

One-Armed Little League Standout Had Pete Gray For An Instructor

BY JOHN McCALLUM

NEW YORK — (NEA) — It's because sports folks place so much emphasis on good physical condition that stories like the one which came out of Memphis in 1944 about the one-armed ball player entertaining the one-armed little boy rang a bell in American hearts.

That picture of one-armed outfielder Pete Gray standing at the plate in a batting stance, while under him stood one-armed 12-year-old Nelson Gary, Jr., of Los Angeles, was the most touching scene since the pictures taken on Lou Gehrig's final appearance at Yankee Stadium.

It all began when the Memphis Chicks got a wire from Little Gary's father: "My little boy has only one arm. Would Pete Gray send him a picture?"

Good-hearted Memphis sent for the little boy. He came out to see Pete play. Pete was sitting in the clubhouse all alone when the youngster first spotted him. "Hi, Pete," yelled Little Gary. "Want a kiss?" Pete picked the boy up and for the first time since cranking pro ball released a wide grin. From that moment on the end Little Gary have been pals.

It was an 1800-mile trip for the little fellow, who lost his arm in a house accident, but there was a rainbow at the end of it—his hero, Gray.

Nelson Gary, Sr., had put Gray up as a symbol to the child, to make him realize that he could play the games that other boys play and be one of them.

"I got a picture of Pete in a Memphis uniform and had it enlarged for Nelson's room," recalls Gary, Sr. "I also had a baseball suit just like Pete's made for him."

"Pete was wonderful with my son. He prescribed treatments to keep Nelson's armless shoulder from shriveling and sagging. Pete told my kid to kick a golf ball and roller skate and play ball. That seemed strange—using the legs to develop the shoulder—but Pete explained the violent action with the legs would cause the boy to roll and exercise the shoulder."

Pete is back in the slug hills of Hantecoke, Pa., again after a career which took him to Memphis, St. Louis, Toledo, Elmira and Dallas. And young Gary? He's a normal lad of 11 now, the star of the Sherman Oaks, Calif., Little League—bating, catching and running just like Pete did. "He's a hustler, the take-charge guy of the team," relates Sam Porter, California State Little League director. "Moreover, Gray's a tremendous morale booster for every boy in the league."

The other day Memphis staged a dramatic reunion between Pete and his protegee, just eight years after they first met.

Nelson has his heart set on playing in the Little League World Series.

"Nelson," explains his father,



GRAY AND GARY—Nelson Gary, 11, is the class of the Sherman Oaks, Calif., Little League, has come a long way since 1944 when Pete Gray, shown at left, started working with him. (NEA)

"has always promised Pete that some day Pete will be coming to watch him play. Nelson has never forgotten how Pete went out that night in Memphis eight years ago and belted out a triple and three singles to lead his team to a 12-inning 7-6 win—for my son."

When it was over, Pete walked back to the little fellow, held out his hand. "Now we're partners, aren't we?" he asked. "It was a night the young man will never forget."

Cardinals Seek First Place In Junior League

The Cardinals seek undisputed possession of first place today in a Brownsville Community Center junior league double header at Ringgold Park.

The Pirates, trailing both the Cards and Eagles in the standings, will provide the opposition.

Last Sunday the co-leaders split a double header to remain deadlocked for the top spot in the standings. A split today will put the Nelsons a tremendous morale booster for every boy in the league while a Cardinal sweep of the two games will put them in the lead by a single game.

BREAKS RECORD
MILWAUKEE — (NEA) — The 1952 American Bowling Congress tournament in Milwaukee established a new attendance record of 147,551.

Hammer's Home Run Wins For Phillies

NEW YORK — (AP) — Shortstop Granville Hammer, hitting only .298 at game time, smacked a home run off the left field foul screen in the seventh inning Saturday to give the Philadelphia Phillies a 3-2 victory over the New Giants.

PEDAL PUSHERS
NEW YORK — (NEA) — More than 26 per cent of the 20,000,000 bicycles owned and ridden in the United States are by adults.

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