

Sporting News Clips: July 16, 1942

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BASEBALL THE SPORTING NEWS THE BASEBALL PAPER OF THE WORLD

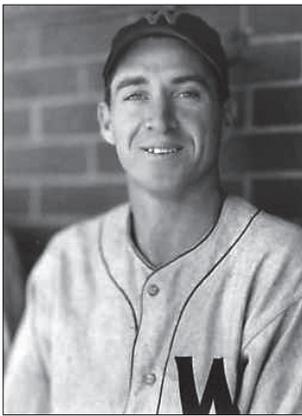
Senator Returns Early

Washington Senators third baseman Hillis Layne returns home to Whitwell, Tennessee, after being honorably discharged from the Army because of recurring leg problems. The 24-year-old Hillis tells the Senators that he is optimistic about resuming his playing career in the future. In the July 16, 1942, edition of *The Sporting News*, Layne elaborates about his time in the military:

“I did all right in the Army, with the exception of a little sergeant trouble because of not being able to make an about-face,” said Layne. “Joe Engel and Clark Griffith have spent a lot of money on my leg and in one operation the surgeon cut the veins at the upper part of my left thigh and tied them up. Since then I haven’t been able to make any quick turns. That’s why I should be able to play third better than short.

“I was getting by in the Army until they sent us to Camp Keesler in Mississippi. We had to walk a mile and a half from the train in full packs. Next day my leg was swollen so badly they kept me there for almost 14 weeks. Finally they gave me my discharge”

Hillis Layne 1945 Washington Senators



Faced with a growing manpower shortage from having to fight on two fronts (Pacific and European) the military reclassifies Layne and he eventually serves two years in the Army before being officially discharged in March of 1944.

A 6-foot, 170-pound left-handed hitter, Layne will make Washington's opening day roster in 1944 and play a total of three seasons with the Senators (1941, 1944-45), hitting .265 (75-for-284) with one home run, 28 RBIs and three stolen bases in 107 games.

As a young boy in Tennessee, Layne had promised his mother that he would make the Major Leagues and one day hit a home run in Yankee Stadium. On August 25, 1945, Layne fulfills his promise when he homers against Yankees' right-hander Tiny Bonham in the seventh inning of a 5-4 loss in 10 innings.

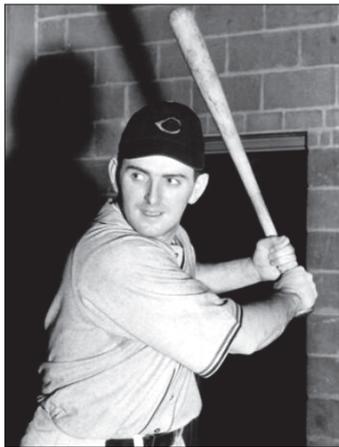
However, it will be his 17-year minor league career where Layne makes his mark. Appearing in 1,791 games, he hits .335 with 83 home runs and 953 RBIs. Layne leads the Pacific Coast League in batting in 1947 (.367) and the Northwest (B) League in 1955 (.391). He will hit .362 over his last four years in professional baseball as a player/manager for the Lewiston Broncos from 1955-1958.

Later a minor-league director and a scout for the Texas Rangers, Layne dies on January 12, 2010, in Signal Mountain, Tennessee, from a heart attack he suffered two days earlier. He is 91 years old at the time of his death.

Third Time a Charm

Paul O'Dea was never a man to be taken lightly. In late June of 1942, O'Dea, despite being released twice previously by Cedar Rapids' manager Ollie Marquardt, remains persistent and finally earns a spot on the team's roster. Released first as an outfielder and then later as a relief pitcher, Marquardt re-signs the 21-year-old for a third time when starting outfielder Gus Gregory is sidelined with an injury.

Paul O'Dea 1945 Cleveland Indians



Despite losing the vision in his right eye as a result of a batting practice mishap on March 21, 1940, at the Cleveland Indians' spring training camp in Fort Myers, Florida, O'Dea sticks with the Raiders for the remainder of the season hitting .261 with 13 doubles and two home runs in 72 games.

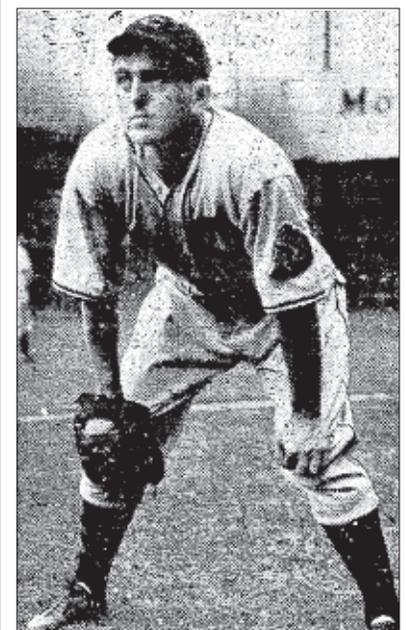
Even more remarkable, two years later, the Cleveland, Ohio, native will make his major league debut with his hometown Indians on April 18, 1944, playing left field and batting cleanup in the Tribe's season opener against the Chicago White Sox.

As a 23-year-old rookie in 1944, O'Dea hits .318 (55-173), including nine doubles and 13 RBIs ... in 163 Major League games, O'Dea has a career batting average of .272. Following his release from the Indians in March of 1946, O'Dea will play five more seasons in the minor leagues, finishing with the Fort Smith Indians of the Western (C) Association in 1951.

Hillis Layne 1948 Seattle Rainiers



Paul O'Dea 1938 Fargo-Moorhead Twins



Sporting News Clips [2 of 2]:

Rocky Mount Romance

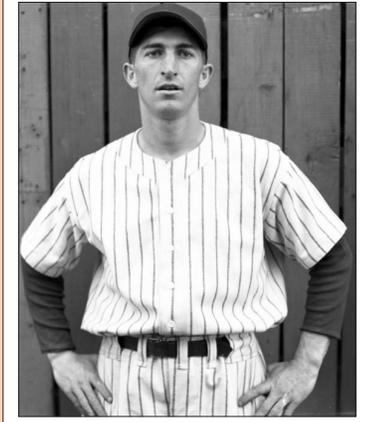
As a result of a wager, Rocky Mount and Bi-State (D) League fans are treated to a rare sight on the playing fields during summer of 1942. Every time that catcher Charley Munday or outfielder Harry Soufas hits a home run, the other kisses the home run hitter before he enters the dugout. It proves to be a summer of smooches as the duo combines to total 45 round trippers with Soufas accounting for a league-leading 29.

Born in Greece on May 22, 1917, Soufas grows up in Wilson, North Carolina, and is awarded a football scholarship to the University of North Carolina where he is the starting halfback on the freshman team in the fall of 1936 before he drops out of school and transfers to Atlantic Christian College. His roommate at UNC is two-time American League All-Star Snuffy Stirnweiss.

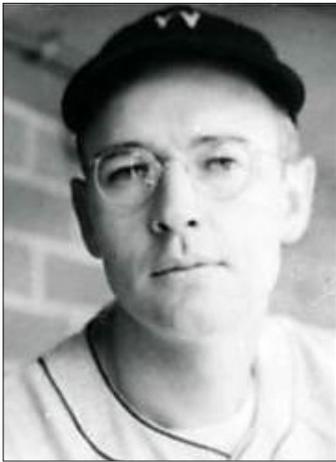
One of Soufas' teammates on the 1942 Rocks is Scottish-born 18-year-old third baseman Bobby Thomson, who is best remembered for hitting a game-winning home run against the Brooklyn Dodgers known as the "Shot Heard 'Round the World" that sends the New York Giants to the 1951 World Series. Though they finished third in the regular season with a 63-60 record under George Ferrell (of the Greensboro Ferrells), the Rocks rebound to win the league's Shaughnessy playoffs, beating the Sanford Spinners 4 games to 1 in the championship series.

In 1947, Soufas hits .342 for the New Bern Bears with a league-leading 25 home runs and 122 RBIs en route to being named the MVP of the Coastal Plain (D) League.

Harry Soufas 1940 Norfolk Tars



Lew Carpenter 1943 Washington Senators



Lew Carpenter

On July 3, 1942, Memphis manager Doc Prothro announces that his top pitcher, Lew Carpenter, has quit the team. Recently named to the Southern Association all-star team, Carpenter is 10-6 at the time of his departure. Prothro does not elaborate a reason for the knuckleballer's absence. *The Sporting News* reports that "all was not serene between Carpenter and manager," and that the 28-year-old Georgia Tech alumnus will attempt to join the Air Force. Carpenter later decides that flying is not his cup of tea and returns to the team, losing his final four decisions to end the season with a 10-10 record and a 3.82 ERA.

In 1945, Carpenter has a career year with the Southern Association's Atlanta Crackers, finishing 22-2 with a league-best 1.82 ERA. On September 15, the native Georgian is sold to the Philadelphia Athletics for an undetermined sum of cash and "at least" two players. The Crackers had purchased Carpenter from the Washington Senators at the beginning of the season.

During the season he works days at the Bell Bomber plant and pitches for the Crackers at night. He takes only a few weekend trips with the eventual league champions.

Two weeks later Carpenter tells the Athletics that he will not report and claims that he can do better selling vacuum sweepers. On two different occasions, Carpenter turns down Philadelphia offers and on February 27 Connie Mack cancels the \$30,000 deal with Atlanta. The bespectacled pitcher sits out the entire 1946 season, staying on his farm in Woodstock, Georgia, effectively ending his career except for a one-game effort for the Carolina (C) League Burlington (N.C.) Bees on April 27, 1947.

Washburn Walks to a Win

On July 7, 1942, Newark Bears' George Washburn walks his way to a 5-1 win over Montreal in a International (AA) League game. A 27-year-old right-hander with continual control problems, Washburn allows the Royals only four hits, but walks 14 men and hits another as the Bears (48-33) reclaim first place over the Jersey City Giants (46-34) by 1 1/2 games following the Giants' doubleheader loss to Buffalo. A veteran minor leaguer (16 seasons), Washburn will suffer from control issues his entire career.

On May 4, 1941, Washburn, with the New York Yankees, makes his first and only major league appearance with a start against the Detroit Tigers. In two-plus innings, Washburn allows four runs (three earned) on two hits and five walks in a 10-1 setback before 43,471 in Detroit's Briggs Stadium. Ten days later, the Solon, Maine, native is optioned back to Newark, allowing the Yankees to get down to the regulation 25-player limit.

Washburn pitches several years with the New Orleans Pelicans of the Southern League and once held the minor league record for the number of hits in a doubleheaders. After leaving the Pelicans, he played in the Evangeline League as a playing manager for Houma (1947-1950) and Baton Rouge (1951-1952).

When not pitching, Washburn plays first base and the outfield. A native of Maine, he was inducted into the Maine Hall of Fame in 1978. Washburn is 64 years old when he passes away in Baton Rouge on January 5, 1979.

Deaf Not Blind

Players, managers and fans of the Piedmont (C) League can say almost anything to umpire Bud Newman and it won't matter. Newman, who works at a sanitarium in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the off-season and considers umpiring as a "summer vacation", is deaf.

George Washburn 1941 New York Yankees

