

Branch Rickey, Mustang Official at Barbecue



Branch Rickey and Rockwood Brown of Billings, vice president of the Billings Mustangs, were honor guests at a barbecue during the Pittsburgh Pirates general manager's visit to the four minor league training camp at Huntsville, Tex. From left to right are Dr. Harmon Lowman, president of Sam Houston State College; Mr. Brown; Branch Rickey and Mrs. Brown.

Sports Slants ...

By ROY ANDERSON

Big Cliff Dapper, Billings Mustang manager now busy training Mustang and other Pirate farm club sluggers in Huntsville, Tex., kept in shape in "the hot stove league" last winter, it was learned Saturday.

Cliff, along with two other minor league managers, spent the winter working in the mill yards and shops of the Flour-Corp. in Los Angeles.

Also working with Cliff and managing Yarns during the winter months were Jerry Gardner, former St. Louis Cardinal and Burlington, S.C., infielder who is heading Mustangs in the California League this summer, and Eddie Sturgeon, Brown's sharptop in the 1948 pennant race and former Los Angeles infielder (holder who will manage Edmonton, Canada, in the Western-Inter-national League).

During the gab fest, according to a report from La's, the managers were agreed on one thing: "We'll stay in baseball as long as we can as a player, as a player-manager or manager. We like it. It's in our blood. We'd rather be in baseball than do anything else. . . ."

According to bits of information which occasionally slip down to this level, Dick Smith, former Billings and Great Falls infielder, is playing regularly (has four homers) with Los Angeles-Pete Borzuta of Kansas Field is with Sacramento-Lenny Lamont, late of Oyster, is with Makoto and Bill Albert, a Miles City boy, is now working that strong right arm from the Salt Lake Anthonis mound after nearly a year of inactivity because of ailments.

There still is no word on the whereabouts or activities of Edson Moore, the former Mustang who was supposed to get his final pay-off from Uncle Sam last fall. And Moore and Dick Hamilton in the

Branch Rickey Tackles Job Of Building Up Pittsburgh

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — Branch Rickey is tackling the job of building up the Pittsburgh Pirates organization with the same energy and trying to attract credit for all the methods that molded great St. Louis Cardinal and Brooklyn Dodger clubs.

The 51-year-old baseball mastermind visited the four minor league training camp here Wednesday eager to work with the players and talk about the Pirates' future.

Practically without equal in baseball background, Rickey is still the able conversationalist—never at a loss for words on the dramatic launch.

"Certainly, coming to Pittsburgh is and was a challenge," he said. "I thought they might have some thing of real value in the minor league system, say how it influences. There isn't anything there. That and the war have delayed our rate of progress."

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Minutes later, however, he was knowing that most of the players had been copied or scouted while he was still head of the Brooklyn organization.

He also admitted that most of the St. Louis Cards including Stan Musial, Ross Stangor, and Del Rice, started under his training.

The architect of the large system in baseball was asked for his views on the alarming drop in baseball attendance over the last few years.

"I think history will repeat itself," said Rickey. "We always have had years of great attendance after years—after World War II and World War I. I think we will have them again when the war in Korea is over."

In answer to another question, Rickey observed that "The transfer of the Boston Braves to Milwaukee indicated no trend in baseball. That was just an accommodation to necessity, an expedient and an acted upon. Transfer of franchises indicate no trend."

Those closest to Rickey say that he still lives baseball around the clock.

He spends some time thinking of ways to combat Communism," one Pirate official stated. "The clubs that led business with a passion. Sometimes I think ways to fight it and baseball are all that ever cross his brain."

But Rickey's words and actions did not completely substantiate the statement.

At a special barbecue held in his honor here the Meluhua was overheard to comment: "You know, I want hunting up over Billings, Mont., not some ago and let me tell you. . . ."

Denver Starts Grid Practice

DENVER — The job of improving Denver University's football team which finished at the bottom of the Skyline Conference last fall, begins to earnest Wednesday with the opening of spring practice.

"We will leave no stone unturned to show improvement," said Bob Backman, the new head coach who succeeded Johnny Baker.

Backman added, "We promise to be completely new staff of four assistants. They are the best from last year. And Margrett in the backfield, Jack

(Photo) Browns Attend Barbeque for Branch Rickey (continued)

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