

# Amerige ballpark has fielded dreams

FULLERTON — For more than half a century, it has been a fixture on Fullerton's landscape: the ballfield at Amerige Park.

Through a Depression and a world war, through men walking on the moon and "moonwalking" on stage, Amerige's diamond has sparkled as a field of dreams for countless local ballplayers hoping one day to see their own likenesses inscribed on a bronze plaque in Cooperstown.

Even though room has been made on the field to accommodate the growing number of soccer enthusiasts, Amerige is still thought of as "a ballplayer's park."

"It's a challenging park, especially for hitters," said Community Services Manager Wes Morgan, who, with Community Services Director Ron Hagan, oversaw renovations recently completed to the site. "From home plate it's more than 400 feet to dead center, and it's 300 feet down the foul lines. The configurations are characteristic of classic old ballparks."

Amerige's reputation is well earned. In its day, the field has hosted exhibition games with such legends as Hall of Famers Walter Johnson (who was born on the nearby Brea-Olinda oil lease), Joe DiMaggio, Satchel Paige and Bob Lemon.

Far more important in the field's history, though, have been the countless local ballplayers — young and not-so-young — who have rounded its bases for more than six decades.

grandstand was removed because it had become termite infested and was declared a fire hazard. A brick snack bar was added to the facility at this time.

Morgan said the city has been considering what to do in the way of renovating the facility since the mid-1970s. "A lot of planning and a lot of community input went into the final plan," he added. "We think the public will be happy with the results. The field can now accommodate one baseball diamond or two soccer fields."

One person who is very happy to see the field upgraded is Roe White, former assistant chief of the Fullerton Fire Department, and one of the many ballplayers who used to consider Amerige their "home away from home."

Now in his 80s, White first took the field at Amerige in 1932, not long after he had moved to California from Detroit. An avid ballplayer, White had once been offered a contract with the Detroit Tigers' farm team. "But they were only going to pay me \$100 a month, and I was making \$200 a month with Chrysler Motors, so I said 'no thanks,'" he recalled.

When the Depression hit, Chrysler began laying off employees, one of which was White. "I had an uncle Torrance, so I decided to come to California for a visit," White said. "That was in 1930, and I'm still visiting."

Landing a job first at a nursery, and then with Chrysler's West Coast plant, White continued playing ball in his



(Photo courtesy of Fullerton Public Library)

**THE BIG TRAIN** — Brea's native son Walter Johnson, center, played exhibition games at Amerige Park. One of the alltime great baseball players, Johnson pitched for the Washington Senators, who won the 1924 World Series.

of baseball greats

# Walter Johnson

**N**icknamed "The Big Train" by sportswriter Grantland Rice,

Walter Johnson won 416 games in 21 years with the Washington Senators. No other pitcher in this century has won so many. In addition, no other pitcher could have won nearly as many games with the teams for which Johnson played.

When he joined the Nats in 1907, they had yet to finish higher than sixth place or have a pitcher who won 20 games in a season.

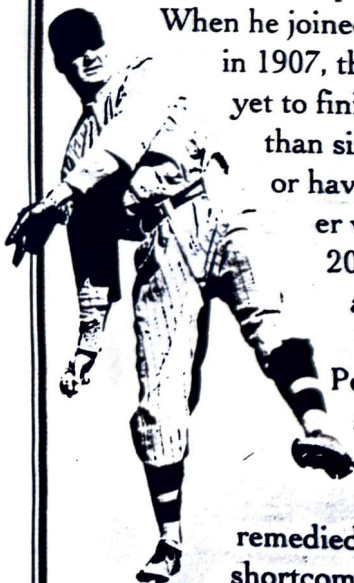
Walter Perry Johnson (1887-1946) soon remedied the latter shortcoming, but

even his talents couldn't immediately lift the team out of the nether regions. The Senators finished last or next to last in each of Walter's first five seasons, even though he twice won 25 games. Then in 1912, Washington vaulted to second place as Johnson racked up 32 wins, 303 strikeouts, and a 1.39 ERA. When Walter suspended belief the following year, winning 36 games and posting a microscopic 1.09 ERA, the Senators repeated their second-place finish. Eleven more years passed before Washington again returned to contention.

Those who wrote Walter off, though, were in for a surprise. In 1924, with Washington locked in a

season-long pennant fight, Johnson paced the AL in winning percentage, strikeouts, and ERA. His league-leading 23 wins also helped bring the Senators their first flag. In the World Series, Johnson won the deciding seventh game in relief. The following season he spurred Washington to a second consecutive pennant when he again won 20. The Pirates, however, bested him in game seven of the series.

The Big Train retired as a player after the 1927 season. His 2.17 career ERA is the seventh-best total ever, and Johnson is the only pre-1960s pitcher in the top ten all-time strikeout leaders. Johnson was among the first five players elected to the Hall of Fame in 1936.



N BASEBALL—CHICAGO WHITE  
0; Kansas City 6, New York Mets 5,  
Philadelphia 1; St. Louis 6, Detroit 5; Hous-  
Dodgers 4, Cleveland 2; San Francisco  
Minnesota 6, Baltimore 2.

LAYERS IN THE MASTERS INVI-  
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t St. Petersburg, Fla. Top-seeded Roy  
ustralia takes on Carlos Fernandez of  
nd-seeded Manuel Santana of Spain  
r of a match between Rod Laver and  
America's top hope, Whitney Reed of  
will play the winner of the Emerson-  
h. In the women's division, top-seeded  
Brazil meets Edda Budding of Ger-

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### JVs Lose Again In 9-Inning Tilt To Laguna Artists

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1903. Standing (left to right) are Art  
Cripps, Rube Crandall, Tom Young  
(village barber who acted as team  
free, Art-Perris, Bill Rayburn and  
Joe Burke. (Historical Publishers  
Santa Ana)

### 'BUILT-IN BASEBALL SHRINE'

# Historical Researcher Tells Walter Johnson's Olinda Days

(Editor's Note: The follow-  
ing story on baseball immortal  
Walter Johnson's association  
with Olinda was furnished by  
Mildred Yorba MacArthur,  
Yorba Linda historical re-  
searcher, who is compiling a  
10-volume history of Orange  
County).

When Brea annexed that  
strip of land to the north and  
east it acquired the little oil  
own of Olinda, which is hal-  
lowed ground to baseball fans  
who will never forget the  
name of Walter Johnson, the  
great Washington Senator  
pitcher who became known as  
"The Big Train," who in 1924,  
was voted the most valuable  
man in the American League,  
and was voted a place in base-  
ball's Hall of Fame in Coopers-  
town, N.Y. By this time he had  
already established a strike  
out record of 3497 and had  
pitched two no-hit games, and  
once, between April 2 and May  
14, 1912, he pitched 56 consec-  
utive scoreless innings.

**Kansas Born**  
Johnson was born in Kansas  
but came to Olinda as a youth  
with his parents, Frank and  
Minnie Perry Johnson. His fa-  
ther and grandfather were em-  
ployees of the Santa Fe Drill-  
ing Company, which not only  
sponsored baseball, but en-  
couraged it during work hours,  
by means of a "weed gang,"  
which carried all of the equip-  
ment for destroying weeds,  
plus a few baseball mitts and  
balls. After a small warm-up  
with a hoe, they took to their  
pitching and catching. Prose-  
lyting was the order of the day  
and any potential ball player  
was invited to join the Olinda  
Wells team. The result was a  
first class team, headed by a  
kid pitcher that never gave  
anyone any trouble, except a  
batter. Hits off of him were  
so sparse that his outfielders  
sportied the best tan in Orange  
County.

**Well-Remembered**  
Brea will remember such  
names as John Craig of Grah-  
am and Loftus; Art Cripps,  
Olinda Land Company; Bob Is-  
bell, CCMO; Charles Lloyd,  
Olinda Land Company; Dutch  
Brown of CCMO; Earl Brown;  
Ray Perry, Billy McLean and  
Claude Buzzard. This was a-  
bout 1908 or 1909. John Martin,

the local drugist, captained  
this team.

But there were others before  
this, about 1903. Art Cripps,  
Rube Crandall, Bob Isbell,  
Claire Head, Jack Burnett, Joe  
Wagner, John Tuffree, Art Per-  
ris, Bill Rayburn and Joe  
Burke. And Tom Young, the  
village barber was team man-  
ager.

During the week Walter  
Johnson played with the boys  
on the Fullerton High School  
team, which C. Stanley Chap-  
man managed. This was the  
team that played itself to a  
standstill, April 15, 1905, with  
a 15 inning scoreless tie a-  
gainst Santa Ana High School,  
in which Johnson struck out  
27 and a boy by the name of  
Coleman from Santa Ana fan-  
ned 17. The game was finally  
called to save the boys' pitch-  
ing arms and because the fans  
had long since lost their voices.  
Charlie Hansen, and Bob  
McFadden of Placentia played  
on that memorable day, as did  
Warren, "Cap" Hillyard of  
Santa Ana. They could proba-  
bly fill in the details.

**Special Train**  
But back to Olinda, whose  
team wandered far afield in  
search of new worlds to con-  
quer. They often took on the  
boys at Rivera where Rube El-  
lis and Ted Easterly played, or  
up to San Bernadino to play  
against the Santa Fe Railroad  
team, where the great Indian  
player, Jack "Chief" Myers  
played, before he became the  
catcher for the New York  
Giants. If they went to Rivera  
they took the day and went by  
horse and carriage, and if to  
Riverside, the Santa Fe rolled  
out a special car for them  
which they boarded down at  
what is now Atwood.

At the end of every season,  
for more than 20 years, Walter  
Johnson returned to his home  
in Olinda, to visit with his  
family. With him he brought  
a lot of old baseball equip-  
ment and he never got too big  
to show them how the game  
was played, or show them how  
he practiced his pitching by  
aiming at a knot hole in a  
barn door. And he watched a  
new crop of players coming a-  
long, such as "Arkie" Vaughn  
and Willard Hershberger and

Del Crandall. He enjoyed all  
of his neighbors and friends  
and partook of good home  
cooked food and had time to  
saunter across the street to the  
lower deck of the old Stein-  
Fassel general store where he  
took his seat at the poker  
game which was always in  
session. That was Walter John-  
son's indoor sport.

### Ruth-Johnson Duel

E. L. Doheny sank the first  
oil well in 1897 in the town of  
Olinda, but a new baseball  
player created more of a stir  
in those days than a new well.  
In 1926 Walter Johnson re-  
turned to Brea to play an ex-  
hibition with Babe Ruth and  
he received a royal welcome.  
He died December 10, 1946, at  
the age of 59, leaving five  
motherless children, his wife  
having preceded him in death.  
They were raised by his moth-  
er, Minnie Perry Johnson, at  
Walter's Maryland farm. Mrs.  
Johnson has always said that  
her happiest days were spent  
in Olinda with her husband  
and their six children.

If Big League baseball ever  
comes to Orange County I hope  
that Brea-Olinda will get first  
consideration, for they have a  
built-in shrine awaiting them.

## Brea Golf Club President's Cup Semis Set Sunday

Two Breans and one La  
Habran are in the semi-  
finals of the President's  
Flight matches in the Presi-  
dent's Cup tournament at  
Brea Golf Course Sunday.

The Breans are Danny La-  
delra Jr., who faces La Ha-  
bran Jerry Breeding in the  
lower bracket semis and Al  
Stockwell, who meets Ben  
Arguello in the upper bracket  
semi of the Brea Men's Golf  
Club tourney, according to  
Ken Finley, club activities di-  
rector.

Semi-final pairings in the

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# Mike Ledbetter Pitcher

## Wire News

### BESS INTERNATIONAL

**BOSTON AGAINST LOS ANGELES**  
The National Basketball Assn. champions open their series Saturday at Boston. The Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Boston Celtics in the final game of the playoffs last night with an upset over Philadelphia. A running jump shot by Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry Jones in the final second of play won the game 109-107.

**SERVICES FOR BOXER BENNY**  
A fight will be held tomorrow in Miami.

**LEADS AFTER ONE ROUND IN**  
Tournament at Augusta, Ga. He shot 67 to lead second place Julius Boros 70. Arnold Palmer, Gardner Dickinson, and Gene Souchak each shot 70.

**ATION OF BASKETBALL COACH-**  
The state's Jerry Lucas as the outstanding player in the nation for the second year.

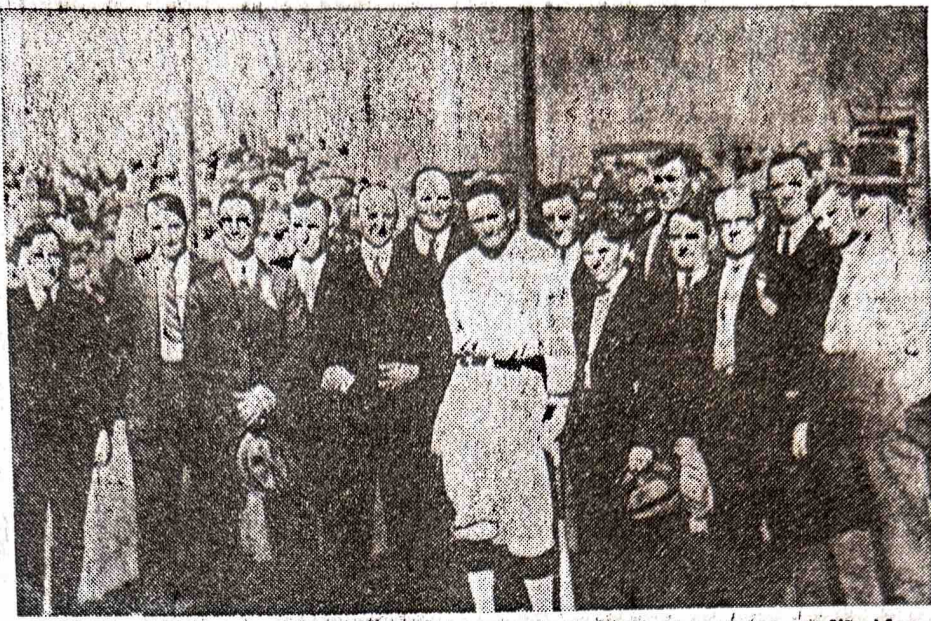
**HITS TERRY DOWNES AND**  
Downes is recognized as champion in the 175-pound weight class. Terry Downes is a slight (7-5) favorite.

**ERWEIGHT CHAMPION CHAR-**  
Little on the line tonight against Orlando at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles.

**AL AAU MEN'S SWIMMING**  
Roy Saari, a 17-year-old swimmer from El Segundo, Calif. won the 100-yard freestyle event in a record 16:54.1. He will win the event under 17 minutes.

**EVADA LIGHTWEIGHT BOXER**  
He is 24-year-old James Feaster. He was wounded in the right shoulder by a fight with John Johns at Johns' home in Las Vegas. Johns was on a charge of assault with a weapon.

**BASEBALL—CHICAGO WHITE**  
Kansas City 6; New York Mets 5; Philadelphia 1; St. Louis 6; Detroit 5; Houston 4; Cleveland 2; San Francisco 3; Minnesota 6, Baltimore 2.



**BIG TRAIN AND FRIENDS**—Walter Johnson, (center, in baseball uniform) greets former teammates when he returned to Olinda in 1926 for an exhibition game against a team which included Babe Ruth.

Some individuals are not readily identified. Those who can be (left to right) are Joe Wagner, third from left; Fayette Lewis, seventh from left; eighth from left Bob Isbell; ninth from left Joe Burke. (Historical Publishers' Photo)



**OLINDA OILERS**—Early-day local baseball team was the first Olinda Oil Well club, as members looked in 1903. Standing (left to right) are Art Cripps, Rube Crandall, Tom Young (village barber who acted as team

manager), Bob Isbell, Claire Head and Jack Burnett. Seated (left to right) are Joe Wagner, John Tuffree, Art Perris, Bill Rayburn and Joe Burke. (Historical Publishers' Photo)

### 'BUILT-IN BASEBALL SHRINE'

## Historical Researcher Tells

## Little League Managers For 11 Cl

Managers of the Little League baseball organization chosen this week in Brea city, Calif., said last night. About 170 boys will begin the season on August 26 and end August 26. The new schedule is up to give boys more practice time for various events. The schedule will include games on Saturday and Wednesday at high school fields.

After school is over, games will be held on Monday, Wednesday evenings. The season which runs from August 28, will have a game on Tuesday, Saturday, and Wednesday.

Teams and managers as follows: Don Carlisle, Leonard Hobbs, Jim Mick, Cards; Jim Bob Bartlett, Jim Laffoon and Jim Braves; Frank Giants; Rusty Charles Robinson, Lanz, Pirates; Corder and Ken Rogers; Bob Bickle, devar, Cubs; Don Gels and Bill Maurice Houghton.

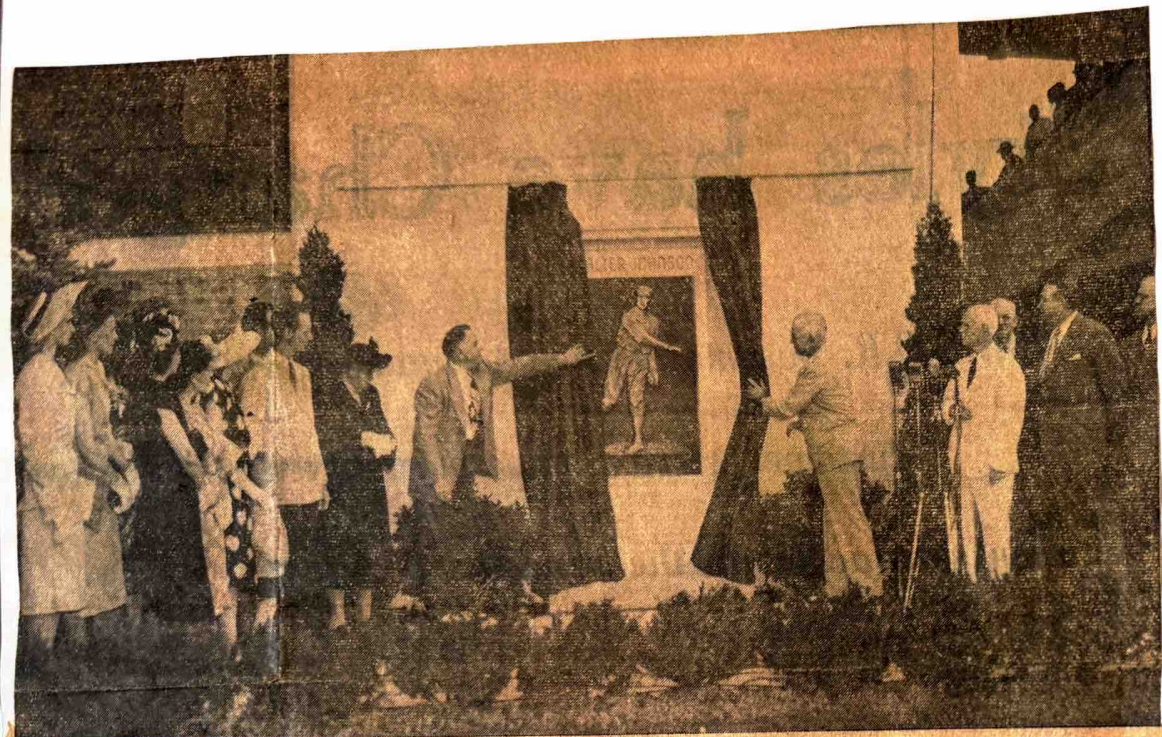
## Pony, Colt To Name Slate Mo

Brea Pony and Colt organization meeting 7 p.m., in Brea School to name and draw up a schedule. Meeting time earlier than day.

The Pony League 13 and 14 will have Thursday and Saturday games.

Colt League for 16 will throw in again this season. Teams will represent

King a  
\$3.50



**TRIBUTE TO JOHNSON** — On June 21, 1947, President Truman unveiled the Walter Johnson Memorial Plaque at Griffith Stadium, Washington, D.C. With Truman are Walter's mother, Minnie Johnson (dark dress and hat and white gloves); Edward Landon (holding drape), who cast the plaque; and Clark Griffith, now deceased, former owner of the Washington Senators. Walter became known as "The Big Train." He racked up a strike-out record of 3497 and pitched two no-hit games. Between April 2 and May 14, 1912 he

pitched 56 consecutive scoreless innings. He pitched 114 games in which he allowed his opponent no runs. In 1924 he was voted the most valuable player in the American League, at which time he was voted a place in baseball's Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y. Orange County remembers Walter as the boy who never forgot his home town, Olinda, and who always came from the big league seasons loaded with reject baseballs which he presented to the small fry of the village for their practice and play.



**PROUD PARENTS** — Minnie and Frank Johnson, parents of the immortal baseball pitcher of the Washington Senators, were married in Iola, Kansas, July 2, 1885. They were the parents of six children. Walter was born in Humboldt, Allen County, Kansas, November 6, 1887. He died Dec. 10, 1946. In 1899, at the age of 12, he came to Olinda with his parents. His father was a loader and teamster for the Santa Fe Oil Company, and Walter helped him during his vacations. After Mr. Johnson's death Mrs. Johnson went to live in Maryland with Walter, where she helped to raise his five children, after their beautiful young mother died. In fact she raised seven grandchildren, when she lost her daughter who was the mother of two tiny children. Now 90 years old, Mrs. Johnson lives on a farm in Maryland, with Walter's second son Eddle, where she still delights in gardening and making her own butter and helping to care for her three great-grandchildren. Her sister, Mrs. Willbite, who lives in Fullerton, says that Minnie Johnson is a most unselfish person. She has spent her life in making pets of everything around her, including Walter's hunting dogs. She says that the happiest days of her life were those spent in Olinda, when her family was complete and all about her each day.

# EVEN 'BIG TRAIN' PITCHED WILD ONE

[This is the third in a series about Walter Johnson, who started his pitching career in Orange County and went on to become a baseball legend during his 21 years with the Washington Senators. Last week Mildred Yorba MacArthur told how Johnson developed the fast ball pitching at a knot hole in an Olinda barn which later was to win him the nickname "The Big Train."]

BY MILDRED YORBA MAC ARTHUR

Walter's first baseman, Bob Isbell, who came to Olinda in 1904 at the age of 18 to work and play ball, has just retired, after 50 years of continuous service.

This quiet, soft-spoken man who turned down offers from Seattle and Washington, played ball with the Olinda teams for 30 years. He still lives there with his charming wife in their white house at the top of the main street.

Isbell has lots of stories to tell about games he played with "The Big Train," including one in which Johnson blew up.

"We had a variety of dressing rooms offered us in those days," Isbell recalls. In Anaheim it was always the back room of a saloon with the fans milling about making their bets. Another time, Walter, Guy Meats and I rented a horse and buggy to drive to Rivera for a Sunday game. This time we changed clothes in what we took to be a deserted henhouse near the field and as a consequence we spent a good part of the game and some of the next few days scratching."

## Recalls Wild Game

Bob had more to say about Walter. "He was a magnificent athlete, weighing about 175 pounds, with long arms and powerful shoulders. He had the perfect delivery. His back

muscles did all the work! He was three-quarter side arm when he started, but somewhat under that as he grew older. What a change a few months in the Big League made in his throw to bases! When he played with us as a kid he made a few false motions before he got the ball out to base. But when he returned after the end of the season he got them there faster and straighter than anyone before or since. It was suicide to try to steal a base on him.

"I only saw Walter pitch one wild game and that was in San Diego," Isbell continued. "That day he damn near tore down the backstop. He never offered an alibi or an excuse for himself and he expected none from others. Whatever errors were committed behind him were completely ignored."

John Tuffree recalls the game in San Diego which was Walter's first outside appearance with the Olinda team.

## Makeshift Uniform

"There was no suit for him to wear," he said, "so we gathered some odds and ends, and the result was that Walter's shirttail was out after every pitch. His pants hit him well above the knees and they were too tight to buckle. His cap was so small that with every pitch it rose up and almost dropped off. He took an awful ribbing, which he ignored, fanned every bat-

ter, and before he was through had the entire crowd cheering for him."

Another man who knew Walter well is Jim McReynolds, who went to Olinda in 1908 as a bookkeeper for the general store owned by Stern and Goodman.

When Walter's family moved back to Kansas, the McReynolds family moved into the old Johnson home in Olinda and it was here that Walter always returned to visit when he came west. "I went to business college in Santa Ana with Walter and his sister Effie," McReynolds said. "He only stayed a short time. Our college professor just couldn't understand why anyone would quit school to play professional baseball."

## Loved Poker

Jim remembers Walter's love of poker and there was plenty of poker played in the Olinda oil fields in those days.

Jim saw the famous Fullerton-Santa Ana High School game on April 15, 1905 with Walter pitching for Fullerton which ended in a 0-0 tie after 15 innings. Not one person who saw that game had the slightest semblance of a voice left when it was called, not on account of darkness, but from sheer exhaustion, McReynolds declares.

## Fullerton Freshman

Stanley Chapman of Fullerton was the manager of the Fullerton High School team in his copy of "The Lucky Thirteen," the school annual of that year, was this note:

"There was much baseball material to pick from. The line-up of the team was soon made and was as follows: Catcher, Edgar Hartung; pitcher, Walter Johnson; first base, Rufus Porter; second base and captain, Charles Hansen; third base, Ralph



'BIG TRAIN'—This photo of Walter Johnson was taken at the peak of his career with Washington Senators.

Tanner; shortstop, Robert McFadden; left field, Walter Schultz; center field, Hollis Knowlton; right field, Lloyd Emerick; substitute, Lloyd Hopkins; manager, Stanley Chapman. With this line-up we put up many a stiff game, especially the 15-inning game with Santa Ana High School. There is no reason why our team couldn't be much stronger in 1906 because we will still have the little freshman Johnson, the swiftest amateur pitcher in Orange County."

(Next week: Mildred Yorba MacArthur concludes the Walter Johnson story telling of his return home as a hero to Olinda after making good in the major leagues.)



**FANNED BY JOHNSON** — Santa Ana High School team, 1905. It was against this team that Walter Johnson received his first taste of fame. After 15 innings, the score was 0-0. The game was called,

but not until Johnson had struck out 27 players, and the opposing moundswoman, Coleman, had fanned 17. Coleman is third from the left, standing.

## Early-Day Teammates Tell About 'Big Train'



**BASEBALL GREAT**—Walter Johnson had just started his 30-year career in the majors when this photo was taken in about 1907.

on \$10 a month, eating in the company boarding house and sleeping in the bunk houses.

### Games Recalled

Never did any team have such solid backing as these boys had. Olinda was a development of the Santa Fe Railroad which had bought the property from Doheny. When the boys had to travel they went first class. For a game at Rivera, a distance of 25 miles, they took their horses and buggies part way, then continued by rail. For trips down the coast to San Diego or to Los Angeles or Glendale, the railroad officials supplied a special train for them which picked them up at a siding in the nearby town of Richfield which is now called Atwood.

The incentive for the gathering of this talent was the desire of Joe Burke and Art Perris to have a gang that could beat the San Bernardino shop team which numbered among its players Jack (Chief) Myers, the great Indian catcher who later played

with the New York Giants. The Olinda boys also had some fine competition when they tackled Rivera, where Ted Easterly and Rube Ellis held forth.

One unscheduled contest was a long-distance throw between Olinda's shortstop, Jack Burnett, and Chief Myers. Burnett won the toss by three feet with the whole town betting on the outcome. Burnett was a fine ballplayer but was addicted to mischief in every form, whether it was taking the sack with him as he ran bases, or over-training before a game. He never deviated from this course even when he played with the St. Louis Browns.

**(Next Week: Mildred Yorba MacArthur continues the Walter Johnson story by reporting what she learned of early baseball lore from George Kammerer of Fullerton, the late George Meats of Orange, Joe Wagner, John Tuffree and others who knew the great pitcher.)**

## SERIES AUTHOR KINSWOMAN OF FIRST SETTLER

Mildred Yorba MacArthur, who wrote the series of stories on Walter Johnson which begins today in this section, is a member of one of Orange County's pioneer families and is a personal friend of the "old-timers" who tell about the early days of the great ballplayer.

She is a direct descendant of Orange County's first settler, Jose Antonio Yorba, who came to California with the Portola Expedition in 1769.

Born on Rancho Los Pinos in Placentia, she is the daughter of Alonzo Yorba and the late Juanita C. Tuffree. She attended law school at the University of Virginia and Hastings College in San Francisco. She is author of the book "California Spanish Proverbs," published last year.

Mrs. MacArthur is on the staff of The Golfer and has written many historical and sports articles for magazines and newspapers.



BASEBALL LEGEND

# They Still Talk About 'Big Train'

[One of baseball's greats, Walter Johnson, soared out of Olinda Grade School, Fullerton High School and the oil field teams of Brea-Olinda to make a shambles of the American League record book during his 30 years as a pitcher for the Washington Senators. Mildred Yorba MacArthur has traced his start in Orange County in a series of visits with old-timers who knew "The Big Train" when . . . Here is the first of her four-part illustrated glimpses into some county history never before published.]

BY MILDRED YORBA MACARTHUR

In Orange County there is a half-deserted little hamlet called Olinda. The silent jack lines continue to pump liquid gold from under its surface, where a driller by the name of Edward L. Doheny sank the first oil well in 1897.

Each spring when the nearby hills turn from brown to green, talk turns to baseball among those who knew and loved and played with the immortal Walter Johnson. He was a native of Kansas, but his boyhood was spent in Southern California, where he lived with his parents, a sister, three brothers and his Grandpa Perry.

### Strike-out Record

The great pitcher who became known as "The Big Train" racked up a strike-out record of 3497 and pitched two no-hit games. Once, between April 2 and May 14, 1912, he pitched 56 consecutive scoreless innings. He pitched 114 games in which he allowed his opponents no runs. In 1924 he was voted the most valuable player in the American League. And he was voted a place in baseball's Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y.

Walter Johnson was born on a farm in Humboldt County, Kansas, Nov. 6, 1887, and was 12 when his family moved

to Olinda. He attended grade school in Olinda, high school in Fullerton and one brief term at the Santa Ana Business College. During summer vacations he drove a team of horses for his father, who was a teamster and car loader for the Santa Fe Oil Co.

Since many others have covered every phase of his baseball career with the Washington Senators, his life as an adult, his illness and death Dec. 10, 1946 at the age of 59, we propose to recount his boyhood as told by several old friends.

### Early Days Traced

These include teammates who played ball with him on the old Olinda ball team, others who were on the Fullerton High School team with Johnson and the men who worked with him in the oil fields. Their stories offer a nostalgic glimpse into a far more carefree life than today's atomic activity. Let's part history's curtain a bit, then, and go back to when the century was about to turn.

The Olinda team consisted of Art Cripps, Rube Crandall, Bob Isbell, Claire Head, Fayette Lewis, Jack Burnett, Joe Wagner, John Tuffree, Art Parris, Joe Burke and a boy named Rayburn.

It was my good fortune to talk to Walter's catcher, the late Guy Meats of Orange, who went with Walter to play in the Western League where Johnson pitched 85 innings without a score against him.

### Remembers Walter

Another member of the team was Bob Isbell, his first baseman, who reported for his first day of work in the oil fields wearing a baseball uniform. Bob lives in Olinda and has just retired after 50 years with the same oil company.

A third member is Joe Wagner, a successful real estate dealer in Anaheim. He remembers Walter as a clumsy, loose-jointed kid who stumbled over his own feet.

A fourth member of the team is John Tuffree, a citrus grower, who for many years was president of the Anaheim Union Water Co. and the Placentia Mutual Orange Association. In recalling his days in the outfield when

Walter was doing the pitching, Tuffree says: "All I ever got out there in center field was a good tan from standing around waiting for someone to get a hit off of Walter."

### Saturday Night Fight

Before we get into baseball it might be well if we knew a bit more about Olinda as it was in the oil boom days.

It was like a college town. There was a recreation hall at the top of the hill where every Saturday night there was a dance, followed by a

fight. The men lived in bunk-houses on the lease. They practiced baseball before and after work and rounded up their own crowd for dances for which their first baseman, Bob Isbell, played the violin and also led the orchestra.

All of the officials of the oil company were unofficial ball scouts. Proselyting was the order of the day, but it was a sporting sort of a deal, because everyone was doing it and there were no laws against the practice. All those hired for jobs were given plenty of time to train for their Sunday game. This was done by means of a "weed gang." Its members were given hoes, rakes and shovels and told to go out and abate the fire hazards.

They disappeared into the nearby terrain and practiced their pitching, catching and fielding, and when they felt exhausted they sought the shade of a nearby tree. This gang was shepherded about the hills by a kindly, interested, mature gentleman who acted as father confessor, coach and strong arm. He was a combination of Archbishop Sheen, Leo Durocher and Jack Dempsey, a man who could start or stop anything. One of the most successful and best loved was the late Frank Kuhn, father of SC's All-American center, Gil Kuhn.

The result of this happy state of affairs was that Olinda was the mecca of all aspiring ballplayers. However, many turned down big-league ball club offers in favor of ranching or the better pay that was offered in the oil fields where a roustabout got from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a day, a tool pusher from \$2 to \$2.50 and the best drillers got \$3.50. A man could live like a king



**'THE BIG TRAIN'**—This picture of Walter Johnson was taken in 1924 when he was making baseball history with Washington Senators. He set 3497 strike-out record.

# 'THE BIG TRAIN' EASY ON UMPIRES

Early Coaches and Teammates Recall  
Johnson's Boyhood in Olinda Oil Fields

[This is the second in a series about Walter Johnson, one of baseball's greats, who got his start with the Olinda oil field teams and at Fullerton High School. Last week Mildred Yorba MacArthur traced the high points of Johnson's 21-year-career with the Washington Senators and introduced you to some of the old-timers of Orange County who played ball with "The Big Train" when he was "a kid who stumbled over his own feet."]

BY MILDRED YORBA MACARTHUR

The old-timers who knew Walter Johnson both as a kid pitcher who was too hot for them to handle and as a poker player in the old Stein and Fassel general store at Olinda have lots of stories to tell about "The Big Train." But they're not the ones that were printed in the newspapers when he was breaking records with the Washington Senators.

George Kammerer, now retired and living in Fullerton, was one of the oil industry's finest drillers and operators, who helped to add to the safety of Olinda life. He didn't play on the Olinda team, but he remembers Walter Johnson well. He says: "Despite the fact that Walter neither drank nor smoked, he was a real man's man. All the world around him was good. He looked and he listened and he smiled."

Kammerer laughs heartily when he tells about the evening that he and Joe Burke, Mike Melrose, Frank

Grimminger and Tom Saine took their buggies and went on a watermelon hunt. They made quite a haul, only to discover that they'd stolen a lot of citrons, which look like the real thing but are absolutely tasteless. They also came off second best when they decided to appropriate four chickens from a fellow worker, Sam Schulte. They made the mistake of inviting him to their feast. Sam was so impressed by their hospitality that he went home and told his wife, who in the meantime had counted beaks and discovered she was four shy.

She made the boys pay her

for the missing chickens.

Week ends at Anaheim Landing were quite strenuous affairs. The Olinda boys rented a boat from Harry Reisbaum, who put their night lines out on Friday so by the time the boys got there on Saturday with the beer there was plenty of fish for everyone who might drop in. And they usually did.

This was the Olinda of Walter Johnson's boyhood. The prospect of a new ballplayer created more excitement there than bringing in a new oil well.

Joe Burke, the team's first manager, was the man to whom Walter gave much credit for his early coaching. Burke started as chief clerk in the offices of the Petroleum Development Co. Later he was in the County Clerk's office in Santa Ana. Following that he studied law, became an Assemblyman and finally was U.S. District Attorney in Los Angeles. He practiced long hours with Walter out in front of the livery stable barn which served as a backstop for the fast ones that he had to let go by.

### Pitched at Knot Hole

The team's second manager was Tom Young, the village barber, who was paid 10 cents for a shave and 20 cents for a haircut. He was the only man for miles around who had no big league aspirations, despite the fact that he practiced with the boys now and then and would catch for Walter by the hour, business permitting.

According to Joe Wagner, there was plenty of baseball being played in Orange County before Walter's time. Joe says that as a kid he used an 11x11-foot packing box for home plate and perfected his

pitching aim by firing at a knot hole in a barn.

This was also the era when the eight Mallet brothers played on the Westminster team. No one seems to remember the ninth man's name. These were the days when a game of ball at Anaheim Landing was a real ball because the home team put a keg of beer at third base and anyone who got that far refreshed himself.

### Threw Light Ball

John Tuffree remembers the day that he was part of a five-man team that their manager, Joe Burke, sent in to play against a Coast League team. When the game was on ice, Walter turned to Burke and said: "Wasn't that kind of risky?" Joe just laughed and said, "Not with you pitching."

Shortly before his death, Walter's catcher, the late Guy Meats of Orange, had this to say about Walter: "He was the easiest man I ever caught. Despite his great speed, he threw a light ball and his control was so perfect that you always got what you asked for. I could have caught him in a rocking chair and that was before anyone had come up with the idea of a jointed glove. Nowadays mitts have a pocket in them like an oriole's nest. I don't see how these guys ever miss one."

### Never Beefed

"Walter had neither temper nor temperament. If an umpire called a close one, Walter never took issue with him because he believed that umpires make mistakes the same as players do and that the next one might be in his favor. He just tossed the next one over the plate in such a fashion that it left no doubt in anyone's mind. He didn't drink or smoke but how the son-of-a-gun liked to play poker! He could hold a nine

and draw four more. And what a touch he was for any amount of money! I could have retired on what he gave away.

"It was in 1907 when Walter and I took off for Weiser, Ida., to play in the Western League, where he pitched 85 innings without a score against him. He was getting \$150 a month and I was getting \$100. About this time Cliff Blankenship, the Washington Senators' catcher, had a broken thumb. He was out doing a bit of scouting and he landed in Idaho. In the face of Walter's formidable record, he wasn't going to come up empty.

### Signed With Senators

"Walter just couldn't believe that he was ready for the big league. He thought he might be pushing himself too fast, so he stalled Cliff. I can still remember Blankenship saying, 'Walter, this is

the first time I've ever coaxed anyone to sign with a big league team.' Finally Walter told him he'd have to wire his folks and get their permission, thinking of course that they'd say no. The answer came, 'Use your own judgment.'

"Walter signed. He got \$333.30 a month and a round-trip ticket home, which he insisted upon but which he never had occasion to use because he was with Washington for 21 years. When we parted in Idaho, there was a smile on his face and tears in his eyes. In his entire career I'm sure that Walter never realized the heights that he had attained. He was the greatest ballplayer that ever lived."



LEGEND — This picture of the great Walter Johnson was taken when he was pitching for the Senators.

(Next week: Mildred Yorba MacArthur continues the Walter Johnson story by reporting what Johnson's first baseman, Bob Isbell, and John Tuffree recalled about the Big Train and one wild game he pitched.)



**OLINDA OILERS**—Early-day local baseball team was the first Olinda Oil Well club, as members looked in 1903. Standing (left to right) are Art Cripps, Rube Crandall, Tom Young (village barber who acted as team

manager), Bob Isbell, Claire Head and Jack Burnett. Seated (left to right) are Joe Wagner, John Tuffree, Art Perris, Bill Rayburn and Joe Burke. (Historical Publishers Santa Ana)



**BIG TRAIN AND FRIENDS**—Walter Johnson, (center, in baseball uniform) greets former teammates when he returned to Olinda in 1926 for an exhibition game against a team which included Babe Ruth.

Some individuals are not readily identified. Those who can be (left to right) are Joe Wagner, third from left; Fayette Lewis, seventh from left; eighth from left Bob Isbell; ninth from left Joe Burke. (Historical Publishers Photo)

(Editor's Note: The following story on baseball immortal Walter Johnson's association with Olinda was furnished by Mildred Yorba MacArthur, Yorba Linda historical researcher, who is compiling a 10-volume history of Orange County).

When Brea annexed that strip of land to the north and east it acquired the little oil own of Olinda, which is hallowed ground to baseball fans who will never forget the name of Walter Johnson, the great Washington Senator pitcher who became known as "The Big Train," who in 1924, was voted the most valuable man in the American League, and was voted a place in baseball's Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. By this time he had already established a strike out record of 3497 and had pitched two no-hit games, and once, between April 2 and May 14, 1912, he pitched 56 consecutive scoreless innings.

#### Kansas Born

Johnson was born in Kansas but came to Olinda as a youth with his parents, Frank and Minnie Perry Johnson. His father and grandfather were employees of the Santa Fe Drilling Company, which not only sponsored baseball, but encouraged it during work hours, by means of a "weed gang," which carried all of the equipment for destroying weeds, plus a few baseball mitts and balls. After a small warm-up with a hoe, they took to their pitching and catching. Prose-lytizing was the order of the day and any potential ball player was invited to join the Olinda Wells team. The result was a first class team, headed by a kid pitcher that never gave anyone any trouble, except a batter. Hits off of him were so sparse that his outfielders sported the best tan in Orange County.

#### Well-Remembered

Brea will remember such names as John Craig of Graham and Loftus; Art Cripps, Olinda Land Company; Bob Isbell, CCMO; Charles Lloyd, Olinda Land Company; Dutch Brown of CCMO; Earl Brown; Ray Perry, Billy McLean and Claude Buzzard. This was about 1908 or 1909. John Martin, the local drugist, captained this team.

But there were others before this, about 1903. Art Cripps, Rube Crandall, Bob Isbell, Claire Head, Jack Burnett, Joe Wagner, John Tuffree, Art Ferris, Bill Rayburn and Joe Burke. And Tom Young, the village barber was team manager.

During the week Walter Johnson played with the boys on the Fullerton High School team, which C. Stanley Chapman managed. This was the team that played itself to a standstill, April 15, 1905, with a 15 inning scoreless tie against Santa Ana High School, in which Johnson struck out 27 and a boy by the name of Coleman from Santa Ana fanned 17. The game was finally called to save the boys' pitching arms and because the fans had long since lost their voices. Charlie Hansen and Bob McFadden of Placentia played on that memorable day, as did Warren, "Cap" Hillyard of Santa Ana. They could probably fill in the details.

#### Special Train

But back to Olinda, whose team wandered far afield in search of new worlds to conquer. They often took on the boys at Rivera where Rube Ellis and Ted Easterly played, or up to San Bernadino to play

#### BUILT-IN BASEBALL SHRINE

## Historical Researcher Tells Walter Johnson's Olinda Days

against the Santa Fe Railroad team, where the great Indian player, Jack "Chief" Myers played, before he became the catcher for the New York Giants. If they went to Rivera they took the day and went by horse and carriage, and if to Riverside, the Santa Fe rolled out a special car for them which they boarded down at what is now Atwood.

At the end of every season, for more than 20 years, Walter Johnson returned to his home in Olinda, to visit with his family. With him he brought a lot of old baseball mits and he never got too big to show them how the game was played, or show them how he practiced his pitching by aiming at a knot hole in a barn door. And he watched a new crop of players coming along, such as "Arkie" Vaughn and Willard Hershberger and

Del Crandall. He enjoyed all of his neighbors and friends and partook of good home cooked food and had time to saunter across the street to the lower deck of the old Steinfassel general store where he took his seat at the poker game which was always in session. That was Walter Johnson's indoor sport.

#### Ruth-Johnson Duel

E. L. Doheny sank the first oil well in 1897 in the town of Olinda, but a new baseball player created more of a stir in those days than a new well. In 1926 Walter Johnson returned to Brea to play an exhibition with Babe Ruth and he received a royal welcome.

He died December 10, 1946, at the age of 59, leaving five motherless children, his wife having preceded him in death. They were raised by his mother, Minnie Perry Johnson, at Walter's Maryland farm. Mrs. Johnson has always said that her happiest days were spent in Olinda with her husband and their six children.

If Big League baseball ever comes to Orange County I hope that Brea-Olinda will get first consideration, for they have a built-in shrine awaiting them.

## BAMBINO WON GAME IN BREa

BREA—Walter Johnson and Babe Ruth, two of baseball's all-time greats, displayed their talents to an awe-struck crowd here for an exhibition game in 1924.

Johnson, holder of many all-time pitching records, had grown up on the Santa Fe lease and lived in Olinda. He returned to Brea by invitation of the businessmen.

A crowd of more than 6,500 fans attended the Oct. 31 event held on level land on the east side of Brea Creek south of Deodara Street. Every organization in town sponsored a booth to sell chicken, cake, pie and other refreshments to the fans.

The game could hardly be described as "sensational," oldtimers report, but it was lively. Johnson pitched and the "Bambino" from the New York Yankees beat him in the memorable duel. It was the last game Ruth ever pitched.

"The Babe" reportedly bopped a youngster in the crowd with a ball and peeled a dollar bill off his bank roll to soothe the child's aches.



**WALTER JOHNSON**

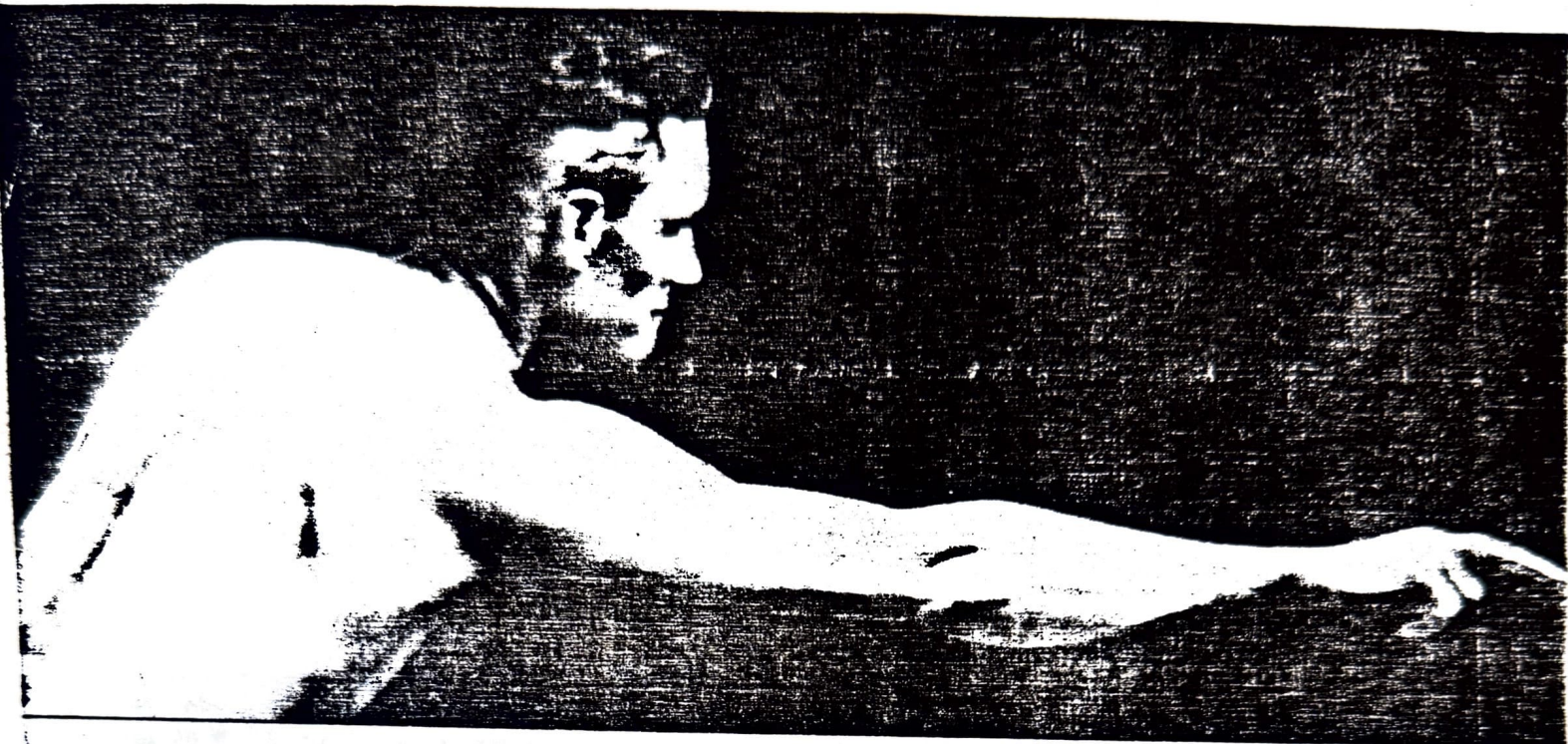
**CENTENNIAL**

**SOUVENIER  
EDITION**

**BY  
MILDRED YORBA  
REPRODUCED FROM  
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# Long Arm From Olinda

By Mildred Yorba MacArthur



**D**ON'T LET ANYONE tell you that the Angels or the Dodgers brought baseball to California, for history will prove you wrong. Let us turn back the pages of baseball, to the little town of Olinda, situated in the northeast corner of Orange County, about fifteen miles from the present California Angels stadium at Anaheim. Olinda is where E. L. Doheny brought in the first oil well in 1897. It was a shallow one, with a short wooden derrick. It is still being pumped by means of a series of silent jack lines, which connect with the many other wells that were brought in later. The village is almost deserted, except for a few employees who live in the company houses that dot the low rolling hills. Recently the state decreed that Olinda should have its own historical landmark. However, the most vivid and lasting memories are of baseball and a young boy by the name of Walter Johnson.

Walter came to Olinda with his parents, Frank and Minnie Perry John-

son, at the age of twelve. He was born on a farm in Humboldt, Allen County, Kansas, on November 6, 1887. He died December 10, 1946, but not before he had rung up records that have only recently been tied or broken. He was called The Big Train, no doubt in reference to the fact that he carried most of the load during his pitching career. He played for the Washington Senators eighteen years before they won the World's Series against the New York Giants in 1924. It is said that people stood up to cheer and remained standing to weep for the man who never quit. He said that the greatest advice he ever received was from his father, when he told him that he'd like to become a professional. His dad said, "Son, you've got to learn to lose, before you learn to play." Walter seems to have done both. He racked up a strikeout record of 3,497 and pitched two no-hit games. Between April 2 and May 14, 1912, he pitched fifty-six consecutive scoreless innings. He pitched 114 games in which he allowed his

opponents no runs. In 1936 he was voted the Most Valuable Player in the American League, and joined other greats in Baseball's Hall of Fame, at Cooperstown, New York.

Walter, as a youth, was already performing like a pro. His training consisted of helping his father, who was a teamster and a loader of heavy equipment for the Santa Fe Drilling Company. After his chores were finished he practiced. If he couldn't find a catcher he perfected his aim by pitching at a knothole on a nearby barn, until darkness descended. At the age of fifteen he was asked to play on the Olinda men's team, a group regularly employed by the oil company. They started Walter as a catcher, but he refused to wear a mask. After observing his speed and accuracy in getting the ball to bases they decided that he should pitch for them in their weekend exhibition games. But for Walter there was still the matter of school, which he attended at Olinda, then on to Fullerton High School where he pitched in



*Olinda's Hall of Famer Walter Johnson; above, former teammates and officials greet Walter (in uniform) in Brea, when he toured the area. Looking over Walter's left shoulder is Bob Isbell. Standing beside Walter, to his left, is team manager Joe Burke*

his freshman year. He made history in 1905 when Fullerton played Santa Ana for the championship of Orange County: The game went fifteen innings, the score was tied, 0-0. Walter had struck out twenty-seven and his opponent, a boy by the name of Coleman, had fanned a more modest seventeen. The game was called for three good reasons. The fans had lost their voices, darkness was descending, and neither team had a substitute pitcher. The Santa Ana *Evening Blade* gave the game but passing notice under a small caption. "A Series Of Goose Eggs."

But Olinda was where the action was. It became the mecca for all who aspired to play baseball while enjoying a lot of built-in benefits. A good prospect was given a job on the "weed gang." They were given a hoe, rake and a shovel and were told to go out and abate the fire hazard. However, they were also equipped with bats, balls, mitts and a very tasty box lunch. They were instructed to practice whenever the urge struck them and if they were exhausted they could also look for the shade of a nearby tree and take a nap. The Olinda Wells team was the

best in Orange County, but there were many other sections that had teams that were being sponsored by industries. Los Angeles had teams like the Hoegge-Flags, Tufts-Lyons, and two black teams, the Trilbys and the Giants. And closer to home, the neighboring oil companies were gathering talent. Proselyting was the order of the day and since there was no law against it, everyone partook. Other oil companies were Chancellor-Canfield-Midway Company, Graham and Loftus, Union Oil and the Baash-Ross Tool Company. San Diego and San Bernardino counties also had plenty of talent. In San Bernardino Walter pitched against the Santa Fe Railroad shop team, which numbered among its members, the great Indian athlete Jack "Chief" Myers, who later became the catcher with the New York Giants. In those days the players stirred up their own excitement without the aid of a gimmick or a giveaway. One of these unscheduled events was a long distance throw between Olinda's shortstop, Jack Burnett, later of the Saint Louis Browns, and Chief Myers. Burnett won by three feet and bettors'

moans could be heard for miles.

Back in Olinda, it was like a country club. It had spotlessly clean bunkhouses where the bachelors lived, rent free, and just down the street a large dining room, with cooks who kept tabs on everyone's favorite food. There was also a never-ending poker game on the main street in the side-hill basement of Stein-Fassel's general store, which also served as a mail drop and a place to leave gear in perfect safety. There were also some lively dances on weekends, which kept the boys close to home when not on a road trip.

Road trips to neighboring cities meant that you hitched your horse to a buggy or a cart and drove to the game, usually dressed in your uniform, carrying your gear along, for there were no dressing rooms under the old see-through wooden stands. If the game was in Anaheim, which was a wide-open town, they dressed in the back room of a saloon, while their fans up front placed their bets. Games at Anaheim Landing, a beach city about thirty miles south of Olinda, were an outstanding event that required an overnight stay, even with all sorts of

PHOTOGRAPH OF WALTER JOHNSON, COURTESY OF MRS. THEO LACY JR

shortcuts over unfenced fields. Just before the game the hosts put a keg of cold beer on a wheelbarrow and trundled it out to third base. Anyone who got that far on a hit could refresh himself before proceeding. Longer trips were negotiated by means of trains, courtesy of the Santa Fe Railroad, the parent company. They picked the boys up at a nearby siding called Atwood.

The Olinda team had a couple of memorable managers. The first was Joe Burke, who devoted much time and talent to his boys. When he decided that they were ready, nothing fazed him. One Sunday he sent in a five-man team against a Coast League nine, with Walter on the mound; Olinda won and Burke beamed. He ended his career as U.S. district attorney at Los Angeles. The second manager was Tom Young, the village barber, who received ten cents for a shave and twenty cents for a haircut. Business permitting, he often acted as a catcher when the boys practiced on the main street in front of his shop. He ended up as a pretty fair catcher but he had no ambition to be anything else but a barber, so there his story ends.

In western Orange County, at Westminster, six of the eight Mallett brothers were playing on a Sunday team. C. C. "Gabby" Cravath, who later played with Philadelphia, retired to become a municipal judge at Laguna Beach. Walter Johnson continued to play ball with his seniors, such as Bob Isbell, Joe Wagner and John Tuffree, but the time had come to make his move, for his fame was spreading and he began to get offers, but he still wasn't sure that he was ready for the big time. In 1907 he and his favorite catcher, Guy Meats, of Orange, went to Weiser, Idaho, to play in the Western League. There Walter pitched eighty-five innings without a score against him. His salary was \$150 per month. It was in this remote area that the Washington Senators' catcher, Cliff Blankenship, while recovering from a broken thumb, decided to do a bit of scouting. He was anxious to sign Walter, who



still wasn't sure that he was ready and continued to stall. He finally told Blankenship that he'd have to get his parents' permission. They answered, "Use your own judgment." He signed for \$333.30 per month, but insisted that he be given a round trip ticket home. This he never had occasion to use.

In 1926 he and Babe Ruth came to California on an exhibition tour and they filled the stands everywhere, especially in Orange County, where Walter renewed old acquaintances. Walter took Babe on a tour of Olinda and the nearby hills to show him his boyhood home, which was still standing, and to meet the old friends with whom he had played on the first Olinda Wells team. For many years these memories burned bright, and from these men I gathered some highlights.

Walter's first baseman, Bob Isbell, said, "He was a magnificent athlete, weighing about 175 pounds, with long arms and powerful shoulders. He had the perfect delivery. His back muscles did all of the work. He was three-quarter side-arm when he started, but somewhat under that as he grew older. What a change a few months in the big league made in his throw to bases. When he played as a kid he made a few false motions before he got the ball out to base, but when he returned the following year he got them there faster and straighter than anyone before or since and it was suicide to try to

steal a base. The ball that he pitched was so fast that without his great control, he would have been completely lost to baseball. To me, it seemed that the ball left his glove instantaneously."

Bob's favorite story about Walter was the time Olinda was playing a Ventura team. The only hit against him was a homer, by another guy named Johnson. Walter just stood there and grinned as he watched the ball gain momentum as it disappeared from sight. This was in the days when baseball was fun to play and to watch.

Another Johnson fan was his catcher, Guy Meats, of Orange, who later became a very successful citrus grower. He probably knew Walter better than anyone else. He said, "He was the easiest man I ever caught. Despite his speed he threw a light ball and you always got what you asked for. I could have caught him in a rocking chair, and that was before anyone had come up with the idea of a jointed glove. Nowadays mitts have a pocket in them like an oriole's nest. I don't see how these guys ever miss one!" Then, warming up to his subject, Meats continued, "If an umpire called a close one, Walter never took issue with him because he believed that umpires make mistakes the same as players do and that the next one might be in his favor. He just tossed the next one over the plate in such a fashion that he left no doubt. He never complained or noted an error behind him."

John Tuffree, Walter's first center





The 1903 Olinda Wells team, in Anaheim. No, not to play the Angels. Above, top; Olinda's opponents, the team from Westminster, on which six of the eight Mallett brothers played. Below; some of Walter's old teammates, left to right, Fayette Lewis, Bob Isbell, and Joe Wagner. Kneeling is John Tuffree



fielder, later a millionaire rancher, maintained that the only thing he ever got out there was a tan, while waiting around for someone to get a hit off of Walter.

There seems to have been only one dissenter on the Walter Johnson horizon. Frank Chance, manager of the Chicago Cubs, said that Walter would never make a good pitcher because he was too awkward. Over the years several neophytes have made liars out of smart managers as well as owners.

Walter led a full life, apart from his baseball career. He married "the loveliest girl in the world." They had five children. When his wife died, his mother, Minnie Perry Johnson, then a widow, joined him at his dairy farm in Comus, Maryland. She presided over his home and helped him to raise his family, as well as two of her daughters' children, who were also motherless. She was ideally suited for this life that had befallen her, for she loved children, homelife and especially that on a farm. She was an early riser and loved to cook and can the vegetables that she helped to raise. The only fault that Walter could ever find with her was that she tried to spoil his hunting dogs by making house pets of them.

Walter's farm became a sort of a baseball shrine, which was visited by managers, scouts, players, owners and newsmen. They hunted with him and they tramped over his fields and they joined him at poker, with plenty of time for reminiscing. He remained a soft touch for anyone that asked and said that he never missed the money that he had given away in this fashion.

After a lingering illness, he died at the age of fifty-nine. His mother continued to care for her brood. She said that her happiest days were spent at Olinda when her family was still complete.

Olinda will soon have its state historical landmark, and many people will drive up the Carbon Canyon Road, east of Brea, to visit the cradle of California baseball and to talk about Walter Johnson, who never made an enemy on or off the field. **W**