THE National Pastime

North Side, South Side, All Around the Town

Baseball in Chicago

ABRIDGED SOUVENIR EDITION

This PDF is a digital replica of the printed souvenir edition given to attendees at SABR 45. It does not contain the full complement of articles, which are available in the actual ebook editions and on SABR.org

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Growing up in Chicago in the early 1970s was about as good an environment for a young baseball fan as could be hoped for.

Not only were the Cubs and Sox competitive—sometimes even at the same time!—it was also very easy to get involved in the daily struggle of both teams. Chicago had several daily newspapers, all of which covered the teams thoroughly, and the Cubs and Sox both showed a heavy majority of their games on television. I later learned that this privilege was not enjoyed by most other fans, outside of maybe those in New York.

The Cubs televised all their home games and most road games on WGN, Channel 9, while the White Sox showed most home and road contests on WFLD, Channel 32, and then WSNS, Channel 44. The games not shown were mostly late-night contests from San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Anaheim, or Oakland, most of which were past my bedtime anyhow.

Of course, the radio was always on during the summer, so I heard plenty of the Cubs (on WGN) and Sox (on WEAW, then WMAQ) when riding in my parents' car, or on a transistor while flying my bike down the streets of Evanston, playing ball at the park, sitting on the porch, or walking through the neighborhood.

It was the voices of those teams, and that time—Vince Lloyd, Lou Boudreau, Harry Caray, Jack Brickhouse, and even Bob Waller and Jim West—that helped form my love for baseball. I owe them all a great deal; they were enthusiastic, friendly, and knew how to tell stories. I found the game and the way they covered it to be enthralling. Nearly all of those men are gone now, and those times are well beyond the rear-view mirror, but I still remember how much of a buzz it was for me to dive headfirst into baseball in my preteen years.

I had that same feeling of discovery reading through the articles for this issue of *The National Pastime*. In these pages (and in the other superb articles available in the digital edition of *TNP* at sabr.org), dedicated researchers and thinkers show the fruits of their work. There are biographies, previously untold stories, forgotten chunks of history that shaped the game, statistical studies, and even poems, all about Chicago's impact on our game and about the players who have passed through the Windy City on their way to eternity.

It was only by fortune that we had a biography of Cubs idol Ernie Banks planned when he passed away. I am sorry we couldn't do the same for his White Sox counterpart, the late Orestes "Minnie" Minoso. My hope is that the passel of fascinating South Side baseball history presented in this and the online edition will compensate for Minnie's absence.

Bouquets go to Cecilia Tan, SABR's Publications Director, for her faith in my abilities. Cliff Blau is the world's greatest fact-checker and Lisa Hochstein a great designer with seemingly endless patience. I appreciate Marc Appleman's commitment to the printed (and digitally printed) word, and I thank Mark Fimoff for helping with some critical photo identification. John Horne at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum provided superb photos with speed and courtesy.

I express my highest gratitude to the writers and researchers who contributed their hard work to this journal, and to you, dear reader, for your interest in baseball history and your support of SABR.

– Stuart Shea, Editor

Sputtering Towards Respectability

Chicago's Journey to the Big Leagues

Brian McKenna

The city of Chicago, already a hub of growth, became more important in the mid-nineteenth century once the Erie Canal linked it with the east coast and rail lines extended their reach throughout the emerging nation.

Still, by the definition of the time, Chicago was a "western city." Serious development of the area was impossible until the settlement of the Black Hawk War in 1833.[1] In significant matters—politics, business, social, and cultural—Chicago played catch-up with the deep-rooted and wealthy eastern cities.

This was also true in baseball, a sport becoming defined by the formal "New York" rules. Yet as quickly as it created itself, Chicago established its interest in the national game. Clubs were playing by the New York rules even earlier than eastern cities like Baltimore and Washington, D.C. But because of its location, Chicago did not join the sport's formal organization, the National Association of Base Ball Players, until 1867.

This happened to be the year professionalism began to proliferate throughout baseball. Because of their willingness to compensate players, whether directly or indirectly, and because of the greater opportunities that could be found for players, eastern clubs fielded the best nines. In order to catch up, the west had to tap that resource—that is, lure the talent west.

The first club to do this was the Red Stockings of Cincinnati, who in 1869 experienced astonishing success: an incredible winning streak and a coast-to-coast barnstorming tour that transformed the sport. Chicago wanted a piece of that success, as well as the accolades befitting its place among the top cities of the nation. The road to respectability for Chicago baseball, however, was characterized by a start-stop nature rather than a smooth, flowing path.

In late 1869, Chicago interests sent agents east to lure top baseball talent. This process would be repeated as needed during much of the next decade. Several hiccups occurred along the way, including a harsh local press, interfering shareholders, and a ruinous fire that destroyed not only the city's premier ballpark but also caused an absence of a top professional team in the city for two seasons. The successes were notable but fleeting. The early seasons were, in fact, stellar for the newly-formed White Stockings, but following the 1871 Chicago Fire, the club floundered and disbanded. A new club was formed the next year.

By 1875, the club's new president, William Hulbert, had tolerated eastern dominance for too long and took matters into his own hands. He robbed the nation's top club, Boston, of four of its top men, overthrew the existing National Association, and formed a new professional organization: the National League. Chicago won the first NL championship in 1876 and placed the city among the sport's elite, a position it has never relinquished.

Baseball would, for many decades, feel the imprint of Chicago influences: Hulbert, Al Spalding, Ban Johnson, Charles Comiskey, Rube Foster, and Kenesaw Landis, to name a few.

THE EARLY YEARS

Some form of baseball was played in and around Chicago before the first rail lines arrived.[2] The city's first formal baseball organization was the Union Club, probably an offshoot of the Union Cricket Club, which incorporated on August 12, 1856.[3] The Excelsior Club organized the following year but distinguished itself by immediately adopting the New York style of play.[4]

Match play—pitting one club's skills against another—kicked off July 7, 1858, when the Unions hosted the nearby community of Downers Grove. The cordial contest, won by the visitors, was followed by a round of gentlemanly speeches and a visit to the theater, with all combatants still proudly wearing their uniforms.[5] The meeting also sparked an immediate call for local clubs to convene and hash out a standard set of rules, which would form the basis of any future competition. A local reporter, anticipating that "some alteration is to be made as to the manner of playing," outlined the New York rules, which had been garnering attention of late.[6] The convention, held July 21, resulted in the forming of the Chicago Base Ball Club and approving the adoption of the New York rules.[7]

In August, the Unions formally challenged the Excelsiors on the grounds of the Prairie Cricket Club, using New York rules. The first contest took place on August 30 with the Excelsiors triumphing 17–11.[8] In a return match on September 13, the Excelsiors won again, 30–17. "Speech making, pleasant repartee, merry jokes, and singing" at the Union Park House followed the contest. The editors of the *Chicago Press and Tribune* were "glad to note the good feeling that was evinced by the members of each club on this occasion, and trust that our citizens will take more interest in this truly healthful and entertaining game."[9]

Several new clubs (the Olympics, Columbias, and Atlantics) heeded the call for 1859. The Excelsiors and Atlantics established themselves as the city's premier clubs and battled over the next decade. On Saturday, June 11, the two met before 500 spectators, many of them female. The Excelsiors again took the victory. The Atlantics claimed the rematch in July then eked out an 18–16 win in the rubber match in August to, in essence, claim the championship of the city.

Baseball fever took hold of Chicago in 1860 as more clubs organized and match play exploded.[10] Taking the losses of '59 to heart, "The Excelsior forces are greatly strengthened this season by the ascension to their ranks of several prominent players, formerly of the Columbian Club."[11] The Atlantics, however, again took the season series before the largest crowds in the city to date.

> Chicago was a growing metropolis with more than 112,000 residents. It was a city bursting with physical development, economic growth, and political vitality. The Republican Party's choice of Chicago for its national convention that year put the city on the political map and infused it with energy…on June 18 in Baltimore, [Chicago resident] Stephen A. Douglas won the nomination of his divided Democratic Party, and Chicagoans must have appreciated the unlikely scenario of two Illinois men battling for the nation's highest office.[12]

Abraham Lincoln, known and respected in Chicago, was elected to the presidency in the fall and the country descended into civil war. With many Chicago-area ballplayers having enlisted, clubs went dormant and the sport floundered in the city until after the war. The only notable matches during the war were a little-followed city series between the Garden City and Osceola clubs in 1863, a series between Garden City and a Freeport, Illinois nine the same year, and some play in 1864 among the men of the nineteenth Illinois Infantry.

Many believe the Civil War to be the catalyst spreading baseball through the country. In fact, the war stymied the game's growth to a threatening extent. Luckily, the lure of the sport and Americans' thirst for exercise and recreation brought a renewal in 1865—that is, once Chicago had properly mourned the assassination of President Lincoln.

DRIVING TOWARD PROFESSIONALISM

Many prewar players moved on and a new breed took over in 1865. The proud Excelsiors and Atlantics regrouped in late summer along with new clubs like the Ogdens, Pacifics, and Pioneers. The season ended with a tournament at the Winnebago County Fair Grounds, but matters ended inauspiciously; the Excelsiors walked off the field in the deciding match after the umpire reversed a call after a plea by the challengers.[13]

The call in December 1865 to form the Northwestern Association of Base-Ball Players sparked the game's revival in the middle west. The Atlantics, Excelsiors, and Pacifics of Chicago joined fellow clubs from Illinois and seven other states to promote the sport.[14] The fever was such that a game was even played on ice over the winter at the Washington Skating Park.[15]

For the 1866 season, the Excelsiors added a recruit from the east: pitcher C. J. McNally. This proved effective as the club won both of the season's major tournaments to claim the championship of the west. The tournaments were the biggest baseball events to date for western sportsmen. The Rockford tournament, held in late-June, attracted clubs from Detroit, Bloomington, Rockford, Milwaukee, and Freeport as well as Chicago's Excelsiors and Atlantics. The Excelsiors took the honors—and the prize of a gold ball—as McNally won the key game over the soon-to-be famous Al Spalding of the Rockford Forest Citys.

The field at the Bloomington tournament in September was even more impressive, including:

> the Union and Empire clubs of St. Louis; the Olympics of Peoria; the Pacifics of Chicago; the Perseverance club of Ottawa; the Louisville and Olympic clubs of Louisville; the Cream Citys of Milwaukee; the Forest City and Empire clubs of Freeport; the Capitol club of Springfield; the Hardin club of Jacksonville, Ill.; two Quincy clubs; and the Excelsiors of Chicago. A feature of this tournament was a specially built amphitheatre (sic) designed to allow spectators to witness two games at once…Again the Excelsiors were victorious, taking the series in impressive style.[16]

The Excelsiors, the Champions of the West, finished the season 6–0 in match play.

Black clubs also formed in Chicago after the war. One such was the Blue Stockings, a group of hotel and restaurant employees.[17] This nine gained notoriety in August 1870 for taking a series with the Pink Stockings of Rockford. The following month, however, they were excluded by decree from the city amateur tournament.[18] Over the winter, some Blue Stockings hopped to the Uniques and the reinforced nine became the first black club in baseball history which, according to James Brunson, "established themselves regionally and nationally."

After topping the Blue Stockings 39–5 to claim city supremacy, the Uniques played and beat a white nine, the Alerts, 17–16 on July 10, 1871. Noting the oddness of the interracial game, the *Chicago Tribune* commented, "…Contestants were the Unique Club (colored) and the Alert (not as much so)."[19] The Uniques took off for the east at the end of the summer, stopping in Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Troy. They split a series with the strong Alerts of D.C. and Pythians of Philadelphia and topped the other clubs, claiming bragging rights as the champions of the West.

In 1867, the Amateurs, Atlantics, Eurekas, and Excelsiors of Chicago joined the eastern-based National Association of Base Ball Players.[20] The Excelsiors started the season well, taking a series over the Atlantics and topping the Rockfords twice to further strengthen their claim as the class of the region.

The most-anticipated event of the summer was the July arrival in Chicago of the Nationals of Washington, D.C., who were barnstorming during the sport's first western tour. The Nationals even carried Harry Chadwick, baseball's great chronicler, in tow. The Nationals were set to play Spalding's Forest Citys of Rockford, the Excelsiors, and the Atlantics. In a bit of a stunner, Spalding topped the Nationals 29–23. This was the D.C. club's only loss during the ten-game tour, which also took them to Columbus, Cincinnati, Louisville, Indianapolis, and St. Louis.

Chicago eagerly awaited the Nationals/Excelsiors matchup, anticipating victory since the Excelsiors had defeated the Forest Citys as recently as the beginning of the month. The Excelsiors, however, were embarrassed by the Nationals 49–4. The loss hurt not only the Excelsiors' self-esteem but also their standing in local baseball circles as the club became the butt of many a joke.

Chicagoans could not stand the second-rate status held by the nation's western cities, whether it was in politics, business, or baseball. The humiliating loss to the Nationals reverberated throughout the city and helped drive the actions of local sportsmen and supporters for much of the next decade. It also led directly to professionalism in Chicago.

Though officially "amateur," the Excelsiors began recruiting top players from the east and west, offering high-paying jobs during the week in return for their skill and diligence on the ball field. For the latter part of the season, they brought in left fielder John Zeller[21] from the Mutuals of New York and a pitcher named Keenan from the Bloomingtons. Other alleged professionals with the Excelsiors in 1867 include Al Spalding, C. J. McNally, and Tom Foley.[22]

With the new recruits, the Excelsiors breezed through a tournament in Decatur in September, whipping the Egyptians of Centralia 79–9, and a hand-picked team 44–6.[23] On October 5 in Chicago, Keenan and his sluggers handily topped the Detroits in a heavily-anticipated match.[24] In Detroit on the 19th, the Excelsiors brought in Al Spalding for a game to help Keenan and the club beat Detroit again 36–24. The Excelsiors finished the year 10–1; their only loss since the end of the war was the rout by the Nationals.

For 1868, the Excelsiors imported Harry Lex and James Hoyt from Philadelphia.[25] The club faltered out of the gate against stiff competition, however, suffering losses to the Forest Citys of Rockford, Athletics of Philadelphia, Atlantics of Brooklyn, and Buckeyes of Cincinnati. After the July 21 loss to the Buckeyes, the club imploded; several players jumped ship and the club weighed merging with another. The *Chicago Tribune* lambasted, "Chicago needs a representative club; an organization as great as her enterprise and wealth, one that will not allow the second rate clubs of every village in the Northwest to carry away the honors in base ball…The Excelsiors cannot fill the bill."[26]

Luckily, a major fundraising effort allowed the Excelsior club to hire the talent needed to win and showcase the nine.[27] After losing to the strong Unions of Morrisania on August 10, the Excelsiors hired New Yorkers Fred Treacey, Joe Simmons (a much-needed catcher), and Bill Lennon from Brooklyn. They then hit the road after a loss to Detroit and two wins over Buffalo and Cleveland clubs. They drew with Detroit in Detroit, lost to Harry Wright and his Red Stockings in Cincinnati, and topped three mediocre St. Louis clubs.[28] But the new hirees and traveling costs proved too expensive and management folded the Excelsiors.

Amateur clubs met with meager success in Chicago in 1868 and 1869. The Atlantics disbanded as well, leaving the city little baseball to boast about. Another

western club, though, soon took center stage in baseball circles, broadening the game's appeal and reigniting Chicago's pride as a western city and in its baseball.

The sport's first openly-declared professional squad, Cincinnati's Red Stockings, dominated baseball in 1869 in the west and east. This impelled Chicago to amass a squad of the best talent available regardless of cost. The amateur ideal surely wasn't going to get Chicago what it so dearly craved—respect from and bragging rights over the east.

1870[29]

Late in 1869, 48 Chicago businessmen met and formed the Chicago Base Ball Association, intending to develop a professional squad in the mold of the Red Stockings, one which could compete and defeat the best in the country. These men wanted not only to show their superiority over eastern nines but also to supplant the Red Stockings as the west's dominant team.[30] Shares and honorary memberships were sold, at $25 and $10 respectively, raising more than $15,000.

This was baseball's first stock venture; previously clubs had been social in nature, raising funds primarily through member fees. "The Chicago businessmen eliminated the dues-paying club membership, instead raising capital through the sale of stock. The joint-stock company was a familiar business model in the booming Chicago economy. This was the organizational model of the future. By 1876 all top professional clubs followed the pattern, which continues to this day."[31]

Tom Foley, a local billiards hall owner, was the team's new business manager, overseeing day-to-day operations. Among his first assignments was to sign eastern sign players. He went to Philadelphia and New York and even placed an ad in the New York Clipper in hopes of attracting some top players.[32]

Foley's efforts proved fruitful but expensive. Catcher Bill Craver was signed for $2,500.[33] Captain and second baseman Jimmy Wood was paid $2,000. Most of the others were paid between $1,500 and $2,000. Many of the players were taken from the Eckfords of Brooklyn, Unions of Lansingburgh (a.k.a. Haymakers of Troy), and Athletics of Philadelphia. The nine:

Pitcher – Ed Pinkham (Eckfords), Levi Meyerle (Athletics)[34]
Catcher – Craver (Unions), Charles Hodes (Eckfords)
First base – Bub McAtee (Unions)
Second base – Jimmy Wood (Eckfords)
Third base – Meyerle
Shortstop – Ed Duffy (Eckfords)
Outfield –Ned Cuthbert (Athletics), Fred Treacey (Eckfords), Clipper Flynn (Unions)
Utility – Mart King (Unions)

This group became Chicago's first professional nine.[35] Foley then sought a dedicated, enclosed ball grounds. The park was erected inside the oval of a race track at Dexter Park. A grandstand, with seating for 12,000 plus standing room, was built around the field.[36]

With its grounds under construction, the club headed south for a series of games in St. Louis, Algiers (Louisiana), New Orleans, and Memphis. Despite suffering general malaise and intestinal troubles during the trip from drinking southern water, the Chicagos played to win. In one game, they smoked the Bluff Citys of Memphis by the outrageous score of 157–1. Memphis begged the Stockings to allow them to put some runs up, but Jimmy Wood would have none of it; his men would play hard no matter the score.[37]

The Chicagos gained the nickname "White Stockings" by the time they took the field in St. Louis.

> The Chicago nine were clad in their new uniform, which they had donned for the first time [in St. Louis]…It consisted of a blue cap adorned with a white star in the center, white flannel shirt, trimmed with blue and bearing the letter C upon the breast worked in blue. Pants of bright blue flannel, with white cord, and supporting a belt of blue and white; stockings of pure white British thread; shoes of white goat skin, with customary spikes, the ensemble constituting by far the showiest and handsomest uniform ever started by a base ball club.[38]

The dapper crew proved to be a strong nine; in fact, they won all 30 contests they played through July 2, although most of their opponents were second-rate. In mid-June, the White Stockings took off for an extended tour, their first, which saw them play strong squads from Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Troy, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. They defeated the Eckfords and Unions—clubs they had previously decimated by signing their top players—but fell to the toughest eastern nines: the Atlantics of Brooklyn and twice to both the Mutuals of New York and Athletics of Philadelphia. They even fell to Harvard and to the Unions.

In the eyes of the Chicago press, the tour had begun disastrously. Local sportswriters were extremely critical and the eastern ones condescending, especially after the White Stockings were buzzed 9–0 by the Mutuals on July 23. The term 'Chicagoed' (to be blanked) was born. Reeling from the criticism, stockholders began meddling in day-to-day affairs. Due to the travel and high salaries, the team stood $3,000 in debt by mid-August.

Management reorganized and brought in Norman T. Gassette to take over the presidency.[39]

Gassette demanded autonomy but gave Jimmy Wood and Tom Foley control over day-to-day team affairs without much interference. Bill Craver, alleged to have gambled and fixed games, was expelled from the club for violating his contract.[40]

The White Stockings finished the season strong, arguably making them the best team in the country at season's end. Henry Chadwick, as he was wont to do, claimed a piece of the success by declaring that the club's fortunes turned around only after he gave Jimmy Wood a piece of advice: adopt a deader ball.

Dead ball or not, the White Stockings lost just once after August 5, pulling off some impressive road wins over the Atlantics, Athletics, Mutuals, Eckfords, and Red Stockings. After topping the Red Stockings in Cincinnati 10–6 on September 7, the White Stockings were greeted as conquering heroes by 3,000 fans at downtown Union Station. It had been a bit of a rocky season, but the win over their midwest rival healed all.

Excitement over an impending rematch electrified the city, and on October 13, 20,000 fans attended the game versus the Red Stockings at spacious Dexter Park. It may have been the biggest crowd in baseball history to that point. The White Stockings won again, 16–13, sparking celebrations and civic pride. In total, Chicago finished with a 65–8 record. Not even having the Mutuals storm off the field in protest in the ninth inning of the final game of the season on November 1 could dampen the club's pride in its success.

Over the winter, Gassette laid out $4,000 of his own money to cover payroll and to sign new players. He also funded an eastern trip by Foley to lure new talent.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

That winter, a rift between amateur and professional players brought down the long-established National Association of Base Ball Players. Shortly after, in March 1871, the professional National Association was formed. The White Stockings immediately joined the new pro circuit, which is in effect a predecessor of the National League.

Also in March, Chicago's city council granted the team use of a small plot of land on the lakefront. Dexter Park, on Halsted between 42nd and 47th Streets on what is now the city's south side, was poorly located, too far from downtown.

The new property, however, was in poor shape, with piles of debris and trash scattered about. At a cost of $5,000, the club had a 7,500-seat facility erected. This, the first enclosed baseball-dedicated park in Chicago, would be known as White Stockings Grounds. The limited space led to necessarily quirky dimensions, which in 1871 included a short right field wall.

That season's White Stockings featured holdovers King, McAtee, Treacey, Wood, and Duffy, with Wood and Tom Foley continuing to run day-to-day affairs. Joe Simmons, a former local Excelsior player, was obtained from Rockford and George Zettlein, a top eastern pitcher, was added from the Atlantics of Brooklyn.

The White Stockings were among the top clubs in the National Association, sitting near first place all season. Chicago's last home game occurred on October 7, at which time they stood tied with the Athletics for the best winning average (.720, 18–7) in official contests. By the NA's rules, however, Boston led the circuit with its 20 victories, albeit compiling "just" a .667 winning percentage. After returning from a hard-fought eastern trip and a win on September 29, Gassette rewarded the men with expensive gifts, including a home for pitcher Zettlein. Then disaster struck.

On October 8, a fire ripped through Chicago; it raged for three days. The White Stockings' ballpark was destroyed on October 9 along with the team's adjoining business offices. Moreover, they lost their uniforms, equipment, record books, receipts, and on-hand cash. "The loss of the members of the nine was generally heavy, consisting of all their clothing and personal property. The only exceptions were Foley, Atwater, and Captain Wood, who all lived outside the limits of the fire."[41]

In despair, the White Stockings formally released all their players. The men regrouped in the east, though—save Atwater—to play some contests. Three of these games counted in the standings, including the championship. Two thousand spectators, a fair share of who were Chicagoans and Philadelphians, showed for the deciding contest, held at Union Grounds in Brooklyn. The Athletics won 4–1 to settle the matter. The men then scattered and the club folded for good.

In April 1872, Gassette and 50 others formed the new Chicago Base Ball Association with the immediate intention of erecting suitable grounds with which to entice top clubs to play in Chicago. Naturally, the long-term goal was to rebuild a top level club for Chicago.[42]

The 23rd Street Grounds opened at the end of May 1872 at a cost approaching $4,000. William A. Hulbert became a club director in July, his first official position with the club.[43] Baltimore, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and Troy made the trip to Chicago during the summer to play at the new ballpark, and the project actually proved profitable, as the team finished the year about $400 in the black.

In August 1873, Gassette and Jimmy Wood hit the east coast to amass a nine for 1874. The effort proved successful and professional baseball returned to the Windy City.

The 1874 White Stockings included top names such as Jim Devlin, Davy Force, and Paul Hines. Former Chicago players Jimmy Wood, Ned Cuthbert, Levi Meyerle, George Zettlein, and Fred Treacey were on board. Wood was slated to captain the club once again, but while trying to lance an abscess on his left leg, he instead gashed his right leg badly enough to lead to infection and eventually amputation.[44] Wood did return in August as field manager, though.

While pro baseball was back in Chicago, the 1874 and 1875 White Stockings were of second-division quality. Sloppy play brought fan disillusionment and even an unfounded charge of game-fixing. In August 1874, William Hulbert assumed the day-to-day management of the club, a responsibility he maintained until his death in April 1882. That year, the White Stockings finished fifth in the eight-team organization with a 28–31 record.

Davy Force's contract became an issue over the winter. He first re-signed with Chicago for 1875 and then inked a deal with the Athletics. At first, the National Association awarded him to Chicago, but after the organization installed a Philadelphia-based president, the decision was reversed.[45] An incensed Hulbert, feeling cheated perhaps with good cause,[46] would soon get his revenge.

BIRTH OF A NEW LEAGUE

Hulbert, a grocer by trade, married the daughter of his employer, eventually taking over the company and expanding into the coal trade. He also held a prestigious and influential position on the Chicago Board of Trade. The 200-pound Hulbert was loud and authoritarian and usually got his own way.

The White Stockings disappointed in the standings in 1875 but had another good year financially. The National Association itself, however, had numerous troubles, including gambling, game-fixing, and excessive revolving (that is, players jumping clubs). That Boston copped each pennant from 1872 to 1875 riled Hulbert, and some others, to no end. Financial instability plagued the organization, which fielded too many clubs, especially in small markets. Expensive trips between the east and west and the travails of multiple unstable clubs in Philadelphia also taxed the business model.

Hulbert added to the NA's woes by pulling an old Chicago trick: luring players from eastern clubs. During June 1875 he negotiated with and signed much of Boston's roster for the 1876 Chicago White Stockings. Hulbert brought over Al Spalding, Cal McVey, Deacon White, and Ross Barnes. Spalding, the sport's best pitcher, was the key component. Hulbert liked the fact that he was originally a western player and intelligent to boot. On June 26, Spalding, in turn, recruited Athletics players Cap Anson and Ezra Sutton, though Sutton later reneged.

The infighting and strain clouded the National Association all winter. Concerns existed that the players moving to Chicago could be expelled from the NA. In order to prevent this, and to usurp control from the east, Hulbert organized several western clubs and set out to form the new National League.

With the western clubs on board, he approached the eastern owners in February 1876. Hulbert extended an olive branch, offering the NL's presidency to an eastern owner, Morgan Bulkeley of Hartford. It was clear to all, however, that Hulbert was the driving force behind the new endeavor.

It seems that the new departure was, from the first, a Chicago idea, and without desiring to detract from the good judgment of the club managers who came into it after it had been explained to them, it should go on record that the president of the Chicago Club is to be credited with having planned, engineered, and carried the most important reform since the history of the game, and the one which will do most to elevate it.[47]

Baseball's oldest league, the National League, kicked off two months later. Hulbert's efforts paid immediate dividends as the White Stockings took the new organization's first pennant, firmly planting Chicago as standard-bearer of the national game. ■

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Notes

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2. "There were well established teams throughout the state of Illinois as early as those of Chicago, if not earlier. Indeed, the *Lockport Telegraph* of August 6, 1851, tells of a game between the Hunkidoris of Joliet and the Sleepers of Lockport, that antedates anything similar for Chicago." *Federal Writers' Project, Baseball in Old Chicago*, Illinois: Works Project Administration, 1939.
3. Peter Morris, *Baseball Pioneers: 1850–1870*, "Excelsiors of Chicago, Prewar," Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2012.
4. *Chicago Daily Republican*, August 17, 1865.
5. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, July 8, 1858. Clubs of the early era generally corresponded with each other asking if the other would like to play a game. The offer and acceptance would then be made public in the form of a challenge. Thus, greater attendance and newspaper coverage followed. If a public notice wasn't made, only word of mouth among participants, friends and family, in early 1858 or previous years, there in fact may have been match games that were not reported. The arrival of the Downer's Grove club in town may have sparked this coverage, even if no public notice was given.
6. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, July 9, 1858. Inferring from this immediate call to standardize the rules, it seems to me that the Union club may have been a holdout on the New York rules. The local Excelsiors already played by the New York rules, which is why the reporter anticipated "some altercation" in the matter. At the meeting, the Unions agreed to the New York style. This probably had something to do with Downers Grove, or more specifically, to adopting rules complimentary with adjoining communities to ease future issues. On a larger scale, this process was repeated over and over until the New York rules came to dominate the baseball landscape throughout the nation.
7. Federal Writers' Project, *Baseball in Old Chicago*, Illinois: Works Project Administration, 1939. The Chicago Base Ball Club was not a ball club but rather a governing body for the sport in Chicago.
8. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, September 1, 1858.
9. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, September 4, 1858.
10. At least 14 clubs engaged in match play during the season.
11. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, August 24, 1860.
12. Stacy Pratt McDermott, "Base Balls and Ballots: The National Pastime and Illinois Politics during Abraham Lincoln's Time." (Thenationalpastimemuseum.com).
13. Peter Morris, *Baseball Pioneers: 1850–1870*, "Excelsiors of Chicago, Postwar," Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2012.
14. *Chicago Tribune*, December 7, 1865.
15. *Chicago Tribune*, January 26, 1866.
16. Federal Writers' Project, *Baseball in Old Chicago*, Illinois: Works Project Administration, 1939.
17. Other early black clubs included the Uniques, Oaklands, Red-Hots, Socials, and Gordons.
18. *Chicago Tribune*, September 17, 1870.
19. *Chicago Tribune*, July 11, 1871.
20. In 1867, there were at least 45 amateur clubs in Chicago, a total that decreased over the next few years.
21. Zeller fractured his knee running the bases in August 1868, one of the worst accidents for a Chicago ballplayer during the era.
22. *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1877.
23. *Chicago Tribune*, September 20 and 21, 1867.
24. *Chicago Tribune*, October 6, 1867.
25. *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1877.
26. *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 1868.
27. *Chicago Tribune*, July 24 and 28, 1868.
28. Peter Morris, *Baseball Pioneers: 1850–1870*, "Excelsiors of Chicago, Postwar," Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2012.
29. By 1870, more than 50 company clubs existed in Chicago; some companies fielded more than one nine.
30. *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1869.
31. Richard Hershberger, *Baseball Research Journal*, "Chicago's Role in Early Professional Baseball," Phoenix: Society for American Baseball Research, Spring 2011. Admission fees developed slowly in Chicago. Space was tight in the city and many of the ball lots couldn't accommodate too many fans. Many games were played along the lakeshore or took place outside the city in the vast prairies that surrounded Chicago, especially in communities that naturally extended into the prairies.
    Admission fees first developed when many clubs came together for area tournaments, as by definition most of the clubs had traveling expenses to cover. The matches with the D.C. nine back in 1867 were specifically called a tournament so that fees could be collected.
32. Tom Foley is not to be confused with Chicago ballplayer Thomas James Foley who played with the Excelsiors in 1866–1868 and umpired in the National Association.
33. Craver was actually signed much later—well into 1870.
34. Here is a quote by John Thorn, at Our Game blog at MLB.com, discussing the earliest known existing professional contract: "At the Baseball Hall of Fame exists a contract between the new Chicagos and Levi Meyerle, formerly of the Athletic Club of Philadelphia. The two parties agreed that for one year, from February 15, 1870 through February 14, 1871, the player would receive $125 per month, for a total of $1500."
35. *Chicago Tribune*, February 18, 1870.
36. *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1870 .
37. Federal Writers' Project, *Baseball in Old Chicago*, Illinois: Works Project Administration, 1939.
38. *Cleveland Herald*, May 2, 1870. Jimmy Wood was entrusted with the selection of the team's uniform design and colors.
39. *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 1870.
40. Daniel E. Ginsburg, *The Fix Is In: A History of Baseball Gambling and Game-Fixing Scandals*, Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 1995. Craver would be expelled by the National League in 1877 on related charges.
41. *Chicago Tribune*, October 14, 1871.
42. The displaced Foley ran a local semi-pro outfit in 1872 and 1873 with limited success.
43. Though, of course, the new White Stockings didn't actually exist in 1872.
44. *Chicago Tribune*, July 11, 1874.
45. *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1875.
46. In all fairness, of course, the White Stockings had repeatedly taken players from eastern clubs.
47. *Chicago Tribune*, February 13, 1876. Interestingly, the baseball world didn't seem to comprehend, when the Hall of Fame was established, the inner workings of the time. Bulkeley, the National League's first president, who served only one year in the role, was inducted in 1937 to counterbalance the election of American League president Ban Johnson, a true giant of the game.

The Windy City – Collar City Connection

The Curious Relationship of Chicago's and Troy (NY)'s Professional Baseball Teams (1870–82)

Jeff Laing

Both Chicago and Troy fielded strong baseball nines in the baseball's post-Civil War pioneer days. With the advent of professional baseball after the 1868 season, the fortunes of Chicago and Troy became intertwined by happenstance and the loosely-knit structure and highly unstable nature of nineteenth century baseball. Both cities played a major part in the ebb and flow of the national pastime as baseball organized itself into professional leagues.

The first baseball dealings between these cities began acrimoniously. In 1870, just prior to the establishment of the first professional organization—the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, or National Association (NA)—the White Stockings formed as a professional club. The upstart team claimed a national championship using several former members of the Unions of Lansingburgh (Troy)[1], including catcher Mart King, first sacker Bub McAtee, and right fielder Clipper Flynn.[2]

Tensions continued to rise between the cities when Chicago signed notorious Trojan serial revolver and win-at-all-costs scalawag Bill Craver,[3] who was in turn enticed back to the Collar City after vague allegations of "contract violations" by the Chicago club.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the most bitterly fought game of the 1870 season occurred in Upstate New York that June 23 between the White Stockings and the Haymakers. Following a devastating loss to the Forest City team of Rockford, Illinois, and with the hated White Stockings' imminent arrival in the Collar City, Troy management raised $5,000 to bolster its roster. Among other solid ball players, the Haymakers signed pitcher John McMullen and center fielder Tom York. Chicago filed a protest, stating that the newly signed players had taken the field with other NA teams within the past 60 days, a direct violation of the group's bylaws. After much grandstanding by both teams, the game was eventually played with Chicago winning 35–21.[4]

Chicago ended its season on a high note. On November 1, 1870, before 6,000 fans at Chicago's Dexter Park, the White Stockings won the national championship in a bitter contest against the Mutual club of New York, a game which ended with a disputed technical decision. Mutuals pitcher Rynie Wolters stalked off the mound after walking the bases loaded with his team leading 13–12, claiming that the umpire was biased. After the Mutual club refused to take the field, the game reverted to the last completed inning, after which Chicago had led 7–5.

This decision gave the White Stockings the "title" amid the protests of the Mutuals, who continued to proclaim themselves champions.[5]

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

The 1871 Haymakers, with manager/second baseman Bill Craver (front center) and slugger Lip Pike (back center).

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

The 1881 and 1882 Troy Trojans had three Hall of Famers: catcher Buck Ewing (rear, right) and hurlers Tim Keefe (next to Ewing) and Mickey Welch (rear, left).

The Craver contretemps continued into the 1871 season, with Chicago refusing to play the Haymakers if Craver was in the lineup and, further, not allowing the Troy club to play other teams at Chicago's Union Base Ball Grounds. Moreover, the White Stockings withheld past gate receipts due the Trojan management:

> The White Stockings have informed the Haymakers that they will not suffer Craver to play in any game against them, nor will they allow the Haymakers to play any other club on the Chicago grounds if Craver is one of the nine…. The *Chicago Times* takes ground against the White Stockings for retaining the Haymaker money, and very properly stigmatizes the act as robbery. It says that a corporation may escape punishment for doing what an individual [would suffer].[6]

The Chicago-Troy relationship improved somewhat following the October 8, 1871, Chicago Fire, which destroyed the White Stockings' ballpark and equipment. Stranded on the road, Chicago split a pair of games at Troy on October 21 and 23; two other games were rained out. On October 30, at the Brooklyn Union Grounds, the White Stockings lost the NA's first pennant, falling 4–1 to the Athletics of Philadelphia. On November 2, the White Stockings played a benefit game in Troy, an anticlimactic end to the season and to the year's heated rivalry.[7]

Prior to the 1872 NA season, Troy looked west to build a winner. With Chicago not fielding a professional team in 1872 or 1873, Troy rebuilt its roster with Windy City imports: Jimmy Wood, the team captain and second baseman, and George Zettlein, a hard-throwing pitcher. The pair led the Haymakers to their best-ever professional baseball record (15–10).

Though only playing in Troy for a few months, Wood and Zettlein are considered all-time Haymakers. Jimmy Wood was a batting star for the 1872 club, batting a robust .336 with a .558 slugging percentage. Having played with many Trojans on the 1870 White Stocking championship club, Wood was certainly aware of the city's baseball heritage. This is presumably one reason he was chosen to be captain (i.e., manager) of the 1872 squad. Unfortunately, Wood was considered a poor manager due to his disorganization and foul temper. His NA managerial record was 105–99.[8]

Wood, a longtime admirer and associate of fireballing George Zettlein, had first recruited the hurler for the 1870 White Stockings. Zettlein led NA pitchers in earned run average (2.73) in 1871 while compiling an 18–8 record. In 1872, he fashioned a 2.16 ERA and 14–8 mark for the Haymakers. By 1875, however, Zettlein was mired in game-fixing controversies and Wood had accused him of not giving his best effort in the box.[9]

The 1872 Haymakers played their last NA contest on July 23, winning a road game against the Middleton, Connecticut, Mansfields. Troy's management could not meet payroll, leading the club's players to disband. They attempted to return as a "cooperative" club for one desultory loss on July 30. Many of Troy's players, including Wood and Zettlein, signed with the woeful Eckfords of Brooklyn for the remainder of the 1872 season. Troy played an independent schedule through 1878.[10]

Chicago's baseball fortunes looked up in 1874 when the club re-entered the NA. While the White

Stockings were mediocre on the field, team Secretary William Hulbert began an ambitious campaign of signing star players; he inked Albert Spalding, Cap Anson, and Deacon White prior to the conclusion of the 1875 season in direct violation of NA regulations.

Though Hulbert correctly assessed the NA as a disorganized group with a doubtful financial future, a high tolerance of boorish behavior by fans and players, and a nod-and-wink policy of suspicious betting patterns, he also acted with extreme self-interest in 1876 when he founded the National League (NL). Hulbert was supported in this action by the moral authority of Cincinnati baseball pioneer Harry Wright and the media support of editor Lewis Meacham of the *Chicago Tribune*, but not by his fellow owners; in fact, Hulbert acted just before being confronted and penalized by NA ownership.

In a direct conflict of interest, Hulbert became the NL's second President following the 1876 season, taking over from an uninterested Morgan Bulkeley while remaining Secretary of the White Stockings. The Chicago businessman further codified and institutionalized financial control of the game, offering management "geographical exclusivity" and running the league as a monopoly wherein the owners determined which clubs' applications would be accepted. Hulbert believed that if he could hire the most talented players, he could eliminate rival leagues from luring away talent, thus lowering team payrolls and increasing ownership profits.

Hulbert was also unforgiving in dealing with management malfeasance. He believed establishing baseball's integrity was the key to increasing fan support and gate receipts. He expelled the Philadelphia and New York City franchises for not completing their 1876 schedules. In 1877 and 1878, Hulbert ran a shaky six-team NL, barely surviving a major game-fixing scandal by Louisville in 1877.[11] The Chicago magnate eagerly anticipated making major changes to the league for 1879.

During the 1878 off-season, Troy reestablished its checkered relationship with the Windy City by applying for entry to the NL. Hulbert accepted the Trojans' application even though the Collar City did not meet the 75,000 population requirement for new franchises. He simply persuaded the board of directors to alter a league rule to favor Troy's application and even allowed the Haymakers to continue playing exhibition games (for money) against its geographical rival, Albany:

> The entry into the National League of the [Troy] Trojans [known officially as the Troy Citys and unofficially as the Haymakers] was greeted with enthusiasm by its supporters, but it was not without controversy. Part of the Trojans' financial success stemmed from their games with their neighbors across the Hudson River in Albany. Troy requested the inclusion of the Albany ball club into the National League, a request which was denied because scheduling problems which would result from a nine-team league. Additionally, the National League's territorial rights rule prevented more than one team per city and no games between cities fewer than five miles apart. [Troy and Albany are separated by 4.75 miles.] This rule prevented Troy and Albany from playing exhibition games against each other. Eventually, the Trojans settled for an amendment of the territory rule, reducing the gap from five miles to four and allowing them to play exhibition games against their Capital District neighbors.[12]

Influenced both by his continued animus to Philadelphia and New York City and his knowledge of Troy's long and storied history with the national pastime, Hulbert shepherded the Haymakers franchise. While Troy's tenure in the NL was marked by spotty attendance and increased financial difficulties, Hulbert defended the Trojans against attempts to replace them with a team from a larger market.

Hulbert passed away just prior to the 1882 season at a time when NL owners felt threatened by the establishment of the American Association (AA).The magnates were fed up with the weak financial status of the Trojan club and its cloudy future and eventually ousted the Haymakers on September 25, 1882, by an ownership vote of 6–2. This vote violated the NL's own constitution, but the owners chose anyway to admit a New York City-based entry for the 1883 season.[13]

Troy fought the expulsion by threatening to sue the league for $5,000 for the costs of refurbishing its new West Troy (Watervliet) Ballpark. The Haymakers also threatened to apply to enter the American Association in 1883. Placated by promises of a large number of exhibition games in Troy by NL teams and of possible reinstatement into the NL at some unspecified future date (neither of which ever came to fruition), Haymakers management never followed through on the proposed lawsuit or AA application. The Collar City had been removed from major league baseball, never to return.[14]

The conclusion of the 1882 NL season ended the curious relationship of the Chicago and Troy professional baseball clubs and forever marked the divergence

of the baseball fortunes of both cities. The Windy City became an industrial and cultural force as the railroads expanded westward and capital and industry moved to newer and larger markets closer to necessary natural resources. The Chicago of the 1880s surpassed, in importance and influence, smaller, gritty Northeastern cities such as Troy which depended on hydroelectric power and a skilled force that eventually emigrated west to follow superior economic opportunities.[15]

The fortunes of Chicago's and Troy's nineteenth century baseball franchises reflect the growth and development of both populations. While Chicago still boasts two flourishing major league franchises, Troy has remained without a major league club for 133 years. ■

Notes

1. Troy's professional baseball club was originally named the "Union Base Ball Club of Lansingburgh," though they were popularly referred to as the "Troy Haymakers" as early as 1866. When Troy entered the National Association in 1871, the club was officially called the "Haymakers" until its demise in 1872. When the Haymakers entered the National League in 1879 they became the "Troy Citys" and/or the "Troy Trojans" but were commonly referred to in the media and among supporters as the "Haymakers."
2. Patrick Mondout, "1870 Baseball Season," www.Baseballchronology.com.
3. Bill Craver was among pioneer baseball's most notorious figures both on and off the field. He was banned for life from the NL in 1877 for his involvement and inaction in the Louisville Grays hippodroming scandal. Later that year, Craver's tarnished reputation led to his banishment by his hometown Haymakers, who had often provided safe passage during his career. After his forced retirement from baseball, Craver became a patrolman in Troy. Craver's batterymate Cherokee Fisher also signed with the White Stockings, but pocketed their monies and never played a game for Chicago. *Troy Daily Whig*, July 13, 1870.
4. *Fort Wayne* (Indiana) *Daily Democrat*, June 28, 1870, 11; David Pietrusza, "Capital Region Baseball Timeline, Part I: 1819–1899," www.davidpietrusza.com/capital-reg-baseball-1.html, 4; Peter Morris, "Union Base Ball Club of Lansingburgh/Haymaker of Troy" http://archive.is/yuZ3V, 11. The extent to which the Haymakers were committed to improving their club for the 1870 season, no matter the cost, is reflected in the six-week signing of catcher Pat Dockney, a noted carouser and serial revolver. (William J. Ryczek, *When Johnny Came Sliding Home: The Post-Civil War Baseball Boom, 1865–1870*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1998, 143–44.)
5. "1870 Baseball Season," *Baseball Chronology*.
6. *Troy Daily Whig*, July 8, 1870.
7. "1871—National Association," Sean Lahman Baseball Archives www.sean-lahmans-baseball-archive.com. (Accessed 12/12/2013); James L. Terry, *Long Before the Dodgers: Baseball in Brooklyn 1855–1884*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2012, 99); John Thorn, *Baseball in the Garden of Eden: The Secret History of the Early Game* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 152; William J. Ryczek, *Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National Association, 1871–1875* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1992), 64.
8. Ryczek, *Blackguards and Red Stockings*, 134; "Jimmy Wood," www.retrosheet.org/boxesetc/W/Pwoodj106.htm.
9. "Offered Him $1,000 to Throw the Game" Troy Haymakers Archive, 1–4, http://baseballhistorydaily.com/tag/troy-haymakers; "George Zettlein," www.baseball-reference.com/players/z/zettlge01.shtml; "1871," 1871–The Baseball Chronology, www.baseballlibrary.com/chronology/byyear.php?year=1871.
10. Peter Morris, William J. Ryczek, Jan Finkel, Leonard Levin and Richard Malatzky (editors), *Baseball Founders: The Clubs, Players and Cities of the Northeast That Established the Game,* Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013, 174–5.
11. Michael Haupert, "William Hulbert," SABR Biography Project, 1–4; http://sabr.org/bioproj/d1d420b3; William E. Eakin, "William A. Hulbert," Robert Tiemann, ed., *Nineteenth Century Stars*, Phoenix: Society of American Baseball Research, Inc., 2012, 135–6.
12. Ray Kim, "When Troy Was a Major League City," 4, www.empireone.net/~musicman/troyball.html.
13. *Troy Daily Times*, September 23, 1882.
14. *Lancaster* (Pennsylvania) *Daily Intelligencer*; *Syracuse Morning Standard*; and *The New York Times*, September 26, 1882.
15. Deborah Nazon, *Brownfield's Redevelopment and Competitive Advantage Theory: Urban Revitalization and Stakeholder Engagement in South Troy, New York* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: ProQuest UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2007), 45, 49–50; George Baker Anderson, "History of Troy, New York" in *Landmarks of Rensselaer County* (Syracuse, New York: D. Mason and Company, 1897); Steven M. Gelber, "Working at Playing: The Culture of the Workplace and the Rise of Baseball," *Journal of Social History*, 16, 4 (Summer 1983), 16; Peter Morris, "Union Base Ball Club of Lansingburgh/Troy Haymakers," in Peter Morris, William J. Ryczek, Jan Finkel, Leonard Levin and Richard Malatzky (editors), *Base Ball Pioneers, 1850–1870: The Clubs and Players Who Spread the Sport Nationwide* (Kindle edition) (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2012) loc. 1962–84.

Mike González

The First Hispanic Cub

Lou Hernández

On September 28, 1912, 22-year-old Mike González became the first Hispanic player to don the tools of ignorance in the major leagues with his debut with the Boston Braves.

Five years later, as a member of the St. Louis Cardinals, González confounded Philadelphia Phillies backstop Bill Killefer and his pitcher Joe Oeschger by stealing home in the bottom of the 15th inning to defeat Oeschger and the Phillies 5–4 at Robison Field.

Cardinals manager Miller Huggins was reported to have conferred with González afterward and said, "You stole without my signal. You've got plenty of guts."

González replied: "I also got plenty big lead."[1]

Two seasons later, in 1919, the New York Giants claimed González off waivers from St. Louis. He played sparingly for New York for three seasons. Then, following the 1921 campaign, González was absent from the Big Time for two years, plying his trade in the minors. The Cardinals re-obtained the nine-year major leaguer prior to the 1924 season from the Brooklyn Robins, who had purchased González from the American Association's St. Paul Saints.

The dependable receiver was the Cardinals' number one catcher on the season. While statistics are not complete for 1924, he is at this point "leading" the National League in games started behind the plate (114) and innings (914⅔). He may not end atop the league, but his final totals will be higher.

In May 1925, the Chicago Cubs cleared the way for Gabby Hartnett to become the team's regular catcher by shipping their everyday backstop Bob O'Farrell to the St. Louis Cardinals. In return, Chicago received promising infielder Howard Freigau and González. Freigau spent barely two seasons with the Cubs, while González played the last five productive campaigns of his major league career with Chicago.

At the time of his trade to the Cubs, González was among nearly 400 active major league players born in the 19th Century. Miguel Angel "Mike" González was born in Havana, Cuba on September 24, 1890. He was among the few Hispanic players on a major league roster in the big leagues in 1925.

González had begun the 1925 season with St. Louis as a starter until his trade to the Cubs on May 23. Following the trade, González became Hartnett's backup for three-and-one-half seasons. On May 25, the 34-year-old catcher became the first Hispanic player in Chicago Cubs history when he pinch-hit for reliever Elmer Jacobs in the seventh inning of a Cubs/Pirates game at Forbes Field. In a curious move, Cubs manager Bill Killefer asked González to sacrifice, instead of letting his pitcher do so. González did so successfully, and he did not stay in the game. The Cubs were defeated, 5–3.

In his third start for the Cubs, on June 9, the 6'1", 200-pound González enjoyed a 3-for-5 day at the plate.

In his last at-bat, in the bottom of the ninth, he homered off the Giants' Jack Scott with no one on base. That cut New York's lead to 9–7, which is how the game ended. "A high wind helped Meusel, Terry and Southworth of New York and Gonzales (sic) of Chicago crack home runs,"[2] read a wire report, indicating the direction in which the wind was blowing on Chicago's North Side that day. (González's name was often misspelled in the press.) The breeze-aided home run by Mike was the first home run hit by a Hispanic player at 11-year-old Cubs Park.

Though such ethnic distinctions were not recognized by reporters of the era, a fine Tuesday afternoon crowd of 15,000 was present for the high-scoring encounter between the first-place Giants (31–15) and the sixth-stationed Cubs (20–28).

Two years prior to being renamed in honor of Cubs owner William Wrigley Jr., and a year before undergoing expansion that would increase its capacity to 38,396, Cubs Park at the time was a single-grandstand compound with a maximum capacity of 20,000. The left field line stretched 319 feet to the foul pole, while the chalk line measured 318 feet to right. Straightaway center field was a deep 447 feet away.[3]

The Cubs finished last in 1925, but improved steadily over the next four seasons under new manager Joe McCarthy. In his fourth season at the helm, McCarthy led the Cubs to the pennant by 10½ games. The former

Cubs Park hosted the first of its five World Series in the 20th Century, beginning on October 8, 1929.

What was called a "limp arm" left Gabby Hartnett unable to throw for much of the 1929 season. González and Zack Taylor shared the catching duties for the National League champions. In the World Series, Taylor, who had enjoyed a better season with the bat, started all five games against the AL champion Philadelphia Athletics.

In Game One at a now double-decked Wrigley Field, González entered the contest after Taylor had been pinch-hit for in the home seventh. The Cubs' Guy Bush relieved starter Charlie Root in the same inning. The game was 1–0 for the Athletics until Philadelphia scored two unearned runs in the ninth. González recorded two putouts in plays at the plate in the same half inning. In the bottom of the inning, the Cubs scratched across a run, avoiding the shutout.

When González's turn to bat in the ninth came up, with the tying runs on first and second, McCarthy substituted Footsie Blair with the stick. The pinch-hitter grounded out, and the next batter, another emergency swinger, Chick Tolson, struck out, ending the game. With his two innings of defensive work, Mike González became the first Latin American position player to appear in a World Series game.

The next day, in Game Two, González pinch-hit for Cubs relief pitcher Hal Carlson in the bottom of the eighth. Philadelphia led 9–3, which was eventually the final score. González struck out swinging on three pitches, foul tipping the second offering. The 39-year-old receiver saw no further action in the remaining three Fall Classic games, as the Athletics took two of the next three contests in Philadelphia to claim the title.

On January 2, 1930, the Cubs released González. The veteran catcher latched on with Minneapolis of the American Association for the 1930 campaign. His familiar St. Louis Cardinals brought González back to the major leagues in early June of 1931. The weak-hitting backstop played sparingly for the Cardinals, who won the National League pennant and then the World Series over Connie Mack's repeat American League champions. González was not included on the Cardinals' World Series roster.

In 1932, González played the last 17 games of his 17-year major-league career. His role was as the team's third-string catcher. Two seasons later, in 1934, González became the first Hispanic coach in the major leagues under Cardinals manager Frankie Frisch. "Mike Gonzalez was considered such an asset to the Cardinals that he served as a coach under four different pilots,"[4] wrote J.G. Taylor Spink a dozen years later.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Mike González, shown with the Cubs circa 1925–26.

González also twice served as interim manager of the Redbirds. The first time came on September 14, 1938, his first game as replacement skipper for the fired Frisch. Mike also earned the honor of becoming the first Hispanic manager in major league history.

Always looking for big league talent, González was credited as the source of an all-time classic baseball line, in describing a potential player's ability. A newspaper report from the 1930s described the reason for his famous quip. "His club's scouts had been sending in long telegrams about worthless prospects. Sick and tired of footing heavy telegraph tolls and getting nothing in return, the club sent Mike scouting with instructions to report as briefly as possible. Mike looked a recruit over and wired, 'Good field. No hit.'"[5]

Following his retirement as a big league player, the superannuated catcher played a couple of more winter league seasons with the Habana Leones before hanging up his spikes for good in 1935 at age 45. (We are staying faithful to the actual spelling, in Spanish, of the team "Habana," while maintaining the more well-known English-spelling of the capital city.) He played 23 seasons with Habana. González maintained his long association with the popular team as its manager, and in the early 1940s, he was part of a group of business associates that purchased the club from the former owner's widow. Before the decade had ended,

Historic National League Ball Parks	First Latin American Player to Homer There
Baker Bowl	Mike González, July 30, 1924
Braves Field	Mike González, August 28, 1925
Ebbets Field	Mike González, June 4, 1918
Cubs Park/Wrigley Field	Mike González, June 9, 1925
Forbes Field	Luis Olmo, July 26, 1943
Polo Grounds	Armando Marsans, August 1, 1912
Redland/Crosley Field	Adolfo Luque, August 15, 1924
Robison Field	Mike González, April 25, 1917
Sportsman's Park	Mike González, July 22, 1924

the shrewd former player had become the team's principal owner.

In early October of 1953, the 63-year-old González stepped away from the Leones' dugout after 33 seasons as manager. He was the winningest manager in Cuban Winter League history (851–674).[6] He continued as the league's most recognizable and influential owner for the remainder of the decade. Among the select group of skippers González chose to succeed him at the helm were fellow Cubans Salvador "Chico" Hernández and Dolf Luque.

Luque and González were the best known Hispanic major league ballplayers of the first half of the 20th century. González had broken into the big leagues in 1912, with the Boston Braves, two years ahead of Luque, who was a standout pitcher with the Cincinnati Reds in the 1920s. Luque was the first Latin American player to participate in a World Series, taking the hill for the 1919 Reds.

The thriving Cuban Winter League was abolished in 1961 following Fidel Castro's Marxist revolution of two years earlier. González' signature Habana Leones franchise was taken from him by Castro's dictatorial regime and dissolved. Like all owners of the Cuban Winter League teams, he received not a dime of compensation. The franchise was estimated to be worth some $500,000 at the time.[7]

Miguel Angel González lived another 16 years, one imagines with an embittered heart. He died, on February 19, 1977, of a heart attack in Havana. He was 77. ■

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Notes

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Bibb Falk

The Only Jockey in the Majors

Matthew M. Clifford

In the old days of professional baseball, players fistfighting on and off the field was not uncommon. Players would scream at each other. Some would tease. Many others were just downright mean.

One player in particular earned a nickname that perfectly described his slick dugout demeanor. The handle followed him throughout his days in the major leagues and all the way to baseball cards printed after his death.

In 1978, when asked who coined his nickname, "Jockey," Bibb Falk replied with a sharp southern drawl, "I don't know where the hell it came from."[1] Today, many baseball historians incorrectly dub Falk as an overaggressive player who screamed at and "rode" his opponents, as a jockey would ride a horse.

His manipulative skills were strongest during batting practice before games or when opposing players walked past Falk's dugout perch. He had mastered a personal technique to take the mental edge off his rivals by questioning them about false rumors that had been started by other players. The tactic forced his competitors to focus their attention on Falk and his position as an innocent "middle-man" that stood between them and another player who shared a rumor with Falk. It is up to the reader to decide which method of "jockeying" is cruder.

Falk explained his moniker in a 1978 interview: "I wasn't hollering at nobody during no game. I was just "jockeying" between somebody. It was more kidding than riding. Sometimes we'd be batting at home and the visiting team would have to come by our batting cage to get to the other side of the bench and you'd hear one of the players say, when so-and-so comes by, ask him about this, see? Something happened to him, see? And then he'd come by and get tough and say, what's this I heard about that and they say, where in the hell you get this?"[2] It is worth noting that Falk was giggling during this portion of the interview.

Bibb Augustus Falk was born in Austin, Texas on January 27, 1899. His first name led to teasing that included the phrase "bib and tuck'er," an old-time slang expression describing someone who was dressed nicely. In fact, he was often referred to during his playing career as "Bib." (His middle name, long believed to be simply "August," is apparently the longer appellation, according to many contemporary documents including those at the Texas State Historical Association.)

Falk learned the game of baseball living close from Riverside Park, the home field of the Austin Senators of the Texas League. Bibb visited the field frequently and eventually earned employment at the park as the Senator's batboy while working between innings selling bags of peanuts to fans in the bleachers.

He honed his baseball talents at the Stephen F. Austin High School. William "Billy" Disch, head baseball coach from the University of Texas, reviewed Bibb's abilities during one of his high school performances. The coach quickly approached the high school senior and invited him to attend UT.

Falk accepted Disch's offer, but before he could enroll at UT he had to join up with Uncle Sam. In April 1917, the United States joined the war against Germany and Bibb enlisted with the U.S. Naval Reserves.

After the war ended in 1918, Bibb returned to Austin and followed the tutelage of Coach Disch, who taught young Falk his baseball.

During his sophomore, junior, and senior years at UT, the left-handed Falk played varsity and, as a pitcher, was undefeated in all three seasons. In spring 1919, the Chicago White Sox came to Austin for spring training and played against Disch's UT Longhorns. Falk's flair caught the attention of White Sox management during the exhibitions. Disch communicated with the White Sox via letters during summer 1919, and Falk eventually signed his first professional baseball contract with Chicago. Falk explained the details of the transaction:

> Well, it was all settled by wire and mail between the White Sox and Disch and myself. They just sent a contract down here after school that summer. I signed in the summer before I reported. In those days you could do that in college, you know. So I actually signed the contract in the summer of '19 and reported in June of '20.[3]


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A nattily attired Bibb Falk.

The 1919 World Series "Black Sox Scandal" opened the door to Falk's career in the major leagues. "I thought I'd be farmed out because they had a great team back then. They had been great until they threw the series away. They had a pretty good outfield and that was my break it was when they'd been kicked out. They had to rebuild, see. That was my break. If it hadn't been for that, I'd been sent down."[4]

Falk initially joined the Sox in July 1920 but did not play regularly until the last few games of the season, by which the team's involvement in the scandal around the 1919 World Series became known. (Commissioner Landis eventually banished eight players from the White Sox roster after a Chicago court acquitted them of fraud. Landis knew that the players had "thrown" the World Series with weak performances for the benefit of gamblers.)

The Black Sox trial ended in July 1921, by which time "the southpaw from the South" had already been summoned to the south side of Chicago. Falk stepped over the minors and headed directly to the majors.

"I joined them (the White Sox) in Philadelphia on the road and I finished the road trip with them. Stayed with them. I never did play much,"[5] Bibb recalled. "I did pinch hit there once or twice after a game they'd lost. Something like that. Till the last week of the [1920] season when those [eight] fellas got kicked out [by Landis], then I played every day."[6] Bibb's first major league appearance wearing a White Sox uniform was July 17, 1920, when he was called to pinch-hit against the New York Yankees at the Polo Grounds.

The outfield garden of Chicago's Comiskey Park had been previously occupied for five years (1915–20) by the legendary "Shoeless" Joe Jackson. Bibb would carry his nickname "jockey" while toting the title, "The Man That Replaced Shoeless Joe" for the rest of his life. Falk explained his feelings of Chicago's notorious "eight men" since he shared their dugout space moments before they were dismissed.

> I got a kick out of Buck Weaver. He used to work at the windows at the race tracks in Chicago for a while and we'd have a rainy day, we'd go out to the tracks, see. I'd see him at the window and I'd talk to him. Anything that Weaver said, Jackson would do. He (Jackson) was too dumb to be a leader, see? Jackson was a great hitter. He hit .370 in the World Series and he was trying to throw it. He was a nice quiet fellow.[7]

In 1921, Falk, just 22, began to make headlines for the White Sox. He excelled in some areas, collecting 31 doubles and 82 RBIs. Falk's progress was impressive despite ranking fourth in the American League with 69 strikeouts.

Bibb's bat continued to produce in 1922. His bat also got him into some trouble on June 7, however, after he threw his stick while arguing with umpire Frank Wilson's decisions of pitched balls and strikes. When the lumber went sailing, Wilson christened Bibb with his first big league ejection. Falk ended the season hitting .298 with 27 doubles, 12 homers, and 79 RBIs.

During the World Series between the Yankees and Giants, Bibb Falk and a handful of other big-league players were selected to participate in an off-season barnstorming schedule in Japan. AL President Ban Johnson and Commissioner Judge Kenesaw Landis authorized the tour, which was supervised by AL umpire George Moriarty and organized by former major leaguer and Japanese baseball coach Herbert Hunter.

Falk recalled the details of his excursion:

> I got to travel a lot and it never cost me any money. There was that barnstorming trip promoted by Herbie Hunter… we had Waite Hoyt, Herb Pennock, Freddie Hoffman, Joe Bush, George Kelly, Casey Stengel, Irish Meusel. All them just had been in the World Series. Amos Strunk and myself from the White Sox, a couple Cleveland guys, Luke Sewell and Riggs Stevenson, Bert Griffith from Brooklyn, Doc Lavan from the Cardinals and their wives. We had twenty-six in the party and we sailed out of Vancouver October the 19th and got back in Frisco February the 1st 1923. We did it all by boat, see? It took eleven days by boat to get there.[8]

After arriving in Japan, Hunter's "All-American" team played against Japanese college teams, industrial teams and amateur teams. Falk and his teammates stopped in Seoul, Korea to play a bit more before parking in Peking, China to spend a day sightseeing.

The next stop was Shanghai and a week-long visit to the Philippines where the All-Stars played an Asian military team. While Falk was enjoying the Orient, baseball rumors around the stovepipe mentioned the possibility

of a trade to the Yankees, who wanted a replacement for floundering outfielder Lawton "Whitey" Witt. The papers kept the gossip flames hot until March 1923, but Chicago fanatics were relieved that Falk would continue working for the White Sox. In late April, a sports rag predicted a bright future for the Comiskey asset: "Falk is a dangerous batsman and has the ability to become a star if he makes the most of his possibilities."[9]

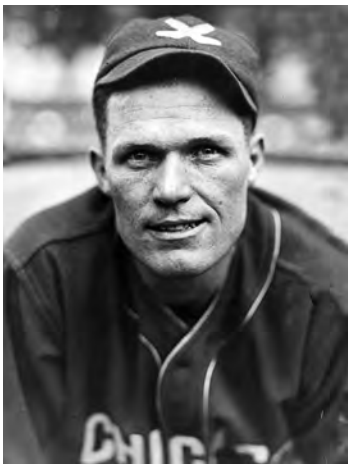
Boss Charles Comiskey and his secretary Harry Grabiner tightened their grip on Falk and opened their checkbook a bit wider for the Texan, increasing his yearly salary from $3,600 to $4,800 for 1923. Unfortunately, Falk was not fully healthy. He missed action from August 25 through the end of September due to trench mouth (i.e. gingivitis—swelling of the gums). White Sox manager Kid Gleason also sat Falk on occasion. So Bibb's usual impressive RBI total dropped by half and his doubles by a third. His monumental moment in 1923 came on June 8 as the White Sox challenged the New York Yankees at their home field. That day, Falk hit the longest single of his career. The hit travelled 420 feet and has been mooted as the seventh longest single in major league history.[10]

Following the '23 season, the 56-year-old Gleason retired. Comiskey quickly appointed Frank Chance, a former Cubs great who heretofore had managed the Boston Red Sox, to change the color of his hose and run his Chicago club. Chance accepted Comiskey's offer and hired longtime Chicago Cubs companion Johnny Evers as a coach. When spring training began, Frank was not there due to illness. Rumors of Chance battling sinus infections, gall stones, and bronchitis covered the newspapers in spring '24.

Unable to attend to his new team, Frank Chance was replaced first by Johnny Evers then by Eddie Collins. Chance resigned and died on September 15 of an undisclosed illness. Days after his passing, the papers mentioned Chance's prediction for Bibb Falk: "Keep that young fellow in the game regularly and it will not be long before you will find him batting rings around all the rest of them."[11]

Chance's forecast had been confirmed by the end of the 1924 season. Bibb collected 185 hits, including 37 doubles, and 99 RBIs. The Texan's .352 mark ranked third in the American League. Falk fell short only to Cleveland's Charlie Jamieson (.359) and the Yankees' Babe Ruth (.378). The White Sox sank into last place that season, however, regardless of Bibb's impressive performance.

In February 1925, Bibb's younger brother, Chester "Chet" Falk, signed on to pitch for the St. Louis Browns. Following in his big brother's footsteps, Chet



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Falk shown in 1926.

worked under the management of "Uncle Billy" Disch at the University of Texas before the Missouri scouts came calling.

Bibb's lumber made big crashes during the 1925 season under new manager Eddie Collins. Comiskey raised Falk's $4,800 salary to $7,500 since the outfielder's bat brought extra spins to the White Sox turnstiles. So, with a heavy bat and heavier pockets, Falk appeared in more games than any other player on the roster. As he had in 1924, he drove in 99 runs.

One of his Chicago teammates, Ted Lyons, remembered Falk's power in a 1977 interview:

> Falk hit line drives and usually right through the middle of the diamond. One year he hit five pitchers with line drives. He hit one between the eyes, one under the heart, one in the stomach, one on the shin and one on the chin, breaking the chap's jaw.[12]

Lyons was recalling an incident that occurred at Comiskey Park on May 29, 1925, when the White Sox welcomed a visit from Ty Cobb and his ferocious Detroit Tigers. Falk stepped to the plate to face Detroit right-hander Sylvester "Syl" Johnson. Bibb slammed a pitch directly at Syl's head, smashing several bones in the pitcher's face and causing a broken jaw that required a lengthy stay at Chicago's Mercy Hospital. The Falk-induced injury branded Johnson a jinx, forcing the pitcher off the Detroit bench and eventually off American League scorecards. But exactly one decade later, on May 29, 1935, Syl, now pitching for the Philadelphia Phillies, became the last pitcher to strike out the illustrious Sultan of Swat, George Herman "Babe" Ruth, in a major league game.

Bibb put in a hard season's work in 1926 as he appeared in every White Sox game on the schedule. Eddie Collins remained at the helm and witnessed

Bibb's thunderous swings that produced 108 RBIs, 43 doubles, and a .345 batting average, seventh best in the AL. He also led the league in fielding average among outfielders at .992. Falk's performance led the AL to place him twelfth place in the League Award voting.

At the end of the season, he recapped his feats to Grabiner and requested a bonus. The secretary advised Falk to compose a letter to Comiskey with details of his request. A few days later, Falk opened a letter that held only disappointment. The irritated Texan clearly remembered the details decades later as he explained the Comiskey letter during a 1978 interview. "I got a letter back signed Comiskey but that Grabiner—he could imitate Commy's signature and I'm pretty sure as far as this statement I'm going to give you, I figure he signed it. It said, "In all my years in baseball I never heard of a player refunding any of his money when he had a bad year so why should I give you extra money for having a good year?"[13]

Comiskey's notoriously tight purse strings affected Falk and caused a rift that worsened in 1927. That year, the White Sox organization replaced Eddie Collins with the club's reliable catcher, Ray Schalk. Falk, dissatisfied with his pay rate despite a 33 percent raise, turned in numbers poorer than some of his earlier performances.

In 1928, skipper Schalk was replaced by Russell (aka "Lena," or "Slats") Blackburne. Falk started the season with vigor until another case of gingivitis forced him out in late June. Altogether he batted .290 in 98 games with only 18 doubles and 37 RBIs.

Following the campaign, Comiskey attempted to cut $2,500 from Falk's yearly income before dealing him to the Cleveland Indians in exchange for backstop Martin "Chick" Autry.

"They (Chicago) wired me and told me I'd been traded to Cleveland," Falk explained.

"Grabiner sent it…signed Comiskey. Cleveland sent me a contract without the cut so I saved $2,500 there."[14]

When he arrived to play in Ohio, Falk was pleased to work with his old White Sox teammate and friend, Roger Peckinpaugh, the manager of the Indians. "Peck" put Falk to work at Cleveland's League Park for the next three years. Falk collected 157 RBIs for the Indians from 1929–31, but in the last two years was only a part-time player.

Peck, perhaps through Indians GM Billy Evans, extended an invitation for Falk to become a manager for Toledo in 1932. The Mud Hens, Cleveland's top minor league club, needed a pilot.

Falk accepted the offer to become a playing manager for the Mud Hens, but his time with the club was bleak; the Great Depression heavily affected the Toledo turnstiles. "I played the outfield and managed there in Toledo and they gave it up because they're in depression. See, we finished third [sic: actually fourth] and lost a lot of money over there. We wasn't drawing. Toledo was broke. All the banks were closed."

In 1933, Peck called Falk back to Cleveland to work as a coach. Peckinpaugh, however, was let go in June after the Indians slipped from first place to fifth. Cleveland owner Alva Bradley appointed Walter "The Big Train" Johnson to replace Peck. Bibb, as interim manager, learned that Johnson was bringing his own coach to Cleveland.

Later that summer, Bibb contacted his Chicago comrade, Eddie Collins. Eddie had been hired as Vice President of the Boston Red Sox and had a position ready for Falk. Collins had him scout for the rest of the season then assume the role of a major league coach for 1934.

After one season coaching in Boston, Falk returned to his hometown of Austin, Texas.

He worked five years (1935–40) as a scout for the Red Sox while enjoying the off-season at his home address.

Falk bid a permanent farewell to the majors in 1940 after his long-time friend and mentor, Billy Disch, became ill in 1939 and requested Bibb's assistance. Disch had never left his post as UT's head baseball coach. In 1940, Falk and Disch worked together at Texas. Disch worked as an assistant to Bibb, who assumed the role of head baseball coach.

After successfully piloting the Longhorns baseball team for three years, Falk stepped away from the field and rendered his services to the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Bibb earned the rank of sergeant shortly after his enlistment at the Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. In 1944, Falk worked on the base as coach for the Randolph Ramblers baseball team. The Ramblers were one of the many teams recognized in the Military Service League.

Two of Bibb's players, pitcher Dave "Boo" Ferriss and catcher Tex Aulds, eventually became property of the Red Sox, Ferriss before his recruitment with the U.S. Air Force and Aulds later.

After serving Uncle Sam from 1943 to 1945, Falk returned to UT's Clark Field to coach the Longhorns. Those who played for Coach Falk say unanimously that he was a big leaguer all the way. He often admonished his men, "You might not be big leaguers, but you can sure act like you are." A world-class cusser, his most contemptuous epithet was "bush league," and he would not tolerate anyone wearing a Texas uniform acting like a "busher." He treated his players like professionals

and he expected them to act like they were big leaguers on the field."[15]

Falk's players described him with adjectives like "a crusty wildcat with a fiery tongue" or as "an ornery, intimidating man." One player explained that his Texan coach could curse consecutively for one hour without ever repeating himself. Bibb's tough and gritty exterior transformed undisciplined college athletes into baseball machines as each of his pupils discovered their strongest abilities on the field. During his 27 years at the helm of the Texas Longhorns, Falk and his men won 470 games, 20 victories in the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Southwestern Conference, and two College World Series Championships (1949 and 1950).

In 1953, Bibb and his Longhorns bid a final farewell to their coach and mentor, "Uncle" Billy Disch, who passed away, leaving a legacy of baseball memories and dedication to Austin's UT.

In 1962, Bibb was elected to the Longhorn Men's Hall of Honor and the Helms Athletic Foundation College Hall of Fame in 1966.

Awards continued to follow Falk after he left UT. In 1968 the ABCA (American Baseball Coaches Association) added him to their Hall of Fame. Twenty years later Bibb was inducted to the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame. In early 1975, the University of Texas completed construction of the $2.5 million Disch-Falk Field, honoring the two men who served Longhorns baseball for a combined 54 years.

Falk, who never married, spent his retirement years living in Austin with his younger sister, Elsie, until her death in 1980. Still tough as nails, Bibb remained healthy until 1988 when he began having heart difficulties. On June 8, 1989, Bibb Augustus Falk passed away at Brackenridge Hospital in Austin at age 90. He was the last surviving member of the 1920 Chicago White Sox.

Years after his death, Falk was elected to the 2007 College Baseball Hall of Fame.

In 2001, historian and author Bill James wrote an interesting synopsis of Falk: "He was an unusual man. A lifelong bachelor, he was devoted to baseball and devoted to his players. He was stubborn, yet good-natured. He would leave perfectly good bats and balls in the trash so that neighborhood kids could have good equipment to play with, but he wouldn't be caught giving them anything. Retiring at 65 [sic: 68], he lived in Austin another 24 [sic: 22] years before he died, and during that time he hardly ever missed a Texas home baseball game."[16]

Today, White Sox fans can view a slice of history on a wall near the concession stand corridors at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago. A life-size black and white photograph of Bibb Falk and his heavy bat occupy a section of the wall, along with a listing of his achievements working for Charles Comiskey. ■

Newspapers and wire services

The Sporting News (1920–89)
The Associated Press (1920–89)
The United Press (1920–89)

Additional assistance

Jason Culver (Research assistance)
Graves-Hume Public Library, Mendota, Illinois
Somonauk Public Library, Somonauk, Illinois
Baseball-Reference.com
Retrosheet.org
The National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum

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2. Dr. Eugene Converse Murdock Audio Interviews. Recorded 1978 in Austin, Texas. Mears-Murdock Exhibit. Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland, Ohio.
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Ted Lyons

300 Wins—Closer with a Closer?

Herm Krabbenhoft

When he finally hung up his spikes, after hurling his last pitch on May 19, 1946, Ted Lyons had accumulated 260 mound victories, a total which at the time ranked fifth all-time in the American League for most career wins, behind only Walter Johnson (417), Eddie Plank (305), Lefty Grove (300), and Red Ruffing (267).[1] Fittingly, each of these five players has been honored with a bronze plaque at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Lyons, unlike the others, spent his entire career (1923–42, 1946) with a second-division club, the Chicago White Sox.

Warren Corbett's excellent article on Lyons, written for SABR's Bio Project, provides a comprehensive macroscopic account of his diamond accomplishments. Lyons "completed more games than any other contemporary starter."[2] Indeed, a check of the relevant "player profile" pages on Retrosheet.org shows that Lyons completed 356 out of 484 career starts, a remarkable 74%, a value higher than those of Cooperstown contemporaries Ruffing (62%) and Grove (65%).

Lyons' relatively high percentage of complete games leads to interesting interpretation. He compiled a 15–20 won-lost record in 110 games as a relief pitcher, therefore giving him 455 decisions (245 wins and 210 losses) in the 484 contests he started. If one assumes, for the sake of argument, that each of Lyons' 245 game-starting wins was a complete game, then the remaining (approximately) 111 complete games were game-starting losses.

Leaping out at us is the question, "How many of these (approximately) 111 complete-game losses were the result of the opposition overtaking a White Sox lead in the ninth (or extra) inning?" And, to follow up, "How many of these (approximately) 111 complete-game losses could have been prevented, saved as (incomplete-game) victories, by a successful closer?" To address these provocative questions one needs to take a microscopic look at Lyons' complete-game losses.

INTRODUCTION

The first order of business is to learn the precise distribution of wins, losses, and no-decisions in Lyons' 356 complete games. By examining Lyons' game-by-game pitching log for each of his 21 Big League seasons—as presented in his "player daily" file on the Retrosheet.org website—I determined that Lyons amassed 236 complete-game victories, was shackled with 119 complete-game defeats, and pitched one complete-game no-decision (tie). So, the salient questions become:

> How many of Lyons' 119 complete-game losses were the result of the opposition wiping out a White Sox lead in the ninth (or extra) inning?
>
> How many of Lyons' 119 complete-game losses might have been prevented and saved as (incomplete-game) victories by a successful closer?

A key related question concerns the 236 complete-game triumphs Lyons achieved:

> How many of Lyons' 236 complete-game wins had a margin-of-victory of three runs or fewer, thereby qualifying for the save rule if a relief pitcher had been brought in successfully?

Next, the rules for crediting a starting pitcher with a Self-Save (SSV) or charging him with a Blown Self-Save (BSSV) need to be formulated. According to the Official Scoring Rules of Major League Baseball, only relief pitchers can be awarded a Save (SV); The Blown Save (BSV) is currently not officially recorded, although some newspaper box scores do include their mention and they are also provided in some compilations of a pitcher's statistics (e.g., Baseball-Reference. com). Here are the definitions for the SSV and the BSSV used in this article, focused specifically on games in which Ted Lyons was the starting pitcher:

> If Chicago was leading by no more than three runs going into:
>
> The top half of the ninth inning when Chicago was the home team, or
>
> The bottom half of the ninth inning when Chicago was the visiting team, or

The bottom half on an extra inning when Chicago was the visiting team, and

If Lyons retired the opposition without allowing the game-tying run, he received credit for a SSV;

If, however, Lyons did permit the tying run to score, he was charged with a BSSV.

NOTE: It is possible for Lyons to have both a BSSV and an SSV in the same game or even more than one BSSV in a game, i.e., in the bottom of the ninth and in the bottom of an extra inning.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

To answer the above questions I scrutinized the line scores, as presented in the box scores on Retrosheet.org, for each of Lyons' 484 career starts. I thereby identified those games where Lyons had a Self-Save (SSV) and/or a Blown Self-Save (BSSV). The pertinent results are presented in the Appendices, which are available in the electronic edition of this journal on SABR.org.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents year-by-year summaries of the outcomes (wins, losses, no-decisions) achieved by Ted Lyons in the games he started. In addition, Table 1 also provides the SSV and BSSV numbers and the derived Self-Save Percentage (SSV%), defined as the number of games in which Lyons earned an SSV divided by the sum of his SSV games and BSSV games, multiplied by 100%, i.e. SSV% = [SSV / (SSV + BSSV)] x 100%.

Examination of Table 1 reveals 112 SSV games and 20 BSSV games for Ted Lyons. Appendix 2 presents half-inning scores for each of the 20 BSSV games.

NOTE There were two games in which Lyons had both a ninth-inning BSSV and an extra-inning SSV: May 16, 1932, and August 1, 1937 (first game). Thus, Lyons actually had 130 SSV-opportunity games (not 132 SSV-opportunity games). Including both the BSSV and SSV results in the calculation of SSV% affords the TOTAL 84.8 SSV%. If one excludes the transitional BSSV result from each of these two games, the TOTAL Self-Save Percentage is 86.2%.

DISCUSSION

As shown in Appendix 2, thanks to timely comeback rallies engineered by his teammates, Lyons emerged as the winning pitcher in six of the 20 games in which he blew a self-save opportunity, including the previously mentioned games on May 16, 1932, and August 1, 1937 (first game). Two other BSSV games were no-decision games for Lyons (although the White Sox won both). Thus, Lyons was the losing pitcher in 12 of the 20 BSSV games. If the current practice of utilizing a closer to try to secure a victory had been operative during Lyons' time in the Big Show, each of those losses could have been completely avoided. How many of those dozen losing games would have been

Table 1. Year-By-Year Summaries of the Outcomes Achieved by Ted Lyons in the Games He Started

Year	GS	CGW	ICGW	CGL	ICGL	CGND	ICGND	SSV	BSSV	SSV %
1923	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	–
1924	22	9	2	3	7	0	1	3	1	75
1925	32	17	2	2	7	0	4	9	0	100
1926	31	15	2	8	5	1	0	7	3	70
1927	34	22	0	8	4	0	0	12	0	100
1928	27	12	1	9	5	0	0	5	3	62.5
1929	31	13	0	8	9	0	1	3	0	100
1930	36	21	0	8	6	0	1	11	0	100
1931	12	3	0	4	1	0	4	3	0	100
1932	26	10	0	9	5	0	2	4	3	(57.1) 66.7
1933	27	5	1	9	9	0	3	4	0	100
1934	24	11	0	10	2	0	1	3	0	100
1935	22	15	0	4	3	0	0	10	0	100
1936	24	10	0	5	7	0	2	3	0	100
1937	22	11	1	0	7	0	3	7	2	(77.8) 87.5
1938	23	9	0	8	3	0	3	4	0	100
1939	21	14	0	2	4	0	1	8	0	100
1940	22	12	0	5	3	0	2	7	1	77.8
1941	22	12	0	7	3	0	0	2	1	66.7
1942	20	14	0	6	0	0	0	6	3	66.7
1946	5	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	33.3
TOTAL	**484**	**236**	**9**	**119**	**91**	**1**	**28**	**112**	**20**	**(84.8) 86.2**

NOTE: The column headings are: GS (Games Started); CGW (Complete-Game Win); ICGW (Incomplete-Game Win); CGL (Complete-Game Loss); ICGL (Incomplete-Game Loss); CGND (Complete-Game No-Decision); ICGND (Incomplete-Game No-Decision).

converted into (incomplete-game) victories by a successful closer?

To address this question one needs to select the success rate (SV%) of the hypothetical closer for Lyons. First, let's consider the success rates achieved by the pitchers classified as closers during the 2014 season.[3] As shown in Appendix 3, Greg Holland achieved the highest SV% in the American League (95.8), followed by Fernando Rodney (94.0) and Zach Britton (90.2). In the Senior Circuit, the top three closers were Huston Street (96.0), Ardolis Chapman (94.7), and Craig Kimbrel (92.2). Had a 96 SV% closer (like Holland or Street) gone in for Lyons in each of his 130 SSV-opportunity games, Ted might have picked up as many as 125 victories, with five games becoming no-decisions for Lyons (because the closer blew the save).

Next, let's consider the success rates achieved by the all-time career leaders in most saves (i.e., those with at least 300 lifetime saves). As shown in Appendix 4, the SV% range for these 26 closers is 73.5% (Goose Gossage) to 89.3% (Joe Nathan). Therefore, had an 89 SV% closer (like Nathan, Mariano Rivera, or Trevor Hoffman) replaced Lyons on the mound in each of his 130 SSV-opportunity games, Ted might have ended up with 116 wins, the same number he achieved himself. The median SV% for these relievers is 83.1% (i.e., the midpoint between Jason Isringhausen's 82.4% and Jose Mesa's 83.8%). Therefore, if an 83 SV% closer had relieved Ted Lyons in each of his 130 SSV-opportunity games, Ted might have emerged with 108 wins—eight fewer victories than he earned by himself! Table 2 summarizes these hypothetical-closer results.

Clearly, as quantified by his 86.2 SSV%, Ted Lyons did an excellent job self-saving his games with leads of three runs or fewer in the ninth (or extra) inning. Even the very best all-time closers would not have been able to bring Lyons' lifetime wins closer to 300.

What about Lyons' games with leads of three runs or fewer in the eighth or seventh innings—i.e., the "Hold" innings? Present-day mound strategy is to have the starting pitcher toss the first six innings (at least), hopefully surrendering three or fewer (earned) runs (thereby achieving a "quality start") before turning the game over to the bullpen so the set-up men can hold the game during the seventh and eighth innings for the closer in the ninth.

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Lyons in 1926, when he was 18–16.

As described in the 2015 edition of *The Bill James Handbook*, the Save/Hold Percentage (S/HLD%) is a much more realistic evaluation of a pitcher's success in save situations.[4] A "Hold" is defined as follows: "A relief pitcher is given a Hold anytime he enters the game in a Save situation, records one or more outs, and exits the game without giving up the lead." Appendix 5 lists those games where Lyons had an advantage of three runs (or fewer) when he commenced pitching in the seventh and/or eighth inning. Table 3 summarizes the detailed information presented in Appendix 5.

Inspection of Table 3 reveals that Ted Lyons was confronted with 135 seventh-inning self-hold opportunities and was successful in 115 of them, a success rate of 85.19%. Similarly, Lyons was challenged with 128 eighth-inning self-hold opportunities and he prevailed in keeping the White Sox in the lead 109 times, a success rate of 85.16%. (And, as previously described, Lyons had a self-save success rate of 86.2%.) Combining the stats for Lyons' self-hold and self-save situations results in an 85.5 SSV/HLD%.

Table 2. Effect of Using a Hypothetical Closer in the Games in Which Lyons Had Self-Save Opportunities

Closer	Wins (SSV or SV)	Wins (BSSV or BSV)	Losses	No-Decisions	Wins (Career)	Losses (Career)
Lyons (86.2 SSV%)	112	4	12	2	260	230
Hypothetical (96 SV%)	125	0	0	5	269	218
Hypothetical (89 SV%)	116	0	0	14	260	218
Hypothetical (83 SV%)	108	0	0	22	252	218

How does Lyons' self-save/hold performance stack up with the performances achieved by bullpens of the ML teams in the 2014 season?

Appendix 6 provides the pertinent information for pitchers who were classified as set-up men during the 2014 season; also presented are the top-ten S/HLD% leaders for each league. As can be seen, the principal set-up men for each AL team achieved a composite Save/Hold success rate of 85%; overall, the AL pitchers assembled an 86 SV/HLD%. For the National League, the corresponding numbers were 87% and 87%. Thus, Ted Lyons' 85.5 SSV/HLD% is right in the ballpark with these values.

Compared to the top-ten leaders within each circuit, however, Lyons' SSV/HLD percentage is about ten percentage points lower. What might Lyons have achieved, if, throughout his entire career, he could have been supported by a relief corps similar to that utilized by the 2014 Kansas City Royals bullpen, which fashioned a composite 89.5 SV/HLD% with its top set-up men Wade Davis (92.3%) and Kelvin Herrera (95.2%) and closer Greg Holland (95.8%)? A 90 SV/HLD% bullpen would theoretically convert 187 save-opportunity games into 168 victories—i.e., 14 more wins than the 154 Lyons actually earned in the 187 games he had with Self-Save/Hold opportunities. These additional 14 victories saved by a hypothetical bullpen would give Lyons 274 career wins, which is closer to the cherished 300 winner's circle but probably not close enough to shout about. In addition, no team has ever had such an effective bullpen year in and year out for a 20-year span, and such a bullpen would only hold the lead 84% of the time anyway.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

First, let's answer the questions posed in the Introduction.

Eleven of Lyons' 119 complete-game losses were the result of the opposition wiping out a Chicago lead in the ninth inning. (One of Lyons' losses in his twelve BSSV defeats was an incomplete-game loss.)

As per charts 1–20 in Appendix 5, 24 of Lyons' 119 complete-game losses (and four of his incomplete-game losses) might have been prevented and saved as (incomplete-game) victories by successful holders and closers.

Lyons self-saved 112 of his 236 complete-game victories.

With regard to the sub-title query, if Ted Lyons could have been supported by a superlative bullpen in each

Table 3. Games Started by Ted Lyons in which He Had Self-Save/Hold Opportunities

Year	SHLD 7th	BSHLD 7th	SHLD 8th	BSHLD 8th	SSV 9th	BSSV 9th	SSV 10th	BSSV 10th	SSV %	SSV/HLD %	G	W	L	ND
1924	4	3	4	0	3	1	–	–	75.0	73.3	7	5	2	0
1925	10	0	10	1	9	0	–	–	100.0	96.7	12	12	0	0
1926	8	3	8	0	7	3	–	–	70.0	79.3	13	11	2	0
1927	8	0	8	1	10	0	2	0	100.0	96.6	14	13	1	0
1928	4	0	6	2	5	3	–	–	62.5	75.0	9	7	2	0
1929	4	1	2	1	3	0	–	–	100.0	81.8	7	6	1	0
1930	11	1	8	1	10	0	1	0	100.0	93.8	16	15	1	0
1931	2	0	2	0	3	0	–	–	100.0	100.0	3	3	0	0
1932	5	2	5	1	3	3	1	0	*66.7*	*73.7*	9	6	3	0
1933	2	3	3	0	4	0	–	–	100.0	75.0	7	4	2	1
1934	7	1	5	2	3	0	–	–	100.0	83.3	9	8	1	0
1935	8	2	10	0	10	0	–	–	100.0	93.3	12	11	1	0
1936	6	1	4	0	3	0	–	–	100.0	92.9	7	6	1	0
1937	7	1	6	2	6	2	1	0	*87.5*	*83.3*	11	9	1	1
1938	5	0	4	2	4	0	–	–	100.0	86.7	8	5	1	2
1939	5	0	5	0	6	0	2	0	100.0	100.0	10	10	0	0
1940	5	0	6	2	7	2	–	–	77.8	81.8	12	9	2	1
1941	5	0	4	1	2	1	–	–	66.7	84.6	6	4	2	0
1942	7	2	6	3	6	3	–	–	66.7	70.4	12	9	3	0
1946	2	0	3	0	1	2	–	–	33.3	75.0	3	1	2	0
Total	**115**	**20**	**109**	**19**	**105**	**20**	**7**	**0**	***86.2***	***85.5***	**187**	**154**	**28**	**5**

NOTE: The SSV % values for 1932 (66.7) and 1937 (87.5) are bracketed by asterisks to indicate that the transitional BSSVs in the games on May 16, 1932, and August 1, 1937 (first game) were not included in the calculation of SSV %; likewise for the corresponding SSV/HLD % values; similarly for the Total values.

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Lyons shown in the early 1940s.

year throughout his 21-year career, he might have picked up an additional 14 wins or so (an average of fewer than one more win per season) and thereby gotten a little closer to the 300 lifetime wins milestone. Most significantly, however, my comprehensive and in-depth investigation of Ted Lyons' mound performance shows that he achieved enviable Self-Save results: an 85.5 Self-Save/Hold percentage in securing 154 victories in the 187 games he was confronted with a save situation in the seventh inning or later. Focusing on the critical challenges embodied in last-inning save-situations, Lyons achieved an 86.2 Self-Save Percentage and an 85.5 Self-Save/Self-Hold Percentage, each value being greater than the Save Percentages earned by every relief hurler currently in the Hall of Fame: Dennis Eckersley (84.6), Hoyt Wilhelm (76.9), Rollie Fingers (75.8), Bruce Sutter (74.8), and Goose Gossage (73.5).

The bottom-line take-away from my microscopic examination of the pitching record of Ted Lyons is that he clearly was a Hall of Fame Self-Closer. ■

Acknowledgments

With grateful appreciation I heartily thank Tom Ruane (Retrosheet's Box Score Project Manager) and his fellow Retrosheet volunteers for generating the invaluable Retrosheet Box Score File and derived Player Daily Files.

Notes

1. Ruffing subsequently added three more victories after May 19, 1946, and three more wins in 1947 to finish his career with 273 lifetime triumphs.
2. Warren Corbett, "Ted Lyons," SABR BioProject, sabr.org website.
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Mel Almada

The First Hispanic to Homer at Several Historic American League Stadia

Lou Hernández

The Almada family of Sinaloa, Mexico sought refuge from the civil unrest of the Mexican Revolution, emigrating to the United States in 1914. The Southern California city of Los Angeles offered Baldomero Almada a safe place for his family and a ranking position in the Mexican consulate.

"My father always wanted us children to have an American education," said Mel Almada, Baldomero's younger son, early in his baseball career. "So when the opportunity came along for him to become Mexican consul at Los Angeles, he turned over most of his property to relatives and moved us all to this country. I was then only a year and one-half-old, so, you see, I am very much an American."[1]

Prior to moving to the U.S., the Almadas had relocated to Sinaloa's bordering northern state of Sonora.[2] There, in Huatabampo, Almada's second son, Baldomero Melo, was born on February 7, 1913, the second and last male addition to a family unit that also included six girls.

A short time later, Almada, Sr. was offered a chance at the governorship of Baja California, which he turned down. Rather than challenge the sitting governor of the region for the seat (which the incumbent governor did not want to relinquish), Almada chose to avoid a political power struggle and instead redirected his family to Los Angeles.

In a profile appearing in *The Sporting News* in 1935, Melo "Mel" Almada's first full major league season, the outfielder revealed the subplot: "My father sort of looked into the situation because it would have been a high distinction to become governor of that state. But it didn't take him long to make a decision. He found out that the governor [who] the president had sought to remove had a large, well-equipped army, while my dad's army consisted of my mother and eight children. Lord only knows what would have happened to all of us had we moved to Lower California."[3]

It is safe to say the course of major league and Hispanic baseball history would have been altered had Baldomero Almada been more politically inclined.

Mel Almada was thus afforded the opportunity to run the educational gamut of the Los Angeles public school system, attending Jefferson Grammar School, John Adams Junior High, and Los Angeles High School, where Mel suited up for football, baseball, and track and field. A gifted halfback and pitcher for the Romans, he also set a school long jump record at 23', 4¾". He was a natural athlete, as had been his older brother, José Luis (known as Lou).

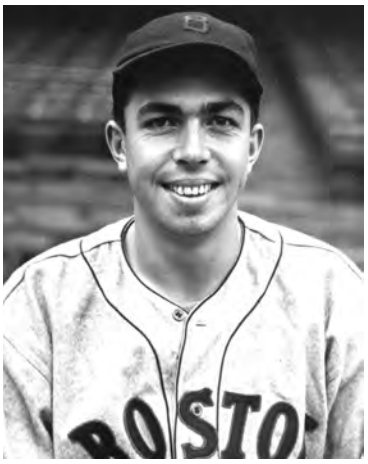
In the late 1920s, Lou Almada joined the Pacific Coast League's Seattle Indians and became an everyday outfielder. In 1932, Lou arranged a tryout for his kid brother. At 19, Mel was such a standout that he ended up taking his brother's starting job. Lou Almada found other employment with the San Francisco Missions, and the brothers subsequently played as friendly rivals for nearly two seasons.

Mel, who had played only semi-professional baseball before 1932, had a .311 batting average in his first season with the Indians then followed it up with 204 hits and a .323 mark in 1933. His hitting, and possibly an advanced scouting report, caught the attention of Eddie Collins, first-year Boston Red Sox general manager during a 1933 summer visit to the west coast. Collins had been hired by Tom Yawkey, the 30-year-old multimillionaire who had bought the Red Sox that February.

Collins purchased Mel Almada and two other players, with the agreement that Almada could finish the season with Seattle then join the Red Sox.

After just two seasons of professional baseball, the 20-year-old was the first Mexican-born player in the major leagues. His first day on the big league scene came at Fenway Park, September 8, 1933, against the Detroit Tigers. Wearing uniform number 21, Almada played center field in both ends of a doubleheader, recording four putouts. Mel had a hit in each game and scored his first major league run in the opener. His first major league hit came off Tommy Bridges. The Red Sox, however, dropped both games by identical 4–3 scores.

Some two weeks later, on September 23, Almada connected against the Yankees' Herb Pennock for his first home run. As a fifth-inning substitute, Almada homered in the same inning, and scored two other



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In 1934, Almada played 23 games for Boston at age 21.

runs in a 16–12 loss to the Bombers at Fenway Park. Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig also socked home runs. Almada's long ball was the first home run hit by a Mexican player in the majors and the first by a Hispanic player at Fenway Park.

Almada also visited Philadelphia and New York that September. In his only game in the City of Skyscrapers, Mel collected three hits in three official at-bats at Yankee Stadium, October 1, 1933. Pitching for the Yankees, in the season finale for both teams, was 38-year-old Babe Ruth, who surrendered 12 hits and three walks (two to Almada) in a 6–5 complete game win.

The following season, 1934, Mel starred for Boston's Kansas City affiliate. He had a .328 batting average in 135 games and topped the circuit in stolen bases with 29. In September, the Red Sox called him up and got him into 23 more games.

The following spring, at age 22, Almada became Boston's regular center fielder. Speed was Almada's greatest asset, and he used it in the field and on the bases. "Almada is as fast as the desert wind that blows across his native Sonora," read one examining report on the Red Sox rookie. "His arm is geared for long range throwing and he gets the ball away quickly…Almada, a left-handed batsman and thrower, is not a distance hitter, but [manager Joe] Cronin believes his defensive skills will more than make up for his lack of power."[4]

In his first year as a starter, Almada batted .290 in 607 at-bats and stole 20 bases (third best in the league). He spent most of his time in center but also played four games at first base. At the plate, he choked up on the bat, a common hitter's practice in those days. He struck out only 34 times in 1935. As a major leaguer, Almada struck out only once every 16.5 at-bats, a terrific ratio.

In 1936, the 6 foot, 170-pound outfielder slumped at bat, falling to a .253 batting average, and played in fewer than 100 games. Boston was forced to move first baseman slugger Jimmie Foxx into the outfield for a time in an attempt to rev up their offense. Almada's on-base and slugging averages dipped to .305 and .338, respectively, compared to the .350 OB and .379 SLG averages of a year earlier.

Late in spring training 1937, Almada was beaned by Cincinnati Reds pitcher Whitey Moore. "Mel Almada, youthful Red Sox outfielder, suffered a concussion today when hit on the head by a pitched ball in an exhibition game with the Cincinnati Reds. The ball struck just behind Almada's right ear with a crack that could be heard all over the ball park."[5] Mel was not seriously hurt, although he was kept two days in a local hospital.

He was ready for Opening Day a week later. He filled in at first base for the first four games of the 1937 season, while Jimmie Foxx recuperated from sinus troubles. Upon Foxx's return, Almada remained in the lineup and was off to a good start, with a .351 batting average in his first nine games, when the Red Sox paid their first visit of the year to Chicago. The White Sox hosted the Red Sox for a two-game set beginning Friday, May 7.

The White Sox' home was in its 28th year. A double-decked grandstand enclosed nearly the entire playing field of the grand structure at this time. Seating capacity was 52,000.[6] The foul line distances were 362 feet in both left and right. Dead center was a cavernous 450 feet from home plate.[7]

Boston, with an early-season 6–3 record, jockeyed with the Detroit Tigers and New York Yankees for the top spot in the AL standings. The home team brought up the rear of the eight-team circuit at just 3–8. The Red Sox won the opener, 5–3, behind Lefty Grove.

The next day, White Sox manager Jimmy Dykes selected right-hander Bill Dietrich to counter the Red Sox' Wes Ferrell on the mound. Ferrell, a renowned hitting pitcher, singled his first time up in the third inning, with one out. Leadoff hitter Almada followed with a home run. The two-run blast was the first scoring of the game and the first home run hit by a Hispanic player at Charlie Comiskey's "Baseball Palace of the World."

Dietrich had the last laugh on Almada and the Red Sox, however, pitching five innings to earn a 6–5 victory.

A month later, on June 11, the Red Sox dealt Almada to the Washington Nationals. The change of scenery brought handsome returns for the Mexican outfielder. His batting average in the .230s when he was traded, Almada stepped up with the Nationals and had a .309 batting average in 100 games. Almada credited Nationals manager Bucky Harris with helping him improve his hitting. "Bucky told me I was a natural-born hitter," said the outfielder. "And that I could go to town if I used a heavier bat—thirty-five ounce instead of thirty-three—and change my stance and wait for the good ones."[8]

A year after that, June 15, 1938, Washington exchanged Almada for St. Louis Browns outfielder Sam West. With the Browns in 1938, Almada put together a 29-game hitting streak, as well as a most remarkable string of hitting in 54 of 56 games, from June 21 to August 19. The 29-game hitting streak was the third longest by a Hispanic major league player in the 20th century; Rico Carty hit in 31 consecutive in 1970 and Benito Santiago hit in 34 straight in 1987.

Almada concluded his seven-year big league career with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1939 at only 26 years of age. In all, he hit .284 and socked 15 home runs, five of which were the first home runs hit in those stadia by a Latin American big leaguer. He played the 1940 season for Triple-A Sacramento and managed for part of the 1941 season in the Mexican League.

He served in the U.S. Army in 1944 and 1945, and in the next decade managed in the Mexican League and Mexican Pacific Coast League.

Why did the promising Almada's career end so soon? He had trouble following up on his early successes at the plate. Some attributed this to being shy of inside pitches; certainly he did not have the power to succeed as an everyday outfielder on a contending team. As a speed and on-base threat, he was simply in the wrong era for his style of play.

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Almada's contact stroke produced a .284 lifetime average.

Historic American League Ball Parks	First Latin American Player to Homer There
Cleveland Stadium	Bobby Estalella, October 1, 1944
Comiskey Park	Mel Almada, May 8, 1937
Fenway Park	Mel Almada, September 23, 1933
Griffith Stadium	Jack Calvo, June 5, 1913
League Park	Mel Almada, May 20, 1938
Navin Field/Tiger Stadium	Mel Almada, August 21, 1935
Shibe Park	Bobby Estalella, September 29, 1935
Yankee Stadium	Mel Almada, June 2, 1935

Whatever the cause of his early exit, Almada soon went into the fruit distribution business with his brother Lou and enjoyed financial success. Baldomero Melo Almada lived a good life, passing away at the age of 75 on August 13, 1988, from a heart ailment in the rural town of Caborca, in his native Sonora.

In 1971, Almada was part of a third class of honorees enshrined into the Mexican Baseball Hall of Fame. Two years later, the organization held the grand opening of the Hall of Fame museum building in Monterrey, Mexico.

The guest speaker at the March 10 event was Bowie Kuhn, the 47-year-old, well-dressed, bespectacled Commissioner of Major League Baseball. He said that day, with some prescience:

> I can see in the decades ahead enormous growth of baseball internationally. Today over 60 countries are participating in organized amateur and professional baseball. I can see the day when heroes of your Mexican diamonds will be heroes all over the world.

"I can remember when, as a 10-year-old boy in Washington D.C., I went out to see my first baseball hero, Mel Almada," Kuhn added. "It is a big thrill for me today to see my boyhood hero enshrined in your Mexican Hall of Fame."[9] ■

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Notes

1. Dick Farrington, "Mexican Revolution Gave Mel Almada to the Diamond," *The Sporting News*, September 5, 1935.
2. The patriarchal Almada was a descendant of affluent Spanish settlers who helped establish one of the oldest cities in Mexico. The privileged-background homesteaders designed their town with cobblestone streets and lavished upon themselves grand estate houses and erected a great fortress to serve as protection from the indigenous tribes of the region. The fortress, built in 1610, became symbolic namesake of the town, called "El Fuerte." There, ten generations later, Baldomero Almada started his family. His eldest son, José Luis, was born in El Fuerte, Mexico on September, 7, 1907.
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Andy Pafko

Darling of the 1945 Cubs

Joe Niese

From the moment Andy Pafko put on a Chicago Cubs uniform he was a fan favorite. He debuted on September 24, 1943, in a rain-shortened, five-inning 7–4 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies. In front of a crowd of 342—the smallest to ever see a game at Wrigley Field—he went 2-for-3 with a double and four RBIs.

He continued to blossom in 1944 under the guidance of Charlie Grimm, who returned to manage the club after the early-season resignation of Jimmie Wilson. In 1945, Pafko made the NL All-Star team (though the game wasn't played) and helped the Cubs to the World Series, hitting .298 with 12 triples, 12 home runs, and 110 RBIs. He finished fourth in National League MVP balloting.[1] His play carried over into the October, and though Chicago lost in seven games to the Detroit Tigers, Pafko was arguably the star of the series.

The 1945 baseball season was the last of the World War II years. Most rosters were depleted by war, but a few, including the Cubs', remained relatively intact. Several Chicago players held 4-F status (exemption from the war due to a variety of maladies) including Pafko, who had both a perforated ear drum and high blood pressure. Major league baseball was clearly being played at a lower caliber as a result of the war, and the drain on many teams' top talent helped both the Cubs and Tigers win the pennant. When longtime Chicago sportswriter Warren Brown was asked who he thought would win the 1945 World Series, he responded, "I don't think either can win it."[2]

Pafko's best game of the series was Game One in Detroit, which he would later call "my biggest game of all-time."[3] Behind the pitching of Hank Borowy, whom the Cubs had acquired from the New York Yankees at the trade deadline, Chicago won 9–0. The Cubs chased Detroit's Hal Newhouser, winner of back-to-back American League MVPs in 1944 and '45, after just 2⅔ innings. Pafko went 3-for-4 and kept the shutout intact with a perfect throw in the fifth inning to nail Tigers runner Eddie Mayo at third base. "I didn't have a chance," said Mayo after the game. "That throw came up to third like it was out of a cannon."[4]

Detroit's manager Steve O'Neill was dumbfounded by Pafko's play in center field. "He's the best center fielder I've seen all season and maybe more than that."[5]

The Tigers won Game Two, 4–1, but Pafko, who went hitless, once again shined in the field, making what *The Sporting News* called the "fielding masterpiece of the game," when he "went against the screen in deepest center near the 400-foot mark."[6]

Pafko's bat went silent after the seventh inning of Game One, as he was hitless in his next 15 at-bats. He hit just .214 in the series overall. But despite his hitting woes, Pafko had captivated many with his play. When the Cubs returned to Chicago after winning Game Three, 3–0, Pafko found the bed in his hotel room covered in letters and telegrams.

After the Cubs dropped Game Four, 4–1, Pafko, along with his brothers Mike, John, and Ed, and Joe Fujko, the manager from his town ball days, returned

Pafko spent eight and a half years in Cubs garb.

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to Pafko's hotel room before attending a banquet in his honor at the Zion Lutheran Church. "Andy is very popular with Chicago fans and sportswriters," Fujko told the *Dunn County News*. "The cameramen were taking pictures of him every chance they got. Autograph seekers are quite a problem with him as they crowd around him and follow him for blocks."[7]

The Cubs and Tigers split the next two games, setting up a decisive Game Seven. The *Milwaukee Journal* dispatched journalist Wallace MacIver to Western Wisconsin to witness Pafko's hometown of Boyceville following baseball's newest darling. MacIver visited a town barbershop, the Pafko family farm, and Boyceville High School, where students gathered to listen to the game on the radio in the auditorium. The piece eventually ran as a multi-page spread in *The Sporting News*.

The Cubs dropped the final game 9–3, but Pafko did set a World Series record for most chances by an outfielder with 26. Even though the Cubs lost the series, his name remained a topic of conversation. At the 1945 Washington Touchdown Club luncheon, Frank O'Neill, new president of the Baseball Writers' Association of America, compared his outfield play to that of the great Tris Speaker, saying Pafko "would have been the Series hero if the Cubs had won."[8] ■

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Bill Murray's Prediction

Rob Edelman

Bill Murray, famous for his work on *Saturday Night Live* and his various screen roles, is also a die-hard Chicago Cubs fan raised in Wilmette, Illinois. His Cubbies may have been the first 20th century major league nine to win two consecutive World Series, but the catch is that these victories came way back in 1907 and 1908. Of course, the team has not copped a Fall Classic since.

In September 2014, Murray brought his latest film, *St. Vincent*, to the Toronto Film Festival. I got to briefly chat with him, and I asked him when his Cubs will win the World Series. Instead of a detailed response, which one might expect from a Cubs fan-atic, Murray—in his trademark deadpan manner—simply uttered, "In two years."

What a Cubs fan! What a singular talent! What an optimist! And what a guy!

The Top 10 Chicago White Sox Games of the 1950s

Stephen D. Boren

May 1, 1951

Minnie Minoso debuts for Sox and homers in first at-bat

On April 30, 1951, the Cleveland Indians, Philadelphia Athletics, and Chicago White Sox orchestrated a trade. Philadelphia sent Lou Brissie to Cleveland, which in turn shipped Sam Zoldak and Ray Murray to Philadelphia and Orestes "Minnie" Minoso to Chicago. The Athletics also sent Paul Lehner to Chicago in exchange for Gus Zernial and Dave Philley.[1]

This was a gutsy trade, as Zernial was the Sox' top slugger, and Minoso a 25-year-old black rookie joining a Chicago team yet to be integrated. Minoso, who had previously played for Cleveland, debuted for the Sox on May 1, batting third and playing third base against the New York Yankees.

In the bottom of the first, he hit a two-run homer off Vic Raschi. After Raschi fired a strike to Minoso, the young outfielder picked on the next delivery and sent it "into the left center field corner of the bullpen, a tap of something like 420 feet."[2]

The trade for Minoso paid off quickly. He immediately became a fan favorite and this love affair continues. He was the first to put the "Go" into the "Go-Go White Sox" and changed the team forever.

May 28, 1954

Phil Cavarretta debuts for Sox as player after long Cubs career

Near the end of spring training 1954, Cubs manager Phil Cavarretta, a longtime north side icon, told owner P.K. Wrigley that his team—5–15 at the time—was not very good. Wrigley was furious with this perceived poor attitude and fired him,[3] replacing him with Stan Hack. Phil's position was, "I thought it my duty to give Mr. Wrigley frank views on the ball club's ability."[4]

The South Siders signed Cavarretta as a player on May 24. This move was unusual; at the time, many believed that an unwritten agreement existed between the White Sox and Chicago Cubs to not conduct transactions with each other. Signing a famous Cub such as Cavarretta was major news.[5]

Ferris Fain started at first base for the Sox against the Baltimore Orioles in the opener of a May 28 twin bill. But in the bottom of the sixth, Phil Cavarretta entered the game at first. He made three putouts and was called out on strikes in the eighth. The White Sox won 11–6.[6]

Cavarretta had not envisioned playing much, and Fain was ensconced as the regular first baseman. Due to a knee injury, however, Fain did not play after June 27 and got into only 65 games. Cavarretta ended up in 71 games. He hit .316, scoring 21 runs and hitting six doubles and three homers and driving in 24 runs.[7] Not only did Cavarretta play well for the Sox, he also got a share of playoff money for their third-place finish—and the Sox got to thumb their noses at the Cubs.

April 23, 1955

A record-tying 29–6 victory

The White Sox of the 1950's were not known for heavy hitting. Sure, they had Minnie Minoso, George Kell, Gus Zernial, Eddie Robinson, Sherman Lollar, and Nellie Fox, but pitching and fielding were really their forte. On April 23, 1955, however, they did score an amazing 29 runs in one game, tying a mark set by the Boston Red Sox on June 8, 1950. Chicago collected 29 hits, just one less than the American league mark, and clubbed seven home runs, which at the time was only one less than the major-league record.[8] The line score:

CHI A	4	7	3	2	0	6	3	4	0	–	29	29	1
KC A	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	–	6	6	3

The Sox began the top of the first with Chico Carrasquel singling and reaching third on an error.[9] Fox flied out and Minoso reached on another error, scoring Carrasquel. Kell's single and Bob Nieman's home run gave the Sox a quick four-run lead. Unfortunately, in the bottom of the first, a Spook Jacobs walk, Jim Finigan's double, and Bill Renna's home run cut the advantage to 4–3.

Lollar led off the second with a home run, and Jack Harshman and Carrasquel singled. A ground out, an intentional walk, a force out, Nieman's single, Walt Dropo's single, Jim Rivera's double, and Lollar's single brought in seven more runs for an 11–3 edge.

In the sixth, up 16–6, the Sox scored six more times.

Minoso's three-run homer in the seventh and Harshman's two-run shot in the eighth increased the lead to 27–6. Later in the eighth, Minoso singled in another run and Stan Jok's sac fly finished the scoring.

Nieman and Lollar each hit a pair of home runs, and Dropo, Minoso, and pitcher Harshman clubbed one each. Lollar twice had two hits in an inning, which itself tied a major league record.

June 22, 1956

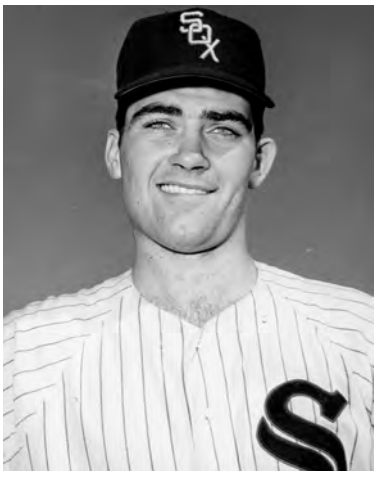
Sam Esposito leads Sox to four-game sweep of Yankees

On Friday, June 22, 1956, the first-place Yankees (40–20) came to town to face Chicago (32–22). The Yankees featured eventual Triple Crown winner Mickey Mantle (52 HR, 130 RBI, and .353 BA), and Yogi Berra, Bill Skowron, Gil McDougald, Elston Howard, and Hank Bauer as well as pitchers Whitey Ford, Johnny Kucks, Don Larsen, and Tom Sturdivant.

In the first game of the four-game set, Casey Stengel started Sturdivant against Dick Donovan.[10] The Sox scored in the third and fifth, but the Yankees tied it with runs in the eighth and ninth. After a scoreless tenth, the Yankees scored two in the eleventh as reserve first baseman Joe Collins singled to chase home Gil McDougald and Norm Siebern.

Sherm Lollar flied out to open the bottom of the eleventh. Walt Dropo singled, but pinch-hitter Bubba Phillips was called out on strikes. Minnie Minoso hit for Luis Aparicio, putting men on second and third. Light-hitting Sammy Esposito batted for Donovan and he too doubled, scoring pinch-runners Jim Delsing and Billy Pierce. Although Jim Rivera singled and Nellie Fox walked, they could not score the winning run.

The Yankees went out in the twelfth, and Dave Philley singled off Rip Coleman to open the home half and Lollar was hit by a pitch. Phillips struck out, but pinch-hitter Ron Northey walked. Esposito then singled home Lollar, and the Sox had stolen game one. Sandy Consuegra was the winning pitcher.



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Despite worlds of talent, Jim Derrington pitched only 21 big-league games and was finished due to injury by age 22.

"Chuck Comiskey strode in amid the shrieking players, shook young Esposito's hand and said with a wide grin, 'You're the new mayor of the city.'"[11]

On June 23 the Yankees started former 20-game winner Bob Grim while the Sox used Jim Wilson.[12] Grim pitched a good game, but in the sixth, he hit Dave Philley with a pitch. After a bench-clearing fight, Philley was ejected.[13] Lollar doubled to score pinch-runner Jim Delsing, and later, Aparicio singled to drive in Walt Dropo. Wilson only gave up four hits and the Sox won 2–0.

Although the Yankees had played six more games, the two teams were now tied in the loss column: NY 40–22 (.645) and Chicago 34–22 (.607).

Sunday June 24 featured a doubleheader. Game One matched aces Ford and Pierce. The game did not begin well for the Sox, as leadoff man Hank Bauer tripled and Mickey Mantle singled to score him.[14] Fortunately, Pierce retired Yogi Berra and Bill Skowron. Esposito, leading off for the Sox, singled to start the first and went to third on a groundout and a wild pitch. Ford hit Minoso with a pitch and Philley singled to plate Esposito. Larry Doby followed with a home run, pushing the Sox ahead 4–1. The Sox continued to pour it on and won 14–2.

The Yankees started Mickey McDermott in Game Two while the Sox started Gerry Staley, who later became their star reliever.[15] Again, Esposito played third and led off. The Yankees did not score in the first, and Esposito walked to start the Sox half. Fox singled and Minoso walked, stuffing the bases. Philley's sacrifice fly scored Esposito and Doby crushed another three-run homer for a 4–0 Sox lead. After Lollar singled, Don Larsen relieved McDermott, but it was too late. Esposito doubled, walked, and scored a run in a 6–3 Sox win.

Falling in four straight to the Sox, the Yankees stood at 40–24.[16] The Sox, at 36–22, had pulled within one game of the league leaders. Unfortunately, the Sox dropped from the heights, playing at .500 for two weeks before losing 11 in a row. The club eventually finished third.

Sept. 30, 1956

16-year-old Jim Derrington becomes the youngest 20th century pitcher to start a major-league game

While the majors had seen some young pitchers, none had been quite as green as Jim Derrington, who took the hill against the last-place Athletics on September 30th, the season's last day.[17] The Sox had clinched

third place, and the third-place post-season share, the day before.

Charles "Jim" Derrington, born November 29, 1939, signed with the White Sox as a "bonus baby" on September 12, 1956. He was only 16 years, 10 months, and 1 day old when he made his first start.[18]

Only 13,171 attended Derrington's start at Kansas City. With one out in the home first, Hector Lopez and Lou Skizas singled. Hal Smith doubled to left, scoring Lopez, but Skizas was out at third trying to advance. Johnny Groth then reached on Esposito's error as Smith scored. Rance Pless walked and Derrington balked. Jim Pisoni walked, but Joe DeMaestri lined out, ending the inning with the Athletics up 2–0.

The Sox filled the bases in the second. Aparicio and Fox walked to push two runs across, and a third scored on an errant pickoff throw, giving the Sox a 3–2 advantage.

Unfortunately, the A's tied the score in the bottom half on another RBI double by Hal Smith. Kansas City did not score in the fourth, despite two Derrington walks. In the fifth, he gave up only a single to Johnny Groth. The bottom of the sixth, however, proved to be Derrington's demise. After Joe DeMaestri walked and Bill Harrington whiffed, Vic Power homered. Skizas also laced a home run later in the inning, and the Sox trailed 6–3.

In the seventh, Doby batted for Derrington and grounded out. The Sox rallied late, but fell 7–6, Derrington taking the loss. He gave up nine hits and six walks, five of which came on 3–2 pitches.[19]

The following season Derrington pitched 20 games, starting five of them. While he went on to work in the minors from 1958–61, Derrington never returned to the majors.[20] He remains, however, the second youngest man to start a major league game.

June 13, 1957
Ditmar, Doby, Slaughter fight

The first-place White Sox, six up in the loss column,[21] were hosting the second-place Yankees, with Billy Pierce facing Art Ditmar. In the home first, Bubba Phillips struck out, Nellie Fox walked, and Minnie Minoso singled. After Sherm Lollar flied out, Ditmar threw a wild pitch, advancing both runners.

Ditmar then unleashed a pitch toward Larry Doby's head, which resulted in a 28-minute bench-clearing fight after which Doby, Walt Dropo, Billy Martin, and Enos Slaughter—but not Ditmar—were ejected.[22]

Doby punched out Ditmar and both Bill Skowron and Martin attacked Doby. Dropo pulled Skowron off, and Slaughter then attacked Dropo. Slaughter's uniform was nearly torn off him. Manager Al Lopez argued that Ditmar also should banished, but the umpires dismissed this by explaining Doby was the "aggressor."[23] After play was resumed, Jim Rivera's two-run shot gave the Sox the lead in second, but the Yankees rallied, scoring three in the fifth to take a 4–2 lead and knock out Pierce.

Lollar laced a solo home run in the eighth, but the Sox drew no closer. The White Sox soon lost their huge lead over the Yankees and by June 30 were in second place.

An irate Chuck Comiskey arranged a post-game meeting involving AL president Will Harridge, the umpires, and managers of both clubs. He argued, "Why wasn't Ditmar thrown out? All Doby said to him was: 'Why don't you watch where you're throwing?' Then Ditmar said, 'Go (chase) yourself.' Doby said: 'I'll chase you right now.' Ditmar turned around and Doby hit him. This is a joke. Are there two sets of rules in the league? I'd like amenity."[24]

Harridge, who had been at the game, levied no suspensions, but did fine Doby, Martin, and Slaughter $150 and Dropo and Ditmar $100.[25]

July 14, 1957
Game #2 of DH against the Yankees at Comiskey Park

One month after the Ditmar/Doby game,[26] the Sox were three games out of first. Chicago won the first game of the day's doubleheader 3–1 as Billy Pierce tamed New York on five hits.[27] Comiskey Park fit in 48,244 fans that day, some 1,500 more than official capacity.[28] A win in the nightcap would pull the Sox within one.

Chicago's Dick Donovan fashioned a gem, scattering five singles over eight innings. The Sox scored in the first on Luis Aparicio's triple and Earl Torgeson's fly and plated two more in the third. In the fifth, the Sox knocked out Ford and Yankees reliever Tommy Byrne walked in another run.

Luis Aparicio joined the White Sox at age 22 and led the AL in steals his first nine seasons.

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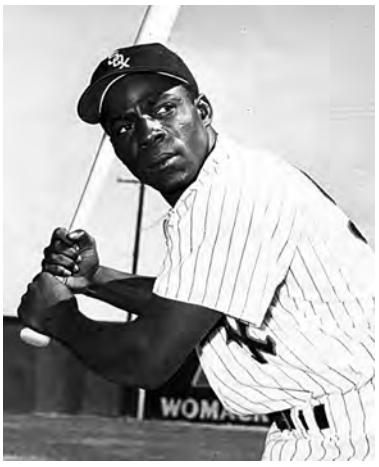
With a 4–0 lead in the ninth, everyone expected a sweep. But Mickey Mantle singled as did Yogi Berra. Harry Simpson singled in Mantle and Jim Wilson replaced Donovan with the score 4–1. Hank Bauer singled, but Wilson fanned Elston Howard. Bill Skowron then pinch-hit for Jerry Coleman and launched a grand slam home run for a 5–4 Yankees lead.

Pitcher Byrne followed with another home run and the score was 6–4. The Sox went scoreless in their half of the inning and the crowd filed silently out of Comiskey.[29] The pennant race had ended that day.



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The White Sox' best and most popular player during the 1950s, Minnie Minoso was equal parts talent, smarts, and daring.

June 27, 1958
Billy Pierce loses a perfect game on a pinch hit with two outs in the ninth

The Sox hosted the eighth-place Senators on June 27, 1958.[30] Washington had some quality hitters in the lineup, including Roy Sievers, Jim Lemon, Albie Pearson (Rookie of the Year that season), Norm Zauchin, and Eddie Yost.

Billy Pierce faced Russ Kemmerer. While Kemmerer allowed three runs on eight hits, Pierce retired the side inning by inning. After eight innings, Pierce had whiffed seven batters and no one had reached base. Nobody in the majors had thrown a regular-season perfect game since Charlie Robertson of the White Sox in 1922.

With 11,300 fans cheering him on, Pierce got Ken Aspromonte to ground to Luis Aparicio at short. Catcher Steve Korcheck became Pierce's eighth strikeout victim. Now down to his last out, Washington manager Cookie Lavagetto inserted Ed Fitz Gerald as a pinch-hitter for Kemmerer.[31]

"On the first pitch, a knee high curve ball, he swung late and sliced it fair by a foot just out of Ray Boone's reach at first base. Fitz Gerald made it to second for a double." A loud groan went through the stands. Pierce then fanned Pearson for the final out. When asked about breaking up the perfect game, Fitz Gerald said, "I was sent up to hit, wasn't I?"[32]

April 22, 1959
Sox score 11 runs in one inning—on one hit

Scoring 11 runs in one inning is interesting enough, but even more so when you are behind 6–1 after just two innings.[33]

Reliever Bob Shaw came on for Chicago and tossed 71/3 scoreless innings, paving the way for the White Sox' decisive 19-run comeback and a 20–6 final.

Chicago knocked out starter Ned Garver in the fourth inning and routed Bud Daley during the sixth, taking an 8–6 lead.[34,35]

Things got nutty in the top of the seventh. Tom Gorman relieved for the Athletics and Ray Boone reached on Joe DeMaestri's throwing error. Al Smith reached when third baseman Hal Smith (usually a catcher) fumbled a sacrifice bunt. Johnny Callison singled—the only hit of the inning—to score Boone, and Smith scored as well when right fielder Roger Maris fumbled the ball. Callison advanced to third.

Luis Aparicio walked and quickly stole second. Gorman also walked Shaw to fill the bases. Earl Torgeson batted for Sammy Esposito and walked to force home Callison and give the Sox an 11–6 advantage. Mark Freeman replaced Gorman, who had faced six batters and retired none of them.

Nellie Fox walked to force in Aparicio with the fourth run. Jim Landis grounded to Freeman who forced Shaw at home. Freeman, however, walked Sherman Lollar, scoring Torgeson with the fifth run. George Brunet replaced Freeman and walked Boone; this scored Fox for the sixth run. Smith walked to push home the seventh run. Brunet hit Callison with a pitch, forcing in Lollar with the eighth run of the inning and a 16–6 lead.

Lou Skizas ran for Callison, and Brunet walked Aparicio to plate yet another run. Shaw struck out. Bubba Phillips batted for Torgeson and—you guess it—walked, scoring Smith with the tenth run. Fox then walked and Skizas tallied the eleventh run. Jim Landis grounded out, Brunet to first baseman Kent Hadley, to end the inning.

The White Sox had scored 11 runs (only two of them earned) on one hit, three errors, 10 walks, and one hit by pitch and now led 19–6.

September 22, 1959
The Sox clinch the AL pennant, Fire Chief Quinn turns on the sirens, and some people think the Russians have attacked

On September 22, the White Sox faced the second-place Indians in a night game at Cleveland's Municipal

Stadium. The Sox were 91–59 and within one victory of clinching the AL flag outright.[36]

Had the Sox lost, their lead would have fallen to just 2½ games with four contests left against the fourth-place Tigers, while Cleveland would finish with four games against the lowly Athletics.

The Sox scored twice in the third and twice more in the sixth when Jim Rivera and Al Smith clouted back-to-back homers. The Indians scored in the fifth and tacked on another in the sixth, when Bob Shaw relieved Wynn. Chicago seemed to be safe with a 4–2 lead, but in the bottom of the ninth with one out, Cleveland's Jim Baxes singled and Ray Webster pinch ran for him.

Former Sox pitcher Jack Harshman singled to right, putting runners on first and second. Carroll Hardy ran for Harshman. Jim Piersall then singled to load the bases. The crowd of 54,293, sensing its moment, roared.

Sox skipper Al Lopez brought in ace reliever Gerry Staley. Vic Power offered at Staley's first pitch and slapped a grounder toward Aparicio. The lithe shortstop sucked up the ball, stepped on second, and fired to first to complete the 6–3 double play, ending the game and clinching the Sox' first pennant in 40 years.[37]

Chicago Fire Commissioner Robert J. Quinn set off the city's air-raid sirens to celebrate the pennant.[38] This odd nighttime action took many people by surprise, however, and even induced some to think that the Soviet Union had attacked. A Chicago detective tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain a warrant against Quinn for disorderly conduct for sounding the air raid.[39] ■

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Mr. Cub

Joseph Wancho

Jarvis fires away…That's a fly ball, deep to left, back, back…HEY HEY! He did it! Ernie Banks got number 500! The ball tossed to the bullpen…everybody on your feet…this…is IT! WHEEEEEEEE!

– Jack Brickhouse, WGN-TV, May 12, 1970[1]

When the curtain rang down on the 1969 season, Ernie Banks was just three home runs shy of 500. But the Chicago Cubs first baseman was not one to dwell on personal achievements. He was probably preoccupied with the disappointing year enjoyed by his team; 1969 was the closest he or many of his teammates had come to a post-season. But Banks was a glass-half-full type of person. Blue skies and better days were ahead.

As the 1970 season commenced, Banks was assigned an unfamiliar role—serving as a back-up to Jim Hickman at first base. His at-bats would be less frequent, and accordingly so were his home runs. Banks' daughter Jan asked him to please "get it over with." On May 12, 1970, Banks was only too happy to oblige. Facing Atlanta's Pat Jarvis in the second inning, he deposited the 1–1 offering into the left field bleachers. Because of dark clouds and threatening skies, the crowd was sparse at Wrigley Field. But the 5,264 in attendance cheered loudly, demanding a curtain call from Mr. Cub. They knew full well the significance of the clout; Ernie Banks was the ninth player in major league history to reach 500 home runs.

"The pitch was inside and up," said Banks. "They've been pitching me inside lately, because I haven't been getting around on the ball."[2] As Banks rounded the bases, and doffed his cap at home plate in acknowledgment of the cheering fans, many thoughts went through his head. "I was thinking about my mother and dad, about all the people in the Cubs' organization that helped me and about the wonderful Chicago fans who have come out all these years to cheer us on," said Banks. "You know, I felt it was the fans last Saturday who helped me hit that number 499 homer and today my number 500. They've been a great inspiration to me."[3]

The Cubs won the game 4–3 on a single by Ron Santo in the bottom of the eleventh. The win kept Chicago atop the National League's Eastern Division. Billy Williams, who also homered in the game, later said that there was no way the Cubs were going to lose and spoil Banks' day. As the celebration carried on in the clubhouse, Banks leapt onto a chair and said "The riches of the game are in the thrills, not in the money."[4] For many, a statement like that might come across as lip service. But coming from Ernie Banks, those words rang truer then the Bell Tower at the Merchandise Mart.

Ernest Banks was born on January 31, 1931, in Dallas, Texas. He was the second oldest of Eddie and Essie Banks' 12 children. Following World War I, Eddie Banks joined the Dallas Black Giants. The Black Giants were a traveling team, and for eight seasons, Eddie played catcher. Their schedule took them to Kansas City, Shreveport, Oklahoma City, and many other cities

Ernie Banks in the 1950s.

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across the country. When his playing days were over, Eddie worked as a chain store warehouse porter for 25 years.

When Ernie was eight, Eddie presented him with his first glove and ball. Eddie would come home from work, wanting to play catch with his son. "I wouldn't have anything to do with them," said Ernie. "So dad gave me 10 cents to play catch with him. From then on, whenever he wanted to play catch, he'd bribe me with nickels and dimes."[5]

"The bat came later, and that almost wrecked everything," says Eddie Banks. "Drives off Ernie's bat broke so many windows in the neighborhood that we were always in trouble. He smashed so many windows that I was almost broke trying to pay for them."[6]

Ernie Banks attended Booker T. Washington High school. He excelled in football and basketball, but the school did not offer baseball as an extra-curricular activity. As a substitute, Ernie played softball. Like many children finding their way, he was introverted and shy. "I thought talking to human beings was just something that could make things complicated and unpleasant. So I didn't talk much. I just watched people."[7]

Bill Blair, a graduate of Washington High School, spotted Banks' ability on the softball field. In Blair's opinion, if Banks could excel at softball, it was not that big of a big leap to do just as well in baseball. Although Banks was only a sophomore, Blair appealed to his parents to allow their son to try out for a traveling team based in Amarillo, Texas. Johnny Carter, owner of the misleadingly-named Detroit Colts—a feeder for professional Negro Leagues teams—visited the Banks household, promising that Ernie would return for his junior year of high school.

The year was 1947, and Jackie Robinson had just broken into the major leagues a couple of months earlier. But the realization of others joining him any time soon was just a dream. "I didn't understand anything about playing baseball," said Banks. "I started playing and it was enjoyable. Most of my life I played with older people on my team, in my league. I learned a lot about life. Every day in my life I learned something new from somebody."[8] Many of the players he faced were in their thirties, or even forties, and had much more experience in baseball—and life.

The Colts traveled through Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. For a teenager, such an adventure certainly beat getting up early with his father to pick cotton, shine shoes, or do any of the other menial jobs Banks had held back in Dallas. His performance on the field was superb, and he won the shortstop job after just a few days of training. The youngster who was skeptical about playing baseball homered in his third at-bat of his first game.

Banks returned to the Colts following his junior year of high school. Playing against the Kansas City Stars, Banks impressed Stars manager "Cool Papa" Bell both with his unruffled behavior off the field and his ability on the diamond. "His conduct was almost as outstanding as his ability," said Bell.[9]

Bell promised Banks a spot with the Kansas City Monarchs if he completed his senior year of high school. Bell had already recommended Banks to Buck O'Neil, the Monarchs skipper, who was already happy with his current shortstop, Gene Baker. But on March 8, 1950, the Chicago Cubs signed Baker to be their first black player. Even though Baker was good enough to play in the majors, his talent did not approach Ernie's.

The Monarchs offered Banks $300 a month, and Eddie and Essie Banks gave their assent. For Ernie Banks, a new life opened up. He was fortunate to join an organization with a history of success in the Negro Leagues. Kansas City was a pillar of black baseball. "'Cool Papa' Bell was the first one who impressed me. Buck O'Neil helped me in many ways. He installed a positive influence," Banks later noted.[10]

In 1950, Banks' first season with the Monarchs, he played shortstop and hit a reported .255. "Playing for the Kansas City Monarchs was like my school, my learning, my world," said Banks. "It was my whole life."[11] As great as an education he may have received as a member of the Monarchs, his greatest thrill to date was just ahead. He was offered the opportunity to barnstorm with the "Jackie Robinson All-Stars," which also included Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, and Larry Doby, who were touring with the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro League. Banks made $400 for the tour and, more importantly, received lessons from Robinson on turning the double play.

Banks was then drafted into the United States Army, reporting to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. His battalion reported to New Orleans in early 1952 and traveled by boat to Germany, where Banks served the rest of his two-year hitch. He was discharged in January 1953.

Although Brooklyn and Cleveland contacted Banks to attend tryouts, the young shortstop made a beeline back to Kansas City. By this time, many blacks had turned their attention away from the Negro Leagues and toward the majors. As more black players left the Negro Leagues, interest waned and attendance dropped. Buck O'Neil knew it was only a matter of time before his prized player would also leave.

In September 1953, the Chicago Cubs offered the Kansas City Monarchs $20,000 for the rights to Banks

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Mr. Cub, King of the North Side.

and pitcher Bill Dickey. Banks, who signed a contract for $800 a month,[12] debuted in the majors on September 17, 1953. Gene Baker, called up from Los Angeles of the Pacific Coast League, played his first game three days later. "They knew we were going to bring Baker to the Cubs, and they knew he'd need a roommate," said Lennie Merullo, a former Cubs infielder then working as the club's chief scout. "One reason they signed Banks was so that Baker would have a roommate. That's true. You couldn't isolate a guy."[13]

The Cubs were not paying $20,000 just for a roommate. Ernie did not spend a day in the minors, reporting directly to Cubs manager Phil Cavarretta. Banks played the last 10 games of the 1953 season and didn't sit again until August 11, 1956, by which time he had played 424 straight games. In 1955, Banks' second full season in Chicago, he stepped in the national spotlight. He was ranked third in home runs (44) and fourth in RBI (117) and hit .295. Banks also led all shortstops with a .972 fielding percentage.

He appeared in his first All-Star Game in 1955, the first of 14 midsummer classic berths for Banks. That season, he set a major league record with five grand slam home runs. The last one came in St. Louis on September 19. "Naturally, I knew I needed another one to break the record, but I never dreamed it would happen to me," said Banks. "Then the kid (St. Louis pitcher Lindy McDaniel) gave me a fastball that was a bit outside, and I knew it was gone as soon as I hit it. It was one of the best pitches I've hit all season, but it's still hard to believe."[14]

"Of course, Ernie Banks was a good hitter, even at the beginning," said Ralph Kiner, a pretty fair hitter in his own right. "I liked watching him. He would lightly rap his fingers on the bat; he looked like he was playing the flute."[15] Banks played a full-blown symphony in both 1958 and 1959, when he was twice honored by the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA) as the National League's MVP. *The Sporting News* also named Banks its N.L. Player of the Year for both seasons. In 1958, he topped the NL in home runs, RBIs, and slugging percentage, and the following year topped the league in RBIs and ranked second in homers. He also led all shortstops with a .985 fielding percentage and committed only 12 errors. Both of these statistics set major league records for shortstops.[16]

"Ernie Banks was a super guy. My kids loved him. Could he ever hit! He had just had back-to back MVP seasons despite playing for a bad ballclub. He had his fourth straight year with over 40 homers and way over 100 RBIs," said his 1960s teammate Frank Thomas.[17]

"I don't try to hit home runs. I just try to meet the ball and get base hits," noted Mr. Cub. "I'm swingin' at better pitches than I did in previous years. I'm not letting those strikes get by. I try to stay ready to hit the fastball. If I'm fooled by the pitch, I take it. I protect myself when the ball is outside and concentrate on hitting strikes."[18] Phillies pitcher Robin Roberts noted, however, that Banks was never the most patient hitter: "He doesn't take many bad pitches; he swings at them."[19]

In 1960, Banks again paced the NL in home runs with 41. He also knocked in 117 and led the league again in fielding percentage, winning his only Gold Glove. Ron Santo joined the club in mid-year and added some power and offense to the lineup. The following season, Billy Williams won Rookie of the Year honors from both *The Sporting News* and the BBWAA, forming with Santo and Banks a three-headed monster. "My second year I hit behind Banks, and he hit 29 home runs, and I spent about 29 times in the dirt," said Santo. "I used to say to him, 'You're hitting the home runs. Why am I spending time in the dirt?' He just laughed. That's the way it was then. You accepted it. You didn't think twice about it. This was all respect."[20]

For 1961, Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley designed a plan under which the Cubs would operate without a manager "as that position is generally understood." An eight-man staff, augmented by other coaches from the organization, would take turns directing the major-league team and rotating through the minor-league system. This unique and radical idea was called the "College of Coaches." This approach, which Wrigley called "business efficiency applied to baseball," was questioned by most and ridiculed by many.

Early in 1961, then-head coach Vedie Himsl asked Banks if he would mind moving to the outfield. Banks had never played the outfield, but he always put the

good of the team first, and agreed so that the Cubs could promote Jerry Kindall, a bonus baby signing from 1956.

Banks was a fish out of water in left field, but Chicago center fielder Richie Ashburn helped give him direction. Banks made 23 starts in left field from May 23 through June 14 and also put in a few games at first base before returning to shortstop. His consecutive game streak of 717 ended on June 23 because of his ailing knee; he had banged his left knee on the brick wall at Candlestick Park and was moved back to shortstop. The knee, originally injured in the Army, continued to give him trouble.

Ernie returned to first base in 1962. Kindall was traded to Cleveland and Andre Rodgers was inserted as the starter at shortstop. "This presents many problems," said Banks. "Not the least of them is what to do with my feet. Sometimes I seem to have too many and sometimes not enough. I took a whirl at first base last year and I knew even less about it than I do now."[21]

On May 25, 1962, Cincinnati's Moe Drabowsky—a former teammate—plunked Banks in the head with a pitch. Although he did not lose consciousness, Banks was dazed and was sent to the hospital for observation for a couple of days. Two days later after being released, Banks hit three consecutive home runs against Milwaukee at Wrigley Field.

Banks' offense began to suffer, as he hit 37 home runs and drove in 104 runs in 1962 but slumped in other categories. Although Buck O'Neil, who was scouting for the Cubs, soon joined the staff and was the first black coach in the majors, Wrigley's "College of Coaches" concept was otherwise a failure. Bob Kennedy, a former major league outfielder, was named the lone head coach in 1963, but over the next three years, he had to deal with a dozen or so revolving coaches.

Banks slumped badly in 1963. He suffered most of the season from sub-clinical mumps, in which the disease remains in the blood without breaking out, and was sidelined for the last three weeks. He also missed games because of a sore right knee and a heel bruise. He did set a major league record with 22 putouts at first base on May 9, 1963, as Dick Ellsworth topped Pittsburgh 3–1 on two hits.

The Cubs improved some in that season, but promising second baseman Ken Hubbs—the 1962 Rookie of the Year—died February 15, 1964, when he crashed a small plane into an ice-covered section of Utah Lake. He was 22 years old.

To make things worse, on June 15, 1964, the Cubs shipped outfielder Lou Brock to St. Louis in a six-player deal. In sixth place but only 5½ games off the pace, the Cubs were trying to bolster their pitching corps, but Ernie Broglio, the centerpiece of the deal, had a bad arm and was out of baseball two years later. The Cardinals used Brock differently than had the Cubs, utilizing his speed. He became the all-time leader in stolen bases, running all the way to Cooperstown.

The Chicago front office hired Leo Durocher to take the helm for 1966. "The Lip" had piloted three other clubs to pennants and captured a world championship in 1954 with the New York Giants. His clubs finished either second or third nine other times. Most felt that Durocher's rough-and-ready style was just what the Cubs needed.

In his fourteenth season, Banks was sick of losing. Even for a player with a sunny disposition, losing can take a toll. "I am happy Leo is here. I am delighted. I think Durocher—"Leo the Lip" as they say—will shake things up. He will be able to do things that some of the others could not do. If Leo gets the Cubs going, I will be happy to play a part even if I am not here when we eventually win a pennant. Just winning and being in the first division would be great incentive for the fellows around here," said Banks.[22]

Although Banks was in a good frame of mind, others painted a different picture. "He (Durocher) disliked Ernie from the go," wrote broadcaster Jack Brickhouse. "It was just that Ernie was too big a name in Chicago to suit Durocher."[23]

"I can remember Ernie and Leo were constantly feuding," recalled Ferguson Jenkins. "Leo was always giving Ernie Banks' job away. Every spring he'd give it away to John Boccabella or George Altman or (Willie) Smith or Lee Thomas, and Ernie would win it back again. Ernie knew that Leo did not like him. There was no 'Come over for tea and crumpets' with Ernie for Leo…Ernie was always going to spring training, and someone always had his job, and Ernie would always win it back."[24]

Curiously, Banks was named as a "player-coach" during spring training 1967. All of the right comments were made and speculation about Banks' playing time diminishing was dismissed. "I'm very happy about it," said Banks. "I'm looking forward to working with the younger players. It's all very gratifying."[25]

Despite the clash between the Cubs star and the skipper, Chicago finished in third place in 1967 and 1968. Although they were a distant third behind St. Louis and San Francisco both times, this was unfamiliar terrain. Glenn Beckert at second base and Don Kessinger at short were as solid as any DP combo in the league. Randy Hundley came over from San Francisco and was a solid catcher for several seasons. The

pitching staff, led by Ferguson Jenkins who would win 20 games six years in a row, was taking shape. Banks' batting average was on the decline, but he slugged 32 homers in 1968.

The National and American Leagues split into divisions for the first time in 1969, creating a playoff system. Both leagues had an East and West Division, each with six teams. The Cubs were placed in the N.L. East. All signs pointed to Chicago ending its postseason drought in 1969 and for their fans, there was no better way to spend the summer than at Wrigley Field. Jenkins and Bill Hands both won 20 games, while Santo, Banks, and Williams combined to smack 73 round trippers and drive in 324 runs. It was also in July 1969 that the phrase "Let's Play Two" was attributed to Banks. The Cubs were to play a game in 100-degree heat and Banks, looking to inspire his teammates, uttered the phrase. Sportswriter Jimmy Enright reported it and credited Ernie.[26]

At the end of August, the Cubs held a 4½-game lead over second-place New York. A two-game series at Shea Stadium in early September featured Jenkins and Hands against the Mets' best hurlers, Tom Seaver and Jerry Koosman. The Mets took both games to slice their deficit to a half-game. Chicago never recovered, going 8–12 the rest of the season. Conversely, the Mets went 18–5 and cruised to the division title by a margin of eight games. "I admit we played horseshit in the last few weeks," said Durocher. "We've played some of the worst baseball I've seen in years. But that doesn't discount the fact that the Mets played like hell. They got in a streak and couldn't lose."[27]

The Cubs made a strong bid again for the playoffs in 1970, trailing Pittsburgh by 1½ on September 19. But a 4–7 record to close the year made them bridesmaids again. For the first time, Banks was used primarily as a reserve. Even when he got the chance to play, Banks was disrespected by Durocher. Once the manager sent Jim Hickman, like Banks a right-handed batter, to pinch-hit for him against a southpaw. "Hickman told me later it was one of the toughest things he ever had to do," said Brickhouse.[28]

Ernie Banks retired from major league baseball at the conclusion of the 1971 season. He was 40 years old. Over his 19-year career he hit .274, made 2,583 hits, pounded out 512 home runs and 407 doubles, and drove in 1,636 runs. He was enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1977, his first year of eligibility. He, Cal Ripken Jr., and Honus Wagner were the shortstops on Major League Baseball's All-Century Team in 1999.

Banks was the Cubs' first-base coach in 1973 and 1974, remained in the Cubs organization on a personal services contract for most of the next two decades. He was named to the Cubs Board of Directors in 1978.

Banks also had his own sports marketing firm and was employed by World Van Lines for more than 20 years. He also worked for the Bank of Ravenswood in Chicago. Even when he was still playing baseball, Banks bought in to a Ford automobile dealership in 1967, becoming the second African American in the U.S. to own one. He also served on the board of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in 1969.

In 1982, the Cubs retired his #14. On Opening Day in 2008, the team unveiled a statue of Banks outside of Wrigley Field.

In 2013, Banks received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a ceremony at the White House. It is the highest honor a United States civilian can receive.

A late 1953 pose. Left to right: Dale Talbot, Gene Baker, manager Phil Cavarretta, Banks, and Bill Moisan.

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"That's Mr. Cub—the man who came up through the Negro Leagues, making $7 a day, and became the first black player to suit up for the Cubs and one of the greatest hitters of all time," said President Barack Obama. "In the process, Ernie became known as much for his 512 home runs as for his cheer and optimism, and his eternal faith that someday the Cubs would go all the way. That is something that even a White Sox fan like me can respect. He is just a wonderful man and a great icon of my hometown."[29]

Banks, and his wife Liz, spent his later years in Southern California. He played golf regularly with his twin sons, Joey and Jerry, and tasted the creations of his daughter Jan, a local chef. He planned for the future and lived comfortably; during the 1960s, Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley offered Ernie the chance to invest in a trust fund. Banks put aside half his salary and at age 55 cashed in more than $4 million. He was the only player to take Wrigley's advice.

On January 23, 2015, in Chicago, Ernie Banks died at age 83, setting off a round of mourning fitting one of the city's most beloved citizens.

Maury Allen, columnist for the *New York Post*, once wrote about Banks, "With a twinkle in his eye, a smile on his face, a warm handshake and a high-pitched, warm voice, Ernie Banks would move close to a visiting sportswriter and laugh, 'What a great day for baseball. Let's play two.'

"The rain might be beating down on top of the dugout roof at Wrigley Field, or the clouds might be a dark, ominous gray or the world might be threatened with a nuclear holocaust, but Ernie Banks would still offer in his cheery way: Let's play two. Sometimes three."[30]

Indeed. ■

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How Good Was the White Sox' Pitching in the 1960s?*

Brendan Bingham

The 1959 Chicago White Sox won the American League pennant despite a league-average offense. Under manager Al Lopez, the "Go-Go" Sox combined speed, fielding, and—especially—pitching to shatter the New York Yankees' four-year run of AL championships.

The 1959 pitching staff was anchored by starters Early Wynn (age 39), Billy Pierce (32), and Dick Donovan (31). Abetted by relative youngster Bob Shaw (26), the 1959 rotation continued the solid pitching that had been the team's staple during the 1950s. No additional AL pennants came the South Siders' way in the decade ahead. Their closest finishes were one game back in 1964 and three games back, in fourth place, in 1967.

The absence of success, though, was no fault of the team's run prevention abilities, as the White Sox strung together six straight seasons in the 1960s leading the AL in runs allowed per games (RA/G).[1]

If the 1960 Sox' pitching performance dropped off from 1959, it was a minor difference (Table 1).[2] In 1959, the Sox staff led the league in RA/G, earned run average (ERA), and adjusted ERA (ERA+)[3] and were second in walks and hits allowed per inning pitched (WHIP). The 1960 team was second in RA/G and third in ERA and ERA+. The drop off in 1961 was more pronounced, with near league-average team RA/G, ERA, and WHIP, but the start of as six-year run of AL-leading RA/G was only a season away.

The 1962 Sox pitching staff bore only a vague resemblance to the 1959 group. Wynn remained on board, but 1962 would be his last season with Chicago. Released after the season, he signed with Cleveland, where in limited action the next year he notched his 300th win before retiring. Pierce had been sent to the San Francisco Giants after the 1961 season in a six-player trade. One arm received in return was Eddie Fisher, who would prove valuable through the 1965 season, mostly in a relief role. Donovan, left unprotected in the 1960 expansion draft, became the new Washington Senators' best pitcher in their inaugural AL season. Shaw left for Kansas City during the 1961 season in an eight-player deal.

Along with Wynn, the 1962 Sox starters were Ray Herbert, Juan Pizarro, John Buzhardt, and Joe Horlen. The 32 year-old Herbert, who had arrived in the Shaw trade, enjoyed his only All-Star season in 1962, posting 20 wins and a 3.27 ERA. Pizarro, Buzhardt, and Horlen, key members of the pitching staff in the coming years, were all age 24 or 25. Pizarro had been acquired from the Braves before the 1961 season, Buzhardt from the Phillies before the 1962 season, and Horlen was home-grown, signed out of Oklahoma State University in 1959. In 1962, the young pitchers showed potential and inexperience. Sox starters were 58–64 with an ERA close to league average. It was the Sox' bullpen that led the staff to 1962 season ERA and ERA+ close to the league's best. Fisher and journeymen Turk Lown, Frank Baumann, and Dom Zanni posted a 3.22 relief ERA in more than 400 innings.

The Sox' pitching improved in 1963 as the club led the AL in RA/G, ERA, and ERA+ and ranked second in WHIP. This improvement was attributable mainly to the maturation of the young starting corps. Pizarro, Buzhardt, and Horlen all improved on their previous years' performance, although Buzhardt missed much of the second half with arm and shoulder problems,[4] and Horlen spent a short stint in the minors to regain his control and confidence.[5] The elder Herbert turned in another solid season, although not quite to the level of his 1962 campaign.

Wynn's departure before the 1963 season made the White Sox pitching staff's turnover from 1959 complete, but the quality of the mound work was not compromised. Wynn's absence left an opening in the starting rotation for rookie Gary Peters, whom the Sox had signed in 1956 out of high school, where he had been a first baseman and outfielder and had done only a small amount of pitching. Peters was signed for his hitting, but shifted to the mound once he was in the White Sox system.[6] The Sox gave him his first taste of major-league ball in 1959, but until 1963 limited his

* The tables referenced in this article are available in the online version of *The National Pastime* at sabr.org.

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Southpaw Gary Peters, the Sox' ace in the mid-1960s, led the AL in ERA in 1963 and 1966 and victories in 1964.

major-league service. The timing proved right, as Peters' 19–8 record and league-leading 2.33 ERA earned him the AL Rookie of the Year Award. Peters remained a cornerstone of the Sox starting rotation through 1969, and throughout his career hit well enough that he was called on to pinch-hit on occasion.

Another change the Sox made for 1963 paid dividends for the next six seasons. The White Sox sent the left side of their infield—shortstop Luis Aparicio and third baseman Al Smith—to Baltimore in exchange for infielders Ron Hansen and Pete Ward, outfielder Dave Nicholson, and pitcher Hoyt Wilhelm. Relief specialist Wilhelm had been a selection to the AL All-Star team three of his four seasons in Baltimore, but by baseball standards was considered old in 1963. (When he joined the White Sox, Wilhelm claimed to be 39. In fact, he was 40, according to the birth certificate found following his death in 2002. That document showed him to have been born in 1922, not 1923 as previously believed.[7])

Age aside, Wilhelm took charge of the Sox bullpen, leading the relief corps in innings pitched in 1963. He was the Sox' most effective reliever, as measured by ERA, from 1964 through 1968 and did not retire until 1972, evidence that age is not the most critical criterion by which to judge a knuckleball-throwing reliever.

The White Sox' pitching staff remained largely the same in 1964. The most noteworthy newcomer was 21-year-old Bruce Howard, of Villanova University,[8] who got three starts. Howard remained a solid contributor to the staff as a starter and reliever through 1967. With Sox starters accounting for 73 wins and 47 losses with a 2.65 ERA, the team went deep in the pennant race in 1964, unlike in the preceding seasons. In the effort to compete with the Yankees and Orioles, manager Lopez and pitching coach Ray Berres went with a three-man rotation in the closing weeks of the season, with Peters, Pizarro, and Horlen bearing the burden as starters. Meanwhile, the bullpen had its work horses, too, with Wilhelm accruing more than a third of the team's relief innings and fellow knuckleballer Fisher contributing nearly as many. The Yankees prevailed in the pennant race, but Chicago's stout moundsmen topped the AL in RA/G, ERA, ERA+, and WHIP.

A somewhat different and less dominant cast of starting pitchers appeared in 1965. Howard's role expanded while Pizarro's was limited by injuries. One off-season trade sent Herbert away, and another, a three-team deal among Chicago, Cleveland, and Kansas City, brought 21-year-old southpaw Tommy John to the White Sox. In aggregate, the starters put up a 62–48 mark and a 3.24 ERA—good but not brilliant. The bullpen, however, was as strong as ever, posting a 2.54 ERA in 518 1/3 innings. The main relief men were Wilhelm, Fisher, and Bob Locker, a 27-year-old rookie, whose history included a college career at Iowa State and two years in the military.[9] Despite the late start, Locker spent ten years as a reliable relief man with four MLB teams. In total, the 1965 staff combined a league-leading WHIP and an ERA just a tick below the league lead.

Lopez retired after the 1965 season, bringing to a close his nine campaigns as Sox manager (he returned to helm the team for three short stints beginning in July 1968). New manager Eddie Stanky set a starting rotation of Horlen, Peters, John, and Buzhardt in 1966. Howard also earned some starts, especially late in the season when Buzhardt was dropped from the rotation.[10] Pizarro, again slowed by injuries,[11] pitched in relief when available. Wilhelm remained the team's most valuable reliever, but in 1966 he pitched fewer innings than in his previous seasons in Chicago. Meanwhile, Locker contributed another strong season in relief, while Fisher was traded in mid-June. The bulk of the remaining relief innings went to rookie Dennis Higgins.

In all, the 1966 White Sox pitching staff equaled the 1964 staff, leading the AL in RA/G, ERA, WHIP, and ERA+, accomplishments due in large part to Peters' performance—he paced the league with a 1.98 ERA.

At the start of the 1967 season, there were no changes to the Sox rotation, but Buzhardt contributed just seven starts before losing his starting job. Previously known for his ability to locate his pitches, Buzhardt began to struggle with his control, causing Stanky to puzzle over how best to use the right-hander. A watershed moment came in mid-June when Buzhardt was called on in relief in an extra-inning game. He pitched very effectively in what turned out to be an

eight-inning relief appearance, but took a frustrating loss against the Senators in the 22nd inning. He started only one more game for the Sox before being sold to Baltimore before the season's end, and was finished as a major league pitcher after the following season.[12]

Prior to the season, Pizarro had been traded to Pittsburgh in exchange for Wilbur Wood, another knuckleballer. Mostly a relief contributor in 1967, the 25-year-old Wood showed signs of the talent that would make him the Sox' most celebrated pitcher of the 1970s. Once again in 1967, the Sox led the league in RA/G, ERA, WHIP, and ERA+, but the team's poor attack doomed it to a heartbreaking fourth-place finish.

The Sox' six-year run of AL-leading RA/G came to a close in 1968—Chicago's 3.25 RA/G ranked fifth in the 10-team league. From the perspective of White Sox fans, the 1968 season (in which the club finished 67–95) is more noteworthy for what might have been. AL MVP and Cy Young Award winner Denny McLain had once been White Sox property. Chicago had drafted the flamboyant Illinois native out of high school, but after one year in the Sox minor league system, McLain was left unprotected and was claimed by the Tigers.[13]

In 1969, the White Sox' pitching was mediocre. Their RA/G, ERA, WHIP, and ERA+ all fell to worse than league average. The starting corps still included Horlen, Peters, and John, who combined for 100 starts, but only John reached his previous level. Wood was a strong contributor from the bullpen, but Locker was not. Wilhelm had been left unprotected in the off-season expansion draft and chosen by the Kansas City Royals. In hopes of bolstering the team's rotation, the Sox dealt Locker to the Seattle Pilots in June for Gary Bell, who as a member of the Red Sox the year before had earned a place on the AL All-Star team. Unfortunately, Bell had lost his fastball[14] and was soon finished.

Sadly for Sox fans, mediocrity would have been a pleasant alternative to the reality of the 1970 White Sox staff, the worst in the AL by all measures. The 1960s had passed, and gone too was Chicago's standing as a dominant AL pitching staff.

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Joe Horlen, known early in his career by his formal name Joel, finished second in the 1967 AL Cy Young voting after leading the league in ERA and shutouts and firing a no-hitter.

Any enthusiasm for the gaudy stats piled up by White Sox pitchers in the 1960s must be tempered by consideration of park effects. Comiskey Park (known as White Sox Park from 1962–75) was always a renowned haven for pitchers, even when the outfield fence was moved in.[15,16]

The extent to which Comiskey Park influenced run production in the mid-1960s can be seen in the White Sox' home and road batting splits from 1962–67 (Table 2),[17] a span in which the Sox scored runs near the league average on the road but not at home. The Sox scored more on the road than at home in all seasons but 1963; for the six years, their road scoring was nearly half a run per game (R/G) higher.

Meanwhile, the other nine AL teams combined for 0.2 R/G more at home, an indication that Comiskey was an extreme run-suppressing environment. The Sox certainly showed diminished power at home; their home slugging percentage (SLG) lagged behind their road SLG and the league norm, while their on-base percentage (OBP) was similar at home and away and similar to other teams' road OBP.

If Comiskey Park negatively impacted the Sox' run production, it also must have affected the opponents' ability to score, thus distorting the Sox' pitching statistics in the process. Traditional pitching statistics tallied at Comiskey Park demand proper context. One way to adjust for park effects on pitching is through adjusted statistics, such as ERA+ in place of ERA. Another way is limiting one's analysis to performance in road games. The advantage of focusing on road splits is that the analysis can be applied to any pitching statistic, not just ERA, while a downside is that half a team's performance is ignored. In addition, when comparing two teams' road efforts, the park effects are actually reversed, albeit in a strongly dampened way. For example, during the 10-team era of the 1960s, Sox opponents each played one-ninth of their road games at pitcher-friendly Comiskey Park, while the Sox played all their road games elsewhere.

Table 3[18] shows road splits for three statistics (RA, ERA, and WHIP) for AL teams from 1962 through 1967. The road White Sox outpitched the road Yankees in two of New York's league championship seasons (1962 and 1963) and put up very similar road pitching numbers in the Yankees' other pennant season (1964), but these early 1960s Bronx teams of Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and Elston Howard relied more on bats than pitching to win. Whether the Sox had the best road pitching performance in any of these years is

another matter. In 1962, the White Sox, Tigers, Twins, and Angels produced similarly strong road pitching numbers. The White Sox can lay claim to having had the best road pitching in the AL in 1963, as evidenced by league leading RA, ERA, and WHIP in road games. In 1964, the three teams that vied for the pennant also had the best road pitching splits.

A different team won the AL championship in 1965, 1966, and 1967. In 1965, the AL champion Minnesota Twins had the best road WHIP and second-best road RA/G and ERA. The Twins' road splits are almost indistinguishable from those of the Baltimore Orioles, but both teams clearly outperformed the White Sox' pitchers on the road. In 1966, the Sox' road pitching splits were better than those of the pennant-winning Orioles, albeit narrowly, but other than WHIP, the Sox road pitching splits were not especially close to those of the league-leading Twins. In 1967, the White Sox' road splits for RA/G and ERA were only narrowly second-best to those of the pennant-winning Boston Red Sox, while the White Sox' road WHIP was the AL's fourth best.

Adjustment for park effects can reveal traditional statistics misrepresenting a team's standing among its competitors. By analysis of road splits, the Sox' pitching staff was shoulder-to-shoulder with the league's best from 1962–64, slipped noticeably in 1965, and hovered near second-best in 1966–67.

This provides strong evidence that Comiskey Park's vast dimensions likely contributed to Chicago's run of league leading RA/G, not surprising given the inequity in the Sox' own home/road batting splits during the same period.

ERA+ paints a similar picture. The Sox topped the AL in this stat in four of the six seasons in the 1960s in which they led the AL in RA/G (1963, 1964, 1966, and 1967).

Comiskey Park exaggerates how good the Sox' pitching was, but cannot be accused of telling an outright lie. Playing in a pitcher-friendly home park contributed to the Sox' ability to keep their opponents from scoring runs, with 1965 as the clearest example of how an extreme pitchers' park distorts traditional statistics. Even after park adjustment, though, there is no denying that the White Sox mid-1960s pitching was consistently strong. The moundsmen simply had the misfortune of being paired with a batting attack that never rose above the AL's midrange. The White Sox simply could not duplicate the unlikely recipe for success in 1959—ordinary offense coupled with extraordinary pitching—during the 1960s. ■

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The spectacular career of ageless knuckleballer Hoyt Wilhelm included six years (1963–68) with the White Sox.

Notes

1. Season and game statistics are from tabled values in www.baseball-reference.com and www.retrosheet.org, accessed various dates November 15, 2014 through January 3, 2015.
2. RA/G, ERA, WHIP and ERA+ per tabled values in www.baseball-reference.com, league splits pages.
3. ERA+ = 100*[lgERA/ERA] adjusted to ballpark.
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5. Gregory H. Wolf, SABR Baseball Biography Project, Joe Horlen, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/968eb078, accessed November 29, 2014.
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7. Mark Armour, SABR Baseball Biography Project, Hoyt Wilhelm, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/635428bb, accessed November 29, 2014.
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12. John Gabcik, SABR Baseball Biography Project, John Buzhardt, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/bd9d9a78, accessed November 29, 2014.
13. Mark Armour, SABR Baseball Biography Project, Denny McLain, http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/6bddedd4, accessed December 10, 2014.
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16. Curt Smith, SABR Baseball Biography Project, Comiskey Park (Chicago), http://sabr.org/bioproj/park/e584db9f, accessed December 10, 2014.
17. White Sox batting splits are from tabled values in www.baseball-reference.com, team batting splits pages; batting splits for the set of other AL teams are calculated from tabled values in www.baseball-reference.com, league batting splits pages and White Sox team batting splits; six-year averages are not weighted by unequal year-to-year values in plate appearances, at bats, and games played.
18. RA/G values are calculated from tabled RA values in www.baseball-reference.com, team pitching splits pages; ERA and WHIP are per tabled values in www.baseball-reference.com/, team pitching splits pages.

The '67 White Sox

"Hitless" Destiny's Grandchild?

Bryan Soderholm-Difatte

The 1967 American League race holds the distinction of being The Last Great Pennant Race in major league baseball's 1901–68 long-time structure of two leagues with just one pennant race each. During this crazy campaign, four junior circuit teams went into the final weekend of the season with a shot at going to the World Series.

Each team had a fascinating story line. The "Cinderella"/"Impossible Dream" Boston Red Sox, who had finished ninth the year before, ended up winning, but perhaps the most interesting story was that of the Chicago White Sox, whose offensive deficiencies paralleled those of their "hitless wonders" namesake from some sixty years earlier.

If such a thing exists as certain teams having a unique Cosmic Destiny—the Yankees as the Bronx Bombers, the Red Sox under the long-time "Curse of the Bambino," or the Chicago Cubs as lovable, Billygoat cursed losers ever since World War II—then perhaps that of those White Sox teams was that of Hitless in Chicago.

THE ORIGINAL HITLESS WONDERS

Although they won only a single pennant—in 1906—the Chicago White Sox between 1904 and 1908 had the best five-year record in the American League. Their .591 winning average, equal to a 91–63 record over a single 154-game season, would have put them five games ahead of the Cleveland Indians (then known as the Naps, after their star second baseman, Napoleon Lajoie) and six ahead of the Philadelphia Athletics, whose winning percentages were the second and third highest during that time. Moreover, Chicago's overall record from 1904 to 1908 was the best of any American League team in the first decade of the twentieth century, one game better than the 1901–05 Boston Red Sox (two pennants), two better than the 1906–10 Detroit Tigers (three pennants) and three up on the 1901–05 Athletics (two pennants).

Unlike each of those teams, the White Sox were competitive every year, never finishing worse than third. But their offense was an enduring weakness, and indeed their teams of the era would be lost to history were it not for their stunning triumph over the heavily-favored Chicago Cubs in the 1906 World Series.

The 1906 team is remembered in history as the "Hitless Wonders" for becoming World Series champions despite hitting only seven home runs all year and compiling the worst batting average in the American League and the second-worst of all sixteen major league teams.[1] Pitching was the foundation to their success. With a staff anchored by Ed Walsh and including Doc White, Frank Smith, Frank Owen, and Nick Altrock, the White Sox were the American League's stingiest team in giving up runs three years straight from 1905 to 1907, and were second in fewest runs allowed in 1904 and 1908. The White Sox had not only the highest fielding percentage in the league, but by far the best defensive efficiency ratio of making outs on balls hit into play, which was particularly important when strikeouts accounted for only 14 percent of their outs. But it wasn't all about the excellent pitching and fielding.

If one takes account only of hits and batting average, then indeed "hitless wonders" is an appropriate appellation for Chicago's White Sox of those years. But it was also misleading, because this was a team—low batting average aside—that could score runs. In 1904, the White Sox were third in scoring despite the fourth-worst batting average in the league, and the next year they had the fourth-lowest average again at .237, but were the league's second-most prolific team in runs, enabling them to finish second, two games behind the Athletics. The Hitless Wonders of 1906 ranked third in runs despite a .230 average, 19 points below the league average. Their home field at South Side Park had less impact in depressing their offensive output at home, compared to games on the road, than on their pitching staff, which was not nearly as effective in other teams' ballparks.[2]

It is worth noting that in their championship season of 1906, the White Sox—"Hitless Wonders" though they may have been—still managed to win 21 games by five runs or more. Only three other American League teams

had more "blowouts" victories that year. The White Sox were fifth in the league in being shut out, 16 times, meaning they were not quite helpless. While their reputation for being lightweights at the plate might have been deserved, it cannot be said that the 1906 Chicago White Sox couldn't score runs.

EXPLAINING THE WONDERS' SCORING PROFICIENCY

The secret to Chicago's success was a very efficient offense. The White Sox averaged fewer than 7.5 hits per game from 1905 through 1908. Yet Chicago's ratio of one run scored for every two hits over that period is far better than the 2.2 hits for each run scored by AL teams as a whole. More significantly, however, it was also better than the 2.13 hits per run compiled, collectively, by the seven other pennant contenders during those years (the 1905 pennant-winning Athletics; second-place New York and third-place Cleveland in 1906; the 1907 and 1908 pennant-winning Tigers; and 1907 second-place Philadelphia and 1908 second-place Cleveland). For a team that averaged 1.2 fewer hits than the 8.7 hits-per-game average of their seven pennant-race rivals, the White Sox scored 90 percent as many runs on 86 percent as many hits. Or to put it another way (only to emphasize the point), they needed four percent fewer hits per run than their top rivals.

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"Big Ed" Walsh was the White Sox' best pitcher from 1906 through 1912.

Even for the Dead Ball Era, the White Sox' "attack" was much more anemic than that of their primary competitors. They were not so much "hitless wonders" as "punchless wonders." In 1906, only the St. Louis Browns, who finished fifth in the standings, had a smaller percentage of their hits go for extra bases than the Hitless Wonders, and the White Sox were last in extra-base percentage each of the next two years.

Extra-base hits have a huge impact because they both set up and score more runs. Consequently, even for the era, the White Sox needed to be extraordinarily proficient both in creating scoring opportunities and getting the timely hit. They were helped by being disciplined at the plate; Chicago was the only American League team to draw more than 400 walks in 1906, 1907, and again in 1908. And they excelled in advancing the relatively fewer runners they put on base. Chicago led the league in sacrifice bunts every year from 1904 to 1907. (Although officially second in sacrifice hits in 1908, the White Sox probably led the league in sacrifice bunts that year too; that year, sacrifice flies were added to the total for sacrifice hits, and Cleveland—overall league leader—had a much better offense and probably had far more sacrifice flies.) The White Sox never led the league in stolen bases during 1905–08, but their average of 198.5 steals in those four years trailed only New York and Washington and was 13 percent better than the league average. The statistical data available for these years do not allow for an assessment of "productive outs" that advance base runners, but it seems quite likely this too was a strength of the White Sox' otherwise famously "hitless" offense. The White Sox' strikeout ratio, while better than the league average, was not as good as that of either Cleveland or Detroit during these years.

Before long, however, the White Sox had a far more formidable offense. Two of baseball's elite hitters, Eddie Collins and Shoeless Joe Jackson, helped the White Sox to be consistently at or near the top of the league in runs, batting average, and slugging percentage between 1916 and 1920—the tarnished golden era in Chicago White Sox history—during which they finished second, two games shy in 1916; won the 1917 World Series; tanked the following year on account of key players serving in defense industries during World War I; won the 1919 American League pennant, only to have eight of their players conspire to lose the World Series; and might have won the 1920 pennant as well had not the Black Sox scandal broken with just days left in the season. They also played Dead Ball Era

baseball as well as any team, usually being among the league-leading teams in stolen bases and sacrifices. And Chicago had exceptional pitching too.

FROM THE BLACK SOX TO THE GO-GO SOX

The "hitless wonders" theme could also be applied to the 1959 White Sox, whose pennant ended 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, perhaps an allegorical penance for the Black Sox scandal. After three decades in the doldrums, the Sox under General Manager Frank Lane and manager Paul Richards in the early 1950s began to build a team around the core principles of pitching, fielding, and speed. Taking advantage of the all-around talent and hustle of Cuban import Minnie Minoso, who arrived via trade in 1951, the White Sox became the most aggressive team in baseball, so much so that the fans at Comiskey Park urged, "Go! Go!" whenever one of their faster players reached base. While Minoso was traded away by 1959, Chicago now had Luis Aparicio, a superb defensive shortstop and speedster on the bases, to carry on the "Go-Go" tradition. Having already led the league in steals every year since breaking in as Rookie of the Year in 1956, Aparicio broke out with 56 stolen bases in 1959—the most in the majors since George Case had swiped 61 in 1943.[3]

Notwithstanding their speed and aggressiveness, the 1959 White Sox were offensively challenged. Their .250 team batting average was only sixth in the eight-team AL and only two teams in the league scored fewer runs. With only a quarter of Chicago's 669 runs scoring on the strength of a home run—far below the American League average of 32 percent—the Sox relied on small ball strategies. They were by far the most proficient team in the major leagues in advancing base runners on outs,[4] and for the ninth straight year the White Sox led the league in steals. Unlike the 1906 Hitless Wonders, the disparity in their offensive statistics between home—Comiskey Park favored pitching—and away was not as great.[5]

The White Sox, however, were not as efficient in scoring runs in "dead ball" fashion as their "Go-Go" legend might suggest. Unable to rely on power, they needed more than three base runners (including hits, walks, hit batters, and reached on error) for every run scored, whereas the league average was just under three. And while Aparicio's 81 percent stolen base success rate was impressive, his Chicago teammates—who combined for 57 steals, one more than Aparicio alone—failed 41 percent of the time, costing the White Sox 40 base runners. Moreover, the theoretically ideal scenario of the speedy Aparicio leading off and Nellie Fox, a master at putting the ball in play, batting behind him did not yield the scoring dividends that might be expected, because Aparicio was not proficient at getting on base. His .316 OBA in 1959, for example, rated below the league average on-base average of .340 for leadoff batters.[6]

PRELUDE TO 1967

The White Sox sagged a bit after their 1959 pennant before re-emerging as a contender, pulling up second in 1963, 1964, and 1965. This run came during a pitchers' era that would rival that of dead ball times. The 3.57 earned run average of American League pitchers between 1963 and 1965 was appreciably lower than the 3.96 ERA from 1960 to 1962. With southpaws Gary Peters and Juan Pizarro, right-hander Joe Horlen, and virtually unhittable knuckleball relief ace Hoyt Wilhelm, Chicago had the best pitching staff in the league, giving up the fewest runs every year from 1963 to 1967.

Offense continued to be a problem on the south side, this time because the White Sox were inefficient in scoring runs rather than just being a poor-hitting team, at least as far as batting average.

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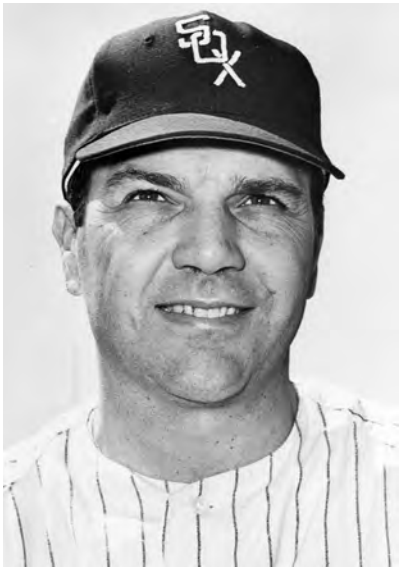
Shortstop Luis Aparicio was the leadoff man for the "Go-Go" Sox of the late 1950s and early 1960s.



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The White Sox dealt for veteran third baseman Ken Boyer in mid-1967 to try and bolster their attack.

In contrast to the Hitless Wonder years of 1904–08 and the Go-Go year of 1959, Chicago's team batting averages were fifth, sixth, and fourth in the now-ten-team league from 1963 to 1965, and their .248 average for the three years combined outranked the league average of .245. Consistent with their team batting averages, the Sox were fourth, seventh, and fifth in runs. But they had difficulty taking advantage of potential scoring opportunities; they not only required eight percent more hits per run than their principal rivals for the pennant (New York and Minnesota in 1963, New York and Baltimore in 1964, and Minnesota and Baltimore in 1965), they were worse than the league average in both 1964 and 1965. And the White Sox did worse than the league average each year in scoring total base runners (reaching on hits, walks, and hit by pitch), including by five percent in 1964 when they lost the pennant by one game. The 1964 American League champion Yankees had a base runners-per-run ratio 12 percent better than Chicago's.

That the White Sox did not score more is mostly due to a lack of power and timely hitting. Chicago's extra base hits as a percentage of total hits—26 percent in 1963, 24 percent in 1964, and 27 percent in 1965—was below the league norm of 29 percent each year. Ranking last in the AL in doubles and next-to-last in homers in 1964 likely cost the Sox the pennant. White Sox power was limited to Pete Ward and Ron Hansen, who hit 23 and 20 home runs, while nobody else had more than 13. The Yankees were also below the league average in extra base hits, but were better than Chicago in extra-base hits with runners on base and hitting with runners in scoring position.[7]

Chicago's inability to hit for power meant that both more hits and more runners were required to produce a run. Leading the league with the most walks and the fewest strikeouts, the 1964 White Sox were proficient in advancing base runners. They led the league in sacrifices, hit into the fewest double plays, and had the league's highest percentage of productive outs to advance any runner with no outs, score a base runner with the second out of the inning, or have a pitcher successfully sacrifice bunt with one out.

The 1964 White Sox were also the most aggressive in advancing base runners on fly ball outs, passed balls, wild pitches, and balks, doing so 191 times compared to the league average of 139.[8] These building blocks to scoring runs, however, are not as efficient as having the capability to clear the bases with extra-base hits.

1967

The "hitless wonders" parallel for Chicago White Sox baseball applies best to the 1967 team. Their .225 batting average was the second-worst in major league baseball, 11 percentage points below the league average. They had the fewest hits of all teams in the majors and scored the second-fewest runs in the American League. Yet, in one of baseball's best pennant races, the 1967 White Sox held first place without interruption for more than two months from June 11 to August 12—leading by 5½ games at one point—before finding themselves in a fierce four-team race with Boston, Minnesota, and Detroit down the stretch. On September 6, the four teams were, for all intents and purposes, tied for first.[9]

The White Sox' prospects seemed excellent at the start of play on Wednesday, September 27. They were in second, only a game behind the Twins, .001 ahead of the Red Sox, and the Tigers 1½ out in fourth. Best of all, Chicago's five remaining games were against last-place Kansas City and eighth-place Washington, while their top competitors were all playing tougher teams; Boston and Minnesota had two games against each other on the final weekend.

Two days later, the four teams were still separated by only a game-and-a-half going into the final weekend—beginning Friday, September 29—each with a chance to go to the World Series:

- Minnesota (91–69) was in the best position, one game up on both Boston and Detroit with two to play at Fenway Park on Saturday and Sunday. If they won both games, the only team that could possibly tie them would be Detroit, and the Tigers would have to win all four of their remaining games against the California Angels, which ended up as back-to-back doubleheaders

on Saturday and Sunday because of a Friday rainout.

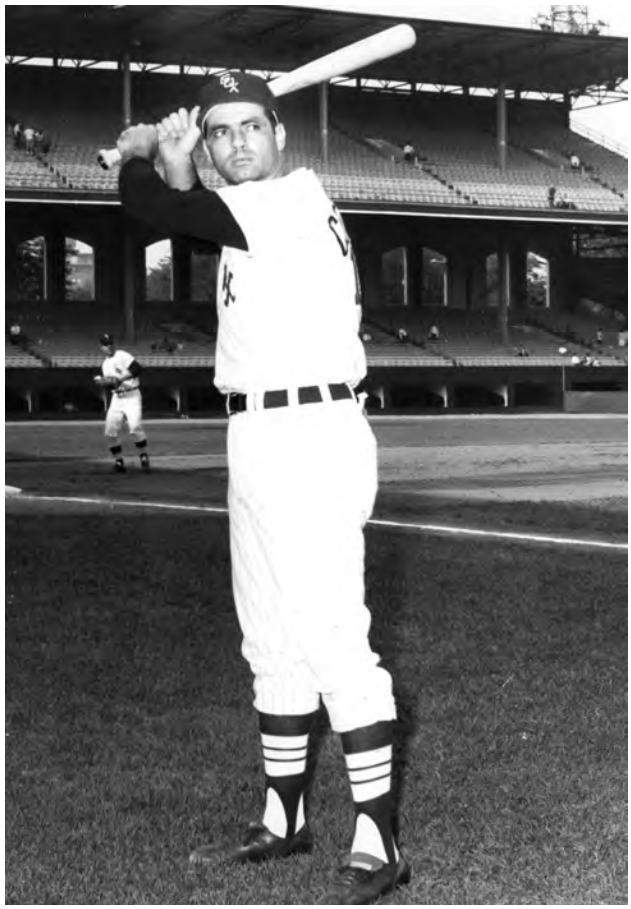
- In an ironic counterpoint to 1949—when the Yankees had to win both weekend games in their home stadium to beat out the Red Sox for the pennant—Boston (90–70) was in the same position—having to win both games at Fenway to finish ahead of the Twins. To avoid a playoff, they had to count on the Tigers doing no better than splitting their final four games and for the White Sox to lose at least one of their last three games.

- Detroit (89–69) could win the pennant outright only by taking all four of their remaining games and Minnesota splitting its weekend series in Boston. A Twins sweep at Fenway, on the other hand, would require the Tigers to win all four of games just to tie for first and force a playoff. If the Twins won one or the Red Sox won both games, the Tigers would need at least three wins to force a playoff.

- Having been stunned by last-place Kansas City sweeping them in a September 27 doubleheader, 5–2 and 4–0, beating Chicago's two best pitchers, Peters and Horlen, the White Sox (89–70) faced the biggest challenge going into the final weekend. With Minnesota and Boston also both losing that day, it would have been the White Sox in first place by half a game had they swept the doubleheader. Now, however, they needed to win all three of their remaining games, and for the Red Sox to sweep the Twins, and for the Tigers to win no more than three of four—and that would only give them a tie for first with Boston and maybe also Detroit, if the Tigers did indeed win three of four.

As it happened, no playoff was needed. The demoralized White Sox were shut out 1–0 by the Senators on Friday, eliminating them from contention. The Tigers split both doubleheaders while the Red Sox swept the Twins to end a 20-year pennant drought.

Chicago's difficulty in scoring runs caught up with them at the worst possible time. They scored only five runs in their final five games and were shut out three consecutive games—in the second of their losses to the Athletics and their first two games against the Senators. Chicago ended up three games behind Boston.



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Slugger Rocky Colavito was just about done when the White Sox acquired him in mid-1967.

It was predictable, however, that with by far the weakest lineup of the contenders, the White Sox would not be able to pull out the pennant, even with the league's best pitching and fielding. It says something about their resilience that they remained in the race until the final weekend.[10] Only ninth-place New York scored fewer runs—just nine fewer—than Chicago's 531 in 1967, and only Washington had a lower team batting average than Chicago's .225 in a league that hit .236.

While Chicago's 1906 Hitless Wonders were better than league average in runs-to-hits ratio, the 1967 White Sox were seven percent worse than the league average in that important indicator of offensive efficiency. Posting a 16–14 record in the season's final month, the Sox had just a .214 batting average, had an awful on-base average of .276, and had just 47 of their 218 total hits go for extra bases…that doesn't even average two extra-base hits per game.

While the White Sox hit eight percent below the league-wide batting average for September, their pennant-race rivals all hit much better than the league average for the month—the Twins by seven percent,

the Tigers by nine, and the Red Sox by 10. Only two teams had a worse batting average and on-base average in the final month than the White Sox, neither of them in the pennant race, and no AL team had a lower percentage of extra-base hits.

While Chicago's pitchers had a superb 2.17 ERA—by far the best in the league—in September, and allowed fewer than one base runner per inning after September 1, a team still needs to score runs. Chicago scored two or fewer runs in 12 of their final 30 games, during which they averaged 7.3 hits per game compared to 8.5 per game by their three pennant rivals.

HITLESS WONDERS TIMES TWO?

Just as the 1904–08 White Sox had the best record in the American League over that five-year span, but with only a single pennant (and a shocking World Series championship) to show for it, so too did the franchise have the AL's best record from 1963 to 1967—except without a single pennant. Applying their five-year winning percentages from 1963 to 1967 to a single 162-game season, the White Sox would have finished one game ahead of the Twins and two ahead of the Baltimore Orioles, both of whom won only a single pennant and had a losing season in the mix.[11] And just like the 1904–08 White Sox, Chicago's 1963–67 teams had a historically weak offense for a contender.

The White Sox, however, played in Comiskey Park, the AL's most difficult park for hitters during the 1960s. They had a more potent offense on the road in 1967, scoring 288 runs away compared to 243 at home. They had a .241 batting average on the road and an amazing .208 at Comiskey and had 25 percent more total bases, 960, on the road compared to only 765—the fewest of any American League team playing at home—in Chicago.

Despite their better statistical numbers, however, the weakness of the White Sox' offense was still apparent on the road. They were only a .500 club away from Chicago at 40–40 (compared to 49–33 in Comiskey Park), and were far less efficient in their ratio of hits to runs, needing 2.3 hits for each run scored in other teams' parks compared to 2.25 at home. (Both figures were substantially worse than the average for all ten American League teams. Big park or not, this offense was just not good.)[12]

Just as the White Sox hit better on the road, the Red Sox and Twins, both teams whose lineups were suited to their hitter-friendly home stadia of Fenway Park and Metropolitan Stadium, did not hit nearly as well and scored many fewer runs away from Boston and Minnesota. In fact, the White Sox' 1967 OPS (.650) on the road was better than that of the Twins (.641), taking into account that the Twins' total includes some games at Comiskey. Both Minnesota and Boston, because of their more potent line-ups, were more efficient in hits-to-runs ratio than the league average.

Unlike their "hitless wonder" Chicago ancestors from half-a-century before, the 1963–67 White Sox did not have an efficient offense. In contrast to the 1904–08 White Sox, whose ratio of runs-to-hits was substantially better than the league average, from 1964 to 1967 the White Sox required significantly more hits per run than the league average even though their team batting average was above the league average in the first two of those seasons.[13] And unlike half-a-century before, when the White Sox had a better runs-to-hits ratio than most of their pennant-race

A DIFFERENT SOX CODA TO THE 1967 PENNANT RACE

As Philadelphia Phillies' manager Gene Mauch had done with Jim Bunning and Chris Short during his team's epic collapse in the last 12 games in the 1964 National League pennant race, Boston manager Dick Williams relied primarily on Jim Lonborg and Gary Bell as his principal starters down the stretch in 1967.

Lonborg and Bell started half of Boston's final 28 games. Lonborg, his best pitcher, was pitching consistently every fourth day, but with three games left on Boston's schedule on September 27, Williams worked him on two days of rest, at home, against eighth-place Cleveland. The Red Sox trailed the Twins by one game but with two off-days before the final series with Minnesota, Williams probably felt it was a necessary gamble to ensure his ace pitched twice in the last five days of the season.

Had Lonborg not started against the Indians, he would have pitched on Saturday game against the Twins, six days removed from his previous start because of the two days off. Pitching against Cleveland on two days of rest left Lonborg available to start against Minnesota on Sunday—the season finale—with his typical three days of rest. And Williams helped set up Lonborg's start on short rest by removing him in the seventh inning of his previous start, September 24, when Boston held a 7–0 lead.

As it turned out, Lonborg lost on short rest to the Indians, lasting only three innings, but pitched a complete game 5–3 victory over the Twins on the final day of the season to send Boston to the World Series—where they (and he, in Game 7) ran into Bob Gibson.

rivals, all the other teams competing for the American League pennant between 1963 and 1967 had a much better such ratio than did the White Sox.

As were their early predecessors in Chicago, the mid-60s White Sox were hobbled by their lack of extra-base clout. Extra-base hits accounted for 26 percent of Chicago's total hits between 1963 and 1967, far below the league average of 29 percent, and all the other contending teams except the 1964 Yankees had at least 30 percent of their hits go for more than one base. Lacking a potent offense, the mid-1960s White Sox gave relatively greater emphasis than other teams to small-ball. They led the league in sacrifices twice those five years, and they were among the top three teams in steals three times, leading the league once.

Perhaps, however, because even mediocre teams had 30-homer sluggers in the 1960s, reliance on such strategies could not compensate for a lack of big hits. A more damaging lineup probably would not have been sufficient for the White Sox to overtake the Yankees in 1963 or the Twins in 1965 because those teams dominated the league, and in 1966 they finished fourth and were never in the race, but almost certainly would have given Chicago pennants in 1964 and 1967. ■

Notes

1. The National League's last-place Boston Braves (then still known as the Beaneaters) hit .226 as a team with sixteen home runs on their way to a 49–102 record.
2. From 1904 to 1908 the offensive-challenged White Sox scored marginally more runs at home than away, despite many opposing parks being more favorable to hitters, while their pitchers in those other parks gave up 30 percent more runs. In 1906 they gave up more than half as many runs on the road as at home—280 to 180.
3. Case's 61 steals came during World War II, when the power game was drastically effected by baseballs made less lively because rubber—a strategic material—could no longer used for their core. (Robert Weintraub, *The Victory Season: The End of World War II and the Birth of Baseball's Golden Age*, New York: Back Bay Books, 13.) Stolen bases from 1943–45 were four percent higher than in the three years before World War II, which significantly impacted the game, and 18 percent in the three years after the return to peacetime. If Case's 1943 season is discounted because of the mushy wartime baseball and its emphasis on the running game, Aparicio's 56 steals in 1959 were the most since Ben Chapman stole 61 in 1931.
4. For the specific data see "Team & League PH/HR/Situation Hitting" under the "Batting" tab for the American League in 1959 on the website, www.baseball-reference.com.
5. The 1959 White Sox scored 313 runs at home while batting .254 with 932 total bases for a .367 slugging percentage, compared to 356 runs on the road with a .247 batting average, and 996 total bases but a lower .361 slugging percentage in away games.
6. See "Batting Order Positions" under the "Batting Splits" tab for Luis Aparicio and the American League for 1959 on the website, www.baseball-reference.com.
7. For the specific data, see "Bases Occupied" under the "Batting Splits" tab for the White Sox, Yankees, and American League for 1964 on the website, www.baseball-reference.com.
8. For the specific data, see "Team & League PH/HR/Situation Hitting" under the "Batting" tab for the American League in 1964.
9. Statistically, Minnesota and Chicago, each with a 78–61 (.561) record, were .001 percentage points ahead of Boston and Detroit at 79–62 (.560). Taking into account their remaining games, the standings showed them in a tie.
10. The White Sox with a 2.45 earned run average were the only American League team with an ERA under 3.00, and their defensive efficiency ratio of making outs on 73 percent of the balls put into play against them was by far the best in the majors. The second-best ERA in the majors belonged to the San Francisco Giants at 2.92. The Defensive Efficiency statistic can be found under "Team & League Standard Fielding" on the "Team Statistics and Standings" page for each league for any given year on the website, www.baseball-reference.com.
11. The Yankees won both the 1963 and 1964 pennants, with the Twins winning in 1965 and the Orioles in 1966, before the Red Sox rose from ninth place in 1966 to be the "Impossible Dream" team of 1967. The Yankees fell off disastrously after their 1964 pennant with three consecutive losing seasons that would have put them in fifth place, seven games behind the White Sox, if their 1963–67 winning percentages were projected to a single 162-game season.
12. AL teams averaged 2.13 hits per run for the season, 2.05 playing at home and 2.22 on the road. Only three teams had a worse hits-to-runs ratio on the season than Chicago's overall 2.28 hits for each run—Cleveland, New York, and Kansas City who, coincidentally, finished eighth, ninth, and tenth on the season.
13. The White Sox runs-to-hits ratio was better than the league average in 1963.

The Chicago White Sox, 1968–70

Three Years in Hell

Sam Pathy

Between 1951 and 1966, the Chicago White Sox outdrew the Chicago Cubs by a wide margin: 18,966,405 fans to 12,636,867. The White Sox proved the picture of on-field consistency during this period, never finishing below a .500 winning percentage. The Cubs proved nearly as consistent during these 16 years: only once did they finish *above* .500. The winning White Sox held an enviable position, one that would seemingly continue far into the future. In 1966 the White Sox drew 990,000 fans, while the last-place Cubs drew 636,000.

In 1967, the White Sox battled the Boston Red Sox, Detroit Tigers, and Minnesota Twins for the American League pennant. The South Siders led a close race for more than two and a half months; the four teams were tied for first in early September. The White Sox spent the final weeks with a good chance to win. But the Red Sox eventually took the flag; the White Sox finished three games out.

Chicago fans did not support the team as expected during the pennant stretch. For example, only 60,050 fans attended a pivotal three-day, four-game weekend series against Detroit from September 8–10. Only 4,314 fans saw the White Sox beat Cleveland on September 14. *Chicago Tribune* sportswriter Edward Prell stated what many were thinking: "In their moment of triumph, the White Sox have cause to wonder what's happened to their fans."[1] In fact, even though the White Sox nearly won the pennant, their attendance dropped in 1967.

In the view of many, including sportswriter Jerome Holtzman, the White Sox's historical reliance on pitching and strong fielding to win ballgames had become "dull."[2] He wrote that "fans want to see action. They get weary of watching ground balls and strikeouts."[3] To add excitement to their games, Holtzman suggested that the White Sox shorten the dimensions at Comiskey Park, which in 1967 was the worst hitting environment in the American League.

The White Sox' negative image contrasted with the sudden resurgence of the long-moribund Chicago Cubs, who finished third in 1967 with a muscular showcase of future Hall of Famers including Ernie Banks, Billy Williams, and Ron Santo. Consequently, the White Sox' 355,000 attendance margin over the Cubs in 1966 dwindled to just 8,000 in 1967. Something big was happening to Chicago baseball and it was happening quickly.

Prior to the 1968 season, the White Sox agreed to play nine regular-season games in Milwaukee. Arthur Allyn (public face of the Artnell Corporation, which owned the team) had obviously noticed that 51,144 fans watched his team and the Twins play an exhibition at County Stadium on July 24, 1967. Allyn denied that the gambit was a precursor to the White Sox moving to Milwaukee, a city which had lost the Braves to Atlanta just two years earlier.[4] Perhaps most important to Allyn was the potential to plug extra income into his stalled franchise.

On April 10, 1968, the White Sox lost their home opener, 9–0. What was worse was that only 7,756 bothered to show up. The game came less than a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and subsequent riots accelerated the growing fear that Comiskey Park, and its Bridgeport neighborhood, were dangerous to visit (even though the closest riots to the park happened more than five miles away).[5] In the last decade, white flight had affected the Canaryville and Back of the Yards neighborhoods near the park, as the Union Stockyards all but closed down, eliminating decent jobs. African-American families began moving into these neighborhoods when the housing covenants that had previously restricted them to the "blackbelt" area just east of the ballpark were made illegal.

Shortly after the 1968 opener, Bill Gleason of the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote this: "[the White Sox] have to go to work now to persuade the sports-buying public of the Chicago area that Comiskey Park is attractively located. They must roll up their sleeves and fight the 'bad neighborhood' slander.… Those who say the neighborhood is 'bad' are suffering from vision distorted by racism or fear."[6] Gleason added that "Allyn and [General Manager Ed] Short should get out into the neighborhoods where their customers are, stand

on the corners, visit the taverns, shake a few hands, and ask fans why they are staying home."[7]

Unfortunately, it turned out to be good advice. The 1968 White Sox, who finished eighth in the ten-team American League, drew only 538,323 fans to 59 dates at Comiskey Park. In just nine dates at County Stadium in Milwaukee, they drew 265,552—nearly half their Chicago total. The Cubs, on the other hand, again finished third in the National League and drew 1,043,409 fans, nearly double the Sox' home total.

White Sox management tried to rectify some important issues prior to the 1969 season. The club spent more than $100,000 to light Comiskey Park's exterior and parking areas.[8] The White Sox played a heavy majority of night games, as opposed to the Cubs at lightless Wrigley Field, and if their fans needed night games to look like day games to feel safe, then the team was willing to spend money to do it.

Management also instituted changes to update the franchise and make the team more exciting. The club hired 15 "Soxettes," mini-skirted female hostesses who directed fans to their seats.[9] At the new Dugout Restaurant beneath the Comiskey Park grandstand, fans could order gourmet sandwiches and cocktails and listen to the house band, the "Four Baggers."[10] Perhaps most important, workmen installed wire fences deep in the outfield, shortening the foul lines by 17 feet and center field by 25 feet.[11]

The White Sox also rocked the baseball world by installing a synthetic surface on Comiskey Park's infield. The 11,163 fans at the 1969 home opener saw the first major league baseball game played outdoors on artificial turf; the Houston Astrodome was the only other ballpark with an artificial surface.[12] The team called it "White Sox turf,"[13] but the disconnect of having only the infield covered tempered the mod experience; the cash-strapped White Sox lacked the extra $300,000 to carpet the outfield.[14]

The short porches (along with the lowering of the mound and shrinking of the strike zone) helped batters hit 65 more home runs at Comiskey Park in 1969. Moreover, teams scored 12 percent more runs at Comiskey Park than at the average major league park; from 1950 through 1968, games at Comiskey Park had 9 percent fewer runs scored than average.[15]

The myriad of improvements didn't help attendance, which dropped dangerously. For 59 home dates, the 1969 White Sox drew only 392,762 at Comiskey Park. They played 11 more dates in Milwaukee and attracted 196,784. Of course, it didn't help that the South Siders lost 94 games. To illustrate how much the two Chicago teams' fortunes had changed, the annual Boy's Benefit exhibition game between the White Sox and the Cubs drew 33,333 at Comiskey Park—the largest paid crowd to see a game on the South Side that year.

To make things worse, the mid-July Back of the Yards Council Fun Fair, an annual South Side event where the White Sox usually ruled, invited the North Siders and drew 12,000 for a "We Love the Chicago Cubs Night." A neighbor near the fair sounded the alarm, saying, "I never thought I'd see this area so keen about the Cubs."[16] At the time of the fair, the Cubs led the National League's Eastern Division and were dominating the minds of most casual Chicago sports fans. Later in the season, the Cubs suffered their legendary collapse, being caught and passed by the New York Mets, but still drew a Chicago record 1,674,993 fans in 1969.

A September 21, 1969, *Chicago Today* article by Dick Young seemed to verify long-suggested rumors; the article's headline screamed, "Milwaukee to get Sox Soon."[17] Three days later, however, the White Sox revealed they were staying in Chicago—with some changes. Art Allyn transferred the presidency of the White Sox to his brother, John. Art had soured on the direction of his franchise and grew tired of fending off rumors of the White Sox moving to Milwaukee, Dallas,

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Gary Peters fell to just 4–13 in 1968, but remained one of the team's top bats off the bench.

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Cubs third sacker Ron Santo hit 26 homers in 1968—more than the White Sox' entire starting outfield.

or Toronto. For his part, John was adamant about keeping the team on the South Side and looking to better days.

But John Allyn understood the desperate challenge. The *Chicago Today* reported that "while he [John Allyn] insisted he doesn't intend to continue operating in the red, he also pointed out he is prepared for a 1970 season that could be 'the poorest we can envision—worse than this year.'"[18] There wasn't much fight in the White Sox, but at least John Allyn would go down swinging.

As if on cue, the 1970 Sox lost a team-record 106 games. According to Vic Ziegel in *Look* magazine, "they lost the league's most home games, road games, extra-inning games, one-run games, [and] doubleheaders, gave up the most home runs, [and] struck out the fewest batters."[19] The White Sox drew just 495,000 fans, a higher rate than 1969 but a total that did not include games at Milwaukee, which now had its own club. Included in the morass were two September games that attracted only 672 and 693 diehards.

Few memorable events stand out in this mostly forgettable season. The best might have been the unveiling of a new "mascot." The soon-to-be National League champion Cincinnati Reds earned the nickname, the "Big Red Machine." The White Sox set their sights lower; several players jokingly rebuilt a 1929 Ford and painted it white and blue—the team's new colors as of 1969—with letters on it reading, "The Big White Machine."[20] The grounds crew drove the jalopy around the edge of the field after each precious victory. On the other side of town, the Cubs again drew more than 1,600,000 million fans. But by the end of another unfulfilled season, their "Cub Power" shtick wore thin; the Reds and Pirates had supplanted them as National League powerhouses, and their hoped-for World Series would slip away.

The White Sox cleaned house for 1971. They hired Chuck Tanner as manager, Roland Hemond as director of player personnel, and brought in new players such as Rick Reichardt and Tom Bradley to add to a core of youngsters that included Bill Melton, Carlos May, and Bart Johnson. They made an important score by hiring broadcaster Harry Caray, even though he was forced to warble on three weak-signaled suburban stations after the White Sox lost their contract with WMAQ after 1970.[21] The team even changed uniform colors. Gone were the powdery blues, replaced by pinstriped red and white. General Manager Stu Holcomb explained it best: "Red makes you look faster."[22]

April 9, 1971, proved to be a watershed in White Sox history; the fans came back to Comiskey Park. An opening day crowd of 43,253 saw the new White Sox beat Minnesota, 3–2. The attendance that day equaled 8 percent of the total 1970 attendance. The young, exciting team won 23 more games than it had in 1970 and drew 833,891 fans. The following year, another new acquisition, Dick Allen, enjoyed an MVP season that led the White Sox to a second-place finish. By 1974 the White Sox had again pulled in front of the Cubs in attendance, 1,149,596 to 1,015,378.

The 1968 season had ended the White Sox' 16-year reign as kings of Chicago baseball. In the aftermath, they spent three years in a proverbial hell, marked by one of the worst seasons in team history, 1970. The die-hard fans began to return in 1971, buoyed by a young, exciting team with a new message and messengers. The casual fans returned, some surely turned off more by the Cubs' inability to "win it all."

But the South Side franchise would continue to struggle to find a permanent equal footing in Chicago. The team changed owners again during the decade and nearly moved to Seattle in 1975 and Tampa/St. Petersburg in 1988.

Today's White Sox franchise still battles the erroneous "bad neighborhood" rap. Some would argue that U.S. Cellular Field and the Bridgeport neighborhood lack the charms that bring many fans to Wrigley Field. But the core Sox fans always seem to come back, and they cheered long and loud when the team claimed the 2005 World Series. ■

Notes

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2. Jerome Holtzman, "Dear Arthur: Sox Owner Gets Memo," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 18, 1967.
3. Ibid.
4. Roy Damer, "Sox Slate 10 Games in Milwaukee," *Chicago Tribune*, October 31, 1967.
5. "Darkened Areas Show Portions of City Hit By Rioting," (map), *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1968.
6. Bill Gleason, "Sox off Base in Sale of Fun and Fresh Air," *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 19, 1968.
7. Bill Gleason, "Future Bleak, But Sox Must Face It," *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 18, 1968.
8. Richard Dozer, "White Sox Fans Will See That Changes Have Been Made," *Chicago Tribune*, February 11, 1969.
9. David Condon, In the Wake of the News, *Chicago Tribune*, April, 16, 1969.
10. Ibid.
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12. Edward Prell, "History Made in 1st Duel on Artificial Grass Outside," *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 1969.
13. "Astroturf for the Infield, Billboards and Balloons," *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 15, 1969.
14. Ibid.
15. Seymour Siwoff, Steve Hirdt, and Peter Hirdt, *The 1988 Elias Baseball Analyst*, New York: Collier Books, 1988, 34.
16. David Condon, In the Wake of the News, *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1969.
17. Dick Young, "Milwaukee to Get Sox Soon: Young," *Chicago Today, Sunday Final*, September 21, 1969.
18. John Hillyer, "Only Sox Owner's Name Same," *Chicago Today, 5 Star Final*, September 26, 1969.
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21. George Langford, "White Sox Plan to Form Their Own Network," *Chicago Tribune*, December 8, 1970.
22. Ziegel, 75.

Black Sox on Film

Rob Edelman

Eight Men Out and *Field of Dreams* are not the only films to feature the "Black Sox."

Major League Baseball's historian, John Thorn, posted this on Facebook in December 2014: "I did not know that as early as October 1920 a film about the Black Sox Scandal was in circulation."

Indeed, an ad in the October 30, 1920, issue of *Exhibitors Herald*, a motion picture industry trade publication, advertises *The Great Baseball Scandal*, produced by the short-lived Celebrated Players Film Corporation and distributed by the equally obscure Federated Film Exchanges of America, Inc.

The ad, which encourages exhibitors to book the film, hypes it as "A Slow Motion Picture Expose" and "THE BIGGEST ONE REEL FEATURE EVER OFFERED." While the Black Sox aren't cited by name, the ad announces that the "speed camera used in photographing this picture shows the trickery of crooked baseball players in dishonoring America's national pastime." It also notes that the film was "EDITED BY THE WORLD'S GREATEST BASE BALL AUTHORITY" (who also is unnamed).

Regrettably, like too many films of the silent era, *The Great Baseball Scandal* is long-lost.

If Gil Hodges Managed the Cubs and Leo Durocher the Mets in 1969, Whose "Miracle" Would it Have Been?

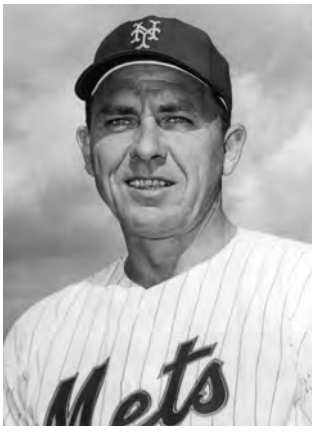
Mort Zachter

In 1969, the New York Mets became the first 1960s-era expansion team to win a World Series. En route to that championship, after overcoming a 9½ game mid-August Chicago Cubs lead, Gil Hodges managed his "Miracle Mets" to the National League East title over Leo Durocher's Cubs. In Chicago, that season has been called the "Miracle Collapse."[1]

J.C. Martin, backup catcher for Hodges in 1968–69 and Durocher from 1970–72, inadvertently opened the door to revisionist history when he said, "Never once did I see Gil Hodges react in a way to cause panic. Never once! I don't care what happened. We could pull the dumbest play in the world, but he'd never show panic. And he instilled that in his players…That was the big difference between the Mets and the Cubs. I found that out when I was traded to the Cubs just before the 1970 season. Leo was the type of manager to cause panic and confusion among his players…Gil would have won with the Cubs in '69…the manager made the difference."[2]

Would the Cubs really have held on to win the Eastern Division had Hodges had been their manager? Analyzing their different managerial styles and how Hodges and Durocher utilized their rosters—especially in center field—shows that Martin may have a point.

One of the 1969 Cubs' weak spots was in center field. Adolfo Phillips had filled the position from 1966–68. At first, Durocher had praised Phillips, a talented but sensitive player with power and speed. In 1967, his first full season in Chicago, Phillips played well, hitting 17 home runs and stealing 24 bases. His hitting, like that of many other players, slipped considerably in 1968, yet he was still an asset at a crucial position.



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Already a legendary figure in New York before 1969, Gil Hodges guided the Mets from the depths to their first World Championship.

Phillips broke a bone in his right hand during spring training in 1969, however, and took more than a month to return. That was too long for Durocher, who publically embarrassed Phillips by saying, "He doesn't want to play."[3] By May, Durocher had benched Phillips and made rookie Don Young his starting center fielder. Young had batted .242 in Class A the previous season.[4]

In June, Durocher deemed Phillips expendable and the Cubs traded him. At the time, the Cubs were 37–17; after the trade, they were 55–53.[5] From a managerial perspective, a key turning point of the season was Durocher's knee-jerk reaction to Phillips' slow return from injury. Contrast this with the support Hodges showed his centerfielder, Tommie Agee.

In 1966, Agee clubbed 22 home runs, stole 44 bases, and won the American League Rookie of the Year award for the Chicago White Sox. But the following season he slumped and lost favor with his manager, Eddie Stanky. Hodges, an American League manager in 1966–67, had seen enough of Agee to know he was a gifted fielder. He felt he could handle Agee with a lighter touch than did Stanky, a disciple of Durocher who embarrassed Agee publicly.

"The first thing Hodges wanted to do when he became the manager was to acquire Tommie Agee," Mets general manager Johnny Murphy said. "He wanted a guy to bat leadoff with speed [who] could hit for power. He also…needed a guy in center to run the ball down."[6]

On December 15, 1967, the Mets traded for the 25-year-old Agee. But in his first spring training at bat in March 1968, Bob Gibson beaned Agee with a high inside pitch. Gibson's welcome-to-the-National-League pitch set the tone for Agee's season; in the "Year of the Pitcher," he hit .217 with only five home runs and 17 RBIs, striking out more than 100 times.

Hodges did everything he could to build Agee's confidence. "He needs to relax a little," Hodges told reporters, "He's not alone. A number of other people

around the league are in slumps, too."[7] Years later, Mets outfielder Cleon Jones said, "Gil… took Tommie under his wing."[8] While most players dreaded an invitation to the manager's office, Agee felt comfortable enough with his new manager to discuss his personal problems.[9] And despite Hodges' tendency to use his coaches as a buffer, he knew which of his players, like Agee, needed his support.

"Gil and Agee got very close," Maury Allen wrote. "Agee would go into his office, close the door, and spill his guts with Gil…[who] was always willing to listen."[10] In 1969, despite an average below .200 in early May, Agee finished the season at .271 with 26 home runs and 76 RBI and made two great catches in the crucial third game of the World Series.

In early July 1969, the Mets won five in a row on the road and returned home to play three games against the Cubs. Four days later, the Mets traveled to Chicago to play another three-game set. "There's no question about it," Hodges said, "the two series with the Cubs are bigger than any others….We need to take two out of three each time."[11]

They did, and the games revealed much about Durocher's and Hodges' differing approaches.

The first game, an afternoon tilt on July 8 before 55,000 fans at Shea Stadium, had World Series intensity and set the tone for the balance of the season. Jerry Koosman started against Ferguson Jenkins.

The Cubs led 3–1 in the bottom of the ninth, with Jenkins having had allowed just one hit. Ken Boswell hit a ball to shallow center field. Don Young misjudged the ball, which fell in for a double. With one out, Hodges sent Donn Clendenon up to pinch-hit. Clendenon hit a drive to deep left center. Young ran a long distance and caught the ball, but dropped it after crashing into the outfield wall. Cleon Jones then tied the game with a two-run double. After a walk and a groundout, Ed Kranepool came up with two outs and runners on second and third. Rather than pass the hitter purposely to set up a force play at any base, Durocher had Jenkins go at him. Kranepool poked a soft liner over the shortstop's head, giving the Mets a shocking come-from-behind victory.

The Cubs lost the game and their composure, starting with their manager. In the Cubs locker room after the game, in front of his players and the press, Durocher laced into Young. "It's tough to win when your centerfielder can't catch a fucking fly ball," Durocher said. "Jenkins pitched his heart out. But when one man can't catch a fly ball, it's a disgrace. He stands there watching one, and then gives up on the other… My three-year-old could have caught those balls!"[12]

Mets center fielder Tommie Agee benefitted from Gil Hodges' empathy and counsel.

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Adolfo Phillips might have caught them as well. Had Hodges managed the Cubs, would he have treated Phillips with encouragement and been rewarded, as he was with Agee's breakout season? And if Durocher had managed Agee after his disastrous 1968 season, would Durocher have prematurely buried him as he did Phillips?

Durocher came up short in other areas as well. On Saturday, July 26, during the third game of a weekend series at Wrigley Field against the Dodgers, Durocher complained he was ill and left the park before the game was over. The next day, Durocher, purportedly ill, failed even to show up. But Durocher was not sick. He had left the game early on Saturday to fly with his new wife on a chartered plane to Wisconsin for visiting day at his 12-year-old stepson's sleep-away camp.[13] Durocher, caught off guard by the firestorm after he returned, blamed the local media—whom he consistently antagonized—for picking on him. Hodges was generally friendly with the media, especially veteran reporters like Arthur Daley and Dick Young, although the younger writers didn't always appreciate him.

Despite taking days off for himself, Durocher insisted on playing his key regulars without rest throughout the hot Chicago summer at a time when every home game was played in the afternoon. "If a man had a slight injury or was just plain-tired, Leo didn't want to hear about it," Ferguson Jenkins said. "He just rubbed a man's nose in the dirt and sent him back out there. You played until you dropped."[14]

That season, left fielder Billy Williams played 163 games; first baseman Ernie Banks 155; shortstop Don Kessinger 158; third baseman Ron Santo 160; and perhaps most shockingly, catcher Randy Hundley 151.[15] Most Cubs regulars slumped in September, when the Mets overtook them.

In contrast, Hodges platooned at first, second, third, and right. The only Mets to play 125 games that season were outfielders Tommie Agee and Cleon Jones.[16] This kept his infielders fresh for the stretch-run in September,

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Talented but troubled Adolfo Phillips was one Cub that manager Leo Durocher had no idea how to motivate.

when the Mets won ten straight games and the Cubs lost eight in a row. In addition, Hodges used his bullpen and five-man rotation to the fullest possible extent. No Mets pitcher threw more than 241 innings that season other than Tom Seaver (273 innings)[17] and nine pitchers won at least six games each. In contrast, two of the Cubs' starting pitchers, Ferguson Jenkins and Bill Hands, each threw at least 300 innings[18] and only five Cubs pitchers won at least five games.

Had Hodges managed the Cubs, he probably would have used infielders Paul Popovich and Nate Oliver more often and not wasted a roster spot on Durocher's personal favorite Gene Oliver, who spent most of the season on the active list but had just 29 plate appearances. Veteran pitcher Don Nottebart spent nearly all of 1969 with the Cubs and pitched only 18 innings. Nottebart later referred to the back end of Durocher's bullpen as the "dead man brigade," a concept that wouldn't have existed on a Gil Hodges club.

In his autobiography, Durocher wrote, "I never had a boss call me upstairs so that he could congratulate me for losing like a gentleman. 'How you play the game' is for college boys. When you're playing for money, winning is the only thing that matters." One way Durocher believed he would win was to have his pitchers throw at opposition batters, intending not just to back them off the plate but to hit them. But in a crucial Mets-Cubs game on September 8, 1969, Durocher was hoisted on his own petard.

That day, the Cubs—losers of four in a row and just 2½ ahead of the surging Mets—began a crucial two-game series at Shea. Jerry Koosman faced Bill Hands in the opener. Hoping to intimidate the Mets, Durocher ordered Hands to throw his first pitch of the game at Tommie Agee's head. Agee hit the dirt, barely avoiding being knocked senseless. But Durocher's strategy backfired. Koosman retaliated, hitting Cubs third baseman Ron Santo on the arm. Nobody on the Cubs bench moved.

In Agee's next at-bat, he clubbed a two-run home run, and the Cubs were the ones who were backing away from the plate. Koosman struck out 13 for a 3–2 win. "Nobody told me to throw at Santo. Hodges didn't say a word," Koosman said. "It's just something you learn. It's how the game is played."[19] The next day, Durocher pitched Ferguson Jenkins on short rest—he'd lasted just 2⅓ innings three days before—and the Mets won, 7–1. Had Hodges been managing the Cubs, he never would have instructed Hands to throw at Agee. That was not how Hodges operated.

Despite spending most of their careers in the same city, Durocher and Hodges sang from very different hymnbooks. When he retired, Durocher had been thrown out of more games than any other manager except John McGraw. Hodges, in contrast, believed umpires were just men doing their jobs as best they could; showing them up accomplished nothing. And Hodges' positive reputation proved crucial when he handed home-plate umpire Lou DiMuro a shoe-polish stained ball in Game Five of the 1969 World Series, claiming that Cleon Jones had been hit by a pitch. DiMuro reversed his call, awarding Jones first base in the turning point of the game.

Had Hodges managed the Cubs, and Durocher the Mets, that historic play would never have taken place. Chicago, instead, might have been doing the rejoicing. ■

Notes

1. Doug Feldmann, *Miracle Collapse: The 1969 Chicago Cubs*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.
2. Stanley Cohen, *A Magic Summer: The Amazing Story of the 1969 New York Mets*, New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009, 246.
3. Glenn Stout, *The Cubs: The Complete Story of Chicago Cubs Baseball*, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007, 270.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. Phillips was batting only .224 at the time of the trade, but his on-base percentage was .424.
6. Richard Goldstein, "Tommy Agee, of Miracle Mets, Dies at 58," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2001.
7. Joseph Durso, "Mets Option Rohr and Keep Goossen," *The New York Times*, April 25, 1968.
8. Maury Allen, *After the Miracle: The Amazin' Mets Twenty Years Later*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1989, 186.
9. Maury Allen, telephone interview, December 19, 2006.
10. Allen, 188.
11. Joseph Durso, "Mets: Crossroads Ahead; Cubs Coming to Town," *The New York Times*, July 6, 1969.
12. Feldmann, 164. Generally, a more conservative manager, Hodges most likely would have walked Kranepool to create the force play at any base.
13. Rick Talley, *The Cubs of '69*, Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989, 78–79.
14. Ibid, 178.
15. Ibid, 336.
16. Cohen, 312.
17. Ibid.
18. Talley, 338.
19. Peter Golenbock, *Amazin': The Miraculous History of New York's Most Beloved Baseball Team*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002, 234.

Split Season 1981, Chicago Style

Jeff Katz

A possible 1980 players' strike was narrowly avoided by pushing the issue of free agent compensation down the road for further study. Despite this environment, real estate mogul Jerry Reinsdorf and television executive Eddie Einhorn were undeterred from leading a group to purchase the White Sox from Bill Veeck for $20 million in early 1981.

Mindful of labor discord, Reinsdorf asked other owners about the possibility of a coming strike. There was no way a work stoppage would occur, he was told, because the owners knew that compensation was the only matter at hand and it wasn't enough to strike over. Unfortunately, it wasn't the first time the owners made the mistake of projecting their own beliefs onto the players.

– *Jerry Reinsdorf*, telephone interview, April 2013

* * * * *

The lead negotiator for the owners since 1978—and a key player during the 1981 midseason strike that chopped the season in two—was Chicago native Ray Grebey. Growing up on the far North Side in Rogers Park during the 1930's, he worshipped the powerful Cubbies of his youth. Grebey's mother took him to his first game at Wrigley Field in 1932.

"I knew a lot of the guys, like Charlie Root. I knew Freddie Lindstrom's son," Grebey happily recalled. "I once saw Gabby Hartnett bite off the end of his cigar when he missed bowling a 300-game on his last roll."

Chicago baseball followed Grebey to college, where, at Kenyon, he formed a lifelong friendship with classmate, dropout, and future White Sox owner Bill Veeck, whose father had been President of the Cubs when Grebey was growing up.

Later in his life, Grebey—embittered by his experience in baseball, vilified by Marvin Miller and the players' union, and cast aside by the owners in 1983—had few baseball items on display in his Connecticut home, but did make room for his beloved Cubs. He had a matted 1990 All-Star Game ticket from Wrigley Field as well as a photo of the outside message board at Clark & Addison welcoming Ray Grebey to the game.

Even at the end, however, baseball was a constant; he watched games often. Grebey saw that rooting for the Chicago Cubs and being a labor relations professional were similar. "In both situations, you suffer immensely."

– *Ray Grebey*, in-person interview, May 2009

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Carlton Fisk was livid. The Red Sox had refused to send him his contract by December 20, 1980, knowing if they did that Fisk would be subject to arbitration. Once they realized they had to mail him his contract, it was too late and Fisk was declared a free agent on February 12, 1981. Instead of buttering up their superstar, Red Sox General Manager Haywood Sullivan criticized Fisk in the press.

Carlton Fisk, whose departure from Boston and arrival on Chicago's south side was one of 1981's big stories.

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Fisk, a seven-time All-Star, former Rookie of the Year and legendary World Series hero, was now on the market, but the absence of courting that usually accompanied a big- time free agent was impossible to miss.

New White Sox owners Reinsdorf and Einhorn watched the scene unfold. As new owners, they were tentative, not wanting to roil the waters, and gave the Red Sox time to re-sign their marquee catcher. Why other owners backed away was unknown. Was there collusion? Reinsdorf thought so. Eventually the White Sox signed Carlton Fisk on March 18 and tickets became a hot item.

Chicago—Fisk in tow—invaded Fenway Park on Opening Day 1981 and the park was buzzing. With the White Sox threatening in the top of the eighth inning, Fisk—who'd caught reliever Bob Stanley over the past four seasons—sat on one of his former batterymate's sinkers and sent it over the Green Monster for a White Sox win. On Opening Day at Comiskey Park, Fisk hit a grand slam. Four days later, Fisk belted a two-run home run over Jim Rice's head in left field to beat his former teammates yet again.

Nothing did more to change Chicago's attitude towards the White Sox in the 1980s than the signing of Carlton Fisk. It was easy for Chicago fans to love Fisk, even in a navy blue SOX cap and pajama uniform.

– *Jerry Reinsdorf*, telephone interview, April 2013

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Sox supporters were an unruly bunch at the time. With Billy Martin's Oakland A's in town on June 2, White Sox fans took to their garbage cans, throwing biscuits, cups, and an apple core at left fielder Rickey Henderson. On June 4, the Comiskey switchboard received a death threat for Martin, who responded by donning a bulletproof vest.

The Yankees were in town on August 28. Reggie Jackson, slowly emerging from a season-long slump, singled and scored on a Bucky Dent hit. When Jackson headed to his position in right field for the bottom of the seventh inning, Sox fans showered him with money. Jackson, slated to become a free agent after the season, chuckled as he picked up every last coin and bill—$31.27 worth.

"Major League Flashes,"
The Sporting News, June 20, 1981
Steve Wulf,
"The Bounce, The Bench and
The Boo-Birds," *Sports Illustrated*,
September 7, 1981

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When the strike was called after midnight on June 12, the Yankees were in Chicago. Teams were instructed by the commissioner's office to offer no help to their players—no travel reservations, no meals, and no way home. Complicating things in Chicago was a taxi strike.

Lou Piniella and Bobby Murcer, stranded outside Comiskey Park hours after Steve Trout and the Sox had beaten the Yankees 3-2, couldn't find a ride. Luckily, a friendly police officer came driving by and gave the two players a lift to the Continental Plaza Hotel on North Michigan Ave. At the hotel bar, Murcer and Piniella saw players and executives sitting at separate ends of the bar, unwilling even to drink together.

– *Graig Nettles* and *Peter Golenbock*,
Balls (New York: Pocket Books, 1985)

* * * * *

"Joey, I'm selling the team. Tell your coaches."

On June 16, just four days into the strike, Cubs manager Joey Amalfitano received a call from team owner William Wrigley. After more than six decades of family ownership, Wrigley had sold the club for some $20.5 million to the Tribune Company.

In the newsroom of the *Chicago Tribune*, word began to spread. There wasn't enough advance notice for the White Sox fans in the room to take down their Comiskey Park posters. Some staffers found Cubs caps and quickly donned them.

Though Cubs General Manager Herman Franks gave the Wrigleys credit for being less interested in money and more in keeping the team in Chicago, the Tribune saw dollar signs: big ones. It was clear that a media giant had much value in owning a baseball team. The Cubs, already instant programming for WGN radio and television, could quickly be shifted into a national cable phenomenon. Much untapped revenue rested in a major league franchise no longer run as a hobby by archaic family ownership.

"It's the end of an era, but hopefully the beginning of another era," said Cubs fan and new President Ronald Reagan.

– *Neil Amdur*, "Chicago Cubs Are Sold by
Wrigley to Tribune Co. for $20.5 Million,"
The New York Times, June 17, 1981

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When settlement talks fell apart in late July, representatives from the Major League Baseball Player's Association decided to go on the road to keep their forces united. The first stop, on July 27, was the O'Hare Hilton, where, after an appearance on *The Phil Donohue Show*, the reps met with more than 50 players. Cubs' Mike Krukow and Bill Buckner had been outspokenly impatient with the union and tired of sitting around. They wanted to play.

Bob Boone (NL Player Representative) and Doug DeCinces (AL Player Representative) gave a recap of where the talks stood and Marvin Miller, Executive Director of the MLBPA, explained the owners' plan on compensation for teams losing free agents.

"If you had to take a team vote today," Miller asked the 26 team reps, "do you think the clubs' proposal would get majority support?" 24 of them voted no, and all pledged support to Miller and his team. After over five hours, the meeting adjourned. Players met with the press and Krukow and Buckner were clearly back on board.

"I'm behind the negotiating team 100 percent. Now I can sit out the season and not feel quite as bad," said Buckner.

– *Joe Durso*, "Owners' Session Called; Players on Coast to Meet"
The New York Times, July 29, 1981

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Once the two sides came to an agreement to end the strike, the players and owners held individual meetings to ratify the settlement. On August 6, three days after the air traffic controllers' (PATCO) strike that paralyzed American air travel, the owners met at the O'Hare Hilton, the barely-used runaways visible from their conference room windows.

Though ratification was a foregone conclusion, the crack of "Gussie" Busch's cane rapping on the floor brought the gathering to attention. The Cardinals chairman of the board had a few things to say.

"I have never been more disgusted, angry, and ashamed of a situation in which I was involved," he berated his colleagues. Busch was apoplectic at the proposal of a pool of players, created with contributions from all teams, from which a team losing a free agent could select a replacement as compensation.

"What did we end up with? If the Cubs lose a player to the Phillies through free agency, then possibly I have the honor of giving the Cubs my 27th best player. Marvelous compensation. I have been in baseball in good times and in bad, but none so shameful. If you have any courage left, I urge the men of integrity here today to vote 'no' on this contract. If nothing else it will show that the entire ownership of baseball is not insane." The new generation of owners— George Steinbrenner, Jerry Reinsdorf, and others—watched in amazement as the old guard made one last stand.

– *August Busch*, statement to owners
August 6, 1981, from Marvin and Theresa (Terry) Miller Papers WAG.165, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, New York University Libraries.
– *Jerry Reinsdorf*, telephone interview, April 2013

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The split-season plan, agreed on at the O'Hare Hilton owners' meeting on August 6, mandated a second pennant race in all four divisions, followed with a best of five mini-playoff between the two half-winners, should they be different teams. If the two half-winners were the same club, that team would play the team with the second-best overall record.

White Sox manager Tony La Russa cried foul. The White Sox, only 2½ games out of first in the AL West, saw their solid first half erased. La Russa remarked that if the Yankees and Dodgers hadn't already finished in first place, the owners would never have considered locking in the first-half winners. Once again, he felt, the big media markets ruled.

Worse to La Russa was that the split-season plan left room for a team to lose on purpose to guarantee a playoff spot. A number two team overall could lose on purpose to the first-half winner, guaranteeing the latter a second-half title as well and ensuring themselves of a playoff position. On an ABC Sunday afternoon baseball telecast, he made it clear that his team would never lose on purpose, but rather would choose to not take the field. Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, outraged, wrote to La Russa seeking clarification.

La Russa and Kuhn met and the skipper reaffirmed his stance that his team would forfeit if that's what it took to make the post-season. Kuhn dashed off a note to White Sox owners Reinsdorf and Einhorn reminding them that Rule 21 stated that a team needed to try its best.

La Russa's intelligence and outspokenness forced a change in plans. The split season was revised. If the two half-winners were the same, then they would face the second-half, second-place team. This was a simple fix to the situation of which Tony La Russa had warned.

– *Bowie Kuhn* and *Tony LaRussa* on Sunday afternoon ABC game, August 16, 1981 from Bowie K. Kuhn Collection, BA MSS 100, National Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum, Cooperstown, New York

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White Sox co-owner Jerry Reinsdorf.

* * * * *

Having a statue outside Wrigley Field is an honor reserved for only the most beloved figures in Cubs history. Harry Caray deserves his immortalization in bronze, but if you think Harry was always the darling of Cubs fans, think again.

Following the 1981 season, the White Sox announced they were moving their games from free television to SportsVision, a team-owned cable operation. No longer were they willing to pour money into WGN now that the Tribune Company owned their TV station AND their rivals. It was time, Einhorn and Reinsdorf thought, to bring on the future. For $21.95 per month, Sox fans could watch their South Siders, along with the Sting soccer team, the NHL Blackhawks, and the NBA Bulls (who, in the pre-Michael Jordan days, were far from enticing).

Harry Caray, for 11 years the voice of the White Sox, wouldn't stand for it. His people, the working class, Falstaff-swilling masses, would be shut out of his broadcasts. Rather than sign for another year with the White Sox, Caray bolted north to the Cubs.

Cubs fans lit up the Wrigley switchboard with complaints. While 77 percent of callers were initially irate that they'd have to listen to Caray's individualistic style, he soon became a national hero via WGN's long reach. By 1998, he had his statue.

– Joe Goddard,
"Caray Shifted for 'My People,'"
The Sporting News, December 5, 1981
– Bob Markus,
"White Sox Will Put Games on Pay TV,"
The Sporting News, October 31, 1981

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The compensation agreement hashed out in the 1981 strike settlement paid big dividends for the White Sox in January 1984, when their pitcher Dennis Lamp signed with Toronto as a free agent. Owners Reinsdorf and Einhorn, alongside General Manager Roland Hemond, read a list of unprotected compensation players sent via teletype. They couldn't believe when they saw Tom Seaver on the list. Lamp for Seaver? They couldn't make a trade that good!

Mets' president Fred Wilpon was angry at Reinsdorf for picking Seaver, but who had left Seaver unprotected in the first place? Tom Terrific, still effective, won 15 games for the White Sox in 1984 and another 16 in 1985, one of which was his 300th major league win—at Yankee Stadium.

– Jerry Reinsdorf,
telephone interview, April 2013 ■

Palmer House Stars

Leslie Heaphy

Staying at Chicago's famous Palmer House Hotel during the 1930s and 1940s allowed guests to enjoy more than just the hospitality, luxury, and impressive guest rooms.[1] Guests would also have been entertained by one of the hotel's baseball teams.

Chicago has a storied history of semi-pro and amateur baseball in addition to the Cubs and White Sox (and their predecessors) along with the Whales and American Giants and other African American teams. The Palmer House contributed four teams of hotel employees over the years but only one of those was African American: the Palmer House Stars. Typical pay for a semi-pro team was anywhere from $5 to $15 a game.

Stars owner L.M. Gamble entered his team in tournaments and exhibition games all over the Midwest, and the team became highly sought. The club earned a strong reputation playing in the Illinois State Semi-pro championship as well as in the National Semi-pro Tournament during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The Stars relied on the solid play of Roosevelt Davis, Bernell Longest, and Maurice Wiggins and also attracted some big-name Negro Leagues stars such as Alex Radcliffe, Jack Marshall, and future Hall of Fame outfielder Turkey Stearnes. Chicago was a hotbed for baseball in general, and black baseball in particular, with the Palmer House Stars providing a strong opponent for local clubs as for any other nine passing through town.

Black baseball in Chicago was not new by the 1930s. The Chicago American Giants had by then become a fixture, building on the foundation laid by Andrew "Rube" Foster and teams such as the Leland Giants, Chicago Unions, and others. Black teams regularly took part in the Chicago City League as well as exhibition and benefit games. This extensive history provided a good foundation for the rise of the Palmer House team.[2]

In 1934, Palmer House owner Potter Palmer III decided to host an intra-hotel league to entertain his establishment's guests. During the first year, the league title went to the Tigers, a team made up of players representing the hotel's accounting department. In 1935 and 1936 the honor went to the Caterers, a club comprised entirely of black waiters. This club became the nucleus of the Palmer House Stars, who remained together as a team through 1941. When the team finally folded, many of the players stayed on at the Palmer House, though some were picked up by the Chicago Brown Bombers, an entrant in the short-lived United States League toward the end of World War II.[3]

Head waiter Maurice Wiggins was a mainstay of the Palmer House Stars. Wiggins worked at the Palmer House for 50 years as a busboy and then a waiter. In the 1960s, after retiring from the Palmer House, he became a sportswriter for local Chicago papers such as the *Courier* and *Independent Bulletin*, penning a weekly column entitled "Wiggins Says." Like many other black families did in the early 1900s, Wiggins' family came to Chicago as part of the great migration. His dad, a barber, brought the family north from Water Valley, Mississippi when Wiggins was only 12.[4]

Wiggins provided stability and organization for the Stars as well as the hotel. While not a star player, Wiggins manned shortstop as well as helping to arrange games locally and set up barnstorming opportunities. He went on to play for the Chicago American Giants and the Gilkerson Union Giants.

The real heart of team was Alex Radcliffe, younger brother of flashy, well-known Ted "Double-Duty" Radcliffe. Alex came to the Palmer House Stars in 1939 and served as player-manager in 1940 and 1941. During a game, he was usually found at the hot corner rather than in the dugout.

Radcliffe's impressive Negro League career began with the Chicago American Giants in 1932. Adoring Chicago fans helped vote him into 11 East-West classics during his career. He also played one season in the Cuban Winter League before finishing his career with the Memphis Red Sox in 1946. Radcliffe holds the record for at-bats (50) in the East-West classics and is tied with Josh Gibson for the most hits with 17.[5]

With Radcliffe at the helm, the Palmer House Stars enjoyed their most successful seasons from 1939–41. All three seasons, they reached the finals of the Illinois State Semi-pro championship and won the title in both

1939 and 1940. Capturing the state tournament certified the club to play in the National Tournament in Wichita, Kansas, where in 1940 they finished fifth overall. Their trip in 1939 marked the first time Illinois had been represented at the national by a black club. At the 1940 National Baseball Congress, shortstop Jack Marshall was the Stars' only representative on the all-tournament team, although Radcliffe led all players with a .437 batting average.[6]

Outside of tournament games, newspaper coverage of the Stars was sporadic. This was a common reality for many black squads, but it did not reflect the quality of the team or the number of games it played. Black newspapers often did not have reporters to cover games and relied instead on teams to send in their own reports. Many smaller towns had no black newspapers, and white papers did not always report on barnstorming games. One is, however, still able to piece together enough evidence to argue that the Palmer House Stars were a strong, worthy opponent for any team. In fact, the *Chicago Garfieldian* called the club "one of the classiest negro aggregations" in a May 1940 article.[7] Later that same year a *Freeport Journal-Standard* reporter referred to the team as "classy negroes" while describing their play at the state tournament. In that same article the reporter gave a full accounting of a fight that broke out Jack Marshall and an opposing shortstop after Marshall came in high on a slide. This incident did not alter the writer's view of the players' athletic abilities or their characters.[8]

How did the Stars get to the 1939 state tournament? Their season began with spring training in New Orleans in late March. The club played its way north in order to begin a 70-game season by the end of May. While documentation for many of these games has not yet been found, some of the Stars' opponents included the Toledo Crawfords and Sheboygan Nine. The Stars played two benefit games against the Crawfords, with the proceeds going to help out a presumably ailing Frank V. Messiah, a 25-year veteran head of personnel and waiters for the Palmer House.

While scores were not reported for either game, the short accounts found in the *Chicago Defender* indicated the fans were treated to exciting matches. In mid-June, crossing the Midwest to play any and all comers, the Palmer House team trounced Sheboygan 15–3. The club hoped to win as many games as possible in order to gain invitation to the State tournament.[9]

The Illinois State tournament in Peoria went for 16 days—assuming no rain delays—with a double-elimination process. The games attracted large crowds, and winning players each received a trophy and a monetary award. (It was reported following the 1939 series that 11,300 fans attended the games, raising nearly $3,000 through ticket sales. The 1939 championship Palmer House team picked up $577 in cash, or $37 per player.[10]

At the tourney, the Palmer House got off to a good start, winning early behind the steady pitching of Norman Cross, who led the staff with four wins in the tournament. Cross turned in a one-hit performance against the Hiram Walkers, also from Peoria, to reach the finals, as the Stars romped 16–4; five Palmer House players had two or more hits.[11] The final victory was a 15–5 decision against Peoria's Woodruff nine. Cross pitched a six-hitter in that game, ably called by catcher Andy Drake; the Palmer House club was aided by 10 Woodruff errors. As the tournament winner, the Stars traveled to Wichita, Kansas, where, although they did not win, just by being there they added to their reputation.[12]

The Stars begin their 1940 spring training in Texas and then played their way north for another 70-game season. A big highlight of the season was the series of games the Stars played against the Kansas City Monarchs. In one report, the Palmer House team was credited with downing the Monarchs six times before finally losing 2–1 to Satchel Paige. Roosevelt Davis took the loss in that game even though he struck out 10 Monarchs (besting Paige's eight strikeouts). Davis was accused of scuffing the ball, though nothing came of the accusation.[13]

Other 1940 opponents included the Albion Tigers (who downed the Palmer House 8–6), the Chicago Mills, the Puerto Rican Stars in Wisconsin, and the George Evans Corporate Nine from Moline, Illinois. The Stars trounced the Puerto Rican Stars 17–6 just prior to the state tournament, gaining revenge for a previous 4–2 loss.[14]

At the state tournament, the Palmer House Stars fell to the Chicago Mills 5–4 but rebounded with a 4–2 win in a rematch with the same team to win the championship. Melvin Powell led the Stars' hitting attack with two runs scored, two doubles, and an RBI. The Palmer House also downed the Jays of Peoria, and the George Evans Corporate Nine (Moline) on their way to winning their second straight State championship and another trip to Kansas.[15]

They lost their first game at the National level to a team from Duncan, Oklahoma, 4–2, but beat Iowa's Aurilla Merchants 13–6. Alex Radcliffe led the way in the latter game with a grand slam homer. By the tournament's conclusion, the Stars were fifth, coming in strong behind the pitching of ace Roosevelt Davis. After the tournament the Stars played a series of exhibition

games on their way home. In two of those games the Stars beat the Chanute, Kansas nine, 3–2, and the Eldorado club, 15–8.[16]

With Radcliffe back at the hot corner and as manager in 1941 the Stars completed a 100-game schedule and reached the state tournament for the third year in a row. Their regular season began with a 6–4 loss to McGill Metals in late May. Lefty Cook picked up the loss even though most of the runs were unearned due to Radcliffe's first-inning error. Other opponents during the season included the House of David, the Aurillia Merchants of Iowa, the Oroville Olives from Sacramento, the Hammond (Indiana) All Stars, the Reno, Nevada Larks, the Butte, Montana Boosters, and, again, the Kansas City Monarchs. In the state tournament, the Palmer House beat the Davenport Maroons 8–2 in their first game and followed up with a 9–8 squeaker over Johnson Motors, but a 5–4 loss to Rock Valley and another defeat against Joliet Schlitz sent them home.

Following the conclusion of the 1941 season, the Palmer House Stars folded. Many of the club's players continued to toil for other local Chicago teams. A few went on to play for the Chicago Brown Bombers, who in 1945 participated in the short-lived United States League (USBL). The USBL was rumored to be a recruiting ground for Branch Rickey and other white professional owners looking for Negro players.

The Palmer House Stars did not have a long tenure, but proved successful in Chicago and throughout Illinois. Their invitations to the National Semi-pro Series showed that they were no fluke, but rather a respected and highly-sought opponent. Their story should not be forgotten in the history of Chicago baseball. ■

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The Peculiar Professional Baseball Career of Eddie Gaedel

Eric Robinson

Hall of Fame baseball owner Bill Veeck is remembered for many things, including winning American League pennants as owner of the Cleveland Indians in 1948 and the Chicago White Sox in 1959; suffering injuries as a Marine in WWII that required him to use a wooden leg the rest of his life; signing Larry Doby as the first openly African American player in the American League; and bringing Satchel Paige to the Cleveland Indians as a 42-year-old rookie.

To the many people that refer to Veeck as the "Barnum of Baseball," however, his legacy is associated with a single plate appearance that he orchestrated as a publicity stunt while owner of the lowly St. Louis Browns in 1951.[1]

The man who took that plate appearance was Chicago native Eddie Gaedel, who at 3'7" and 65 pounds is the smallest man ever to play Major League Baseball.

Gaedel was born on June 8, 1925, to parents of "normal" physical stature. His two siblings were of normal height as well.[2] Despite being sensitive to his height and suffering ridicule and mistreatment due to it, Gaedel took advantage of the opportunities afforded a little person (or "midget" in the language of the time), accepting promotional jobs for circuses, rodeos, and stores.[3]

After stints owning the Cleveland Indians and the minor-league Milwaukee Brewers, Bill Veeck led a group that purchased the perennial cellar-dwelling St. Louis Browns on July 3, 1951. At that point in the season they were averaging some 3,700 fans a game, 9,700 fewer than the Cardinals were drawing at the same locale, Sportsman's Park.[4]

As part of his flurry of promotional activities, Veeck decided to do something special during a doubleheader scheduled against the Detroit Tigers on August 19, 1951. The day was meant to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the American League and the club's chief sponsor, Falstaff Beer. Veeck contacted booking agent Marty Caine and with complete secrecy had Caine search for a midget who was "somewhat athletic and game for anything."[5] The agent sent him Eddie Gaedel.

Gaedel was initially apprehensive due to the potential danger of being hit by an errant fastball, but soon grew excited at the idea of being a cup-of-coffee big leaguer and the attention that would come with it.[6]

The only hint Veeck gave to the 18,000 fans in attendance for the August 19 doubleheader was on the day's scorecard. There, in black and white, was an entry for a new player, Gaedel, who had the rather curious number of "⅛" printed beside his name. When a local reporter asked about this, the text was simply shrugged off as a printing mistake.[7]

Following the first game of the twin bill, which the Tigers won 5–2, Veeck turned Sportsman's Park into a carnival, featuring acrobats, baseball clown Max Patkin, a band playing at home plate that featured Satchel Paige on drums, and free Falstaff beer for the adults in the crowd. The highlight of the fun was a large cake wheeled to the infield. From inside the cake emerged Eddie Gaedel, wearing a Browns uniform, pointy shoes, and a pointy hat.

Falstaff executives, unfortunately, were vocally displeased at being promised a large promotional event and ending up with "only" a little person in a costume jumping from a cake.[8] Veeck could hardly contain himself as he waited for the real surprise.

Duane Pillette of the Browns retired the Tigers in the first inning of Game Two. When Frank Saucier, the first batter for Browns, was about to step to the plate in the last of the first, St. Louis manager Zack Taylor signaled for a pinch hitter. The crowd was shocked to see a 3'7" tall batter start limbering up with three toy bats.

The umpires quickly tried to stop the at-bat, but Veeck made sure Taylor was prepared. The manager presented the official copy of Gaedel's valid contract as submitted to the American League office. After 15 minutes of deliberation, and probably a phone call to league headquarters in Chicago, home plate umpire Ed Hurley returned and summoned Gaedel to the batter's box.[9]

Detroit catcher Bob Swift ran to the mound to have a quick strategy conference with pitcher Bob Cain. The 26-year-old southpaw proceeded to throw four straight balls well over the head of Gaedel, laughing as hard as

anyone in the park during the final two.[10] Gaedel took his time as he trotted to first base, playing to the crowd. After being pulled for pinch runner Jim Delsing, Gaedel slapped his substitute on the rump then took even longer to run across the field to the Browns' dugout, tipping his hat and bowing to cheers multiple times.[11]

Within two days, the American League office had voided Gaedel's contract, but could not erase his one appearance for the Browns. On September 6 of the same year, Gaedel had an at-bat for an amateur team in Sycamore, Illinois. This one ended with him leaving the game after getting into an argument with the umpire.[12]

Several weeks later, a police officer in Cincinnati stopped Gaedel for being drunk and argumentative and carted him to jail. Gaedel tried to convince the arresting officer that he was a professional baseball player.[13]

In 1959, when Bill Veeck owned the Chicago White Sox, he hired Gaedel and three other little people for another memorable appearance. Dressed in Martian clothing, they were lowered by helicopter into Comiskey Park, where near second base they "abducted" the diminutive double play combo of Nellie Fox and Luis Aparicio and made them honorary Martians.[14]

Veeck later employed Gaedel as an usher at Comiskey Park, but in typical Veeck style—after he had been receiving complaints about tall ushers blocking fans' views in the box-seat section.[15]

On June 18, 1961, Eddie Gaedel was found dead following a drunken incident at a bowling alley that left him battered, bleeding, and suffering internal injuries. He was only 36.[16] With Bill Veeck at the Mayo Clinic due to health issues, the only person affiliated with baseball to attend his funeral was Bob Cain, the Detroit pitcher of that infamous plate appearance ten years prior. Cain drove 300 miles to attend.

Until his own death in 1997, Cain honored Gaedel each year with a personalized Christmas card which featured a picture of Gaedel in his batting stance and the inside caption reading, "Hope your target in the future is better than mine in 1951."[17] ■

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Eddie Gaedel with manager Zack Taylor on the Browns' bench.

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When They Were Just Boys

Chicago and Youth Baseball Take Center Stage

Alan Cohen

Not long after D-Day in June 1944, *Esquire* magazine summoned 16- and 17-year-old boys from all over the country to New York for the first *Esquire* All-American Boys Baseball Game.

Chicago was one of 29 cities to send players to this game. A local newspaper would select a deserving local player and pay their travel expenses. In 1944, the Windy City's rep was first baseman Charlie Perchak, who had three hits in the game.[1] Perchak's eye-popping fielding in a practice game caught everyone's attention, and manager Connie Mack was impressed enough to name him team captain. He later signed with the Cubs, but in four minor league seasons, interrupted by two years in the military, rose only to Class B. His dream of stardom ended in 1950.

This is a story of Chicago's relationship with youth all-star games many years ago. Nearly 30 players represented Chicago in these games and three made it to the majors. Most, like Charlie Perchak, did not. But these games also launched the careers of two dozen players, from other locales, who went on to play with the Cubs and White Sox.

Before the 1944 *Esquire* game, a photographer snapped a picture of the day's starting pitchers with the managers. The pitcher for the East team, number 19, was known as "Mr. Zero" due to his numerous shutouts. He pitched six scoreless innings for the win, striking out seven and allowing only three hits. He was named the game's MVP.[2]

Along with the award came a four-year college scholarship. Rather than attend school, however, Billy Pierce signed with the Detroit Tigers and pitched for them in parts of the 1945 and 1948 seasons before being traded to the White Sox, where he blossomed. In 13 years with Chicago, Pierce fashioned a 186–152 mark with a 3.19 ERA. He was named to seven All-Star teams and led his league with 20 wins in 1957, 186 strikeouts in 1953, and a 1.97 ERA in 1955). At age 35, when it looked like he was slowing down, Pierce was traded to the Giants and his 16–6 record sparked the Giants' 1962 National League pennant run. As for his #19, it is one of ten numbers the White Sox have retired.

The selection process for the Chicago representative to the 1945 *Esquire* game emerged from a youth All-Star contest at Comiskey Park on July 28. In the event, sponsored by the *Peoria Journal*, the CYO All-Stars defeated the American Legion All-Stars 1–0 in seven innings. Bloomington High School's sophomore pitching star John Neal, a two-way player, started the game in the outfield, getting two hits and then pitched a hitless last inning in the seven inning contest. He was selected to go to New York.[3] In batting practice before the game in New York, Neal turned heads, depositing balls into the outfield stands. The hitting display impressed team manager Babe Ruth so much that the Bambino elected Neal to play outfield in the game.

Neal, batting cleanup, did not disappoint. He went 2-for-4 with a single and a double and was right in the middle of a rally that resulted in his team scoring its first two runs in the fourth inning en route to a 5–4 win.

In 1945, Jim Crosset took over promotion of the game for *Esquire* and was instrumental in moving it to Chicago for 1946. What was to be the last Esquire game was played before 28,211 at Wrigley Field in Chicago on August 10, 1946. Six of the 16 players on the East team eventually made the majors.

In the days prior to the game, the young players got to see two games between the White Sox and the Indians, attended a performance of the Ringling Brothers Circus, took a two-and-a-half hour boat ride on Lake Michigan, and attended a practice of the College All-Stars football team.

Ty Cobb, manager of the West squad, applauded the game. "When any event makes it possible for boys from all sections of the country to meet on common ground, and where all have a common interest, it is a big step forward in making this country a better place for our coming generation to live in."[4] Honus Wagner managed the East Squad, assisted by coaches Luke Appling and Mike Tresh.

Cobb's squad exploded for five runs in the sixth inning and coasted to a 10–4 victory. Walter Pocekay went 4-for-5 with a double and two RBIs and was named the game's MVP.[5] Pocekay played in parts of

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Bob Will, from suburban Chicago, played in the Hearst games and the major leagues.

nine minor league seasons, mostly on the West Coast, and batted .308 overall, but never reached the majors.

Chicago's representative in the game, Pete Pantos, played for the West squad. He signed with the Cleveland Indians in 1948, but only got as far as Class C in his one minor league season.

Those players from this game who did make the majors include Hobie Landrith, Chuck Stobbs, Harry Agganis, Pete Whisenant, John Powers, and Harold "Tookie" Gilbert.

Esquire had hoped to take the game to a different city each year, but these hopes were dashed in December 1946 when the magazine officially pulled the plug on the project.

Two other youth tournaments, however, had their inaugural contests in 1946.

"Brooklyn Against the World," a yearly three-game series held at Ebbets Field in both 1946 and 1947, featured players from all over the United States (including the territory of Hawaii) and Canada facing Brooklyn's finest. The *Chicago Daily News* sent Art Sepke in 1946. Sepke was selected for the game by Rogers Hornsby, the director of the *Chicago Daily News* Free Baseball School.

Sepke had batted .405 in his senior year of high school and hurled his team to five wins. At the end of the season, when his squad was depleted by injury, he even stepped behind the plate for a couple of games. Sepke played for parts of two seasons in the Class D Sooner State League, but his pro career ended in 1949.

The *Chicago Daily News* sent Joe Naples to the 1947 game. Naples, a shortstop, had batted .455 in his senior year at Chicago Vocational High School.[6] Although not signed by a major league team, he pursued his baseball dream to Class D in 1949, playing in the Alabama State League and the Mississippi-Ohio Valley League. Over the course of the season, he batted .234, and it became clear that he would not be the next Marty Marion.

In 1946, the Brooklyn team had so much good pitching that one of its hurlers only saw action in one game, playing right field. Despite not seeing mound action in Brooklyn Against the World, the young man was not fazed. Within two months he signed with the New York Yankees, and within four years, Edward "Whitey" Ford had reached the majors.

The Hearst Sandlot Classic was the most enduring of these youth games. Each season from 1946 through 1958, Hearst Newspapers from around the country sent players to New York's Polo Grounds to face a New York contingent sponsored by the *Journal-American*. Chicago's Hearst paper, the *Chicago Herald-American*, sent two players to the game each year. In 1959, the Classic was moved to Yankee Stadium where it was contested through 1965, as the *New York Journal-American* ceased publication in early 1966.

Chicago's Herb Adams was the starting pitcher for the U.S. All-Stars in the first Hearst game. Adams, who had earned his way on to the squad by virtue of his performance in an All-Star game at Wrigley Field on July 1, signed with his hometown White Sox in 1947 as an outfielder and batted .405 in his first minor league season with Class D Madisonville, Kentucky. That opened a few eyes and he was promoted to the White Sox in 1948. He played parts of three seasons with the Sox before his major league career concluded in 1950 at age 24. After two years in the military, he returned to the minors and played through 1959. Over 11 minor league seasons, he batted .312.

Another Chicago player sent East in 1947 really made the headlines. The Weber High School senior earned his way to New York by winning the *Herald-American*'s "Home-Run King" Contest in March 1947. He became the first person to homer in the Hearst Classic, banging a ball to deepest center field and circling the bases for an inside-the-park homer as the U.S. All-Stars defeated the *Journal-American* All-Stars 13–2 before more than 31,000 spectators, including the game's honorary chairman, Babe Ruth.

Who was this kid? None other than Bill "Moose" Skowron, who signed with the Yankees in 1950 and tore things up on the farm. In 1952, at Kansas City, he hit 31 homers and drove in 134 runs, adding a .341 batting average. He eventually joined the Yankees and played with them for nine seasons. Over the course of his 14-year career in the majors, he hit 211 homers.

In the ensuing seasons, Chicago continued to send players to New York. Their 1949 representative, Bobby (later "Bob") Will, took a while to get to the majors.

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Glenn Beckert, a skinny kid from Pittsburgh, got experience in the Hearst tourney before playing pro ball.

He was the game's Most Valuable Player, driving in three runs with a single and a double. His bases-loaded single in the seventh inning plated two more and tied the game 5–5. The next batter, Ralph Felton, plated the game's final two runs with a single.

There wasn't much big money in baseball in those days, so Will elected to pursue his education at Mankato Teachers College in Minnesota and Northwestern University. He signed with the Cubs in 1954 and first reached the majors in 1957, appearing in 70 games. In 1959, he played 162 games at Triple-A Fort Worth, batting .336 and winning American Association MVP honors. He spent the next three full seasons with the Cubs.

Will was the last of the Hearst Game players from Chicago to reach the majors, but the annual contest launched the careers of other Cubs and White Sox. In 1954, Los Angeles was represented by Barry Latman and Jim McAnany. Both signed with the White Sox. Latman pitched six years in the majors and compiled a 59–68 record, fashioning an 8–5 mark for the pennant-winning 1959 White Sox. McAnany had the best year of his career for those same Sox, batting .276 in 67 games.

But the real bonanza for the Windy City was 1958. In that year, Boston was represented by Len Merullo Jr. (His father, former Cub Lennie Merullo, had committed a record four errors in one inning the day Len Jr. was born.) The young Merullo was the youngest player on the U.S. All-Stars that year, as the game was played a month prior to his sixteenth birthday. The senior Merullo accompanied his son to New York, and the younger Merullo's teammates—particularly a kid from Seattle named Ron Santo—were thrilled to be around the former big leaguer.

Prior to the trip East, Santo was not considering signing with the Cubs, but the influence of the senior Merullo was such that the Cubs' West Coast scouts had little trouble convincing him. Not only did the Cubs ink Santo, they also signed Paul Popovich and John Boccabella.

Glenn Beckert first played in the 1958 game in Pittsburgh, and in 1959 was selected to play in New York. Originally signed with the Boston Red Sox in 1962, he was taken by the Cubs in the first-year draft after the season. He joined the Cubs in 1965. In nine seasons with the Cubs, "Bruno" was named to four All-Star teams, won one Gold Glove, and batted .283.

The most Hearst alums to appear in a big-league game appears to be eight, and this happened on two occasions: April 29, 1971 and August 9, 1972. Both games involved the Cubs and Expos. In the latter contest, the Cubs hosted the Montreal Expos at Wrigley Field, and each team was represented by four former Hearst Sandlot Classic players. Santo, Beckert, Popovich, and Tommy Davis took the field that day for the Cubs, while the Expos featured Ron Fairly, Mike Jorgensen, Boccabella, and Mike Marshall. Four of them started the game: Fairly, Santo, Beckert, and Jorgensen.

When it comes to players from kids' All-Star games showing up at the same place, however, nothing quite tops the 1957 World Series. Tony Kubek, Gene Conley, Frank Torre, Bill Skowron, and Bob Grim had played in the Hearst Games, while Whitey Ford and Don McMahon had played in "Brooklyn Against the World."

Yet another player from the 1958 Pittsburgh All-Star game which produced Popovich and Beckert wound up in Chicago. An outfielder chosen as an alternate for the 1958 Hearst Sandlot Classic, he went on to play football at the University of Pittsburgh. As noted in the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, he was "easily the biggest man on the field…the 6'3" 215-pounder, who'll probably play an end at Pitt this fall, showed speed and a healthy swing. He couldn't get hold of one in the game but demonstrated his power in batting drills. He sent two over the wall to the right of the scoreboard in left."[7]

After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh, he was drafted by the Chicago Bears. Mike Ditka went on to a very successful career that did not include baseball.

The games in New York continued through 1965, but the *Journal-American* ceased publication in early 1966. In New York, annual games between the Yankees Juniors and the Mets Juniors were played through 1970. In Boston, the Hearst program continued through 1971.

Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in sandlot baseball. In New York, the Greater New York Sandlot Athletic Alliance sponsors kids' programs as well as an annual dinner at which young players receive scholarship awards and old-timers swap stories of the *Journal-American* days.

We shall close this brief history with a story of the 1971 game in Boston. The experience of a youngster from Everett, Massachusetts in that contest is the stuff from which miracles are made.

Picked for the 90-man squad was a 16-year-old infielder who would not be denied his place. He went to tryout after tryout before being selected as one of the 90 semi-finalists.[8] In a game the morning of July 29, the youngster went 1-for-2, scored the winning run, made the best fielding play of the game, and was selected as one of the 30 young men to play in the finals.[9]

The personification of persistence, he eventually became far better known for his ice hockey skills, and Mike Eruzione captained the United States Olympic team to the Gold Medal in the "Miracle on Ice" in 1980.

Do you believe in miracles? For hundreds of Esquire, Brooklyn Against the World, and Hearst participants in games from 1944 through 1971, the answer is a loud, resounding, "YES!" ■

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Stories of the White Sox

Farrell, Lardner, and Algren

James Hawking

The Chicago White Sox of the early twentieth century provided the inspiration and the subject matter for three of America's greatest novelists.

JAMES T. FARRELL

For most of his youth, Farrell lived with his grandmother and a maternal uncle in several neighborhoods, all close to Comiskey Park. He attended as many as 40 White Sox games a year, sometimes even following the team to spring training.[1]

The death of Ed Walsh prompted Farrell to write about his baseball memories, such as attending the 1910 opening of the "Baseball Palace of the World." Farrell also saw Walsh's no-hitter on August 27, 1911, which he fictionalized in A World I Never Made. On his way to the game, Danny O'Neill walks down 35th Street and becomes uncomfortable due to the presence of African Americans (not the term he used). A dramatic account includes an outfield collision that took Tris Speaker out of action.

Farrell also received permission to be absent from school for the first game of the 1917 World Series. In 1920 Farrell saw Joe Jackson leaving the park after the news of the Black Sox had broken and heard a fan calling out, pleading: 'It ain't true, Joe.'"[2]

Many years later, Farrell recounted details of the 1919 White Sox, such as "The Perfect Catcher" (Ray Schalk) and the player who was on his way to becoming the greatest third baseman ever (Buck Weaver). Eliot Asinof was amazed at how clearly Farrell remembered that team when he was encouraging Asinof to write *Eight Men Out*.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

James T. Farrell in England in the 1950s.

Ralph Kiner, a friend of Farrell's, said Jimmy became a novelist only after he realized that he could never be the second baseman for the White Sox. While playing in a game for St. Cyril's (today known as Mt. Carmel), Farrell struck out three times with the bases loaded, just as Danny O'Neill did in fiction. Farrell's sandlot career included playing for the son of Sox manager Pants Rowland at Armour Square Park, the field right behind White Sox Park.

Schalk accompanied Farrell to interview Helen McCuddy, who owned the bar on 35th Street where Babe Ruth was known to send word to have a cold one ready because it was the ninth inning. "They Called Her Ma" is a superb portrait of the woman who was a surrogate mother to Schalk and other White Sox and a hostess to generations of White Sox fans.

Farrell's posthumous novel, *Dreaming Baseball*, follows the fictional Mickey Donovan, who plays on the White Sox beginning in 1918, blending with the actual Sox players and playing through the 1919 series and the subsequent decline in Sox fortunes. Donovan narrates the novel as an old man living in Florida, recalling his successful major league career.

> And I didn't get a raise until 1924. In 1923 the team was bad, and I was .321. But my record is in the books, and who wants to hear an old timer like myself talk about how he hit .292 and .321 and .300 when, what the hell, look at what Eddie Collins hit and look at Ty Cobb's record, a lifetime average of .367.[3]

White Sox players interact with Donovan both on and off the field. Guidance from Ray Schalk and Eddie Collins helps him avoid serious trouble with his marriage as a result of carousing with Babe Ruth in 1925.

Clearly Farrell got his dream of playing with the White Sox, even if only through fictional alter egos.

RING LARDNER

Another novel blending real White Sox players with fictional characters was Ring Lardner's justly celebrated *You Know Me Al*, a collection of letters by Sox pitcher Jack Keefe to a friend back in Bedford, Indiana. Keefe pitches well for the most part, but when he fails, someone else is always to blame. When Ty Cobb gets the only hit of the game off Keefe, it is because Buck Weaver didn't come in on the ball fast enough. A poor performance is blamed on the manager who forces him to pitch with a sore arm. Hall of Fame umpire Billy Evans is responsible for other problems because "blind Evans don't know a ball from a strike."[4] A scorekeeper "must be McMullins brother in law (sic) or something because McMullin ought to of throwed Milan out from here to Berlin on that bunt."

Weaver might have thrown a game away "from spitework" because he preferred one of his friends to be the team's leading winner. Keefe is not impressed when he sees Christy Mathewson, who makes him think it must be easy to pitch in the National League. Walter Johnson has nothing but a fastball.

Lardner's friend, White Sox Coach Kid Gleason, is always portrayed favorably. He tries to teach Keefe how to hold men on base. "I don't think he could learn me nothing, but I promised I would go with him." Keefe loses a 1–0 game in the tenth inning when he intentionally beans a romantic rival with the bases loaded.

Like many small town boys moving to the big city, Keefe cannot get used to the high prices, complaining about fifteen-cent lunches and the hired girl who sticks him and his wife up for $8 a week. He feels that he is underpaid and threatens to jump to the Federal League, even though he has signed a contract with the White Sox.

Sox owner Charles Comiskey resists Keefe's demands of $5,000 a year, bargaining him down to an agreement to continue his present salary of $2,800, locking the rising star into a three-year contract with the customary ten-day release clause. Comiskey, whom Lardner also liked, is not portrayed as particularly cheap, but he does take advantage of the reserve clause.

Lardner grew up a Cubs fan in Niles, Michigan, but when he got a job as the *Chicago Tribune's* beat writer, he moved closer to the White Sox:

> …and the Cubs, whom I had idolized all my life, became non-existent as far as I was concerned. Ed Walsh, formerly an object of hatred, was now my hero and soon to be my friend.[5]

Lardner also became friends with Sox pitcher Doc White. In 1909 he wrote the lyrics to White's tune "Gee! It's a Wonderful Game," their attempt to supplant the recent hit "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Lardner even wrote a poem instructing his readers on how to pronounce the name of Eddie Cicotte. "Alibi Ike," perhaps his best known story, is set on a fictional version of the Cubs, but he was moving away from including actual players in his fiction.

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Ring Lardner, one of America's great sportswriters.

Lardner covered the Sox and Cubs on a daily basis until 1913, but then he took over the *Tribune*'s more general "In the Wake of the News" sports column. He still mentioned baseball but no longer on an everyday basis. The Black Sox scandal caused Lardner to withdraw from baseball, and he rarely returned to it in his fiction. His later baseball stories, written under financial pressure, never measured up to his earlier work.

NELSON ALGREN

Algren's prose poem *Chicago: City on the Make*, written in 1951, captures at least a part of the spirit of the city, describing the origin of the town:

> Till between the waters and the wind came the marked down derelicts with the dollar signs for eyes.
>
> Looking for any prairie portage at all that hadn't yet built a jail.[6]

Algren relates how he moved from the South Side to North Troy Street, near the alien bleachers of Wrigley Field. With him, he carried his treasures: a Louisville Slugger Bat signed by Swede Risberg and a July 1920 program that proved he had attended a game at Comiskey Park. Defending his American League allegiance, he adopted the nickname "Swede" and sought to play shortstop.

BAIN COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

While best known for his portraits of tough and unforgiving Chicago, Algren was also a White Sox fan.

When the scandal broke, his Cub fan tormentors pointed to Risberg's 0-for-4 day, which included being picked off and making a wild throw. Hadn't he known that Risberg was losing on purpose?

During the 1959 World Series, Algren wrote a newspaper piece entitled, "Go! Go! Go! Forty Years Ago,"[7] reflecting on how sure the city had been that the White Sox were going to beat Cincinnati. The occasion also brought back memories of another disaster, the 1915 capsizing of the *Eastland*, which killed more than 800 people.

In a piece called "Ballet for Opening Day," Algren drew portraits of the principal characters involved in the Black Sox scandal. Joe Jackson allegedly had said he didn't expose the scandal because he was afraid of Risberg, and "the Swede was a hard guy."

Perhaps the best of the individual portraits was that of Weaver:

> Kid Gleason had developed him into a .300 hitter
> By switching him at the plate
> And into the finest fielding third baseman in
> either league.
> His habit of grinning, while inching up on a
> batter
> So unnerved Ty Cobb that he refused to bunt
> against Weaver:
> The only third-baseman whose throws Cobb
> couldn't outrun.[8]

The article is preceded by a quotation from Eliot Asinof, whose version of the scandal Algren largely accepts. What matters is not any rendition of the facts, but the mythic proportions of the event.

In a short story elegantly entitled "a lot you got to holler,"[9] the youthful narrator tells how he had to trade an entire strip of ten baseball pictures to get one of Joe Jackson. After the scandal became public, he needed to trade the Jackson, a Buck Weaver, and two Happy Felsches to get one of Schalk, who had been on the strip he originally traded.

> And nobody cared any more whether Ray Schalk was a good guy or a bad guy anyhow. The feeling grew that he may have been a sucker.[10]

HONORS, AWARDS AND OPINIONS

Toward the end of his life, Farrell was honored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences with the Emerson-Thoreau Medal, an honor he shared with writers like T.S. Eliot.[11] Carl Van Doren called Farrell "the American city's truest historian."[12]

No less a critic than Virginia Woolf said that Lardner had written "some of the best prose that has come our way.[13] V.S. Pritchett said "…the specifically American contribution to literature is 'talk,' and that it began with Ring."[14]

Hemingway ranked Algren as the second greatest American writer of the century, behind only Faulkner.[15] In all, the White Sox may have inspired more great American writers than any other baseball team. ■

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Curse of the Billy Goat

An Adaptive Coping Strategy for Cubs Fans

Jeremy Ashton Houska, Ph.D.

Researchers in the social sciences who have investigated the effects of sports fandom acknowledge the positive impacts of team allegiances on psychological health.[1] Classic studies in social psychology have demonstrated that fans will bask in the reflected glory of a winning team by making others aware of their affiliation with it,[2] or will, conversely, distance themselves from a losing team.[3]

Fans employ these processes of image enhancement and protection (Basking in Reflected Glory, or "BIRGing" and Cutting off Reflected Failure, or "CORFing") in order to maintain their mood, self-esteem, and social capital.

Some research suggests that highly identified, or "die-hard," fans engage in these strategies more frequently than less identified, casual fans;[4] other studies, however, find that CORFing is not an option for the staunchest fans.[5]

When their favorite team performs poorly, sports fans can maintain their psychological health by modifying their association with the team.[6] While the processes of associating and distancing from sports teams have been examined in a number of contexts, fewer studies have been conducted on fans' beliefs in whether a team is somehow "cursed." Moreover, belief in an external cause of failure is adaptive; belief in a curse can serve as a buffer against negative emotions associated with a team's shortcomings.

Two of the most well-known sports curses have implicated the Boston Red Sox ("The Curse of the Bambino") and the Chicago Cubs ("The Curse of the Billy Goat").[7] Beliefs in team curses are highly publicized in the media,[8] and fans even go to great (and disturbing) lengths in their attempts to reverse curses.[9] Less understood, though, is the nature of these beliefs and the purposes they can serve for fans. Few researchers in sport psychology have studied beliefs in team curses; an exception is Daniel Wann and Len Zaichkowsky's work on fans' perceptions of the Red Sox curse.[10]

Wann and Zaichkowsky hypothesized that highly identified Red Sox fans would be more apt to utilize the Curse of the Bambino as a coping strategy than would less serious fans. Their rationale is that it is easier for fans to attribute a loss to a curse rather than blame players, the manager, or the front office for poor performance.

Data from Wann and Zaichkowsky's (2009) study revealed three key trends. First, those fans who believed in luck and magic tended to believe in the Curse of the Bambino; second, those with a high sense of baseball fandom (regardless of beliefs in mysticism or team identification with the Red Sox) also reported increasing belief in the curse. Third, and most notably, the level of team identification accounted for the greatest variance in curse beliefs. That is to say, people who most strongly identified as Red Sox fans were most likely to believe in the Curse. Baseball fans will note that the Boston Red Sox' 2004 World Series victory[11] put an end to this curse.

The current study[12] examined Cubs fans' beliefs in the still-active Curse of the Billy Goat. In particular, this research addressed the possibility that sports curses serve a mood-enhancing function. Sports fans should be in a more positive mood if they can blame losses and poor performance on an outside force. It was hypothesized that highly identified Cubs fans presented with information about the Curse of the Billy Goat (i.e., the Curse Salience condition) would exhibit a less negative mood state than those highly identified fans who did not receive information about the Curse (i.e., No Curse condition).

This experiment employed a pre-test/post-test control group design. Participants were randomly assigned to a treatment group (Curse Salience condition) or a control group (No Curse condition) by the experimenter. Participants included 119 undergraduate students at Concordia University—Chicago (River Forest, Illinois), who took part in this study for psychology research credits or course extra credit. All participants went through the informed consent process and completed Peter Terry and colleagues' (1999) Profile of Mood States for Adolescents (POMS-A).[13]

This initial assessment of participant mood with the POMS-A ("Time 1 Mood State") was taken for two rea-

sons. First, these pre-test data determined whether any of the participants' moods were unusually positive or extremely negative. Extreme moods would affect subsequent stages of the study. No outliers were observed in the data.[14] Second, these pre-test data determined whether systematic differences in mood existed between the two groups. The treatment group (Curse Salience) did not differ significantly from the control group (No Curse). See the Figure for a graphic depiction of the Time 1 Mood ratings. It was then concluded that any observed differences in mood at Time 2 could be attributed to conditions of the study.

Next, participants were presented an 18-item Baseball Fan Survey consisting of open-ended and Likert-type items on a seven-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Survey subscales included Degree of Cubs Fandom (measured by number of years watching Major League Baseball and the Chicago Cubs, number of Cubs games viewed on television/heard on radio, and number of Cubs players on one's fantasy baseball team), and Identification With the Cubs items patterned after Daniel Wann and Nyla Branscombe's Sport Spectator Identification Scale (1993)[15] (e.g., "How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of the Chicago Cubs?" "I like the Chicago White Sox"). In addition, a Superstition subscale was created by adapting items from Tobacyk and Milford's (1983) Paranormal Scale.[16]

Participants either received information about the Cubs' performance that blamed the Curse of the Billy Goat (Curse Salience condition) or information that provided no mention of it (No Curse condition).

Key to this research study is that one experimental condition made the Curse of the Billy Goat salient to participants and the other did not. Participants randomly assigned to the Curse Salience condition read that the Curse of the Billy Goat explains why the Cubs have neither won a World Series since 1908 nor even played in one since 1945. Participants also read that this is the longest drought in Major League Baseball. The Cubs performance data were then presented for two time periods: from 1876–1945 and 1946–2009. The former period was emphasized as "Pre-Curse" and the latter "Post-Curse." An additional sheet outlined the history of the curse, beginning with Billy Sianis and his goat Murphy's ejection from Wrigley Field prior to Game 4 of the 1945 World Series. The Curse of the Billy Goat Timeline ended with the Cubs being swept by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 2008 National League Division Series.

Participants in the No Curse condition also read information about the performance of the Cubs franchise.

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Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley and first baseman Charley Grimm pose in 1934 with….a goat. If only they had known.

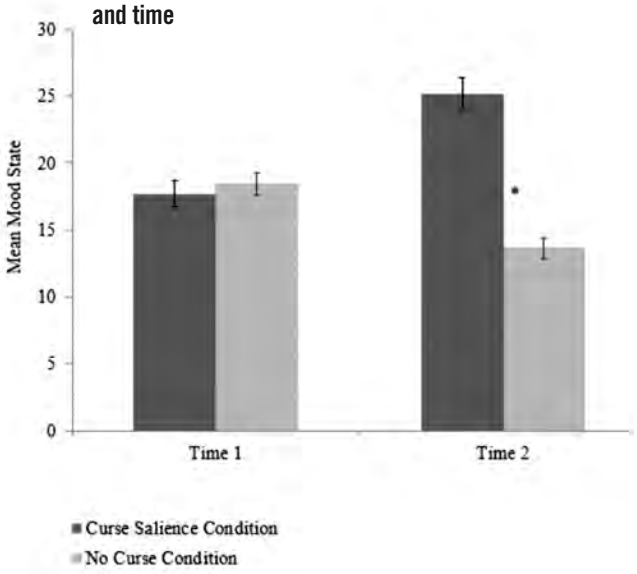
It was reported that the Cubs had not won a World Series since 1908 nor returned since 1945 and that these are the longest such droughts in Major League Baseball. Performance data were then presented for two time periods: from 1876–1945 and 1946–2009. There was no mention made of a Curse of the Billy Goat, or of such a curse's history.

Immediately after reading the information in the Curse Salience or No Curse condition, participants completed Peter Terry and colleagues' (1999) Profile of Mood States for Adolescents an additional time. This second assessment of participant mood ("Time 2 Mood State") would test whether participants who read about the Curse would exhibit a more positive mood state than those who were presented Cubs performance data alone.

Finally, participants were given a full oral debriefing by the experimenter, had all their questions answered to their satisfaction, and left the laboratory.

Results revealed that higher levels of superstition were associated with stronger beliefs in the Curse of the Billy Goat. This finding is consistent with Wann and Zaichkowsky's (2009) data on the Curse of the Bambino. It makes sense that people who believe in magic and mystical phenomena would also believe that Billy Sianis' curse on the franchise has prevented

Figure 1. Comparison of mean mood state by curse condition and time



the Cubs from returning to the postseason. Additionally, highly identified Cubs fans in the Curse Salience condition reported a less negative mood state relative to highly identified Cubs fans in the No Curse condition. This difference was statistically significant. See the Figure for a graphic depiction of the Time 2 Mood State.[17] Because no statistically reliable differences in mood ratings existed between the groups at Time 1, there is greater confidence in the study conditions and interpretation of the results. It was concluded that this laboratory study effectively evoked frustration and disappointment within participants in the No Curse group and less negative emotions in participants in the Curse Salience group.

In sum, these findings on the Curse of the Billy Goat replicate past research conducted on the Curse of the Bambino[18] and are consistent with the notion that sports curses are used as a coping strategy.[19] These findings suggest that die-hard Cubs fans may point (either playfully or seriously) toward Billy Sianis and his goat after a heartbreaking loss instead of the club's inconsistent pitching staff, anemic lineup, poor management, or just an untimely error. Research in the social psychology of sport reminds us that fans will not distance themselves from their beloved team for long.[20] Instead, Cubs fans shift their causal attributions from the players, manager, and front office to a goat. And this strategy is adaptive. ■

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Of Black Sox, Ball Yards, and Monty Stratton

Chicago Baseball Movies

Rob Edelman

Once upon a time, A.J. Liebling, consummate Manhattanite and writer for *The New Yorker*, dubbed Chicago America's Second City.[1] But in relation to New York-centric baseball movies, this AAA-league rating is extremely generous. Across the decades, baseball films with Chicago references have been relatively scarce. For every onscreen image of Wrigley Field, there are scores set inside or just outside Yankee Stadium. For any one Hollywood biopic highlighting a Chicago player—*The Stratton Story*, from 1949, comes to mind—a dozen chart the lives of Lou Gehrig, Jackie Robinson, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and especially Babe Ruth.

The majority of Chicago-set baseball films have included (and occasionally showcased) the Cubs. Among them are Joe E. Brown's *Elmer, the Great* (1933) and *Alibi Ike* (1935), the Grover Cleveland Alexander biopic *The Winning Team* (1952), the Dizzy Dean biopic *The Pride of St. Louis* (1952), and the family comedy-fantasy *Rookie of the Year* (1993). Sometimes, a fictional Chicago club is depicted. One example is *Boulevardier from the Bronx* (1936), an eight-minute Warner Bros. cartoon featuring the exploits of the Chicago Giants, whose star pitcher—a rooster—is named Dizzy Dan. (At the time, Dizzy Dean still was pitching in St. Louis; he did not join the Cubs until 1938.)

The town's other big league nine has not been completely shut out onscreen. But it should surprise no one that two of the highest-profile Chisox films spotlight the Black Sox scandal, and are worth comparing because they offer vastly different points of view. *Eight Men Out* (1988), based on the Eliot Asinof book, is one movie about baseball history that does not glorify its subjects. The Sox are portrayed in ensemble style as a rowdy, hard-playing bunch, easily the best major league team of the era. As depicted by director-writer John Sayles, however, they are also victims, oppressed as much by jowly Charles "The Old Roman" Comiskey (Clifton James), the team's penny-pinching owner, as by underworld kingpin Arnold Rothstein (Michael Lerner).

Meanwhile, *Field of Dreams* (1989), adapted from W.P. Kinsella's novel, deals with the Black Sox from a wholly different perspective. *Field of Dreams* is the *It's a Wonderful Life* of baseball movies, a wistful fantasy about love, hope, and the timelessness of the game. Here, the defamed ballplayers are restored to their glory when their spirits come to play in an eternal, pastoral ball field. Their sins are not dramatized and, consequently, an idealized vision of American innocence is recaptured.

Eight Men Out is deeply cynical. At one point, Eddie Cicotte (David Strathairn) observes: "I always figured it was talent made a man big, you know... I mean, we're the guys they come to see. Without us, there ain't a ballgame…but look at who's holding the money and look at who's facing a jail cell. Talent don't mean nothing." A heckler yells at Shoeless Joe: "Hey, Jackson! Can you spell 'cat'?" Jackson (D.B. Sweeney) retorts: "Hey, Mister! Can you spell 'shit'?"

In the nostalgia-tinged *Field of Dreams*, however, Shoeless Joe (Ray Liotta) utters "Man, I did love this game. I'd have played for food money" and "I used to love travelling on the trains from town to town. The hotels... brass spittoons in the lobbies, brass beds in the rooms. It was the crowd, rising to their feet when the ball was hit deep. Shoot, I'd play for nothing!"

Various non-baseball films also reference the scandal. In *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), gangster Hyman Roth (Lee Strasberg) declares: "I loved baseball ever since Arnold Rothstein fixed the World Series in 1919." F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, filmed four times (in 1926, 1949, 1974, and 2013) and as a 2000 made-for-TV movie, includes the character Meyer Wolfsheim, said to have fixed the series and clearly based on Rothstein. In the 1926 film, the character is named "Charles Wolf." In the 1949 version, he is "Myron Lupus."

The disparate depictions of real-life ballplayers in *Eight Men Out* and *Field of Dreams* serve to emphasize that films featuring real-life individuals offer the subjective views of their creators. They also usually present skewed representations of history. Sometimes, inaccuracies result from sloppy scholarship; more often, they exist to keep the storyline lean and comprehensible.[2]

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Sox owner Charlie Comiskey, "The Old Roman," a major force behind the sad events of 1919.

Both are the case in *The Stratton Story*, a biopic about White Sox hurler Monty Stratton.

The real Stratton, a Texas farm boy, was in 1937–38 a promising major league pitcher. But in November 1938, while target-shooting on his mother's farm, he shot at a rabbit and his revolver accidently discharged while returning it to its holster. The bullet severed the femoral artery in his right leg, gangrene soon set in, and the leg was amputated above the knee.[3]

Though Stratton played for the Pale Hose in the 1930s—specific years and dates are not cited in the screenplay—*The Stratton Story*, made in 1949, is more a reflection of post-World War II America. Douglas Morrow, who earned an Academy Award for the film's story and scripted it with Guy Trosper, had attended a game at the Sawtelle Soldiers Home, a Southern California facility for disabled GIs. "Seeing the armless and legless spectators, Morrow had the desire to find a film story that would give them hope," wrote film industry reporter-biographer Bob Thomas. "He thought the story should be divorced from the war. Then he remembered Monte [sic] Stratton."[4]

Stratton is played in the film by James Stewart. The ex-big leaguer was the film's technical advisor and coached Stewart on the art of pitching. He noted that the actor "did a great job playing me, in a picture which I figure was about as true to life as they could make it."[5] Despite this hype, however, *The Stratton Story* is loaded with misinformation. In an effort to ensure narrative clarity, none of Stratton's siblings are present onscreen and only two of the five seasons he spent in Chicago are represented. The hurler played in the minors in Omaha and Galveston (in 1934) and St. Paul (1935), yet only Omaha is cited in the script.

Other changes are historical revisions designed to make the scenario more acceptable to viewers. In the film, Stratton shoots himself with a hunting rifle rather than a revolver. The film ends with his return to the sport in a Houston exhibition pitting the "Southern All-Stars" and "Western All-Stars," but he really did so in a White Sox-Cubs charity game, held in Comiskey Park, organized to raise money for him.

Other "facts" also reflect the 1940s rather than 1930s. One example: Stratton's comeback game took place in 1939. In the film, his mound opponent is Gene Bearden, who did not pitch in the majors until 1947. The last batter he faces is Johnny Lindell, whose first big league appearance was a one-game looksee in 1941. Still others are even less explicable. When Stratton is recalled from the minors, a Clark Gable-Lana Turner film, *Honky Tonk*, is screening in a movie theatre. The film was released in 1941, three years after Stratton threw his last major league pitch.

Perhaps the most egregious error involves Stratton's major league debut on June 2, 1934. This was his lone big league appearance that season, coming against the Detroit Tigers, and Stratton surrendered four hits and two runs in 31/3 innings. Stratton entered the game with two outs in the sixth inning, relieving Phil Gallivan. Hank Greenberg had just walked and promptly stole second on Stratton. Jo-Jo White then lined out to left field.[6]

In *The Stratton Story*, the hurler comes in to pitch in relief against the New York Yankees. "Dickey, DiMaggio, Gehrig. You can't power past them, kid," Barney Wile (Frank Morgan), Stratton's fictional onscreen mentor, advises the hurler. "If you're gonna get by," Wile adds, "you gotta out-think 'em, cross 'em up, give 'em what they don't expect." (According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the real-life Wile was "Jockie Tate, a former Texas leaguer, who always had a blank contract handy in case something good suddenly turned up."[7])

Wile's advice may be sound, but what follows is pure fiction. The first batter Stratton faces is Bill Dickey (appearing as himself). The Bombers' backstop homers on Stratton's first pitch. (Stratton allowed no round-trippers in his actual debut.) Also included in the sequence is stock footage of Joe DiMaggio belting a dinger and circling the bases. There is a catch, however: The Yankee Clipper did not debut in the majors until 1936.

So Monty Stratton's real debut was not nearly as disastrous as depicted in *The Stratton Story*. The question is: Why rewrite history? Simply put, having Stratton face Hall of Famer Dickey and the New York nine is more dramatically potent than having him pitch to Jo-Jo White.

The Yankees' success also allowed for some repartee that surely would have delighted George Steinbrenner. Stratton tells his wife, "Honey, do you know there's a tailor in Chicago that gives a suit of clothes away to any

ballplayer that hits the scoreboard in center field? As of yesterday the New York Yankees are the best-dressed team in baseball."

In June 1948, during the film's pre-production, Roy Rowland—assigned to direct *The Stratton Story*—shot footage of the White Sox at Comiskey Park. By the time filming began, Sam Wood had replaced Rowland. Meanwhile, the *Hollywood Reporter* announced that Gregory Peck would be playing Stratton while Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the studio producing the film, hyped Van Johnson for the part. But in the end, Stewart got the role.

The studio also reported that 72 pro ballplayers appeared onscreen. Many were at one point or another affiliated with Chicago teams; the list begins with Merv Shea, Hank Sauer, Peanuts Lowrey, Catfish Metkovich, Gene Mauch, Tuck Stainback, Lou Novikoff, Bobby Sturgeon, Steve Mesner, Lou Stringer, Red Kress, Al Zarilla, and Gus Zernial. Most significantly, Jimmy Dykes, who became the Sox player-manager fifteen games into the 1934 season and helmed the team into the 1946 campaign, appears as himself. Of Stratton's teammates, Ted Lyons has the most screen time, but the real Lyons is not in the film. Instead, he is played by actor Bruce Cowling.[8] Legend has it that Ronald Reagan, who three years later played Pete Alexander in *The Winning Team*, desperately wanted the Stratton role. But he was under contract with Warner Bros., which refused to lend him to MGM.[9]

Across the years, other real-life Chicago ballplayers have appeared onscreen. *The Giants-White Sox Tour* (1914) is the first notable feature-length documentary to spotlight big leaguers. *Variety*, the motion picture trade publication, described it as a "long reeled picture of the baseball players' trip around the world the past winter… with here and there snatches of a baseball game played between the natives and the teams in foreign countries. The well-known ballplayers who went along are shown individually at different times, with Germany Schaefer always in the foreground whenever the camera was working…"[10] (Schaefer had played for the Chicago Orphans [aka the Cubs] in 1901 and 1902.)

Some onscreen Chicago ballplayers are more obscure: Frank Shellenback, Ray French, and Smead Jolley had small roles in *Alibi Ike*; Shellenback also appeared in Joe E. Brown's *Fireman, Save My Child* (1932). Others are Hall of Famers; Ernie Banks has appeared in over a dozen feature films, television movies, and television series. (He was billed as "Steamer Fan" in *Pastime* [1990], a baseball film, and played a cabbie in a 1985 *Hill Street Blues* episode.) A highlight reel of other Cooperstown inductees with Chicago connections begins with Rube Waddell, who pitched for the Chicago Orphans in 1901 and appeared as himself in the documentary shorts *Rube Waddell* and the *Champions Playing Ball with the Boston Team* (1902) and *Game of Base Ball* (1903); Leo Durocher, who managed the Cubs from 1966–72 and was seen in *Whistling in Brooklyn* (1943), *The Errand Boy* (1961), and such TV series as *Mister Ed*, *The Munsters*, and *The Beverly Hillbillies*; and Frank Thomas, who played The Rookie in *Mr. Baseball* (1992).[11]

Some films have actually featured the ballparks themselves. In this regard, Wrigley Field far outweighs Old Comiskey Park and its successor as onscreen locations or references. (Wrigley Field Chicago should not be confused with Wrigley Field in Los Angeles, built in 1925. Besides serving as a Pacific Coast League park, it was a playground for exhibition games featuring Tinseltown celebs. Countless films and TV shows were shot there, from the Babe Ruth feature *Babe Comes Home* [1927] through "The Mighty Casey," a 1960 *Twilight Zone* episode, the *Home Run Derby* TV show, and "Herman the Rookie," a 1965 installment of *The Munsters*.)[12]

An infinitesimal number of films feature on-location images of Old Comiskey. But one—a non-baseball film—is extra-special. *Only the Lonely* (1991) includes a sequence shot not long after the 1990 season, just prior to the park's demolition. The hero is a Chicago cop (John Candy) who shares his first date with the woman he is courting by taking her to Old Comiskey, where they share an on-field picnic.

The then-new ball yard briefly appears, but the focus is on the soon-to-disappear park, which is paid homage via the line, "Boy, it's a shame they're gonna tear this all down." The sequence reportedly was filmed on a Friday, with the demolition beginning the following week. Jacolyn J. Baker, an *Only the Lonely* location manager, described it as "a special night," adding: "Everybody knew that this was going to be the last time anybody would be in Comiskey Park… In between takes, people were playing catch on the field. You felt that this was about to be taken away. It was really special."[13]

Wrigley Field's iconic status has more than occasionally been celebrated onscreen. The Chicago location of *While You Were Sleeping* (1995), a Sandra Bullock-Bill Pullman romantic comedy-drama, is established via a series of city landmarks. One, of course, is *The Friendly Confines*, as much a symbol of its town as Yankee Stadium is to New York. In *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), baseball is a byword for romance, a loving family, and bliss. As the film opens, Sam Baldwin (Tom Hanks), a Chicago architect, has just lost his wife

to cancer. As Sam mourns the loss of his beloved, there is a split-second flashback to a memory of a happier time as he, his late wife, and their young son pose outside Wrigley Field.

The first onscreen image in *The Break-Up* (2006) is a long shot of Wrigley during a game. The second is the red-and-white Wrigley sign. Die-hard Cubs fan Gary Grobowski (Vince Vaughn) is in the stands, and he rests his face in his hands in agony as a fly ball drops between three Cubs fielders. His pal Johnny O (Jon Favreau), who is garbed in White Sox regalia, laughs hysterically.

One of the more celebrated Wrigley references occurs in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), in which the title character (Matthew Broderick), a high school senior, cons most of the world into thinking he is deathly ill so that he can skip school. Ferris is joined by his girlfriend and best pal and the trio spends a day enjoying Chicago's amenities. How could the afternoon pass without a Wrigley visit?

Ferris' main nemesis is Ed Rooney (Jeffrey Jones), the pompous school dean determined to bust him. Rooney happens to be inside a pizza parlor and beside a TV set on which the Cubs contest is being broadcast. The home nine are in the field, the inimitable voice of Harry Caray notes that Lee Smith is on the mound, and the unnamed batter hits a long foul ball into the leftfield stands. Who do you suppose nabs it? None other than Ferris Bueller! But Rooney is oblivious. He asks the score and is told "nothing-nothing." His doltishness is ever-apparent by his next question: "Who's winning?" The not-amused pizza man tells him, "The Bears."

Not all screen characters seeing a live Cubs game actually do so inside the park. *About Last Night…* (1986), a romantic drama based on David Mamet's play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, is framed by softball games in Grant Park during successive summers in which Danny (Rob Lowe), the hero, and Debbie (Demi Moore), the heroine, meet and then become reacquainted after breaking up. In between, they watch a Cubs game not from Wrigley but from a nearby rooftop, where they can be alone. *About Last Night…* also features a peek into what some women might discuss at ballgames. Debbie and her pal Joan (Elizabeth Perkins) are chatting, and Debbie observes: "That second baseman's got a really nice ass." To which Joan responds: "I refuse to go out with a man whose ass is smaller than mine."

In *Hardball* (2001), aimless Conor O'Neill (Keanu Reeves) finds direction in coaching pre-teen Little Leaguers from the Cabrini-Green housing project. At one point, Conor escorts the kids to a Cubs game. The boys are close enough to the field to attract the attention of what then was a premier Cubbie. "Yo, check it out," one of the boys yells to his pals. "That's Sammy Sosa over there… right there." Alas, another boy points out that it is not Sammy, and the Sosa spotter is dissed by his pals. But then he spots the real Sosa, garbed in a warm-up jacket and wielding a bat. Quickly, the kids grab Sammy's attention. He smiles, kisses his fingers, moves them to his heart, and shoots them a "V" for victory. The music swells on the soundtrack, and the boys are in baseball heaven.

Not only is *The Blues Brothers* (1980) among the higher-profile Chicago-set films of recent decades, it also features a baseball reference that is the equivalent of a grand-slam homer. At one point, the brothers Jake (John Belushi) and Elwood (Dan Aykroyd) elude the police but are not trouble-free; Jake points out to Elwood, "Those cops have your name, your address…" But not to worry. As Elwood explains: "They don't got my address. I falsified my renewal. I put down 1060 West Addison."

Surely, those cops are not real Chicagoans; if they were, they would not need Elwood Blues to tell them: "1060 West Addison. That's Wrigley Field." ■

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Memories That Will Never Go-Go

Francis Kinlaw

"This is the Cubs' town," said the man over beers,
When we talked in the Nixon years;
We discussed Chicago's teams, tossed names we both knew,
In an exercise best named "recall and review."

He had loved the Cubs all his life, less so the Pale Hose,
While lamenting, to varying degrees, both teams' woes;
He politely gave lip service to Wynn, Pierce, and Shaw
To maintain a desired conversational thaw.

For me, those three names held a special allure,
Long after the pitchers had caused such a stir;
The '59 Sox were a team to embrace
When they disposed of the Yanks and captured first place.

His opinions ranked low on the list of my cares,
For I had enjoyed each of Veeck's scoreboard flares;
As the men of Comiskey, whose speed was revered,
Were applauded, praised, heralded, lustily cheered.

The term "Go-Go Sox" meant a team that was quick
Though some players weren't fast, and some hit not a lick;
Big Klu and Sherm Lollar were slow on their feet,
But watching them play was always a treat.

"Little Louie" and Nellie, a slick DP combo,
Ended many a frame with a catch, toss and throw;
The hot corner was Bubba's, while Landis chased flies,
Plucking spheres of horsehide out of the skies.

Flanking Landis were Smith and unique "Jungle Jim,"
Torgeson and Goodman hit when things looked grim;
Dick Donovan and Latman took the mound for key starts
Lown and Staley nipped rallies, breaking enemy hearts.

In the dugout Al Lopez, often called "The Señor,"
Hoped for better than his Tribe had done five years before;
But the skipper was sadly denied the big prize:
After six games with the Dodgers, he'd again agonize.

But AL fanatics are resilient types,
(Necessarily so, unless their team wears pinstripes!)
White Sox fans bounced back and my spirits did, too…
And the memories—ah, the memories—I have quite a few!

Chicago Goes Hollywood

The Cubs, Wrigley Field, and Popular Culture

David Krell

Chicago is a city of icons. A hotbed of popular culture, the Windy City owns a curriculum vitae rarely paralleled concerning characters, real and fictional, responsible for defining the American experience.

Al Capone rose to kingpin status in Chicago's underworld during Prohibition in the 1920s. His was a household name, a celebrity status recognizable nearly a century later as a description—or an exaggeration—of the criminal persona.

Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert birthed film criticism to the masses with their newspaper columns and syndicated television program offering insight, banter, and approval (or disapproval) signified by a thumbs-up/thumbs-down paradigm.

Catherine (or Molly, according to some sources) O'Leary's cow, according to Chicago folklore, kicked over a lantern in 1871 while being milked in a barn, sparking a fire that consumed everything in its path. In the chronicle of natural disasters, it's on par with the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

Baseball, too, offers fertile territory for Chicago popular culture, especially those myths, legends, and tales involving the Cubs. Superstition, for example, dictates that a curse hovers over Wrigley Field, the Cubs' home, sourced from an incident during Game Four of the 1945 World Series. William "Billy Goat" Sianis, owner of the famed Billy Goat Tavern, entered Wrigley Field with his pet goat Murphy and even paraded him through the box seat section before being ejected shortly after the game began. The Cubs had informed the well-known Sianis before the Series that the presence of a goat would not be tolerated. An appeal to Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley failed. "Because the goat stinks," Wrigley explained. Sianis, in turn, prompted a curse. "The Cubs ain't gonna win no more. The Cubs will never win a World Series so long as the goat is not allowed in Wrigley Field."[1] The Cubs have not won a World Series since.

In 1997, Chicago newspaper columnist Mike Royko—a Windy City newspaper institution—denounced the curse as the reason for the Cubs' absence from the World Series since Harry S. Truman was President of the United States. Rather, Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley deserves the blame, according to Royko. The columnist's key reason was the team's lateness in signing black players. Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier on April 15, 1947, but Ernie Banks debuted as the Cubs' first black player on September 17, 1953, nearly six and a half years later.

During this delay, the pool of black talent got shallower, siphoned by other teams more readily adaptable to a changing sociological paradigm in baseball. "So what might have been wasn't," Royko wrote. "It had nothing to do with a goat's curse. Not unless the goat wore a gabardine suit and sat behind a desk in an executive suite.[2]

TELEVISION

NBC's television series *Chicago Fire* paid homage to the Billy Goat curse in the 2012 episode "Mon Amour." Sardonically nicknamed "Otis" because of his dislike of elevators, Firefighter Brian Zvonecek expresses disappointment to his fellow firefighters at Firehouse 51 regarding Truck 81's crest incorporating a goat. Firefighter Christopher Herrmann, a Firehouse 51 veteran, passionately explains that the goat crest will unlock Sianis' curse.

During NBC's sitcom heyday of the 1990s, *Chicago Sons* used the setting of a North Sheffield Avenue apartment building overlooking Wrigley Field. The Kulchak brothers boasted a formidable cast—Jason Bateman as Harry, an architect seeking love; D.W. Moffett as Mike, a construction worker seeking refuge after his wife throws him out because of his obsession with televised sports; and David Krumholtz as Billy, a recent college graduate seeking his next moneymaking opportunity. *Chicago Sons*, a mid-season replacement, lasted only a few months.

CBS' drama series *Chicago Hope* featured Wrigley Field in an early episode of its debut 1994–95 season. Neurologist Aaron Shutt (played by Adam Arkin) and surgeon Jeffrey Geiger (played by Mandy Patinkin) hit golf balls from home plate under the Wrigley Field

lights. A live broadcast of NBC's *ER* in the 1997–98 season featured a simultaneous Cubs game on WGN.

THEATER

Chicago's vibrant theater scene provided the platform for the Organic Theater Company's 1977 play *Bleacher Bums*, a work of fiction deeply grounded in reality. *Bleacher Bums* debuted at Organic on August 2, 1977. It depicts a group of Cubs fans during a game against the St. Louis Cardinals. To better prepare, members of the Organic did research in Wrigley Field's bleacher seats to build a story around banter, betting, and baseball.

The main characters are: Decker, a middle-aged businessman; Melody, a busty blond initially more interested in tanning than baseball until she slowly gets immersed into the intricacies until she's talking like she was born and raised on Waveland Avenue; Greg, an amiable blind man in his 20s; Zig, a man in his 50s who compulsively gambles on the slightest of happenings during the game; Rose, Zig's wife who proves to be more knowledgeable about baseball than her husband; Richie, a man in his 20s whose inattention to hygiene compounds his offensiveness to the group; and Marvin, a professional gambler who bets against the Cubs if he thinks the odds warrant it.[3]

Though written by an ensemble at the Organic Theater Company, *Bleacher Bums* owes its genesis to Joe Mantegna. "Stuart Gordon was the head of Organic at that time. During a meeting, he said that we were almost out of money but we might have enough for one more show in the season," explains Mantegna. "He asked if anyone had an idea for a show that could be done cheaply. Well, I had been going to Cub games since I was five, but I looked at games in a whole different light once I became an actor. I was banging around this idea of a story revolving around the fans at Wrigley Field and capturing their excitement for something that's not a quality product.

"I distinctly remember putting my hand up and saying, 'Let me take you to a ballgame and sit where I sit and tell me if you don't think there's a play.' Once they saw the characters in the stands, they agreed. We did improvs and based the characters on real people. Zoz became Zig. Becker became Decker. Initially, the title was 'The Year the Cubs Won the Pennant' but 'Bleacher Bums' became the actual title. Mantegna adds:

> We sat most of the audience on the stage of the arena theater we had, then we took seats out of one section of the audience and had the cast sit on the cement levels where the seats used to be. So, the cement levels acted as bleacher seats. The sets cost next to nothing. We bought the costumes from the Amvets National Foundation store. On Tuesdays, you could get stuff cheap. The entire play probably cost less than $200 to produce. Based on longevity, Bleacher Bums is the biggest moneymaker for the Organic. It ran in Los Angeles at the Century City Playhouse for ten years, from 1980 to 1990.[4]

In her review of the Performing Garage version in 1978, *Sports Illustrated*'s Sarah Pileggi noted, "Marvin, of course, winds up with all the money, but by and large the nice guys win in the end."[5] Mantegna furthers the point. "Everybody comes in as an individual, but at the end, Marvin is left alone with everyone else leaving as part of a pair. They all made a connection. For those couple of hours, they were a family."[6]

The story ends with an eloquent speech by Greg in response to Marvin's offer of a ride home. He speaks of tomorrow, when the Cubs will win. In Greg's prediction, the Cubs will continue to win until they reach the World Series and play the Chicago White Sox. With the championship on the line in the seventh game, the

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Franklin P. Adams (left), author of "Baseball's Sad Lexicon."

Cubs will bring Ernie Banks out of retirement in the 23rd inning. Banks will hit a home run. And that's when Marvin can give him a ride home, Greg finishes, with the paradoxical hopefulness of a Cubs fan.

Mantegna and his Organic Theater Company cohorts went beyond the bleachers to the broadcasting booth for research. They talked to Cubs broadcasting legend Jack Brickhouse, who dreamed of a fantasy scenario for the Cubs. "That speech came from Brickhouse—it was verbatim except for the last line. So the night Jack Brickhouse came to the play was a special night. Just to see his reaction,"[7] Mantegna said.

Bleacher Bums resonates because of the universal appeal of different characters bonding over a similar goal—to root for the Cubs. Sourced in the pathos that appears to exist in every Cubs fan's DNA, *Bleacher Bums* merits respect from the theatrical community. "A great thing that happened to me years ago, around 1983 or 1984, was a call from Jason Miller, the playwright for *That Championship Season*," says Mantegna. "An anthology of sports plays included *Bleacher Bums* and Jason read it. He told me that he had a theater in Malibu and he wanted to produce the play. Ironically, his son is one of my daughter's best friends."[8]

Since its 1977 debut, *Bleacher Bums* has seen various versions in theatres, updated since 1988 to reference the installment of lights after 74 years of day games at Wrigley Field. In 2001, Showtime aired a version starring Peter Riegert, Wayne Knight, and Matt Craven.

FILMS

The Break-Up, a 2006 comedy film starring Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn, features a Cubs game at Wrigley Field in the opening scene. Billy Crystal dons a Cubs jersey in the 1986 buddy cop film *Running Scared*. As 12-year-old Henry Rowengartner, Thomas Ian Nicholas realizes the dream of every Cubs fan in the 1993 comedy film *Rookie of the Year*. When Henry follows Wrigley Field tradition and throws back a home run ball, it reaches home plate—his power resulted from his tendons tightening while healing a broken arm. The Cubs sign Henry, promptly.

In the 1986 comedy film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*—written and directed by John Hughes, Hollywood's conduit for the angst, hope, and humor of mid-1980s teens—a Chicago Cubs home game is one of many stops for the title character, a high school student whose experiences escalate to adventures with suburban myth status in the Windy City's environs.

Ferris (Matthew Broderick) persuades his parents that he has an illness serious enough to stay home, but not serious enough to warrant a trip to the doctor. It's a ruse, of course, so that Ferris can ditch school on a picture-perfect day, to the consternation of Dean of Students Ed Rooney, who prioritizes catching Ferris away from the home where he is resting. Ferris' gifts of persuasion extend to his gorgeous girlfriend Sloane and his best friend Cameron, who exudes anxiety the way Marilyn Monroe exudes sexuality.

On a visual level, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* may be considered a Chicago travelogue, as it depicts trips to the Art Institute of Chicago, the Sears Tower, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and the Von Steuben Day Parade—an annual September celebration honoring Chicago's German-American population—where he mounts a float to lip-sync Wayne Newton's "Danke Schoen" and the Beatles' version of "Twist and Shout" in what ranks as one of the greatest all-time music scenes on film, right up there with Gene Kelly splashing around in *Singin' in the Rain*, Elvis Presley singing the title song in *Jailhouse Rock*, and any song from *Grease*.

Ferris et al. attended the Cubs-Braves game on June 5, 1985; Atlanta right fielder Claudell Washington smashed a foul ball that Ferris caught, further illustrating the good-natured teenager's ability to float carelessly through life while garnering the fortunes of good luck, good will, and good friends.[9]

That is, the film portrays the WGN broadcast of the June 5, 1985 game. But the close-up of Ferris catching the Washington foul ball may come from another contest. Baseball writer Al Yellon posited this theory in 2011 while referencing a July 12, 1985, article in the *Chicago Tribune* declaring the film's production to be set in Chicago. "So the announcement of the filming of *Ferris Bueller* wasn't made until more than a month *after* the June 5, 1985 game was played," wrote Yellon. "The article says filming would begin in Chicago in September, and the parade in which Bueller jumped onto a float and sang took place during a real parade on Sept. 28, 1985."[10]

In 2014, the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress added *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* to its list of iconic films.

Taking Care of Business, a 1990 comedy starring Jim Belushi and Charles Grodin, illustrates the depths of Cubs loyalty and the lengths to which a loyalist will go to preserve it. Belushi plays California prisoner Jimmy Dworski, a die-hard Cubs fan convicted of grand theft auto with just a few days left on his sentence. After winning two tickets to Game 6 of the 1990 Cubs-Angels World Series in a radio contest by being the first person to name the two Cubs pitchers threw no-hitters in 1972—Milt Pappas and Burt Hooton—Jimmy risks freedom by escaping prison to

see the game in Anaheim. If Jimmy gets caught, he'll wind up back in prison governed by a warden who simply, but intensely, dislikes Jimmy; an extension of his sentence would be certain upon capture.

When uptight advertising executive Spencer Barnes (Grodin) leaves his Filofax organizer at the airport, Jimmy finds it, keeps it, and uses it as a platform to impersonate Spencer; without the Filofax, Spencer is like a rudderless ship—he has no information, no credit cards, no cash. Jimmy, as Spencer, takes business meetings, stays in the beach house courtesy of the key in the Filofax, sleeps with the boss' beautiful daughter, and botches an account with a major client. Initially furious at the impostor who has thrown his life upside down and backwards, Spencer reconciles with Jimmy; they go to Game 6, which the Cubs win.

Belushi also appeared in the 1986 film *About Last Night* starring Brat Packers Rob Lowe and Demi Moore. A meet-cute takes place at a softball game in Chicago's Grant Park between Lowe's restaurant equipment salesman Danny and advertising professional Debbie. It leads to a one-night stand, which leads to a tumultuous one-year relationship. An early scene shows Danny and Debbie watching a Cubs game from a rooftop on North Sheffield Avenue.

LITERARY

Franklin Pierce Adams created a cornerstone item in Cubs popular culture when he scribed the double-play ballet of Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance in *That Double Play Again* for the July 12, 1910, edition of the New York *Evening Mail*; it later became known by its more popular title—*Baseball's Sad Lexicon*. Adams was a Cubs fan from the Midwest; he moved to New York City in his 20s. In J.G. Taylor Spink's "Looping the Loops" column in the March 2, 1944, edition of *The Sporting News*, Adams explains, "I didn't like [New York Giants manager John] McGraw. I was a Cub fan, for I had come from Chicago, and I got particular delight out of every game the Cubs won from the Giants."[11]

Other literary offerings regarding Cubs Nation include the prominence of Wrigley Field in Randy Richardson's mystery 2014 novel *Wrigleyville* and Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski novel series about a female private investigator. The 1991 film *V.I. Warshawski*—starring Kathleen Turner as the title character—had one scene filmed inside Wrigley Field. Unfortunately, it did not make the final cut.[12]

THE FUTURE?

2015 is a landmark year for Cubs popular culture. In the 1989 comedy film *Back to the Future Part II*, Marty McFly (played by Michael J. Fox) transports 30 years into the future, from 1985 to 2015, when he finds out that the Cubs won the 2015 World Series. "That's my favorite bit about the Cubs in popular culture, other than *Bleacher Bums*,"[13] says Joe Mantegna.

So, will life imitate art in 2015? We'll see in October. ■

Notes

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2. Mike Royko, "It Was Wrigley, Not Some Goat, Who Cursed Cubs," *Chicago Tribune*, March 21, 1997.
3. *Bleacher Bums*, Conceived by Joe Mantegna, Written by Roberta Custer, Richard Fire, Dennis Franz, Stuart Gordon, Josephine Paoletti, Dennis Paoli, Carolyn Purdy-Gordon, Michael Saad, Keith Szarabajka, Ian Williams, 1977.
4. Telephone interview with writer, December 17, 2014.
5. Sarah Pileggi, "For Once, The Cubs In A Laugher," *Sports Illustrated*, June 19, 1978.
6. Mantegna interview.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. www.baseballprospectus.com/article.php?articleid=12877.
10. Al Yellon, "Was Ferris Bueller Really at a Cubs Game at Wrigley Field?" February 8, 2011, http://chicago.sbnation.com/chicago-cubs/2011/2/8/1982246/ferris-bueller-cubs-game-wrigley-field.
11. J.G. Taylor Spink, "Looping the Loops" column, *The Sporting News*, March 2, 1944.
12. Don Babwin and Andrew Seligman, "Stevens, Mantegna Recall Wrigley," April 22, 2014, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/stevens-mantegna-recall-wrigley.
13. Mantegna interview.

Buying the White Sox

A Comic Opera Starring Bill Veeck, Hank Greenberg, and Chuck Comiskey

John Rosengren

When Bill Veeck and Hank Greenberg arrived at Comiskey Park on March 11, 1959, as the new owners of the White Sox, Chuck Comiskey raced away in his Cadillac. Greenberg waved, but Comiskey did not return the gesture.[1]

It was as if Chuck, whose grandfather Charles had brought the White Sox to town in 1900, thought he could avoid parting with the family treasure simply by avoiding the men who wanted to buy it. Thus began what the *Chicago Sun-Times* declared "a stirring chapter in the history of the White Sox, replete with comedy and tragedy."[2]

The Old Roman had left the team to his son and daughter-in-law, Grace Comiskey, who in turn left the team to their two children, Dorothy Comiskey Rigney and Chuck. Perhaps because she knew of Chuck's propensity to make a mess of things after a few drinks, Mrs. Comiskey gave Dorothy—the older, responsible sister—500 more shares than Chuck. When Dorothy wanted to sell her 54 percent stake to Veeck and Greenberg, Chuck sued to stop her. A judge ruled in Dorothy's favor; Chuck appealed. That didn't work either.[3]

Chuck wanted Chicago insurance salesman Charlie O. Finley to control the team. Finley, later known for his meddling with the Kansas City and Oakland A's, had seduced Chuck with the promise that he could stay with the Sox and tried to win over Dorothy with a sweeter offer.[4] But Veeck and Greenberg already held the option, and in the end, the older sister sold her majority interest in the club to them for $2.5 million.[5]

Veeck, who had previously owned the Cleveland Indians and St. Louis Browns, and Greenberg, a Hall of Fame player who had owned and run the Indians, wanted to buy out Chuck—or at least 26 percent of the remaining team stock—in order to save $1.3 million in taxes with Veeck's clever scheme for depreciating players' salaries.[6] Nuh-uh, Chuck said. He called the partners "raiders" and sued them.[7]

The *Detroit News* called the situation "baseball's strangest stalemate."[8] Throughout the 1959 season, during which the "Go-Go Sox" of Luis Aparicio, Nellie Fox, and Early Wynn won the White Sox's first pennant since the 1919 Black Sox Scandal and restored the team's good name, the new owners tried to win over Chuck with no luck.

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Greenberg spent more than 10 years as an executive with the Indians and White Sox after his playing career.

They let Chuck keep his office and raised his salary, but he still wasn't happy.[9] He developed an intense enmity for Veeck, a sentiment the maverick owner reciprocated. That left Greenberg, the team vice president and treasurer, to play peacemaker between the two adversaries. That wasn't an easy role for Greenberg, since Chuck was suing him, too.[10] The mess was further complicated by Chuck's alliance with his father-in-law, Frank Curran (appointed to the board by Chuck as a minority owner),[11] who constantly peered over Greenberg's shoulder to check the team's books.[12]

Chicago's American reported the Sox' February 1960 board meeting as having "had comic opera aspects altho [sic] the participants were deadly serious about the whole thing." While the directors met, Chuck refused to join them and pouted in his office next door.[13]

Late in the 1960 season, Veeck began to suffer from a nasty cough and constant headache. Mayo Clinic doctors ruled out a brain tumor but decided that he had a chronic concussion and prescribed complete rest. He and Greenberg chose to sell their shares of the club to Arthur Allyn, Jr., in June 1961 for $2.5 million.[14] (Allyn owned 30 percent of Artnell Corporation, which now became the majority owner of the team.) By that time, Comiskey had made himself so irrelevant that he was unaware of the sale. Greenberg agreed to stay on as general manager, but the strain of commuting from New

York, where the divorcé was raising his three children, wore him out and he resigned two months later.[15]

Chuck also sold his shares to another group, believing he could eventually buy them back. He was wrong, and there ended the Comiskey family's hand in the Sox. When Veeck regained his health and returned with Greenberg to purchase the White Sox in 1975, they were able to run the club without any Comiskey interference.[16] ■

Notes

1. Veeck, Bill, *Veeck as in Wreck*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, 329; *Detroit News*, March 12, 1961.
2. *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 11, 1961.
3. Dickson, Paul, *Bill Veeck: Baseball's Greatest Maverick*, New York: Walker & Co., 2012. 228; Veeck, 323.
4. Veeck, 324.
5. Veeck, 322.
6. Veeck, 325-7.
7. Veeck, 328; Greenberg, Hank, *Hank Greenberg: The Story of My Life*, Chicago: Triumph, 2001.
8. *Detroit News*, March 12, 1961.
9. Veeck, 330.
10. Greenberg, 235.
11. Veeck, 319.
12. Greenberg, 235.
13. *Chicago's American*, February 19, 1960.
14. *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 11, 1961; Associated Press, June 10, 2011.
15. Associated Press, August 26, 1961; Rosengren, John, *Hank Greenberg: The Hero of Heroes*, New York: New American Library, 2013, 340.
16. *Detroit News*, December 20, 1975.

From the North Side to the Deep South

Francis Kinlaw

Sandburg's "City of Big Shoulders" (that's Carl, not Ryne!)
Was once quite important in a small world of mine;
For Fate placed me, in the Fifties, far from a city
Forcing this baseball lover to fight off self-pity.

Following 16 teams was a task by itself,
Yearbooks were plentiful on my bookshelf;
I memorized the stats of guys like Joey Jay,
And gave thanks for Mutual's Game-of-the-Day!

Though I felt isolated down South from baseball's great feats,
The radio in our house provided my necessary treats
In the form of broadcasts, day after day,
Each of a big-league matinee.

Wrigley Field, decades before the advent of cable,
Became the Mutual Network's most common staple;
In the only ballpark with pure, natural light
Day games were plentiful, none played at night.

The Cubs were heard more often on my precious Philco
Than teams that won more in Frick's acclaimed show;
That the Cubs often held the short end of the score
Mattered none to a youngster who loved the sport's lore.

My mother, though no fan, showed little frustration,
Believing that listening increased one's imagination;
And because that was true, I did "see" Stan Hack
Remove more than one pitcher, and Ernie Banks take a whack.

With every hit, pitch, catch, or Cubbie miscue,
I was transported off to Waveland Avenue;
Moved by the voices of men like Art Gleeson,
I relished events of each baseball season.

Bob Neal, Rex Barney, Gene Elston, John MacLean
Were key characters during each summer campaign
In a decade when the sun most clearly did shine
On an ivy-covered wall and unique baseball shrine.

The White Sox were consistently Chicago's best team—
Of pennants their fans could reasonably dream;
Their games were broadcast once in a while
Sending Minnie and Nellie through my radio dial.

Many folks watched those games without giving a thought
To outland regions the big leagues forgot;
But we Southerners hungered for rare baseball meals,
Be it the Game of the Day or Frank Lane's latest deals.

Mutual and the Cubs played a vital role
In bringing nourishment to my overlooked bowl—
Which, in my youth, was a brown radio
With sounds coming from it that made this fan glow!

Contributors

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JEFF KATZ is the author of *Split Season: 1981–Fernandomania, the Bronx Zoo and the Strike that Saved Baseball* (Thomas Dunne Books). After 16 years in Chicago trading options at the CBOE, Katz and his family moved to Cooperstown, where he currently is mayor. You can reach him at jkkatz@stny.rr.com and follow Split Season on Twitter @SplitSeason1981

FRANCIS KINLAW has contributed to 15 SABR convention publications (the number of double plays grounded into by Ernie Banks during the Cubs' memorable 1969 season) and attended 19 SABR conventions (Banks' doubles total that year). A member of SABR since 1983, he resides in Greensboro, North Carolina and writes extensively about baseball, football, and college basketball.

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