

A History of the Chicago Franchise in the 19th century (part 2 of 3)

Part II: The Master Gives Way to the Student



Albert Goodwill Spalding

William A. Hulbert died on April 10, 1882 after a long illness. The future of the team was never in doubt. Just two weeks after the funeral, Albert Goodwill Spalding was unanimously elected president of the White

Stockings. His ascendancy to the position corresponded with a consolidation of stock. On April 26th the board met and unanimously voted to purchase Hulbert's stock at par value from his widow, though at the time of his death Hulbert had only paid in 40% of the par value. Spalding became one of the two principle owners, along with John L. Walsh, president of the Chicago National Bank.¹ Spalding financed his additional shares from the considerable wealth accumulated in his sporting goods business, which was on the verge of monopolizing the industry – in the following year he would buy out his chief competitor, Al Reach. He had already scored a coup when Hulbert named his company the official supplier of National League baseballs and printer of the league's annual guide.

Walsh was connected to the team through Spalding. He had been a benefactor of Spalding's when he first opened his sporting goods company. At the time, Walsh was president of the Western News company. When Spalding opened his first store in Chicago in February of 1876, Walsh bought 10,000 baseballs from him for the news company, placing Spalding's business on firm ground.²

After a spectacular, though brief (seven year) pitching career, Spalding retired after the 1877 season to attend to his burgeoning sporting goods business. He continued to act as secretary of the team, a position he had assumed while still a player. Spalding was in name the secretary, in practice

arguably the first general manager. He put together the roster that dominated the early years of the league, winning championships in 1876, 1880-82, and 1885-6.

Albert Goodwill Spalding was born in Byron, Illinois on September 2, 1850 to James Lawrence Spalding and Harriet Irene (Goodwill) Spalding. At the age of eight, Spalding lost his father. His mother then moved the family to Rockford in 1863, where Spalding graduated from high school and enrolled in a local business college. Like his mentor, William Hulbert, Spalding began his career in the grocery business, taking a job as a grocery

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clerk in Rockford. Unlike Hulbert, Spalding was a talented ball player, and joined the local Forest City nine as a pitcher.³

Harriet Spalding was well off, having inherited a good sum of money, so Albert was raised in a comfortable, though not extravagant lifestyle. As was common for the time period, his mother was not happy with his interest in baseball and counseled him to pursue business, which he

¹ "The City," *Chicago Tribune*, April 27, 1882, p 8; Levine p 29

² "Sporting Gossip," *Cincinnati Sun*, November 22, 1885, p 4

³ "Spalding Enters Game's Valhalla", September 16, 1915, unidentified source, Albert Spalding file, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

eventually did, to great success. But not before giving baseball a shot – another endeavor at which he experienced great success. He signed his first professional contract with the Excelsiors of Chicago in September of 1867 for \$40 per week. He went on to a Hall of Fame playing career with Boston and Chicago, retiring while still in his prime to begin building his sporting goods empire, which exists to this day.

Spalding displayed his business acumen in the way he ran his ball club. He made it clear by his actions that baseball was a business, not a game - a distinction that has not always been appreciated. He was a marketing genius. In addition to winning valuable endorsements from organized baseball for his company, he also used the White Stockings to promote baseball and further promote Spalding Brothers Sporting Goods when he took players on a world tour during the winter of 1888-89.

Spalding also recognized opportunities to improve his team. He initiated the practice of spring training to get his players in peak condition for the beginning of the season, taking the club to Hot Springs, Arkansas for the first time in 1886. He was also a pioneer when it came to employing scouts, in an attempt to keep the pipeline full of future players.⁴

He ran his club relentlessly, demanding the best from his employees. This was particularly evident in his approach to alcohol. Like Hulbert before him, Spalding was adamant about promoting player sobriety. He used his annual league Guide to rant against the evils of high salaries, home run hitters, and alcohol, comparing the evils of drink to the throwing of games. “Temperance in the ranks

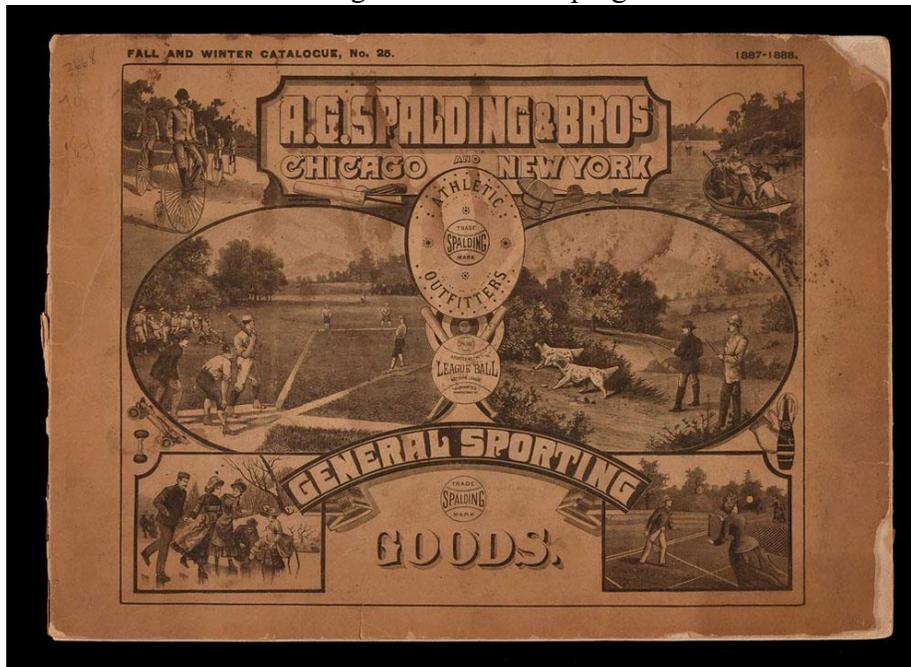
during the summer championship season has become a necessity if only for financial reasons . . . players are paid excessive salaries for the labor they perform, and the man [with] . . . an unnatural appetite for intoxicating liquor, is as much a violation of his contract, as would be his conspiring to sell a game. . . . Thousands of dollars in loss of public patronage was one of the results of the past season’s mistake of the condoning of the offense of drunkenness in the ranks.”⁵

In order to enforce his convictions on temperance, Spalding employed detectives to trail his players to determine who among them was breaking their sobriety pledges. In the midst of the 1886 season, he leveled \$25 fines on seven of his stars for “keeping too late hours and flirting with beverages

not calculated to keep an athlete in good form.”⁶ Star outfielder Mike “King” Kelly’s propensity toward excessive drink eventually drove Spalding to dispose of his most popular player, selling him to Boston for the princely sum of \$10,000 that winter.

By January 1882,

Spalding had already resigned the core of the 1881 champions for the new season. In March of that year, just weeks before Hulbert’s death, he signed an even bigger contract – this one with the National League and its new competitor, the American Association. Spalding secured an exclusive agreement with both leagues for his sporting goods company to be the official provider of baseballs for all league games. The contract was a five-year deal,



⁵ *Spalding’s Official 1890 Base Ball Guide*, p 12-13

⁶ The seven players fined were McCormick, Kelly, Flint, Gore, Williamson, Flynn and Ryan. “Punished Champions,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 23, 1886, p 3

⁴ Seymour, p 193

granting Spalding the option of renewing for an additional five years.⁷

The White Stockings won their third consecutive pennant in 1882. That December the National League elected Abraham G. Mills to succeed Hulbert as league president.⁸ Mills was a close

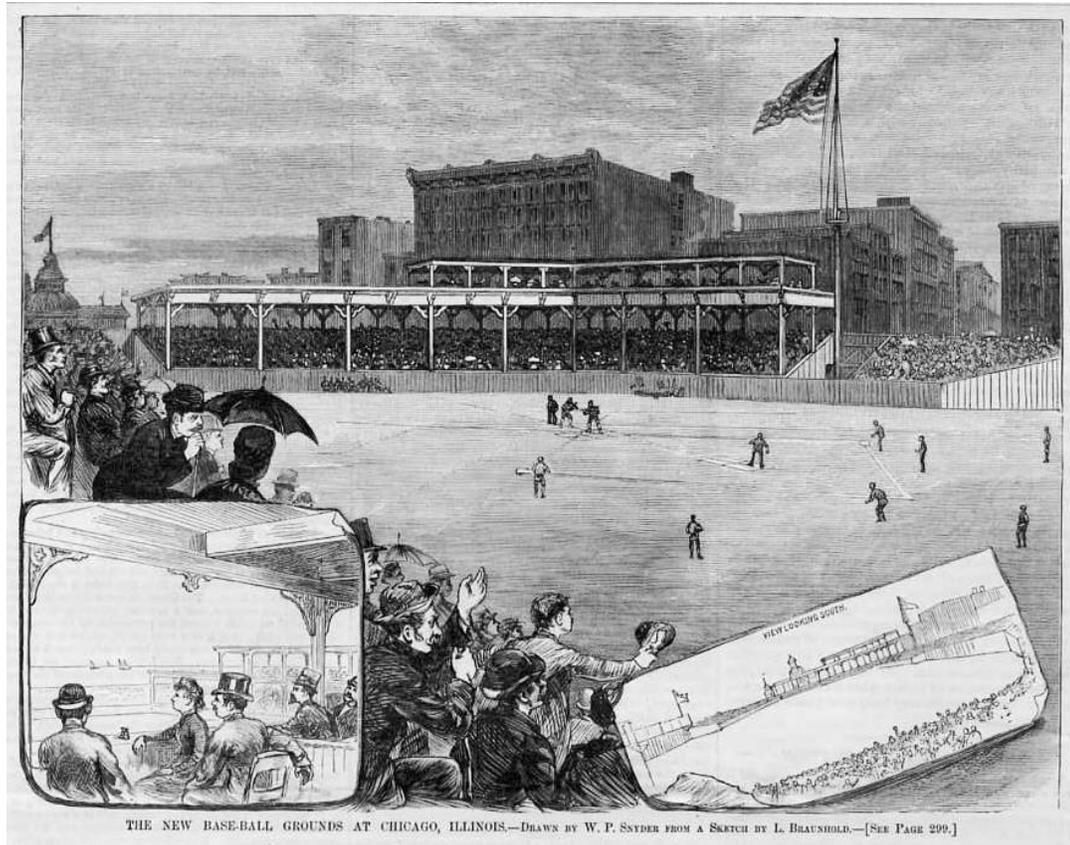
capacity more than doubled to 10,000, with “comfortable” seating for 8000, including 1800 reserved seats. “The whole interior of the park has been remodeled, and there are certainly no grounds in America to equal them.” *Harper’s* crowed that they were “indisputably the finest in the world in respect of seating accommodations and conveniences.”¹⁰

Eighteen private boxes with privacy curtains, comfortable armchairs, and a telephone and gong for President Spalding were added on top of the grandstand for the use of club officers, reporters, and “those who may wish to pay the extra charge for occupying them. . . . Chicago has the champion club and now possesses the champion grounds.”¹¹

The White Stockings played only two seasons in their newly remodeled park. After the 1884 season they were forced out by the city. In May

of that year, the US government, owners of the property on which the Lake Front grounds were located, sued the city and team, alleging that the city violated the intended use of the grounds as open and public, and had no authority to allow its use for private or commercial purposes. Federal Circuit Court Judge Henry Blodgett ordered the city to desist leasing the grounds and gave the team until November 1st to vacate them, at which time the city was instructed to clear all buildings and fences.¹²

The 1884 season was a tough one for the White Stockings. Their payroll was reportedly the highest in the National League, but their attendance plummeted more than 30% to 88,218, due to the



associate of Spalding’s. The two had worked together in the White Stockings front office for six years. While he never held a major position on the club, Mills sometimes represented the team at NL meetings, and had worked closely with both men for several years. His election secured the strong connection between Chicago and the league office, which would extend into the 20th century.

The White Stockings opened the 1883 season in a ballpark renovated to the tune of \$10,000.⁹ Seating

⁷ Contract between AA and NL and Spalding Brothers Sporting Goods, dated March 16, 1882, Albert Spalding file, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

⁸ Technically, Mills replaced Arthur Soden, who had been named interim president upon Hulbert’s death in April.

⁹ The investment paid off. According to the *Reach Base Ball Guide* of 1890, the White Stockings earned profits of \$20,000 in 1883.

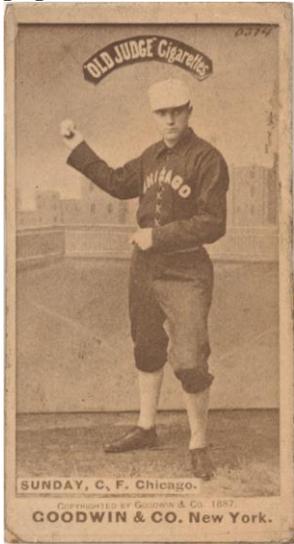
¹⁰ Seymour, p 195

¹¹ “Base Ball,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 1883, p 7

¹² “The Lake Front,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1884 p 8; “The Lake Front,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 25, 1884, p 11

competition from the rival Union Association franchise located on the south side of town.

Spalding, determined to reverse the attendance slide, decided that a grand ballpark was the way to go. The new ballpark, built at a cost of \$25,000, was erected on the west side of the city, near three trolley lines, and easily accessible by “a larger population than the North and South Sides combined.”



Billy Sunday was a member of the NL champs in 1885 but made a much bigger impact in his second career

It was designed to be used for a variety of sports, including cricket, lacrosse, lawn-tennis, and bicycle racing, with a bicycle track built around the interior of the walls. The White Stockings signed a five year lease on the lot, bounded by Congress, Harrison, Throop, and Loomis streets. An enthusiastic

Spalding announced that “no pains or expense will be spared to make these the finest base-ball and athletic grounds in America.” *Sporting Life* agreed, calling it “the finest and best in the world.” In lieu of an “unsightly board fence . . . a substantial, stone-capped brick wall twelve feet in height will be constructed, to extend entirely around the grounds.” Sunday games, alcohol, and gambling of all types were prohibited at the new park (never mind that they were already prohibited by the National League) in an effort to curry “the encouragement and patronage of the better class of people.”¹³

The White Stockings’ christened the new stadium on June 6, 1885. “The game played upon the new grounds of the Chicago Club between the St. Louis and home teams yesterday attracted one of the largest audiences ever assembled at a ballfield in this city, the turn-stiles showing the registry of 10,327 people. The grand-stand was packed, as were also the open stands, and in addition 500 chairs which President Spalding ordered sent to the ground were sold, and 2000 people stood upon the

bicycle track upon each side of the diamond. . . Every housetop and window commanding a view of the grounds was occupied by spectators, and at a rough estimate fully 2000 people must have witnessed the game in this way. The east end of the grounds was filled with carriages, and quite a number of vehicles for want of room were compelled to stand outside on Congress, Throop, and Loomis streets.”¹⁴ According to the White Stockings own attendance records however, the actual crowd that day was 6477.¹⁵

There were reports of the White Stockings drawing crowds in excess of 10,000 on multiple dates during the season.¹⁶ However, team records indicate the biggest crowd of the year was 7752 for the morning game of a July 3rd split double header versus New York. The second game attracted 5473. In total, attendance exceeded 5000 only seven times in 58 home games for a total of 119,318 on the season.¹⁷

The *Chicago Daily News* reported in early October that the White Stockings took in approximately \$300,000 in revenue against expenses and salaries of \$40,000.¹⁸ This is another example of reporting hyperbole. In order to earn this kind of revenue they would have had to draw an average of over 8000 per game both at home and away. In fact, they averaged 2057 per home game, and historically were a much better draw at home than anywhere on the road.¹⁹ Whatever the exact figure, the players benefitted from the successful season. The 1885 post-season series between the NL champion White Stockings and the St. Louis Browns of the AA ended in a tie. Players from both teams split the \$1000 prize pot, sponsored by the two teams. The post season series was neither well attended nor followed, interest in baseball having faded at the conclusion of the regular season. White Stockings players were also promised cash bonuses for having

¹⁴ “Sporting Affairs,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 7, 1885, p 14

¹⁵ Chicago Cubs Attendance Book 1882-1889, *Chicago Cubs Collection*, pp 20-21

¹⁶ Bales 2019, p 147

¹⁷ Attendance Book 1882-89, *Chicago Cubs Collection*

¹⁸ Bales 2019, p 148

¹⁹ Chicago Cubs attendance book 1882-1889, *Chicago Cubs Collection*

¹³ “Sporting Notes,” *Chicago Times*, March 1, 1885, p 7; “Sporting,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1885, p 6

honored the temperance pledges they signed in April before they left Chicago for spring training.²⁰

In the midst of the post season series, the two leagues met in New York City and inked a new national agreement that provided, among other things, that no player contracts would be written for a period to exceed seven months, no contracts would be made for the following season prior to October 20th, and that for the first ten days after his release, a player could only be signed by other teams in his original league. Only after this ten day period could teams from the other league sign him. Each league promised to recognize the other's reserve clause, with no team able to reserve more than 12 players. The agreement also provided geographic monopoly for all clubs in both leagues. The most important move however, was the new salary cap. Immediately, it provided cost control for clubs by limiting salaries to a range of \$1000-\$2000 per season and prohibiting advance payments except for train fare to join the club in the spring.²¹



The 1886 White Stockings, NL Champions

Spalding showed his appreciation for a pennant winning effort again in 1886. After the team clinched the title on October 9th in Boston, he sent a telegram congratulating them for having “clinched the pennant in great style. . . now come home and win the world's championship. As a token of my appreciation of your work I herewith tender each man of the team a suit of clothes, and the team collectively one-half the receipts in the coming series with St. Louis. Accept my hearty congratulations.”²² Alas, the Browns won the series and with it the prize of the total gate receipts, as

previously agreed upon by Spalding and Von der Ahe. There are no records indicating whether Spalding honored his pledge to award half the gate to his players.

Perhaps due to the disappointing series loss, Spalding's appreciation for the pennant winning White Stockings was fleeting, and he began to break up the team that winter. After the disappointing showing, he refused to pay temperance bonuses to several players, accusing them of backsliding on their promise, and hinting drink played a part in the loss to St. Louis. In one of the most famous baseball transactions of the 19th century, Spalding shipped Mike Kelly to Boston for \$10,000. He followed that by sending, Jim McCormick to Pittsburgh for George Van Haltren and \$2000, and George Gore to the Giants for a reported \$3500. The next year he sold John Clarkson to Boston for another \$10,000,²³ ending the Chicago dynasty. It would be 20 years and several team nicknames before they would win another pennant.

The following spring, Spalding turned his attention to league-wide matters, floating a plan to form a single major league from the AA and the NL. His plan called for eliminating Cleveland and the Metropolitans from the AA and Indianapolis and Washington from the NL, and combining the remaining teams into a single 12 team league. This plan went nowhere, but presaged the events of five years hence, when the collapse of the AA resulted in four AA teams being absorbed into a new 12-team NL.

The NL made big news at its fall meeting in November of 1888. The league unilaterally decided to opt out of the maximum salary schedule they had agreed to three years earlier, and replace it with a classification system. The system was to take effect on December 15th, and would exempt any contracts in place before that date. Thereafter, however, players were to be paid based on their classification. Owners would assign each player to a class, ranging from A to E, according to skill and off-field deportment. Salaries would range from \$2500 for Class A players down to \$1500 for those in Class E. All players in a given class would receive the same

²⁰ Bales 2019, p 148

²¹ “The Baseball Convention,” *New York Times*, October 18, 1885, p 2

²² “Chicagos Grandly Win,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 10, 1886, p 10

²³ Baseball-reference.com individual player pages

salary.²⁴ The classification system helped spur the formation of the Player's League in 1890.

A hot rumor floating around the meeting hotel was that a majority of the clubs favored the formation of a baseball trust. The purpose of the trust would be to provide financial assistance to the weaker clubs from the wealthier clubs.²⁵ Details were not provided, but the basis of such a system was already in place, with some owners holding stock in more than one club. In 1890 John Brush owned the Cincinnati club and the minor league Indianapolis club, as well as stock in the New York entry in the National League, which also counted as stockholders Art Soden (who held 33% of Boston's stock), Spalding, and Ferdinand Abel, who also owned 40% of both the Brooklyn and Baltimore franchises. Harry Von der Horst also owned 40% shares of Brooklyn and Baltimore. Ned Hanlon and Charles Ebbets each held 10% of the stock in both Baltimore and Brooklyn. And Frank Robison owned the St. Louis (AA) and Cleveland (NL) franchises.²⁶ It wasn't the single-entity trust rumored two years earlier, but the interlocking interests of the franchises were enough to question the independence of any team. This sort of relationship was certainly characteristic of Spalding's approach to base ball as a profit maximizing business, no different than his approach to the sporting goods industry.

The Players League

Spalding worked diligently behind the scenes to prevent an AA team from locating in Chicago in 1890, using the press to spread propaganda about the inability of Chicago to support two professional teams.²⁷ He was right. While he succeeded in fending off competition from the AA, he was not successful in monopolizing the market. That year saw the debut (and farewell) of the Players' League (PL), which placed franchises in seven NL and AA markets, including Chicago, with disastrous financial results. Attendance at the West Side

Grounds plunged 31% to 102,536.²⁸ The PL Pirates, who played across town from the White Stockings, drew 148,876. They were only one of six PL teams that outdrew their NL and AA crosstown competitors.²⁹ The attendance victories were short-lived, however. The increased competition from the upstart league resulted in the NL reportedly losing \$231,000, with the White Stockings alone losing \$35,000. The red ink extended to the PL, which allegedly lost \$125,000, with the Pirates responsible for \$16,000 of that amount.³⁰

The Players' National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs (PL) had been organized over the previous winter by the Brotherhood of Professional Baseball Players, the first player union. Disenchanted by the salary classification system and reserve clause, players leapt at the opportunity to join a league in which they would be partial owners of the franchises for which they played. The PL attracted many of the game's stars, and filled its rosters with players who had defected from the NL and AA.

Spalding's penurious reputation and his hard driving inflexible style, particularly when it came to alcohol, cost him dearly. When faced with the option of playing for Spalding or fleeing for a new league, the White Stockings players voted with their feet. Spalding lost 13 of the 19 players from his 1889 roster to the PL, seven of whom moved south to 35th and Wentworth to play for the Pirates. In addition, three other players departed, leaving the White Stockings with only three returning players for the 1890 season. Spalding rebuilt his roster with younger players, leading sportswriters to refer to the team as the "Colts."

As bad as things were in Chicago, they were no match for the crisis faced by the NL's New York entry, which was nearly bankrupted by the competition. In a desperate attempt to rescue the franchise, Spalding organized a consortium of owners to back John T. Brush in his purchase of the team from John B. Day. Spalding and Art Soden (Boston), each matched Brush's \$20,000

²⁴ "Angling for Ward," *The Evening World* (New York), November 22, 1888, p 1

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Seymour, p 304

²⁷ December 27, 1890, unidentified newspaper, Spalding file, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

²⁸ Chicago Cubs attendance book 1882-1889, *Chicago Cubs Collection*; <https://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/CHC/>, accessed January 2020

²⁹ Gattie 2015

³⁰ Bales 2019, p 175

investment, and the other \$20,000 of the total \$80,000 purchase price was put up by Al Reach (Philadelphia), Ferd Abell, and Charles Byrne (the latter two owned stock in the Brooklyn NL and NY AA franchises).³¹

Spalding was elected by his peers to lead the NL's "war committee" against the Players League. His primary weapon was to employ a divide and conquer strategy, pitting the PL players against the financiers by offering the latter a chance to buy into the NL. But he also planned to fight in the courts, the newspapers, and at the gate. In order to control the flow of information, Spalding took a page from his own playbook. He took control of the media by purchasing the *Reach Baseball Guide* and the *New York Sporting Times*. He hired O. P. Caylor to edit the sporting paper and used the publication as the NL's mouthpiece.³²

Spalding planned a scorched earth approach to the battle, calculating that the NL owners could afford to lose more money in the short run than their PL counterparts would be willing to lose, declaring in March of 1890 "I want to fight until one of us drops dead."³³ The key to victory lay in the recognition that businessmen are in business to make profits, and when faced with the prospect of large losses or the possibility to buy into a profitable monopoly, the PL owners quickly chose the latter. The league, and hence competition, was vanquished, but its strengths, the monied men behind it, became part of the National League.

National League teams purchased and merged their PL competitors in Pittsburgh, New York, Brooklyn, and Chicago. Spalding bought out his competitor for \$25,000.³⁴ The purchase included the lease on their ballpark, known then as Brotherhood Park, but eventually called South Side Park, which had a capacity of nearly 11,000 plus standing room for

another 5000. Streetcar lines provided convenient access to the park, located at 35th and Wentworth (the same intersection now occupied by Guaranteed Rate Field). But the White Stockings had a loyal following at West Side Park and feared fan outrage if they abandoned those Congress Street grounds. Their solution was to use both parks, scheduling half their home games at each in 1891. Brotherhood Park was leased for \$1500 per year, a far cry from the \$7500 they were paying for West Side Park. In addition, the club was leasing a plot at the intersection of Lincoln (present day Wolcott) and Polk, just a few blocks from West Side Park, for \$6000.³⁵

John Addison (for whom the street bordering the south side of Wrigley Field is named) was a renowned Chicago architect and principal financial backer of the Chicago PL franchise. As part of the settlement, he exchanged his shares of the Pirates with Spalding for shares in the White Stockings and New York Giants. The deal was not without some drama, however, as his co-owners threatened a lawsuit, temporarily holding up the exchange. In the end, Addison sold his shares, dividing \$18,000 between non-playing shareholders at 60% of par value, and the Pirates players, who received a settlement on their unpaid salary balances. In addition, the six players who held stock were paid off at 50% of par value.³⁶ In the end, his involvement with the team was minimal, and his last known connection was when he built the second iteration of West Side Park in 1893 on the aforementioned lot being leased by the club. It remained home to the team until they moved into Wrigley Field.³⁷

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³⁵ "To Play Base Ball," *Chicago Tribune*, April 4, 1892, p 10

³⁶ Seymour, p 244; Koszarek, p 52

³⁷ Nemecek 2012, p 285

³¹ Spalding Guide 1895 p 123; Hauptert, private collection, accessed January 2020; Lamb, accessed February 2020

³² Voigt, p 162

³³ Lowenfish and Lupien, p 43

³⁴ Only \$10,000 in cash was exchanged. The remainder was in the form of White Stockings stock. The deal also included season passes for the Pirates ownership group. "Sale of a Baseball Club," *New York Times*, November 14, 1890, p 3

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Chicago's West Side Grounds in 1885

Recently Published Research

This column highlights recently published articles on topics that may interest members of the Business of Baseball Committee. If you are aware of a

source that publishes articles of interest to the readership, please alert me so that I can monitor it.

Sheptak, R. Dale Jr., and Brian E. Menaker, "When Sport Event Work Stopped: Exposure of Sport Event Labor Precarity by the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Sport Communication* 13, no. 3 (2020): 427-35

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has exposed major weaknesses in economic, governmental, and social structures that many have taken for granted in everyday life. The sport industry, which has gained unprecedented popularity in recent decades, is no exception. Decisions, driven in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, to suspend play in major sports leagues across the globe have exposed the precarious nature of the work situation that hourly event workers find themselves in. As the games stopped, so did the earnings of workers who impact essential aspects of the sport spectators' experience. These workers include the part-time front of house staff for public assembly facilities, including ushers, concessions workers, ticket takers, and security personnel. This essay, drawing on ideas from C.W. Mills, Arne Kalleberg, and Guy Standing, will examine the impact of the pandemic on the employment of these workers by looking at the state of labor associated with sport and sports events. Furthermore, the essay will explore the challenges facing a class of workers who depend on numerous part-time or seasonal sports event jobs to scrape together an existence when sport suddenly stops. Finally, the essay will address the potential aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport labor and consider how sport work could change as a result. This scholarly commentary lays the groundwork for further study and analysis of an important, yet rarely remarked on, aspect of employment morality and sport labor studies.

Rogers, Ryan, "Boys in the Booth: The Impact of Announcer Gender on Audience Demand," *Journal of Sports Economics* 21, no. 6 (August 2020): 610-627

This study provides an experiment to examine whether announcer gender impacts audience demand. With special attention to literature detailing the role of women in sports, sports economics, as well as uses and gratifications theory, this study provides an experiment wherein participants watched a sporting event announced by

a man or a woman. Afterward, the participants responded to questions regarding their attitudes toward the sporting event they watched. Overall, the male announcer engendered greater feelings of enjoyment and lower feelings of cognitive load than the female announcer. Feelings of autonomy and hostile sexism also played a significant role in mediating the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This study is diagnostic such that it provides empirical evidence that women will have a more difficult time succeeding in this labor market. Also, this study provides noteworthy areas for content producers to focus on in order to increase demand for a product.

Solow, John L., and Anthony C. Krautmann, "Do You Get What You Pay for? Salary and Ex Ante Player Value in Major League Baseball," *Journal of Sports Economics* 21, no. 7 (October 2020): 705-722

The last few years have seen a resurgence of very long, very expensive guaranteed contracts in Major League Baseball. Commentators who examine the outcomes of earlier long-term contracts generally conclude that teams greatly overpay in these situations. These assessments suffer from the use of perfect hindsight, however. In this article, we estimate the economic gain that could be anticipated at the time of signing of a contract. We forecast the player's expected future productivity in terms of winning based on recent performance at the time of the contract signing and adjusted for player aging. We translate this expected performance into a stream of expected marginal revenues using estimates of the team-specific value of a marginal win and discount these to present value at the time of signing. The economic cost of the contract to the team is measured by the discounted stream of guaranteed future salaries across the contract horizon. Comparing these benefits and costs indicates that teams overpay on average and more so for longer contracts. Some part of this is likely explained by benefits beyond the effect of games won.

Pifer, N. David, Christopher M. McLeod, William J. Travis, and Colten R. Castleberry, "Who Should Sign a Professional Baseball Contract? Quantifying the Financial Opportunity Costs of Major League Drafts," *Journal of Sports Economics* 21, no. 7 (October 2020): 746-780

Players selected in the annual Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft have a choice of whether to enter the system or pursue a career outside of professional baseball. As with any choice, there are opportunity costs associated with their decision. The purpose of this study was to analyze those opportunity costs by comparing draftees' expected, non-signing-bonus income to the income of standard laborers. We estimated expected income over the first six seasons of players' careers by combining minor and major league salary data with the probabilities obtained from C5.0 classification models that were applied to a large set of player-related data. Unlike traditional classification methods that produce the probabilities for landing in one of two classes, C5.0 classification models are able to produce the simultaneous probabilities of a player landing in several different classes, or out of professional baseball, in each season. The results show that, all else equal, college fielders drafted in the first 89–90 picks and college pitchers drafted in the first 32 picks (college graduates) or 171 picks (some college) should sign contracts. Pitchers drafted out of high school should sign contracts if they are picked in the first 78 picks, as should fielders selected in the top 118 picks. Beyond these ranges, signing bonuses or higher levels of performance are needed to limit the opportunity costs of pursuing professional baseball. Such findings are relevant to draftees making contract decisions and baseball stakeholders dealing with recent calls for improved wages and labor conditions in the minors.

Swanson, Ryan, "Albert G. Spalding and the business of baseball," *Sport in Society* 23, no. 9 (2020): 1424-1433

Albert G. Spalding revolutionized the business of baseball during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He built a retail empire based off his reputation as a player, his connections to MLB, and his ability to market directly to consumers.

Pearson, Demetrius W., and Drew D. Brown, "Madame executive: baseball the Manley way," *Sport in Society* 23, no. 9 (2020): 1454-1467

Effa Manley, arguably the most demanding matriarch in baseball history, was a pioneer in many respects. As the first female owner of an American professional baseball team, she helped hone the skills of numerous star players while negotiating

contracts with several of the most savvy team owners within Major League Baseball. Her plaque in Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame is a testament to her dedication to the sport, steadfast resolve, and administrative leadership.

Atwater, Christopher, "A passion for people: the unconventional and innovative business success of Bill Veeck," *Sport in Society* 23, no. 9 (2020): 1480-1489

Bill Veeck earned a reputation as one of the most influential men in the history of baseball and the field of sport marketing during his long and well-documented career. His entrepreneurial spirit changed the business of baseball by growing the game in a way that made it accessible and enjoyable for fans. He is considered by many as one of the great innovators in sports history. Though controversial at times and known to be at odds with rival owners throughout the majority of his career, Veeck remained true to his vision, thus cementing his legacy as one of sports greatest entrepreneurs. This article explores Veeck from an historical perspective with an emphasis on three primary principles that were evident in his approach to changing the game: baseball must be appealing and accessible to all, baseball must be entertaining, and baseball professionals, both administrators and players, are people who must be developed, marketed and protected.



Team Ownership Histories Project -- A subset of Bioproject and the Business of Baseball Committee

By Andy McCue

The project (<https://sabr.org/bioproj/topic/team-ownership-histories>) continues to grow and evolve. In the past year, we've more than doubled the number of essays posted and added a new dimension.

The new dimension covers teams beyond the current 30 major league franchises. Charlie Bevis touched off the added direction with five essays on defunct 19th Century teams (Boston of the Union Association, Boston of the 1890 Players League and the 1891 American Association, Worcester, Troy

and Providence of the National League). Bill Lamb quickly joined in with the Newark Peppers of the Federal League. John Zinn has been inspired to volunteer for Brooklyn of the Players League. Duke Goldman has volunteered to do the Negro League's Newark Eagles and Mike Hauptert offered to do the Negro Leagues Hilldale Club and the South Bend Blue Sox of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

Charlie's essays join earlier essays on the Mets (Leslie Heaphy), the Boston Braves (Bob LeMoine), the Red Sox and Yankees (Dan Levitt and Mark Armour), the Indians (Dave Bohmer), the Dodgers (Andy McCue), the New York Giants (Bill Lamb) and the Diamondbacks (Clayton Trutor). In the past year, we've added the San Francisco Giants (Rob Garratt), Miami Marlins (Steve Keeney), Phillies (Rich Westcott), Blue Jays (Allen Tait), Mariners (Steve Friedman), St. Louis Browns (Greg Erion), both versions of the Washington Senators (Andy Sharp), Royals (Dan Levitt), Expos (Joe Marren) and Twins (Gary Olson).

Working on drafts are Mike Hauptert (Cubs), Brian Ertz (Reds to '68), Steve West (Rangers), Nick Waddell and Jeff Samoray (Tigers), Mark Stangl (Cardinals), John Bauer (Padres), Ed Edmonds (Reds from '68), Joe Wancho and Blake Sherry (Pirates) and Ken Carrano (White Sox).

That leaves the Milwaukee Braves, Atlanta Braves, Milwaukee Brewers, Washington Nationals, Colorado Rockies, Los Angeles Angels, Houston Astros, Philadelphia/Kansas City/Oakland Athletics, and Baltimore Orioles.

Anyone interested in the un-assigned teams or those of defunct franchises should contact Andy McCue at agmccue48@gmail.com.

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A Call for Submissions

The Business of Baseball Committee has more than 700 registered members. We are sure many of you are doing research that would be of interest to your

fellow SABR members. Please consider sharing your work in the newsletter, which is especially well suited to preliminary versions of work you may wish to publish elsewhere. *Outside the Lines* is an excellent outlet for the publication of your research on any topic of baseball that occurs "outside" the playing field. Submissions can be directed to Mike Hauptert at mhauptert@uwlax.edu.

BUSINESS OF BASEBALL COMMITTEE

The Business of Baseball Committee co-chairs are Dan Levitt dan@daniel-levitt.com, and Mike Hauptert (mhauptert@uwlax.edu). Hauptert edits *Outside the Lines*. The committee's website is at <http://research.sabr.org/business/>. You should stay in touch with the site as we improve the look and add content.

100 Years Ago

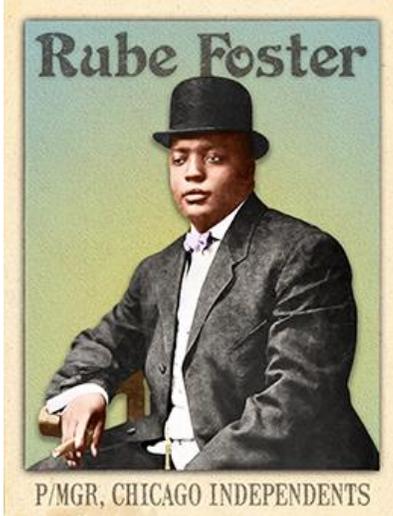
Birth of the Negro Leagues

By Michael Hauptert

Beginning in 1885 African American baseball players were banned from working in what would become known as Major League Baseball (MLB). This segregated league represented the pinnacle of success in the professional baseball industry. With that decision, employment at all levels of organized baseball was closed to anyone who could not pass as white, until Jackie Robinson took the field in 1946 for the Montreal Royals, a minor league affiliate of the Brooklyn Dodgers. The only sources of employment for professional baseball players of African American descent were teams organized exclusively for black ballplayers.

Players were not the only industry employees shunned because of the color of their skin. The ranks of managers, coaches, scouts, and front office personnel were also segregated by race. In fact, it took much longer to integrate some of these positions. It was nearly thirty years after Jackie Robinson's debut before Frank Robinson became the first black manager in the major leagues. In 1976, a year after Frank Robinson's managerial debut, Bill Lucas became MLB's first general manager of color. And it wouldn't be until Magic Johnson became a minority shareholder of the Dodgers in 2012 that the ownership ranks integrated for the first time.

The first professional league for black players was formed one hundred years ago. Rube Foster, former player turned owner, organized the Negro National League in 1920. The league debuted with eight franchises and except for 1932, survived for 29



years, ranging in size from six to ten teams. It was not the only professional league that evolved to provide refuge for professional ballplayers excluded from MLB on the basis of skin color, but it was the longest lasting.

While professional leagues debuted in 1920, professional teams were in existence earlier, and some were spectacularly successful. Ironically, segregation meant that the success of black baseball teams had a ripple effect, improving the lot of the local black business community. They tended to employ African American office workers, construction crews, and game day labor. They purchased food (for resale at the ballpark), uniforms, and lodging (while on the road) from black owned businesses. And importantly, they provided entertainment without segregated seating in the black owned ballparks. One example of such a professional success story is the Hilldale Daisies.

Hilldale began life as an amateur youth squad in 1910, incorporated as a professional team in 1917, and flourished for the next decade as one of the preeminent black teams in the east. Not only were all of its players African American, but so was its management and ownership, most notably president and stockholder Ed Bolden. Hilldale's fortunes sank with the economy in the 1930s, and despite attempts to revive the franchise, it was never able to regain its luster.

The Origin of Hilldale

Austin D. Thompson, a 19 year old ballplayer from Darby, Pennsylvania, organized the Hilldale Athletic Club in the spring of 1910. The team was based out of Darby, an African American enclave of 6300 located five miles southwest of Philadelphia.

Thompson started Hilldale on the road to prominence, but he was not around to see them reach it. By the end of the season he was gone, replaced at the helm by Ed Bolden, a volunteer scorekeeper for the team.

Under Bolden's leadership the club grew from a local amateur organization to a professional powerhouse, flourishing financially until brought down by the Great Depression.

Ed Bolden was a master marketer. His greatest stroke of marketing genius was the construction in 1914 of Darby Field, also known as Hilldale Park. It was a modest, wooden ballpark with seating capacity of only a few thousand, which grew over time as additional bleachers were added. Modesty aside, it was owned by a black man, which made it a rare and desired commodity for barnstorming black teams.

The convenient location of Darby, with its low cost of transportation to major black baseball hubs in New York, Baltimore and Washington D.C., made Hilldale an attractive destination for all the top teams on the east coast. The fact that Hilldale owned its own stadium eliminated the problems of finding quality dates and negotiating profitable lease terms for stadiums owned by white businessmen.

The Decision to turn professional

Hilldale was formally organized into a for-profit cooperative in 1914, earning \$225 that year. They operated as a semipro team for three seasons before incorporating in January of 1917 as the Hilldale Baseball and Exhibition Company, a fully professional squad, led by Ed Bolden.

1916 proved to be a watershed year for Hilldale. The team implemented several substantial operational changes before the season, foreshadowing their conversion to a fully professional operation the following year. Players were required to be present for twice-weekly practices, and abstain from alcohol, under the threat of fines. The park was upgraded, a grandstand was built, admission was fixed at 20 cents, new uniforms were ordered, and regular weekly meetings were held during the offseason. Most importantly, Hilldale earned a profit for the third consecutive year. The players displayed their appreciation for Bolden after the season by

presenting him with a \$100 diamond ring, which they purchased out of their share of the profits.

On October 15, 1916 Bolden and a few of the older club members dissolved the old town team and transformed the franchise into a fully professional organization. They left their share in the treasury, paid the younger players their shares, and then cut them loose. No longer would the team be run as a co-op with the players sharing in the proceeds at season's end. Instead, players would be employees of the "old fellows." In January of 1917 they incorporated the franchise for \$10,000.

The decision by Hilldale to turn professional was financially risky, but paid off immediately both on the field (23-15-1 record) and off (\$1916 profit). The bottom line was helped by several postseason exhibitions that Bolden lined up against major leaguers. To beef up the squad for these games he added Smokey Joe Williams, Louis Santop, and Dick Lundy to the lineup. Santop remained with Hilldale for several seasons, and was instrumental in leading them to the first colored World Series in 1924.

Bolden's success drew the attention of white New York booking agent Nat Strong, who coveted Hilldale for his agency. When his advances were rebuffed, Strong threatened to drive Hilldale out of business by locating a competing team across the street from Darby Field. Bolden responded promptly and publicly to this threat by taking out an ad in the Philadelphia Tribune to state his case:

"The race people of Philadelphia and vicinity are proud to proclaim Hilldale the biggest thing in the baseball world owned, fostered, and controlled by race men. . . We are proud to be in a position to give Darby citizens the most beautiful park in Delaware County, a team that is second to none and playing the best attractions available. To affiliate ourselves with other than race men would be a mark against our name that could never be eradicated.

Bolden's public relations coup and his skills at signing top talent diffused Strong's threat and contributed to the rise of Hilldale to the top of the eastern colored circuits. His refusal to ally with white baseball men won him praise and admiration.

League Ball

Hilldale abandoned the life of an independent team when they paid \$500 for an associate membership in the National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs (NACPBC) for the 1920 season. The advantage of joining a league was a regular slate of games and a central league authority. Unfortunately, the ability of the league to discipline either the players or clubs was almost nonexistent. Teams regularly bypassed scheduled league games when the prospect of a more profitable exhibition game presented itself. In between scheduled games they would play almost any team that would agree to terms on price and location for a game. That year more than two-thirds of the Hilldale schedule was against non-league opponents. Even when they joined the much better organized Eastern Colored League in 1923, Hilldale frequently scheduled lucrative non-league exhibition games to boost the bottom line. The problem wasn't the playing of exhibition games, but the cancellation of league games to do so.

Bolden understood the need for the stability of a league, but also recognized the profit potential of a



Ed Bolden

well marketed exhibition game. Despite several seasons of league membership, Hilldale seldom had as many as half its games scheduled as part of a league. This is a problem that plagued the Negro Leagues far and wide. From 1920-32, across all of the various leagues that existed, totaling 21 seasons, there was not a single instance of all teams playing the same number of league games.

Exhibition games were a financial necessity for most black teams, and they played them frequently. For example, in 1929, despite being in the American Negro League, where they played 84 league games against high profile competition including the Baltimore Black Sox, New York Lincoln Giants, and Homestead Grays, Hilldale still

added 49 non-league contests, which accounted for 24% of their total game receipts that year. The most profitable individual games were three contests at Bushwick, NY, for which they received a \$600 guarantee each time. Only six dates that year generated a larger gate for Hilldale, and four of those were double headers.

In the shortened 1932 season, two long barnstorming tours accounted for 44% of Hilldale's total schedule and brought in 33% of their total game receipts. In two other seasons during which Hilldale was a member of a league, their non-league games accounted for 18% (1926) and 91% (1927) of total game receipts.

Bolden v Foster

Throughout his career, Bolden improved his roster by signing players away from other squads. When Hilldale was an amateur team, they recruited players from other sandlot teams, sometimes advertising in the papers for open tryouts, or "classified" ads seeking specific players. In later years they signed players from other teams, often earning the enmity of other owners as a result. This practice led to a long-running, public feud with Rube Foster.

The feud had its roots in the organization of the Negro National League (NNL) by Foster in 1920. The league suffered from many problems, ranging from a lack of competitive balance to poor publicity. But it was contract jumping that Foster considered the greatest threat to league stability. He was particularly upset with Bolden, who he accused of stealing three of his players after the 1919 season. In retaliation, Foster pledged his support to the Madison Stars and Bacharach Giants, competing clubs in the east. The Giants joined the NNL and immediately raided the Hilldale roster.

Bolden responded to the raid with a legal challenge, which he ultimately dropped when legal expenses began to add up. He maintained his innocence, claiming that none of the players he had signed away from Foster's club had been under contract at the time, nor were they protected by a reserve clause, hence he had not been guilty of enticing anyone to jump their contract. Bolden's eventual creation of a competitor league to the NNL only further strained the relationship between the two entrepreneurs.

In December of 1920, Hilldale left the NACPBC and joined Rube Foster's Negro National League (NNL) as an associate member for a \$1000 deposit. The membership provided protection from player raids from other league members. The following year Bolden made one of his most lucrative investments, purchasing the contract of Judy Johnson from the Madison Stars for \$100. Johnson became a fixture in the Hilldale lineup for the next decade, leading the team with a .341 average during the 1924 colored World Series and managing the team in 1931 and 1932. In 1975 Johnson was elected to the Hall of Fame.

By 1922, Hilldale was no longer satisfied with membership in the NNL. While they were protected from player raids, they had to give up lucrative dates against eastern clubs on Foster's outlaw list. Foster maintained a list of teams that did not honor NNL contracts, and forbade NNL members from playing them. He felt that by denying these outlaws lucrative dates against the high quality teams of the NNL he would punish them at the box office. Unfortunately for Hilldale, they suffered as well.

The travel costs associated with league play were another sore point for Bolden. During the 1921 and 1922 seasons, only four western teams came to Hilldale for games, and Hilldale's western trip in 1922 was a financial fiasco. Bolden sought to withdraw from the league and requested a refund of his deposit, which Foster refused. The two threatened to raid each other's rosters, but ultimately Hilldale retained its associate membership in the league for a second season in 1922.

After the 1922 season, Hilldale resigned from the NNL for the second time. Foster still refused to refund the deposit, citing a recent change in league bylaws preventing it. Foster's refusal to refund the deposit was a symptom of the mistrust the two executives had for one another. Bolden struck back by forming a rival league, the Mutual Association of Eastern Colored Baseball Clubs, popularly known as the Eastern Colored League (ECL), to begin play in 1923.

The formation of the league set off a public relations war with Foster and the other members of the NNL. Foster's chief criticism was that some of the owners of ECL teams were white. Of particular



The 1924 Colored World Series

concern to Foster was Bolden's inclusion of Nat Strong, a white booking agent in New York, as a league member. From Bolden's perspective, Strong's tight control of the New York market made it necessary to do business with him, especially since Sunday ball was still prohibited in Philadelphia, but not New York. Bolden countered that most of the NNL teams rented parks from white owners, and rent on these parks ran to 25 percent of gross receipts. In contrast, black owners controlled many of the ECL parks.

In his typical fashion Bolden strengthened his team by raiding NNL rosters. The result was that Hilldale dominated the early years of the league. They won the first three league titles in 1923, 1924 and 1925, appeared in the first two Colored World Series in 1924 and 1925, and won the Series in 1925. Of course, pilfering their players did not enhance Bolden's popularity with NNL owners.

Foster and Bolden maintained frosty relations, but the lure of potential profits superseded their dislike for one another. In the fall of 1923 the two executives met in New York and put their differences aside, agreeing to stage a colored World Series beginning the following year. This agreement became the groundwork for more substantial cooperation between the leagues.

The NNL champion Kansas City Monarchs bested Hilldale in the inaugural World Series. While a financial success, the player shares were less than they likely would have earned in a barnstorming series against white players. The winners share was barely \$300 and the losers took slightly less than \$200 each. Bolden and Foster were happy with the outcome however, because the series helped to focus national attention on professional black baseball. Unlike regular season games, the series was acknowledged by the white press in many cities.

After the series, Bolden and Foster set about normalizing relations between the NNL and the

ECL. They authored a National Agreement, which was ratified by the two leagues. The agreement divided geographic territory between the two leagues, standardized player contracts, and formally inserted a reserve clause into player contracts. Both Bolden and Foster felt the agreement would provide the stability necessary to insure the financial success of their respective leagues.

Hilldale won the second World Series in 1925, but it too was a financial disappointment. Hilldale's winning share was barely \$80 per player. They never returned to the Colored World Series, but performed well, and profitably, for the remainder of the decade. Ed Bolden suffered some personal setbacks, including a nervous breakdown in 1927, and would eventually leave the team.

Before the 1928 season, Hilldale withdrew from the ECL. Though Bolden had founded the league, by 1928 he no longer found membership profitable, and abandoned it. Two other teams also withdrew before opening day, dealing a fatal blow to the league, which did not finish the season. Hilldale played that year as an independent team, and while profits fell from the preceding two years, they finished the season in the black.

Just one year later Bolden changed his mind again about league membership. He assembled five of the six original ECL franchises and formed the American Negro League (ANL) in time for the 1929 season. The league lasted only one season however, during which Hilldale compiled a 39-35 record, good for fourth place.

End of the line

1929 marked the apex of Hilldale's popularity. Despite their mediocre record, they sold more than 56,000 tickets and turned a profit. Storm clouds were on the horizon, however. Jobs were disappearing and the economy was plunging into what would become the Great Depression, wreaking financial havoc on black baseball.

In response to the difficult times faced by Hilldale, Bolden attempted to dissolve the corporation early in 1930. He quietly made plans for a new team he planned to organize with the financial backing of white promoter Harry Passon. The rest of Hilldale's board had other ideas, however. They blocked his attempt and bought him out of the corporation. Just like that, Ed Bolden was no longer a part of the legacy he had created.

Bolden was forced out of the organization he had built from a ragtag collection of boys into the best ballclub on the wrong side of the color barrier. Two years later, under the control of new president John Drew, the club folded. It was an ignominious ending for a once proud franchise. Hilldale stood atop the eastern black baseball world for more than a decade after turning professional. Ed Bolden turned a successful amateur team into a powerful and profitable professional one, captured a national championship, and saw five future Hall of Famers wear the Hilldale flannels. Though Foster is more famous, organized black league baseball would not have been as successful without the contributions of Ed Bolden, whose Hilldale Daisies were an example of the profitability possible in the baseball business, regardless of the color of one's skin.

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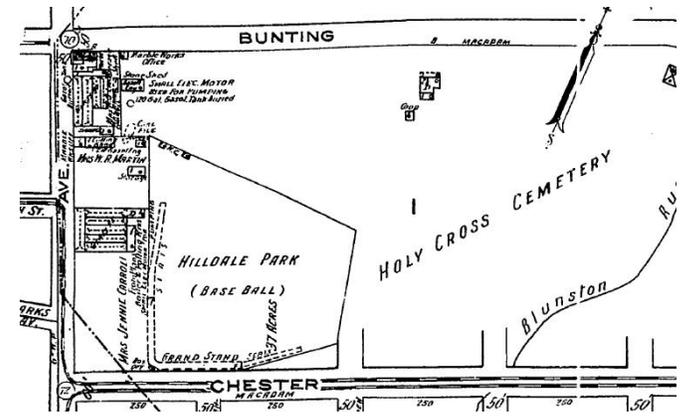
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MLB Team Employee Directory Project Update

We are well underway building a historical database of major league baseball employees. We hope this will give us a new and unique lens in major league front and back offices. Sean Lahman is in the process of constructing the physical database from our data entry.

We have a terrific group of volunteers who have made this project possible: to date we have completed roughly 1,200 team-seasons and have another 200 or so assigned. But there are still many team-seasons to go.

If you would like to help, we need volunteers to enter data from information sources, principally team media guides, into a spreadsheet. Most of the team-seasons for which we have electronic sources have already been entered or are in process.

We do have hard copies of roughly two-thirds of the years between 1983 and 2004 for most teams and can upload the relevant couple of pages from each if there is a team you'd like to work on—a half dozen or so of these teams are still available. Additionally, if you have a source with the relevant information and would be willing to enter it into a spreadsheet, that would be terrific as well.

Please let us know if you might be willing to take on a few years of your favorite team year at dan@daniel-levitt.com