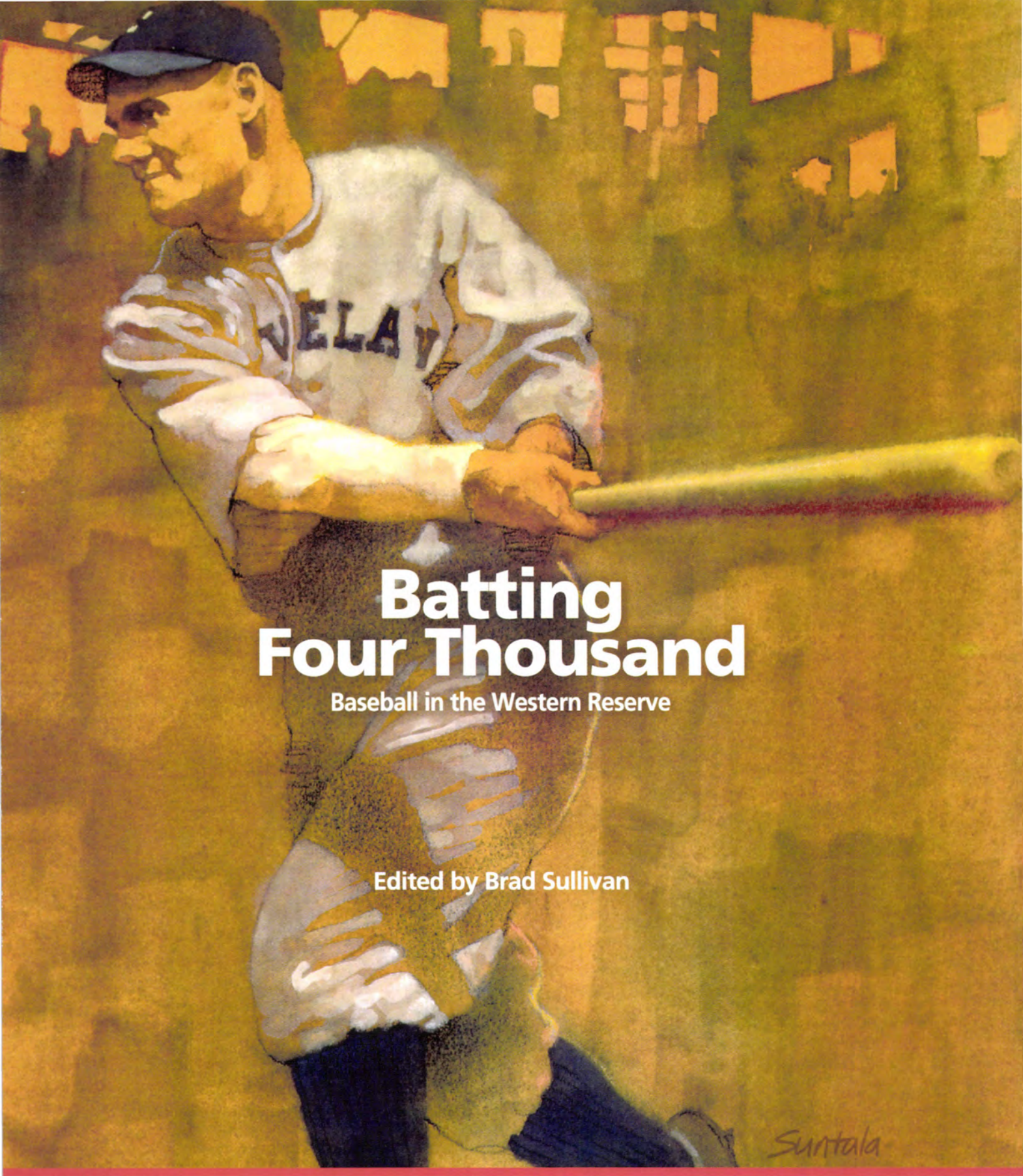
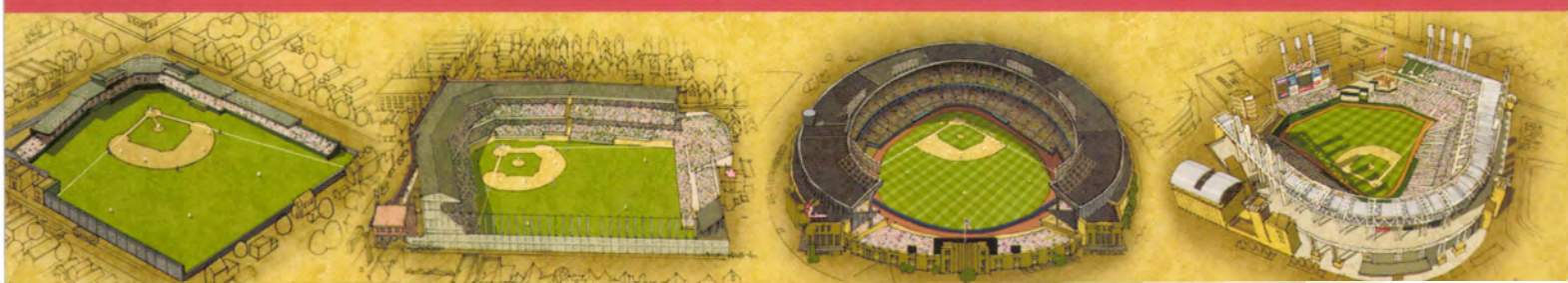


Batting Four Thousand

Baseball in the Western Reserve

Edited by Brad Sullivan



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Society for American
Baseball Research
Cleveland 2008

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A Note from the Editor

For more than a century and a half Cleveland has been a baseball town, and the game has provided fans throughout the Western Reserve with both joy and heartache, not always in equal doses. From an ordinance that (indicating something of the game's popularity at that early date) banned baseball in Public Square in 1845 to Game 7 of the American League Championship Series only last October, baseball in the Forest City, as Cleveland used to be affectionately called, has run the gamut from doom and gloom to the glorious joy of world championships.

You hold in your hands the collective work of authors from across the country, many of them SABR members. They provide varied perspectives on the players, owners, sportswriters, and (as you'll notice if you read closely) fans whose team effort across the generations has resulted in the distinct character of that strange and wonderful thing we call Cleveland baseball.

Longtime fans of the Indians will no doubt connect the title of this publication to the unforgettable Gomer Hodge (see page 66), whose moment of glory back in 1971 was captured with the help of some fuzzy math on his part. While the title might be whimsical, the efforts of our authors are not, and we hope you take the time to immerse yourself in these views of baseball history as seen through the lens of the culture particular to Northeast Ohio.

In no way does this work attempt to offer a comprehensive, panoramic view. It is rather a collection of snapshots. Hundreds of stories remain to be told, either for the first time or in greater depth. The reader is invited to explore other avenues for more information.

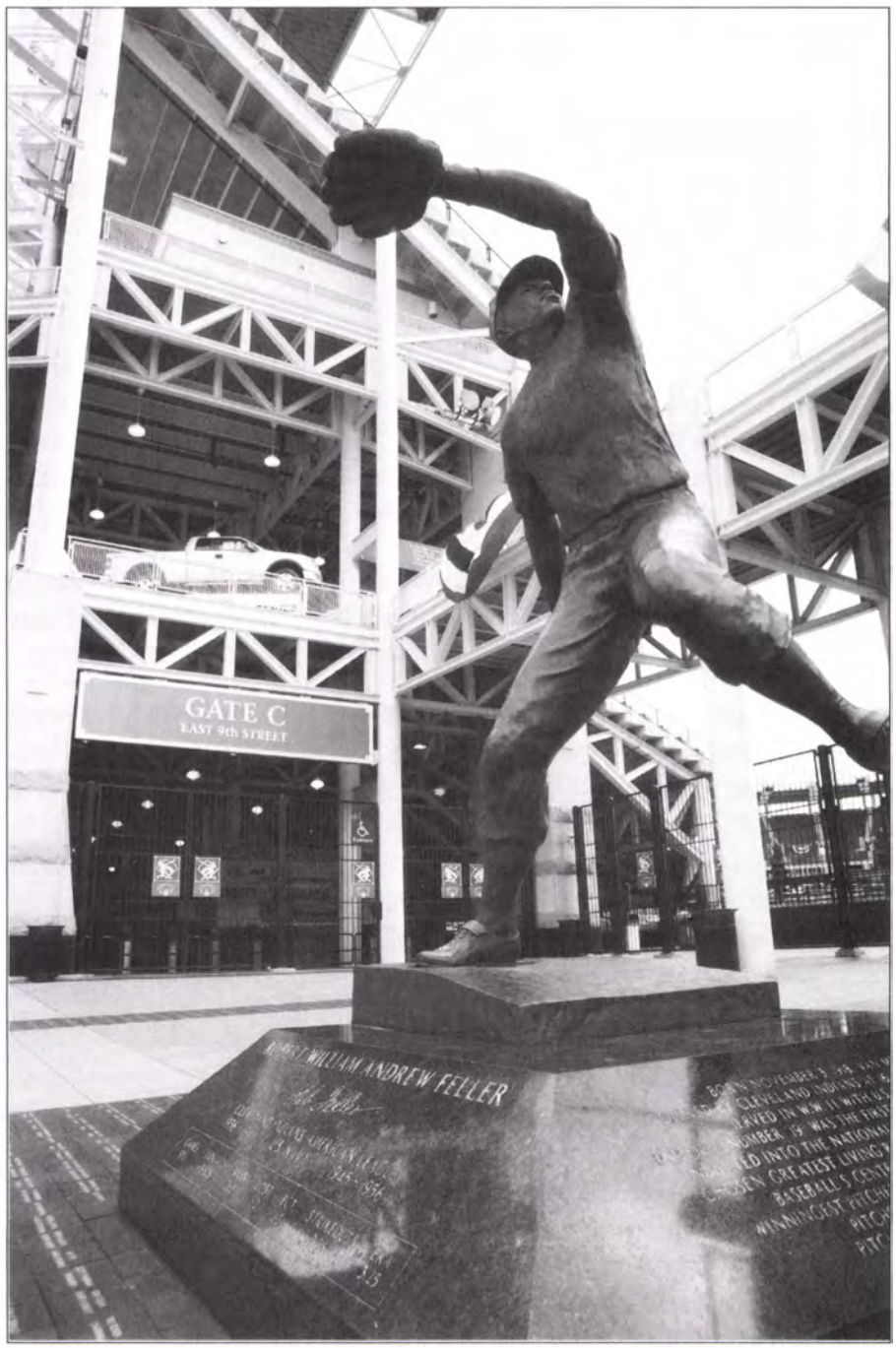
One place to begin would be SABR's convention journal of 1990. There, Morris Eckhouse offers a brief annotated bibliography of the essential Cleveland baseball library. Since then, several major additions to that library have appeared. These include Russell Schneider's *The Cleveland Indians Encyclopedia* (Temple University Press, 1996), Terry Pluto's *The Curse of Rocky Colavito: A Loving Look at a Thirty-Year Slump* (1994, Gray), Jack Torry's *Endless Summers: The Fall and Rise of the Cleveland Indians* (Diamond, 1995), and James M. Egan Jr.'s *Base Ball on the Western Reserve: The Early Game in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio, Year by Year and Town by Town, 1865–1900* (McFarland, 2008).

Though my name is listed on the cover, the honest truth is that the work of editing this book has been aided by the efforts of many people. Nick Frankovich, who spent many long hours improving the text, and Lisa Hochstein, whose elegant layout is eye-catching, deserve special mention. Jeffrey Suntala, who designed the cover, has given the book a face nicely fitted to its title and theme. Norman Macht, besides contributing his article about the Rommel game at League Park, lent his eagle eye and sound judgment to the proofreading process. Bill Nowlin pointed us in the direction of a treasure trove of relevant baseball research and then helped us edit it. Lenore Collins, Mark McKinstry, David Nemec, Jim Odenkirk, and Mike Sowell aided in the review process. Scott Flatow, SABR's peerless fact-checker, made many catches, some of them heroic, like that one (are you sitting down?) made by a certain center fielder at the Polo Grounds one afternoon in October many years ago. Indian summer, they call it. I think Vic Wertz would have remembered the details.

But enough of that. Turn the page. Welcome to baseball in the Western Reserve.

Brad Sullivan
April 17, 2008

COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS



Bob Feller winding up. The bronze statue, sculpted by Gary Ross, was dedicated April 1, 1994, and stands in Indians Park in front of Progressive Field in downtown Cleveland.

Bob Feller, Ace Negotiator

Michael J. Haupert

On a warm July day in 1935, Cy Slapnicka, Cleveland Indians superscout, ambled across an Iowa wheat field to chat with sixteen-year-old Robert Feller, the phenom pitcher from tiny Van Meter, Iowa. Later that fall, Slapnicka returned and acquired the signatures of Robert and Bill, his father (since Robert was a minor), on a Cleveland contract calling for a $500 salary. Feller was to report to the Indians' Class D farm team in Fargo-Moorhead the following summer. He never made it there, because his contract was transferred to New Orleans before the season began. He never made it to New Orleans either. Instead, he was called to Cleveland in June after resting a sore arm through the spring. He worked out for the Indians before they arranged to have him sign with the Rosenblums, a Cleveland semi-pro team, for a couple of starts. He made his debut against major-league hitters during an exhibition contest against the St. Louis Cardinals on July 6. Two weeks later, after one more outing with the Rosenblums, he arrived in the majors to stay.

The deal that brought Feller to Cleveland was one of the most lopsided interstate transfers in baseball, if not economic, history. Ohio got a future Hall of Famer, Iowa got one dollar and an autographed Cleveland Indians team baseball, Feller's signing bonus. Feller would go on to become the best pitcher of his generation and one of the greatest of all time. After a career spanning eighteen seasons, interrupted for nearly four years for military service, he retired in 1956 with 266 wins, 2,581 strikeouts, 3 no-hitters, 12 one-hitters, and the single-season strikeout record. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility in 1962 and in 1969 was voted the greatest living right-handed pitcher.

In his prime, Feller was regarded as one of the best pitchers in the game, and he was compensated as such. From 1946 to 1948, three of the most dominant seasons of his career, Feller reigned as the highest-paid player in the game. When he earned $82,500 in 1948, he became the highest-paid player in the history of baseball. His earnings eclipsed Babe Ruth's record $80,000 salary for 1931. Feller quickly relinquished the salary crown the following year, 1949, when Joe DiMaggio became the first $100,000 man in MLB history (figure 1).

Even during his best years, Bob Feller never drew the highest base salary in the league (figure 2). Yet, a shrewd negotiator, he parlayed his success and drawing power into some of the most lucrative contracts in baseball history at the time. He used the knowledge that he was a crowd favorite to negotiate a series of bonus clauses that would pay him more than $160,000 over his career, amounting to 25 percent of his total earnings from the Indians. Except for his first bonus clause, they were exclusively based on attendance.

Feller's third season in the majors, 1938, was the first for which he negotiated a bonus clause in his contract. He was coming off two seasons that, while producing only a 14–10 record, did see him average more than a strikeout an inning and post ERAs more than a full run below the league average each year. It had not taken long for Feller to establish himself as a crowd favorite and a menace to opposing hitters. That year he had a performance clause in his contract that would have paid him $1,000 for each win over 20 and $2,500 each for reaching 15 and 20 wins. However, he had attendance clauses that same year, and the performance clause kicked in only if an attendance clause did not, so he did not earn anything extra for winning 17 games. He did, however, pocket $5,000 for the attendance clauses, which paid him $2,500 each for attendance of 500,000 and 550,000.

Beginning in 1938, his attendance clauses were regular, appearing each full season he played through 1949. The last three years, the attendance clause specified adult paid admissions instead of total admission (tables 1 and 2). Without access to the actual financial records of the team, it is impossible to determine the composition of the attendance, only the total. In 1947 the Indians drew 1,521,978 fans. Feller received bonuses of $7,500 for each 100,000 adult admissions from 750,000 through 1,050,000 and $5,000 for each of the next 100,000 up to 1,250,000. In order for him to earn the full complement of bonus money, 82 percent of the attendance would have to be made up of adult admissions. Similar figures for 1948 and 1949 would be 76 percent and 89 percent, respectively. Without more detailed information, we can only speculate as to whether he earned his bonuses in each of these years. The figures in table 3 assume that he did.

In addition to his shrewd bargaining for bonus clauses, he earned income off the field as well, endors-

ing popsicles, Wheaties, and sporting goods; authoring his autobiography at the ripe old age of twenty-eight; licensing his name and likeness for comic books and baseball-bat pens; and collecting appearance fees. He participated in offseason barnstorming tours beginning in 1936 and organized his own in 1946, 1947, and 1949. The 1946 tour was a huge financial success, netting him a reported $80,000, which more than made up for the money he lost on each of his next two barnstorming tours. In some years he earned nearly as much through these ancillary earnings as he did from the Cleveland Indians.

Feller revealed his negotiating strategy in a *Sport* magazine interview in 1947. He credited his success to careful research, claiming that he kept close track of the club's finances and then estimated his contribution to team revenues, using that as a base for his contract negotiations. He did not reveal how he kept track of club finances, but the results can hardly be disputed.

His financial acumen was often a source of interest to the media. In several interviews over the course of his career, his salary, bonus clauses, negotiating skills, and offseason financial dealings were mentioned. The press dutifully reported salary and bonus-clause figures fed to them by Feller and Indians ownership, especially Bill Veeck, but seldom had accurate information. In most cases the figures they reported were inflated values of what Feller was actually paid (in base salary), actually earned, or could potentially earn through his bonus clauses. It is no surprise that Veeck would seek to generate publicity from the news that Feller was set to become the first $100,000-a-year ballplayer or that his 1947 salary would catapult him ahead of Babe Ruth for the all-time highest salary in MLB history. Neither claim turned out to be true. In his best year, Feller was paid $82,500 by the Indians, and he did not surpass Ruth until 1948, and then it was on the basis of bonus clauses, not base salary.

The only year that Rapid Robert was unable to turn over a bonus clause was 1939, the tail end of the Great Depression. His salary declined from $22,500 in 1938 to $20,000 in 1939 because attendance dropped from 652,006 to 563,926, and his attendance clause did not kick in until 600,000. In 1938 he had padded his salary by $5,000 with attendance bonuses and had a chance to earn as much in bonuses in 1939 if the team drew more than 700,000. The failure of the Indians to draw well was certainly not Feller's fault. He won 24 games, the first of five consecutive (full) seasons he would win 20 or more (leading the league in wins each of those years). His 24 victories accounted for 28 percent of Cleveland's total of 87. The problem was the lackluster performance of the Tribe on days when Feller was not pitching. Their 87 wins got them no closer than third place, a distant 20½ games behind the pennant-winning Yankees. The 13 percent decrease in Cleveland attendance was far greater than the 0.3 percent league average decrease, further evidence that it was not a nationwide lack of interest in baseball that choked off the crowds in Cleveland.

From 1938 through 1949, Feller cashed in on more than two dozen separate attendance bonus clauses in his contracts. During his peak earning years, 1946–49, Feller earned more in bonus incentives alone than the average Hall of Famer earned from salary and bonuses combined.

Feller did not have an immediate impact on Cleveland's annual attendance. For the first three years of his career, it rose slightly, almost exactly in line with the American League average. It spiked in 1940 before falling back to the American League average through both the slump brought about by the Second World War and then the gradual rise through 1946. At this point, while Feller entered the best years of his career and Cleveland's fortunes rose with him, the Indians' attendance grew rapidly, outstripping the American League average, increasing by nearly half a million fans from 1946 to 1947 and rising by another million the next year, during a lull in the growth of the average attendance of the other American League teams. Even as Cleveland's attendance began a decline from 1949 through 1953, it remained above the league average. After a brief uptick in 1954 it continued its decline, until it fell below the league average in 1956 to a level nearly one-third its 1948 peak (figure 4). Feller's salary was tied to attendance only through the 1949 season. It is not likely that Feller foresaw a decline in attendance and opted out of bonus clauses in anticipation of such, because he actually took a base-salary cut from $40,000 to $37,500 in 1950.

Coming off a 15-win season in 1949, his lowest full season total since 1937, he took a salary cut of nearly 50 percent. In 1950 his base salary was reduced by only $2,500, but his long series of attendance bonuses ended, costing him thousands more. Had his 1950 contract had the same bonus clauses as his 1949 contract, he would have earned an additional $20,000. The reality was that the team believed his best days were behind him at age thirty-one. After the 1949 season, his salary glided downward with the fortunes of the team for the rest of his career, with one slight jump in 1952, the result of an outstanding 1951 season that saw him lead the American League in wins, with 22, and reach the 20-win plateau for the sixth, and final, time in his career. That proved to be the last great year of his career, and his sinking salary reflected his decreasing value to the team. Even the team's record-setting 111-win season (up to then, 111 was the most wins by an American

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Feller signs his 1941 contract as general manager Cy Slapnicka and owner Alva Bradley look on. It would be his last contract until he returned from war after 1945. In later years, incentive clauses would enable Feller to earn thousands of dollars above his guaranteed salary.

League club, and the winning percentage, .721, remains an American League record) in 1954, aided by a solid season from Feller, did not break his salary slide. Cleveland rewarded his 13–3 record and 3.09 ERA (more than half a run below the league average) with another salary cut, the third of four consecutive salary decreases.

As lucrative as the bonus clauses proved to be to Feller, it still remains to be seen whether his negotiating strategy was sound. While he repeatedly earned his attendance bonuses, would he have done better to forgo the bonuses and take a straight salary? In economics parlance, this is known as an opportunity cost. What could Feller have been expected to earn in base salary if he had not instead negotiated bonus clauses? It is not possible to know exactly what salary he could have earned, but we can estimate it by comparing his career salary progression to that of his Hall of Fame peers. Feller negotiated two parts to his salary each year from 1938 through 1949 (except for 1942–45, when he was serving in the navy instead of serving up fastballs). The first part was a base salary; the second was a series of bonus clauses based on attendance. In order to estimate his earnings had he bargained for a straight salary instead of a wage plus bonus, I assumed that his wage would have risen by the average of other Hall of Fame pitchers in his cohort instead of at the rate it actually did.

It turns out that Feller made the right decision. Depending on which assumption we make as to his salary growth, he earned between $70,000 and $140,000 more in his career as a result of choosing bonus clauses over guaranteed salary amounts. His actual career earnings were $657,675, so he likely earned between 12 percent and 27 percent more over his career as a result of his bonus clauses. While he fell a bit short in 1938 and 1939, he more than made up for it with the rest of his bonus clauses. In his peak bonus-earning years he made nearly twice what he would likely have earned on a straight salary contract.

I estimated salaries for Bob Feller by looking at the average growth rates of the salaries of Hall of Fame players by years of experience. In order to do this, I gathered the available salary data for every Hall of Famer whose career overlapped Bob Feller's by at least five years. The resulting pool included fifty-nine players whose careers spanned the years 1918 to 1977. In order to avoid inflation issues, I omitted from that sample all players whose career started before 1934 or ended after 1963. I then divided this group into pitchers and hitters, giving me three different sets of players

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Feller's blazing fastball sold tickets and was lucrative for him and the front office alike. This photo shows Feller testing his pitches with a speed meter in 1939.

(pitchers, hitters, and both combined) whose salary progress I could use to estimate Feller's salary. I looked at all three samples and chose to focus on only the one that would have resulted in the highest opportunity cost for Feller. That group was made up of the pitchers whose careers most closely lined up with Feller. Even when biasing the results upward in this way, it still turns out that Feller made the right decision. The group of pitchers included Hal Newhouser (1939–55), Early Wynn (1939–63), Bob Lemon (1941–58), and Warren Spahn (1942–65).

I looked at each of these pitchers' salaries by years of experience and calculated the average rate of growth of salary for each year of experience. I then took those growth rates and estimated Bob Feller's salary for each of those years that he had a bonus clause and estimated what his salary would have been had it grown at the same rate as the average Hall of Fame pitcher during those years. This is the line labeled "estimated" in figure 3. In his critical third though tenth years of experience, Feller's salary had a lower growth rate than average in five of the eight years. In those years when his growth rate was higher, it was barely so (18.2 to 14.4, 37.5 to 31.0 and 0 to –9.2) but it was far below the average every other year, falling between one-quarter and one-tenth the average growth rate. The estimated salary assumes that Feller would have seen his base salary grow at the rate the average pitcher saw his salary grow each year. Had he done this, he would have been worse off than having negotiated the lower base growth and the bonus clause. I consider the estimated growth only during the bonus-clause years, sticking with the actual growth during the years without bonus clauses. When calculated this way, Feller outearned the estimated salary by more than $70,000 over the eight-year period, or nearly $10,000 per year more from bonus clauses than he might reasonably have been expected to earn in straight salary.

One of the frequent laments of older players is that they never had the opportunity to earn the outrageous salaries that players earn today. Free agency and billion-dollar television packages have certainly changed the salary landscape. If Bob Feller were active today, what kind of salary could he have earned? Using the Bill James similarity index, the most similar active player to Bob Feller is Randy Johnson, who has a career similar in length to Feller. If Feller earned salaries on a par with Johnson (not including bonus earnings) he would have earned approximately $165 million over a hypothetical twenty-year career today. If we eliminate seasons 7–10, the equivalent seasons that Feller missed for military service, Johnson earned $145 million. Even after Feller's salary is adjusted for inflation, his earnings totaled a relatively modest $6.4 million and change.

Table 4 carries the Johnson–Feller comparison one step farther by looking at how they were compensated

TABLE 1. THE DETAILS OF BOB FELLER'S BONUS CLAUSE

Year	Attendance condition	Amount	Actual attendance	Performance condition	Amount	Actual performance	Total earned
1938	500,000	$2500	652,006	15 wins*	$2500	17 wins	$2500
1938	550,000	$2500		20 wins*	$2500		$2500
1938				each win over 20	$1000		0
1939	600,000	$2500	563,926				0
1939	700,000	$2500					0
1940	575,000	$2500	902,576				$2500
1940	650,000	$2500					$2500
1941	600,000	$5000	745,948				$5000
1941	700,000	$5000					$5000
1941	ea 100,000 over 700,000	$2500					0
1946	550,000	$5000	1,057,289				$5000
1946	650,000	$7500					$7500
1946	ea 100,000 over 650,000	$5000					$20,000
1947	750,000	$7500	1,521,978				$7500
1947	850,000	$7500					$7500
1947	950,000	$7500					$7500
1947	1,050,000	$7500					$7500
1947	1,150,000	$5000					$5000
1947	1,250,000	$5000					$5000
1948	850,000	$5000	2,620,627				$5000
1948	1,000,000	$5000					$5000
1948	1,150,000	$7500					$7500
1948	1,300,000	$7500					$7500
1948	1,500,000	$7500					$7500
1948	1,750,000	$5000					$5000
1948	2,000,000	$5000					$5000
1949	750,000	$5000	2,233,771				$5000
1949	1,000,000	$5000					$5000
1949	1,250,000	$5000					$5000
1949	1,500,000	$5000					$5000
1949	1,750,000	$5000					$5000
1949	2,000,000	$5000					$5000
1949	2,250,000	$5000					0
1949	2,500,000	$5000					0

* Bonus paid if either performance or attendance condition was met, but not paid for both.

for their performance. The table adjusts all salaries for inflation and then calculates how much each pitcher was paid per inning pitched, wins, and strikeouts. It is no surprise, but certainly illuminating, to see how much better compensated was the Big Unit than Rapid Robert. In their second seasons, Feller was paid more per win (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than Randy Johnson, but that quickly changed. Feller's highest salary per win was a bit more than $39,000, a figure that Johnson has exceeded in eighteen of the twenty years of his career, peaking at a salary of $2.7 million per win in 2003. Comparisons of price per inning pitched and per strikeout yield similar results.

Bob Feller was a strikeout artist, a hero of World War II, and a master negotiator. He may have come cheap to the Indians in the beginning, but he clearly extracted his pound of flesh as his career wore on. The available evidence suggests that he earned just about as much as he possibly could have during his career. But what about that autographed baseball? Today, on the open market, it might fetch about $100. It still turns out to be a pretty good deal for the Indians, and for Bob Feller as well. ■

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TABLE 2. ACTUAL AND BONUS-LEVEL ATTENDANCE DURING BOB FELLER'S CAREER WITH THE CLEVELAND INDIANS

Year	Ballpark	Actual attendance	Bonus-clause attendance conditions
1936	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	500,391	
1937	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	564,849	
1938	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	652,006	500,000 and 550,000
1939	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	563,926	600,000 and 700,000
1940	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	902,576	575,000 and 650,000
1941	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	745,948	600,000 and each additional 100,000
1942	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	459,447	
1943	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	438,894	
1944	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	475,272	
1945	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	558,182	
1946	League Park II / Cleveland Stadium	1,057,289	550,000 and each additional 100,000
1947	Cleveland Stadium	1,521,978	750, 000 and each 100,000 to 1,250,000
1948	Cleveland Stadium	2,620,627	850,000 and each additional 150,000 to 2,000,000
1949	Cleveland Stadium	2,233,771	750,000 and each 250,000 to 2,500,000
1950	Cleveland Stadium	1,727,464	
1951	Cleveland Stadium	1,704,984	
1952	Cleveland Stadium	1,444,607	
1953	Cleveland Stadium	1,069,176	
1954	Cleveland Stadium	1,335,472	
1955	Cleveland Stadium	1,221,780	
1956	Cleveland Stadium	865,467	

TABLE 3. BOB FELLER'S SALARY BONUS AND TOTAL EARNINGS BY YEAR

Year	Salary	Bonus	Total earnings	Real earnings (2006 base year)	Cleveland attendance
1936	$675		$675	$9,818	500,391
1937	$14,000		$14,000	$196,546	564,849
1938	$17,500	$5000	$22,500	$321,930	652,006
1939	$20,000		$20,000	$290,281	563,926
1940	$27,500	$5000	$32,500	$466,999	902,576
1941	$32,500	$10,000	$42,500	$581,670	745,948
1945	$10,000		$10,000	$112,000	558,182
1946	$37,500	$32,500	$70,000	$722,211	1,057,289
1947	$40,000	$40,000	$80,000	$721,934	1,521,978
1948	$40,000	$42,500	$82,500	$690,698	2,620,627
1949	$40,000	$30,000	$70,000	$591,698	2,233,771
1950	$37,500		$37,500	$313,953	1,727,464
1951	$37,500		$37,500	$290,993	1,704,984
1952	$41,250		$41,250	$313,220	1,444,607
1953	$32,500		$32,500	$244,935	1,069,176
1954	$26,250		$26,250	$196,875	1,335,472
1955	$25,500		$25,500	$191,964	1,221,780
1956	$22,500		$22,500	$166,887	865,467

TABLE 4. BOB FELLER VS. RANDY JOHNSON: CAREER PAY AND PERFORMANCE

FELLER							JOHNSON						
Year	W	$/W	IP	$/IP	K	$/K	Year	W	$/W	IP	$/IP	K	$/K
1936	5	$1,964	62	$158	76	$129	1988	3	$39,763	26	$4,588	25	$4,772
1937	9	$21,838	148.7	$1,322	150	$1,310	1989	7	$16,258	160.7	$708	130	$875
1938	17	$18,937	277.7	$1,159	240	$1,341	1990	14	$20,383	219.7	$1,299	194	$1,471
1939	24	$12,095	296.7	$978	246	$1,180	1991	13	$43,267	201.3	$2,794	228	$2,467
1940	27	$17,296	320.3	$1,458	261	$1,789	1992	12	$166,743	210.3	$9,515	241	$8,303
1941	25	$23,267	343	$1,696	260	$2,237	1993	19	$192,752	255.3	$14,345	308	$11,891
1945	5	$22,400	72	$1,556	59	$1,898	1994	13	$347,929	172	$26,297	204	$22,172
1946	26	$27,777	371.3	$1,945	348	$2,075	1995	18	$345,388	214.3	$29,011	294	$21,146
1947	20	$36,097	299	$2,414	196	$3,683	1996	5	$1,561,591	61.3	$127,373	85	$91,858
1948	19	$36,353	280.3	$2,464	164	$4,212	1997	20	$402,329	213	$37,777	291	$27,651
1949	15	$39,447	211	$2,804	108	$5,479	1998	19	$390,572	244.3	$30,376	329	$22,556
1950	16	$19,622	247	$1,271	119	$2,638	1999	17	$617,048	271.7	$38,608	364	$28,818
1951	22	$13,227	249.7	$1,165	111	$2,622	2000	19	$870,509	248.7	$66,504	347	$47,665
1952	9	$34,802	191.7	$1,634	81	$3,867	2001	21	$773,955	249.7	$65,090	372	$43,691
1953	10	$24,493	175.7	$1,394	60	$4,082	2002	24	$674,316	260	$62,245	334	$48,454
1954	13	$15,144	140	$1,406	59	$3,337	2003	6	$2,739,130	114	$144,165	125	$131,478
1955	4	$47,991	83	$2,313	25	$7,679	2004	16	$1,100,582	245.7	$71,670	290	$60,722
1956	0		58	$2,877	18	$9,272	2005	17	$936,308	225.7	$70,524	211	$75,437
							2006	17	$921,260	205	$76,397	172	$91,055
							2007	4	$2,275,137	56.7	$160,503	72	$126,396

All dollar values adjusted for inflation to base year 2006

Figure 1. Career Salaries of Select Hall of Famers

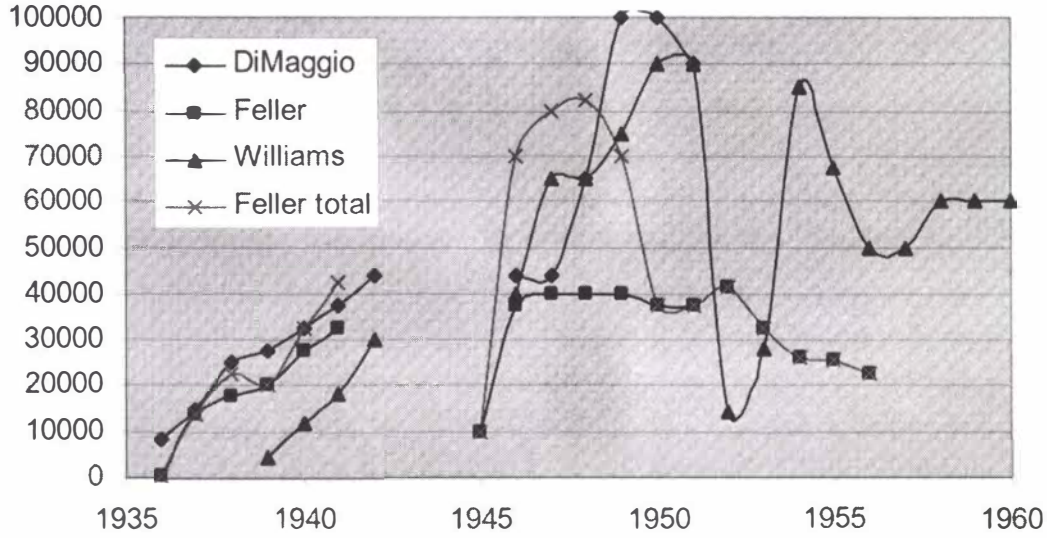


Figure 2. Salaries: Bob Feller and Hall of Fame Contemporaries

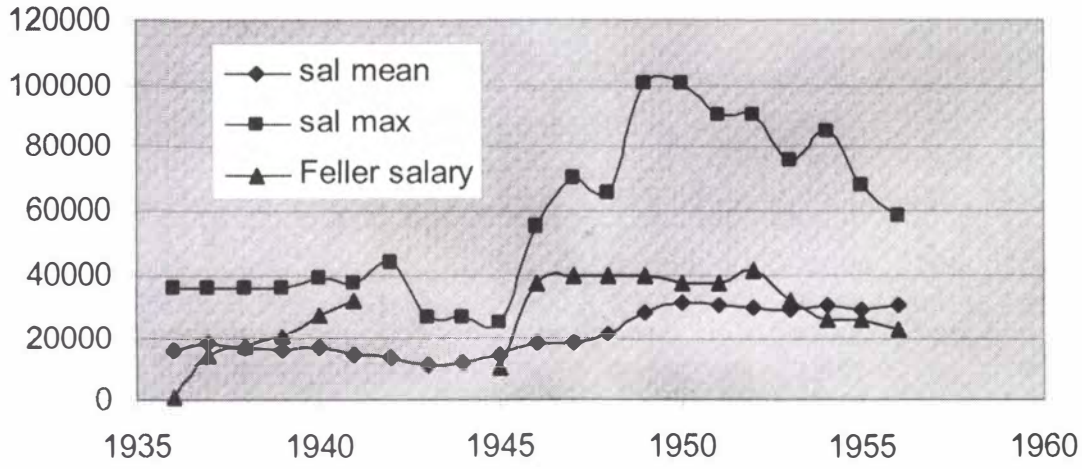


Figure 3. Feller: Actual and Estimated Salaries

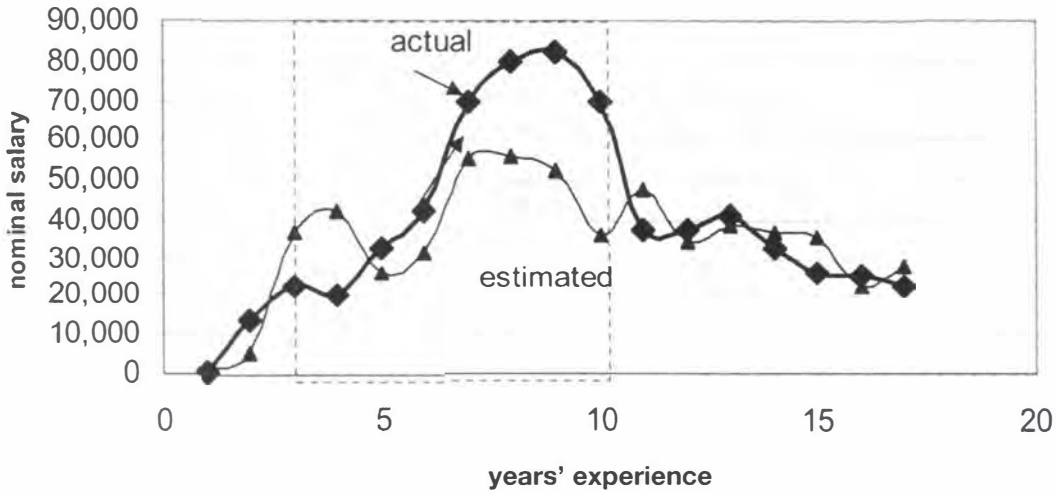
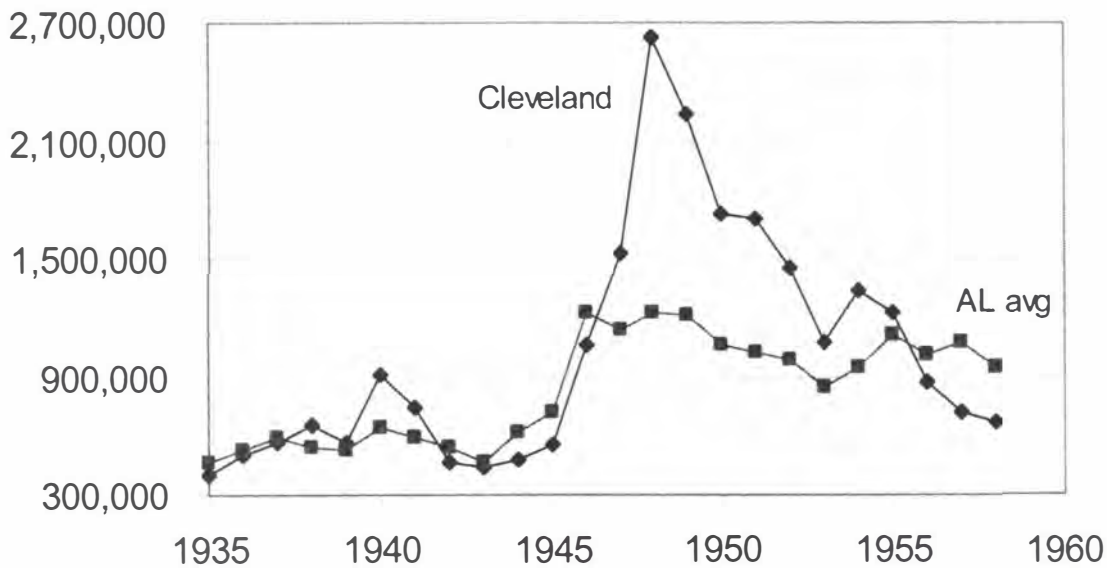


Figure 4. Attendance: Cleveland and American League



Jesse Burkett

Cleveland's Forgotten Legend

Mark Hodermarsky

The .400 club is a select company to which no new member has been admitted for more than half a century. Even the casual fan knows that Ted Williams was the last player to bat over .400. The year was 1941, and Williams, who refused to sit out a season-ending doubleheader to protect his .400 average, went 6 for 8 that day and ended up at .406. Although arguably the greatest hitter in baseball history, the Red Sox legend would hit .400 only once. ("The Kid" did come close sixteen years later, at age thirty-nine, when he led the majors with a .388 average.)

Three players have hit .400 or better three times.

Tyrus Raymond Cobb—owner of the highest lifetime batting average (.366) and most batting titles (twelve[1] in a thirteen-year span)—hit .420, .409, and .401 in 1911, 1912, and 1922, respectively.

Second to Ty Cobb in career average, at .358, is Rogers Hornsby, whose .400 years were 1922, 1924, and 1925. His .424 mark in 1924 surpasses all twentieth-century batting averages by a player over a full season.

Add "Big Ed" Delahanty's name to the list. A Cleveland native and outfielder for the Phillies, he hit over .400 in 1894, 1895, and 1899.

Several other players came close to hitting .400 three times, and their names are not Napoleon LaJoie, Willie Keeler, Hugh Duffy, or Joe Jackson. Actually, only three members of the prestigious .400 club have batted .400 exactly twice: Sam Thompson, George Sisler, and Jesse Burkett, left fielder for the Cleveland Spiders in the 1890s.

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, on December 4, 1868, to Granville and Eleanor Burkett, Jesse Burkett lived near the Ohio River in a neighborhood called Wheeling Island. A son of the laboring class (his father worked for the Wheeling and Belmont Bridge Company and later for the Wheeling Traction Company), Burkett played baseball until dark and often was late for supper. He also loved to swim in the Ohio River. His swimming prowess was to be tested profoundly at age twelve when a little girl fell out of a skiff into the muddy river. While several adults stood by and did nothing, young Burkett plunged into the water, crawled about the river bottom, found and brought the girl to the surface, and dragged her to the shore. Her heart was still beating, but attempts at artificial respiration failed, and she died right there. At eighty-three, Burkett's eyes would well with tears when he told this story to a reporter. The event haunted Jesse Burkett his entire life.

Wheeling's competitive amateur and semipro leagues, which produced a number of major leaguers during this period, provided an opportunity for Jesse to prove his athletic talents as a hard-throwing pitcher and part-time outfielder. He showed enough promise at age eighteen to sign his first professional baseball contract as a pitcher for the Scranton team in the Central League in 1888. The Wheeling *Daily Register* on March 30 of that year wrote optimistically about the scrappy five-foot-eight-inch, 155-pounder: "Jesse Burkett leaves for Scranton with which club he has signed as a pitcher for the season. Jesse has several good curves and is an all-around good ball player. He will no doubt make a success on the diamond." In his rookie season at Scranton, he won 14 games.[2]

The following year, Burkett advanced to Worcester of the Atlantic Association and enjoyed a spectacular season on and off the field. His 30–6 record (he hit .267) helped his team win the Atlantic Association Championship.[3] Off the field, Burkett fell in love with and married a local girl, Ellen G. McGrath. Worcester would be his home for the rest of his life.

Jack Glasscock, a native of Wheeling and captain of the New York Giants, persuaded the National League team to purchase Burkett's contract in 1890. Surprisingly, Burkett showed them more promise as a hitter than as a pitcher. He hit .309 and knocked in 60 runs, but as a pitcher he posted a dismal 3–10 record and a 5.57 ERA. Overlooked by the Giants (who sold his contract to Cleveland after the season) was Burkett's .461 slugging average. There Burkett ranked fifth in the league.

As a member of the Lincoln (Nebraska) team of the Western Association in 1891, Burkett was converted into an outfielder and now concentrated on hitting. This is when he "began to make my reputation," he would tell an interviewer years later. Burkett's .316 batting average (fourth best in the league), line-drive hitting to all fields, superb bunting, and aggressive baserunning impressed the Cleveland club, which added him (on August 15) to the late-season roster. For the next fourteen years Burkett would shine as one of baseball's premier hitters.

Burkett arrived in Cleveland late in 1891 just as the Spiders had moved from their home at old National League Park (at East 39th Street and Payne Avenue) to new League Park (at East 66th and Lexington Avenue). Professional baseball's most modern edifice (it was rebuilt for the 1910 season), it would showcase the sublime talents of the game's immortals over the next fifty years. But during the 1890s the atmosphere at League Park, both on the field and in the stands, suggested the Roman Coliseum (or a British soccer stadium) more than a pastoral setting appropriate to the national pastime. "The tactics of the '80s were aggressive," as Bill James observed in his Historical Baseball Abstract; "the tactics of the '90s were violent. The game of the '80s was crude; the game of the '90s was criminal. The baseball of the '80s had ugly elements; the game of the '90s was just ugly." The young left fielder's natural combativeness fit perfectly, as the Spiders and their fans were notoriously rowdy.

Fighting and cursing were part of the game. Spiking other players, tripping baserunners or grabbing their belts or blocking their way as they rounded the bases, and shoving and spitting on umpires were also common. Unruly fans often bombarded umpires and opposing players with beer bottles, vegetables, eggs, and rocks. Jesse Burkett once refused to leave the field after being ejected from a game for cursing an umpire. Two policemen eventually escorted him from the grounds. On another occasion, Burkett and several other Spiders spent a night in jail. Their animated protests of an umpire's decision to call a game due to darkness had incited the Louisville fans to riot and the Louisville police court to fine each player $200. Another time, the bellicose Burkett, after exchanging epithets with the manager of the Washington team, punched the skipper in the nose, drawing a $50 fine.

Noted for his surly disposition and caustic tongue, "the Crab," as he was nicknamed, believed that it was the fight in him that made him a great player, recalling for a local paper in 1953 that "you got to be a battler. If you don't, they'll walk all over you. After you lick three or four of them, they don't show up any more looking for a fight." To succeed against brawnier athletes, the diminutive West Virginian was forced to be a scrapper.

Many students of baseball hold that the modern form of the game began in 1893, when the distance between the pitcher's mound and home plate was increased from 50 feet to 60 feet, 6 inches. In the course of two years, from 1892 to 1894, league batting averages rose from about .250 to over .300, and runs per game increased from 5 to 7. Another important rule change (adopted in 1894) prevented expert bunters such as Burkett and Willie Keeler from deliberately bunting pitches foul until they got one they liked. Bunting foul with two strikes now became an out. The Crab is considered by many to be the best bunter in history. He once bragged that he could hit .300 if he bunted every time up. At age seventy, after watching Red Sox players struggle to lay down bunts properly during a morning practice in Fenway Park, Burkett stepped into the batting cage. He ordered the pitcher to throw as hard as he could and proceeded to bunt the first pitch down the third-base line, to bunt the second pitch down the first-base line, and to smash the third pitch over second base. Jesse Burkett's amazing eyesight certainly contributed to his extraordinary skills at the plate. Even at eighty-four he could read without glasses. The only specs he ever wore were sunglasses on the field.

From the late summer of 1891 until traded to the Cardinals in 1899, Jesse Burkett was Cleveland's best hitter. With his smoldering spirit, daring baserunning, slashing hitting style, bunting mastery, speed, and intelligence, he dominated the National League. The Crab owns too many individual team records to list, so behold these league-leading numbers. In 1895 Burkett batted .409 with 225 hits; in 1896, he hit .410 with 240 hits, 160 runs, and 317 total bases. In 1898 Burkett's 213 hits ranked second in the league, close behind Willie Keeler's 216. (A hitting machine, Burkett would accumulate more than 200 hits in six out of seven consecutive seasons, 1895–1901. He came up two hits short in 1897.)

The Cleveland Spiders boasted a formidable roster throughout Burkett's time with them in the 1890s. Only the Boston Beaneaters and Baltimore Orioles won more games than the Spiders, but no team boasted more stars. Listen to this lineup: Cy Young, 511 career wins, Hall of Famer; Chief Zimmer, the finest defensive catcher in the game; second baseman Cupid Childs, a lifetime .306 hitter; Ed McKean, a slugging shortstop with better career statistics than Lou Boudreau; Patsy Tebeau, a notable player-manager; and, of course, Jesse Cail Burkett, another Cooperstown resident. In 1895, this formidable squad handed Cleveland the honor of a Temple Cup championship (in the equivalent of the World Series for a period in the 1890s) when it defeated the hated Orioles in the best-of-seven contest, four games to one. (The Crab performed brilliantly, igniting a first-game win with a clutch ninth-inning double and batting .450 for the series.) From 1892 to 1896, the Burkett-aided Spiders would participate in three world-championship series. Through the end of the twentieth century, only two other major-league teams in Cleveland would capture the world championship, the Indians of 1920 and 1948.

Let me venture a quick word on the infamous 1899 Cleveland Spiders, who won 20 and lost 134, making it the worst team in baseball history. This club, dubbed "the Misfits" by the press, was an aberration. The

owner, Frank DeHaas Robison, shipped all of his star players (including Burkett) to the St. Louis Browns (also of the National League), a rival team he now also owned, having bought them in 1899 after National League officials prevented his plan to sell the Spiders, whose home attendance Robison found too low. Burkett remained an excellent hitter in St. Louis, finishing that year at .396, a frustrating second to Delahanty's .410 (and leaving him agonizingly close to joining Cobb, Hornsby, and Delahanty in the club of players who have hit .400 three times). The Crab did win his third batting championship, however, in 1901, when he hit for a .376 average. That summer he also led the league in hits—it was the seventh time he collected more than 200—as well as runs and total bases.

Burkett would play in St. Louis for the next three years, 1902 through 1904, but not for the same team. He signed on with the new American League team, also named the Browns (to invoke memories of the great St. Louis teams of the 1880s—by now the National League team, the former Browns, had changed their name to the Cardinals). Burkett spent 1905, his last season in the majors, close to his adopted home, Worcester, with Boston's American League team, the future Red Sox. He was thirty-six and batting only .257 when Boston released him, ending his sixteen-year major-league career at a point when his lifetime batting average was .338, a remarkable figure that stands as a permanent testimony to his achievement.

Jesse Burkett couldn't leave the game. He bought the Worcester club of the New England League and as player-manager led his team to four consecutive pennants, topping the league in hitting in 1906 with a .344 average. Burkett ran the team until 1915, when he managed in the Eastern League. He went on to coach at Holy Cross (1917–20) and to scout for John McGraw, the legendary manager of the New York Giants and a former rival. He returned to the big-league diamond in 1921 as a coach for McGraw. Still salty as ever, Burkett was not popular with his players. They refused to vote him a share of the World Series bonus when they won the championship.[4] Burkett was back in Worcester in 1923 and would coach various teams, including Assumption College, until 1933, when he turned sixty-five.

On the field Burkett could be abrasive and short-tempered, but from all accounts his disposition away from the ballyard was friendly. He was always generous when describing the talents of other ballplayers. "There were better players than me," he acknowledged. One in particular commanded Burkett's utmost respect: "Cobb could do anything around the plate—hit, bunt, drag the ball. He could field and throw." On Honus Wagner: "He was quite a ballplayer, that boy. He had a good pair of hands on him."[5] Burkett made many more friends than enemies during his lifetime and counted the gentlemanly Connie Mack as his closest baseball colleague

Burkett, who played baseball during its most roughhouse era, neither smoked nor chewed tobacco, as did so many of his contemporaries. (Heavy drinking was also widespread. Two of the most notorious drinkers of 1890s baseball—Patsy Tebeau and Lou Sockalexis—were teammates.) Drinking an occasional beer, eating vanilla ice cream, and consuming ten teaspoonfuls of sugar a day were his only vices. The Crab and the Georgia Peach displayed the same "will to win at all costs" on the field, but Burkett behaved with equanimity off the field. Unlike Cobb, he was a devoted husband and father. One of the country's finest Little League organizations is named in his honor, befitting his reputation for kindness toward children.

During his playing days, the player who has become Cleveland's forgotten legend enjoyed the respect and admiration of baseball fans everywhere. Jesse Burkett's performance and personality made him impossible to ignore. Although through the Old-Timers Committee he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1946, today only serious fans remember his name, let alone his accomplishments. As Jesse Burkett never forgot the young girl he attempted to rescue from the murky Ohio River during his childhood, let us not disregard his brilliant contribution to Cleveland's baseball history. ■

NOTES

1. The number of batting titles won by Cobb is disputable, as, according to *Total Baseball* and *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*, the highest American League batting average in 1910 belongs to Nap Lajoie (at .384, with Cobb at .383), although both sources accede to MLB's official recognition of Cobb as the batting champion that year.
2. *The Historical Register*, compiled by SABR members, 4th ed. (San Diego: Baseball Press Books, 1998). Some sources credit Burkett with as many as 27 wins in 1888.
3. *The Historical Register*. Some sources credit Burkett with as many as 39 wins in 1889.
4. He is said to have been voted out of his share again in 1922, when the Giants repeated. See Deadball Era Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research, *Deadball Stars of the American League*, ed. David Jones (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2006), 767.
5. Worcester *Sunday Telegram*, 11 January 1953.

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Keeping the Federals at Bay

Cleveland in the American Association, 1914–1915

Marshall Wright

Over the first half of the twentieth century, the American Association served as a model of stability for minor-league baseball. Originally formed in 1902, the league entered the 1952 season with the same eight teams, still located in their places of birth. Along the way, the octet stayed put as well—with one notable exception. Although taking place in the years leading up to America's involvement in World War I, this move was not in reaction to international hostilities. Instead, it was made to counter a perceived threat to Organized Baseball itself.

One of the founding members of the American Association, the Toledo Mud Hens, had a mixed record of success over the first decade of the league's history. High points came in 1907, 1910, and 1912 with strong second-place finishes—in 1907, missing the bunting barely, by a couple of games. Despite these modest successes, the team finished in the second division most years, including three tail-ending performances (1902–4) in the first three years of the league. Later, a generous friend, coal millionaire Charles Somers, who also owned the American League's Cleveland Naps, acquired the Mud Hens. It was this dual ownership that paved the way for the Association's first location shift—a move designed to thwart a potential problem, the upstart Federal League.

In 1913, a new minor-league circuit began operation. Consisting of six clubs, most in the Midwest, the Federal League was an independent circuit, operating outside the aegis of Organized Baseball. As the summer progressed, the six-team league survived more or less intact (the only franchise move being from Covington to Kansas City on June 26). The potential fan base was large, as the loop included several major-league cities, Cleveland among them. In the inaugural season, Cleveland's Green Sox finished second, playing in Luna Park, a small local diamond. Though the facilities were modest, the manager was none other than pitching legend Cy Young, one of the city's most cherished baseball heroes.

Buoyed by their success, the Federals decided to upgrade in 1914. No longer content with minor-league status, the Feds declared themselves a major league before the season. Expanding to an eight-team circuit, the Feds also kept certain franchises in place, allowing direct competition with major-league teams in Chicago, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, all carryover locales from the 1913 campaign. This turn of events startled baseball's cozy world, prompting direct intervention by the owner of the Mud Hens.

Before the 1914 season, the American Association, though facing direct Federal competition in Indianapolis and Kansas City, decided to remain firm—ready to go head-to-head with the upstarts. However, in March, the Feds announced that their eighth franchise, originally slated to operate in Toronto, was transferring to Brooklyn, butting heads with the Robins of the National League. Alarmed, and not wanting a sudden shift to his turf, Somers took direct action. Knowing full well there was only one suitable site for big-league baseball in Cleveland, League Park, he decided to make it impossible for the Feds to claim any playing dates there. Later that month, Somers announced that he would be transferring his Toledo club to Cleveland, where they would play in League Park when his American League club was on the road.

Logistically, the transfer was easily accomplished, as Cleveland geographically fit into the existing league structure very nicely. However, there were a couple of problems. First, the Association schedule had already been drawn up, so on paper the Toledo games were simply transferred to Cleveland. Of course, this did not dovetail nicely with the existing schedule. As a result, many of the home games of Cleveland's American Association club were transferred to their opponents' parks. In addition, the American League, wary of the Association's encroachment, stipulated that the minor league could not play any home games until the Naps had finished their first lengthy homestand, even though the American League team was slated to start the season on the road.

The American Association's Cleveland club opened the 1914 season at Indianapolis, dropping a 4–0 decision to the Indians on April 14. Called a variety of nicknames, including Scouts, Warriors, and Shecks (after manager James Sheckard), the team eventually came to be known as the Bearcats. After facing all seven Association rivals on the road, the Bearcats (7–17) finally opened the season at home on May 14, besting Minneapolis 6–4. Over the next month, Cleveland won more than it lost and clambered back into the race. By early June, the team had clawed its way into second, only a game

behind Milwaukee. Despite losing star outfielder Dave Hillyard to a broken leg, the Bearcats continued to perform well, finally grasping first place (50–42) by a few percentage points on July 19.

Then, the season began to unravel. Over the course of another monthlong road trip, the Bearcats went 12–18, dropping out of contention. When they finally returned home on August 19, the club was in fifth place, barely over .500. During the final month they treaded water, finishing fifth with a record of 82–81, 14½ games out of first. Their star performer was Jay Kirke (.349), who spent half the season with the Bearcats and the other half with Cleveland's other team, the Naps.

Overall, the season was considered a modest success. The team drew almost 100,000 fans—not too bad when considering that the Bearcats lost at least sixteen home dates because of scheduling conflicts. Though they were outdrawn by the American League's cellar-dwelling Indians, the Association club certainly had its own fan base, as reported in the pages of *The Sporting News:* "The idea that a minor league will not draw in a town used to big league ball is receiving a rather rude jolt in Cleveland. The Naps, cellar occupants of the American League, are getting hardly any crowds, while the American Association club, managed by Sheckard, is getting most of the support."

Toledo fielded a team in the Southern Michigan Association in 1914. The city certainly missed having a high-class Association club, but it was not weepy-eyed about having Somers out of town. Over the course of his ownership, Somers took full advantage of Toledo's proximity to Cleveland, regularly shuttling players from one club to the other—naturally favoring the American League Naps. With the two clubs now sharing the same facility, League Park, in 1914, the movement of players increased dramatically. For instance, in addition to Kirke, the Bearcats lost the services of starting first baseman Jack Lelivelt (.295), who was promoted to the American League after 92 games, and starting pitcher Lefty James (9–6), who was also called up.

After the 1914 season, the Feds switched another team to a major-league locale, transferring the pennant-winning Indianapolis club to Newark, New Jersey, thereby giving the New York City area another big-league club. For the rebel league, Cleveland was still not an option, since Somers made plans to keep his American Association club in League Park for the upcoming season.

With a full off-season to put a workable schedule in place, it must have come as a disappointment to Cleveland's Association club to see virtually the same problems unfurled at its feet in 1915. The team was scheduled to lose sixteen home dates, as it had the year before. In 1914, the Bearcats were able to overcome this obstacle, posting a reasonably decent season. In 1915, a different story would unfold, primarily the result of instability at the top.

The combination of owning a losing American League club and then incurring the expenses entailed in keeping his star players out of Federal League clutches had stretched Somers financially thin. He hastily fired his underperforming manager, Joe Birmingham, who sued in response. In short, Somers was looking for a way out, even if it meant unloading his Association club.

Aswirl in turmoil, Cleveland's American Association season opened at home in April 1915 with a 10–1 trimming courtesy of Indianapolis. After a brief homestand, the team took to the road for a monthlong trip, visiting every league opponent on the way. During this marathon, scribes began to call the team the Spiders—no doubt referring to Cleveland's National League team of 1900, which spent much of the season on the road. (One *Sporting News* wag even substituted the name Spiders for Cleveland in the April 25 box score.) Still, the team was playing decently enough, finally arriving home in late May with a record of 14–17.

During the next homestand, which stretched into mid-June, Somers reduced ticket prices to encourage better turnout. At the same time, he announced he was seeking a buyer for the club who would move it, with luck, back to Toledo, which was without a pro club of any kind in 1915. Shortly thereafter, the Association gave its blessing for such a transfer; however, no takers emerged.

On the field, the team continued to hover around the .500 mark, reaching the breakeven point on July 4 thanks to a 10–5 road trip. (Two of the five losses were no-hitters.) After another good week, the Spiders (38–36) rose to third. Alas, for them it would be a downhill slide the rest of the way.

With the transfer back to Toledo still on hold, the team drifted through July and August, dropping to seventh in the standings. In late August, two weeks into another long swing through Association cities, the announcement was made that the team would play the rest of its games on the road, completing its makeover as the Spiders. Even so, the final weeks of the Spiders' season would include a few home games after all. In mid-September, they played four times—two games against St. Paul and two against Kansas City, both teams being already on the road nearby. The home season ended with a whimper. The Blues failed to show on September 16, giving Cleveland a 9–0 forfeit win in its last home game.

Overall, the Cleveland Spiders (67–82) in 1915 finished seventh, a lengthy 22½ games from the top.

Once again, their best player—this time Denney Wilie (.311)—was snatched away by Cleveland's American League team before the hundred-game mark. Luckily for them, the Spiders kept the services of Lefty James (19–13) for the whole season—probably keeping them out of the cellar. The announced attendance was 86,000—a drop from the previous campaign, but still better than what several other Association clubs drew.

Following the 1915 season, the Federal League fragmented, with several Fed owners latching on to American League and National League clubs. With the threat gone, Cleveland's Association team quietly moved back to Toledo for the 1916 season.

Somers did accomplish his goal in keeping the Feds at bay. Although scheduling conflicts prevented League Park from being used every day during the 1914 and 1915 seasons, the handful of open dates were not enough to entice a Federal League jump. It would prove to be his only victory in the world of baseball during the Federal League war. To keep creditors at bay, he sold off his best stars on the American League club, including Nap Lajoie and Joe Jackson. In the end, it was not enough, and the bankers took virtually all of Somers's baseball empire, including both his Cleveland clubs.

Although this kind of preemptive strike has not been repeated in the world of minor-league baseball, it was used at a higher level many years later. In the early 1960s, with the possibility looming large that a rival league, the Continental League, would soon be established, Houston was granted a National League franchise—a move to prevent the perceived usurpers from gaining a toehold there.

The example of minor leagues and major leagues sharing the same locale has been repeated many times, right up to the present. Several minor-league clubs, both affiliated and independent, are currently in orbit around Chicago. In New York, also represented by an American League and a National League franchise, two minor-league teams, the Brooklyn Cyclones (Class A, Mets) and the Staten Island Yankees (Class A), currently operate within the city limits, tapping into the same market as do their parent, major-league clubs. They illustrate the trend in Organized Baseball in recent years for the major-league club to maintain one or more of its minor-league affiliates geographically close to the city that the big-league team plays in. The Akron Aeros (Class AA) and Lake County Captains (Class A), farm teams in the Indians organization, play in state-of-the-art ballparks less an hour's drive south and east, respectively, from Progressive Field in downtown Cleveland, multiplying the opportunities that baseball fans in the Western Reserve have for enjoying the game in person all summer long. ■

The Kid from Cleveland

A Celebration of the Postwar Cleveland Indians

Rob Edelman

As baseball movies go, *The Kid from Cleveland* is strictly second division. The film, which came to movie houses in 1949, is no *Field of Dreams* or *Bull Durham*—nor does it rate with the more entertaining baseball films of the post–World War II era, from *Kill the Umpire* and the original *Angels in the Outfield* to *Rhubarb* and *It Happens Every Spring*.

Yet, in a modest way, *The Kid from Cleveland* is a noteworthy film. It is so for its on-location filming throughout the city, allowing contemporary viewers a Polaroid portrait of Cleveland as it looked sixty years ago. But what really makes the film special is the number of real-life Cleveland Indians in its cast. Their appearances not only lend the film authenticity but also make for a valuable visual and historical record of a place and time in baseball history.

Bona fide major-leaguers may be seen in feature films from *Right Off the Bat* in 1915 and *Somewhere in Georgia* in 1916 to *Analyze That* (2002), *Anger Management* (2003), and *Fever Pitch* (2005). None of these films—including the *Major League* movies, which remain the best-known films that spotlight the Tribe—feature entire big-league ball clubs. *The Kid from Cleveland* does. Practically the whole Cleveland organization appears in the film: players from Gene Bearden and Ray Boone to Bob Kennedy and Ken Keltner, Early Wynn and Sam Zoldak; team owner Bill Veeck and player-manager Lou Boudreau; coaches Tris Speaker and Bill McKechnie; pitching coach Mel Harder; trainer "Lefty" Weisman; and the recently retired Hank Greenberg, then working in the Indians front office. A celebrated ex-Indian, Lew Fonseca, is credited as the film's "Baseball Supervisor."

Also cast in *The Kid from Cleveland*, whose working titles were *Pride of the Indians* and *The Cleveland Story*, are real-life sportswriters (local scribes Gordon Cobbledick, Franklin Lewis, Ed McAuley) and umpires (American League arbiters Bill Summers, Bill Grieve). They and the "Members of the Cleveland Indians Baseball Club," are thanked at the film's finale. Movie-star-handsome player-turned-actor John Berardino, who later played Dr. Steve Hardy on the TV soap *General Hospital*—and who, as Johnny Berardino, graced the rosters of the Browns, Indians, and Pirates between 1939 and 1952—is the one baseball personality who does not play himself. He is cast as Mac, a shady character who fences stolen goods. (As a publicity stunt, Veeck insured Berardino's mug for $1 million during his tenure in Cleveland.) The film's associate producer was a local celebrity: K. Elmo Lowe, a fixture at the Cleveland Play House for almost a half-century as actor, director, and artistic director. Lowe appears onscreen as well, playing an undercover cop.

The title character in *The Kid From Cleveland* is neither a fireballing "Nuke" LaLoosh–like rookie nor a composed Henry Wiggen–like veteran. He is Johnny Barrows (Russ Tamblyn, when he still was billed as "Rusty"), a troubled youth. Johnny's alienation stems from his lack of rapport with his stepfather. But he loves baseball, and in particular the Cleveland Indians. During the course of the story, Johnny finds a mentor in Mike Jackson (George Brent), the team's kindhearted radio broadcaster.

It is the presence of the Indians, however, that makes the film essential viewing for the baseball historian or buff—and, more pointedly, the Cleveland sports aficionado. When *The Kid from Cleveland* was released, the Indians were the reigning World Series champs. They play the role of the "godfathers" recruited by Jackson to help Johnny. Furthermore, interspersed throughout the film are shots culled from the team's official 1948 World Series promotional film, and footage from a postseries victory parade and regular-season games at Municipal Stadium.

Most of *The Kid from Cleveland* was filmed on a twenty-two-day production schedule in May and June of 1949, with many of its exteriors shot on location on the city's streets, bridges, and playgrounds. For example, sequences featuring the ballplayers in spring training were filmed not in the hot desert sun of Tucson, Arizona, but in Cleveland's League Park, the team's home field (and known as Dunn Field from 1916 through 1927) from 1910 to 1932 and 1934 to 1946. A scene set outside Tucson, on a ranch where the ballplayers consume a barbecue supper was shot on East 87th Street, north of Euclid Avenue.

In a 2005 post on the film's Internet Movie Database "user comments" page, an anonymous Clevelander recalled:

CLEVELAND PICTURE FILE, WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The 1948 world champion Cleveland Indians.

> I was an "extra" in the movie, which was filmed at the end of [the] street where I lived, near Hough Ave. It was very near League Park, at [the] other end of my street! Some of the kids in [the] neighborhood were also in the movie, of course we were all not paid but did have a lot of fun with the "stars" and were treated to a ballgame, taken by bus [to Municipal Stadium], where we ran around under the bleachers.

Upon seeing the film on television several years ago, the writer observed that it was "a bit of a 'tear-jerker' as [it] brought back many memories of the days after WWII and the pride we in Cleveland had, and I still have, for our Indians."

It is wholly appropriate, then, that *The Kid from Cleveland* opens with the following written prologue: "This is the story of a city, a kid and a baseball team." (This line was slightly altered for the marketing campaign. The film was publicized as "the story of a kid . . . a city . . . and 30 Godfathers!," with headshots of twenty Indians lining the top of its advertising poster.) It also was appropriate for the Indians organization to be involved with a film about a troubled teen. At the time, Veeck and his ballplayers were supporting efforts to fight juvenile delinquency in Cleveland.

Combating underage misbehavior is not the only critical issue explored in the film. Two years before *The Kid from Cleveland* went into production, Larry Doby became the first African American to play in the American League. This landmark event is paid homage onscreen. Near the finale, Bill Veeck offers a well-intentioned (but entirely fictitious) anecdote in which he describes Doby's first major league at-bat:

> When Larry first joined the club, he was kind of in a spot, something like Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers. . . . His first time up, he was nervous. Very nervous. Much more nervous than the average rookie. Because, you see, he had the additional load of some 15 million people riding on his back. And that's quite a load. Larry wasn't just batting for himself. He was batting for some 15 million people—15 million people who really believed in him.
>
> And so when he struck out, he felt he let all those people down. . . . And after Larry struck out, he made that long trip to the dugout, and he went down the dugout steps and walked the entire length and sat down at the extreme corner. He was the picture of absolute dejection. And the next hitter was Joe Gordon, one of baseball's really great

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

An older Russ Tamblyn in a publicity still from 1959. Tamblyn would go on to costar in the Academy Award–winning classic *West Side Story* and later to see his daughter Amber achieve fame as a film and TV star.

> hitters. [Gordon is shown on screen taking two strikes.] Joe took a terrific cut at the ball. He missed it by at least six inches more than Larry had. I don't say that he did it intentionally. But I know he's never missed a pitch by that much before. Joe too made that long trip back to the dugout. He didn't stop, but walked the entire length to sit next to [Doby]. He too sat in exactly the same position, to prove to this boy that, here at least, he was just another ballplayer.

The critic for *Variety*, the show-business trade publication, described this sequence as "heart-warming," adding that it "should enhance [Doby's and Gordon's] popularity." Even though its content is fabricated, what really matters is the essence, rather than the specifics, of the anecdote and what it reveals about Larry Doby's plight, Joe Gordon's character, and Bill Veeck's commitment to integrating major league baseball. Moreover, other sequences in which Doby and Satchel Paige casually mix with their fellow Indians are extraordinary for the late 1940s, a time when the civil-rights movement was in its infancy and Hollywood movies of recent vintage mostly depicted black characters as comical caricatures: maids and mammies, janitors and train porters who fecklessly wrecked the English language.

Perhaps it was the social-issue aspect of the film that drew its director, Herbert Kline, and screenwriter, John Bright, to the project. Kline was most acclaimed as a maker of humanist, anti-Fascist documentaries, while Bright was a co-founder of the Screen Writers Guild. By the early 1950s, in the wake of the House UnAmerican Activities hearings in Washington and the dawn of McCarthyism, both were blacklisted from Hollywood.

During the shoot, fiction and reality clashed in other ways. Just as the film was released, Leonard Lyons, the syndicated Broadway columnist, reported:

> Republic Pictures hired Bill Summers to umpire a ballgame in *The Kid from Cleveland*, in which Lou Boudreau is called upon to hit a home run. The script provided that the first pitch to Boudreau was to be a strike, the second a ball—and the Boudreau homer. . . . Summers called the first one a strike, and then called the second one "strike two" . . . The director, Herbert Kline, corrected the umpire. "That's a ball. Look at your script". . . "I'm looking at the plate," Umpire Summers replied. "Tell your pitcher to look at the script."

The Kid from Cleveland had its world premiere at the Stillman Theater in the city on September 2, 1949, several days before going into national release. *The Sporting News* reported that "the premiere . . . was staged in Cleveland with all the fanfare of a Hollywood opening," with many of the stars, professional actor and ballplayer alike, on hand to scribble autographs and wave to onlookers.

The film earned mixed notices, with the negative far outweighing the positive. A representative review was penned by Howard Barnes, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*. Barnes described the film as

> a quasi-documentary which is a silly patchwork of clips, amateur acting and a case history. Ball fans will find interest in authentic shots of the 1948 World Series. . . . Film fanciers will discover an extraordinarily inept production.

New York Times critic Bosley Crowther dubbed *The Kid from Cleveland* "a labored tale" and "generally routine." His piece ran on September 5, and he noted, "In fact, Mr. Veeck and the Indians pay so much attention to [helping Johnny] that one perceives (since the time is the present) why maybe the Indians are in third place." (Bob Dolgan, writing in the *Plain Dealer* in 2001, observed that the "distraction" of filming *The Kid from Cleveland* during the baseball season "is blamed for [the] Indians' fall to third place" in the 1949 campaign.)

One of the few who liked *The Kid from Cleveland* was the *Variety* reviewer. After labeling the film "a sermon on juvenile delinquency," the scribe admitted that its story was "nicely developed," noting that it was "best when it focuses on the diamond triumphs and defeats of the 1948 World Champions." The critic also observed that the film "incorporates the intense baseball enthusiasm in Cleveland."

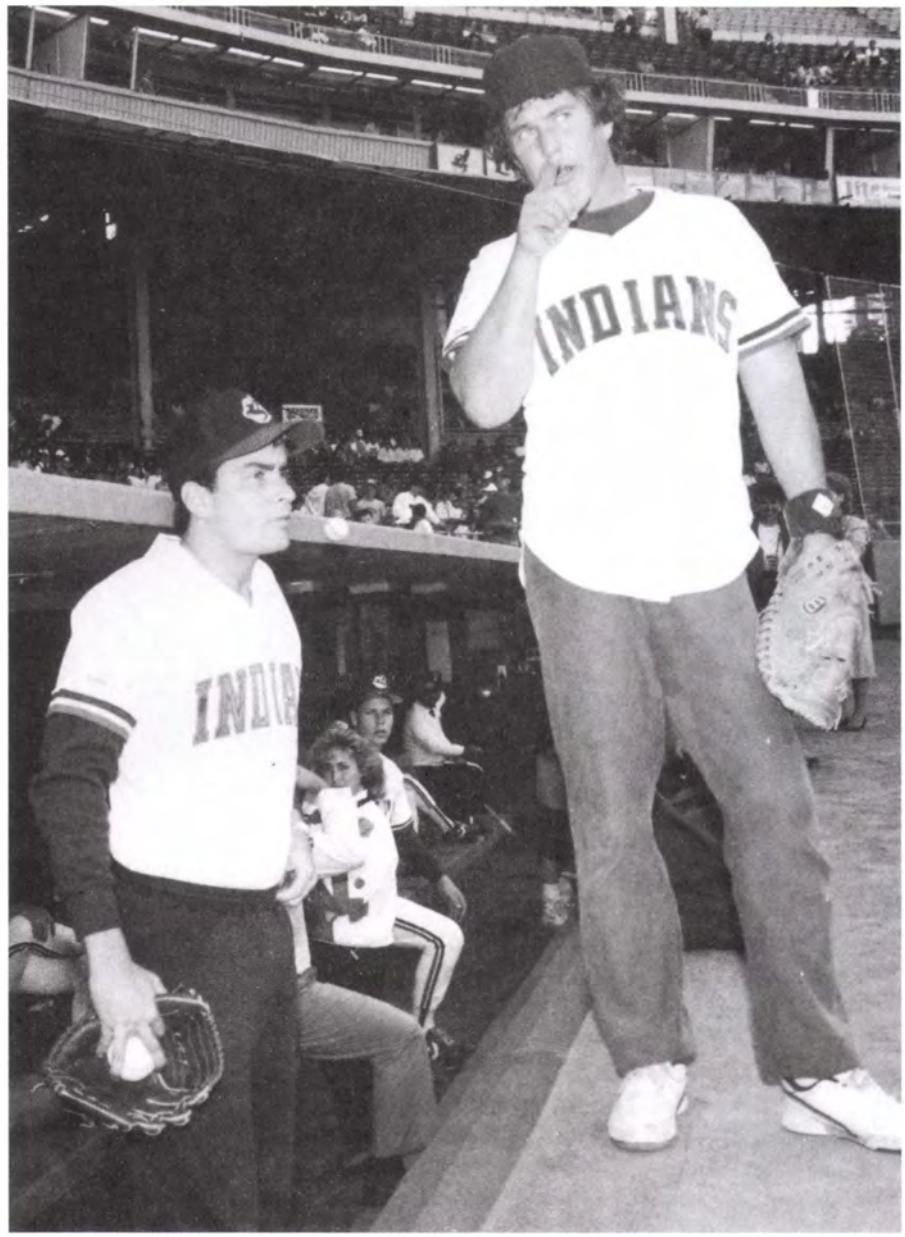
Ed McAuley, writing in *The Sporting News*, gushed over *The Kid from Cleveland*—perhaps because he appeared in the film. Among his observations: "The players prove surprisingly adept at switching to the world of make-believe" and "the baseball sequences

are excellent." At least he admitted, "This writer, being no movie connoisseur, can only say he got a big kick out of seeing a bunch of guys he knows so well act themselves."

McAuley offered various witticisms, culled from his baseball knowledge and insider status as a sportswriter. He noted that Gene Bearden "talks much more than he did in *The Stratton Story* [another 1949 release, in which he played himself], when his contribution to the culture of his times consisted of the muttered word: 'Okay.'" He observed that Ken Keltner "says more words in the picture than I've heard him speak in 13 years, but maybe that's only because he doesn't like to talk to sports writers." McAuley added:

> The script writer pulled an amazing boner when he ended the 1948 World Series with Dale Mitchell making the last putout. Lou Boudreau will wonder why he took the trouble to put Bob Kennedy in left field to bolster the defense in the final innings.

McAuley may have been the only "nonactor" participant who did not toss beanballs at the film. In *Everything Baseball*, James Mote quoted Lou Boudreau on *The Kid from Cleveland:* "I would like to buy every print of the film and burn it. Boy, that picture was a dog." Added Veeck, "I have one unwritten law at home that I adhere to: I never allow my kids to mention or see that abortion." On another occasion, the owner commented on the ballplayer performances by observing, "We failed at playing ourselves." While interviewing Bob Feller in Cooperstown several years ago, I asked him if he had any memories of making *The Kid from Cleveland.* He had nothing whatsoever to say about the experience. In his book, *Now Pitching, Bob Feller: A Baseball Memoir,* he described it as "an entirely forgettable movie" and quipped, "Those '30 godfathers' must have been the only people who ever saw it. At least that's what we hope."



JANET MACOSKA COLLECTION, WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Four decades after *The Kid From Cleveland,* moviegoers were treated to another work about the success (fictional, but in retrospect somewhat prescient) of the Indians when *Major League* was released in 1989. Here two of the movie's stars, Charlie Sheen, *left,* and Tom Berenger, *right,* ponder a scene set at Cleveland Municipal Stadium (though home-game scenes were actually shot at County Stadium in Milwaukee).

Despite this negativity, some contemporary Tribe fans and movie aficionados treasure *The Kid from Cleveland.* In 2006, *Plain Dealer* film critic Clint O'Connor published a piece on the all-time best baseball movies. *The Kid from Cleveland* was not one of them. He later reported that he received "about 50 e-mails and phone calls" from readers who suggested films they felt had been "tragically omitted." Near the top of the list was *The Kid from Cleveland.* "Some callers suggested I was out of my mind for not including this one," O'Connor

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

The *Kid from Cleveland* was fiction, but the crowds they drew in their 1948 championship season were entirely real. Here fans pack the bleachers at Municipal Stadium in Cleveland for Game 5 of the World Series. The attendance of 86,288 set a World Series record.

reported, "and that it not only was a great baseball movie, but a great movie, period."

Whatever one's opinion of the film's artistic merits, it is undeniably fun to watch *The Kid from Cleveland* and savor the presences of its long-ago ballplayer-heroes. One scene in the film features Johnny Barrows on a ballfield during spring training. Johnny has been warming up, and he asks Satchel Paige, "Is this the right windup for your hesitation pitch?" Paige advises him to "watch old Satch" as he shows him the correct way to throw. The youngster tries, but fails miserably. "Don't worry about that, Johnny," a supportive Paige declares. "It took me twenty years to get that pitch." Bob Feller, who has been observing the scene, promptly quips, "Satch, some folks say it took you thirty years." A second voice chimes in that it might have been forty.

In *The Kid from Cleveland,* ballplayers comment on their real-life opponents. At one point, Lou Boudreau pronounces, "I wish all my problems were that easy," in response to a plot development, "Like getting rid of Ted Williams without the Boston Red Sox putting me in jail for it." In another scene, Boudreau asks Hank Greenberg if he ever batted against a ghost. "I sure did," Greenberg observes. "His name was Dizzy Dean. I never even saw the ball."

Much of the dialogue might have been penned by a team publicist rather than a Hollywood screenwriter. After Greenberg's remark about Dean, Johnny exclaims, "Bet he couldn't pitch faster than Feller, or Lemon, or Bearden." Predictably, the youngster wants to grow up to be "a ballplayer on the Indians, a shortstop like Lou Boudreau." This is not surprising, as Mike Jackson volunteers that Boudreau is "one of the greatest clutch hitters in the game." Of Tris Speaker, the broadcaster declares, "Mr. Speaker is as well-known in baseball as Shakespeare was a playwright." In a glaring comment that mirrors life in America during the postwar years, Jackson observes, before Game 5 of the 1948 World Series, "It was a wonderful day for the game. Even the ladies turned out in large numbers, grateful for the nursery that Bill Veeck had introduced to play host to the next generation of Indians fans." During this game, Veeck notes that over 86,000 spectators have packed into Municipal Stadium. Jackson tells his radio listeners, "Today's gate raises the Indians total to almost three million people this season. No other team, not even the Yankees in their heyday with Babe Ruth, ever drew that many."

Of all the nonprofessionals, Boudreau and Veeck have the biggest parts. Given his legendary flair for theatrics, it is no surprise that *Variety* reported that Veeck "shapes up surprisingly well as a thespian." One would have to agree with Ed McAuley's assessment of Veeck's performance, with the sportswriter describing the owner as "the best of the amateurs." McAuley might have been thinking of Veeck's Doby-Gordon "anecdote"

when he observed that Veeck "is so natural that I half expected him to wink and say, 'Stick around. When this is over, we'll get together and tell a few lies.'"

The Indians organization received no compensation for participating in the film. The ballplayers also were not paid, but were promised a percentage of the profits. Only trouble is, there were none. *The Kid from Cleveland* cannot be found on the *Variety* list of top ninety-two moneymaking films released in 1949. Other baseball movies made the cut: *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* earned $3,350,000, for thirteenth place; *It Happens Every Spring* grossed $1,850,000, for fifty-eighth place.

In June 1952, *The Sporting News* noted:

> Hal Lebovitz of the *Cleveland News* reports that the producers of the movie *The Kid from Cleveland* sent Lou Boudreau a financial report which showed the film . . . to be in the red by approximately $150,000. . . . The producers added the note, "We hope the Indians win the pennant so we can reissue the film and wipe out the deficit. . . . Causing Lebovitz to observe, "They obviously forgot that Boudreau is now manager of the rival Boston Red Sox." ■

FILM CREDITS

The Kid From Cleveland. Released by Republic Pictures. PRODUCER: Walter Colmes. DIRECTOR: Herbert Kline. SCREENPLAY: John Bright, from a story by Kline and Bright. CINEMATOGRAPHER: Jack Marta. EDITOR: Jason H. Bernie. MUSIC: Nathan Scott. ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: K. Elmo Lowe. BASEBALL SUPERVISOR: Lew Fonseca. RUNNING TIME: 89 minutes. CAST: George Brent (Mike Jackson); Lynn Bari (Katherine Jackson); Rusty (Russ) Tamblyn (Johnny Barrows); Tommy Cook (Dan Hudson); Ann Doran (Emily Novak); Louis Jean Heydt (Carl Novak); K. Elmo Lowe (Dave Joyce); Johnny Berardino (Mac); The Cleveland Indians Baseball Team with Bill Veeck; Lou Boudreau; Tris Speaker; Hank Greenberg; Bob Feller; Gene Bearden; Satchell (Satchel) Paige; Bob Lemon; Steve Gromek; Joe Gordon; Mickey Vernon; Ken Keltner; Ray Boone; Dale Mitchell; Larry Doby; Bob Kennedy; Jim Hegan. Appearing uncredited: Bobby Avila; Al Benton; Allie Clark; Gordon Cobbledick; Mike Garcia; Bill Grieve; Mel Harder; Franklin Lewis; Ed MacAuley; Bill McKechnie; Frank Papish; Hal Peck; Bill Summers; Mike Tresh; Thurman Tucker; "Lefty" Weisman; Early Wynn; Sam Zoldak. Appearing in archival footage: Alvin Dark; Bob Elliott; Tommy Holmes; Phil Masi; Nelson Potter; Al Rosen; Sibby Sisti; Warren Spahn; Eddie Stanky; Earl Torgeson.

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It Was "Smoky" in Cleveland

Rick Huhn

The Ruth era was still a year or two away in 1918. Two home runs in one baseball game was still a big deal. When Frank Baker hit a home run in back-to-back games for the Philadelphia Athletics in the 1911 World Series, it earned him the nickname "Home Run." Thus, it was a matter of note on May 24, 1918, when a classic nineteen-inning battle at the Polo Grounds between the New York Yankees and the Cleveland Indians was won by a Cleveland outfielder who launched his second home run in that game. According to the next day's *New York Times*, the contest "scintillated with brilliant plays," and the hero was "as fine a piece of outfielding bric-a-brac as there is in the game right now."[1] (See Fred Schuld's article on page 84.)

The performance that day by the object of the newspaper's affection overshadowed a great pitching performance by Stanley Coveleski. The Tribe's pitching ace went the distance, giving up just two hits in the last six innings. Still, it was the twenty-eight-year-old left fielder, all five feet eleven inches and 180 pounds of him, who supplied the real fireworks. His home run into the left-field bleachers in the seventh inning increased the visitors' lead to 2–0. His towering drive over the fence in the top of the nineteenth broke a 2–2 tie. But even that was not the whole story. In the bottom of the ninth, this same fellow climbed the left-field fence to rob Yankee Elmer Miller of an extra-base hit and help preserve the tie. Then, in the twelfth inning, he brought Miller up short once again, throwing the Yanks' center fielder out at second as he tried to stretch a single.

Certainly a casual fan need not look far to identify the Cleveland outfielder who carried the day: Tris Speaker. No one in the game roamed the outfield like the "Grey Eagle." The fleet outfielder was better known for stroking doubles and triples, but he was no stranger to the home run. If it wasn't Spoke, then most certainly it had to have been Robert Braggo Roth. In 1915 he led the American League with seven home runs. But alas, it was neither. The hero that late May day was Joe Wood, better known as Smoky Joe, a title earned in Boston, not Cleveland, achieved by staring down batters, not pitchers. All that changed, however, in that wonderful nineteenth inning on a day he later termed "one of the biggest days of my life," a day when Joe could finally look back and say the haze had lifted and "the worst was finally over."[2]

As this last poignant statement reflects, Smoky Joe Wood's journey to the Cleveland outfield in 1918 was an arduous one. The future baseballer was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 25, 1889, eventually landing in Ness City, Kansas, where he began seriously playing town baseball in 1906. In the early days he played the infield and pitched. The next two years found him playing professional ball in the minors for Hutchinson of the Western Association and Kansas City of the high-end American Association. By then it was clear that he would make his real mark as a pitcher. By the end of the 1908 season he was pitching for the Boston Red Sox. His seven-plus seasons in Boston were nothing short of sensational, particularly 1912, when he finished with a 34–5 record that included a 16-game winning streak, which tied an American League record. Walter Johnson set the record earlier that same season. Wood's victory over Johnson, at a time when the Washington pitching star was in the midst of a winning streak of his own, preserved Wood's own streak and became a baseball classic. Wood's mound heroics continued into the 1912 World Series with the Giants. Here he was the pitcher of record in four games, the winning moundsman in three, two at the Polo Grounds and then the deciding victory in Boston in Game 8, as his Red Sox captured the crown.

In 1913, the Smoky Joe "Express" rounded a bend and almost derailed. In a 1963 interview with baseball historian Larry Ritter, Wood told of an injury to the thumb of his pitching hand that occurred in early 1913, when his feet slipped as he came off the mound to field a ball. In 1917, writing for *Baseball Magazine*, he gave a slightly different version. "I broke my [right] thumb in sliding to base and started to pitch before the thumb had fully regained its strength."[3] Be that as it may, since he was not fully healed he threw awkwardly, incurring a sore right pitching arm as a result. Then in 1915, after below-par years in both 1913 and 1914, he again strained the arm. By now the pain was severe, sending him to doctors who diagnosed neuritis. Following the 1915 season, he sought chiropractic treatment, at the time thought unconventional and frowned upon. Joe offered

differing versions of the effectiveness of that treatment, but he felt ready to return to pitch for the Red Sox during the summer of 1916. It was at this point that he and Sox owner Joe Lannin bumped heads on the terms of a contract. As a result, Wood sat out the entire 1916 baseball season.

In early 1917 Wood saw yet another physician who x-rayed him and determined that at some point the pitcher "had torn the lining of the bone" in his shoulder. The tear was healed, perhaps aided by his forced layoff. By that time theatrical producer Harry Frazee was the new owner of the Red Sox. On Joe's word that he was recovered, Frazee offered a new contract at a substantially reduced figure from the previous one. Joe refused it but received assurances that he could try to negotiate a deal with other clubs. "He [Frazee] offered to let me make all the negotiation and promised if the sale could be effected to his satisfaction as well as mine, to go through with his part of the deal," Wood recalled. "I had been Speaker's room-mate for a long time and wished to join him at Cleveland. So I immediately got in touch with the Cleveland club, and as they seemed to want me the sale was speedily arranged."[4]

An overflow crowd waits outside Ebbets Field during the 1920 World Series between the Indians and the Brooklyn Robins. After winning one of three on the road, the Indians captured the best-of-nine series by sweeping the four contests at League Park.

Actually, the negotiations were not that simple. At first the Red Sox demanded Cleveland catcher Steve O'Neill. Eventually they sought a straight cash payment of $25,000, finally settling for $15,000. When the deal was completed on February 24, 1917, Cleveland owner Jim Dunn and manager Lee Fohl thought they were getting a pitcher. As Fohl noted at the time, "If it were otherwise, I know Spoke would not have advised us so strongly to land him."[5]

Despite management's optimism, not everyone was convinced that Wood was the Smoky Joe of old. Cleveland sportswriter Henry P. Edwards made sure he advised readers that "Wood also is something of a batter, having hit .250 or better in five of his campaigns with Boston. During seven seasons as a member of the Red Sox he has made 121 hits, including twenty-six doubles, six triples and four [actually five] home runs. In home runs he excelled the total output [three] of the Cleveland hurlers for the last ten years."[6]

Wood's pitching comeback was short-lived. He pitched in only five games in 1917, covering just over fifteen innings. He started one game against the Yankees at Cleveland's Dunn Field (League Park) on May 26, a 4–3 loss in which he gave up all four runs, allowed eleven hits, and struck out one. By mid-June, local newspapers were calling the pitching effort against the Yanks a "comeback stunt." According to Robert Drury, a medical doctor who treated Joe that year, the hurler should have limited his action to an inning or two. In fact, he held the New Yorkers scoreless through four and pitched eight. Drury recounted that Wood had "strained his arm badly and probably permanently as the result of trying to earn his salary too early in the season."[7]

That was essentially it for Joe Wood's major-league pitching career. Not much was heard from his bat that season, either. In six at-bats, he did not fashion a hit. When he announced that he would not accept another dime from the Indians until he was pitching, again it seemed certain his short but illustrious career was finished. But those who thought Wood had tossed in the towel had never taken true measure of the man. In order to stay in baseball, he would "have carried the water bucket if they had water boys."[8]

In order to strengthen his arm, Wood followed Drury's advice, performing hard labor outside in the cold during the offseason. In the spring of 1918 he reported to camp, thinking he could make his way back to the mound. It did not pan out, but in Joe's case a world's misfortune opened another avenue, and he turned it into a five-year career as a Tribe outfielder.

As the 1918 season opened, the Indians, like many other teams, experienced a shortage of players because of World War I. In Cleveland's case the situation was exacerbated by illness and injury to several players, including outfielder Jack Graney. Buoyed by a spring of hard work in the batting cage, Wood regained his ability to hit, underscored in dramatic fashion in the Polo Grounds on May 24, which led to his appearance

in 119 of the 127 games his team played that war-shortened season. In the field he played nineteen games at second base, four at first, and the remainder in the outfield. Despite a right wing too sore to pitch, he demonstrated an adequate throwing arm and average range. He was, it turned out, a natural fly chaser who could hit. He finished this—in many ways his rookie—season with a healthy batting average of .296, 5 home runs, and 66 RBIs. Among players with at least 400 plate appearances, he ranked seventh in the league in batting average. He ranked fifth in home runs, and he tied a young pitcher named Babe Ruth for third in RBIs, two ahead of a fellow named Ty Cobb. He had accomplished the task through hours of hard work, shagging fly balls, taking infield practice, and choking up on his bat. His efforts once again earned him a big-league paycheck. In June he signed a new contract.

Heading into the 1919 season, Joe Wood was a solid member of the Indians' outfield corps. When he arrived for spring training, he welcomed a new manager. Tris Speaker had replaced Lee Fohl. Although he was obviously happy for his friend, the change did not bode particularly well for Joe. Spoke was an early proponent of the platoon system. In 1919, Cleveland had a number of capable outfielders. In addition to Speaker, definitely not a candidate for the platoon, there were lefties Elmer Smith and Jack Graney and the right-handed Wood. As the season wore on and Joe saw mostly left-handed pitching, his games played (72), as well as his average (.255), home runs (0), and RBIs (27) dropped accordingly. Apparently the platoon system worked, however, as the team improved its record and finished in second place for the second consecutive year.

In 1920, the Indians took direct aim at the American League pennant and went it one better, topping the Brooklyn Dodgers by winning five of seven games to capture the franchise's first World Series. Wood played his part, again serving on the platoon detail. In this first year of "lively" ball, he played sixty-one times, batted .270, slugged a home run, and drove in thirty mates. He even followed up on a brief 1919 relief appearance with two innings of relief, which included the last of 989 career strikeouts. The 1920 pitching performance was to be his last.

In the 1920 World Series the platoon system permitted Joe to appear in four games. In so doing, he joined Babe Ruth as players with the rare distinction of both pitching their teams to victory and later playing the outfield in World Series play. His two hits in ten official trips included a double. He scored two runs, both in Game 1, a 3–1 Cleveland win. He also walked once.

In 1921, Wood hit his batting stride, although by now the addition of Charlie Jamieson had pretty much rendered him a part-timer. He ended the season with a .366 average as he hit four home runs and doubled his RBIs to 60. Given that it was an era of inflated averages (the league hit .292), one still wonders why Joe appeared in only 66 games. After all, he outhit all Tribe outfielders, even Speaker at .362, as the Indians finished as bridesmaid to the pennant-winning Yanks. Had Joe batted enough to qualify for the title, his average would have placed fifth, just five points shy of George Sisler of the Browns.

Whatever the reason for his limited play in 1921, it was remedied in 1922 when Elmer Smith was sold to the Red Sox and Wood appeared in 142 games against both right- and left-handed pitchers for the fourth-place Indians. In 505 at-bats (583 plate appearances) he hit a very respectable .297. Moreover, his eight home runs and team-leading 92 RBIs were both career highs. It was therefore a surprise when Joe announced that fall that he was leaving baseball to coach the varsity pitchers and take charge of the freshman squad at Yale. Later he took over the varsity and was a fixture at the school until 1942.

Why did Smoky Joe Wood, age thirty-two and in his prime, follow his best year as a position player by announcing his retirement? He always offered that he came to realize that the rigors of professional baseball were keeping him from quality time with his growing family. Then there were the rumblings of the Cleveland fans. They once adored him but now voiced their displeasure, particularly in early 1922, when he showed a propensity for taking a called third strike.[9] Or just maybe Joe Wood had come to Cleveland to lift the "smoky" haze that hung over him. Although not exactly according to plan, he had eventually proven to everyone, including himself, that he was much more than a great pitcher; he was a mighty fine everyday player too. Maybe now, his place in baseball history secure, it was the perfect time to lay down bat and glove and move along. ■

NOTES

1. *New York Times*, 25 May 1918.
2. Joe Wood, quoted in *The Glory of Their Times*, by Lawrence A. Ritter (New York: Morrow, 1985), 169.
3. Joe Wood, "Doing the Come Back Stunt," *Baseball Magazine*, August 1917, 425–26.
4. Ibid., 426.
5. Lee Fohl, quoted in *Plain Dealer*, 25 February 1917.
6. Ibid.
7. Dr. Robert Drury, quoted in news article, source unknown, 13 June 1917, Joe Wood's clippings file, National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, New York.
8. Joe Wood quoted in *The Glory of Their Times*, 169.
9. *The Sporting News*, 16 November 1922.

Roger Maris and the Indians

Daniel Dullum

Before the back-to-back MVP awards in 1960 and 1961 and the glaring fame that accompanied the magical number 61 in the latter year, with or without the asterisk, Roger Maris was merely another top minor-league prospect—for the Cleveland Indians, as it happens, with whom he began his career as a highly touted outfield hopeful.

Branded with the "can't miss" tag, Maris didn't disappoint the Cleveland brass during his rapid four-year ascent through the Indian farm system, leading Keokuk and Reading to the playoffs and Fargo-Moorhead and Indianapolis all the way to a league championship. "In the minor leagues with Cleveland, they always stressed fundamentals. They always looked for those ballplayers that could do everything, and Roger was that kind of ballplayer," Jim "Mudcat" Grant, a teammate of Maris with the Indians in 1958, said. "Everybody in the organization knew that out of the three or four hundred ballplayers in the system, Roger was in the top five."

Herb Score, the one-time Indians pitching great and longtime broadcaster for the club, said in a 1996 interview: "I saw Roger when he first signed, at spring training and through the minor leagues. Roger was just one of those fellows that you . . . knew was going to be a big leaguer." Kerby Farrell, who replaced Al Lopez at the Indians' helm following the 1956 season, told the Associated Press in March 1957 that Maris would "get a long look" at spring training in Tucson, Arizona, adding, "Maris has a chance to be a great ballplayer.

"I'd like to give Maris a good shot in left field," Farrell, Maris's Triple-A manager at Indianapolis, continued. "The kid's going to be great someday. Wait until you see him. He can run, he's got a fine arm and he came along great last year after a slow start. If determination and desire count, he'll be somewhere with us."

And in a feature in *The Sporting News* (March 1, 1957), Cleveland correspondent Hal Lebovitz wrote that "Maris has the tools to become another Mantle, lacking only the powerful arm Mickey owns. The job in left field is his to win."

The hype surrounding Maris didn't stop there. The April 1957 issue of *Sport* carried a feature on rookies with a chance to reach the majors, with Maris listed as the Tribe's number-one outfield hopeful. In his preview of major league rookies for *Look*, New York sportswriter Tom Meany tabbed Maris as one of the top four outfield prospects. *Sports Illustrated* ran a story (March 25, 1957), citing Maris as one of its top ten rookie selections. Of Maris, *SI* stated, "Here is the youth who could add needed speed to a lead-footed Cleveland offense. Extremely fast, he can bunt—or pull the long ball to right."

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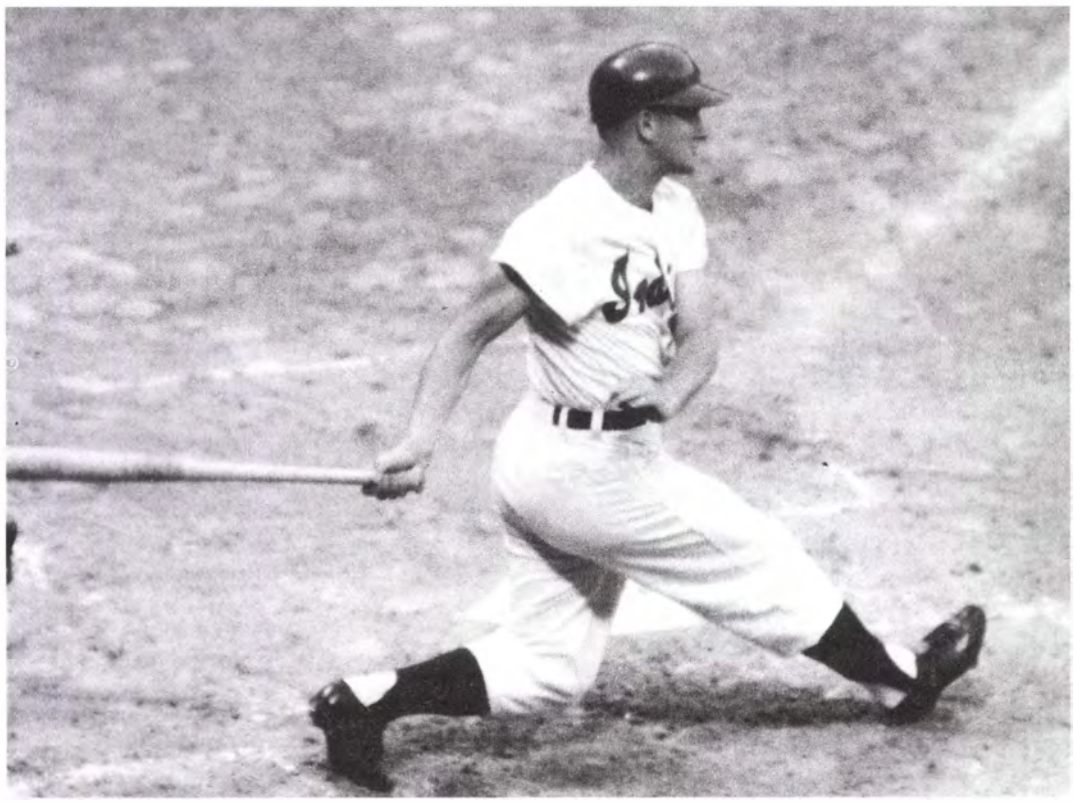
Retired slugger Ralph Kiner with Maris during spring training in 1957.

To hear reporters of the day tell it, the only thing that could keep Maris from starting the season with Cleveland was himself. Those stories of a brooding, moody Roger Maris didn't start in New York.

Lebovitz observed in *The Sporting News* that "Maris is a brooder who might be upset with a slow start, which seems to have plagued him in his four years of professional baseball, all on pennant winners." (Tulsa, where Maris began the 1955 season, did not win the pennant in the Texas League that year, although Lebovitz's characterization of the teams Maris had played for up to then is largely accurate.)

In his column in the *Fargo Forum*, Maris's hometown daily newspaper in North Dakota, published the week of April 3, 1957, Eugene Fitzgerald concurred:

> Maris is a brooder, and once in a batting slump he has a tough time shaking it. . . . A typical Maris brooding period right now could be costly to the



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Maris takes a healthy cut at a pitch during an Indians game in June 1957. The next year he was traded to the Kansas City Athletics. In 1961 he hit 61 home runs for the New York Yankees, breaking Babe Ruth's long-standing single-season record.

> chances of the Fargoan making the majors as a regular. . . . Regardless of what anyone wishes to read into opinions expressed here, no one would be happier than I would be if Maris went all the way. . . . But I don't like the reports I hear about his temperament. I hope they're untrue.

Such fears proved unfounded, inasmuch as Maris not only made the jump to the majors but also laid claim to the vacancy in left field. A notorious slow starter throughout his minor-league days, Maris broke in with a bang when the Indians hosted the Chicago White Sox on Opening Day, April 16, 1957. Maris clubbed three singles in five at-bats off White Sox ace Billy Pierce and scored a run in the fourth inning of a game won in eleven innings by Chicago, 3–2.

Two days later, Maris hit the first of his 275 career home runs, a grand slam in the top of the eleventh inning off Tigers reliever Jack Crimian that gave the Tribe an 8–3 victory in Detroit.

Maris opened his rookie campaign with a nine-game hitting streak. All was going well for the young outfielder until he suffered two broken ribs while trying to break up a double play against the Kansas City Athletics on May 10. Maris was hitting .315 at the time. By June 1, his average had slipped to .258.

A month after he returned to the lineup, Maris took two foul tips off his right instep and spent nearly another two weeks, June 29 through July 10, on the shelf. The ninth inning of back-to-back games against Boston in mid-June illustrated the ups and downs Maris was experiencing. On June 18, Maris's home run keyed a 7–6 win over the Red Sox, while a 3-for-5 performance hiked his average to .270. Twenty-four hours later, Maris was accidentally struck on the left temple when Red Sox catcher Sammy White was returning the ball to pitcher Frank Sullivan. Maris dropped to the ground but was able to walk off the field. X-rays showed no fractures, and Maris returned to the lineup the next day.

"Roger was a very good teammate," according to Herb Score,

> and a very intense ballplayer; he played hard. I would consider him a hard-nosed ballplayer. People tend to focus on the home runs, but he was an outstanding outfielder, and in his younger days, he could run very well.

For the remainder of his rookie year, what was essentially a two-month slump took Maris's average from .271 on July 17 to .235 at season's end. He contributed 14 home runs, 51 RBIs, and eight stolen bases to the Indians offense despite missing 37 games due to injuries.

The upheaval that took place within the Cleveland organization during the 1957–58 offseason didn't bode

well for Maris. After the Indians finished sixth with a 76–77 season, 21½ games behind the pennant-winning New York Yankees, Farrell was fired and replaced by Bobby Bragan. Later, in a move that would have long-range repercussions on the franchise, General Manager Hank Greenberg was sacked and replaced by "Trader" Frank Lane on November 12, 1957. With Lane in charge, no player in the organization was safe. Roger Maris would learn soon enough the difference between playing for a manager who believed in his abilities (Farrell) and one who was indifferent (Bragan).

Maris began 1958 as the Indians' right fielder. As in 1957, he started off well. He was hitting .280 with three home runs and six runs batted in when he pulled a lower back muscle during a pregame workout in early May. Bragan construed Maris's hesitation to play with the injury as an attempt to malinger, thus earning the second-year outfielder a permanent residence in Bragan's doghouse.

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Maris awaits a Ralph Terry pitch during an April 1957 contest. The two would later become teammates with both the Kansas City Athletics and New York Yankees, and Terry would also pitch for the Indians during the 1965 campaign.

For the remainder of his stay in Cleveland, Maris's playing time was sporadic. When he hit a pair of two-home runs in a game at Detroit on May 14, Maris was batting .275, a figure that dropped to .225 with nine home runs and 27 RBIs as the June 15 trading deadline approached.

Considering the combination of Lane's itchy trigger finger and Bragan's disposition, it was only a matter of time before Maris would find himself wearing a new uniform. In an attempt to showcase Maris for a possible trade, he was returned to the Cleveland lineup as a leadoff hitter.

After a proposed deal with the Yankees fell through as the trading deadline approached, Lane dialed up Kansas City and unloaded Maris, infielder Preston Ward, and pitcher Dick Tomanek to the Athletics for infielder Vic Power and utility man Woodie Held.

"No matter what they got, if you traded Roger Maris you had to get had, because Roger was a complete ballplayer," Mudcat Grant said.

> We had an idiot for a general manager in Frank Lane that could not see the talent, but always criticized Roger for his attitude. With a ballplayer like that who could really play and was sitting on the bench, I would've had an attitude also. Lane didn't see the attitude as something positive, so he traded Roger and that was a big mistake.

In his June 18, 1958, column in the *Fargo Forum*, Eugene Fitzgerald wrote:

> It was somewhat surprising that Maris was dealt to Kansas City. It was generally believed the Shanley High product . . . would wind up with the New York Yankees. There is no secret that Maris hasn't been happy at Cleveland, not an uncommon situation with the Indians. There is no secret that the Yankees would like to have Maris. His transfer to Kansas City may delay his arrival at Yankee Stadium. Whether the charges are true or not that Kansas City is a [major-league] farm club for the Yankees, it must be recognized that Maris has a better chance now to join the Yankees than he had while in the employ of the Cleveland club.

It took a year and a half, but Fitzgerald's prognostications eventually came to pass—on all counts. ■

Cleveland Tate Stars

Leslie Heaphy

The city of Cleveland had a number of entrants in the Negro Leagues during that organization's heyday. The Buckeyes, the most famous Cleveland team to play in the leagues, won the Negro Leagues World Series in 1945 against the Homestead Grays, earning a spot in history forever. Few people know much about that team, and even fewer know anything about the other Cleveland teams that played between 1920 and 1950 in the Negro Leagues. One was the Cleveland Tate Stars, which represented the African American community in the Negro National League (NNL) in 1922 and 1923.

The Cleveland Tate Stars began playing baseball in the city in 1918 and joined the NNL in 1921. After the Stars left the league in 1923, the Cleveland Browns took their place and finished last. The Elites, the Hornets, and the Tigers all followed and did not fare much better. In the 1930s, the Stars, the Cubs, and the Giants represented Cleveland in rival Negro leagues, and the Red Sox gave it a try in the NNL, but none could seem to break the cycle of losing teams. The Cleveland Bears entered the Negro American League (NAL) in 1939 and enjoyed brief success—they finished first (22–4) in 1939 but the next year fell to 6–16 and then moved to Jacksonville, Florida, in 1941—paving the way for Ernest Wright and the Buckeyes, who made two trips to the World Series before moving to Louisville in 1949 and finally folding at the end of the season.

The Cleveland Tate Stars set the pattern for the mediocrity that would charaterize Cleveland's Negro League teams until the 1940s. The team began its existence as a local squad, and a few box scores have been found that reveal a bit about it. A 1919 account in the *Chicago Defender* talks about the Stars' first practice under manager Bill Irvin at Woodland Hills Park. Most of the players who showed up to try out were either rookies or veterans from other teams in the area. They were trying to get ready for their first game on April 13 against the National Cafes. They went on to win their first regular game of the new season, against the Johnny Otts, 3–2. A large crowd came out to see the Stars play and was treated to a game filled with speed and enthusiasm.[1] The papers reported a five-game winning streak for the Stars in early June, and a nailbiter in July against the Tellings Nine. George Branham came away with the victory by allowing only five hits through eight innings and getting some fine fielding from one Rev Cannaday.[2]

A short series of games was played in 1920 against a team from Oberlin to try to name the best team in Ohio. Three games were played, with the Tate Stars winning two. Following a 3–1 victory, the local paper referred to the Tate Stars as Cleveland's "crack colored team." Winning pitcher Lefty Brady struck out fourteen batters to secure the win.[3] The series also included a dance in Rowland Hall on the Oberlin campus.

Before the start of the 1921 season, Jim Taylor left Indianapolis to manage the Stars. He immediately set out to sign some new players for his squad, beginning with Ralph (Roy) Moore, first baseman and pitcher. While Taylor worked on the roster, owner George Tate and his business manager Devoe worked on a deal to use one of the Akron parks for practice while their own field was under construction. Tate Field became their new home, and by June they were enjoying their home-field advantage as they took two games from the Pittsburgh Keystones, 8–7 and 8–3. Branham came away with the victory in both contests. Outfielder Willie Miles and second baseman Claude Johnson led the offensive charge in both games. Errors hurt the Stars in the first contest, but they only committed one in the second.[4]

The Stars played through some hot streaks in the summer, winning eight out of nine games in late June. They finished the streak with a come-from-behind win against the Columbus Buckeyes, 10–9. A six-run rally brought them back from defeat, with Rev Cannaday providing solid hitting. In mid-July they pulled off a sweep with a doubleheader victory over the Bacharach Giants, 3–1 and 6–5. In the first contest the Stars beat Cannonball Dick Redding behind the four-hit pitching of Johnson.[5]

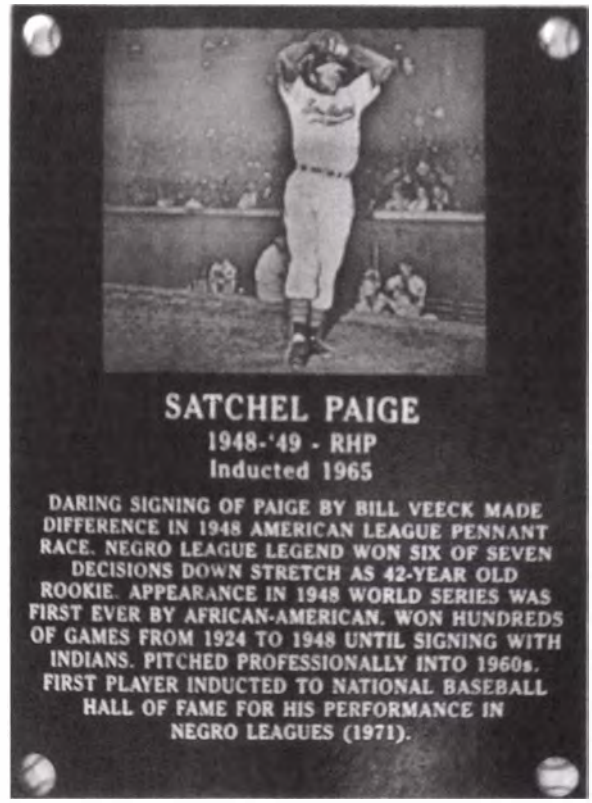
In a battle of wills, the Tate Stars beat Suds Sutherland (a former Detroit Tiger) and his Cowpers teammates 7–6 in sixteen innings. The Stars got twenty-one hits off the former major league pitcher but gave up sixteen of their own. The Stars pulled off a nice doubleheader victory against the Kansas City Monarchs near the end of the season, winning 8–6 and 6–4. Johnson hit a home run in the second game to support the six-hit pitching of Hamilton. In late 1921 the Stars

played the Indianapolis ABCs and came out on the losing end of a 6–1 score before a hometown crowd. The Stars hit into four double plays and could not stop the hard hitting of Ben Taylor, who went 3 for 3 and a walk to lead the ABCs.[6]

The Stars lost again to the ABCs near the start of the 1922 season, with a 4–0 shutout going to Taylor's crew. They lost another doubleheader to the ABCs in June when they were outhit 30–24. Indianapolis clouted nine extra base hits, including three homers, compared to the Stars' three for extra bases. Indianapolis continued to give the Tates trouble with three out of four victories in September.[7] While they did not enjoy much success in the NNL in 1922, the Tate Stars did establish a strong record in Ohio with their independent play against teams such as the Great Americans of Mansfield. In October they were tied for the lead in the Cleveland City Series after beating the Tellings 16–0. They relied on the strong pitching of Branham and Bob McClure, and solid hitting and fielding from Johnson, Cannaday, Taylor, and Fred Boyd. For example, they won two straight from the Tellings in April, with Branham getting the victory in the second game, 6–4. Cannaday led the attack with two hits and two runs scored. Branham later beat the Detroit Stars 5–1, with the only hit being a home run by Bruce Petway. They beat the Kansas City Monarchs in late July, with Johnson helping the hitting attack and McClure beating "Bullet Joe" Rogan 6–5. The Monarchs came back in the nightcap to triumph 9–3, with Drake besting Branham.[8]

In 1923, the Tate Stars appeared to have an uncertain future. Rube Foster paid a visit to the city in February in an effort to encourage more support for the team and to try to fix "the tangled up affairs" of the ballclub.[9] Reports indicated that the owners found themselves in court over unpaid debts. George Tate struggled to make ends meet and finally had to sell the Tate ballpark to businessman George R. Hooper in early July to save the team. These early difficulties may have been the harbinger of things to come for future Cleveland entries in the NNL. In fact, the Stars played many of their home games in Toledo at Washington Park. They lost a doubleheader to the ABCs there in August when they could not turn their hits into runs. In the first game the Stars had eleven hits but scored only twice, and in the nightcap they had eight hits and still only scored two runs to lose 3–2. Bob McCall came out the loser in the first game, while Branham lost the second.[10]

The Stars did manage to play their early games at home, even with the future of the park and the team in jeopardy. They split an early series with the Homestead Grays, losing the first game 3–1 but pounding the ball in the second to triumph 14–5. Johnson had three extra base hits in the second, including two home runs.[11] In a non-league series with the Ambridge Eagles of Ambridge, Pennsylvania, the Stars continued their heavy hitting with a 27-hit barrage to win 14–1 and 8–2. George (Rube) Henderson hit the only home run in the second game for the Tates. A series of August games in Memphis did not go as well; the Tates lost to the Red Sox 5–1 and 8–1.[12]



JOHN ZAJC, SABR

Satchel Paige's plaque at Heritage Park, Progressive Field, Cleveland. Paige, who first saw action for a Cleveland team in 1931 with the Cubs of the Negro National League, was elected to the Indians Hall of Fame in 1965.

Compiling the roster for the Tate Stars reveals few names that many would recognize, and it appears that many of the players were local stars who never played outside the Cleveland area. An important exception to that pattern was the inclusion of Candy Jim Taylor, who was with the Stars in 1921 and 1922 as player-manager. A few other names that are more recognizable are Vic Harris, Cannaday, Boots McClain, Buck Ewing, Hooks Johnson, and Bob McCall. Vic Harris is best known for the many years he spent with the Homestead Grays beginning in 1925, but he got his start with the Tate Stars in 1923 before going on to have a successful baseball career spanning twenty-eight years. Jim Taylor came in with a strong reputation as a player and a well-known name as one, with Ben and C. I., of the Taylor brothers.

When the Tate Stars folded and did not return in 1924 a new Cleveland entry, the Browns, joined the

NNL and continued to use Hooper Park for their home games. As the Stars had struggled financially so too did the entries that succeeded them in the Negro Leagues. In mid-1924 a reporter explained that the Browns could not win despite "apparent strength both on the offense and defense."[13] Without a winning record, fans would not come out in large enough numbers to support the teams. The Tate Stars started out with a great deal of excitement and promise but were unable to translate that into winning records, and ultimately they had to leave the NNL. ■

NEGRO LEAGUE TEAMS IN CLEVELAND

Years	Team	League
1922	Cleveland Tate Stars	Negro National League
1924	Cleveland Browns	Negro National League
1926	Cleveland Elites	Negro National League
1927	Cleveland Hornets	Negro National League
1928	Cleveland Tigers	Negro National League
1931	Cleveland Cubs	Negro National League
1932	Cleveland Stars	East–West League
1933	Cleveland Giants	Negro National League
1934	Cleveland Red Sox	Negro National League
1939–40	Cleveland Bears	Negro American League
1942–50	Cleveland Buckeyes	Negro American League

NOTES

1. "Tate Stars Start Training," *Chicago Defender,* 12 April 1919; "Tates Win First Game of Season," *Chicago Defender,* 17 May 1919.
2. "Two-run Rally in Ninth Wins for Tate Stars," *Chicago Defender,* 2 July 1921.
3. "Oberlin Club Lost Game to Clevelanders," *Chronicle Telegram,* 10 September 1920.
4. "Tate Stars to build New Park in Cleveland," *Chicago Defender,* 19 March 1921; "Tate Stars Take Two from Pittsburgh Keystones," *Chicago Defender,* 11 June 1921.
5. "Tate Stars Nose Out Columbus Buckeyes," *Chicago Defender,* 25 June 1921; "Tate's Stars Win Two Games from Connors," *Chicago Defender,* 15 July 1922.
6. "Tate Stars Win 16-Inning Game Off Sutherland," *Chicago Defender,* 13 August 1921; "Tate Stars Surprise Fans; Win 2 from Kansas City," *Chicago Defender,* 27 August 1921; "ABCs Win 6 to 1," *Indianapolis Star,* 27 September 1921.
7. "ABCs Trounce Tate Stars 4–0," *Savannah Tribune,* 4 May 1922; "Charleston Gets 2 Homers; A.B.C's Down Tates Twice," *Chicago Defender,* 12 June 1922; "Indianapolis Takes Three Out of Four from Tates," *Chicago Defender,* 2 September 1922.
8. "Cleveland Akron Stars Will Oppose Great Americans This Week," *Mansfield News,* 19 July 1922; "Tate Stars 6; Tellings 4," *Chicago Defender,* 29 April 1922; "Detroit Stars Stop Tates, Pennant Aspirations, 8–2," *Chicago Defender,* 27 May 1922; "Tate's Defeat Rogan in Last Half of Ninth," *Chicago Defender,* 22 July 1922; "Tate Stars Tie Up the Cleveland City Series," *Chicago Defender,* 17 October 1922.
9. "Rube Foster Banqueted by Cleveland Business Men," *Chicago Defender,* 17 February 1923.
10. "Cleveland Business Man Buys Tate's Baseball Park," *Chicago Defender,* 14 July 1923; "ABCs Grab Double Bill from Cleveland," *The Indianapolis Star,* 17 August 1923.
11. "Tate Stars Split Even with Homestead Grays," *Chicago Defender,* 19 May 1923.
12. "Tate Stars Win Two," *Chicago Defender,* 28 July 1923; "Memphis Beats Tate Stars," *Chicago Defender,* 11 August 1923.
13. "St. Louis Takes 2 from Cleveland," *Chicago Defender,* 5 July 1924.

The Crybabies of 1940

William H. Johnson

In the early spring of 1940, under a warm Florida sun, Cleveland Indians manager Oscar Vitt prepared his players for their upcoming season in the manner he'd learned as a teammate of Ty Cobb almost thirty years earlier. He peppered them with insult, invective, and threat. It was completely consistent with his personality, and Vitt felt that this version of the Indians finally had a chance to legitimately challenge the Yankees, Red Sox, and Tigers for the pennant.

Indians team owner Alva Bradley had hired "Ol' Oss" Vitt before the 1938 season, following Vitt's phenomenal run as skipper of the minor-league Newark Bears. Vitt replaced Steve O'Neill, who was popular with the players, gregarious, self-confident, and straightforward. Vitt was none of these things. Upon assuming the Cleveland helm, he'd gone to the press with the pronouncement that, after having had a look at the team, he had "only two major leaguers, Feller and [Mel] Harder."

Vitt was tough, but the 1940 preseason gave no indication of the drama that was to play out in Cleveland. That isn't to say that all was perfect. Veteran pitcher Johnny Allen and catcher Frankie Pytlak were contractual holdouts, young star Lou Boudreau tore cartilage in his ankle during an intrasquad game, and promising rookie Paul O'Dea was struck in the eye by a batting-practice foul ball and never played again. Despite that adversity, Vitt was buoyant. Even when confronted with stories such as the one about Jeff Heath and another player staging a fight in the hope that Vitt would try to break it up so that Heath could "accidentally" take a swing at the manager, "Ol' Os" remained calm.

"I guess it can't be helped," Vitt responded to reporters. "I'll just go along doing the best I can and the boys will have to like it." Those words are consistent with the notion that Vitt was a Dr. Jekyll to reporters but a Mr. Hyde to his players. The players thought the manager antagonistic and spiteful, while the press portrayed him as suffering and misunderstood.

Vitt had his work cut out for him on the field. Oddsmakers were so confident that the Yankees would win their fifth consecutive pennant that the odds on New York were set at 7–20, and the scarce few who disagreed almost unanimously believed that Boston would win the American League. Vitt, though, remained a study in confidence, telling reporters that Cleveland just might unseat the Yankees.

The season began with Feller's opening-day no-hit classic against the White Sox, and by April 27 the team was in first place with a record of 6–2. Joe DiMaggio had suffered a sore heel earlier in the season, raising doubts about his health. If fate was not smiling on Cleveland baseball, at least it did not seem to be smirking, either. But fate has, on occasion, displayed a sense of humor.

On the following day, the real fireworks began. On a sunny afternoon against Schoolboy Rowe, and in front of a crowd of more than 30,000 in Detroit, the Tribe entered the ninth inning with a 9–3 lead. Cleveland pitcher Al Milnar, along with the bullpen, gave up six runs, allowing the score to tie at 9–9. At that point, Vitt theatrically "mugged" on the bench, criticizing everyone in earshot for the team's play. Hal Trosky homered with two out in the tenth inning to win the game, but Vitt had dipped his toes in the river of discontent.

The next day Feller was a bit off, and Cleveland lost to Detroit 4–3. Vitt snapped at his star to the press, and the team edged toward meltdown. As captain, Trosky was toeing a thin line between the professional pride of his teammates and the responsibility afforded by his title. Managing egos became as much a daily ritual as managing to hit American League pitching.

On May 1, crisis found Trosky's family. His fourteen-month-old son James inhaled a piece of bacon at breakfast, and Hal's wife Lorraine rushed the boy to the hospital. As soon as word reached the team, Trosky dropped everything and took a cab to the airport to get back to Cleveland.

Jim Trosky's condition improved. After a few days, when doctors were confident that pneumonia would not set in, Hal made plans to rejoin the team in Washington for a series with the Senators. Frighteningly, the boy took an abrupt turn for the worse, and Hal cabled Vitt that he'd be staying home until the boy got better. While the delay was brief, Vitt wasn't pleased. The slugger's eventual return, though, boosted the team to a two-game-series sweep of the Yankees and imbued the clubhouse with renewed optimism. By Memorial Day, Trosky had eleven homers and the team was in second place with a record of 23–13. The first week in June, however, marked the beginning of the end.

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Flanked by starting pitcher Johnny Allen, *left,* and catcher Frank Pytlak, *right,* manager Oscar Vitt betrays no hint of any trouble among his players in this photo taken in May 1940.

Confidence reigns during spring training in 1940, with no thought of the controversy that will cloud the season. Seated, *left to right,* are team executive Andy Wallace, owner Alva Bradley, Vitt, and Bradley's son Maurice.

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The Detroit duo of Hal Newhouser, *left,* and Birdie Tebbetts, *right,* sample some of the produce that was tossed onto the Cleveland Stadium field by a raucous crowd. The Tigers clinched the 1940 pennant during the season's final weekend in Cleveland, though Tebbetts had earlier been knocked unconscious by a crate of tomatoes dumped on him by an Indians fan.

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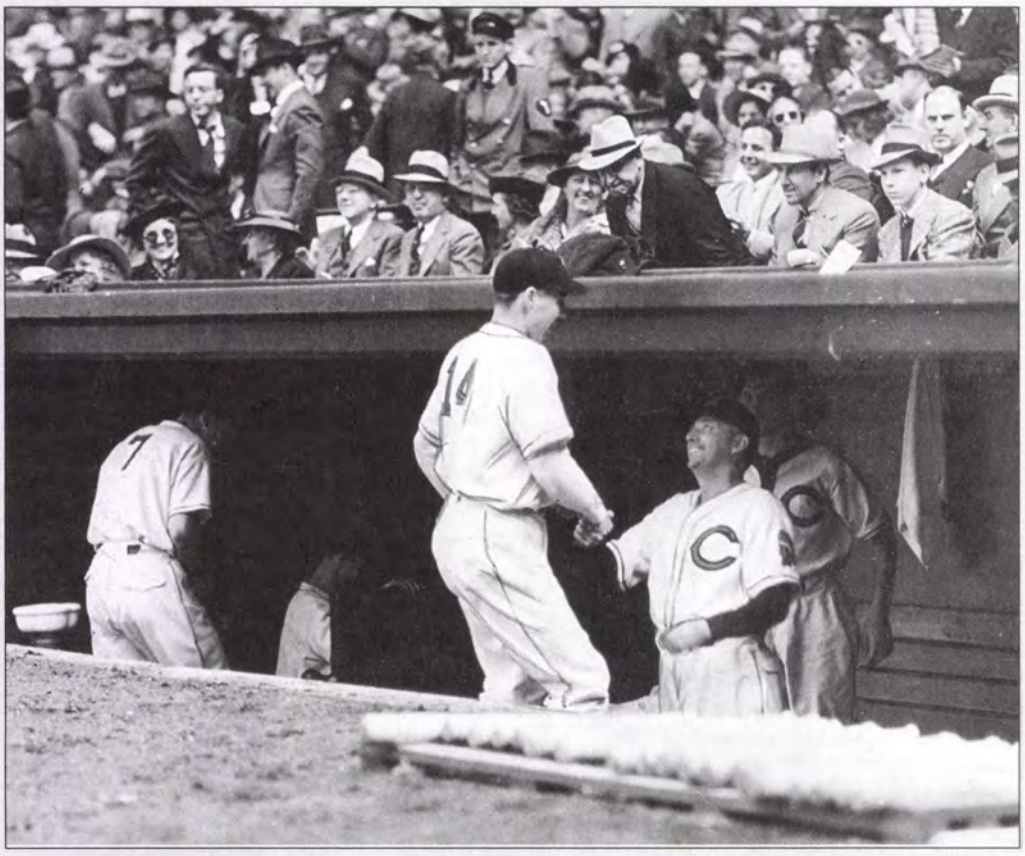
The trio of, *left to right,* Rollie Hemsley, Vitt, and Bob Feller get set to start the 1940 season in spectacular fashion. Feller became the only major-league pitcher ever to toss an opening-day no-hitter when he hurled a 1–0 masterpiece against the White Sox at Comiskey Park on April 16, 1940.



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New Indians manager Oscar Vitt welcomes ace Bob Feller back to the dugout during a Memorial Day contest in 1938. Over the course of the next two years, their relationship would sour and contribute to the clubhouse dissension that accompanied the Indians' failure to capture the pennant in 1940.

Slugging first baseman Hal Trosky played a key role in the Crybabies episode of 1940. He hit 216 home runs during his time in Cleveland, but persistent migraine headaches cut short a promising career.

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After the Tribe split a doubleheader with the Senators, narrowly avoiding losses in both ends with a late run in the nightcap, Vitt conveyed his anger with Al Smith, despite the win, and said as much to the press. A couple of players later claimed to have overheard Vitt yearning for his Newark Bears squad, a thinly veiled assertion that the minor-league team would have performed as well or better. Opinion did not change at all when, three days later, despite Trosky's fourteenth home run, Cleveland lost to the Yankees when George Selkirk stole home off Feller.

On June 10, the Indians were rained out in Boston, and the players spent the day in the hotel lobby dissecting their misfortune. The blame, naturally, fell on Vitt. Some players advanced the idea of mutiny, of trying to have the manger fired, but again Trosky counseled patience. The slugger was a proud man, and he wanted no part of public finger pointing, even though he had been a repeated victim of Vitt's acid tongue.

The next day, the Red Sox blew out the Indians. Vitt was in rare form during the game, again screaming about his star, "Look at him! He's supposed to be my ace. I'm supposed to win a pennant with that kind of pitching?"

That evening, Trosky spoke with Frank Gibbons of the *Cleveland Press*. He told the reporter that the Indians could win the pennant with their current players but had no chance as long as Vitt was the manager. Gibbons cautioned Trosky to wait and see how things turned out before doing anything rash, the same advice Trosky had given his teammates.

In the hotel lobby the next morning, the players checked out early. At breakfast they began surreptitiously plotting about how to solve the "Vitt problem." During the game that afternoon, which the Indians lost, Vitt snidely chastised Mel Harder. "It's about time you won one, the money you're getting." To the other players, this was rock bottom. Mel Harder was in his thirteenth year with the team, was one of its touchstones in what was shaping up to be a memorable pennant race, and was unquestionably respected by everyone in the organization—everyone except one.

Harder could only respond, "I gave you the best I had." On the train ride from Boston to Cleveland, no one bothered to break out the cards. Ben Chapman and Rollie Hemsley reportedly called Lou Boudreau and Ray Mack into their berth and told the young infielders that some of the players were circulating a petition calling for Vitt's ouster. Boudreau and Mack, along with Al Smith, Beau Bell, Mike Naymick, and Soup Campbell, were excused from participating because the veterans did not want to penalize the younger players by potentially ruining their careers.

It was a gesture that demonstrated the sobriety and seriousness of the mutineers. Mel Harder and Johnny Allen, in a meeting with the rest of the players, told the team that they would go to owner Alva Bradley alone. The players disagreed, but they did anoint Harder as their spokesman. (See Fred Schuld's article on page 46.)

On June 13, actual tragedy struck Trosky. As the train pulled into the Cleveland station, Hal received word that his mother had passed away unexpectedly in Iowa. Trosky went directly from the train station to the airport, while Harder called Bradley's office seeking an appointment with the owner. Instead of sending Harder alone, though, ten of the dissidents went to Bradley's office en masse to demonstrate the depth of their resolve. It was an act unprecedented in baseball history.

The players were all seasoned veterans who knew how baseball was played, both as a game and as a business. They were men who played before the era of spoiled superstars, men who worked in the offseason not of choice but necessity, and they were men who understood the consequences of their actions. Clearly, this was no idle grumbling about a stern taskmaster. Vitt had wounded each deeply enough to provoke them to take this extraordinary measure.

The players told Bradley that Vitt had to go if the team was to compete successfully. They outlined four specific grievances, each of which Bradley later confirmed, and they demanded that the owner take action. Trosky even telephoned Bradley from the airport to ensure that his absence would not be misconstrued as disagreement. Despite his personal misgivings about the action, as captain he could not stand by while his teammates pressed the issue.

Bradley told the players that he would look into the matter and warned them that if word of this got out, the players would be ridiculed forever. Naturally, the story was leaked to reporter Gordon Cobbledick almost immediately. The team won that afternoon, but it was the insurrection that was front-page news the following morning. The headline for the story was physically larger on the printed page than was the news of Hitler's invasion of Paris. Even Trosky's hometown paper, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, jumped on the bandwagon and bashed the "Crybaby Indians."

In the following days, reporters attempted to dissect the events leading up to the insurrection. Most concluded that although Vitt was a good baseball strategist, he had completely lost the respect of the players by making them lose face among the other American League teams. One Iowa writer contacted Trosky at home, where he was still grieving for his mother, and asked the player about the team.

"Those writers," Trosky reportedly answered,

> know the situation so well that I couldn't add anything to what they have already stated. The boys are sincere in their complaints. Take Bob Feller, for example. Bob is the kind who never did anybody any harm. But he was among the leaders of the movement. He must feel justified. It's the same with the rest.

He continued:

> There's a lot of defense offered for Vitt, namely, that he must have a lot of ability because he is keeping his team near the top of the league. But that is misleading. We are up there because the Yankees have not yet come into their own. But we're only playing .575 ball. That isn't championship stuff. Our showing is due mainly to the failure of some other teams.

Owner Alva Bradley took no action. In 1951, the *Cleveland News* discovered and published a memo from Alva Bradley written a decade earlier:

> We should have won the pennant. . . . Our real trouble started when a group of 10 players came to my office and made four distinct charges against (Vitt) and asked for his dismissal. The four charges made against Vitt, on investigations I have made, were 100% correct.

Bradley later offered the managerial job to coach Luke Sewell, who declined. "Oscar was a fine fellow, but he talked too much," Sewell recalled.

> He would say these things, promise things, which he forgot he ever said or promised. Players resented this because they thought he did it on purpose. But he didn't. . . . [The rebellion] was not all Oscar's fault. The players were to blame, too. They picked on one another, blamed each other when things went wrong, and blew a pennant they should have won.

Despite the players' subsequent public retraction of their charges (Roy Weatherly refused to sign), after a half-season of humiliation at every park the team visited, and following a dramatic loss to Detroit and Floyd Giebell on the last weekend in September, Bradley fired Vitt after a directors' meeting on October 28 and replaced him with Roger Peckinpaugh. The season had ended, but the event colored the careers and reputations of almost all those involved.

In a sad postscript, the *Plain Dealer* ran the following a year later, on September 28, 1941:

> Oscar Vitt disclosed today he had resigned as manager of the Portland baseball club which finished last in the Coast League this season. The former Cleveland Indians manager submitted his resignation at the close of the season. . . . Vitt expressed belief that if the Portland club had had a few more replacements it probably could have finished well up in the first division. ■

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Lorraine Trosky

James C. Dunn

Sunny Jim

Scott Longert

James C. Dunn's 1916 purchase of the Cleveland Indians brought a much needed stability to the ailing franchise. His unbridled optimism had been part of the formula for his success in the railroad contracting business. Now it would serve him well in reshaping the Cleveland ballclub into a pennant-contending team.

Sunny Jim, as he was nicknamed by friends, was born in St. Anthony, Iowa, on September 11, 1866. He left school at age fourteen to serve as a messenger boy for the First National Bank in nearby Marshalltown. He apparently paid close attention to the banking and finance business, later accepting a position as bookkeeper for the Hawkeye Linseed Oil Company. Dunn spent five years there, sharpening his skills on the bottom line. He eventually left Hawkeye for a similar opportunity with the A. E. Shorthill Company, where a chance meeting brought him close to his future occupation in baseball. Dunn and his coworker Henry Anson, whose son Adrian was making a splash in professional baseball, became close friends. Undoubtedly what Dunn heard about the exploits of his friend's son helped pique his interest in the game. Soon Sunny Jim decided he was ready to leave A. E. Shorthill and venture out on his own. His finances were not enough to bankroll a new enterprise, but Henry Anson had a lot of confidence in his younger friend, enough to lend him the cash needed to start Dunn's contracting business. Flush with the necessary operating money, Dunn tried entering the coal business but found it not to his liking. He switched his focus to railroad contracting, which became his vocation for many years in Chicago until his entrance into major-league baseball. He never forgot the kindness of Henry Anson, and he did what he could to return it.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Dunn bid successfully for the rights to construct the Cleveland Belt Line Railroad, the brainchild of entrepreneur Ben Hopkins. It was planned to circumnavigate the city limits, allowing freight carriers to deliver steel and ore in a more efficient manner directly to the mills. Once again baseball intersected with the railroad contractor, as Ben Hopkins had many friends on the Cleveland Naps and was a regular visitor to League Park. Dunn later remarked that, during his stay in Cleveland, he witnessed Addie Joss's perfect game in 1908 and found a distinct fascination with the crowd and its excitement. He took notice of the 10,000 spectators and the revenue dollars going to owners Charles Somers and J. F. Kilfoyl. Seven years later the opportunity of a lifetime came along, and Sunny Jim was too clever a businessman to let it pass him by.

How Dunn acquired the Cleveland Indians in the winter of 1916 is a story that has several different twists and turns. One of the popular versions lies in Franklin "Whitey" Lewis's 1949 team history, *The Cleveland Indians.* Lewis had been sports editor of the *Cleveland Press* for ten years and had access to veteran sportswriters including Henry P. Edwards and Ed Bang. Lewis also had at his disposal an extensive archive of clippings and articles. His version of the transaction whereby Dunn acquired the team is colorful, complete with direct quotes from the principals. Lewis takes the reader to a popular saloon in Chicago, where Ban Johnson and a group of businessmen are idly chatting about Charlie Somers's financial predicament. Cleveland's owner since the team's inception in 1901, Somers had gone broke from poor attendance and bad real-estate investments. Suddenly Johnson turns to one of the men and declares him to be the new owner of the Indians. Dunn, purportedly that man, gulps audibly and stammers that he has $15,000 available. Others, including the bartender, chime in with various amounts, and the plan is hatched. Dunn, excited about the scheme, remarks that he knows nothing about the business of baseball, but he is assured by the iron-willed Johnson that he will get him the right men to run the ballclub.

This amusing story notwithstanding, it is unlikely that Jim Dunn, a shrewd businessman, would be rushed into such a deal. Dunn had amassed more than a million dollars in his contracting business. Whether or not he understood the business of baseball, he had the acumen to determine if a potential venture had the necessary upside for him to take a flyer on it. Whenever Dunn and Johnson actually met to discuss buying the Indians, surely Dunn had done his homework. The purchase price was in the neighborhood of $500,000. It is unlikely that Dunn agreed to buy the club and then ran about Chicago drumming up investors. If anything, Sunny Jim had analyzed the situation closely.

DESERVING OF HIS LUCK

OWNER JIM DUNN OF CLEVELAND

Great luck has come to Jim Dunn—he likes to be called just plain Jim—through his purchase of the Cleveland Club, and he is entitled to all of it. He invested in the baseball property in 1916 when the outlook for the game because of the shadow of the war was gloomy and not even American League club owners themselves would venture assistance to save the club from bankruptcy. Those who really have baseball's welfare at heart never have regretted the happy accident of Mr. Dunn becoming interested in the opportunity of enlisting as a magnate, and none will begrudge him the good fortune and the glory that has followed, for he is one of nature's noblemen, a true sportsman, and baseball was fortunate indeed to acquire him. Where Jim Dunn stands there is planted the banner of right and square dealing in baseball.

James C. Dunn, "Sunny Jim," owner of the Cleveland Indians, 1916–22, presided over the club's first world championship, in 1920. Arguably his two most astute decisions were to bring Tris Speaker over from the Red Sox and then to appoint him manager.

Dunn moved quickly to strengthen his ballclub. Before February was out, he added infielder Ivan Howard and catcher Tom Daly, and he paid $5,000 for Washington first baseman Chick Gandil.[1] The last purchase looked good on paper. He brought excellent fielding skills and power to the lineup. Character issues surrounding Gandil would come forward several years later and do tremendous harm to the integrity of the game; luckily for Dunn, Gandil was gone and playing in Chicago before he became embroiled in public scandal, the scheme to throw the 1919 World Series.

Indians players were quite excited about the moves made by their new owner. "Why Washington ever let Chick Gandil go," Ray Chapman remarked to the *Plain Dealer*, "is more than I can see, for I think he is the best first baseman" in the American League. Later that spring, Cleveland manager Lee Fohl echoed the sentiment: "It is a surprise what the addition of just one man will make to a ballclub but there is no denying the fact that the addition of Chick Gandil has made our team look much different than it did a year ago." In just a short time, Fohl would be stunned by the addition of another player with a few more skills than Gandil ever had.

With the players on hand, Dunn busied himself for the start of the regular season. He had the team stock incorporated in Columbus, Ohio, changing the name of his enterprise to the Cleveland Baseball Company. New uniforms were designed, with the home whites to be fashioned with navy-blue stripes along with blue caps. Away uniforms would be gray with black caps.

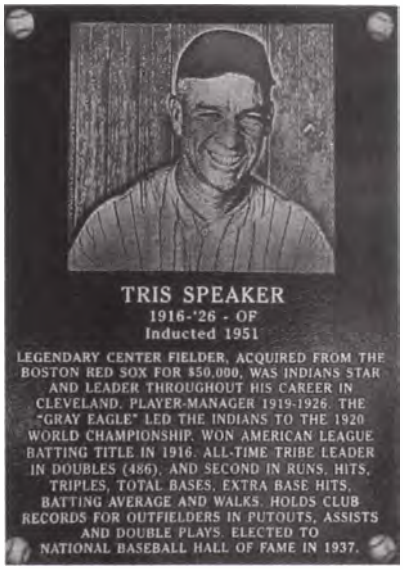
In late February, the 1916 Indians assembled in New Orleans for spring training. In a bit of wonderful irony, the minor-league New Orleans Pelicans were owned by none other than Charles Somers. While cold-blooded bankers were selling off his holdings, Somers negotiated to retain his ownership in the Southern League club. The bankers' committee caved in and allowed Somers the favor. Not only could Somers remain in baseball, but his Pelicans were also affiliated with Cleveland, leaving him a small connection to the franchise.

While fans speculated about the Indians' chances in the upcoming season, Jim Dunn kept working to improve the ballclub. Through various sources Dunn discovered that the best center fielder in baseball might be available for the right price. In April, Dunn turned the baseball world upside down by shelling out the improbable sum of $55,000, among other considerations, to bring the great Tris Speaker to Cleveland. In one quick stroke, Sunny Jim had breathed new life into Cleveland's baseball hopes. He restored the city's confidence in the ownership and put a competitive team on the field.

An excited Dunn told Cleveland baseball fans: "I will not stand for a tailender. If I thought the Cleveland club was destined to remain a second-division team I would not buy it. Cleveland is a corking good town and I think it will do a comeback in baseball." The addition of Speaker dramatically improved the ballclub and opened a pipeline to Boston, which eventually led to the acquisitions of Joe Wood and Larry Gardner. Both would prove to be valuable contributors in elevating the Indians to pennant-contender status.

In 1919 a frustrated Jim Dunn accepted the resignation of manager Lee Fohl after a dramatic grand slam by Babe Ruth on June 18 cost the Indians a game at League Park, a fateful episode in Indians history. The Indians were leading 7–4 in the top of the ninth. With two out and the bases loaded, Speaker, according to some accounts, signaled for the left-handed reliever Fritz Coumbe to pitch to Ruth. According to other accounts, Fohl, having stepped out of the dugout to get the signal for which of three relievers—two righties and

JOHN ZAJC, SABR



Tris Speaker's plaque at Heritage Park, Progressive Field, Cleveland. The Gray Eagle was inducted into the Indians Hall of Fame with the inaugural class of 1951.

one lefty—was ready, misunderstood and brought in Coumbe, who hadn't sufficiently warmed up.

Dunn promoted Tris Speaker to the position of player-manager, a move the Cleveland faithful happily approved. Speaker proved to be an able manager, implementing a platoon system with his outfielders and handling the pitching staff, including Ray Caldwell, who had a serious drinking problem.

The 1920 season was the culmination of Jim Dunn's hard work over five years, during which he had overseen several key additions to the Indians roster. He managed to acquire, after Speaker, Wood, and Gardner, first baseman "Doc" Johnston, outfielder Charlie Jamieson, and pitchers Ray Caldwell and Walter Mails. Elmer Smith was dealt to Washington in 1916 but brought back the following year. Despite the horrific death of Ray Chapman in August, the Indians were able to steady themselves and bring the pennant to Cleveland. The addition of shortstop Joe Sewell from the New Orleans Pelicans helped rally the club. A jubilant Jim Dunn sat in the owner's box and happily watched his team win the World Series. In his contract for the next season, each player received a bonus, and, in turn, Sunny Jim received from his players the gift of a pair of diamond cufflinks.

The Jim Dunn era came to a sudden halt in June 1922. Dunn died of a recurring heart ailment at the young age of fifty-six. He left his stock in the Indians to his wife, who did not have the desire to operate a major-league franchise. Ernest S. Barnard effectively ran the club for the next five years, until Mrs. Dunn put it up for sale in 1927. All the momentum built by the late Mr. Dunn evaporated, and the Indians would not claim another pennant until 1948.

In his six years of ownership, Jim Dunn rescued a down-and-out franchise and turned it into one of the elite ballclubs of the American League. His legacy was that of promises delivered. He vowed to bring a championship to a city that had seen only a near miss or two since 1901. He won over the skeptics and actually brought Cleveland to the pinnacle of the baseball world. ■

NOTE

1. Sources differ as to the amount. The figure of $5,000 is attested by Deadball Era Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research, *Deadball Stars of the American League*, ed. David Jones (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 206). It is $7,500 according to Retrosheet.org and BaseballReference.com.

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Alva Bradley

Baseball's Last Purist

Fred Schuld

In 1927, at the height of the booming 1920s, Cleveland was a bustling metropolis, a manufacturing dynamo and transportation hub on the Great Lakes. As the fifty-two-story Terminal Tower—ground was broken the year before, and construction would be completed in 1930—began to rise over Public Square, the city had a new monument and focus to look forward to, a prestigious office address and the grand terminus of railroad lines coming into Cleveland from all parts of the country, particularly between New York and Chicago.

The major-league baseball team, the Cleveland Indians, had won the World Series in 1920 and finished a close second to the Yankees for the American League pennant in 1926. By the beginning of the 1927 season, the stellar player-manager Tris Speaker had resigned under a cloud of accusations (never substantiated) that he threw a baseball game in 1919. Joe Sewell and Charlie Jamieson were the only starters left from the championship team of seven years ago. The new manager, Jack McCallister, led a team that proved mediocre, finishing 66–87, good for no better than sixth place. Attendance at League Park had dropped from 627,426 in 1926 to 373,138 in 1927. When James Dunn, owner of the Indians since 1916, died in 1922, ownership devolved to his estate, and his widow took over. In the fall of 1927 she sold the Indians and League Park to a group of local real-estate magnates and businessmen for approximately one million dollars.

The new owners considered it important that the ownership of the ballclub be local. The most passionate baseball fan among them was Alva Bradley, who, though not the principal investor, was designated their president and spokesman. Bradley, then in his early forties, was a Cornell graduate, president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, and chairman of the Cleveland Builders Supply Company. His involvements in the real-estate and shipping industries were numerous. Sportswriter Whitey Lewis described him as "suave, even-tempered and inclined to adopt a conciliatory view of disputes."

Every spring, Bradley would express optimism that the Indians would win the pennant. After every game at League Park, whether the team had won or lost, he went to the clubhouse and talked with the players, never criticizing any of them for their performance. Congratulations would follow a win, and, if they lost, Bradley would begin the conversation with "Well, we can't win 'em all."

Bradley once said of Ernest S. Barnard, who served as spokesman for the Dunn family and had arranged the sale of the Indians, that he was "unquestionably the smartest man I ever met in baseball. . . . He sold our crowd the team for a million dollars, and they weren't worth a darned cent." The 1928 team had a fair batting average, .285, but they didn't score many runs. Moreover, their pitching was bad and their defense the worst in the league—all this despite Bradley's resolve from the outset to introduce new blood into the organization.

Recognizing the gaps in his knowledge of the baseball business, Bradley hired American League umpire Billy Evans as general manager and vice president for an estimated salary of $30,000 to $40,000 a year. When the contract of shortstop Roger Peckinpaugh, a native of Wooster, Ohio, was purchased from the Chicago White Sox, he hung up his cleats to become the Indians' new field manager. Looking back, Bradley once described his new manager as "sound" and scrupulously honest in all his dealings. "I never had to fear that he might get the club into trouble."

Bradley immediately went to work to strengthen the Indians' roster. With Evans's advice and the new owners' money, he endeavored to acquire some of the game's best players. His letter to Ed Barrow of the Yankees indicated that his "sole effort" was "to build up an organization that will put Cleveland back on the baseball map." Generous offers made to the Yankees for Lou Gehrig and to the Boston Braves for Rogers Hornsby were rebuffed. But Billy Evans went to the Pacific Coast League and for $50,000 did acquire Earl Averill, the powerful center fielder who would be the team's best offensive player for the next decade.

Anticipating championship teams, Bradley, in a letter to city manager William R. Hopkins, wrote on May 23, 1928: "We must have the necessary facilities to take care of the crowds. I hope that some definite action will be taken on the Stadium." Many powerful business interests, including Bradley's and those of the Van Sweringen brothers, developers of the Terminal Tower, stood to benefit from the new Municipal Stadium, slated to be built on the lakefront at West Sixth Street.

LOUIS VAN OEYEN COLLECTION, WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Alva Bradley welcomes longtime American League umpire Billy Evans into the executive ranks after hiring him as the team's general manager in 1927. Evans would serve in that position until 1935.

Bradley worked diligently for the bond referendum, on the ballot in November, to raise $2,640,000 for the Stadium's construction.

The referendum passed. Bradley boasted, "We'll fill that place often, every Sunday." Its seating capacity was 78,129, and in the 1930s the Indians would fill it only once. Bradley didn't believe in hiring a public-relations firm for the team, reasoning that a team's winning record would sell itself and that, if the record were a losing one, "I do not care what you do; you cannot interest them in seeing a lot of poor players." Unfortunately, Bradley's nineteen years as president of the Indians included a decade of the Great Depression and four years of World War II. The plans Bradley and his fellow owners had for the improvement of the organization were "crushed in the merciless grinder of the depression." Gone were the days when general manager Billy Evans had the funds to acquire players of Averill's caliber.

During the Depression years and following, Bradley would never negotiate with the players about their salaries. After discussing a given player with Billy Evans and Roger Peckinpaugh, the front office determined the figure the club would pay. The first figure was the final one.

The Indians played their first home game at the new stadium on July 31, 1932—a pitcher's duel between Mel Harder and Lefty Grove of the Athletics, the A's finally winning 1–0. Thereafter, the Indians made Municipal Stadium their permanent home field through the end of the 1933 season, but during that period their average attendance there per game was only 5,817, about a thousand less than what they could have expected to draw at League Park.

The Stadium, Babe Ruth declared, was a cow pasture, and Connie Mack informed Bradley that the greatest place in the world to play baseball was none other than League Park. Like a lot of fans, Bradley enjoyed high-scoring games, and he pointed to another one-run win by the Athletics over the Indians in July 1932—this one an 18–17 game at League Park only three weeks before their inauguration of Municipal Stadium, as one of the best games he had ever seen. (See Norman L. Macht's article at page 91.) By 1934, the Indians had returned to League Park, at least for their weekday and Saturday games.

It was in 1933 that the Depression hit baseball the hardest. After President Roosevelt closed the banks in March, Bradley had some difficulty finding enough cash to pay spring-training expenses. In an effort to boost gate receipts, he discontinued radio broadcasts of regular-season games. The organization had been in the red ever since it was acquired by the new ownership team in 1928. Bradley had never received any salary from his position as club president, and now everyone in the front office, from Evans on down, took a pay cut. After every game Evans would report the club's financial details to Bradley. The player payroll was trimmed by $70,000.

The Indians teams of the early Depression years were hard-hitting ones, but the fielding was poor and

the pitching only fair, although a few bright spots in that department stand out. Wes Ferrell won 91 games for the Indians from 1929 through 1932 (but then faltered in 1933 and was pitching for the Red Sox the next year). And Mel Harder, who broke in with the Indians in 1928, won twenty or more games for the Indians twice in the 1930s and established himself as a rock of stability in their starting rotation.

A little more than two months into the 1933 season, with the Indians two games out of first place, Evans fired Peckinpaugh, on June 7. In more than five years as manager of the Indians, Peckinpaugh compiled a record of 415–402, a winning percentage of .508. "We only hire the manager, the public fires him," Bradley told reporters. This incident was the beginning of a series of questionable decisions on the part of the Indians to fire their managers. By the time Oscar Vitt was shown the door in 1940 (see William H. Johnson's article at page 37), Cleveland had developed a reputation for being "the graveyard of managers."

In 1940, *Plain Dealer* sports columnist Gordon Cobbledick would extol Peckinpaugh's managerial excellence and argue that his departure was the beginning of Bradley's woes. "It is said," Cobbledick wrote, that "once the owner started firing managers, it was an indication of his failure to provide winning players and he was in for trouble."

Two days after Peckinpaugh's dismissal, Bradley announced that Walter Johnson, the pitching legend who would be elected to the inaugural class of the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936, had been hired as the Indians' new manager. Some reports indicate that Evans was opposed to the hiring of Juhnson but that the ownership group included a personal friend of the "Big Train."

In 1934, his first full season as manager, Walter Johnson led his team to a third-place finish. The assessment of sportswriter Herman Goldstein was that he was a great ballplayer and "far from a great manager but a nice guy, a very nice guy." Johnson had little patience for ailing players. He boasted that "I've never had a sore arm." The Big Train traded fiery Wes Ferrell to the Red Sox and suspended Oral Hildebrand after the pitcher asked for a day off to recover from an injured leg. By the fall of 1934 the anti-Johnson faction among the Indians players included almost the entire team. Bradley knew of the players' feelings, but on July 20 the team re-signed Johnson to manage the 1935 season. "Johnson wasn't built for the job," wrote sportswriter Stuart Bell. "Reticent, inarticulate, and hard-headed, he can't meet his players on a common ground."

The owners were satisfied with the team's performance in 1934. It posted a winning record, and the books showed a profit, finally—of $100,000. In a cost-cutting measure, Johnson had managed without a coach. Some veteran players, notably third baseman Willie Kamm, filled in the gaps by coaching younger players informally. On May 23, 1935, Johnson dismissed Kamm and backup catcher Glenn Myatt from the team, saying that he had reason to think they were fomenting opposition to him among the ranks. Myatt soon signed with the New York Giants, but the future of Kamm's career in Cleveland was now on the desks of Bradley and Evans. At least initially and in public, Bradley did not waver. "In any business we run," he told reporters, "we have only one manager."

Bradley offered to pay Kamm his salary for the rest of the season to work as a scout, but he refused to make any decision against Johnson. Kamm asked Bradley if he could take his case to Commissioner Landis. Bradley assented. "I believe," he said,

> that when a manager is involved on the one side, a manager who has the whole hearted back of his employers, and a star player like Kamm, who is an idol with the fan flock on the other, the highest court in baseball should decide who is in the right.

When asked what action he would take if Landis backed Kamm, Bradley replied that there would be "only one thing I could do" and that would be to fire Johnson. Ed Bang of the *Cleveland News* concluded, "Bradley welcomed the chance to support his lonely position with the opinion of the commissioner."

In a two-hour meeting with with Johnson and Kamm, Landis affirmed that it was a manager's right to dismiss a player. He also supported Kamm against any slur on his "character or repute." Some observers concluded that Landis simply sent the whole matter back into Bradley's hands. Kamm accepted Bradley's offer to scout for the Indians. Trying to gather support for Johnson with Cleveland fans, Bradley took out an ad in the local papers: "We, the members of the Cleveland Baseball Club, want the fans to know that we are not a team split wide open by dissension, arrayed against our manager." Twenty-one players signed the petition, in which Johnson was neither praised nor blamed.

Despite this measure, for weeks afterward the fans booed the manager. They even threw lemons on the field. Extra police were assigned to League Park, and concession stand beverages were dispensed in soft cups rather than bottles. Attendance was dropping. Only 5,000 showed up for a Sunday game with league-leading Detroit. Bradley fired Johnson, and on August 5 coach Steve O'Neill was hired in his stead. "The fans are mad at Johnson," Bradley concluded, "and so we are going to put O'Neill in charge and see if he can pull us up a little." Johnson never managed again, and Willie Kamm's major-league career was over. Kamm

managed in the Pacific Coast League for the Mission Reds in 1936–37, their last two years in the league. Billy Evans's salary had been cut for the second time after the 1935 season, and he decided to move on. He served as president of the Southern Association in 1942–46 and as general manager of the Detroit Tigers in 1947–51.

Cy Slapnicka, superscout, assumed some of Evans's responsibilities for the Indians. His work in the 1930s included his signing of future stars Hal Trosky, Ken Keltner, and Lou Boudreau. At a meeting of the board of directors in 1936, he reported on "the greatest young pitcher I ever saw." The youngster was Bob Feller, a high-school junior from Van Meter, Iowa. Feller was signed for one dollar, and Slapnicka moved him around to keep him off the radar of rival major-league clubs. (See Michael J. Haupert's article at page 7.) Judge Landis learned of the Indians' dealings with Feller and was prepared to make the teenager a free agent. After meeting with Feller and Feller's father, Bill, Landis relented, as the Fellers explained Bob's wish to stay with the Cleveland club and their intention to sue baseball if Landis attempted to alter their current arrangement with the organization.

The affable Steve O'Neill was Feller's first manager in Cleveland when he came up in 1936. In 1936 and 1937, his two full seasons as the Indians' manager, the team had winning records, although the pitching depth was not great and the defense not sharp. The roster included several eccentric players who were difficult to discipline; Johnny Allen, Rollie Hemsley, Frankie Pytlak, Roy Weatherly, and Jeff Heath earned reputations for rowdiness.

After the 1937 season, when O'Neill's record stood at an impressive 199–168, Bradley demoted him to the position of scout, arguing that the former catcher had tolerated insubordination and failed to curb the volatile personalities of some of his players.

Enter Oscar Vitt, manager of the Yankees' farm team in Newark. His new contract with the Indians took him through 1939. To the Cleveland reporters, Bradley described him as the premier manager in the minor leagues. Vitt promised a "hustling" club: "Above all, I insist my players hustle all the time or out they go. There will be no exceptions." The Indians won 88 games in 1938, 87 in 1939, and finished third both years.

His players despised him. Gordon Cobbledick observed that Vitt "ridiculed players in conversation with writers, fans and opposing players and managers." From his postgame visits to the clubhouse, Bradley was well aware that many of the players reciprocated their manager's contempt. Even so, in August 1939, Bradley rehired him for the 1940 season. "They've got to know who their boss is," he said, "and they may as well know now that Vitt will be giving the orders again next season. Naturally, I will back him up in whatever action he may see fit to take to maintain discipline."

In 1940, the four-time defending world champion New York Yankees had an off year, and Cleveland showed some promise of capturing the pennant. Ed Bang at the *Cleveland News* suggested that, to win the players' respect, Vitt had "to be more patient with their shortcomings." But the outspoken manager ignored the advice, and his negative comments to players and to reporters alike continued apace.

On June 13, 1940, a committee of players approached Bradley. Feller related that, "if Bradley wanted the team to win the pennant, he had to fire Vitt, and the sooner the better." Bradley heard them out. He reminded them that the season was not yet half over, and his final word to them was that Vitt would stay. One of the players conveyed some details of the meeting to Cobbledick, who the next day made it public knowledge through his column in the *Plain Dealer.* Whitey Lewis of the *Cleveland Press* urged Vitt to resign because "he had outlived his usefulness as manager of the present Cleveland Club."

As in 1935, the manager had lost the respect of many of his players. Back then Bradley's decision was to fire the manager, Walter Johnson. Now, though, five years later, the team was a winning one, and Vitt, while opposed by his players, at least had the support of the fans, who greeted him with cheers whenever he left the dugout to walk out on the field. At home as well as on the road, the Indians players had come to be called "the crybabies."

Perhaps at Bradley's suggestion, they signed an open letter to the Cleveland fans that was published in the local newspapers on June 18: "We, the undersigned, publicly declare to withdraw all statements referring to the resignation of Oscar Vitt. We feel this action is for the betterment of the Cleveland Baseball Club." But this statement was in no sense a result of the players having changed their minds. On the contrary, insiders on the team called the present situation an "armed truce" likely to continue for the rest of the season.

But the players had now gotten their troubles off their chests, and that had a helpful effect. Feller recalled that the players worked with coach Johnny Bassler on their own set of signals during the games and ignored Vitt as much as they could. For his part, Vitt did discard the offensive dugout behavior and attitude that the players had objected to. "If mistakes are made," Vitt told the press, "they'll be criticized by me. But I'll be as nice as I can." The Indians lost the pennant to the Detroit Tigers the last weekend of the season. "Our players literally kicked it away," Bradley told *The Sporting News* years later, in 1944. "The players were literally booed out of the championship."

Whitey Lewis pointed fingers instead at the front office. "I think the officials of the baseball club should get together and hide in shame for allowing such a putrid situation to develop right under their noses," he wrote in his column of June 14, 1940.

> If they didn't know of this approaching revolution, right under their noses, they are not capable of operating a baseball team in the major leagues. If they did know of the inevitable and allowed such a condition to develop, words fail me at this point in the narrative.

Bradley would remain the club president until 1946, but after the 1940 season he would never bring to that role the same optimism and enthusiasm that had characterized his attitude in earlier years.

Vitt's contract was not renewed. Roger Peckinpaugh was brought back to replace him. The team slipped to fourth place (75–79) in 1941, and attendance dropped from 902,576 to 745,948. Bradley believed that no major-league team should play more than seven night games a season. His former advisor Cy Slapnicka, however, argued that lights at the Stadium would give people who worked during the day more opportunities to attend games. At President Roosevelt's request, the Indians finally did add more night games to their schedule, doubling them to fourteen a season. (On the subject of televised games, Bradley maintained that television, if "unbridled," would ruin all professional sports.)

Wartime baseball in Cleveland featured the appointment of twenty-four-year-old shortstop Lou Boudreau as player-manager in 1942. (A basketball injury resulted in arthritis in Bourdreau's ankles, rendering him ineligible for military service.) Bradley opposed the move, arguing that "he was the greatest shortstop in the world. I'm not going to ruin his career by burdening him with the problems" that confront a manager. Peckinpaugh, who had moved to the front office to become general manager, finally persuaded Bradley to name Boudreau the manager, but Bradley insisted that the younger man be carefully advised by his elders, by Burt Shotton and other coaches.

Bradley thought wartime baseball should be discontinued if the caliber of available players declined beyond a certain threshold. "If we ever reach the point where we'd have to put catchers in the outfield, I'd be in favor of suspending." Bradley felt strongly that the war effort should be subordinated to all other business. He delegated contract negotiations to Peckinpaugh and worked hard on arrangements for the exhibition game, between an all-service team and an American League all-star team, played at Municipal Stadium on July 7, 1942, before 62,094 paying fans. (The American League won, 5–0.) The event was a personal triumph for Bradley, as he hosted business leaders, writers, and broadcasters to raise money for the armed forces. It was around this time, in the early 1940s, after his brother had died of heart disease, that Bradley added to his philanthropic profile the chairmanship of a committee to raise funds for research into the causes of high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries.

Still dreaming of a Cleveland Indians world championship, Bradley corresponded regularly with Bob Feller, who was fighting the war in the Pacific. Bradley was looking forward to the day when Feller and his teammates would come home and the city would be on top of the baseball world again. Other members of the ownership team, the wind taken out of their sails by some of the club's struggles and embarrassments in recent years, worried that Bradley would stubbornly refuse to sell the team until they won the World Series, a goal that had eluded them all along. The group negotiated secretly with Bill Veeck and his investors to buy the Indians, and on June 21, 1946, the Cleveland Indians were sold to Veeck for $1.6 million. When Bradley learned of the news, he resolved to make a bid for the team himself, but it was too late.

Much of the marketing philosophy that Veeck would make famous during his tenure as owner of the Cleveland Indians would soon be adopted by baseball executives nationwide, but his immediate predecessor was not impressed. "I've always been a conservative man," Bradley told Howard Preston in an interview (August 1, 1946) in the *Cleveland News*. "Fireworks and free nylon stockings at a ballgame are novel. But our old organization couldn't have done it. Different people have different selling ideas."

After being forced out of his role in the Indians organization, Bradley never attended another baseball game in Cleveland until 1948, when the Indians finally won their second world championship. He could take satisfaction that the championship team had at its core Boudreau, Feller, Keltner, and Hegan, ballplayers acquired during his time in the front office.

Ever the traditionalist, Bradley to the end continued to express his disapproval of the introduction of lights and whistles, as he might have called them, into the institution that was major-league baseball. "Today's big question," he told Ed McAuley of the *Cleveland News* in 1951, "is how many people are in the park? Get them in somehow. Play all your games at night. Give them souvenirs; give them all kinds of sideshows. Get them in the park."

Bradley's career as a baseball executive was marked by his conflicts with his managers, who in turn were in many cases hamstrung by their own conflicts with their players. "Ballplayers," as the saying goes, "are ordinary

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The end of an era arrives on June 21, 1946, as Bradley, who bought the team for $1 million in 1927, signs over ownership of the Indians to Bill Veeck. Veeck's 1948 team would go on to capture the World Series, a prize that eluded Bradley.

people with special skills." At the office, the supervisor can fire a temperamental accountant and the next day hire another who will do the same work just as well or better, but the talented ballplayer is a rare commodity. In baseball, the manager manages personalities as well as in-game strategy, and Bradley's reluctance to fire his managers when they were failing miserably in that former capacity may have been a function of his never having worn a major-league uniform himself.

On Bradley's death in 1953, *The Sporting News* wrote that "he brought to the National Pastime a calmness, dignity and honesty of purpose which helped see it through some of its most dangerous times, the long years of the depression and of World War II."

That baseball's last purist had held "firmly to the proposition that baseball is a sport rather than a business" was a sentiment that, besides being appropriate to the occasion, pointed to, if not the whole and complex truth about Alva Bradley, an important element of that truth and one worth remembering.

Enjoy the game on a sunny summer afternoon! ■

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Russell Schneider informed me about Ed McAuley's series about Bradley in the *Cleveland News* in January–February 1951 and gave me the title for this article.

Steve Johnson copied the Alva Bradley file at the National Baseball Hall of Fame for me. A great friend in baseball and SABR.

My wife Doris has calmed me and edited and typed my papers for more than fifty years. My father took me to the first night baseball game played at Brookside Park in Cleveland, on May 22, 1938, before an estimated crowd of as many as 100,000 people.

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CLEVELAND CLASSIC

Loss of Harder Is Great One for Tribe

Hal Lebovitz

October 21, 2002

Mel Harder's ashes will be scattered across Mel Harder Field in Chardon. That's what he wanted.

The field was his love, and when the folks in Chardon named it after him, he considered it the honor of his life.

The longtime Indians pitcher and coach died Sunday morning peacefully after many months of fighting off illnesses, mainly difficulty with breathing and eating.

Through all his suffering, mention a baseball incident or ask a question about the game and his eyes would brighten and he would dip into that fine memory of his and offer pearls no other person had. He would say, for example, that Lou Gehrig was tougher to pitch against than Babe Ruth.

Harder's birthday was last Tuesday.

He turned 93. Russell Schneider, once my peer at *The Plain Dealer* and now a columnist for Sun newspapers, thoughtfully mentioned fans might want to send Mel a birthday card. He was inundated with them, and many carried warm personal messages of their recollections about this outstanding pitcher and special man.

Fortunately, he was able to have them read to him during the final few days of his life and to know how much we admired and cared about this exceptional pitcher and gentleman.

He was one of the greatest pitchers ever to put on an Indians uniform.

He came to the Indians at age 18 in 1928, pitched through 1947, and won 223 games.

Then he became the team's pitching coach.

Bob Lemon is in the Hall of Fame.

He always said Harder made him.

Early Wynn is in the Hall of Fame. He always said Harder put him there.

Bob Feller is in the Hall of Fame. He and Harder were teammates. During which time Harder often counseled the young pitcher at Feller's request, and later Harder coached him. Ask Feller about Harder, and he'll speak only in superlatives.

The fourth man of that Big Four staff—often called the greatest of all time—was Mike Garcia. Garcia, until the day he died, would tell me how much of his success he owed to Harder. And if Garcia had pitched long enough, he probably would be in the Hall of Fame today, too.

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Harder, winner of at least 15 games for eight consecutive seasons, is shown here warming up in 1939. The 1934 All-Star Game is famous for Carl Hubbell's remarkable feat of striking out six future Hall of Famers in succession, but the National League lost, and the winning pitcher was Harder, allowing only one hit over five innings.

Al Lopez was the manager under whom Harder coached. Together, they led the Indians through several outstanding seasons, the climax of which was a record 111 victories and the American League pennant in 1954. Lopez often told me of Harder's brilliance as a teacher.

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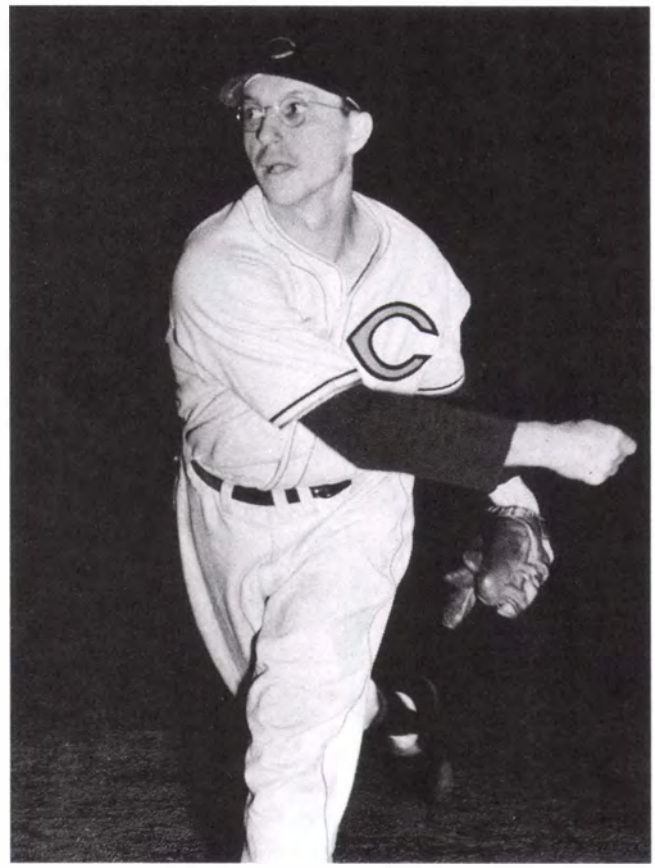
Harder was presented with this new Buick in the waning days of the 1939 season. During his 20-year career, Harder won 223 games and is often discussed as candidate for the Baseball Hall of Fame.



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Harder allowed seven hits in a 2–1 win over the Chicago White Sox on May 27, 1942. The night game at Cleveland Stadium marked the first time in his career that Harder wore glasses.

"He never pushed his ideas on the guys," said Lopez. "He would wait until they seemed eager for help and advice."

Lopez is in the Hall of Fame.

Harder should be, too.

One of the disappointments in his life was that he had yet to be elected.

There is no pitcher more deserving.

Joe DiMaggio told me more than once that Harder was the toughest pitcher he ever faced. I heard this from so many old-timers.

Ted Williams always found Harder a problem, and he campaigned hard, along with Feller and many of his fans here, for Harder to be elected.

It was not to be because the Veterans Committee was rife with politics and this year it was changed for that very reason, influenced in part by the fact that it was so unfair to Harder.

We thought we had enough votes for him in 2000. The group pushing his election talked with every member of the Veterans Committee and we were promised the votes to get him in. But we were double-crossed by those who had friends they secretly favored and thus were lying to us.

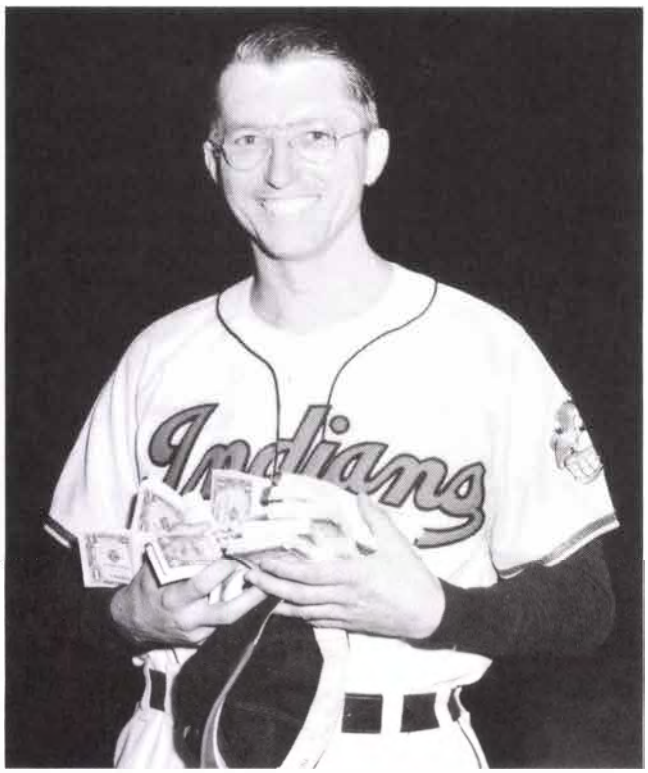
Harder, of course, had pitched long before many of those on the Veterans Committee became seriously involved with the game. They really didn't know him and Harder was the quiet type who never made headlines with quotes or pushed himself. You'd never hear him toot his own horn.

So the man richly deserving of the honor lost out. It's the Hall of Fame's loss. The new selection process, of which I am now a part, makes it almost impossible for any old-timer to receive sufficient votes. I just voted for him—No. 1 on my list—and I'll keep pushing because to be in Harder's corner is a labor of love, although now a seemingly hopeless one.

But he did have that Mel Harder Field and the Wahoo Club every year gives out its Distinguished Service Award in Mel's name. And he is in the Greater Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame, the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame and many others.

There are a few of us around who saw him pitch. He pitched the historic opener at Cleveland Stadium. If memory serves, the date was July 31, 1932. It was Wes Ferrell's turn to pitch, but on game day he begged off for some mysterious reason. Roger Peckinpaugh, the manager, asked Harder, pitching out of turn, to take the ball.

Harder never would say no. Before 80,000 fans, he and Lefty Grove of the Philadelphia Athletics engaged in a brilliant pitching battle, Grove finally winning, 1-0. (Incidentally, Grove is in the Hall of Fame.) Harder pitched mostly for poor Cleveland teams, yet managed to have two seasons of 20 or more victories, and to accumulate 223 victories with little hitting behind him reveals how great a pitcher he was. His exceptional curveball buckled the knees of the best hitters.



During his final season as a player, Mel Harder was given a night in his honor and received countless gifts, including cash. From 1948 to 1963, he would serve as the team's pitching coach, tutoring a host of talented pitchers that included Hall of Famers Bob Feller, Early Wynn, and Bob Lemon.

By 1960, Harder had distinguished himself as one of the top coaches in baseball. Following his departure from the Indians after the 1963 season, he served as pitching coach for the Mets, Cubs, and Reds, closing out his career with the expansion Kansas City Royals.

In 1940, the Indians had one of their better teams and rebelled against Manager Oscar Vitt, firmly believing his thoughtless, outspoken criticism of some players—one being Feller—was costing them the pennant.

Hal Trosky, the first baseman, was to be the team's spokesman when the players presented their complaints to owner Alva Bradley and to request the removal of Vitt.

On the day of the meeting, Trosky had to leave the team for Iowa because of an illness in his family. Harder was asked to be the spokesman. Although this was not his nature, again he didn't say no because it hurt him deeply to hear the manner in which Vitt, in front of everybody on the bench, cut up those on the field when a misplay occurred.

The "revolution" resulted in the team being called the Cleveland Cry Babies, and in a sense, Harder was left holding the bag, but he never regretted standing up for his teammates.

He always was a standup guy and ever the gentleman. Even against Vitt, he never was vitriolic or swore. I never have heard anyone, not even Vitt, say an unkind word against Harder. He lived and died without an enemy.

He was a super husband to his wife Sandy, who died many years ago, and a father of two daughters who idolized him.

And anyone who became acquainted with him became a permanent Harder fan and friend.

The Burr Funeral Home in Chardon is certain to be crowded Thursday from 1 to 4 and 6 to 9 P.M. for our last goodbyes.

If there is a Hall of Fame in heaven for the good and special people, Harder will be in it today.

Lord knows he belongs. ■

Excerpted from *The Best of Hal Lebovitz: Great Sportswriting from Six Decades in Cleveland* (softcover/$14.95/352 pages) © 2006 by Hal Lebovitz. The book is available online from Amazon.com.

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

MR. ROBERT, MASTER HERBIE

Hal Lebovitz

May 2, 1955

BOB FELLER WALKED INTO THE CLUBHOUSE. He had just pitched a one-hitter, the 12th of his career, to beat the Red Sox 2-0.

Asked to evaluate his performance the great Mr. Robert said, "It was good as any game I ever pitched." Yes, this included his three no-hitters, his fabulous strikeout feats. "I only faced 29 men," he explained.

A 21-year-old pitcher sat in front of his locker thinking, "This is gonna be great . . . me coming on after that performance."

Feller thought about it, too. "It's going to be a tough act for the kid to follow," he said.

"Just go out and tell him to do better," grinned Jim Hegan seated nearby.

The kid went out, struck out the first three men on 10 pitched balls, struck out the side again in the second inning and again in the third. Nine strikeouts in three innings. Nine more to go and he would have tied the mark set by Feller himself, back in 1938.

The kid didn't make it. He finished with 16 and the Indians won, 2–1, to take a doubleheader, putting them in first place. Herb Score had followed a tough act with an amazing one of his own.

In straight comparisons, Feller's job had to be rated a shade better. But from the long range view Score's performance is the more important. Feller, at best, has only a few more years to play. Score is but 21.

Sam Mele, a Red Sox hitter, judged Score to be the "fastest pitcher I have faced in the majors." Said Mele, "He's just a little faster than Bob Turley and he has a much better curve."

Manager Al Lopez, mighty pleased that his pitching has been able to carry the club during this horrible hitting slump, insisted to unbelieving Boston writers that Score wasn't his fastest yesterday.

"I've seen him faster this spring," said Lopez, "and so will you. The more confidence he gets the harder he'll fire. Now he still has a tendency to aim the ball."

And how did these two great performances affect his pitching plans? Lopez was asked.

"It sets up our pitching," declared the elated manager. "We've always been a pitching club and now to have a kid like Score is like finding a diamond to add to the greatest collection in the world."

Master Herbie saw the first five innings of Mr. Robert's masterpiece. Then he went into the clubhouse and tried to sleep on the trainer's table. "It wasn't exactly a sleep," he said later. "I was concerned. Last two times I'd been knocked out of the box. I wanted to do well enough for them to keep me up here."

Feller saw only the middle innings of Score's strikeout story. He had his youngsters at the game and he wanted

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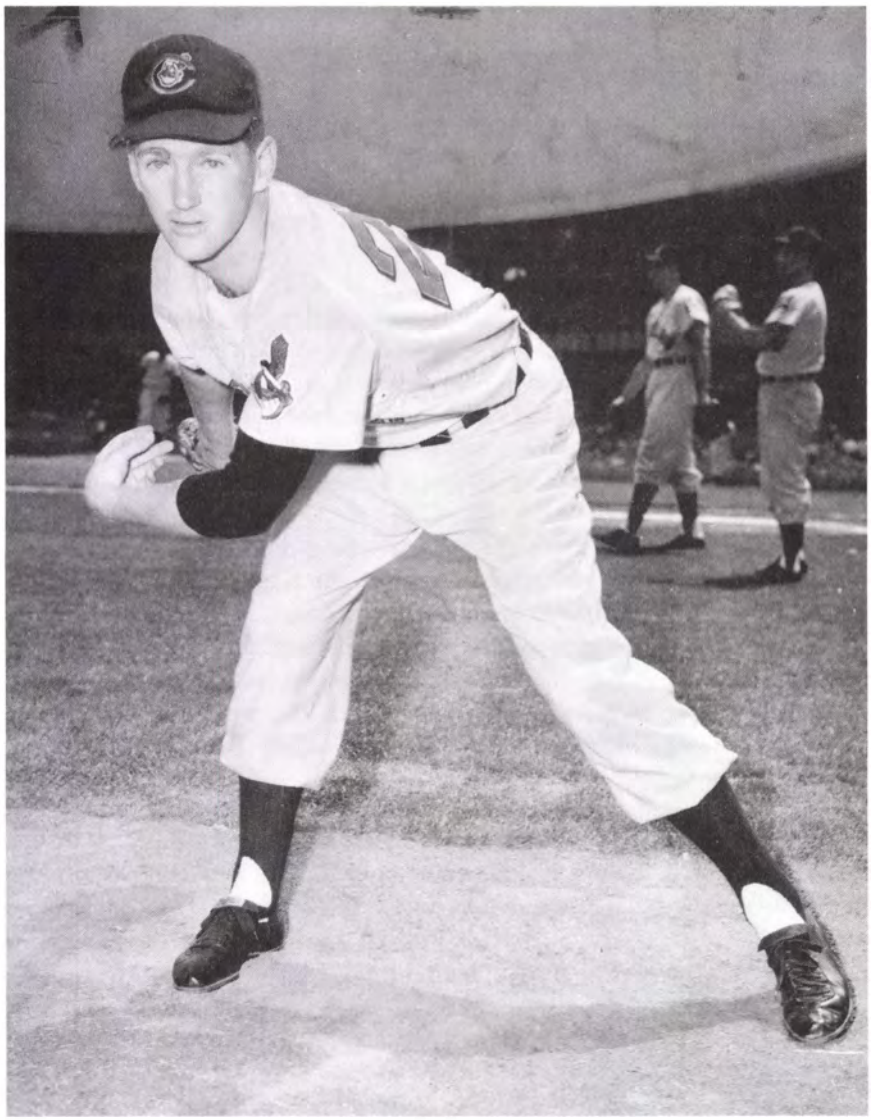
Veteran pitcher Bob Feller, *right*, welcomes rookie Herb Score, *left*, to the big leagues in 1955.



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

For his outstanding season in 1955, Herb Score won the American League Rookie of the Year Award. A line drive off the bat of Gil McDougald in 1957 and an arm injury the following year would cut short his promising career.

them home in time for dinner. He left in the seventh. That was his plane that buzzed over the Stadium.

Yes, Feller knew he had a no-hitter going until Sammy White singled to kill it in the seventh. "I tried to throw him a fast ball but it sailed. He reached out and nubbed it," said Feller later, not at all unhappy about losing his fourth no-hitter. "If it's in the books for me to pitch another no-hitter I'll do it," he said philosophically.

Mr. Robert credited his control for the excellent performance. "And when I didn't get the ball where I wanted to I was lucky enough to have good stuff," he added. In all, there were only three hard hit balls off Feller: two line drives and a long fly which Ralph Kiner caught.

Feller was particularly gratified, he explained, because he had worked so hard since April 16, when he made his first start and was knocked out of the box.

"I stayed late at the park each day, I did more running than regularly, I did more calisthenics to strengthen my back muscles and I tried to perfect every pitch I have.

"It paid off," he concluded.

Score also was aware that he might be approaching a record. "I knew I had an awful lot of strikeouts," he revealed later. "But I wasn't counting 'em. I'll tell you the best out of the game was Kiner's catch of Sammy White's drive." It prevented a home run.

In the first inning Score surprised himself. After whiffing the top three hitters he came to the bench and said, "Where did I come up with that curve ball?"

Actually he came up with it during the week. Mel Harder worked several hours with Score in an effort to gain curve-ball control for the rookie.

"In the first innings I had a good fast ball and a great curve," said Herb. "Later the curve wasn't as good and neither was my fast ball. I'm just glad I got by."

Yes, he had done better. Last summer he fanned 17 against Minneapolis. He whiffed 16 in seven innings against St. Paul. In high school he often fanned 22 and 23.

"But this," he said, pleased with himself, "is the big leagues." ■

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... TITO FRANCONA?

Russell Schneider

TITO FRANCONA – Outfielder, First Baseman, 1959–64

Best season: 1959, 122 games, .363 batting average, 20 home runs, 79 RBI

Indians career: 835 games, .284 avg., 85 home runs, 378 RBI

THERE WERE MANY WHAT-IFS in Tito Francona's 15-season major-league career, two of which stand out in particular:

What if Jimmy Piersall had not complained to Indians manager Joe Gordon that, because of the late-afternoon sun, he didn't feel comfortable playing center field in the second game of a double header against New York at Cleveland Stadium on June 7, 1959?

And what if Francona's left leg had not been so severely injured that he was unable to play five games in late September that season, after the Indians were mathematically eliminated from the pennant race?

"When Piersall had a problem because of the sun, Gordon put me in center field," said Francona, who'd filled in at first base for slumping Vic Power and singled and homered in the opener. "From that game through the rest of the season everything seemed to click for me."

Indeed it did. Thereafter, Francona—who'd been acquired by the Tribe two weeks before the start of the season—was a regular in the lineup that season, either in the outfield, for 64 games, or first base, for 35 games.

And, in contrast, "When my leg was so bad late in the season [trainer] Wally Bock warned me that I could cause serious damage if I continued to play, and insisted that I rest it for a few games," added Francona.

If Francona had not established himself as a regular in the lineup at either center field or first base, he would not have had the opportunity to come this close to winning the 1959 American League batting championship. And if he had not been forced out of the lineup when the torn hamstring muscle caused his leg to turn black, it's probable Francona would have batted enough times to qualify for the title that was won by Harvey Kuenn, his former teammate with the Tigers.

Francona hit for a .363 average (145 hits in 399 official times at-bat), 10 percentage points higher than Kuenn's .353 (198-for-561). But he didn't have enough total plate appearances to qualify for the championship. The rule then in effect required a player to make at least 477 total plate appearances—which included walks, sacrifices, and times hit by pitches.

In 1959, Francona walked 35 times, was credited with six sacrifices, and reached base as a hit batsman on three occasions for 443 total plate appearances, 34 short of the amount specified in the rule. Thus, Francona would have needed to play eight or nine more games to reach the minimum requirement—and the way things were "clicking" for him that season, it's safe to assume he would have made enough hits to hold his lead over Kuenn.

As Francona said from his home in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, "I felt like I had a god on my shoulder every time I went to the plate. There was no way a pitcher could throw a ball past me. No way. Not anybody. Not that season." Which must have been true because, as late as August 10 he was batting over .400.

Francona's sore hamstring, and a similar injury suffered by teammate Chuck Tanner, also factored in his failed bid for the title.

"There were times I got screwed out of hits because, after I'd hurt my leg, I couldn't run full speed and couldn't beat out balls that normally would have been hits."

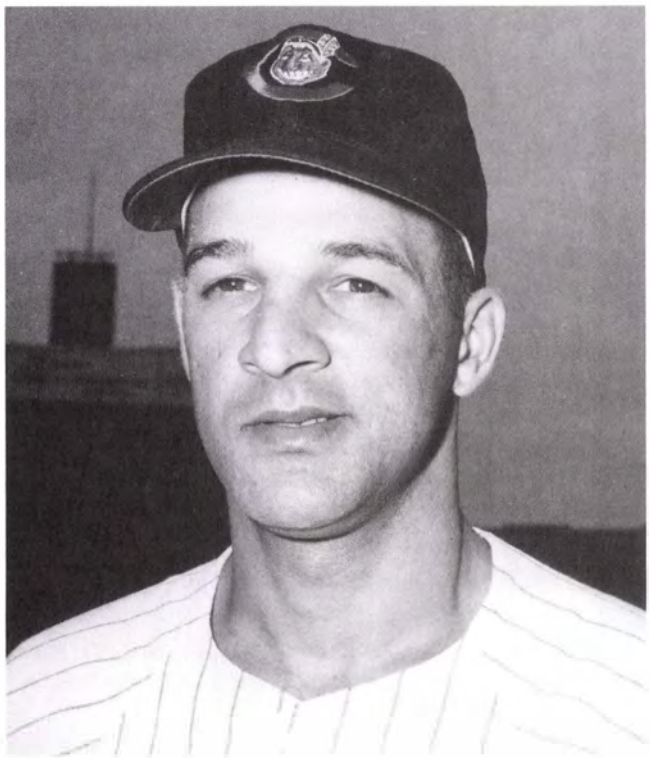
On at least one occasion, "Tanner could hardly run because of a bad leg and was forced at second by the right fielder—the right fielder!—when I hit a line shot that would have been a hit if nobody had been on base," he said.

In the years since his final game, with the Brewers on September 29, 1970, the former outfielder/first baseman—and almost-batting champion—has had two open-heart surgeries, in 1992 and 2001, and both knees replaced at the same time in 2005.

As he suggested, fans who might remember him from the years he played in Cleveland probably would be surprised to see him now. "My height has increased by two or three inches, that's how bad my legs were bowed. My wife, Jean, calls me 'Betty Grable' because my legs look so much better now."

Francona lost his first wife, Roberta, to cancer in 1992. She was the mother of their two children, daughter Amy and son Terry, who played 10 years in the major

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS



In 1959, Tito Francona made Indians general manager Frank Lane look like a genius, as he batted .363 after being traded from the Detroit Tigers for Larry Doby. Francona did not have enough at-bats to qualify for the batting title.

leagues, including 1988 with the Indians. Terry managed the Philadelphia Phillies from 1997 to 2000 and took over as manager of the Boston Red Sox in 2004.

Terry was born on April 22, 1959, which was 42 days before his dad replaced Piersall in center field for the Indians, launching his near-batting championship season. And now, of course, it's Terry and the Red Sox who command most of Francona's attention.

"People asked me if I coached him when he was a kid, which I didn't because I never had time, I was always playing. And when Boston won the World Series [in 2004] they asked me if I give him [managerial] advice, which of course I don't," he said.

When he signed as a 18-year-old amateur with the St. Louis Browns in 1952, Francona received a $10,000 bonus. He was in the army in 1954 and 1955, reached the major leagues with Baltimore in 1956, spent 1958 with the Chicago White Sox and Detroit, and was traded to the Indians on March 21, 1959.

That first year with the Tribe his salary was $10,000; it doubled to $20,000 in 1960. The most he ever made in baseball, Francona said, was $29,500 in 1962, after a brief holdout with Indian chief Gabe Paul. "I liked Gabe, but oh! was he tough to deal with. In those days players had no choice because management had all the power."

As for agents, Francona chuckled and said, "There was no such thing in my day. If you brought in an agent, they [the owners] would throw you out."

It is ironic that on two occasions Francona was traded in deals involving Larry Doby. The first was in 1958, when the Orioles sent Francona to the Chicago White Sox, and the second in 1959, when the Tigers dealt Doby even-up for Francona. It also was ironic that, the season following their classic battle for the batting championship, Francona and Kuenn wound up as teammates—and as roommates on the road—after the Indians acquired Kuenn in Frank Lane's infamous trade for Rocky Colavito.

Francona said they never talked about Kuenn winning the batting championship, or that he won it because Francona did not have enough at-bats. "It never really dawned on me how good it would have been if I had won. In fact, I never thought much about it until you guys [in the media] asked about the what-ifs."

Francona played for nine teams in his major-league career: St. Louis Cardinals, Philadelphia Phillies, Atlanta, Oakland, Milwaukee Brewers, Orioles, White Sox, Tigers, and Indians.

"I never played on a pennant winner," he said. "I always seemed to be one year too late or one year too early."

Thus, "When Terry and the Red Sox won [the World Series in 2004], it was almost as great a thrill for me as it was for him. Before that I hardly ever watched a World Series game on television . . . I was always too jealous of the guys who were in it," said Francona.

The closest Francona came to playing in a World Series was 1959, when the Indians collapsed in the final two weeks and finished second, five games behind the White Sox.

"We could have won it; OK, maybe we should have won it," Francona said about the Indians' failed bid to win the pennant in 1959. "We had the best team."

Just as some would say about Francona's failed bid for the batting championship in 1959: that he could have won it; OK, perhaps even that he should have won it. ■

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... GARY BELL?

Russell Schneider

GARY BELL – Pitcher, 1958–67

Best season: 1959, 44 games, 16-11 won-lost record, 5 saves, 4.04 ERA

Indians career: 419 games, 96-92 won-lost record, 45 saves, 3.71 ERA

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS

After being traded by the Indians to the Boston Red Sox in 1967, Bell helped the team capture its first pennant in twenty-one years. Two years later, after being selected by the expansion Seattle Pilots, he was immortalized in baseball literature as Jim Bouton's roommate in *Ball Four.*

GARY BELL WAS GOOD, but never seemed to be as good as everyone thought he would be—or should be—throughout his nine seasons with the Tribe, and the two seasons after he left Cleveland.

Bell signed as an amateur free agent in 1955 at the age of 18 for a $4,000 bonus, made it to the Indians in 1958, and went 12–10 as a rookie. He was traded to Boston on June 4, 1967, was claimed by the Seattle Pilots in the expansion draft on October 15, 1968, and on June 8, 1969 was dealt to the Chicago White Sox, who released him four months later.

"If only he'd be a little meaner . . . if only he wouldn't be so easy-going, so laid back all the time." Those are things people in the Indians hierarchy often said when Bell's name was mentioned.

Perhaps the implied criticism was valid. Who knows? The only thing certain was that it didn't please Bell. Still doesn't.

"That's a lot of [bleep]. I heard too much of it. I got tired of it," he said with a scowl, and then reverted to his usual easy-going demeanor, which might have been a reason his nickname—"Ding-Dong"—was coined. Again, who knows?

"OK, so I horsed around. Still do. I laugh easily and I have fun. I don't take myself or anyone too seriously. But when I pitched, that was something else. I tried as hard as I could, and I wanted to win as badly as anyone.

"Would I have been a better pitcher if I'd destroyed some furniture in the clubhouse or kicked the dirt when somebody got a hit?"

Then, not waiting for an answer, he said, "That's baloney," or, actually, something more expressive.

"Nobody can change a person's personality. Nobody can teach somebody to be different. It would have been like your boss telling you to write like somebody else," he said to the scribe interviewing him. "That wouldn't have helped you." And then Bell paused again, the twinkle in his eyes returning, and said, "Well, maybe it would have helped you."

More vintage Bell.

His record with the Tribe was 96-92 with a 3.69 earned run average as both a starter and reliever. He started almost exclusively from 1958 to 1961, when he went 49--47, but from 1962 to 1965 Bell pitched out of the bullpen 216 times and started only 15 games.

Overall, including his stints with the Red Sox, Pilots, and White Sox, Bell won 121 games and lost 117. He had 71 complete games and 51 saves in 519 appearances, and a commendable 3.68 ERA.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Gary Bell morphed from starting pitcher to reliever over the course of his ten years with the Indians. His strong personality added color to what, for the most part, was a down period for the franchise.

"I hated relieving, but in those days you had no choice. You did what the manager told you to do," said Bell, who pitched for seven different managers during his nine-plus years with the Indians—Bobby Bragan, Joe Gordon, Jimmie Dykes, Mel McGaha, Birdie Tebbetts, George Strickland, and Joe Adcock. "I loved Gordon, and Dykes was a nice man, too. They were all OK, except for Adcock," said Bell.

It was on the subject of his overall record that Bell admitted having one regret.

"With the stuff I had, I think I was good enough to win at least 200 games," he said. "I'm not sure why I didn't, though I'm damned sure it wasn't because I wasn't mean enough.

"I don't know how hard I threw because they didn't have radar guns then, but I tell people they used a sun dial to time me," he quipped.

Then, serious again, he said, "I guess I got it up there in the mid- to high-90s [miles per hour]," which was a major reason for the high expectations the Indian chiefs had for Bell.

In Cleveland in 1967, before he was traded to the Red Sox, Bell was paid $27,000. "When I got to Boston, Dick O'Connell [the Red Sox general manager] asked me how much I wanted [to earn for 1968]," said Bell. "I could hardly get the words out of my mouth. Finally I said, kind of hopefully and very softly, '$40,000.' He told me, 'I'll give it to you if you promise you'll win 20 games.' I said, 'OK, I will,' and it was done."

So how many games did Bell win in 1967? "I was 11–11, but we won the pennant, and I got the same money the next year." [*Editor's note:* In 1967, Bell was actually 12–8 with the Red Sox and 1–5 with the Indians, for an overall record of 13–13. It was the following year, 1968, that he was 11–11.]

In the World Series in 1967, Bell pitched in three games against St. Louis, two in relief and one as the starter (and loser) in Game 3. He also earned a save in Game 6 before the Cardinals won Game 7.

When Bell retired from baseball after the 1970 season, he returned to his hometown of San Antonio, Texas, and "bounced around" in various jobs. In 1987

he started his own sporting goods business—Gary Bell Athletic Supplies—which he and his wife, Rhonda, operate. They were married in 1978 and have two children, daughter Casey and son Cody, both of whom attend Texas A&M University. Bell also has three children from a previous marriage.

"Things are going well," he said. "I had a heart attack in 1992, but I'm OK. It hit me when I woke up and felt sick one morning. It was like having a hangover, but I knew it was something more than that because I hadn't been drinking the night before.

"That's one advantage about being a drinker. You know when you're supposed to have a hangover—and when you're not. Anybody who doesn't drink wouldn't know."

He also plays a lot of golf. "I can still break 80 once in awhile," and said his handicap "depends on who I'm playing against."

Bell never aspired to get back into baseball as a scout, coach, or manager. "Back then scouts and coaches didn't make any money. And now, the game has gone by us so much, I'd be lost. When I pitched, you picked up the ball and threw it. Now it's all so technical. Everything is computerized . . . and complicated.

"And everybody is making so much money. It's hard to believe the contracts that guys are getting. It proves that the money always was there, but in my day the players didn't get much of it. Especially not if you played for guys like Frank Lane and Gabe Paul, which I did. They were really tight with a buck.

"After my first year with the Indians [1958], when I won 12 games and was making only the minimum, which at that time was $7,000—that's $7,000 a year!—I tried to get a raise out of Lane. I was going to hold out for $12,000, and he flat-out refused. He told me, 'We're going to start the season without you if you don't sign,' which scared the [bleep] out of me, so I signed. That's how it was."

As for the game today and the money that players are making, Bell said, "We're all jealous, all the old guys. But I don't have a problem with it. If the owners are stupid enough to pay guys $25 million a year, why not take it?

"We weren't even allowed to have an agent. If you had one, they [the owners] wouldn't talk to you. We had a guy named Jim Baxes, an infielder who came over from the Dodgers during the [1959] season, and his wife wanted to negotiate for him. But Lane refused to let her, and when the season ended, [Baxes] was gone.

"And when people ask me how much I think I could be making if I were playing now, I tell them I'd probably get four or five million a year. But then, I guess I'd have to scowl a lot, not smile as much as I did, and break up some furniture in the clubhouse to prove that I could be a mean guy, a nasty S.O.B. like everyone back there thought I should have been." ■

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

KRALICK VERSUS BELL

Terry Pluto

WHEN VETERAN *PLAIN DEALER* BASEBALL WRITER Russ Schneider made up his team of the worst guys he had to deal with in his twenty years with the Indians, he picked Kralick as the left-handed pitcher. (For those who are wondering, Wayne Garland was the righty.)

Meanwhile, the newspaper files revealed little.

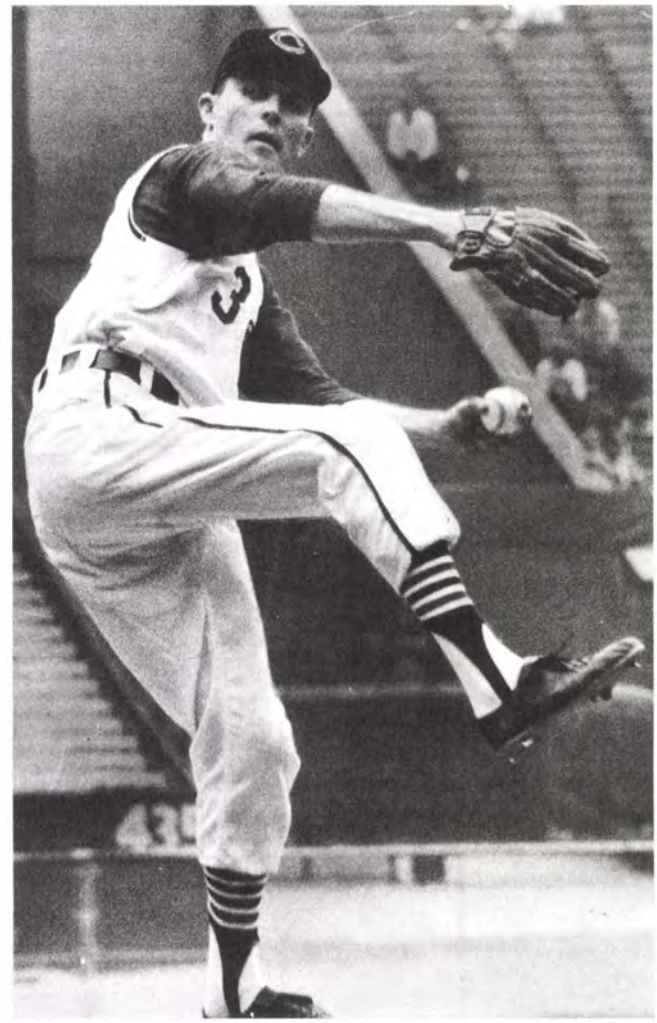
His no-hitter in 1962 was 1–0 over the Kansas City A's. He had a perfect game for 8⅓ innings before he walked George Alusik. If you don't remember good old George Alusik, don't feel bad; I didn't either. When I looked him up, I discovered he was an outfielder who played 298 games between 1958 and 1964, and there wasn't much worth remembering.

Kralick lacks an overpowering fastball, wrote United Press International of his no-hitter. "But Sunday he threw mostly fastballs because he had trouble controlling his curve. Bob Allison, Bernie Allen, and Rich Rollins turned in fine defensive plays in support of Kralick."

The only interesting story about his three years with the Indians was on August 25, 1965. "Scarcely 24 hours after being knocked out by a single punch thrown by his roommate, Gary Bell, Jack Kralick had 10 counted over him, again, this time at Chavez Ravine," wrote Jim Schlemmer of the *Akron Beacon Journal* in a game story of the Tribe's 8–2 loss to the Angels.

On Sunday the Indians played in Washington. Kralick and Bell went to dinner together and then returned to their room. Bell had pitched four scoreless innings and picked up the win. In their room "there were angry words, and both of us swung," Bell told reporters. Kralick missed. Bell punched Kralick in the mouth, and Kralick lost a tooth and had facial cuts that needed nine stitches to repair. Bell had cuts on his right hand and knuckles. Originally, the Indians said that Kralick was simply suffering from "a dental discomfort." Well, that was part of the truth, but it didn't fool reporters, especially when they got a look at Bell's hand.

"Both battlers were unable or unwilling to recall what the argument was about, but both said they would continue to room together on the road," reported the *Beacon Journal*. "Manager Birdie Tebbetts said, 'These are the dog days in late August, and fights are inevitable. My rule is that it's okay for players to fight so long as it doesn't interfere with their play.'"



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Jack Kralick, Indians southpaw, was 33–33 during his tenure with the Indians (1963–67). His name continues to conjure up memories of the team's struggles during the 1960s.

Well, at least Birdie Tebbetts made that very clear.

Later there was an unconfirmed report that Bell and Kralick were debating about what to watch on TV when the punches were thrown, but who knows? Or who even cares twenty-nine years later? But somehow I believe it, especially after my experience with ballplayers later in my life.

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On occasion Bell battled with opposing players too, as in this scuffle at Yankee Stadium on August 21, 1963. It began after he hit Yankee first baseman Joe Pepitone. Bell stayed in the game, but Pepitone ended his night early, courtesy of the umpires.

When I was a kid, I was once in the same car as Gary Bell. My brother worked for the recreation department in the Cleveland suburb of Parma. He drove Bell to speak at a baseball clinic, and I got to sit in the backseat. All I recall is that Bell wasn't in the car more than five minutes when he was hanging his head out the window like a basset hound that wanted wind on his nose. Then I discovered that the reason for his preoccupation with the window was that he was chewing tobacco but making sure he spit the juice outside. How appetizing to a nine-year-old baseball fan. Bell also was known as "Ding Dong"—ah, those clever ballplayers and their nicknames.

I asked Ding Dong one question: "Who is the toughest hitter you ever faced?"

"Young fella," he said, "the one with the bat."

Then he spat out the window.

I can look back now and see that even at the age of nine I was preparing for my life's work as a sportswriter by asking dumb questions. And today Bell is a sporting goods salesman in his hometown of San Antonio.

The final news story on Kralick was from April 11, 1971. The *Beacon Journal* had a "Whatever Happened To?" column, and the subject was my favorite player. The headline was: FINDS BASEBALL EASY TO FORGET, EX-INDIAN HASN'T SEEN GAME SINCE RELEASE.

Kralick was living in Watertown, South Dakota, working for a school supply concern. He said that the night he was traded, the auto accident cracked a rib, "but the worst outcome of the accident was that I suffered from double vision. The Mets put me on the temporary inactive list, and I was to report to the team as soon as my problems cleared up. But the double vision continued through the [1967] season."

His vision eventually cleared, but Kralick simply quit.

"I haven't missed baseball at all," he said. "I've found other things to do, such as hunting and fishing."

Wherever he is, Kralick probably knows that baseball doesn't miss him, but he should know that he is responsible for making one kid into a Cleveland Indians fan. So thanks, Jack—I guess. ■

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... MUDCAT GRANT?

Russell Schneider

JAMES "MUDCAT" GRANT – Pitcher, 1958–64

Best season: 1961, 35 games, 15-9 won-lost record, 0 saves, 3.86 ERA

Indians career: 227 games, 67-63 won-lost record, 8 saves 4.09 ERA

THE TRADE—SOME CONSIDERED IT A "GIVEAWAY"—that sent Mudcat Grant from the Indians to Minnesota in 1964 is a perfect case history of the financial insecurity that plagued the Cleveland franchise in the "bad old days." That would be the era that began in the early-1960s and continued into the mid-1990s, marked by losing teams and small crowds.

Grant, who grew up in the Tribe farm system after he signed as an 18-year-old amateur free agent in 1954—his "bonus," he said, was a "handshake"—had become one of the team's best young pitchers from the time he made his major-league debut in 1958.

He showed promise of being so good, in fact, that the Indians apparently believed they would be unable to afford his salary and, thus dealt him (OK, gave him) away to the Twins on June 15, 1964. At the time the franchise was owned by William R. Daley, and Gabe Paul was general manager.

In exchange for Grant, the Indians received Lee Stange, a pitcher who would continue to have an undistinguished career the next two seasons in Cleveland; George Banks, an equally undistinguished third baseman/outfielder; and an undisclosed amount of cash (don't forget the money!).

Fast forward to the present.

Grant, while dealing with several infirmities, including diabetes, arthritis, and knee problems, stays active in a variety of charitable endeavors. Many of them involve African American athletes on behalf of children around the country. Among them is one he founded, the "Thirteen Black Aces Foundation," which comprises the 13 African American pitchers who won 20 games in the major leagues.

Mudcat, of course, is one of them. The others: Vida Blue, Al Downing, Bob Gibson, Dwight Gooden, Ferguson Jenkins, Sad Sam Jones, Don Newcombe, Mike Norris, J. R. Richard, Dave Stewart, Dontrelle Willis, and Earl Wilson.

"We produce products—lithographs, posters, and the like, including a book that's being written [by Grant]—that are sold to raise money for charitable organizations."

Grant also heads a marketing company, BGAT Slugger, that, he said, "holds baseball clinics, among other fund-raising events . . . anything we can do to influence kids and motivate them in terms of education."

In addition, Grant serves in various capacities with the Negro League Hall of Fame, Baseball Assistance Team, and Major League Baseball Alumni Association, among others, in support of former players who are not well off financially.

Until he was slowed by physical problems, Grant also was active in the entertainment business. As a singer and dancer, he and his group toured the country as "Mudcat and the Kittens" and in 2004 gave concerts in both Europe and the U.S.

Grant and his second wife, Gertrude, whom he met in Vienna, Austria, and married in 1975, make their home in the Los Angeles area. He has five children from his first marriage, including a son, James Timothy Grant III, who lives in the Cleveland area.

"I loved the Indians and I always thought they loved me, until—apparently—they couldn't afford me," said Grant, whose 14-year major league won-lost record was 145–119 with a 3.63 earned run average in 571 games.

"Cleveland was the only place I liked almost as much as Lacoochee," which was Mudcat's hometown in Florida.

He still harbors a painful memory of the day he was dealt to Minnesota. "The Twins were in [Cleveland] when I was traded, but nobody told me about it. I went to my locker in the clubhouse and there was nothing there. It was bare. I asked the clubbie [clubhouse attendant], and he said, 'Your stuff is in the Twins' clubhouse.' I asked him, 'What's it doing over there?' and he said, 'You've been traded to Minnesota.' "He's the one who told me. Nobody from the front office, or [Indians interim manager George Strickland] bothered to tell me.

"I went to the Twins' clubhouse and, sure enough, my stuff was there. Apparently they made the deal the night before. I didn't know what to say to anybody, so

I didn't [say anything]. I just got dressed and walked out on the field. Some fans asked me, 'What are you doing in that uniform?' and all I could say was that I got traded."

Grant flourished with the Twins (in 1964–67) and went on to pitch for the Los Angeles Dodgers (1968), Montreal and St. Louis (1969), and Oakland and Pittsburgh (1970–71).

With the Twins in 1965 he became the first African American pitcher to win 20 games in the American League (when his record was 21–7), and pitched them into the World Series. He became an ace reliever the last two years of his career and was credited with 53 saves, including 24 with the Athletics in 1970. He is one of only seven pitchers in major league history to win 20 games in one season and save 20 victories in another.

Ironically, just as it was financial trouble that caused the Indians to trade Grant, he ran into similar problems in Minnesota with owner Calvin Griffith. After leading the Twins to their first pennant after the franchise's move to Minneapolis, Grant asked for a $4,500 raise, a modest sum by today's standard, but was promptly rejected. "Calvin asked me, 'Mud, how much was your share from the World Series?' I said it was $4,500, and he said, 'Well, if I give you $2,000, that'll be $6,500 more than you made last year.'

"I told him to shove it and that I was going home to Lacoochee. He told me, 'We can negotiate,' but he kept telling me he couldn't pay me what I wanted so I got a cab—we were in Florida for spring training at the time—and I went home. That convinced the Twins I was serious, and they called me back and gave me a $13,000 raise."

Grant didn't say how much that boosted his salary, but six years later, in 1971 with Pittsburgh (his final season in baseball), he was paid $82,000, a career high.

That also was five years before free agency came into being, when players gained the right to sell their services to the highest bidders. Soon thereafter most became millionaires.

"I'm not bitter that I wasn't around when the big money came in," said Grant. "But I hope players today realize that one of the reasons they're doing so well is because of what we did in the past. Our hard work and sacrifices helped them get where they are."

After he retired as a player, Grant worked for the Indians in community relations and also was a member of their broadcasting team from 1972 into the early 1980s. He later did some television work for the Dodgers and the Athletics.

Looking back, Grant said, "The high point of my major-league career took place before it even started. It was the night I signed a major-league contract with the Indians in 1958, and I thought about all the African American players who had preceded me...Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby and Luke Easter and Don Newcombe and Monte Irvin and Joe Black and so many others.

"We didn't have a telephone in my home [in Lacoochie] at that time, so I wrote my mother a letter and told her, 'Mom, I made it!'—even though it took three days for her to get it." ■

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS

Signed by Fred Merkle out of Lacoochee, Florida, Grant played for seven seasons with the Indians, who traded him in June 1964 in order to make payroll. Mudcat went on to win 21 games the following year, helping the Twins to their first pennant. After his retirement as a player, he did commentary for the Indians television broadcasts.

Excerpted from *Whatever Happened to "Super Joe"?* (softcover $14.95/294 pages) © 2006 by Russell Schneider. Reprinted with permission of Gray & Company, Publishers. The book is available online from Amazon.com.

CLEVELAND CLASSIC

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... GOMER HODGE?

Russell Schneider

HAROLD "GOMER" HODGE – Second Base, Third Base, First Base, 1971

Best (only) season: 1971, 80 games, .205 batting average, 1 home run, 9 RBI

Indians career: 80 games, .205 avg., 1 home runs, 9 RBI

THE YEARS HAVE NOT BEEN KIND to Harold "Gomer" Hodge since his departure—actually, his unwilling "retirement"—from professional baseball, after he was fired as a minor-league coach for the Montreal Expos in 2001.

"They never told me why; they just let me go," Hodge said from his home in Rutherfordton, North Carolina, where he was born and raised, and was a star baseball, basketball, and football player at Spindale High School in the early 1960s. Rutherfordton is about 60 miles west of Charlotte.

"I'd like to get back in [base]ball, but I can't because of my health," said Hodge. He has been on total disability for several years, primarily because of problems with his back and other ailments. "I can't do much of anything anymore."

At the time of our interview, Gomer was in the early stages of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as "Lou Gehrig Disease."

Though his given name was Harold, Hodge was nicknamed "Gomer" by his minor-league teammates because "some of my northern buddies thought I sounded like that guy on television, Gomer Pyle," he said. Gomer Pyle was a character on the old Andy Griffith television show, played by actor-singer Jim Nabors, who later starred in his own TV show, *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*

Though his major-league career consisted of only one season (1971), Hodge is still a favorite of Tribe fans of that era because, well, primarily because he was such a charismatic, pleasant, unpretentious, and extremely likable character.

He played first, second, and third base. "But my best position," Gomer said, "was hitting."

Hodge's popularity took off after back-to-back pinch-hitting appearances. On Opening Day in Detroit, April 6, 1971, Gomer singled for a run against the Tigers' Mickey Lolich. In the Tribe's next game, the home opener in Cleveland against Boston on April 8, Gomer pinch-doubled and scored the Indians' first run in the eighth inning. He remained in the game at second base and, in the bottom of the ninth, delivered a two-out, two-run single for a 3–2 Tribe victory.

Three days later, in the Indians' fourth game, Hodge came through again as a pinch hitter, this time with an eighth-inning double as the Indians again beat Boston, 7–2.

It gave Gomer four hits in his first four official at-bats, after which he chortled in a post-game interview, "Gollee, fellas, I'm hitting 4.000," a remark that will always remain his legacy.

Unfortunately, Hodge's—and the Indians'—season went into rapid decline thereafter, though Gomer enjoyed one more day in the limelight. On September 3, he smashed a home run, his only one in the major leagues, in Boston over Fenway Park's infamous left-field wall, again as a pinch hitter.

When the season ended with the Indians mired in sixth place, tying a franchise record for futility—102 losses—Hodge, whose batting average had shrunk from "4.000" to .205, was demoted to Portland of the Class AAA Pacific Coast League.

"They said they wanted me to go down and concentrate on playing one position," said Gomer. "After a little while they asked me to be a player-coach, and I knew right away they didn't have any plans to call me back, but that was OK. I figured if they thought enough of me to want me to be a player-coach, that was pretty good."

He was right. Hodge remained a minor-league player-coach and eventually a manager in the Indians farm system through 1976, when he was fired. He went home to Rutherfordton, where he helped his father on the farm and tried to forget about baseball.

But in 1981, Bob Quinn, then the Indians' farm director, called and asked Hodge if he wanted to manage Waterloo, Iowa, in the Class A Midwest League. "I sure did," said Gomer. "But first I asked Quinn why they fired me, and he said, 'Because you had a horse-bleep record, didn't you?' which I did. All I could figure was that he must have thought I got smarter working on my dad's farm."

Maybe he did. He won the Manager of the Year award in the Midwest League in 1981 and 1983. It also

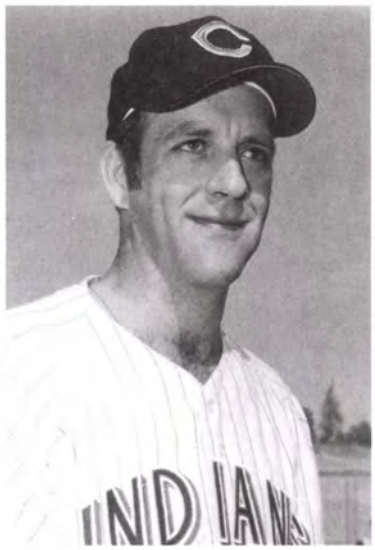


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS

In 1971, his only season in the major leagues, Gomer Hodge charmed Tribe fans with his clutch pinch-hitting and his humor. His single in the bottom of the ninth on April 8 at the home opener drove in the winning run as the Indians defeated the Boston Red Sox 3–2. Hodge later served many years as a coach in the team's farm system.

was in Waterloo that Hodge met his first wife, Deborah, though he was reluctant to talk about her, even to mention her by name.

"We were married almost twenty years…She told me I'd never catch her cheating on me, but I did and she left me with about $20,000 in bills," he said. They had two children, son Nicholas and daughter Morgan. Hodge and his second wife, Linda, a probation officer in Rutherfordton, were married in 2002.

Gomer went on to work in the minor leagues in various positions as a manager, coach, and hitting instructor for the Milwaukee Brewers, Boston, and Montreal. He even coached teams in Australia and Mexico until back and hip problems curtailed his physical activities. He was forced to retire in 2001.

The highlight of his career? "There were lots of them," he said, somewhat surprisingly considering that he spent only one year in the major leagues. (It took him eight seasons in the minors to get there, and he spent three more as a player-coach in the Indians farm system from 1972 to 1974.)

"My biggest thrill was when [manager] Alvin Dark called me into his office during spring training on April 3, 1971," he said. "I remember the date because that was my 27th birthday and I was afraid he was going to tell me I was going back to the minors. Instead he told me I made the team. It was the best birthday present I ever got.

"When people ask me how many home runs I hit in the big leagues and I say one, they laugh. But then I tell them, 'I bet you wish you'd been able to hit one,' and they don't laugh any more. I hit my home run over the Green Monster in Boston. It wasn't a game winner, but it was a home run… it sure was. And those four pinch hits were pretty good, too.

"I still have a fan club in Cleveland. It's not too big anymore, but I still get letters from fans who want my autograph. I always sign 'Gomer' for them, but I'm Harold to everybody down here."

Something else that Gomer remembers with pride, though it didn't happen during his playing days, was a scouting assignment in the winter of 1992–93 that he made while working for the Expos.

"They sent me to the Dominican Republic with another of their scouts to look at some players," said Hodge. "I found a 17-year-old kid and told the Expos they should sign him. They did, and now he's in the big leagues. I get a thrill reading about how good he is."

That "kid" is Vladimir Guerrero, who became one of the best players in baseball, won the American League's Most Valuable Player award in 2004 as a member of the Los Angeles Angels, and signed a $12.5 million contract in 2005.

"I'd like to have a couple hundred of that [salary]," said Hodge, who made $13,500 (the major-league minimum) in 1971. That [$13,500] is worth about one time at-bat today.

"I'm not bitter, just disappointed the way things turned out. Not because I didn't make a bunch of money, but because I love baseball and I'd still like to be in it. If I sound like I'm sad, it's probably because I have a bad cold and my nose is all stuffed up.

"When I played it was because we loved the game, not for the money. And the guys who are making all the money now, when they come out of the game I guarantee they won't have enjoyed it as much as I did," said Gomer. ■

Editor's note: Hodge died on May 13, 2007, in Saluda, North Carolina.

"I Didn't Think Baseball Players Were Real People"

An Interview with Richie Scheinblum

Marc Katz

Richie Scheinblum *grew up in a poor section of the Bronx, moved to New Jersey as a youngster, and overcame more odds of making it to the major leagues than did most.*

Just a year before baseball instituted the free-agent draft in 1965, Scheinblum signed a professional contract with the Cleveland Indians, earned his first service in the major leagues as a 22-year-old, and eventually played eight seasons with six different organizations—Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators, Kansas City Royals, Cincinnati Reds, California Angels, and St. Louis Cardinals—plus two years in Japan.

A notoriously poor hitter in the spring when it was cold, Scheinblum hit well later in the season. A classic example was 1973, when he began the year in Cincinnati and hit .222 in 29 games before being traded to California, where he batted .328, including .371 after the All-Star break and .419 in September.

In 1972, Scheinblum was leading the American League in hitting for almost half the season and was voted to the American League All-Star team along with outfielder teammates Lou Pinella and Amos Otis—one of the few times three outfielders from the same team have been so honored.

Overall, Scheinblum hit .263 in parts of eight major-league seasons. Playing for the Hiroshima Carp in 1975 and 1976, he hit .281 and .307.

In the minor leagues, Scheinblum made a name for himself as a great contact hitter, hitting as high as .388 one season for the Denver Bears (affiliated with the Washington Senators at that time) of the American Association.

Today Scheinblum lives in Palm Harbor, Florida, just west of Tampa, the first stop north of Clearwater on Florida's Gulf Coast. He has operated as an independent contractor for logo companies for fourteen years, ordering shirts and souvenirs with company emblems for clients coast to coast.

He was interviewed Saturday evening, March 26, 2005, at his home.

[*Editor's note:* Richie Scheinblum's recollection of some of the factual details of his career is approximate and not necessarily precise. In a few instances, we interpolated a bracketed correction of, for example, an individual's name, but for the most part we trust that readers will appreciate that this is an oral history, not an encyclopedia article.]

RICHIE SCHEINBLUM

I grew up in the south Bronx in Fort Apache. I was a foster child until I was seven. From ages one and a half until seven, my mom was sick in the hospital. My dad took a regular day job and worked for my uncle as a CPA and went to Pace College at night. It took him thirty-one years to become a CPA.

He put my brother and I in different foster homes and every Sunday would pick us up at whatever houses we were living in and we'd go to the hospital. She was in the French Hospital, and I found out later that's where Babe Ruth was, and where he died.

When I went to the hospital to visit my mother, I've got to guess Babe Ruth was there, too. I have that link to Babe Ruth. My mom died when I was seven, in 1949. Babe Ruth died in 1948.

I'm not sure what my mother had. We were just told a couple years ago by my uncle, during an appendectomy, the doctor left something in there. That infected and ultimately killed her. Every once in a while they'd let her out and my dad would get us together and we'd spend a little time together. It wasn't that often.

I was told this by my relatives. My mother was born in Russia, in the Ukraine, in a little town called Verinyon. My grandmother had six or seven sisters. One of the sisters was Moe Berg's mother. Another sister was Abe Saperstein's mother, and his brother was Pinhas Sapir, who became one of the first finance ministers of Israel. That was Saperstein's brother. And a third sister was the mother to Allen Ginsberg, the weirdest guy in Jewish history. Of course, I knew none of them, but these are my grandmother's sisters. I have

a picture of my grandmother and there is a bit of a chart.

My mother's name was Lee. She wasn't a model, but she could have been. She was once named Miss New York City. My father was Fred. I was told my mother was such a character. In the '20s and '30s she smoked. She flew in airplanes. She rode horses. She did things that women didn't normally do.

No, I didn't have a bar mitzvah. One day, I'm going to. When I lived with my uncle between the ages of five and seven, there was a shul at the end of the street. My brother and I were there every day, sitting in the front row. And my grandmother, I think, spoke strictly Yiddish. I just know a couple of words. I always went to the High Holy Day services—Yom Kippur, of course I go to Yizkor services, and I'm a good Jew, other than getting some of the formalities. One day, I'm going to get it done.

My uncle's was one of the homes I lived in. It was a kosher house we lived in. And my brother and I were always at the shul at the end of the street in the morning. I don't know what we did there. But I know we always sat in the front row.

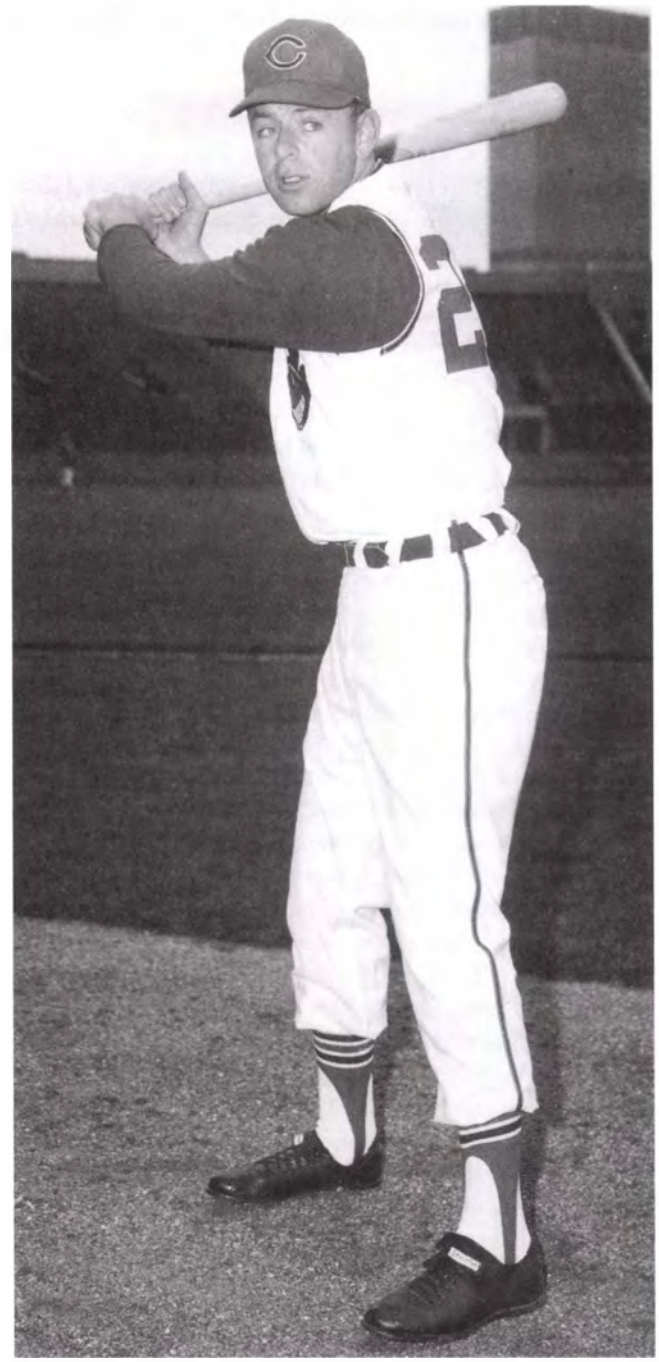
My brother's name is Bob. He lives in Texas and was a fighter pilot for the Marines, and his son has served tours of duty in Iraq. He flies F18s and took his wife's place recently. She was the one who was deployed. She's a fighter pilot for the navy. But they have two young kids, so David volunteered to go instead. My brother retired as a colonel in the Marines. He's two to three years older than me—way older than me.

Interesting guy, though. He is extremely intelligent. He was a federal attorney for a bunch of years. Graduated second in his law class at Arizona and became a federal attorney. He never got flying out of his blood, so he was a captain for Western Airlines, and, when they went under, he was a captain for Delta for, oh, 25 years, and retired a couple years ago. Now he flies a G2 corporate jet.

Bob always included me with his friends. I have to give him a lot of credit. He helped me. When you look back, you sometimes forget those things.

I was seven and my brother was 10 and my dad remarried and we moved to Englewood, New Jersey. Before that, the only place we lived together as brothers was at my uncle's house. It was right across the street from Crotona Park. Hank Greenberg was from my neighborhood. I didn't know. We didn't have TV. I don't think we were allowed to listen to the radio very much.

We had one game, and that didn't belong to us—Monopoly. I think my aunt's brother lived in the house also. And her father, he always had the payas on, and



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Signed off the campus of C. W. Post in 1964, Richie Scheinblum struggled during four separate stints with the Tribe. In 1972, with the Kansas City Royals, he had a career year and was selected to the All-Star Game.

he'd walk to the table and we were playing a game. And he'd knock it off and I guess sit and daven. He didn't like us.

I got interested in baseball playing across the street in a little side park. It was a little fenced-off area right next to Crotona Park. And we were there every day. Rocky Colavito told me he used to play there. He's

from the same neighborhood. Rod Carew told me he played on that field.

No, I didn't think I would play in the major leagues. Growing up, until I was eight, nine, ten years old, I didn't think baseball players were real people. I didn't know how to put two and two together. I didn't see them on TV. We didn't read newspapers when I was seven, eight, nine years old. We listened to the radio for games when we were allowed. I didn't put together that people on the radio were real people.

Dick Schaap explained this to me. If you look back, Mickey Mantle wasn't just a baseball player. He was the first TV star in the United States—full-blown TV star. When most people thought about getting their first black-and-white TV in 1950, '51, all of a sudden there's the biggest sports hero in the country, Mickey Mantle. He was the idol of every man, woman, little girl, little boy. They watched the World Series with Mickey Mantle. You know, the clean-cut—everything. I couldn't believe he could be a real person.

I did go to camp, Camp Keeyumah in northeastern Pennsylvania. Tony Kornheiser, the writer and radio and television personality, was one of the kids in my bunk. A lot of famous young kids were up there. Peggy Lipton was on the girls' side. Also in my bunk was Aaron [Mark?] Shimmel—he was a manager of a lot of musical people such as John Denver and Wham with George Michael. Then he became CEO of LaFace Records.

As poor as my family was growing up in the Bronx, this [athletics] was one of those things where you get dirty, and they [other family members] weren't that pleased with me doing it, knowing it may have been my only chance to stick with my smarts. I was a smart kid, and I was still failing, nothing special. But baseball was my way out of a predicament.

The first big-league game I ever played in was the first big-league game I ever went to. I never went when I lived in the Bronx. We lived in the slum areas of the Bronx. So that's why I couldn't put two and two together.

Someone said Yankees pitcher Joe Page lived in Englewood after we moved there. And I thought I saw him walk into the drugstore. I couldn't tell you what Joe Page looked like now. I knew everyone's name. I knew all their statistics, probably of all the teams. And suddenly, my baseball cards were coming to life.

I wanted nothing to do with the Dodgers. Growing up, my uncle was a Giants fan. And he was the first one in my family to have a TV. When we'd go to his house, it was a special occasion. We would always watch the New York Giants. And the reason I liked the Yankees is I'd always fool around hitting right-handed and left-handed, and a lot of switch-hitters, in my day, they became switch-hitters so they could hit ground balls and run to first. It gave them another second. A lot of them weren't pure switch-hitters. I started doing it from the first day I started playing.

I'm a natural righty, but all my statistics were much better left-handed. When we moved to New Jersey, a couple of kids and I would play lefty baseball. You'd have to hit left-handed. You'd have a pitcher, a batter, a first baseman, and an outfielder, so you couldn't use the whole field. Some of the kids hit right-handed if it felt natural.

In high school I wanted to play major-league baseball, but I didn't think it was a feasible thought.

I don't know how to explain this. It's like watching a cartoon. While you're in the midst of watching a cartoon, even though it might be incredible, everything seems real in there, because you've now watched the movie. But at the end of the movie, it's just cartoons. It's a dream. It's a fantasy. And I just—I don't know. I was always told I was good. But I was always the smallest one on my team.

I went to C. W. Post. I had all these conditional athletic scholastic scholarships at the end of my junior year in high school. Then I took my college boards. I got a 705 in math, 725 in advanced math, and 374 in English. And it was all from the reading. My vocabulary was fine. I remember when I took the test, I read it and I answered the multiple-choice questions, and I answered them and got them all right, and when they rang the bell there were 17 more to go. So I wound up with a 374, barely literate.

And I took them once more and basically had the same scores. I lost all my conditional scholarships, to Columbia, to Colby College. They all told me I'd never pass freshman English. So basically, I didn't go to class my senior year in high school. I'd walk into class and sneak out with my best friend and we'd go play pool or something. So I went from 24th in my class I think to 75th. And I didn't want to go to college. I wanted to find a baseball contract.

In high-school baseball, I was always the smallest, and I always did well. And I had a couple of small bonus offers from the Yankees and Mets. I remember Houston offered me something, and a few other teams. But my dad said, "You're not playing. You're going to college."

So he enrolled me at C. W. Post—and, in those days, I think all you had to do was fog a mirror and you got in. But I graduated. I got a year of my master's in, in business.

My dad used to give me five dollars a month in college. After a couple months, he said, "I'm sorry." He couldn't come up with the five dollars. So I got small jobs in between all the sports I was in and going to school. I got a job at the post office. I got another one

raking leaves for neighbors. And I played three sports. I was the first 10-letter man at C. W. Post.

And I was inducted with the first group of six people in the Post sports Hall of Fame in June [2005]. I played track and basketball as well as baseball.

I started all four years in basketball. I was the only walk-on. Everybody else was a scholarship player. I started on the freshman team and they moved four of our freshmen to start on the varsity. That was very cool. Our coach was George Kaftan, who was a great player at Holy Cross and then with Boston, the Knicks, and Baltimore. He was captain of Holy Cross when Cousy was there.

The assistant coach (who I've remained friends with—he was the freshman coach, it was his first year coaching) is now the assistant coach with the Atlantic Hawks—Herbie Brown. His brother Larry and I were counselors at camp, and he and I—well, we had three guards actually. I was the swingman because I was the rebounder. So Larry and Mike Brandeis was the other player and Herbie coached us. We went undefeated for two years. Our final game, we beat the Knicks' rookie team. So I played guard with Larry Brown for two years.

He was very cool. He has turned out to be one of the great coaches ever—and a great basketball player, too.

I signed a pro contract out of college.

This was before the draft. I had these offers to come to different stadiums and try out. The first one was Pittsburgh. So my father, my college coach, and I took a train to Pittsburgh. Joe E. [Joe L.] Brown Jr. was the general manager. I had a great workout in a gigantic park. It was Forbes Field. And the part I will never forget—I had never met a [professional] baseball player before. I went into a locker room—they put me in the boiler room of the visiting team.

I came in, and I noticed a couple of Dodgers players were watching me work out. So I walked into the boiler room, and two players walked in—Tommy Davis and Frank Howard. I will never forget how kind they were. And they said nice things.

The offer that Joe E. Brown gave me seemed great. He said I had a great workout, and this is what they offered me. And it was more money than I had ever heard of. It was double what my father was making—eight thousand dollars. And my college coach says, No, if you don't come up with more, then we're going to be on our way. I couldn't swallow.

So we took the train to Cleveland. Actually, there's a story written about this incident with Hoot Evers, who had the workout. He said, "You did great." He offered me $12,000. I jumped across the table. I grabbed his pen and signed it before my coach could say anything.

I only went to Pittsburgh and Cleveland to see about a contract, but there were other places I was going to go after that. My coach is one of my great friends and he was inducted into the C. W. Post Hall of Fame too. The first time I saw him after I signed, he was doing the draft for the Indianapolis Colts, and he's the one who picked Edgerrin James over Ricky Williams in the draft—Dom Anile. He played with Tommy Davis in high school.

He was my baseball coach and also the football coach. He told me not to sign. I think at the time my dad was making right around $4,000 a year, or $5,000, and we lived in a decent home in Englewood, but we had five kids and we never really had spendable money.

I was on my way. I told my dad, "You and I never have to work another day in our lives." I'd never heard of that much money.

I can't blame anybody for the money they're making now. I wish I got it. For the couple good years I had in baseball, I could be making three to four million now. I hit .300 three times. That's decent money now. And when I played, not that many hit .300.

I played on teams and in leagues where they never had a Jewish player. I had one great story: My first roommate in my first year. When I got to the team, there were three guys living in a house. They asked me to come in with them. Now there were four of us. One of them was Harold "Gomer" Hodge, who ended up being a pinch-hitter with Cleveland later in his career. (See Russell Schneider's article on page 66.)

He was from North Carolina. After we were there for about a week, he asked if he could touch me. And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "I just want to see what you feel like." And he touched me on the shoulder. He said, "I noticed in the shower, you weren't completely covered in hair. And you didn't have horns or a tail." I said, "Gomer, what are you talking about?"

He got on the phone that night and called his mother and father. They lived in the hills of North Carolina. And he said that he met a Jewish person and that I didn't have a body completely covered in hair and I didn't have horns and I didn't have a tail. I just thought that was very funny.

We wrote to each other for several years. Thankfully, he made the big leagues for a short time. And he was a decent pinch-hitter. No knock against Gomer. But it's what people are led to believe. I was also the first Jew to play in Japan. Moe Berg went as a visitor. But I played in Hiroshima, which is a little different.

My playing weight was a lie. I weighed 160, and I was only 5'10½". I started growing like after I got out of baseball. Now, I'm 6'1" maybe. I just grew late. I started going to spring training at 185. At the end of spring training, I weighed 160. So that was really my playing

weight. I had a little tiny waist and I had big shoulders. I had a 30-inch waist. Now, my legs are 30 inches.

Cleveland sent me to Burlington, North Carolina. I was so excited playing there. It was B ball then. The minor leagues were a whole different story than they are now. I got sent to C ball the next year. I got called up, and Birdie Tebbetts said I was too young. I got up like twice in two months.

I never hit over .200 in any April I played. I grew up in cold weather. I just couldn't function in cold weather. At the time, I just had trouble hitting in cold weather. I remember one spring training, in 1969, I won the triple crown in spring training—batting, RBIs, and home runs. And I started in right field for the Indians. I hit third. And Opening Day was in Detroit. It was the year after Denny McClain won 31 games. I saw him in the first inning. He didn't strike me out, but I was overmatched. It looked like he was throwing nothing. I was 0 for 4.

Then I faced Mickey Lolich. I had never faced him. I went 0 for 3. It was like 5 degrees out. And the third night we were home and played Boston in a 16-inning game. I was 0 for 7 against Dick Ellsworth, and then Al Dark, my manager, traded for Hawk Harrelson, and I wound up on the bench the rest of the year.

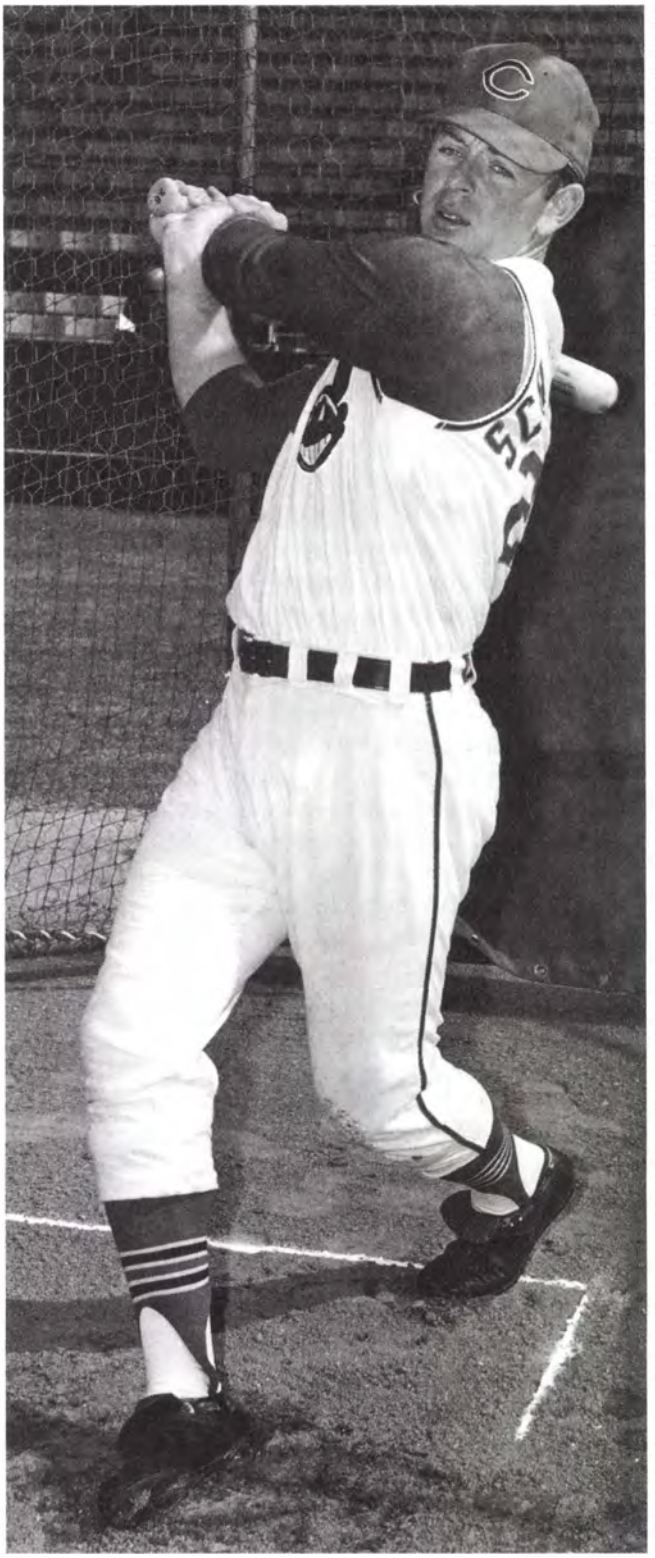
Harrelson was a great player—nothing against that. But my chance ended. I broke the major-league record for the worst start in major-league history. It was 0 for 14 in those first three games, and then I'd spot-start for awhile, and pinch-hit, and I didn't get my first hit—I was 1 for 36. And during that time, I had three strikeouts. 0 for 35. Cleveland Stadium was gargantuan. It was the Grand Canyon, and I had a lot of warning-track power.

And I remember Dark called me in his office and he said, "You're the most snakebit player." I wound up second in the American League in pinch-hits that year with 16. I still wound up hitting like .190 [.186]. The same thing happened in Washington later in my career. I had a really bad start. I think I hit .146 before they sent me out. As soon as I got rid of April and the cold weather, I could hit.

Whenever I played every day, I always hit .300. The only exception was in Pawtucket. I hit .263 and finished fifth in the league in hitting.

I grew up in cold weather, but we never played baseball in cold weather. I never ice-skated. I just didn't like the cold weather. I played basketball, always indoors.

I remember somebody in Cleveland, I think it was '67, he said, "If you ever make it big, the Jewish community will come and support you." I said, "I need the support now." Those were really some down years of my life, after I got to the big leagues and saw what other people could do, and people told me I would never make it in the big leagues because I swung up.



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Despite his classic swing, Scheinblum hit only one home run during his time with the Indians. That came on July 20, 1969—a solo shot in the seventh inning off Detroit's Tom Timmermann. Scheinblum speaks of his "warning-track power," his career home-run numbers being depressed by the deep outfields in a couple of his home parks, Washington's RFK Stadium and, particularly, Cleveland's Municipal Stadium, which he calls "the Grand Canyon."

At one time Trader Frank Lane—he was very nice to me, straightforward—he took me to lunch one time in Denver. He said, "Richie, I've spent a lot of years in baseball. I take you as the greatest minor-league hitter that ever lived, but I know you can't hit in the big leagues because you swing up."

But to my face he told me I was the greatest minor-league hitter he had ever seen, and maybe in history, but, "I don't think you can hit big league pitching because you swing up." I said thanks. If they would only give me a chance.

I hit .388 in Denver. That was the lowest I hit. I was over .400 the whole year. And the next year, 41 pitchers in that league went to the big leagues. I think the whole Oklahoma City staff went to the big leagues. They had James Rodney Richard, I think both Forsch brothers, Pedro Borbon, Tom Griffin. Scipio Spinks was better than all of them. Cedeno was on that team, Mayberry. Cleveland had Dick Tidrow, Mike Paul. Vida Blue was in the league.

I'm just trying to remember names off the top of my head—a lot of great pitchers. And everybody said, Well, you played in Denver and it was a big home-run park. I had 26 home runs that year and 5 of them were at home. The rest of them were on the road.

I went to Denver after I was sent down from Washington. My manager there was Ted Williams. My brother was a friend of Charlie Duke, one of the astronauts who drove a space sled on the moon. He was in awe of him. I felt the same way about Ted Williams.

I listened to everything he said. When I went to Denver, I won the Ted Williams Award for hitting.

I knew I could hit and I begged them: "Please give me a chance. Don't play me in April. Start me in May." And nobody would do it. The one who did it was Bob Lemon, in Kansas City, but before he started me I got six pinch-hits in a row. I was leading the major leagues in hitting 4½, almost 5 months—in the warm weather.

As soon as it got cold—and I got hurt, too—I told him, "Well let me play. I want to win the batting title." I didn't want to sit. I was getting thrown out from left field. Two nights in a row I hit a line drive off my ankle. We didn't have an ankle shield. Inside slider and I smoke it, off my ankle. So they took me off on a stretcher after they put on that ice stuff.

Lem said, "How you feeling, meat?" I said I want to play. The first pitch, Blue Moon Odom, threw me the exact same pitch. I hit it in the same spot, and I thought I was going to die. My ankle was this big. I was getting thrown out from left field, right field. I dropped 20 something points the last two weeks.

And Carew, who turned out to be one of my really close friends, he wound up winning again. I used to go to his house and say, "You know, that's my bat you got hanging on the wall." When we were tied at .328, we were the only two in the American League hitting .300. Then three, four guys passed me. I think I wound up fifth. I don't think it would have mattered. I wanted to do what Ted Williams did. I wanted to win the batting crown not sitting.

Carew was one of our two to three closest friends when I was married. They spent Thanksgiving with us. We went to dinner all the time, went to Vegas. And Bert Blyleven was a big friend.

Pitchers weren't always your friends in those days.

The first time I faced Larry Sherry, he knocked me down four pitches in a row. It was in the Coast League and I was hitting well at the time. He was a mean pitcher. He was one of those pitchers who would knock you on your ass in a minute. Stan Williams, Don Drysdale, Bob Gibson, and Larry Sherry—all four of them would knock you down and come halfway to home plate see if there was anything you wanted to say.

I'm proud to say all four of them have knocked me down. There were plenty of other ones, but those four come to mind. They were also four you don't want to charge the mound on.

Once April was gone, I'd hit much higher. And it made no difference, majors or minors. Now, I may have been looked at differently.

I hit my first home run in the majors the day Neil Armstrong walked on the moon—on July 20, 1969. Years before, a reporter told pitcher Gaylord Perry he might be the worst hitter he had ever seen. He told Perry there was no chance he'd ever hit a home run. And Gaylord said, "They're going to have to put a man on the moon before I hit a home run."

He hit one that day, too. It was his first and only home run. What did he have, 25 years in the big leagues? What a prediction. Nostradamus.

I didn't like Gaylord. Actually, there were very few pitchers I did like, until you get out and you meet him. He's one of the nicest guys. He's so down to earth. Very nice. I spent a whole day at a golf tournament with him.

There were some things written about me that I was a flash in the pan for one year. That isn't true. I was a good hitter. My fielding was a different story. When I first came up, my arm was extremely strong. Rocky Colavito told me my arm was stronger than his, except I never hit the cutoff man. I was like a wild pitcher. I had a funny way of throwing. I wrapped my arm around my back and flung it.

A lot of my errors were throwing errors, more so than fielding errors. Then it got to the point your reputation was there.

But I always could hit, although there were certain

pitchers I couldn't hit. Hoyt Wilhelm—if someone gave me a Prince tennis racket, I couldn't hit him. I think in one spring training I was 0 for 13 against him and I didn't get a foul ball. In 1972, my first time facing Wilbur Wood, I got a single and then went 0 for 31 the rest of the year. I couldn't hit knuckleballs. I couldn't hit a good changeup. I couldn't hit a really good curveball. I could hit a hanging curveball. I didn't mind sliders that much, 'cause I liked the ball inside on me anyway. A Blyleven curveball was unhittable.

When I was with the Indians, Al Rosen's kids used to play in my locker. What a treat that was. He was a great guy.

I'm a good Jew. I'm 100 percent Jewish. I don't fit a lot of the clichés about being Jewish. People who think we're cheap are wrong. If you look throughout this country, Jews are the the most giving, the most philanthropic. Yet we're known as being cheap. And maybe that was the case a hundred years ago.

I think our people are looked on falsely. We're not the devil. We're good people who help neighborhoods. We help countries.

Mike Epstein was my roommate with two teams. There's a little bit of kinship there with other Jewish players.

I know when I was in Japan, playing for Hiroshima, they had never had a Jew playing there. And, of course, they didn't understand the religion, even though books have been written where some historians think they may be the lost tribe of Israel.

I played in Japan two years. St. Louis had traded me to the Dodgers. I went to them and said, "I can't play for the Dodgers." I hated the Dodgers growing up. Isn't it funny how something sticks to you? I'd been offered a nice contract to play in Japan. I said, "Would you mind giving me my release so I can go to Japan?" And they gave it to me. The only reason I was traded over to St. Louis was for the pennant drive. And I could say I hit .333 there, but it was 2 for 6.

Anyway, Hiroshima had come in last place something like 29 out of 30 years that they had the league. The other year, they came in fourth. The first year I got there, Gail Hopkins and I were the first two foreigners to play at Hiroshima. And we did well in the Central Division. It was just unheard of.

Forgetting that the bomb was dropped there, they have always been considered the black-sheep town of Japan. And, in essence, they may be the nicest people on earth. They're just farmers. And the reason we dropped the bomb there is there was a naval-building base on Hiroshima.

Anyway, I had to sit out Yom Kippur and they didn't understand. The team was doing well, and I was one of the star players and I had a big year.

I said, "I'm sorry," and without too much explanation I said I just can't play. I stayed in my hotel room—I mean my apartment—and I hear a knock at my door. This is before the game is coming on. And I opened the door and there are a good forty to fifty reporters. And they completely filled up my place and they started firing questions at me through the interpreters.

I basically said this is my one day of the year I have my one-on-one with God. I atone for my sins, and I just added a little bit about what the day means. The next day in the paper there's a cartoon of me, and, like every other cartoon of me, it's a fifty-pound nose and a little body attached to it, and the picture showed me kneeling in front of the TV in my uniform, with my hands together and the game is on. That was their interpretation of Yom Kippur.

That was the only time I had to sit out for Yom Kippur. I was never in the World Series [in the United States]. If it had come, I would have sat it out. I felt an allegiance. Kids were watching. When I was home, I went to services, mostly Yom Kippur services, the closing ceremony, and Yizkor.

After I was traded to the Angels, we moved from the East Coast to the West Coast, and that's where I stayed.

I was told something I didn't know. I'm the first major-league player to hit .300 on four continents. That isn't entirely true, but I hit .300 in North America, I hit .300 in Asia, and I hit .300 in South America a couple of times—and .300 in Central America, which really isn't a continent. I was also told I'm the only Jewish switch-hitter to hit .300. And I was the seventh overall in major-league baseball in the modern era, the seventh switch-hitter to hit .300. That's pretty cool.

The trivia question is, Who are the other six? One of them you would never guess in a million years—Frankie Frisch, and Pete Rose, Mickey Mantle, Reggie Smith, Ted Simmons, and Red Schoendienst. A few more have done it since then.

After playing two years in Japan, I didn't retire. I came home and severed my Achilles tendon playing basketball, and I guess in those days you don't come back from that injury. I was five, six months in one of those March of Dimes metal casts. I was done.

I was married for 24 years. My wife was a Catholic. I didn't give my son a bar mitzvah. If I had done that, I think my mother-in-law would have had a heart attack. My wife was born in Portugal, and they were strict Catholics, and I had to teach her her religion. I don't know if it was just them or other people, but they just didn't understand their own religion. They don't understand the history of what their beliefs are. My wife would go to church and just sit there.

I'd ask her questions because I'd read up on other religions also, especially my own. I raised my son with stories of the Bible I told him. I told him the difference between right and wrong. His name is Monte. I asked him always to ask questions. I never hit my son. I never raised my voice to him. We always discussed everything.

He had no religious training, other than what I taught. He was basically taught at home—his whole education, because we were in Japan a couple of years and we spent winters playing winter ball.

I think he went to preschool. Then he didn't enter school until the fifth or sixth grade, and, he was so far advanced from all the other kids, we maybe wrongly agreed to put him into high school, with juniors and seniors in high school, when he should have been in the fifth grade. Wherever we went, my wife would read to him and play math games with him. He knew his times tables at a year and a half, which is extraordinary. He is a brilliant kid.

My son has a photographic memory. He lives in Southern California.

We made math a game. That's one of the faults of education today. They make school a drudge.

The only time he got anything but an A was in physics, and I went to school—not to say I was one of those doting parents trying to get them to correct a grade. Twice a week four kids went to their teacher to get tutored. He had the highest grade in the class—97. The teacher showed it to us, and the four kids he was tutoring, they all got A's. The principal was our friend at the school.

I just wanted to know. I wanted an explanation for this. And the teacher said, "Well, I heard Monte was a troublemaker." I said, "Monte's never been in trouble in his life." The kid who said he was a troublemaker ended up being the valedictorian.

My wife and I opened up a jewelry store in Anaheim and we actually sold to a lot of baseball players. I lived there until my divorce. I moved out into the San Fernando Valley and experienced that big earthquake in Northridge. I've been through some stuff in my life. My son was at PGA qualifying school in Fort Ord when the earthquake hit during the 1989 World Series. Carney Lansford left him tickets for that game, and he would have gone right across that bridge. He was on the green at Fort Ord when the earthquake hit. He jumped in his car. He was averaging 130, 140 miles an hour going home.

I moved into LA for a little while and I moved to Georgia, but it was too cold in Georgia. I had some friends there. I had a couple of operations. From playing on the artificial fields, our joints are shot. That's what players talk about when we get together. I'd say 90 percent of the players have had hips or knees replaced. You don't have to play on it long to jam your joints down.

Usually, the town I'm in, somebody will invite me over for Passover dinner.

In high school, being Jewish was just another word. The words meant nothing. Now, there's such a thin-eggshell mind, I don't think it's quite as good. They're only words.

I'm a Jew. I'm a good Jew. While I was playing baseball, I was a baseball player. Why am I being pointed out as a Jewish baseball player? I'm the first Jew to play here, I'm the first Jew to play there. Why spend your whole day thinking about prejudice when there are so many other things?

Anyone who makes the minor leagues, you're probably one of the best two, three players in your state.

All those years, Mays was the best player I had ever seen. Taking into account Mantle, who had those bad legs. Then the guy who may have been one of the greatest players ever, but no one will ever know about it—Bo Jackson.

I sat with George Brett and we talked about Bo. He said he had the strongest arm, ever, in baseball. He is the fastest player, ever, in baseball. George showed me where Bo hit a ball in batting practice in Kansas City. He showed me where it left the stadium and hit three-fourths of the way up the lightpole. He said all he needed was two more years of facing these pitchers and he's not going to strike out 160 times a year.

Bo was a great outfielder too. He had his hip replaced and he actually came back and played too. I've had both hips replaced.

Blyleven—he's one of the great pitchers ever. He pulled too many tricks on reporters. He was a great prankster. I think Carew is one of the great underrated players.

Mays was at the end of his career, and so was Mantle, when I played. I saw Jr. Griffey play two, three times and I said, "My God, the game isn't this easy." His father is one of the nicest people I've met. Now, whether Bonds is on steroids or not, you pretty much have to say he's the best ever.

The only way I can judge how good an athlete is—they're so much better than when I played. They're better conditioned, they're better trained. Their fundamentals aren't as strong, because most of the players in my time had to spend four to five years in the minors learning. But other than that, these guys are superhuman. Forget the drugs and everything else.

The other part is, the only way to relate—how did that player do during his time against his peers? I don't

think anyone in history so much dominated his sport as Ruth did. Jimmy Reese told me a great story. People forget Ruth was not just a home-run hitter, he was a great hitter. And, like Bonds today, he's doing this against pitchers who weren't pitching to him.

My only chance today is there are double the teams when I played. I would have had a better chance to hit .300 today. I was a contact hitter with some power. I was in big ballparks. I didn't strike out that often. At least a third of my outs were to the warning track. Cleveland was gigantic. Washington was a big park. Anaheim, at night, you couldn't hit it out. During the day, maybe.

Now, could I hit that split-fingered fastball? I don't know. There isn't a man alive who could throw a fastball by me. I innovated the sledgehammer. I read I wasn't a prospect, Class A only, pull hitter. When I read that, I went out and bought an 8-pound sledgehammer and I swung it every day. I started taking it into on-deck circles with me. My eyesight and everything else was good. If I got the pitch I wanted, I hit a sinking line drive into right field or left field. I liked having a runner on first base. That gave me the hole between first and second.

I think I was a similar hitter to Joe Morgan in that, in all his years, he had Pete Rose on first and he was really good at moving him to third.

Pete Rose in the Hall of Fame? Yes. I really, really liked Pete. Whether he made the mistake or not, he has paid for it. He is such a proud man, whether he did it or not, there are a lot of kids around the country that idolized him. And, if today he had that handle on him, I'd pick him as one of my first couple of players to be on my team.

I don't know if steroids were there in my day. If I knew they would kill me, I wouldn't have touched them. If I knew they were legal, and I could take them and they were going to enhance my ability, I would have taken them.

In the case of McGwire, what he was taking at the time was legal. I was taking cortisone shots. I played with two torn rotator cuffs. If they destroy these records, they're going to kill baseball. I think it's still the greatest sport. You're competing against hundred-year-old statistics. Whether Ty Cobb did it when the baseball glove was the size of your hand or Babe Ruth did it with a 42-ounce bat, whatever the case, baseball is a statistic sport built around team play. If they wipe these records out, it would be the same thing as the Roger Maris asterisk. He hit 61 home runs.

I watch a game to watch a guy. My team affiliation, I will always root for the Angels, because of [late owner] Gene Autry. I'm a homer. Right now I root for Tampa Bay. When I lived in Atlanta, I rooted for Atlanta.

Jewish ballplayers I root for always. Gabe Kapler is playing in Japan. I wish I could have sat with him and told him what to expect. I don't like going into locker rooms. Older players aren't welcome, unless you're a Hall of Famer.

Today I sell things with logos on them. I have catalogues from all the companies and put logos on shirts and bags and things. I've been doing it for fourteen years.

I go to a lot of old-timers' events. We sit around and talk about injuries. Ninety-nine and nine-tenths of those who played in my era really were nice people. Most of us are hobbling a little bit, though. We played on all those turf fields.

I guess I could have made it better when I played, but most of the guys you play against are all-state in two to three sports, and some of them are the best in their state.

Lots of players today come out of college. It's the new minor league. I went to college, but not many of those I played with did. My timing was a bit off, but I think I could have played in the era behind me and the era ahead of me. I had fun. I would have done it again. ■

This interview was conducted as part of the oral-history project of Jewish Major Leaguers, Inc. (www.jewishmajorleaguers.org).

A Moment of Silence

Remembering Herb Score

Bill Barry

As we came out of the ferryboat landing and walked to the Port Authority Building, the sky was overcast and a light rain was falling. It was noon, and we had two hours to get to Yankee Stadium. Maybe the doubleheader would be rained out, we thought. The date was June 26, 1955. I was fifteen and together with my mother and father and two friends had come to New York for the Indians–Yankees Sunday doubleheader. We had gone to early Mass at the Scranton cathedral and then dashed to the station to catch the Lackawanna Railroad's special baseball train to New York. The train was a daily single mail car train on a government contract, but on baseball excursion weekends the railroad added additional passenger cars, a dining car, and a bar car as well as a boxcar full of beer. For $7.50 each, we got to ride to New York and see the ballgames. There were more than 1,500 people from Scranton on the train that day. In addition to the baseball fans, there were families just visiting New York, people going to plays and museums but not the city's famed shops, since the stores were all closed on Sunday back then. When the train pulled into the Hoboken railyard, we all walked directly to the connecting ferry pier for the five-minute ride across the Hudson River. We all walked, that is, except for a few of the supposed ball fans who had spent too much time in the bar car on the trip in and would spend their afternoon and early evening sleeping in Hoboken.

At the Port Authority building, we caught the subway train up to Yankee Stadium and proceeded through the bustling crowd to find our seats. By then the rain had stopped, and the grounds crew was removing the tarpaulin from the infield. There was going to be a game after all.

Scranton had had a minor-league team as recently as 1953, and it was a Red Sox affiliate through the 1951 season, but there were few Boston fans in town. The Yankees broadcast every game on a local radio station, and the train excursions made it convenient to see them play once or twice a year, so I became a Yankees fan. The only other alternative was to watch the hated Brooklyn Dodgers (they of one of the greatest lineups of all time: Reese, Robinson, Snider, Campanella, Hodges, and Furillo) on black-and-white television when a local station showed all their home games. I had no interest in the Dodgers or the National League. I'd seen my first major-league game four years earlier, when a neighbor had taken me to Philadelphia to see the National League champion Phillies play the Cardinals. That was the only time I ever saw Stan Musial play, and I can still remember that he went hitless in twelve at-bats.

On this Sunday, the American League champion Indians were six games behind the league-leading Yankees, with the pesky Chicago White Sox between them in second place with the season nearly half over. Cleveland had come into New York four games behind, but had lost Friday and Saturday's games to the Yankees. All-Stars and future Hall of Famers populated both lineups. The Indians had set a league record the previous year for victories in a season. They had four experienced twenty-game winners in their starting rotation with Bob Feller, Bob Lemon, Early Wynn, and Mike Garcia. The team lineup lacked speed but included such proven hitters as Gene Woodling, Bobby Avila, Al Rosen, Ralph Kiner, Al Rosen, Larry Doby, and Vic Wertz. The Yankees had won five pennants and five consecutive World Series from 1949 to 1953 under the legendary Casey Stengel, and they were embarrassed by Cleveland's record-setting pennant win in 1954. Their roster included an impressive collection of proven performers such as pitchers Allie Reynolds, Eddie Lopat, Johnny Sain, and Whitey Ford as well as Bob Turley and Don Larsen, who would go on to make valuable contributions to their team. Beyond pitching, they were an experienced and impressive balance of good fielding and good hitting. Players of note included Gil McDougald, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Bill Skowron, Phil Rizzuto, Enos Slaughter, and Hank Bauer (Enos Slaughter having been traded to the Kansas City Athletics in May).

The Sunday morning rain had vanished, and the sun began to come out as the doubleheader began. Cleveland's starting pitcher was Early Wynn, with a 9–2 record. Wynn had already beaten New York twice in the season. The Yankee starter was Tommy Byrne, a former fireballer who had been resurrected from the minors, where he had lost his fastball but found much-needed control and a slider. Byrne's record was 5–1. After three scoreless innings the first game became a Yankee nightmare. Early Wynn gave up three singles in

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

The trio of 20-game winners, *left to right,* Bob Lemon, Herb Score, and Early Wynn, celebrate their milestone in the closing days of the 1956 season.

the first three innings and no hits after that in pitching a complete game 5–0. He struck out eight. Byrne gave up a run in the fourth and then surrendered a 415-foot home run to Ralph Kiner, the former National League home-run champion, who played left field for the Indians. Kiner's blast (his 361st) tied him with retired Yankee hero Joe DiMaggio for sixth place on the then all-time home-run hitting list. Byrne walked three men in the eighth and gave up a single as Cleveland scored twice and sent him to the showers. As Casey Stengel, the Yankees' gnarled and bowlegged manager waited for the relief pitcher to walk in from the bullpen, he casually played catch with himself on the pitcher's mound, throwing the ball into the air and then catching it one-handed in the sunlight while the crowd looked on. The Indians scored another run in the ninth off the Yankees' relief pitcher, Jim Konstanty, who had been the National League MVP in 1950 while pitching relief for the Phillies.

The first game took two hours and fifty minutes to play. It was nearing five o'clock as the intermission began. It was then announced that the attendance for the doubleheader was 66,511—the largest Yankee Stadium attendance in five years.

Whitey Ford was the Yankees' starting pitcher for the second game. Ford had a record of 8–3. He started off very tentatively in the first inning when a double sandwiched between two walks loaded the bases with only one out. But Ford escaped without a run being scored by getting the next two dangerous hitters, Kiner and Doby, on a popup and a weak flyout. The Cleveland starter was Bob Lemon, with a league-leading win record of 10–5. With one out in the home half of the first, Lemon gave up a run on three consecutive singles. New York led 1–0 at the end of the first.

In the second, a Cleveland player pinch-hit for Lemon, who left the game. A pulled thigh muscle caused him to leave the mound. Unbeknownst to anyone at the time, it would be his last starting appearance in Yankee Stadium. As the crowd noisily awaited the start of the Yankee half of the inning, a young, lanky pitcher emerged from the Indian bullpen in left field. The crowd began to buzz a bit louder. New York's public-address announcer Bob Sheppard intoned, "Now pitching for Cleveland, Herb Score. Number twenty-seven, Herb Score." Score continued walking to the mound and gave his warm-up jacket to the batboy as he neared the mound.

Now the crowd was loud. New York fans, being among the most knowledgeable followers of the game, were well aware that twenty-two-year-old Herb Score was said to be the Indians' immediate successor to the fireballing great Bob Feller. This was Score's first outing against the Yankees, and his first appearance before a New York audience. Just a month earlier, Feller had started the first game of a doubleheader against the Boston Red Sox and beat them 2–0 with his twelfth career one-hitter. The Indians also won the second game when Score, their rookie left-hander, beat the Sox 2–1 while striking out sixteen. Now as Score got ready to throw his first warm-up pitch from the mound, the crowd of 66,000 was abuzz in anticipation. "How fast can this guy throw"? Around came the left arm as catcher Jim Hegan crouched behind the plate. The Yankees on their dugout steps were just as interested as the crowd in gauging with what velocity Score would bring the ball to the plate. Except for the cries of the beer and concessions sellers and the muted roar of people going to and from the seats to the lavatories and the food stands, near-silence took over the stadium.

Thwack. As Score's first pitch hit Hegan's mitt, the crowd erupted. "Fast, really fast," they said to one another. Faster than Wynn, Byrne, Lemon, or Ford. Fast, just as advertised. Thwack. Score's second and subsequent pitches verified the initial assessment, and the crowd quickly resumed its normal level of noise and movement as he completed his warm-up tosses.

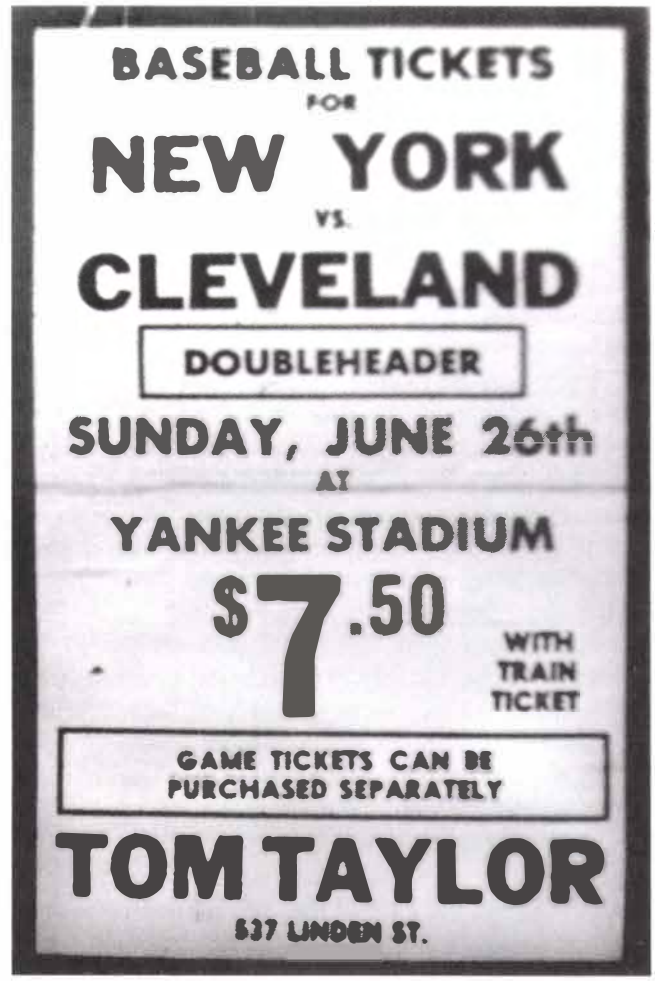
Score then interrupted his rhythm and waved to Hegan. The crowd interpreted the wave as the end of the warm-up, expecting that Hegan would throw the next pitch down to second base, signaling the start of the Yankee's second inning batting. Score wound up and released what was seemingly his last warm-up.

Thwack.

All sound in the jammed stadium ceased. The concessionaires' cries and the movement in the aisles ceased. Score was done getting loose; now he was really throwing. For one, possibly two seconds, the masses sat silently, open-mouthed. The speed of the pitch was reflected in the louder sound as it hit Hegan's glove, as well as in the visual difficulty mere mortals had in following it to the plate after it left Score's hand. The level of background noise in the stadium rose to a new high as viewers exclaimed, "Wow, this guy is really fast!"

Score threw four or five more superspeed pitches before giving another crooked wave of his arm. Hegan returned that final pitch to second base. The ballgame was ready to resume while the crowd buzzed and moved again at its usual level.

Score settled in, nullifying the Yankee's veteran offense for the next five innings. He and Ford matched zeroes through the end of the sixth inning. Through five



COURTESY OF BILL BARRY

An ad from the *Scranton Tribune* in 1955 offers details on a trip to New York to see the defending American League champions take on the Yankees.

innings he struck out nine with a dazzling combination of fastballs and curves. The rookie lefthander walked two, and the only hit he gave up was a single by Ford, the opposing pitcher. Throughout the entire performance the crowd was mesmerized by his fastball, as were Bauer, Berra, Skowron, Howard, and McDougald, among many other Yankees.

In the seventh, with the score still 1–0 in favor of the Yankees, Ford walked Indians center fielder Larry Doby with one out. Shortstop George Strickland singled Doby to third, and another walk loaded the bases. The Indians then pinch-hit for Score. Hank Majeski lofted a medium fly to right field for the second out, and Hank Bauer converted that into a double play by throwing Doby out at the plate.

Elston Howard singled to open the Yankee half of the seventh, and one out later Mickey Mantle came off the bench to pinch-hit. Mantle was hitting .290 and leading the league in home runs and runs scored, but he was also suffering from a sore throat, had gone

0 for 12 in his most recent at-bats. He had also left several runners in scoring position while going 0 for 3 in the first game. Batting right-handed against left-hander Don Mossi, who had replaced Score on the mound, Mantle hit a vicious line shot directly at the feet of Indian third baseman Al Smith. Smith was either going to make a great short-hop stop of the ball or be castrated. But the ball bounced twenty feet straight up in the air over Smith's head and then curled down the left-field line while Howard scored and Mantle legged it into second base.

There was no further scoring in the game. To the delight of the huge hometown crowd, the Yankees captured the second game 2–0, with Ford pitching a complete-game four-hitter. With the victory, the New Yorkers stayed six games ahead of the Indians in the standings and three games ahead of the second-place White Sox, who were losing a doubleheader to Boston on the same day.

The games were over just before 7:30 in the evening. We had two hours or so to get away from the stadium and ride the subway and ferry back to Hoboken for the train ride back to Scranton.

In the intervening years I have seen hundreds of major sporting events. Yet I remember that particular doubleheader as if it were yesterday. After the early rain, it was a perfect day to watch a ballgame in Gotham. The huge crowd, the well-played two-hour-plus games, and the numerous Hall of Fame ballplayers who populated the lineups of the two clubs made it a special day.

Herb Score is not in the Hall of Fame. Neither is he particularly well remembered outside Cleveland, where he later spent more than thirty years as an Indians play-by-play radio and TV announcer. On May 7, 1957, in the first inning of a home night game, Score was hit in the face by a line drive that Yankees' second baseman Gil McDougald hit off one of his fastballs. The comeback liner fractured Score's nose and badly shattered his right eye socket. Following surgery and extended recuperation, he attempted, without success, to regain his former mound effectiveness. He never regained the speed and control that had earned him the Rookie of the Year award in 1955. That year he won 16 games and struck out a league leading 245 batters (still the American League record for rookies) in 227⅓ innings, with an ERA of 2.85. The next year he won 20 games and struck out a league-leading 263 batters while compiling an ERA of 2.53. He won only 17 more games in five years following his injury. He joins such hard-luck pitchers as J. R. Richard of Houston and Mark Fidrych of the Tigers, whose baseball talents were great but who blazed for too brief a period. Both Ted Williams and Yogi Berra have testified to how great Score's potential was before the accident. Williams remarked that Score "was on his way to being a great pitcher."

Who was the greatest baseball player I ever saw? I am often asked that question. I always ask the questioner to clarify the query. Does he or she mean the greatest by record regardless of how he did on the day that I saw him—for example, Stan Musial, who I saw once go hitless all day long, or Ted Williams, who I saw only once on a day when he went 0 for 3 in an exhibition game. Or does the questioner mean What player gave the greatest major league performance on the day I happened to see him? I never saw a more impressive performance by an athlete than that by Herb Score in his New York debut. Striking out nine estimable Yankee batters in just five innings with a mercurial fastball was an awe-inspiring feat. There is no better tribute to the power and uniqueness of that accomplishment than the moment of silence that followed Score's first full-strength pitch from the Yankee Stadium mound. Sixty-six thousand people, as one, sat in absolute silence. I have never seen a reaction like that again. ■

A. S. Young

Writing "Wise Words" about "Gripping and Moving Effects"

Michael Marsh

In the broad sweep of the history of baseball in Cleveland, a special place is occupied by the writers who have told pieces of that history over the years. The work of a few of the more notable among them—Lebovitz, Schneider, Pluto—is represented in the pages of this very journal. Less familiar than theirs by now, perhaps, but in a class unto itself is the distinguished voice of one of the most accomplished black sportswriters in American history, A. S. "Doc" Young.

Young's career spanned half a century, from the 1940s through the 1990s. Much of his work was published in black publications. He held positions at several black newspapers—the Cleveland *Call and Post*, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *Chicago Defender*. During the 1950s he worked for Johnson Publishing Company, which publishes *Ebony* magazine. He later wrote for *Sepia* magazine, which competed with *Ebony* for black readers. He also authored several books about sports, including *Great Negro Baseball Stars*, *Negro Firsts in Sports*, and *The Mets from Mobile*. One of the first black members of the Baseball Writers Association of America, Young won many honors during his career.

Andrew Spurgeon Nash Young was born in 1919 in Dunbrooke, Virginia, the elder of two children. The family later moved to Bowling Green, Virginia. Young's father was a high-school teacher with graduate training in divinity. His mother was a homemaker who had graduated from Hampton Institute and earned a graduate degree in music at Columbia University. The son played piano, clarinet, and saxophone. He enjoyed reading books, memorizing stock information and sports statistics in newspapers, and chatting with a local high-school teacher about baseball. His childhood friends nicknamed him "Doc," which stuck. He disliked his given name, Andrew, and so used the byline A. S. "Doc" Young throughout his career.

Baseball was Young's favorite sport when he was growing up. He developed a lifelong passion for the art of hitting. In an article in *Ebony* he wrote with admiration the batting stroke of San Francisco star Orlando Cepeda:

> Just before the pitcher starts his motion, Cepeda draws his bat back, far behind his right shoulder. As the pitcher hurls the ball toward home plate, Cepeda fuses remarkably the titanic power of his body with incredible timing, whips the bat around with the speed of light to meet the ball at precisely the proper fractional second, at precisely the right angle, and . . . by[e] by[e] baby! Home run![1]

In high school, Young dislocated his left hip in a football game. Unable to walk for more than a year, he spent part of his recovery in bed and later used a wheelchair. His left leg was slightly shorter than the other, and he walked with a slight limp for the rest of his life. Young completed his studies with the help of a tutor and ranked among the top students in his class when he graduated in 1937. That fall, Young enrolled in Hampton to prepare for a career in business. He chose Hampton partly because his mother had gone there, and he liked the school's business department.

Young intended to become a businessman, but gradually he found himself pursuing a career in journalism. An English teacher suggested that he join the campus newspaper. He followed the advice, becoming a reporter and business manager.

After graduating, with honors, in 1941 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, Young worked as an accounting clerk at Hampton. In 1943 he moved to Los Angeles, where he found work as an assistant manager of a grocery store and as a sportswriter with the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. While working at the store in 1944, Young met his future wife, Hazel. They married the following year. Settling into their new home together, Young took along twelve baseball bats. The couple eventually had two children, Norman Gregory and Brenda, both of whom would grow up to earn law degrees.

Young's career took off in 1946 when he joined the *Call and Post*, where he started out in the sports department. His drive earned the respect of the paper's editor and publisher, William Walker, and of the managing editor, Charles Loeb. By September of the following year, he had been promoted to sports editor. He covered baseball, football, and boxing and wrote a column called "Sportivanting." It was there in 1947 that he articulated one of his core beliefs: Sports helped advance the civil rights of blacks.

> Sports are powerful factors for democracy and downright good in these United States. It may not be as intended or as it should be; but, the righteous truth is that the doings of a Joe Louis or a Jackie Robinson have more gripping and moving effects on the thinking of the majority people than all of the long-studied and wise words of a W. E. B. DuBois, a Walter White or an A. Phillip Randolph.[2]

COURTESY OF BRAD PYE JR.

Left to right, Los Angeles Sentinel **columnist Brad Pye Jr., Jackie Robinson, and A. S. Young.**

While in Cleveland, Young covered outfielder Larry Doby, the first black in the American League, and pitcher Satchel Paige after they joined the Indians. Young occasionally defended Doby's inconsistent play in 1947, arguing that Indians manager Lou Boudreau did not use him properly and hardly spoke to him. After Doby helped the Indians win the World Series in 1948, Young wrote an article about him for *Sport* magazine.

Young was supportive of Paige as well. After watching him work out, Young reported the pitcher's comment about not knowing he was throwing a slider until someone told him. "That statement," Young wrote, "is testimony to a remarkable arm. The slider is an arm-punishing pitch and is, supposedly, one of the causes of Ewell Blackwell's poor showing this year after a sensational 1947. Paige has thrown the thing for 20 years!"[3]

Young and his wife often entertained Doby and Paige at their house. Once Paige was surprised when Mrs. Young said she didn't know how to fry catfish with Cream of Wheat. (Later a friend would explain to her that the Cream of Wheat was used instead of cornmeal to coat the fish.)

While covering the Indians, Young often had occasion to interview Bill Veeck, the team's enterprising owner during their famous run in the late 1940s. In his memoir *Veeck—As In Wreck.* he wrote that Young helped him in his attempt in 1942 to buy the Philadelphia Phillies and stock the team with black players. According to Veeck, Young would scout Negro League players to find candidates for the Phillies. (The veracity of his claim that he intended to integrate the team has been disputed but also defended.)

Young's domain included not only the Indians but Cleveland's Negro League baseball as well. He was on hand to report on the Cleveland Buckeyes when they won a Negro American League pennant in 1947. In June 1948 he found himself embroiled in some controversy after having ghostwritten for Jackie Robinson "What's Wrong with Negro Baseball," an article that was published in *Ebony.* Robinson complained about business practices in the Negro Leagues, arguing that players had to cope with a lack of written contracts and with umpiring that was bad and accommodations that were poor. The article met with harsh criticism from defenders of the Negro Leagues.

Leaving Cleveland and settled in Los Angeles, Young in 1949 returned to the *Sentinel*, where he now served as sports editor. From there he went on to Chicago, where in 1951 be went to work as associate editor for *Ebony.* It was the first of several positions—his titles, besides associate editor, included assistant managing editor, managing editor, and sports editor—he held with various publications of the Johnson Publishing Company.

Great Negro Baseball Stars, his first book, was published in 1953. The book covers the careers of the blacks who had played in the major leagues during that brief but concentrated period since Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby had broken the racial barrier 1947. There Young offered this trenchant observation on the difference between Doby and Robinson:

> In many ways, Doby had been the perfect choice for the pioneering job in the American League. In others, as in his tendency to tighten up, he was a puzzler, a lad who not infrequently confused his closest friends. It might be said that the major difference between Jackie and Larry was this: Jackie, as time was to prove, dressed himself in the cloak of

> humility and made it into a perfect fit through one of the greatest acting jobs in baseball history; Doby wore the cloak as a gift of nature.[4]

Ten years later, in *Negro Firsts in Sports*, Young published a rich collection of brief profiles of athletes ranging from black boxers and jockeys in years past up to the young baseball players who were only now entering the major leagues. The book was cited by the American Library Association as one of the leading reference books of 1963.

While Young was proud of the performance of athletes on the field, he was also alert to their performance off it. He appreciated Jackie Robinson's business acumen, well-spoken manner, and contribution to the civil-rights cause. Young admired as well Joe Black, a former Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher who became an executive with Greyhound.

Young's fondness for athletes who developed into well-rounded public figures shone through in his article about Frank Robinson, then with the Baltimore Orioles, that appeared in *Sepia* magazine in May 1967. Traded by the Cincinnati Reds after the 1965 season, Robinson flourished with the Orioles, winning the Triple Crown and the American League MVP award and helping Baltimore win the 1966 World Series. "Despite his 31 years," Young wrote,

> there is a certain boyishness about his face. He most definitely doesn't appear to be the fearless, highly competitive baseball star that he is in season, an inspirational leader who, along with Maury Wills, must be ranked among the greatest since Jackie Robinson. Prior to his fantastic season at Baltimore, Frank Robinson had sometimes been portrayed as a "trouble-maker," as a moody type of player. But, just as numerous fans discovered over the winter, this *Sepia* writer, who had known Frank before, found a gentlemanly fellow who spoke easily, and articulately, in a resonant tone.[5]

"Is Baseball Ready for a Black Manager?" In an article under that title, Young, writing again in *Sepia* a few years later, in 1971, suggested that Robinson, along with Maury Wills, was most likely to become the first black manager in the major leagues. "The fact of the matter," he wrote,

> is that both Robinson and Wills have gained the high regard of white and black players alike in their winter league managerial posts. Robinson has been praised by white players for his understanding managerial style and Wills is one of the best teachers in baseball.

Events would prove Young prescient, as Robinson did go on to become the majors' first black manager, when the Cleveland Indians named him player-manager before the 1975 season. Doby would follow shortly, when he was hired, again by Veeck, who was now with the White Sox, to manage in 1978. Wills became the third black manager in the major leagues, piloting the Seattle Mariners for 82 games in the 1980 and 1981 seasons.

Young's career took him to Hollywood, where as a publicist he helped promote the movies *The Defiant Ones* (1958) and *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974). He was a contributor to *The Big Blue Review* and *Dodger Magazine*, publications of the Los Angeles Dodgers organization. The roster of publications for which he wrote would come to include *The Sporting News*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *New York Post*, *Parent's Digest*, *Saga*, *Negro Digest*, *Las Vegas Sun*, the *Los Angeles Mirror-News*, and *Chicago's American*. He often spoke on radio shows in Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. From the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a trade group representing black publications, he received President's Anniversary Sports Award, Best Sports Column award, and Best Sports Section award. In 1993 the *Los Angeles Sentinel* gave Young a National Service Award.

A peculiar but interesting footnote to his distinguished career in journalism is that his typing ability is legendary. Young typed 125 words a minute while using only one finger on each hand. Observers in the Dodger Stadium press box were impressed as they watched him type up to eight columns for clients during ballgames. Unlike most writers, he seldom paused at the keyboard.

Fond memories of Cleveland stayed with Young to the end of his life. "Others may do it," he wrote a few years before he died of pneumonia in 1996, "but you'll never hear me running down Cleveland, Ohio."[6] ■

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The Iron-Armed Pitcher

Stanley Coveleski's Nineteen-Inning Complete-Game Victory

Fred Schuld

Every season, baseball records are broken. Some, such as Cy Young's 511 victories and Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak, are famous and may never be surpassed. Obscure but nonetheless a candidate for permanence in the record books is a remarkable Cleveland pitching achievement. On May 24, 1918, Stanley Coveleski pitched a complete-game victory—3–2 over the New York Yankees at the Polo Grounds—that went to nineteen innings.

In the early 1960s, Paul Richards, the Baltimore manager, began limiting his starters to a hundred pitches. Before pitch counts, a manager would ask his pitcher, "Are you tired?" As late as 1972, Jon Matlack recalls, the pitcher would never answer affirmatively. "If you could breathe and walk back out there, that was the end of it."Complete games by pitchers are unusual today, but during the first sixty years of the last century they were not so uncommon. American League pitchers completed as many as 60 percent of their starts in 1918, when Cleveland pitchers Jim Bagby, Guy Morton, and Coveleski were expected to start on three days' rest and complete their games. Pitchers who worked strictly in relief were rare, although starters often doubled as relievers. In 1917, Bagby led the team with 23 wins in 49 games and threw 321⅓ innings. Coveleski was right behind with 19 wins in 45 games and 298⅓ innings pitched.

Many ballplayers of the era could say, "As a kid I always worked." The Indians battery of Coveleski and catcher Steve O'Neill were from the coal-mining area of eastern Pennsylvania.

Born Stanislaus Kowalewski on July 13, 1889, Coveleski was working in the mine six days a week by the age of twelve, twelve hours a day for $3.75 a week, or about a nickel an hour. His four brothers played baseball. One, Harry, was an effective major-league pitcher before injuring his arm. Playing professional baseball was the brothers' way out of the mines.

At best, Coveleski was five feet eleven inches tall and weighed 166 pounds, but teammates described him as strong and durable. "I had good control," he told Larry Ritter years later, "a good curve, a good fast ball and a good slow ball. I was never a strikeout pitcher. Why should I throw eight or nine balls to get a man out when I got away with three or four?"

Except for a five-game trial with the Philadelphia Athletics in 1912, Coveleski seemed destined to be a minor-league pitcher. At Portland in 1915 he learned to throw a spitball that he could control. Covey contended that he went to his mouth on every pitch, but often several innings would pass before he threw a spitter. The threat of his spitball kept the batters guessing.

Hurling 293 innings in 64 games for Portland with an ERA of 2.67 earned him a move to Cleveland, and a thirteen-year career in the major leagues followed. What impressed manager Lee Fohl was Coveleski's control, probably the best of all the spitball pitchers. In 1916, he walked only 58 hitters in 232 innings.

By May 1918, umpire George Moriarty was calling him the greatest of all the spitball pitchers of the day. Describing him as the only one who could break his spitters high up, Moriarty predicted that Coveleski was going to win a whole lot of ballgames. The umpire added that the high spitball was a fooler because it looked as if it was going to be a ball, and many a batter didn't figure it could possibly fall in for a strike. Clark Griffith of Washington compared Covey favorably with Ed Walsh as a premier spitball pitcher and added, moreover, that the Cleveland pitcher didn't need a spitball to be effective.

In 1917 and 1918, for the first time in baseball history, major-league baseball was played during a major war. President Woodrow Wilson, a fan of the game, recommended in 1917 that all "sports" go on as usual. In July, however, the secretary of war ruled that professional ballplayers were not exempt from the war effort, and both leagues voted to end the season a month early, on Labor Day. The 1918 season was shortened to 140 games. All major-league teams lost players to duty in the armed forces or to work in war factories. The three major losses for the 1918 Indians were Ed Klepfer, a 14-game winner in 1917; Joe Harris, the first baseman; and outfielder Elmer Smith.

Week by week in 1917 and 1918, players were leaving their teams. By May 1, 1918, some 560 professional ballplayers were in military service, including 124 American Leaguers and 103 National Leaguers. On May 23, 1918, Provost Marshal General Enoch H. Crowder issued a "work or fight" order compelling all draft-age men to join the military or work in essential

industries by July 1. Baseball executives appealed the decision on the basis that actors and opera singers had been deferred for providing essential public entertainment. Why not baseball players too?

Another problem facing baseball players in 1918 was influenza. By the fall, it would be global, the deadliest epidemic in history. At the beginning of the season, the Indians were especially hard-hit by the "grippe." Twelve Cleveland players were out of action at times early in the season. For the Detroit series in late April, only four Cleveland pitchers were healthy. Coveleski, Bagby, Morton, and Coumbe were required to pitch the entire game no matter how hard they were being hit.

Baseball players were often labeled "loafers" in the newspapers. The *Cleveland Press* bard "Wampus" commented on July 21, 1918, on the impact the work-or-fight order might have on the ballplayers:

> When players work or fight, why say—
> Which do you think they'll choose?
> To work for 8 long hours each day
> Where they have worked for two?
> Or will they take their fling
> Upon the line of fire?
> And rouse their rage by picturing
> The Kaiser an umpire?

The Indians were the 1918 preseason favorite to win the pennant—it would have been their first—with strong competition from Boston, New York, and Washington. The defending world champions, the Chicago White Sox, had several key players who avoided the military draft by choosing to "work" in a hometown industry, where they could play baseball for a company team and receive a handsome salary doing it.

Cleveland had finished third the year before, and most of their key players were back for the new season, led by peerless center fielder Tris Speaker. "The ball club arrived today" was Ed Klepfer's wry comment when Speaker finally arrived, late, for the 1917 season. The infield defense was sound, with Ray Chapman at shortstop and Bill Wambsganss at second base. Steve O'Neill was a durable catcher for three fine pitchers: Jim Bagby, who had won 23 games; Coveleski, with 19 wins; and Guy Morton, with 10.

The 1917 Indians offense befit the Deadball Era. Leadoff batter Jack Graney was nicknamed "3 & 2 Jack" for his ability to work the count for bases on balls. Ray Chapman led the American League in sacrifice hits, and Speaker hit .352. A typical first inning for the Indians would be a walk to Graney, a sacrifice hit by Chapman, and Speaker's single or double, scoring Graney.

Home runs were not common in 1917. Wally Pipp led the league with nine, and the Yankees hit 27 of them for the American League team lead. The 1917 Indians had 13 home runs for the season, Graney and Elmer Smith leading the team with three each; Chapman had two.

NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Coveleski won 172 games during his nine seasons with the Indians, including a four-year stretch of 20-win campaigns beginning in 1918. In 1969 he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Coveleski in 1918 would start the first game in about a third of the series, and Lee Fohl, the Indians manager, would often start him in one-game meetings. In Coveleski, Fohl had a stalwart who would take the ball for every start without complaint—someone who nicely fit what has become George E. Phair's famous description of the Deadball Era pitcher,

> The old-fashioned pitcher,
> The iron-armed pitcher,
> The stout-hearted pitcher
> Who finished the game.

At League Park on Opening Day, April 18, 1918, Coveleski won 6–2 over Detroit.

With three days' rest, on April 22 he defeated visiting St. Louis 8–1 in another complete game. At Detroit

on April 27, it took Covey twelve innings to win his third game, 3–2. Ed Cicotte and the White Sox visited League Park and Covey outlasted the Chicago ace, 6–5. Allen Sothoron shut out the Indians in St. Louis on May 5, and the Cleveland ace pitched seven innings and lost his first game of the season, 3–0.

Coveleski renewed his winning ways at Washington with an 8–2 victory on May 10. The next two games he pitched were extra-inning losses. The Athletics defeated the Indians 3–2 in thirteen innings on May 15. Doc Ayers shut out Coveleski and the Indians 1–0 in twelve innings on May 19. The two extra-inning losses suggested a pattern. The perception was that Covey didn't receive much support from his teammates' bats. Wampus wrote of the Covey jinx:

> Some day when the snow's on the ground
> If Covey will go to the mound
> The Jinx that pursues him
> May be willing to lose him
> And the margin his way may be found.

His fellow players called him "The Silent Pole," but, when a *Press* reporter asked Coveleski about a jinx, he was voluble enough. "That kind of luck can't keep up forever," he replied, "even though it has lasted a good long time. Things aren't going my way right now, but I think the breaks of the game are just about due to take a turn in my favor."

A day after Crowder's work-or-fight order was issued, the Indians played at the Polo Grounds against the New York Yankees. Boston led the American League with a record of 19–12, and closely bunched behind were the Indians at 17–14, New York at 16–13, St. Louis at 15–13, and Chicago at 14–12.

More than six thousand fans were present for the game, which began at three o'clock. The admission price was fifty cents. The *New York Times* reported that in the park were "idle rich, idle poor, to say nothing of the idle middle classes."

Fred Lieb had labeled the 1917 Yankee lineup "Murderers' Row," and Wampus was impressed by the 1918 version:

> The Yankees are to . . . take a fling;
> Gilhooley's first to make the trip,
> Then Peck & Baker set the clip
> They're followed up by Pratt & Pipp
> Then look who's here—dawgon,
> It's Ping.

Both the Yankees and the Indians had wartime players in the lineup. However, five of the first six batters in the lineup of the Yankees' new manager, Miller Huggins,

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In his fourteenth and final season, Coveleski pitched for the 1928 Yankees, winning 5 of 6 decisions before being released in August.

were carryovers from the 1917 team. Frank "Flash" Gilhooley, the right fielder, was a genuine leadoff batter who had been in the major leagues since 1911. The shortstop was Roger Peckinpaugh, who was in his eighth year (his career would go on to span seventeen years) in the major leagues. Born in Wooster, Ohio, Peck had grown up in Cleveland. He began his major league career there but was traded after Ray Chapman beat him out for the shortstop position. A lifetime .259 hitter, Peck improved his fielding from 54 errors in 1917 to 28 in 1918. The next three Yankee batters formed the heart of Murderers' Row. The best-known player on the team was third baseman Frank "Home Run" Baker, a former Maryland farm boy. He hit only 96 home runs in his thirteen-year career, and it was largely for two timely shots for the Athletics in the 1911World Series that he earned that nickname. He hit .306 in 1918 and hit six home runs. In 1955, Baker would be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Almost forgotten today was the excellent second baseman "Del" Pratt, who was playing his first year in New York after six productive years with the Browns.

The South Carolinian hit a solid .275 in 126 games during the 1918 season.

The first baseman, Wally Pipp, a Chicago native, studied architecture at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., before entering professional baseball. One of the finest-fielding first baseman of his era, he hit .304 in 1918 and two home runs. Ping Bodie, the right fielder, was the former Francesco Pezzolo, born to Italian immigrants in San Francisco. He became Frank Bodie when the family took their name from Bodie, California, an almost forgotten mining town near the Nevada border. A family friend gave him the nickname "Ping," according to some sources, although according to others it referred to the sound the ball made off his weighty, 52-ounce bat. Bodie played for nine years (1911–14 and 1917–21) in the major leagues with the White Sox, the A's, and the Yankees in a career interrupted by World War I. In 1918 he batted .256 and hit three home runs.

The center fielder for the Yankees, Elmer Miller, was from Sandusky, Ohio. In seven years in the major leagues, he played in 413 games and hit .243. In 1918, Miller played in 67 games and matched his lifetime average. The Yankees would use two catchers in the game. James "Truck" Hannah caught the first seven innings. A longtime minor leaguer, Hannah finally reached the big leagues in 1918, appearing in 90 games for the Yankees and batting .220, fifteen points below his average for the three years he played in the major leagues. Catcher Alfred "Roxy" Walters finished the game for New York. A backup catcher, he hit .199 in 64 games in 1918.

The Yankees' starting pitcher was Allan Russell, whose record in 1918 was 7–11. He was 70–76 over his career, from 1915 through 1925. George Mogridge, the sole relief pitcher to appear in the game, was a six-foot two-inch, 165-pound left-hander who appeared in 45 games, leading the league in 1918. Mogridge started 19 games and went 4–7 in relief. His seven saves in 1918 led the American League. His fifteen-year career in the American League ended in 1927 with a record of 132 wins and 133 losses.

Lee Fohl's projected 1918 lineup was weakened not only by the loss of players to military service but also by a season-long arm injury to his leadoff batter, Jack Graney, who was limited to 77 games.

Edwin Miller played first base and led off for the Indians that May 24. After playing for the Browns in 1912 and 1914, he was in 32 games for the 1918 Cleveland team and hit .229. The ill-fated shortstop Ray Chapman was in 128 games for the Indians and batted .267. In 1918 Chappie ran the hundred-yard dash in ten seconds. That season he had a career-high on-base percentage of .390 and 28 extra-base hits.

The 1916 league batting champ, Tris Speaker, was in a real slump in 1918, averaging only .290 in mid-June. Spoke raised his average to .318 by the end of the season.

The cleanup batter for the Indians was Robert "Braggo" Roth, who stood at five feet seven inches, weighed 170 pounds, and was a good runner. Famous for his high opinion of his abilities, he would play for as many as six clubs in a career that spanned only eight years. Roth hit .283 in 106 games for the 1918 Indians. Bill Wambsganss, a Cleveland native and the son of a Lutheran minister, was the second baseman. Newspapers often shortened his name to Wamby. Remembered today for his unassisted triple play in the 1920 World Series, in 1918 Wamby hit .295, the highest in his thirteen-year major-league career.

After Speaker, the left fielder, Smoky Joe Wood, was the most famous player in the Cleveland lineup. (See Rick Huhn's article at page 28.) For the 1912 world champion Boston Red Sox, the twenty-three-year-old right-hander was 34–5 in the regular season and won three more games in the World Series. He injured his arm in 1913, and by 1915 it appeared that Wood's baseball career was over. After Wood sat out the 1916 season, his best friend in baseball, Speaker, convinced the Indians to buy Wood's contract from Boston for $15,000. Although his pitching arm never recovered, Smoky Joe made himself into a skilled utility ballplayer. Wampus sang his praises:

> Joe Wood plays left, Joe Wood plays right,
> and whales the ball with all his might.
> Next Joe's noticed at first base
> And plays it like he owned the place;
> . . . And you should see that boy cavort
> In nifty style when sent to short;
> In center field this Joe de Smoke
> Is sure an able sub for Spoke—
> But say, do tell us which is which—
> Does Joe intend once more to pitch?

No, Wood would remain a utility player. In 1918 he appeared in 119 games for the Indians, hit .296, and led the team with 66 RBIs.

The third baseman on May 24 was Al Halt, a former Federal League player. In his only year in the American League, Halt appeared in 26 games and batted .174. The catcher Steve O'Neill was a tough, durable ballplayer who had a legendary throwing arm and an ability to block pitches in the dirt, and he was a great pitch caller. O'Neill caught 113 games in 1918 and hit .242. In the course of his seventeen years in the major leagues,

O'Neill saw a stretch, 1915 through 1923, during which he caught more than a hundred games every year.

The May 24 contest was typical of the Deadball Era. The game was marked by effective pitching and stellar fielding. The Yankees tried to steal three times and were thrown out twice. The Indians attempted four steals and were successful only once. They failed in three sacrifice-bunt attempts. The only Yankee attempt at a sacrifice hit was successful.

In seven of the nineteen innings, Coveleski set down the New York batters in order. Russell retired the side in order only in the first inning, and in Mogridge's twelve innings of toil he had six innings of three up and three down. In the long game, the Yankees left 14 men on base to the Indians' 12.

In the first inning, the Yankees threatened to score. Gilhooley's hit to third baseman Halt was too hot to handle. Wamby's spectacular play of a grounder by Peckinpaugh resulted in a force at second. With two out, Halt's throw of a hit by Pratt was too late to retire Peck. Fortunately, Covey got Pipp to hit back to him to retire the side.

In the third inning, an error by the Yankees resulted in an unearned run for the Indians. With the first two runners on as a result of an infield hit by Halt and a walk to O'Neill, Covey grounded to first base for the first out. Pipp made an errant throw to second, on which Halt scored and O'Neill moved to third base. There was still only one out, but Miller soon grounded out to the pitcher, and Chapman struck out.

O'Neill stole second when his batterymate Coveleski fanned trying to sacrifice in the fifth inning. Ed Miller grounded out to Peckinpaugh, ending the inning.

The sixth inning was promising for Cleveland after Chapman flew to Bodie—Speaker and Roth hit singles. Wamby forced Roth at second, and Speaker was thrown out on an attempted double steal. In the bottom of the same inning, Wamby made a great play to retire Russell. After Gilhooley fouled to Ed Miller, Halt couldn't field Peck's drive, and the Yankee shortstop took second on a passed ball by O'Neill. Covey fanned Baker to end the inning.

Solo home runs for both teams marked the seventh inning. Leading off, Wood hit a home run into the left-field bleachers to give the Indians a 2–0 lead. "The ball just scraping over the top of the barricade," as the *New York Times* related, "Ping Bodie made a desperate leap for the ball, climbing the fence until he almost touched it. With a soap box to stand on, Ping would have had it."

The Yankees came back in the bottom of the inning when Bodie hit a home run into the right-field bleachers, A hit by Elmer Miller and a walk to Truck Hannah gave the Yankees a chance for more runs. Ray Caldwell, a good-hitting pitcher, pinch-hit for Russell, and Huggins sent in backup catcher Roxy Walters to run for Hannah. Coveleski ended the threat by striking out Caldwell.

With Mogridge and Walters forming the new Yankee battery, the Indians went quietly in the eighth and ninth innings. It seemed as if the Yankees were going down to a 2–1 defeat when Wally Pipp tripled to center leading off the ninth. The drive scooted past Tris Speaker in center. Bodie promptly tied the score with a sacrifice fly to Braggo Roth. Joe Wood saved the game for Coveleski when he leaped up on the left-field fence and caught Elmer Miller's drive with one hand. The game went on.

In the tenth inning, Cleveland had two runners on with two out, but Mogridge fanned Ray Chapman. The Indians threatened to take the lead in the eleventh inning when Speaker beat out a high grounder to Baker and cleanup hitter Bobby Roth sacrificed him to second. After Wamby popped to Pipp, Wood was intentionally-walked, but Halt flied to center to end the threat.

The Yankees' Elmer Miller led off in the twelfth with a hit and tried to take second on sore-armed Joe Wood, but he was thrown out. Again in the thirteenth, the New Yorkers were in position to win the game. With two out, Pratt's single moved Peck to third. The Indians issued an intentional walk to Pipp, loading the bases for Bodie, who had driven in the first two Yankee runs. Coveleski got him to pop to Ed Miller at first. The *Times* reported that the third out "brought forth the most heartrending groan heard at a ball game in many a year." The fans' hope for a hot dinner had long ago faded as the game played on.

The fifteenth inning witnessed another Yankee chance to win and send the fans home happy. Peck walked with one out when Braggo Roth made an outstanding catch of Home Run Baker's drive to right field. Peck then stole second, but Pratt grounded out Miller, who threw to Coveleski covering first base.

Pipp was at second base in the sixteenth inning after a hit and a Bodie sacrifice, but the next two batters grounded out.

Both teams had good opportunities to end the contest in the seventeenth inning. For the Indians, O'Neill, with two outs, singled to left for his third of four hits in the game. Coveleski then doubled to left-center field, and O'Neill had a good chance to score the go-ahead run when Bodie's throw to Peck and the subsequent great throw by the shortstop to Walters caught O'Neill at the plate. The *Times* described the close play there as putting the Indians "within a sixteenth of an inch of victory."

Invigorated by the out at the plate, the New Yorkers got Gilhooley to second base after his bunt single and an error by Wamby. Peck hit a liner to Wood for the second

out, and Fohl had Baker walked. The two runners were stranded when Pratt flied to Speaker.

By the eighteenth inning, fans began to leave the game, thinking only darkness could end it. Lo and behold, in the nineteenth, Joe Wood, who would hit five home runs all season, smashed his second one of the game with a drive off Mogridge into the left-field stands.

Coveleski trudged out for his nineteenth inning on the mound. He had to face Huggins's second pinch-hitter of the game, Armando Marsans, a Cuban-born outfielder. His at-bat in this game would be his only pinch-hitting appearance that season. Third baseman Halt threw him out at first, and Gilhooley ended the marathon game with a foul ball caught by Steve O'Neill. The game lasted three hours and forty-eight minutes, ending at almost 7 P.M.

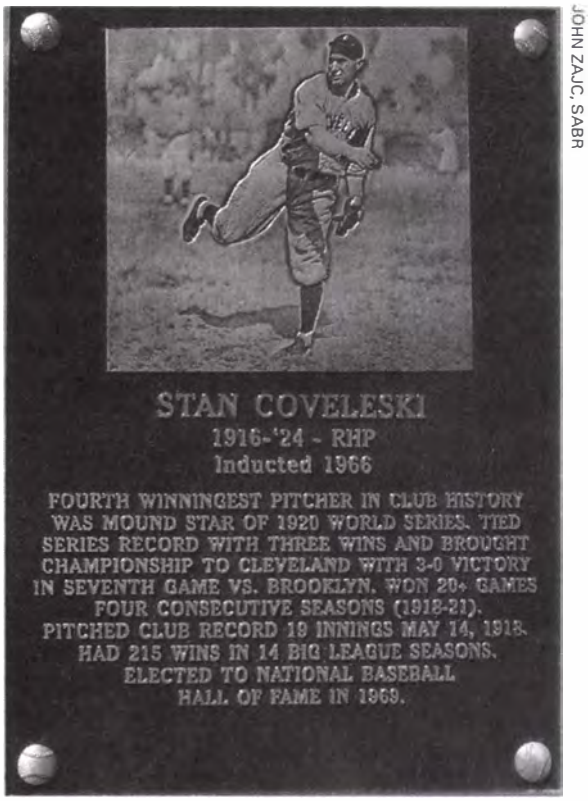
The Cleveland lineup played the entire nineteen innings. So did the Yankees' lineup, except for changes at pitcher and catcher and the use of two pinch-hitters.

Coveleski's complete-game masterpiece was his sixth win of the season, against three losses. Between May 19 and May 25, the workhorse pitcher had thrown 44 innings in three games, within one inning of enough to make for five full nine-inning games squeezed into three.

"The ball players," the *Times* reported, "were evidently smarting under the intimation of some one in Washington that they were loafers, so they put in the hardest day's work noticed in the major leagues this season." Other games played in the major leagues that year showed that the players could indeed perform a full afternoon of labor for the fan.

That same day, Washington and Detroit competed until dark to a 2–2 tie, while the Reds and Phillies played eleven innings and St. Louis and Brooklyn went twelve. On May 15, nine days before Covey's nineteen-inning victory, Walter Johnson of Washington and Claude Williams of Chicago both pitched eighteen innings before Johnson finally prevailed 1–0. Later in the season, on August 4, Walter Johnson lost an eighteen-inning complete game to Detroit, 7–6.

In 65 at-bats against the Cleveland pitcher, the Yankees scored two runs on 12 hits. He walked six and struck out four. How many pitches did he throw? We don't know, but from a couple of data points we can estimate. A baseball statistician has determined that Coveleski threw 101 pitches in nine innings in his Opening Day victory against Detroit. Comparing pitch counts in the 1919 World Series with those of the 1997 World Series, Daniel R. Levitt has concluded that, in the Deadball Era, a pitcher going nine full innings averaged 118 pitches. In his nineteen-inning game, then, Coveleski threw, we might calculate, about 260 pitches, slightly more than four per batter.



JOHN ZAJC, SABR

Stanley Coveleski's plaque at Heritage Park, Progressive Field, Cleveland. Coveleski was inducted into the Indians Hall of Fame in 1966.

The three Cleveland newspapers lauded Coveleski's pitching, but the *New York Times*, with the headline "Home Run by Wood Beats Yanks in the 19th," awarded the spotlight to Wood. Coveleski was not mentioned until the third paragraph of the article. The *Chicago Tribune* followed suit, making their headline all about Wood, who "Wins Duel . . . by His Second Home Run." The 1912 World Series hero was much better known to the fans than was Coveleski. When Larry Ritter interviewed Wood forty years later, Smoky Joe ended the session with his memories of the May 24, 1918, game.

> That was one of the biggest days of my life. The season was pretty young yet and I hadn't been in the outfield very long. It was up to me to show Lee Fohl I could do the job. But from that day on he knew I could do it, and so did I. And the worst was finally over.

What effect did the nineteen-inning game have on the rest of the season for Coveleski? The next game that he pitched was May 30, and on five days' rest he defeated Chicago in a complete game. His teammates marveled that Covey could pitch again so soon after

five days' rest, while Walter Johnson needed ten days off after his eighteen-inning shutout on May 15.

Following that victory, Coveleski lost his next four games by scores of 3–2, 1–0, 2–0, and 3–2, and 3–2, receiving only four runs' support throughout that stretch. The fourth loss was to George Mogridge.

Beginning with his 6–3 win over the Athletics on June 17, Coveleski went 15–6 for the remainder of the war-shortened season. On July 18, he lost 1–0 to Sam Jones and the Boston Red Sox. In the tenth inning, Strunk hit a single and Babe Ruth won the game with a walk-off triple. Ruth hit the ball into the bleachers, but he was given credit for only a triple, since Strunk scored the run needed to win. Otherwise it would have been the Babe's twelfth home run of the season, an impressive number in the Deadball Era.

Many baseball writers thought that, if the season had not been shortened by a month, the Indians could have caught the Red Sox. Boston finished 76–51 and Cleveland went 73–54. Led by Ruth, Boston went on to win the World Series over the Chicago Cubs.

The game of May 24, 1918, was in most respects a typical Deadball Era contest, but it was won by home runs. Two years later, the old era ended when Babe Ruth hit 54 home runs. Coveleski won 24 games for the pennant-winning Indians and pitched three complete-game victories against Brooklyn to give Cleveland its first world championship. "The pressure of baseball never lets up," the great spitball pitcher told Larry Ritter years later. "Doesn't matter what you did yesterday. That's history. It's tomorrow that counts. So you worry all the time. It never ends. Lord, baseball is a worrying thing." "Back to the coal mines for you, pal."

Coveleski proved on May 24, 1918, in the World Series of 1920, and in a great thirteen-year major-league career that he could worry and win all the way to the Baseball Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 1969. ■

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Marathon at League Park

Ed Rommel's 18–17 Game

Norman L. Macht

Connie Mack had a dilemma, a rather common, never-ending dilemma among managers of big-league baseball clubs. He was short of pitchers.

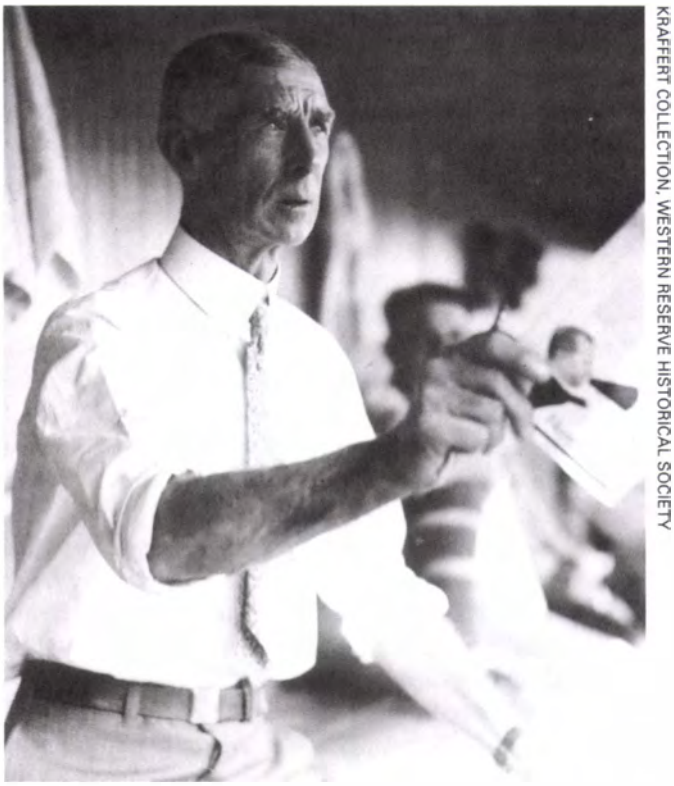
Pursuing their fourth straight pennant, his Philadelphia Athletics had just played three doubleheaders in three days—July 7, 8, and 9, 1932—against the Chicago White Sox at Shibe Park. The A's had won four of the six games, but in the process Mack had started George Earnshaw twice and Rube Walberg, Roy Mahaffey, Tony Freitas, and Lefty Grove (rusty after a four-week layoff with a sprained ankle) once each. He had used the aging knuckleballer, Ed Rommel, now strictly a reliever, for two innings on the eighth and three on Saturday, the ninth. In the process they had gained nothing on the first-place Yankees and still trailed by 7½ games.

As was customary for teams subject to blue laws forbidding Sunday baseball, the Athletics would take an overnight train to Cleveland for one game, and then both teams would return to Philadelphia, where another doubleheader on Monday began a four-day series. As had also been customary on such occasions, pitchers and other plays of both teams who were not expected to be used in the single road game did not make the trip.

So who to take? Earnshaw was spent and wouldn't start again for eleven days. Mack needed Walberg and Mahaffey on Monday, Grove on Tuesday, and somebody else on Wednesday. He chose the youngest and the oldest: rookie Lew Krausse, who had made his first start twelve days earlier and pitched four innings in relief on Thursday, and Rommel, who expected a day off after working two days in a row. But everybody knew the knuckler didn't put any strain on the arm, even a thirty-four-year-old one. He gave catcher Mickey Cochrane the day off and took two catchers, rookie Ed Madjeski and veteran John Heving.

The Athletics were always tough for the fourth-place Indians and a good draw in Cleveland. The twenty-four-year-old slugger Jimmie Foxx was making headlines threatening to break Babe Ruth's five-year-old home-run record; he'd hit 30 of them in his first 79 games while leading the league in batting at .375.

The ten thousand fans who came to see a ball game wound up taking the wildest roller-coaster ride in baseball history. Their alternating currents of joy and despair would leave them exhausted—and late for Sunday supper.



KRAFFERT COLLECTION, WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The decision of Connie Mack, "the Tall Tactician," to bring only two pitchers to League Park on July 10, 1932, narrowly missed becoming a stunning blunder, as his Athletics outlasted the Indians in an 18-inning, 18–17 slugfest.

The Athletics jumped on Cleveland starter Clint Brown; three singles and an error produced a quick 2–0 lead. The crowd's dismay turned to delight when Lew Krausse quickly gave up two infield hits and Earl Averill homered over the right-field screen. Inexplicably, Mack decided to give a quick hook to Krausse but let him bat in the top of the second; there were no pinch-hitters on the bench except the spare catcher, Ed Madjeski, and a spare catcher was important. He sent Rommel in to start the second, knowing he had an empty bullpen. The Indians loaded the bases on two singles and a walk but a double play ended the inning.

The crowd didn't mind when Foxx tied the score in the third with his thirty-first home run. A Foxx home

run was always a thrilling sight whatever the score.

The merry-go-round spun faster; there were hits in every inning. The A's scored two in the fourth. The Indians came back with three, then one more in the fifth. Each team scored one in the sixth, making it 8–6 Cleveland. In the seventh, the A's finished off Brown with two singles and a triple. Willis Hudlin relieved him and walked the first two batters he faced to load the bases. The crowd booed. The manager, Roger Peckinpaugh, waved in his ace, Wes Ferrell, en route to his fourth consecutive twenty-plus-victory season. Ferrell had pitched a tough complete game in Washington on Friday, giving up thirteen hits and four walks in a 6–5 win. Dykes greeted him by clearing the bases with a long double. Simmons drove Dykes in with a single. Foxx hit his thirty-second home run. The boos grew louder—a seven-run inning louder.

In the bottom of the seventh inning, five hits, a walk, and an error changed the boos to cheering—six runs worth of cheering. Mack couldn't change pitchers, so he changed catchers, Ed Madjeski replacing Joe Heving. It was now 14–13 Cleveland.

Both sides rested in the eighth, though the Indians mined enough energy to mount two baserunners when Averill singled and Myatt walked.

With two outs in the ninth, the crowd groaned when first baseman Ed Morgan let Dykes's easy roller go through his legs. Simmons walked, and Foxx drove them both in with a double to left. The A's now led, 15–14. Hometown hopes rebounded when Kamm led off the bottom of the ninth with a double and scored on an infield hit by Johnny Burnett. With the winning run on third and two outs, they screamed themselves hoarse when Joe Vosmik hit a shot down the right-field line, then collapsed like a punctured balloon when Mule Haas dove through the air and caught it.

League Park was quiet in the tenth, only one hit being made by each side. In the last of the eleventh, the Indians loaded the bases with one out. The crowd stomped and whistled and clapped and yelled—and hushed when Vosmik hit into a short-to-home-to-first double play. They went through the emotional wringer again in the twelfth when Eddie Morgan led off with a double, then was thrown out at the plate trying to score on Bill Cissell's single.

Everybody on the field and in the grandstand and bleachers took a time out for the next three innings, only five batters occupying the bases.

In the sixteenth Jimmy Foxx hit his third home run of the day into the left-field seats, scoring Simmons ahead of him and squelching the spirits of the exhausted spectators. The score was now 17–15.

It was past 6:00 in the evening. Empty streetcars had been waiting for the crowd on Lexington Avenue for over an hour. Suppers were getting cold or drying out in ovens all over the city. Small children were asleep in their seats or their fathers' laps, immune to the cacophony around them. The only remaining patch of sunshine was in left field near the wall. But nobody headed for the exits. Nobody was leaving this topsy-turvy game.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Despite a record-setting day that saw him amass nine hits in the 18-inning contest, Burnett and the Indians still ended the day on the losing end of the scoreboard. The 1932 season would be the high point of Burnett's nine-year major-league career.

Weary hearts rebounded when leadoff man Dick Porter drove a double to the center-field bleachers. Scratchy throats screeched when Johnny Burnett looped a single to right, his ninth hit of the day. A fly ball scored Porter. When Vosmik and Morgan singled, tying the score, hopes that had sunk just a few minutes before soared like a leaping porpoise. Hysteria filled League Park when Cissell sent a long drive toward the right-field screen. But that joy-killer Haas leaped against the wall and snared it.

The A's went out in order in the seventeenth for only the third time all day. For the home team, Willie Kamm walked and was sacrificed to second but was left there. In the eighteenth Foxx singled—his sixth hit—with two out. Eric McNair singled to left. When the ball bounced over Vosmik's head, Foxx scored. McNair, for reasons known only to him, tried to reach third, where Vosmik's throw to Willie Kamm was waiting for him for the third out.

This time the Indians' comeback tank was empty. After four hours and five minutes, it seemed as if the most tireless man on the field was the oldest, Ed Rommel. He struck out Averill, got Vosmik on a grounder to short, and struck out Eddie Morgan. It was Rommel's 171st and last major-league victory.

The crowd of exhausted onlookers left quietly, their heads full of more memories than they could sort out. No way could they accurately recreate all the action of the most exciting game they had ever seen—or would ever see—to tell their friends and descendants about it. But they would try—for as long as they could find someone who would listen. They had witnessed what might be a record-breaking number of records broken (and still standing) for an extra-inning game (see accompanying chart).

The two teams took the night train back to Philadelphia, where the Indians took the Monday doubleheader, 9–8 and 12–7, to begin a four-game sweep. By the end of that series, the Yankees had a 9½-game lead, and the pennant race was effectively over. ■

NOTES

For another look at this remarkable game, see Ron Liebman, "Cleveland's Two Historic Games in 1932," *Baseball Research Journal* (1982): 49–53.

MAJOR-LEAGUE RECORDS

Most hits by a batter	Johnny Burnett's 9
Most hits by both teams	58
Most hits given up by a pitcher (post-1900)	29 off Rommel
Most bases on balls by a reliever	Rommel's 9
American League record:	
Longest relief stint by a pitcher	17 innings

JULY 10, 1932

PHILADELPHIA

	AB	R	H	RBI
Haas, rf	9	3	2	0
Cramer, cf	8	2	2	1
Dykes, 3b	10	2	3	4
Simmons, lf	9	4	5	2
Foxx, 1b	9	4	6	8
McNair, ss	10	0	2	1
Heving, c	4	0	0	0
Madjeski, c	5	0	0	0
Williams, 2b	8	1	2	0
Krausse, p	1	0	0	0
Rommel, p	7	2	3	1
Totals	80	18	25	17

CLEVELAND

	AB	R	H	RBI
Porter, rf	10	3	3	2
Burnett, ss	11	4	9	2
Averill, cf	9	3	5	4
Vosmik, lf	10	2	2	1
Morgan, 1b	11	1	5	4
Myatt, c	7	2	1	0
Cissell, 2b	9	1	4	3
Kamm, 3b	7	1	2	0
Brown, p	4	0	2	0
Hudlin, p	0	0	0	0
Ferrell, p	5	0	0	0
Totals	83	17	33	16

PHILADELPHIA	201	201	702	000	000	201	18
CLEVELAND	300	311	601	000	000	200	17

Two-base hits–Burnett 2, Myatt, Cissell, Vosmik, Morgan 2, Haas, Dykes, Kamm, Porter, McNair, Foxx. **Three-base hit**–Williams. **Home runs**–Foxx 3; Averill. **Stolen base**–Cissell. **Sacrifice hits**–Kamm, Ferrell. **Double plays**–Williams, McNair, Foxx; Burnett, Cissell, Morgan; Kamm, Cissell, Morgan; Williams, Madjeski, Foxx. **Left on bases**–Philadelphia 15; Cleveland 24. **Base on balls**–Krausse 1, Rommel 9; Brown 1, Hudlin 2, Ferrell 4. **Strikeouts**– Rommel 7, Brown 3, Ferrell 7. **Hits**–Off Krausse, 4 in 1 inning; Rommel, 29 in 17; Brown, 13 in 6⅓; Hudlin, 0 for 0 (faced two batters); Ferrell, 12 in 11⅓. **Wild Pitches**–Rommel 2. **Winning pitcher**–Rommel. **Losing pitcher**–Ferrell. **Umpires**–Hildebrand and Owens. **Time of game**–4:05.

The Cleveland Buckeyes

Triumph and Tragedy

Stephanie Fleet Liscio

During its eight-year tenure, the Negro American League Cleveland Buckeyes exhibited star players and claimed a Negro League World Series title and a Negro American League pennant. The team made history as it fielded the first white player in the Negro Leagues and saw two players killed and five people (four players and the general manager) injured in a tragic automobile accident. From its inception, the team was competitive and staffed with talented players, yet struggled to attract fans and media attention. The Buckeyes faced a great challenge to compete with the Cleveland Indians once that team became the first in the American League to integrate with the addition of Larry Doby in 1947. In an attempt to salvage the team, owner Ernest Wright and business manager Wilbur Hayes moved the Buckeyes to Louisville, Kentucky, with the hope of gaining better attendance there. When that plan failed, the team returned to Cleveland in 1950 and folded for good before the end of summer.

The Buckeye story begins at the end of the 1941 season. Even though a number of black professional teams had called Cleveland home before this point, the Buckeyes were the first major circuit team that sustained itself over a number of years in the city. In 1941 Wright, a native of Erie, Pennsylvania, purchased the semipro Cleveland White Sox, as well as a half-interest in the St. Louis Stars. His plan included a merger of six Stars players with the White Sox, while Hayes would oversee the business operations of the team. While Wright and Hayes initially had ambitious plans to build the new team its own stadium, it would play in League Park on Cleveland's east side throughout its existence.[1] By the end of 1941, team officials decided to name the team the Cleveland and Cincinnati Buckeyes for the 1942 season, with plans to share time in other Ohio cities, among them Youngstown, Columbus, Springfield, and Dayton.[2] By the 1943 season, Cincinnati had dropped from the title.

The Cleveland *Call and Post* hoped that the Buckeyes would draw 10,000 to 15,000 fans during their first season in 1942, with people coming to see budding stars such as pitchers Eugene Bremmer and Willie Jefferson, catcher "Buster" Brown, third baseman Parnell Woods, outfielder Sam Jethroe, and first baseman Archie Ware. However, the paper claimed that the team

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Sam Jethroe, center fielder for the Cleveland Buckeyes. Jethroe, who hit for high average (.393 in 1945) and was a threat on the basepaths, would later play in the major leagues. For his season with the Boston Braves in 1950 he was named National League Rookie of the Year.

struggled to draw more than 1,000 fans to most home games.[3] Despite the perception that fans were not interested in them, the Buckeyes still managed to claim one of the best first-half records in the Negro American League in 1942. Some *Call and Post* writers encouraged the Cleveland Indians to offer a tryout for three Buckeyes—Parnell Woods, Eugene Bremmer, and Sam Jethroe—by the summer of 1942. Indians owner Alva Bradley scouted the players at the East–West All-Star game held in Cleveland that summer. When all three players performed poorly during the game, Bradley passed on signing them to integrate the Indians.[4] The 1942 season came to a tragic end for the Buckeyes when

one of the three vehicles team members were traveling in was involved in an accident at three in the morning on Route 20 outside Geneva, Ohio. Catcher Ulysses "Buster" Brown and pitcher Raymond "Smokey" Owens were killed instantly, pitchers Eugene Bremmer and Herman Watts were critically injured, and general manager Wilbur Hayes and pitcher Alonzo Boone were mildly injured. The team still managed to complete its last several weeks of games following the tragedy.[5]

Despite their difficult first year, there were positive events in store for the Buckeyes by 1945. At the peak of its popularity, the team managed to conquer the powerhouse Negro National League Homestead Grays in that year's Negro League World Series. The two teams were scheduled to face off against each other at League Park and the much larger Municipal Stadium in Cleveland, as well as in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.[6] At the end of the 1945 season, there was a temporary fear that the Buckeyes did not qualify for that year's World Series, even though the Buckeyes had won more games than any other team through the first and second halves of the season.

Teams were required to play at least thirty games per half in order to qualify for the championship series. League officials initially believed that Cleveland did not play in enough games to qualify for the World Series, although additional Buckeye games were discovered at the last minute. Without the discovery of these games, the Buckeyes would have been forced into a four-game playoff with Chicago, even though Chicago had won fewer games than the Cleveland squad.[7] The Buckeyes went on to dominate the Grays in a four-game sweep. The team made it back to the Negro League World Series in 1947 as the American League champions, yet lost to New York Cubans four games to one. Sandwiched between these championship years, the Buckeyes became the only Negro League team to have a white player, Eddie Klep, a left-handed pitcher. An offseason pickup to solidify the bullpen, Klep never performed well and was let go early in the 1946 season.

The 1948 Cleveland Indians won the World Series with Larry Doby and Negro League mainstay Satchel Paige. It became more and more difficult for the Buckeyes to compete with the popular Indians, who already had those two noteworthy African American players, with several more waiting in the minors. By the end of the 1948 season, the Buckeyes announced a move to Louisville, Kentucky. In July 1949 the team returned to Cleveland for a benefit game for the Karamu House community theater, which drew 5,541 fans for a doubleheader with the Indianapolis Clowns and raised $5,000 for the theater. Wilbur Hayes admitted to the *Call and Post* that he had likely made a mistake by moving to Louisville, since the Buckeyes did not fare much better in that city.[8] By 1949, Hayes and Ernest Wright faced legal action for failing to pay bills and wages, including the salary of star pitcher Eugene Bremmer.[9]

In 1950 former Buckeyes outfielder Sam Jethroe, now with the Boston Braves, became the oldest Rookie of the Year, a triumph for the player who had been overlooked by the Indians in 1942 and the Boston Red Sox in 1945. The Buckeyes struggled to remain solvent without many of their star players and increasing competition for African American talent at all levels of the game. During the 1950 season, the *Call and Post* estimated that only about 1,200 people on average attended Buckeyes games, a total that writers believed did not cover the team's stadium rental fees.[10] The poor attendance, coupled with existing financial difficulties and a losing record, caused the team to fold by the end of summer in 1950.

The Buckeyes' time in Cleveland included extreme highs and extreme lows. The team had phenomenal seasons on the field, particularly in 1945, when the Buckeyes defeated the heavily favored Homestead Grays in the Negro League World Series. At other points during their tenure in the city, the Buckeyes faced poor attendance and financial troubles, especially after the Indians integrated in 1947, in addition to that tragic automobile accident. Despite these ups and downs, the Buckeyes left their mark on Negro League baseball and the city of Cleveland. ■

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3. John Fuster, "Slugging Josh Gibson and Famous Homestead Club to Play Bucks Here on July 19," *Call and Post*, 11 July 1942.
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7. Bob Williams, "Sports Rambler,"*Call and Post*, 15 September 1945.
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Walter Goldbach

The Accidental Marketing Genius

Gary Twardzik

In the world of sports, particularly baseball, certain logos have acquired an almost iconic status. The Gothic capital *D* says "Tigers," and the fringed *B* and two red socks say . . . well, you know. Subtle variations on the interlocking *N* and *Y* distinguish the Mets from the Yankees from the Giants, whose current logo, the interlocking orange *S* and *F*, has become probably as familiar as their New York logo ever was. Standing out among this staid company and arguably more famous, or infamous, than his alphabetic counterparts is Chief Wahoo, the face of the Cleveland Indians. Walter Goldbach, the artist who created that face—the original version, that is, the father of the Chief Wahoo who currently serves on cap and uniform and all manner of merchandise—is, by contrast, himself self-effacing, as anonymous as any pedestrian on the street.

COURTESY OF THE CLEVELAND INDIANS

It was midway through the 1946 season that Bill Veeck, fresh from his service as a Marine in World War II, bought the Indians and changed the business of baseball forever, injecting fireworks and promotional giveaways into the fan's experience of attending a major-league baseball game. Looking to add to the profile of his newly acquired franchise a logo in the form of an appealing cartoon that would convey a spirit of pure joy and unbridled enthusiasm, he approached the J. F. Novak Company, a local firm that specializes in signs and emblems. The job fell to one of its newer employees, a seventeen-year-old high-school student, Walter Goldbach, who went to work sketching the face that would lift the hearts of generations of Cleveland baseball fans. Adopted by the Indians in 1947, Goldbach's illustration is unlikely to be confused with the update that was introduced four years later, in 1951. Goldbach's Wahoo cartoon was orange, not red; the nose was larger, and in his version Chief Wahoo has a ponytail.

Goldbach, now in his late seventies, remains an avid Indians fan and humble about his enduring achievement. He and his wife had been married five years before she knew he was the artist who drew what is arguably the most famous face in all of Cleveland. As for the controversy that has cropped up around Chief Wahoo more recently, Goldbach explains that "the last thing on my mind was trying to offend anybody."

"Laughter is in far too short of supply in this society, and causes are in far too great of supply," said Mike Veeck in 2001, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of a stunt engineered by his father, Bill. In 1951, the year Goldbach's version of Chief Wahoo was succeeded by the current version, Eddie Gaedel, a little person—or midget, in the parlance of the day—made his one appearance in the major leagues, an at-bat for the hapless St. Louis Browns. "We're just trying to add enjoyment to the game," Mike Veeck explained. "If people feel so strongly about an issue, I suggest they pick up a pen and write a letter or something." ■

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The Cleveland Naps in Crestline, 1914

David L. Fleitz

The Cleveland franchise of the American League enjoyed a certain measure of success during the early years of its existence. The team, then called the Naps after star second baseman Napoleon Lajoie, finished in the first division in seven of its first thirteen seasons and lost the 1908 pennant to Detroit by mere percentage points. The 1913 club, with good hitting and solid pitching, finished in third place, and Cleveland fans expected the Naps to mount a pennant challenge during the following season.

Unfortunately, the 1914 campaign proved disastrous. Shortstop Ray Chapman suffered a broken leg during spring training, putting him on the sidelines until mid-June. The club also lost two starting pitchers, George Kahler and Cy Falkenberg, who signed with the rival Federal League. Thus weakened, Cleveland dropped its first eight games and settled into last place, languishing there (except for a two-day stay in seventh position) for the remainder of the season. Cleanup hitter Joe "Shoeless Joe" Jackson missed three weeks with a leg contusion, forty-year-old Napoleon Lajoie batted only .258, and pitcher Guy Morton lost his first thirteen games before posting a win. The 1914 Naps ended up in the American League cellar for the first time in team history and finished last in the league in attendance as well.

The season came to a merciful end on October 4 in an 11–6 loss at Detroit, but some of the Naps were not finished playing. Four independent teams in north-central Ohio, representing the towns of Crestline, Mansfield, Bucyrus, and Shelby, had arranged to play a postseason tournament in Crestline after the close of the major-league season. The four clubs were permitted to augment their rosters with professional players, and while three of the teams hired minor leaguers, the Crestline club went one better. It signed six members of the Cleveland Naps, allowing Crestline to put a nearly complete major league team on the field.

Lajoie and Chapman were absent, but Shoeless Joe Jackson made the trip to Crestline. Jackson, who battled injuries all season, had hit .338 to tie for third, with Tris Speaker, in the American League batting race. His totals of hits and runs scored were the lowest of his career to that point, but he was still considered one of the most dangerous batters in the game. Jackson was joined by five fellow Naps: outfielder Elmer Smith, first baseman Doc Johnston, outfielder and first baseman Jay Kirke, and pitchers Bill Steen and Willie Mitchell. Crestline also signed a former major leaguer, catcher Red Munson, from Cleveland's top farm team. Munson had seen action with the Phillies in 1905.

Neither Bucyrus nor Mansfield employed any active major-league players, while Shelby hired two former big leaguers in outfielder Al Schweitzer (Browns) and pitcher Tommy Atkins (Athletics). They also signed Cleveland rookie Sad Sam Jones, who pitched in one game for the Naps that season, and outfielder Hank Schreiber, who made one appearance for the White Sox. Shelby tried to get Detroit's Ty Cobb in uniform, but the Crestline tourney proceeded without the eight-time (and eventually twelve-time) American League batting champ.

The rosters were set, and Crestline's lineup, anchored by Jackson, Johnston, and Smith, looked so formidable that most onlookers conceded the title to them. The *Plain Dealer* remarked that "all baseball attendance records for this section are likely to be broken" when Crestline took the field with Jackson and the other Cleveland stars, while the local gamblers could not convince anyone to wager on the games, even at 5-to-1 odds. The Crestline management was so confident that it opted to start the second-line Cleveland pitcher, Bill Steen, in the first contest against Mansfield, saving the veteran ace Willie Mitchell for the title game later in the day.

The Crestline tournament took place on Tuesday, October 6, in front of a large crowd that expected to see the Naps steamroll their way to the championship. The first game pitted Crestline against Mansfield, a club that had assembled players from minor-league cities such as Newark and Waterbury. Mansfield shortstop Johnny Daley had played briefly for the Browns in 1912, while third baseman Tim Flood had seen action with St. Louis and Brooklyn in 1899 and 1902–3; the rest were career minor leaguers.

The game started well for Crestline. The leadoff batter, a shortstop named Silverman, singled, as did Doc Johnston of the Naps. However, Silverman was thrown out on a relay to third base, and Johnston was picked off first soon after. Elmer Smith followed with

LOUIS VAN OEVEN COLLECTION, WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Napoleon Lajoie, *center*, played thirteen seasons (1902–14) in Cleveland, serving as player-manager from 1905 through 1909. In his honor, the team was nicknamed the Naps from 1905 through 1914.

another single, and Jackson's double brought Smith home as Crestline took a 1–0 lead. The Mansfield pitcher, a right-hander named Maul from Racine, a town in the Wisconsin-Illinois League, then settled down and retired Jay Kirke to end the inning.

Mansfield tied the score in the third on an outfield error and a single, while Maul kept Crestline off the scoreboard. Jackson did his part with three hits in three trips to the plate, but the other Naps could not solve the Mansfield pitcher. Maul walked no one, and only Jackson and Kirke, who singled in the fourth, managed to reach base against him after the first inning. Jackson took second base with none out in the seventh on a single and an infield error, but he was stranded when Maul retired the next three batters.

The weather was cold and rainy, and the tournament directors decided to limit each game to seven innings. This allowed Mansfield to win the game in the seventh when its catcher, Redman, singled and stole second, then scored on a single by Schlegel, an outfielder from Youngstown. Crestline and its contingent of Cleveland Naps had lost to Mansfield by a score of 2–1, making only seven hits against a minor-league pitcher. "No wonder the Naps finished last!" hooted the fans as the embarrassed Clevelanders left the field. In the second game of the day, Shelby defeated Bucyrus 5–3 as Sad Sam Jones pitched a five-hitter, striking out seven.

Joe Jackson did not play in the consolation game, in which Willie Mitchell struck out eleven men and defeated Bucyrus 3–0 in an error-filled, five-inning contest. Shelby won the title as Tommy Atkins, who played right field in the first game, took the mound and shut out Mansfield on three hits.

The action then moved to Shelby as the four teams played another one-day tourney two days later. Joe Jackson did not play for Crestline, but Ty Cobb agreed to appear for Shelby for a fee of $150 per game. Cobb was on his way from Detroit to Boston to cover the World Series for a newspaper syndicate, and he found it profitable to stop off in north-central Ohio for a quick payday. He earned his money, belting five hits in six trips to the plate and leading Shelby to another title. Fred Blanding of the Naps pitched two complete games for Shelby, defeating Maul and Mansfield 3–1 and besting Bucyrus 7–6.

The Cleveland ballclub endured a last-place finish in the American League in 1914, and a humiliating loss to a group of minor leaguers in the Crestline tournament added an unpleasant postscript to the campaign. It also marked the end of the Naps. Three months later, team owner Charles Somers chose a new nickname for the club. Somers decided to call his team the Indians, and the Cleveland Naps passed into history. ■

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Bonesetter Reese

Baseball's Unofficial Team Physician

Dave Anderson

The image of the small-town doctor is embedded in American folklore. Kindly but gruff, with a heart of gold and healing talents beyond those of mere mortals, that doctor is a mythic ideal. As with all myths, this ideal contains a kernel of truth. Television doctors such as Doc Adams of *Gunsmoke*, "Bones" McCoy of *Star Trek*, and the eponymous hero of *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, all contribute to it. Judging from what we now know, the citizens of Youngstown, Ohio, and by circumstance, the growing sport of professional baseball, had such a medical paragon in the person of a Welsh immigrant named John D. "Bonesetter" Reese.

Anyone who studies Deadball Era baseball will sooner or later encounter the Bonesetter as a footnote to other subjects. Because he shunned publicity, he was a shadowy figure. But the record is clear. Reese was more than just a mere curiosity. His healing talents had a genuine impact on the game of baseball during the early years of the twentieth century.

An issue of *Sporting Life* published in April 1924 sums up his career:

> Reese has done more for baseball . . . than anybody else in the country not directly connected to the game. Through his remarkable miracles in bloodless surgery (and restoring muscles and tendons), "Bonesetter" Reese has prolonged the active life of countless baseball stars and preserved them for the fans of the country to cheer.[1]

A writer for the *Cleveland Press* ventured in an article of February 5, 1913, that a look at Reese's hands showed what he could do.

> Large, sinewy and knotty, they are the sort you'd expect to see upon a steel worker. The very sight of them creates an impression of power, but gives no hint of the wonderful delicacy of touch that enables them to locate instantly a displaced muscle or a tiny broken bone.[2]

Such praise would surely warrant a measure of curiosity about Reese on the part of researchers, but little has been published beyond *Child of Moriah*, a biography written by David L. Strickler, Reese's grandson-in-law. Several factors explain the dearth of information about Reese. Strickler's book is out of print and difficult to obtain. I was able to read the book with the assistance of an interlibrary loan through the University of Notre Dame. Reese himself was publicity-shy and never wrote memoirs. Too, Reese has always been a footnote to larger stories. Most baseball fans have learned of him by reading biographies of stars such as Honus Wagner and Rogers Hornsby.

But even this brief acquaintance is fraught with misconceptions. Baseball authors have described him in a variety of ways. In Dennis and Jeanne Burke DeValeria's *Honus Wagner: A Biography*, Reese is depicted as "part chiropractor and part masseuse, treating injuries he diagnosed as wrenched tendons and displaced muscles; he was pronounced a miracle worker after he treated Leach for a leg ailment the previous year [1902]."[3] The authors note that Wagner was cured of a leg ailment in late 1903, and Reese accompanied the Pittsburgh club during the 1903 World Series for a fee of $500. Arthur D. Hittner, another biographer, notes Wagner's first encounter with Reese in 1903:

> Bonesetter was not a physician and claimed no medical training. Using massage, manipulation and a touch of mysticism, the former steel worker and oil driller had nevertheless achieved the reputation of a miracle worker throughout professional baseball.[4]

In his fine biography of Rogers Hornsby, Charles Alexander offers this description:

> Hornsby was only one of many ballplayers who visited Reese, an elderly, totally unschooled former Welsh coal miner whose skills at skeletal manipulation were so renowned that the Ohio legislature gave him special medical certification.[5]

And in his *Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball*, Jonathan Fraser Light puts it plainly: "Reese was a popular early trainer. He had no medical training but was good at manipulation and massage."[6]

All these descriptions provide a glimpse of Reese's work, but they all include a measure of inaccuracy as

well. Yes, he was a Welsh immigrant. He learned the bonesetting trade from a fellow ironworker. But there is no evidence that Reese ever set foot in a coalmine or on an oil rig, or that he was a mystic. As for being totally unschooled, Reese owned an extensive library on anatomy, and his knowledge of the subject guided his practice. He even attended medical school at Case University in Cleveland, if for only three weeks in 1897. Baseball historians, it seems fair to say, have not brought Reese's life into full focus.

This article aims to shed some light on Reese and his work. Reese's experience in medical school reveals much about his character and talents. His attempt at obtaining a medical degree was driven by open opposition to his work by the medical establishment. The education of physicians and the practice of medicine at this time were much different from today's models. Accreditation of medical schools and licensing of physicians were haphazard, and much effort was spent in getting these two important aspects of the profession in control. The actual practice of medicine was substantially different as well. There were no antibiotics, and a minor infection could easily become a life-threatening illness. Modern tools such as MRIs and other forms of imaging were decades away from discovery and use.

Reese himself was not much of a medical student. He could not stand the sight of blood and could not perform surgery, but he astounded his peers and superiors with his ability to manipulate muscles and ligaments. The head of the school told him to leave because they had nothing to teach him, saying,

> You're wasting your time here. I've considered all the factors in your equation, and my advice to you is to go back home and continue to work according to your own methods. Who knows? If you were to continue on here you might lose this unique ability. I don't understand it, but I cannot deny you have it. As for your detractors, my own colleagues, I'm embarrassed to admit, ignore them! Better still, the next time they cry foul, refer them to me. I have a message for them.[7]

Anyone wanting to know more about Bonesetter Reese is indebted to David L. Strickler. Using family records, Strickler provides a mother lode of material about Reese's life. In a work of almost four hundred pages, only thirty-three discuss Reese and ballplayers. But the book provides valuable information, including how Reese practiced medicine and his relationship with patients.

Reese was born May 6, 1855, in Rhymney, Wales. His childhood was marred by tragedy. His father died three months after his birth, and his mother died when he was eleven years old. He thereupon went to work in the iron factories of Wales, where his luck changed. Another ironworker named Tom Jones took him in and taught him the trade of "bonesetting," the informal term for general-practice medicine. Reese seldom set a broken bone, despite that name; instead, his practice mainly involved the manipulation of muscles and tendons. Jones's children eventually became trained orthopedic physicians, while Reese's technique and focus is close to osteopathy, a branch of medicine founded by Andrew Taylor Still on the Missouri frontier in 1874. Still believed that the musculo-skeletal system was a key to good health, and his osteopathic manipulative therapy (OMT) is still taught in osteopathic medical schools.

Reese remained an ironworker until mill closings led him to emigrate to the United States in 1887. Sailing to America in steerage class, Reese left his family behind. He first settled in Pittsburgh, where he became a roller's helper at Jones & Laughlin Steel. Less than six months after his arrival, he had saved enough money to send for his wife and children. Upon their arrival, Reese moved to Youngstown, Ohio, to work at the Brown-Bronnell Mills. Family history says that he treated an injured ironworker sometime during 1889 for a dislocated shoulder. The successful cure changed Reese's life forever.

Demand for his medical services soon overwhelmed him. Because Reese was paid on a piecework, instead of hourly, basis, management tolerated his medical activities. The company, after all, received the benefit of getting ailing workers back on the line without paying for the service.

Treating fellow workers on the job deprived him of pay, and Reese was not one to try to make up the loss in pay by charging fellow workers. Establishing his long-held policy, Reese charged only what the patient could afford, and his fellow ironworkers could not afford much. That policy was crisp: "Pay me when you get it."[8] It cost Reese money, but he remained loyal to this way of doing things. In his obituary his standards of practice were detailed:

> He saw all patients in order no matter what their rank in society. He often charged them directly in the proportion to the greatness or the smallness of their finances. It was said of him that he never charged a widow or an orphan for treatment. Until his death, he held a soft spot in his heart for mill workers, and even at his busiest times, a steel man had little trouble in seeing him, even though other and more profitable appointments had to be delayed.[9]

As public knowledge of his talents grew, Reese's avocation came to occupy his off hours. Eventually he abandoned the mills in an attempt to bring order to his life. The decision was not an easy one. He was faced with giving up bonesetting altogether or not doing it at all at the mill, or else quitting the mill and asking for a fee for service. The last alternative had a hitch, for without a license, he could not charge a fee for service. With licensing restricted to school-trained physicians, Reese arrived at the policy of charging patients what they could afford as a means of providing his service without violating state law.

Reese became a full-time medical practitioner in 1894, just two years after he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. He immediately faced a major challenge from the medical establishment, which charged him with quackery and threatened arrest if he were to treat a patient. Reese's attempt to attend medical school was a response to these complaints. He struggled with varying levels of opposition from the medical community until about 1900.

The exact source of Reese's licensing is not at all clear. No copy of it exists today. Reese's family claimed that it came from the Ohio legislature, but there was a state law against such individualized awards. It could well have been a proclamation from a state agency or legislative committee.

Reese enjoyed popularity and had the support of influential people. His experience in medical school did not hurt him, and he did not hurt himself by making any outrageous claims. In 1908, Reese further proved his personal and professional responsibility by referring patients with symptoms of typhoid fever to conventional physicians.[10]

Open opposition from the medical establishment faded as the years went by, but while he may have been grudgingly accepted, he never was quite understood by his more educated colleagues. "He is an enigma to all the physicians of the country," one remarked, "who cannot understand his natural ability to straighten out twisted bones and replace misplaced muscles and ligaments."[11]

If licensed physicians could not understand Reese and his technique, just what kind of doctor was he? Reese described his work simply:

> Manipulation is the secret, if there is any, of my treatment. A thorough knowledge of anatomy is necessary, which I have studied and am still studying to acquire. My manipulation is something similar to that of an osteopath. The theory on which it is based is that muscles and ligaments may become displaced and remain so until put back where they belong.[12]

The medical establishment never accepted Reese, but he overcame that obstacle through his methods. In diagnosing ailments, he relied upon his knowledge of anatomy and highly developed sense of touch. During treatment he used great strength and quick movements and never used terms such as "magical" or "miraculous" to describe his cures. And he knew his limits. Reese was not afraid to admit that a case was beyond his ability.

As Reese's practice grew, he began to treat many of the famous of the day. Among prominent patients were Charles Evans Hughes, Theodore Roosevelt, former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, evangelist Billy Sunday, Will Rogers, and countless others, great and common alike—as well as showgirls who needed treatment for twisted ankles or leg cramps.

Reese's ability and fame won him a rare honor in June 1926 when he was given the highest Druidic degree by the Gorsedd, an ancient Celtic institution charged with guarding ancient traditions. The Druidic degree was recognition of good works by alleviating suffering and had little to do with spiritualism or superstition. News reports of the event noted that Reese was the first American to be so honored.[13]

As with his licensing, the origin of his treatment of ballplayers is not easily traced, except for a diary composed of news clippings kept by the family. This diary is not entirely accurate for a couple of reasons. Many players were reluctant to make it known that they had visited the Bonesetter because they wished to keep injuries secret from opponents and team management. Another obstacle to accuracy was that Reese did not encourage publicity from treating players. A shy man, he was known to tell reporters not to report on his treatments of celebrities. There was another reason why he discouraged publicity. He simply did not need to drum up more business, for at his peak Reese saw as many as eighty patients a day.

The first player he treated was probably Jimmy McAleer, a Youngstown native who suffered from a bad cramp. The treatment occurred when McAleer was with the Cleveland Spiders. McAleer is credited with spreading the word about Bonesetter Reese. In 1894, pitcher George "Nig" Cuppy was treated for a strained arm tendon. By the turn of the century, Reese's patient list expanded greatly. He treated members of the Pittsburgh Pirates as they prepared for the first modern World Series. Babe Adams, Honus Wagner, and Tommy Leach were among his patients.

Reese's biography lists fifty-four players whom he treated. Of that number, twenty-eight are members of the Hall of Fame. Reese described his treatments of ballplayers plainly. "The ball players who consult me have no imaginary ailments. They come because they

are in trouble and I have treated so many of them that I can tell in a jiffy where the trouble lies."[14]

Reese's assessment of pitching injuries reveals his knowledge of anatomy and of the impact that pitching has on the arm:

> Strange as it may seem, most of my patients are pitchers . . . and it's not the curve ball pitchers who come the more often either but the boys who try to throw the ball past a batter, the speed ball pitchers. If the soreness is in the elbow it's a speedball pitcher nine times out of ten; if in the shoulder, a curve ball pitcher. . . . I can usually locate a problem and fix things up. Once in a great while, an arm fails to yield to treatment and then the pitcher is through.[15]

Reese's favorite ballplayer was Wagner.

> There's one ball player I will never forget and that's Hans [sic] Wagner. I got the surprise of my life when he came to me with his back injured. The big husky! Anyone would think he could stand all kinds of pain. I guess he can, too, but because they call me "bonesetter" he was trembling clear down to his shoes. And the minute I placed my hands on his back he fainted dead away.[16]

Wagner thought highly of Reese, saying, "He hurts me like the devil but always does the work."[17]

No pain, no gain: that aptly describes Reese's treatments. Owen "Chief" Wilson of the Pirates tells how a charley horse was treated:

> Why when he grabbed that bunch of congested muscles, I thought I would croak. I did not think I ever before suffered so much pain in my young life. After he had done this, Reese told me to get to the train and hike for St. Louis that I would be all right in a day or two.[18]

While baseball fans owe a huge debt to Reese for keeping their favorites in action, the Bonesetter himself was not all that pleased with many of the athletes he treated. He believed many of them would wind up injuring themselves again because they would not follow directions.

Reese also hated football. When George Halas came calling, Papa Bear had to persuade Reese that his bum knee was from a sliding injury on the diamond, not a bone-crunching tackle on the gridiron. University of Illinois Athletic Director George Huff reportedly tried to persuade Reese to come to the Urbana-Champaign campus, but like others before him, he was rebuffed.[19]

Reese died of heart failure at the age of seventy-six in 1931. His passing was widely noted. It was in his obituary that a *Youngstown Vindicator* reporter noted that Reese exacted from him a vow of silence about the identities of the ballplayers he treated. The Bonesetter came to America to seek a better life for himself and family. We sons and daughters of immigrants understand that motive. His adopted nation gave him a productive life, and "productive" best describes the man and his works.

His legacy to baseball can be seen in this all-star team from the patient list in his biography, a twenty-five-man roster that amounts to a pretty good ballclub. In addition, I have added a list of players mentioned in Strickler and names provided me by Steve Steinberg during his research on players of the era.

BONESETTER'S ALL-STARS

Pitchers

Cy Young, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, Big Ed Walsh, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Addie Joss, Chief Bender, Urban Faber, Herb Pennock, and Stanley Coveleski

First Base

George Sisler and Frank Chance

Second Base

Eddie Collins, Rogers Hornsby, and Napoleon Lajoie

Shortstop

Honus Wagner and Donie Bush

Third Base

Home Run Baker and Jimmy Collins

Outfield

Ty Cobb, Shoeless Joe Jackson, Tris Speaker, Edd Roush, and Max Carey

Catcher

Gabby Hartnett and Roger Bresnahan

Manager

John McGraw

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BONESETTER REESE'S BALLPLAYERS

Babe Adams, P
*Grover Cleveland Alexander, P
*John Franklin "Home Run" Baker, 3B
Bill Bayne, P
*Charles Albert "Chief" Bender, P
Benny Bengough, C
Bill Bradley, 3B
*Roger Bresnahan, C
Donie Bush, IF
*Max Carey, OF
*Frank Chance, 1B
Hal Chase, 1B
*Ty Cobb, OF
*Eddie Collins, 2B
*Jimmy Collins, 3B
Jack Coombs, P
*Stanley Covelski, P
George 'Nig' Cuppy, P
*Kiki Cuyler, OF
George Dauss, P
Al DeVormer, C
*Johnny Evers, 2B
*Urban Faber, P
*Elmer Flick, OF
Ray French, SS
*Burleigh Grimes, P
Charley Grimm, 1B
Hank Gowdy, C
George Halas, OF
*Gabby Hartnett, C
*Rogers Hornsby, 2B
Joe Jackson, OF
*Walter Johnson, P
*Addie Joss, P
Ray Kremer, P
*Napoleon Lajoie, 2B
Tommy Leach, 3B
Grover Lowdermilk, P
Firpo Marberry, P
*Christy Mathewson, P
Jimmy McAleer, OF
Stuffy McInnis, 1B
*John McGraw, 3B-Mgr
Marty McManus, 2B
Bob Meusel, OF
Wilcy Moore, P
Guy Morton, P
Tiny Osborne, P
Marty O'Toole, P
Freddy Parent, SS
*Herb Pennock, P
Jack Pfiester, P
Bill Piercy, P
*Edd Roush, OF
Nap Rucker, P
Al Schacht, P
Ferdie Schupp, P
Bob Shawkey, P
*George Sisler, 1B
Billy Sunday, OF
*Tris Speaker, OF
Harry Steinfeldt, 3B
Terry Turner, INF
George Uhle, P
*Honus Wagner, SS
*Ed Walsh, P
Doc White, P
Ed Willett, P
Chief Wilson, OF
George Wiltse, P
Glenn Wright, SS
*Cy Young, P

(* = Hall of Famer)

HONORABLE MENTION

Among others treated but not on David Strickler's list are George Uhle and Jack Pfiester, both of them pitchers. Pfiester's treatment is detailed in *Sporting Life* (October 10, 1908), where it is claimed that Pfiester pitched the Merkle game with a badly injured, if not dislocated, elbow. In *Touching Second*, Johnny Evers says Pfiester pitched in pain the entire game. It was especially painful for him to throw a curveball. Evers says that Pfiester threw four curveballs, all to Mike Donlin in game situations.[20]

Uhle reportedly went to see Reese yearly. The old-time pitcher credited Reese with lengthening his career. Uhle apparently suffered chronic arm and elbow pain, which Reese was able to repair.[21]

Another player who could credit Reese with saving his career was shortstop Glenn Wright. Upon Reese's death, the *Youngstown Vindicator* reported that Wright had injured his throwing arm in an offseason basketball game. In 1929, Wright quit the game, citing his arm problems. Reese worked on Wright's arm that fall, and in 1930 Wright reported to the Dodgers with a strong arm that allowed him to "cut down base runners with rifle-like throws from all angles of the short field."[22]

This list of players is incomplete, for Reese himself claimed to have treated hundreds of ballplayers. Because of his reluctance to seek attention, it can be safely assumed many other ballplayers visited Reese than are listed here. ■

NOTES

1. David L. Strickler, *Child of Moriah: A Biography of John D. "Bonesetter" Reese, 1855–1931.* (Franklin, Mich.: Four Corners Press, 1984), 181.
2. *Cleveland Press*, 5 February 1913.
3. Dennis DeValeria and Jeanne Burke DeValeria, *Honus Wagner: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 1995), 122.
4. Arthur D. Hittner, *Honus Wagner: The Life of Baseball's "Flying Dutchman"* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1996), 118.
5. Charles C. Alexander, *Rogers Hornsby: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 1995), 113.
6. Jonathan Fraser Light, *The Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997), 749.
7. Strickler, *Child of Moriah*, 103.
8. "Famous Healer Succumbs at 76," *Youngstown Vindicator*, 11 November 1931.
9. Ibid.
10. Strickler, *Child of Moriah*, 124.
11. Ibid., 112.
12. Ibid., 344–45.
13. Reese File, Mahoning Valley Historical Society.
14. Strickler, *Child of Moriah*, 207.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 162.
17. Ibid., 128.
18. Ibid., 325.
19. Ibid., 288.
20. John J. Evers and Hugh Fullerton, *Touching Second: The Science of Baseball* (Chicago: Reilly and Britton, 1910), 116.
21. Strickler, *Child of Moriah*, 290–94.
22. "Famous Healer Succumbs at 76."

Bridesmaids with Strong Arms

Francis Kinlaw

As memories flow from the Fifties for an aging fan,
Cleveland's teams are recalled from that time span;
Bridesmaids they were, far more often than not,
Claiming six times in that decade the league's second spot!

The Yankees excelled during Stengel's time at the helm,
But the Indians were annually in the same realm;
Though chasing Pinstripes became tiresome over the years,
Municipal Stadium resounded with vigorous cheers.

The home team had flourished under a youthful Boudreau,
But 1948 seemed long, long ago;
So for The Mick's first season and Joltin' Joe's last,
Al Lopez replaced Lou to lead a strong cast.

Gone was the mercurial owner of the Tribe, Bill Veeck,
Whom fans loved but owners considered a pain in the neck;
With Veeck's antics having ended, every night and
every day,
Attention was focused on Jimmy Dudley's play-by-play.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

A confident group of Indians fans gather before the World Series in 1954. Their hopes would be dashed when the New York Giants swept the Tribe, the last two victories taking place at Cleveland Municipal Stadium.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Fans of the two opposing teams in the 1954 World Series gather in New York.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Indians rookie reliever Ray Narleski is welcomed back to the dugout by manager Al Lopez after striking out the side in this game in August 1954. After five seasons with the Indians, Narleski pitched for the Tigers in 1959 before his brief but notable career was brought to a close.

The club to the east was a team of great lore,
With a level of talent no one could ignore;
Nearly all the Bronx Bombers were skilled with a bat.
The pitchers were Reynolds, Raschi, and Lopat.

On the mound, though, the Tribe gave absolutely no quarter,
For the Yanks' roster of skilled hurlers was actually shorter
Than the list from which Lopez could select the right guy
To frustrate the opposition and make batters sigh.

Bob Lemon, Mike Garcia, Bob Feller, and Early Wynn
Caused hitters much dread. The last threw under the chin.
Those four were present when the new skipper arrived,
With any offense at all, the Indians thrived.

Doby and Rosen had been the top threats at the plate,
Ever since Doby came to the lake to integrate
The American League, as well as Cleveland's crew,
Months after Rickey and Robinson had changed
baseball's hue.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Indians manager Al Lopez and right-handed pitcher Mike Garcia in 1954. Garcia ended the year at 19–8, helping the Indians capture the American League pennant and set the league record for highest single-season winning percentage.

Luke Easter blasted long shots as the decade began,
The Negro League star was no flash-in-the-pan;
But restrictions on race caused his stay to be brief—
For him Father Time was a veritable thief!

Bobby Avila was another hitter of note,
His best year was one of which Cleveland would gloat.
Bobby won the batting title, and the Tribe game after game,
Surely '54 was the year Cleveland would reign.

But dominance in summer led to nothing but frowns
When the World Series began at New York's Polo Grounds;
Mays corralled Vic Wertz's drive; Rhodes's shorter pop
brought defeat.
Four days later the Indians' fall was complete.

The lofty legacy the team had seemed destined to claim
Was thus spoiled by an indelible stain;
But despite Al Smith's and George Strickland's hapless fate,
Who can forget them, Houtteman, or Hegan behind the
plate?

Mossi and Narleski were vital to their club's cause;
As young pitchers they exhibited very few flaws.
But neither of these '54 rookies was truly superb,
As was a rising star in the farm system named Herb.

Herb Score's great velocity and incredible curve
Signaled potential that all would observe;
Thirty-six wins in two seasons placed his stock high,
Until McDougald's line drive struck poor Herb in the eye.

The Tribe finished sixth in '57 and fourth in '58.
Quick improvement was hard to contemplate.
Attendance was down, the farm system was weak,
And many a player had passed his peak.

Though Score had been injured, and young Maris was
traded,
In 1959, the feared Yankees faded;
Tito Francona's high average and Colavito's home runs
Keyed a lineup with adequate offensive guns.

But the great pitching staffs of the past were gone,
So the "Go-Go Sox" seized the American League throne.
Chicago's speed impressed. Pierce, Shaw, and Wynn
threw well...
Better than McLish, "Mudcat" Grant, Jim Perry, and
Gary Bell.

The Tribe climbed to second, surpassing the Yanks,
At a time when roster moves were Trader Frank's;
In April of '60, all Cleveland went into shock
When Kuenn came to the Indians in exchange for
"The Rock"!

Arriving, too, were Vic Power and Jimmy Piersall
Who entertained and occasionally provoked a brawl;
When Lane sent Joe Gordon to Detroit for Jimmy Dykes,
His trading of managers trumped balls and strikes.

THE CLEVELAND PRESS COLLECTION, CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Winner of the 1954 American League batting title at .341, Indians second baseman Bobby Avila is presented with a silver bat by league president Will Harridge in August 1955. Avila would finish the season at .272. After his retirement in 1959, when his eleven-year career could be seen in whole, 1954 would stand out as exceptional.

The GM's deals generated headlines galore,
But early in '61 he was shoved out the door;
Frantic Frank's strategy of "dispose and acquire"
Had produced few results, but plenty of ire.

For decades the Tribe suffered a terrible drought:
Until by the Nineties it merely floundered about;
Municipal Stadium would grow old and be replaced
by "The Jake,"
Ridiculed near its end as "The Mistake on the Lake."

Skippers passed in and out of the old ballpark:
Kerby Farrell, Bobby Bragan, and former Giant Al Dark.
But none could match the success achieved by Lopez
When his pitching was strong and Ike was the Prez.

Why did fortunes in the Teepee grow worse?
Certainly not because of a "Colavito Curse"!
No, the stars of the Fifties had grown very old
And the players who followed weren't from the s
ame mold.

Where in history do the mid-century Indians stand?
How much respect do Rosen and his teammates
command?
In terms of quality, those clubs certainly deserve mention.
They were seldom champs, but they were always in
contention.

So many years later, does it matter where they rank?
Or how often in celebration champagne they drank?
More significant than the '54 pennant or the title of '48
Is their lasting identification with one special trait.

Their everyday players were not "hitless wonders,"
And as fielders they committed relatively few blunders;
But the keys, without doubt, were the men on the mound,
To this day those great pitchers are widely renowned.

Nearly a half-century after Lane was replaced by Gabe Paul,
The exceptional hurlers are distinguished most of all;
Feller, Lemon, Wynn, Garcia and a heralded Score.
All in one decade! We will see that no more! ■

CONTRIBUTORS

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HAL LEBOVITZ was a Cleveland sportswriter who in his long career wrote for several Cleveland-area newspapers, including the *Cleveland News,* and served as sports editor of the *Plain Dealer* (1964–82). His column "Ask the Hal Referee," in which he answered questions about sports rules, ran in various papers, including *The Sporting News* for many years, from 1957 until his death in 2005. Lebovitz was inducted into the writers' wing of the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2000.

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SCOTT LONGERT, author of *Addie Joss: King of the Pitchers* (Society for American Baseball Research, 1998) has written for *The National Pastime* and *The Baseball Research Journal.* He is currently doing research for a book on the 1920 Cleveland Indians.

NORMAN L. MACHT, having recovered from the birth of *Connie Mack and the Early Years of Baseball,* is now conceiving volume 2.

MICHAEL MARSH is a writer in Chicago.

TERRY PLUTO, columnist for the *Plain Dealer* and formerly for the *Akron Beacon Journal,* is the author of more than twenty books, including *The Curse of Rocky Colavito: A Loving Look at a Thirty-Year Slump* (Gray, 1995), *Our Tribe: A Memoir* (Simon and Schuster, 1999), and *Dealing—The Cleveland Indians' New Ballgame: Inside the Front Office and the Process of Building a Contender* (Gray, 2006).

RUSSESLL SCHNEIDER, a freelance writer and former longtime sportswriter and columnist for the *Plain Dealer,* is author of several books, including *The Cleveland Indians Encyclopedia* (Temple University Press, 1996), *Lou Boudreau: Covering All the Bases* (Sagamore, 1993), and *The Glorious Indian Summer of 1995* (Schneider, 1996).

FRED SCHULD, a Cleveland Indians baseball fan since 1934, shook hands with Cy Young at Newcomerstown, Ohio, in August 1945.

BRAD SULLIVAN is president of the Jack Graney Chapter of SABR and currently works in helping to establish the Baseball Heritage Museum in downtown Cleveland.

GARY TWARDZIK was at Cleveland Municipal Stadium with his father on July 19, 1974, when Dick Bosman threw a no-hitter against the world champion Oakland Athletics (and has the autographed scorecard to prove it). He lives outside Cleveland, in Hiram Township, with his wife and daughter.

MARSHALL WRIGHT lives in Quincy, Massachusetts, and has written about the Michigan-Ontario League for SABR.

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