

Pepper Martin--Firebrand of Gashouse Gang

Cards' Whirlwind of 1931 World Series Dead at 61

John Leonard (Pepper) Martin, one of the most colorful players in baseball history as the heart of the Cardinals' famed Gashouse Gang, died at the age of 61 at McAlester (Okla.) General Hospital, March 5. Martin had suffered a heart attack the previous night at his nearby ranch.

Martin, who raised top-quality Hereford cattle on his 970-acre ranch 17 miles northeast of McAlester, had planned to coach for the Tulsa Oilers of the Texas League this season. He did color commentary on the broadcasts of Oiler games last year.

The former third baseman-outfielder, who spent 13 seasons with the Cardinals from 1928 to 1944, was nicknamed Pepper in 1925 by Blake Harper, president of the Cardinals' Fort Smith, Ark., farm club, for his aggressive and sometimes almost ferocious style of play. He also was tabbed The Wild Horse of the Osage.

Martin, whose hitting and daredevil recklessness on the base paths made him a baseball legend in his own time, first reached national prominence with a dramatic one-man show in the 1931 World Series against the favored Philadelphia Athletics.

The Cardinals won, four games to three, as Martin equaled a Series record with 12 hits against such pitching stars as Lefty Grove, George Earnshaw and Waite Hoyt. The record stood until the Yankees' Bobby Richardson broke it last year.

Among Pepper's hits were four doubles and a home run, and he scored five runs and batted in five, four in one game.

Stole at Cochrane's Expense

He also stole five bases in six attempts against Hall of Fame catcher Mickey Cochrane, though he always contended that he stole them on the pitchers. He also felt he was safe the one time he was called out.

Several years later, Pepper became an integral part of the Cardinal teams which came to be known as the Gashouse Gang and included such other colorful figures as Frankie Frisch, Dizzy and Paul Dean, Leo Durocher, Ernie Orsatti, Rip Collins, Joe Medwick, Bill Delancey and others.

It was with several members of this fun-loving aggregation that Martin helped form the Mississippi Mudcat band, which serenaded players and fans alike in the dugout before games, on trains, in hotel lobbies and practically any time the musical urge struck them.

Pepper, with his "gittar," was the maestro, Bob Weiland blew the jug, Frenchy Bordagaray played the washboard, Bill McGee the fiddle and Lon Warneke the guitar. Other players were later added to the group as they

Pepper, Dizzy Built a Fire To Counteract Blazing Sun

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—A partner of Pepper Martin in much of his mischievous activity was the future Hall of Fame pitcher, Dizzy Dean.

On one afternoon when the temperature was a sizzling 110 degrees, Pepper and Dizzy gathered scraps of paper and pieces of wood and built a fire in front of the dugout.

Then they obtained blankets and mocked the blazing sun by squatting, Indian style, in front of the fire. Naturally, the patrons of the game roared with delight.

came up to the club from the minors. Everybody in the band improvised and it was a rarity that the members finished a piece at the same moment. Pepper's favorites included, "Willie, My Toes Are Cold," "Birmingham Jail," and "They Buried My Sweetie Under an Old Pine Tree."

Martin, whose trademark was the head-first slide, batted .298 in his major league career, all of which was spent with St. Louis, and his best full-season average was .316 in 1933. He led the National League with 122 runs scored the same year.

Two-Time Series Star

His success in World Series play was not confined to 1931. He hit .355 as the Cards captured a seven-game Series from the Tigers in 1934.

Earlier, he appeared in the 1928 Series as a pinch-runner. Overall, he hit .418 in World Series action with 23 hits and 14 runs in 15 games.

In 1941, Martin joined Sacramento of the Pacific Coast League as a playing-manager and led the club to a second-place finish. Sacramento finished first the following year, after which Martin moved to the Interna-

Pepper Was a Keen Student Of Branch Rickey Rhetoric

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Pepper Martin was a great admirer of Branch Rickey, a Cardinal executive for many years, and Rickey's eloquent rhetorical style rubbed off on Martin.

Pepper had a penchant for the use of big words and prided himself on his oratorical abilities.

He was in great demand as a speaker and delighted St. Louis fans at a reunion of the 1944 Cardinals and St. Louis Browns last summer with such statements as, "I hesitate to remove my hat on this glorious occasion because my locks are shorn."

tional League to manage Rochester in 1943.

He returned to the Cardinals in 1944 and helped them to a pennant as a utility outfielder.

After finishing his playing career in the big leagues, Martin managed teams at San Diego in the Pacific Coast League, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale in the Florida International League, Portsmouth, Va., in the Piedmont League, Macon, Ga., and Greenville in the South Atlantic League and Des Moines in the Western League.

The muscular, raw-boned Martin, who was known for his hawk nose, wide shoulders and wider grin, continued his aggressive ways even as a manager.

On one occasion in Florida, he was suspended and fined for choking an umpire. He was suspended another time for hitting a fan whom he thought had become too abusive.

Learned to Control Temper

Eventually, he reformed to some extent and said when he joined the Cubs as a coach in 1956, "There was a time when if I was insulted or had just taken too much, I simply would double up my fists and start swinging. But now I have learned to walk away."

"I have never hurt anyone intentionally," he added. "I always played hard, but never dirty or viciously."

He returned to Miami to manage that city's entry in the International League in 1959 and later served as a coach at Tulsa.

Martin, the son of an Oklahoma prairie farmer, was born on February 29, 1904, a leap year, and thus saw his birth date come around only every fourth year.

Martin broke into Organized Ball in 1924 with Greenville of the East Texas League as an outfielder-pitcher. After playing for Fort Smith, Syracuse and Houston, he joined the Cardinals in 1928. He was back at Houston in 1929 and Rochester during most of the 1930 season, before returning to the Cardinals at the end of the campaign to begin an 11-year stay.

Pepper was a God-fearing and profoundly honest individual, but he was also a master prankster and joker. The stories of his mischievous activities are countless.

Played for House of David

He was a man of diverse interests. He co-managed a heavyweight fighter, played basketball for the bearded House of David team, served as a deputy sheriff, was an enthusiast of midget auto racing and even played professional football, doing some place-kicking for the Brooklyn Dodgers of the National Football League in 1948.

His greatest forte, other than baseball, was as an outdoorsman. He loved to fish and hunt, especially quail, and he also judged bird dogs.

But despite his many interests, baseball always was his first love. Even in 1961, when he was out of O. B., he coached baseball at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, where he served as athletic director.

He is survived by his widow, Ruby, and three married daughters, Mrs. Alynne Cherry of Tulsa, Okla., Mrs. Jenny Lee Weathersby of Farmers Beach, Tex., and Mrs. Alice Foor of Blocker, Okla.



PEPPER MARTIN . . . A Cardinal of the Highest Caliber

Schang, Yanks' Star Catcher, Dead at 75

Walter Henry (Wally) Schang, 75, who caught for the Yankees during the early Babe Ruth era, died at St. Luke's Hospital in St. Louis following a long illness, March 6.

Schang, whose major league career spanned 19 seasons, appeared in six World Series, including three straight with the Yankees starting in 1921. He also saw Series action with the Athletics in 1913 and 1914 and the Red Sox in 1918.

After hitting .333 in his pro debut with Buffalo (International) in 1912, Schang was promoted to the Athletics the following season and showed a .266 batting mark for 77 games.

A switch-hitter, Schang lifted his average to .287 for the 1914 A's, but he was a feeble .167 hitter in the fall classic against the "Miracle Braves."

Wally Caught Babe Ruth

This proved Schang's worst Series performance. He had been a .357 hitter in 1913, and enjoyed his best Series in 1918 with .444.

Ruth, who went on to gain home-run fame with the Yankees, picked up a pair of pitching victories in the 1918 Series against the Phillies with Schang as his receiver.

Traded to the Red Sox in 1917, Schang, a native of Wales, N. Y., started a string of four straight seasons of hitting .300 or better with a .306 mark in 1919. He batted .305 his final season with the Red Sox in 1920 and posted .316 and .319 averages his first two years with the Yankees.

Schang dropped out of the charmed .300 circle in 1923, but bounced back for his best season in 1926, when he reeled off a .330 average for the St. Louis Browns. He spent four years



Wally Schang

with the Browns before returning to the A's in 1930 and wound up his major league career the next season when he appeared in 30 games as a 40-year-old receiver for the Tigers.

Thus ended a big league career that spanned 1,840 games and found Schang posting a .284 lifetime mark. He used his legs expertly, too, stealing 123 bases, including 18 for the 1915 Athletics. Schang had his best home run total in 1926 when he belted nine for the Browns.

Replaced Injured Brother

In contrast to the modern jet age when players arrive quickly at their destination, Schang rode a horse to and from his baseball games when he began as a semi-pro player.

Oddly enough, he never gave catching much of a thought until he was pressed into service as a semi-pro backstop when his brother suffered a broken finger.

A similar situation gave Schang his first catching opportunity with the

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Proud Record by Wild Horse of Osage

Year.	Club.	League.	Pos.	G.	AB.	R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	RBI.	B.A.	F.A.
1924	Greenville	E. Tex.	OF-P	27	62	7	17	3	0	2	—	.274	.974
1925	Greenville	E. Tex.	2B-P	98	374	103	127	27	8	18	—	.340	.925
1925	Ft. Smith	W. A. SS-P	45	180	39	62	15	4	5	31	344	.897	
1926	Syracuse	Int. 2-3B-P	129	490	103	144	30	8	9	48	300	.920	
1927	Houston	Tex.	OF	147	552	118	169	24	12	—	67	.306	.963
1928	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	39	13	11	4	0	0	0	—	.308	.909
1929	Houston	Tex.	OF	157	588	114	175	40	11	0	64	.298	.974
1930	Rochester	Int.	OF	135	482	121	175	33	18	20	114	.363	.954
1930	Rochester	Int.	OF	49	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	.000	1.000
1930	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	123	413	68	124	32	8	7	75	.300	.967
1931	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	85	323	47	77	19	6	4	34	.238	.975
1932	St. Louis	Nat.	OF-3B	145	599	122	189	36	12	8	57	.316	.943
1933	St. Louis	Nat.	3B	145	599	122	189	36	12	8	57	.316	.943
1934	St. Louis	Nat.	3B	110	454	76	131	25	11	5	49	.289	.936
1935	St. Louis	Nat.	3B-OF	135	539	121	161	41	6	9	54	.299	.908
1936	St. Louis	Nat.	OF-3B	143	572	121	177	36	11	11	76	.309	.953
1937	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	98	339	60	103	27	8	5	38	.304	.973
1938	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	91	269	34	79	18	2	2	38	.294	.986
1938	St. Louis	Nat.	OF-3B	88	281	48	86	17	7	3	37	.306	.959
1940	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	86	228	28	72	15	4	3	39	.316	.974
1941	Sacramento	P. C. OF-P	92	245	40	79	17	6	2	35	.322	.930	
1942	Sacramento	P. C. OF-P	130	223	27	55	17	1	0	24	.247	.969	
1943	Rochester	Int. OF-P	40	86	15	24	4	0	2	4	.279	.980	
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	49	17	4	4	0	1	12	.280	1.000	
1945	San Diego	P. C. O-IN-P	53	97	27	30	6	4	1	15	.309	.971	
1946	San Diego	P. C. OF-P	11	15	3	3	0	0	0	0	.200	1.000	
1947	Greenville	Sally O-P-IN	14	17	4	4	0	0	1	0	.235	.833	
1949	Miami	Fla. Int. P	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1.000	1.000	
1951	Miami	Fla. Int. PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000	
1951	Tulsa	Tex. PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000	
Major League Totals				1189	4117	756	1227	270	75	59	501	.298	.952

Year.	Club.	League.	Pos.	G.	AB.	R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	RBI.	B.A.	F.A.
1928	St. Louis	Nat.	PR	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1931	St. Louis	Nat.	OF	7	24	5	12	4	0	1	5	.500	1.000
1934	St. Louis	Nat.	3B	7	31	8	11	3	1	0	3	.355	.789
World Series Totals				15	55	14	23	7	1	1	8	.418	.862

Year.	Club.	Pos.	AB.	R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	RBI.	B.A.	F.A.
1933	National	3B	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	1.000
1934	National	PH	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1935	National	3B	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	.250	.750
All-Star Totals				8	1	1	0	0	0	.125	.750