

Baseball in Binghamton

By Samantha Carr

In 1968, New York State was working to extend Route 17, the state highway that now stretches for 397 miles, entering New York about 30 miles east of Binghamton, running the length of the Southern Tier and reentering Pennsylvania near Jamestown. It is the longest route in the state. Unfortunately, to reach that goal, Johnson Field, home to the Triple City Triplets in Binghamton, had to be destroyed.

So New York advanced with the highway project and Binghamton went without professional baseball for the next 23 years, despite the city's rich baseball history. But the Binghamton Mets brought that tradition back.

Baseball in Binghamton dates back to the late 1800s, when fans were entertained by the Binghamton Binguoes, beginning in 1885. The team spent a couple of seasons as the Binghamton Crickets and is known to have played until 1919.

The area's longest-tenured professional baseball team was the Triple City Triplets. The team existed for 45 years from 1923 to 1968 and was affiliated with the New York Yankees for most of its existence.

On March 23, 1923, the Eastern League was founded in the Arlington Hotel in Binghamton. At the time the league featured only six teams and played home to the Triplets.

Many Yankees greats spent time in Binghamton improving their skills before getting a chance at the major leagues, including Hall of Famer Whitey Ford, catcher Thurman Munson and 1960 World Series MVP Bobby Richardson.

The team also had short affiliations with the Kansas City Athletics and the Milwaukee Braves. The team was named for the "Triple Cities" of Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott. When Johnson Field had to be torn down, the team disbanded and fans in

Binghamton went without professional baseball for more than two decades.

Finally, following the 1991 season, the New York Mets moved their Double-A franchise from Williamsport, Pa. to Binghamton and the team began play in the Eastern League in 1992.

The Binghamton Mets are a minor league franchise for the major league team in Queens. A major league team's farm system is made up of several different levels that usually consist of the following hierarchy: Triple-A, Double-A, Class A and Rookie.

The Binghamton Mets play at NYSEG Stadium. It was built in 1991 when the team first moved to Binghamton, but was formerly called Binghamton Municipal Stadium. It seats 6,012 fans.

In the 1992 inaugural season for the Mets, the team finished with a 79-59 record and a league championship. In 2011, the Mets will compete in their 20th year in the Eastern League, hoping to bring home another championship.

Binghamton's rich baseball history continues today, thanks to the fan's desire to keep the game alive.



Binghamton Triplets, ca. 1952-53



Binghamton Bingo Team, 1892



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