

Forgotten Heroes:

Alonzo Perry



by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

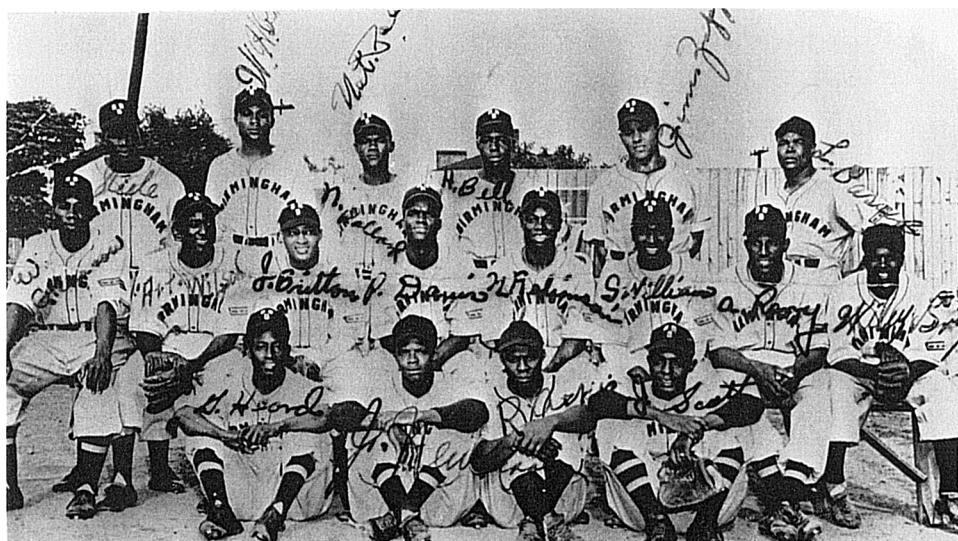
Dr. Layton Revel

and

Luis Munoz



1946 Birmingham Black Barons
(Perry - back row third from right)



1948 Birmingham Black Barons
(Perry - middle row second from right)



1950 Birmingham Black Barons
(Perry - back row fourth from right)

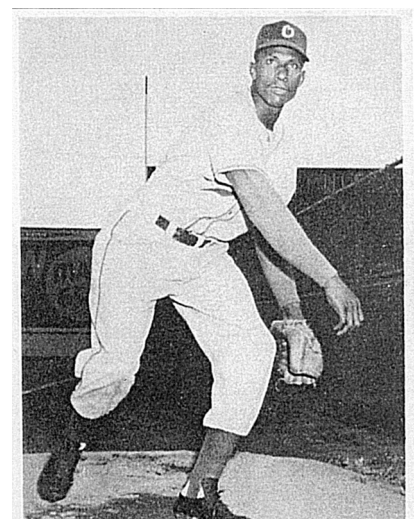
Alonzo Thomas Perry was born in Birmingham, Alabama on April 14, 1923. Perry got his start in baseball on the sandlots in Birmingham. Perry stood 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighed 190 pounds. Alonzo began his career as a right-handed pitcher with a “big” curve ball, but it was clearly evident from the very beginning of his baseball career that he was also an outstanding hitter. He began his professional career in the mid 1940’s in the Negro Southern League. Perry played in the Negro Southern League for the Atlanta Black Crackers in 1945 and started the 1946 season with the Chattanooga Choo Chos also of the Negro Southern League. Perry was signed by the Homestead Grays of the Negro National League in 1946 and posted a won-loss record of 2-2 while pitching in seven games. After leaving the Grays due to dispute with the team owner over money, he returned home and signed with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League. Perry played for the Black Barons from 1946 through 1950. During the 1948 and 1949 seasons, Perry had his best years on the mound in the Negro American League.



1948 Birmingham Black Barons
(Perry – ninth from left)

In 1948, Perry posted a won-loss record of 10-2 and improved to a 12-4 record with a 3.45 ERA in 1949. Even though Perry considered himself a pitcher when he started out, his bat kept him in the lineup everyday. On days that he wasn’t pitching, Alonzo played first base or in the outfield. His pitching and hitting helped lead the Birmingham Black Barons to a Negro American League pennant in 1948. In 1949 Perry had a brief stint with the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League. Perry only appeared in 12 games with Oakland. After the Oakland Oaks released him, Perry returned home to the Birmingham Black Barons. Perry experienced arm problems after the 1949 season, which ended his pitching career.

In 1950, Perry transitioned to first base and the outfield on a fulltime basis. Playing everyday in the field suited Perry as he finished the 1950 Negro American League season hitting 14 homeruns, driving in 64 runs and posting a .313 batting average. Alonzo appeared in the East West All Star game as the starting first baseman and collected two hits in three plate appearances. Perry started the 1951 season with Syracuse Chiefs of the International League. In the nine games that he played before he was released by Syracuse, he had 5 hits in 18 trips to the plate (.278 batting average) and drove in three runs. Interestingly enough, the Chiefs’ starting first baseman Eddie Shokes was only hitting .238.



ALONZO PERRY
Oaks Pitcher

1949 Oakland Oaks

From Syracuse, Alonzo went to Canada to play for the Brandon Greys of the Mandak League. From the late 1940's to the mid 1950's, the Mandak League was a haven for Negro League ball players. Perry made his debut with Brandon on May 29, 1951 against the Elmwood Giants. In five at bats, Alonzo had a homerun, double, single and two walks as the Greys beat the Giants 8 to 6. The next day, Perry got four hits (including a homerun) and drove in three runs. During his short time in Canada, Perry continued to tear up the league. When he left Canada he was leading the Mandak League in hitting at a .397 clip and had 5 homeruns and 19 runs batted in. Alonzo's reason for leaving was simple. The Licey Tigers of the Dominican Summer League offered him \$ 1,500.00 a month to come to the Dominican Republic and play for them.

Perry Goes to the Dominican Republic

Perry's move to the Dominican Republic would be the start of a Latin American baseball career that would see him become a superstar. The Licey owner made an extremely good decision in signing Perry. Alonzo responded in his first season (1951) with the Tigers by hitting .400 with 9 homeruns and 34 runs batted in 25 regular season games.



1951 Licey Tigers
(Perry hits game winning homerun)

Perry also hit safely in all 25 regular season games and carried his batting streak into the playoffs. Perry collected at least one hit in each of the seven play-off games. He culminated his unbelievable hitting streak with a grand slam homerun in the ninth inning of the final playoff game to win the Dominican Summer League title for Licey. When all was said and done, Perry had finished the season with a 32 game hitting streak, would have won the batting crown if he had had enough qualified plate appearances and hit a dramatic ninth inning grand slam home run to win the league championship. Perry spent the rest of his career in Latin America. South of the border, he was a "superstar" in every sense of the term. The fans adored Alonzo. While playing in the Dominican Republic, he was given the nickname "Su Majestad" ("His Majesty").



**“His Majesty” (Perry) Receives Hero’s Welcome for Winning
the 1951 Dominican Championship for Licey**

He played for the Licey Tigers from 1951 to 1954 when the Dominican League schedule was played during the summer. During the 1953 season, Perry led Licey to another Dominican League Championship. Perry put up “big” numbers every year during his Dominican Summer League career. His batting statistics from 1951 through 1954 with Licey were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Licey	25	90	27	36	4	1	9	32	10	.400	.767
1952	Licey	45	162	29	53	9	1	11	38	5	.327	.599
1953	Licey	56	229	40	67	11	4	11	53	16	.293	.520
1954	Licey	42	146	29	49	11	1	8	29	6	.336	.589
	Totals	168	627	125	205	35	7	39	152	37	.327	.592

During the years of 1951-1954, Perry led the Dominican Summer League in the following offensive categories:

Category	Year	Number
Runs Scored	1954	29
Stolen Bases	1953	16
Homeruns	1951	9
	1952	11
	1953	11
Runs Batted In (RBI)	1952	38
	1953	53
Batting Average	1954	.336

Perry Goes to Mexico

In 1955, Alonzo went to Mexico to play for the Mexico City Red Devils of the Mexican League. Perry played in Mexico from 1955 through 1963 and finished his Mexican League career with the second highest career batting average (.355) in Mexican League history. In Mexico, Perry was given the nickname “El Espiriton” (“The Great or Honored One”). His son (Alonzo Jr.) recalls trips he made to Mexico with his dad and relates that they were treated like royalty.



Alonzo Perry and Alonzo Perry Jr.
Mexico City Red Devils (1957)

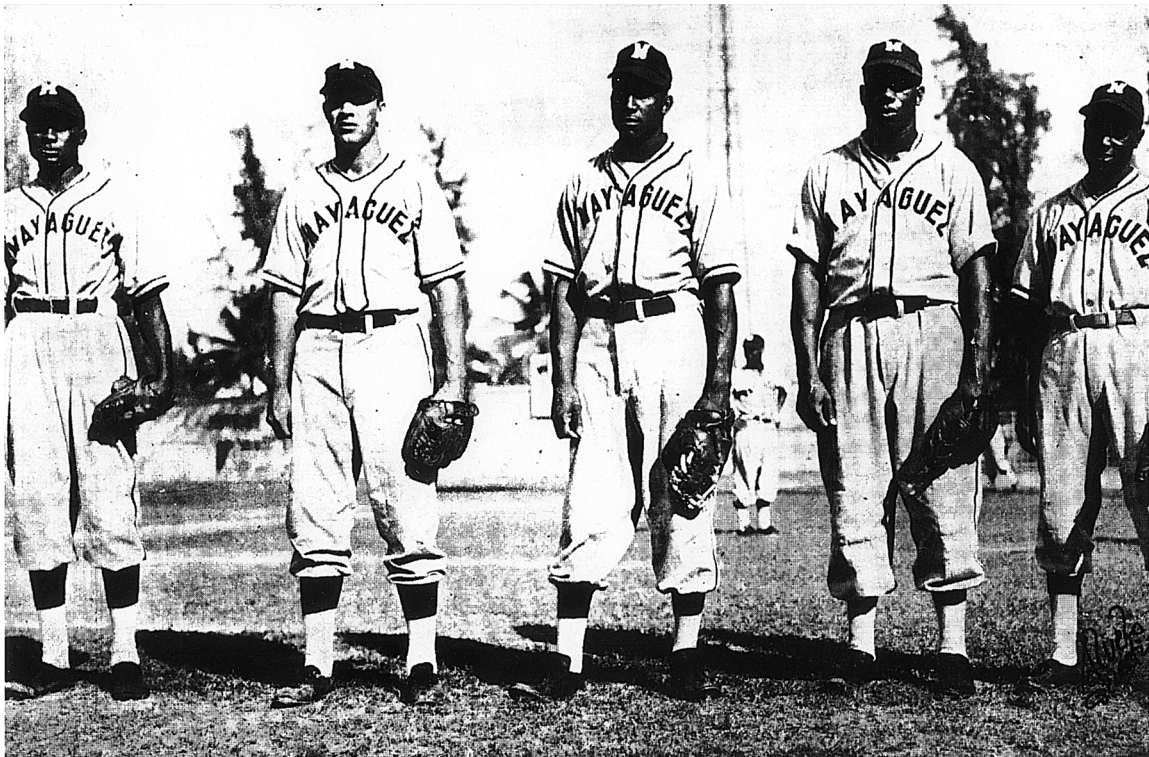
Perry enjoyed his greatest success in baseball during his career in the Mexican League. In his first season in Mexico he batted .375, hit 21 homeruns and knocked in 122 runs. The next year (1956) he improved on his spectacular start by leading the Mexican League in seven batting categories and winning the Mexican League Triple Crown (28 homeruns, 118 RBI and .392 batting average). Behind Perry’s play and under the leadership of Lazaro Salazar, team manager, the Mexico City Red Devils won the 1956 Mexican League championship with a record of 83-37 (.692). Perry would also lead the Mexican League in runs batted in two more years: 1957 (107 RBI) and 1962 (105 RBI). No records have been found as to where or if Perry played professional baseball in 1960 and 1961. Perry returned to Mexico in 1962 and joined the Monterrey Sultanes of the Mexican League. His return to Mexico was a success as he hit 16 homeruns, drove in 105 runs and batted .318. The Sultanes decision to bring Alonzo out of retirement was an excellent one, as he led them to a Mexican League championship with a record of 77-53 (.592). In 1963, which would prove to be Perry’s final season, he batted .353, hit 17 homeruns and drove in 90 runs for Monterrey. After the season, Alonzo retired from baseball at the age of 40. When Perry concluded his Mexican League career, he had a career batting average of .355. Only Al Pinkston (another former Negro League player) had a higher lifetime career batting average in the Mexican League. Perry’s overall career statistics for his Mexican League career are as follows:

Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
832	3122	648	1107	203	58	138	721	51	.355	.589

Alonzo Perry in Puerto Rico



1948-49 Mayaquez Indios
(Perry – back row second from left)



William Powell, Wilmer Fields, Alonzo Perry, Luke Easter and Artie Wilson
Mayaquez Indios (1948-49)

Alonzo Perry's Winter League Career

Perry subscribed to the Negro League philosophy: "That the sun is always shining somewhere." This meant that baseball could be played twelve months a year. Perry played winter ball in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic on a regular basis. Alonzo played four seasons in Puerto Rico between 1948 and 1955 and four winter league seasons in the Dominican Republic from 1955 to 1959. Perry was an integral part of Artie Wilson's Puerto Rican Winter League championship team, the Mayaquez Indians, during the 1948-49 season.



Alonzo Perry
Mayaquez Indians

The Indians were built around the following nucleus of Negro League players: Artie Wilson, Alonzo Perry, Wilmer Fields, Luke Easter and Johnny Davis. Perry also anchored Mayaquez's pitching staff with 11 complete games pitched and an 11-4 record on the mound. Alonzo was one of the team's leading hitters with 9 home runs, 64 runs batted in, .303 batting average and a .506 slugging average.

Perry returned to play for Mayaquez for the 1949-50 winter league season in Puerto Rico. Alonzo had another solid year at the plate, hitting .333 with a .460 slugging average.

During the 1950-51 season in Mayaquez, Perry was both a player and managed the team. Even with his managing responsibilities, Alonzo hit .323. Alonzo did not play winter league ball during the 1951-52 and 1952-53 seasons.

Martin Dihigo had contacted Perry about playing the 1954-55 winter league season with Xalapa of the Liga Invernal (Mexico). The money was good and Perry went to Laredo, Texas to meet up with Dihigo. After seven days, Dihigo failed to show up. During this time Alonzo had gotten a telegram from Ponce with an offer to play for them in Puerto Rico. Perry changed his plans and flew to Puerto Rico and joined the Ponce Leones. The 1954-55 season was by far Alonzo's worst year in professional baseball as he managed to hit only .217 in the 22 games he played.

Perry's – Puerto Rican Hitting Statistics

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1948-49	Mayaquez	-	330	76	100	24	8	9	64	14	.303	.506
1949-50	Mayaquez	-	213	-	71	8	5	3	-	-	.333	.460
1950-51	Mayaquez	-	269	37	87	12	4	4	39	4	.323	.442
1953-54	Ponce	22	83	5	18	4	1	1	13	2	.217	.325

Perry's – Puerto Rican Pitching Statistics

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1948-49	Mayaquez	18	144	11	4	147	-	69	54	3.38

Perry in the Dominican Republic



Alonzo Perry's Famous Batting Stance



Perry Hits another Homerun
Lacey Tigers (1952)

Winter Ball Returns to the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic changed from a summer league to a winter schedule in 1955. Alonzo who was a super star in the Dominican Republic returned to play for the Licey Tigers for the 1955-56 Dominican Winter League season. Perry responded as he always had with an outstanding year at the plate, hitting .325 with a .488 slugging percentage. He would play two more seasons (1956-57 and 1957-58) with Licey. Alonzo had his best year in the Dominican Winter league during the 1957-58 season when he won the league batting title with a .332 batting average.



1958-59 Estrellas Orientales
(Perry – first on left)

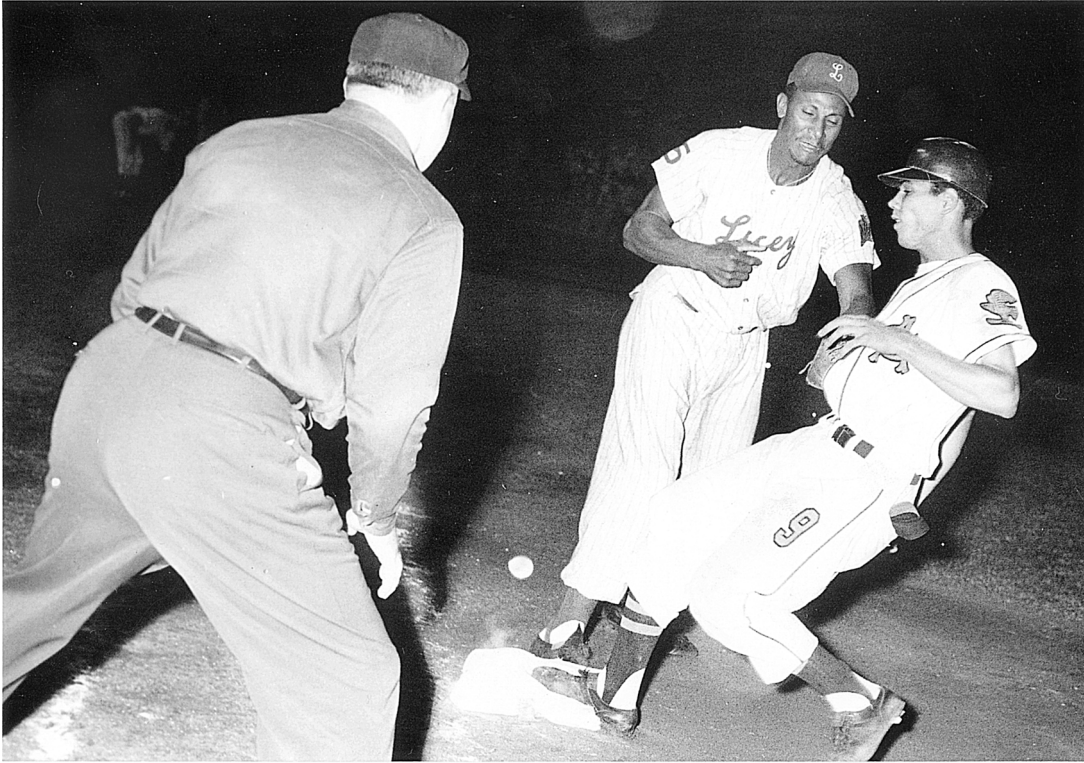
Before the start of the 1958-59 season, Perry was traded to Estrellas Orientales. The 1958-59 winter league season would be Perry's final season in Dominican baseball.

When his career in the Dominican League had concluded, Perry finished with the Dominican League's highest lifetime career slugging average (.489), second highest batting average (.317) in Licey history and the fourth overall highest career batting average (.310) for the Dominican League. His 45 homeruns still remains a Licey career record. The Licey Tigers honored Perry by retiring his number "5."

Perry's career statistics for his Dominican League career were:

Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
378	1430	218	443	72	18	49	252	42	.310	.489

Alonzo Playing Against the Major Leaguers



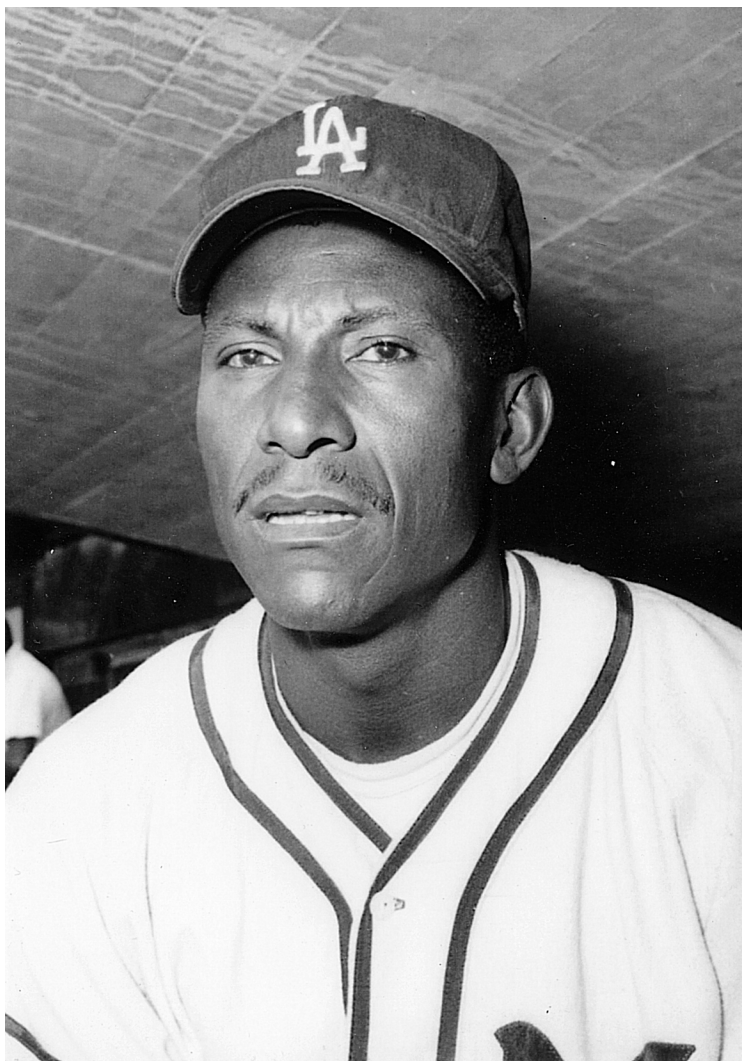
Alonzo Perry and Julian Javier



Felipe Alou and Alonzo Perry

Alonzo Perry – A True Forgotten Hero

Everywhere Perry played he was a star. From the Negro American League to Canada to Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic to Mexico, Alonzo was a super star. The only unanswered question is why Perry never had a shot at Major League baseball. There have been many speculations, but from this researcher's perspective there were most likely three major reasons. First, in Latin America he was a superstar making as much money as if he were playing in the Majors. The second reason was that in Latin America he was a celebrity without any of the trappings of racial discrimination. Perry stayed in the best hotels and ate in the best restaurants. The third reason is that when he went to play baseball in the Dominican Republic in 1951, he fell out of favor with many baseball executives because they considered the Dominican League an "outlaw" league. Perry had found a good life playing baseball in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Mexico and took full advantage of it.

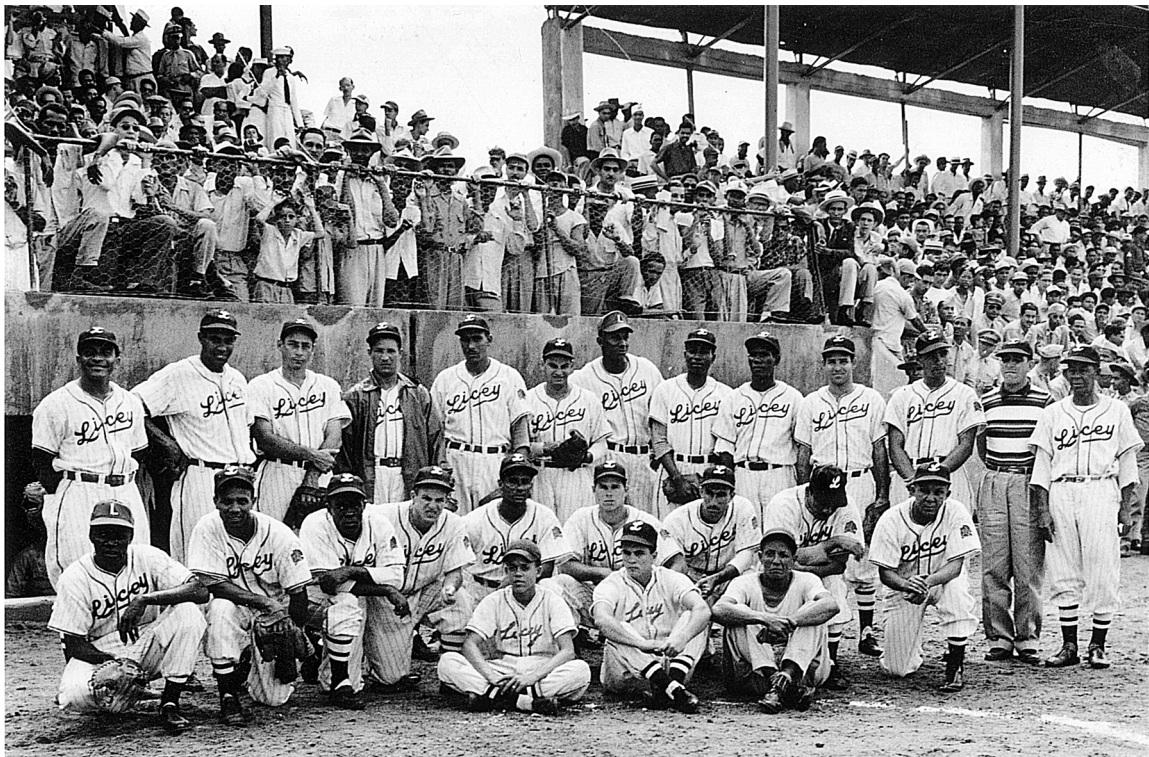


Alonzo Perry
Baseball Super Star

Alonzo Perry may have been a "forgotten hero" here in the United States, but in Latin America his legacy lives on today as one of the greatest players in Mexican League and Dominican League baseball history. When Alonzo Perry passed away on October 13, 1982, we lost one of the great black ball players of his era. Unfortunately most baseball fans in the United States never had the opportunity to see him play.



Lacey Tigers
Dominican League Champions (1952)
 (Perry – middle row third from left)



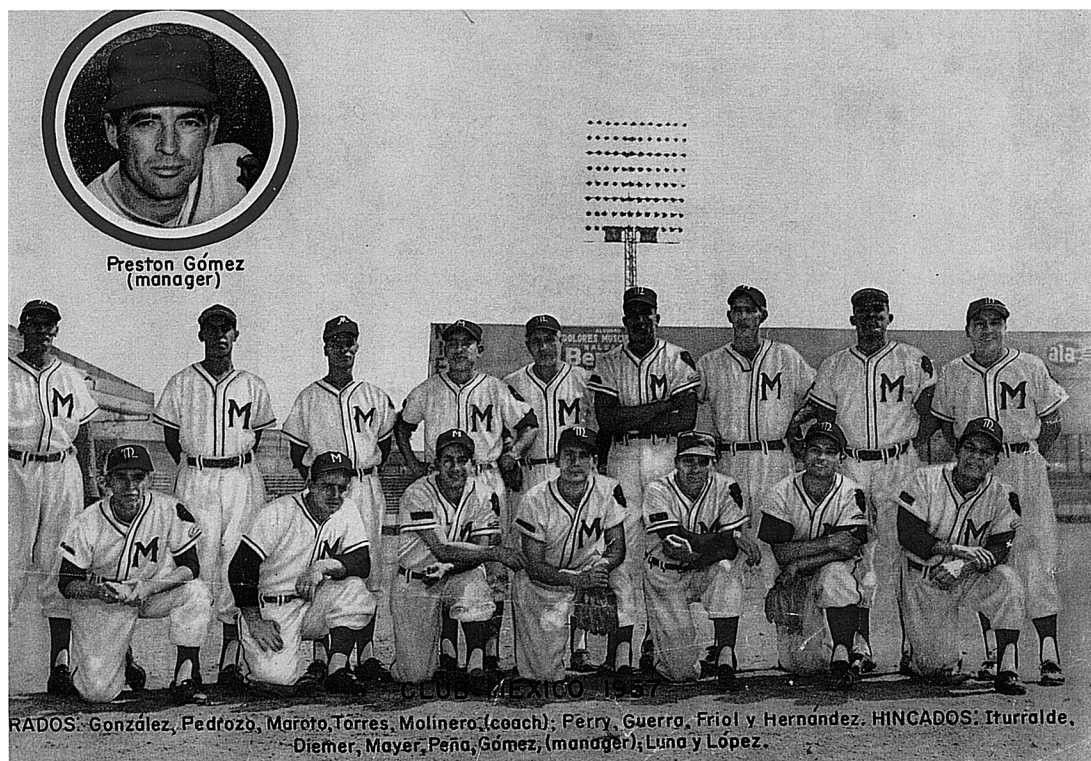
Lacey Tigers (1953)
 (Perry back row seventh from right)

Playing Career

Year	Team	League
1945	Atlanta Black Crackers	Negro Southern League
1946	Chattanooga Choo Chos	Negro Southern League
1946	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1946-1949	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1949	Oakland Oaks	Pacific Coast League
1950	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1951	Syracuse Chiefs	International League
1951	Brandon Greys	Manitoba-Dakota League
1951-1954	Licey Tigers	Dominican Summer League
1955-1959	Mexico City Red Devils	Mexican League
1960-1961	Retired – Out of Organized Baseball	
1962-1963	Monterrey Sultanes	Mexican League

Winter Leagues

1948-49	Mayaguez Indians	Puerto Rican Winter League
1949-50	Mayaguez Indians	Puerto Rican Winter League
1950-51	Mayaguez Indians	Puerto Rican Winter League
1954-55	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1955-56	Licey Tigers	Dominican League
1956-57	Licey Tigers	Dominican League
1957-58	Licey Tigers	Dominican League
1958-59	Estrellas Orientales	Dominican League
1959-60	Puebla Camoterros	Liga Invernal Veracruzana (Mexico)



CLUB MEXICO 1957
 RADOS: González, Pedrozo, Maroto, Torres, Molinero (coach); Perry, Guerra, Friol y Hernández. HINGADOS: Iturralde, Diemer, Mayer, Peña, Gómez, (manager); Luna y López.

Mexico City Red Devils (1957)
 (Perry –back row fourth from right)



Alonzo Perry – 1953 Lacey Tigers
Homerun vs Aguilas Cibaenas



Alonzo Perry – 1953 Lacey Tigers
Game Winning Hit

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1948	Birmingham	31	80	7	26	4	0	2	12	1	.325	.450
1949	Oakland	12	15	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	.200	.200
1949	Birmingham	51	133	22	37	8	1	5	30	1	.278	.466
1950	Birmingham	73	294	80	92	14	7	14	64	18	.313	.551
1951	Syracuse	9	18	3	5	0	0	0	3	0	.278	.278
1951	Brandon	16	63	13	25	-	-	5	19	-	.397	-
1951	Lacey	25	90	27	36	4	1	9	32	10	.400	.767
1952	Lacey	45	162	29	53	9	1	11	38	5	.327	.599
1953	Lacey	56	229	40	67	11	4	11	53	16	.293	.520
1954	Lacey	42	146	29	49	11	1	8	29	6	.336	.589
1955	Mexico City	92	365	76	137	24	15	21	122	5	.375	.696
1956	Mexico City	123	451	103	177	33	13	28	118	10	.392	.710
1957	Mexico City	121	466	96	164	32	6	22	107	15	.352	.588
1958	Mexico City	115	417	93	152	30	4	22	85	5	.365	.614
1959	Mexico City	127	459	93	153	29	9	12	94	7	.333	.514
1962	Monterrey	124	468	91	149	28	5	16	105	4	.318	.502
1963	Monterrey	130	496	96	175	27	6	17	90	5	.353	.534

Career Statistics – Hitting (East West All Star Game)

1950	West	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	.667	.667
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Career Hitting Statistics (Regular Season - Totals)

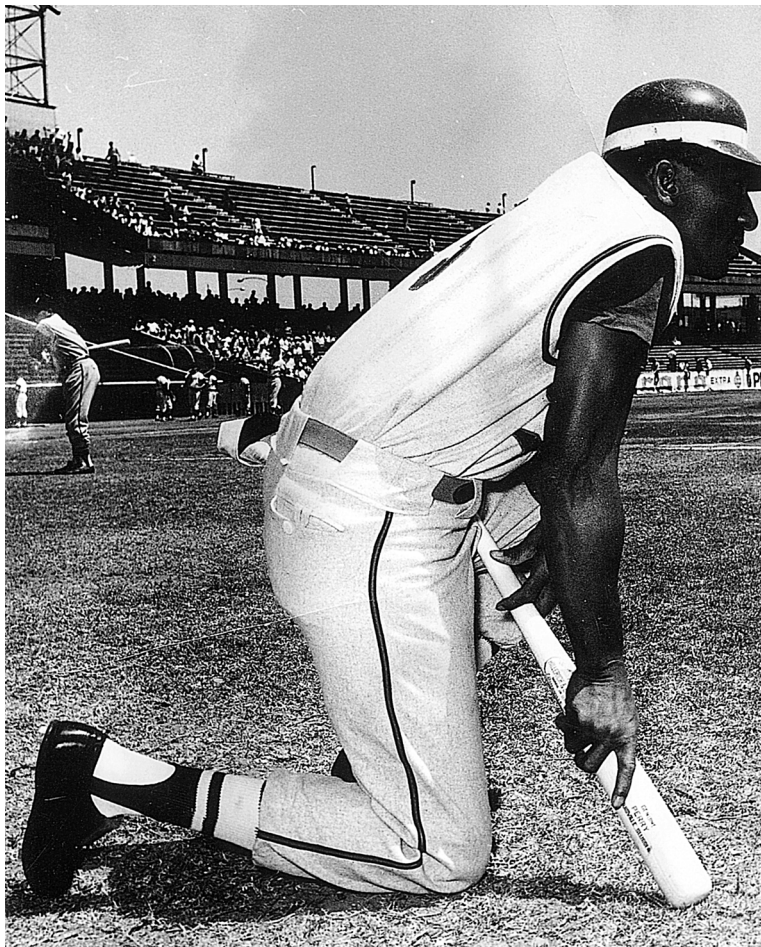
Negro League	155	507	109	155	26	9	21	106	20	.306	.517
All Star Game	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	.667	.667
Minors	21	33	3	8	0	0	0	4	0	.242	.242
Canada	16	63	13	25	-	-	5	19	-	.397	-
Dominican	168	627	125	205	35	7	39	152	37	.327	.592
Mexico	832	3122	648	1107	203	58	138	721	51	.355	.589
Totals	1193	4355	898	1502	264	74	203	1002	107	.345	.578

Career Statistics – Hitting (Winter Season)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1948-49	Mayaguez	-	330	76	100	24	8	9	64	14	.303	.506
1949-50	Mayaguez	-	213	-	71	8	5	3	-	-	.333	.460
1950-51	Mayaguez	-	269	37	87	12	4	4	39	4	.323	.442
1953-54	Ponce	22	83	5	18	4	1	1	13	2	.217	.325
1955-56	Lacey	53	209	29	68	13	6	3	31	2	.325	.488
1956-57	Lacey	46	159	19	40	7	1	0	19	2	.252	.308
1957-58	Lacey	51	202	18	67	8	2	3	23	1	.332	.436
1958-59	Estrellas	60	233	27	63	9	2	4	27	0	.270	.378
1959-60	Puebla		Records not available									
Totals		232	1698	211	514	85	29	27	216	25	.303	.435

Career Statistics – Pitching

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1946	Homestead	7	34	2	2	35	-	22	16	-
1947	Birmingham	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
1948	Birmingham	18	120	10	2	145	80	33	59	4.73
1948-49	Mayaguez	18	144	11	4	147	-	69	54	3.38
1949	Oakland	8	33	0	1	-	-	20	-	4.91
1949	Birmingham	24	133	12	4	124	61	31	61	3.45
1950	Birmingham	3	9	0	1	18	15	9	3	8.00
1951	Brandon	2	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
1951	Lacey	2	3	0	1	-	1	-	-	2.45
1959	Mexico City	14	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	4.00
Totals		96	476	37	18	469	157	184	193	-



Monterrey Sultanes (1962)
Mexican League Runs Batted In Leader



Alonzo Perry
Gold Glove First Baseman

Batting and League Leader Hitting Titles

Category	Year	League	Number
Base Hits	1956	Mexican League	177
	1957	Mexican League	164
	1957-58	Dominican League	67
Runs Scored	1950	Negro American League	80
	1954	Dominican Summer League	29
	1956	Mexican League	103
	1957	Mexican League	96
Total Bases	1952	Dominican Summer League	97
	1953	Dominican Summer League	119
	1954	Dominican Summer League	85
	1956	Mexican League	320
	1957	Mexican League	274
Doubles	1955-56	Dominican League	13
	1956	Mexican League	33
	1957	Mexican League	32
Triples	1955	Mexican League	15
	1956	Mexican League	13
Stolen Bases	1953	Dominican Summer League	16
Homeruns	1951	Dominican Summer League	9
	1952	Dominican Summer League	11
	1953	Dominican Summer League	11
	1956	Mexican League	28
Runs Batted In (RBI)	1952	Dominican Summer League	38
	1953	Dominican Summer League	53
	1955	Mexican League	122
	1956	Mexican League	118
	1957	Mexican League	107
	1962	Mexican League	105
Batting Average	1954	Dominican Summer League	.336
	1956	Mexican League	.392
	1957-58	Dominican League	.332
Slugging Average	1952	Dominican Summer League	.599
	1953	Dominican Summer League	.519
Fielding (First Base)	1952	Dominican Summer League	.993
	1956-57	Dominican League	.995
	1958-59	Dominican League	.996



Unknown, Chuck Dressen, Alonzo Perry and Artie Wilson
Oakland Oaks – Pacific Coast League (1949)



Alonzo Perry
Mayaguez Indios (1948-49)

Alonzo Perry – Dominican Baseball Hall of Fame



Luis Olmo, Alonzo Perry and Bert Haas
Stars of Lacey Tigers



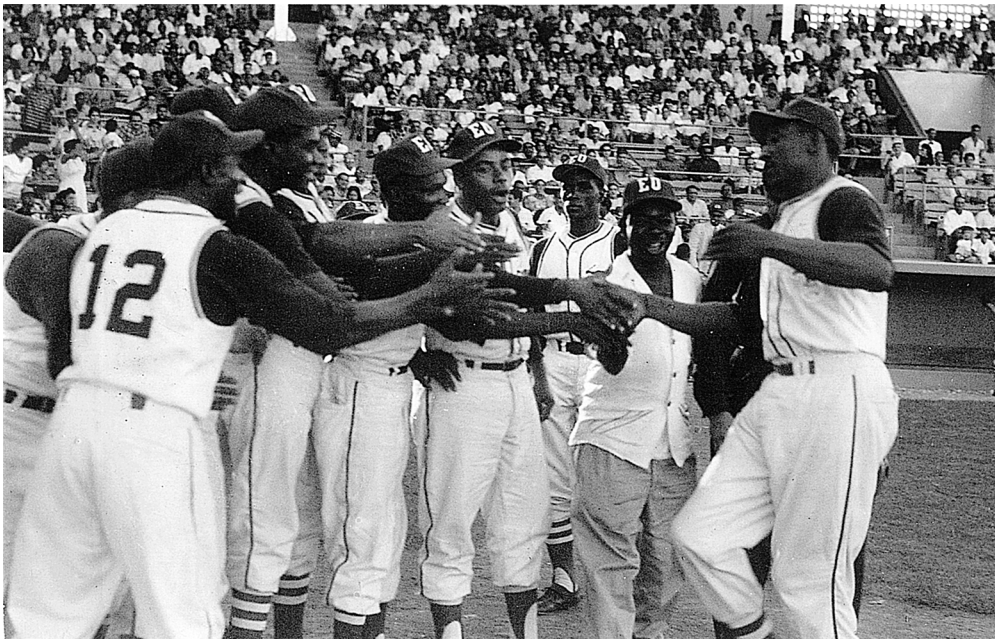
Alonzo Perry
Lacey Tigers (1952)



Alonzo Perry Hits another Homerun
Estrellas Orientales (1958-59)



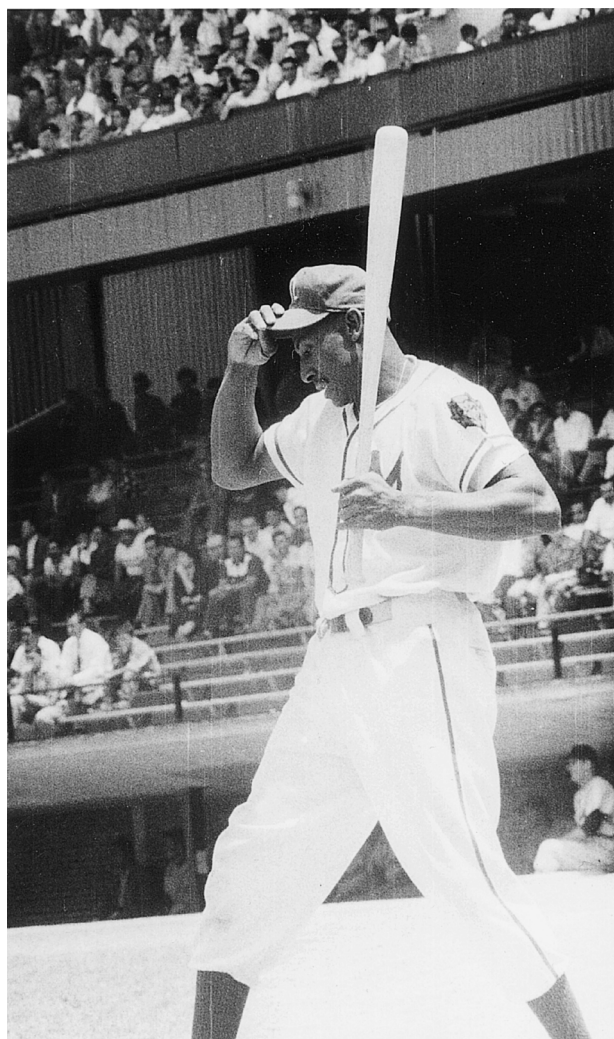
Alonzo Perry (Interim Manager) Argues a Call
Licey Tigers (1954)



1958-1959 Estrellas Orientales
Perry's Final Season in the Dominican Republic

Selected Career Highlights

- Career batting average of .345 and a slugging average of .578 in regular season play.
- Negro League All Star team – West Squad (East-West All Star Game) – 1950.
- Won 33 offensive league leading hitting titles including: 4 homerun titles, 6 runs batted in (RBI) titles and 3 batting titles.
- Won Triple Crown in Mexico in 1956 – 28 homeruns, 118 RBI and .392 B.A.
- Highest career Slugging Percentage in Mexican League baseball history with a .589 career slugging percentage.
- Highest career Slugging Percentage in Dominican League baseball history with a .488 career slugging percent.
- Second highest career batting average (.355) in Mexican League baseball history. (Former Negro Leaguer, Alfred Pinkston is First with a .372 batting average).
- Fourth highest career batting average in Dominican League history.
- Won three Gold Gloves at first base in Dominican Republic (1952, 1956-57 and 1958-59).
- Puerto Rican League All Star team: 1949-50 and 1950-51.
- Dominican League All Star team: 1955-56, 1956-57 and 1957-58.
- Seven time Mexican League All Star team: 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1962 and 1963.
- Liga Invernal Veracruzana All Star Team as both a Player and Manager: 1959-60.
- Led six teams in four different countries to League championships: Negro League (1948), Puerto Rico (1948-49), Dominican Republic (1951 and 1953) and Mexico (1956 and 1962).
- Dominican Baseball Hall of Fame



Alonzo Perry
Baseball Super Star



Lo mejor
en beisbol
No. 639

\$1.60

Alonso Perry