

May 29, 2005

By Joe Willis

**Jack Gardner, Beaufort:**

- ◆ **Carteret County Baseball Hero**
- ◆ **College Hall-of-Famer**
- ◆ **World Series for Amateur Baseball Star**
- ◆ **Professional (Minor League) Baseball Player**
- ◆ **Carteret County Baseball Hero**

**April 29, 2005 Jack Gardner****Photo By: Joe (Boy) Willis**

Upon arriving at Jack’s Home in Beaufort, he met Becky Paul and I at the front of his beautiful home, which he had built over a two-year period himself. He finished it in 1943. He and Hazel decided to build on Front Street. They were the first ones in that area until Dr. Salter and his wife Rosalie moved in 1947.

Jack Gardner was born Jan 25, 1917 in Paducah, Kentucky. His parents later moved to Ohio where he played and excelled in baseball, basketball and football in high school and where he played American Legion baseball.

Jack was offered scholarships from various colleges including Duke. He chose Elon because it had an excellent sports program and to him it was more laid back and not as ‘high flucking’. At Elon, Jack would have become their first 1,000 point producer had he played out his fourth year, but the three-time all-conference basketball player had to interrupt his studies after ten games in the 1941-42 season to go to work as his father had tuberculosis. In three and one-half years, he tallied 937 points and averaged better than 16 points a game at a time when very few small college players scored consistently in double figures. He is still ranked 17<sup>th</sup> on the all-time list of Elon scorers.

Jack led the team in scoring as a freshman and was named to the All-Conference team for three years. During his junior year, he was also named to the All-Tournament team and was the conference’s Most Valuable Player as he set a new season scoring mark for the league with 369 points.

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On the baseball diamond, Jack was a swift shortstop and swung a hot bat. His career batting average for three years was .388 and during his sophomore year he hit .451 to lead the league.

On May 19, 1973, Jack was inducted to the Elon's Sports Hall Of Fame for both Basketball and baseball. He was selected to play in September/October of 1941 in Cuba in the World Series for Amateurs.

Jack married Hazel Diell in the early 1940s and they had two boys Jack Jr. and Stephen Diell. On March 11, 1942 Jack signed with the Philadelphia Athletics farm club in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He had a good first year and had his ticket to go back for the second year; however, since he had a good job at Cherry Point and since in the farm team played late at night and they just had a baby, he decided not to go back.

In answer to what would he do different, he believes people with the ability to play at that level should do everything possible to further the possibility of their success. He has seen to many people for a host of reasons i.e. getting married too early, likes fishing too much, can't leave Carteret County, girlfriend and a whole host of other reasons that has precluded them from trying. If he had to do it all over he said, "I would do everything I could do to make."

Jack starting playing baseball for Beaufort around 1944 and excelled as a player for them through 1947. In 1948 he became the Player-Manager for Morehead City where he was selected as an All-Star and the Morehead team had the second best record 26-10. Swansboro won the regular season with a record of 27-10. Marshallberg beat Morehead and Beaufort out to win the Tidewater League 1948 Playoff Title. He received \$75 per game, which he said was a lot in those days.

Jack has a lot of fond memories of the people he played with and against. He couldn't remember all of the names, but he mention people like Elvin Davis the great player of the 1940s and 1950s; Jack Rose of Atlantic about how competitive he was; and Myron "Ace" Harris how he was not only a great baseball player, but he was a track star at Wake Forest.

He talked about the some of the great pitchers like James Webb, Morehead leading pitcher, a control pitcher. Joe Hill, Newport, a hard thrower. He remembered getting a hit against Bob Porterfield, who went on to play with the Senators.

He mentioned other great players like Red Davis, Lester Babbitt, John Hamilton, Roy Cockram and Footsey Palmer. He remembered how he loved to play Marshallberg since they played on the Smyrna field. He fondly remembers it was an outstanding field for a hitter.

Jack continues to work with his great Grand Son, Sam Stainback, who he loves dearly. He has high hopes that he will go on to play baseball even though he said he may not be here to see it. We spoke with Sam and he looks like a baseball player.

Jack's favorite thing about baseball was to get hold of one and hear that crack-of-the-bat.

Jack, thank you for doing all that you have accomplished and for being part of the "Carteret County Baseball League of Honor."

## Beaufort Pony League Ready for Open

Player agent, W. R. Hamilton announces that four teams have been formed in the Beaufort Junior Baseball League and the first game of the season is set for Saturday, June 6.

Making up the four-team league will be the Braves, managed by Bobbie Martin; the Rebels, managed by Ray Hassell; the Tigers, managed by Ray Ransom and the Marines, managed by Jack Gardner.

The league will provide baseball for boys who have graduated from Little League play. The age limits of players is over 13 and under 16.

League officials include W. R. Hamilton, president; Charles Merrill, vice-president; Jack Gardner, treasurer and Ray Ransom, secretary.

Tommy Piner will serve the league as chief umpire while official statistician will be Jim Fodrie.

In Saturday's opener the Tigers are pitted against the Marines and a contest Sunday will bring together the Braves and the Rebels.

