

Birmingham Born African American Players in the Major Leagues

Birmingham has a rich baseball history with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro Leagues and the Birmingham Barons of the Southern League.

Even though Birmingham had never had a Major League team, Birmingham has sent several African American ball players to the Major Leagues.

African American players from the Birmingham area who played in the Major Leagues, their first year in the Majors and details of their playing careers are as follows:

Year	Player	Team
1947	Dan Bankhead	Brooklyn Dodgers
1951	Artie Wilson	New York Giants
1951	Willie Mays	New York Giants

1962	Bob Veale	Pittsburgh Pirates
1963	Charlie Dees	Los Angeles Angels
1963	Willie Smith	Detroit Tigers
1965	Lee May	Cincinnati Reds
1968	Carlos May	Chicago White Sox
1969	Johnny Hairston	Chicago Cubs
1973	Jerry Hairston	Chicago White Sox
1973	Otis Thornton	Houston Astros
1974	Lamar Johnson	Chicago White Sox
1974	Reggie Sanders	Detroit Tigers
1975	Lyman Bostock, Jr.	Minnesota Twins
1975	Ron Jackson	California Angels
1981	Albert Hall	Atlanta Braves
1981	Reggie Patterson	Chicago White Sox
1986	Bo Jackson	Kansas City Royals
1996	Terry Jones	Colorado Rockies

Dan Bankhead

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1948	Nashua Dodgers	New England League
1948	St. Paul Saints	American Association
1949	Montreal Royals	International League
1951-1952	Montreal Royals	International League
1953	Drummondville Cubs	Provincial League
1953-1955	Monterrey Sultanes	Mexican League
1955-1956	Vera Cruz Aguilas	Mexican League
1956	Mexico City Tigres	Mexican League
1959	Vera Cruz Aguilas	Mexican League
1960-1963	Puebla Pericos	Mexican League
1964	Leon Broncos	Mexican Center League
1966	Reyonosa Broncs	Mexican League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1947	Brooklyn Dodgers	National League
1950-1951	Brooklyn Dodgers	National League

Artie Wilson

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1949	San Diego Padres	Pacific Coast League
1949-1950	Oakland Oaks	Pacific Coast League
1951	Ottawa Giants	International League
1951	Minneapolis Millers	American Association
1951	Oakland Oaks	Pacific Coast League
1952-1954	Seattle Rainiers	Pacific Coast League
1955-1956	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League
1956	Seattle Rainiers	Pacific Coast League
1957	Sacramento Solons	Pacific Coast League
1962	Tri-Cities Braves	Northwest League
1962	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1951	New York Giants	National League

Willie Mays

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1950	Trenton Giants	Interstate League
1951	Minneapolis Millers	American Association

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1951-1952	New York Giants	National League
1953	Military Service	
1954-1957	New York Giants	National League
1958-1972	San Francisco Giants	National League
1972-1973	New York Mets	National League

Bob Veale

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1958	San Jose Pirates	California League
1958	Las Vegas Wranglers	California League
1959	Wilson Tobs	Carolina League
1960-1962	Columbus Jets	International League
1972	Charleston Charlies	International League
1974	Pawtucket Red Sox	International League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1962-1972	Pittsburgh Pirates	National League
1972-1974	Boston Red Sox	American League

Charlie Dees

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1958	Springfield Giants	Eastern League
1959	Corpus Christi Giants	Texas League
1960	Springfield Giants	Eastern League
1960	Tacoma Giants	Pacific Coast League
1961	Springfield Giants	Eastern League
1962	El Paso Sun Kings	Texas League
1963	Hawaii Islanders	Pacific Coast League
1964	Oklahoma City 89ers	Pacific Coast League
1965	El Paso Sun Kings	Texas League
1965	Seattle Angels	Pacific Coast League
1966	El Paso Sun Kings	Texas League
1966	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League
1966	Seattle Angels	Pacific Coast League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1963-1964	Los Angeles Angels	American League
1965	California Angels	American League

Willie Smith

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1960	Duluth-Superior Dukes	Northern League
1961-1962	Knoxville Smokies	South Atlantic League
1963-1964	Syracuse Chiefs	International League
1967	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League
1971	Indianapolis Indians	American Association

Japanese League Career

Year	Team	League
1972-1973	Nankai Hawks	Japanese League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1963	Detroit Tigers	American League
1964	Los Angeles Angels	American League
1965-1966	California Angels	American League
1967-1968	Cleveland Indians	American League
1968-1970	Chicago Cubs	National League
1971	Cincinnati Reds	National League

Lee May

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1961-1962	Tampa Tarpons	Florida State League
1963	Rocky Mount Leafs	Carolina League
1964	Macon Peaches	Southern League
1965	San Diego Padres	Pacific Coast League
1966	Buffalo Bisons	International League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1965-1971	Cincinnati Reds	National League
1972-1974	Houston Astros	National League
1975-1980	Baltimore Orioles	American League
1981-1982	Kansas City Royals	American League

Carlos May

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1966	White Sox	Gulf Coast League
1966	Deerfield Beach/Winterhaven Sun Sox	Florida State League
1967	Appleton Foxes	Midwest League
1968	Lynchburg White Sox	Carolina League
1968	White Sox	Florida Instructional League

Japanese League Career

Year	Team	League
1978-1981	Nankai Hawks	Japanese League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1968-1976	Chicago White Sox	American League
1976-1977	New York Yankees	American League
1977	California Angels	American League

Johnny Hairston

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1965	Treasure Valley Cubs	Pioneer League
1966	Quincy Cubs	Midwest League
1967	Lodi Crushers	California League
1968	San Antonio Missions	Texas League
1969	Tacoma Cubs	Pacific Coast League
1969	San Antonio Missions	Texas League
1970	Tacoma Cubs	Pacific Coast League
1971	Birmingham A's	Dixie Association
1971	Wichita Aeros	American Association

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1969	Chicago Cubs	National League

Jerry Hairston

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1970	White Sox	Gulf Coast League
1971	Appleton Foxes	Midwest League
1972	Knoxville Sox	Southern League
1973-1974	Iowa Oaks	American Association
1975	Denver Bears	American Association
1976	Iowa Oaks	American Association
1978-1979	Durango Alacranes	Mexican League
1980	Campeche Alacranes	Mexican League
1981	Mexico City Diablos Rojos	Mexican League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1973-1977	Chicago White Sox	American League
1977	Pittsburgh Pirates	National League
1981-1989	Chicago White Sox	American League

Otis Thornton

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1965	Bradenton Astros	Florida Rookie League
1966	Salisbury Astros	Western Carolina League
1966	Bismark-Mandan Pards	Northern League
1967	Cocoa Astros	Florida State League
1968	Williamsport Astros	New York-Penn League
1968	Greensboro Patriots	Carolina League
1969	Peninsula Astros	Carolina League
1970	Raleigh-Durham Triangles	Carolina League
1970	Columbus Astros	Southern League
1971-1972	Oklahoma City 89ers	American Association
1973	Denver Bears	American Association
1974	Columbus Astros	Southern League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1973	Houston Astros	National League

Lamar Johnson

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1968-1969	White Sox	Gulf Coast League
1970	Appleton Foxes	Midwest League
1970	Duluth-Superior Dukes	Northern League
1971-1972	Appleton Foxes	Midwest League
1972-1973	Knoxville Sox	Southern League
1974	Iowa Oaks	American Association
1975	Denver Bears	American Association

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1974-1981	Chicago White Sox	American League
1982	Texas Rangers	American League

Reggie Sanders

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1968	Burlington Bees	Midwest league
1969	Lodi Crushers	California League
1970	Birmingham A's	Southern League
1971	Birmingham A's	Dixie Association
1972	Toledo Mud Hens	International League
1972	Birmingham A's	Southern League
1972	Montgomery Rebels	Southern League
1973	Toledo Mud Hens	International League
1974	Evansville Triplets	American Association
1975-1976	Richmond Braves	International League
1977	Durango Alacranes	Mexican League
1978	Charlotte O's	Southern League
1978	Durango Alacranes	Mexican League
1978	Iowa Oaks	American Association
1979	Aguascalientes Rieleros	Mexican League
1979	Tampico Alijadores	Mexican League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1974	Detroit Tigers	American League

Lyman Bostock, Jr.

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1972	Charlotte Twins	Western Carolina League
1973	Orlando Twins	Southern League
1974-1975	Tacoma Twins	Pacific Coast League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1975-1977	Minnesota Twins	American League
1978	California Angels	American League

Ron Jackson

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1971	Idaho Falls Angels	Pioneer League
1972	Quad Cities Angels	Midwest League
1973	El Paso Sun Kings	Texas League
1974	El Paso Diablos	Texas League
1975-1976	Salt Lake City Gulls	Pacific Coast League
1982	Spokane Indians	Pacific Coast League
1984	Rochester Red Wings	International League
1985	Louisville Redbirds	American Association
1988	Vancouver Canadians	Pacific Coast League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1975-1978	California Angels	American League
1979-1981	Minnesota Twins	American League
1981	Detroit Tigers	American League
1982-1984	California Angels	American League
1984	Baltimore Orioles	American League

Albert Hall

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1977	Kingsport Braves	Appalachian League
1978	Braves	Gulf Coast League
1979	Greenwood Braves	Western Carolina League
1980	Durham Bulls	Carolina League
1981	Savannah Braves	Southern League
1982-1983	Richmond Braves	International League
1985-1986	Richmond Braves	International League
1988	Braves	Gulf Coast League
1989	Buffalo Bisons	American Association

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1981-1988	Atlanta Braves	National League
1989	Pittsburgh Pirates	National League

Reggie Patterson

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1979	Knoxville Sox	Southern League
1979	Niagara Falls Pirates	New York-Penn League
1980	Glenn Falls White Sox	Eastern League
1980	Iowa Oaks	Midwest League
1981	Appleton Foxes	Midwest League
1981-1982	Edmonton Trappers	Pacific Coast League
1983-1985	Iowa Cubs	American Association
1986	Dos Laredos Tecolotes	Mexican League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1981	Chicago White Sox	American League
1983-1985	Chicago Cubs	National League

Bo Jackson

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1986	Memphis Chicks	Southern League
1991	Birmingham Barons	Southern League
1991	Sarasota White Sox	Florida State League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1986-1990	Kansas City Royals	American League
1991-1993	Chicago White Sox	American League
1994	California Angels	American League

Terry Jones

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1993	Bend Rookies	Northwest League
1993-1994	Central Valley Rookies	California League
1995	New Haven Ravens	Eastern League
1996-1997	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Pacific Coast League
1998-1999	Ottawa Lynx	International League
2001	Ottawa Lynx	International League
2001	Jupiter Hammerheads	Florida State League
2002	Duluth-Superior Dukes	Northern League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1996	Colorado Rockies	National League
1998-2001	Montreal Expos	National League

Hairston Family

Major League Baseball Legacy

The Hairston family has had three generations and five ball players who made it all the way to the Major Leagues.

The first Hairston to play in the Major Leagues was Sam Hairston. Sam started his baseball career with American Cast Iron and Pipe (ACIPCO) in the Birmingham Industrial League in 1942 and played with them until he signed with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1944. Hairston went on to star for the Indianapolis Clowns and won the Negro American League batting title in 1950 with a .424 batting average. In 1950 Sam Hairston was signed by the Chicago White Sox. He played the majority of his eleven (11) year career in “organized” ball in the Minor Leagues but did get called up the Chicago White Sox’s Major League club in 1951.

Even though Sam Hairston was not born in Birmingham, he spent his entire adult life in the “Magic City” and this is where he passed away in in 1997.

All of Sam’s children were born in Birmingham and two of his sons (Johnny and Jerry) played in the Major Leagues. Johnny had a cup of coffee with the Chicago Cubs (National League) in 1969 and Jerry played in the Major Leagues from 1973 to 1989 with the Chicago White Sox (American League) and Pittsburgh Pirates (National League).

Following in their grandfather’s (Sam) and father’s (Jerry) tradition, Jerry Hairston Jr. and Scott Hairston also played in the Major Leagues. Jerry Hairston Jr. played in the Major Leagues from 1998 to 2013. During his Major League career he played for nine (9) different teams. Scott Hairston came up to Major Leagues in 2004 with the Arizona Diamondbacks and was still playing in the Major Leagues with the Washington Nationals when this research project was conducted in 2014.

In addition Sam Hairston's oldest son (Sammy Hairston Jr.) also played in the Minor Leagues and two of Sam's other grandsons (Johnny Hairston Jr. and Jason Hairston) also played Minor League ball.

The five Hairston's playing in the Major Leagues ties the family with the Delahanty brothers with the most members of one family to play professional baseball at the Major League level.

Two other three generation families have had four family members each to play in the Major Leagues. These two families are the Boone family (Ray, Bob, Bret and Aaron) and the Bell family (Gus, Buddy, David and Mike).

Sam Hairston

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1950	Colorado Sky Sox	Western League
1951	Sacramento Solons	Pacific Coast League
1951-1953	Colorado Sky Sox	Western League
1954	Charleston Senators	American Association
1955-1956	Colorado Sky Sox	Western League
1957	Indianapolis Indians	American Association
1958	San Antonio Missions	Texas League
1958	Indianapolis Indians	American Association
1959	Charleston ChaSox	South Atlantic League
1960	Charleston White Sox	South Atlantic League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1951	Chicago White Sox	American League

Jerry Hairston, Jr.

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
1997	Bluefield Orioles	Appalachian League
1998	Frederick Keys	Carolina League
1998	Bowie Bay Sox	Eastern League
1999	Rochester Red Wings	International League
2000	Frederick Keys	Carolina League
2000	Rochester Red Wings	International League
2000	Orioles	Gulf Coast League
2003	Bowie Bay Sox	Eastern League
2003	Aberdeen Iron Birds	New York-Penn League
2004	Bowie Bay Sox	Eastern League
2005	Iowa Cubs	Pacific Coast League
2007	Frisco Rough Riders	Texas League
2007	Oklahoma Red Hawks	Pacific Coast League
2008	Louisville Bats	International League
2011	Harrisburg Senators	Eastern league
2012	Albuquerque Isotopes	Pacific Coast League
2013	Rancho Cucamonga Quakes	California League

Jerry Hairston, Jr.

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
1998-2004	Baltimore Orioles	American League
2005-2006	Chicago Cubs	National League
2006-2007	Texas Rangers	American League
2008-2009	Cincinnati Reds	National League
2009	New York Yankees	American League
2010	San Diego Padres	National League
2011	Washington Nationals	National League
2011	Milwaukee Brewers	National League
2012-2013	Los Angeles Dodgers	National League

Scott Hairston

Minor League Career

Year	Team	League
2001	Missoula Osprey	Pioneer League
2002	Lancaster Jet Hawks	California League
2002	South Bend Silver Hawks	Midwest League
2003	Tucson Sidewinders	Pacific Coast League
2003	El Paso Diablos	Texas League
2004-2006	Tucson Sidewinders	Pacific Coast League
2009-2010	Lake Elsinore Storm	California League
2014	Syracuse Chiefs	International League

Major League Career

Year	Team	League
2004-2007	Arizona Diamondbacks	National League
2007-2009	San Diego Padres	National League
2009	Oakland Athletics	American League
2010	San Diego Padres	National League
2011-2012	New York Mets	National League
2013	Chicago Cubs	National League
2013-2014	Washington Nationals	National League