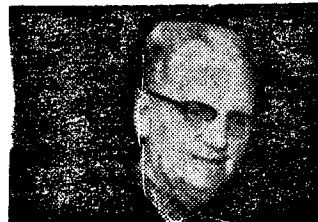


ON THE MAIN STREET

Jan 15/68



Pre-Christmas mail received by this columnist included a letter and story from Orville Ashton of Mount Clemens, Michigan who will be remembered by many readers as a son of Grand Trunk Railway Conductor Ashton who lived on Wellington Street. Incidentally, this former Lindsay boy is a brother to Mrs. Gordon (Kay) Cook. For several years Orville Ashton was prominent in baseball circles, especially as a member of the Champion Lindsay Greybirds and as a member of the Olympia team. Extracts from this interesting and historical story are as follows:

"In one of your recent articles you mentioned a pitcher who had 62 strikeouts. This was our friend Dick Grey, but I also remember quite well the great pitching ability of Jack Oulette of the Lindsay Greybirds and of course I recall the ace pitcher Lefty Goyer of Belleville. I agree that Dick Grey had Big League possibilities had he been given the opportunity. Herb Workman and Bill Cinnamon were two other good ball players and I recall when Workmen had the opportunity of trying out with the Toronto Club of the International League.

"I vividly recall the days of Dick Butler as a baseball umpire. It was he who signed me for the Greybirds. I was very young and just out of school and was working in the "Home Bank". I had been playing the night before with some club, I can't remember who, in Victoria Park. Dick of course was behind the plate. I got lucky that night and dropped two or three hits on the roof of 'Batsy Bates' home over on Sussex St. The next day Dick was in to see me, and it still has to be the biggest event in my life. I started to work out with the club immediately. Two of the team lived within a few houses of me. Clarence (lefty) McElroy and Elwood (Snorts) Coombs, and at the request of my family they took me under their wings; because I was on the young side as compared to the rest of the club. I went to centre field and stayed there."

"The club at that time, as I can remember it, was as follows: Geo. Logan and 'Batsy' Bates were behind the plate; Norm (Dooley) Star and Lefty McElroy constituted the pitching staff; 'Snorts' (Elwood) Coombs on first and Herb Workman was on second; Bill McMahon, short stop and Jack Clark on third; in the outfield 'Tubby' (Howard) Williamson in left field and Art Carew and Les Richmond in right and I was in centre."

"As long as I am spinning yarns I might as well continue. Our opening game was in Cobourg on the 24th of May. The diamond then, was in the old park right on the lakeshore, with the dance pavilion at the west end of the outfield. I'll never forget it! I was scared stiff! 'Lefty' was on the mound. I think the first man got on and he retired the next two, with old Dick Turpin coming up — remember him! He was a big man with a head of heavy bushy hair that was prematurely gray. The first pitch 'Lefty' threw he tied into it, and really got wood on it. I can see the ball yet. It was high and was travelling straight as an arrow right over the pitchers mound, dead centre over second base and looked like it was going to make Mariposa station without a bit of trouble. I stood there and just looked at it. Frozen stiff — but — all of a sudden I could hear 'Tubby' bellowing at me. His remarks were not too complimentary, but it yanked me out of it, and I just turned my back on the world and headed west. I knew that no matter how far I ran it possibly would not be far enough. When I got to the dance hall I turned and looked up and there she was, coming right at me. I think I squeezed that ball so hard I must have flattened it a little. From then on I was alright. That is just as vivid in my mind right now as it was that day, and that was a lot of years ago.

"The following year they brought me in to try out at second base. Herb Workman worked with me, and I learned a lot from him. I played second

as long as we played hard ball in Lindsay. All the time the C.O.B.L. was in existence, and after it dissolved we went into intermediate ball. We had some changes on the club through the years. The last club, I think, was made up of the following: Bart Cummings, catching; Jack Oulette, Chuck Allen pitching; Norm Starr spare pitcher; I remember Chuck Goodhand; Coombs on first, myself on second, Harold Brownscombe at short, Hugh Cummings at third. Outfield was still Art Carew, Les Richmond and Howard Williamson. That is as close as I can remember. Pretty fair ball club too.

We had some good town league teams at that time. We had two boys who I remember very well from Toronto. Ed. Scott ('Cannon Ball') and a chap named Mike Scott. Chuck Carew was catching for some line too. I have been thinking of other good names with the different clubs in the C.O.B.L. From Peterboro I can recall Swanson, pretty nifty catcher; Big 'Hap' Harrison at first, Roy Cherette at short; Stan Lowe in right field. From Belleville I can recall Harry Mills at first and his brother 'Peeny' behind the plate. Good ball players. 'Lefty' Goyer on the mound, and an Indian pitcher named Williams. I believe he went to the Rochester Club. From Oshawa there was Harold Dainty, a pitcher, and he too was a dandy and at second "Tip" Rowden who married Meryl McCoullough from Lindsay. Dick Turpin is the only one from Cobourg I can remember. Leaside I can't recall.

"Getting into the Intermediate League, I can recall one big incident. We were playing off for the championship with "Raybestos" of Peterboro. Jack Oulette was pitching, and Hilton Brown was catching. Alex Kay was umpiring. To all things apparent we were winning the championship, when all of a sudden things changed, and to this day I think "Brownie" will swear to the fact that we were sold out, and I will

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On the Main Street

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back him up. Brownie was so mad he pulled off one I had never seen before and I assure you I haven't since. He had been arguing with the Umpire over the calls he was making but with no success of course. He called for a high hard one, and if you recall the Lindsay pitcher had that in abundance. Brownie made no attempt to catch the pitch at all. He simply stepped out of the catchers box and the Umpire really was floored. If I remember correctly, Brownie was out of the ball game too.

Another item I would like to comment on, is your column on the passing of Tony Bakogeorge. I think all of us will agree that Tony was one of a kind. Great fellow. I can remember one summer when I was still with the Ernst Kern Co. in Detroit. My secretary buzzed me that there were two men to see me. I told her to get their names and lo and behold it was Tony and 'Snorts' Coombs. They were returning from a trip to Florida and stopped off in Detroit and made it a point to come up and see me. I was indeed flattered to say the least. For years I have summered up on Pigeon Lake, north of Bobcaygeon and when mother and dad were alive I would spend some time in Lindsay and visit old friends. Tony of course being one of them. We would sit in the yard at his place on Peel and Sussex and go over the years of the past. There are so many I often wonder about — Buster Macdonald, Jack Stark, Chuck Goodhand etc. Bill Langdon I know has passed on but I don't know about George Langdon.

Well, I think I have taken enough of your time. Had no intention of going on like this, just got started and it all seemed to unfold in front of me."