SOUVENIR EDITION

A Celebration of Louisville Baseball in the Major and Minor Leagues

SABR 27

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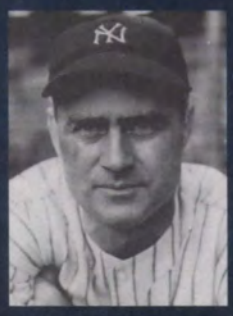
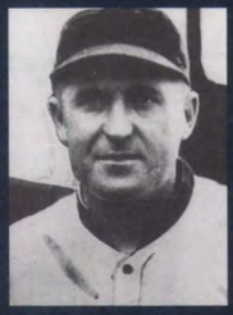
Future 'Famers' Called Lou-a-vul Home





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ON THE COVER

Night view of recently opened Louisville Slugger Museum. Plus, four of the *dozen* players and managers -- in the dawn or twilight of their careers --who wore a Louisville professional uniform (top to bottom): Earle Combs (1922-23), Honus Wagner (1897-99), Joe McCarthy (1916-25), and Pee Wee Reese (1938-39). The others are Hughey Jennings (1891-93); Fred Clarke (1894-99); Dan Brouthers (1895); Jimmy Collins (1895); Rube Waddell (1897, 1899); Billy Herman (1928-31); Burleigh Grimes (1936); Max Carey (1956).

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A CELEBRATION OF LOUISVILLE BASEBALL IN THE MAJOR AND MINOR LEAGUES

SOUVENIR EDITION

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Joe McCarthy's Ten Years as a Louisville Colonel

Everyone knew he was destined for The Big Show

By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr

Unlikely as it may seem, a careful reading of Louisville's two major daily newspapers in January, 1978 does not reveal a single article of local origination announcing that one of the city's former sports cornerstones had passed away in upstate New York. Perhaps it was a mark of shame to Louisville's sense of history that it ignored this man of intelligence and distinction; perhaps it was only another sign that the last quarter of the 20th century could be a trifle inhospitable to its diamond heroes.

Joe McCarthy died on January 13, 1978 at the age of 90. Bowie Kuhn, then commissioner of baseball, said, "I thought McCarthy was the greatest manager there ever was." But McCarthy's importance to Louisville baseball went virtually unnoticed in the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and *Louisville Times*. Only Israel "Izzy" Goodman, formerly one of the state's most popular sportsmen, noted his friend's death in a letter to the editor, in which he called Joe the most successful manager baseball had ever known. "I knew McCarthy during the years he managed the Colonels and later the New York Yankees into one championship after another," Izzy noted. "He was a calm man with not only an encyclopedic knowledge of baseball, but of men and how to handle them."

Although Joe eventually counted a host of friends from coast to coast, none was more staunchly loyal than Izzy and the group from Louisville who formed the Colonels' Brotherhood of Boosters. The years Joe spent in Louisville were some of the happiest he knew, when people such as Izzy Goodman and Mitchell Roth counted him as their friend, before fame beckoned.

"Good-field-no-hit"

Joseph Vincent McCarthy was born in 1887 in the Germantown suburb of Philadelphia where he played sandlot and high school ball. A good Catholic boy, he attended Niagara University in Buffalo, New York for two years before launching his professional baseball career. Short and stocky (5-foot-8, 170 lbs.), he was a multitalented defensive player, noted for his aggressiveness and keen knowledge of the game.

McCarthy played briefly for Wilmington of the Tri-State League in 1907 and then for the Franklin Club of the outlaw Inter-State League. In only two years, he signed with Triple-A Toledo of the American Association (AA), where he spent three full seasons. But his bat betrayed him, and he never hit over .254 there. He also played for Indianapolis of the AA, but, by 1912, he was playing for Wilkes-Barre of the New York State League. Impressing everyone with his leadership skills, McCarthy was named playing-manager in 1913 at age 26. He hit .325 there, his best year ever at the plate.

By 1914, he was playing second base for Buffalo of the International League, managed by "Derby Day" Bill Clymer, who had been a successful skipper at Louisville in 1902-03. While at Buffalo, McCarthy went 0-for-4 against Babe Ruth in the latter's pitching debut for Baltimore in 1914 (in front of only 200 fans). When Clymer (who earned his nickname from the long jockey-type peak of his cap) was rehired to manage Louisville's Colonels in 1916, he needed a second baseman.

By chance, McCarthy was available. In the winter of 1915-16, Ed Barrow, president of the International League, recommended McCarthy to the Yankees. A deal was in serious negotiation when McCarthy decided to sign with Brooklyn of the Federal League. When that league folded before the season, so did McCarthy's only chance to avoid the tag of "career minor-league player." Joe once recalled, "I was twenty years in the minor leagues as a player and manager before I made it. I think I spent more time trying to get up there than almost anybody I know of." In any event, he wound up at Louisville, where he became a "Corncracker," as the local papers once called the Colonels.

Joe McCarthy in Louisville

McCarthy blossomed in Louisville. He became one of the best fielders and "brainiest" players in the league. His popularity soared with the fans, and he was greatly appreciated. His mediocre hitting (.259) typified the "good-field-no-hit" Colonels of 1916, who won 101 games and Louisville's second AA pennant.

A news account of a Colonel shutout of Memphis in 1919 characterizes McCarthy's play:

> *Another Corncracker who dazzled the Memphians with his inside play was none other than sturdy Joe McCarthy. In the 3rd, the Colonel second sacker raced into deep right field and captured Griffin's fly. A moment later he invaded left and camped under "Slats" Slattery's pop-up. Before he went to the showers to remove the dust from his pulchritude, Joe helped wring the necks of eight chickens. Being in a truculent mood, he slaughtered five single-handed.*

By 1919, McCarthy had become a fixture at second base. And when field manager Joseph Patrick Henry "Patsy" O'Flaherty resigned in mid-season that year, apparently due to differences with general manager Cap Neal, the popular McCarthy was named player-manager. The press described him as "one of the brainiest players cavorting in the minors" and the local sports page headline read: "Brainy Second Baseman Chosen."

Joe began to develop managing traits which would serve him well in the future: sound tactics, stable atmosphere, ability to handle stars, an infielder's perspective and a low-key ego. The main feature of the end of the Colonels' season was winning 12 out of the last 13 games, all on the road!

McCarthy's excellent showing with the club during the latter part of that season assured his selection for the same position in 1920. He took over the Louisville team just as it was ready to go to pieces and, despite injuries, bad luck and weak pitching, made a credible showing (finishing third).

McCarthy's last season as a player was 1921, when he hit .278 (his Louisville high) in only 11 games. (His lifetime average was .261.) That was also the year in which he married his Buffalo sweetheart "Babe" (who seldom viewed a Colonels' game). He stayed in Louisville as manager through the 1925 season. McCarthy was widely regarded as the best manager in the minor leagues; he was popular, settled, secure and relatively well-paid.

And on his way to the Hall of Fame!

Success in Louisville

During his 6 1/2 seasons at the helm in Louisville, McCarthy won two AA pennants (1921 and 1925) and one Junior World Series (1921). His upset defeat of Jack Dunn's 1921 Baltimore Orioles came against a team described as "the finest minor league team of that era, perhaps one of the best in organized baseball at any level."

McCarthy's keen mind and ability to handle players made him a superlative manager. His formula for success was: get the players and keep them happy. In later years, he bristled when Jimmy Dykes of the White Sox called him a "push-button manager." His friends defended McCarthy from such sniping, saying, "...it took great understanding to mold divergent temperaments of star performers into a team that could win so often." In Louisville, McCarthy was lighthearted and at ease with himself, perhaps due to the influence of the friends around him. "It is not strange that whenever he is sitting around talking baseball

so many of his stories begin with: 'I remember when I was in Louisville' ...or 'We were in Louisville one day...", reported Frank Graham in a 1946 *New York Journal American* column.

When pitcher Dixie Davis paid him a 1919 pre-season salute to the press by saying, "This is going to be his banner year," McCarthy, usually mild-mannered, yelled, "Thank you, hog-head, for your compliment!" (Team secretary Pat Clark said sarcastically, "That's a dadblamed refined way for Joe to acknowledge gratitude!") On July 24 of that year, a McCarthy foul ball rebounded from the grandstands and hit his friend, John Ganzel, on the head, knocking the Kansas City Blues' manager out for several minutes before being revived. All enjoyed a good chuckle. When that season concluded, Joe formed a business partnership with former Colonel captain Roxey Roach to open a string of poolrooms and amusement emporiums in Pennsylvania.

Gabby Hartnett with McCarthy

Evidently, Joe traveled with a rather large wardrobe. He was kidded that it would take him three or four hours to pack his garments. In response, he joked that slugging first sacker Jay Kirke was never known "..to travel with heavy luggage. It usually consists of the civilian suit he has been wearing since his 21st birthday, a plug of licoriced tobacco and his diamond toggery, which he uses for a pillow when he is embraced by Morpheus."

Reports Arthur Daley in a 1948 *New York Times* column:

Marse Joe McCarthy's life is so wrapped up in baseball that he has no interest in any other sport. But he did have bets riding on four successive Derbies, and if Commissioner Chandler wants to do anything about it, he's welcome. It happened this way. When McCarthy was at Louisville, he struck up a warm friendship with Izzy Goodman.

Just for old times' sake, Izzy bet $2 for Joe on a Derby and, the colt winning, mailed him a check. The astonished McCarthy stuck it away in his desk and many months later mailed it back to Goodman with a note of thanks. So Izzy bet the sum on the next Derby and mailed another check. Joe returned it. The indefatigable Goodman parlayed it on the next Derby and won once more. By then the sum was up in the hundreds and McCarthy's embarrassment grew. He sighed with relief when he lost the wad on the fourth Derby. End of McCarthy as a hoss player.

During Joe's tenure as manager, fire claimed Eclipse Park at 7th and Kentucky streets after the 1922 season. This led to the construction of concrete Parkway Field, which opened on May 1, 1923, and which was used by the Colonels for 33 years until all home games were moved to Fairgrounds Stadium in 1957.

The Brotherhood of Boosters was continually organizing support for McCarthy and the "Corncrackers". When Louisville clinched the 1925 Association pennant in Columbus, the Boosters met them upon the Colonels' return at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast. On September 25, 1925, a glorious "Joe McCarthy Day" was planned at Parkway Field by the Boosters, apparently the only such major public recognition he received in Louisville during his 10 seasons there. A crowd of up to 15,000 was expected, but the next day's headline read, "Rain Undermines McCarthy Day, But Not For McCarthy." The rain, which began at noon, held attendance to 5,260 fans, and it also decreased the sales of the souvenir programs, the proceeds of which went into a pot of gold and silver given to Joe by the Boosters. Even though the Boosters were depressed over the rain-caused low turnout, McCarthy was extremely gracious in his remarks. He thought the day was an "unbounding success" and said that "the day could not have been any better...the goodness of everyone stunned me." Joe further commented that the remembrances and speeches made him blush for the first time in his life!

McCarthy also reminisced about Kentuckian Combs: "I had Earle Combs playing for me when I was managing Louisville. The Yankees wanted to buy him - that was around 1924. We told them that we'd make the deal if they would throw in this kid they had at Hartford named Gehrig... but they

wouldn't turn him loose. We made the deal anyway."

As Joe matured as a manager, he began to perfect his managerial philosophy: always Think Baseball; no petty rules but no complacency or frivolous behavior; all-out effort; pride in appearance; respect older players and develop young ones, but have no favorites; lead by example; be willing to experiment; and, choose a lineup and let it play. And, contrary to some reports, he was not tagged with the moniker "Marse Joe" until after his Louisville years.

Thinking back on the days when Joe was managing the Colonels, Izzy Goodman later said,

"...we knew we had a big league manager here before anybody in the big leagues tumbled to him. He was just the same then as he is now. If a player didn't hustle for him or gave him any trouble, Joe would get rid of him, no matter how good he was. And those he kept played ball like the big leaguers. I don't mean they were as good as big leaguers but they played smart. You never saw a pitcher McCarthy had who didn't know how to field his position and never saw anybody throw to the wrong base.

He sent up some pretty good players, too. The best player he ever had here was Earle Combs, and Joe sent him up to the Yankees — and then caught up with him seven years later. The best pitcher he had, in my book, was Wayland Dean — you remember him? Well, most people up there in the big leagues don't, I guess, because he went up 20 years or so ago, but we remember him around here. Joe thought he was going to be a great pitcher some day when he sent him up to the Giants and I thought so, too, but the poor kid got sick and died in a couple of years, as you know."

Joe Leaves Louisville

On September 4, 1925, toward the conclusion of the Colonels' pennant-winning season, a small article in the sports pages of the *Courier-Journal* presaged change. It reported that George C. Gibson would manage the Chicago Cubs for the remainder of the season, taking Rabbit Maranville's place. (Maranville had been hastily selected to succeed Bill Killefer in July.) "Reports were current that Joe McCarthy, manager of the Louisville club, is under consideration as manager of the Cubs next year."

In spite of their first-place finish, and a chance to again defeat the mighty Baltimore Orioles of the International League, McCarthy and the Colonels faced postseason problems. Sale of seats was termed "distressingly sluggish," and the team averaged only 6,788 fans during its split of four home games in the series. Then, Pel Ballenger, the Colonels' veteran third baseman who was hitting .437 in the series, was kicked off the team following an incident on the train to Baltimore. Refusing to return to his berth when halted while walking in his underwear near a McCarthy card game, Ballenger publicly insulted Joe with owner William Knebelkamp nearby.

The incident received nationwide attention as McCarthy received praise for his "courageous" actions. The Louisville press supported the discharge, stating that Ballenger was "kicked off the ball team, in miserable disgrace, forever and a day, by the kindly Joe McCarthy." Meanwhile, some players pleaded for Ballenger's reinstatement, but McCarthy said, "It is better for us to lose with our heads up, then to win with our heads down."

In the meantime, while McCarthy was "meriting the respect and admiration of the nation" and "placing virtue over victory," Ballenger showed up at the Baltimore ball park and, although not in uniform, indulged in part of the Colonels' practice after initially watching from the stands! The Colonels won their next game, 7-1, but McCarthy was still under severe pressure to reinstate Ballenger after they dropped the sixth game 5-3, evening the best-of-nine series.

In the midst of this squabble, on October 10, 1925 a small news article reported: "Here it is again! Reports persist that Joe McCarthy would be named Cubs manager, but Cubs' president Veeck would have no comment until after the series."

Prior to the seventh game, McCarthy reinstated Ballenger, illogically claiming that the International League should not have reinstated a suspended Baltimore player; therefore, McCarthy would not continue to punish his player. Whatever the reason for his return, Ballenger did his club no favors as they lost to the Orioles 10-9 in 11 innings. Ballenger dropped a fly ball and later failed to run out a

dropped pop-up and was thrown out by 60 feet. McCarthy was incensed! On October 11, 1925 the Orioles wrapped up the Junior World Series with a 5-2 win. The Colonels immediately began a barnstorming tour across the country to San Francisco, where they were to begin a series with the Pacific Coast League champs on October 22.

Strangely enough, McCarthy's heroic persona seems to dissipate in the Louisville press when it becomes clear that he will sign to manage the Cubs. On October 14, a small story appears telling that the Cubs won the city championship "in the presence of their new boss, Joe McCarthy, defeating the White Sox." No feature story of his signing appears and it is not until October 17 that a photograph appears with the title "When McCarthy Signed to Manage Cubs," and stating that "all Louisville will watch with keen interest the work of Joe McCarthy as manager of the Cubs." Joe was pictured signing his two-year contract with owner William Wrigley, Jr. and president William Veeck.

Thus, McCarthy's glorious ten years in Louisville came to a bittersweet ending, somewhat ignored in the press.

McCarthy After Louisville

Although Joe McCarthy never played a single game in the major leagues, his superlative managerial genius would carry him to the Hall of Fame. Remembering his idol, Connie Mack, McCarthy said it took "just about three things to be a manager: a good memory, patience and being able to recognize ability and then know what to do with it."

In his rookie year in Chicago, he fired veteran Grover Cleveland Alexander and was congratulated by owner William Wrigley for his nerve. He was greatly responsible for the development and success of Hack Wilson and Riggs Stephenson. Never failing to finish out of the first division during 24 years, he became the first manager without major league playing experience to win a pennant (1929), but he lost to the great Philadelphia A's in the World Series. He was given one year to avenge the embarrassment, but failed and was fired by Wrigley four days prior to the end of the 1930 season. Rogers Hornsby replaced him.

Quickly scooped up by the New York Yankees for the 1931 season, McCarthy inherited the touchy situation of Babe Ruth, who had been rebuffed for the managerial post. "Be prompt" was Joe's only request to Babe, who usually complied. With his 1932 American League pennant success, Joe became the first manager to win championships in both leagues. His World Series success in '32 was even sweeter since he swept his old Cubs team.

McCarthy stayed with the Yankees until he resigned in 1946, ostensibly for health reasons, although front-office conflicts may have existed. He had won eight American League pennants and seven World Series, including four consecutive in 1936-39! Joe managed the Yankees longer than anyone, before or since.

Sometime during his life Joe had become a heavy drinker, who was able to hide his alcoholism from the public, but not from his players. He was unable to control it as well during the mid-1940s and it began to interfere with his ability.

McCarthy returned to his home in Tonawanda, a suburb of Buffalo. When his health improved he accepted an offer to lead the Boston Red Sox in 1948. He finally retired in 1950 with the Red Sox in second place.

McCarthy, Manager of the Year three times, was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1957. In 1976, a plaque honoring him was placed alongside monuments to Miller Huggins, Col. Jacob Ruppert, Ruth, Gehrig and Ed Barrow in the rebuilt Yankee Stadium. His career-winning percentages of .615 in 24 years and .698 in nine World Series are the highest among all managers.

Even after his departure from Louisville, Joe remained in close and constant contact with his pals in Louisville. They corresponded frequently and reminisced about old times. Whenever Joe was with his major league team nearby, his Louisville friends managed to be there also. But they never referred to the "Cubs" or "Yankees." It was always "Joe's team."

Later Years

In 1971, shortly after Joe had eye surgery, his wife, Elizabeth ("Babe") died in suburban Buffalo at the age of 84. She had been an invalid for six years and required constant nursing care.

McCarthy's favorite pursuits of golf,

hunting and fishing became limited as he aged, but he remained mentally alert, and virtually every player under his tutelage still held him in the highest esteem. Joe DiMaggio said, "Never a day went by that you didn't learn something from McCarthy," and Phil Rizzuto complimented him by stating, "He had more respect than anyone in the game."

Joe had been in good health until he broke his hip in mid-1977 and subsequently developed lung problems and hearing difficulties. He lost touch with baseball and the Yankees in his last years, and his main joy was the cadre of friends who visited his Tonawanda farm.

In a 1977 interview, McCarthy reflected, "I quit in 1950. I'd gotten tired and I wasn't feeling well. I still follow the game today. I read the box scores, but I don't know the names of half those players. It's a whole new generation in there now. Sometimes I look back and I find it hard to believe it's all so long ago."

Joe McCarthy died of pneumonia at age 90 while holding the hand of his friend, sportscaster Ralph Hubbell. He had no children, and he left no known survivors.

HARRY J. ROTHGERBER, JR is an attorney in the Commonwealth Attorney's office in Louisville; co-chair of SABR27.

Joe McCarthy's Managerial Record in Louisville

Year	Record	Percentage	Finish	Notes
1919	40-32	.555	Third	McCarthy took over team on July 22, when the Colonels were 46-35 and in third place.
1920	88-79	.527	Second	McCarthy continued to play second base.
1921	98-70	.583	First	Won Junior World Series 5 games to 3 over Baltimore Orioles of International League.
1922	77-91	.458	Sixth	First year McCarthy did not play.
1923	94-77	.550	Third	
1924	90-75	.545	Third	
1925	106-61	.635	First	Lost Junior World Series 5 games to 3 to Baltimore

McCarthy's totals with the Louisville Colonels: 6 1/2 years. 593-485 (.550) in 1,078 American Association league games, 8-8 (.500) in Junior World Series for a total of 601-493 (.550). Won one Junior World Series and two American Association pennants.

The Ten Commandments of Baseball by Joe McCarthy

1. Nobody ever became a ballplayer by walking after a ball.
2. You will never become a .300 hitter unless you take the bat off your shoulder.
3. An outfielder who throws back of a runner is locking the barn after the horse is stolen.
4. Keep your head up and you may not have to keep it down.
5. When you start to slide S-L-I-D-E. He who changes his mind may have to change a good leg for a bad one.
6. Do not alibi on bad hops. Anybody can field the good ones.
7. Always run them out. You can never tell.
8. Do not quit.
9. Do not find too much fault with the umpires. You cannot expect them to be as perfect as you are.
10. A pitcher who hasn't control hasn't anything.

Printed in the interest of Baseball by

BILL ZUBER'S DUGOUT RESTAURANT
Homestead, Iowa

Editor's note: Bill Zuber played for the New York Yankees (1943-46) and Louisville Colonels (1948).

Honus Wagner's Major League Debut

100th anniversary of his first appearance as a Louisville Colonel

By Dennis and Jeanne DeValeria

Hall of Famer Cap Anson's hits total varies widely by source. While some maintain that he never amassed 3,000 hits at all, others credit him with achieving this milestone on July 18, 1897. One day later, July 19, Honus Wagner—who would become the first or second batter (depending on which source is believed) to reach that milestone—made his National League debut, as a center fielder for the Louisville Colonels.

In the bottom of the first, Colonel left fielder-manager Fred Clarke and right fielder Tom McCreery singled. Batting third against Washington's James "Doc" McJames, the league's strikeout leader that year, Wagner placed a bunt to the first base side of the mound and came close to beating it out. The successful sacrifice moved two runners into scoring position as part of a four-run first inning. Honus walked and struck out in his next two trips to the plate and, in the seventh inning, lined a single to right, driving in a run. On the day, he went 1 for 2 in the Colonels' 6-2 win, collecting several big league firsts: single, run driven in, base on balls, sacrifice bunt, strikeout, stolen base, and outfield assist.

Honus Wagner

Only six hundred paying customers witnessed Wagner's big league debut, but *The Louisville Commercial* called him "the main feature of the game" and referred to him as "Count Hans Von Wagner." The paper noted that he "is a splendidly built man, cut on a generous pattern," elaborating, "In fact his whole build is very much after the order of a one-story brick house." Favorably impressed, the paper also maintained, "He throws like a shot . . . and is remarkably fast." His baserunning aggressiveness also nearly cost the team a rally. With Clarke at third and Wagner at first, Wagner stole second, rounded the bag, and headed for third when the throw skipped a few feet away. Clarke, who was anchored to third, reacted to Wagner's barreling toward him by setting out for home, where he narrowly avoided a tag at the plate.

The following day, Wagner made a sensational catch in center field and, over the next few games, secured many of his other career firsts. On July 21, in game one of a doubleheader, he scored his first run and hit his first double off Washington's Lester German. German, coincidentally, had surrendered Napoleon "Larry" Lajoie's first double less than a year earlier. In the second game of the doubleheader, Wagner had his first two-hit game and first triple, also off McJames (though he tried to stretch the triple into a home run and was thrown out at the plate). His first big league homer would come five weeks later, on August 27, when he drove a Jack Dunn pitch over the left field fence at Brooklyn's Eastern Park. (Dunn is best remembered for being the minor league magnate-manager who, years later, would sign Babe Ruth, a young recruit out of the St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, to his first professional contract.)

Wagner was off to a flying start. He had at least one hit in each of his first nine games, totaling fourteen hits and giving him a

Wagner is shown in 1902 en route to a .329 average, the sixth in a string of 17 straight seasons in which he compiled a .300-plus mark.

.424 batting average. Within three weeks of his debut, *The Sporting News* touted his hitting prowess as well as the strength and accuracy of his throwing arm, calling him "a glittering success" and the "bright particular star of the Colonels just now." The St. Louis-based sports weekly continued with, "Every day he gets cheers and verbal and typographical bouquets and his place in the affections of the rooters is disputed only by Fred Clarke."

Within a month of his first game with Louisville, Wagner was already making himself the butt of a joke in describing his introduction to Cincinnati Reds' center fielder William "Dummy" Hoy. Changing sides between innings, the two crossed paths, but Hoy gave no response to Wagner's repeated requests for a chew. Honus confided to teammate Perry Werden that Hoy must be "the worst stuck-up guy I've ever seen." In admitting his gaffe to others, Wagner quoted Werden's reply, "Why, you slob, he's deaf and dumb." It was obvious that Wagner was already comfortable with his new surroundings, but then again, he never felt above telling one on himself.

Wagner's agreeable combination of cheerful good nature and superior baseball ability helped pave the way to his acceptance and eventual popularity at the major league level. He confessed, "I was a green, awkward kid, unused to big league ways. . . . I kept my mouth shut, though, and went right along about my business. The one thing that saved me from a lot of extra joshing, I suppose, was [that] I could always slam the ball."

DENNIS and JEANNE DeVALERIA are the authors of Honus Wagner: A Biography; this article is an excerpt from their book.

And The Last Shall Be First

Louisville club zooms from cellar to pennant in 1890

By Bob Bailey

The baseball season of 1890 was a tumultuous season on and off the field. It was the year of open battle in the Brotherhood War, with the players forming their own league and fielding a full schedule of games in competition with the established National League and American Association. Franchises shifted leagues, cities hosted multiple teams, and new cities joined the ranks of the major leagues. It was great for fans. The surfeit of baseball games gave them many choices in attending games and lower ticket prices as the competing organizations vied for fan support.

The losing-prone 1889 Louisville team.

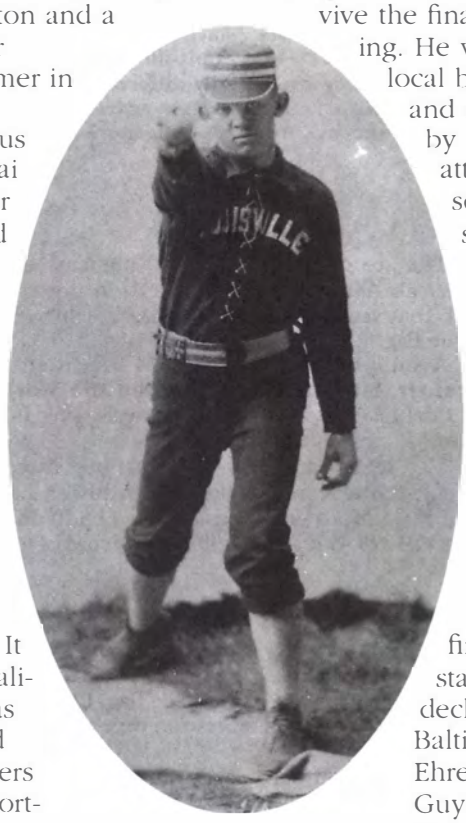
On the field, rosters were shuffled as never before. Many major leaguers jumped to the Players' League and the National League. In addition to trying to reacquire some of their stars, clubs made raids on Association teams. But one team was relatively immune to all this - the lowly Louisville Colonels.

Louisville had a mixed history in organized baseball going back to 1876 when they were a charter member of the fledgling National League. Some of the luster dimmed two years later when they quietly dropped out of the league in the wake of the gambling scandal that shook the franchise in 1877. But in 1882 the Kentucky city was again a charter member of a new major league, the American Association. For several years Louisville was a respectable club that occasionally contended for the pennant. But by the end of the 1880s they were a perennial second division club, typically out of the race by the Fourth of July.

Until 1890. That crazy year of three major leagues - players jumping from roster to roster and baseball wars being fought on the field and in the press - ended with Louisville's capturing their first and only big league pennant. The story of Louisville's rise to the top of the American Association was all the more remarkable since they rose from the cellar in 1889. This is not the story of a bad team catching a few breaks, it is the tale of a woe-

ful squad catching lightning in the bottle for one glorious season.

The opening day roster contained past-their-prime veterans Pete Browning, Guy Hecker and Dude Esterbrook along with pitchers Red Ehret and Scott Stratton and a cast of unknowns, except for Chicken Wolf, a solid performer in the outfield. Stratton and Browning had had contentious dealings with owner Mordecai Davidson before signing their 1889 contracts. Davidson had assumed the club presidency the previous season when he bought out several other club directors over a disagreement about spending money to acquire better ball players to improve the club. Davidson was against it. His tight-fisted approach toward players and club fiscal management was not merely a reflection of a robber baron mentality. It was well-grounded in the reality that the Louisville club was pitifully undercapitalized and operated by a group of owners that, while individually comfortable financially, did not possess personal wealth sufficient to build a contending squad.



Scott Stratton, pitching ace of 1890 championship squad.

The Colonels opened with six straight losses and ended the first road trip at 3-14. On the ensuing home stand things did improve. The 5-8 record included what would be the season's longest winning streak, three games. The third win in the streak was also the last the club would experience for close to a month. Louisville was swept in Cincinnati and Columbus before boarding a train for Philadelphia. The Kentucky boys were due in Philly on June 3. However, they were a no-show. Likewise June 4. Nobody knew where they were. The papers derided the squad with a headline of "Lost Again." Finally, they arrived in Philadelphia on June 5 as victims of the Johnstown Flood. It seems that the train carrying the team was stuck in high water in extreme western New York, and was unable to communicate with the outside world because the telegraph lines were down. Once in Philadelphia they returned to their losing ways, dropping four games in both Philadelphia and Brooklyn.

Back in Louisville, Davidson was busily trying to sell players or the franchise to survive the financial disaster that was building. He was unsuccessful in finding a local buyer for the club in Louisville and had been called on the carpet by the Association president for attempting to dismantle the squad. As part of his effort to save some cash, Davidson instituted a system of fines for various player misdeeds on the diamond. The players naturally rebelled at these measures and demanded the fines be rescinded. Davidson refused. When threatened with the players' refusal to take the field in Baltimore, he blithely instituted fines for refusing to play.

On June 14, 1889 the first major league players strike started. Six Louisville players declined to report to the park in Balti-more. They were pitcher Red Ehret, catcher Paul Cook, infielders Guy Hecker, Dan Shannon and Harry Raymond, and the Old Gladiator himself, Pete Browning. After some cajoling by Association leaders and assurances that the league would investigate the players' grievances, the Louisville six returned to the field after missing one game.

On the field the team completed the 21-game road trip with a perfect 0-21 record and returned to the Bluegrass with a 23-game losing streak intact. After dropping three more to St. Louis they scored an easy 7-3 victory over the Browns to end the horror at 26 games.

Unhappily, the remainder of the season was not any better. The Colonels finished with a 27-111-2 record for a measely .196 percentage. The offense had turned in a middle-of-the-pack record, but the fielding and pitching ranked among some of the worst ever. In July 1889 some of the local stockholders bought out Davidson. They released Hecker and Browning, and hired Jack Chapman as

manager. Chapman was making a return trip to Louisville since he had been the manager of Louisville's original entry in the National League in 1876.

No doubt about it, Chapman had his work cut out for him. Opportunely, help was on its way. Chapman used his extensive knowledge of the baseball world to sign newcomers Harry Taylor, Herb Goodall, Tim Shinnock and Louisville native Charlie Hamburg. All would play key roles in the Colonels' 1890 rise. Just as important was what was happening to the competition. The Players' League signed over a quarter of the players on the American Association's reserve lists. Hardest hit were St. Louis, Baltimore and the Athletic Club of Philadelphia. Stars like Charlie Comiskey, Henry Larkin and Lave Cross jumped to the new league. Louisville lost five players, but none had hit over .260 the previous season, and they didn't figure to be much of a loss.

In addition to player movement, Louisville was helped by franchise movement. The National League, trying to shore up its ranks to compete with the Players' League, induced Brooklyn and Cincinnati to jump from the AA to the NL. Brooklyn had won the AA pennant in 1889 and Cincinnati was one of the stronger contenders in the Association. So, by opening day 1890, Louisville found itself with a younger squad, new leadership, in a league that had lost its strongest clubs, and its competitors crippled by Players' League raids.

Louisville, now nicknamed the Cyclones by the local press due to their fast start and a twister that swept through Louisville that spring, found themselves in first place after the first two weeks of the season. This rarefied atmosphere was so alien to the players that they slipped to 27-25 through June and were in fourth place, nine games behind the Athletics. A 20-game home stand to start July began with 12 straight wins, including three over the Athletics, and saw Louisville vault into first place by percentage points ahead of Philadelphia. Through August Louisville continued to play at a .600 clip as teams fell out of the race. By late August they were seven games in front of second-place St. Louis. A 16-8 September led to an early October pennant-clinching victory over Columbus.

They had done it! Louisville became the first team to go from worst to first in a single season. The Cyclones finished with an 88-44 record, a 61-game improvement over the previous season. Certainly the unusual environment in the major leagues was a major contributor to the rise of the team, but they still had to win the games on the field. Louisville did so by improving every aspect of their game. They increased their run production by 28% while the Association as a whole declined 11%. They turned in a league-best batting average of .279, led by Chicken Wolf's league-leading .363. On defense they cut their opposition runs to 588 from 1091 the previous season. In 1889 they committed the most errors in the league and had the second-worst fielding percentage. In 1890 they were the best in both categories.

The worst-to-first story continued for the pitching staff, too. In 1890 Louisville won the most games, surrendered the least runs, and dropped their ERA over 2 runs a game. Walks declined 40%. Scott Stratton turned in a 34-14 season with an ERA of 2.36. He led the league in ERA and winning percentage. Red Ehret chipped in with a 25-14 record and trailed only Stratton with a 2.58 ERA.

By capturing the American Association pennant, Louisville earned a berth in the World Series against NL pennant winner (and 1889 AA pennant winner) Brooklyn.

The series opened in Louisville in wet, cold weather. When they moved on to Brooklyn it was worse. After seven games each team had three wins and a tie. Since the weather forecast called for snow in Brooklyn, the teams postponed the deciding game, with a vague agreement to settle things the next spring. When the Players' League collapsed, tensions between the AA and NL heightened and the series was never completed.

In the ensuing seasons Louisville quickly settled back into the second division, where they would reside for most of their remaining years in the big leagues. But there was that one shining season when the presence of a baseball war, new ownership, and career years by a group of overachieving players vaulted Louisville to the top of the baseball world.

BOB BAILEY is a frequent writer on baseball history in SABR publications; co-founder of Kentucky SABR.

Earle Combs: Louisville Colonel and Gentleman

Kentucky's first inductee into baseball's Hall of Fame

By Richard B. Lutz

Earle Bryan Combs had a career in professional baseball that spanned four decades, from 1922 as a rookie with the Louisville Colonels (American Association) through 1954 as a coach with the Philadelphia Phillies.

Endeared, revered, admired and respected by other players, management, media and fans alike, Combs gained many appropriate nicknames: Colonel, The Kentucky Colonel, The Gentleman from Kentucky, The Kentucky Greyhound, The Mail Carrier, The Waiter, The Silver Eagle, The Modest Man, Prince Charming, Big Jim, SAN-GUWANOC (swift white hawk)—each a tale; each a story. But let us focus on Earle Combs—a Louisville Colonel.

Earle Combs' rapid rise in organized baseball should not have surprised anyone who knew him. From the games played on diamonds in the fields of his family's Owsley County (KY) farm with home-made bats and home-made balls to the games at recess with his pupils at the Ida Mae School, people knew he was good. In 1917, in his first "organized" game, a student-faculty pick-up game at Eastern Kentucky Normal School, Combs hit two home runs off Dr. Charles Keith (Dean of Men and one-time pretty fair pitcher). This drew cheers from the crowd and a lecture from Dr. Keith as to why Combs was not playing baseball for Eastern. Inspired by Dr. Keith's interest, he joined the team. In 1918, only four years before signing with the Colonels, Combs batted .596 and hit at least one home run in every game for Eastern. From 1919 to 1921 he played for the Pleasant Grove team, the Winchester (KY) Hustlers, the Mayham Coal Co. in High Splint (KY), the Harlan (KY) town team, and the Lexington (KY) Reo's semipro team. Combs gave former major leaguer and Reo manager Jim Park credit for getting him into professional baseball by arranging a meeting with Cap Neal, business manager of the Louisville Colonels.

Combs signed with the Louisville club in the winter of 1922 and traveled with the team to spring training in Pensacola, Florida. As with any young person on the threshold of living their dream, Combs had mixed emotions: afraid he wouldn't make the team; knowing he could make the team; convinced that every player on the team could hit better than he could; afraid he needed luck. But his hustle and eagerness to learn and his positive mental attitude about baseball life (he ate, slept and dreamt baseball) tipped the emotional scale.

He immediately impressed players and coaches with his batting, fielding, and speed to run down long flies. Plus, he could get rid of a ball exceptionally fast. Other attributes that impressed: he was modest and unassuming, sincere, level-headed and even-minded.

Play Ball!

Combs' first plate appearance in an exhibition game in Pensacola was as a pinch hitter against the Dodgers' Al Mamaux. The result was a home run. Both manager Joe McCarthy and Cap Neal felt Combs (dubbed "Big Jim" in spring training) was an outstanding player. In Combs' first regular season game he got two hits, but also committed two fielding errors. It was a most miserable day for him. McCarthy told him, "Forget it. I told you today that you were my center fielder.

You still are. Listen, if I can stand it, I guess you can." Combs confided later that it was at that moment he became a baseball player. His .945 fielding average would have been better except for that first game and another game in which he committed three errors on one play.

Combs started strong and finished strong in his rookie season. Major league scouts began watching him long before the season was over. Although he could have been sold to the majors, through Combs' asking and the Colonels' own inclination, he was kept for another year in Louisville. And what a year it was.

Cap Neal was quoted in early March as saying, "Earle Combs is the most promising player who has broken into the game since Ty Cobb—he is the nearest approach to Cobb that we have seen. He is a natural sticker, and is constantly improving in the field and baserunning."

Combs demonstrates classic batting stance for which he was famous

Parkway Field, the Colonels' new ballpark, held its inaugural game May 1, 1923. Combs caught the first out of the game, scored the first run of the game and went 1 for 3, hitting a double. Former major leaguer turned evangelist, Billy Sunday, was in attendance and wrote regarding Combs, "I want to meet that chap. They tell me he came up from the mountains and that last year was his first year in the big tent. Well, I'll gamble they'll sell him about next year for just about what the grandstand cost. He's a real find. He may need this year's seasoning, but he is one sweet ball player. He is big league caliber, believe me. And he is a fine hitter. There are only a few real free hitters in baseball today. He'll make good, that fellow. He has the stuff and before many years, if he doesn't get the swell-head, which I don't think probable, he'll be a major league sensation. Another Cobb? Well, strange things happen in baseball." Ty Cobb was Combs' baseball idol.

Combs' stats in Louisville speak for themselves (See Table 1). But they don't tell the whole story. One day's performance (3 for 4, including a grand-slamer, driving in 7 runs; and running down a would-be gapper with the bases loaded, saving at least 2 or 3 runs) got this comment from a Columbus, Ohio sportswriter: "Combs is his name. He's a tall, powerful, round shouldered, rustic looking youth. He is in his second season of AA pastiming. Joe McCarthy, Louisville manager, picked him up from the wild and wooly downs of Upsquidink or Oompahpah, Kentucky. He doesn't look much like a ball player and he's far from a thing of beauty and a joy forever as he lopes around in left field, with all the abandoned grace of a speeding giraffe, but he can run as fast as a scared rabbit, can judge fly balls like Tris Speaker, can bat like Ty Cobb and run bases like Bob Bescher in his palmiest days. Outside of that he isn't much of a ball player."

September 23, 1923 was "Earle Combs Day" at Parkway Field. Some 300 fans came by special train from Richmond and the surrounding area in Combs' native eastern Kentucky to honor him and to see a doubleheader. They presented him with an automatic shot gun. The Colonel fans in Louisville, not to be outdone, presented him with a silver loving cup inscribed "Kentucky's Greatest Ball Player." The honoree gave a gift back in his first time at bat by hitting an inside-the-park home run.

At some time during Combs' stay in Louisville his teammates accepted a bet from the Kansas City team as to which team's fastest runner was really fastest. Combs won the home-to-first-base race with very little problem.

The Reds, Pirates, Giants and Dodgers from the senior circuit and the Indians, White Sox and Yankees from the junior circuit were all interested in Combs. On January 7, 1924 Combs became a member of the New York Yankees. Yet, it was not that simple. Before

signing his 1923 Colonels contract Combs wanted to have included in writing that he would receive some monetery reimbursement from the club when he was sold to a major league team. The Louisville brain-trust assured him they would take care of him and nothing needed to be in writing. No "appreciative settlement" was received and Combs was more than a little upset, more because of the principle than the money.

HOF induction ceremony, 1970.

Combs would not sign the Yankee contract until the Colonels completed their agreement with him. Combs stated, "I have nothing to be scared of. I am not a dumb animal to be browbeaten, cowed, lashed, coerced, or goaded into anything that I do not think is right. I am a human being and I intend to stay that way whether I play with the New York Yankees or not." During the "holdout" Combs signed a contract to be an assistant baseball coach at Eastern and was building a new home in Richmond. Joe McCarthy entered the picture and was able to get Combs to agree to terms and report to the Yankees for spring training.

Speaking in later years about the Louisville-Combs-Yankee "deal", Combs said, "They said it was a record in those days, I don't know what they paid for me but I do know that I was cut in for $3,000 of it. And what's more, I still got that $3,000 and I believe it's doubled its value since then."

Combs' first year with the Yankees lasted only 24 games before he broke an ankle sliding into home on June 15. Babe Ruth was so impressed with the rookie that he said that injury cost the Yankees the loss of the pennant to Washington in 1924. Combs returned in 1925, and as they say, "The rest is history."

Earle Bryan Combs was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1970.

RICHARD B. LUTZ is a pharmacist and longtime baseball fan.

TABLE 1.
Earle Combs' Lifetime Statistics

Tied American League record for most three-base hits in game-3, Sept. 22, 1927. Tied record most runs, World Series game-4, Oct. 2, 1932. Accepted most cances for outfielder, World Series 4 games, 1927-16. Most putouts, one Series (4 games, 1927)-16 Coach, New York Yankees, 1935-44; St. Louis Browns, 1947; Boston Red Sox, 1948-52; Philadelphia Phillies, 1954.

LIFETIME	RECORD															
Year	Club	League	Pos.	G.	A.B.	R.	H.	2B.	3B.	HR.	R.B.I.	B.A.	PO.	A.	E.	F.A.
1922	Louisville	AA.	OF	130	485	86	167	21	18	4	55	0.344	282	12	17	0.945
1923	Louisville	AA.	OF	166	634	127	241	46	15	14	145	0.380	373	13	18	0.955
1924	New York	Amer.	OF	24	35	10	14	5	0	0	2	0.400	12	0	0	1.000
1925	New York	Amer.	OF	150	593	117	203	36	13	3	61	0.342	370	12	9	0.977
1926	New York	Amer.	OF	145	606	113	181	31	12	8	56	0.299	376	8	12	0.970
1927	New York	Amer.	OF	152	648	137	231	36	23	6	64	0.356	411	6	14	0.968
1928	New York	Amer.	OF	149	626	118	194	33	21	7	56	0.310	424	11	9	0.980
1929	New York	Amer.	OF	142	586	119	202	33	15	3	65	0.345	358	10	13	0.966
1930	New York	Amer.	OF	137	532	129	183	30	22	7	82	0.344	275	5	9	0.969
1931	New York	Amer.	OF	138	563	120	179	31	3	5	58	0.318	335	5	9	0.974
1932	New York	Amer.	OF	144	591	143	190	32	10	9	65	0.321	343	6	12	0.967
1933	New York	Amer.	OF	122	419	86	125	22	16	5	60	0.298	227	3	6	0.976
1934	New York	Amer.	OF	63	251	47	80	13	5	2	25	0.319	145	1	1	0.993
1935	New York	Amer.	OF	89	298	47	84	7	4	3	35	0.282	143	2	1	0.993
Major	League	Totals		1455	5748	1186	1866	309	154	58	629	0.325	3418	69	95	0.973
WORLD	SERIES	RECORD														
Year	Club	League														
1926	New York	Amer.	OF	7	28	3	10	2	0	0	2	0.357	17	0	0	1.000
1927	New York	Amer.	OF	4	16	6	5	0	0	0	2	0.313	16	0	0	1.000
1928	New York	Amer.	OF	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.000	0	0	0	0.000
1932	New York	Amer.	OF	4	16	8	6	1	0	1	4	0.375	10	0	0	1.000
WORLD	SERIES	TOTALS		16	60	17	21	3	0	1	3	0.350	43	0	0	1.000

My Grandfather, Earle Combs

He was simply "Pop" to me

By Craig C. Combs

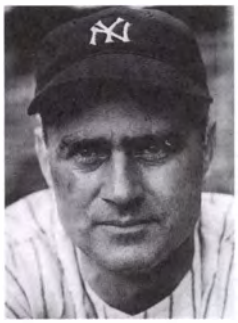
The young boy ranged slightly to his left, and, with his left-gloved hand only partly extended, leaped and speared the line drive off the bat of his grandfather.

"Craig!" The older man exclaimed laughing, "We ought to start calling you Twinkletoes, because you looked just like George Selkirk! You didn't have to jump for that ball at all!"

The boy's two older brothers giggled, as brothers will, while the chagrined fielder pondered his explanation. They, of course, never made mistakes in these backyard pepper games.

"It didn't go as high as I thought it would," the boy mumbled lamely. He knew his grandfather was right, though.

"Yeah, old George used to really jump around," the boy's grandfather continued, preparing to hit again. "Here, Craig, try another one. Remember, don't leave your feet unless you have to."



Earle Combs

Boys have been learning to love baseball through backyard pepper games with their fathers and grandfathers now for generations. My grandfather/teacher was a man who had patrolled center field for the New York Yankees for 12 years, and even at 10 I knew it was something special. Whether it was listening to him discuss the fielding style of an old Yankee teammate or sitting on the front row (in front of Denny McLain) during his Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in 1970, being the grandson of Earle Combs had its advantages.

Of course, I didn't really think of him as Earle Combs, ex-ballplayer and Baseball Hall of Fame member; he was simply "Pop" to me. He was never too busy to fool with my brothers and me, and when he could, he loved to come watch us play in our Little League games. As evidenced by his many years as a coach following his playing career, he was never critical of our play, even though we never attained his level of excellence. Many years later, when friends found out who my grandfather was, they would sometimes ask, politely, at what level my baseball career had stalled. I remember recounting the sad fact that "my playing days ended when I graduated from high school, when the curve balls got a whole lot better!"

I grew up on a farm in central Kentucky, in southwestern Madison County to be exact. My father ran the farming operation for both our acreage as well as my grandparents'. Our property was separated from their land only by a long fence running along the lush ridges of our farm. From atop this fence I could look eastward and see the stately white-brick home of my grandparents, just a few hundred yards in the distance, among what seemed like fifty acres of manicured lawn surrounded by a white plank fence. Looking back to the west roughly the same distance I viewed the comforting sight of our own house and yard. If it was summertime, more often than not I could watch mom from a distance working in her peony bed or planting a new variety of tree which I'd never heard of. From this vantage point I might also

see my father atop a tractor mowing or checking cattle.

When I was growing up I used to visit my grandparents' house almost daily. Most of the time it was with my family, but sometimes I would just head off through the pastures and materialize unannounced at their back door. Like most grandparents, Pop and Mimi never minded my dropping in. Occasionally on these impromptu visits I'd notice an unfamiliar car in the driveway. This usually meant an old teammate or acquaintance from Pop's days in baseball was in for a visit. If I promised not to be a bother, I sometimes got to sit and listen to the likes of Waite Hoyt or Joe Sewell talk about the old days with him.

In 1968, 10-yr-old Craig sits with "Pop" and Mimi, brothers Clark and Clay; dad and mom in rear.

In my grandparents' house there was a back bedroom upstairs. When I would enter this room, it was as if I had entered a holy place; there was a reverence I felt when I was there. It was the room that contained my grandfather's baseball library and a good many of his scrapbooks and pictures. He even had an old Boston uniform he had worn as a coach for the Red Sox, stored in a white cardboard box bound with string. Pop told me the Red Sox were the only team he had been with that had ever given him anything like that. A narrow set of stairs off this back bedroom always drew me like a magnet towards the attic, where Pop had stored satchels and boxes containing old magazines and World Series programs. The attic of the old country home was well-suited for giving a youngster the creeps, what with the usual dark creakiness, cobwebs and all, but I never minded. I would lose myself in baseball's Golden Age for hours up there.

In the summer of 1970 many of the baseball heroes I'd been reading about came to life for me. In February of that year Pop was notified that he would be enshrined in baseball's Hall of Fame. I remember him saying at the time that he was as surprised by his being selected for the Hall as if he'd "been shot between the eyes."

The news had a profound effect on me as well. I think I realized for perhaps the first time, that in addition to being a neat grandfather who fixed great chocolate sodas and had just happened to play major league baseball with Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig - on perhaps the greatest team of all time - he was a real, live, honest-to-goodness hero too! Just like the ones I'd read about. He received congratulatory notes from all over the country, even President Nixon. He was finally receiving the recognition which some thought was overdue. After all, he had finished his career with the same lifetime batting average, .325, as had his successor in the Yankee outfield, a fellow by the name of Joe DiMaggio. Pop and my dad had both always considered DiMaggio their definition of the perfect ball player, so this was a good enough yardstick for me as well.

To say I was a mighty excited 12 year old heading up to the Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in Cooperstown that summer was, as Groucho Marx would say, simply evidence of the poverty of my vocabulary. The sense of anticipation and wonder I felt could probably be compared to Armstrong and Aldrin preparing to survey the surface of the moon, or perhaps Dorothy wandering into Oz.

During induction week in July 1970 the Hotel Otesaga on the banks of the Otsego Lake in Cooperstown, New York was the center of the baseball universe. All of the honorees and their families, along with all the current Hall of Fame members present, would be staying at the Otesaga. On the advice of Pop and my dad, I decided that the massive lobby of the old hotel would be the best location to

meet the ball players. Little did I know that for an entire week none of us would be able to get on an elevator or eat breakfast or go get a paper without running into someone like Frankie Frisch or Luke Appling or Bill Terry.

Sometimes Pop would introduce me to an old teammate or rival. I recall cautiously approaching the still-imposing Lefty Grove while Pop exclaimed ruefully, "He's the only pitcher I ever faced who actually knocked the bat out of my hands one time." From the look of approval on Grove's face it was clear he enjoyed the memory. Still a pitcher versus a hitter after all those years!

Craig gets batting tips from "The table setter" for Ruth and Gehrig.

Sometimes I had trouble when I went solo, though. During breakfast one day I walked past the hotel dining room and noticed a serious-looking Bob Feller, who was sitting alone and appeared to have just begun eating. I stopped, and tried to pretend not to stare, but by now he had noticed me also. Now what could I do? I felt I had probably already disturbed his breakfast and was about to turn away when he motioned for me to come over to his table. Now I've done it, I thought. I wondered what a ninety-mile-an-hour coffee cup in the stomach would feel like. As I timidly approached the table, Feller, noticing the ball clutched in my right hand, smiled broadly and said, "Would you like me to sign your ball?"

Whew! I'll always remember Bob Feller fondly for that moment.

And so it went the entire time we were in Cooperstown. I shot pool with Bowie Kuhn's kids. Our family had a private guided tour of the Hall of Fame museum one evening. We took a boat ride on Otsego Lake, and I learned more about James Fenimore Cooper than I thought I ever would. I was even among a group of autograph-seeking kids shooed out of a Hall of Fame "members only" cocktail party by Casey Stengel!

Although there would be many other special honors and sporting events for my family to attend together, Pop only got to enjoy the annual Hall of Fame induction ceremonies for a couple more years. Our travels to many of the various events he was asked to attend ended when he suffered a stroke in 1972. After a long illness he died from the effects of the disease in July 1976. A heartfelt eulogy appeared in Sports Illustrated, where writer E.J. Kahn, Jr. called my grandfather the greatest center fielder in Yankee history.

Even though he's been gone for two decades, Pop's legacy as a ball player lives on. I'll see footage of an old World Series game that mentions him, or he'll be referred to in a newspaper article. I occasionally get phone calls from baseball history enthusiasts simply wanting to talk about him. On vacation golfing excursions along the Atlantic Coast, I've even run into elderly gentlemen from the northeast who remember seeing him play.

More often, though, I'll sit with my own two young sons and talk to them about their great-grandfather. I might tell them about spending the night with my Pop and Mimi and how they always fixed me these huge, crusty, wonderful pancakes for breakfast. Or about living close enough to them to run see them anytime I wanted to; and what a magical place their home was to me then. We might even discuss a certain backyard pepper game when their dad got teased just because he caught line drives like George Selkirk.

CRAIG C. COMBS is a media salesman in the Bluegrass area.

Kentucky's All-Time All-Stars

What home-grown big-leaguers would make the first team?

By Henry C. Mayer

Ever wonder who were the best big leaguers to be born in Kentucky? Approximately 150 players from our 120 counties have worn a big league uniform, but fewer than one-third of them played for as long as five seasons.

Performance over time is essential in choosing an all-star lineup, so in picking players for the all-time, all-Kentucky team only those were considered who had played five seasons or more as a regular - a regular, in this case, being one who (except for pitchers) played in 100 or more games at a starting position.

Our infield is made up of Dan McGann at first, Fred "Dande " Pfeffer on second, Pee Wee Reese at short and Ray Chapman at third.

Two players deserve serious consideration at first base: McGann and Don Hurst. McGann, a native of Shelbyville, played in the pre-"rabbit ball" era, specifically 1895 to 1908, while Hurst, the pride of Maysville, competed when the likes of Babe Ruth, Jimmy Foxx, Hank Greenberg and Hack Wilson were hard at it.

McGann, a switch-hitter, was a regular for eleven seasons and hit .300 or better in five of them. He wore the uniform of eight major league teams. Only twice did he account for more than 200 runs in a season (counting runs scored and runs batted in) but he was a stolen base artist in an era when larceny on the bases was a key weapon. He holds the record among Kentuckians for the most heists in a career with 288 - 56 more than Reese, who played three years longer.

Hurst could be awesome. In 1932, he hit 24 home runs and led the league with 143 runs batted in, while scoring 109 himself and ending up with a .339 average. His 31 home runs in 1929 are the most by a Kentuckian in one season. He hit over .300 for four straight years (1929-1932) and had the highest slugging average (.547 in 1932) of any Kentuckian. But the following year his average plummeted 72 points and two seasons later he was no longer in a big league lineup. Our choice is McGann for longevity (13 seasons compared to seven for Hurst) and speed.

At second, Louisville's Pfeffer, a regular for 14 of his 16 years (1882-1897), tying Reese for the longest big league career. Though his average for the half dozen teams he played with was only .255, he rapped out 1,671 hits. He scored 1,094 times while knocking in 859 runs. Pfeffer was one of 50 Kentuckians to play before the turn of the century, all but three of whom were pitchers.

Reese, of Ekron, at shortstop is one of three Kentucky players enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York. He was a whiz from the beginning, inspiring a writer for the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* to write during his first professional season at Louisville: "the Colonels' 18-year-old shortstop . . . is all they said he would be."

Never a power hitter, he could get a respectable share of doubles and triples and was always a threat to steal. He had guts, too, recovering from a hit in the head in his first big league season and going on to hit .269 during a 16-year career (1940-1958 with three seasons missed because of military service). He had the most hits of any Kentuckian in the big leagues (2,170) and scored the most runs (1,338).

The only Kentuckian close to Reese as

a big league shortstop was Chapman, who was fatally injured by a pitched ball at the height of his career in 1920. Like Reese, he was a master at covering ground, amassing as many as 528 assists in one season and leading the league in putouts twice.

A team player from the words "play ball," Chapman set a big league record for the most sacrifices in one season besides tying the mark for the most in one game. He hit over .300 four of his nine big league seasons and holds the Kentucky record for stolen bases with 52 in one year (1917). He played from 1912 to 1920 and because no other Kentuckian qualifies at third base, we have moved the Beaver Dam native to that position to complete our team.

Our utility infielder, Bill Sweeney, learned the various positions on the sandlots of Covington and, in 1907, at age 21, made the National League team in Chicago when the Cubs boasted of Tinker, Evers and Chance.

He had no chance of becoming a regular so, after one year, the Cubs sent him to the Boston Braves, where he took a turn at each infield slot. By 1911, he had settled down as a second baseman and seemed to be developing as a hitter, batting .314 that season and rising to .344 the following year. But then he skidded to .257 in 1913 and wound up his career the following season back in Chicago with a puny .218. Still, he finished with a career mark of .272.

Our outfield is a manager's dream and a pitcher's nightmare, with Earle Combs, Pete "The Gladiator" Browning and Bobby Veach.

Combs, the pride of Owsley County, and Kentucky's first Hall of Famer, was a tremendously intelligent athlete. He had speed to burn and his ability to draw walks and hit line drives made him an ideal leadoff hitter in the days of the Yankees' "Murderers Row." He was a true gentleman, never thrown out of a game, and his jokes and pranks contributed to the good spirits that permeated Yankee clubhouses during his career (1924-1935).

In eleven full seasons, he hit over .300 eight times including six years in a row, a Kentucky record. He wound up with a lifetime .325 average. He also hit more triples (154) than any other Kentuckian. Teammate Babe Ruth, who played beside him for 10 years, said that as a fielder "he could do everything [Tris] Speaker could do, except possibly throw. Ty Cobb, that grizzled warrior without illusions, listed Combs as one of a half dozen great center fielders.

Browning, the only Kentuckian ever to win a big league batting title, ended his career with the highest average of any Kentuckian (.343). He won the batting title in 1882, 1885 and 1890, with marks of .382, .362 and .387 respectively, but he failed to win it in 1887, when he hit a career high of .402. This Louisvillian drilled 1,654 hits in 1,185 games from 1882 to 1894.

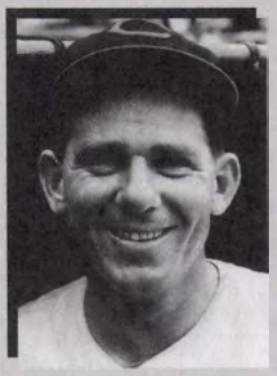
Veach, who hailed from McLean County, cavorted in a Detroit outfield that featured the immortal Cobb and another fellow who was almost as devastating with a bat, Harry Heilmann. In that company he etched a lifetime mark of .310. Cobb had one word to describe his teammate: "dependable."

Veach was responsible for more runs scored and runs batted in than any Kentuckian except Reese (2,120). He was also second to Reese in hits (2,064) and the only other player from the state to notch more than 2,000 in his career. He played from 1912 to 1925 and led all Kentuckians in doubles (393).

Our utility outfielder is Arlington's George Harper, who averaged .303 for eleven seasons between 1916 and 1929. Our designated hitter is Louisville's Gus Bell, who led all Kentuckians in home runs with 206 between 1950 and 1964. Four times he drove in over 100 runs and finished with a career average of .281.

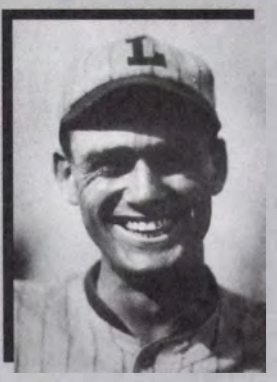
The hardest job in making up our all-Kentucky team was choosing a catcher, for no Kentuckian ever achieved at that position what any of those already named accomplished at theirs. Paducah's Phil Roof played the longest - from 1961 to 1977 but batted only .215 during his career. Kid Baldwin of Newport and Bob Clark of Covington played seven years apiece during the late 1800s, but their statistics were little better. Covington's Johnnie Heving had the best average of any catcher from Kentucky, .265 for eight years from 1920 to 1932. But that is only two points better than Earl Grace of Barlow, whose big league career also spanned eight seasons (1929-1937) but who appeared in 627 games to Heving's 398. Grace was Pittsburgh's number one receiver for three years and the Philadelphia Phillies' for one. The nod goes to Grace.

Kentucky's All-Time All-Stars

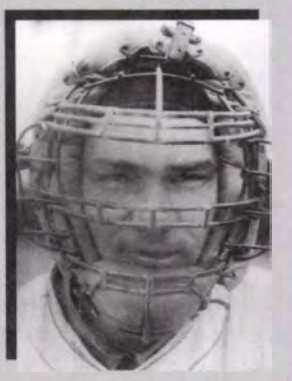


Paul Derringer

Jesse Tannehill



Earle Combs



Earl Grace

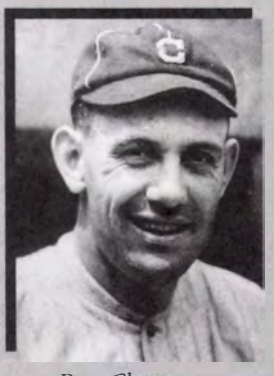
Jim Bunning

Pete Browning

Dan McGann

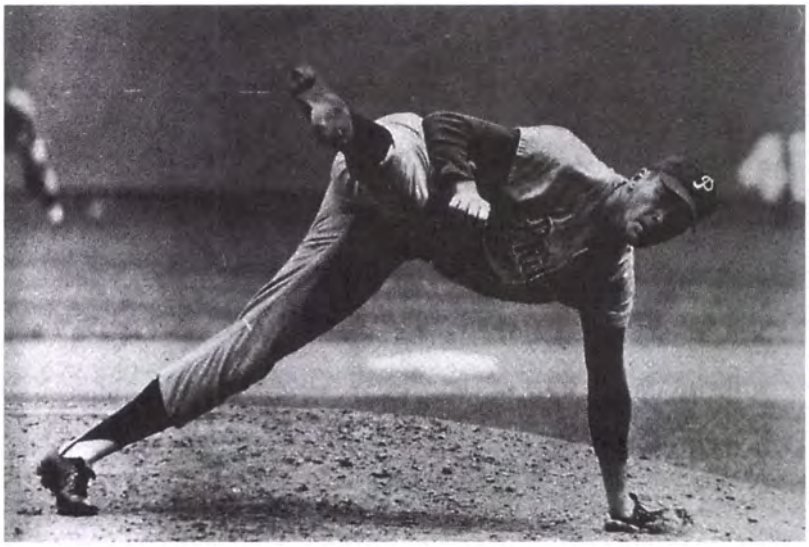
Fred Pfeffer

Pee Wee Reese



Ray Chapman

[Photos of Weyhing, Mays and Veach not available]



Fielding his position wasn't easy for Bunning, who typically ended his delivery completely off balance.

In contrast to their potential battery mates, our pitchers are enough to make any manager envious. Our starting rotation includes Gus Weyhing, Carl Mays, Jim Bunning, Paul Derringer and Jesse Tannehill.

Weyhing, in 14 seasons, won 264 and lost 234 between 1887 and 1901. Though he weighed only 145 pounds, he won 20 or more games for seven straight seasons, including four in a row in which he reached or exceeded the magic number of 30. His 1,665 strikeouts are second highest among Kentuckians.

Mays, who hailed from Liberty, won 20 or more games five times. His 208 wins and 126 losses gave him the best won-lost percentage of any Kentuckian (.623). In 1917, he not only notched a 22-9 record but also an earned run average of 1.74, the lowest any Kentuckian has ever achieved in the majors. He played from 1915 to 1929 and in 1921 led the American League in total games (49), total innings (336.2) and won/lost percentage (.750 with a record of 27-9). Twice he led the league in complete games (1918 and 1926). When in top form, his submarine delivery was invincible and, at his peak, the Yankees parted with two players and $40,000 to acquire him.

In 1996 Bunning became the third player from Kentucky to enter the Hall of Fame. He won 224 games and lost 184 between 1955 and 1971, and was the first player since Cy Young to win 100 games in both leagues. His 2,855 career strikeouts are tops among Kentuckians and rank 11th on the all-time major league list. The Southgate native, now a representative from Kentucky's 4th Congressional District, led the league in strikeouts in 1959, 1960 and 1967. He pitched a no-hit game in both leagues and posted 40 shutouts during his career.

Physically formidable at 6-foot-4, Springfield's Paul Derringer was a master of control. He won 20 or more games four times between 1931 and 1945, no small accomplishment considering that for six straight years at the peak of his ability he led a team that never finished higher than fifth. Still, he achieved a career record of 223 wins and 212 losses. His best season was 1939, when his 25 - 7 record with Cincinnati gave him the best winning percentage in the National League. His record included 1,507 strikeouts and 32 shutouts.

Tannehill, of Dayton, had six 20-game winning seasons in a 17-year career between 1894 and 1911, four in the National League and two in the American. His lifetime record of 195 wins and 120 losses included 34 shutouts. He led the National League in ERA in 1901 with 2.18; the following year it dropped to 1.95.

There is one more Kentuckian whose name is enshrined in the Hall of Fame, Albert B. "Happy" Chandler, who was commissioner of baseball from 1945 to 1951. He could throw out the first pitch for this all-Kentucky team!

HENRY C. MAYER is a widely published writer on a variety of subjects; co-chair of SABR27.

Slow Tragedy: The Saga of Pete Browning

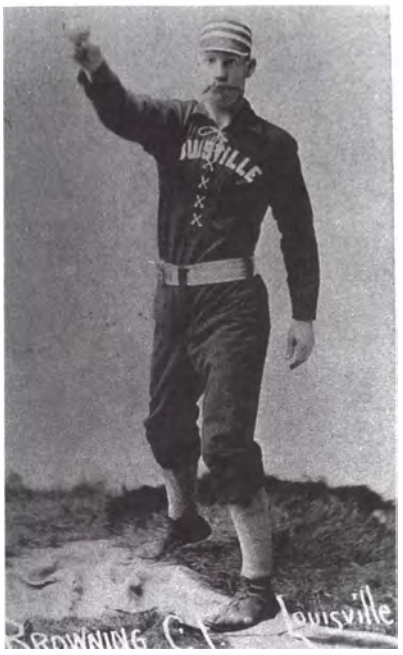
Did prejudice against early American Association keep him out of HOF?

By Clyde F. Crews

A native Louisvillian, Louis "Pete" Browning was born June 17, 1861, in the first summer of America's Civil War. One of eight children (four sons and four daughters) born to Samuel and Mary Jane Sheppard Browning, Pete grew up in the city's near West End. The family was geographically well-rooted, for when Pete died, a bachelor, in the late summer of 1905, it was at the old family homestead at 1427 West Jefferson, where he had made his residence at the end with his old mother and two sisters.

The tragic aspects of the Browning story begin early in "The Gladiator's" life and course through his days like dark threads in a once bright tapestry. As a boy and young man who loved not only baseball but skating, marbles and fishing, Pete was afflicted with ear and hearing maladies that made learning difficult. (In those youthful years, he did not learn to read or write.) The diagnosis was mastoiditis, and in the still primitive days of surgery, Browning had two operations for his condition, neither of lasting help.

He was to spend 13 seasons in major league baseball (1882-1894), with an average above .300 for seven consecutive years. He topped out in 1887 at .402. Two years later, he spent two months on suspension for the alcohol problem that plagued him throughout his adult years.



Louis "Pete" Browning

Browning first achieved notice as a pitcher, but spent his time in the majors as a fielder, staying permanently in the outfield after 1885. As a fielder, writes Philip Von Borries, Browning was "atrocious" and "wielded hands of stone." His elegant hours, of course, were to be spent at the plate, armed with one of his formidable bats. There, in the glory days with Louisville, he regularly electrified his fans. An editorialist for the *Louisville Herald* wrote:

> "... when "Old Pete" Browning walked with easy grace to the plate with his bat under his arm, and rubbed his hands with dirt, all of us youngsters in the bleachers raised our voices in wild acclaim .... With breathless interest we watched him as he took his position, crouching panther-like over the plate, his keen eye watching for the pitcher ... And when "Pete" found one to his liking and let go at it for a fair hit, how we rose with the other exultant fans and shouted for the pure joy of shouting."

"Old Pete" stayed with the Louisville team through their disastrous 1889 season (27-111) and switched to the Players' League and Cleveland in 1890, batting .373 that year. Before his career ended in 1894, he had done stints with Pittsburgh and four other National League clubs.

Browning maintained that he reformed and stopped drinking when he left Louisville. The *New York Herald* noted in 1891 that

some reports had made a dupe of the real Browning, providing a "spin" that the Gladiator was ignorant and simple. "On the contrary," the *Herald* reported, "he appeared to be decidedly sensible and well-read." The columnist continued:

> "Pete is one of the characters in professional baseball. He has figured in more scrapes and skirmishes with managers than practically any other ballplayer in the country. Two years ago he was a confirmed drunkard; now he is a reformer, sober, hard working and respected ."

The transformed Mr. Browning visited Louisville during the "World Series" of 1890 between his native city and Brooklyn. He spoke of himself to the press in the third person: "When Pete was here he wasn't nobody. Now Pete comes back to town and everybody calls him Mr. Browning. When he got with good people, he became good people himself." Asked about the chances for a Louisville victory, the feisty old Gladiator replied: "All the Brooklyns might be killed in a wreck and then the Louisvilles would have to win."

It was during the 1884 season playing with "the Louisvilles" that Browning cracked his bat, an event destined to become the Crack Heard 'Round the World. For Pete turned to John Andrew "Bud" Hillerich, son of the owner of the J. F. Hillerich Co., purveyor of bed posts and butter churns, to create a round, barrel-shaped bat especially for him, and the Louisville Slugger tradition was born.

Browning was a man who was shot through with eccentricities - always stepping on third base with his left foot when he came off the field; pampering his "lamps" (eyes) and bushy eyebrows. But, foremost among his quirks was what might be called a "bat mysticism." He named all his bats, often turning to the Bible as a source. He believed that each of his wood sluggers had just so many hits within them. When they were exhausted, they were given a respectful retirement in the basement of Pete's mother's home. Reportedly, over 200 ended up there in repose.

After his diamond career was completed, Browning returned to Louisville, where he kept a saloon (not the best of occupations for a man with his personal history) at the corner of Thirteenth and Market streets. He also tried cigar sales for a time. But his health - both mental and physical - began to deteriorate significantly.

In the summer of 1905, he was committed by order of a local circuit court to the Central Kentucky Lunatic Asylum (Lakeland). After barely two weeks of residence there, he was removed by his sister. Within a month he was taken to City Hospital in Louisville and underwent surgeries on the ear and chest. He died at his mother's home on September 10, 1905.

The Louisville papers next day could not resist puns in their obituary headlines: CALLED OUT FOR ALL TIME ON LIFE'S FIELD read the morning *Courier-Journal*; and PETE BROWNING "OUT" OF LIFE'S GAME came from the evening *Times*. Old teammates - including John Reccius and Charles Pfeiffer - were among the pallbearers who brought "Old Pete" to his final resting place, Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery.

Pete Browning's life, to all outward appearances, was a story of slow tragedy. His saga is one of great ability and performance that played itself out and finally wound down against a backdrop of ongoing incapacity, isolation and misunderstanding.

Even in death, the tragedy has continued, for, despite outstanding achievement, Browning has never been inducted into the Hall of Fame. In his insightful study of Browning in *Legends of Louisville*, Philip Von Borries makes a studied and impassioned appeal that such an omission be remedied in the future. He writes of the failure of The Gladiator's contemporaries and some later historians to recognize "the ravaging mastoidal condition that lay at the root of all his lifelong personal and professional problems." Von Borries concludes:

> "Today, nearly a century after he last played major league baseball, Browning is imprisoned by both that media-created legend and historical prejudice against American Association luminaries. When those shackles are finally broken, the way will be clear for Browning to enter Cooperstown."

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The Six Lives of the Kitty League

Sociocultural changes finally overwhelm pro ball in western Kentucky

By James T. Kirkwood

They had names like the Pant Makers, the Railroaders, the Hoppers, and the Swamp Angels. They played in wood and concrete ballparks with names like Hook's Field, Cyclone Park, Miller Field, and Kentucky Park. They were the teams of the Kentucky, Illinois, and Tennessee Baseball League. Scattered over fifty years, they represented the small cities and towns in some of the most isolated regions of the three states. Over the first half of this century, and through six lives, the "Kitty League" earned the respect of the baseball world while forging its story into that sport's long and colorful history.

The Kitty League was first formed in 1902 under the guiding hand of Frank Bassett, a young salesman from Hopkinsville, Kentucky. During his lengthy presidency of the league, Bassett studied medicine, became a doctor, and would later be elected county judge-executive of Christian County, Kentucky. When young Christian Countians decided to tie the knot Dr. Bassett administered the blood test as well as the marriage service.

The first player Bassett signed to the league was a 20-year-old catcher he saw play on the sandlot fields around Huntsville, Alabama. The young receiver was tough and handled games like a seasoned catcher, and Bassett knew he had what it took to make Hopkinsville the anchor team in the new league. His name was Charles Evard Street and after his Kitty League days he would go on to have a long career with the Washington Senators. He caught Walter "Big Train' Johnson's aspirin-like fastballs and become better known as Gabby Street. Although his big league career was stellar, he was lucky to collect his $35-a-month salary from the 1903 Hopkinsville Moguls.

Besides having a team in Hopkinsville, the first season of the Kitty League included teams in Paducah and Henderson in Kentucky, Clarksville and Jackson in Tennessee, and Cairo, Illinois. Financial records of the first year are not known to exist; however, two events indicate that it was successful. First, in what would become the most important barometer of success for the Kitty, it played ball the next season. Secondly, the owners met in the back room of a Cairo, Illinois saloon to divvy up the league's profits. Witnesses recount the meeting stretching far into the night until it concluded in a fist fight among the team owners.

Although the first season seems to have been profitable, the following season must have been a bust because the league folded after the 1906 season. The die was cast, however. The league would come and go several more times, just like the west Kentucky summers it filled with entertainment, talent and competition. Earl Ruby, a long time sports columnist for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, once wrote, "Born of a fight, it died with its boots on every time and came back swinging on each revival."

In 1911, C.G. Gosnell, a native of Vincennes, Indiana re-formed the Kitty League, this time including two teams from the Hoosier state, Evansville and Vincennes. Fans in west Kentucky, hungry for professional baseball, launched door-to-door fund-raising campaigns to start local teams. Such efforts allowed Owensboro, Kentucky, which became one of the most successful franchises in the

Kitty, to field its first team in the league for the 1913 season. Other cities were not as supportive as Owensboro, so the league dissolved because of dwindling profits and lack of interest. Dr. Bassett made another go of the league in 1916, but the looming presence of the war in Europe allowed only one season of life for the Kitty.

The league staggered to life again several years after World War I. In 1922, Mayfield, Kentucky opened its first season in the Kitty with adulation and fanfare. On opening day local businesses opened only for the morning, and special excursions were offered by the railroad so people could go to the Mayfield ball yard.

Their team was called the Pant Makers because of the clothing mills in town, and they played their games at Cyclone Park, a wooden grandstand just north of town. A year before the city's debut in the Kitty League, the citizens of Mayfield built the ballpark near the Illinois Central Railroad tracks. In March 1922 a tornado ripped the tin roof from the grandstand and smashed it to bits on the ground behind the ballpark. It was quickly repaired, but always known thereafter as Cyclone Park.

The fanfare did not last, and the Kitty used up its fourth life by 1924. Again, it seems to have been the lack of attendance that sent the league into another dormancy. Some might say that the people of the region were apathetic baseball fans, but it is likely to be something more significant than a disregard for the nation's pastime. It is more likely to be a tangible shift in the social condition of the region.

Mayfield had been a farming community for almost a century. Tobacco and cotton farmers brought their crops to this rural Kentucky town to sell, bought the next season's supplies, and then returned to their farms. In the summer, if their crops and farms were in order, they had time during the hottest part of the day to go to town and watch baseball. Mayfield had changed, however. Cotton and clothing mills had taken root in the once quiet town, and much more rigid working standards took hold. While small businesses and shopkeepers could turn their employees loose to watch an afternoon ballgame, the manufacturers could not afford to do so. Without adequate lighting systems for the ballparks, professional baseball disappeared from west Kentucky and Tennessee, and southern Illinois, which spelled doom for the Kitty League.

Baseball, however, flourished. Semipro and "Sunday leagues" sprang up in the Kitty League towns and the smaller towns of the region. In 1926 the Modern Woodmen of America fielded a team featuring several old Kitty League players and a curve-ball-throwing teenager named Jack Erwin. Erwin would later work his way up to the Detroit Tigers and would (many locals claim) strike out Babe Ruth during a spring training game.

Semipro baseball thrived. The teams usually played only on Sundays so fans could watch baseball after church. They also had no league rules regulating the kinds of players they had to have on the team, which allowed the Modern Woodmen team to use a teenage pitcher and other players that had played several seasons of professional baseball. The Kitty League, on the other hand, was a "developmental league" (also known as a Class D league) for the major league teams, so they had strict roster guidelines to follow. Each team was allowed six "veterans' on a 15-man roster, while the rest had to be playing in their first or second season of professional ball. The result was better play in the semipro leagues in the region, which is why they outlasted the Kitty League.

In 1935, after an 11-year hiatus, the Kitty League came storming back, once again under the leadership of Frank Bassett. The old and practically forgotten league roared back to life and started into its golden age. The newly re-formed league had teams in Portageville, Missouri, Paducah and Hopkinsville in Kentucky, and Union City, Jackson, and Lexington in Tennessee for its first season. In 1936 Henry Wise moved his Portageville Pirates team to Owensboro and named them the Oilers, and Mayfield and Fulton, Kentucky each put a team in the league. The Lexington, Tennessee team moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky in 1929 and took the name Barons.

Several very fine ball players got their start in the league during the high tide of the Kitty. Vern Stephens played shortstop for the Mayfield Clothiers and led them to the 1937 league championship. He belted 30 homers while hitting .361, and drove in 123 runs for the Mayfield team. The St. Louis Cardinals'

Hall of Fame second baseman Red Schoendienst broke into the professional ranks with the Union City, Tennessee team. He was deft with the bat and foiled many batters with his prowess in the infield.

Over the next seven seasons the Kitty enjoyed increasing popularity as well as healthy returns at the ticket windows. Many teams were playing in new ballparks and under new lighting systems that afforded working class fans nightly trips to the ballpark. Everything looked promising for the Kitty, but Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941 sealed the fate of the Kitty League. The war dried up the talent pool in all of baseball; minor leagues like the Class D leagues evaporated. The Kitty ceased operations on June 16, 1942 because of a lack of ball players.

Once the war was over, the Kitty League came swinging back to life in 1946. Soldiers returned home, and many baseball-players-turned-soldiers tried to resume their professional careers. Many spent four years playing in the army, so they were well-equipped for professional baseball. For a few years after World War II, Kitty fans were treated to a different kind of baseball player. They were bigger, stronger, and more experienced than the players of the pre-war era. Men like Barry Craig, a hard-throwing southpaw from Knoxville, Tennessee were assigned to teams such as Mayfield in the Kitty when they were in their mid-20s. The quality of play in all minor leagues was excellent. Fans appreciated that and pushed through the turnstiles in record numbers, and many leagues shattered attendance records in 1946, 1947 and 1948.

Post-war Kitty League fans were treated to several different future major league stars. Dusty Rhodes, who played for the Hopkinsville Hoppers in 1947, hit a pinch-hit homer in game one of the 1954 World Series for the New York Giants. In 1954 Tony Kubek played outfield and shortstop for the Owensboro Oilers at the tender age of 17.

The love affair with the Kitty League did not last. Throughout the first half of the 1950s attendance leveled off and then started to decline. Talent in the league remained good, and cities like Mayfield and Owensboro continued to improve their ballparks to comfort the fans. Ultimately, they could not compete with three new components that forever changed the face of southern popular culture - drive-in movie theaters, air conditioning and, most significantly, television.

The first, drive-in movies, eroded the support of young baseball fans. For whatever reasons, taking a date to a movie, and staying in one's own automobile, had a greater attraction than a night spent at the ballpark! The effect of the drive-in theater paled in comparison to the other two inventions. Air conditioning and television proved to be a lethal combination to the Kitty League. People were more likely to remain in their air-conditioned homes and watch a whole new realm of entertainment on their televisions than to spend a hot evening at the ballpark. The Kitty finished its sixth and final life by 1955. Professional baseball has remained extinct in west Kentucky ever since.

JAMES T. KIRKWOOD is a member of the Kentucky SABR Steering Committee; on staff of The Filson Club Historical Society.

Louisville Baseball Briefs

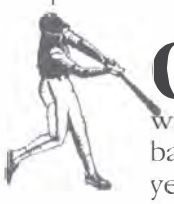
By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr.

* *On July 19, 1865, in the first baseball game played under standard rules west of the Alleghenies, Louisville defeated the Cumberlands from Nashville 22-5 in a field at 19th and Duncan streets.*
* *The first organizational meeting of the National League was held in Louisville in 1875 at Larry Gatto's saloon on Green Street (now Liberty Street, which borders the Hyatt).*
* *The Louisville Grays of 1876-77 were charter members of the National League.*
* *The Louisville Grays of the National League were the victims of the first shutout in major league baseball history, a 4-0 loss to Al Spalding of Chicago in the opening game of 1876.*
* *The Grays of 1877 became known as the "Louisville Crooks" when four of its players were banned for life for throwing games - the first great scandal in major league baseball.*

Reflections on the Minors

They may not be "uptown" but the minors mean grass-roots and fun

By Branch B. Rickey



One of the surprising pleasures of my life was to be elected president of a Triple-A baseball league. Interestingly, this occurred five years ago, just about when the minor leagues, at all levels, leaped into a period of an unexpected and unparalleled renaissance. This revival of the minors has occurred during a time of turmoil at the major league level.

I characterize the course of the minors as an "unparalleled renaissance" primarily because of the tremendous scope of new park construction and the huge investment in facilities. This is so much greater than anything in preceding decades. Clearly, the number of professional baseball leagues will never again flourish as they did in the late 1940s, when dozens of leagues developed and teams could be found playing in the smallest towns.

However, the teams of today, grouped in seventeen "organized" leagues, all members of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, have a sophistication of operation and a stability of management and governance of which the post-WWII leagues would never have even dreamed.

While the operation of today's clubs is professional in a methodical fashion, for the fans the minors have managed to retain a special, almost rustic image, and conjure up in many minds a mystique right out of *Field of Dreams*. Anyone following daily media accounts is keenly aware that major league baseball is mainstream in America — yet larger than life; it is filled with stars and superstars; it is glitz and television; it is money and prime time; it is uptown and mega-seating. It fills a distinct function in our society — that need by some portion of our population to fantasize about rags-to-riches dreams come true.

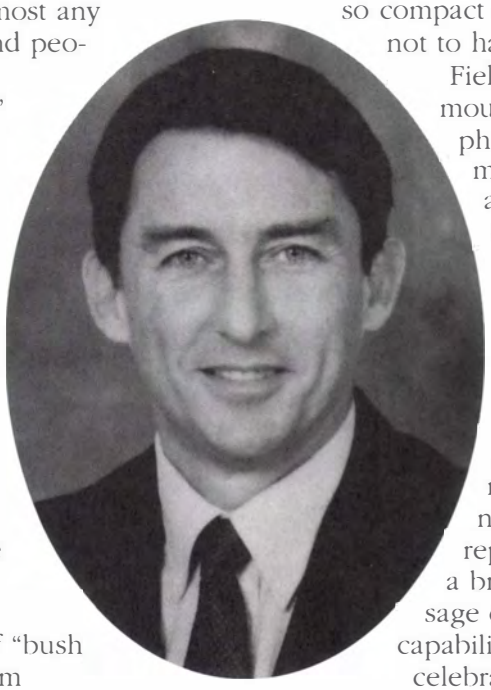
However, our society is broad; it is not bound to one style of thing in any genre. Minor league baseball's resurgence is due, in part, to its establishing of a very desirable, unchallenged niche. It is charm; it is more "boys playing a sport"; it is not uptown, but hometown; it is not glitz, but grass roots; it is honest effort; it has crazy promotions and crowd involvement. It is something that many of us as adults think our society has nearly lost.

My love of minor league baseball is probably rooted in some wistful attachment to playing baseball myself as a youngster. Also, my emotion partly reflects some nostalgic feelings about the folklore of "old-time players" doing the unexpected, some bizarre things that even today, when retold, are apt to capture anyone's imagination. One might mistakenly dismiss the resurgence of the minors as some chasing of nostalgia, but the minors are not caught in any aura of yesteryear. The minors are thriving in the mood of the present. A visit I made to Victory Field in Indianapolis this season made me quite aware of this. The park there is practically new, having opened on July 11, 1996. A sold-out crowd of roughly 12,000 enthusiastic Hoosiers flocked to it.

The stadium sits in the southwest corner of Indianapolis' downtown, with a wide-open center field, foul pole to foul pole, which focuses your attention - especially during the setting sun - on the streamlined skyscrapers and glass-windowed hotels and offices of the downtown skyline. The friendly

design of the stadium is satisfying in every aspect of modem sport-facility architecture. Major or minor, it's the best park in which I've ever watched a baseball game.

Minor league baseball is played in many wonderful towns like Indianapolis. Most of the minor league towns are smaller than Indy, but a common thread in so many of those ballparks is the discernible sense of community reflected in the attitudes of the fans who attend. Look at almost any minor league crowd. You find people who know each other. Generally, they're "just folks." Often, they have children in tow, sharing together, as a family, this traditional game. They can afford to bring the kids. They can closely follow the action, or they can pop in and out to concession and souvenir stands. There is a general sense of comfort in the air. After all, it is the fans who set the mood at a minor league game.



Branch B. Rickey

This is not to indicate that the minors are rural America. For decades the "minors" held a reputation of "bush leagues, bus leagues and mom and pop operations." Athletes reaching the majors looked back on their careers and laughed at their early years. But the minors are no longer the subject of that type of jesting. They are now viewed as an industry. But even in this, they are distinct from the majors. Though an industry by all accepted financial norms, minor league teams enjoy a "local" image, the pride of the city, something other industries wish they could duplicate.

The primary influence which has made the bush league description passé is the phenomenal surge in the construction of new ballparks. Today, women who never relished the thought of using public restrooms at a ballpark are finding lavatory facilities the equal of modern multiplex cinemas. Concession stands are no longer hot dog and popcorn shacks wedged in some tight, dark location. They are brightly lit, strategically placed, often overlooking the playing field, and more than likely, armed with closed circuit television monitors covering the game.

What's more, the seats are no longer wood slat holdovers from pre-WWII; they are body-molded plastic for easy access and comfort. In the outfield there may be a spacious patio lawn surrounding the fence, where fans can spread blankets and picnic while watching both the game and their cavorting children. As for sight-lines, these smaller stadiums are so compact and streamlined it's difficult not to have a *great* seat.

Field lights are no longer mounted on oversized telephone poles. The modern mercury or argon lights sit atop towering metal standards designed to sway in the wind. Nowadays, the average fan can't distinguish the lighting at most minor league parks from the majors.

Perhaps the charm of the old scoreboard, with manually hung, painted numbers is lost, but the replacement is hard to fault — a bright scoreboard and message center, often with graphics capability and the launching pad for celebratory fireworks.

In the old days, the peak of any music in a minor league game was the playing of the national anthem. Now, the modern sound systems rock their crowds into excitement. After the game, bright, bouncy music replays in your head long after you've left the parking lot.

* * *

If one were to single out an overriding aspect of attending a game anywhere in the minor leagues, I would venture to suggest that "stress-loss" is the most singular difference. One doesn't have to park twelve blocks away to save money. Ballpark parking costs about the price of a hot dog. Parking is usually in supervised areas. Crime is so negligible that even petty vandalism is unexpected. It's a nice feeling to have an easy walk both to and from the park and to be free to say hello to acquaintances. It's a nice feeling to pay ticket prices that equate to parking prices. What a satisfaction to arrive or leave without having

to worry about when the traffic is the worst. In general, it's just nice to be able to relax completely. Certainly that helps make fans want to come back time and again.

Meanwhile, with all of these factors adorning the game, surrounding it, promoting it, none has changed the "game" itself. In fact, the game, as it is played between the lines, is remarkably unchanged. Young athletes desperate to be a success, to become stars, are dreaming their dreams and playing to their fullest. They give heart and soul, and sometimes, body to win. They play with the zest of youth - and their zest becomes contagious to the fans.

In summary, minor league baseball has changed completely. Yet this industry is based on a game that has changed very little. The mix combines the best of tradition and revolution. In the middle of our modern, high-speed existence, I find that minor league baseball is more vibrant than ever, and I grin a big grin every time I hear of another new park springing to life. While it's not the majors, for many of us it's just exactly where we want to sink down into a seat and just enjoy listening to the crack of the bat.

BRANCH B. RICKEY is president of the American Association; grandson of legendary Branch Rickey.

Louisville Baseball Briefs

By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr.

* *The first player strike occurred in 1888 when the Louisville team boycotted games for two days due to the owner's decision to levy fines for every fielding error!*

* *The 1889 Louisville Colonels compiled baseball's first 100-loss season (27-111), including a record 26 straight!*

* *In 1890, Louisville was nicknamed "the Cyclones" after the tornado that killed 75 people on March 27, 1890.*

* *The Louisville Cyclones finished first in the major league's American Association in 1890, becoming the original "worst-to-first" team (and the last for 102 years!).*

* *The only post-season major league baseball series to end in a tie occurred between the 1890 Louisville Cyclones and Brooklyn Bridegrooms. Their 3-3-1 series, ending in bitter cold, was the last interleague competition of the century between the NL and AA.*

* *The two most extraordinary players home-grown in Louisville, Pete Browning and Pee Wee Reese, were both city marbles champions.*

* *Louisville's Honus Wagner was the first player to have his name inscribed on a Louisville Slugger bat.*

* *The original third baseman to play away from the base toward shortstop was the Colonels' Jimmy Collins.*

* *The first no-hit game by a Louisville hurler in the National League was Deacon Philippe's 7-0 defeat of New York by the Colonels on May 25, 1899.*

* *Louisville and Indianapolis are the only two charter cities still playing in the American Association, founded 1901.*

* *Bill Monroe, the father of Bluegrass music, put together a baseball team called the Bluegrass All-Stars, which toured with his band and played semipro and minor league teams between musical engagements. "Stringbean" (Dave Akeman) was a popular player who could play any position.*

* *In 1910, Casey Stengel played Class D ball at Shelbyville (in nearby Shelby County), Kentucky and Maysville (Mason County), Kentucky.*

* *The all-time AA record for hits in a single season (282) was established by Louisville's Jay Kirke in 1916.*

* *Louisville's Parkway Field (1923-61) was modeled after Wrigley Field, but left field was close enough to require a tall fence extension similar to the "Green Monster" at Fenway Park.*

A. Ray Smith Comes to Louisville

His Redbirds rewrote all-time attendance records from Year I

By George Rorrer

Fate landed A. Ray Smith and his Springfield Redbirds on Louisville's doorstep in 1982, and it was a love affair from the start.

Smith turned out to have just the right combination of guts and moxie to allow him to bring baseball back to Kentucky's largest city in grand style. In the process, Smith's American Association team and the leaders and baseball fans of Louisville touched off the biggest minor-league bonanza since the post-World War II 1940s.

Louisville had been without baseball since 1972, when then-Kentucky Governor Wendell Ford appeased seekers of a football stadium for the University of Louisville by spending $800,000 to erect a stationary 18,000-seat concrete and aluminum grandstand in what had been right field at Fairgrounds Stadium.

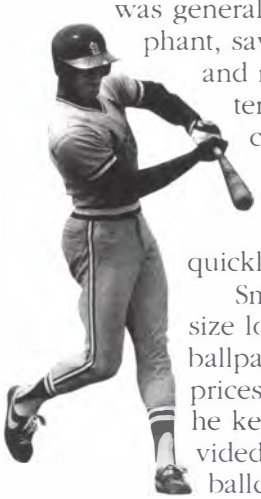
With no place to play, the Louisville Colonels said a bittersweet goodbye by winning an International League championship and moved on to Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Louisville was without baseball for nine dreary years until, during the major league player strike of 1981, a committee headed by banker Dan Ulmer and beer distributor Armin Willig raised $4.1 million to uproot the football grandstand and move it back far enough to open the way for the return of America's pastime.

Ulmer, an avid fan of the St. Louis Cardinals, targeted Smith's team in Springfield, Illinois, where it had attracted just 425,683 customers over the four seasons since it arrived from New Orleans. What Ulmer got along with Smith was a team with just the right blend of veterans such as George Bjorkman, Glenn Brummer, Mike Calise, Joe DeSa, Jeff Doyle, Billy Lyons, Kelly Paris, David Green, Tito Landrum, Dyar Mller, Dan Morogiello, Eric Rasmussen, Gene Roof and Orlando Sanchez, and youngsters such as Ralph Citarella, John Fulgham, Jeff Keener, Ricky Horton, John Stuper, Mark Salas, Dave Kable, Rafael Santana and Willie McGee.

What Ulmer also got in Smith was a savvy baseball operator at the peak of his game.

Smith took a look at a stadium which was generally perceived as a white elephant, saw unlimited possibilities, and negotiated himself a far better lease than one the financially strapped Colonels had had. He paid Springfield $500,000 to break his lease there, but that gamble was quickly repaid tenfold.



Willie McGee

Smith said he would emphasize low ticket prices, a clean ballpark and fair concessions prices for quality products, and he kept his word. St. Louis provided a colorful, competitive ballclub managed by Joe Frazier, former skipper of the New York Mets. The combination was intoxicating.

McGee didn't stick around long. He soon went to St. Louis and became National League Rookie of the Year. Other original Redbirds were to later enjoy at least brief big league careers, including Brummer, Green, Landrum, Miller, Rasmussen, Fulgham, Horton, Keener, Salas and Santana. Catcher Kevin

Kennedy was released early in the season, ending his playing career, but he went on to become a major league manager.

Oh, how the fans loved them! People from all walks of life converged on Cardinal Stadium to see the Redbirds play and enjoy the county fair-style atmosphere which included a Dixieland band and a wide, designer-decorated concourse concessions area.

In the Redbirds' first season in Louisville, they smashed the all-time minor league attendance record of 670,563 held by San Francisco since 1946, ushering 868,418 through the turnstiles. In their second season, they became the first minor league team to break the one million barrier, drawing 1,052,438.

After the first season, Smith hired Jim Fregosi, the popular former star big league infielder who had been fired by the California Angels. Fregosi sharpened his managerial tools by winning two American Association championships for Smith, and in 1986 he departed to manage the Chicago White Sox. In 1993, he piloted the Philadelphia Phillies to a National League championship.

Smith had more than a little to do with Fregosi's success in Louisville. Annually at midseason, Smith and Fregosi would assess the team's problem areas. Smith would then ask St. Louis' scouts for advice, and purchase himself a ballplayer such as slugger Gary Rajsich or pitcher Eric Rasmussen. The player would usually perform well, and at the end of the season Smith would sell the player to St. Louis for approximately what the signing had cost him.

That soon became illegal in minor league baseball, as did several other ploys with which Smith made it special to be a Redbird, including paying his players more meal money than any other Triple-A team, and booking his team in the finest hotels.

Just as the fans loved the Redbirds, they embraced Smith, too. One night early in the 1982 season, a new chant rose from a section of the crowd. It was indistinguishable at first, but soon it became clear: "A. Ray! A. Ray!"

Where else, except maybe in Bill Veeck's heyday in Chicago, did fans ever chant in appreciation for a club owner?

Smith was a combination of Santa Claus and the Pied Piper. On his call-in radio show, he took fans' suggestions, and by noon the next day he would have acted on the most reasonable of them. He would walk through the stands and work the crowd, taking comments, complaints and compliments from the common man.

To see the 1982 Redbirds play, it cost $1 to park, $3.50 for reserved seats and $2.50 for general admission, with tickets for the young and elderly priced at even less.

"Isn't that basic?" Smith asked. "Does it take a genius to keep a place Dutch clean? Does it take a genius to figure if you get them to the park they might buy a hot dog? There's nothing new about any of that."

Many things had to happen to create the Redbirds' instant success, Smith said. "First is the facility. It's a great one. Next, there was the professional way it has been brought to the attention of the fans by all of the media. It set off a startling chain reaction, fan to fan, church to church, and so on.

"Next, we had unbelievable support from the people, who contributed more than $4 million for renovation of the stadium. Next, I have a feeling we're a product of the times. We're offering something the ordinary man can afford. I call this the all-collar sport, in the truest sense of the word the only family sport in this country, and that's not knocking any of the other sports in any way.

"Next, our staff has gotten the job done. Timing has been a big factor. It's a fantasy that has fed on itself, person to person."

Smith, who attended Oklahoma State and Indiana universities, was a lieutenant colonel in the Army Engineer Corps in World War II. After the war, he went to work for Texas oilman Clint Murchison, but when Murchison bought the Dallas Cowboys of the National Football League, Smith shifted his attention to heavy construction and made his fortune.

Among Smith's company's major projects were the repairing of a fault that endangered the Panama Canal, the dredging of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the building of an $80-million tunnel in New York, the building of Barkley Dam in Kentucky and the construction of military installations in Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Lebanon.

Smith bought the Redbirds for $25,000

Owner A. Ray Smith (in sportcoat) predicted it in the spring of 1983. The much-ballyhooed 'March to a Million' ended in glorious celebration on the night of August 25 when Giovanni Setaccioli (in white t-shirt) was officially designated the millionth fan to churn through the turnstiles.

To put this milestone into perspective, no other minor league city, at that time, had drawn more than 670,563 fans (San Francisco, 1946), and three major league clubs (Cleveland, Seattle and Minnesota) failed to draw a million in '83 -- even with an average of 13 more home dates than Louisville.

Regular season attendance, an eye-popping 1,052,438. Per-game average, 16,191. What a year!

in 1960 in an attempt to save baseball for Tulsa, Oklahoma, his base of operations. In 1976, Smith was faced with a deteriorating stadium and no governmental help to repair it, so he moved the Redbirds to New Orleans. After one year in the Louisiana Superdome, which wasn't designed for baseball, he moved the team to Springfield.

In Louisville, Smith not only loved to visit with fans in the stands, he would hold court nightly in the finely appointed Stadium Club. No subject was too small or too large for discussion, and anyone could join in. Smith's open, hands-on method of operating the club, and the results that came of it, earned him national recognition as a business leader.

Smith's methods are widely used in baseball today. Before the Buffalo Bisons opened their new downtown stadium in 1988 and began drawing a million annually, their executives studied the Redbirds' operation carefully and put its principles to use on a larger scale.

The successes in Louisville and Buffalo led to a huge increase in the value of minor league franchises. In the 1990s, Triple-A teams fetched as much as $9 million, and in the American Association alone there were new stadia at Buffalo, Iowa, Indianapolis and New Orleans - and others were under construction. The going rate for an expansion Triple-A franchise in 1996 was $7.5 million, plus a $1 million indemnity to the Double-A club whose territory was taken, plus $500,000 or so to get a front-office staff up and running.

During the Redbirds' heyday, Smith put together a group that included Hall of Fame catcher Johnny Bench and made a bid to buy the Cincinnati Reds. However, a contract clause provided that minority stockholders would be granted preference and Marge Schott exercised that option.

In 1983, Smith staged the Triple-A World Series, in which young pitcher Dwight Gooden sparkled for the victorious Tidewater Tides. Smith wanted to continue as host, but withdrew when no provision was made for an automatic berth for the home team.

In 1986, Smith sold the Redbirds for $4.2 million to Ulmer and a group of seven other Louisvillians, and they have continued the tradition, basing their operations on Smith's theories and attracting more than 500,000 — the generally recognized benchmark for minor-league success - every season.

Smith worked for a time for a group trying to bring a big league ballclub to Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida, then retired to his ranch in Grove, Oklahoma. In 1995 he sold the ranch and moved to Oklahoma City.

GEORGE RORRER is a retired sportswriter for The Courier-Journal; covered Redbirds 1982-95.

Jim Fregosi Had an Edge: He Could Teach

Players listened to him as manager because he never put them down

By George Rorrer

Jim Fregosi was much more than a baseball tactician during his spectacularly successful run as manager of the Louisville Redbirds from 1983 to 1986. He was both a father figure and a friend to his players and he was a keen-eyed talent scout for his employers, the St. Louis Cardinals. But mostly he was a teacher.

After the original Redbirds barely missed the American Association playoffs in 1982, owner A. Ray Smith and Lee Thomas, the Cardinals' director of player development, sought out the popular Fregosi.

Fregosi, a six-time all-star over 16 big league seasons as an infielder for the California Angels, New York Mets, Texas Rangers and Pittsburgh Pirates, was between baseball jobs after he was fired as skipper of the Angels in 1991.

At age 41, he was at home in Beverly Hills, California, working with his partners in a food brokerage business. That was more lucrative than managing a Triple-A baseball team, Fregosi said, but it wasn't as much fun.

"To me," he said at the time, "everything comes under one heading: do you enjoy what you're doing? I'm fortunate to be managing because I enjoy it. I like everything about it. I'm here (at the ballpark) at 2 o'clock (for 7:30 night games) because I like it. I get a lot of pleasure out of seeing young players develop and do well."

Smith and the Cardinals combined to make Fregosi what Smith says he believes is the best financial offer any minor league manager has ever had — a $50,000 salary, plus the use of a plush condominium and a luxury car — and Fregosi took the job. It paid off for the Redbirds in the form of a runner-up finish and two pennants, not to mention the first one million-plus season in attendance ever for a minor league team (1,052,438 in 1983).

It paid off for Fregosi, too. He honed his managerial skills, corrected a perceived weakness by learning how to deal with the media, found himself a wife in Bellarmine College graduate Joni Dunn, and got himself back to the big leagues in mid-1986 as manager of the Chicago White Sox.

Fregosi seemed to be always working, always teaching. He could be shaving after his post-game shower, but he'd also be talking baseball with the player shaving next to him. Fregosi had a way of making the butt of his jibes feel as if he or she had been let in on the joke. "He corrects you," said catcher Tommy Nieto, "but he makes it fun."

In 1983, Fregosi seemed to have a special project going with every one of his players. He worked at convincing Ricky Horton that Horton's fastball was an effective pitch. He tried to get infielder Billy Lyons to hit the ball to the opposite field. He worked daily with catcher Nieto on how to call pitches.

He tried to get shortstop Jose Gonzalez (later Uribe) to lay off pitches out of the strike zone. With hard-throwing reliever Todd Worrell, the subject was maturity and toughness.

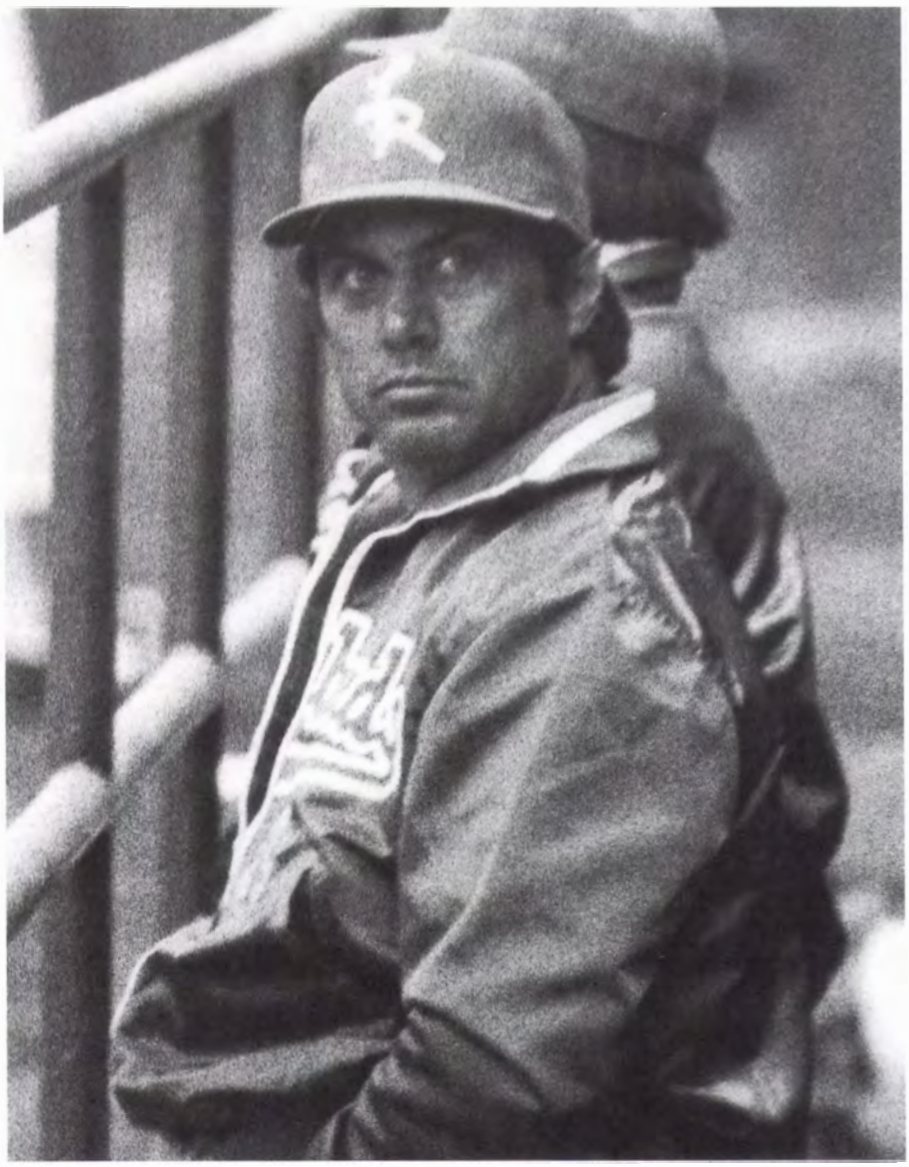
Worrell, a first-round draft choice, was a gentle kid, not long out of Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola College). Fregosi made Worrell the road roommate of Dyar Miller, a 37-year-old veteran pitcher. That way, Fregosi reasoned, Worrell could learn a lot about pitching and about baseball life in general.

Not long after the first road trip,

Worrell approached Fregosi and said maybe his rooming with Miller wasn't such a good idea. Fregosi said Worrell complained that Miller had come in at 3 o'clock in the morning and awakened him. Fregosi said he listened patiently and answered, "Todd, do you know where your roommate was last night? Hell, son, he was with me!"

Worrell got the point. "Jim does a great job of getting to know the players off the field as well as on the field," he said. "When he needs to make a point to you, he knows how to do it because he knows you."

Worrell toughened up mentally and went on to a successful big league career after Fregosi and Thomas made a joint decision to switch the lanky Californian from starter to reliever.



Mgr. Jim Fregosi commanded respect and admiration.

When Fregosi showed up in Louisville, it was so soon after his playing days that his star status was fresh on the minds of young players. At first, they listened because of his reputation. Then, they said, they listened because what he said could help them.

Pitcher Ralph Citarella said Fregosi was an effective teacher "because he never put a player down, never hurt anyone's confidence."

Andy Van Slyke played 54 games for Fregosi before going to St. Louis to begin a notable big league career, and Fregosi gave Van Slyke a break. He gave the young player two days off to go home and marry the former Laurie Griffiths. The night Van Slyke returned, he made four errors at third base.

"If I had known that," said Fregosi, "I'd have given him the whole week off."

Others who played significant roles for Fregosi's Louisville teams included Jim Adduci, Jeff Doyle, Mike Calise, Jeff Keener, Kevin Hagan, Joe Pettini, Danny Cox, Ken Dayley, Curt Ford, Dave Kable, Jerry Johnson, Kurt Kepshire, Mike Lavalliere, Tom Lawless, Greg Mathews, Dyar Miller, Jose Oquendo, Rick Ownbey, Andy Hassler, Mickey Mahler, Mike Dunne, Tom Pagnozzi, Jack Ayer, Joe Magrane, Tito Landrum, Vince Coleman, Dave Rajsich, Gary Rajsich, Eric Rasmussen, Andy Rincon, Mark Salas, Orlando Sanchez, Rafael Santana, Jimmy Sexton, John Stuper,

Pat Perry, Curt Ford, Jim Lindeman, Johnny Morris and Alex Cole.

Many of them made it to the big leagues, in no small measure because of the lessons Fregosi taught them. Pettini managed the Redbirds to the 1995 American Association pennant, Louisville's first since Fregosi departed.

Fregosi is a baseball man through and through. He signed his first professional contract in September 1959 as a 17-year-old shortstop. An intelligent man, he was educated in the baseball clubhouses of America and he speaks clearly and fluently in the clubhouse idiom.

Fregosi reached the big leagues with the then-Los Angeles Angels for the first time in 1961 at age 18, and went up to stay in 1962. His next minor league stop was Louisville, 21 years later. Along the way, he was traded by the Angels to the Mets in 1972 for, among others, pitcher Nolan Ryan.

On June 1, 1978 Fregosi retired as an active player with the Pirates to become manager of the Angels. As skipper of the Angels from mid-1978 to '81, Fregosi won California's first American League West championship (1979), but on May 27, 1981 the Angels had a 22-25 record and Fregosi was fired.

One facet of managing Fregosi said he felt he needed to improve was his relationship with the media. "I had been a player since I was 17 years old and a big leaguer since I was 19," he said. "I had always been the fair-haired boy, always the good player on average clubs. I had to adjust and learn. I didn't have good relations with the press, and it was as much my fault as theirs.

"I didn't understand what they wanted. They would ask me what seemed to me to be stupid questions. Now I realize they knew the answers, too, but they wanted the manager's point of view."

In Louisville, Fregosi made it a point to be accessible to media people and cooperative with them. His offices in Comiskey Park and Veterans Stadium have, according to beat writers in Chicago and Philadelphia, generally been a happy place to be. Fregosi knows a million baseball stories, and he knows how to tell them.

Fregosi's 1983 Redbirds won the Eastern Division by 7 1/2 games and reached the championship series by beating Oklahoma City three games to two. Denver, however, swept the Redbirds 4-0 for the title.

To get into the playoffs in 1984, the Redbirds had to beat Wichita in a one-game playoff for fourth place. They did it, then eliminated regular-season champion Indianapolis four games to two, and won the crown by downing Denver four games to one.

In 1985, the Redbirds won the Eastern Division title by 2 1/2 games, then beat Oklahoma City in the championship series four games to one. When Fregosi took the White Sox job in 1986, they had a 32-34 record.

Fregosi succeeded Tony LaRussa as skipper of the White Sox and managed them through 1988, when he was fired. Fregosi then teamed up again with Lee Thomas, who by 1989 was general manager of the Phillies. Fregosi served as the Phillies roving minor league pitching instructor and as a special assignment scout in 1989 and 1990, and in 1991 he was back in the big time as skipper of the Phillies.

In 1993, Fregosi managed the Phillies to the National League East championship and beat the pitching-rich Atlanta Braves in the NL Championship Series, but lost to Toronto in the World Series.

At every opportunity, Fregosi has been quick to credit his days in Louisville with helping him get his career and his life back on track. The Redbirds could say the same about their association with him.

GEORGE RORRER is a retired sportswriter for The Courier-Journal.

The Most Tragic Day in Baseball

Two Kentuckians made history when they faced each other on that fateful afternoon

By Henry C. Mayer

Carl Mays, a pitcher who won 208 games in his major league career, grew up near Liberty, in Casey County. Ray Chapman was a shortstop from McHenry, a coal town in Ohio County, about 100 miles to the west.

Chapman first appeared in a big league lineup at the end of the 1912 season, Mays in the spring of 1915. The number of times they faced each other on the diamond is not recorded, but their meeting on August 16, 1920 was unique; it made baseball history in a way neither man foresaw or intended.

More than 22,000 fans went to New York's Polo Grounds that afternoon. Chapman's Cleveland Indians held a slim lead in the American League standings over the Chicago White Sox and the host New York Yankees. (Yankee Stadium had not been built in 1920, and the Yankees played at the Polo Grounds.)

Cleveland grabbed a 1-0 lead in the second inning and scored two more runs in the fourth. It was an unusually shaky start for Mays, the Yankee pitcher, who had become a highly effective performer, though he was only 26. His underhand delivery when he threw the ball had earned him the nickname "Sub."

The 5-foot-10, 165-pound Chapman led off for Cleveland in the top of the fifth. Mays' first two pitches had given the hitter an even count (one ball and one strike), when Yankee catcher Muddy Ruel signaled for a fast ball. Chapman was batting from a semi-crouch, which Mays later observed "made him very hard to pitch to." Mays threw the ball, there was a loud THWACK, and the ball rolled back to the mound. Mays scooped it up and threw it to first baseman Wally Pipp.

But there was no runner.

Suddenly Mays heard plate umpire Tom Connolly calling for a doctor and realized his pitch had not hit Chapman's bat, it had struck him on the head.

An eyewitness wrote:

> "The ball hit Chapman on the left side of the head. The crack of the ball could be heard all over the stands and spectators gasped as they turned their heads away. The injured player dropped unconscious and a doctor was summoned to his aid. The player was partially revived after a time and attempted to walk to the clubhouse with the aid of two teammates. But his legs doubled up under him and he was carried to the clubhouse and afterwards taken to nearby St. Lawrence Hospital.
>
> "As the injured ballplayer was being taken to the clubhouse, he tried to speak to Percy Smallwood, trainer . . . but he could not speak. He pointed to his finger. Smallwood then understood and gave him his wife's gift (a diamond ring). Before the game, Chapman had given it to Smallwood for safekeeping."

An Associated Press reporter quoted a tearful Mays:

> "I got the signal for a fast ball, which I delivered. It was a little too close and I saw Chapman duck his head in an effort to get out of the path of the ball. He was too late, however, and a second later, he fell to the ground. It was the most regrettable incident of my career and I would give anything if I could undo what has happened. Chapman was a game, splendid fellow."

It was almost six o'clock when Chapman reached the hospital. As the hours moved towards midnight, his condition worsened. In the meantime, Cleveland Manager Tris Speaker had phoned Chapman's bride of

10 months. Then the doctors, Speaker and a Cleveland front office official conferred and decided to proceed with the surgery before she came.

A reporter gave this account:

> "At 12:30 a.m., Doctors M. J. Horan and T. D. Merrigan wheeled Chapman into the operating room. There they made an incision 3½ inches through the skull on the left side. They found a rupture of the lateral sinus and a quantity of clotted blood. A small piece of skull was removed. Dr. Merrigan added, 'the shock of the blow had lacerated the brain not only on the left side of the head where the ball had struck it, but also on the right side where the force of the blow had forced the brain against the skull.' Immediately after the surgery, Chapman breathed easier and his pulse improved. So his teammates went back to their hotel, trusting the dawn would bring encouraging news. They were notified, instead, of Chapman's death."

Chapman's fatality is the only one ever to occur on a major league ball field.

The incident remains the only such fatality in major league history.

The Associated Press reported that Mays had paced the floor all night. When he received news of the outcome that morning, he resolved immediately to turn himself in to the district attorney. There the incident was ruled an accident.

The game in New York that day was postponed and at other ballparks throughout the nation, appropriate tribute was paid to Chapman. A storm of controversy followed. At least four American League teams, including the Boston Red Sox, for whom Mays had played previously, favored barring the pitcher. In previous years, he had been accused of deliberate beaning and, in 1919, his transfer to the Yankees for $40,000 and two players came after he had bolted the Red Sox in mid-season. For a time, league president B. B. Johnson seemed to agree with the protesting players.

However, other voices were heard. One came from Philadelphia Manager Connie Mack, who said, "Outside of Mrs. Chapman and the Chapman family, I believe no one feels the effects of Chapman's death more than Mays. I am of the opinion that he should be extended sympathy instead of trying to blemish his name."

Chapman's manager, Tris Speaker, added, "I do not hold Mays responsible in any way. I have been active in discouraging my players from holding Mays responsible, and in respect to Chapman's memory, as well as for the good of baseball, I hope all this kind of talk will stop."

Yankee Manager Miller Huggins told a reporter he believed Chapman's left foot may have caught in the ground in some manner, which prevented him from stepping out of the ball's way. Batters usually have one foot loose at such moments and Chapman had gotten out of the way of the same kind of pitch before.

The day after Chapman died, *The New York Times* revealed that baseball officials were considering the use of protective headgear. A few days later, Dr. Robert Coughlin

wrote in the *New York Medical Journal* that his 10-year investigation showed baseball to be "the deadliest of sports." Between 1905 and 1915 it had claimed 284 lives; football had taken 215; auto racing,128; and boxing, 105.

At least 20,623 fans donated to a memorial fund for Chapman. His funeral mass in Cleveland was moved from his home parish to a church that held three times as many people. Even so, hundreds stood outside and traffic was snarled. The esteem in which opponents held Chapman can be gauged by the prompt offer of Detroit shortstop Donie Bush to play the rest of the season for Cleveland, an offer to which his Tiger teammates agreed.

Chapman left an enviable baseball record which included setting a major league mark for the most sacrifices in a season (67) and the most plays of this kind in a single game (6). In his last four seasons, he hit over .300 three times and thrice led the league in the most put-outs by a shortstop. He had married after the 1919 season ended and planned to retire after the 1920 season.

Yankee hurler Carl Mays ended his playing career in Louisville.

Mays continued to play. He remained in the majors through 1929, and wound up his playing career with Louisville in the American Association in 1931.

Connie Mack's plea for sympathy for Mays found one receptive ear in the Rev. William Scullen, who, in his eulogy for Chapman, said, "No hostile word should be uttered against the man who was the cause of this unfortunate accident. He feels the outcome of it more deeply than most of us do.

"Chapman played the game of life as he played the game of his profession, cleanly and honestly. He was our friend as a player and as a man. Sterling athlete that he was, he never knew defeat. Courageous, and with an indomitable spirit, he played his part in life honorably and he was a strong type of typical American youth and a great example for others."

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Fred "Dandelion" Pfeffer

A star from Louisville's early diamond days

By Phillip Von Borries

A 16-year veteran whose professional tenure included four seasons with his native Louisville (including one as a player-manager), Nathaniel Frederick "Dandelion" Pfeffer recorded a personal best .308 mark there in 1894.

But it was Pfeffer's glove that garnered him his fame.

One of the two greatest second basemen of the pre-modern (pre-1900) era, Pfeffer made his name with Cap Anson's National League Chicago dynasty teams of the early- and mid-1880s, where he was a member of an almost inpenetrable infield known as "The Stone Wall."

He was exceeded in keystone-bag skills only by the great Bid McPhee of the Cincinnati Reds, although Hall of Famer Mike "King" Kelly—-according to Daniel Okrent's and Steve Wulf's *Baseball Anecdotes*—-called Pfeffer "the greatest second baseman of them all...he could lay on his stomach and throw a hundred yards."

Further evidence of Pfeffer's defensive prowess comes from Mike Shatzkin's *The Ballplayers*, which notes that Pfeffer "was the first infielder to cut off a catcher's throw to second base on a double steal attempt and cut down the runner at the plate."

Fred "Dandelion" Pfeffer

In some quarters and times, the McPhee-Pfeffer rivalry was a draw, as witness this item from the *Louisville Commercial-Gazette* of Wednesday, May 6, 1891: "Association players to a man maintain that McPhee is the greatest second baseman in the profession, while the League men are inclined to favor Pfeffer, of the Chicagos." The article concluded by stating: "Louisville is, in this one instance, of the same opinion as the League."

Pfeffer, a legitimate Hall of Fame candidate, also was a speedy baserunner who was once timed circling the bases in less than 16 seconds.

As intelligent as he was talented, Pfeffer, in 1889, became one of the game's first published players with his highly popular book, *Scientific Ball.*

After wrapping up his major league work with Chicago in 1897, Pfeffer ran a celebrated bar there for years, which he sold for all of $1.50 in 1920 according to newspaper accounts. Later, he was in charge of press boxes at several racetracks in Chicago, where he died in 1932 at age 72.

PHILLIP VON BORRIES is nationally known for his work on Pete Browning; author of two baseball books: Legends of Louisville (1993) and Louisville Diamonds (1996).

Baseball's Most Colorful Commissioner

"Happy" Chandler's bold moves strengthened the game but alienated powerful owners

By Bill Marshall

Albert Benjamin "Happy" Chandler (1898-1991), born in Corydon, Kentucky, was a lifetime baseball fan who often attended Cincinnati Reds games during his first tenure as Governor of Kentucky. In 1945, he was the surprise choice of the owners to succeed the legendary Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis as Commissioner of Baseball. As a U.S. Senator, Chandler openly supported baseball during World War II, and his sponsor among the owners, Larry MacPhail, effectively argued that his political influence in Washington would help keep the game in operation.

Professional baseball reached new heights in popularity and prosperity during Chandler's commissionership (1945-1951) as attendance marks were shattered in both major and minor leagues. Although many owners expected Chandler to be malleable, he proved otherwise. In late 1945 he demanded and received the same powers in office held by his predecessor. Chandler dealt decisively with labor issues and attempted to protect baseball's image against gambling and other perceived menaces. In 1946, when American Baseball Guild attorney Robert Murphy brought the Pittsburgh Pirates to the brink of a strike, Chandler worked behind the scenes to defuse the situation. Moreover, when the Pasquel family enticed several major league players, including Mickey Owen, Max Lanier, Sal Maglie, and Vern Stephens to Mexico with generous contracts and large bonuses, the commissioner moved to stop the migration by banning the jumpers from the game for five years.

The aborted Pirates strike and the Mexican League incursions had a profound effect on baseball owners. In August 1946 they moved to protect baseball's reserve clause with a new uniform contract and to placate players with a $5,000 minimum salary, spring training expenses (called Murphy Money), player representation, and a pension plan. With the owners' blessing, the players elected representatives and established a platform of their own, which also called for a pension plan, a minimum salary, and other benefits. Chandler publicly praised the players' plan, which he described as "comparatively modest." Moreover, he indicated that "organized baseball is willing to do all it can to keep its athletes happy." The greatest benefit was the pension plan, drafted independently by Marty Marion of the St. Louis Cardinals and Larry MacPhail of the Yankees. Initially funded through World Series and All-Star Game receipts, the plan enjoyed a tenuous existence at best. Twice, in 1946 and again in 1950, Marion, the chief spokesman of the players, pleaded with Boston Red Sox and Philadelphia Phillies players to put a portion of their World Series earnings into the plan. Much to the dismay of several owners, the plan's solvency was assured in 1950 when Commissioner Chandler negotiated long-term multimillion dollar contracts with the Gillette Razor Company for television and radio sponsoring of the two events.

The most monumental event of the period, the integration of baseball, also occurred during Chandler's tenure. The action had far-reaching implications which helped blacks and whites accept social and legal changes in America during the following two decades. Branch Rickey, in a carefully orches-

trated move, signed former UCLA and Negro League athlete Jackie Robinson to a Montreal contract in 1945. The rationale behind Rickey's actions are as paradoxical and complicated as those that converted the Puritans into Yankee traders. While his religious and social background prepared him for the move, it was the profit motive that sealed his determination to sign Robinson. Chandler's election as commissioner provided the opportunity to break the barrier. Although Chandler was a native of a segregated state and was subject to all of the ingrained prejudices of his region and period, he was quoted in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the influential black newspaper, as saying, "If it's discrimination you are afraid of, you have nothing to fear from me." Moreover, in 1946 he told reporter Wendell Smith, "I think every boy in America who wants to play professional baseball should have the chance, regardless of race, creed or color. I have always said - and I repeat it now - that Negro players are welcome in baseball."

Commisssioner Chandler officially opens 1945 World Series.

Chandler, who watched numerous games at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, knew that blacks could be great athletes. Imbued with a sense of fairness on the athletic field, Chandler, in a meeting between the two men in 1946, agreed to support Branch Rickey's experiment. During the major league meetings in Los Angeles in December 1946 Chandler praised Robinson in the *Pittsburgh Courier* when he said that the former Negro League star was "perhaps the best all-around athlete this country has ever produced." Though most baseball owners opposed integration, Chandler's acquiescence stripped away the barrier previously upheld by Judge Landis and gave Rickey a green light. Moreover, Chandler operated behind the scenes during the 1947 season to insure Robinson's safety. Without Chandler's support, baseball integration might have been forestalled for several years. In a 1956 letter to Chandler, Robinson himself recognized the commissioner's contribution when he wrote, "I will never forget your role in the so-called Rickey experiment."

Chandler's most controversial decision was the suspension of Dodger manager Leo Durocher during the entire 1947 season for conduct detrimental to baseball. Trapped in a feud between Rickey and New York Yankees' president Larry MacPhail, Durocher's indiscretions (his associations with gamblers, his well-publicized role in the break-up of actress Laraine Day's marriage, and his anti-MacPhail comments in a ghost-written newspaper column) left him vulnerable to Chandler's action. The suspension was a key example of the omnipotent power the commissioner exercised over players and other baseball personnel. Had Durocher taken his case to a court of law, baseball's 1922 antitrust exemption might have been jeopardized. Yet, Chandler simply felt that he was maintaining baseball's integrity. The commissioner wanted to distance baseball from gambling and Durocher was not a figure he wanted young people to emulate.

The gregarious Chandler was at his best when he was "on the stump" promoting baseball. While he did not create the condi-

tion necessary for the game's popularity, the commissioner unquestionably served the game well as a promoter. Research in his trips' files verifies that he promoted baseball through hundreds of speeches across the country, in small towns as well as large cities. Nevertheless, Chandler's folksy style, rich southern twang, toothy smile, and his ability to belt out *My Old Kentucky Home* in a beautiful tenor voice at the slightest urging, caused several eastern writers to consider him too undignified to hold office. Although he was the antithesis of Landis, the Judge cast a long shadow over Chandler's conduct and decisions. New York and Boston sportswriters, in particular, were unable to reconcile Chandler with the image projected by his predecessor. In reply he once stated, "I followed a myth, and I'll tell you following a myth is not easy. I have Judge Landis' files for reference, but have had no present word from him on what to do in the many difficult situations which abound in my office."

Baseball's owners, and not its writers, however, caused Chandler's downfall. In 1950 and again in 1951, Chandler's attempts to be re-elected as commissioner failed as he lost by a 9-7 vote. New rules, adopted in 1945, which required approval of three-fourths of the owners (12 votes) for Chandler to be rehired, proved to be a formidable stumbling block. There were several reasons why Chandler might fail the owners' litmus test. First, he was not the tractable defender of owners' rights that many had envisioned. Tom Yawkey of the Red Sox reportedly complained to his fellow owners that Chandler is "the players' commissioner, the fans' commissioner, the press and radio commissioner - everybody's commissioner but the men who pay him." Second, in the owners' minds Chandler jeopardized baseball's structure by not reinstating the Mexican League players when it became clear that the league was no longer a threat. Instead of finding a means of repatriating the jumpers, his hard stance spawned law suits and a congressional investigation which challenged the reserve clause. Third, some owners felt that Chandler played favorites. As sportswriter Red Smith charged, the owners "hired a man trained in the school of pork-barrel patronage and log-rolling politics. Happy's entire experience was calculated to teach one lesson: reward your friends, blast your opponents."

Finally, Chandler's political acumen, applied with great success in Kentucky, failed him in baseball. Instead of cultivating Tom Yawkey, and up-and-coming power brokers like Bob Carpenter and Walter O'Malley, he chose as his allies the grand old men of baseball - Connie Mack, Clark Griffith, and Walter Briggs. These were his heroes. Chandler alienated St. Louis Cardinals' owner Fred Saigh with his handling of the Gardella case and other issues, and Del Webb of the Yankees when the latter discovered that Chandler was investigating his Las Vegas interests. Webb, who was the most influential owner in the American League, organized the owners' opposition to Chandler. Chandler's later claim that his stance on race was the major factor in his demise has little credence. There is no contemporary evidence that any of the owners credited or discredited Chandler because of his role in breaking the color barrier.

Chandler left baseball in a stronger position than he found it. He was at heart a baseball fan, a man who wanted to take the commissioner's position off a pedestal, to humanize it, and to share himself and the game with its followers. In this he succeeded admirably. Faced with difficult and even critical decisions during one of American history's most pivotal eras, he let his conscience guide him. Following his ouster, Chandler was almost ignored by his successors and by most other baseball officials. Not until the coming of Bowie Kuhn, a commissioner whose problems closely paralleled Chandler's, was the second commissioner of baseball even invited to an official baseball function - a hiatus of seventeen years. Chandler was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982.

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Home-grown Kentuckians in the Negro Leagues

What role did 'black baseball' play in the region's diamond history?

By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr.

Philosophically, socially and historically, Louisville and Kentucky have been Southern in their customs and outlook. At times this perspective has fueled ugly incidents. Toledo newspapers reported that when Moses "Fleet" Walker, the first Negro major leaguer in the American Association, first appeared in a game in Louisville, he was booed, hissed and insulted due to his race. A similar "welcome" of jeers and insults greeted the Montreal Royals' Jackie Robinson at his appearance in Parkway Field in 1946 as he led his team against the Colonels in the Junior World Series. Both incidents eventually backfired against the Louisville players. During Louisville's trips to Toledo and Montreal, the home fans, knowing the insults that their star players had endured, turned their anger on the entire Colonel nine, whose play suffered.

On the other hand, after the legendary Rube Foster joined the Leland Giants in 1907, that black team's forays into Louisville would result in many admirers of both races. A fan said, "Every time he came to Louisville those Leland Giants used to walk right away from those Louisville teams - white and colored." And who can forget the image of Louisvillian Pee Wee Reese standing with his arm on the shoulder of Dodger teammate Jackie Robinson amidst abuse from an opposing dugout, or Kentuckian A.B. "Happy" Chandler's role as baseball commissioner in giving the green light to admit blacks in the major leagues?

In 1887, Louisville was a charter member of the six-team League of Colored Base Ball Players, the first black professional league. In fact, Jerry Malloy, a SABR historian, reports that "the Falls City Club of Louisville was said to be the only black team in the nation that owned its own grounds, 'a handsome park at 16th Street and Magnolia Avenue.' However, construction of the park was not completed in time for the season opener..." (But Louisville receives no respect from author Art Rust, Jr. who, in *Get That Nigger Off The Field*, cites the team as "Fall City of Louisiana.")

Although the league collapsed in less than two weeks due to myriad financial setbacks (and after one Louisville Falls City victory), it lasted long enough to showcase the talents of many African-American players. (But the Boston Resolutes surely were not pondering their role in history as they worked their way back to their hometown by doing odd jobs in barbershops and waiting hotel tables, having been stranded in Louisville when their team folded in early May.)

In spite of frenetic Negro League activity in the region around "Kentuckiana" (the Louisville and Southern Indiana area), black professional baseball on a major level was virtually nonexistent during the golden years of Negro League ball in the '30s and early '40s. A survey of books and writings on all-black professional teams and the Negro leagues reveals little mention of significant Louisville accomplishments or accolades on the team level.

Although Negro Major League activity in the area was absent, there was much black baseball occurring at the semipro, independent and minor league levels of competition. Fueling this interest was the fact that Kentucky was the birthplace of a number of players who made important individual contributions

to the Negro Major Leagues.

This list of African-American Kentuckians who played in the Negro leagues is not meant to be all-inclusive. The difficulties in researching Negro leagues, teams and players are well-documented: unstable teams, folding leagues, and team-jumping players, all little-reported by the mainstream newspapers and mostly ignored by historians and statisticians until 1970. The purpose of this article is only to name and recount the careers of a few of the "home-grown" Kentuckians who plied their trade in professional baseball long before Jackie Robinson appeared.

JOHN BECKWITH

BORN: LOUISVILLE (JEFFERSON COUNTY), 1902

This huge (6-foot-3, 220 lbs.), powerful right-handed slugger was one of the original "tape measure" home run hitters, but he also managed to earn a lifetime .366 BA! Beckwith achieved these results in spite of being a pull hitter who consistently faced tremendously overshifted defenses and sidearm curveballs. Defensively, he played every position on the field, beginning his career as a shortstop-catcher and ending as a third baseman.

After moving to Chicago early in life, he turned professional in 1916, signing with the Montgomery Grey Sox and then playing with the Chicago Giants until 1923. In 1921, he became the first person to hit a ball over the roof and out of Cincinnati's Redland Field (left field). He later hit a homer in Washington which hit a sign 460 feet away and 40 feet off the ground!

While with the Baltimore Black Sox (1924-26 and 1930-31), Beckwith was team captain and hit .452 with 40 home runs against all teams in 1924 (.403 in league play). The next year, he became the manager of the Black Sox, but resigned after he was suspended for beating an umpire.

In 1927, with the Harrisburg Giants, he finished second in the league in home runs, and was credited with 72 homers against all competition. The following year, Beckwith clouted 54 home runs for the Homestead Grays, and he followed that performance by being the second-leading hitter in the Negro American League in 1929 with a .443 average. Despite breaking his ankle and missing two months of the 1930 season with the Lincoln Giants, he hit .480 in league play and .546 against all levels! In exhibition games against white major leaguers, Beckwith had a career BA of .337.

In spite of his extraordinary hitting and versatility, Beckwith was hampered by his turbulent personality, quick temper and excessive drinking. His relationship with teammates was often strained, and he excelled at no one particular position.

After completing his playing career in 1938, he managed the White Plains (N.Y.) Crescents, a minor team, before leaving baseball entirely. He died in New York City in 1956.

JUNIUS "RAINEY" BIBBS

BORN: HENDERSON (HENDERSON COUNTY), 1910

Leaving Kentucky at an early age, this infielder moved to Terre Haute, Indiana. He later starred as a collegiate football player, and became a baseball professional with the Detroit Stars in 1933.

Bibbs had a banner year with the Cincinnati Tigers in 1936, when he hit .404 and doubled for the West in the All-Star game. He played for the Kansas City Monarchs as they won three straight pennants 1939-41.

Primarily a second baseman, Bibbs was a switch-hitting line-driver to all fields. Possessing only average speed, he was still a good bunter and leadoff man. He ended his play by hitting .309 for the Cleveland Buckeyes in 1944. He died of a heart attack in 1979.

EARL BUMPUS

BORN: UNIONTOWN (UNION COUNTY)

This fastball pitcher broke in with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1944 but became a Birmingham Black Baron in mid-season. Although he had a 1-8 record with a 6.50 ERA that year, he was chosen to start a World Series game against the Homestead Grays. Bumpus pitched a complete game, but lost.

The big (6-foot, 215 lbs.) lefty possessed excellent control to go with his strong fastball, but he lacked a decent curve. In his second season, he went 4-2 with a 3.63 ERA. When not pitching, he sometimes substituted in the outfield. His last season was 1948, when he was 0-4 with Chicago.

CHARLES "PAT" DOUGHERTY

BORN: SUMMER SHADE (METCALFE COUNTY), 1879

This big side-wheeling lefty was referred to as the "black Marquard." During his 10-year career, he was one of the best left-handers in any league, and he was at his peak during a brief six-year span (1909-15) with top Chicago-area teams.

As a rookie in 1909, he won both of the Leland Giants' victories in their five-game playoffs against the St. Paul Gophers, but he lost the final, 3-2. In those three complete games he allowed only 8 hits and 4 earned runs! Later that year, he engaged in a memorable duel with Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown of the Chicago Cubs in an exhibition game. Dougherty struck out the first three batters, yielded a run in the second inning, then shut the Cubs out the rest of the way. It was a tough 1-0 loss.

The next year, he compiled a 13-0 record for the excellent Leland Giants of Rube Foster. Foster referred to the team as the greatest of all time, black or white. In 1913, Dougherty pitched a no-hitter for the Giants.

Dougherty often aided his pitching efforts by his good hitting. He began having control problems in 1915, and by 1918 had made his final appearance. He died in 1940.

WILLIAM DEMONT "BILL" EVANS II

BORN: LOUISVILLE (JEFFERSON COUNTY), 1899

As a tall, skinny schoolboy in Louisville, Evans loved sports and starred in both football and baseball. For two years he attended Livingston College prior to becoming a semipro pitcher/shortstop in 1919 with the Louisville White Sox. The next year, he joined Gilkerson's Union Giants and also became the team secretary. Often playing against players such as Weaver, Felsch and Jackson, who were banned in the "Black Sox" scandal, he learned how to bunt and perfected that art.

Evans was an outstanding defensive player, with a strong, accurate throwing arm and great instincts on the field. His usual position was either center field or shortstop, and he played well at these positions for the talented Homestead Grays, 1930-34. A light hitter (from both sides of the plate) but great bunter, and possessing blazing speed on the basepath, Evans generally hit in the bottom part of the Grays' order. With several other teams, he was the leadoff man. While he hit only .141 in 1927, according to partial statistics from the Cleveland Hornets, he tallied .328 for the Grays in 1930. Evans also regularly played winter ball for teams in Florida and California.

After his playing days ended, Evans became a manager until the 1950s. He also worked as a sportswriter for the *Louisville News* and as a playground director; he later founded the Midwest Association of Coaches.

CARL LEE GLASS

BORN: LEXINGTON (FAYETTE COUNTY), 1898

Glass' career was spent as a pitcher and first baseman. He was a big southpaw with a great curve which, unfortunately, was not matched by his control.

Although he had losing records for the Memphis Red Sox in the late 1920s, he was still regarded as the ace of their staff. In 1929, he compiled a 6-10 pitching record, batted .276 while playing outfield and first base, and managed the team for a while.

His playing time after 1930 consisted of a brief stint with the Cincinnati Tigers in 1936, where he ended his 14-season career.

SAMUEL THOMAS "SAMMY T." HUGHES

BORN: LOUISVILLE (JEFFERSON COUNTY), 1910

Dropping out of school after the eighth grade in Louisville, this tall, graceful right-hander learned to play baseball. He eventually signed with the Louisville White Sox at age 19 as a first baseman. Switched to second base in 1932 with the Washington Pilots, he began to establish his reputation as the best at that position during the golden years of the Negro leagues.

Hughes was a brainy player who usually batted second in the lineup. He could bunt, make contact, hit and run and he had good extra-base power, but he was not a home run threat. Defensively, Hughes was superb, possessing a strong arm, wide range and great double-play skills. Five times he was selected to play in the East-West All Star Game, hitting .263 in those contests.

With the Baltimore Elite Giants, during a tightly contested pennant race in 1942, Hughes received word that a tryout would be

arranged with the Pittsburgh Pirates. His dream of major league ball did not materialize. Despite his .301 average, the Elites lost the flag to the Homestead Grays.

"Sammy T." spent 1943-46 with the Army in combat in the Pacific Theater. By the time he returned, his skills had eroded and he retired after hitting .277 in 1946. His lifetime Negro League average was .296 and he is credited with a .353 average against major leaguers in exhibition games.

Hughes worked for several major corporations in Los Angeles after he left baseball.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT "TED" PAGE

BORN: GLASGOW (BARREN COUNTY), 1903

Ted Page moved to Youngstown, Ohio at age nine and played basketball and football there. Eventually, he was offered a scholarship to Ohio State University as a halfback. Instead, he chose to sign with baseball's Toledo Tigers after high school, thus beginning a successful 15-year career as an outfielder-first baseman.

Ted Page

As an aggressive, intimidating competitor, Page hated to lose. He was a line-drive hitter and good bunter who usually batted second or sixth, and who used his great speed to advantage on the basepaths. Buck Leonard compared him to Ty Cobb as a slider. Page's lifetime average in black baseball was .335, and in exhibitions against major league players he hit an astounding .429.

Ted Page played for two of the greatest teams in Negro League history - the 1931 Homestead Grays and the 1932 Pittsburgh Crawfords. With the Grays he was the regular right fielder, batted second, and hit .315. As a teammate of Satchel Paige on the Crawfords, he hit .352 in 1932 and .362 in 1933.

While sliding into a base in 1934, Page injured his knee and subsequently lost his blazing speed. Still, he was good enough at the plate to hit .329 in 1935. In his last season, this hard-playing, bull-headed outfielder batted leadoff and hit .351 for the Philadelphia Stars.

After he left baseball, Page eventually bought the bowling alley at which he worked and became a prominent person in bowling circles. For many years he even wrote a regular bowling column in a newspaper. After his retirement, Page met a violent death at the hands of a man who beat him with a ball bat in Pittsburgh.

CLINTON "CLINT" THOMAS

BORN: GREENUP (GREENUP COUNTY), 1896

A career .300 hitter, Clint Thomas was an offensive threat who hit for average and with power over his 19 seasons as a professional ball player.

At age 14, he left Greenup to look for work in Columbus, Ohio. He played amateur ball there until military service during World War I. After his discharge in 1919, he played semipro ball in Columbus until he was signed as a second baseman by the Brooklyn Royal Giants in 1920.

Defensively, Thomas later developed into a superbly agile, rifle-armed center fielder. With the Black Yankees, he was called "the black DiMaggio." At the plate he had a sharp eye, and earned another nickname: "Hawk."

In 1923, he hit .373 with 23 homers and 56 stolen bases to help Hilldale win the first Eastern Colored League flag. The Daisies also won the next two pennants, with Thomas batting .363 and .351, and split the first two World Series against Negro National League champ Kansas City Monarchs. For Hilldale, Thomas usually batted fifth and played left field. He led the league in stolen bases (23) in 1927 and hit a total of 28 home runs against all competition that year. When the ECL disbanded in 1928, he was signed by the Bacharach Giants and hit .342 in the 1929 season.

During the '20s, Thomas often played winter ball in Cuba, compiling a lifetime average of .310 in his six seasons there. Interestingly, he also hit a homer off a young pitcher named Fidel Castro, the future revolutionary leader. Later, in a 1934 exhibition game against major leaguers, he tripled in the ninth off Dizzy Dean and then stole home to win the game 1-0.

In his last full season (1937), he hit his 367th homer and carried a .343 average into

late June with the New York Black Yankees. Thomas retired after playing briefly for them in 1938.

After working for several years as a guard at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Thomas went to West Virginia where he worked as a custodian and supervisor in the Department of Mines and State Senate. His 80th birthday party in his hometown of Greenup, Kentucky in 1976 turned into the first Negro League's reunion and became an annual event for several years.

FELIX "DICK" WALLACE

BORN: OWENSBORO (DAVIESS COUNTY), 1884

Wallace went to nearby Paducah (McCracken County), Kentucky to begin his baseball career in 1903 as a third baseman for the Paducah Nationals. He traveled east in 1906 to play for the Cuban Giants.

Primarily used at second base and shortstop, Wallace was superb. He has been proclaimed as the best middle infielder of the second decade of the century. He was fast, ran the bases well, hit consistently and was marvelous defensively.

He played primarily with the St. Louis Giants during the years 1911-21, hitting in the second slot in the lineup. During a brief stint with the Lincoln Giants in 1914, he hit .348.

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C A R E E R T E A M S

JOHN BECKWITH - (1916-38)
Montgomery Grey Sox
Chicago Union Giants
Chicago Giants
Havana Stars
Chicago American Giants
Baltimore Black Sox
Harrisburg Giants
Homestead Grays
New York Lincoln Giants
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
Newark Browns
New York Black Yankees
Newark Dodgers
Palmer House Indians
Brooklyn Royal Giants

"RAINEY" BIBBS - (1933-44)
Detroit Stars
Cincinnati Tigers
Kansas City Monarchs
Chicago American Giants
Indianapolis Crawfords
Cleveland Buckeyes

EARL BUMPUS - (1944-48)
Kansas City Monarchs
Birmingham Black Barons
Chicago American Giants

PAT DOUGHERTY - (1909-18)
West Baden Sprudels
Leland Giants
Chicago American Giants
Chicago Giants

BILL EVANS - (1924-34)
Louisville White Sox
Gilkerson's Union Giants
Chicago American Giants
Indianapolis ABC's
Dayton Marcos
Cleveland Hornets
Brooklyn Royal Giants
Homestead Grays
Washington Pilots
Detroit Wolves
Cincinnati Tigers

CARL GLASS - (1923-26)
Birmingham Black Barons
St. Louis Stars
Kansas City
Memphis Red Sox
Louisville White Sox
Chicago American Giants
Cincinnati Tigers

"SAMMY T." HUGHES - (1929-42)
Louisville White Sox
Washington Pilots
Nashville Elite Giants
Columbus Elite Giants
Washington Elite Giants
Baltimore Elite Giants
Mexican League

TED PAGE - (1923-37)
Toledo Tigers
Buffalo Giants
Newark Stars
Chappie Johnson's Stars
Mohawk Giants
Brooklyn Royal Giants
Baltimore Black Sox
Homestead Grays
New York Black Yankees
Pittsburgh Crawfords
Newark Eagles
Philadelphia Stars

CLINT THOMAS - (1920-38)
Brooklyn Royal Giants
Columbus Buckeyes
Detroit Stars
Hilldale Daisies
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
New York Lincoln Giants
New York Harlem Stars
Indianapolis ABC's
New York Black Yankees
Newark Eagles
Philadelphia Stars

DICK WALLACE - (1906-21)
Cuban Giants
St. Paul Gophers
Leland Giants
St. Louis Giants
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
New York Lincoln Giants
Brooklyn Royal Giants
Hilldale Daisies

The Silent World of Dummy Hoy

Deafness didn't keep him from putting up HOF-like numbers, 1885-1901

By Barbara Oremland

In 1992 I was invited to speak at the induction ceremonies of the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame. My topic was "'Cultural Issues in Baseball—a Historical Perspective of the Black, Jewish, Native American and Hispanic Experiences in Baseball." When Kathy Gardner, who was in charge of the ceremonies in Toledo, informed me that the theme for the ceremonies was cultural issues and minorities, she also mentioned that Dummy Hoy, the first deaf player in baseball, was to be inducted posthumously that year. She suggested that maybe I should also consider the minority of the disabled in baseball as well. I gave it some thought and began gathering information on Hoy to include that aspect in my talk. And the more I gathered, the more I was in awe of this great player.

Some of Hoy's descendants were at the ceremonies, as were representatives from the American Athletic Association for the Deaf (AAAD). In addition, my speech was being signed; for many in the audience that was the only way they could receive it. It was quite an experience. And following that wonderful day in August of 1992, the letters started coming. They were from the AAAD and many of Hoy's relatives, part of a tremendous push to get Dummy Hoy into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The devotion this group has to Hoy and the representation of the deaf athlete truly impressed me.

Tom Boswell, in his recent book *Cracking the Show,* said, "In baseball the challenge for the greatest of the great - the long haulers - is to stay happy in their hard, simple work, though the world tries to tell them they are fools to care so much about a game so small. Their task is to ignore the money and take on man's meanest opponent - time. Day after day, they resist insidious invitations to kick back and be less than they dream they can be. Take a day off, Cal, what the hell? Why bother to be different? Why try to find the absolute limits of your performance? They are stubborn, ornery, almost bullheaded men. Not paragons, to be sure; but symbols definitely. They are the part of us that sets our jaw in defiance of common sense, and doesn't know why - yet feels better and more at peace for it."

Although Tom was trying to describe Ryan, Aaron, and Ripken, this description also applies to Dummy Hoy.

William Elsworth "Dummy" Hoy was the first deaf player in baseball, and also one of the leading players at the turn of the century. He was born in 1862 and was stricken with spinal meningitis, and left deaf and unable to speak by age two. At ten, he was placed in the Ohio School for the Deaf in Columbus. He graduated at 18, doing in eight years what should have taken 12, and was valedictorian. He became a shoemaker after that in Findlay, Ohio and, remembering the stories he read in the Ohio School about baseball, he had a dream - to become a baseball player.

With persistence he became a catcher for a local team. After belting four hits in a game against a professional pitcher, he thought he would try to turn pro.

He headed for Milwaukee in 1885. Like deaf athletes today, getting a chance to just show what he could do was a major obstacle. In addition, another issue was that

he was only 5-foot-4 and weighed 148 pounds.

The Milwaukee Brewers of the Northwestern League needed a catcher and allowed Hoy to try out. They were impressed and offered him $60 a month. Hoy thought he was worth $75 and was turned down. Settling for less was not the style for this strong and confident man. So Hoy went on to Oshkosh, where an outfielder was needed.

Hoy had great speed and a strong arm. He obtained the position of outfielder for Oshkosh, where he was offered $75 per month. Later, a messenger came from Milwaukee to offer him $85 and take him back. The proud Hoy told the Brewers he would not play for them for a million a month!

William "Dummy" Hoy

In his first season in 1885 there were some problems at the plate. Fielding was flawless, but for the time it took him to turn and read the umpire's lips for the call of the previous pitch, opposing pitchers would try to "quick pitch" him. This threw his timing off, resulting in his batting .219, a career low.

Hoy' s solution was truly a major contribution to baseball. He asked the third base coach to signal the ball-strike calls using simple hand signals. This was a tremendous help, and Hoy then batted .367, taking his team to the 1887 pennant. Soon after, these hand signals were adopted for all calls made on the field and it helped everyone, not just deaf players. The fans and other players who were not within hearing range could now understand the umpire's decisions.

In 1888 Hoy went to the Washington Senators of the National League; at 26 he was a major leaguer with impressive credentials; batting .274 and stealing 82 bases in his first season. His speed and strength made him a defensive wizard and he became known as the 'Amazing Dummy," a name he cherished, realizing it was making him very popular. In an interview with the *Cincinnati Enquirer* in 1889, Hoy said, "I had to be fast or they wouldn't keep me."

With Washington in 1889, on June 19 he threw out three runners at home plate, with his catcher Connie Mack applying the final tag. Like many players in the late 1800s, Hoy changed teams often. In 1890 he went to the Buffalo Bisons of the Players' League and was with the St. Louis Browns the following season. Then it was back to Washington for three years, and on to Cincinnati in '95 through '97. In 1898 and 1899 Hoy played with the Louisville Colonels, which allows Louisville to celebrate this great player.

In 1898 Hoy married a woman who was also deaf. Sam Crawford describes a wonderful arrangement Dummy Hoy and his wife had for the doorbell at their home. The guest would pull a string, which released a lead ball that plummeted to the floor, making a heavy vibration, thus signaling that someone was at the door.

In 1900 Hoy went to Chicago for Comiskey's White Stockings and helped the team gain their first pennant. The following year he helped gain another pennant for the White Stockings under the leadership of Clark

Griffith. And, in 1902, Hoy returned to the Reds, where he played 72 games, after which the major leagues told Hoy, at 40, they were through with him. Far from disconsolate, he went to the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League in 1903 and played 211 games, stealing 46 bases and helping them to a pennant.

Sam Crawford, in Ritter's *Glory of Their Times*, said, regarding Hoy, "We played alongside each other in Cincinnati in 1902. He was on his way out then, but even that late in his career he was a fine outfielder, a great one."

Referring to how Hoy communicated with his players, Tommy Leach said, "You never called for the ball, you listened for him, and if he made this little squeaky sound, that meant he was going for it. Whenever Hoy made a brilliant catch, the fans would stand up en masse and wildly wave hats and arms - the only way they could communicate with him and show their approval and joy."

Many of Hoy's teammates, out of respect and love for him, learned to sign. His honesty was unquestionable. His grandson remembers a story that when the umpires asked him whether he trapped the ball or caught it on the fly, he'd tell them the truth.

Another aspect of his deafness was an advantage for baseball. Mike O'Donnel, a coach at Gallaudet College for the Deaf in Washington, DC, explained that deaf people are very sensitive to everything around them. They train their eyesight to be superior to a hearing person's sight. Hoy's grandson recalls that his grandfather had a sixth sense on fly balls, locating them in darkness and fog.

Hoy's career is remarkable: he batted .292, recorded over 3,000 putouts, stole 605 bases, and banged out 2,057 hits.

Retiring in 1903, he had a son to raise and a farm to work on. Selling the farm in 1904, Hoy became a personnel director with Goodyear, and then worked with the Methodist Book Concern. He remained active until his death in 1961, six months short of his 100th birthday. In game three of the 1961 World Series with the Yankees and the Reds, he threw out the first ball.

Many are trying to get Hoy into the National Hall of Fame; there is even a Dummy Hoy Committee. Sam Crawford felt Hoy should be included and so do many others. In 1996 Hoy made it into the final five candidates in the veterans committee, but did not make it into the Hall. All of his fans and supporters will try again.

The plaque honoring Bill Klem in Cooperstown credits him with introducing arm signals for strikes in 1905, but this really happened with Hoy in 1885.

Hoy was a great man; he was a great ball player. And he always accepted his world of silence. He never let it stop him and always believed in who he was. In 1961, bordering on the age of civil rights and political correctness, Hoy was annoyed that sportswriters now called him William Hoy. He barked back, "Tell them to call me Dummy again, like always."

BARBARA OREMLAND is Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, University of Louisville; Director, Kentucky SABR.

Louisville Baseball Briefs

By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr.

* *In spite of a regular-season losing record, the 1939 Colonels won the Junior World Series, scratching out an 11-inning victory in the seventh game.*

* *The all-time AA record for walks in a single season (147) was set by the Colonels' Nick Polly in 1944.*

* *From 1944 to 1946, "One Hop" Chico Genovese established an AA record for consecutive games in the outfield without an error (268).*

* *In 1949, fireballer Maurice McDermott of Louisville struck out a record 20 batters in a single game.*

* *One of the most famous Colonel pitching performances came in 1959 when Juan Pizarro threw a no-hitter against Charleston before a huge home crowd on "Paramount Pickle Night".*

* *Howie Bedell is the AA co-leader for consecutive-game hitting streaks, going safely for 43 games in 1961.*

A Tale of Two Cities

Former scribe recalls high jinks in Kansas City and Louisville

By Carl Lundquist

In an official visit to the town of the big bat factory in 1960, could there be forgiveness to their hostile invaders who ruined the first trip to a professional ballpark in 1924 for an innocent kid of 11?

These haughty marauders, who called themselves Colonels and were heavily armed with weapons from that factory, came to a brand new facility and mercilessly mistreated the defending league champion Kansas City Blues, 9 to 1.

A timely intervention by a dove of peace provided evidence that they deserved to lose and the first impulse to throw the KC BLUES KNOTHOLE GANG PIN NO. 2495 into the nearby Kaw River was vetoed. That dove, also called Mom, knew what she was doing. Good thing, too, because it still is worn proudly on occasions, alongside another as a lifetime member of the Baseball Writers of America, class of 1937.

Along the way in that lifetime there were some fabulous side trips into that wondrously phony hoopla of horn-tooting called Public Relations and/or Promotion. And so here came Louisville in 1960. And a super good guy, Joe Burke - who had sales-pitched and won Louisville as the convention city for the annual winter baseball meetings - always one of the sparkling events on the annual diamond calendar. It was in December but this was a preparation session, alerting the townfolks that always "IT'S FUN TO BE A FAN."

As the PR rep from minor league headquarters in Columbus, another troublesome town in the American Association, I had instant rapport with guys and dolls, happy to call themselves old-timers who remembered past heroes with the other teams, the Toledo Mudhens, Columbus Senators, Indianapolis Indians, St. Paul Saints, Minneapolis Millers, Milwaukee Brewers and those hometown Blues.

There was an energetic No. 2 man with top honcho Burke, a Notre Dame grad, Dan O'Brien, who eventually succeeded this drummer in the minor league jazz section.

Amidst all the foofaraw there was a well-kept secret but we got in because of proximity. Sequestered away while the Colonels were on a road trip were 21 brand new 1961 model Edsels, the car for everybody's future. We were shamelessly secretive. It had a grill that looked like a horse collar and was so creatively bad it might well have taken the auto industry back to horse and buggy days. Well, you couldn't blame the ColoneIs. They weren't in town.

Louisville was just a spoke in the big-wheel Edsel caper. That stash, inside Parkway Field, was one of many across the land where on a designated date there was a mass unveiling to auto critics who mainly gave them a rating of 4-knocks.

* * *

In no particular sequence, because memories do not come in numerical order, call 1939 a vintage year in this Tale of Two Cities.

Kansas City was the site for the American Association All-Star Game and on a rainy night Louisville provided the lightning.

The game was washed away and created a session of unbridled sociability in the Hotel Muehlebach, owned by George

In two seasons with his hometown Colonels, Reese batted in the high .270s; in his second year (1939) he stole 35 bases.

Muehlebach, also the proprietor of the ballpark of the same name. The drinks kept tinkling with no curfew, not even a seventh inning stretch, and out of a not quite clear-blue sky, here came Larry MacPhail, a red-haired arsonist.

MacPhail, top honcho of the Brooklyn Dodgers, upstaged the storm-struck all-stars with spectacular details of the big deal in which he acquired shortstop Pee Wee Reese from the Louisville Colonels, a sure-fire prospect for the Baseball Hall of Fame, which had just been opened that very year.

In the wettened atmosphere of the Muehlebach hospitality suite, there was some negative reaction that leaned on MacPhail's renowned touchiness. Harold (Spike) Claassen of the Associated Press observed that there was a bumper crop of shortstops budding in the Association that season, and that frail Pee Wee was not the best. He noted that his pallor indicated he might be a "lung job and maybe you just bought him a spot on the Brooklyn bench."

The comments from the 6-foot-8 Claassen, who might well have been a varsity basketball center for the Iowa Hawkeyes, where he studied diplomacy before joining AP, brought instant action.

"Pow" was the one-punch response, knocking Claassen slightly sideways, and effectively ending the hilarities as every one committed to a typewriter quickly departed for their own interlude of punching. And supporting Spike's research on abundant shortstops, the Blues had a nice little fellow, Phil Rizzuto, who followed Pee Wee into the Hall of Fame. There were two others of quality. Jimmy Pofahl of the Millers, and Huck Geary, a rover and early drop-out because he had a quirk involving departures that earned him the nickname of homesick Huck.

Of anticlimactic consequence, the All-Stars inundated the Blues, 19-7, the following afternoon, July 19.

Ah, but there were monumental consequences for back-to-back afternoons in 1927, when mighty Joe Hauser hit a couple of $100-plus home runs. Hauser, who earned recognition as the home run king of the minors, was with the Blues for this single season and was not happy with the enormous dimensions of the park, especially right field. Not only was it a toll call from home plate, there also was a steep terrace and a right field wall which never had been conquered in a league game.

In an exhibition benefit for Mercy Hospital, shortly after the park was opened, Babe Ruth hit one out with a fungo bat but it didn't count.

The first of the Hauser howitzers was on a Saturday. The ball cleared the wall with room to spare and the fans were delirious. Various hats were passed and there was a time-out while the grounds crew plucked coins thrown on the field. It was no big deal

for Joe and so he duplicated his feat the next day. This time the ball bounced against a sign-board across the street. There was no time for counting the second deluge of money because the Blues were racing to catch a train for a road trip.

Ernie Mehl, columnist for the *Kansas City Star*, sat with Hauser on the floor of the lurching train and toted up more than $100 as he recalled it.

The park, a thing of beauty, was an early day monster and produced a dead last finish after the 1923 season, in which the Blues won the pennant and set various hitting records. The pennant team, involving such authentic fence-busters as Bunny Brief and manager Wilbur Good, had been developed for little old Association Park, a hit-hippodrome where balls crashed over and against the fences with ear-splitting regularity. In the first full season in the new spread of cattle ranch dimensions, those homers became routine catches and the Blues finished dead last.

Long gone from the old hometown when the Athletics came in 1955 with all their white elephants, the most notable link with the past was in 1964. The so-called Major League A's got involved with an authentic genius who also was a borderline madman.

Charlie Finley

Charley Finley, who dyed sheep various colors and leased grazing space on that mountainous terrace, tired of such gimmicks, as did the fans, and he sought greener pastures.

This time, the Tale of Two Cities originated in a third city, and the comic opera aspect defiled the memory of Charles Dickens. Even in New York, a haven for literary impostors, it was difficult to recall anything much weirder.

Finley, who had nourished the "blue grass roots" of Kentucky fandom with not much notice, had announced that he was ready to move the Kansas City franchise to Louisville in time for the 1964 major league season, though it was in mid-January of that year.

This scribe, after two decades as a staffer for the United Press, had taken over as the Eastern Manager for *The Sporting News* in New York, and was totally surprised, as was another Hall of Fame shortstop, president Joe Cronin of the American League. Joe even had Kansas City roots on those 1927 Blues.

Now, notably steamed up, because the American League schedule had been completed and no procedures had been developed, even in Louisville, he called a full-house press conference to denounce Finley's contemplations.

Cronin informed Finley that the league had voted almost unanimously against his proposal and gave him a February 1 deadline to renew with Kansas City or be expelled from baseball. Finley, in turn, declared that he would test the legality of Cronin's edict "as soon as I can get the case into court."

Then he sprinted away with a dozen or more scribes in pursuit.

"Follow that elevator," was the rally cry as just one scribe, Joe Reichler of the AP, managed to squeeze in. When he resurfaced, he noted that it wasn't worth the trip, because Finley had nothing more to say.

Cronin, ever the politically correct ambassador, noted that he had nothing against Louisville and that he had enjoyable trips there when he played with the Blues, adding that "I'm sure they aren't ready for us."

Ah, memories. How sweet they are!

CARL LUNDQUIST was United Press staffer 1937-56; lifetime member of Baseball Writers Association of America.

Personal Memories of the '41 Colonels

An oral monolog by Tony Lupien

[Editor's note: This is an edited transcript of a taped message he made in his Norwich, Vermont home for SABR on May 1, 1996.]

I went through spring training with the Boston club in 1941, in Sarasota, Florida. It was obvious that we had several first basemen on the roster and the chances were that when the spring training was over, I was going someplace, but not back to Boston. So my wife and my baby of eight months drove with me to Florida. We stayed at Sarasota for spring training until I was sent to the Louisville club, which was training over in Bradenton, Florida, about 20 miles from Sarasota.

We were only there a few days because it was the end of the spring training season and the club was going back to Louisville. So my wife and I and the baby drove from Bradenton, Florida to Louisville, never having been in that part of the country in our lives. And finally, we met the club up at the Henry Clay Hotel in Louisville, three days before the season opened. At that time, Louisville was just starting to come alive with defense for the war. Aluminum plants and other industries were springing up all over the place. The city was bulging with people coming in there to work. Uniformed people were everywhere from Ft. Knox, and the place was a real beehive of activity.

We were in the hotel and looking for a place to live and just having no luck at all. And finally, after several days, we had pretty much given up the thought of finding a place and very sadly my wife was talking about taking the baby and going back to Boston and staying there until the season was over. I could find a room someplace and stay the season in Louisville.

Out of nowhere a lady walked up to us and asked if we were the Lupiens, and we said yes. She said her name was Louise Lindley. She lived out on Taylor Boulevard and she said she and her husband had been baseball fans all their lives. They heard that we were looking for a place to live. Could we come out and take a look at their house? They would like to have us live with them for the summer. Of course we would! These were just the most wonderful people. They gave us the run of the first floor. They slept up in the attic (where it was hotter than hell!) and did their cooking down in the cellar. They ended up just like being part of our family, and us part of theirs. It turns out they had been watching the ball games in Louisville all their lives. In fact, Jim Lindley had worked as a ticket taker at the ballpark years before. He enriched us with many stories of old-time Louisville ball players and people like Jay Kirke and Joe McCarthy. I learned an awful lot about the tradition of Louisville baseball just listening to him sitting around the house.

I had been at Little Rock in the Southern League the year before, when it was in the midst of the worst of depressions. The town was in very bad shape, and to come to Louisville was just like going to heaven as far as we were concerned. Parkway Field was in very good shape. The fans were great and they came out in fine numbers. It was really a joy to join the Louisville ball club.

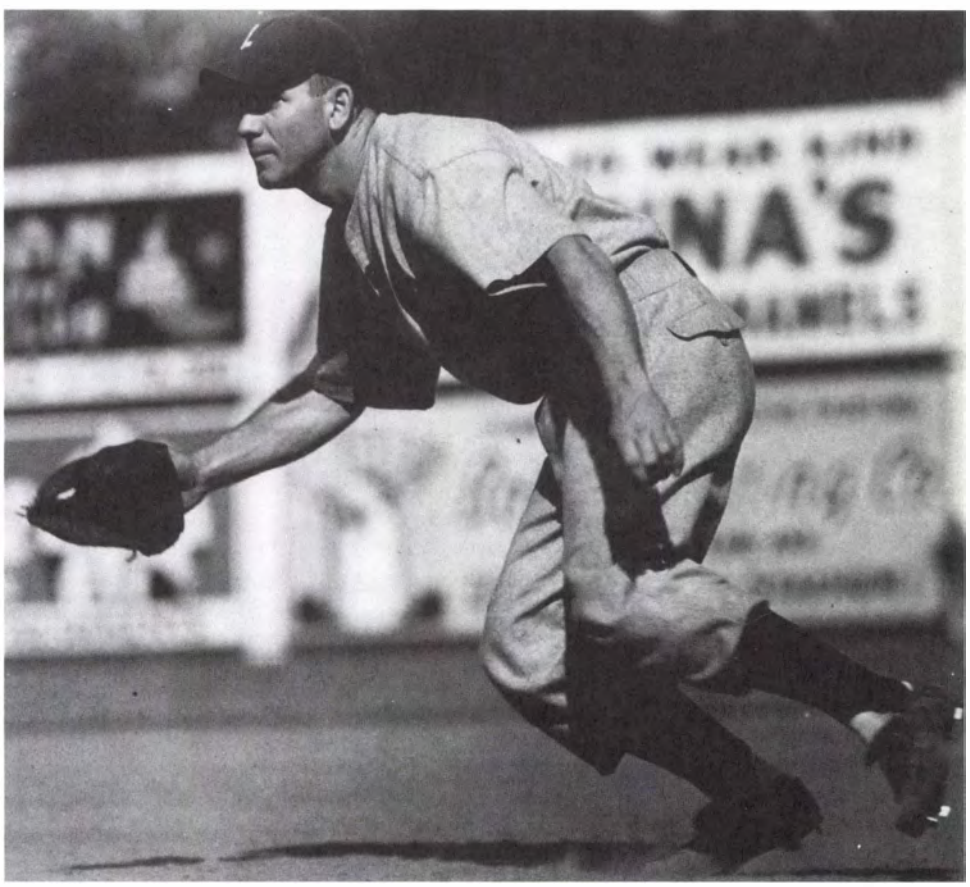
I might say, too, that now we were traveling in trains that were some of the best, going through Chicago to Minneapolis and Kansas City. No longer did we have the dregs of the Pullman cars that somebody had dumped on all the southern railroads.

Conditions were excellent. We had a nice trainer there and clubhouse man. It was just like the big leagues to us after having been in other minor league situations.

In addition, there was the opportunity to play for a great man, Bill Burwell, who was the manager of that club. To me, I played for several managers in the big leagues and Triple-A and I would say that this was the best handler of pitchers that I have ever met in my life. And some of the young pitchers that developed under his tutelage, people like Tex Hughson, learned so much that we would just sit in the railroad cars and listen to him talk. He could tell them more in five minutes than these smart executives that I see on the television today with stop watches and all kinds of equipment and don't know what town they're in.

This was a period where you played, and your object was to help the ball club. It was not a me, me, me world like it is today. There were no closers and set-up men and all of these fancy names. If you could relieve and get somebody out, you went in and relieved. And if you had to stay in the ball game and pitch and get a bad beating to straighten out a pitching staff, you did so without complaining and beefing about it. It seems like today, because of the emphasis on individual statistics and greed on the part of everyone, players and owners alike, that a fellow is more interested in his record than he is in how the team does. So, if he has to face a tough left-hander on a certain day, or he just doesn't feel quite right, he has to get out of the line-up and rest for a day or two. In those days we played day in, day out, drunk or sober, sick or well, and as Bill Burwell would say, you're gonna have days when you face pitchers that you're not gonna hit, but you do something else to help the ball club. Maybe you'll get a base on balls; maybe you'll steal a base; maybe you'll go from first to third on a play that is gonna change the ball game. Maybe you will make a great defensive play and help us. Try to manufacture something to help the ball club, because you're not going to have people that you can hit every day. And I think this is a great lesson for a young hitter to learn.

We never spent much time in the office in those days as ball players, but I know that we had a president of the club, Bruce Dudley, who was well-respected among baseball people, and ran a very efficient operation at Louisville. Our traveling secretary was a man named Harry Jenkins, who later had a



Tony Lupien charges a ground ball during a Colonels' road game in Columbus, OH, 1941.

good executive job in the Braves organization. I believe he was from Owensboro, Kentucky. Nice guy. And our trainer was Frank Bidack, and he was a good man. A young guy who could do more for the training job, which in those days did not require a degree in kinesiology. It required a knowledge of human nature, just like it does today. And most of the ills are all up in the head and not in the body.

Don Hill was the radio broadcaster for the ball games in those days. He was eminently fair. And was good to the ball players, but he didn't pull any punches.

Let's talk about the roster of the ball club a little bit. It was not a time that rosters changed very much. You stayed pretty much with the ball club that you had from the beginning to the end. I think we had two or three pitching changes of new men that came and some that went, but that was about it. The pitchers that we had were: Bill Butland, Owen Scheetz, Bill Sayles, Fred Shaffer, Oscar Judd, Bill Fleming, Bill Lefebvre, and Emerson Dickman. I want to point out that we did have for about a half a season, Tex Hughson, who developed into one of the fine right-handed stars in the game and pitched well until he hurt his arm. I had played with Tex in Scranton and again in Louisville, and we were teammates in Boston.

Our catchers were: Joe Glenn, who had been with the Yankees as Dickey's understudy for a long time; George Lacy; and Fred Walters, who was with us for quite a bit of the time before he went to Montreal. He ended up later on managing in the Association and then the Southern League. He was from Laurel, Mississippi and was one of my best friends on the club. Joe Glenn (one of the characters of the game), could tell us nine million stories about Lou Gehrig. And it was just at that time that they were talking about making a picture of Gehrig's life and Joe used to tell us all kinds of things, and he said he knew more about Gehrig than any movie director in Hollywood. He was a very entertaining guy to tell us about the past with the Yankees.

In the outfield we had Walter Cazen, who was a veteran minor league ball player. He had come over from Rochester in a deal, but he had played a long time in the International League and in the Texas League and he was a character in his own right. A funny man. Lot of characters that he could talk about and he knew a million old Texas League stories that would entertain you on the trains. He was full of hell and practical jokes and, of course, when you live that intimately on the trains for a full year and in the hotels, you have some time on your hands to do the work of the devil.

In center field we had Chet Morgan, who had been a veteran Association player, lead-off man and a fine gentleman from Mississippi. Knew how to play. Played great position in the outfield and did a wonderful job for us in center field.

In right field we had Joe Vosmik, who had come over to the club in part of the deal that brought Pee Wee Reese to Brooklyn. It was an involved deal and Joe, we felt, belonged in the big leagues and did not belong in Louisville with us. But he pitched in and helped us; he was a fine right-handed hitter with a wealth of experience. A great person to have on the club. Artie Parks also had come over from Brooklyn and he was a left-handed outfielder; he was more or less our back-up outfielder and spelled anybody who might be hurt in the outfield.

In the infield we had Junie Andres at third base, from the University of Indiana, who played at Louisville the year before. A great basketball player. Nice, big, easy-going guy. Had good power. Had it not been for the war, I'm sure that Junie would have had an excellent big league career somewhere. John Pesky, who spent a life with the Red Sox organization, was our shortstop. He had played at Rocky Mount the year before and came to Louisville in one big jump and had just a phenomenal season. Somewhere in the .330s, I believe, at the plate, and the next year we went to Boston and he had a carbon copy of that same year. He knew how to play and was an excellent shortstop for us. He was named the league's most valuable player.

We had a boy named Al Mazur, who played second base, who would have been a fine big league second baseman had it not been for the war. You've got to realize, this was just the time when the draft was taking single men first, and some of these boys were going to be in the service before long. I

played first base and was lucky enough to have been there. Paul Campbell, who had played first base the year before, was in Montreal. He was a hard man to follow because he was very popular in Louisville. A good hustler. Good attitude, and had been an excellent player at Louisville, so I was lucky to follow him and be accepted as a first baseman on that club.

We lost the pennant to Columbus. It was just that they had an outstanding group over there. Preacher Roe, Harry Brecheen, Harry Walker, etc.

Practically everybody on the ball club went either to the Cardinals or one of the contenders in the National League from that club. And they beat us down the stretch. Then in the play-offs, we beat Minneapolis in the first round. Columbus beat Kansas City. And then we lost to Columbus to close out the playoffs. I never felt sadder or yet any more proud than on that final game that we got beat in Louisville, to see Bill Burwell walk across that field after the last out and shake hands with Burt Shotton of Columbus. This was a class man, the likes of which baseball could use today.

Fifty-five years have passed since I played on that club and sometimes it's hard for me to remember everything that happened. I know that we had a good, fine hustling club. The makings of a club that would have become a perennial American Association contender, had it not been for the war.

If I recall correctly, my salary for the year at Louisville was somewhere between $3,500 and $4,000, as an option ball player from the Red Sox. Today, I guess they can play in Class D and make that kind of money, but I know one thing, they can't have the fun we had in the game.

One of my great memories of the years I spent in the game was the year in Louisville. I don't think my wife and I were ever happier or treated better by anyone than we were in that town. And I hated to see Louisville go out of baseball when they did, but I'm sure glad to see that they're back in business today.

TONY LUPIEN spent ten years in the big leagues, with the Boston Red Sox and the Philadelphia Phillies; played 1st base for Louisville Colonels, 1941.

Louisville Baseball Briefs

By Harry J. Rothgerber, Jr.

* *In 1964, American League owners prevented Charles O. Finley from moving the Kansas City Athletics to Louisville. (He had already signed a two-year contract with Fairgrounds Stadium!)*

* *Even though the Colonels won the IL pennant in 1972, low attendance and stadium difficulties led to the Red Sox' transfer of their roster to Pawtucket.*

* *After his retirement as an active player, Kentuckian and Hall of Famer Jim Bunning managed for one year in Double A and four years in Triple A in the Phillies organization.*

* *University of Louisville player Jim LaFountain rapped an NCAA record 14 RBIs in a game against Western Kentucky University in 1976.*

* *Cardinal Stadium (formerly Fairgrounds Stadium) is the largest in the minor leagues, with a seating capacity of 33,000.*

* *When the Louisville Redbirds returned to the American Association in 1982, they drew 868,418 fans - nearly 200,000 more than any minor league team had drawn before.*

* *In 1983, the Louisville Redbirds became the first minor league team to draw more than one million fans in one season.*

* *Two Louisville Redbirds were American Association league leaders for the 1996 season: Dmitri Young led the league in batting average with .333 and Richard Batchelor recorded 28 saves.*

The Louisville Scandal

1877 was, perhaps, the bleakest year in Falls City sports

By Daniel E. Ginsburg

The city of Louisville has a rich baseball history. Louisville was a charter member of the National League as well as the major league American Association. Pete Browning, perhaps the greatest hitter not in baseball's Hall of Fame, spent most of his career in Louisville. Honus Wagner, arguably the greatest shortstop in baseball history, launched his major league career in Louisville. Today, Louisville hosts one of the most successful minor league baseball franchises in the country--the Louisville Redbirds.

However, despite all of these positive contributions to baseball history, the city of Louisville will forever be linked with the 1877 game-fixing scandal, one of the most notorious gambling scandals in the history of baseball.

Contrary to popular belief, the 1877 Louisville scandal was not the first gambling incident in baseball history. Games were fixed by gamblers as early as 1865, and the National Association was riddled with scandal during its five-year history beginning in 1871. While part of the blame for the problem can be attributed to the moral code at the time - corruption was also prevalent in America during this time frame in both politics and business - organized baseball must take the lion's share of the responsibility for winking at corruption rather than taking a strong stand against it. Baseball officials and owners, worried that the exposure of gambling scandals would hurt the popularity of the game and injure their business, chose not to strongly investigate rumors of corruption or to take strong action against suspect players. In fact, dishonesty in the National Association was a key factor in the demise of that organization and the founding of the National League in 1876. The National League promised to fight the venal practices, although initial rosters of National League teams contained most of the same players suspected of repeated game-fixing during the National Association days.

During the 1876 season, the Louisville team had taken a strong stand against corruption with the expulsion of George Bechtel for throwing a game and attempting to bribe teammates to throw future games. However, showing inconsistency typical of baseball's early days, the team acquired Bill Craver to play shortstop for the 1877 season, despite the fact that he had been a key figure in various underhanded deals going back to 1869.

Prospects looked bright for the Louisville Grays as the 1877 National League season began. In addition to Craver, the team had added outfielder George Hall, one of the great early sluggers. During the 1876 season, Hall became the National League's first home run champion, and finished second in the league in batting with an average of .366. With holdovers such as Jim Devlin, rapidly developing into one of the league's best pitchers, and Joseph Gerhardt, one of the best second basemen in the league, Louisville was expected to contend for the 1877 pennant.

The Grays entered August with a comfortable lead over second place Boston. In the opening days of that month, Gray's third baseman, Bill Hague, developed a painful boil in his left armpit, and based on the strong recommendation of George Hall, the club recruited Al Nichols to fill Hague's place. The light-hitting Nichols had been playing with an inde-

pendent team in Pittsburgh.

On August 13 the Grays had a record of 25-13, good for a 3 1/2 game lead over Boston with 22 games left in the season. The Grays then went into a seven-game tailspin, including losing four straight to Boston to knock themselves out of first place.

It is believed by many that the seven-game losing steak was the result of crooked play by Craver, Devlin, Hall and Nichols. However, much of the testimony about the Louisville scandal is conflicting, and to this day no one has a clear picture of exactly what happened and which games were played on their merits.

It appears that the problems were triggered by a Brooklyn man named Frank Powell, who was George Hall's brother-in-law. According to Hall's later testimony, Powell had been urging Hall for over a year to increase his income by throwing games. At first Hall steadfastly refused, but finally, during the 1877 season, he began to weaken and proposed to Devlin that they work together.

1877 Louisville team

At the same time Devlin had been approached by a New York gambler named McCloud. McCloud offered Devlin money to throw games and told him that if he was ever willing to do so he should send a telegram to McCloud containing the word "sash."

The first game to be thrown was an exhibition game in Cincinnati. It was common in those days for National League teams to supplement their income and fill up their schedule by playing non-league games around the country.

Devlin received $100 from McCloud and gave $25 to Hall. He told Hall that McCloud had sent $50, and that he and Hall would split the proceeds 50-50.

The next game thrown was an exhibition at Indianapolis. Devlin was paid $100 for this game but ended up giving none of it to Hall. Louisville lost this poorly played game 7-3. Hall and Nichols then conspired to lose an exhibition at Lowell, Massachusetts. Devlin was apparently not involved in this one.

In addition to the throwing of these non-league games, there is strong suspicion that some of the league games were also thrown by the players. Before a game against Hartford, club president Charles E. Chase received an anonymous telegram to "watch your men." Louisville lost badly to Hartford that day, primarily through errors by Hall, Craver, and Nichols.

Chase received a telegram before the next game predicting that Louisville would lose again, and when this prediction came true it raised the suspicions of Chase. At the same time, *The Courier-Journal* sportswriter John Haldeman became suspicious from watching the play of the Grays. An investigation was quickly launched.

One of the key tip-offs for Chase was the fact that substitute Al Nichols was receiving a tremendous number of telegrams. President Chase confronted Nichols, demanding permission to read these telegrams. Nichols indignantly refused, but relented after Chase said that refusal was an admission of guilt. While the telegrams were vaguely worded, two from P. A. Williams, a Brooklyn pool seller, raised a great deal of suspicion.

At this point, the investigation began to pick up steam. Haldeman then expressed carefully worded suspicions in *The Courier-Journal*, and Chase prepared to confront the players.

Chase's first target was Devlin. According to Chase, he told Devlin that he knew that he had been throwing games, and "I want a full confession. I'll give you until

8:00 P.M. to tell me the whole story."

Before Chase could hear back from Devlin, George Hall approached him offering to confess. According to Chase, Hall explained, "I know I have done wrong, but as God is my judge, I have never thrown a league game. If I tell you all I know about this business, will you promise to let me down easy?"

Chase responded, "I know everything you have done, and I can't make any promises."

Hall took this to mean that Devlin had confessed, and Hall did likewise. He admitted throwing the exhibition games and named Nichols as the prime culprit. In reality, it appears that Nichols was merely following Hall's and Devlin's leads and serving as a go-between from the players to the gamblers, which accounts for the large volume of telegrams.

The entire team was then summoned to a meeting at Chase's office and all the players were requested to sign an order giving the directors permission to inspect all telegrams sent or received by them. Chase added, "There is no reason not to grant this request. Refusal to go along with this order will be construed as an acknowledgment of guilt."

All the team agreed to sign this order with one exception - Bill Craver. He had been under suspicion for his play throughout the year, and his past record certainly did nothing to inspire the confidence of Louisville management. Craver told Louisville management, "You can (open the telegrams) if you will pay me the two months salary you owe me." Craver's wires were not opened; Devlin, Nichols, and Hall had not set such a condition on the reading of theirs.

Hall's confession took place on October 27. Three days later a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Louisville club was held to hear the evidence. Based on this evidence, and with strong support from National League president William Hulbert, the board unanimously resolved to expel Hall, Craver, Devlin and Nichols from the Louisville club.

While it was proved that Hall, Devlin, and Nichols threw games, no real proof in this case was ever brought against Craver. In fact, other than his refusal to let the Louisville club open his telegrams, the only evidence against Craver was a statement by Nichols and teammate George Schaffer that Craver's play caused him (Schaffer) to make errors, and Schaffer's repetition of a conversation with Nichols in which Nichols implied that he "thought some of the players were not working on the square. I understood him to mean Craver."

Craver denied ali charges, and sent a blistering letter to *The Courier-Journal.* His protests fell on deaf ears however, and at the National League's annual meeting in December, the Louisville four were permanently expelled from professional baseball.

These expulsions, and the tremendous publicity they received, finally sent a message that the National League would not tolerate corruption and crooked play. While many worried that this public exposure would damage baseball, in fact the expulsions had the opposite effect by demonstrating to the fans and the press that the owners were serious about cleaning up the game.

While the banishments proved good for baseball in general, the entire scandal proved disastrous for the Louisville Grays. Stripped of three of their best players, most observers felt that the club would quickly fold. However, the Grays managed to struggle on, trying to put together a team, before finally submitting their resignation to the National League on March 8, 1878.

In the aftermath of the Louisville scandal, a new era dawned for professional baseball. Because of the actions taken by the Louisville management, and the strong support of National League president William Hulbert, confidence in the game's integrity was restored. While the exposure gave baseball a black eye, the players' expulsion and Hulbert's unrelenting attitude to their pleas for reinstatement established a strong code for the National League, which held during the rest of the century. No gambling or game-fixing would be tolerated.

This allowed the game to grow and prosper and truly become the national pastime.

DANIEL E. GINSBURG operates an advertising & PR firm in Florida; abiding interest in 19th century baseball history.

Bourbon, Baseball and Barney

The story of Barney Dreyfuss - "Last of the Baseball Squires"

By Dan Bonk and Len Martin

Barney Dreyfuss was the last president of the National League Louisville Colonels. Using business skills honed at a Louisville whiskey distillery, he made a commitment to succeed in baseball. Unfortunately for Louisville, Barney could only guide the Colonels for a year before the team was dropped by the league. In 1900 he moved to Pittsburgh to gain control of the fledgling Pirates. In the 13 National League seasons prior to his arrival, the Pirates had finished an average of 29 games out of first place. There were six Pirate presidents before Dreyfuss, few quality players, and a frustrated base of fans. By his second season the Pirates won their first of three consecutive National League pennants. During his 33-year stewardship, the Pirates won the National League pennant six times and the World Series twice, making Barney the most successful owner in the century-plus history of the team.

Dreyfuss was an unlikely baseball success story. German-born, he was small in stature and spoke English with a heavy accent. He could be obstinate, difficult, and argumentative to the extent that, at times, his peers sought ways to avoid his company. He was nevertheless respected because he brought much needed discipline, organization, and focus to league affairs. At times he was supportive and considerate of his players, but he could also be highly intimidating and critical.

His son-in-law, Bill Benswanger, who succeeded Dreyfuss as president of the Pirates just prior to Barney's death in 1932, admitted, "Barney could be a stubborn man. He relied implicitly on his judgment. He was a man of pride and principle."

Brooklyn club president Charles Ebbets once told Dreyfuss, "Barney, you're a bulldog. You get hold of something and you never let it go." "He was a fighter for what he thought was right," declared American League founder Ban Johnson. One-time Pirate shortstop Dick Bartell, who didn't care much for Dreyfuss, recalled, "Dreyfuss was tough to talk to, tough to negotiate with, and a stickler on petty matters."

"He was the most intense diamond enthusiast I ever met," observed John K. Tener, National League president from 1913-1918. "No matter how a conversation began, he channeled into baseball within a brief time. Thereafter, all other topics were out."

When arguing salaries, Dreyfuss could be unyielding even with Hall of Fame caliber stars. "You can't steal first base," is the famous baseball quote attributed to Dreyfuss during contract negotiations with Pirate all-time stolen base leader Max Carey. Perhaps the most balanced recollection of Dreyfuss, however, was advanced by Rogers Hornsby in his autobiography *My War With Baseball.* Hornsby wrote, "He made baseball his life, and you couldn't take a magazine out of his office without him knowing it. But he did everything he could to improve baseball."

According to family records, he was born Bernard Dreyfuss in Freiburg, Germany on February 23, 1865. He was the second of four children and the only son of Samuel and Fanny Goldschmid Dreyfuss. Raised and educated in Germany, Barney apprenticed as a bank clerk as a teenager and aspired to come to America.

At age 17, Dreyfuss arrived in Paducah, Kentucky to work at a distillery owned by his

cousins, the Bernheim Brothers who, years later, were known as the makers of I.W. Harper brand bourbon. Barney liked to claim that his first assignment was scrubbing whiskey barrels, but the brothers started him out as an assistant bookkeeper to utilize his bank training. While in Paducah, Dreyfuss took an interest in baseball, playing second base and operating a semipro team. In 1888, he became a naturalized citizen. That same year, the distillery moved its entire operations upstream to Louisville. Barney eventually worked his way to the important position of credit manager, where his efforts were rewarded with a lucrative equity interest in the company.

Shortly after his arrival in Louisville, Dreyfuss collected his savings and bought a small interest in the local American Association team. He gradually increased his financial stake until, just prior to the 1899 season, he gained control of what was now a National League franchise. In doing so, Dreyfuss took the biggest financial gamble of his life - resigning his position with the Bernheims and selling his stake in the distillery to finance the acquisition. Although his baseball venture reportedly came on the heels of advice from his physician to seek a more fresh-air-oriented profession, years later he commented, "I had a vision of what was coming, though I could not at the time see stadiums like Forbes Field. I saw that America was a nation of sport-loving people that liked to be out in the open. And I knew that baseball was a game of the people. It thrilled me, an immigrant from Germany. I decided to go on with the game."

Barney Dreyfuss

The Louisville franchise was very tenuous when Barney took over. In his first season, Dreyfuss became embroiled in a battle with a faction of owners who tried to deprive him of lucrative Sunday playing dates. When his ballpark burned down late in the season, Dreyfuss knew Louisville was finished in the National League and began to search for options to remain in baseball.

Dreyfuss had two valuable assets at the end of the 1899 season, talented ball players under contract and investment capital. He bought into the Pittsburgh Pirates as part of a deal that caught team president William W. "Captain" Kerr somewhat off guard, but found support among the other Pirate owners on the promise that he would deliver his best Louisville players. Dreyfuss replaced Kerr as Pirates president and, with the infusion of new talent that included Honus Wagner and Fred Clarke, the team went on to their best season since 1893. Kerr tried to unseat Dreyfuss prior to the 1901 season, but was rebuffed when Barney successfully challenged him in court. Frustrated by Dreyfuss and perhaps jealous of his success, Kerr sold out.

No sooner had Dreyfuss gained a foothold in Pittsburgh than he was threatened by Ban Johnson's upstart American League. Johnson courted Kerr as an owner, offering to shift the Detroit franchise to Pittsburgh. Dreyfuss was rightfully wary, as Kerr had the capital and experience to be a successful com-

petitor. Seeking to shut the new league out of available playing venues, Dreyfuss signed leases at both Exposition Park and Recreation Park, the only two local ballparks considered suitable for major league baseball. Eventually, the deal fell through. Still feeling insecure, Dreyfuss immediately lobbied to make peace with the new league. When an agreement between the two leagues was hammered out in early 1903, it included specific provisions banning an American League team in Pittsburgh. Later that summer, in an effort to cement the partnership between the two leagues, the Pirates participated in the first World Series, losing to the Boston Pilgrims. The results mattered little to Dreyfuss; in fact, he even gave his losing squad his share of the Series receipts in gratitude for their efforts. More important to Barney, his baseball monopoly in Pittsburgh was safe and his prestige within baseball's inner circle was rising.

Dreyfuss championed various baseball issues he believed would improve business. He was fervent in his opinion that the game needed to be cleaned up to attract a higher class of clientele. He correctly reasoned that wealthier patrons would pay higher prices for the best seats and spend more on the game in general. Players who cursed, fought, smoked, or drank to excess were the focus of his wrath.

Opinionated and not always consistent in his views, Dreyfuss vehemently opposed player gambling, but he was famous for his own wagers, which included large sums bet on his Pirates during the 1903 World Series. He disdained real estate ownership, preferring to rent rather than own his home. However, he purchased a plot of land in a fashionable section of Pittsburgh and built the most extravagant ballpark of its era - Forbes Field. He squeezed extra profits out of his business wherever he could, but for years he was the only owner to ban advertising from the outfield walls of his ballpark.

Barney's baseball life reached its apex in 1909, the year he opened Forbes Field and his team captured its first World Championship. His critics labeled Forbes Field "Dreyfuss' Folly" because it was too big, too fancy, and too far from downtown Pittsburgh. Characteristically, Dreyfuss never doubted his decision to build it. On opening day, as he stood inside the main gate, he shook the hands of those who came to congratulate him and told a local reporter, "This is the happiest day of my life. I used to dream of such things as I see here today, but it was not until a comparatively [short] time ago that I ever thought to see them as realities."

Dreyfuss was competitive and liked to win. He was famous for maintaining extensive statistics and personal files on numerous major and minor league players in an effort to gain an advantage. He dubbed himself "First Division Barney," bragging of his teams' propensity to finish in the upper half of the league standings. The team achievement he most enjoyed citing was a record-setting six consecutive shutouts posted between June 2 and June 8, 1903.

Dreyfuss was proudest, however, of his efforts to bring credibility, integrity and organization to the league scheduling process. He never forgot how he was slighted by the league in 1899. After arriving in Pittsburgh, he took on the daunting task of developing schedules for both leagues each year. Initially his schedules were challenged, but his skill and tenacity in this area came to be viewed as incomparable. "How can you beat a guy like that? " decried Ban Johnson. "He pulls out a schedule as soon as he gets to a meeting. If you object to that he produces a second. Finally, he will come up with a third one. Invariably, with a few minor changes, it will be just to both leagues."

On February 5, 1932 Barney Dreyfuss died after contracting pneumonia following prostate surgery. Many believe he simply lost his will to live following the death of his only son, 36-year-old Sam, a year earlier. Barney's tenure as president of the Pittsburgh Pirates was, at the time, the longest in the history of the game. Famed sportswriter Dan Daniel called him "The Last of the Baseball Squires" and the "Dean of the Major Leagues."

Barney Dreyfuss is buried in Pittsburgh. In 1980, he was posthumously inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame at its second annual induction dinner in Los Angeles.

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