

1969 La Salle Cub hall of Fame

JIM GORMAN; No information.

PETE HEPING;

STEVE MAIETTA;

RAY ROHWER;

BILL SHICK;

The Story of Pete Hepting

By VINCENT F. STANICH

Unlike Joe Marty, Alex Kampouris, Stanley Hack and Walt Westlake, Pete Hepting did not reach the major leagues. However, that is no criterion as to whether or not he was a good ball player. On the contrary, he was considered, by many of the local experts, as one of the better hitters in this community for a period of 12 years. His lifetime batting average on the local lots is close to .400.

For an infielder that phenomenal batting in a park will stand for a long time.

Usually when a player with little more than ordinary fielding ability hits over 400 for a season or two he is grabbed up by some scout and he sticks him in pro ball. Such was not the case with Pete Hepting.

He was grabbed by Bill Esick, manager for Vernon, in 1922, but his stay was limited to six weeks. In 1924 Charles Pick, Solon mentor, signed Hepting to a contract for the far end of the season.

In 1925 he signed with Salt Lake when Tony Laueri was entering a great season before joining the Yankees. He was cut loose as there were no small leagues to season promising youngsters.

RIGHT THROUGH the years Hepting was always a "bridesmaid, but never a bride" until he gave up baseball in 1940 to take up skiing.

Hepting started his baseball locally around 1919 as a teen age lad. He carried a Union route in the mornings which kept him in pretty good shape. His first club was the Fox Stars and his first real baseball pal was Jim O'Connell. Pete played left field that year on account of his strong throwing arm, but his true position was third base and that is where he broke in with Kimball Upsom club in 1920 when most of the National Division contests were played at the Capitol Extension Grounds at Ninth and Capitol Avenue.

His hitting was terrific and great things were expected of the barrel chested lad, but the zenith of every ball player's dream, the major leagues, was denied this youngster.



VINCENT STANICH

Portland in 1928 under Bill Rodgers. After his release Hepting spent the balance of the year in town, but the urge to play pro ball landed him with Salt Lake in the Utah-Idaho League in 1929. He had a great season in the mountain states and led the league in doubles, triples and runs scored and landed on the all-star club which were to tour Japan. The trip to the Orient was being promoted by Earl Sande, famous jockey, but it never materialized as the University of Chicago baseball club signed up for half the price.

THE YEAR of 1930 found Pete with Kelso, Wash., in the Timber League. That is where he made a connection with Dutch Faust, who subsequently signed Hepting to a House of David contract.

In the interim Hepting spent the winter of 1930-31 where he battled Stanley Hack for the batting championship of the National Division. The youthful Hack beat him out on the last days of the season with a .452



PETE HEPTING with House of David beard.

average while Pete settled for a .344 mark. On the strength of that strong batting Hack signed with the Solons in the spring of 1931 and the following year he began his long tenure with the Chicago Cubs.

EACH YEAR, from 1930 to 1935, his hitting would get better. He would spend a few weeks with some club in organized ball, but each winter he would be back with the same gang on the local lots. He played with the Foresters, the Eastern Outfitting Company, Rickas and the Hissodrome rines. He always was among the top three in the hitting department.

His first full season in pro ball was spent with Cedar Rapids of the Missouri League in 1925. He batted a respectable .319, but the following season he found himself in the Sacramento Valley League with the Chico Colts.

In 1927 he was signed to a Mobile contract in the Southern Association, but after three weeks he was cut loose. He then signed to play with Fort Bayard of the outlaw New Mexico-Arizona League with one of the greatest set of ball players ever assembled. On that club were Syd Cohen, who later pitched with Portland, Buck Weaver, Chick Candil, Lefty Williams and Eddie Cicotte of the Chicago Black Sox; Jim O'Connell, Hal Chase and Jay Hughes, Jr.

THAT CLUB, which played four games a week, clinched the pennant one month before the season ended. On that club Hepting had the distinction of batting in the cleanup position and he finished the year with a .335 mark. Not knowing whether his playing days in organized baseball were in jeopardy, the local lad contacted Judge Landis and he was given a clean bill of health. Oscar Vitt, who was manager of the Hollywood club, signed Hepting to a contract to play the last three weeks of the 1927 season, and again Pete was found wanting and was given his release at the conclusion of the season.

Hepting spent four weeks with

in 1932 helping reported to Benton Harbor, scene of the heavy weight championship Dempsey-Muske fight and at the home of the House of David. These bearded lads, who are the most famous of all barnstormers, were overjoyed at the choice of selecting the Sacramento lad as one of their players. Hepting carried the hitting law and broke up many a hall game. He was billed as "The Sultan Swat" on the many placards that preceded the team into town.

Hepting, to qualify for a club, had to grow a beard, which Pete Alexander, all-time great of the pitching department, was allowed to play smooth shaven. Alexander was signed as an added attraction as these were the depression years. Alex's contract called for pitching two innings a game.

DURING THE FIRST season with the club Hepting traveled 18,500 miles covering 44 states. The players, who, for the most part are members of the "House of David" play for expenses only, the balance of the money going to a general fund, which is used to support this religious group. Many of the players had major league ability, but they were a zealous group and very few would leave. The players on tour were given the privilege of attending any movie house and had access to all the major courses in the country free of charge.

All foodstuffs and clothing are given to the members in requisition. Hepting claims to be the greatest experience in baseball was playing with the House of David club. "They were a grand gang of players and the conduct on and off the field was highly commendable," said Hepting.

FROM 1934 TO 1937 Hepting was a member of the Beaverton Eagles in the Oregon League. In 1937 Pete had the pleasure of being on the same club with Johnny Pesky and Joe Gordon. In the middle of the season, the late Frisco Edwards, later umpire in the Coast League, offered Hepting a \$1,000 bonus he could inveigle Gordon's signature to a professional contract. But it was too late as Joe Lavin, New York Yankee scout, had Gordon already in tow. Gordon reported to Oakland to play shortstop before he reported to the major leagues in the spring of 1938.

The following year Hepting left the baseball wars and returned to Sacramento, finishing up his career with the Willow Woodland, Reno and Susanville. His baseball ability just about played out. Hepting took up skiing and is a regular visitor to Sun Valley each winter.

IN 1942 HE joined the Nines and stayed on until his activities ceased in 1945. Pete is still a bachelor and still is interested in basketball. He umpires during the summer and is an officer of the Sacramento Bushers Association.

He and Dewey Elliott, another baseball addict, are always on hand to instruct young ball players. Hepting says that he never backed away from a curve ball, but it is pretty hard to test the youngsters that. "I guess I was a natural when it came to hitting," said Hepting modestly. After looking over his hitting record we must agree with his

Pete Has Perfect Day

Pete Hepding had a perfect inning at the plate, hitting four singles and a triple in five trips. Leonard Rich had four in six up, including two doubles. Daly, Russell, Brammer and Dawes all had doubles for their afternoon's work and Nehl a triple. Leach and Sayles tripled and Gordon and Sayles homered for the Hep Golds.

The box score:

Hep Golds

	AB	R	H	O	A	E
Schalle, cf	5	2	1	1	0	1
Demorest, rf	2	0	0	0	0	0
Koch, 2b	4	1	2	1	4	1
Gordon, 3 rd ss	5	1	3	3	4	0
SMITH, 1 st rf	5	1	0	2	0	1
Johnson, 3b	4	1	0	1	3	0
Rishep, c	4	3	2	0	0	0
McCambridge, 1b	5	1	1	10	0	1
Miller, p	1	0	0	0	3	0
Sayles, p	4	3	2	0	0	0
Leach, lf	3	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	42	13	12	24	14	5

Bend Elms

	AB	R	H	O	A	E
Rich, 2b	6	3	4	1	3	0
Lewis, c	5	1	1	1	1	2
Nehl, cf	5	4	2	0	0	0
Hepding, 3b	5	2	5	0	1	1
Russell, lf	4	1	2	1	0	0
Dawes, c	4	1	2	10	1	0
Brammer, rf	5	0	1	3	0	0
McCall, 1b	4	0	0	11	1	0
Daly, p	5	2	1	0	1	0
Totals	43	14	18	27	10	3

Summary Two base hits, Daly, Russell, Rich 2, Brammer, Dawes. Three base hits, Leach, Sayles, Hepding, Nehl. Home runs, Gordon, Sayles. Innings pitched, by Miller, four, at bat 27, hits 11, runs 9. By Sayles four, at bat 20, hits 7, runs 5. Struck out, by Miller 2, by Sayles 3, by Daly 11. Bases on balls, off Miller 1, Sayles none, Daly 4. Sacrifice hit, Russell. Umpires, Kelly and McDaniel's. Time, 2:05.

January 20, 1969

Dear Gene:

The following is the information you requested.

I was born in Spring Valley, Illinois on May 20, 1897. We came to Sacramento in 1901. I was educated in the local schools.

As a young man I worked for the Southern + Western Pacific railroads. In 1933 I was appointed as a United States Deputy Marshal where I served for ten years and resigned to become marshal of the municipal courts of Sacramento County. I retired on August 31, 1965.

Before Sacramento Winter League baseball was organized I played in 1915 with Mike's Cafe club in the \$1,000 Elimination

League which included Sacramento
and valley clubs. In the
Sacramento Winter League
I played with Foresters,
Zemansky, Sacramento
Bail Bond in the 1920's
& early 1930's.

I am a past president of
Fraternal Order of Eagles # 9 and Southside
Improvement Club, a member
of the Elks and the Mariposa
Association of California. Since
retirement I have become a
member of Sons in Retirement
9. I have been a season ticket
holder for the San Francisco
Giants since they came to the
west coast.

Thank you for your interest,

Steve Marietta

Local Man Recalls Major League

By DON BLOOM

One of the University of California's all-time great hitters, a Pittsburgh Pirate outfielder and Portland left-handed slugger who banged out 40 home runs in one season are just a few of the highlights in the athletic career of Ray Rohwer.

Rohwer, now assistant secretary for the Production Credit Association in Woodland, has had a full life in the baseball world and was an outstanding addition to every club he ever played on from his intercollegiate days while starring for the Golden Bears to the major leagues and later in the Pacific Coast league.

Now completely out of the baseball scene, "except when the wife and I go to see the Solons play," Rohwer is still living in Dixon, where he was born and raised and now commutes daily to Woodland. A modest ex-athlete, Rohwer neglected to point out the fact that all of his great baseball accomplishments were established while a slender 5 ft. 10 in., 155 pounder. For any man to play in the big leagues is a feat in itself, but with the additional burden of being a slight built outfielder another barrier to overcome, Rohwer made good despite the odds.

Looking in good enough shape today to go out and show the youngsters a few baseball tricks, Rohwer looks 10 years younger than his actual age of 61. The sparkle in his eye still gleams with the fire that took him from a small Dixon schoolhouse to baseball diamonds all over the United States and enabled him to rub elbows with such diamond greats as Rogers Hornsby, Dizzy Vance, Grover Alexander, Frankie Frisch and Tony Lazzeri.

Rohwer's life began in Dixon way back in June 5, 1894. After going through the small school system "that didn't include any organized baseball," Ray enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley, where he was to go down in the record books as one of the institution's finest baseball players.

Making the team in 1915 as an unheralded freshman, Rohwer went on to play four varsity seasons as a first-string outfielder. His schooling was interrupted after his junior year of 1917 when he served two years in the Army, but he came back for his senior year to spark the Bears to another win over the Stanford Indians in 1920. "We beat Stanford every year," beamed Rohwer, "and a player had to participate in the Big Game to earn his block C."

After leading the California team in hitting during his final three seasons, Rohwer signed with the National League Pittsburgh Pirates for a \$1,600 bonus in 1921. At this time Ray was at his physical peak at 155 pounds and he was used as a utility outfielder and in tight pinch-hitting roles.

Recalling his seasons spent with the Pirates, Rohwer said, "One year we were out in front and leading the National League by 7½ games with only 36 games left and I had my World Series money



RAY ROHWER
former Pittsburgh and PCL slugger

"Democrat" Eng

OVER

Baseball Career

all spent. Needless to say, the Giants won the pennant with a strong finish drive and we were left out in the cold."

Asked who he would place on his all-star National League team, Rohwer leaned back in his chair, smiled to himself while reminiscing back 35 years and then named Walter Smith of Pittsburgh (catcher); Dazzy Vance of Brooklyn (pitcher); Charlie Grimm of Pittsburgh (first base); Rogers Hornsby of St. Louis (second base); Pie Traynor of Pittsburgh (third base); George Bancroft of New York (short stop); outfielders Emil (Irish) Meusel of New York; Max Carey of Pittsburgh and Ross Young of New York.

"Hornsby was the greatest hitter I ever saw," says Rohwer, "and Carey was a great base runner who stole 52 times in 54 attempts. They don't steal like that any more. The major league teams go for the big inning now days. Thirty five years ago if we were two or three runs ahead, we figured we had the game won. Presently the home run hitters dominate the game and a team has to worry even when they are four or five runs ahead."

Speaking of all-time great hurlers like Grover Alexander of the Chicago Cubs, Rohwer stated, "If a man like Alexander allowed four runs in one afternoon, he would consider that he pitched a poor ball game. Now very few pitchers have an earned run average of less than four runs per game." (Rohwer smiled as he added that he hit one of Alexander's offerings out of the park in 1922.)

"The main change in baseball," said Rohwer, "is the style of pitching. The boys used to throw a fast ball, curve and maybe a spitball. The pitchers now are adding knucklers, sliders and change-of-pace pitches.

"The players are bigger now too. Most of us had to choke up on the bat but the men drawing the big salaries now are swinging from the end of the bat and going for the big inning."

Rohwer came to Seattle of the Pacific Coast league in 1923 and played regular outfield for the club. The southpaw swinging Rohwer came through with two consecutive seasons of hitting better than .300 and in 1923 he set a new PCL home run record with 37 roundtrippers, only to lose top billing to Paul Strand of Salt Lake, who finished the year with 42.

In his second year at Seattle, Rohwer was a strong spark in the team's drive as they won the Pacific Coast league pennant and he once kept the Rainiers in contention by hitting three home runs in a Sunday doubleheader.

Going to Portland for the 1925 and 1926 seasons, the highly-touted outfielder started off with a bang by hammering out 40 home runs and batting .364 in his first year. His 40 homers were overshadowed by a fellow named Tony (Preach 'Em Up) Lazzeri of the San Francisco Seals, who hit 60 the same year.

In his second year in a Beaver uniform, Rohwer hit 33 more four-baggers, to raise his total to 73 in two seasons. After the 1926 season Ray was traded to the Sacramento Solons and remained with the club until he retired from baseball in 1931.

Rohwer played against a young catcher named Archie Yelle of the San Francisco Seals "in the old days." Referring to Yelle, who is now a retired Woodland policeman, Rohwer said, "Yelle was a good one. He was the toughest man I've ever seen at blocking home plate and one of the game's great defensive ball players."

Yelle, listed as the all-time Seals' catcher, says about Rohwer — "Ray was a very good all-around batter and one of the best long distance hitters in the league."

Rohwer and his wife, Elda have two daughters, LaVerne and Gail, who are presently students at the University of California.

Dear Vince

January 20

Thanks for your memo confirming the story I saw in the Bee recently. I have a feeling that you had a lot to do with my being so honored. In regards to my life story I never kept a scrap book so the following is based only on my memory.

I was born June 5, 1895 on my father's farm near Dixon. I had 5 brothers and two sisters. Both sisters and 3 brothers are still living. I attended the Dixon schools and graduated in 1913. At that time there were no coaches. My brother Hans and I farmed my father's ranch in 1914. In the fall of 1914 I registered at U.C. Berkeley. My college career was interrupted by World War I. I spent two years in the army which included 14 months in France and Germany. I was a Field Artillery 2nd Lt. when I was discharged in August 1918. I reentered U.C. and graduated in June 1920. After graduation I went to work for the Paraffine Paint Co.

Due to the fact that freshmen could play on the varsity in 1915 I played on the varsity that year and consequently I was able to earn four "Big C" medals while attending California. I captained the team in 1920. Carl Janlock was our coach at that time.

Late in the fall of 1920 I started receiving letters from the Pittsburgh Pirates. After negotiating with them for several months I finally signed a contract for \$600 per month + \$1,000 for signing
over

I joined the club at spring training and later spent the full season of 1921 and 1922 with that club. I played part time in the outfield and did considerable pinch hitting. I was traded to Seattle P.C.L. after the 1922 season. I played two years with that club after which I was traded to Portland where I played 2 years. Portland traded me to Sacramento where I played until I retired.

I farmed for a year after that. These were the depression years and farming was a poor business. In the fall of 1933 I went to work for the Federal Land Bank of Berkeley which specializes in making farm real estate loans. In 1936 I transferred and went to work for the Woodland Farm Credit Associations. I worked for them until I retired at aged 70 on June 30, 1965.

I did not marry until after I quit playing baseball. I married Elda Schmeiser, a local girl, May 25, 1932. We have two married daughters and 4 grand children.

Since in regards to my baseball record I wish you ^{could} find the U.C. "Blue and Gold" annual year books covering the years I played for "Cal" and also the year end record covering the years I played in the Coast League. Especially the 4 years I played with Seattle and Portland. I never weighed more than 155 lbs while I played ball. I think that the records for those 4 years will show that my slugging % and R.B.I. record was probably right near the top for anyone playing in the league at that time.

Woodland, Calif.

Jan. 25 1969.

Vince Stanich,
c/o Sacramento Union,
Capital Avenue, Calif.

Dear Vince:

I do not know if you are looking for information on Ray. Ray was always too modest about his baseball records, and only once or twice was I able to get him to discuss them. At least twice when he was in the race for homerun honors, he was also battling for lead in three base hits. He hit a triple in Sacramento one afternoon while playing with Portland which tied him with Pete Schneider of Vernon for the lead. I asked him after the game how many triples he had, and he told me he did not know. He would have been a better player if he had had a little conceit.

He was driving hitter with as much power to left center as a right hand hitter. Altho weighing only 155 pounds, he could reach any fence in the league. He played a game with Portland with six appearances at the plate but no time at bat. Four walks, a sacrifice and hit by pitcher. He is listed on the all-time all University of California team.

I am enclosing a clipping from the Woodland paper.

Yours truly,

Egypt
P S Without minor league experience, he hit 294 for Pittsburg in 1921, playing in the outfield with Max Carey, Sketter Bigbee, Mogan and Whitted.

PSPS Sent this care of Sacto Union and it came back

Ray Rohwer

1921	Pittsburgh	30 games	.250 B.A.
1922	Pittsburgh	53 games	129 AB 19 R, 38 H, 59 TB, 6 2B, 3 3B, 3 HR, 5 SH, 1 SB, .2945 BA
1923	Seattle	20 3B ^{(club} record that stood until 1958, and may still be high)	37 HR, 394 TB, 135 RBI
1924	Seattle	15 3B,	33 HR, 380 TB, 155 RBI
1925	Portland	139 R,	226 H, 44 2B, 40 HR, 436 TB, 153 RBI
1926	"		30 HR.
1927	Sacramento	133 G,	141 H, 338 BA, 14 HR, 95 RBI, 29 SH.
1929	Sacramento	149 G,	495 AB, 76 R, 127 H, 8 SB, 11 HR, 7 3B, 29 2B, 26 SH, 70 RBI, .257 BA

San Francisco Calif.,
January 18, 1969

Dear Vince

First a thank you to all concerned. I am pleased to join to distinguished a group. I am personally acquainted with all present members as well as those now proposed, with the exception of one Frank Osborne and I certainly 'knew him by reputation. So I feel right at home.

I will answer your request for information as best I can. I never kept a scrap book. Of late however, friends in Sacramento have been sending me copies of your column. And ~~concerning~~ concerning your column I think the old timers owe you their thanks because without it, a lot of us would have long since been forgotten.

I was born in Sacramento on Dec. 31, 1898 on F Street between 10th and 11th. We later moved to 16th and E Streets. So you can see I have roots in Alkali Flat. & OVER.

I attended Washington Primary School
at 13th and G Streets, Mary J. ~~W.~~
Watson Grammar School at 16th
and J Streets and Sacramento
High School at 19th and K Streets.
I worked for the Western Pacific
Railroad from 1917 to 1922. In
1922 I went to work for the
Standard Oil Co. of California ~~in~~
~~1922~~ where I remained until I
retired in 1960. I was transferred
to San Francisco in 1935.

I am listing below the teams I
played with, from beginning to
end, not necessarily in chronological
order:

Wiley B. Allens
Christian Brothers Red Sox
Y. M. C.'s
Sacramento High School
Sacramento Elks
Clark + Lobners
Leo Lobners
Ed Bell Stars
Holt Caterpillar Tractors (Stockton 1917)
Lodi
Vallejo

Davis
 Willows Giants
 Colusa Prune Pickers
 Oroville Olives
 Woodland Oaks

There were others no doubt.

~~I started as a catcher.~~ Someone stole my \$5.00 Catchers glove. My economic situation was such at the time that I could not replace so I took my entire \$1.50 cap and bought a finger mit. I acquired a first basemans glove and started playing first base. ^{later} I was playing first base for the ym.c.s and one day, our manager the late Freddie Murphy, asked me if I could play short stop. I said "Sure" and became a short stop. I alternated between these two positions until I hung 'em up. The Red Sox team was an interesting one. Brother Edmont was our manager. He was quite a guy. The team was composed of Hugh Duffy, Tom Kelly, Teuschfarber & spelling, not guaranteed, Coyle, Tom O'Neil, George

Brannelly, Jimmy Lane, Emmett Kavanau,
Eddie Beckwith, Cy Ford, Jimmie
O'Connell.

Three ~~Four~~ of the teams listed were managed
by the late Freddie Murphy, a
Clark & Lobners, Leo Lobner and Jimmie.
And of course, the late one and
only Charlie Clark was the main
spring of the Woodland Oaks
Merw. Rehm who used to sell
papers on the south-east corner
of 10th and K. was the manager of
the Ed Bell Stars. And Tony
Monti was a fixture on the north
west corner.

Incidentally, according to one of
your columns, I led the Sacramento
Valley League with 442 in the
'20's.

I played with ^{Ray} Rohwer's brother, the
late Claude Rohwer, at willows. He
played 3rd base. I was on 1st base
and the late Chief Esola was on
short. Of memory serves the late
Pete Read, our catcher went ^{directly} from
the willows club to Oakland in
the Coast League.

The late Spec Shea was our pitcher with the Holt Caterpillar Club.

Glad to see Jimmie Gorman on the list I have known him so long I hate to think about ^{it} this from the age standpoint. And Pete Keping. It used to be said of Pete that he played in every league including the Twenty League Under the Sea. And Steve Marietta

was our neighbor when we lived on Howell Avenue. And Ray besides Claude had two other brothers both of whom played ball, ie Egger + Otto.

Incidentally, I went to work for Standard because they needed a first baseman. The late Harry Lilly, the late Reese Peck and the late Hugh Suffy all had something to do with it I suspect. Hope the foregoing is of help.

Regards,
Bill Shick

P.S. Correct spelling is SHICK.