

# THE GLASHOUSE GANG



**SO, HOW DID I GO** from a sharecropper's son to the Hall of Fame? Well, I'll tell ya, it was a long road, but I made it look easy.

Back in 1927, I'd never even heard of professional baseball. I discovered the real charm of this profession while listening to the World Series on the radio that very year. I knew I was gonna get to that there World Series some sweet day. So, after my time in the Army, I became a reader of gas meters in San Antonio. I don't give a wallop hoot about gas meters—I took the job so that I could pitch for the company team. It wasn't long before my talents was recognized by an important scout for the St. Louis Cardinals. That year, 1929, I signed on to pitch for Houston of the **Texas League**, an essential leg of Mr. Branch Rickey's farm system, you see.

It was there that people first started callin' me Dizzy. I was pitching in an **exhibition game** against the Chicago White Sox and I'll tell ya, I was puttin' those clowns away, striking them out one after another. Legend has it (and I'm not one to argue with legend) the White Sox Coach turned to his players that day and says to them, "That kid is making you look dizzy!" And whattya know, "The Sporting News" picked that phrase right up and before I knew it there I was, no longer Jay Hanna, Jerome Herman or even J.H. Dean. Just Dizzy.

From Houston I eventually moved on to play in the **Class A Western League** in St. Joseph, Mo., with the **St. Joseph Saints**. I arrived in that grand city with no suitcase and only the clothes on my back. Nobody told Ol' Diz back then that it's customary to actually check out of a hotel when a man's stay is over, so at the time I found myself neatly registered at a number of the city's fine establishments—The St. Francis, the Robidoux and the YMCA. No matter. I just sent the bill for my stays—and a new shirt, naturally—to the ball club. Mr. Branch Rickey was always good to take care of everything.

I made my name pitching for the Saints, with win after win, but, don't you know, not everyone knew who Dizzy was right away.

Why, I'll tell ya, once the St. Joseph Chief of Police even pulled me over for driving a bit too fast. It was only 65 mph in the business district, but that's neither here nor there. That guy says to me, "Who do you think you are and what do you think you're doing?"

So I says, "Why, don't you know? I'm Dizzy Dean who beat up that big Pueblo first baseman the other day!"



I swear on my life that man not only let me go, free of charge, but to this day the old boy and I consider each other right good friends!

Soon enough, I transferred from that St. Joseph team to the **Houston Buffs** (name short for Buffaloes, I am told) in Texas. There in Houston, I pitched my way up the ladder of success, making lots of good decisions, as Dizzy will do, eventually leading to the most important choice I ever made. You see, one day while doing a little department store

browsing, I noticed the sweetest dame I'd ever laid eyes on! Pat was her name, and I immediately asked her for a date. I wanted to impress this lady, of course, and so, before our date, I bought myself a brand, spankin' new **Hupmobile** so that we could ride in style! Dagnabbit, don't you know that my new girl told me that I couldn't afford it and made me return that car straight away. No matter. The future Mrs. Pat Dean always knew how to talk some sense into Ol' Dizzy, even when it came to our wedding. You see, I requested a marriage ceremony on home plate. Pat, though, opted for a quiet little wedding in a pretty church. I'd have done anything to please that girl, so that's what we did. The wedding went off without a hitch, except for me saying "I will, sir" in place of "I do." Well, Pat knew what I meant, and that's all that mattered anyway.

Before I married, my buddies says to me, "Why'd you want to go and marry Pat anyway, don't you know she's kissed every man in town?" And I says right back to them, "Heck, I'm one of 'em! That's why I married her!"

I found myself starting 1932 primed for success—a brand new wife, and whattya know, a contract for the big leagues. I was headin' to pitch for the St. Louis Cardinals. And I told them, heck, all you boys better get ready 'cause I'm gonna win at least 25 games!

## POP UPS



**THE TEXAS LEAGUE** is a Minor League baseball league in the South Central United States.

**AN EXHIBITION GAME** is a game played just for fun—the outcome has no effect on a team's ranking, statistics or standing.


**CLASS A WESTERN LEAGUE** is made up of several circuits within Minor League Baseball.


**ST. JOSEPH SAINTS** were a Minor League feeder team to the St. Louis Cardinals, playing in St. Joseph, Mo.

**HOUSTON BUFFS** were a Minor League team also associated with the St. Louis Cardinals. They played in Houston, Texas.

**A HUPMOBILE** was a car model built between 1909-1940 by the Hupp Motor Company.

## EXTRA INNINGS!

 In this chapter, Dizzy Dean met his wife. Newspapers are a great source for wedding, engagement, anniversary and birth announcements. Find an example in your newspaper and write a wedding announcement for Dizzy and Pat Dean.

 Dizzy Dean predicted he would win 25 games. Select a story in the newspaper. After reading only the headline, write a prediction. Read the news story. Was your prediction accurate?

**Learning Standards:** I can write for a specific purpose and audience. I can make predictions.