

MY BASEBALL BOYS

Six of her sons played pro ball and two are stars—yet this isn't a baseball

story; it's a mother's warm recollections of a Depression family that had fun and found success

By MRS. VERNON BOYER
as told to Neal Russo



for a long time, and the bills piled up. Ken took just enough of his bonus for a down payment on his first car, and he gave the rest of it to us for the doctor. So what happened? It turned out that Vernon's trouble wasn't with his heart at all: an ulcer was what was bothering him.

When Cletis and Ronnie got bonuses for signing baseball contracts, Vernon and I got a new car. About four years ago we moved into a big nine-room house that used to belong to a doctor. A big house comes in handy for us because we have reunions. Last time we had 46 people in; we have a total of 22 grandchildren and one on the way—one is always on the way, it seems.

The girls do all the work because the boys are pretty good eaters, and I can't keep up with them all. I did make my own bread and lots of country rolls, and you should have seen them disappear. No wonder all my boys are over six feet tall. Vernon is 5 feet, 11. Cletis is crazy about homemade ice cream, fried chicken, and chocolate pie. I think he could eat a gallon of ice cream in a day.

WHEN KEN is coming, I always know just what to serve. He loves those beets I've been putting up in vinegar for years. "I can't get them anywhere but in Alba," he always says.

Sometimes Vernon and I visit the boys during the baseball season. They always want us to stay longer, but we don't like to get in their way, even though they say we're not any bother. But we want to make sure they keep their minds on their work. After all, baseball is their bread and butter.

For the same reason, we have never gone to visit our boys in Florida training. Besides, we've always had a few young ones at home, and we have never been keen on leaving youngsters home by themselves. Of course, we did get away last year to see Cletis hit that homer, and now that our baby is getting to be a young lady, maybe we'll see more games.

I'm sure my boys will be in more World Series. It certainly won't be like watching them out in that cornfield which Vernon worked so hard to lime and trim. But what if both the Cardinals and Yankees should win the pennant this year. Who would we cheer for then?

Well, anyway, we'd have a lot of fun, just like we always have had.



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