

Leon Brinkopf, "Unkind Fate to the Kiner Clone"

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*"The Cubs were trying to make an outfielder of me and I ran into a fence."
- Leon Brinkopf, June 2, 1954*

Sometimes the difference between greatness and obscurity can be measured not only in terms of inches, but in a moment of prevailing fortune - or the lack thereof.

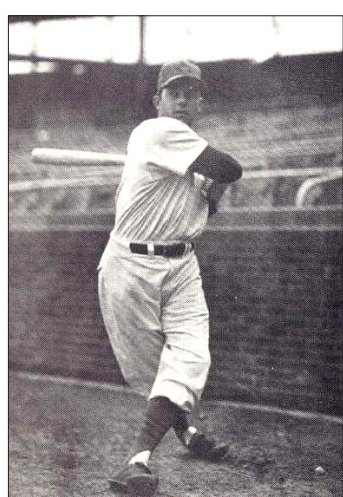
For Leon Brinkopf, the difference between a successful career in the major leagues, or early retirement at the age of 28, might be found in the outfield grass of Wrigley Field in Los Angeles and a shortstop who didn't hear you call him off. Or at an outfield wall at the Cubs' spring training facility in Mesa, Arizona.

Brinkopf is never certain where he sustains the back injury that diminishes his once-promising career. At first, he believes it resulted from a collision with teammate Gene Baker while going for a pop fly late in the 1952 season. Later, he places the blame on running into a unpadded outfield wall at the Cubs' spring training facility in Mesa during the team's pre-spring training session in 1953 where Manager Phil Cavaretta's attempted conversion of his young protege from third base to the outfield was in the first stages.

Signing Seraph



August 5, 1950 - Los Angeles Angel infielder Leon Brinkopf fast becoming favorite with youngsters at Wrigley Field, signs autographs for his youthful admirers before the game.



Leon Brinkopf
1952 Chicago Cubs



Ralph Kiner
1948 Pittsburgh Pirates

Either way, his ailment is eventually diagnosed as a ruptured intervertebral disc and two subsequent operations curtail what many believe was a promising major league career.

*"Brinkopf hits just like Ralph Kiner. Look at that bat held high. Look at the swing."
- Frank Baumholtz, March 12, 1952*

High praise indeed for a 22-year-old rookie, but two weeks later Brinkopf makes Baumholtz look like a genius when he and Pittsburgh's both homer in a spring training game.

If game stories are to be believed (and I have no reason to feel otherwise), Brinkopf's home runs weren't just lazy flyballs barely clearing outfield fences at stadiums throughout the Pacific Coast and Western leagues, they were hard-hit line drives or "prodigious" blasts of "magnificent" distance.

His talent is so obvious it is reported that in 1951 and 1952, at least three teams offer Chicago \$100,000 or more for his services. One of the suitors is Branch Rickey of the St. Louis Cardinals.

The second of three children born to Leon and Flora Brinkopf, Leon Clarence Brinkopf is born on October 20, 1926 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Leon Sr., is a truck driver for a local oil company and later owns a filling station in Cape Girardeau.

Leon Brinkopf [2 of 7]:

As a high school senior in 1944, Brinkopf is the starting shortstop for the Cape Girardeau American Junior Legion baseball team that wins the Missouri state championship. He also letters one year (1945) in basketball under Abe Stuber at Cape Girardeau State Teachers College, now Southeast Missouri State. The school doesn't have a baseball team and he "passes" on football.

Leon Brinkopf Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	W-L	Finish	Age	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	SLUG	OPS	AVG	
1944	Newark Moundsmen	Ohio State	D	71-58	+2 of 6	17	65	13	11	1	0	1	3	4	.231	.529	.169	
1945	US Military - Marines	Enlist March 3	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1946	US Military - Marines	Release August 11	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1947	Capahas Flour Company	-	SPro	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1948	Odessa Oilers	Longhorn	D	81-58	2 of 8	21	497	86	168	30	10	16	114	7	.535	.873	.338	
1949	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-AA			22	369	42	84	19	4	4	49	5	.333	.561	.228	
	Nashville Volunteers	Southern	AA	95-57	+1 of 8	22	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	.400	.600	.200	
	Des Moines Bruins	Western	A	70-70	4 of 6	22	364	42	83	18	4	4	49	5	.332	.560	.228	
1950	2 Teams	2 Leagues	AAA-A			23	594	87	178	28	5	20	122	6	.465	.765	.300	
	Des Moines Bruins	Western	A	84-70	3 of 8	23	283	60	95	17	2	16	82	4	.580	.915	.336	
	Los Angeles Angels	Pacific Coast	AAA	86-114	7 of 8	23	311	27	83	11	3	4	40	2	.360	.688	.267	
1951	Los Angeles Angels	Pacific Coast	AAA	86-81	3 of 8	24	530	91	148	25	8	25	93	5	.498	.879	.279	
1952	Chicago Cubs	NATIONAL	MLB	77-77	5 of 8	25	22	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	.182	.490	.182	
1952	Los Angeles Angels	Pacific Coast	Opn	87-93	6 of 8	25	450	66	107	17	2	27	67	4	.464	.815	.238	
1953	Injured - missed entire season																	
1954	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-Opn			27	262	29	69	18	1	8	5	0	.431	.694	.263	
	Los Angeles Angels	Pacific Coast	Opn	73-92	6 of 8	27	26	3	6	3	0	1	5	0	.462	.855	.231	
	Des Moines Bruins	Western	A	88-66	+2 of 8	27	236	26	63	15	1	7	34	0	.428	.695	.267	
1955	Shreveport Sports	Texas	AA	87-74	+3 of 8	28	171	21	38	6	0	5	29	1	.345	.667	.222	
Major League Totals		1 Season					22	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	.182	.490	.182	
Minor League Totals		9 Seasons					2938	435	803	144	30	106	482	32	.451	.724	.273	

*Denotes league leader; +Denotes league champion via post-season playoff

ML Debut: April 18, 1952, at Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois: pinch hits for starting pitcher Bob Rush in the bottom of the eighth inning and strikes out against Harry Breechen in a 5-4 win over the St. Louis Cardinals.

ML Finale: May 5, 1952, at Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois: starts at shortstop and bats eighth; goes 1-for-2 with a walk, against Jim Hearn (walk) and Monte Kennedy (1-for-2) in a 3-2 loss to the New York Giants.

Ned Garver



In 1944 Garver leads the Ohio State League in wins (21), strikeouts (221), shutouts (5) and ERA (1.21). In 14 major league seasons, he wins 129 games despite having never played with a first division team. In 1951, he becomes the second American League pitcher to win 20 games for a last place team when he is 20-12 for the St. Louis Browns.

In mid-August of 1944, a 17-year-old Brinkopf breaks into organized baseball with the Newark Moundsmen, a charter member of the Ohio State (D) League and in the St. Louis Browns organization. The sixth player to "cover" shortstop for the Moundsmen that season, he is inserted into the lineup when Les Barnes breaks an ankle. Brinkopf is one of four teenagers - Brinkopf, Owen Friend, Ned Garver, Hal Hudson - of the team that will eventually make it to the major leagues.

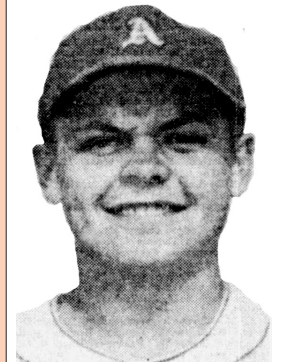
Brinkopf makes his pro debut on August 18 in a doubleheader against the last-place Marion Diggers. After going hitless in the first game Brinkopf hits his first career home run in the third inning of the second game off of 12-game winner Edward Bailey. In 21 games for the Moundsmen, he hits .168 with a home run and three RBIs.

The following spring, Brinkopf enlists in the Marines on March 3, 1945, at the age of 18. After serving a little more than 16 months, he is discharged on August 11, 1946. The following summer, Brinkopf begins the long road back to the diamond by joining Capahas, a highly-regarded semipro team in Cape Girardeau for college players and other players in their mid-30s. The team was founded by the CA-PA-HA Flour Company in 1894.

Unsigned after last playing organized ball in 1944, Carlton Nebel, a catcher for the Austin Pioneers of the Big State (B) League and a cousin of Brinkopf, talks the Pioneers into giving the Marine veteran a tryout. The Pioneers sign him, but

before he even steps onto a field he is optioned to Odessa of the Longhorn (B) League. Installed as the starter at third base, the now mature 21-year-old earns league All-Star honors in 1948 after hitting .338 with 30 doubles, 10 triples, 16 home runs and a career-best 114 RBIs.

Carlton Nebel



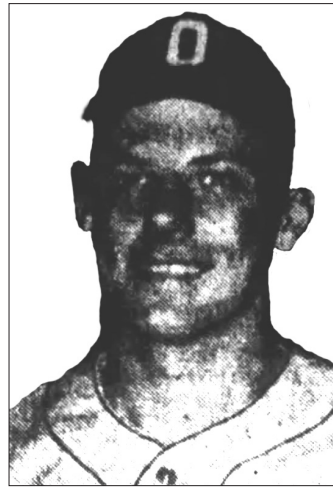
A teammate of Brinkopf's on Cape Girardeau's 1942 American Legion team, Nebel makes his pro debut as a 19-year-old catcher with the Austin Pioneers in 1947. The World War II Army veteran will play six seasons of minor league baseball finishing with nine home runs and a .265 batting average. Nebel later becomes a successful high school coach.

Leon Brinkopf [3 of 7]:

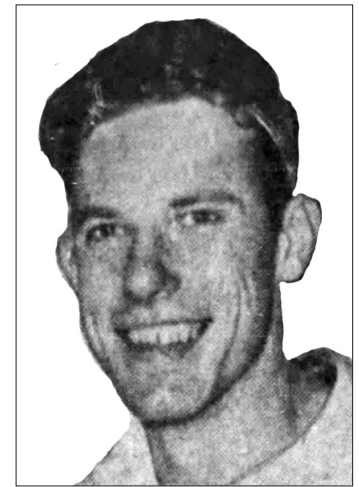
After the season ends, Brinkopf is drafted by the Texas League's Dallas Rebels, who then trade him to the Nashville Volunteers of the tough Southern (AA) Association where he become property of the Chicago Cubs.

Moved to second base in the pre-season in 1949 by Nashville Manager Rollie Hemsley, Brinkopf makes the Volunteers' opening day roster, but after collecting only one single in five pinch-hit appearances, he is demoted to Des Moines of the Western (A) League.

With the Bruins, Brinkopf hits a meager .228 with 18 doubles and four home runs. He is often kidded by his Des Moines' teammates as "the strong man," because he was holding up the rest of the league with his low batting average, which he blames on a pinched nerve in his shoulder.



Leon Brinkopf
1948 Odessa Oilers



Leon Brinkopf
1949 Des Moines Bruins

Gene Baker



Playing with the Kansas City Monarchs, Baker becomes the first black player signed by the Chicago Cubs. Following an all-star season in the PCL, he and Ernie Banks break the color barrier for the Cubs in 1953. He finishes his career with a .265 lifetime average and was a National League all-star in 1955. On September 21, 1963, Baker becomes the first African-American to "manage" a big league team when he takes over the Pittsburgh Pirates against the Los Angeles Dodgers after Danny Murtaugh and coach Frank Ocek are ejected from the game in the eighth inning.

Bill Serena slated for third

Brinkopf begins 1950 back in Des Moines, and it is in that Iowa city and under the tutelage of new manager Charlie Root, that he finds his Ralph Kiner-like swing and extra base power that makes him so attractive to baseball general managers. On July 1, he is leading the Western League in hitting (.336), home runs (16) and RBIs (82) when he and shortstop Gene Baker are promoted up to Los Angeles of the Pacific Coast (AAA) League. With the Angels, he is able to hold his own, hitting a respectable .267 in 88 games with four home runs and 40 RBIs.

Brinkopf plays the entire 1951 season with Los Angeles, hitting .279 with 25 doubles, 25 home runs and 93 RBIs. At the end of the season he is second to Seattle's Jim Rivera in the league's Most Valuable Player voting. In addition, Los Angeles area sportswriters vote Brinkopf as the Angels' most valuable player. With success comes recognition and several unnamed teams offer the Cubs up to \$100,000 for his services.

Cubs Send Brinkopf To Los Angeles

CHICAGO—AP—The Chicago Cubs optioned Leon Brinkopf to their Los Angeles Pacific Coast farm club.

Brinkopf, 25, came to the Cubs this Spring from the Angels where he played third base and was named his club's most valuable player in 1951 after slugging 25 homers driving in 93 runs and hitting .279.

he responds by hitting 27 home runs with 67 RBIs. Over the last six weeks of the season he hits at a .360 clip.

Coming off a solid 1952 season with Los Angeles where he was voted the outstanding third base man in PCL, and following a standout campaign in winter ball for San Juan in Puerto Rico, things are looking up for Brinkopf in late January of 1953 when he signs his Cubs' contract for the upcoming season. With Ransom (Randy) Jackson and base duties, Chicago manager Phil Cavaretta

The following spring he makes the move up the major leagues with the Chicago Cubs. On the team's 1952 opening day roster, he makes his major league debut on April 18 as a pinch hitter in a 5-4 win over the St. Louis Cardinals. On May 11, six days after playing in last major league game, and with only four singles in 22 at bats (.182), Brinkopf is optioned back to Los Angeles. Angel manager Stan Hack moves him back to his natural position of third base and,



May 3, 1952 - Wrigley Field, Chicago - The Chicago Tribune photo headline read, "CUBS ERR IN JUDGEMENT." Brinkopf is show here attempting to score from second base on a single to rightfield by Bob Ramazotti. Unfortunately for Brinkopf, in rightfield for the Brooklyn Dodgers that afternoon is Carl Furillo, nicknamed "The Reading Rifle," for his strong throwing arm which accounted for 151 career assists. Blocking the plate is Hall of Famer Roy Campanella.

Leon Brinkopf [4 of 7]:

envvisions the 26-year-old Missourian competing with another ex-service man Preston Ward, and newcomer Paul Schranka for playing time in a crowded outfield picture.

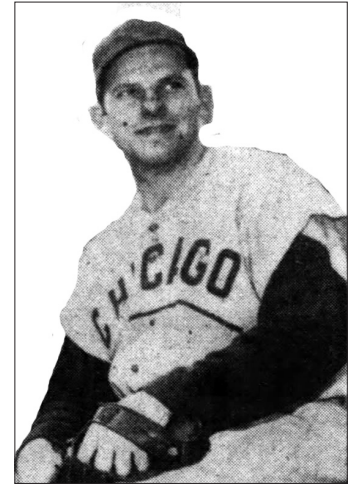
On March 6, it's first reported that Brinkopf is playing with a torn tendon in his back which is reflected in early spring training results when he has only three hits in 21 at bats. Finally, on April 25, after three weeks of observation, Brinkopf is placed on the voluntary retired list which will keep him away from the diamond for at least 60 days. The injury is later diagnosed as a ruptured disc and he is operated on June 30.

Hope springs anew in 1954. Despite the severity of the injury and subsequent operation, Brinkopf, along several other players including a rookie infielder named Ernie Banks, is invited to the Cubs' pre-spring training camp in Mesa, Arizona, starting February 22, nine days before everyone reports on March 1.

The infielder-turned-outfielder, is among five players - Brinkopf, Frank Baumholtz, Hal Jeffcoat, Bobby Talbot, Luis Marquez - vying for center field spot between the Cubs' decidedly slow outfield combo of 37-year-old Hank Sauer in leftfield and 31-year-old Ralph Kiner in right.



Leon Brinkopf
1949 Nashville Volunteers



Leon Brinkopf
1952 Chicago Cubs

CUBS PRESCRIBE TEXAS HEAT FOR LEON BRINKOPF

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Mesa, Ariz., March 24—Leon Brinkopf, for whom the Cubs rejected two \$100,000 offers in 1952, today was sent into the second phase of his attempted comeback.

The 27 year old Missourian, who suffered a ruptured disk in his back in '52, left by plane for Beaumont, where he will work out with that city's club in the Texas league. Brinkopf, originally a third baseman, has been working out in the outfield, but prefers the infield spot.

The shift was made to enable Brinkopf to continue playing in a warm climate while the Cubs are braving rough weather on the trip homeward which starts Saturday in Albuquerque against the Baltimore Orioles.

However, the injury proves too serious to be overcome at the major league level and on March 24, the Cubs decide that "Texas heat" is just the prescription for Brinkopf and he is sent to the Texas League's Beaumont Exporters where he is to begin the "second phase" of his attempted comeback playing in warmer weather while the parent club moves eastward and a colder climate.

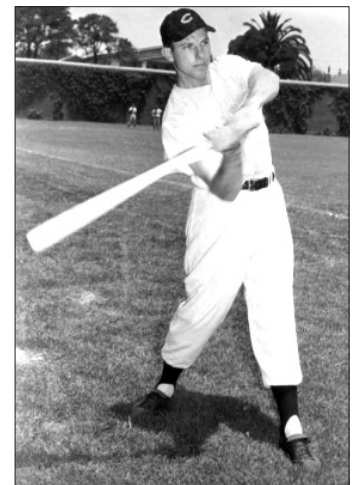
Following a dismal last-place finish in 1953, Beaumont rookie manager Les Fleming is overjoyed at having Brinkopf join the team and plans on returning him back to his natural position of third base. But Fleming's hopes are dashed on the last day of April when the Cubs sell Brinkopf outright to the Los Angeles Angels for an undisclosed amount.

On May 5, 1954, the always-popular Brinkopf receives a rousing reception by Los Angeles fans when he makes his first appearance in an Angel uniform since 1952, pinch-hitting in the eighth inning of a 9-2 loss to the Portland Beavers.

But baseball is a business and on May 24 with Los Angeles mired in seventh-place, the Cubs send the struggling Angels pitcher Bubba Church, third baseman Bruce Edwards and outfielder Don Robertson. To make room for the trio, Brinkopf and pitcher Hy Cohen are demoted to Des Moines, who in

turn send pitcher Jim Brosnan to the Cubs. Edwards will also makes his way to Des Moines, where he hits .353 in 18 games.

At the end of the season, Brinkopf returns home to Cape Girardeau and is expected to have another major operation on his back. Despite that sobering information the Angels restore him to their roster in November for the upcoming 1955 season. But on February 4, he is sold to the



Leon Brinkopf
1952 Chicago Cubs



May 18, 1952 - Wrigley Field, Los Angeles - Two days after being demoted from the Cubs, and playing third base for the hometown Angels, Brinkopf tags out San Diego's Murray Franklin at third base in the fourth inning of 6-0 Los Angeles win. Brinkopf collects two hits in four at bats.

Leon Brinkopf [5 of 7]:

Texas League's Shreveport Sports for an undisclosed amount. On July 2, 1955, Brinkopf pinch hits a two-run home run in

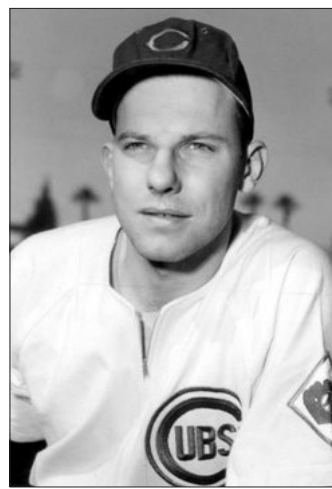
Brinkopf Acquired By Sports

The Shreveport Sports Saturday announced the acquisition of infielder Leon Brinkopf a former Chicago Cub shortstop from the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League. Business Manager Walter K. Magarity of the Sports revealed the transaction, terming it the "final payment on pitcher Billy Muffett" purchased by Los Angeles last summer.

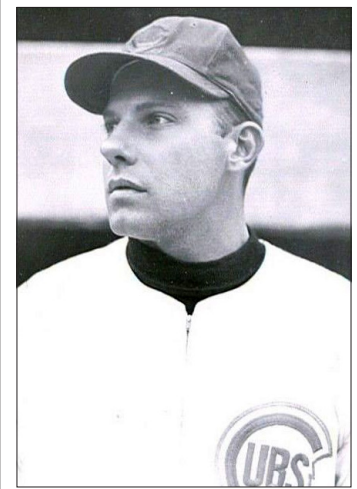
the Sports' 9-4 loss to San Antonio. Following the game, his professional career comes to an end when he and pitcher Wayne McLeland are given their outright releases.

One month later, Brinkopf is named the head baseball coach at Thebes High School in Cape Girardeau.

Brinkopf passes away on July 2, 1998, in Cape Girardeau, at the age of 72.



Leon Brinkopf
1952 Chicago Cubs



Leon Brinkopf
1952 Chicago Cubs

BRINKOPF CHRONOLOGY

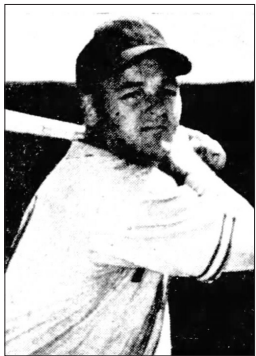
February 17, 1945

After being elbowed in the mouth by 6-foot-7 Murray State center Bob Harris, Brinkopf floors the future All-American with a blow to the face ... Brinkopf, who has nine points, and Harris with seven, are both thrown out of the game which S.E. Missouri eventually wins 38-34 ... Harris was named as a second-team All-American later in his career at Oklahoma State by the Associated Press.

June 18, 1948

Brinkopf has a grand slam, a triple and a single in five trips to the plate against San Angelo.

Roy Easterwood



Beginning in 1935, catcher Roy Easterwood will play 15 seasons of professional baseball, including 17 games with the Chicago Cubs in 1944. Classified 4-F, Easterwood is able to play through the war years. Traded straight-up for Brinkopf on December 23, 1948, the 34-year-old Texan hits .271 in 1949 for Dallas in his final pro season.

December 23, 1948

Dallas trades Brinkopf to the Nashville Volunteers for 34-year-old catcher Roy Easterwood.

Vols Option Brinkopf

NASHVILLE, Tenn., May 9— (AP)—Leon Brinkopf Monday was optioned to Des Moines in the Western League by the Nashville Vols.

May 9, 1949

Nashville general manager Larry Gilbert options Brinkopf to Des Moines of the Western League.

May 18, 1949

Brinkopf has acquired a throwing problem and has been told to "throw the ball right at the first baseman's nose."

June 30, 1950

Jack Sheehan, director of the Chicago Cubs farm system, directs Brinkopf and Gene Baker to be sent to Los Angeles of the Pacific Coast League.

October 12, 1950

In attempt to save their prized farm system players from next month's draft, the Chicago Cubs promote Brinkopf, outfielder Frankie Baumholtz and pitchers Cal McLish and Stubby Stablefield from their Los Angeles farm club to the major league roster ... the promotion of Brinkopf and Baker sets off a firestorm in Des Moines.

March 13, 1951

Los Angeles options Brinkopf back to Los Angeles.

December 17, 1951

The Boston Braves decline the Cubs' trade offer of Brinkopf straight-up for pitcher Vern Bickford ... Cubs' General Manager Wid Matthews also offers starting pitcher Bob Rush to Brooklyn for Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Bobby Morgan or Carl Erskine.



Leon Brinkopf
1953 Chicago Cubs Spring Training

Leon Brinkopf [6 of 7]:

December 18, 1951

St. Louis Cardinals' General Manager Branch Rickey offers the Cubs \$100,000 for either Brinkopf, Randy Jackson or Roy Smalley ... Chicago responds by putting up a "Not for Sale" sign on all three players ... Smalley is coming off a season cut short with a broken ankle.

Leon Brinkopf - Major League Debut

St. Louis Cardinals at Chicago Cubs
Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois
April 18, 1952

ST. LOUIS			CHICAGO		
	AB	R H		AB	R H
Hemus.ss	3	0 0	R'zotti,2b	4	1 2
Sc'dienst,2b	4	0 3	Jeffcoat,cf	4	0 0
Stanky,2b	1	1 0	B'mholtz,rf	4	0 1
Musial,lf	4	0 1	Sauer,lf	4	1 3
Slaughter,rf	5	1 3	Jackson,3b	4	1 1
Westlake,cf	5	0 1	Smalley,ss	3	1 0
Bilko,1b	4	0 1	Fondy,1b	3	0 1
Johnson,3b	2	1 0	*-Edwards	0	0 0
D. Rice,c	4	1 2	+Hatten	0	1 0
Brecheen,p	3	0 0	Chiti,c	4	0 0
Bok'lm'n,p	0	0 0	Rush,p	2	0 0
Brazle,p	0	0 0	*-Brinkopf	1	0 0
			‡-Serena	1	0 1
Totals	35	4 11	Totals	34	5 9

*-Struck out for Rush in 8th.
**-Walked for Fondy in 9th.
+-Ran for Edwards in 9th.
‡-Doubled for Schultz in 9th.
Score by Innings
St. Louis 000 102 100—4
Chicago 000 100 004—5
E—Johnson. RBI—Westlake, Sauer. D.
Rice 2. Slaughter, Edwards, Chiti, Serena 2. 2B—Ramazotti, Serena. 3B—Slaughter, Sauer, Schoendienst. HR—D. Rice. SB—Slaughter. DP—Jackson-Chiti, Jackson-Ramazotti-Fondy. Left—St. Louis 10. Chicago 7. BB—Rush 5, Schultz 1, Bokelmann 2. SO—Rush 6, Schultz 1, Brecheen 5. HO—Rush 10 in 8 innings, Schultz 1 in 1, Brecheen 8 in 8, Bokelmann 0 in 0 (pitched to two batters in ninth). Brazle 1 in 0 (pitched to two batters in ninth). Winner—Schultz (1-0). Loser—Bokelmann (0-1). U—Donatelli, Ballanfant, Barlick and Gorman. T—2:35. A—20,396.

December 22, 1951

Chicago Manager Phil Cavaretta says that he plan to try Brinkopf at second base in spring training.

**Brinkopf May
Go to First**

**Brinkopf Moves
To Third Base**

**Cavarretta Can't Find
Spot for Brinkopf**

March 31, 1952

Despite a .350 batting average with two home runs and six RBIs in 20 spring training at bats, Cub Manager Phil Cavaretta seems to be having a difficult time finding a place to play him.

**Brinkopf Poses
\$100,000 Query**

April 8, 1952 ▶▶

In a spring training game Brinkopf strikes out in his only at bat against Leroy "Satchel" Paige in Chicago's 5-4 win over the St. Louis Browns.

May 11, 1952

Brinkopf has four hits in 21 at bats when the Cubs option him to the Los Angeles Angels of the PCL.

June 11, 1952

With 12 home run in his first 30 days, the *Los Angeles Times* says that Brinkopf has become the "take charge" guy of the Angels' offense.

Brinkopf Placed On Retired List By Chicago Cubs

CHICAGO (UP) — The Chicago Cubs Friday place Leon Brinkopf on the voluntary retired list to reduce their roster to 31, four over the limit for the season.

Brinkopf, a third baseman whom Manager Phil Cavaretta tested as an outfielder this year, has been hospitalized for two weeks with a bad back.

April 24, 1953

Plagued by a bad back, which later is diagnosed as a ruptured disc, Brinkopf is placed on the retired list by the Cubs.

March 24, 1954

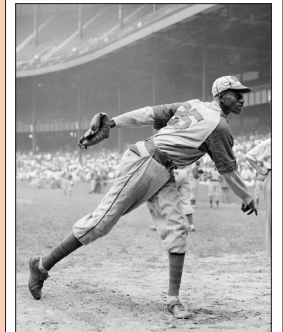
Texas heat is deemed the prescription as the Cubs send Brinkopf to the Beaumont Exporters of the Texas League where he will begin the "second phase" of his attempted comeback playing in warmer weather while the Cubs start moving homeward and a colder climate.

A Trade Best Left Unmade

On March 31, 1952, two weeks before the Cubs' season opener, S.D. Rockwell, a correspondent for the Central Press, is of the opinion that an eight-player trade made back in 1951 that sent popular Andy Pafko to Brooklyn for Eddie Miksis "now appears to have been all in Chicago's favor," and that Miksis may make Cubs fans forget about Pafko. In the eight remaining years of his career, Pafko (right) will hit .277 with 69 home runs and 334 RBIs, while Miksis hits .235 with 31 home runs and 135 RBIs.



Satchel Paige



Hall of Fame pitcher Leroy "Satchel" Paige makes his big league debut with the Cleveland Indians on July 9, 1948, two days after his 42nd birthday. Paige will finish 6-1 with three complete games, two shut-outs, a save and a 2.47 ERA as the Indians win the American League pennant in one-game playoff with Boston. The Mobile, Alabama, right-hander becomes the first African-American to pitch in the World Series when he worked two-thirds of an inning against the Boston Braves in Game 5. In six major league seasons with the Indians (1948-1949), St. Louis Browns (1951-1953) and the Kansas City Athletics (1965), Paige is 28-31 with 33 saves and a 3.29 ERA.

Leon Brinkopf [7 of 7]:

Cubs Fielder Is Purchased By LA

LOS ANGELES —UP— The Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League today purchased Leon Brinkopf from the Chicago Cubs in an outright sale.

The Angels did not disclose how much they paid for Brinkopf but said he will report to the club at once.

Brinkopf, both an infielder and outfielder, played with the Angels in 1951 and 1952. He was out of baseball last season with an injury to his back.

April 31, 1954

Following a dismal last-place finish in 1953, Beaumont rookie manager Leslie Harvey Fleming is overjoyed at having Brinkopf join the team and plans on returning him back to his natural position of third base ... Fleming's hopes are dashed when on the last day of April, the Cubs sell Brinkopf back to the Los Angeles Angels for an undisclosed amount.

May 5, 1954

Brinkopf receives a rousing reception by Los Angeles fans when he makes his first appearance in an Angel uniform since 1952, grounding out as a pinch-hitter in the eighth inning of a 9-2 loss to the Portland Beavers.

May 24, 1954

Los Angeles is in seventh-place in the PCL when the Cubs send the struggling Angels pitcher Bubba Church, third baseman Bruce

Edwards and outfielder Don Robertson. To help make room for the trio, Brinkopf and pitcher **Hy Cohen** are optioned to Des Moines, who in turn send 24-year-old pitcher Jim Brosnan to the Cubs. Edwards also makes his way to Des Moines, where he hits .353 in 18 games.

On February 4, 1955

Brinkopf is sold to the Shreveport Sports for an undisclosed amount and is a player in return for the team's sale of pitcher Billy Muffett.

Sports Release Two Players

The Shreveport Sports announced the outright release last night of utility man Leon Brinkopf and pitcher Wayne McLeland.

Brinkopf is currently hitting .220 for the locals while McLeland has won one game and lost three since being bought from Oklahoma City earlier. His total Texas League record this year stands at 2-10.

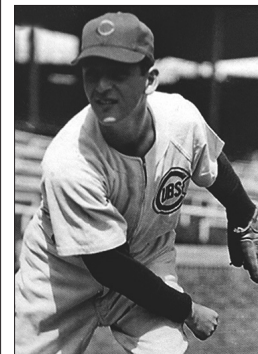
July 2, 1955

Brinkopf pinch hits a two-run home run in Shreveport's 9-4 loss to San Antonio. Following the game, his professional career comes to an end when he and pitcher Wayne McLeland are given their outright releases.

July 2, 1998

Brinkopf passes away in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, at the age of 72.

Hy Cohen



Originally signed in 1947 by the New York Yankees, Hy Cohen wins an even 100 games in nine minor league seasons (1948-1951, 1954-1958). Drafted by the Chicago Cubs in 1950, Cohen finally makes it to the major leagues in 1955, appearing in seven games with the Cubs. His major league debut on April 17 against the Cardinals is nothing to write home about. Replacing starter Hank Perkowski who allowed six runs without recording an out, Cohen would yield seven more runs on 13 hits and three walks in seven innings. He would spend time with Pittsburgh and Cincinnati farm systems until 1958, when he calls it quits one year after going 15-7 with Memphis and leading the Southern Association with 2.72 ERA.