

# Hank Gowdy, Who Caught For 1914 'Miracle Braves'

Henry M. (Hank) Gowdy, catcher for the 1914 Miracle Braves and the first major league player to enlist in the armed forces in World War I, died at Columbus, O., August 1. He was 76 years old.

The history-making Braves, managed by George Stallings, were in last place on July 4 before winning 60 of their last 76 games to capture the National League pennant.

Gowdy, who had hit .243 during the regular season, became the batting hero of the Braves' four-game sweep over the heavily-favored Athletics in the World Series.

Leading the way in the upset, Hank hit .545, still a record for an N. L. player in the classic. Of his six hits in 11 official trips, five were for extra-bases—one homer, one triple and three doubles. He also walked five times.

Gowdy also appeared in the 1923 and '24 Series after becoming a member of the Giants. Pancho Snyder was the Giants' regular catcher in '23 and Gowdy's Series role was that of a substitute and pinch-hitter.

However, in 1924, Gowdy was behind the bat in all seven of the Giants' games with the Senators and figured in one of the memorable incidents in Series history.

**Stumbled Over Mask**  
In the twelfth inning of the final game, the score tied, 3-3, Muddy Ruel of the Senators lifted an easy foul fly. Gowdy ripped off his mask, but accidentally threw it in his own path as he went back for the ball.

"I stumbled over it," he once said in describing what happened. "I kicked the mask and it bounced in my way again and threw me off stride so that I was unable to make a catch I ordinarily would have handled."

Given a life at the plate, Ruel doubled. Earl McNeely followed with a grounder that struck a pebble and bounced over third baseman Freddie Lindstrom's head for a single to give the Senators a 4-3 victory.

A native of Columbus, Gowdy got his first taste of professional baseball as a janitor and scoreboard boy for the Columbus (American Association) Senators while a high school student.

In the spring of 1908, Hank asked Bob Quinn, an official of the Co-



Hank Gowdy

lumbus club and president of the Ohio State League, for a chance as a player. Quinn placed him with Lancaster, where he made his O. B. debut as a first baseman. He was six feet, two and one-half inches tall.

After two years at Lancaster, Gowdy was acquired by Dallas (Texas). He batted .312 in the 1910 season, leading to his acquisition by the Giants. However, he played only two games under Manager John J. McGraw, who suggested that he be converted into a catcher. Before he could don the mask and mitt, Hank was traded to Boston, where he began his career behind the plate as a second-string catcher in 1912.

In 1913, he was sent to Buffalo (International) for more experience, but the following year, back with the Braves as their regular catcher, Gowdy was a leader in the club's pennant drive.

**Fought in World War I**  
On May 2, 1917, Gowdy volunteered for the Fourth Ohio Militia, which quickly became the 166th Infantry of the 42nd, or Rainbow, Division. As a sergeant, he reached France in October, 1917, and fought at Chateau Thierry, St. Mihiel, Champagne and in the Argonne Forest. After rejoining the Braves in 1919, he changed uniforms in 1923 when he was traded to the Giants, along with pitcher John Watson, for catcher Earl Smith and pitcher Jesse Barnes. The deal proved a good one for Gowdy, enabling him to share in the Giants' World Series receipts in 1923 and '24.

At 35 years of age, the veteran catcher reached his batting peak in 1924, hitting .325 in 87 games. He also batted .325 in 1925, but only in 47 games, before being sent to his hometown club at Columbus in 1926. He also was with Minneapolis (American Association) for part of '26 and all of 1927 and then was with Rochester (International) in 1928.

Returning to the Braves, Gowdy served as a coach from 1929 to 1937. In 1929, he also took part in ten games as a catcher and in 1930 made his last active appearance in 16 games. For his major league service, covering 1,044 games, he had a career batting average of .270.

**Tried to Enlist Again**  
Gowdy switched to the Reds as a coach in 1938. When World II broke out, he sought to return to the Army, but the 53-year-old volunteer was turned down. Undaunted, he kept trying and finally succeeded in persuading the Army to enroll him as a Special Services officer at Fort Benning, Ga. He was given the rank of captain and then promoted to major.

The baseball diamond at the Army installation subsequently was named Gowdy Field in his honor.

The war over, Gowdy resumed his job with the Reds. He was a coach for the Giants in 1947 and '48. After managing Dayton in 1949, he was a scout and troubleshooter for the Indians' organization in 1951 and '52. His last official connection with baseball was as a scout for the Giants in 1958.

## Be a Classy Catcher First, Hitter Second, Gowdy Said

COLUMBUS, O.—There's too much emphasis on hitting and not enough on the finer aspects of catching, Hank Gowdy, the old backstop, said in an interview a few years ago.

"You'll notice how scarce good catchers are," Gowdy said. "The one big reason is the play being given hits and runs. Everyone is swinging for the fence now. Everyone is a potential home-run hitter, thanks to the rabbit ball, and the catchers are hitters first, with catching being given secondary consideration."

"Not long ago, it was the exact opposite. The catcher had to be skilled in handling his batterymate. He had to know every hitter, call a perfect game and keep on top of his pitchers. He had to see that every last ounce of ability was being put forth on every pitch."

"Now the slogan is swing that bat and the finer points of catching are forgotten."

Gowdy had agreed that there were some other factors involved, like more money.

## Hal H. Dixon

Hal H. Dixon, 46, former National League umpire, died of a heart attack at Chesnee, S. C., July 28, after stopping there on his way to his home at Galax, Va.

A native of Mt. Vernon Springs, N. C., Dixon had a whirl as a pitcher with South Boston (Bi-State) and Salem-Roanoke (Virginia) in 1939.

"I knew I didn't have it as a player, but I wanted to stay in the game somehow," he once said. After working on his father's dairy farm, he decided to try umpiring and attended Bill McGowan's school in Florida in 1948.

He made his debut in the Evangeline League that year and then umpired in the Tri-State League before being promoted to the staff of the American Association in August, 1951. The N. L. brought him up in 1953.

Dixon, who was 6-3½ and weighed 225 pounds, was a rugged umpire. In 1956, he suffered a fractured jaw when he was hit by a wild throw during an exhibition game. His jaw had to be wired and braced, but despite the handicap, he was on the job when the regular season opened.

Financially independent, Dixon quit as an umpire after the 1959 season and stuck to his decision, although the N. L. made several efforts to induce him to remain on its staff.

**Dr. David J. Jones**, a major stockholder in the Cubs, who reportedly owning more shares than anyone except Phil K. Wrigley, died in Chicago, July 28.

He also was the former owner of the old Chicago Cardinals of the National Football League, buying the team in 1929 for \$12,000. He sold it in 1933 for \$50,000 to Charles Bidwill, whose sons now operate the Cardinals in St. Louis.

Dr. Jones, 82, was the city physician of Chicago, heading a staff of 51 doctors, who were responsible for medical examination and emergency treatment of city employees. He had held the job for 44 years and continued to work almost daily despite his age.

**Bruce P. Lockley**, sports director of KCRA radio and television stations in Sacramento, Calif., died of cancer at the age of 27, July 26.

A graduate of Ithaca College, he worked as an announcer for several New York stations and served in the Army before coming to Sacramento.

**Louis W. Bergesch**, father of Bill Bergesch, stadium manager for the Yankees, died in St. Louis, July 27. Seventy-five years old, he was a retired real estate man.

## Basin Armstrong and Robson Add Zip To Faint Hearts

By DON LINDNER  
RAPID CITY, S. D.

The scouts don't agree, but Valentine Manager Jim Railey believes he has a professional prospect in Tom Robson, first baseman from Utah State. But then Railey may be prejudiced; he's also baseball coach at Utah State.

The record shows Robson and Jim Armstrong, second baseman from Arizona State, are providing a solid one-two punch for the Hearts in the Basin League.

After the first 30 games, each had 29 runs batted in for a club that was consistently in the lower division. Armstrong was batting .374 and Robson .308.

"The scouts apparently aren't interested in Tom," said Railey about his 6-3, 220-pound infielder. Railey believes Robson's physical statistics are misleading.

"He is as agile as a cat. He can react and has good hands. They say you have to hit a ton in pro ball, but Tom can hit a ton. I would like to be the scout that signs him. I know he'll stick."

A year ago, Armstrong batted .311 as one of only five .300 hitters in the

## Basin League

Club	W.	L.	Pct.	G.B.
Pierre	25	12	.676	.....
Winner	23	13	.639	1½
Rapid City	20	16	.556	4½
Mobridge	16	18	.471	7½
Valentine	13	22	.371	11
Sturgis	11	27	.289	14½

summer league for college players. "He usually gets a piece of the ball," Railey said.

Armstrong did just that with an 8-for-10 performance in two consecutive nights as the Hearts beat Sturgis, 10-2, and then lost to the Titans, 5-4.

The Hearts, however, had the misfortune of being another no-hit victim this season. Winner's John Hilts stopped Valentine, 11-0, allowing only two base-runners, both on walks. The Wyoming righthander struck out 14. Third Baseman Roger Heirigs (Yankton) made a fine throw on a ground ball in the ninth to preserve the no-hitter.

Rapid City's Gary Moore (Texas) earlier tossed a no-hitter against the Hearts.

## Allen Continues Streak

Unbeaten Art Allen (Memphis State) won his fifth game, stifling Sturgis, 2-0. The Pierre righthander allowed but two hits.

Gary Moore collected four hits and pitched a three-hitter as Rapid City bumped Pierre, 4-2.

Bill Carthel (Sul Ross) drove in five runs on a homer and single in Rapid City's 7-3 win over Sturgis. A pinch-hit single by Dan Frisbee (Arizona) gave Rapid City a 3-2 victory over Pierre.

Richard Nairn (Guilford) slapped a two-run homer to present Sturgis a 5-4 win over Valentine.

**Basin Beat:** A crowd of 2,430 turned out at Mobridge and Rice's Bill Palmer made it a gala occasion with a three-hit, 7-0 victory over Winner. . . Dave Grangaard (Arizona) cracked two homers in one game for Valentine. . . Marv Brosset, Mobridge outfielder from Northeast Louisiana, had a 13-game hitting string snapped. . . Mobridge's Mike Otolski played pitching hero one night and batting star the next. The 6-4 righthander became the league's first eight-game winner by beating Winner, 7-4. Three nights later, Otolski, playing first base, cracked a homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to beat Rapid City, 2-1.



Tom Robson

## Central Illinois Murphy Clicks As Loop's First 10-Game Victor

By DICK LIEN  
PEORIA, Ill.

The Central Illinois Collegiate League had its first ten-game winner in its four-year history and predictably it was Bloomington's Tom Murphy (Ohio).

Murphy, running his record to 10-0 this year and 19-4 in two years, stopped Springfield, 9-2, on a two-hitter, July 31, for his record-breaking victory. The only hits off him were by Joe Staples (Texas A&M) and Steve Vaughn (Southeast Missouri).

The only other pitchers to win as many as nine games in CIC play were Charlie Hartenstein (Texas) of Champaign-Urbana in 1963 and Marty Pattin (Eastern Illinois) of Champaign-Urbana and John Collier (Texas) of Galesburg in 1964. Murphy joined them with nine wins last year.

Good pitching was the key to first-half champion Bloomington's rise to near the top in the second half. Culminating with Murphy's two-hitter, the Bobcats had three straight sharp games.

## Teammates Turn in Victories

Two days previously, Dale Spier (Arizona State) won his fifth straight game as he stopped Springfield on a four-hitter. A grand-slam homer by Jim Hoff (Xavier) was the difference in a 6-2 victory. The following day, Eddie Sennett (Illinois State) struck out 11 and beat Galesburg on five hits, 4-2.

Pitcher Nick Radakovic (Michigan) of Lincoln was also a hot hitter. He had two home runs to contribute to victories. On July 26, with Dick Noffke (Northwestern) winning his sixth game, Radakovic, playing right field, tagged a homer. Then, July 31, while pitching, he hit another to win a 7-6 game from Galesburg.

In the second game of a double-header that day, Galesburg won, 2-1, on a home run in the final inning by Pat Prini (Iowa). In that one, Tim Plodine (Arizona) pitched a three-hitter and won his fifth game after four early-season losses.

Peoria pitcher Tim Chiles (Texas A&M), a former Basin League star, fell on hard times again when he lost to Lincoln, 4-2, in 11 innings, July 30. The winning runs scored on a throwing error by Chiles, who was now 0-6. Jeff Browne (Western Michigan) of Bloomington, 7-0 for the Bobcats last year, fell to 1-5, July 28, when he lost to Springfield and Rich Hicks (LSU), 5-4.

Springfield, getting lusty hitting, moved into the second half lead, August 1, with a 6-5 victory over Galesburg on a triple by Vaughn with two out in the eighth inning.

## CIC League

Club	W.	L.	Pct.	G.B.
Springfield	10	4	.714	.....
Bloomington	9	4	.692	½
Galesburg	7	7	.500	3
Lincoln	4	9	.308	5½
Peoria	2	8	.200	6

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