

History of the Indianapolis Clowns

1920 – Syd Pollock forms his first baseball team the Westchester Blue Sox.

1922 – The Westchester Blue Sox introduce comedy routines and vaudeville acts to their baseball games.

1920-1928 - Pollock operates the Westchester Blues Sox and promotes/books other traveling teams (Bloomer Girls, Havana Red Sox, House of David, Zulu Cannibal Giants, etc.).

1928 - After completion of the regular season, Pollock buys the Havana Red Sox from Ramiro Ramirez.

1929-1930 - Havana Red Sox barnstorms with Pollock booking games and Ramirez as manager. Pollock would use 1929 as the date that the Clowns were founded. To Pollock the name of the team was inconsequential; it was always the same ownership and organization.

1931 – Havana Red Sox change their name to Cuban House of David. Team featured Luis “Lefty” Tiant, Sr. and Juan “Tetelo” Vargas.

1932 – Cuban House of David plays in the East-West Colored League. The league folds before the end of the season.

1933 – Cuban House of David becomes known as Cuban Stars. Cuban Stars win over 100 games during their barnstorming season.

1933 – Syd Pollock helps Ed Hamman form the Canadian Clowns.

1934-1936 – Cuban Stars complete several very successful barnstorming seasons.

1936 – Miami Giants become Miami Ethiopian Clowns under ownership of Hunter Campbell and Johnny Pierce. A new Miami Giants team would form under the ownership of Roderick Silva. Clowns barnstorm as Miami Ethiopian Clowns from 1937 to 1943.

1936 – Pollock becomes part owner of the Miami Ethiopian Clowns. Hunter Campbell sold Pollock the interest of his partner Johnny Pierce without Pierce’s knowledge or approval.

1939 - Pollock buys out Hunter Campbell and becomes sole owner of the Miami Ethiopian Clowns.

1939 – Clowns play in their first Denver Post Tournament. Clowns would make two more appearances in 1940 and 1941.

1941 – Clowns win 125 games during the regular season.

1941 - Clowns win the Denver Post Tournament and Buster Haywood (Clowns catcher) is named Tournament Most Valuable Player (MVP).

1942 – Syd Pollock hires Mc Kinley “Bunny” Downs as field manager of Clowns.

1943 – Team changes name to Cincinnati Clowns.

1943 – Clowns enter the Negro American League.

1944 – Ed Hamman joins the Clowns.

1944-1945 – Team known as Cincinnati-Indianapolis Clowns

1946 - Clowns change their name for the last time to simply the Indianapolis Clowns.

1947-1948 - Syd Pollock operates the Havana La Palomas baseball team as the farm team of the Clowns.

1948-1953 Buster Haywood manages the Indianapolis Clowns.

1950 – Indianapolis Clowns win their first Negro American League championship.

1950 – Sam Harrison (Clowns catcher) wins the Negro American League Triple Crown. (17 homeruns, 71 runs batted and a .424 batting average). Hairston also led the league in hits with 100 and total bases with 176.

1950 - The Indianapolis Clowns do not play a single home game in Indianapolis during the 1951 Negro American League season.

1950-1953 Indianapolis Clowns barnstorm during the off-season with Jackie Robinson’s All Stars

1951 – Indianapolis Clowns move their base of operation to Buffalo, New York.

1951 – Indianapolis Clowns sign Toni Stone to a Negro American League contract, making her the first woman to play major professional baseball. The Clowns would have two other women play for their team in the 1950’s. Connie Morgan and Mamie “Peanuts” Johnson both played for the Clowns in 1954.

1951 – Indianapolis Clowns win their second Negro American League championship.

1952 – Clowns sign a seventeen-year old shortstop by the name of Hank Aaron.

1952 – Clowns defeat Birmingham Black Barons to capture their third Negro American League championship.

1952 – Clowns barnstorm during the off-season against the New York Black Yankees.

1954 – Clowns win their fourth Negro American League championship in five years.

- 1955** – Clowns drop out of Negro American League to pursue a full time barnstorming schedule.
- 1956** – Syd Pollock sells Ed Hamman 40% interest in the Indianapolis Clowns.
- 1956** – Indianapolis Clowns introduce the concept of the traveling baseball school.
- 1963** – Clowns play 143 games during the 1963 season barnstorming schedule. This is the smallest number of games the Clowns had ever played in one year.
- 1964** – Ed Hamman sells Hal King to Los Angeles Angels (MLBB) for \$ 8,000.
- 1965** – Syd Pollock sells his interest in Clowns to Ed Hamman for \$ 3,885. Ed Hamman becomes the sole owner of the team.
- 1968** – Clowns integrate with their first white player. Hamman also introduces several other changes to keep the team in business: roster is reduced to 10 or 11 players, schedule is reduced to 65 to 75 games and Clowns start playing smaller cities.
- 1971** – Clowns players receive no salary but do receive \$ 4.00 per day meal money.
- 1972** - Ed Hamman sells Indianapolis Clowns to George Long of Muscatine, Iowa. Long would operate the Clowns from 1972 to 1983.
- 1983** - George Long sells Clowns to Dave Clark and Sal Tombasco of Corning, New York.
- 1984** – Clowns play their first season under Dave Clark
- 1988** – Danny Vickers is signed by Dave Clark to play for the Clowns. Vickers is the last African American to play for the Indianapolis Clowns.
- 1988** – Indianapolis Clowns play their last full barnstorming season.
- 1989** – Clowns cease operations after playing a few games at the start of the season