

Major League Baseball in Terrace Park

By Carol C. Cole

“Opening Day” of the 2008 baseball season is Monday the 31st of March. The Reds will play the Arizona Diamond Backs starting at 2:10 PM. Perhaps at least some of you know that we had at one time two very important professional baseball players living right here in Terrace Park: Eppa Rixey at 108 Miami Avenue and later at 2 Lexington Circle, and Bubbles Hargrave, Eppa’s catcher, at 622 Miami Avenue. Besides living in Terrace Park they used to bring their teammates out here to eat both at the Marigold Tea Room Restaurant (435 Elm Avenue, just before the bridge that crossed the railroad tracks) and the Kuntz Tavern, at the five way crossing at the corner of Elm Avenue and Wooster Pike. Eppa Rixey married Dorothy Meyers, the daughter of Charles and Blanche Bacon Meyers of 203 Cambridge Avenue. Relative Helen Christopher, now Helen Barnett, remembers being their flower girl. Shortly after the wedding they moved into their new home on Miami Avenue, built by local builder Fred Strathmann & Sons of 761 Wooster Pike.

When Eppa Rixey died in February 1963 his obituary read:

“RIXEY DEAD AT 72; MADE HALL OF FAME

CINCINNATI. Feb. 28 (AP) Eppa (Jeptha) Rixey, a left-handed pitcher who was voted into baseball’s Hall of Fame only last month, died yesterday. He was 72 years old.

Eppa’s major league career spanned 21 years with the Philadelphia Phillies and the Cincinnati Reds, from 1912 to 1933. He won 266 games and lost 251.

His victories set a major league record for left-handers until Milwaukee’s Warren Spahn broke it in 1959.

“I’m really very glad Spahn broke it.” Rixey quipped at the time. “If he hadn’t broken it, no one would have known I’d set it.”

Rixey, who became a successful insurance executive in suburban Mariemont after leaving baseball, was one of four players elected to the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N. Y. last month.

Rixey, 6 feet 5 inches and 210 pounds, was one of the few players of his era who did not reach the major leagues after an apprenticeship in the minors.

He played with the Philadelphia National League championship team in 1915. Among his better seasons were 1916, when he had 22 victories and 10 losses with Philadelphia, and 1922 when he posted 25-13 with Cincinnati.”

Eppa Rixey was born May 3, 1891 in Culpeper Virginia. He came into major league baseball directly from the University of Virginia where he earned a degree in chemistry. Although he threw left-handed, he batted right-handed. He missed the 1918 season to do military service overseas in World War I. BaseballLibrary.com says “contemporary accounts describe him as a Virginia gentleman of easy charm and boyish humor. In teammates’ memories, he was a fierce competitor, crafty on the mound, but hot-tempered after a loss and destructive to clubhouse furniture”

When Bubbles Hargrave died February 23rd 1969 his obituary read:

“BUBBLES HARGRAVE, BATTING CHAMPION

CINCINNATI. Feb. 24 (UPI) – Bubbles Hargrave, the National League batting champion in 1926, died in a hospital here yesterday. He was 76 years old and lived in suburban

Parkview Heights. He had retired as a supervisor with the Powell Valve Company here. He leaves his wife, Hester, a son, Eugene N. Hargrave, and two grandchildren.

Mr. Hargrave – his off-the-diamond name was Eugene F. – played 12 seasons with three teams in the major leagues. He won the 1926 championship while catching for the Cincinnati Reds in 1926. His average was .353 for 105 games.

Mr. Hargrave played with the Chicago Cubs from 1913 to 1915, and then was sent back to the minor leagues.

He made a comeback with the Reds in 1921 and played with them through the 1928 season. After one year as player-manager of St. Paul in the American Association, he returned to the majors with the New York Yankees for 45 games in 1930.

His lifetime batting average for 852 games was .310.”

Eugene Franklin Hargrave was born July 15, 1892 in New Haven, Indiana. His younger brother, William McKinley Hargrave, nicknamed Pinky, also played catcher in the major leagues but never for Cincinnati. Bubbles Hargrave is quoted as saying, “Eppa was just great. He was great as a pitcher, fielder, and competitor. I look on him as the most outstanding player I came in contact with in my entire career.”



Eppa Rixey



Bubbles Hargrave