

Henry Tate, "Texas Big Boy"

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

Henry "Texas Big Boy" Tate is 22 years of age and one year removed from being a "wild and wooly cowpuncher" when he signs with the Philadelphia Athletics out of the Lone Star State in August of 1910.

With only three months of organized baseball under his belt, the 6-foot-3, 220-pound right hander is a "crack" pitcher for an amateur team from Taylor, Texas, when he signs.

The legend of "Texas Big Boy" has its origin one year earlier when Tate reportedly shoots a man in a gunfight ... in June, 1910, Tate leaves his Thrall, Texas, family ranch for the nearby (7 miles) town of Taylor to turn himself in and "pay his fine."

While in Taylor, Tate goes by the town's baseball field where a number of players are holding a practice ... later, at a town dance he meets the team's manager and informs him that he has been throwing some with his brother (at his ranch) and that he is a better pitcher than any of the players currently on his team.

Looking at Tate's "6-foot-3 inches of attitude" the manager invites him to the next day's practice ... to make a long story short, nobody on the team can hit Tate's pitches, including a curve "of his own making" and the manager signs the tall Texan on the spot for the remainder of the season.

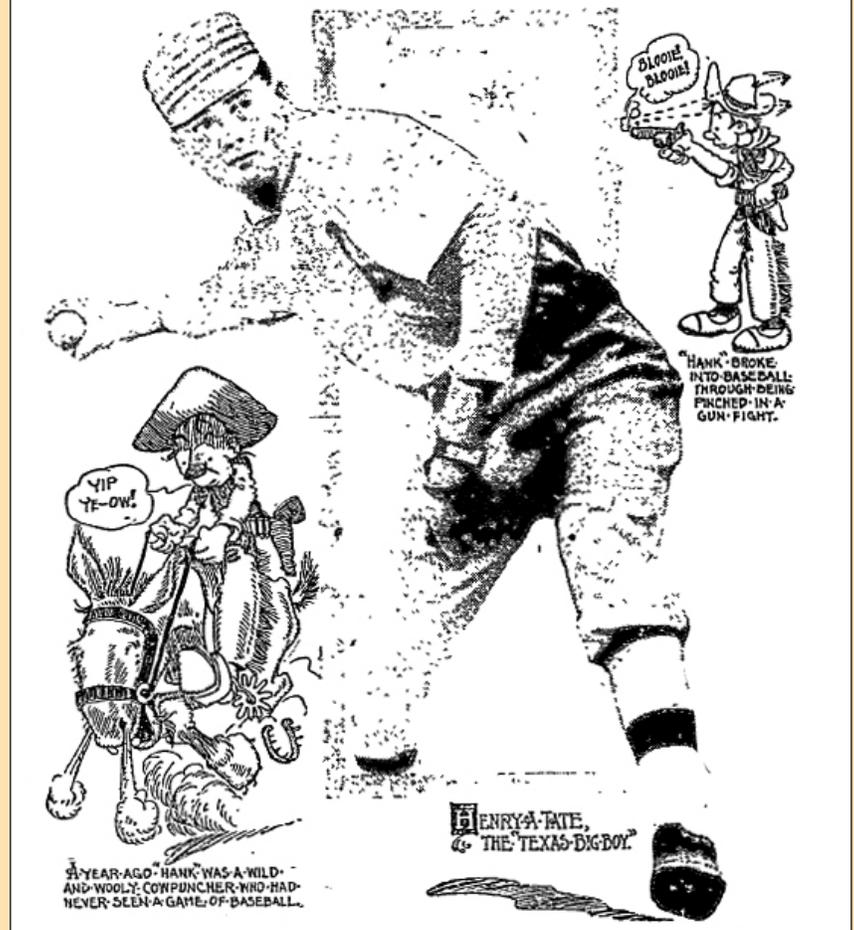
On July 4th, Taylor is playing a "rival village" when Tate, in his first start on the mound, hurls a 1-0, 13-inning shut-out in front of a holiday crowd that includes one Dr. Harmon Pearlstone, a close friend of Philadelphia Athletics owner/manager Connie Mack ... Pearlstone later writes Mack informing him of Tate's performance.

Texas to Report.

Special to The News.

Taylor, Tex., March 11.—In response to a message from Connie Mack of the American Baseball League, now at Savannah, Ga., training the scrubs of the Philadelphia Americans, Henry Tate, the star pitcher last season of the Taylor Baseball Club, who signed up with a scout of the Americans, will leave tomorrow for Savannah, where he will go in training for a position with some of the minor leagues. Tate will go via Palestine, where he will first have a conference with Hyman Pearlstone and then proceed to Savannah. Tate is just recovering from a severe attack of mumps, but is hopeful for success in the try-out. Taylor is proud of her contribution to the American League and will watch Tate's movements with interest.

STORY OF HANK TATE, OF TAYLOR, TEXAS; OR HOW FAME WAS WON IN SHUT-OUT GAME



Tate pitches 15 games for Taylor that summer, winning 14 times, including seven by shutout ... legend has it that as a batter, Tate once hit a ball so high that an outfielder starved to death waiting for it to come down.

One of 33 players invited to Philadelphia's 1911 spring training camp in Savannah, Georgia, Tate, despite recently recovering from the mumps, makes an immediate impression on the venerable Mack, who says he has "another jewel in Tate if he is responsive to instruction."

Henry Tate 1 of 3:

Henry Tate [2 of 3]:

Athletics vs. Phillies April 10, 1911

Morgan was the first to face Doolin and his crowd, the Phillies getting runs in the first and third innings, the first due to a pass, sacrifice, and wild pitch, and the one in the third by three hits. Collamore then worked for three innings, shutting out the Mack men. Henry Tate, the raw recruit from Texas, then twirled the final three rounds, he being easy for the Nationals to hit. The score:

Phillies:	AB	H	O	A	E	Athletics:	AB	H	O	A	E
Titus, rf...	3	1	0	0	0	Hogan, lf...	3	0	0	0	1
Knabe, 2b...	3	0	0	6	0	Lord, cf...	2	1	2	0	0
Lober, 3b...	5	2	1	0	0	Oldring, cf...	2	1	0	0	0
Magee, lf...	4	1	2	0	0	Collins, 2b...	3	0	2	4	0
Paskert, cf...	3	1	0	0	0	Baker, 3b...	3	0	0	3	0
Luderus, 1b...	4	1	15	1	0	Davis, 1b...	3	0	14	2	0
Doolan, ss...	4	1	1	4	0	Murphy, rf...	4	1	0	0	0
Moore, p...	1	0	2	2	0	Barry, ss...	4	1	3	4	0
Moran, c...	2	1	5	0	0	Livingstone, c	1	1	3	1	0
Rowan, p...	1	1	0	1	0	Morgan, p...	1	0	0	1	0
Chalmers, p	0	0	1	0	0	Lapp, c...	1	0	1	2	0
Totals...	31	10	27	15	0	Collamore, p	1	0	0	1	0
						Thomas, c...	1	0	2	0	0
						Tate, p...	1	1	0	2	0
						McInnis*	1	0	0	0	0
						Totals...	31	6	27	20	1

Phillies..... 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 3 0-5
Athletics..... 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1-2
Runs—Titus, Lober, Magee, Paskert, Moore, Collins, Tate. Two-base hits—Doolan, Lord. Sacrifice hit—Knabe. Stolen bases—Livingston, Oldring, Titus, Collins, McInnis. Struck out—Luderus, Morgan, Knabe, Collamore, Doolan, Chalmers. Double plays—Doolin and Luderus; Collins, Barry, and Davis. First base on balls—Off Moore, 3; off Collamore, 1; off Rowan, 1; off Tate, 3; off Chalmers, 2. Wild pitch—Morgan. Umpires—Messrs. Conolly and O'Day.

Tate appears in three games for Mack's rookie team and one with the "varsity" during spring training.

In the team's final pre-season game on April 10, against the cross-town rival Phillies in Shibe Park, Tate relieves Allan Collamore in the seventh inning and promptly strikes out the first batter he faces (shortstop Mickey Doolin) on three pitches ... however, the Phillies tally three runs in the eighth inning and Tate completes his only appearance against major league competition allowing three earned runs in three innings on six hits and three walks in a 5-2 loss.

Two days later (April 12), Tate is sent to the Spartanburg Spartans of the Carolina (D) Association ... Mack tells Tate that when he masters his control he will be brought back to the parent club.

In early May, the Spartans' manager Billy Laval releases Tate due to a "lack of experience."

At this point, Tate's 1911 itinerary becomes a bit more cloudy ... after leaving the Palmetto State, he joins the Ardmore Blues of the Texas-Oklahoma (D) League ... his stay with the Blues is short-lived and on June 22 he rejoins the Taylor team ... in late June a "Tate" is listed as pitching for Oklahoma City and on July 19, Fort Worth's new pitcher "Tate" hurls a complete game in a 19-6 win over Oklahoma City.

In the off-season Tate loses the first joint of his right forefinger as a result of an accident at an oil mill where he was employed.

In 1912, Tate makes a short-lived comeback going 1-4 in 10 games for the Galveston San Crabs of the Texas (B) League.

Tate Chronology

August 14, 1910

Tate signs a contract with the Philadelphia Athletics for the 1911 season at \$250 per month.

Henry Tate Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	INN	H	BB	SO	ERA
1910	Taylor (Texas)	.....	Ind.	14-2	-	-	-	-	---
1911	Spartanburg Spartans	..... Carolina	D	-	-	-	-	-	---
1911	Ardmore Blues	..... Texas-Oklahoma	D	-	-	-	-	-	---
1911	Taylor (Texas)	.....	Ind.	-	-	-	-	-	---
1911	Oklahoma City Indians	..... Texas	B	-	-	-	-	-	---
1911	Fort Worth Panthers	..... Texas	B	-	-	-	-	-	---
1912	Galveston Sea Crabs	..... Texas	B	1-4	55.1	59	17	-	---

Charged With Robbery.

Special to The News.

Houston, Tex., Oct. 31.—J. R. Johnson of Sealy, who was struck down and robbed on Saturday evening as he stepped out the side door of a saloon in the western portion of the city, has practically recovered from his injuries and was able to identify the party charged with the alleged robbery. Mr. Johnson was knocked unconscious by the blow on the head. Henry Tate was arrested on a warrant issued by Justice of the Peace McDonald charging him with robbery.

October 30, 1910

Tate is arrested in Houston, Texas, on a charge of robbery ... Tate is accused of robbing J.R. Johnson as he stepped out of a side door of a local saloon.

February 17, 1911

Tate receives a check from Philadelphia Athletics' manager Connie Mack and is told to report to the team's spring training at Savannah, Georgia, next March ... Tate is noted for "wonderful speed, remarkable curves and splendid control of himself."

March 25, 1911

Philadelphia's spring training game with George Magoon's Savannah Indians is cancelled because of cold and rainy weather ... the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports that Tate, "the big Texas recruit, was especially disappointed as

Henry Tate [3 of 3]:

he has invented a new ball called the 'snake ball' and he was anxious to try it against the batters in a real game."

March 30, 1911

Despite inclement weather so bad that "at times play was stopped until the elements had subsided enough for the fielders to see the batsman", Tate hurls a complete game in a 12-6 win against Augusta, striking out six and allows 10 hits in securing the victory.

April 12, 1911

Mack announces that Tate has been released to Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Bill Griffin to Augusta, Georgia.

June 22, 1911

Tate rejoins the Taylor team after Ardmore of the Texas Oklahoma League briefly disbands.

October 17, 1911

Back in Taylor, Tate loses the first joint of his right forefinger at an oil mill where he was working ... attempting to put a belt on the pulley of a saw flier, Tate is injured when his hand slips and his finger was caught in the sprocket wheel.

March 9, 1912

Attempting to make the roster of the Austin Senators, Tate faces his former teammates in a pre-season affair in the Texas state capital ... despite showing "improvement" over his form from the previous season, Tate still allows four runs (all in the first inning) on five hits in four innings pitched ... Mack's rookies prevail 10-5, pounding Tate's replacement, Jenkins (a mute), for six runs in the last three innings.

December 29, 1912

Tate, now a "former" baseball star pitcher, enters professional wrestling with a scheduled match against "Pet" Brown of Waco next January 2.



Pitcher Tate Loses.

WACO, Jan. 3.—Henry Tate, baseball flinger, was an easy victim for "Pet" Brown of Taylor when they met in Waco Thursday in a wrestling match. It required forty-four minutes for Brown to win. Brown is looking for other game.

January 2, 1913

Tate loses his professional wrestling debut against Waco native "Pet" Brown in a match that last 44 minutes.

March 1918

Tate, now a professional heavyweight boxer, has won 11 of his 15 fights by knockouts.