

#45B 1930s – Claude Brown Article – Unknown Author

During the earliest years this writer can recall- of economic depression and recovery - entertainment in Marshallberg and other down east communities was confined largely to books, plays and baseball. What Marshallberg resident of that period could forget the plays put on by local boys and girls who, for a few hours were idolized? Years later John Willis and Harold Davis are still remembered for a funny skit or their overall acting ability. But the activity most enjoyed in each community was baseball, the topic of discussion on those hot, lazy Saturday afternoons throughout the summer, when small boys dreamed of the day when they would star. Over the years players came and went, but a few could not be forgotten Their personalities were almost as interesting as the results they achieved. Some were colorful and noisy, others were quiet and productive, but all were unique in a certain way. But in Marshallberg Claude Brown was Mr. Baseball. The characteristic that best described Claude from the first inning to the last was his hustle. While reminiscing one thinks of him as an earlier edition of Pete Rose. When at bat he would crowd the plate and/or meet the pitchers eye with a glaring gaze to intimidate him. And once on first he became a thief to be admired. The pitcher must not forget him for a moment or he would be on second One wonders if Ty Cobb was better. Baseball is not a contact game but if contact advanced him to the next base or resulted in a run so be it. And if an opponent initiated the contact Claude did not complain to the umpire.

In 1938 Claude played Professional ball with Mt. Airy N C, a Cincinnati Reds farm team. World War Two was fast approaching, interrupting many activities intended to entertain including baseball; but when the war was over and the boys returned interest in the game peaked. A few generous fans even hired one or two semiprofessional players to join the best of the locals. Claude was one of those best.

The last great local baseball battle was with rapidly improving Television and Air conditioning, with which an increasing number of homes were being furnished. While predicting the future is tricky, to say that down east community baseball will not return is a reasonable guess. Instead of battling the heat and mosquitoes to be entertained by amateur teams one can sit in a comfortable room with a beverage of choice and a snack and see a variety of interesting activities among which is Major League Baseball.

To Claude and the others who were here when we needed them we say thank you.