

They Played the Game

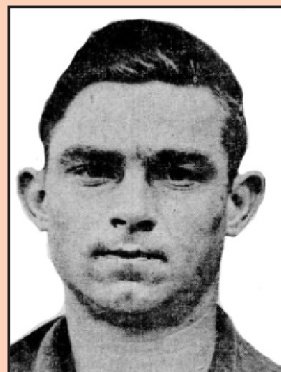
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Frank Biscan



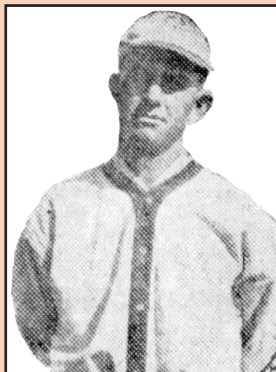
Frank "Porky" Biscan might have been a little bit of prima donna. Once, irked because he was assigned an upper berth instead of a lower, Biscan, pitching for the St. Louis Browns in 1946, stalks off the train and remains behind in St. Louis when the team leaves for Cleveland. St. Louis' Charlie Dewitt says, "He's paid to play baseball. He wasn't here for the game yesterday and so as far as I'm concerned he's off the payroll." Five years later, following a solid year with the Memphis Chickasaws, Biscan is selected by the San Francisco Seals in the 1951 minor league draft. He begins his short stay with the Seals by reporting late to the team because of a supposed outbreak small pox in his family. Ineffective in three spring training outings and one regular season game, the portly southerner complains of a sore arm and tells the media that he doesn't think much of San Francisco weather and he years for chicken fried southern style. "I just can't pitch in cold weather," Biscan says prior to being returned to Memphis for the \$6,500 purchase fee. A product of the St. Louis Browns farm system, Biscan starts his professional career in 1938 and rises rapidly, including a 26-4 mark with the Lima Pandas in 1940. He makes the Browns roster in 1942 before being called into military service. Serving in the Navy, he is named to the Guadalcanal Hall of Fame for a record number of no-hit games while stationed on the island. After three years in the Navy, Biscan is discharged in December 1945.

Jack Kibble



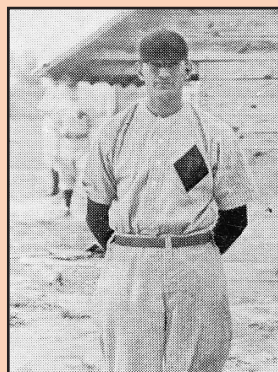
"Happy" Jack Kibble hits a solid .253 with 18 doubles and 10 triples in his first professional season in 1911 as a 19-year-old third baseman with the Helena Senators of the Union (D) Association. The following spring, Kibble fails to make the Portland Beavers' 1912 opening day roster and is sent to the Portland Colts of the Northwestern League. The Seatonville, Illinois, native gets off to a fast start for the Colts, hitting two home runs in the first eight days of the season and is hitting .274 with 12 doubles and six home runs in late July when several major league teams begin to inquire as to his availability, but are turned off by the Colts' \$3,000 asking price. Promoted back to the Beavers in early August, Kibble is eventually sold to the Cleveland Naps on August 22 for \$2,000 and "delivered" to the major league club the following spring. However, Cleveland asks Portland for Kibble to report immediately. The Naps express a desire to look Kibble over at third base for the remainder of the 1912 season. Cleveland had first tried Terry Turner at third. Turner hits well (.308) but is susceptible to injury. Turner is followed by Herman Bronkie, Ivy Olsen, and finally a rookie named Howard Baker. The switch-hitting Kibble is hitless in eight at bats for the Naps in his only major league experience. Returning to the minors for another six seasons, Kibble, one of 18 Montanans to play major league baseball, dies on September 13, 1969, at the age of 77.

Ralph McLaurin



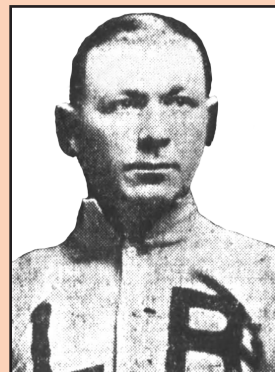
Ralph McLaurin is the first player born in Florida to break into the major leagues (by some eight years) when he takes part in eight games at the end of the 1908 season with the St. Louis Cardinals. In 1905 and 1906, he plays for a "fast" semipro team in Cheraw, South Carolina. A year later, in his first full pro season, he finishes third among South Carolina State League hitting leaders with a solid .303 batting average and 16 stolen bases. Sold to the Augusta Tourists on February 15, 1908, for \$250, and turning down a "flattering" offer from a Western League right before the start of the season, he responds by finishing third in the South Atlantic League in hitting with a .271 average. Augusta buys McLaurin back from the Cardinals on March 20, 1909, the fleet-footed Floridian has career-highs in steals (33) and hitting (.317), but his season is not without controversy. On August 16 he leaves the Tourists. Upset with manager Lou Castro because he is not sold to the Atlanta Crackers where he could draw a better salary. The outfielder is also "very much incensed" because of the criticism directed at him from the bleachers. In the 1910 off-season, McLaurin is sold to the Topeka Jayhawks, but refuses to report saying his farm in North Carolina needs his attention. He eventually sold to Waco, where he plays. After hitting .274 for Fort Worth in 1917, he is traded to Shreveport, where once again, he refuses to report and retires again, this time for good.

Frank Dobson



A native of Philadelphia, a four-sport star and a 1905 graduate of Princeton University and former assistant baseball and football coach at Georgia Tech, Frank Dobson announces his retirement from the game on March 21, 1909, to concentrate on coaching Atlanta's Peacock School's baseball team. Less than two months later, the popular Dobson changes his mind and returns to the diamond with the Anderson Electricians, who sell him to the Fayetteville Highlanders, where he hits .221 in 83 games. In November, he begins an extensive college coaching career, assisting James Coulter as a co-head football coach at the University of Georgia. The following March, Dobson is named the head football, basketball and baseball coach at Clemson College. That summer, he hits .252 splitting time between Fayetteville and the Richmond Colts of the Virginia League. In his gridiron coaching career, Dobson compiles a 137-142-24 record as the head mentor at Clemson (1910-1912), Richmond (1913-1917, 1921-1933), South Carolina (1918) and the Apprentice School in Newport News (1940-1948). As the head basketball coach at Clemson and Richmond, he is 166-113. On the diamond with the same two schools, he is 197-124-2. His Clemson basketball team opened the 1912 season 5-0, a feat not matched by a Tiger hoop team until 1994. Dobson passes away on December 1, 1956, at the age of 71.

Whitey Guese

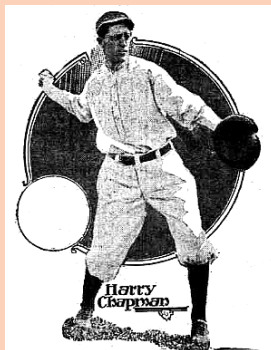


A physically large pitcher noted for a sharp curveball, the "Wapak Big Boy" begins his pro career in 1898 as a 26-year-old with the New Castle Quakers, where the right-hander wins 18 of his last 24 decisions and finishes second among Interstate League win leaders with 24. Drafted from New Castle by the Pittsburgh Pirates, he is released twice, first by the Pirates to the Detroit Tigers of the Western (A) League and then by the Tigers to the Fort Wayne Indians where he is 25-10 with 116 strikeouts. Drafted by Indianapolis in the off-season, he is 2-3 in eight starts for the Hoosiers, including a June 25 game where he walks 11 batters in an 8-7 loss to Detroit. He makes his major league debut with the Cincinnati Reds in 1901, finishing 1-4 with four complete games and a 6.09 ERA. In his final major league appearance on August 9, and his second against the St. Louis Cardinals who had "thumped" him in their first meeting, the Cardinal players cheer him when he takes his position on the rubber, before he had even pitched a ball. He will play the next four seasons with Little Rock where he wins 64 games, including 19 games twice. In 12 minor league seasons, Guese is 146-103, including 120 wins in nine seasons in the Southern Association. Guese's father Frederick served with the 19th Ohio Volunteers in the Union Army during the Civil War and fought in the battle of Shiloh among others.

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Harry Chapman



Harry Chapman was a catcher of five big league seasons. The overwhelming majority of his action came with the renegade Federal League, catching 126 games with the St. Louis Terriers but hitting just .204 (with his lone career home run) in the circuit's existence. He died in Nevada, MO, two years after his final big league appearance with the St. Louis Browns, from injuries suffered during his service with the military in World War I. Chapman's pro career ended after the 1917 season as he entered military service later that year. Five days short of his 33rd birthday, Harry Chapman died from influenza induced pneumonia at State Hospital No. 3 in Nevada, Missouri on October 21, 1918. He is buried at McPherson Cemetery in McPherson, Kansas.

December 14, 1912 - Traded by the Chicago Cubs with Joe Tinker and Grover Lowdermilk to the Cincinnati Reds for Red Corriden, Bert Humphries, Pete Knisely, Mike Mitchell and Art Phelan.

. None of the recruits in the Cub camp has a better chance to earn "a permanent job for himself than has Harry Edward Chapman. He is a catcher and there are only four of them trying for three positions this year. Archer, the premier, and Needham, the wise, are pretty sure of two of the three places and Chapman has the inside track on Cotter, because he reported in time to get the jump on the young collegian. Moreover Cotter will have to be an unusually promising youngster to beat out Chapman, not counting the starting handicap. The latter handles himself like an experienced backstop and has 'proved himself a horse for work already. Chapman has been a catcher all his life, that is, since he was big enough to stop a ball with 'a mitt.' Unlike so many backstops who have started in other positions and have been forced behind the bat by circumstances over which they had no control. Chapman started catching 'because he liked it. Although this will be only his third year as a real professional, he has had seven years of seasoning as a catcher and he is 25 years old. Born in the little town of Severance, Kan., in October, 1886, Chapman aspired to be a catcher even when a kid. and one of the most highly prized toys of his boyhood was a mitt big enough to stop the kid curves of his neighborhood pals. There were first and second town teams and at the outset Chapman was compelled by his age to play on the second team. Sometimes for lack of material he was reduced to the ignominy of playing short, but he had the mitt on whenever possible. One day when the first team was going to a neighboring town for a game the regular catcher looked too long upon the stuff that passes for liquor in Kansas' and incapacitated himself. Chapman was taken along, and from that time he was a member of the first town team. That was over seven years ago. In 1907 Chapman became backstop for a professional outfit representing Trenton, Mo., as an independent team and he caught all but ten of the ninety-six games the Trenton team played in that season. In one stretch Chapman caught eighty-six games in eighty-four days and his team finished the season with ninety-one victories and five defeats, its games being chiefly with independent teams in Missouri and adjoining states. For his efforts that year Chapman received the munificent salary of \$60 a month. He remained with the Trenton team in 1908 and in 1909 caught for another independent professional team in Plainfield, Neb. His debut into organized baseball did not occur until 1910, when he was with the Concordia team of the Central Kansas league. Chapman started the season of 1911 with Concordia, but in July the Central Kansas league split its season into halves. Concordia having won the championship in the first half disposed of Chapman to the Topeka club of the Western league. Before the year ended the catcher, only just out of the tall grass, comparatively speaking, had caught the attention of the scouts and the luck of the dragnet gave him to the Cubs. While with Concordia last year Chapman batted .335 in forty-eight games. He did not find the picking so easy in the Western league for with Topeka his batting average for the last half of the season was .240, but he was used in sixty-eight games behind the bat, which made him the regular backstop of the Topekans and his backstopping average was .974. Chapman is of good build for a catcher. He is 5 feet 11 inches in height and weighs 155 pounds in playing season. That