

# BLACK SOX SCANDAL



Vol. 13, No. 1, June 2021

Research Committee Newsletter

## Leading off ...

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### Chairman's Corner

By Jacob Pomrenke

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It's hard to miss all of the loud, colorful advertisements encouraging fans to bet on baseball this season.

Three years after the US Supreme Court struck down a federal ban on sports betting — and after a century of baseball officials strongly denying there was any place in the game for gambling — you can't turn on a major-league game without seeing a link to some form of wagering these days.

On Opening Day, the Detroit Tigers broadcast on Bally Sports Detroit showed at least 10 gaming ads in the first nine innings of the season, for companies like DraftKings, PokerStars, BetMGM, TwinSpires, and FanDuel Sportsbook, according to *Washington Post* columnist Micheline Maynard. The owner of that TV network, Sinclair Broadcasting, changed the

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One hundred years ago, in the weeks before the Black Sox trial began in June 1921, Swede Risberg organized a team called the "South Side Stars" with Shoeless Joe Jackson, Chick Gandil, Happy Felsch, and Lefty Williams to play weekend games at the White City Amusement Park in Chicago. See the full story on page 3.

## Summer of SABR series to feature Black Sox panel

Register now to join us for this virtual event on August 14

As part of SABR's 50th anniversary in 2021, all baseball fans are invited to join us online for the [Summer of SABR: Golden Celebration Series](#), presented by Major League Baseball and Baseball-Reference.com.

The Summer of SABR online sessions will be held on the weekends of June 25-27, July 23-25, and August 10, 13-14.

On Saturday, August 14, the SABR Black Sox Scandal Committee and Century Committee will co-host a panel discussion on the 100th anniversary of the Black Sox criminal trial with



authors Bill Lamb, Bruce Allardice, and Don Zminda, moderated by Jacob Pomrenke.

We hope you'll join us for this special online discussion.

Registration is \$35 for SABR members and \$50 for non-members.

The single registration fee will provide access to the entirety of the Summer of SABR: Golden Celebration Series, including all nine sessions to be held in June, July and August.

Visit [SABR.org/summer](https://www.sabr.org/summer) to learn more or to register for the Summer of SABR online sessions.

## ► CHAIRMAN

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station's name from Fox Sports Detroit to promote Bally's, a national casino conglomerate, one day before the season began.

MLB Network routinely displays ads for DraftKings, one of the league's "authorized gaming operators," and its highlight shows include moneyline odds and point spreads along with a team's run and hit totals for every game played.

As of June 2021, sports betting legislation has been passed in 31 of the 50 US states, with others likely soon to follow. Some require bets to be placed in-person, while others already allow full betting services online or on mobile devices.

In the coming years, the Cubs and White Sox are likely to open sportsbook kiosks at Chicago's Wrigley Field and Guaranteed Rate Field, further cementing the brave new world that baseball finds itself in, more than 100 years after the fixed World Series of 1919.

You'll soon be able to attend a game at Wrigley Field and place a bet on how many total runs will be scored in an upcoming game between the Cubs and Phillies. You can bet on the final margin of victory, or which team will win the game outright.

Fans could do all that a century ago, as well — without the mobile phones, of course. Betting was a popular pastime, then and now, implicitly encouraged by baseball officials as a way to help spur fan interest. We all tend to enjoy the game a little more when we have something riding on it, whether that's an emotional investment or a financial one.

But one of the most important lessons of the Black Sox Scandal is that a careless attitude about the game's integrity can lead to a far worse outcome. It's why baseball officials spent the rest of the 20th century *discouraging* any link between baseball and betting.

Betting is far more sophisticated today, and so are the security measures in place to prevent a scandal like the 1919 World Series from happening again. Players who enjoy life-changing, million-dollar salaries in the majors are unlikely to be as susceptible to bribes as Eddie Cicotte or Chick Gandil. But there are other figures on the periphery of the game who could be enticed to influence a result if the price was right: umpires, athletic trainers, video replay operators, clubhouse attendants, and others.

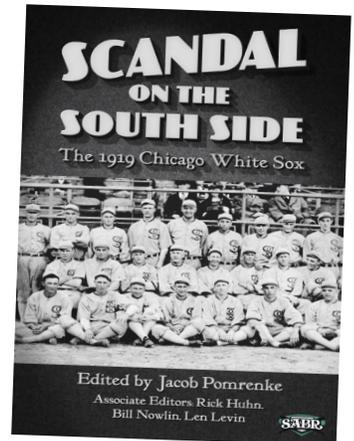
If the rewards start to outweigh the risks, and the opportunity is right, no sport in the world is immune to game-fixing. Baseball may consider the rewards of legalized betting to be worth it right now, but its own history shows it must be extra careful in considering all the risks.

For more information about SABR's Black Sox Scandal Research Committee, e-mail [buckweaver@gmail.com](mailto:buckweaver@gmail.com).

## Catch up on Black Sox committee projects, research

Want to dive deeper into the Black Sox Scandal? Here are a few ways to catch up on some of our recent committee projects:

◆ ***Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox***, edited by Jacob Pomrenke, with associate editors Rick Huhn, Bill Nowlin, and Len Levin, is available from the SABR Digital Library at [SABR.org/ebooks](https://SABR.org/ebooks). All SABR members can download the e-book edition for free in PDF, EPUB, or Kindle formats. SABR members also get a 50% discount to purchase the paperback edition.



Free download available at [SABR.org/ebooks](https://SABR.org/ebooks)

◆ ***Eight Myths Out***, published in 2019, is an online project on the most common errors and misconceptions about the scandal. View it at [SABR.org/eight-myths-out](https://SABR.org/eight-myths-out).

◆ **2019 Centennial Symposium: Listen to highlights** from the SABR Black Sox Scandal Centennial Symposium, held on September 28, 2019, at the Chicago History Museum to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 World Series.

◆ **Infamous America podcast**: Season 2 of the [Infamous America podcast series](#), produced by Black Barrel Media in 2019, focuses on the Black Sox Scandal, using research from our *Scandal on the South Side* book.

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# Awaiting Trial: The Black Sox at White City

By Jacob Pomrenke  
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In the months leading up to their criminal trial in the summer of 1921, the eight Chicago White Sox players accused of fixing the 1919 World Series faced a more tedious dilemma than the prospect of a prison sentence. Before they could face conspiracy charges in a Cook County courtroom, they suddenly found themselves out of work.

The legal proceedings that would determine the Black Sox players's fate were moving at a snail's pace. Following their indictments in October 1920, the defendants were forced to wait through lengthy delays that pushed back the opening of their trial for months. The team of prosecutors leading the case had been overhauled in the wake of a contentious election that fall, and the new State's Attorney made a strategic decision in March 1921 to dismiss their charges and re-indict the accused players in order to buy more time.

Shoeless Joe Jackson, Eddie Cicotte, and the other players were technically free men, but they were effectively stuck in limbo until the trial was finally scheduled to begin in late June. As prosecutors worked to round up all 13 defendants — eight players and five gamblers involved with the World Series fix — from their homes around the country, the players found themselves with no money coming in and little to do in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> They could not earn a living playing baseball with the White Sox, having been suspended by new commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis before Opening Day.

As lawyers for both the prosecution and the defense engaged in pre-trial machinations without them, some of the Black Sox players spent their days at Joe Jackson's pool room on Chicago's South Side,<sup>2</sup> but there was only so much near-beer to drink in those early days of Prohibition. Their recognizable faces precluded them from taking jobs where they might have to interact with the general public. So how best to pass the time — and maybe bring in some extra income — while waiting for their trial to open?

The answer, naturally, was to get back on the ballfield and do what they did best.



In the 1920s and '30s, Chicago was a hotbed of amateur and semipro baseball, with many former and future professional players — including big names like ex-Cubs pitcher Jim "Hippo" Vaughn — coming together every week to play games at local parks all over the city. These games, which often drew thousands of fans, were covered by Chicago's *Tribune*, *Daily News*, and other newspapers. There were more than a dozen baseball leagues around the city in 1921 and, thanks to the caliber of the players involved, many of them were extremely competitive.

These games were also occasionally integrated, with



From left, Swede Risberg, attorney Michael Ahern, Buck Weaver, attorney Thomas Nash, and Happy Felsch take a break during the Black Sox criminal trial in July 1921. In the months leading up to their trial, Risberg, Felsch, Joe Jackson, Chick Gandil, and Lefty Williams formed an independent team that played baseball at the White City Amusement Park in Chicago. (Photo: BlackBetsy.com)

powerhouse all-Black teams such as Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants — founding members of the year-old Negro National League — and Robert Gilkerson's rival Union Giants squaring off against any independent team willing to play them.

In 1921, the most glamorous new baseball park in the city was at the White City Amusement Park, Chicago's version of Coney Island, which had opened in 1905. At 63rd Street and South Park Way in the Woodlawn neighborhood, the 14-acre White City park was a popular entertainment venue known as "the city of a million lights," with carnival rides, a roller skating rink, dance hall, Ferris wheel, and a 300-foot-high electric tower with lights that could be seen up to 15 miles away.<sup>3</sup> It all revived memories of the park's namesake, the 1893 World's Fair, which had also been nicknamed "White City."<sup>4</sup>

The new baseball park on White City's southwest end could accommodate up to 5,000 fans — all of them White, since the segregated amusement park was not open to Black customers — some of them undoubtedly with their hearts still racing after riding the Whip, the Pep, the Chutes, or the Great American Racing Derby carousel.<sup>5</sup> The city's public high schools scheduled their championship tournament at the White City ballpark and the Woodlawn Lions semipro club, managed by former Cubs catcher Jimmy Archer, held their regular home games there.

With nothing else better to do, Swede Risberg decided

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he wanted to form a team and play there, too. The erstwhile White Sox shortstop enlisted the services of George K. Miller, a publicity-minded investment broker based at the Harris Trust and Savings Bank on Monroe Avenue in the downtown Loop, where they began sending out telegrams to semipro teams all over the Midwest.<sup>6</sup> Miller named their new team the South Side Stars, and Risberg recruited Joe Jackson, Lefty Williams, and Happy Felsch to star as the main attractions. “I think we’ll go big, whether we are panned [booed] or not,” Jackson told one reporter.<sup>7</sup>

The backlash to their plan was swift and strong. Their first scheduled game, on Sunday, April 17 against a team called the Aristo Giants, was canceled when the Commonwealth Edison company threatened to revoke the Aristos’ permit to play at its ballpark in Irving Park.<sup>8</sup> One by one, the city’s biggest semipro leagues announced that their players and teams would not be allowed to take the field with the disgraced Black Sox. The National Baseball Federation, a loose governing body of amateur sandlot leagues, also barred its teams from participating in games with the South Side Stars. So too did a local umpires association.<sup>9</sup>

One semipro club owner said: “We might play them one game and they would draw well — maybe better than usual. But on the way home, the average fan would say to himself, ‘By George, half of my money ... is going to the fellows who double-crossed me in 1919.’ And that fan would not come back to our park.”<sup>10</sup>

But public curiosity is a curious phenomenon, and not everyone was opposed to the idea of seeing major-league caliber players in action. The White City ballpark had already been booked up for early-season games by the time the South Side Stars formed their team, but Frank P. Conroy, who operated a ballpark at Grand Crossing Park on 75th Street and Greenwood Avenue, invited the Black Sox to open their season at his venue instead.



On Sunday, May 8, 1921, Risberg, Jackson, Felsch, and Williams took the field for the first time as the South Side Stars — just over seven months since their final appearance in a White Sox uniform at Comiskey Park.<sup>11</sup> Conroy must have been delighted to see an overflow crowd of 6,000 fans show up to see the game despite little advance publicity: “There were no handbills, dodgers or other forms of advertising to secure the crowd. Tickets were placed in drug stores and billiard halls on the south side, and the advance sale was said to be large enough to fill the park.”<sup>12</sup>

The Aristos were captained for several years by Jack Ness, who had recorded a 49-game hitting streak in the minor leagues in 1915 and then spent part of the 1916 season as a backup first baseman with the White Sox before jumping to the semipro circuit.<sup>13</sup> It’s unlikely Ness was



**White City Amusement Park, which opened in 1905, was a popular entertainment venue known as “the city of a million lights,” with carnival rides, a roller skating rink, dance hall, Ferris wheel, and a 300-foot-high electric tower with lights that could be seen up to 15 miles away.** (Photo: Chicago Daily News Collection, Chicago History Museum, DN-0066641)

still on the team in 1921, but the Aristos were no match for his one-time teammates, as Lefty Williams dominated the semipro batters for a 7-2 victory. According to syndicated columnist Al Spink, the players received \$25 each for their efforts that day.<sup>14</sup>

Some were dismayed by the rousing reception that Chicago fans gave to the indicted ballplayers. One Texas sports writer remarked, “A gent has a lotta trouble trying to keep his faith in the human race.”<sup>15</sup> Oscar Reichow of *The Sporting News* wrote, “[It’s] just like nuts to go see a murderer.”<sup>16</sup> But fans continued showing up to see the Black Sox.

The following weekend, Chick Gandil made his first appearance with the South Side Stars. One of the few Black Sox defendants who had not already returned to Chicago, Gandil had been arrested at his home in Los Angeles on April 26, on orders of the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office. He produced a pre-paid train ticket to Chicago and was released on bail with orders to report to court officers by May 1.<sup>17</sup> As prosecutors continued to round up trial witnesses and participants, Gandil took the field at first base for the Stars in their 16-3 blowout victory over a visiting team from Omaha, Nebraska. The crowd reportedly surpassed 7,000 — twice as high as some White Sox home games that season<sup>18</sup> — with some fans turned away for lack of space. The Black Sox players “were given a great hand ... throughout the game.”<sup>19</sup>

On May 22, the South Side Stars faced the Gilkerson Union Giants at Conroy’s Grand Crossing park. The Giants were a popular, independent all-Black team that spent their summers barnstorming around the Midwest playing lucrative games against local semipro teams. Giants center fielder Bill “Happy” Evans — who gained posthumous fame as

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DANCING-DINING-SKATING  
**FREE** PARKING SPACE **FREE**  
 FOR AUTOS  
**BASEBALL** 3:00 **TODAY**  
 P.M.  
**SOUTH SIDE STARS**  
 HAPPY FELSCH CHICK GANDIL  
 CHARLES RISBERG LEFTY WILLIAMS  
 JOE JACKSON  
**WHITE CITY BALL PARK**

**South Side Stars**  
 Happy Felsch, Swede Risberg, Chick Gandil, Lefty Williams, Joe Jackson play  
**Woodlawn at White City**  
 Ball Park this Afternoon  
 and Sunday—3:00 P.M.  
 65th St. and So. Park Ave.  
*Free Parking Space for Autos in Park.*

**South Side Stars**  
 Happy Felsch, Lefty Williams, Swede Risberg, Chick Gandil, Joe Jackson  
**PLAY STRONG ELKS' CLUB**  
 Sunday Afternoon at 3 o'Clock  
**WHITE CITY BALL PARK**  
 65th and South Park Ave.  
**FREE PARKING SPACE FOR AUTOS IN PARK**

In the summer of 1921, promoter George K. Miller placed ads in the *Chicago Tribune* to help drive interest in the South Side Stars games at White City Amusement Park. These ads appeared in the newspaper on, from left, June 12, June 18, and June 25, 1921. Jury selection for the Black Sox trial began on Monday, June 27. (Photos: Chicago Tribune / Newspapers.com)

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the great-great uncle of Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex<sup>20</sup> — told author John Holway in a 1972 interview that he picked up some batting tips from the Black Sox:

“If you get Cum Posey’s memoirs, you’ll see where he said he would rather see me at bat with a man on third than anybody he’s ever seen. And I learned it from Buck Weaver and Happy Felsch of the Chicago Black Sox around 1921. See, I keep my hands in tight to my stomach when I bat. And I don’t watch the ball, I watch the pitcher’s left shoulder. ... Josh Gibson, Ray Brown, Roy Partlow, Sammy T. Hughes, Felton Snow, those were my pupils. And Buck Weaver and Happy Felsch taught me.”<sup>21</sup>

While Weaver never played<sup>22</sup> for the South Side Stars in 1921, he did play some games against the Gilkerson Union Giants in later years. Evans also played at least eight other documented games against Swede Risberg while barnstorming in Minnesota in 1923-24. He told Holway, “There wasn’t a great deal of difference in our scores; they would win sometimes and we would win sometimes.”



The Black Sox’s success on and off the field ruffled the feathers of Chicago’s business and political elite. In mid-May, Sheldon “Frank” Govier introduced a resolution in the Chicago City Council to revoke Conroy’s ballpark license. Among the aldermen who expressed support for the punitive measure were future Chicago mayor Anton Cermak, Chicago Bears minority owner George Maypole, and former University of Chicago football star Walter P. Steffen.<sup>23</sup>

Govier, a Scottish-born soccer star who had played on the 1912 US Olympic team, may have had a personal reason for wanting to punish the Black Sox and anyone who associated with them: His brother, Benjamin Govier, had

once captained a professional soccer team owned by White Sox owner Charles Comiskey.<sup>24</sup>

The conflict came to a head at a City Council meeting on June 13, when Frank Govier baited Risberg and Gandil into a shouting match. At one point, Govier said Risberg “would not even be allowed to play [ball] in his hometown.” Risberg yelled back, “Bet any kind of dough I can.” To which Govier retorted, “Don’t talk dough with me. Bet dough on you two years ago and lost. That was when you sold out.” When the dust settled, the city council’s Judiciary Committee voted to turn down Govier’s resolution and the Sox were free to continue playing ball.<sup>25</sup>

By then, the White City ballpark had finally opened up for their use. After several weeks of declining crowds at Grand Crossing, the South Side Stars’s first appearance at White City on June 5 was a spectacle. According to Al Spink, the crowd numbered around 5,000 and the players received \$50 apiece for a couple hours of work in front of the amusement park rides.<sup>26</sup>

Many sports writers could barely contain their disgust for the rowdy scene at White City. The Chicago papers stopped carrying reports of their Sunday afternoon games as the trial date approached in June. One City Hall employee wrote in to the *Chicago Tribune* — the only newspaper still accepting George K. Miller’s small, 1-inch display ads promoting the South Side Stars’s upcoming games — to complain: “After refraining from giving them publicity as long as you have, do you not think it would have been advisable to hold off until after their trial?”<sup>27</sup> An Associated Press report was published with the headline “Black Sox Are Forgotten Now,” pleading with fans to pay more attention to their less talented replacements at Comiskey Park instead.<sup>28</sup>

The following Sunday, syndicated columnist James Kilgallen ventured out to White City to look over the “alleged baseball crooks.” He watched as the South Side Stars “toyed with their opponents,” the Woodlawn Lions. The “only feature” of the game, he wrote, “except the show-off tactics of the former Sox, was a long home run by Jackson,

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who was ‘all in’ when he finished circling the bases.” He gave an exaggerated account of Shoeless Joe Jackson’s weight and said the outfielder “wouldn’t run for any ball that wasn’t hit right into his hands. ... He drank pop and ate cracker-jack throughout the contest.” Kilgallen added with obvious disdain, “The morale of all of them is low. They figure they’re ‘through.’”<sup>29</sup>

The Black Sox continued to schedule weekend games right up until the Fourth of July — a week after their trial finally began at the Cook County Courthouse downtown, a few miles north of White City. Jury selection opened on Monday, June 27, less than 24 hours after the South Side Stars played an Elks Club team in the shadow of the 300-foot-tall Electric Tower, just down the boardwalk from the mirror maze funhouse called 1001 Troubles. This time, there weren’t even a thousand fans in the ballpark to watch them play; the players reportedly only collected a few dollars apiece from their share of the admission gate.<sup>30</sup>

By the time they finished their final game on the Fourth of July against a team calling itself the World Nations,<sup>31</sup> the Black Sox had seemingly worn out their welcome after 10 weeks of playing ball in the carnival atmosphere of White City. Fans were tired of the spectacle and ready to find out if their former idols would be back in the big leagues anytime soon.

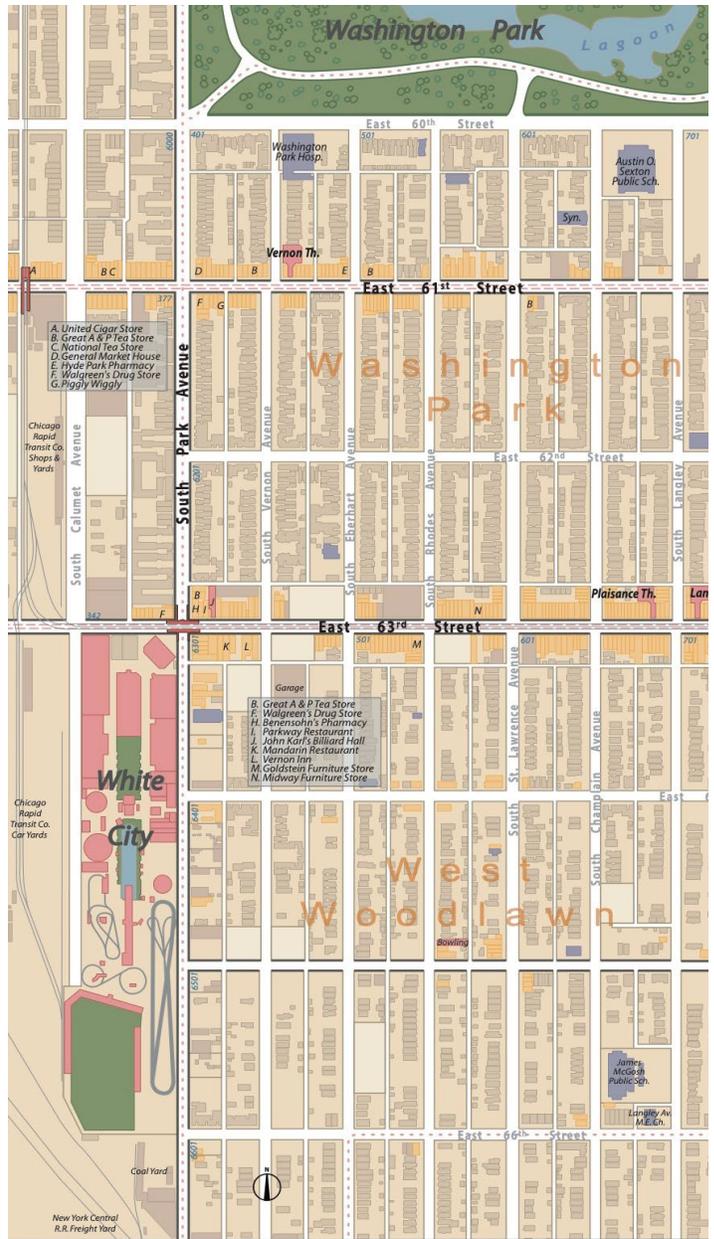
Inside the courtroom, jury selection continued for another two weeks, finally concluding on Saturday, July 16.<sup>32</sup> The players had had their fun, passing the time while prosecutors prepared their case all summer, but now they would have to exchange their spikes and stirrups for shirts and ties in order to find out what the future had in store for them. The real-world roller-coaster ride was about to begin.



After they were acquitted on August 2, 1921, by a group of 12 working-class Chicagoans, the White Sox players celebrated through the night with those same jurors at a South Side restaurant that had ties to Al Capone’s mob.<sup>33</sup> Their jubilation was short-lived, as baseball commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis announced the following day that they would never be allowed to play in the major leagues again.

The Black Sox were free from a life behind prison bars, but still barred from the highest levels of the game they loved. Once again, they turned to baseball to eke out a living as best they could. Three weeks after the trial, the South Side Stars — with Jackson, Gandil, Felsch, and Risberg, plus Eddie Cicotte replacing Lefty Williams on the mound — traveled to Oklahoma and played a series of games around the state against local amateur and semipro teams. They won every game they played before returning north after Labor Day.<sup>34</sup>

Their names, and their infamous reputations, would



**The baseball stadium at White City Amusement Park, located in the park’s southern end, was built in 1921 and housed up to 5,000 fans. Tickets to the South Side Stars games cost 50 cents. This circa-1928 map of Chicago’s Woodlawn neighborhood was one year after a fire destroyed parts of the park, which fell into bankruptcy in the early 1930s. (Photo: Scott Newman / Jazz Age Chicago)**

continue to be a draw for many small-town fans around the United States for the rest of the decade. Since the American League and National League did not extend farther west or south than St. Louis, the “outlaw” Black Sox offered fans in other cities a glimpse at the elite skills possessed by real major-league talent. Even after they were forced to look for regular civilian jobs to make ends meet, most of the Black Sox players continued playing ball every summer into the

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early 1930s.

The disgraced White Sox never returned to play at Chicago's White City ballpark after their trial ended. In 1927, the amusement park's iconic Electric Tower, the popular ballroom, and several other buildings were destroyed by a fire. The Great Depression delivered the final blow, and the park's owners filed for bankruptcy a few years later. The rest of the park was torn down in 1950 to make way for a public housing project.<sup>35</sup>

### Notes

1. Not all of the Black Sox players were living in Chicago during the spring of 1921. Fred McMullin claimed he could not afford to travel from his home in Los Angeles to Chicago for the trial. The state of California refused to extradite him and he did not stand trial with the other seven players. His charges were dismissed after the jury returned a not-guilty verdict.

2. Jackson's pool room and cigar store was located at 1202 E. 55th Street. In October 1921, he sold the property for \$1 to his friend Lefty Williams.

3. George Estep, "The Roller-Coaster Life of Towering and Tawdry White City," *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1986.

4. Steven A. Riess, "Leisure," *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*, Chicago Historical Society, 2005. Accessed online on April 24, 2021.

5. "White City Construction Co. scrapbook, 1914-33," Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois. The unused ticket book with a list of active rides is dated July 11-12, 1921.

6. James L. Kilgallen, "New Start Sought by Barred Stars," *United News*, April 9, 1921. "Chicago Brokers Back Accused Ball Players," *Associated Press*, April 9, 1921.

7. Kilgallen, "New Start."

8. "'Black Sox' Baseball Game is Canceled," *Chicago Daily News*, April 16, 1921. That game was scheduled at a park at N. Elston Ave. and Kedzie Ave. in the Irving Park neighborhood.

9. "Slam Ball Park Gates on Indicted Sox," *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 1921, 17.

10. "Semi-Pro Ball Dead If Indicted Sox Play, Is Cry," *Chicago Tribune*, April 18, 1921.

11. Adam Berenbak, "September 27, 1920: 'The end of some inevitable chain': Chicago's final Black Sox game," SABR Games Project, accessed online on May 17, 2021.

12. "Six Thousand Fans See Ex-Sox Ball Players Win," *Chicago Daily News*, May 9, 1921. Stanley Parsons, "Fans Crowd Park to See Indicted Sox Play," *Collyer's Eye*, May 14, 1921, 4.

13. William F. Lamb, "Jack Ness," SABR BioProject, accessed online on May 17, 2021. There is no box score



Sheldon "Frank" Govier, left, Chicago's 9th Ward alderman, attempted to restrict the Black Sox from playing baseball in 1921 by revoking the license of a ballpark operator, but his resolution in the City Council was turned down. (Chicago Daily News Collection, Chicago History Museum, DN-0070379)

available for the May 8 game, and the Aristo Giants were mentioned only briefly in local newspapers in 1921. A Chicago-based club called the Aristos, with Jack Ness as their cleanup hitter and first baseman, was very active from 1917-19 and their box scores appeared regularly in local newspapers.

14. Al Spink, "Al Spink's Column," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 6, 1922. Spink claimed to have talked with an unnamed player who had been a member of the South Side Stars. Besides the five Black Sox players, he named four other members of the team who have yet to be identified, "Conroy, c; O'Malley, 2b; Wells, 3b; Adams, rf." The catcher may have been one of Frank Conroy's younger brothers, Michael, Thomas, or William, who all worked as switchmen for a railroad company. Little is known about their baseball skills or experience. "Wells" may have been James Webb, a Pullman freight mechanic from Chicago who is known to have played third base with the Black Sox touring team in 1922.

15. William B. Ruggles, "The Passing Hour," *Dallas Morning News*, May 11, 1921.

16. Oscar C. Reichow, "Just Like Nuts Go To See A Murderer," *The Sporting News*, May 19, 1921.

17. William F. Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom: The Grand Jury, Criminal Trial, and Civil Litigation* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2013), 97-98.

18. The White Sox drew 3,500 fans for a midweek game against the St. Louis Browns on April 26. See "1921 Chicago White Sox Schedule," Baseball-Reference.com.

19. "Indicted Sox Drawing Record Crowds," *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, May 22, 1921.

20. For more on Bill Evans's family, see this author's story, "Meghan Markle, the Royal Wedding, and the Black Sox," in *SABR Black Sox Scandal Committee Newsletter*, June 2018.

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21. John Holway, *Black Giants* (Springfield, VA: Lord Fairfax Press, 2010).

22. Weaver declined Risberg's initial offer to play — not because he refused to play with his "guilty" teammates, as was widely reported, but because he was making too much money working at his brother-in-law's drug store. See "Weaver Not in Sunday Ball Game on South Side," *Chicago Daily News*, May 10, 1921. After the trial ended, Weaver did play with and against the other Black Sox players into the early 1930s.

23. "Proceedings of the City Council of Chicago," Vol. 92, p. 185, May 13, 1921. The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. Accessed online at Archive.org on May 16, 2021.

24. Benjamin Govier, who was elected to the National Soccer Hall of Fame in 1950, played for many years on the Chicago-based Pullman F.C. company team. In 1901, he captained Comiskey's Chicago team in a short-lived Midwestern league with teams in St. Louis, Detroit, and Milwaukee. Gabe Logan. "Soccer," *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, Chicago Historical Society, 2005. Accessed online on November 18, 2013.

25. James L. Kilgallen, " 'Black Sheep' Can Play, But Their Morale Hangs Low," *United News*, June 14, 1921. "Proceedings of the City Council of Chicago," Vol. 92, p. 416, June 13, 1921. The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. Accessed online via the Internet Archive on May 16, 2021.

26. Spink, "Al Spink's Column."

27. T.H. O'Neill, unpublished letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, June 25, 1921; found in "Chicago White Sox and 1919 World Series Baseball Scandal Collection," Chicago History Museum.

28. "Black Sox Are Forgotten Now," *Associated Press*, June 5, 1921.

29. Kilgallen, " 'Black Sheep' Can Play, But Their Morale Hangs Low."

30. Spink, "Al Spink's Column."

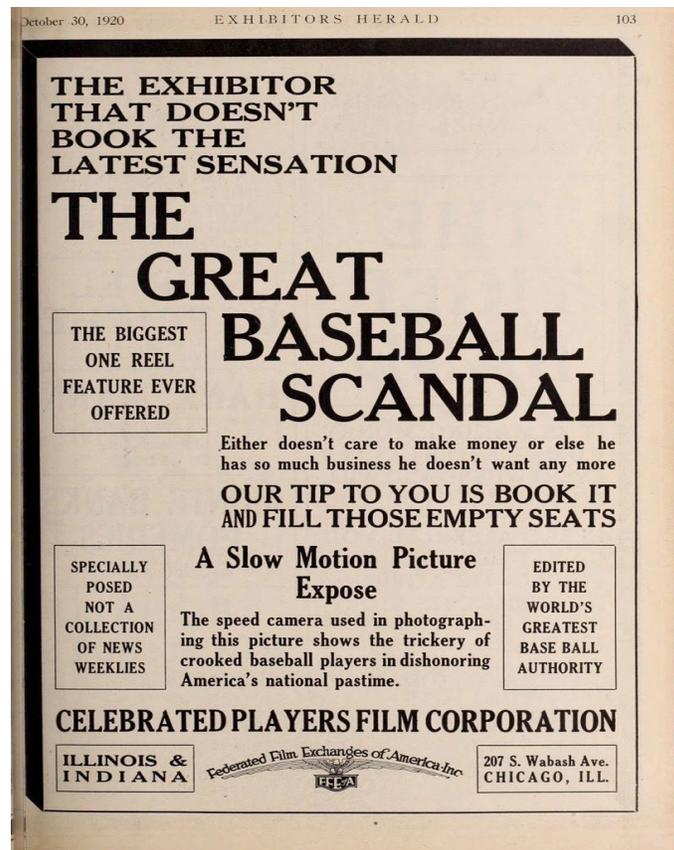
31. Because there is no box score or published game account, it cannot be determined if this "World Nations" team was the same as the Kansas City-based *All-Nations* barnstorming team that occasionally included star Cuban pitcher José Méndez, a future Baseball Hall of Famer.

32. Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom*, 106-07.

33. See "Diamond Joe and the Black Sox jury celebration," *SABR Black Sox Scandal Committee Newsletter*, December 2017.

34. Ron Coleman, "The 1921 Black Sox tour of Oklahoma," *SABR Black Sox Scandal Committee Newsletter*, June 2018.

35. Wallace Best, "Greater Grand Crossing," *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*, Chicago Historical Society, 2005. Accessed online April 24, 2021.



*Exhibitors Herald*, October 30, 1920

## The Great Baseball Scandal silent film — lost to history

Committee member **John Thorn** passes along this interesting promotional poster, with some background on a long-lost film about the 1919 World Series:

As early as October 1920 — days after the story broke in late September — a film about the Black Sox Scandal was in circulation. This advertisement appeared in the October 30, 1920, edition of the *Exhibitors Herald*.

The one-reel *Great Baseball Scandal* film was made by Lincoln Borthwick. Like most silent films, Thorn says, this one is now considered to be lost.

Borthwick's previous film was a slow-motion special feature of Babe Ruth's swing, filmed during multiple New York Yankees games in the 1920 season, at least one at the Polo Grounds and one at League Park in Cleveland. That reel also includes slow-motion footage of pitchers Carl Mays and Jack Quinn.

The Babe Ruth and Carl Mays film can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJM-Qu7f2jg>.

# Joe Jackson Museum reopens after 18 months

The Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum and Baseball Library in Greenville, South Carolina, shut its doors near the end of 2019 for renovations and a move down the street to make room for a new mixed-use development called .408 Jackson.

The museum, led by new executive director Dan Wallach, reopened on June 25, 2021, with a new roof, a new HVAC system, and a new 800-square-foot annex for extra museum space and a gift shop.

The museum is now open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., plus before and after each Greenville Drive home game. The museum also now offers individual memberships starting at \$20 annually, which help to keep admission free of charge.

Visit [shoelessjoejackson.org](http://shoelessjoejackson.org) to learn more, become a member, or to plan your visit.



The red brick building that houses the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum, where Joe and his wife Katie lived for years until their deaths in the 1950s, was relocated in July 2020 to the western end of Field Street across from Fluor Field in Greenville, South Carolina. The museum reopened on June 25, 2021.



Above Left: A photo of Joe Jackson greets visitors in the new entranceway to the museum.

Above Center: The newly restored Gene P. Carney Research Room, honoring the founding chairman of SABR's Black Sox Scandal Committee.

Above Right: An exhibit in Jackson's old bedroom showcases photos and artifacts from his baseball career.

Left: Replica jerseys from Jackson's Chicago White Sox days are displayed in clubhouse lockers at the museum.

(All photos courtesy of Dan Wallach)

# Comiskey's options in 1920 ranged from bad to worse

By Bruce Allardice

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The late Gene Carney was only one of several experts who came down hard on Charles Comiskey's handling of the Black Sox Scandal in the months following the 1919 World Series. Despite being informed of his players' plot to throw the World Series as early as Game One, the Chicago White Sox owner decided to offer contracts to all of the suspected Black Sox fixers before the 1920 season.<sup>1</sup>

To these authors, Comiskey's decision indicates his willingness, at a minimum, to condone players he suspected of throwing games in an effort to keep the White Sox competitive.<sup>2</sup> Marvin Miller, the first executive director of the MLB Players Association, once suggested that Comiskey's name be removed from the Baseball Hall of Fame. Other experts, notably Comiskey biographer Tim Hornbaker, offer a more nuanced view of Comiskey's response to the scandal.

This article will not analyze the moral dilemma Comiskey faced in choosing whether to re-sign his players, except to note that by the spring of 1920, he still didn't have enough proof on legal grounds to charge the "Eight Men Out" with throwing the Series.<sup>3</sup> The broader legal implications of Comiskey's actions have also been discussed at length elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> What this article will focus on are the baseball options Comiskey had for building his team's roster in time for Opening Day.

Following the 1919 World Series, with fix rumors swirling around behind the scenes, Comiskey was basically faced with three choices:

1. Trade the Black Sox players to other teams
2. Release/suspend the Black Sox players and acquire replacements
3. Bring them back and hope they played honest ball in the future

The first option — finding new players via trades — was a risky move at best. The 1919 White Sox were noted for having little depth, relying heavily on their eight starters in the field and their top two pitchers in Eddie Cicotte and Lefty Williams. They had no surplus talent to trade. In early 1920, many newspapers reported that the Sox would need to acquire, not trade away, more talent in order to defend their American League pennant.

Trading the suspected players was an option, but what would they have received in return? Logically, the clubs they traded with were likely aware of the World Series fix rumors and would not give equal value for veterans like Shoeless Joe Jackson or up-and-coming stars like Happy Felsch. That would mean a pretty good player could be acquired in exchange for Felsch or Jackson, but it would still result in the White Sox's talent level sinking below that of



**White Sox owner Charles Comiskey, left, pictured with Chicago Cubs president William Veeck Sr., had to make a decision following the 1919 World Series whether to offer contracts to the eight players he suspected of intentionally throwing games.** (Photo: Chicago Daily News Collection, Chicago History Museum, SDN-062205)

rivals Cleveland and New York.

We also cannot assume that other teams would even *want* to trade for the suspected players — or that Comiskey would feel right in trading them without warning other teams that he had hired detectives to investigate them in the offseason.<sup>5</sup> One example is the case of Lee Magee, a pretty good player for the Chicago Cubs who was released in February 1920 after accusations of game-fixing. No other club signed him and he never played again in the major leagues.

Of course, trade rumors abounded in early 1920 — they always do in the spring. One story had holdouts Chick Gandil and Fred McMullin being sent to the Pacific Coast League for slugging first baseman Jack Fournier, a former White Sox prospect. Nothing came of that, and Fournier soon signed with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Another proposed trade had Joe Jackson going to the New York Yankees for third baseman Frank "Home Run" Baker, who would have replaced holdout Buck Weaver. Yet another rumor had Happy Felsch being swapped for Philadelphia A's pitcher Scott Perry or Yankees first baseman Wally Pipp. These rumored trades seem to have had more to do with the Sox replacing holdouts and acquiring pitching depth than they did getting rid of the suspects. In

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any event, none of the rumored trades transpired.



Comiskey's second option was to immediately suspend the suspected players — players valued at 31.1 Wins Above Replacement (WAR), as measured by Baseball-Reference.com — and try to get replacements. This scenario is essentially what the White Sox followed after the scandal was publicly exposed near the end of the 1920 regular season. The results were awful: the Sox tumbled from a pennant contender in 1920 with a 96-58 record to seventh place at 62-92 in 1921.

Before the 1921 season, the White Sox had the entire winter to call up, trade for, or purchase replacements for the suspended players, a longer time frame than Comiskey had to make a decision in the 1919-20 offseason. And yet, with more time to do so, Comiskey could not come close to replacing the value of his missing players.

Judged by Wins Above Average (WAA),<sup>6</sup> the 1921 White Sox starters were below the American League average in four of the eight positions: catcher, third base, left field, and center field — with three of those spots in the lineup once filled by Black Soxers: Buck Weaver, Joe Jackson, and Happy Felsch.

Two new players, Earl Sheely and Ernie Johnson, were picked up from the Pacific Coast League. They were decent players, though not stars. In the outfield, veteran Harry Hooper hit .327 and rookies Bibb Falk and Johnny Mostil showed promise at the start of their long and successful baseball careers. But none were as productive as the Black Sox they had replaced.

The pitching staff's shortcomings was even worse.<sup>7</sup> Despite an amazing season by Red Faber (25-15, league-leading 2.48 ERA, 8.1 WAA, 11.4 WAR) for a next-to-last place team — bringing to mind comparisons with Steve Carlton's iconic 1972 season for the Philadelphia Phillies — the 1921 White Sox pitchers were well below the league average, with the worst team ERA in the American League.

Twenty-game winners Lefty Williams and Eddie Cicotte (who went 43-24 in 1920 with a combined 602 1/3 innings pitched and 8.6 WAR) were "replaced" by the forgettable Roy Wilkinson, Dom Mulrenan, Doug McWeeny, Shovel Hodge, and John Russell, who went a combined 17-47 with a -4.5 WAR. Of these five, only Hodge logged any significant number of innings for the White Sox in 1922. One reporter opined that the replacement hurlers "could hardly hold their jobs in any good semipro team."<sup>8</sup>

The White Sox's options to find replacement players in the spring of 1920 were even more limited than in 1921. First, the time frame to make deals for purchase players was shorter. More importantly, the Sox had few players ready for major-league action in the minor leagues that

# FELSCH AND JACKSON TO BE TRADED IN EFFORT TO BOLSTER TEAM

BY JOE LE BLANC

NOTWITHSTANDING the statements made by "Kid" Gleason during the week that the White Sox team as made up last year would remain intact, news has leaked out that a big deal is impending, whereby Scott Perry, of the Philadelphia Athletics, will come to the Southsiders in exchange for "Hap" Felsch, and Frank Baker, of the New York Yankees, will be traded for Joe Jackson, who will eventually land with the Boston Red Sox. A majority of the White Sox players will be missing from the lineup when the season opens, and to fill the gaps in his machine Comiskey will be forced to do considerable trading with the minor leagues.

Before the 1920 season began, trade rumors flew around the baseball world, with suspected World Series fixers from the Chicago White Sox involved in some speculated deals that never came to pass. (Photo: Collyer's Eye, February 7, 1920)

they could call on.

They expected to, and did, bring up young first baseman Ted Jourdan to replace Chick Gandil. The White Sox counted on the slick-fielding Jourdan to hit at least as well as Gandil,<sup>9</sup> but after two months of the 1920 season it became apparent that Jourdan simply didn't provide enough offense. He was replaced at first by platoon outfielder Shano Collins, who provided more with the bat.

Predictably, this move also negatively impacted the White Sox's outfield depth. Their best young outfielders were Johnny Mostil, who was considered to be major-league ready in 1920 but played all season in the minors, and Bibb Falk, who was still in college at the University of Texas until midseason. Also given a look was veteran journeyman Bruno Haas, who had batted .294 for the minor-league Milwaukee Brewers in 1919.

The infield situation was just as bad. The White Sox's best in-house replacement options at shortstop and third base were Hervey McClellan, a lifetime .221 hitter who had been a little-used backup in 1919, and minor-leaguer Rube Lutzke, who hit .292 for the Winnipeg Maroons in 1919 and who would hit .228 for the Milwaukee Brewers in 1920.<sup>10</sup> The good-field, no-hit Lutzke had a brief stint with Cleveland two years later.

The White Sox's options for pitching help were perhaps worse than the field options. Entering the 1920 season, practically every expert downplayed Chicago's chances of repeating as pennant winners, based partly on team

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dissension and player holdouts, but more often on the lack of pitching.

Even with Cicotte and Williams coming back, there were doubts about Red Faber’s returning to health (he had battled injuries and a lingering bout of influenza in 1919, missing the entire World Series) and Dickey Kerr being too small to last a full season. Those worries are reflected in who the Sox invited to spring training: 11 new pitching prospects.<sup>11</sup>

Of the potential replacements, Grover Lowdermilk and Roy Wilkinson had seen spot duty in 1919. Lowdermilk’s “stuff” was admired, but control problems soon saw him out of the major leagues. Journeyman Wilkinson had decent years in 1920 and 1921,<sup>12</sup> but nobody compared him to Cicotte or Williams. Of the new pitchers, the Sox were high on hulking Spencer Heath, a Chicago boy who had won 18 games for Winnipeg in 1919, and Clarence “Shovel” Hodge, who went 7-10 for Nashville in 1919. Heath had a cup of coffee with the Sox, while Hodge would go on to post three ineffective seasons with the Sox.

Of those pitchers not invited to spring training, perhaps the best was young Charlie Robertson, who pitched two innings for the Sox in 1919. Brought up in 1922, he pitched a surprise perfect game against the Detroit Tigers, which earned him a few more mediocre years in the majors. But in 1920, he was not considered ready for the big leagues.<sup>13</sup>

With limited in-house options, Charles Comiskey might have turned to the semi-open minor league market and tried to purchase or trade for replacement talent. As of late February 1920, Comiskey was still receiving reports from his private investigators on the suspected World Series fixers,<sup>14</sup> so if he had decided to get rid of the Black Sox players before the season, it is hard to see how he could have started his search prior to early March.

If you look at the league leaders of the three high minor leagues — the American Association, International League, and Pacific Coast League — it’s hard to find much pitching talent available in March 1920 that could step in and help the White Sox compete, assuming that talent was even available for purchase. The best three minor-league pitchers who could contribute in 1920 were arguably Jesse Haines, Eddie Rommel, and Rube Parnham. In February, the St. Louis Cardinals snapped up Haines and the above-

mentioned Jack Fournier. A’s manager Connie Mack signed Rommel. The eccentric Parnham, who had made brief appearances with the A’s in 1916 and ‘17, abruptly quit baseball midway through the 1920 season (he later returned to the minors in 1922, but never reached the majors again.)<sup>15</sup>



This leaves the third option: Comiskey could re-sign the suspected World Series fixers and hope those players played honestly. The White Sox owner did have a legitimate hope they would play honest ball, at least through the regular season, if for no other reason than the players knew they were under scrutiny. Also, the bribes for throwing regular-season games would not be as lucrative as they were for the heavily wagered World Series.

For Comiskey to suspend the suspected fixers would mean forgoing baseball talent worth an irreplaceable 31.3 wins, measured by WAR.<sup>16</sup> The economic loss would total hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost ticket revenue, along with the along with the \$250,000 (\$3.365 million in today’s money) cost of replacing the players.<sup>17</sup> Most people don’t give away a fortune unless they’re forced to do so.

Historian Bill Lamb sums up Comiskey’s choice of the third option well: “Rather than take action against his players and break up a championship team, [Comiskey] opted for self-interest and hoped that the matter would blow over — a strategy that almost worked. ... Ultimately, Charles Comiskey chose to protect his business — an understandable decision, but hardly an admirable one.”<sup>18</sup>

The choice may not have been morally admirable, but given the unsuitable options, it was probably an inevitable decision for the White Sox owner to make.

### Notes

1. All except Chick Gandil, who had retired from major-league baseball after the 1919 World Series.
2. The legal concept of “condonation” (that by re-hiring the players, Comiskey had forgiven the misconduct and thus forfeited his legal right to suspend said players) played a key role in the subsequent Joe Jackson and Felsch lawsuits against the White Sox. Bill Lamb (perhaps the leading expert on the 1924 Milwaukee trials) posits that this concept swayed the Milwaukee jury to find in the players’ favor. For more on condonation, see Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2013), 169-170, 186-187; and Jacob Pomrenke, ed., *Scandal on*

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**Roy Wilkinson was one of five pitchers the White Sox asked to replace 20-game winners Eddie Cicotte and Lefty Williams in 1921. Wilkinson went 4-20 with a 5.13 ERA for the seventh-place team.** (Photo: Trading Card Database)

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*the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox* (Phoenix, AZ: SABR, 2015), 308.

3. For purposes of this article, I take the position that reflects most modern scholarship: that the information Comiskey possessed in the spring of 1920 was sufficient to suspect a fixed series, but was not enough to initiate a prosecution. As Bill Lamb points out, for a charge of conspiracy to hold up in court, the prosecution needed the testimony of one or more of the conspirators, and that didn't come about until the fall of 1920.

4. Cf. Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom*. Don Zminda, *Double Plays and Double Crosses* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 66-67.

5. Gene Carney, "Comiskey's Detectives," *SABR Baseball Research Journal*, Fall 2009.

6. The advanced statistics in this article are taken from [www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com). See [https://www.baseball-reference.com/leagues/AL/1921.shtml#team\\_output](https://www.baseball-reference.com/leagues/AL/1921.shtml#team_output).

7. The 1921 Sox were sixth in the league in runs scored, but last (eighth place) in team ERA. In 1920, they had ranked fourth in runs scored and third in ERA.

8. *Collyer's Eye*, June 18, 1921.

9. Jourdan had batted .302 for Minneapolis in 1919. For more on Jourdan, see his [SABR biography](#).

10. These evaluations are based on newspaper reports

from the spring of 1920, including extensive quotes from Sox manager Kid Gleason.

11. In all, 18 pitchers were invited. 11 were newcomers. In the infield and outfield, only 2 new players (Jourdan and Lutzke) were invited. See the list of invitees in the *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1920.

12. Despite an awful won-loss record, Wilkinson's FIP (Fielding Independent Pitching), though hardly stellar, was a little better than league average in 1921.

13. Some may bring up young hurler Frank Shellenback as another possible replacement. Unfortunately for Shellenback, the majors had outlawed his "out" pitch, the spitter. In January 1920, he was sold to the Pacific Coast League and went on to win 296 games in that league, where his use of the spitter was "grandfathered" in.

14. The Hunter investigation agency was working on the case through May 8, 1920, well after the season started. See Carney, *Burying the Black Sox*, 55.

15. There were other, younger, pitchers in the minors who years later proved their worth — like Carmen Hill, Remy Kremer, and Vic Aldridge — but it's doubtful they could have provided much immediate help to the White Sox in 1920. As for field players, the Yankees acquired Bob Meusel, the pick of the lot, in January.

16. Based on 1919 WAR. The seven remaining Black Sox totaled 26.1 WAR in 1920.

17. Hugh S. Fullerton, "Baseball on Trial," *New Republic*, October 20, 1920.

18. Quoted in Zminda, *Double Plays and Double Crosses*, 67-68.

Committee member Jeff Nichols passes along this colorful 1911 advertisement for Hunter's Secret Service. The detective agency, based at the Title & Trust Building on Washington Street in downtown Chicago, was hired eight years later by White Sox owner Charles Comiskey to spy on the eight players he suspected of fixing the 1919 World Series. J.R. Hunter and his detectives — including Edward William Minkel, listed as "EWM" in the reports and recently identified by Bruce Allardice — spent several months on the road during the 1919-20 offseason, following the trail of Chick Gandil, Eddie Cicotte, Happy Felsch, and Swede Risberg, checking to see if they had come into any money. Hunter was hired again by White Sox corporate counsel Alfred S. Austrian in 1924, when the team was defending itself against civil lawsuits filed by the players for back pay. Hunter's detective reports are now on file at the Chicago History Museum and are available for viewing there. [Click here](#) to read Gene Carney's article on these reports in the Fall 2009 *SABR Baseball Research Journal*.

## AROUND THE WEB

**Don Zminda**'s latest baseball book, *Double Plays And Double Crosses: The Black Sox and Baseball in 1920*, was published by Rowman & Littlefield on March 10.

Zminda spent more than two decades working with STATS LLC. He has written or edited over a dozen sports books, including *The Legendary Harry Caray: Baseball's Greatest Salesman* (2019) and SABR's *Go-Go to Glory: The 1959 Chicago White Sox*.

Zminda was interviewed by veteran newspaperman Tom Hoffarth [for his Farther Off the Wall blog](#) in May, explaining how the book's production was changed by the pandemic and answering questions about baseball during the 1920 season:

"The fact that so many newspapers, magazines, and documents are available digitally makes it a lot easier to write about the events of 100-plus years ago than was possible even a few years ago. ... At the same time, there is an enormous amount of material that is still not available digitally, such as many of the newspapers of the period. Telling the full story often necessitates traveling to where the materials like newspapers on microfilm can be accessed. That is not always easy or cheap to do."

Zminda notes how the Black Sox Scandal could have been far different if Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis was hired as commissioner before the 1920 season instead of afterward:

"By the time Landis became commissioner in November, the scandal had broken open and baseball's ineptitude in dealing with it had come to light for all to see," he said. "The magnates needed a respected authority figure like Landis to clean up the game, and if he wanted basically unlimited power, they really couldn't push back."

"But I think we might have been spared things like the Black Sox continuing to play during the 1920 season — and dump games along the way, as the evidence seems to indicate."

Zminda also spoke about his views on *Eight Men Out* after finishing his book:

"I find it hard to be too critical of either [filmmaker] John Sayles or [author] Eliot Asinof because much of the truth about the scandal did not start to come out until early in this century. ... But I'm sure they meant well, and the story as told by them makes for a good movie."

Zminda was also interviewed by SABR member Steve

Steinberg for the Pandemic Baseball Book Club. [Click here](#) to listen to a replay of their conversation.

◆ **Gregory Wolf** (*The Base Ball Palace of the World: Comiskey Park*) and **Don Zminda** (*Double Plays and Double Crosses: The Black Sox and Baseball in 1920*) were guest speakers at the SABR Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter virtual meeting on May 22. [Click here](#) to watch on YouTube.

◆ **Dan Wallach**, executive director of the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum, was a guest speaker at the SABR Ken Keltner (Wisconsin) Chapter virtual meeting on May 27. [Click here](#) to watch on YouTube.

◆ **David Fleitz** was a guest on Marty Lurie's San Francisco Giants pregame show on KNBR radio on May 8 to talk about his new book, *Eddie Cicotte: The Life and Career of the Banned Black Sox Pitcher*. [Click here](#) to listen to the replay.

◆ **Micheline Maynard** in the *Washington Post* explains why she can't wrap her head around baseball's [embrace of sports betting](#).

◆ **Mary Darling**'s 3-part podcast series, *Mining Diamonds Along the Border*, on the 1925-27 outlaw Copper League that featured Hal Chase, Chick Gandil, Buck Weaver, and Lefty Williams, is now available on Spotify and other podcast streaming services.

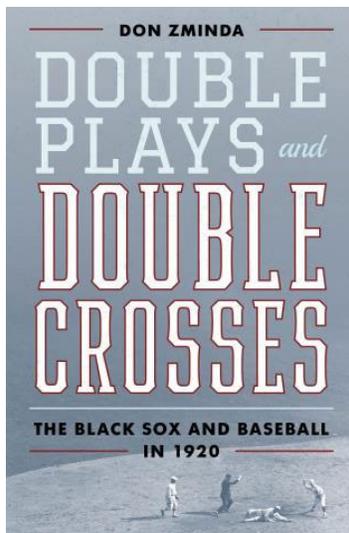
◆ **Thomas E. Merrick** highlights Joe Jackson becoming the first American Leaguer to [steal home twice in one game](#) in 1912 for the SABR Games Project.

◆ **Chuck Hildebrandt** covers the White Sox's [Opening Day 1921 loss](#) to the Detroit Tigers in their first season following the Black Sox Scandal for the SABR Games Project.

◆ **Steve Zalusky** of the (Chicago) *Daily Herald* explores [the uphill battle](#) that the 1921 White Sox had to face after losing their biggest stars.

◆ **Tom Wroblewski** of the *Staten Island Advance* writes about Joe Jackson [bringing his all-star team](#) to New York for an outlaw barnstorming game in 1922.

◆ **Steve Gietschier** passes along a rare study of the Black Sox Scandal that does *not* rely heavily on *Eight Men Out*: In 1966, **Coy Wayne Hardin**, a graduate student at the University of Missouri, wrote a master's thesis titled *The Sporting News: Its First Fifty Years, 1886-1936*. [Click here](#) to read Chapter 8 on TSN's involvement in the Black Sox Scandal.



# Shoeless Joe Jackson, theatrical headliner

By Bill Lamb

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By early 1915, Joe Jackson had come a long way from the country naif signed by the Philadelphia A's some seven years earlier. Now he was a high-profile major league star. And while he remained illiterate,<sup>1</sup> Shoeless Joe had matured into a savvy, well-traveled man attuned to the income-producing opportunities that came with his baseball celebrity.

This article recalls one of those ventures, a Jackson foray into the entertainment industry as a theatrical headliner.<sup>2</sup>

As the 1915 season approached, Jackson was dissatisfied with the three-year contract that he had inked the previous year with the Cleveland Indians. At \$5,333 per season, his deal yielded considerably less than the Federal League-inflated salaries paid other American League standouts like Ty Cobb or Eddie Collins.<sup>3</sup>

So like many other big-name players before him — including Cap Anson, Rube Marquard, and Mike Donlin — Jackson was amenable to supplementing his baseball wage by cashing in on opportunities for a stage career.

At first, it was rumored, implausibly, that Jackson was seeking roles as an actor.<sup>4</sup> Or as a musical comedy star.<sup>5</sup> But reports quickly focused upon the more realistic prospect of Joe fronting a vaudeville act.<sup>6</sup>

The originator of the production is unknown but by early February, “Joe Jackson and His Baseball Girls” was ready for unveiling.<sup>7</sup> The show would be carried by a bevy of comely female performers doing musical numbers and comedy skits. Toward the finish, headliner Joe Jackson would take center stage to deliver a two to three-minute monologue about his life and/or baseball.

To modern theater-goers, such a show would likely be deemed hopelessly hokey. But the entertainment options of a century ago were far more limited than today, and tastes often less discriminating. This was particularly true in the small-to-medium-sized Southern cities where the Jackson show was booked. Besides, those paying to view the performance would also get to watch two or three silent one-reel

films, as well.

On or about February 5, 1915, the curtain lifted on the Jackson show at the new 400-seat Bonita Theater in Atlanta and played to packed houses for two weeks.<sup>8</sup> Next on the itinerary was the Palmetto Theatre in Anderson, South Carolina, about 30 miles south of Jackson's hometown in Greenville.

The first bill of fare offered there had the Jackson troupe performing a then-popular musical comedy entitled *King of Heidelberg*, based on the French opera *The Mascot*. The following days' presentations included *In the Wild and Woolly West*; *Two Fools That Were*; *The Prince of Fibs*; *A Day in Turkey*; and *When Twins Marry*.<sup>9</sup> Although these works, too, have not entered the stage canon and are unknown today, they featured singing, dancing, and clowning by the “Baseball Girls,” all serving as prelude to Shoeless Joe's arrival on stage.<sup>10</sup> The show's star then regaled those in attendance with a brief telling of “how he climbed to a dizzy pinnacle in the hearts of the great American fan.”<sup>11</sup>

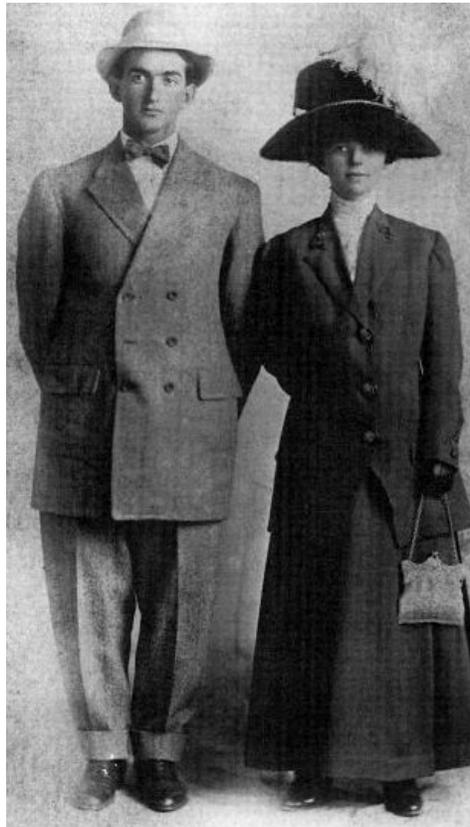
Other Jackson performances, and there were nightly variations, included pantomime bat swings that concluded, oddly, with Joe fouling out to an imaginary catcher.<sup>12</sup> Think what you like, but 1915 audiences lapped it up, with the house selling out three times daily (two matinees plus one evening performance; top seat: 30 cents).

Their next stop was the Majestic Theater in Asheville, North Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, reports circulated that George B. Greenwood, manager of a theatrical agency in Atlanta, was seeking to purchase Jackson's release from cash-strapped Cleveland Indians

owner Charles W. Somers.<sup>14</sup> According to the theater man, Jackson “could make more money as an actor than a ball player.”<sup>15</sup>

But Somers declined to sell Jackson — to Greenwood or to the New York Yankees, another public bidder for the Jackson contract. Apparently trying to leverage Somers into a raise, Joe himself later began circulating the report that Federal League teams were dangling big money contracts before him.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, back at the Majestic, Jackson enjoyed another triumph, receiving standing ovations during

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Joe and Katie Jackson are pictured on their wedding day, July 19, 1908, in Greenville, South Carolina.

(Photo: BlackBetsy.com)

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all three first-day performances.<sup>17</sup>

Back in Cleveland, hometown sportswriter Ed Bang reacted testily to reports that Jackson might forsake baseball, guessing that Joe cleared no more than \$60 per week while on tour. However dissatisfied he was with the wage that the club was paying him, it was still a good deal more than that.<sup>18</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Jackson himself put an end to speculation that he might pursue a career as a thespian, at least for the time being. "There is no danger of my deserting the ball field for the stage," Jackson declared. "At least I am not going to take up stage work for a good many years."<sup>19</sup>

Instead, he said he intended to report to Indians spring training camp in San Antonio on March 1. Except he didn't, heading instead for an engagement at the Winston-Salem Auditorium.<sup>20</sup> Jackson ended a week-long run of "most splendid shows" there by presenting a free bat and baseball to two lucky boys selected from the audience of the closing performance.<sup>21</sup> Only then did he head for San Antonio.

Once finally in uniform, Joe informed syndicated sports columnist Bozeman Bulger that talk of his jumping to the Federal League "was all a lot of bunk to advertise the show."<sup>22</sup> Whatever late-run revenue for the show such publicity had generated, extending his time on the boards also had a down side for Jackson. His belated arrival in spring camp cost him money, with fines levied by Indians player-manager Joe Birmingham, who had had problems with Joe the previous season. After a winter on stage, Jackson came to camp in poor condition and struggled in early practices and intrasquad games.

Soon, Joe had a problem far more concerning than difficulty with manager Birmingham or a sluggish bat. Jackson was in serious trouble with his wife. Sweethearts in their hometown of Greenville, South Carolina, Joe Jackson and the former Katie Wynn had been married since July 1908. Without children, Mrs. Jackson was devoted to her husband and accustomed to having his company during the offseason.

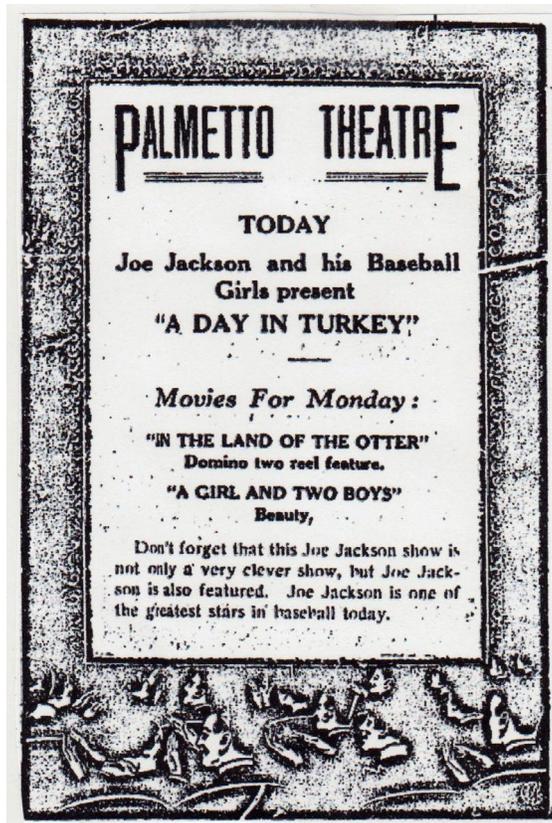
But Katie had been left home while Joe pursued his vaudeville turn. She felt neglected. More ominously, Katie was disturbed by reports that her husband was lavishing attention on a female member of the troupe, and let her displeasure be known publicly.<sup>23</sup> It was even said that Katie contemplated the initiation of divorce proceedings,<sup>24</sup> but it is unclear if she ever actually filed suit.

Nevertheless, it was widely reported that some kind of process had been issued against Joe, often reported as "a warrant sworn out by Mrs. Jackson."<sup>25</sup> Another report claimed that Greenville Sheriff Hendrix Rector had located Jackson in Atlanta, but was pummeled by his would-be prisoner when he tried to take Jackson into custody.<sup>26</sup> All of this drew an indignant response from Rector, who denied that he or any of his deputies had been in Atlanta or that Joe was sought by local authorities. The marital difficulties of the Jacksons, the sheriff aptly observed, were "a personal matter," not a police concern.<sup>27</sup>

Embroidered by speculation and newspaper hype, the publicity embarrassed the Jacksons, particularly Katie. She "hasn't entirely forgiven her husband for alleged affection of a vaudeville woman [but] is becoming reconciled and now longs to be in her husband's brawny arms," an Ohio newspaper intoned, breathlessly. "It all depends. I'm just waiting to hear from Joe," said Mrs. Jackson.<sup>28</sup>

By this time, Shoeless Joe was back in Cleveland but appeared on the "verge of nervous collapse. [He] looks but a shadow of himself. Within the last ten days he has lost fifteen or twenty pounds

in weight as a result of not eating and brooding over his troubles."<sup>29</sup> The melodrama was to have a happy ending. The Jacksons soon reconciled, and their marriage endured until Joe's death in December 1951. Those years saw times of triumph — a World Series championship in 1917 — and disgrace — permanent banishment from Organized Baseball in August 1921 — for Shoeless Joe Jackson. But they did not include a return to the stage.



Joe Jackson and his Baseball Girls advertisement in the *Anderson (South Carolina) Independent*, February 18, 1915. (Photo: Courtesy of Bill Lamb)

### Notes

1. Deprived of a childhood education but hardly

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## ► JACKSON

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stupid, Jackson was a man of ordinary intelligence who had declined A's manager Connie Mack's offers to have him tutored privately. In later life, Jackson operated a number of small business establishments competently, and he was easily the most successful of the Black Sox players after their banishment from professional baseball.

2. Care has been taken to distinguish our subject's stage efforts from those of a tramp comedian named Joe Jackson, then drawing rave reviews for his performance in a touring show titled "Maid in America."

3. For detailed analysis of Joe Jackson's salary situation, see Bob Hoie, "Black Sox Salary Histories – Part I," *The Inside Game*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, February 2013, 1-5.

4. "Picking Off the Hot Ones in the Hot Stove League," *Denver Post*, February 6, 1915: 6.

5. A.J. Loer, "Sport Shimmings," *Evansville (Indiana) Journal*, February 1, 1915: 6.

6. George E. Phair, "Breakfast Food," (Little Rock) *Arkansas Gazette*, February 9, 1915: 13.

7. Reportedly, the show's cast consisted of a small musical comedy company that Jackson had recently purchased a one-half interest in. See "Glare of Spotlights Attracts Joe Jackson," *Muskogee (Oklahoma) Times-Democrat*, February 2, 1915: 7.

8. *Asheville (North Carolina) Gazette*, February 20, 1915: 2. There are newsprint suggestions, however, that Jackson may have appeared in an earlier show called *Joe Jackson's Winning Girl* in Greer, South Carolina. See e.g., "Theatrical Agent Wants to Buy Joe Jackson," *Boston Globe*, February 20, 1915: 5, and "Tried To Buy Joe's Release," *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, February 22, 1915: 7.

9. As advertised in the *Anderson (South Carolina) Intelligencer*, February 14-18, 1915. One ad contained the following reminder to prospective theatergoers: "Don't forget that this Joe Jackson show is not only a very clever show, but Joe Jackson is also featured. Joe Jackson is one of the greatest stars in baseball today."

10. A capsule review of *Two Fools There Were* described the work as consisting of new song novelty numbers, plus singing and dancing, and a "bill full of many funny situations, and the plot is a complicated one throughout." The finale was a Joe Jackson "talk on the coming season in the big leagues." See "Theaters," *Asheville (North Carolina) Citizen-Times*, February 26, 1915: 7.

11. "Joe Jackson's Show To Be Here First Week of March," *Twin-City (Winston-Salem, North Carolina) Sentinel*, February 20, 1915: 5.

12. "Jackson Given Standing Ovation at Majestic," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 23, 1915: 9.

13. "Joe Jackson Plays at Asheville This Week," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 21, 1915: 8.

14. "Want to Buy Joe Jackson and Put Him in Vaudeville," *Grand Forks (North Dakota) Herald*, February 21, 1915: 6; "Wants Joe Jackson To Leave Baseball for Elevated Stage," *Bridgeport (Connecticut) Evening Farmer*, February 23, 1915: 8.

15. "Says Joe Jackson Better as an Actor Than Player," *Evansville (Indiana) Press*, February 24, 1915: 3.

16. "Joe Jackson Is Offered \$45,000 for Three Years," *Washington (DC) Evening Star*, March 6, 1915: 11; "Joe Jackson Threatens To Jump Indians," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 5, 1915: 13.

17. "Jackson Given Standing Ovation."

18. Ed Bang, "Cleveland Chat," *Sporting Life*, February 27, 1915: 4.

19. "Joe Jackson Says He Will Not Desert Baseball for Stage," *Twin-City Sentinel*, March 1, 1915: 2.

20. "Joe Jackson Will Be at Auditorium This Week," *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 28, 1915: 11.

21. "Arcade," *Durham (North Carolina) Morning Herald*, March 7, 1915: 5.

22. As memorialized in Bulger columns published in the (Davenport, Iowa) *Quad City Times*, March 28, 1915: 22; *Muskogee (Oklahoma) Phoenix*, March 27, 1915: 7; and elsewhere.

23. "Theatrical Side Line Causing Family Trouble," *Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal*, April 8, 1915: 8.

24. "Joe Jackson's Wife To Seek Divorce," *New Castle (Pennsylvania) News*, April 8, 1915: 2.; "Joe Jackson's Wife Divorces Him in Ohio," *Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Evening Times*, April 8, 1915: 4. Because divorce was not then obtainable in South Carolina, any divorce action would have had to have been initiated in Ohio where Katie Jackson could claim summer residence.

25. Reports that stated a South Carolina sheriff attempted to arrest Joe "on a warrant sworn out by Mrs. Jackson" make no sense. See e.g., "Mrs. Jackson To Sue for Divorce," *Erie (Pennsylvania) Times*, April 9, 1915: 16. Among other things, divorce is a civil matter, while arrest warrants require a showing of probable cause to believe that a criminal offense has occurred (and adultery usually does not count). Second, arrest warrants are not sworn out by civilians. The Fourth Amendment restricts their issuance to judges (and in some places) court officials. Finally, there must be enforcement authority for a law enforcement officer to take someone into custody, an authority that a South Carolina sheriff would not have in Atlanta, Georgia.

26. "Joe Jackson Arrested; Knocks Out Sheriff," *Pittsburgh Post*, April 8, 1915: 14; "Joe Jackson Slugs Sheriff," *Munster (Indiana) Times*, April 8, 1915: 3; and elsewhere.

27. "Joe's Biff Was Foul Tip Says Rector," *Greenwood (South Carolina) Journal*, April 9, 1915: 2.

28. "Joe's Wife May Forgive," *Mansfield (Ohio) News-Journal*, April 10, 1915: 1.

29. "Joe Jackson Suffers from Nerves and May Not Open with Team," *Grand Forks Herald*, April 13, 1915: 6.

# Faber, White Sox in epicenter of influenza pandemic

By Jacob Pomrenke

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Less than a week before Opening Day of the 1918 season, as the Chicago White Sox made their way north from spring training, Eddie Collins woke up feeling weak and ill in Wichita, Kansas. The captain of the defending World Series champions decided to play that afternoon's exhibition game against the Wichita Jobbers of the Western League. He went 0-for-5, an uncharacteristically poor performance, and Wichita's minor-leaguers defeated the powerful White Sox.<sup>1</sup>

Afterward, Collins summoned a doctor and fainted in his hotel room while he was being examined.<sup>2</sup> It was just a cold, maybe a bout of tonsillitis, the doctor said.<sup>3</sup> Collins thought he had picked it up in Mineral Wells, Texas, the White Sox's spring training home for the past month. The sleeper train that had transported them to Kansas had been "without heat of any kind," with few blankets on board to keep the players warm at night.<sup>4</sup> Manager Pants Rowland sent his star second baseman home to Chicago to rest up for the start of the season.

The White Sox were scheduled to play another game on Friday, April 12, at Camp Funston, a hastily built military base outside of Junction City, Kansas, that housed more than 40,000 US Army soldiers training to go overseas to fight in World War I.<sup>5</sup> The Army's 89th Division baseball team, which included several future major-leaguers, had beaten the St. Louis Cardinals twice in the previous seven days.<sup>6</sup> White Sox owner Charles Comiskey had booked this game, and several others against military teams during spring training, as a show of baseball's support for the troops, to help boost morale and provide entertainment before they went off to face the carnage of war.

What Comiskey did not know — what almost no one knew at the time — was that the White Sox were heading into the epicenter of the most devastating public health crisis of the 20th century. A new and virulent strain of the H1N1 influenza virus was first noticed in February in the farming community of Haskell, Kansas. Soldiers from that town who were home on leave unknowingly carried the virus back to Camp Funston, where by mid-March more than 1,100 soldiers were admitted to the base hospital and 38 of them had died.<sup>7</sup>

The influenza virus spread rapidly after that, as US soldiers were transferred from base to base, and then quickly shipped overseas to join the war in Europe. By the time the global pandemic finally ended in early 1920, upwards of 500 million people had been infected — nearly one-third of the world's population — leaving an estimated 50 million dead, including around 675,000 Americans.<sup>8</sup>

But in the spring of 1918, no one at Camp Funston knew of the deadly horror that was to come. The first wave of the influenza pandemic attracted little attention at the time, in



The Chicago White Sox are pictured on April 12, 1918, before an exhibition game against a US Army team at Camp Funston, outside of Junction City, Kansas. Just weeks earlier, the first major outbreak of a global influenza pandemic killed 38 soldiers at the base. An estimated 50 million people around the world died from the flu by the time the pandemic subsided in 1920. (Photo: BlackBetsy.com)

part because while thousands of people became infected quickly, relatively few died from the virus at first. Soldiers dismissed their mild symptoms of the flu as a "three-day fever" and no precautions were taken to stop the spread.<sup>9</sup>

Eddie Collins may have felt the same way about his own illness as he was traveling back home to Chicago, accompanied by the White Sox's Opening Day starter, Eddie Cicotte.<sup>10</sup> After a few days of rest, Collins's symptoms seemed to clear up, rather than develop into pneumonia as the doctors had feared. The flu that was quietly sweeping around central Kansas was likely the furthest thing from his mind.

In the meantime, pitcher Red Faber and the rest of the White Sox team was still at Camp Funston, ready to play an exhibition game with 7,000 soldiers in attendance. The troops received special permission to take the rest of the day off and watch baseball from the base's top commander, Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, who had just returned from France and was the guest of honor with his wife, Louise.<sup>11</sup> The 50-cent admission fee for everyone in attendance went toward the camp's athletic equipment fund.

Faber had been the White Sox's biggest star in the 1917 World Series, recording three wins over the New York Giants. The right-hander from Cascade, Iowa, expected to face little opposition against the 89th Division team, which included future St. Louis Browns outfielder Dutch Wetzel, future NFL football coach George "Potsy" Clark, and Philadelphia A's pitcher Win Noyes.

Faber allowed just two hits against the Army team in five innings, while Noyes and a pair of relievers were knocked around by the White Sox's powerful lineup. Happy Felsch delivered the big blow with a grand slam to left field in the

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## ► PANDEMIC

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fourth. Nemo Leibold also homered, while Chick Gandil, Swede Risberg, and Fred McMullin all had extra-base hits.<sup>12</sup> The military newspaper *Trench and Camp* reported, “At no time did the division team look dangerous to the Comiskey players for they all seemed to be in the finest shape.”<sup>13</sup>

After the game, the White Sox said goodbye to the soldiers and left for Kansas City to play their final exhibition series against the Kansas City Blues of the American Association. Despite their proximity to anyone at Camp Funston who may have been carrying the influenza virus, none of the Sox players except Eddie Collins publicly reported any flu-like symptoms before their Opening Day game against the St. Louis Browns on April 16.

One day after the White Sox left Kansas, their crosstown rivals, the Chicago Cubs, learned that star pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander’s draft number had been called and he would miss most of the baseball season. He was ordered to report to military duty by the end of April — at Camp Funston.<sup>14</sup>

The dark cloud of war dominated headlines all summer long. In July, the US government issued a “work or fight” order to all able-bodied men that shortened the baseball season and forced the World Series to be played in early September. By then, the second wave of the influenza pandemic was in full force and millions of people would die throughout the fall.

White Sox pitcher Red Faber, who had easily beaten the Camp Funston team in his final tune-up, was one of the baseball players who reportedly contracted the flu after the season ended. He recovered in time to report to spring training in 1919, but he had lost nearly 20 pounds by the time he arrived. His weakened state, combined with recurring ankle injuries, caused his performance to fall far below his usual Hall of Fame-caliber standard.

Although the White Sox won the American League pennant in 1919 for the second time in three years, Faber was left off the World Series roster and failed to make an appearance against the Cincinnati Reds. His absence in that fateful fall classic — which eight of his teammates conspired to lose in exchange for bribes from gamblers — was far more noticeable than Eddie Collins’s absence from a preseason exhibition game, played in the heart of a health crisis that rocked the entire world.

### Notes

1. “Wichita Pitcher Beats Champs,” *Wichita Beacon*, April 12, 1918, 7. The Jobbers’ team president was Frank Isbell, a White Sox hero in the 1906 World Series.

2. I.E. Sanborn, “Eddie Collins Forced to Quit Sox by Illness,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1918, 9.



**Red Faber, pictured here in 1926, was unavailable for the 1919 World Series after reportedly contracting the flu and suffering arm and ankle injuries during the regular season.** (Photo: Chicago Daily News Collection, Chicago History Museum, SDN-066265)

3. George S. Robbins, “Gen. Wood Sees Sox Play His Camp Team,” *Chicago Daily News*, April 12, 1918, 2; “Collins Too Ill to Play,” *Kansas City Star*, April 12, 1918, 21.

4. Sanborn, “Eddie Collins.”

5. “Camp Funston,” *Kansapedia*, Kansas Historical Society, accessed online on May 31, 2021.

6. “Ball Season On,” *Topeka State Journal*, April 6, 1918, 1.

7. John M. Barry, “How the Horrific 1918 Flu Spread Across America,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2017, accessed online on May 31, 2021.

8. “1918 Pandemic (H1N1 Virus),” Centers for Disease Control and Protection, accessed May 7, 2020.

9. Barry, “Horrible 1918 Flu.”

10. I.E. Sanborn, “10,000 Funston Boys Watch Sox Bombard Camp’s Team, 13 to 1,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1918, 9.

11. H.E. Fisher, “Sox Wallop Army,” *Trench and Camp* (Fort Riley, Kansas), April 20, 1918, 1.

12. Fisher, “Sox Wallop Army.”

13. Fisher, “Sox Wallop Army.”

14. James Crusinberry, “Cubs’ Hopes Wrecked with Aleck Drafted,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1918, 17.

# Field of Dreams game rescheduled for August 12

Plans for Major League Baseball's "Field of Dreams" game on August 12, 2021, are "full steam ahead," according to Jacque Rahe, executive director of Dyersville, Iowa's Economic Development Corporation.

"I feel people are still saying, 'Is it real? Is it going to happen?'" Rahe told the *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* on June 12. "So there's a little bit of angst about that."

The game between the Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees — on a specially constructed field next to the site of the 1989 film starring Kevin Costner — was originally supposed to be played in August 2020, but was canceled due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. (The St. Louis Cardinals briefly replaced the Yankees in MLB's revised 2020 schedule, but that game was also wiped out.)

Tickets, which have not gone on sale yet, are expected to be extremely limited.

The film, based on the 1982 novel *Shoeless Joe* by W.P. Kinsella, centers around an Iowa farmer's mystical call to build a baseball field where Shoeless Joe Jackson and other "ghost" players from the disgraced 1919 White Sox can return to play.

Hall of Famer John Smoltz, who will call the game on national television for Fox Sports, said he's excited to broadcast the first American League game ever held in Iowa.

"It's going to be one of the coolest events," Smoltz recently told the *Des Moines Register*. "I've done Australia, I've done London. They were both incredible. This, to me, will rank up there with my childhood growing up and watching the movie."



**The Field of Dreams Movie Site, a popular tourist attraction in Dyersville, Iowa, will host a major-league game between the Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees on August 12, 2021. The game will be played on a specially constructed 8,000-seat stadium adjacent to the farm featured in the 1989 film with Kevin Costner.** (Photo: Courtesy of Dan Evans)

An interactive exhibit, "[If You Build It](#)," opened on May 1 in downtown Dyersville and will remain open through October.

The exhibit explores the making of the film and its impact on the local community, including in the town of Cascade, about 20 miles south, home of the [Red Faber Museum](#).

## *Scandal on the South Side* in SABR's top 50 books list

*Scandal on the South Side: The 1919 Chicago White Sox*, produced by our committee in 2015, was selected for inclusion in SABR's list of the [50 most notable baseball books](#) of the past 50 years.

Edited by Jacob Pomrenke with associate editors Rick Huhn, Bill Nowlin, and Len Levin, *Scandal on the South Side* included contributions from 32 members of this committee, whose hard work has been so instrumental to its success:

Bruce Allardice, Russell Arent, Steve Cardullo, Brian Cooper, James E. Elfers, David Fleitz, David Fletcher, Daniel Ginsburg, Irv Goldfarb, John Heeg, Rick Huhn, Bill Lamb, Len Levin, Dan Lindner, Adrian



Marcewicz, Brian McKenna, Steven G. McPherson, Paul Mittermeyer, Jack Morris, Peter Morris, Rod Nelson, James R. Nitz, Bill Nowlin, Kelly Boyer Sagert, Jim Sandoval, Richard Smiley, Lyle Spatz, Steve Steinberg, Brian Stevens, Andy Sturgill, and Gregory H. Wolf.

The book stands as SABR's best-selling Digital Library publication, thanks in part to the flurry of activity around the 100th anniversary in 2019, and was the backbone of our [Eight Myths Out](#) project as well.

Visit [SABR.org/50at50/books](https://sabr.org/50at50/books) to view the full list of baseball books in the SABR 50 at 50 series.