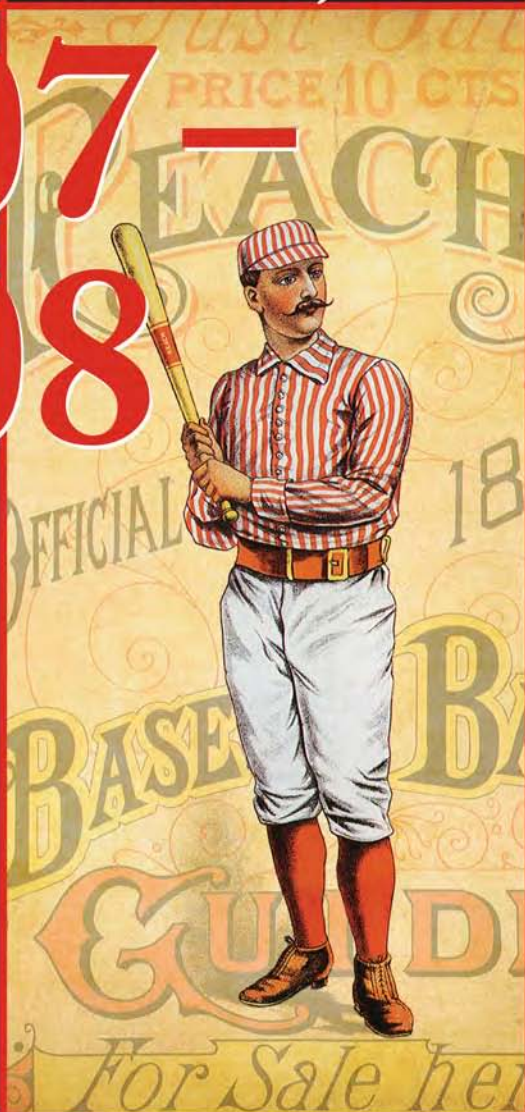


The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture,

2007—
2008



Edited by
William M. Simons

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2007–2008

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Acknowledgments

William M. Simons

Alvin L. Hall created the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture and continues to provide institutional memory.

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The book is dedicated to my nephew, Jon Derr. He is a Special Olympics medalist, Red Sox loyalist, and all-around great sport. Jon's courage, enthusiasm, and compassion give inspiration to all of us who know and love him.

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Introduction

William M. Simons

The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2007–2008 is a collection of learned articles that employ the national pastime to comment on issues transcending the playing field. The essays, chosen on the basis of scholarship, contribution to baseball literature, and interest to readers, are based on sixteen of the premier presentations from the two most recent proceedings of the annual Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, held from June 6 to 8, 2007, and from June 4 to 6, 2008. By tradition the conference begins on a Wednesday and ends on a Friday in early June while Cooperstown is still unhurried, just prior to the beginning of the K–12 school vacation season that crowds the village with tourists and denizens of baseball camps—and sends hotel rates soaring.

Co-sponsored by the State University of New York College at Oneonta and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, the conference shares a name with this book. The informed, analytical, and engaging articles that provide ballast to this book provide testament to the Symposium's commitment to hosting significant baseball scholarship. Generally acknowledged as the pre-eminent gathering of baseball academicians, the Symposium has made singular contributions to baseball pedagogy and research, and its influence continues to grow.

When Alvin L. Hall, then dean of continuing education at the State University of New York at Oneonta, created the Symposium in 1989, he initially envisioned it as a one-time conference, prompted by the fiftieth anniversary of the Hall of Fame. An intellectual and popular success at its inception, the Symposium, however, immediately generated a demand that it continue, and so it has each June for twenty years—and counting. Over his long tenure, Al Hall served, with distinction, as the director of the Symposium before I assumed the position. Honored as our founder, Al continues to provide the conference with institutional memory, a strong link between new and veteran participants, and gracious welcoming remarks.

In the early years of the Symposium, part of the conference's appeal derived

from the affirmation that it gave to serious students of the game at a time when they often felt marginalized in academia. A generation ago, many skeptics questioned the intellectual significance of baseball research: that is no longer the case. The Symposium generated impetus for the legitimization of baseball studies in college and university curriculum. Many books, essays, master's theses, Ph.D. dissertations, and teaching strategies have evolved from papers initially presented at the Symposium. As a result, baseball provides content for many liberal arts course offerings, monographs in university presses, articles in academic journals, and research grants. A unique synthesis of rigorous scholarship and baseball amity invests the Symposium with enduring appeal. It is a forum for understanding America through its national game, and enjoying the company of like-minded enthusiasts.

Through the years, many important print and electronic media, including the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, National Public Radio, and CBS News, have commented on the Symposium, recognizing its unique features. Pundits invariably note that the setting is special. There is no better locale to host a baseball conference than Cooperstown, birthplace to the game's creation myth, site of Doubleday Field, and domicile to the Hall of Fame. With its baseball memorabilia stores, hospitable restaurants, local legends, history, small-town ambiance, proximity to open land, and access to beautiful Lake Otsego (the Glimmerglass of novelist James Fenimore Cooper's iconic frontiersman Natty Bumppo), Cooperstown charms Symposium participants.

If Cooperstown is baseball's sacred town, the Hall of Fame is its most treasured shrine. Renovation and enlargement now allow the Hall of Fame to host all Symposium sessions. The 2007 conference inaugurated something new with the relocation of two Thursday evening traditions. The town ball game, a mid-nineteenth-century ancestor to today's game, moved to Cooper Park, adjacent to the Hall of Fame, and the dinner was held in the hallowed Hall of Fame plaque gallery. The Thursday night dinner still features vintage wine donated by businessman-baseball maven Nick McIntosh — as well as the game's song and poetry, including the recitation of baseball's most famous verse by the Hall of Fame's Tim Lincecum, uniformed appropriately as the mighty Casey. Meeting at the Hall of Fame contributes to the baseball tribalism bonding conference participants.

The Symposium is an assemblage of serious baseball scholars. The majority of presenters are college or university faculty with doctoral degrees. They come from diverse disciplines, including history, literature, sociology, anthropology, political science, linguistics, statistics, music, art, economics, psychology, architecture, and theology. Photographers, filmmakers, librarians, businessmen, attorneys, physicians, government officials, military officers, and journalists also contribute to the proceedings. For example, in 2008, the ranks

of the latter included Steve Jacobson, an acclaimed *Newsday* reporter and columnist for 44 years; he provided a telling evocation of baseball's past.

With annual conference attendance now averaging about 140, the Symposium tribe has grown more inclusive. Although veteran presenters contribute valued continuity, women, minorities, and young scholars have enlarged their participation in recent years. Senior professors and graduate students discuss baseball content, theory, and pedagogy.

By encouraging leading scholars and young apprentices to share their baseball research, the Symposium links the generations as evidenced by the following vignette. During a 2008 session on baseball literature, Elizabeth V. O'Connell, a graduate student and a first-time Symposium participant, presented an insightful paper. Four proud members of O'Connell's family attended her lecture, including her father, the noted sportswriter Jack O'Connell. During the discussion following her presentation, O'Connell answered a question by referring the audience member to the work of Jean Hastings Ardell, which provides a pioneering feminist perspective on the game. The interlocutor smiled and replied, "I am Jean Hastings Ardell." It was a classic Symposium moment. O'Connell, a rising young scholar, was excited — and surprised — to meet a major figure in baseball gender studies who had significantly influenced her own work. Ardell glowed in appreciation that her work had inspired a young researcher.

Another generational connection involved first-time Symposium attendee Mario Ramos, a thirty-year-old former major league pitcher, and conference veteran Oren Renick, a baseball author and longtime Texas State University academic. They collaborated on a well-received presentation that examined Ramos' transition from professional athletics to a life beyond the diamond. An All-American at Rice University and the Oakland Athletics Minor League Player of the Year, Ramos had a brief career in MLB, starting three games for the 2003 Texas Rangers, with a won-lost record of 1–1 and a 6.23 ERA. Beyond his own session with Renick, Ramos contributed to discussions that followed other panels. Both in formal settings and informal conversations, scholars found Ramos thoughtful, candid, and cooperative in response to their questions. Likewise, Ramos appreciated his dialogue with academics, saying of his experience: "I was asked often who are the most memorable characters I met. Honestly, I met some in the past three days ... I'm humbled to be up here and have these great minds out there listening to me."¹ During the town ball game, Ramos pitched for both sides, displaying batter-friendly form.

Participants enjoy themselves, continuing animated discussions well into the night, long after the day's formal program has ended. The Symposium is inimitable amongst academic conferences for its emotional rewards, evident in the ties between attendees. Enduring friendships are born and renewed — and annually documented in the photographs of the talented Bob Norris, the conference's de facto photographer.

Branch Rickey Comes to the Symposium

The 2007 Symposium featured a special Wednesday evening session, nearly three hours in length, in the Hall of Fame's Grandstand Theater, examining the life and times of Branch Rickey (1881–1965), one of most influential and significant figures in baseball history. Rickey was a major league catcher of marginal ability, a mediocre manager, and a brilliant executive. With the St. Louis Cardinals, he created the minor league farm system, and, by bringing Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers, reintegrated Organized Baseball after over a half-century of segregation. Rickey's innovations, which included the modernization of spring training, resulted in multiple pennants for both the Cardinals and Dodgers. During the early 1950s, Rickey, then general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, found new sources of Latino talent. Subsequently, he forced expansion upon Major League Baseball through the threat of a Continental League, with himself as president. Rickey was also a Methodist moralist, World War I Army colonel, profit-minded businessman, Republican, and attorney. "An American original," Rickey, wrote historian Jules Tygiel, "commanded caricature":

a cigar lodged firmly in the corner of his mouth, a floppy hat pulled down to his bushy eyebrows, wrinkled clothing draped sloppily over his former catcher's frame, and bespectacled eyes gazing intently over the playing field. Rickey perpetuated this mystique with his skillful use of the English language and his theatrical flamboyance. A master of the spoken word, Rickey marked his conversations with rhetorical flourishes and verbose explanations.

* * *

In 1942 sportswriter Tom Meany dubbed him the "Mahatma," reflecting John Gunther's description of Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi as "a combination of God, your father, and [a] Tammany Hall leader."²

The program, "Baseball and Freedom: Remembering Mr. Rickey," focused on the biographical and historical context that led to the integration of the national pastime. George Nicholson, an associate justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, State of California, organized and moderated a panel, remarkable for the attainments and insights of its members. As Nicholson noted,

While their focus was Branch Rickey, panelists told the story of two men, a white lawyer and a black athlete, working together to buck 15 of the 16 big league teams that existed at the time, peacefully — without government incentive or intervention — changed baseball and the nation.³

As president and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Rickey signed Robinson to a minor league contract on August 28, 1945. After a season with

the Dodgers' International League affiliate in Montreal, Robinson made his major league debut with Brooklyn on April 15, 1947.

Creating an ambiance for the "Baseball and Freedom" speakers who followed, Vince Miles, public programs and office administrator, Sacramento County Bar Association, demonstrated acting ability in his costumed portrayal of Jackie Robinson. As Robinson, Miles employed PowerPoint to narrate a chronicle of American race relations on and off the playing field, punctuated by the soul-searing Billie Holiday rendition of "Strange Fruit."

Then, Mark Huddleston, president, Ohio Wesleyan University, discussed Rickey's years as a collegiate undergraduate. Given his provincial, early education in a one-room schoolhouse in rural America, Rickey came to Ohio Wesleyan with doubts about his preparation and potential, leading him, after some setbacks, to drop out of college. He returned to the rustic environs of southern Ohio, but two friends physically put Rickey on a train and brought him back to Ohio Wesleyan. This was a turning point. His academic skills grew, and Rickey acquired new perspectives at Ohio Wesleyan. As an undergraduate, he coached the baseball team. Relating an incident described by Tygiel, Huddleston commented on the young Rickey's confrontation with discrimination:

[Rickey's] first exposure to racism had occurred in 1904 when he served as the baseball coach at Ohio Wesleyan University. Among his athletes was Charlie Thomas, a black first baseman, whose hitting, according to the school archives, "was feared all over the state." "From the first day at Ohio Wesleyan," Thomas later recalled, "Branch Rickey took a special interest in my welfare." In the spring of 1904 the Wesleyan squad traveled to South Bend, Indiana, to play Notre Dame. The hotel at which the team had reservations refused to allow Thomas to lodge there. Rickey convinced the management to place a cot in his room for Thomas to sleep on, as they would do for a black servant. That night Thomas wept and rubbed his hands as if trying to rub off the color. "Black skin! Black skin!" he said to Rickey. "If only I could make them white."⁴

After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan, Rickey coached and taught for a time at Allegheny College, an interlude discussed by that institution's current president, Richard Cook. The panel also featured Dean Evan Caminker and Professor Richard Friedman of the University of Michigan Law School, from which Rickey received his legal education. Caminker asserted that the university, through its practices and graduates, has figured prominently in the struggle for racial equality. Indeed, Moses Fleetwood Walker, who, in 1884, became the first black to play Major League Baseball, attended the University of Michigan Law School. A generation latter, Rickey had black classmates at the University of Michigan Law School, and this further influenced his evolving view of race. Caminker found meaning in the juxtaposition that Walker, the first black major leaguer, and Rickey, who, in time, reintegrated Organized Base-

ball, both attended the University of Michigan Law School. Displaying Rickey's law school transcripts, Friedman stated that Rickey, by age and experience, was set apart from his law school classmates. Prior to studying law, he had already played Major League Baseball and recovered from tuberculosis, and Rickey coached Michigan's baseball team while attending its law school.

Ill health prevented Earl Warren, Jr., the son of the late chief justice of the United States Supreme Court and himself a judge (retired), Superior Court, County of Sacramento, California, from traveling to Cooperstown, but he participated in the panel through videotaped comments. According to the younger Warren, his father had had a deep interest in baseball and was considered for the commissioner's position after the owners failed to renew Albert (Happy) Chandler's contract. Pleased by Rickey's signing of Robinson, Earl Warren, Sr., followed the integration of baseball closely and believed that its success suggested racial justice was possible in other areas of American life, paving the way for historic Supreme Court decisions.

The most momentous decision of the Warren Court concerning race came, of course, in the *Brown* case (1954), which resulted in a ruling that declared "separate but equal" unconstitutional in public schools. During the *Brown* deliberations, Warren toured Civil War battlefields and discovered that his black driver could not find a Virginia hotel that would admit him, an experience that had an impact on Warren similar to Rickey's with Charlie Thomas. Panelist Thurgood Marshall, Jr., himself a distinguished attorney and the son of Thurgood Marshall, the chief NAACP attorney in the *Brown* case, compared Rickey to his father: the senior Marshall's recruiting and mentoring of young civil rights attorneys paralleled Rickey's relationship to Robinson.

Another participant, Ira Glasser, the former longtime executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, talked about the impact that Rickey's recruitment of Robinson had on his own life. Glasser wore a Brooklyn Dodgers jacket during his presentation. Although his parents were liberal, tolerant, Jewish, and supporters of the labor movement, the young Glasser had little consciousness of racial exclusion prior to the integration of baseball:

I was nine years old at the time. I lived in Brooklyn and, although many black families also lived in Brooklyn, I never saw any as a child. Separation of the races was not legally imposed in New York, as it was in the South, but in some ways racial separation in the North was even more perfectly maintained. I went to a public school that was not required by law to exclude blacks; nonetheless, from kindergarten through the eighth grade, in three separate schools, I never saw a black child.⁵

Glasser asserted that "Rickey's feat and Robinson's leadership constituted the first great public and civil rights event of the post-World War II era."⁶ It was from the Rickey-Robinson campaign — "not from a book, not in school, not from a congressional debate, and not from a court case" — that Glasser

learned “about racial discrimination in public accommodations.”⁷ Glasser reflected,

Many of us, perhaps most, were not even aware that we were learning these lessons. They were learned nonetheless, and they prepared us for the struggles that would come in the larger society a decade and more later... In fact, the March on Washington took place on August 28, 1963, eighteen years to the day of that first meeting between Rickey and Robinson.

“Luck is the residue of design,” Branch Rickey liked to say, and his design for baseball turned out to be a design for America.⁸

To critics who claimed that Rickey was motivated primarily by a desire to win pennants and attract fans, Glasser retorted that such “an explanation is insufficient,” noting that “there was widespread fear that black players would attract black crowds that would drive whites away,” thus diminishing revenue.⁹

The final speaker gave a more personal perspective on Branch Rickey—and bore a remarkable physical resemblance to him. Branch Rickey III, grandson of the original and himself the president of the Pacific Coast League, shared family lore about his grandfather’s youth and latter years. He noted that the elder Rickey’s hero was fellow Midwestern lawyer Abraham Lincoln, and that the man who ended baseball segregation kept a photograph of the Great Emancipator above his desk. Racial change was resisted by many, and Rickey III, although always proud of his lineage, sometimes found himself the target of his grandfather’s detractors.

Sharing a revealing piece of oral history, Rickey III recounted observing his grandfather, having miscalculated the wind, set a springtime fire to burn off the previous year’s grass; the fire, growing in strength, came back at them, threatening the barn and house, necessitating the calling of a volunteer fire department. The volunteer brigade succeeded in putting the fire out and, before departing, warned the elder Rickey against a repeat attempt. Rickey later determined, wrongly, that the wind had changed direction. Consequently, he set another fire, which once again threatened the barn and house. The firefighters returned, albeit with more than a little ire, and effectively reprised its efforts. From this episode, Rickey III learned that his grandfather, a stubborn man, weighed risk against reward, and was not afraid to fail.

The capacity audience at the “Baseball and Freedom” session was graced by the presence of three of Rickey’s most distinguished biographers—Murray Polner, Lee Lowenfish, and Steve Jacobson. Their scholarship animated the discussion that followed the formal presentation.¹⁰ A Rickey quote cast a lingering resonance at program’s end: “Baseball is the proving ground for civil rights.”¹¹

At the 2008 Symposium, Justice Nicholson again organized and introduced a special Wednesday evening session, “Baseball and Freedom II: Umpires and

the Roots of Order and Freedom.” The program explored similarities in the roles of baseball umpires and judges in promoting civility, fair play, order, and compliance with rules. Special attention was given to the umpiring careers of Cece Carlucci (Pacific Coast League), Bob Motley (Negro leagues and Pacific Coast League), and Emmett Ashford (Pacific Coast League and American League). Emphasis was accorded the presence of high quality Pacific Coast League and Negro league baseball in regions once bereft of major league teams. With appropriate gusto, actor Vince Miles returned to impersonate the flamboyant Emmett Ashford. Informed and deliberate, William Shubb, judge, United States District Court, Eastern District, California, moderated the panel on umpires. Participating through videotaped interviews, the ailing Carlucci commented on diverse aspects of his long umpiring career, including his rescue from virulent fans by the California Highway Patrol. Illness also prevented Bob Motley’s attendance, but he was ably represented by his multitalented son, Byron, a documentary filmmaker, actor, singer, dancer, storyteller, and student of Negro league baseball. Byron Motley shared colorful tales of his confident and theatrical father, who survived attack from a disgruntled Negro leaguer wielding a butcher knife, with the help of Kansas City Monarchs manager Buck O’Neil. Returning panelist Branch Rickey III, president, Pacific Coast League, noted that the legacy of baseball arbiters of the past continues to influence contemporary umpires.

The Trial of Rube Waddell

The 2008 Symposium hosted a mock trial on Thursday morning, June 5, in the Grandstand Theater. *The Trial of Rube Waddell: The State of Baseball v. George Edward “Rube” Waddell* was, by turns, informative, argumentative, and entertaining. John F. Lambert, chief assistant district attorney, Otsego County, New York State, served as the presiding judge. Roger I. Abrams, professor of law and former dean of the Northeastern University School of Law as well as a baseball salary arbitrator, prosecuted the case. Alan H. Levy, professor of history, Slippery Rock University, and an expert on baseball during the Progressive Era, was the defense counsel. Waddell, a Hall of Fame pitcher, zany eccentric, and self-destructive indulger of bad habits, was indicted 94 years after his death for taking money from gamblers not to play in the 1905 World Series and thus facilitate the eventual triumph of the New York Giants in five games. Ace of the Philadelphia Athletics pitching staff, he led the American League in victories (27), winning percentage (.730), ERA (1.48), and strikeouts (287) during the regular season.

The prosecution argued that substantial circumstantial evidence demonstrated Waddell’s guilt: the pitcher claimed that an early September injury to

his pitching shoulder prevented him from participating in the Series, but the injury was uncorroborated, and Waddell pitched twice more during the regular season and again in an exhibition game following the Series. The defense countered that the injury was genuine, offering details about its origin in an incident involving Waddell and teammate and fellow pitcher Andy Coakley. As he was ineffective on the mound during his two regular season appearances following the injury, Waddell, stressed the defense, had good reason for not wanting to pitch in the Series. Moreover, asked the defense, would it not have made more sense had gamblers bribed Waddell for the mobsters to have instructed the pitcher to appear in the Series and then perform poorly?

Tim Wiles, the Hall of Fame's director of research, testified as an expert witness on baseball history for the prosecution; he stated that there was no official diagnosis of Waddell's injury and that Athletics manager Connie Mack believed that Waddell was capable of pitching. Questioned about two contemporary newspapers articles introduced by the prosecution as physical evidence — one indicating that an osteopath could not diagnosis Waddell's supposed ailment and the other casting doubt on the pitcher's character — Wiles opined that those comments were no reason to dispute the journalistic evidence.

Born in 1862, Mack (channeled by Hall of Fame Library researcher Gabe Schechter) testified posthumously for the defense that Waddell did have shoulder problems, but they were caused by the cold from an open railroad car window, not from an incident involving a teammate, and that Waddell's irresponsibility and inability to keep commitments would have made him a poor investment for gamblers. Furthermore, Mack asserted that it was Philadelphia's poor hitting, not the team's pitching, that led to the Athletics' defeat in the Series.

The closing remarks of the defense challenged the veracity of the newspaper articles that the prosecution had introduced, asserting that sportswriter Horace Fogel had an ax to grind. The defense also emphasized that baseball's preeminent publication, the *Sporting News*, found claims of Waddell accepting money from gamblers not to pitch in the Series lacking in credibility. In its closing, the prosecution argued that the troubled and unreliable Waddell had debts and needed money, and agreement of two contemporary newspaper articles that the pitcher received precisely \$17,000 from the gamblers gave further credence to those sources. After weighing the evidence, the jury, compromised of Symposium attendees, found Waddell not guilty.

Keynote Speakers

Keynote speakers open and set the tone for the Symposium. The first two conferences (1989 and 1990), as well as the eighteenth (2006), featured dual

keynote presentations; other symposia have had one. Accomplished and well known, keynote speakers examine baseball's relationship to the American culture, and they invariably do so in a manner that is interesting and engaging. Through the years, many of baseball's most iconic commentators, pundits, and muses have delivered keynote addresses.

The roster of keynote speakers—with the year of their appearance cited in parentheses—includes eminent baseball historians James Vlasich (1989), Harold Seymour (1990), David Quentin Voigt (1990), Peter Levine (1991), Jules Tygiel (1997), G. Edward White (1998), and Charles Alexander (2002).¹² Paleontologist and cultural guru Stephen Jay Gould (1992) demonstrated that he was also a baseball savant. Literary lions—W.P. Kinsella (1996), Eliot Asinof (1999), Roger Kahn (2000), and George Plimpton (2001)—contributed memorable addresses as have two eminent figures from electronic media, Marty Appel (1989) and Ken Burns (1994). Award-winning journalists—Leonard Koppett (1995), Josh Prager (2003), and Jonathan Eig (2005)—opened the proceedings with style. Donald Fehr (1993) and Marvin Miller (2004), respectively the present and past directors of the Major League Baseball Players Association, provided fascinating insider accounts of labor relations in the national pastime. In 2006, former Negro leaguers Stanley Glenn and Mahlon Duckett gave a joint presentation, recreating, with candor and telling detail, baseball prior to integration. Past keynoters held forth with authenticity and eloquence. The 2007 and 2008 keynoters augmented this tradition of excellence.

Writer and radio host Curt Smith delivered the 2007 keynote address—“Voices of the Game: Radio, TV and America.” Formerly a speechwriter for President George H.W. Bush, Smith, senior lecturer in English at the University of Rochester, has authored 12 books, numerous newspaper and magazine articles, radio commentary, and television documentaries. In addition to political and cultural punditry, Smith has written extensively about baseball, with special focus on broadcasters, as evidenced in several of his books, including *Voices of the Game: The Acclaimed Chronicle of Baseball Radio and Television from 1921 to the Present*, *Voices of Summer: Ranking Baseball's 101 All-Time Best Announcers*, *The Storytellers from Mel Allen to Bob Costas: Sixty Years of Baseball Tales from the Broadcast Booth*, *The Voice: Mel Allen's Untold Story*, and *America's Dizzy Dean*.

In his keynote address on baseball's iconic announcers, Smith demonstrated the encyclopedic knowledge that has made him the most prolific chronicler of the game's broadcast history. Leavening informed analysis with verve, telling wit, and memorable phraseology, Smith both educated and entertained his audience. He limned the attributes—personality, knowledge, language (with signature words and phrases), stories, voice, timing, connection, continuity—of sportscasters who became the voice of teams, communities, and eras, passing down oral history from generation to generation.

Smith commented on a number of the great voices of the baseball broadcast booth, each distinctive, never to be confused with another. The Dodgers' Red Barber "made us all citizens of Brooklyn": He chronicled the integration of baseball and coined language that shaped the everyday vernacular — "cat-bird seat," "tearin' up the pea patch," "rhubarb on the field," and "as tight as a brand-new pair of shoes on a rainy day."¹³ Another iconic Dodgers broadcaster, Vin Scully, who followed the team from Brooklyn to Los Angeles, still invites us to "pull up a chair."¹⁴ From 1939 to 1964, the voice of Mel Allen, "deep, full, and Southern, mixing Billy Graham and James Earl Jones," called almost 4,000 Yankees games.¹⁵ Ernie Harwell's voice, honeyed, like that of Barber and Allen, by his native South, etched word pictures for two generations of Detroit fans as with his description of the batter who "stood there like the house by the side of the road."¹⁶ For 53 years in the broadcast booth, with the St. Louis Cardinals, Oakland A's, Chicago White Sox, and Chicago Cubs, the boozy and raucous Harry Caray held court as "he defied the laws of probability, longevity, and cirrhosis of the liver."¹⁷ Pittsburgh Pirates play-by-play man Rosey Rowsell was an unabashed partisan with a singular home run call — "Get upstairs, Aunt Minnie, and raise the window. Here she comes!" — followed by an assistant dropping a pane of glass.¹⁸ It was the New York Giants' Russ Hodges, however, who made the game's most famous home run call of all, following Bobby Thomson's "shot heard round the world" on October 3, 1951:

Branca throws, there's a long drive! It's going to be, I believe! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! Bobby Thomson hits into the lower deck of the left-field stands! The Giants win the pennant! And they're going crazy! They are going crazy! Oh-oh!¹⁹

Smith also gave a tip of the hat to a number of other iconic voices, amongst them: Graham McNamee, Bob Wolff, Jack Buck, Bob ("Gunner") Prince, Bert Wilson, Jack Brickhouse, Dizzy Dean, Lindsey Nelson, Curt Gowdy, Joe Garagiola, Jerry Coleman, Bob Murphy, Phil Rizzuto, and Milo Hamilton. Smith noted, though, that one baseball announcer found more notoriety in acting and politics than in the broadcast booth; nonetheless, while doing recreations for the Chicago Cubs from Des Moines, future president Ronald Reagan, lost his connection — and improvised by having second baseman Billy Herman foul off pitches for seven minutes.

Smith's panegyric to the game's voices ended with a lament. He decried the decline in the quality of baseball broadcasting, a phenomenon that parallels the erosion of literacy in American society. Broadcasting schools have homogenized the sound. Smith invited the audience to find solace in the memory of the singular, recognizable voices of baseball past.

In 2008, Ira Berkow was the keynote speaker, and he made a significant

contribution to the Symposium canon. A sportswriter for forty-two years, the last twenty-six of them as the “Sports of the Times” columnist and feature writer with the *New York Times*, Berkow wrote eloquently about some of the most memorable moments in baseball, basketball, Olympic, football, and boxing history. His eighteen books include *Full Swing: Hits, Runs and Errors in a Writer’s Life*; *Court Vision: Unexpected Views on the Lore of Basketball*; *To the Hoop: The Seasons of a Basketball Life*; *The Gospel According to Casey*; *Hank Greenberg: Hall-of-Fame Slugger*; *Pitchers Do Get Lonely and Other Sports Stories*; *Red: A Biography of Red Smith*; *Carew*; *Rockin’ Steady: A Guide to Basketball and Cool*; *Oscar Robertson: The Golden Year*; *The Man Who Robbed the Pierre*, *The DuSable Panthers*, *The Senator with a Jump Shot*; *Maxwell Street: Survival in a Bazaar*; *The Minority Quarterback: and Other Lives in Sports*; and *Beyond the Dream: Occasional Heroes of Sport*. Berkow shared the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for his contribution to the *New York Times* series “How Race Is Lived in America.”

Inside detail, social context, and critical insight animated Berkow’s keynote address, “Impressions and Perspectives: What Makes a Hero?” A master storyteller, Berkow captured the full humanity of several baseball players, relating their foibles, travails, and triumphs. Often drawing upon incidents he had observed and words he had heard spoken, he revealed the nuance of character and personality. Berkow confided that his boyhood hero was, improbably, the diminutive pitcher Marv Rotblatt, winner of only four games during a three-season MLB career with the future writer’s hometown Chicago White Sox. Despite Hall of Famer Joe DiMaggio’s resolve not to share his thoughts about Marilyn Monroe, Berkow described bridging that defense when DiMaggio displayed gratitude for a gift of photos of his ex-wife entertaining troops in Korea. Berkow shared anecdotes conveying the warmth, humor, and ironic wisdom of New York Yankees Phil Rizzuto and Yogi Berra. Berkow related piercing the dismissive arrogance and self-absorption of Barry Bonds by telling the slugger, embattled in controversy over steroid allegations, that he had covered Bonds’ father, Bobby, when the latter was a rookie.

Berkow drew a distinction between ballplayers termed “heroic” exclusively for their athletic accomplishments and those whose actions transcended the game. The Jewish slugger Hank Greenberg and the African American pioneer Jackie Robinson, argued Berkow, possessed a significance that transcended their formidable skills on the diamond. Greenberg, the Detroit Tigers star, provided American Jews with a standard bearer to counter the virulent anti-Semitism of the 1930s, and Brooklyn Dodgers infielder Jackie Robinson’s breaking of baseball’s color line resonated throughout America. In 1947, Greenberg spent his final season as an MLB player with the Pittsburgh Pirates, and he encountered the rookie Robinson. Berkow referenced the following:

Robinson and Greenberg collided in a play at first base during the current Dodgers-Pirates series. The next time Jackie came down to the sack, Hank said, "I forgot to ask you if you were hurt in that play."

Assured that Robinson was unharmed, Greenberg said: "Stick in there. You're doing fine. Keep your chin up."

This encouragement from an established star heartened Robinson, who has been the subject of reported anti-racial treatment elsewhere and admits he has undergone "jockeying" — some of it pretty severe.

"Class tells. It sticks out all over Mr. Greenberg," Robinson declared.²⁰

Yet the centerpiece of Berkow's keynote talk was Lou Brissie, a journeyman ballplayer — and an authentic hero. During his seven years in MLB, Brissie, a left-handed pitcher with the Philadelphia Athletics (1947–1951) and Cleveland Indians (1951–1953), accumulated modest career statistics (44 W, 48 L, 4.07 ERA). He was less than dominant in his two best seasons, 1948 (14 W, 10 L, 4.13 ERA) and 1949 (16 W, 11 L, 4.28 ERA). However, Brissie, related Berkow, possessed the courage, determination, and concern for others that mark a true hero. It was remarkable that Brissie even reached the major leagues.

As a United States soldier during World War II, Brissie fought bravely under miserable conditions in Italy. He saved another soldier's life and earned the Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Purple Heart. Left for dead after a bloody engagement, Army doctors told Brissie that they needed to amputate his shredded leg to save his life. Brissie refused to have the leg amputated, telling physicians that he had a letter from Athletics manager Connie Mack promising him a tryout with the team when he returned from military service. A skilled surgeon saved Brissie's leg and life. He required twenty-three operations in all.

Brissie, stated Berkow, resumed his arduous postwar baseball comeback by throwing while still using crutches. Remarkably, wearing leg braces and enduring pain, he started a game for the Athletics in 1947 and joined the starting rotation the next year. In 1948, fellow veteran Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox hitter nonpareil, smashed a hard line drive off Brissie's leg brace, dropping the pitcher to the ground. After reaching first base, Williams ran out to the mound to check the condition of the prone pitcher; Brissie told Williams to learn to hit the ball on the ground. In a subsequent at bat, Brissie struck Williams out. Brissie finished fourth amongst American League pitchers in strikeouts that year, and in 1949 was named to the All-Star team.

During his MLB playing career, Brissie visited veterans and children in hospitals, inspiring hope by his example and presence. He pitched despite continuing pain and difficulty walking. In 1953, Brissie, continued Berkow, retired from professional baseball rather than accept a minor league assignment. The pitcher felt that if returned to the minors, those who were inspired by him would perceive it as a failure, and he would not let them down. Productive years after baseball followed. At age 84, Brissie again needs crutches, but the qualities that made him a hero remain intact.

Structure of the Book

An abstract committee subjected paper proposals for the 2007 and 2008 symposia to a rigorous and blind selection process. Such was the quality of these abstracts that many good proposals were not chosen for inclusion in either the 2007 or 2008 programs. Following both the 2007 and 2008 symposia, presenters were invited to submit their papers for possible publication. This collection contains sixteen essays on baseball and American culture, chosen by an editorial board from the approximately ninety papers delivered, cumulatively, at the 2007 and 2008 symposia. Thus, articles tapped truly represent an all-star line up, subject to two demanding and distinct selection processes. Subsequent to initial presentation, papers were revised and edited for publication.

The book is divided into six parts. “Cultural Perspectives on the Game” examines the meaning of baseball in American civilization. “Literary Baseball” explores novelistic and biographical treatment of the sport. “Baseball at the Movies” analyzes the cinematic diamond. “Minority Standard Bearers” chronicles the trials and triumphs of deaf and Asian players. “New Leagues” focuses on the creation, chronologically separated by over a century, of two very different professional circuits—the American League and the Israel Baseball League. “The Business of Baseball” investigates the economics and regulations of the corporate game. Each part contains essays related by theme and topic, as described below.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GAME

“The Baseball Reliquary: The Left Coast’s Alternative to Interpreting Baseball History” by Jean Hastings Ardell examines the West Coast’s populist counterpoint to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. In addition to its embrace of satire, irony, and the unconventional, the *Baseball Reliquary*, demonstrates Ardell, represents a significant cultural expression of the national pastime’s history and artifacts, one that reflects the fans’ perspective. A recipient of the *SABR/USA Today Baseball Weekly* Award, Ardell is the author of the critically acclaimed *Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2005). She is the co-director, with her husband, Dan Ardell, a former major league first baseman, of the *Nine* Spring Training Conference.

“Durocher as Machiavelli: Bad Catholic, Good American” by Jeffrey Marlett offers an original and thoughtful commentary on the abrasive and combative Hall of Fame manager who claimed, “Nice guys finish last.” Marlett views Leo Durocher from a previously unexplored perspective — the values of the mid-twentieth century Catholic working class. Despite the much married

manager's outward indifference to the Church during his adult years, Marlett demonstrates that a Catholic upbringing in a French-Canadian immigrant neighborhood resonated in Durocher's commitment to victory on the diamond. Asserting a Catholic influence on America's fixation with winning, Marlett depicts Durocher as a notable conduit between ethnic and national views of competition and opportunity. Associate professor of religious studies at The College of Saint Rose, Marlett is the author of *Saving the Heartland* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).

LITERARY BASEBALL

"Homecoming: Family, Place, and Community in Sara Vogan's *In Shelly's Leg* and Thomas Oliphant's *Praying for Gil Hodges*" by Thomas Wolf explores and integrates, in seamless, expressive language, the place of baseball in the author's own family and in novelistic literature. Through personal memoir and literary analysis, Wolf captures baseball's enduring capacity to foster a sense of home, kinship, and place. He shows families of fiction and of flesh acquiring networks of connection through the rhythms and memories of the game. Wolf has taught courses in writing and literature at the University of North Carolina and Santa Clara University. With his wife, Patricia Bryan, Wolf authored *Midnight Assassin: A Murder in America's Heartland* (Algonquin, 2005).

"Now Batting — Peter Pan: Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* and Baseball's Boyish Culture" by Elizabeth V. O'Connell shrewdly analyzes the pitcher's controversial 1970 baseball diary, which violated the clubhouse code of silence, from the vantage point of gender roles and ideals. Utilizing recent scholarship on masculinity, she offers a fresh perspective on Bouton's depiction of teammates misbehaving. According to O'Connell, the reckless, substance abusing, and sexually promiscuous ballplayers described by Bouton embodied the Peter Pan Syndrome of adult men who never properly matured. O'Connell is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her major fields are twentieth-century American popular culture and gender studies.

"Chasing Moonlight' Through Fiction, Film, and Fact: The Evolution of a Biography" by Brett Friedlander and R.W. Reising relates the truth about the life and times of ballplayer-physician Archibald Wright Graham in a masterful exercise in storytelling. Fictionalized in the writings of novelist W.P. Kinsella and the film *Field of Dreams*, Moonlight/Doc Graham appeared in one game, without getting a turn at bat, for the 1905 New York Giants and subsequently dispensed decades of medicine and benevolence in Chisholm, Minnesota. Attuned to nuance and detail, Friedlander and Reising limn the real Graham's biography, a life that was an amalgam of the mundane and mov-

ing. As a sportswriter for the Fayetteville (North Carolina) *Observer* and other newspapers, Friedlander has written extensively about baseball. A catcher on Michigan State University's 1954 Big Ten Conference championship team, Reising, the author of two books on Olympian Jim Thorpe, is professor of English at the University of the Cumberland.

BASEBALL AT THE MOVIES

"Patriot's Game? Images of American Nationalism in Baseball Films" by Robert Rudd and Marshall Most offers seminal commentary about the ideology of the national pastime in the cinema and on the diamond. In contrast to the triumphal, tribal nationalism displayed by Major League Baseball, movies about the game embrace a more tolerant and inclusive version of American identity, contend Rudd and Most in their nuanced content analysis. They provide new perspective on the relationship between baseball and political ideology. Professors in the department of communication at Boise State University, Rudd and Most are the co-authors of *Stars, Stripes and Diamonds: American Culture and the Baseball Film* (McFarland, 2006).

"The Dark Side of the American Dream: Ron Shelton's *Cobb*" by Ron Briley brilliantly employs the 1994 film about the game's greatest and most ruthless practitioner of "inside baseball" to explore contractions of character and culture. As Briley notes, director Ron Shelton, through the life of Ty Cobb, exposes the dichotomy between the myth and reality of the American Dream. Shelton's Cobb, observes Briley, finds a heart of darkness at the core of the American Dream, experiencing isolation, anger, and alienation as the price of success and celebrity. Assistant headmaster at Sandia Preparatory School and adjunct professor of history at the University of New Mexico, Briley received the 1999 SABR/Macmillan Award and authored *Class at Bat, Gender on Deck, and Race in the Hole: A Line-Up of Essays on Twentieth Century Culture and America's Game* (McFarland, 2003).

MINORITY STANDARD BEARERS

"No Dummies: Deafness, Baseball, and American Culture" by R.A.R. Edwards rescues from historical neglect ballplayers who overcame hearing disabilities. By their use of fingerspelling and absence of oral communication, pitcher Luther Taylor and outfielder William Hoy, in particular, provided significant role models for the deaf community at a time when bias mistakenly associated lack of speech with low intelligence. Edwards recounts a time when deaf ballplayers, whose single season presence on major league rosters peaked at four in 1901, were routinely nicknamed "Dummy." Leavening a fascinating case study in cultural history with persuasive advocacy, she makes a strong case that for the deaf Hoy's significance is comparable to that of Jackie Robinson

for African Americans. Associate professor of history at Rochester Institute of Technology, Edwards augments her research specialty in deaf history with an interest in baseball.

“Asians and Baseball: The Breaking and Perpetuating of Stereotypes” by Terumi Rafferty-Osaki chronicles evolving perceptions of Asian and Asian American participation in the game. Despite their growing presence and success in Major League Baseball, the “model minority” stereotype, argues Rafferty-Osaki, remains a double-edged sword for players of Asian descent, both on and off the diamond. Sensitive to the changing context of demographics, the global economy, and perceptions of race, he captures the nuances of Asian participation in baseball. Elected to Phi Alpha Theta (the national honors society for history), Rafferty-Osaki taught English and history at Hillel Yeshiva High School in Deal, New Jersey. He is a Ph.D. candidate in history at American University.

NEW LEAGUES

“Building a League One Dollar at a Time: The Story of the Immediate Success of the American League” by Michael J. Hauptert and Kenneth Winter persuasively argues that the new circuit’s triumphal challenge to the National League’s baseball monopoly derived from superior business management. The discovery of a set of American League financial records from the early years of the twentieth century enable the authors to fashion a compelling account of entrepreneurial daring and acumen. With drama and detail, Hauptert and Winter render the American League’s origins accessible and significant. Hauptert is professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and Winter is associate professor of accountancy at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

“The Israel Baseball League and the Jewish Diaspora” by William M. Simons examines the origins, evolution, declension, and significance of the game’s first professional circuit in the Mideast. Created in 2007, the Israel Baseball League was a quixotic and secular venture in economic globalization. Simons provides a detailed history of this flawed attempt by American Jews to bring professional baseball to Israel. A frequent lecturer for the New York Council for the Humanities, Simons, professor of history at the State University of New York at Oneonta, is the editor of this book as well as the previous five editions of *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture* (McFarland).

THE BUSINESS OF BASEBALL

“Baseball’s Ultimate Umpires: Labor Arbitration in Our National Game” by Roger I. Abrams examines the role of neutral arbiters in resolving labor

disputes that arise under the terms of the collective bargaining agreements reached by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association. With precision and clarity, Abrams describes the historical, legal, and economic context of baseball arbitration. Abrams, Richardson Professor and former dean at Northeastern University School of Law, is the author of three books on the national pastime — *The First World Series and the Baseball Fanatics of 1903*, *The Money Pitch: Baseball Free Agency and Salary Arbitration*, and *Legal Bases: Baseball and the Law* as well as more than 35 law review articles. He has served as a baseball salary arbitrator and is frequently asked to comment on legal and economic issues involving the game by the print and electronic media.

“Taxing the Fan Who Catches the Ball: Looking Back on Record-Breakers, the 1998 Season and the IRS’s Turn at the Plate” by Patricia L. Bryan provides a rigorous application of tax law to the national pastime. With a rare gift for translating arcane legal and tax regulations into language comprehensible to the lay reader, Bryan shapes a compelling account of evolving interpretations of IRS mandates imposed upon fans in possession of historic home run balls, particularly those launched during the great 1998 duel between Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire. Professor and director of the Tax Institute at the University of North Carolina, School of Law, Bryan teaches courses on taxation as well as a seminar of law and literature.

“The Role of Agents in Baseball” by Paul D. Staudohar provides an excellent overview of “the evolution, involvement, functions, and regulation of sports agents.” Although Staudohar focuses on Major League Baseball, he employs other sports to place his telling portrait of agents within a larger context. Notable for its clarity and unsparing honesty, Staudohar’s account vitiates shibboleths as it provides knowing perspective on the role of sports agents. Professor emeritus of business administration at California State University, Hayward, Staudohar has authored or edited twenty books, including *Diamond Mines: Baseball and Labor* (Syracuse University Press, 2000). He is the past president of the International Association of Sports Economists and co-founder of the *Journal of Sports Economists*.

“The Brave Departure” by Michael Civile illuminates the reasons and context for the 1953 relocation of Boston’s National League franchise to Milwaukee. Buttressed by impressive research and seminal analysis, Civile explores the relevance of history, politics, technology, demographics, economics, and culture within the game and the larger society to the Braves’ departure from Boston. The article constitutes an important contribution to baseball and urban studies. Civile is a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at Boston University. In addition, he is a filmmaker who teaches film production and film studies in the Fine Arts Department at Boston College. Civile’s productions have appeared at the Tribeca Film Festival and other major venues.

“The Great Dodgers Pitching Tandem Strikes a Blow for Salaries: The 1966 Drysdale-Koufax Holdout and Its Impact on the Game” by Ed Edmonds is a major addition to the literature concerning a significant passage in baseball labor history. In addition to forwarding a revisionist interpretation, this study provides the first detailed analysis of the contemporary press coverage of the joint holdout by Los Angeles Dodgers pitching stars Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale. Associate dean for library and information technology, as well as director of the Kesge Law Library, Edmonds is also a professor of law at the University of Notre Dame Law School. Edmonds has taught sports law for over twenty years, and his areas of research specialization encompass labor relations in baseball.

Notes

1. Jack O’Connell, “Ex-Big Leaguer Shares New Views on Life,” *MLB.com* http://mlb.mlb.com/conent/printer_friendly/mlb/y2008/m06/d07/c2863206.jsp.
2. Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 48–49.
3. George Nicholson, “Baseball and Freedom: Remembering Mr. Rickey — A Sojourn to Cooperstown,” *Sacramento Lawyer*, November/December 2007, 21.
4. Tygiel, 51–52.
5. Ira Glasser graciously provided me with a copy of his article, “Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson: Precursors to The Civil Rights Movement,” *The World & I*, March 2003, 257–273, which can also be found at <http://www.worldandi.com/newhome/public/2003/march/mtpub.asp>. Although Glasser’s published article is longer — and with somewhat different wording — than his Symposium remarks, their viewpoints are consistent.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Lee Lowenfish, *Branch Rickey: Baseball’s Ferocious Gentleman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2007); Murray Polner, *Branch Rickey: A Biography* rev. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007); and Steve Jacobson, *Carrying Jackie’s Torch, The Players Who Integrated Baseball — and America* (Chicago: Chicago Review, 2007).
11. Nicholson, 35.
12. Dorothy Jane Mills, “Who Was that Keynote Speaker?” *The HSC Baseball Newsletter*, March 2008 <<http://www.HaroldSeymour.com>>. Seymour’s widow writes of his 1990 keynote address: “I gave that speech. [Though present, Seymour was too burdened by age and illness to deliver the address.] In 1990 Seymour could no longer speak in public. He told me what he thought he’d like to say, and I wrote the speech and delivered it. When I came to the microphone, I asked the audience to imagine that I had a large mustache and a deep voice, for I was speaking for my husband.... It’s curious, when I think about it, that nobody questioned these presentations or wondered how I could be so knowledgeable about the subject as to speak convincingly about it. The reason, of course, was that by this time I had been closely involved with the research and writing for more than forty years.”
13. Curt Smith, *Voices of Summer: Ranking Baseball’s 101 All-Time Best Announcers* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), 41.
14. *Ibid.*, 4.
15. *Ibid.*, 96.
16. *Ibid.*, 86.
17. *Ibid.*, 44.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, 59–60.

20. “Hank Greenberg: A Hero to Dodgers’ Negro Star,” *The New York Times*, 18 May 1947, in Ira Berkow, *Hank Greenberg: The Story of My Life*, edited and with an introduction by Ira Berkow (New York: Times, 1989), 189.

Part I

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES
ON THE GAME

The Baseball Reliquary: The Left Coast's Alternative to Interpreting Baseball History

Jean Hastings Ardell

To visit the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown is to become a fan all over again, with a fan's sense of awe at the wealth of artifacts, photographs, art, and memorabilia on display, and a fan's reverent hush in the Hall of Fame Gallery, with its long walls of plaques that connect us to the glories of yesterday's heroes. Outside on the lawn, nostalgia is likely to fall upon fans of a certain age when they happen upon the life-size bronzes of Roy Campanella and Johnny Podres, testimonies to the melancholic memory of the Dodgers when they still played ball in Brooklyn. Such awe, reverence, and nostalgia suggest that it would be easy to conclude that when it comes to interpreting baseball history, Cooperstown is where it begins and ends. What else is possibly left to say on the subject?

We are speaking of baseball, however, a subject on which the game's historians, writers, and fans always, happily, find more to say. Apropos of the game's history, this paper examines the Southern California counterpoint to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum: the Baseball Reliquary and its Shrine of the Eternals. For reasons that will become apparent, I call the Reliquary the Left Coast's alternative to interpreting baseball history.

"A puckish alternative to the Baseball Hall of Fame."— New York Times¹

The Reliquary offers a significantly different approach to and attitude toward baseball history and artifacts, and even the Dodgers' cataclysmic abandonment of Brooklyn for Los Angeles. As does Cooperstown's baseball museum, the Reliquary engages fans' intellect and imagination to enliven the game's

history. As does the Hall of Fame, the Shrine of the Eternals annually inducts candidates deemed worthy of the honor. The Reliquary and its Shrine, however, seek out aspects of this history that have been overlooked or have not been explored in depth as well as players and others in baseball who have had unconventional careers. Because it is also known for its use of irony, satire, and broad comedy, the Reliquary is often viewed as quirky. Reflecting upon his induction into the Shrine, Jim Bouton mused, “The Reliquary is said to honor ‘rebels, radicals, and reprobates,’ which gave me three shots at it.”²

The Reliquary is substantially more than that. At the Shrine’s inaugural Induction Day ceremony in 1999, the organization’s archivist and historian, Albert Kilchesty, explained the Reliquary and its mission:

The Baseball Reliquary is about as grassroots a form of cultural expression as there is. And while the Reliquary will always be difficult to define and thus will always represent different things to different people, it is for me primarily an entity that has been created by baseball fans (the folk) for the delight of baseball fans in order to provide, through thought-provoking exhibits and artifacts, a version of baseball history as filtered through the imagination of the fan.³

The Reliquary’s celebration of the fan, Kilchesty’s “folk,” is, in its way, reflective of a sea change in how history is treated. In his keynote address, Kilchesty, who then worked as an archivist and microfilm specialist at the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia, Athens, discussed how history was traditionally done. He dated the tradition to the ancient Greeks Herodotus and Thucydides, who focused upon history as “made principally by members of the social elite ... [with] little, if any, attention paid to the common folk — housewives, serfs, children, laborers, slaves — whose role was confined to serving those who made History, not making it themselves.” Kilchesty argued that over the past half-century a “[paradigm] shift in thinking proposes that history is rightfully the province of the common folk ... the masses, and that the best way to study this History is through an investigation into the grassroots forms of expression that the folk developed — folk songs and poetry, pamphlets, broadsides, and alternative newspapers; works of art in various media; and games. Games such as baseball.”

Ergo the Baseball Reliquary.

*“Dare I call Veeck our spiritual guru?” — Terry Cannon,
Executive Director, the Baseball Reliquary*

A man named Terry Cannon founded the organization in 1996 to provide an outlet and framework that would encompass his passions for baseball history

and art. Cannon started out after graduating in 1975 from San Francisco State University with a degree in Creative Arts by founding the nonprofit Pasadena Filmforum. Now known as the Los Angeles Filmforum, the organization remains in play 33 years later. Since 2005, he has worked as an assistant librarian at Alhambra High School. He describes his outer self as “meek and mild-mannered (what else would you expect from a high school librarian?),” he asks. Cannon confesses, however, to having the heart of a “rabble rouser and non-conformist.”⁴ (One of the highlights of the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture is the recitation by the research director of the Hall of Fame Library, Tim Wiles, in his Mudville flannels, of “Casey at the Bat.” Likewise, at various Southern California art events, Terry Cannon has dressed as the Baseball Pope — his wife Mary made his miter — and performed “The Sermon on the Mound.”) As Don Malcolm, who frequently writes about the Reliquary, puts it, “Terry Cannon is one part showman, one part baseball scholar, and one part committed social historian.”⁵

Cannon’s non-conformity can be traced at least to 1962, when he was nine years old and read a book that would vividly color his attitude toward baseball history. The book was *Veeck as in Wreck*, written with Ed Linn by the irrepressible Bill Veeck, Jr. “This was the first baseball book I read from cover to cover, and 45 years later, I think it may still be the best baseball book I have ever read,” Cannon says. “I was particularly enthralled by the drama and intrigue of the book’s first chapter, ‘A Can of Beer, a Slice of Cake — and Thou, Eddie Gaedel.’” More on Gaedel later.

Cannon may have founded The Reliquary under the influence of the Veeckian mantra to Have Fun, but that is not to say the museum is one long joke, ironic or otherwise. When Cannon refers to Veeck as “our spiritual guru,” he is not being light. “I was also impressed by Veeck’s intellect (he was a voracious reader), his humanitarianism, and particularly his visionary approach to baseball, which was so different and refreshing when compared to his fellow owners,” he says. “I often describe the Reliquary as being the only museum that represents the entire spectrum of the baseball experience, from the silly and irreverent to the serious and scholarly.”

The Reliquary is unconventional in another way: Its mailing address is P. O. Box 1850, Monrovia, California; its web site is <www.baseballreliquary.org>. It has no bricks-and-mortar building in which to permanently house and present its exhibits and events, collaborating instead with such local institutions as the Burbank Public Library, the Los Angeles City College Library, the Jackie Robinson Center, and the Ice House Comedy Club. Cannon’s catholic interest in baseball history is reflected in exhibits from “Baseball’s Time Machine: Photography at the Field of Dreams” to a replica of Ebbets Field designed by confectionery artist William Robert Steele (used to promote awareness of Jackie Robinson’s story in his hometown of Pasadena).⁶ Some

exhibits possess a certain edginess: A poster promoting “The Times They Were A-Changin’: Baseball in the Age of Aquarius, 1960–1976” depicts three of the game’s controversial players from that era: Curt Flood, Jim Bouton, and Oscar Gamble — with Gamble’s substantial Afro virtually a fourth entity. Indeed, Gamble’s hairstyle signifies the era’s departure from the mores of the past. The exhibit shows how ballplayers like Gamble and Dock Ellis (who on the field wore hair curlers beneath his cap and was called to account for it by commissioner Bowie Kuhn) represent the tensions between baseball and popular culture. In its depiction of outspoken rebels such as Joe Pepitone and Charlie Finley, groundbreaking umpires Bernice Gera (female) and Emmett Ashford (black), and union executive Marvin Miller (shown in a priceless photograph with his wife Terry, his legal counsel Dick Moss, and a discomfited-looking Walter O’Malley — all four wearing St. Patrick’s Day hats), the exhibit addresses the issues of free speech, racial unrest, and labor relations that beset that turbulent time.

Barrio Baseball, a Neglected History

In recent years, Cannon has taken the Reliquary beyond such periodic exhibits on baseball history to a more ambitious project. The idea for the project came during his visit to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). Cannon knew that the university has a large number of Hispanic students; noticing the library’s numerous empty display cases, he began to envision an ideal venue for a Mexican/Latino baseball exhibit. In 2004, with a \$5,000 grant from the California Council for the Humanities, the Reliquary embarked upon an extensive collaboration with the Kennedy Library. Through the use of artifacts, artworks, photographs, and oral histories, “Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues” examines its subject as a social and cultural force dating to early in the twentieth century and extending to other areas of the United States:

- The industrial, Roman Catholic, community, migrant, and women’s leagues that dotted the Midwest. “It was not at all unusual to find the best players participating in two or more leagues, and talent on the baseball diamond often proved a ticket to employment for Mexicans, since businesses prided themselves on sponsoring successful baseball teams,” Cannon writes in the exhibit notes. Such teams provided a gathering place where people socialized and discussed community issues. “The once-flourishing culture of amateur and semi-professional baseball was an important means for Mexican Americans to celebrate ethnic identity and instill community pride,” explains Fran-

cisco Balderrama, professor of Chicano studies and history at CSULA. “It was also a way for Mexican Americans to find a place for themselves in American society.”⁷

- Las Aztecas, a women’s team that played during the pre–World War II years in Kansas City, Kansas, recalls the women’s leagues of the Midwest that played hardball by men’s rules, upending traditional notions of women’s capabilities and roles. “The Kansas City and East Chicago teams had several excellent players,” according to former coach Fred Maravilla in the exhibit notes. “Some of the women were gifted athletes, while others learned to play outstanding ball from their brothers. The coaches used to say that we wanted some of the women on our men’s teams, which nearly always brought laughter from the guys because they thought we were joking. We weren’t kidding.”

- Latino broadcaster Jaime Jarrin, who in 1959 joined the Los Angeles Dodgers’ Spanish-language broadcasting team on radio station KWKW. Cannon credits Jarrin with inspiring the increase in Spanish-language broadcasts of MLB. For his contributions, Jarrin was the first Hispanic broadcaster to be honored with a Golden Mike award (1970) by the Southern California Radio and Television News Association, and the second Spanish-language broadcaster awarded the Ford C. Frick Award (1998) for broadcasting achievement by the Hall of Fame; he also received the La Gran Cruz al Merito en El Grado de Comendado medal of honor, the highest award presented to non-military citizens in his native Ecuador (1992).

- Pitcher Elias Baca, the first Mexican American to play baseball at the University of California Los Angeles.

- Fernandomania. When Mexican lefthander Fernando Valenzuela broke in with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1981, he launched a cultural phenomenon. He “reflected the stirring of an often overlooked community newly invigorated by immigration,” comments Patrick J. McDonnell in the program notes. [Valenzuela’s popularity] “was an early indicator of both the demographic revolution and the cultural and political breakthroughs that would soon be too pronounced to ignore. Southern California’s Latino character, obscured through decades of western migration by English-speaking whites and blacks, was coming back.”⁸

- Oral histories of participants in the Mexican American leagues collected by students in Dr. Balderrama’s “Oral History: Theory and Practice” class at CSULA. Digitally formatted, the audio and video recordings proved so popular that the university library expanded its Special Collections to archive the project’s materials.

Little attention had been paid to the rich Mexican American baseball history of Los Angeles until Cannon got involved. In 2007 the project received a

national humanities award, The Schwartz Prize, for excellence in public programming. The Schwartz Prize panel of judges explained that the exhibit won in part because it forged strong links between the university and local residents “to produce an experience of exceptional and lasting significance.”

* * *

In the decade-plus since the Reliquary’s inception, Cannon has acquired several private collections of baseball manuscripts, books, magazines, programs, and audio recordings. He also owns an ever-growing collection of Shrine of the Eternals inductee plaques, artifacts, and commissioned artwork including paintings, assemblages, photographs, and conceptual pieces. Everything is kept, when not in use, in storage units or in his and his wife Mary’s one-bedroom home. Asked whether storage was becoming a problem, Cannon replied, “You bet it is,” adding that it is one of the major issues he faces in the coming years.

While Cannon’s collaboration on “Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles” earned a satisfying amount of attention and critical acclaim, fame has yet to visit the Reliquary. The *New York Times* did a story on the Reliquary in 2007, but coverage by the mainstream Southern California press has been thin, according to Cannon. He laments that radio and television coverage has been even thinner. Because it is not a household name, mention the Shrine of the Eternals in conservative Orange County (just south of Los Angeles) and you risk being teased as being part of a deviant and possibly dangerous religious cult. Cannon says that in 1997 he received a letter from a woman in Pasadena: Wendy Brougalman, a board officer of The Catholic League for Decency in Baseball, to advise that the organization had begun an investigation into the Reliquary.⁹ Writers and bloggers, however, tend to fall in love with the idea of the Reliquary, and stories and commentary have appeared in *Arroyo Monthly*, the *Burbank Leader*, www.dailybulletin.com, www.deepcount.com, and the *Pasadena Star-News*.

When it does gain coverage, the Reliquary’s reputation for humor can divert attention from its serious work in baseball history. “It is not clear how the face of the former Dodgers owner Walter O’Malley came to appear on a flour tortilla in Los Angeles,” begins the *New York Times’s* article on the Reliquary.¹⁰ Like others who combine their love of baseball with humor — Bill Veeck, Jr. comes to mind — Cannon has run into misunderstandings about his mission. He says he has been disappointed by the media’s almost exclusive focus on the Reliquary’s satirical and irreverent side. “This may very well be a byproduct of our modern era where so much of the fun has been taken out of the major league game, so people are yearning for more humorous approaches. Whatever the reason, the Reliquary’s more scholarly work is generally given less credence.” Cannon’s dilemma is unlikely to change, as humor is integral

to the Reliquary. On the occasion of his induction into the Shrine in 2005, former coach Rod Dedeaux, renowned over the years for both his expertise in teaching fundamental baseball at the University of Southern California and his sense of humor, recalled that at USC's coaches' meetings, all the stories were of baseball rather than other sports. "Humor *is* in baseball," he stated, "and the lack of it [today] just kills me."¹¹ In his Induction Day keynote address that same year, John Schulian, author of *Twilight of the Long-ball Gods*, asked, "Can you be funny playing for Steinbrenner?" Listing the players' "canned quotes and clichés, sportswriters' lack of wit, and the shrillness of sports talk radio," Schulian urged that "baseball perform Tommy John surgery on its funny bone."¹²

The Reliquary is a 501(c)(3) organization that survives upon grants and membership dues. Membership categories range from \$25 to \$1,000 a year; all categories grant voting privileges to the Shrine. The Reliquary's annual budget is \$10,000 to \$15,000. MLB, by the way, gives \$15,000 annually to the Hall of Fame and Museum. Much of the latter's income derives from the admission fees from its 350,000 annual visitors. While the \$15,000 annual sum given by MLB to the Hall of Fame and Museum may seem paltry, the two organizations obviously enjoy highly symbiotic relations to the Hall's great benefit.

The Reliquary enjoys no connection whatsoever with MLB, a distinction about which Terry Cannon has something to say: "The Reliquary is one of the few organizations that actively encourages creative and frequently unusual approaches to the documentation and interpretation of baseball history.... We can pursue this mission without concern about offending advertisers or corporate sponsors.... There are downsides to having your own museum," he concludes, "but there are also a few upsides, and one of them is that you can do whatever you want."

Cannon has a point. Recall the uproar in April 2003 as the Hall of Fame was preparing to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the film *Bull Durham*. Dale Petroskey, the president of the Hall, cancelled the festivities because Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins, two of the film's stars, were outspoken in their opposition to the War in Iraq. In his letter of cancellation, Petroskey asserted, "We believe your very public criticism of President Bush at this important — and sensitive — time in our nation's history helps undermine the U.S. position, which ultimately could put our troops in even more danger. As an institution, we stand behind our President and our troops in this conflict." Robbins replied, "I was unaware that baseball was a Republican sport."¹³ More than 28,000 people wrote to protest that Petroskey had brought politics into the Hall of Fame and Museum, and he later apologized. But the Hall's board has long been known to be conservative; besides, politics and organized baseball have always gone along together hand in mitt.

Cannon's liberal use of his intellectual freedom is apparent in an event

he produced in Hollywood at the Ford Amphitheatre in 2004: “Legacies: Baseball from Flatbush to the City of Angels.” “Legacies” featured a variety of interpretations of the Dodgers’ move to Los Angeles by actors, poets, musicians, performance artists, and a self-described stand-up novelist. Comedienne Elayne Boosler served as the emcee, and musical performances included Sue Raney and Carmen Fanzone’s “Dodger Blue,” Byron Motley’s “Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball?” and the Dodgers’ organist Nancy Bea Hefley playing her favorite tunes. Dan Kwong’s “Dodgertown” riffed on boyhood memories of getting into games for free. The aforementioned stand-up novelist, Heather Woodbury, presented excerpts from “Tale of 2Cities: An American Joyride on Multiple Tracks,” and Culture Clash performed excerpts from “Chavez Ravine.”

Much of the program dramatized the plight of the former residents of the community of Chavez Ravine, where Dodger Stadium now stands. No haze of nostalgia surrounds this story; it is a blot on the City’s political and social history. For much of the first half of the 20th century, the Ravine housed a vibrant, if poor, Latino community, located near downtown Los Angeles. When federal funds for public housing were made available in the late 1940’s, the city signed on, targeted Chavez Ravine, and began to evict the residents, many of whom did not go quietly. Any residual commitment to public housing on the site went out the window when Walter O’Malley went looking for a new home for the Dodgers. Given the prospect of becoming a big-league town, the city’s politicians went all out to make it happen. Construction of Dodger Stadium began in 1959, shortly after the few remaining residents of the Ravine were evicted. On television and in the press, images appeared of Los Angeles County sheriffs forcibly removing people from their homes. While the scandal of Chavez Ravine essentially has to do with Los Angeles politicians’ abuse of power, specifically their abuse of the right of eminent domain, rather than the Dodgers’ move to town, the two events remain conjoined in history.¹⁴

Despite the Reliquary’s independence from MLB, the “Legacies” event attracted its scrutiny. According to Cannon, “Peter O’Malley (Walter’s son) even had Major League Baseball in New York contact the Reliquary and request a ‘script’ for the event so that they might officially ‘approve’ it, which, of course, I denied, further advising them that they had no legal rights to do so.” Anne Oncken, the Reliquary’s development director who worked on the “Legacies” event, corroborates Cannon’s story, and adds that the O’Malley camp asked the Dodgers’ box office manager to call the Ford Theater’s box office manager to learn more about the event’s content. Cannon simply wonders why Peter O’Malley did not contact him directly, and why he did not attend the show to satisfy his curiosity.

Had O’Malley gone, he would have seen not only the lengthy ode to the residents of Chavez Ravine but also a celebration of the Dodgers’ historical

role as a pioneer of diversity in MLB: 1945: The signing of Jackie Robinson; 1958: the sponsoring of the first daily MLB broadcasts in a language (Spanish) other than English; 1959: the hiring of Latino broadcaster Jaime Jarrin; 1981: the promotion of Mexican pitching sensation Fernando Valenzuela; and 1995: the debut of Japanese pitcher Hideo Nomo. In the course of becoming the National League Rookie of the Year, the latter inspired a wave of Nomomania among Japanese fans. But Cannon's point is that "this kind of programming — Chavez Ravine — would not be produced or sanctioned by MLB due to its concerns of offending those who have a financial interest in it."

*"They honor anti-establishment people — that's me."
— Marvin Miller, Shrine of the Eternals Inductee,
Class of 2003*

The highlight of the Reliquary's annual calendar of events is its Shrine of the Eternals Induction Day program, held each July at the Pasadena Central Library's venerable Donald R. Wright Auditorium. The Shrine's standards for induction differ from those for the Hall of Fame. As the Shrine's manifesto declares¹⁵:

Stats are not the sole criterion for induction. Because the life and career of a human being cannot and should not be reduced to a set of numbers.... Although our culture has a tendency to equate success and achievement with quantifiable results, the Baseball Reliquary recognizes that excellence comes in many forms and a good many of those forms have nothing to do with numbers, but have everything to do with character and principle.

Absolutely anyone associated with baseball, past or present is eligible: players, managers, coaches and umpires, executives and administrators, broadcasters and writers, and fans, as well as those who have interpreted the game through artistic and cultural media. Also eligible are fictional characters from literature, drama, motion pictures, et al. In 2008, one of the nominees was Charlie Brown of the *Peanuts* comic strip.

With an eye out in particular for colorful characters who were at the center of one of the game's defining moments, the Board's screening committee compiles a list of nominees, which are then voted upon by the Reliquary's members. As you would expect, you find people in the Shrine whose images are unlikely to grace the Hall of Fame Gallery:

- Pam Postema (Class of 2000), whose thirteen-season minor-league umpiring career culminated in an acrimonious lawsuit against MLB, is in the Shrine.

- Marvin Miller (Class of 2003), whose years as executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association (1966–1983) transformed the game’s economics.

- Lester Rodney (Class of 2005). The year before his induction, Rodney gave the keynote address, and at 93 was as fiery as he was in 1936, when he became sports editor of the *Daily Worker*, the official newspaper of the American Communist Party, and began to call for the integration of MLB. “Racism was an accepted culture of the times,” he said in a 2004 interview. “I wrote editorials that asked why in the land of the free, in the middle of the 20th Century, were qualified people not allowed to play in the national pastime? No one else was saying it. The other newspapers weren’t challenging the commissioner (Judge Landis) about baseball’s policy.”¹⁶

It is not simply that former Communists, labor organizers, and female umpires receive a nice plaque to take home, but that they are given a chance to speak, to tell their side of their baseball story. The Shrine tends to honor individuals with a capital I, ballplayers such as Dick Allen, Curt Flood, and Bill “Spaceman” Lee who have strayed or, in some cases, bolted from baseball orthodoxy in their quest for authenticity or a fair deal. The Shrine also tends to honor players such as Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson who sought a place in organized baseball. Family members of the inductees show up—faces in the audience have included relatives of Roberto Clemente, Josh Gibson, and Jackie Robinson—and I have noticed that they are likely to sit tall in their seats. Induction into the Shrine can mean a great deal to the honoree, too. As journalist Paul Sterman writes, “Since many of [the inductees] have been nonconformists or outspoken, they were never embraced by the traditional baseball establishment, so they haven’t ever been honored by MLB in any significant way—and know they probably never will be. The Reliquary induction, for many, is their big honor.”¹⁷ Sterman discussed the subject with Cannon, who, he writes, noted that Jim Brosnan, the right-hander best known for the curves he threw the baseball establishment in his critically-acclaimed groundbreaking memoir of 1960, *The Long Season*, “got very emotional” when he learned of his induction, while Marvin Miller “seemed to be quite moved by the honor. He said Marvin was genuinely pained that he hadn’t been honored by MLB, and that his influence wasn’t ever really acknowledged.”

In the beginning, Cannon had not been at all sure how his inductees would respond to his invitation into the Shrine of the Eternals. Any doubts he had, however, were washed away at the inaugural ceremony in 1999 by the first inductee. During his introduction of Dock Ellis, Cannon recalled the season of 1971. As the All-Star game approached, Vida Blue’s 10–1 record made him the logical choice to start for the American League; Dock Ellis’s 14–3 record, with twelve straight wins, made him the logical choice to start for the

National League. Then Ellis's comment to the press—"I doubt very seriously if they'll start a brother (black man) from the American League and a brother from the National"—caused a media storm of wrath aimed at the pitcher for suggesting that racism still existed in baseball. At least one person understood, however, and wrote to Ellis¹⁸:

I read your comments in our paper the last few days and wanted you to know how much I appreciate your courage and honesty. In my opinion progress for today's players will only come from this kind of dedication. I am sure you also know some of the possible consequences. The news media while knowing full well you are right and honest will use every means to get back at you. Blacks should not protest, as you are, even though they know you are right. Honors that should be yours will bypass you and the pressures will be great. When I met you I was left with the feeling that self-respect was very important. There will be times when you will ask yourself if it's worth it all. I can only say, Doc, [sic] it is and even though you will want to yield in the long run your own feeling about yourself will be most important. Try not to be left alone, try to get more players to understand your views and you will find great support. You have made a real contribution. I sincerely hope your great ability continues. That ability will determine the success of your dedication and honesty. I again appreciate what you are doing — continued success.

Sincerely,
Jackie Robinson

When Dock Ellis stepped to the lectern, he said, "Jackie Robinson might have said it all when he said, 'You might want to give up.... But I never did.'" Ellis then choked up, and it was a moment before he was able to continue. Cannon recalls that Ellis went on to "tell the audience that throughout and after his baseball career, he had received few honors, and that this acknowledgment, as modest as it may seem, meant that he had made a contribution to the game." It was then that Cannon believed the Shrine of the Eternals had a viable purpose. Indeed, the induction of Dock Ellis best represents the Shrine's core value—the recognition of a gifted and controversial ballplayer and human being who faced down both his own personal demons and the baseball establishment.

The Induction Day ceremony celebrates other facets of baseball history, too. As Master of Ceremonies, Cannon opens with the ringing of a cowbell in honor of Hilda Chester, followed by commentary on Hilda's iconic value as folk-hero "queen of the bleachers" at the Brooklyn Dodgers' Ebbets Field. The playing of the national anthem follows. True to the Reliquary's unconventional style, the anthem has been rendered by musicians on the harp, ukulele, and erhu (Chinese violin). The role of Kilchesty's "folk" is then honored through The Hilda Award for distinguished service to the game by a fan. Recipients of the Hilda Award have ranged from actor and minor-league club owner Bill

Murray to Rea Wilson, who at the age of 77 drove 18,000 miles to visit every major-league ballpark in the U.S. and Canada, to Ruth Roberts, who wrote the lyrics to the song “Meet the Mets.” Next comes the Tony Salin Memorial Award, which is given to an individual dedicated to preserving baseball history. Recipients of the award include authors Peter Golenbock and David Nemec, statistician Bill Weiss, author and Pacific Coast League Historical Society founder Richard Beverage, author and Nisei Baseball Research Project founder Kerry Yo Nakagawa, and photo archivist and collector Mark Rucker. And then the heart of the afternoon: the keynote address, and the introduction of and acceptance by the inductees. (When Yogi Berra was unable to attend his induction into the Class of 2007, Charlie Silvera, Berra’s back-up catcher from 1948 to 1956 on the New York Yankees, spoke.)

“The Reliquary has been described as a large-scale artwork.”— Terry Cannon

The Reliquary goes beyond its oft-exuberant celebration of baseball’s fans and renegades to illustrate how and why the game has inspired its vast literary and artistic canon. Cannon has seasoned the Reliquary board with men and women of various ethnicities whose careers include: photographer, chef, film-maker, the founder of the Museum of Jurassic Technology, and assorted performance artists and bon vivants—people likely to bring highly creative points of view to baseball history. Cannon even invited Wendy Brougalman, of The Catholic League for Decency in Baseball, to join the board to see for herself what the Reliquary was up to. From 1997 to 2003, “this wonderful and elderly woman popped in and out of Board meetings, usually sitting in the back of the room knitting or crocheting,” he recalls.

Given Cannon’s own abiding interest in the arts, he, of course, turns to them whenever possible in framing baseball history. He explains, “[The Reliquary combines] elements of history and performance, much more involved than, but not dissimilar to, a baseball film or a poem or a musical piece which attempts to provide insights into why the game of baseball is so deeply rooted in the American psyche and, perhaps in its creation, to unravel a few of baseball’s mysteries along the way.” Key to this mission is the role of the imagination. Albert Kilchesty puts it this way: “For fans old enough to possess a stockpile of baseball memories, the game of baseball as conjured in the imagination often takes precedence over the game as it is played daily on the field.”¹⁹ Kilchesty is talking about our childhood dreams of bottom-of-the-ninth glory, the “what-might-have-been” and “what-if scenarios” known so well, for example, to fans of the Chicago Cubs over the past century. “This ability to refashion the game so richly in the mind separates baseball from nearly every

other sport,” Kilchesty explains. “Games such as football, hockey, or basketball, for example, do not lend themselves so freely to the imagination. So it’s not surprising baseball has become such an attractive subject for so many artists.”

Especially notable is the Reliquary’s collection of approximately twenty paintings from Ben Sakoguchi’s “Orange Crate Label Series: The Unauthorized History of Baseball in 100-odd Paintings.” Cannon says that he did not commission the project — Sakoguchi does not accept commissions — but that the Reliquary did help to inspire it. The interpretative series of 10" by 11" acrylic-on-canvas orange-crate labels was first exhibited at Los Angeles City College in 2006. Visitors to www.bensakoguchi.com will find such depictions as: Tokyo Babes Brand California Oranges, Little Tokyo, California, 1934, with Babe Ruth, shaded by a parasol, bowing toward a traditionally-garbed Japanese woman; *Asterisk Brand Oranges, Homer, California, with Roger Maris in his home-run swing; and Buff Brand Oranges, Giant, California, with Ted Kluszewski (“organic”) and Mark McGwire (“juiced”). As with much of the Reliquary’s projects, there are layers of meaning in this collection of orange-crate labels. Each spring the air in many parts of Southern California was once permeated by the scent of blossoming citrus trees. The orchards were long since bulldozed for housing and freeways, but the memory evokes a nostalgia not unlike some have for, say, Brooklyn before the Dodgers left town. Original and newly created labels from orange and lemon crates have been popular for decades.

“Truth is a many-faceted gem.” — Terry Cannon

Both the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and the Baseball Reliquary inspire a fan’s imagination, though in different ways. The Hall of Fame tends to use its relics — relics it attempts to authenticate as real — to trigger the fan’s imagination. For example, in the early 1990’s, I visited the newly installed exhibit of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, with its mannequins dressed in the League’s short-skirted uniforms, photographs of the players in action, and assorted memorabilia. As a woman with three young children in tow approached the exhibit, her son, aged about seven, stopped short. “Look, Mom,” he said, tugging at her hand. “You could’a played. Mom! You could play baseball, too.” The exhibit clearly triggered the boy’s imagination, if not his weary mother’s, to embrace the idea that women play baseball, too.

By contrast, Cannon begins with imagination, unleashing it to examine and challenge the meaning of a baseball relic. The Reliquary’s artifacts ask: What is real? How do we know it is authentic? Does it matter? To this end,

and with his tongue firmly in cheek, Cannon has accumulated a mind-blowing array of baseball artifacts. Among them are a rubber replica of one of Mordecai “Three Finger” Brown’s missing digits; the skin from Abner Doubleday’s inner thigh (ostensibly found in 1948 in a basement refrigerator at the Hall of Fame and Museum); the Walter O’Malley Tortilla — “carbon-dated” to circa 1958, according to Cannon and used to teach the history of Chavez Ravine; Eddie Gaedel’s jockstrap, used to address social attitudes toward “midgets,” as Eddie was referred to in less semantically sensitive days; and Bill Veeck, Jr.’s wooden leg. (Cannon cherishes this remark by Mike Veeck, made on the occasion of Bill’s induction into the Shrine. “Had dad ever decided to open a baseball museum, it would be very much like the Reliquary.”)

“One of the world’s most sacrosanct baseball relics,” states the Reliquary’s display of dirt from Elysian Fields, once thought to be the site in 1846 of the first game of baseball as we know it. “Details of the origin of the soil, and its miraculous preservation for nearly a century and a half, are documented in a letter from Gerald H. Orr of Reading, Pennsylvania.” *Really?* the historian thinks. *Who would have thought back then to preserve a scoop of dirt?* Pointing out that it dates to 1853, Cannon argues for this particular relic’s authenticity:

I know that some have questioned the veracity of this relic, usually stating something along the lines of, “How could anyone think that this dirt would have any special importance?” Yet, that is exactly the beauty of it. Why is anyone moved to collect anything? A person has some kind of special relationship with a place or a thing, and wants to keep something that signifies that special bond.... Remember, too, that Gerald Orr’s letter of provenance accompanying the donation of the dirt stated that his great-great-great-grandfather was “an intuitive type who ‘wrote poetry,’ and who ‘was so moved by the game and its manner of being played that, at times he seemed to be in a trance.’” We know that intuitive types and poets often have a very special appreciation for, and understanding of, things that others often overlook or take for granted. Considering all of these elements, I don’t think it is unreasonable to believe that Mr. Orr dug up a piece of dirt from Elysian Fields in 1853 as a keepsake.²⁰

Baseball historians know that today’s truth may be discredited tomorrow. The Elysian Fields story of 1846, which supplanted the Doubleday creation myth of 1839 as the prototypical baseball game, has itself been supplanted by research done by such historians as David Block and John Thorn.²¹ (Baseball was not invented by anyone; it evolved.) Baseball history has always been an exotic blend of myth and legend, fact and fiction, a point the Baseball Reliquary underscores. “The intertwining of fact and invention, and the resultant blurring of their respective borders, is an important part of the Reliquary’s creative exploration of baseball history,” Cannon says. “Because the Reliquary is such an unusual institution in the baseball world, in fact the only institution

that asks you to surrender the idea that history and fiction can be neatly separated, many people have a very difficult time understanding the various ‘levels’ upon which it operates. For instance, how can a museum showcase objects of veneration while at the same time critiquing the institutional adoration of such objects? Most baseball observers don’t really ‘get’ the Baseball Reliquary. There are some exceptions [who are able] to see how the Reliquary can function on a variety of levels, such as celebrating, while simultaneously critiquing, the concept of museums.”

* * *

It is fitting that the game of baseball, so entwined with the nation’s history and culture, the national psyche and its collective imagination, commands a repository for its official history at the august and beautiful edifice known as the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Such a place will continue to inspire awe, reverence, and nostalgia among those who love the game. So where does the grassroots upstart known as the Baseball Reliquary fit in? If you consider that we are a nation founded in 1776 in rebellion against the traditional hierarchy, a nation populated by immigrants, Albert Kilchesty’s “folk,” who risked much to reinvent the meaning of home, and a nation whose finest moments often have come from upstart, grassroots ideas that challenged the establishment, the powerful, the moneyed, the Reliquary fits right in.

As for baseball, it is too vast a game to ever be captured in its entirety by one museum, one approach to the game’s history. Here the Reliquary’s approach offers much. In its wry way, the Reliquary brings humor to the reverence we hold for the game and its artifacts, reminding us that baseball is a *game*—a game of some hilarity. Through the Hilda Award, the Reliquary honors the presence of the fan in the seats, reminding us that baseball belongs in an essential way to its “folk”—and that these “folk” have stories of value to tell. Through the Shrine of the Eternals, the Reliquary honors outsiders such as Curt Flood who put principle above orthodoxy. Through the Shrine, the Reliquary recognizes that baseball’s less-than-famous have made contributions that transcend the diamond: lefthander Ila Jane Borders, who pitched during the late 1990’s on men’s professional teams, primarily in the independent Northern League, and Kenichi Zenimura, who used his time in the Japanese internment camps during World War II to organize a 32-team baseball league. By preserving and interpreting these stories, the Baseball Reliquary brings richness, texture, and depth to the game’s historical narrative.

Meanwhile, Cannon is looking to the future. The project “Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues” has grown in scope as part of a regional center for the study of Mexican and Latino baseball to be established at the John M. Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino. To resolve that pesky storage problem, a search is

underway for a local institution, possibly a Special Collections library in academia, in which to house the materials in a research environment. “Slowly, since its inception,” he writes, “the Reliquary, like Emily Dickinson’s spider, noiseless and patient, has been moving inexorably in this direction ... a stable, permanent place to call home.” As I write this, Cannon is busy organizing the 2008 ceremony of the Shrine of the Eternals. This year’s inductees are: Emmett Ashford, Bill Buckner, and Buck O’Neil. Charlie Brown did not make the cut.

Notes

1. Justin Peters, “An Off-the-Wall Tribute to America’s Pastime: The Baseball Reliquary Is a Hall of Fame for Great Stories, if Not Great Players,” *New York Times*, March 1, 2007, p. C18.

2. Jim Bouton, *Foul Ball: My Life and Hard Times Trying to Save an Old Ballpark* (North Egremont, MA: Bulldog, 2003), p. 130.

3. Albert Kilchesty, “1999 Induction Day Keynote Address,” Shrine of the Eternals, July 25, 1999.

4. Terry Cannon, e-mail to the author, May 3, 2008.

5. Don Malcolm, “A Reliquary for All Seasons,” www.baseballthinkfactory.org, August 4, 2004.

6. Steele was working as the pastry chef at Pasadena’s Ritz-Carlton Huntington Hotel when Cannon commissioned him to do the Ebbets Field cake. “William is an Irish immigrant and knew nothing about baseball, but he loved the architectural designs of the old ballparks I showed him. He had a particular affinity for Ebbets because he liked the exterior columns and could easily create those at his work using a pasta extruding machine,” says Cannon, e-mail to the author, July 4, 2008.

7. Nomination statement for the Helen and Martin Schwartz prize, California Council for the Humanities, www.statehumanities.org/programs/canom.pdf.

8. Nomination statement.

9. Terry Cannon, e-mail to the author, July 4, 2008.

10. Peters.

11. Rod Dedeaux, induction address, The Baseball Reliquary Shrine of the Eternals Induction Ceremony, July 24, 2005.

12. John Schulian, keynote address, The Baseball Reliquary Shrine of the Eternals Induction Ceremony, July 24, 2005.

13. Ira Berkow, “The Hall of Fame Will Tolerate No Dissent,” *New York Times*, April 11, 2003.

14. For an in-depth examination of the Dodgers’ move from Brooklyn to Los Angeles, see Neil J. Sullivan, *The Dodgers Move West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

15. Kilchesty.

16. Bob Keisser, “Rodney finally gets some respect,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, July 17, 2004, B1.

17. Paul Sterman, e-mail to the author, May 17, 2008.

18. Letter from Jackie Robinson to Dock Ellis, reprinted in Donald Hall with Dock Ellis, *Dock Ellis in the Country of Baseball* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976) pp. 145–146.

19. Kilchesty.

20. Cannon, July 4, 2008.

21. For an insightful examination of early baseball, see David Block, *Baseball Before We Knew It: A Search for the Roots of the Game* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

Durocher as Machiavelli: Bad Catholic, Good American

Jeffrey Marlett

Nice guys finish last. What can be said about this overused sports adage? Or, perhaps better, what can be said that hasn't been said already? The phrase, coined by the irascible baseball manager Leo Durocher, signifies everything Machiavellian in American life.¹ Honor and integrity make nice mantle ornaments, but if you really want to win, learn how to play dirty. (One thinks of Leo's biography — also titled *Nice Guys Finish Last*— wherein he admitted that he'd run over his own mother if she stood at third base waiting to tag him out.)² Winning has become something of an American identifier. Americans, simply put, cannot lose. In the 1981 movie *Stripes*, Bill Murray punctuates a pep talk with "We're Americans.... We're ten and one!" a rather bald and early recognition of the Vietnam war. Much of the nation's recent political and cultural history hinges on understanding "winners" and "losers" in presidential and mid-term elections, policy decisions, wars— either actual combat or the perception thereof, and even the natural environment.³ Hyper-competitiveness has now come to characterize both sides of America's "culture wars."⁴ Leo's expression of that commitment has become an identifying feature of American life.

Here I am concerned primarily with Durocher's managerial career with the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants from 1941 to 1955, largely because his initial success sketched the trajectory that would lead to his latter failures with the Chicago Cubs and the Houston Astros. Leo's gutsy and pesky managerial style reveals an appreciation for a certain Machiavellian approach to winning. Any discussion of cheating and gaining competitive edges in baseball must include the famously lapsed Catholic, Leo Durocher. For example, 2007 witnessed the sixtieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson's integration of the major leagues, one of baseball's greatest moments. Leo's role in this event (tempered by his gambling suspension) often goes unnoticed. Still, his argument for Robinson's inclusion — "I don't care if he is yellow or black or has

stripes like a fucking zebra. I'm his manager and I say he plays" — says as much as an American common-sense "color-blind" attitude toward racism as it does Leo's legendary "win at all costs" mentality. Alternatively, Leo's willingness to sacrifice principle for advantage also reveals an unpleasant side of the national pastime. The publication of Joshua Prager's *The Echoing Green* (2006) details Durocher's sign-stealing that culminated in Bobby Thomson's 1951 pennant-winning home run. With the Mitchell Report on steroids, the role of cheating in baseball has once again come to the forefront of American life.

What is interesting, and yet remains rather under-studied, are the ways in which men like Leo, and perhaps Brooklyn's own Vince Lombardi, represented the ethic trajectories of the mid-twentieth century ethnic Catholic working class. Durocher clearly did not model very saintly behavior; he constantly ran afoul of baseball authorities for his combative personality and shady gambling friends. Lombardi, on the other hand, was a lifelong communicant, graduated from Fordham University, and a member of the Knights of Columbus. These two very different Catholic sports leaders (both white men) created a certain Catholic watermark on American life that has gone virtually unnoticed. Twenty years ago American Catholic scholars could not say enough about President John Kennedy's 1960 election and Vatican II. More recently attention has turned to the changes wrought by the Latino demographic explosion.⁵ The surprisingly Catholic character of America's obsession with winning — in sports, politics, warfare, global markets, or another person's intimacy — goes unnoticed.

Neither Durocher nor Lombardi were celebrated as "successful Catholics." Both saw themselves as coaches who just happened to be Catholic. Unlike Lombardi, though, apart from the erudite baseball fan, Durocher has faded from view. For many who do know about Leo, that is hard to grasp. Nicknamed "Lippy" or "the Lip," Durocher played for the New York Yankees, Cincinnati Reds, St. Louis Cardinals, and Brooklyn Dodgers during his seventeen seasons (1925, 1928–1941, 1943, 1945) as a major league shortstop. He played on two teams that won the World Series, and was noted for his combativeness, good fielding, and modest bat. Durocher's twenty-four-year Hall of Fame managerial career (1939–1946, 1948–1955, 1966–1973) began with his appointment as the player-manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. As a skipper, Leo amassed 2,140 victories, three pennants, and one World Series championship. In the 1954 World Series, Durocher's New York Giants swept the heavily favored Cleveland Indians in four games. Durocher ranks third, trailing only Bobby Cox and John McGraw, for being thrown out of games.

Others revile Leo for his bungling of the 1969 Cubs. And then, of course, there's Leo's personal life. He married four times, and all four unions ended in divorce. The last two made the biggest splashes. His 1947 wedding with actress Laraine Day ignited spectacular, nation-wide headlines. Day had divorced her

first husband in Mexico only a day before wedding Durocher in El Paso, Texas. In 1969, with the New York Mets dogging his Cubs through the hot summer, Leo snuck away to get married again, this time to Lynne Walker Goldblatt. Critics cite these days absent as one of Leo's many mistakes during another doomed Cubs summer.⁶

Finally, there's the phrase that landed Leo in Bartlett's Famous Quotations: "Nice guys finish last." The phrase quickly took on a life of its own. Leo explained that it emerged from a conversation with Frank Graham of the *New York Journal-American* and others at the Polo Grounds. (Leo's biographer, Gerald Eskenazi, has provided the date: July 5, 1946.) Leo extolled the virtues of the Eddie Stanky, the hyper-competitive sparkplug for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Durocher then gestured across the field to the New York Giants; naming them, beginning with the manager Mel Ott. Leo then said: "Take a look at them. All nice guys. They'll finish last. Nice guys. Finish last." He then continued, indicating that Ott didn't goad the Giants enough. Instead of well-paid, coddled stars, Leo preferred "some scratching, diving, hungry ballplayers who come to kill you."⁷ Ever since, Leo's "nice guys finish last" one-liner has enjoyed a long life. The phrase put him on the cover of *Time* magazine (April 14, 1947). It has helped scholars erect contrasts between virtuous and deviance in subjects diverse as Japanese history, Nobel laureates in Economics, and Shakespeare.⁸ The witticism aptly summarizes the philosophies of egoism and nihilism.

While he captured the words, Leo was not the first to make the point. The Renaissance classicist and political observer, Niccolo Machiavelli, said roughly the same thing four centuries earlier:

Because there is such a distance between how one lives and how one should live that he who lets go that which is done for that which ought to be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation—for a man who wishes to profess the good in everything needs must fall among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary for a prince, if he wishes to maintain himself, to learn to be able to be not good, and to use it and not use it according to necessity.

One can safely assume that Leo would not have been caught at the Polo Grounds with a copy of *The Prince* in his back pocket. Still, the Renaissance man seemed to presage the Lip's arrival on the American scene. Machiavelli's well-known adage—it is better to be feared than hated or loved—provides a handy illuminative tool for understanding Leo's managing career.⁹ If nice guys really do finish last, then survival necessitates cheating, or at least stealing pitching signs. For the 1951 Giants, that meant using their home field, the Polo Grounds, to their best advantage.¹⁰ Somewhere in the afterlife, Leo is chuckling to himself, probably as he lines up another sucker on the billiard table: "Win any way you can as long as you can get away with it."¹¹ Hey, nice guys finish last, right?

This perpetual advantage-seeking surfaced early in Leo's baseball career. When he broke in with the New York Yankees, he ignored the unspoken rules that rookies should be seen, not heard. Off the field Leo overspent on clothes and the night life. On the field he sparred verbally with everybody, teammates and opponents alike. His lack of deference to established stars like Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb was immediate and unrepentant. Peter Golenbock writes: "There was ... a ruthless streak in him that made the other players distrust him. They felt if Durocher wanted something, he would find a way to get it, regardless of the morality or the feelings of others. Whatever he was doing, he had to win or succeed, which is the same thing as winning."¹² Machiavelli could not have agreed more. The prince had become the baseball manager.

A Certain Kind of Catholic

In all of this, Leo Durocher displayed some quintessentially "American" and Catholic sensibilities. Leo's American identity rarely draws attention. This oversight seems odd, given the intensely immigrant, French-Canadian character of his childhood. Leo maintained the French pronunciation of his last name (du-roh-SHAY) until his mid-twenties. On the other hand, Leo's Catholicism has always been questioned. Biographer Eskenazi details how devout little Leo often served Mass at St. Louis de France Catholic Church in West Springfield, Massachusetts, then crossed the street to a bakery to serve himself a doughnut or two. After that, Leo apparently never gave the Church much thought — until his later years in retirement when his guilty conscience returned with a vengeance.¹³ Leo also could have served as a textbook example of colonialism, or in 1950s lingo, an "ugly American." In a Giants 1957 trip to Japan Leo eschewed signals and called for a runner to steal, only to learn that the Japanese catcher fully understood English and easily picked off the player. Even a cursory reading of Leo and Laraine Day's thirteen-year marriage indicates he cared little for popular opinion or the judgments of moral leaders. So, of course, Leo's a bad Catholic. Roger Kahn has said as much:

By 1947 Durocher, then forty-two, was expanding the definition of lapsed Catholicism. He had been divorced twice. He flouted the dogmas of his youth with swaggering, practically public fornication. He had lost the right to receive communion and have his confession heard. As he put it, he didn't give a damn. Princes of the Church were not amused.¹⁴

Leo really did not care. Machiavelli once suggested that it's always better to appear religious than to actually be religious, but Durocher even dispensed with appearances. Surely he wasn't a good Catholic.

On the surface, that conclusion is quite true. However, a closer look reveals deeply embedded Catholic sensibilities in Leo's baseball career. American

Catholics, so long a minority tradition in the nation, have absorbed several Protestant values and perspectives. These days there are some, but not many, clear distinguishing characteristics between the suburban Catholic mass and the Methodist service around the corner from the auto mall.

In Leo's day, things were much different: mass in Latin, candles and saints' statues cramming every corner of Catholic churches, and papal authority. Even in the early 1970s, when that world was crumbling much like Leo's Cubs, Catholics recognized the separate quality of their American lives. Garry Wills wrote in 1972 that Catholicism's American subculture "spoke to us of the alien. The church was stranded in America, out of place. And not only out of place here. It belonged to no age or clime, but was above them all."¹⁵ Catholics made up the bulk of the working and middle class, especially in the urban northeast where baseball's most prominent teams ruled.

Also within their ranks lurked subversives and miscreants like Sacco, Vanzetti, Joe McCarthy, and pop culture characters like Michael Corleone (and, later, Tony Soprano). Catholicism harbored dangerous people. Catholics' ethnic variety contrasted sharply with the (apparent) homogeneity of White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Americans. Further, the secrecy of the Catholic confessional meant moral dilemmas and missteps were adjudicated in an oddly private yet communal meeting between God, priest, and sinner. Apparent Catholic accommodation of criminality flew in the face of Protestantism's individualistic, biblical moralism. Finally, when Catholics were not subverting America's moral fabric, they marshaled their numbers to coerce acceptance of their own moral agenda.

Thus Leo's hyperbole on the baseball diamond could be viewed as the flip side of the political crusades by Father Charles Coughlin and Senator Joe McCarthy. These three American Catholic men rallied all sorts of Americans to their causes. All three basked in the warmth of public attention, validating the American dream that hard work, guts, and a good cause brought success. All three experienced noticeably public rebukes, and viewed their downfalls rooted in external causes (conspiracies, moralists, etc.).¹⁶ Only Leo managed to resurrect his career, and he did so more than once. Fittingly, in his autobiography Leo describes his managerial career in New York as "the days of trial and glory."

Protestants, on the other hand, featured several denominations: Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and revivalists of all stripes. Each church committed itself to moral purity, taking a stand for Christ against the world, even if that very world was managed and bankrolled by members of their own denomination. Protestants feared Catholic power.

In the nineteenth century, the utter strangeness of Catholic life — confessionals, celibacy, monasteries, Mass in Latin — sparked fears of Catholics brainwashing Protestants. Surely, American Protestants concluded, any "convert"

to the Roman church was the victim of seductive Catholic power.¹⁷ In the twentieth century, Catholicism's large membership numbers spelled political danger. Slavish allegiance to Catholic clerical powers meant, many Protestants thought, a threat to the free participation of American democracy. Priests would tell their flocks how to vote, and they'd surely do it!

Best-selling author Paul Blanshard advanced this very argument in his 1949 book *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. In fact, Blanshard regarded Durocher's 1947 suspension as proof of orchestrated Catholic power. Catholic censorship was "a highly organized system of cultural and moral controls that applies not only to books, plays, magazines, and motion pictures, but to persons and places."¹⁸

This compartmentalization of professional athlete's religiosity seems to apply particularly to Roman Catholicism. Catholics, apart from crossing themselves prior to batting, seem to veil their faith in public. For contrast, consider how Bill James begins his assessment of Kevin Seitzer, ranked #77 among third basemen: "He was a born-again Christian who sometimes irritated his teammates and managers, perhaps for good reason or perhaps just because, when things go wrong, it's easy to blame the Christian."¹⁹ The unavoidability of Seitzer's faith exemplifies the difference between Catholics and Evangelicals; the former utilize ritual, devotion, and communitarian traditions to exhibit Christian faith, the latter employ instead clear, individual statements of faith. Catholics emphasize community, Evangelicals emphasize separation (from the world, unity with God). Catholics perceive grace within the world, Evangelical Protestants see instead it breaking in from outside the world we know. Literature scholar Paul Giles, working with David Tracy's theological work, defines this as Catholic "manifestation" or "transubstantiation" and Protestant "proclamation."²⁰ Giles goes on to examine authors and artists, many of whom rejected explicit Catholic Christian faith (i.e., mimicking Protestants by proclaiming their faith publicly: "I'm a Catholic") but who nonetheless retained shadows of their Catholic heritage: e.g., Robert Mapplethorpe, Martin Scorsese, William Kennedy, Robert Altman. Giles easily discusses the subterranean Catholic religiosity of Beat novelist Jack Kerouac (like Leo, born to a working class French-Canadian family in Massachusetts). As mentioned earlier, the same trajectory among America's broad array of sports characters remains overlooked. Given Leo's prominence in baseball — the American pastime — and the ubiquity of "nice guys finish last," Durocher seems as good a candidate as any. As mentioned earlier, another good choice, albeit with a noticeably different moral narrative, would be Green Bay Packer's coach Vince Lombardi, the subject of David Maraniss' excellent biography *When Pride Still Mattered* (1999).

Therefore, unlike Seitzer and many other born-again Christians, fans, general managers, teammates, players, and owners did not blame Leo for being

Catholic. (The Brooklyn Catholic Youth Organization, after all, chided him publicly for not being Catholic enough!) However, Leo's urban ethnic Catholic upbringing led him to first play, then manage, in a particular style: *play every angle to your advantage— and know that the other guy's doing the same to you.* It was this style that generated Leo's "nice guys finish last." When it worked, Bobby Thomson hits the "shot heard round the world" and, three years later, the Giants sweep the Indians. When it did not work, or more accurately, when the nation's zeitgeist passed Leo's ethnic Catholic world by, the result was the '69 Cubs. The "grace" here is not proclaimed, so Leo's successes seem less conspicuously Christian—and his failures often spectacularly un-Christian—than Protestant major leaguers.

Gaining an Edge

Durocher enjoyed a lengthy career in baseball. After a hard scrabble youth in West Springfield, he eventually drew the attention of Hartford, and then Yankees, scouts. Leo's large, quick hands, noticeable since childhood, made him a natural shortstop. He wore #7 on his Yankees uniform years before Mantle (and then *Seinfeld*) made the number famous. Throughout his playing days, Leo's fielding abilities were celebrated, while his hitting, well, made less impact. Babe Ruth once labeled Leo, a career .247 hitter, "the All-American Out." Bill James does not list Durocher among the 125 top shortstops. His all-around play, though, made him hard to ignore. So, too, did his propensity for arguing calls and bench-jockeying players—on his own team as well as his opponents.²¹

Leo transitioned easily into managing full time. Leo, of course, preferred being player-manager because, in his words, "Christ, I was into everything; my wheels were spinning all the time."²² With the Dodgers (1941 to 1948) and then the archrival New York Giants (April 1948 to 1955), Leo had his most successful years managing. Likewise, his Catholic roots started to show themselves. Back in West Springfield, a seven-year-old Leo simply could not sit still through catechism lessons (in French) at the Quebecois parish (St. Louis de France). Informed by the parish priest that he would not be admitted to First Communion, Leo spurted back: "That's all right. I can go to Father O'Donnell's church. They have the same God down there."²³ Leo exhibited the same adaptability and extemporaneous, instinctual responsiveness as a manager.

Arthur Mann made the same point: "Durocher was a child opportunist who learned very early that winning races and contests was more important than all other factors; victory meant survival."²⁴ In his autobiography, Leo detailed the famous story about his competitiveness: if his mother was rounding third with the winning run, he'd trip her. Just two lines above that story,

though, appears a short summary suitable for bumper stickers today: “If you’re afraid, go home.”²⁵

Leo’s belated induction to the Hall of Fame in 1994 seemed to crown (posthumously) this combative, never-say-die attitude. Durocher seems to stand as the managerial equivalent to baseball’s long line of gritty, unrelenting competitors (e.g., Ty Cobb, Pete Rose). The publication of Joshua Prager’s *The Echoing Green* (2006) has cast a pall, detailing quite convincingly that the Giants, led by Durocher, conspired to steal pitching signs. Normally this wouldn’t raise eyebrows. After all, Prager joins Leonard Koppett and others in recognizing that sign-stealing has a long history in baseball. Peter Golenbock has noted the Dodgers long suspected Leo and the Giants stole signs that season. For the Giants, though, the conspiracy culminated in Bobby Thomson’s “shot heard round the world,” the home run that won the 1951 pennant. So was Leo really deserving of the Hall of Fame?²⁶

At this point, it might help to remember Machiavelli and his philosophy of gaining advantage through strength as well as prestidigitation. A prince should emulate both the fox and the lion; the fox to outwit snares and the lion to intimidate those bent on rebellion.²⁷ This might shed some light on Leo’s “role” in Jackie Robinson’s courageous first major league season. In 2007, baseball celebrated the sixtieth anniversary with widespread media adulation. Around the country, elementary school kids marked the event with films and lesson units. On November 10, 2007, another event went quite unnoticed: Laraine Day, Leo’s third wife, died at age 87.²⁸ Since her divorce from Durocher in 1960, Ms. Day had remarried, raised two children, and lived quietly out of the Hollywood spotlight. In her latter years she returned to her Mormon roots in her native Utah.

The discrepancy in media attention is not surprising but nevertheless unfortunate, for they were actually connected — through Leo Durocher. Durocher admittedly played no role in signing Robinson, but he did set the tone for the Dodgers. When asked his opinion about Robinson joining the Dodgers, Leo gave his response about skin color not effecting playing time. When rumors reached him of players circulating a petition protesting Robinson’s arrival, Leo called a midnight meeting. In front of his sleepy, disgruntled team, Leo coldly told them to drop the petition (“wipe your ass with it”) and, further, get accustomed to African-Americans joining the big leagues.

From everything I hear, he’s only the first. *Only the first, boys!* There’s many more coming right behind him and they have the talent and they’re gonna come to play. These fellows are hungry. They’re good athletes and there’s nowhere else they can make this kind of money. They’re going to come, boys, and they’re going to come scratching and diving. Unless you fellows look out and wake up, they’re going to run you right out of the ball park.²⁹

That amounted to the highest praise Durocher could imagine. What does this have to do with Laraine Day? She and Leo got married just months before, sneaking down to Mexico to obtain a shady divorce and then marrying just as quickly in El Paso, Texas. Moralists in Brooklyn were less than pleased. Less than a week before Robinson's first game, Commissioner Albert "Happy" Chandler suspended Durocher for a year for associating with known gamblers (due to orchestration by Yankees owner Larry MacPhail). Brooklyn's Catholic officials clucked their tongues as the diocese withdrew the Catholic Youth Organization's support of the Dodgers' knothole gang.³⁰ Sixty years later, Robinson's taking the field on April 15, 1947, only a day after Leo's mug graced the cover of *Time*, remains the momentous, justifiably celebrated, event that it was. At the time, though, Brooklyn was by turns enraged at Chandler for his unequal treatment of Durocher and aghast at their manager's very public love life.³¹

Accounts of Robinson's first year rightfully emphasize his moral courage as well as the prophetic Christian commitment of Dodgers owner Branch Rickey. However, Durocher's role in squashing the players' rebellion equally exemplifies a different sort of Christian morality — the urban, ethnic Catholic ethic of getting ahead, and showing respect to those who fight their way up like you did. Durocher appreciated Robinson's fiery play as following his own playing days: Robinson "did to us exactly what I always tried to do when I was playing.... He was a Durocher with talent." Durocher had indicated as early as 1942 that he would play any black players the Dodgers signed.³² Given the similarities between Leo and Machiavelli, Durocher's role in integrating the major leagues might be dismissed as a cynical concession. Win at all costs, including integration; the ends justify the means.

However, opportunism can seem virtuous by comparison. Later in life, Leo seemed less scrappy but more mean. Leo's Cubs teams disintegrated due in part to his antagonistic treatment of the team's black and Jewish players. Players' union leader Marvin Miller labeled Leo a "thoroughly right-wing character in every way" for his repeated opposition to Miller's organizing activities.³³ David Claerbaut offers a sharp psychological portrait:

Leo Durocher was hardly a complex entity. He was a basically insecure, embattled little man who emerged from a less than stable childhood with a variety of addictive needs. Charged by some as being amoral — calculating every act solely in terms of what would most benefit him rather than conforming to more noble standards — Durocher's self-centered behavior seems much more motivated from the fears and insecurities inevitably arising from a highly addictive personality and need to survive.³⁴

This perspective reckons Leo merely *acquiesced* to Robinson's arrival, instead of facilitating it with some characteristically honest words for Robinson's resistant would-be teammates. Surely his insensitive failure to motivate a talented Cubs team proved his moral anemia.³⁵

Durocher's support of integrating the major leagues points toward the virtue of justice, the most central of the cardinal virtues.³⁶ True, a rudimentary telescope-and-bell system rigged to steal pitching signs violates rule of fair play. However, virtue becomes most clear when lived out, and in this regard Leo, for all his myriad sins, often exhibited "justice" more than many other Americans (including Catholics!). Bench jockeying — even of one's own teammates — exemplifies the finding and taking any advantage. But could this also constitute a certain kind of ethnic Catholic street justice?

Leo's French-Canadian roots reemerge here, too. French-Canadian immigrants constituted a "silence presence" in the American Catholic subculture. Numerous in New England factory towns (like West Springfield, Leo's hometown), the Quebecois rarely made the significant cultural impact like the Irish or Italians (or in the Midwest, the Germans). Further, French-Canadian Catholicism seemed to revel in the gloomy, masochist "culture of suffering" so prevalent in American Catholic life. All Catholics prior to the Second Vatican Council (1958–63) were accustomed to hearing about salvation coming through Christ's sacrifice; Quebecois Catholics added to this their own version of nationalism connected with martyrdom and defeat following England's eighteenth-century conquest of Canada. Triumph was a "future possibility, because it was usually built around a tripartite scheme in which the original innocence and beauty of life was crucified, only to reemerge in glory."³⁷ Generations of scholars have deprecated Jack Kerouac's Catholicism for its deleterious effects on his bohemian spirit. Few have perceived how that religious imagination instead fueled his appreciation for ethnicity, mystical experience, and spiritual exploration and connection. Something similar could be said for Durocher's expertise managing from the dugout or third-base coach's box. Leo's famous exchanges with Dodgers Jackie Robinson (which involved several racial epithets) and Carl Furillo (including Furillo's 1953 charge into the Giants dugout and grappling Leo in a tight headlock) could thus appear as more than amoral needling, but also a product of Durocher's particular Catholic background. Winning required more than just effort; it required a little pain. Gerald Eskenazi writes: "Leo, the ex-altar boy, wasn't looking for altar boys. Could you play for him? That was what Leo wanted to know above everything else." Leo heaped abuse on friend and foe alike. Part of playing for *him* meant handling the verbal barrage. Success indicated that Leo had found another winner. Those harsh words led the way to victory, even though they led through excruciating pain.³⁸

Conclusion

James T. Fisher has argued that the "most interesting Catholics have rarely been identified as 'religious' precisely because of the reticent quality of the

faith.” For proof Fisher looks to figures like basketball coach Al McGuire and sports writer Pete Axthelm who reveled in the miasma of bookies, gambling, has-beens, and hustlers who followed in the wake of professional sports. On the other hand, both McGuire and Axthelm harbored deeply-rooted, but nonetheless quite veiled, moral sensibilities. Yes, the world is tough but it is precisely there that we give as well as take.³⁹ In other words, manifestation, not proclamation. The moralizing over Durocher’s sign-stealing contains a Blanshardian element: what can you expect from a person (Catholic) like that? Thus, Durocher’s street sense of justice and integration — “let black players in, we’ll win more” — does not atone for breaking the sacrosanct rules of baseball. This elitism recalls Michael Novak’s claim that baseball embodies White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and thus “American” values. On the other hand, Novak almost immediately argues that blacks, Jews, and immigrants (and even rednecks!) all have learned to operate *within*, and when necessary, *outside* these WASP baseball rules. “Such outbreaks serve to indicate that, even in baseball, humankind cannot bear too much rationality and must break Anglo-America bounds.”⁴⁰ In other words, even Americans find it necessary, like Machiavelli advised, to use the system to find some leverage. And the nice guys will still finish last.

Leo recognized that his four words of infamy would outlive him. So, too, has America’s awareness. In a 2001 episode of HBO’s *The Sopranos*, gangster Tony Soprano confided to his psychiatrist Dr. Jennifer Melfi: “Now most of the guys that I know read that Prince Matchabelli [sic]. And I had Carmela get the Cliff Notes [sic] once, and it was okay. But this book [*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu] is much better about strategy.” David Hahn has argued that Tony’s woes — in marriage as well as in the mob — often stem from his obvious misunderstanding of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.⁴¹ Likewise, Leo Durocher could have benefited from observing the cardinal virtues — in marriage as well as in baseball. Both men, though, grasped Machiavelli’s point that fear motivates, and often leads to wins. In the argument over who’s more virtuous, the lust-driven mobster or the winning-obsessed baseball manager, we forget perhaps that when some Brooklyn fans listed the most evil people in the world, they chose Walter O’Malley to share company with Stalin and Hitler. Durocher and O’Malley, both Catholics involved with the Dodgers’ greatest years in Brooklyn, have provided significant ballast for the ways in which Americans view competition and opportunity.⁴²

Notes

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2. Leo Durocher, with Ed Linn, *Nice Guys Finish Last* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975), p. 26.

3. Cf., e.g., John Hood, "GOP Car Wreck," *National Review* 58 (No. 22, December 4, 2006): 18–20; "It's Over for Bush," *The Nation* 283 (No. 18, November 27, 2006), p. 3.

4. The literature here is mind-bogglingly extensive, but see James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Control the Family, Art, Education, Law, and Politics in America* (New York: Basic, 1992) and, more recently, James Davison Hunter and Alan Wolfe, editors, *Is There A Culture War? A Dialogue on Values and American Public Life* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2006).

5. For Kennedy, see James Hennesey, SJ, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 307; and Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* rev. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), pp. 421–2. For Latinos, see Timothy Matovina and Gary Riebe-Estrella, editors, *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican Traditions in U. S. Catholicism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). Claire Wolfteich's *American Catholics in the Twentieth Century: Spirituality, Lay Experience and Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 2002) includes chapters on both.

6. See David Claerbaut, *Durocher's Cubs: The Greatest Team That Didn't Win* (Dallas: Taylor, 2000).

7. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, pp. 13–14 (both quotes from p. 14). Gerald Eskenazi, *The Lip: A Biography of Leo Durocher* (New York: Quill, William Morrow, 1993), p. 229.

8. See Marius B. Jansen, review of Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (New York, 1975) in *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, Vol. 10, No. 2/3 (September 1975), p. 219; Alan Blinder, "In Honor of Robert M. Solow: Nobel Laureate in 1987," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (Summer 1989), p. 103; and William R. Bowden, "The "Unco Guid" and Shakespeare's Coriolanus Author(s): William R. Bowden Source: *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter 1962), pp. 41–48; URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2866893> Accessed: May 29, 2008 14:41.

9. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Leo Paul S. de Alvarez (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1989), book XI, p. 93 (quoted), and book XIX, p. 112.

10. Joshua Prager, *The Echoing Green: The Untold Story of Bobby Thomson, Ralph Branca, and the Shot Heard Round the World* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), pp. 66–80.

11. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, p. 11.

12. Peter Golenbock, *Bums: An Oral History of the Brooklyn Dodgers* (New York: Contemporary, 2000), p. 17.

13. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, p. 29. Leo claimed to attend Mass, but not receive Communion, throughout his playing and managing career. Further, he believed his divorces rendered it impossible to have his confession heard. This seems to misconstrue the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Leo's divorces would have barred him from Communion, but he would have remained free for Confession. For Leo's rediscovered religiosity, see Claerbaut, *Durocher's Cubs*, pp. 213–4, and Eskenazi, *The Lip*, pp. 313–4.

14. Roger Kahn, *The Era, 1947–1957: When the Yankees, the Giants, and the Dodgers Ruled the World*, with new afterword by the author (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), p. 28.

15. Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), p. 18.

16. For an analysis of Coughlin and McCarthy's place with American Catholicism, see James Terence Fisher, *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933–1962* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 72–78 and 159–61.

17. Jenny Frachot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 135–61.

18. Paul Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Boston: Beacon, 1949), p. 180.

19. Bill James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Free Press, 2001), p. 578.

20. Paul Giles, *American Catholic Arts and Fictions: Culture, Ideology, Aesthetics*, Cambridge Studies in American Culture and Literature (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 38.

21. See John Heidenry, *The Gashouse Gang: How Dizzy Dean, Leo Durocher, Branch Rickey, Pepper Martin, and Their Colorful, Come-From-Behind Ball Club Won the World Series and America's Heart During the Great Depression* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007).

22. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, p. 117.

23. Arthur Mann, *Baseball Confidential: Secret History of the War among Chandler, Durocher, MacPhail, and Rickey* (New York: David McKay, 1951), p. 5.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, p. 26.

26. Prager, *The Echoing Green*, p. 348; cf. Prager, "Giants' 1951 Comeback, The Sport's Greatest, Wasn't All It Seemed," *Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*, January 31, 2001, p. 1. Leonard Koppett, *The Thinking Fan's Guide to Baseball*, Hall of Fame edition (revised edition, No. 3) (Wilmington, DE: SportClassic, 2004), pp. 123–32. Golenbock, *Bums*, p. 281.

27. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Book XVIII, p. 108.

28. "Laraine Day" at www.imdb.com.

29. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, p. 205.

30. "Durocher versus the CYO," *Catholic Digest* 11 (June 1947): 96.

31. For an account of Durocher's suspension, see David Mandell, "The Suspension of Leo Durocher," *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* No. 27 (Cleveland: Society of American Baseball Research, 2007), pp. 101–4.

32. Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, pp. 211–2; Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* 25th Anniversary Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 31.

33. Eskenazi, *The Lip*, p. 294; see also Andrew Hazucha, "Leo Durocher's Last Stand: Anti-Semitism, Racism, and the Cubs Player Rebellion of 1971," *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 15 (No. 1, Fall 2006): 1–12.

34. Claerbaut, *Durocher's Cubs*, p. 28.

35. Beyond morality, of course, lies baseball strategy. Bill James faults Durocher's failure to rest his pitchers during the hot summer of 1969 as a primary reason why the Mets caught and surpassed the Cubs (*New Bill James Historical Abstract*, p. 635).

36. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II/II, Q. 58, A. 12, in *The Cardinal Virtues* trans. Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), pp. 40–41. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08571c.htm>>.

37. Fisher, *Catholic Counterculture*, pp. 59–60, 80 (quoted).

38. Golenbock, *Bums*, pp. 278, 361–2 (Robinson) and 384–5 (Furillo). Tackled by more than twenty Giants players, Furillo broke a finger in the fight. With his season ended, his batting average remained locked at .344 and thus won him the National League batting title. Later Durocher admitted intense shame for antagonizing Robinson (Durocher, *Nice Guys Finish Last*, pp. 209–210). Eskenazi, *The Lip*, p. 268.

39. James T. Fisher, "Clearing the Streets of the Catholic Lost Generation," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 93:3 (Summer 1994): 623–4 (quoted on 623).

40. Michael Novak, *The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit* rev. ed. (Lanham, MD: Madison, 1994), pp. 59, 61 (quoted).

41. Soprano quote from "He Is Risen," *The Sopranos* Season 3, episode 8 (Home Box Office, 2001); David Hahn, "The Prince and I: Some Musings on Machiavelli," *The Sopranos and Philosophy: I Kill Therefore I Am*, edited by Richard Greene and Peter Vernezze (Chicago: Open Court, 2004), pp. 48–56.

42. Golenbock, *Bums*, p. 492.

Part II

LITERARY BASEBALL

Homecoming: Family, Place, and Community in Sara Vogan's *In Shelly's Leg* and Thomas Oliphant's *Praying for Gil Hodges*

Thomas Wolf

In the summers of my youth, our family would vacation in northern Michigan. My father liked the area around Petoskey on Little Traverse Bay, where pollen-free air had given him relief in the 1920s from the asthma and hay fever that afflicted him as a boy in Wabash, Indiana. We spent our days fishing off the breakwater, searching for Petoskey stones¹ on the rocky coast, and revisiting my father's old haunts. At Juilleret's in Harbor Springs, we ate planked whitefish and mashed potatoes, and we took long drives and listened to my father's stories about famous visitors to the region. We drove past the castle-like estate of the Loeb family near Charlevoix where young Richard had spent summers in the years before he and Nathan Leopold murdered Bobby Franks. We took day trips to Walloon Lake and heard stories about novelist Ernest Hemingway, who owned a cabin on the lake.

These journeys into my father's past filled our days, but what I remember best are the cool Michigan nights and baseball games. After dinner, the family would get ice cream at a nearby Dairy Queen, and then we would go to Bayfront Park to watch men's fast-pitch softball, where a local legend named Dick Bare was a star pitcher, hurling shutout after shutout.

The night would not be complete unless we also listened to Ernie Harwell broadcast a Detroit Tigers game. Harwell's southern-toned voice made each game fresh, a twisting mini-drama of suspense until the last out was recorded, his voice wafting through the night and reaching us in our remote location. Sometimes we listened through the static on the car radio; more often, my father and I listened on a boxy old radio that used to belong to my grandfather. As Harwell announced the game, my sister and I sprawled on the

floor and played cards or board games. My mother sat nearby, reading a book. This is where my love of baseball was born.

In truth, my father was not much of a baseball fan. Those summer weeks in Michigan were the only time each year he paid much attention to the pennant races. I think my mother was actually more of a sports fan. As a young girl, she had been an outstanding amateur golfer. During World War II, she had served in the Red Cross, and she told us she had pitched for a women's softball team that was coached by the great Yankees pitcher Spud Chandler. A line drive had smashed the index finger of her pitching hand; she proudly displayed the crooked knuckle as she told us the story. I never knew for sure if the story was true.

To me, those Michigan summer nights seemed nearly perfect, some dreamy midpoint on our family's journey through the last half of the twentieth century.

My experience is hardly unique. Baseball is America's most family-centered sport. An appreciation of the game is passed down from one generation to another, and the roots for most fans go deep into their pasts. Favorite teams are followed from decade to decade. Traditionally, parents have taught the game to their children on the crudest of playing fields, in backyards and vacant lots close to their homes. In Van Meter, Iowa, Bob Feller learned the game on a homemade ball field, constructed by his father on the family farm; Feller's father taught him to field by hitting grounders to him in the pig lot.²

The great writer David Halberstam remembered, "Baseball was the first thing my father and I truly shared ... baseball was something that children could understand; it provided the first entry into the world of adults."³ In his splendid essay, "Fathers Playing Catch With Sons," poet Donald Hall noted that his obsession with sports began at home "in mimicry of my father and in companionship."⁴ Hall, too, traced his early interest in baseball to the radio broadcasts of games he listened to on trips he used to take with his parents in the family car: "My mother and father and I, wedded together in the close front seat, heard the sounds of baseball — and I was tied to those sounds for the rest of my life."⁵

Likewise, in her memoir, *Wait Till Next Year*, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin juxtaposed her love of baseball to her relationship with her father. Baseball, Goodwin wrote, "has always been linked ... with the mystic texture of childhood, with the sounds and smells of summer nights and with the memories of my father."⁶ Goodwin recalled the first game she attended with her father — riding the trolley to Ebbets Field — as her father recounted how *his* father had taken him to his first game.

Goodwin later moved to Boston to teach at Harvard. By then, her beloved Dodgers had headed west to California, and she switched her allegiance to the Red Sox. In Boston, Goodwin initiated her three young sons into baseball by

taking them to Fenway Park, a ballpark where she found the ambiance of an intimate and “cozy” home⁷—just as she had in the Ebbets Field of her youth. At Fenway Park, Goodwin, accompanied by her three sons, recognized “an invisible bond” linking the generations. She came to view “the magic of baseball” as both a home-centered family phenomenon and a journey through time.⁸

That magic — baseball’s enduring capacity to foster a sense of home, family, and community — is an underlying element in much of the fiction and non-fiction about the game. In several of A. Bartlett Giamatti’s essays, the late scholar and baseball commissioner connects the history and structure of baseball — and its implicit symbolism — to the human impulse to find and establish a home. Giamatti asserts that “Baseball is about homecoming.”⁹ He observes that “Baseball is about going home, and how hard it is to get there and how driven is our need. It tells us how good home is. Its wisdom says you can go home again but you cannot stay.”¹⁰

Two books—*In Shelly’s Leg*,¹¹ a novel that first appeared more than twenty-five years ago; and *Praying for Gil Hodges*,¹² a memoir published in 2005 — illustrate how baseball provides a world of shared enjoyment and facilitates the forming of relationships. Both books address the importance of place in American life and how communities are established and nourished over time.

Sara Vogan’s novel *In Shelly’s Leg* was published in 1981. The book is set in the restless 1970s, a decade still in recovery from the traumatic political and social events that had shaped the era’s history—the Civil Rights Movement, assassinations, the Sexual Revolution, the Johnson and Nixon presidencies, Vietnam, and Watergate—and prompted many Americans to question and challenge the validity of traditional values, structures, and relationships. Not surprising, the book’s characters—described by one reviewer as “quietly rendered lovers and losers, Vietnam veterans and whores, drinkers and hunters”¹³—are rootless and lonely,¹⁴ struggling to find meaningful connections and continuity in their lives. They gather at Shelly’s Leg, a local bar that becomes the figurative home for the disparate characters who populate the novel. The book’s title refers to the action—the drinking, eating, and bonding—that occurs in the bar and the relationships that are tested and nurtured there.

A man named Sullivan is the current proprietor of Shelly’s Leg. He took over the establishment after the death of the former owner, a vivacious, one-legged woman named Shelly, who was Sullivan’s lover. Sullivan lives by himself in an apartment over the bar. Shelly’s portrait—with a bullet hole through her throat—hangs above the jukebox. Sullivan is also the sponsor and coach of the bar’s women’s fastpitch softball team—a team started by Shelly that has won six straight Montana state championships.

In a series of flashbacks and through Sullivan’s boozy reveries, we learn that Sullivan fell in love with Shelly when she was fourteen, but she married another man while Sullivan was in the navy. When Sullivan returned, they

resumed their relationship. For seven years, Shelly's husband, Paul, knew about the affair but conveniently looked the other way. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Shelly never considered getting a divorce. After a motorcycle accident in which Shelly lost her right leg, she and Sullivan moved to Montana and began to live together openly. Shelly opened the bar and started the softball team. Their relationship was functional, though untraditional. Soon after, though, she became gravely ill with cancer; Sullivan tenderly cared for her, but she eventually died in the apartment over the bar.

After Shelly's death, Sullivan continues to mourn her absence. He honors her memory each day by setting out fresh roses in empty beer bottles to decorate the bar, and, by keeping the softball team going. Sullivan, in essence, assumes Shelly's role, becoming a "substitute mother" — defined by the scholar Kathleen Sullivan as a character — often a prototypical character in baseball novels — who "exhibit[s] maternal qualities by unconditionally nurturing those around them."¹⁵ Sullivan thinks of his bar as a church, but Shelly's Leg is more of a home than a church, a place where all of the characters return — after games, and whenever things go wrong in their lives — and Sullivan is the matriarch who keeps his place tidy and welcoming.

The star pitcher for the Shelly's Leg team is named Margaret. She is a single mother with two children, and like Sullivan, she has suffered losses in her personal life. Her ex-husband, Mike, is a man who "used to study maps, imagining the routes in his mind as he daydreamed them around the country."¹⁶ Mike is now an absent father who works on the pipeline in Alaska. Woody, a likeable musician, has taken Mike's place in Margaret's life and bed, but he is married to a woman he has never gotten around to divorcing. Woody wants to have a child with Margaret, and he assumes the role of father to Margaret's children, but it's clear from the beginning — as he talks about taking his band on tour — that his relationship with Margaret is tenuous. Margaret's problem, as Woody sees it, is that she is too anchored to home and family to have any sense of adventure.

Vogan's book begins with Margaret and Rita, the team's catcher, in a pre-season workout, practicing together under Sullivan's nervous eye. When they finish, Rita leaves the field and heads home. Sullivan then spots a two-legged dog — stumbling around in the outfield behind second base — and he thinks that the dog is rabid. Although Margaret protests, Sullivan goes to his truck and gets a gun and shoots the dog.

This dog — who does not figure in the story after this brief scene — serves notice that the book is about those who are crippled and disabled — disfigured by life. There is the one-legged Shelly and the ripped portrait of her that hangs over the jukebox. The bar patrons and team supporters include Deadeye, a character with one glass eye; Silent Sam, a man incapable of speech who communicates only through a kind of crude sign language; and Birdheart, a

Vietnam veteran who claims to be “the meanest son of a bitch this side of Laos,”¹⁷ but is defined by his emotional frailty.

The narrative arc of *In Shelly’s Leg* takes the reader from pre-season workouts through the state championship game—a three month journey from mid-May until mid-August. Shelly’s Leg provides a space for these characters to congregate, a place where one hears the clinking of glasses and the clatter of spikes on the wooden floor. It is where the team comes to celebrate, commiserate, and commune with its loyal fans. Together these men and women—broken and banished—trade stories, share lives, and provide solace in each other’s darkest hours. They drink and talk, telling stories and lies, evading the truth as often as confronting it. In the bar, the players and fans of the softball team unite as a kind of family—trusting, loving, struggling, and caring for one another. What stability each person finds is a function of the security that all of them feel when they are together.

At the end of *In Shelly’s Leg*, the team has lost in the state championship game, ending their six-year run as champions. Margaret’s boyfriend, Woody, is about to embark on his band tour, and Margaret’s battery mate, Rita, has decided to accompany Woody. In the last line of the book, as Sullivan and Margaret sit together in the bar, Sullivan reaches out and takes her hand, and the reader observes a realignment of the relationships.

In a very different kind of book with similar themes, Thomas Oliphant’s memoir, *Praying For Gil Hodges*, presents the reader with a nostalgic look back at the Brooklyn Dodgers and the author’s childhood. As the most evocative memoirs do, *Praying for Gil Hodges* provides an intersection between personal experience and historical events.

The book opens with Oliphant driving on a two-lane country road in rural Indiana—State Highway 57, near Princeton, just south of Bloomington. He is on a journey, a literal journey, on assignment as a political reporter. Suddenly he comes to Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge over the White River, close to the birthplace of both the late Dodgers first baseman and Oliphant’s own father. Oliphant slams on his brakes and stops the car. It is a crisp October day, nearly fifty years after Brooklyn’s only championship. Oliphant is immediately transported—and transformed—by a firestorm of memories. He thinks back to his family, the Dodgers—Gil and Jackie and Pee Wee; Duke and Carl and Campy—and he thinks about the place he calls home—Brooklyn—and its unique place in American life. Oliphant reminds us that most baseball teams are associated with cities and states; only the Dodgers were named for a borough.

Oliphant’s parents are dead; many of the Dodger players—including Hodges—are deceased; and the Dodgers themselves have been in California for close to five decades. But the sight of the bridge brings them all roaring back to life for him. The title of the book derives from a Brooklyn priest’s

admonition for parishioners to pray for Hodges when the beloved Dodgers slugger endured a terrible slump. Oliphant's father and Hodges, strong and stoic natives of rural Indiana, found new homes in the borough of Brooklyn.

The book is structured around the story of the seventh game of the 1955 World Series—the deciding game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees. Oliphant, then ten years old, watched this game in his Brooklyn home with his father. His parents had allowed him to stay home from school to see the game. His mother watched the game on a small television in the downtown law office where she was employed as a legal secretary. Oliphant wryly notes that while the partners in the law firm were Yankees fans, everyone else in the office rooted for the Dodgers.

In fact, it seems that all of Brooklyn was either watching or listening to the game. The chapters about the game are interspersed with chapters about his family's life in their small Brooklyn apartment, the history of Brooklyn, and the history of the Dodgers—with a special emphasis on the story of Jackie Robinson breaking the color line. Oliphant melds three separate, but linked, histories—personal, geo-cultural, and baseball—into a kind of meditation on roots and the importance of place in culture and family life.

Oliphant's parents were poor, but closely bonded and devoted to their son's upbringing and welfare. He was sent to a private school and given music lessons; as a child, he performed at Carnegie Hall. From an early age, Oliphant knew he was a lucky child. As part of Oliphant's devotion to his parents, he acquired their love of the Dodgers. The Dodgers served to bring the Oliphants together as family. They watched games on their small black-and-white TV. When they could afford tickets, they attended games at Ebbets Field. This was a formative and vital experience in Oliphant's childhood. Oliphant dedicates the book to "the loving memory" of his parents, and of them he writes, "I dream of us all together drinking cream soda in the bleachers at Ebbets Field."¹⁸

The book serves as an elegy, of sorts, for Oliphant's parents, Hodges, and the Brooklyn Dodgers. The team itself, of course, is gone forever, and the author notes that only a few members of the 1955 team are still alive. When the Dodgers moved west in 1958—a road trip from which they would not return—it was like a divorce, bitter and heartbreaking. There could be no more happy homecomings, no more reunions, no more championships, no more nerve-wracking pennant races and World Series games. The Dodgers played their last game in Brooklyn on September 24, 1957, and Ebbets Field itself was demolished in 1960.

As Oliphant looks back, he reflects on the connection between the Dodgers, his family, and the community. The literal bonding of the Oliphant family takes place in their apartment, but it is clear that the larger community—the borough of Brooklyn—is also a part of their connection. Oliphant reflects, "We shared the Dodgers; they were a metaphor and an oasis."¹⁹ Oliphant asserts

that they were “the glue that held my little family together through tough times and happy times, a metaphor for hope, disappointment, triumph, and tragedy.”²⁰

What the Dodgers represented to the Oliphants, to Brooklyn, and to their fans, is similar to what the Shelly’s Leg team represented to their community. In both cases, the team became an extension of the families that rooted for them. And like Vogan, Oliphant presents the reader with a snapshot of our common history, a glance back at a defining decade. Oliphant’s childhood in the mid-1950s reflected the nation at rest, the nation on the bubble of history between two phases of the Cold War, a nation weary and ready for an end to strife and insecurity. Almost two decades had passed since the depths of the Great Depression; the country had survived World War II and the Korean War. In 1955, families were rebuilding, the suburbs were growing, and neighborhoods were once again thriving. A year would pass before the Suez Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary would again spark international conflict.

Oliphant captures the poignant testament of Johnny Podres, the Dodgers pitcher who shut out the Yankees in the final game of the 1955 Series. Podres understood the bittersweet meaning of the game that brought Brooklyn its lone World Series championship. The Dodgers’ abandonment of Brooklyn following the 1957 season meant that there would be no encore for the borough. Podres understood: “The events of that day are frozen forever.”²¹ The Dodgers would never go home again.

At the end of the book, Oliphant recounts a day when he was working in the research library at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and decided to step outside and take a walk. He strolled into the courtyard and came face to face with baseball history. Oliphant spotted the bronze statues of Podres and Dodgers catcher Roy Campanella, placed sixty feet apart — Podres captured in the act of throwing the ball, Campanella crouched to receive the pitch. Oliphant concludes by observing that this storied game of his childhood — this event in the history of the Dodgers and the borough of Brooklyn — is literally cast in bronze.

In an essay titled “Baseball as Narrative,” Giamatti concludes that “in baseball everyone wants to arrive at the same place, which is where they start.”²² He is speaking of home plate, but, in the broader sense, I think he is talking about the concept of home — a place as well as a destination — and the path we take to get there.

We see this in literature, and we see this in our own lives. My father died on Christmas Eve 2002, one day after his 88th birthday. His mind remained sharp to the end, and he had a clear recall of the past. In those last weeks, as he completed the journey of his life, he talked about growing up in Wabash, the teachers he remembered from elementary school, and the canoe trips he

took in his boyhood summers. In his last days, he circled back home to his earliest memories.

Senile dementia and severe memory loss deprived my mother of such clarity in her final years. The end of her life was much different. She could no longer care for herself and lived in a health care facility. When I visited her, we often passed the time by watching baseball on television, and I think it brought my mother back, in some way, to her younger days. She could not follow the game as a narrative or remember the score, but she could focus on the beauty of the game's solitary moments, the pitch-by-pitch quality of an individual at-bat, or the replay of a stolen base.

My mother's great joy in life had been reading, but with failing eyesight and faltering short term memory, she had lost that pleasure too. But she always asked me to tell her what I was reading, and I would bring books to show to her. In the summer and fall of 2006, I was in a reading phase where I was devouring books about baseball — David Halberstam's *The Teammates*; biographies of Babe Ruth, Rogers Hornsby, Joe DiMaggio, and Waite Hoyt; Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* (for the third time); A. Bartlett Giamatti's essays — and so I dutifully brought these books to her room and placed them in her hands. She would ask me what the books were about, and then she would turn them over and read the front and back covers. My mother was particularly fond of a quote attributed to Babe Ruth on the back of Robert Creamer's *Babe: the Legend Comes to Life*: "I swing big, with everything I've got. I hit big or I miss big. I like to live as big as I can."²³ She always read these words out loud with great expression, and then she'd laugh. I do not know why the quote seemed to amuse her so much.

The books gave us a chance to talk about baseball. One day I showed up with a copy of *In Shelly's Leg* and explained how the plot involved a women's softball team. Then I reminded my mother of the story she had told me about her days with the Red Cross team and being coached by Spud Chandler. She could not remember that part of her life, but we examined her arthritic knuckle, as if it alone proved the story were true.

In October 2006, my mother and I watched the World Series as the Cardinals beat the Tigers. Four weeks later she passed away.

I am reminded that each new baseball season propels fans on a fresh journey through the seasons, from spring training in February, where hope is born, to the World Series in October, when dreams are realized or crushed. Through all the seasons of our lives, the game connects families and communities through shared expectations, sudden reversals of fortune, and grand triumphs. Baseball is an experience that stretches across time, geography, differences in culture, and generations. For many of us, our lives are linked, as Goodwin says, by the magic of baseball.

Notes

1. The Petoskey stone is the state stone of Michigan. It is a fossilized coral found primarily in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula. When polished, the stone is quite beautiful and often used in the creation of jewelry.
2. Bob Feller with Burton Rocks, *Bob Feller's Little Black Book of Baseball Wisdom* (Chicago: Contemporary, 2001), 10.
3. David Halberstam, foreword, *A Great and Glorious Game: Baseball Writings of A. Bartlett Giamatti*, ed. Kenneth S. Robson (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin, 1998), x.
4. Donald Hall, *Fathers Playing Catch with Sons* (San Francisco: North Point, 1985), 1.
5. *Ibid.*, 9.
6. Doris Kearns Goodwin, "From Father, With Love," in *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend: Women Writers on Baseball*, ed. Elinor Nauer (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993), 26.
7. *Ibid.*, 27.
8. *Ibid.*, 28.
9. A. Bartlett Giamatti, *A Great and Glorious Game: Baseball Writings of A. Bartlett Giamatti*, ed. Kenneth S. Robson (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin, 1998), 30.
10. *Ibid.*, 30–31. Giamatti includes references to Homer's *Odyssey* in some of his baseball articles, and the themes of journeys, family, and homecoming also appear in many of the books and stories that utilize baseball as a subject or metaphor for the human experience. Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* begins on a train trip, and Roy Hobbs is constantly in motion, seeking and searching for a home and place that eludes him. In *Shoeless Joe*, W. P. Kinsella's protagonist is on a quest, first to find the writer J.D. Salinger and the ballplayer Moonlight Graham, and then, ultimately, to come home and reunite with his deceased father. Philip Roth's *The Great American Novel* features the Rupert Mundys, a team that plays its entire season on the road. In Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, it is the ball that goes on a journey—from Dodgers pitcher Ralph Branca's hand to the bat of the Giants Bobby Thomson to the left field stands in the Polo Grounds and eventually to the succession of fans who possess the ball over the course of the novel.
11. Sara Vogan, *In Shelly's Leg* (Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf, [1981] 1985). The novel was originally published in hardback in 1981 by Alfred A. Knopf, but all references in this article are to the 1985 Graywolf paperback edition.
12. Thomas Oliphant, *Praying for Gil Hodges: A Memoir of the 1955 World Series and One Family's Love of the Brooklyn Dodgers* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2005).
13. Eric Solomon, "Diamonds Are the Girls' Best Friends," *American Book Review*, March/April 1987, 10.
14. The theme of loneliness is common in much of Vogan's work. A character in *Loss of Flight*, one of Vogan's later novels, describes a condition he calls "American Loneliness."
15. Kathleen Sullivan, *Women Characters in Baseball Literature* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005), 57. Sullivan argues that a number of male characters in baseball books and movies fit the definition of "mothering men," including Pop Fisher in *The Natural*, Henry Wiggins in *Bang the Drum Slowly*, and Crash Davis in *Bull Durham*, to name a few.
16. Vogan, 95.
17. *Ibid.*, 47.
18. Oliphant, v.
19. *Ibid.*, 24.
20. *Ibid.*, 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 10.
22. Giamatti, 94.
23. Robert Creamer, *Babe: The Legend Comes to Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), back cover.

Now Batting — Peter Pan: Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* and Baseball's Boyish Culture

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When Senator George J. Mitchell's report on the drug subculture in professional baseball was released in December 2007, it sent shockwaves through the nation. Some of the game's biggest stars were listed in association with performance enhancing drugs, most notably home-run king Barry Bonds and seven-time Cy Young Award-winner Roger Clemens.¹ Suspicion had clouded Bonds' and Clemens' achievements for some time, but the Mitchell Report cast an even greater shadow over two men who once seemed bound for enshrinement in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Shortly after the report's publication, the U.S. government began its own investigation. In February 2008, Clemens, his former trainer Brian McNamee (who had cooperated with Mitchell's investigation and detailed alleged drug use of several former clients, including Clemens), and New York Yankees starting pitcher Andy Pettitte were called to testify before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Like Clemens, Pettitte had been implicated in the use of human growth hormone (HGH), provided by McNamee; however, in contrast to his friend and former teammate, Pettitte admitted past use of the performance enhancer.²

Although Pettitte was ultimately excused from testifying before Congress, news of his affidavit leaked to the press, and many questions were raised about his relationship to Clemens, and how it might be impacted in regards to McNamee's allegations. Journalists spoke to a variety of professionals outside of baseball, among them lawyers and sociologists, for insight into this situation. Michael S. Kimmel, a Stony Brook University sociologist specializing in gender studies, told the *New York Times* that Pettitte's affidavit reflected a clash between two conflicting values connected to masculinity: first, to always do the right thing; second, to never betray your friends. For athletes, there is an

unspoken code: teams need to be cohesive to work together, and this has kept teammates from speaking publicly — not just about illegal or unethical acts, but other facets of one's personal life as well.³

Breaking the clubhouse code, therefore, can be analyzed in terms of gender roles and ideals, and Jim Bouton's *Ball Four*, a 1970 baseball diary that exposed amphetamine use, heavy drinking and fighting among players, provides an opportunity to examine gender roles within the national pastime. When Bouton, described by sportswriter Marty Noble as a "personality who could pitch, not a pitcher with a personality,"⁴ published *Ball Four*, he revolutionized the sports biography by telling all about his life — and those of his teammates — on and off the field. Like Jim Brosnan's *The Long Season*, published ten years before *Ball Four*, Bouton's book took an insider's look at professional baseball; however, Bouton was willing to divulge much more about the clubhouse and traveling lives of ballplayers than Brosnan, making his book radically different than its predecessors, and forever altering the format of the sports biography and memoir.

Jim Bouton began his career as a fastball pitcher in the New York Yankees' organization. Between 1963 and 1964, Bouton won 38 regular-season games and two in the World Series. However, as the Yankees began their decline in 1965, so did Bouton, falling to a mysterious arm ailment (also known as a sore arm). The Yankees sold his contract in 1968, and, after a brief stint in the minor leagues, Bouton returned to the Major Leagues as a relief pitcher — now favoring a knuckleball instead of a fastball — on the expansion Seattle Pilots in 1969. During that season, in which he was traded to the Houston Astros in July, Bouton kept a diary of his daily experiences and memories of his time with the Yankees. The diary was published with the title *Ball Four* the following season, while Bouton was still an active player. The book had a major impact throughout baseball and the media, telling all about the national pastime that had fiercely guarded its image.⁵

Consistent with personality journalism and public disclosure in the 1970s, Bouton's book revealed that baseball's heroes were flawed individuals.⁶ Bouton did not hesitate to name names, and his frankness bothered those in Organized Baseball — players, coaches, managers, executives and, especially, Commissioner Bowie Kuhn. Audiences devoured the book, and most enjoyed its realism, although some took exception to Bouton's comments, particularly those about the All-American hero Mickey Mantle.

While scandalous and sensationalist, *Ball Four* has a value in academic study, particularly in regard to gender. Sports have a special place in studies of masculinity, and its heroes are often upheld, at least by the public, as the masculine ideal. To succeed in sports requires not only talent, but discipline; sports stress stoicism and conformity to strict rules. Furthermore, the masculine physique has symbolic value: physical strength has long been represen-

tative of success and strength of character. Athletes, therefore, with their conditioned bodies and stoic attitudes, signify masculine virtue.

However, *Ball Four*’s revelations undermine this popular understanding of the athlete. Bouton revealed players as immature, sex-obsessed young men who like to drink and had to stifle laughter after losing, or when listening to their managers and coaches. *Ball Four* is much less a text that celebrates masculinity than it is an emasculating text; rather than celebrate baseball’s heroes, it presents them as boys who never grew up.

Bouton and the Chipmunks

Prior to *Ball Four*, the conventional sports biography followed, as trained paleontologist and moon-lighting baseball historian Stephen Jay Gould once commented, a hagiographic model. This convention limited “treatment to the heroic aspects of on-field play, told as an epic, so that the tragedies of defeat (borne with stoic honor) received equal space with the joys of victory.”⁷ The sports biography reinforced the Horatio Alger myth of the self-made man, who, through dedication and determination was able to rise above his circumstances and become an American hero. *Ball Four*, however, dismissed this concept of heroism, and reflected changes in journalism to create a new form of sports biography, the “kiss-and-tell” biography, or, as baseball traditionalists sneered, the “sweat-and-snitich” biography.

The tendency to deify sports stars was not unusual, particularly in the early twentieth century. Studying the ways in which Jungian archetypes played into the deification of sports heroes, Peter Williams cited Frederick Cozens and Florence Stampf’s study of technology and urbanization as creating the need for heroes at the turn of the century: “the increasing impersonal quality of city life created a greater need for vicarious personal contacts and for humanized materials which would permit the illusion of sharing an emotional experience.”⁸ Changes in American society led people to search for heroes, and sports provided a number of men, physically strong and independent, whom they could admire.

Professional sports heroes affirmed the Alger myth. Many biographies suggested that baseball’s heroes had arisen from lower positions in society; Babe Ruth promoted his reputation as an orphan (although he was actually a saloonkeeper’s son who was sent away to a reform school at a young age), and Lou Gehrig and Joe DiMaggio were the sons of immigrants. Their ascent of the social ladder supported the Alger myth and value of social mobility, while also becoming symbols of group and national pride. For example, DiMaggio was transformed from an Italian baseball player into a national hero by changing images in the press; reporters applied the archetypes of national hero and

DiMaggio was no longer seen as an ethnic hero, precisely at the time the United States was unifying in the Second World War.⁹

Indeed, the press played a significant role in creating baseball's heroes. Sportswriters had access to the players as individuals, and their writing reflected their judgments of these individuals. In praising some players, Williams wrote, members of the press instructed the public's attitudes toward those players (deification), while reflecting the public's values. Journalists were responsible for creating a player's image; they decided which archetypes a player embodied, and presented that image to the American public. As a result, they were responsible for "Godding up," to use legendary sportswriter Red Smith's phrase, some players and ignoring others.¹⁰

The writers were also responsible for sports biographies, contributing to the hagiographic model seen before *Ball Four*. Player memoirs were often longer versions of popular "as told to" articles, reinforcing hero myths and conveying "the gratitude of men who might never have emerged from the coal mine, or debarked from the fishing boat, if God had not granted, and the public appreciated, their fortunate skills of body."¹¹ However, beginning with Jim Brosnan's *The Long Season*, player memoirs shifted to reflect the ordinary aspects of the game; by the time Bouton produced *Ball Four*, a new breed of sports journalism was taking an irreverent look at the national pastime.

The Long Season was Jim Brosnan's diary of the 1959 season, which he spent with the St. Louis Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds. Brosnan was an intellectual, a rarity in baseball. Nicknamed "Professor" by his teammates, he was known to have a small library in his locker. While his teammates were reading comic books, Brosnan was reading Civil War histories. *The Long Season* reflected the author's intelligence; eschewing a ghost-writer, Brosnan published his own account, a well-written diary that indicates a love of language.¹²

Brosnan's memoir was unique in that it offered an inside-the-clubhouse view of professional baseball, from an informed observer and rather ordinary ballplayer. Brosnan presents himself as an average ballplayer, which he was; prior to the 1959 season, he had a 29–29 career record as a pitcher. Brosnan arguably became well-known only through his writing, which astonished audiences with its level of literacy as much as its revelations. In response to *The Long Season*, Brosnan encountered players who felt he had betrayed the "clubhouse code," that creed which read, "What you say here, what you see here, let it stay here when you leave here." Brosnan offered stories of clubhouse meetings in which coaches discussed signs and base running; he talked about "dusting," an intentional pitch designed to move the hitter away from the plate; and, most significantly, he failed to uphold the saintly image of ballplayers.¹³

Although Brosnan's book failed to keep the clubhouse code and dared to present ballplayers as they actually were, it would be misleading to suggest that

the hagiographic model of baseball biography was all that was available prior to *The Long Season*. In actuality, while the saintly portrayal of ballplayers was standard, authors did acknowledge flaws in their heroes. For example, biographies of Ruth did not ignore his enormous appetite (physical or sensual), although they did not extensively pursue it. Admission of flaws was necessary to heroic depictions, however, because, as Marshall Smelser wrote:

Every hero must have his human flaw which he shares with his followers. In Ruth it was hedonism, as exaggerated in folklore and fable. If he had been nothing more than an exceptional hitter, he would have been respected, but he attracted more than respect. The public love of Ruth approached idolatry, and his reputed carnality was necessary to the folk hero pattern.... He fit the public image of what a highly paid ballplayer *ought* to be, and, if he didn't really fit, the people wished to believe any legend that would shape the image. (They still do.) The combination of great skill on the field and a shared flaw off the field made him the most admired and theatrical man in the game.¹⁴

As in most other instances, Ruth is again an exception in baseball biography, his legend exceeding that of all others and his hedonistic reputation therefore undeniable (although not fully disclosed until the 1970s). Yet other heroes also had publicized human flaws, including DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle. In both instances, these flaws were physical, as the players suffered injuries. These concessions humanized their subjects,¹⁵ and yet also promoted them in that they now had another source of adversity to overcome. While heroes like DiMaggio and Mantle had to deal with physical pain and aging much the same way their fans did, their ability on the field in the face of such adversity made them all the more impressive to the public. Although never a Yankee fan, baseball writer Jack O'Connell always respected Mantle for playing through the pains associated with osteomyelitis, an infection of the bone or marrow. Knowing this pain personally, O'Connell had to admire the player's ability to perform under such circumstances.¹⁶ Brosnan's decision, therefore, to depict players with flaws was not novel, but the manner in which he described their lack of sobriety or loyalty differed from the humanizing flaws commonly associated with baseball heroes.

At least one group of writers appreciated Brosnan's approach to sports writing. The "chipmunks" were a group of young writers predominantly from evening papers with leisurely deadlines, so named by veteran sportswriter Jimmy Cannon because they chatted in the pressbox during games while others, with early deadlines, had to write. Included in this group were Vic Ziegel of the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Times*' George Vescey, and *Newsday*'s Stan Isaacs and Steve Jacobson. Chipmunk journalism began in the early 1960s and was characterized by an irreverent view of the game; the chipmunks were always looking for a new approach, and broadened the spectrum of baseball coverage to include more than game stories.¹⁷

Leonard Shecter, the sports editor of *Look* magazine, was also a member of the chipmunks, although he did not seem to share their joy in sports. He has been described as a very bitter and anti-establishment reporter. According to the *New York Daily News*'s Bill Madden, Shecter "took such a jaundiced view of sports and the people in it. He seemed to take particular pleasure in destroying idols."¹⁸ Shecter's book *Jocks* was a no-holds-barred account of professional sports and its coverage, criticizing the commercialism of sports and the deifying of professional athletes. In his introduction, Shecter describes the book as follows:

It's about the cynicism of American sports, the dump, the fix, the thrown game, the shaved points, the cross and the double cross and the "I've got mine, bub." It's about the newspapers and the newspapermen who shill for sports. It's about television, the conscienceless and ruthless partner of sports. It's about the spoiled heroes of sports, shiny on the outside, decaying with meanness underneath. It's about the greedy professionals and posturing amateurs, the crooks, the thieves, the knaves and the fools.¹⁹

Jocks was first published in 1969, one year before Shecter collaborated with Jim Bouton on *Ball Four*. Actually, it was on Shecter's recommendation that Bouton wrote *Ball Four*.

In an editor's note to *I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally*, Bouton's follow-up to *Ball Four*, Shecter admitted that he believed the world was ready for a new baseball diary, a "down-to-earth, honest-to-goodness report of the day-to-day activities of a real, live, sweaty baseball player."²⁰ Shecter believed that Bouton, who had always been a favorite of the chipmunks, with his own irreverent style and comfort dealing with the press, was the perfect person to write this diary. Bouton, Shecter thought, would be willing to write an honest diary, and would not back down from what he had written. When the editor approached the pitcher about keeping a diary, Bouton said, "Funny you should mention that. I've been keeping notes."²¹ The result was *Ball Four*, Bouton's diary of the 1969 season as played with the Seattle Pilots and Houston Astros, when Bouton was trying to make a comeback as an aging (at the age of thirty) knuckleball pitcher. It was Bouton's honesty and pride in his own work, both qualities Shecter had acknowledged, that made the book into a sensation.

The Boutonian Revolution and "Masculinity" in Baseball

Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* was a revolutionary clubhouse exposé disguised as a player's diary. It was irreverent and humorous, revealing baseball as it really was, and not how it was portrayed. In the process, however, the revelations of *Ball Four* contradicted the popular notions of masculinity and the depictions

of athletes as embodying the masculine ideal. Instead, Bouton’s memoir revealed the childishness of professional baseball and its heroes, and celebrated boyhood in all its forms.

Ball Four revels in clubhouse gossip; Bouton brings the reader into intimate conversations and allows one to see his heroes uncensored. In its most benign revelations, Bouton’s book tells of baseball players’ love of gory details, and following one another into the trainer’s room or forming crowds around an injured player, hoping to get a glimpse of an unsightly injury. For example, Bouton recalls teammates gathering during spring training when Jake Gibbs was hit on the thumb and the trainers attempted to relieve the pressure by drilling a hole through his nail. “The drill boring through the nail started to smoke, and when it hit paydirt Jake jerked his hand and here’s Jake’s hand waving in the air with the drill still hanging from the hole in his nail,” Bouton recalls of “one of the great thrills of spring.”²²

Ballplayers also amused themselves by gossiping about other players. One bullpen conversation focused on the “all-ugly nine,” a roster compiled of baseball’s least attractive players. In a later conversation, Jim Pagliaroni, who joined the Seattle Pilots after the season began, described a teammate’s date as a “Joe Torre with tits,” to which Bouton added: “This joke can only be explained with a picture of Joe Torre. But I’m not sure any exist. He dissolves camera lenses.”²³ These passages indicate a ridiculing of one’s opponents, independent of the field of play. Torre, a National League catcher, and Yogi Berra, a member of the “all-ugly nine” who retired in 1965, were not opponents, nor was it their playing ability that was being mocked. These conversations targeted their physical appearances, showing the callousness and superficiality of ballplayers. While this in itself is not surprising, Bouton’s decision to include it made his book different than other memoirs that came before.

If these were the most revealing passages of *Ball Four*, however, it would not have drawn the attention it did. Instead, Bouton’s book pushes much further, disrespecting the game’s authorities and questioning its stars, while also revealing a drug subculture, cheating, and an obsession with sex. As such, *Ball Four* demonstrated that baseball players were hardly paragons of virtue; they failed to meet the masculine ideal that was commonly associated with sports heroes.

In an age when questioning authority became common, particularly with the war in Vietnam, Jim Bouton was not alone in looking cynically at his elders. There is a running commentary about the futility of coaches. Whether it was mocking Eddie O’Brien’s advice (“The secret to pitching, boys, is throwing strikes”), detailing his contract negotiations with Yankees’ general manager Ralph Houk or Pilots’ general manager Marvin Milkes, or illuminating the Yankee players’ dislike of manager Johnny Keane, Bouton expresses his disgust with baseball’s management. His decision to do so is another example of *Ball Four*’s willingness to step away from the traditional baseball memoir.²⁴

Furthermore, Bouton criticizes some of the game's biggest stars and questions their work ethic. Carl Yastrzemski and Roger Maris were selfish players, according to Bouton, and loafed when they were slumping.²⁵ These were not marginal players taken to task — both MVP-winners, Yastrzemski, the Boston Red Sox outfielder, won the American League Triple Crown in 1967 (the last player to accomplish this feat in either league), and Maris had set the single-season home run record during the Yankees' 1961 championship season.

Yet the criticism that drew the most attention in the wake of *Ball Four* was not directed toward Maris or Yastrzemski, but baseball's Golden Boy, Mickey Mantle. Mantle was a baseball giant and a fan favorite, but more than that, he was revered by his teammates. His monument in Yankee Stadium's Monument Park bears arguably the greatest testament any ballplayer can receive: "A great teammate." For all his talent and accomplishments, however, Mantle's career frequently inspired baseball commentators and fans to wonder "what if." What if Mantle hadn't been hurt for much of his career? What if he had never suffered from osteomyelitis, or fallen in the drain in right field at Yankee Stadium during the 1951 World Series? Mantle, for all that he accomplished, might have done more, or so it was reasoned.²⁶

In *Ball Four*, Jim Bouton offered another "what if" regarding Mickey Mantle. Bouton pondered, "If he might have healed quicker if he'd been sleeping more and loosening up with the boys at the bar less." While Bouton was not wholly critical of Mantle, recalling the way in which the center fielder laid down a path of white towels for Bouton after he had won his first game, or commending Mantle's sense of humor and practical jokes, his questioning of Mantle's time off the field raised many eyebrows. Furthermore, he challenged Mantle's integrity and revealed that he had been difficult with the press, ignored fan requests for autographs, womanized, drank too much and played hung-over.²⁷

Although the Mantle comments occupied very little of the 398-page text, they were seized upon by the media when the book was released. Players jumped to defend their teammate, with former Yankees' catcher Elston Howard charging Bouton with an inferiority complex. Whitey Ford, the Yankee pitcher and Mantle's close friend, was particularly bothered by Bouton's remarks. Responding to excerpts of *Ball Four* printed in *Look* magazine before the book was released, Ford told the *Daily News* (New York) that Mantle's wife Merlyn had been hurt by the story, and that Mantle had tried to befriend Bouton, who was otherwise generally disliked within the Yankee clubhouse. "In my eighteen years with the Yankees, there has never been a player who was as generally disliked as much as Bouton was," Ford was quoted. "Because of that, Mickey and I, especially Mickey, went out of our way to be nice to him ... Mickey was always involving Bouton in his little pranks in the clubhouse. You don't do that to a guy if you don't like him. Now he says these things about Mickey. They're uncalled for."²⁸

While it is not surprising that Ford would defend Mantle, it is interesting that he does not defend himself from slights in *Ball Four*. Prior to a three-game series between the Pilots and the Yankees, Bouton writes, players in the Seattle clubhouse were discussing Whitey Ford’s attempts to “get an edge,” a player’s euphemism for cheating, toward the end of his career. Bouton reveals that Ford used a mud ball — a ball loaded with mud and thus impacting its flight from the pitcher’s mound to home plate — as well as scuffed balls. The balls were scuffed either by Ford, using the diamond in his wedding band, which was hidden in his jock strap, or by Elston Howard, who Bouton alleges used the sharpened buckle of his shin guard.²⁹ Bouton’s comments do not seem critical, however; he seems impressed by Ford’s ability to manipulate the scuffed or loaded ball, not put off by the pitcher’s attempt to deceive the batter, umpire or audience.³⁰

Indeed, it appears as though Bouton accepts cheating as a part of the professional game, as is collaboration between opponents. Bouton tells a story in which Rich Rollins was recalling a game they played against one another in the Carolina League. Rollins had hit two home runs in the first game of a doubleheader and would receive a \$300 bonus if he managed to hit a third home run that day. His teammates convinced him to talk to Bouton’s catcher, Norm Kampshor, to see if the catcher would tell him what pitch to expect. Although initially hesitant, Rollins offered the catcher half of his bonus if Kampshor could tell him what was coming; Kampshor not only agreed, he let Rollins call his own pitches. “In the end, though,” Bouton recalled, “the joke was on Rollins. Calling my game for me, he managed only one double in four times at bat. And if he had come to *me*, I probably would have grooved one for him. Not for money, just for the hell of it.” Should the reader be disappointed by this confession, Bouton offers no regrets: “Sorry, kids, things like that happen.”³¹

The desire to get an edge also reveals a drug subculture in baseball. Bouton admitted that he had tried numerous drugs to heal a sore arm. Among them were butazolidin, an anti-inflammatory drug that was used to treat horses; dimethylsulfoxide, an anti-inflammatory cream that penetrates the skin so readily the wearer can actually taste it; novocaine, cortisone, and xylocaine. While these drugs were taken with the intention of alleviating pain, other drugs, such as amphetamines (called “greenies”), were also popular. Players valued greenies for their short-term boosts of energy and increased stamina, but they could also lead to rage and irregular heartbeats. Although all of these drugs put the user at serious risk, Bouton said that players relied on them because of the (false) sense of security they provided. Ballplayers were willing to take the risks if it meant better performance in the immediate future.³²

Bouton’s final revelation, and arguably his most explosive, was in regards to another prominent social change in the 1960s: sexual liberation. The ballplayers’ preoccupation with sex is a major focus of the book, and *Ball Four*

introduced Americans to the phrase “beaver-shooting,” which was the players’ term for voyeurism and might mean peering over the top of the dugout to look up dresses, placing a mirror in the gap underneath a hotel room door, or even drilling holes in doors, and, in one case, the home dugout in the Astrodome. In the most extreme example, Bouton recalls the story of teammate Jim Gosger, who hid in the closet of his hotel room as he watched his roommate entertain a young woman. The most popular place for baseball’s Peeping Toms to congregate, however, was the roof of the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The architecture of the hotel, with L-shaped wings, was amenable to voyeurism, because one could see inside several windows while standing on the roof. The Shoreham’s roof was so popular, Bouton’s Seattle teammate Gary Bell once remarked that one could stock an entire league with the guys who have stood there — including Mickey Mantle.³³

Ballplayers were not limited to watching, however. Bouton noted the availability of stewardesses and “Baseball Annie’s” (camp followers of the players). Stewardesses, higher on the social taxonomy than Baseball Annie’s, often stayed in the same hotels as players, and it was not considered beneath a player’s dignity to be seen with a stewardess. In contrast, the Baseball Annie’s were looked down upon; players availed themselves of their physical charms, but displayed scant respect toward these women:

It is permissible, in the scheme of things, to promise a Baseball Annie dinner and a show in return for certain quick services for a pair of roommates. And it is just as permissible, in the morality of the locker room, to refuse to pay off. The girls don’t seem to mind very much when this happens. Indeed, they seem to expect it.³⁴

Baseball Annie’s were to be used on the road, and stewardesses were potential wives — if the player wasn’t already married. Infidelity, as Bouton revealed, was common in professional baseball; players were away for long periods of time and sought the company of women, whether or not they had made vows to another who was waiting for them back home.

This is a far cry from the stoicism and restraint that was representative of the masculine ideal. Much of what Bouton wrote contradicted the popular understanding of masculinity in sports. Sports were prominent stages of masculinity because of the emphasis placed on the physical body as representative of one’s character; physical strength connoted strength of character. Athletes were supposed to represent manliness in its highest forms, and yet virtue is missing from Bouton’s memoir.

Studies of masculinity have found that, since the nineteenth century, the male body has been an important symbol of virtue. The theory of physiognomy, following from the Enlightenment ideal of unity of the body and soul, emphasized the visual appearance of a man — physical beauty was representative of morality, moderation and cleanliness. This theory was incorporated

by the modern middle class, who viewed the male body as an example of virility, strength and courage.³⁵

Sports required discipline and teamwork, highly regarded virtues. The physically conditioned body was representative of this self-sacrifice, as well as stoicism in the face of discomfort and ability to conform to a strict set of rules. As such, sports provided an important means of socialization for young men, and could function as a stand-in for war in aiding a young man's development because they required, in theory, the same discipline as military preparation; the socialization process undergone through physical activity and participation in organized sports enabled a boy to control selfish or sensual impulses.³⁶

Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* does not reflect this self-sacrificing, disciplined goal. By opening the clubhouse doors to the public and allowing the reader to see the reality of ballplayers' lives, Bouton contradicted the concept of the male athletic body symbolizing strength of character. In particular, his discussion of drugs reverses this perception. Bouton and his teammates were willing to do anything to succeed athletically, including taking drugs. This is hardly weightlifting to achieve physical perfection; ballplayers were using creams meant to treat horses and amphetamines in the hopes of compiling a few extra hits or wins. The desire to win and the need to maintain one's livelihood caused men to cheat, but there is no honor to be found in this.

Furthermore, Bouton's book revealed that ballplayers were unable—or unwilling—to control their sensual desires, which also contradicted the prominent understanding of masculine virtue. To think that ballplayers were meeting on rooftops to spy into hotel room windows, or drilling holes into walls to see women undressing—this reflected an adolescent sexuality, not that of a grown man. Nor was this activity limited to baseball's bachelors; married men were also peeping, or consorting with Baseball Annies. Sex drives were supposed to be sublimated according to the masculine ideal, but *Ball Four* does not support this understanding.

The sublimation of sensual desires is a psychoanalytic understanding of modern masculinity. Sexual desire was viewed as a powerful force in young men, and was capable of distracting them from their work and, ultimately, their ability to carry out the male role. "Thus, the pursuit of pleasure among youthful males seemed a threat to the basic integrity of society."³⁷ The transition to adulthood and healthy sexuality required the sublimation of the sex drive and other aggressions, for uncontrolled impulses led to excess and would distort the body and mind, resulting in the opposite of the manly ideal, whether it be an effeminate identity, or, more likely, a youthful, boyish identity.³⁸

Ultimately, this is what Bouton's book reveals about masculinity in baseball: rather than celebrating masculinity, *Ball Four* is a celebration of the childishness of the game. It reflects not the socializing rituals of sport that transitioned boys into men by teaching them discipline. Instead, professional

baseball players are depicted as overgrown boys, ruled by their impulses. Nor is Bouton apologetic about his observations, as the author is seldom critical of his subjects. While he criticizes those players he believes to be lazy or unproductive, he is unmoved by the players' overactive libidos, drug use, cheating (be it through ball scuffing or consorting with the enemy) or mean-spirited mockery of others. These are all part of the fun of the game, and Bouton maintained that "sharing the fun" was his reason for writing *Ball Four*; he was not out to change it.³⁹ But Bouton's book did change baseball. At the very least, it changed the way people perceived the game.

The popular understanding of masculinity was, at least according to one scholar, already in flux at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to E. Anthony Rotundo, masculinity as it was then constituted, stoic and disciplined, was seen as pompous, and men sought to reform it. Although other scholars maintain the constancy of the masculine ideal from the nineteenth century, Rotundo argues that boyhood came to be glorified at the turn of the century, and this embracing of boyhood virtues developed a more natural connection between boyhood and manhood.⁴⁰ Seen in this context, Bouton's book illuminates a transformed masculinity by midcentury; ballplayers were embracing the fun of the game as much as they were driven by the competition and thrill of victory.

Another possibility, though, is that the nature of professional baseball is such that it encourages boyishness, not manliness. Bouton argued that athletes easily lost perspective because "being a professional athlete allows you to postpone your adulthood." After all, these are grown men paid to play a child's game. Furthermore, many professional ballplayers have had accommodations made for them since childhood, and reach a prominent place in society at a young age, when they are not emotionally equipped to handle it. As a consequence, they are trapped in adolescence and are susceptible to drugs and infidelity. Bouton cautions his reader to think of a ballplayer as a fifteen-year-old in a twenty-five-year-old's body.⁴¹

This condition is also known as the Peter Pan Syndrome, first studied by Dan Kiley in 1983. Named after J.M. Barrie's whimsical character who never grew up, the Peter Pan Syndrome affects young men and is characterized by emotional paralysis and social impotence. Other characteristics include irresponsibility, anxiety, loneliness, sex role conflict, and narcissism, which can lead to recklessness, drug abuse and sexual promiscuity.⁴² Each of these characteristics is found in Bouton's book, suggesting that professional baseball is full of adult men who never properly matured.

Whether it is the nature of baseball to trap young men in adolescence or a reflection of changes in masculinity over the course of the twentieth century that opened men to self-expression, professional baseball players as observed through Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* reflect a non-normative masculinity. If the

masculine ideal is physical and mental strength derived by discipline and sublimation of desires, Bouton’s diary reveals an *emasculated* sport; Major League Baseball is the Never Never Land where superstars cheat and carouse, never accepting responsibility for their actions. It is all part of the game.

They Took It Personally...

Bouton’s *Ball Four* was met with mixed reviews. While it was praised by the public, people within baseball took exception to his candid account; and while the chipmunks celebrated Bouton’s irreverence, many veteran sports-writers bristled at his willingness to tell secrets other than his own. Although it was meant to be a diary about Bouton’s attempt to return to the Major Leagues in the spring of 1969, it may have actually contributed to his retirement in the summer of 1970. Bouton was optioned to the Houston Astros’ minor league affiliate in Oklahoma City in August 1970, two months after the book had been published. Although the Astros were adamant that his demotion had more to do with his ERA (which was over six runs per game) than it did his publication, manager Harry Walker acknowledged that the book may have been a distraction for Bouton — requiring public appearances and divided attention — which may have contributed to his decline. Rather than go back to the minors, Bouton retired, and turned his attention toward his second publication, *I’m Glad You Didn’t Take It Personally* and a budding career as a sportscaster for New York’s “Eye-Witness News.”⁴³

As previously mentioned, excerpts from *Ball Four* were printed in *Look* magazine in advance of the book’s publication. Players were unhappy about what they read in these advances, although Bouton would argue that most complained about the book without ever reading it in its entirety. Regardless, players reacted strongly. In May, playing against the Cincinnati Reds, Bouton was taunted by Reds stars Johnny Bench and Pete Rose, among others, who considered him a “no-good rat-fink.” When the Astros traveled to Los Angeles, they found the remnants of a fire set by the San Diego Padres, the visiting clubhouse’s previous occupant — the team had left the ashes of *Ball Four* waiting for Bouton.⁴⁴

Players were bothered by Bouton’s violation of the clubhouse code. Trust was very important to these men, and Bouton had violated that trust by detailing the pranks and conversations of the clubhouse, as well as stories players told or Bouton witnessed. “Is this guy an author or a teammate?” Astro second baseman Joe Morgan was quoted. “Why, I’ve told him stuff I’d never tell a sportswriter.”⁴⁵ Although Bouton would insist that players knew he was writing a book, it is questionable whether they knew *what kind* of book he was writing, or that their secrets were just as likely to be published; for example,

if the book was about Bouton, why was there the story of Jim Gosger hiding in a closet?

It was on these grounds that traditional sportswriters were most upset. Dick Young, the influential *New York Daily News* columnist, probably aided Bouton's book sales with his many columns criticizing *Ball Four*. Young found the book to be "muck-stirring," questioned the author's integrity and called him a "social leper." Wells Twombly, a San Francisco writer, found Bouton's diary an example of the excesses of chipmunk journalism: "What started out to be a refreshing trend is in danger of becoming a smutty torrent of poor taste."⁴⁶

If these critiques did not send people to the bookstores looking to see what all the fuss was about, baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn certainly did. Kuhn, who considered it his job to guard baseball's image, expressed his disappointment with *Ball Four*, and insisted on meeting with Bouton to discuss it. The commissioner told the author that he would not punish him for *Ball Four*, but warned him against future publications. Bouton responded by planning his second book, *I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally*, which detailed the meeting with Kuhn.⁴⁷

Although the criticism of Bouton's book avoided the issues of masculinity that I have discussed here, writers did question the author's honor, an important masculine trait. Charles Maher of the *Los Angeles Times* charged Bouton with invading privacy and violating confidences. Furthermore, with many of his teammates claiming they were never warned about his publication, Bouton was targeted for dishonesty; he wrote about players without their knowledge, and told stories they may never had told if they had known he was recording them.⁴⁸

Bouton never apologized for his revelations. He defended his literary rights, claiming that by witnessing or hearing about these events and stories they became his intellectual property as much as that of the person actually at the center of the activity. He argued that he never named a player who was cheating on his wife, and that if a player had problems in his marriage, it was ultimately not Bouton's fault but rather a symptom of larger problems. He also defended his violation of the "sanctity of the clubhouse" by declaring that the clubhouse was full of mindless activity, and that there was much he could have written but ignored — such as anti-Semitic remarks or racial slurs in the integrated game.⁴⁹ In the end, *I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally* is as much a work defending his first book as it is a celebration of its positive responses.

Bouton deserves credit for his honesty and his insight, but he is too smart to believably hide behind claims that he did not know the book would inspire such visceral reactions among the baseball establishment, players and reporters. As a matter of fact, Bouton acknowledged that part of his intention in writing *Ball Four* was to alter people's perceptions of their heroes — not necessar-

ily destroy heroes, but at least tear down the façade of saintly folk heroes.⁵⁰ Is it then not disingenuous for Bouton to claim that he did not mean to hurt anyone when in the next breath he admits that his intention was to draw attention to these flaws in the hopes of enlightening the public as to the reality of their heroes’ character and actions?

In many ways, *Ball Four* made Bouton a pariah. Such is the price of revolution. The pitcher-turned-author’s willingness to expose the realities of baseball did not sit well with those in professional baseball, but it did forever change the way the public saw the game. Following what Stephen Jay Gould calls the “post-modern Boutonian revolution,” sports biographies took new forms, becoming uncensored chronicles of the athlete’s life and experiences. As a consequence, those reading *Ball Four* in 2008 for the first time might find it dated; it’s not nearly as revealing or explicit as other biographies that followed. Yet it stands as the catalyst for this adjustment in writing. Bouton’s book reflects changes in American culture in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when the public was engrossed in gossip and emphasized public disclosure. *Ball Four* belongs to the literature of that time, revealing heroes were not always what they were thought to be, questioning the masculine ideal in the professional game, and encouraging the reader to look beyond the media’s interpretations. In this way, it is one of the most significant sports histories written, and well deserving of its place in the academic’s library, as well.

Notes

1. George J. Mitchell, *Report to the Commissioner of Baseball of an Independent Investigation into the Illegal Use of Steroids and Other Performance Enhancing Substances by Players in Major League Baseball* (New York: Major League Baseball, Office of the Commissioner, 2007). For information in regards to Barry Bonds and the BALCO investigation, see pp. 161–166; for the allegations against Roger Clemens, see pp. 167–175.

2. Duff Wilson, “Congress Calls on Clemens and 4 Others to Testify,” *New York Times*, 5 January 2008, p. D1; Michael S. Schmidt, “Pettitte Confirms Mitchell Report and Says He Used HGH,” *New York Times*, 16 December 2007, p. SP1; Kat O’Brien, “Rocket: I Never Used ‘Roids; Clemens Denies Mitchell Report Allegations, Saying He’ll Address Them ‘At Appropriate Time,’” *Newsday* [Melville, NY], 19 December 2007, p. A70.

3. Mireya Navarro, “We’re Friends, Right?” *New York Times*, 10 February 2008, p. 1(L). See also: Ken Davidoff, “Andy, Rocket Rift Widening,” *Newsday* [Melville, NY], 20 January 2008, p. B21; Brian Costello, “Damning Words—Pettitte Backed Trainer vs. Rog,” *New York Post*, 12 February 2008, p. 76; Duff Wilson and Michael S. Schmidt, “Pettitte Is among Those Excused from Testifying,” *New York Times*, 12 February 2008, p. D1.

4. Marty Noble, interview by author, e-mail correspondence, 12 December 2007. Mr. Noble is currently the New York Mets beat writer for MLB.com. He began covering sports in 1970 for the *Herald-News* in Passaic, New Jersey, although he was predominantly covering high school sports when Bouton’s book was published. He began traveling in 1974 as a reporter for the *Bergen Record*, and became a traveling beat reporter for Long Island’s *Newsday* in 1981, covering mostly the Mets until moving to MLB.com in 2004.

5. Jim Bouton, *Ball Four*, 20th anniversary edition, ed. Leonard Shecter (New York: MacMillan, 1981).

6. The late 1960s and 1970s featured a movement toward public disclosure in the media. This movement, as it might be considered, manifested itself in the publication of the Pentagon Papers, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's exposure of the Watergate scandal, and biographies exposing the personal lives of America's most popular figures, including former Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy. Marjorie Smelser and Carol Billman proposed that the movement toward public disclosure and its publications were products of changes in culture created by the media. The public, according to the authors, had come to relish the gossip provided by the media, labeled "personality journalism." This 1970s phenomenon changed the public's attitudes toward its leaders, and gave "life and vicarious experience to our more ordinary existences." Marjorie Smelser and Carol Billman, "Ballyhoo and Debunk: The Unmaking of American Political and Sports Heroes," *North Dakota Quarterly* 46 (Summer 1978), 5–8. See also: Jeffrey Potter, *Men, Money and Magic: The Story of Dorothy Schiff* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976); Judith Exner, *My Story* (New York: Grove, 1977).

7. Stephen Jay Gould, "Good Sports and Bad Sports," *New York Times Review of Books* 42 (March 1995), online <<http://nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article_id=1974>>.

8. Peter Williams, *The Sports Immortals: Deifying the American Athlete* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1994), 40.

9. Joseph C. Carroll, "Two Sociological Perspectives on Sports Hedonism," *American Baptist Quarterly* 2 (Spring 1983), 44–47; Anthony Yoseloff, "From Ethnic Hero to National Icon: The Americanization of Joe DiMaggio," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 16 (September 1999), 1–20.

10. Williams, *The Sports Immortals*, 1–2, 140.

11. Gould, "Good Sports and Bad Sports," online.

12. Jim Brosnan, *The Long Season*, third edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960; Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001); Jonathan Yardley, "Second Reading: Pitcher Jim Brosnan, Throwing a Perfect Game," *Washington Post*, 7 April 2004, Jim Brosnan file, National Baseball Hall of Fame A. Bartlett Giamatti Research Center, Cooperstown New York (hereafter referred as HOF).

13. Brosnan, *The Long Season*; Yardley, "Second Reading"; Noble, interview by author; Moss Klein, interview by author, e-mail correspondence, 7 December 2007. Mr. Klein is a sportswriter for the *Star-Ledger* in Newark, New Jersey. He has been covering baseball for 35 years, beginning as a New York Yankees' beat writer and columnist for 17 years, from 1976 to 2002. He is co-author of the book *Damned Yankees: A No-Holds Barred Account of Life with 'Boss' Steinbrenner* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), about the Yankees in the George Steinbrenner era.

14. Marshall Smelser, "The Babe on Balance," *American Scholar* 44 (Spring 1975), 299–304.

15. Yoseloff, "From Ethnic Hero to National Icon," 14; Smelstor and Billman, "Ballyhoo and Debunk," 8–9.

16. Jack O'Connell, interview by author, email correspondence, 3–5 December 2007. O'Connell is a features writer for MLB.com and the Major League Baseball Player's Association website. He is also the secretary-treasurer of the Baseball Writer's Association of America, and has covered sports since 1968. He served as a Mets beat writer with the *Bergen Record* and *New York Daily News*, from 1979 through the 1988 season, and as a Yankees beat writer with the *Hartford Courant*, from 1989 to 2000, before becoming the *Courant's* national baseball writer, from 2001 to 2004, and joining MLB.com in 2006. He is the author of *The Yankee Kid*, a biography of Derek Jeter aimed at a juvenile audience.

17. A famous story, noted by both Jack O'Connell and Marty Noble, was the "breast or bottle" question. It was during an exchange the writers were having with Ralph Terry, the Yankee pitcher and MVP of the 1962 World Series. During the session, Terry was called away because of a phone call from his wife, congratulating him on being named World Series MVP. When he returned he explained that his wife had been at home, feeding their newborn. "Breast or bottle?" asked a chipmunk, most likely either Stan Isaacs or Stan Hochman, a Philadelphia reporter. This story is meant to characterize the irreverence of chipmunk journalism, and their willingness to detail those personal and occasionally trivial factors that traditional reporters eschewed in favor of impersonal, objective journalism. See also: George Plimpton, *The Norton Book of Sports* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 19.

18. Bill Madden, interview with author, email correspondence, 11 December 2007. Madden is the *Daily News* baseball columnist, and has been with the paper since 1978, serving as the Yankees’ beat writer from 1980 to 1988, before becoming a columnist. He had previously spent nine years with United Press International, having written about baseball, track and field and the Olympics. He is the co-author of *Damned Yankees* with Moss Klein, as well as the author of *Pride of October: What It Was to Be Young and a Yankee* (New York: Warner, 2003); and *Bill Madden: My 25 Years Covering Baseball’s Heroes, Scoundrels, Triumphs and Tragedies* (New York: Sports Publishing, 2004).

19. Leonard Shecter, *The Jocks* (New York: Paperback Library, 1970), 9.

20. Jim Bouton, *I’m Glad You Didn’t Take It Personally*, ed. Leonard Shecter (New York: Morrow, 1971), 148–149.

21. *Ibid.*, 149.

22. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 54.

23. *Ibid.*, 56–57, 182.

24. O’Connell, interview by author; Bouton, *Ball Four*, 2–10, 85, 88–89.

25. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 196, 289, 296.

26. O’Connell, interview by author.

27. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 29–31, 38–39.

28. Phil Pepe, “Bulldog’s ‘Pals’ Bite Back,” *New York Daily News*, 22 May 1970, Jim Bouton file, HOF; see also Joseph Durso, “Sports of *The Times*: Elston Howard Replies,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1970, Jim Bouton file, HOF; Dick Young, “Young Ideas,” *New York Daily News*, 31 May 1970, Jim Bouton file, HOF.

29. Howard refuted Bouton’s comments regarding scuffing the ball against his shin guard, claiming that it was not possible to sharpen one of the buckles. He admitted, however, that he did dirty the ball for Whitey Ford — and Jim Bouton. See Pepe, “Bulldog’s ‘Pals’ Bite Back.”

30. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 213–214.

31. *Ibid.*, 87.

32. *Ibid.*, 45, 157, 221; O’Connell, interview by author.

33. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 37–39, 190, 196–197, 354.

34. *Ibid.*, 218. It should be noted that Baseball Annies were not a product of the sexual revolution, although Bouton’s writing may have been. In truth, camp followers were a part of the game almost from its inception. For a more comprehensive study of Baseball Annies, see Jean Hastings Ardell, *Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).

35. George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5, 23, 25–26; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free, 1996), 139; Roger Horrocks, *Male Myths and Icons: Masculinity in Popular Cultures* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1995), 150.

36. Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, 239–242; Horrocks, *Male Myths and Icons*, 150; Ralph R. Donald, “From ‘Knockout Punch’ to ‘Home Run’: Masculinity’s ‘Dirty Dozen’ Sports Metaphors in American Combat Films,” *Film and History* 35 (2005), 20.

37. Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 72.

38. *Ibid.*, 20–21, 71–72, 241–242; Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 48, 62, 86.

39. Will Balliett and Thomas Dyja, eds., *The Hard Way: Writing by the Rebels who Changed Sports*, foreword by Jim Bouton (New York: Thunder’s Mouth, 1999), xii.

40. Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 256.

41. Bouton, *Ball Four*, 447.

42. Dan Kiley, *The Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1983).

43. United Press International, “Bouton, Book Leave Astros for Minors,” *Washington Post*, 2 August 1970; Associated Press, “Bouton Retires from Baseball,” *New York Times*, 11 August 1970; Grace Lichtenstein, “For 11 Years I Was Just a Ballplayer,” *New York Times*, 4 October 1970, all in Jim Bouton file, HOF.

44. Bouton, *I’m Glad You Didn’t Take It Personally*, 60–61; Harold Kaese, “Jim Bouton’s only regret: Never banned in Boston,” *Boston Globe*, 26 July 1976, Jim Bouton file, HOF.

45. Wells Twombly, *San Francisco Examiner*, 20 June 1970, Jim Bouton file, HOF.

46. Dick Young, "Young Ideas," *New York Daily News*, 29 March 1970, 28 May 1970, 31 May 1970; Wells Twombly, *San Francisco Examiner*, 20 June 1970, all in Jim Bouton file, HOF.

47. Bouton, *I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally*, 68–69; "Jim Bouton is Off Base, Says Bowie," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 June 1970; United Press International, "Congressman Hits Kuhn for 'Repression,'" *Washington Post*, 3 June 1970, all in Jim Bouton file, HOF.

48. Charles Maher, "On False Pretenses," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 June 1970, Jim Bouton file, HOF.

49. Bouton, *I'm Glad You Didn't Take It Personally*, 80–87.

50. *Ibid.*, 118–119.

“Chasing Moonlight” Through Fiction, Film, and Fact: The Evolution of a Biography

Brett Friedlander and R.W. Reising

“You can always chase a dream. But it will never count unless you catch it.”—Malcolm X

Fiction writer W.P. Kinsella was the first. Lured by the name “Moonlight” Graham, which he happened upon in the 1970s browsing through *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, he chased the one-time New York Giant outfielder from his Canadian home through the corn fields of Iowa he had known as a fledgling author, to the ranges of Minnesota. Finally, in 1982, he published his prize-winning *Shoeless Joe*, a novel whose title character had died in disgrace because of his role in the “fixed” 1919 World Series. Kinsella combined thousands of miles of travel with thousands of hours of research, writing and rewriting to alert his readers to the long-dead ballplayer-physician who enjoyed but “fifteen minutes in the sun” in a major league uniform.

Film actor Kevin Costner was next. Fresh from his role as Crash Davis, the minor league catcher who combined sex with baseball in the 1988 Hollywood hit *Bull Durham*, he chased film makers until convincing one of them, Phil Alden Robinson, that Graham deserved a larger audience — the movie goes of the world — thus, although dead since 1965, the character played by the revered Burt Lancaster in his last screen appearance, flashed before the eyes of millions in a host of nations. In the process, he endeared himself in ways no one, not Kinsella, Costner nor Graham himself, could ever have dreamed possible. *Field of Dreams*, which debuted in 1989, immediately became a cinematic classic and with it, the once little-known M.D., became an international icon, a human whose dream of batting in the majors became a reality only on the dream-inspired diamond near the town of Dyersville, Iowa.

Both writer and film star had chased “Moonlight” hard, extremely hard, and each as a result of his efforts managed to create an engaging description

of an intriguing human being. But neither, nor the pair together, came close to communicating the character and complexity of the quiet North Carolinian who spent the bulk of his adulthood in an obscure city not far from the Canadian border. *Shoeless Joe* and *Field of Dreams* were both successes, yet Archibald Wright Graham's life merited a much more complete chase and a much more extensive — and accurate — analysis.

Chasing Moonlight, a co-authored venture whose creators followed the path that biographers must follow, retracing the steps and revisiting the stops crucial to a full understanding of a mortal who occasionally inspired the mythic, often approximated the heroic, but always remained the human. “Doc” Graham's story is distinctive. A nickname that fired the imagination of a novelist and a script that did no less for a Hollywood performer yielded only a portion, a fragment of a story that was worthy of a far-more ambitious chase — one as fulfilling as it was fatiguing. *Chasing Moonlight* not only proves that truth is stranger than fiction, but that it is no less fascinating than film.

Let the final chase begin!

*“What’s so special about a half an inning that would make you want to come all the way from Iowa to talk about it 50 years after it happened?” — Moonlight Graham to Ray Kinsella, *Field of Dreams**

Late on the afternoon of June 29, 1905, a kid named Moonlight squinted into a sunlit sky so bright that it hurt his eyes to look at it, bolted out of the New York Giants' dugout and took up his position in right field for the first and only time as a major league baseball player. It was an event of such little consequence that even those who remained that day from the announced crowd of 2,000 at Brooklyn's Washington Park didn't take notice. And yet a century later, Archibald “Moonlight” Graham has become so well known as a ballplayer that a film crew traveled all the way from Tokyo, Japan, to do a documentary on him and a California company trademarked his name for its line of baseball-themed apparel.

So what was it about that half an inning that makes so many people want to talk about it so many years later?

For starters, it wasn't actually a half an inning. According to the *New York Evening Telegram* in a two-paragraph account, Graham played “two joyous innings in the right garden while George Browne hustled into his street clothes.”¹ He even held a bat anxiously in his hands as he waited in the on deck circle while a teammate made the final out of the Giants' 11–1 victory against the team that would become known as the Dodgers. Shortly thereafter, the 27-year-old journeyman — who spent his off-seasons “moonlighting” as a medical student — was sent back to the minors and presumably, into permanent

obscurity.² His blink of a career was so nondescript that most of the patients he cared for as a successful country doctor never knew about it.

All he left behind from his moment on the diamond was a single line on page 955 of the *Baseball Encyclopedia* between the entries for Lee Graham and George Frederick “Peaches” Graham. That and a yellowing photograph of an ambitious young man with oversized ears, a set of pronounced black eyebrows and the letters N and Y proudly emblazoned across the chest of his uniform.

In fiction, Moonlight would later tell the inquisitive Iowan Ray Kinsella that his fleeting encounter with fame was like coming within an eyelash of his dream “only to have it brush past you like a stranger in a crowd.”³ Fate and Graham’s long lost dream finally collided head-on nearly 20 years after his death in 1965 when a real-life Kinsella, author W.P., stumbled across his record while researching a book on the legendary Shoeless Joe Jackson. Whether it was his catchy nickname, the fact that Graham played just one game in the majors without batting or the possibility that he might once actually have played semi-pro ball against Jackson in Minnesota, there was something about the old ballplayer that intrigued Kinsella. Following a trip to Graham’s adopted hometown of Chisholm, Minnesota, allegedly with reclusive author J.D. Salinger, Kinsella decided to include Graham as a secondary character in his novel *Shoeless Joe*.

In the book and subsequent movie *Field of Dreams*, Graham finally got to fulfill his missed destiny by coming back to life with other ghostly players and slapping a sacrifice fly to right field against Chicago White Sox pitcher Eddie Cicotte.⁴ Though embellished with fiction, Graham’s story seemed to strike a chord with both baseball fans and hopeless romantics—most of whom were shocked to learn that his character was actually based on a living, breathing individual. Suddenly, everyone wanted to know more about the mysterious young ballplayer turned doctor who never got to bat in the major leagues.

Even now, little is known about Doc Graham, as his friends and acquaintances knew him, other than what Kinsella and Hollywood have told us. That’s because he didn’t become a public figure until well after his death and the fact that his accomplishments, as profound as they were to the people of Chisholm, were overshadowed by those of his more famous relatives. His father, Alexander, was a superintendent of schools in his native North Carolina and was so beloved that the *Charlotte Observer* once suggested that “perhaps not a man in Charlotte was as well-known.”⁵ His younger brother, Frank Porter Graham, went on to become president of the University of North Carolina, a U.S. senator and an early champion for the Civil Rights movement in the Deep South.⁶

Following in the family tradition, Graham was a respected, caring man who dedicated his life to helping others. He became the most popular man in town in both Scranton, Pennsylvania, where he played four seasons of minor league ball, as well as Chisholm.

Graham simply chose not to call attention to his philanthropy. The indi-

gent and those down on their luck found a friend in Doc Graham. He provided healthcare for generations of children, often going above and beyond the call of duty to make sure they were cared for, and he was one of the first to practice what is now called sports medicine. Graham's pioneering research of children's blood pressure is still being used at such respected institutions as the Mayo Clinic. With a degree from Johns Hopkins and several internships in New York, Graham could have practiced anywhere he chose. But he eschewed the lure of the big city to spend 44 years as Chisholm's school doctor.⁷

Such is the contradiction of his life.

He never sought the spotlight but is now a celebrity. He was a generous, down-to-earth man who has become a mythical figure. He loved children and spent the majority of his adult life working among them at a school and yet, never had any of his own. He was a simple small town doctor seemingly content with his lot in life, but who through interviews and other personal recollections may actually have been haunted by the fact that he came so close to his childhood dream without actually realizing it. There is much more to the man than one simple line of fine print in the *Baseball Encyclopedia*. Because that one line and the illusion of *Field of Dreams* are all most of us have to go by, the rest of what lurks beneath the Moonlight is a matter of conjecture.

What might have happened if he had gotten a hit in the major leagues? It's a question characters in the movie openly pondered. If he'd have been a success with the Giants, Graham might have stayed in baseball and never become a doctor. While it's doubtful that would have happened, given his upbringing and academic foundation, one never knows. In fact, for as much as he loved playing ball, the conflicted youngster faced several other important crossroads that could easily have steered him away—or at least delayed—his chosen career in medicine and arrival in Chisholm.

In 1902, his first year as a professional ballplayer, Graham's team was disbanded at midseason because of, among other considerations, a lack of competition.⁸ Several members of those Charlotte Hornets, including manager Eddie Ashenback, were picked up by teams in higher leagues and continued to play through the rest of the summer. Graham, who had just earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina, probably would have done the same had he been among those offered other jobs in baseball. But as a still-unknown rookie, even one with impressive statistics, he was passed over. Instead of playing, he began attending medical school at the University of Maryland in Baltimore.⁹

Eight years later, after getting his license, becoming a doctor and moving to Minnesota, Graham was offered one final chance to choose the sport he loved over the profession for which he'd been trained. The Boston Red Sox purchased his contract following the 1910 season. This time Graham turned down the offer.

When it was suggested to the fictional Graham that it might be considered a tragedy by some to leave baseball behind after just five minutes in the majors, the kind old doctor, played by Academy Award winner Burt Lancaster, looked his inquisitor square in the eye and with a reassuring grin, gave an answer that has become one of the signature lines of *Field of Dreams*. “Son,” he said, “if I’d only gotten to be a doctor for five minutes, now that would have been a tragedy.”¹⁰ While the line between fact and fantasy, legend and legacy is often blurred to the point of distortion with respect to the events of Graham’s life, at least one thing is irrefutable. The only real tragedy is that the world didn’t get to know the good doctor until long after he was gone.

But how and why did the world find out about him? Or as the fictional Graham asked his benevolent pursuer, Ray Kinsella, during their movie encounter: “What’s so important about a half an inning that would make you want to come all the way from Iowa to talk about it 50 years after it happened?”¹¹ It’s a question that to this day, continues to confound those who are responsible for Graham’s unexpected celebrity.

On this much, everyone agrees:

It was unseasonably hot in Chisholm, Minnesota, on the early-summer afternoon that would ultimately help turn Dr. Archibald W. Graham into an immortal. It was so sweaty and uncomfortable on June 3, 1980, that Veda Ponikvar decided to send everyone home early from the tiny Lake Street office of the bi-weekly local newspaper she published. Ponikvar, an amazingly dynamic little woman who rubbed elbows with powerful politicians such as Vice President Walter Mondale and continued to work with NORAD long after she was discharged from the military, was about to leave herself when the visitors arrived unannounced.¹²

The way she remembers it, the two men pulled up in a black rumble seat Ford and walked through the door wearing black suits that made them look like the Blues Brothers. Their appearance was so sinister that she thought she was about to be robbed. “I remember grabbing the cash box and trying to hide it,” she recalled more than 30 years later. But the men weren’t interested in money. They came looking for information, specifically as many facts as they could unearth about a certain old ballplayer whose major league career lasted but an instant a lifetime ago.

“Oh, you mean Doc Graham,” Ponikvar remembers saying.

“No, I believe his name was Moonlight,” one of the men replied.

“That’s him,” Ponikvar said. “His baseball career didn’t amount to much, so he went to school and became a doctor.”

It was a scene first chronicled by author W.P. Kinsella in the novel *Shoeless Joe*, then adapted to the silver screen by the hit movie *Field of Dreams*.¹³ To this day, Ponikvar swears that the man accompanying Kinsella that stiflingly hot day was none other than the reclusive author J.D. Salinger. It lives on in

her memory as if it happened just yesterday, even if the details of the encounter aren't quite the same as how Kinsella remembers them.

As he recalls, he was driving an old mustard-colored Datsun when he rolled into town looking to attach a personality to a colorful nickname and a single line of type from *The Baseball Encyclopedia*. Instead of a black suit, he recalls wearing shorts, a cheesy Hawaiian shirt and his trademark cowboy hat. And that partner? As poetically perfect as it might have been, it wasn't Salinger. It was Kinsella's wife Barbara. "Veda, she sincerely believes what she's telling you," Kinsella admitted. "She's told the story over and over again so many times that to her, it's become fact. But I've never met J.D. Salinger."

Chisholm has no greater benefactor than Ponikvar, who over the decades has met with and hosted dozens of nationally and internationally known figures. As late as 2004, she was responsible for bringing Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry to Chisholm, no small feat considering the size of the town and the significance of the office for which he was running. So if she changed a few facts to glamorize her story, it was with Chisholm's best interests at heart. She can be excused for her confusion, because when it comes to the details of Graham's life, everyone seems to want to "swirl the ingredients together," as Kinsella once described, "into an exotic cocktail of fact, fiction and fantasy." It's part of the allure that makes him such a fascinating figure. The other half of the equation is that there is little or no way to prove or disprove many of the myths that surround him and have grown exponentially with the passage of time. Because he was an obscure country doctor to all but those in his small sphere of influence, no one thought to save any of his papers or records. They were either thrown away at the time of his death or destroyed when the Washington School was later demolished.

About the only way to identify the whole truth of Graham's life story is to stroll the streets of Chisholm after dark, hoping to run into his ghost the way the fictional Ray Kinsella did in *Field of Dreams*. But even that chase might not be fruitful, since the Chisholm that appears on film isn't actually Chisholm. It's not even Minnesota. Rather, it's Galena, Illinois, a small town that was selected as a stand-in for Doc's adopted hometown because of its proximity to the main filming location in Iowa. It's one of the many inaccuracies the real-life Kinsella likes to call "creative nonfiction" that are included in the movie and the book that inspired it.

Among the most glaring has to do with the timing of Graham's short stay in the major leagues. On film, the young Moonlight's one moment in the sun came on the final day of the regular season and he retired immediately thereafter because he "couldn't bear the thought of another year in the minors." In fact, his "two joyous innings in the right garden" for John McGraw's New York Giants came at midseason, on Thursday, June 29. And he continued to harbor dreams of getting back to the big-time for nearly a decade after being

shipped out to Scranton of the New York State League, which he led in hitting in 1906.

In fiction, Doc played for the Giants in 1922 rather than 1905; batted right-handed instead of left-handed and was born in Minnesota, not North Carolina. His father was portrayed by Hollywood as a doctor, not the respected educator that he was and because he worked for the school system and wasn't in private practice, his office was in the Washington school, not in downtown Chisholm.

They are all flaws Graham would have noticed had he lived long enough to see himself on the big screen. Other than that, those who knew him best believe he would have been happy with the way he was portrayed in *Field of Dreams* — especially that he finally got to take a swing at a major league pitcher. “I think he would have relished that in a way, not from the standpoint of an immodest type of behavior, but because of the fulfillment of the dream of the trail he was supposed to lead,” said long-time Chisholm High basketball coach Bob McDonald. “He never talked about what he had done. He was a modest fellow. It all came out after he'd passed away.”

But it must be conceded that, in the minds of the living, those who have passed on are an understandable, credible composite of memories, mysteries, and myths.

As for the memories, everyone in Chisholm born before 1960 has at least one. For Veda Ponikvar, it's those lazy afternoons with Doc in the newspaper office talking about the past. For Angelo Vittori, it's the sight of the old doctor and his auto mechanic friend, Andrew Niemalla, searching to create perpetual motion. For Jim Vitali, it was an unforgettable prom night, made possible by a kindly father figure. Other such memories aren't always as verifiable. The most sensational of those is said to have taken place during the mid-1920s when the great Shoeless Joe Jackson appeared on the Mesabi Iron Range to play a little baseball.¹⁴

Jackson had been banned from the game by then because of his participation in the 1919 Chicago “Black Sox” scandal, but in order to continue making a pay check, he barnstormed around the country playing wherever he could. Most of the time he'd play under an assumed name to avoid attention. That was the case the day he rolled into Chisholm for a game against the local team, known as the Flyers, and a certain right fielder that would one day become linked with the fallen star in both literature and legend. An account of that meeting between the two old kids from the Carolinas, based on stories told by those who were there, appears on the back of a commemorative baseball card produced by Mike Kalibabky in 1999.

It was played at the old ballpark at the edge of Pig Town and the local iron ore mine, where author Jerry Sonosky wrote that “if you went after a long fly ball and misjudged the distance to the pit, you'd go flyin' and tumblin' right

in.” According to Sonosky, Chisholm led the visitors by three runs in the bottom of the ninth when with two outs and the bases loaded, the man purported to be Shoeless Joe came to the plate. Jackson then hit one “a mile high and deep, but not deep enough so that Moonlight couldn’t make a spectacular one-handed catch before falling backwards into the pit, still clutching the ball for a clean out.”¹⁵

Twenty years later, Graham met up with another great left-handed hitting outfielder. Only this time, the story wasn’t quite as dramatic and there were many more witnesses.

Hall of Famer Ted Williams made several trips to Chisholm early in his career with the Boston Red Sox.¹⁶ A passionate outdoorsman, he first learned of the great hunting and fishing potential in the Minnesota wilderness during a minor league stop in Minneapolis in 1937–38. During that time, Williams befriended many of the locals, including Chisholm hotel owner Oscar Dornack. The enigmatic slugger hated people who put on airs almost as much as he despised the media circus that surrounded him wherever he went in Boston. As such, he valued the Iron Range as a place where he could escape the spotlight and enjoy some precious free time in relative anonymity with people who weren’t awed by his celebrity. The fact that the lakes surrounding Chisholm were filled with walleye didn’t hurt, either.

Williams spent countless hours at Dornack’s home when the pair weren’t off hunting and fishing. Always one to share a celebrity with the town, Dornack’s daughter Joanne said her father was particularly fond of taking Williams to the local hospitals to tour the children’s wards. It was during one of those visits that the “Splendid Splinter” first ran into “Moonlight” Graham. The two also met many times at the \$1 Thursday night smorgasbord at Dornack’s Tibroc Hotel that was so popular, the line to get in would stretch all around the post office down to Rupp’s Funeral Home two blocks away on 3rd Ave. Though there are numerous accounts of their face-to-face encounters, no one is quite sure what the two former major leaguers might have talked about.

Their personalities were as different as the rival Red Sox and the Yankees. Williams loved the great outdoors and hated ties. Graham rarely ventured from his home when he wasn’t working and always dressed up, no matter what the occasion. Williams liked to have a good time with the local bar crowd and was a notorious ladies man who was married three times, while Graham was devoted to his one true love, Alecia. The one thing they both had in common was hitting and since both men were described by mutual friend Ray Maturi as “polite, friendly and nice,” that’s probably what they spent most of their time together discussing.

One baseball event Graham almost certainly avoided was his short time with the Giants. It was a subject he rarely, if ever, discussed with anyone outside his tightest circle of family and friends. “Many of the people in Chisholm

didn't even know he played ball at that level,” Kinsella, the novelist, said. “He could have been one of those American Legion drunks who spent the next 70 years telling everybody (in slurred speech): ‘Yeah, I played for the New York Giants.’ But Doc never mentioned it at all.”

That began to change later in his life. Perhaps haunted by the pain and long-suppressed regret of coming so close to realizing his dream “only to have it brush past (him) like a stranger in a crowd,” Graham began concocting a plausibly fictitious story that expanded his role while in “The Bigs.” There’s no telling how many times he recited the tall tale that allowed him to fulfill his wish of holding a bat in a major league game and running the bases. What is certain is that he told reporter Ernie Accorsi of the *Charlotte News* that he had actually come to the plate as a member of the Giants, walked and then suffered a career-ending leg injury while attempting to steal second base.¹⁷ Even though the story was printed as fact in the *News* on July 18, 1963, Graham didn’t seem to mind. And because he never dreamed he would become as universally famous as he did after his death, he assumed no one would care enough to take the time to check the records and contradict his claim.

But Kinsella did. In doing so, he stumbled upon a story so unique and inspiring that the name Moonlight Graham has become a symbol for faith, forgiveness and second chances. Those high ideals continue to inspire others nearly a half century after his death and more than 20 years after he was first introduced to the public in *Field of Dreams*.

Chisholm resident Kalibabky was so inspired that he began a charitable foundation in Graham’s name to provide scholarship money to the children the good doctor loved so much. Through the sale of commemorative baseball cards he designed and produced himself, selling for \$1 each, Kalibabky has raised more than \$20,000 since getting started in 1993. “For some reason, people are compelled about his story because of the movie,” he said. “I can always tell when *Field of Dreams* is replayed on cable, because the card sales usually spike. It’s amazing. I’ve had orders from as far away as England and Japan. People can’t believe he was a real person.”

When they do find out, they can’t seem to get enough of him. Graham’s character has become such a marketable commodity that in 2000, a self-proclaimed baseball nut named Bart Silberman decided to name his nostalgic line of baseball-themed apparel after the world’s most famous one-game wonder. He did it because old-timers such as Graham “bring us back to the romance of the sport, a better time and place.” In keeping with that belief, Silberman’s company donates a portion of its profits each year to a charitable foundation in Doc’s name that returns the money to the Doc Graham Scholarship Foundation.¹⁸

Around that same time, Ohio musicians Chris Bailey and Bill Littleford also took on the name Moonlight Graham for their country folk band. “I had

always been a fan of Archie Graham ever since being introduced to him in *Field of Dreams*,” Bailey said. “I was intrigued by his story. It has a real ‘follow your dreams’ sort of message everyone in American can relate to.” But the good doctor’s fame isn’t restricted to his home country. His appeal became so widespread that in 2003, Japanese producer Cyg Mori sent a five-member crew all the way to Minnesota to research and film a documentary on the *Field of Dreams* icon. The 50-minute production, which also featured a segment on Shoeless Joe Jackson, was aired for a national audience by the NHK network on the “Sports Fans Club” television program.¹⁹ Among the dramatizations Mori’s crew filmed were scenes depicting Graham’s 1909 arrival in Chisholm, his coaching a group of children at the local ball field, and a dream-like conversation between him and Jackson on the porch of Graham’s A-frame house.

In a way, the Japanese film crew, the baseball card buying collectors and all those fans that listen to the music or wear the clothes bearing his name have a lot in common with the children who were once drawn to him in hopes that he might toss some candy or coins in their direction. Graham’s Pied Piper-like quality continues to draw people in.

On June 29, 2005, a crowd of 24,546 gathered at the Hubert Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Graham’s one game in the majors. Among them was a group of several hundred Chisholm residents. The Minnesota Twins were hosting the Kansas City Royals that day and as part of the festivities, Graham baseball cards were given out to all fans in attendance while *Field of Dreams* film clips were shown on the large video scoreboard between innings. The highlight of the event was when Ponikvar was invited out onto the field to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

About a year later in Dyersville, Iowa, more than 5,000 people flocked to a baseball diamond that was once a cornfield to watch the movie that brought Doc Graham back to life — both literally and artistically. Afterward, the gathering was treated to a concert by a band featuring Kevin Costner, the film’s star. It was Costner’s first trip back to the mystical ballpark since his work on *Field of Dreams* ended 17 years earlier.²⁰

The site, with its familiar white farmhouse and lush green grass, has hardly been forgotten, though. Owned by two local families, it has become a popular tourist attraction visited by more than 65,000 people a year. In all, more than a million pilgrims have come to the field to run the bases, reconnect with their past and maybe even hear a voice or two out in the corn. “I think initially, the natives thought interest in the field as an attraction would taper off,” Dyersville mayor Jim Heavens said in 2006. “But it’s been pretty steady over the years. It’s one of those things that continues to make a connection with people.”

The connection is just as strong in Chisholm, where civic leaders have decorated Lake Street with banners celebrating it as the hometown of Moon-

light Graham. They also began construction of a state-of-the-art athletic complex named, appropriately enough, *Field of Dreams*, where they hope to honor their favorite son by hosting annual baseball tournaments and other youth sporting events.

In Rochester, the tributes at Doc’s grave site aren’t as organized, but they are usually more personal and heartfelt. Visitors to the plot at Section 9, Lot 4, IE of the Calvary Cemetery leave candy and coins on Graham’s headstone so that he’ll always have something in his pockets to throw to the children he loved so much. Baseballs, poetry and other individually significant items can also randomly be found there. One young woman, Laura Askelin, even brought a pair of socks. They belonged to a friend who had taken the hosiery with him all around the world from Mexico to the Space Needle in Seattle. Because he was a big fan of *Field of Dreams* in general and Graham in particular, his “journey of the socks” would not be complete until they were photographed at Doc’s final resting place.

Who could have imagined two decades earlier that such a long-forgotten old ballplayer would become so well-known? Or so beloved? Certainly not the man who catapulted Moonlight Graham to stardom by picking his name out of the *Baseball Encyclopedia*, then writing him into the plot of a short story he was in the process of lengthening into a novel. “All I could think was ‘What a wonderful name,’” Kinsella said. “I just decided I wanted to use this guy as a character in one of my stories. My first thought was what was he doing in one of the two or three coldest places in North America? He was a Southerner, so I said to myself, ‘There must be some kind of story there.’ Maybe he’d been exiled or whatever. And then there was the one game and no at bats. So I told my wife (not Salinger), ‘Let’s get up and go to Chisholm, Minnesota, and find out about him.’ Of course, he turned out to be much more wonderful than anything I could have invented.”

What Kinsella stumbled onto in the pages of the *Baseball Encyclopedia* all those years ago was a mortal who occasionally inspired the mythic, often approximated the heroic, but always remained the human. Dr. Archibald W. Graham’s true story turned out to be both distinctive and inspiring. Though his big league career was only about as long as the blink of an eye, he has become a symbol for all the qualities Americans hold dear — dedication, selfless sacrifice and ultimately, the notion that with hard work and perseverance, all dreams are possible.

Notes

1. “Giants’ Bats Toll Brooklyn’s Knell,” *New York Evening Telegram*, 29 June 1905.
2. *Sporting Life Magazine*, 15 July 1905.
3. William P. Kinsella, *Shoeless Joe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 149.

4. *Ibid.*, 202.
5. "Dr. Alexander Graham Celebrates 87th Year," *Charlotte News*, 12 September 1931.
6. Warren Ashby, *Frank Porter Graham, A Southern Liberal* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1980).
7. "His Was A Life Of Greatness," *Chisholm Free Press-Tribune*, 31 August 1965.
8. "The State League Collapses," *Charlotte Observer*, 17 July 1902.
9. "Mighty Outfit Recalled," *Charlotte Observer*, 3 July 1938.
10. Kinsella, *Shoeless Joe*, 149.
11. *Ibid.*
12. "Veda F. Ponikvar," *Chisholm Free Press-Tribune*, 2 October 1993.
13. Kinsella, *Shoeless Joe*, 122.
14. Jerry Sonosky, *Shoeless Joe Jackson, Doc "Moonlight" Graham Play Ball* (Chisholm, MN: Moonlight Graham Scholarship Fund).
15. *Ibid.*
16. David Cataneo, *I Remember Ted Williams* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House, 2002).
17. "1902 Hornet Returns Charm of Victory to Ball Park," *Charlotte News*, 18 July 1963.
18. "Baseball Lover Scores With Classic Clothes," *Irvine World News*, 23 August 2001.
19. "Japanese Film Crew Arrives in Chisholm To Dramatize Area's Baseball Past," *Hibbing Daily Tribune*, 11 July 2003.
20. "Costner Returns to 'Field of Dreams,'" MSNBC.com, 11 August 2006.

Part III

BASEBALL AT THE MOVIES

Patriot's Game? Images of American Nationalism in Baseball Films

Robert Rudd and Marshall Most

To enter upon a deliberate argument to prove that Base Ball is our National Game; that it has all the attributes of American origin, American character and unbounded public favor in America, seems a work of supererogation. It is to undertake the elucidation of patent fact; the sober demonstration of an axiom; it is like a solemn declaration that two plus two equals four. — Albert Goodwill Spalding, 1911¹

Baseball enjoys its undisputed status as America's national pastime because it is thought by many to embody the nation's most fundamental values. In his essay on baseball and American exceptionalism, scholar Francis Cogliano contends that "to a greater degree than any other sporting or cultural activity, the game is intimately associated with the United States and American national identity."² Despite the repeated debunking of baseball's creation myth, the game's increasingly international nature, and the success of other sporting forms, baseball remains steadfastly associated with American national identity.

Other scholars have written extensively about the social and economic dimensions of baseball's ideology. Steven Riess, for example, in his seminal history of the evolution of baseball's ideology during the Progressive Era, observes that the ideology of baseball has been designed to "provide the symbols, myths and legends society needed to bind its members together."³ Elliot Gorn and Warren Goldstein cite baseball's ability to provide a sense of community, tradition, and stability amidst urban and industrial growth.⁴ Steven Gelber and others emphasize the economic function of baseball ideology.⁵ Richard Lipsky suggests that baseball helped mold "citizens of industrial civilization."⁶ Studies of cinematic depictions of baseball ideology by Gary Dickerson,⁷ Howard Good,⁸ and Marshall Most/ Robert Rudd⁹ also place their primary focus on the game's social and economic — rather than political — dimensions.

Baseball as a means to promote political ideology, specifically American nationalism, has received less attention from critical and cultural theorists. As a vehicle for inculcating the values of American nationalism — often couched in euphemisms like “citizenship training” — baseball is second only to the nation’s public schools. Baseball’s mission, both past and present, has been to teach “new Americans” — native-born children and new immigrants — how to be good workers and loyal Americans. The political influence of the “patriotic” element of baseball’s ideology remains powerful. Perhaps its clearest recent manifestation emerged in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when baseball provided the stage for the most vivid — and some would add, aggressive — expressions of American nationalism.

American filmmakers have ardently promoted the ideology of baseball for more than a century, portraying a particularly pure, idealized vision of the game. Baseball films are more than simple reflections of an idealized view of the game; they are also reflections of an idealized view of American culture. Thus, it is not surprising that baseball films present a normative version of American nationalism based on devotion to the nation’s inclusive, democratic aspirations, a variant of nationalism consistent with what historian Anatol Lieven calls an optimistic “American creed.”¹⁰ This tolerant version of national identity, however, differs from the nationalism advanced by Major League Baseball.

Baseball and American National Identity

Baseball’s emergence as the sporting symbol of American nationalism was no accident. Rather, it was the result of decades of work, particularly during the Progressive Era, by those who stood to benefit most from widespread acceptance of the notion — team owners, publicists, sports journalists and other proponents of the game.¹¹ Baseball was as good a candidate as any other nineteenth-century game to become the national pastime. Following the Civil War, a somewhat standardized form of the game had spread to every region of the country. And it had evolved significantly beyond the British game of rounders from which it originated, so if one did not look too closely, baseball looked uniquely American.¹²

No single individual was more active and instrumental in the campaign to make baseball the national game than Albert Goodwill Spalding. He burst onto the sporting scene as a teenage pitching phenom in the late 1860s. By 1875, Spalding was regarded by many as the premier pitcher in the game. He was also “shrewd, calculating and a born promoter.”¹³ Spalding’s place in baseball’s Hall of Fame was assured by his pitching dominance for the Boston Red Stockings and Chicago White Stockings (he was professional baseball’s first 200-game

winner), but his lasting legacy to the game would be his relentless promotion of baseball as a superior and uniquely American sporting form. Baseball, argued Spalding, was the only endeavor worthy of being called “America’s National Game.”

Shortly after leading Chicago to the inaugural National League championship in 1876 — a season in which he led the league in wins — Spalding walked away from the playing field to pursue the business side of the game. Founding the sporting goods empire that still bears his name and made him baseball’s first millionaire, Spalding remained at the forefront of the game as a baseball executive and team owner for another three decades. He played a significant role in founding of the National League, campaigned against player misconduct, emerged as the most influential voice in league councils, led the suppression of the 1890 player’s revolt, and organized world baseball tours. When, in 1878 he acquired the rights to the league’s annual publication — thereafter known as *Spalding’s Official Base Ball Guide* — he obtained control of a powerful editorial platform from which to promote baseball as America’s national pastime.¹⁴

To demonstrate that baseball was a uniquely American institution, Spalding called for the creation of a special commission to investigate the origins of baseball. He financed and hand-picked the board’s members (including himself) from among his baseball associates, thus ensuring that the commission would come to the conclusion that baseball was “invented” in the United States.¹⁵ Spalding helped give birth to the myth of baseball’s American origins, embellishing his creation with imagery that includes Civil War hero Abner Doubleday inventing the national pastime in the same picturesque, rural setting where James Fenimore Cooper “created” American literature and its first great literary hero, frontiersman Natty Bumppo.¹⁶

“To popularize the game and make it pay were Spaulding’s twin goals,” asserts baseball historian David Q. Voigt.¹⁷ “As a promoter,” contends baseball scholar Benjamin Rader, “no one exceeded (Spalding’s) bravado, energy or imagination.”¹⁸ One of his final contributions to the campaign to make baseball America’s sport might be his most significant. In 1911, Spalding wrote *America’s National Game*, a “history” of baseball that would have an enduring effect on the way baseball’s place in nationalist ideology in the coming decades. *America’s National Game* has been described as the “most chauvinistic history of American baseball.”¹⁹ Filled with nationalistic passages, Spalding paean described the game as:

The genius of our institutions is democratic; Base Ball is a democratic game. The spirit of our national life is combative; Baseball is a combative game. We are a cosmopolitan people, knowing no arbitrary class distinctions, acknowledging none. The son of a President of the United States would as soon play ball with Patsy Flannigan as with Lawrence

Lionel Livingstone, provided only that Patsy could put up the right article.²⁰

Spalding goes so far as to assert that only Americans (and American men, at that) are capable of playing the game properly:

I claim that Base Ball owes its prestige as our National Game to the fact that as no other form of sport it is the exponent of American Courage, Confidence, Combativeness; American Dash, Discipline, Determination; American Energy, Eagerness, Enthusiasm; American Pluck, Persistency, Performance; American Spirit, Sagacity, Success; American Vim, Vigor, Virility. Baseball is the American Game *par excellence*, because it demands Brain and Brawn, and American manhood supplies these ingredients in quantity sufficient to spread over the entire continent.²¹

America's National Game is also unblushingly patriotic. Spalding reminds the reader that the game's putative founder "became a Major General in the United States Army!" and, in the first chapter, twice proclaims that "Base Ball is War!"²² In addition, he devotes Chapter XXV of *America's National Game* to a description of baseball's importance in the U.S. armed forces, its prominence in American military history, and its popularity with American presidents. Spalding concludes the chapter with another assertion "that Base Ball has its patriotic side."²³

Such bombast characterizes much of the public rhetoric of the era, and is reminiscent of Theodore Roosevelt's oratory. Had Spalding's aggressive, jingoistic, and somewhat belligerent tone disappeared from baseball's perception of its place in American national identity, contemporary readers might regard his writings as an amusing anachronism. However, *America's National Game* would long remain the most influential work on early professional baseball, and the attitudes it expresses linger even today.²⁴

Doubleheader: Two American Nationalisms

In the John R. Betts Address, delivered at the first convention of the North American Society for Sport History in 1973, Voigt expressed his deep concerns about the linkages between baseball and nationalism. Relying upon the work of historian Carleton J.H. Hayes, Voigt's address draws the distinction between *liberal* and *integral* forms of nationalism.²⁵ The *liberal* nationalist style, according to Hayes, emphasizes the values of individual freedom and limited government, and Voigt characterized it as the most appealing and the form that has dominated America's history. Juxtaposed against this form of nationalism, observed Hayes, was an *integral* nationalism, represented in its most base form by Hitler's Germany. Under this belligerent force, liberalism was repressed by a horrific national self-interest and tribal egoism.²⁶

Asserting that liberal nationalism has been most characteristic of American culture, Voigt also cautioned, "That Americans are not immune to the unifying promise of integral nationalism is a sober and chilling thought."²⁷ He then addressed the ways in which baseball has served as an all-too-willing accomplice through the years to American "political manipulators"²⁸ whose nationalistic tendencies have been more integral than liberal, and who have sought to "exploit the game for image advantage, or for support for military policies."²⁹ Voigt worried that such tactics risked alienating fans who would view baseball's participation in such political spectacles as "pandering to super patriots and war lovers."³⁰ He was also concerned about the impact on society at large, wondering "can a pluralistic society like ours have a national anything?"³¹

Echoing Voigt's concern is an extensive body of critical research documenting the ways in which sports inculcates "values and norms that bolster the legitimacy of the American political system."³² Gary Whannel, for example, writes that sport is "part of the system of ideas that supports, sustains and reproduces capitalism. It offers a way of seeing the world that makes our very specific form of social organization seem natural, correct and inevitable."³³ Gelber suggests that baseball's popularity in the late 19th century was to a great extent due to the fact that it both "replicated and legitimized the social and intellectual environment of the urban work place."³⁴ Baseball itself became popular, says Gelber, precisely because it was consistent with and embodied those corporate values dominant within an industrialized American culture. Sut Jhally goes even further, arguing that baseball was significantly responsible for the initial development of these values.³⁵ Nick Trujillo asserts that sport serves as an arena for "displaying exemplars of successful and unsuccessful men in a capitalist society."³⁶ And, in their analysis of media coverage of American sports agent Joe Cubas, Afsheen Nomai and George Dionisopoulos contend that such coverage both "reifies the tenets of the material mythos of the American dream," while at the same time failing to address the disjuncture between that dream and the realities of capitalism.³⁷ Baseball, such theorists suggest, presents a celebratory vision, in which all is right with both baseball and America.

In addition to these somewhat diffuse expressions of dominant American values cited by the theorists above, the display of more overt patriotic symbolism by baseball has also been well documented. The most well-known such ritual, of course, is the singing of the national anthem, which first appeared at ballgames during World War I and became institutionalized during World War II when "teams scheduled the anthem for every game in order to show their patriotism."³⁸ The singing of the national anthem, assert social scientists Dan Nimmo and James Combs, provides fans with a religious experience, which "invokes a sense of communal unity and deference to the political values sym-

bolized by the game.”³⁹ Ewing Kauffman, the late owner of the Kansas City Royals baseball club, learned how powerfully fans are attached to the ritual of “The Star-Spangled Banner” when in 1972 he attempted to limit the playing of the anthem to certain occasions. Within two days, hundreds of complaints forced Kauffman to bring back the anthem at every game.⁴⁰

The singing of the national anthem is, however, but one example of baseball being used to express nationalist sentiments. D.W. Rajecki and his collaborative scholars, for example, found a dramatic increase in the use of patriotic symbols, such as the American flag, in World Series program covers during the 1940s and again in the 1980s, which they suggested reflected an increase in patriotic sentiment.⁴¹ Voigt notes a long history of American presidents associating themselves with the game, from throwing out the first pitch of the season, to having themselves photographed with the winners of the World Series.⁴²

Baseball’s patriotic vision has been exhibited most intensely, however, during times of war. Voigt observes that baseball has expressed support for American wars ever since “that imperialist struggle with Spain that Secretary of State John Hay called ‘a splendid little war.’”⁴³ Soon after American entry into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt responded to baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis that “it would be best for the country to keep baseball going.”⁴⁴ During World War II, baseball was used by American leaders in a variety of significant ways to support the war effort “both financially and psychologically.”⁴⁵

As social scientist Michael Butterworth documents, baseball has embraced a particularly extreme and jingoistic form of nationalism since September 11, 2001. Baseball games, following the attacks of 9/11, and then again with renewed fervor following the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003, commonly featured extravagant patriotic rituals which typically included prominent displays of the American flag, the presentation of colors by military personnel, fly-overs by Air Force fighters, and the replacement of “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” with the singing of “God Bless America” during the seventh-inning stretch.⁴⁶ These rituals continued long after the initial shock and grief. In 2002, to mark the one-year anniversary of the 9/11 attack, ESPN and Major League Baseball scheduled twelve continuous hours of baseball, from 1 P.M. until 1 A.M. According to a letter from President George W. Bush read at each of those games, “baseball helped to bring Americans together” in the aftermath of the attacks. A United States flag recovered from the wreckage of the World Trade Center was flown in Yankee Stadium, where fans spontaneously chanted “U-S-A, U-S-A” after the playing of the national anthem and “God Bless America.”⁴⁷

There has been little tolerance for players or fans who either dare to complain about such rituals, or fail to participate in them. Baseball, notes Butterworth, has unquestioningly supported the war in Iraq, in the process reducing

“the range of democratic participation to the use of symbols whose meanings became empty beyond their most fundamental nationalism.”⁴⁸ Perhaps the best-publicized example of that process involved the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. In 2003, Hall of Fame President Dale Petroskey wrote a public letter to actor Tim Robbins, a vocal critic of the Iraq War and the Bush administration. Robbins was scheduled to be among the participants at a commemoration at the Hall of Fame for the 15th anniversary of the baseball film *Bull Durham*. Robbins’ presence prompted Petroskey to cancel the event, writing:

From the first day we opened our doors in 1939, The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum — and many players and executives in Baseball’s family — has honored the United States and those who defend our freedoms.

In a free country such as ours, every American has the right to his or her own opinions, and to express them. Public figures, such as you, have platforms much larger than the average American’s, which provides you an extraordinary opportunity to have your views heard — and an equally large obligation to act and speak responsibly. We believe your very public criticism of President Bush at this important — and sensitive — time in our nation’s history helps undermine the U.S. position, which ultimately could put our troops in even more danger. As an institution, we stand behind our President and our troops in this conflict.⁴⁹

Given the well-documented history of Major League Baseball (MLB) being used to express the type of nationalistic sentiments which concerned Voigt in the early 1970s, it would not be surprising to also observe such expressions of extreme nationalism within cinematic baseball. Indeed, scholar Rob Edelman has argued that baseball films are “bywords for patriotism, for mom’s apple-pie Americana, for unabashed flag waving.”⁵⁰ However, a close analysis of baseball films not only fails to find the prevalence of patriotic nationalism. Instead, such examination reveals that there are significant instances of a more oppositional discourse in baseball films.⁵¹

Integral Nationalism in Baseball Film

Portrayals of zealous American nationalism are hard to come by in baseball films. “The Star-Spangled Banner” is heard in six baseball films, all produced between 1973 and 1992: *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1973), *The Bad News Bears* (1976), *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* (1976), *The Natural* (1984), *Eight Men Out* (1988), and *A League of Their Own* (1992). The Pledge of Allegiance is recited prior to games played in two films about Little League baseball, *The Great American Pastime* (1956) and the 1976 version of *The Bad News Bears*. Independence Day celebrations are featured, albeit very

briefly, in *The Sandlot* (1993), *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings*, and *A League of Their Own*. The prologue to the Lou Gehrig biography, *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), released in the months following U.S. entry into World War II, tells us the title character “faced death with that same valor and fortitude that has been displayed by thousands of young Americans on far-flung fields of battle.” Beyond these sparse examples, there is little more than a vague but apolitical presentation of baseball as a comfortable element of the tapestry of Americana, on the same plane as mom and apple pie.

The most overtly patriotic imagery in baseball film is found in *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950). Ostensibly a chronicle of Robinson’s life and the challenges he faced as the first black major leaguer of the modern era, the primary purpose of the film was to reassure white America that baseball integration represented no threat. Such reassurances were no easy task in the early years of the Cold War, and the film goes to some lengths to associate patriotic images with the desegregation of baseball to avoid any taint of “Un-Americanism.” When racist thugs try to intimidate Robinson after a game, two of his teammates come to his rescue, and while “America the Beautiful” plays in the background. Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey elevates baseball to a civic entitlement, telling Jackie “We’re dealing with rights here — the right of every American to play baseball, the American game.” The film concludes with a scene to establish Robinson’s (and integration’s) patriotic credentials. In it, Robinson is shown testifying before Congress, telling lawmakers that “democracy works for those who are willing to fight for it, and I’m sure it’s worth defending.” As “America the Beautiful” again plays in the background, an image of the Statue of Liberty fades in, and a voice-over intones that the Robinson story could “only happen in a country that is truly free. A country where every child has the opportunity to become president — or play baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers.” Certainly, however, the preceding manifestations of cinematic nationalism are modest compared to that found in contemporary MLB ballparks.

Liberal Nationalism in Baseball Film

What is perhaps most striking about the nationalistic content found in American baseball cinema is just how little of it there is. But when it does appear, it rarely evokes integral nationalism, and in some instances it seems a parody of the unquestioning, flag-waving expressions of patriotism associated with professional baseball.

A case in point is the cinematic playing of the national anthem. In the six films in which the anthem is heard, three of them treat it with little respect. In *The Bad News Bears*, the anthem is played on opening day with all the league’s

teams present and standing at attention. However, the scene is yet another way to demonstrate the Bears' underdog, underclass status in the ultra-competitive and very white suburban North Valley League. During the anthem — played rather badly by a junior high band — Bears manager Morris Buttermaker sips his beer. In a series of camera shots, we see that all the other teams in the league wearing jerseys emblazoned with the names of their respectable team sponsors, while the Bears' uniforms feature an advertisement for "Chico's Bail Bonds." In *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings*, "The Star Spangled Banner," badly-mangled, plays as an inept baton twirler performs and an unfriendly, all-white, Independence-Day crowd looks on. In *Bang the Drum Slowly*, we see the only cinematic depiction of the patriotic pomp and ceremony associated with a MLB game. Flags fly, a military color guard marches onto the field, and fans are asked to stand for the playing of the national anthem. During the anthem, one of the three black members of the New York Mammoths team holds his cap over his heart with the middle finger of his right hand displayed against the bill, his facial expression betraying his disdain for the ceremony.

Although not treated as mockingly in the other films, the presence of the national anthem serves a purpose that is not overtly patriotic. Rather, it is a baseball ritual that serves the cinematic need for an establishing shot, setting up the scene to come. In *The Natural*, the national anthem is used to show the New York Knights all wearing their recently-adopted lightening-bolt sleeve patches, the symbol of their new team unity. In *Eight Men Out*, director John Sayles uses the playing of the anthem as an opportunity to highlight the worry and doubt on the faces of the Chicago White Sox prior to the final game of the World Series they have conspired to throw. Similarly, in *A League of Their Own* it is a chance to show the thoughtful, worried glances of Kit Keller toward her sister Dottie Hinson, the star of the rival team. In every case, the narrative point is far more significant than the patriotic ritual during which it happens to occur.

In much the same way, the Fourth of July celebrations portrayed in baseball films are vaguely patriotic gestures which just happen to occur during baseball season and are incidental to the narrative. In *A League of their Own*, the Rockford Peaches players are very briefly seen enjoying a fireworks display that implies it is the Fourth of July. Devoid of any other patriotic trappings, the scene is instead part of a culminating, celebratory montage that shows the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League winning the respect and affection of fans with their outstanding play on the field. In *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars*, the hostility directed at the African-American players by the white crowd creates an ugly Independence Day mood. Not until the All-Stars' clowning (or "shining for white folks," as the All-Star's disgusted catcher Leon Carter terms it) relieves the tension are we assured that the day will not end

in racial strife. *The Sandlot's* version of the Fourth features a 1960s neighborhood block party, replete with sparklers, tables laden with food, and red, white, and blue bunting. The Ray Charles version of "America the Beautiful" plays in the background. But none of the neighborhood houses flies an American flag and for the players the holiday's primary significance is that the evening's fireworks will provide sufficient light for a night game on the sandlot.

Baseball films seldom associate the game with militant images of nationalism. In *A League of Their Own*, wartime sacrifices and virtues are acknowledged, but for the married women who play in the league, the war is largely a source of dread of receiving a telegram reporting the death of a husband in combat. When such a telegram arrives in the Rockford Peaches' locker room prior to a game, it has the predictably devastating effect on the recipient, Betty Horn, and the entire Rockford team. War is treated in much the same way in *The Winning Team*, the 1952 biography of Hall of Fame pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander (played by Ronald Reagan). During the early days of U.S. entry into World War I, Alexander is traded to the Chicago Cubs, a fact that the reporters interviewing Alexander and his wife Aimee seem more interested in than his military status. Alexander is a willing citizen soldier, but rather than volunteering to fight the Kaiser, Alexander is drafted. His experiences in the war are not glorified, but instead serve as an explanation for the bouts of dizziness and double vision that will later threaten his playing career.

In contrast to the few overt expressions of integral nationalism in baseball films, there are several significant expressions of a much more liberal form of nationalism in which the values of individual freedom are celebrated. In *Field of Dreams* (1989), Ray Kinsella ignores the ridicule of his community, as well as the threats of bankers to foreclose on his farm. Instead, he heeds the guidance of a mysterious voice telling him to plow up his cornfield and build a baseball field in its place. Kinsella's quirky individualism is in the end rewarded through his reconciliation with his dead father — not to mention the assurance of financial stability as a result of the thousands who will flock to his field of dreams to find the peace which they lack in their own lives. In one striking scene, his wife, Annie, takes on a group of right-wing, religious fundamentalists who are attempting to ban the books of Terence Mann, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, at a school board meeting. Annie asks the crowd gathered in the school gym for the meeting, "Who wants to spit on the Constitution of the United States of America?" and "Who thinks that we have to stand up to the kind of censorship that they had under Stalin?" After a show of hands, it is clear Annie has prevailed, and she joyfully proclaims "America. I'm proud of ya!" Unlike the patriotic displays in baseball parks across America since 9/11, the message of this film is that we should challenge, not trust, the voices of conformity and censorship.

While not as overly political, the film *Mr. Baseball* offers a subtle but

interesting commentary on American foreign policy, particularly given its release date of 1992. In theaters just one year after the first Gulf War, this film tells the story of Jack Elliott, the stereotypical, chauvinistic, “ugly American,” who goes to play baseball in Japan. Elliott is no racist, but he is surely ethnocentric. Following repeated confrontations, the arrogant, abrasive Elliott finally learns the values of acceptance, cooperation, and community. After coming to realize he must place the interests of the team above his own self-interest, Elliott apologizes to his teammates, telling them he wants to build a bridge of friendship. Once again, this is not the type of message sent from American ballparks to those around the world.

The 2005 version of *The Bad News Bears* celebrates the values of a non-conformist American nationalism. Both versions of this film (1976, 2005), tell the story of a group of misfits and outcasts who come together to challenge the very proper, and very white, Yankees for the league title. Both versions are classic celebrations of the underdog, which has long been a central theme not just in baseball films, but in American cinema in general. However, it is the addition of a single element in the final scene of the 2005 remake that is particularly significant. After realizing that winning isn’t everything, the team’s coach, Morris Buttermaker, replaces his regulars in the last two innings of the championship game with his scrubs — including a player in a motorized wheel chair. As a result, in the end, the scrappy, ill-mannered, nonconformist Bears have come up one run short. Following the game’s conclusion, the trophies are presented — a large, championship trophy to the Yankees, a small second-place trophy to the Bears. When one of the Yankees condescendingly tells the Bears that they have earned the Yankees’ respect, one of the Bears promptly tells the imperialist Yankees to take their trophy and “shove it up your ass.” As the Bears then proceed to once again break all the rules of decorum and “good sportsmanship” by spraying each other with non-alcoholic beer, the camera slowly zooms to the left field foul pole. On the pole flies an American flag, the red, white and blue shining brightly in the setting sun. This closing shot tells us that this is what America is really all about.

Discussion

Although baseball films have little of the super-patriotic symbolism that has historically — and in recent years particularly — been so much a part of MLB, it is not our argument that the cinematic game is devoid of expressions of nationalism. It depends, as Voigt so aptly noted more than 30 years ago, on what one means by “nationalism.”

In representations of community and of the game’s heroes/citizens, baseball films serve both to reflect and construct, in idealized ways, what it means

to be an “American.”⁵² Cinematic depictions of the sport express and help constitute an American identity. However, the identity that baseball films espouse is very different than the one so often embraced by MLB. The nationalism of baseball films is much more the liberal ideal advocated by Voigt than the integral variety of nationalism he so abhorred. Baseball films display the nationalism of individual freedom and of communities that are inclusive. Baseball films portray communities of diversity, solidarity, and equality, peopled by individuals of different backgrounds, races, and beliefs. In contrast to the hyper-patriotic spectacles noted by Butterworth, which insist that “you are with us or you are against us,” the communities of baseball films proclaim that solidarity and conformity are two very different things.⁵³ As noted, *Mr. Baseball* cautions against American arrogance and unilateralism while *Field of Dreams* and *The Bad News Bears* celebrate those who challenge, rather than succumb, to establishment power and values.

This is not to say that the values represented in baseball films cannot be appropriated by proponents of integral nationalism. Those in positions of power often insist that playing by the rules of the game means not questioning those in authority — or that “teamwork” means supporting one’s country and one’s leaders, right or wrong. Indeed, the argument of that body of critical research referred to earlier in this paper is precisely that those of power and wealth have consistently employed the rhetoric of baseball’s values — teamwork, devotion to the game, hard work, and fair play — in the service of economic and political dominance. However, in baseball films such exploitation of these core “American” values is normative. In these movies, devotion to the game and fair play produces communities in which individual differences are not only tolerated but valued. In cinematic baseball, a “good American” embraces others to form communities based on solidarity, rather than conformity.

Thus, despite frequent instances throughout history of MLB expressing a much narrower, jingoistic, and intolerant form of nationalism, this is not normative in baseball movies. Films about the game offer a vision of an ideal American nationalism. Nationalism in cinematic baseball is a very different nationalism than that displayed in MLB ballparks, particularly since 9/11. Baseball films embrace the liberal nationalism of the American ideal, rather than the repressive, integral nationalism of political manipulation that Voigt cautioned against.

Notes

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8. Howard Good, *Diamonds in the Dark* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1997).
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10. Anatol Lieven, *American Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 7.
11. Riess, 15–19.
12. Cogliano, 150–151.
13. David Q. Voigt, *American Baseball, Volume I: From Gentleman's Sport to the Commissioner System* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1983), 44.
14. Benjamin G. Rader in Albert Spalding, *America's National Game*, Bison Book edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992) xi.
15. Voigt, 1983, 44–45.
16. Cogliano, 163.
17. David Q. Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976), 83.
18. Rader, xii.
19. Voigt, *America Through Baseball*, 84.
20. Spalding, 6.
21. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
22. *Ibid.*, 7–9.
23. *Ibid.*, 368.
24. Rader, xv.
25. In his pioneering studies of nationalism, culminating with the 1948 book *Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: McMillan), Carleton J.H. Hayes identifies at least five distinct forms of nationalism, including the *liberal* and *integral* styles described above, as well as a *humanitarian* version, a product of enlightenment thinking; A *Jacobin* nationalism emphasizing revolution and, as necessary, terror, extremism, and militarism; And a *traditional* form emphasizing social continuity to bond the connection between past, present, and future generations, and opposed to social upheaval, particularly revolutionary change. Voigt (1976) notes that all five have forms emerge at various times in U.S. history.
26. David Q. Voigt, "Reflections on Diamonds: American Baseball and American Culture," *Journal of Sport History* 1, no. 1 (1974), 6–7.
27. *Ibid.*, 7.
28. *Ibid.*, 11.
29. *Ibid.*, 16.
30. *Ibid.*
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45. Steven Bullock, "Playing for Their Nation: The American Military and Baseball During World War II," *Journal of Sport History* 27 no. 1 (2000): 85.
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51. Voigt, "Reflections on Diamonds: American Baseball and American Culture," 14.
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Filmography

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- The Bad News Bears*, Dir. Richard Linklater, Paramount Pictures, 2005.
- Bang the Drum Slowly*, Dir. John Hancock, Paramount Pictures, 1973.
- The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings*, Dir. John Badham, Universal Pictures, 1976.
- Eight Men Out*, Dir. John Sayles, Orion Pictures, 1988.
- Field of Dreams*, Dir. Phil Alden Robinson, Universal Pictures, 1989.
- The Great American Pastime*, Dir. Herman Hoffman, MGM, 1956.
- The Jackie Robinson Story*, Dir. Alfred E. Green, Jewel Productions/Eagle-Lion Films, 1950.
- A League of Their Own*, Dir. Penny Marshall, Columbia Pictures, 1992.
- Mr. Baseball*, Dir. Fred Schepisi, Universal Pictures, 1992.
- The Natural*, Dir. Barry Levinson, Tri-Star Pictures, 1984.
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The Dark Side of the American Dream: Ron Shelton's *Cobb*

Ron Briley

In 1994, Warner Brothers released filmmaker Ron Shelton's *Cobb*, a biographical picture based upon the last days of legendary baseball star Tyrus Raymond "Ty" Cobb and starring Tommy Lee Jones in the title role. Shelton's screenplay was based upon the tumultuous relationship between Cobb and sportswriter Al Stump. The collaboration between Cobb and Stump produced the ballplayer's 1961 laudatory autobiography, *My Life in Baseball*. Stump's reservations regarding the baseball great, however, were made apparent in a *True Magazine* piece, published six months after Cobb's death in July 1961 as well as the biography, *Cobb* (1994). Basing his film upon Stump's *True* article and Cobb biography, Shelton presented a complex portrait of an aging athlete with little baseball footage in the picture. Viewers expecting the nostalgia for baseball expressed in *Field of Dreams* (1989) were in for a rude awakening, for *Cobb* questions the contradictions between the myth and reality of the American dream. *Cobb's* lackluster performance at the box office may be attributed to the studio's inability to market a film which illuminates the dark side of the success ethic usually obscured in lighter baseball fare.

The enigma of Ty Cobb is well captured by his scholarly biographer, Charles Alexander. In describing the baseball great, Alexander writes, "A man who set the highest standards for himself and consistently met them, Cobb was never able to understand why most other people failed to share his passion for excellence and refused to settle for second best. He was never an easy man to know, never easy to get along with in or out of uniform, never really at peace with himself or the world around him. Ty Cobb was the most volatile, the most fear-inspiring presence ever to appear on a baseball field."¹ The demons that plagued Cobb fueled his accomplishments on the playing field, undeniably establishing his reputation as one of the game's greatest players.

In his major league career which spanned from 1905 to 1928, Cobb was a fixture with the Detroit Tigers before spending his final two seasons playing with the Philadelphia Athletics. During his twenty-four major league campaigns, Cobb maintained a .366 lifetime batting average and hit over .400 three times; a baseball mark of excellence, which has not been attained since the 1941 season. Cobb also ended his career with 891 stolen bases and 4,189 hits—major league records which have since been surpassed. Cobb led the Detroit Tigers to American League pennants in 1907, 1908, and 1909, but World Series victory eluded the Detroit franchise and Cobb. Off the field, Cobb became a wealthy individual through investing his baseball salary in such emerging corporations as General Motors and Coca-Cola.

In fact, Cobb often equated the intense competition necessary to succeed on the baseball diamond with the qualities essential for survival in American capitalism and on the battlefield. Describing himself as a “self-made man,” Cobb took issue with critics who assailed him for the overly aggressive use of his spikes on the base paths, asserting, “I would insist that it is just as sportsmanlike to make the other fellow tremble as to let him make me tremble. At any rate it’s fighting a fellow with his own weapons.” In addition to describing baseball as the moral equivalent of war, Cobb’s perception of the sport as requiring the instincts of a successful capitalist was evident in his comment that intelligent baseball players needed to be constantly thinking a play or two in advance, just as “a manufacturer doesn’t wait until the last minute to order his materials.”² Thus, Cobb represented the work ethic and producer capitalism of nineteenth-century America. He had little use for the consumption culture symbolized by the instant gratification of Babe Ruth and the home run.

In *A Brief History of American Sport*, Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein portray Cobb as an “acquisitive, calculating, aggressive” individual, who “made the most of his build and terrific speed and took instant advantage of every opportunity.” On the other hand, Gorn and Goldstein perceive Ruth as “a player of power rather than calculation,” who “was that rare ‘natural’ who seemed to have been born with an instinctive knowledge of the game; unlike Cobb, he never appeared to think about strategy, or guard or contract his strength.”³ Accordingly, Cobb expressed resentment toward Ruth and the changes in the game brought about by the Yankee slugger.

Cobb ridiculed the passive nature of the home run, while extolling the aggression as well as intelligence of the hit and run play or stolen base. In his autobiography, written with Al Stump, Cobb proclaimed that during his day, “Teams fought for runs like tug-of-war teams fight for an inch of turf.” But the glorification of the home run ruined the game, and Cobb preferred players from an earlier production-oriented capitalism who were “less interested in a bonus, a business manager, and bowling alley than in fighting to win.”⁴

And fighting is an activity which certainly characterized the combative

Cobb in his relationships both on and off the playing field. In addition to altercations with opponents, Cobb battled with teammates and family members. Both of his marriages ended in divorce, and Cobb was estranged from his children. The Georgia native also reflected the racist attitudes of the Jim Crow South in which he grew to maturity. In addition, Cobb was implicated in the gambling scandals that plagued baseball and culminated in the 1919 Black Sox scandal. In 1926, former Detroit pitcher Herbert “Dutch” Leonard accused Cobb and Cleveland Indians star Tris Speaker of gambling and fixing the outcome of games during the 1919 season. Although exonerated by Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the Cobb-Speaker case continues to generate controversy.⁵ In summarizing Cobb’s demeanor, Richard Bak argues, “Ball players, umpires, grounds keepers, shoeblacks, butchers, waiters, even his own teammates—it didn’t matter. Cobb battled them all. In 1912, he had even climbed into the stands to stomp on a cripple, earning him a suspension and precipitating a strike by his teammates, who, even if they loathed him, understood that they needed his cruel brilliance in the lineup.”⁶

Despite financial generosity toward his peers who struggled following their playing days and philanthropic endeavors such as a college scholarship fund for needy Georgia youth and a hospital for his hometown of Royston, Georgia, Cobb’s funeral drew only a few hundred mourners with only four attendees having baseball connections. Cobb’s propensity for violence and cruelty alienated friends and family, leaving what many consider baseball’s greatest player embittered and alone. Cobb achieved fame and fortune, but at what cost to his own happiness? The tragedy of Cobb, which raises serious questions about the pursuit of the American dream, is not the stuff of which most baseball films are constructed.

In their insightful study of the national pastime in American cinema, Marshall G. Most and Robert Rudd argue that symbolically baseball is employed as a nostalgic myth to reconcile conflicting values in American culture. In the early 1900s as America moved from a pastoral society to an industrial and urban nation, baseball was, thus, extolled as a means through which values of individualism could be incorporated into the notion of teamwork critical for the new industrial order. A game which celebrated respect for authority and fair play could temper competitive industrial capitalism with some self-restraint. Baseball was also perceived as a tool for assimilating the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who were pouring through Ellis Island during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Accordingly, it was not an anathema that the Supreme Court ruled in the 1922 Federal League decision that baseball was a game rather than a business and not subject to the nation’s antitrust laws. In his work on baseball and antitrust, Jerold J. Duquette suggests that Progressives perceived baseball as a means through which to shape and transform immigration as well as urbanization and indus-

trialization. Duquette writes, "For the leaders and reformers of the Progressive Era, baseball was a tool of reform rather than the object of reform. Baseball was a game that was used by these social reformers to inculcate certain values into American society. Fair play, teamwork, sound mind and bodies; these were the buzzwords of a social movement. Baseball was a prop, a metaphor used for the social gospel of progressivism."⁷

Most and Rudd, in agreement with Duquette, maintain that the progressive baseball political agenda was also an essential element of baseball cinema from the silent era into the twenty-first century. According to the film scholars, "The vision of an ideal community, and the kinds of heroes/citizens which inhabit that community, are still the dreams of which baseball films are made."⁸ But as Most and Rudd acknowledge, the greatest contradiction for the baseball film as well as American society is the gap between the vision and reality for a society characterized by class, race, and gender inequalities. At the core of the American dream also lies a heart of darkness that baseball iconography, seeking to bolster the status quo, is reluctant to examine. This is the fundamental contradiction of American life which Shelton's film *Cobb* bravely confronts.

The incongruity found in Ty Cobb's support of fame and fortune at the expense of the greater community is examined by Robert Elias in his 2003 Shine of the Eternals keynote address for the Baseball Reliquary. Elias suggests that the American dream of equal opportunity has sustained the nation and attracted immigrants from around the world. Yet, Elias observes that many in the United States find the America dream elusive, and he concludes, "Even if the dream was more widely experienced, some worry about the values it asks us to live by — materialism, hyper-competition, excessive individualism, and so forth." This appears to describe the path of self-destruction chosen by Cobb. Elias, however, insists that baseball, despite its association with racism, sexism, anti-intellectualism, gambling, imperialism, and big business, still offers promise of a better America. Quoting John Thorn, Elias writes, "Fundamentally, baseball is what America is not, but has long imagined itself to be. It is the missing piece of the puzzle, the part that makes us whole ... a fit for a fractured society. While America is about breaking apart, baseball is about connecting.... America, independent and separate, is a lonely nation in which culture, class, ideology, and creed fails to unite us; but baseball is the tie that binds.... Yet, more than anything else, baseball is about hope and renewal ... this great game opens up a portal onto our past, both real and imagined ... it holds up a mirror, showing us as we are. And sometimes baseball even serves as a beacon, revealing a path through the wilderness."⁹

But before realizing baseball's potential for tapping the promise of American life, it is essential to deconstruct the sport's myth of nostalgia which obscures a realistic view of baseball and the American dream. It is imperative

that we be reminded of the price paid by Cobb in the relentless pursuit of fame and fortune. Many players in recent years have succumbed to the use of steroids and performance-enhancing drugs in order to gain a competitive advantage and play through injuries. It will be interesting to see whether the gates of Cooperstown will be opened for such outstanding athletes as Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens, whose integrity have been questioned in the courts and Congressional hearing rooms. It is ironic to note that in a case of art imitating life, it is Roger Clemens portraying the pitcher facing the “Georgia Peach” in the one major baseball scene from *Cobb*. Both men have legitimate claims to baseball greatness, yet their competitiveness and arrogance raise serious questions about their characters and the heart of darkness which is often embedded in the unrestricted drive for greatness.

In some ways, Ron Shelton was a strange choice to make *Cobb*. Shelton was acclaimed for his lighter, comic sport films such as *Bull Durham* (1988) and *White Man Can't Jump* (1992). Shelton used his experience of playing five seasons in the Baltimore Orioles organization to create his bitter-sweet celebration of minor league baseball in *Bull Durham*, which many fans perceive as the quintessential baseball film. In an interview with film scholars Stephen C. Wood and J. David Pincus, Shelton acknowledges the romanticism of baseball, observing, “Baseball’s the only game without a clock. Therefore, there’s always hope. And hope, false or otherwise, is part of the American character. It’s never too late to come back, to pick yourself up from the gutter and score 12 runs in the bottom of the ninth to win the game. That kind of optimism is very American.” Shelton, however, refuses to let this romanticism obscure the reality of baseball as a metaphor for the American experience, noting, “Life ends with a routine 6–3 ground out [shortstop to first base], I’m afraid.” As for Ty Cobb, Shelton was drawn to investigating the “heart and soul of a troubled genius.”¹⁰

Shelton based his film upon the relationship between Cobb and sportswriter Al Stump, whom the athlete tapped to write his autobiography. The result of this collaboration was *My Life in Baseball: The True Story*, which Stump later described as “self-serving” since the publisher granted Cobb final editorial approval over the project. Stump’s unedited opinions were made evident in a December 1961 *True Magazine* piece published six months after Cobb’s death. Cobb biographer Charles Alexander found the timing of the piece somewhat insensitive, but, nevertheless, Alexander concluded that the journalist’s account “had a basic ring of authenticity.” Shelton was captivated by the disparity between *My Life in Baseball*, which was simply a “baseball book,” and the *True* article telling the story of “a reckless, incorrigible man who was refusing to die quietly.” Shelton was intrigued by “something unknowable” about Cobb, and he began working with Stump who was finishing his unauthorized biography of the baseball great. The ambiguity of Shelton’s film is

captured in Stump's preface to his 1994 Cobb biography. Stump proclaims, "My respect for his greatness, my contempt for his vile temper and mistreatment of others, my pity for his deteriorating health, and my admiration for his stubbornness and persistence produced a frustrating mix of emotions."¹¹

For the role of Stump, Shelton selected character actor Robert Wuhl with whom he worked on *Bull Durham*. For the title role of Cobb, the filmmaker cast the popular Tommy Lee Jones, who won the 1993 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in *The Fugitive*. According to Shelton, the director wanted Jones for the role because of his "combination of physicality and fierce intelligence" similar to that displayed by Cobb. The two men also had similar physiques, and Jones was an athlete who played football at Harvard. In most of the film's scenes, however, a robust Jones was actually portraying a frail but combative old man in his seventies.

Cobb opens with journalist Stump being summoned by the aging baseball star to write his autobiography. Stump arrives at Cobb's Lake Tahoe hunting lodge in the middle of a blizzard. He finds an intoxicated and belligerent Cobb berating his black servant Willie (Lou Myers), who departs the lodge after refusing to accept any further racial abuse. Stump is both repelled and attracted by the gun-wielding Cobb. Against his better judgment, the writer is prevailed upon by Cobb to accompany him to Reno in search of female companionship. After the two men survive Cobb's wild, inebriated drive down icy mountain roads, Cobb's actions in Reno further disillusion Stump.

The former ballplayer disrupts Louis Prima's (Eloy Casados) stage show with a drunken rant about Jews and blacks. Cobb then proceeds to try and prove his manhood by abusing a cigarette girl, Ramona (portrayed by Shelton's wife Lolita Davidovich). When he is unable to perform sexually, Cobb pays the terrified woman a thousand dollars to proclaim the sexual prowess of the former ballplayer as a lover. At this point in the film, Stump begins to prepare two versions of Cobb's biography. In a neat, typed version, the writer relates the oral history of baseball in which Cobb describes himself as the greatest to ever play the game. Stump also begins to assemble a collection of notes on napkins and scraps of paper focusing upon the paranoid ranting of the real Ty Cobb.¹²

Stump, nevertheless, refused to leave Cobb's side, and the two men embark upon a pilgrimage to Cooperstown and the Baseball Hall of Fame. Cobb, the first man to be inducted into the Hall, is lionized at a dinner honoring Hall of Fame members. Later that evening, however, he is refused entrance into a hotel room party hosted by the other baseball greats, who want no part of his company. In fact, Hall of Famer Mickey Cochrane (Stephen Mendello), whom Cobb often supported financially, closes the door in Cobb's face. Stump pulls the angry Cobb out of the hallway, gaining new insights into and even some sympathy for the complexities of the man's life.

After his rejection at Cooperstown, Cobb wants to visit his daughter in Georgia, but she refuses to see him. As the journalist and ballplayer become increasingly isolated and alienated, Stump begins to take on the character traits of Cobb. When a process server (Bradley Whitford) attempts to present Stump with a divorce petition from his estranged wife, the journalist assumes a belligerent attitude and threatens to kill the man with Cobb's gun. But it is Stump who is almost murdered when Cobb discovers that the writer is surreptitiously preparing a manuscript defaming the great ballplayer. Putting aside his notions of homicide, an increasingly ill Cobb checks himself into a hospital where his gun-wielding habit causes considerable disruption. As Cobb lingers on death's door, he tells Stump that the writer must make his own decision on what to print.

The film concludes with a brief epilogue following Cobb's death. Stump has returned to his favorite bar in New York City, where he is surrounded by his fellow sportswriters. They ask his opinion about Cobb, and Stump hoists his glass, proclaiming that the "Georgia Peach" was the greatest baseball player in history. In a voice over, Stump explains that in the final analysis, he published the myth because he needed Cobb to be a hero.¹³ The point here echoes the refrain from John Ford's classic *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."¹⁴

Shelton's complex film seems to have perplexed the Warner Brothers publicity department which marketed the film as baseball cinema, although there is little playing field action in the film. Rather than a typical baseball film in the nostalgic and heroic sense of *Field of Dreams* or even *Bull Durham*, *Cobb* is a serious examination, often through black comedy, of the contradictions which expose the illusions of the American dream. An intellectual audience more attuned to the subtleties of a *Catch-22* does not usually flock to a baseball film. Uncertain how to market *Cobb*, Warner Brothers gave the film little support, and it earned only slightly over a million dollars in its initial theatrical release, barely enough to play Tommy Lee Jones's salary.¹⁵

Critical commentary upon *Cobb* was mixed. Among the more negative reactions was Owen Gleiberman's review in *Entertainment Weekly*. Gleiberman described Jones's performance as manic and overwrought, failing to provide an insightful look into the complexities of Cobb's personality. In his assault upon the film's protagonist, Shelton's direction, according to Gleiberman, succeeded in making Cobb "look even worse than he was." Gleiberman's sentiments were shared by Peter Stack of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who asserted, "In spite of a ranting style, mad-eyed grins, rough-hewn demeanor, cunning and rage, Jones succeeds only in running the awful and pathetic Cobb into the ground." On the other hand, Leonard Klady in *Variety* was critical of *Cobb* for overemphasizing the role of Stump and casting Wuhl, who could not compete with the dynamic performance of Jones in the title role. Klady complained of

Stump's character, "It's tough to get behind a guy whose justification for being a toady is that it will enable him to secretly write the 'real' story while he feeds his subject pages of the sanitized version"¹⁶

Other critics were somewhat more nuanced in their reactions to the film. Roger Ebert was ambivalent, stating that with a second screening he found the film to have redeeming qualities. Although he also considered the character of Stump to be too much of a toady, the veteran critic concluded, "This is one of the most original sports biopics I've seen, if only because it contains one of Tommy Lee Jones' best performances. It's the kind of film where you admire the craftsmanship and artistry while questioning the wisdom of the project itself." Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* also credits Shelton's film for attempting to deal with the dark side of genius and, thus, going where few baseball films dare to tread. But in the final analysis, Maslin argues that *Cobb* gives into sentimentality. Differing from critics who believed *Cobb* and Jones to be overly cruel in their interpretation of the baseball great, Maslin concludes, "But *Cobb* is finally nowhere near as tough as the man was himself. A sports-writer's brand of romanticism creeps into the later scenes, suggesting a softie of a Cobb who is secretly more frail, wounded and generous than he cares to let on." The career of Tommy Lee Jones is marked by a tough guy exterior, under which lies a sentimental side with which film audiences identify. This is similar to the allegation that Anthony Hopkins in *Nixon* (1995) portrayed the disgraced President in too sympathetic of a fashion. Oliver Stone who directed *Nixon* asserts that this was inevitable for when one stares into the eyes of Hopkins, it is impossible not to recognize the soul's humanity, but with Nixon all one could perceive was a vacant expression devoid of empathy and community. Thus, only Nixon could have portrayed the real depth of that troubled soul.¹⁷

Perhaps this was also true for Cobb, but a number of reviewers insist that Shelton and Jones came close to exposing the tortured essence of the man many consider to be the greatest baseball player of all time. Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* proclaimed that *Cobb* was the *Raging Bull* (1980) of baseball films, favorably comparing Shelton's movie with Martin Scorsese's classic cinematic depiction of troubled middleweight fighter Jake LaMatta during the 1950s. Travers understands that *Cobb* was more than a baseball film, just as Scorsese's *Raging Bull* asked penetrating questions about the nature of American masculinity and capitalism. Grasping that *Cobb* seeks to employ baseball as a means through which to examine the relentless search for success and the American dream, Travers argues, "Shelton's strong, stinging film — one of the year's best — wants to get at something ingrained in the American character, the irrational desire to make saints of sports heroes. That dog won't hunt, yet the need is as old as Cobb and as timely as O. J. Simpson. The sight of Cobb in the baseball arena, flexing for combat, inspires awe. His behavior brings

only revulsion. Can we repose the two? Should we?"¹⁸ The caveats suggested by Travers regarding athletes and the American dream apply equally to the worlds of commerce and politics. There is a connection between means and ends which explains the bitterness of those who, like Cobb, abandoned principle and decency in pursuit of greatness.

Terrence Rafferty develops these themes in a detailed review of *Cobb* published in *The New Yorker*. Rafferty finds Stump's mixture of admiration and repulsion for Cobb to be one of the more disturbing elements in the film; it presents sentiments which resonate with the audience whose perceptions of Cobb and the success ethic are equally conflicted and ambivalent. As a culture we are both attracted and repelled by the business tactics and conspicuous consumption of figures ranging from John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to Donald Trump and the contemporary cult of celebrity. Shelton does a fine job of tapping this ambiguity with *Cobb*. Stump describes his weakness as that he still wants Cobb to be a hero, despite understanding the tragic flaws of the man. In a similar fashion, Americans want to believe in the American dream, while living in a society and economy which fosters inequality in daily life. And as Rafferty notes, "Lurking somewhere in our consciousness, perhaps, is the idea that a genius like Cobb is inherently monstrous, unnatural — that his achievement as a ball-player is somehow inseparable from his horrible inadequacy as a human being."¹⁹

The New Yorker critic finds the film's one extended baseball scene to encapsulate Cobb's drive, determination, and alienation. After a brush back pitch, Cobb doubles and manufactures a run by stealing third as well as home; although his aggressive slides lead to altercations at each base. He is playing a private game with his own rules. Rafferty argues that Cobb's charge down the third base line and jarring collision with the catcher embodies "the essence of Cobb's greatness." Rafferty concludes, "We see him sliding into the plate with one leg raised high and aimed at the catcher's groin. *Cobb* is a movie about a one-of-a-kind man facing death; it's a snapshot of Ty Cobb heading home."²⁰

But how do we account for this intensity which alienates Cobb from any sense of community whether with baseball or family? In order to provide some explanation for Cobb's inner demons, Michael Adams, in an essay for *Magill's Cinema Annual*, suggests that the structure of Shelton's film parallels that of the Orson Welles classic, *Citizen Kane* (1941).²¹ Like *Citizen Kane*, *Cobb* begins with a newsreel extolling the life and career of its protagonist. But the newsreel footage and narration are only able to describe the accomplishments of its subject. There is no explanation offered as to the motivation for Cobb or Kane. It is, thus, up to a journalist, such as Stump, to make some sense of Cobb's life.

The newsreel which begins the film is replayed at the Cooperstown din-

ner where Cobb is honored along with his contemporaries. As Cobb watches the highlights of his baseball career, he starts to replay in his mind a film which better captures the reality of his life. Instead of stealing bases for the Tigers, Cobb perceives himself abusing his first wife and berating his children. He soon realizes, however, that the myth is intact as applause greets the newsreel's conclusion. On the other hand, perhaps his secret is not safe for later that evening the other former players want no part of Cobb when they are socializing with women.

Some psychological insight into Cobb's abusive behavior toward women in particular and humanity in general is offered when Cobb and Stump visit the ballplayer's home in Royston, Georgia. Standing in the Cobb family crypt, Cobb finally reveals his innermost secret to Stump. Cobb worshipped his father, William Herschel Cobb, who was a respected local businessman and educator, often referred to as "the professor." But on the evening of 8 August 1905, during Cobb's initial season with the Tigers, his father's head was blown off by a shotgun blast fired by Ty's mother, Amanda Cobb. According to sworn testimony, she assumed that her husband was an intruder seeking to enter the home through a second story bedroom window. There was considerable local gossip as to what "Professor" Cobb, who was reportedly away from home on a business trip, was doing outside his wife's bedroom in the middle of the night. Royston was filled with rumors that Amanda Cobb had a lover, and her husband was attempting to catch her in an act of infidelity. In a flashback scene, Amanda Cobb (Rhonda Griffis) is shown in bed with her unnamed lover (Michael H. Moss). When they hear someone outside the window, Amanda retrieves a shotgun from under the bed, and her lover kills the intruder, who proves to be William Herschel Cobb (J. Kenneth Campbell). While this interpretation is not repeated in Stump's biography, the rumors regarding an extramarital affair were rampant in the community. Cobb, nevertheless, did stand by his mother during a trial in which she was acquitted.²²

Similar to Charles Foster Kane, Ty Cobb is deprived of a father's love by his mother at an early age, fostering habits of misogyny in both characters. In Kane's case, his mother dispatched him from his father and Colorado home to be educated in Eastern boarding schools. Raised by the executor of his estate and gold mine which the Kane family inherited from a client at their boarding house, Kane simply wants to regain the love and simplicity of his family home in Colorado, symbolized by his childhood sled, "Rosebud."²³ Kane's two marriages, fortune, newspaper empire, and aborted political career fail to compensate for losing Rosebud. In a similar but certainly more violent vein, Cobb is separated from his father through the actions of his mother, regardless of whether the shooting was premeditated. In this psychological reading, Cobb's anger and alienation are fueled by family tragedy. On the other hand, the film text suggests that Cobb acted like a "bastard" even before the shooting.

Biographer Charles Alexander, accordingly, tends to downplay the murder of Cobb's father in accounting for the ballplayer's violent and aggressive behavior. Alexander argues that Cobb had a tremendous desire to please his father whom he greatly admired. William Herschel Cobb considered playing baseball to be a frivolous activity and did not approve of his son pursuing a career in the sport. He told his son, nevertheless, that if the boy had to follow his baseball muse, then he was not to come home a failure. Cobb, thus, spent the rest of his life attempting to please and not disappoint the departed patriarch. In addition, Alexander emphasizes the cruel treatment accorded the young Cobb by his older teammates during his first full season with the Tigers in 1906; a source of Cobb's anger which is not addressed in Shelton's cinema.²⁴

In the final analysis, the reasons for Cobb's aggressive behavior remain obscure. This enigma, however, is what makes Cobb and his legacy such a fascinating topic. Although there is much about Cobb that continues to be elusive for biographers and filmmakers, it is indisputable that Cobb was one of the greatest baseball players in major league history. But it is equally clear that this greatness was purchased at a price which left Cobb alone, bitter, and alienated. Cobb achieved the American dream of fame and fortune, but the ferocity with which he pursued these goals estranged family and friends. Cobb's pursuit of greatness revealed a heart of darkness at its core. One of the more disturbing elements of the film is that through the character of an everyman in the person of Stump, Shelton intimates that we are all capable of displaying this darkness. When confronted with the choice to tell the truth or perpetrate a destructive myth, Stump selects the latter option. His motivation has little to do with community concerns. Rather, Stump asserts that he provided the lie for his own selfish ends such as maintaining his reputation as one of the nation's foremost sportswriters. To achieve the pinnacle of success in his profession, Stump was willing to conceal the truth. It is this type of compromise which makes striving so hard for the American dream a dangerous proposition. As Rob Elias proclaimed in his Shrine of the Eternals induction address, the American dream is beyond the reach of many people in this nation, and the means often required to reach this goal make the prize worthless. These are the fundamental contradictions of American life which baseball films are loathe to explore. With *Cobb*, filmmaker Ron Shelton attempted to expose the heart of darkness which often lies at the core of the American dream. Shelton's departure from the mythical nostalgia of baseball may have cost the filmmaker at the box office, but in *Cobb*, he produced a piece of art for which we should all be grateful. To realize the potential of this country and better employ baseball as a progressive tool to challenge the sexism, racism, anti-intellectualism, and imperialism often associated with the sport, it is essential that patriotic citizens interrogate the ambiguities at the center of the American dream and how sport is used to hide these contradictions and per-

petuate the mythology of the autonomous and self-made individual. Ron Shelton's *Cobb* through its portrayal of a gifted but self-destructive athlete provides this service for America and the community of baseball.

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Part IV

MINORITY STANDARD
BEARERS

No Dummies: Deafness, Baseball, and American Culture

R.A.R. Edwards

In the summer of 1901, the bullpen of the New York Giants boasted three deaf pitchers, George Leitner, Billy Deegan, and Luther Taylor.¹ That combination marked the most deaf men to play together for one professional team, either before or since. But they were not the only deaf players in baseball that year; William Ellsworth Hoy, playing for the Chicago White Sox, was still in the majors, nearing the end of his long career. He was just coming off an outstanding 1900 season, in which he led the American League in putouts, assists, and fielding average. Neither before nor since have so many deaf players appeared on major league rosters as did in 1901.

On the one hand, the fact that the wave should crest in 1901 is no surprise, for it had been building since the 1870s. On the other hand, the prominence of deafness at the turn of the century demands explanation, both because that source of players into the majors appears to have atrophied, and because that time, unlike our own, was far more hostile to deafness and disability in public view.² Why in an era less hospitable to disability in American life than today would the deaf presence in Major League Baseball have peaked?

The Ohio School for the Deaf provides antecedents.³ It was the first residential school to introduce baseball as a team sport to its male students. In the 1870s, shoemaking teacher Parley Pratt began coaching the school's baseball team.

In 1879, the school's baseball team went on a barnstorming tour, billed as the Ohio Independents Baseball Club. As the team's exploits were remembered in the silent press years later, "The Ohio Independents played for glory as well as to show the people that the deaf were as good players as the hearing." They played several National League teams, including Cincinnati, Cleveland, Troy, and Syracuse, in exhibition games that summer, compiling a won-lost record of 6–2. Returned to Ohio, the squad toured throughout the state, playing various semi-professional teams. By summer's end, the Ohio

Independents had traveled 3,500 miles and recorded forty-four victories against seven losses.⁴

Edward Dundon was the star pitcher of the Ohio Independents. He had graduated from OSD as valedictorian in 1878. He went on to a brief professional career, the first deaf man to do so. From 1883 to 1884, Dundon pitched for Columbus in the American Association team, losing more than he won. He later played for Syracuse in the International League as well as for various semiprofessional teams. Ill health ended his playing days. Dundon died from consumption in 1893; he was in his mid-thirties.⁵

Undoubtedly, Dundon was an inspiration for many of his former teammates at OSD. Indeed, in 1893, five OSD graduates reported that they were earning a living playing baseball, at a time when the overwhelming majority of their peers, 152 in all, were working a very different field, as farmers.⁶ One of Dundon's former OSD teammates, William Hoy (1862–1961), eventually reached the majors leagues. Though Hoy graduated from the school as valedictorian in 1879, he did not accompany the team on that summer's tour. Coach Pratt thought the seventeen-year-old Hoy, never more than 5' 4", too small and youthful for the summer circuit despite the latter's play during the regular season.

Instead, Hoy went home. In spite of his obvious intelligence, Hoy's hearing parents assumed that his future would be severely limited by his deafness. When his sister reached 18, their father gave her a cow and a piano, as her dowry. When his hearing brothers reached 21, their father gave them each in turn a new suit, a buggy, a harness, and a saddle. But Hoy remembered, "When I turned 21, my father gave me a suit of clothes and a promise of free board until I turned 24."⁷ His parents had apparently determined he would have to live at home for a time, unlike his hearing brothers, on account of his disability.

Hoy had other ideas. He started playing baseball locally. Confident of his talent, Hoy left for Oshkosh, Wisconsin, landing a minor league contract in 1886. He was brought to the majors by Washington in 1888, and promptly led the league that year in steals with 82. He joined the short-lived Players League, a rival major circuit, in 1890. After spending 1891 with St. Louis of the American Association, Hoy returned to the National League, in 1892, where he played through the years in Washington (1888–1889, 1892–1893), Cincinnati (1894–1897, 1902), and Louisville (1898–1899). In 1901, he joined Chicago of the fledgling American League. An itch to see a new part of the country led Hoy to the Pacific Coast League in 1903, where he played for Los Angeles, in the minors, during his final season of professional baseball.⁸

By the time Hoy retired from the sport, he had been playing baseball for a living as a center fielder for 18 seasons, 14 of those in the majors. In 1,796 major league games, he amassed 2,044 hits, 248 doubles, 121 triples, 40 home runs, scored 1,426 runs, 594 stolen bases. Hoy had a career batting average of .287.⁹

Due in part to his longevity, William Hoy remains the best-known deaf player in baseball history. His name still commands near-instant recognition in deaf circles, more than one hundred years after his playing career ended. Hoy has become an iconic figure within the deaf community, even though he is less remembered in the hearing world. As Hoy fan and deaf professor Robert Panara has explained, Hoy is the deaf community's Jackie Robinson; "Jackie broke the color barrier; Hoy broke the communication barrier."¹⁰

Hoy did so through substantial achievements. Baseball scholar Bill James counts him as one of the top fifty center fielders of all time. In addition, James calls Hoy's rookie season the fifth-best debut by a center fielder. Moreover, James touts Hoy as a noteworthy leadoff hitter.¹¹

Given his level of play, it becomes a bit clearer why he would be, at least among deaf people, mentioned side by side with Jackie Robinson. He did not just play in the majors, like Dundon; Hoy announced his arrival with a spectacular rookie year and kept going from there. To him, then, falls the title of first, just like Jackie, the deaf community's first baseball star, breaking into the hearing majors with panache.

Recognition for Hoy, in some ways, would also be a cultural recognition of the larger deaf community. Jackie Robinson is known to fans of all races. He is a first in African-American history and a first in American history. Robinson is universally acknowledged as an American hero. By contrast, William Hoy is largely forgotten in the hearing world.

In recent years, deaf fans have wondered why this should be the case. From their point of view, their Jackie Robinson has been unfairly overlooked, and deaf fans have begun an effort to get Hoy into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, in Cooperstown, New York. They have rallied numerous times on his behalf, pleading his case. The first serious effort came in 1952, with the support of the National Association of the Deaf and hearing sportswriters, including Vincent Flaherty, sports columnist of the *Los Angeles Examiner*. Flaherty wrote, "Hoy's all-time record and the place he won in the hearts of the fans long ago, entitle him to a place in the baseball Hall of Fame.... Unfortunately, and for some inexplicable reason, the Cooperstown wheel grinds slowly."¹² Slowly indeed (though Dick Sipek would argue not inexplicably). Another push came in 1992, and there was a rally for Hoy most recently in September 1997.

Some think they know what has been holding Hoy back. Dick Sipek, a deaf man who briefly played for the Reds in 1945, said in a 1992 interview that he believes Hoy has been slighted on account of his deafness. "People don't want to talk about the deaf," he said. "They want to keep them down."¹³

It is not clear that such blatant prejudice is the reason. But Stephen Jay Gould also argues in *Triumph and Tragedy in Mudville* that Hoy's deafness is an issue in how he is remembered. First, people get so bogged down in the

argument about whether or not it is really true that Hoy invented the umpires' signals for balls and strikes that the rest of his case gets lost entirely.

For readers who don't know the debate, the story goes that Hoy invented the signals because, of course, he could not hear the umpire's verbal calls. The historical proof for this assertion is thin at best. What is true, however, is that Hoy had his third base coach signal to him, while he was at bat. The umpire would make the call, Hoy would look to third, and his coach would raise his right hand for strikes or his left hand for balls. This was so well known as a part of play for the Reds, that when the team held a ceremony to dedicate its new ball park in 1902, the program imagined a game in progress and invited fans to look out and "see the speechless determination in [Hoy's] wizened face, as he stands at the bat and turns to see Heiney Peitz elevate his right hand or his left, signaling that the umpire has called a strike or a ball."¹⁴ It does not seem an unreasonable leap to imagine that the practice, over the years, influenced umps to adopt hand signals for themselves. Matthew Moore, a deaf journalist and Hoy advocate, also points out that the umpire's signals for "safe" and "out" look like exaggerated versions of the American Sign Language signs SAFE /FREE and WON'T, respectively.¹⁵

But Hoy's case should not rest on this debate, but rather on his play and stature as a role model for the deaf. His vanishing status within the hearing baseball mainstream comes as a surprise, given the fact that SABR counted him as one of the sport's "nineteenth-century stars" in 1989, that Mac Davis listed Hoy as one of baseball's 100 greatest heroes in 1974, and that Ira Smith pegged him as one of baseball's famous outfielders in 1954.¹⁶ Perceptions of deafness, argues scholar Stephen Jay Gould, has diminished Hoy's legacy.¹⁷ Perhaps not in the way that Dick Sipek baldly implies but Gould does similarly point to a deep deaf-hearing divide.

A player's reputation is still burnished by journalistic attention, and here Hoy was not well served by the hearing press. Few hearing reporters tried to interview him, on account of his deafness. The few that did manage to interview Hoy did so with a sense of clear unease. Hoy supporter Bob Panara loves to tell this story about Hoy and a hearing reporter: "Using a pad and pencil to communicate with a reporter during an interview, [Hoy] wrote, 'What is your name?' The reporter, taken aback, voiced to those standing nearby, 'Oh I didn't know he could write.' Proving he could lipread too, Hoy snatched back the pad and wrote, 'Yes but I can't read.'"¹⁸

Bridging the deaf-hearing divide proved easier for players. When Hoy played for the Cincinnati Reds, from 1894–98, it was reported that

[he] was so admired by his teammates that the Reds all learned sign language ... [there were] times when the players would be having dinner and would communicate exclusively by sign language to avoid being interrupted by autograph seeking fans.¹⁹

When he went to Chicago, manager Clark Griffith learned how to fingerspell, and the team used the manual alphabet to send in signals, that is, until the opposing team figured them out. As Griffith put it, “The letter S meant steal ... H was the signal for the hit and run. And B was the bunt sign. I’d make some meaningless motions with my fingers, of course, to cover the signals.”²⁰

Sign language was the key to incorporating Hoy into the team. He was regarded as a pretty good lipreader, but he did not speak.²¹ Neither did his deaf counterpart in those years, Luther “Dummy” Taylor (1875–1958), who pitched for the New York Giants from 1900–1908. As Sean Lehman put it for the SABR Biography Project, “The Giants didn’t just add Taylor to their roster; they embraced him as a member of their family. Player-manager George Davis learned sign language and encouraged his players to do the same. John McGraw did likewise when he took over as Giants manager in July 1902.”

Mostly what is meant by “learned the sign language,” in all these accounts, seems to be learned how to fingerspell, or to use McGraw’s phrase, “wig-wagged.” McGraw, incidentally, got so good at reading fingerspelling, no easy achievement, he once reported that, in a heated moment with Taylor, “In sign language, Dummy consigned me to the hottest place he could think of — and he didn’t mean St. Louis.”²² McGraw, like Griffith, took to using fingerspelling to send in signs, rattling off S-T-E-A-L, “so plain,” Giant Fred Snodgrass once said, “that anyone in the park who could read the deaf and dumb language would know what was happening.”²³

Snodgrass remembered how the whole team learned to fingerspell, as Taylor “took it as an affront if you didn’t learn to converse with him. He wanted to be one of us, to be a full fledged member of the team.” Snodgrass recalled that in response, “we all learned. We practiced all the time. We’d go by elevated train from the hotel to the Polo Grounds and all during the ride, we’d be spelling out the advertising signs. Not talking to one another, but sitting there spelling out the advertising messages.”²⁴

The deaf press too confirmed the overwhelming presence of sign language among the Giants. It reported: “All the Giants can talk the sign language and sometimes in dining rooms and hotels Taylor will talk to two or three of the players and persons seated nearby look on but are unable to tell which man is the mute.” Taylor also advocated for his inclusion; it was widely reported in the press that he used to hand out manual alphabet cards to newly arrived Giants, to encourage them to learn as well.²⁵

Learning fingerspelling might seem like an obvious choice here, but its use is striking in the context of the times. As the twentieth century opened, oralism was in vogue in deaf education. Oralism promoted the exclusive use of speech and lipreading to communicate, and in most cases forbid the use of any gestural communication, including fingerspelling, in schools for the deaf. By the turn of the century, nearly 40 percent of deaf Americans were taught

without the use of sign language; as World War I broke out, that number had risen to 80 percent. So this was a period of oralist ascendancy, in which ball clubs were signing.²⁶

Oralism was meant to make it possible for deaf people to pass as hearing. Deaf people would no longer sign to communicate, but would talk and read lips. In this way, deaf people would be rescued from their own community and culture, and would be fully assimilated into hearing society, as people who, if they did not hear, could at least communicate like hearing people. Oralism, as a philosophy, was also closely linked to eugenics. Alexander Graham Bell, oralist and eugenicist, published "Memoir Upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race," in 1883. This document recognized the major features of deaf life, sign language, deaf organizations, deaf-deaf marriages, but presented them as threats to the cultural unity of the country. His method of abolishing all of these practices was oralism, to make deaf people over in a hearing image. This would get them to marry hearing people, not each other, and thus prevent a deaf race from overtaking the hearing race.²⁷ As historian Douglas Baynton puts it, "The image of an insular, inbred, and proliferating deaf culture became a potent weapon for the oralist cause."²⁸

Given that the oralist cause was at its peak during the turn-of-the-century period, the importance of Hoy and Taylor as countervailing symbols of the benefits of manualism becomes even clearer. Their careers clearly pointed to the gap between oralist theory and common practice. While oralists preached that the best way for deaf people to function in the hearing world was as hearing people, Hoy and Taylor demonstrated that the best way to guarantee both success and acceptance in the hearing world was to be a deaf person and sign. While oralists lauded the image of a deaf person passing as hearing, the reality was that most deaf people did not pass. They simply couldn't; the task of acquiring speech was too arduous and the practice of lipreading was too unreliable. Outside the walls of oralist schools, deaf people interacted with hearing people as deaf.

Hearing ballplayers were not going to be able to communicate with Hoy and Taylor like hearing people. Beyond the limits of oralist theory in the abstract, there was the little practical matter of the fact that neither man had much of a usable speaking voice.²⁹ To function as a team, they would have to find some reliable ways to communicate. Fingerspelling seems to have fit the bill.

It was a deaf way to communicate, to be sure. Left to their own devices, most hearing people did not take up the manual alphabet. The knowledge and easy use of fingerspelling tended to mark one as member of the larger deaf community, or at least as someone culturally in the know, familiar with that community's linguistic preferences. Fingerspelling, in this way, like signing in public, makes the hidden physical difference of deafness visible. But, in another

sense, it was a hearing way to communicate. After all, in fingerspelling, one reproduces English letters on the fingers. In this way, it represents a good compromise for both sides. It is a manual style of communication, more reliable for deaf people, but, unlike American Sign Language, fingerspelling utilizes the grammar and spelling of English, more comfortable for the hearing people.

For the deaf community, it was precisely Hoy's and Taylor's lack of speech that made them great deaf role models. The community wanted them to be clearly seen both as deaf and as successes. Arguably, neither man would have had the same impact on or respect within the deaf community if they had been oralists, attempting to pass as hearing. Rather, in these years, when the deaf community and its language were under increasing attack, the community looked for truly deaf heroes to parade before a majority hearing audience.³⁰ Deaf sport was a way to claim normality, in one sense, and, potentially, a path to greater acceptance by embracing mainstream norms.³¹ What could say "normal, red-blooded American" more than baseball?

But in another crucial way, the careers of these two men represented a specifically deaf claim to the mainstream of American life, as they played as recognizable deaf athletes in a hearing league. As *The Silent Worker* reported, "[Billy Hoy] can't talk — and neither can Taylor and in fact they are two of the same kind ... despite their infirmity they are above average in intelligence."³² The deaf community continued to value sign over speech even in these oralist years. The community fought back against the hearing assumption that if you can't speak, you must be stupid.

This was an assumption stoked by oralist proponents who regularly referred to those deaf students who did not succeed with the oral method as "oral failures."³³ For these failures, the use of the sign language was recommended. That recommendation pointed to a clear conclusion — namely, only the less intelligent deaf would sign to communicate. This was all the more reason to praise non-speaking, signing sports stars as demonstrating what the deaf community wanted the hearing community to understand: You can succeed in the hearing world without speech, and the best way to make your way as a deaf person in the hearing world is with sign language.

Within the deaf community, Hoy and Taylor were therefore regarded as cultural icons. As historian Susan Burch puts it, "Hoy embodied the American dream for the Deaf.... As a noncollege graduate who communicated only in signs and in writing, he displayed the abilities of common Deaf people."³⁴ *The Saturday Evening Post* reported that "wherever Taylor goes he will always be visited by scores of the silent fraternity among whom he is regarded as a prodigy."

The nickname for both players, "Dummy," was meant to refer to this lack of speech; they were, colloquially, deaf and dumb. As *Time* magazine put it in

Hoy's obituary, "In the blunt innocence of a bygone age, [he] was affectionately dubbed 'Dummy' by his teammates."³⁵ The deaf community was not nearly as sanguine about this nickname. They did not find anything innocent or affectionate about it at the time, and neither did Luther Taylor. Taylor told *Baseball Magazine* in 1945, "In the old days Hoy and I were called Dummy. It didn't hurt us. It made us fight harder."³⁶

Hoy, while more tolerant of the nickname, nonetheless also called on deaf people to fight for their due in the broader American society. He knew that able-bodied Americans were uncomfortable with disability. In an article that he authored, Hoy asserted that deaf players had to constantly work harder than others in order to surmount prevailing prejudices against them:

His deafness is such a heavy handicap, at least in the eyes of his teammates, that he is obliged to demonstrate in every play he makes that he has superior judgment, wonderful observation, and quick wit in order to overcome their natural aversion to having a deaf player hold an important position of the team.³⁷

As Taylor said, the deaf had to fight harder.

"Dummy" was by this point well on its way from signaling only muteness to meaning unintelligent. And the deaf community knew it. Alexander Pach wrote scathingly in *The Silent Worker*: "The highest salaried deaf man in the United States is the much heralded Dummy Taylor — I say Dummy only to serve to show how contemptible the epithet looks...." Pach complained that the effect of calling players by this nickname was that "every other deaf man who comes within the focus of the public eye is a dummy." This was clearly an "insult." He urged the deaf press to protest the use of this word in sports coverage.³⁸

Taylor was also quick to protest being treated shabbily on account of his deafness. He was known as the clubhouse clown for the Giants, and he could take and make a good joke. But, *The Silent Worker* related, "When a stranger in Chicago on the last western trip told him he was wanted on the telephone, they had a hard time keeping Taylor from knocking the man down."³⁹ Here is where the greater meaning of sport in American life becomes clear. Taylor had been accepted as a full-fledged member of the team by his hearing peers, but he must still endure insults about his deafness, to be reminded of his difference, on the road, from strangers. It was all the more reason to continue to fight harder.

The deaf community regarded its sports heroes as standard bearers, possessed of a significance that transcended the playing field. James Brady editorialized in *The Silent Worker*,

In industrial life and social periods we deaf people are reminded consciously or otherwise of our handicap and we are "different" from others,

but in sports, well, that is another matter. There we are all right.... Why should it cause wonder and surprise? ... the loss of the sense of hearing in no way deprives us of the ability to shine anywhere and it does not make us helpless.⁴⁰

Brady's point is well taken. It is appropriate that these standard bearers, particularly William Hoy, are still remembered so fondly so very many years after their playing careers ended within the deaf community. That these players did so in an era that was, even as Hoy admitted, averse to having disabled players hold important positions on a team, in an era that was opposed to their sign language, and in an era that was determined to remind the disabled that they were different and therefore perpetual outsiders, makes their achievements that much more remarkable and memorable.

Both men have received numerous laurels, both inside and outside the deaf community. Hoy and Taylor were both inducted into the American Athletic Association of the Deaf, Hoy in 1952, the inaugural inductee, and Taylor the following year, in 1953. Hoy was inducted into the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame in 1992 and the Baseball Reliquary in 2004. Taylor, featured in the excellent novel *Havana Heat* (2000), was inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Kansas Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007.⁴¹

Both men have gained renewed recognition in their home states. While the deaf communities there had never forgotten them, the hearing communities are being reintroduced to them. This, one must conclude, is a good thing indeed. There was never a good reason for these players to have been forgotten. It is hard to imagine the deaf community ever abandoning the cause of William Hoy, its Jackie Robinson. But Luther Taylor too deserves his due. These two men stood as powerful examples of what deaf people could accomplish in, and what they would contribute to, the hearing world. They proved that deaf people could be highly successful as deaf people, using deaf language, to negotiate in a hearing world. Hoy and Taylor did this at a time when the deaf community desperately needed to demonstrate their abilities to the hearing community. Two "Dummies" rose up and accepted the challenge of being *deaf* ballplayers. No wonder their example still resonates so deeply in the deaf community today. They were deaf; they were ballplayers; they were heroes.

Notes

1. Deegan appeared in the majors only in August 1901. Leitner survived for one additional year, playing his last game in August 1902. Taylor had the longest career of any deaf pitcher, hurling in the majors from 1900 to 1908, and in the minors from 1909 to 1915.

2. To give one example of this hostility to the sight of the disabled body in public space, in the early twentieth century, at least three American cities, Chicago, IL, Columbus, OH, and Omaha, NE, passed so-called "ugly laws," which forbid what the laws called "grotesque" people from appearing in public. Omaha did not repeal its law until 1967, Columbus until 1972,

and Chicago until 1974. Hostility to deafness and sign language will be discussed in the body of the essay.

3. Or perhaps not all that unusual. As Susan Burch describes it, "Particularly in the Midwest, strong athletic programs defined the school experience for many young boys." This was certainly the case at Ohio. See Burch, *Signs of Resistance: American Deaf Cultural History, 1900–1942* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 76.

4. All information on the Ohio Independents from Ralph LinWeber, "The Ohio Independents of 1879," *The Silent Worker* (July 1959), 17–18. There is also a good team picture on page 20.

5. All information on Dundon from Ralph LinWeber, "The Dundon Story," *The Silent Worker* (July 1959), 19–21. An image of Dundon graces the cover of the issue.

6. Figure as reported in Douglas C. Baynton, Jack R. Gannon, and Jean Lindquist Bergey, *Through Deaf Eyes: A Photographic History of an American Community* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2007), 41. This source does not list the names. However, from other historical records, we know that Arthur Hinch played as an outfielder in the Western League, George Kihm as a first baseman in various leagues, including the New York State League and the California League, Harry Dix as a pitcher in the Cotton States League, William Fankhauser as a third baseman in the Indiana State League, and William Sawhill as an outfielder in the Ohio State League. See Ralph LinWeber, "The Ohio Independents of 1879," *The Silent Worker* (July 1959), 18.

7. Hoy as quoted in Art Kruger, "AAAD Hall of Fame Created," *The Silent Worker* (July 1952), 26.

8. Career summary in Stephen Jay Gould, *Triumph and Tragedy in Mudville* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 116–7.

9. All stats from baseball-reference.com. In addition, looking at Sabermetric stats, Hoy's career batting average of .287 compares to the league average of .281; his combined on base and slugging percentage of .759 to the league's .725.

10. Panara as quoted in Scott Pitoniak, "He fans the flame for deaf ballplayer," Rochester (New York) Democrat & Chronicle (1997), 1A. Exact date not recorded on this clipping, in the Hoy file, at the National Baseball Hall of Fame library and archive.

11. See Bill James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 2001), 685, 735, 739, 781.

12. Flaherty's *L.A. Examiner* column of 21 May 1952, as reprinted in *The Silent Worker* (July 1952), 25.

13. Dick Sipek interview recounted in Matthew Moore, "The Colorful Legacy of Dummy Hoy, Part Two," *Deaf Life* (December 1992), 25.

14. *Souvenir of the Cincinnati Base Ball Club: Upon the Occasion of the Dedication of the Grand Stand, May 16th, 1902* (Cincinnati: Manns Engraving & Printing, 1902).

15. Matthew Moore and Robert Panara, "William 'Dummy' Hoy," in *Great Deaf Americans*, 3rd ed. (Rochester: Deaf Life, 2008), 85. See also Randy Fisher and Jami N. Fisher, "The Deaf and the Origin of Hand Signals in Baseball," *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* 28 (2008): 35–39.

16. See Joseph Overfield, "William Ellsworth Hoy (Dummy)," *Nineteenth Century Stars*, ed. Robert Tiemann and Mark Rucker (Kansas City, MO: Society for American Baseball Research, 1989), 64; Mac Davis, *100 Greatest Baseball Heroes* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1974), see the chapter "Bill Hoy: The Amazing Dummy,"; Ira Smith, *Baseball's Famous Outfielders* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1954), 22–26.

17. See Gould, *Triumph and Tragedy in Mudville*, 112–129, for his discussion of Hoy.

18. Story recounted in Robert Panara, "Why a short Ohio farm boy belongs in the Hall of Fame," *The Beacon Journal* (July 19, 1991), A15.

19. Reported by Michael Zitz, "Local Man wants deaf player added to Baseball Hall of Fame," for fredericksburg.com, the on-line edition of *The Free Lance Star*, on 30 July 2006.

20. Griffith as quoted in Ira Smith, *Baseball's Famous Outfielders*, 24.

21. Though *The Sporting Life* did report in 1893 that he was learning to talk. "So far," the reporter noted, "his vocabulary consists only of swear words for use against umpires."

22. "McGraw's Worst Panning Given by Dummy Taylor," *The Silent Worker* (October 1916), 9.

23. Fred Snodgrass as quoted in Lawrence S. Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times: The Story of the Early Days of Baseball Told by the Men who Played It*, rev. ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), 101.
24. Snodgrass in Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times*, 101.
25. As reported in R.E. Lloyd, "With Our Exchanges," *The Silent Worker* (June 1905), 148.
26. Figures from Douglas C. Baynton, *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign Against Sign Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4–5.
27. For more on Bell, and the link between oralism and eugenics, see Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance*, 139–142. See also Douglas Baynton, *Forbidden Signs*, 30–1.
28. Baynton 31.
29. This in spite of the fact that both of the schools for the deaf they attended, Ohio and Kansas respectively, taught speech and lipreading when each man was a student. Another gap, one might say, between oralist pedagogical theory and learning outcome.
30. For attacks on the deaf community in the turn of the century period, see Douglas C. Baynton, *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign Against Sign Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
31. For a gendered discussion of normalization pressure on the deaf community, see Burch 82–3.
32. Clarence Boxley, "From the Troy Letter Box," *The Silent Worker* (December 1901), 52.
33. For more on the practice of labeling students "oral failures," see Burch, *Signs of Resistance*, 137.
34. Burch 81.
35. "Died. William Ellsworth Hoy," *Time* (December 22, 1961), 50.
36. Arthur Mann, "Mute Testimony," *Baseball Magazine* (September 1945), 343.
37. William Hoy, "Isn't Hoy Right?" *The Silent Worker* (January 1924), 151.
38. Alexander Pach, "With the Silent Workers," *The Silent Worker* (May 1905), 124.
39. "Luther Taylor," *The Silent Worker* (November 1904), 22.
40. James Brady, "The Deaf in Athletics," *The Silent Worker* (January 1924), 147.
41. See Darryl Brock, *Havana Heat: A Novel* (New York: Total Sports Illustrated, 2000).

Asians and Baseball: The Breaking and Perpetuating of Stereotypes

Terumi Rafferty-Osaki

This paper chronicles evolving perceptions of Asian and Asian-American participation in baseball. Although a comprehensive history of Asia in the American consciousness is beyond the scope of this paper, consideration of the larger culture and political context is essential to understanding race in the microcosm of baseball. Misconceptions influenced the Asian experience in America's game. Minority groups are often seen by the dominant majority as a monolithic entity. Stereotypes deny individuality. Like other racial and ethnic minorities, Asians, on and off the diamond, frequently encountered prejudicial stereotypes.¹

Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm coined the term "Yellow Peril" in 1895.² Over the next twenty years, anti-Asian sentiment grew in the United States and Europe. While covering the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) for William Randolph Hearst's newspapers, novelist Jack London repeated and perpetuated the "Yellow Peril" refrain. The seeds of the subhuman/superhuman dichotomy of Asian stereotyping can be seen in London's prose:

The Korean is the perfect type of inefficiency — of utter worthlessness. The Chinese is the perfect type of industry. For sheer work no worker in the world can compare with him.... The infusion of other blood, Malay, perhaps, has made the Japanese a race of mastery and power, a fighting race through all its history, a race which has always despised commerce and exalted fighting.... The menace to the Western world lies, not in the little brown man, but in the four hundred millions of yellow men should the little brown [Japanese] man undertake their management.³

London's disdain and mistrust of Asians is obvious. London depicts a stoic, hard working, submissive, well mannered, and quiet group, but he also views Asians as secretive, crafty, cunning, sneaky, untrustworthy, and a potential threat. For London, Asians are at once contemptible and fearsome.

In 1898, with its triumph in the Spanish–American War, the United States acquired new territories. American acquisitions from Spain extended to the Philippines in the Pacific. Contemporaneously, Japan was emerging from two hundred years of isolation, determined to modernize and make its power felt internationally. The Japanese viewed the American presence in the Pacific with anxiety. Mistrust between the United States and Japan was mutual. The outcome of the Russo–Japanese War intensified concerns. By May of 1905, Japan had defeated the Russian army — and destroyed the entire Russian navy. The United States negotiated an end to hostilities with the Treaty of Portsmouth, but American fears grew when Japan solidified its hold on Korea, ultimately colonizing the peninsula in 1910.

The Chinese also stoked American apprehension. The Republican Revolution of 1911 presaged decades of turbulence in China, punctuated by the Japanese invasion, World War II, and the clash between Nationalists and Communists. Across the Pacific, Asian immigrants encountered prejudicial stereotypes in the United States.

Significant Chinese immigration to the United States commenced in the mid–nineteenth century, with San Francisco attracting large numbers of these new arrivals. Later, in the late 1890s, Japanese immigrants started arriving on the West Coast. Japanese immigration was modest in scope, and, initially, Japanese immigrants often settled in small, rural West Coast communities. A larger number of Japanese came to Hawaii as contract workers in the 1880s, and, in 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii, eventually granting it statehood in 1959.

For a century, between 1848 and 1948, immigrants born in Asia were not eligible for naturalization. Asian-born immigrants were not permitted to own land or file mining claims.⁴ Asian immigrants could not vote, hold government office, work for the state, or testify against whites in court, although their American-born children qualified for citizenship. The Immigration Act of 1924 placed highly restrictive quotas on non–European immigration, and it was not until 1943 that the prohibition against naturalization was lifted for Chinese immigrants then living in the United States. For Japanese immigrants, the restriction was not lifted until 1952. Consequently, the children of Asian immigrants— who were citizens— served as the standard bearers for their immigrant parents’ hopes.

Baseball in Asia first came to Japan in the early 1870s, introduced by Horace Wilson, a history and English teacher.⁵ It was brought to Taiwan by the Japanese, circa 1895, when China ceded the island to Japan at the end of the Sino–Japanese War. A missionary is reputed to have introduced baseball to Korea in 1905. American major leaguers visited Korea in 1922, routing their hosts in competition by a score of 21–3.

During the game’s early years in Asia, baseball found its most ardent

adherents in Japan. In 1896, an international game was played between the Yokohama Country Athletic Club Nine, represented by Americans, and the First Higher School of Tokyo. Japan won this first meeting by the score of 29–4.⁶ After this remarkable upset, interest in the sport of baseball grew exponentially in Japan. A bilateral baseball relationship developed between the two countries over the next three-and-a-half decades with a number of teams crossing the Pacific from Japan to the United States and vice-versa. This relationship was violently interrupted by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which made the two nations enemies during World War II.

Pearl Harbor heightened anti-Japanese sentiment as well as ubiquitous—and negative—stereotypes directed against Japanese-Americans. Some Americans feared attack from the “Yellow Peril” in their midst. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, uprooting approximately 120,000 Japanese-Americans, many of whom were native-born citizens. These Japanese-Americans were confined, for the duration of World War II, to ten Relocation Centers, located in remote areas of seven states. The internees came from the West Coast, a region with a long history of prejudice toward Asians, which post-Pearl Harbor fear about an invasion intensified. (Japanese-Americans in Hawaii and other non-West Coast areas were exempt from the relocation directives.) One of the largest relocation centers, Manzanar, was located in the desert area of Owens Valley in eastern California; it had a sprawling 500-acre housing area, surrounded by barbed wire and eight watch towers. In September 1942, Manzanar domiciled 10,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry. By the time Manzanar discharged its last internee in November 1945, 11,700 had passed through its gates.

In February of 1943, military recruiters came to the various detention centers looking for volunteers and to register young men for the draft. A number of Nisei (second generation Japanese-Americans) volunteered or were pressed into service in military intelligence units, which employed their linguistic skills in the Pacific campaign as interpreters and spies. Others volunteered or were inducted into the newly-formed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which fought with considerable distinction in North Africa, France, Italy, and Germany. The 442nd became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in United States military history, receiving seven Presidential Unit citations, with 21 Medal of Honor recipients. It also suffered one of the highest casualty rates.

Those interned in relocation centers experienced hardship of a different sort. The *Manzanar Free Press*, published by internees, asserted, “Discrimination and prejudice is brought about by ignorance and fear. It is a human trait to fear the unknown.”⁷ Differences in dress, language, and culture added to the mysteriousness and inscrutability of Asians. Cultural difference between Asians and Americans—eating with two wooden sticks and odd-looking char-

acters on a page — reinforced perceptions of the exotic of the East and of “the other.”

Despite the many difficulties encountered in the United States, Asians, especially the Japanese, embraced America’s game. In all ten relocation centers, within the area enclosed by barbed wire and watchtowers, internees built baseball diamonds. Men and women played baseball and softball on teams bearing sobriquets such as “Red Sox,” “Solon Nine,” “Pick Ups,” “Forget-Me-Nots,” and “Twixteeners.” From June 1944 to June 1945, the *Manzanar Free Press* had a full page devoted to “Sports”—which meant baseball. The game was central to internment camp life. Writer and civil rights activist Steven Kluger stated:

The baseball diamonds at Manzanar and the other nine federal “relocation camps” comprised the very heart of the internment experience for most of the surviving internees. Baseball, in fact, was the only aspect of the lives they’d led before their Constitution was taken away that they were allowed to keep with them during their three years behind barbed wire. To rebuild the baseball diamond at Manzanar is to thank them for retaining their faith in this country, even when they had no reason to do so.⁸

The departure of Nisei from the camps for military service prompted references to baseball. The sports page of the *Manzanar Free Press* reported:

Rohwar loses four of their greatest ball players ... Frank Kamibayashi, one of the best shortstop [sic]; Ted Kamibayashi, the most valuable pitcher in the camp. Two of these boys was [sic] formally [of] Stockton. The other two are — Sammie Ichiba a valuable centerfielder and also first base co champ to the Bronx; Butch Hayashi, known as one of the greatest catchers formerly from a place called Lodi. They are now serving for Uncle Sam.⁹

The evolution and morphing of negative and positive stereotypes of Asian-Americans eventually created the concept of “model minority” as the dominant depiction of Asians-Americans. For example, *The Abilities and Achievements of Orientals in North America*, by social scientist Philip Vernon, supports the “model minority” paradigm. Indicative of the varied implications of the “model minority” designation, Vernon employs the term “Orientals,” a nomenclature that, by the time of the book’s publication (1982), many Asian-Americans regarded as pejorative. It is not without significance that the Pioneer Fund, which promoted eugenics and racial separatism, provided financial support for Vernon’s study.¹⁰ Vernon attributes Asian-American success to their family values:

Adherence to accepted conventions of social behavior.... Discouragement of egocentricity and recognition of obligations to others; loyalty and obedience to authorities, employers, and to the state. The need for hard work to gain success and honor the family.¹¹

Vernon's depiction of Asian-Americans as a "model minority" is, however, pervaded by paternalism.

Scholar Frank H. Wu challenges the myth of the "model minority." Wu argues that shibboleths about the Asian "model minority" is a mechanism for exaltation of the American experience: "In the view of other Americans, Asian Americans vindicate the American Dream."¹² The Asian "model minority" concept allows conservatives to argue that other minorities are responsible for their own lack of success. This line of reasoning suggests that the academic, professional, and financial success of the Asian "model minority" validates the American way. Indeed, the recent United States Census Bureau reports that Asian Americans have the highest median income amongst the nation's racial minorities.¹³ However, Wu cites recent research by University of Texas scholar Arthur Sakamoto that challenges statistics used to support the Asian "model minority" designation,¹⁴ particularly in regards to income.¹⁵

Nonetheless, educational attainments reinforce the Asian "model minority" stereotype. In 2007, Asian-Americans constituted 18 percent of the student population at Harvard.¹⁶ In fact, Asian-Americans now attend the nation's best universities at a rate four times higher than the national average. Such achievements perpetuate the perception that all Asians are hardworking, silent, and "good." University of Wisconsin scholar Stacey Lee observes, "Within the model minority discourse, 'good' minorities, like 'good' women, are silent. 'Good' minorities know their place within the system and do not challenge the existing system."¹⁷

Academic achievement has not led to positive perceptions of Asian-American masculinity.¹⁸ Indeed, it perpetuates the stereotype of Asian males as "nerds." Social scientist David L. Eng offers insight into perceptions of Asian-American masculinity:

the building of the transcontinental railroad, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the era of cold war diplomacy, and the rescinding of immigration exclusion and the liberation of immigration policy from 1943–1965 have worked to shape a mainstream perception of the Asian American male as what Frank Chin calls the, "emasculated sissy."¹⁹

In sports, the most positive image of Asian athletic prowess is in the martial arts. The popular culture, however, often views Asian masters of the martial arts as exotic, mysterious, and inscrutable. Their proficiency in the martial arts thus perpetuates the belief that Asians employ craftiness, deception, intellect, and speed to compensate for a lack of physical stature.

As pundit George Will writes, baseball occupies a special place in American culture: "Baseball, it is said, is only a game. True. And the Grand Canyon is only a hole in Arizona. Not all holes or games are created equal."²⁰ The game's growth in post-World War II Japan offered an avenue for healing the Japanese

psyche as well as for improving the defeated nation's relationship with America. On September 1, 1964, only a generation after atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a left-handed relief pitcher, Masanori Murakami, became the first Japanese player to appear in Major League Baseball (MLB).

Murakami, an "accidental pioneer," pitched 15 innings and had a 1.80 earned run average in his abbreviated 1964 season with the San Francisco Giants.²¹ Murakami's arrival in MLB, and his subsequent return the following season, reverberated on both sides of the Pacific for a generation. Murakami had previously pitched in three games for the Nankai Hawks of Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) in 1963. With the approval of the commissioners of both NPB and MLB, Murakami and two other Japanese players were signed by the San Francisco organization in 1964 and assigned by the Giants to minor league teams, ostensibly to gain experience. The general manager of the Hawks entered into the agreement with the belief that the three athletes sent to America lacked the ability to play MLB. Murakami and his two cohorts were thus subject to a "standard option" provision, allowing San Francisco to purchase the contract of any of the Japanese players who made the parent team for the pricey sum of \$10,000.²²

Murakami did well in the San Francisco farm system, joining the Giants for September games against the New York Mets. With his major league debut, Murakami's popularity exploded in Japan — and became the source of tension between NPB and MLB. The Giants quickly exercised their right in accordance with the option clause and paid the Nankai Hawks the required amount for the services of Murakami for the 1965 season.

During the off-season, under intense pressure from the Nankai Hawks and his family, Murakami signed a second contract with the Japanese organization. This set the stage for a major contractual and cultural conflict between the American and Japanese leagues. Commentator Robert Whiting notes, "The Japanese believe more in the *spirit* of the contract than the letter, that the purpose of the contract was to ensure both sides benefited."²³ MLB, however, pointed to the legal aspects of the contract. The Japanese principle of *aimaina* complicated the cultural and legal impasse. *Aimaina*, for the Japanese, makes a "virtue" of the intentionally vague, obscure, equivocal, dubious, and noncommittal.²⁴ *Aimaina* constitutes the oil that greases the wheels of complex Japanese society. If nothing is said too directly or concretely, then no one is boxed into a corner, allowing room for everyone to "save face" should circumstances change.

The Nankai Hawks believed that the San Francisco contract was now null and void on the basis of the Japanese tradition of *amae* (dependence on the benevolence of others).²⁵ Nankai believed, writes Whiting, that the Giants "had to understand *their* [Nankai's] *needs*.... In all honesty how could the Giants expect them to give up a promising pitcher so easily? Viewed in that light, wasn't San Francisco in the wrong?"²⁶

National pride also figured prominently in the controversy between the Nankai Hawks and the San Francisco Giants. Orestes Destrade, a former major leaguer who played in NPB, asserted, “The Japanese, I found, are wonderful people, very nationalistic, very biased — not prejudiced — but biased.... They would rather see Japanese win than a foreigner win.”²⁷ NPB feared that if Murakami failed in MLB, Japanese baseball would lose face. Conversely, NPB was concerned that if Murakami achieved success in MLB, more Japanese players would leave for the United States.

The San Francisco Giants, supported by MLB Commissioner Ford Frick, protested the maneuvers of the Nankai Hawks. The Giants asserted that their contract was binding. As relations grew more contentious, MLB suspended relations with NPB on February 17, 1965.²⁸ A compromise was reached; Nankai returned the posting fee, and Murakami, on May 4, returned to San Francisco for the remainder of the 1965 season. Giants fans greeted him with enthusiasm. In 1965, Murakami had a 3.75 earned run average (ERA), a 4–1 won-loss record, and eight saves, while registering an impressive 85 strikeouts in only in 7½ innings. At the end of the season, Murakami returned to Japan, never to return to MLB.

Murakami’s brief stint with the Giants did not spell the death knell of old stereotypes in the MLB. Perception of Asians as deviant and duplicitous continued to linger in American baseball. Though some teams, including the Giants, continued to pursue Japanese players, cultural differences as well as duty to team and country deterred Asian players from coming to the United States for the next thirty years.

Then, on February 8, 1995, baseball in Japan and in the United States marked a major milestone. On that winter day, the Los Angeles Dodgers signed Hideo Nomo, a 6' 2" right-handed pitcher, formerly of the Kintetsu Buffaloes. Following MLB’s strike-shortened 1994 MLB season, Nomo became a feel-good story in 1995. The Dodgers, Asian-Americans across the United States, and the media embraced him with enthusiasm. The July 10, 1995, issue of *Sports Illustrated* featured a cover-story on Nomo. His rise to stardom in the United States, however, came at a price. Nomo was viewed by some of his countrymen as a traitor.

NPB contracts can be viewed as a form of indentured servitude. Japanese players sign with one franchise for nine to ten years of service, but NPB team contracts are issued on a year-to-year basis. NPB player salaries are also determined year to year. Thus NPB teams can hire and fire at will. Japanese teams have the right to lock in a player’s services for a ten-year period, but only have to guarantee employment one year at a time. Nomo, however, found a loophole in his Japanese contract. He “voluntarily retired,” thereby releasing him from the mandatory term of service, which, in essence, rendered Nomo a free agent. With that bold decision, Nomo had crossed his Rubicon.

Nomo could not turn back, and he would encounter many obstacles. American culture, an unfamiliar cuisine, travel across four time zones, a longer season, and a language barrier would constitute major challenges. By defying Japanese tradition, Nomo knew that failure would bring absolute disgrace. Destrades, now a sportscaster, notes:

The pioneer ... the guy that definitely opened the door is Hideo Nomo.... I had never seen anybody like him and he took it upon himself that [sic] he did not like the way they were treating the Japanese players. They were going on year-to-year contracts, where they had to personally sit in front of their ownership and kind of fight for a raise every year. No agents, no multiyear contracts, their players' association was null and void, while we [gaijin- foreigner/outsider] were coming in [with] multiyear contracts and a lot more attributes to our deal.... Obviously if Nomo had failed, if Nomo had not succeeded in the United States, he would have been considered really such a huge failure. He would have had to gone[sic] back to Tokyo, to Japan with his tail between his legs. So the fact that he succeeded opened up the doors and gave that confidence to all the other players you saw after him....²⁹

Nomo bridged the gap between Japan and America. An outstanding pitcher, he also proved to be a significant source of revenue for the Dodgers. Tom Verducci, a senior writer with *Sports Illustrated*, observed that for home games “attendance has gone up 4 percent, to 38,311, when Nomo has pitched, and souvenir stands pack \$150 Nomo jackets, \$50 Nomo sweatshirts, \$25 Nomo T-shirts, \$15 limited edition Nomo baseballs, \$5 Nomo pins.”³⁰

During his rookie season in MLB, Nomo was chosen as the starting pitcher for the National League (NL) in the All-Star Game. A source of great fascination for the media and fans, Nomo sat for interviews—both in English and Japanese—all morning and all afternoon—on the day before the All-Star Game. The exoticness of Nomo’s long pause with arms extended above his head, the coil of his body, and then the throw—the mythical “tornado wind-up” pitching motion—garnered much comment during the All-Star Game.³¹

Pitching 191⅓ innings during the 1995 season, Nomo had a 13–6 won-lost record and the second lowest ERA in the NL (2.54). Recipient of NL Rookie of the Year award, he led the league in strikeouts (236) and tied for the lead in shutouts (3). It was, by any standard, an impressive rookie season. Nomo had built a bridge for other Asian ballplayers to follow. The Far East had established a beachhead in MLB. After Nomo’s success in 1995, other MLB teams sought talent from Asia.

In the years following Nomo’s MLB debut, a new version of baseball “integration” followed. Technically, South Korean pitcher Chan Ho Park reached the majors before Nomo, but he pitched but a scant four innings for the Dodgers in both 1994 and 1995, spending most of those seasons in the minors. In 1996, Park remained with the Dodgers throughout the season, registering

119 strikeouts in only 108⅓ innings. Between 1996 and 2000, other Asian pitchers made their debut with MLB teams, including the Seattle Mariners (Mac Suzuki, 1996; Kazuhiro Sasaki, 2000), New York Yankees (Hideki Irabu, 1997), Los Angeles Angels (Shigetoshi Hasagawa, 1997), New York Mets (Takashi Kashiwada, 1997; Masato Yoshii, 1998), Detroit Tigers (Masao Kida, 1999), and Boston Red Sox (Tomokazu Ohka, 1999).

Despite the fact that the Asian pitchers mentioned above ranged in height from 5'11" to 6'4", the old stereotype concerning the diminutive Asian physique lingered. Empirical data outside of baseball contributes to these stereotypes. The average height of the Japanese male is between 5'6" and 5'7"; for the South Korean male, it is 5'8"; and for the Taiwanese male it is 5'7". The average height for non-Hispanic white males in the United States is 5'9"–5'10."³² Whiting captured the mindset of those who still questioned the physicality of Asian males: "Sure, there might have been a few pitchers capable of performing at the top levels of the American game, but they were the exception. Playing every day was something else."³³ Asian position players continued to be excluded from MLB because they were seen as too small. This exclusion lasted until Ichiro Suzuki's 2001 debut with the Seattle Mariners. Whiting noted, "[Ichiro's] detractors snootily declared that the bigger and stronger MLB pitchers would cut the 27-year-old wisp down to size with high inside fastballs."³⁴

During his 2001 rookie season, Suzuki, like Nomo before him, became a household name. As with a select group of pop icons, he was soon referred to only by his first name — Ichiro. With his spectacular offensive and defensive play, Suzuki won the American League Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player awards; in MLB history, Boston's Fred Lynn (1975) is the only other rookie to garner the two accolades in the same season. In addition, Suzuki's defensive prowess earned him a Gold Glove.

Suzuki's "mystique" intrigued the public. ESPN pundit Jim Caple mused, "We want to think of him as we do 'Area 51' the nickname for the grassy lawn he patrols in right field — mysterious and alien."³⁵ Sportswriter Jeff Pearlman observed:

Between pitches in rightfield, Ichiro puts on a calisthenics clinic. If he's not rolling his shoulders he's stretching his quads, he's bending at the waist and touching his toes. When he sits at his locker he methodically rubs a six-inch wooden stick up and down the sides and bottoms of his feet.³⁶

Imagery of Suzuki in Japan and America differed. The Seattle outfielder appealed to national pride in Japan. In America, part of the fascination with Suzuki derived from perceptions of him as the exotic "other." ESPN featured his stretches before entering the batter's box. A Seattle Mariners commercial highlighted Suzuki's idiosyncratic routine in the batter's box. In an age of steroid-size ballplayers, American commentators emphasized that the lithe

outfielder stood only 5'9" and weighed a mere 160 pounds. Paving the way for the next wave of Asian players, Suzuki proved that an Asian position player could play in MLB every day and be effective.

Nicknamed "Godzilla," Hideki Matsui — the 6'2", 212 pound, New York Yankees outfielder — is certainly not diminutive. Since his 2003 MLB debut, Matsui, a veteran of the Japanese Central League, has slammed home more than 100 runs each season, save for his injury-plagued 2006 campaign. During the 2007 season, eighteen Asian players were on MLB rosters, and only two (including Suzuki) weighed less than 180 pounds, providing a rebuttal to the emphasis on the small, fragile Asian physique.³⁷

Suzuki debunked the shibboleth that Asians could not be effective position players. Nonetheless, praise from the players and the media for Suzuki's "Asian work ethic," as well as his willingness to always do what was best for the team, perpetuated elements of the "model minority" stereotype. Suzuki reinforced this image when he told St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony La Russa: "You Americans would be much better if you practiced more."³⁸

Suzuki's comment perpetuates the image of the hardworking, compliant, and dedicated Asian. American stereotypes of the Asian "other" derive from cultural differences. Baseball training in Japan is intense. In Japan, practice lasts from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. every day; it includes a drill involving fielding 1,000 balls as well as taking endless shadow swings. As a schoolboy pitcher in Japan, Daisuke Matsuzaka, a 2007 MLB rookie, exemplified a selfless work ethic; in one high school game, he threw an incredible 254 pitches in 17 innings, then returned the next day to save a game in the ninth inning. A day later, Matsuzaka pitched a no-hitter in the Japan's prestigious Koshien High School Tournament.

Suzuki, of course, remains the most commented-upon Asian player in MLB. Caple does not find the Seattle outfielder an enigma: "This then, is the real secret of Ichiro: There is no mystery. The Zen of Japan's most successful baseball player is little more than the quality people here once called the good old American work ethic."³⁹ Caple's remark suggests that the attribute of hard work is not exclusive to Asians. Nonetheless, perceptions of the Asian "other" persist.

Suzuki's *wa* (harmony) reflects Japanese culture — and is not as exotic or mysterious as some Americans find it. Leon Lee, who played baseball in Japan (and is the father of Chicago Cubs' first baseman Derrek Lee), offers this perspective on the Asian game:

It's more of a culture [in Japan] than a game. You have a duty, a duty to mentally and physically prepare yourself to play the game, a duty to work as a part of the group. The team concept the *wa* is everything.⁴⁰

Supporting Lee's observation, Trey Hillman, formerly the American manager of Japan's Nippon Ham Fighters and currently the skipper of MLB's Kansas

City Royals, asserts, “Rituals and customs are very important in Japan. There are ways they like to do things, and have done them for years. If you ask them to deviate from that, you have to move slowly....”⁴¹ For Japanese ballplayers, according to Hillman, culture dictates giving primacy to the best interests of the team. Therefore, *all* Japanese players know how to bunt and execute the hit and run. The Japanese do play small ball, but it is because of the culture and *wa*, not because they lack power.

For most Asian players, the transition to MLB is not made “easier” by their work ethic. Asians in MLB do not necessarily work harder — though they may work more on fundamentals. Training, however, is different in the United States than in Asia. Shigetoshi Hasagawa, who played the game in Japan and in the United States, clarifies these differences:

The content of camp between US and Japan is so different. In the case of Japan, the objective is to build up stamina (which is impossible). Most of the camps begin at 9:00 A.M. and last until 3:00 P.M. Practice in the United States lasted from 9:00 until noon, then players practice on their own; especially weight training.⁴²

Hasagawa contends that race is not the key variable. Culture has led to differences between Japanese and American baseball. To succeed in MLB, Japanese players have to adapt to the American context.

Social scientist Stacey Lee asserts that descriptions of Asians as quiet and well-behaved derive from the perception of an “emasculated sissy” stereotype, based on the assumption that “good minorities ... know their place in the system.”⁴³ Americans often view contemporary Asians as a non-threatening people who are conciliatory, reserved and devoid of anger. In MLB, the conduct and words of some Asians contradict this shibboleth. During the 2003 American League Divisional Series, for example, Boston Red Sox pitcher Byung-Hyun Kim gave fans an obscene hand gesture after being removed from a game. As part of rookie hazing in 2005, New York Yankees pitcher Chien-Ming Wang donned a cheerleader uniform.⁴⁴ These, as well as other instances, deviate from the stereotype of the quiet reserved Asian ballplayer.

In a *Sports Illustrated* interview, Wang proclaimed a desire for recognition as a standard bearer: “If I play well here, more teams will go to Taiwan for players. I want to be a role model.”⁴⁵ Likewise, Seattle Mariners catcher Kenji Johjima acknowledged his needs as an individual:

First of all, I myself being Japanese, I wanted to play in the majors. I’m not saying all the players in Japan want to play in the majors. I’m not like the best power hitters here. Players like Ichiro, who doesn’t[sic] have power can come over here and play. We have a lot of players in other countries that can come and play. It’s hard to say because we all have our own dreams and that’s to play in the major leagues. That’s why I’m here right now.⁴⁶

In a 2004 interview, Nomo openly criticized the intensity and rigidity of the Japanese training regimen: “It’s a great feeling to be responsible for yourself and to be free to be yourself. In Japan you’re treated like a child.”⁴⁷ The preceding comments challenge the stereotype of the reserved Asian minority.

As was the case with earlier fascination concerning Nomo’s “tornado wind-up” and Suzuki’s on-deck/batter’s box rituals, fans and the media dwell on pitcher Akinori Otsuka’s hesitation, double-clutch, knee lift before throwing. Two Boston Red Sox pitchers also elicit extensive comment for perceived peculiarities; Daisuke Matsuzaka’s gyroball and Hideki Okijima’s whiplash action of his head just prior to releasing the ball are both viewed as exotic behavior. According to one sportswriter, “The cherubic face of Daisuke Matsuzaka bears a mysterious contentment, the calm self-assuredness of a kid who knows something you don’t....”⁴⁸ Discussions about the mysterious and inscrutable Asian continue, but, in reality there is no mystery. Asians, like other MLB players, have individual quirks. MLB today, as it has in the past, has many players who exhibit distinctive rituals. For Asian players, however, the idiosyncrasies are perceived as exotic, perpetuating the stereotype of the inscrutable Asian.

Conclusion

Americans once believed that Asians could never develop the skills required to play MLB. In 1977, *Sports Illustrated*’s Frank Deford, an influential pundit, wrote sarcastically of reaction to Sadaharu Oh, the half-Chinese, half-Japanese legend who holds the record for career home runs with 868 in the NPB: “Because there are only 113 million Japanese and because they have been playing for only 105 years, it is foolishness to think that a single one of these tiny little folks could excel at our great American game.”⁴⁹ While stereotypical images of the exotic “other” prove resilient, the MLB success of a number of Asian major leaguers in recent years vitiates such canards. In a 2007 ESPN interview, former New York Mets skipper Bobby Valentine, currently managing in Japan, observed,

At one time, Japanese players went to the major leagues to see if they could play. At one time, American players went to Japan to make money. But the shoe is on the other foot now. The Japanese know they can play there. They come back and say, “It’s not as tough as you think.” They go because the money is so different.⁵⁰

The Asian migration to MLB is still in its early stages. After Nomo upended the NPB with his voluntary retirement (now known as the “Nomo Clause”), Japanese teams realized they had to change their system or face the same fate as the Negro leagues, which deconstructed when MLB appropriated their best

players. NPB has responded by creating a posting system that allows Japanese players to request to play in the United States, with the proviso that MLB teams compensate the Japanese owners for the player's services.

Under the current Japanese posting system, it is highly unlikely that Japanese baseball players will come in droves. Given tradition and *wa*, Japanese players still have to serve a majority of their nine-year contracts in Japan. Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China is just beginning to develop its baseball program, spurred by the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. On July 7, 2007, the *New York Times* reported the signing of two mainland Chinese players by the New York Yankees organization.⁵¹

According to *ESPN* commentator Tim Kurkjian, organized baseball in Taiwan and Korea is about fifteen years behind that of Japan.⁵² However, players from Korea and Taiwan are opting not to play in the Korean Baseball Organization (KBO) or the fledgling Taiwan Major League (formed in 1996 as the successor to the Chinese Professional Baseball League). Instead, they are signing minor league contracts with American franchises.⁵³ Due to this practice, players from Korea and Taiwan are often younger when they begin their MLB careers than their Japanese counterparts.⁵⁴ Therefore, as a result of the impediments of the Japanese posting system, Korean and Taiwanese players may well come to constitute the largest cohort of Asians in MLB.

Asian players in MLB will continue to perpetuate and break myths, labels, and stereotypes. The exoticness of Matsuzaka's gyroball and Suzuki's "Area 51" (now located in centerfield) attract fans to MLB ballparks— as well as promote the sale of merchandise in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. It is probable, however, that with the passage of time and continued integration, perceptions of the exotic "other" will increasingly yield to perception of Asians as simply talented ballplayers.⁵⁵

There are, of course, contrarians. Former MLB player Lenn Sakata, a Japanese-American and the current manager of the Class A San Jose Giants, offers caveats. Sakata contends that "old prejudices still exist regarding smaller ball players."⁵⁶ These prejudices, believes Sakata, will provide limits to the numbers of Asians ballplayers in MLB.

Beyond baseball demography, the "model minority" stereotype continues as a double-edged sword for Asian-Americans, both on and off the baseball diamond:

history tells us that the model minority representation is dangerous because of the way it has been used by the dominant group. The model minority stereotype is dangerous because it tells Asian Americans and other minorities how to behave. The stereotype is dangerous because it is used against other minority groups to silence their claims about inequality. It is dangerous because it silences the experiences of Asians who can/do not achieve model minority success.⁵⁷

Thus, it is not enough for Asian players in MLB to be adequate or good. As part of a “model minority,” Asian players are expected to perform at a much higher level than others or face the stigma of failure. Furthermore, MLB organizations may decide that rather than spending the money and time training a raw Asian-American high school or college prospect, there is less risk in *importing* an Asian-born player who already possesses the skills to play in the major leagues. MLB scouts are looking for the next Ichiro Suzuki.

Asians still have to prove their longevity in the Major Leagues. Verducci exhibits skepticism about their durability: “Nomo had three good years for the Dodgers before he was traded at 29 and released at 30, triggering a journeyman career. Irabu was done at 33. Kaz Ishii was done at 32.”⁵⁸ Whiting notes similar concerns: “Of course, the question most people want to ask Japanese players given their major league track records is.... *How long are you going to last?*”⁵⁹ This poses a challenge for Daisuke Matsuzaka, Chien-Ming Wang, Cha Seung Baek, Kaz Matsui, and the next generation of Asian ballplayers. These players will need to make adjustments to extend their careers and dispel the perception that Asians have a shorter baseball lifespan.

Notes

1. See Robert G. Lee, *Oriental: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).
2. Akira Iikura, “The Yellow Peril: The German Kaiser Wilhelm II, His Cartoon and Their Relation to the Triple Intervention,” translated from Japanese, *Josai International Review*, July 15, 1997, 1.
3. Quoted in Frank Wu, *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White* (New York: Basic, 2001), 13.
4. Some early Japanese immigrants were able to purchase land. They owned and operated businesses within their communities. In 1913, the state of California passed the Alien Land Law, denying land ownership to aliens even if the land had been legally purchased prior to the law.
5. Robert Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro: The New Wave from Japan and the Transformation of Our National Pastime*, (New York: Warner, 2004), 148–149. See also: Steve Solloway, “Gorham Man’s gift to Japan: a National Pastime,” *The Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram*, May 20, 2007, <http://pressherald.maintoday.com/story.php?id=106835&ac=PHspt>. See also: Joseph Reaves, *Taking in a Game: A History of Baseball in Asia*, timeline reproduced on the Society of American Baseball Research webpage, “Japanese Baseball Timeline,” <http://asianbb.sabr.org/japanesebaseballtimeline.html> (accessed June 7, 2007).
6. Joseph Reaves, *Taking in a Game: A History of Baseball in Asia*, timeline reproduced on the Society of American Baseball Research webpage, “Japanese Baseball Timeline,” <http://asianbb.sabr.org/japanesebaseballtimeline.html> (accessed June 7, 2007).
7. “Misguided People,” *Manzanar Free Press*, July 19, 1944, 2.
8. David Marasco, “The Diamond at Manzanar — Controversy in the Desert,” <http://www.thediamondangle.com/archive/july04/manzanardiamond.html> (accessed June 24, 2007).
9. “Sports Bits,” *Manzanar Free Press*, August 16, 1944, 5.
10. See Philip Vernon, *Abilities and Achievements of Orientals in North America* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).
11. Wu, 45.
12. *Ibid.*, 44.

13. Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Robert J. Mills, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003," *United States Census Bureau Report*, August 2004.

14. Wu, 55.

15. *Ibid.*, 55.

16. Statistics were compiled by *US News and World Report* Annual Report, "America's Best Colleges 2007," and by *Newsweek* "How to Get into College 2007."

17. Stacey Lee, *Unraveling the Model Minority Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996), 7.

18. "Selected Characteristics of the Science and Engineering Population," http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind96/ch3_sele.htm (accessed June 12, 2007).

19. David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 29.

20. George Will, *Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 294.

21. Whiting, 72.

22. *Ibid.*, 73–74.

23. *Ibid.*, 76–77. For an excellent account of the saga of Masanori Murakami, see Ron Briley, "The Chinese Waal and Murakami, Too: The Baseball Establishment and Post-World War II Perceptions of the Asian Other," *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2003–2004*, ed. William M. Simons (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005).

24. Roger Davies and Osamu Ikeno eds. *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture* (Boston: Tuttle, 2002), 9.

25. *Ibid.*, 17.

26. Whiting, 77.

27. "The Foreigner Experience in Japan," Narr. Orestes Destrade, *Baseball Tonight*, sports.espn.go.com/mlb/asia/index (accessed March 7, 2007).

28. "Ford Frick," www.baseballlibrary.com/baseballlibrary/ballplayers/F/Frick_Ford.stm, accessed May 17, 2007. See also Whiting, 78.

29. "How the Posting System has affected Japan," Narr. Orestes Destrade, *Baseball Tonight*, sports.espn.go.com/mlb/asia/index, (accessed March 7, 2007).

30. Tom Verducci, "The Play's the Thing," *Sports Illustrated*, July 10, 1995, 22.

31. Mike DiGiovanna, "Nomo Offers Services with a Shot in the Arm," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1995, C1, C5.

32. Statistics come from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan, 2005) Official Statistics by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development MMA (Military Manpower Administration) White book 2004–06 (South Korea), and Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan) as sourced in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Average_height (accessed May 14, 2007).

33. Whiting, 25.

34. *Ibid.*, 26.

35. Jim Caple, "The Art of Being Ichiro," *ESPN.COM*, July 30, 2005, <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/eticket/story?page=ichiro> (accessed April 12, 2007).

36. Jeff Pearlman, "Big Hit" *Sports Illustrated*, May 21, 2001, 37.

37. Statistics are based on player information from www.espn.com accessed June 5, 2007, and www.baseball-reference.com accessed June 5, 2007. The eighteen foreign born players are: Daisuke Matsuzaka, Hideki Okijima, Tadahito Iguchi, Kazuo Matsui, Takashi Saito, Kei Igawa, Hideki Matsui, Kenji Johjima, Ichiro Suzuki, So Taguchi, Akinori Iwamura, Akinori Otsuka, Tomo Ohka, Byung-Hyun Kim, Cha Seung Baek, Hong-Chih Kuo, Chin-hui Tsao, and Chien-Ming Wang.

38. Robert Whiting, "Lost in Translation," *Sports Illustrated*, March 22, 2004, 101.

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Part V

NEW LEAGUES

Building a League One Dollar at a Time: The Story of the Immediate Success of the American League

Michael J. Hauptert and Kenneth Winter

Introduction

In 1901, the American League (AL), under the leadership of Byron Bancroft Johnson, began its life as a major league. The previous winter Johnson had announced the head-on competition with the National League (NL) when he refused to renew the expiring National Agreement. The American League was not the first competitor to the National League, nor would it be the last. It was, however, the only successful competitor.

Why was the AL successful? Their timing seemed extraordinarily bad. The NL had ended an eight-year 12-team experiment, apparently recognizing the limits of the demand for baseball. Per-team attendance had actually decreased by five percent in the NL since 1895. After contraction it fielded eight financially strong franchises with talented players and long histories in their cities. The NL seemed to be in fine shape to rule over the baseball monopoly it had created. Instead, it turned out to be a great time to expand. During the first decade of the 20th century, average per-team attendance nearly doubled, despite the doubling of the number of teams.

There is no evidence to suggest that the leap in demand was caused by exogenous events. Unlike the next big leap in attendance following the First World War, there was no spate of new stadium construction, post war recovery, or lively ball. So to what do we attribute the success of the American League and the growth in demand for baseball in general?

An important part of the answer is the business model employed by the AL. The AL was centralized with an effective leader in Ban Johnson, who built

a substantial financial war chest through careful control of league fees and the selection of baseball-literate, financially savvy owners. Johnson sold the franchises for only \$500 but convinced the owners to contribute 2.5 percent of their gate receipts to the league. The AL used those contributions to build a league surplus of \$36,000 by the time a truce was declared with the NL.¹ This kind of financial acumen not only insured the success of all franchises, but served as a source for loans when the spate of stadium building began in the latter part of the decade; six AL franchises built large new stadiums between 1909 and 1912 to more than double capacity.

The discovery of a set of AL financial records spanning the years 1900–1916 allows us to fill in some of the details of this tale of financial derring-do and better understand why the upstart American League was able to wrest control of baseball's monopoly away from the National League and force it to share what was to become the greatest monopoly, if not the greatest show, on earth.²

The Success of the American League

The early success of the American League is extraordinary when compared to other fledgling baseball leagues. The American Association, the Union Association, and the Players League had all failed prior to the start of the AL, and the National League had just contracted. In the near future the Federal League would emerge and quickly collapse. The AL was immediately successful on the field as well, winning six of the first ten World Series including the first one in 1903. In addition, in 1903 there were three intra-city or intra-state series between the AL and NL. The AL won two and tied one (the A's beat the Phils, Cleveland bested Cincinnati, and the Cubs and Sox split their games).³

The AL outdrew the NL in competitive cities (Tables 5 and 6, at the end of this chapter). In the first decade of competition the AL drew 3.8 million more fans than the NL in the competitive cities of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Overall, the AL attracted 15 percent more paying customers than the NL.

The AL was quite profitable. The franchises were capitalized for modest amounts when they were formed. In 1901, the Brewers were capitalized at \$25,000 and the Chicago White Sox at \$35,000. In 1912 the Red Sox sold for \$300,000. In 1915 the Yankees sold for \$460,000, and later that year the Indians changed hands for \$500,000. The White Sox were recapitalized for \$720,000 in 1922, representing a 15.5 percent annual return on the initial capitalized value.⁴

Using the AL financial ledgers we have estimated revenues for the first five years of the league's existence. In 1901 team revenues ranged from \$85,000 to \$225,000, for a \$146,000 average. In 1902 the range was \$96,000 to \$351,000

for a \$197,000 average. The Baltimore Orioles reportedly had the highest payroll in 1902 at \$43,000.⁵ If true, then all AL teams were likely to have been profitable. We suspect they were, since no payouts were made by the league to any team during the first five years, and by 1905 the AL had accumulated a war chest of nearly \$100,000.

Both leagues went on a stadium building binge beginning in 1909, ushering in the new era of concrete and steel stadiums (Table 3). In contrast to the 21st century stadium boom, all of these stadiums were privately financed. Charlie Comiskey built his \$500,000 ballpark in 1910 entirely out of retained earnings.⁶

David Pietrusza lays out four criteria that he believes are necessary for the long-term survival of a league.⁷ They are: money, leadership, player dissatisfaction with the older order, and what he terms necessity, but is really excess demand. If an existing league is earning high profits, then it will attract newcomers because it signals a situation in which the market is not able to meet current demand.

The American League clearly had the necessary financial resources to survive, Johnson proved to be an outstanding leader, and circumstances certainly provided cause for player dissatisfaction with the NL. Finally, it appears the AL recognized the profit potential, for it certainly cashed in on it, and it did so in a hurry.

A Brief History

The National League was formed in 1876. It had held a monopoly in the major league baseball industry since the failure of the American Association after the 1891 season. The NL absorbed the Baltimore, Louisville, St. Louis and Washington AA franchises for the 1892 season and continued with a 12-team circuit until 1900, when it dropped Baltimore, Louisville, Cleveland and Washington.⁸ The major leagues existed as a single eight-team league for the season of 1900. The next year the AL began play as a major league.

Ban Johnson was president of the Western League, considered a top-level minor league, from 1894 to 99. Johnson used a two-step approach to convert the minor Western League to the major American League. In 1900 he changed the name to American League to gain broader appeal. He also moved the St. Paul franchise into the Chicago market that year and the Grand Rapids franchise to Cleveland, which had just been dropped from the NL. The league would thus have teams in Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Detroit, Buffalo, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Minneapolis. Except for Minneapolis, every one of these cities had at one time been home to an NL team.

In 1900 the newly christened AL was still a minor league and competed

head-to-head with the NL only in Chicago. Importantly, it was still bound by the National Agreement, which was set to expire after the 1900 season. Johnson's move to compete head-on with the NL was driven by ambition, revenge, and the belief that there was enough demand for two leagues and that the largest cities could support two teams.

Johnson was bitter toward the NL because he had appealed to it on more than one occasion for better treatment of the Western League in the draft and was rebuffed each time. In those days, minor league players were promoted from the low minors to the high minors and from the high minors to the majors via a draft, in which the higher-level team could choose the players it wanted and pay a fixed fee to the club in compensation. When Johnson took over the Western League in 1894, the fee was \$500; it was increased to \$1000 in 1895 but went back to \$500 in 1896. Johnson tried repeatedly to get the amount increased back to \$1000 but was rebuffed by the NL.

Another thorn in Johnson's side was John T. Brush. Brush owned the Cincinnati Reds in the NL and Indianapolis in the Western League in the 1890s, and he regularly moved players between the franchises to suit the needs of whichever team he was trying to promote at the time. Brush could really use this scheme to his advantage in the Western League. For example, he could draft a star player from a rival team for the Reds, then later demote the player to help the Indianapolis team, thus simultaneously depleting a rival's roster and improving his own.

A series of events made 1901 the year for the AL to become a major league. The National Agreement expired after the 1900 season, the players organized a union and filed a list of grievances with the NL after the 1900 season (which were largely rebuffed by the NL, antagonizing the players and making it easier to recruit them to the AL), and there was some interest in resurrecting the AA and putting franchises in Baltimore and Washington, which would have cut off two important eastern markets for the American League. Finally, the five-year Western League agreement was due to expire on October 20, 1900. After that date each club could make its own arrangements. This confluence of events made the 1901 season an ideal one to reorganize as a major league.

An early and important move in the promotion of the AL to major league status took place in the spring of 1900. In March, Ban Johnson met with James A. Hart, owner of the NL Chicago franchise, and hammered out an agreement to allow Charles Comiskey to move the St. Paul franchise to Chicago, as long as it did not use "Chicago" in its name, and it played its games south of 35th Street. As part of the agreement, Johnson also allowed Hart to select two American League players. Johnson pulled off a coup when he chose the "White Stockings," the name of Cap Anson's old championship ballclub, as a name for the franchise.

At its October 14, 1900, meeting, Johnson made clear his intentions to

become a major league by announcing that he would not renew the National Agreement. In preparation, the AL relocated teams into the cities of Philadelphia (where it would now compete with the NL), Baltimore and Washington (both of which had been dropped by the NL after 1899) and dropped Minneapolis, Indianapolis and Kansas City. At its January 1901 meeting, it transferred the Buffalo franchise to Boston, setting up a third confrontation with the NL, and signed a new ten-year agreement with all member clubs.

The players formed a union, the Players Protective Association, in June of 1900 in response to the tight-fisted owners, who, among other things, instituted a \$2000 salary cap on any individual player. In December of that year, the NL held its meeting. One of the major agenda items a proposal from the players to make the ten-day clause reciprocal. This would allow either a player or a team to nullify an existing contract for cause with ten days' notice. The current contract extended that privilege only to the owners. They also requested a cessation of farming players out to minor league teams, a prohibition on the sale of contracts without player approval, and a limit on the reserve clause to a three-to-five year maximum. The owners rejected each proposal. The outright rejection, plus the lack of a salary cap in the AL, gave disgruntled NL players all the reason they needed to bolt to the AL when offered the chance. In total, 62 players, including future Hall of Famers Roger Bresnahan, Jimmy Collins, Hugh Duffy, Clark Griffith, Nap Lajoie, Joe McGinnity, John McGraw, Wilbert Robinson, and Cy Young, moved from the NL to the AL for the 1901 season.

This was not the only serious error the NL made during its winter meeting. The NL also refused to see Ban Johnson when he requested a meeting to discuss his desire to form a major league. This snub only hardened Johnson's resolve. An angry Johnson and a rejected players' union would prove to be more than the NL could handle.

During the battle with the AL, the NL owners bickered among themselves, especially after John Brush proposed a syndicate plan in which he would own the largest share of the league. In previous wars, the NL owners had always presented a united front. In this battle, it was the AL owners, under the firm guidance of Ban Johnson, who were united.

After the 1901 season, the Milwaukee franchise was moved to St. Louis where it leased the old St. Louis Browns stadium, Sportsman's Park. It also signed several players away from the crosstown Cards, including stars Jesse Burkett, the reigning NL batting champ, Emmett Heidrick, Bobby Wallace, regarded as perhaps the best shortstop in the league, and pitchers Jack Harper, Jack Powell and Willie Sudhoff.

In August of 1902 the *Sporting News* declared the AL was winning the war because of its superior management. Charles Comiskey sang Ban's praises when he said, "Ban Johnson is the American League. The League is nothing without Johnson."⁹

The NL had defeated three previous competing leagues: the American Association, the Union Association and the Players League, but they sued the AL for peace after the 1902 season. The original NL offer to merge the leagues into a single 12 team circuit was rejected by Johnson. As part of the agreement, the AL was allowed to move into New York. Both leagues adopted the same rules (e.g. the AL agreed to accept the foul strike rule), the same standard player contract, and agreed to honor the reserve clause.

The Demand for Baseball

So what determines the success of a league? Why did so many leagues fail and the AL survive? To answer this question, we take a step back and first look at what determines the demand for baseball. The answer to this question will help us evaluate the success of the American League.

There have been numerous studies focusing on the demand for baseball. The variables that the literature has identified as most important in determining demand include population, the quality of the team, and the presence of superstars.¹⁰

Population is easy to count, but quality can be a troubling concept to measure. For example, simply declaring oneself a major league does not automatically raise the quality of a minor league to major league status. The quality of the product on the field is a function of the quality of the players, managers, and style of play.

The superstar effect refers to the demand by patrons to see the best players. The mere presence of superstars, even if they are in the twilight of their careers, is enough to draw fans. One way of thinking about the superstar effect in the American League is to consider the number of Hall of Famers in the league. The 1901 AL rosters boasted 10 future Hall of Famers. The National League had 20 future Hall of Famers.

The quality of ownership and team management, while not directly affecting demand, is also important. In particular, the ability to field a high-quality team, procure a feasible stadium, and provide the financing to keep the league stable will enhance the quality of the game and draw more fans. A league is only as strong as its weakest member. A management structure that can prevent the failure of any one franchise, which would weaken the status of the remaining franchises, is critical to the survival of the league.

Four Keys to a Successful League

The keys to success include the quality of the product (on-field play), city population, attractiveness of stadiums, and managerial structure. In particular,

the quality of the product on the field is a function of the quality of the players, managers, and style of play. We will address each of these in detail.

POPULATION

The population of the city in which the team is located is an important determinant of the demand. Bigger markets mean more potential fans. Ultimately, the NL contraction to eight teams left a lot of markets open for the AL to move into. While they did not immediately move into all of the markets the NL abandoned, they did move into Cleveland, Baltimore and Washington. The other AL cities were proven successes in either the NL or the American/Western, League.

The American League performed best when going directly up against the NL. In 1901 the leagues were in three common cities (Table 5), and in those cities the AL outdrew the NL by more than a quarter million fans (Table 6). Philadelphia serves as a nice example of their dominance in head-to-head competition. That season there were ten days on which both the Phillies (NL) and Athletics (AL) played home games. On those days the A's drew a total of 59,367 and the Phils drew 6,928.¹¹

QUALITY OF PLAY

There are four main areas where we will address the quality of play. The quality of the players is an obvious start. The presence of "superstars" is a derivation of that measure. Third is the quality of managers, and finally, the style of play.

Johnson did three main things to make the AL appealing to NL players.

1. He did not put a ceiling on player salaries, which stood in stark contrast to the \$2,000 maximum salary enforced by the NL.
2. He recognized the newly formed Players Protective Association, again in contrast to its outright rejection by the NL.
3. He hired respected managers who could attract quality players.

In addition to higher salaries, AL teams offered better terms to former NL players as a way to entice them to jump leagues. AL clubs were obliged by Johnson to limit suspensions to no more than 10 days, pay medical costs for playing injuries, offer binding arbitration for disputes, and could only farm out or sell players with their permission. In addition, AL contracts had a limit of three years on the reserve clause and a prohibition on salary cuts.¹²

The pool of players for AL rosters came from the large number of major leaguers who had been unemployed with the reduction of the league to eight teams after 1899 and from the growing body of dissatisfied players who decided

not to sign their 1901 NL contracts, but instead signed with the AL. One third of AL roster spots were filled by players who had been on an NL team in 1900, and an additional 26 percent of roster spots were filled by players with previous NL experience. Thus, a total of 59 percent of AL players had previous NL experience. As a comparison, 63 percent of players on NL rosters in 1901 had previous experience in the league (Table 4).

As previously mentioned, the American League had 10 future Hall of Famers on its rosters as compared to 20 in the NL. While the number of future Hall of Famers was twice as high in the NL, the quality of players on the other end of the scale was similar in both leagues. Both leagues resorted to a large number of rookies to fill out their rosters (76 in the AL and 63 in the NL), including 24 NL players whose only year at the MLB level was 1901 and 29 AL players who saw duty only that season. On average the AL fielded a league that was slightly younger and slightly less experienced than the NL.

Johnson sought out well-known managers for his teams in order to command attention and respectability from both fans and potential owners. Respected managers also helped to attract players. Among the managers he hired, several of whom also held ownership shares in their clubs, were John McGraw in Baltimore, Connie Mack — originally for the Milwaukee franchise and ultimately Philadelphia, Clark Griffith in Washington, and Charlie Comiskey in Chicago.

Five of the eight AL teams were headed by future Hall of Fame managers in 1901, four of whom jumped from the NL the previous year (Connie Mack was the exception). While the average AL manager had less than one year of experience at the helm of a MLB team (as compared to five for the average NL manager in 1901), he had more than eight years experience as a player, only three years less than the average NL manager. The eight inaugural AL managers made up for that shortfall with their longevity. They averaged a total 18 years as a manager to the ten-year average of the NL managers.

In addition to recruiting talented players and managers, Ban Johnson elevated the game of baseball through his successful battle to eliminate rowdy behavior on the field and to control gambling. Reducing rowdiness and gambling helped to make the game respectable and attractive to a larger sector of the population. This same move toward respectability had been promoted by vaudeville titans Benjamin Keith and Edward Albee with great success a decade earlier. Eliminating the baser elements of the industry worked to broaden the customer base and make the business more profitable for both vaudeville and the American League.

An example of the lengths to which Johnson went to gain control of the quality of the game was the way the league treated its umpires. Johnson early on established a pattern of backing his arbiters, and he rewarded the good ones with consistent and generous pay increases. There were two umpires who

worked each of the first five AL seasons (John Sheridan and Hall of Famer Tom Connolly), and each saw his salary more than double. During that same period of time, Ban Johnson's salary increased by 50 percent and AL total revenues increased by 93 percent. Johnson pledged to clean up the game of baseball, and he put his money where his mouth was.

STADIUMS

The NL clearly had an advantage over the AL in the quality of the league's stadiums. The NL had the bigger stadiums in 1901, with at least five stadiums with capacity over 15,000 compared to one AL stadium. The average NL stadium seated 16,800 fans in 1901 compared to 10,200 for the AL parks, in part because six of the AL stadiums, including all of those in the competitive cities, were hurriedly constructed during the 1900–01 off-season (Tables 1 and 2). In addition, the only "modern" stadium (steel and concrete, as opposed to wood) existed in the NL, where the Phillies played in the Baker Bowl. It wouldn't be until the end of the decade that both leagues made a mass conversion to the modern stadiums.

BUSINESS MODEL

While the AL held its own with the established NL in terms of quality of play, location of franchises and managerial talent, it excelled in its business model. The league relied on deep-pocketed owners who were dedicated to making the league succeed. The bickering NL bosses were personified by John T. Brush and his attempt to push syndication ball. The AL owners worked together to keep the league afloat. In contrast to Brush, the AL had Charles Somers, a Cleveland coal magnate who not only financed his hometown club, but also provided needed funds for the Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia teams.

Ban Johnson described Charles Somers as "a daring soul, a courageous heart, and a vast fortune, who was not merely willing, but truly eager to throw his all into the fight to make the American League's ambitious dreams become actual realities."¹³ His financial role in the early survival of the Boston franchise was so critical that, though he had only a brief formal tie to the club, Boston carried the nickname of Somersets for awhile.

Ban Johnson fit the bill as a strong leader, imposing his will on the owners for the good of the league. Before the 1901 season, all American League owners signed an agreement to turn over 51 percent of each club's stock to Johnson. In addition, they put the ground leases in escrow under his control. He also obtained options to buy each team's entire baseball property in the event of bankruptcy.¹⁴

After John McGraw fled Baltimore for the New York Giants in the middle of the 1902 season and transferred the Orioles into NL hands, Johnson took action immediately. He invoked the league constitution, which stated that any franchise that failed to field a team for a scheduled game would be forfeited to the league. When the Orioles were unable to field a team for the July 17, 1902, game, Johnson declared the franchise forfeited to the league. A collection of marginal players was moved to the Baltimore franchise, which limped through the rest of the season, and was reborn as the future New York Yankees for the 1903 season.

After the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld an injunction prohibiting Nap Lajoie from playing for the Philadelphia A's, Ban Johnson and Connie Mack orchestrated his transfer to Cleveland, partly owned by Charles Somers, who helped finance the A's. In the deal, the A's sent two future Hall of Famers (Lajoie and Elmer Flick) along with Bill Bernhard to Cleveland for no players and no known other compensation.

These are but two examples of how the leadership of Johnson and the camaraderie and commitment of the AL owners combined to make the AL a success. By no means are we suggesting that mere goodwill was enough to defeat the National League. As we have indicated, the AL had the money, the talent and the franchise locations to make a go of it. The difference between the AL and the other failed leagues was Ban Johnson and his managerial model.

The AL finances, while not necessarily greater than NL finances, were on solid footing as well. In 1901, an AL home team was netting 47 cents per ticket after paying the visitor and league shares of the gate. While we do not have similar data for the NL during this period, we can make some educated guesses as to what the NL financial picture looked like by using other information. For example, the New York Yankees, while playing in the Polo Grounds in 1915, netted 47 cents per ticket.¹⁵ It is inconceivable that the Yankees and the Giants, using the same stadium, were charging different prices for the same seats. We know that in other instances during this time period teams sharing a stadium set the same ticket prices.¹⁶ This information, while scant, suggests that NL and AL teams had similar ticket prices a decade after their merger.

The basic financial model for turn-of-the-century ballclubs was fairly simple. Revenue was almost entirely due to attendance, either in the form of ticket revenue or concession sales (a minor but important source of income). Therefore, Revenue = Attendance \times price per fan, or Revenue = $Q \times P$, where Q = attendance and P = ticket price. Attendance varied over the first decade but average ticket prices did not. Evidence from the AL financial ledgers indicates consistent average ticket prices across all teams for the first fifteen years of the league's existence. As new, larger stadiums were constructed, the price of different types of tickets changed. In particular, box seats rose in price, while more plentiful low-cost bleacher seats did not.

Expenses, while more complicated, still only featured three broad categories: player salaries, stadium costs, and other expenses (including front office expenses, operating expenses, travel and equipment). Thus, Expenses = salaries + stadium + other. So $P \times Q - \text{Expenses} = \text{Profit}$. With little variation in expenses, an increase in attendance could lead to big profits.

The AL followed a high-cost, high-revenue strategy. Despite the lack of definitive salary information, we feel comfortable in our claim that the AL spent more on players than did the NL. The NL had a salary cap, which the AL did not, and the AL made expensive promises to the players that the NL did not (medical coverage, player sales only with player permissions, and a limit on suspensions—which were always unpaid—to name a few). The gamble by the AL was that high initial salaries would attract fans, who were returning about the same revenue per fan that the NL teams were. The plan worked, as the AL outdrew the NL in each of its first two seasons.

The NL, on the other hand, followed a low-cost strategy that did not pay off. While NL salaries were almost certainly lower, it was losing the attendance battle to the AL. After two seasons, the NL sued for peace rather than watch further erosion of its fan base.

Despite the financial success of the AL, we do not believe that financing alone was the key to victory. We believe the answer is more global and linked more closely to the overall AL managerial model rather than the brute force of deeper pockets and better financing. In fact, it is not clear that the AL financial situation, while strong, was superior to that of the NL.

The AL had ownership experience and quality of leadership at the owner and managerial level, both of which were critical to its success. Management is the key reason for the success, and the Western League gave the AL a chance to test its management model. The fact that the AL did not lend money to any of its member teams during the “war years” suggests that all clubs were keeping their heads above water with private funds.

Conclusion

There were no substantial differences between the leagues in terms of players and managers, and the NL enjoyed a slight advantage in terms of stadiums. Nor is the evidence strong for a financial advantage for the AL. Its owners certainly weren't paupers, but most didn't have deep pockets either.

The success of the American League was primarily due to its superior management. While the AL benefited from deep-pocketed owners, its financial strength was no greater than that of the NL. The AL financial approach, while risky, did turn out to be more lucrative in the short run than the NL approach. The AL was revenue oriented (high-risk approach) while the NL was

cost oriented — trying to hold down player salaries to maximize profits. The NL contracted in 1900, leaving viable markets for the AL to move into and players to fill the new circuit's rosters. The AL was centralized, and its teams banded together against the NL; conversely, NL owners battled each other.

The strength of the AL managerial model was due to Ban Johnson. It was his leadership and organization that were crucial to the immediate success of the league. He recruited the owners, managers and players he felt were necessary to the success of the AL. He was interested in putting a good team in New York and maintaining league balance to keep it competitive and interesting. To that end, Johnson would sometimes get involved in player transactions, acting in the best interest of the league. The AL had some interlocking ownerships (mostly in the person of Charles Somers) in order to strengthen it. While this issue led to problems in the NL, likely because “syndicate ball” was a means to increasing the wealth of a few owners, it was a means of survival, and thus a source of strength early on in the AL.

In December of 1903, Ban Johnson sent a letter to each of the AL clubs in which he summarized the state of the league:

It may be safely said that never before was the national game upon such a substantial basis as it is now, and to the American League must be given the credit of having brought about this desirable condition of affairs. It has sought to emphasize the professional side of the game, and so far as possible to suppress its strictly commercial side. It has stood and will continue to stand for clean and orderly contests.... It has achieved its success by keeping faith with the public, and it will continue to keep faith until the end.¹⁷

Except for the part about suppressing the commercial side, Johnson hit upon a formula that has paid dividends for the past century.

TABLE 1: AMERICAN LEAGUE STADIUMS 1901–1908

<i>Team</i>	<i>Park</i>	<i>Opened</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Cost (000s)</i>	<i>Age (1901)</i>
Cleveland	League Park	1891	9,000	12	10
Detroit	Bennett Park	1896	8,500		5
	(Capacity 1901)				
Baltimore	Oriole Park IV	1901			0
Boston	Huntington Ave Grounds	1901	9,000		0
Chicago	Southside Park III	1901	15,000		0
Milwaukee	Lloyd Street Grounds	1901			0
Philadelphia	Columbia Park	1901	9,500	7.5	0
Washington	American League Park I	1901			0
St Louis	Sportsman's Park II	1902	8,000		
Washington	American League Park II	1903	10,000		
New York	Hilltop Park	1903	16,000	275	
<i>Average in 1901</i>			10,200		1.9

TABLE 2: NATIONAL LEAGUE STADIUMS 1901–1908

<i>Team</i>	<i>Park</i>	<i>Opened</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Cost (000s)</i>	<i>Age (1901)</i>
Cincinnati	League Park	1890			11
Pittsburg	Exposition Park	1890			11
New York	Polo Grounds III	1891	16,000		10
Chicago	West Side Grounds	1893	16,000		8
St Louis	Robison Field	1893	15,200		8
Boston	South End Grounds II/III	1894			7
Philadelphia	Baker Bowl	1895	18,000	80	6
Brooklyn	Washington Park III (Cap 1914)	1898	18,800		3
Cincinnati	Palace of the Fans	1902			
<i>Average in 1901</i>			16,800		8

TABLE 3: THE STADIUM BUILDING BOOM

<i>City (League)</i>	<i>Stadium</i>	<i>First year*</i>	<i>Final year</i>	<i>Cost (000s)</i>	<i>Original capacity</i>
Baltimore (AL)	Oriole Park IV	1901	1902		8,500
Boston (AL)	Huntington Ave Grounds	1901	1911	35	9,000
Chicago (AL)	South Side Park III	1901	1910		15,000
Detroit (AL)	Bennett Park	1901	1911		
Milwaukee (AL)	Lloyd St Grounds	1901	1901		
Philadelphia (AL)	Columbia Park	1901	1908	7.5	9,500
Washington (AL)	American League Park I (National Park)	1901	1903		
St. Louis (AL)	Sportsman's Park II	1902	1908		8,000
New York (AL)	Hilltop Park NY	1903	1912	275	16,000
Washington (AL)	American League Park II (National Park, League Park)	1904	1910		10,000
Philadelphia (AL)	Shibe Park	1909		368	20,000
St. Louis (AL)	Sportsman's Park III	1909	1966		18,000
Chicago (AL)	Comiskey Park	1910	1990	500	32,000
Cleveland (AL)	League Park II (enlarged)	1910	1951		21,000
Washington (AL)	American League Park II (National Park, League Park)	1910		177	
Washington (AL)	Griffith Stadium (National Park II)	1911	1961		27,400
Boston (AL)	Fenway	1912		650	35,000
Detroit (AL)	Tiger Stadium (Navin Field)(Briggs Stadium)	1912	1999	500	23,000
New York (AL)	Yankee Stadium	1923		2,300	58,000

<i>City (League)</i>	<i>Stadium</i>	<i>First year*</i>	<i>Final year</i>	<i>Cost (000s)</i>	<i>Original capacity</i>
Cincinnati (NL)	Palace of the Fans	1902	1911		
Pittsburgh (NL)	Forbes	1909	1970	2,000	25,000
New York (NL)	Polo Grounds IV	1911	1963		16,000
Cincinnati (NL)	Crosley Field (Redland Field)	1912	1970	225	20,000
Brooklyn (NL)	Ebbets	1913	1957	750	25,000
Chicago (NL)	Wrigley Field	1914		250	14,000
Boston (NL)	Braves Field	1915	1952		40,000
St. Louis (NL)	Sportsman's Park (refurb)	1925		500	
AL avg 1909 and after				749.2	29,300
NL avg 1909 and after				745.0	23,333

**Year opened or first used by team*

TABLE 4: 1901 ROSTER COMPARISON

	<i>NL total</i>	<i>% of total NL roster</i>	<i>AL total</i>	<i>% of total AL roster</i>
Players elected to Hall of Fame	20	10.1	10	5.4
Players on NL rosters in 1900	98	49.2	62	33
Players on NL rosters some time before 1900	28	14	49	26.3
Average years experience in MLB	3.68		2.74	
Average age	27.0		26.4	
MLB rookies	63	31.7	76	41
Players who never played MLB after 1901	49	26.4	55	29.6
Players whose only year in MLB was 1901	24	12.1	29	15.6
Average years in MLB after 1901	4.3		3.54	

TABLE 5: THE MARKET COMPARISON

<i>Common Cities 1901</i>	<i>AL only 1901</i>	<i>NL only 1901</i>
Boston	Cleveland	Brooklyn
Chicago	Detroit	Cincinnati
Philadelphia	Washington	Pittsburgh
	Baltimore	New York
	Milwaukee	St. Louis
<i>Common Cities 1902</i>	<i>AL only 1902</i>	<i>NL only 1902</i>
Boston	Cleveland	Brooklyn
Chicago	Detroit	Cincinnati
Philadelphia	Washington	Pittsburgh
St. Louis	Baltimore	New York

<i>Common Cities 1903–10</i>	<i>AL only 1903–10</i>	<i>NL only 1903–10</i>
Boston	Cleveland	Brooklyn
Chicago	Detroit	Cincinnati
Philadelphia	Washington	Pittsburgh
New York		
St. Louis		

TABLE 6: THE ATTENDANCE COMPARISON

<i>1901</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Monopoly</i>	<i>Total</i>
AL	850,127	833,457	1,683,584
NL	586,510	1,333,521	1,920,031
AL–NL	263,617	(500,064)	(236,447)
<i>1902</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Monopoly</i>	<i>Total</i>
AL	1,378,826	827,628	2,206,454
NL	719,143	963,869	1,683,012
AL–NL	659,683	(136,241)	523,442
<i>1903–10 (mils)</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Monopoly</i>	<i>Total</i>
AL	18.8	6.6	25.4
NL	15	8.1	23.1
AL–NL	3.8	(1.5)	2.3

TABLE 7: THE AMERICAN LEAGUE FINANCIAL PICTURE

<i>(000s)</i>	<i>1901</i>	<i>1902</i>	<i>1903</i>	<i>1904</i>	<i>1905</i>
Revenue	29.4	39.5	40.1	50.3	56.7
Expenses (total)	15.2	21.7	22.9	31.3	30.8
Johnson salary	5.0	7.5	7.5	10.0	10.0
Umpires	7.5	9.9	10.7	14.6	14.4
Other	2.7	4.3	4.8	6.7	6.3
Profit	14.2	17.8	17.2	10	25.9

TABLE 8: THE MANAGER COMPARISON

<i>Team</i>	<i>manager</i>	<i>yrs mgr prior to 1901</i>	<i>yrs MLB prior to 1901</i>	<i>total yrs MLB</i>	<i>tot yrs mgr</i>	<i>HOF</i>	<i>Age in 1901</i>
AL Balt	John McGraw	1	10	42	33	yes	28
AL Bos	Jimmy Collins	0	6	14	6	yes	31
AL Chi	Clark Griffith	0	9	29	20	yes	32
AL Clev	James McAleer	0	10	21	11		37
AL Det	George Stallings	2	3	14	13		34
AL Milw	Hugh Duffy	0	13	21	8	yes	35
AL Phi	Connie Mack	3	11	61	53	yes	39
AL Was	James Manning	0	5	6	1		39

<i>Team</i>	<i>manager</i>	<i>yrs mgr prior to 1901</i>	<i>yrs MLB prior to 1901</i>	<i>total yrs MLB</i>	<i>tot yrs mgr</i>	<i>HOF</i>	<i>Age in 1901</i>
NL Pit	Fred Clarke	4	7	22	19	yes	29
NL Phi	Bill Shettsline	3	3	5	5		38
NL Brklyn	Ned Hanlon	12	21	28	19	yes	44
NL StL	Patsy Donovan	2	11	20	11		36
NL Bos	Frank Selee	11	11	16	16	yes	42
NL Chi	Tom Loftus	6	8	11	9		45
NL NY	George Davis	2	11	20	3	yes	31
NL Cin	Bid McPhee	0	18	20	2	yes	42
	<i>AL AVG</i>	0.8	8.4	26.0	18.1		34.4
	<i>NL AVG</i>	5.0	11.3	17.8	10.5		38.4

Note: years experience include MLB experience only, not Western League or 1900 AL.

Notes

1. To put this figure in perspective: it was more than the capitalized value of the average AL franchise and equal to two years total operating expenses for the league.

2. The financial ledgers for the American League for the years 1901–16 (some years missing) are available in the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library.

3. Warren N. Wilbert, *The Arrival of the American League* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007).

4. Michael Hauptert, MLB Franchise Sale Database, University of Wisconsin—La Crosse, 2008.

5. Reed Browning, *Cy Young: A Baseball Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

6. Michael Hauptert, MLB Franchise Sale Database, University of Wisconsin—La Crosse, 2008.

7. David Pietrusza, *Major Leagues: The Formation, Sometimes Absorption and Mostly Inevitable Demise of 18 Professional Baseball Organizations, 1871 to Present* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1991).

8. The NL fielded teams in Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Washington from 1892 to 1899.

9. Eugene C. Murdock, *Ban Johnson: Czar of Baseball* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982), 58.

10. For a summary discussion of this literature see Hauptert, Michael, “Productivity and Pay in Two MLB Labor Market Regimes,” NINE, forthcoming.

11. Lee Allen, *The American League Story* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 24.

12. Wilbert, 28.

13. Murdock, 49.

14. Wilbert, 44.

15. Michael Hauptert and Kenneth Winter, “Pay Ball: Estimating the Profitability of the New York Yankees, 1915–1937,” *Essays in Economic and Business History* XXI (Spring 2003), pp. 89–102.

16. For example, minor league and Negro League teams sharing the park in Newark were charging the same prices. See Hauptert and Winter, “Pay Ball.”

17. Allen, 33.

The Israel Baseball League and the Jewish Diaspora

William M. Simons

Of Bagels, Baseballs, and Epiphanies

Even denizens of Cooperstown acknowledge that the story of Abner Doubleday creating the game in their village in 1839 is fictive.¹ Baseball's origins remain shrouded in myth, elusive to history. Not so the Israel Baseball League (IBL)—it was created in 2007 by Larry Baras. As Casey Stengel, one of the game's preeminent linguists used to say, “You can look it up.”² More precisely, you can read the commentary that follows for an examination of the origins, evolution, declension, and significance of the IBL, an enterprise that most definitely began with Larry Baras.

In middle age, Larry Baras, then a business consultant, emerged as a visionary. Cream cheese leaking — and creating a mess—from the middle of a Dunkin' Donuts bagel allegedly led Baras to a culinary epiphany. He invented UnHoley Bagels, pre-stuffed with cream cheese. Baras' novel bagel provided ballast for his Boston-based business, SJR Food Inc. Its baked goods found their way into retail outlets and were purchased by the U.S. Army.³ An even more ambitious and improbable venture beckoned in a few years.

In June 2005, Baras went to a minor league baseball game in Brockton, Massachusetts. A Jewish American with relatives in Israel and a baseball enthusiast, Baras discovered his mission while watching the Brockton Rox on that June night:

What I saw was a bunch of kids and parents running around, having a good time, and I was transported back to the '50s. I thought, “If they could do something like that, that would be a tremendous gift.” That's what spawned it, right then and there.⁴

Baras imagined baseball taking a big hop from Brockton to Tel Aviv: “I said to myself, ‘If this picture could just be transferred to Israel.’”⁵ According

to Baras, thus was the genesis of the Israel Baseball League. He hoped to do something for Israel — and to make money.

Baras knew that professional baseball in the Mideast would be a tough sell, but he observed Israelis consuming other forms of American culture — movies, music, food, clothes, and basketball. He gambled that the IBL would survive long enough to encourage youth participation and fan interest in the game by native-born Israelis. Until then, American-born Israelis and tourists would provide a base of support. If the IBL lasted until 2009, it might provide recruits, supplemented by Jewish major leaguers for an Israeli entry in the World Baseball Classic.⁶ Baras envisioned the IBL developing into an independent minor league. Others bought his vision, some quite literally.

With founder Baras assuming the title of managing director of the new league, individuals of substance invested, accepted executive positions, and served on the IBL's advisory board. Many of them did not even know Baras yet responded affirmatively to his e-mail overtures. Daniel C. Kurtzer, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel, agreed to serve as the commissioner of the IBL. Miami trial attorney Martin Berger became president and chief operating officer of the IBL. Marty Appel, former director of public relations for the New York Yankees and once the Emmy-award winning executive producer of the team's telecasts, supervised the IBL's public relations. MLB commissioner Bud Selig, New York Yankees president Randy Levine, former president of the NBA Portland Trailblazers Marshall Glickman, and Smith College professor of economics Andrew Zimbalist joined the IBL Advisory Board. Former major leaguers Ken Holtzman, Art Shamsky, and Ron Blomberg were announced as managers of IBL teams. American Jews of the Diaspora provided the primary impetus, financing, and personnel for establishing professional baseball in Israel. The Diaspora refers to Jews living outside of their ancestral homeland, and it was they who brought a professional variant of America's national pastime to Israel. As a gentile, Dan Duquette was an exception. Ex-general manager of the Montreal Expos and Boston Red Sox, Duquette assumed the post of IBL director of baseball operations, responsible for player tryout and recruitment.⁷

The 2007 IBL fielded six teams — the Bet Shemesh Blue Sox, the Modi'in Miracle, the Netanya Tigers, the Petach Tikva Pioneers, the Ra'anana Express, and the Tel Aviv Lightning. Given the circumscribed scope of Israel's prior involvement with baseball, the IBL secured the use of only three ballparks, varying from the Spartan to the inadequate. Circumstances necessitated that each ballpark host two home teams. Yarkon Field at the Sports Complex in the Baptist Village provided a titular home for the Pioneers and the Express; the Lightning and the Tigers shared Sportek in Tel Aviv; and Kibbutz Gezer domiciled the Miracle and the Blue Sox. The forty-five game regular season — reduced to forty-one games for four teams and forty for two others by

unforeseen contingencies—began on June 24th and ended on August 15th. Bet Shemesh (29–12) finished first during the regular season, followed by Tel Aviv (26–14), Modi'in (22–19), Netanya (19–21), Ra'anana (17–24), and the hapless Petach Tikva contingent (9–32). All six teams competed in the post-season August 16th–19th playoffs, with Bet Shemesh winning the championship.⁸

Jewish Baseball: Davening in the Fifth

The IBL was a quixotic venture. By 2007, electronic media had rendered Major League Baseball (MLB) accessible, albeit not widely embraced, in Israel, and a number of contemporary players of Jewish heritage, including National League Rookie of the Year Ryan Braun of the Milwaukee Braves, Boston Red Sox first baseman Kevin Youkilis, former New York Mets outfielder Shawn Green, and Chicago Cubs pitcher Jason Marquis, had attained prominence in America's national pastime.⁹ Why then seek to gather Jewish players of considerably lesser talent in an Israeli league? Moreover, the Israelis, frenetic soccer fanatics, would appear most unlikely to have much initial receptivity to a game as nuanced, generational, and subject, at least from the perspective of novice spectators, to long intervals of relative quiescence as baseball.

What was Jewish about the IBL? Although the IBL was a secular venture in economic globalization, it is indisputable that the league possessed many Jewish attributes. With few exceptions the IBL founder, investors, league officials, advisory board, managers, and fans were Jewish, and, for most of them, it was precisely because they were Jewish that they committed their interest, time, energy, and/or finances to baseball in Israel. That is not to suggest the absence of other motives. Nonetheless, at its most elemental level, the IBL was an attempt by American Jews to bring professional baseball to the Jewish homeland.

As for the IBL players, the majority of them were not Jewish. Although the multinational, 120-player IBL drew athletes from diverse places, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Japan, Venezuela, Ukraine, and the United States, most of the players were Americans.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the IBL was not simply an international league that happened to be in Israel. Jews, sixteen or so from Israel and about twice that number from other nations, primarily the U.S., constituted the largest player cohort, albeit not a majority, within the IBL. The Jewish ballplayers varied greatly in their orientation to Judaism, but for many of them that identification was important. Some of the Jewish players maintained blogs, which exhibited an implicit Jewish sensibility by tone, if not always by content.¹¹

With the Israeli flag on display, games began with the playing of *Hatikva*, the Israeli national anthem, which proclaims the fulfillment of the hope for

the return of Jews to their ancestral homeland. Observing proper protocol, spectators and players left their hats on their heads as they stood respectfully for *Hatikva*. Kosher food at the concession stands and the conversational style of fans, a few of whom wore yarmulkes, added to the Jewish ambience. IBL games were usually punctuated by a call for a *minyan*, a quorum of ten adult Jews, so *davening* (public prayer) could take place. *Davening* was often in the middle of the fifth inning, but that varied according to the length of the game and the time of sunset.¹²

The IBL did not play on the Jewish Sabbath, which runs from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. Likewise, the IBL scheduled early games for Monday, July 23rd so that they could be over well before the sundown start of Tisha B'Av, a solemn holiday marking the destruction of the first and second temples as well as the expulsion from Spain, the Holocaust, and other tragedies that have befallen Jewish people.¹³ Moreover, as the surrounding physical history and ubiquitous security concerns attested, the IBL operated in a Jewish homeland. An ancestral homeland dating to Biblical times and a modern, relatively new state (established in 1948), Israel has profound significance and multiple meanings for American Jews. American and Jewish identities, pecuniary interests, status confirmation, and love of baseball all contributed to the genesis of the IBL.

Opening Day, All-Stars, and the Championship at Yarkon Field

Opening Day for the IBL was on Sunday night, June 24, 2007, at Yarkon Field at the Baptist Village in Petach Tikva near Tel Aviv. During the pre-game ceremonies, players from all IBL teams were present to sign autographs, talk with fans, and pose for photographs. A young, attractive Israeli woman flirted with players, and IBL founder Larry Baras “personally greeted fans as they walked into the ballpark.”¹⁴ IBL souvenirs and refreshments sold well. IBL commissioner Dan Kurtzer threw out the first ball. The official attendance counted an impressive 3,112 fans. Despite a few miscues, including the disappearance of the Pioneers’ batting helmets for several innings and the absence of ice for pitchers’ shoulders, it was a promising start.¹⁵

Israel’s Sport5TV cable network broadcast the opening game in Hebrew, laced with baseball terms in English.¹⁶ In America, PBS affiliates in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and West Palm Beach, Florida, televised the game, via tape delay, in English on July 1. Miracle manager Art Shamsky put in all 20 of his players so that friends and family back in U.S. could watch them on television. The atmosphere was good. Fans cheered and enjoyed the game. The Modi’in Miracle defeated the Petach Tikva Pioneers 9–1.¹⁷

Press coverage of the opening game was favorable. According to the Associated Press, “the game looked and sounded like real baseball on a minor league level, though it seemed as out of place in the Holy Land as polo in Manhattan.”¹⁸ Journalist Hillel Fendel acknowledged potential problems but found positive signs:

At present, baseball in Israel appears to be like a young rookie with all the tools necessary to make it to the big leagues.... But will the game’s slow, considered pace attract fans in sufficient numbers to make it a commercially viable enterprise?

Indications vary. One of the Israeli cameramen filming the game, asked how he was enjoying the job, blurted out, “It’s boring!” ...

But the excitement of most of the crowd at the opener told a different story.¹⁹

Writing for the *Jerusalem Post*, Shlomo Sprung observed,

The access that the fans had to the players and managers was unbelievable. All the teams were here ... tonight. The fans were able to meet and greet anyone that their hearts desired and they seemed pleased with the atmosphere that the baseball provided....

There may be some criticisms towards the Israel Baseball League but the league looks like something which will stick around longer than the skeptics will admit to.²⁰

On opening day, Abel Moreno, the Pioneers’ starting pitcher, walked seven and yielded seven runs in his 2.1 innings on the mound. The lopsided score, augmented by the Pioneers’ fielding and pitching limitations provided omens of an imbalanced league and uneven player talent.²¹ Yarkon was, by far, the best baseball park in Israel in terms of field conditions, lighting, seating, bathroom facilities, and refreshment stand, but it never again approached its opening day attendance. With upgrading, it could have potentially met the standards of the Class A New York-Penn League.

On July 29, 2007, Yarkon Field was the site of the IBL All-Star Game between North and South squads. The North team featured the best players from Tel Aviv, Netanya, and Ra’anana; the South drew its squad from Bet Shemesh, Modi’in, and Petach Tikva. At 5 P.M., there was a home run hitting contest, featuring a representative from each team; Stewart Brito, a Dominican playing for the North, won the slugging derby. The game started at 6 P.M. Although it was apparent, by this time, that the IBL had major problems, the fans, officially numbering 1,112, exhibited enthusiasm, cheering and participating in a wave. In contrast to the seven inning, regular-season contests, the All-Star Game featured nine frames. The North rocked the South’s starting pitcher Jason Benson for five runs in his 0.1 innings on the mound, but the South rallied, scoring three times in the second, and adding single runs in the fourth, fifth, and eighth to win 6–5.²²

The troubled IBL season ended as it had begun — at Yarkon Field in an atmosphere that belied the league’s difficulties. On August 19, 2007, a crowd of 2,610 watched the Bet Shemesh defeat Modi’in in the post-season playoff to claim the IBL championship. Blue Sox ace right-hander Rafael Bergstrom, a 6'5" native of Pacific Grove, California, who had a 7–2 won-lost record during the regular season, pitched a complete game, shutting out the Miracle 3–0.²³ When Commissioner Kurtzer presented Bet Shemesh with the championship trophy, Blue Sox manager Ron Blomberg enthused, “I’ve been in two World Series with the New York Yankees, and this championship lives up to both.”²⁴ Host to the season opener, All-Star Game, and championship, Yarkon Field provided the IBL with its three most memorable days.

David and Alon Leichman’s Field of Dreams

The ballpark at Kibbutz Gezer was the heart and soul of the IBL. Gezer was unique, possessed of a history and demography hospitable to baseball. Yet those singularities, while parochial strengths, also provided insight into the difficulties of creating a strong professional baseball league in Israel. This was understood by David Leichman, muse of the field at Gezer.

Born in 1951, the year of Bobby Thomson’s “shot heard round the world,” David grew up in the borough of Queens in New York City with attachments to baseball and Judaism. He immigrated to Israel in his mid-twenties, prompted by a resolve to contribute to the construction of the on-going Jewish story. In 1976, David, along with 20 American friends, made *aliyah*, settling at Kibbutz Gezer, a collective farm encompassing 1,200 acres— 200 acres for housing and 1,000 acres for agriculture.

David and his fellow pioneers arrived at Gezer with artifacts of their American past, including their fielding gloves. Fast pitch softball, a staple of their prior existence, soon punctuated the settlers’ new surroundings. Hard dirt and weeds provided the surface for the first ball field at Gezer. Around 1982, David and his fellow kibbutzim constructed a new diamond on the site of a cornfield. A backstop was donated. In time, the park at Gezer featured Little League as well as fast pitch softball games, the two activities having the same field size requirements. To host softball competition in the Maccabiah Games, the Jewish Olympics, night lights were installed. Jewish national softball teams from many lands came to Gezer.²⁵

A combat veteran of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), David believed that the ball field was not just for current participants, but for children to come — and that the land connected present and future generations to the past. Gezer was the site of fierce fighting during the Israel’s War of Independence in 1948 and central to the Maccabean Revolt of antiquity. David transmitted the

significance of archeological discoveries, noting that the great mound, just beyond the outfield fence, domiciled remains of King Solomon's fortress.

Through Gezer's ties to the Kansas City Jewish Federation, David brought George Toma, arguably the best sports groundskeeper in the world, to the kibbutz to upgrade Gezer's ball field for the Maccabiah Games. Head groundskeeper of the Kansas City Royals and Chiefs, Toma remained at Gezer for 17 days and partook of his first Passover *seder*. For David, the rocky soil that Toma replaced, mixed, and relocated was "holy."²⁶ The ball field at Gezer attracted media attention, and the stories of the park and David grew ever more intertwined. When David saw the movie *Field of Dreams*, he recognized a cinematic version of his own life.²⁷ David related the mantra of *Field of Dreams* ("If you build it, he will come") to that of Theodor Herzl, the progenitor of modern Zionism ("If you will it, it is not a dream").²⁸

David helped build over 50 houses at Gezer, finding great satisfaction in moving the dirt. The concept of sacred land connected David's Zionism and the ball field at Gezer. This led David to create and become the Executive Director at Pinat Shorashim: The Center for Pluralistic Jewish Education, an "educational nature park at the kibbutz to promote an understanding of the essential tie between Jews and the land."²⁹ Pinat Shorashim, like the nearby ball field, was part of Kibbutz Gezer — and a physical and spiritual construct of David's dreams.³⁰

Alon Leichman, David's son, was 18 in the summer of 2007, and he was one of a handful of Israeli players in the IBL. From the beginning, there were portents of Alon's baseball future. During the late 1980s, David and his wife, Miri Gold, lived for a few years, along with their two older children, in Massachusetts. (A Detroit native who had made *aliyah*, Miri became one of the first women ordained as a Reform rabbi in Israel.) David and Miri served as liaisons from Gezer to Jewish college students in the Boston area. Late in Miri's pregnancy, the family, including her mother, was watching a rented baseball video, *Eight Men Out*. During the movie, Miri experienced labor pains. Pausing the video, David rushed Miri to a hospital, where she gave birth to Alon. The baby was given the middle name of Barak, meaning lighting in Hebrew. When David and his mother-in-law returned from the hospital, they finished watching *Eight Men Out*. Baseball became part of Alon's being.³¹

By the time that Alon was three or four years old, he would walk down the road from his kibbutz home to the Gezer ball field. At an early age, he took joy in throwing a ball. While Alon was growing up, there was an overnight baseball camp at Gezer, attended by non-resident youth and staffed by former professional players. Although 8 was the official minimum age of baseball campers, Alon began attending at 6. In time, coaches and instructors commented on Alon's strong baseball mechanics. His parallel involvement in the martial arts, from which he won a black belt, further developed balance, self-

discipline, and receptivity to accepting coaching instructions, attributes transferable to baseball. By the age of 10, Alon began traveling with Israeli youth teams, over a number of summers, to other countries for baseball competition.³²

Alon grew up a fan as well as a player. Alon's paternal grandfather, Gil, who divided his year between the U.S. and Israel, videotaped the entire 1996 World Series, won by the New York Yankees in six games. Gil made a present of the tapes, and seven-year-old Alon watched them over and over again, acquiring an attachment to the Yankees and the team's star shortstop, Derek Jeter. Television and the internet allowed Alon to follow the exploits of his favorite team and player. During visits to the U.S., he attended several major league games at Yankee Stadium and other ballparks. The first book that Alon read in English was about Jeter. He acquired many autographed baseballs, several signed by Yankee players. Alon displayed the autographed balls in his compact kibbutz bedroom along with a Jeter painting, photograph, and jersey. On the field, Alon, strong of arm, pitched and, like his hero, played shortstop on the infield dirt.³³

As with his parents, land, dirt, and physicality were important to Alon's Jewish identity. Gezer and its ball field reflected the natural world. For its adherents, home plate, like the land of Israel, possessed spiritual qualities and required protection. Milking cows, driving a tractor, and planting were part of Alon's youth, along with baseball. David and Miri wanted Alon to grow up without fear, and supported his baseball and martial arts participation, deep sea diving, parachuting, and a long bicycle trip throughout Israel at age fifteen. The boy sustained some injuries, but those were seen as the price of athletic participation. Alon's baseball skills continued to develop, and he played for Israeli national baseball teams. He attended the Israeli tryouts for the new IBL — and did well enough. At eighteen, Alon signed a contract to play professional baseball for the Bet Shemesh Blue Sox of the IBL.³⁴

Gezer served as the home field to the Bet Shemesh Blue Sox as well as to the Modi'in Miracles. Thus the park that his father built and where he came of age became Alon's IBL base. Denizens of the field at Gezer were the only IBL spectators who embraced its home teams in terms of partisan enthusiasm and attendance. Kibbutz Gezer had native sons on both the Blue Sox and the Miracle. Nate Rosenberg, Alon's close friend since early childhood, was a right-handed pitcher for Modi'in. In addition, Jeff Mohr, from the nearby city of Bet Shemesh, pitched for the Blue Sox. Thus pride in native talent gave Kibbutz Gezer reason to support both the Bet Shemesh and Modi'in teams, which Gezer did, and the town of Bet Shemesh, more populous than Kibbutz Gezer, came out in significant numbers to support Mohr's Blue Sox. The presence of a sizeable number of native Americans and their children, possessed of a prior affinity for baseball, in Kibbutz Gezer, the town of Bet Shemesh, and the nearby

city of Modi'in also boosted attendance at the ballpark in Gezer. Games at Gezer often drew from 300 to 400 spectators, and on Thursday, the cusp of the Israeli "weekend," ballpark attendance at Gezer sometimes reached 500.³⁵ With the IBL, the ballpark at Gezer added another chapter to its history.

Previously the site of softball and Little League games, the park at Gezer underwent hasty renovation to host professional baseball before the start of the IBL season. Alterations left both dugouts situated along the third-base side of the field. The outfield fences were pushed back, leaving a light fixture in right field and creating problematic inclines in the outfield. Save in right field, the approaches to the outfield fences had no warning tracks, and the fences lacked padding. Player inattention and safety hazards led to near tragedy at Gezer on July 11th. During batting practice, no "turtle" cage was available, and Petah Tikvah Pioneers outfielder Reynaldo Cruz, with his back to home plate, was struck in the head by a hard line drive launched by a Modi'in Miracle batter. Cruz lost consciousness, had convulsions, and waited 20 minutes for an ambulance.³⁶

Despite serious league problems as well as his own lack of previous professional experience, youth, size (5'8", 165 pounds), limited playing time, and modest performance as a right-handed spot pitcher (0 W, 0 L, 8 IP, 25.88 ERA) and utility infielder (7 AB, 2 H, .286 BA, 1 2B, 0 3B, 0 HR, 1 R, 2 RBI), the summer of 2007 was memorable for Alon Leichman — and his father. Alon was part of the best team in the IBL; Bet Shemesh finished first during the regular season, and won the post-season championship.³⁷ Alon gained confidence and honed skills.

Blue Sox manager Ron Blomberg set a positive tone, which 41-year-old shortstop/coach/acting manager Eric Holtz continued after Blomberg returned, by pre-arrangement, to the U.S. to run his baseball camp. (Blomberg did come back to Israel for the final games of the IBL season, and during his absence, remained in contact with the Blue Sox by telephone.) To evoke Blomberg's New York Yankees career, the Blue Sox wore pinstriped uniforms resembling those of his old team.³⁸ Not only did Alon thus get to dress in the style of his favorite MLB team, but, like his hero Jeter, he had the number 2 emblazoned on the back of his uniform.

Alon was loyal to his teammates and took his baseball obligations seriously. When he graduated from high school during the IBL season, Alon arrived late to the graduation ceremony so that he could remain with Bet Shemesh until the end of the day's game. Alon's teammates, most of them several years his senior in age and baseball experience, provided camaraderie and mentorship, among them fellow right-handed pitchers Jason Benson, an IBL stalwart (6 W, 1 L, 50.1 IP, 4.11 ERA) and a well-traveled journeyman, who had played the game professionally in five different countries, and Juan Feliciano, a 27-year-old native of the Dominican Republic, veteran of the Japanese major leagues, and the most valuable pitcher in the IBL (7 W, 1 L, 50.1 IP, 1.97 ERA).³⁹

As an Israeli standard bearer, Alon had his own following. Young spectators retrieved foul balls for the players to sign, a ritual that Alon savored. (Initially the IBL reclaimed foul balls, and David argued that allowing spectators to keep foul balls would strengthen the fan base, a practice later adopted by the league.) Attempting to attend all Blue Sox games, David took great pride and joy in Alon's IBL summer, but was not blithe to the league's shortcomings—nor to a major decision that awaited Alon. Facing 3 years of mandatory, active service in the IDF, would Alon choose to serve in an elite fighting unit, often the pathway to contacts that facilitate future success in Israel, or would Alon select a military unit that would allow him to continue to play baseball on the Israeli national baseball team?⁴⁰

Jewish-American Players in the IBL

Several IBL players had minor league experience—a few at the Triple A level—and many of the Americans had played college ball. Nonetheless, there was a great range of playing skills within the IBL. For some players, however, affirmation transcended measurement of athletic performance.

Pitcher Ari Alexenberg of the last place Petach Tikava Pioneers made his professional baseball debut at age forty-six. Although Alexenberg's 2007 IBL statistics were far from stellar (0 W, 6 L, 33 IP, 7.64 ERA), he found the season rewarding. Due to Sabbath observance and yeshiva demands during his youth, Alexenberg, an observant Jew, did not participate in a competitive baseball league until he was in his twenties and in middle age his dream of playing professionally remained unfulfilled. Then, in 2007, Alexenberg's parents, who had made *aliyah* to Israel, alerted him to IBL tryouts. Living in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with his wife of nearly twenty-two years and two teenage children, Alexenberg, who had previously sold his technology business, headed to Israel.⁴¹ Helping to introduce professional baseball to a land that he loved, Alexenberg called his IBL summer "a magical experience."⁴²

Prior to 2007, Matt Comiter had last played for a uniformed baseball team in high school. His IBL Player Profile listed Matt's nickname as "The Comet." Matt's 2007 summer was memorable for reasons other than his IBL statistics as left-handed pitcher for the Netanya Tigers—(2 W, 4 L, 44.2 IP, 5.24 ERA). A switch hitter, Matt got only four at bats (with one hit) due to the IBL's use of designated hitters.⁴³

On Wednesday July 18, 2007, at Sportek, Matt was the starting pitcher for Netanya against the Ra'anana Express. Two days before, he had pitched 1.1 innings in relief. At 5 P.M. game time, with the Tigers the home team, Matt faced the Express' leadoff batter, Matt Catillo, who walked and stole second. The second batter grounded out. Then Matt yielded a two-run homer, on a

0–2 pitch, to the third batter, outfielder Ben Field, and Netanya remained behind the rest of the game.⁴⁴

Matt had a large vocal, rooting section, which never wavered in its support despite the vicissitudes of the innings that followed. Nine members of the Jewish-American Comiter family, representing three generations, were in attendance. A close, personable, and attractive family, the Comiters were proud of Matt.⁴⁵

Matt, a twenty-two-year-old finance major, was a spring 2007 graduate of the University of Florida at Gainesville. Active in his college fraternity, Matt was not a varsity athlete at Gainesville. The IBL listed Matt as 5' 6", but he was actually 5' 4". His 6' 5" batterymate, catcher Sam Faeder, from New York City, was more than a foot taller than Matt.⁴⁶

Beyond the two runs tallied by Ra'anana in the first inning on July 18th, the Express scored 2 more off Matt in the second, 1 in the third (a home run by catcher Juan Ramirez), and 3 in the sixth, and 1 in the seventh. Netanya scoring was confined to 1 run in the first inning, and 1 run in the third inning. Despite the final score (Ra'anana-9 and Netanya-2), Matt's family never gave up, and neither did Matt. His father, Richie, a tax attorney, continued to shout support with the cry, "Let's go, Comet." During the fifth inning stretch, the Comiter family gamely accepted an invitation to sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" on the sound system.

Matt too showed grit; he did not quit, pitching a complete game and striking out the last batter he faced. Although Netanya's 9 runs were earned and counted against Matt's ERA, he bounced back from tough situations several times, striking out 7 batters in seven innings. Matt's fastball topped out at 82 MPH, but he was crafty on the mound, possessed multiple pitches, and changed speeds often enough to fool some batters.⁴⁷ Always playing his best, Matt demonstrated resilience and pride during his IBL summer.

Amongst the batters Matt faced on July 18th was Express shortstop Brendan Rubenstein, who at the time was hitting an impressive .390, more than 100 points higher than any of his Ra'anana teammates. Batting second in the Ra'anana lineup, Brendan, in 5 at bats against Matt, had 2 hits and 4 RBI. In addition, he stole second base in the fourth inning and was errorless in the field.⁴⁸

Brendan, a 23-year-old switch-hitting All-Star, was one of the league's better players. Brendan wore #14 because Pete Rose wore #14; his father had a prize videotape of Brendan with Pete at Rose's baseball camp. A 2007 graduate of Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, Brendan had played intercollegiate baseball.⁴⁹ The on-field performance differences between Brendan and Matt reflected the wide range in player skill levels in the IBL. However, they shared important demographic characteristics. Both were American Jews, who made up, by far, the largest single cohort of IBL players. Many of the Jewish-

American players, like Matt, had family members who traveled to Israel to support their baseball aspirations. This was also true of Brendan.

Brendan's parents, Todd and Barbara Rubenstein, spent the entire IBL season in Israel, far from their home in Rochester, New York. Todd, a middle-aged retiree, and Barbara, a school teacher, rented a room in the private home of an Israeli woman, facilitating their integration into her active social network of friends and family. Todd and Barbara also developed friendships with the parents of other IBL players. In addition to sampling Tel Aviv nightlife, they visited various sites, including the Wall, the Dead Sea, and a number of cities.⁵⁰ Armed with a camcorder, Todd was a ubiquitous presence at Ra'anana games, videotaping his son's play.

Brendan finished the season with a .331 batting average, eleventh highest amongst fulltime players. This was an impressive accomplishment for a number two hitter in the batting order, whose obligation to move the lead runner up necessitated sacrifices that took points away from his own batting average. Make no mistake, however: other factors contributed to the 59 point drop in Brendan's batting average between July 18th (.390) and the end of Ra'anana's regular season on August 15th (.331). Players from all teams were housed at HaKfar HaYarok, a boarding school, and the accommodations—four players per small, dormitory-style room — with erratic air conditioning during the Israeli summer — were not conducive to maintaining peak athletic performance. Nor were the compact, uncomfortable beds, constructed of foam-like material atop wooden planks. Over the course of the season, Brendan dropped 15 pounds on his 5'11" frame, going from 175 to 160 pounds. The weight loss was due to the unavailability of food supplements and unappetizing chicken schnitzel as the dinner entrée night after night at the IBL player cafeteria. The weight loss diminished Brendan's strength and batting average, and there was a problem with the bats.⁵¹

Prior to arriving in Israel, Brendan was told that he could bring his own bats, but that the IBL would have ample bats for player use. Brendan packed bats that matched his specifications (33"/30 ounces). After four to five weeks, the bats that Brendan brought from the U.S. broke. The closest that the IBL could come in providing him with replacement bats were 33"/32 ounces, which were too heavy. It was impossible to get proper replacement bats for Brendan anywhere in Israel, or to have them shipped from the U.S. prior to the end of the season.⁵²

The impact of Israel on Jewish players in the IBL varied. Although his parents experienced a heightened sense of Jewish consciousness during their 2007 summer in Israel, Brendan did not. Brendan, along with about half the other players, did go on a two-day trip, organized by the IBL, to places of historical, social, and cultural significance. Nonetheless, Brendan went to Israel to advance his baseball career, and that remained his focus.⁵³

Well grounded, Brendan moved forward on several levels. During the fall of 2007, he did substitute teaching in Rochester areas schools, and then did a stint on the coaching staff of the Bucky Dent School (in Delray Beach, Florida), of which he was an alumnus.⁵⁴ Brendan also prepared for another season of professional baseball.

Brendan was one of, at least, nine veterans of the IBL to sign a professional contract for the 2008 season.⁵⁵ Brendan looked forward to continuing his baseball career for the Midwest Sliders of the Frontier League. A twelve-team independent circuit in the Midwest, the Frontier League was the equivalent of Class A baseball. Brendan planned to follow his professional baseball career as far as talent and circumstances would allow, but, with a teaching certificate, he also envisioned a life beyond the game. Brendan and Ashley Christian, a fellow graduate of Wright State University, trained in Early Childhood Education, announced their engagement and planned an April 2009 wedding.⁵⁶

The IBL cast a lingering resonance. Following the end of the IBL season, Brendan was named co-winner of the Commissioner's Award for Sportsmanship and Character.⁵⁷ Despite the shortcomings in the IBL's infrastructure, Brendan cared, and acted like he cared. For most of the players, this was also true.

Baseball at Sportek

Sportek was a large recreational facility, comprised of a number of separate, albeit physically connected, areas. There were dedicated spaces for a myriad of activities, including basketball, soccer, wall climbing, skating, jogging, Frisbee, and trampolining. A baseball park was at the far end of Sportek.

Sportek paralleled the Yarkon Stream. A few rented foot paddle boats and sculls traversed the Yarkon. A welcome breeze along the Yarkon punctuated the heat, but the breeze did not reach the ballpark. Downtown Tel Aviv loomed beyond the left fence. An armed security guard, a memorabilia stand, and a refreshment concession were fixtures on game days at Sportek.

The baseball field at Sportek in Tel Aviv represented much that was problematic about the IBL. Due to unexpected delays in field renovations, Sportek was not ready for baseball until July 10th, more than two weeks after the start of the IBL season. With six teams limited to two fields during the first quarter of the season, the IBL rescheduled and cancelled games.⁵⁸ Given the IBL's absence of spring training, several off days in the beginning of the season further compromised player development and pitching rotations.

Serious problems remained at Sportek after the park was open to play. Like the park at Gezer, it was unsafe. Before games, players dug tiles with cement backing, corroded metal, and glass out of Sportek's rocky infield. Elec-

trical wires hovered above left field. Fences lacked protective padding. With no bullpens at Sportek, pitchers warmed up along the sidelines during batting practice, leaving them dependant on urgent screams to avoid injury from hard line drives drilled in their direction.⁵⁹

Sportek lacked charm and comfort. From home plate to the right-field foul pole was approximately 240', a field dimension inappropriate for adult baseball. Dugouts were constructed of canvas supported by poles. Bathroom facilities were limited to portable stalls on the third base side of the park. There were no bleachers or grandstands. Seating consisted of mobile green plastic chairs. Depending on time of arrival, some patrons could also claim a small lawn table, matching the chairs in color and material composition. Poles with attached beach umbrellas, centered and shielded some of the tables. Other spectators were vulnerable to the Israeli sun.

There were no lights at Sportek, meaning that games were not cooled by the night. Games at Sportek generally started at 5 P.M., and in Tel Aviv that meant it was generally still quite warm during the early innings, and for players and early arrivals, batting practice and other drills often took place in a physically uncomfortable environment.

Attendance was generally poor at Sportek, consisting, on occasion, of no more than 50 paying fans. Few native-born Israelis attended or gave much thought to the games at Sportek. David Sitman, responsible for the Internet at Tel Aviv University, had moved to Israel from Philadelphia years ago, retaining his loyalty to baseball and the Phillies; David enjoyed watching the IBL at Sportek, but his Israeli son found baseball too slow and sedentary.⁶⁰ The lack of business signs along the outfield fences at Sportek, a staple of American minor league baseball, reflected the failure of the IBL to make successful outreach to residents of Tel Aviv.

Relatives of American-born players provided a significant component of the modest spectatorship at Sportek. Other American tourists and Israelis who had made *aliyah* from the U.S. also filled some seats. These people generally enjoyed themselves at Sportek. Young spectators chased foul balls— and sometimes played catch. Geoffrey Zolan, a Red Sox ticket dealer, and his family came to Sportek while vacationing in Israel.⁶¹ Three American-born Israeli senior citizens, a man named Kenny and his two women friends, were regulars, finding the games a pleasant backdrop for passing time and socializing.⁶² Still robust in their mid-seventies, Marvin and Sonny Thal, residents of Commack, Long Island, where Marvin had served as president of Temple Beth David and provided strong support for the Maccabiah movement, came to Israel for three weeks to watch their grandson Jason Bonder pitch for the Tel Aviv Lightning. At Sportek, Marvin and Sonny exhibited great pride and joy in Jason's character; noting his Jewish education, they pointed out that Jason put the Hebrew names of young autograph seekers on the balls that he signed.⁶³ Three Amer-

icans, a geologist and two environmental engineers working on a project in Israel, relaxed, drank beer, and found excitement in the big plays while taking in a game at Sportek.⁶⁴ Intermittently, touring Jewish youth groups from the U.S., looking for a late afternoon-early evening activity, provided an additional 50–100 spectators.

On Thursday, July 26th, a Jewish youth group arrived in the second inning of a Sportek game between the Ra'anana Express and Petach Tikva Pioneers, jumping the attendance from 50 to about 125. They were from Yachad Yad b'Yad ("Hand in Hand"), an organization for special needs youth. The campers and staff of Yachad Yad b'Yad were Americans, complimented by a few Israelis. Some wore yarmulkes and *tallis*. They shouted "riffs" on players' names, clapped hands in unison, cheered enthusiastically, gyrated in-between innings to American pop music, and participated in "waves." Energetic and enthusiastic, the Yachad youth enjoyed their day at Sportek. A young American volunteer with the special needs group, Atara Smilow, commented, "The game was amazing! I love hanging out with all my friends and especially the Yachad members. They truly make everything beautiful!"⁶⁵

Ken Holtzman's Long Season

Unlike the Yachad attendees, Ken Holtzman, manager of the Petach Tikva Pioneers, did not enjoy the July 26th game at Sportek. His last place team suffered another disappointing loss (12–3) to the Ra'anana Express.⁶⁶ More than a single game, however, colored Holtzman's mood. For him, the IBL had proved a major disappointment.

In an attempt to legitimize the new league, three former Jewish majors leaguers—Ken Holtzman, Ron Blomerg, and Art Shamsky—with name recognition were hired to manage in the IBL. Holtzman, Blomberg, and Shamsky all lacked prior managerial experience; none of the trio had ever been to Israel before. From 1965–1972, Shamsky, an outfielder-first baseman, played for 4 major league teams, most famously for the New York Mets. Hitting .300 during the regular season and a spectacular .538 in the NLCS in 1969 for the *Amazin' Mets*, Shamsky acquired an enduring repute amongst New York fans, and Jewish loyalists remembered his observance of Yom Kippur. Following his retirement as an active player, baseball broadcasting, further burnished Shamsky's celebrity. Capitalizing on his MLB past, Shamsky's IBL team, the Mod-i'n Miracle, by uniform style and name, evoked Shamsky's "Miracle Mets." His partner, Theresa Taylor, accompanied him to Israel. Taylor became a presence at IBL games, and she promoted sale of Shamsky's baseball memorabilia. With Shamsky as manager, Modin finished third during the IBL regular season (22 W, 19 L, .537 Pct.).⁶⁷

Just as Shamsky's Miracle had symbolic linkage to the Mets, Blomberg's pinstriped Bet Shemesh Blue Sox of the IBL were packaged to appeal the major league team of his salad days, the New York Yankees. As a Yankee, Blomberg, on April 6, 1973, acquired a niche in baseball history as MLB's first designated hitter. He also played first base and the outfield. Although injuries curtailed his playing time and seasons in MLB (1969, 1971–1976, 1978), Blomberg was a good batter, hitting as high as .329 in 1973 and registering a career batting average of .293.⁶⁸ A native of the South, the friendly and gregarious Blomberg became a favorite of his fellow Jews in New York. With reference to his DH role and Jewish identity, Blomberg titled his autobiography *Designated Hebrew: the Ron Blomberg Story*.⁶⁹ Despite Blomberg's mid-campaign hiatus from Bet Shemesh to attend to his baseball camp in the U.S., the Blue Sox finished first during the regular season and won the post-season championship.⁷⁰

Another Jewish-American manager, Steve Hertz, guided Tel Aviv Lightning to a second place finish. Hertz had a cup of coffee in the big leagues—appearing in 5 games for the 1964 Houston Colt .45's, and subsequently built an impressive coaching record at Miami Dade Community College. Hertz possessed the most extensive baseball coaching background amongst IBL managers.⁷¹ Netanyahu's Ami Baran was the only Israeli manager in the IBL; he had a limited baseball background, but was a widely respected all-around coach in Israel.⁷² Shaun Smith, an affable and capable Australian coach, managed Ra'anana.⁷³

Petach Tikva manager Ken Holtzman was the biggest baseball name associated with the IBL. An inductee of the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, Holtzman won more games than any other Jewish pitcher in MLB history, nine more than Sandy Koufax. A lefty, Holtzman had a formidable major league career (174 W, 150 L, .537 Pct., 3.49 ERA). During his 15 seasons in MLB (1965–1979), Holtzman pitched for the Chicago Cubs, Oakland A's, Baltimore Orioles, and New York Yankees. Six times he won 17 or more games in a season, and recorded 21 victories in 1973. He threw two no-hitters. A good hitting pitcher, Holtzman was the last pitcher to hit a home run in the World Series.⁷⁴ Moreover, he was an individual of substance.

During his playing days, Holtzman stood up for the rights of fellow players as a union representative to the Major League Baseball Players Association. He served in the National Guard. Thoughtful and articulate, Holtzman received a degree in business administration from the University of Illinois. His post-baseball employment included stints as a stockbroker, insurance agent, and teacher.⁷⁵

Raised in a religiously observant home, Holtzman strongly identified with Judaism. During his MLB career, he attended synagogue on the High Holidays, absenting himself from the playing field. In 1972 during the baseball

post-season, Holtzman wore an armband to honor the memory of the 11 Israeli athletes slaughtered at the Munich Olympics. As a player and in the years that followed, he observed kosher when possible, supported Jewish charities, and spoke publicly about his attachment to Judaism. For a number of years, Holtzman was the athletic director at the St. Louis Jewish Community Center.⁷⁶

At age 61, Holtzman looked forward to going to Israel for the first time to manage during the inaugural season of the IBL. Given his baseball expertise and commitment to Judaism, he believed that he had something to contribute: “Hopefully a little of what we’ve learned in all the years I played in the major leagues, we can try to pass on to these players and the people of Israel.”⁷⁷ Despite probable discomfort and possible danger, Holtzman welcomed the opportunity to make a significant contribution: “My mother’s proudest moment for the past 41 years has been the day in 1966 when I pitched against Sandy Koufax,” Holtzman said. “Now that I have the chance to manage in Israel, she’s also very, very proud.”⁷⁸ An adventure awaited, and Holtzman was happy, excited, and anxious.

His IBL involvement turned out very differently than Holtzman had anticipated. The operation of the April 26, 2007, IBL player draft at Benjamin Cardozo School of Law in New York City was not transparent and contributed to major disparities in the distribution of talent amongst the six teams. The last player selected in the six-round draft was 72-year-old Sandy Koufax, but the Jewish Hall of Fame pitcher eschewed acknowledgment of the intended honor. Some key draftees never came to Israel, and most players were assigned to teams subsequent to the draft.⁷⁹ Initial press releases indicated that Holtzman would manage the Ra’anana Express; instead he ended up as the skipper of the ill-fated Petach Tikva Pioneers.⁸⁰ Petach Tikva had a disappointing season on the field, finishing in the basement. The Pioneers were simply not competitive. Although three players with more than 100 at bats—Ryan Crotin (.348), Willis Bumphus, (.327) and Ben Dashefsky (.291)—hit well, Petach Tikva’s team batting average was an anemic .234 (the other five clubs had team batting averages of .294, .280, .278, .272, and .262). Petach Tikva’s pitching was even more problematic. The cumulative ERA for the Pioneers’ pitching staff was an astronomical 7.17 (compared to 3.65, 5.33, 5.47, 5.58, and 6.59 for other franchises).⁸¹ For Holtzman, a proud competitor, Petach Tikva’s performance was a bitter pill, but his disillusionment with the IBL went beyond the travail of his own team.

A frustrated Holtzman gave an interview to *Walla*, a Hebrew-language, on-line, daily newspaper. Holtzman’s comments were quoted at length in an article by David Rosenthal, “This League Will Just Survive One Year in a Good Year,” in the July 20, 2007, edition of *Walla*. Despite his own arrival two days before the start of the season (and the lack of an IBL spring training), Holtzman related that he arrived with optimism, hoping that baseball might gain

a following in Israel as basketball had done previously, abetted by the contributions of his former college classmate Tal Brody. Opening day, buttressed by American atmospheric, was well attended, and, acknowledged Holtzman, gave him a sense that something significant was about to happen. According to *Walla*, Holtzman's faith in the IBL dissipated as attendance plummeted as did his team's performance. He criticized the organizers of the IBL for poor leadership, absenteeism of several officials who returned to the U.S., deceptive statements, acting in haste, and the random and unbalanced composition of team rosters. Playing facilities, according to Holtzman, were poor. (In other conversations, Holtzman called the playing fields unsafe and displayed anger over the incident that nearly cost the life of one of his players.) According to *Walla*, he said that, in general, the skill level of players was low and that there was not a single good Israeli player. Holtzman predicted a limited future for the IBL. Terming himself a Zionist, Holtzman stressed his love for Israel, noting that he visited Jerusalem and went to the Wall. Nonetheless, he believed that baseball would never attract a following in the Jewish homeland because natives perceived the game as dull. Holtzman told *Walla* that the IBL no longer offered him a meaningful professional challenge and that he would regard the rest of his time in Israel as a vacation.⁸²

Holtzman's *Walla* comments infuriated IBL officials, players, and the parents of players. Even though players had their own grievances against the IBL, they were hurt by his disparagement of them.⁸³ Within two weeks of his *Walla* interview, Holtzman, prior to the end of the IBL season, departed Israel. In response to a question seeking clarification, Holtzman stated, "I will no longer wish to comment on this league."⁸⁴

The Deconstruction of the IBL

During the 2007 season, the IBL continually struggled. The curtailed player draft, not adequately based on informed evaluations, and the lack of a spring training contributed to the uneven quality of play and imbalance between teams. The league was underfinanced and poorly marketed; field conditions were generally subpar; player accommodations at the Kfar Hayarok youth village, services, and equipment were insufficient; umpiring was problematic; attendance was disappointing; and native-born Israelis were uninterested. At mid-season, the IBL, failing to pay its bills on time, suffered the discontinuation of game broadcasts by Israel's Sport5TV cable network, but narrowly averted a players' strike.⁸⁵ At season's end, the American players found that their final \$500 checks, the last installment on their \$2,000 season salaries, bounced.⁸⁶ The IBL constituted an interesting case study of a flawed and perhaps chimerical attempt to participate in the globalization of the game.

On September 24, 2007, IBL founder Larry Baras was sued by Natalie Blacher, former senior director of produce marketing for Burger King, in U.S. District Federal Court in Boston. Alleging securities fraud and breach of fiduciary duty, Blacher claimed that, through stock purchases, she invested \$275,000 in Baras' bagel business, SJR Foods, based on false information concerning the company's viability. She contended that, subsequently, he failed repeatedly to comply with her requests for financial data about SJR Foods. According to Blacher, Baras misappropriated her money, using it for his IBL venture and personal expenses. Baras, she contended, neglected debt-ridden SJR Foods to concentrate his time and stockholders capital on his baseball venture. Blacher's suit sought compensation for her investment plus 6 percent interest and legal fees.⁸⁷

Further revelations about the IBL's legal and financial woes led the league's commissioner, Daniel Kurtzer, and advisory board members Martin Abramowitz, Marty Appel, Jeff Goldklang, Marvin Goldklang, Stuart Hershon, Randy Levine, Gary Rosen, Bob Ruxin, and Andrew Zimbalist to resign in November 2007.⁸⁸ With investors, vendors, players, and others owed money, IBL debts were well in excess of \$1 million dollars.⁸⁹

The possibility that a reorganized IBL would survive and have a second season grew even more remote on January 9, 2008. Haim Katz, the president of the Israel Association of Baseball, the sanctioning group for Israeli baseball, notified Baras that the IBL was no longer certified to operate in Israel. Katz's letter cited the IBL's "unpaid bills from the 2007 season, and clear inability of the IBL, due to its current financial situation to produce a baseball league in Israel in 2008."⁹⁰ With its contract revoked by the Israel Baseball Association of Israel, the IBL appeared defunct.

In terms of finances and infrastructure, the 2007 IBL was a failure, but the league had a positive social and cultural impact. Despite the shortcomings of the IBL, many of the players enjoyed the experience of playing baseball in Israel. Ben Field, an American Jew who hit .330 for Ra'anana, was amongst the players who garnered significant rewards from his summer in the IBL:

But even with these problems in mind, the players never failed to realize how fantastic an experience they were having ... this league has allowed me to explore ISRAEL.... It gave me the mystical opportunity to visit Masada and Jerusalem. It let me connect to a people with whom I share thousands of years of history. The league let me continue the baseball dream for yet another season. And when baseball takes off in Israel, I can tell my grandchildren that I was there in the beginning, giving pointers to little kibbutznicks before games.

...the IBL did ... offer a connection between American and Israeli culture. The message of the IBL was this: baseball is America's game and we want to share it with you.⁹¹

At least nine players went on to continue their professional baseball careers

in other professional leagues in 2008.⁹² Attendance was a problem, but spectators, particularly relatives of the American players, American tourists, and American-born Israelis enjoyed the games.

The IBL mirrored a Jewish-American ethos far more than it did the Israeli national character. The Israel national character is quick, abrupt, and impatient, reflecting a people with perennial security concerns that could again flare into war. When the IBL debuted in 2007, Israel was only a year removed from full scale combat with Hezbollah. Even though Israelis are devotees of sport, particularly soccer and basketball, most of them found baseball too slow, its action limited and intermittent. Baseball's nuances were not readily accessible to Israelis lacking generational connections.⁹³ The IBL's attempts to package the game to the Israel temper, such as limiting games to seven innings with ties broken by home run competition, created little indigenous resonance.⁹⁴

Yet, as another summer approached new investors from the U.S. evoked surprise and skepticism with the claim that the IBL would play an abbreviated season in 2008.⁹⁵ While the sport made only modest inroads in Israel in 2007, the IBL did plant some baseball seeds: the future will determine their yield.

Notes

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Part VI

THE BUSINESS OF BASEBALL

Baseball's Ultimate Umpires: Labor Arbitration in Our National Game

Roger I. Abrams

The umpire must be quick witted. He may not, like the wise old owl of the bench, look over his gold-rimmed eyeglasses, inform the assembled multitude that he will take the matter under consideration and then adjourn the court for a week or two to satisfy himself how he ought to decide. No, indeed. He must be "Johnny-on-the-spot" with a decision hot off the griddle, and he must stick to it, right or wrong, or be lost. — pitcher, baseball executive, and entrepreneur Albert Spalding¹

Introduction: The Blue and the Gray

For over 160 years, baseball fans have enjoyed the on-the-field exploits of thousands of ballplayers—the great, the near-great, and the not-so-great. The game has always been played according to the official rules administered by baseball's umpires, outfitted in distinctive blue.² Those arbiters on the field have suffered the scorn of millions of fans and the protests of players and managers alike.³ Yet their role in the game has always been vital to the integrity of the sport. Eight umpires have been enshrined at the Hall of Fame.⁴

Out of public view, however, over the last four decades, another group of neutral arbiters—attired in gray—have served the game by resolving labor disputes that arise under the terms of the collective bargaining agreements reached by Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA).⁵ These professionals are baseball's labor arbitrators who, like their on-field brethren, have just applied the rules—those rules set forth in the parties' various agreements. These arbitrators have had an enormous impact on the business of baseball. They created free agency; they stopped club owners from colluding in violation of their contractual promise; and they have assured all concerned that the parties' contracts will be enforced.⁶ Their decisions may not have all been correct, but even an on-field umpire blows a

call now and then. The professionals “in gray” have never been overturned in court. Who are these labor arbitrators, and how does this process of grievance arbitration work?

The Rules of the Arbitration Game

“Gentlemen, he was out because I said he was out.”—umpire Bill Klem⁷

Unresolved employment disputes can be very disruptive in the workplace, and that includes the places where ballplayers work—the ballpark, the clubhouse, and the dugout. Periodically, labor and management will negotiate terms of a new collective bargaining agreement, and that has happened in baseball as well.⁸ These agreements might cover three to five years. The parties know, however, that during the term of the collective bargaining agreements, labor disputes are certain to arise. It is perfectly foreseeable in the workplace that someone will be disciplined for misconduct, that seniority and ability may clash in a promotion or layoff situation, or that the calculation of fringe benefits will be disputed. Workers on a baseball diamond will also have disciplinary issues, questions involving the interpretation of contract provisions, and problems with eligibility for certain benefits.⁹ How can these disputes be resolved?

A union can always threaten to strike, but you can't strike over every minor dispute, and baseball would soon lose the public's goodwill if scheduled games were cancelled because of intermittent labor disputes. Of course, the Players Association could sue Major League Baseball every time a problem arose. However, protracted litigation is expensive and time-consuming, and state and federal judges are not particularly skilled in the ways of collective bargaining.¹⁰

For much of the last century, the most common method used by organized labor and management to resolve disputes that arise under the terms of collective bargaining agreements has been private labor arbitration.¹¹ Marvin Miller's remarkable success as executive director of the Players Association was a direct result of convincing baseball management in the early 1970s to adopt that same alternative dispute resolution process—labor arbitration—to handle the game's labor-management disputes. Even the mighty Miller could not have foreseen the impact labor arbitration would have on the business of baseball.

Labor arbitration is often confused with mediation. Both involve a neutral outside party, but they are quite different processes. In arbitration, the neutral is selected by management and labor to conduct a hearing and decide the dispute, i.e., to rule for one side or the other.¹² In mediation, the neutral party might be appointed by someone other than the parties, such as when President

Bill Clinton appointed federal mediator William Usery to assist the owners and players during the 1994–95 baseball strike to resolve their dispute. (By the way, Mr. Usery did not help the parties very much during that terrible strike.¹³) The mediator’s role is to facilitate, rather than impose, an agreement. He might suggest ideas to the parties and cajole them into moving off their set positions. Ultimately, however, the mediator does not have the power to order either side to do anything, and that is exactly the power the parties give their grievance arbitrator.

Article XI of the current collective bargaining agreement between MLB and the Players Association provides for the resolution of disputes between the parties through private labor arbitration.¹⁴ These disputes, called “grievances,” are complaints involving the “interpretation of, or compliance with, any agreement, or any provision of any agreement, between the Association and the Clubs or any of them, or between a Player and a Club.”¹⁵ When management and labor are unable to resolve these grievances, the matters proceed to arbitration.

Sometimes the terms of the collective bargaining agreement will provide a simple answer to a dispute, and simple cases are normally settled through the use of a multi-step grievance procedure without calling on an arbitrator. Under the terms of baseball’s 2007–2012 collective bargaining agreement,

[a]ny Player who believes that he has a justifiable Grievance shall first discuss the matter with a representative of his Club designated to handle such matters, in an attempt to settle it. If the matter is not resolved as a result of such discussions, a written notice of the Grievance shall be presented to the Club’s designated representative.¹⁶

The player or the Players Association may appeal an unfavorable decision to step two of the procedure where the matter is considered by the Labor Relations Division of MLB.¹⁷ If the player or Players Association remains unsatisfied after the second step, the matter can be brought to arbitration. “The decision of the Arbitration Panel,” states the Basic Agreement, “shall constitute full, final and complete disposition of the Grievance appealed to it.”¹⁸ Much like the umpires on the field, the umpires’ decisions in labor arbitration are final and binding because that is what the rules provide.

Under baseball’s grievance arbitration process, cases are normally heard by a panel of three persons—one designated by the Players Association, the second by MLB. The chair of the panel is the neutral arbitrator selected by both parties. The chair is considered a “permanent” arbitrator. He is the single neutral designated to hear all unresolved disputes, and he serves until replaced, something that either party may do at any time—and have done so over the years.¹⁹ These “ultimate umpires” have always been among the very best in the profession. Men like the late Peter Seitz were renowned in arbitration circles

as much as Hank Aaron was renowned in batting circles.²⁰ The current baseball arbitrator, Shyam Das of Pittsburgh, is a star performer, having served for years in that position and rendered numerous awards.²¹

Deciding a Case

"I couldn't see well enough to play when I was a boy, so they gave me a special job — they made me an umpire."— President Harry S Truman²²

An arbitrator decides a dispute based on evidence — testimony from both witnesses and documents— presented to him at a hearing.²³ Hearings are normally held in New York City, where both the owners and the Players Association have their headquarters. An arbitration hearing may look a little like a court proceeding, but the arbitrator doesn't wear a robe. He doesn't sit above the parties behind an elevated bench. Testimony is presented in an orderly fashion through witnesses who have sworn to tell the truth. In contract interpretation cases, the union proceeds first. In disciplinary cases, management proceeds first. Normally, the arbitrator does not follow the strict rules of evidence that would be applied in court. The process is informal, but it is not just a discussion. It is an orderly hearing.²⁴

A typical arbitration hearing will be completed within a day, perhaps two. Baseball grievance cases often have taken much longer, sometimes many days for an important case. The arbitration record is loaded with documents offered by the parties, and transcripts are normally taken of the testimony of the witnesses. While a simple suspension case in an industrial plant might take a few hours to complete, baseball cases seem to run on much longer than an extra-inning game.

At the close of the hearing, the parties will normally request the opportunity to submit — to the arbitrator — written briefs explaining their arguments once again. The arbitrator will then write an opinion and issue an award resolving the dispute.²⁵ Baseball grievance decisions are private, and very few opinions have made it into the public arena.

As noted above, under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, the arbitrator's decision is final and binding. That does not mean that the loser in the most significant baseball arbitration cases has not tried to get the decisions overturned in court. The owners have regularly sought review in federal court of arbitration decisions. Under the prevailing law, however, a court may set aside an arbitrator's ruling only if he does not base his decision on the contract.²⁶ It is not the court's job to retry the case on the merits. That is why baseball management has lost every one of its appeals.²⁷

Arbitration Changes Baseball: The Messersmith Case

“The criteria for non-playing personnel is the impact they made on the sport. Therefore Marvin Miller should be in the Hall of Fame on that basis. Maybe there are not a lot of my predecessors who would agree with that, but if you’re looking for people who make an impact on the sport, yes, you would have to say that.”
— Commissioner Bud Selig²⁸

Let’s take a look at one of the critical labor arbitration decisions that changed the business of the game — and the way fans enjoy the pastime. Baseball’s reserve system began in 1879, the fourth year of the National League. Previously, players had “revolved” around the league, seeking better pay and sometimes jumping from one club to another during the middle of the season. The owners put an end to that “kangarooing.”²⁹ Players would be bound to the club that first signed them to a major league contract for as long as they played baseball, until they were traded or retired. The reserve system prevailed in baseball for almost a century.³⁰

When the Players Association was revitalized as a real trade union in the 1960s,³¹ Executive Director Marvin Miller set as a primary goal the elimination of the reserve restriction on the right of the players to work for whomever they wished at whatever salary that club would be willing to pay. His efforts at the bargaining table to change the reserve system achieved only marginal success, although in the early 1970s the owners did agree to the 5–10 rule, which allowed a player to veto a trade if he had been in baseball for ten years and had played five years with his most recent club.³² Negotiations had failed to abolish the reserve system, which stood as a bulwark for the owners despite the best efforts of the Players Association.

Miller next tried using the courts. The Players Association funded Curt Flood’s antitrust case against Commissioner Bowie Kuhn; the union claimed the reserve system was an antitrust violation, but the Supreme Court ruled in 1972 that baseball was still exempt from the antitrust laws because of a 1922 Supreme Court case.³³ Justice Harry Blackmun, writing for a 5–3 majority, acknowledged that there was no reason for the “illogical” exemption other than its longevity.³⁴

What then was Miller to do? Remember, he had been able to convince baseball management to provide for neutral grievance arbitration under the Basic Agreement. Working with the MLBPA’s brilliant General Counsel Richard Moss, Miller initiated a grievance involving Catfish Hunter. Charlie Finley, the owner of the Oakland Athletics, had not paid the future Hall of Famer the amount promised in Hunter’s contract. Arbitrator Peter Seitz ruled that the player contract’s pay requirement was “pellucidly clear.” Finley had breached the contract, and Seitz declared Hunter a free agent. The Hunter decision established two important principles: cases involving the reserve system could

be brought in arbitration, and free agency was an available remedy.³⁵ Having failed in litigation and in negotiation, it was now time for the Players Association to launch a frontal attack on the whole reserve system — this time in arbitration.

Miller's argument about the so-called "reserve clause"³⁶ was simple and straight-forward. The standard player contract signed by every major league player reserved for the club the option to renew the terms of the player's contract for "one year." Management claimed that renewing the terms of the contract *also* meant renewing the option clause, and so at the expiration of the option year, the club could renew the contract once again. Miller was certain that the "one year" option clause should not be read as allowing perpetual renewal.

Miller selected the grievant for the case, Dodgers pitcher Andy Messersmith, who had played out his option year. He then added recently retired Baltimore pitcher Dave McNally as, in effect, a grievant "in reserve" in case the Dodgers bought out Messersmith's claim with a huge contract. The case was set for hearing before the Arbitration Panel chaired by Arbitrator Seitz, who held three days of hearings in the fall and early winter of 1975. On December 23, 1975, Seitz ruled that the owner's option on the player was only for one year.³⁷ Thereafter, the player was a free agent who could sign with any club.³⁸

Seitz understood the importance of the case and the impact of his possible ruling. He worked diligently to get the parties to resolve the matter themselves so they could reach an accommodation of their conflicting interests.³⁹ When that proved impossible, this "ultimate umpire" made the call. The contract allowed only a one year renewal. Seitz was promptly fired by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn. By the next spring, after futile litigation to overturn the award and a spring training lockout by management, the owners and players reached agreement on a new personnel system. The new agreement allowed players to declare free agency after six years of major league service — that protocol is still intact today.

No one can doubt the impact of the Messersmith case on MLB. Free agency obtained through labor arbitration has produced riches for the players — and, surprisingly, greater parity among clubs. From 1975–1985, ten different clubs won the World Series, something that had never happened previously. Combined with new club revenue sharing provisions in the 1997, 2002, and 2006 collective bargaining agreements, the business of baseball has prospered.

Conclusion: The Umpire Rules

Once when the Yankee's Lou Pinella was batting he questioned a Steve Palermo strike call. Pinella demanded, "Where was that pitch at?" Palermo told him that a man wearing Yankee pinstripes in front of 30,000 people should not end a sentence

with a preposition. So Pinella, no dummy, said, "OK, where was that pitch at, asshole?"—author and pundit George F. Will⁴⁰

The success of baseball cannot be attributed to the “ultimate umpires” of labor arbitration — none of the neutrals can hit a curve ball, let along a splitter — but their importance to the enterprise cannot be doubted. Instead of lengthy litigation or sporadic and harmful work stoppages, owners and players know that if their private discussions do not result in the resolution of a dispute, the arbitrator they have selected stands ready to pick up his pen and stride to the plate. Under this framework, the game has flourished.⁴¹

The “men in gray” who run baseball’s grievance arbitration system have been subject to scorn by the losers and, occasionally, by the media, but none have faced physical threats to their well-being. By comparison, the life of the on-field umpire has never been placid. Spectators at mid-nineteenth century baseball games were not separated from the field of play. Lubricated by hard liquor, onlookers would rush the field to object to an umpire’s call. As sportswriter Henry Chadwick wrote in 1860, “The position of an umpire is an honorable one, but its duties are anything but agreeable, as it is next to an impossibility to give entire satisfaction to all parties concerned in a match.”⁴² It seemed at times that the umpire satisfied no one. Ned Hanlon, Baltimore Orioles club owner and manager, explained to the *New York Clipper* on May 25, 1895:

Ball players are not school children, nor are umpires school masters. It is impossible to prevent expressions of impatience or actions indicating dissent with the umpire’s decision when a player, in the heat of the game, thinks he has been unjustly treated.... Patrons like to see a little scrappiness in the game, and would be dissatisfied, I believe, to see the players slinking away like whipped school-boys to their benches, afraid to turn their heads for fear of a heavy fine from some swelled umpire.

On-field umpires have never shied away from confrontation. Umpire Tim Keefe had eight members of the Cleveland Spiders arrested during a game in June 1896.⁴³ Few players reacted quite as violently as Phillies left fielder Sherry Magee; on July 10, 1911, he argued vociferously when umpire Bill Finneran called him out on strikes. Magee then swung and broke the umpire’s jaw.⁴⁴

Modern umpires do not have it any easier. Most fans remember Roberto Alomar’s explosion. After being called out on a third strike in September 1996, Alomar argued with umpire John Hirschbeck and exchanged unpleasanties— at that point, it was a typical rhubarb. Then, Alomar spit on Hirschbeck.⁴⁵ This was not the first such spitting incident. In 1939, at a game at the Polo Grounds, Giants shortstop Billy Jurges spit on umpire George Magerkurth’s face. The umpire retaliated with a punch to the jaw.⁴⁶

Time magazine opined in 1961 that the perfect baseball umpire “should

combine the integrity of a Supreme Court justice, the physical ability of an acrobat, the endurance of Job and the imperturbability of Buddha.” Except for the physical ability, baseball’s “ultimate umpires,” the grievance arbitrators, have demonstrated all of these qualities. And the partnership in baseball is solid, at least in part because of the work of these neutrals.

Notes

1. Albert Spalding, *America's National Game: Historical Facts Concerning the Beginning, Evolution, Development, and Popularity of Baseball* (New York: American Sports Publishing, 1911), 407.

2. Major League Baseball Official Rules 9.01: (a) The league president shall appoint one or more umpires to officiate at each league championship game. The umpires shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with these official rules and for maintaining discipline and order on the playing field during the game; (b) Each umpire is the representative of the league and of professional baseball, and is authorized and required to enforce all of these rules. Each umpire has authority to order a player, coach, manager or club officer or employee to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties....

3. Charles C. Alexander, *John McGraw* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 4. John McGraw was the most famous proponent of vociferous attacks on umpires. Manager protests, called “kicking” in the early days of the game, have remained a staple of the sport. Lou Pinella’s June 2007 tirade against umpire Mark Wegner included kicking dirt on the arbiter’s shoes and, allegedly, touching him in the process. <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=2891897>.

4. Listed in chronological order based on their year of induction, the eight great neutrals are Tom Connolly, Bill Klem, Billy Evans, Jocko Conlan, Cal Hubbard, Al Barlick, Bill McGowan, and Nestor Chylak.

5. James B. Dworkin’s *Owners Versus Players: Baseball and Collective Bargaining* (Boston: Auburn House, 1981) offers a good introduction to the negotiation process in the National Game. For a more general discussion of collective bargaining, see these classic texts: Harold William Davey, *Contemporary Collective Bargaining* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1951); and Edwin Beal, Edward Wickersham, and Philip Kienast, *The Practice of Collective Bargaining* (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1976).

6. Roger I. Abrams, *Legal Bases: Baseball and the Law* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

7. Quoted in http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nine/v010/10.2diamond_quotes.html.

8. Abrams, *Legal Bases*, chapter 9. Until 2002, every time the owners and players negotiated a new collective bargaining agreement there was an interruption in work, either a union-called strike or an owner-directed lockout.

9. Basic Agreement 2007–11, Major League Baseball and Major League Baseball Players Association <http://mlbplayers.mlb.com/pa/pdf/cba_english.pdf> The Basic Agreement is filled with provisions that may give rise to a dispute, including salaries, expenses allowances, termination pay, safety and health. For example, in the area of discipline, Article XII A provides: “The Parties recognize that a Player may be subjected to disciplinary action for just cause by his Club, the Vice President, On-Field Operations or the Commissioner. Therefore, in Grievances regarding discipline, the issue to be resolved shall be whether there has been just cause for the penalty imposed.”

10. Justice William Douglas in three critical Supreme Court decisions in 1960 generally referred to as the Steelworkers Trilogy explained that labor arbitrators are better able to resolve workplace disputes than judges: “The labor arbitrator performs functions which are not normal to the courts; the considerations which help him fashion judgments may indeed be foreign to the competence of courts.... The ablest judge cannot be expected to bring the same

experience and competence to bear upon the determination of a grievance, because he cannot be similarly informed.” *Steelworkers v. Warrior & Gulf Navigation Co.*, 363 U.S. 574 (1960).

11. Frank Elkouri, Edna Elkouri and Alan Miles Ruben, *How Arbitration Works*, 6th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Affairs, 2003). We should draw the distinction between grievance disputes that arise during the term of a contract and bargaining disputes over the terms of a new contract. Baseball’s arbitration system could *not* have been used to stop the eight work stoppages and lockouts between 1972 and 1995.

12. Dennis R. Nolan, *Labor and Employment Arbitration in a Nutshell*, 2nd ed. (St. Paul, MN: West, 2006).

13. Abrams, *Legal Bases*, chapter 9.

14. Basic Agreement: Article XI. Many fans know about baseball’s other dispute-resolution procedure that makes headlines each February. Starting in 1973, MLB and the MLBPA have used a unique procedure to resolve certain salary disputes and avoid player holdouts. Final offer salary arbitration, which I have written about in *The Money Pitch: Baseball Free Agency and Salary Arbitration*, chapter 6 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), is unique to baseball. Eligible players and clubs submit final salary demands and offers to three-person arbitration panels, which must choose one or the other within 24 hours after a hearing.

15. The grievance and arbitration procedure is set forth in Article XI of the 2007–2001 Basic Agreement.

16. Basic Agreement, Article XI B.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. See Elkouri, Elkouri, and Ruben, *How Arbitration Works*. By comparison, most other unionized workplaces use ad hoc arbitrators selected for each case. The American Arbitration Association and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service maintain rosters of experienced neutrals and either will supply the parties a list of seven or nine arbitrators upon request. The parties normally alternately strike the names of unacceptable arbitrators and the remaining neutral is appointed to hear the case. Other firms and unions use a permanent panel of arbitrators who hear cases in rotation.

20. <http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Peter_Seitz> (“an American jurist who changed the business of baseball”).

21. Roger Abrams, “Off His Rocker,” 11 *Marquette Sports Law* (2001), 167. http://www.baseballthinkfactory.org/files/primate_studies/discussion/eugene_freedman_2001_11_19_0. Das’ first opinion for baseball in 2000 was likely his most famous, reducing the penalty imposed by Commissioner Bud Selig on John Rocker for his racist comments published in *Sports Illustrated*.

22. http://www.baseball-almanac.com/prz_qht.shtml.

23. See Abrams, *The Money Pitch*, Chapter 7. People often ask me whether it is important to understand baseball in order to be a baseball arbitrator. Arbitrators may serve one day in the paper industry and the next in a nuclear plant. The third day, he may be sitting as the chair of the arbitration panel in baseball. It is important for an arbitrator to be able to learn quickly about an industry such as baseball and for a salary arbitrator to understand the measures of success or failure for a player. There is no requirement that you know the game from the inside. In fact, your personal experiences may interfere with your ability to act as the parties’ neutral contract reader. See Abrams, *The Money Pitch*, Chapter 7.

24. Roger Abrams, Frances Abrams, and Dennis Nolan, *Arbitral Therapy*, 46 *Rutgers Law Review* (1994), 1751.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Steelworkers v. Enterprise Wheel*, 363 U.S. 593 (1960).

27. For example, the Eighth Federal Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Seitz free agency decision, discussed below, in *Kansas City Royals Baseball Corp. v. Major League Baseball Players Association*, 532 F.2d 615 (8th Cir. 1976). In that case, the Players Association sought local counsel and found a young Kansas City lawyer named Donald Fehr, who later joined the MLBPA as general counsel and now serves as its executive director.

28. Associated Press, April 27, 2007.

29. Abrams, *Legal Bases*, chapter 1.

30. Abrams, *The Money Pitch*, chapter 6. Players did have one option, and that was to

holdout, a tactic used with little success. There were exceptions, however. Ty Cobb held out in 1913. Using his bargaining strength and political leverage, Cobb returned to the Tigers a richer man.

31. Charles P. Korr, *The End of Baseball As We Knew It: The Players Union, 1960–81* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

32. Basic Agreement, Article XIX A.

33. *Flood v. Kuhn*, 407 U.S. 258 (1972).

34. Roger Abrams, "Blackmun's List," *Virginia Entertainment and Sports Law Journal* (Spring 2007), 6.

35. Abrams, *Legal Bases*, 108–109.

36. *Ibid*, chapter 6. Major League Baseball's reserve system was based on more than a single clause. Numerous provisions of the Major League Agreement and Rules set forth the guiding structures—including the filing of a list of reserved players with the commissioner, a promise not to tamper with players on another club's list, and the individual player option clause.

37. Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, 66 *Labor Arbitration Reports* (BNA) (1975), 101.

38. See Roger Abrams, "Liberation Arbitration: The Baseball Reserve Clause Case," *Proceedings of the 55th Annual Meeting of the National Academy of Arbitrators* (2002), Chapter 12.

39. See Mitchell Nathanson, "Gatekeepers of Americana: Ownership's Never-Ending Quest for Control of the Baseball Creed," *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 15.1 (2006) 68. Nathanson writes that John Gaherin, the chief negotiator for the owners' Player Relations Committee who sat on the Arbitration Panel as management's representative, told the owners in December 1975 that "they were very likely going to lose the Messersmith arbitration." Arbitrator Seitz had met with Gaherin and Marvin Miller in his New York apartment and told them that he would prefer the parties to reach their own agreement. According to Nathanson: "The owners responded to Gaherin's advice by effectively hooting him out of the room."

40. www.peterga.com/baseball/quotes/umpires.htm.

41. At the Sports Lawyers Association meeting, I attended in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on May 18, 2007, Commissioner Bud Selig reported that the gross revenue for Major League Baseball for 2007 should surpass \$6 billion.

42. <<http://www.pondfielders.org/1860rules.html>>.

43. Richard Scheinin, *Field of Screams: The Dark Underside of America's National Pastime* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 60.

44. Rich Westcott, *Tales from the Phillies Dugout* (Champaign, IL: Sports, 2006), 19.

45. Tim Wendel, *The New Face of Baseball: The One-Hundred-Year Rise and Triumph of Latinos in America's Favorite Sport* (New York: Rayo/HarperCollins, 2004), 41.

46. George Vass, "Letting Off Steam, Confrontations Between Players, Fans and Umpires," *Baseball Digest*, October 2000.

Taxing the Fan Who Catches the Ball: Looking Back on Record-Breakers, the 1998 Season and the IRS's Turn at the Plate

Patricia L. Bryan

At the National Baseball Hall of Fame, historic balls are enshrined in lighted cases, visible through protective glass. The balls that set, tied, or broke home run records enjoy special status, and fans stand transfixed in front of the ones hit by Babe Ruth for his 500th home run in 1929 and then, six years later, for his final home run, to establish the new career high of 714; by Roger Maris to set the single-season high of 61 in 1961; by Hank Aaron to tie Ruth with 714. More than other artifacts, the balls seem to convey that one magical moment when a hitter's bat connected in a powerful stroke to make history.

Record-setting baseballs are among the most cherished items of the game, and they have also become the most valuable. In recent years, collectors have been willing to pay increasingly high prices, sometimes offering hundreds of thousands of dollars and even more. Not surprisingly, these increased values have raised questions of entitlement and ownership. In an unusual aspect of the sport, fans are allowed to keep baseballs hit into the stands, whether fair or foul. Sometimes justified by their low cost, the tradition has been endorsed by major league clubs, and many stadiums encourage fans to bring gloves to the park. But when a ball is fraught with historical significance and worth so much money, the long-standing practice raises unique issues of property law, public policy, and ethics, as well as questions under the tax law.

The application of property law concepts to baseballs has been considered by scholars and lawyers, most recently as a result of the litigation between two fans over the ball hit by Barry Bonds for his 73rd home run: does owner-

ship reside in the fan who initially catches the ball or in the fan who eventually retrieves it in the scrum?¹ Some writers have talked about the ethics involved in a fan's decision of whether to return the ball to the hitter or to sell it, and others have raised the possibility of changing the tradition of fan ownership in the case of the most valuable home run balls, in hopes of preventing violent fights in the stands over possession.²

Serious talk about these issues began in the late summer of 1998. This article looks back on that time, describing the fate of home run balls—some hit that season and others in prior years—and the controversy that erupted when an unexpected player joined the fray. An IRS agent spoke up, asserting the government's right to some of the riches, in a statement that was widely criticized and finally rejected by the agency itself in a public news release.

Is catching a valuable home run ball a taxable event, or is the entire gain deferred until a later sale? Many of us will never face that issue, but, with the striking increase in the numbers of home runs—both over careers and a single season—it will be relevant to more taxpayers than in the past. The rapid growth of the collectibles market has also had an effect, increasing prices for the most valuable balls, while creating a new demand for many others.³ The interesting story of how taxes became part of the discussion provides a chance to consider the applicable tax rules, as well as an opportunity to remember some of those record-breaking balls from the past.

Baseball fans will never forget the season of 1998, when Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa vied to break one of the most enduring records in the game: sixty-one home runs in a single season. It had been thirty-seven years since Roger Maris set the mark in 1961, surpassing Babe Ruth by just one, amidst controversy and disparagement of his achievement. In contrast, enthusiasm prevailed through the summer months of 1998. Both players were well-liked by fans, and their mutual respect and collegiality, evident even during this fierce competition, added a new human interest angle to the story.⁴ By mid-August, a constant barrage of press coverage fueled a feverish excitement throughout the nation, and sportswriters celebrated baseball's return to front page news.

In mid-August, with both McGwire and Sosa on pace to break the record, people speculated about the two. How were they affected by the pressures of the race? How were they dealing with the stress, both on and off the field? Who would be the first to beat Maris? And which one would go down in history as the next home run king?

The explosive home runs could often be seen on television replays. With each spectacular blast, the focus of the cameras, just as the eyes of spectators, would shift away from the batter to follow the arc of the ball, traveling up into space before heading back down. It was never clear where the ball would land. Sometimes it hit a foul pole to roll back on the field; sometimes it came to rest in the expanses of the bullpen; sometimes it dropped outside the park; and

sometimes, to the excitement of the crowd, the ball ended up in the bleachers, perhaps caught by a fan with an outstretched glove or grabbed from under the stands. As the triumphant player took his lap around the bases, the camera might also focus on the victorious fan, holding his prize aloft.

By the late summer of 1998, fans knew that the hitters and the balls were making history. There would be the home runs to tie Babe Ruth at #60, to match Maris at #61, and then to take them beyond where any player had gone before. Did any one fan have the right to keep such icons? In the minds of many, the balls belonged in a place where they could be protected and seen by the masses. The National Baseball Hall of Fame seemed the most appropriate spot. To others, the player — who made baseball history — deserved the ball, and the right to decide about its final resting place.

The historical significance of the ball was one thing to consider; money was another. Dealers in sports memorabilia suggested that the record-setting ball could be worth \$1 million, with others hit by McGwire and Sosa also worth significant amounts.⁵ As values increased, baseball officials worried about safety issues. Security guards were trained in controlling rowdy crowds, and stopping people from spilling into the section where the ball landed. A special team was on hand, ready to descend upon the spot where the ball fell and to transport it and its lucky owner to safety.⁶ Concerns about authentication led officials to number the balls and mark them with invisible ink.⁷

Despite the potential value of the balls, St. Louis fans who caught the balls hit by McGwire leading up to #60, tying Ruth, didn't cash in. It was reported that McGwire wanted the balls returned to him, with Cooperstown as the ultimate destination for the record-breakers.⁸ According to Jason Duncan, retriever of ball #56, McGwire commended him, saying that giving back the ball "was a good idea."⁹ A sportswriter quoted McGwire as criticizing the "outrageous" talk about selling the balls,¹⁰ and as asking, "Why would somebody hold the ball hostage when really, basically, they had nothing to do with it?"¹¹ St. Louis fans, it seemed, were eager to comply with his wishes, surrendering the balls for a personal meeting and an autograph or two.

Deni Allen and Mike Davidson, the fans who ended up with McGwire's #60 and #61, followed the protocol of returning the balls.¹² Allen surprised club officials by requesting, in addition to the usual autographs, a few minutes of batting practice with the team.¹³ But the team was happy to give Allen what he wanted, just as McGwire complied with Davidson's request for a couple of signed jerseys in exchange for the ball that tied Maris' record, estimated to be worth at least \$100,000.¹⁴ As Davidson put it, "This means more to him and to baseball than a million dollars does to me. Why be greedy?"¹⁵

Returning the ball had its rewards. The two men were praised for their generosity, and for keeping the balls out of the collectibles market.¹⁶ They were called "heroes" in the St. Louis media, and commended by baseball Hall of

Fame president Don Marr.¹⁷ And, though values had never been as high in the past, the fans were following precedent, suggesting that, at least in the case of historic balls, return was the right thing to do.¹⁸

In 1961, Maris passed Babe Ruth in season home runs, hitting 61 and breaking one of the most hallowed and enduring records in baseball. Sam Gordon, a restaurant owner from California, had made a standing offer of \$5000 for the ball — nearly twice the yearly salary of Sal Durante, a 19-year-old auto-parts worker from Brooklyn, who was sitting in the right-field stands when Maris blasted the record-breaker. The ball landed in Durante's outstretched hand, and he held on to it during the chaos that erupted, with people hitting and punching him to try to grab the ball away. Despite the money, Durante's first thought was to give the ball to Maris, and he was taken by security guards to meet the player after the game. Maris, though, told the teenager to keep the ball and "try to make some money."¹⁹ Durante enjoyed celebrity status, appearing on interview and game shows and giving autographs, and he was joined by Maris in a public ceremony when he finally sold the ball to Gordon. Durante appreciated the money, but, as he later reflected on the events, it was the connection to Maris that had meant even more to him. After a brief display in Gordon's restaurant, the ball was returned to Maris. Today, the ball rests in the Hall of Fame, emblazoned with the signatures of Maris and Tracy Stallard, the pitcher who yielded the home run, as well as the initials of Sal Durante.²⁰

Thirteen years later, another Ruth record was broken, with the valuable ball again returned to the player. It was April 8, 1974, when Hank Aaron hit his 715th career home run, passing Ruth's long-standing mark. Sammy Davis, Jr. had offered \$25,000 for the ball,²¹ and fans crowded the left-field bleachers in Atlanta, armed with lacrosse sticks, fishnets on poles, and even rope ladders to hoist themselves into the bullpen area if necessary. When Aaron came up to the plate in the fourth inning, Braves pitchers staked out 20-foot lots in the bullpen, hoping to retrieve the ball quickly, and prevent injury to fans in the chaos that was sure to follow a home run.²² The ball flew straight to reliever Tom House, who caught it cleanly, avoiding the dangling nets above him, and ran to hand the ball to Aaron. House said later that he knew people might wonder at his decision — giving up what would have been a significant amount of money — but he claimed to feel no regret, with Aaron's appreciation worth more to him than the cash.²³

But, to some in St. Louis in the late summer of 1998, a teammate returning a ball seemed different than a fan making that decision. It was true that a fan had offered to return the ball to Maris, but maybe Maris had had the right idea in telling the fan to make what he could. Reports were that Sammy Sosa was telling fans to keep or sell the balls in Chicago, even when they offered them back.²⁴ The most valuable of all balls, the 62nd, was expected in St. Louis

any day, estimated to be worth a million dollars or more. The question was publicly debated: what would you do if you caught that ball?²⁵

Deni Allen, who had returned #60 to McGwire in exchange for a few moments of batting practice, was having second thoughts. “When I heard that ball might have fetched \$250,000 in an auction, I just felt — uggggh,” said Allen,²⁶ who urged the Cardinals to consider paying for the balls.²⁷ On a radio show discussing the issue, an angry caller took Allen’s side, arguing that the Cardinals and McGwire, with his \$8,978,354 million salary, were taking advantage of the fans by giving them so little in return, and making people feel guilty for even thinking about keeping some for themselves.²⁸ One sportswriter wrote that fans returning balls were making “stupid” decisions and making St. Louis look like a “wimpy place to live.”²⁹ An ethicist called McGwire “profoundly selfish” for accepting the balls, and urged fans to do the morally right thing: sell the balls and use the money to do good, helping their families and favorite charities.³⁰

In the midst of this lively debate, an unexpected player appeared — the Internal Revenue Service — asserting a new interest in the economic value of the ball. So far, tax liability hadn’t been part of the discussion. If asked, most people — taxpayers themselves — would probably have known that a fan who catches the ball and then sells it would be subject to tax on the cash proceeds, just as a seller of any property. But few would have expected that even more tax could be owed by the generous fan, commended by many for his selflessness and sense of history, who turns the ball over to the player. Over the Labor Day weekend, in early September 1998, a sportswriter apparently asked an IRS agent about the tax situation of a fan who caught a million-dollar ball and then returned it to the hitter. The agent didn’t hesitate in his response: The fan who caught the ball would be the owner of property. Anytime an individual gives property away to a non-charitable recipient — whether to Mark McGwire or anyone else — that individual has made a gift, and that transfer triggers gift tax — a legal liability of the giver — computed with marginal rates up to 40 percent. Newspapers throughout the nation carried the story, reporting the calculation: after subtracting the \$625,000 lifetime credit, a fan who gave McGwire a home run ball that was worth \$1 million could be hit with a gift tax liability of more than \$150,000 — and that was even before considering income tax that might also be owed.³¹

The story triggered a barrage of furious criticism. A *Wall Street Journal* editorial, “A Tax on Joy,” denounced “the IRS killjoys,” in their role as the “grim reaper,” while also calling for full scale reform of the Internal Revenue Code.³² White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry called the IRS position “about the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard in my life.”³³ Legislators then got into the act. The heads of both tax-writing committees came out with public statements. Senate Finance Committee Chairman William Roth called the IRS

conclusion “a prime example of what is wrong with our current tax system,”³⁴ while House Ways and Means Committee Chair Bill Archer denounced the IRS as “threatening to turn a home run ball into a foul ball.”³⁵ And two Missouri legislators raised their voices, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt and Senator Christopher Bond. “Only the IRS,” declared Gephardt, “could turn a once-in-a-lifetime event into a once-in-a-lifetime Catch 22.”³⁶ “If the IRS wants to know why they are the most hated federal agency in America,” chided Bond, “they need look no further than this assault on America’s baseball fans.”³⁷

A bill was quickly drafted and introduced in Congress, adding a new section to the Internal Revenue Code: “Tax Treatment of Catching and Returning Home Run Baseballs.” The provision was narrow, applying only to baseballs “hit during the 1998 baseball season if the batter of the baseball hit at least 61 home runs during such season,” but it protected a person retrieving such a ball both from income tax, excluding the ball from “gross income,” and, if the ball was returned to the hitter, from the gift tax.³⁸

Congress never officially considered the change in law. Just hours before Mark McGwire hit historic #62, the IRS issued a News Release, rejecting the agent’s analysis. Its statement was less broad than the proposed law, and concerned only the fan who immediately returns a home run ball. According to the IRS, the fan would not be taxed, either under the income or the gift tax rules, based on “an analogy to principles of tax law that apply when someone immediately declines a prize or returns unsolicited merchandise”: no inclusion on receipt, and no taxable gift on the return.³⁹ The agency didn’t address balls that were kept or sold, saying only that the tax implications “may be different” for the fan choosing to sell. IRS Commissioner Charles Rossotti concluded the statement with baseball jargon: “Sometimes pieces of the tax code can be as hard to understand as the infield fly rule. All I know is that the fan who gives back the home run ball deserves a round of applause, not a big tax bill.”⁴⁰

When McGwire hit #62 on September 8th, it was his shortest home run of the season. The ball, with its invisible ink markings, barely cleared the left field wall and hit an advertising poster, dropping onto a concourse under the stands. Tim Forneris, a Cardinals groundskeeper, picked it up, and raced to the clubhouse. On the field, Sammy Sosa, playing defense for the opposing Cubs, ran to embrace McGwire as he rounded the bases. Inside, security officials used an ultraviolet lamp to authenticate the ball.⁴¹ Although the Cardinals didn’t have an official policy requiring employees to return found balls, Forneris didn’t hesitate. In an emotional postgame ceremony, the young man presented it to the slugger, with the words, “Mr. McGwire, I think I have something that belongs to you.”⁴² Later, Forneris was quoted as saying, “I just don’t want to be taxed.”⁴³

The last-minute IRS News Release assured Forneris that he was safe, but there was another possible consequence of the debate over taxes that erupted

in early September. Fury was unleashed at the IRS, but the emergence of the tax collector also seems to have affected perceptions about the choice to sell the ball, so that the decision now seemed more rational, less “greedy.” Perhaps, with the IRS looming, self-interest didn’t look quite so bad; maybe it should trump intangible factors, such as the sentimental idea of putting history above oneself, and “giving back” to baseball. If the question was simply one of economics, it seemed to make sense that the fan should be entitled to profit from the ball; after all, even a million dollars would just be a fraction of McGwire’s annual salary.⁴⁴

Certainly there were historic balls that had been kept by fans, although usually the balls surfaced only when the holder decided to sell. Some balls had surely been lost or misplaced, or were unable to be authenticated. One famous ball was known to have remained in private possession — the last home run hit by Hank Aaron, establishing a new career record of 755. No one knew it would be Aaron’s final homer when he connected on July 20, 1976, in Milwaukee, with the ball retrieved by a Milwaukee groundskeeper, Richard Arndt. Arndt, who claimed he wanted to hand the ball over to Aaron personally, took the ball home when he left work; the next morning, he was fired for removing the ball from the stadium. Different stories were told. Aaron declared that he met with Arndt, and had offered to purchase the ball, offering twelve autographed balls in exchange. Arndt denied the story and kept the ball.⁴⁵

Some fans were known to have profited from their good fortune. Sal Durante, of course, had sold Maris’s 61st home run ball with Maris’s approval. The ball hit by Cal Ripken, Jr., in 1995, on the night he tied Lou Gehrig’s record for consecutive games played, had also been sold by the fan who had caught it, with the ball bringing \$41,736.⁴⁶

Two other ball sales were well-publicized. One, although not a home run ball, inspired strong feelings. The “Buckner Ball,” dear to the hearts of Mets fans and abhorred by Red Sox partisans, was hit by Mookie Wilson and rolled through the legs of Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner, leading to the Mets triumph in Game 6 of the 1986 World Series. Abandoned on the field, the ball was retrieved by an umpire, who gave it to a Mets official. Put up for auction six years later, in 1992, the ball sold, to Charlie Sheen, the actor, for a record high of \$93,500.⁴⁷

Four years later, the ball hit by Eddie Murray for his 500th home run was sold to a private buyer for even more. Dan Jones, the fan who made the catch, received an amount that seemed incredible to many: \$500,000 paid over the next 20 years.⁴⁸ According to some collectors, it seemed probable that the value of future balls could go even higher.⁴⁹

While the IRS hadn’t addressed the tax liability of a fan who caught a ball and chose not to return it, former IRS Commissioner Donald Alexander, a practicing tax lawyer, was among the first to speak publicly. He declared that

a fan who kept one of the historic balls would certainly have taxable income on the catch: “It’s an accession to wealth, like winning the Powerball lottery.”⁵⁰ Most commentators, continuing the discussion long after the end of the 1998 season, seemed to agree with that view.⁵¹

Under this analysis, the catch is a taxable event, so that the fan is required to include the “fair market value” of the ball in “gross income” in that year. If the value is set by reference to cash offers, tax on historic balls could be a substantial liability, payable regardless of whether the ball was sold for cash. The fan wouldn’t, of course, be taxed on the initial value again on sale. The amount included on the catch would become the fan’s cost “basis” in the ball, just as if he had purchased it, and the basis would be subtracted from the sale proceeds, so that only “gain” would be taxable then (and, if the ball had declined in value since the catch, the loss would be deductible).

This analysis depends upon including a home run ball as “gross income” when caught, and some have disagreed with that conclusion. The tax debate is an interesting one, and deserves a brief explanation here.⁵²

“Gross income,” the starting point of the tax calculation, is defined by the Internal Revenue Code to include “all income from whatever source derived.”⁵³ The case law has expanded on the statutory provision, with one well-known opinion characterizing “gross income” as “undeniable accessions to wealth, clearly realized, and over which the taxpayers have complete dominion.”⁵⁴ To be includible, an economic enrichment doesn’t have to be cash, but can be “realized in any form, whether in money, property or services.”⁵⁵

Although Congress has enacted some exceptions, source is generally irrelevant. Dividends and interest earned on investments are generally taxable, as is compensation for services, whether received in cash or in kind. A specific provision states that prizes and awards are includible in gross income.⁵⁶ In this context as in others, inclusion doesn’t depend upon a cash receipt; property is equally includible, in the amount of its fair market value.⁵⁷

Courts have sometimes struggled with the question of how to determine fair market value: whether it’s determined on objective grounds, based on sales and purchases of comparable property or replacement cost, or whether subjective factors—such as the taxpayer’s ability to afford that price and the particular value of the property to him—can be considered. And marketability of the property—how easy it is to sell for cash—might also be a relevant factor. In some cases, especially when the property isn’t easily liquidated or sold, value may be only a guess, but the need for a reasonable estimate doesn’t prevent inclusion under the law.⁵⁸

Under Section 74, for example, baseball player Maury Wills was required to include the value of an automobile he received as “the most popular Dodger” in 1962 as well as the value of the S. Rae Hickok belt awarded for his athletic achievements.⁵⁹ More recently, the rule has been spotlighted in some highly-

publicized cases. Members of Oprah Winfrey’s studio audience, for example, were told to include as gross income the value of cars they received on the show,⁶⁰ and newspaper stories reported that tax could be assessed against beneficiaries on ABC’s popular television show *Extreme Makeover, Home Edition*, which features transforming modest homes into huge and luxurious mansions. In the *Extreme Makeover* case, inclusion may seem particularly unfair; since the recipients are financially needy, the property isn’t transferable, and when actual cost is so far above the taxpayer’s means. The remedy, though, would be to consider those factors in reaching the appropriate value to include, rather than in allowing a total exclusion.⁶¹

Found property is another type of unexpected windfall. The Regulations require inclusion in this case, providing that “treasure trove, to the extent of its value in United States currency, constitutes gross income for the taxable year in which it is reduced to undisputed possession.”⁶² The rule was applied to an individual who found a stack of bills in an old piano,⁶³ and would seem to govern a taxpayer who finds property, such as a diamond ring. In this case, inclusion might be deferred if the taxpayer’s legal ownership of the property was in question, although that would depend upon an interpretation of “undisputed possession,” which might mean less than clear and certain title under the law. If so, a taxpayer who holds on to property until title is decided might be required to include initially, but then entitled to a deduction upon a later return.⁶⁴

In the case of a fan catching a baseball, one argument against immediate inclusion relies on the realization requirement, or the rule that economic enrichment is not taxed until “realized” by the taxpayer. This rule typically operates to defer tax in the case of appreciation in property already owned by a taxpayer, with gain subsequent to purchase taxed only upon a realization event, such as a sale or exchange. When, for example, a taxpayer purchases a collectible, such as a valuable baseball or sports card, which appreciates in value after the purchase, the taxpayer is clearly economically enriched by the gain as it accrues, but taxation is deferred until a later sale of the item.

Conceivably, one could say that the gain from catching a baseball is more analogous to the enjoyment of unrealized appreciation than to the finding of property. Under this argument, the previously-owned property is the ticket to the game, and the fan is viewed as making an investment in its purchase, buying the opportunity to catch balls.⁶⁵ The conclusion has practical difficulties—it wouldn’t protect fans who retrieve balls outside the stadium (such as Waveland Avenue in Chicago and McCovey Cove in San Francisco)—and, given the entertainment value, which is the primary benefit of the tickets to almost all fans, the argument doesn’t hold up on theoretical grounds.

Another argument against taxing a valuable baseball on the catch cites the long-standing rule excluding “imputed income,” or benefits created by a

taxpayer for her own consumption. Under this well-established rule, a farmer who grows and harvests food for his family's meals, or a famous artist who paints a picture to decorate her own walls, are not taxed even if the value created and consumed or enjoyed is greater than the associated costs. Perhaps the exclusion is best justified by the lack of a market transaction, or, in some cases, by an analogy to unrealized appreciation. Whether theoretically justified or not, neither creation nor consumption are considered realization events, so that only a later sale has the potential of triggering tax.⁶⁶

Despite the language of the "treasure trove" regulation, it has been argued that an analogy to self-created property, rather than to prizes or awards, controls the taxation of found property — including a home baseball. Some specific examples are cited in support of that view, including the deferral of gain on property procured by commercial fishermen and prospectors. The fisherman doesn't include income on catching the fish, nor the prospector on mining the gold, even though value exceeds cost. Just as for self-created property, income is deferred from the point of acquisition until a later sale of the product.⁶⁷

A persuasive response, though, distinguishes these examples as involving taxpayers engaged in purposeful endeavors, typically business enterprises or personal hobbies, where the taxpayer has expended considerable effort and capital. Deferring gain in "sought-after property" seems consistent with inventory accounting, where sale — the final stage in production — is the realization event. A pure windfall gain — such as a taxpayer enjoys on the sudden finding of property without prior investment — seems different enough to justify defining the moment of acquisition as the appropriate realization event, just as in the cases of stolen property, and prizes and awards.⁶⁸

One might question whether a home run ball is a pure windfall gain, given the energy and physical force sometimes involved in retrieving the ball (and surviving the scrum). The value of the ball isn't created because of that exertion, though, but comes about independently from (and is far in excess of) the taxpayer's efforts. The case seems to fit more neatly in the category of windfall than not.

Catching a home run ball, or finding other types of valuable property, isn't exactly like winning a prize — the lack of a transfer is surely one distinction — but the lucky fan still seems close to the lucky winner who submits an entry blank selected in a drawing, or maybe one who completes some more time-consuming prerequisite, such as writing an essay or composing a poem, in exchange for a prize. The law requires realization of the prize on receipt, and the treasure trove regulation provides that found property be treated similarly. At least under current law, catching a valuable home run ball seems almost certain to trigger inclusion.

Determining the fair market value of the ball could be a difficult issue, but that's a familiar tax problem, faced in many other contexts. Outstanding

offers for the ball at the time of the catch wouldn't necessarily be determinative, nor would the price at a subsequent sale, especially if circumstances, such as unusual publicity or increased fame of the hitter, might have increased value from the moment of catch until sale. A reasonable estimate of the value should suffice.⁶⁹

Inclusion of an estimated value on catch could offer an advantage to the taxpayer. That amount would be taxed at rates applicable to ordinary income, but subsequent gain on sale would most likely be characterized as capital gain, and, if the taxpayer had held the baseball for a year, the rate of tax on that gain could be significantly lower. Without an initial inclusion, it's quite possible that none of the sales proceeds would be treated as capital gain, so that tax on the entire amount would be computed at the higher rate.⁷⁰

The regulations require inclusion only when the taxpayer has "undisputed possession" of found property, so a conflict over ownership of a home run baseball could result in deferral. "Undisputed possession" doesn't necessarily mean the same as clear legal title, though, so a taxpayer who continues to hold the property might be required to include in the year of acquisition, even if forfeiture (accompanied by a deduction then) is possible in a future year.⁷¹

Congress, of course, can always amend the law, and the IRS might decide not to enforce it in specific situations, especially when administrative problems—such as valuation, enforceability, and negative publicity—seem sure to arise.⁷² The IRS News Release, protecting a fan who returns an historic ball to the hitter, might, in fact, be viewed as an instance of that kind of IRS discretion. The agency's declaration of no tax to the fan isn't fully supported by the examples cited: taxpayers who decline prizes or send back unsolicited merchandise are returning property to the original owners and never assert ownership rights themselves, so that the situations seem clearly distinguishable from the baseball case.⁷³ Nevertheless, allowing a taxpayer who receives no consideration in exchange to give up a ball without tax seems well-justified on the grounds of other administrative goals, even if not squarely based on the law.

It seems likely that the government would apply a similar rule to a fan who immediately donates the ball to the Hall of Fame, concluding that the fan has no income on receipt, and no deduction on the contribution. If the disclaimer analogy doesn't hold, the fan could end up with a significant tax liability: in the year of the contribution, the charitable deduction would be subject to significant limitation, so that the deduction would not fully offset the inclusion.⁷⁴ That might be a problem for a fan retaining the ball for any significant period of time, before making the donation; if the fan clearly asserts control over the property, it's more difficult to argue against inclusion on the catch, with a subsequent charitable donation limited under the normal rules. Given that result, the fan might well choose to sell the ball.

Although the tax debate continued among tax lawyers and scholars after the 1998 season ended, the public storm died down after the IRS's News Release, issued shortly before McGwire's 62nd homer. Attention returned to McGwire and Sosa, who continued to blast away. But public perception seemed slightly changed after the brief controversy raised the threat of taxes. Many people applauded the actions of Tim Forneris, the young man who gave up a ball that was likely worth a million dollars, but some were critical, blaming St. Louis executives, league officials and the well-paid player himself for convincing Forneris to make such an enormous sacrifice. One editorial labeled him "one of the world's all-time suckers,"⁷⁵ while a sportswriter in the *New York Times* wrote about Forneris: "he isn't an angel; he's a pigeon."⁷⁶

Five days after McGwire hit #62, Sammy Sosa hit his 61st home run; John Witt, unemployed, retrieved the ball and sold it within days for \$10,000. Why, Witt asked, would anyone expect him to give anything to a player with a \$10 million contract.⁷⁷ Later in the same game, Sosa hit #62, tying McGwire's high; the ball landed on Waveland Avenue and triggered a chaotic fight among Cubs fans, who piled on top of each other, kicking, biting and punching. One man emerged with the ball, but two others claimed ownership, and took the battle to court. The ball was eventually given to Sosa, who planned to send it to the Hall of Fame, with the decision negotiated among the parties only when mounting legal fees threatened to exceed any possible gain.⁷⁸

Mark McGwire hit seven more home runs in September, and two balls, #65 and #66, were returned to him by St. Louis loyalists.⁷⁹ But, as reported values escalated, returning the balls no longer seemed the inevitable course, even to Cardinals fans.

John Grass, the district groundskeeper who had an annual income of \$30,000, caught McGwire's 63rd, and he was the first to hesitate. Grass submitted a list of demands, asking for autographed jerseys, bats, gloves, balls, jackets, and pictures; four 1999 season tickets; an all-expense-paid trip to 1999 spring training; and the right for his son to throw out the first pitch in an upcoming game.⁸⁰ According to Grass, "[McGwire] makes millions of dollars. I don't think there's anything wrong with something coming to me."⁸¹ Cardinals officials rejected his requests, and McGwire said he wouldn't negotiate.⁸² Grass held on to the ball, and so did the fans retrieving balls #64, #67 and #68.⁸³

McGwire played his final game of the season on September 27th. In the third inning, when Kerry Woodson caught home run ball #69, he thought he was a millionaire. But, five innings later, McGwire connected again, and this ball ended up in the hands of Phillip Ozersky, a 26-year-old research scientist, seated just beyond the left field line.⁸⁴

One buyer immediately offered \$1 million for the ball, but Ozersky declined and took his time to decide what to do. He claimed to be nervous about taxes if he gave the ball away or kept it.⁸⁵ Selling the ball was favored by

an overwhelming majority of his friends, he said, and the decision seemed justified to him on ethical grounds, since “the greater good would be served if I used the ball to help myself and the people around me.”⁸⁶ Explaining his wish to help his parents, Ozersky said, “My parents aren’t inanimate objects and the ball is. That’s all going to go into my thinking.”⁸⁷

Serious negotiations for the new home run balls began once the season ended. McGwire’s 69th was the first to go, selling for \$200,000 in cash.⁸⁸ Another ball sold; this one was discovered hidden in an attic, with Babe Ruth’s signature and an inscription identifying it as the first home run in Yankee Stadium. Seventy-five years after the hit, the ball was authenticated and then offered for sale, setting a new auction high for a baseball of \$126,500.⁸⁹ In December 1998, a New York auction house announced an unprecedented event: forty-one baseball artifacts would be offered for sale, and seven would be balls from 1998 hit after #61, four by McGwire, including #70, and three by Sosa. Other historic baseballs would also be there: the ball Mickey Mantle hit for his 500th home run, and balls autographed by Ty Cobb, Cy Young, Ruth, and Maris. Richard Arndt, the Milwaukee groundskeeper, was offering his treasure: the home run ball hit by Hank Aaron for his record-setting #755. Arndt set a minimum price of more than \$800,000, but agreed that a large portion of the proceeds would go to Aaron’s charitable foundation.⁹⁰

Wealthy baseball collectors were enthusiastic at the news of the upcoming sales; many bidders were certified, as required by the auction house, and cleared to spend amounts in the seven figures— and some received even larger authorizations.⁹¹ The auction was held in Madison Square Garden on January 12, 1999, and, when the dust cleared, some sellers were disappointed. Except for #70, none of McGwire’s home run balls sold for more than \$55,000. One of Sosa’s reached \$150,000, but another went for only one-tenth of that. The Mantle ball had been unexpectedly withdrawn, with its authenticity questioned. And, although bidding for the Aaron ball had gone up to \$800,000, the minimum price hadn’t been reached.⁹²

But Phillip Ozersky, owner of what some called the “Hope Diamond of Baseball,” went home a multi-millionaire. The bidding for #70 lasted less than 10 minutes, with an unidentified telephone bidder finally agreeing to pay \$3 million: more than 23 times the world record for any baseball ever sold.⁹³ The auction house called the sale “an extraordinary accomplishment.”⁹⁴ Ozersky declared himself to be “in awe,” and his girlfriend exclaimed that it was “beyond my wildest dreams.”⁹⁵

Some say that records are meant to be broken. The list of those who have hit 500 career home runs, once viewed as one of baseball’s stellar achievements, is lengthening quickly in recent years. McGwire’s single-season record endured for only three years; in 2001, Barry Bonds hit 73 home runs. And in 2007, Bonds, the subject of controversy over alleged steroid use, eclipsed Hank Aaron’s long-

standing career home run record. None of these records is inscribed indelibly in the history books.

And that's probably also true of the \$3 million record price. So far, though, values haven't gone that high again. A few balls sold after the big auction: Mantle's 500th home run ball brought \$250,000, and Arndt finally closed a deal for the Aaron ball at \$650,000.⁹⁶ George Foster, the former Cincinnati Reds left fielder, unexpectedly came forward with a ball he had kept for almost 25 years, from Carlton Fisk's 12th inning walk-off home run in the 1975 World Series; Foster sold the ball for \$113,000. The amount seemed almost insignificant when compared to Ozersky's haul, but, as the auction house put it, the \$3 million sale had thrown "the whole market for balls ... out of whack."⁹⁷

Over the last several years, fans have sold record-breakers hit by Barry Bonds, although one that seemed the most valuable — #73, which set the new season high in 2002 — went for a mere \$450,000. The value was said to suffer from the contentious litigation for ownership between two fans, who had engaged in a violent scuffle after the hit. Another fight ensued in the park after Bonds hit home run #700, with ownership again disputed in court.⁹⁸ Not surprisingly, some have argued that public safety requires a change in the ownership rules governing valuable balls hit into the stands.⁹⁹

These days, fans are unlikely to return historic or valuable balls to the record-breakers, and that trend is likely to continue. With the steroid controversy looming over the game, and in light of salaries that, at least to some, seem wildly inflated, players may well seem less heroic and less deserving to the public. And the high prices and active market for historic balls, both well established since 1998, have also made a difference to the public, now more inclined to view a sale as economically justified instead of selfish. Of course, not all balls were returned in the past. Some, such as the Ripken and Murray balls, were sold quickly, while others, such as Aaron's final home run, were held for years before disposition. There will surely be more sales of historic balls in the future. Some balls from the past will be discovered hidden away, such as the Ruth ball, or revealed from private collections, such as the Fisk ball. And there will be many new and valuable balls, as players hit more home runs, breaking records with increasing frequency. Wealthy investors, already active in the growing collectibles market, will certainly stand ready to pay cash for these treasures.

Fans catching valuable balls will have to face the tax question: is the catch a taxable event, or only a later disposition? The IRS hasn't publicly addressed the issue, and, given the negative publicity garnered in the late summer of 1998, the agency may well decide to stay silent on this score. If a resolution is necessary, it may be necessary for Congress to step up to the plate.

Notes

1. Articles discussing the litigation over this ball, and the relevant property law, include Paul Finkelman, "Fugitive Baseballs and Abandoned Property: Who Owns the Home Run Ball?" *Cardozo Law Review* 23 (2001): 1619; and Steven Semeraro, "An Essay on Property Right in Milestone Home Run Baseballs," *SMU Law Review* 56 (Fall 2003): 2281.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See, for example, "Scrum of Kayakers Awaits Splash Ball," *Raleigh News and Observer*, 10 July 2007: 5C, noting the cash value of some balls hit in batting practice.
4. See, for example, Mike Berardino, "62 He Did It!" *Sun-Sentinel*, 9 September 1998, 1A.
5. "Record Ball Could Hit Jackpot," *USA Today*, 4 September 1998, 8C.
6. Gary Smith, "The Mother of All Pearls," *Sports Illustrated* (21 September 1998): 56.
7. Tom Verducci, "Making His Mark," *Sports Illustrated* (7 October 1988): 88; and Daniel Paisner, *The Ball* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 14.
8. Smith, "The Mother of All Pearls," 56.
9. Carolyn Park, "Generosity Carries Young Fan to World Series, Hall of Fame," *Scripps Howard Foundation Wire*, 18 October. 1999. <http://www.shfwire.com/story/generosity-carries-young-fan-to-world-series-hall-of-fame>.
10. "Finder: Groundskeeper," *CNN/NSI*, 9 Sept. 1998. http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/baseball/mlb/news/1998/09/08/the_ball.
11. *Ibid.*
12. For a description of these two fans and their decisions, as well as ball #62, see Smith, "The Mother of All Pearls," 56.
13. George Vecsey, "History is Made, and Fan Survives," *New York Times*, 6 September 1998.
14. Shop Talk, "McGwire's 62nd Home Run: IRS Bobbles the Ball," *Journal of Taxation* 89 (October 1998): 253.
15. Smith, "The Mother of All Pearls."
16. Editorial, "Bringing Out the Best," *New York Times*, 11 September 1998, A27.
17. "Finder: Groundskeeper."
18. Carrie Muscat, "Where Have All the 500 Balls Gone?" *MLB.com*, 18 April 2001 <http://www.gameuseduniverse.com/vb_forum/showthread.php?p=22566> (26 June 2007).
19. Michael Ollove, "The Catch of a Lifetime," *The Baltimore Sun*, 7 September 1998, 1F.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Ken Daley, "Longtime Coming," *Dallas Morning News*, 8 April 1999, 1B.
22. Evan Grant, "Place in History," *The Dallas Morning News*, 7 April 1999, 14B.
23. George Plimpton, "A Matter of Record," in *Home Run*, ed. George Plimpton (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 2001), 167–206.
24. Don Corrigan, "Ethical Dilemma of a Home Run Ball," *Kansas City Star*, 26 September 1998.
25. "Finder: Groundskeeper;" and Vecsey, "History is Made."
26. Ric Bucher, "McGwire Fails to Hit His 64th; Man Who Caught 63 Wants to Make a Deal," *The Washington Post*, 17 September 1998: E01.
27. Corrigan, "Ethical Dilemma."
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.* See also Smith, "The Mother of All Pearls," 56.
31. See, for example, Bill Dedman, "Fan Snaring No. 62 Faces Big Tax Bite," *New York Times*, 7 September 1998, D1; and "Catching No. 62 could be Taxing," the *Los Angeles Times*, 8 September 1998, C7.
32. Editorial, "A Tax on Joy," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 September 1998, A22.
33. Darren Heil, "The Tax Implications of Catching Mark McGwire's 62nd Home Run Ball," *Tax Lawyer* 52 (Summer 1999): 871.
34. "Tax Man Won't Go After Fans Who Return Historic Homers," *CNN/NSI*, 8 September 1998. http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/baseball/mlb/news/1998/09/08/irs_62_update/.
35. Heil, "Tax Implications," 871.
36. "Tax Man Won't Go After Fans."

37. Heidi Glenn and Lee Sheppard, "IRS Hits Foul Ball in Home Run Race," *Tax Notes* 80 (14 September 1998).
38. H.R. 4522, 105th Cong., 2d Sess., September 9, 1998 (Reps. Thomas, Bonilla, Gibbons, Franks, Boehner, and Jones).
39. U.S. Internal Revenue Service Information Release. IR 98-56 8 Sept. 1998.
40. *Ibid.*
41. The scene is described in many articles, including George Vecsey, "A Mighty Swing, A Grand Record," *The New York Times*, 9 September 1999, D5; and Tom Verducci, "Making His Mark," *Sports Illustrated*, 7 October 1998, 88.
42. Bill Dedman, "The Home-Run Question: What Would You Do?" *Kansas City Star*, 26 September 1998. <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Valley/8414/home-run-balls.html>. Later that day, McGwire donated the ball, as well as his bat and uniform, to the Hall of Fame.
43. "Tax Man Won't Go After Fans."
44. See "The Gullible Groundskeeper," *New York Times* 12 September 1998, A19.
45. Karen Rosen, "Aaron Pleased Record Ball is Resting in Atlanta," *Cox News*, 7 April 1999.
46. Mary Gail Hare, "Retailer Eyed as Buyer of Ripken Ball," *Baltimore Sun*, 7 January 1997, 1B.
47. Murray Chass, "Newest Met Finally Lets Go Of the Ball," *New York Times*, 27 January 2005, D5.
48. Hare, "Retailer Eyed as Buyer of Ripken Ball." With the amount to be paid over twenty years, the cost to the buyer was only \$280,000, but still less than experts said that ball was worth. "Babe Ruth Home Run Ball Sold for \$126,500, an Auction Record," *New York Times* 14 Nov. 1998, B3.
49. Hare, "Retailer Eyed as Buyer of Ripken Ball."
50. Glenn and Sheppard, "IRS Hits Foul Ball," 1251.
51. See, for example, "McGwire's 62d Home Run: IRS Bobbles the Ball," *Journal of Taxation* 89 (October 1998), 253; and Glenn and Sheppard, "IRS Hits Foul Ball."
52. The summary is drawn from the articles that have discussed the tax consequences of home run balls, including Glenn and Sheppard, "IRS Hits Foul ball in Home Run Race;" Heil, "The Tax Consequences of Catching Mark McGwire's 62nd Home Run Ball," 871; and Shop Talk, "McGwire's 62nd Home Run: IRS Bobbles the Ball," *Journal of Taxation* 89 (October 1998): 253. The main article arguing against immediate taxation is by Lawrence A. Zelenak and Martin J. McMahon, Jr., "Taxing Baseballs and Other Found Property," *Tax Notes* (August 30, 1999): 1299. A response came in: Joseph M. Dodge, "Accessions to Wealth, Realization of Gross Income, and Dominion and Control: Applying the 'Claim of Right Doctrine' to Found Objects, Including Record-Setting Baseballs," *Florida Tax Review* 4 (2000): 685.
53. Internal Revenue Code section 61(a).
54. *Commissioner v. Glenshaw Glass Co.*, 348 U.S. 426, 431 (1955).
55. Section 1.61-1(a) of the Treas. Regs.
56. Section 74(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.
57. Brian Hirsch, "The Extreme Home Renovation Giveaway," *University of Cincinnati Law Review* 73 (Summer 2005): 1665.
58. For a good discussion of the valuation question and the factors considered, see Hirsch, "The Extreme Home Giveaway," 1665.
59. *Wills v. Commissioner*, 411 F.2d 537 (9th Cir. 1969).
60. "Oprah Car Winners Hit With Hefty Tax," *CNN/Money* (September 22, 2004), available at http://money.cnn.com/2004/09/22/news/newsmakers/oprah_car_tax/.
61. Hirsch, "The Extreme Home Renovation Giveaway," 1665.
62. Section 1.61-14 (a) of the Treasury Regulations.
63. *Cesarini*, 428 F.2d 812 (6th Circuit, 1970).
64. Dodge, at 717.
65. The argument is discussed, and rejected, by both Dodge and Zelenak & McMahon.
66. See both Dodge and Zelenak & McMahon.
67. Zelenak at 1302-4.
68. Dodge at 696-99.
69. For a good discussion of the valuation issues in the context of home run balls, see "More on Historic Homers: do Auction Prices Control?" *Journal of Taxation* 90 (March 1999): 189.

70. See Dodge at 726–27.
71. “Contested Historic Homers: What are the Tax Consequences?” *Journal of Taxation* 98 (March 2003): 189; and Dodge, 717–24.
72. Hirsch, “The Extreme Home Renovation Giveaway,” discusses instances, including the taxation of frequent flyer miles, where the IRS has retreated for such reasons.
73. See Heil, “The Tax Implications of Catching Mark McGwire’s 62nd Home Run Ball.”
74. Under section 170(b) of the Internal Revenue Code, charitable contributions of property with inherent long-term capital gain are generally deductible in the amount of the full value of the property, but only to the extent of 30 percent of adjusted gross income. If the property was held less than one year, so that the gain would be short-term capital gain, the deduction would be limited to the taxpayer’s basis (the amount paid or previously included in income), as well as to a percentage of adjusted gross income.
75. Dedman, “The Home Run Question.”
76. Owen, “The Gullible Groundskeeper.”
77. Dedman, “The Home Run Question.”
78. “Contested Historic Homers: What are the Tax consequences?” *Journal of Taxation* 98 (March 2003): 189.
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The Role of Agents in Baseball

Paul D. Staudohar

A sports agent provides services to an athlete, performing functions legally authorized, with the agent engaging in business transactions on the athlete's behalf. In about the mid-19th century, it was not uncommon in the U.S. and Europe for top theatrical actors and opera singers to employ agents. These agents obtained bookings for their clients, negotiated their pay for performing, and arranged publicity.

Today, nearly all professional athletes in North American team sports are represented by agents. This article is on the evolution, involvement, functions, and regulation of sports agents. The emphasis is on Major League Baseball. Other sports are examined as well, because of commonalities among sports and the fact that agents and their firms may represent players in a variety of sports.

The first sports agent in America was Christopher "Christy" Walsh, who began representing baseball player Babe Ruth in 1921.¹ Walsh was a sports cartoonist turned ghostwriter who placed articles by Ruth in newspapers and magazines. (Another of the Babe's ghostwriters was William J. Slocum, about whom Ruth facetiously said, "Bill writes more like I do than anyone I know."²) Walsh produced the popular feature "Babe Ruth's Annual All Star Team." Because Ruth was a lavish and impulsive spender, saving little or no money, Walsh became his financial advisor. Prudent investments allowed Ruth to accumulate wealth from his ample baseball earnings and to enjoy a comfortable retirement. Walsh also negotiated numerous product endorsements, and although Ruth did his own salary negotiations with the Yankees, Walsh advised him behind the scenes.³

Another early sports agent was a theatrical promoter named Charles C. ("Cash and Carry") Pyle. In 1925, Pyle represented football player Harold "Red" Grange. Known as the "Galloping Ghost" for his gridiron exploits at the University of Illinois, Grange had Pyle negotiate a contract with the Chicago Bears for \$100,000 for eight games. Pyle also handled Grange's product endorsements and appearances in movies.

Apart from famous stars like Ruth and Ty Cobb, baseball players were paid roughly the same as moderately successful people in other careers. Professional football players made even less. In 1939, the first winner of the Heisman Trophy, halfback Jay Berwanger of the University of Chicago, was drafted by the Bears but chose instead to pursue a business career. Former President Gerald Ford, a star center at Michigan, turned down offers from the NFL to become the boxing coach and a football assistant at Yale. Distinguished running back, Dick Kazmaier of Princeton, said this: "Even as the Heisman Trophy winner, I didn't need an agent to tell me that I would do better to play touch football at Harvard Business School than accept George Halas' offer to join the Chicago Bears. A No. 1 pick in 1952 signed for less than \$10,000, not \$1 million."⁴

It was not until the mid-1960s that agents began to emerge in professional team sports. Reserve clauses in contracts prevented players from negotiating with other clubs, and consequently they had relatively little bargaining power over their salaries. Also, when agents sought to represent players they were not welcomed by team officials who zealously guarded their almost complete control. When a player for the Green Bay Packers tried to get legendary coach Vince Lombardi to negotiate with his agent, Lombardi said, "I wouldn't get discouraged, son. Maybe your new team will talk to him."⁵

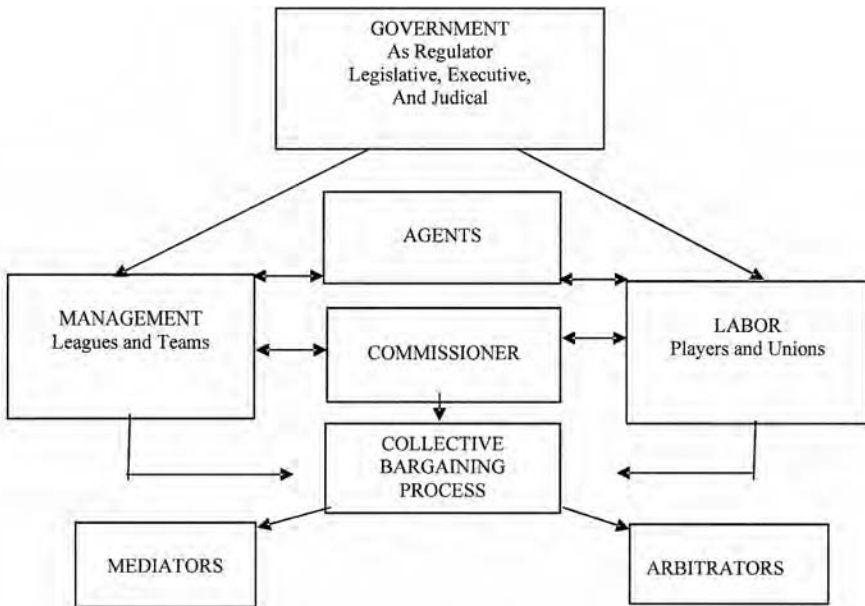
A noteworthy incident occurred in 1966, when future Hall of Fame pitchers Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale formed a tandem to increase their bargaining power with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Agent J. William Hayes, who represented movie and television stars, told the Dodgers that Koufax and Drysdale would not sign contracts with the club unless they were paid a million dollars, \$167,000 for each player for three years. The Dodgers stonewalled, and shortly before the season began the players signed individual contracts for far less money.

Providing the spark for widespread use of agents was the achievement of free agency in the mid-1970s by pitchers Andy Messersmith and Dave McNally. The Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) under the leadership of Marvin Miller had negotiated a provision in the collective bargaining agreement with the owners for arbitration of player grievances. Messersmith and McNally filed grievances challenging the reserve clause, and Arbitrator Peter Seitz decided in their favor. Shortly thereafter, players in football, basketball, and hockey also achieved free agency. These events opened the door for agents to help maximize the monetary gains from player freedom in the labor market by negotiating deals with the highest bidder. Accompanying the resultant spike in player salaries was a need for financial management to preserve and increase the newfound wealth.

Nature of the Business

Figure 1 is a simple model of labor relations in the sports industry. It shows relationships between labor, management, and government, the three main participants in the industry. Labor relations in sports are formalized under a system of union representation and collective bargaining between owners and players. The role of government is mainly to serve as a regulator of labor and management.

FIGURE 1. MODEL OF LABOR RELATIONS IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY



SOURCE: Paul D. Staudohar, *Playing for Dollars: Labor Relations and the Sports Business* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 7.

Agents are shown in Figure 1 as representatives of players in dealing with management. Agents are involved in individual salary negotiations on behalf of players but do not participate in the collective bargaining process. An interesting exception occurred in the National Basketball Association. When a tentative agreement was reached between the league and the players' union in 1995, a group of agents objected because the agreement would hinder salary growth. This led to a proposal by some players, under the direction of agents, to decertify the union so as to be able to bring an antitrust suit against the league. When the agreement was subsequently modified in the players' favor, the decertification plan was abandoned.

Agents, however, got their noses into the bargaining tent, which later complicated the 1998–99 collective bargaining for a replacement agreement.⁶ Although agents were not actually at the bargaining table, they were involved in the bargaining process by working with players and their negotiators behind the scenes. This was a destabilizing force because it raised the question of who was really in charge, the union or the agents. As negotiations continued in the face of a lockout imposed by the league, both agents and the union realized that agents' interests did not always coincide, because not all players are stars and lesser players may have different aspirations concerning the outcome of negotiations. The purpose of collective bargaining is to represent all players, which is the function of the union. Agents can, of course, represent individual players, but not all of them at the same time. As a result, a lesson was learned, and agents have since stayed out of the collective bargaining process in basketball.

Under the National Labor Relations Act, unions in sports are the “exclusive representative” of the players. Because of this law, were unions so inclined they could take over the function of individual salary negotiations for players which is currently performed by agents. In the 1982 collective bargaining agreement between the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) and the NFL, the following provision appeared:

Other compensation: A player will be entitled to receive a signing or reporting bonus, additional salary payments, incentive bonuses and such other provisions as may be negotiated between his club (with the assistance of the Management Council) and the NFLPA or its agent. The club and the NFLPA or its agent will negotiate in good faith over such other compensation; provided, however, that a club will not be required to deal with the NFLPA or its agent on a collective or tandem basis for two or more players on that club.⁷

What this provision means is that if the NFLPA had chosen to do so, it could have negotiated individual player contracts. But it has never done so, leaving the field to agents.

Sports agents provide a variety of functions on behalf of players, including:

1. Bankrolling training at workout centers so that athletes can perform better in scouting combines preparatory to league player drafts.
2. Determining the value of a player's services.
3. Negotiation of the player's contract with the club, including salary, incentives, bonuses, guarantees, no-trade clauses, and length of contract.
4. Soliciting and arranging product endorsements, broadcasting appearances, speaking engagements, and other uses of the player's name, services, and image for commercial purposes.

5. Promoting the athlete's career through public relations, media coverage, and charitable activities.
6. Providing financial management services, such as tax advice, estate planning, career planning, and making arrangements for the sale of stocks, bonds, real estate, and other investments.
7. Resolving conflicts that arise concerning areas such as enforcement of employment contracts, and behavioral problems such as substance abuse.
8. Representing players in salary or grievance arbitration matters.
9. Arranging for movement of the player in the labor market, e.g., free agency, suggesting a trade to another club.
10. Counseling a player about his post-career years.

Many agents are attorneys who are capable of providing counseling and litigation. The most common arrangement for the player-agent relationship is a firm that handles a variety of the functions listed above. However, a single person rarely provides all of the functions. It is not uncommon for the agency function to be bifurcated into a single agent handling all aspects of negotiations on behalf of players, including endorsements, while another agent or firm handles financial management and planning tasks. Some sports management firms specialize in handling team sport athletes only, or perhaps just players in a particular sport.

The agent's role is shifting toward more complete representation. Some agents have teamed up with companies that have specialized access to, or perhaps even provide the shoe, clothing, film, video game, record label, acting, or brokerage services that players may require. This is a kind of vertical integration, so that a player with, say, acting aspirations can have movie or television roles arranged by his agent. Instead of just providing financial advice, some agents handle actual money placement. The agent's role is constantly evolving. A recent illustration is that the Internet is changing sports coverage. Athletes who stray over the lines of moral rectitude — being drunk in a bar, engaging in adulterous behavior — may have their actions posted on a website by a blogger with a camera phone. As a result, players, who are already inclined to hide behind agents, are becoming even more guarded in their private lives.⁸

The role of agents for players accused of using performance-enhancing drugs has created new challenges, especially in baseball. Teams may be less receptive to signing players with a history of using steroids or human growth hormone. When pitcher Roger Clemens made his fateful decision to deny taking banned substances, it was announced through his agents Randy and Alan Hendricks of Houston. Like the embattled Barry Bonds, most of Clemens' business affairs have shifted to a phalanx of attorneys, but their agents continue to play a role.

Agents' fees are usually about three to four percent for negotiating player

contracts. The NFL sets a three percent limit. Baseball has no limit but three to five percent is typical. In the NBA, the range is two to four percent, but the 1999 collective bargaining agreement somewhat diminished the negotiating role for agents. Ceilings were placed on individual player salaries for the first time in the modern sports era. Because of these limits, a player is more likely to handle his own salary negotiation with the club, rather than paying an agent a percentage of the total value of the contract. It is also becoming more common for a player to hire an attorney on a per hour fee basis to handle salary negotiations, which is often far cheaper than the percentage cut.⁹ Agents are typically paid commissions of 15–25 percent on endorsement contracts.

Occasionally players represent themselves. For instance, in recent years pitcher Curt Schilling has negotiated his own contracts. The largest contract ever in the NHL — \$124 million over 13 years — was negotiated by player Alexander Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals in 2008, with assistance from his mother, thus saving at least \$3.72 million (three percent of the value of the contract). Self-representation is not usually a good idea, however, and brings to mind the old adage that “He who represents himself has a fool for a client.”

An interesting twist on self-representation is the 2007 contract negotiation for Alex Rodriguez, considered by many to be baseball’s best player. Rodriguez was represented by agent Scott Boras, who advised him to exercise an option clause to get him out of his contract with the New York Yankees so he could get a richer contract elsewhere. When Rodriguez opted out of the contract it was announced during the World Series. (Boras was criticized in the media for his poor taste in timing the announcement during baseball’s hallowed event.)

Rodriguez and his wife Cynthia reluctantly took Boras’ advice, because they were eager to remain in New York.¹⁰ Amid widespread uproar in the media, Rodriguez telephoned famed Omaha investor Warren Buffett, with whom he was friendly from previous social meetings. Buffett advised Rodriguez to approach the Yankees solo, without Boras. Rodriguez also contacted another acquaintance, John Mallory, a manager at Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., who handled investment accounts for the Steinbrenner family of Yankee owners. Mallory telephoned Gerry Cardinale, a Goldman partner who handled media and technology investments, including investments in Yankees Entertainment & Sports cable network. Learning of Rodriguez’s remorse, the Yankees agreed to talk, but only if Boras was not involved.¹¹

The collective bargaining agreement between the owners and the players union provides that the agent of record is the only person other than the player himself who can negotiate on the player’s behalf. Therefore, the Goldman executives recused themselves and Rodriguez wound up cutting his own deal with the Yankees. Although Boras suffered public humiliation, his wounds were salved by getting his regular commission of five percent as agent for the deal.

The new contract, estimated at \$275 million over 10 years, set a record as the richest ever.¹²

The sports agent business is becoming increasingly dominated by a handful of entertainment conglomerates, which have been buying out smaller firms. The advantage of a full-service agency is that the athlete gets complete representation without having to gather together a group of specialists. The arrangement is attractive to the agency because it captures all the client's business.¹³

The first full-service agency in sports was IMG, founded in the early 1960s by Mark McCormack. IMG attracted attention by signing up golfer Arnold Palmer, and today the Cleveland-based firm has over 1,000 clients in baseball, football, hockey, golf, tennis, and auto racing. Its most famous clients are Tiger Woods and Roger Federer, and the firm's specialty is sports marketing.

There has recently been an exodus of agents from IMG. In 2006, two important agents, Casey Close and Tom Condon, left IMG and joined Creative Artists Agency (CAA). Headquartered in Beverly Hills, California, CAA is a large talent and literary agency, with ties to movie stars like Tom Cruise and Jennifer Aniston. Close's clients include Derek Jeter and Kenny Lofton. Condon, a former offensive lineman for the Kansas City Chiefs and longtime NFL player agent, lured quarterback Matt Leinart away from Leigh Steinberg Enterprises shortly before the 2006 NFL draft, and also represents quarterbacks Peyton and Eli Manning as well as running back LaDarian Tomlinson. In 2007, CAA acquired the sports agency business of Leon Rose, a Philadelphia attorney who represents NBA stars LeBron James and Allen Iverson. CAA was also involved in luring soccer icon David Beckham to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Another powerhouse sports agency is SFX Sports, headquartered in the Los Angeles area.¹⁴ Its baseball division represents about 30 major league players, including Vladimir Guerrero and Pedro Martinez. Its basketball division represents several NBA players, including Kobe Bryant. In 1999, David Falk, the most influential NBA agent, representing Michael Jordan, sold his firm to SFX for \$100 million.

Octagon Professional Management Athlete Representation is another large full-service firm. It has been active in acquiring smaller sports agencies, including the baseball division of Bob Woolf Associates and the firm of agent Frank Craighill. Octagon represents about 250 athletes, with 25 or so in baseball, including Tom Glavine, David Wells, and Mark Mulder.

Arn Tellum, one of the leading baseball agents, sold his firm to SFX, but has since joined the Wasserman Media Group in Los Angeles. Among Tellum's clients at Wasserman are Jason Giambi, Hideki Matsui, Mike Mussina, Frank Thomas, and Nomar Garciaparra. When smaller agencies are gobbled

up by full-service firms, the agents who founded their organizations typically continue to represent athletes under the larger corporate umbrella.

A rapidly growing agency representing baseball players in negotiations only is the Beverly Hills Sports Council. This California firm represents 85 major leaguers, and its agent Jeff Borris recently attracted Barry Bonds away from Scott Boras Corporation. Other important clients are Albert Pujols and Trevor Hoffman.

The most important baseball agent is Scott Boras, whose firm is located in Newport Beach, California. Boras grew up on an 800-acre dairy and row-crop farm near Elk Grove, California.¹⁵ He is a former second baseman and center fielder for the St. Louis Cardinals and Chicago Cubs organizations who never made it beyond the AA minor league level. Boras retired due to knee surgeries and the Cubs paid his way through law school at the University of the Pacific. He broke in as an agent in the early 1980s when former teammates on their way to the majors asked him to represent them.¹⁶

The Boras Corporation, which employs about 75 people, has subsidiaries: Boras Sports Marketing, the Boras Sports Training Institute, and a personal management and consulting firm.¹⁷ Among his 65 or so major league clients are Barry Zito, Greg Maddox, Luke Hochevar, Johnny Damon, Andruw Jones, Manny Ramirez, Mark Teixeira, Daisuke Matsuzaka, Jason Varitek, Carlos Beltran, and Alex Rodriguez. As noted above, in 2007 Alex Rodriguez signed the largest contract in professional sports. This broke the previous record set in 2000 when Boras negotiated a \$242 million, ten-year contract for Rodriguez, then with the Texas Rangers. In 2006, Boras negotiated a \$126 million, seven-year deal for Barry Zito with the San Francisco Giants, at the time the largest contract for a pitcher in baseball history.¹⁸

Not only is Boras the biggest agent in baseball, he is also the most controversial. Besides representing big-leaguers he represents about 60 minor leaguers and recent high draft choices. Boras is considered by many to be the most feared agent in sports because of his high contract demands. Some teams avoid drafting his clients for this reason. Clients like J.D. Drew, Jared Weaver, and Luke Hochevar, have refused to sign with teams that drafted them because they were not offered the premium price demanded by Boras. They were drafted again a year later by teams that knew what they were getting into with Boras, and paid accordingly. These kinds of manipulations have earned Boras the nicknames “The Extortionist” and “Lord of the Loophole.”¹⁹

Agents have to work hard and smart to hold on to their clients and acquire new ones. Players can be fickle, willing to listen to the siren song of new agents trying to lure them away. “Show me the money” is the mantra of this highly competitive business.

Negotiations

Under the dual system of negotiations in sports, the union negotiates provisions applicable to all players in the league, such as minimum salaries, free agency, and salary arbitration. The rules thus established underlie the second aspect of sports bargaining: negotiation of the individual contract between the player and his club. Players in these individual situations are ordinarily represented by an agent, and this negotiation is usually the most important service that agents provide.

Over the years, a substantial literature has accumulated to provide analytical models and practical applications for conducting negotiations and dealing with conflicts that arise at the bargaining table.²⁰ Of particular importance in individual negotiations between agents and clubs are three aspects of bargaining. The first is bargaining in which the agent is seeking as large an economic reward for the player's services as possible. The more the agent receives on the player's behalf the less is left over for the club. This is a fixed-sum, win-lose game in which the negotiators may view each other as adversaries. Because large amounts of money are at stake, these negotiations may lead to impasses that are difficult to resolve.

In contrast, a second aspect of bargaining entails the negotiators engage in joint problem solving to come up with solutions that benefit both sides. An example of this type is having a part of a player's compensation subject to performance. Bonuses might be provided for winning an MVP award, playing a certain number of games, or being named to the all-star team. Thus the club's desire to win is tied to the player's desire to achieve performance goals. The size of the financial (and perhaps psychological) reward to each party can be increased in this kind of variable-sum, win-win game.

A third aspect of individual contract negotiations is structuring the bargaining environment or ambiance so as to smooth the path toward agreement. Whether negotiations are viewed in terms of dividing up the economic pie or making the size of the pie bigger, attitudes of the negotiators are of paramount importance. If the relationship between the negotiators is hostile, agreement, especially a mutually beneficial one, is going to be harder to achieve. Focus of the negotiators should therefore be on engendering mutual trust, respect, accommodation, attention to face-saving, and other positive factors that lead to a greater willingness to come to agreement.

Conflict in bargaining may be inevitable in certain cases, but giving attention to building a positive relationship and avoiding personal vendettas can move the negotiators toward agreements that work to the advantage of both sides. This is why negotiation is viewed as an art rather than a science. Negotiators acquire their skills through hard work and experience, and professional agents have a distinct advantage over amateurs who are untested in the bargaining arena.

Athletes rarely have the experience and acumen necessary to become a successful negotiator. A lot of money is at stake and club representatives are quite proficient in handling salary negotiations. Therefore, players who represent themselves may run a sizable risk. Although agents get a percentage of the negotiated salary, they typically earn their share.

Two of the best agents have been Leigh Steinberg and Jeff Moorad. For many years, they were partners in a law firm that placed particular emphasis on high ethical standards for themselves and represented players. Their principled approach and remarkable success established a model for agents. Working only with players who were willing to contribute significantly to charities, benefits, or schools, Steinberg and Moorad set standards by which other agents should be judged. Each specialized in a sport, Steinberg in football and Moorad in baseball. Moorad, who felt he had accomplished all he wanted to achieve as an agent, is now part owner of the Arizona Diamondbacks.²¹

Steinberg continues to thrive as a top agent for NFL players, often representing elite quarterbacks in the league out of his office in Newport Beach, California. He was the inspiration for the title character of the movie *Jerry Maguire*. Steinberg suggests these 12 essential rules for negotiations:

1. Align yourself with people who share your values.
2. Learn all you can about the other party.
3. Convince the other side that you have an option — even if you don't.
4. Set your limits before negotiation begins.
5. Establish a climate of cooperation, not conflict.
6. In the face of intimidation, show no fear.
7. Learn to listen.
8. Be comfortable with silence.
9. Avoid playing split-the-difference.
10. Emphasize your concessions; minimize the other party's.
11. Never push a losing argument to the end.
12. Develop relationships, not conquests.²²

These rules are full of common sense and might be usefully adopted by persons involved in any kind of negotiating situation.

Big-time agents in baseball benefit from “information asymmetry” because they control the flow of information about the value of players in the labor market. Under baseball's collective bargaining agreement, which prevents conspiracies, teams are forbidden from communicating with each other. Agents, however, are in contact with multiple teams and therefore have a far better idea of a player's market worth.

Certification

In order to represent athletes in professional team sports, it is necessary to be certified as an agent. Certification is provided by the players associations, not by the leagues. The first association to certify agents was the NFLPA in 1985, and since 1996 all four major team sports have required certification. The reason that certification was required was complaints about agent practices. The number of agents and players in the team sports are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: CERTIFIED AGENTS AND NUMBER OF PLAYERS, 2006

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Year Begun</i>	<i>Certified Agents</i>	<i>Players on Rosters</i>
Baseball	1988	400	750
Football	1985	800	1,900
Basketball	1986	350	360
Hockey	1996	158	750

SOURCE: Mark Fainaru-Wada and Ron Kroichick, "Agents of Influence," San Francisco Chronicle, March 11, 2001, p. C1; Kenneth L. Shropshire and Timothy Davis, *The Business of Sports Agents* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 15; and author's update.

The players associations all require completion of an application package, comprehensive evaluation, and background checks. Regulation of agent conduct and enforcement provisions vary by sport. The MLBPA requires agents to pay annual fees and to keep current on developments within the sport. It also provides that agents cannot become certified until they actually agree to represent a particular client. The players associations can suspend or revoke certification for prohibited conduct. Examples of prohibited conduct for the NFLPA include (1) providing or offering a monetary inducement to encourage a player to sign with an agent, (2) providing or offering money or other thing of value to a player's family or other person to induce them to recommend an agent, and (3) providing false or misleading information to a player.

The following is an excerpt from the MLBPA Regulations Governing Player Agents:

Section 3: Standard of Conduct for Player Agents; General Requirements; Prohibited Conduct; Miscellany

Introduction

The primary objectives of the MLBPA in issuing these Regulations are to afford every Player an opportunity to make an informed selection of his Player Agent by making available to him a full and comprehensive disclosure of facts relevant to the ability of a person to serve as a fiduciary of Players, including but not limited to information relevant to the educational and professional background of the applicant and to whether such person is subject to any actual or potential conflict of interest; and to

provide both Players and Player Agents with an effective and expeditious procedure for resolving any disputes concerning their contractual obligations.

A. All Applicants and Player Agents shall be required:

(1) To provide the information required by the Application, and to update that information pursuant to the requirements of these Regulations;

(2) To agree that all the information provided in an Application (or in any update required by the Regulations) can be provided by the MLBPA to any professional or amateur baseball player, or his parent or guardian, and, in addition, can be used by the MLBPA as it deems appropriate in the performance of its representational function, subject only to the Association taking into account its concerns about individual Player confidentiality;

(3) To provide on or about February 1 of each year, to each Player whom the Player Agent represents, a fully completed and executed copy of the Fee Statement Form attached to these Regulations as Exhibit E. The Fee Statement shall cover the period January 1 through December 31 of the immediately prior year and a copy of it shall be provided to the Association concurrent with its transmission to the Player;

(4) To attend any mandatory seminars or meetings conducted by the Association which, in the judgment of the Association, will deal with matters relevant to the proper performance of the Player Agent function;

(5) To comply with the limitation on fees for individual Player salary negotiations as set forth in the Regulations;

(6) To insure that each Player whom the Player Agent represents receives an executed copy of the required contract between the Player and the Player Agent, and to provide the Association with a copy of each such contract promptly after execution;

(7) To allow a person retained by a former or current Player-client to conduct an independent audit, upon request, of all relevant books and records relating to any services provided to the Player;

(8) Upon request by a Player, to transfer to any successor Player Agent designated by the Player copies of documents and records deemed by the Player or successor Player Agent relevant to the appropriate representation of the Player;

(9) To advise a Player of, and report to the MLBPA, any known or reasonably suspected violations of any Uniform Player's Contract, or the Basic Agreement, committed or reasonably suspected to have been committed by any Major League Club or Clubs, the League or Commissioner's Office, or their officers, employees or agents;

(10) To provide the Association with all materials that the Association deems relevant with respect to any inquiry it is making concerning these Regulations and in all other respects to cooperate fully with the Association; and

(11) To comply with all other provisions of the Regulations.²³

It is not especially difficult to become certified as a sports agent, provided one has reasonably good qualifications and an honorable work record. The

compliance requirements following certification are not onerous either. But becoming a successful agent is another matter. Even if a person becomes certified in a sport, there is no guarantee of future clients. It is a catch-22 situation, because athletes do not want to hire someone who is inexperienced as an agent, yet how does one get experience unless an athlete is willing to use your services? Well-known agents like Leigh Steinberg or Scott Boras can get all the clients they can handle, but for a person trying to break in as an agent the landscape is barren. Perhaps by knowing a local athlete or his family a would-be agent can gain entry, especially if offering services on a pro bono basis. If that athlete has success in the pro ranks, the agent may gain a reputation that can propel a career.

Corruption

As salaries of professional athletes rose to higher and higher levels, not only did the number of agents grow but their business became more competitive. Inducing an amateur athlete to sign with a particular agent through bribes became common. Agents have provided cars, clothing, shoes, gift certificates, women, airline tickets, drugs, and, most commonly, cash to attract attention of players and their families, some of whom are poor. The NCAA strictly prohibits payments or gifts of any kind, but under-the-table transactions are hard to detect. Certification of prospective agents by players associations and the passage of state laws regulating agents have helped to temper this form of bribery. But the problem will never go away entirely because certain athletes and their families will always be tempted by a few unscrupulous agents looking to gain an unfair advantage.

Wrongdoing by agents has occasionally surfaced, most often involving football and basketball. In one widely publicized case, sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom were convicted by a federal court for fraud, conspiracy, and racketeering. Their firm, General Talent International, had signed 43 college football and basketball athletes to personal services contracts while the players had college eligibility remaining. By signing the players prematurely, the agents violated NCAA rules, which the jury found to constitute fraud against the players' universities. Walters was sentenced to five years and Bloom to three years, but both were released on bond pending an appeal. In 1990, the U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the convictions on the technical ground that the jurors were not allowed to consider certain testimony about criminal intent.²⁴ Bloom was shot to death in his Malibu home in 1993.

Another highly publicized case involved Alan Eagleson, former head of the National Hockey League Players Association. Eagleson was also an agent

for several players, including famous Boston Bruins defenseman Bobby Orr. Eagleson's mishandling of Orr's financial affairs led to an investigation that turned up other missteps involving embezzlement and fraud at the players association in 1994. He ultimately served six months in prison.²⁵

In 2000, William "Tank" Black, a prominent agent who represented several NFL and NBA players, was accused of engaging in fraudulent moneymaking schemes. Black's firm, Professional Marketing Incorporated, was located in Charleston, South Carolina. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) charged that Black and several associates took advantage of clients' lack of investment experience by committing mail and wire fraud and money laundering to the tune of \$15 million in clients' money.²⁶ Black filed his own suit on antitrust grounds, seeking dismissal of disciplinary proceedings imposed by the NFLPA against him, including revocation of his certification as an agent. A U.S. District Court rejected his claims.²⁷ The suit against Black resulted in his receiving a five-year sentence for fraud in 2002.

Another troublesome case arose in 2006, involving Kirk Wright and his firm called International Management Associates. Wright was an Atlanta-based hedge fund manager and seven of his clients were current and retired NFL players. These persons filed suit claiming to have lost as much as \$15 million, and SEC documents estimate a loss to Wright's 500 total clients of \$115 million to \$185 million.²⁸ Wright was a registered agent with the NFLPA and a member of its Financial Advisors Program, which claims to protect players from fraud. In this case, however, the players' interests were not protected. In 2008, Wright was convicted of defrauding clients and, while awaiting a prison term of up to 710 years, hanged himself in an Atlanta jail.

There has been relatively little corruption among baseball agents, although two incidents stand out. The first involved Jerry Kapstein, one of the pioneer agents in the sport who represented players like Carlton Fisk, Don Baylor, and Fred Lynn. Kapstein was decertified by the MLBPA for falling into bed with team management.²⁹

The second incident occurred in 2007 when Gustavo "Gus" Dominguez was convicted of smuggling five Cuban baseball players into the United States. Dominguez is the founder of the Encino, California, agency Total Sports International. His firm represented numerous Cuban defectors in pro baseball for several years. Many Cubans, including baseball players, have been taken by fast boats to South Florida, such as Kendry Morales of the Los Angeles Angels and Yuniesky Betancourt of the Seattle Mariners.³⁰ But Dominguez is the first agent charged with illegal smuggling of players. Convicted by a jury in Key West, Florida, of 21 felony counts of smuggling, conspiracy and harboring and transporting aliens for profit, he was sentenced to five years in prison.

Regulation

The certification process and monitoring of agents by the players associations, discussed above, is an important mechanism for the regulation of dishonorable practitioners. Also, attorneys are regulated by the codes of ethics of the bar associations of the states in which they are authorized to practice law. Not all persons with law degrees are practicing law, however, because they may not have passed the bar examination and are therefore not licensed. As a result, they are not held responsible under a code of ethics. NCAA regulations have also been utilized, but have not been particularly effective in bringing miscreants to justice. Consequently, in addition to these private systems, regulation has been provided by government.

In 1970, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) was established by Congress to prosecute organized crime and political corruption. RICO was used in the Walters-Bloom case. Also, the jurisdiction of the SEC applies to sports agents involved in financial management. The SEC's enforcement powers were used in the Tank Black case as well as the charges of financial fraud against Kirk Wright. Financial managers are considered fiduciaries, and as such are subject to the common law "prudent man rule" which seeks to prevent unusually risky or ill-advised investment practices.

To further protect athletes from unscrupulous or incompetent agents, about 30 states have laws regulating agents.³¹ These laws typically require the registration of agents and posting of bonds to insure against financial defalcation. An example of a state law is the Miller-Ayala Athlete Agents Act in California.³² This law, the first of its kind in the nation, requires sports agents to file extensive personal and business information with the California Secretary of State. A surety bond is required and the schedule of fees charged must be provided along with any future changes in fees. Filing of false, misleading, or incomplete statements is subject to criminal and civil penalties.

In 2000, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Law developed a proposed model law called the Uniform Athletes-Agents Act (UAAA), to protect the interests of student athletes and academic institutions by regulating agent activities.³³ The UAAA provides a template designed to encourage states to adopt its provisions into law. Several states have adopted the UAAA, but there is still substantial variation in the state laws taken as a whole. This creates a problem for agents operating in more than one state, because the provisions on compliance and penalties vary from state to state. Perhaps the time has come for a comprehensive federal law that regulates agents uniformly nationwide.

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the world of the sports agent is a challenging one, with extensive certification and regulation requirements, and power consolidated in big firms. It is also a crowded field with many agents competing for relatively few athletes. The full-service agencies typically attract the top players. Many agents are attorneys or have specialties in financial management, so academic credentials are important.

Still, it is possible to become an agent if one is determined enough and perhaps catches a break representing a local athlete. But becoming a “Jerry Maguire” is another story. This is a Hollywood fantasy coveted by many but achieved by few. A more realistic way to gain entry to the field is to get a job with a leading full-service firm or prominent agent, then working your way up the ladder.

Because of the astronomical salaries of athletes in baseball and other sports, there is a temptation for agents to flout rules, especially on payoffs to unrepresented college players and misappropriation of funds placed into their trust. As a result, there will always be a need for strict rules governing the behavior of agents, vigilant enforcement, and stiff penalties to miscreants.

Notes

Portions of this article are adapted from “So You Want to Be a Sports Agent,” *Labor Law Journal* 57, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 246–256.

1. Walsh’s role as an agent is discussed in Robert W. Creamer, *Babe: The Legend Comes to Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 271–274.
2. *Ibid.*, 273.
3. *Ibid.*, 348.
4. Dick Kazmaier, “Foreword,” in Robert H. Ruxin, *An Athlete’s Guide to Agents* (Lexington, MA: Stephen Greene, 1989), viii.
5. Quotation from Leigh Steinberg, “The Role of Sports Agents,” in *The Business of Professional Sports*, ed. by Paul D. Staudohar and James A. Mangan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 247.
6. For details, see Paul D. Staudohar, “Labor Relations in Basketball: The Lockout of 1998–99,” *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 122, No. 4, April 1999, 3–9.
7. Collective Bargaining Agreement between National Football League Players Association and National Football League Management Council, 1982, 32–33.
8. Chris Ballard, “Writing Up a Storm,” *Sports Illustrated*, March 27, 2006, 65.
9. Alan Abrahamson, “Sports Agents Might Be on the Way Out With NBA Agreement as the Catalyst,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1999, B1.
10. Kate Kelly and Dana Cimilla, “Alex Rodriguez Gets a Surprise Assist from Fan in Omaha,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 2007, A1.
11. *Ibid.* A7.
12. “Rodriguez, Yankees Finalize \$275 Million Deal,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 14, 2007, C5.
13. Kenneth L. Shropshire, *Agents of Opportunity: Sports Agents and Corruption in Collegiate Sports* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 12.

14. L. Jon Wertheim, "SFX Needs an Rx," *Sports Illustrated*, November 5, 2001, 35.
15. Larry Stewart, "Nahan Left Many Fond Memories," *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 2008, D2.
16. Matthew Benjamin, "Go-To Guy," *U. S. News and World Report*, May 10, 2004, EE2–EE6.
17. Ben McGrath, "The Extortionist," *The New Yorker*, October 29, 2007, 60.
18. Newswire: "Zito Hits Giant Jackpot With \$126 Million Deal," *Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 2006, D6.
19. Ben McGrath, "The Extortionist," op. cit., 63.
20. See, for example, Richard E. Walton and Robert B. McKersie, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations: An Analysis of a Social Interaction System* (Ithaca: ILR Press, Cornell University, 1991); Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (New York: Penguin, 1981, 1991); and E. Edward Herman, *Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations*, fourth edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998). Also, two sports books that have good coverage of negotiations are Michael Leeds and Peter von Allmen, *The Economics of Sports* (Boston: Addison Wesley, 2002) and Rodney D. Fort, *Sports Economics* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2003).
21. See Jeffrey Moorad, "Negotiating for the Professional Baseball Player," in *Law of Professional and Amateur Sports*, ed. by Gary A. Uberstine (St. Paul, MN: Thomson/West, 2002).
22. Leigh Steinberg, *Winning With Integrity: Getting What You're Worth Without Selling Your Soul* (New York: Villard, 1998, 2002), 225.
23. Major League Baseball Players Association Regulations Governing Player Agents, revised July 1, 1997, provided to the author by the MLBPA in April 2006.
24. *U.S. v. Walters-Bloom*, 913 F. 2d 388 (1990).
25. See Russ Conway, *Game Misconduct: Alan Eagleson and the Corruption of Hockey* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995).
26. L. Jon Wertheim, "Web of Deceit," *Sports Illustrated*, May 29, 2000, 82.
27. *Black v. National Football League Players Association*, 87 F. Supp. 2d 1 (2000).
28. Farrell Evans, "Brother Beware," *Sports Illustrated*, April 4, 2006, 20.
29. Ben McGrath, "The Extortionist," op. cit., 64.
30. Kevin Baxter, "Sports Agent Receives Five-Year Sentence," *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2007, D6.
31. A regular update of state laws regulating sports agents may be found in *Sports Lawyer*, the bimonthly publication of the Sports Lawyers Association.
32. This law is contained in Section 18895, et seq, of the California Business and Professional Code.
33. Kenneth L. Shropshire and Timothy Davis, *The Business of Sports Agents* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 149–155; and Ray Yasser, James R. McCurdy, C. Peter Gopelrud, and Maureen Arellano Weston, *Sports Law: Cases and Materials*, fourth edition (Cincinnati: Anderson, 2000), 512–514.

The Brave Departure

Michael Civile

On February 22, 1953, a small piece in the *Boston Globe* excitedly announced the beginning of spring training. The Boston Red Sox and Boston Braves were on their way to Florida to prepare for the upcoming season. “In seven weeks, they will be back to go on display for the home folks,” the *Globe* reported.¹ But after a flurry of activity, the Braves instead began the regular season less than two months later as Milwaukee’s new major league franchise.

The abrupt move stunned Boston, which had seen the Braves win the National League pennant only five years earlier. But by the early 1950s, the Braves’ annual attendance was in freefall, spiraling to 281,000 total fans in 1952, an 81-percent decrease from their 1948 league-leading total. So it should have come as no surprise that Boston would be the first of the original two-team cities to lose one of its major league franchises. After all, the city had dropped from fifth in national population to tenth, below modern metropolises that were devoid of major league representation, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. It seemed as though Boston was seeing the results of postwar population, migration, and suburbanization trends, and could no longer successfully field two teams. Historical studies of more dramatic postwar major league franchise migrations such as the Brooklyn Dodgers have determined that the Braves were merely the first franchise to suffer from the same shifting demographics that plagued all struggling franchises, thus triggering Major League Baseball’s resulting realignment.

However, this study will examine the sudden and sharp decline in the Braves’ fortunes between 1948 and 1952 in an effort to explore another potential reason for the Braves’ swift decline. I will analyze attendance figures, the circumstances surrounding other franchise relocations, national suburbanization trends, and Boston’s social makeup at the time to suggest that a negative response to integration was perhaps the most significant reason for the Braves’ drastic attendance drop. In this sense, Major League Baseball was forced to stretch beyond its conservative boundaries in order to save one of its original franchises, and usher itself into the modern era. Perhaps shifting demograph-

ics *within* the game inadvertently led it to be integrated into America's new social map, and new opportunities for advancement and financial success were to be found in this uncharted territory.

History

The Boston Braves were the oldest franchise in professional sports, operating continuously since 1871. But after the introduction of the nearby Red Sox in 1901, the Braves often struggled to upstage their more successful American League rival. While the Red Sox won five of the first fifteen World Series, the Braves were only able to eek out a single World Series win (1914) in the forty years before World War II, while never finishing higher than fourth place during the thirty years between 1917 and 1946. However, by the time the Braves had reached the postwar late 1940s, they had rediscovered a winning formula under new ownership. In January of 1944, construction magnate Lou Perini bought out other Braves' stockholders, and became principal owner along with partners Guido Rugo and Joseph Maney. Perini was named team president and ran the franchise's operations. Over the next five years, he established himself as an imaginative owner, bringing in more fans by renovating Braves Field, installing lights at the ballpark for night games, outfitting the team in satin uniforms, using marching bands, and setting off fireworks.² Perini and general manager John Quinn began acquiring players and expanded the Braves' minor league farm system from one team to fourteen, including the 1947 acquisition of the highly successful Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association, a purchase that foretold the Braves' future.

By 1948, the investments had paid off: the Braves management had constructed a team that went to the World Series against the Cleveland Indians, losing in six games. The Braves' success that season led to a National League-leading attendance of 1.5 million fans. Perini's renovation of a dilapidated Braves Field transformed the team's image from hapless to hopeful, and made fans temporarily forget the mistakes of the past, such as their failure to sell out the 1936 All-Star Game (still the only Midsummer Classic to have empty seats) and Opening Day 1946, when the newly painted seats had not yet dried at Braves Field, leading the organization to "pay the highest dry cleaning bill in history."³ But the good fortunes of 1948 were merely an exception rather than a new norm.

In 1949, the Braves finished 75–79, and drew only 1.1 million fans, one of the few teams in history to follow a World Series appearance with a smaller attendance. The subsequent off-season further hindered the Braves' appeal. On December 14, the Braves dealt 1948 Rookie of the Year Alvin Dark and team leader Eddie Stanky to the New York Giants for an aging Sid Gordon and three

other unheralded players. Dark and Stanky would become key components in the Giants' 1951 pennant winner, while Dark also played on the Giants' 1954 World Series winner. Gordon would provide three years of solid play for the Braves, but the loss of fan favorites Dark and Stanky would disappoint Braves fans, and affect loyalty in the waning years of the team's stay in Boston. By 1950, only two years removed from the magical 1948 season, the Braves would draw fewer than one million fans, finishing seventh (out of eight) in league attendance. The next two seasons would see them consistently halve their turnout, with 487,000 fans in 1951 and a paltry 281,000 in 1952. Within four years, the Braves had become an inept embarrassment, desperate for a change as they headed in an increasingly disturbing direction.

Throughout February and early March of 1953, while the Braves trained in Florida, the *Boston Globe* reported optimistically on the team's daily activities, with barely a mention of any potential move. In fact, most of the relocation talk at the time seemed to be coming out of St. Louis, where the National League's Cardinals and American League's Browns vied for fan loyalty in another two-team market descending the national population rankings. The Cardinals seemed ready to migrate until February 20, when it was reported that Anheuser-Busch had purchased the team, determined to keep it a St. Louis institution. This provoked flamboyant Browns' owner Bill Veeck to immediately seek a new home, even though the season was merely seven weeks away. Veeck's first choice was Milwaukee, where he had once owned the minor-league Brewers. He saw the city's potential in its minor league-leading attendance figures in 1951 and 1952,⁴ and was further encouraged when Milwaukee unveiled the new state-of-the-art County Stadium in the spring of 1953, announcing itself as major-league ready. City officials had attempted to lure the Cardinals with a \$4 million offer, only to have Anheuser-Busch step in at the last second to keep the Redbirds in St. Louis. Once the city of Milwaukee recognized Veeck's interest, they presented him a similar proposal to come north to Wisconsin.

In order to complete the deal, Veeck needed approval from the current Brewers owner, Perini, who owned the territorial rights to Milwaukee baseball. On March 3, Perini blocked Veeck's move, even refusing a \$500,000 compensation. This rejection kept Major League Baseball out of Milwaukee, effectively turning its residents against Perini, who had previously promised that "he would never stand in the way of the city getting a major league franchise."⁵ Within twenty-four hours, "Milwaukee officials threatened to terminate the lease that allowed Perini's Brewers to play in County Stadium in 1953 [while fans] threatened to boycott the team."⁶ Now that Perini stood to lose significantly in both his major league and top minor league cities, a change was imminent. By March 5, the day of Joseph Stalin's death, the *Boston Globe* saw the possibility — and even obligation — that Perini would have to eventu-

ally move the club to Milwaukee if he ever wanted to be financially successful in baseball again, although reporters surmised that relocation would not happen until October, after the 1953 season.⁷ Perini, who had already developed plans to move his franchise, simply expedited the process as the situation in Milwaukee escalated.⁸ By March 15, Perini was lobbying the other owners to approve an immediate move to Milwaukee, and he stopped hiding it from the press and the fans. He claimed, “You can’t stop progress.”⁹

Perini blamed the rise of television for the diminishing fan base and his subsequent need to relocate. At the same time, he was optimistic about the “new territory” ahead, claiming that the move was “in the best interests of baseball.”¹⁰ After days of discussion and voting, the owners approved the move, and the *Globe’s* March 18 evening edition front-page headline screamed “BRAVES GO.” After a few days of stunned editorials, opinions, and columns, the March 21 *Boston Globe* featured not one mention of the Braves, as if their abrupt exit took with it eighty-two years of memories.

These events suggest that the Braves’ sudden departure was the result of Veeck’s aggressiveness and Perini’s subsequent need to stabilize the franchise. But it still does not resolve the significant extent to which the Braves’ attendance faded. The next section will examine the reasons most often proffered by experts about the 1950s trend in team migration, specifically focused on declining attendance. A closer look will indicate that no two urban areas were alike, and that a series of interrelated circumstances in Boston revealed the specific culture of the city, forcing baseball to accept the realities of postwar America if it were to continue operating as the national game.

Rationale

This examination of the Braves’ plummeting attendance between 1950 and 1952 begins with Perini’s claim that television was critical in keeping the fans at home. While television was still in its infancy, its impact on the game was already being felt by the early 1950s. A Major League Baseball game was first televised in 1939, and in 1948, the Braves began televising their National League pennant winner. But at this point, most sets were located in barrooms, with only several thousand sold nationally by the end of the war.¹¹ By 1950, that number had skyrocketed to seven million, and according to William Marshall, “Once television caught on, fans stayed home in droves.”¹² According to most historians, this had a devastating league-wide effect on attendances, and hurt minor league teams most significantly, since they were suddenly overshadowed by their fans’ ability to watch major league games on television.¹³ Ironically, the consequences from the rise of television were opposite those of radio, which tended to draw more fans. The St. Louis Cardinals, for instance, solidified

their core fan base in the South and West by famously broadcasting games on powerful KMOX radio, reaching nine states and 120 markets.¹⁴ Roger Launius credits this use of radio broadcasts for building a fan base that would ultimately root the Cardinals so deeply in St. Louis lore that when it was time for one of the town's two teams to relocate, the Browns were the logical choice.¹⁵

Alternatively, the Braves' use of new broadcasting technology was specifically blamed—and is still cited often—for the lack of fans in the early 1950s. In fact, Perini was so certain that television was to blame for the Boston debacle that he outright refused to televise any of his team's home games once he moved to Milwaukee.¹⁶ As of 1955, his Braves were one of four teams still not televising any home games. The resulting spike in Milwaukee attendance—which also could have been attributed to novelty and/or a competitive team—was all the evidence Perini needed to know that television was a distracting presence, and kept fans from attending games. Television became the preferred viewing experience for several markets, and has become a key material symbol of postwar suburbanization. After the war, several factors contributed to families relocating from cramped city apartments to appealing suburban single family houses: improved government loan-lending policies, metropolitan and national freeway systems, development of open land, housing availability and price, a preference by citizens to own their own property, as well as a sudden surge in population due to the postwar baby boom.¹⁷ This population shift thrived due to a mutually beneficial relationship with the automobile industry, allowing the growing population to drive outward to distant city suburbs.

Parks built in the early twentieth century were constructed with the urban fan in mind, the supporter who would arrive at the game by walking, or via subway. Eric Avila notes that Progressive Era ballparks “all depended on the streetcar to bring a steady influx of pleasure seekers and sports enthusiasts, but that too became a relic after World War II.”¹⁸ With the popularity of the automobile in the 1950s, many ballparks suddenly became unapproachable.¹⁹ This would have an inevitable effect on suburban fans that were no longer interested in driving home and then back into town for night games, especially when parking was limited, traffic was rampant, and the games were available for free on television. In a streetcar city like Boston, this argument makes sense. Braves Field was specifically designed for the urban fan, tucked tightly into a city block with little available parking. Milwaukee, on the other hand, underwent a massive overhaul during an act of foresight in 1950, pulling up its streetcar rails, and repaving the city to be more automobile-friendly in the new suburban age.²⁰ When the Braves moved to Milwaukee in 1953, the city was ready to accommodate both the team (with the sparkling new County Stadium) and its car-happy fans (the park featured over seven-thousand parking spaces).

Of course, no discussion of postwar suburbanization is complete without the racial implications at the time, and these apply to the decreasing baseball attendances as well. Many ballparks that suffered mid-century setbacks were built between 1909 and 1915 in white middle-class neighborhoods such as Brooklyn's Flatbush, Harlem in Manhattan, and North Philadelphia. These failures connote an extension of "white flight," the suburbanization trend evident in many urban centers where the white population moved out after the city's traditionally white areas were integrated. With the end of the war in 1945 came a migration of southern African Americans into northern U.S. cities teeming with industrial employment opportunities. Many of these urban areas were thus transformed into African American neighborhoods, often deemed "undesirable" by the predominantly white residents.²¹ In this sense, television offered a reproduction of the public experience without the inherent risks that accompanied an evening out on the town.²² Avila suggests that the changing demographic landscape around Ebbets Field was a primary reason for decreasing fan interest in Brooklyn in the mid-1950s, a belief supported by Neil Sullivan: "This elegant community began to deteriorate when its inhabitants migrated to the suburbs ... [this] radically altered the atmosphere of Dodger games."²³ However, Sullivan also notes that the Yankees maintained a high attendance rate in a more depressed urban environment — the South Bronx — because Yankee Stadium was not a traditional urban ballpark; it differed by providing convenient parking via accessible roads, thus drawing more fans from the entire metropolitan area.²⁴

In the case of the Braves' plummeting attendance, it would seem that a lack of parking at Braves Field was also more a critical factor than white flight. By the early 1950s, white suburbanization did not seem to affect Boston as much as it did other cities such as St. Louis, Cleveland, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. While the white population in the latter four cities decreased as the nonwhite demographic showed substantial growth, Boston's white population, on the other hand, increased along with its nonwhite population.²⁵ A study of the 1950 Boston census, which breaks down the city's population by districts, race, and ethnicity, provides evidence of a more widespread case of *de facto* segregation, a phenomenon prevalent in many of the industrial cities of the North and Midwest at the time.²⁶ Indeed, the African American population in Boston's delineated "black" neighborhoods — Roxbury and Dorchester — increased significantly between 1940 and 1950, while remaining virtually nonexistent in the city's remaining districts.²⁷ This is especially true of the area around Braves Field, which did not experience an unusual influx of African Americans. In 1940, Allston-Brighton had a population of 7,294 whites and 159 blacks. Ten years later, the change in the area's demographics was barely noticeable: 8,658 whites, 186 blacks.²⁸ So it can be assumed that the dissipating fan base at Braves Field was not affected by white flight or altered demographics, especially when considering the city's other team.

Recalling Sullivan's comparison of Ebbets Field and Yankee Stadium, it is important to note that the Red Sox did not suffer a significant drop at the gate during this same period, despite the fact that Fenway Park was barely a mile away from Braves Field, in a more urban setting with a similarly dire parking situation. Additionally, like the Braves, the Red Sox had been televising games since 1948 with no significant decrease in attendance. This suggests that neither white flight, deteriorating neighborhoods, suburbanization, nor lack of parking could have possibly accounted for the considerable 71 percent decrease in attendance at Braves Field between 1949 and 1952, especially when compared with the consistent attendance enjoyed by the Red Sox nearby.

Perhaps, as some historians propose, the main reason for the Braves' tumbling turnout was their competitive ineptitude, as signified by poor personnel choices and a mismanagement of the club.²⁹ This incompetence compared very unfavorably with the competitive and executive stability of the Red Sox during the same years. But in 1952, the Red Sox finished in sixth place with a 76–78 record and played all but six games without their star Ted Williams, who was serving a stint in the Marines. Yet the Sox still managed to draw 1.1 million fans, over 800,000 more than the Braves that same year, and without any advantage in ballpark accessibility or neighborhood. Could competitive imbalance possibly account for such a significant disparity? Perhaps the answer lay in the culture pervading Boston at the time.

A Final Proposal

In 1951, only three seasons removed from a National League pennant, the Braves were competitive into July before fading in the season's second half. They finished 76–78 — an identical record to the 1952 Red Sox — yet their attendance plunged 46 percent to 487,000, lowest in the National League. These numbers are too skewed to suggest that competitive instability was the only difference between the Braves and the Red Sox, and instead signify a sudden *abandonment* of the Braves by the Boston public. Perhaps the Braves' disappearing fan base can be considered an extension of the city's 1950s segregated psychology. Howard Bryant's *Shut Out*, which examines the symbiotic relationship between Boston's racial politics and the Red Sox, can be used as a valuable tool in analyzing the potential influence of the city's exclusionary mentality on the Boston Braves. Bryant maintains that the Red Sox instituted a franchise-wide policy of racial segregation between 1933 and 1959, implemented from the top down by owner Tom Yawkey, general managers Eddie Collins and Joe Cronin, and manager Pinky Higgins. This policy encompassed every position in the organization from management to players to Fenway Park concession workers.³⁰ Curiously, Bryant rarely discusses the Braves, leaving open interpretations such as the one to follow.

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey integrated the Brooklyn Dodgers and Major League Baseball. The subsequent inclusion of black ballplayers revolutionized the sport both on and off the field. Inspired presumably by the Dodgers' financial windfall and winning record, the Cleveland Indians, Philadelphia Athletics and the New York Giants also began signing players from this new and exciting crop of talent, with the Giants and Indians achieving subsequent success both on the field and at the gates. In October of 1949, the Braves followed suit, trading for Sam Jethroe of the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league system. Jethroe had been a star in the Negro leagues in the early 1940s, and at 33, was already in the twilight of his career when the Braves acquired him. Two months later, the Braves famously traded Alvin Dark and Eddie Stanky, changing the makeup of the ball club. In 1950, Jethroe debuted for the Braves, integrating the team as its first black player. He has been described as a "dazzling" player, leading the league in stolen bases and sparking the team to an 83–71 record and a hopeful third place finish.³¹ Jethroe was named National League Rookie of the Year in 1950.

Despite the promise of 1950, the Braves' attendance in 1951 dropped to nearly half that of the prior season. This sudden and significant decrease is much more substantial than the 12 percent drop between 1949 and 1950, after the Braves had allegedly "torn the guts out of a team that was supposed to be a contender" by trading Stanky and Dark.³² But if the hostile response in 1951 were due to this trade, the decline in attendance would have most likely been consistent, rather than exponential. Based on the comparative attendance figures, the timing, and Bryant's exposé of Boston's racial prejudices, perhaps the Red Sox were able to maintain popularity because they continued a strict policy of no black players. The significant drop for the Braves in 1951, on the other hand, could be viewed as a backlash by Boston fans for integrating their team and thus the city.

Bryant describes Boston in 1945 as "a perilous place for Blacks."³³ Rather than welcoming African Americans migrating from the South, this influx was viewed as "a source of great contention," even amongst Boston's original black community.³⁴ Avila suggests that the Irish- and Italian-Americans who had been persecuted as immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had been reconfigured as "white" as they gained positions of power by mid-century, identified less by ethnic heterogeneity and more by racial distinctions.³⁵ Indeed, in the Boston of the late 1940s, the city's dominant Irish and Italian communities had appropriated — and were now dictating — a white hegemony by participating in a regional policy of exclusion and segregation. In 1949, for instance, a civic ordinance was passed in Boston that made it virtually impossible for any neighborhood to elect an African American to citywide public office. Bryant states that the black community in Boston was so small that it could not muster any effective government pressure to overturn such policies.³⁶

This rise of previously mistreated ethnic groups is critical when considering the makeup of the Braves' fan base. Before World War II, the Braves were considered "the people's team," appealing to working class and immigrant fans.³⁷ During the Great Depression, the Red Sox' Tom Yawkey was the richest boss in the game while the Braves were owned by Emil Fuchs, a cash-strapped former magistrate. In addition, the Braves often featured fan-friendly promotions such as the Knothole Gang, a campaign instituted by several teams around the league offering children access to Braves games on special days for ten cents. The Red Sox, meanwhile, were considered the team for middle and upper class fans, with Yawkey always charging full price for tickets.³⁸

This is significant considering the demographic changes in the Boston population around 1950. As the immigrant and working class Irish and Italians achieved success and acceptance in the Boston community, their class distinctions shifted. In addition, because of their newfound status as "white," they may have greeted the Braves' integration with resentment, shifting their allegiance from the people's team to the segregated, middle class Boston Red Sox. Perhaps the Red Sox' upper class fans were moving out of the city and/or staying home and watching more games on television after all. But the Sox were still able to supplement and maintain a consistent attendance level by absorbing the alienated Braves fans as their own.

It is possible that Yawkey foretold the fate of the Braves as a member of the 1946 steering committee that addressed several issues surrounding the two major leagues. One issue was "The Race Question," considered a year before Robinson debuted with the Dodgers, in which the six-man committee doubted that Negro League players could compete in Major League Baseball and determined that their inclusion would ultimately have a negative impact on attendance:

A situation might be presented, if Negroes participate in Major League games, in which the preponderance of Negro attendance in parks such as the Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, and Comiskey Park could conceivably threaten the value of Major League franchises owned by these clubs.³⁹

Bryant reads this line as "too many blacks attending baseball games would scare away white customers and ruin the national pastime."⁴⁰ In Boston, where the small black attendance at the ballpark matched the city's undersized black population, this was never a real possibility.⁴¹ Rather, Yawkey and Perini may have been surprised to find that the appearance of a black player actually isolated an integrated team, thereby sapping it of its predominantly white fan base. Rather than an influx of black fans, the result was no fans at all. It should come as no surprise then, that when Yawkey witnessed what happened with the Braves, he maintained his segregationist principles until 1959, becoming the last team in the major leagues to integrate.

Bryant suggests that business was just as much at the root of this issue as any prejudice.⁴² It stands to reason that Yawkey and Perini both knew Boston's racial position, and understood what a black player in Boston could do to a team's gate receipts. In 1945, a black Boston newspaper writer and a white city councilman appealed to both Yawkey and Perini to try out Negro league players for their teams. Perini, the Italian owner of the Braves, flat out refused the request, while Red Sox general manager Eddie Collins conceded to a sham try-out of Jackie Robinson, Sam Jethroe, and Marvin Williams as a publicity stunt.⁴³ The trial was never serious, and both teams continued to conform to the major league company line that would be further established by the 1946 steering committee.

As in any copycat industry, it was not until the Dodgers achieved financial and competitive success with Jackie Robinson in the lineup that Perini potentially saw an opportunity to overtake the Red Sox in the Boston market. Disappointed that his 1948 pennant winner had still yielded 100,000 fewer fans than the Red Sox, it can be assumed that Perini attempted to emulate the Dodgers' experiment with hopes of similar success, which would lead to the Braves' dominance of Boston.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Boston was not Brooklyn, and the sharp drop-off in fan interest drove the Braves from Boston. In an ironic turnabout, it was Perini's subsequent success in Milwaukee that influenced Dodgers' owner Walter O'Malley to consider moving his own franchise to Los Angeles, the largest of the untapped markets.⁴⁵

Conclusion

In the days following the Braves' departure, fans and sportswriters grappled with what the move meant for Boston. In the March 22, 1953, *Boston Globe*, sportswriter Harold Kaese bitterly told fans how to respond in the title of his column: "Count Your Blessings: Boston Fortunate It Has Sox, Yawkey."⁴⁶ Deriding the Braves as a classless organization with poor resources, Kaese provided a litany of reasons why the city was better off with the Red Sox rather than with the Braves. In his conclusion, Kaese offered the ultimate explanation, summarizing Boston's racial stance in a thinly veiled commentary on the "revolution" begun by Jackie Robinson in 1947:

Since the war, a revolution has been taking place in baseball. Revolutions can lead to great things, as did the American Revolution, or they can lead to disaster, as did the Bolshevik Revolution. The only stake we have left in the baseball revolution is the American League as represented by the Red Sox. Better the Red Sox than the Braves, better the right arm than the left for a struggle like this.⁴⁷

No other event in baseball between 1945 and 1953 could have been construed as a revolution other than integration, which Kaese links to the Com-

munist “Red Scare” that dominated the American ethos in the early 1950s. Portending a disastrous outcome, Kaese powerfully chose for the city to go to war in this “struggle” against the African American influence with the conservative pre-war segregationist Red Sox.

This policy of racial intolerance continued for the Red Sox for most of the 1950s, until second baseman Pumpsie Green debuted in the summer of 1959.⁴⁸ For the next forty years, Boston’s black ballplayers would endure a tenuous and bitter relationship with the city.⁴⁹ It wasn’t until a new ownership took over from Yawkey (and the trust that ran the team after his death) in 2002 that the Red Sox were able to remove the suspicion of prejudice. The city embraced black Latino stars Pedro Martinez, Manny Ramirez, and David Ortiz, especially when the three formed the integral core that delivered a much-anticipated World Series victory in 2004.

The Boston Braves’ 1953 move to Milwaukee continued baseball’s postwar move towards modernity, setting in motion the migration and nationwide expansion that would characterize the sport in the latter half of the twentieth century. Sparked by integration in 1947, teams moved and sprouted up across the country in baseball’s own version of suburbanization. After the Braves relocation, the St. Louis Browns moved to Baltimore (1954), the Philadelphia Athletics moved to Kansas City (1955) and the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants conquered the California coast in 1958. Only in this case, the flight out of town was not by the prejudiced, but rather by the integrated, to cities that accepted a new game of inclusion if it meant acquiring a major league franchise. Ironically, integration and near failure forced these teams to clear a path to the modern era, and allowed them to reap the unexploited riches of the sprawling postwar American metropolis. The more conservative old guard of the two-team cities—the Red Sox, the Yankees, the Cardinals, and the Philadelphia Phillies—not surprisingly waited as long as they could to integrate. It was this delay that caused each franchise to slowly slip into mediocrity before realizing that they had fallen behind in the contemporary national pastime.

The Braves set National League records for attendance in Milwaukee, topping the league in fans from 1953 until 1959, when the Los Angeles Dodgers reassumed the top spot after two years on the west coast. Milwaukee embraced its major league franchise and the resulting high attendance allowed Perini to pay higher salaries, expand the team’s scouting, and mount a squad that would win back-to-back National League pennants in 1957 and 1958. The Braves would win the World Series in 1957, defeating the vaunted Yankees with a core group that had been constructed and cultivated in Boston in 1951 and 1952. This included Hall-of-Famers Warren Spahn and Eddie Mathews, as well as critical role players such as first baseman Joe Adcock, catcher Del Crandall, shortstop Johnny Logan and pitcher Lew Burdette. Of course, the centerpiece

of the Milwaukee Braves' championship team was superstar Hank Aaron. Aaron was also a product of the Boston Braves, signed as an 18-year-old from the Negro leagues in June of 1952, in the midst of the Braves' Boston nadir. He would never play in Boston, coming up as a 20-year-old rookie with the 1954 Milwaukee team. Aaron excelled for 23 seasons, 21 consecutively as an All-Star, and set numerous batting records, including for career home runs.

Aaron's career with the Braves spanned into the 1970s, but by then, the team had already moved again, this time to the southeastern hub of Atlanta. It seemed that the novelty had worn off on the Braves in Milwaukee by the early sixties. In 1962, attendance was at 766,000, although this time the reasons for the swift decline at the gate was a lack of a contender, raised ticket prices, and a policy by which fans could no longer bring their own beer to the park.⁵⁰ Or perhaps further studies will reveal other potential reasons beneath that surface. Nevertheless, in 1963, Perini sold the Braves to a Chicago-based syndicate, which proceeded to search for a new home. By 1965, the Braves were ready to move to Atlanta, and dominate the entire southeast. After an injunction filed by the residents of Milwaukee forced the team to play one last lame-duck season in 1965, the Atlanta Braves debuted in 1966.

It was there, in the Deep South, before a packed house at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium in 1974, that Hank Aaron, an African American outfielder from the Atlanta Braves, lifted a pitch from Al Downing, an African American pitcher from the Los Angeles Dodgers, over the left-center field wall. The home run broke the career record held by the legendary Babe Ruth, who had played during an era when the major leagues were racially segregated and confined to ten eastern and Midwestern cities. The home run proved once and for all that the 1946 steering committee, Tom Yawkey, Lou Perini, and the city of Boston were mistaken. Black players not only belonged, but could be legends—or more—in the major leagues. Aaron's shot into the night was the great equalizer. Born in Alabama, signed by Boston, and playing in Georgia, Aaron traversed an America represented by a newly reshaped national pastime, from south to north, east coast to west coast, succeeding through the veiled policies, death threats, and condescending comments of intolerance. The revolution feared by Kaese was complete. Modern baseball had finally arrived.

Notes

1. Bob Holbrook, "Red Sox and Braves Leave For South, Camp Opening This Weekend," *Boston Globe*, February 22, 1953, 15.

2. William Marshall, *Baseball's Pivotal Era: 1945–1951* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 197.

3. Richard A. Johnson, telephone interview by author, 13 November, 2007.

4. Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 170.

5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Harold Kaese, "What a Situation!" *Boston Globe*, March 5, 1953, 22.
8. Dick Heller, "Milwaukee Went Batty as Home of Braves in '53," *Washington Times*, March 14, 2005, 34.
9. Jack Barry, "Hynes Calls Perini in Futile Effort to Keep Braves Here," *Boston Globe*, March 15, 1953, 47.
10. Clif Keane, "Frick Opposes Braves Shift Now, But Lacks Power to Block It," *Boston Globe*, March 16, 1953, 7.
11. Marshall, 256.
12. *Ibid.*, 257.
13. J. Ronald Oakley, *Baseball's Last Golden Age, 1946–1960: The National Pastime in a Time of Glory and Change* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994), 189.
14. Roger D. Launius, "'This Town Isn't Big Enough For the Both of Us': Politics, Economics, and Local Rivalries in St. Louis Major League Baseball," in *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2000*, ed. William M. Simons (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), 111.
15. Launius fails to mention that despite their far-reaching fan base, the Cardinals almost did leave St. Louis for Milwaukee, only rescued by a sale to Anheuser-Busch in the spring of 1953.
16. Keane, 7.
17. J. John Palen, *The Suburbs* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1995), 59–62.
18. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 2.
19. After the team migrated to Milwaukee, many *Boston Globe* editorials featured complaints about the difficulty in getting to Braves Field, and the traffic that was consistently endured on the subpar Boston freeways.
20. Eric Fure-Slocum, "Cities With Class: Growth Politics, the Working Class City, and Debt in Milwaukee During the 1940s," *Social Science History* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 258.
21. Avila, 2–4.
22. *Ibid.*, 10.
23. Neil J. Sullivan, *The Dodgers Move West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 39.
24. *Ibid.*, 40.
25. Richard W. Redick, "Population Growth and Distribution in Central Cities, 1940–1950," *American Sociological Review* 21, no. 1 (Feb. 1956): 39.
26. Palen, 63.
27. United States Department of Commerce — Bureau of the Census, "Volume III: Census Tract Statistics, Akron — Dayton," *Census of Population: 1950* (Washington, D.C., 1953), 6.
28. *Census of Population: 1950*, 47.
29. Johnson, interview.
30. Howard Bryant, *Shut Out: A Story of Race and Baseball in Boston* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 7.
31. George Altison, telephone interview by author, 13 November, 2007.
32. Johnson, interview and Altison, interview.
33. Bryant, 28.
34. *Ibid.*, 28.
35. Avila, 15–16.
36. Bryant, 83.
37. Johnson, interview.
38. Johnson, interview and Altison, interview.
39. Doug Pappas, "The MacPhail Report of 1946," *Business of Baseball Pages 1996* <<http://www.roadsidephotos.com/baseball/MACPHAILREPT.htm>>.
40. Bryant, 24.
41. Johnson and Altison both suggested that Jethroe's signing did not bring with it an increased African American fan base.
42. Bryant, 24.

43. For more details on the Robinson-Jethroe-Williams tryout, see Bryant, 30–33.
44. Ray Finegan, “Businesses Lose,” *Boston Globe*, March 19, 1953, 17.
45. Sullivan, 43.
46. Harold Kaese, “Count Your Blessings: Boston Fortunate It Has Sox, Yawkey,” *Boston Globe*, March 22, 1953, 46.
47. Kaese, “Count Your Blessings,” 46.
48. It should be noted that the Red Sox attendance spiked in 1960 after integration, before declining consistently until their “Impossible Dream” American League championship in 1967.
49. Bryant, viii.
50. Tygiel, 189.

The Great Dodgers Pitching Tandem Strikes a Blow for Salaries: The 1966 Drysdale-Koufax Holdout and Its Impact on the Game

Ed Edmonds

Introduction

The 1966 joint holdout of Los Angeles Dodgers pitching stars Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale constitutes a significant passage in baseball labor history. The holdout of the Dodgers pitching duo, however, has not received sufficient attention from scholars. Much of the previous work approaches the episode from a biographical perspective. This article adds to the literature by examining, in depth, the Koufax-Drysdale holdout and its consequences on Major League Baseball (MLB) from the vantage point of terms and conditions of labor. In addition to consulting sources employed by earlier commentators, this study provides the first detailed content analysis of the contemporary press coverage of the holdout.

From 1959 through 1966, the Los Angeles Dodgers appeared in four World Series and prevailed in three. The team's strength was its pitching staff, and the acknowledged aces were righty Don Drysdale and lefty Sandy Koufax. The duo spanned the Brooklyn-Los Angeles years with each pitcher enjoying a hometown relationship with one of the cities. Drysdale grew up in Van Nuys, California, while Koufax was born in Brooklyn.¹ At age nineteen, bonus baby Koufax joined the Brooklyn Dodgers roster in 1955, but for several years, despite intermittent brilliance and a blazing fastball, the lefty was plagued by wildness and used sparingly. A 1956 rookie, Drysdale, also possessed an impressive fastball and, unlike Koufax, a willingness to intimidate batters by throwing at them. Drysdale was the first of the duo to join the starting rotation, winning 17 games in 1957. For Drysdale, this was the start of a twelve-year span of dou-

ble-digit wins. After gaining control of his equally dominant fastball and curveball, Koufax acquired iconic status in Los Angeles. He led the National League in ERA five times (1962–1966). At his peak, Koufax was perhaps the best pitcher in baseball history, averaging more than 24 wins per season from 1963–1966. During that same span, Drysdale averaged more than 18 wins per season. Both pitchers are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

The strength of their joint ability was particularly evident during the 1965 season. Koufax completed the season with a triple crown pitching ledger of 26 wins (against 9 losses), a 2.04 ERA, and a record 382 strikeouts in 335 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched.² Drysdale was 23–12 with a 2.77 ERA and 210 strikeouts. After the duo lost Games 1 and 2 of the 1965 World Series against the Minnesota Twins, Drysdale pitched solidly in a Game 4 win, and Koufax spun shutouts in Games 5 and 7 to lead the Dodgers to the Series victory. The pitchers should have expected a great off-season highlighted by substantial raises for the 1966 campaign.

The Beginning of the 1966 Holdout

Salary levels during the mid–1960s were capped at \$100,000 for all but a small handful of major stars. No pitchers had reached that level. Koufax made \$85,000 in 1965 while Drysdale received \$80,000.³ Willie Mays had upped his \$105,000 salary for 1965 by signing a two-year, \$125,000 deal to assume the pinnacle of baseball salaries.⁴ Don Drysdale put the issue in context in his autobiography: “In 1965, asking for \$100,000 wasn’t like asking for the moon. It was like asking for the moon plus the rest of the solar system.”⁵ *Los Angeles Times* columnist Sid Ziff likened the demand for \$100,000 to climbing Mt. Everest.⁶

In less than a decade after the 1958 relocation of the Dodgers and Giants to the West Coast, the growth of television and radio revenue, together with attendance, had significantly augmented the financial position of Major League Baseball. The radio popularity of the Dodgers in the Los Angeles market was undeniable. Don Page’s analysis of the ratings concluded that “(b)aseball was as big as Sandy Koufax during the summer, with KFI’s Dodgers outrating KMPC’s Angels 3–1. At times, KFI reached a share of 35, which is almost unbelievable.”⁷

With the Mays multi-year signing and the Dodgers’ success on the field and at the turnstile, the salary ceiling was ripe for a challenge prior to the 1966 season. Although Koufax and Drysdale both stated that they were unaware of the salaries of other players, Koufax quipped, “I read in the papers Buzzie says I’m entitled to \$100,000. That’s nice. But I haven’t talked to the man for a month, although I hope to before it’s time to leave for Florida.”⁸ On Febru-

ary 12, *Los Angeles Times* sportswriter Frank Finch reported that Dodgers short-stop Maury Wills planned to seek \$100,000 so that he could match the salaries of Drysdale and Koufax for the 1966 season.⁹ Finch quoted Drysdale as saying that Bavasi had yet to talk with him about his salary: "But I've never had any problems with the Dodgers before, and I don't intend to now. Buzzie and Mr. O'Malley have always been more than fair to me and my family."¹⁰ Bavasi's response to Wills' demand was not surprising: "I'm not in the habit of negotiating player contracts in the newspapers, and for the captain of the club to do so is uncalled for and highly unethical."¹¹ Finch concluded by noting that "Buzzie finds himself impaled on the horns of a fiscal dilemma: whether to protect O'Malley's bankroll or brag that his team is the only one in history with three \$100,000 hired hands."¹²

Ziff, who expected a \$100,000 deal for Koufax, however, anticipated nothing less than a satisfied Drysdale:

Every year about this time I give Don Drysdale a call because I like to talk to someone who is completely happy. Others may get involved over their contracts. Not Don. He is already one of the highest paid players in baseball and there's never a fight over new terms. Signing him is just a matter of form. There's nothing to argue about.¹³

Drysdale's response to the call was cool. He argued that he had not discussed salary yet with Bavasi and appeared to want to avoid negotiating through the press. Ziff felt that nothing new was on the horizon. Extolling Drysdale's virtues, Ziff concluded that "he's beginning to look like a bargain" at \$100,000.¹⁴

Don Drysdale provided the most detailed description of the genesis of the dual negotiation tactics in his 1990 autobiography with Bob Verdi.¹⁵ As Drysdale remembered the events, the plan evolved during a dinner with Drysdale's wife Ginger and Koufax at a Russian restaurant near the southpaw's Sherman Oaks home "after the season ended."¹⁶ Koufax was agitated about a meeting with Bavasi earlier that day when the Dodgers' general manager responded to Koufax's salary request by asking the hurler how he could expect "that much when Drysdale only wants this much."¹⁷ Drysdale had been given the same counter-argument only one day earlier. Ginger offered her opinion of a solution: "This whole thing is easy to rectify.... If Buzzie is going to compare the two of you, why don't you just walk in there together?"¹⁸

Bavasi's written description of the timing of the initial meeting about salaries differs in two published sources. In the first installment of his 1967 four-part *Sports Illustrated* series on his front office work with the Dodgers, Bavasi claimed that the first meeting about contracts for 1966 took place right after the completion of the 1965 season.¹⁹ Although the meeting did not go well, Bavasi claimed to be unconcerned because there was plenty of time to reach an agreement before the season began. Bavasi believed that Koufax's lawyer, J.

William Hayes of Executive Business Management in Beverly Hills, was advising the pitching duo. Bavasi wanted nothing to do with Hayes, stating that he would only talk with the player individually.²⁰ In his 1987 autobiography *Off the Record* with John Strege, Bavasi stated that the meeting was in January at Drysdale's request. Furthermore, Bavasi thought the meeting would pertain to a charity function.²¹

Finch broke the story in the *Los Angeles Times* on February 23 that the two pitchers had decided to approach Dodgers' management collectively, requesting \$1,000,000 over three years.²² The money would be split evenly between the two hurlers. At \$167,000 apiece per year, the "goldplated Titans" and "flinging financiers" were angling to become the highest paid players in the game.²³ The first hurdle would be overcoming the Dodgers' steadfast policy of never offering multi-year deals. Finch wrote that such a demand had cost Charlie Dressen his Dodgers managing job in 1953, and the current manager, Walt Alston, had begun his long career of single-year contracts with the Dodgers in 1954. Bavasi claimed that he was prepared to make a firm offer so that each could be at spring training by the upcoming Sunday reporting day.²⁴

Finch argued that the duo had "a lot going for them in negotiations" based on the "four golden years in Dodger Stadium" that saw attendance top 10 million. Koufax's gate appeal brought an "extra 8,000 to 10,000 fans per game."²⁵ On February 24, Finch reported that Koufax had verified the story that the two intended to seek equal money during an interview on Jimmy Piersall's KABC show: "For all too long now people have been comparing us, saying that one was better than the other. We both are asking for the same thing."²⁶

Press Coverage

Ziff offered a picture of O'Malley's mind-set in his February 24 column. Characteristic of an owner's desire to garner public support by attacking sports-writers, O'Malley argued that the report of a \$2 million profit during an unrelated lawsuit deposition failed to give an accurate view of the Dodgers' fiscal position.²⁷ O'Malley also indicated his distrust of agents although few players retained them at this time. According to Ziff, O'Malley feared that the Drysdale-Koufax effort "may be the start of a players' union" and invoked the name of the Jimmy Hoffa, the controversial president of the Teamsters.²⁸

Ziff was certain of public opinion: "The public is delighted with it all. The fans are 100 percent for the players. 'I hope they get it,' everyone says."²⁹ John Hall, writing from Palm Springs, offered opinions from the Angels clubhouse. Jim Fregosi quipped that if he and Bobby Knoop could each hit .300, they might try the same dual strategy. Rick Reichardt, Dean Chance, and veteran Lou Burdette also voiced their approval of the Dodgers duo.³⁰

Drysdale and Koufax sat down with Bavasi for breakfast on Thursday, February 24, and rejected the team's offer.³¹ Finch speculated that the offers amounted to around \$120,000 for each pitcher.³² In response to a direct question, Drysdale told Bavasi that the two pitchers would not board the airplane for the Saturday flight to Vero Beach.³³ In his autobiography, Drysdale noted that when he and Koufax did not get on the airplane to head to Florida on February 26, their absence became noteworthy.³⁴ Bavasi reiterated that he would not offer a package deal nor would he grant a multi-year contract.³⁵ In support of his position, Bavasi argued that every other member of the team would want additional money if he consented to the Drysdale-Koufax demands.³⁶

As the scene of the battle shifted to a second front in Florida, Finch opined that Bavasi "will make the most important oration of his baseball career."³⁷ Attempting to continue his divide and conquer tactics that precipitated the joint negotiations, Bavasi claimed that Koufax and Drysdale could not be worth five times more than Ron Fairly or John Roseboro.³⁸ Finch lowered estimates for the offer on the table to six figures for Koufax and the 90s range for Drysdale. On February 28, Finch reiterated that the Dodgers would not offer a multi-year deal.³⁹ Bavasi's offer to the pitchers was "more money than any two players on one team ever received."⁴⁰ Bavasi was quoted as saying, "I see no chance of Koufax and Drysdale getting more than I offered them."

When questioned about what would happen to the Dodgers without the two star hurlers, Bavasi noted that all careers come to an end; he indicated that the Dodgers had gone on after the retirements of Campanella, Hodges, Robinson, Reese, and Snider.⁴¹ The reaction around the league included a report that Cincinnati's Jim Maloney was staying at home in California while Juan Marichal was weighing his options.⁴² Coining new nicknames, Bavasi said of Koufax and Drysdale — "call them the 'Love-Seat' holdouts."⁴³

Ziff in his March 1 column was still supporting the two players against O'Malley although he quoted fans who sided with ownership.⁴⁴ Ziff wrote, "Surprisingly, most fans are speaking out against the holdout twirlers. You would assume they would figure O'Malley is making so much they'd like to see someone tap the till."⁴⁵ In fact, a few fans endorsed a Drysdale-for-Aaron trade with a Koufax-to-the-Cubs deal for Larry Jackson, Ron Santo, and Billy Williams.⁴⁶

John Hall's March 2 article purported that "even the athletes are now siding with general manager Buzzie Bavasi. They feel the \$100,000 plus offers for one year are more than fair."⁴⁷ In his March 2 article, Finch wrote that "Ed Linn, crack free-lance journalist, is doing a book on Sandy Koufax, for which Sandy got a whopping advance."⁴⁸ According to Koufax biographers Jane Leavy and Edward Gruver, Linn met Koufax in Hawaii to work on the book — and to rebut a *Time* magazine article, published in the aftermath of the World Series, which offered an unflattering portrayal of the southpaw as aloof and remote.

(Leavy suggests that Koufax was influenced by the legacy of his immigrant Jewish grandfather, Max Lichtenstein, a socialist who confronted the establishment.)⁴⁹

The first *Los Angeles Times* article identifying J. William Hayes as a spokesman for Koufax and Drysdale appeared on March 3.⁵⁰ Hayes put the issue squarely on the Dodgers. Hayes noted that he was available to talk with management; he asserted that “the Dodgers had made ‘very little effort’ to reach agreement.” Hayes warned that Drysdale and Koufax might “have to seek ‘alternatives’” if the holdout continued.⁵¹

Ziff’s March 3 column again discussed fan reaction.⁵² Noting a gender split, Ziff claimed that “the women are for the ball club and the men are for Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale.”⁵³ On the following day, fan and concessionaire Danny Goodman’s comments provided the lead for Ziff’s column.⁵⁴ Arguing against an analogy to actors, Goodman felt that Koufax and Drysdale would not be able to regain their peak level, sabotaging their chance to establish records on par with pitching immortals Walter Johnson and Christy Mathewson.⁵⁵

Noted columnist Jim Murray finally entered the picture on March 6 with a humorous piece with the following lead: “To the barricades, men! One of the last bastions of capitalism is beginning to crumble. Now pitchers are getting together.”⁵⁶ Lampooning Bavasi in a mock interview, Murray wrote:

All right. So they want a million. You don’t give it to them. That’s a million saved, right? That’s a million bucks you can give to some untried kids out in the cornfields, right? Like, we gave \$108,000 to Frank Howard and he went on to set the Dodger record for strikeouts in one year, right! Also, it is the unanimous opinion of the Sporting News that nobody, but nobody, ever dropped a fly ball with the style of a Frank Howard. We can get 10 Frank Howards for what we’ll save.⁵⁷

Murray continued in like manner, mocking the talents of Dodgers players John Kennedy, Mike Kekich, Claude Osteen, John Purdin, Johnny Podres, Johnny Roseboro, Ron Fairly, Wes Parker, Jeff Torborg, Howie Reed, and Willie Crawford before concluding that “we’ll have a sound, well-balanced team without them. Not a good one. Just a sound, well-balanced one. We’ll be in the thin of things.”⁵⁸

A UPI story that the *Los Angeles Times* published on March 8 brought the idea of arbitration into the conversation: “‘The next logical step would be the establishment of an arbitration board,’ one veteran owner declared Monday. ‘I for one would be very much in favor of it and I happen to know some others who would be, too.’”⁵⁹ This owner suggested a three-person panel, which “could be made up of one man from the commissioner’s office, the league president and this new man [Marvin Miller] the players have just hired.”⁶⁰ The article concluded with a notation about the existence of arbitration for minor league contracts, but considered that circumstance a “shocker.”⁶¹

In an article by Charles Maher, Maury Wills received renewed attention upon his return from Japan.⁶² Wills felt that he would be able to quickly come to terms with the Dodgers. The shortstop indicated that he did not merit the same compensation as Drysdale and Koufax. Furthermore, Wills indicated a disinclination to go to Florida before concluding terms with Bavasi because “it’s tough to negotiate when you see all the other guys on the field.”⁶³

Posturing by Bavasi played out again in Ziff’s March 13 article.⁶⁴ Although acknowledging that the next move belonged to Koufax and Drysdale, the general manager welcomed contact from the two pitchers or Hayes. Bavasi offered a mixed statement about agents while agreeing that it was not a primary issue. When asked about the value of arbitration, Bavasi generally stated his opposition, but agreed that it might be useful in this one case, suggesting that the Drysdale-Koufax problem was unique to Los Angeles.⁶⁵

Ziff trotted out an interview with Willie Davis on March 14 to show how grateful the outfielder was for his treatment by the Dodgers management.⁶⁶ Although Davis did not comment on the holdout, Ziff managed to mention Koufax and Drysdale.⁶⁷ Finch penned the bigger story of the day, reporting that Wills would indeed go to Vero Beach without a contract to discuss signing directly with Bavasi.⁶⁸ Finch speculated that the performance of John Kennedy during a single spring training game, along with O’Malley’s support for Bavasi’s final offer of \$75,000, were factors. The following day, Finch used hyperbole in his article’s lead sentence: “The greatest player revolt in the 77-year history of the Dodgers grows more macabre, bizarre, weird or what-have-you by the minute.”⁶⁹ The cause of this excitement was a new revised edition of Dodgers’ vice president Fresco Thompson’s book with a cover displaying Drysdale, Koufax, and Wills.⁷⁰

Indeed, the arrival of Wills in Florida quickly ended his holdout. The shortstop reportedly signed for around \$75,000.⁷¹ Wills stated that the details were worked out during the drive from Melbourne to Vero Beach with Bavasi apparently getting things entirely his way. Playing the part of captain to the hilt, Wills even offered to accept a move to third base and a demotion to second in the batting order.⁷² (Wills’ stolen base numbers slumped to 38 — in 62 attempts — in 1966, and the Dodgers traded him to the Pittsburgh Pirates prior to the 1967 season.)

A little over a month into the stalemate, Hayes announced that Koufax and Drysdale were looking at lucrative offers for a movie and a tour of Japan.⁷³ Paramount Studio offered the duo roles in the movie *Warning Shot*, featuring David Janssen, star of the television series *The Fugitive*. The article included a discussion of the nature of previous contracts signed by Koufax and Drysdale.⁷⁴

Commissioner William Eckert injected himself into the controversy, claiming that he had the power to arbitrate the salary dispute. In typical fash-

ion, he also argued against unionization as unneeded and not advisable for players. Eckert probably did not have any real interest in playing a role in the dispute although his successor Bowie Kuhn might well have tried to mediate under baseball's "best interest clause." Derisively called "The Unknown Soldier," Eckert, a retired Air Force general, served as commissioner from 1965–1968. Jerome Holtzman could only tease out a dozen pages about Eckert in his book, *The Commissioners: Baseball's Midlife Crisis*.⁷⁵ Holtzman found Eckert's accomplishments modest.⁷⁶ During Eckert's watch, the Major League Baseball Players Association, led by Marvin Miller, gained strength, and the owners dumped Eckert with nearly four years left on his contract in December 1968.⁷⁷

Jim Murray penned another entertaining column on March 17.⁷⁸ Murray examined the perspective of the principals. The sportswriter satirized Koufax and Drysdale as members of the "United Pitching Workers of America, Local 1."⁷⁹ Murray also offered a number of clarifications by Koufax and a repeat of Bavasi's arguments on behalf of all of his other players.

In Ziff's March 18 column, O'Malley suggested that baseball was a less certain business than the entertainment industry:⁸⁰

A hit show like "My Fair Lady" will continue to be a hit. But we don't know whether we are going to have a hit show from one night to the next, or from one month to the next.... Therefore, I do not believe we are in competition for the entertainment dollar. We are competing for what I call the sports dollar.⁸¹

O'Malley went on to state that the 9–0 exhibition loss to the Yankees might prompt a refund and that rising costs of operation would soon require increased ticket prices. Ziff, however, noted that since the team moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles "the franchise has been the next thing to the United States Mint."⁸²

The March 18 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* also carried an article on the "unique, much-discussed and highly controversial reserve clause."⁸³ This article, linking Jim Maloney and Juan Marichal to Koufax and Drysdale, offered the only alternative left to a player disputing his salary—"quit" and find another occupation.⁸⁴ The dominant legal context for the article was the status of Wisconsin's lawsuit over the relocation of the Milwaukee Braves; this case prompted former MLB Commissioner Ford Frick to respond to the question of what a "player could do if he wanted to play elsewhere." Frick retorted that "the player can, of course, quit organized baseball."⁸⁵

On March 18 and 19, the press again commented on the movie deal and Koufax's advance on the book with Ed Linn.⁸⁶ The movie pact was signed in the office of Paramount Studio head Howard Koch with producer Bob Banner, director Buzz Kulik, and Hayes in attendance. To reassert pressure on the Dodgers, Hayes claimed that the two-week filming schedule for the pitchers

did not contain an “escape clause.”⁸⁷ As for the book, scheduled for early summer release, the Ziegler-Ross Agency, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, was offering a \$110,000 advance against royalties plus the prospect of a \$40,000 *Look* serialization.⁸⁸

Ziff’s March 20 commentary presented conflicting fan sentiment on the holdout. The pundit doubted that movie parts would continue to sustain Drysdale and Koufax. Moreover, Ziff suggested that it was likely that the public would ultimately turn against Koufax and Drysdale.⁸⁹

Charles Maher’s March 22 column portrayed Drysdale as ready to deal and Bavasi as possibly ready to reopen communications.⁹⁰ On the same day, sportswriter Al Wolf argued that the fans had switched from support for the pitchers to a pro-management position because of the lucrative offers and the many additional income streams available to prominent players.⁹¹ In rebuffing talk of baseball “slavery,” Wolf noted the strong pension plan and the provision that a salary could not be reduced by more than 25%. Wolf’s advice was to “(t)ake the 100G’s or so, boys, and run all the way to the bank.”⁹²

A joint piece by Maher and Finch on March 23 quoted an angry Bavasi as doubting the possibility of reaching an agreement.⁹³ The source of Bavasi’s anger was allegedly a call from the pitchers directly to O’Malley. The article supported Drysdale’s subsequent version that O’Malley called and left a message with Drysdale’s wife, Ginger, which the pitcher returned. O’Malley, however, claimed that he had not made such an overture. Although O’Malley stated that he would not negotiate through the press, he called a news conference to discuss the confidential nature of the telephone call.⁹⁴ In Maher’s article on the following day, Drysdale disputed the figures previously cited in the press.⁹⁵

The headline of Maher’s March 25 article, “Drysdale Ponders Seven-Year TV Offer,” highlighted a significant point in the negotiations between the parties. Hayes was developing a strategy based upon California’s personal-service contract legislation, enacted to break the stranglehold that the movie studios once enjoyed over acting talent. The statute prevented contracts that exceeded seven years in duration. A court challenge based upon the California law certainly had a greater chance of success than an action directly focused on baseball’s reserve clause, given the game’s antitrust exemption. Drysdale stated in his biography that O’Malley was tipped off by film producer Mervin LeRoy that the pitching duo was ready to litigate based on the California labor statute. Highlighting the importance of this circumstance, Drysdale asserted:

I think Mr. O’Malley must have realized we were on to something, because it wasn’t a week after Bill Hayes made his discovery that our holdout ended. I’m convinced that was the major reason why the Dodgers moved, because we knew they had found out about Bill Hayes’s little discovery. I can’t prove it, but my guess is that the Dodgers realized they were playing with fire and that if we went to court, they might lose us both and get nothing in return.⁹⁶

Maher's headline and story noted the possibility of a seven-year television deal for Drysdale. A case based upon California's personal-service contract might have delivered a severe blow to the reserve clause nearly a decade before arbitrator Peter Seitz cast the determining vote on a three-man panel that liberated major league pitchers Andy Messersmith and Dave McNally from the reserve clause. The Drysdale-Koufax holdout helped create the climate for the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) to negotiate arbitration concessions from MLB owners: this was the greatest legacy of the Koufax-Drysdale holdout of 1966.

Two days later, Maher's March 27 article offered an in-depth analysis of both sides of the dispute, including numerous observations by fans.⁹⁷ Maher pondered who were the villains and heroes. He compared the demands of Drysdale and Koufax to those of Babe Ruth. Nonetheless, Maher concluded that management appeared less willing to negotiate than the pitchers. The scribe argued that finding a hero was a more difficult task than deciding which side represented the villain.⁹⁸

The *Los Angeles Times* ran a picture in its March 29 issue of neophyte actors Drysdale and Koufax flanking David Janssen in director's chairs as they prepared for the filming of *Warning Shot*. The photograph appeared below an article discussing the Dodgers' inability to hit in a spring training game against the Pittsburgh Pirates.⁹⁹

Although the 6'2" Koufax and 6'6" Drysdale were both handsome and well built, attributes that had sustained many Hollywood careers, sportswriters were generally skeptical of the prospect of the pitchers pursuing long-term acting careers. Nonetheless, pundits recognized that the stratagem gave the pitchers' negotiating leverage. Maher ran an interview with actor Chuck Connors, a former Dodgers reserve first baseman. After brief stints in professional basketball and baseball, Connors went on to star in the long-running and popular television series *The Rifleman*.¹⁰⁰ Connors noted the restrictiveness of the reserve clause, but he asserted that the California personal-service contract prevented "peonage."¹⁰¹ Connors generously suggested that Koufax and Drysdale might well achieve success as actors.

The End of the Holdout

On March 30, a joint — and detailed — article by Maher and Finch purported that Hayes had told Bavasi that the two players had refused the Dodgers' offer of \$210,000.¹⁰² According to Maher and Finch, Drysdale, hinting that there was still hope for closure, had, however, agreed to meet with Bavasi. Koufax gave Drysdale authority to represent the interests of both pitchers. With Connors working as an intermediary, Bavasi and Drysdale got together at Nikola's, a restaurant near Dodger Stadium, and quickly hammered out a solution.¹⁰³

On March 31, Maher proclaimed that the 33-day holdout was over and that all of the parties were ecstatic.¹⁰⁴ The sportswriter's salary figures for the new deal and the previous year were not entirely accurate. Maher indicated little surprise at the quick conclusion of the holdout.¹⁰⁵ Maher suggested that Bavasi, dealing with only Drysdale at the end, did not appear to capitulate to the duo. According to the article, Drysdale and Koufax thanked Hayes for his efforts, and Drysdale acknowledged the assistance of Connors. Koufax and Drysdale were released from their obligations on the set of *The Warning Shot*, and their tour of Japan was cancelled.¹⁰⁶

Although there appears to be some conflict as to the final salaries, the most accurate figures seem to be \$125,000 for Koufax and \$110,000 for Drysdale.¹⁰⁷ The two pitchers had successfully fought together to exceed the \$100,000 ceiling — with some room to spare. Although Koufax and Drysdale were unsuccessful in forcing O'Malley and Bavasi to give them multi-year deals, their joint effort most certainly drove the final figures higher. Drysdale's later reflections bear this out:

There's not much doubt in my mind that a key to the whole thing was that Sandy and I did it together. We were both valuable to the pitching staff, but if we hadn't stayed away together, it might not have worked. If one of us had gone to spring training and signed, the Dodgers would have let the other one dangle and twist in the wind. It was tough enough for us to hold out. Without the strength we gained from doing it together, holding out would have been unbearable.... Was I prepared to play no baseball at all in 1966? Absolutely. I allowed for that possibility in my mind.¹⁰⁸

Koufax discussed the holdout in his 1966 autobiography with Linn in a chapter entitled "I Was Ready to Walk Out the Door."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, plagued by excruciating arthritic pain in his left elbow, Koufax would do precisely that after the 1966 season. When Wills was traded to Pittsburgh, the Dodgers recovered quickly from their pre-1966 bank account raid, and baseball appeared to be returning to a normal labor relationship with the players. However, Drysdale and Koufax had together created a sense of unrest throughout the ranks of ownership.

The Aftermath

The years from 1966–1975 were pivotal in labor relations between MLB owners and players. Recently hired as executive director of the MLBPA, Marvin Miller, former chief economist for the United Steelworkers, had closely monitored the Koufax-Drysdale holdout, and he began to work relentlessly on behalf of the players. Negotiations over collective bargaining agreements were

tense. Within less than a decade, concessions by the owners granted players substantially better working conditions and salaries.¹¹⁰

As noted by legal scholar Roger Abrams, the Drysdale-Koufax holdout was historically important for two reasons: “First, it led directly to the creation of salary arbitration and the contract prohibition on collusion. Second, the players’ scheme had frightened the clubs owners, since a joint holdout of key players would produce enormous bargaining power.”¹¹¹ In an interesting turn of events, the owners proposed a system of salary arbitration in 1973. The MLBPA agreed and the process began in 1974. Oakland’s Charley Finley and St. Louis’ Augie Busch were the only owners to vote against arbitration.¹¹² The process still remains in effect; the mechanism allows resolution of disputes for players sandwiched between the potential riches of free agency after six years of service and players toiling early in their careers with between two and three years of service working generally at or near the league minimum salary negotiated through collective bargaining. The unique system of single offer arbitration provides arbitrators only one of two choices, a figure submitted by management or one submitted for the player. Although owners often react with venom to losses during hearings, the vast majority of cases are resolved within the framework of the two figures submitted at the deadline.

The owners’ concern about a repeat of the Drysdale-Koufax stratagem prompted management to push very hard for a prohibition of combined player negotiations. Miller agreed, and, in return, the owners accepted salary arbitration.¹¹³ Ultimately prohibitions against collusion rebounded against the owners. From 1985 to 1987, the owners exhibited unusual cohesiveness under the leadership of Commissioner Peter Ueberroth and refused to negotiate with free agents. Arbitrators Thomas Roberts and George Nicolau rendered decisions against the owners in three collusion cases that resulted in over \$280 million in damages.

The legacy of the Drysdale-Koufax holdout is significant although many fans of the game do not know about the critical role that both Hall of Fame pitchers played in baseball’s labor history; the duo did this by utilizing solidarity during February and March 1966 to extract serious raises from Buzzie Bavasi and Walter O’Malley. When the owners subsequently accepted salary arbitration and anti-collusion language in the collective bargaining agreement, management inadvertently presented players with two extremely powerful tools that were well used to increase the paychecks of many athletes in the next three decades.

Notes

1. Don Drysdale and Bob Verdi, *Once a Bum, Always a Dodger* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990), 3.

2. The pitching triple crown requires league leadership in wins, strikeouts, and ERA. Koufax also accomplished the feat in 1963 and 1966. Only Grover Cleveland Alexander won it more times (four — 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1920).

3. Drysdale remembered that the biggest change in his salary came after the 1962 season when he won 25. His salary had doubled, as he remembered it, from \$30,000 to \$60,000. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 123.

4. Sid Ziff, “Bambino Still Tops,” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 February 1966, B3. Ziff listed Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial, and Ted Williams as members of the \$100,000 club.

5. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 125.

6. Sid Ziff, “O’Malley Unruffled,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1966.

7. Don Page, [The Radio Beat] “Results of the Ratings Game,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 1966.

8. Frank Finch, “Wills to Demand Same Salary as Big D, Sandy,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 February 1966.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Sid Ziff, “Bambino Still Tops,” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 February 1966, B3; and Sid Ziff, “A Happy Legend,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 February 1966.

14. Sid Ziff, “A Happy Legend,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 February 1966.

15. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 124–125.

16. *Ibid.*, 124.

17. *Ibid.*, 124.

18. *Ibid.*, 125.

19. Buzzie Bavasi with Jack Olsen, “The Great Holdout” in “The Dodger Story,” *Sports Illustrated*, 15 May 1967, 80.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Buzzie Bavasi with John Strege, *Off the Record* (Chicago: Contemporary, 1987).

22. Frank Finch, “Koufax, Drysdale Eye \$1 Million Pact; Dodger Aces Want 3-Year Package Deal,” *Los Angeles Times*, 23 February 1966.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.* In an aside, it was noted that unsigned players could not participate in practices at Vero Beach.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Frank Finch, “Big D, Sandy Give Bavasi News Today; ‘Million Dollar Babies’ Want Even Split of Loot,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1966.

27. Sid Ziff, “O’Malley Unruffled,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1966.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. Frank Finch, “Koufax, Drysdale Spurn Record Offer by Dodgers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 25 February 1966.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 127.

35. Frank Finch, “Koufax, Drysdale Spurn Record Offer by Dodgers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 25 February 1966.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Frank Finch, “Bavasi Plans Speech to Soothe Feelings Before Dodger Drill,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 February 1966.

38. Ziff’s use of Bavasi’s quotation lists Fairly as five times and Roseboro four times. Sid Ziff, “Bavasi Digs In,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1966.

39. Frank Finch, “Bavasi’s Final Word: Sandy, Drysdale Must Sign One-Year Pacts,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1966.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. Sid Ziff, "Bavasi Digs In," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1966.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Sid Ziff, "Sandy, Don All Alone," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 March 1966.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. John Hall, "Dream Game," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 March. 1966.
48. Frank Finch, "'No Part-Time Role for Me; Says 'New' Podres," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 March 1966.
49. Jane Leavy, *Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 192; and Edward Gruver, *Koufax* (Lanham, MD: Taylor, 2000), 197. Gruver listed the payment as \$100,000 for the agreement signed after the completion of the World Series.
50. "Contract Stalemate: Koufax-Drysdale 'Spokesman' Says Next Move Up to Dodgers," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1966.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Sid Ziff, "How the Fans Feel," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1966.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Sid Ziff, "Holdouts Bad Risk," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 March 1966.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Jim Murray, "Forget About 'em," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 March 2006.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Los Angeles Times*, "Salary Board for Players Sought," 8 March 1966.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. Charles Maher, "Wills Expects No Signing Trouble," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 March 1966.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Sid Ziff, "Players Neutral," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 1966.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Sid Ziff, "A Happy Dodger," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 March 1966.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Frank Finch, "Wills Going to Camp, Will Talk With Bavasi," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 March 1966.
69. Frank Finch, "K-D Contract War Has Mates Uneasy: O'Malley's Adamant, Places Team Above Individual Star Players," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 March 1966.
70. *Ibid.*
71. Frank Finch, "Wills Ends Holdout, Signs With Dodgers for \$75,000," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 March 1966.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Paul Zimmerman, "K&D Are Making Other Plans," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 March 1966.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Jerome Holtzman, *The Commissioners: Baseball's Midlife Crisis* (New York: Total, 1998).
76. *Ibid.*, 128–129.
77. *Ibid.*, 128.
78. Jim Murray, "Sandy Eager to Play, Wait's for Buzzie's Call, But ...," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 March 1966.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Sid Ziff, "Dodgers Amused," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 March 1966.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. "Reserve Clause at Work; It's Sign, Be Sold or Quit for Holdouts in Contract War," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 March 1966.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Los Angeles Times*, "Cameras Will Roll April Four; Koufax and Drysdale Sign Pacts—As Movie Actors," Mar. 18, 1996; *Los Angeles Times*; and "Koufax Peddles His Biography for Tidy Advance of \$110,000," 19 March 1966.

87. *Los Angeles Times*, "Cameras Will Roll."
88. *Los Angeles Times*, "Koufax Peddles His Biography."
89. Sid Ziff, "Is Movie Necessary?" *Los Angeles Times*, 20 March 1966.
90. Charles Maher, "Big D Implies Duo Ready to Come to Terms," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1966.
91. Al Wolf, "Bid D, Koufax Losing Support," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1966.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Charles Maher and Frank Finch, "Bavasi Doubts Koufax and Drysdale Will Sign," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 1966.
94. *Ibid.*
95. "'Bavasi Right, We Won't Accept Offer'—Big D"; and Drysdale Says Figures Less Than Reported," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1966.
96. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 130.
97. Charles Maher, "L'Affaire Drysdale-Koufax: Villains or Heroes?" *Los Angeles Times*, 27 March 1966.
98. *Ibid.*
99. "The Fugitives" photograph ran below Frank Finch, "Dodgers Can't Seem to Hit it Off Against Bucs," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 March 1966.
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Ibid.*
102. Charles Maher and Frank Finch, "Koufax, Drysdale Reject \$210,000," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 March 1966.
103. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 130.
104. Charles Maher, "Peace at Last! K&D Return to Fold," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 March 1966.
105. *Ibid.* Maher reported that Koufax received \$120,000 and Drysdale signed for \$105,000. He reported their 1965 salaries as \$75,000 apiece.
106. *Ibid.* *The Warning Shot* was completed and released by Paramount Studios. The film was directed by Buzz Kulik (*Brian's Song*) and starred David Janssen. Koufax was slated to play a detective sergeant, and, ironically, Drysdale was going to play a television commentator (his main career after baseball). The final version had a strong cast, including David Janssen, Ed Begley, Sam Wanamaker, Stefanie Powers, George Grizzard, Steve Allen, Joan Collins, Vito Scotti, Bob Williams, Romo Vincent, Eleanor Parker, George Sanders, Carroll O'Connor, Walter Pidgeon, David Garfield, Jerry Dunphy, Jean Carson, and Brian Dunne.
107. Roger Abrams, *The Money Pitch: Baseball, Free Agency, and Salary Arbitration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 28; and Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 130. Drysdale mentioned the discussion as \$125,000 for Koufax and \$115,000 for himself. A copy of Bill Hayes letter to Bavasi agrees with the figures in Abrams book, <http://www.jewsinsports.org/enlarge.asp?ID=%20166>.
108. Drysdale, *Once a Bum*, 132–134.
109. Sandy Koufax and Ed Linn, *Koufax* (New York: Viking, 1966).
110. For extensive discussion of labor and baseball, consult John Helyer, *Lords of the Realm: The Real History of Baseball* (New York: Villard Books, 1994); Lee Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond: A History of Baseball's Labor Wars*, rev. ed. (New York: DeCapo, 1991); Marvin Miller, *A Whole Different Ball Game: The Sport and Business of Baseball* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1991); and Bowie Kuhn, *Hardball: The Education of a Baseball Commissioner* (New York: Times, 1987).
111. Abrams, *The Money Pitch*, 28–29.
112. *Ibid.*, 29. The vote was 22–2.
113. *Ibid.*, 29.

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