

Highland's Own "Iron Man"

Malcolm Disney

1889 - 1950

Malcolm Disney played for twelve different local baseball teams over a period of 44 years! He began playing with the Highland Athletic Club's baseball team in 1905 at the age of 16. At the age of 42, he was still playing second base for the Dayton Athletic Club team. One of the 17 year olds on that team was T. Marshall Harding, the son of one of his teammates on the earlier Highland team. Four years later both Disney and Harding were playing for the Granite, MD team. The other area teams Disney played with included Sandy Spring, Scaggsville, Rockville, Linthicum Heights, Ellicott City, Laurel, Fairbanks and Morse. Disney played baseball until age 61. He died in 1968.

Malcolm Disney was literally a baseball player who spent his life on the diamond. As the old timers say, when baseball was as it used to be played – for fun, for free, for as long as you could play. Baseball was considered a moral asset for a community, inducing young men to forego the pool halls, gaming and other bad habits and to generally improve their health. During the early 1900's, dozens of area amateur teams competed before small audiences in Maryland's rural towns. In 1908, the Highland A. A. team defeated Lawyers' Hill with a score of 6 to 2. This was the deciding game of a series that was declared to be for the "Championship of Howard County".

Disney was a good solid player and he could hit; he would just slap the ball through the holes in the infield. It was a talent that drove pitchers crazy. At the age of 51 he was still hitting .300. His fielding was remarkable as well, with few errors. That year he also played in his longest game, which his team won after 14 innings with the Chevrolet Nine of Alexandria VA. The teams played every Sunday. During the week Disney operated the Highland Garage which he owned at the intersection of Maryland State Route 108 & Highland Road.

Before Cal Ripken, Jr. was even born, Malcolm Disney had established his own record to merit the title "Iron Man of Baseball". Unfortunately he never made it into the Maryland Baseball Hall of Fame. With his record, he should have. In his long career in amateur and semi-pro ball:

Disney was never called out on strikes, although being human he did of course go down swinging.

He never left a game because of injuries.

He missed only two scheduled games. One day he played four games.

He was taken out only twice for pinch hitters. Ironically, both times his replacement struck out.

In 1938 it was estimated that Disney had already participated in about 2000 games! (He played for another 12 years.)

He was the best known baseball player in Howard County and probably the oldest.

As a sixty year old former garage owner, playing for Ellicott City he slapped a pitch that bounced up to the plate for a clean single, scoring the winning run off ex-Oriole pitcher Turner Balsey.

Malcolm Disney never gave up his love of baseball.