

The Glynn West Baseball Memorabilia Collection in the words of Candy West

Introduction to Glynn West

Glynn West wasn't a famous baseball player. He wasn't a big league manager or flashy major league executive. He certainly wasn't an autograph seeker or collector. Glynn West *was* a humble, soft-spoken man who devoted his life to his family first and baseball second. It was a very close second, but family really did come first. So much so that when Charles Finley offered him the GM position in Oakland with the newly relocated A's, Dad turned him down; he didn't want to uproot his young family. So Dad stayed in Birmingham, at Rickwood Field, where he'd worked since 1947. His first job was changing the scoreboard, humble beginnings for a man who would go on to become The Sporting News' Double A Executive of the Year, Birmingham's GM, the Southern League's VP, and Finley's #1 pick for a franchise that would go on to win three consecutive World Series.

Intro to entire collection

Going through the baseball stuff in a thorough manner was never on my to-do list largely because I didn't know there was much to go through. After all, Dad wasn't a collector by any stretch of the definition. Digging through the basement, attic, looking in closets and under beds for stuff to sell on eBay, I started to find lots of cool baseball things. *Lots* of cool baseball things.

I started researching the things I found. With every "new" find, I hurled myself off higher and higher cliffs of obscure dusty minor league minutiae. It wasn't long before I realized that the objects I had corresponded precisely to my father's time at Rickwood, 1947-1975. At that revelation, the pitch changed. I mean my pitch, my timbre, my approach - my mission changed. I was no longer gathering old junk to sell on eBay. I wasn't even just finding "cool baseball stuff". I was piecing together a life's work and in doing so, I discovered just how unique, devoted, genuine, brilliant, and trailblazing my dad was in his career in baseball.

With full consent from my mom, I decided to sell my collection. Like my dad, I'm not a collector of things baseball and when mom and I are gone, there won't be anyone with time and interest enough to see to it that all this cool baseball stuff gets where it needs to be. Where is that? Well, that question started to take larger and larger priority in my head a couple of weeks into my project. Obviously, this is a very specialized lot of items and therefore not suited for eBay but it isn't the Barry Halper/Sotheby's 1999 auction either. I had to find the right in-between and I finally did. Soon, Redfield Group Auctions will host the sale of my entire collection. And when it came time to sign, I got emotional for the first and only time.

I decided that some ceremony was needed so I put on one of the few team caps I've kept for myself, a very rare mid-1960s Barons solid light green cap with a pseudo-Gothic/somewhat-script "B". My pile of negro league notes suddenly caught my attention and instead of sending the scanned agreement to the auctioneer, I googled "famous black Barons", just in case I'd missed anybody. And do you know what happened? The search engine landed me directly onto the paragraph about my dad that's on the Barons Hall of Fame webpage. Specifically, it went to this part of a sentence within that paragraph, "...West oversaw the desegregation of Rickwood Field...".

I smiled, took my hat off, signed the auction agreement, and sent it. Thanks, Dad, because that was a cool moment.

Provenance

After the disastrous 1965 season, Birmingham's volatile owner, Charles Finley moved the team to Mobile and threatened to tear down Rickwood and sell it for scrap. My father knew Finley was wreckless and short-sighted enough to do it so Dad gathered up significant items and documents and moved them to the basement in his newly built home. Of course, Finley left Rickwood standing and moved the club back to Birmingham in 1967 so it was a lot to do about nothing. You just never knew with Finley and while Dad never had a negative thing to say about the man, he wasn't about to risk losing pieces of Birmingham baseball history.

EXHIBITION GAMES RECORDS: Important Signatures/notes

Most of these signatures are from Negro League players, managers, and/or Negro League player/managers. Often, these guys had to take on double duty. Few Negro League teams had the luxury of funding a salary for a traveling secretary. The minor league teams did but not the Negro Leagues. As best as I can tell, it went like this:

The Birmingham Black Barons didn't have their own ballpark so they had to rent places to play. Rickwood Field was obviously convenient - if not economical. On a handshake at the end of the night, both teams' reps signed the tally sheet which are now before you on the pages in these exhibition record books). Attendance figures and dollars agreed upon, everyone was paid, and that was that. These transactions were written in pencil; those signing were, after all, gentlemen and at stake were reputations – far more important than careers .

The significance of the handwritten history resting within these volumes cannot be overstated. Jotted down in pencil on these pages is the complex story of one city's love affair with baseball and the galvanizing effects this passion would have not only on Birmingham and the sport of baseball, but on athletics, society, and idealism throughout the world. Games in which ACIPCO faces off against Stockham Pipe and Valve might seem out of place in a Rickwood register until you consider that many of the greatest players in baseball who also happened to be black played in these industrial leagues. There are cold reminders of our darker moments and of the segregation so prominent in Birmingham and illustrated at Rickwood with its "colored" seating section and separate entrance. One rental entry is for the "Negro State Fair", another for "Colored [sic] Auto Races", woefully misspelled by the Baron's white office clerk. But there are redemptive entries too: "Negro Tuberculosis Society, park rental n/c" and "soldiers, 110, n/c". And while Satchel Paige himself did not leave a tangible imprint on these books, his legendary talents and the fear those talents instilled in his opponents did, expressed in this simple title for a single exhibition game: "May 2, 1943. Kansas City vs. Satchel Paige. Attendance 8,318." The next day, the white Barons played Kansas City before a crowd of 167.

These exhibition game records consist physically of little more than generic templates, bound, and in duplicate, recorded dutifully by hand each night. At first glance, these documents appear to contain a bunch of hasty arithmetic, scribbled notes to self, and scrawled sideways

annotations, a collection of facts and figures. There are no introductions, no historical context, no neat chapters nor informative titles. Indeed, there is very little permanent ink; pencils with their erasers were much more convenient in the days before correction fluid and word processors. The history, however, is undeniably permanent. So too are the stories it holds. Cruel and misspelled at times, difficult to decipher and cryptic at others, this is storytelling in the purest form and history in its most raw.

Here are some highlights of the signatures included in this collection.

BASEBALL HALL of FAME MEMBERS

Oscar Charleston's 35-year career began in 1912 when he was fifteen and stationed in the Phillipines. After he was discharged, he signed on with the Indianapolis ABC's, the first of a dozen teams to which he'd add some punch, literally; infielders got out of his way as he rounded the bags, fearful of his considerable speed and infamous mean streak. He could hit, he could run, he could throw, and as a centerfielder made many of the most spectacular catches the game has ever witnessed. Enjoying women and the good things in life, Oscar Charleston has often been penned as a sort of "black Babe Ruth": good-natured, kind-hearted, and adored but hardly without faults. Once past his prime, Charleston stayed in baseball as a player manager and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1976.

Buck (Walter) Fenner Leonard Power-slugging and exceptional first baseman Buck Leonard is understandably compared to Lou Gehrig. As Gehrig was a cornerstone of the legendary Yankees teams of the 1920s and 30s, Leonard was a key ingredient in the Homestead Grays domination of that time. The only hitter to best him was Josh Gibson. After Gibson jumped ship to play in the more lucrative Mexican League, Leonard was by far the Negro leagues best slugger, hitting .392 in the 1941 season and later collecting two home run titles. At age 41 and close to the end of his career with the Grays, Leonard won the league hitting title with a .395 average. Unlike most Negro league players, Leonard stayed with the Grays his entire professional career, from 1933-1950. He did play winter ball in Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela and also barnstormed with Satchel Paige's All-Stars. Buck was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1972.

W.B. McKechnie, or Bill or "Deacon", managed major league teams from 1915 through 1946. Repeatedly, he piloted lowly teams to pennant and World Series wins. Once with the Cincinnati Reds organization, McKechnie became involved with the Birmingham club (part of the Reds franchise) and was an active proponent for farm systems. In fact, McKechnie invested in the Birmingham Barons purchasing stock in the late 1930s. He was inducted into the **Baseball Hall of Fame** in 1962.

Alejandro (Alex) Pompey was a talented scout, executive, director, and peacemaker during a time when baseball and America was transitioning from a polarized culture to an integrated society. Pompey began his 35-year career operating his Cuban Stars independently (1916-

1923) before joining Black baseball in the Eastern Negro League where the team stayed until 1929. He often brokered peace deals between arguing Negro Leagues, arranged the first Negro League World Series in 1924, and renovated the Dyckman Oval for his Cuban Stars making them the sole New York Negro team with its own stadium. In an attempt to retain his New York Cubans' economic viability, Pompey negotiated for the Cubans to serve as a New York Giants farm team and in 1951, the Giants hired him to scout Caribbean and African American players in the United States. The roster of talent he introduced to the Negro and major leagues included future Hall of Famers Orlando Cepeda, Dihigo, Juan Marichal, and Willie McCovey, along with all-stars Francisco Coimbre, Horacio Martínez, Miñoso, Oms, Tony Taylor, and Felipe Alou. He was honored with a Cooperstown plaque in 2006.

James Leslie (J.L.) Wilkinson is considered one of the most innovative owners of Negro League and other league teams. His Kansas City Monarchs dominated Black baseball from 1923-1929, from 1937-1942 and then again in 1946. In his early years as a baseball entrepreneur, Wilkinson organized an all-women's traveling team in 1909. In 1912, he created the All Nations team in Des Moines. This team had Black, White, Native American, Latin American and Asian players and was a top barnstorming club until World War I needed several of its players.

SIGNIFICANT NON-PLAYERS

JESSE OWENS As an Olympic track hero and former basketball player, his presence at Rickwood Field may seem out of context. Sadly, upon his return from superhuman achievements in Berlin, Owens found no room in the polarized Us or Them society of America. Unable to make a living, he found himself financially pressured to display his incredible talents at small-time sporting events for money and, of course, to boost turnstile counts.

ABE SAPERSTEIN Owner and founder of The Harlem Globetrotters, Saperstein provided off-season employment to many Negro League player and later helped Jesse Owens start his own professional Negro League on the west coast.

BIRMINGHAM BLACK BARONS: players/managers

Country Ralph Brown: shortstop

Frank Evans: outfielder

Sugg (Willie) Cornelius: pitcher

Homer Curry: manager

Lorenzo "Piper" Davis: infielder, manager, and career Black Baron 1942-1950

Dizzy (William) Dismukes: pitcher, manager

Willie Harris: outfielder

Tom Hayes: owner In 1939 The Black Barons were purchased by Tom Hayes, a Memphis undertaker. Hayes partnered with Harlem Globetrotters owner Abe Saperstein who provided the financial backing Birmingham needed to acquire the best players.

W. Jones: manager and possibly outfielder

Floyd Meshac: co-owner

Frank McCollum: pitcher

Ted “Double Duty” Radcliffe: catcher, pitcher, manager

Ulysses Redd: shortstop

Nat Pollard (Nathaniel Hawthorne): pitcher

Dr. Anderson Ross: co-owner

Tommie Sampson: 2nd baseman, manager

George “Tubby” Scales: 2nd baseman, manager

Freddie Shepard: pitcher, outfielder

Candy Jim Taylor: manager in 1940 and Negro League infielder for numerous teams

A.M. Walker: manager in 1937. I’ve also seen a reference to Walker owning the Black Barons but cannot verify that.

Jesse Walker: shortstop, manager

Wingfield Welch (W.S.): manager 1941-45

Arthur Wilson: shortstop

Parnell Woods: 3rd baseman

Willie Young: pitcher

Other Negro League Teams players/managers/characters

George Mitchell: pitcher who played from 1924-1944 with various Negro League teams

Frank Johnson: Memphis secretary

John "Big Boy" Williams: Negro League player/manager

Hunter Campbell: and former Ethiopian Clowns owner

Dr. B.B. Martin: Memphis owner

Bunny Downs: Negro League infielder and scout extraordinaire

Stanley Lee: Cincinnati secretary

J.H. Harden : Atlanta Crackers owner

Nat Rogers: rightfielder

S.H. Posey: brother of HOFer Cum Posey and business manager of the Homestead Grays

Harry Barnes: Atlanta Black Crackers catcher

Ernest Wright: Cleveland Buckeyes owner

Vernon Green : Baltimore Elite Giants owner/manager

Marvin Barker: New York Black Yankees player

Harry Williams: New York Cubans player/manager

Frank "Beauty" McGowan: MLB All Star and scout

Gabe Paul: assistant to NL President and HOFer Warren Giles. Paul would go on to become GM of the Cincinnati Red, President of the New York Yankees, and MLB Executive of the Year in 1974.

George Jefferson : player, Cleveland Buckeyes

Tom Dowd : Boston Red Sox traveling secretary

C.L. "Cool Breeze" Moore: player

Wilbur Hayes: Cleveland Buckeyes owner

James D. Cohen: Havana Las Palomas player/manager and Evergreen, Alabama native

José Fernandez: New York Cubans catcher/manager

Leo Ward: St Louis Cardinals secretary

Frank Scott: New York Yankees traveling secretary, called the “Father of Modern Day Sports Agents”

William Brisker: Louisville Buckeyes general manager

Patricio Scantlebury: New York Cubans player/manager

R.S. Simmons: Chicago American Giants secretary and stats expert

Joe Black: MLB Rookie of the Year 1952

Bob Harvey: 2 time Negro League All Star

D. Thomas: player

Joe Atkins: player

Russ Peters: MLB shortstop and third baseman

David Edwin Keefe: Philadelphia A's pitcher

Mike “Pinky” Higgins: Birmingham and Louisville manager and MLB player Mike “Pinky” Higgins

Curtis Link: Negro National League secretary

Charlie Henry: Negro League player/operator

John R. Wise: Philadelphia Nationals traveling secretary

John “Buck” O’Neil: Negro league star player/manager and the first black coach in MLB

Ed Hamman: third baseman and later owner of the Indianapolis Clowns. Hamman is rated as one of baseball's top 'trick artists' and demonstrated his unique talent with unbelievable back-hand throws across the diamond. He had a standing offer of \$1000 to any major or minor league player who could duplicate his throwing and pepper ball feats. Hamman was white and

the only player to throw a baseball backhanded across the width of the diamond. During the game, Hamman could be seen in the stands selling programs.

Ed Short: Chicago White Sox general manager

Henry Saverson: Detroit Negro League secretary

Ted Rasberry: Negro League player/owner

Lon Varnell: Tennessee sports HOFer/football coach

James Chambers: New York Black Yankees coach (?) James Chambers

Rufus Ligon: Negro League pitcher/manager

McAllister Keen: famous and revered bus driver for Negro League teams

Arthur Williams: Negro League player/manager

James Austin: Raleigh Tigers traveling secretary

Charles "Bulldog" Drummond: Philadelphia Stars pitcher

Earl Palmore: Indianapolis Clowns pitcher Earl Palmore

Fred Banks: Philadelphia Stars owner/manager

Walter "Pop" Banks: Cincinnati Tigers owner/bus driver

Naomi Tatum: wife of Negro League/Black Barons/Indianapolis Clowns legend Goose Tatum

Stock certificates

Names on the Birmingham Baseball Association (later Club) original stock certificates read like a veritable Who's Who of Birmingham Society. Rust, Yielding, Lackey, Kirkpatrick, McNeil, Bradley, Hanna, Ward, Meyer, Blach, Moore, Ward Sterne & Co., (signed Rucker Agee) and Pepperman all put their dollars into Birmingham's baseball dream and then signed on the dotted line. Our early baseball executives are here too: Robert H. Baugh, President in 1914 and the reason we got Carlton Molesworth and not Miller Huggins as manager; John McQueen, of the McQueen family from whom A.H. "Rick" Woodward purchased the club in 1909; and W.D. "Quack" Smith who took over as club president in 1915. Later on, Birmingham would get a moral and financial boost from two future Hall of Famers who purchased stock in our club. Warren Giles and Bill "Deacon" McKechnie were staunch advocates for farm systems and expansion teams, and both were among the first major league executives to value and plumb the talents of both Latin American and black ball players.

Uniforms

Major league Baseball, in a bold move in 1961, ordered all minor leagues to integrate. Under intense pressure from heavy-duty segregationists like Bull Connor (commissioner of public safety) who absolutely did not want blacks playing at Rickwood, Barons owner Albert Belcher folded the team. Birmingham did not field a team again until 1964. My guess is that all of these uniforms were handed down from Kansas City as that was the practice of the day. If so, then re-outfitting the jerseys would've entailed little more than removing the embroidered "A" and replacing it with a matching "B". On the other hand, since Kansas City didn't adopt this style of jersey until 1963, it's also possible that the shirts were ordered specifically for Birmingham's returning team in 1964.

#13. It's very likely that this uniform belonged to and was game-worn by Johnny "Blue Moon" Odom. He was the only player in the Kansas City franchise to wear the ominous #13 during 1964 and 1965. #11 was worn by Jerry Lumpe from 1959-1963, and then by Dave Duncan and Rene Lacheman in 1964 and '65 respectively. #1 was Dick Green's number in 1964-65 but I believe this #1 to have been made for our bat boy, my brother Shane, as it is quite small. We might never know for sure, but it's fun to guess that the $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve green and oatmeal undershirt with "Mac" written across the back in marker was worn by manager John McNamara in 1965. The coolest items, perhaps, are the satin pitcher's jackets. If you look at the famous picture of Satchel Paige talking with other Kansas City pitchers in 1965, these jackets are identical except for the letter (A for Athletics vs. B for Barons). By 1967, Birmingham uniforms would also feature A instead of B. This history and the remaining manufacturer's tags date these uniforms to 1964 and 1965.

The baseball caps in this collection include examples from Birmingham's major league team affiliations as well variations adopted from year to year. The oldest of the caps, navy with a red B is from our time as part of the Boston Red Sox franchise, 1948-1952. Next came our stint with the New York Yankees, 1953-1956, and a cap from this era is not represented here. Detroit picked us up in 1957. We stayed with this organization until 1961 and there are two navy caps with two different orange Bs from the Tigers years. Not surprisingly, our affiliation with Kansas City and Oakland (1964-1975) saw the most variations on a theme so there are several iterations of solid green, solid darker green, As and Bs, and the green and gold combinations. Also part of this auction is a very rare manager's cap which is white with a Kelly green B.

Exhibition games records

The significance of the handwritten history resting within these dusty volumes cannot be overstated. Jotted down in pencil on these pages is the complex story of one city's love affair with baseball and the galvanizing effects this passion would have not only on Birmingham and the sport of baseball, but on athletics, society, and idealism throughout the world. You'll see Jesse Owens' signature: as an Olympic track hero and former basketball player, his presence at Rickwood Field may seem out of context. Sadly, upon his return from superhuman achievements in Berlin, Owens found no room in our polarized culture. Unable to make a living, he found himself financially pressured to display his incredible talents at small-time sporting events for money and for turnstile counts. He was here twice, once in 1943 and again in 1944, and signed the back of a page in pencil both times. Games in which ACIPCO faces off against Stockham Pipe and Valve might seem out of place in a Rickwood register until you consider that many of the greatest players in baseball who also happened to be black played in these industrial leagues. Here too is Abe Saperstein who gave us the Harlem Globetrotters and later helped Owens start his own professional Negro League on the west coast. You'll see HOFer J.L. Wilkinson, the first white

man courageous enough to purchase and foster a Negro League team. Countless Negro League players are represented by the few dozen men whose signatures grace these pages. Among them are Candy Jim Taylor, Lorenzo "Piper" Davis, George "Tubby" Scales, Schug Cornelius, Nat Rogers, Tommie Sampson, Ted Raspberry, Ulysses Red, and future Hall of Famers Buck O'Neil, Alex Pompez, and W.B. McKechnie, Cincinnati's forward thinking front office man and farm system pioneer. There are cold reminders of our darker moments and of the segregation so prominent at Rickwood: "Negro State Fair" and "Colored [sic] Auto Races", woefully misspelled by the Baron's white office clerk. There are redemptive entries too: "Negro Tuberculosis Society, park rental n/c" and "soldiers, 110,n/c". And while Satchel Paige himself did not leave a tangible imprint on these books, his legendary talents and the fear those talents instilled in his opponents did, expressed in this simple title for a single exhibition game: "May 2, 1943. Kansas City vs. Satchel Paige. Attendance 8,318." The next day, the white Barons played Kansas City before a crowd of 167.

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Legal documents pertaining to the real estate of Rickwood Field, 1819-1957

6 bound legal-sized volumes and one folder with loose pages

These volumes contain plat maps, abstracts of title, surveys, warranty deeds, mortgages, quit claim deeds, incorporation papers, wills, affidavits, titles, tax assessments, powers of attorney, and other pertinent real estate and supporting instruments. Told in formal legal fashion, the park's illustrious history is detailed from 1819 when the United States of America and President James Monroe granted the parcel to the Connecticut Deaf and Dumb Asylum, later known as the American Asylum at Hartford. In 1821, the Asylum granted power of attorney to William Ely who then leased the parcel to W.D. Bradford. Through the years, land was acquired, bought, sold, leased, and mortgaged to a cast of Birminghamians whose names are instantly recognizable to any of us who grew up here. In rough chronological order, here are some of the hands through which parcels of Rickwood's real estate has passed: Tarrant, Lacey, Killough, Kelly, Worthington, Tankersly, Morrow, Hall, Mudd, Heflin, Bush, Highland Lake Co., Birmingham Base Ball Association, Byrom, Alabama Term Railroad Co., Old Colony Trust Co., Wylly, Beltz, Reeder's Gap, Birmingham Railway Co., Atlanta, Birmingham, & Atlantic Railway Company, Equitable Trust Co. of New York, and in 1938, the Birmingham Base Ball Club, Inc.

Also contained within these volumes are supporting documents that are of tremendous historical importance. Among those are both the Declaration of Incorporation of the Birmingham Base Ball Association dated 20 March 1885, the Association's incorporation papers, and its official incorporation certificate of 10 September 1901. Here too is the 23 July 1912 warranty deed from the Highland Lake Co. to the Birmingham Baseball Association in which our infant baseball club exercises its option to purchase Block 6 & N1/2 of Block 3 from the Highland Lake Co. for \$18,000. And, curiously or sadly depending on

your frame of reference, is a 1948 lease to one Carl Tucker, an enterprising gentleman who, for the sum of \$1,800 per year, was allowed to use the Rickwood parking area as a used car auction lot – provided all his automobile offerings were rolled out by 5pm on game days.

The publications and documents collection

The documents in this collection contain records, statistics, lists, numbers, procedures, requirements, and rules from seventy years of professional baseball. From the embossed and personalised Reach and Spalding Guides of the early 1900's – the latter with its stunning art deco colour lithographs - to the plain yet packed Kansas City and Oakland Athletics sketchbooks of the 960s and 70s, these books and binders are survivors and guardians of the blueprints, foundations, and vital systems of our country's national pasttime. Take, for example, one of the rarest of all baseball-related publications, *The Private Telegraphic Code of The National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues*, compiled and edited by W.G. Bramham (president of the Durham club) and released only once in 1933, this pocket-sized book was a tool for baseball scouts and managers designed to save money on telegrams and ensure a message's privacy. From the Foreword:

Example-Suppose you wished to send the following message:

W.G. Bramham, President
Durham, N.C.
John Wilson accepted our terms three hundred
February thirteenth six o'clock. Contract
was signed by player February twenty-fifth.
Rochester Baseball Club.

This message would be sent in code as follows:

W.G. Bramham, President
Durham, N.C.
John Wilson Pactolian Aggressed Acclimate Geld-
ing Hardest. Galbast Genevan.
Rochester Baseball Club

In today's world of instant information, it's perhaps difficult for the younger baseball fans among us to imagine a time when a book was scarce and its content was not for public consumption. This publication was so integral to a club's success that each copy came with both a number and a stern reminder from the Association as to who this little red book belonged to. Numbered copies 202 and 204 are featured in this auction.

Many an earlier edition of Reach and Spalding guides sported a cover embossed with the name of its intended owner. Dating as far back as 1908, we have personal copies belonging to R.H. Baugh, President of the Birmingham Baseball Association in 1914; W.D. Smith, Association Secretary under Baugh and then President in 1915; and C. Molesworth, Birmingham manager from 1909-1921 who led the club to pennants in 1912, 1913, and 1914. Interesting note: A.H. (Rick) Woodward, Barons owner from 1909-1938 had originally planned to acquire future Hall of Famer Miller Huggins to manage the Birmingham club but Mr. Baugh convinced him to go with Molesworth, or Moley as he was fondly called. In another publication offered in this collection, *The House of the Barons* by Zipp Newman and Frank McGowan, Woodward says that was a decision he never regretted. This auction also contains a near vertical library of Heilbroner's Baseball Blue Book, beginning in 1921 and spanning five and a half decades. Many of these are personalised copies bearing signatures: Molesworth, Smith, Paul Florence, and Eddie Glennon.

For the serious student and dedicated baseball researcher, obscure booklets such as the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues Annual Report of the Secretary of 01 November 1920 and the Minutes from the League's Annual Meeting, also in November 1920, promise discovery-filled weekends of little known facts from the sport's past. For the rest of us, thumbing through *The Sporting News' Dope Book* of 1963 or Don Hill's 1948 *Sports Book* is pleasurable entertainment with a dose of sweet nostalgia on the side. If you need to know which company provided the official game ball for the Mexican league in 1943, you'll find that information too, thanks to the thorough folks of Heilbroner. And just in case you need Reggie Jackson's phone number from 1968, that and every other minute detail about every other Kansas City/Oakland's A's player from 1964-1975 is in that club's official yearly Organization Sketchbook.

Have fun, fellow Fans and Fact Junkies! This is a baseball lover's dream library collection.

Signed baseballs, 1947-1975

My dad never thought of Birmingham baseball as a second class citizen. Indeed, it would be difficult for any fan or critic of the game to look through the signatures below and conclude anything other than the fact that Birmingham was home to world class talent on the diamond. Most of the signed baseballs in this collection are Southern Association/Southern League balls signed by Birmingham players. That said, there are plenty of major league autographs among the more than 400 guys who left their signatures behind.

1947 Birmingham Barons, 2 baseballs

Affiliated with the Philadelphia Athletics and managed by Dick Porter, the team played before a then record 367,555 fans in 1947. Signatures include star pitcher Lefty Kellner; slugger Mickey Rutner; home run leader Zeb Eaton; stolen base wiz Joe Scheldt; and future major league scout extraordinaire Al LaMacchia. Other signatures include Jack Teagan; Roy Bruner; Joe Erautt; Don Schmidt; Gene Babbitt; Frank Nelson; John Orphal (most hit-by-pitch); Al Ronay (walked 100 batters); Bob Reid; Dick Adkins (led team with 56 strikeouts); Lou Kahn; Mel Hoderlein; Walt Sierotko; and **Mule Haas**. Haas was Connie Mack's and the Philadelphia A's World Series hitting star in the 1929 contest. Famous for his homers in games 4 and 5, Haas should also be remembered for what he considered his best Series performances: three truly awesome running catches in the 18-inning, 18-17 win against Cleveland in 1932.

1948 Birmingham Barons, Dixie Champions, 1 baseball

Affiliated with the Boston Red Sox and managed by Boston farm system veteran Fred "Whale" Walters. Signatures include Walter Dropo; Hersh Freeman; Al LaMacchia; Jim Wasdell; Ken Rogers; Joe Stephenson; **Tommy O'Brien**; Don Carter; Pete Modicy; George Wilson; Dick Adkins; Fred Walters; George "Skeets" Dickey; Mike Palm; Mickey Rutner; and **Jim Suhecki**. Anniston native Tommy "Obie" O'Brien played for Pittsburgh, Boston, and Washington from 1943-1954 juggling respectable major league performances with regular tune-up trips to the minors. Pitcher Jim Suhecki went on to throw for Boston, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh in the majors and several farm teams until 1954. **This auction features a signed 8 x 10 black and white photograph of both Tommy O'Brien and Jim Suhecki.**

1950 Birmingham Barons, 2 baseballs

Manager Pinky Higgins (Mike) led his team to a 87-62 season in which the Barons outscored their opponents 838 to 637. Here we find the signatures of popular Barons such as Joe DeMaestri; Lefty

Wallace; Norm Zauchin; Fred Harrington; Earl Caldwell; Red Lavigne; Karl Olson; Red Mathis; Lou Damman; Ray Yochim; Bob diPietro; Charlie Maxwell; Charlie Palm; Bob Nelson; Leo Kiely; Boo Ferriss; Jim Atkins; Hal Bamberger; Tom Tatum; Bobby Brooks; Jim Davis; Ralph Holmes; Nick Littlefield; Eddie Lyons; George Strickland; Ralph Atkins; Norman Koney; Jim Watson; and George Taylor. Interestingly, one of the signed baseballs is the Official Southern Association league ball by MacGregor. The other is a scarce Draper Maynard baseball.

1952 Birmingham Barons, 3 baseballs

Managed by Red Mathis and Al Vincent, 1952 wasn't quite a banner year for the home team as the Barons finished with a record of 64-90. There was an abundance of talent that just didn't quite get everything together. Signatures include: Bill Fogg; Jack Hartsell; Dan Ryan; Bill Boyce; John MacKinson; Herb Conyers; John Minarcin; Tommy O'Brien; Cliff Coggin; Al Bennett; Al Van Alstyne; John Miskulin; Dick Young; Walt Rogers; Windy McCall; coach Dave Luongo; Milt Bolling; and Red Mathis. The third baseball has the notation, "Given by Larry di Pippo, BB '51". Signatures on this baseball include Bill Kennedy; Walt Rogers; Lefty Wallace; John Lucadello; Jim Dickey; Dan Ryan; Cliff Coggin; and Al Bennett.

1952 New York Yankees, World Champions

Signatures include **3 Hall of Famers: Phil Rizzuto, Johnny Mize, and Yogi Berra**. Other signatures include: Gene Woodling; Allie Reynolds; Jackie Jensen; Ed Lopat; Ewell Blackwell; Bill Martin; Ray Scarborough; and Hank Bauer. Bauer might be most famous for scoring on an RBI by Billy Martin that clinched the Yankees' fifth consecutive World Series in 1953. In the 1958 Series, Bauer led all batters with 10 hits, 4 homeruns, and 8 RBIs.

1953 Birmingham Barons, 3 baseballs

Ball 1: Signatures include: John Kucab; Bob Kline; Johnny Hunton; George Moskovich; Fred Robbins; Hal Smith; Bill Kennedy; Neil Lettau; Lyle Westrum; Gus Triandos; Emil Tellinger; Tom Sturdivant; Tommy O'Brien; Hal Grote; and Dave Waters.

Ball 2: Signed team ball with faded signatures including: Bill Kennedy; John Kucab; Joe Polich; Norm Siebern; Hal Grote; and Mayo Smith. Smith skippered the team to a 78-76 season.

Ball 3: Single signed Emil Patrick, a right-handed pitcher who had a nine season minor league career for various teams from 1949-1957.

1955 Birmingham Barons All Stars, 1 baseball

Signatures include: Bob Martyn; Moe Thacker; Cal Neeman; Dave Benedict; Country Brown; Jim Russell; Jack McMahan; Al Cicotte; Jerry Lumpe; Gene Hassell; Jim O'Reilly; Ralph Terry; Jim DePaolo; George Prigge; Al Pilarcik; Tom Hamilton; Hal Grote; and Phil Page.

1955 Birmingham Barons, 1 baseball

Affiliated with the New York Yankees and managed by Phil Page, the 1955 Barons posted 88 wins to 65 losses. Skipper Page signed this baseball as did the following: Bob Martyn; Country Brown (Ralph); Buddy Carter (Leon); Tom Hamilton; Ralph Terry; Moe Thacker; Hal Grote; John Gabler; Jim O'Reilly; Cal Neeman; Jim DePalo; Jerry Lumpe; George Benedict; and George Prigge.

1956 Birmingham Barons, 2 baseballs

The Barons went 81-74 under Phil Page's management. Signatures include: Page; Don Richmond; Dan Ryan; Gerry MacKay; John Gebhard; Sam Suplizio; Don Leppert; Fritz Brickell; John Blanchard; Jim O'Reilly; John Jaciuk; Hal Grote; Wilson Parsons (Charles); Lloyd Merritt; George Prigge; Jim Russell; Stan Johnson; and Arnie Portocarrero.

1958 Birmingham Barons, Dixie Champions, multiple baseballs

In the Barons' sophomore year as a Detroit affiliate and with manager Cal Ermer at the helm, 91 wins vs. 62 losses put the team in first place. Many of these baseballs are in pristine condition, in original boxes, and each has more than 20 signatures including: Cal Ermer; Frank Kostro; Joe Grzenda; Dan Ryan, Bob Miller; Gail Henley; Phil Regan; Steve Demeter; Lou Limmer; Jim Raugh; George Alusik; Dick Camilli; Mel Clark; Bob Thorpe; Dave Reed; George Thomas, Bob "Coot" Veale; Bill Harrington; and Carl Wagner.

1960 Birmingham Barons, 2 baseballs

Managed by Skeeter Newsome, the 1960 Barons went 83-70 thanks to the likes of the gentleman who signed these baseballs. They are: Newsome; Bob Micelotta; Gil Dickens; Gail Henley; Ron Shoup; George Thomas; Vince Trakan; Ron Nischwitz; Ron Mrozinski; Jim Hughes; Stan Palys; Alan Koch; Ross Grimsley; Bob Rodgers; Gene Larry; and Dick Young.

1961 Birmingham Barons, 3 baseballs

These baseballs mark the end of the Southern Association, the end of Hal Totten's tenure as Association president; and the end of baseball in Birmingham until 1964. Major league Baseball, in a bold move in 1961, ordered all minor leagues to integrate. Under intense pressure from heavy-duty segregationists like Bull Connor (commissioner of public safety) who absolutely did not want blacks playing at Rickwood, Barons owner Albert Belcher folded the team. Birmingham did not field a team again until 1964. Manager Frank Skaff went out with an 89-63 winning season on the shoulders of the following talented young players: Dick Egan; Bob Micelotta; Leo Smith; Bill Graham; Johnnie Seale; Don Kaiser; Fran Boniar; Doug Gallagher; John Sullivan; George McCue; Don Lumley; Herb Plews; LeGrant Scott; Stan Palys; Howie Koplitz; Pat Duke; Bill Dashner; Alan Koch; Jerry Lock; and Norm Manning.

1964 Birmingham Barons: the first integrated team/game in Birmingham, 5 baseballs

The 1964 Birmingham Barons roster included Manager Haywood Sullivan; Willie Meyer; Woody Huyke; Paul Lindblad; Blue Moon Odom; Nicky Curtis; Ron Thompkins; Hoss Bowlin; John Stutz; Wayne Norton; Rich Allen; Larry Stahl; Ossie Chavarria; Tom Reynolds; Ken Knight; Stan Wojcik; Rosy Rosario; Lou Hemauer; Paul Seitz; Joe Grzenda; Ken Knight; Tony Frulio; and Stan Jones. All of these signatures appear on these 1964 signed team baseballs. **Included is the first ball from that famous first integrated game**, played on Opening Night: 17 April 1964, Attendance 6,564. The 1964 baseball collection ends with the final ball from an exhibition game with Kansas City on 03 August 1964, attendance 16,912, in which the Barons trounced Kansas City 7-4. Birmingham concluded the regular season with an 80-60 record.

Rogelio Alvarez, two signed baseballs and junior Hanna Paint bat: On 08 August 1964, Macon peach All-Star and young Cuban refugee Rogelio Alvarez broke the green "Hanna Paint" seal on the outfield fence. Because it happened to be Bat Night at Rickwood sponsored by local company Hanna Paint, Alvarez received a \$1,000 cash prize for his bullseye slug.

1965 Birmingham Barons, 6 baseballs

These baseballs represent quite a bit of dashed hope and triumphant accomplishment. One baseball records Opening Night on 19 April 1965 and notes a dismal turn out of 2,005 fans. Another ball is the final one pitched by Paul Seitz just 10 days later, a no-hit, 2-0 win against Chattanooga. The remaining baseballs bear the signatures of many great players and a manager whose talent didn't translate into a win season. John McNamara, one of the classiest men in the game, could do no better than a 54-85 season even with the likes of the following: Ted Kubiak; Dave Duncan; Santiago Rosario (Rosy); Rollie

Petranovich; Frank Cipriani; Wayne Norton; Gary Sanossian; Jim Rittwage; Jim Driscoll; Marcel Lacheman; Nick Curtis; Bob Meyer; Robert Davis; Bill Lindner; Willie Meyer; Ken Suarez; Hoss Bowlin; Dick Joyce; Legrant Scott; Larry Wilson; Paul Seitz; John Stutz; Bill Edgerton; Ron Debus; Butch Cole; Stan Wojciak; Bill Landis; Syd O'Brien; Dale Willis; Stan Jones; Chuck Dobson; Jack Newcomer; and future MLB **Hall of Famer Tony LaRussa**.

Single-signed Bert Campaneris, 1 baseball, Official American League Reach baseball

Dagoberto Campaneris aka "Bert" or "Campy": There was something especially endearing to my Dad about Campaneris. I think Dad knew he'd had a rough life growing up and then fleeing Castro's Cuba. Once in the States, Campy struggled with English which Dad always tried to help him with. Larry Colton tells the story in his book, *Southern League*, far more eloquently than I can about University Hospital's first "Negro" patient, Campaneris, upon my Dad's insistence to a reluctant ambulance driver who'd informed my father that University didn't take Negroes. It was Dad who noticed that Campy was so talented he could play every position. It was Dad who realized that a guy playing all nine positions in a single game would make for a hell of a sports story and likely put meat in the seats. Attendance was slacking, after all. So Dad talked to Bert to see if he was up for it and Bert said he was. Dad mentioned the doable gimmick to Finley. Guess what happened? Campy got called up and quickly became the first major league player in history to play all nine positions in a single game. Mom says that Dad never sulked about his idea being swiped which doesn't surprise me at all. Dad was just happy for Bert's accomplishment, especially since it happened on Dad's 33rd birthday, 08 September 1965. It's possible this baseball was a gift from Campy to Dad from that game.

1965 Kansas City A's, 4 baseballs

With coaches like former Yankee southpaw Ed Lopat and **Hall of Famer Luke Appling**, managers Mel McGaha and Haywood Sullivan, and gifted players, one must wonder how the 1965 A's managed to finish dead last with a 59-103 season. Among the talent pool and signatures on these baseballs: Wayne Causey; Luke Appling; Larry Stahl; Jesse Hickman; Ed Lopat; Skip Lockwood; Mike Hershberger; Ed Charles; Bill Bryan; Bert Campaneris; Diego Sequí; John O'Donahughe; Rene Lacheman; Rosy Rosario (Santiago); and Johnny "Blue Moon" Odom.

1967 Kansas City A's, 1 baseball

The '67 A's struggled to win 62 games and lose 99 again finishing dead last in the American League. Another dismal finish was not for lack of talent: the team was managed by Al Dark and Hall of Famer Luke Appling and Ed Lopat handled the GM's responsibilities. Signatures include: Al dark; Chuck Dobson; John Donaldson; Dan Cater; Wes Stock; Paul Lindblad; Mike Hershberger; Allan Lewis; Ramon Webster; Phil Roof; Dick Green; Jim Gosger; Campy Campaneris; Ted Kubiak; Jack Aker; Diego Sequí; Joe Nossek; Tim Talton; Rick Monday; Ken Suarez; Ossie Chavarria; Tony Pierce; Bob Hofman; and Al Vincent.

1968 Birmingham A's

Gus Niarhos now skipper, the '68 A's mustered a 66-74 year. Signatures include: Mike Canfield; Nicky Curtis; Stan Wojcik; Dan Greenfield; Elmo Plaskett; Bob Clark; Tim Talton; Niarhos; **future Hall of Famer Rollie Fingers**; Marty Martinez; Hoss Bowlin; Milciades Olivo (Mike); Darrell Evans; and Ethan Blackaby.

1969 Birmingham A's, 5 baseballs

Manager Gus Niarhos edges a 78-62 winning season out of his team which includes: Gonzalo Marquez; Don Buschhorn; Warren Bogle; Bob Clark; Bob Stickels; Pete Koegel; Gene Tennace; John Strohmyer; Tommy Fullen; LaDon Boyd; Greg Conger; Jim Panther; Nicky Curtis; Stan Wojcik; Kelly Prior; Anselmo

Martinez; Jim Pamlyne; Bill Fitzgerald; Bill Adkins; Jim Panther; Bill McNulty; Elmo Plaskett; Brien Bickerton; Risty Adkins (William); and Vida Blue.

1969 Southern League All Stars, 1 baseball

Signatures include Kurt Bevacqua, James Marshall, and Dave Concepción of the Asheville Tourists; Bill McNulty of the Barons; Jack Jenkins and Glen Clark of the Savannah Senators; Ed Fiskland from the Columbus White Sox; Danny Thompson and Bill Zepp from the Charlotte Hornets; Hagan Anderson of the Montgomery Rebels; and Ralph Rowe from Minnesota.

1971 Birmingham A's, 3 baseballs

Manager Phil Cavaretta never played a day in the minor leagues but at age 19, he was playing in the World Series. As a Chicago Cub, he broke no less than 6 batting records for teenage players including 82 RBIs in 1935. Phil managed here in the early 1970s and his win/loss records certainly don't reflect the depth of his talent. These signed baseballs from the 1971 48-93 A's team include these signatures: Cavaretta; Bill Geiger; Steve Easton; Marshal Crossan; Brien Bickerton; Sam Lovelace; Tom Cook; Chris "Wildman" Floethe; Gil Marcano; Don Yingling; Charles Chaney; Gene Dussan; Al Lewis; John Major; Pete McKenzie (George); Fred Kampf; Roger Cain; Buddy Copeland; Tom Sandt; Tom Smith; Orlando Gomez; Steve Mastin (Paul); Mike Olivo; Sam Ellis; Reggie Sanders; and Manny Trillo

1971 Oakland A's, 1 baseball

Even with Dick Williams and his rowdy gang winning 101 games in 1971, the A's didn't win the Championship. That would have to wait a year and so would the following players who signed this baseball: Mike Epstein; Frank Fernandez; David Duncan; Rick Monday; Chuck Dobson; Williams; Bert Campaneris; Mike Hegan; Dick Green; Larry Brown; Jerry Lumpe; Darold Knowles; Diego Sequí; Johnny L. Odom (Blue Moon); Bob Locker; Sal Bando; Jim Roland; Curt Blefary; Joe Rudi; Tom Davis; Gene Tennace; Vida Blue; and future Hall of Famers Reggie Jackson; Rollie Fingers; and Jim "Catfish" Hunter.

1972 Birmingham A's, 2 baseballs

As The Show in Oakland became one of the best baseball dynasties in history, its farm team in Birmingham was still on a downward slide. Manager Cavaretta and the A's couldn't garner 50 wins but still got some new talent. Signatures include: Cavaretta; Gary Marion (Hank); Buddy Copeland; Tommy Sandt; Bob Clark; Mike Weathers; Kieth Lieppman; Bob Wolf; Mike Barlow; Charlie Chant; Bob Williams; Gil Marcano; Steve Mastin; Bill Geiger; Dale Sanner; Joe Lindsey; Steve Easton; Pat Tatom; and Tommy Smith.

1972 Oakland A's, World Champions, 1 baseball

Four Hall of Famers signed this baseball. They are Orlando Cepeda; Reggie Jackson; Catfish Hunter; and Rollie Fingers. Many other dynamic players who were right there at the core of the A's nucleus also signed including: Mike Epstein; David Duncan; Ted Kubiak; Dal Maxvill; Sal Bando; Johnny L. Odom (Blue Moon); Brant Alyea; Tom Cullen; Bob Locker; Dick Williams (manager); Berto Campaneris; Joe Rudi; Gene Tennace; Matty Alou; Vida Blue; Kenny Holtzman; Larry Brown; Mike Hegan; Dick Green; Don Mincher; Jor Horlen; and Darold Knowles.

1973 Birmingham A's, 2 baseballs

With former Yankee pinch hitter Harry Bright now managing, the Birmingham club continued its struggle to win more than lose in 1973, finishing with a record of 50-88. Signatures include: Pat Tatom; Keith Lieppman; Al Lewis; Nick Parrilla; Stan Bockewitz; Rick O'Daniels; Bill VanBommel; Dennis Myers; Bob Wolf; Jim Seida; Kirk Allison; Ray Leavitt; Mike Barlow; Frank Bowling; and Harry Bright.

1973 Oakland A's, World Champions, 1 baseball

Though he would have made good on his threat to quit – win or lose – after the 1973 Series because he'd had enough of Finley, manager Dick Williams did it for the second year in a row. He's signed this baseball along with Bill Conigliaro; Johnny L. Odom (Blue Moon); Horacio Pina; Berto Campaneris; Paul Lindblad; Mike Andrews; Jerry Adair; Sal Bando; Vic Davalillo (Pompejo); Mike Hegan; Ray Fosse; Timothy Hardy; Joe Rudi; Gene Tennace; Larry Holtzman; Wes Stock; Vida Blue; Dick Green; Ted Kubiak; Darold Knowles; Deron Johnson; Jesus Alou; and future Hall of Famers Reggie Jackson; Rollie Fingers; and Jim "Catfish" Hunter.

1975 Birmingham A's, 4 baseballs

By 1975, under Harry Malmberg's leadership, the Birmingham A's were heading in an upward direction with a 65-69 year. Signatures include: Chris Wiberly; Clarence Harrell; Denny Stegman; Rob Picciolo; Don Spare; Malmberg; Ron Beaurivage; Jim Capeheart; Rick Ingalls; Bob Argenti; Dennis Haines; Gary Woods; Chris Batton; Wayne Gross, Derek Bryant; Mark Sinovich; and Rick Lysander.

1975 Oakland A's, 1 baseball

Oakland won again in 1974 with Al Dark at the helm. In the 1975 season, he and his team won 98 games and lost 64 in the regular season and then lost the American League Series to Boston in three games to 0. On that team were three future Hall of Famers, Reggie Jackson, Rollie Fingers, and Billy Williams. They've signed here alongside: Claudell Washington; Ted Kubiak; Phil Garner; Ray Fosse; Dark; Bert Campaneris; Glen Abbott; Mike Norris; Pau Lindblad; Bob Winkles; Joe Rudi; Dave Hamilton; Sal Bando; Don Hopkins; Wes Stock; Billy Grabarkewitz; Jim Todd; Ken Holtzman; Gene Tennace; and Vida Blue.

PLAYER NOTES

Poor **Mike Andrews**. Or should I say poor Willie Mays? In 1973, Willie Mays won Game 2 for the Mets on the last hit of his career. It was a hell of a single up the middle but unfortunately for Mays, a pair of errors by A's reserve second baseman Mike Andrews got most of the press. After the game, Finley dropped Andrews from the roster. Fortunately commissioner Bowie Kuhn stepped in and reinstated Andrews and of course the A's went on to win the championship in seven games. So who knew about Willie Mays' final hit?

Vida Blue or simply Vida because that's what Dad called him would be one of the guys that - if Dad were still around - he'd wonder aloud why Vida wasn't Hall of Fame. (Dad didn't wonder aloud often.) He just thought Vida was that good and it turned out, he was. In 1970, Minnesota was the division winner and at all of 21 years old, the rookie Vida no-hit 'em. He pitched another shutout in 1970 and it wasn't even his first full year. In 1971, Blue's phenomenal first full year, he fanned 301 batters, posted a league-leading 1.82 ERA, and had a 24-8 record. Nevermind the American League Cy Young and MVP awards Vida received that year.

Sal Bando. Tough and sporting one of those great handlebar mustaches made famous by the early 1970s Oakland A's, third baseman Sal Bando was one of those guys who didn't play in Birmingham but was one of my Dad's favourite guys. Finley yanked the Birmingham team after 1965 and moved it to Mobile where Bando did play for the Mobile Athletics in 1966. A few years later, the muscular Bando was a force to be reckoned with in Oakland, posting 94 RBIs and 24 HRs in 1971 and earning stripes as Co-Captain of the team that would be World Champs in 1972, 73, and 74. He's also the guy that give

Finley the finger in the 1973 Series: Finley had deposed of Bando's teammate Mike Andrews after Andrews committed a couple of errors that gave the Mets Game 2 over the A's. Sal distributed black arm bands with the number 17 (Andrews' number) to his fellow Athletics which they proceeded to wear in Game 3. This endeared Sal to the delighted Oakland fans who shared in the team's collective hatred of its owner.*

* It seems Charles Finley was not a racist and that's as far as my praise for him goes. My personal conclusion is that Finley was a tyrant, a menace to and a cruel joke within baseball, a shameless usurper, and ultimately an asshole who cared little about anyone. The only person with whom I've spoken who didn't have anything negative to say about the man was my father. I do not know how Dad put up with him for 13 years other than 1) my Dad was smarter and knew it; 2) Dad was great at his job; and 3) Dad put the club first and didn't have an ego or agenda. It took Finley a few years to spell Dad's name correctly: "Glynn" and not "Glen" or "Glenn".

Dave Concepción: After a short stint with Cincinnati's AA and AAA teams, Dave became part of The Big Red Machine that was so dominant in the 1970s it was often compared with sacred clubs such as the 1927 New York Yankees. He shows up here on the 1969 Southern League All Star Game baseball.

Al Dark: Dark was the National League's Rookie of the Year in 1948 and that was before two TOTY were awarded (one for each league.) He would go on to manage the 1974 World Champion Oakland A's.

Walter Dropo: Always a favourite here in Birmingham, Dropo received the Rookie of the Year award with the Boston Red Sox in 1950. Two seasons later in 1952, he ties the Major League records with 12 consecutive hits in 12 at bats.

Dave Duncan: Catcher Dave Duncan was at the nucleus of the dominant Oakland A's championship teams of the early 1970s. He played in Birmingham in 1965 and alongside future A's teammate Reggie Jackson in 1967. His signature appears on several baseballs. Also included in this collection is a baseball he hit 508 in Charlotte on 30 May 1965.

Zeb Eaton: Another home crowd favourite, Zeb had 12 homeruns in 1947, more than any other Baron that season. He also topped the team with a batting average of .359. Fellow pitcher **Al "Lefty" Kellner** struck out 107 while launching nine wild pitches at frightened batters during the season of '47.

Dave "Boo" Ferriss: Lefty Red Sox hurler Boo Ferriss won 21 games as a rookie in 1945 and was second in the American League in both innings (265) and complete games (26). The next season, he won 26 games. His playing career was somewhat short-lived and he was sent down to Birmingham in 1950. His signature appears on a 1950 Barons signed team ball and on a personal letter he sent to my Dad during his tenure as Athletic Director at Delta State College.

Charles "Whitey" Glazner: Sometimes in, sometimes out control, Barons Hall of Famer White Glazner threw for us almost 100 years ago. In 1920, he won 24 games vs. 10 lost with a win percentage of .706 despite walking 101 batters and hitting nine with wild pitches. His autograph is here only once, on the same Official Southern Association baseball signed by **Major League Hall of Famer Joe Sewell**.

Joseph Wheeler Sewell was a good 'ole boy from Titus, Alabama, a Crimson Tide baseball and football vet, and baseball's unofficial patron saint of optometry. He was almost impossible to strike out: over 14 years and 7,132 at bats, he fanned only 114 times - or only once in every 63 trips to the plate. More impressively, he kept getting better with age. During his last three seasons with the Yankees, Sewell

struck out just 15 times in 1,511 plate appearances. That's once per 101 at bats. Consistently batting .300, Sewell also happened to be the very best shortstop in the field during his peak years with the Cleveland Indians in the mid 1920s.

Shaky Joe Grzenda loved his caffeine and might be the most popular Baron ever to wear the uniform. He pitched for us in 1958, 1960 and 1961, in 1964, and finally in 1967. He weaved through many major and minor league teams including, Kansas City, Detroit, Washington, Minnesota and St. Louis.

Mule Haas: Haas was Connie Mack's and the Philadelphia A's World Series hitting star in the 1929 contest. Famous for hitting his homers in games 4 and 5, Haas should also be remembered for what he considered his best Series performances: three truly awesome running catches in the 18-inning win against Cleveland in 1932.

The Reggie Jackson Shoe Order

In the 1970s, the Beconta company had a huge percentage of the market share on ski gear. It was also at one point the largest distributor of athletic shoes in the United States. Executives must've been Reggie fans; if you'll take a close look at the purchase order, you'll see "Sold to: Reggie Jackson" and "N/C". The Oakland Athletics were the first team to wear white spikes, not surprising given Finley's proclivity toward garish uniforms. Fun fact: When the Kansas A's went to the "Kelly Green, Wedding Gown White, and California Gold uniforms" in 1963, American League All Star manager Ralph Houk benched Norm Siebern of the A's because he felt Siebern's uniform would embarrass the rest of the AL All Stars. Of course, a winning team changes everything and by 1973, no one cared how tacky The Swingin' A's uniforms were. These white and green-winged Puma cletes would still look stylish on Mr. October. These are three pair, unlaced, unworn, and in original boxes.

The Green Bats

Another idea of Charles Finley that didn't take. These bats were custom made for both the major and minor league teams in the Kansas City franchise. One might have been game or practice-used but as pretty as the Louisville Sluggers are all greened out, the coloured bats never caught on. Green baseball bats fared much better as 16" stadium giveaways.

Of the **miniature bats** included in this auction, all are interesting and certainly rare. Of particular note is the 1958 mini bat marking Eddie Glennon's much deserved recognition as Minor League Executive of the Year. Glennon was instrumental in revitalizing Birmingham baseball and restoring the prestige Rickwood enjoyed in its earlier years.

Large stadium pennants

Both of these pennants were won by the Mobile Athletics. The larger, at 21 feet in length, is from the 1966 league championship and the smaller (approximately 15 feet) is from the 1957 Southern League play-off championship game. I can't find any photographs of the pennants hanging in the stadium at Mobile but they probably did. My Dad probably ended up with these after Finley, not wanting to leave behind symbols of his greatness, cooled off and decided to return the A's to Birmingham for the 1967 season. I believe these to be 75% wool and 25% nylon.

Photographs, signed/unsigned

Jim Piersall, one of our favorites:

Jimmy played outfield for Birmingham in 1951 and 1952. Jimmy was one of those players that became a lifelong friend to Mom and Dad even though both of them thought he ought to think twice about a making a catch that meant potential brain damage. Piersall left Birmingham and had a prolific and very respectable career in the majors that spanned nearly two decades.