

## #2: Born With a Silver Spoon? Hardly!

Delbert Eugene Webb was born in Fresno California on May 17, 1899. It's amazing how life's twists and turns change the course of so many lives. Del's story is one that is rife with the question; what if?

His parents, Ernest and Henrietta Forthcamp Webb, were well to do. His mother would become heiress to a small fortune. His dad, considered himself a farmer, rancher, contractor, road builder and ultimately president of a successful sand and gravel business. In addition, he was a pretty fair amateur baseball player; all skills he passed on to his son Del.

Life was good for the Webb family and one can only imagine had things not changed in 1915, what would have happened to Del and his future. Ernest lost almost everything when the company went bust and Del dropped out of high school after his freshman year.

Imagine if Del could have stayed in school, graduated and went to work for his father. He might have spent his life running the company and becoming the biggest sand and gravel contractor in all of California.

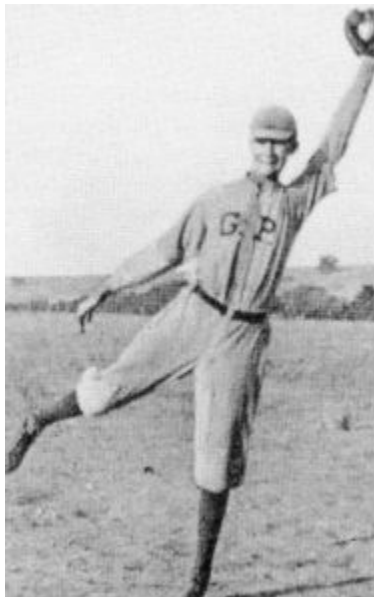
Imagine if he had been able to pursue his passion for baseball. Had he avoided the drudgery of working as a carpenter during the day and dedicated his life to developing his skills as an accomplished pitcher with a wicked fastball. He might have gone on and played professional baseball.



But alas, like baseball, life throws us lots of curve-balls. When the family went broke, Del left school, picked up his carpenter tools, his glove and bat and struck out on his own (pun intended). Even at 15 years of age, Del was fearless.

Opportunities were plentiful, and he was working days up and down the coast of California. The only prerequisite to the carpenter's jobs he took was there needed to be a baseball team he could play for at night and on weekends.

Without school in the way, he honed both his carpenter skills and his baseball prowess. He never looked back at being a high-school dropout, never regretted his decisions, focusing only on making the most of life. It was a trait he carried with him to the day he died.



In 1917, he went to work in the shipyards in Oakland CA. He was proud of the fact he was paid \$8 a day as a carpenter while the day laborers were making \$4 a day. He supplemented his income by playing baseball, picking up as much as \$2.50 per game.

He married his childhood sweetheart, Hazel Church in 1919. That marriage would last until 1952 and even after the divorce they remained good friends. In fact, Hazel owned a patio home in Sun City on the corner of Del Webb Blvd and Topaz until her family moved her back to California where she died in 1992.

Just when you think the Del E Webb story is on track, more tragedy struck...but that's the next segment of this amazing journey of a lifetime.

See you all next week.

Bill Pearson