

TNP

Welcome to baseball's past, as vigorous, discordant, and fascinating as that of the nation whose pastime is celebrated in these pages. And to those who were with us for TNP's debut last fall, welcome back. A good many of you, we suspect, were introduced to the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) with that issue, inasmuch as the membership of the organization leapt from 1600 when this column was penned last year to 4400 today. If you are not already one of our merry band of baseball buffs, we hope you will consider joining. Details about SABR membership and other Society publications are on the inside back cover.

What's new this time around? New writers, for one (excepting John Holway and Don Nelson, who make triumphant return appearances). Among this year's crop is that most prolific of authors, Anon., who hereby goes under the *nom de plume* of "Dr. Starkey"; his "Ballad of Old Bill Williams" is a narrative folk epic meriting comparison to "Casey at the Bat." No less worthy of attention is this year's major article, "Out at Home," an examination of how the color line was drawn in baseball in 1887, and its painful consequences for the black players then active in Organized Baseball. Its author, Jerry Malloy, is quite real though, in publishing circles until now, as unknown as old Anon.

Also new with this issue—and most welcome—is a far-flung staff of editorial and design associates, listed at the right. Gentlemen, thank you. And copious thanks go to Dean Coughenour, who again shepherded TNP to your mailbox with extraordinary wisdom, care, and patience. Thanks as well to National Baseball Hall of Fame Librarian Tom Heitz, and photographers Mike Saporito and Joseph Levy, who photographed the work of art which adorns our covers.

Which brings us to something else that is new: Mark Rucker's "The Seamless Web," a stadium and twenty all-time greats painted in gouache. These are not Mark's nominations for the game's best players, nor the editor's—simply twenty picturesque, important men who span the game's history from 1860 to 1983. Wider distribution of his unique vision is being planned, ranging from a poster to full-dress stadium replicas, peopled by all-timers from each club. Inquiries may be addressed to TNP.

And, for the last of the new—the charm of which is age itself—your attention is called to the Gallery section on pages 39-47, which consists of photos taken from the personal scrapbook of Joe Wood. The marvel of the 1912 Red Sox, just turned 94, Mr. Wood graciously granted TNP permission to reproduce these vintage views documenting his notable life in baseball. TNP readers have the opportunity to obtain any of the photos in the Gallery from: Big 3 Sports, Dept. P, 63 Arch St., Keene, NH 03431. Glossy prints may be purchased for \$10 (8x10) or \$15 (11x14), less 15 percent to SABR members. Add \$1.75 postage and handling for 1-6 prints (8x10), or \$2.50 (11x14); \$3.00 p&h for 7-20 prints (8x10) or \$4.00 (11x14). Order by page number in this issue and page position (40, top; 46, bottom, right; etc.).

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STATISTICS

The Best Fielders of the Century

BILL DEANE

WHO ARE THE BEST fielders of all time, at each position? How can we compare a Bill Dickey with a Bill Freehan, a Bobby Doerr with a Bobby Grich, an Amos Strunk with an Amos Otis?

With these age-old riddles in mind, I closeted myself in a room with *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, a pocket calculator, and a pad of notebook paper to find a solution. The result is a statistic I call Relative Fielding Average (RFA), which places an individual's fielding percentage in the context of his particular era, thus permitting meaningful cross-era comparison.

Currently, there are two principal ratings of defensive performance: fielding average and total chances per game. Each has strengths and weaknesses.

Total chances per game (TC/G) is particularly effective in stating the total defensive contribution of shortstops, second basemen, and third basemen. It tells us, for example, that throughout his career the Cardinals' million-dollar shortstop, Ozzie Smith, has consistently averaged about one more chance per game than Larry Bowa of the Cubs. Al-

though Bowa posts outstanding fielding averages, he may not be as valuable as "The Wizard of Oz."

The TC/G method is not as useful in rating outfielders, since the stats of left, center, and right fielders are ordinarily lumped together. Furthermore, TC/G has virtually no use in appraising first basemen or catchers.

A look at the record books shows us that almost all of the lifetime leaders in TC/G, at each infield and outfield position, are oldtimers, with names like Tom Jones, Fred Pfeffer, and Jerry Denny. For catchers, however, just the reverse is true: almost all of the leaders are modern players. The obvious reason for this state of affairs is that in a power-pitcher, home run-swing era there are far more strikeouts—thus more putouts for catchers and fewer chances per game for other fielders.

Besides being of limited use in cross-position and cross-era comparisons, TC/G is still a foreign statistic to the average baseball fan. Fielding average (FA) is the most comprehensive and widely used defensive statistic. It measures, roughly, a player's success ratio in negotiating plays he should make with ordinary effort. As we know, because "ordi-

nary effort" varies from player to player, FA can be a deceptive statistic: an agile, aggressive player may make an error on a ball a less mobile player would not reach or even try for. This may help explain, for example, why such outfielders as Willie Mays and Roberto Clemente never won a fielding average title but Greg Luzinski did.

Over a period of time, however, we will usually find that the players considered the most dominant at their positions consistently emerge among the fielding average leaders. It is not coincidence when a Brooks Robinson wins eleven FA titles, or Luis Aparicio eight. So, despite its flaws, FA is still the most useful statistic we have for measuring defensive performance at all positions, and the most practical one to apply toward a project of this kind.

Cross-era comparison would appear to be a stumbling block with FA as well. In the first decade of this century, the average league leaders in FA at second base, shortstop, and third base had marks of .966, .946, and .946, respectively. By the 1970s, those figures were up to .989, .985, and .975. While overall batting and pitching performances have fluctuated with the times, only fielding average can claim a constant statistical improvement (although FA has been at a virtual plateau for 40 years). There are three basic reasons for this phenomenon: better athletes, better field conditions, and, especially, better equipment. The microscopic fielder's mitts in use at the turn of the century were barely apt for keeping a hand warm, let alone snaring a vicious line drive.

How, then, to equate the FA of yesteryear with that of the present time? First, we have to determine how well a player stacks up against players of his own era. To compare against the average performances of an era tends to favor stars of lower levels of competition. In 1910, for

BILL DEANE is a freelance writer with a lifetime RFA of .0000.

example, Terry Turner's .973 FA was over 4 percent higher than the .935 average of American League regular shortstops; to exceed 1982's .969 league average by 4 percent, an A.L. shortstop would have needed an impossible 1.007 FA. A better method is to compare against the *best* performances of an era.

Borrowing a concept from Merritt Clifton's *Relative Baseball*, a cross-era batting and pitching study, we'll assume that "the player who tops all others in any given department for all practical purposes does the very best anyone possibly could under that year's conditions, and his performance thus can be considered 'perfect,' the top end of the scale."

Applying this to fielding averages, the player with the highest FA in a season, at a position, has achieved "statistical perfection," or an effective Relative Fielding Average (RFA) of 1.000. We can calculate how close the other league players approach "perfection" by dividing their respective FA's by the league leader's.

Over a player's career, RFA works in the same way: his career FA divided by the average league-leading FA at his position during his career. Theoretically, the all-time best fielders at each position, regardless of era, will be those with RFA's closest to 1.000.

Only seasons in which a player had a significant number of games (50 or more at a position) are considered in computing the RFA. Players must have at least 1000 total games at a position during the computed seasons to qualify for the lifetime RFA leaders' list. The generally accepted date of the beginning of the "modern era," 1900, was chosen as the cutoff point for candidates.

In the course of the mammoth project, several trends developed. Although there is a pretty fair sampling of players from each era among the RFA leaders, the majority are "recent" players—i.e., of the last forty years or so. The probable reason for this is that there is a higher level of competition today—and this was especially

TABLE 1
Average League-Leading Fielding Averages,
by Decade and Position, 1900-79

DECADE	1B	2B	SS	3B	OF	C
1900s	.990	.966	.946	.946	.982	.982
1910s	.993	.972	.958	.960	.985	.984
1920s	.995	.976	.964	.969	.987	.988
1930s	.995	.979	.966	.968	.991	.992
1940s	.995	.982	.973	.968	.994	.992
1950s	.994	.987	.976	.969	.994	.995
1960s	.996	.987	.977	.971	.996	.996
1970s	.996	.989	.985	.975	.996	.995

true in the postwar, pre-expansion era (1946-60)—than in the earlier part of the century; thus, there are annually more players very close to the league leaders, our "statistical perfection" representatives.

If we define professional baseball candidates as "U.S. males age 20-39" and the number of major league players at a given time as 25 times the number of teams, we can plot the level of competition trends throughout baseball history. In 1901, about 3.2 men out of every 100,000 candidates were in the majors; by 1983, that figure was only 1.7 out of 100,000, having reached a low of 1.4 in 1960. In effect, then, it is nearly twice as difficult to make the big leagues today as in 1901—contrary to the popular impression—indicating there is a much higher level of competition. This doesn't even take into account that in the old days many qualified players were not allowed or could not afford to play ball.

The leaders in RFA at the various positions did not have comparable marks as I had hoped; first basemen had, overall, the highest RFA's, while outfielders had the lowest.

Table 2, at the end of this essay, shows the all-time top five players in RFA at each position.

First Base: Little-known Dan McGann, a turn-of-the-century glove wizard, leads all first-sackers with a near-perfect .9993 RFA. He is followed by Wes Parker (.9992) and Steve Garvey (.9991) who, along with Gil Hodges, give the Dodgers the dis-

inction of having had three of the greatest defensive first basemen in baseball history. Joe Adcock (.9991) and Vic Power (.9990) round out the top five.

Second Base: Frankie Frisch comes nearest perfection at the keystone base with a brilliant .9995 mark. He's followed by Hughie Critz (.9976), Eddie Collins (.9970), Red Schoendienst (.9970), and Bobby Doerr (.9968), who barely edged out Nellie Fox. Collins won nine fielding titles over three decades. Current star Bobby Grich ranks tenth.

Shortstop: Lou Boudreau attained the seemingly impossible with an RFA of higher than 1.000—to be exact, 1.0009. Boudreau led American League shortstops in FA in each of the eight seasons he played in the required 100 games. Additionally, Lou had five seasons in which he played between 50 and 99 games at short, in three of which his FA exceeded that of the league leader. This explains the over-1.000 anomaly which, while it points out a basic weakness of the RFA method, also illustrates Boudreau's superiority at shortstop during his era. Not gifted with exceptional range, Lou more than compensated with his instinct, smartness, and dexterity. Other high finishers at this position include Everett Scott (.9987), Eddie Miller (.9975), Leo Durocher (.9964), and Larry Bowa (.9960). Boudreau and Scott, like Luis Aparicio, each won eight fielding titles.

Third Base: Brooks Robinson re-

affirmed his position as the best third baseman the game has ever seen, racking up a pace-setting .9968. Robby's eleven fielding titles and sixteen Gold Glove Awards are unsurpassed by any player at any position. Backing up the "Human Vacuum Cleaner" (if he needs it) are Jim Davenport (.9967), who once played 97 consecutive errorless games at the hot corner; Heinie Groh (.9965), whose .983 FA in 1924 is, incredibly, still a National League record; George Kell (.9956), whose combined defensive and offensive excellence (seven fielding titles, nine .300 seasons) at last brought him into the Hall of Fame; and Pinky Whitney (.9950), who battled out Ken Reitz, Willie Kamm, and Willie Jones for the fifth spot.

Outfield: Pete Rose is not usually noted for his defensive play, but perhaps he should be. An All-Star at each of five positions (left and right field, first, second, and third base), Rose has won fielding titles at four of these (nobody else has won at more than two). Cincinnati fans will remember his Gold Glove, nearly flawless play in the outfield between 1967 and 1974, where he made just 20 errors in 8 full seasons. Rose made up in sure-handedness, aggressiveness, and defensive alertness what he may have lacked in speed or throwing strength. Among outfielders, he stands atop the all-time lists in both FA (.992) and RFA (.9964).

In second place is old-time fly-chaser Amos Strunk (.9959), whose five fielding titles are two more than any other outfielder in history. Defensive stars Jimmy Piersall (.9951), Tommy Holmes (.9948), and Gene Woodling (.9944) are next, with Jim Landis, Mickey Stanley, Amos Otis, Jim Busby, and Joe Rudi close behind. Holmes' fourth place ranking is unusual in that he never won a title.

The outfielders popularly considered the best in history—Speaker, DiMaggio, Mays, et. al.—do not even approach the leaders list. Does their absence make a mockery of the RFA method? Or is it possible that the offensive prowess, natural grace, and

dramatic flair of these players overshadowed the performances of the other defensive stars of their times?

Catcher: All-time great Bill Dickey leads the field in the closest race of any position. Dickey's .9970 tops the RFA's of modern maskmen Bill Freehan (.99691) and Jim Sundberg (.99687). Johnny Edwards (.9966) and Sherm Lollar (.9960) complete the list. Sundberg joins first baseman Garvey, shortstop Bowa, and former outfielder Rose as the only active players on the RFA leaders' list.

Of the thirty players on this list, seven are Hall of Famers (counting Rose as a certain future member). Interestingly, five of these seven are the all-time RFA leaders at their respective positions: Frisch (2B), Boudreau (SS), Robinson (3B), Rose (OF), and Dickey (C). Eddie Collins and George Kell are the other Coopers-town occupants on the chart.

As I presumed all along, the RFA method is not foolproof; it is merely a first step toward effective cross-era comparison of fielders.

TABLE 2

Relative Fielding Average Leaders

POS.	PLAYER	YEARS	G	FA	RFA
1B	Dan McGann	1900-08	1094	.9894	.9993
	Wes Parker	1965-72	1077	.9959	.9992
	Steve Garvey	1973-82	1468	.9957	.9991
	Joe Adcock	1953-66	1460	.9941	.9991
	Vic Power	1955-65	1283	.9943	.9990
2B	Frankie Frisch	1921-36	1687	.9741	.9995
	Hughie Critz	1924-35	1453	.9738	.9976
	Eddie Collins	1909-27	2600	.9706	.9970
	Red Schoendienst	1946-60	1776	.9834	.9970
	Bobby Doerr	1938-51	1805	.9804	.9968
SS	Lou Boudreau	1939-51	1538	.9725	1.0009
	Everett Scott	1914-24	1552	.9655	.9987
	Eddie Miller	1939-50	1362	.9726	.9975
	Leo Durocher	1929-40	1462	.9613	.9964
	Larry Bowa	1970-82	1870	.9802	.9960
3B	Brooks Robinson	1958-76	2788	.9715	.9968
	Jim Davenport	1958-69	1004	.9650	.9967
	Heinie Groh	1915-24	1256	.9677	.9965
	George Kell	1944-57	1691	.9686	.9956
	Pinky Whitney	1928-38	1392	.9614	.9950
OF	Pete Rose	1967-74	1220	.9921	.9964
	Amos Strunk	1911-22	1282	.9813	.9959
	Jimmy Piersall	1953-66	1467	.9898	.9951
	Tommy Holmes	1942-50	1222	.9889	.9948
	Gene Woodling	1949-61	1427	.9892	.9944
C	Bill Dickey	1929-43	1663	.9881	.9970
	Bill Freehan	1963-76	1578	.9933	.9969
	Jim Sundberg	1974-82	1255	.9919	.9969
	Johnny Edwards	1961-73	1360	.9916	.9966
	Sherm Lollar	1949-62	1505	.9918	.9960

YEARS = Refer to years in which player appeared in 50 or more games, in one league, at particular position; subsequent statistics (G, FA, RFA) are for those corresponding years only.

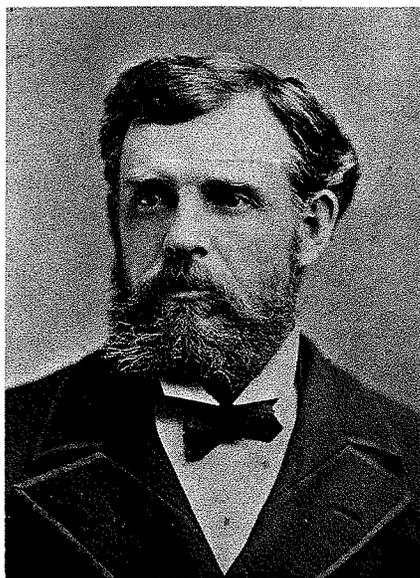
G = Games played; minimum 1000 games played in rated seasons.

Averages carried out as many decimal points as necessary to break ties. Most statistics based upon those in *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (Macmillan); remaining stats provided by Ev Cope and Pete Palmer, mostly from Spalding annual guides.

19th CENTURY

The Day the Reds Lost

GEORGE BULKLEY



Harry Wright

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 1870, was fair and warm in New York City. The mercury on this pleasant day climbed slowly and steadily until the thermometer at Hudnut's popular pharmacy at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street registered 86 degrees at 3 P.M.

Up the Hudson a few miles, at West Point, relatives and friends of the 1870 Class were grateful that the planning committee, in arranging for tomorrow's graduation ceremony,

had selected a shady, grassy plot rather than the customary treeless parade ground. Today the cadets would stage their last drill.

But for most Manhattanites, those who were sportsminded at least, the doings up the Hudson were of little moment. The big story for them was the battle scheduled to take place in the city across the East River, sleepy old Brooklyn.

It was a glorious day for a game of ball and Patrolman Wilson, of the 28th Precinct, was unquestionably the only baseball addict in the bustling city of a million and a half souls whose blood didn't race through his veins at the thought of the big doings that lay ahead. Officer Wilson had other thoughts on his mind, for last night, according to James Gordon Bennett's *Herald*, a cowardly sneak thief, entering his bedroom at 111 Prince Street, stole his pants, his shield (No. 1,530), his fire alarm key (No. 6), and \$7 in cash. Wilson, who had intended going to the ball game (his off-duty day), was destined to spend the morning and most of the afternoon making out reports and attempting to regain his status symbols—along with his trousers.

For the rest of New York's ball fans,

there was but one thing to do and that was to make tracks for the Capitoline Grounds in Brooklyn. The Cincinnati Red Stockings—the mighty Reds—were in town and scheduled to cross bats with the once mighty Atlantics.

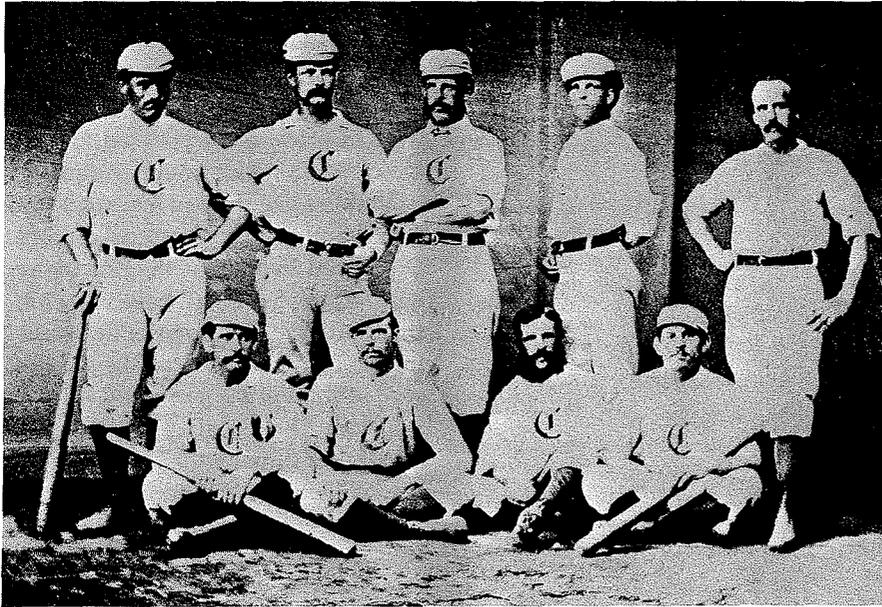
Nothing like the Red Stockings had ever happened to baseball before. Organized in 1869 as the first avowedly all-professional baseball club, they had proved a remarkable success on the field and become the greatest gate attraction the game had known.

When the English-born Harry Wright sat down with his club directors in the winter of 1868-69, he proposed to get the very best players in the country, many of whom were in the status of what was subsequently called semiprofessional players—those who shared in gate receipts but worked outside baseball for a living—and turn them into outright professionals, drawing regular salaries which would enable them to do nothing all summer except play baseball. But how much would it cost, the directors asked. Harry had it all figured out and, if he could get the players he wanted, he told them the payroll would come to \$9300.

Top salary would go to Wright's younger brother George, who in 1868 was playing with the Unions of Morrisania, a region of Westchester County then, since absorbed by the Bronx. George would go west for a wage of \$1400, and they say he was worth every cent of it, inasmuch as he was the outstanding player of his day. Harry himself would draw \$1200 for managing the club and playing the outfield (and managing the club entailed all the duties that are now delegated to the general manager, the manager, and the road secretary, as well as the scheduling of games).

From New Jersey came Doug Allison and Irish-born Andy Leonard; from New Hampshire, Charlie Sweasy, whose name through the years has been misspelled more ways than any other ballplayer's including

GEORGE BULKLEY wrote some 30 articles for the old *Baseball Magazine*.



The 1869 Reds, as photographed by Mathew Brady

Carl Yastrzemski. Cal McVey hailed from Montrose County, Iowa, and, except for Cincinnati Charley Gould, was the only midwesterner on the club. The other four regulars, the Wright brothers, Asa Brainard, and Fred Waterman, came from New York State. The locales of substitutes Hurley, Fowler, Bradford, and Taylor are not known.

Because Gould was the only Cincinnati native on the team there were some critics who insisted on calling it an "eclectic" nine ("all-star," future generations would term it). These critics predicted some terrible things would come of such an arrangement, a team whose motivation was pecuniary rather than civic. (The same dire sentiments have more recently been directed toward George Steinbrenner's "eclectic" nine.)

The Reds swept the baseball scene literally from coast to coast in 1869, defeating all comers and arousing such interest that by the spring of 1870 every city of any size had organized its own team of professionals to beat the Reds when they dared to come to town. From that point on there was no question as to which way baseball was going. Gone was the heyday of the amateur and semi-professional teams, except as feeders for the play-for-pay game.

As the Reds invaded New York in 1870, they were riding a two-year winning streak of 90 games. And only yesterday they'd trounced the Mutu-als to make it 91.

The Capitoline, the first enclosed baseball grounds, lay between Nostrand Avenue on the west and Marcy Avenue on the east, and between Putnam Avenue on the north and Halsey Street on the south. It was located on part of a farm leased from the Leferts family, who had owned the land since Revolutionary days, by Reuben S. Decker's father. Reuben Decker it was who, along with H. A. Weed, built the stands in 1862. (Later, in 1879, the original farm was forced into physical oblivion as Jefferson Avenue and Hancock Street were cut through the ballpark by the city. Today this four-city-block area is part of the Bedford-Stuyvesant section, much in the news in recent years.)

Many years later Decker's daughter recalled the 1870 scene for the writer.

Sheds and stables were located about half the length of the Putnam Avenue side, beginning at Nostrand Avenue. In front of these were permanent buildings housing the restaurant, bandstand, private rooms for the families of the proprietors, sitting rooms for the ladies on the second floor and, on the first floor, lockers

and storage rooms for the baseball teams. In addition, bleachers for the accommodation of 5,000 persons were erected along the Nostrand Avenue and Halsey Street sides of the grounds. The entrance was on Nostrand about 200 feet south of Putnam.

The field was known formally as the "Capitoline Skating Lake and Base-Ball Ground." In November the grounds were flooded from a city main at the corner of Halsey and Nostrand and used for skating all winter, as well as baseball matches on ice featuring many of the stars of the field. Come spring, the water was drained off and the grounds turned over first to Phineas T. Barnum for his circus, and then prepared for the baseball season.

If you were a baseball fan in 1870 and lived in Manhattan you crossed the East River to Brooklyn on the ferry. Construction work on the Brooklyn Bridge had just started and wouldn't be finished until 1883; indeed, so little progress had been made that, stare as you might while crossing the river, you could see nothing that indicated a bridge was being built.

In your horsecar, you then followed Fulton Street in a southerly direction through the heart of downtown Brooklyn (population 419,921, 1870 census), and turned eastward for a ramble through the countryside. The total distance from the ferry slip to the ball field was three and a quarter miles. You left the horsecar at the corner of Fulton and Nostrand and walked north a few hundred feet to the Capitoline.

One street west of Nostrand is Bedford Avenue, and if you had left the car at the corner and followed Bedford Avenue south exactly one mile you would have found yourself at the future site of another ballpark that figured large in baseball history—Ebbets Field.

On this second day of the Reds' 1870 invasion of the metropolis the fans sensed the possibility of an Atlantic victory. They flowed toward

the Capitoline from all directions, starting shortly after noon, until the field was engulfed with humanity. The grounds were jammed to capacity and many hundreds stood on the field itself, along both foul lines and behind the outfielders.

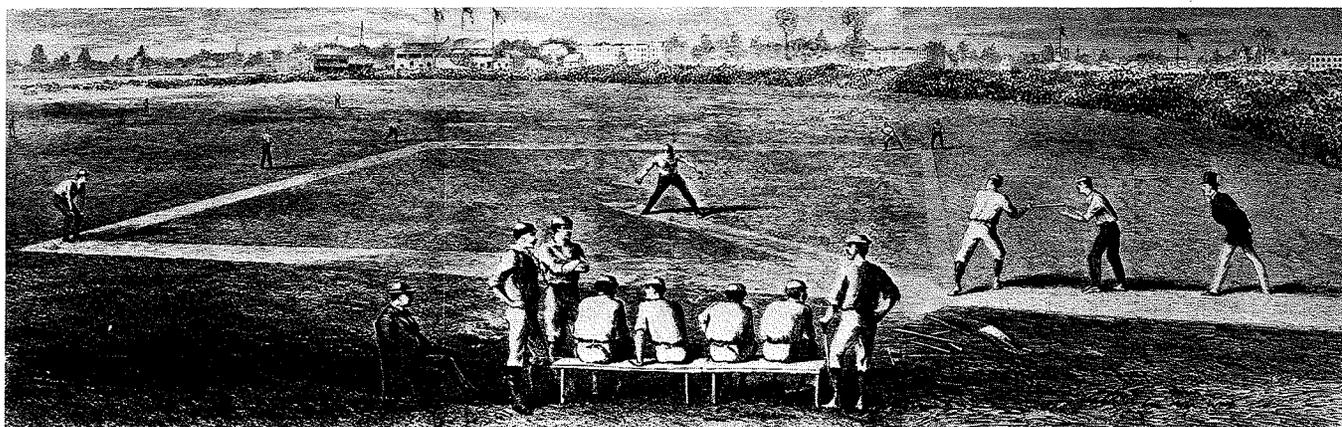
Harper's Weekly estimated the crowd to be between 12,000 and 15,000 shoehorned into a park that could seat at best 5,000. Said the *New York World*: "Hundreds who could or would not produce the necessary fifty-cent stamp for admission [Harry Wright always insisted on that fee although twenty-five cents was the norm of the period] looked on through cracks in the fence or even climbed boldly to the top, while

Dickey Pearce and other stars would not play in the game with the Reds. Tactless Bob Ferguson, captain of the Atlantics, was in the midst of a feud with the baseball writer of the *New York Herald*. A lively discussion between these worthies had ended with the writer charging the other with running off his best players by his insolence, and Ferguson countering with an offer to do some dental work on the scribe without benefit of a forceps.

As a result, the *Herald* man refused to cover the Atlantics-Cincinnati game, although he had reported the previous day's Mutual match with a thousand word story. And so, while other papers gave the game of June 14

the club name embroidered on the chest, and light buff linen caps. The Reds wore their customary knickerbockers and bright red stockings. They had an Old English "C" on their shirt panels. During the day George Zettlein, the hard-working pitcher of the home team, deviated somewhat from the uniform of the day: he worked much of the game stripped to a silk undershirt and his uniform pants.

Every newspaper commented on the boisterous and unruly conduct of the spectators. "As the Red Stockings entered the field," said one paper, "a few of the toughs in the assemblage attempted to hiss them, but at once a round of applause greeted the



June 14, 1870—perhaps it is still the greatest game ever played

others were perched in the topmost limbs of the trees or on roofs of surrounding houses."

The cause of this wellspring of optimism isn't quite clear. Only the day before, the Red Stockings had mauled the Mutuals, 16 to 3. Yet on their previous visit to New York they had eked out a 4-2 win—an unprecedentedly low score for the time, at this level of play—over these same Mutuals before moving on to clobber the Atlantics by 32-10. On comparative records, then, the visitors appeared likely to overwhelm the Brooklynites.

Add to this the fact that the Atlantics had already suffered defeat three times in 1870, due mostly to trouble within the ranks—trouble so acute that it was freely predicted that

full coverage, the *Herald* man stayed at home and devoted just 200 words to a critique of the game and the unruly nature of the crowd. And his paper didn't even print a box score of the greatest game of baseball played up until that time.

That the gamblers did not expect a hometeam win is shown by what the racing people call the morning line. Before the game, betting was 5-1 on the Red Stockings—and when Cincinnati moved ahead in the early innings, 3-0, the odds zoomed to 10-1 with few takers.

The Atlantics, however, had patched up their differences and their strongest team took the field, nattily attired in long dark blue trousers (with a light cord down the outer seams), shirts with the initial letter of

strangers. . . ." Another reported that "the visitors were annoyed throughout by catcalls, hisses, and jeers, their misplays being applauded, and their finest efforts received in silence."

As the opponents squared off, the batting orders looked like this:

CINCINNATI	ATLANTICS
George Wright, ss	Dickey Pearce, ss
Charley Gould, 1b	Charles Smith, 3b
Fred Waterman, 3b	Joe Start, 1b
Doug Allison, c	John Chapman, lf
Harry Wright, cf	Bob Ferguson, c
Andy Leonard, lf	George Zettlein, p
Asa Brainard, p	George Hall, cf
Charlie Sweasy, 2b	Lipman Pike, 2b
Cal McVey, rf	Dan McDonald, rf

The Reds lost no time once the game got under way, George Wright singling down the left field line and,

after the next two men were retired, scoring on singles by Allison and Harry Wright. On the latter's blow there was an error by McDonald, and Allison also crossed the plate. The Reds increased their lead to 3-0 in the third with hits by George Wright and Waterman proving the decisive blows. Dickey Pearce ended the threat of a big inning by coming up with Allison's sharp grounder and starting a fast double play.

The Atlantics, meanwhile, could do nothing with Brainard's delivery. Pitchers in 1870 worked from a distance of only forty-five feet from home plate but were restricted by the rules to an underhand "pitch." The wrist snap needed to throw curve balls would not be legalized until 1872, so pitchers had to rely on nothing except speed and a change of pace.

Cincinnati was at its defensive best this day. Henry Chadwick, baseball editor of the *New York Clipper*, was fascinated by the style in which the fielders moved about as the different batsmen took their turns. A model display, he thought. "In fact," said Henry, "Harry Wright would at one time be seen playing almost back of second base, while Sweasy would be nearly a first base fielder, and so they changed about, coming in nearer or going out further, just as they judged the balls would be sent to the different batters. It is in the lack of judgment like this that our outfielders show their inferiority to the skillfully trained Red Stockings."

Zettlein, greatest fastballer of his day, was the first line of defense for the Atlantics, who were noted more for their batting prowess than for their fielding finesse. The Reds had never seen Zettlein before, but fast-ball pitching didn't usually bother them. The previous year, when the Reds clobbered the Atlantics, they pounded Tom Pratt, a fastballer, from pillar to post.

Singles by Pearce, Start, and Ferguson and a two-base overthrow by Waterman gave the home team leads two runs in the fourth. In the sixth,

the Atlantics' slashing drives handcuffed Sweasy and Waterman to account for two more, sending them into the lead for the first time.

Cincinnati had not scored in three innings, but as soon as they found themselves trailing they resolutely hammered out a new lead. Brainard, Sweasy, and the irrepressible George Wright pounded out clean hits in the seventh, the younger Wright's hit driving in his fellow Reds.

But the boys in blue weren't licked yet. With one out in the eighth, Smith tripled to deep left field and Start (first player to earn the nickname "Old Reliable") clouted viciously down the right field line. Cal McVey, traveling at top speed, made a brilliant catch and threw quickly to the plate. Smith, holding third until the catch, tried to score but McVey's spectacular throw had him beaten. And then, in this most crucial moment, Allison muffed the ball. The crowd really let loose as Smith crossed the plate with the tying run.

Only three men faced each pitcher in the ninth. Pike closed out the Reds by taking George Wright's hot grounder and converting it into a double play, and Andy Leonard retaliated in the last half with a great catch of Hall's line drive.

Entered at this point the rules book. Several of the Atlantics' directors, reasoning that a tie with the invincible Red Stockings was better than a probable loss, even an extra-inning one, instructed Captain Ferguson to take his team off the field. Exactly opposite reasons prompted Cincinnati to play it out; Harry Wright was so ordered by president Aaron B. Champion.

As the Brooklyn players began to "stack bats" preparatory to leaving the field, the crowd, uproarious all afternoon, swarmed over the field. President Champion clambered onto a bench and announced that the Reds would claim the game by forfeiture if Brooklyn refused to continue. He pointed to Rule 5, which plainly stated that in case of a tie score at the end of nine innings the game should

be continued "unless it be mutually agreed upon by the captains of the two nines to consider the game as drawn."

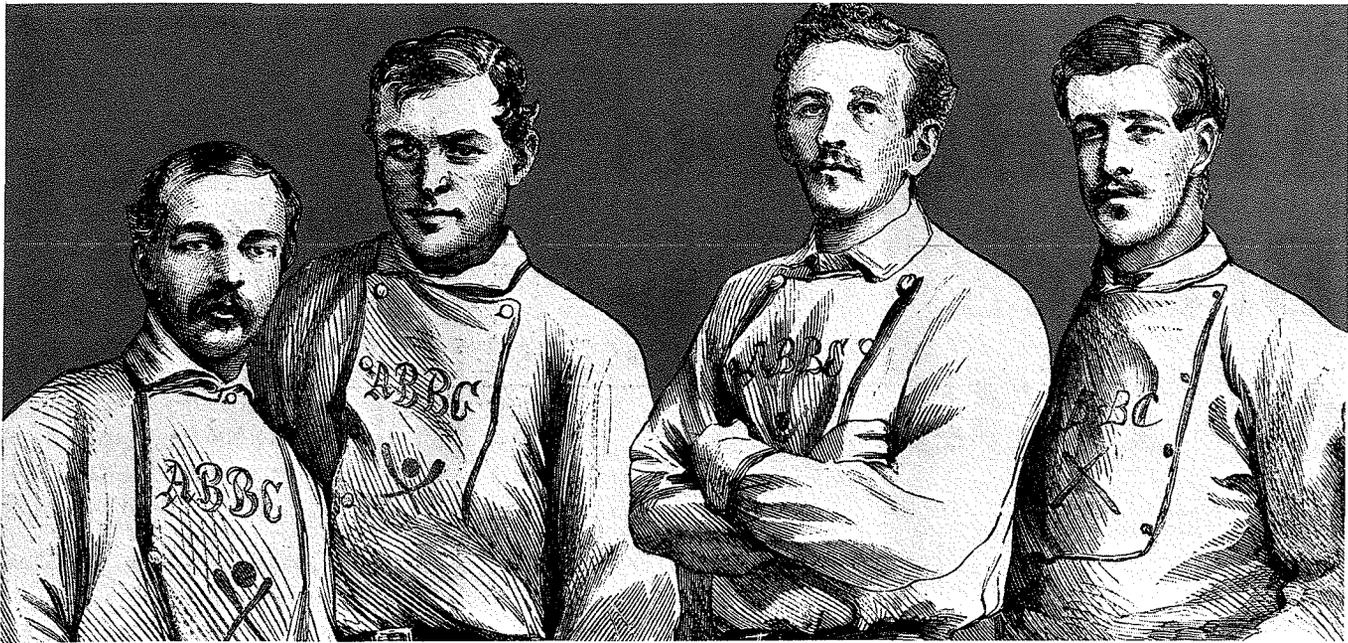
And now Father Chadwick got into the action. Henry was the supreme expert on the rules and the author of several of them. Year after year he served on the rules committee, where his voice was the most respected of all. "How about it, Henry?" asked Harry Wright, and Chadwick agreed that the visitors were right. It was the first time the Reds had been forced into extra innings.

Some of the Atlantics had already reached the clubhouse but they were hastily recalled, the field was cleared with some difficulty, and the game resumed.

Cincinnati was easy in the tenth and the Atlantics were turned back once more by George Wright. With one out McDonald and Pearce singled in succession. Smith lifted a high fly to shortstop; Wright, playing the ball so as to catch it close to the ground, intentionally dropped it, thus forcing the runners to leave their bases. This, of course, was the play whose abuse in later days led to the adoption of the infield fly rule to protect the helpless baserunners. At that time, there being no infield fly rule, Wright scooped up the ball and started an easy double play.

Years later Albert G. Spalding, writing the first large-scale baseball history, jumped to the conclusion that this was the origin of the trapped-ball play, and present day writers relied upon Spalding for the dope. Spalding, however, was wrong: When the Reds beat the Mutuals in 1869, Fred Waterman, Cincinnati third sacker, pulled an identical play after the New Yorkers had tied the score in the ninth inning, and there's no reason to imagine that this was the first instance of the trapped-ball maneuver.

The Red Stockings cast deep gloom over Flatbush by tallying twice in the eleventh, apparently sewing up the old ball game. After Leonard was retired, Brainard doubled to right



Dickey Pearce, Joe Start, Charles Smith, and John Chapman, portrayed in 1866

center. Sweasy lifted one in the same direction and Hall was about to make the catch when McDonald, cruising over from right field, ran into him. McVey also hit into Hall's territory, but this time his mates gave him plenty of room and he grabbed it, Brainard scoring easily from third after the catch. The poisonous George Wright then singled to score the second run of the inning, making the score 7-5.

Charley Smith, who had batted into the spectacular double play to end the tenth inning, led off for the home team in its last chance at bat. If that sounds a bit peculiar, take a look at the 1870 rules. Rule Three, Section 2, specified that: "Players must strike in regular rotation, and, after the first inning is played, the turn commences with the player who stands on the list next to the one who was the third player out."

Now, while Smith had hit into the double play in the tenth he had not been put out: McDonald and Pearce were the victims of Wright's skull-duggery. Pearce was the third player put out, and Smith followed Pearce in the batting order. An odd consequence of this rule was that Pearce, the Atlantics' lead-off man, batted only five times while the next three

men—Smith, Start, and Chapman—each batted six times.

Smith opened the eleventh by punching a sharp single toward left field. He went all the way to third on a wild pitch. The crowd really came alive when Joe Start slammed a drive to deep right field that landed in the fringe of the crowd. McVey was on the ball in an instant, but as he bent to pick it up a spectator leaped on his back. By the time McVey could fight his way clear and hurl the ball to the infield, Start, representing the tying run, was on third and the complexion of the game had changed.

Now, that's the way the story has always been told. Everyone who has attempted to recount the story of the great game of 1870 has reported the naughty behavior of the Brooklyn crowd and every sportsman-reader has, presumably, responded with "tch! tch!" and rolled his eyes piously heavenward. Not so, said McVey, shortly before he died. Cal told a newsman that he remembered the play very well and that no one climbed his back. He said that he encountered some difficulty in digging the ball out of the crowd, but that no one deliberately interfered with him.

At any rate, Chapman, the next

batter, hit hard to third, but Waterman handled the ball well, held Start at third, and threw the batter out.

If the Atlantics had learned anything at all it was that George Wright could do nothing wrong today. And so, with the object of keeping the ball out of Wright's grasp, Ferguson, a righthanded batter, went up to the plate to hit lefthanded. This seems to be the first recorded instance of a batter switching, although the *New York Clipper*, leading sports weekly of the day, suggested it was not the first time he had done so, remarking that Ferguson "can use one hand as well as the other."

That stratagem worked. Ferguson ripped the ball past the second baseman and scored Start with the tying run.

Zettlein kept the rally alive with a torrid smash to Gould's right. The first baseman couldn't handle it, and when he did recover the ball he flung it to second in a desperate attempt to force Ferguson. The ball, however, was in the dirt and Sweasy missed it completely, the sphere scooting into the outfield. As Ferguson stretched his legs and raced for home base all Brooklyn went mad.

The impossible had happened! Cincinnati had lost!

RECORDS

The Hapless Braves of 1935

DON NELSON

ANY AVID BASEBALL FAN can tell you about the Miracle Braves of 1914—how they rose from eighth place on July 18 to win the pennant by 10.5 games and the World Series in four straight. But who can tell you much about the Miracle-less Boston Braves of 1935? They had the worst record in the National League in the twentieth century (38-115, .248), finishing 61.5 games out of first—and 26 out of seventh!

The next question might be: who cares? The 1914 team rose from the cellar; the 1935 outfit stayed there. Well, just because a team was unsuccessful does not necessarily mean it was uninteresting. Like the phantoms of '14, this too was somewhat of a mystery team. The mystery was how they got so bad so fast from 1934 to '35, and how they restored themselves to respectability in '36.

In his excellent book, *The Life That Ruth Built*, Marshall Smelser wrote, "The only real assets of the [1935] Braves were the preseason ticket sale, a very good ballplayer, Wally Berger, two or three adequate journeymen ballplayers, and a crumbling monument named Babe Ruth." But from this vantage point, the interest in that

1935 club centered around not just two men, but six: team president Judge Emil Fuchs, manager Bill McKechnie, and players Ruth, Berger, Ben Cantwell, and Rabbit Maranville. Taking them one by one:

Emil Fuchs, age fifty-seven, had been president of the Braves since 1922 and had managed the team in 1929 (they finished eighth). He had been trying to find some alchemy that would turn red ink to black, but without success. Maybe Ruth could do the trick. Through some maneuvering, too intricate to detail here, the old home run king shucked his Yankee uniform (or was stripped of it) and donned one belonging to Fuchs' Braves. Part of the machinations included Ruth being named not only player, but also a vice president and assistant manager. The duties of the latter positions were never precisely explained nor visibly exercised. The promise of a Ruthian spectacle in Braves Field helped hype the aforementioned advance ticket sale.

The spectacle lasted only a few days, as we shall see, and the ink continued to run red. To Fuchs' credit, the Braves did outdraw the Phillies in 1935, but they certainly didn't challenge them for seventh

place. Fuchs wasn't around in any official capacity to see the Braves' inglorious end: he was gone from the front office by August 1.

Deacon Bill McKechnie, age forty-nine, was in his fourteenth season of managing major league teams and in his sixth with the Braves. The Deacon had never had a last-place team before and he never would again in eleven more years as a skipper. In fact, the first division was more to his way of managing. He had piloted the Pirates to a world's championship in 1925 and had brought the Cardinals home first in the National League in 1928.

He escaped the '35 calamity with his job (he managed the Braves through 1937) and apparently his sanity (he brought a pennant to Cincinnati in 1939 and a world's championship there in 1940). In fact, the Braves were the only NL team he managed that didn't win a flag (he also finished up the 1915 season as field boss of the Newark entry in the Federal League).

Of course, Bill may have been looking over his shoulder, at least early in the '35 campaign, to try to see what Fuchs and Ruth had really agreed upon. Fuchs kept voicing solid support for McKechnie, even as he dropped innuendoes that the swat king might ascend to the manager-ship. If McKechnie was troubled by the whole cloudy affair and managed badly because of it, he need not have worried. By season's end, Fuchs was no longer president and Ruth was not and never would be manager—McKechnie was both! (He was named temporary president when Fuchs departed.)

Babe Ruth (the "crumbling monument"), released by the Yankees, forty years old, ravaged by twenty years of pitching, hitting, overindulgence, and the relentless glare of the public spotlight, was signed on by the Beantown team. In his first National League game in

DON NELSON knows about losers. He's been a Cub fan for forty years.

Boston, the Babe busted one—off King Carl Hubbell no less! The Braves beat the Giants 4-2 as Ruth also singled.

The next dramatic day for Ruth came more than a month later, on May 25. The Braves were playing in Pittsburgh. Ruth smashed three homers and a single. His third shot of the day was his sixth of the year and the 714th and last of his career; it cleared the right field roof of Forbes Field.

But the Braves lost that day, by a score of 11-7, as they did on most other days (their record after the Ruthian swan song stood at 7-20 and would get worse). Shortly thereafter Ruth, batting .181 and with no extra-base hits besides the 6 homers, packed it in, leaving behind his playing days and his “vice presidency” and “assistant managership.” The legend was written.

Ben Cantwell, thirty-three-year-old starting pitcher, lasted the whole year, but there must have been days when he thought Ruth had the right idea. His won-lost record was 4-25, .138. That was the last time a major league hurler ever lost as many as 25 games and was the lowest percentage in this century for any pitcher who lost as many as 25 (there have been nineteen such “performances”).

For the team, the pattern was win one, lose three. For Ben Cantwell, it was twice as bad—win one, lose six. Cantwell wasn't really that poor a pitcher, in 1935 or any other year. He had a 76-108, .413 lifetime record (72-83 by eliminating '35). He won 20 games for the fourth-place Braves in 1933 and had a 9-9 record for them in 1936, as the team climbed out of the mire into sixth place. His '35 ERA of 4.61 was bad, yes, but not as bad as that of the whole staff (average 4.93). Ben was a hard-luck pitcher on a down-on-its-luck team. Reached at his home, in San Antonio, seventy-eight-year-old Pinky Whitney, the third baseman on that '35 team, said Cantwell was a “very fine pitcher.”

Wally Berger, age twenty-nine, was in his prime. He led the league in

home runs (34) and RBI (130). He had the second best record in history in percentage of his team's RBI (See TNP, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4). He led the team in every important hitting category except two.

What was amazing was not that he led the team in so many categories (even tying for the lead in stolen bases—3) but that he WAS the team in most hitting statistics. For instance, Ruth's mere 6 home runs were second-best on the club—and the Babe played in only 28 games. Berger had more than twice as many RBIs as the next Brave (Whitney, 60). His leads in other departments were by margins of 18 in games played, 75 in at bats, 29 in runs, 43 in hits, 15 in

doubles, 10 in bases-on-balls, 43 in strikeouts (he got his cuts), and .165 in slugging. His batting average of .295 was 8 points less than Hal Lee's .303. He had four triples to Lee's six.

If you were in a Braves uniform that year and somehow managed to get on base, about your only chance of scoring was if Wally came to the plate while you were standing around. The Chicago Cubs of the late '50s and early '60s were oftentimes referred to as “Ernie Banks and eight other guys.” The 1935 Boston Braves were built along the same lines.

Rabbit Maranville, age forty-three, was trying one last hurrah for the Braves that dismal year of 1935, his twenty-third major league season.

The young slugger and the old—Wally Berger and The Babe



The curious thing here is that the Rabbit was a twenty-two-year-old hotshot shortstop on that Miracle team of 1914! He played for the Hub team from 1912 through 1920, moved through the Pirates, Cubs, Dodgers, and Cardinals over the next eight years, and then returned to the Braves for the 1929-33 seasons. He was injured and didn't perform in 1934, and 1935 was enough to put him off the game for good.

For that fine 1914 group, Maranville played 156 games at shortstop; for that downtrodden 1935 bunch, 20 at second base. His batting average (.149) was worse than Ruth's.

A funny thing as regards the Miracle-less Braves, compared to the Miracle Braves, perhaps good for a trivia question or two: The 1935 contingent had three Hall of Famers (Ruth, Maranville and McKechnie), and the 1914 crew two (Maranville and Johnny Evers).

Just why those 1935 Braves were so woebegone is a bit of a puzzle. It wasn't because it was a brand new team like the 1962 Mets (120 losses); Boston had had a National League franchise every year since the league was organized in 1876. Nor was it that they were the worst of a long string of bad teams like their neighbors, the Red Sox of the '20s and early '30s (six straight cellar dwellers). And the 1935 debacle didn't follow the breakup of a great team like the 1916 Philadelphia Athletics (.235 winning percentage and the century's major league record for futility).

Ruth and Maranville didn't play enough to make much difference one way or the other. The team batting average of .263 wasn't that bad (it rose only 2 points for the 1936 sixth place team). Besides, there was Berger.

Other teams had bigger one-year declines or recoveries—but not in succession! Mack's A's tumbled from first in 1914 to eighth in 1915 and lost .368 in winning percentage in the process. But they crumpled still further in 1916, losing another .048 as

they established the modern record for ineptitude. The Milwaukee Brewer nine in the new American League moved to St. Louis in 1902 and improved their record by .224. The Boston Red Sox later made a neat recovery from seventh place in 1945 (last war year) to a pennant in '46, gaining .214.

The '34 Braves dived by .269 in '35, then leaped up by .213 in '36, an incredible crash and correction. What accounted for it?

That '35 group gave up 852 runs and scored but 575. The '34 and '36 editions surrendered in the 700s and scored in the 600s.

There was some luck involved. SABR statistician Pete Palmer, by a runs-differential method (see TNP, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 79), figures the Braves got lucky in 6 wins in 1934 and unlucky in 11 losses in 1935. What he's saying is that, based upon their deteriorated run differentials, with average luck in close games the team should have declined by about 23 wins over the two years, not 40. Luck aside, what happened?

The '35 team finished last in the league in hits, doubles, runs, RBI, batting average, slugging, and stolen bases; in pitching, the Braves were last in strikeouts, shutouts, saves, and ERA. However, last-place statistics accompany almost every last-place team. Also, they were not the worst-fielding team and were in the middle of the pack in some categories, such as home runs hit and walks allowed.

Pinky Whitney was asked, "What

do you think were the reasons for the Boston Braves' record of 78 wins in 1934, only 38 in '35, then back to 71 in 1936?" His reply: "I really do not know."

If Whitney doesn't know, how am I supposed to? I didn't see the team play (I was one year old at the time).

I decided to look for more statistical clues.

One question I scrutinized: did several key players have off-seasons that one long summer? Eight men, besides manager McKechnie, were with the club all three years, 1934-36. Below is the book on them.

The table shows that Jordan and Urbanski had off-seasons in average in 1935 (but not HR). Lee actually had his best average year, though he didn't homer. Thompson was steady and Berger was solid. Among the pitchers, on the basis of ERA, Cantwell had kind of a bummer and Bob Brown was horrific, but Bob Smith's performance was tolerable.

Nothing very conclusive here.

Let's look at other pitchers, too. The pitchers in '35 were about the same crew as those who performed for the 1934 first division team, only now they were a year older and about one earned run a game worse. Records of pitchers aboard both years are shown on the next page, above.

I've already commented on Cantwell, Smith, and Brown. But look at the rest. Their ERA's ballooned by 1.56, 1.40, 1.46 and 1.81. No wonder they were all gone the next year!

The '35 staff had an average age of

BA-HR for:	1934	1935	1936
Buck Jordan, <i>1B</i>	.311- 2	.279- 5	.323- 3
Billy Urbanski, <i>SS</i>	.293- 7	.230- 4	.261- 0
Wally Berger, <i>CF</i>	.298-34	.295-34	.288-25
Hal Lee, <i>LF</i>	.292- 8	.303- 0	.253- 3
Tommy Thompson, <i>OF</i>	.265- 0	.273- 4	.286- 4
TOTALS	.293-51	.276-47	.282-35
W-L, ERA for:			
Ben Cantwell, <i>P</i>	5-11, 4.34	4-25, 4.61	9- 9, 3.05
Bob Smith, <i>P</i>	6- 9, 4.65	8-18, 3.95	6- 7, 3.77
Bob Brown, <i>P</i>	1- 3, 5.74	1- 8, 6.37	0- 2, 5.63
TOTALS	12-23, 4.69	13-51, 4.57	15-18, 3.48

W-L, ERA for:	1934	1935
Fred Frankhouse	17- 9, 3.19	11-15, 4.75
Huck Betts	17-10, 4.06	2- 9, 5.46
Ed Brandt	16-14, 3.53	5-19, 4.99
Flint Rhem	8- 8, 3.59	0- 5, 5.40
Bob Smith	6- 9, 4.65	8-18, 3.95
Ben Cantwell	5-11, 4.34	4-25, 4.61
Bob Brown	1- 3, 5.74	1- 8, 6.37
TOTALS	70-64, 3.90	31-99, 4.84

thirty-three, and all the starters were thirty or older. What's more, the guys who most frequently had to trudge in from the bullpen had old, tired arms rather than young, live ones. Larry Benton, 29 games in relief, was thirty-seven; Smith, 26 relief appearances, the same age; and Huck Betts, who was called in to relieve 25 times, was thirty-eight. Smith was credited with all of the team's saves—5. But that low number wasn't so unusual for the times, and with the kind of year the Braves had, there wasn't a whole lot to save.

One of the first things the new management did after 1935 was to run a "name that team" contest. "Bees" was chosen. (The name never caught on and the team reverted to Braves a few years later.) But the owners were smart enough to know that it would take more than a name change to post some wins.

The pitching looked mighty suspect, yet the Braves did *not* go after that commodity for '36. The front office apparently—and correctly it would seem—decided to shore up the defense instead. Thus they engineered a six-player swap with Brooklyn, fifth in '35.

The Hub team shipped lefthander Ed Brandt plus their regular right-fielder, Randy Moore, to the Dodgers. Brooklyn, in turn, parted with veteran righthander Ray Benge, second baseman Tony Cuccinello, catcher Al Lopez, and all-purpose Bobby Reis (he played first, second, third, and the outfield for Brooklyn in '35 and also pitched). In a separate deal, righthander Freddie Frankhouse went south from the banks of the Charles to the shores of the Gowanus.

Brandt had had a 94-119 record with Boston over eight seasons. Frankhouse had been 63-59 in the previous six years with the Braves. Both were starters for Brooklyn in '36, working 234 innings apiece and logging 11-13 and 13-10 records, respectively. Moore got in only 42 games, batting a dismal .239.

Benge, who had gone 33-38 for Brooklyn in the previous three years, logged a 7-9 record in 115 innings for Boston; he was banished to the eventual Braves' successor to the cellar, the Phillies, before the '36 season ended. Reis got a chance to become a pitcher almost exclusively (two games in the outfield were his only duties off the mound) and turned in a 6-5 slate in 139 innings. He won only one more game in his career after that, as he returned to his role of jack of all trades, master of none.

The key to the turnaround, it developed, had little to do with pitching and almost everything to do with strengthening the middle.

Lopez led the majors in assists with 107; Braves catchers Al Spohrer and Shanty Hogan had only 70 between them in '35. That indicates to me that the opposition wasn't stealing on Lopez as it had on the Braves in '35.

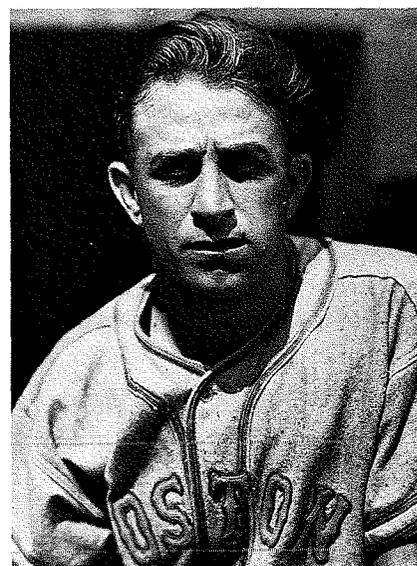
Cuccinello anchored the infield and probably was the player who did more than any other to resurrect the team. He batted .308, a marked improvement over the second base tenants of 1935, Les Mallon (.274) and Maranville. Welcome as his bat was, it was Tony C's glove that really made a difference. The Braves turned 101 double plays in 1935, seventh in the league. With Tony at the keystone, the club executed 175 in '36, tops in *both*

leagues. "Cooch" led all second sackers in assists with 559, a right smart figure for that position.

The suggestion, therefore, is that the Braves-Bees pitchers were not much better in '36 than in that horrendous '35 campaign (runs allowed per inning declined by 22 percent, but hits-walks allowed per inning declined by only 9 percent).

As proof the Braves knew what they were doing in the Brooklyn deals, they improved stupendously while the Brooks declined a bit. Boston actually beat out the Bums by four games in the final 1936 standings.

Still, for all this analysis, we're talk-



Tony Cuccinello

ing about mediocre teams in 1934 and '36 with an aberrant abomination in between. The lingering question about the 1935 Boston Braves is: why not forget them? Sure, it's the American way to accentuate the positive and go with the winners. But most of us can identify with losers, too. Who doesn't like Charlie Brown?

When I asked Pinky Whitney to comment on the best-known players, he described Babe Ruth as "a great fellow," said Rabbit Maranville was "lots of fun all the time," and called Wally Berger a "real nice guy." I didn't ask Leo Durocher, but he would probably tell you that the 1935 Boston Braves were *all* nice guys.

Baseball draws the color line, 1887.

Out at Home

JERRY MALLOY

Baseball is the very symbol, the outward and visible expression of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century.

MARK TWAIN

. . . social inequality . . . means that in all the relations that exist between man and man he is to be measured and taken not according to his natural fitness and qualification, but that blind and relentless rule which accords certain pursuits and certain privileges to origin or birth.

MOSES F. WALKER

IT WAS A DRAMATIC and prophetic performance by Jackie Robinson. The twenty-seven-year-old black second baseman opened the 1946 International League season by leading the Montreal Royals to a 14-1 victory over Jersey City. In five trips to the plate, he had four hits (including a home run) and four RBIs; he scored four runs, stole two bases, and rattled a pitcher into balking him home with a taunting *danse macabre* off third. Branch Rickey's protégé had punched a hole through Organized Baseball's color barrier with the flair and talent that would eventually take him into the Hall of Fame. The color line that Jackie Robinson shattered, though unwritten, was very real indeed. Baseball's exclusion of the black man was so unremittingly thorough for such a long time that most of the press and public then, as now, thought that Robinson was making the first appearance of a man of his race in the history of Organized Baseball.

Actually, he represented a return of the Negro ball-player, not merely to Organized Baseball, but to the Inter-

national League as well. At least eight elderly citizens would have been aware of this. Frederick Ely, Jud Smith, James Fields, Tom Lynch, Frank Olin, "Chief" Zimmer, Pat Gillman, and George Bausewine may have noted with interest Robinson's initiation, for all of these men had been active players on teams that opened another International League season, that of 1887. And in that year they played with or against eight black players on six different teams.

The 1887 season was not the first in which Negroes played in the International League, nor would it be the last. But until Jackie Robinson stepped up to the plate on April 18, 1946, it was the most significant. For 1887 was a watershed year for both the International League and Organized Baseball, as it marked the origin of the color line. As the season opened, the black player had plenty of reasons to hope that he would be able to ply his trade in an atmosphere of relative tolerance; by the middle of the season, however, he would watch helplessly as the IL drew up a written color ban designed to deprive him of his livelihood; and by the time the league held its offseason meetings, it became obvious that Jim Crow was closing in on a total victory.

Yet before baseball became the victim of its own prejudice, there was a period of uncertainty and fluidity, however brief, during which it seemed by no means inevitable that men would be denied access to Organized Baseball due solely to skin pigmentation. It was not an

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interlude of total racial harmony, but a degree of toleration obtained that would become unimaginable in just a few short years. This is the story of a handful of black baseball players who, in the span of a single season, playing in a prestigious league, witnessed the abrupt conversion of hope and optimism into defeat and despair. These men, in the most direct and personal manner, would realize that the black American baseball player soon would be ruled "out at home."

I

The International League is the oldest minor league in Organized Baseball. Founded in 1884 as the "Eastern" League, it would be realigned and renamed frequently during its early period. The IL was not immune to the shifting sands of financial support that plagued both minor and major leagues (not to mention individual franchises) during the nineteenth century. In 1887 the league took the risk of adding Newark and Jersey City to a circuit that was otherwise clustered in upstate New York and southern Ontario. This arrangement proved to be financially unworkable. Transportation costs alone would doom the experiment after one season. The New Jersey franchises were simply too far away from Binghamton, Buffalo, Oswego, Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica in New York, and Hamilton and Toronto in Ontario.

But, of course, no one knew this when the 1887 season opened. Fans in Newark were particularly excited, because their "Little Giants" were a new team and an instant contender. A large measure of their eager anticipation was due to the unprecedented "colored battery" signed by the team. The pitcher was George Stovey and the catcher was Moses Fleetwood Walker.

"Fleet" Walker was born in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, on the route of the Underground Railroad, on October 7, 1857. The son of a physician, he was raised in nearby Steubenville. At the age of twenty he entered the college preparatory program of Oberlin College, the first school in the United States to adopt an official admissions policy of nondiscrimination by sex, race, or creed. He was enrolled as a freshman in 1878, and attended Oberlin for the next three years. He was a good but not outstanding student in a rigorous liberal arts program. Walker also attended the University of Michigan for two years, although probably more for his athletic than his scholastic attainments. He did not obtain a degree from either institution, but his educational background was extremely sophisticated for a nineteenth century professional baseball player of whatever ethnic origin.

While at Oberlin, Walker attracted the attention of William Voltz, former sportswriter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, who had been enlisted to form a professional baseball team to be based in Toledo. Walker was the second player signed by the team, which entered the

Northwestern League in 1883. Toledo captured the league championship in its first year.

The following year Toledo was invited to join the American Association, a major league rival of the more established National League. Walker was one of the few players to be retained as Toledo made the jump to the big league. Thus did Moses Fleetwood Walker become the first black to play major league baseball, sixty-four years before Jackie Robinson. Walker played in 42 games that season, batting .263 in 152 at-bats. His brother, Welday Wilberforce Walker, who was two years younger than Fleet, also played outfield in five games, filling in for injured players. Welday was 4-for-18 at the plate.

While at Toledo, Fleet Walker was the batterymate of Hank O'Day, who later became a famous umpire, and Tony Mullane, who could pitch with either hand and became the winningest pitcher, with 285 victories, outside the Hall of Fame. G. L. Mercereau, the team's batboy, many years later recalled the sight of Walker catching barehanded, as was common in those days, with his fingers split open and bleeding. Catchers would welcome swelling in their hands to provide a cushion against the pain.

The color of Walker's skin occasionally provoked another, more lasting, kind of pain. The *Toledo Blade*, on May 5, 1884, reported that Walker was "hissed . . . and insulted . . . because he was colored," causing him to commit five errors in a game in Louisville. Late in the season the team travelled to Richmond, Virginia, where manager Charley Morton received a letter threatening bloodshed, according to Lee Allen, by "75 determined men [who] have sworn to mob Walker if he comes on the ground in a suit." The letter, which Morton released to the press, was signed by four men who were "determined" not to sign their real names. Confrontation was avoided, for Walker had been released by the team due to his injuries before the trip to Richmond.

Such incidents, however, stand out because they were so exceptional. Robert Peterson, in *Only the Ball Was White*, points out that Walker was favorably received in cities such as Baltimore and Washington. As was the case throughout the catcher's career, the press was supportive of him and consistently reported his popularity among fans. Upon his release, the *Blade* described him as "a conscientious player [who] was very popular with Toledo audiences," and *Sporting Life's* Toledo correspondent stated that "by his fine, gentlemanly deportment, he made hosts of friends who will regret to learn that he is no longer a member of the club."

Walker started the 1885 season with Cleveland in the Western League, but the league folded in June. He played the remainder of 1885 and all of 1886 for the Waterbury, Connecticut, team in the Eastern League. While at Waterbury, he was referred to as "the people's choice," and was briefly managed by Charley Hackett, who later moved on to Newark. When Newark was accepted into the Inter-

national League in 1887, Hackett signed Walker to play for him.

So in 1887 Walker was beginning his fifth season in integrated professional baseball. Tall, lean, and handsome, the thirty-year-old catcher was an established veteran noted for his steady, dependable play and admired, literally, as a gentleman and a scholar. Later in the season, when the Hamilton *Spectator* printed a disparaging item about "the coon catcher of the Newarks," *The Sporting News* ran a typical response in defense of Walker: "It is a pretty small paper that will publish a paragraph of that kind about a member of a visiting club, and the man who wrote it is without doubt Walker's inferior in education, refinement, and manliness."

One of the reasons that Charley Hackett was so pleased to have signed Walker was that his catcher would assist in the development of one of his new pitchers, a Negro named George Washington Stovey. A 165-pound southpaw, Stovey had pitched for Jersey City in the Eastern League in 1886. Sol White, in his *History of Colored Base Ball*, stated that Stovey "struck out twenty-two of the

Bridgeport [Connecticut] Eastern League team in 1886 and lost his game." *The Sporting News* that year called Stovey "a good one, and if the team would support him they would make a far better showing. His manner of covering first from the box is wonderful."

A dispute arose between the Jersey City and Newark clubs prior to the 1887 season concerning the rights to sign Stovey. One of the directors of the Jersey City team tried to use his leverage as the owner of Newark's Wright Street grounds to force Newark into surrendering Stovey. But, as the *Sporting Life* Newark correspondent wrote, ". . . on sober second thought I presume he came to the conclusion that it was far better that the [Jersey City] club should lose Stovey than that he should lose the rent of the grounds."

A new rule for 1887, which would exist only that one season, provided that walks were to be counted as hits. One of the criticisms of the rule was that, in an era in which one of the pitching statistics kept was the opposition's batting average, a pitcher might be tempted to hit a batter rather than be charged with a "hit" by walking him. George Stovey, with his blazing fastball, his volatile

The Oberlin College team of 1881, with Fleet Walker (middle row, left) and brother Welday



temper, and his inability to keep either under strict control, was the type of pitcher these skeptics had in mind. He brought to the mound a wicked glare that intimidated hitters.

During the preseason contract dispute, Jersey City's manager, Pat Powers, acknowledged Stovey's talents, yet added:

Personally, I do not care for Stovey. I consider him one of the greatest pitchers in the country, but in many respects I think I have more desirable men. He is head-strong and obstinate, and, consequently, hard to manage. Were I alone concerned I would probably let Newark have him, but the directors of the Jersey City Club are not so peaceably disposed.

Newark planned to mute Stovey's "head-strong obstinance" with the easy-going stability of Fleet Walker. That the strategy did not always work is indicated by an account in the Newark *Daily Journal* of a July game against Hamilton:

That Newark won the game [14-10] is a wonder, for Stovey was very wild at times, [and] Walker had several passed balls. . . . Whether it was that he did not think he was being properly supported, or did not like the umpire's decisions on balls and strikes, the deponent saith not, but Stovey several times displayed his temper in the box and fired the ball at the plate regardless of what was to become of everything that stood before him. Walker got tired of the business after awhile, and showed it plainly by his manner. Stovey should remember that the spectators do not like to see such exhibitions of temper, and it is hoped that he will not offend again.

Either despite or because of his surly disposition, George Stovey had a great season in 1887. His 35 wins is a single season record that still stands in the International League. George Stovey was well on his way to establishing his reputation as the greatest Negro pitcher of the nineteenth century.

The promotional value of having the only all-Negro battery in Organized Baseball was not lost upon the press. Newspapers employed various euphemisms of the day for "Negro" to refer to Newark's "colored," "Cuban," "Spanish," "mulatto," "African," and even "Arabian" battery. *Sporting Life* wrote:

There is not a club in the country who tries so hard to cater to all nationalities as does the Newark Club. There is the great African battery, Stovey and Walker; the Irish battery, Hughes and Derby; and the German battery, Miller and Cantz.

The Newark correspondent for *Sporting Life* asked, "By the way, what do you think of our 'storm battery,' Stovey and Walker? Verily they are dark horses, and ought to be a drawing card. No rainchecks given when they play." Later he wrote that "Our 'Spanish beauties,' Stovey and Walker, will make the biggest kind of drawing card." Drawing card they may have been, but Stovey and Walker were signed by Newark not for promotional gimmickry, but

because they were talented athletes who could help their team win.

Nor were other teams reluctant to improve themselves by hiring black players. In Oswego, manager Wesley Curry made a widely publicized, though unsuccessful, attempt to sign second baseman George Williams, captain of the Cuban Giants. Had Curry succeeded, Williams would not have been the first, nor the best, black second baseman in the league. For Buffalo had retained the services of Frank Grant, the greatest black baseball player of the nineteenth century.

Frank Grant was beginning the second of a record three consecutive years on the same integrated baseball team. Born in 1867, he began his career in his hometown of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, then moved on to Plattsburg, New York. In 1886 he entered Organized Baseball, playing for Meriden, Connecticut, in the Eastern League until the team folded in July. Thereupon he and two white teammates signed with the Buffalo Bisons, where he led the team in hitting. By the age of twenty Grant was already known as "the Black Dunlap," a singularly flattering sobriquet referring to Fred "Sure Shot" Dunlap, the first player to sign for \$10,000 a season, and acknowledged as the greatest second baseman of his era. Sol White called Frank Grant simply "the greatest ball player of his age," without reference to race.

In 1887, Grant would lead the International League in hitting with a .366 average. Press accounts abound with comments about his fielding skill, especially his extraordinary range. After a series of preseason exhibition games against Pittsburgh's National League team, "Hustling Horace" Phillips, the Pittsburgh manager, complained about Buffalo's use of Grant as a "star." The Rochester *Union* quoted Phillips as saying that "This accounts for the amount of ground [Grant] is allowed to cover . . . and no attention is paid to such a thing as running all over another man's territory." Criticizing an infielder for his excessive range smacks of praising with faint damns. Grant's talent and flamboyance made him popular not only in Buffalo, but also throughout the IL.

In 1890 Grant would play his last season on an integrated team for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, of the Eastern Interstate League. His arrival was delayed by several weeks due to a court battle with another team over the rights to his services. The Harrisburg *Patriot* described Grant's long awaited appearance:

Long before it was time for the game to begin, it was whispered around the crowd that Grant would arrive on the 3:20 train and play third base. Everybody was anxious to see him come and there was a general stretch of necks toward the new bridge, all being eager to get a sight at the most famous colored ball player in the business. At 3:45 o'clock an open carriage was seen coming over the bridge with two men in it. Jim Russ' famous trotter was drawing it at a 2:20 speed and as it approached nearer, the face of Grant was recognized as being one of the men. "There he comes," went through the crowd like mag-

netism and three cheers went up. Grant was soon in the players' dressing room and in five minutes he appeared on the diamond in a Harrisburg uniform. A great shout went up from the immense crowd to receive him, in recognition of which he politely raised his cap.

Fred Dunlap should have been proud had he ever been called "the White Grant." Yet Grant in his later years passed into such obscurity that no one knew where or when he died (last year an obituary in the *New York Age* was located, revealing that Grant had died in New York on June 5, 1937).

Meanwhile, in Binghamton, Bud Fowler, who had spent the winter working in a local barbershop, was preparing for the 1887 season. At age 33, Fowler was the elder statesman of Negro ballplayers. In 1872, only one year after the founding of the first professional baseball league, Bud Fowler was playing professionally for a white team in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Lee Allen, while historian of baseball's Hall of Fame, discovered that Fowler, whose real name was John Jackson, was born in Coopers-town, New York, in about 1854, the son of itinerant hops-pickers. Thus, Fowler was the greatest baseball player to be born at the future site of the Hall of Fame.

As was the case with many minor league players of his time, Fowler's career took him hopscotching across the country. In 1884 and 1885 he played for teams in Stillwater, Minnesota; Keokuk, Iowa; and Pueblo, Colorado. He played the entire 1886 season in Topeka, Kansas, in the Western League, where he hit .309. A Negro newspaper in Chicago, the *Observer*, proudly described Fowler as "the best second baseman in the Western League."

Binghamton signed Fowler for 1887. *The Sportsman's Referee* wrote that Fowler ". . . has two joints where an ordinary person has one. Fowler is a great ball player." According to *Sporting Life's* Binghamton correspondent:

Fowler is a dandy in every respect. Some say that Fowler is a colored man, but we account for his dark complexion by the fact that . . . in chasing after balls [he] has become tanned from constant and careless exposure to the sun. This theory has the essential features of a chestnut, as it bears resemblance to Buffalo's claim that Grant is of Spanish descent.

Fowler's career in the International League would be brief. The financially troubled Bings would release him in July to cut their payroll. But during this half-season, a friendly rivalry existed between Fowler and Grant. Not so friendly were some of the tactics used by opposing baserunners and pitchers. In 1889, an unidentified International League player told *The Sporting News*:

While I myself am prejudiced against playing in a team with a colored player, still I could not help pitying some of the poor black fellows that played in the International League. Fowler used to play second base with the lower part of his legs encased in wooden guards. He knew that about every player that came down to second base on a steal had it in for him and would, if possible, throw the spikes into him. He was a good player, but

left the base every time there was a close play in order to get away from the spikes.

I have seen him muff balls intentionally, so that he would not have to try to touch runners, fearing that they might injure him. Grant was the same way. Why, the runners chased him off second base. They went down so often trying to break his legs or injure them that he gave up his infield position the latter part of last season [i.e., 1888] and played right field. This is not all.

About half the pitchers try their best to hit these colored players when [they are] at the bat . . . One of the International League pitchers pitched for Grant's head all the time. He never put a ball over the plate but sent them in straight and true right at Grant. Do what he would he could not hit the Buffalo man, and he [Grant] trotted down to first on called balls all the time.

Fowler's ambitions in baseball extended beyond his career as a player. As early as 1885, while in between teams, he considered playing for and managing the Orions, a Negro team in Philadelphia. Early in July 1887, just prior to his being released by Binghamton, the sporting press reported that Fowler planned to organize a team of blacks who would tour the South and Far West during the winter between 1887 and 1888. "The strongest colored team that has ever appeared in the field," according to *Sporting Life*, would consist of Stovey and Walker of Newark; Grant of Buffalo; five members of the Cuban Giants; and Fowler, who would play and manage. This tour, however, never materialized.

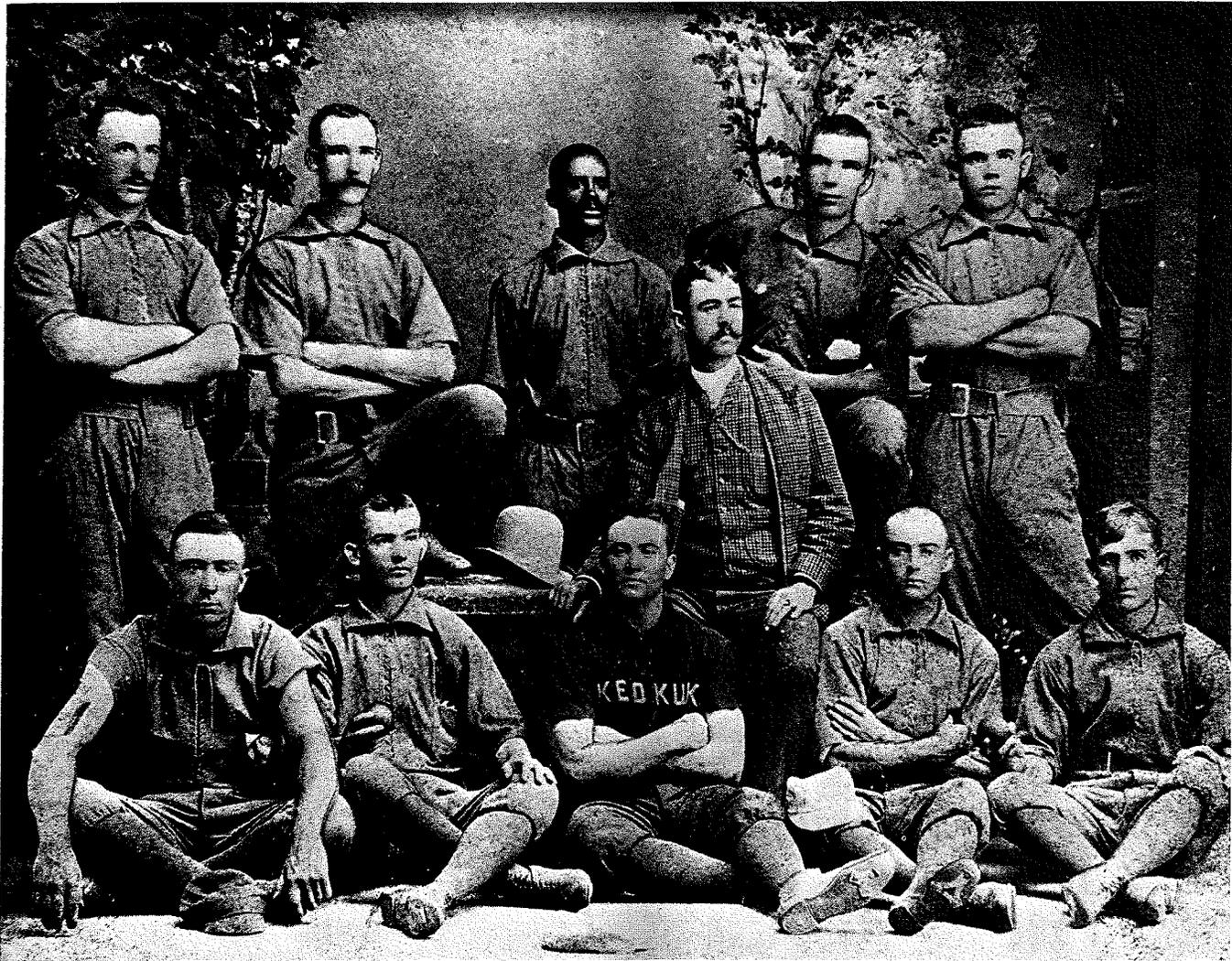
But this was not the only capitalistic venture for Fowler in 1887. The entrepreneurial drive that would lead White to describe him as "the celebrated promoter of colored ball clubs, and the sage of base ball" led him to investigate another ill-fated venture: The National Colored Base Ball League.

II

In 1886 an attempt had been made to form the Southern League of Colored Base Ballists, centered in Jacksonville, Florida. Little is known about this circuit, since it was so short lived and received no national and very little local press coverage. Late in 1886, though, Walter S. Brown of Pittsburgh announced his plan of forming the National Colored Base Ball League. It, too, would have a brief existence. But unlike its Southern predecessor, Brown's Colored League received wide publicity.

The November 18, 1886, issue of *Sporting Life* announced that Brown already had lined up five teams. Despite the decision of the Cuban Giants not to join the league, Brown called an organizational meeting at Eureka Hall in Pittsburgh on December 9, 1886. Delegates from Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Louisville attended. Representatives from Chicago and Cincinnati also were present as prospective investors, Cincinnati being represented by Bud Fowler.

Final details were ironed out at a meeting at the Douglass Institute in Baltimore in March 1887. The seven-team



The Keokuk club of 1885, with star Bud Fowler, née John Jackson

league consisted of the Keystones of Pittsburgh, Browns of Cincinnati, Capitol City of Washington, Resolutes of Boston, Falls City of Louisville, Lord Baltimores of Baltimore, Gorhams of New York, and Pythians of Philadelphia. (The Pythians had been the first black nine to play a white team in history, beating the City Items 27-17 on September 18, 1869.) Reach Sporting Goods agreed to provide gold medals for batting and fielding leaders in exchange for the league's use of the Reach ball. Players' salaries would range from \$10 to \$75 per month. In recognition of its questionable financial position, the league set up an "experimental" season, with a short schedule and many open dates.

"Experimental" or not, the Colored League received the protection of the National Agreement, which was the structure of Organized Baseball law that divided up markets and gave teams the exclusive right to players' contracts. *Sporting Life* doubted that the league would benefit from this protection "as there is little probability of a wholesale raid upon its ranks even should it live the season out—a highly improbable contingency." Participation in

the National Agreement was more a matter of prestige than of practical benefit. Under the headline "Do They Need Protection?" *Sporting Life* wrote:

The progress of the Colored League will be watched with considerable interest. There have been prominent colored base ball clubs throughout the country for many years past, but this is their initiative year in launching forth on a league scale by forming a league . . . representing . . . leading cities of the country. The League will attempt to secure the protection of the National Agreement. This can only be done with the consent of all the National Agreement clubs in whose territories the colored clubs are located. This consent should be obtainable, as these clubs can in no sense be considered rivals to the white clubs nor are they likely to hurt the latter in the least financially. Still the League can get along without protection. The value of the latter to the white clubs lies in that it guarantees a club undisturbed possession of its players. There is not likely to be much of a scramble for colored players. Only two [sic] such players are now employed in professional white clubs, and the number is not likely to be ever materially increased owing to the high standard of play required and to the popular prejudice against any considerable mixture of races.

Despite the gloomy—and accurate—forecasts, the Colored League opened its season with much fanfare at Recreation Park in Pittsburgh on May 6, 1887. Following “a grand street parade and a brass band concert,” about 1200 spectators watched the visiting Gorhams of New York defeat the Keystones, 11-8.

Although Walter Brown did not officially acknowledge the demise of the Colored League for three more weeks, it was obvious within a matter of days that the circuit was in deep trouble. The Resolutes of Boston traveled to Louisville to play the Falls City club on May 8. While in Louisville, the Boston franchise collapsed, stranding its players. The league quickly dwindled to three teams, then expired. Weeks later, Boston’s players were still marooned in Louisville. “At last accounts,” reported *The Sporting News*, “most of the Colored Leaguers were working their way home doing little turns in barbershops and waiting on table in hotels.” One of the vagabonds was Sol White, then nineteen years old, who had played for the Keystones of Pittsburgh. He made his way to Wheeling, West Virginia, where he completed the season playing for that city’s entry in the Ohio State League. (Three other blacks in that league besides White were Welday Walker, catcher N. Higgins, and another catcher, Richard Johnson.) Twenty years later he wrote:

The [Colored] League, on the whole, was without substantial backing and consequently did not last a week. But the short time of its existence served to bring out the fact that colored ball players of ability were numerous.

Although independent black teams would enjoy varying degrees of success throughout the years, thirty-three seasons would pass before Andrew “Rube” Foster would achieve Walter Brown’s ambitious dream of 1887: a stable all-Negro professional baseball league.

III

The International League season was getting under way. In preseason exhibitions against major league teams, Grant’s play was frequently described as “brilliant.” *Sporting Life* cited the “brilliant work of Grant,” his “number of difficult one-handed catches,” and his “special fielding displays” in successive games in April. Even in an 18-4 loss to Philadelphia, “Grant, the colored second baseman, was the lion of the afternoon. His exhibition was unusually brilliant.”

Stovey got off to a shaky start, as Newark lost to Brooklyn 12-4 in the team’s exhibition opener. “Walker was clever—exceedingly clever behind the bat,” wrote the *Newark Daily Journal*, “yet threw wildly several times.” A few days later, though, Newark’s “colored battery” performed magnificently in a 3-2 loss at the Polo Grounds to the New York Giants, the favorite National League team of the Newark fans (hence the nickname “Little Giants”).

Stovey was “remarkably effective,” and Walker threw out the Giants’ John Montgomery Ward at second base, “something that but few catchers have been able to accomplish.” The play of Stovey and Walker impressed the New York sportswriters, as well as New York Giants’ Captain Ward and manager Jim Mutrie who, according to White, “made an offer to buy the release of the ‘Spanish Battery,’ but [Newark] Manager Hackett informed him they were not on sale.”

Stovey and Walker were becoming very popular. The Binghamton *Leader* had this to say about the big southpaw:

Well, they put Stovey in the box again yesterday. You recollect Stovey, of course—the brunette fellow with the sinister fin and the demonic delivery. Well, he pitched yesterday, and, as of yore, he teased the Bingos. He has such a knack of tossing up balls that appear as large as an alderman’s opinion of himself, but you cannot hit ’em with a cellar door. There’s no use in talking, but that Stovey can do funny things with a ball. Once, we noticed, he aimed a ball right at a Bing’s commissary department, and when the Bingo spilled himself on the glebe to give that ball the right of way, it just turned a sharp corner and careened over the dish to the tune of “one strike.” What’s the use of bucking against a fellow that can throw at the flag-staff and make it curve into the water pail?

Walker, too, impressed fans and writers with his defensive skill and baserunning. In a game against Buffalo, “Walker was like a fence behind the home-plate . . . [T]here might have been a river ten feet behind him and not a ball would have gone into it.” Waxing poetic, one scribe wrote:

There is a catcher named Walker
Who behind the bat is a corker,
He throws to a base
With ease and with grace,
And steals ’round the bags like a stalker.

Who were the other black ballplayers in the IL? Oswego, unsuccessful in signing George Williams away from the Cuban Giants, added Randolph Jackson, a second baseman from Ilion, New York, to their roster after a recommendation from Bud Fowler. (Ilion is near Coopers-town; Fowler’s real name was John Jackson—coincidence?) He played his first game on May 28. In a 5-4 loss to Newark he “played a remarkable game and hit for a double and a single, besides making the finest catch ever made on the grounds,” wrote *Sporting Life*. Jackson played only three more games before the Oswego franchise folded on May 31, 1887.

Binghamton, which already had Bud Fowler, added a black pitcher named Renfroe (whose first name is unknown). Renfroe had pitched for the Memphis team in the Southern League of Colored Base Ballists in 1886, where “he won every game he pitched but one, averaging twelve strikeouts a game for nine games. In his first game against Chattanooga he struck out the first nine men who came to

bat," wrote the *Memphis Appeal*; "he has great speed and a very deceptive down-shoot." Renfroe pitched his first game for Binghamton on May 30, a 14-9 victory over Utica, before several thousand fans.

"How far will this mania for engaging colored players go?" asked *Sporting Life*. "At the present rate of progress the International League may ere many moons change its title to 'Colored League.'" During the last few days in May, seven blacks were playing in the league: Walker and Stovey for Newark, Fowler and Renfroe for Binghamton, Grant for Buffalo, Jackson for Oswego, and one player not yet mentioned: Robert Higgins. For his story, we back up and consider the state of the Syracuse Stars.

IV

The 1887 season opened with Syracuse in a state of disarray. Off the field, ownership was reorganized after a lengthy and costly court battle in which the Stars were held liable for injuries suffered by a fan, John A. Cole, when he fell from a grandstand in 1886. Another fall that disturbed management was that of its team's standing, from first in 1885 to a dismal sixth in 1886. Determined to infuse new talent into the club, Syracuse signed seven players from the defunct Southern League after the 1886 season. Although these players were talented, the move

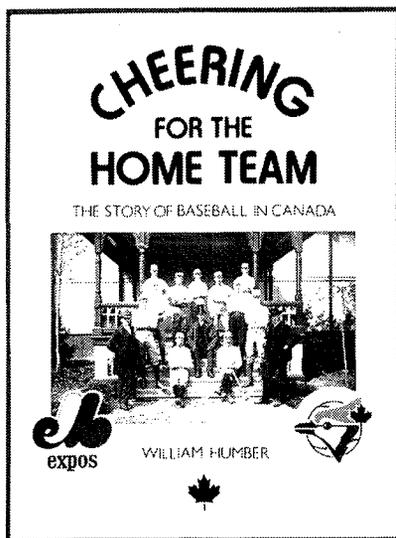
appeared to be backfiring when, even before the season began, reports began circulating that the Southern League men had formed a "clique" to foist their opinions on management. The directors wanted to sign as manager Charley Hackett, who, as we have seen, subsequently signed with Newark. But the clique insisted that they would play for Syracuse only if Jim Gifford, who had hired them, was named manager. The directors felt that Gifford was too lax, yet acquiesced to the players' demand.

By the end of April, the *Toronto World* was reporting:

Already we hear talk of "cliqueism" in the Syracuse Club, and if there be any truth to the bushel of statement that team is certain to be doomed before the season is well under way. Their ability to play a winning game is unquestioned, but if the clique exists the club will lose when losing is the policy of the party element.

Another offseason acquisition for the Stars was a catcher named Dick Male, from Zanesville, Ohio. Soon after he was signed in November 1886, rumors surfaced that "Male" was actually a black named Dick Johnson. Male mounted his own public relations campaign to quell these rumors. The Syracuse correspondent to *Sporting Life* wrote:

Much has been said of late about Male, one of our catchers, being a colored man, whose correct name is said to be Johnson. I have seen a photo of Male, and he is not a colored man by a large majority. If he is he has sent some other fellow's picture.



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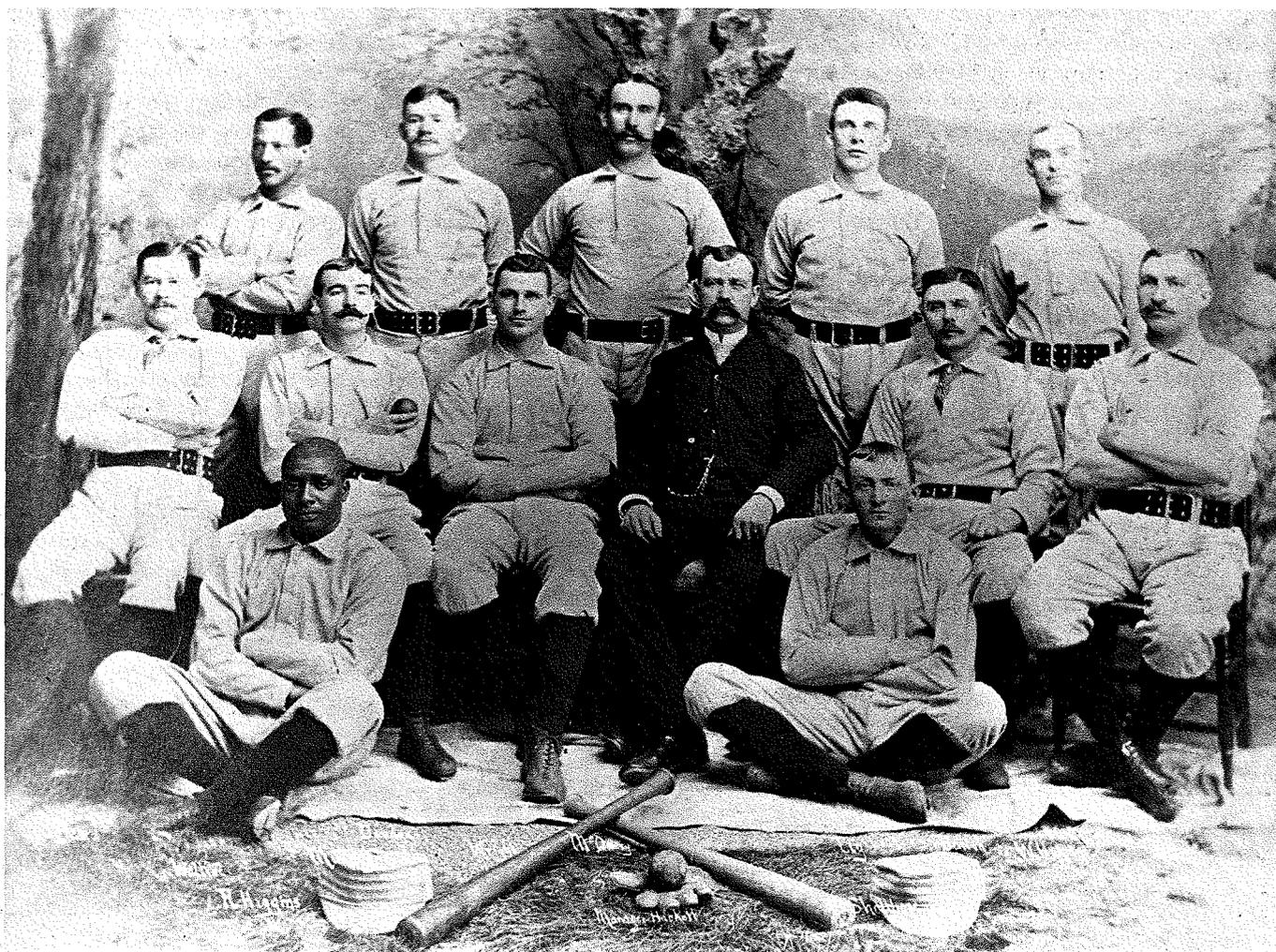
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The Syracuse Stars of 1888, featuring pitcher Bob Higgins (bottom left) and battery mate Fleet Walker (top left)

The *Sporting News*' Syracuse writer informed his readers that "Male . . . writes that the man calling him a negro is himself a black liar."

Male's performance proved less than satisfactory and he was released by Syracuse shortly after a 20-3 drubbing at the hands of Pittsburgh in a preseason game, in which Male played right field, caught, and allowed three passed balls. Early in May he signed with Zanesville of the Ohio State League, where he once again became a black catcher named Johnson.

As the season began, the alarming specter of selective support by the Southern League players became increasingly apparent. They would do their best for deaf-mute pitcher Ed Dundon, who was a fellow refugee, but would go through the motions when Doug Crothers or Con Murphy pitched for the Stars. Jim Gifford, the Stars' manager, not equal to the task of controlling his team, resigned on May 17. He was replaced by "Ice Water" Joe Simmons, who had managed Walker at Waterbury in 1886.

Simmons began his regime at Syracuse by signing a nineteen-year-old lefthanded black pitcher named Robert

Higgins. Like Renfroe, Higgins was from Memphis, and it was reported that manager Sneed of Memphis "would have signed him long ago . . . but for the prejudice down there against colored men." Besides his talents as a pitcher Higgins was so fast on the basepaths that *Sporting Life* claimed that he had even greater speed than Mike Slattery of Toronto, who himself was fast enough to steal 112 bases in 1887, an International League record to this day.

On May 23, two days after he signed with the Stars, Higgins pitched well in an exhibition game at Lockport, New York, winning 16-5. On May 25 the Stars made their first trip of the season to Toronto, where in the presence of 1,000 fans, Higgins pitched in his first International League game. The *Toronto World* accurately summed up the game with its simple headline: "DISGRACEFUL BASEBALL." The Star team "distinguished itself by a most disgusting exhibition." In a blatant attempt to make Higgins look bad, the Stars lost 28-8. "Marr, Bittman, and Beard . . . seemed to want the Toronto team to knock Higgins out of the box, and time and again they fielded so badly that the home team were enabled to secure many hits after the side should have been retired. In several

instances these players carried out their plans in the most glaring manner. Fumbles and muffs of easy fly balls were frequent occurrences, but Higgins retained control of his temper and smiled at every move of the clique . . . Marr, Bittman, Beard and Jantzen played like schoolboys." Of Toronto's 28 runs, 21 were unearned. Higgins' catcher, Jantzen, had three passed balls, three wild throws, and three strikeouts, incurring his manager's wrath to the degree that he was fined \$50 and suspended. (On June 3 Jantzen was reinstated, only to be released on July 7.) *The Sporting News* reported the game prominently under the headlines: "THE SYRACUSE PLOTTERS; The Star Team Broken Up by a Multitude of Cliques; The Southern Boys Refuse to Support the Colored Pitcher." The group of Southern League players was called the "Ku-Klux coterie" by the Syracuse correspondent, who hoped that player Harry Jacoby would dissociate himself from the group. "If it is true that he is a member of the Star Ku-Klux-Klan to kill off Higgins, the negro, he has made a mistake. His friends did not expect it. . . ."

According to the *Newark Daily Journal*, "Members of the Syracuse team make no secret of their boycott against Higgins. . . . They succeeded in running Male out of the club and they will do the same with Higgins." Yet when the club returned to Syracuse, Higgins pitched his first game at Star Park on May 31, beating Oswego 11-4. *Sporting Life* assured its readers that "the Syracuse Stars supported [Higgins] in fine style."

But Bob Higgins had not yet forded the troubled waters of integrated baseball. On the afternoon of Saturday, June 4, in a game featuring opposing Negro pitchers, Syracuse and Higgins defeated Binghamton and Renfroe 10-4 before 1,500 fans at Star Park. Syracuse pilot Joe Simmons instructed his players to report the next morning to P. S. Ryder's gallery to have the team portrait taken. Two players did not comply, left fielder Henry Simon and pitcher Doug Crothers. The Syracuse correspondent for *The Sporting News* reported:

The manager surmised at once that there was "a nigger in the fence" and that those players had not reported because the colored pitcher, Higgins, was to be included in the club portrait. He went over to see Crothers and found that he was right. Crothers would not sit in a group for his picture with Higgins.

After an angry exchange, Simmons informed Crothers that he would be suspended for the remainder of the season. The volatile Crothers accused Simmons of leaving debts in every city he had managed, then punched him. The manager and his pitcher were quickly separated.

There may have been an economic motive that fanned the flames of Crothers' temper, which was explosive even under the best of circumstances: he was having a disappointing season when Simmons hired a rival and potential replacement for him. According to *The Sporting News'* man in Syracuse, Crothers was not above contriving to hinder the performance of another pitcher, Dundon, by

getting him liquored-up on the night before he was scheduled to pitch.

Crothers, who was from St. Louis, later explained his refusal to sit in the team portrait:

I don't know as people in the North can appreciate my feelings on the subject. I am a Southerner by birth, and I tell you I would have my heart cut out before I would consent to have my picture in the group. I could tell you a very sad story of injuries done my family, but it is personal history. My father would have kicked me out of the house had I allowed my picture to be taken in that group.

Crothers' suspension lasted only until June 18, when he apologized to his manager and was reinstated. In the meantime he had earned \$25 per game pitching for "amateur" clubs. On July 2, he was released by Syracuse. Before the season ended, he played for Hamilton of the International League, and in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, all the while threatening to sue the Syracuse directors for \$125.

Harry Simon, a native of Utica, New York, was not punished in any way for his failure to appear for the team portrait; of course, he did not compound his insubordination by punching his manager. The *Toronto World* was cynical, yet plausible, in commenting that Simon "is such a valuable player, his offense [against Higgins] seems to have been overlooked." The sporting press emphasized that Crothers was punished for his failure to pose with Higgins more than his fisticuffs with Simmons.

Thus in a period of ten days did Bob Higgins become the unwilling focus of attention in the national press, as the International League grappled with the question of race. Neither of these incidents—the attempt to discredit him with intentionally bad play nor the reluctance of white players to be photographed with a black teammate—was unprecedented. The day before the Stars' appointment with the photographer, the *Toronto World* reported that in 1886 the Buffalo players refused to have their team photographed because of the presence of Frank Grant, which made it seem unlikely that the Bisons would have a team portrait taken in 1887 (nonetheless, they did). That Canadian paper, ever vigilant lest the presence of black ballplayers besmirch the game, also reported, ominously, that "The recent trouble among the Buffalo players originated from their dislike to [sic] Grant, the colored player. It is said that the latter's effective use of a club alone saved him from a drubbing at the hands of other members of the team."

Binghamton did not make a smooth, serene transition into integrated baseball. Renfroe took a tough 7-6 eleven-inning loss at the hands of Syracuse on June 2, eight days after Higgins' 28-8 loss to Toronto. "The Bings did not support Renfroe yesterday," said the *Binghamton Daily Leader*, "and many think the shabby work was intentional."

On July 7, Fowler and Renfroe were released. In recognition of his considerable talent, Fowler was released only

upon the condition that he would not sign with any other team in the International League. Fowler joined the Cuban Giants briefly, by August was manager of the (Negro) Gorham Club of New York, and he finished the season playing in Montpelier, Vermont.

On August 8, the Newark *Daily Journal* reported, "The players of the Binghamton base ball club were . . . fined \$50 each by the directors because six weeks ago they refused to go on the field unless Fowler, the colored second baseman, was removed." In view of the fact that two weeks after these fines were imposed the Binghamton franchise folded, it may be that the club's investors were motivated less by a tender regard for social justice than by a desire to cut their financial losses.

According to the Oswego *Palladium*, even an International League umpire fanned the flames of prejudice:

It is said that [Billy] Hoover, the umpire, stated in Binghamton that he would always decide against a team employing a colored player, on a close point. Why not dispense with Mr. Hoover's services if this is true? It would be a good thing for Oswego if we had a few players like Fowler and Grant.

There were incidents that indicated support for a color-blind policy in baseball. For example:

A citizen of Rochester has published a card in the *Union and Advertiser* of that city, in which he rebukes the Rochester *Sunday Herald* for abusing Stovey on account of his color. He says: "The young man simply discharged his duty to his club in white-washing the Rochesters if he could. Such comments certainly do not help the home team; neither are they creditable to a paper published in a Christian community. So far as I know, Mr. Stovey has been a gentleman in his club, and should be treated with the same respect as other players.

But the accumulation of events both on and off the field drew national attention to the International League's growing controversy over the black players. The forces lining up against the blacks were formidable and determined, and the most vociferous opposition to integrated baseball came from Toronto, where in a game with Buffalo on July 27, "The crowd confined itself to blowing their horns and shouting, 'Kill the nigger.'" The Toronto *World*, under the headline "THE COLORED BALL PLAYERS DISTASTEFUL," declared:

The *World's* statement of the existence of a clique in the Syracuse team to "boy cott" Higgins, the colored pitcher, is certain to create considerable talk, if it does not amount to more, in baseball circles. A number of colored players are now in the International League, and to put it mildly their presence is distasteful to the other players. . . . So far none of the clubs, with the exception of Syracuse, have openly shown their dislike to play with these men, but the feeling is known to exist and may unexpectedly come to the front. The chief reason given for McGlone's* refusal to sign with Buffalo this season is that he objected to playing with Grant.

* John McGlone's scruples in this regard apparently were malleable enough to respond to changes in his career fortunes. In September 1888 he signed with Syracuse, thereby acquiring two black teammates—Fleet Walker and Bob Higgins.

A few weeks later the *World* averred, in a statement reprinted in *Sporting Life*:

There is a feeling, and a rather strong one too, that an effort be made to exclude colored players from the International League. Their presence on the teams has not been productive of satisfactory results, and good players as some of them have shown themselves, it would seem advisable to take action of some kind, looking either to their non-engagement or compelling the other element to play with them.

Action was about to be taken.

V

July 14, 1887, would be a day that Tommy Daly would never forget. Three thousand fans went to Newark's Wright Street grounds to watch an exhibition game between the Little Giants and the most glamorous team in baseball: Adrian D. (Cap) Anson's Chicago White Stockings. Daly, who was from Newark, was in his first season with the White Stockings, forerunners of today's Cubs. Before the game he was presented with gifts from his admirers in Newark. George Stovey would remember the day, too. And for Moses Fleetwood Walker, there may have been a sense of déjà vu—for Walker had crossed paths with Anson before.

Anson, who was the first white child born among the Pottawattomie Indians in Marshalltown, Iowa, played for Rockford and the Philadelphia Athletics in all five years of the National Association and twenty-two seasons for Chicago in the National League, hitting over .300 in all but two. He also managed the Sox for nineteen years. From 1880 through 1886, Anson's White Stockings finished first five times, and second once. Outspoken, gruff, truculent, and haughty, Anson gained the respect, if not the esteem, of his players, as well as opponents and fans throughout the nation. Cigars and candy were named after him, and little boys would treasure their Anson-model baseball bats as their most prized possessions. He was a brilliant tactician with a flair for the dramatic. In 1888, for example, he commemorated the opening of the Republican national convention in Chicago by suiting up his players in black, swallow-tailed coats.

In addition to becoming the first player to get 3,000 hits, Anson was the first to write his autobiography. *A Ball Player's Career*, published in 1900, does not explicitly delineate Anson's views on race relations. It does, however, devote several pages to his stormy relationship with the White Stockings' mascot, Clarence Duval, who despite Anson's vehement objections was allowed to take part in the round-the-world tour following the 1888 season. Anson referred to Duval as "a little darkey," a "coon," and a "no account nigger."

In 1884, when Walker was playing for Toledo, Anson brought his White Stockings into town for an exhibition. Anson threatened to pull his team off the field unless

Walker was removed. But Toledo's manager, Charley Morton, refused to comply with Anson's demand, and Walker was allowed to play. Years later *Sporting Life* would write:

The joke of the affair was that up to the time Anson made his "bluff" the Toledo people had no intention of catching Walker, who was laid up with a sore hand, but when Anson said he wouldn't play with Walker, the Toledo people made up their minds that Walker would catch or there wouldn't be any game.

But by 1887 times had changed, and there was no backing Anson down. The Newark press had publicized that Anson's White Stockings would face Newark's black Stovey. But on the day of the game it was Hughes and Cantz who formed the Little Giants' battery. "Three thousand souls were made glad," glowed the *Daily Journal* after Newark's surprise 9-4 victory, "while nine were made sad." The *Evening News* attributed Stovey's absence to illness, but the *Toronto World* got it right in reporting that "Hackett intended putting Stovey in the box against the Chicagos, but Anson objected to his playing on account of his color."

On the same day that Anson succeeded in removing the "colored battery," the directors of the International League met in Buffalo to transfer the ailing Utica franchise to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. It must have pleased Anson to read in the next day's *Newark Daily Journal*:

THE COLOR LINE DRAWN IN BASEBALL.

The International League directors held a secret meeting at the Genesee House yesterday, and the question of colored players was freely discussed. Several representatives declared that many of the best players in the league are anxious to leave on account of the colored element, and the board finally directed Secretary White to approve of no more contracts with colored men.

Whether or not there was a direct connection between Anson's opposition to playing against Stovey and Walker and, on the same day, the International League's decision to draw the color line is lost in history. For example, was the league responding to threats by Anson not to play lucrative exhibitions with teams of any league that permitted Negro players? Interestingly, of the six teams which voted to install a color barrier—Binghamton, Hamilton, Jersey City, Rochester, Toronto, and Utica—none had a black player; the four teams voting against it—Buffalo, Oswego, Newark, and Syracuse—each had at least one.

In 1907, Sol White excoriated Anson for possessing "all the venom of a hate which would be worthy of a Tillman or a Vardaman* of the present day. . . ."

Just why Adrian C. Anson . . . was so strongly opposed to colored players on white teams cannot be explained. His repugnant feeling, shown at every opportunity, toward colored ball players, was a source of comment throughout every league in the country, and his opposition, with his great popularity and power

* Sen. Benjamin R. ("Pitchfork Ben") Tillman, of South Carolina, and Gov. James K. Vardaman, of Mississippi, were two of the most prominent white supremacists of their time.

in baseball circles, hastened the exclusion of the black man from the white leagues.

Subsequent historians have followed Sol White's lead and portrayed Anson as the *meistersinger* of a chorus of racism who, virtually unaided, disqualified an entire race from baseball. Scapegoats are convenient, but Robert Peterson undoubtedly is correct:

Whatever its origin, Anson's animus toward Negroes was strong and obvious. But that he had the power and popularity to force Negroes out of organized baseball almost singlehandedly, as White suggests, is to credit him with more influence than he had, or for that matter, than he needed.



Adrian "Cap" Anson

The International League's written color line was not the first one drawn. In 1867 the National Association of Base Ball Players, the loosely organized body which regulated amateur baseball, prohibited its members from accepting blacks. The officers candidly explained their reason:

If colored clubs were admitted there would be in all probability some division of feeling, whereas, by excluding them no injury could result to anybody and the possibility of any rupture being created on political grounds would be avoided.

This 1867 ban shows that even if blacks were not playing baseball then, there were ample indications that they would be soon. But the NABBP would soon disappear, as baseball's rapidly growing popularity fostered professionalism. Also, its measure was preventative

rather than corrective: it was not intended to disqualify players who previously had been sanctioned. And, since it applied only to amateurs, it was not intended to deprive anyone of his livelihood.

Press response to the International League's color line generally was sympathetic to the Negroes—especially in cities with teams who had employed black players. The *Newark Call* wrote:

If anywhere in this world the social barriers are broken down it is on the ball field. There many men of low birth and poor breeding are the idols of the rich and cultured; the best man is he who plays best. Even men of churlish dispositions and coarse hues are tolerated on the field. In view of these facts the objection to colored men is ridiculous. If social distinctions are to be made, half the players in the country will be shut out. Better make character and personal habits the test. Weed out the toughs and intemperate men first, and then it may be in order to draw the color line.

The *Rochester Post-Express* printed a shrewd and sympathetic analysis by an unidentified "old ball player, who happens to be an Irishman and a Democrat":

We will have to stop proceedings of that kind. The fellows who want to proscribe the Negro only want a little encouragement in order to establish class distinctions between people of the white race. The blacks have so much prejudice to overcome that I sympathize with them and believe in frowning down every attempt by a public body to increase the burdens the colored people now carry. It is not possible to combat by law the prejudice against colored men, but it is possible to cultivate a healthy public opinion that will effectively prevent any such manifestation of provincialism as that of the ball association. If a negro can play better ball than a white man, I say let him have credit for his ability. Genuine Democrats must stamp on the color line in order to be consistent.

"We think," wrote the *Binghamton Daily Leader*, "the International League made a monkey of itself when it undertook to draw the color line"; and later the editor wondered "if the International League proposes to exclude colored people from attendance at the games." Welday Walker used a similar line of reasoning in March 1888. Having read an incorrect report that the Tri-State League, formerly the Ohio State League, of which Welday Walker was a member, had prohibited the signing of Negroes, he wrote a letter to league president W. H. McDermitt. Denouncing any color line as "a disgrace to the present age," he argued that if Negroes were to be barred as players, then they should also be denied access to the stands.

The sporting press stated its admiration for the talents of the black players who would be excluded. "Grant, Stovey, Walker, and Higgins," wrote *Sporting Life*, "all are good players and behave like gentlemen, and it is a pity that the line should have been drawn against them." That paper's Syracuse correspondent wrote "Dod gast the

measly rules that deprives a club of as good a man as Bob Higgins. . . ." Said the *Newark Daily Journal*, "It is safe to say that Moses F. Walker is mentally and morally the equal of any director who voted for the resolution."

Color line or no color line, the season wore on. Buffalo and Newark remained in contention until late in the season. Newark fell victim to injuries, including one to Fleet Walker. Grant's play deteriorated, although he finished the year leading the league in hitting. Toronto, which overcame internal strife of its own, came from the back of the pack, winning twenty-two of its last twenty-six games; they may have been aided by manager Charley Cushman's innovative device of having his infielders wear gloves on their left hands. On September 17, Toronto swept a doubleheader from Newark at home before 8,000 fans to take first place. One week later they clinched their first International League title. To commemorate the triumphant season, the Canadian Pacific Railway shipped a 160-foot tall pine, "the second tallest in America," across the continent. Atop this pole would fly the 1887 International League pennant.

Before the season ended there was one further flareup of racial prejudice that received national attention. On Sunday, September 11, Chris Von der Ahe, owner of the St. Louis Browns, canceled an exhibition game that was scheduled for that day in West Farms, New York, against the Cuban Giants. Led by its colorful and eccentric owner, and its multitalented manager-first baseman, Charles Comiskey, the Browns were the Chicago White Stockings of the American Association. At ten o'clock in the morning Von der Ahe notified a crowd of 7,000 disappointed fans that his team was too crippled by injuries to compete. The real reason, though, was a letter Von der Ahe had received the night before, signed by all but two of his players (Comiskey was one of the two):

Dear Sir: We, the undersigned members of the St. Louis Base Ball Club, do not agree to play against negroes tomorrow. We will cheerfully play against white people at any time, and think by refusing to play, we are only doing what is right, taking everything into consideration and the shape the team is in at present.

The Cuban Giants played, instead, a team from Danbury, New York, as Cuban Giant manager Jim Bright angrily threatened to sue the Browns. Von der Ahe tried to mollify Bright with a promise to reschedule the exhibition, a promise that would be unfulfilled. The Browns' owner singled out his star third baseman, Arlie Latham, for a \$100 fine. Von der Ahe did not object to his players' racial prejudice. In fact, he was critical of them not for their clearly stated motive for refusing to play, but for their perceived lack of sincerity in pursuing their objective:

The failure to play the game with the Cuban Giants cost me \$1000. If it was a question of principle with any of my players, I would not say a word, but it isn't. Two or three of them had



The Buffalo team of 1887, with Frank Grant at the bottom, second from the right

made arrangements to spend Sunday in Philadelphia, and this scheme was devised so that they would not be disappointed.

VI

There was considerable speculation throughout the offseason that the International League would rescind its color line, or at least modify it to allow each club one Negro. At a meeting at the Rossin House in Toronto on November 16, 1887, the league dissolved itself and reorganized under the title International Association. Buffalo and Syracuse, anxious to retain Grant and Higgins, led the fight to eliminate the color line. Syracuse was particularly forceful in its leadership. The Stars' representatives at the Toronto meeting "received a letter of thanks from the colored citizens of [Syracuse] for their efforts in behalf of the colored players," reported *Sporting Life*. A week earlier, under the headline "Rough on the Colored Players," it had declared:

At the meeting of the new International Association, the matter

of rescinding the rule forbidding the employment of colored players was forgotten. This is unfortunate, as the Syracuse delegation had Buffalo, London, and Hamilton, making four in favor and two [i.e., Rochester and Toronto] against it.

While the subject of the color line was not included in the minutes of the proceedings, the issue apparently was not quite "forgotten." An informal agreement among the owners provided a cautious retreat. By the end of the month, Grant was signed by Buffalo, and Higgins was retained by Syracuse for 1888. Fleet Walker, who was working in a Newark factory crating sewing machines for the export trade, remained uncommitted on an offer by Worcester, as he waited "until he finds whether colored players are wanted in the International League [sic]. He is very much a gentleman and is unwilling to force himself in where he is not wanted." His doubts assuaged, he signed, by the end of November, with Syracuse, where, in 1888 he would once again join a black pitcher. The Syracuse directors had fired manager Joe Simmons, and replaced him with Charley Hackett. Thus, Walker would be playing for his third team with Hackett as manager. He

looked forward to the next season, exercising his throwing arm by tossing a claw hammer in the air and catching it.

After a meeting in Buffalo in January 1888, *Sporting Life* summarized the IA's ambivalent position on the question of black players:

At the recent International Association meeting there was some informal talk regarding the right of clubs to sign colored players, and the general understanding seemed to be that no city should be allowed more than one colored man. Syracuse has signed two whom she will undoubtedly be allowed to keep. Buffalo has signed Grant, but outside of these men there will probably be no colored men in the league.

Frank Grant would have a typical season in Buffalo in 1888, where he was moved to the outfield to avoid spike wounds. For the third straight year his batting average (.346) was the highest on the team. Bob Higgins, the agent and victim of too much history, would, according to *Sporting Life*, "give up his \$200 a month, and return to his barbershop in Memphis, Tennessee," despite compiling a 20-7 record.

Fleet Walker, catching 76 games and stealing 30 bases, became a member of a second championship team, the first since Toledo in 1883. But his season was blighted by a third distasteful encounter with Anson. In an exhibition game at Syracuse on September 27, 1888, Walker was not permitted to play against the White Stockings. Anson's policy of refusing to allow blacks on the same field with him had become so well-known and accepted that the incident was not even reported in the white press. The Indianapolis *World* noted the incident, which by now apparently was of interest only to black readers.

Fowler, Grant, and Stovey played many more seasons, some with integrated teams, some on all-Negro teams in white leagues in organized baseball, some on independent Negro teams. Fowler and Grant stayed one step ahead of the color line as it proceeded westward.

Fleet Walker continued to play for Syracuse in 1889, where he would be the last black in the International League until Jackie Robinson. Walker's career as a professional ballplayer ended in the relative obscurity of Terre Haute, Indiana (1890) and Oconto, Wisconsin (1891).

In the spring of 1891 Walker was accused of murdering a convicted burglar by the name of Patrick Murphy outside a bar in Syracuse. When he was found not guilty "immediately a shout of approval, accompanied by clapping of hands and stamping of feet, rose from the spectators," according to *Sporting Life*. His baseball career over, he returned to Ohio and embarked on various careers. He owned or operated the Cadiz, Ohio, opera house, and several motion picture houses, during which time he claimed several inventions in the motion picture industry. He was also the editor of a newspaper, *The Equator*, with the assistance of his brother Welday.

In 1908 he published a 47-page booklet entitled *Our*

Home Colony; A Treatise on the Past, Present and Future of the Negro Race in America. According to the former catcher, "The only practical and permanent solution of the present and future race troubles in the United States is entire separation by emigration of the Negro from America." Following the example of Liberia, "the Negro race can find superior advantages, and better opportunities . . . among people of their own race, for developing the innate powers of mind and body. . . ." The achievement of racial equality "is contrary to everything in the nature of man, and [it is] almost criminal to attempt to harmonize these two diverse peoples while living under the same government." The past forty years, he wrote, have shown "that instead of improving we are experiencing the development of a real caste spirit in the United States."

Fleet Walker died of pneumonia in Cleveland at age 66 on May 11, 1924, and was buried in Union Cemetery in Steubenville, Ohio. His brother Welday died in Steubenville thirteen years later at the age of 77.

VII

In *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, historian C. Vann Woodward identifies the late 1880s as a "twilight zone that lies between living memory and written history," when "for a time old and new rubbed shoulders—and so did black and white—in a manner that differed significantly from Jim Crow of the future or slavery of the past." He continued:

. . . a great deal of variety and inconsistency prevailed in race relations from state to state and within a state. It was a time of experiment, testing, and uncertainty—quite different from the time of repression and rigid uniformity that was to come toward the end of the century. Alternatives were still open and real choices had to be made.

Sol White and his contemporaries lived through such a transition period, and he identified the turning point at 1887. Twenty years later he noted the deterioration of the black ballplayer's situation. Although White could hope that one day the black would be able to "walk hand-in-hand with the opposite race in the greatest of all American games—base ball," he was not optimistic:

As it is, the field for the colored professional is limited to a very narrow scope in the base ball world. When he looks into the future he sees no place for him. . . . Consequently he loses interest. He knows that, so far shall I go, and no farther, and, as it is with the profession, so it is with his ability.

The "strange careers" of Moses Walker, George Stovey, Frank Grant, Bud Fowler, Robert Higgins, Sol White, et al., provide a microcosmic view of the development of race relations in the society at large, as outlined by Woodward. The events of 1887 offer further evidence of the old saw that sport does not develop character—it reveals it.

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Baseball's Great Experiment

JULES TYGIEL

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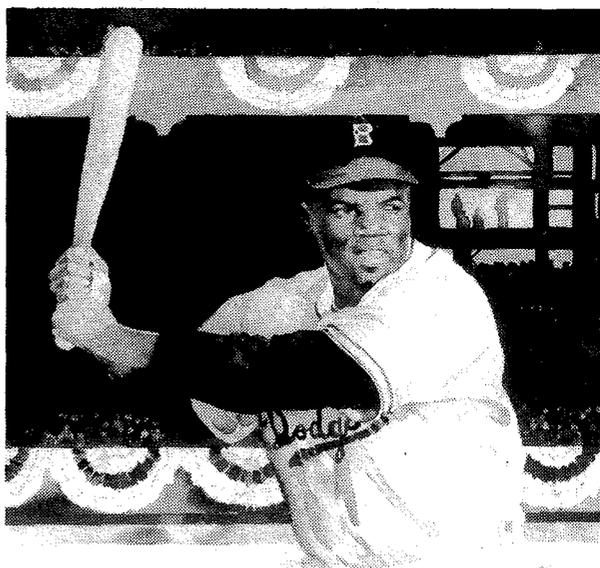
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"Nothing but good luck followed in his wake."

Louis Van Zelst in the Age of Magic

JOHN B. HOLWAY

THE BAND STRUCK UP "Hail the Conquering Heroes Come," and cheering Philadelphia fans opened a gauntlet at the depot October 24, 1910, to let their victorious Athletics pass through. The A's had just arrived from Chicago, where they had whipped the Cubs four games to one to win the baseball championship of the world.

At the head of the line of players marched the manager, lanky, kindly Connie Mack, in his black derby hat and starched collar. Beside him, barely reaching to Connie's belt buckle, limped hunchback Louis Van Zelst. It was Connie's first world championship ever, and, wrote the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "little did they [the fans] know that away down in that corner where superstition is safely locked up, many of the players felt that the diminutive chap who walked beside the great Connie Mack had a lot to do with the humbling of the Cubs. Connie himself thinks so."

The story of Louis Van Zelst is played against the backdrop of an age when many players accorded superstition a weight equal to talent in the formula for pennant success . . . an age when the best teams often maintained rituals of dress, habit, and conduct designed to foster good luck, and when several went so far as to carry "lucky mascots." Did Louis fulfill his mission—was he an amulet of good fortune?

"Indeed he was," wrote veteran sports writer Fred Lieb. "Nothing but good luck followed in his wake."

Mack has long been considered one of the top managers of all time. But until he met Louis, late in the 1909 season, his record had been spotty. In twelve years, including three directing Pittsburgh's National League club in the 1890s, Mack had finished seventh twice, sixth twice, fifth

once, fourth twice, second three times, and first twice—in 1902 and 1905.

Louis was born in 1895, making him only six years older than the A's franchise, which was founded in 1901 with the traditional Philadelphia name. His body was misshapen from the age of eight, according to his younger brother, T. P. Van Zelst, now seventy-eight and a retired Philadelphia beer distributor. The boy had hitched a ride on a wagon and fallen off. The accident collapsed his lung and almost killed him, but he recovered, remaining a tiny, stunted boy with a twisted torso much too short for his legs.

Yet his happy smile "seemed to light up one's heart, no matter how trouble or defeat pressed on it," as one sportswriter later put it. He was "an exceptionally bright chap, winsome and clever," another commented.

In September of 1909, The A's, trailing Detroit and the Tigers' legendary star, Ty Cobb, by 3.5 games, played a crucial four-game series with the league leaders in Shibe Park. The clubs split the first two games, and the stadium was packed for the third. Little Louis Van Zelst hobbled toward the gate as soon as school was over.

Louis had apparently struck up a friendship with Rube Oldring, the A's center fielder, who later claimed he got the hunchback the job as batboy. Another story says that Louis, lacking a ticket, flashed a picture of Rube taken from a cigarette pack and an indulgent ticket taker smilingly waved him in.

When Mack spotted the hunchback he called to him,

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"How'd you like to tend bats for us today?" How would he like it? Louis limped eagerly onto the field and took up his duties.

The A's got a lucky break in the fourth inning. With Eddie Collins on third, Detroit ace Wild Bill Donovan caught Collins flat-footed but threw wildly and Collins dashed home with a run. A second gift followed in the eighth. With A's rookie Heinie Heitmuller on second by an error, Collins hit a ground ball and was safe at first on a close play. Donovan, thinking Collins was out, held the ball while Heitmuller raced home; the A's won 2-0. They won the next game, too, and were now only 1.5 games behind. With Louis remaining on the job, the A's won six of eight, but they couldn't catch the Tigers, who won six straight to capture the flag.

The following spring Mack signed Louis to a full-time contract. Little Van Zelst was in his glory, wearing a regular A's uniform and making all the road trips. A's shortstop Jack Barry and pitcher Jack Coombs acted as his guardians and made sure he went to Mass every Sunday. Travel was an ordeal, since Louis was subject to spasms of pain. But he never complained. "He had the courage of a Spartan," a reporter wrote.

Louis "won the hearts of our players," Mack said. Even enemy players loved him, including Cobb, a man who didn't make many friends. Louis was a good comic, too. Detroit manager Hughie Jennings had once dived into an empty pool at night, and Louis used to get his dander up with a pantomime of a swan dive.

Louis discovered "lucky holes" in the turf. At every game he dug his spikes into the charmed spots and carefully stepped in the same place thereafter. If a hitter was in a slump, Louis would say in his weak, quavering voice, "better rub my back for a hit this time."

It must have worked in 1910. Outfielder Danny Murphy raised his average 19 points to an even .300. Shortstop Jack Barry improved 44 points. Oldring jumped 78 points to .308, the best year of his career. And Collins led the league in stolen bases, beating out the great Cobb.

The pitchers, meanwhile, cut their earned run average to an amazing 1.79. Bender won 22 games, the first 20-victory season of his life, and Coombs won 31. In all, the A's won 102 times, the most in the young history of the American League, and trotted to the pennant.

But their World Series foes, the Chicago Cubs, had done even better, with 104 victories. What's more, they had whipped the Tigers in each of their last two Series appearances, in 1907 and 1908. When Plank reported a sore arm and Oldring broke his leg, Philadelphia went into the Series a distinct underdog.

But the A's laughed at the odds. In the first game, Bender pitched a three-hitter to win 4-1. Next Coombs faced Chicago's ace, 25-game winner Mordecai "Three-Fingered" Brown. In the last of the seventh, the Cubs were holding a slim 3-2 lead. Louis' luck must have rubbed off, because they erupted for six runs, the biggest inning to

that date in World Series history, and went ahead in the Series two games to none.

Moving to Chicago, Mack called on Coombs again with only one day's rest. He coasted to a 15-5 victory.

After the A's lost the fourth game, 4-3, Coombs came back to pitch his third complete game in five days. He was protecting a 2-1 lead when the A's, merrily rubbing Louis' back, scored five runs in the eighth to clinch the world championship.

As a team, the Athletics hit .316, a record that would stand for 50 years until the 1960 Yankees of Mickey Mantle and Yogi Berra broke it. Collins hit .429, third baseman Frank Baker .409.

In 1911 Mack added Stuffie McInnis at first base and the famous "\$100,000 infield" was complete: McInnis, Collins, Barry, and Baker. Coombs had another splendid year on the mound with 29 victories. Plank won 22 and the A's easily won the pennant again.

This time their foes in the World Series were the New York Giants, who themselves carried one of the most famous good luck charms in the annals of baseball, a lunatic Kansas hayseed named Charles Victor Faust.

Victory Faust had dreamed that he would pitch the Giants to a pennant: he went to a gypsy fortune teller who confirmed the vision; then, when a telegram arrived offering him a job with the Giants, he dashed to see John McGraw. The telegram was a hoax perpetrated by a local joker, but Faust convinced McGraw that he was indeed a lucky charm. After he joined them, the Giants played some of the hottest ball of any team in major league history. For the last two months of the season, with Faust "warming up" to pitch before each ballgame and then taking his place on the bench, the Giants won 39 games and lost only 7 for a winning percentage of .830; not the Miracle Braves of 1914, the 1951 Giants, the Amazin' Mets of 1969, or the '78 Yankees could equal that pace down the stretch. (Only the record-setting 1906 Cubs performed better at the finish, winning 50 of their final 57, an .877 percentage.) From third place, 4.5 games behind Chicago, the Giants charged into first to win by 8.5 in October. They stole 347 bases, an all-time record. Their legendary pitchers, Christy Mathewson and Rube Marquard, won 24 and 25 games respectively—Marquard going 11-1 after the arrival of the aptly named Faust. Relief specialist Otis "Doc" Crandall was 8-0 with Charlie on the job.

Leon "Red" Ames was considered a hoodoo pitcher, the unluckiest man in baseball, until an actress gave him a lucky necktie soon after Faust joined the team; helped by both Faust and the tie, Ames won five of his last six games.

The Giants were red-hot, and the A's again entered the Series with a heavy handicap. McInnis, a .321 hitter, hurt his hand and was replaced by Harry Davis, at .197.

With Mathewson facing Bender in the opener, the Giants surprised the crowd by walking out in black uniforms, like those they wore when they beat the A's in 1905. Perhaps these brought good luck: the Giants won 2-1.

In Game 2, Frank Baker lined a Marquard pitch over the wall for a Philadelphia victory. The next day he lined another off Mathewson in the ninth to tie it (and was forever after known as Home Run Baker). New York's Chief Meyers replied in the eleventh with a long blow that curved foul at the last second, then the A's pushed across a run to win. After a week's rain delay, Philadelphia came from behind to defeat Mathewson for a third straight victory.

Game 5. Charlie Faust, still predicting a Giant victory, entertained the pregame crowd by leading the band. The attempt was not too successful, the band finding it hard to play and laugh at the same time. Coombs went against Marquard. This time the A's struck first. Oldring, who had hit only three home runs all year, hit one with two men on base to give Van Zelst's heroes a three-run lead.

Then it seemed as if the Faust magic took hold. Collins' error let in one Giant run. Two more scored in the ninth to tie it up. In the tenth, Coombs pulled a groin muscle and had to leave the game, so Mack hurriedly called on Plank to pitch. He yielded a double to Larry Doyle, then fielded a bunt but threw too late to third to nip Doyle. Fred Merkle flied to right, and Doyle slid home with the winning run. It was now three games to two, the A's still ahead.

In Game 6, Bender went up against Ames, who had foolishly thrown away his lucky tie. In the fourth inning, the Giants fell apart, allowing four runs, three on errors, including one fumble by Ames.

The A's were champs again.

Why did Philadelphia win? Mathewson, a Bucknell graduate (Class of '99) and hardly an uneducated, superstitious ballplayer, pointed the finger at Louis Van Zelst, claiming he out-jinxed Faust. The A's voted Louis half a share of their World Series winnings. "He deserved it," Matty said, "because he has won two world's pennants for them."

In 1912 the A's dropped to third (although Faust's Giants finished first again in the National League). In 1913 Coombs was taken ill, winning only one game, yet Philadelphia regained the American League pennant. While Louis went faithfully to the hospital, talking or reading to big Jack by the hour, the other pitchers took up the slack. Bender won 21, Plank 18, Boardwalk Brown 17, and newcomers Bullet Joe Bush and Bob Shawkey 14 and 7, respectively. The World Series would be an A's-Giants rematch — Louis against Charles once again.

Once more the little hunchback prevailed, as the A's beat the Giants four games to one.

In 1914, lefties Herb Pennock and Rube Bressler joined the starting rotation, and the A's easily won the pennant again. Louis was 4-for-5.

Over in the National League, the Giants had "released" Charlie Faust after three straight flags. Starting out 1914 strong, they led the league on July 4, then ran into trouble. From the back of the pack, the last-place Braves began stirring to life at the same time.

The Braves were led by George Stallings, a former medical student from Georgia who was the cussingest—and probably the most superstitious—man ever to manage in the major leagues. He had so many lucky charms that he kept them in a trunk which the equipment manager lugged from city to city.

According to Lieb, he prized one charm above all others—a lucky 10-cent piece blessed by a Cuban witch doctor known as "the black pope." A friend brought it back that summer and gave it to Stallings, saying, "Here, this may bring your team luck."

Sure enough, the Braves began an amazing drive. They won 59 of their last 75 games for a percentage of .787. Three pitchers virtually carried the team: George Tyler won 11 and lost six in the stretch, Dick Rudolph went 17-1 after July 4, and Big Bill James posted a still more incredible 19-1.

But in the World Series the A's were heavy favorites to whip the cocky upstarts from Boston. When Mack ordered his pitchers to check out the Braves, Bender airily replied, "there's no need to scout a bush league team like that."

Stallings' faith was unshakable, however. He told the Braves they could beat the A's in four straight, something that had never been done in World Series history. He ordered his players not to talk to the A's, and picked a fight with Connie Mack, loudly calling him several "pet names," and threatening to punch him in the nose. ("You . . . you . . . you . . . DUB!" Connie sputtered, though he apologized later for his intemperance.)

On the morning of the final day of the regular season, Braves president Jim Gaffney woke up with a premonition of trouble and phoned Stallings to urge his players to be careful. In the first game of the doubleheader with Brooklyn, Boston's best hitter, third baseman Red Smith, broke his leg. Still Stallings refused to be discouraged. He named Charlie Deal, a .210 hitter, to replace Smith and insisted that the change wouldn't weaken the team at all.

Mack named Bender to start the Series against Rudolph. The Chief complained that he had vertigo and gall bladder trouble, but Mack scoffed. Bender was soundly beaten 7-1.

It was Plank against James in the second game, and the two dueled for eight innings 0-0. In the Boston ninth, Deal lofted a fly ball to center which the A's Amos Strunk lost in the sun. A moment later Deal was caught off base, but Wally Schang threw high and Deal raced to third.

Then Les Mann, a .247 hitter, stroked a clean single just off Collins' fingers as Deal scored to win the game 1-0.

Game 3 pitted Bush against Tyler. Van Zelst's luck seemed to have returned when Murphy opened with a double and scored after Boston's Joe Connolly muffed Collins' fly. Collins stole second and it looked as if another run might come in, but Eddie was picked off the bag to end the threat. At the end of nine innings the two teams were tied 2-2.

In the Philadelphia tenth, Schang singled and Tyler

muffed a sure double play ball. Collins hit a long ball into the stands—foul—then stepped back in and drew a walk to load the bases. Baker hit another into the stands, foul again. Was Stallings' magic medal jinxing everything the A's did? No, Baker bounced a ball to Boston's great second baseman, Johnny Evers, but the ball took a hop over his shoulder and two runs scored. It seemed Van Zelst had overcome Stallings' voodoo.

Or had he? Hank Gowdy was first up for the Braves in the bottom of the tenth. A's scouts had told the pitchers to work Gowdy high and tight. Bush did and Hank hit it over the fence. A walk, a single and a fly ball tied the game.

As darkness settled, James came in to pitch for Boston. The A's threatened in the twelfth. Murphy walked with the heart of the batting order coming up—Oldring, Collins, and Baker. They must all have furiously rubbed Louis' back, but none could get the ball out of the infield. In the last of the twelfth, Gowdy doubled into the crowd, Herbie Moran bunted, and then Bush threw wildly to third. The winning run crossed the plate.

Shawkey was the A's last hope, pitted against Rudolph in Game 4. In the fourth the Braves scored without a hit on a walk, two ground balls, and Collins' error. In the fifth the A's tied as Barry beat out a hit to shortstop and scored on Shawkey's double.

But Stallings must have rubbed his coin extra hard in the bottom of the same inning. With two outs Rudolph singled, Moran doubled, the pesky Evers singled both men in, and the Braves were world champions. Baseball's most incredible season, by the game's most incredible team, had come to an end.

Louis Van Zelst was crushed by the Series loss. One reporter described it as "like a Waterloo to him."

That winter Plank and Bender jumped to the outlaw Federal League. Baker said he'd sit out the 1915 season, unless he got more money. The financially strapped Mack sold Collins to the White Sox. Still, it was a strong team that he took to spring training in March. He still had Pennock, Bush, and Bressler on the pitching staff. His World Series outfield remained intact, and half of his \$100,000 infield—Barry and McInnis—was with him. Not a championship club, Connie conceded, but a good first division team, nonetheless.

Van Zelst did not go to spring training that year. On Wednesday, March 19, he came home from a Penn baseball game and was suddenly taken gravely ill with heart trouble and Bright's Disease. The next day he knew he was going to die, and on Friday, March 21, the sad father wired Connie Mack that Louis was gone. The whole team sent heartfelt condolences to the family of "the little chap who had magicked the team to championships."

When the 1915 season opened, nothing went right for the A's, who lost 7 of their first 10 games. By May 1 they were in seventh place. By June 1, they were last.

Then Mack seemed to come apart completely. He sold Barry and Murphy for pittances. He let Pennock and

Shawkey go on waivers. At season's end, the A's were last, 48.5 games behind the champion Red Sox.

The conventional theory is that the A's finished eighth because Mack broke up the team. Actually, they were last before the final break-up began.

How did Louis' two nemeses, the Giants and Braves, do in 1915?

Barely two months after Louis' sudden death, Charles Victor Faust also passed away, in Fort Steilacoom, Washington, at age thirty-five, vainly begging McGraw to take him back. Like the A's without Louis, the Giants without Faust skidded all the way to last place in 1915.

Stallings looked ahead euphorically to another victory in 1915, but his coin's magic power, if that's what it was, would not work a second time. James won only five times in 1915, hurt his arm, and never won another major league game. The Braves fell to second, then third in 1916, sixth in 1917 and finally seventh in 1918. They did not win another pennant until 1948.

Without Van Zelst Connie Mack's A's finished last for seven years, 1915-21. He won only three more pennants. With Van Zelst he had won four flags in five years; without him he won only five in forty-eight.

Yet curiously, from 1915 through 1928, every American League champion save one would owe its pennant, at least in part, to stars who had played with Mack and Van Zelst in the A's halcyon years. Barry, sent to the Boston Red Sox, helped them win pennants in 1915 and 1916. In 1918, Stuffy McInnis joined the club and Boston won again. Collins, assisted by Eddie Murphy, sparked the Chicago White Sox to the 1917 and 1919 championships. They were aided in the latter season by little Eddie Bennett, another hunchback and good-luck charm who tended the team's bats.

The 1920 Indians featured pitching star Stanley Coveleski, a 20-game winner and veteran of the 1913 A's.

Prior to the 1921 season, the Yankees signed Baker and Shawkey and went on to win. Three more ex-A's joined the team in later years as New York won six pennants between 1921 and 1928.

The Washington Senators defeated New York in 1925, thanks in part to the acquisition of Coveleski from Cleveland. The 1924 Senator champions were the only ones to possess no direct link to the Mack-Van Zelst years.

In the long interim between championships, Connie tried his luck with another hunchback, Lou McLone. It was a brief and tragic experiment. McLone fell in with bootleggers and was gunned to death in a gangland war.

Today, only one veteran of those miracle teams, the A's, the Giants, and the Braves, remains alive.

I wrote Stanley Coveleski, now 94 years old, and asked him about Louis Van Zelst. What was the true story on how he was hired? Did he really bring the team good luck?

"Rube Oldring did ask Connie Mack to hire him," Coveleski replied in careful penmanship. "And we did regard him as lucky. It is all true, every word of it."

"It seemed there was always somebody or something refusing to let me pitch."

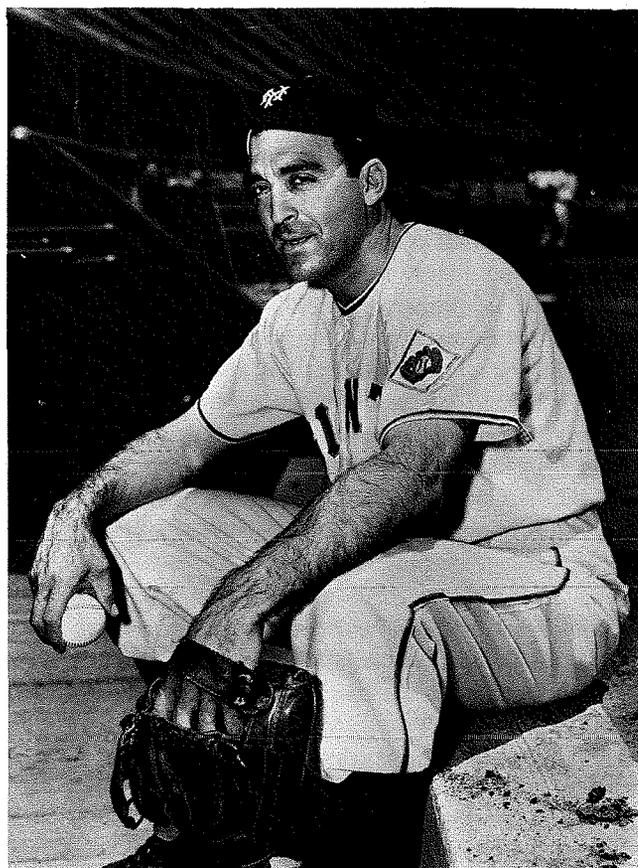
Sal Maglie: A Study in Frustration

HERMAN KAUFMAN

ST. LOUIS ON THE EVENING of July 19, 1950. The New York Giants came to town to challenge the winging Cardinals, engaged in a taut four-team race with Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Boston. A mere one and one-half games separated the contenders. Unlike their hosts, the visiting Giants harbored no pennant aspirations. Having just lost 12 of 14 games they were anchored solidly in fifth place with a record of 36-46.

Having nothing to lose, Giant manager Leo Durocher nominated a much-traveled, little-used thirty-three-year-old pitcher named Salvatore Anthony Maglie to start the game. A veteran of little more than a year's major league experience, Maglie's journeyman minor league record boded nothing in the way of hope for an end to New York's tailspin. After compiling a 3-15 record through his first three professional seasons—with the Class AAA Buffalo Bisons in 1938-40—he had asked for and received a demotion to the Class D Pony League. Sidelined during the war years, he was 5-4 with the Giants in 1945, then jumped to the outlaw Mexican League. Officially ostracized for that action, he gained reinstatement prior to 1950 and rejoined New York. In his only start prior to July 19, he was knocked out by the lowly Reds.

Yet on that summer evening in St. Louis Maglie, working out of innumerable jams, defeated the Cards 4-3 in 11 innings. It was more than a singular high in an up-and-down career; seen in retrospect, it was the occasion which ushered in a new era for New York. Spurred by Maglie's performance, the team won 17 of its next 18 games and 50 of the final 72, coming up only five beats short of the pennant.



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Today the career of Sal "The Barber" Maglie remains an enigmatic one in baseball history. It was Maglie who anchored the famous 1951 pennant drive, when the Giants, 13.5 games out of first place in mid-August, won 37 of their final 44 to overtake Boston. It was Maglie who became the symbol—either hero or villain depending on allegiances—of the always heated Giant-Dodger rivalry. There was his mastery against Brooklyn, evidenced by a 23-11 lifetime record. There were the brushback wars with Carl Furillo, who retaliated with his bat, and Jackie Robinson, who retaliated with daring baserunning. (During a game played April 30, 1951, Robinson became so exasperated with one of Maglie's "duster" pitches that he pushed a bunt down the first base line and, as Maglie approached the ball, met him with a vicious cross-body block for which the Dodger had been famous as an All-American halfback at UCLA. Maglie, who was sent sprawling across the infield, resumed his position on the mound and beat the Dodgers.)

Made more mature by his tribulations, Maglie starred on the mound during the 1950-51-52 and '54 seasons, and only an injury slowed him in 1953. Then, as abruptly as he had arrived, Maglie was discarded. He became a Dodger himself by way of Cleveland and, at age 39, demonstrated how foolish the Giants were to let him go, becoming the second oldest pitcher to that time to throw a no-hitter (only Cy Young was older) while leading Brooklyn to its last pennant in 1956. He won the first game of the World Series that year, beating Whitey Ford, and pitched a superb five-hitter in the fifth game several days later. Almost nobody recalls the latter effort because his opponent that October 8 afternoon was named Don Larsen.

Two seasons later, at the age of forty-one, Sal Maglie closed out his twenty-one-year career with his fifteenth club, the St. Louis Cardinals. It had been a career alternating between the self-fulfillment and frustration typified in his two starts of the 1956 World Series.

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The beginning was unequivocal—simply frustrating. In 1938 Maglie joined the Buffalo Bisons. By mid-1940, with a season's mark of 0-7 and an ERA of 7.17, Maglie requested demotion to Jamestown of the Class D Pony League, where he finished out the year. Because of the long periods between starts in Buffalo, Maglie was not effective for more than three or four innings. "And as I lost the opportunity to pitch, my confidence went," he said recently from his home near Niagara Falls, N.Y. At Jamestown Sal pitched better, and in 1941 the Giants, who had purchased his contract, sent him to Elmira, where he had plenty of mound opportunities and compiled a record of 20-15. At the end of the following season, which was spent at Jersey City, Maglie experienced the first of several career interruptions. With the advent of World War II, when his local draft board informed him that his deferment due to

a sinus condition would be lifted if he continued to play baseball, he took an exempt position in a defense plant.

After a two-year absence from the game, Maglie re-joined Jersey City in 1945 and, near the end of the season, was called up to the Giants, who gave him ten starts. Sal was effective, hurling three complete game shutouts. This performance impressed the Giants enough that they offered him a \$6,000 contract to pitch for the team the next season.

Nineteen forty-six was a pivotal year in baseball. With the return of servicemen to the big leagues, rosters were in a state of flux. The Giants, led by Mel Ott, were desperately trying to refurbish a pitching staff laced with non-entities. Coming off his brief but impressive 1945 showing, Maglie expected to be given an excellent chance to prove his worth.

He wasn't. In exhibition games, Maglie made only one appearance—against the Braves—giving up one run and striking out seven in five innings. "I never told this to anybody before," Sal said, "but since this was the first year after the war, manager Mel Ott set up a pitching rotation for batting practice for the purpose of getting a look at all the new pitchers, who were many. It was so bad that Ott would not even let me join the batting practice rotation."

Something else was happening in the major league training camps that spring. The Mexican League, led by Jorge Pasquel, who reportedly had amassed a fortune of some 60 million dollars, launched its raids aimed at upgrading the caliber of Mexican ball. Pasquel visited many players during spring training in 1946, including Stan Musial, to whom he offered a contract four to five times the Man's \$13,500 salary with the Cardinals. A similar offer was said to have been made to the Yankees' Phil Rizzuto.

Pasquel was aware of Maglie, having seen him pitch the previous winter in Cuba, where Sal had led the Cienfuegos team to a championship over its arch-rival, Almendares. At the time, Pasquel had offered Maglie a contract, which he refused. When he renewed the offer at New York's spring training camp in Miami, Maglie hesitated. Wanting badly to pitch, he wondered how he should respond.

What helped Maglie decide to play in the Mexican League was a stern rebuke from Ott after several Giants, who had also been approached by Pasquel, gathered for a meeting in Maglie's hotel room. "I wasn't even there," said Sal. Nonetheless Ott, who learned of the meeting and of long-distance phone calls to Mexico, accused him of leading the exodus of Giant players. Maglie figured he would not be pitching too often for the Giants and left camp.

With Puebla in the Mexican League, Maglie became a 20-game winner in 1946 and '47. He also perfected his famed curve after discovering how enormously the break was affected by atmospheric conditions. In the dry air at 7,000 feet the curve simply hung. In the moist sea-level air, it always broke sharply. Forced to experiment and adjust to those differing conditions, Maglie learned to



The Barber, south of the border

throw two types of curves: the sharp one, which broke down more than out, and the sweeping curve, which broke out more than it did down. For better control, he shortened his delivery so that he could throw the curve by gripping it with just the thumb and forefinger, which made the pitch more difficult to hit.

Despite his success, by 1948 Maglie found himself with no place to pitch. Pasquel, citing losses of over \$350,000, withdrew from the league, leaving Maglie and seventeen other defectors without jobs. "It seemed there was always somebody or something refusing to let me pitch," he said recently.

The league's new president, Dr. Eduardo Pittman, and major league baseball commissioner Happy Chandler negotiated a nonraiding pact by which each major league promised not to seek the other's players. But this did not result in Maglie's return to the major leagues, for in 1946 the baseball owners—fearful that the lure of the Mexican League would have the same effect on player salaries as the Federal League had in 1914—had prodded Chandler into decreeing the suspension for five years of players under contract who had jumped to Mexico. Even following execution of the agreement with Pittman, Chandler refused to rescind the ban.

So in the spring of 1948, Maglie and other former Mexican League players formed an all-star team headed by Cardinal pitcher Max Lanier. The team won 81 straight exhibitions, but could not continue playing after various forces in major league baseball instituted boycotts against it. The all-stars were denied access to parks controlled by Organized Baseball, and any player participating against the all-stars faced expulsion.

Unable to ply his trade, Maglie opened a service station in Niagara Falls in the fall of 1948. The next year, joined by several of the blacklisted players, he pitched for Drummondville in the outlaw Canadian Provincial League, where, according to official records, he was 15-6 during the regular season and 3-0 in the playoffs. (Maglie insists that he won 17 or 18 games during the regular season.)

On August 28, 1949, on the eve of the Provincial League playoffs, Maglie received a telephone call from a New York Giants club official, Charles "Chub" Feeney (the current National League president), advising him that Chandler had extended an amnesty offer to all previously blacklisted players, and that Maglie was eligible for immediate reinstatement. "I had absolutely no inkling of my reinstatement until Feeney telephoned," Maglie recalled.

Sal did not join the Giants until 1950, choosing instead to remain with Drummondville until the end of the season. Contrary to published reports, Maglie did not receive any bonus—rumored by some as high as \$15,000—for remaining in Canada after his reinstatement. "That kind of money simply didn't exist. We were lucky to be paid \$250 per game," he said.

The reinstatement of Maglie and the other players must be credited largely to Danny Gardella, who also had left the Giants to play in Mexico in 1946. Unlike Maglie, Gardella had not signed for the 1946 season and thus was not a contract jumper; he joined the Mexican League after surmising that the Giants would not offer him a contract for 1946. After one year in Mexico, Gardella sought reinstatement to the majors, but Chandler said no, reminding him that the reserve clause in his 1945 contract with the Giants forbade him from playing with any other team in 1946—even if he had not been signed by any team.

When Gardella could not persuade Chandler to change his mind, he commenced a legal challenge to the reserve clause. By early 1949, a federal appeals court had decreed that Gardella was entitled to a trial on whether the reserve clause was valid.

The ruling resulted immediately in other players filing suits and requesting preliminary injunctions that would allow them to play during the 1949 season. A federal district judge denied that relief, holding that once the players had left the teams voluntarily, the courts should not order the teams to take them back. (Maglie himself did not initiate any litigation: "Since I left the Giants voluntarily while under contract to them, I would not have taken the team to court . . . it was just something that I would not or could not do.")

Chandler, despite the district judge's ruling, was alarmed that Gardella might ultimately prevail and decided to settle the case as expeditiously as possible. As a first step, he issued the amnesty decree.

* * * * *

From that evening in St. Louis in 1950 and through the final half of that season, Maglie was 13-1, including 11 straight wins and 5 shutouts. Four whitewashes were consecutive, equaling a National League record then held by the great Grover Cleveland Alexander. The fourth, a masterful 2-0 four-hitter against Preacher Roe and the Dodgers, came five days after Maglie had shut out the first-place Phils in Philadelphia.

Through the sixth inning of a game on September 14, against Cincinnati in the Polo Grounds, Maglie had extended his scoreless innings streak to 45, leaving him just four batters short of Carl Hubbell's record. In the seventh, Gus Bell, backing away from a curve down at the ankles, hit a 257-foot home run down the rightfield line. Sal had no regrets. "The pitch was out of the strike zone and right where I wanted it," he said.

From July 1950 to May 1952 Maglie won 45 and lost 7, posting a 12-1 record against the Dodgers—whom he shut out five times. He was arguably the best pitcher in baseball over that period. His repertoire consisted of a fastball which broke down and in on righthand hitters, and his famous curve. Maglie's most important assets, however, were his thorough knowledge of the hitters and his sharp control, essential for a pitcher who could not overpower a hitter. "Always protect the plate," he said, "or else the hitters will take it away from you." This was the cornerstone of his "Barber" image. His success depended on keeping righthand hitters off balance, backing them away from the plate with inside pitches, mostly fastballs, in order to set up the curve. "Above all," he warned, "never throw a strike unless you must." The hitters who gave Maglie the most trouble, therefore, were those who insisted on strikes, like Pee Wee Reese and Richie Ashburn, whom Maglie described as "especially murder to pitch to with men on base."

During one stretch from September 15, 1951 to May 26, 1952, Maglie started and won 12 consecutive games, 11 of them complete, giving up just 18 runs. With what appeared to be relative ease he shut out Brooklyn three straight times, prompting the bewildered Dodgers to accuse him of throwing a spitter. "That's when I knew I had a psychological edge, when they started believing I was loading up the ball," he said. He never denied the accusation. "Why say anything?" he asked.

* * * * *

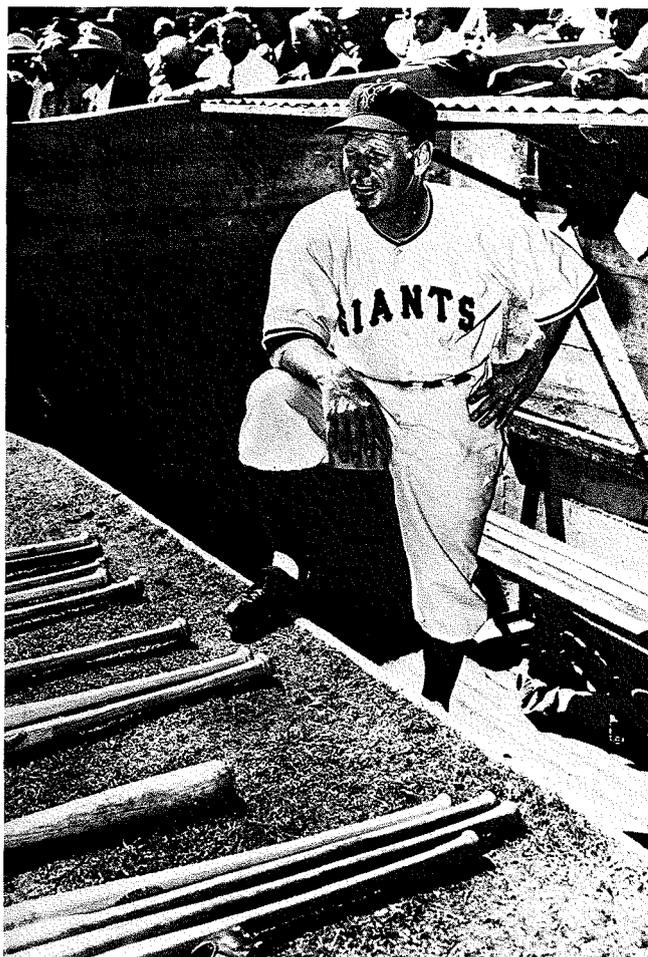
The evening of July 16, 1952, marked another frustrating turning point in Maglie's career. A few days earlier, while warming up for a start in Cincinnati, he had noticed a twitch in his back. It eased and he continued to

pitch. Through four innings of the game on July 16, the Giants led the Cardinals 1-0. Maglie, at bat in the fifth, was struck by a pitch and removed from the game, having aggravated the back pains.

He was placed in traction for several days and did not start for almost a month. Then, facing the Dodgers, he pitched six scoreless innings for the victory. Those who saw him knew that, barely able to bend over to pick up ground balls, he was pitching purely on courage. Time and again Brooklyn batters forced him to field bunts, but Maglie survived. Two weeks later he defeated Brooklyn again, 4-3, in a come-from-behind complete game victory sparked by a three-run home run by Davey Williams. During Maglie's absence, the Giants had sunk to 8 games out of the lead; with The Barber's second victory following his return, they were within 3.5 games. Despite lingering pains from the injury, he won seven of his final ten decisions.

The next season was disastrous. Sidelined with continuing back problems for most of the second half of the year, he watched New York close with 44 losses in its final 64 games to finish in the second division, 35 games out. The one bright spot for him came in early summer when he pitched six consecutive complete games, winning five

Leo Durocher



and losing a 1-0 decision. He allowed only 7 earned runs in 54 innings.

Realizing that because of his bad back and advancing age Maglie could no longer be counted upon as the team's stopper, the Giants made a serious but unsuccessful bid over the winter to obtain Warren Spahn. Instead, New York traded outfielder Bobby Thomson for two young southpaw pitchers, Johnny Antonelli and Don Liddle. Those acquisitions, plus the return of Willie Mays from the Army, led the experts to predict that New York might finish in the first division in 1954. They did better; they became world champions. Antonelli went 21-7 to lead the staff. But it was Maglie's early season performance that prevented the Dodgers from taking a commanding lead and turning the race into a runaway as had happened in 1953.

An observant chiropractor gave Maglie and the Giants an important lift between seasons. The chiropractor discovered that Maglie's back troubles stemmed from his right leg being three-quarters of an inch shorter than the left. A lift was prescribed for the inside of his right shoe. Once the season began, Maglie won four of the team's first nine games and five of his first six decisions. In typical fashion, his first two victories were against Brooklyn. There was no doubt his comeback was for real when, on April 30, pitching at Wrigley Field, Maglie defeated the Cubs 4-2 in 14 innings. He held Chicago scoreless during the final 10 innings and won on a home run by Mays.

Afterward, Giants' catcher Wes Westrum marveled at Maglie's feat. "Sal was missing with his curve ball in the early innings, and I told him he would have to rely more on his fastball," Westrum related. "That's all there was, and in most cases that can mean disaster to a pitcher because the hitter can wait for the fastball. But Maglie had such extraordinary control with the fastball that he was able to go through that long, tough game without letting them see enough of the ball for a good clout when they needed it."

The 14-inning victory was an inspiration to the Giants, who shortly thereafter swept four straight against the Braves in Milwaukee, then proceeded to win 34 of 40 games and emerge 7 games ahead by early July. Then the team sagged badly in August, and saw its lead dwindle to but a half game after three straight losses to the Dodgers. On August 27 Maglie, facing the Braves before 47,000 in Milwaukee in what was perhaps the pivotal game of the year, won 3-1 on a five-hitter, ending the team's slide. The season came to a climax on September 19 when Sal defeated the Dodgers on another five-hitter to clinch the pennant.

It has never been understood why, on July 31, 1955, the Giants waived Maglie to the Cleveland Indians. Some said he was no longer worth the close to \$38,000 salary he was receiving. Yet salary clearly was not the issue. While Maglie had been ineffective in the month before the trade—he had not won a game since the previous June

22—that was attributable to his not being given enough rest between starts during the inordinately hot summer. Still, Maglie had compiled a 9-5 record when the trade was announced.

An incident occurring in a game between the Giants and Cardinals at the Polo Grounds on June 12 might explain why the Giants soured on Maglie. With New York leading 5-3 and two out in the eighth inning, Maglie was pitching to Solly Hemus, who stroked a low line drive down the first base line that appeared headed for a double. Maglie started for the area behind third base to back up a possible overthrow to second base from right field. The batted ball, however, never reached the outfield; it hit the first base umpire and rebounded into the hands of first baseman Whitey Lockman, who was too far from the base to make an unassisted play and could not throw to Maglie, stationed behind third. Instead of being out of the inning, Maglie had to pitch to Stan Musial, who homered to tie the score. St. Louis won, 6-5, in extra innings.

After the game, Durocher told the press that the Giants lost because "Maglie was too lazy to cover first base" on the ball hit by Hemus. The feeling has persisted that Durocher's attack accounted for the Maglie trade; the Giants' front office would never comment on the deal.

Maglie, of course, expressed no displeasure at being sent to Cleveland, at the time a contender for the American League pennant. And when the Indians sent him back to the National League to Brooklyn on May 15, 1956, he was overjoyed. It was difficult, especially for Giant fans, to get used to The Barber in a Dodger uniform, but Brooklyn fans quickly adjusted.

In 1955 the Dodgers had all but clinched the flag by the Fourth of July. In 1956, however, the aging "Boys of Summer" were in a tough race with the Reds and Braves. By the end of July, Brooklyn was in third place, trailing Milwaukee by 8 games. As the Dodgers were about to be written off, Maglie, Don Newcombe (a 27-game winner that year), and Carl Erskine each won two successive starts to move the team within 2 games of the lead. In August and September, Maglie posted a 10-1 mark, making him 13-5 since joining Brooklyn. He highlighted that with a no-hitter against Philadelphia September 25.

His most important win down the stretch, however, came two weeks earlier against the Braves, whom he defeated 4-2 to give the Dodgers a share of the lead for the first time since April 28. The losing pitcher was Bob Buhl, who had defeated Brooklyn eight times previously in 1956.

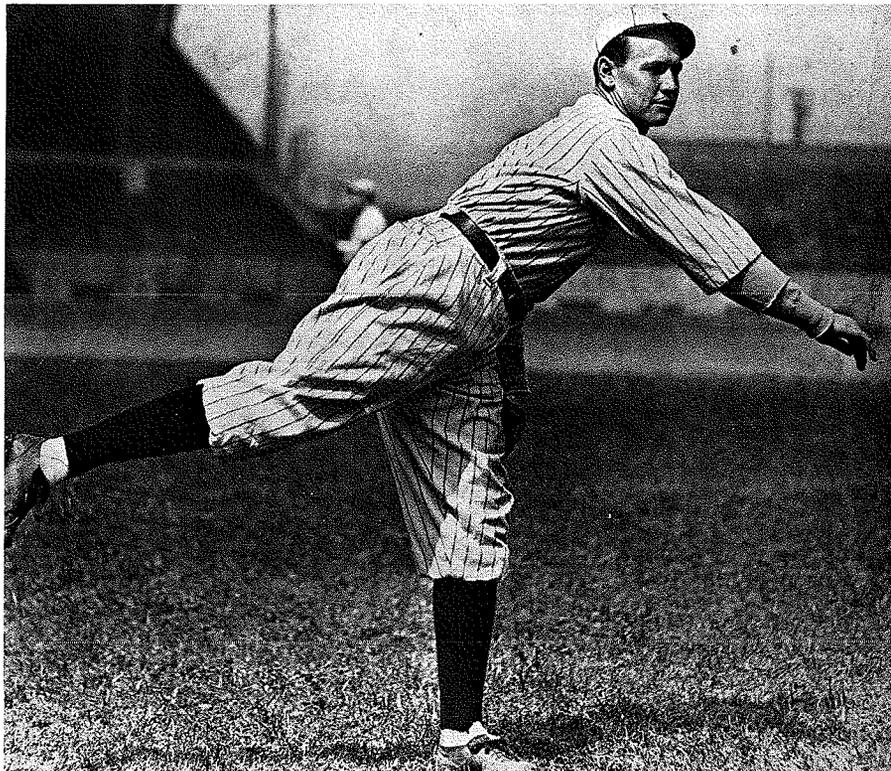
Maglie's strong finish made his opening game victory over Whitey Ford and the Yankees in the World Series almost anticlimactic. It was also anticlimactic when Sal became the twelfth major league player to wear the uniforms of the three New York teams after the Yankees acquired him from Brooklyn on September 2, 1957—one day too late for Maglie to be eligible for another World Series. Yet again, forces beyond his control conspired to deny him the opportunity to pitch.

The Joe Wood Scrapbook

Text by DEBRA A. DAGAVARIAN

Design by MARK RUCKER

He was there when Cy Young bowed out, when Babe Ruth broke in, when Ty Cobb terrorized baseball. He was not only there, he was a star, winning 37 of 43 decisions in 1912, batting .366 in 1921. And he is here—these pages portray baseball's history through his story, the long trail of Smoky Joe Wood. Wander from the turn of the century up to the present against the background of a man born 94 years ago, in 1889.



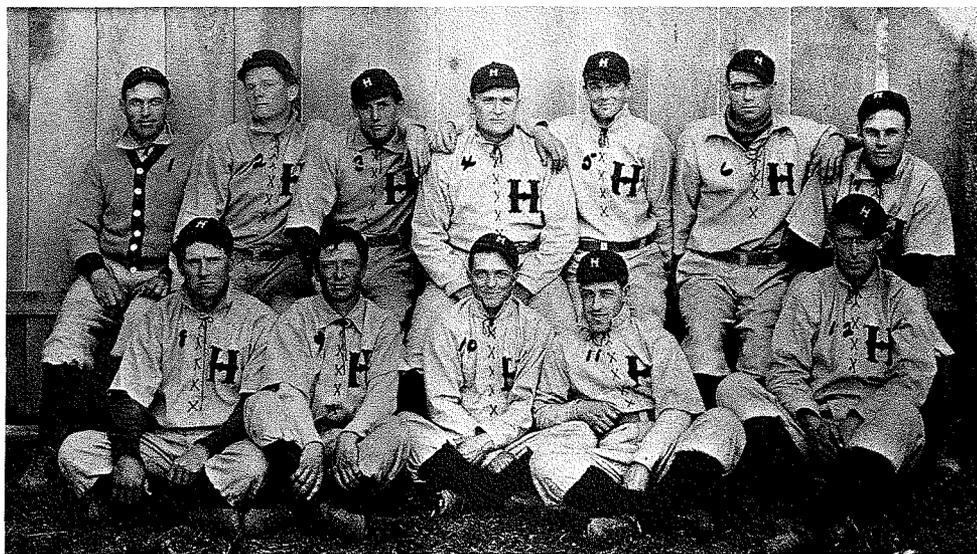
DEBRA A. DAGAVARIAN works as a college administrator and is writing a doctoral dissertation on baseball.

MARK RUCKER is a New York artist and co-chair of a SABR research committee.



Twelve year old Joe Wood (grimacing in the front row, left), in 1902 with the town team of Ouray, Colorado. Wood's family moved out west by prairie schooner and lived there for five years. Joe remembers his Colorado playing days as when he "first got big enough" to be on a baseball team. In those days, they often made their own balls using string they had saved.

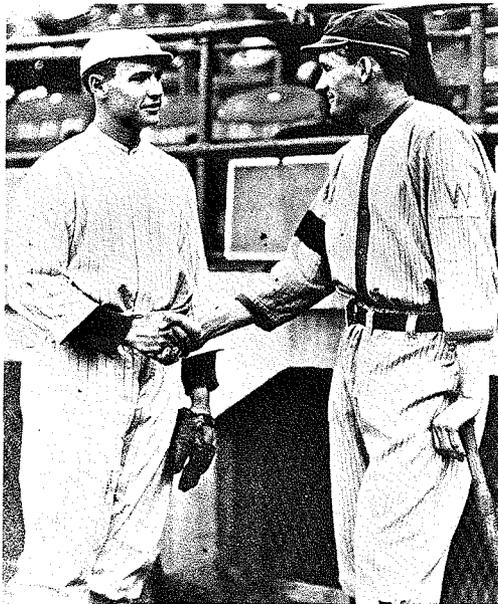
The amateur Ness City, Kansas team in 1906. Joe is wearing a dark shirt at the lower right. By 1907, he was with Hutchinson, Kansas in the Western Association—this was Wood's first professional team. Joe started as a shortstop in the minors, but once they saw him pitch, the verdict was in. In the picture below, he is No. 3.





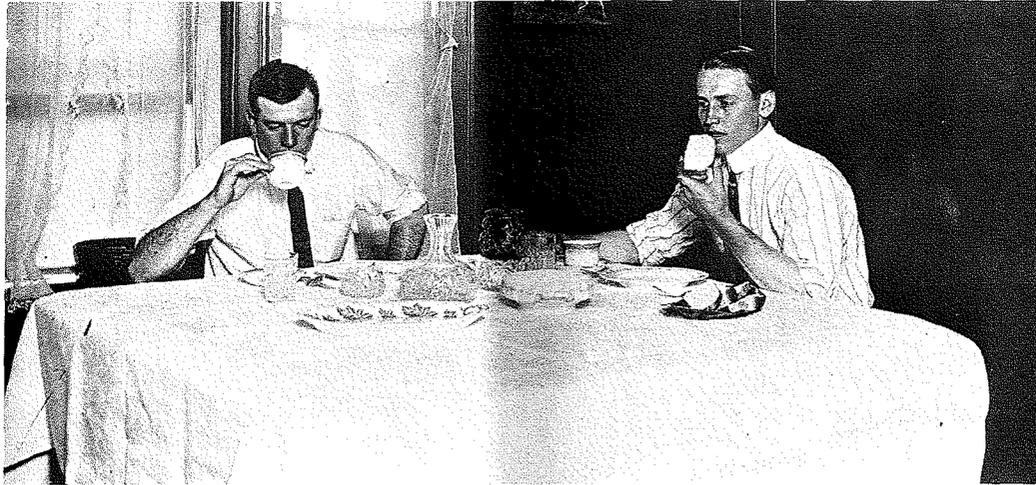
The Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park in April of 1912. Waving their caps for the camera are Wood (topmost), and pitchers Buck O'Brien (next to Wood) and Eddie Cicotte (below O'Brien). Bottom: In 1911 the first team of All-Stars was organized in honor of Cleveland pitcher Addie Joss, who had died that spring. Pictured are (top, left to right): Bobby Wallace, Frank Baker, Wood, Walter Johnson, Hal Chase, Clyde Milan, Russ Ford, and Eddie Collins; (bottom) Germany Schaefer, Tris Speaker, Sam Crawford, Jimmy McAleer, Ty Cobb—note the uniform—Gabby Street, and Paddy Livingston.



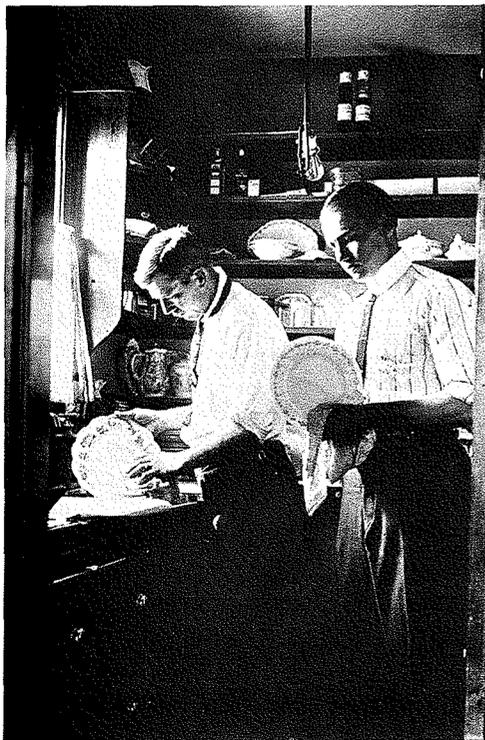


The highly publicized game of September 6, 1912 matched Wood against Walter Johnson. The ace hurler of the Washington team had recently ended a string of 16 consecutive wins and Wood had already compiled 13 straight. The game was billed as Johnson's chance to defend his own record, but Wood won a 1-0 classic and went on to tie Johnson's record of 16 consecutive wins later that season. Bottom: The Red Sox of 1915 in Hot Springs, Arkansas during spring training. Wood sits atop the wheel of the steamroller. Note the youthful Babe Ruth. Also pictured, carrying Chet Thomas on his shoulders, is the ubiquitous Germany Schaefer, who was not a member of the team.





Tris Speaker and Joe Wood were roommates for fifteen years, first with Boston and later with Cleveland. "Spoke" and Wood were hardly as domestic as they are portrayed here in "Cottage Park," Winthrop, Massachusetts, ca. 1913. Center fielder Speaker played shallow, just behind second base. He "was one of the greatest fielders that ever lived," remembers Wood. "He could run the bases, he could field, he could hit, he could throw . . . he could do everything!"





Wood with his sister and Tim Murnane, Boston sportswriter and former major leaguer. Taken in 1912 at the Wood home in Shohola, Pa.



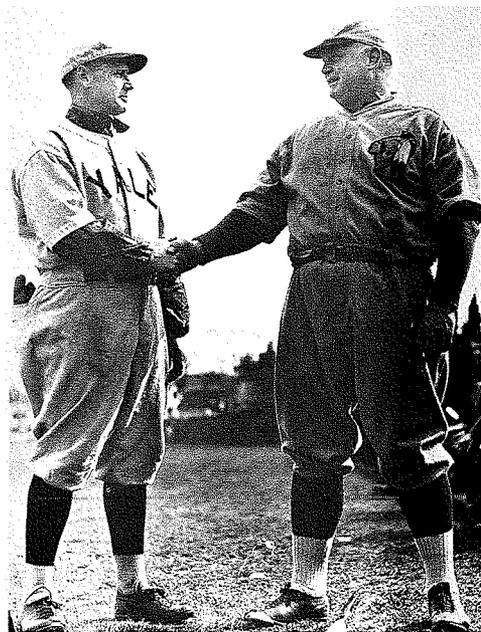
The heroes of 1912 after clinching the pennant, with "Honey Fitz" (standing in front seat), mayor of Boston and grandfather of J.F.K.



Wood with a few of his friends from the Cleveland club of 1920 on a hunting trip in Lord's Valley, Pa. The solemn-looking teammates above are Bill Wambsganss (left) and Wood. Below, clowning for the photographer, are (left to right) outfielder Elmer Smith, second baseman Wambsganss, and Cleveland groundskeeper Clarence VanDellen.



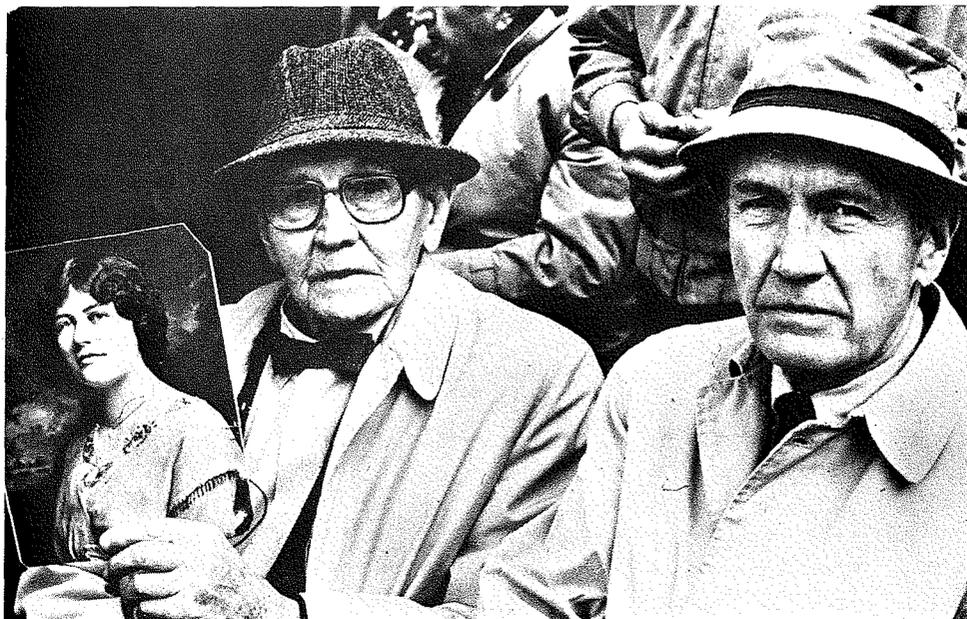
At Fenway Park in 1939, four of baseball's greatest pitchers—
Joe Wood, Cy Young, Lefty Grove, and Walter Johnson.



Left: Babe Ruth presents his autobiography to Yale captain (current V.P.) George Bush. Right:
Eli coach for 20 years, Wood faces Dartmouth coach Jeff Tesreau, his 1912 Series nemesis.



Ralph Houk with Joe Wood, Opening Day at Fenway Park in 1982. Wood, at the age of 92, had the honor of throwing out the first pitch, 70 years after throwing the last pitch for the Red Sox in the World Series.



Opening Day, Fenway Park, 1982. Joe Wood holding photograph of Laura, his wife of 66 years. Pictured with him is son Bob, whom Joe asserts had the most natural athletic ability of his four children.

The Great Days, the Great Stars

GENE KARST

I SPLASHED GRAPEFRUIT JUICE into the eye of the first Hall of Famer I ever met. I trailed another Hall of Famer into the clubhouse toilet and kept talking to him until he agreed to his first radio interview. Still another Hall of Famer hired me for a fascinating, never-to-be-forgotten publicity job the day I met him.

These three weren't in the Hall of Fame at the time. There was no Hall of Fame at the time. The three were honored some years later, after the Cooperstown shrine came into existence in 1939.

My first observations of major league baseball had come in the early 1920s, from the vantage point of the Knothole Gang section in the wooden leftfield pavilion at Sportsman's Park, St. Louis, and later from the bleachers after the old stadium was remodeled. I used my Knothole pass until one day Mel Curran, the gatekeeper, looked up at me and noticed my size. That was the end of that.

In college I began writing—and selling—baseball articles. These were mostly statistical in nature since at that time I had never met a real live major leaguer. But I wanted to. George Sisler had been a superstar with the Browns for many years. In 1920 and 1922 he hit above .400, but eye trouble forced him to sit out the entire 1923 season. Later he played briefly with the Washington Senators, then had a few years with the old Boston Braves. Since he had played in both the American and National Leagues, I wanted to write an article giving his views on their merits.

His reputation awed me, but I screwed up enough courage to phone him at the sporting goods store he owned in St. Louis. I got an appointment to meet him the next day at 10 A.M. for breakfast at the old Statler Hotel. He appeared on time, and we sat down to eat. Before I

could calm myself about meeting such a celebrity in the flesh, I plunged my spoon into the half grapefruit.

Disaster. A big splash of grapefruit juice shot straight into Sisler's eye. What a way to start an interview! Sisler, however, wiped his eye and tried to put me at ease. He couldn't help but see how nervous I was. I was thinking about the time he slugged an umpire when the Browns lost a close call at first base. Would his temper flare up again? (Such behavior was completely out of character for him, though—George was a gentleman.)

Except for the designated hitter rule in the American League and the minors, baseball has not changed fundamentally since the 1920s. However, the game has changed in many minor but noticeable ways.

There used to be two umpires officiating a game. If one of them got hurt, or missed a train, or just didn't show up, the competing teams would agree on a coach or a player from one of the teams to call the plays on the bases. Think of it! Try to imagine Billy Martin or Earl Weaver looking on calmly as one of these partisan umpires called a close play against the Yankees or the Orioles!

When I was a kid, a "courtesy runner" was occasionally allowed to substitute for a player who later continued in the game. There was a time back in the 1920s when, because of injuries, the Cardinals had only one catcher available: Verne (Tubby) Clemons. Clemons reached base a couple of times on a boiling, humid afternoon. The opposing manager allowed the Redbirds to use a runner each time, but afterwards Tubby still continued to catch.

GENE KARST worked for the Cardinals, Reds, Montreal Royals, and Hollywood Stars. He was also principal author of Who's Who in Professional Baseball.

He took his later turns at bat. Of course, no pennant was at stake. But courtesy runners are a thing of the past. To my best recollection, they disappeared in the 1930s.

Another custom that seems to have vanished a long time ago is this: With one team enjoying a big lead in the ninth inning, the pitcher and the infielders would often completely ignore the baserunner. If the losing team got a man on first base with two outs, the pitcher would concentrate solely on the batter, allowing the runner to trot down to second base, and then on to third. No stolen bases were credited to this runner.

Batting helmets were unknown. Even though Ray Chapman died after being beamed by a Carl Mays pitch in 1920, it took more than two decades to get helmets used at all. Even then, many macho types refused to wear head protection until it became mandatory.

Likewise, there were no batting gloves. There were plenty of other gloves lying around, though. The gloves of the team at bat were left right on the playing field during the game, left there for infielders and outfielders to stumble over when making a play. Occasionally, a batted ball would hit one of these gloves and take a crazy bounce. Some players would simply toss their gloves anywhere on a grassy area. Others carefully placed their gloves in a specially chosen spot at the end of every inning. Pitchers usually dropped their gloves in foul territory outside the first or third base line. Catchers took their mitts to the bench with them. It took years before the rules required players to remove their gloves from the playing area when their team was at bat.

Other hazards remained. There were no padded walls to keep outfielders from crashing into concrete or wooden barriers. Warning tracks did not exist. Bats were often spread out on the ground in front of the dugouts, and trying to catch a foul ball near one of them was needlessly dangerous until somebody changed the system.

Another source of danger: in those days newspaper photographers occasionally appeared on the field during the game. The cameramen didn't have the zoom lens used nowadays, and they would crowd close to home plate trying to snap a close play. Occasionally they got in the way of the catcher, or the umpire, or a runner trying to score. Such collisions sparked plenty of cussing on the part of players, plus numerous arguments about interference. Eventually all cameramen were barred from the field during a game.

Loudspeaker systems were unknown in the early days. Instead, a bull-voiced announcer armed with a megaphone shouted out the lineups before the game, bellowing them in the direction of the press box. Next he would trot down the first and third base lines, barking out the batteries but not the full lineups. Then he would resume his seat near the grandstand and do no more announcing unless there was a change in the lineup. No attempt was made to identify each player as he came to bat.

Undoubtedly, this was a deliberate strategy to get the

fans to buy scorecards. The familiar yell, "Ya can't tell the players without a scorecard," still echoes in my ears after all these years. But even with a scorecard, it wasn't easy to identify the players. There were no numbers or names on the backs of players' uniforms. Instead, each player had a scorecard number. This number appeared on the hand-operated scoreboard as the player took his turn at bat. Only then, if you didn't already know him by his appearance or had a scorecard, could you be sure of who the hitter was.

Both the Cardinals and the Browns sometimes changed all the numbers on the scorecard. They did this for two reasons: They wanted to discourage fans from bringing an old scorecard to the park to identify players, thus failing to buy a new one. They also wanted to cross up independent vendors outside the ballpark who tried to sell scorecards of their own, thus undercutting the "official" scorecards sold by the clubs. Competition was keen between these "legal" and "illegal" scorecards, although they cost only five cents each (later a dime).

At one point the Cardinals sewed numbers on the sleeves of their players to help identify them. But the numbers were small, couldn't be read from far away, and the Cards soon abandoned the idea. It was several years before large numbers were placed on the uniform backs.

Even with numbered uniforms, there were those scorecards to sell. For a time, the Cardinals and Browns used *two* sets of numbers for their players. One was the new uniform number. The other was the old scorecard number—a different number entirely—that popped up on the scoreboard when the player took his turn at bat. Confusing . . . but anything to sell more scorecards!

There were no exploding scoreboards then, no instant replays. Very little information was available to the fans. The scoreboard told who was at bat, indicated the pitcher and catcher, and gave the batteries and scores for other teams in the same league. When the Browns were in town, the scoreboard showed what was happening in the American League. When the Cardinals were at home, fans got only National League scores.

When someone suggested that the scoreboard register a hit or an error on a doubtful play, Sam Breadon, owner of the Cardinals, vetoed the idea. He thought it might upset a Cardinal player to learn immediately what the official scorer had ruled. He also rejected the idea of a clock on the scoreboard, fearing this would make some fans restless and cause them to leave the game early, thus hurting concession sales.

The only way fans could learn about the ruling on a hit or an error was to sit near the press box. Then they might see the official scorer raise a finger to indicate a hit, or make a circle with his thumb and first finger to signal an error.

Baseballs have always been expensive. Back in those days they cost major league clubs about \$1.50 each. Ushers and players were supposed to save money for the

ballclub by guarding against "theft" of the baseballs. When a foul ball was hit into the stands, there was often a struggle between a fan and an usher for possession of the ball. If the usher won, he threw the baseball—"club property"—back onto the playing field. If the fan won, he might be threatened with arrest for stealing.

These encounters were not very pleasant, and there was the danger of legal action against the ballclub resulting from an usher's physical attack on a fan. For a time the ballclubs offered fans a free pass to a future game in exchange for the baseball. This seemed to work fairly well.

Gradually, baseball teams began to realize that it was good public relations to let a fan take the ball home and proudly show it to his friends. It might pay off with the fan remaining friendly and coming back another time, perhaps spending a few dollars for beer, hot dogs, popcorn, and peanuts. In those days the ballclubs had not yet thought of selling pennants, caps, bumper stickers, and other souvenirs.

Autographed baseballs are treasured by fans and collectors. But neither fans nor collectors will ever know how many of those autographs are forgeries. When Harrison (Doc) Weaver was the Cardinal trainer back in the days of the Gas House Gang, one of his duties was to keep the players' arms in shape by relieving them of the chore of autographing baseballs.

Weaver used eight or ten fountain pens filled with different colored inks. The points were varied, some stubby, some fine. He became adept at copying the handwriting of each player. Autographed baseballs were in great demand, and Doc Weaver did his part without public credit for this contribution to the physical welfare of the Cardinal players and the good will of the team . . . and the lasting confusion of collectors.

Along about Labor Day there were showers at old Sportsman's Park every time the Cardinals or the Browns showed any signs of a rally. Not rain, but showers of straw hats—the flat-brimmed kind you see nowadays only at a stage show recalling the 1920s. Everybody wore hats in those days—straw in summer, felt headgear in the winter. NOBODY wore straw hats after Labor Day, so baseball fans showed their enthusiasm for their home teams by sailing their straw skimmers onto the field when Kenny Williams or Sisler or Hornsby or Jacques Fournier banded hits. Oftentimes the games were delayed ten or fifteen minutes while ushers collected the hundreds of boaters from the field.

Public relations always interested me, and in 1931, having been a sportswriter and a fan, I went to Branch Rickey with a plan for baseball publicity. Rickey was vice president and general manager of the Cardinals. At the time, the National League had Cullen Cain as its public relations man and the American League had Henry Edwards. But no single major league team had a publicity man, or information director, as I later was called.

My plan was simple: I intended to try to get more Cardinal stories in newspapers by giving the editors interesting, dependable material—human interest stories about players and statistical dope for the baseball bugs. Within a 300-mile radius, I would supply suburban, rural, and small-city papers with additional pictures of players; offer radio stations live interviews with players or dramatizations of their lives; and, in general, help the newspapers and radio stations in any way possible.

Rickey listened, quizzed me at length, then discussed my ideas with Sam Breadon. That very morning I became the first publicity man hired by a major league club.

Soon the Cardinals were getting lots of free publicity in the newspapers and on the radio in Missouri, Illinois, western Indiana, and in parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Outside of my modest salary, postage, and some mimeograph paper, the only cost to the club was for the passes we handed out to newsmen and radio people.

Within a few years the Chicago Cubs and Cincinnati Reds followed suit, hiring publicity men. Eventually, all the big league teams came to hire not one but oftentimes several men doing publicity, digging up material for the sportswriters and announcers.

One of my early calls on a newspaper editor was a visit to the St. Louis *Argus*, a Negro publication. It embarrassed me that while the passes I gave the black editor were the same as those I gave to white editors, the *Argus* editor could use his passes only for the bleachers, since no blacks were allowed in the grandstand. This was a decade and a half before Jackie Robinson put on a Brooklyn Dodger uniform.

Shortly after Rickey hired me, he asked whether I could learn shorthand quickly—in one month. He suggested that I temporarily drop all other jobs, go to a commercial school, and learn enough shorthand so that I could travel with him. He wanted me to take care of his correspondence on the road and to help with the driving, which meant going to spring training and to many of the minor league cities in the Cardinal organization.

I learned shorthand, or at least enough to get by. Most of his correspondence on the road consisted of incoming and outgoing telegrams. So, while Cardinal publicity was my main job for four years, I spent a lot of days and nights during this time traveling with, living with, and becoming intimately acquainted with this complex man.

We talked baseball on these trips, lots of it. We talked about batting stances, pitching skills, how to break up the double steal, and the moral fiber needed by a young man to become an outstanding ballplayer. But Rickey was interested in more than baseball. He was interested in every subject under the sun. We also talked about world travel, history, politics, religion, education, science, bridge playing, and the sexual mores south of the border.

One day as we were driving somewhere, Rickey meditated out loud, "Today is my fiftieth birthday. I always thought I'd be out of baseball by now. I fully expected to

get out of the game and go into the practice of law.”

By then he was hooked, though. He probably realized he was making a lot more money in baseball than he might have made were he to switch occupations in middle age.

In 1932 the Depression hurt attendance, and furthermore the Cardinals were having a bad season on the field. Breadon was anxious to earn a few dollars any time there was an open date. He booked the House of David traveling team for a night game in Sportsman's Park. What's this? A night game in a major league park in 1932?

Yes. The House of David ball club had its own portable lighting equipment, which it carried around the country in trucks. This equipment consisted of floodlights that were mounted on top of telephone poles placed in foul territory, perhaps 30 feet away from first base and third base. The trucks had their own noisy generators. Illumination was far from perfect, but the Cardinals and the bewhiskered visitors staged a pretty fair exhibition game under the circumstances. Everybody had fun.

Still, the game had its sad side. The manager of the House of David, and the only man on the club without long hair and a beard, was Grover Cleveland Alexander. This was the same fellow who had been a great Cardinal hero in the 1926 World Series. Alec's strikeout of the Yankees' Tony Lazzeri with the bases loaded in the seventh inning saved the final game for the Redbirds and gave them their first world championship.

A modest crowd saw their erstwhile hero pitch a couple of innings under the lights.

One of my publicity blurbs for this event said, "It is possible that regular major league games may be played at night next season." I was a little premature in my speculation. Slightly over two years passed before Cincinnati played its first game under the lights, early in 1935.

Before the exhibition game, I met Alexander and took him to a radio station for an interview. Alec was a tragic figure. This great pitcher had won 373 games in his major league career, the same number as Christy Mathewson. When he enlisted in the army in the First World War, he had won 190 games over seven years for the Phillies, losing just 88, pitching them to a flag in 1915. The big guns in France deafened him in one ear, and by the time he was mustered out of service he was suffering from epilepsy. He began to drink heavily and did so for the rest of his life. It was downhill from then on, although he did have some good seasons, including that spectacular success in the 1926 World Series.

After his release by the Phillies in 1930, he was offered a job by the House of David. This meant barnstorming around the country, living in cheap hotels when the team wasn't driving all night, or riding a broken-down bus in time to reach the next tank town.

Finally, Alec joined a flea circus on 42nd Street in New York City. On exhibition with the freaks, he talked base-

ball and answered questions about his magnificent past. Epilepsy, alcoholism, and finally cancer brought his life to an end in November 1950. During his final years, the Cardinals, through the National League, sent him a modest monthly sum to go along with his \$60-a-month pension as a First World War veteran.

I've mentioned George Sisler and the grapefruit juice. I've told about Branch Rickey and the on-the-spot job offer. But I still haven't said anything about the man I chased into the toilet, where I finally got him to agree to a radio interview. That man was Carl Hubbell, the famed screwball pitcher with the New York Giants. Hubbell was in his peak in those days. I tracked him down in the visiting clubhouse at Sportsman's Park and stayed with him until he said yes, he'd make his radio debut on station KWK.

That was quite a coup for me, but there were other good radio interviews: Dizzy Dean, Frankie Frisch, Joe Medwick, Charlie Grimm, Jimmy Wilson, Rip Collins, Leo Durocher, Sam Breadon, Branch Rickey, and Larry MacPhail, to mention a few. Sometimes I did the interviewing, but mostly it was done by the station's sports announcer.

I got a special kick out of my experience with Rogers Hornsby when I lined him up for a radio appearance in the winter of 1932-33. Hornsby had been the great superstar of the Cardinals in the early 1920s. He had his clashes with Breadon and was traded to the Giants after leading the Cardinals to their first pennant in 1926. Later he managed the Boston Braves and the Chicago Cubs. Though he had made big money for years, he had lost most of it gambling. Broke and out of a job, he signed for the 1933 season as a player in the ranks. As soon as he signed, he borrowed money against his next season's salary. He needed it to meet his current living expenses and to pay some of his debts.

I recalled the days when I was a kid in the Knothole Gang watching him hit right around .400 season after season. In my eyes he was a great hero; now this demigod with feet of clay was asking me what he should say over the radio. He had had his battles with Breadon and Rickey. But in this winter of 1932-33 he wanted to do whatever was needed to earn his modest salary. "I'll say anything Mr. Rickey and you want me to say," he told me.

This must have been one of the few times in his life when the great Rajah didn't show his blunt, brutally frank, bigoted, and profane personality to everyone in sight.

Besides Sisler, Rickey, Hubbell, Dean, Frisch, Medwick, Alexander, and Hornsby, the subsequent years brought me into personal contact with a great many men who have been honored in the Baseball Hall of Fame, including players, owners, managers, umpires and sportscaster Red Barber.

Those days are long behind me. Calling them up has been lots of fun—almost as much fun as it was to live them . . . but not quite.



A never-before-published gem — a rival to Casey at the Bat

The Ballad of Old Bill Williams

“DR. STARKEY”

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In August of 1982 James K. Gaynor, Professor of Law Emeritus of Northern Kentucky University, sent this long narrative poem to TNP. In the letter accompanying it he wrote: "The current SABR directory indicates that only seven of the 1,161 members are interested in umpiring, but I am one of the seven. . . . These ballads were given to me in 1935 when I was umpiring in the Nebraska State League. There the donor was a young baseball writer in Norfolk, Nebraska; I long since have forgotten his name. He said they were written by a Dr. Starkey, a local physician whom I did not meet." Our thanks to Mr. Gaynor, and to "Dr. Starkey," for this marvelous find. (P.S. The tough character at the left might have stood in for Old Bill Williams, but he is in fact Jack Sheridan, a big-league ump from 1892 to 1914.)*

I. The Master of the Umpires

OLD BILL WILLIAMS was chief of the umps
In a roughneck league in the West,
They made him the chief because he had stayed
Far longer than all the rest.
He welcomed his work in the afternoons
When he went to his daily task,
And he smiled as he put his uniform on
With shin guards, protector, and mask.
He looked a lot like old Charley Moran,
When Charley was looking his best,
And he weighed pretty close to two hundred and five,
With most of it up 'round his chest.

He had his own system of handling men,
With scarcely no trouble at all.
He seldom used fines, but said, "If they're big,
It's an awful lot harder they'll fall."

He was boss of the field from the time he arrived
And his methods were always the same,
The players might kick but it got them no place,
For they found he was running the game.
Recruits did not know that Bill ran the show
And some of them argued too long,
'Til he said, "Twenty-five and be glad you're alive,
I never yet called any wrong."

'Twas a wonderful sight to see Bill in a fight,
The knockouts were his as a rule,
And many that knew of his famous "one-two"
Would say he could fight like a fool.
There was never a stall after he'd call, "play ball,"
For the old heads all hated the sight
Of getting bawled out with the crowd all about
And they knew 'twas a fine or a fight.

I remember one day when they went out to play,
A stranger appeared on the scene.
He looked mighty rough and said he was tough
And the very best "grabber" there'd been.
When he put on his mask to work at his task,
A bulldog and he looked a pair,
And the spectators thought of the man as he caught
That a muzzle seemed natural there.

The first of the game, there were none very close,

So no one had much chance to kick,
 But then from the seventh up to the eleventh,
 The close ones came in pretty thick.
 But Bill worked away and was on every play
 And called them all just as they looked,
 When the last man came up with two on and two out,
 It was darn sure that trouble was booked.

The man up at bat was the catcher so tough,
 And he turned to Old Bill with a growl,
 "If you miss one on me, you will not live to see
 All the things I will hang on your brow."
 But Bill never heard, not one single word,
 Nor knew what the man talked about.
 With a call of two-two, a nice one came through,
 And Old Bill rightaway called, "You're out!"

The fight that took place is history now,
 Folks thought that it lasted for hours,
 But Bill got his man, laid him cold as a clam
 Before the teams went to the showers.
 When he got to his feet he was still half asleep
 For what Bill had done was a crime,
 But he'd made a good fight, was a terrible sight,
 So Bill didn't fine him a dime.

The players knew Bill was straight as a string,
 That he tried to be on every play,
 Though he'd never admit that he made a mistake
 And when questioned he always would say,
 "It's a ball or a strike, it's fair or it's foul,
 He failed or the base he did make,
 There are none quite so close as to leave any doubt
 And I've never yet made a mistake."

He stayed quite a while in that league in the West
 But one day there came quite a dearth
 Of ump's they could use in the two major leagues,
 But Bill had falled off of the earth.
 The scouts for the bigs hunted three times as hard
 As they hunted for players that year,
 But about all the word that they ever sent back
 Was the line that "Old Bill is not here."

I was walking one day through a nice little town
 And I stopped at a place where they sell
 Automobiles and tires and things of that sort
 When I thought that I'd come out and yell,
 For there was Old Bill, he was selling a car,
 I was sure that my brain was awlirl,
 And I asked, "Is that Bill?" of a man standing there
 And 'twas then that I heard of the girl.

Yes, Bill found a girl, a darling she was,
 And it worried her none to talk back,
 But then if Bill did, she would just say to him,
 "I don't want another wise crack."
 Yes, back in his days when calling the plays,
 A man talked back once, not again,

But the girl in the case bossed him over the place
 And she weighed one hundred and ten.

II. Old Bill Comes Back

The men that play professional ball,
 While playing a game will jump
 And yell and kick and bawl about
 A decision that comes from the ump.
 They don't stop to think that he watched the play,
 The whole thing was right in his sight,



Billy Evans

And that he has to call two hundred a day
 Of which every one has to be right.

He has to be boss of the game at all times
 And has to keep straight with the folk
 That come out to the games on the warm afternoons,
 Or the club owner's apt to go broke.
 Umps are mighty good men and they try to be square
 But it takes time for them to get ripe,
 In their judgment of plays and of balls and of strikes,
 And Bill Williams was of the best type.

He watched them all close and he handled the men
 So that no time was lost in the game,

And most of the time he was calling them right,
 At least he'd acquired that name.
 But he saw a girl in the grandstand one day
 And after the game they both tarried,
 And when Bill came out of the trance he was in,
 He found himself happily married.

Then his wife said, "My dear, at the end of this year
 Your calling of plays has to stop,
 For merciful heavens, just think of Bill Evans,
 He was hit by a bottle of pop!"
 As she had Old Bill strictly under her thumb
 And she did not care what folks thought,
 She found a good town and chased him around
 Until a garage he bought.

Bill stuck pretty close to the job for a year
 But the business was always the same,
 He wanted a change on a hot afternoon,
 So he drove himself out to the game.
 A scout, sitting there, recognized him at once
 And hastily wired the chief
 Of one of the leagues that was looking for him,
 As his umpires were giving him grief.

He called up Old Bill on the long distance phone
 And he talked till he'd worn off Bill's ear,
 And finally the Missus said Bill could go back
 If he'd only sign up for a year.
 He hit for Chicago on that very night
 To see the big boss that was there,
 And was told that his stuff was sure good enough
 For him to get by anywhere.

There were just a few players Bill knew in the league
 And none of them in the first game,
 That he worked in a town where they never had heard
 Of anyone bearing his name.
 There was some of the men thought they would ride
 The umpire from out in the sticks
 But Bill only smiled, although he was riled,
 And was harder than four loads of bricks.

Bill called the balls and the strikes the first day
 As they put him in back of the plate,
 And a lad came to bat who could murder a curve
 But would miss those that came fast and straight.
 With a call of two-two, a fast one went by
 That cut the plate honest and fair,
 And Bill called the strike and then called him out,
 He was left with his bat in the air.

He dropped to his knees and folded his hands
 And looked as if to make prayer,
 When Bill said, "You're funny, just stay on the bench
 And see if they'll laugh at you there."
 One pitcher was wild—he threw lots of balls
 That would miss the plate almost a mile,
 So he said to Bill, "Let the crowd see your ring,
 Please use your right hand for awhile!"

But Bill got along mighty well with the game,
 He only put one off the field,
 For when he'd called a play, it stayed just that way
 And never an inch would he yield.
 And so the first day in the big show was through
 And right away Bill made a break
 To the telegraph office and wired his wife,
 "I never yet made a mistake."

III. Old Bill Faces the Mob

Bill Williams got by pretty well in this league
 And when he'd been up quite awhile,
 The players he met on the street that he knew,
 He'd say "how-de-do" and then smile.
 But out on the field, he knew no player's name,
 He treated them all just alike,
 And after he'd made his call on a play,
 They would go right ahead with the game.

New catchers came in who thought they were smart
 And at times they would step on his feet,
 And Old Bill would say, "I won't put on a fine,
 But later we'd better not meet."
 One day a young catcher started a fight
 Who wasn't familiar with Bill.
 He was out for a month while they patched him up
 In a hospital up on the hill.

The race that they had for the pennant that year
 Was down where it was pretty fine,
 The two teams in front were laboring hard
 And neither had given a sign
 Of blowing up under the strain of the race
 And both of them stayed full of fight;
 They filled up the stands in the towns where they
 played
 As they struggled with all of their might.

And when the two met in a series of games
 That was to decide on the race,
 The climate was tense, they both showed the strain
 Of keeping the terrible pace.
 The players were crabby and fought for each play
 And the managers frequently kicked,
 And the chief of the umps put Bill on the games
 Because he had never been licked.

They were playing five games and each had won two
 On the last afternoon that they met,
 And when Bill called the game and started them off,
 They were feeling the tension, you bet,
 So both plugged along till the last of the ninth
 As each had acquired a score,
 But both of these came at the first of the game
 And neither could get any more.

In the first of the tenth, two runners got on,
 They were standing on second and third;

The stands were so silent as all watched the play
That one hated to utter a word.
The pitcher was working as smooth as a watch
And Bill had both eyes on the game,
"No matter which wins," was the thought that he had,
"They both are entitled to fame!"

The man up at bat at this critical time,
Was not such a very good hitter,
But everyone knew that he'd give them his best
For he never was known as a quitter.
There was only one out and he rapped a long fly
Which was hit to the man playing right,
And the man upon third raced back to the bag
And watched closely the ball in its flight.

As soon as the fielder had landed the catch,
The man on third broke for the plate,
And the fielder cut loose with a beautiful throw,
Hoping it was not too late.
The play was so thrilling, the crowds in the stands
Were all of them holding their breath
With the man and the ball on the way to the plate,
The field was as silent as death.

It seemed to the crowd they both got there at once,
The home team thought he was out;
But when Bill called him safe and said, "The score
counts!"

Why, there seemed just a wee bit of doubt
That he would escape from the crowd with his life
So they called for the cops o'er the phone,
But when they arrived, Old Bill took his stuff
And said, "I will walk out alone."

Then he walked through the crowd that wanted his
hide

And not once did he hesitate
With most of them crazy to hang the old man
For the play that he'd called at the plate.
From the telegraph office he wired his wife
That he had no excuse to make
"For I saw it all, and the mug dropped the ball,
And I never make a mistake."

IV. *Old Bill's Great Experience*

When they pick out the ump's for the World's
Series games,
The leaders of Organized Ball
Pick out the men that are best in both leagues
And whom they depend on to call
The close ones that come at the plate, in the field,
And there's generally always a raft
Of games that need umpires of courage and skill,
And Bill Williams was "King of the Craft."

His very first year he impressed everyone
With the way that he handled his games,

He finished on time, he had little grief
And never was called any names.
They knew he had courage as he'd called the play
That decided the pennant that fall,
And he'd walked out alone through a big, angry mob
When he had no protection at all.

Bill's turn came first, so the opening game
He was calling them back of the plate,
And he never went bad on a ball or a strike,
His umpiring simply was great.
The catchers kicked some, but that didn't count,
They were working the tricks of their trade,
For down in their hearts, they knew he was right
As a fairer ump never was made.

There was only one question about a called strike,
A curve and the lad tried to duck it
So Bill told the boy as he started to kick,
"Just keep your foot out of the bucket
And maybe you'll hit if you'll stand up and swing
And not try to pull an old fake,
For I saw it all, 'twas a strike, not a ball,
And I never make a mistake."

The next day at third, a catcher was out
And right away started to kick,
But Bill said, "Shut up, you know you were out
And you know when I call them, they stick."
The next day at second and the next one at first
Were quiet and troubleless days,
But Bill thought, "Tomorrow, in back of the plate,
I'll be calling the difficult plays."

The second time Bill was in back of the plate,
Each inning the players he hurried,
And some of the men that knew him the best
Considered he looked a bit worried.
The leaders were standing three won and one lost
And it seemed that this game would decide
But the trailers got started along in the eighth
And the first thing they knew, it was tied.

In the last of the ninth the trailers were up
And they'd put a man on third base,
But two men were out and prospects were slim
When a batter walked into his place;
When he hit a long fly into deep center field,
The crowd simply muttered, "That's all."
But the man on third base scrambled over the plate
As the man in the field dropped the ball.

And so the next day when the teams went out to play,
The trailers were chock full of fight,
If they won on this day there'd be one more to play
With a possible victory in sight.
That night when the umpires were eating their meal
And allowing their fancies to roam,
Old Bill didn't visit or say a whole lot
Except that he ought to be home.

Bill called them at third all through the last game
 And there wasn't a whole lot to do,
 But a telegram arrived in the top of the sixth
 Which he claimed only when he was through.
 He tore it wide open and read it at once
 And he gasped as though suffering pain,
 Then he sprang to a cab and yelled at the man,
 "Get me to that six-thirty train!"

When he got on the train, he never was still,
 He bullied and bossed all the crews,
 He had started right out with his uniform on
 And all that he'd changed was his shoes.
 But at last he got home, found the wife feeling good
 And his baby there for him to take,



Bob Emslie, in his younger days as a pitcher

And he wired his friends, "She looks like her Ma,
 So I guess that she's made no mistake."

In the spring when the players all head for the South,
 The umpires oftentimes go along;
 They need to get rid of some fat they've acquired
 While loafing the whole winter long.
 The Bill Williams baby might have been three
 When Bill thought that she and her mother
 Had best take a trip to the South with the teams
 And possibly visit his brother.

He'd kept the garage and it made him some coin
 So he said to his wife, "Now, my dear,
 There's nothing to keep both you and the babe
 From going on two trips a year
 Around the big circuit and see all the towns

And meet the good men of the game
 And you might want to see how the folks regard me
 As I'm rather proud of my name."

So all of the time that the girl was quite small,
 They went in the spring and the fall,
 But later when she began going to school,
 One trip in the summer was all
 That she and her mother went out on the road
 Where father was gathering fame
 As a writer of sports as well as an ump,
 And his prose style could not be called lame.

This arrangement was fine and they had lots of fun
 As Bill was a family man,
 But when the girl's age was about seventeen,
 It was then that the trouble began.
 She looked as her mother had looked at the time
 That Bill thought she was looking her best;
 And Bill was so proud of his two womenfolk
 That at times it affected his chest.

They had a fine time, the Missus and Bill,
 Till somehow it came to their knowledge
 That daughter had shown quite an interest in
 Some lad that came up from a college.
 A mighty fine man, as straight as a string,
 For no better one could you ask,
 But Bill was against him, for his little trick
 Was with a protector and mask.

So Bill sent them home, which he hated to do,
 But he had assumed this position
 That as long as the lad was a catcher he could
 Be hardly a step from perdition.
 The catchers and Bill never seemed to get on
 As lots of them thought it a treat
 To run into him while chasing a foul
 And at times stick their spikes in his feet.

But once every summer she went on the trip
 And most of the players went wild
 About the sweet girl who looked like her Ma
 And who was tough Old Bill's only child.
 The players were careful about what they said
 And kicked in less violent ways,
 When she was along than when she was not
 And her dad was calling the plays.

The girl could never have gone on a diet,
 At least one that would make her look thinner,
 As most every night before six o'clock,
 She had nine invitations to dinner.
 Now some of the times Old Bill let her go,
 As with her he'd try to be fair,
 But he laid down the law that no place could she go
 If an unmarried catcher was there.

The pitchers, infielders, and outfielders, too,
 All seemed to get by pretty pat,

But the idiosyncrasy held by Old Bill
Was for lads that worked back of the bat.
Still, once in a while, when her dad did not know,
She'd hurriedly send out a line
To the beau in whom most of her ardor was placed,
And they'd slip off somewhere and dine.

One night as Old Bill was alone in his room,
She came in bearing some flowers,
And she told her dad, "Now don't you get mad,
We've been married for nearly two hours."
Bill needed his wife, so he sent her a wire,
'Twas one he was certain would fetch her,
It said, "Come at once, I know not what to do,
As our daughter has just wed a catcher!"

V. *Bill's Big Surprise*

When Bill Williams' daughter and new son-in-law
Came home, of course Bill did not know
That the lad had saved most of his salary check
And had planted considerable dough.
When they came to the house to see Bill and his wife
Along at the end of the year
They were talking of renting a house for themselves
But Bill said, "You both will stay here.

"You buy half the garage and run the whole thing,
You don't need to pay for it now
And if my daughter does as her mother used to,
She'll operate you anyhow.

You children must live right here in the house
As mother and I won't be here,
We are joining the teams in their trip 'round the
world;
We'll be gone for the rest of the year."

So the next week Old Bill and his wonderful wife
Took the train and blew into New York
Where they climbed on the boat with the rest of the
crowd

And soon they were started for Cork.
There they were to play the first of their games
Which the Irish would think rather queer,
For when they picked up something to throw at a
man,
Their intent was to knock off his ear.

The whole outfit was sick except three or four
Who had off' made the trip o'er the foam,
And all Bill could say when he woke every day
Was, "Oh, how I wish I was home."
At last they got right but Bill wanted to fight

When the managers picked out the teams,
As the batteries picked for the opening game,
To Bill, were the wildest of dreams.

"Cvengros and Picinich for one of the teams,
Yde and Grabowski, the other,
These names for a game that's to be played in Cork
Make me wish I was home with my brother.
But then go ahead, you'll maybe get by,
About all you can do is to try it,
But to call out such names as you've written down
here
Is just an excuse for a riot."

Nothing took place in the riotous line
For the players outnumbered the folk
That were up in the stands merely watching the game
Wond'ring when the Yanks'd go broke.
When they finished in Cork, they made all the towns
Where the manager listed a game,
And Bill called the balls and the strikes every day
And treated all games just the same.

They had no bad luck until nearly all through,
It was then they were up at Hong Kong,
That Bill's Missus got sick and he said he would wait
Until he could bring her along.
So he cabled the boss, he'd be late getting back,
If he left, he knew "Mother would die,"
And that he'd have to stay until she could leave
So they returned the last of July.

When Bill got on land, he headed for home
And when he walked up to the door,
It was opened for him by a pleasant-faced girl
Whom he'd never seen there before,
And when he heard a noise that he had not heard
For many and many a year
He turned to his wife and whispered with awe,
"I wonder what's going on here!"

So he ran in to see the pride of his life,
She wasn't yet leaving her bed,
And he cried out, "My dear, we should have been
here,"

As gently she patted his head.
Then she told the old man of the grand baby boy
That had come while they both were away;
Bill wired the boss, "I can never come back,
I got a new job just today."

Then Grandfather Bill wired two of his friends,
Bob Emslie and Henry O'Day,
And told them as soon as they both could get loose,
They'd both have to come out and stay.
So they visited Bill when the season was closed
At his home by the side of the lake
And they exuded joy as they all trained the boy
So he'd never make a mistake.

WANTED: Reminiscences, correspondence, photographs for bio of
Kiki Cuyler (esp. minor league days: Bay City, MI; Charleston, NC;
Nashville, TN; Chattanooga, TN; Atlanta, GA). Will exchange research
time in Chicago. Gerald Brennan, 1640 W. Greenleaf, Chicago, IL 60626.

The Freshman Class of 1964

MERRITT CLIFTON

BY THE END OF THE 1983 season, the jury will have been out on the 1964 rookie crop for 20 years. Sole remaining exhibits in the majors as of the end of '83 were pitcher Tommy John and infielder Bert Campaneris. The '64 rookies may or may not be judged the best ever, but if not, the verdict should be "missed on account of disability."

The rookie crop was rich in '64 for two reasons. First, the rule then in effect regarding bonus signings forced major league clubs to keep many of their best prospects after a single season of minor league experience. This brought Tony Conigliaro, Rick Wise, Johnny Briggs, and Wally Bunker (among others) up two or three years before they might otherwise have surfaced. Second, recent expansion—1961 in the American League, 1962 in the National—had seen the four new clubs selecting veterans rather than journeymen, meaning lots of open reserve jobs for young players during the next several years, a situation perpetuated when the expansion clubs again pursued veterans in a special catch-up draft held after the '63 season.

In all, fifty-three rookies played key roles for their teams in 1964 as regulars, top reserves, members of the starting rotation, or top men out of the bullpen. That's over two key rookies per team on average, and indeed every one of the twenty major league teams had at least one rookie regular at season's end; seventeen teams had more than one. The tally includes twenty-seven players whose rookie or sophomore performance indicated superstar potential (among them eleven pitchers) and twenty-six journeymen. All the potential pitching stars and thirteen additional players had their careers interrupted for at least a season or prematurely terminated by illness or injury. Several others fought chronic ailments throughout unin-

terrupted careers that nonetheless fell short of expectations. The crop includes three batting champions, two home run champs, a perennial stolen base leader, four Golden Glove winners, five 20-game winners and three other pitchers who peaked at 19 victories.

Minnesota right fielder Tony Oliva paced them all with 32 homers, 94 runs batted in, and a .323 average; also leading the American League as its first-ever rookie batting champion. Oliva led the league in hits for the first of four times with 217, a rookie record; in doubles with 43, also for the first of five times and also a rookie record; and in runs scored with 109. The following season, leading the Twins to their only World Series, Oliva hit .321 for a second straight batting title. But starting in 1967, Oliva was handicapped by minor injuries, including a separated shoulder in 1968 that cost him a September run at another batting crown. Then, on June 9, 1972, attempting a difficult catch, he so severely tore cartilage in his knee that he was thereafter restricted to DH and pinch-hitting duty. Following four more awkward and painful seasons, each marked by declining average and power production, he retired at age 36 with 220 homers and a .304 lifetime average.

Left fielder Rico Carty of the Braves and third baseman Richie Allen of the ill-fated Phillies didn't quite equal Oliva's numbers, but they did make a mighty run at the National League batting title in 1964, a title eventually won by Roberto Clemente at .339. Carty's .330 placed second, and was accompanied by 22 home runs and 88 runs batted in. Various injuries cost Carty half the 1965

MERRITT CLIFTON is the author of Relative Baseball, Disorganized Baseball, and A Baseball Classic; he lives in Quebec.

season, when he batted .310. Mysteriously weak throughout 1967, he missed all of 1968 with tuberculosis, part of 1969 while still recuperating, and then, after hitting .342 and .366, the latter for the 1970 batting title, he fractured his ankle during winter league play and missed all of 1971. Further injuries put Carty on the disabled list in 1972 and '73 while bouncing from the Braves to the Rangers, Cubs, Athletics and finally to Cordoba of the Mexican League. Returning to the majors as DH for the Indians, Blue Jays, and A's again, he was released during spring training of 1980, having compiled 204 homers and a .299 lifetime average.

Allen was among six rookies who almost pushed the Phillies to a surprise pennant in 1964, and from the



Rico

Carty

beginning he commanded the spotlight. He tied a record by playing in 162 games as a rookie, all at third base, which he'd never played in the minors. His 125 runs scored and 13 triples led the National League; other stats included 201 hits, 38 doubles, 29 home runs, 91 runs batted in, and a .318 average. Adding the next fourteen seasons, Allen hit 351 homers, averaged .292, retired twice, jumped his team a half dozen times, and was on the disabled list in 1967, '73 and '76. He led the National League in total bases in 1964 and slugging in 1966; the American League in home runs, runs batted in, and slugging in 1972; and in home runs and slugging again in 1974. He stole as many as 20 bases per season, played regularly at three positions, and filled in everywhere else but pitcher and catcher. Allen always claimed he jumped teams rather than give less than his best due to injury. Managers generally accused him of jaking. It didn't help him that after he cut his right hand pushing his car, missing all of September 1967, rumors persisted that he'd really gotten into a barroom brawl.

The other Phillie newcomers were less spectacular, but in several cases no less unfortunate. John Herrstein, nominally the team's regular first baseman, was never highly regarded and never hit over .239, without power. Danny Cater, .296 in 60 games, hit .276 over a twelve-year career unmarred by injury, including .301 in 1970, and .313 in 1973. Pitcher Rick Wise, 5-3 as a rookie, went on to become a front-rank hurler until arm trouble cost him most of 1974. Coming back to 19-12 for the pennant-winning 1975 Red Sox, Wise pitched with pain thereafter, enjoying mixed success until returning to the disabled list in 1980. Ineffective in 1981, he pitched only one game during 1982 and was finished.

Outfielder Alex Johnson smashed .303 during the last 43 games of 1964, then .294 while being platooned in

1965. But his moody temperament and frequent refusal to hustle kept him from ever sticking with a team more than two years. A reserve with the pennant-winning '67 Cards, he put together .312, .315 and .329 seasons with the Reds and Angels in 1968-70, edging Carl Yastrzemski by a fraction of a point for the 1970 batting title. He will be best remembered, however, as the first player ever placed on the disabled list for mental illness, that following an incident in which he threatened teammate and fellow 1964 rookie Chico Ruiz with a gun in June of 1971. Johnson came back, still tough to get along with, but never again hit over .287, finishing up in 1976 with a .288 lifetime average. John Briggs, the youngest of the Phillie rookies, hit .258 in 61 games. While maturing into a slugger with speed, he missed six weeks of the 1966 season with an injured back, and despite several good seasons as a Milwaukee Brewer never lived up to expectations. He finished in Japan at age 33.

Other rookies had a significant impact on the 1964 pennant races. In the American League, Baltimore chased the Yankees to the wire because nineteen-year-old Wally



Pete

Mikkelsen

Bunker was 19-5 in 29 games, third best victory total in the league. Bunker compiled a 2.69 earned run average. Rookie right fielder Sam Bowens contributed 22 home runs, 71 runs batted in and a .263 average. After nine years of elbow trouble, Bunker retired in 1971 at age twenty-six, never again approaching his rookie performance over a full season, although he did pitch a World Series shutout in 1966. By that time Bowens was already hurt. A shoulder injury returned him to the minors in 1965; hitting .296 out of a platoon with Curt Blefary through May of 1966, he hurt his shoulder again and never thereafter hit with authority, despite another five years of trying.

Don Buford, a .262 hitter, was the only rookie who helped the White Sox stretch drive, and another of the few who was never seriously injured. He hit leadoff for the Orioles' 1969-70-71 pennant winners.

The Yankees hung on to claim their fifth straight pennant only because Mel Stottlemyre arrived from the minors to post a 9-3 record and 2.06 ERA in 13 stretch starts. Stottlemyre became a three-time 20-game winner with a workhorse reputation until a torn rotator cuff finished him abruptly at age thirty-three in 1974. Fellow rookie Pete Mikkelsen was the '64 Yanks' most effective reliever, winning 7 and saving 12. Never a big star, he nonetheless pitched effectively through nine major league seasons, interrupted by two months on the disabled list at the beginning of 1970.

In the National League, midseason call-up Mike Shan-

non epitomized the Cardinals' hardnosed style of play as an outfielder, third baseman, and reserve catcher (even though he had never caught before volunteering in an emergency). It took something major to get Shannon out of the lineup, but hypertension did it and almost killed him at age thirty-one in August of 1970. The Cardinals also carried rookie infielders Jerry Buchek and Phil Gagliano; neither, however, graduated from journeyman status.

The second-place Cincinnati Reds hung in there with rookies Sammy Ellis, 10-3, 2.57, 14 saves, and Bill McCool, 6-5, 2.42, 7 saves, as a spectacular righty-lefty relief combination. Converted to starting, Ellis won 22 games in 1965, while McCool saved 21 games, as well as 18 more in 1966. Arm trouble soon finished both. McCool lasted until age twenty-six, Ellis to twenty-eight. Rookie infielder Chico Ruiz claimed the Reds' third base job in 1964, lost it to Deron Johnson, broke his ankle in 1965, and thereafter rode the bench. He was killed in an auto crash at age thirty-three in February of 1972.

The Giants' Ron Herbel and Jesus Alou were never injured, but never really lived up to potential either. More tragic were the careers of Jim Ray Hart, slugging third baseman, and Hal Lanier, the 1964 Topps All-Star Rookie second baseman, who mostly played shortstop thereafter. Lanier never missed playing time, but suffered fits of epilepsy after a beaming in early '65, never again approaching the .274 he hit as a rookie. Hart, after a 31-



Jim Ray

Hart

homer, 81-RBI, .286 rookie season, put together four more good years in a row and, at age twenty-seven in 1968, entered what should have been his prime with 139 home runs already to his credit. But the seeds of his problems to come had been sown years before. First called to the majors on July 6, 1963, he suffered a broken shoulderblade the very next day when struck by a Bob Gibson fastball. Back in action on August 12, Hart was disabled four days later when another Cardinal, Curt Simmons, beamed him. Drinking heavily through his good years, perhaps to overcome fear of the ball, Hart reinjured his shoulder in 1968, had a miserable '69 season playing while hurt, and spent most of the next three seasons with Phoenix drying out and recuperating from repeated surgery. Averages of .282 and .304 following late-season call-ups in 1970 and '72 seemed to signal comebacks, but after a torrid 1973 start as the Yankees' first regular DH Hart tailed off and returned to the minors. He finished up hitting .315 in the Mexican League in 1976. His lifetime 170 homers and .278 average only hint at what might have been.

Tony Conigliaro's bad luck began in 1964 when a

broken right arm sidelined him throughout August. It didn't keep him from hitting .290 with 24 homers. The American League's youngest-ever home run champ the following season, with 32 at age twenty, Conigliaro was leading the Red Sox to the 1967 pennant when beamed by Jack Hamilton of the Angels on August 19. Pieces of his fractured cheekbone damaged his left eye. Missing all of 1968, Conigliaro won Comeback-of-the-Year honors in 1969, then improved to a career-high 36 home runs and 116 runs batted in 1970. After a trade to the Angels in 1971 he slumped to .222. On July 10 of that year, he called a midnight press conference to announce his retirement. Subsequent examination showed his sight had deteriorated again. Conigliaro attempted one comeback as a pitcher, unsuccessfully, then made the Red Sox as a free agent DH in 1975, but hit only .123 and was shipped to the minors to make room for Jim Rice. Later in the year Conigliaro retired permanently, at age thirty, ending another career that pointed toward the Hall of Fame. His misfortune continued with a heart attack and prolonged coma in 1982, from which he is very slowly recovering, with uncertain chances of ever walking or talking again.

The Tigers came up with two jinxed rookies in 1964, pitcher Denny McLain and left fielder Willie Horton. Starting in 1965, McLain won 16, 20, 17, 31 and 24 games, and might have won more had a foot injury not sidelined him down the stretch in 1967. The circumstances of that misfortune are still hazy; some say he was jumped by gamblers. Suspended for betting on games in 1969, McLain injured his elbow, put on weight, and was finished at age 28. Twice an American League leader in victories and the only pitcher since Dizzy Dean in 1934 to win 30 games, there's no telling what he could have accomplished if healthy and with a good head on his shoulders. Horton, meanwhile, was never kept out of the



Tony

Conigliaro

lineup for long, but he did spend time on the disabled list in 1972, '73, '74, and '76, and probably should have been there in 1967 and '71. His injuries included beanings, a broken ankle, and a broken foot. Nonetheless, he batted .273 over his career with 325 home runs. (Another promising Tiger rookie, Joe Sparna, never pitched consistently, winning 16 games in 1967 but fading out with arm trouble at age twenty-eight in 1970.)

The Angels introduced journeyman second baseman Bobby Knop, their regular for the next five years, and pitcher Aubrey Gatewood. But their most sensational rookie was reliever Bob Lee, who jumped all the way from the New York-Pennsylvania League to post the AL's best ERA, 1.51, while saving 19 games. He saved 21 and 16 the

next two seasons, but encountered arm miseries that finished him at age thirty-one.

Sam McDowell, washed up at 33 with alcoholism and shoulder problems, wasn't a '64 rookie. At age 22, he was, however, *senior* member of the Indian's season-ending starting rotation, which also included rookies Luis Tiant, Sonny Siebert, and Tommy John. Offensive support came from rookie first baseman Bob "Fat" Chance, who knocked in 75 runs while platooning with Fred Whitfield, and rookie outfielder Chico Salmon, hitting .307. The sophomore jinx relegated both Chance and Salmon to utility duty thereafter. Siebert enjoyed a healthy career, three times winning 16 games and tossing a no-hitter in 1966. Tiant led the American League in earned run average twice (1.60 in 1968, 1.91 in 1972), and won 20 games four times among fourteen winning seasons in the major leagues. John has won 20 games three times, with eleven winning seasons.

But both men had to overcome devastating injuries to do it. Tiant was unconditionally released twice in 1971 after two years of arm trouble. He was disabled again both in 1978 and 1980. John had 10 wins and a 1.98 ERA as of August 22, 1968, despite an early-season pulled hamstring. He threw a knockdown pitch at Detroit's Dick McAuliffe, and in the ensuing brawl suffered torn shoulder ligaments that finished him for the year. By 1974 John had fully regained his form and was 13-3 after 22 starts when his elbow tore. He missed all of 1975 while muscle tissue from his right arm, surgically grafted into his left, strengthened. The revolutionary procedure saved his career. John won 80 games between 1977 and 1980, then returned to the disabled list in 1981 for about the time of the baseball strike and hasn't pitched consistently since.

Six-time American League stolen base leader Bert Campaneris and slick-fielding Dick Green became the Athletics' double-play combination in 1964. Charlie Finley built the 1972-74 world champions around them, and they stayed healthy. Another all-star shortstop who emerged in 1964, Pittsburgh's Gene Alley, was less fortunate. A member of the Sporting News all-star fielding team in 1966 and '67, when he hit .299 and .287, Alley missed the 1968 All-Star Game with back spasms, and was never again the same all-around player. Fellow 1964 rookie Steve Blass was 19-8 in 1972 after winning at least 15 in four of the previous five seasons, but then, at age thirty-two, mysteriously burned out. He swore his arm was healthy; others were not so sure.

The 1964 rookies who came and went without much of a mark? George Smith, Gerry Arrigo, Dalton Jones, Jay Ritchie, Ed Connolly, Bill Spanswick, Jim Gosger, Mike Brumley, Buster Narum, Al Koch, John O'Donoghue, Bob Meyer, Tommy Reynolds, Derrell Griffith, Billy Cowan, Jimmy Stewart, Mike White, Bobby Klaus, and Bill Wakefield. It is worth noting, however, that several enjoyed rookie seasons that would have been heralded most years. O'Donoghue, for instance, won 10 games for the base-

ment A's. Cowan smacked 19 home runs. Griffith batted .290, Stewart showed speed on the bases. They remained obscure because the competition for rookie honors was so uncharacteristically fierce.

Certainly other years have produced many rookie stars: 1963, for instance, brought Pete Rose, Willie Stargell and Gaylord Perry, among likely Hall of Famers, together with Rusty Staub, Jim Wynn, Bill Freehan, Gary Peters, Ray Culp, Pete Ward, Tommy Harper, and Jimmie Hall, all of whom reached baseball's pinnacle for at least a year or two. An allegedly thin rookie crop in 1965 still included Joe Morgan, Rico Petrocelli, Tony Perez, Jim Lefebvre, Curt Blefary, Frank Linzy, Ron Swoboda, Jim Palmer, and Jose Cardenal. Morgan and Palmer are sure Hall of Famers, Perez a reasonable candidate. The others enjoyed promising seasons.

What particularly distinguishes the 1964 rookie crop is that so many did so much so quickly, and that those who did the most the fastest—Oliva, Carty, Allen, Hart, Bunker, and Conigliaro—were so severely injured so often. Perhaps this can be judged a consequence of an unusually competitive era; five and six-team races in the National League were frequent, while the American League went six years without a repeat winner. Contending clubs are more inclined to send their best players on the field with minor injuries that could become major through aggravation. Too, sports medicine was not as advanced when most of the 1964 rookies suffered their first bad injuries. The 162-game season, air travel, and artificial turf all introduced new stresses; the slider had just begun to proliferate, and almost all the injured pitchers threw it.

Starting rotations usually included only four men instead of the five generally used today. Sammy Ellis was injured working out of a three-man rotation. The combination of short rotations and the slider appears most responsible: the Giants often used a three-man rotation, for example, but discouraged use of the slider (they favored the spitter) without losing any pitcher to chronic injury between the 1962 and '74 seasons. Many outfielders suffered shoulder injuries because walls were not yet padded. Bean balls were thrown more frequently than today, broken ankles were more common because spikes were longer and more likely to snag. Players didn't yet do long-distance running to strengthen their legs or weightlifting to combat specific weaknesses. What weight lifting they did ca. 1964 was oriented toward building overall strength; sometimes already strong muscles were pumped up while weak ones were neglected, resulting in more rather than fewer muscle pulls.

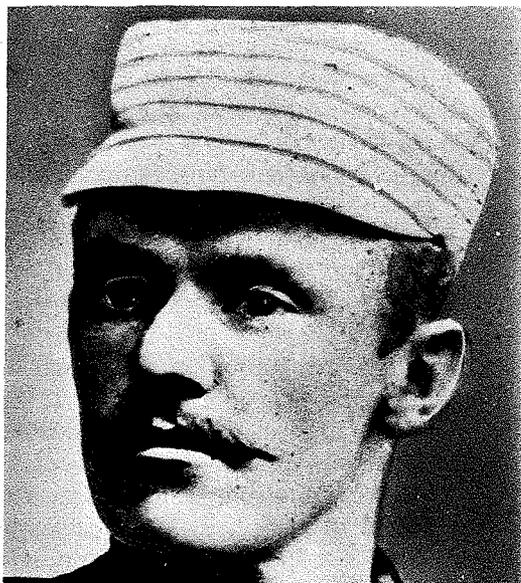
None of the 1964 rookies will be first-ballot Hall of Famers. It's possible none will make it; Oliva has the best chance, followed by Carty, Allen, Campaneris, John, and Tiant. McLain, barely eligible, and Horton have outside shots. But how many could have gone to Cooperstown, without the injuries, will be forever conjecture.

"Is the baseball player a chattel?"

The Making of a Baseball Radical

CYNTHIA BASS

John M.
Ward



LONG-HAIRED, SKINNY, and proficient in throwing the curve, eighteen-year-old John Montgomery Ward first tasted life in the National League when he joined the Providence club as a pitcher in the summer of 1878. Starting his duties on a hot July morning, he finished that autumn with a 22-13 record—not bad, considering he pitched only half a season. Providence, intrigued enough by this newcomer to wonder how he'd hold up over an entire season, renewed his contract.

In 1879, a "veteran" Ward held up very well. He was the dominant pitcher in the league that year, with a record of 44-18. He led the NL in wins, in winning percentage (.710), and in strikeouts (239). He even managed to rap out 2 of Providence's 12 home runs. His

performance that season led the Grays, in their second year of existence, to their first pennant.

The following season, 1880, he pitched a perfect game, a feat that seems to have meant less to his contemporaries than it would today (perhaps because it came only five days after the one hurled by Worcester's Lee Richmond). His stats were once again brilliant: a won-lost record of 40-23; third in the league in wins; first with nine shutouts; and fourth with 230 strikeouts.

But by 1881 Ward was being challenged for top pitching honors on his own team by a new arrival: Old Hoss Radbourn. The two of them shared mound duties for Providence, but in 1882 Radbourn was the main pitcher for the Grays, and Ward was his back-up man. A year later Radbourn was winning 49 games; Ward had been sold to New York.

How did the young John Ward react to his changing status at Providence? It's not hard to guess. Ward was popular during his glory years at Providence, but he was also temperamental. The press of the day provides several examples of his on-field tantrums, including attacking an umpire and publicly humiliating a catcher he considered unsuitable by deliberately throwing pitches that were impossible to catch. Apparently Ward believed that losing the game was less important than making his point.

Since Ward was just twenty-one when his brilliant career started going awry—and given the hot-headed intensity with which he was playing—it would hardly be surprising if his eclipse by Radbourn caused him, if not bitterness, at least sorrow. The Providence fans in the

CYNTHIA BASS is writing a novel entitled *The Brotherhood War*, based on the *Players League*; she lives in Berkeley, CA.

1880s were probably no different from fans today. As the limelight shifted to the Old Hoss, so did their allegiance. The handsome young Ward was far less interesting when they saw him on the mound only three times a week. The rest of the time he roamed the grassy Providence outfield, batting desultorily, stealing an occasional base—and condemned, apparently forever, to a diminished role by the reserve agreement.

Being sold to the New York club at the end of the '82 season must have seemed like deliverance from Egypt. Ward loved New York, very possibly because the New York press loved him. The *Herald*, covering a late-season shelling of Providence by Chicago in 1882, was so enthusiastic about Ward's future greatness they seemed ready to snatch him from the ungrateful Grays then and there. Even the staid *Times* sounded happy. Ward packed his bags, smiling.

Perhaps it was his early Providence experience that shaped Ward's initial thoughts on the reserve system. The first time he ever mentioned it was in the context of a personal reminiscence. Writing for *Lippincott's* in 1886—by then a star shortstop—he summed up his past eight years in two sentences. ("I then went into the League with the Providence Club, where I remained till 1883. Since then I have been with the 'New Yorks.'") He followed that with an odd and original observation:

It seems that a man cannot, with any credit to himself, play in the same club beyond a definite time. Three years is in most cases the limit. The local club has seen him at his best . . . , makes this his standard, and expects it from him forever after. If he does that well he is only doing what he should, and if he does less he is playing poorly. I have in mind a number of first-class players who are not at all appreciated at home simply because they have overstayed their time.

One can easily guess at least one of the "first-class" players Ward had in mind. He went on:

The present reserve-rule, which allows a club to retain a player as long as it wishes, ought to be modified to meet this case. The interests of both clubs and players demand some scheme providing for a gradual change.

It's interesting to note that Ward's complaint, although inspired by his own encounter with the reserve system, was so mild. This mildness is especially intriguing in light of the revolt he would lead only four years later—a revolt that advocated, among other things, three-year contracts.

In this article Ward made a few more comments, generally positive, on the reserve rule. He deplored its occasional abuses, but the system itself, he felt, had worked to the benefit of the game. He credited the rule more than anything else with placing baseball "on the basis of a permanent business arrangement," because with it capital could be "invested in base-ball stock without the possibility of seeing it rendered valueless at the end of six months by the defection of a number of the best players."

Making baseball not a pastime but a business was a development that appealed to Ward. For, future accusations of socialism to the contrary, Ward was never anti-business. On the contrary: he argued in this article that it was the owners' interest in making money that cleaned up the game, and made it the national pastime.

Ward shared some more opinions in *Lippincott's* a year later. By then, in July 1887, he had picked up a bachelor's degree in political science as well as a law degree. Both were from Columbia. He was firmly established as one of the game's greatest shortstops. He led the National League that year in stolen bases (111); he was second in hits (184); and he batted .338, fourth in the league. He was playing for a team that included six future Hall of Famers. And he was president of a quasi-union with a membership of over half the players in the National League.

It would appear that Ward's life in New York, especially compared to his Providence days, was getting better and better. But, oddly enough, this second *Lippincott's* article was much less optimistic than the first. Ward fired off the first shot with the title itself: "Is the Baseball Player a Chattel?"

Ward was both alarmed and angry that the reserve system permitted such a question to be asked. His eventual answer was equivocal. He no longer believed, as he had the previous year, that the system was serving the game's best interests from a business standpoint. It may have been once, but now it was doing the opposite, throttling business by stifling competition between the clubs. "As new leagues have sprung up," he wrote, "they have either been frozen out or forced into [the National Agreement] for their own protection, and the all-embracing nature of the reserve-rule has been maintained."

The system was stifling on a personal level as well: "There is now no escape for the player. If he attempts to elude the operation of the rule, he becomes at once a professional outlaw, and the hand of every club is against him." Finally, the system was offensive from a moral standpoint. Ward saw it as an "ideal wrong," an "inherent wrong," a "positive wrong in its inception."

He gave a number of examples to demonstrate the business, personal, and moral weaknesses of the rule. But what infuriated him most of all was an American Association resolution passed in Cleveland that spring of 1887 but not yet enforced. It was not enforced, Ward hotly implied, because it was so outrageous it could never survive courtroom scrutiny. It might well drag the whole reserve system down with it.

The American Association, at that time a major league, wanted to pursue reserve-rule violations vigorously. Players who failed to honor their reserve obligations were to be placed on a blacklist. Ward, a gentleman and an incipient legal scholar, was incensed and horrified: "For the mere refusal to sign upon the terms offered by the club," he cried, "the player was to be debarred entirely, and his

name placed among those disqualified because of dissipation and dishonesty! Has any body of sane men ever before publicly committed itself to so outrageous a proposition?"

Ward, a lawyer, knew the answer to that one, but he preferred to let it pass, making instead a veiled threat: "Is it surprising that players begin to protest, and think it necessary to combine for mutual protection?"

However, in spite of his extreme distaste for the men behind the reserve system, their contempt for the players, and their short-sighted business practices, Ward was still far from ready to revolt, let alone secede. In fact, he maintained there was a clear-cut, easy solution to all the problems: free enterprise. Cut away baseball's "tangled web of legislation" and open it to normal market competition. Let the "business of baseball rest on the ordinary business basis." Don't try to regulate salaries through arcane and insulting restrictions. Rather, trust the market. Trust the law of supply and demand. Eschew old-fashioned and high-handed practices, and make baseball a modern business, run by "thorough business-men."

It's ironic that as Ward's personal and professional situation blossomed, his opposition to the reserve system increased. This second *Lippincott's* article was not only more critical than the first, it was far more analytical and incisive. Ward seemed to be learning how to bring his legal training into play. He was starting to talk specifics, starting to talk morality, starting to talk money. He was beginning, in short, to sound like a lawyer.

Ward wrote another baseball feature the following season. It was published in the October 1888 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, just after the Giants defeated Chicago to win their first pennant. Ward had become more pessimistic, and even sarcastic, informing his readers that "the general public may not know that there is a law in this land higher than the common law. 'Base-ball law' is a law unto itself. . . ."

As in his '86 article, Ward admitted some virtues in the reserve system. He was not filing a blanket condemnation. But his attitude had changed. Two years earlier, what he had found praiseworthy about the reserve system was that it made the game more solid and permanent. Now what he found praiseworthy was that the system restrained the "piratical tendencies of club managers."

It's a long trip from "permanence" to "pirates," and it took Ward two seasons and a series of closely observed player-management abuses to get there. But get there he did. He now saw collusion wherever he looked: the National League, the American Association, and various minor leagues were all bound into unanimity by the five-year-old stipulations of the National Agreement. That grandly labeled document put the club above the player in every conceivable situation. It provided that "all clubs of each association shall respect the contracts, reservations, suspensions, blacklistments, and expulsions of every [other] club." It also prevented the player from

lodging a protest with any outside agency by setting up a self-manned Board of Arbitration which had a last say on all baseball matters. Moreover, the Agreement made the establishment of new leagues virtually impossible by establishing a confederacy of territorial monopolies among its signatories.

The result of all this was the total entrapment of the player. If the player did not like his salary, or if he wanted to leave his club—or if he did *not* want to leave his club but his club wanted to sell him—there was absolutely nothing he could do. No club would move against the club of original contract. The only thing contract-jumping would accomplish was to get the player blacklisted by every professional team in the nation. Baseball had become a cross between cattle-selling, slave-buying, and prostitution—all favorite Ward metaphors.

Like the Sugar Trust or the Standard Oil trust, said Ward, baseball too was a trust. For Ward's audience, less than two years away from the passage of the Sherman Antitrust Act, the word "trust" was a buzzword for all that was evil. A "trust" accusation in Ward's day was as damning as a racism label today. Ward chose such a strong word deliberately. The owners, he claimed, had created, through careful maneuvering, an impenetrable power structure against which the player had no choice but submission.

After firing his salvo in *Cosmopolitan*, John Ward left the country to join Spalding's international tour. On the tour he wrote a series of charming columns for the *New York World*, whose pleased editors informed Ward of rumors that he was going to be shipped off to the Washington club upon his return.

While in Egypt, he learned of John T. Brush's plan to classify all players publicly and pay them accordingly. Details of the plan undoubtedly angered him, but by now the general pattern must have seemed all too familiar. The baseball trust was on the move again.

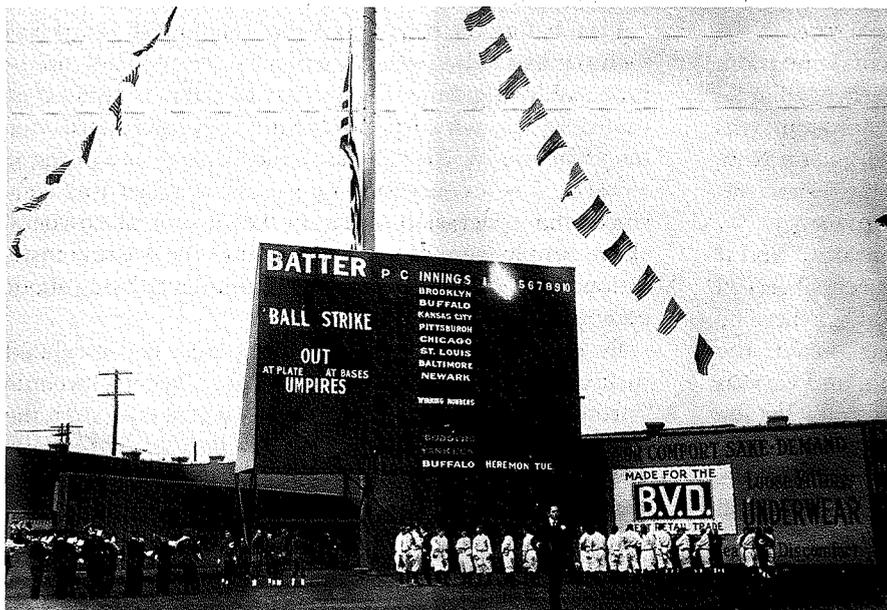
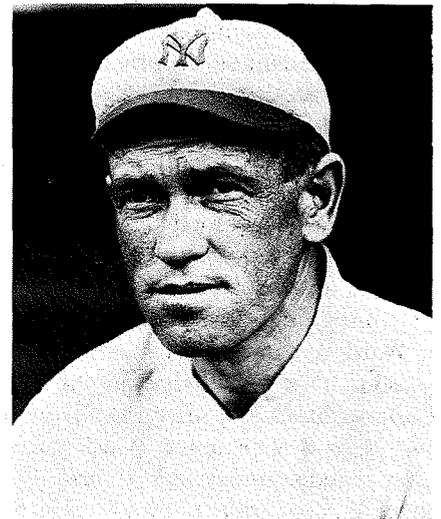
Even before the Brush plan was announced, Ward had seen the baseball establishment as an entrenched, unapproachable oligarchy, impervious to reform. Because of that view, it is not surprising that he opposed a strike for the 1889 season. All a strike could achieve, assuming it worked, was a concession or two. And Ward was convinced that concessions were not the answer. The owners' claws simply were dug too deeply into the existing institutional fabric for any amount of militancy to bring about meaningful change.

By 1889 Ward believed that the owners had escalated their evil, if such a thing were possible. They had become "stronger than the strongest trust"—worse even than the hated John D. Rockefeller himself. Best to leave these selfish connivers alone, muttering over their cauldron of reserve rules, blacklists, and secret deals, and to set up a new major league, one that stressed competition and good business over arrogance and bad faith. It was to be the Players League.

John Montgomery Ward presenting a floral cup to Roger Bresnahan (fourth from left) at the Polo Grounds, ca. 1908.



At the left is Ban Johnson, whose wrath Ward engendered in a dispute over the contractual rights to George Davis; at the right is Hal Chase, who used the infamous ten-day clause to his benefit rather than the club's, leaving the White Sox in mid-1915 to join Buffalo in the Federal League.



The flag raising on Opening Day at Washington Park, April 10, 1915, home of the Brookfeds, whom Ward served as business manager.

Is a ballplayer barred "from business association with respectable men"?

The Later Years of John M. Ward

LEE LOWENFISH

JOHN MONTGOMERY WARD, one of the early masters of the curve ball, is also credited with developing the raised pitcher's mound. He devised many infield techniques as well, including signaling for pitchouts to prevent stolen bases and using the intentional walk to increase chances for a double play.

When Ward retired after the 1894 season, he had compiled impressive credentials as a pitcher: a 158-102 record, an earned run average of 2.10 (still fourth best on the all-time list), 244 complete games out of 261 started, and a lifetime strikeout-to-walk ratio of nearly four to one. Having made the successful transition from pitcher to everyday player in 1884, he amassed 2,123 hits, stole 504 bases, and put together a batting average of .278.

Yet it took till 1964 before Ward was voted to a place in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Given the baseball establishment's historically harsh treatment of dissenters, there seems little doubt that Ward's delayed recognition had its roots in his role as mastermind of the revolt of 1890.

The detailed story of the single season of the Players League need not be told here. The Players League outdrew the National League at the gate, but its backers panicked when faced with losses greater than they had expected. The NL war committee, headed by the redoubtable monopolist Albert G. Spalding, hid the senior circuit's own substantial losses from their inexperienced rivals until the revolt was over.

After performing heroically for the Brooklyn team during the 1890 season—he hit .369 with 207 hits and 134 runs scored—Ward tried desperately to keep his new league together. When he failed to gain player representation on the negotiating committee which presided over the Players League demise, Ward asked a question that

reverberates through the corridors of baseball history to this very day:

"Do these gentlemen wish to go on record as saying that the occupation of a ballplayer bars him from business association with respectable men?"

Beginning in 1891 the National League ruled the roost again. By 1892 the other major league, the American Association, had folded, with four of its teams joining the Nationals to form a league of twelve. There could be no blacklist of the Players League veterans because virtually all the stars had joined the rebels. Salaries were cut, however, and a renewal clause was added to the standard contract of 1891, which the owners hoped would take the place of the more indefinite reserve stipulation.

John Montgomery Ward spent two years with the Brooklyn Nationals and then finished his playing days with the Giants in 1893 and 1894, leading the second place New Yorkers to a victory over the pennant-winning Orioles in the 1894 Temple Cup Series.

Ward's story as a baseball personage was far from finished. He did become a leading amateur golfer in his last years, which has led historian Harold Seymour to declare that Ward adopted the attitudes of the upper class after his rebellious youth. The story of Ward's later years is actually far more complex and interesting than that.

In the fall of 1895, one year after his retirement, Ward made the sports pages again with the announcement of his desire to be removed from the reserve list of the Giants. Many baseball people saw this as Ward's ploy to free

LEE LOWENFISH is co-author of *The Imperfect Diamond*; his collaborative book with Tom Seaver will be out this spring.

himself of his obligations to the Giants so that he could name his price and choose a new team for a comeback. "Tradition and precedent," editorialized the weekly *Sporting Life*, dictated that Ward remain Giants' property. Ward denied that he planned to return to the active list. "While I am not yet making a baseball salary as a lawyer," he told the press, "I am doing better every month. I am entirely satisfied that I shall not return to baseball unless my circumstances change materially."

While Ward was becoming a successful corporate lawyer in New York—numbering among his clients the Brooklyn Rapid Transit company—he kept his interest in baseball alive by representing both individual players and the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the minor league body which was formed in 1901. During these years, Ward successfully represented fireball pitcher Amos Rusie in his suit for back pay against penurious Giants' owner Andrew Freedman. Rusie had to hold out the entire 1896 season before the other National League owners chipped in and paid the wages due the pitcher. Ward also won back pay for Fred Pfeffer, Chicago's star second baseman, although the case dragged on through the courts for eleven years.

In representing shortstop George Davis, Ward dealt with a case that would eventually cripple his chances of becoming the chief executive of the National League. Davis, whose twenty-year career included 2,688 hits and a .297 lifetime average, left the Giants after 1901 to join the White Sox of the new American League. He had signed a two-year contract with the White Sox, but after 1902 and the impending peace agreement between the two leagues, he decided he wanted to return to the Giants.

Davis appeared in four games for New York in 1903 before Ban Johnson, president of the American League, got a temporary injunction restraining him from playing with the Giants. The Giants had offered Davis \$6,300 a year for each of two years, compared to the White Sox' \$4,000 one-year offer for 1903. The Giants argued that they were within their rights to offer Davis a contract since they had options on both 1902 and 1903 in their original 1901 contract.

Davis had already sought legal counsel from Ward, his former manager, who had approved of his jumping to Chicago. Although Ward considered the Chicago contract valid, he sympathized with Davis's desire to return to New York and to earn more money. His advice was for Davis to ask Chicago for expense money to go to training camp. When that request was turned down, he advised Davis to report to the Giants. In the face of the injunction, though, there was little Davis could do. He sat out the entire 1903 season and afterwards was awarded to Chicago by the new National Commission, headed by a close friend of Ban Johnson's, Cincinnati Reds' president Garry Herrmann. The White Sox had won, but they had to pay out \$2,800 in legal and other expenses, an indignity Ban Johnson never forgot.

In the fall of 1909, when Ward was put forward by a strong but not controlling faction of National League owners for the league presidency, Johnson made it clear he would resign from the National Commission rather than accept Ward. Two club owners, Pittsburgh's Barney Dreyfuss and Cincinnati's Herrmann, told the press they would join Johnson in a ten-team American League rather than accept Ward as president. The anti-Ward owners made public Johnson's letter of late November 1909 which branded Ward's action in the Davis affair "clearly conspiracy." Johnson went on:

It is far from our purpose to say, or even suggest, who the National League should select as its President, but common sense, and the interests of other parties to the National Agreement, should be considered if the present cordial relations are to continue.

For his part, Ward kept a low profile. His backing came from the controversial owner of the Cubs, Charles Murphy, an advocate of syndicate baseball, which many followers of the game feared could move players at whim from strong to weak franchises. The two New York magnates were solidly behind Ward, although their reasons were basically negative. Brooklyn's Charles Ebbetts was peeved at what he considered the leniency of the previous president toward umpires who made anti-Brooklyn decisions. The Giants' John T. Brush, no favorite of Ward's in earlier years, had a long-standing enmity toward Ban Johnson.

The outcome remained in doubt. Sam Crane, a rare former player among the sporting scribes, asserted naively, "Ward is a lawyer of standing and repute, and there has long been a feeling among the magnates that a disciple of Blackstone should be at the head of the organization."

Evidently, the feeling was not overwhelming. The first three ballots showed a 4-4 deadlock. At that point Ward laid down a public challenge to Garry Herrmann: "I am willing to submit the question as to my action in that [Davis] case to any reputable attorney he may name," Ward declared. "If Mr. Herrmann's selection says that I did anything contrary to right I will withdraw at once from the race for president of the league, provided Mr. Herrmann will withdraw that objection to me if the decision is in my favor."

The same day that Ward went public, Ban Johnson cabled a characteristically shrewd message to the National League meeting. Wiring from Syracuse on his way back from the much smoother American League meeting, he wrote:

This should indicate forcibly to you and your colleagues that we do not wish to interfere or embarrass to the slightest degree your organization in the election of an officer.

Johnson knew that the deadlock was permanent and that even this display of gall would produce no more supporting votes for Ward. After one more tie vote, Ward

withdrew his name from nomination, and a compromise candidate, former umpire Thomas Lynch, was elected the next president of the National League. (Ward later sued Johnson for \$50,000 in libel damages. In 1911 Federal District Judge Learned Hand ruled in Ward's favor and awarded him \$1,000.)

As the senior circuit closed up shop after its hectic meeting, it hurriedly adopted a rule that allowed the removal of waivers on a player claimed by another club. The American League already had this regulation. John Montgomery Ward would soon rue this edict as well as his failed candidacy. For at the winter meetings of 1911, Ward appeared as the new president of Boston's National League club, soon to be nicknamed the Braves in honor of the Tammany Hall connections of its owner, New York contractor James B. Gaffney.

Ward pledged to find local backers of the Braves, and he began work on increasing the number of grandstand seats. But he inherited a team that had finished last the previous season despite having players with five of the eleven top batting averages in the league. Ward counted on the 45-year-old Cy Young for pitching help in 1912, but Young's career was over; he never appeared in a 1912 contest. Ward announced that he was building with young players, and he signed the colorful young infielder Walter (Rabbit) Maranville. But when the Braves sought help through the waiver list, every player Ward claimed was removed. "It looks like every man for himself, and the Old Boy take the hindmost," Ward commented ruefully.

The Braves never were a factor in the 1912 race, dropping quickly to last place and "going from worse to Worcester," as one local scribe put it. Ward did not finish out the season, resigning at the end of July to return to New York. Many writers thought that his heart was more in golf and that he lacked the ability to communicate with the younger players. *The Sporting News* editorialized in a piece called "The Curtain on Mr. Ward" that he had been depriving players of drinking water in the dugout and liniment in the clubhouse. "His head and heart [were] woefully lacking," it declared, referring to him as "a shattered idol."

Ward's career in the baseball limelight was still not over. On the surface, he seemed to be endorsing the status quo when he testified in Washington in the spring of 1913. He spoke against federal regulation of baseball for anti-trust violations. "Baseball is now under the direction of an autocratic trust, but it is good that it is," Ward told the solons. "Baseball is something which cannot in my opinion be discussed by legislators or judges. There are some judges who are fans, I know, but the whole idea of baseball is such that it is difficult to reduce it to legal terms."

Yet in less than a year Ward was involved with a new "outlaw" league, serving as business manager of the Brookfeds, the Brooklyn franchise in the Federal League. Actually, there is no great contradiction between Ward's

testimony and his connection with the new Federal League. While Ward distrusted politicians' knowledge and motives in probing sports, he had faith in American businessmen to know a good market and to develop it. With baseball and American cities both booming in the years at the edge of World War I, Ward believed there was room for a third and maybe even a fourth major league.

At the end of 1914, the first year of Federal head-to-head competition with the existing major leagues, Ward compared its progress favorably with the American League in its first year. More players, he noted, had jumped in one Federal season than in the first two American campaigns. Furthermore, he asserted that the new league "now has enough established stars to proceed in the development of young players," which, as a long-time advocate of minor league baseball, he understood was the key to long-range success.

Ward left the Brookfeds early in 1915, having made only a short-term commitment to the new organization because of the pressure of his law practice. It is probably true that he had some doubts about the antitrust suit the Federals brought in 1915. This suit would make a national figure and later a commissioner out of the presiding federal judge, Kenesaw Mountain Landis. He also disapproved in principle of long-term contracts for players, which he felt sapped their initiative and their motive to excel.

Yet he made it clear that he believed in the right of ballplayers to go with the highest bidder if their contract was deemed one-sided and unjust by the courts. He applauded New York State Judge Herbert Bissell's condemnation in June 1914 of the ten-day clause in Hal Chase's standard contract. He approved of that jurist's proclamation that Chase was within his rights to turn the clause on its head and give the team ten days' notice. Ward surfaced briefly as an associate counsel in 1916 during one of the early hearings in the famous Baltimore Federal League antitrust suit that ended in 1922 with the Supreme Court's historic exemption of baseball from the antitrust laws.

Following his Federal League flirtation, Ward stayed out of baseball for the last ten years of his life. He died after contracting pneumonia during a 1925 hunting trip in Georgia. It may be idle to speculate on what might have happened if he had held a place in baseball's highest councils during those years. The course of the game's bizarre business history, especially its labor-management relations, might have been different. Certainly, Ward understood the travail of the player better than most executives, few of whom had played the game. Perhaps he would have brought to baseball's business and legal relations the kind of spirit he called for in 1888 when he wrote in *How to Become a Player*, the first such manual ever written by a baseball player: "First of all, let me say that no one will ever become an expert ball player who is not passionately fond of the sport."

The remarkable life of a man called "Dummy"

William Ellsworth Hoy, 1862-1961

JOSEPH M. OVERFIELD



BACK IN 1955, while searching the old newspaper files at the Buffalo Historical Society, I came across a photograph of the 1890 Buffalo Players League team, from which I was able to have copies made. At the time, surprisingly, two members of the team, Connie Mack and Dummy Hoy, were still alive. I wrote to each of them, enclosed a picture and asked some questions about that ill-starred Buffalo club, one of the most inept in baseball history, finishing in eighth place, 20 games out of seventh.

I received a short, rambling note from Mack, who was then ninety-two. The venerable one thanked me for the picture, answered none of my questions and concluded by writing, "You must be very old to remember Deacon White." (I was thirty-nine at the time.) Properly humbled, I awaited with some trepidation a reply from Mr. Hoy, who was just three months younger than Mack.

When Hoy's letter came, it put all my fears to rest. Datelined, most appropriately, Mt. Healthy, Ohio, November 15, 1955, the letter was six pages in length and written in a bold, unquivering, and beautiful hand that completely belied the age of the writer. All of my questions were answered in sentences that were grammatically pure and perfectly punctuated.

Those of us who are inveterate letter writers sometimes gain rich rewards. This was such a time.

I was to exchange many letters with Hoy. The last one I received from him was dated January 3, 1961. He was

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ninety-eight then, and it was just eleven months before his death on December 15, 1961, five months and eight days short of his 100th birthday. He had lived longer than any other major league ballplayer.

I never met Hoy, other than through our letters, but I was fortunate enough to see him on television when he threw out the first ball at the 1961 World Series between Cincinnati and New York.

There was always some question about Hoy's true age. Some sources said he broke in with Oshkosh, Wisc., at age twenty, while later accounts reported him to be twenty-four when he made his debut. His reply to my inquiry about this discrepancy follows:

I will tell you how this happened [the discrepancy] and go bail on the correctness of my figures. They were copied from the family Bible!

One rainy day in the spring of 1886, the Oshkosh players were assembled in the clubhouse getting ready for opening day. A newspaperman entered to take down the age, height and weight of each player. When it came my turn to be interviewed, he omitted me because I was a deaf mute. Also, he had not the time to bother with the necessary use of pad and pencil. When I read his writeup the next day, I found he had me down for twenty years of age. He had made what he considered a good guess.

Now in my school days, I had been taught to refrain from correcting my elders. Then too, he had *whiskers*! After thinking it over, I decided to let the figures stand. It was in this way that I became known as the twenty-year-old Oshkosh deaf-mute ballplayer. What would you have done if you were in my place?

However, later on, I was pinned down by an alert Cincinnati insurance man at the Methodist book concern where I was employed at the time. He told me to write down my full baptismal name, together with the day, month and year of my birth. Nobody had ever asked me such a question before. If they had, I certainly would have written down 1862 and not 1866.

In the *Sporting News Record Book*, Hoy is listed as the first outfielder to be credited with three assists from outfield to catcher in a single game. In a letter I received from Hoy in 1959, he recalled this feat:

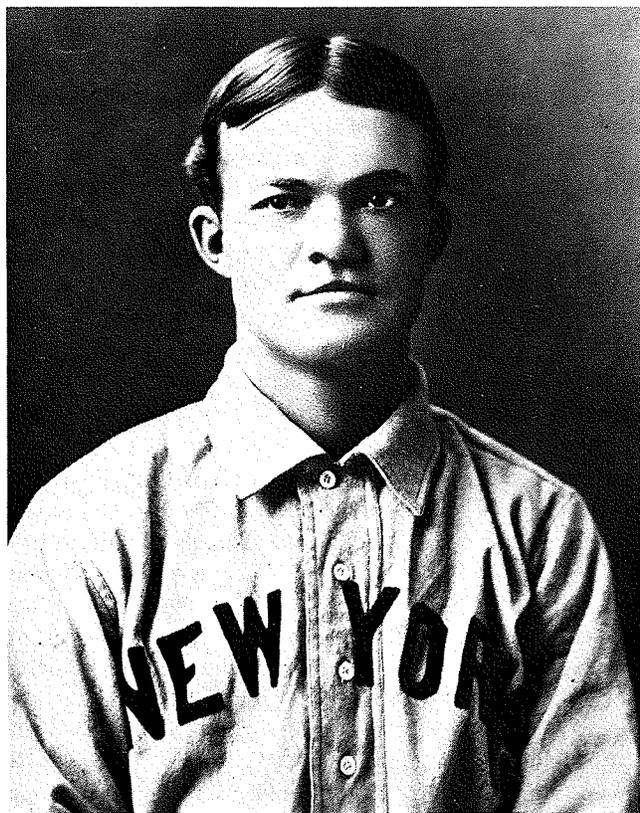
The first putout was accomplished when a batter made a basehit to me in the outfield. The runner on second was put out by my throw to the catcher. The next out at the plate was made in the exact way as the first. The third play was a basehit over shortstop in about the eighth inning. I picked up the ball, threw to the catcher and caught the runner attempting to score from second. I had no other fielding chances whatsoever during the entire game, the three assists being all the chances I had. The game took place on June 19, 1888, and was a regularly scheduled National League game between Washington (my club) and Indianapolis, then a member of the National League. Do you know of any other player who duplicated this feat? Bear in mind the three assists were on basehits to the outfield. If you know of any, who is he? I want to shake his hand.

NOTE: Two other outfielders are credited with three assists to the catcher in one game. They are Jim Jones of

the Giants on June 30, 1902, and John McCarthy of the Cubs on April 20, 1905.

The box score of the game from the *Sporting Life* substantiated Hoy's recall in every detail. It was truly a remarkable performance, but just as remarkable was his perfect recall of it seventy-one years later.

Hoy played eighteen seasons as a professional, remarkable in light of his late start, his deafness, and his muteness. He was one of two deaf mutes to gain fame in the majors. The other was pitcher Luther (Dummy) Taylor, who won 117 games, all but 1 for the New York Giants, for whom he won 27 games in 1904. According to *Daguerreotypes* (*Sporting News*), Paul Hines, famed outfielder



Luther "Dummy" Taylor

of the last century, was deaf. His deafness, however, did not develop until he was thirty-four after a beaming in 1886 by Jim (Grasshopper) Whitney of Kansas City; of course, he did not have the additional handicap of muteness. (Strangely, Hines and Whitney were teammates the next season at Washington.)

Hoy's late start in the game may be attributed partly to his infirmity—which, incidentally, followed an attack of meningitis when he was three—but to a greater extent to economics. In an interview with Art Kruger for a publication called the *Silent Worker* and later condensed in the May 1954 issue of *Baseball Digest*, Hoy recalled that his father gave his sister a cow and a piano when she was eighteen, and to each of his brothers, when they became twenty-one, a suit of clothes and a buggy, harness, and

saddle. When William reached majority, his father gave him only the suit, but promised him free board until he was twenty-four. "Being handicapped by deafness, it was my thought that I would make better progress in life if I worked as a cobbler and lived at home, rather than to accept the buggy, harness and saddle and leave home." So, he recounted to Kruger, he opened a shoe shop in his native Houcktown, Ohio, after graduating from the State School for the Deaf at Columbus, where he had won highest honors and had been valedictorian of his class. Business was dull, especially in the summer when most everyone in Houcktown went around sans shoes, so there was plenty of time for William to play ball with the young men of the town. He told Kruger that a man from nearby Findlay noticed him one day and asked him to play a game in Kenton, which was a few miles away. He agreed and did so well against a former professional pitcher that he decided to give baseball a try.

Frank Selee, later to enjoy success as a major league manager, was the skipper at Oshkosh of the Northwest League in 1886 when Hoy signed his first contract. Selee was perspicacious enough to see Hoy's innate ability and stayed with him that first difficult year, despite his .219 batting average. He improved next year to .367, stole 67 bases and led Oshkosh to a pennant. This performance earned him a promotion to Washington of the National League where he batted .274 and led the league in stolen bases with 82.

His career from that point on was peripatetic, to say the least. Besides Washington, he played for Buffalo, of the Players League, St. Louis of the then major league American Association, and for Cincinnati, where he starred from 1894 to 1897, only to be traded to Louisville. After two seasons with that National League club, he cast his lot with Ban Johnson's fledgling American League, playing for Chicago in 1900 and then again in 1901, the AL's first year of major league status. He returned to Cincinnati for a final major league fling in 1902, batting .259 in 72 games. He was one of twenty-nine men to play in four major leagues: National, Players, American Association, and American.

Hoy wound up his career in 1903 at Los Angeles in the Pacific Coast League where he played in every one of his team's 211 games. His average was a modest .261, but he totaled 210 hits and stole 46 bases, five more than his age.

At five feet, five inches, and 150 pounds, Hoy, who batted left and threw right, did not have the heft to be a power hitter, but he did get his share of doubles and triples and was an excellent baserunner. In the field his speed was an asset and he was considered to be a reliable fielder with a strong and accurate arm. Detroit writer H. G. Salsinger, quoting an old-time St. Louis writer, Thomas Lonergan, wrote, "Hoy was the smartest player he had ever seen, swift as a panther and very fast in getting the ball in from the outfield." Of his throwing prowess there can be little question: witness his three assists to the plate

previously described, and the fact that he was in double figures in assists every season except for 1902 at Cincinnati. His lifetime total (major and minor) was 389, including a league-leading 27 with Louisville in 1898 and an incredible 45 with the 1900 Chicago club.

It has been widely written that it was because of Hoy that umpires began to raise their right hands to signify strikes. Paul Helms—wealthy west coast businessman, founder of the Helms Foundation, and a nephew of Hoy's—states this unequivocally in the Kruger article above mentioned. On the other hand, the authoritative Lee Allen, in his *Hot Stove League*, tells us that Charles "Cy" Rigler of the National League was the first to follow this practice, and he did not come into the league until 1905, two years after Hoy's retirement. According to Allen, Cincinnati players used to signal strikes to Hoy in this manner.

How good a player was Hoy? It is the conclusion here that he should rank high, even meriting Hall of Fame consideration. Hall of Famer Tommy McCarthy, with whom Hoy is often compared, was a contemporary, playing from 1884 to 1896. The two were teammates at Oshkosh in 1887 and at St. Louis (AA) in 1891. A comparison of the two players' major league records seems to indicate that Hoy has been overlooked far too long.

	HOY	McCARTHY
Years	14	13
Games	1798	1275
At bats	7123	5128
Hits	2054	1496
Doubles	248	192
Triples	121	58
Home runs	40	44
Runs	1426	1069
RBI's	726	666
Stolen bases	597	467
Walks	1004	537
Average	.288	.292
	<i>Fielding</i>	
Putouts	3932	2034
Assists	286	301
Errors	384	261
Average*	.917	.899

It is unlikely at this late date that Hoy will gain much Hall of Fame support, any more than will his teammate on the 1890 Bisons, Jim (Deacon) White, one of the truly great players of the game's early years. But there can be no doubt that Hoy was an outstanding player, whose accomplishments loom even larger, considering he could neither hear nor speak.

* Hoy played 1797 games as an outfielder and one game at second base. McCarthy played 1189 games in the outfield, 39 at second base, 37 at third base, 20 at shortstop and 13 as a pitcher.

Thirty-six men batted .300 in their final season.

Bowing Out On Top

JAMES D. SMITH III

IN THE EARLY MONTHS of 1926, Ty Cobb recounts in his autobiography, *My Life in Baseball*, the great outfielder was obliged to submit to eye surgery at the Johns Hopkins Clinic in Baltimore: "the dust of a thousand ballfields was in my eyes." Shortly before he was admitted, a poem appeared in one of the local papers:

The curtain's going to drop, old chap
For Time has taken toll,
And you could never play a part
Except the leading role.
You might go on and play and play,
But why go on for folks to say
"There's old Ty Cobb, still on the job,
But not the Cobb of yesterday."

The record shows that the Georgia Peach not only played that season, but added two more with the Philadelphia A's before hanging up his spikes—batting over .300 each time. The point, however, is well taken: it has been said that, amid all the physical and mental exertion, the toughest thing for a ballplayer is knowing when to quit. And, as does no other sport, baseball often provides a decisive statistical indication of that moment when the sun has dropped below the horizon of a career.

The story is told of another Hall of Famer, Adrian (Cap) Anson, relating an incident which occurred a few years before his death in 1922. The old Chicago veteran was involved in a Windy City accident which nearly claimed his life. This prompted a close friend, half-jokingly, to ask what he would like as an epitaph when the time came for him to be laid to rest. With little hesitation, the reply came: "I guess one line will be enough—just write this on

my tombstone: 'here lies a man that batted .300.' " Pop Anson, of course, had finished his career on that note, batting .302 at the ripe age of forty-six.

But how many have gone out that way, clearing that time-honored barrier, satisfied with a strong effort at the plate during their final major league campaign? And, for those closing their big league careers in that manner, how was such a decision made—what marked the end? These two questions provide the starting point for a glance backward into a century of baseball history.

At the outset, four points must be made. As implied above, our investigation does not begin with any so-called "modern era" of baseball (1893? 1900? 1901? 1903?). In 1968, the Special Baseball Records Committee declared that major league baseball has been played in America since 1876. To approach completeness, even with changes in the game and some records still being researched, our story must begin at the beginning and recognize the continuities.

Second, since many players have appeared briefly for a "cup of coffee" on major league rosters, or played only occasionally, some criterion of involvement is necessary. For our purposes, the measure of a "regular" player is not number of games, but a number of plate appearances equal to 2.5 times the scheduled games. That is, for a 154-game season, 385 appearances provide a cut-off point; for 1877, when the schedule called for 60 games, the figure becomes 150 plate appearances.

Next, not all players end their careers voluntarily—

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some do; most don't (1). Some leave the game for health reasons (2). A few have been permanently suspended—barred from major league ball (3). Far more frequently, players have continued their careers in Organized Baseball by catching on with a minor league team (4).

Finally, there is a story behind each of the thirty-six regulars who batted .300 in his last major league season; four of these—one from each of the categories listed above—will serve to epitomize the group. And within each group, four others will have their tales told in brief. Some players are familiar, others obscure—but all reach beyond the statistics to provide a brief glimpse of the wealth of baseball history.

Eight players played regularly in their final campaign, batted .300, and retired voluntarily from organized baseball.

Cap Anson has been mentioned above, retiring in 1897 after twenty-two legendary seasons with Chicago. In Anson's obituary, Grantland Rice best summed up what lay behind his retirement: "The light in his batting eye was still carrying a bright glow when his ancient arms and legs had at last given away and ended his career upon the field." His involvement with baseball was to continue in a variety of management and business ventures, including an unhappy stint as manager of Andrew Freedman's New York Giants.

YEAR	NAME (AGE, OCT. 1)	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	AVE	POS.
1877	Hall, George (28)	61	269	53	87	15	8	0	26	12	19	---	.323	0
1884	Moore, Harry (?)	111	461	77	155	23	5	1	---	19	---	---	.336	0
1886	Lewis, Fred (27)	77	324	72	103	14	6	2	---	20	---	---	.318	0
1890	Orr, Dave (31)	107	464	89	173	32	13	6	124	30	11	10	.373	1
1890	Roseman, Chief (34)	82	310	47	105	26	0	2	---	30	---	7	.339	0
1893	Wise, Sam (36)	122	521	102	162	27	17	5	77	49	27	20	.311	2/3
1893	Larkin, Henry (30)	81	319	54	101	20	3	4	73	50	5	1	.317	1
1894	Ward, Piggy (27)	98	347	86	105	11	7	0	36	80	31	41	.303	2
1895	Tebeau, George (32)	91	337	57	110	16	6	0	68	50	28	12	.326	0/1
1897	Anson, Cap (46)	114	424	67	128	17	3	3	75	60	---	11	.302	1
	Werden, Perry (32)	131	506	76	153	21	14	5	83	40	---	14	.302	1
1899	Lange, Bill (28)	107	416	81	135	21	7	1	58	38	---	41	.325	0
1901	Dungan, Sam (35)	138	559	70	179	26	12	1	73	40	---	9	.320	0/1
	Waldron, Irv (25)	141	598	102	186	22	9	0	51	38	---	20	.311	0
1902	Beck, Erve (24)	89	349	42	105	14	3	3	42	7	---	5	.301	1/2
1903	Keister, Bill (29)	100	400	53	128	27	7	3	63	14	---	11	.320	0
1915	Campbell, Vin (27)	127	525	78	163	18	10	1	44	29	---	24	.310	0
	Evans, Steve (30)	151	556	94	171	34	10	4	67	63	---	15	.308	0
1920	Chapman, Ray (29)	111	435	97	132	27	8	3	49	52	38	13	.303	S
	Felsch, Happy (29)	142	556	88	188	40	15	14	115	37	25	8	.338	0
	Jackson, Joe (33)	146	570	105	218	42	20	12	121	56	14	9	.382	0
	Weaver, Buck (30)	151	630	104	210	35	8	2	75	28	23	19	.333	3
1924	Pratt, Del (36)	121	429	56	130	32	3	1	77	31	10	6	.303	1/2
1926	Youngs, Ross (29)	95	372	62	114	12	5	4	43	37	19	21	.306	0
1927	Tobin, Jack (35)	111	374	52	116	18	3	2	40	36	9	5	.310	0
1928	Cobb, Ty (41)	95	353	54	114	27	4	1	40	34	16	5	.323	0
1930	Sisler, George (37)	116	431	54	133	15	7	3	67	23	15	7	.309	1
	Walker, Curt (34)	134	472	74	145	26	11	8	51	64	30	4	.307	0
1931	Arlett, Buzz (32)	121	418	65	131	26	7	18	72	45	39	3	.313	0
1933	Hodapp, John (28)	115	413	55	129	27	5	3	54	33	14	1	.312	2/1
1945	Cuccinello, Tony (37)	118	402	50	124	25	3	2	49	45	19	6	.308	3
	Dickshot, John (35)	130	486	74	147	19	10	4	58	48	41	18	.302	0
1960	Williams, Ted (42)	113	310	56	98	15	0	29	72	75	41	1	.316	0
1962	Ashburn, Richie (35)	135	389	60	119	7	3	7	28	81	39	12	.306	0
1972	Clemente, Rob (38)	102	378	68	118	19	7	10	60	29	49	0	.312	0
1979	Brock, Lou (40)	120	405	56	123	15	4	5	38	23	43	21	.304	0

Bill Lange stands as the finest everyday, all-around player to retire from baseball at the peak of his career. Born in San Francisco, he developed there both his baseball skills and a lifelong attachment to the Bay Area. In 1893, aged twenty-one, he began his seven-season major league career with the Chicago Colts. By the time player-manager Anson retired, Lange was already being hailed by some as "the greatest player of the age."

His physical tools were impressive. In an age of generally smaller players, he stood 6'2" and weighed over 200 pounds. Moreover, he was lightning fast as a runner, as well as being agile in the outfield.

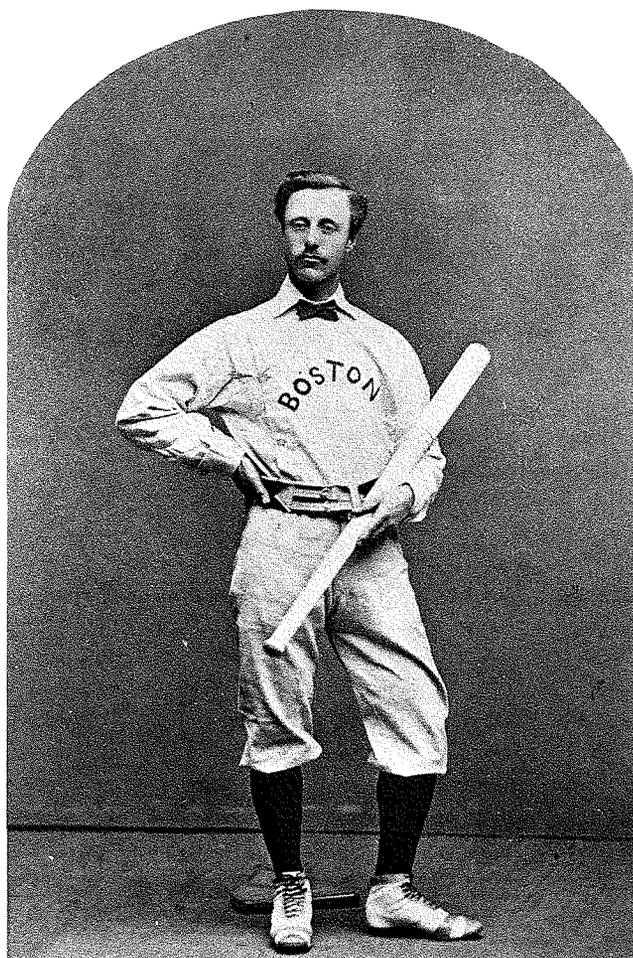
The 1897 season was vintage Lange. In the spring, he was helping to coach the Stanford baseball team. On March 5, he received a telegram summoning him to the Colts' training camp in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Determined to remain in the West until local favorite Gentleman Jim Corbett's fight with Bob Fitzsimmons in Nevada, his first stalling tactic was to send a wire refusing to report until he received a \$500 raise. But the raise was quickly granted (provided he come immediately and tell no one of the bonus). The fight was scheduled for March 17. So he managed to "sprain his ankle," wiring the news on March 12 that it should be all right in a week. It was (Corbett wasn't), and Lange finally reported in time to hit .340 with 73 stolen bases.

More famous, however, was his 1896 campaign. Despite stealing 84 bases and batting .326, it was his fielding that would become legendary. Al Spalding, when selecting his all-time major league team years later, chose Lange even over Tris Speaker. "Both men," he reflected, "could go back or to either side equally well. Both were lightning fast in handling ground balls. But no man I ever saw could go forward and get a low line drive like Lange."

During the 1899 season, his last, a romance with Miss Grace Geiselman of San Francisco blossomed. After the campaign, wedding plans were made for the spring, and in October (with his fiancée in Europe) Bill Lange announced his retirement from baseball. He left to take up a position in a large real estate and insurance firm in his native city, accepting a partnership with his father-in-law to be.

In the following years, he played occasionally and became involved in scouting (sending nephew George Kelly to the majors) and in the business end of baseball in California. He died in 1950, mourned in his native San Francisco and by all in Chicago who ever saw him play.

Ty Cobb, after twenty-four seasons of American League baseball, issued a statement on September 17, 1928, declaring that he was in his final campaign: "I prefer to retire while there still may remain some base hits in my bat. Baseball is the greatest game in the world. I own all that I possess in the way of worldly goods to this game. For each week, month, and year of my career, I



George Hall, .323

have felt a deep sense of responsibility to the grand old national sport that has been everything to me. I will not reconsider. This is final." His aching legs and old wounds made his final season, the last of two under Connie Mack, "hellishly hard."

Ted Williams, thirty-two years later, closed out his magnificent career with the Red Sox with a 425-foot home run at Fenway Park on September 28. Earlier in the season, after hitting his 500th home run, he had remarked: "I want to play out the year if I can. I hope I can get through it. I know I can't play all the time. I need a rest about every fourth day. But I think I'll be able to hit the rest of the year. I believe I can still help the club." And hit he did, rebounding from his only sub-.300 season in a career which touched four decades. After his final game, in the dressing room: "I'm convinced I've quit at the right time. There's nothing more I can do." Except, perhaps, fish. . .

Lou Brock ended his stellar career with a major league record 938 stolen bases, 21 in his final season of 1979. In spring training he had declared, following a disappointing 1978, "I think this will be my last season in baseball. Even if present conditions change, I don't think I want to go on. The mental tear is too much. The writing



Roberto Clemente, .312

is on the wall . . . I am convinced that a real champ, a thoroughbred, can rebound. I'd like a chance to prove it." In September, after he had collected hit number 3,000 the previous month and was still going strong: "The most important thing was to crown my career with a fine performance. I've always wanted to leave baseball in a blaze of glory." He retired to become Director of Sports Programming for a Cable TV concern and to pursue other business and civic involvements.

* * * * *

Four ballplayers ended their major league careers still batting a steady .300, but overcome by poor health, even death.

Dave Orr was the 250-pound first baseman on John M. Ward's 1890 Brooklyn team in the Players League. In his eight major league years he never batted under .300—including a .373 mark in his final year—though often hit with nagging injuries. On July 12, he had two ribs broken by a pitched ball in a game against Boston. He continued to play for a time, but the pain continued. Late in the season, during an exhibition game in Renova, Pennsylvania, he was stricken with a paralysis which affected his whole left side. He hoped to find the therapy in Hot Springs, Arkansas, which would allow him to return in 1891, but he never fully recovered. He served in various positions attached to baseball, including a job as caretaker when Ebbetts Field was being built.

With the exception of Lou Gehrig, perhaps the player

best remembered for a career tragically halted by terminal illness is **Ross Youngs**. At 5'8", he was stocky, powerful, and aggressive. College coaches pursued him for his abilities in track and football, but he wanted to play professional baseball.

Immediately after graduation, in 1914, he became a seventeen-year-old trying to hold his own in the fast Texas League. The Austin team let him go, and he drifted into lower leagues for two seasons. In 1916, however, he enjoyed a .362 campaign in Sherman, Texas of the Western Association—and his contract was purchased by the New York Giants. John McGraw brought him to spring training camp at Marlin, Texas, in 1917 but sent him to Rochester, bringing him back at season's end to hit .346 in seven games.

That was the first of eight straight .300 seasons Youngs registered for the Giants, who captured National League pennants in 1921-24. For the first of these four pennant winners, he drove home 102 runs with benefit of only 3 homers. He was a "short Ty Cobb." In the process, he also captured a spot in the hard-bitten McGraw's heart reserved only for Christy Mathewson. The pictures of those two would adorn McGraw's office wall for years to come.

In 1924, the Giants lost a hard-fought World Series to Walter Johnson and the Washington Senators. That winter, during a stay in Europe, Ross Youngs became ill, and carried the effects into 1925, in which he lost almost 100 points off his previous season's average (.356-.264).

A cloud of uncertainty and concern hung over him at the Giants' training camp. Youngs seemed sluggish and drained, somehow. When questioned, he laughingly replied, "I guess I'm getting old. It takes me more time to get in shape." McGraw, however, was worried and depressed by all this (Mathewson had died in October 1925), and called in a doctor. He was told that "Pep" might not finish the season, that his condition would require a special diet and constant attention. "Muggsy" hired a male nurse to monitor his right fielder's needs. Youngs was determined to play as hard as he could for as long as he could.

He joked about his male nurse and special care: "I used to laugh at Phil Douglas [the inebriate Giants' pitcher] and his keeper—now I've got one." He taught a seventeen-year-old rookie named Mel Ott to play right field. And, having played his final game on August 10, he closed his season at .306. He was no longer able to take the field, due to the progressive effects of Bright's Disease, a degenerative kidney disorder which led to the retention of toxic uric acids. Despite the best care available in the 1920s, prolonged convalescence, and repeated transfusions, he died in San Antonio, Texas on October 22, 1927. He was thirty.

Perhaps the best summary of Youngs' career is to be found in his eulogy by John McGraw, who had already managed the Giants for twenty-five seasons and whose baseball memory reached back to the Baltimore Orioles of

the 1890s: "He was the greatest outfielder I ever saw . . . he was the easiest player I ever knew to handle . . . on top of all this, a gamer ball player than Youngs never played. . . ."

Ray Chapman is the only player to be killed by a pitched ball in the major leagues. On August 16, 1920, in the midst of the best of his nine major league seasons, he was struck in the head by a Carl Mays submarine delivery. One of the finest hitting and fielding shortstops in the American League, he remained conscious for a time but could not speak, passing away at 3 AM the next day.

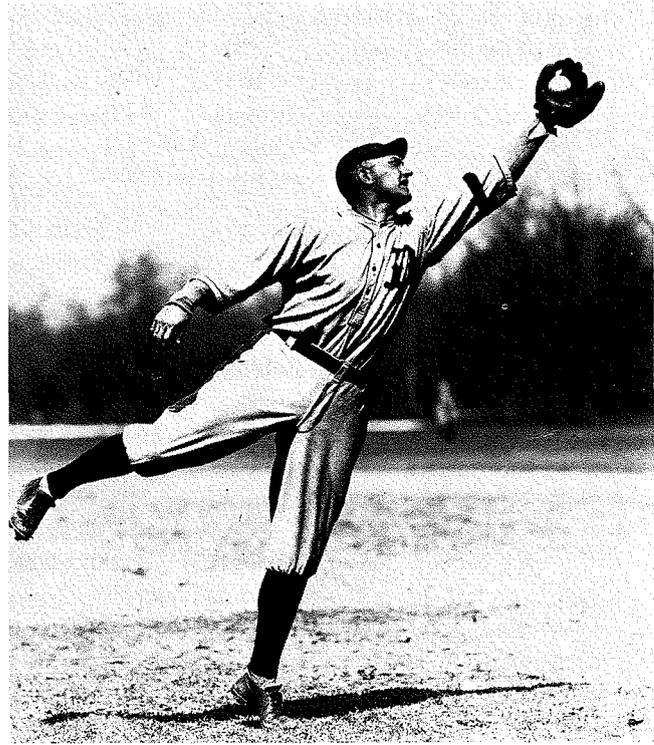
Roberto Clemente ended his career in 1972, reaching the 3,000 hit milestone on September 30. Before the season began, however, his spring training interviews had told a story: "There is no way I can play more than this year and next year. No way." Even as his hitting remained strong and he won his twelfth Gold Glove, it appeared that the 1973 season might well be his last. It never came. On the night of December 31 the airplane in which he was riding, carrying medicine and supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua, plunged into the Atlantic. Waiving the five year wait, baseball writers voted him into the Hall of Fame in 1973.

Two other players, both .300 batters but neither surviving midseason, deserve brief mention. Ed Delahanty, the great turn-of-the-century slugger, died on July 2, 1903 when he plunged off a railroad bridge into the darkness of the Niagara River—a mysterious end to a remarkable career (he was batting .333 for Washington at the time—and that was below par for him!) Lesser known, but a fine player at age thirty, was Pittsburgh first baseman Alexander McKinnon. Batting .340 coming into a game at Philadelphia on July 4, 1887, "Mac" complained of not feeling well, and the next day was persuaded to go home to Boston: "I don't believe I tried harder in my life to break a sweat than I did this morning, but it was no go." He had typhoid fever, and died on July 24.

* * * * *

Four seasoned regulars enjoyed campaigns well over the .300 mark, but never played another inning in the major leagues—banished from Organized Baseball for conspiring with gamblers to throw games for a payoff. The Black Sox scandal of 1919 immediately comes to mind—and, indeed, three of the plus-.300 group were mainstays of that team. The remaining figure, however, deserves special attention, as he played a vital role in what was baseball's biggest scandal of the nineteenth century.

George Hall was born in Brooklyn in 1849, and polished his skills there during the baseball boom which followed the Civil War. There were no recognized professional teams or leagues in the mid-1860s. Amateur clubs and town teams had been in the field for decades, and as competition for the prestige and profit of a "winner" increased, under-the-table payoffs increased as



Ty Cobb, .323

well. Heavy betting and the periodic throwing of ball-games through intentionally careless play plagued the ballparks. Amateurism had become a sham—and into this turbulent atmosphere stepped a nineteen-year-old George Hall.

After an 1868 season with the Excelsior Juniors of Brooklyn, he caught on as first baseman for the Cambridge (NY) Stars, one of the leading teams in the East. In 1870, he returned to Brooklyn as center fielder of the Atlantics. But when the Atlantics decided to reorganize as an amateur club in 1871, Hall moved down the coast to play center field for the Washington Olympics of the new National Association of Professional Base Ball Players. He batted .260, but was just reaching his physical maturity, standing 5'7" and weighing around 140 pounds. (It should be noted that, of the 150 or so NA players for whom vital statistics are available, only about a dozen were known six-footers.) He was a wiry lefthanded batter with sure hands, good speed, and surprising strength for his size.

In 1872, the Olympics dropped back to "cooperative" status in the league, indicating an economy operation with players paid from gate receipts without guarantee. Faced with this, Hall moved to nearby Baltimore to wear the silk uniform of the Canaries. He batted .300 and .320 in 1872 and '73, but with the high expenses of a twelve-player roster, huge for that period, the team sank in red ink (in the latter season, Hall was the lowest-paid regular but drew \$1000). The team scattered, and he joined Cal McVey in moving to the prestigious Boston Red Stockings—champions the past two seasons.

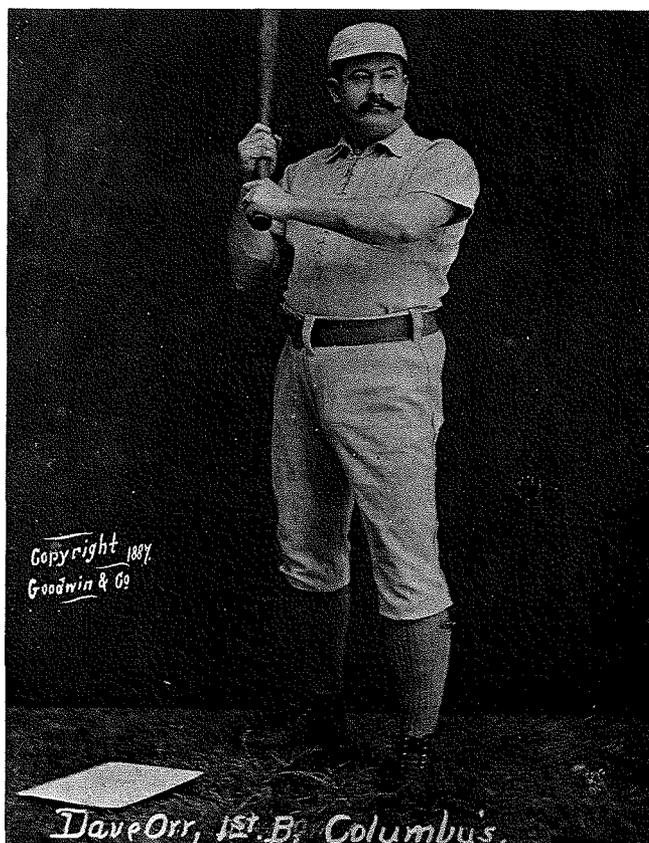
In Boston, though called a substitute, in deference to the legendary but aging Harry Wright, he played the latter's traditional center field position in most of the league games (.329) and the several exhibitions. In July of that 1874 campaign, he enjoyed the team's exhibition tour in England. For his season's labors, however, he was paid only about \$500. The following season, at age twenty-six, he signed with the Philadelphia Athletics.

The atmosphere in Philadelphia was significantly different from what he had known in Boston. The crowds were notoriously rowdy. Betting was heavier on games and innings, and the "baseball pools" were openly played on the premises. The undisciplined corruption which would eventually destroy the NA was rife in Philadelphia. During that season, Hall was also reunited with his tough, but moody, former teammate and manager in Baltimore, William Craver.

After some years of taking a brutal beating as catcher (with no protective gear), Craver had developed skills as a second baseman. He had also cultivated other skills: in August of 1874, he had been accused by Billy McLean, a former New York City bare knuckle fighter and widely-respected umpire, of "throwing" a ballgame. During his 1875 season with the Athletics, the Brooklyn Eagle named a starting lineup of "rogues" who "would think only of how much money to make out of a game," and included Craver without fear of a libel suit. By season's end, the second-place Athletics were in financial difficulty and the fans were indifferent. The National Association itself collapsed, to be replaced by the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs.

In 1876, George Hall was stationed in left field for the reorganized Athletics and enjoyed his finest season, batting .366 and becoming the first NL home run king (5); the A's, meanwhile, went 14-45 and, at the league meetings in December, were expelled for failing to play out their final scheduled games. Without a team, Hall signed with Louisville for the 1877 season, his last.

The Louisville Grays were a strong team. Holdover Jim Devlin was one of his era's great pitchers, and in '77 became the only one in major league history to hurl every inning of his team's games. Hall joined a young and speedy outfield. The captain, however, was the aforementioned Bill Craver. And, when their third baseman developed a painful boil at midseason, Brooklyn native Al Nichols, who had batted .179 with a league-high 73 errors at that position for the 1876 New York Mutuals, was signed at Hall's suggestion. The Grays were league leaders and favorites well into the campaign but suddenly began losing late-season road games in suspicious ways. Amid Louisville *Courier Journal* headlines like "!!!-??-!!!" and tips on gamblers' betting patterns, club vice-president Charles E. Chase initiated an investigation which led to confessions by Hall, Devlin, and Nichols, backed by incriminating telegrams from New York gambling connections. The three were promptly suspended by



Dave Orr, .373

the Grays, along with Craver, who had refused to have his telegrams opened and was generally uncooperative and antagonistic. In December, the league reaffirmed these suspensions, as did all the clubs of the newly formed "League Alliance." Having batted .323 while appearing in all his club's games, Hall was banished for life. St. Louis tried to sign him and Devlin to '78 contracts, but to no avail.

Following the scandal, Hall began, by choice, to fade into obscurity. While Devlin and Craver made repeated appeals in person to league officials like president William Hulbert, Hall's fruitless appeal for reinstatement in December of 1878 was made by mail. He may have played ball in Canada—Craver tried to and Devlin did. Other evidence remains inconclusive.

What is certain is George Hall's eventual return to Brooklyn, where he labored quietly as an engraver for years. He died, at age 96, in 1945—unrecognized both as the last of the pre-National Association worthies and as one of baseball's greatest wastes of talent.

Four decades later, eight Chicago White Sox players were banned from Organized Baseball for life for their part in selling out the 1919 World Series to Cincinnati. Among these "Black Sox" were three regulars who had batted well over .300 in 1920, Happy Felsch, Joe Jackson (.382), and Buck Weaver. Much has been written over the years about their relative guilt, or lack of such. The

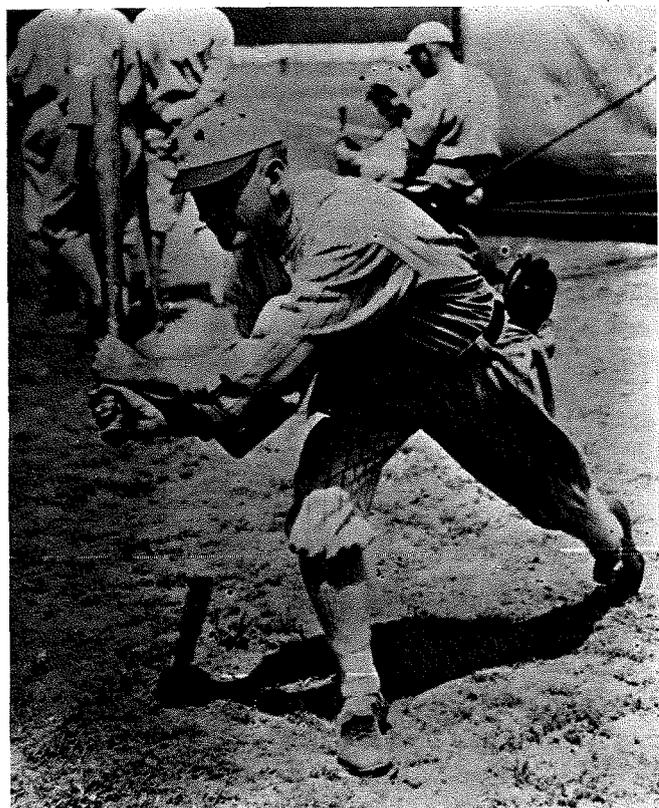
statement of Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, however, set forth a standard of baseball which would end their careers in their prime. Issued after the conclusion of their trial on August 2, 1920 (in which they were acquitted), it read, in part: "Regardless of the verdict of juries, no player who throws a ballgame, no player that undertakes or promises to throw a ballgame, no player that sits in conference with a bunch of crooked players and gamblers where the ways and means of throwing a game are discussed and does not promptly tell his club about it, will ever play professional baseball!"

After Judge Landis's decision, each of the three played semipro and outlaw baseball for a number of years. Felsch returned to his hometown, Milwaukee, working as a crane operator and laborer, and opened a tavern to support his six children. Jackson played baseball until 1933, continuing a valet business and, later, buying a liquor store. He remained active in the management and administration of several semipro teams and leagues. Weaver repeatedly made appeals to Landis for reinstatement, but all were bluntly denied. He continued to run a drugstore for many years, and later worked the parimutuel windows at a local racetrack.

* * * * *

By far, most of those major league regulars (twenty) who batted .300 in their final seasons continued their careers in the various minor leagues that once dotted the American landscape.

Joe Jackson, .382



Perry Werden was one of the most feared minor league batters of the 1890s, and played portions of seven seasons in the big leagues. In Minneapolis he hit 45 home runs in 1895—a record that stood throughout all baseball until the 1920 onslaught of Babe Ruth. In 1897 he was drafted by Louisville (then a major league franchise), where he compiled his highest big-time average, leading NL first basemen in putouts and assists as well. The following season, however, he returned to Minneapolis—unfortunately breaking his leg and missing the entire 1898 season. Thereafter his power totals were reduced, but he continued to hit for a high average into 1906. He eventually made his home in Minneapolis.

George Sisler always insisted that his real career ended in 1923 when, after batting .420 the season before, he missed the entire season with a severe sinus infection which produced double vision. He returned to play major league ball in 1924-30 until, with his legs "gone," he was unconditionally released by the Braves. He then batted .303 for Rochester and was released. The following year he dropped out of his player-manager position at Shreveport-Tyler when asked to take a large pay cut. He spent most of the 1930s as a businessman in St. Louis.

Buzz Arlett, like Harry Moore and Irv Waldron, as well as part-time .300 hitters Tex Vache (1925) and Monk Sherlock (1930), enjoyed only one season in the major leagues. He was, however, the greatest switch-hitter in minor league history, averaging .341 and blasting 432 home runs in 19 seasons (the first five largely as a pitcher). His first thirteen seasons were spent with Oakland of the Pacific Coast League. Depending on who ventured the opinion, Arlett was confined to the minors due to his fielding weaknesses, high price, temperament, or bad timing (the PCL President voided Arlett's 1930 sale to Brooklyn after an altercation with an umpire). After his .313 NL season with the Phillies, who had purchased him for a healthy sum from Oakland, he was traded to minor league Baltimore.

Urban John Hodapp stands as the only ballplayer in this century who closed out his major league career as a regular batting .300—and ended the minor league tour which followed in the same manner.

Born in Cincinnati in 1905, "Johnny" had an uncle who took considerable interest in his baseball development. By the early 1920s, young Hodapp's abilities stood out in several of the small amateur leagues which dotted the Queen City, and he turned semipro in 1923. Two years later, after a turn in the minors with Indianapolis, he appeared in 37 games with Cleveland. Although he batted only .238, his showing was stronger than that of three-year incumbent third baseman Rube Lutzke, and rapid improvement was expected. Instead, during spring training of 1926, he suffered a broken leg, limiting him to only five at-bats with the Indians that season.

In 1927, however, Hodapp returned to bat .304 in

halftime duty. His next season, finally as the regular third baseman, was even better: his line drives produced a .323 mark, complemented by 73 RBIs. By that time, Hodapp was reaching his physical prime, a sturdy six-footer at 180 pounds, batting and throwing righthanded.

Unfortunately, in the following years, his knees were a constant source of trouble. Moved to second base in 1929 (his position thereafter), he managed to bat .327, with the benefit of increased pinch-hitting roles. During the off-season, taking special care of himself, he prepared for the 1930 campaign.

Teamed with Earl Averill, Eddie Morgan & Co., Hodapp played in all 154 games, leading the league in hits (225) and doubles (51), driving in 121 runs while batting .354. Though not a smooth fielder, he did pace AL second basemen in putouts. The 1930 season indicated what a healthy John Hodapp could do.

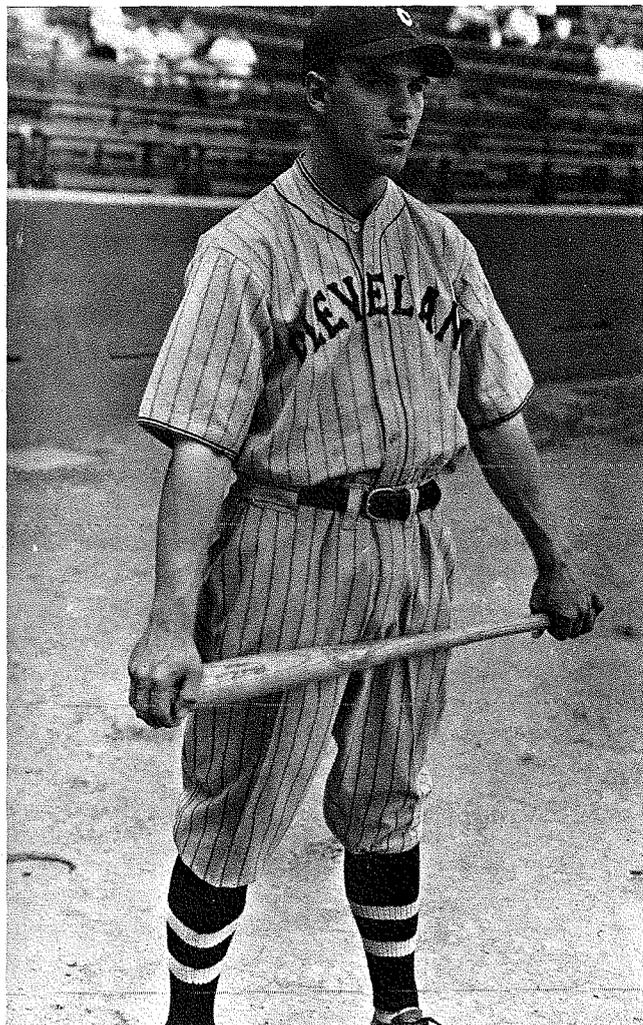
The next campaign, however, saw the return of serious concerns about his knees. Though he managed a .295 mark, both his power at the plate and mobility in the field were noticeably diminished. By 1932, it was clear that ligament damage was involved. Given the surgical care

of fifty years ago, Hodapp was warned that an operation could possibly leave him with a stiff knee—so he chose to make the best of his situation. That season marked the close of his career with the Cleveland Indians, and he finished out the torturous year in the White Sox outfield and as a pinch hitter. Chicago let him go after its 49-102 season, and Hodapp signed with an AL team which was even more inept, the Boston Red Sox (43-111).

The 1933 Red Sox improved to 63-86. But, most significantly, the beginning of the Tom Yawkey era marked the end of the major league trail for four great hitters: Bob (Fatty) Fothergill, Dale Alexander, Smead Jolley—and Johnny Hodapp. The game second baseman was leading the league at .374 in June but, plagued with continued physical liabilities, declined to a still respectable .312 with 27 doubles. On October 31, with the Sox making rebuilding plans, Hodapp was released.

Not yet 30, and still in love with the game, he did not seriously consider retiring. Instead, he turned to the minor leagues. Hodapp split the 1934 season between Columbus (.344) and Knoxville (.307). This one year back in the minors was enough to convince him he would not be returning to the majors. He considered umpiring but, by this time, his father was waiting for a decision on the business offer which had been open for a decade: Johnny Hodapp returned to Cincinnati as a director in the family funeral home, with his brothers. He passed away in 1979.

Johnny Hodapp, .312



In 1945, three American Leaguers batted over .300 in qualifying for the batting title, two of them on the Chicago White Sox—who released both—**Tony Cuccinello** and **John Dickshot**—in anticipation of the return of the World War II veterans. Cuccinello, in 1941 the manager of the Giants' Jersey City farm club, had joined the Braves for the 1942 campaign and, during his final stint with the White Sox, led the league in batting ("strictly from memory") almost until the final day. His outright release came as a complete surprise for, as the UPI noted, "the old Cuccinello was better than the Cuccinello of old." He remained in the New York area in 1946, playing semipro baseball and turning down other opportunities due to family concerns. He managed the Tampa Smokers in 1947, batting .067 in seven games. Soon after, he began a coaching and scouting career, notably with Al Lopez, which would last for decades.

* * * * *

"One of the great thrills of my life," Ted Williams once observed, "was when I was 14 and discovered I could hit whatever my friend Wilbur Wiley threw." Cap Anson would, no doubt, have smiled in agreement, remembering his mastery of the hurlers of another era. A selective survey of those major league regulars batting .300 in their final seasons, however, clearly underlines a fact of baseball life: for some players a strong season at the plate simply isn't enough.

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A QUIZ

What's in a Name?

DOUG SIMPSON

1. Which major league franchise has operated for the longest continuous time in the same city without changing its nickname?
 - a. Chicago Cubs
 - b. Pittsburgh Pirates
 - c. St. Louis Cardinals
 - d. Cincinnati Reds
2. Which two original American League franchises have operated continuously since 1901 without changing their nicknames?
 - a. White Sox and Red Sox
 - b. Tigers and Yankees
 - c. Yankees and Red Sox
 - d. White Sox and Tigers
3. Which name has never been used by the Boston National League team?
 - a. Beaneaters
 - b. Pilgrims
 - c. Patriots
 - d. Bees
4. The Toronto Blue Jays are not the first team to use that handle. Who was the first?
 - a. Philadelphia
 - b. Brooklyn
 - c. Baltimore
 - d. Cleveland
5. Which name has never been used by the Cleveland American League franchise?
 - a. Bronchos
 - b. Naps
 - c. Spiders
 - d. Molly McGuire
6. Which name was never used by a major league franchise in New York City?
 - a. Gothams
 - b. Mutuals
 - c. Highlanders
 - d. Manhattans
7. Which of these modern franchises used the combination of city and nickname for the shortest period of time?
 - a. Seattle Pilots
 - b. Houston Colt .45s
 - c. Kansas City Athletics
 - d. Los Angeles Angels
8. Which of the above held its full identity the longest period of time?
 - a. Seattle Pilots
 - b. Houston Colt .45s
 - c. Kansas City Athletics
 - d. Los Angeles Angels
9. How many times has a Washington franchise been known as the Senators?
 - a. once
 - b. twice
 - c. three times
 - d. four times
10. Which of these nicknames was previously used by a major league franchise?
 - a. Royals
 - b. Brewers
 - c. Mariners
 - d. Rangers
11. The sobriquet "Reds" is perpetually associated with Cincinnati. Which other city in the nineteenth century used the Reds as its handle?
 - a. St. Louis
 - b. Brooklyn
 - c. Boston
 - d. Hartford
12. Which name was never used by a Chicago National League team?
 - a. White Stockings
 - b. Stars
 - c. Colts
 - d. Orphans
13. Kansas City has had the Athletics and Royals. What was its handle back in 1886?
 - a. Colts
 - b. Monarchs
 - c. Steers
 - d. Cowboys
14. The Orioles made for a logical name for the Baltimore franchise when it moved from St. Louis in 1954. What was the last year a major league team had been called the Orioles?
 - a. 1895
 - b. 1897
 - c. 1899
 - d. 1902
15. Which continuous franchise has used the most names since its inception?
 - a. Boston AL
 - b. Boston NL
 - c. Chicago NL
 - d. Cleveland AL
16. Which of these colors has never been used as a team appellation?
 - a. Grays
 - b. Blues
 - c. Greens
 - d. Maroons
17. Which nickname was never used in Brooklyn?
 - a. Trolleys
 - b. Bridegrooms
 - c. Superbas
 - d. Dodgers
18. Which of these animal mascots never was associated with a nineteenth century baseball team?
 - a. Tigers
 - b. Bisons
 - c. Wolverines
 - d. Colts
19. Which of these cities used the Trojans as a nickname from 1879 to 1882?
 - a. Buffalo
 - b. Troy
 - c. Syracuse
 - d. Toronto
20. Which monicker has been used for the longest continuous time regardless of its home city?
 - a. Pirates
 - b. Cardinals
 - c. Giants
 - d. Cubs

Answer on page 85.

DOUG SIMPSON, a teacher in Washington State, wrote about Earl Averill for the Baseball Research Journal.

MINOR LEAGUES

Why I Research

JOHN F. PARDON

IN THE EARLY 1950s, a youngster growing up in the suburbs of New York City had to pick a team to root for, the Dodgers, the Giants or the Yankees. It was a matter of survival at the local lot where you gathered to play.

Toward the end of the spring training schedule, the Yankees were working their way north to open the season. On this particular night, they were facing the Atlanta Crackers in Ponce de Leon Park. Fiddling around with the radio at the head of my bed, I happened to tune in the Cracker play-by-play announcer. It was hard to keep the station, but the weak signal seemed to strengthen at just the right moment: the Crackers were leading the mighty Yankee team. They held that lead, and Don Larsen was the losing pitcher, if memory serves.

To needle my father, a Yankee idolator, I bounded out to the kitchen the next morning and gleefully announced that the Atlanta Crackers had beaten New York. "Well, who's Atlanta, what kind of team do they have?" If the Yankees had lost, there better be a good reason for it!

From a meager collection of three or four baseball guides that one day

would be part of a formidable library, we soon determined that Atlanta belonged to something called the Southern Association. I reasoned—quite rightly—that if Atlanta had a team in the years for which I had guides, it probably had had teams in other years, too. And if Atlanta did, what about other cities not on the (then) major-league map?

Thus began a love affair—a love affair with minor-league baseball that has lasted thirty years. The most immediate benefit was to learn some geography. From Boston and New York City to San Francisco and Los Angeles, and in more than 1,300 other cities, towns, and villages, baseball has been played professionally at one time or another since the 1870s. I might not know a town's prime industry, export, or history, but I soon learned if it had a baseball team.

Through high school and college, military service, and into the working world, my interest ebbed and flowed, but never disappeared. Sometimes I worked furiously to complete a research project; sometimes I did nothing concerning baseball at all. But the interest remained.

The eventual outcome of this interest was the development of a list of cities that ever had a professional baseball team. I began in the 1950s with a simple form that contained space for the following information: city, year(s), wins, losses, winning percentage, position in final standing, attendance, manager(s), and league(s). But as I collected more and more data, problems inevitably developed. For example:

- A team moves from one city to another. How should the season's information be divided between these cities?

- A team has one or more managers during the playing season. What were their individual records? Why the change?

- What of team records? When final standings of a league were not in balance (all teams' wins equaling all teams' losses), then what?

- And, finally, there were the leagues that folded before their regular schedules were completed.

I never fail to stumble upon some new variable to contend with in this endless project. As a result, I've continued to expand the kinds of data, adding columns for league classifications, farm system affiliations, and team nicknames.

At first, individual players didn't catch my fancy. With several hundred thousand to handle, I thought that such a list would be best left to a higher power. But the spirit moved, and players became a segment of the project, too—particularly if some friend or fellow researcher expressed an interest. Over the course of thirty years, many blanks have been filled, giving me a great sense of gratification; but many gaps remain.

So, my goal of amassing complete data on the teams and cities of professional baseball is not finished—and I know now that it never will be. Still, I come ever closer—and therein lies the lure, the tease: that maybe, despite my rational assessment, I just

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might add more data to make the puzzle more nearly complete.

And there's another kind of reward for a quarter-century of digging into musty newspaper files, reading dim microfilm, talking to baseball people, and clambering up and down ball-parks new and old, big and small. I've collected memories galore, memories and experiences. The miles I've traveled in search of information, if plotted on a map, would look like the wanderings of a deranged ant: here, there, around, and back again.

I talked with Jim Mills, Phil Hower, Marv Lorenz, and Stan Wasiak—not the household names of baseball, but men who lived their whole lives for and through the game. The yarns they could spin made a hotel lobby seem the site of *The Arabian Nights* tales.

And it was baseball that allowed me to peer into the hearts of several cities and small towns—the people, architecture, industry, geography—each offering something new and different. There's Greenville, South Carolina, which had a team in the Palmetto League in 1931. The league didn't survive the season, but my research turned up the nicknames of the five cities it briefly represented. Greenville's team was the "Spinners"—for the spinning mills located in town.

"Up the mountain," in the Smokies, in Asheville, North Carolina, pro baseball goes back to 1909 and the Western Carolina League. Since its earliest days Asheville teams have been known mostly as the "Tourists" for the obvious reason that the Smoky Mountains are a popular tourist area. (In 1968 I covered the Tourists' entry in the Class AA Southern League and watched Sparky Anderson's final season in the minors before he headed for the big leagues.)

Big or small, wooden or concrete, the baseball parks across the country provide a common link—like schools, churches, post offices, and other basic institutions of American life. In the higher minor leagues, the parks sometimes are scaled-down versions

of the big league parks: the Columbus, Ohio, park, for example, seats more than 15,000, has modern lights and a restaurant—plus an artificial infield. Johnson City, Tennessee, on the other hand, has a park with a stand of trees towering over the outfield fence. A picturesque scene.

Each park has (or had) a history of its own. Some still stand intact; others are overgrown and falling down. Many have been torn down to provide acres of asphalt for shopping centers.

One such parking lot can be found in Peekskill, New York, on the site of Peekskill Stadium, home of the Peekskill Highlanders of the North Atlantic League of 1946. The Highlanders won the regular season pennant and playoffs that year—with the final game at home capturing the playoff title. And in that game, a pitcher by the name of Tony Napoles accomplished one of the rare feats in baseball. A starting pitcher, Napoles played the entire season without suffering a single defeat: he was 18-0 for the regular season and added another 4 victories in the playoffs.

Researching such men as Tony Napoles and the Highlanders, poring over box scores and reading the Peekskill *Evening Star* (and it could be any newspaper, in most any city, anywhere), I find myself moving back in time. I begin to get the feel of life in the year I'm working on. Baseball research is a little like having your own time machine—Peekskill in 1946, Asheville in 1917, Johnson City, 1910.

And from that time machine I emerge with an understanding of the essential relationship of America and baseball: not the baseball of Monday night television, but baseball as it is experienced by the many—in fact, the vast majority—who work at it without reaching the top. Jacques Barzun wrote, "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." As far as I'm concerned, whoever wants to know the heart and mind of baseball had better look to the minor leagues.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON P. 83

- (b) Pittsburgh, since 1891. This may be a bit of a technicality, but in the 1944 and 1945 seasons Cincinnati was officially the Red Legs. The names have been used somewhat interchangeably ever since, but other than those two seasons it has been the Reds since 1890. And the Phillies would date back to 1883 were it not for a name change in 1943 and 1944.
- (d) White Sox and Tigers.
- (c) Patriots. Boston was the Beaneaters from 1883 to 1906, the Pilgrims from 1909 to 1911, and the Bees from 1936 to 1940.
- (a) Philadelphia. Since 1883 the team has been known as the Phillies all but two years, 1943 and 1944.
- (c) Spiders. This is a bit of a trick question. Cleveland was the Bronchos in 1901, the Naps from 1905 to 1911, and the Molly McGuires from 1912 to 1914. Cleveland was also the Spiders . . . but in the National League, from 1879 to 1884 and from 1889 to 1899.
- (d) Manhattans. Before they became the Giants, the NL entry team was the Gothams from 1883 to 1885. The present Yankees were the Highlanders from 1903 to 1912. New York's National league team in 1876 was the Mutuals.
- (a) Seattle Pilots, 1969 only.
- (c) Kansas City Athletics. The Athletics were in Kansas City from 1955 to 1967, the Angels were in Los Angeles from 1961 to 1965, and the Houston club was the Colt .45s from 1962 to 1964.
- (d) Four times—from 1901 to 1960, the expansion team in 1961-71, and National League teams from 1886 to 1889 and in 1892-99.
- (b) Brewers. Twice before, Milwaukee major league franchises bore that name, in the National League in 1878 and in the American League in 1901. The latter became the St. Louis Browns in 1902.
- (a,c) Trick question—Boston and St. Louis, the latter for 1876-77 only.
- (b) Stars. The present Cubs were the White Stockings from 1876 to 1893, the Colts from 1894 to 1897, and the Orphans in 1898. The only major league team ever known as the Stars was Syracuse in 1879.
- (d) Cowboys.
- (d) 1902. The old National League Orioles last played in 1899, before moving to Brooklyn in 1900. But the American League had a franchise in Baltimore its first two seasons before it was transferred to New York.
- (b) Boston, an original member of the National League, as you may have guessed. Besides the Braves, Beaneaters, Pilgrims and Bees (see question #3), they have also been known as the Red Caps (1876-1882) and the Doves (1907-1908).
- (c) Greens. The Grays were active in Providence from 1878 to 1885; Hartford had the Blues in 1875 and 1877; and the Maroons were in St. Louis in 1885-86.
- (a) Trolleys. Brooklyn was the Bridegrooms from 1890 to 1898 and the Superbas from 1899 to 1910. Apparently the name Dodgers was a shortened version of "Trolley-dodgers," but the team was never known as the Trolleys.
- (a) Tigers. The name was unused until Detroit claimed it in 1901. The Bisons were in Buffalo from 1879 to 1885, the Wolverines in Detroit from 1881 to 1888, and the Colts in Chicago from 1894 to 1897.
- (b) Troy. If you missed this one, shame.
- (c) Giants, from 1886 to 1957 in New York—since then in San Francisco.

MEMORIES

I Remember Harry

ROBERT COLE

THAT SUMMER of 1949, at twelve, I got closer to baseball. I carried a ball and glove in the car in case I met someone who wanted to play. I judged people by their baseball connections: if they didn't have any, they weren't interesting to me. One of my grandmother's neighbors, Mr. Martin, took on new stature when I learned that he was the famous Horsey Martin who pitched softball for Appalachian Electric Power Company in the City League of Beckley, West Virginia. I wouldn't have guessed: he looked just like an ordinary guy—square, ruddy face, wore gold-rimmed glasses, never said much. But now I always spoke to him. He still never said much.

If I wanted to play baseball, there was only one place in Beaver I really could count on it; up on Tank Branch Hill with the Wills boys, Jack and Jeep. Almost no one else would play—they called it hardball, and it hurt your hands—so the three of us would go up the road from the Wills home and climb over the fence into Old Man Wolfe's field. Sometimes we could con another boy or two into playing, but we rarely had more than a pitcher, two fielders, and two bat-

ters. So we played a simplified version of the game, called Straight Base, or Move Up. If you hit the ball, you had to run through the pitcher's area and be safe at second base, or lose your bats. If you got to second, you had to get back home on the next batted ball, or you were forced out. There was no first base, at least not off at a ninety-degree angle to home. When you made out, you were "last man in the field," and all the other fielders moved up a position closer to batting. However, a fielder could go directly to batter if he caught a fly.

Usually we "threw easy" to each other, like batting practice, so we could hit the ball. That was the most fun. But one day Bobby Meadows, a big boy from down the road, wanted to play and impress us with his fast-ball. It wasn't that fast, but it was too fast for us, and he looked at you with disgust if you didn't swing, although a lot of his pitches weren't within reach. That day was no fun. Nor was it if Paul Pendleton was there: he was a blank-looking little blond boy who wouldn't swing at any "dead pitch" because his brother Mason told him not to. That meant I couldn't use my Gene Bearden knuckleball.

Lots of times we didn't play Move

Up, but just shared the joy of chasing flies. I hated to waste any chance to catch one. It irritated me greatly to see the fungo-hitter try to hit a throw as it bounced in from the outfield, because he almost always sliced it off to the side, and we just had to waste time chasing a foul ball. No one liked chasing grounders, and anyone (such as I) who couldn't consistently hit fungoes took a lot of heat. We also shared the suffering of stoved fingers, usually thumbs, when we let a fly hit wrong on our tiny gloves.

As summer went on, nature shut our games down. Old Man Wolfe didn't mow his field, and by late July the outfield grass was knee-high. Chasing a fly was like splashing after a ball in a pool. We would have to retreat to Jack's front yard and just "pass some ball." There wasn't another convenient field big enough for baseball. On Sunday drives with my family, I began a quest for the ideal available field, evaluating all the vacant lots and pastures I saw. "There's a good one, grassy and level," I would think, or "we could play there: no one could hit it out," or "too bad that one's got a stream running through it," and so on, adjusting sizes, building fences, trimming grass, landscaping, and laying out diamonds in my mind.

I was particularly enamored of a field near Hedricktown, the shanty part of Beaver. This field was long and wide and dignified and sloped gently up toward a small hill. Part of the slope now was covered with small evergreens, but it was easy to imagine the baseball field they said used to be there, where the old town team played and people had picnics and watched on Sunday afternoons. What happened to it, I wondered. Why did it stop? Why can't it come back? Is everybody hiding something about baseball? I felt so alone. It was only about a hundred yards from the main road, but somehow I never walked

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over to inspect it closely. It was just *there*, like the background landscape in a comic strip, the cactus in "Red Ryder" or the stick palm trees in "Popeye" or the "Katzenjammer Kids."

At home, the most relief I could get from my itch for baseball was to throw a ball up in the air and catch it. My oldest brother was only seven, not worth throwing to. He wasn't interested anyway. At least once a week I might have the treat of a visit from Bill Brown, the deliveryman for Kester's Dry Cleaners. He had been a friend of Dad's for a long time, and always spoke to me in a friendly way, but paid more attention to me when Dad told him I had become a baseball fan. Bill was a fan of long standing, and loved to share his memories with me, but wasn't condescending. He would drive up in his bright red panel truck and stop on a summer day and talk baseball. He was a bald, tanned man with a heavily lined face that held a grin a long time as he told me baseball stories. His gold teeth would show, too, as we sat in the shade of the front porch and talked. He looked like I thought a baseball manager should. Bill used to take the C & O excursions to Cincinnati and see the Reds. Once he said he saw Eddie Miller, playing shortstop for the Reds, run way down the left-field line and catch a foul fly over his shoulder. "They had these wooden folding chairs down there for the bullpen crew to sit on when they weren't working," Bill said, "and Eddie caught the ball just before he got to the chairs. He caught it, and whirled around and sat right down in one of the chairs. People gave him a big hand."

I liked that story because Eddie Miller, now near the end of his career, was a utility infielder for the Phillies, my NL favorites because of young Robin Roberts. I could see Miller making the catch. It was a sunny day, an afternoon game. Bill also told me that while most people thought of Ralph Kiner only as a home run hitter, he once saw Kiner hit five straight

singles in a game. "Little humpback liners," Bill said, "just right over the infield and sharp down into the grass—zing! zing!" He made a quick horizontal and downward motion with his cupped hand. He said Kiner could have been a percentage hitter if he had wanted to be, but there was more money in hitting home runs. I knew Kiner's famous remark about singles hitters driving Fords and home-run hitters driving Cadillacs.

Although the major leagues played on into October, local baseball and softball tended to wrap up by mid-August, because so many of the players and coaches had to turn to preparing for the really big sport in the



Harry Perkowski

area—football. High school practice started the Monday closest to the middle of August. Bones Bragg was going to be a freshman at Shady Springs High School that fall, so he went out for football. One day that August of 1949 I was playing in the front yard when I saw Bones strutting down the railroad track, coming home from football practice, carrying his cleats over his shoulder by the laces, neatly tied together. He said he was the starting center on the freshman team, and invited me to do some pushups with him. I didn't know how. He put on his cleats, dropped down in the yard and briskly dipped through a dozen or so. I tried, but couldn't lift my body off the ground. "Jesus, Bobby," Bones warned me,

very seriously, "you're gonna have to learn to do pushups if you want to play football." Yeah, I said. Bones had wounded my confidence again.

Seventh grade started and as a veteran, I began to assume some position of authority on the recess softball field. I also followed the major league season through the World Series, and although I wasn't excited about the Series, I hated to see the season end. I wasn't prepared for the delightful surprise that followed for me a week later. Harry Perkowski, the Reds' rookie, was going to pitch in Beckley! The lead on the story in the *Raleigh Register* read:

Local fans will get a chance to see a big leaguer in action Sunday. The occasion will be a game between the Eccles Admirals, champions of the Raleigh County Baseball League, and the Raleigh Clippers, who claim the Southern West Virginia Negro title, Sunday afternoon at 2:30 at Clipper Park on the Stanaford road.

Boy, this game had it all—the only local boy in the big leagues, the best team in the county league (whose games Dad wouldn't let me attend because all the teams were from coal towns, and he thought the crowds would be too rough), and a hotshot black team. My first baseball game. The ballpark was out behind Beckley Open Air Theatre. My best friend Jack Wills and I went, and the day was miserable, cold and damp. To my surprise, there wasn't a very big crowd. We stood along the sidelines behind the dugout between first and home, because we'd read that was the best place to watch a game. Actually the "dugout" was just a small structure with a roof and chickenwire sides, and benches inside. It enabled us to watch the players closely, and I didn't like what I saw: all they did was clean mud from their spikes and smoke cigarettes constantly, taking a few puffs off one and then throwing it on the ground, like the way Dad used to drop cigarettes and ashes on the floor at home when he'd rest on the couch in the middle room in the evening when he got home from the

mines. I thought players were not supposed to smoke.

Even Harry Perkowski smoked. But he pitched beautifully, and we were perfectly located to watch him, because he was a lefthander. We were so close and he looked so big in his Cincinnati road uniform and blue cap with the red pointed "C." He was so smooth and longstriding in his follow-through, so attentive to his work, so straight and square in his posture. The other players would watch him and talk among themselves. He pitched five innings of scoreless ball, allowed three hits—one by Sonny Watts of the Birmingham Black Barons—struck out five, walked none, then moved over to first base. Okey Mills, the county sheriff and the Admirals' star pitcher, finished up, and he held on for the win, 5-3.

Harry, a strong lefthanded hitter, helped with the scoring, too, hitting a

towering home run in the fifth. The bat whipped into an uppercut and the ball, white, shot high, very high, darkening, angling sharply up from the cold mud of the field, up toward the chill gray glare of the sky, a little dot disappearing black into the woods beyond center field.

The *Register* next day said the fences all were 500 feet away, but Bob Wills, the sports editor, asked Pat Salango, a Stanford engineer, to measure the home-run distance with his engineering tape. Salango said it was 420 feet to where the ball cleared the fence and 453 feet to where three eyewitnesses said Harry's homer landed. Bob looked in the record book and deduced that the homer would have left all but four of the fourteen major league parks at their longest point from home plate. Best he could find, Babe Ruth supposedly hit a 500-foot home run during spring training in 1913 and Jimmie Foxx hit

one 550 feet in a league game. "So, after all," Bob concluded, "history wasn't made Sunday. But—that boy can still wallop the apple." And I had been there.

And on top of that, I was going to meet Harry Perkowski. Montgomery Ward's had hired him to work in the sporting goods department for the winter, and one Saturday soon after the home run, Dad, 35, took me uptown to meet Harry, 27. We got there early in the morning and Harry was along in sporting goods, wearing a brown suit, looking tall and strong. The space vanished between us. "Harry, this is my boy," Dad said, smiling with his lips bunched together. Harry, looking serious, reached out and politely shook hands with me. Seconds stretched. Words floated in jello. We left. "I met Harry Perkowski," I boasted to Jack Wills. No one else would have cared to know.

THE BOOK LOG

In this column will be found publications received by TNP in 1983. While each of the items below may have much to recommend it, its presence in the Log does not constitute an endorsement by TNP or SABR, just as the absence of any publication connotes no disfavor. (All prices in U.S. dollars, hardbound unless noted.)

HENRY CHADWICK. *The Game of Baseball*, Camden House, Drawer 2025, Columbia, SC 29206. \$30 (SABR members, \$25.50) plus \$2.50 postage. The first in a projected "Library of Baseball Classics," this is a complete facsimile (inc. ads) of the first hardbound baseball book.

MERRITT CLIFTON. *Disorganized Baseball: The Provincial League from LaRoque to Les Expos*. Samisdat, Box 129, Richford, VT 05476. \$6. Paperbound. Thirty-six page monograph on baseball in Quebec's sometimes outlaw and sometimes inlaw circuit, with records. Production values and length slim, but content unusual and valuable.

L. ROBERT DAVIDS, ed. *Insider's Baseball*. Scribners. \$14.95. (SABR members, \$12; order from John F. Pardon, Box 728, Crugers, NY 10521). An anthology of the best of the *Baseball Research Journal*. All right, this is one that does come endorsed.

WILLIAM HUMBER. *Cheering for the Home Team: The Story of Baseball in Canada*. The Boston Mills Press. (See ad on p. 21 for price and ordering data.) Large (8 1/2 x 11), copiously illustrated; covers subject from 1838 to present. Many photos not previously seen.

BILL JAMES. *The Bill James Baseball Abstract, 1983*. Ballantine, \$6.95. Paperbound. Statistical analysis that challenges and entertains—sabermetrics. The seventh annual edition, second to be published commercially. Provocative, unique, and its price is a miracle.

LEW LIPSET. *The Encyclopedia of Baseball Cards, Vol. 1: 19th Century Cards*. Self-published. \$9.95. (SABR members, \$8.95 from P. O. Box 137, Centereach, NY 11720). Paperbound. Trade, insert, and ad cards, plus miscellaneous issues and checklists. Over 150 photos in 140 pages, 8 1/2 x 11 format.

Minneapolis Review of Baseball. Edited by Ken Lazebnik. \$1. Published quarterly from 1501 S. 4th St., Minneapolis, MN 55454. Fiction, poetry, musings and meditations.

LOWELL REIDENBAUGH. *Take Me Out to the Ball Park*. Illustrations by Amadee. The Sporting News. \$29.95 to 12/25/83, \$34.95 thereafter. Oblong 8 1/2 x 11. Handsome, heavily illustrated, inc. color. Covers 35 parks: all extant plus 9 of bygone days. Entertainingly written, well designed, useful index.

ANSWER FOR P. 81

"What baseball requires is nothing less than perfection, and perfection cannot be eased or divided. Every movement of every game, from first pitch to last out, is measured and recorded against an absolute standard and thus each success is also a failure." ROGER ANGELL, *The Summer Game*.

LOWELL REIDENBAUGH. *Cooperstown: Where Baseball's Legends Live Forever*. The Sporting News. \$19.95 to 12/25/83, \$24.95 thereafter. Anecdotal brief lives of the 184 HOFers, with b&w photos and 8-page color section. Production values not the equal of its mate above, but neither is the price.

DOUGLAS A. NOVERR and LAWRENCE E. ZIEWACZ. *The Games They Played: Sports in American History: 1865-1980*. Nelson Hall. \$34.95. History of sports within cultural context; ambitious reference work. Examines seven U.S. sports, including baseball.

LAWRENCE S. RITTER. *The Story of Baseball*. Morrow. \$12.50. Engaging introduction to baseball in this century, especially apt for the young. Many photos.

DONN ROGOSIN. *Invisible Men*. Atheneum. \$14.95. Life in the Negro Leagues, based on extensive interviews with the men who played in them. League standings, East-West All Star box scores.

DAVID QUENTIN VOIGT. *American Baseball, Vol. III: From Postwar Expansion to the Electronic Age*. Penn State. \$16.75 cloth, \$10 paper. Hefty yet sprightly, and generously illustrated. Previous two volumes also available.

JULES TYGIEL. *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*. Oxford. (See ad on p. 29 for price and ordering data.) Well written study of the color line and its slow demise; treats the other, often neglected black pathbreakers as well as Robinson.