

Notebooks From Prewar Training Camps

Dixie as a Rookie... Gehrig as Card-Player... Keller as Unheralded Slugger

By MICHAEL GAVEN

In the New York Journal-American Memories revived from an old notebook found in a south-bound baseball writer's trunk: . . . A wire from the office advising the writer to buy a camera and take his own pictures. . . . Because of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby no photographers could be spared. . . . Doesn't seem like 15 years ago, but it is.

The Dodgers coming to Lakeland, Fla., that same spring on the very day the papers used pictures of Max Carey at a blackboard. . . . "No more daffy base running," announced the new Brooklyn manager. . . . In the very first inning of the game against the Newark Bears, Hack Wilson and Murray Howell pulled into third base together. . . . Dixie Walker, Red Rolfe and George Selkirk among the Newark rookies.

Visiting the Brooklyn camp at Clearwater and accidentally bumping into a two-hour beat on the Herman, Lombardi, Stripp, Gilbert, Sukeforth trade with the Braves. . . . and discovering four hours later that our copy was still at the bottom of a pile on a telegrapher's desk. . . . Next spring the bank holiday and the office handing out only \$25 in cash. . . . Visiting a bank president and talking him out of an additional \$35. . . . Wonder what ever happened to that bank book? Playing pinochle en route to St. Pete with the late Lou Gehrig. . . . And big Lou, who had just signed a

Piloted Dodgers



Max Carey

\$30,000 contract, almost jumped out of the window when the writer bid 500 spades and made it. . . . Gehrig played pinochle just as hard as he played baseball and everything else. . . . The last time we saw him alive, a very sick man, sitting alone in a corner in the Yankee dressing room, he still insisted another fellow's bad play saved me from going in the hole. . . . although ten years had passed he recalled every card played.

Three springs at the good old Gray Moss Inn at Clearwater. . . . The old station bus with the door in the rear which furnished handy, if slow, transportation to "juke joints." . . . Corn whiskey and grapefruit juice. . . . Visiting with Larry Mac-

Phail at the Cincinnati camp in Tampa. . . . Catching a half barrel of king fish on a two-hour expedition into the gulf with Wiggly Dick Porter.

St. Petersburg and sitting on the green benches in the evenings while Joe McCarthy spilled stories of Jay Kirke and Louisville. . . . A Sunday fishing trip into the gulf with Joe Gordon, Red Rolfe, Steve Sundra, and other Yankees. . . . Listening for the whistling buoy in the fog and a huge freighter coming so close to the little skiff we couldn't see the top of the hull. . . . And someone saying, "Imagine what Barrow would say if he knew where we were." . . . But most of us were praying too hard to laugh. . . . Songs at twilight 'neath the trees in Johnny Nee's orange grove.

Sitting tight on a story of "Babe Ruth's drowning." . . . But the next morning the Babe was out for practice, swearing at the drat, drat compass. . . . "We were almost in Mexico before we found out we were going the wrong way," explained Babe, who spent most of the night on a little fishing boat in the gulf. . . . Trying hard to believe he was the same Ruth the next spring in the uniform of the Braves.

An auto trip with the late Colonel Ruppert, who stopped at an ostrich farm and had two of the birds shipped to his Garrison, N. Y., estate. Paul Krichell signing Babe Ruth's name to autographed balls. . . . The Babe couldn't possibly have signed them all himself and you couldn't

Toted Carpet Bag



Charlie Keller

tell the difference. . . . Joe DiMaggio's room the Sunday he arrived from the Coast the first time. . . . And Joe frankly stating that he became a ball player mainly because he thought his brother Vince, who was making \$600 per month with San Francisco, had the softest touch in the world. . . . Rabbit Maranville sliding into Norman Kies and breaking his leg. . . . and the rookie catcher crying like a baby.

Charlie Keller arriving unheralded and unannounced, carrying a carpet bag, at Sebring. . . . Slated for the Norfolk club, he went to the Newark camp without asking for instructions. . . . Herb Pennock, then scouting for the Red Sox,

saying Keller hit a ball to left field harder than any other lefthanded batter except Ruth. . . . George Weiss forgetting about the Norfolk assignment when Keller cleared the fence the first time he picked up a bat. . . . Considering that he led the International League his first year, he probably would have hit .500 in the Piedmont.

The hired chauffeur sitting outside a Sebring hotel for nine hours while a Dodger (pre-Rickey) got "one for the road." . . . Ted Williams taking vicious swings but hitting nothing on his first Red Sox trip. . . . And being farmed to Minneapolis when he said to Joe Cronin, upon entering a team bus for an exhibition game, "I thought this was the big league." . . . The boys giving Hiram Bithorn, now with the Pirates, "the fireman's bride," but the Puerto Rican refusing to run, explaining he would rather be shot than soil his white pants racing through an orange grove.

Casey Stengel leaving the coaching lines at Bradenton and advising the photographers, "This kid tells me he can steal home" . . . and the photographers setting their cameras at the plate. . . . The kid did steal home. . . . Gordon, George McQuinn and the late Willard Hershberger borrowing my row boat, which I never rowed, every evening for late fishing . . . and never failing to provide me with a fresh fish breakfast. . . . But for food, there was only one training camp. . . . That was Bear Mountain.

Let Others See the World, Says Sam; Florida Brings World Titles to Cards

Bird Owner Points to Flag Record in Support of Stay-Put Camps

By EDGAR G. BRANDS



Sam Breadon

Redbird president believes in a real training program to win the pennant and not a sight-seeing trip.

Not since 1925, when the Redbirds went to Stockton, Calif., have they done much traveling in the spring. And if anybody doesn't believe that attending strictly to the business at hand pays dividends, Breadon proudly points to the record—nine pennants, including six world's championships, six second-placers, one third-placer and two fourth-placers, with only three second-division finishes, once fifth and twice sixth, in 21 years.

The Cardinals started the pennant-winning habit after training at San Antonio, Tex., in 1926; acquired one flag after conditioning three years at Avon Park, Fla., and achieved three pennants and two world's championships after drilling at Bradenton, Fla. A big bonus lured the Cardinals to Daytona Beach, Fla., in 1937, when they finished fourth. Then Al Lang induced Breadon to go to St. Petersburg in 1938. The Redbirds wound up in sixth place that year; but thereafter garnered two firsts and two world's champions, two second rungs and one

Pollet Remains Behind

HOUSTON, Tex.—Howie Pollet, southpaw ace of the Cardinals who returned the first three contracts mailed him, remained here, February 27, as two of his teammates, Red Munger and Ted Wilks, left to join the Redbirds in St. Petersburg, Fla. Pollet said he would not budge until a satisfactory contract was offered.

Musial on Scene Early



STAN MUSIAL, star first baseman of the Cardinals who went to Florida a holdout, with his wife and 26-month-old daughter, Geraldine, pause in front of a sign at the St. Petersburg hotel headquarters of the St. Louis club.

third. During the three-year war interlude at Cairo, Ill., the Cards took two firsts, including one world's championship, and a second, but promptly returned to St. Pete when the travel restrictions were lifted.

Using De Luxe New Field After using old Waterfront Park in St. Pete, the Cardinals are kicking up their heels at Lang Field, a new \$300,000 park. Even an old-time Cardinal like Coach Buzzy Wares had difficulty overcoming his awe over the new training grounds, with a 4,400-capacity grandstand and a billiard-table field, 309 feet down each foul line and the center field fence 397 feet away from home plate. Breadon hasn't seen the new layout yet, but he will leave St. Louis March 10, in time to attend the dedication, March 12, when the Cardinals play their first exhibition game of the season with the Yankees, who have had the advantage of playing since February 22.

Manager Eddie Dyer, however, expects to be ready for the New York

Bombers, even though his regulars did not start work until March 1. Dyer and his coaching staff had been busy with the rookies for a week previous, getting a line on the youngsters before turning their attention to the vets.

Before leaving Houston, Dyer announced the establishment of the Eddie Dyer General Insurance Agency in that city, which will be managed during the summer by his brother, Charley. . . . Traveling Secretary Leo Ward, with the advance party, celebrated his fortieth birthday in St. Pete, February 23 and two days later was informed Mrs. Ward had presented him with an eight-pound-three-ounce daughter, giving them two daughters and a son. One of the most enthusiastic workers at St. Pete is Marty Marion. Apparently relieved of his back troubles and satisfied with his pay, said to be in the neighborhood of \$20,000, the Human Octopus is determined to make those experts who said he had lost the right to the title of Mr. Shortstop eat their words.

Arky, Back at 35, Slim and Trim From Riding California Range

By HAROLD C. BURR

HAVANA, Cuba

Arky Vaughan looked as slim as a magazine ad for young men's clothing in his brown suit without an ounce of fat on him.

"What have you done with it, Arky?" the former Dodger third baseman, attempting a comeback, was asked.

"Do with what?" he asked in turn.

"All that excess baggage you were reported to be carrying around. We heard that you were up around 230 pounds."

"I never weighed over 190 in my life. I guess riding horseback the last three years has kept me in trim. I've done a lot of walking too, but I haven't had a bat or a ball in my hands since I left the Dodgers in 1943, except to play pitch and catch with my kids in the ranch yard. It would be silly for me to say that my legs are as good as ever. I just don't know how they'll stand up. Gee, I'll be 35 in March," a note of sadness edging his voice for some of his lost youth.

But he's not in the least pessimistic about the outlook for his comeback try with the Dodgers.

"I've never had any trouble with my legs since I've been in baseball—or my arm either, for that matter. One year I was out for six weeks because of knee trouble. But that was a knee injury and it was when I was a Pirate. The knee didn't give me any more trouble."

It took Vaughan quite a while to make up his mind to return to baseball.

Sold Most of Ranch Acreage

"I had a 2,000-acre ranch at Potter Valley and sold all but 400 acres of it," he explained. "But I've kept my boots and saddle and a couple of my favorite horses. I sold my 200 head of cattle, too. Then I applied to Commissioner Chandler for reinstatement. When it came through, I wrote to Mr. Rickey. Even then I didn't make up my mind. I was playing around with the idea of buying another ranch."

"Then I got to thinking," said Arky (a bad sign with most ball players, but Arky set the wheels in motion to good purpose). "I figured I still had some baseball left and I could retire permanently to ranching in my old age. So I got in touch with Mr. Rickey again and he offered me a very fair contract to return."

"Was it for more money than you got in 1943?"

"It might work out that way," he confessed.

Vaughan added his denial to that of President Branch Rickey and Manager Leo Durocher that the reason why he quit the Dodgers was because he

Streamlined



ARKY VAUGHAN, a Dodger again after three years.

had some trouble in hitting it off with The Lip.

"No such thing," he declared. "Oh, had my run-ins with Leo. But that isn't any truth in the charge that I chased me off the ball club. My run was demanding a lot of my attention. That was the big reason why I gave up the game."

Arky's best year in baseball was 1935, when he was the best hitter in the National League with a .385 average. He met the ball just as solidly the next year, but somehow couldn't keep away from the outfielders. Ted Williams waited until the ninth inning in the 1940 All-Star Game at Detroit to spoil another big time for Vaughan. Arky had crashed out a pair of home runs to give the National leaguers a sizable lead. But the Red Sox slugger hit one up on the right field roof at Briggs Stadium with two men on base and a new hero replaced Vaughan in that never-to-be-forgotten game with one swish of his bat.

Arky was traded by the Pirates in 1942 for four players while he was a shortstop, but was shifted to the base, due to a hot corner shortage at Ebbets Field. He went back to the Dodgers briefly in 1943.

