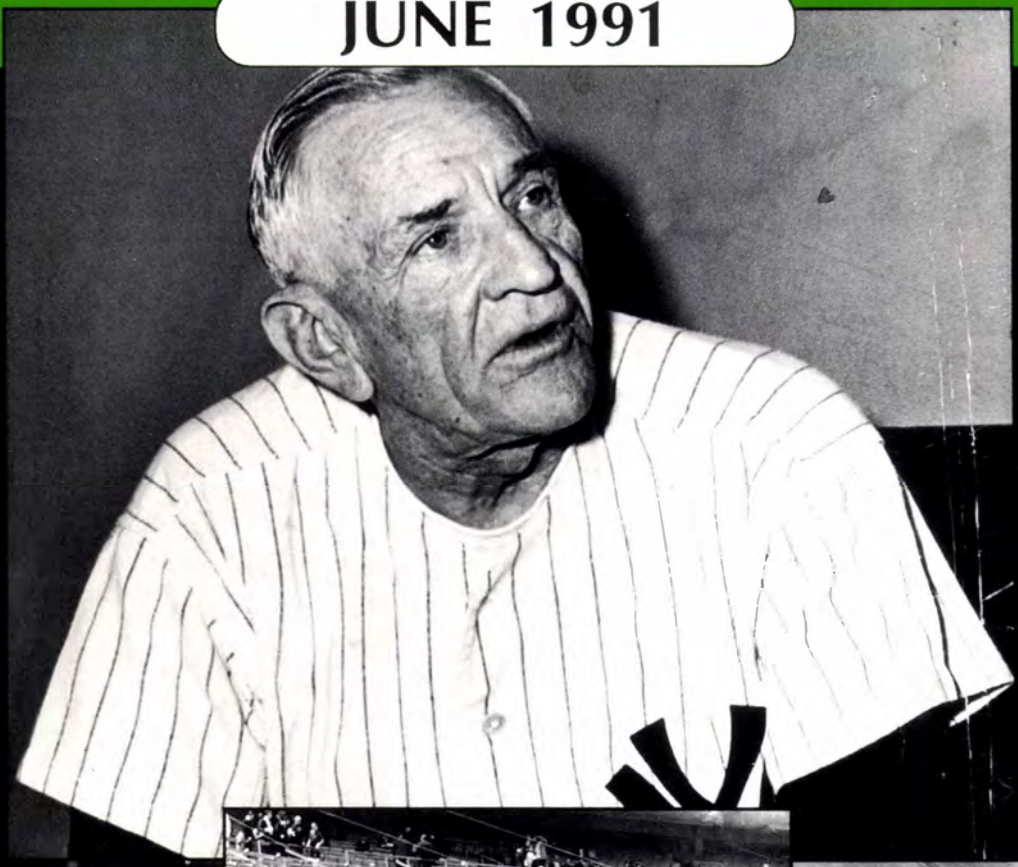
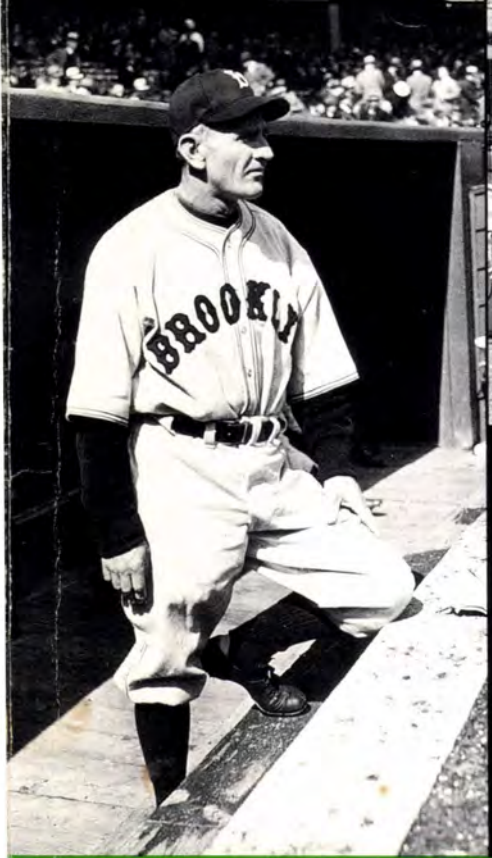
S A B R

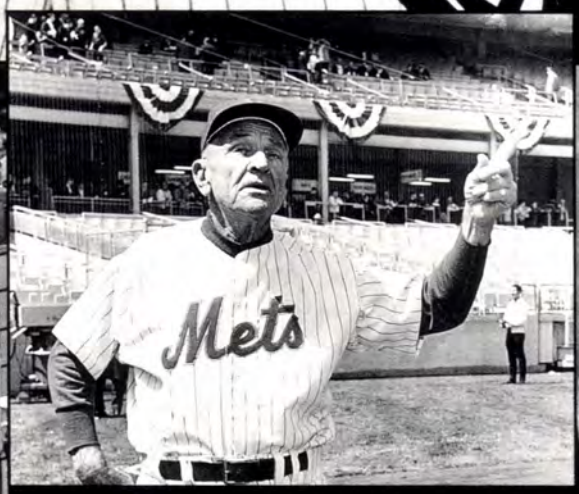
National Convention 21

JUNE 1991

NEW YORK







Casey. A man for all seasons.

BASEBALL IN NEW YORK

Leading Off ...

ONE SUNNY August day twenty years ago Bob Davids convened a meeting of baseball researchers at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. And from a loose circle of baseball "statistorians" the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) not only got its name, but its purpose.

Over the course of 20 years the membership has increased 350 fold. With over 5000 members SABR has become the largest sports research society of its kind.

This year's National Convention being held in New York is no accident. After all, SABR got its start in the Empire State. SABR 21 and its official publications will highlight Baseball in New York through the eyes and voices of the players, journalists and most importantly the fans.

The New York City SABR Regional Committee calls itself the Casey Stengel chapter, so neither the man nor the teams he played for or managed will be forgotten.

New York Baseball is much more than the teams of today. New SABR members and baseball fans yet to be must be exposed to New York's varied and "colorful" baseball past. We hope to accomplish this via our regional meetings, publications and of course the National Convention.

Check out the centerfold and you'll see we've delved into SABR's archives and dug up the "Davids" letters which started it all back in Cooperstown 20 years ago. Also, on the back inside page you'll see we've reprinted a copy of the very first SABR Bulletin.

The Batting Order

FIRST EDITION
MAY 1991

THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES AND PERSONS FOR PERMISSION TO USE THEIR TEXT AND ARTWORK IN THIS PUBLICATION:

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Editor and "Man Behind the Plate"
David Michael Blumenstein

New York City, Andrew Freedman and the Rise of the American League

DAVID PIETRUSZA

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1901, as the infant American League battled for acceptance, New York Giants owner Andrew J. Freedman invited fellow National League magnates John T. Brush of Cincinnati, Arthur Soden of Boston and Frank deHaas Robison of St. Louis to a fateful meeting at his Red Bank, New Jersey estate.

Until the advent of Charles O. Finley and George Steinbrenner, Freedman was widely considered the most unpopular owner in the history of the sport. A German-Jewish bachelor who grew rich in dry goods and real estate, Freedman became the trusted cronie of Tammany Hall's Richard Croker and even served as his best man. Together the two engineered the election of Robert A. Van Wyck as the first Mayor of the consolidated City of New York. Together with financier August Belmont, he helped finance and control the new Interborough Rapid Transit subway.

By all accounts Freedman was highly unpleasant. Frank Graham termed his "Course, vain, arrogant and abusive." Albert Spalding found him "obnoxious." Pittsburgh *Sporting Life* correspondent A. R. Cratty recalled taht it was his duty to interview Freedman on each trip the Giants made to that city. "No job was ever harder," he wrote on Freedman's death, "unless it be the same act with the late John Tomlinson Brush as the target. Freedman never let you get away from the idea that he was a New Yorker. His whole attitude demanded sort of homage because he was from the big burg on the island. That high bearing cost him many friends on the circuit, or rather in the provinces. Some old and young feared him."

Freedman once physically assaulted Brush in the barroom of New York's Fifth Avenue Hotel. In return he was given a pasting by Brush's friend, Bert Dasher. He once ran into J. Walter Spalding (A. G. Spalding's brother), and so vociferously insulted him that Walter resigned from the Giants Board of Directors.

Freedman's teams were chronic tail-enders as he fired managers with abandon, with four in 1895 alone; including an actor Harvey Watkins, whose only qualification was his status as a long-time Giants fan. In July 1898 after an anti-Semitic remark by Orioles outfielder "Ducky" Holmes – "Well, I'm glad I'm not working for a Sheeny anymore." – Freedman even participated in a near riot at the Polo Grounds by pulling the Giants off the field and forfeiting to Baltimore.

Brush had developed a scheme to turn the National League into one giant corporation, the ultimate baseball cartel. The plan remained secret until the National League's annual meeting began in New York in December in 1901. On December 11 the *New York Sun* broke the story. Common stock would be parceled out among the various clubs as follows: New York 30%; Cincinnati 12%; St. Louis 12%; Boston 12%; Philadelphia 10%; Chicago 10%; Pittsburgh 8%; and Brooklyn 6%. A five-man "Board of Regents", to be elected by the stockholders, would govern the corporation. All managers at $5,000 each were to be hired through the Board. All players were to be "licensed" by them.

Brush's scheme for such centralized, overreaching control emerged from an earlier plan of his to crush the American League. In mid-season, he had plotted to lure the weak Detroit and Baltimore clubs away from the

American League. He would then force "Ban" Johnson to agree to a new twelve-club circuit, "dominant and in full control of baseball in this country."

In any case, Brush's plan drew the resentment of the four owners left out in the cold. It also raised the hackles of an American public decreasingly tolerant of "trusts" and monopolies.

As soon as the League Meeting began, Pittsburgh's Barney Dreyfuss nominated Albert Spalding for President. As early as February rumors had Spalding replacing the ineffectual Nick Young, so as to better strengthen the circuit's hand in the coming war. Many viewed Spalding's election as a foregone conclusion.

It was a false prophecy. The "Red Bank" faction, as they were now called, raised all sorts of technial objections to the nomination and ended up standing firmly against Spalding voting to retain Young.

On the second day of the session. Spalding himself appeared to argue his own case. Spalding's oratory failed to sway his opponents, however, so he took his case to the members of working press.

"In the event of my election .... I will impose some conditions ... that will be of lasting benefit to the game," a perspiring and wildly gesturing Spalding thundered to a a huge assemblage of reporters, "One of them I will make bold to state ... I will demand that Andrew Freedman ... be eliminated from the councils of the body...

"The issue is now between Andrew Freedman and A.G. Spalding and when I go back actively into baseball Andrew Freedman gets out. He gets out right away or I'll get out..."

But despite Spalding's stirring oratory, the deadlock continued for 25 ballots with A.G. holding the votes of Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Pittsburgh, while Nick Young just as consistently held the other four.

After the 25th ballot, Freedman Brush and their allies left the room, leaving Nick Young with their proxies. Young then ruled a quorum no longer existed while Philadelphia's Colonel John Rogers insisted that "once a quorum always a quorum."

Young then left, but the others remained and elected Rogers chairman pro tem. He called for another vote and Albert Goodwill Spalding, who was sound asleep in his hotel room, was "elected" President of the National League ¸ four votes to none.

At 4AM Spalding ordered Young to immediately surrender League records, papers, etc. to him. Young at first demurred, allowing that he would turn the trunk of documents over to his son Robert. As negotiations proceeded, a porter hired by Spalding spirited the trunk away.

Spalding then called a league meeting and proceeded to move in for the kill. Only his four supporters answered his call, but Spalding noted that Giants Secretary Fred Knowles was lurking in the doorway while all this was going on. A.G. ruled that by Knowle's "presence" New York was represented. Thus, a quorum was created.

Spalding next called for a vote on the Freedman "Syndicate" plan, which not surprisingly, was quickly rejected. While Young was probably relieved to be out of all this turmoil, Andrew Freedman had no intention of surrendering so easily. Freedman went to court, and although his first motion was denied, on March 29, 1902 a Judge Truax of New York ruled Spalding's "election" invalid.

Deadlocked balloting proceeded once more. Finally on April 3, 1902 a compromise of sorts was reached. A triumvirate was named to guide executive functions as the war raged into its second year. Brush chaired the unwieldly group. Nick Young, the eternal Nick Young, was back as Secretary-Treasurer. Some allege that as part of this deal, Andrew Freedman sent word to A. G. Spalding that he would retire from baseball as soon as he gracefully could.'

"Ban" Johnson, of course, was elated by such dissension in the opposition's ranks. In every previous struggle, the National League had been firmly united, while its various interloping competitors had lacked cohesion. Now, the shoe was on the other foot.

"If they fight like a bunch of Kilkenny cats among themselves," "Ban" Johnson chortled, "I know we have them licked."

Following the 1901 season, the American League looked still more viable, as Johnson shifted his weak Milwaukee franchise (it drew only 139,034 in 1901) to St. Louis (which, next to Chicago, was the second largest city allowing Sunday ball.) The new franchise would utilize old Sportsman's Park.

Late in the 1902 season, Andrew Freedman, much to the relief of his fellow magnates, bowed out of the game.

He sold the Giants to John T. Brush, who in turn disposed of his Cincinnati holdings. After that season, jumping to the American League continued. Even Christy Mathewson and catcher Frank Bowerman were hopping from the Giants to the Browns.

The American Leagues invasion of Manhattan was now about to occur. Obtaining a field in Manhattan was always the major issue delaying the incursion as Andrew Freedman enjoyed considerable favor from the local politicians, so much so that any site considered would soon have a street cut through it by the City Fathers.

In December 1902 Johnson located a promising site between 142nd and 145th Streets and Lenox Avenue and the Harlem River. It was, moreover, near a new station of the interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) subway. Johnson's agents convinced John B. McDonald, an IRT contractor, to purchase the land and lease it to the American League. McDonald persuaded financier August Belmont II to come aboard. However, an IRT Director – one Andrew Freedman – soon killed the plan.

"You know that I am out of baseball, having sold my controlling interest in the New York club to Mr. Brush," gloated Freedman to the press in early January 1902, "but you may quote me as saying that someone has been stringing these Western fellows all along."

That situation was changing, however, and fast. On February 18, 1902 the estate of one Josephine Peyton had auctioned off twelve parcels of land for $377,800 to John J. Byrne, a nephew of "Big Bill" Devery. Devery, one of the Big Apple's foremost gamblers, was a very active Democrat in the borough's Ninth District, and, oh yes, a former city Police Chief.

Devery soon was in business with Frank Farrell, another major operator. Ex-saloonkeeper Farrell owned 250 pool halls in the city and was closely connected to "Boss" Sullivan, an even greater star in New York's underworld firmament.

Coal dealer Joseph Gordon, acting as front man for Farrell and Devery, approached Johnson, telling him his group could easily arrange for a park to be built if given a franchise. Devery and Farrell paid $18,000 for the Baltimore franchise and installed Gordon as President. Devery's name was missing from those listed as stockholders, although it was well known he had contributed approximately $100,000 to the enterprise.

"Me a backer!" Devery modestly, if somewhat dishonestly, exclaimed, "I only wished I did own some stock in a baseball club. I'm a poor man and don't own stock in anything. Besides, how could I pitch a ball with this stomach.

That's one version of the story. Frank Graham in The *New York Yankees* tells another. According to sportswriter Graham, Johnson and his new ownership group were brought together by the *New York Sun*'s Joe Vila. Vila had known Johnson since the League President's own sportswriting days and introduced him to Frank Farrell.

Farrell was more than eager to purchase the Baltimore franchise, although Johnson was sure about his prospective new club owner. His reticence evaporated when Farrell produced a $25,000 check and handed it over to Johnson, proclaiming, "Take this as a guarantee of good faith. If I don't put this ball club across, keep it."

"That's a pretty big forfeit," replied an amazed Johnson.

"He bets that much on a horse race, Ban," Vila informed him.

In any case the deal was made between the American League and its somewhat shady triumvirate. For $75,000 in actual construction costs (plus $200,000 in excavating the rocky, hilly terrain) rickety wooden 16,000 seat Hilltop Park was constructed. A local Democratic politico, Thomas McAvoy received contracts for both phases. A full five hundred workmen went to work, excavating 12,000 cubic yards of bedrock, replacing it with 30,000 cubic yards of fill. On May 30, 1903 the Highlanders opened up before 16,243 fans and defeated Washington 6-2 behind "Happy Jack" Chesbro.

To help shore up the weak New York roster – which after all had finished dead-last in Baltimore – "Ban" Johnson dispatched reinforcements. Clark Griffiths, his pitching career winding down, would manage. Outfielder "Wee Willie" Keeler was lured from Brooklyn for a sizable sum. "I signed Keeler, myself," boasted Johnson," and I found him an easy man to deal with." The strengthened club would finish a respectable fourth in 1903.

American League baseball – and with it a team to be known as the New York Yankees – had begun in New York City, the Big Apple.

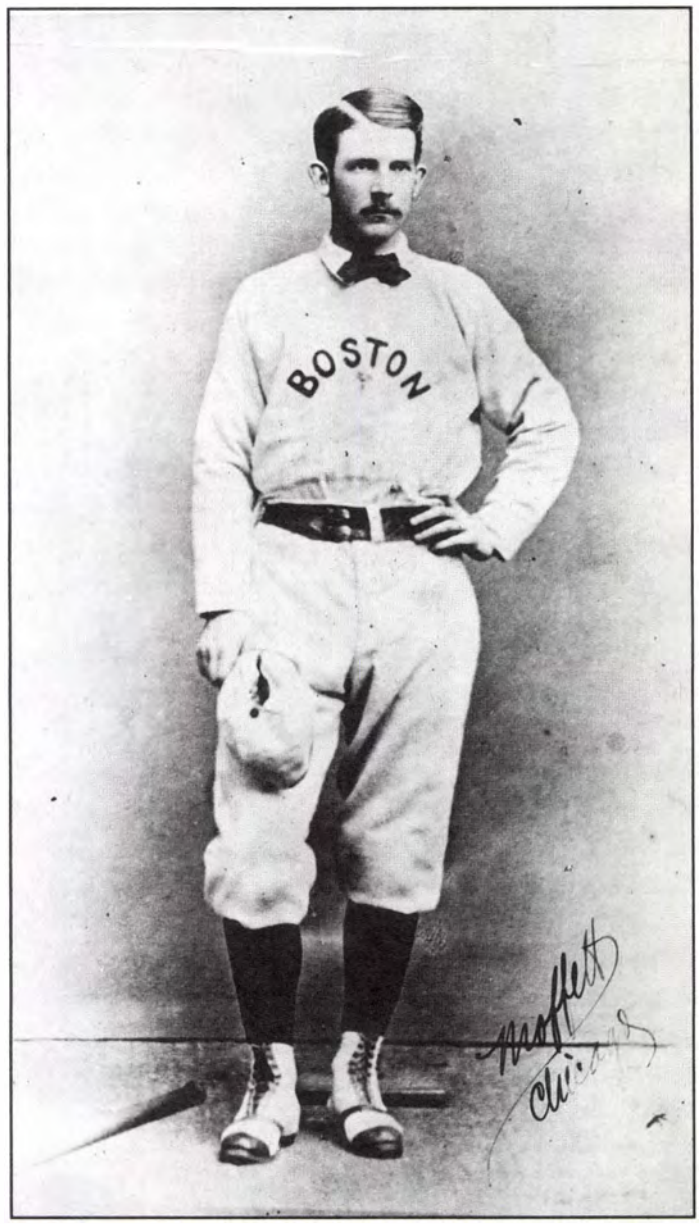
The above article is an excerpt from David Pietrusza's upcoming book published by McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers. Contact the publishers at Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina, 28640. Phone (919) 246-4460 for more information or to purchase the book.

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

John T. Brush

Albert
Goodwill
Spalding

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York



First a Rookie, Always a Veteran

JAY GAUTHREAUX

WHEN AMERICA issued the call to "Work or Fight" in 1917 to battle the Hun, Baseball answered. Some players like "Shoeless Joe" Jackson and "Lefty" Williams of the Chicago White Sox went to work in the shipyards; Babe Ruth joined the New York National Guard; others like utility player Alfred Von Kolnitz also of the Chisox rose to the rank of Major when the war finally ended in 1918, and Hank Gowdy of the Boston Braves were the first to enlist. Eddie Collins, Ty Cobb, Grover C. Alexander, and Christy Mathewson also followed, to name a few.

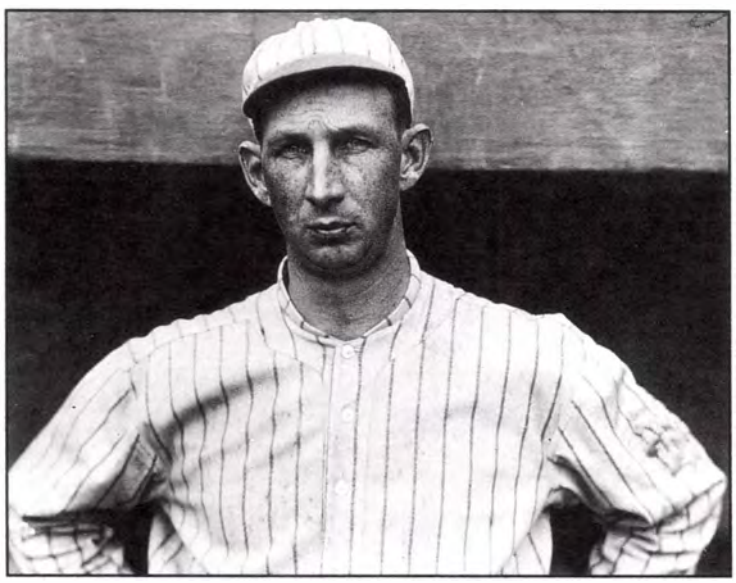
One ballplayer who enlisted when his country's call to duty was sounded, but who in now all but forgotten was Edward Leslie Grant. Grant was born on May 21, 1883 in Franklin, Massachusetts. For ten years he was a mediocre player with a batting average of .249. He played for the Philadelphia Phillies, Cleveland Indians, Cincinnati Reds, and the New York Giants. With the Giants, Grant was a backup third baseman and an excellent dugout assistant. But his major distinction was that he was the first major leaguer to be killed in the raging combat of World War I.

At the end of the 1915 season, Grant retired from baseball to enter his law practice. He acquired the nickname of "Harvard" Eddie Grant to signify his alma mater.

When war was declared in 1917, Grant enlisted and went to Officers Training School where he soon rose to the rank of Captain. Grant was later sent to France after his training was complete and assigned to the 307th Infantry Unit of the 77th Division. On October 5, 1918, while leading a patrol into the Argonne Forest to locate and rescue Colonel Charles Whittleby's "Lost Battalion," Grant was killed.

In Noel Hynd's fine work "The Giants of the Polo Grounds," he states Grant, "...was buried where he fell.... After the war, his body was never located."

On Memorial Day May 29, 1921, representatives from the armed forces, baseball and sisters of the slain Grant unveiled a monument in deep centerfold of the Polo Grounds. It was dedicated to the memory of Captain Edward L. Grant: a professional both on and off the field.



Edward L. Grant

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

"I Wouldn't Change My Name For Anybody"

LOUIS JACOBSEN

"STAND UP STRAIGHT!" the old gentleman barked at me. He was a former dance instructor, and cared about visitors' postures. The man stood bent over, suffering from osteoarthritis, but every once an a while flashed a fleshy smile. At 88, his head was still covered with hair, mostly white. Back when his hair was black, during what they called the Great War, Bob Berman caught the Great One.

"Boy could he throw. My, my, what a man, "Berman said that day. His age made it difficult for him to remember much, but Walter Johnson was indelibly marked in his mind. "I loved that man. He was my God down there. Walter Johnson, I'd do anything for him. I followed him around like a dog follows his master."

" I would have played for *nothing*! Just to be playing ball there. I was in seventh heaven ... in the major leagues and *nobody* can take that away from me. "

Bob Berman, in his day, was like the Moonlight Graham character in the movie *Field of Dreams*. Despite spending most of the season with the Washington Senators in 1918, he played in only two games. He never got an at-bat that whole season. But, at 19, he caught Johnson.

"Johnson, who would win 23 games that season and was possibly the best pitcher in baseball, was summoned in relief in the last inning against the Browns to try to protect a 6-4 lead," wrote Ira Berkow in a New York Times Column about Berman. "The Senators had rallied in the late innings and had used up their other two catchers – one was pinch-hit for, the other pinch-hit. No one was left to catch Johnson except the third string catcher, Robert Leon Berman."

It was June 12, 1918. The box score showed that Berman – "Bergman," it called him – had two putouts on Johnson strikeouts, and no miscues. It was the end of his major league career.

Berman lived most of his life in New York City, and on Long Island. But by June, 1987 he had moved to his daughter's house in suburban Connecticut. That is where we met one afternoon. Sitting around the living room, his memory prodded by his daughter Barbara Berman Cassidy, Berman looked at the old black-and-white pictures of a handsome young man in a Senators uniform and tried, earnestly but with difficulty, to remember what it was like growing up in New York.

"I was an honest-to-goodness Jewish youngster growing up on the lower east side," he said. "Then we moved to the Bronx. We had our tough times. There were three of us, myself, my two sisters – we were the children."

They grew up on Fulton Avenue, across the street from Crotona Park, where Berman played baseball with neighborhood boys. "So that meant there were no houses there at all. All clear. Lovely!"

His family was not always as lovely. "I had a father, may the good Lord rest his soul." His father was a marble polisher, born in Russia. "He was a tough guy. Five-foot-eleven, weighed about 180, 190 lbs., with a temper that went with it. And he drank all the time." When Berman was getting out of public school, his mother took him aside.

"Bobby, do me a favor," she said. "I want you to promise me one thing. Don't *ever* take a drink."

Berman responded, "Mother, I understand. I shall never drink in my life."

He paused. "You want to know something? I never have." Another pause. "It used to gall him to think that his only begotten son, when it came to the holidays like Passover and so on, wouldn't touch the wine."

Berman's mother never lived long enough to see him enter professional baseball. His parent's first choice was for young Bobby to become a professional. "A professional, yes. A doctor, or a lawyer. And the next best thing [would be to go to] City College of New York (CCNY). My mother, she was expecting me to be a *Latin* teacher.

But at Townsend-Harris High School, a Manhattan prep school for CCNY where one of his cousins had graduated, Berman preferred baseball to academics. "It was one of those real high- class schools," Berman said. "Well, I wasn't a very, very fine student; I was a good student. If I liked the subject, I studied for it.

"I wanted to get into [baseball], and here I was getting too much studying. You had to make a certain average, and you had to work hard, and I couldn't see myself doing that." He had a falling-out with a teacher, and left the school.

So he went to Evander Childs High School in the Bronx; they needed a catcher.

The Israelis, it is said, find the desert-blooming flower called the sabra to symbolize what they see as their national character: prickly on the outside, sweet inside. The sabra could also represent Bob Berman: prickly for those who crossed him – especially if they crossed his religion. Every few minutes, as if it were a mantra, Berman said something like, "Nobody was ever going to call me 'Jew-this' or 'Jew-that' and get away with it. He had to put up his hands."

After Berman graduated high school, he went directly into baseball. Barbara Cassidy asks her father who tried to sign him.

"Branch Rickey, wasn't it?

"Branch Rickey. That's it."

"What club was it?"

"He had some kind of club. I don't recall it."

"Anyway," she continues, seeming having heard it several hundred times growing up, "he had this contract all signed with Branch Rickey. And then he asked you, 'What is your profession of faith,' or whatever. And you said, 'Are you saying you do not want Jews on your team?' And you took the contract and tore it up."

"That's right. that's right. Now I get that."

"Which was very cute of him," she said.

Berman's most blatant incident of anti-Semitism occurred during a spring training trip with the Senators in New Bern, South Carolina.

"Oh, and this one guy, I'll never forget. This one fellow, I forget his name now, he was a pitcher. A farm boy, about six-foot-two or -three. Something like that. Probably about 190 lbs. Big kid. And this is his first season with the ballclub, too. He's trying to make the ballclub, just like I'm trying to make it.

"We're in...an intrasquad game and he got pummeled one inning. He's coming back to the bench. The guys started to kid him, which is normal. He turns around and says, 'What do you expect if you have this Jew?' With an epithet attached to it. 'This catcher, he doesn't know how to call 'em, or anything like that.'

"I didn't say anything. I put my glove down, took my mask off, took my chest protector off, took my shin guards off, and I said, `Pardon me? What did you say? I didn't hear you.'

"And he repeated it again. And – Bing! – I hit him. Down he goes. Can't get up. The fellows of the team are getting all excited. He says, 'I didn't mean it.'

"I said, 'No. He's going to apologize. Otherwise I'm going to beat the living life outta him. Nobody can do what he did to me. I don't care who he is. I'll take a beating, too.' And he was made to apologize.

"Walter was the one who interfered, nicely. He said, 'Thataboy!' And from then on the word went out. 'Leave that kid alone. He's got the guts to fight, and he'll fight.' And I made the ballclub."

Berman was sent to Jersey City after his season in the sun; he later became part of the first known all-Jewish battery, with Al Schacht, in his pre-Clown Prince of Baseball days. After a couple years in the International League, and played semipro ball until the mid 1930's. "I was a star then," Berman said.

One team he played for was the South Philadelphia Hebrews knows as the SPHAs. "We were, next to pro, the finest semipro [club] you could find anywhere," he said. They barnstormed all over, playing teams both black and white. "I don't know how the hell we went, but we traveled. Listen, we're talking about 1918, 1919. Things were pretty tough. Money was scarce, and here

you are a Jewish ball team. Strictly Jewish. *Mama mia!*"

Did the opposing players bench jockey him? he is asked. "I guess they did. I don't know. I had resigned myself to go through life down there, learn to take certain things, and show them you're not afraid to back what you say. I didn't lie to them. Whatever I said was the truth. I was a different character from most of these people. I had more education than most of them. I had been to college and all that. I would take a beating, but [the other guy] would too."

Berman refused to do what almost every other Jewish ballplayer would have done in that era: change his name. "I wouldn't change my name for anybody. I was born Robert L. Berman. That was it. And if you don't like it you can do the next best thing."

He married Dorothy Schrampf in 1926; their marriage lasted until her death, 50 years later. (Berman did not keep up Jewish observance past his childhood.) Meanwhile, a CCNY degree in hand, he began to teach – not Latin, but physical education. He spent some time teaching and coaching at Stuyvesant High School, the bulk of his post-baseball career was spent at Franklin K. Lane High School in Brooklyn. One of the students he coached, Bob Grim, made the Yankees in the late 1950's. At one point Berman introduced the art of ballroom dancing into the New York City schools, and continued teaching it for years. (He even taught for a while at Arthur Murray's dance studio.) He retired from Lane in 1968.

When I saw him in 1987 he said he still exercised every day, despite an arthritic hip. "It's tough, but it's up to the individual, that's all. The good thing that helped me [was that] I loved to dance." Thus his concern with my less-than-perfect posture.

The next time I saw him, five months later, he spent most of his time at a daycare center. The man had lost more of his memory, but none of his charm. He was overjoyed when I brought him a Washington Senators cap.

Less than a year later – August, 1988 – Bob Berman died, four months after moving into a nursing home and five months short of his ninetieth birthday. The newspaper ran a death notice, a little bit smaller than the box score they had printed back in 1918.

"I was getting $150 a month," he had said a year before he died. "And – listen to this – I would have played for *nothing*! Just to be playing ball there. I was in seventh heaven. I was in the major leagues and *nobody* can take that away from me."

He was right. Nobody can.

Robert Leon Berman

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Walter Johnson
... all business

Al Schacht
... funny business

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

For Lang, It's Been a "Hall of a Time"

JACK LANG

The article below first appeared in the New York Daily News Sunday Edition July 26, 1987.

Jack Lang began covering baseball in this town in 1946, a beat he still covers for the Daily News. Today, in Cooperstown, our Mr. Lang will be inducted into the writers' wing of the Hall of Fame. We're giving him the day off, but we did ask him to put together a few memories.

MY FIRST WEEK on the baseball beat I covered two no-hitters. It was my start on a rollercoaster ride through major-league baseball for the next 42 seasons, in which I would cover 11 more no-hitters, more than 6,000 regular-season games, more than 200 World Series games and 40 All-Star Games.

What a thrill it has been.

I can't imagine anyone having a more enjoyable life than I have had for 40 years, going to a game every day. Throw in two months in Florida every year for spring training and you can understand why it wasn't hard to take. How many people wake up every morning and can't wait to get to work? I couldn't.

Oh, it wasn't always easy. There were all those days and nights on the road and being away from my wife and children. There was endless travel and living out of suitcases arriving home from trips at 3 a.m with a day game to follow.

But I wouldn't trade one day of it for anything else I could have done. There were too many pluses to outweigh the minuses if you love baseball as I do.

For more than 40 years I have lived and worked with some of the top people in my craft...writers Dick Young, Jimmy Cannon, Red Smith, Dan Daniel, Milt Gross, Dave Anderson, Dan Parker, Bill Roeder, George Vecsey Sr. and Jr. and countless others.

And then there were the players, the great I developed friendships. The greatest of these as an individual and a ballplayer was Pee Wee Reese. But there were so many others...Whitey Ford, Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Duke Snider, Bud Harrelson, Tom Seaver, Johnny Bench, Steve Garvey, Rusty Staub, Harmon Killebrew, Jerry Koosman, the Torre brothers, Frank and Joe, Stan Musial and Ralph Kiner.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being a major-league baseball writer was the people I got to meet and know intimately. My greatest friendships have developed with the people I worked with, the writers I traveled with and visited in other cities. There is a camaraderie in the baseball writing fraternity that does not exist in other sports. Perhaps it is because we are thrown together to work and live nearly every day for eight months of every year. It's like family after a while.

Great friendships developed with some of these men, as they did with broadcasters who traveled the same road.

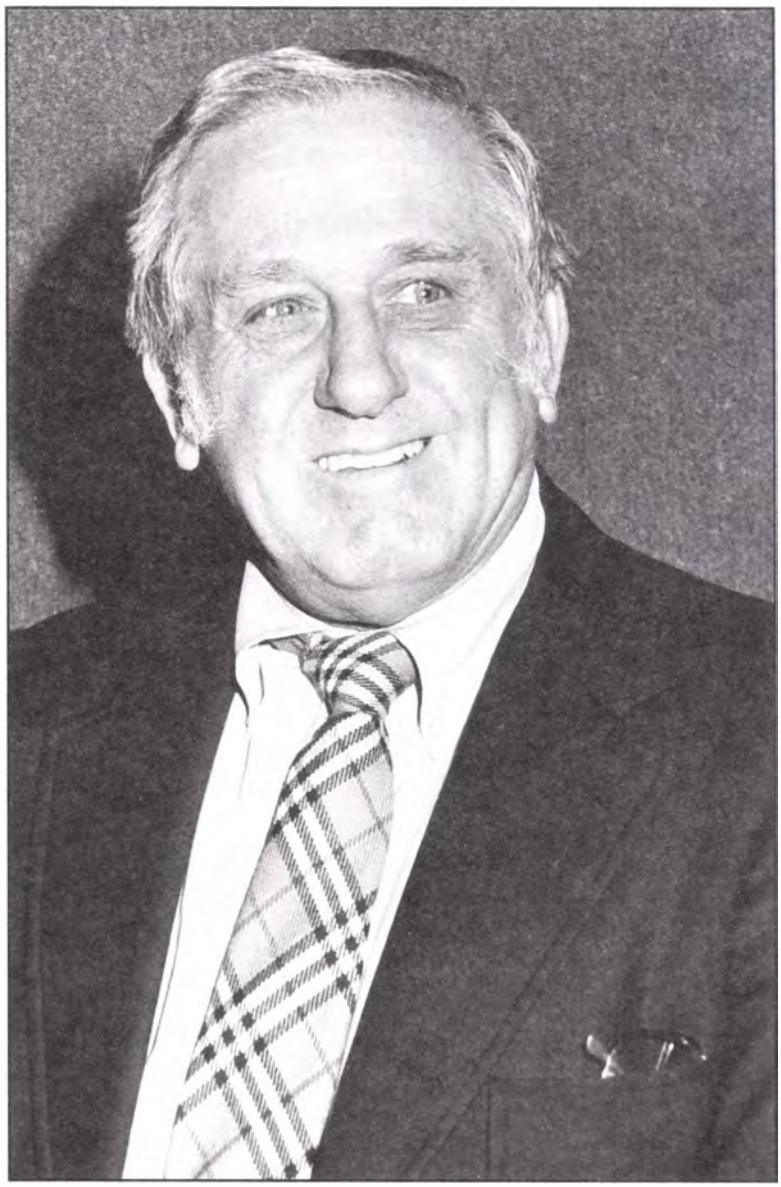
I saw Vin Scully break in as a kid out of Fordham an go on to become the top man in his field. Red Barber, Lindsay Nelson, Bob Murphy, Mel Allen, Kiner, Ernie Harwell and Jack Buck are a few of the play-by-play men with whom I developed strong relationships.

It all began so simply in 1946 when I was fresh out of the Army and working for the now defunct Long Island Press. I had decided shortly out of high school that what I wanted to be a baseball writer. The Press did not cover baseball on a regular basis then, but it leaned strongly on local angles. So I began going to Ebbets Field and Yankee Stadium whenever the Dodgers and Yanks

were home. I would write feature stories on Long Island players in the majors...Ford, Hank Behrman, Mickey Harris, Bob Chipman, Sam Mele, Phil Rizzuto and so many others.

Then, one day it happened.

"As long as you're going there every day," Mike Lee, my sports editor said to me, "you might as well cover the game." All of a sudden I was a "beat" writer covering the Brooklyn Dodgers on a daily basis. I covered the Dodgers on a daily basis. I covered the Dodgers during their glory years in Brooklyn from 1946 until they left in 1957. Then I covered the Yankees during the Mantle-Maris era – under the great Casey Stengel from 1958-60 and under Ralph Houk in 1961. And when the Mets were born in 1962, I was assigned to follow them. The Long Island Press went out of business in March 1977, and I was out of work for eight hours before the Daily News hired me. I was "traded" from one paper to another in spring training and never missed a game.



Jack Lang

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

One of the first major-league games I covered was a no-hitter that Ed Head pitched for Brooklyn against the Boston Braves on April 23, 1946. A week later – on April 30 – I covered a no-hitter. I covered 13. The others I covered were pitched by Rex Barney, Vern Bickford, Carl Erskine (2), Sal Maglie, Hoyt Wilhelm, Sandy Koufax, Bob Moose, Bill Stoneman and Ed Halicki, And, of course the perfect game by Don Larsen in the 1956 World Series.

I must confess that I did not see the last inning of a great many no-hitters. When I worked for an afternoon paper, myself and other reporters usually were parked outside a clubhouse door under the stands waiting to rush in to interview the pitcher. We got the final inning by radio or word of mouth.

Of the teams I covered on a regular basis – the Dodgers, Yankees, and Mets – the most enjoyable days were spent with the Dodgers from the late '40s until they left for Los Angeles. Strong friendships with the players developed because we lived together – players, writers, club officials – in the old barracks of what had been a wartime naval air base in Vero Beach. We ate our meals in the same dining room, writers' families and the players' families and in the evening we sat around in the headquarters lobby and played cards, pool, the jukebox or listened to Cal Abrams' mother play piano. Walter O'Malley was always the big winner in the press-room poker games, and on Saturday nights, we moved the jukebox back into the press room and had parties. It was one happy family.

In those days when the team left Florida, it was usually to barnstorm north through a series of towns. We'd travel in two or three private train cars with a dinner and a club car. During Charlie Dressen's days

every night was a party night in that club car.

Of course the Dodgers of that era had a team that stayed together for so many years – Roy Campanella, Gil Hodges, Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese, Billy Cox, Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Rube Walker, Ralph Branca, Carl Erskine, Don Newcombe, Preacher Roe, and managers Burt Shotton, Charlie Dressen and Walter Alston – so you really got to know each other.

The wives always got together when he went on road trips. Dottie Reese and Millie Walker were my wife's guests at our home when we were away, and my wife was always invited to the bridal or maternity shower for a player's wife. Writers today don't have that kind of relationship with players.

In the early years when I lived in Elmont and Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella lived in St. Albans, they frequently gave me a lift home after day games. I got to know both well. In Vero Beach, we were babysitters for the Campanellas when they went out, and Ruth and Roy sat for us when we went out. We sat for Roy Jr., now a successful Hollywood producer.

Pee Wee Reese was the leader of that club, and he set the tone for the relationships with the writers.

"If I have a bad day, I never read the papers the nest day," Reese would say. "These guys are my friends, but I know they have a job to do."

Traveling by train overnight, or night and day, you got to know players better than nowadays, when travel is by plane and you're only up in the air a few hours. There's not as much conversation between the players and writers as there was then.

A big difference in my early years of baseball writing was that writers remained on the beat until they retired. It was considered the best job on any sports staff. But now, all the night games and extended travel, plus the big emphasis on pro football and basketball, it is no longer the desirable beat if once was. Baseball writers remain on the beat only a few years and move on to something else.

Covering the Dodgers in the '50s was the greatest experience a writer could have. The team was in the pennant race every year and finished first six of 12 years. Usually, they were in the race up to the final week or final day.

It also was the Jackie Robinson era, and for most of the time, Ebbets Field was packed. It was fun working where so many people were coming to have fun.

When I switched to the Yankees in 1958, the transfer was eased by two people – Whitey Ford and Casey Stengel. I had written about Ford when he was a minor-leaguer from Long Island, so he knew me. His friendship with Mantle and the other "insiders" on the Yankees helped get me accepted by the team.

But being around Casey was the greatest pleasure of all. What a joy he was. Casey was indefatigable, and if you wanted to talk baseball, he would sit and talk for hours. In the dugout, a hotel lobby, a plane or a train, and always at a bar. I closed many a bar with Casey or left him to close them.

Like Reese, Casey also knew what a writer's job was all about and was always ready with a story.

Next to Casey, what I remember most about my four years with the Yankees was 1961 – the Maris year. In September, when Maris was closing in on Babe Ruth's home-run record, myself and other writers covering the club wrote about him every day. I don't think that has happened with any other player, expect maybe Pete Rose. But not before 1961.

Maris was that story, and the games that month were almost incidental. Despite whatever else you might have read, Maris was great with the Yankee beat writers. He made himself available and gave us the stories we were looking for.

The Yankees won pennants three of the four years I covered them, so that made for a much more enjoyable assignment.

I was happy to switch back to the National League in 1962, especially with Casey at the helm of the Mets. But it was the first time I covered a loser. It also gave me the opportunity of keeping records on the club from Day One – records that would provide stories. The Mets – with losses and ineptness – were not inclined to provide writers with records. Because most of those the Mets set were negative, I became known as the "Keeper of the Neggies." The ballclub, especially team president George Weiss, abhorred the records. The other writers loved them.

Covering the Mets in those early years was like traveling with a circus. We had a ringmaster named Stengel, a bunch of clowns in uniform, and we were welcome in every town we visited. Why not? A visit from the Mets usually meant two or three victories.

One thing about the Mets, though: They may have been awful, but they went first class. Charter flights to

and from, and Frank Thomas, the club's leading home-run hitter, serving the meals. "The Big Donkey," as he was known, delighted in playing host.

During the Mets' mediocre seasons after Casey retired, things were somewhat dull until first Tom Seaver and then Gil Hodges arrived. The Mets went from bottom to top in two years, and remained contenders for several years. They lucked into a pennant in 1973 when no one else seemed to want it, and almost beat the Oakland A's in the World Series.

But it was all downhill after that, and the dreariest years I spent covering baseball were during the late '70s when Lorinda deRoulet and her daughters operated the Mets. They didn't have the money required to run a major-league club and they were amateurs.

One day, when they were trying to figure out how to save money, Bebe deRoulet suggested they take the old baseballs, wash them and use them again.

The fans quickly gave up on the team. It was no fun going to empty Shea Stadium night after night.

But Nelson Doubleday and Fred Wilpon poured money back into the club, starting in 1980, and it became a vibrant franchise again, a good club to cover.

Writing baseball has always been fun for me, but a new aspect was added to my job in 1966 when I was elected by fellow writers to the office of secretary-treasurer of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

My duties have been to conduct the elections every year for the MVP, Cy Young, Rookie of the Year and Manager of the Year Awards, as well as supervise the Hall of Fame voting. In my capacity as secretary-treasurer I get to call the winners. You have no idea what a joy that is. As Billy Williams, who goes into the Hall of Fame today, said when he saw me at the All Star Game: "You're the good-news man."

BASEBALL FIRSTS

First League Game ever played: May 4. 1871 at Hamilton Field, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Kekionga of Fort Wayne beat Forest City of Cleveland, 2-0. By the way, this is also the first shutout on record. A four hitter was hurled by Bobby Mathews.

First Home Run: Ezra Sutton of the Forest City team, May 8, 1871. Two at-bats later he hit another home run, making Sutton the first player to hit two or more home runs in a game.

First Pinch Hitter: Frank Norton batted in place of the injured Doug Allison on May 5, 1871.

First Strikeout: It was the top of the second innning and Art Allison struck out, however, he reached first base safely when catcher Bill Lennon dropped the ball, May 4, 1871.

First Stolen Base: Moments later Art Allison was caught off first base but escaped the rundown and reached second base safely.

First Home Run Champ: Levi Meyerle of the Philadelphia Athletics.

First Relief Appearance: Harry Wright came into the game to relieve Albert Goodwill Spalding and then left after two innings with Mr. Spalding returning to the mound to pitch the remaining innings.

First Grand Slam: Charlie Gould of the Boston Red Stockings smacked it in the fifth game of the 1871 season.

First Walk: Wally Goldsmith of Cleveland Forest Cities received the first "invite" in the fourth inning of the game against the Kekionga of Fort Wayne on May 4, 1871.

Beat Years

MAURY ALLEN

THE YEAR WAS 1947. The place was the shrine in Brooklyn called Ebbets Field. The time was 3 a.m.

As I sat on that cement street corner at Bedford Avenue and Sullivan Place, wrapped in an old Army Blanket, holding a brown bag of two salami sandwiches and an apple close to my chest, I was as close to heaven as a boy could get.

Rex Barney would start against the Yankees that day in the World Series and by the time I got to my bleacher seat many hours later, my eyes were bloodshot from lack of sleep.

Joe Dimaggio of the hated Yankees would hit a homer and I would feel the anguish for days afterward.

I clung to that ticket receipt for many years, carrying it with me to combat in Korea some years later, to small newspaper offices in Indiana and Pennsylvania, to the hushed halls of Time Inc. and Sports Illustrated magazine and finally, in the early 1960's, to the New York Post.

The kid from Brooklyn, fanatic about Jackie and Pee Wee, Duke and Oisk, Carl and Campy, had made it big.

I remember covering my first game with the Mets and staring over at the giants of my trade, Jimmy Cannon, whose columns I read faithfully a few years earlier in the Pacific Stars and Stripes, Dan Parker, Dick Young, Joe Trimble, Joe King, Harold Rosenthal, Dan Daniel, Barney Kremenko, Milton, Gross, and the exalted Red Smith.

Life could not be sweeter.

Soon I was traveling with a new team called the Mets, staying up late in hotel bars with Casey Stengel, arguing about Ron Hunt with Young, working next to Gross on one of his sensitive days, breaking bread with Snider and Don Zimmer, Roger Craig, the saintly Gil Hodges and all the others of my youth who were passing through the team in those early years.

"Baseball had been more to me than God and religion. It had been life itself, dying a thousand deaths when Bobby Thomson connected, bleeding for Ralphie, cheering uncontrollably in a barracks in Japan when Elston Howard rolled out to Pee Wee for the final 1955 out and that championship season at last ..."

Baseball had been more to me than God and religion. It had been life itself, dying a thousand deaths when Bobby Thomson connected, bleeding for Ralphie, cheering uncontrollably in a barracks in Japan when Elston Howard rolled out to Pee Wee for the final 1955 out and that championship season at last, clipping pictures and saving cards.

Now in the 1960's I was one of them, sitting next to Gil one day and talking about his frustrating Series, listening to Duke complain about a smart aleck kid first baseman named Kranepool and over all watching the antics of the beloved Stengel.

Baseball writing is more than words on paper. It is the love of the game, the fraternalism of the press box, the

joys of ribald humor, the sharing of secret dreams, the emotional high of the big scoop when a player trusts that you can handle this urgent message with dignified behavior.

For a year or two I watched the giants work. I said little. I observed. I saw these names I had read in the pages of the News, the Times, the Post, the Journal American, the Telegram, the Tribune as great teachers. All were generous with advice and time.

Soon I was becoming established. Others came to me for information about Rod Kanehl and Graig Anderson, asked my opinions of Marvelous Marv, congratulated me on a scoop about Larry Bearnarth.

The old names passed from the scene and the Mets won in 1969 as the Yankees faded. Then the Yankees came back with Billy and Reggie and Goose and the rest, and the Mets struggled.

I flew to Los Angeles and San Francisco and Cincinnati and Dallas for big games. I ate in the finest restaurants. I lived in luxury hotels. I drank in whirling hotel bars with $100 a night hookers asking for my favors. I bought breakfast and actually picked up the tab for kids named Nolan Ryan and Jerry Koosman, Ron Blomberg and Ron Swoboda, Fritz Peterson and Tom Seaver.

The Mets won again in 1986. It didn't matter much to me then. It had only become a job. The thrill was gone. I had grown older and the players had grown richer. The stories about contracts, free agency and salary arbitration and agents bored me to tears. The 25-year-olds who respectfully called me Mr. Allen when I was 35 years old, now yelled obscenities at me across a locker room.

Baseball writing lost its romance as it lost many of its best practitioners. Wise guy journalism became the style of the 1980's, knocking everything and everyone, experting the game of baseball and the game of life before their powder was dry. Women sportswriters paraded through locker rooms. Radio "foofs" thrust microphones into every locker and ripped off the questions of the writers for a sound bite.

The travel was wearisome. The games were too long. The politics of the papers was too much.

I resigned from the Post in 1988. I now write a news column and an occasional sports column for the Gannett Newspapers out of Westchester. Nobody tells me to bleep myself anymore.

Television is now king, of course, but there are occasional stories I read that still sing to me. I thank the writer if I see him or offer a note to them from far away.

The thrill isn't completely gone. I never miss an installation in Cooperstown. I still get breathless when Pee Wee walks up to me, grins, sticks out his hand and says, "Hi, Maury."

How could a grown man with gray hair tell a little Colonel from Kentucky that he still loves him?

Writers on their beat.

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

4424 Chesapeake Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20016

April 16, 1971

This letter is being addressed to about 25-30 persons interested in baseball history and statistical research (I use the term "statistorians"). Your are an addressee because I have seen your name in the Sporting News in past years, appended to an interesting historical or statistical article, or your name has been passed on to me by Ray Nemec, Bob McConnell, Leonard Gettelson, or Cliff Kachline.

There may be many more than 25 or 30 baseball statistorians around the country. We don't really know, but I thought some effort should be made to organize this "motley crew" into a more formal group. For that reason we plan to hold an organization meeting at Cooperstown, New York on August 10-11, 1971. Cliff Kachline, Hall of Fame Historian, has kindly invited us to meet in the museum library. The Hall of Fame Baseball game and induction ceremonies will be held on Monday, August 9. Why don't we meet then on August 7-8? Impossible, says Cliff. The place is busier than Washington on Inauguration Day. You could come on August 9, take in the induction festivities and get a motel room that night, but not before, and then be available for meetings the next day.

What would be accomplished at the Cooperstown meeting? From general to specific, your attendance would provide an opportunity (1) to see Cooperstown and the always changing Hall of Fame Museum; (2) to meet and exchange first hand views with other statistorians; (3) to review specific areas of baseball interest to avoid duplication of effort; (4) to establish an informal group primarily for exchange of information; or (5) to establish a formal organization with officers, dues, a charter, annual meetings, etc.: (6) to consider the establishment of a publication in which our research efforts could be presented; and (7) to take up additional matters which you may suggest in response to this letter.

What do you do now? You should send me a note saying something along the line (1) "Your idea of a get-together of the baseball statistorians sounds great, I would like to attend; (2) I am interested in your efforts to organize the group, I would like to be included but cannot get away for a meeting at Cooperstown this summer; or (3) your plans for an organization are completely impossible; take me off your mailing list, quick." I would also hope that you would include your response the names of additional baseball "nuts" who might qualify or be interested.

The next step then would be for me to send to those of you who could make the meeting this summer the information on hotels and motels which you would need for the night(s) of August 9 and 10; August 10 only; or August 10 and 11, depending on your travel plans.

I hope to hear from you,

Bob Davids

L. Robert Davids

4424 Chesapeake St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

June 28, 1971

This is letter No. 3 aimed at organizing the baseball historians and statistical research types at a meeting in Cooperstown, NY on August 10. It is being mailed to the 40 odd (not all of them are odd) persons who have expressed an interest in such an organization, and not merely the 17-18 who indicated plans to attend. We want to make it "perfectly clear" that the organization will be made up of those who are interested rather than just those who attend the first meeting.

First, have you made hotel accommodations? Also remember that public transportation is very poor to Cooperstown , a twice daily Pine Hills Trailways bus from New York City is all there is. Cab fare from Utica, Albany and Syracuse would be more than $20. Cliff Kachline reminds us that there are only a few outfield tickets left for the August 9 Hall of Fame game in case some of you want to take this in. Tickets are $2.50 plus 50¢ mailing charge.

Based on various suggestions received, I have drafted a proposed agenda of discussion items for our August 10 meeting. I have reviewed these with Cliff, so let me list them tentatively as follows:

(1) How formal an organization do you want?

(2) What should be the objectives of the organization?

(3) What should the organization be named?

(4) What should be the membership qualifications?

(5) How much dues? A token amount, or enough to finance a publication?

(6) What kind of publication? Newsletter or annual historical review or both?

(7) Should we hold annual meetings in different areas?

(8) How many officers? President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer? Publications Committee?

(9) What should be our relationship to other baseball organizations and/or publications?

(10) Other discussion items?

Please give some serious thought to these matters prior to the meeting; and those not attending let me know what you're thinking so we can have some additional input. We plan to discuss these and possibly other items at a meeting in the baseball library at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, August 10. We will meet again at 2 p.m. to vote on the questions discussed at the morning meeting and to put the organization in being. If there are any other last minute instructions I will get a message off to the attendees in early August.

Sincerely,

Bob Davids

L. Robert Davids

Lou Gherig (Sic)

EDDIE GOLD

ALTHOUGH LOU GEHRIG'S name was misspelled, he left 6,000 baseball fans spellbound. It was 70 years ago today that Gehrig hit a ball out of a major league park.

The date was June 26, 1920 when New York City's High School of Commerce conquered Lane Tech High School of Chicago 12-6 for the inter-city baseball championship at Wrigley Field, known at that time as Cubs Park.

The game was featured by a home run over the right field wall by Louis Gherig (sic), the New York lad known as the "Babe Ruth" of high schools.

The real Babe never poled one more thrilling. The bases were filled, two were out and it was the ninth inning. Lane Tech pitcher Tom Walsh complained of a sore arm and was replaced by Norring Ryerholm.

Ryerholm, Lane Tech's star player, shifted from shortstop to catcher to the mound. Ryerholm got the first two batters, but walked the next two. An error filled the bases.

Gehrig had been up five times and made nary a hit. He walked twice, but hadn't been able to get hold of the ball. The crowd was wondering if the stories of his batting prowess were all myths. This time he made good. Ryerholm grooved one and the "Babe" landed on it.

The ball sailed out high and far over the right field screen by many feet, finally landing in Sheffield Avenue, and bouncing onto a front porch across the street.

It was a blow of which any big leaguer would have been proud and was walloped by a boy who hadn't yet started to shave. For the first time the name Gherig (sic) went over the wires that stretch across the country.

"It was a homer mentioned in the corridors of Lane for many decades," said Emil Rothe, who recently retired as assistant principal at Lane Tech. "He looked the same when he was a Yankee first baseman...thick legged, and wide-shouldered."

The fabled homer is a good one for trivia buffs. Next time anyone asks "In which big league park did Gehrig hit his first homer?" You can answer Wrigley Field. And then add "they spelled his name Gherig."

Schoolboy Lou

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

A Park Grows In Brooklyn

DAVID PIETRUSZA

THINK OF BROOKLYN and the mind and heart turn to Ebbets Field, but Baseball was played in the Borough of Churches long before Ebbets Field flung open its doors on April 9, 1913.

Most of Brooklyn's pre-Ebbets history revolves around a territory known collectively and individually as Washington Park. Three separate structures housed the grand old game in Brooklyn.

Organized ball first set foot on the site (Washington Park I) in 1883 when a team representing the Interstate League, an offshoot of the Old American Association, set up shop. The operation was such a success that owner Charles H. Byrne picked up an American Association franchise, and Major League ball came in on May 5, 1884. Coincidentally the locale was also the site of the first Mets-Orioles clash (the American Association's New York Mets and the National League's Baltimore Orioles) in an 1887 exhibition and portions of both the 1887 and 1888 World Series.

The wooden stadium burned to the ground under mysterious circumstances on May 29, 1889, but was quickly rebuilt (Washington Park II) and re-occupied by June of that season. The National League appeared for the first time the next year, but by 1891 the ballpark was abandoned. As part of a settlement with former Brooklyn Players League owner George Chauncey the team moved out to Eastern Park in East New York.

Eastern Park, home of the Superbas, was geographically to far east for the fans, so President Charles Ebbets wanted to move back to Washington Park. Unfortunately, the land have been sold and simply no longer available. Ebbets then did the next best thing; building a new park (Washington III) diagonally across the street from the old field.

Ebbets opened the third and last Washington Park on April 30, 1898, and it was home until the new era of steel and concrete stadiums almost instantly forced the stadium into obsolescence. When Ebbets Field made its debut with the 1913 season the Ward Brothers of the Federal League Brookfeds took ownership of the Washington Park pouring $250,000 worth of concrete and brick to erect bleachers and a 12 foot high wall around the field.

On one beautiful Saturday morning. I set off in a search of these fabled grounds, taking the F Train, and debarking at the Carroll Street Station. The surrounding neighborhood is quite pleasant, but proceeding down Third Street, and crossing the *colorful* Gowanus Canal.

Walking past junk yards, garages, and printing plants, one soon spies a Consolidated Edison facility at First Avenue. The brick wall all along First Avenue is the 12 foot high barrier the Wards had built in 1914, and more of it can be seen along First Street.

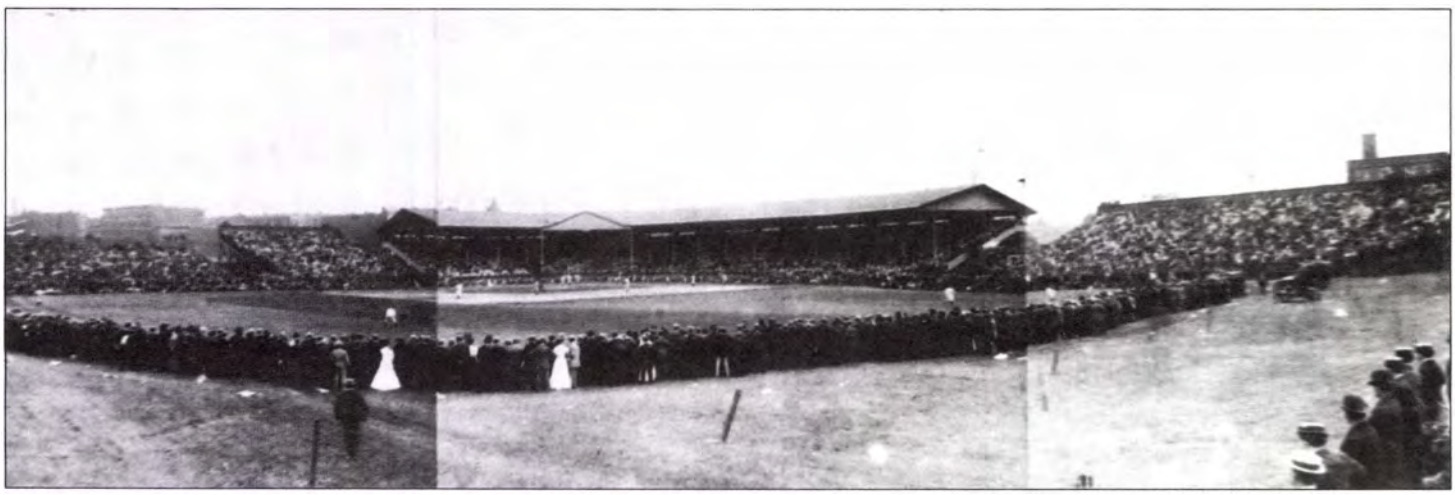
Some of the Con Ed employees are well aware – and quite proud – of their workplace's physical position in baseball history. Other, newer workers, are hearing about it for the first time. At one time, I was told there was a plaque marking the site, but alas that is long gone.

Continuing along Third Street, one comes across the James J. Byrne Memorial Playground which contains a small fieldstone, two story house, with a peeling red roof. At first glance it is nothing more than a run down comfort station...at second glance too.

But this field house is much more – it should be a baseball shrine. Firstly, the building dates back to 1699. Known to some as the Vechte-Cortelyou House of the Old Stone House of Gowanus, it was rebuilt in 1935 from the structure's original stones. The Battle of Long Island with General Cornwallis defeating George Washington took place there, and it is for this reason alone

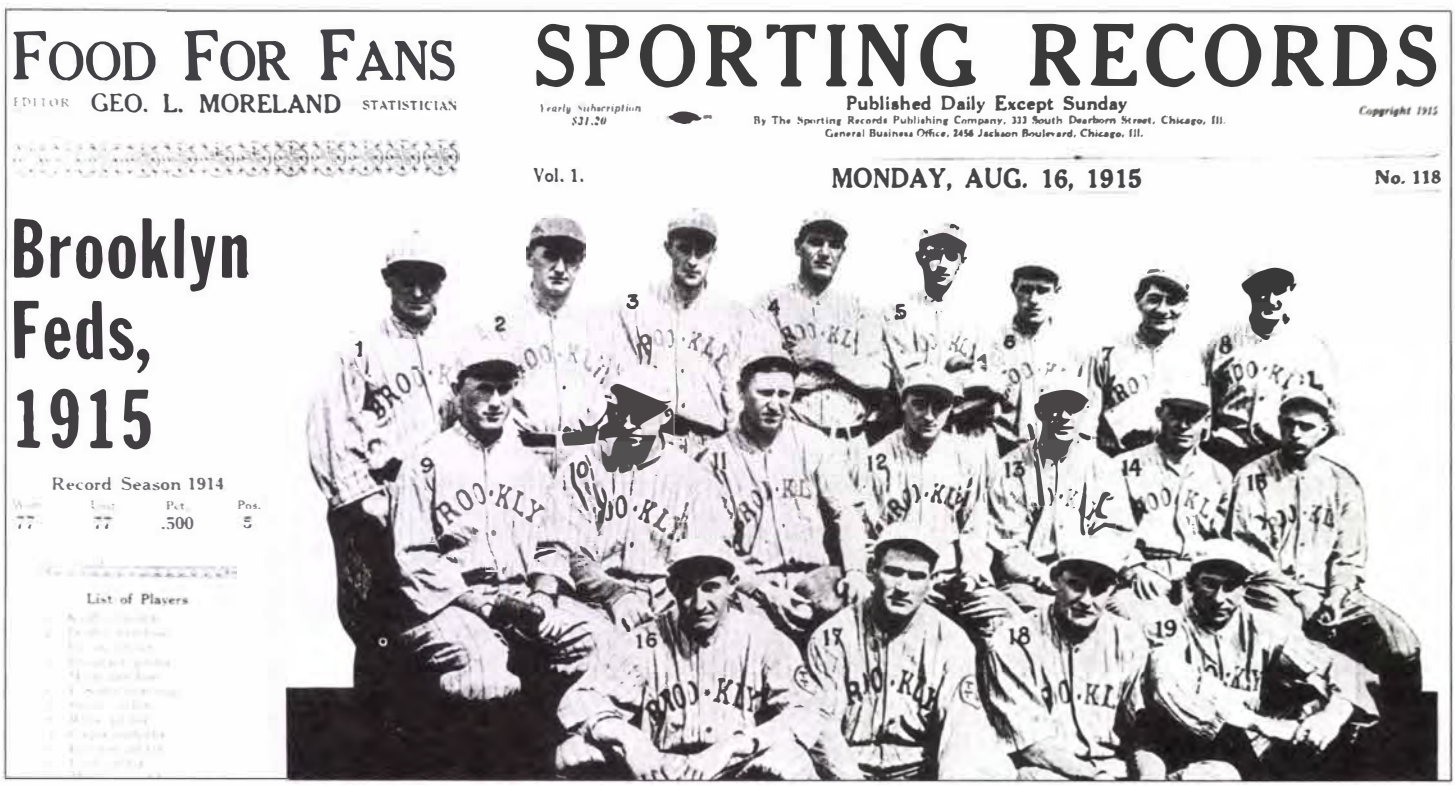
that Washington Parks I, II and III are so named. Moreover, this playground with ballgloves and spaldeens still in evidence is the site of Washington Parks I and II, and the field house served as a clubhouse for the Brooklyn teams of that era.

While the locals may gawk and stare at someone in a suit and tie taking pictures of the place, they are calmed at learning of their Brooklyn neighborhood's roots in baseball history. Interestingly, even though there is no plaque on the building the people know all about George Washington, so now the historical score is tied and the race is on to see who gets a plaque up there first.



Washington Park, wide view.

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York



FOOD FOR FANS
EDITOR GEO. L. MORELAND STATISTICIAN

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Brooklyn Feds, 1915

Record Season 1914

Won	Lost	Pct.	Pos.
77	77	.500	5

List of Players

BrookFeds, team photo.

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

Bats on Fire

JAY GAUTHREAUX

A CROWD OF 56,508 was on hand to witness a bizarre opening game of a doubleheader on April 30, 1944 at the polo Grounds. The Giants took pleasure in defeating their hated rivals, the Brooklyn Dodgers 26-8 in a game where the starting pitchers were cousins, an opposing manager was given the thumb not by one umpire, but by all three, and a Giants player was struck by a thrown bottle in a sensitive area.

Brooklyn starter Rube Melton and his older cousin, Giants starter Cliff shared a family trait of big ears. A sportswriter quipped: "Between them, the two Meltons couldn't get through a revolving door." Because of the way the Dodgers were pitching, they resembled a revolving door; giving up a total of 26 runs on 18 hits.

The Giants unleashed their barrage in the first, with the Dodgers ahead 2-0. Rube gave up three bases on balls, picking off one of the runners. He then served up a homer to Giants first baseman Phil Weintraub making the score 3-2. After one inning, Durocher has seen enough of Cliff's cousin and brought in Les Webber to start the next inning. Webber then proceeded to give up three more runs; including a two-run homer by short-stop Buddy Kerr.

It had all the makings of a Marx Brothers picture, the more Durocher brought in pitchers, the stranger it got. The next victim called to mound was Al Zachary.

Zachary picked up where Webber left off, allowing two Giants to reach first on passes, and letting two of them advance home. Fred Ostermueller was next out of the bullpen, but wished he'd stayed in bed. He allowed eight runs on just two hits and walked two. (Ostermueller must have set a major league record for walks in an inning!)

While the Giants were cruising with a 16-7 lead in the sixth, Durocher brought in another victim to the mound. This time, Tom Warren gave up two more runs.

By this time, Leo was tearing out what little hair he had left. In an attempt to probably fire up the troops, Leo decided to talk to "friends", the men in blue. He started talking with home plate umpire "Beans" Reardon. When Leo was finished, home plate was covered with dirt.

With act one of his skit over, Leo brought up the next curtain by appearing with first base umpire Tom Dunn in order to get the ump's approval. And Dunn, having given Leo enough time, acted in concert with the other umpires gave Durocher the thumb and out he went. While Leo was making his grand exit fans showed their disapproval by converting the playing field into a trash heap.

The Giants continued the hit parade in the eighth; scoring eight more runs and setting a new team record for runs scored with 26. They broke the old record by one run, which coincidentally was set by the New York Giants in a game against Cincinnati in June of 1901 where the final score was 25-13.

Harry Feldman came on in the fourth for New York after Cliff Melton faltered and gave up seven runs on seven hits.

When the "variety" show was finally over, the Giants and Dodgers were making their way to the clubhouse when a fan allegedly took aim and let a bottle fly in the direction of Joe Medwick, striking him in the groin.

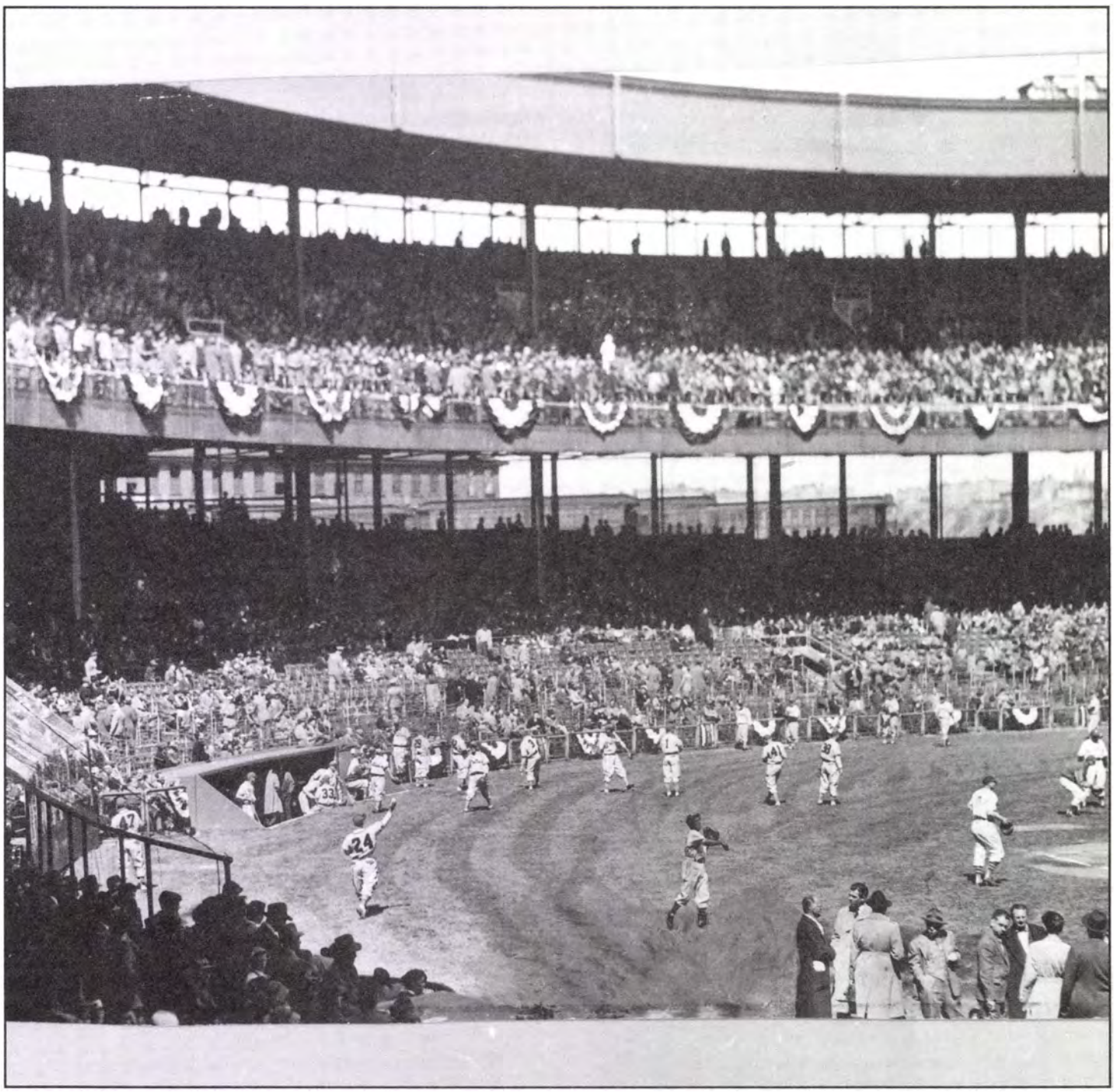
The smoke had cleared, Feldman had given up only one run off of five hits in the five and two- thirds innings for the win. The Polo Grounds hit men banged out a total of 18 hits, with their star first baseman Phil Weintraub knocking in 11 runs with a home run, triple, two doubles and missed by one RBI the record of "Sunny" Jim Bottomley set in 1926. Catcher Ernie Lombardi and Mel Ott both had good days in their own right: Lombardi drove in 7 runs, while Ott walked 6 times tying his own record set 15 years earlier.

The Dodgers issued a total of 17 free passes tying the major league record ironically set by the Dodgers team of 1903 against Philadelphia.

Lost in the shuffle was Dodgers' first baseman Howie

Schultz, who went 3 for 4 with 2 homers in a losing cause.

The Giants gave their fans something to cheer about, even though they would lose the nightcap by a score of 5-4. For the first time since 1937, the Giants would do better in the standings than their neighborhood rivals from Flatbush. It would not be until 1951 that they would give their fans something more to cheer about.



Polo Grounds

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

The Other Babe

TOM GALLAGHER

AN EBBETS FIELD of the mind was the only Ebbets Field I ever knew. And Babe Herman played there.

If there is such a thing as "a fully matured baseball fan", I was one when the Dodgers left New York. Unfortunately, I was only nine years old. Trapped in a child's body, I couldn't convince my father that, although we lived only a crosstown bus away from Yankee Stadium, going there just wouldn't do.

I was a Dodger fan and I wasn't interested in any house that Ruth built. But I never did get to the tangible Ebbets Field before it was too late.

I took the departure of the Dodgers as a test of faith. Descended from a people for 800 years heartened by the knowledge that the British would soon be leaving their island, I knew that the Dodgers had been around longer than O'Malley and would be around when he was gone.

Turning away from my team was the last thing on my mind. Instead I learned what I could about the players who called Ebbets Field home. I was most surprised to find that the Dodgers, too, once had a guy named Babe who had hit .333 one year – as high as Ruth or any other Yankee ever had.

And there was more – the 241 hits – a total never matched by a Yankee; the 143 runs scored, 416 total bases, and .678 slugging average – figures unequalled by any other New York National Leaguer, although none would lead the league in 1930 as Hack Wilson, Chuck Klein and Bill Terry racked up still unbroken records. (This wasn't new for Herman, I found – the year before he had hit .381 and missed the batting title then too.)

But the final surprise Babe Herman would give me waited until 1981, as I watched the introduction of players of six decades in a Dodger Stadium World Series pre-game ceremony. There in my TV screen stood the guy Dazzy Vance called "the Headless Horseman of Ebbets Field" – a man I always assumed already belonged to the ages – Floyd Caves Herman.

For a few months before he died I spent a lot of time thinking about Herman because I had landed a bit part in the writing of an encyclopedia of baseball biography and drew him as one of my assignments. The 150 words allowed me to depict a man who left as strong an imprint on the Dodgers as any who ever set foot on Ebbets Field, did not allow me to do justice to him. And so I toyed with the idea of writing or even calling him, with the vague notion of maybe putting together something longer to try and set the record straight on a few things.

Of course, I had always known that there were severe limits as to how straight the record could be set. We, after all, talking of a man who had to deny having been hit on the head by a fly ball, admit to having been hit on the chest, and refuse bets on whether he might be hit on the shoulder.

Some, like Casey Stengel, claimed that these stories were misleading – that Herman really wasn't a bad fielder, just a little absent minded.

While I suspected that, on the while, they were correct, it is a matter of record that after Herman led all national league first basemen in errors in 1927, manager Wilbert Robinson decided to move him to the outfield to get the bat of the less mobile Del Bissonnette into the lineup.

As far as putting some jolt into the batting order, the move worked. Herman batted .340 and Bissonnette hit 25 home runs to set a new record for rookies. But the results in the field were at least as impressive.

Bissonnette more than filled Herman's shoes – leading both leagues in errors at first base. And the Babe didn't let the move affect his defense at all – he led the majors in errors at his new position.

Since my initial discovery of New York's forgotten .390 hitter, I had come to realize that Herman's batting achievements were eclipsed more by these tales than by anything Wilson, Klein or Terry achieved. Herman

personified the madness of Brooklyn baseball during the 1920-1941 pennant drought. When his name was mentioned, no strange story seem out of place.

Still, I was a little surprised when the news of his passing reached us here in the northern suburbs of the Bronx a while back, and the Boston Globe described him, not as a slugger, but as "a base stealing star with the 'Daffiness Boys' Brooklyn Dodgers in the late 1920's.

I wondered was this a subtle, and astute allusion to the fact that Herman also finished second in the National League in steals the same year he had done all that hitting, or simply a reference to Herman's most famous steal of third base – the time there were already two guys on it?

Herman used to argue that the incredible scene with the three of them on third base was Dazzy Vance's fault, as the pitcher shouldn't have been running back to third while Herman was sliding into it. But that really didn't speak to the fact of Chick Fewster in there between the two of them.

But then even history has not spoken on the question of who was coaching the whole mess. It's twenty five years since Otto Miller, the Dodgers third base coach of the time, went to his grave privately claiming not to have been out there that inning. He used to explain that he took credit for it at the baseball dinners anyhow, because it was easier to take the bows than to tell the story of who had actually been in the coaching box – and why.

In the Bronx, back when the Yankees were the only team in town, they used to think that Babe Ruth's records would never be broken. That was before Roger Maris and Hank Aaron. And Lou Brock and Pete Rose were no kinder to Ty Cobb.

Some will claim that the pages he wrote in the history of the national pastime were the work of a baseball dyslexic, but the fact remains that Babe Herman's legacy cannot be eroded in the same way as Ruth's or Cobb's."

The Bums got three men on base. "Terrific – which base?" You can't top that – no one is going to put four men on third base.

But as to the question of putting a woman on base – well, Herman came about as close to doing it as anyone. In 1935, from the midst of a raucous Cincinnati crowd watching one of the first major league night games, strode a female night club singer, bat in hand. The chanteuse made her way to the plate and told Dizzy Dean's brother Paul to pitch to her.

The on-deck batter who gave her the bat she grounded out with? As Leo Durocher put it – Who else would it be? – Babe Herman.

We won't get to find out what was going through his mind as he handed over the bat that night in Cincinnati, or even who was coaching third on the day he became a myth.

I knew that I should have written to the Brooklyn's Babe, but at least, I made sure to write to Duke Snider when he had his recent triple bypass operation a while back – they're just not making Brooklyn Dodgers anymore.

It would have been great to know Floyd Caves Herman. But it was real good just to know that we Dodger fans had our Babe too, back before Ebbets Field was a high rise.

Babe Herman

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

Dollars and Sense

HENRY P. EDWARDS

JANUARY 23, 1938 — Joe Cronin, manager of the Boston Red Sox, has designated a student and lawyer to teach a business man how to catch major league ball. Moe Berg, baseball's most famous linguist, is the student. John Peacock, who has done right smart for John Peacock, by selling mules during the winter time and who also found the way to have himself declared a free agent and then sold John Peacock to the Red Sox for a substantial bonus, is the business man.

Berg will have a particular interest in Peacock inasmuch as both of them started their professional baseball careers in positions other than that behind the bat, Peacock, however, did have this on his teacher. He did catch as a semi-pro and also as a collegian in the University of North Carolina whereas Berg made the Princeton baseball team as a shortstop. When he left Princeton, he had his mind made up to be a lawyer and decided that professional baseball would give him the money to carry out his ambition.

As a result, he joined the Brooklyn club as an infielder. That was in 1923. He went to Paris, that winter and attended the University of Paris, extending his hobby of studying the romantic languages which he thought might be useful in law. That one year in the Sorbonne, added to his four years in Princeton enabled him to read Latin, Greek, French, Provencal, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese in addition to Hebrew and English while he also found himself able to converse fairly well in French, Spanish and Italian. Incidentally, it might be mentioned that when he was ten years of age he read the five books of the Mosaic law in the original Hebrew, showing that he combined intense study with his sports activities.

"But," says Moe, "My linguistic accomplishments never helped me get base-hits off Lefty Gomez, a Spaniard, Joe Cascarella, an Italian or pitchers of any nationality. In baseball, the fact that a player can talk several languages means nothing if he is up there with the bases filled and two out. Baseball is the most democratic of games. I have roomed with players who never finished their high school education and found them quick witted, able to carry on a conversation intelligently on general subjects, and, in some cases, owning a better knowledge of baseball than I did."

From Brooklyn, Berg went to Minneapolis, to Toledo, to Reading, Pa. It was then he was bought by the Chicago White Sox, as a utility infielder, a role in which he could make good. In 1927, Manager and catcher Ray Schalk broke his thumb. Buck Crouse, now manager at Baltimore, replaced him behind the bat. A foul tip put him out of commission without delay, putting the catching up to Harry Mc Curdy. A few days later, he broke a finger and Berg volunteered to catch until one of the three regulars was able to supplant him.

Moe never went back to infielding. He caught 107 games in 1929. In 1930, however, he injured his knee and was released to Cleveland in '31. Cleveland let him go to Washington in '32. When that season was ended, he joined a team that visited Honolulu and Japan, remaining in Japan for several weeks to coach the Nipponese players and also adding their language to his repertoire. In '34, when the American League sent a star team to Japan and Manila, Berg went along. While he was touring, Washington released him but when he stepped off the boat the day after the 1935 campaign opened, it was to find a Boston contract waiting for him.

Berg did not have an error in his last seven games in '31. He caught seventy-five games in '32 and thirty-five in '33 and the first six games of '34 went without a misplay, giving him a run of 117 games in succession without an error, having 324 put outs and forty-seven assists.

At the present time, Berg is a member of law firm in New York City having studied law at Columbia University during the winter months and being admitted to the bar close to ten years ago. But, he still loves baseball.

Now, take Peacock's career. When he quit the University of North Carolina in 1933 after four years of baseball, football and basketball at high school, one year in all three sports at the Episcopal school and four years of baseball and two years of football at college, he looked around for a job suitable for one of his talents. Like Berg, he found baseball the most advantageous. He joined the Wilmington, N.C. Club and was assigned to the outfield and infield duties.

In 1934, he divided his time between the outfield and catching but when sent to Toronto in 1935, he was used behind the bat in only twenty-five games. He was patrolling the outfield or guarding second base the rest of the time. Cincinnati, which had controlled him for two years, sent him to Nashville for the 1936 season. There he was a catcher once more with pinch hitting on the side. While he showed faults as a catcher he starred with the bat.

It was at the end of that season that Commissioner Landis declared him a free agent. The Red Sox stepped in an, outbidding several other major league clubs, induced him to sign a Boston contract. Still too green for major league duty, Peacock served with distinction for Minneapolis in '37, catching ninety-four games and batting 311. Finishing the season with the Red Sox, Manager Cronin placed the stamp of approval on him and said that under the tutelage of Moe Berg he would become a regular in 1938.

"I am glad I turned to professional baseball." said Peacock, last September. "I have found it more enjoyable each year and certainly more profitable in a financial way. I hope to have the good fortune to realize by ambition of being a big league regular for many years to come.

Proud as a Peacock!

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

Moe Berg, hitting the books.

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

"Good field, No hit."

...that's how Miguel (Mike) Gonzalez, the Cuban catcher-coach described Berg after watching him in a 1924 spring training contest. Yes, that's where the phrase came from, but let us hope that Moe Berg is remembered for much more than just that.

They said he could speak 10 languages, but couldn't hit in anyone of them. Does it really matter? His exemplary character both on and off the field made him universally respected. He was an an anachronism. Most ballplayers start out as students and graduate to the Majors, but for Moe school was always in session no matter where or with whom he was at the time.

My relationship with Moe Berg is one of books, letters, baseball cards and hot-stove discussions. I regret that when he was still alive statistics meant more to than a ballplayer's personality and accomplishments off the field. If and when another Moe Berg steps up to the plate I'll be ready to get to know him as a person.

To learn more about Moe Berg, visit the Library at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Ask to see the Berg collection and be prepared to spend a full day getting to know the man, and then the ballplayer.

A Nice Jewish Boy

PETER GORDON

He had a chance to be Brooklyn's first home-grown Jewish baseball hero. It was his for the taking. In the last inning of the last game of the 1950 season, Cal Abrams, from Flatbush, had the chance to win the pennant for the Dodgers.

When Cal was growing up in Brooklyn during the Great Depression, he and his friends must have played a similar scene in empty lots and on city streets innumerable times. Score tied, bottom of the ninth, the pennant on the line for the Dodgers. Although his boyhood friends would go on to other pursuits, Calvin Coolidge Abrams would get the chance to live his dream. By the end of the decade, Cal had grown into a strong, swift six-footer, who hit the longest home run in the history of Brooklyn's James Madison High School.

The Dodgers signed him to a minor league contract in 1942, and he hit over .300. However, America was at war, and Cal joined the Army. He served through 1945, and then went to the Three I League in 1946. He took up where he left off, hitting over .330 in that league, and then .345 for Mobile in 1947.

Abrams' speed, hitting ability and religion quickly brought him to the attention of the New York media. In the late 1940's and early 1950's New York was then, as it is now, the city with the largest Jewish population in the world. Ever since the days of John McGraw, New York's ball teams searched high and low for a star Jewish ball player that could help them win a pennant and bring New York's large Jewish contingent to the ball park. In 1947, even with the hype surrounding Jackie Robinson, and the intense pennant race, some writers found the space to mention that the Dodgers had a "nice" Jewish outfielder hitting .340 in the minor leagues.

The Dodgers brought Abrams up for a cup of coffee in 1949, and he stayed on the team in 1950. However, for most of the year Dodger manager Burt Shotton, recognizing the value of Abrams' speed and contact hitting ability, used him mostly as a pinch runner, pinch hitter and defensive replacement.

Brooklyn expected to defend their 1949 pennant successfully in 1950. They did not count on the astonishing emergence of the Philadelphia Phillies, nicknamed the "Whiz Kids." In fact, the young Phillies led the Dodgers by nine games in early September. The Brooklyn veterans battled back to within one game of the Phillies with one games remaining in the season.

Coincidentally, the Phillies and the Dodgers were scheduled to play each other in that last game, in Ebbets Field. The teams pitched their best, Roberts vs. Newcombe, and each side scored one run through the first eight and one half innings. Cal Abrams led off the bottom of the ninth, and worked Roberts for a walk. The Ebbets Field crowd, silent with tension, began to make some noise.

Captain Pee Wee Reese followed with a single, sending Abrams to second. The fans began to clap and plead for Duke Snider, the next batter, to get a hit. Abrams and Reese took their leads. Roberts pitched and Snider hit a hard line drive single to Richie Ashburn in centerfield. Abrams was one of the fastest Dodgers and Ashburn had one of the weakest arms in the league. Third base coach Milt Stock waved Abrams around third. Cal Abrams, of Flatbush, was about to live his dream of winning a pennant for his hometown team. Ebbets Field roared in anticipation of the apparent Dodger triumph.

However, Ashburn had been playing very shallow in centerfield, and Snider's liner came to him on one hop. Ashburn threw straight to catcher Stan Lopata. The ball got there in time for Lopata to have a cup of coffee before tagging Cal out. In one second Ebbets Filed was transformed from deafening euphorial to an ear piercing silence.

The Dodgers still had runners on second and third with one out. But Furillo and Hodges failed to drive them home. In the top of the tenth inning Dick Sisler hit

a three-run homer for the Phillies, and the Dodgers went down with nary a whimper in their half of the inning. Despite other missed opportunities by the Dodgers, the fans and media singled out Cal Abrams as the *goat*.

After, the game Ashburn said that he was creeping closer to second while Roberts was pitching to Snider because the pick-off play was on at second. But Roberts missed the sign, and pitched to Snider, who happened to hit it directly to Ashburn. Had Ashburn been playing at his normal depth for the power hitting Snider, he very well might not have thrown Abrams out.

To say that Dodger fans were disappointed in Cal is putting it mildly. Peter Golenbock's book , *Bums*, quotes Dodger fan Bill Reddy as saying " I could have killed Cal Abrams for making that wide turn around third base. I could have killed him with my bare hands." Talk show host Larry King is a bit more charitable, but still obviously bitter.

"We rooted for all the Jewish ball players. We loved Cal Abrams. [He] had a lot of speed and was a good outfielder. We love Cal Abrams — until he got thrown out at home."

Of course, Cal's career wasn't over. In 1951, new manager Charley Dressen said he would give Abrams a chance to win the left field job. For a while, Cal responded to the challenge magnificently. He hit well over .400 in May, and helped the Dodgers open up a big lead in the pennant race. In a game against the Phils in May, he even beat an Ashburn throw home for a game winning run. However, when Abrams' hitting streak began to cool off, he found himself on the bench. In 1952, despite again saying they would give Abrams a chance, the Dodgers traded him for the older, slower Andy Pafko, and Cal ended up in Cincinnati.

Given a chance to play regularly with the Reds, and later the Pirates and Orioles, Cal performed very well. In 1953, as a regular for Pittsburgh, Cal hit .286 with 15 home runs for a .435 slugging average. Had things worked out differently — had Cal scored that run — he could have been a valuable part of the pennant winners in 1952 and 53. He was a fast, left-handed hitter and fielder; Abrams could have caught Yogi Berra's fly i the last game of the 1955 series as well as Sandy Amoros, and been immortalized as the Dodger who saved Brooklyn's only World Championship. He could very well have become the Jewish baseball hero that Jewish fans, as well as marketing executives, in New York craved.

But, of course, ashburn's throw was on the money. And Cal didn't score. Still, given the Dodgers' left field problems, and the box office potential of a good Jewish ball player on the field for Brooklyn, one has to wonder why the Dodgers didn't give him more of a chance. Instead, as Cal said, "If I went 0-15, they'd say 'Abrams is in a slump' and I'd be out of the lineup. Yet other fellows like Jackie went 0-27 and they'd still play every day."

Did anti-semitism play a part in the team's decision? Dodger publicist Irving Rudd said of the organization, "they were tolerant, but it helped to be Irish." I have to believe, though, had Cal scored in that last game of the 1950 season, they would have given him more of a chance. In any case, that play did help Cal be remembered forever as a Dodger. And he became philosophical about it. "...as it turned out, all these years I go out and make speeches and meet with people, and they remember the play so vividly, and I'm thankful they do.... Had I reached home, I don't think they would have remembered it as well."

Cal Abrams

National Baseball Library
Cooperstown, New York

Hometown Hall of Famers

Player	*From*	*Inducted*
George Wright	New York, NY	1937
Henry Louis "Lou" Gehrig	New York, NY	1937
Wiliam Henry "Willie" Keeler	Brooklyn, NY	1939
Frank Francis "Frankie" Frisch	Brooklyn, NY	1947
Henry Benjamin "Hank" Greenberg	New York, NY	1956
Charles Waite "Waite" Hoyt	Brooklyn, NY	1969
Sanford "Sandy" Koufax	Brooklyn, NY	1972
Michael Francis "Mickey" Welch	Brooklyn, NY	1973
Charles Edward "Whitey" Ford	New York, NY	1977
Carl Michael Yastrzemski	Southampton, NY	1989
James Alvin "Jim" Palmer	New York, NY	1990

North by Northwest: New York to Cooperstown

Hank Greenberg (1911-1986)

Apart from Jimmie Foxx, Hank Greenberg hit more home runs from the right side of home plate in one season than any player in baseball history. In 1938 he belted 58 home runs, just two short of Babe Ruth's record, and a total which tied Foxx's output in 1932. Such awesome power was not surprising from this New York strongboy who went on to start for the Detroit Tigers.

Henry Benjamin Greenberg was born on New Year's Day, 1911, in the Greenwich Village section of New York City. By the time Hank was seven years old, the Greenberg family was able to move to the Crotona Park section of the Bronx. There Hank lived in a fashionable, 16-room house not far from the site of Yankee Stadium.

Greenberg was a schoolboy star at James Monroe High School in the Bronx, playing for coach Irwin Dickstein. Basketball was his better sport because of his height (6' 3 1/2"), however, baseball was his first love and he habitually worked long hours to overcome his somewhat awkward style on the field.

Paul Krichell of the Yankees was the first scout to take notice of Hank's talents, and he offered him a $7500 bonus to sign with the local American League club. The Washington Senators bid $12,000, and the Detroit Tigers followed with an offer of $9000. None of the bids particularly impressed David Greenberg, who wanted his son to attend college.

The Tigers then returned to talk David Greenberg into agreeing to a contract which would permit Hank to go to college first. His permission was received and Hank enrolled at New York University while property of the Tigers.

In the spring of 1930, Hank, overwhelmed by his desire to play ball, left NYU and was assigned to Hartford of the Eastern League where he batted .214 in 17 games. The Tigers then dropped him to Raleigh of the Piedmont League, and Hank responded with a .314 average, 19 home runs, and 93 runs batted in 122 games. At the end of the season the Tigers called Hank up, and he grounded out as a pinch-hitter in his only appearance.

Farmed to Evansville of the Three-I League in 1931, Hank hit .318 with 15 homers. With Beaumont of the Texas League in 1932, Hank batted .290 and led the league with 123 runs scored and 39 homers. He also drove in 131 runs.

In 1933 Detroit manager Bucky Harris installed Hank as the club's regular first baseman. Although the Tigers finished fifth that season, Hank batted .301 and tied teammate Charlie Gehringer for the club lead with 12 home runs. It was the first of eight consecutive seasons in which Greenberg hit .300 or better, but Hank became far better known for his power-hitting achievements.

Mickey Cochrane became the Tiger manager in 1934, and he led the team to its first pennant since 1909. Hank's contribution was a .339 average, 26 home runs, and 139 runs batted in, the latter being the third highest total in the league. Although he batted .321 with seven RBIs in the 1934 World Series, Hank also struck out nine times. Dizzy and Paul Dean captured that Series for the Cardinals.

In his third year in the majors, 1935, Hank won the American League's Most Valuable Player award. He batted .328 with 36 homers and 170 runs batted in as the Tigers again won the pennant. Hank tied Jimmie Foxx for the league lead in home runs, and his RBI total was 51 higher than runner-up Lou Gehrig of New York. These were the first of four home run and RBI titles which Hank would win. Although Detroit captured the World Series, Greenberg set the ignominious record of

committing three errors at first base. He was batting only .167 when forced out of action after the second game with a broken wrist.

In 1938 Hank exploded for 58 home runs, equaling the record for righthanded batters set earlier by Foxx. Ruth's record of 60 was only 11 years old at that point, and Hank's home run chase did not cause the sensation that Roger Maris's did in 1961. Hank had belted 58 homers with five games remaining, but in the crucial final weekend against Cleveland, he was stopped in his bid for the record.

Greenberg moved to the outfield when it became necessary to make room for Rudy York at first base. York was slower and less graceful than Greenberg, and it was impossible to place him anywhere else. Hank hit .340 season with 41 homers and 150 RBIs, earning him his second MVP award. He helped the Tigers win another pennant, however Cincinnati got the best of the Tigers in the 1940 World Series.

Hank's average slipped to .277 in 1946, and the Tigers began to feel the 35-year-old slugger might be slowing down despite the home run and RBI crowns. Nevertheless, Hank was totally surprised when heard on his car radio, on January 18, 1947, that he had been sold to Pittsburgh after the entire American League had waived on him.

Greenberg roomed with young Ralph Kiner at Pittsburgh that year, and although the club finished last, the two sluggers, one fading and the other coming on, gave the fans plenty to cheer about. Left field in Forbes Field was shortened and nicknamed "Greenberg Gardens," and Hank bowed out with 25 homers and a .249 average. His advice helped Kiner to a 51-homer season.

Retiring as a player after the 1947 season, Hank joined an old admirer, Bill Veeck, at Cleveland the following season as a vice-president and farm director. The Indians captured the 1948 pennant, and two years later, after Veeck left the Indians, Greenberg became the club's general manager when the Indians won the 1954 pennant with a league record of 111 victories.

In 1956 Hank Greenberg was elected to the Hall of Fame. Three years later he rejoined Veeck, this time with the Chicago White Sox, and served as vice-president from 1959 through 1963, after which he left baseball to devote more time to his Wall Street interests and the tennis courts.

George Wright (1847-1937)

George Wright starred for baseball's first professional team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, who went undefeated during the 1869 season. He was the first baseball pioneer elected to the Hall of Fame.

George Wright was born at 110th Street and 3rd Ave. in the Harlem section of New York City on January 28, 1847. In 1836, his parents had to come to America from Sheffield, England, bringing along George's older brother, Harry. A third brother, Sam, was born in 1848.

All three boys played cricket in addition to experimenting with baseball in its earliest form. Sam was perhaps the best of the boys at cricket; in baseball, he played only 45 games at shortstop in a brief major league career.

Harry was more of an organizer, and he eventually founded the first professional team. But George, 12 years younger than Harry, always seemed to steal the spotlight.

George's first experience in organized baseball came in 1864 when he played for the Gothams of New York. The team followed Alexander Cartwright's basic rules and did quite well.

In 1865 George played for the Philadelphia Olympics, but he was back with the Gothams in 1866. During this period George played every position, as there were only 9 or 10 men on a full roster.

Brother Harry formed the Red Stockings in 1869 and induced his younger sibling to join. George at once became the highest player on the team. The Red Stocking easily defeated every opponent they faced that year, compiling a 57-0 record. George's batting average was computed at .629 over that 57 game stretch.

George proved to be an outstanding shortstop. Like everyone else, he played without a glove and delighted the fans by snaring hard-hit line drives. His strong arm enabled him to play a deep shortstop, and he became the first player to cover second base when the second baseman was other occupied on a play.

He also invented the trap play for setting up double plays. Later the infield fly rule was passed to prevent this maneuver. The Red Stockings broke up after the 1870 season, and the Wright brothers went to Boston to form a new entry in the National Association, the first major league. Harry was the manager, and George the short-

stop and most popular player on the team. Young fans would say, "I'd rather be Wright than President," and good crowds turned out to watch the games.

Boston won the National Association championship from 1872-1875. By the final year of the league, the team had compiled a 71-8 record. George, hitting against underhand pitching with no curveballs, batted .409, .336, .378, .345, and .337 during the five years of National Association play.

In 1876 the National League was formed, replacing the National Association. Chicago, managed by Spalding, had the best team, but Harry Wright moved his Boston club into the new league. With 29-year-old George as the shortstop, Boston managed to finish in fourth place behind Chicago, St. Louis, and Hartford.

George was the first batter in National League history, for he led off the April 22 game at Philadelphia and grounded to the shortstop.

When George left baseball, he devoted his time to running his sporting goods business and playing golf. He played the first match in New England, which may also have been the first in America.

He lived to be 90 years old. Long a consultant on the game, he served on the Centennial Committee that helped lay plans for the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

In 1937 George Wright was elected to the Hall of Fame, beating his brother Harry by 16 years. George died in Boston on August 31, 1937.

Willie Keeler (1872-1923)

In an era of rough and tumble baseball players, a small, gentlemanly Irishman named Willie Keeler made his mark as one of the finest hitters in the game.

William Henry Keeler was born on March 13, 1972, in Brooklyn, New York, before it became a borough of New York City. His father was the oldest horse-car trolley driver on the DeKalb avenue line.

Willie stood only 5'4 1/2" and weighed 140 pounds, but he developed his great athletic ability playing on the sandlots in Flatbush, and Flushing.

Keeler was a member of a semipro team known as the Acmes when received his chance to break into professional ball. In upstate New York, the Eastern League had a team in Binghamton. When the club's third baseman, John Rainey, broke a leg, a replacement was urgently needed. Binghamton scouts liked what they saw and signed Keeler to contract.

Willie eventually was installed at third base and began to shine there. He played 93 games for Binghamton, enough to qualify for the Eastern League's batting title, which he won with a .373 average. He collected 153 hits, but his 48 errors indicated that perhaps the infield was not his station. The New York Giants purchased Keeler's contract in 1892 and after 13 error ridden games, he was sold to Brooklyn in 1893, where he played until his 1894 trade to the Baltimore Orioles. Keeler went with Dan Brouthers to the Orioles in exchange for Billy Shindle and George Treadway. Both Keeler and Brouthers wound up in the Hall of Fame.

Willie became an instant hit in Baltimore. Joining Ned Hanlon's fine club, he teamed with Hughey Jennings, John McGraw, Joe Kelley, Wilbert Robinson, and Dan Brouthers to establish one of the finest teams in baseball history. They all made it to the Hall of Fame, and for consecutive seasons the Orioles participated in the Temple Cup "World Series". Baltimore won the 1896 and 1897 series against Cleveland and Boston.

Keeler used one of the lightest bats ever employed in baseball. It measured only 30 inches in length and weighed a mere 29 ounces. He handed it with great dexterity and became one of the outstanding bunters in the game. Before the rule was instituted that a batter was declared out if he bunted foul after two strikes, Willie would foul off dozens of pitches with bunts until he got just what he wanted. Willie hit only 32 home runs in his career.

He mastered the "Baltimore chop," pounding high bouncers over infielders' heads as they charged potential bunts. He and McGraw, alternating between the first and second spots in the batting order were the first to perfect the hit-and-run play. Willie always seemed able to aim the ball at vacated holes in the infield. And should the hit-and-run fail, it was good bet that Keeler would steal second. He swiped 519 bases in his career, with a high of 73 in 1896. A sportswriter, reportedly Abe Yager of the Brooklyn Eagle, once asked Willie his hitting secret. "Keep your eye clear and hit 'em where they ain't," he replied, and the expression "hit 'em where they ain't" took its place among baseball's famous quotes.

1897 was Keeler's finest year. He hit safely in his first 44 games of the Orioles' schedule, from April 22 to June 18. It was the majors' longest consecutive-games hitting streak until Joe Dimaggio broke the mark with his 56-game streak in 1941. By the end of the year, Willie had collected 243 hits, a record that stood until 1920 (broken by George Sisler), and had batted .432, the second highest average in baseball history (Hugh Duffy hit .438 in 1894). Keeler not only won the batting title, but he repeated a year later with a .379 average on 214 hits, which included 202 singles, an all-time major league record. Keeler joined the New York Highlanders, formerly the Baltimore franchise in 1903 and became baseball's first $10,000 player. After Napoleon Lajoie, Keeler was the biggest name in the American League. Since the Highlanders later became the Yankees, Keeler was the first in a long line of Yankee greats.

Calling it a career in 1911, Willie finished with one of the highest career batting averages (.345) in baseball history. Just as Babe Ruth was known as the best home run hitter during baseball's home run era, Keeler was proclaimed the best at hitting singles during the so-called dead-ball era. Keeler made 376 Pulaski Street in Brooklyn his lifelong address, and he died at his home on New Year's Day, 1923. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1939.

Mickey Welch (1859-1941)

"Smiling Mickey" Welch was one of the great pitchers of the nineteenth century, pouring 308 victories into only 13 National League Seasons.

Michael Francis Welch was born on July 4, 1859, in Brooklyn, New York, seventeen years before the birth of the National League. Baseball was virtually unknown as a professional sport in America during Mickey's childhood, but it was growing in popularity as a street game. Mickey played the sport on the streets of Brooklyn until 1877 when he traveled up the Hudson River to Poughkeepsie to join a professional team known as the Volunteers. His salary was $45 per month.

Welch played for Auburn and Holyoke of the National Association in 1878 and 1879. The following year Mickey joined the Troy Haymakers of the National League to begin his major league career. In 1881 the Troy team finished fifth in the National League with a 39-45 record. Mickey's contribution to the total was a 21-18 mark, with Tim Keefe winning the 18 other games and losing 27. Welch trimmed his innings pitched total that season to 362, but he did complete all of his 40 starts, giving him 104 consecutive complete games. The streak ended at 105 following his first appearance in 1882.

The 1882 season was a disappointment for the Haymakers, finishing in seventh place. Then, in 1883, John B. Day, owner of the original New York Mets of the American Association, purchased the Troy club and moved the franchise, with most of the players, into New York to share the Polo Grounds with the Mets. This was the original Polo Grounds, located at Fifth Avenue and 110th Street at the northern boundary of Central Park. Welch received the honor of pitching the first game in the Polo Grounds for the New York team. (They were called the Maroons in those days. Two years later, manager Jim Mutrie proclaimed, "My big fellows, my giants!" after a victory, and the name stuck.)

As the 1884 season approached, Mickey decided he was being overworked. The string of 105 complete games had taken their toll, and earned him the reputation of a rubber-armed pitcher with no limit. Welch demanded that a clause be written into his contract prohibiting the manager from pitching him more than every other day. The clause remained in his contract until his retirement. In the mid-1880's, Welch was nicknamed "Smiling Mickey" as a result of a crooked smile characterized in *Puck* and the *New York Journal* by cartoonist R.V. Munkitrict. The nickname suited his easygoing nature, one which never became upset if a teammate committed an error.

When asked the secret of his pitching success. Mickey attributed it to drinking beer. He prepared a little poem for sportswriters covering the Giants that read:

Pure elixir of malt and hops
Beats all the drugs and the drops

Following his retirement from baseball, Mickey, his wife and daughter moved to Holyoke, Massachusetts. In 1912 he returned to New York and was hired by the Giants as a watcher at the bleacher entrance of the Polo Grounds, where he was popular with the older fans. Welch had been all forgotten, until the Veterans Committee voted him into the Hall of Fame with the other 300-game winners in 1973.

SABR Bulletin No. 1

Newsletter of the Society for American Baseball Research - August 1971

Sixteen baseball researchers and statisticians from 11 states met at Cooperstown, N.Y. on August 10 to organize the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR). This is the first organization of its type to be established in the 100 year history of Organized Baseball. The 16 who took part, plus an observer from Ontario, Canada, were representative of some 40 "statistorians" across the country who have expressed interest insuch an organization. Here is a summary of what was accomplished at that meeting.

- The following objectives were adopted:

  1. To foster the study of baseball as a significant American social and athletic institution.

  2. To stimulate interest in baseball as our National Pastime.

  3. To establish an accurate historical account of baseball through the years.

  4. To coordinate and facilitate the dissemination of baseball research information.

  5. To cooperate in safeguarding the proprietary interests of individual research efforts.

- It was generally agreed that the organization should have a constitution to provide basic guidelines and procedures. The officers will work as a committee to draft a constitution for consideration by the membership. The objective, outlined above will be incorporated into that document.

- After a discussion of whether there should be two memberhips – active and associate – it was decided that there should be at this time one full membership with annual dues of $10 (more about that later). A membership card will be provided with the hope that it will facilitate your admission to libraries and other places where you carry out your research.

- Discussion of a name for the organization based on geographic coverage, a possible acronym, and a means of covering both the historical and statistical aspects of the group without a long title. It was generally agreed that the word research accomplished the latter. In regard to geographic scope, it was stated that American was broader than national. Society was preferred over association. Efforts to come up with a name resulting in a baseball acronym like RBI or something similar proved fruitless. Consequently, we became the Society for American Baseball Research.

SABR 21

Celebrating 20 years of SABR and 120 years of Major League Baseball

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