



"Baseball in Mobile" is a book about the local history of the game. The book was released Tuesday in book stores. A book signing will be at Hank Aaron Stadium on Jan. 29.

Photo submitted to Register

# Book highlights history of baseball in Mobile

► Book signing part of benefit for BayBears' Rookie League on Jan. 29

**By TOMMY HICKS**  
Sports Reporter

A book signing for "Baseball in Mobile," written by Joe Cuhaj and Tamra Carraway-Hinckle that focuses on the history of the game in the Port City, will take place at Hank Aaron Stadium on Jan. 29 from 6-9 p.m.

The book signing is part of an evening that will also feature the grand opening of the Z Technology Center in the Hank's Gas Light Park, as well as a silent auction that will benefit the Mobile BayBears' Rookie League, a youth baseball and softball league for inner-city youth.

Reservations are required for the function, which costs \$30 person and includes a signed copy of the book, food, beverages, band and participation in the silent auction. For reservations or information, phone the BayBears' office at 479-2327 (BEAR). BayBears general manager Bill Shanahan

as the BayBears gift shop at the stadium. It will be available at all area bookstores soon, Cuhaj said.

"We're really happy with the way it turned out," Cuhaj said of the book. "From the beginning, we didn't want to do a straight history with a lot of stats, but wanted to have a lot of photos and stories. We asked people for their help in getting photographs to use in the book and we had a great response."

"We're looking forward to (the evening). It's going to be great."

Cuhaj is a former Mobile radio broadcaster and sports announcer who grew up in New Jersey as a New York Mets fan watching games when Mobile's Amos Otis, Cleon Jones and Tommie Agee roamed the outfield. He now lives in Daphne. Carraway-Hinckle is a contributor to a monthly newsletter.

Included in the book are photos and stories that focus on the start of professional baseball in Mobile and some of the people who played, including Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, Milt and Frank Bolling, Billy Williams, Dave Stapleton, Eddie Stanky and Willie McCovey. Teams such as the Mobile Bears, Black Shippers and A's

by Hank Aaron, a baseball autographed by Nolan Ryan, a Jake Peavy autographed baseball and scorecards from the Mobile Bears teams.

The Rookie League has operated for six years, developed by the BayBears, Mobile Area Sports Commission, Mobile Housing Board and Prichard Housing Authority in an attempt to re-generate interest in baseball with inner-city youths. Shanahan said 45 youngsters took part in the league the first year, a figure that reached 500 last year. The Rookie League features organized teams in baseball and softball for boys and girls ages 8-18. The BayBears and local sponsors provide equipment, some instruction and a structured league in which to participate, as well as offer visits to The Hank for BayBears games.

The evening also serves as the grand opening of the Z Technology Center, a 4,000-square foot facility that is available for meetings, banquets, weddings, receptions, product launches, parties and other events year-round. The facility, sponsored by the locally owned company, Z Technology, features capacity for 250 people, wireless technology, high-speed Internet access and catering possibilities.

# Mobile plants seed of baseball in Cuba

► Researchers find that Spring Hill College graduate introduced game to island in 19th century

By **BRADLEY HANDWERGER**  
Sports Reporter

Cuba has a well-known tradition of baseball excellence.

What the average Joe may not know is that baseball was brought to the small Caribbean nation of Cuba straight from the fields of Mobile.

Joe Cuhaj, then, isn't your average Joe.

Cuhaj found that fact as well as lesser-known details about Mobile's baseball past and has been compiling them for a book due for release in November.

Along with Tamra Carraway-Hinckle, Cuhaj has spent three months putting together the 250-page book.

During their research, the two found a brief mention on a Web site of Mobile's introduction of baseball to Cuba.

"That was a surprise," the 45-year-old Cuhaj said. "It kind of fell into our laps."

He said they saw one sentence mentioning that Cuban baseball came from Mobile, so they began to do some research.

Carraway-Hinckle, 35, said that through an 1864 Spring Hill College graduate, Cuban-born Nemesio Guillo, baseball was taken from Mobile to the island.

When they tried to contact Spring Hill College, they were told they were the first ones to be able to come up with a name, Carraway-Hinckle said.

Cuhaj said the most active time period for baseball was the 1940s.

"That's when we had the championship Bears, and the Negro League and women's baseball," he said.

Arcadia Publishing of Mount Pleasant, S.C., approached Cuhaj, who has written two books about outdoor activities in Alabama, about writing a book on Mobile's baseball past, he said.

But he wanted some help, so he asked Carraway-Hinckle, a computer programmer who works at Adams Systems with Cuhaj, to join him.

"The history is so absolutely enormous," Carraway-Hinckle said. "When Joe approached me, I thought it would be somewhat superficial."

But there was much more to the history than she first thought.

"The Negro League, for me personally, has been fascinating," Carraway-Hinckle said. "What's interesting, especially in the South with the Jim Crow laws and segregation, we found out their conditions were so much worse than we thought,"

Despite that, she said, the passion for the game in the Negro League was impressive.

Another fact that the two authors said they've found interesting is that in the early 1900s, Major League teams used to make Mobile a regular stop on their schedules.

The Chicago Cubs played games against Spring Hill College and the Cincinnati Reds have played in Mobile before, Cuhaj said.

The two said finding information hasn't been a problem.

"I don't think it's been difficult," Carraway-Hinckle said. "Everyone we've contacted has bent over backwards."

"Unfortunately, a lot of key people we need to talk to are deceased or ill and unable to talk."

Cuhaj said they are still looking for pictures of Hartwell Field, Monroe Park or any teams from Mobile.

To contact them, e-mail Cuhaj at [jcu-haj@bellsouth.net](mailto:jcu-haj@bellsouth.net).