

Forgotten Heroes:

Sam Hairston



by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

Dr. Layton Revel

**“Sam Hairston Night” – Colorado Springs
(1955)**

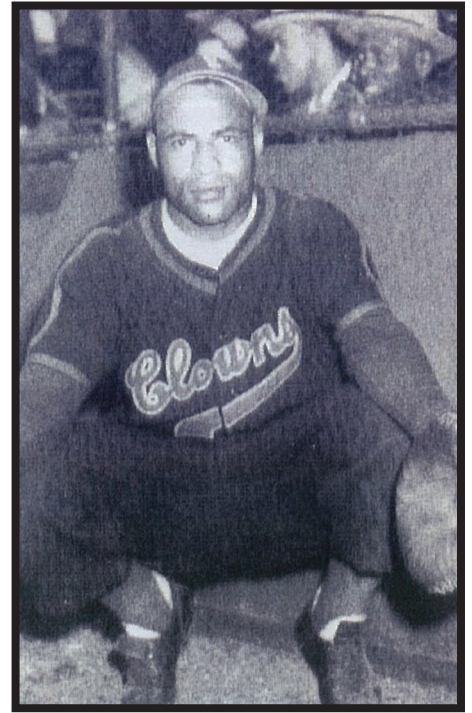


**“Sam Hairston Night” at the Colorado Springs Sky Sox Ball Park
Sam Receives a New Car
(1955)**



**Hairston Family at Colorado Springs Ball Park
“Sam Hairston Night”
(front row left to right - Johnny, Sam Jr., Wife and Jerry)
(1955)**

Samuel Harding Hairston was born on January 20, 1920 in the small town of Crawford, Lowndes County which is in the eastern part of the state of Mississippi. He was the second of thirteen children (eight boys and five girls) born to Will and Clara Hairston. Will Hairston moved his family from Crawford to the Birmingham area in 1922. The primary reason for the move was to find better work so that he could support his large family. Will became a coal miner and worked alongside Garnett Bankhead who was the father of the five Bankhead brothers who all played in the Negro Leagues. By 1930 Will had gained employment with American Cast Iron and Pipe (ACIPCO) as a laborer in their pipe shop. According to United States census records the Hairston family also lived in North Birmingham and Sayreton. Sam spent his formative years in Hooper City and attended Hooper City High School. Reportedly Sam did not finish high school and when he was 16 he told the employment office at ACIPCO that he was 18 and was given a job working for the company. According to Sam he went to work to help support the family and give his brothers and sisters the opportunity to go to school.



Sam Hairston
Indianapolis Clowns

When World War II started Sam Hairston reported for his physical and after his medical examination, Sam was classified as 4F (medical deferment) because of a problem with his big toe. Hairston had injured his foot when it was struck by a foul tip. Sam continued to work at ACIPCO which supported the war effort by manufacturing steel parts for planes, ships and tanks.

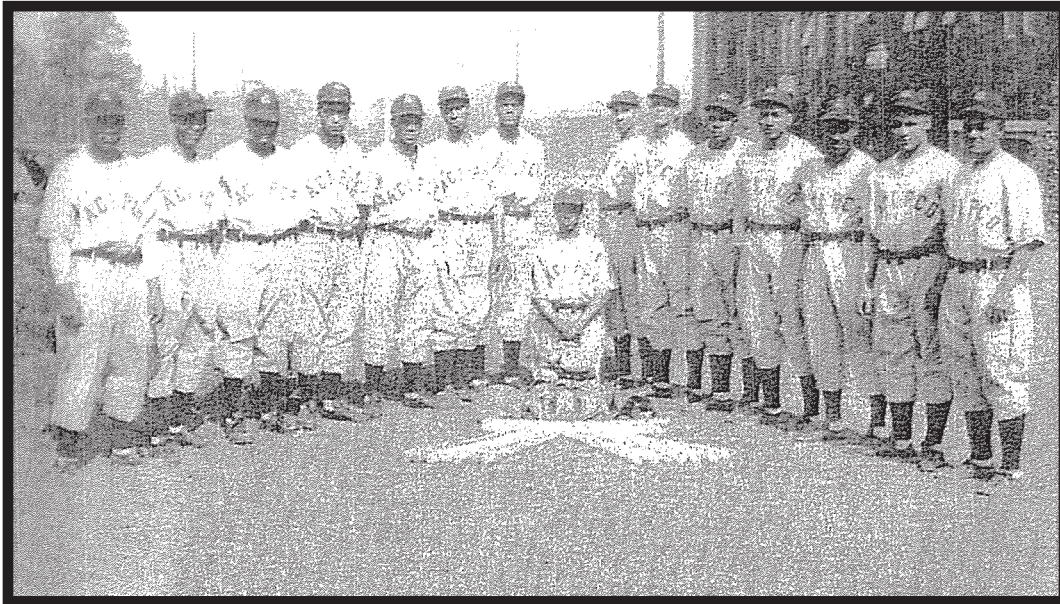
He stood five feet ten inches tall and weighed 187 pounds during his playing days. Sam threw right handed and batted from the right hand side of the plate.

Sam is best known for outstanding hitting skills. He was a great contact hitter who rarely struck out. He was a line drive hitter who besides hitting for average also hit for power. Every season he got more than his share of extra base hits. Sam was often described in the media as a “hitting machine.” Hairston hit over .300 at every level of baseball that he played.

Hairston started playing professional baseball in 1944 and retired as a player following the 1960 season. Sam played in the Negro Leagues from 1944 to 1950 primarily with the Indianapolis Clowns. When he signed with the Chicago White Sox in July of 1950, he played in their farm system from 1950 through 1960. Sam Hairston also played briefly for the Chicago White Sox Major League squad in July and August of 1951. In addition to playing ball in the United States Sam Hairston played winter ball extensively on the West Coast and in Latin America.

Birmingham Industrial League

In the late 1930's Sam Hairston went to work for American Cast Iron and Pipe Company (ACIPCO) in Birmingham, Alabama. As soon as he joined the company, Sam tried out for their baseball team. Making the ACIPCO team would be a real challenge for the young Hairston because ACIPCO had been and was the best team in the Birmingham Industrial League. They had dominated play for years. ACIPCO had won the Birmingham Industrial League championship nine straight years from 1928-1936 and after a two years lapse had won the title four straight years from 1939-1942. According to Sam he got into one game and struck out both times he got up to the plate. He was immediately cut from the team. Sam Hairston immediately went to play for Sayreton Mines which had a very good baseball club and also played in the Birmingham Industrial League. Before long Sam was Sayreton's best player and became a dominate force in the “league.”



American Cast Iron and Pipe (ACIPCO)
 Birmingham Industrial League Champions
 (1943)

Prior to the start of the 1943 Birmingham Industrial League season, ACIPCO recognized that Sam Hairston had turned into a high quality baseball player and needed to be on their team.

When the 1943 season started Robert Bolden, manager of ACIPCO, and his Pipemen picked right up where they had left off at the end of the 1942 season. ACIPCO finished the season with an outstanding record of 47-4 (.922) and won their fifth straight Birmingham Industrial League title.

Six of Bolden’s players would go on to play in the Negro American League. These players were Artie Wilson (shortstop), Ed Steele (outfield), Lorenzo “Piper” Davis (second base), Herman Bell (catcher), Sam Hairston (third base) and Nate Pollard (pitcher).

The leading hitters for ACIPCO during the 1943 season were as follows:

Player	Batting Average	Player	Batting Average
Artie Wilson	.559	Jim Williams	.326
Ed Steele	.435	Sam Hairston	.313
Waldo Dudley	.386	Nate Pollard	.265
Earl Little	.377	Albert Bennett	.253
Herman Bell	.333	Matthew Jenkins	.250

Nathaniel Pollard (16-0) and Earl Little (13-0) were the team’s top two pitchers and did not lose a game all season. Jesse Rabze (8-3), Harry Simpson (7-1), Lawrence Williams (2-0) and Robert Bolden (1-0) also pitched for ACIPCO during the 1943 season.

When the Birmingham Industrial League season ended on August 28th, ACIPCO had won the Red Division of the “league” with a record of 14-2 (.875). Their only two “league” losses were to L & N and Stockham. The Pipemen also went 33-2 (.943) in “non-league” games. Their two losses in what they called practice games were to Westfield and Ensley. When “league” and “non-league” games were added together, ACIPCO had a record of 47-4 (.922) in 1943.

After the conclusion of the regular season, ACIPCO faced Sayreton, winners of the Blue Division in a two game play-off series at Sloss Field for the “league” championship. Nate Pollard won the first game by a score of 9-5 and Earl Little took the second game by a score of 8-2. The two victories gave ACIPCO the Birmingham Industrial League title.

Negro League Career

Sam Hairston's professional baseball career began in 1944 when he was signed by the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League. After making the team in spring training as a third baseman he found little playing time because the Black Barons already had a solid player in John Britton who was their regular third baseman. Opportunity presented itself for Hairston when Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, the team's starting catcher, broke his finger. Sam told his manager he could fill in for Double Duty. In reality Sam Hairston had never caught a game in his life. Sam just let his natural talent take over and in his first game behind the plate he caught a shutout.

Sam's big opportunity came when the Birmingham Black Barons were playing an exhibition game against a team from Fort Benning (GA). Former Indianapolis Clowns player Leonard "Sloppy" Lindsay was playing for the military team and was very impressed by what he saw in Hairston. After reportedly going 7 for 8 in a double header against the Fort Benning squad, Lindsay told Sam that he would talk with Syd Pollock who owned the Indianapolis Clowns about the Clowns acquiring Sam's contract. Leonard felt Sam had a better chance of playing every day for Indianapolis than he would have if he stayed in Birmingham. Pollock agreed with Lindsay and traded Lloyd "Pepper" Bassett to Birmingham for Sam Hairston



Birmingham Black Barons
Negro American League Champions
(1944)

(Front row left to right – John Scott, **Ed Steele**, Ted Radcliffe, **Winfield Welch**, Alvin Gipson and Leandy Young. Middle row left to right – Lester Lockett, Lafayette Washington, Al Saylor, Tommy Sampson, Lloyd "Pepper" Bassett and **Lorenzo "Piper" Davis**. Back row left to right – Felix McLaurin, John Britton, Leroy Morney, **Artie Wilson**, Jimmy Newberry and John Huber. **Sam Hairston** not pictured.)

Sam Hairston becomes a Clown

Sam Hairston was now part of the Indianapolis Clowns and all he had to do was to prove his worth and value. According to Alan J. Pollock in his book Barnstorming to Heaven, his dad (Syd Pollock) told Hairston the following when he joined the Clowns: “You make my club, I’ll give you a \$ 25 raise the first paycheck.” Sam Hairston’s first appearance with the Indianapolis Clowns was in a double header against the Detroit Stars. Sam was the hitting star for Indianapolis against Detroit and reportedly Sam got his raise. Hairston finished the season with Indianapolis. Box scores have been found for eighteen (18) games for Sam for the 1944 season. His hitting statistics for these games are as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1944	Birmingham Indianapolis	18	53	3	17	1	0	0	-	2	.321	.339

During their 1944 Negro American League season, the Clowns were a relatively weak hitting team. Their .249 team batting average was fourth best in the “league.” Indianapolis’ top hitters during the season were Leo Lugo (.327), Alec Radcliff (.281) and Albert “Buster” Haywood (.270). Fortunately for Indianapolis they had a very strong pitching staff. Roosevelt Davis (11-7 w/ 2.65 ERA), Antonio Ruiz (10-4 w/ 2.76 ERA), John Williams (6-4 w/ 2.00 ERA), Lazarus Medina (4-3 w/ 3.06 ERA) and Willie Burns (2-2 w/ 6.53 ERA) comprised the Clowns’ pitching staff.

The Indianapolis Clowns finished the regular season in second place in the final Negro American League standings with a won-loss record of 40-31 (.563). The Birmingham Black Barons won the “league” championship with a record of 48-22 (.686).



Indianapolis Clowns
Negro American League
(1944)

(Back row left to right – Jesse “Hoss” Walker, unknown, Johnny Williams, Fred Wilson. Roosevelt Davis, Alec Radcliff and McKinley “Bunny” Downs. Middle row left to right – **Sam Hairston**, unknown, Buster Haywood, unknown and unknown. Front row left to right – Unknown, unknown, Richard “King Tut” King and unknown.)

Sam Hairston returned to the Indianapolis Clowns for their 1945 Negro American League season. During the season, the Clowns played out of both Cincinnati and Indianapolis. They were referred to as the “Cincinnati-Indianapolis Clowns.” Jesse “Hoss” Walker managed the team.

When spring training broke, Sam was in the starting line-up. By the start of the regular season Sam had taken over the full time catching duties from Buster Haywood. Alec Radcliff (.325), John Williams (.300), Sam Hairston (.285), Leroy Cromartie (.283) and Atores “Angel” Garcia (.273) were the leading hitters for the Clowns. Sam Hairston’s complete hitting statistics in games for the 1945 Negro American League season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1945	Cincinnati-Indianapolis	52	165	29	47	5	5	0	20	3	.285	.376

The pitching staff for the Clowns had been spectacular in 1944 but this was not the case in 1945. The starting rotation for the Cincinnati-Indianapolis squad were Atores Garcia (7-6), Lazarus Medina (7-6) and John Williams (5-9). Oliver “Ollie” Smith (0-3), Lamb Barbee (0-2), Fred Wilson (0-2), Hoses Allen, Jim Bennett, Roosevelt Davis, Leroy Sutton, Fay Washington and Amos Watson also pitched for the team in 1945.

One of the highlights of the season for the Clowns was a game they played in St. Louis at Sportsman’s Park against the Birmingham Black Barons. The game was played on August 30th and drew an unbelievable 31,000 fans. Sam Hairston’s double started the scoring for the Clowns. Lazarus Medina fanned twelve and got the win for Indianapolis



Chicago Defender
Chicago, IL
09-08-45

The combination of mediocre hitting and poor pitching resulted in Indianapolis struggling the entire 1945 season. They finished with a record of 30-39 (.435) and were in fifth place in the final “league” standings. The Cleveland Buckeyes (53-16) dominated “league” play the entire season and finished the year by winning the championship.

Only a limited number of box scores have been found for the Indianapolis Clowns 1946 Negro American League season. Current research has identified that Sam Hairston (.360) and Atores Garcia (.327) were the leading hitters for Indianapolis in 1946. Some of the other star players on the Clowns’ roster were Chiflan Cleveland (RF), Verdes Drake (CF), Leo Lugo (LF), Ray Neil (2B) and Goose Tatum (1B). Atores Garcia was also the ace of the pitching staff that included Jim Cohen, Jim Colzie, Manuel Godinez, Leo Henry, Lazarus Medina, Tomas Quinones, Amos Watson and Johnny Williams.

Twenty-one (21) box scores have been found for Sam Hairston for the 1946 season. His complete hitting statistics in these games are as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1946	Indianapolis	21	86	15	31	7	1	2	18	1	.360	.535

The Indianapolis Clowns had a disappointing season in 1946 and ended the year with a final record of 27-35 (.435) in Negro American League games. The Kansas City Monarchs won the Negro American League title with a won-loss record of 43-14 (.754).

Hairston Joins the Kansas City Royals

During the 1946 post season Sam Hairston traveled to California to play for Chet Brewer's Kansas City Royals team who played in the California Winter League. Four other teams (Kent Parker's All Stars, Major League All Stars, Major-Minor League All Stars and Hollywood Stars) also played in the California Winter League in 1946. The season opened on October 6th and no records for games played after October 27th has been found. The short season was played to comply with Major League Baseball Commissioner Happy Chandler's ruling "that Major League players may not play exhibition baseball for no more than thirty days after the end of the Major League baseball season." It appears that Wrigley Field in Los Angeles was the site for the majority of games played during the California Winter League season. From newspaper accounts the games drew on the average about 3,000 to 4,000 fans per game.



San Diego Union
San Diego, CA
09-24-46

The prime competition for the Royals during the season was the Major League All Stars (sometimes referred to in the media as Bob Feller's All Stars). The Major Leaguers were led by the hitting of Jeff Heath (Cleveland Indians), Charlie Keller (New York Yankees), Ken Keltner (Cleveland Indians), Stan Musial (St. Louis Cardinals), Phil Rizzuto (New York Yankees) and Mickey Vernon (Washington Senators). Bob Feller and Bob Lemon anchored the pitching staff for the Major League squad. Chuck Stevens was the top player on the Major-Minor League Stars and Butch Moran headed up the Hollywood Stars. Kent Parker's All Stars included Solly Hemus and six players from the San Diego Padres team.

Chet Brewer managed the Kansas City Royals. Some of the key players on Brewer's roster were Sam Hairston (C), Bill Hoskins (OF), Cowan Hyde (OF), Verdell "Lefty" Mathis (P), Walt McCoy (P), Booker Mc Daniels (P), Lee Moody (1B), Ray Neil (2B), Clyde Nelson (3B), Jimmy Newberry (P), Satchel Paige (P), Al Smith (utility), Ed Steele (OF), Jesse "Bat Man" Williams (SS) and John Williams (P).

The highlight of the Kansas City Royals winter season was a two game series with the Major League All Stars with Ralph Kiner and Bob Lemon. The two game series was played at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles. The Royals also played a series against Jackie Robinson's All Stars.

Bob Feller's All Stars and Jackie Robinson's All Stars also played a barnstorming schedule on the West Coast during the winter of 1946. The Kansas City Royals were declared the winners of the California Winter League title with a record of 6-3-1 (.667). This appears to be the last season of the infamous California Winter League.

Hairston Returns to Indianapolis

After a successful post season in California, Sam Hairston was back with the Clowns as their starting catcher for their 1947 season. Sam Hairston had an excellent season at the plate and was the Indianapolis Clowns leading hitter for the season with a .361 batting average. In 67 games he went 92 for 255 with 41 runs scored. Hairston finished in third place behind John Ritchey (.381) and Artie Wilson (.373) for the Negro American League batting championship.

As a team the Clowns had a .275 team batting average which was fifth best in the Negro American League. Their .950 team fielding percentage was the best in the "league."

Both Jesse "Hoss" Walker and Willie Wells managed the team during the 1947 season. Some of the top players on the Clowns roster were Reynaldo "Verdes" Drake (OF), Coco Ferrer (SS), Henry "Speed" Merchant (OF), Ray Neil (2B), Leonard Pigg (C) and Reece "Goose" Tatum (1B). The pitching staff for Indianapolis included Jim Colzie, Atores Garcia, Manuel Godinez, Juan Guilbe, Leo "Preacher" Henry, Carranza Howard, Tomas Quinones and Johnny Williams.

One of the most interesting aspects of the 1947 season for the team was a reported tryout of several Clowns players with the Boston Red Sox of the American League. Supposedly Jim Colzie, Sam Hairston, Ray Neil and Goose Tatum were to be given a try out with Boston. The four players traveled to Boston and when they showed up at the ball park the gates were locked. No red Sox officials could be found and the try out was never held.



Elks Benefit Baseball Game
INDIANAPOLIS CLOWNS
vs. CLEVELAND BUCKEYES
MacArthur Stadium
Monday Nite, June 23
Featuring
King Tut
Popular Diamond Comedian of
Negro American League Clowns
Double-Header
First Game 6:30 P.M.
Regular International League
Prices

Indianapolis Clowns
vs
Cleveland Buckeyes

Syracuse Herald Journal
Syracuse, NY
06-22-47

The Indianapolis Clowns had an extremely poor season in 1947. They finished the season in last place in the "league" with a record of 22-44 (.333). The Cleveland Buckeyes (54-23) won the Negro American League title.

Hairston Signs with Jackie Robinson All Stars

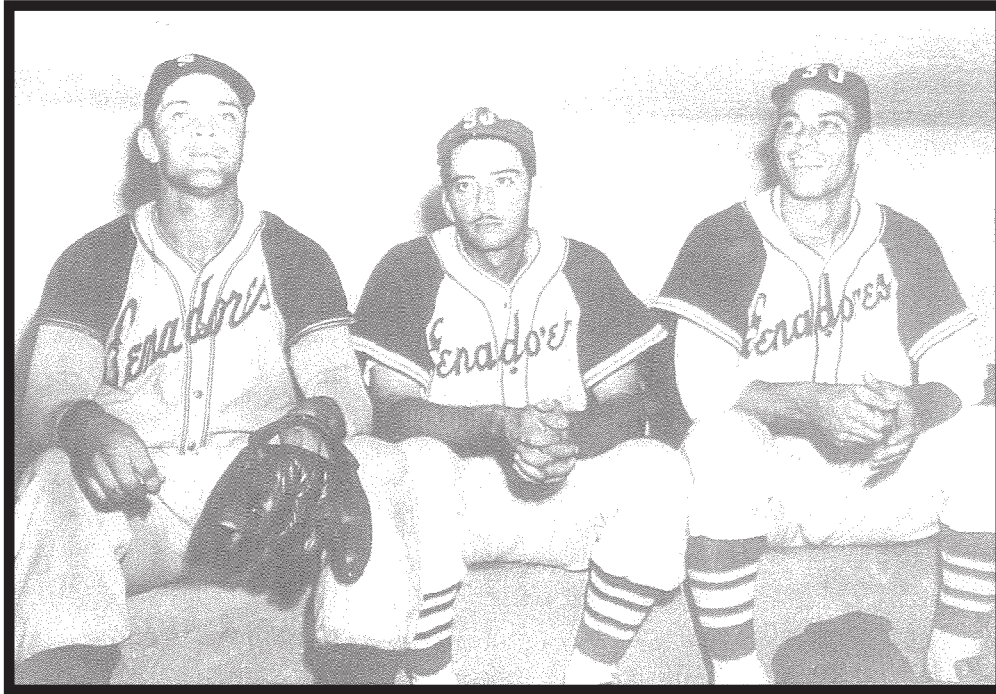
During the winter of 1947 Sam Hairston (C), Buster Haywood (C), King Tut (entertainer), Clyde Nelson (3B), Ray Neil (2B), Goose Tatum (1B) and John Williams all played for the Jackie Robinson All Star team.

Jackie Robinson's All Stars played an independent barnstorming schedule on the West Coast in 1947. One of their biggest games during their off season tour was against the Major League All Stars.

Sam Travels to Puerto Rico

Sam Hairston also played for the San Juan Senadores of the Puerto Rican Winter League during their 1947-48 winter season. Other Negro League players who were on the roster for San Juan were Verdes Drake, Leonardo Medina, Francisco Sostre, Vicente Villafane and Johnny Williams.

San Juan struggled throughout the 1947-48 season. They ended their season with a 26-34 (.433) record and were thirteen games behind the Mayaguez Indios (39-21) who won the “league” title.



San Juan Senadores
Puerto Rican Winter League
(1947-48)

(Wilmer Fields, Jamie Almendro and **Sam Hairston**)

Indianapolis Clowns Continue to Struggle

The Indianapolis Clowns struggled through the 1948 Negro American League season. Albert “Buster” Haywood managed the team during the season.

Leonard Pigg (.345), Sam Hairston (.319), Verdes Drake (.275), Ray Neil (.272), Andres Mesa (.267) and Buster Haywood (.267) led the team in hitting during the season. Sam Hairston’s complete hitting statistics for the 1948 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1948	Indianapolis	76	285	54	91	18	5	4	38	6	.319	.460

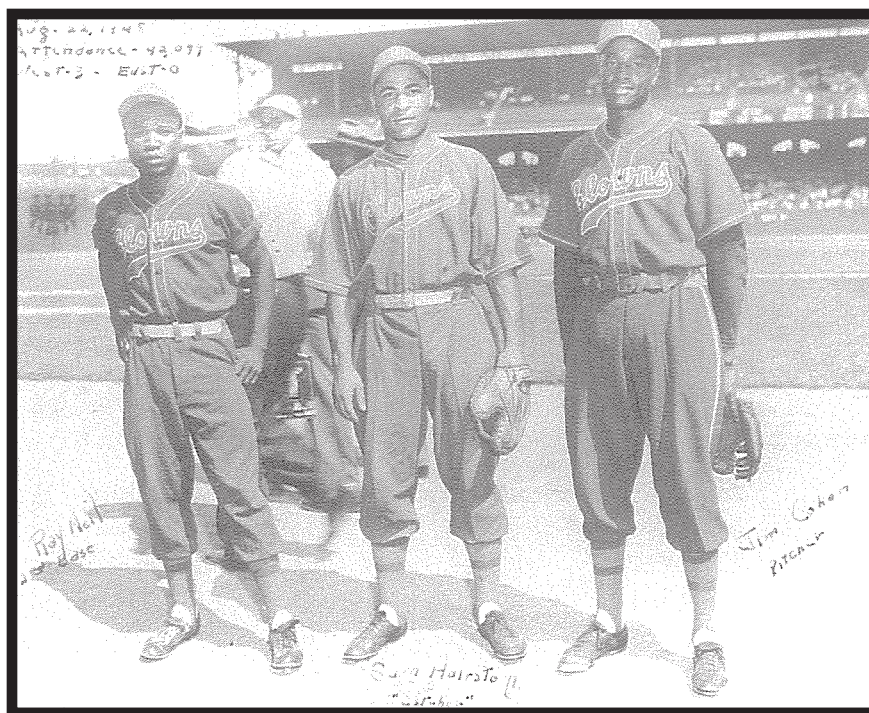
Luis Raul Cabrera (8-5), Bill Cathey (5-9), Andy Porter (4-5), Jim Cohen (3-8) and Johnny Williams (3-7) anchored the pitching staff. Jose Velasquez (1-4), Jim Bennett (1-0), Manuel Godinez (1-1), Walter Gibbons (1-2), Atires Garcia (0-3), Henry Merchant (0-1) and Art White (0-1) also pitched for Indianapolis during the season.



**Indianapolis Clowns
(1948)**

(Back row left to right – Verdes Drake, Sherwood Brewer, Ray Neil, Bill Cathey, Allbert “Buster” Haywood, Harry Butts, Charles Wilson, Leonard Pigg, **Sam Hairston**, Jesse Williams, Jim Cohen, Manuel Godinez, Raydell “Bo” Maddix, Clyde Nelson, Henry Merchant, Horace Garner and Andy Porter. Front row left to right – “Juggling” Joe Taylor, McKinley “Bunny” Downs, Edward “Peanuts” Davis and Reece “Goose” Tatum.)

Indianapolis finished the 1948 regular season with a dismal record 27-46 (.370) and were in next to last place in the final Negro American League standings. The Birmingham Black Barons won the “league” title with a record of 57-21 (.731).



**East-West All Star Game
West Team
(1948)**

(Ray Neil, **Sam Hairston** and Jim Cohen)

Sam Hairston is Selected to East-West All Star Team

In August of 1948 Sam Hairston was selected to represent the West team for the East-West All Star games. Game one was played on August 22nd at Comiskey Park in Chicago. There were 42,099 fans in attendance. Sam Hairston did not play in the game. The West won the game by a score of 3-0. Game two was held on August 24th at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The attendance at the game was a disappointing 17,928 fans. Sam appeared for the West as a pinch hitter for Jim LaMarque in the ninth inning. Hairston did not get on base. The East won the game by a score of 6-1.



East-West All Star Game
West All Stars
(1948)

(Back row left to right – Neil Robinson, **Willard Brown**, Spoon Carter, Willie Grace, Gentry Jessup, Sam Hill, Bill Powell, Jim La Marque, **Chet Brewer**, **Lorenzo “Piper” Davis**, and Quincy Troupe. Front row left to right – Nat Rogers, Leon Kellman, **Sam Hairston**, Bob Boyd, Ray Neil, Jim Cohen, Verdell Mathis, Herb Souell, **Artie Wilson**, Roberto Vargas and Trainer.)

Hairston Returns to California

After the regular 1948 Negro American League season had concluded play, Sam Hairston signed with Chet Brewer’s Kansas City Royals. Brewer’s team played a West Coast barnstorming tour during the winter of 1948. Besides Hairston some of the other Negro League stars who played for the Kansas City Royals during the winter of 1948 included James “Cool Papa” Bell (OF), Buster Haywood (C), Leon Kellman (OF), Lefty La Marque (P), Satchel Paige (P), Andy Porter (P), Othello Renfroe (C/OF), Bill Robinson (OF), Gene Smith (P/OF), Herb Souell (3B), Archie Ware (1B) and Jesse “Bat Man” Williams (SS).

The highlight of the 1948 season for the Royals was a game they played against Bob Lemon’s All Stars. The game was played in Wrigley Field in Los Angeles.

Sam Hairston Heads to Panama

The Panama Professional Baseball League or Panama Winter League as it was sometimes called was founded as a “professional” league in 1946. Prior to the start of the 1948-49 season the “league” officially became part of organized baseball. Four teams (Carta Vieja Yankees, Cerveceria National, Chesterfield Smokers and Spur Cola Colonites comprised the 1948-49 Panama Winter League. Carta Vieja, Cerveceria National and Chesterfield were all based in

Panama City. Spur Cola represented Balboa. Most of the “league’s” games were played at Estadio Olimpico de Panama City.

Team owners were all determined to make a good showing in the “league’s” inaugural season. The owners of the Chesterfield team’s plan for the season was to sign a roster of primarily Negro League players. Quincy Barbee, Pablo Bernard, Archie Braithwaite, Chet Brewer, Vibert Clarke, Sam Hairston, Ulysess Mahoney and Clyde Paris all played in the Negro Leagues and were on Chesterfield’s roster during the 1948-49 winter season. Individual player statistics have not been uncovered as of the publishing of this book.

The season came down to a two team race between Chesterfield and Spur Cola. The final “league” standings were as follows:

Panama Professional Baseball League

Team	Won	Lost	%	Games Behind
Spur Cola	24	14	.632	-
Chesterfield	22	14	.611	2
Carta Vieja	17	18	.486	6.5
Cerveceria	8	27	.229	15.5

Negro American League Changes Its Structure

The Negro National League which had been established in 1920 disbanded after the 1948 season. Even though the Negro National League was gone there were still several former “league” teams (Baltimore Elite Giants, Houston Eagles, New York Cubans and Philadelphia Stars) that had an interest in continuing to play in an organized league. In a response to this need, the Negro American League decided to restructure by dividing their “league” into two divisions (Eastern and Western) and extending franchise offers to the teams that had played in the Negro National League.



Indianapolis Clowns

(Sam Hairston – kneeling first on right)

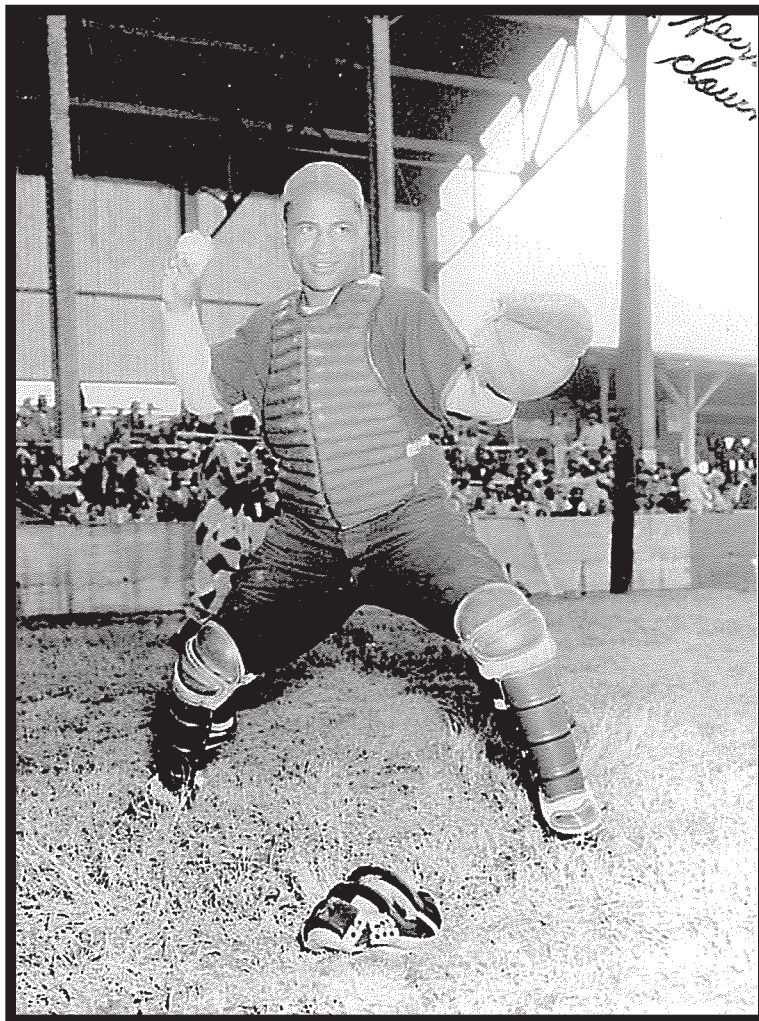
The Indianapolis Clowns played in the Eastern Division of the Negro American League with Baltimore Elite Giants, Louisville Buckeyes, New York Cubans and Philadelphia Stars. The Baltimore Elite Giants dominated “league” play the entire season. Like they had done for so many years, the Clowns played mediocre ball. Indianapolis went 37-44 (.457) and were in third place in the final “league” standings.

The top hitters for the team during the season were Leonard Pigg (.388), Ray Neil (.364), Clyde Nelson (.322), Goose Tatum (.307), Sam Hairston (.307), Al Gerrard (.306) and Buster Haywood (.286). Hairston’s complete batting statistics for Negro American League games in 1949 were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1949	Indianapolis	93	349	58	107	19	8	1	43	2	.307	.404

Even with several very productive hitters, the Indianapolis Clowns only managed to compile a .270 team batting average. This was only sixth best in the Negro American League.

The starting pitching rotation for the Clowns was comprised of Andy Porter (10-6 w/ 3.63 ERA), Jim Cohen (9-7 w/ 3.49 ERA), Raydell Maddix (6-7 w/ 3.31 ERA), Eddie “Nyasses” Davis (6-11 w/ 3.96 ERA), Bill Cathey (4-8 w/ 4.71 ERA) and Harry Butts (2-8 w/ 5.22 ERA).



Sam Hairston
Indianapolis Clowns

Hairston Finds a Winter Home in Venezuela

Needing a job, preferably a baseball job over the winter months, Sam Hairston signed with Vargas of the Venezuelan Winter League. Four teams (Cerveceria Caracas, Magallanes, Vargas and Venezuela) played in the 1949-50 Venezuelan Winter League. The forty-seven (47) game season started on November 17, 1949.

Going into the 1949-50 season, the owners of the Vargas team's strategy was to recruit Negro League players to fill their roster. The hitting attack for Vargas was led by Howard Easterly (3B), Sam Hairston (OF), Clyde "Junior" Mc Neal (SS) and Othello Renfroe (utility). Raymond Brown, Jim Cohen, Jonas Gaines, Andy Porter and Bill Ricks anchored the team's pitching staff.

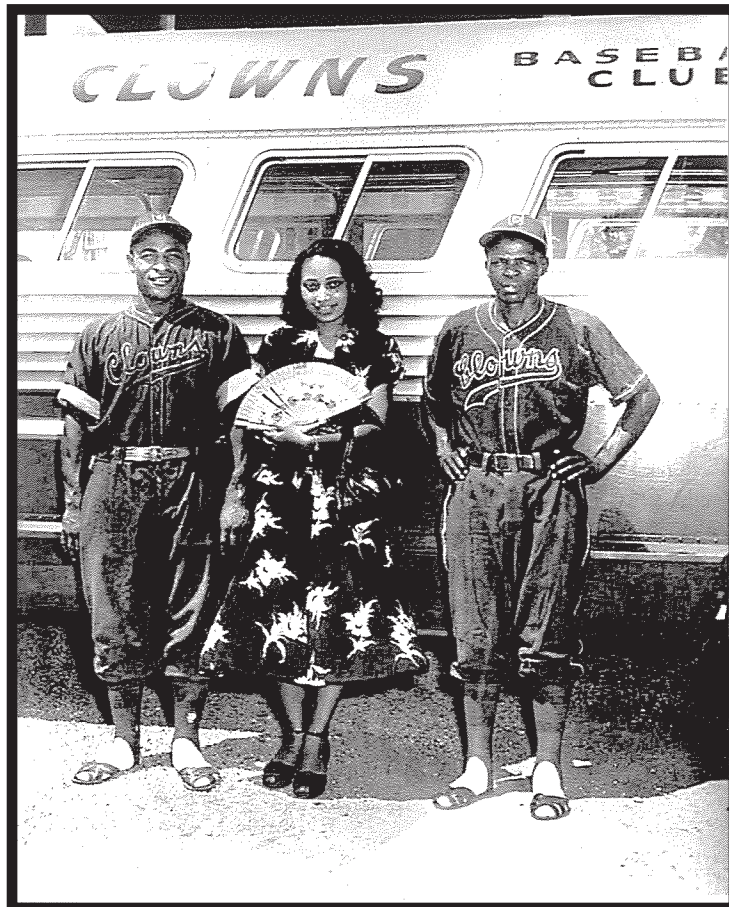
Sam Hairston quickly became a fan favorite when he joined the team and would play the next four winter league seasons in Venezuela.

Magallanes easily won the "league" championship with a record of 32-14 (.696). Vargas played poorly the entire season and finished in last place with a record of 17-31 (.354). They were a full sixteen (16) games behind Magallanes.

Sam Hairston Wins the Triple Crown

The 1950 season was the best season of Sam Hairston's professional baseball career. Sam started the season hot and never cooled off. He ended the season by winning the Triple Crown of the Negro American League. Sam won the batting title with a .424 batting average, led the "league" in homeruns with 17 and also led the "league" with 71 runs batted in. Hairston also led the Negro American League in hits (100), total bases (176) and slugging percentage (.517). His complete hitting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950	Indianapolis	70	236	55	100	23	1	17	71	5	.424	.517



White Sox Sign Hairston, Leading Negro Player

Assign Catcher to Farm Club:
Slugger Has .465 Batting Mark

Chicago Defender
Chicago, IL
08-01-50

Sox Farm Signs First Negro Player

(Special to The SUN-TIMES)

Colorado Springs, Colo.— In-
fielder Sam Hairston, currently
hitting .465 with the Indianapolis
Clowns, became the first Negro to
sign a contract with a Chicago
White Sox farm team Monday
when he agreed to terms with the
Colorado Springs Skysox of the
Western League.

Hairston, a third baseman and
catcher for the Clowns, will join
the Skysox Thursday when they
return from a road trip. He was
the leading hitter in the Negro
American League with 87 safeties
in 187 times at bat, including 16
homers and 66 runs batted in.

Chicago Sun Times
Chicago, IL
08-01-50

One of his best games of the season was against the Houston Eagles in late June of 1950. Sam connected for three home runs in the game.

To put Sam Hairston's season in perspective, it is important to look at the number of future Major League players who were playing in the Negro American League in 1950. These future Major Leaguers were Bob Boyd (.356), Willie Mays (.330), Elston Howard (.319), Jim Gilliam (.265) and Ernie Banks (.250).

Indianapolis also got excellent production offensively from Raul Galata (.313), Buster Haywood (.307), Henry "Speed" Merchant (.306), Ben Lott (.304), Nate Peeples (.302), Verdes Drake (.300), Sherwood Brewer (.298), Ray Neil (.291) and Raydell Maddix (.290). The Clowns posted an outstanding .287 (857 for 2986) team batting average for the 1950 season.

In addition the Indianapolis Clowns also got very good pitching in 1950. Raul Galata (11-6 w/ 2.92 ERA), Harry Butts (8-8 w/ 4.50 ERA), Whit Graves (7-8 w/ 3.62 ERA), Eddie Davis (7-5 w/ 4.36 ERA) and Raydell Maddix (5-5 w/ 3.73 ERA) made up the starting rotation for Indianapolis. Henry Mc Henry (3-1), Jim Cohen (2-3), Andy Porter (2-0), Tommy Johnson (2-1) and Pedro Najarano (0-1) also pitched for the Clowns in 1950.

With outstanding hitting and an effective pitching staff, the Indianapolis Clowns won the Negro American League (Eastern Division) championship title. The team was managed by long term player and manager, Albert "Buster" Haywood. The Indianapolis Clowns posted a won-loss record of 47-38-2 (.553). The Kansas City Monarchs (52-21) won the Western Division of the Negro American League. No play-off was held between Indianapolis and Kansas City.

Hairston was the leading vote getter for the 1950 East-West All Star game when he caught the interest of the Chicago White Sox and was signed by the Major League team before the East-West All Star game was held.

Sam Hairston Signs with Chicago White Sox

Sam Hairston's hallmark season with the Indianapolis Clowns in 1950 did not go unnoticed. His spectacular hitting got the notice of Major League baseball clubs. After weighing all of his options, Sam Hairston signed with the Chicago White Sox of the American League on July 31, 1950 as an amateur free agent. Negro League legend John Wesley Donaldson who was the first African American to scout for a Major League organization scouted Sam Hairston for Chicago. Donaldson also recommended that the White Sox sign Bob Boyd of the Memphis Red Sox. Chicago took Donaldson's recommendation and also signed Boyd.

When Chicago White Sox general manager, Frank Lane signed Sam Hairston he had the following to say: "We are looking for good young players in building the White Sox for the future. Whether or not they are white or black makes no difference."

Immediately upon their signing both Sam Hairston and Bob Boyd were assigned to the Colorado Springs Sky Sox of the Western League. The Colorado Springs White Sox were the Class A farm team of the Chicago White Sox. The team was managed by Buddy Hassett and called Memorial Field their home ball park. Hairston and Boyd became starters as soon as they joined the team and played the remainder of the season at Colorado Springs. Sam appeared in 38 games and Bob played in 42 games. Boyd put up super star numbers with a .373 batting average and a .646 slugging percentage. Sam also made a very respectable showing. The duo's numbers for their 1950 season with Chicago's Minor League team were as follows:

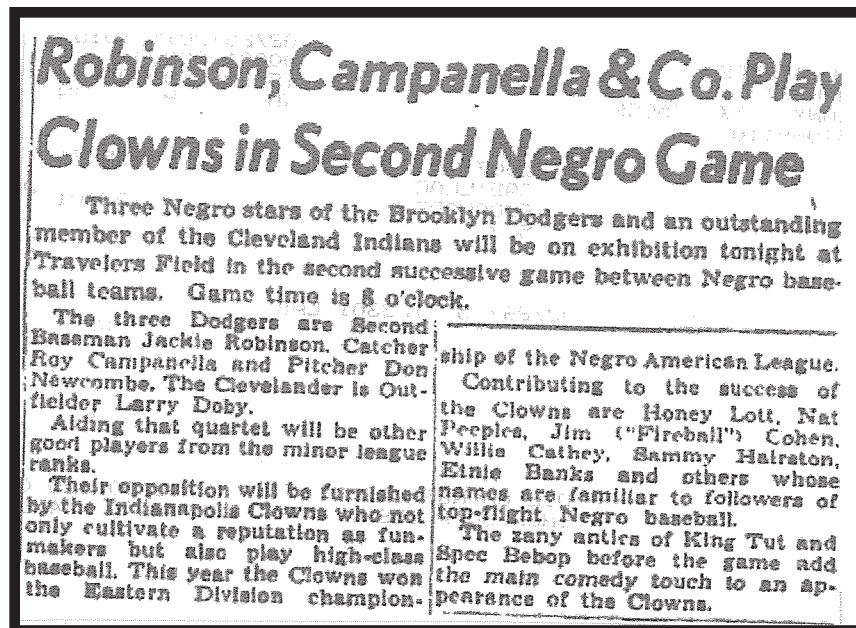
	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Sam Hairston	38	133	-	38	5	1	1	-	-	.286	.361
Bob Boyd	42	158	-	59	6	5	9	-	-	.373	.646



Sam Hairston with Colorado Springs Management Team

Even though Sam Hairston and Bob Boyd were very productive for the team, the Colorado Springs White Sox only had a mediocre season. They ended the year with a 72-82 record and were sixth place in the final Western League standings.

Immediately after the conclusion of the 1950 regular season, Sam Hairston joined his old team the Indianapolis Clowns to play two games against the Jackie Robinson All Stars at Travelers Field in Little Rock (AR). The Jackie Robinson All Stars featured the hitting of Roy Campanella, Larry Doby and Jackie Robinson. Don Newcombe was the top pitcher for the Jackie Robinson All Stars. Besides Sam Hairston rejoining the Clowns, they also recruited Ernie Banks to play for them against Jackie Robinson's team. King Tut and Spec Beebop were the featured comedy entertainers.



Sam Returns to Venezuela

Even though the team had played poorly for the 1949-50 season, Sam Hairston had proven to be an important player to Vargas and he was resigned for the 1950-51 season. Bill Ricks was the only other former Negro League player to be signed by Vargas for the season. Team owners filled their roster with white Minor League players. Sam had an excellent season at the plate and culminated his winter season by winning the Venezuelan Winter League batting title with a .380 batting average. His complete hitting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950-51	Vargas	40	163	29	62	15	1	0	34	0	.380	.485

Sam Hairston was selected as the "league's" Most Valuable Player (MVP) for the 1950-51 season.

Vargas significantly improved its won-loss record from the previous season. They finished the season tied for second place in the final "league" standings with Cervercera Caracas. Both teams had a record of 27-27 (.500) and were seven (7) games behinds Magallanes who won the title with a 34-19 (.641) record.

Sam Hairston is Promoted to Sacramento

Spring training for the White Sox for the 1951 season was held in Pasadena (CA). Sam played behind the plate and was given a good look in the outfield during spring training camp. After a successful season with Colorado Springs in 1950, a tremendous winter league season with Vargas in Venezuela and a very good effort in spring training, Sam Hairston was promoted along with Bob Boyd to the Sacramento Solons of the Pacific Coast League. The Solons were the Class AAA farm team of the Chicago White Sox. Sacramento was managed by Joe Gordon and called Moreing Field as their home ball park.

Sam appeared in 68 games for the Solons. He was batting .253 with a .337 slugging percentage when he was called up to the Major League by the Chicago White Sox.

Also appearing for Sacramento in 1950 was Bob Boyd who batted .342 for the season in 145 games with the Solons.

The White Sox Call

Chicago (IL) had the secondlargest population of non-white people in the country. In July of 1951 the Chicago White Sox backup catcher, Gus Niarhos, broke his wrist on a foul tip. To make matters even worse for Chicago their starting catcher, Phil Masi, was suffering from knee problems. The White Sox needed help behind the plate. Management's solution was to look within their farm team system. The answer was Samuel Hairston who was catching in Sacramento.

Sam Hairston made his Major League debut on July 21st and his last day in the Major Leagues was August 26th. When he took the field Sam Hairston became the first American born black player to play for the Chicago White Sox.

San Francisco Chronicle
07-18-51

White Sox Recall Solons' Hairston

CHICAGO, July 17 (UP) — The Chicago White Sox tonight recalled Catcher Sam Hairston from Sacramento in the Pacific Coast League to replace Gus Niarhos, who suffered a broken wrist against Philadelphia yesterday.

Niarhos had appeared in 51 games with the Sox this year and was batting .244.

Thirld-string receiver Joe Erautt played against New York tonight as Niarhos went on the disabled list for 30 days.

Hairston, a Negro, has played in 65 games with 47 hits in 180 times at bat for a .261 batting average.

Hairston Plays in Majors

The White Sox pecked away for a run in the third on two hits. The Hose got two more in the sixth on Lenhardt's homer and doubles by Al Zarilla and Sam Hairston, the Negro catcher's first major league hit. A three-base error and a long fly plated the third Sox run in the seventh and the Hose closed business with Minoso's homer in the ninth.

Washington	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Yost, 3b	4	2	1	1	1	0
Coan, lf	4	1	1	1	0	0
Noren, cf	5	5	1	10	0	0
Vernon, 1b	5	2	4	7	0	0
Male, rf	4	2	3	3	0	0
Runnels, ss	3	1	0	0	2	0
Dente, ss	1	0	0	0	0	0
Michaels, 2b	4	1	2	0	3	0
Grasso, c	4	0	1	3	0	0
Moreno, p	4	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	38	10	14	27	7	0
Chicago	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Busby, cf	1	1	3	0	0	0
Fox, 3b	5	0	2	2	4	1
Minoso, 3b	4	1	0	0	1	0
Robinson, 1b	5	1	0	0	1	0
Lenhardt, lf	3	1	1	4	0	0
Zarilla, rf	3	1	2	6	0	0
Carrasquel, ss	2	0	0	0	3	0
Domasatri, ss	2	0	0	0	0	0
Erautt, c	1	0	0	2	0	0
Hairston, c	1	2	0	1	0	0
Gumpert, p	0	0	0	0	0	1
Aloma, p	1	1	0	0	0	0
a-Haas	1	0	0	1	0	0
Dobson, p	1	0	0	0	0	0
b-Baker	1	0	0	0	0	0
Rotblatt, p	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	38	5	9	27	11	2

a. Filled for Aloma in 5th.
 b. Filled for Dobson in 8th.
 Washington 028 200 000—10
 Chicago 001 002 101—5
 RBI, Vernon 2, Grasso, Male 2, Michaels 4, Fox, Noren, Lenhardt, Hairston, Minoso, Robinson; 2BH, Busby, Male, Aloma, Noren, Moreno, Zarilla, Hairston; BBH, Fox; HR, Vernon, Michaels, Lenhardt, Minoso; Sac, Coan; DP, Carrasquel to Fox to Robinson, Minoso to Fox to Robinson; LOB, Washington 3, Chicago 8; BOB, Aloma 1, Dobson 1, Moreno 3; SO, Gumpert 1, Aloma 1, Moreno 1; HBP, by Gumpert (Yost); Winner, Moreno; Loser, Gumpert; umpires, Summers, Grieve and Hurlley; time, 2:12; attendance, 6338.

Advocate
 Baton Rouge
 07-22-51

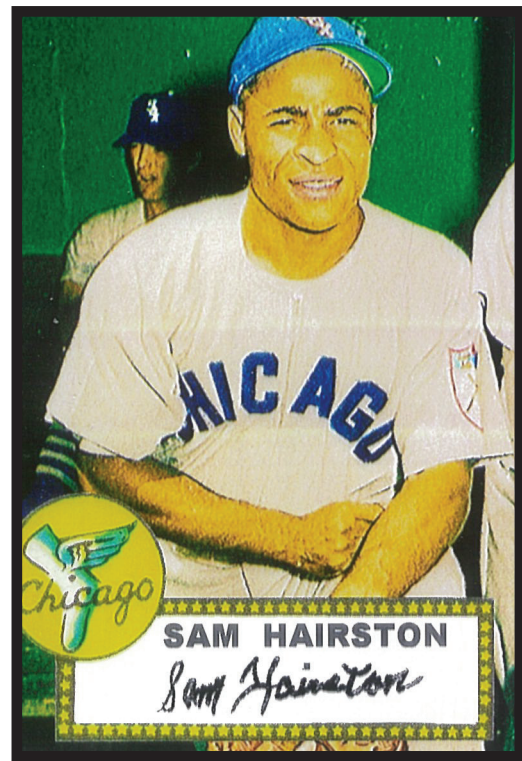
His hitting statistics for the four games he played in the Major Leagues was as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Chicago	4	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	.400	.600

Sam Hairston also had two walks in his short stay with the White Sox.

The sad part of Sam Hairston's career was that he never got the opportunity to show that he possessed the skills to play Major League baseball for an extended period of time.

Minnie Minoso was actually the first person of color to play for Chicago. Minnie was a dark skinned Cuban player who joined the White Sox on May 1st when he was traded by Cleveland Indians to Chicago. The importance of Hairston and Minoso playing for the White Sox was that this made the Chicago White Sox only the sixth team in Major League baseball to integrate.



Sam Hairston
 Chicago White Sox
 American League

Hairston was on the Major League roster for the Chicago White Sox for only about five weeks. Chicago manager Paul Richards only played Sam Hairston in four games (three as a pinch hitter and one as a substitute catcher) for the White Sox and Sam produced when he was called upon. Sam spent the majority of his time warming up pitchers in the bull pen or sitting on the bench.

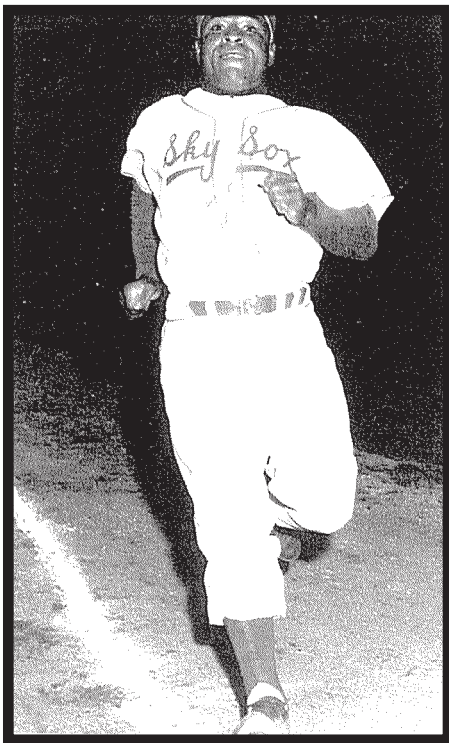
An interesting side note to Sam Hairston's debut with the Chicago White Sox was that when he was called up the White Sox presented him as being 25 years old and born in 1925. He was actually born on January 20, 1920 and was 31 years old. The White Sox continued this charade the rest of Sam Hairston's career.

Hairston Goes Down to Colorado Springs

Instead of being sent back down to Sacramento, the White Sox sent Sam all the way back down to the Colorado Springs Sky Sox of the Western League.

Hairston played fifteen (15) games for the Colorado Springs at the end of the season and performed brilliantly. He finished the season with a .389 batting average for Colorado Springs.

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Colorado Springs	15	54	-	21	6	1	0	-	-	.389	.537



Former Negro Leaguers Jesse Douglas (.262), Bill Lott (.345) and Bill Powell (14-8) also played for Colorado Springs in 1951.

The Colorado Springs Sky Sox finished the season with a record of 64-87 (.424) and were in seventh place in the final Western League standings.

Hairston is Back with Vargas

After a brilliant season with Vargas during the 1950-51 winter league season Hairston was back with the team for their 1951-52 Venezuelan Winter League campaign. Interestingly, Sam was the only black player on the team.

Vargas never really got untracked during the season. They fell from second place the previous season back into last place. They went 22-36 (.379) and were twenty (20) games behind Cerverceria Caracas who won the "league" championship with a remarkable record of 41-15 (.732). Caracas dominated all three of the other "league" teams the entire season.

Sam Hairston

Sam Hairston Returns to Colorado Springs

When the 1952 baseball season started Sam Hairston was back with the Colorado Springs Sky Sox as their starting catcher. Don Gutteridge managed the team.

Of all the players in the starting line-up, Hairston was the team's leading hitter with a .316 batting average. A more detailed report of Sam Hairston's hitting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1952	Colorado Springs	134	503	-	159	29	3	12	98	-	.316	.457



Colorado Springs Sky Sox
Western League
(1952)

(**Sam Hairston** – back row fourth from right)

Ken Landenberger (.315), Robert Kellogg (.296), Vic Fucci (.291) and Al Jacinto (.281) also produced offensively for the team. Former Kansas City Monarch's pitcher, Connie Johnson, was the ace of the pitching staff with a record of 18-9 (.667). Bill Pope who also played in the Negro Leagues went 12-5 with a 3.00 ERA. Dick Strahs (16-12) and Bill Rose (11-12) rounded out the starting rotation.

Another highlight of the 1952 season for Sam Hairston was being named the top defensive catcher in the Western League. From his catching position, Sam had a fielding percentage of .988 for the season.

The Colorado Springs Sky Sox had a very good season in 1952 and ended the year in second place in the final Western League standings with a won-loss record of 87-67 (.565).

After the conclusion of the 1952 regular season with the Colorado Springs Sky Sox, Sam returned to Venezuela to play winter ball with Vargas.

The 1952-53 Venezuelan Winter League season was hotly contested. Caracas (32-25) won the title. Magallanes was in second place with a record of 30-27. Venezuela and Vargas tied for third place or last place depending how you look at it with identical records of 26-31 (.441). Both teams were six games out of first place.

An interesting and little known fact about Sam Hairston's career came in the preseason of 1953. Sam was listed on the Seattle Rainiers (Pacific Coast League) spring training roster. At this time it is still unclear what happened but we do know that he started the regular season with his old club the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

Championship Season in Colorado Springs

Even though he had a good season in 1952 with the Colorado Springs Sky Sox, it didn't get Sam a promotion to a higher level of ball within the Chicago White Sox organization. Don Gutteridge who had managed the team to a second place finish in 1952 returned for the 1953 season and was determined to lead his team to a championship.



**Colorado Springs Sky Sox
Western League Champions
(1953)**

(Sam Hairston – back row – fifth from right)

During the season the Sky Sox were led by the hitting of Len Johnston (.318), Sam Hairston (.310), William Ley (.305), Jerry Crosby (.302) and Hal Rhyne (.290). Colorado Springs compiled a team batting average of .284 (1494 for 5263) which was the best in the "league." Sam Hairston's hitting statistics for the 1953 season were as follows:

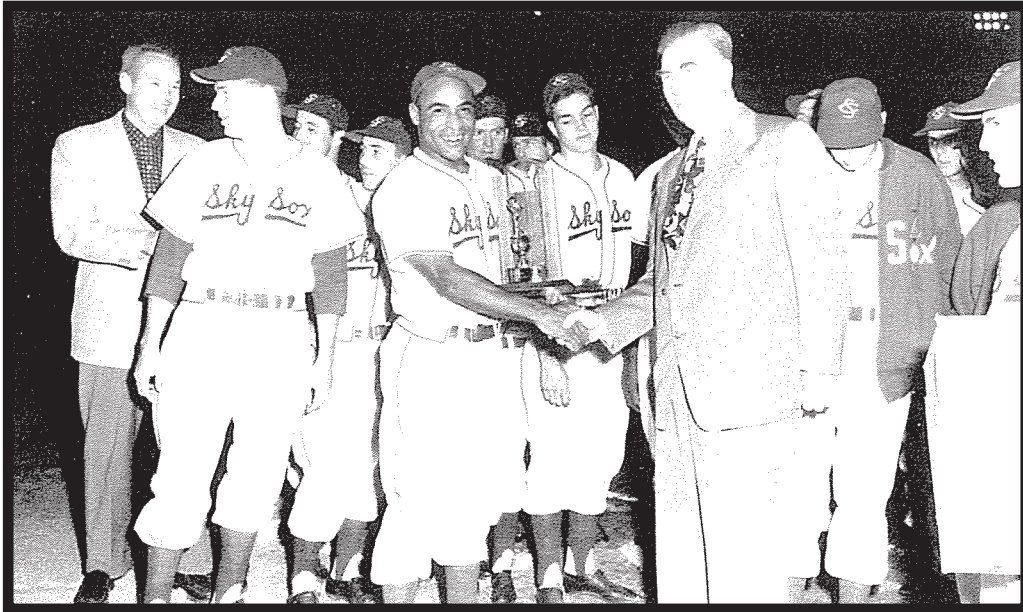
Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1953	Colorado Springs	143	535	-	166	42	6	8	-	-	.310	.456

Bill Rose (16-7), Bill Pope (16-12), Bob Simpson (12-9), Walter Yowell (10-5), Keith Nicolls (10-8), Robert Kerce (8-4) and Larry Hoffman (6-2) carried the majority of the pitching load for the Sky Sox during the 1953 season.

The 1953 Western League season came down to a two team race between the Colorado Springs Sky Sox (95-59) and the Denver Bears (94-60). Colorado Springs edged out Denver by just one game for the Western League title. The teams that played in the 1953 Western League and their order of finish were as follows:

Team	Affiliation	Won	Lost	%	Games Behind
Colorado Springs Sky Sox	White Sox	95	59	.617	-
Denver Bears	Pittsburgh	94	60	.610	1
Pueblo Dodgers	Brooklyn	78	77	.503	17.5
Des Moines Bruins	Cubs	77	78	.497	18.5
Omaha Cardinals	St. Louis	74	80	.481	21
Lincoln Chiefs	Milwaukee	71	83	.461	24
Sioux City Soos	Giants	70	84	.455	25
Wichita Indians	Browns	58	96	.377	37

The key to the Sky Sox winning the championship was the hitting of Sam Hairston. In his last 121 at bats of the season he hit for a .445 batting average. For all of his efforts in Colorado Springs' run for the championship, Sam Hairston was named the Western League's Most Valuable Player (MVP) and was selected to the Western League All Star team.



Sam Hairston Wins Western League Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award
(September 7, 1953)

Hairston Goes to Mexico to Play Winter Ball

After the conclusion of the 1953 Colorado Springs season, Sam Hairston was signed to play winter ball with the Charros de Jalisco of the Mexican Pacific Coast League. The season began on October 2, 1953 and play concluded on February 14, 1954. The Charros were managed by Mexican baseball legend Jose Luis "Chile" Gomez.

Besides Hairston the Jalisco roster included several other notable players like Dan Bankhead (1B/P), Jesse Douglas (SS), Indian Torres (P) and Marvin Williams (2B). Sam had a good season for the Charros. He compiled a .306 batting average and had a "league" leading 58 runs batted in. At the end of the season Dan Bankhead and Sam Hairston were selected to the South All Star team.

The Jalisco Charros had a poor season for their 1953-54 Mexican Pacific Coast League campaign. The Charros went 35-44-2 (.443). They were twelve (12) games behind the Venados de Mazatlan who won the "league" regular season championship with a record of 48-32 (.600).

Hairston is Traded to Charleston

After his brilliant performance during the 1953 season, Sam Hairston was traded in October by the Class A Colorado Springs team to the Class AAA Charleston Senators of the American Association for left handed pitcher Andy Tomasic.

Upon joining the Charleston Senators Sam Hairston became the team's starting catcher.

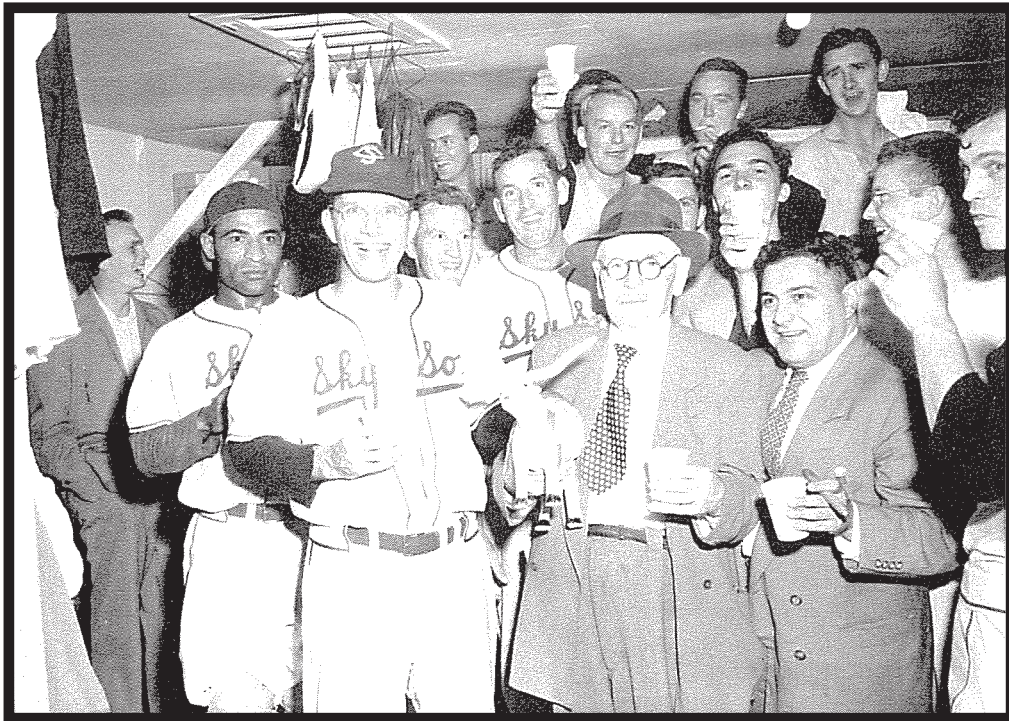
Charleston did not have a strong hitting team in 1954. The leading hitters for the Senators in 1954 were Gordon Goldsberry (.283), Joe Montalvo (.278), Sam Hairston (.268) and Asdrubal Baro (.267).

The starting rotation for Charleston was comprised of Ross Grimsley (8-8), Mike Fornieles (7-7), Tom Hurd (7-8), Dick Strahs (6-6), Phil Haugstad (6-11), Bill Voiselle (5-9), Bill Pope (4-11) and Dick Fowler (4-17).

The Charleston Senators had a very poor season in 1954. They were 59-94 and were in eighth place in the final American Association standings.

Colorado Springs Strike Gold

After a mediocre season in Charleston, Sam Hairston was sent down to Class A Colorado Springs for the 1955 season. Manager Jack Conway was excited about having Sam Hairston on his roster because in 1953 Sam had led them to a Western League championship.



Colorado Springs Wins 1955 Western League Championship

(Sam Hairston – second on left)

The Sky Sox were led by their offense during the 1955 season. Sam Hairston led the team and “league” with a .350 batting average.

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1955	Colorado Springs	142	546	-	191	38	4	6	-	-	.350	.467

One of the most amazing statistics from the season for Sam Hairston was the fact that he only struck out 30 times in 546 at bats. This was only one strikeout for every 18.2 plate appearances.

Hairston Takes WL Batting Title

By the Associated Press.

Husky Sain Hairston, the veteran catcher voted Most Valuable Player two years ago, closed with a rush to lead Colorado Springs to the 1955 Western League title and gain the Class A loop's batting crown with a .350 mark.

Final statistics prepared by the Howe News Bureau show Hairston edged out Sioux City's Ramon Conde by four points.

Hairston's hefty mark helped the Sky Sox to the team batting title, at .280.

Pueblo's Pedro Almenares and Clarence Moore, with .329 and .328 batting averages, respectively, followed Hairston and Conde.

Sam Hairston started the season hot and never let up. When the season ended, he had won the 1955 Western League batting title with a .350 batting average.

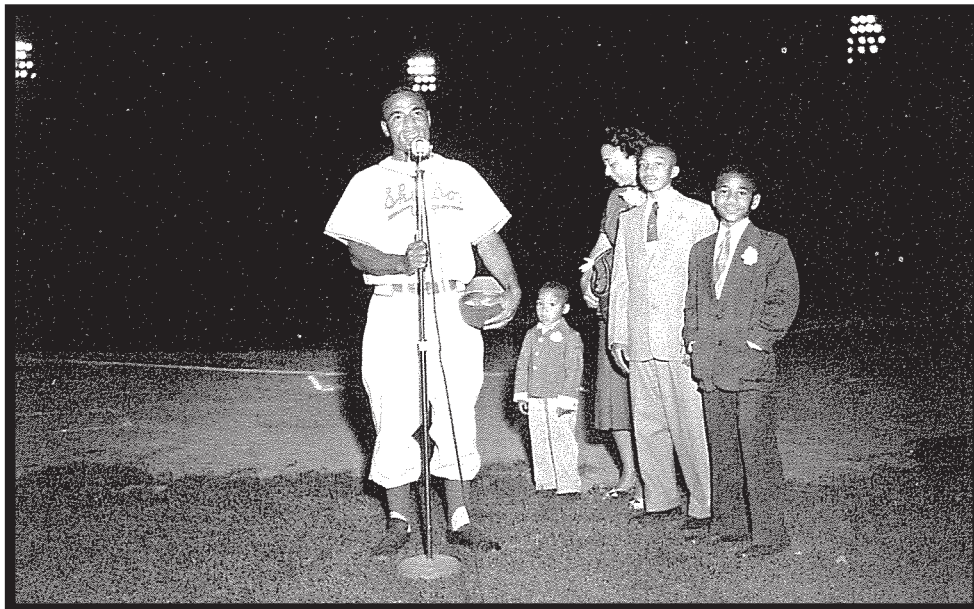
Domenick Ditusa (.328 w/ 18HR), Ken Landenberger (.307), Eugene Sheets (.291), Don Bacon (.288), Bobby Winkles (.286), Max Gnagy (.285) and Ron Cooper (.281 w/ 35 HR) also had very productive seasons at the plate in 1955. The Colorado Springs Sky Sox had a "league" leading .280 (1395 for 4976) team batting average and also led the "league" with a .418 slugging percentage. They also led the "league" in scoring average with 5.63 runs per game.

The pitching staff was not nearly as effective as the hitters. They gave up 5.32 runs per game which was tied for last in the Western League. Alois Zilian (14-7 w/ 3.86 ERA), former Negro Leaguer Bill Pope (13-8 w/ 3.43 ERA), Robert Lowe (9-4), Lowe Wren (8-3), Garland Brill (8-7), Robert Hattenbach (7-3), Charles Selby (4-4) and Jack Pickart (4-4) anchored the pitching staff for the Sky Sox.

Omaha World-Herald

Omaha, NB
09-11-55

According to Sam, the highlight of the 1955 season for him occurred on July 31, 1955 when the Colorado Springs Sky Sox held a "Sam Hairston Night" to honor him for all of his contributions to the team. He was given a brand new car and several other gifts. He responded on the field for the team by going three for four in the game and leading his team to a 10-7 victory over the Pueblo Dodgers. Hairston had a double, two runs batted in and scored two runs.



Colorado Springs Sky Sox

Sam Hairston Night
(July 31, 1955)

The 1955 Western League season was hotly contested. Colorado Springs won the title. The teams that played in the “league” and their records were as follows:

Western League (1955)

Team	Affiliation	Won	Lost	%	Games Behind
Colorado Springs Sky Sox	White Sox	81	69	.540	-
Pueblo Dodgers	Browns	79	71	.527	2.0
Wichita Indians	Orioles	78	73	.517	3.5
Des Moines Bruins	Pirates	77	74	.510	4.5
Sioux City Soos	Cubs	69	81	.460	12.0
Lincoln Chiefs	Giants	67	83	.447	14.0

Almost a Toronto Maple Leaf

In October of 1955 the Chicago White Sox sold Sam Hairston’s contract to the Toronto Maple Leafs of the International League. The Toronto Maple Leafs was an independent team and not affiliated with any Major League team. Then on April 16, 1956 the Chicago White Sox traded catcher Carl Sawatski to Toronto for Sam Hairston. The Chicago White Sox reassigned Hairston to the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

Back Home in Colorado Springs

When the 1956 baseball season started, Sam Hairston was back in Colorado Springs as the starting catcher for the Sky Sox. Jack Conway also returned as the team’s manager. Conway’s goal was to try to duplicate a repeat of the team’s performance from the previous championship season. Unfortunately for everyone, the “magic” was gone. The Colorado Sky Sox went from first place in 1955 to sixth place in 1956.



Colorado Springs Sky Sox
 Sam Hairston with Young Fan
 (1956)

Offensively, the Sky Sox had a good hitting line-up who compiled a .283 team batting average for the season. The team was led by the hitting of Paul Griffith (.337), Domenick Ditusa (.325 w/ 37 HR), Sam Hairston (.318), Eugene Sheets .318 w/ 21 HR), Bobby Winkles (.298) and Donald Prohovich (.284). Sam Hairston's batting statistics for the 1956 season in Colorado Springs were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1956	Colorado Springs	123	453	-	144	38	0	8	-	-	.318	.455

The pitching staff for Colorado Springs failed to deliver. They allowed a 5.00 ERA for the season. Russ Herman (14-11), Robert Lowe (12-7), Richard Ramos (10-11), Rudy Arias (8-5), Charles Rabung (7-9), Garland Brill (6-5) and Thomas Richards (4-9) anchored the pitching staff.

Colorado Springs ended the season with a record of 66-72 (.478). Besides a losing record, Colorado Springs also suffered at the box office. During the 1956 season, the team only averaged 859 fans per game which was down 308 fans per game from the 1955 season.

Sam Hairston Moves to Indianapolis

The 1957 season saw Sam Hairston on the roster of the Indianapolis Indians of the American Association. The Indians were the Chicago White Sox Class AAA farm team. The Indians were managed by former Major Leaguer Andy Cohen.

Hairston played a back up role for the Indians in 1957. In 89 games he hit a disappointing .254 which was the lowest single season batting average of his career. His .253 batting average with Sacramento in 1951 was only for part of the season.

Ted Beard (.347), Neil Chrisley (.343), Ron Jackson (.310) and Chico Garcia (.298) led the team in hitting. Barry Latman (29 starts w/ 13-13 record) and Tony Ponce (26 starts w/ 12-13 record) carried most of the pitching load for the team.

The Indianapolis Indians finished the season with a 74-80 (.481) record and were sixth place in the final American Association standings.

Sky Sox Romp
Colorado Springs, Colo. (AP)—Catcher Sam Hairston drilled a grand-slam homer in the first inning Tuesday night to start Colorado Springs on the way to a 14-2 Western League conquest of Sioux City.

The Sky Sox catcher also hit two doubles and batted in six runs.

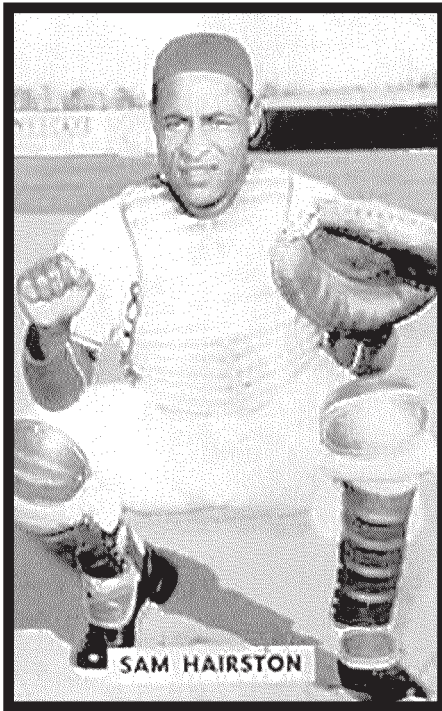
Sioux City			Colorado Springs		
ab	r	o	ab	r	o
Burnett ss	4	1	4	3	0
Catchott cf	1	0	0	0	0
Burton cf	3	2	2	0	0
Williams 2b	4	0	0	3	0
Brown rf	3	1	1	1	1
Elberger 1b	4	2	3	1	1
Cordell lf	3	1	3	0	1
Davis 3b	3	0	2	0	0
Troxell c	3	0	4	0	0
Spiller p	0	0	0	0	0
Gaston p	1	0	0	1	0
Johnson p	2	0	0	0	0
Brown	1	0	0	0	0

Totals 33 7 24 11 Totals 35 16 27 7
 a Popped out for Johnson in ninth.
 Sioux City..... 010 001 000—14
 Colorado Springs..... 424 201 01x—14
 R—Landenberger, Cordell, Landis & DITUSA 4 Griffith 3, Hairston, Winkles, Raybung, E—Williams, Burnett, Means, RBI—Cordell, Landenberger, Hairston 6, Sheets 2, DITUSA 2, Landis 2B—Burnett, Hairston 2, DITUSA 2, Landis HR—Landenberger, Hairston, DP—Williams, Burnett, Landenberger, Raybung, Winkles, Means, Left—Sioux City 9, Colorado Springs 12, RB—Spiller 3, Gaston 3, Johnson 4, Raybung 4, SO—Johnson 4, Raybung 6, HO—Spiller 2 in 1/2, Gaston 7 in 2, Johnson 7 in 5, R—ER—Spiller 4-4, Gaston 6-6, Johnson 4-2, Raybung 2-2, HBP—Johnson (Landis), Raybung (Cordell), WP—Spiller, W—Raybung (3-1), L—Spiller (1-3), U—Stone, Petrock, T—2-2, A—5-1.

Sam Goes 3 for 5 w/Grand Slam
 Omaha World-Herald
 Omaha, NB
 05-15-56

Sam Hairston Returns to Venezuela

After the regular 1957 baseball season in the United States, Sam Hairston was recruited by the owners of the Rapinos de Occidente (Western Raptors) to come to play for them for them in their inaugural season in the Liga Occidental de Beisbol Profesional (Western Professional Baseball League). The season was played over the winter of 1957-58 in Venezuela. The team was managed by Ira Hutchinson. Besides Sam Hairston several other notable Major Leaguers went to Venezuela. These players were Luis Aparicio, Tom Flannigan, Dave Hoskins, Barry Latman and Bobby Winkles. The Rapinos played their home games in the old Olympic Stadium in Maracaibo, Zulia.



Sam Hairston

In their very first year the Rapinos walked away with the “league” title. The Rapinos finished the season with a 30-13 (.698) record. After the regular season the Rapinos played the Industriales de Valencia of the Venezuelan Professional Baseball League. The winner of the series would represent Venezuela in the 1958 Caribbean World Series. The Rapinos were swept in four straight games.

Hairston Starts the Season in Indianapolis

Sam Hairston started the 1958 season with the Indianapolis Indians. He played in a back up role to starting catcher John Romano who Chicago had pegged for the Major Leagues. The White Sox also had veteran catcher Walker Cooper on their Indianapolis roster. Hairston played well in his limited game appearances. He appeared in 17 games for the Indians and went 10 for 31 for a .323 batting average. Romano was playing well and Walker Cooper had just returned from an injury. This meant that Sam didn’t fit into the Chicago White Sox plan for him playing in Indianapolis.

By mid-season Sam Hairston’s contract was sold on a conditional basis to the San Antonio Missions of the Texas League. San Antonio was the Class AA farm team for the Baltimore Orioles. The conditional component of the deal was that if the Indianapolis Indians needed him back he would have to be returned to the Indians. Sam Hairston was obtained by San Antonio to replace their temperamental starting catcher, Jim Mangan. As soon as the deal was done Mangan was suspended “for the good of the team’s morale” and he returned to his home in California. Sam played in 74 games for the Missions and went 59 for 217 for a .272 average



San Antonio Express
San Antonio, TX
06-04-58

The San Antonio Missions ended the season with a 74-79 (.484) record and were in sixth place in the final Texas League standings.

In January of 1959 the San Antonio Missions sold Sam Hairston’s contract to Vancouver of the Pacific Coast League. The sale was on a conditional basis with Vancouver having the right to return him. In April of 1959 Vancouver returned Sam’s contract before spring training started.

Sam Hairston Returns to the Chicago White Sox Organization.

After spring training Sam Hairston was sent by Chicago to the Charleston ChaSox of the South Atlantic League. Charleston was the Class A farm team of Chicago. When Hairston joined the team he became their starting catcher. Being back in a starting role seemed to fit Sam perfectly. He was the team’s leading hitter with a .330 batting average and a .459 slugging percentage. Sam’s complete hitting statistics for the 1959 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1959	Charleston	120	427	60	141	21	2	10	63	0	.330	.459

'Old' Sam Hairston Delivers In Clutch

Backstop Drives In Four Runs; Hits Include 370-Foot Home Run

By ED CAMPBELL
News And Courier Sports Editor

Ageless Sam Hairston, who probably was playing pro baseball when most of his teammates were in diapers, delivered in the clutch again yesterday as Charleston's White Sox trounced the Macon Dodgers 6-2 in the wind-up of a four-game series at College Park.

At thirty-nine (39) years of age, Sam Hairston finished the season in second place for the South Atlantic batting title. Nathan Dickerson won the batting championship with a .362 batting average.

The next best hitter on Charleston's roster was Chico Terry who batted .276. The other top hitters on the ChaSox roster were Bobby Joe Case (.275), Don Mincher (.272), Ernest Johnson (.265) and Donald Prohovich (.254).

The pitching staff for Charleston performed significantly better than their hitters. The ChaSox pitching staff compiled a 3.75 team ERA for the season. Glen Rosenbaum (13-4), former Negro Leaguer Ollie Brantley (12-11), Jim Derrington (10-8), Richard Grant (9-4), Stover McIlwain (9-11) and Thomas Richards (8-10) anchored the pitching staff for the Charleston ChaSox.

Charleston News and Courier

Charleston, SC
06-29-59

When the South Atlantic League all star team was named in July, four Charleston players including Sam Hairston were named to the team. Bobby Case (pitcher), Don Mincher (first base) and Jim Derrington (pitcher) were the other three ChaSox who made the team.



BOBBY CASE
Utility Infielder

DON MINCHER
First Baseman

SAM HAIRSTON
Slugging Catcher

JIM DERRINGTON
Elite Mound Corps

Four Chasox Make It

Sally All-Star Club Set

Charleston News and Courier

Charleston, SC
07-14-59

Charleston Fans Gift Negro Star

CHARLESTON, S. C. (UPI)—Sam Hairston, Negro catcher, has been voted the most popular player on the Charleston White Sox squad by fans of the South Atlantic League baseball team. Hairston, whose .326 batting average may win the Class A league's hitting title, was presented an automobile and other gifts Wednesday night before the White Sox' final home game of the season.

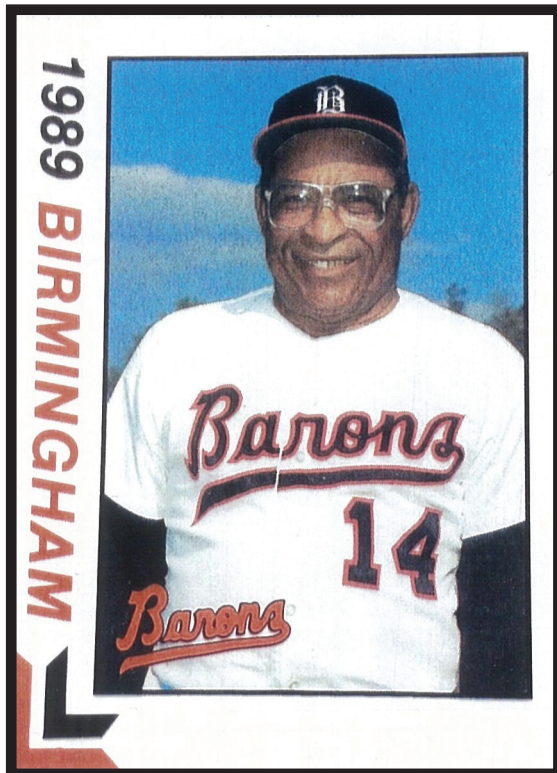
Las Vegas Review and Journal

Las Vegas, NV
08-28-59

Donald Prohovich (.295) led the team in hitting. Future Major Leaguers Joe Hoerner (11-9 w/ 2.97 ERA) and Joe Horlen (7-5 w/ 2.92 ERA) were the team's two best pitchers.

The Charleston White Sox had an extremely poor season with a won-loss record of 59-80 (.424). Charleston also suffered at the box office. The team only averaged 625 fans per game.

Hairston Remains with the Chicago White Sox Organization



After his playing days, Sam Hairston served in the role of a scout, hitting instructor and coach. Sam was with the Chicago White Sox organization for 48 years. He even coached for the Chicago White Sox Major League team during the 1978 season. He was the White Sox's bull pen coach in his lone season at the Major League level.

In his latter years he was on the coaching staff of his hometown Birmingham Barons of the Southern League for at least twelve (12) seasons. He was still in uniform for the Birmingham Barons right up to a few months before his death in 1997.

Besides all of his work for the Chicago White Sox organization, Sam Hairston also sponsored the Hooper City team in the Birmingham Industrial League for several years. His work with local Birmingham area ball players helped develop many young ball players. He also conducted countless baseball clinics for kids all over the country.

In August of 1959, Sam Hairston was chosen the most popular player on the Charleston ChaSox team by the fans. Hairston was presented with a new car and several other nice gifts before the final home game of Charleston's season.

The Charleston ChaSox had a good season and went 71-69 (.507) for a third place finish in the South Atlantic League.

At the start of the 1960 baseball season Sam Hairston was back in Charleston, South Carolina to play for the Charleston White Sox for their South Atlantic League season.

This would be Sam's last season in professional baseball as a player. Hairston played in a back up role to starting catcher Jim Napier. Sam appeared in 45 games during the season and went 42 for 160 for a .262 batting average. Sam's .262 batting average was low for him but on a team that had a lowly .235 team batting average, he was one of Charleston's best hitters.

The New York Times

Sam Hairston, 77, First American Black on White Sox, Dies

By Robert McG. Thomas Jr.

Nov. 9, 1997

Sam Hairston, who spent more than 50 years as a professional baseball player, scout and coach but played in the major leagues just long enough to qualify for an asterisk, died on Oct. 31 at a nursing home in Birmingham, Ala. He was 77 and the first American-born black player on the Chicago White Sox.

His family said the cause was pulmonary cardiac arrest.

In his career, he played with Satchel Paige, Cool Papa Bell and other Negro League stars in the 1940's, won a Western League batting championship in the 1950's, spent the next three decades as a coach and scout and was in uniform as a coach for the Birmingham Barons until a few months before his death. But Hairston is chiefly remembered for the four games he appeared as a substitute catcher and pinch-hitter for the White Sox in 1951.

Half a century after Jackie Robinson broke the baseball color barrier by joining the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, it is easy to forget that it was another dozen years before all 16 pre-expansion major league teams had signed a black player.

By 1951, only five teams had put black players in major league uniforms, and when the White Sox became the sixth, the record got a bit confusing.

For although Hairston, who played his first game on July 21, is often listed as the first black White Sox player, he actually joined the team almost three months after Minnie Minoso made his famous first-pitch home-run debut on May 1, a day after signing a White Sox contract.

Minoso was also black, but Hairston has been accorded the honor partly because Minoso was considered Cuban rather than black and partly because Hairston had actually signed with the White Sox first, on July 31, 1950. That was the year he won the American Negro League's triple crown, batting .424, hitting 17 home runs and driving in 71 runs in 70 games with the Indianapolis Clowns, before joining the White Sox Class A farm club in Colorado Springs.

In addition, unlike Minoso, Hairston, along with another black player, Bob Boyd, was at the White Sox 1951 training camp in Pasadena, Calif., but began the season with the Sacramento farm team before being called up in July.

For someone who had been playing baseball most of his life, Hairston, a native of Crawford, Miss., who moved to Birmingham as a child and played semipro ball before breaking in with the Birmingham Black Barons and moving onto the Clowns in 1945, it was something of a late start for a rookie.

He was 31, but was listed as 25, a deception he and the club continued to maintain with a wink during his 48 years with the organization. The White Sox 1997 media guide lists his birth date as 1925, although Mr. Hairston had long acknowledged he was really born in 1920.

Whatever his age in 1951, he made a respectable debut at Comiskey Park on July 21, driving in a run on an eighth-inning double in a 10-5 loss to the Washington Senators.

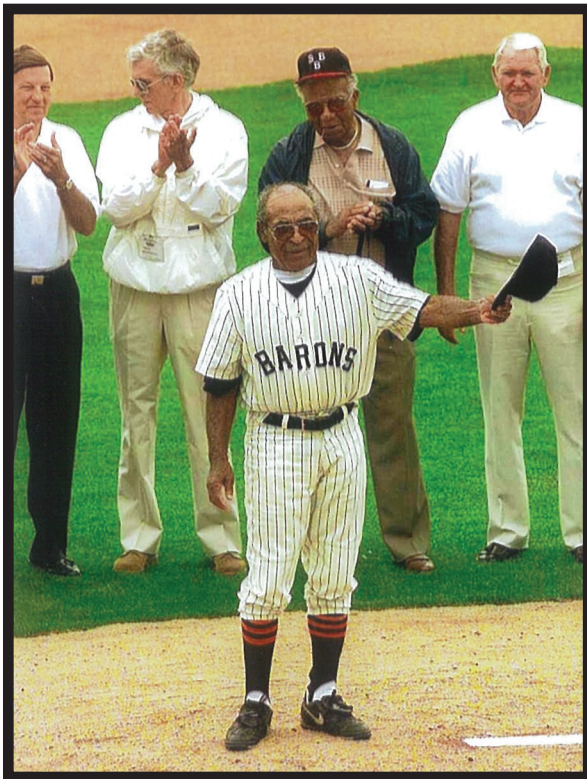
He appeared briefly in three more games, but having come up for the proverbial cup of coffee, he was gone by mid-August. Rejoining the Sky Sox, he led the team to the Western League championship and was named the league's most valuable player in 1953, won the batting title with a .350 average in 1955 and became such a popular figure that fans presented him with a new Pontiac on a Sam Hairston Night and a successor team retired his uniform number in 1993.

During his dozen years as a coach of the Barons he made a similar impression on Birmingham. He was honored at a Sam Hairston Day last year, and a sports complex was named for him.

He also started something of a baseball dynasty. When his son John joined the Chicago Cubs for what turned out to be a three-game major league career in 1969, Hairston became the first black major leaguer to have a son play in the majors. That distinction continued when another son, Jerry, set pinch-hitting records for the White Sox in the 1970's and 80's. With two grandsons now in the minors and others on the way, a third-generation major league Hairston seems only a matter of time.

As for his own interlude in the majors, brevity has its rewards. In five official at-bats, Hairston, who also drew two walks, got two hits, giving him a career batting average of .400, or as he liked to put it, "higher than Ty Cobb's."

He is survived by his wife, Dora; three sons by a previous marriage, John of Portland, Ore.; Jerry of Naperville, Ill., and Sam Jr. of Birmingham; seven brothers, Bob and Bill, of Nashville; Jack, Leotis and Willie of Birmingham, Johnny of Scooba, Miss., and Herbert of Cleveland; three sisters, Leanna Taylor and Nellie Butler of Birmingham and Bessie Bishop of Jefferson, Pa.; 10



Sam Hairston Celebration
Rickwood Field
Birmingham, AL

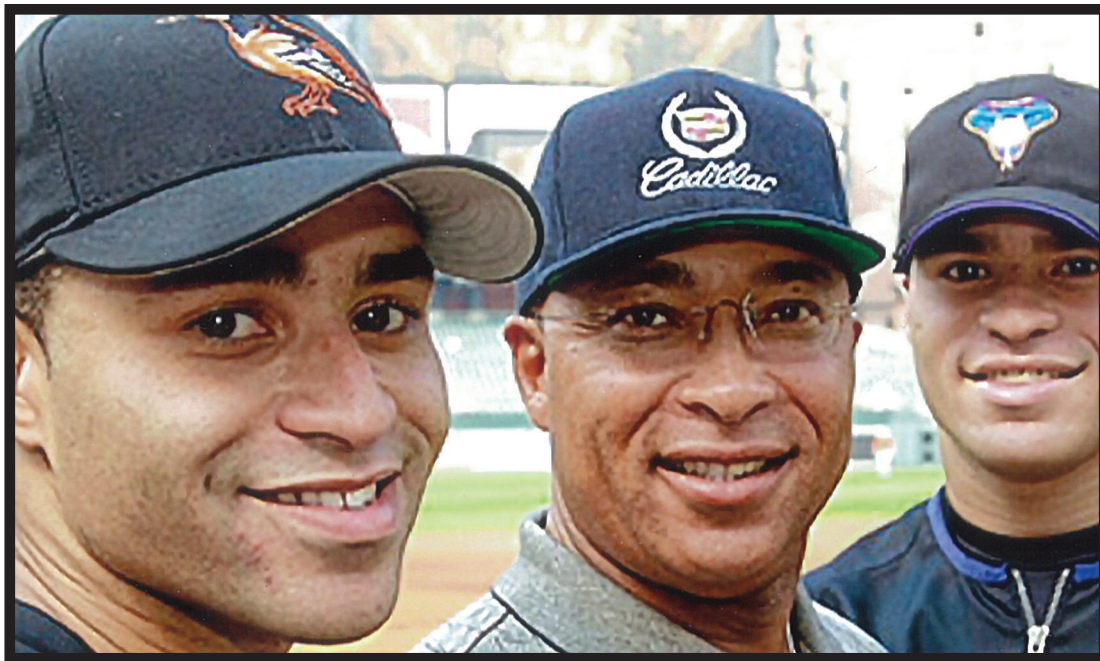
Passing of a Legend

Samuel Hairston passed away in a nursing home on October 31, 1997 in Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama. The cause of his death was pulmonary cardiac arrest. Sam was 77 years old. He was laid to rest in Birmingham's Elmwood Cemetery.

When Chicago White Sox co-owner Jerry Reinsdorf heard that Sam Hairston had passed away he had the following to say:

“Sam Hairston will be missed, not just by everybody in the White Sox organization, but by everyone associated with the game of baseball. In addition to being a tremendous ball player with a wealth of experience and knowledge about the game, Sam was a great person. He left a lasting impression on everyone he ever met over his 53 seasons in the game.”

When Samuel Harding Hairston passed away we lost one of the great baseball men of all-time. His memory and legacy will live on for generations to come.



Sam Hairston and His Grandsons
(Jerry (Jr.) , Sam and Scott)



Colorado Springs Sky Sox
Western League Champions
(1953)

(Sam Hairston – front row of players third from left)



Western League All Star Team (1953)

(Sam Hairston –third from left)

Playing Career

Regular Season:

Year	Team	League
1943	ACIPCO Pipemen	Birmingham Industrial League
1944	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1944	Indianapolis Clowns	Negro American League
1945	Cincinnati-Indianapolis Clowns	Negro American League
1946-1950	Indianapolis Clowns	Negro American League
1950	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Western League
1951	Sacramento Solons	Pacific Coast League
1951	Chicago White Sox	American League
1951-1953	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Western League
1954	Charleston Senators	American Association
1955-1956	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Western League
1957-1958	Indianapolis Indians	American Association
1958	San Antonio Missions	Texas League
1959	Charleston ChaSox	South Atlantic League
1960	Charleston White Sox	South Atlantic League

Winter Leagues:

1946	Indianapolis Clowns	Two Game Series vs Birmingham Black Barons
1946	Kansas City Royals	California Winter League
1946	Kansas City Royals	Two Game Series vs Major League All Stars
1946	Kansas City Royals	Series vs Jackie Robinson All Stars
1947	Jackie Robinson All Stars	Series vs Major League All Stars
1948	Kansas City Royals	West Coast Barnstorming Tour
1948	Kansas City Royals	Game vs Bob Lemon All Stars
1947-48	San Juan Senadores	Puerto Rican Winter League
1948-49	Chesterfield Smokers	Panama Professional Baseball League
1949-50	Vargas Sabios	Venezuela
1950	Indianapolis Clowns	Game vs Jackie Robinson All Stars
1950-51	Vargas Sabios	Venezuela
1951-52	Vargas Sabios	Venezuela
1952-53	Vargas Sabios	Venezuela
1953-54	Jalisco Charros	Mexican Pacific Coast League
1955-56	Obregon Yaquis	Mexican Pacific Coast League
1956-57	Puebla Pericos	La Liga Invernal Veracruzana
1957-58	Rapinos	Occidental League (Venezuela)
1975	Hermosillo Naranjeros (coach)	Mexican Winter League

Career Statistics – Hitting (Birmingham Industrial League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1943	ACIPCO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.313	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season – Negro Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1944	Birmingham	18	53	3	17	1	0	0	-	2	.321	.339
	Indianapolis											
1945	Cincinnati-Indianapolis	52	165	29	47	5	5	0	20	3	.285	.376
1946	Indianapolis	21	86	15	31	7	1	2	18	1	.360	.535
1947	Indianapolis	67	255	41	92	-	-	-	-	-	.361	-
1948	Indianapolis	76	285	54	91	18	5	4	38	6	.319	.460
1949	Indianapolis	93	349	58	107	19	8	1	43	2	.307	.404
1950	Indianapolis	70	236	55	100	23	1	17	71	5	.424	.517
	Total	397	1429	255	485	73	20	24	190	19	.339	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season – Non-League Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1944	Birmingham	2	8	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	.875	-
49	Indianapolis	1	5	2	3	0	0	1	3	-	.600	1.200

Career Statistics – Hitting (Minor Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950	Colorado Springs	38	133	-	38	5	1	1	-	0	.286	.361
1951	Sacramento	68	190	15	48	14	1	0	18	3	.253	.337
1951	Colorado Springs	15	54	-	21	6	1	0	-	-	.389	.537
1952	Colorado Springs	134	503	-	159	29	3	12	98	-	.316	.457
1953	Colorado Springs	143	535	-	166	42	6	8	102	-	.310	.456
1954	Charleston	139	481	47	129	18	8	1	60	5	.268	.345
1955	Colorado Springs	142	546	-	191	38	4	6	91	-	.350	.467
1956	Colorado Springs	123	453	-	144	38	0	8	-	-	.318	.455
1957	Indianapolis	89	264	27	67	15	5	1	35	0	.254	.360
1958	Indianapolis	17	31	2	10	2	1	0	6	0	.323	.452
1958	San Antonio	74	217	17	59	12	3	3	31	0	.272	.396
1959	Charleston	120	427	60	141	21	2	10	63	0	.330	.459
1960	Charleston	45	160	17	42	8	0	3	21	1	.263	.369
	Total	1147	3994	185	1215	248	35	53	525	9	.304	.424

Career Statistics – Hitting (Major Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Chicago	4	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	.400	.600

Career Statistics – Hitting (Mexico)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1953-54	Jalisco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	-	.306	-
1956-57	Puebla	-	318	-	115	-	-	6	60	-	.362	-
	Total	-	318	-	115	-	-	6	118	-	-	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Venezuela)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950-51	Vargas	40	163	29	62	15	1	0	34	0	.380	.485

Career Hitting Statistics (Totals)

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Industrial League	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.313	-
Negro League	397	1429	255	485	73	20	24	190	19	.339	-
Minor League	1147	3994	185	1215	248	35	53	525	9	.304	.424
Major League	4	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	.400	.600
Mexico	-	318	-	115	-	-	6	118	-	-	-
Venezuela	40	163	29	62	15	1	0	34	0	.380	.485
Total	1588	5909	470	1879	271	56	83	868	28	.318	-

Batting Titles

Category	Year	League	Number
Batting Average	1950	Negro American League	.424
	1950-51	Venezuelan Winter League	.380
	1955	Western League	.350
Slugging Percentage	1950	Negro American League	.517
Hits	1950	Negro American League	100
Total Bases	1950	Negro American League	176
Doubles	1953	Western League	42
Homeruns	1950	Negro American League	17
Runs Batted In	1950	Negro American League	71
	1953-54	Mexican Pacific Coast League	58
Most Valuable Player (MVP)	1950-51	Venezuelan Winter League	
	1953	Western League	

Assessing the Career of Sam Hairston

- Sam Hairston was an **outstanding hitter his entire career.**

Researchers disagree on Hairston's Negro League hitting statistics. This is primarily because all the different research groups have analyzed a significantly different number of box scores. The following chart identifies Sam's hitting statistics as reported by seven leading research teams.

	CNLBR	Seamheads	Lester & Clark	Howe News Bureau	Baseball Reference	James Riley	John Holoway
1944	.321	.154		.222	-	-	-
1945	.285	.250		.285	.067	.285	.285
1946	.360	.360		-	.273	.279	.361
1947	.361	.321		.361	.348	.361	.361
1948	.319	.352		.319	.333	.319	.319
1949	.307	-		.307	-	.307	-
1950	.424	-		.424	-	-	-
At Bats	1429	582		1335	104	-	-
Hits	485	191		447	29	-	-
Batting Average	.339	.328		.335	..279	-	-

Sam Hairston batted over .300 at every level of baseball that he played. The following chart identifies his career batting average at each level he played.

Level	Batting Average	Notes
Birmingham Industrial League	.313	He played several seasons in BIL and we only have batting average for one year.
Negro Leagues	.339	Most likely have majority of statistics
Minor Leagues	.304	He went 1215 for 3994.
Major League	.400	He only appeared in 4 games.
Mexico	.306/.362	Only have partial statistics for two years
Venezuela	.380	He played four seasons and we only have statistics for one year.

Hairston's Minor League and Major League hitting statistics are relatively complete. We have complete statistics for number of games, at bats, hits and batting average.

Sam Hairston won three league batting titles during his career.

Year	League	Batting Average
1950	Negro American League	.424
1950-51	Venezuelan Winter League	.380
1953	Western League	.350

- During his career, Sam Hairston played for the following **championship teams.**

Year	Team	League
1943	ACIPCO Pipemen	Birmingham Industrial League
1946	Kansas City Royals	California Winter League
1950	Indianapolis Clowns	Negro American League (East)
1953	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Western League
1955	Colorado Springs Sky Sox	Western League
1957-58	Rapinos de Occidente	Liga Occidental de Beisbol Profesional

- Sam Hairston was known to have had **solid defensive skills**. His Minor League fielding percentage as a catcher was .987 for 610 games. According to his son, Jerry, his father did not have a cannon for a throwing arm but he had a quick release and was very accurate with his throws. Former Minor League Chicago White Sox pitcher Glen Rosenbaum who played with Sam Hairston at Charleston in 1959 had the following to say about Sam's skills as a catcher:

“He handled pitchers very well.” According to Glen, Sam would tell the pitchers to “Just pitch what I put down.” Glen went to say “I didn't shake him off once that year.”

It must have worked for Rosenbaum because he went 13-4 for the 1959 season.

One example of his strong defensive skills was having the best fielding percentage in the Western League and being named as the catcher on the “Western League All Defensive” team in 1952. Sam had a .988 fielding average for the season.

- We are **missing a significant number of Sam Hairston's hitting statistics** for his career. Some examples of these are as follows:
 1. Sam played several seasons for Sayreton in the Birmingham Industrial League before joining ACIPCO and we do not have any of these statistics.
 2. Hairston played winter ball just about every year and we are missing most of his statistics. This is especially true for all the barnstorming teams for which he played.
 3. Sam played four seasons in Venezuela and we only have one season of batting statistics.
 4. Hairston played several seasons in Mexico and we only have partial statistics for two seasons.
 5. Sam Hairston played winter baseball in Panama during the 1948-49 season and we do not have any of his hitting statistics.
 6. He played seven (7) seasons in the Negro League and we don't have any statistics for “non-league” games he played.
 7. For his Minor League career with Colorado Springs we are missing several seasons for runs scored, stolen bases and runs batted in.
- Sam Hairston's **short time in the Major League is a mystery**.

On July 21, 1951 Sam was called up to the Chicago White Sox Major League club and was sent back down to the Minors on August 26, 1951. In his short stay in the Majors he only appeared in four games (one game as a catcher and three games as a pinch hitter).

Sam Hairston was an outstanding hitter and good defensive catcher. In addition he was adept at playing other positions (both in the infield and outfield) and was a very good pinch hitter. The question then is: “Why did he only get one shot at the Major Leagues and why did manager Paul Richards not use him more during his short stay with the White Sox.”

The Chicago White Sox used six (6) different catchers (Joe Erault, Sam Hairston, Phil Masi, Gus Niarhos, Bud Sheely and Red Wilson) during the 1951 season. None of the other five catchers that Chicago used during the 1951 season distinguished themselves to the point that keeping Hairston on their American League roster and actually playing him would not have been a good idea.

The following chart identifies all of the White Sox catchers who played in 1951 at the Major League level and their batting average for the season were as follows:

Player	Games	Batting Average for Season
Phil Masi	84	.271
Gus Niarhos	66	.256
Bud Sheely	34	.180
Joe Erault	16	.160
Red Wilson	4	.273
Sam Hairston	1	.400

Chicago solved their catching problem on November 21, 1951 when they traded five players (Joe DeMaestri, Gordon Goldsberry, Dick Littlefield, Gus Niarhos and Jim Rivera) to the St. Louis Browns for catcher Sherm Lollar and two other players (Tom Upton and Al Widmar). Sherm Lollar spent twelve (12) seasons (1952-1963) with the White Sox and ten of those as their starting catcher.

- The **length of his career as a player and coach is remarkable**. Sam dedicated his life to the game of baseball. In Birmingham where he made his home he even built a baseball park behind his house. Sam Hairston spent fifty-three (53) years in professional baseball.
- Sam Hairston was a **fan favorite everywhere he played**. Several good examples of this are as follows:
 1. In his final two seasons in Venezuela he was the only black player on the Vargas team.
 2. Colorado Springs always had a special place in Sam's heart. He led them to two championships. On July 31, 1955 the team had a "Sam Hairston Night." Among the many presents that he was given was a new Pontiac.
 3. In 1959 Sam Hairston was voted the "Most Popular Player" by Charleston ChaSox fans. The team held a "Sam Hairston Night" in late August and the team presented him with a new car.
- Sam Hairston was a scout, instructor and coach for the Chicago White Sox organization from 1961 to 1997. The White Sox obviously trusted his judgment on identifying talented baseball prospects. He was also invaluable instructing and working with young ball players. Being able to speak Spanish was a real asset in working with Chicago's Latin players. He was also very effective as a coach.

Having said all of this it brings up the question as to **why didn't the Chicago White Sox have Sam Hairston on their Major League roster as a coach for more than just the 1978 season** when he was their bull pen coach.

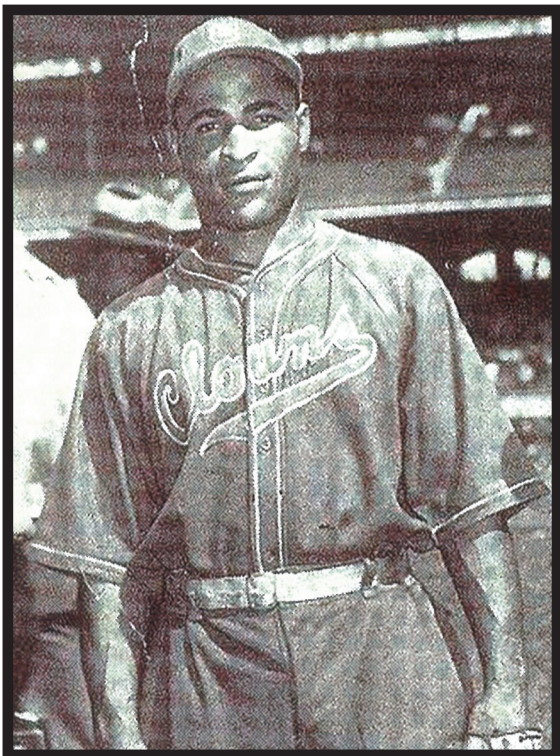
- Sam Hairston **dedicated his life to baseball**. Over the course of his distinguished career he was an outstanding ball player. Then when he retired he was an exemplary scout, instructor and coach.



Sam Hairston
Catcher

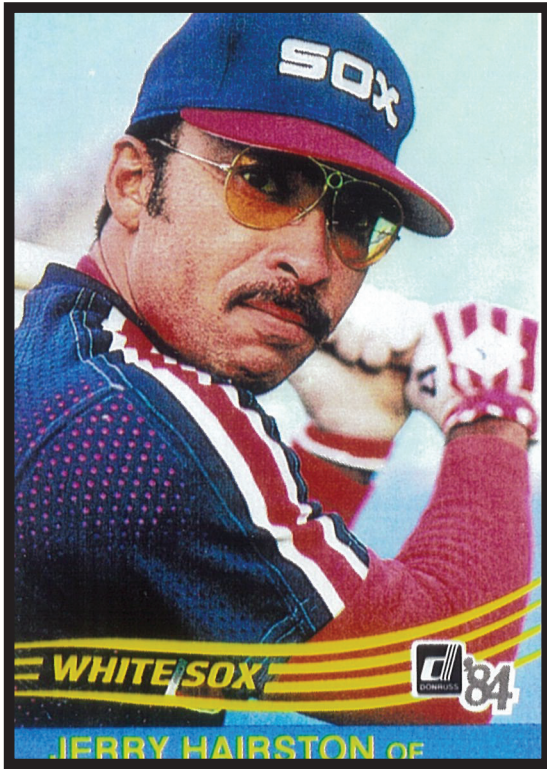
Selected Career Highlights

- Sam Hairston played seven seasons in the Negro Leagues and compiled a career .339 batting average. He then played eleven seasons in the Minor Leagues and had an impressive .304 career batting average. Sam also played numerous seasons of winter baseball and never failed to hit at least .300. For his professional baseball career which lasted from 1944 to 1960 he posted a .318 batting average in games against all levels of competition.
- He was chosen to represent the West squad for the 1948 East-West All Star games. Hairston was also the leading vote getter for the 1950 East-West All Star team when he signed with the Chicago White Sox.
- Sam Hairston closed his Negro League career in 1950 by putting up unbelievable numbers. In 70 games he collected 100 hits in 236 at bats for a .424 batting average. He also had 23 doubles, 1 triple, 17 home runs and 71 runs batted in. Sam posted a .517 slugging percentage.
- During the 1950-51 season Hairston set the Venezuelan Winter League record of twenty-six (26) consecutive games with getting at least one hit in the game.
- Sam won the 1950-51 Venezuelan Winter League batting title with a .380 batting average. He was also selected as the “league’s” Most Valuable Player (MVP) award.
- On July 21, 1951 when he appeared for the Chicago White Sox, Sam Hairston became the first American born black player to play in the Major League for the Chicago White Sox. Minnie Minoso who was from Cuba was the first player of color to play for the Chicago White Sox.
- Sam Hairston was an integral part of the Colorado Springs Sky Sox teams that won the Western League championship titles in 1953 and 1955.

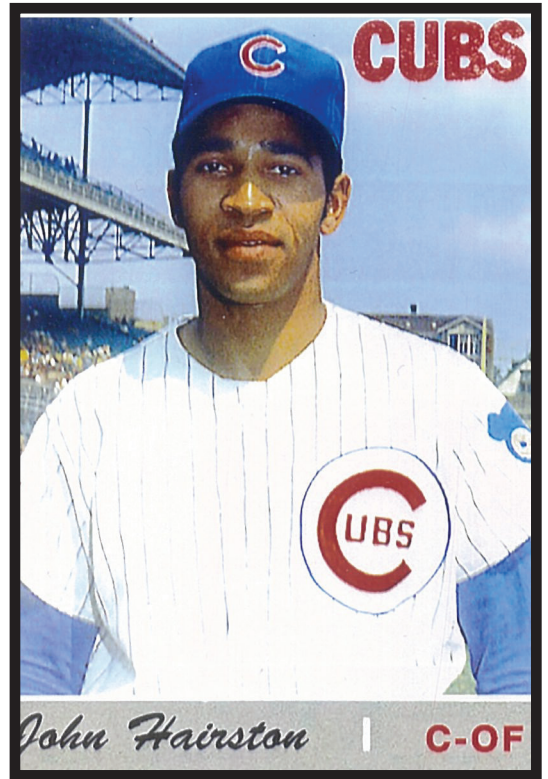


- He was selected as the Western League Most Valuable Player (MVP) for the 1953 season.
- In 1953 Sam Hairston was voted to the Western League All Star team.
- Sam was named to the South All Star team for the 1953-54 Mexican Pacific Coast League.
- Hairston won the 1955 Western League batting title with a .350 batting average.
- Sam Hairston was named to the 1959 South Atlantic League all star team.
- In 1993 Sam Hairston was inducted into the Colorado Springs Sports Hall of Fame.
- The State of Mississippi put a historical marker to Samuel Harding Hairston in Plum Grove, Mississippi.

Sam Hairston
Indianapolis Clowns



Jerry Hairston



Johnny Hairston



Jerry Hairston Jr.



Scott Hairston

Baseball – A Hairston Family Business

Three generations of Hairston family played in the Major Leagues.

Sam Hairston was the first generation when he played for the Chicago White Sox in 1951.

Sam had the pleasure of scouting and signing his oldest son Jerry Hairston, Sr. to a contract for the Chicago White Sox. Another of Sam's sons, Johnny, played briefly in the Major Leagues for the Chicago Cubs. In addition two of Sam's grandsons Jerry Hairston, Jr. and Scott Hairston both played in the Major Leagues.

The five members of the Hairston family who played in the Major Leagues are tied with the Delahanty brothers for the most members from one family to play Major League baseball. There are two other families that have three generations to play in the Major Leagues. They are the Boone family (Ray, Bob, Bret and Aaron) and the Bell family (Gus, Buddy, David and Mike).

In addition Jack Hairston (Sam's brother), Sammy Hairston, Jr. (Sam's son) and three of Sam's grandsons (Johnny Hairston, Jr., Jeff Hairston and Jason Hairston) all played in the Minor Leagues.

Hairston Major Leaguers

Jerry Hairston – Jerry was signed by his father to the Chicago White Sox organization. He spent seven seasons in the Minor Leagues from 1970-1981 and fourteen years in the Major Leagues from 1973-1989. Jerry played for the Chicago White Sox of the American League and the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League. His career batting statistics are as follows:

	Years	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Minors	7	569	1968	368	608	103	26	33	342	48	.309	.438
Majors	14	859	1699	216	438	91	6	30	205	4	.258	.371

Johnny Hairston – Johnny was signed by the Chicago Cubs. He spent seven seasons in the Minor Leagues from 1965-1971 and made a brief appearance for the Cubs at the Major League level in 1969. Knee problems ended his career prematurely. His career batting statistics are as follows:

	Years	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Minors	7	575	1859	266	478	88	20	57	277	10	.257	.418
Majors	1	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.250	.250

Jerry Hairston, Jr. – Jerry (Jr) was the grandson of Sam Hairston. He played parts of twelve seasons in the Minors and sixteen seasons in the Major Leagues from 1998-2013 with nine different teams. Seven of these seasons were with the Baltimore Orioles. His career batting statistics are as follows:

	Years	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Minors	12	416	1548	283	464	101	19	30	207	68	.300	.448
Majors	16	1442	4387	580	1126	233	22	70	420	147	.257	.368

Scott Hairston – He is also a grandson of Sam. He spent parts of nine seasons in the Minor Leagues and eleven seasons in the Major Leagues from 2004-2014 with six different teams. Scott spent four years each with Arizona and San Diego. His career batting statistics are as follows:

	Years	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Minors	9	483	1833	392	587	123	25	93	354	24	.320	.567
Majors	11	923	2431	300	589	133	17	106	313	36	.242	.442

