

Ovid Nicholson "Where Have You Gone Ovid"

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Ovid Nicholson begins his professional baseball career in 1910 after seeing a newspaper ad for tryouts with the Great Bend Millers of the Kansas State (D) League. Two years later, the 23-year-old Salem, Indiana native gains national recognition when he hits .313 with 128 runs scored in 117 games and sets a minor league single-season record with 111 stolen bases playing for the Frankfort Statesmen in the Blue Grass (D) League.



OVID NICHOLSON

The fleet-footed Nicholson parlays his base-stealing talents into a late-season call-up by the National League's Pittsburgh Pirates.

On September 18, 1912, the Pirates are 30 games above .500 (84-54), but 11 1/2 games behind John McGraw's first-place Giants when Pittsburgh manager Fred Clarke gives Nicholson his first major league start in the second game of a double-header against the last-place Boston Braves.

Clarke pencils Nicholson in as the team's starting left fielder and bats the rookie third in the lineup between two future Hall of Famers - Max Carey and Honus Wagner. Nicholson collects one of only two Pirate hits - a single in three at bats off of Braves' starter George "Lefty" Tyler as the two teams battle to a 0-0 tie in a game called at the end of eight innings because of darkness.



Ovid Nicholson
1912 Pittsburgh Pirates

Ovid Nicholson Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	SB	AVG
1907	Salem Athletic Club	Southern Indiana	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1910	Great Bend Millers	Kansas State	D	338	86	11	6	0	-	.254
1911	Frankfort Statesmen	Blue Grass	D	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1912	Frankfort Statesmen	Blue Grass	D	473	148	19	4	1	111	.313
1912	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	MLB	11	5	0	0	0	0	.455
1913	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-AA	455	132	14	7	4	26	.291
	Louisville Colonels	American Assoc.	AA	107	28	3	1	2	2	.262
	Nashville Volunteers	Southern Assoc.	A	14	2	0	0	0	2	.235
	Wichita Jobbers	Western League	A	324	102	11	6	2	22	.315
1914	Wichita Jobbers	Western League	A	586	179	25	5	2	60	.305
1915	2 Teams	Western League	A	432	127	9	4	2	25	.297
	Wichita Wolves	Western League	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	St. Joseph Drummers	Western League	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1916	2 Teams	2 Leagues	B-A	419	110	-	-	-	52	.263
	Chattanooga Lookouts	Southern	A	41	6	1	0	0	2	.146
	Hannibal Mules	Three-I League	B	378	104	-	-	-	50	.275
1917	Quincy Gems	Three-I League	B	248	65	9	3	0	22	.262
1919	Kitchener Beavers	Michigan-Ontario	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	Nash Motors	Minnesota	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1924	Fort Wayne Chiefs	Central	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1926	Luddington Tars	Michigan State	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
Major League Totals		1 Season		11	5	0	0	0	0	.455
Minor League Totals		9 Seasons		2941	847	87	29	9	274	.288

ML Debut: September 17, 1912 at Washington Park, Brooklyn: pinch runner for C Mike Simon in the top of the 7th inning; no plate appearances in a 7-3 loss to the Brooklyn Superbas.

ML Finale: September 26, 1912, at Forbes Field, Pittsburgh: started in left field and went 0-for-2 against Bill Steele in a 7-5 win over the St. Louis Cardinals

Despite hitting .455 (5-for-11) in six games and fielding flawlessly with eight putouts and no miscues, the *Pittsburgh Press* notes of Nicholson, "he is a well built chap, and seems to have a lot of strength but he showed ignorance of the game." Despite playing well, the 5-foot-9 Nicholson is returned to Louisville because it is thought that the Pirates feel he is too small.

Though his major league career is short, Nicholson will play eight seasons in the minor leagues, surpassing .300 two times. Overall, he hits .288 with 87 doubles, 29 triples and nine home runs. He also managed several seasons in the minors.

In August of 1916, Nicholson, playing for the Hannibal Mules, is leading the Three-I League with 50 stolen bases when he suffers an ankle injury that puts him out of action for the remainder of the season. After hitting .262 in 1917 with the Quincy Gems, Nicholson enters military service and leaves organized baseball at the relatively young age of 28.

Ovid Nicholson [2 of 5]:

Nicholson resumes his pro playing career in 1919 with the Kitchener Beavers of the Michigan-Ontario (B) League. In 1926 he is named the player/manager of the Central League's Ludington Tars. He has the Tars in second place with a 12-12 mark when on June 13 the four-team league merges with the Michigan-Ontario League to create an eight-team Michigan State League. Ludington finishes fifth with a 45-51 record.

In addition, Nicholson and his wife Nelle lose their daughter, Donna Rose, to illness before her fifth birthday on June 28. Following the end of the season, the Nicholsons move to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he becomes an owner of a women's clothing store.

On March 24, 1968, Nicholson passes away in Salem, Indiana, at the age of 79.

NICHOLSON CHRONOLOGY

March 22, 1909

A 20-year-old Nicholson leaves his hometown of Salem, Indiana, for Springfield, Illinois, for a tryout with the Springfield Senators of the Mississippi Valley League.

March 24, 1909

Nicholson and catcher John O'Connell are the first two players cut from the team and sent "to the Pumpkin Patches" by team owner Dick Kinsella ... Nicholson, listed as a shortstop, returns to Salem to play for the local semipro team.

September 18, 1912 South End Ground, Boston, Mass. Ovid Nicholson's First Major League at Bat

BOSTON.	AB	R	B	P	A	E	T	B	S	H	S	B
Campbell, m.....	4	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Devlin, 1b.....	4	0	1	8	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Sweeney, 2b.....	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Jackson, lf.....	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Titus, rf.....	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kirke, 3b.....	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maranville, ss.....	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Rariden, c.....	3	0	1	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tyler, p.....	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	29	0	5	24	10	0	5	0	1	0	0	0
PITTSBURGH.	AB	R	B	P	A	E	T	B	S	H	S	B
Byrne, 3b.....	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carey, m.....	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Nicholson, lf.....	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wagner, ss.....	3	0	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Miller, 1b.....	3	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilson, rf.....	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Butler, 2b.....	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Simon, c.....	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
O'Toole, p.....	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	23	0	2	24	8	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
Boston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two-base hit—Wagner.												
Stolen base—Devlin.												
Sacrifice hit—Carey.												
Left on bases—Boston 7, Pittsburgh 1.												
First base on balls—Off Tyler 1, off O'Toole 2.												
Struck out—By Tyler 4, by O'Toole 6.												

April 8, 1911

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* reports that the Frankfort Statesmen have signed Nicholson, a "crack outfielder" from the Kansas League.

September 8, 1912

Nicholson is hitting .313 with 111 stolen bases with the Frankfort Statesmen when the Pittsburgh Pirates purchase his contract.

September 17, 1912

Nicholson makes his major league debut with Pittsburgh as a pinch runner for catcher Mike Simon in the top of the 7th inning in a 7-3 loss to the Brooklyn Superbas.

◀◀September 18, 1912

Making his first major league start, starting in leftfield and batting third, Nicholson is 1-for-3 against Boston Braves starter George "Lefty" Tyler as the two teams battle to a 0-0 tie in a game called at the end of eight innings because of darkness.

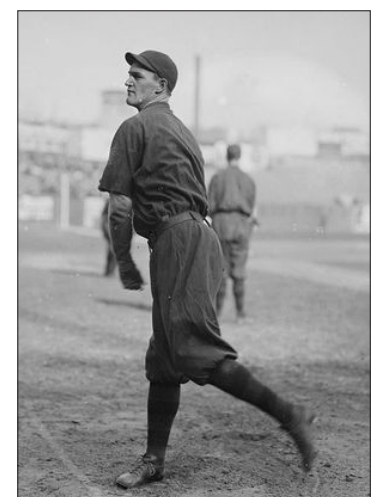
September 26, 1912

The *Pittsburgh Press* notes of Nicholson, "he is a well built chap, and seems

to have a lot of strength but he showed ignorance of the game."

Minor League Stolen Base Leaders

Billy Hamilton, B'field/Pensacola	1912	155
Vince Coleman, Macon.....	1983	145
Donell Nixon, Bakersfield	1983	144
James Johnston, San Francisco	1913	124
Jeff Stone, Spartanburg	1981	123
Alan Wiggins, Lodi.....	1980	120
Allan Lewis, Leesburgh.....	1966	116
Ovid Nicholson, Frankfort	1912	111
Marcus Lawton, Columbia.....	1985	111
Chris Morris, Peoria.....	2001	111



George "Lefty" Tyler
1912 Boston Braves

Ovid Nicholson [3 of 5]:

December 1, 1912

The Pirates management announces that Nicholson and pitcher Sherrod Smith have been released to the American Association's Louisville Colonels.

"The Nicholson in question may or may not be a star. But he has a record, a peach of a record as a base-stealer. He was sent to the Frankfort club in the Blue Grass League stole bases so fast they had trouble in counting them and he was the champion base-stealer of the world last season."

- Indianapolis Star

December 22, 1912

Nicholson's father's home in Salem, Indiana, is burned to the ground.

December 24, 1912

Nicholson informs the Louisville Colonels that his home burned to the ground destroying the contract that had been sent to him ... Nicholson asks for a duplicate so he can affix his "John Henry."

May 19, 1913

Nicholson is sold to the Nashville Volunteers of the Southern League ... the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reports that with the acquisition of Scotty Ingerton from Indianapolis, whose "superior batting ability" makes him more valuable to the team Nicholson's services are "no longer needed".



1912 Pittsburgh Pirates, Spring Training at Hot Springs, Arkansas
March 22, 1912



1915 Wichita Witches

Nicholson relates a story that learned to slide to base by rigging up a small portion of a diamond in his father's barn and then from a running start going into a bag representing second or third base from various angles.

June 12, 1913

Less than a month after being sent to Nashville, Nicholson is recalled to Louisville ... Colonel fans made an "awful howl" when he was sold to the Volunteers.

July 3, 1913

A cigar company in Louisville produces a cigar named "Our Nick" and is wrapped in a photo of Ovid "Nick" Nicholson.

July 6, 1913

Nicholson is hitting .262 in 31 games with Louisville, when he is sold outright to the Wichita Witches of the Western League.

July 10, 1913

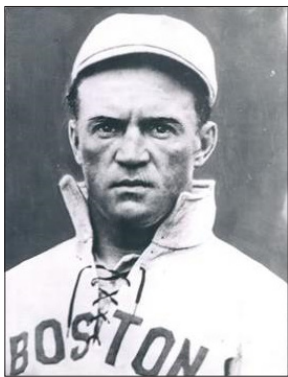
It is reported that one of the reasons why Louisville sold Nicholson to Wichita was his dislike of manager Jack Hayden.

December 1913

Nicholson writes the Wichita team secretary that he anxious for the season to open, but if the franchise is moved to Kansas City he will "jump" the team.

NICHOLSON
SOLD TO
WESTERN TEAM

Ovid Nicholson [4 of 5]:



Jack Hayden

January 13, 1914

Louisville manager Jack Hayden says he still regrets in sending Nicholson to Wichita last July ... "Why that kid burned up the Western Association. As soon as he got over his nervousness he commenced to murder the pill."

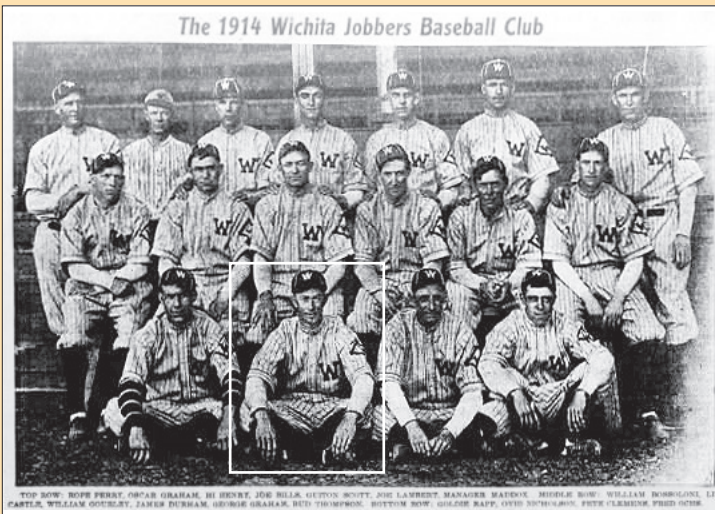
July 3, 1914

Nicholson leads the Western League in base hits and big league scouts are starting to find their way to Wichita in an attempt to get the Witches to part with the former major leaguer ... however, team president Patrick Breese "cannot

find his way to weaken the team in spite of the fact that the money would come in mighty handy right now."

June 8, 1915

Nicholson is involved in a five-player trade with the St. Joseph Drummers ... Nicholson, third baseman Goldie Rapp and first baseman William Fisher are sent to the Drummers for third baseman Gilbert Britton, outfielder William Fox and manager Ham Patterson ... even though Nicholson hit over .300 for Wichita a year ago, club management is "in despair" about his recent slump and feels that Fox will be an improvement.



The 1914 Wichita Jobbers Baseball Club

TOP ROW: BOPE, PERCY, O'NEAL, GRAMM, HI, HENRY, JOE, BILL, GUYTON, SCOTT, JOE, LAWRENCE, MANAGER, WARENS. MIDDLE ROW: WILLIAM, BARRINGTON, LEE, CARTER, WILLIAM, COOLEY, JAMES, DURHAM, GEORGE, GRAMM, RED, THOMPSON. BOTTOM ROW: GOLDIE, RAPP, OVID, NICHOLSON, FRED, CLERKIN, FRED, O'NEAL

**MANAGERS INVOLVED
IN WESTERN LEAGUE
TRADE; ALSO 5 MEN**

(BY MORNING JOURNAL SPECIAL LEASED WIRE)

Wichita, Kan., June 8. —A trade involving two managers and five players of the St. Joseph and Wichita Western league baseball clubs was closed here tonight. Jack Holland, owner of the St. Joseph team, released Manager Patterson, Third Baseman Britton and Outfielder Fox to Wichita, receiving in return Ovid Nicholson, outfielder; Goldie Rapp, third baseman, and William Fisher, first baseman.

Clyde Wares, who came to Wichita from the St. Louis Browns, as a manager of the team, was bought back by his former owners. William Powell, outfielder, who came to Wichita with Wares and who was sent to St. Louis two weeks ago, came back to Wichita.

Patterson, who plays first base, will manage the team and play that position on the local team.

April 26, 1916

Nicholson is hitting .146 (6-for-41) and is one of six players released by the Chattanooga Lookouts ... later signs with the Hannibal Mules.

**OVID NICHOLSON
GIVEN THE GATE**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., April 26.—(Special.)—Chattanooga purchased Outfielder Jantzen tonight from Little Rock. He probably will replace Fred Nicholson in left field. Outfielder Ovid Nicholson was given his unconditional release today.

August 15, 1916

Leading the Three-I League in steals (50), Nicholson suffers a season-ending injury when sliding into second base an infielder falls on his leg, pinning to the ground.

**OTTOS HAVE THE WORLD'S
CHAMPION BASE STEALER**

September 11, 1916

Nicholson signs with the independent Loganport (Ind.) Ottos

February 1917

Nicholson writes the Nashville Vounteers to let them know that he is a free agent and would like to play with them again during the 1917 season ... Nashville elects not sign Nicholson as he is "too light for the heavy hammering" of the Southern League.

May 5, 1917

The Quincy Gems sign Nicholson and 31-year-old first baseman Jack Beatty ... Beatty a teammate of Nicholson with Hannibal in 1916, will hit

.331 for the Gems before being released to the Central Association's Fort Dodge Dodgers.

