

# 10 Things to Know about Herky Jerky Horton

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

## #1 Personal

Born Elmer Edward Horton on September 4, 1869, in Hamilton, Ohio, to William and Mary (Yeager) Horton ... following his playing days, Horton owns a hotel in North Bay, New York, and it was on a lawn adjacent to the hotel that he is found dead of an apparent heart attack on Thursday, August 12, 1920 at the age of 50.

## #3 Herky Jerky - 1896

The Des Moines Leader in speaking of Herky Jerky Horton's delivery says: "He has the most remarkable system of gymnastic preliminaries ever shown before the Des Moines public. For example, he will take the ball in one hand, balance himself on the tip toe of his left foot, raise the ball in his right hand straight above his head, then jerk it down with his two hands as if it was trying to get away from him, pull it down over his right shoulder to the small of his back, and hold it there an instant; then he will let go of it with his left hand. The left arm will describe a double circle in one direction like a wind mill; the right arm simultaneously describes a circle in the other direction. By this time the batter is half scared to death; he is afraid the legs and arms of the pitcher will begin to fly off at any moment. Then Mr. Horton stops instantly, untangles himself, smiles over his shoulder at first base, and starts again. This time he places his left foot against the small of his back and slides it up to his shoulders; at the same instant he whirls around twice on the tip of his right foot, and produces the reversing fanning mill effect with his two arms, as before; finally he stands on his head for an instant. After this he uncouples and delivers the ball. It looks as if he was throwing with his left leg, but a kinoscope man who has experimented on him says this does not seem to be correct. This is one of the simpler ceremonies attending Mr. Horton's delivery of a ball. The more complex would be beyond all attempt to describe. But it was of no avail. The Des Moines men were full of base hits and vigor, and they refused to scare. They just lit on the ball when it uncurred itself from the seething mass of legs and arms at the center of the diamond, and pounded it wherever they wanted to."

## #2 Carnegie Phenom - July 18, 1896

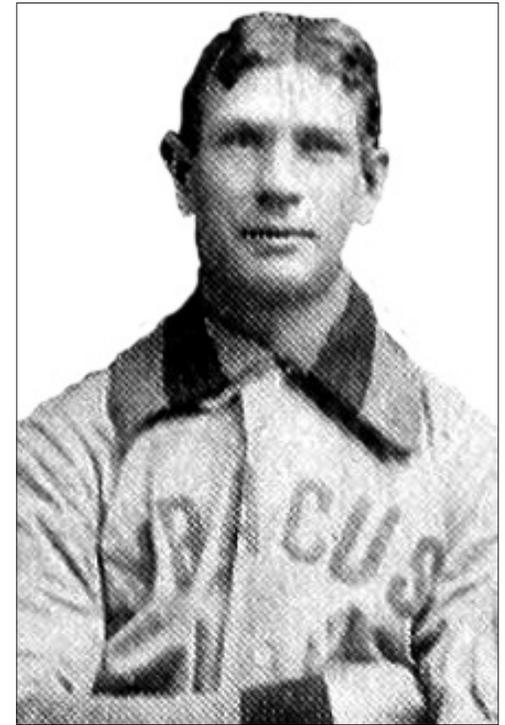
Horton begins the 1896 season with Rockford of the Western Association before being sold to the Pittsburgh Pirates in early July ... on July 18, pitching for the Carnegie Athletic Club and under contract with Pittsburgh's Connie Mack, Horton strikes out 15 in an 11-inning 7-6 win over the Greensburg Athletic Association ... twice with the bases loaded and no outs, he strikes out the side ... it's estimated that fully \$1,500 was bet by Greensburg "sports" and remains in Braddock.

## #4 Let's Play Three - August 7, 1896

Horton is the starting pitcher for the Toronto Canadians in the middle game of a tripleheader against the homestanding Syracuse Stars ... he strikes out one, walks two and allows one earned run on seven hits in a 3-2 loss ... recently-acquired Ernie Mason pitches back-to-back complete game wins for the Stars in the afternoon games ... between 1894 and 1896, Eastern League teams play at least three triple-headers ... the National League prohibits triple bills in 1896 and the Eastern Leagues follows suit four years later.

## #5 Major League Debut - September 24, 1896

You know that your major league debut probably didn't go well when the headlines in the *Pittsburgh Press* scream "Was A Farce." ... Horton allows five runs in the first inning in an 11-5 loss to the homestanding St. Louis Browns.



Herky Jerky Horton  
1897 Syracuse Stars

WAS A FARCE,  
—  
Browns and Pirates Play Like a Lot  
of Hoobies.

## #6 Major League Career

Horton makes three starts in the major leagues - two with the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1896, and one with the Brooklyn Bridegrooms two years later ... he loses all three starts, allowing 31 runs (26 earned) on 38 hits and 15 walks in 24 innings for a 9.75 ERA ... he also hits one batter and uncorks a wild pitch ... he strikes out three and is 1-for-11 at the plate, with his lone single coming against Philadelphia's George Wheeler in his final MLB appearance. a 13-3 loss on April 18, 1898.

## #7 French Ball Disaster - June 1898

Brooklyn manager Billy Barnie sends Horton and Ralph Miller back to Brooklyn from the team's road trip in Baltimore ... the two pitchers attended a "French Ball" the night before with Oriole second baseman Gene DeMontreville and return to the team hotel "in anything but proper condition." ... French Ball is a phrase used for public drunkenness and debauchery ... Barnie fines the pair \$25 and sends them home in disgrace, if not a little hung over ... DeMontreville will fashion a career batting average of .303 over 11 seasons (1894-1904) in the majors.



Ralph Miller  
1898 Brooklyn Bridegrooms



Gene DeMontreville  
1903 Washington Senators

El  
of t  
sent  
the  
tend  
ville  
the  
ditio  
the  
fined  
Hor  
he v  
Oriol  
last  
port  
Barn  
the

## Herky Jerky Horton [2 of 2]:

### #8 Season Opener - April 29, 1899

Horton is the opening day pitcher for the Eastern (A) League's Worcester Farmers ... the team is nicknamed the Farmers because it was going to have several "farmed" players from Frank Selee's National League's Boston Beaneaters ... the Farmers, and Horton, open the season with a 12-11 win over the visiting Montreal Royals before a crowd of 3,000 ... Worcester out-hits the Royals 18-to-6, but several costly errors keep the game close ... Horton will finish fourth in the Eastern League in wins (20), innings pitched (297) and strikeouts (102).

### #9 The Bat - May 12, 1899

*The Toronto Mail & Empire* reports that Horton has a "pet" bat that is carved out of some famous wood that is found only on his farm near Cincinnati ... Horton is on the mound for Worcester on May 12, 1899, when he refuses to allow Toronto third baseman and team captain Jud Smith use of his bat when he comes to bat in the second inning ... moments later, Smith singles sharply to center field using his own bat and will end up collecting two hits in a 13-8 win.

### #10 Disagreement in Utica - August 15, 1904

The managing career of Elmer "Herky Jerky" Horton comes an end when the Utica Pent-Ups release their player/manager following a personnel disagreement with team ownership ... the 34-year-old Horton had released pitcher Happy Jack Miran and benched shortstop George Needham ... only two days before his release, Miran had shutout Iliion Typewriters 4-0 on four hits ... the decisions were against management wishes and Horton is released from his duties with the team in sixth place with a 42-53 record ... Miran rejoins the team following Horton's departure and outfielder Jack Lawlor assumes the managerial duties and directs the Pent-Ups to a 17-20 mark the remainder of the season.

## Herky-Jerky Horton, Famous Player, Is Dead

Edward (Herky Jerky) Horton is dead! From Oneida comes the final chapter in the life of one of the most picturesque boxmen in balldom and to the hundreds who recall his activities years ago, his passing will marshal memories of an epoch in baseball history that is romantic and replete with thrills. The present generation may have its idols in Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb, but in the good old days of the early century it was such men as Herky Jerky Horton—so dubbed because of his peculiarly abrupt style in winding up while on the mound—who made the game what it is today and gave it that rare sportsmanship that forces it to every corner of the globe and sees it played under every sun.

Dynamic in action, swirl in body and mind, Horton wended his way from the back-lot diamond to the National and International leagues and for years played with the heroes of other days—men now all but forgotten, and seemingly only recalled when one of the clan passes out into the mystic diamond where fouls aren't called.

Feeling that the grind was too hard for him, Horton dropped out of the national bands. But he couldn't remain off the diamond, and coming back, he joined up with the New York State League and no town ever forgot him once he "warmed-up" for the fray. Growing tired of long jaunts and hard days, he tendered the old state leaguers a farewell appearance in 1904 and settled down in Oneida.

But the restlessness of the idol came back and he was in the forefront of the organization of a league centered about Oneida, Canastota and other central New York communities and donning a uniform at 58 he drove many a victory home to his team with his old, dependable arm.

Of late years, the star in the sky of the younger generation of Oneidans, directed the existence of a hotel at North Bay and it was upon a lawn adjacent to this establishment that he was found dead Thursday morning. He had evidently been walking toward the village and dropped out of the "game" he played so squarely without one pany. Death was due to heart trouble.

It was said of Herky Jerky Horton that he played till the whistle blew—straight to the end and it would seem that—Another good fellow has gone in his passing.

The game's lost a friend and the world a real pal!