Guide to the Papers of Leon Hamilton

National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

National Baseball Hall of Fame
25 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

This guide to the collection was prepared by Jon C. Clark, Jr. in April, 2004; further review and edits done by Anne McFarland; reviewed by Andrew Newman December, 2005.
Collection Number
BA MSS 29
BL-4104.2000

Title
Leon Hamilton Papers

Inclusive Dates

Extent
.5 linear foot (1 manuscript box) + 1 oversized

Repository
National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
25 Main Street
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Abstract
This collection contains the papers of Leon Hamilton, high school athlete, House of David team member, boxer, baseball player, and baseball scout. Hamilton’s scouting career spanned four organizations and five decades. Hamilton’s papers are in the form of awards and certificates, brochures, clippings, contracts, correspondence, decals, dinner programs, game programs, photographs, and scouting materials.

Acquisition Information
This collection was a gift of Chris Hamilton, 2000.

Preferred Citation

Access
By appointment during regular business hours, email research@baseballhall.org.

Copyright
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Separations
Two metal passes are with the Museum Collections Department.

History
Leon Hamilton was born on June 20, 1911 in Pennsylvania. He attended high school at City High, in Chattanooga, Tennessee where he played a number of sports including baseball, basketball, wrestling and football. In 1928, Hamilton left high school to play professional
baseball with the Kinston Eagles in North Carolina. He returned to complete high school, and went on to earn a business degree from the University of Kentucky in 1933.

In 1935, Hamilton joined the House of David, a professional level basketball team, where he played and served as the general manager until 1952. A number of major league baseball players would play both baseball and basketball for the House of David during the off-season. Between 1935 and 1937, Hamilton participated in other forms of organized sport, including playing basketball for the Jacob’s Manufacturing Company and serving as a wrestling referee.

In 1938, he returned to baseball on the administrative side for the Cordele, Georgia Bees, in the Georgia-Florida League. He served in administrative roles in Cordele, Pensacola, Florida, Kingston, North Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida from 1938-1940.

By 1946, Hamilton was named the General Manager of the Binghamton New York Triplets of the Eastern League. By 1949, Hamilton requested a move south; this was granted and he became a scout for the New York Yankees. In 1951, he started scouting for the Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers. In 1969, he followed Buzzie Bavasi from the Dodgers to the San Diego Padres, staying until 1973 when he signed as a scout for the Cleveland Indians. He stayed with the Indians until he retired in 1986.

During his scouting career, Hamilton signed between seventy and eighty major league players, including many notable names: Doyle Alexander, Steve Garvey, Jack Billingham, Charlie Hough, Jim Farirey, Bob Stinson, Mike Ivie, Bill Singer, Nate Oliver, Clarence “Choo Choo” Coleman, Roger Craig, and Charlie Smith. There is some dispute about whether he signed on Don Sutton.

Leon Hamilton died in Kennesaw, Georgia in January of 1996 at the age of 84.

Sources

Scope and Content Notes
This collection is organized into 2 series. Series I contains information on Hamilton’s career and association with baseball. The series contains awards and certificates, brochures, business and identification cards, Christmas cards, clippings, contracts, correspondence, decals, dinner programs, photographs, poems, press releases, programs, scouting materials, and World Series. Series II contains information on Hamilton’s high school sports and House of David careers. The series mainly contains clippings.
**Controlled Access Terms**
These records are indexed under the following terms in the National Baseball Hall of Fame’s Library catalog. Researchers wishing to find related materials may wish to search under these terms.

**Subjects**
- Baseball scouts.

**Corporate Names**
- Brooklyn Dodgers (Baseball team)
- Los Angeles Dodgers (Baseball team)
- Cleveland Indians (Baseball team)
- New York Yankees (Baseball team)
- San Diego Padres (Baseball team)
- House of David

**Personal Names**
- Hamilton, Leon

**Content List**

**Series I. Baseball, 1945-1993**

*Scope note:*
Series I contains awards and certificates, brochures, business and identification cards, Christmas cards, clippings, contracts, correspondence, decals, dinner programs, photographs, poems, press releases, programs, scouting materials, scouting reports, and World Series. The records are arranged alphabetically. The scouting reports are arranged by year, but these are two sided so there are occasions with more than one year. In most cases, the earlier year was given precedent.

**Box 1**

*Folder 1*  
Awards and Certificates, 1967-1987

*Folder 2*  
Brochures, [1956-1960]

*Folder 3*  

*Folder 4*  
Christmas Cards, n.d.

*Folder 5*  
Clippings, 1951-1978

*Folder 6*  
Contracts, Hamilton, 1928, 1950

*Folder 7*  
Higgins, 1984

*Folder 8*  
Correspondence, 1945-1993

*Folder 9*  
Decals, n.d.
Folder 10  Dinner Programs, 1953-1993  
Folder 11  Photographs, c.1955  
Folder 13  Press releases, 1972  
Folder 14  Programs, Greenville Spinners, 1961  
Folder 17  1984  
Folder 18  1985  
Folder 19  World Series, 1971, recap pamphlet

Oversized Box  
Folder 3  Clippings, 1946-1956  
Folder 6  1952-1980, n.d. (photocopies)  
Folder 7  1950-1982 (photocopies)  
Folder 8  1950-1982 (originals)

Series II. Non Baseball, 1936-1994

Scope note:
Series II contains records concerning Hamilton’s time with the House of David sports organization and his high school career. The records are organized alphabetically.

Box 1  
Folder 20  Funeral, 1994

Oversized Box
Folder 1  Clippings, House of David, 1936-1950 (originals)  
Folder 2  House of David, 1936-1950 (photocopies)  
Folder 5  Awards and Photograph, n.d.