

Trail's first major leaguer

By GREG NESTEROFF

Before Jason Bay, there was Tom Harrison. You won't find his name in the Sports Hall of Memories; you would be hard pressed to find anyone who remembers him. But he holds the distinction of being Trail's first major league baseball player.

Today, Harrison runs a private nursing home in Los Alamitos, Calif. However, he did not respond to a letter or to two phone messages left with his wife, so we're left with a very fragmentary record.

Thomas James Harrison was born in Trail on Jan. 18, 1945. His birth announcement ran in the *Times* five days later, and stated that his parents were Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Harrison.

According to the 1952 West Kootenay directory, Thomas and Susan Harrison lived at 680 Kipling in Warfield. He was a smelterman. Susan died in 1980, but her obituary doesn't mention a son named Tom. Furthermore, she would have been 46 when Tom was born, so it's probably not the same family.

There is no sign that Tom Jr. played baseball or any other sports in Trail. He didn't attend college, and we have no idea where he played in the minor leagues. He was a pitcher, stood 6'3", 200 lbs., batted and threw right.

The Kansas City Athletics signed him as an amateur free agent in 1964, and his major league career was so brief, we can describe it play-by-play.

He debuted with the A's on May 7, 1965, in a game against the California Angels at Dodger Stadium. He was only 20, unusually young for big-league ball.

In the top of the 8th, with the A's trailing 5-4 and one out, he was inserted as a pinch-runner on first. The next batter grounded into a double play. Harrison was out at second, and was replaced in the next inning. The 5-4 score stood up as the final.



Tom Harrison, pictured in the Kansas City A's 1965 yearbook.

Ten days later, Harrison appeared in his only other game, against the Chicago White Sox at Municipal Stadium.

In the top of the 7th, with the A's down 9-0, and a runner on first, he relieved **Catfish Hunter** on the mound.

The first batter he faced, **John Romano**, doubled, batting in a run. Then **Ken Berry** singled, driving in Romano, although Berry tried to stretch his hit into a double and was thrown out at second. Harrison walked **Gary Peters**, the

opposing pitcher, then got **Danny Cater** to ground into a fielder's choice.

Harrison was due up to bat first in the next inning, but was replaced by pinch hitter **Ken Harrelson**. Kansas City lost 13-2, and that was the end of Harrison's career.

His lifetime stats: two games played, $\frac{2}{3}$ of an inning pitched, four batters faced, two hits and one walk allowed, one run against, earned run average of 13.43.

The *Trail Daily Times* didn't mention him at all, which suggests it wasn't well known he was born in Trail, nor was he regarded or remembered as a native son.

Sources:

<http://www.retrosheet.org>

Trail Daily Times, Jan. 23, 1945

1952 West Kootenay directory

FASTBALL TONIGHT

BUTLER PARK at 7:30 p.m.

FIRST GAME

GRAND FORKS vs MISSION ORANGE

SECOND GAME

GRAND FORKS vs CROWN POINT

Adults 25c

Children 15c