

= Dave Bancroft =

David James Bancroft ( April 20 , 1891 ? October 9 , 1972 ) was an American baseball shortstop and manager . Nicknamed " Beauty " for his penchant for calling good pitches " beauties " , he played in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) from 1915 to 1930 , for the Philadelphia Phillies , New York Giants , Boston Braves , and Brooklyn Robins .

Born in Sioux City , Iowa , Bancroft played in minor league baseball from 1909 through 1914 , at which point he was bought by the Phillies . The Giants traded for Bancroft during the 1920 season . After playing for the Giants through the 1923 season , he became player @-@ manager of the Braves , serving in that role for four years . After he was fired by the Braves , Bancroft played two seasons for the Robins and ended his playing career with the Giants the next season . He coached with the Giants , then managed in the minor leagues and the All @-@ American Girls Professional Baseball League .

Bancroft was part of the Giants ' World Series championship teams in 1921 and 1922 . He was also a part of the National League pennant @-@ winning teams of 1915 and 1923 . Considered an excellent defensive shortstop and a smart ball player , Bancroft was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee in 1971 . However , his election was not without controversy , as the Veterans Committee included former teammates of Bancroft , resulting in charges of cronyism against the Veterans Committee .

= = Early life = =

Bancroft was born in Sioux City , Iowa , the youngest of three children of Ella ( née Gearhart ) and Frank Bancroft . Frank worked as a news vendor on the Milwaukee Railroad . Bancroft attended Hopkins Grade School and Sioux City High School .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career = = =

In the summer after his junior year of high school , at the age of 18 , Bancroft began his professional career in 1909 with the Duluth White Sox of the Class @-@ D Minnesota ? Wisconsin League . Bancroft did not have immediate success , registering a .210 batting average and .917 fielding percentage in 111 games , but he developed a positive reputation in the league . The Superior Blues acquired Bancroft at midseason , and he remained there through the 1911 season . Bancroft finished the 1911 season with a .273 batting average and 41 stolen bases , and the Blues won the league championship .

The Portland Beavers of the Class @-@ AA Pacific Coast League ( PCL ) drafted Bancroft from Superior for the 1912 season . He struggled in 1912 , batting .207 , and was demoted to the Portland Colts of the Class @-@ B Northwestern League in 1913 . After batting .244 for the Colts , he was promoted back to the Beavers in 1914 , where he batted .271 and drew comparisons to former Beavers star shortstop Roger Peckinpaugh as the team won the PCL championship . While with the Beavers , Bancroft earned the nickname " Beauty " , for his habit of referring to pitches as " beauties " while he batted .

= = = Major League Baseball = = =

= = = = Philadelphia Phillies = = = =

Before the 1915 season , the Philadelphia Phillies purchased Bancroft from Portland for \$ 5 @,@ 000 ( \$ 116 @,@ 957 in current dollar terms ) . Portland 's manager was quoted as saying he did

not expect Bancroft would last with the Phillies . In his rookie season , Bancroft finished second in the National League ( NL ) to teammate Gavvy Cravath in walks ( 77 ) , third in runs scored ( 85 ) , and tied Fred Luderus for sixth in home runs ( 7 ) . For his ability to hit with power from both sides of the plate , The Pittsburgh Press declared he was developing into " a second Honus Wagner " . The Phillies won their first NL pennant in 1915 , but lost the 1915 World Series to the Boston Red Sox . Bancroft 's offense contributed to the Phillies ' victory in Game 1 , as he had an infield hit leading to the Phillies ' winning run . Though the Phillies batted .182 as a team in the series , Bancroft batted .294 .

Bancroft batted third in the Phillies ' lineup in 1916 . However , he slumped to a .212 batting average that season , the lowest of his career . Despite his offensive struggles , he gained recognition for his fielding skills , and an injury to Bancroft late in the season contributed to the Phillies ' poor play late in the season .

Bancroft feuded with Cravath , who became the Phillies ' manager in 1919 . Before the 1919 season , Bancroft requested a trade to the Cincinnati Reds , but the trade request was not granted . John McGraw , manager of the New York Giants , coveted Bancroft due to his intelligent and hard @-@ nosed style of playing . Upon McGraw 's urging , the Giants traded Art Fletcher , Bill Hubbell and \$ 100 @,@ 000 ( \$ 1 @,@ 181 @,@ 229 in current dollar terms ) to the Phillies for Bancroft on June 7 , 1920 .

=== New York Giants ===

With the Giants , Bancroft was an able performer . His 102 runs scored during the 1920 season were second only to new Giants teammate George Burns . On June 1 , 1921 , in a game the Giants won against the Phillies , Bancroft hit for the cycle . His 153 games played in the 1921 season tied for second in the NL with several others , behind only Rogers Hornsby . He also tied teammate Frankie Frisch for second with 121 runs scored , behind only Hornsby , while his 193 hits were eighth @-@ best and his .389 on @-@ base percentage was ninth @-@ best in the NL . However , he only batted .152 in the 1921 World Series , which the Giants won over the New York Yankees in eight games .

Bancroft played in all 156 games in the 1922 season . He tied Jack Smith for third with 117 runs scored , finished third with 209 hits , and tied Bob O 'Farrell for second with 79 walks . His .321 batting average was his career @-@ high . He set an MLB record for the most fielding chances by a shortstop in a season ( 984 ) . Though the Giants swept the 1922 World Series from the Yankees in four games , he again had a poor World Series , batting .211 .

Serving as team captain , Bancroft began to suffer through leg injuries in 1923 . He was also hospitalized with a case of pneumonia during the season . Bancroft returned by the postseason , but batted .091 in the 1923 World Series , which the Yankees won in six games .

=== Boston Braves ===

With a young Travis Jackson ready to succeed Bancroft as the Giants ' shortstop , and with Bancroft desiring an opportunity to manage , McGraw traded Bancroft to the Boston Braves with Bill Cunningham and Casey Stengel for Joe Oeschger and Billy Southworth after the 1923 season . McGraw was also looking to aid his former star Christy Mathewson , who was then the General Manager of the Braves .

Bancroft served as player ? manager for the Braves for three seasons , from 1924 through 1927 . Upon becoming manager , he became the youngest manager in the National League ( NL ) . He missed time during the 1924 season with appendicitis . After finishing in last place in the eight @-@ team NL , Bancroft overhauled the Braves ' roster for the 1925 season . However , he lost the services of Rube Marquard and Joe Genewich , and the Braves finished in fifth place . Bancroft suggested that Bob Smith , ineffective as an infielder , become a pitcher ; Smith 's successes as a pitcher benefited the Braves ' starting rotation . The Braves lacked offense going into the 1926 season , but hoped their pitching and defense could lead them into contention . The Braves finished

in seventh place in the NL in 1926 and 1927 .

== = Brooklyn Robins and return to the Giants == = =

Failing to turn the Braves into a winning team , Bancroft requested his release from the team after the 1927 season . He signed with the Brooklyn Robins the same day . Stating that he was happy to no longer have the stress of managing , he played for the Robins for the 1928 and 1929 seasons . During his time with the Robins , he was seen as a possible successor to manager Wilbert Robinson .

The Robins released Bancroft after the 1929 season , and he returned to the Giants as assistant manager and coach , serving under McGraw . He ended his MLB playing career in 1930 . He remained as a coach , filling in for McGraw when he was too ill to manage . During the 1930 offseason , he led a team of MLB players on an exhibition trip to Cuba . When McGraw retired in 1932 , the Giants appointed Bill Terry as player @-@ manager . Surprised and disappointed that Terry was chosen over him , Bancroft left the Giants .

== = Later career == =

After retiring as a player , Bancroft managed in minor league baseball . He managed the Minneapolis Millers of the Class @-@ AA American Association in 1933 . Though the Millers reached the championship series , he was not retained for the 1934 season , as the Millers sought a player @-@ manager to help the team reduce costs .

After the season , Bancroft interviewed for the managerial job with the Cincinnati Reds ; however , the Reds hired O 'Farrell . Bancroft next managed the Sioux City Cowboys of the Class @-@ A Western League in 1936 . He appeared in one game for Sioux City as a player . Bancroft then managed the St. Cloud Rox of the Class @-@ C Northern League in 1947 . In the All @-@ American Girls Professional Baseball League , Bancroft managed the Chicago Colleens in 1948 and South Bend Blue Sox in 1949 and 1950 .

== = Legacy == =

Grover Cleveland Alexander , Bancroft 's teammate in Philadelphia , and Hughie Jennings , his coach in New York , considered Bancroft one of the best shortstops in MLB . Sportswriter Frank Graham called Bancroft " the greatest shortstop the Giants ever had and one of the greatest that ever lived . " Bancroft is still considered to be among the top fielders in baseball history . He was also considered one of the fastest shortstops in baseball . In contrast to other great fielding shortstops , Bancroft was noted for his offensive ability .

After failing to be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Baseball Writers ' Association of America ( BBWAA ) , the Veterans Committee elected Bancroft in 1971 . Former Giants teammates Terry and Frankie Frisch , who joined the Veterans Committee in 1967 , aided the elections of several of their former teammates . Terry and Frankie shepherded the selections of Jesse Haines in 1970 , Bancroft and Chick Hafey in 1971 , Ross Youngs in 1972 , George Kelly in 1973 , Jim Bottomley in 1974 , and Freddie Lindstrom in 1976 . Bancroft , along with some of the other selections made by Terry and Frisch , has been considered among the weakest of all inductees . According to the BBWAA , the Veterans Committee was not selective enough in choosing members . Charges of cronyism were levied against the Veterans Committee . This led to the Veterans Committee having its powers reduced in subsequent years .

Despite the criticism of players elected to the Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee in this period , Bancroft grades well in terms of sabermetric statistics . He finished fourth in the NL in Wins Above Replacement in 1920 ( 6 @.@ 5 ) and third in 1921 ( 7 @.@ 2 ) and 1922 ( 6 @.@ 0 ) . Bancroft was also inducted in The Des Moines Register 's Iowa Sports Hall of Fame .

== = Personal life == =

Bancroft married Edna Harriet Gisin while he played minor league baseball . They had no children and lived in Superior , Wisconsin for the remainder of their lives .

After retiring from baseball , Bancroft worked as a warehouse supervisor for Interprovincial Pipeline Company . He retired in 1956 and spent his later years hunting and fishing . Bancroft died on October 9 , 1972 in a hospital in Superior at the age of 81 .