



EMIL ROTHE CHICAGO CHAPTER

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021 • VOLUME 12 • EDITION 5

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Above: SABR's Emil Rothe Chapter members enjoyed a wonderful outing at the Joliet Slammers game on July 17, 2021. Special thanks to Ken Miller of the Slammers for access to a suite.

LOU REYNOLDS: THE "GRAND OLD MAN OF BASEBALL" IN KEWANEE

BY: DEAN KARAU



After the Civil War and the initial hope of a true racial awakening during Reconstruction, the country soon settled into Jim Crowism. By the 1890s, black Americans were deemed second-class citizens in all walks of life, including baseball. But there were areas of the country where a good ballplayer was a good ballplayer, regardless of the color of his skin. Kewanee, Illinois, founded by abolitionists, was one of those areas. When Lou Reynolds arrived in Kewanee with his extraordinary baseball skills, he found acceptance and respect in the city. When he died nearly fifty years later, he was the acknowledged "Grand Old Man of Baseball," Kewanee's "Mister Baseball."

In 1884, Moses Fleetwood Walker arguably became the first black American to play professionally in Major League Baseball, 63 years before Jackie Robinson and the reintegration of MLB. But he and other black Americans suffered from indignities and, at times, vicious practices intended to drive them out of the game. For instance, Frank Grant, one of the best second basemen of his era, had to wear homemade wooden shin guards to protect his legs from hard-sliding white runners kicking their spikes at his body.

Ultimately black Americans were driven out of MLB by the viciousness and Jim Crow racism. But that didn't stop black Americans from playing ball, including in my hometown, Kewanee, Illinois. One of the most well-known and beloved ballplayers of the first half of the twentieth century was Lou Reynolds, who became known as Kewanee's "Grand Old Man of Baseball."

Louis Thomas Reynolds was born in Frankfort, Missouri, in 1872, seven years after the Civil War ended. From Missouri, Lou's family moved to Abingdon, Illinois, where relatives from Virginia resided, and he began playing baseball at the age of fifteen. Lou played left field for the Hedding College team, and then joined the Abingdon Globe Overall Co. team, pitching, and playing first base, the latter position one he would play for most of the rest of

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BY JASON A. SCHWARTZ

Four cards, one player. Can you guess who?



IS THIS HEAVEN? ...

THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX AND IOWA

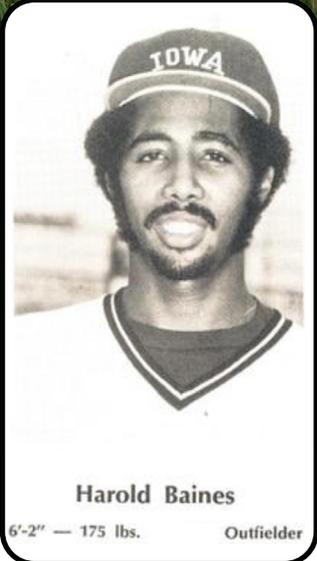
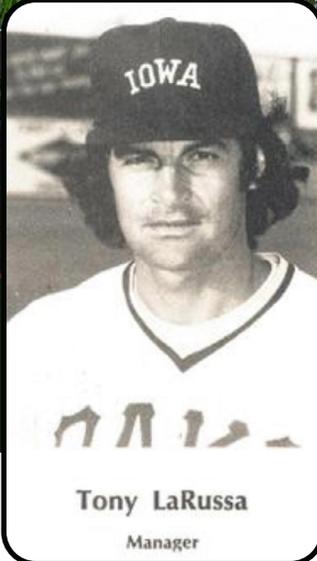
BY: DAVE MARRAN (AKA SOXNERD)

If you reschedule it, the White Sox will come.

With the recent rescheduling of the "Field of Dreams" game, what better time to check out the White Sox links to Iowa ... [@soxnerd](#) style!

***THE OVERVIEW:** The "Field of Dreams" game — aka "MLB at Field of Dreams presented by GEICO" — was played on Thursday, August 12. The Chicago White Sox defeated the New York Yankees, 9-8, in Dyersville, Iowa — the site of the iconic 1989 movie, "Field of Dreams."

The truncated 2020 season robbed the White Sox of the originally-scheduled "Field of Dreams" game, which was slated for August 13 at a makeshift 8,000-seat stadium adjacent to the site of where much of the movie was filmed. The Sox original 2020 opponent were the Yankees and then the Cardinals before the pandemic scotched the showcase.



***A FIRST!** The game will be the first Major League Baseball contest in Iowa.

***HE'S BACK!** And Tony La Russa was slated to manage. Iowa was where La Russa was managing when he was appointed Sox skipper the first time on Aug. 2, 1979. La Russa's Triple-A Iowa Oaks, based in Des Moines, were 54-51 and in third place in the American Association's East Division upon his promotion to the Sox bench.

***HAR-OLD!** Among La Russa's charges that season was a 20-year old outfielder by the name of Harold Baines. Baines hit .298 with 22 homers and 87 RBI in his last full minor league season in 1979. Others at Iowa in 1979 included Britt Burns, Steve Trout, Bob Molinaro and LaMarr Hoyt.

***ANOTHER LINK:** Former White Sox executive Dan Evans played a big role in the "Field of Dreams" game. The Chicago native was a consultant with "Go The Distance Baseball," which owns the "Field of Dreams" movie site. Evans talks in-depth about this (and other things) and tells a touching story about the event in this White Sox Talk podcast.

***NEW DIGS:** The game at the Field of Dreams site will be the 75th venue where they've played an official game.



SABR MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



We all have great baseball stories. Go ahead and share some with your fellow SABR Chicago Chapter members. Contact Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at wcpearch@comcast.net to schedule a brief interview.



HISTORY HUNTERS

WOODRUFF ATHLETIC FIELD PEORIA, ILLINOIS

A portion of Woodruff Athletic Field's former left-field wall still stands off of Grant Street in Peoria, Illinois. Constructed in 1923 and demolished in 1978, the ballpark once served as the home of the Peoria Distillers, Reds and Tractors. (40.705927, -89.565441)

If you go out of your way to visit old ballparks, historical markers, statues, or gravesites we would love to hear about it! Send your experiences and photos to j.racanelli@hotmail.com!



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THERE ARE FIVE EASY WAYS TO INTERACT WITH CHICAGO CHAPTER MEMBERS.
CLICK TODAY AND START TALKING BASEBALL.



Top: Photo taken by Bill Peach on July 18, 2021; Middle / bottom: Historic photos provided by digitalballparks.com

BY: JASON SCHWARTZ



This series takes a look at the legendary ballplayers that most fans forgot ever suited up with our local teams. Where possible we'll present baseball card evidence of their Second City tenure.

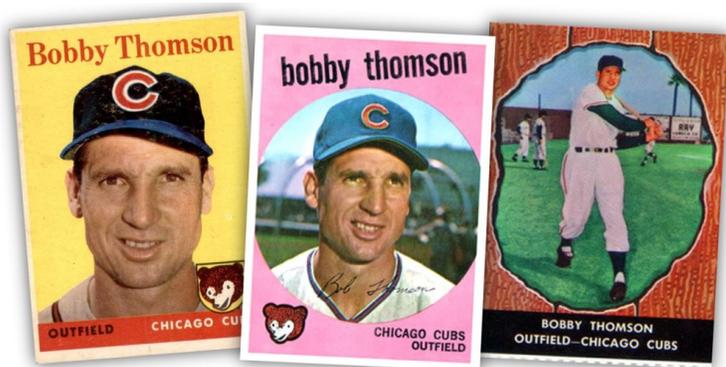
Bobby Thomson

Two years and over a thousand plate appearances with the Cubs tend to exclude one from "Unknown Legend" status, but a special case is made when ones entire career is best remembered, if not uniquely remembered, for a single at-bat. Aided by a [telescope-and-buzzer](#) cheating system, Bobby Thomson broke the hearts of Dodger fans everywhere with a dramatic walk-off home run to win the National League pennant in 1951.

The year following the fateful home run, Thomson would earn his third All-Star appearance with the Giants and lead the league in triples. His 1953 season with the Giants would boast fewer triples but ultimately match up nicely with 1952. Even still it would not be enough to keep Thomson in New York as he found himself traded to Milwaukee for pitching during the 1954 preseason. (Notably his Spring Training injury with the Braves cleared a roster spot for Henry Aaron, meaning Thomson had a connection to two of baseball's most famous home runs.)

Whether injuries or age, Thomson never regained All-Star form in Milwaukee, batting .242 in his three and a half years as a Brave. Ostensibly nearing the end of his career, the Braves returned Thomson to the Giants in the middle of the the 1957 season where he once again hit .242. With stiff competition in the Giants outfield and only middling numbers, Thomson was once again the subject of a trade, and this is how the one-time hero found himself a Chicago Cub.

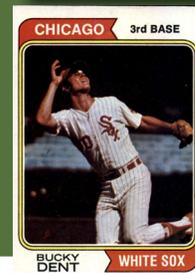
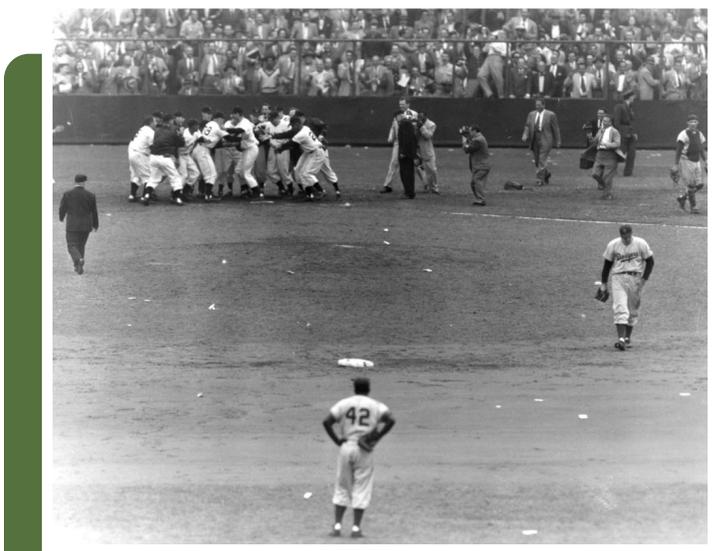
Thomson's 1958 season marked something of a resurgence. In 547 at-bats, Thomson batted .283, and his wins above replacement were his highest since his 1952 All-Star season. He remained a Cub in 1959, batting .259 in 374 at-bats, before finishing his career in 1960 with the Red Sox and Orioles.



Cardboard proof of Thomson's two years as a Cub come through his readily available 1958 and 1959 Topps cards as well as a much more elusive 1958 Hires Root Beer card.

Bucky Dent

Another three-time All-Star remembered best for his pennant-winning home run is one Russell Earl Dent, or as he's known in Boston, Bucky F. Dent. The weak-hitting shortstop's dramatic home run in game 163 of the 1978 season sent the Yankees to their third straight World Series and left Red Sox fans once again wondering if they might ever "reverse the curse."



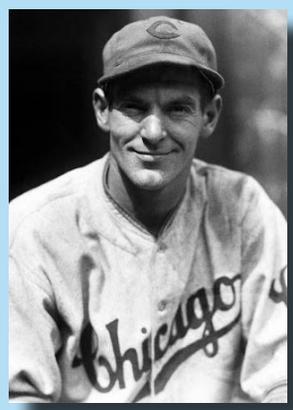
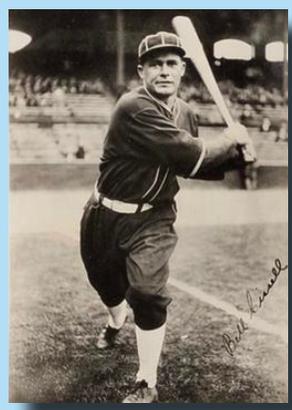
Of course before Dent ever donned Yankee pinstripes he spent four seasons on Chicago's South Side, putting up what were then above average numbers for a shortstop. Dent batted .260 and "slugged" .305, finishing second to Mike Hargrove in the 1974 American League Rookie of the Year vote and earning a place on the All-Star team in 1975. In a trade that forever altered the course of Yankees and Red Sox history, Dent was traded to New York just before the start of the 1977 campaign. While Red Sox faithful rue the day the trade ever happened, it was one that worked out well for Chicago, netting the Sox not only South Side Hit Man (and fashion icon) Oscar Gamble but eventual Cy Young Award winner LaMarr Hoyt.

There is of course no shortage of cardboard proof of Dent's time in the Windy City. Still, if you want a card of Bucky Dent before he became Bucky F. Dent, he has a nice Topps run from 1974-77 as well as several other Sox cards. ☺

Thinking of an "unknown legend" that you would like to nominate? Send Jason an email at jason.1969@yahoo.com.



CHICAGO RANDOM TANDEM



BILL CISSELL & WOODY ENGLISH

The Chicago White Sox added numbers to their uniforms in 1931. Bill Cissell was the first player in franchise history to wear uniform number 1.

The Chicago Cubs added numbers to their uniforms in 1932. Woody English was the first player in franchise history to wear uniform number 1.

Have a sweet Chicago Random Tandem?
Send it to j.racanelli@hotmail.com!

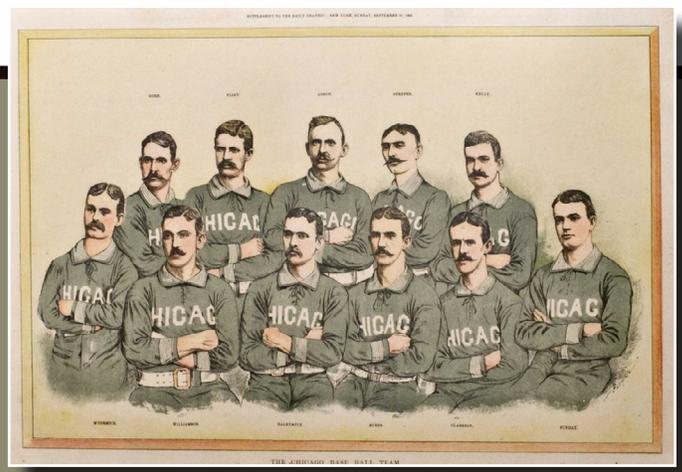


PASTIME PASSAGE

“One thing about the Chicago Bears. When their season starts, it takes some heat off the Cubs.”

– Bill Madlock, 1975

Do you have a favorite baseball-related quote?
Send it to John Racanelli via email at j.racanelli@hotmail.com.



ABOVE: 1885 CHICAGO WHITE STOCKINGS (SOURCE: APPELPR.COM)

TOP TEN: CHICAGO FRANCHISES BY REGULAR-SEASON WINNING PERCENTAGE (THROUGH 2020)

RANK	YEAR	TEAM	PERCENTAGE
1	1880	WHITE STOCKINGS	.798
2	1876	WHITE STOCKINGS	.788
3	1885	WHITE STOCKINGS	.777
4	1906	CUBS	.763
5	1932	AMERICAN GIANTS	.739
6	1886	WHITE STOCKINGS	.726
7	1920	AMERICAN GIANTS	.717
8	1926	AMERICAN GIANTS	.704
9	1907	CUBS	.704
10	1909	CUBS	.680

HAVE YOU COMPILED A TOP TEN LIST THAT THE CHAPTER WOULD FAWN OVER? SEND IT TO JOHN RACANELLI VIA EMAIL AT [J.RACANELLI@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:j.racanelli@hotmail.com).



CLICK HERE TO PLAY
CAN YOU NAME THE EVENTS THAT HAPPENED BEFORE OR AFTER THE CHICAGO CUBS 1908 WORLD SERIES VICTORY?

GET PUBLISHED!

You're conducting baseball research, now let SABR's Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter help. We are looking for new articles to publish in the Chapter's newsletter and our social media outlets. Submit your articles to Bill Pearch, newsletter editor, via email at wcpearch@comcast.net for inclusion in an upcoming edition.

FIELD OF DREAMS (CONTINUED)

***SMALL CROWD:** Best I can tell, the 8,000-seat "Field of Dreams" venue will be tied for the smallest stadium to host a White Sox game. The other 8,000-seat facility in which the Sox played was 8,000-seat Oriole Park in 1901 (8) and 1902 (10). Every other one of the 74 venues the Sox have played seated or seats at least 9,500 fans.

***THE LAST TIME:** The Sox played their first game in Iowa since a 4-1 win over their Triple-A Iowa farm team on May 1, 1978. Ron Schueler started and got the win while Wayne Nordhagen, his batterymate for a few frames, homered. Rich Hinton and Lerrin LaGrow also pitched for the Sox. Veteran Bruce Dal Canton started, went three innings and took the loss for the Oaks, who were managed by Joe Sparks. After future Sox pitching coach Mike Pazik threw three innings, Stan Butkus put in two frames for Iowa.

Butkus?

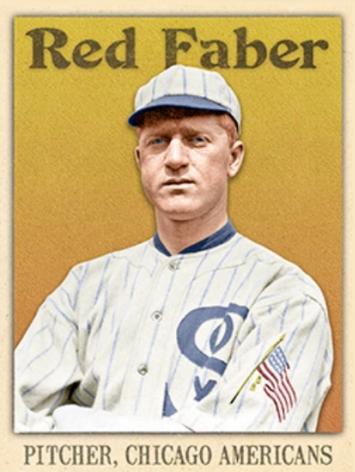
A cousin of the legendary Bears middle linebacker, 27-year-old Stan was 2-2 with a 5.34 ERA in 15 appearances (all in relief) for Iowa in 1979. The stop in Iowa was the last in the states for the Elgin, Ill., native. After Iowa, Butkus pitched for two seasons in Mexico before his pro career ended.

Thanks to some digging by Twitter friend Jacob Pomrenke aka [@buckweaver](#), I learned Stan wasn't close to Dick Butkus but his dad was ... Stan was raised in Florida after his family moved from Elgin when he was two months old ... he pitched at Miami Dade Junior College and at the University of South Alabama ... At USA, Butkus played for former White Sox manager Eddie "The Brat" Stanky.

***DEEP IOWA ROOTS:** Before they were the Chicago White Sox, they were the Sioux City (Iowa) Cornhuskers. Charles Comiskey purchased the Cornhuskers after they won the 1894 Western League crown, moved them to St. Paul, Minn., where they



AT DES MOINES
 WHITE SOX 010 030 000—4 7 1
 Iowa 000 000 100—1 7 2
 Schueler, Hinton (4), LaGrow (7)
 and Nahoroday, Nordhagen (2); Dal
 Canton, Pazik (4), Butkus (7), Proly
 (9) and Colbern. WP—Schueler. LP—
 Dal Canton. HR—Chicago: Nordhagen.



became the Saints. When the American League was formed in 1900, Comiskey was awarded the Chicago franchise and the Saints became the White Stockings and then the White Sox.

***IOWA ICON:** Sox legend Red Faber of Cascade is the all-time leader among Iowans with 4,086.2 innings, 669 pitching appearances, 213 losses, 4,106 hits allowed, 103 HBP and 17,104 batters faced. Faber's 254 wins are second among Iowans to Bob Feller's 266. Of the 34 Iowans who have played for the Sox, Faber played in the most games (670). All but one of Faber's appearances came as a pitcher with the other coming as a pinch-runner in 1923.

***THE FIRST:** The first Iowan to play for the Sox was Des Moines' Herm McFarland on April 30 in the team's inaugural campaign of 1901. The next day McFarland's grand slam — the first in franchise history — was the first Sox homer by an Iowa native.

***CORN POWER:** Carroll's Ken Henderson is the Sox all-time leader among Iowans with 35 homers. Norway's Hal Trosky, the career leader among Iowans with 228 homers, is tied for second in Sox annals with New Hampton's Duane Josephson with 12 dingers. Henderson is the Sox career leader among position players from Iowa with 375 games.





FIELD OF DREAMS (CONTINUED)

***MORE CORN POWER:** Iowans to go deep for the Sox are Henderson, Josephson, Sioux City's Bobby Knoop (11), Boone's Jerry McNertney (9), Red Oak's Dick Kentworthy (4), McFarland (4), Faber (3), Knowlton's Yam Yarian (2), Cedar Rapids' Ryan Sweeney (1), and Des Moines' Ducky Holmes (1). Sweeney was the last Iowan to homer for the Sox (May 12, 2007).

***FIRST PITCHER:** Lou Fiene of Fort Dodge was the first Iowan to pitch (April 21, 1906) and the first to get a win (Oct. 4, 1906) for the Sox.

***LAST PITCHER:** The last pitcher from Iowa to play for the Sox was Cedar Rapids' Cal Eldred on April 11, 2001. His win on June 22, 2000 vs. Minnesota at Comiskey Park was the last by an Iowan for the Sox. Eldred's shutout of the Twins on June 28, 2000 was the last by a Sox pitcher from the Hawkeye State.

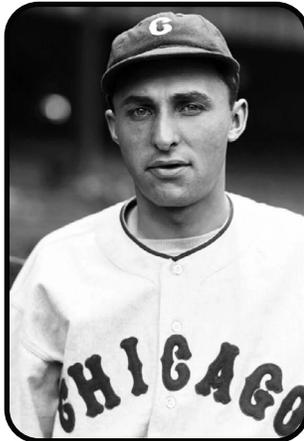
***IOWA WHITEWASHERS:** Eldred, Council Bluffs' Stan Bahnsen (6), Logan's Hal McKain (1), Sumner's Les Tietje (2) and Faber (29) are Iowans who own shutouts for the Sox.

***HOT TIME:** Tietje was the winning pitcher in what could have been the hottest game in White Sox history. With temperatures in Chicago reaching a record 105, the right-hander turned in a complete game in the Sox 4-1 win over Washington at Comiskey Park.

***SECOND SEASON:** The only native of Iowa to appear in the postseason for the Sox was Coon Rapids' Babe Towne. A rookie, Towne flew out to center as a pinch-hitter for Doc White in the bottom of the third in the Sox 7-1 loss to the Cubs in Game Two of the 1906 World Series.

***TRIPLE-A HISTORY:** The Sox Triple-A team was in Des Moines in 1973 and 1974 and from 1976 to 1980. Sparks managed the team in 1973, 1974, 1977 and 1978 and after La Russa in 1979, while Loren Babe was the skipper in 1976. Sox icon Pete Ward began as the Iowa manager in 1980 before being dismissed by the locally-owned team (and not Sox owner Bill Veeck per reports of the day) on June 30. The Oaks were 32-42 and in third place in the America Association East, 14.5-games behind Springfield when Ward was replaced by player-manager Sam Ewing.

***DOWN ON THE FARM:** The Sox last minor league affiliate in Iowa were the Burlington Bees of the Class-A Midwest League in 1999 and 2000. The Sox return to Iowa came on April 10, 1999



when host Burlington lost to Quad Cities, 4-3, before 602 fans at Community Field.

Iowa native Mitch Wylie was Burlington's starting pitcher. The right-hander fired five shutout

frames in commencing his second year of pro ball. Wylie was originally scheduled to start the Bees' second game vs. QC in his hometown of Davenport but was moved up because of a postponement.

"I would have liked to have started ... at home against Quad Cities but I'm sure I'll get my chance sometime," Wylie said in the Quad Cities Times. "This was a pretty good start for me."

Said manager Nick Capra, "I know he wanted to pitch at home but this was opening night, and he was excited about that, too." Quad Cities, a Twins affiliate, got all it needed with a four-run sixth.

While the premiere was a bummer, the season was not. Burlington (71-68 overall) won the Midwest League championship after qualifying for the playoffs by claiming the West Division's second-half title by one game at 40-30. Capra's crew opened the playoffs by taking out Clinton in three games.

In the semifinals, it took some Herculean heroics from Eric Battersby to get the Bees past Kane County. A right-handed hitting outfielder, Battersby clubbed four home runs and drove in six in getting the Bees a 9-6 victory in the final game and a spot in the championship series.

Burlington went on to dispatch Wisconsin in five games for the crown. This was the last championship for a Sox full-season low Class-A affiliate.

***BIG NAME BEE!** The most prominent Burlington Bee was a budding Mark Buehrle. At age 20, Buehrle went 7-4 with a 4.10 ERA in 20 games after signing on May 21.

Buehrle was the Sox 38th round pick (1,139th overall) in the June 1998 draft out of Jefferson (Mo.) Junior College. Under the rules of the day, Buehrle was a "draft-and-follow" where teams could select a high school or junior college player and hold their rights until a week before the next draft. The St. Charles, Mo., native earned a save in his pro debut with two shutout innings on June 8, 1999 vs. Cedar Rapids in Burlington.

MITCH WYLIE		50	
Given Name:	Mitchell Andrew Wylie		
Position:	Pitcher		
Bats:	Right		Throws: Right
Height:	6-3		Weight: 190
Opening Day Age:	25		
Born:	January 14, 1977, Davenport, Iowa		
Resides:	Princeton, Iowa		
First Pro Contract:	White Sox.		
Sox Acquisition:	Selected in the eighth round, June 1998 First-Year Player Draft.		
Major League Service:	None.		
Contract Status:	Signed through 2002.		

FIELD OF DREAMS (CONTINUED)

Buehrle would log two more saves that season. After that, his next and last pro save would come in the White Sox epic Game Three victory in the 2005 World Series.



The lefty's best start came Aug. 2 when he fired a six-hit shutout with 11 strikeouts at Cedar Rapids. Five days later, Buehrle went eight innings for the win vs. Clinton at home. The two outings earned him the Midwest League's Pitcher of the Week Award.

Less than a year after playing for the Bees, Buehrle made his big league debut for the Sox on July 16, 2000.

***BIG LEAGUE BEES:** Other Burlington Bees to advance to the Sox were Lorenzo Barcelo, Matt Ginter, Gary Majewski, Josh Stewart, Dan Wright and Arnie Munoz.

***BURLINGTON FINALE:** The Sox minor stint in the "Hawkeye State" ended on Sept. 3, 2000 when Burlington lost to the West Michigan (Tigers) Whitecaps 7-6 in Burlington. Similar to the Bees' inaugural game, none of the Burlington players in this contest made it to the Majors.

However, one of the stars for the Bees in this one was Chad Durham, whose brother, Ray was playing for the White Sox 243 miles away in Chicago. In a striking coincidence both Durham brothers led off, both went 3-for-5, both scored two runs, both had at least one steal and both had a double. Ray, a second baseman, also had an RBI as the eventual American League Central Division champions outlasted the Angels 13-12 before 22,020 at Comiskey Park. Chad, a center fielder, also had a triple, another steal and an error as the Bees finished 51-88 under manager Jerry Terrell.

Note: Thanks to David Malamut and the Midwest League Archives (@mwarchives) for his assistance here.

***MINOR REPORT:** Other Iowa towns that have hosted Sox farm teams include Clinton, Davenport, Dubuque, and Waterloo.

In 1962, 18-year old Denny McLain, MLB's last 30-game winner (1968), finished his first pro season at the Sox Clinton affiliate of the Class D Midwest League. Playing for manager Ian Hutchinson, like McLain a Chicago native, the right-hander went 4-7 with a 3.56 ERA in 16 games (13 starts) at Clinton. In 91 innings, McLain gave up 92 hits with 93 strikeouts.

His performance in Iowa was just months removed from his days at Chicago's Mt. Carmel High School and a month removed from a two-game stint at low Class D Harlan where he debuted with a 16-strikeout no-hitter. McLain spent some of his time in Clinton exploring the roads between the Midwest League city and Chicago.

According to McLain's SABR biography, "In Clinton he went AWOL on the team several times, costing himself several hundred dollars."

Prior to the next season, the Sox did not elevate McLain to the big league roster, leaving him exposed in a draft of players with one year of minor league service. The Tigers claimed McLain but that wasn't the last time he would toil for a Sox farm team in Iowa.

The two-time Cy Young winner was with the Sox Triple-A Iowa affiliate from April 24 to July 9, 1973 after he was cut by the Braves in spring training. McLain was not on the Sox 40-man roster and wasn't even remotely in their plans.

"As of right now, we have no plans for Denny McLain," Sox manager Chuck Tanner said in the Tribune at the time. "He should draw the people to Des Moines. If he does real well, I'm sure (Iowa) will give us the first opportunity to bring him up."

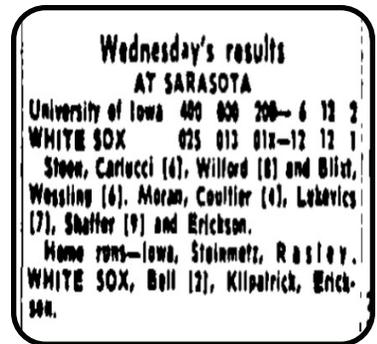
McLain was optioned to Double-A after he went 1-4 with a 7.55 ERA in eight games (four starts) for Iowa, which also employed the likes of Bucky Dent, Steve Swisher, Brian Downing and Goose Gossage that season. McLain went 6-4 for Shreveport (AA) in what turned out to be, at age 28, his last professional stop.

***DRAFT DAY:** The Sox made Larry O'Brien and his 100 mph fastball the highest drafted player out of Iowa in 1971. The Sox used the second overall pick of the now-defunct January draft on the right-handed pitcher out of Indian Hills Community College in Centerville, Iowa.

A native of Nebraska, O'Brien spurned the Sox and returned to school. He was drafted by Montreal the following summer but did not sign. O'Brien finally signed with the Reds after being taken in the second round in 1972. O'Brien pitched until 1974 in the low minors.

He later served as a scout for the White Sox and other clubs and coached at Iowa Western Community College and in the American Legion ranks.

***HAWKEYE BATTLE:** Let it be known that the first opponent in Bill Veeck's second go-round as Sox owner was against ... the University of Iowa! With no union players in camp because of labor issues, the Sox were scrambling for foes to fill their spring home of Payne Park for games against their minor leaguers and non-roster players.



Finally, the Sox found Iowa Hawkeyes who were in Florida for their spring trip and they played the Sox played in a hastily-arranged exhibition game on March 10, 1976 in Sarasota, Fla.

According to the Tribune, the Sox treated this game as their spring opener with "speeches, baton twirlers, a marching band, Harry Caray and yes, believe it or not, the mayor throwing out the first ball." Because of the labor strife, this was the only game in Florida, per the Tribune. The tilt attracted 750 paying customers with tickets going for \$1. The aluminum-bat wielding Hawkeyes scored four in the top of the first off "Bugs" Moran. The Sox rallied for a 12-6 win thanks to two homers and six RBI from Kevin Bell and a homer and four RBI from Cleo Kirkpatrick.

***COLLEGE BOYS:** Iowa Hawkeyes who played for the Sox include Eldred, Gene Ford, and Jack Bruner. ... Iowa State Cyclones who played for the Sox include Mike Myers, Bob Locker and McNertney

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LOU REYNOLDS (CONTINUED)

his baseball career. Lou played around Abingdon and Galesburg, including with the Galesburg Pavers in the Illinois-Iowa League, until making his way to Kewanee. But over the years, he returned regularly to Abingdon to visit his son who lived with Lou's relatives.

Kewanee was founded in 1854 after the Central Military Tract Railroad (soon renamed the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad) bypassed Wethersfield, Illinois, founded 17 years earlier, in favor of a high plain a mile and a half to the north. Within five years, Kewanee's population surpassed 1,500 residents. By the time Lou arrived in Kewanee in the early 1890s, the population had grown to 4,500 residents. It had become the economic engine of Henry County, with major factories such as Haxtun Steam Heater Company, which by that time employed 1,000 workers.

"Base ball" likely was introduced to Kewanee shortly after the village's founding, and certainly the game was being played by the early 1860s as Kewanee's business connections grew with other Illinois cities playing ball, such as Chicago, Bloomington, and Alton. Although the Civil War put a crimp in the development of the game locally as young and middle-aged men answered the call to defend the Union, the war also spurred interest in the game as soldiers — Confederate and Union alike — played base ball to pass the time in the dreary camps in which they lived. So, too, did prisoners play the game for similar reasons — Kewaneean J. S. Miner recalled the game being played even in the infamous Andersonville Confederate prison.

In 1867, the Base Ball Club of Kewanee sent two men to Chicago to help form an Illinois association affiliated with the National Association of Base Ball Players. The Illinois group represented



Top: Lou Reynold (top row, far right) with the Chicago Unions - The Chicago Inter-Ocean, September 2, 1897

Inset: Kewanee Regulars, circa 1903

55 clubs, including the Kewanee club. By 1869, the Kewanee Blue Stockings were the Henry County base ball champions.

There may have been a few black Americans in Henry County prior to the Civil War, but during the war, a number of formerly enslaved persons made their way to Kewanee, generally helped along by military personnel returning to Kewanee during the war. A number of those black Americans subsequently joined the Union army, enlisting and serving in U.S. Army "Colored" regiments.

Many of those black Americans eventually returned to Kewanee and, by 1876, their numbers were hovering around 40 residents, working primarily in the service industries and the larger coal mines north of the city. They lived in and around Kewanee's white citizens. Unlike cities not too far to their south, such as Macomb, which were populated by whites from the southern



LOU REYNOLDS (CONTINUED)

Above: Lou Reynolds (back row, second from right) as an umpire in Kewanee church league game, circa 1910

states who lived with enslavement, Kewanee was founded by Eastern abolitionists who took a strong stance against slavery before the war and a charitable posture toward former slaves after the war. Soon Kewanee's black Americans were participating in civic and other activities in Kewanee, including starting an African Methodist Episcopal congregation (although they had to wait almost a quarter of a century for a church building).

It was in this climate that Lou found himself when he arrived in Kewanee in the early 1890s. The city's black American population was about the same as a decade and a half earlier. His sister Lucinda, her husband Emanuel Bailey, and their family lived in Kewanee. Undoubtedly they encouraged Lou to move further north and into a fast-growing city, and he boarded with them initially upon his arrival. Lou was soon working as a hostler (a groom or stable worker), probably at Guest's wagon shop.

But, according to John P. Brady, Brady was the reason Lou came to Kewanee. Brady was a Kewanee bar owner, sportsman, and all-around raconteur — he claimed that he later had an opportunity in 1912 to buy an interest in the Chicago Cubs but passed on it.

In Brady's story, he was in Galesburg for an Emancipation Day celebration and saw a game between black American clubs from Galesburg and Abingdon. Near the end of the game, Lou smacked "a long one over the fence to break up a pitchers' duel." Brady claimed that he immediately convinced Lou to come to Kewanee to play with Brady's Hibernians baseball team, also known as the Shamrocks.

Lou did so and played regularly with the Shamrocks. Then, in 1896, Lou joined a team managed by John Bannister and backed by a community commitment to keep quality baseball in Kewanee.

Lou's skills soon were noticed by W. S. Peters, owner and manager of the Chicago Unions' professional ball team. The Unions began as a "prairie team" in the early 1880s, but by the middle of the 1890s, Chicago's Inter-Ocean newspaper pronounced that "it stands today as the foremost colored organization of its kind in the world."

During the week, the team toured small towns throughout the Midwest, playing white and black American teams, and then playing Sunday home games in the Windy City at its Union Park grounds at Thirty-Seventh and Butler Streets, just north of the stockyards.

In January 1897, Peters signed Lou, "Kewanee's crack colored first baseman," to captain and play first for his team. The season began in March and stretched into October, before moving indoors. The Unions, deemed the "Colored Champions of the West," played Eastern championship teams over the month of June, including New York's Cuban X-Giants and Cuban Giants. From March to September 23, the Unions barnstormed the Midwest during the week while playing Sundays at its home park for its bigger gate receipts, recording 113 wins against only 16 losses. By the end of the year, the team had played 150 games and lost only 23. Over the 40 games in which Lou appeared with the Unions, he led the team in batting, with an average of over .400.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 -

At season's end, Lou returned to Kewanee where he drove a hack for William Dugger while contemplating his options, which included an offer to play again for the Unions, switch to the Page Fence Giants, the Cuban Giants, the Freeport first nine, or join a new team expected to be organized by Chicago's Seigal - Cooper Company department store (whose New York store, when opened in 1896, was the largest store in the world).

However, in 1898 Lou played local ball again in and around Kewanee. Unfortunately, he had to fend off racial taunts regularly while on the road. But Lou received the support of his teammates and his home town newspaper. As reported in the Kewanee Daily Star Courier, in a game in Cambridge, Illinois, the Henry County county seat, "some young men had the ill breeding to insult Louis Reynolds because he was a colored man. As long as Mr. Reynolds acted the gentleman, which he did, he should have been accorded gentlemanly treatment."

In February 1899, Lou set up a bootblacking chair at the Kewanee House. But later in the year he played ball again in Chicago with the Columbia Giants and the Unions.

After that, Lou played for John Brady's Kewanee Regulars at the new Crystal Lake field adjacent to the new lake, park, and recreational facility Brady had built. When not playing ball, Lou was back at the Kewanee Hotel working as a porter, where he also stayed. In 1902, he then secured a janitorial position at the Washington School.

In April 1903, Lou married Mrs. Emma J. Hamil-ton. Announcing the nuptials, the Kewanee Daily Star Courier noted that "[t]he groom is well known in Kewanee ... and his reputation as a fast baseball player is by no means confined to this locality. He is well thought of here"

From that point on, except for a stint as a driver for Guest Laundry, Lou continued to work as a janitor and steward all over town - in the schools, the Elks Club, and in other organizations. But he still managed to play some ball, always amazing those who saw him with his continued prowess.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Lou and Emma bought a house on O'Dea Street just north of the railroad tracks, where he lived for the rest of his life.

But baseball was Lou's game. He often traveled to other nearby towns to play on other teams, and played with other Kewanee teams. When not playing, he umpired games. And he even began a black American baseball team in Kewanee.

Lou played the game straight. John Brady told a story of a pair of games on the Fourth of July where his team was far too good for the opposition. In the first game, Brady wanted to keep it as even as possible so that the fans would stay for the second game:

"I was playing short, and Lou was on first. I got one and tried to overthrow first. I got it high. He sure went up in the air after that ball and got it. He knew what I had in mind and he hollered for me to get a boy and put on that arm, and then he laughed. I tried it once more and did not make it, and to make matters worse, he had three home runs in that morning game which kept the crowd at home that afternoon."

Even after he stopped playing, Lou followed baseball, including local ball at the city's Northeast Park, arguably the first non-commercial lighted field in the country. He also kept in touch with former Negro League players and friends. For instance, he caught up Jim "Candy" Taylor, manager of the Chicago American Giants, when the American Giants played the Kansas City Monarchs in an exhibition game in Kewanee in 1947.

Lou was involved in civic affairs and organizations around Kewanee. He found time to coach high school football, track, and baseball teams. He was a member of organizations such as the Century Club. He was an active member and a trustee of Kewanee's Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Lou was also the uncle of Kewaneean Walter T. Bailey, (recently honored with a Kewanee Walldog mural in recognition of being the first black American to graduate from the University of Illinois School of Architecture and later an accomplished architect and educator at the Tuskegee Institute).

Even as he grew older, Lou continued to play ball with some of his old Kewanee teammates. He participated in old-timer events to help raise funds and encourage the sport - even in 1944 when he was 72. The year before he died, when interviewed along with Candy Taylor, Lou said that he still liked to be at ball games, "but you know - the old legs ain't what they used to be."

Here's a brief summary of highlights from Lou's early career, as reported in the October 24, 1903, Daily Star Courier:

"During [the last] 17 years of ball playing he has made the remarkable record of batting over .300 for each season. He has played ball in twelve different states and in Canada. He has done some wonderful batting stunts, one of the greatest being in a game between Woodhull and Kewanee. When he got three home runs in one inning, Kewanee winning the game by the score of 28 to 5 Another notable batting feat was in a game against the Chicago Edgars, on Easter Sunday, 1897, in which he got two home runs, one two-base hit, and a single in four times at bat. In another game in 1897, in which the Chicago Unions defeated the Indianapolis Western League team with the famous Jot Goar pitching, he got four hits, winning the game in the ninth inning with a home run."

After Emma died in 1928, Lou married Mamie Wright in 1929. She died in 1945. In April 1948, Lou married Ms. Willie Riggs. In late December 1948, Lou passed away. His only son had preceded him in death a year earlier.

Of Lou's character, John Brady told of an away game where a dinner had been arranged at a hotel when they arrived late afternoon:

"We were all seated and they wouldn't let Lou eat in the dining room, and all the fellows got up and went out, but Lou insisted that they eat there, and they finally went back in and the management of the hotel fixed up a private dining room for Lou in appreciation of what he had done."

Brady, like most Kewaneeans, had the utmost respect for Lou:

"Lou was a wonderful character and I have never seen him mad. While he was always able to take care of himself, he was always for the underdog. I had known him for 60 years, and I had never heard him use an oath or take a drink, and that is something for a fellow that would follow that profession."

When Lou Reynolds died nearly fifty years after his arrival in Kewanee, he was the acknowledged "Grand Old Man of Baseball," Kewanee's "Mister Baseball." Born to enslaved parents, Lou won the respect of the city of Kewanee over his lifetime. It was a respect not just based on the exceptional quality of his baseball skills, but the exceptional quality of Lou as a man.



WHAT'S ON DECK?

VIRTUAL CHAPTER MEETING (ZOOM)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2 - 2 P.M.

Jack Bales & Dan Taylor Book Discussion

Jack Bales, SABR member and author, will discuss his recent publication:

The Chicago Cub Shot For Love: A Showgirl's Crime of Passion and the 1932 World Series

Author Dan Taylor will discuss his new book:

Lights, Camera, Fastball – How the Hollywood Stars Changed Baseball

Zoom details will be available soon via email and on the Chapter's social media outlets.

GO-GO WHITE SOX!

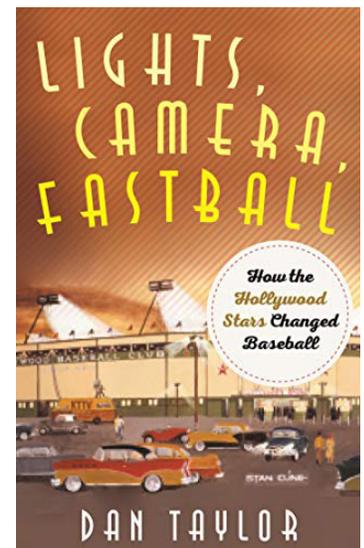
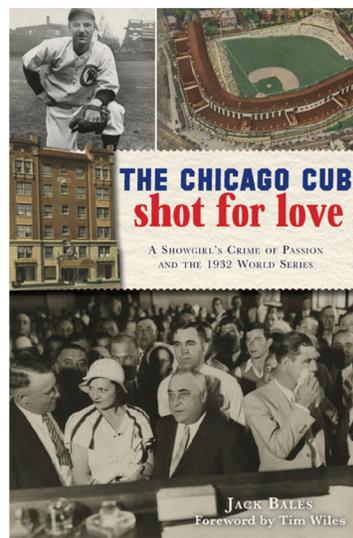
Let us know how far you think the Chicago White Sox will go in the 2021 postseason. ALDS? ALCS? WORLD SERIES?

Send an email to Bill Pearch at wcpearch@comcast.net. We'll share your thoughts in the next newsletter.

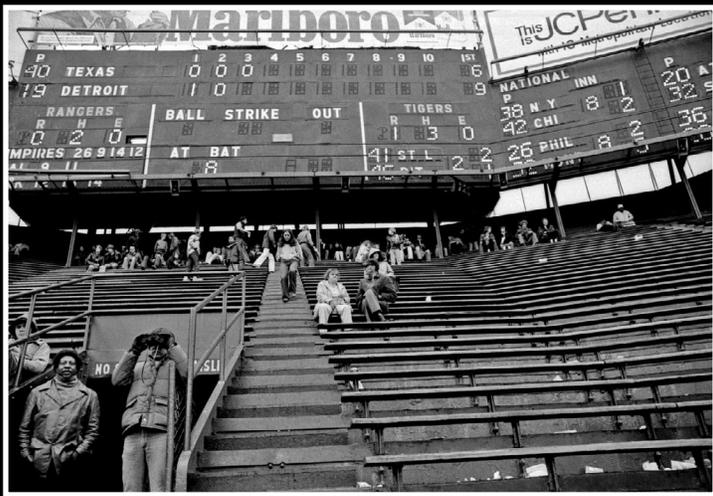


Top: Have a baseball question? You're going to want to ask this group of SABR members. Photo taken at Guaranteed Rate Field on Saturday, August 28, as the Chicago Cubs defeated the Chicago White Sox.

Inset: On Saturday, September 11, Emil Rothe and Ken Keltner Chapter members were treated to a pregame discussion with (left to right) Todd Johnson, Cubs Central photographer; Max Thoma South Bend Cubs announcer; and John Rawson, Beloit Snappers announcer.



SCOREBOARD PUZZLER



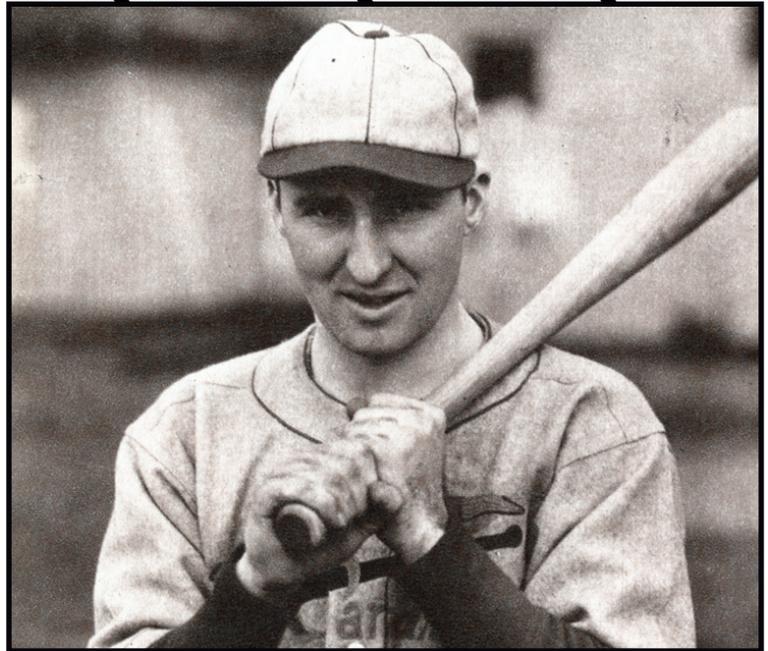
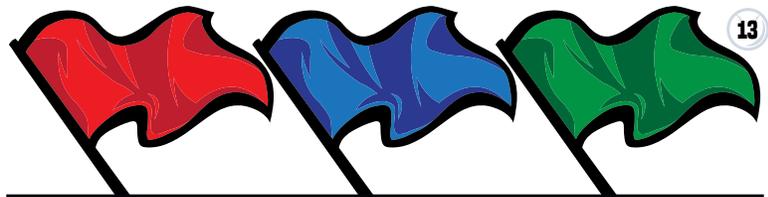
The pennant races are in full swing. Let's test your scoreboard identification skills as the regular season winds down. From the clues in this photo, can you successfully guess the ballpark and the exact date of the game? You may need to zoom in. Some of the clues might be deceiving. Good luck.

Congratulations to the five winners from the July-August 2021 issue. Everyone correctly guessed the date: July 26, 1939 (St. Louis Browns vs. New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium).

- Greg Gits
- Frank Collins
- Bruce Allardice
- Richard Smiley
- Ed Hartig

Do you have a scoreboard photo that will have your fellow chapter members scratching their heads? Send it to Bill Pearch at wpearch@comcast.net. Note that photos are not limited to Chicago ballparks.

*Photo courtesy of
Pinterest*



ZEMAN'S ZINGERS

BY: DAVE ZEMAN

Here's another installment of trivia questions to challenge your knowledge of the game and general history. Fans of *Jeopardy!* will be familiar with before and after categories. For these questions, two answers are combined to make one correct response. Ready? Play ball!

1. 2019 Scarlett Johansson hit / 1922 Pirate who set the record for most AB in a homerless season
2. Terminator target / 2021 Rockie and cancer survivor
3. Robin Hood buddy / .300 hitting rookie for the 1934 Cubs
4. RCA canines / first pick in the 1990 first year player draft
5. Hall of Famer who died on his 68th birthday in 1948 / John le Carre thriller

JULY-AUGUST 2021: HOW DID YOU DO?

1. Only 2-time loser to the Chicago Bulls in the NBA finals / Marlins speedy rookie infielder **Utah Jazz Chisholm**
2. 1977 Cy winner / first husband of Julia Roberts **Sparky Lyle Lovett**
3. Terrorized Whitechapel in 1888 / 1930s power-hitting switch hitter **Jack the Ripper Collins**
4. Umpire with heavenly nickname / frequent Tarantino collaborator **Doug Harvey Keitel**
5. Baseball's top iron man before Gehrig / Erin Moran's TV love **Everett Scott Baio**



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If you get a chance, check out more of Lou's story as found in the Kewanee Public Library's newspaper archives and at the Kewanee Historical Society. You won't be disappointed.

Dean Karau researches and writes about his family history and the history of his hometown of Kewanee, Illinois. A retired intellectual property attorney living in Minnesota, he is the author of **THE HISTORY OF WETHERSFIELD 2.0**, which traces the founding of Wethersfield, Illinois, in 1837 until the building of a railroad led to the founding of Kewanee in 1854. [↻](#)

**VIEW
DEAN'S VIDEO
ABOUT LOU
REYNOLDS**

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2021-2022 NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Chicago's Emil Rothe Chapter is a bimonthly publication. We are always looking for new contributors.

Here is the upcoming production schedule, corresponding deadlines for content, and potential topics for lead stories.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue of our Chapter newsletter, contact Bill Pearch at wcpearch@comcast.net.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

Published: November 7
Content Deadline: October 3

Topics: World Series Recap, Chapter News/Events

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

Published: January 9
Content Deadline: December 12

Topics: 2021 Season Recap, SABR Day Promotion, Chapter News/Events

MARCH-APRIL 2022

Published: March 6
Content Deadline: February 6

Topics: SABR Day Recap, MLB Opening Day, Spring Training Recap, Chapter News/Events

MAY-JUNE 2022

Published: May 1
Content Deadline: April 3

Topics: Minor League Baseball, Independent Leagues, Chapter News/Events

JULY-AUGUST 2022

Published: July 3
Content Deadline: June 5

Topics: Season Status Updates, MLB Trade Deadline, Chapter News/Events

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

Published: September 4
Content Deadline: July 31

Topics: Postseason Preview/Predictions, Chapter News/Events