

Doyle's gambling connections led him to the man who would be the franchise's financial mainstay for two decades.

Ferdinand A. Abell came from one of the older and more established families in the country. His uncle had founded the Baltimore Sun, which was then being run by Abell's first cousin. Abell himself ran a casino in the fashionable Newport, Rhode Island area, a casino frequented by Vanderbilts. He had other business interests throughout the Northeast. When the team took out its incorporation papers in March of 1883, Abell's name was listed first among the partners, although Byrne was the president of the team.

The ownership breakdown within the group is fuzzy. Neither *The Sporting News* nor *Sporting Life* were being published while the team was being organized. Most of what is known about ownership during this period comes from interviews done decades later and with at times conflicting details. In retrospect, it seems clear Abell and Doyle kicked in most of the money, Byrne a small amount of money and Taylor the lease. But Byrne, the team's president, and Taylor, its manager, were the men in the public eye and Abell's importance was not clear to the public for almost a decade.

While Taylor was trying to round up financial backers, the National League and the American Association had found their New York connections. Byrne's group settled on joining the Interstate Association, a minor league operating mostly in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and began play May 1, 1883. Their home field debut was delayed until May 12 while they waited for the grandstand at what they called Washington Park to be completed. It was at the southern corner of 3rd Street and 4th Avenue near the Gowanus canal in the Brooklyn neighborhood known as Red Hook. It was a working class, Irish neighborhood, well served by trolley and street car lines.

As president, Byrne performed all the jobs a team's front office staff would do today. He supervised tickets, concessions, ballpark acquisition and maintenance, sometimes delegating duties to a young employee named Charles Ebbets who joined the club the day of its first game at Washington Park. In addition, Byrne had significant input on trades and purchases, a job he shared with the team's manager.

Byrne was a small man, a Napoleon to his admirers. *The Sporting Life* described him as "a nervous little man, full of life and grit, a good talker, very earnest and aggressive..." Byrne was to grow into one of the most influential voices in the American Association and, later, the National League.

But for the moment, he was leading a team which was going nowhere in the Interstate Association. Then, in July, the league-leading Merritts of Camden, New Jersey folded. Byrne snapped up five of their best players and the Dodgers surged to the pennant. Flushed with this success, Byrne talked his way into the American Association for the 1884 season.

In the Association, Byrne's team was clearly outclassed, falling to ninth place in a 13-team league in 1884. Byrne realized that to compete at this higher level, he would need to be aggressive about acquiring better, and presumably more expensive, players. Taylor was replaced as manager before the 1885 season, and left the partnership around the same time. Abell and his money took a more prominent role in the team. Byrne scooped several players out of the National League's Cleveland franchise when it collapsed. He picked up more from the American Association's original New York Mets when that was disbanded after the 1887 season. By 1889, Byrne's strengthened team won the American Association.

In 1890, Byrne moved the Dodgers into the National League and into a highly competitive race of attendance. The New York metropolis boasted five major league teams in 1890. The new Players League, grown out of the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players, had created franchises in both Brooklyn and Manhattan. And the American Association had cobbled together a Brooklyn team to replace the Dodgers.

Adding the Players League Magnates

While other National League magnates refused to match Players League salary offers, Byrne paid. It was to be his salvation. With the 1889 American Association pennant-winning lineup virtually intact, Brooklyn swept to the National League flag in 1890, edging Chicago by six games. The victory enabled Byrne's team to lose less money, \$25,000, than any of the other New York teams. It also left Byrne's group in a strong negotiating position when

the Players League magnates began to sell out the Brotherhood that winter.

George Chauncey and his fellow Brooklyn Brotherhood owners had more ready cash, but that was their only asset. Byrne's group had the franchise in the more stable league, the better players and the better prospects.

Eventually, the deal was cut. The Chauncey group agreed to pay Abell, Byrne and Doyle \$30,000 in cash and to give them another \$10,000 out of future profits. This implied a value for the franchise of approximately \$80,000, although it now was capitalized at \$250,000. A new corporation was created, with Abell, Byrne and Doyle controlling 50.4% of the shares initially. Byrne remained as president and three of the five directors slots went to this triumvirate. Chauncey's group got the other two seats on the board and the remainder of the stock. In addition, Chauncey won the transfer of the Dodgers to Eastern Park on land he owned in the East New York section of Brooklyn, land served by trolley lines in which other members of the

Abell's dominance was also cemented by the withdrawal of Doyle from the partnership. Doyle's previously close relationship with Abell had deteriorated over the years. Ebbets said Doyle was frustrated by the poor attendance caused by Eastern Park's location even though the Dodgers were the reigning National League champions. Doyle wanted out and came up with an offer from two men The Sporting News identified only by their last names, Marx and Jolly, and their occupation, gamblers.

Abell the casino operator said he was dismayed at the idea of gambling men coming into baseball. More believably, he also was reported to be worried Doyle would convince his highly esteemed brother-in-law, Byrne, to go with him and start another American Association team in Brooklyn. Abell convinced Doyle to sell out to him in January 1892. Byrne also sold some shares to Abell during the early 1890s.

These years perhaps also saw the first appearance of the name Charles Ebbets on the rolls of the franchise's owners. Chauncey reportedly took a shine to Ebbets and sold him a small piece of his

own shares. It must have been a very small piece. By the mid-1890s, Abell told a reporter, he owned 51% of the team, Byrne 12% and the Chauncey group 37%.

The Gay Nineties weren't for the Brooklyn team. Attendance, which had hit 353,690 in 1889, averaged

184,000 during the 1890s. Ebbets, in later years, made it clear he thought the major problem was the location. East New York was just too far for most people. The mediocre quality of the team didn't help much either.

The team lost money virtually every year. Appeals were made to the shareholders to make up the deficits, but only Abell responded. Ebbets called him "the human war chest". The Rhode Island financier slowly hiked his share of the team. It wasn't as if he wanted to. Abell had a standing offer



The old and the new. Washington Park in 1910 with its predecessor in the background.

Chauncey group owned interests.

As if setting a pattern for Dodger ownership for the next quarter century, the Players League group didn't fulfill its part of the merger agreement. They paid only \$22,000 of the \$30,000 cash, and then began ceding stock to Abell and Byrne. When baseball profits weren't forthcoming in subsequent years, they ceded more stock to Abell rather than come up with the unpaid balance. Over the next few years, several smaller members of the Players League group would sell out to Abell.

to his partners that he would either buy them out or sell to them, but only a few of the smaller investors took up his offer, and then only to sell out. By 1897, he said, he had lost \$100,000 on his investment in the team. Almost all of the losses had occurred beginning with the Players League competition, but he had lost \$25,000 in the 1896 and 1897 seasons alone.

Abell is a somewhat vague figure. Reporters of the period loved to call him "Chesterfieldian," an adjective which conveyed upper class English regard for manners, rectitude and a gallant attitude toward women. The source of most of his wealth was referred to coyly. Ebbets skated around it by saying that when Abell joined team ownership he "knew a great deal about some sports, but nothing whatever about baseball." He developed a reputation of being hard to deal with, but Ebbets said that once you knew his ways, you could get yours.

The Emergence of Charles Ebbets

Charles Ebbets was taking a larger role in Brooklyn management. Born in Manhattan's Greenwich Village on October 29, 1859 of an old Dutch family, Ebbets' father had been a bank president and an associate of Alexander Cartwright, whose Knickerbocker Baseball Club had played an important role in codifying baseball's early rules.



He had left school early, joining an architectural firm where he worked as a draftsman on the Metropolitan Hotel and Niblo's Garden, a famous amusement center. He later went to work for publishing houses, selling

cheap fiction and keeping the books. All these skills were to stand him in good stead when he ran the Dodgers. At first, Ebbets was a bookkeeper but pitched in doing whatever Byrne needed. Soon, Byrne was delegating substantial tasks.

Ebbets was a marketing campaign all by himself. He was a joiner, founding the Old Nassau Athletic Club among others. He was active in the Masons, bicycling and Democratic Party politics. He participated in at least four bowling clubs and many secret societies. He had been elected a State Assemblyman and an alderman and lost an 1897

race for city councilman by literally the narrowest of margins, 23,183 votes to 23,182. He also lost a 1904 race for the State Senate when Democrats were buried in the Theodore Roosevelt landslide.

With the Dodgers' losses mounting in late 1897, Ebbets made his move. He arranged to borrow money to buy the Chauncey group's shares. The reported purchase price of \$25,000 implied a value around \$70,000 for the whole team. He then secured an option on Abell's shares. On January 1, 1898, he invited the reporters who covered the Brooklyn team to a dinner and announced that he now controlled 85% of the team. The remaining shares were owned by Byrne, who was on his deathbed. On Jan. 4, the man who had run the team since it was founded 15 years before died.

The results for Ebbets were mixed. On the positive side, he quickly assumed Byrne's role. With Abell's backing, he was elected president. He would exercise control over the team until his own death in 1925, while his stable of financial backers and partners changed several times.

But he didn't gain ownership. He didn't come anywhere near it. His option to buy Abell's controlling shares ran out Feb. 1 and Ebbets conceded he hadn't been able to raise the money to exercise it. Abell decided not to sell out to anyone else and continued to invest in the team. What happened to Ebbets' purchase of the Chauncey shares isn't clear, but by the next winter Ebbets owned only 18% of the team. Presumably Abell picked up some of these shares as well.

However, Ebbets' management was already bearing fruit. He moved the team back from Eastern Park to a location diagonally across the corner from the old Washington Park. It was a location much more convenient for fans. Ebbets' problem was finding \$25,000 to build a new ballpark. He'd hocked himself to buy out the old Players' League magnates and Abell was reluctant to sink any more money.

His white knights were trolley car magnates, including Al Johnson, once president of the Players' League. Johnson's Nassau Railroad and the Brooklyn Heights Railroad companies bought the site, graded it and built what became known as the New Washington Park for about \$15,000. In addition, they agreed to charge only \$5,000 in

annual rent, \$2,500 less than the team had paid in Eastern Park.

But Ebbets also needed a better club than the one which finished a dismal tenth in 1898. He saw the potential for what was called syndicate baseball. Essentially, syndicate ownership was control of more than one team by one management group. The owners would then move all the best players to the team in the better market, leaving the other team to languish.

Ebbets and Abell got in touch with Harry Von der Horst. Von der Horst was a Baltimore brewer who had owned the Orioles since they had been in the American Association with Byrne's teams. But even in the early and mid-1890s, when the Orioles were winning National League pennants and establishing a reputation as a cradle of managers and one of the great teams of all time, they hadn't made much money.

Ebbets and Von der Horst decided they could put Baltimore's better players - Wee Willie Keeler, Joe Kelley, Joe McGinnity and Dan McGann for example - with Brooklyn's population of fans and come up with a winner on and off the field. The two camps struck a deal to split ownership of both franchises. Baltimore manager Ned Hanlon would come to Brooklyn as manager and part-owner. Ebbets would remain as team president. Von der Horst and Hanlon would own 50%, as would Abell and Ebbets. Ebbets share was variously reported as 9% and 10%. Hanlon's was 10%.

The deal was an initial success in Brooklyn. The team won the 1899 National League race and drew 269,641 fans, 120% more than a year before. They won again in 1900, although attendance slumped to about 183,000 and Ebbets had to fend off rumors the team would be moved to Washington, DC. Then, the team fell on harder times. Brooklyn lost stars such as Keeler and McGinnity to the new American League, which had proclaimed itself a major league in 1901. Attendance fell. Ebbets' partners were skittish.

Von der Horst had become unhappy with Hanlon for reasons that remain obscure. His confidante on the team was now Ebbets. Early in 1905, Ebbets was able to persuade an ailing Von der Horst to sell him virtually all of his shares. Ebbets newest financial angel was a Brooklyn furniture manufacturer named Henry W. Medicus. Medicus

was an old friend of Ebbets. The two had been extremely active in Brooklyn bowling circles for years. Medicus was elected an officer of the team and kept some shares in his name, but he was willing to remain even further in the background than Von der Horst. This gave Ebbets effective control of the team, although his personal holdings were well less than 50%.

By the end of the year, Von der Horst had died and Hanlon had signed to manage the Cincinnati Reds. It wasn't until November of 1907 that Ebbets got rid of Hanlon completely. At that time, he and Medicus bought out Abell, Hanlon and the tiny holding of Von der Horst's estate. Ebbets announced he controlled 70% of the team, including 10% owned by Charles Ebbets Jr., while Medicus had the rest. Medicus again provided most of the cash, although the shares were in Ebbets' name. The transaction didn't go smoothly. Abell and Hanlon had deferred payment for some of their shares and had to sue Ebbets to get their money back. It was later reported that Medicus had paid \$30,000 for his shares, putting the franchise value around \$100,000.

The team entered a period of relative prosperity. Attendance was steady (averaging about 238,000 over the decade of the 1900s) even if the team wasn't performing very well on the field, it was apparently providing modest profits. In 1909, at a post-season banquet, the long-winded Ebbets reviewed the history of baseball and concluded the sport was still in its infancy. The audience dissolved in catcalls and Ebbets was nearly heckled off the stage. But, he believed what he said, and was emboldened to try his most enduring venture.

The general prosperity led Ebbets and other major league owners to deal with one of their most persistent problems - the quality of their facilities. Wooden grandstands were cheap to erect, but they crumbled, collapsed and burned. (A fire which destroyed the old Washington Park grandstand in May 1889 had occasioned the first appearance in The New York Times of the name Charles Ebbets, misspelled Ebbitts).

The second Washington Park was a wooden firetrap in an often smoky industrial area near the malodorous Gowanus Canal. Ebbets had added so many seats that he'd severely restricted foul territory. Its main advantage was its central location, but Brooklyn's center was moving south

and east. Ebbets had to choose his site carefully. He had put much of the blame for the Dodgers' bad decade in the 1890s on their move to Eastern Park - too far from the center of downtown Brooklyn. But now it was almost twenty years later and the city had grown enormously. The 1890 census, taken the year the Dodgers won their first National League pennant, showed 806,343 people in the city of Brooklyn. By the time of their sixth place finish in 1910, there were 1,634,351 people in the borough of Brooklyn.

Over a dozen years, Ebbets bought up plots of land in an area known as Pigtown. It was relatively cheap because of its population of squatters, but it was also along the path of rapid growth. His site, as Ebbets noted excitedly in a letter to August Herrmann, chairman of the National Commission, the three-man body which oversaw baseball before the commissioner system, was served by nine mass transit lines. "Between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 people can reach the new site by surface, subway or elevated in thirty to forty five minutes," Ebbets wrote. It was within easy reach of the older neighborhoods but poised to be in the middle of the borough's future expansion.

In January 1912, Ebbets announced he had put together the parcel and intended the Dodgers to have a modern ballpark on the site. Asked what he would call it, Ebbets said he didn't know, but the reporters began calling it Ebbets Field. Modest Charlie didn't object. The new stadium was a focus of civic pride for Brooklyn. In a magazine article, Ebbets crowed that his stadium would fill "all demands upon it for the next thirty years." Just to show he was on the cutting edge, he planned a parking garage capable of holding a few hundred automobiles or carriages.

Enter the McKeever Brothers

Ebbets began construction in March 1912. His public cost estimate was \$750,000 including land. But, in his letter to Herrmann, he gave a construction budget of about \$325,000 plus almost \$200,000 for the land, \$100,000 of which had already been paid. He estimated the money would be raised from a bond sale of \$275,000, a bank loan for \$100,000 that he would secure personally, and the team's \$50,000 profit from 1912. He was probably closer with the public estimate.

The 18,000-seat stadium was supposed to be finished by June, or maybe August, 1912. It wasn't. Excuses were given about undelivered materials and labor troubles. Apparently, though, the real trouble was money. In late August, Ebbets announced he had bought out Medicus and taken new partners. They were two politically well-connected brothers, Ed and Steve McKeever, who were in the construction business. Ebbets wouldn't say how big the brothers' stake was, but subsequent events were to prove they each had received 25% for their investment. The breakdown of stock blocs created by this transaction was to persist for almost 50 years.

The brothers McKeever had textbook careers on how the 19th century Irish got ahead. Steve was born in 1854 and Ed in 1859, both in Brooklyn, sons of a cobbler. Both received minimal education, Steve's being interrupted when he ran away in an unsuccessful attempt to join the Union Army as a Civil War drummer boy. He went to work as a horse boy for a trolley line down near the Fulton Street Ferry and was eventually apprenticed to a plumber. One of Steve's first contracts was for plumbing work on the Brooklyn Bridge. Ed also left school at 14, first working for a brass wholesaler and then joining with Michael J. Daly to form the Hudson River Broken Stone Company.

Within a few years, the brothers combined their expertise in plumbing and stone work to form the E.J. & S.W. McKeever Contracting Company. They had also learned well from Daly, who got government contracts through his excellent (Republican) political contacts. When Steve McKeever married in 1892, one of his ushers was Hugh McLaughlin, boss of the Brooklyn Democratic Party. The McKeever brothers built their company with lucrative government contracts to construct sewers and water mains and pave streets. Steve, the more gregarious of the two, was a former city alderman. Ed was more the businessman. With New York's growth, filling government construction contracts was an excellent business. In the early 20th century, the brothers moved into house construction. And, they had a lucrative city contract to take Brooklyn's garbage out to sea and dump it. When the McKeever brothers' identity was revealed, sportswriters outdid each other suggesting which of the Dodgers should be given one-way rides on the brothers' fleet of scows. The sale of the

garbage contract, for over \$1 million, provided the brothers with the cash to buy into the Dodgers.

How much the brothers paid for their shares isn't clear. Most of the contemporary sources refer to a figure of \$100,000, but The Sporting News obituary of Steve McKeever says it was \$250,000 and Robert Creamer's biography of Casey Stengel lists it as \$500,000. The Ebbets heirs said Ebbets had borrowed \$150,000 from the McKeevers and pledged 50 percent of the stock as collateral. When the costs of building the stadium caused him to miss payments, they took over the stock and turned some of their construction expertise to finishing the new stadium on time and at less cost.

The stadium was done in time for the 1913 season.

Attendance rose 43% to 347,000. With more income and the McKeevers' bankroll behind him, Ebbets brought Wilbert Robinson in as manager and began to invest in ballplayers. Casey Stengel arrived during the last year in Washington Park, joining Zack Wheat. In the next couple of years, Ebbets, Robinson and scout Larry Sutton added Jeff Pfeffer, Larry Cheney, Sherry Smith and Rube Marquard, the nucleus of the pitching staff that would win the 1916 pennant.

The pennant-winning season portended a prosperous era, which would leave Charles Ebbets with an estate worth over \$1 million. The improvement started with the quality of the team. A second pennant was added in 1920 and an unexpectedly fine team in 1924 led to a tight pennant race and another attendance record. It was helped by the new stadium, which was expanded to 22,000 seats for the 1917 season.

The second boost was the collapse of the Federal League after the 1915 season. The Federal League lasted two years and had little success either on or off the field. Ebbets had to compete with a Federal League franchise in Brooklyn, but did so

successfully at the gate. He even managed a \$30,000 profit in 1914 despite attendance falling by two-thirds, while the Brooklyn Federals lost \$800,000 in 1915. But, he also had to compete with the Feds on salaries. In 1916, many of those salaries



Ebbets Field 1920 World Series

persisted because of multi-year contracts used to tie up the better players.

The most important factor that helped Ebbets was the final victory of Sunday baseball. In New York, the ban on Sunday baseball was generally an upstate, rural, Republican, Protestant imposition on a metropolitan, Democratic, Catholic city. Nationally, it was a battle that had gone on for thirty years, with New York one of the last holdouts. In a day when many working people still labored six days a week, the ability to stage a game on their day off was a tremendous shot in the arm for attendance. Sunday baseball was finally legalized in 1919. Beginning that year, Ebbets' Field attendance would never again fall below the 300,000 Ebbets estimated he needed to break even.

The fourth factor was sheer population growth. By 1920, Brooklyn's population hit 2 million, an increase of 23% for the decade. By 1930, Brooklyn had passed Manhattan as the city's most populous borough. The South and East Brooklyn communities - Flatbush, Borough Park, Brownsville, Gravesend, Bensonhurst, New Lots, Bay Ridge, Brighton Beach - were leading the way. Perhaps more important, the percentage of foreign-

born Brooklynites had peaked at the 1910 census. The children of the immigrants were a growing percentage of the population and were starting to turn to baseball as part of their pledge of allegiance to their country. In the pennant-winning year of 1916, the Dodgers had drawn more than their share of National League fan's for the first time since 1901. They wouldn't do it again until Sunday

baseball arrived in 1919 but then did it every year but two until Walter O'Malley uprooted the team.

Next: The death of Charles Ebbets and ownership deadlock



Recently Published Research

This column highlights recently published articles on topics that may interest members of the Business of Baseball Committee. If you are aware of a source that publishes articles of interest to the readership, please alert me so that I can monitor it.

Cash, Jon David, "Chris Von der Ahe, the American Association versus National League Cultural War, and the Rise of Major-League Baseball," *Missouri Historical Review*, 109, no. 1 (October 2014), 41-61

No abstract available

Stride, Christopher, Ffion Thomas & Maureen M. Smith, "Ballplayer or Barrier Breaker? Branding through the Seven Statues of Jackie Robinson," *International Journal of the History of Sport*," Vol. 31, 17, 2014, 2164-2196

Jackie Robinson is the baseball player most frequently depicted by a public statue within the USA, a ubiquity explained by his unique position as barrier breaker of the Major League color bar. Utilizing a detailed inspection of statue designs,

locations and inscriptions, and comparisons with wider baseball statuary, Robinson's monuments reveal a distinctive set of cultural projections. These are commemorations distinguished by their age, location away from MLB ballparks, lack of action poses and their use of inscriptions consisting of platitudes or discourse on the subject's relationship with the statue's location as opposed to athletic achievement. Such characteristics indicate that Jackie Robinson statues neither fulfil the typical role of branding host communities through nostalgia and reflected glory nor that of reparations. Instead, Robinson's statues act as mediators of *reflected character* and as *tolerance branding*. By projecting the softer aspects of Robinson's personality, and promoting a local history of racial tolerance as much as Robinson's triumph over wider intolerance, the host communities are seeking to identify themselves with these twin positive attributes. However, in neglecting a visual connection with baseball in the design and interpretative material, Robinson's statuary marginalizes the relationship between his ability as a sportsman and his wider social impact.

Hersch, Philip L. and Jodi E. Pelkowski, "Does General Manager Networking Affect Choice of Trade Partners in Major League Baseball?" *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol. 15, 6, December, 2014, 601-616

It is not unusual for baseball general managers (GMs) to have network ties to their potential trading partners, either to the other teams' GMs or to the teams themselves. This article investigates whether these connections affect the degree of trading activity between specific team pairs. Estimates indicate that connections between GMs and commonalities between GMs enhance trade, although in absolute terms the effects are small. However, a GM simply having a professional tie to another team does not have any statistically significant effect. On the whole, our results are

consistent with those found in the socioeconomic networking literature.

Ahn, Seung C., and Young H. Lee, "Major League Baseball Attendance: Long-Term Analysis Using Factor Models," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol. 15, 5, October, 2014, 451-477

Although Major League Baseball has a long history, most studies of attendance have focused on recent years because important explanatory data, such as ticket prices, are often missing for earlier periods. This study fills gaps in the data by analyzing individual team attendance records between 1904 and 2012. If important missing variables are determined using common factors that can influence between-team attendance, the attendance function can be estimated by a panel factor model. Our results indicate that the determinants of fans' attendance decisions have changed over time. In earlier years (1904-1957), the home team's win record was the only significant team characteristic influencing attendance. However, in recent years (1958-2012), outcome uncertainty, size, and quality of the stadium, and playing styles have also influenced fan attendance.

Ormiston, Russell, "Attendance Effects of Star Pitchers in Major League Baseball," *Journal of Sports Economics*, Vol 15, 4, August, 2014, 338-364

While the determinants of Major League Baseball attendance have been thoroughly researched, the literature is conspicuously incomplete in regard to the attendance effects of star players. Addressing two concerns in the research, this study develops two measures of players' star power and, analyzing within-season fluctuations in game attendance from 1969-2010, demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship between attendance and varying gradations of star power of the home and visiting teams' starting pitchers. Using over four decades worth of data, the results of this study also suggest that fan responsiveness to star players has declined considerably over time.

Jones, Kevin and L. Mara Dodge, "A Brief History of Fenway Park," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 42, no. 2 (Summer 2014), 2-13.

No abstract available

Weir, Robert E., "Constructing Legends: Pumpsie Green, Race, and the Boston Red Sox," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 42, no. 2 (Summer 2014),.

No abstract available

Fraire, John, "Mexicans Playing Baseball in Indiana Harbor, 1925-1942," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 110, no. 2 (June 2014), 120-145

The article discusses the history of Mexican American men's baseball and women's softball players and teams in the Indiana Harbor district of East Chicago, Indiana, between 1925 and 1942. It examines the significance of baseball in developing a dual Mexican and American identity among Mexican Americans, describes the Indiana Harbor community's economic and social conditions, particularly the significance of the steel industry there, and the baseball team known as Los Gallos and the softball team known as Las Gallinas.

Hauptert, Michael, "New York, New York: A Financial History of Two Baseball Teams," *NINE* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2014), 68-85

In 2012 the New York Mets turned fifty. In March of that year *Forbes* magazine published their annual valuations of Major League Baseball (MLB) franchises. They estimated the New York Mets to be worth \$719 million and the Yankees \$1.85 billion. The value of the Yankees franchise is second only to that of the Dallas Cowboys (\$2.1 billion) among North American team sports franchises. In 2011 the Yankees, boasting a roster studded with All Stars earning a collective \$210 million, won the American League Eastern Division title with a record of 97-65. The Mets, meanwhile, finished in fourth place, 25 games behind the Phillies. The billion dollar difference in franchise value between the teams is the greatest it has ever been in the 50 year existence of the Mets. This is a story about the value of these two franchises. How they compare over time, and why they differ by so much. Why two teams, both located in the biggest baseball market in the country, seem to have experienced such different fates.

1944: A New Era Without Landis

By Joe Marren

The Business of Baseball Committee is currently writing a book on the history of the winter meetings. This article is an excerpt from that book.

Introduction and Context

As World War II seemed to be winding down (even though the Battle of the Bulge in Europe was only days away, and the Pacific invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa were still in the future), recovery from the war was the watchword at the 43rd annual baseball winter meetings. The nation was beginning to think about being at peace again, and the various paths to re-adjustment were being planned in all walks of life. For baseball, normalcy meant the winter meetings, as the minors and their major league brethren met in Buffalo's Hotel Statler from December 6-8, while the major leaguers convened by themselves in New York City's Hotel New Yorker on December 11-13.

But a sense of loss would pervade the normal business routine for the expected 1,000 baseball men at the meetings. It would be the first winter meetings since 1920 that would not be chaired by Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who died November 25, 1944, in Chicago. Landis had been chosen to be the first commissioner in late 1920 and formally assumed his duties on January



Kenesaw Mountain Landis

12, 1921. And, just as in 1920, organized baseball would have to find at least a temporary way to run things until it decided who – or what group – would be in charge. Expediency had to be paramount, as baseball writers reminded the moguls, because the Major-Minor League Agreement was set to expire in January 1945 and the Major League Agreement would end in January 1946, though baseball officials had given a 10-member committee until February 6, 1945, to draft a major league pact.

Governance wasn't the only thing penciled on and off various agendas; there was good news and bad news and the same-old news given to minor league owners and executives at their meeting. The

seemingly annual problem of what to do about territorial incursions and even the threat of such incursions by the major leagues was the same-old news that was discussed. The bad news, as might be expected, was financial -- 1944 expenses were \$35,588 more than revenues and, as a result, the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues were forced to dip into a reserve fund to balance the books. The good news, on the other hand, was that the baseball executives were looking ahead to the end of the war and anticipating a future that would be joyous, even in Mudville. In particular, the meetings in Buffalo had "the greatest optimism" among the minors since before the start of the war, and maybe that's why it was the most attended meeting since the 1941 confab in Jacksonville.

There were 10 leagues in the association that year, the same number that started play in 1944 (and one more than '43), and there was talk of two to four more leagues resuming play as the nation hoped to shift from war to peace in the upcoming spring and summer of 1945. William G. Branham, president of the association, believed this indicated not only stability but also the possibility of growth. He reported that although Winston-Salem of the Piedmont League and Jackson of the Southeastern League had suspended play in 1944, the 15 leagues that had suspended active status during the war had renewed their membership and protection fees. So the future of baseball held promise.

Minors Seek Security

The problem with that promise, though, was that it might mean growth – and therefore competition for the minors – by the majors. Such a paradox begs an explanation: Major league baseball was still predominantly a northeastern sport in 1944, with St. Louis serving as both the southernmost and westernmost city. The minor league magnates, worried about post-war territorial incursions into Los Angeles, San Francisco, Baltimore and Buffalo, proposed 13 amendments to the Major-Minor Agreement. One of the amendments put forth, by Pacific Coast League President Clarence Rowland, would require the major league team to compensate both the affected minor league owner and the league itself, as well as give that owner an option to somehow be involved in operating the major league franchise.

However, the majors didn't take any action on that amendment at its meeting the following week in New York City. Nor did it agree to a hike in draft prices paid for minor league players. Presidents Rowland, Frank Shaughnessy (International League) and George Trautman (American Association) of the three AA leagues (then the highest classification) said in Buffalo that they wanted \$10,000 per player instead of the current \$7,500 in compensation when a player was drafted. Lower leagues would consequently also be paid one-third more.

The minors also wanted a say in who would rule the baseball world in the wake of Landis' death. But who – or what – would be the boss was a matter of some controversy at the meetings. At first a plan was floated for a triumvirate made up of American League President William Harridge, National League President Ford Frick, and secretary to the commissioner Leslie O'Connor to run things. This was the way baseball had been structured before the Office of the Commissioner was established, and opposition came from powerful owners and executives such as Clark Griffith of the Washington Senators, Horace Stoneham of the New York Giants, Ed Barrow of the New York Yankees and Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

The sport was, in fact, being run by Harridge, Frick and O'Connor at this time. No action was taken during the meetings on a successor to Landis, but what really got the major and minor league owners arguing was whether to pick a baseball man for the job, or look to an outsider to be the next commissioner. Griffith, Stoneham and Rickey favored looking outside the sport while Barrow favored promoting from within. As the reasoning went, Griffith felt that someone from outside the sport would guarantee that baseball didn't return to the pre-Landis commission days, when the sport was almost ruined by gamblers and other unsavory elements. As such, Griffith said he wanted someone with a national reputation "who carries the confidence of the public." Others, however, thought that, with postwar changes on the horizon, an insider was really needed. And yet another argument was that Landis had wielded too much power and baseball should simply revert to the three-man commission it had utilized prior to Landis' appointment.

But there was one thing everyone agreed on -- at least publicly -- and that was the unanimous election of Landis to the Hall of Fame, which took place on December 10, just two weeks after his death. He was the first selection to the Hall since Rogers Hornsby's induction in 1942 and the fifth non-player.

Football Competition

Branch Rickey had warned about a football incursion into the baseball season back in 1943, saying that one day football would start as early as Labor Day and run for months. So at the meeting in Buffalo a committee was named to meet with professional football owners to try to work out a solution to what baseball termed the encroachment of pro football into the baseball season. With the anticipated addition of the All-American Football Conference in 1946 to compete with the National Football League, the baseball powers worried that football was taking up September and October dates in their ballparks. In response to the scheduling pressure, the majors passed the Barrow Regulation at their meeting in New York. At that time, many football teams rented the hometown baseball stadium for their games, and the Barrow Regulation prohibited the major league club from renting its stadium to a football team as long as the baseball club had a chance of playing in the World Series. (Remember, there were no league playoffs in baseball at the time. Unless there was a rare tie in the standings, something that had actually not yet occurred, the top team in each league would automatically meet in the World Series in late September or early October.) So the Barrow rule would effectively deny a football team in a major league city a place to play until mid-October.

Those in baseball thought this was only fair, while football people begged to differ, charging that baseball began its season too early and ended too late. Football owners would think about building their own parks, they told reporters. But baseball owners didn't take that threat seriously, the newspapers reported, since the cost of building a stadium would be prohibitive and also not economical since it would only be used a handful of times in the football year. Or so went the quaint thinking at the time.

Night Ball

Stadium usage didn't only center around competition with football, there was also the issue of nighttime baseball games; specifically, who would play them and how often. Before the meetings, Griffith said he wanted a blank check to play as many games as possible at night. Others, such as Rickey and Barrow, wanted to set a limit on how many night games a team could schedule in a season. The two St. Louis teams – the Cardinals and the Browns – were allowed an unlimited number of night games, except on holidays and Sundays, yet their respective executives said they didn't know if they would take advantage of the ruling that had been handed down by Judge Landis.

There were a host of reasons why night baseball was a topic: no stadiums added lights during the war, so only those with lights in the 1930s were capable of holding night games; electricity was needed for the war effort in manufacturing cities; municipalities on the Atlantic Ocean tried to keep illumination down so as not to silhouette shipping for German submarines; and, frankly, tradition. St. Louis was one of the cities with stadium lights and it wasn't on an ocean.

The upshot was that each team playing in a stadium equipped with lights was allowed to schedule as many night games as it wished for 1945, though holiday and Sunday games were still required to be played during the day, and the host team was also required to get formal consent from the visitors to play at night.

Manpower Issues

Regardless of when games were played, it was revealed during the meetings that who might be playing them could prove to be an issue in 1945. The Selective Service wanted to reclassify all men between the ages of 26 and 37 to make more of them eligible for the military draft if they weren't working in an essential industry. While it was widely believed the ruling was put in place to help keep the vital war production factories busy rolling out the needed tanks, guns, ships and ammo, what especially worried baseball men was that the War Department had already told the Selective Service it would be needing 60,000 to 80,000 more men in January and February. And that was only part of the whammy: Selective Service officials said that most men younger than 30 who had been classified 4-F prior to February 1 would be re-examined. As

The Sporting News pointed out, every major league team had several 4-F players and that, combined with the War Department's decision to more closely scrutinize who was being discharged, meant fewer athletes might be available to play.

Consequently, player deals were at a minimum during the '44 winter meetings. On the other hand, when the war was over the clubs would have to ponder what to do with their returning vets, so it was decided at the meetings to temporarily increase player limits after the war.

All this uncertainty about who could play, and when, had major league magnates wondering if the players would at some point try to unionize; there was already a report circulating at the meetings that Pacific Coast League players had begun talking with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.), a federation of unions.

Postwar Planning

As the end of the war seemed to be in sight, the formal disbanding of the Postwar Planning Committee took place in Buffalo, though that didn't mean baseball stopped planning for the future. The owners and executives at the meeting discussed several committee concerns such as increasing fan interest by realigning several leagues and building better parks with lighting and public address systems. No formal action was taken on these two matters, but two other suggestions were adopted: the re-establishment of a promotions department to deal with the press, and the beginning of a re-examination of the rules and a re-training of umpires with the creation of an Office of Umpire Adviser for the National Association. It was voted to fund the umpire adviser job for two years at a salary of \$6,500 per year, although no one was named to the post. Among other duties, the adviser would be expected to work with the leagues to offer pre-season clinics, keep tabs on umpire compliments and complaints, and rank umpires by ability at the end of every season. However, the



Happy Chandler

major leagues, in their New York meeting, did not vote to fund the position.

The Postwar Planning Committee had also been charged with looking into the future of baseball and, in some cases, it did not like what it saw. For instance, it thought that high school baseball was in sharp decline because there were fewer teams and players. According to a report presented at the Buffalo meeting, there were 40 percent fewer student-athletes playing baseball than there had been five years previously. To try and help reverse that dismal number, Warren Giles, general manager of the Cincinnati Reds, advocated a series of clinics in 15 states, taught by major leaguers. Although the minors voted to set aside \$5,000 for the clinics as well as a training film, the majors did not fund that project either.

Leagues and Players

Baseball wasn't giving just high schoolers the cold shoulder, it also apparently wasn't planning on going international. Representatives from the Mexican National Baseball League were in Buffalo in hopes of gaining recognition by the association.

"We have been practically assured of recognition by Bramham, and our six league cities are planning to go in for a complete program, including lights for night games," said L.A. Michaels, vice president of the El Paso Texans. Michaels was in Buffalo for the meeting with Ernest Calderon, director of the Chihuahua team, and Frank Montes, vice president of the Juarez team.

However, no action was taken even though Rogers Hornsby endorsed the idea, and published reports said Bramham had promised league officials a Class B recognition. (Hornsby was at the meeting in Buffalo in an unsuccessful attempt to buy the minor-league Minneapolis team from owner Mike Kelley.)

The winter meetings were usually Rumor Central for big trades and other player moves, and once in a while some of those rumors actually came true. But trading at the 1944 meetings was scant. There were only four deals worked out, three of them involving the Chicago White Sox:

- The Sox sent left-handed pitcher Jake Wade (2-4 in 1944; he wound up with a 27-40 career mark) to the New York Yankees for lefty pitcher Johnny Johnson (0-2 in '44; 3-2

lifetime).

- They also sent shortstop/second baseman Jim Webb to the Detroit Tigers for utility infielder Joe Orengo. "Skeeter" Webb retired after the 1948 season with a .219 batting average in 699 games, while Orengo called it a career at the end of 1945, finishing with a .238 batting average in 366 games.
- Their last trade had outfielder Ed Carnett going to Cleveland for outfielder Oris Hockett. Carnett played in 30 games for the Indians and ended his career in 1945 with a .268 batting average in 158 games. Hockett, who was an All Star in 1944, also saw 1945 prove to be his last year in the majors, as he finished with a .276 batting average in 551 games.
- In addition, the Cincinnati Reds sent outfielder Tony Criscola to the Pacific Coast League's San Diego team. Criscola never made it back to the majors and his final career stats show a .248 batting average in 184 games.

And finally, it was announced that the 1945 All-Star Game would be held on Tuesday, July 10, in Boston's Fenway Park. Since Fenway didn't have lights at the time, it would be the first time since the 1941 game in Detroit that the All-Star Game would be played in daylight.

Consequences

With the death of Landis, a whole new era opened for baseball near the middle of the 20th century. Just as some baseball owners feared, football would one day grow and come to rival baseball for the nation's entertainment dollars and attention. Much of that had to do with television, of course, which was able to mold football while encountering old-fashioned resistance with baseball.

Buffalo never again hosted the winter meetings. Its place of prominence in the nation's manufacturing heartland declined to afterthought as many of its industries withered or moved from the Rustbelt to the Sunbelt for a variety of reasons, including climate and a "perfect storm" of economic forces beyond its control.

Baseball was also buffeted by change in the years after the war. It painfully showed the nation how to keep its promises of equality for all as Jackie Robinson joined the boys of summer in their games. Just a generation of players later, as baseball and the nation still struggled with civil rights, free agency helped to open the vaults as players and agents could now negotiate with owners from a position of strength.

Baseball also expanded to the West Coast and into Canada. St. Louis was now the middle ground between the coasts and no longer the metaphorical end of the line with the majors going no further west or south. But expansion, free agency (and, yes, collusion), and integration were matters for other winter meetings in other cities.

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A Call for Submissions

The Business of Baseball Committee has more than 700 registered members. We are sure many of you are doing research that would be of interest to your fellow SABR members. Please consider sharing your work in the newsletter, which is especially well suited to preliminary versions of work you may wish to publish elsewhere. *Outside the Lines* is an excellent outlet for the publication of your research on any topic of baseball that occurs "outside" the playing field. Submissions can be directed to Mike Hauptert at mhauptert@uwlax.edu.

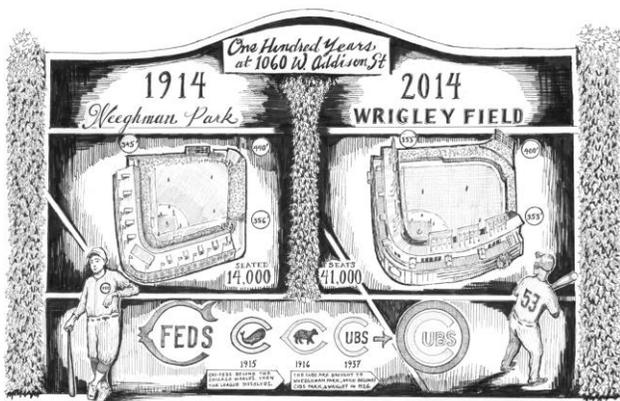


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One Hundred Years Ago



The Construction of Wrigley Field

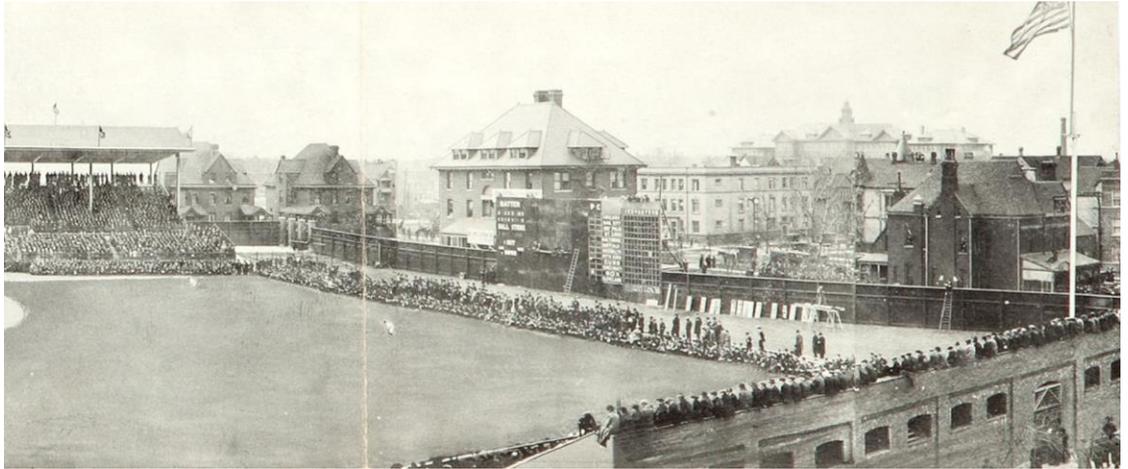
By Mike Hauptert

Charles Weeghman built a ballpark. The team it was built for didn't last, but the ballpark did, and it is now 100, the second oldest stadium in the majors.

Wrigley Field, as it was christened in 1927, has been host to NFL and NCAA football games, the National Hockey League, boxing matches, wrestling championships, ski jumping, rodeos,

soccer, concerts, lacrosse, an orchestra performance, basketball, vaudeville shows, three All Star games, World Series games in 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, and as every Cubs fan knows, for the last time in 1945.

The ballpark was constructed for a cost of \$250,000 in 1914. Even after adjusting for inflation this comes to only about six million dollars, the cost of a few luxury boxes in one of today's stadiums. The original capacity was only 14,000, which has been expanded to more than 41,000 over the years. The ballpark is currently undergoing a renovation, expected to be completed over the next three years, that will cost upwards of half a billion dollars. It will update the park, add more signage and a Jumbotron, but only five additional seats. The expansion will block the views of some of the storied rooftop seats located across the street. This has provided much drama and controversy, but



Note the location of the house beyond the left field fence in comparison to the photo below

been home to the seminary since 1891. The location was no longer in a secluded area far from the bustle of downtown, but in one of the fastest growing residential sections of the city. The

seminary wanted to move to a quieter locale.

The plot of land was originally owned by developer Joseph Sheffield, after whom the street outside of the right field bleachers is named. It was acquired by Lutheran minister William Passavant, who constructed St. Mark's Lutheran Church on the land in 1874. The church eventually grew into the seminary.



One of the seminary buildings stood in left field throughout the 1914 season

turns out not to be a new issue.

In the spring of 1914, 2000 neighbors signed a petition protesting the construction of the new ballpark proposed for the former site of the Chicago Theological Lutheran Seminary. The plot of land that would eventually become Wrigley Field had

In June of 1909 the seminary sold the land and its buildings to brothers Joe and Mike Cantillon, and Charles Havenor for \$175,000. Havenor owned the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association (AA), Mike Cantillon owned the AA's Minneapolis Millers, and his brother Joe was manager of the Washington Senators. The group was plotting to erect a ballpark to move an AA team to town, with the

possibility of upgrading the minor league to major league status. The land was the right size and in the right location for those plans.

At the time, the north side of Chicago had a population of about 500,000, certainly large enough to support a major league team, not to mention the

minor league team that was first envisioned for the site. Despite the large population, it was still smaller than either the south side, occupied by the White Sox, or the west side, which the Cubs called home. Chicago was a large and growing city at the turn of the century. In fact, only New York City boasted a population greater than Chicago's west side alone.

Federal League debuted in 1913 as a minor league, with franchises in six cities. The Chicago entry played at DePaul University's athletic field that year.

Charles H. "Lucky Charlie" Weeghman, known around Chicago as the "lunchroom king" for his profitable string of downtown lunch counters, was eager to own a professional baseball team, but was not initially committed to the FL. He tried to buy the Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals to no avail. He was even amenable to owning a Chicago based franchise in the AA, but Cubs President Charles Murphy did not want the competition and foiled that attempt. Ultimately, James Gilmore, president of the Federal League, convinced Weeghman and his seemingly unlimited bankroll to invest in the league by taking over the Chicago franchise. As his partner, Weeghman had William Walker, who made his fortune in the wholesale fish business. The partners paid \$25,000 for the franchise and hired architect Zachary Taylor Davis to design a ballpark. He seemed an obvious choice, having designed the recently completed Comiskey Park on the south side of town.

Weeghman agreed to lease the seminary land from the Cantillons, who by this time had shifted their ownership to the name of Archambault. The 99 year lease was signed on January 22, 1914. The terms were \$16,000 per year for ten years, rising to \$18,000 annually for the next ten, and \$20,000 per year for the last 79 years. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on March 4, and then a furious rush was made to complete the park in time for the April 23rd opener. The single deck grandstand stretched from right field, around home plate, to the left field corner, and featured a press box on the top of the roof immediately behind home plate. The presence of two remaining seminary buildings prevented any left field stands, resulting in a fence running across left and center field to the right field bleachers. A scoreboard stood in left field, which was a mere 310 feet from home plate.

Weeghman promised that his park would be an upgrade from the poor conditions fans were used to

FEDERAL LEAGUE

Opening Game Federal League
TODAY April 23d
At 3:00 P. M.
Kansas City vs. Chicago

BATTERIES: Kansas City, Packard and Easterly Chicago, Hendrix and Wilson

A Message from President Charles Weeghman

Tomorrow the Chicago Federal League (Weeghman Park) opens its gates to the Chicago sports-loving public. This great park, dedicated to clean sport and the furtherance of our national game is sure, not only its dignity as in our hands, but the fact that Chicago fans are champions of fair play, believing that the great North Side of this city needs a big League Ball Park, believing that the base ball public will respond to a

Chicago Ball Team Owned by Chicagoans

I have devoted my time, my energy and my money to help bring this project to the point where it stands today. What success I have attained is a business man's duty to the loyal patronage of the general public, and in this effort to further clean sport and to bring to a large city a national game, I am doing no more than my natural loyalty to the community demands.

Let's start this fine season of the Chicago Federal League Team off right with a record breaking crowd. Many spectators will be there to witness the first ball-throwing of the new team. Many thousands of fans will be there. You will be there. You will see a great game if you see it.

"Be a Fed Fan"

Weeghman
 President Chicago Federal League Ball Club

Go Fare From All Parts of the City
 Reduced Fare on "L" Lines and "C" Lines
 One dollar to the park
 Band of Fifty Pieces

In 1910 two more partners joined the Cantillon-Havenor ownership: wealthy Milwaukee businessmen E.T. Harmon and Edward Archambault. Archambault was part-owner of the Minneapolis Millers of the AA and the Cantillons' brother-in-law. Havenor sold his share to the others shortly before his death in the spring of 1912. At the time the property was still undeveloped and the seminary buildings still stood, having been converted to residential units.

The challenge to MLB from the AA never developed. But the Federal League (FL) did. The



at the Cubs home park, the West Side Grounds. He provided comfortable restrooms, polite ushers, and clean seats and aisles. He sold concessions from behind the stands to cut down on vendors blocking fan views (his was the first ballpark to have concession stands) and cleaned the park before every game (another novelty). Weeghman was also well ahead of his time in regard to promotions. Every Friday was ladies day, and he was the first to give away items to fans. For the home opener each fan received a cap and pennant with the ChiFed logo.

Opening day was a wild success. The park gates had to be closed at 2:30, a half hour before the start of the game, because it was already filled beyond capacity. Fans who had been denied tickets clambered to the top of apartment buildings across the street to gain a vantage point, beginning a tradition that exists to this day. The crowd was estimated at 22,000 to 25,000, not counting those on the rooftops.

The opening day gala featured a fifty piece band, a giant American flag, a 21 gun salute, speeches, flowers, parades, a (staged) bullfight, and eventually even a ballgame. The opening pitch was supposed to have been made by Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr., but he was a no show, so city counselor William Sexton did the honors. The

ChiFeds prevailed 9-1 over Kansas City. Catcher Art Wilson popped two home runs, one of them landing out on Waveland Ave., starting another tradition when schoolboys raced to retrieve the rare souvenir.

The first three games at Weeghman Park produced a total of 35 runs and nine home runs, decidedly undeadball like figures, prompting Weeghman to order the left field wall be moved back. It took 100 workers to make the quick switch, but for the next series, which began two days later, the left field line was 327 feet. It would have been moved back further, but there was still a large brick house behind left field that would not be vacated until May. In order to move the wall back as far as possible, the porch was removed from the back of the house and the back wall of the house became part of the left field wall for the remainder of the season.

The house was torn down before the 1915 season and the wall moved back again to 340 feet, and bleachers were erected behind it. The right field bleachers, which had held only 1500, were torn down, but the park capacity still increased to about 18,000. The cost of the renovations was \$17,000.

After the 1914 season Weeghman challenged the winner of the city championship series between the



Construction of Weeghman Park was completed in 52 days



The West Side Grounds, home of the Cubs from 1893-1915

Sox and Cubs to a series, but was rebuffed. He then declared the ChiFeds the city champs, ignoring the challenge put forward by Rube Foster, who offered to have his Negro League Giants play for the city championship against Weeghman's squad.

Chicago won the FL championship in 1915 and challenged the World Series champion Red Sox to a playoff, which of course was ignored. They then declared themselves the true champions of professional baseball, to date the only residents of Wrigley Field to be designated thusly.

As part of the peace settlement following the 1915 season Phil Ball, owner of the St. Louis FL franchise, was allowed to purchase the St. Louis Browns and Charles Weeghman purchased the Cubs. He paid \$500,000 for the team after putting together a consortium of some of Chicago's wealthiest tycoons, including meat-packing maven J. Ogden Armour, Julius Rosenwald (of Sears Roebuck fame), Albert Lasker, Charles McCullough, John R. Thompson, his main rival in the lunch room arena, and eventual owner William Wrigley.

By 1920 Weeghman was out of organized baseball. He had sold his interest in the Cubs to Wrigley after the decline in his restaurant business compounded his losses in the FL, forcing him into financial ruin. After Weeghman's departure, the field was known as Cubs Park, officially taking the name Wrigley Field in 1927. That year the second deck was finally added, increasing seating capacity to 38,400,

helping the Cubs become the first team to top one million in season attendance.

The Cubs made their debut in Weeghman Park on April 20, 1916. The two year old modern steel and concrete stadium was a major upgrade from the rickety West Side Grounds they had occupied since 1893. The Cubs won that day, besting the Reds in eleven innings 7-6 for their first win in what would come to be known as the "Friendly Confines."

Wrigley renovated the ballpark extensively during his first decade as majority owner. In 1922 he reconfigured the left field seats, lowered the playing field by several feet to add six more rows of seats in front of the grandstand, and extended the grandstand further down the foul lines.

This increased capacity to about 31,000. In 1924 he purchased the land from Archambault and the Cantillons for \$295,000 in cash, and as mentioned earlier, in 1927 he added the second



Lucky Charlie Weeghman

deck, a project that was not completed until 1928.

In 1929 Wrigley got city permission to erect temporary bleachers beyond the stadium to accommodate the more than 50,000 fans who crowded into the World Series games against the Athletics. The hand operated centerfield scoreboard

was constructed in 1935 at the behest of Bill Veeck, whose father Bill Sr. was club president. Veeck junior also planted the iconic ivy in 1937. And in 1941 Phil Wrigley, who inherited the team from his father in 1932, famously donated the steel he had purchased for erecting lighting towers to the war effort. It would take nearly half a century before lights were finally installed in Wrigley Field.



Ski jumping at Wrigley Field in 1944

When the Tribune Company purchased the Cubs from the Wrigley estate in 1981 they began to explore the possibility of erecting lights. Much as they had done in 1915 (unsuccessfully) the neighbors protested the installation of lights (also, ultimately, unsuccessfully). They succeeded in delaying the installation until 1988 and in getting a compromise whereby the Cubs would limit the number of night games they played. Those limits increased from 18 to 30 over the years. 1988 was not the first night game played at Wrigley Field though. In 1943 temporary lights were installed and the All American Girls Professional Baseball League played its first All Star game, and the first night game, at Wrigley Field.

After the 2005 season the Cubs began an expansion of the bleachers in left and right fields, producing an overhanging bleacher section beyond the confines of the outside walls. This required removing the outer brick wall, the final vestige of the original Weeghman Park.

The latest changes to Wrigley Field won't be completed for another three years, but when they are, the park will be modernized. It will still retain the footprint it has had for nearly a century, ivy will

adorn the walls, and the hand operated scoreboard will still stand tall in centerfield. But the addition every Cubs fan pines for is the sight of Wrigley Field flying its first World Championship banner.

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