

#10 Jack Gardner – College Hall of Fame – Town Hero (From the Mailboat 1991)

Jack Gardner was not your average hometown player. Even with the amount of talent that abounded in Carteret County, Jack excelled, not only as a player but later as manager of the Morehead team. Included here are several clippings from his scrapbook which is filled with pictures, programs, and newspaper accounts (from as far away as Cuba). Though it is difficult to single-out any one player among so many talented athletes, it seems fitting to recognize Jack and his accomplishments, not only here at home, but those beyond the county line as well.

From *The Havana (Cuba)*, October 8, 1941:

"The United States team lost its last chance to win or tie for the world amateur baseball championship by dropping an eleven-inning game 4 to 1 to Panama yesterday. Jack Gardner, the hardhitting American fielder, was snapped above scoring the lone U.S. run on Jim Blair's single in the eighth inning of the hard-fought battle. The victory sent Panama into a second-place tie with Mexico."

From *The Carteret County News-Times*, March 15, 1973:

"Jack Gardner of Beaufort is one of six persons selected to be in the newly established Elon College Sports Hall of Fame... Mr. Gardner attended Elon College from 1937 to 1941, majoring in physical education. He earned nine college letters. Four of them were earned in basketball, four in baseball and one came from football.

... During his junior year in college, he signed a baseball contract with a bonus with the Philadelphia Athletics. He was later declared a free agent and signed with the Chicago Cubs and played in the Bi-State League in Sanford during the summer of 1941..."



Jack Gardner with the Morehead City team of 1948. Photo courtesy of Earl Lewis.

From *The Beaufort News*:

"This Sunday will be 'Jack Gardner Day*' in Morehead City as the team of that town take on Marshallberg in a Tidewater League contest in Wade Brothers ball park. Tomorrow the two teams will meet on Marshallberg's home diamond.

A number of Morehead City fans have organized to honor their slugging center fielder and manager in pre-game ceremonies Sunday in recognition of the bang-up job that Jack has done for the club this season.

Gardner, besides covering the outfield like a hawk, has been slapping the ball around at a .400 clip ... Batting in the number three slot in the Morehead batting order, Gardner has become the most feared batter in the league, and is often passed intentionally by opposing pitchers in order to avoid pitching to him.

Gardner is followed in the Morehead batting order by left-fielder Joe Hill, former manager of Newport, and shortstop Foot-sy Palmer, state college star athlete who set an intercollegiate punting record in football last year. This trio is the dangerous 'Murderer's Row*' of an already slugging batting order ..."

#10 Jack Gardner *Continued*

From the Album –

The Seashore League was a hot organization back in the late 1940s and 1950s. Playing in it were New Bern, Cove City, Newport, a Beaufort-down east team, Midway Park and Swansboro.

Pat Crawford, former director of Camp Morehead, was president, Wade Bell, Morehead City, was treasurer, and Charles Has-seU, Beaufort, secretary ...

James Webb, Morehead City, who pitched for Morehead, and Mr. Bell, former treasurer, identified some of the players in the picture.

The man standing at right with the bats, played for Morehead City. He was from New Bern and an outfielder. (Businessmen in Morehead City, as hi other towns in the league, paid players. Mr. Webb says they were usually paid \$35 a weekend. One business in the area even hired ballplayers from other areas during the week, so that they would be around to play ball on the weekends.)

'Admission' to the games was anything the spectators wanted to give. Collectors at the three entrances to the ball field were usually John Tillery, Lon Lewis, and Clarence Pelletier.

Among those in the bullpen behind Smith are Calvin Hodges, Eric Lewis, Roland Brinson and James Webb.

Along the fence, behind Gardner, who was player-manager, are Sheldon Bell, father of Wade Bell, Cliff Willis, Wade Bell, Ben Heath, and Lon Lewis.

Among the spectators in the stands were Pete Block, Duffy Rowe, Hubert Perry, Bobby Bell, Mart Bell, Ray Lewis, R. H. Dowdy, Harold Baldree, Horace Finer, Charles Guthrie, John T. Willis, Sammy Hughes and William Baits.

It is believed that this was a Sunday game, no one knows who Morehead City's opponent was. So, without consulting Dot Har-reU, who kept the statistics, let's assume Morehead City won.

Managers of the Morehead City team at different times were Genuine Talbert and Moose Tenney. Mr. Webb says that many players in the semi-pro Seashore League went on to the major league. Among them was Roger Craig, now manager of the San Diego Padres."

Carteret County News-Times.