



From the Vault: At the old ballgame

October 06, 2021

By Stan Austin

This year was a rough one for Major League Baseball teams in the Tenth District. However, some might not know that 100 years ago a squad sponsored by the Kansas City Fed's head office experienced similar futility.

The "Federal Reserves" finished last in the Missouri-Kansas League for the 1921 season despite the efforts of team leader Matty Glandon, a lefty described as a former semi-pro pitcher making a comeback.

"Life in some cellars isn't what it's cracked up to be, and the Mo-Kan basement holds no charms for any team of ambitious ball players; hence the desire for Matty and his crew of banking experts to take the nearest elevator," *The Kansas City Times* said in a July 1921 article previewing a game against the Sweeney automotive trade school.

Bank-sponsored baseball teams were common in the 1920s, though news accounts of their success - or lack of it - aren't always available. A Federal Reserve team sometimes called the "Federalers" represented the Oklahoma City Branch but might not have done much winning. However, a Denver Branch team appears to have won two league championships early in that decade. Meanwhile, records are unclear regarding a possible Omaha Branch team.

Such Bank-sponsored baseball teams eventually were phased out. In more modern times, activities including basketball, bowling, golf and softball became popular among employees. Also, employees have represented the bank in athletic competitions such as the Corporate Challenge.

(Cynthia Edwards of the Kansas City Fed's Research Library contributed to this article.)
