

# Gordon Nell, "Borger Bomber"

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In its 16-year existence, the West Texas-New Mexico League was regarded as a haven for hitters with batting averages and home runs inflated by the region's thin dry air and undersized ball parks, like Amarillo Park (324 feet down both lines and 364 feet to center field).

One player that takes full advantage of these circumstances is Gordon Nell, a hard-hitting outfielder-first baseman for the Pampa Oilers and Borger Gassers.

In seven seasons playing in the West Texas-New Mexico League (WTNML), the brawny Nell averages 39 home runs, 44 doubles and 160 RBIs per year.

Three times Nell will lead the WTNML in home runs and RBIs, doubles twice, while hitting a nifty .351 over that seven-year span. Nell's best season comes in 1939 when he captures the triple crown with a career-high .392 batting average, 44 home runs and 189 RBIs. And just for good measure he has 60 doubles and 15 stolen bases.

Starting with a Western Association home run title in his second season in 1931, Nell will be a league leader in home runs five times in his 12-year career.

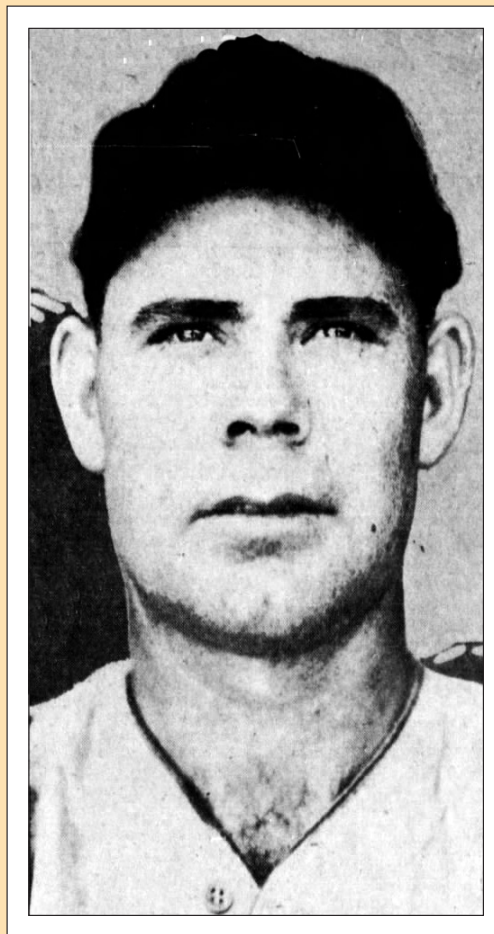
But, in many ways Nell is an enigma. Talented enough to be offered a contract to begin his career in a B-level league, he turns it down as a 21-year-old in 1929.

By his second season (1931), Nell has already made it to the highest reaches of the minor leagues playing with the Minneapolis Miller of American (AA) Association. In year four (1933) he is back in A-ball but has 95 career home runs to his credit. By many accounts he is just a step away from making it to the major leagues.

But then his career takes a perplexing step back (or maybe just a side step).

First, he takes a five-year (1923-1938) sabbatical from organized baseball to play semipro ball back in his familiar haunts of Texas and Oklahoma. Later, returning to the minor league fold for three outstanding years with Pampa and Borger of the WTNML from 1939 to 1941, he disappears again until 1944, when after some preliminary contract talk with the Sacramento Salons in the early spring, he ends up playing several games with Little Rock of the Southern Association before being released.

This is man who proves to be a successful manager with Borger in 1940 and 1941, yet twice "jumps" contracts, including once with Pampa in 1939, leaving the Oilers high and dry the day before post-season playoffs were to get underway.



Records of him playing organized baseball, or serving in the military in 1942, 1943 or 1945, are simply not available in my search process.

Despite his early success at the higher levels of the minor league hierarchy, the Hollis, Oklahoma, native spends most his minor league career in the low minors.

Missing almost nine full seasons for various reasons, Nell still manages to hit over 40 home runs six times en route to 365 for his career. With 1,416 RBIs, he averages over an RBI per game for his career.

Nell's career begins in typical fashion in 1929 as 21-year-old with the Pensacola Fliers of the Southeastern (B) League. Despite signing a contract, Nell writes to Flier manager Doc Johnston that "for his own good," he should quit the game to pay better attention to his business in Lipton, Oklahoma. It is a portent of things to come.

## Gordon Nell [2 of 8]:

### NELL CHRONOLOGY

#### 1928

September 6

Catcher Gordon Nell is one of nine players signed by Pops Kitchen for the Pensacola Fliers for the 1929 season.

#### 1929

February 23

The Pensacola Fliers receive a signed contract from Gordon Nell of Lipton, Oklahoma.

March 2

Nell informs Pensacola manager Doc Johnston that will not be reporting to preseason workouts as he plans to quit the game to pay better attention to his business in Lipton.

#### 1930

A 22-year-old Nell makes his professional baseball debut hitting .351 with 29 doubles, 27 home runs and 60 RBIs while splitting time between Muskogee and Joplin of the Western Association ... the 27 home runs lead the league and his 296 total bases are third.

March 12

For the second-straight year, Nell is listed on the preseason roster of the Pensacola Fliers.

**MUSKOGEE, Okla., May 8**—The signing of Gordon Nell, big right-handed first baseman of Tipton, Okla., was announced last night by Manager Doc Smith of the Muskogee Chiefs.

Nell, who was the property of Pensacola, of the Southern league, refused to report this year and was released recently.

He is a righthanded batter with real power, says Smith, who has played against him in exhibition games.

July 31

The Minneapolis Millers buy options on several Muskogee Chiefs' players for \$1,000 in cash ... the Millers have already acquired pitcher Bill Wilson and will eventually purchase outfielders Ab Wright and Gordon Nell and will possibly take pitcher Harvey Sutton if his "lame" arm comes around.

August 22 (insert)

Nell and Ab Wright, the Western Association's hitting and home run leaders, respectively, are ordered to report to Minneapolis immediately.

### Gordon Nell Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	AVG	
1929	Pampa Oilers	Red River Valley	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1930	Muskogee Chiefs/Joplin Miners	Western Assoc.	C	490	172	29	7	27	60	9	.351	
<b>1931</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>2 Leagues</b>	<b>C-AA</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>.319</b>	
1931	Muskogee Chiefs	Western Assoc.	C	559	180	36	7	44	109	5	.322	
1931	Minneapolis Millers	American Assoc.	AA	13	3	1	0	1	3	0	.231	
<b>1932</b>	<b>3 Teams</b>	<b>2 Leagues</b>	<b>C-B</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.277</b>	
1932	Montgomery Capitals	Southeastern	B	58	13	1	2	0	5	0	.224	
1932	Independence/Joplin/Hutchinson/Topeka	Western	C	317	91	20	5	8	47	1	.286	
<b>1933</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>3 Leagues</b>	<b>A-C</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>.256</b>	
1933	Oklahoma City Indians	Texas	A	90	15	1	2	1	9	1	.166	
1933	Waco Cubs	Dixie	C	10	3	0	1	0	0	0	.300	
1933	Des Moines Demons	Western	A	267	76	13	9	14	56	11	.285	
1934	Hollis	Red River Valley	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1934	Pampa Road Runners	Red River Valley	SPro	90	46	-	-	-	-	-	.511	
1935	Coltoso of Lefors	Red River Valley	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1935	Pampa Road Runners	Red River Valley	SPro	237	98	25	5	22	-	-	.413	
1936	Eason Oilers	Cotton Belt	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1937	Seminole	Cotton Belt	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1937	Eason Oilers	Cotton Belt	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1938	Hollis	Cotton Belt	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1939	Pampa Oilers	West Texas-New Mexico	D	528	207	60	8	44	189	15	.392	
1940	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	D	529	206	48	15	40	175	15	.389	
1941	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	D	459	145	33	5	28	115	18	.316	
1942				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1943				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1944	Little Rock Travelers	Southern	A1	26	7	1	0	0	3	0	.269	
1945				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1946	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	C	567	190	47	4	43	175	5	.335	
1947	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	C	500	172	34	1	49	173	4	.344	
1948	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	C	513	183	48	2	37	164	2	.357	
1949	Borger Gassers	West Texas-New Mexico	C	514	164	39	1	29	133	2	.319	
<b>Minor League Totals</b>				<b>12 Seasons</b>	<b>5430</b>	<b>1824</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>1416</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>.336</b>

#### All-Star Selections

1939 West Texas-New Mexico League

1940 West Texas-New Mexico League

1941 West Texas-New Mexico League

**Bold Denotes League Leader**

May 7

Muskogee is 6-4 on the young season, but manager Doc Smith is unhappy with the play of first baseman Bill Hargrove so he opts to sign Nell, who was recently released by Pensacola ... Nell responds with a pair of multi-home run games in his first four games with the Chiefs.

1931

For the second time in as many years, Nell leads the Western Association in home runs with 44 ... back with the Muskogee Chiefs to start the season, Nell hits .322 with 36 doubles, seven triples and 109 RBIs ... sent to Minneapolis in late August, Nell collects three hits, including one home run, in 13 at bats ... in his first two seasons in professional baseball, Nell is hitting .334 with 66 doubles, 14 triples and 72 home runs while driving in 172 runs.

### Two Western Association Stars Called by Millers

Muskogee, Okla., Aug. 26.—(P)—Ab Wright, Western association leading batter, and Gordon Nell, the league's home run king, were ordered tonight to report immediately to the Minneapolis team of the American association. Both were the Muskogee chiefs.

## Gordon Nell [3 of 8]:

August 27

Nell and Wright do not arrive at Nicolett Park in Minneapolis as expected.

August 29

Making his Minneapolis debut, Nell doubles as a pinch-hitter in an 8-6 loss to the visiting Columbus.

## 1932

*On the preseason roster of the Minneapolis Millers in February, Nell fails to come to terms with the team and is sent to Montgomery of the Southeastern League where he hits .224 in 15 games for the Capitals before finding himself back in the Western Association where over a matter of three months (May-July) he plays for the Independence Producers, Joplin Miners, Hutchinson Wheat Shockers and the Topeka Jayhawks ... playing for four financially-strapped teams (all four would be done by July 18), Nell hits a career-low .286 with eight home runs and 47 RBIs.*

February 19

Nell is one of five Minneapolis Millers yet to return a signed contract.

February 25

An unsigned Nell is sent to the Montgomery Capitals of the Southeastern (B) League ... described by the *Montgomery Advertiser* as a "powerful man" with great strength in his wrists, forearms and wrists, Nell should be one of the Capitals' "greatest drawing cards."

April 16

The *Joplin Globe* reports that Nell has been sent to the Charlotte Hornets of the Piedmont (B) League.

May 24

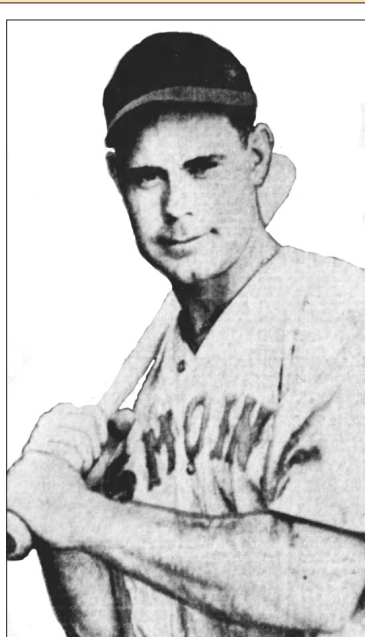
Nell hits two home runs in Muskogee's 11-7 win over Joplin.

July 11

Not in the lineup in Hutchinson's 13-5 win over Independence, Nell, described as a "troublemaker between players," is released to the Topeka Jayhawks.

### THIS IS JUST TOO LATE FOR RIPLEY'S BIG PRIZE CONTEST

FORT SMITH Ark., May 21—Archie Wise, Muskogee, Okla., pitcher, hit a home run through a knothole in the left field fence to give his team a 3 to 2 victory over Fort Smith in a Western association game here tonight. Spectators said the blow ordinarily would have been good for a double.



Gordon Nell  
1933 Des Moines Demons

## 1933

*For a second-straight year, Nell plays for multiple teams - Oklahoma City Indians (25 games), Waco Cubs (2) and the Des Moines Demons (67) ... released by Oklahoma City first and then Waco, Nell signs Des Moines but jumps his contract with the Demons in August and is suspended ... on the season, Nell hits .263 with 15 home runs with 65 RBIs in 94 games.*

May 4

Oklahoma City is in last place in the Texas League with a 5-18 record and has dropped 15 road games in a row when owner Jack Holland, in an effort to improve the team, announces that he has signed Nell, outfielder Fuzzy Hufft, third baseman Walter Euiler and second baseman Ray Flaskamper, who was released earlier in the season.

June 8

Neil is hitting .190 with one home runs and nine RBIs in 90 at bats when he draws his release from Oklahoma City.

June 9

With Johnny Dickshot refusing to report and facing an injury to rookie first baseman Whitlow White, the Waco Cubs sign Nell to his second contract of the 1933 season.

June 11

After only two games with Waco, Nell signs with the Des Moines Demons of the Western (A) League.

## Gordon Nell [4 of 8]:

August 28

Nell is hitting .286 with 14 home runs and 56 RBIs for Des Moines when he jumps his contract and is suspended ... he will be listed as "voluntarily retired" for the 1934 and 1935 seasons.

### 1934-1938

*Nell is set to begin the 1934 season with Des Moines but fails to report to preseason workouts and for the second time in seven months is suspended ... for next five years (1934-1938), Nell elects to play semipro ball in the Red River Valley and Cotton Belt leagues for small towns in Oklahoma (Hollis, Pampa, Eason) and Texas (Lefors) ... in 1938, Nell is named manager of the Hollis team of the Cotton Belt League.*

February 24, 1934

Nell is on the Des Moines preseason roster but fails to report and is suspended.

**COLTEXO WINS  
FROM BORGER  
TEAM 12 TO 5**

**GORDON NELL SMACKS  
HOMER WITH BASES  
LOADED**

June 22, 1935

Playing for Pampa in the Red River Valley League, Nell hits three consecutive home runs in a 13-5 win over the Enid Oilers ... in his first 13 games with the Road Runners, Nell has 10 home runs and is hitting .463.

July 24, 1935

In front of 2,500 fans "roaring approval," Nell hits two home runs as Pampa beats the Red River Valley League all-star team 10-4.

March 19, 1936

Nell signs with the Eason Oilers, Oklahoma's sandlot champions in each of the past two years.

March 21, 1936

The *Pampa Daily News* reports that Nell has yet not reported to the Pampa Road Runners for preseason drills.

February 13, 1937

Nell is one of six Enid players to sign with the Seminole (Oklahoma) semipro team.

April 21, 1937

Nell hits three home runs for the Eason Oilers in wins over Shawnee and Ponca City.

August 30, 1937

The Eason Oilers are crowned the national semipro champions following a 7-4 win over the Buna Alens of Buford, Georgia.

### 1939

*Returning to professional baseball for the first time in five years with the Pampa Oilers, Nell quickly reestablishes himself as one of the top hitters in the low minor leagues, capturing the Triple Crown of the West Texas-New Mexico League with a league-record 44 home runs, 189 RBIs and a .383 batting average ... Nell also leads the D-level league in hits (207), total bases (413), runs scored (152) and doubles (60).*

Just Isn't Right—

## GORDON NELL TOO POTENT FOR CLASS D HURLERS

That is the consensus of several Abilene Apache pitchers when asked about Pampa's Gordon Nell. They don't understand why young pitchers attempting to break into Class D ball should have to face a 32-year-old Nell who has played at the AA-level and has hit 44 home runs at a higher classification.



Gordon Nell  
1933 Des Moines Demons

## Eason Oilers Win Semi-Pro Baseball Title

(United Press by Radio)  
WICHITA, Kans., Aug. 30—The Eason Oilers of Enid, Okla., today won the National Semi-pro baseball tournament championship.

They defeated the Buna Alens team of Buford, Ga., 7 to 4. The victory earned them first prize of \$5,000.

The finals climaxed two weeks competition in which 32 teams from all part of the nation were entered.

April 16

After three trips to Nell's hometown of Hollis and several phone calls, Pampa manager Grover Seitz convinces Nell to sign with the Oilers for the 1939 season.

April 25

In his first professional game in six years, Nell is 5-for-6 with four doubles and three RBIs in a 15-6 win over the Amarillo Gold Sox.

## Gordon Nell [5 of 8]:

September 2

Nell, as a left fielder, is the only unanimous selection on the 1939 West Texas-New Mexico League All-Star team.

September 5

Pampa opposes Midland in the opening game of the league's postseason playoffs, but Nell is nowhere to be seen having "deserted" his teammates following a dispute with the team's management.

**"Gordon, who reputedly played during the season at a salary a Class A-1 player would have been glad to have received, quit the club when he discovered he was to be given no part of the playoff gate receipts, retiring to his farm near Hollis, Oklahoma."**

Without their star slugger, Pampa manages to win in the opening round against the Midland Cowboys, but loses in five games to Lubbock Hubbers in the championship round.

## 1940

*Having worn out his welcome in Pampa, Nell takes his disappearing act (Des Moines '33; Pampa '39) 28 miles northwest to rival Borger ... Nell hits .389 for the Gassers with a league-leading 40 home runs and 175 RBIs to go along with 48 doubles, 15 triples, 206 hits, 404 total bases and a .764 slugging percentage ... his 40 round trippers mark the fourth time Nell will lead a league in home runs ... Nell takes over from Pete Susko as Borger's manager a week before the season opener and directs the Gassers to league pennant.*

### Borger Gassers - 1940 West Texas-New Mexico League Champions



Back Row (l-r): Ernie Potocar, Cage Keaton, Bob Crues, Gordon Nell (mgr.), Larry Gilchrist, Wilcy Moore, Jerry Soule, Stuart Williams. Front Row (l-r): Buck Tinsley, Clem Hausman, Soapy Scopetone, Mack Short, Bobby Decker, Benny Franklin, James Reynolds.

March 23

Having been declared a free agent by minor league "czar" Judge Bramham, Nell receives a telegram from El Paso general manager "Red" Wilson inquiring as to his interest in playing with the Texans.

April 15

Nell is named as a player/manager of the Borger Gassers, succeeding Pete Susko.

September 14

Borger, behind Nell's two RBIs and a four-hit shutout by slender 21-year-old righthander and 20-game winner Bob Crues, capture the West Texas-New Mexico League pennant with a 5-0 win over the Lubbock Hubbers before 4,000 fans in Lubbock.

Pampa Daily News, September 15, 1939

After winning the West Texas-New Mexico League Triple Crown and leading the Pampa Oilers to a second place finish in the regular season, Nell has a dispute with team management and leaves the team the day prior to the start of the league playoffs. Sans the league's best player, Pampa manages to beat Midland three games to two in the first round before falling to the Lubbock Hubbers in the finals, four games to one.

## Lubbock Called Poor Sports In Denying Pampa Nell Replacement

Many Pampa baseball fans have been wondering why Manager Grover Seltz of the Pampa Oilers hasn't replaced Gordon Nell. The answer is because the Lubbock team management refused to grant Manager Seltz that courtesy after he had given them permission to play Sparr in place of Stevens, lost for the rest of this season because of an operation the Oiler management revealed today.

Business Manager Harold Miller made public correspondence and discussions between the team managements regarding the replacements. He stated in plain words that Lubbock showed mighty poor sportmanship in the dealings.

Mr. Miller said:

"On our last trip to Lubbock, before the playoff, Business Manager Harry Faulkner of the Hubbers asked Grover if he could use Sparr in place of Stevens. Seltz agreed, not knowing at the time who Sparr was.

"Then on July 5 Arthur Hale, new Lubbock business manager, wired me Faulkner advises we have your permission to use Sparr in place of Stevens. In that I am new in this office please wire your approval. All other clubs in playoff have agreed."

Miller said he answered the telegram as follows: "You have our permission to use Sparr. We may ask for replacement for Gordon Nell later."

"The Oiler management played the Midland series without asking for a replacement for Nell because Manager Sam Hale had only 13 players and he didn't ask for a replacement therefore we didn't," Miller declared.

Sparr Record Learned

"When the series with Lubbock began and we learned that Sparr was a Class C man, having played with Longview, and Stevens was only a Class D player, we asked for a replacement for Nell, naming Stacey of Big Spring," Miller said. "We were refused permission to use him by Manager 'Sally' Parker, on whose shoulders the business man-

agement placed the load of refusing after we had allowed them to use Sparr and told them we might ask for a replacement for Nell."

"We asked if we might use anyone and we were informed that we couldn't," Miller continued. "Last night preceding the game Parker said that we might have replaced Nell with a rookie. If that's sports-

**Turn To Page 10 For Box Scores On Yesterday's Big League Games**

manship I can't see it. We allowed Lubbock to replace a Class D player with a Class C player yet he asked us to replace a Class AA man with a rookie."

"Technically, we weren't entitled to a replacement, but we let Lubbock select anyone they desired when we could have refused them permission to secure another player and they would have had to play the series with 13 men," Miller said. "Luckily, we had an extra pitcher available which gave us an equal number of players but our power at the plate was reduced."

### MANAGER NAMED

**BORGER, Tex., Apr. 15—(AP)—**Gordon Nell, outfielder and first baseman, today was named manager of the Borger Gassers of the West Texas-New Mexico League. Nell succeeds Pete Susko, released Saturday.

A week prior to the start of the regular season, Nell replaces Pete Susko as the manager of the Borger Gassers after Susko is released for being too argumentative with club officials. Borger president Vern Underhill says the team will be "vastly benefitted" by the move. At one point during his discussion with the management, Susko, a former first baseman with the Washington Senators, offers to buy the team outright. Team members express "complete satisfaction" with Nell's appointment.

**Gordon Nell [6 of 8]:**

**1941**

Back for his second year as the player/manager for Borger, Nell once again leads the West Texas-New Mexico League in home runs with 28 while driving 115 runs and hitting .315 as the Gassers finish 42 games above .500 with a 89-47 mark, but finish in second place to the Big Spring Bombers (91-45).

March 2

Nell signs to manage Borger again in 1941.



**Wilcy Moore**

Wilcy Moore is best remembered as one of the premier pitchers on the 1927 New York Yankees. As a 30-year-old rookie, Moore appears in a team-high 50 games, finishing 19-7 with an AL-best 13 saves and a 2.28 ERA. In 1940, the Hollis, Oklahoma native is pitching for the St. Paul Saints when he is released on May 20 following a particularly bad outing against the Columbus Red Birds eight days earlier. The 43-year-old signs with Borger on July 26 following a visit to his farm by Gasser manager Gordon Nell. Moore returns to the hill, going 5-1 for the Gassers with a 2.81 ERA.

April 30, 1941  
Hubber Park, Lubbock, Texas

BORGER	AB	R	H	O	A
Gilchrist, ss	7	0	0	2	2
Williams, 2b	5	1	3	1	2
Willingham, 2b	3	1	0	1	5
Nell, 1b	5	4	4	13	2
Scopstone, cf	4	1	2	1	6
Tinsley, rf	5	0	1	0	0
Rodriguez, c	6	1	1	5	1
Nansom, lf	3	0	1	2	0
Vannoy, p	5	1	2	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>

LUBBOCK	AB	R	H	O	A
Bragston, 2b	6	1	3	3	2
Kauzlarich, 1b	4	1	2	7	0
Ledwith, 3b	5	0	0	2	1
Wobzsal, rf	4	1	3	3	0
Bartkowski, cf	4	0	0	2	0
Schlereth, rf	4	0	1	0	1
Mahan, ss	3	0	0	1	1
Hatch, c	4	1	1	9	1
Sucky, p	2	0	0	0	4
Adamitis, p	2	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11</b>

April 30

Nell hits for the cycle in a 9-4 win over the Lubbock Hubbers.

July 20

Nell is named to the West Texas-New Mexico League all-star team for the third-straight year.

**1942-1943**

Following three productive years with Pampa (1939) and Borger (1940-1941) in the West Texas-New Mexico League, Nell elects not to play, or manage, in 1942 and 1943.

March 11

After two seasons as a player/manager with the Borger Gassers, Nell is mailed a "players only" contract for the 1942 season ... Nell had originally been mailed a player/manager contract, but failing to hear back from him they elect to tender him a "players only" contract ... Nell had directed the Gassers to the West Texas-New Mexico League pennant in 1940 and into the playoffs in 1941.

March 13

The Borgers hire 36-year-old second baseman Hugh Willingham to direct the team in 1942 ... Willingham's Gassers are 33-39 and 19 1/2 games out of first place when the West Texas-New Mexico League disbands on July 5, 1942

**1944**

After not playing in 1942 and 1943, Nell's attempt to return to the diamond with the Sacramento Salons for the 1944 season is thwarted by some issues with a pending Army physical and he is eventually released by the Salons before spring training ... the 36-year-old outfielder signs with Little Rock of the Southern Association, but plays sparingly before being released for the second time in four months on July 1.

**Solons Sign Experienced Outfielder And Three Sandlot Players**

February 4

Nell is one of four players signed by the Sacramento Salons ... the "untried lads" are Frank Bowa, who played for the Sacramento Capitals of the local winter league, pitcher/infielder Dick Steinhauer and outfielder James Weir from Salt Lake City ... Bowa will play in only seven games for the Salons before he and Steinhauer are sent down to the Lima Redbirds of the Ohio State (D)

League ... Bowa will hit .289 in six minor league seasons while Steinhauer will hit .361 for the Red Birds in 1944 before entering military service for four years ... Steinhauer will play five more seasons, finishing with the Bisbee-Douglas Copper Kings of the Arizona-Texas (C) League and a .347 career batting average and 68 home runs.

February 7

Sacramento manager Kenneth Penner has watched Nell work out in Southern California and says, "That fellow can really hit the ball. He should help us even though he has not played baseball for a year and half."

March 6

Nell's time with Sacramento may be over before it even gets started as he reportedly has passed his military physical to enter the Army.

**Sheely Gives Unconditional Release To Outfielder Nell**

Manager Earl Sheely announced yesterday he has given Gordon Nell his unconditional release from the Sacramento baseball club. Nell is a 36 year old outfielder whom Kenneth Penner signed in Los Angeles during the Winter. Nell wrote to Sheely this week, saying he would report here from Oklahoma if he flunked his army physical examination.

Sheely figures he has enough outfielders already without paying the expense of bringing Nell out from Oklahoma. His only professional experience was in the West Texas League several years ago. Penner likely will sign Nell for his Rochester club in the International league.

Two fine fielding plays were made during last night's ball game. Paul Bowa, Sacramento third baseman, knocked down a hard grounder hit by Babe Burda and then threw the speedy Mather left fielder out by a step. Joe Marty went to deep right center field to rob Bill Ramsey of Sacramento of a double in the third inning with a one handed catch.

The improved lights were turned on for the first time last night and they illuminated the field in perfect fashion. All new globes have been installed and in addition the reflectors have been repainted.

## Gordon Nell [7 of 8]:

### MAY LOSE NELL

There is the possibility Sacramento may lose the services of Gordon Nell, hard hitting outfielder formerly of the West Texas League. Nell is supposed to have passed his physical examination to enter the army. He was considered a serious candidate for the local squad and was one of the few players actually signed to a 1944 contract.

March 29

Sacramento manager Kenneth Pender gives Nell his unconditional release ... Nell tells the Salons that he will join the team from his home in Oklahoma if he flunks his Army physical ... Pender tells the *Sacramento Bee* that he has enough outfielders already and he doesn't feel like paying Nell's travel expenses.

June 4

It's reported that Little Rock Traveler manager Bob Seeds in an effort to try and quiet two of his players at a Chattanooga hotel, the two players - Vern "Socko" Johnson and Rosy Cantrell - gang up on Seeds, but the 37-year-old manager turns the table and proceeds to give both players quite a beating ... Cantrell requires stitches in his head and Johnson is reportedly "mauled."

June 5

Little Rock sends Rosy Cantrell back to Little Rock and releases Vern "Socko" Johnson.

June 13

Down an outfielder with the release of Vern "Socko" Johnson, Little Rock signs Nell to a contract.

July 1

Nell is hitting only .269 with no home runs and three RBIs in 26 at bats when he is released to clear roster space for 20-year-old catcher Hoyle Boger ... Boger, an ex-Marine will hit a combined .241 in 52 game splitting time between Atlanta and Little Rock.

## 1946

Returning to organized baseball, the 38-year-old has an impressive return, hitting .335 in 136 games for the Borger Gassers ... Nell leads the league in doubles (47) and RBIs (175) while finishing second in home runs with 43 (five behind the legendary Joe Bauman) and slugging percentage (.660) ... playing for Amarillo, Bauman hits .301 with 48 home runs and drives in 148 runs ... however both Nell and Bauman will both be left off of the league's all-star team in lieu of Albuquerque's 19-year-old Gordon Goldsberry who hits .372 with seven home runs and 90 RBIs.

January 14

The *Lubbock Morning Avalanche* opines that Nell "is still very much in the running," along with Dutch Prather and Hugh Willingham for the manager position of the Borger Gassers in 1946 ... unfortunately, all three will be disappointed as team ownership names Ted Clawitter manager ... Clawitter will direct the Gassers to a 66-72 mark and a fifth-place finish, 31 1/2 games behind first place Abilene.

October 12

In statistics released by the league office, Nell leads the league in total bases (374), doubles (47) and RBIs (175) while Bauman leads in home runs (48) and strikeouts (110) ... Lamesa's Jack Hauptert set a league mark for most losses (21).

December 6

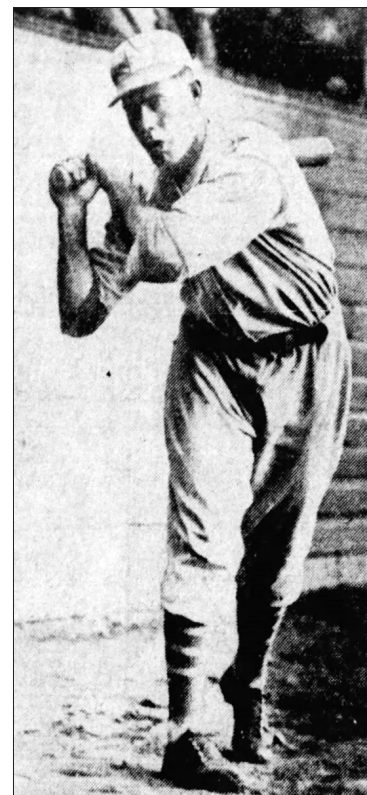
Nell is named manager of Borger for the 1947 season.

## 1947

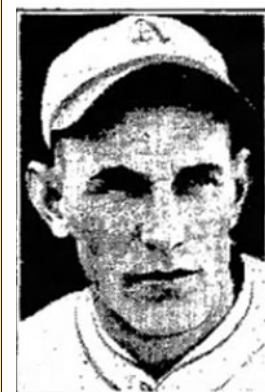
Nell has another stellar season, hitting .344 with a career-high 49 home runs and 173 RBIs and .710 slugging percentage in 124 games ... Nell and Joe Bauman (.350/38/127) are again left of the league's all-star team ... Nell's 47 home runs rank only third in the WTNML behind Lubbock's Bill Serena (57) and Amarillo's Bob Crues (52) ... in this third year as a manager in the minor leagues, Nell resigns as the Borger skipper on July 11.

July 11

Borger is in fifth place with a 36-42 (.462) record when a "youth" movement gets underway as the 39-year-old Nell is replaced as the team's manager by 37-year-old by Stu "Dib" Williams ... in resigning, Nell tells Borger president R.B. Takewell that he feels that injuries have taken their toll on him and that he will be of "more value" to the team only as a player ... under Williams, a .267 hitter in six major league seasons (1930-1935) with the Philadelphia Athletics and the Boston Red Sox, the Gassers will go 25-37 (.403) and finish the season in sixth place with a 61-79 mark and a full 38 games behind first place Lubbock.



Gordon Nell  
1931 Minneapolis Millers  
(or so the caption says)



Dib Williams  
1931 Philadelphia A's

## Gordon Nell [8 of 8]:

### 1948

Nell hits .357 with 48 doubles, 37 home runs and drives in 164 runs in 123 games ... he scores 133 runs, has a .674 slugging percentage and once again finishes third in the circuit in home runs a distant 32 behind Amarillo's Bob Crues (right) who has a league-record 69 to go along with a .404 batting average.

April 28

Nell is 4-for-5 with a single, a triple and two home runs in a 21-7 loss to the Lamesa Loboes.

August 10

Nell hits two home runs, including a grand slam, in Borger's 16-8 win over Lubbock.

### 1949

In his 12th and final season of minor league baseball, a 41-year-old Nell hits .319 with 39 doubles, 29 home runs, 133 RBIs and 39 doubles in 132 games.

June 23

Nell "gently" pokes a third inning grand slam over the left centerfield wall in Borger's 7-2 win over the Pampa Oilers.

## Gordon Nell Pounds Grand-Slam Homer to Defeat Oilers; George Payte Coming Back

up his "Gasser gloves" and retires from baseball ... in a pair of games where "each team had pitchers all over the place. Pitchers were playing everywhere but on the mound. Everybody wanted in the act, everybody got in - everywhere!" Pampa wins the opener scoring three times in the top of seventh inning for a 12-11 win ... Borger rebounds for a 14-8 victory in the nightcap.

October 5

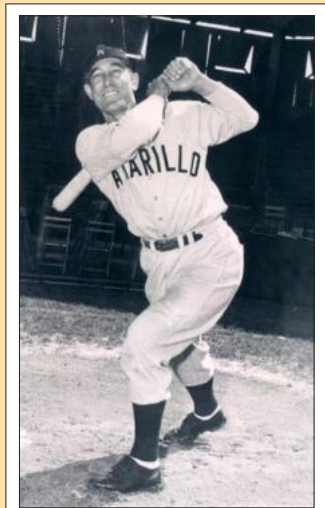
Officially released by the Gassers at the end of the season, the *Lubbock (Texas) Journal* reports that Nell will be a major league scout in 1950.

1950

Nell manages and plays for the Dumas Dusters semipro team.

May 22, 1986

Nell passes away in Hutchinson, Texas, at the age of 86.



### Bob Crues

In 1948, Amarillo's Bob Crues leads the Gold Sox to the WTNML pennant hitting .404 with 38 doubles, 69 home runs and 254 runs batted in - the all-time record for organized baseball. Crues will hit two more home runs in the playoffs giving the pitcher-turned-outfielder a total of 71 round-trippers.

September 5

On "Gordon Nell Night" and in between games of a season-ending Labor Day doubleheader with visiting Pampa, Nell hangs

June 17, 1951

## Nell's Record Book Available

One of the "musts" for West Texas-New Mexico League baseball fans is the league "Record Book" compiled and published by Gordon Nell, longtime favorite of the league's fandom. Nellie has put in long and tedious hours on the book, and the first printing and sale of the 120 page league history is taking place right now.

The book contains complete league batting, pitching and fielding records from 1937 through 1950. Nellie's plans call for the addition each year of the records of the season before, complete with photographs.

Nell received the complete cooperation of Milton Price, league president, and all of the records of the league in order to make the thorough history available to the fans. The book may be purchased at Oller Park.

It contains pictures of most of the record-breaking and record-setting figures of the league, team photos of the pennant winners, and various other personalities.