

KELTNER'S HOT CORNER



Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter

December 2021 In This Issue:

- Upcoming Events
- Keltner Book Korner
- Borchert Field Bonus Chapters
- What's Happening with the Dock-Hounds in Oconomowoc?
- New SABR Membership Offer
- Schabowski Super Stumpers
- Help with Book on Brewers Opening Days
- Vintage Brew

Upcoming Events: Keltner Book Club

Thursday, Dec 9 @ 7 PM (Central)
Our Team with Author Luke Epplin
Register [Here](#)

SABR's Virtual SABR-Day
Thursday Feb 3 @ 7-9 PM (Central)
Details to be announced soon.

Virtual Analytics Conference
March 18-20, 2022
Learn More [Here](#)

**SABR Annual Convention
SABR 50**
Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor
Baltimore, MD
August 17-21, 2022
Learn More [Here](#)

Direct questions or comments to:
Dennis D. Degenhardt
bovine9@icloud.com,
262-339-9968

Upcoming Virtual Events

Keltner Book Korner

Book Club News by Mary Shea

Keltner Book Club Virtual Meeting
*Our Team - The Epic Story of Four Men
and the World Series That Changed Baseball*
by Luke Epplin
Thursday, December 9th, 7:00 PM CT



Hey Keltner Bookworms,

We are excited to announce that the book club is back with a virtual meeting featuring a special guest, Luke Epplin, the author of our next selection, *Our Team - The Epic Story of Four Men and the World Series That Changed Baseball*. It's about the 1948 Cleveland Indians, focusing on their four most remarkable figures: Bill Veeck, Larry Doby, Satchel Paige, and Bob Feller. Epplin does an amazing job of presenting the lives and legacies of each one while developing the storylines that led to the team's last World Series championship.

Also, all those who attend will be eligible for a drawing for a free copy of the book.

Praise for *Our Team*:

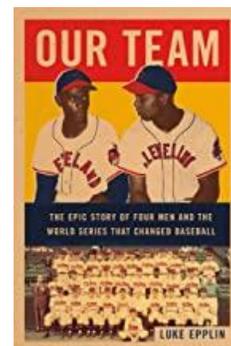
"Oceans of ink have been spilled on Jackie Robinson and the '47 Dodgers. And rightfully so! But the story of Larry Doby and the '48 Indians is just as compelling, and *Our Team*, by Luke Epplin, tells it better than anyone ever has. And if all you know about Major League Baseball's integration is what you've seen in the movies, you know just half the story. This book tells the other half, and brilliantly." - Rob Neyer

You can find out more about the book and how to purchase it from the publisher [here](#). It is also available at [Boswell Books](#) for those in Milwaukee.

Register in advance for this virtual meeting [here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Please contact [Mary Shea](#) with any questions or comments.

I've missed seeing your faces. Hope you can join us! ... Mary



Borchert Field, the Bonus Chapters

By Bob Buege

During the February Keltner Book Club meeting featuring Bob Buege and his awesome book, [Borchert Field Stories from Milwaukee's Legendary Ballpark](#), we learned that 13 chapters were not included in the book. We asked Bob if he would like to place them in the *Hot Corner*; he happily agreed. We'll feature one monthly into 2022. Thanks, Bob!

Fifty Plus

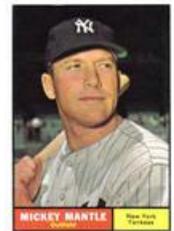
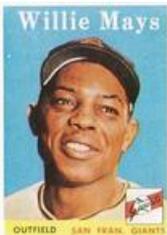
New York Yankees manager [Miller Huggins](#) explained the public's fascination with Babe Ruth as follows: "Nowadays, the American fan likes the fellow who carries the wallop." (That was 90 years ago. In modern times the catch phrase is more succinct: "Chicks dig the long ball.")

The long ball, of course, is measured in home runs. The career record of [Babe Ruth](#) that [Henry Aaron](#) surpassed, which was subsequently (and pharmaceutically) eclipsed by [Barry Bonds](#), was a factor of opportunity, power, and longevity. A better gauge of "the long ball" might be the number of home runs a batter can hit in a season. Certainly any ballplayer who has blasted 50 or more homers in one campaign can reasonably be called a long-ball hitter.

Of all the talented athletes who played major league baseball before Borchert Field was demolished in March 1953, eight achieved the half-century mark in home runs in one season. Not surprisingly, the most popular was the man who invented the home run, Babe Ruth. Four times the great Bambino exceeded the magic number of 50, beginning in 1920 with 54 and peaking at 60 in 1927. Milwaukee fans had three chances, beginning in 1928, to witness The Babe's personal charm and matchless power, twice with a post-season barnstorming team in 1928 and 1931, and once with the entire 1932 Yankee ballclub [see chapter entitled "Bambino Comes to Beertown"].



Two members of the "50 Home Run Club" continued their careers long after Borchert had disappeared. Both [Willie Mays](#) and [Mickey Mantle](#) competed in Borchert in league games of the American Association. Mays played three games there in his penultimate series in the minors before joining the 1951 New York Giants. Mantle had tasted the majors but only briefly before being temporarily demoted to Kansas City [see chapters "Say Hey to Borchert Field" and "The Real M & M Boys"].



In many ways the most intriguing of the prolific sluggers was [Hack Wilson](#). He was destined to establish (in 1930) a pair of National League records, one of which lasted 68 years (56 home runs) and one of which may stand forever (191 RBI's, the major league mark). But even before that, Wilson was one of a kind.

Lewis Robert "Hack" Wilson's body could be described as freakish. He possessed a large head supported by an 18-inch neck. He had a barrel chest, short legs (he stood 5'6" tall), and size 5 1/2 feet. Along with a broad, flat face and a propensity for booze, he bore all the signs of what is currently known as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Small wonder he was dead at age 48.

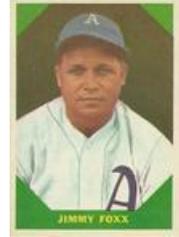
On April 19, 1925, as a New York Giants outfielder, Wilson blasted the longest home run Ebbets Field had ever seen. On July 2 he smashed two home runs in the same inning in Baker Bowl. On August 9, though, hitting just .239, he was sent down to Toledo. Fifteen days later Wilson was in center field for the Mud Hens when they took on the Brewers in a four-game series in Borchert Field.



The teams began by splitting a Tuesday doubleheader, the Mud Hens losing 2-1, then winning, 12-10. Wilson gave Toledo the victory in the nightcap with a two-out, two-run single in the ninth off Ovid McCracken, whose parents must have been passionate about ancient Roman poetry.

The next afternoon Toledo prevailed in 12 innings, 6-5. Wilson beat out an infield hit in the final inning, then stole second with a slide that local sportswriter Red Thisted described as “a baby hippopotamus taking to the water for the first time” (*Milwaukee Sentinel* August 27, 1925). Hack promptly scored the deciding run on a double by Ukulele Pete Nicholson. The Hens also took the series finale, 9-6, with Wilson hitless in three at-bats but demonstrating his fundamental skill by contributing two sacrifice bunts.

One of the all-time sluggers, known affectionately as “The Beast,” was [Jimmie Foxx](#). Borchert Field was still Athletic Park when it received its first glimpse of 16-year-old Foxx in 1924. [Connie Mack’s](#) A’s had signed Foxx less than three months after the husky teenager finished his junior year at Sudlersville (MD) High School. For the rest of the season he traveled with the team and watched the games from the bench. In Milwaukee on September 24 he enjoyed his first game action with the big-league club in an exhibition game against the Brewers. That afternoon he was the catcher for right-hander Dennis Burns. He handled himself well behind the plate except for one passed ball. At bat he went hitless in three trips against veteran [Roy Walker](#).



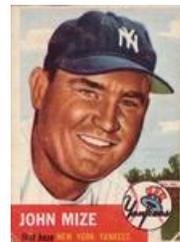
Milwaukee next saw Foxx as a 22-year-old, rising-star first baseman for the Athletics. Exactly four days after helping the A’s win the 1930 World Series by beating the St. Louis Cardinals, Foxx and his Philly teammates [Al Simmons](#) and [George Earnshaw](#) played an exhibition in Borchert. Foxx showed his versatility by catching Earnshaw for three innings, then moving to first base for four innings. To top it off, he pitched scoreless ball in the eighth and ninth innings, striking out two. At the plate he was less than stellar, managing only a single and a bloop double in seven tries.

Nearly a dozen years later The Beast returned to Milwaukee as damaged goods. Formerly robust and intimidating, Foxx had been beamed in an exhibition game in Winnipeg after the 1934 season. He suffered a sinus injury from which he never fully recovered. This came two years after he belted 58 homers and drove in 169 runs while earning his first of three American League MVP awards. He continued to excel on the diamond for six seasons, blasting 50 homers in 1938, but his drinking problem worsened and his health gradually declined. On June 8, 1942, he came to Borchert Field as a member of the Chicago Cubs, one week after suffering the humiliation of being waived by the Red Sox.

Foxx was the proverbial shadow of his former self. His first time up he was fanned by a seldom-used Brewers pitcher named Ray Campbell. His next time he hit a short popup that the second baseman dropped for an error. The fans began getting on Foxx from the grandstand. When he grounded out to short he was heckled furiously by the unsympathetic louts in the seats. He managed a single in his fourth trip, then was retired easily in his last at-bat. Most of the real baseball fans among the chilled crowd (low fifties, with a breeze) who saw the future Hall of Famer probably wished they hadn’t.

[Johnny Mize](#), known as “The Big Cat,” visited Borchert Field as the best-hitting sailor in Uncle Sam’s Navy on July 6, 1943. The powerful Georgia native was a seven-year veteran, the first six of them with the St. Louis Cardinals. He had averaged 109 RBI’s and a .331 batting mark with a peak home run total of 43 in 1940. His big year lay ahead—51 four-baggers in 1947 while striking out just 42 times. No other slugger has fanned fewer than 50 times while blasting 50 or more home runs.

On a warm Tuesday night the Great Lakes Naval Training Station baseball team, all former big leaguers, traveled to Milwaukee to play the Brewers in an exhibition to benefit the naval relief fund. Before the start of the contest the sailors were introduced individually as they ran from the dugout to home plate and lined up along the base line. The two biggest ovations were given to former Brewers southpaw [Johnny Schmitz](#), a Wausau native dubbed “Bear Tracks” because of his huge feet, and to The Big Cat. The teams played to a 10-inning, 1-1 tie. Mize had a forgettable evening, going 0-for-4 against Charley Gassaway (whose name sounds like an anti-flatulence medicine).



Detroit Tigers first sacker [Hank Greenberg](#) tied Foxx's runner-up total behind Babe Ruth with 58 home run blasts in 1938. Greenberg was drafted into the military in 1940, then discharged two days before Pearl Harbor was attacked. He re-enlisted and served 45 months, longer than any other major league ballplayer. As a member of the world champion Tigers, he played a Saturday afternoon exhibition game in Borchert Field on August 10, 1946. Greenberg contributed two singles and a base on balls in the five innings he played as Detroit defeated the Brewers, 6-3.



The final 50-home-run slugger to appear in Borchert Field was [Ralph Kiner](#), a classic good-hit, no-field ballplayer if there ever was one. The large, lumbering Kiner was a natural designated hitter born a quarter-century too early. He led the National League in home runs in each of his first seven seasons, all with the Pittsburgh Pirates. In his sophomore year in the NL he blasted 51 homers; two years later he surpassed that number by three.

On Thursday night, May 24, 1951, the Pirates came to Borchert Field. Former Brewers second baseman "Whistlin" [Danny Murtaugh](#), one of the stars of Milwaukee's Junior World Series champs in 1947, was at second base, Kiner at first. Trying to please the crowd, Kiner swung from the heels in each of his three turns at the plate. All he could do, though, was rip two singles in addition to a harmless popup. After the fifth inning he was pulled, replaced by ex-Brewer (for one game) [Dale Long](#). Pittsburgh's general manager Branch Rickey was in the stands scouting Long. The Brewers gave away six unearned runs and lost to the Pirates, 9-4. However, hundreds of fans left happily with Ralph Kiner's signature.



What's Happening with the DockHounds in Oconomowoc?



We just finished up a calendar contest where fans could submit photos of their dogs. Top 24 were selected and then the public voted for the [top 12](#). Calendar will be available for sale at the end of November.

DockHounds Announcements

The 2022 [Schedule](#) is out. They open their inaugural season on the road, well, maybe down the road in Milwaukee with three games against the Milkmen starting May 13. The DockHounds continue the road trip to Sioux City before returning home to open Wisconsin Brewing Company Park on May 29 for three against the Winnipeg Goldeyes followed by the Kane County Cougars ending their first home stand. The Hounds final home appearance is on August 28 before closing the season in Cleveland on September 4.

Latest Hound News



The Dockhounds finalized their coaching staff adding **Ed Campaniello** who will man the third base box. "Campy" as he is called spent nine years in the Cincinnati Reds organization before entering the coaching arena developing hitting and fielding programs at the national level, hitting coach in the Oakland minors. Read his [link](#) for more information on his career.

The team added their first Wisconsinite, inking Green Bay native, **Connor Bagnieski**. The second baseman played for the Green Bay Bullfrogs in the Northwoods League while attending Radford University and professionally for one year for the Birmingham-Bloomfield Beavers of the United Shores Professional Baseball League where he built a reputation as a spark plug at the top of the batting order and solid defense. Learn more [here](#).



The first trade in franchise history occurred on October 21 when the DockHounds acquired third baseman, **TJ Bennett** from the Chicago Dogs for a



player to be named later. Bennett has minor league experience through Triple A and has played for three team in the American Association where he hit .357 for the Dogs with nine dingers and 40 RBIs in 52 games. “Signing TJ is exactly what the doctor ordered. His humble, veteran presence on the field, in the clubhouse, and in the community is exactly what we need,” said Manager Jim Bennett. “He’s a big bat in the middle of the lineup that has power to all fields. He plays ‘for the love of the game’ and will put a smile on a lot of kids’ faces that interact with him at the ballpark.”

Wisconsin Brewing Company Park Construction Update

Brick by brick Wisconsin Brewing Company Park is coming together right in front of our eyes. Last week, we reached a huge milestone with turf being delivered and installed. Not far away, the building that will be home to a performance center, retail space, batting cages, and much more is progressing towards being fully enclosed so work can begin work on the interior.

Parking lot is 85% done
Walls will be finished by next week
Roof will be on my Christmas
Bowl Fabrication will start week of 12/6

Trish Rasberry

General Manager

[Lake Country DockHounds](#)



Keltner Hot Corner Archives

You can now view or download past copies of the Keltner Hot Corner at: [Ken Keltner Badger State Newsletters](#)

Use of Links

Links in the *Keltner Hot Corner* are used to enhance the articles with the majority going to players SABR [BioProject](#) and [baseball-reference.com](#) as well as other sites.

Who is Ken Keltner? See his SABR [Biography](#).

New Membership Offer from SABR



If you or someone you know have been thinking of joining SABR, now is the time! For a limited time, try SABR with ONE FREE MONTH of membership. If you can't get enough baseball, a monthly SABR membership offers unparalleled access to the game's most important research and histories within a like-minded community of like-minded enthusiasts.

Learn more & join us today: <https://sabr.org/freemonth>



Schabowski's Super Stumpers

By [Rick Schabowski](#)
December 2021 Trivia.

1. In 1989, Robin Yount became the third player in MLB history to win an MVP award at two different positions. Name the previous two and the positions that they played.
2. In 1992, Pat Listach became the first Brewer to win the Rookie of the Year Award. Who was the runner-up?
3. After missing a major portion of the 1986 season, which Brewer was in the 1987 Opening Day lineup as a DH?
4. Hall of Famer Rollie Fingers led the Brewers in saves in 1982, who were the two pitchers who tied for second place with six?
5. Who did Ned Yost replace as the Brewers manager?



Answers on page 7



Help with Book on Brewer Opening Days

Greetings Ken Keltner Chapter! My name is Matthew Prigge and I am currently at work on a book detailing the history of the Milwaukee Brewers via the franchise's 52 (soon to be 53) home openers. The book is set to be published in 2023 by McFarland and Company. I am reaching out to the Keltner Chapter for home opener photos that members have and might be willing to share for the project. I am hoping to include an image from or related to each home opener. Photos of the stadium, game action, even of your tailgate party would all be gladly accepted. Even mementos from home openers - give-aways, promo items, etc - could work. Being a small-run publication, there is no real budget for images, but I would properly credit the work and be very grateful for your help. If you can help out, please contact me at mjprigge@gmail.com.



Member Benefit Spotlight

SABR Gift Memberships

A SABR membership makes a great gift for the baseball fan in your life!

All baseball fans are welcome to join SABR. Gift memberships are \$65/year (with discounts available for Students, Seniors, and Young Professionals), and members receive all the benefits of a standard membership. For a complete list of membership pricing, [see below](#).

If the gift membership you wish to purchase is not a surprise for the recipient, simply complete the sign-up process using the recipient's contact information and your payment information.

[PURCHASE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP](#)

Bring It Home in 2021 and support the future of SABR and baseball research

SABR's 50th year has been a historic one. We have commemorated our history and looked forward to our shared vision of the organization's future. As 2021 comes to a close, we need your support to **BRING IT HOME** and ensure that vision turns into a reality.

You can support SABR's Bring it Home Campaign [by making a gift of at least \\$100](#) by December 31, 2021. We will use your best gift of \$100, \$300, \$500, or \$1,000 to boost initiatives in several key areas of SABR's mission:



- **Research:** continued support for groundbreaking baseball-related research, books, articles, and new member resources
- **Scholarship:** furthering the reach and impact of SABR's world-class committees, chapters, and conferences
- **Preservation:** committing to preserve, honor, and commemorate baseball history
- **Future of the Game:** improving SABR's ability to engage with a younger and more diverse constituency, including high school and college students, through baseball research

Visit SABR.org/donate/2021 to learn more.



Schabowski's Super Stumpers

December Answers:

1. Hank Greenberg (1935, 1940) and Stan Musial (1946, 1948). First base and outfield
2. Kenny Lofton of the Cleveland Indians
3. Billy Joe Robidoux
4. Dwight Bernard and Jim Slaton
5. Jerry Royster on October 29, 2002



The American Association Angle Vintage Brew



"1937" From Bay View, to Borchert Field & Beyond ...Ken Keltner

by Paul Tenpenny

Before "Jolting" a certain New York Yankee back to reality on July 17, 1941... the hometown fans already knew that Kenny Keltner was destined for stardom...

Kenneth Frederick Keltner was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on October 31, 1916. He spent most of his young life with beautiful Lake Michigan as his backyard, in the quiet neighborhood of Bay View.

Young Kenny Keltner attended grade school in his neighborhood at nearby Trowbridge Elementary School and later, Boys Technical High School.



Bay View's Trowbridge School

In the days before television and other modern day distractions, baseball was a very popular activity occupying a young boy's time, all across America.

Ken Keltner was no exception, in fact, he learned early on that he was pretty darned good at it. Soon, playing ball was all he wanted to do, as a result, he gave up on high school to pursue his love of baseball.

Ken Keltner began his sand lot baseball career in 1932 while playing shortstop for the Gerber

Morticians in the Midget League (under 18 years of age). 1933 found the young right hander playing with the Hebein Drugs team. In 1934 his Justright team won the Major A championship, thanks in part to his .413 batting average. In 1935 Keltner advanced to Major AA ball with the Sanders Clothiers, hitting .402 for them. An energized Kenny Keltner could not get enough of baseball and found some spare time to enjoy playing softball on the side.

Like another Milwaukeean, Chet Laabs, who played sand lot ball 3 years prior to Keltner, his hitting ability caught the eye of the ever-present Milwaukee Brewers scouts. The American Association Brewers were always prospecting for hidden treasures at the neighborhood diamonds in those days.

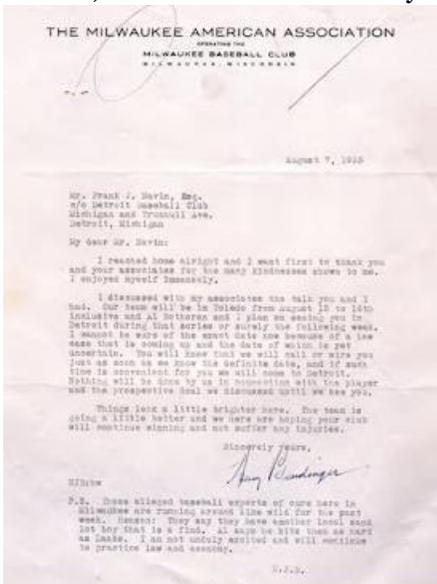
In 1935, Keltner was brought to Borchert field by umpire, Hal O'Brien (Schieffelbein) to meet his friend, Milwaukee Brewers manager Al Sothoron. After watching Kenny play, "Old Fidge" was sold on the youngster. It didn't take too long for Sothoron to convince the youngster to give up softball and to concentrate on his hardball skills, with Milwaukee of course.

A rare glimpse into this world of scouting can be viewed in correspondence dated August 15th, 1935. Milwaukee Brewers President Harry (Heine) Bendinger wrote a letter to the Detroit Tigers' Frank Navin, which included this very interesting post script comment on their latest discovery, Ken Keltner.



Gerber Morticians, Midget League Team, 1932
Left to right, kneeling: George Bunde, second base; Dan Lucci, first base and third base; Kenny Keltner, shortstop; Lee Sanier, right field; John Videgar, second base; Lee Fabian, center field; Tom Failer, center field. Left to right, standing: Larry Kohl, manager; Job Zadkovic, first base; Stanley Nowicki, pitcher; Jiggs Husting, left field; Mr. Schneider, score marker; Eddie Tobaddo, catcher; Bud —, sub

1932 Gerber Morticians
Ken Keltner Front Row 3rd from left
(Sand Lot Baseball - George Reimann)



1935 Milwaukee Brewers Correspondence

Keltner.

"These alleged baseball experts of ours here in Milwaukee are running around like wild for the past week. Reason: They say they have another local sand lot boy that is a find. Al says he hits them as hard as Laabs."

The 6 foot Keltner was signed to a contract by the Milwaukee Brewers and was assigned to play for the Fieldale Towlers of Virginia in 1936, a class D team in the Bi-State League. Fieldale was managed by Joseph Guyon and Richard (Red) Smith. The 19 year old from Bay View, Wisconsin did not disappoint his handlers. He had a spectacular year with the Towlers.

He gathered 175 hits in his 486 at bats while playing in 118 games for the Fieldale team. Keltner's average was .360 with 118 runs batted in. His power as a hitter was evident as he stroked 37 doubles, 17 triples and 32 round trippers for a slugging percentage of .683. He played 3rd base and shortstop and compiled a .943 fielding average. The Milwaukee Brewers wanted a closer look at him for 1937.

Spring Training Begins

Ken Keltner set out for spring training in 1937 to begin workouts in Fieldale. After two weeks there, he was expected to report with the other infielders and outfielders to the Milwaukee Brewers spring training camp in Biloxi Mississippi by March 21st.



Keltner and Brewers Teammates
Wysteri Spring Training in
Biloxi

An eager Ken Keltner surprised everyone by showing up a week early. Brewers Manager Al Sothoron had intended to try out the youngster at 1st base, but after talking with Red Smith, Sothoron soon changed his mind and would use him elsewhere. Besides being a capable 3rd baseman at Fieldale, Smith advised Sothoron:

"Keltner is destined to develop into a greater hitter than Laabs."

Smith was in camp to assist Sothoron during spring training. He managed Fieldale for the Brewers last year and would be managing Hopkinsville of the Kitty League for 1937. Hopkinsville picked up the remnants of the Fieldale team after dissolution of the Bi-State League according to the Sporting News. Smith had an extensive baseball career and was considered a "keen judge of young players."



Spring Training - Keltner Digs
One Out (Authors Collection)

In opening drills, the "Bay View Larruper" was tried out in center field. A bright sun seemed to challenge Keltner that day, but he did well enough for Sothoron to continue the experiment in the outfield. Milwaukee's outfield was questionable this spring for the Brewers, with an injured Jack Kloza hoping to make a comeback. Sothoron planned on giving the 20-year-old a lot of attention and wanted to try him out in several positions while he was in camp. When working out at 3rd base, he moved and fielded the grounders like he had been there all his life.

It didn't take long for him to be noticed. The "promising youngster" was showing "class" at bat and in the field and talk was that he would be challenging holdout veteran Lin Storti for his position at 3rd base.

In his first game of the spring season, Keltner had a good day. At bat he went 1 for 4 with 2 put outs in a 4-3 victory over the 1936 National League title holders, the New York Giants. He had one error due on a bad hop.



Keltner was a very hot prospect and several teams expressed interest in him. Milwaukee considered the offers, but the Brewers needed more than the cash offered, they needed players. They knew Ken Keltner would be worth a lot more if they waited. His being a home-grown boy was also a big plus

and they expected him to boost attendance at Borchert Field.

Manager Sothoron was also practical. He felt that as good as Keltner was, he wasn't going to rush him. If he needed more seasoning, he was ready to send him to the New Orleans Pelicans for the 1937 season. As it turned out, Pelican manager Larry Gilbert was satisfied with his team and he didn't need him.

The Bay View boy would be returning home with the Milwaukee Brewers ball club. Opening day was set for April 16, against the Saint Paul Saints. With outfielder Jack Kloza's rehab not working out and the loss of outfield prospect Tom Henrich to the Yankees (by virtue of [Baseball Commissioner Landis' decision](#)), Ken Keltner would greet his Milwaukee fans as their starting left fielder.

The Season Begins

Even though the Milwaukee Brewers were the reigning American Association champions, most doubted that they would finish in the 1st division. Milwaukee had lost too many of their key players from the 1936 team.



Spring Training - Keltner Fires to First

The Brewers' hitting was weakened by the loss of both Chet Laabs and slugger Rudy York, both of them graduating to the major leagues. "Big and Little Dynamite" had produced most of the Brewers power last year. The Brews suffered heavy losses to their pitching staff too. Gone were Luke Hamlin, Joe Heving and Clyde Hatter, who won a combined 54 games for the AA champions last year. Only Forest "Tot" Pressnell (19-9) remained from last year's starters. The catching corps seemed to be in good hands with veteran Bill Brenzel and Hank Helf who had replaced George Detore.

8,700 Borchert Field fans greeted Ken Keltner and the Milwaukee Brewers on April 16th.

It proved to be a good opening game for both the Brewers and for Keltner, as the left fielder went 2 for 5 with 2 put outs in a 10-5 blow out of the "Apostles."

Milwaukee would go on a early season tear, and leave the rest of the league behind. Ken Keltner would be a big factor for Milwaukee's breakout success in 1937.

Keltner's continued his hard hitting, with 3 base hits on Monday April 19th giving him 6 for 14 at bats in the first 4 games of the young season. He hit a triple to start off the scoring against the Minneapolis Millers, driving in teammate Frenchy Uhalt. The Brewers went on to win 8-7 against the early season favorites.

On May 7th, Gullic and Keltner, the "Home Run Twins" helped Tot Pressnell win against the Indianapolis Indians 5-4. Ted Gullic hit one out of the park and Keltner did him one better by blasting 2 home runs over the left field wall.

Sunday May 9, Milwaukee played a double header against Toledo, winning both ends for their 7th straight league win and the 11th straight home victory (The streak was at 19 games in a row counting last years playoffs). Keltner hit a triple, double and two singles, just the home run shy of the cycle in game one. The Brewers were 15-4 and solidly on top of the American Association.

On May 12th the Brews defeated the Red Birds 6-5 for their 9th in a row, their 13th consecutive at Borchert Field.

The streak finally ran aground at 12 games, with Milwaukee losing the 2nd game of a double header to Indianapolis May 17th.

The Milwaukee Brewers' fans were ecstatic. After the first month of the 1937 campaign, visions of 1936 were dancing in their heads. Hometown hero Ken Keltner was batting at a lofty .360 average. In spite of the preseason doomsayers, the 1937 Brewers seemed to be unstoppable. As of May 21 the first place Milwaukee Brewers had a record of 22-6.

COLUMBIA CREDIT CLOTHIERS	
4 STORES—OPEN EVERY EVENING	
807 W. MITCHELL ST.	7117 W. GREENFIELD AVE.
1207 W. VLIET ST.	2315 N. 3rd ST.
Union Made — CLOTHING ON CREDIT — For the Entire Family	
SCHEDULE	SCHEDULE
BREWERS AT HOME	BREWERS ABROAD
April 16, 17, 18—St. Paul	April 22, 23, 24—St. Paul
April 19, 20, 21—Minneapolis	April 26, 26, 27, 28—Minneapolis
May 3, 4, 5—Louisville	April 29, 30, May 1, 2—Kansas City
May 6, 7, 8—Indianapolis	May 15, 16, 17—Indianapolis
May 9, 10—Toledo	May 18, 19, 20, 21—Louisville
May 11, 12, 13—Columbus	May 22, 23, 24—Columbus
May 20, 20, 21, 21—Kansas City	May 25, 26, 27—Toledo
June 2, 3, 4, 5—Toledo	June 18, 19, 20, 21—Toledo
June 5, 6, 7, 8—Columbus	June 21, 22, 23, 24—Columbus
June 9, 10, 11, 12—Indianapolis	June 25, 25, 27, 27—Louisville
June 13, 14, 15, 16—Louisville	June 28, 29, 30—Indianapolis
July 6, 7, 8, 9—St. Paul	July 1—Indianapolis
July 10, 11, 11, 12, 13—Minneapolis	July 9, 4, 5, 5—Kansas City
July 15, 16, 17, 18—Kansas City	July 19, 20, 21, 22—Minneapolis
July 28, 29, 30, 31—Louisville	July 23, 24, 25, 26, 26—St. Paul
August 1, 2, 3, 4—Indianapolis	August 13, 14, 15—Kansas City
August 5, 6, 7, 8—Toledo	August 17, 18, 19—Louisville
August 9, 10, 11, 12—Columbus	August 20, 21, 22—Indianapolis
September 5, 6, 6—Kansas City	August 23, 24, 25, 26—Toledo
September 7, 8, 9—Minneapolis	August 27, 28, 29—Columbus
September 10, 11, 12, 12—St. Paul	September 31, Sept. 1, 1—St. Paul
	September 2, 3, 4—Minneapolis

1937 Milwaukee Brewers Schedule

Hello? Was that a noise I heard? Something scraping, a ping, no a rattle, maybe a squeak, a disturbing vibration. Did you hear it?

Yes, Milwaukee, the wheels were about to fall off the Brewers victory train and Ken Keltner was about to stumble along with them.

Just as fast as they rose, the Milwaukee Brewers went into a sickening nose dive, a losing streak of 11 straight games. By June 10th, the Milwaukee Brewers had fallen out of first place, a position they had held on to since August 4th, 1936.

MILWAUKEE		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	R	H	P	A
Ser. Bd. No.	Suit No.														
1. Bluege, SS.....	12														
2. Uhalt, C. F.....	21														
3. Keltner, L. F.....	22														
4. Gullic, R. F.....	27														
5. Hoach, 1B.....	30														
6. Storti, 3B.....	14														
7. Brenzel, c.....	28														
Helf, C.....	29														
8. Hope, 2B.....	11														
9.....	P														
PITCHERS															
Blascholder.....	16	Braxton.....	10	Korn.....	15										
Zuber.....	23	Pressnell.....	28	Skilling.....	18										
Johnson.....	21	Wingarnier.....	17	SETTLERSON, Mgr.	26										
Milner.....	31														
UTILITY															

1937 Milwaukee Brewers Scorecard vs St Paul April 1937



Keltner Watches One Soar

But the precipitous drop didn't stop there.

While Ken Keltner saw his batting average fall below the .300 level, the losses kept coming for the Brewers. By the time June 21st rolled around, the Brews were down to 4th place with a record of 29-28.

Where would it end?

The *Milwaukee Journal's* June 26th Box score pleaded: "**SAND THE RAILS!**"

While the Nation was focused on the disappearance of aviator Amelia Earhart, lost somewhere in the Pacific, Milwaukee fans were concerned with their Brewers, who were now lost in the American Association's 2nd division.

Milwaukee crashed into 6th place by the 4th of July, and Keltner's batting average went thump, as it fell below .270!

Falling out of the first division was extremely traumatic for the fans after their Championship year in 1936. The great start this year convinced them that 1937 was going to be more of the same. The upset fans began criticizing the team, knowing that if something wasn't done soon...the season would be over. Management agreed. Having tried many adjustments during the slump, resulting in little success, it was time for a change.

In a major shake up, Friday July 9th, the Brewers gave up on Jim Shilling and Eddie Hope at 2nd base and returned Lin Storti to the keystone sack, where he played part of last season. Ken Keltner was moved to 3rd base. Ted Gullic took over in left field.

The "Sanded Rails" seemed to be working for the Milwaukee Brewers, slowing their descent. The Brews swept Minneapolis Millers in a double header victory at Borchert Field Sunday the July 11th. 8-7 in game one and a 12-2 trouncing in game 2. 3rd baseman Keltner was held 0-4 in game one but came back to hit 3-4 in the second with 3 RBIs.

The Brewers repeated their double header magic against the St. Louis Blues July 18th. Winning a marathon 15 inning game 9-8 on Lin Storti's double. Keltner batting 8 times in game one with a homer and 2 singles.

The 43-44 Brewers had moved up into 5th place.

The *Milwaukee Sentinel's* Red Thisted opined that the season was pretty much lost for the Brewers with 4th place being the highest they could achieve. He advised the Brewers to start looking toward rebuilding their squad for the 1938 season. The Brewers had some cash to spend and needed to bolster the "weak spots." Both Keltner and Pressnell were mentioned as being of interest to the major leagues, but he didn't feel they would garner the Brewers much in cash or players.



Teammates: Eddie Hope,
Ted Gullic, Ken Keltner

After the Saint Paul Saints hammered the Brewers 14-4 in the opener of a 5 game series July 23rd, Milwaukee's double header mastery helped them bounce back again, as the Brews double teamed the "Apostles" 11-7 in the opener and nipping them in the night cap, 6-5. Keltner enjoyed a 6-8 evening in the twin bill.

By August, Milwaukee was turning it around with a maturing Ken Keltner returning to his early season form at the plate. Another double duty victory was had at the expense of the Indianapolis Indians Sunday August 1st at Borchert Field. Ken Keltner belting out 6 hits in 11 at bats, moving his batting average from .306 to .314. Game one was a 19-5 crusher, followed by a 9-1 trouncing. The Brewers were back in the first division again. Kenny Keltner's play was getting noticed around the league.

By April 5th, the young 3rd sacker's batting average was at a .526 pace for his last 14 games. He had raised his 1937 average by 40 points to .315 during his 15 game hitting streak. Sam Levy of the *Milwaukee Journal* touted the "moxey" of young Ken Keltner. In spite of the swarm of major league scouts who were on him constantly, all the attention failed to upset him. Instead of freezing up from the scrutiny he was getting from the "Ivory Hunters," he gave them more "food for thought," by playing a spectacular game on Saturday August 7th.



1937 Milwaukee Brewer Programs

He joined 3 of his Milwaukee teammates to set an American Association record. He led off with the first of what would be 4 home runs in a row. Then teammates Ted Gullic, Hank Helf and Al Milnar followed him with round trippers. Not finished by any means, Keltner took another one out of the park in the eighth inning, defeating the Toledo Mud Hens, 10-8. Milwaukee was now solidly in 4th position with a 57-50 record.

Everyone expected the news.

On Saturday August 28, it was officially announced by Milwaukee Brewers president Harry Bendinger and Secretary Lou Nahin, that 3rd baseman Ken Keltner was sold to the Cleveland Indians for 6 players and an unannounced amount of cash. The deal between the two teams solidified the close relationship between the two teams for another year.

There were other teams who wanted him. The New York Yankees had told Milwaukee to "write their own price tag." The bottom line for Milwaukee was that cash was not what they needed. The New York Yankees were unable to offer as much as the Indians did with needed players.

Fans would be sad to see him go but all would agree that Ken Keltner had earned his trip to the major leagues. After a fine first season with Fieldale, he proved his mettle and importance to the Milwaukee Brewers team by playing wherever he was needed. Not only was he able to fill the bill in left field and replace his Milwaukee sand lot predecessor Chet Laabs, he took over at 3rd base when he was needed to take on that role for his team.

In spite of his early season slump, due in part to a sinus problem, Keltner did not lose heart. After falling off from his meteoric start, he raised his mid-season batting average of .278 back into the .300s in short order. He showed great ability to hit against both right and left handed pitching, a necessary skill if one was to last in the bigs.

Not even "Ken Keltner night" activities on September 8th at Borchert Field deterred the Bay View native from business as usual. The Milwaukee Brews took another double H from the Millers that Wednesday night as the *Bay View* Brewers star collected 2 home runs, a Chrysler and a golf bag for his "Night" of work.

Extra Innings - The Playoffs

The Milwaukee Brewers finished the season with an 80-73 record, a solid 4th place finish, and by virtue of that finish, they made it to the post season playoffs.

Their first opponent would be the tough Toledo Mud Hens opening Tuesday September 14th, in Ohio. The Hens (89-65) were the runner ups in 1937 and throughout the season they handled the Milwaukee 9 pretty easily. Toledo won 14 of the 22 matchups.

The Mud Hens were heavy favorites to defeat the Brews. The *Milwaukee Journal's* R.G. Lynch, while aware of Milwaukee's strengths and weaknesses, was cautiously optimistic:

"The Brewers ... may prove unexpectedly tough in the playoff series."

This proved to be prophetic.

Behind Tot Pressnell's "Dizzy Liz" (knuckleball), and a timely home run in the 7th inning by Bernard Bartholomew "Frenchy" Uhalt, the Brewers took game one 5-4.



1937 Radio Appreciation Night Team Photo

Toledo evened up the series, one apiece, with a 6-5 squeaker in 10 innings in game two. Milwaukee took a one run lead into the bottom of the inning, but Toledo's Babe Herman ended it with a 2 run shot off of pitcher George Blaeholder. Ken Keltner, who was held hitless in game one, stroked a Texas League double in the first frame and scored on a Lin Storti single. In the top of the 10th, Keltner reached on an error. He later scored on Mickey Heath's second triple of the game. But the tide turned quickly in the bottom half. Keltner's low throw allowed a runner on base and up stepped the "Babe" to end it in victory for the Mud Hens.

Game 3 was all Brewers, as manager Al Sothoron's surprise start of rookie pitcher Allan Johnson worked like a charm. Milwaukee defeated the Mud Hens 11-4. Ken Keltner contributed with a 2 for 5 day with two RBI's. Next stop, Borchert field.

In Game 4, Bill Zuber and Ralph Winegarner combined to pitch a 6 hitter as Milwaukee defeated Toledo 15-6, taking a commanding lead in the playoff series 3 game to 1. Keltner chipped in with 3 put outs on a single and an RBI.

Game 5 was a slugfest with Toledo coming out on top 11-10. The two teams combined for 35 hits in the 11 inning game. The Brewers sealed the Mudhens' fate in Game six with a 12-3 blowout. Jeff Heath and Ken Keltner were major contributors in the clincher with 3 hits apiece.

In round one of the playoffs against Toledo, Keltner performed well. His combined statistics showed that he hit safely 8 times out of 28 at bats for a .286 batting average. He had 2 doubles, 1 home run and drove in 7 runs. In the field he had one error and 8 put outs for a fielding average of .947.

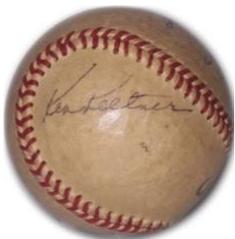


Ken Keltner Personal Model Bat

The Brewers next opponent would be the American Association champions, the Columbus Red Birds (90-64) who defeated the Minneapolis Millers in the other semi-final.

Monday September 20th was a rest day for Milwaukee. Like in the previous round, the Brewers would be on the road to open the series in Ohio.

Game 1 went to the Red Birds by a score of 7-3. The Brewers bats were virtually silent with only 3 hits for the loss. A double by Jeff Heath, followed by home runs by Lin Storti and Ted Gullic put the otherwise anemic Brews on the board. Only one batter got on base the last 6 innings off of Columbus pitcher Mort Cooper.



Ken Keltner Signed Baseball

Game 2 wasn't much better for the Brewers as they got shut down again in a 5 hitter 3-2.

With their backs against the wall and trying to salvage a win in Columbus, Game 3 was all Milwaukee pitcher Ralph Winegarner. The Brewers right hander had a no hitter going into the final inning. He finished the game with a 2 hit 3-0 shutout.

Ralph even broke the deadlocked game open in the 8th inning by launching a lead off home run himself. They scored two more insurance runs in the inning. One of them was a line drive home run by Ken Keltner, a 375 foot line drive over the left field bleachers. Keltner who was hitless in the series, went 2-4 for the day.

The series mercifully moved to Milwaukee Saturday, September 24th, but lack of hitting again was the curse for the Borchert Brewers who lost the game 2-0. The Red Birds pitcher, Max Macon scattered the 6 Milwaukee hits in the shut out. The Brewers were facing elimination as they were down 3 games to 1 in the series.



Rare Tin 1937 Team Photo

Expecting an easy kill in Game 5, the Columbus team heckled the Brewers before the contest with "We've got our railroad tickets for Newark," boasts, a reference to the upcoming Little World Series which would go to the victor.

As always, it is NOT a good thing for a team to publicly belittle an opponent. Milwaukee was no exception, as the angry Brewers won the game.

Mickey Heath knocked the wind out of the Columbus sails with an 8th inning blast over the right field fence. The "dissed" Brewers plucked the Birds, 6-5, tightening the race, 2 games to 3.

The better team won according to Brewers skipper Al Sothoron, and the Columbus "flock" flew off victoriously after beating the Brewers 10-4 in game 6. The triumphant and "cocky" Red Birds went on to lose the Little World Series to Newark, 4 games to 3.

The Milwaukee Brewers seemed to have run out of steam in their series with the Columbus Red Birds. As a team, their hitting failed to materialize. A paltry .213 batting average clearly showed the reason for failure. The Red Birds by comparison hit .283.

By contrast, the Brewers team hit for a .319 average against the Toledo Mud Hens.

While the Brewers could not repeat their success of 1936, they showed guts and a fighting spirit. They could have panicked and lost it all when the wheels were threatening to fall off after a great start. The team showed its character by hanging in there and finishing well.



Rookie Keltner 1938
Press Photo

Young Ken Keltner exemplified this hanging tough. After an explosive start, he had to deal with a slump, partially caused by a sinus problem and probably just part of his maturing into a ball player. He did not quit. He was poised and unflappable and he would soon show his ability and "Moxie" at the major league level in 1938.

Ken Keltner finished 1937 with a batting average of .310, with 170 hits in 549 at bats in the 142 games he played. He had 26 doubles, 5 triples and 27 home runs and 96 RBI's.

He did lead the American Association with 92 strike outs in 1937. Not too bad for the 20 year old when one compares him to 2002 All Star Jose Hernandez of the "major league" Milwaukee Brewers.

Jose benched himself rather than risking embarrassment, as he was near setting an all-time record for whiffs that year. In spite of his "benching" Jose still had 188 fans in 525 at bats for his 152 games played for the Major League Milwaukee Brewers.

Ken Keltner spent 13* years in the major leagues from 1937-1950. All but 1950 was spent with the Cleveland Indians. (*He had a single at bat with Cleveland in 1937)

From the beginning, any worries that the 21 year old Keltner would not be ready for prime time in the majors was quickly put to rest. The rookie put together a stellar first season as one of the best of the league's new faces in the game. He hit .276 with 26 homers and 113 runs batted in for his first year with the team.

Ken Keltner became one of the best 3rd basemen in baseball. He was an exceptional fielder as well as being a dangerous hitter. Many still argue that the 7-time All Star belongs in the baseball Hall of



Keltner Boston

Fame. He was an important part of the Cleveland Indians team throughout the 1940s. His contributions were crucial in Cleveland's drive to the World Series in 1948.

In his 13 seasons in the majors, Ken Keltner had a batting average of .276. He had 1570 base hits, 308 doubles, 69 triples, 163 home runs and 853 runs batted in. Defensively he had a career fielding average of .947.

The Cleveland Indians released Ken Keltner on April 18, 1950 and he was signed as a free agent by the Boston Red Sox. Keltner's play was limited to just 13 games while with the Sox. Boston released him June 6th the same year.

He wrapped up his baseball career with the Pacific Coast League's Sacramento Solons in 1951.

"July 17, 1941"

Much has been written about the day "The Streak" ended and Ken Keltner's role in ending it. Instead of adding my version to the many already out there, I think it is sufficient to let those who were there speak about it. Suffice it to say, the streak ended with the



Ken Keltner Signed Exhibit Card

New York Yankees outfielder failing to get a hit in his 4 times at bat that day. Two of the outs were handled by the Cleveland Indians' 3rd baseman, Ken Keltner.

Hall of Famer and Cleveland Indians 2nd baseman, Lou Boudreau also accounted for one of DiMaggio's outs that day:

"In the first inning, DiMaggio pulled a low inside curve down the line at 3rd that Keltner backhanded and, with his strong arm, nipped Joe at first by half a step. Then in the seventh, when the Yankees went ahead 2-1, DiMaggio did it again and so did Keltner. Joe hit another shot down the line. Keltner backhanded the ball behind the bag, just as he did in the first inning, and again his throw to first was on the mark and in time. He was a real professional, one of the best third basemen, I've ever seen and, in my opinion, one who also belongs in the Hall of Fame."

One of baseball's finest pitchers, Hall of Famer "Rapid" Robert Feller has high praise for his teammate:

"Keltner was simply the best in the American League. He could go to his right better than anyone and had a great great arm. Ken Keltner ... stopped Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak at 56 consecutive games with two of the greatest stops anyone ever saw. But Kenny did a lot more in 13 years as one of the best players in the American League, and one of the best teammates a guy could ask for."



Goudey R 303 Premium & Signed Joe DiMaggio Photo

John Sturm played first base for the 1941 New York Yankees:

"I knew Keltner when he was with Milwaukee. He had a terrific arm and he was a helluva good fielder. He was a great big league ball player, that Keltner."

Joe DiMaggio - New York Yankees:

"One of the best in the business at protecting the foul line is

Ken Keltner. He can backhand a ball hit down the line as skillfully as any third baseman I have ever seen. In fact, I have a particular reason to remember Ken because when my hitting streak of fifty-six straight games was broken in a night game in Cleveland in 1941, he made two stops on balls I hit over the bag which I thought were sure two-baggers when they left the bat."

In his book *Streak*, Michael Seidel relates to us Keltner's point of view. When asking Keltner about why he positioned himself the way he did against DiMaggio, Seidel explains:

"...he figured that to get an extra step's worth of time because of the damp field; he also wanted to hold any hit that got past him to a single. He wasn't thinking about DiMaggio's streak but about the Indians attempt ... to challenge the Yankees ... in the pennant race. After the game, Keltner was not happy about losing and snapped at the reporters **"that DiMaggio hit 'em and he caught 'em."**



Ken Keltner At the Plate

When asked about which ball was the toughest to handle, Keltner told Seidel:

"They were pretty much in the same place, the throws were more difficult than the stops, and the throws were identical. I had to put something on them, and the plays at first were both very close."

On the 50th anniversary of the hitting streak, a bronze statue was unveiled at National Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Ken Keltner was brought in from a convalescent home in Wisconsin for the ceremony. Spotting Keltner, DiMaggio asked:

"What the hell is he doing here?"

Keltner, with cane in hand, approached Joe and shook hands. "You know, Kenny, you were lucky it rained that morning, you never would have stopped those balls."

Keltner had to be smiling as he hobbled away..



Ken Keltner Pennant
American Nut & Chocolate Company

In a SABR Chapter meeting on March 6, 2002, Ken Keltner's eldest son Randy was asked if his dad was tired of hearing about the DiMaggio streak? Randy said: *"He loved it!"*

On December 12, 1991, Milwaukee's 7 time All Star Kenneth Frederick Keltner passed away.

In 1999 the baseball diamond in Humboldt Park where Keltner had played as a youth, was renamed Ken Keltner Field, according to author James Nitz in his Society for American Baseball Research biography on Ken Keltner.

Like Jim Nitz, I am very proud to be a member of the Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter of SABR that bears his name.



Humboldt Park, Facing South Pine Ave.
(Near Keltner's Residence in Bay View)



Ken Keltner Field - Humboldt Park

Tencentz@aol.com
Copyright 2010/2021 Tencentzports
Printed with permission of the Author