

Mansfield memories: Mansfield's Major Leaguer: Walt Ripley

By Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco | Mansfield@wickedlocal.com

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Mansfield has a long-standing connection to baseball. There are records of local teams playing as far back as 1867. Lowney's chocolate factory had a traveling baseball team. Mansfield High has fielded a team for over a century. And no one would doubt that Mansfield is a part of Red Sox Nation. But did you know that a man from Mansfield once pitched for the BoSox?



Walter Ripley was born in Worcester in 1916. His family moved to Mansfield while Walt was still young. In addition to being a baseball standout, Walt was also captain of the MHS basketball team. Walt graduated from Mansfield High School with the Class of 1934. The next year he attended Deerfield Prep. There he threw a one-hitter and a two-hitter, attracting the interest of major league scouts. He also played on the Mansfield town team.

While still just 18 years old, Walt signed a contract with the Red Sox and appeared in two games. He logged four innings pitched, giving up seven hits, three walks and four earned runs. His debut was on August 17, 1935, in an 11-7 road loss to the Saint Louis Browns.

His second and final appearance was Sept. 11 of that year, pitching the final three innings of a 10-2 loss to the Chicago White Sox at Fenway Park. In that final outing Walt surrendered a walk to Luke Appling, who would later be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He also gave up a single to White Sox pitcher "Sad Sam" Jones, who amassed 229 wins in a 22-season career.

Walt was sent to the minor leagues the following year, as is customary for a prospect who was still so young. In the minors he suffered arm trouble, but continued to "kick around" the minors until 1940. He left baseball 10 months

before Pearl Harbor, enlisting in the Army Air Corps and serving honorably until his discharge in 1946.

He returned to the Mansfield area where he and his wife Mary had a daughter and three sons. Their son Allen graduated from North Attleboro High School and went on to pitch for five seasons in the majors, making 101 appearances with the Red Sox, Giants and Cubs. Allen retired with a career record of 23-27.

Walt Ripley died on Oct. 7, 1990 at Sturdy Hospital in Attleboro. He is buried at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne.

If you are interested in learning more about Walter Ripley, we recommend an article by the Society for American Baseball Research which can be found on the Internet.



Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco are members of the Mansfield Historical Society. They can be reached at mansfieldhistoricalsociety@yahoo.com. Follow the society on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.