

Forgotten Heroes: William “Bill” Greason



by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

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and

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Birmingham Black Barons (1948)

(Back Row left to right – Ed Steele, Bill Powell, Nat Pollard, Herman Bell, Jim Zapp and Lloyd “Pepper” Bassett. Middle Row left to right – Bill Greason, Artie Wilson, John Britton, Lorenzo “Piper” Davis, Norman Robinson, Sam Williams, Alonzo Perry and Wiley Griggs. Front Row left to right – Jehosie Heard, Jimmy Newberry, Roosevelt Atkins and Joe Scott)



Birmingham Black Barons (1950)

(Standing left to right – Vic Harris, Lloyd “Pepper” Bassett, Alonzo Perry, Lorenzo “Piper” Davis, Clarence “Pijo” King, Herman Bell, Ed Steele, Nat Pollard and Dick Watts. Kneeling – left to right Norman Robinson, Jimmy Newberry, William “Bill” Greason, William Powell, Sammy Williams, Bat Boy, Willie Mays, Trainer, Henry Baylis and Jose Burgos.)

William Henry “Bill” Greason was born on September 3, 1924 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was the middle of five children born to James and Lizi Greason. His father, James, was a laborer who worked odd jobs and his mother washed laundry for the “white” folks. Bill grew up in Atlanta in the Sweet Auburn Historic District and attended David Howard Elementary School before going on to Booker T. Washington High School where he graduated. For a while the Greason family lived across the street from the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. Bill Greason’s younger brother, Willie, went to school with Dr. King’s brother A.D. King.

Early on, William Greason played for the Hanley Hornets who were sponsored by a local funeral home. The Hornets played in a fast-pitch softball league in Atlanta. It was here he earned the nickname “Double Duty” as a star pitcher and catcher. Bill Greason also played baseball in high school. After high school Bill played baseball for the Atlanta Scripto Black Cats. Former Negro League catcher Sammie Haynes who ran the team had seen Bill pitch in high school and immediately signed him to play for the Black Cats. Bill only started one game for the Atlanta Scripto Black Cats before joining the United States Marines. In addition to playing baseball, Greason also played semi-professional football for two years with the Atlanta All Stars as a quarterback, fullback and running back.



William Greason
Oklahoma City Indians
1952-1953

During his professional baseball career, Bill stood 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighed approximately 170 pounds. He threw right handed and batted from the right hand side of the plate.

Bill Greason was a pitcher his entire career. He was known for his fastball and had a sharp-breaking curveball. Defensively he fielded his position very well and even won a Gold Glove in the Minors. For a pitcher he was also a good hitter. Bill Greason hit close to .200 for his career and is credited with at least 16 homeruns for his career.

Greason’s career started in the Negro Southern League and took him all the way to the Major Leagues with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Greason Becomes a Marine

In 1943 Bill Greason was drafted into the United States Marine Corps and served until 1945. Greason took his basic training at the segregated Montford Point unit adjacent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. His first stint in the Marines was during World War II where he served in the 66th Supply Platoon which was an all-black unit that was stationed in the Pacific Theater of Operations attached to the 4th Marine Division. Bill’s unit took part in the Battle of Iwo Jima. Among the 6,800 soldiers who died on the island, Greason lost two black Marine friends, Corporal Hubert Duveny and Private James Wilkins. When the American flag was raised on Mount Suribachi, Greason remembered the moment as follows: “Well, we were standing on blood stained beach and were saluting that flag when it went up both times.” It was on Iwo Jima that Bill Greason issued a notable contract with destiny.” “Lord, if you get me off this island, whatever you want me to do, I’ll do.” The verbal contract was fulfilled after his baseball career when he entered the ministry. After Iwo Jima he was part of the American occupation force in Japan.

Negro League Career

After World War II he returned home to Atlanta, Bill Greason received encouragement from Sammie Haynes (manager of the Atlanta Black Crackers) to enter professional baseball. Haynes was aware of Bill's baseball talents from watching him play on the sandlots of Atlanta. Bill Greason began his professional baseball career in 1947 when he was signed by the Nashville Cubs of the Negro Southern League. The Nashville franchise was owned by Dr. R.B. Jackson and the team played their home games at Sulpher Dell Stadium. The Cubs were managed during the season by Felton Snow and then Jimmie Armstead. The highlight of the 1947 Negro Southern League season for Greason came in the second game of a double header against the Raleigh Tigers. Greason faced off against Jimmy Cooper who took the mound for Raleigh. The game went 15 innings and Greason got the win when his team scored a lone run in the top of the 15th inning off Cooper. Greason came out for the bottom of the 15th inning and shut down Raleigh to preserve a 1-0 Nashville victory. Both pitchers went the entire 15 innings and each pitcher picked up credit for a complete game.

During the 1947 and 1948 seasons Bill Greason also played briefly for the Atlanta Stars who were the top semi-professional black baseball team in the Atlanta area.

Greason Joins the Birmingham Black Barons

When spring training opened for the 1948 season, Bill Greason was playing for the Asheville Blues of the Negro Southern League. The Blues were managed by Clarence Lee "C.L." Moore who was also a former Negro League player. During a spring training game that Asheville played against Birmingham, Pepper Bassett (Birmingham's catcher) was so impressed with Greason's eight (8) innings of pitching that he convinced player-manager Lorenzo "Piper" Davis to acquire Bill. Piper Davis already had a strong pitching staff going into spring training but needed one more pitcher and Bill Greason was the answer to his problem. Birmingham had only lost one of their seventeen (17) preseason games and that was to Asheville behind the pitching of Bill Greason. He was never sure how the deal was done but on Monday Bill was in Asheville and by Saturday he was playing for the Black Barons. The Birmingham Black Barons were owned by Tom Hayes who was a funeral home operator.



Birmingham Black Barons (1948)

(left to right – Herman Bell, Lloyd "Pepper" Bassett, **William Greason**, Joe Scott, Bat Boy – Roosevelt, Jehosie Heard, Wiley Griggs, **Lorenzo "Piper" Davis**, **Alonzo Perry**, Jimmy Newberry, Jim Zapp, Ed Steele, Johnny Britton, **Artie Wilson**, Nate Pollard, Unknown, Bill Powell and **Willie Mays**.)

William Greason was not your normal rookie when he signed with Birmingham. His experience in the Marines had made him significantly more mature, confident and had given him a tremendous sense of discipline.

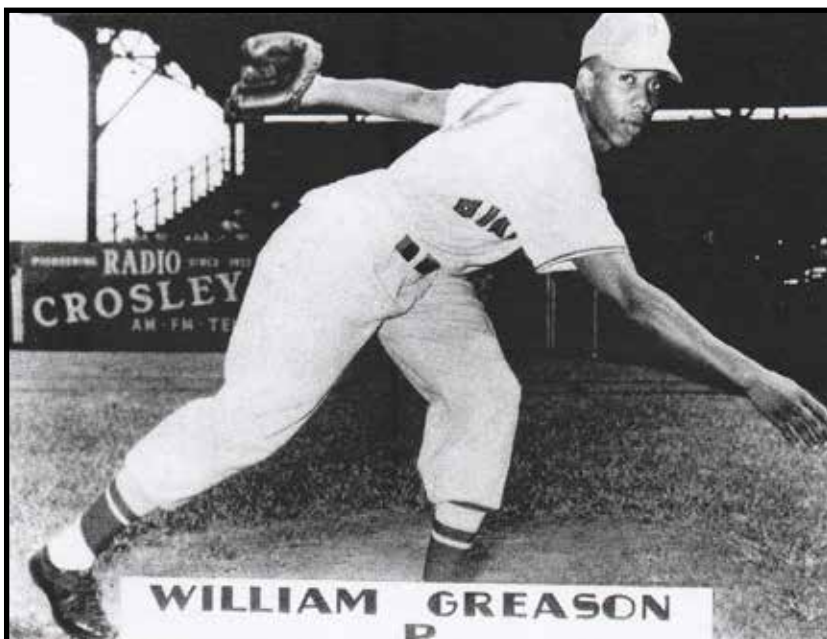
The 1948 Birmingham Black Barons fielded a roster that possessed both excellent hitting and pitching. Artie Wilson led the Negro American League in hitting with a .402 batting average. Lorenzo "Piper" Davis (.353), Lloyd "Pepper" Bassett (.350), Alonzo Perry (.325), Ed Steele (.300), Norman Robinson (.299) and Johnny Britton (.289) rounded out a starting line-up that compiled a .306 team batting average for the season.

Teenager and future Hall of Famer Willie Mays was a teammate of Greason on the 1948 Black Barons roster. Playing professionally for money endangered Mays' amateur status. The principal of Fairfield Industrial High, E.J. Oliver, met with Mays' father and aunt regarding Willie possibly playing professional baseball for the Black Barons while still in high school. A deal was worked out - Willie could not travel with the Black Barons but would be allowed to play home games. When asked about Bill Greason, Willie Mays had the following to say about his former teammate:

"I met Bill Greason when I was playing ball for the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro Leagues in 1947 or 1948. He was a pitcher, older than I was and a good man to have as a teammate. I was 15 or 16, still in high school, when I joined the team. I was a little cocky and a little scared. There I was playing with men, real men and they didn't tolerate childish things. Greason, as I called him, seemed to understand me pretty well. He was always careful to help me out when he could without calling attention to what he was doing. He gave me respect and in turn helped me grow up. We won our league pennant in 1948. We've stayed friends for over 65 years now. He is a loyal friend, always ready to lend a hand."

According to Bill Greason, Willie Mays is the best player he ever saw play and also the most inspirational.

Jimmy Newberry (14-5 w/ 2.18 ERA), William Powell (11-3), Alonzo Perry (10-2), Jehosie Heard (6-1), Sam Williams (6-3) and Bill Greason (6-4) anchored the pitching staff. Bill Greason also finished the 1948 season with the third best earned run average on the team with a 3.30 ERA.



William "Bill" Greason

Birmingham Black Barons
Negro American League

The Birmingham Black Barons finished the 1948 season with a record of 57-21 (.731). The final “official” standings for the 1948 Negro American League season was as follows:

Negro American League (1948)

	Games	Record	Pct.
Birmingham Black Barons	78	57-21	.731
Kansas City Monarchs	68	43-25	.632
Cleveland Buckeyes	83	41-42	.494
Memphis Red Sox	77	33-44	.429
Indianapolis Clowns	73	27-46	.370
Chicago American Giants	75	27-48	.360

Birmingham won the first half of the season and the Kansas City Monarchs (43-25) won the second half. The two teams met in a play-off series to crown a Negro American League champion. The four game series started on September 11th with the game being played in Birmingham at Rickwood Field. The Black Barons won the series by winning three of the four games played. Bill Greason pitched in two games and picked up one victory. When Bill Greason was asked about the play-off series, he had the following to say:

“I pitched a five hitter. They (Kansas City Monarchs) had some power back then (Gene Baker, Curt Roberts, Buck O’Neil and Herb Souell). I pitched against LaMarque (James “Lefty” LaMarque) a left-hander who was a great pitcher.”

By winning the Negro League American title the Birmingham Black Barons also won the right to play the Homestead Grays (Negro National League champions) in the Negro League World Series. The Homestead Grays won four of the five games played to take the title. Bill Greason was the workhorse of the pitching staff for Birmingham against Homestead. Greason won game three in relief by a 4-3 margin on September 30th at Rickwood Field. Willie Mays got the game winning hit. This was the only game that the Black Barons won during the series. Bill Greason also took two losses in the series. Jimmy Newberry and William Powell were the other two losing pitchers for Birmingham.

Bill Greason returned to Birmingham for the Black Barons 1949 season. The hitting attack for the 1949 Black Barons was led by Lorenzo “Piper” Davis (.375), Norman Robinson (.312), Willie Mays (.311), Ed Steele (.311), Lloyd “Pepper” Bassett (.295) and Alonzo Perry (.278). The starting rotation for the 1949 Birmingham Black Barons included Alonzo Perry (12-4), William Powell (11-11), Sam Williams (8-6) and Bill Greason (7-13).

Even though he was having an off year, Bill Greason was selected to play for the West squad in the 1949 East-West All Star game. The game was played on August 14th at Comiskey Park in Chicago (IL) before 31,097 fans. Greason pitched three scoreless innings for the West squad. He gave up two hits and struck out one batter. The East won the game by a score of 4-0.

Prior to the start of the 1949 season several teams from the old Negro National League which had disbanded after the 1948 season, joined the Negro American League. To accommodate all the new teams, the Negro American League was divided into two divisions (Eastern and Western). Birmingham played in the Western Division. The Birmingham Black Barons were never in the hunt for the Negro League title during the season. They finished the 1949 season with a mediocre record of 45-39 (.536) and were in third place in the Western Division.

After an off season in 1949 Bill Greason bounced back and had an excellent season for the Black Barons in 1950. He was one of the top two pitchers on the staff with a 9-6 record, 10 complete games in 19 starts, a 2.41 ERA and struck out 106 batters in 142 innings pitched. Other starting pitchers for the Black Barons in 1950 were William Powell (15-4), Sam Williams (13-7), Nat Pollard (7-3) and Jimmy Newberry (4-1).



Birmingham Black Barons (1950)

(Standing left to right – Joe Atkins, Sam Williams, **William Greason**, Clarence “Pijo” King, Bill Powell, Andy Watts, **Ed Steele**, **Alonzo Perry**, **Vic Harris**, Herman Bell and Charles Rudd. Kneeling left to right – **Lloyd “Pepper” Bassett**, Charlie Hollingsworth, Jimmy Newberry, Norman Robinson, Johnny Cowan, Henry “Hank” Bayliss, Roosevelt Atkins and Frank Dixon.)

As in years past the Black Barons fielded an incredibly strong hitting line-up. Leading the way in the hitting department for the 1950 Black Barons were Lorenzo Davis (.383), Charles “Pijo” King (.335), Willie Mays (.330), Alonzo Perry (.313), Norman Robinson (.309), Ed Steele (.306) and Andy Watts (.299).

The 1950 Birmingham Black Barons rebounded from their disappointing performance in 1949. Birmingham finished the 1950 season with a won-loss record of 52-25-1 (.675) and finished in second place to the Kansas City Monarchs (52-21) in the Eastern Division of the Negro American League.

Greason Travels South of the Border

In 1950 Bill Greason traveled south of the border to play for the Jalisco Charros of the Mexican League. The team was managed by former Negro League player Quincy Troupe. Also playing for the Charros was Greason’s former Birmingham Black Baron teammate Lorenzo “Piper” Davis. Behind a pitching record of 10-1 (.909) with 6 complete games, Bill Greason led the Jalisco Charros to the Mexican League title. His winning percentage (.909) with Jalisco led the Mexican League for the 1950 season. Jalisco finished the second half of the season very strong with a record of 26-16 (.619). They were three games ahead of Mexico (23-19) and Aguila (23-19) for the second half of the season. The Charros had a combined season record of 50-34 (.595) and were two games ahead of Torreon who finished the season with a record of 48-36 (.571). Besides turning in an exemplary pitching performance for the season, Bill also won a Golden Glove for the 1950 Mexican League season with a perfect fielding percentage of 1.000. In addition he contributed at the plate with a .231 batting average which is extremely good for a pitcher.

Greason's manager, Quincy Troupe, had the following to say about his star pitcher: "Greason won eleven (it was really ten) games for us and lost only one. His pitching was a key factor in our team rising to the top and he won two of the three games he pitched in the play-offs."

At the end of the 1950 Mexican League season, William Greason was selected as the "Champion Pitcher" for the season.



Bill Greason – Champion Pitcher of Mexico

Prensa
San Antonio, Texas
12-26-50

John Donaldson Scouts Bill Greason

In June of 1950 former Negro League great and then scout for the Chicago White Sox, John Donaldson, recommended to Frank Lane, General Manager of the White Sox, that the team bring Bill Greason up to Comiskey Park in Chicago for a work out. Greason had gotten off to an excellent start in Mexico and Donaldson believed that Bill had Major League talent. The one problem for the White Sox was that in the United States Bill Greason's contract was still the property of the Birmingham Black Barons. On June 26th Donaldson wrote a letter to Tom Hayes, owner of the Black Barons, asking him for his assistance in arranging a tryout. For some unknown reason the tryout at Comiskey Park never materialized.

Donaldson had also recommended that Chicago sign Willie Mays. Unfortunately, Chicago never was able to sign either player.

Bill Greason Travels to Cuba

Over the winter of 1950-51, Bill Greason pitched for the Marianao Tigres of the Cuban Winter League. He compiled a record of 2-2 in seven games. Two of his seven outings were complete games. In the 42.2 innings he pitched, he struck out 18 batters but walked 21 while compiling a respectable ERA of 3.38.

The Marianao Tigres finished the 1950-51 Cuban Winter League season with a won-loss record of 36-36 (.500) and were four and a half games behind the "league" champion Habana Leones. The Tigres were led by the hitting of former Negro League players Lorenzo Cabrera (.342), Minnie Minoso (.321), Claro Duany (.314) and Ray Dandridge (.299). Charles Barrett (8-8 w/ 2.75 ERA), Jim Hughes (6-7) and Jim Prendergast (5-5) anchored the pitching staff.

Greason Returns to Mexico

After leading Jalisco to a championship in 1950, Greason returned to the Charros for the start of the 1951 season. Greason did have an opportunity to sign with and was invited to spring training with the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League but the Oaks wanted to send him to their Wenatchee (WA) farm club in the Western International League. Several African American

players did go to spring training with Oakland. They were Artie Wilson, Lorenzo “Piper” Davis, Rafael Noble and Joe Perry (San Francisco 49ers football super star running back).

Feeling he could make more money in Mexico, Bill signed with Jalisco. After starting off slowly with a 1-4 record and a 7.94 ERA, Greason returned to the United States.

Bill Greason Returns to Birmingham

Bill Greason’s last season in the Negro Leagues was 1951. By 1951 many of the top players who had led the Black Barons in years past were gone. They had been signed into organized baseball. Birmingham was led by the hitting of Ed Steele (.370) and the pitching of Bill Greason (8-7) during the 1951 season.



Birmingham Black Barons (1951)

(Standing left to right – Joe Atkins, **Ed Steele**, Butch Hubbie, Norman Robinson, Willie Price, Louis “Sea Boy” Gillis, Irwin Castille, Roosevelt Lilly, **Bill Greason**, Jim Kennedy and Roosevelt Atkins. Kneeling left to right – Blackmore, Acie “Skeet” Griggs, Leroy Johnson, Rufus Gibson, Eddie Stankie and Wiley Griggs.)

The Birmingham Black Barons had a horrible season in 1951. They finished the season in last place in the Negro American League (East) with record of 24-40 (.375). The Indianapolis Clowns won the Negro American League (East) with a record of 53-26 (.671) and the Kansas City Monarchs won the Negro American League (West) with a record of 52-21 (.712).

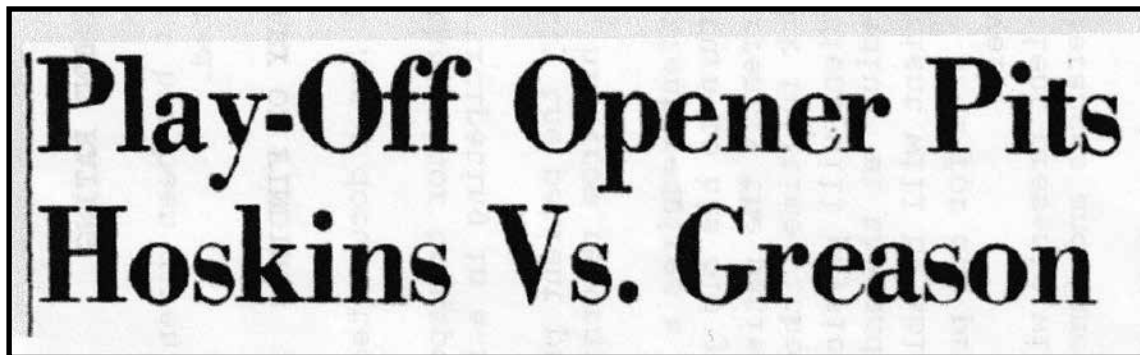
Bill Returns to Military Service

Bill Greason served a second hitch in the military from 1951 to 1952 when he was recalled to active duty because of the Korean War. Fortunately he did not have to deploy overseas. He spent most of his second tour of duty in the Marines playing baseball. Reportedly, he only lost one game during his military baseball career. In one of his games he pitched while in the military he beat Don Newcombe of Brooklyn Dodger fame by a score of 3-1. Another highlight of his military baseball career was striking out 20 batters in a 16 inning game. By the time William Greason had finished his military obligation, he had attained the rank of sergeant in the Marines.

Oklahoma City Signs Bill Greason

After getting out of the military in 1952 Bill Greason was signed by E.J. “Jimmy” Humphries who was the owner of the Oklahoma City Indians of the Texas League. He had drawn the attention of baseball scouts when he defeated Don Newcombe in a game they played against each other in the military. Oklahoma City was a Class AA affiliate of the Cleveland Indians. Greason’s contract with Oklahoma City called for a \$ 2,000 signing bonus, \$ 500 more if he lasted a few months and an additional \$ 500 if he lasted the whole season. When Bill Greason took the mound for the Oklahoma City Indians in 1952, he was the first African-American to play in “organized” ball in the state of Oklahoma. Greason won his first game at Texas League Park before a crowd of 5,751. It was the largest home attendance of the season for the Indians.

The highlight of the 1952 season for Bill Greason occurred on August 3rd when he pitched against fellow African-American ball player Dave Hoskins of the Dallas Eagles. Hoskins entered the game with an impressive record of 16-8 (.667). The game was played in Dallas with more than 11,000 fans in attendance. Greason led the Indians to a 3-2 win.



Dallas Morning News

Dallas, TX

09-09-52

Bill spent two productive seasons (1952 and 1953) with the Oklahoma City Indians. His complete pitching statistics for these two seasons are as follows:

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1952	Oklahoma City	11	80.0	9	1	53	19	26	57	2.14
1953	Oklahoma City	37	249.0	16	13	206	100	162	193	3.61

The Oklahoma City Indians fielded a roster with only average talent in 1952 and 1953. The team finished in fourth place in the final Texas League standings for the two years that Bill pitched for them. They were 82-79 (.509) in 1952 and 80-74 (.519) in 1953.

After the conclusion of the 1952 season Bill Greason joined the Negro American League All-Stars for their exhibition series against Roy Campanella’s All Stars. Other former Negro League pitchers on the team were Minski Cartledge, Bill Powell, James Tugerson and Marshall Bridges. Ed Steele led the Negro American League All-Stars in hitting. Besides Roy Campanella, other members of his team included Joe Black, George Crowe, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Harry “Suitcase” Simpson and Hank Thompson

Bill Greason's big season in 1952 caught the eye of Major League baseball. The New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox headed the list of Major League clubs interested in purchasing William Greason's contract from the Cleveland Indians affiliate. In their December 10, 1952 issue, The Sporting News reported the following about the Yankees interest in Bill:

“The New York club is reported to have ordered scouts Tom Greenwade and Atley Donald to appraise Greason late last season, and it is understood that they are high on the pitcher, who won nine games and lost only one after joining Oklahoma City on July 31st.”

When Humphries was asked what he would take for Greason he answered as follows: “I might listen to something like \$ 75,000 with a few players thrown in and then I'd have to have the choice of what men I get.” Reportedly Humphries turned down \$ 50,000 from both the Yankees and Red Sox. Everyone suspected that he wanted to keep Bill Greason for the 1953 season because of his box office value and then raise his asking price to \$ 100,000.

Greason Gets Called up by the St. Louis Cardinals

August Anheuser “Gussie” Busch, Jr. bought the St. Louis Cardinals of the National League for \$ 7.8 million dollars on February 20, 1953. “My ambition is whether hell or high water, to get a championship baseball team for St. Louis before I die.” An integral part of his plan was to sign and promote the best players available and that included African-American players like Tom Alston and Bill Greason.

After two very strong seasons with the Oklahoma City Indians, Bill Greason caught the eye of the St. Louis Cardinals. On October 13, 1953 the Oklahoma City Indians traded Greason to the St. Louis Cardinals for three minor league players (Roy Broome, Jack Cardey and Dummy Lynch) and \$ 25,000 in cash.

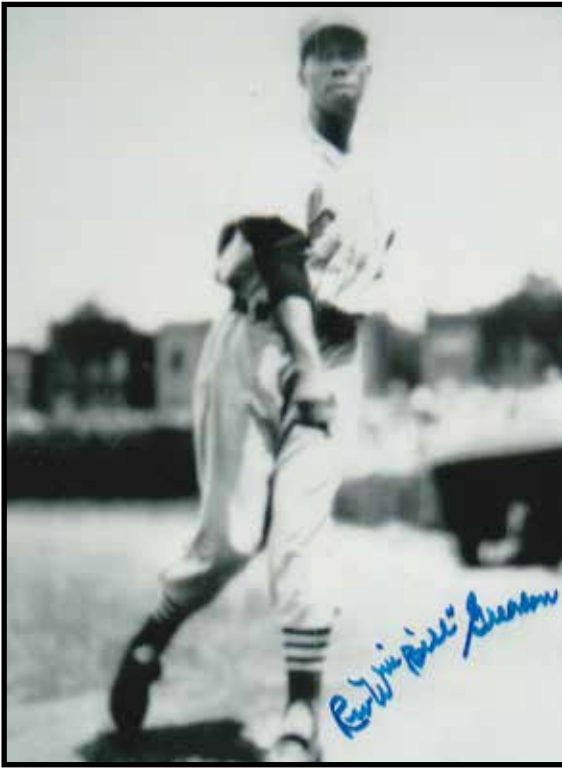
Bill Greason May Be First of His Race Wearing St. Louis Card Suit

Omaha World-Herald

Omaha, NB
12-27-53

Greason started the 1954 season at the St. Louis Cardinals minor league spring training camp in Albany, Georgia. Even though “organized” baseball was integrated there was still a distinct separation of black and white ball players as evidenced from this insert from the Cardinals spring training camp manual:

“While you are in camp, you will receive a meal allowance of \$ 3.50. All colored players will get their meals at Albany State College for the Colored. They have a good cafeteria. If you are a white player, you should go to the Lee Hotel. On the other hand, if you are a colored player, you should take a taxi cab to Gibson Hall, Albany State College for the colored, where you will be housed for the night and indeed for the entire time you are in training camp. A colored player will come directly from Albany State College in a special bus. All white players will be roomed in private homes while colored players will be housed in Gibson Hall, Albany State College for the Colored.”



William "Bill" Greason
St. Louis Cardinals
1954

When spring training had concluded Bill Greason was assigned to the Columbus Red Birds of the American Association under manager Johnny Keanne. On May 28th the St. Louis Cardinals sent pitcher Mel Wight down to Columbus and called up Greason. Bill made his Major League debut on May 31, 1954 against the Chicago Cubs. When he took the field for the Cardinals, Greason became only the second African-American to play for the St. Louis Cardinals. Tom Alston who debuted for the Cardinals on April 13, 1954 was the first. Greason earned his call up to the Cardinals after pitching a one-hitter for Columbus and then winning his next three starts. Bill Greason's call up to the Major League did have an interesting side note when he was required to take a pay cut from the \$ 1,200 per month he was making at Columbus to \$ 900 a month with St. Louis. When Bill questioned the salary cut, he reportedly got a "take it or leave it" response from the Cardinals front office. According to St. Louis management he needed to prove himself. In John Klima's book Willie's Boys, Klima quotes Bill Greason's response to the situation as follows: "I tried to get there for years and then when I got there, I didn't want to stay." His short tenure in the Major Leagues was an extremely disappointing situation.

Greason got into three (3) games for St. Louis before being sent down to the Columbus Red Birds of the American Association on June 20, 1954. His first game in the Majors was a May 31st start in a rain shortened game at Wrigley Field. The 29-year old rookie right hander Greason went three (3) innings, giving up six (6) hits, five (5) runs, walking one (1) and striking out two (2). Greason took the loss giving up two homeruns to Hank Sauer and one to Ernie Banks. Greason's next start came on June 6th against the Philadelphia Phillies. He got off to a rocky start in the game when Philadelphia's third baseman, Willie "Puddin Head" Jones, hit a lead off homerun. His final Big League appearance came in relief on June 20th when he pitched a scoreless inning against the New York Giants before being returned to Columbus. Bill Greason recalls his reception when he joined the St. Louis Cardinals as "cool" and that Cardinals manager Eddie Stanky spoke to him only once and that was to say "Get the (expletive) ball over the plate." Bill was 0-1 for his Major League career. Unfortunately for Bill, he never got the chance to show his real pitching skills. Stu Miller was sent down to Columbus with Greason. Their roster spots were taken by African American pitcher Brooks Lawrence and Ralph Beard.

Bill spent the remainder of the 1954 season with Columbus. The Red Birds hitting attack was led by future Major Leaguer Hal Smith who batted .350 for the season. As a team Columbus compiled a .266 team batting average for the season. Herb Moford (17-14) and Bill Greason (10-13) were the team's top two pitchers. The Columbus Red Birds ended their 1954 American Association schedule with a record of 77-76 (.503). They were in fourth place in the final "league" standings and eighteen and a half games behind the Indianapolis Indians who won the American Association title.

Greason Integrates the Houston Buffaloes

After spring training for the 1955 season, Bill Greason was assigned to the Houston Buffaloes of the Texas League. When Bill reported to Houston he became the team's first African-American player in the team's 66 year history. Greason spent the 1955 and 1956 seasons with Houston. In 1955 two former Negro League players led the team in hitting. They were Willard Brown (19 HR, 104 RBI and .301 BA) and Bob Boyd (15 HR, 94 RBI and .310 BA). Bill Greason had the best season of his career as a hitter in 1955. He hit 3 homeruns, had 14 RBIs and batted .295. Greason was also the ace of the pitching staff with a record of 17-11 (.607).

At the end of the season the Houston Buffaloes were 87-74 (.540) and were in fourth place in the final Texas League standings. They were seven and a half games behind the Dallas Eagles.



Houston Buffaloes Stadium
Houston, Texas

The Houston Buffaloes did everything right during the 1956 Texas League season. Buffaloes hitters combined for an excellent .279 team batting average for the season. Benny Valenzuela (18 HR, 99 RBI and .314 BA) and Bobby Smith (21 HR, 109 RBI and .299 BA) were the Buffaloes top two hitters. Houston used a five man starting rotation during the season that included Bob Mabe (21-10), Tom Hughes (18-6), Ted Wieand (16-9), Billy Muffet (14-10) and Bill Greason (10-6) to overpower their opposition.

Houston ended the regular season with a record of 96-58 (.623) to win the Texas League title. They finished two games ahead of the always strong Dallas Eagles (96-60).

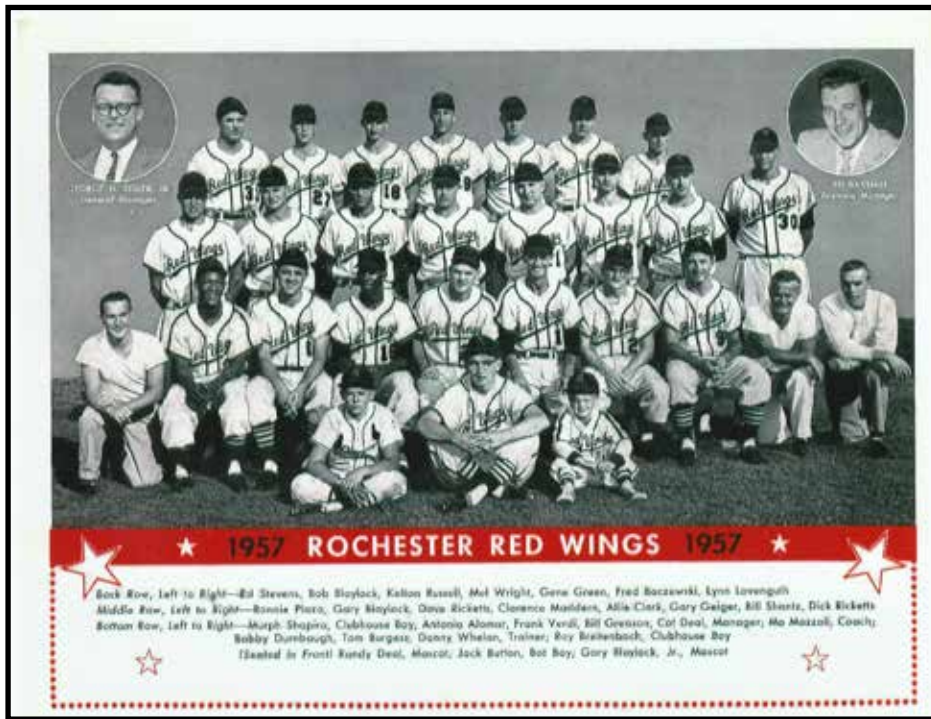
Bill Greason's pitching statistics for the 1955 and 1956 seasons with Houston were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1955	Houston	34	240.0	17	11	222	111	110	160	4.16
1956	Houston	27	154.0	10	6	149	80	87	80	4.68

Greason Finishes His Career in Rochester

Before the end of the 1956 season Bill Greason was promoted by the Cardinals from the Houston (Double A) farm team to Rochester, their Triple A farm team. Greason appeared in five (5) games for the Rochester Red Wings at the end of the 1956 season. Bill went 2-1 in these five games.

When the 1957 season started Bill Greason was on the pitching roster of the Rochester Red Wings. Bill spent the final three years of his career in Rochester pitching for the Red Wings.



Rochester Red Wings (1957)

(Greason – bottom row fourth from left)



Rochester Red Wings (1958)

(Greason – back row first on left)

During the final three years of his career he was a spot starter and also worked out of the bull pen. In his final season he was almost exclusively used as a relief pitcher. Even though he had a losing record of 5-6 (.455), he posted a very respectable earned run average of 3.43 for the 1957 season.

In the 36 games he played for the Red Wings, he made four (4) starts and had two (2) complete games. Bill also hit 4 homeruns and batted .250 for the season.

Bill appeared in 38 games with 11 starts and 3 complete games in 1958. He went 7-10 (.412) with a 4.00 ERA for the season. In his final season (1959) he appeared in 23 games with 4 starts, pitched 58 innings and recorded a won-loss record of 2-1.

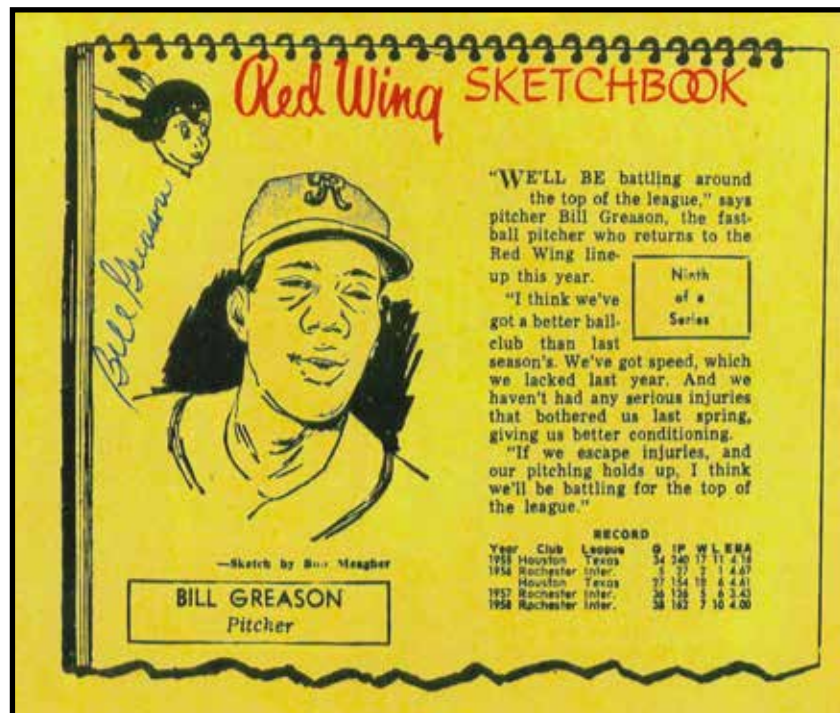
The Rochester Red Wings had only mediocre records for the 1957 to 1959 seasons. Rochester was 74-80 (5th place) in 1957, 77-75 (3rd place) in 1958 and 74-80 (5th place) in 1959.

Bill Greason's pitching statistics for the final three years of his professional career were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1957	Rochester	36	126.0	5	6	105	48	72	97	3.43
1958	Rochester	38	162.0	7	10	152	72	93	125	4.00
1959	Rochester	23	58.0	2	1	72	36	30	44	5.59

Towards the end of the 1959 season the Cardinals attempted to trade Bill to Charleston of the American Association. When contract negotiations between Greason and Charleston management broke down, Bill retired and returned to Birmingham to attend college.

From this researcher's perspective William Greason ended on an extremely positive note because he spent the final three years of his career pitching at the Triple A level. Very few players can say they ended their career in such a positive manner.



Rochester Red Wings (1959)
Red Wing Sketchbook Series

Bill Greason

Liga de Baseball Profesional de Puerto Rico

(PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL LEAGUE OF PUERTO RICO)

P. O. BOX 2467

SAN JUAN

139



PLAYER'S CONTRACT

Parties. THE SANTURCE BASEBALL CLUB, member of the Professional Baseball League of Puerto Rico, herein, called the Club, and WILLIAM GREASON of U.S.A. years old, herein called the Player, execute the following contract:

Employment. 1. The Club hereby employs the Player, to render, and the Player agrees to render, skilled and loyal services as a baseball player during the 1956-1957 season, including the Club's training season, and all the games of the season, including such post-season series as may be conducted under the auspices of the Professional Baseball League of Puerto Rico or the Caribbean Professional Confederation.

Salary. 2. For the services aforesaid and the promises hereafter specified, the Club will pay the Player the sum of ONE THOUSAND dollars (\$1,000.00) ~~per month~~, plus Round trip transportation and expenses monthly

which he shall begin to receive from and after the commencement of the playing season, or from such subsequent date as the Player may begin to render his services, and which he shall continue to receive for the duration of the season.

Loyalty. 3. (a) The Player agrees to perform his services hereunder diligently and faithfully, for the contracting Club or for any other club of the Professional Baseball League of Puerto Rico to which, in conformity with its Constitution, he may be transferred; and to keep himself in first class physical condition, and to obey the Club's training and disciplinary rules, and pledges himself to observe good moral conduct and to carry out his duties faithfully and in a sportsmanlike manner.

Baseball Promotion. (b) In addition to his services, the Player agrees to cooperate with the Club and participate in any and all promotional activities which, in the opinion of the Club, will promote the welfare of the Club or professional baseball, and to observe and comply with all requirements of the Club respecting conduct and services of its players, at all times, whether on or off the field.

Player Representations. 4. (a) The Player represents and agrees that he has skill and ability as a baseball player; that his services to be rendered hereunder are of special, unusual, and extraordinary character, which gives them peculiar value which can not be reasonably or adequately compensated for in damages at law, and that the Player's breach of this contract will cause the Club great and irreparable injury and damage. The Player agrees that, in addition to other remedies, the Club shall be entitled to injunctive and other equitable relief to prevent a breach of this contract by the Player, including, among others, the right to enjoin the Player for playing baseball for any other person, organization or corporation, public or private, during the term of this contract.

Condition. (b) The Player represents that he has no physical or mental defects, known to him, which would prevent him from rendering efficient services.

Bar. (c) The Player agrees that he cannot, directly or indirectly, be a member of the Board of Directors of the League, nor of the Board of Directors of any club affiliated with the Professional Baseball League of Puerto Rico; nor have any interest, hold stock, etc., in any such club.

Service. 5. (a) The Player agrees that, while under contract, and while the right of the Club to renew said contract shall subsist, he will not play baseball for any other club in Puerto Rico or elsewhere, without the written consent of the club.

Other Sports. (b) The Player recognizes and agrees that his participation in other sports and activities may impair or destroy his ability as a baseball player. Accordingly, the Player agrees that during the term of this contract he will not engage, without written consent of his club, in any game, match or exhibition of boxing, wrestling, pan-cratiom, football, basketball, or other activities that may impair or destroy his ability and efficiency as a baseball player.

Assignment. 6. (a) The Player agrees that this Contract may be assigned by the Club, to any other club of the Professional Baseball League and the Player agrees to report to the place, and on the date and hour fixed by the assignee Club.

No Salary Reduction. (b) The salary fixed to the Player in paragraph 2 of this Contract for the period stated in paragraph 1 hereof shall not be diminished by any such assignment.

Puerto Rican League Career

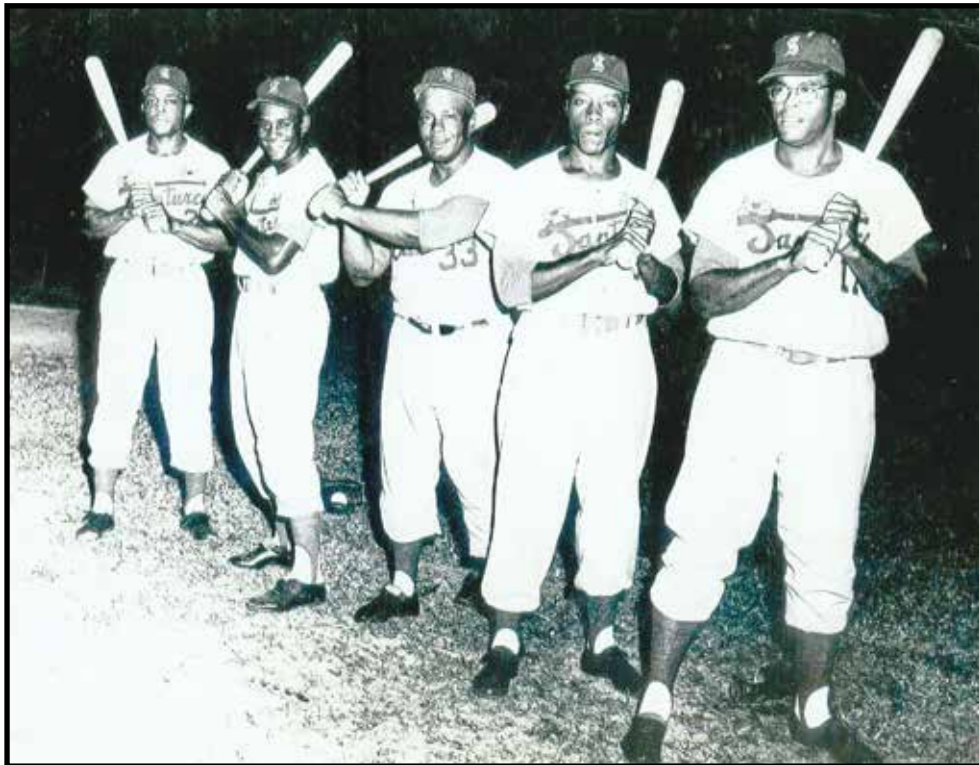
Like many other professional ball players, Bill Greason played winter baseball. From 1948 to 1959 Bill Greason played seven (7) winter league seasons in Puerto Rico. His first season in Puerto Rico was the 1948-49 season for the Mayaguez Indios and then he played six (6) seasons for the Santurce Cangrejeros. Both the Indios and Cangrejeros played in the Puerto Rican Winter League. The Cangrejeros were owned by Puerto Rican baseball magnate Pedro Zorilla.

After the conclusion of the 1948 Negro League World Series, Artie Wilson, who was the player-manager of the Mayaguez Indios, recruited three of his Birmingham Black Barons team mates (Bill Greason, Alonzo Perry and William Powell) to play for him in Puerto Rico. With Artie Wilson's extensive contacts in the Negro Leagues, the Mayaguez Indios were able to sign several high quality ball players. Besides Wilson and his three Black Barons teammates, the Indios were able to recruit several other Negro Leaguers that included: Johnny Davis, Luke Easter, Wilmer Fields, Carlos Santiago and Luis Villodas. Luke Easter (.402) and Artie Wilson (.373) were the team's leading hitters during the season. Mayaguez led the Puerto Rican League in hitting for the season. The pitching staff for the Indios included Alonzo Perry (11-4), Wilmer Fields (10-4), Bill Powell, Johnny Davis and Bill Greason. Bill's statistics for the 1948-49 season are not known. The Mayaguez Indios won the regular 1948-49 winter league season title in Puerto Rico with a record 51-29 (.637) and then went on to defeat Santurce in the "league's" play-off system.

Bill Greason returned to Puerto Rico to play for Santurce during the 1953-54 Puerto Rican Winter League. Greason went 12-10 (.545) with 180 innings pitched. One of his Santurce teammates was the Roberto Clemente who called Bill Greason "mi hermano" which in English means "my brother."

The January 20, 1954 edition of The Sporting News would pen the following regarding Greason:

"The big negro hurler purchased by the Cardinals organization from Oklahoma City last fall has accounted for approximately half of Santurce's conquests and is rated a good chance to make the Cardinal staff."



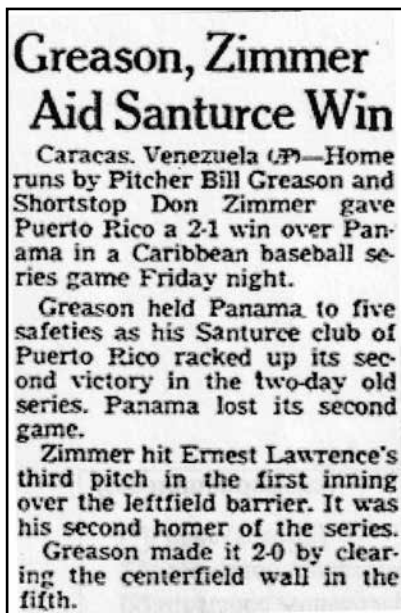
Santurce (1954-55)

Willie Mays, Roberto Clemente, Buster Clarkson, Bob Thurman and George Crow

His best season in Puerto Rico was the 1954-55 season when he led Santurce to the “league” championship and then to the Caribbean Series title. The Cangrejeros went 47-25 (.653) during the regular season.

Santurce was led by the hitting of Willie Mays (.395 w/ 12 HR and 33 RBI), Roberto Clemente (.344), Bob Thurman (.323 w/ 14 HR and 60 RBI), Buster Clarkson (.315 w/ 17 HR and 61 RBI), Don Zimmer and George Crowe. Sam Jones (14-4 w/ 1.77 ERA), Ruben Gomez (13-4 w/ 2.80 ERA) and Bill Greason (8-2 wins w/ 2.34 ERA) not only were the top three pitchers for Santurce but were also the top three pitchers in the entire “league.” Bill’s won-loss record of 8-2 gave him the best winning percentage in the Puerto Rican Winter League for the 1954-55 season. The 1954-55 Santurce Cangrejeros team is considered one of the best team’s in Latin American baseball history. Former Major League star and Major League manager, Don Zimmer, was quoted as saying: “Without a doubt it was the best winter league baseball club ever assembled.”

At the conclusion of the regular season Santurce played a seven game series against Caguas for the “league” title. The series only went five games as the Cangrejeros won four of the first five contests. Bill Greason pitched a 14-0 shut out to win game three.



Omaha World-Herald

02-12-55

Santurce’s victory for the Puerto Rican Winter League championship gave them an automatic invitation to the Caribbean World Series which was held in Caracas, Venezuela. Bill Greason picked up two wins in the series as he led the Cangrejeros to the Caribbean World Series title. In game two of the series Bill hit a homerun to support his 2-1 victory. Greason led the “series” in pitching (2-0), winning percentage (1.000), complete games (2), games won (2), innings pitched (18) and walks (7). At the end of the Caribbean World Series Greason was selected to the Caribbean World Series All Star team.

Greason returned to play for Santurce for the 1955-56 Puerto Rican season. Behind the hitting of Bob Thurman (.348) and Alfonso Gerard (.335) and the pitching of Steve Ridzik (14-3 w/ 2.61 ERA) and Bill Greason (6-4 wins w/ 3.10) the Santurce Cangrejeros won the regular season title with a record of 43-29 (.597). Santurce lost the series final to Caguas by a score of 4-2.

Bill Greason played for Santurce during the 1956-57 season. Orlando Cepeda (.310 BA w/ 11 homeruns) was the team’s leading hitter during the season. Other players that contributed offensively during the 1956-57 winter league season were Willard “Homerun” Brown, Roberto Clemente, Earle Hersh, Joe Koppe, Ron Samford and Bill White. The pitching staff for the Cangrejeros included Marion Fricano who led the team with 12 victories, Bill Greason, Duke Markell who led the team with a 2.26 ERA and Juan Pizarro.

Turmoil struck the team shortly after Christmas when team owner, Pedro “Pedrin” Zorrilla, sold the team. Then Zorrilla sold the player contracts of Roberto Clemente, Juan Pizarro and Ron Samford to Caguas for \$ 30,000. The final nail in Santurce’s coffin was the resignation of the team’s manager Monchile Concepcion.

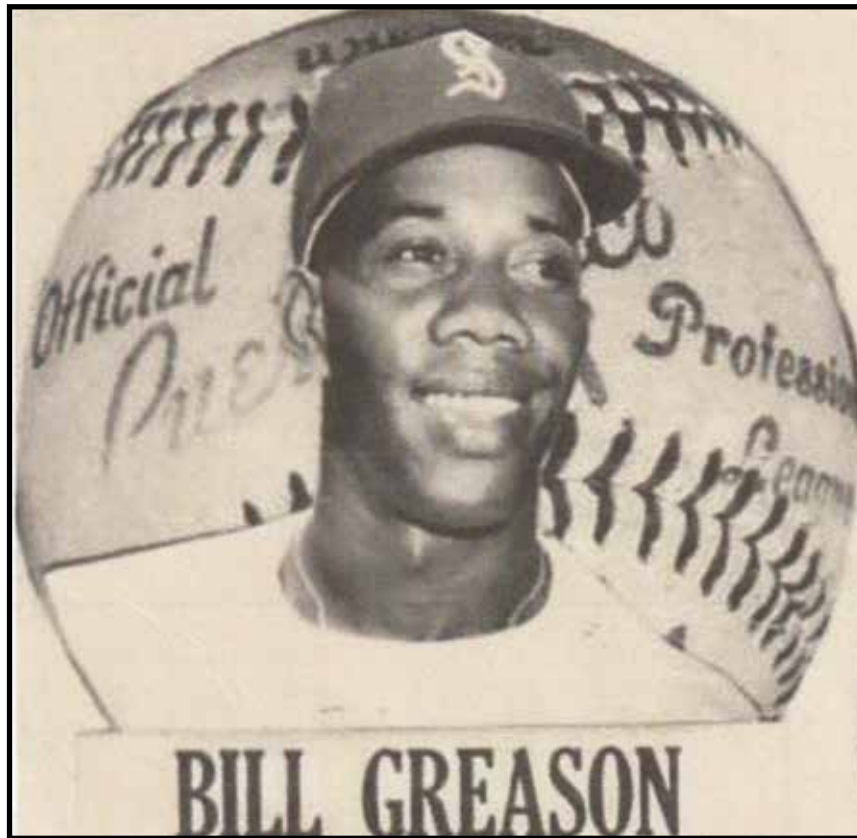
The Cangrejeros won the regular season title with a record of 43-29 (.597) but lost to the second place Mayaguez Indios (41-31) in the Puerto Rican League Play-Off Series. The Indios won four of the five games they played against Santurce.

Greason leads Santurce to Its Fourth Straight Pennant

Bill Greason returned to Santurce for the 1957-58 season. Greason was the ace of the pitching staff with a 12-6 record, 100 strikeouts and 2.75 ERA. He finished second in the “league” in both wins and strikeouts. During the season Bill pitched 25 consecutive scoreless innings for the Santurce Cangrejeros. Rounding out the pitching rotation for Santurce was Ruben Gomez (2.23 ERA) and Julio Navarro (2.35). Billy Harrell of Santurce led the team and “league” in hitting with a .317 batting average. Santurce first baseman, Orlando Cepeda, led the “league” in hits (72), homeruns (13) and runs batted in (49) while posting a .300 batting average.

The season was hard fought from the very beginning but when all was said and done, Santurce won the regular season title for the fourth season in a row with a record of 36-28 (.563). Unfortunately for Cangrejeros fans, Caguas beat Santurce four straight games in the play-offs.

The winter of 1958-59 in Puerto Rico would be Bill Greason’s last winter league season of his professional baseball career. Sadly for Bill he was hampered by a sore arm that limited his playing time. This impacted the team in their run for their fifth straight title when they were left with only three healthy starters (Ruben Gomez, Marion Fricano and Julio Navarro). Santurce ended in second place in the final “league” standings with a record of (36-27) but won the play-off series over Caguas 5 games to 2. Their victory earned them a trip to the Caribbean World Series where they finished in third place with a 3-3 record.



Bill Greason
Santurce Cangrejeros

Our research of the Puerto Rican career Bill Greason credits him with a record of 38-22 (with no reported statistics for the 1956-57 and 1958-59 seasons). Puerto Rican baseball historian and researcher Thomas E. Van Hyning reports in his book Puerto Rico’s Winter League: A History of Major League Baseball’s Launching Pad that Bill Greason had a career won-loss record of 46-31 (.597), pitched 701 innings, registered 372 strikeouts and had a career 2.99 ERA. Unfortunately, Van Hyning doesn’t break Greason’s pitching statistics down by season.

Life After Professional Baseball

After Bill Greason retired from professional baseball in 1959, he and his wife moved to Birmingham, Alabama. William Greason had gotten married in 1953 to Willie Otis Wilson who at the time was working as a cashier at the Brock Drug Store in Birmingham. They met at the 16th Street Baptist Church in the city. On the day of the fateful bombing where four young African American girls were killed, Sunday September 15, 1963, Greason was in Tuscaloosa playing ball.

It didn't take Bill long to find out that even though he was retired he had not gotten baseball totally out of his blood. Fortunately for Greason Birmingham had the premier industrial league in the country so Bill started playing industrial league ball. He played for several seasons with both the Fairfield Stars and Winona of the Birmingham Industrial League. During this time period he pitched the Fairfield Stars to a Birmingham Industrial League championship. The highlight of his industrial league career was during the Major League off-season when Jackie Robinson brought an all-star team to Birmingham. Bill Greason took the mound for a local all-star team and pitched a one-hitter against the Major Leaguers. After the game Jackie was quoted as saying the following to Greason: "They didn't come to see you. They came to see me."



Reverend William Greason



Bill Greason and Willie Mays

When Greason moved to Birmingham in 1959, he found employment with Pizitz Department store where he worked for fourteen (14) years. It was during this time that he started studying for the ministry at Birmingham Baptist Bible College and Samford University. Greason received his Bachelor of Theology degree and also an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Birmingham Easonian Baptist Bible College. Initially, he started his ministry at New Hope Baptist Church in Bessemer (AL) in 1969. In 1971 Reverend Greason was installed as pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham. He has served as the pastor of Bethel Baptist for over the past forty plus years. In addition to preaching, Reverend Greason still leads Bible study and for years was an instructor teaching classes at Birmingham Easonian Baptist Bible College.

At the age of 92 Reverend William Greason is still going strong praising our Lord through words, actions and example. He says "my contract lasts until I die."

Playing Career

Regular Season:

Year	Team	League
1947	Nashville Cubs	Negro Southern League
1947-1948	Atlanta Stars	Independent
1948	Asheville Blues	Negro Southern League
1948-1950	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1950-1951	Jalisco Charros	Mexican League
1951	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1952-1953	Oklahoma City Indians	Texas League
1954	Columbus Red Birds	American Association
1954	St. Louis Cardinals	National League
1954	Columbus Red Birds	American Association
1955	Houston Buffaloes	Texas League
1956	Rochester Red Wings	International League
1956	Houston Buffaloes	Texas League
1957-1959	Rochester Red Wings	International League

Winter Leagues:

1948-49	Mayaguez Indios	Puerto Rican Winter League
1950-51	Marianao Tigres	Cuban Winter League
1952	Negro American League All-Stars	Series vs Roy Campanella's All Stars
1953-54	Santurce Cangrejeros (Crabbers)	Puerto Rican Winter League
1954-55	Santurce Cangrejeros	Puerto Rican Winter League
1955	Santurce Cangrejeros	Caribbean Series (Caracas, VZ)
1955	Pacific Coast All Stars	Barnstorming Team
1955-56	Santurce Cangrejeros	Puerto Rican Winter League
1956	Licey Tigres	Dominican League
1956-57	Santurce Cangrejeros	Puerto Rican Winter League
1957-58	Santurce Cangrejeros	Puerto Rican Winter League
1958-59	Santurce Cangrejeros	Puerto Rican Winter League



Rickwood Field

Home Field
of
Birmingham Black Barons

Career Statistics – Pitching (Negro Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1947	Nashville	-	-	12	4	-	-	-	-	-
1948	Asheville	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
1948	Birmingham	14	90	6	4	85	33	38	66	3.30
1949	Birmingham	26	158	7	13	179	95	84	107	5.41
1950	Birmingham	19	142	9	6	108	38	72	106	2.41
1951	Birmingham	-	127	8	7	122	-	51	93	3.61
	Total	59	517	43	34	494	166	245	372	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Negro League - Play-Off Series)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1948	Birmingham	2	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Negro League World Series)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1948	Birmingham	3	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Negro League - East-West All Star Game)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1949	West	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0.00

Career Statistics – Pitching (Military)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1952	Marines	1	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Minor Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1950	Jalisco	14	93.2	10	1	76	36	76	52	3.46
1951	Jalisco	7	28.1	1	4	30	25	37	23	7.94
1952	Oklahoma City	11	80.0	9	1	53	19	26	57	2.14
1953	Oklahoma City	37	249.0	16	13	206	100	162	193	3.61
1954	Columbus	34	191.0	10	13	172	87	99	110	4.10
1955	Houston	34	240.0	17	11	222	111	110	160	4.16
1956	Houston	27	154.0	10	6	149	80	87	80	4.68
1956	Rochester	5	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
1957	Rochester	36	126.0	5	6	105	48	72	97	3.43
1958	Rochester	38	162.0	7	10	152	72	93	125	4.00
1959	Rochester	23	58.0	2	1	72	36	30	44	5.59
	Total	266	1382.0	89	67	1237	614	792	941	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Major Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1954	St. Louis	3	4.0	0	1	8	6	4	2	13.50

Career Statistics – Pitching (Cuba)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1950-51	Marianao	7	42.2	2	2	35	-	21	18	3.38

Career Statistics – Pitching (Puerto Rico)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1948-49	Mayaguez	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1953-54	Santurce	-	180	12	10	-	-	-	107	-
1954-55	Santurce	-	107	8	2	-	-	-	45	2.34
1955-56	Santurce	-	87	6	4	-	30	-	41	3.10
1956-57	Santurce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1957-58	Santurce	-	163	12	6	-	50	-	100	2.75
1958-59	Santurce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	537	38	22	-	-	-	293	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Puerto Rican League Play-Offs)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1954-55	Santurce	1	9	1	0	-	0	-	-	0.00

Career Statistics – Pitching (Caribbean Series)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1955	Santurce	2	18	2	0	9	-	7	5	-

Career Statistics – Pitching (Total)

	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
Negro League	59	517	43	34	494	166	245	372	-
Negro League - Play-Offs	2	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	-
Negro League-World Series	3	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
East-West All Star Game	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0.00
Military	1	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	=
Minor Leagues	266	1382	89	67	1237	614	792	941	-
Major Leagues	3	4	0	1	8	6	4	2	13.50
Cuba	7	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Puerto Rico	-	537	38	22	-	-	-	293	-
Puerto Rico – Play-Offs	1	9	1	0	-	0	-	-	0.00
Caribbean Series	2	18	2	0	9	-	7	5	-
Total			178	128					

Tribe's Negro Blanks Buffs

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla., Aug. 18 (UP).—Bill Greason, Oklahoma City's Negro pitcher, shut the Houston Buffs out on three hits Monday night as he pitched the Indians to a 3-to-0 Texas League victory.

Bob Habenicht started on the mound for the Buffs but required help from Dick Bokelman in the eighth and was the loser. The Indians got five hits off their combined pitching.

HOUSTON				OKLAHOMA CITY					
ab	h	po	a	ab	h	po	a		
Costa.s	4	0	1	3	Cross.cf	2	1	3	0
Hirngin.2	4	0	2	2	Shofner.3	3	0	0	1
Keller.1	4	2	1	1	Kellert.1	3	1	1	0
Mrkowl.lf	4	0	0	0	Frazier.lf	3	1	1	0
McGah.cf	3	0	6	0	Burns.r	3	1	1	0
Centrell.r	3	1	2	0	Tucker.r	0	0	0	0
Landis.c	3	0	0	1	Baich.r	4	0	0	0
Flint.3	2	0	2	1	Darnato.2	3	0	0	3
Hinnach.p	2	0	0	1	Lind.s	3	1	1	3
Witte.bs	1	6	0	0	Greason.p	3	0	0	3
Boklman.p	0	0	0	2					

Total 30 3 24 11 Total 27 5 27 10
 Houston000 000 000—0
 Oklahoma City002 000 10*—2
 R—Cross, Greason, RBI—Frazier, Burns 2, 2B—Frazier, S—Lind, Left—Houston 6, Oklahoma City 9, BB—Off Habenicht 7, Greason 3, SO—By Greason 8, HO—Habenicht 5 in 7 innings, Bokelman 6 in 1, HBP—Habenicht (Kellert), WP—Greason, Loser—Habenicht, U—Williamson, Smith and Newman, T—1.38, A—3.719.

Greason, Dixon Pace Buff Win

HOUSTON, Texas (AP). — Bill Greason came up with one of his better pitching performances of the season and Sherry Dixon supplied the power with his 13th home run of the season to give the Houston Buffs and 8-3 decision over Tulsa's Oilers and 3-1 edge in their 4-game series Thursday night.

TULSA				HOUSTON					
ab	h	po	a	ab	h	po	a		
Graber.cf	4	0	5	1	Dixon.2	3	1	4	2
Bernard.s	4	0	0	2	Adams.cf	5	3	0	0
Gasque.p	0	0	0	0	Boyd.1	5	1	7	1
Boles.lf	4	0	2	0	Lerchen.lf	4	0	2	0
Macko.1b	3	3	7	1	Rac.r	3	1	3	0
Lutz.r	3	0	0	0	Smith.c	4	1	7	1
Prentice.2	3	0	3	2	Ries.3	3	1	3	2
Krsnich.3s	4	1	2	2	Fassler.s	3	1	0	4
Jones.c	2	0	2	2	Greason.p	2	2	1	0
Schmees.1	2	1	2	0					
Nichols.p	2	1	1	1					
Widmar.p	0	0	0	1					
Jenney.c	0	0	0	1					

Totals 31 6 24 13 Totals 35 11 27 10
 Tulsa000 000 021—3
 Houston000 004 11x—8
 R—Macko, Schmees, Prentice, Dixon, Boyd, Rac 2, Ries, Fassler, Greason 2, E—Bernard, Schmees, Fassler, RBI—Dixon 2, Ries, Greason 2, Adams, Fassler, Schmees 2, Krsnich 2B—Macko, Nichols, Boyd, Smith, HR—Dixon, Schmees, SF—Fassler, S—Dixon, DP—Ries, Dixon and Boyd, Dixon and Boyd, BB—Greason 4, Nichols 3, Widmar 2, Gasque 1, SO—Greason 7, Nichols 1, R—ER—Nichols 6-6, Widmar 1-1, Gasque 1-1, Greason 3-3, HO—Nichols 7 in 5½, Widmar 3 in 1½, Gasque 1 in 1, L—Nichols, Left—Tulsa 5, Houston 8, U—Burkhart, Valentine, Odom, A—2.562, T—2.18.

Dallas Morning News
 Dallas, TX
 08-19-52

Dallas Morning News
 Dallas, TX
 07-22-55

Career Statistics – Hitting (Negro Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1948	Birmingham	18	36	6	8	1	1	0	4	0	.222	.306
1949	Birmingham	28	50	7	8	2	1	1	12	0	.160	.300
1950	Birmingham	23	56	6	8	2	2	0	3	-	.143	.250
	Total	69	142	19	24	5	4	1	19	0	.169	.286

Career Statistics – Hitting (Minor Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1952	Oklahoma City	12	29	-	4	0	0	1	-	-	.138	.241
1953	Oklahoma City	39	93	11	16	6	0	0	2	-	.172	.237
1954	Columbus	34	63	6	10	1	3	1	7	0	.159	.317
1955	Houston	36	88	14	26	4	0	3	14	0	.295	.443
1956	Houston	27	50	8	13	3	0	4	8	0	.260	.560
1957	Rochester	43	44	4	11	3	1	3	7	0	.250	.568
1958	Rochester	47	64	5	10	2	0	1	11	0	.156	.234
1959	Rochester	26	26	2	3	1	0	1	2	0	.115	.269
	Total	264	457	50	93	20	4	14	51	0	.204	.357

Career Statistics – Hitting (Puerto Rican League – Play-Offs)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1954-55	Santurce	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

Career Hitting Statistics (Totals)

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Negro League	69	142	19	24	5	4	1	19	0	.169	.286
Minor Leagues	264	457	50	93	20	4	14	51	0	.204	.357
Puerto Rico	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	334	599	69	117	25	8	16	70	0	.195	.339



'No Sale' Sign Hung on Hurler

Bosox, Yanks Bidding For Greason

OKLAHOMA CITY (INS) — There's bad news brewing for the Yankees and Red Sox.

These two red-hot bidders for Bill Greason, the 27-year-old Negro pitching sensation of the Oklahoma City Indians, are not going to get their man — this year.

Jimmy Humphreys, president of the Texas league team, has decided against selling Greason at this time despite the brisk bidding and offers reported as high as \$50,000.

Humphreys, one of the nation's few remaining independent operators in minor league baseball, claims it wouldn't be fair to the right-handed Greason to sell him to a major league team with so little experience.

Cool Chucker

Despite his widely-heralded nine won, one lost record in pitching the Indians into the Texas league play-offs, Greason has hurled in only 14 games since his entry into organized baseball last July 31.

As to his prize chucker, Humphreys says:

"He's one of the most amazing athletes I've ever seen in baseball. Cool as ice water under fire, and the tighter the situation, the better Bill pitches.

"Greason is going to be a great major leaguer one of these days, but he deserves further time to learn the little tricks of the trade."

Sees \$100,000 Tag

Writers assigned to the Oklahoma City team claim Greason is a brighter prospect right now than was Mike Garcia, the Cleveland ace, while winning 19 games here in 1949.

These same scribblers contend there are other reasons behind Humphreys' decision to delay Greason's major league debut that haven't been placed on the record.

Cards Bring Up Greason

MILWAUKEE, May 28—(AP)—The St. Louis Cardinals today brought up Bill Greason, 27-year-old Negro pitcher, from their Columbus, Ohio, farm club to help bolster Cardinal pitching. Greason becomes the second Negro player with the Cardinals.

Richmond Times Dispatch

Richmond, VA

05-29-54

Bill Greason Sent To Columbus Club

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (AP).—The St. Louis Cardinals Wednesday announced reassignment of Pitcher Bill Greason's contract to their Columbus, Ohio, farm club.

Greason, a former Texas Leaguer, who had a 10-13 record at Columbus, pitched briefly for St. Louis in May and was recalled to the Redbirds after the American Association playoffs earlier this month.

Register-Republic

Rockford, IL

01-14-53

Dallas Morning News

Dallas, TX

06-30-54

Selected Career Highlights

- In a professional baseball career that lasted from 1947 through the 1959 season, Bill Greason compiled a won-loss record of 178-128 (.582). It is important to note that we are still missing a significant number of his pitching statistics. Projections are that Greason easily won between 200 to 250 games during his career.
- He was a starting pitcher for the Birmingham Black Barons team who won the Negro American League title in 1948.
- Bill pitched in the 1948 Negro League World Series for the Birmingham Black Barons against the Homestead Grays who were the champions of the Negro National League. Bill Greason got the sole win for the Black Barons in the series.
- Member of the 1948-49 Mayaguez Indios who won the Puerto Rican Winter League title.
- Selected to play in the 1949 East-West All Star game. He pitched three scoreless innings.
- Led the Jalisco Charros to the second half title of the 1950 Mexican League. Greason posted an unbelievable won-loss record of 10-1 (.909). He was also selected as the “Top” Pitcher” for the 1950 season.
- Won a Golden Glove for the 1950 Mexican League season with a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage.
- When Bill Greason took the mound for the Oklahoma City Indians in 1952, he was the first African-American to play in “organized” ball in the state of Oklahoma.
- In 1952 Bill Greason, while playing for the Oklahoma City Indians, had perhaps the best season of his career with a 9-1 record in 11 starts and a 2.14 ERA.
- Bill Greason was the second African-American ball player to play for the St. Louis Cardinals. He made his Major League debut in 1954.
- Led the Santurce Cangrejeros to the Puerto Rican Winter League title for the 1954-55 season and the best “league” record for the regular season for four years in a row (1954-55, 1955-56, 1956-57 and 1957-58).
- In 1955 he led Santurce to a Caribbean World Series title. Greason pitched two complete game victories in the series. Bill was selected to the Caribbean World Series All Star team at the end of the series.
- Selected to the 1955-56 Puerto Rican Winter League All Star team.
- When Bill Greason joined the Houston Buffaloes he became the team’s first African-American player for Houston in their sixty-six (66) year history.
- Bill helped lead the Houston Buffaloes to the 1956 Texas League title.
- Greason had an excellent season with Santurce during their 1957-58 winter league season. He went 12-6 with a 2.76 ERA and pitched 25 consecutive scoreless innings.
- Pitched the last three years of his professional career at the Triple A level with the Rochester Red Wings of the St. Louis Cardinals organization.
- In the early 1960’s he pitched the Fairfield Stars to a Birmingham Industrial League title.
- In 2012 William Greason received our nation’s highest civilian award, the Congressional Gold Medal, as a former Montford Point Marine.

Birmingham Black Barons (1948)

Negro American League Champions

The Birmingham Black Barons finished the 1948 Negro American League season with a record of 57-21 (.731). They soundly defeated the second place Kansas City Monarchs who went 43-25 (.632) for the Negro American League title.



Birmingham Black Barons
Celebrating the Negro American League Championship in the Locker Room
1948

Rickwood Field
Birmingham, AL

(Bill Greason – standing against back wall third from right)