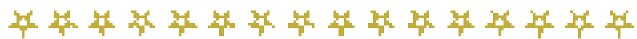
TED WILLIAMS

RONALD A. REIS

BASEBALL SUPERSTARS

Ted Williams



Hank Aaron
Ty Cobb
Johnny Damon
Lou Gehrig
Rickey Henderson
Derek Jeter
Randy Johnson
Andruw Jones
Mickey Mantle
Roger Maris

Mike Piazza
Kirby Puckett
Albert Pujols
Mariano Rivera
Jackie Robinson
Babe Ruth
Curt Schilling
Ichiro Suzuki
Bernie Williams
Ted Williams

BASEBALL SUPERSTARS

Ted Williams

Ronald A. Reis

CHELSEA HOUSE
PUBLISHERS
An imprint of Infobase Publishing

TED WILLIAMS

Copyright © 2008 by Infobase Publishing

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information, contact:

Chelsea House
An imprint of Infobase Publishing
132 West 31st Street
New York NY 10001

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Reis, Ronald A., 1941-
Ted Williams / Ronald A. Reis.
p. cm. — (Baseball superstars)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-7910-9545-4 (hardcover)
1. Williams, Ted, 1918-2002. 2. Baseball players—United States—Biography. 3. Boston Red Sox (Baseball team) I. Title. II. Series.
GV865.W55R45 2008
796.357092—dc22
[B] 2007029049

Chelsea House books are available at special discounts when purchased in bulk quantities for businesses, associations, institutions, or sales promotions. Please call our Special Sales Department in New York at (212) 967-8800 or (800) 322-8755.

You can find Chelsea House on the World Wide Web at http://www.chelseahouse.com

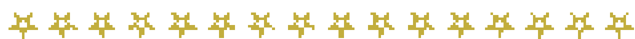
Series design by Erik Lindstrom
Cover design by Ben Peterson and Jooyoung An

Printed in the United States of America

Bang EJB 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

All links and Web addresses were checked and verified to be correct at the time of publication. Because of the dynamic nature of the Web, some addresses and links may have changed since publication and may no longer be valid.



CONTENTS

1	The Pro Kid	1
2	"I'll Be Back"	13
3	1941: The Year of Magical Happenings	25
4	Flying High	36
5	Back in the Swing of It	48
6	"Commie" Combat in Korea	59
7	All Baseball All the Time	70
8	Get a Good Ball to Hit	82
9	Gone Fishing	92
10	The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived	103
	Statistics	113
	Chronology and Timeline	115
	Glossary	118
	Bibliography	121
	Further Reading	124
	Index	126

The Pro Kid

Theodore Samuel Williams, 18 years old and but six months out of high school, was, in the summer of 1937, deep into his first prolonged batting slump—as a professional ballplayer. Having signed with the Class AAA Pacific Coast League San Diego Padres on June 26, 1936, while still a Hoover High School senior, Ted was now in his second year in the minors, earning an impressive $150 a month in the midst of the Great Depression. But having failed to hit in his last 18 times at bat, Ted Williams, the future "Splendid Splinter," "Teddy Ballgame," and "King of Swing," was a most unhappy young man, indeed.

As the Padres' train sped north for a game with the San Francisco Seals, Williams was anything but his jovial, talkative, and animated self, swinging pillows around his sleeping car in

Ted Williams, who was born and raised in San Diego, California, signed with the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League while he was still in high school. He played with the team during the 1936 and 1937 seasons.

a phantom batting practice. Ted had grown sullen as the train pulled forward, the blue-green Pacific Ocean glistening out the coast-side windows, long-board surfers bobbing in the distance off San Clemente.

Until now, the 6-foot-3-inch, 145-pound (190.5-centimeter, 66-kilogram), skinny-as-a-string-bean Williams had been having the time of his life. Though he played but half the 1936 season, "The Kid" was already being paid for what he longed to do most—smack a round ball with a round bat. Having hit .271 in 42 games during that break-in season, Ted had proven his worth. He was a pro.

Ted Williams did not feel much like a professional now; he just felt sorry for himself. In those first few years on the job hitting a baseball, believing that others were forever quick to pick on him was something Williams was even quicker to accept.

Yet the brash young slugger had a flip side. Unrestrained in seeking to improve his hitting, Williams eagerly sought advice from others. Upon arrival in the Bay Area, he approached the all-time great Seals player-manager Lefty O'Doul and boldly asked, "Mr. O'Doul, what should I do to become a good hitter?" The reply was simple and sincere, and it lifted the lanky player's spirits. "Son," O'Doul said, "whatever you do, don't let anybody change you."

If that wasn't ego-boosting enough, the next day's newspaper headline nearly put the young Padres fielder in orbit. "Williams Greatest Hitter Since Waner," it shouted. At first, Ted was not sure who this Williams guy was. Then he read on. O'Doul, the story said, had called Ted the best left-handed hitter to come into the league since Paul Waner.

The slump was over. And maybe O'Doul was on to something. Although Ted was to finish his first full pro season with a .291 batting average, in his last year playing varsity baseball for Hoover High School, he averaged an incredible .403. Who could say—maybe someday, someday in the majors, Ted Williams would, could, do that again.

FIRST ON THE FIELD OF PLAY

Ted Williams was born on August 30, 1918, just a few miles north of the Mexican border, in then small-town, but always sunny, San Diego. His mother, May Venzor, had a Mexican mother and a French father. Ted's dad, Sam Williams, was a mixture of Welsh and English. In 1910, May and Sam married.

May devoted her entire life in service to the Lord through work with the Salvation Army. As a foot soldier in the cause, "Salvation May" would spend hours a day soliciting funds in the streets of San Diego as well as in the backwaters of Tijuana, Mexico. At times, she would drag young Ted along with her to march with the Army's band. He hated it. "I was just so ashamed," Williams painfully recalled.

Sam owned a little photography shop in town, one that catered to sailors looking to have their photos taken as they nestled close to their local sweeties. Sam was as absent a father as May was a truant mother. As a result, Ted was left to fend for himself, and to find camaraderie in sports—in baseball.

The future "Teddy Ballgame" discovered baseball, or, more precisely, the baseball bat, as a 10-year-old fifth-grader at Garfield Elementary School. It was the late 1920s, before the 1929 stock market crash, the onset of the Great Depression, and the universally bad decade to follow. It was when, through the eyes of a boy, life was fun, fun was sports, and sports pretty much meant hitting a 2½-inch-diameter, rubber-cored sphere as hard and as far as possible. Even at a young age, Ted Williams had discovered he could do that better than most anyone he knew.

Being the best at hitting a baseball meant practice, practice, practice, something the future "Splendid Splinter" would preach all his life. To get that drill, as a boy and later as a man, "The Kid" made sure he got his turns at bat—first and often.

"I'd be at school waiting when the janitor opened up," Williams reflected in his autobiography, appropriately entitled *My Turn at Bat*. "I was always the first one there so I

could get into the closets and get the balls and bats and be ready for the other kids. That way I could be first up in a game we played where you could bat as long as somebody didn't catch the ball."

For Ted, he was simply living his dream, living for his next turn at bat. "As a kid, I wished it on every falling star: Please, let me be the hitter I want to be," he recalled.

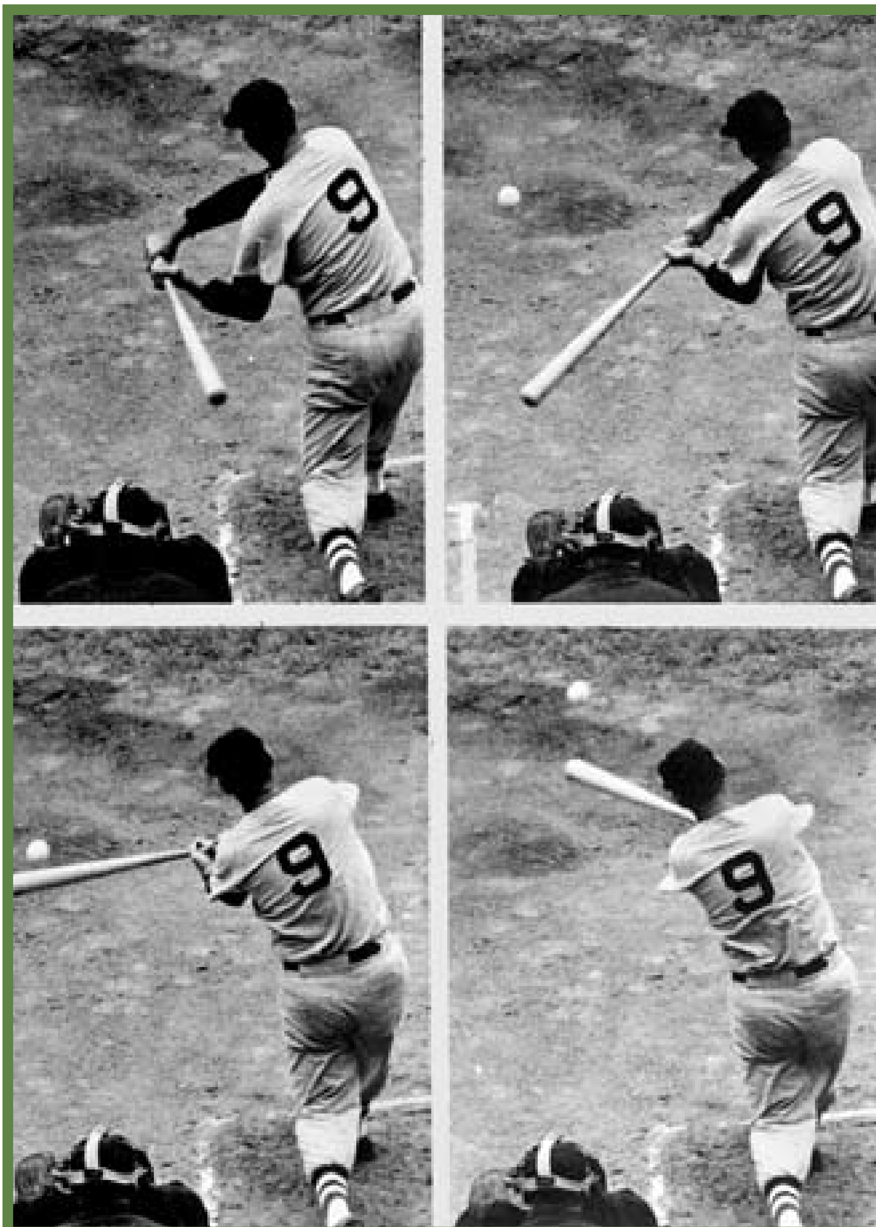
MENTOR MOMENTS

To aid him in his quest, Ted sought guidance from others. He sought mentors. There would be Rod Luscomb, a big, good-looking guy, seven years older than Ted. As director of the North Park playground, just a couple of blocks from his home, Luscomb was idolized by Ted, a "big brother" for the rest of his life. "He would throw me batting practice for an hour or more," Williams recounted in his book, *Ted Williams: My Life in Pictures.* "Then I'd throw to him. I tagged after him, hung around that little playground for a good seven years. A wonderful, wonderful man. I can't give him *enough* credit for making me a ballplayer."

Luscomb was not the only adult to guide and nurture young Ted, to, in effect, fill the role of substitute father. Chick Robert, a game warden, taught Ted how to fish. Johnny Lutz, a neighbor, instructed Ted on how to fire a rifle. Baseball and the outdoors—Ted Williams grew up getting more than his share.

Soon enough, in February 1934, the almost six-foot-tall Ted Williams was ready for Hoover High School.

Ted was not a particularly good student. Though many who encountered Williams in the years to come would consider him the most intelligent man they had ever met, the boy got grades in high school that gave little indication of his intellectual depth and insatiable curiosity. A decidedly non-college-prep major, Ted pumped up his class schedules with shop courses and, of course, physical education. He graduated with a 2.07 grade-point average—a classic "C" student—barely.



This series of photographs, taken in 1957, when Ted Williams won the American League batting title, shows Williams's powerful swing. As a youngster he used to wish: "Please, let me be the hitter I want to be."

Yet Ted was well liked by both his peers and his teachers. Bob Breitbard, one of Williams's closest friends at the time, offers snippets of Ted in his Hoover High School days. In the book *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*, Breitbard says, "Ted was a fun guy in school. . . . He always raised his hand. Asking questions. Women, he didn't care about going out with a gal. . . . His love was baseball."

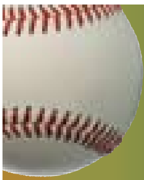
In trying out for the high school team, the story is told that Ted had to line up with 100 other kids to get his chance to prove himself. He kept yelling to the coach, Wos Caldwell, to let him hit. Finally, to shut the shouter up, Caldwell relented. The first hit went out over the lunch arbor, where no ball had ever landed before. Then Ted hit another to the same spot. Tossing the bat aside, Williams announced, "I'll be back tomorrow." The kid could hit.

Ted Williams was a standout in his three years as a Hoover Cardinal. On defense, he pitched and played the outfield, usually in right. In 1935, he won the team's batting championship, hitting .583. In his senior year, Ted batted .403, though in his autobiography he says it was .406. A difference of but .003! What could that matter? Four years later, Ted Williams, and the whole world, would find out.

PADRES PICKUP

Because travel time between distant competing schools was great, the high school baseball season itself was short—but 12 games. Yet in addition to regular contests, Coach Caldwell scheduled his team to play wherever and whomever it could, which ratcheted up the number of field encounters considerably. There were American Legion contests and games with the local military and the Texas Liquor House squad, to name but a few competitors. At times, Ted even went up to Santa Barbara, alone, a distance of 215 miles (346 kilometers), to play semipro ball with seasoned men. He was just 15 years old.

Williams made sure he got plenty of play during those high school years, from early 1934 until graduation, mid-year, on February 3, 1937. Joe Villarino, a teammate, remembers the times. As reported by Leigh Montville in his book *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, Villarino declared: "We had a pretty good team. But we were pretty good because we had Ted. He was something else. He talked about seeing the



THE PACIFIC COAST LEAGUE

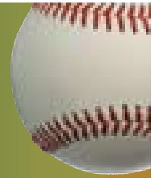
In 2003, the Pacific Coast League (PCL) celebrated its centennial, having been formed 100 years earlier with the merger of the California and Pacific Northwest Leagues. Consisting of legendary teams like the Hollywood Stars, the Portland Beavers, the Sacramento Solons, the San Francisco Seals, and, of course, the San Diego Padres, play was considered top-notch from the outset. Never less than Class AAA, there were times, in the early 1950s, when the league was seen as somewhere between AAA and the majors.

Given the excellent weather, particularly in California, PCL teams played long seasons, often from late February to early December. It was not uncommon for ball teams to hit the field six days a week, often playing doubleheaders. A year's schedule could mean at least 200 games. As a result, both team owners and players reaped considerable financial rewards.

The Pacific Coast League was able to draw from a large pool of talent, given the growing population centers out West. Many players went on to star in the majors, including Joe DiMaggio, Tony Lazzeri, Paul Waner, Earl Averill, Ernie Lombardi, and Ted Williams.

ball flatten out when it hit the bat. The rest of us would try to look, but none of us saw what he saw."

As Ted Williams completed his junior year in high school, it became clear that the leap from semipro to pro ball was about to take place sooner rather than later—while Ted was in school. The new local minor-league team, the San Diego Padres, came knocking.



In 1952, the league sought to make the leap to major-league status. It never happened. With the arrival of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants on the West Coast, in 1958, and the advent of safe, affordable, and rapid air travel by jet, the majors spread across the country. The Pacific Coast League stayed AAA and is essentially today a minor league with major-league team affiliations.

The San Diego Padres were originally called the Hollywood Stars (1926–1935). The Stars moved to San Diego in 1936, becoming the Padres. Then, for the 1969 season, San Diego was granted a major-league team, which adopted the Padres name; the minor-league team dropped out of the Pacific Coast League altogether.

During their PCL days, the Padres played in Lane Field, on the waterfront in downtown San Diego, often to large and enthusiastic crowds. After the Padres won their opening game with Seattle, the *San Diego Evening Tribune* declared: "As long as baseball is popular, as long as businessmen can toss off their cares and become excited over a stolen base or a long throw from center, the solution of the more weighty problems of the day will remain in pretty safe hands."

Ted Williams also developed an affinity for other sports while growing up. At age 20, Williams takes aim during a hunting trip near San Diego *(above)*. Baseball and the outdoors would be his two big passions.

As part of a Pacific Coast League (PCL) expansion effort, the Padres hit town in 1936. They were eager to add to their roster. Bill Lane, the team owner, had seen Ted play for Hoover High. So had representatives from the New York Yankees and

the St. Louis Cardinals. Offers from the majors were enticing but would require Ted to leave San Diego and spend time with their farm teams. May Williams wanted her boy to remain close to home. After all, he was only 17 years old and, in the summer of 1936, still had not finished high school. Bill Lane's local club seemed the logical choice.

Ted would receive $150 a month, good money in what was now the depth of the Great Depression. There would be a small signing bonus. And most important, Lane agreed that for the next two years, 1936 and 1937, Ted would not be farmed out—he would remain in San Diego no matter what. Thus, Ted Williams, "The Kid," became a professional baseball player in late June 1936. Being a minor, his parents had to sign the contract.

Clearly, the Padres were signing Williams because of his hitting. Yet young Ted was to get a slow start. In 1936, he played sporadically, finishing the season with a .271 average and 107 at-bats in 42 games. Nonetheless, the boy was learning, and doing so while having a terrific time train-traveling up and down the Pacific Coast with professionals, getting paid for playing a child's game—baseball.

On June 22, 1937, two months into the new season, Ted Williams finally made the Padres' starting lineup. He hit an inside-the-park homer. Ted would finish the season with a .291 average and 23 home runs. And now, the two-year stay-at-home period in his contract was up. The major-league scouts were back.

RED SOX CALL

Although there is little evidence that young Ted Williams was any kind of "neatnik" (a guy who demanded that everything be nice and clean and in its place), he did not take to filth, especially at home. If nothing else, it embarrassed him.

But that is the way it was at home in his little California bungalow on Utah Street. The Williams family acquired the

house for $4,000 in 1924. It was never to be the cozy sanctuary it could have been for Ted or his younger brother, Danny.

With Mom out proselytizing for the Lord all day and Dad staying away at work, the Williams home degenerated into a hovel: dark and dingy, with shabby and frayed furniture. It was into this dwelling that Eddie Collins, the Boston Red Sox general manager, would come in December 1937, looking to sign young Ted.

Years later, Collins would report that, throughout his negotiations with May and Sam Williams, Ted never got up from his mohair chair to shake hands or say hello. Williams, it turned out, was too ashamed to stand up. By remaining seated, Ted covered up the hole in his chair's cushion.

Nonetheless, a contract was signed. Williams would get $3,000 his first year and $4,500 his second. His parents would pick up a $1,000 signing bonus.

Ted, surprisingly, was not all that ecstatic about the deal, not at first. "The Red Sox didn't mean a thing to me," he recalled in his autobiography, *My Turn at Bat.* "A fifth-, sixth-place club, the farthest from San Diego I could go. I sure wasn't a Boston fan."

Still, Ted would go. As he prepared, in the spring of 1938, to head for the Sox training camp in Sarasota, Florida, Williams could be heard muttering what would become an enduring refrain: "All I want out of life is when I walk down the street folks will say, 'There goes the greatest hitter who ever lived.'"

In spring training, he would last but little over a week.

"I'll Be Back"

Supposedly, according to song and wishful thinking, it never rains in Southern California. Yet those living south of the Tehachapi Mountains, the acknowledged dividing line that splits the state, were to discover otherwise in the three days beginning February 28, 1938. As the skies opened up and the deluge commenced, rail lines were cut, roads became impassable, 5,000 homes were destroyed, and 200 people lost their lives. To this day, the flood of 1938 is considered the worst such natural disaster to befall the Golden State.

Folks hoping to flee, perhaps to the East Coast, were not, it would seem, going anywhere. Ted Williams, though, managed to hop a train leaving San Diego for Sarasota, Florida, via El Paso, Texas. There he would meet up with three players also heading for Florida and spring training. When Bobby Doerr,

Babe Herman, and Max West rambled into El Paso, they found Ted at the train station waiting. He was swinging a rolled-up newspaper at an imaginary pitch.

As the foursome headed east, Williams's ceaseless chatter began to match the clacking of railcars as the train sped onward. Herman was the main target of Ted's obsessive questioning. He drove the seasoned player to distraction, wanting to know everything Herman knew about hitting. The babble never quit. With stopovers and delays along the way, the four arrived at spring training five days late.

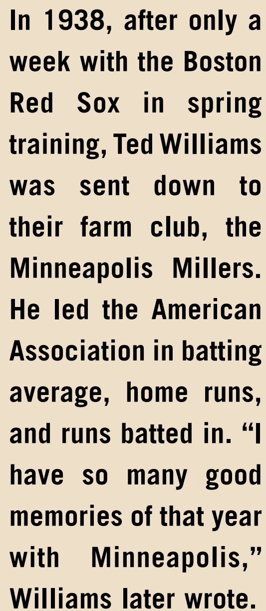
"Who are you?" Williams remembers Johnny Orlando, the Red Sox equipment manager, asking him upon arrival, as recounted in *My Turn at Bat.* "Ted Williams," was the instant reply. "Oh, well, 'The Kid' has arrived, eh," Orlando responded. "You dress over there with the rookies, Kid."

"The Kid" nickname stuck. It would be Williams's to carry the rest of his life.

Ted, of course, had his own labels to throw around. The 19-year-old Williams was quick to call everybody "sport." Not everybody liked it, particularly Red Sox manager Joe Cronin. Within a week, it was clear that the young motormouth from California, who seldom left a thought unuttered, was getting on people's nerves.

It wasn't Ted's boasting and brashness, his immaturity and insecurity, though, that would send him packing down to the minors in little more than a week. Truth be known, the youngster simply lacked seasoning. Williams needed to be where he could play every day, gain valuable experience, and along with it, a measure of maturity.

Orlando drove his "Kid" to the bus station; he would be going to the minor-league Minneapolis Millers' training camp in Daytona Beach. A year with the Red Sox farm team would do him good, Orlando assured the despondent Williams. "I'll be back," Ted told Orlando. "Don't have any worries about that." The Sox's clubhouse man then reached into his pocket



In 1938, after only a week with the Boston Red Sox in spring training, Ted Williams was sent down to their farm club, the Minneapolis Millers. He led the American Association in batting average, home runs, and runs batted in. “I have so many good memories of that year with Minneapolis,” Williams later wrote.

and pulled out a $5 bill. "The Kid" would need to eat on his trip to Daytona Beach.

MINOR ENGAGEMENT

Ted Williams threw right-handed but hit left-handed. No one knows for sure, not even Williams himself, why that came to be. "I don't know why, but from the time I was old enough to carry a bat to the sandlots of San Diego, I hit lefty," he recounted in his autobiography. One young acquaintance claims that at the North Park playground, kids were awarded more points for hitting into right field, since there was a greater distance the ball could travel. Ted, the argument goes, switched to the left side of the plate in pursuit of more hitting territory.

No matter the reason for his swinging lefty, on Opening Day with the Millers, Williams was in great form. The newcomer hit a home run and two singles and had four runs batted in. At the plate, it was clear the Minneapolis team had a smasher on their hands.

In the field, however, they had themselves a screwball.

"What do you say to an outfielder who slaps his glove on his thigh and yells, 'Hi-yo, Silver,' when he chases fly balls?" Montville writes in his biography of Williams, referring to comments made by the Millers' frustrated manager, Donie Bush. "What do you say when the outfielder turns his back on the action at the plate and works on his swing, taking imaginary cuts at imaginary pitches, oblivious to whatever else is taking place? . . . To an outfielder who keeps up a running dialogue with the scorekeeper inside the scoreboard in right?"

"The Kid" was just hyper, cuckoo. But he was having a ball. And he was learning.

Rogers Hornsby, a legend in his own time, was one to provide instruction. He told Williams something that the youngster was beginning to grasp for himself. "Great hitters," Hornsby declared, as Michael Seidel's biography, *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*, states, "know as much how *not* to

swing at certain pitches as how to swing at others. . . . He does not hit the pitcher's best pitch but waits for the pitch he can hit best." In other words, Hornsby finally declared, "Get a good ball to hit."

Williams evidently got quite a few. He finished the season winning the American Association's first Triple Crown: hitting .366, smashing 46 home runs, and collecting 142 RBIs. No wonder Williams concluded in his autobiography, "I have so many good memories of that year with Minneapolis."

OUTDOOR WONDERLAND

Baseball, it turned out, was not the only pursuit to provide such pleasant recollections. There would also be hunting, fishing—and a girl. In 1938, all three came together in and around Princeton, Minnesota, a rural town of 3,000 people, 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Minneapolis.

Princeton can get mighty cold, especially for a boy from Southern California. During the off-season (November to March), the average high is 31 degrees Fahrenheit (-0.5 degrees Celsius). The average low is 11 degrees Fahrenheit (-11 degrees Celsius). That Ted Williams, accustomed to sunny San Diego, would want to spend time in Princeton in the winter, would seem a mystery. Williams, though, loved the outdoors, the fields, and streams. Instead of going back to his hometown after the 1938 season, Williams stayed in Minnesota. Though he would never play ball in the state again, he returned to it often in the years to come, seeking its brisk, clean country air.

It was not just the climate that brought Williams back to Princeton; sitting in a local cafe one day, Williams blurted out something to the effect of "Any good-looking girls around here?" The word must have traveled fast, because soon enough, Doris Soule showed up. She met the qualification.

Doris was the daughter of a fishing guide. Naturally, she liked to hunt and fish. She was also a feisty gal with a mind

of her own. "The first time I saw Ted, he was an awful sight," Doris said, as related in Leigh Montville's biography, *Ted Williams.* "He hadn't shaved, he had a hole in the seat of his pants (though he did have another pair of pants under those), and he was wearing those earflap things. Taken all in all, I guess I wasn't very impressed."

Though the two argued the first evening they were together, and Doris insisted that she could not stand him, the two agreed to meet the following day. There would be many more such rendezvous in the months and years to come.

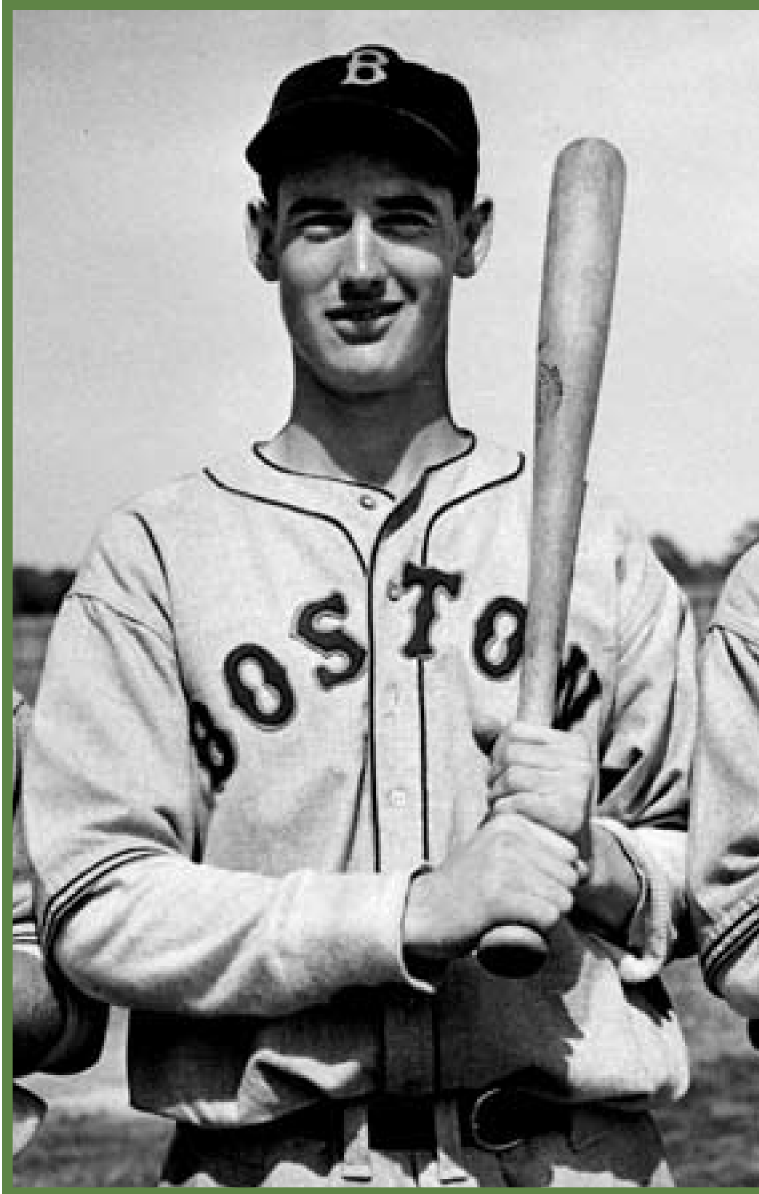
Hall of Famer Bobby Doerr remembers those good times of 1938. He told Bill Nowlin, author of *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*, "Ted really enjoyed that year in Minnesota, and went back many times. He liked the outdoors—hunting birds (especially in the wintertime), all that water to fish, and so on."

Doerr also noticed something else. "There was a big difference in Ted between San Diego in 1936 and Minneapolis after '38," he told Nowlin. "Some of it was just physically 'filling out'. . . but the experiences he gained and baseball knowledge he picked up had a big effect."

WELCOME TO THE BIGS

By 1939, the decade-long Great Depression was finally waning. In an attempt to hasten its demise and give the nation's economy one further shot in the arm, New York City opened its World's Fair. More than 40 million fair-goers would cram through turnstiles to gawk at man's latest inventions and promises for the future, the most impressive of which was a new communications medium—television.

In the same year, in the same city, one of baseball's most acclaimed players had taken himself out of the lineup on May 2, ending a streak of playing an incredible 2,130 consecutive games. On July 4, the Big Apple gave Lou Gehrig a huge Yankee Stadium sendoff in front of 62,000 fans. The crowd sat numb as Gehrig delivered what many consider the finest



Ted Williams became a starter for the Red Sox in the 1939 season. That year, he led the American League in runs batted in and hit .327. The Boston fans loved their new rookie, but as Williams would discover the following season, that adoration was tenuous.

speech in sports. His head bowed, Gehrig told the assembled and, through radio, the nation, that despite an illness that was destroying every muscle in his body, he felt he had a lot to live for. He was, he said, "the luckiest man on the face of the earth." Two years later, Gehrig would be dead.

As one giant of the game retired from the scene, another had begun his journey to baseball stardom. Ted Williams said he would be back, and now here he was ready to take Boston by storm.

The Red Sox opened the season on April 20 in Yankee Stadium. It would be Williams's first official major-league game—actually, the first major-league game he ever saw. He played it with Lou Gehrig.

Though the Sox lost the opener, Williams took on Yankee pitcher Red Ruffing, smashing one off the stadium wall in right-center field for a double. Williams had his first major-league hit.

There would be more season highlights to savor. On May 30, "The Kid," facing Ruffing again (this time at Fenway Park), launched the ball as deep into the bleachers as any of the sportswriters covering the game could remember. In a second game that day, he did it again, firing the pellet almost to the same spot. Boston fans loved it, and Williams loved them back. It would be the year, the only year, Williams chose to tip his cap as he rounded the bases for one more home run.

Offensively, rookie Ted was having a sensational year in the majors. He averaged .327, hit 31 home runs, and led the league in RBIs with 145. Williams would probably have been named Rookie of the Year, except the award had not yet been established.

Between the great hitting, or during it, though, flashes of a hyper, immature 20-year-old kid displayed themselves, often to considerable embarrassment.

During an exhibition game in Atlanta, before the season started, Williams misjudged a ball down the right-field line,

dropped it, and then booted it trying to pick it up. "I was so mad when I finally grabbed it I threw it the hell out of the park over the last fence," Williams recalled in his autobiography. "The ball hit a Sears store across the street." Williams was immediately pulled from the game. Welcome to the big leagues!

THINGS FALL APART

As famous as Ted Williams would become for hitting balls out, he would become equally renowned for hitting back, back at Boston fans and the Boston press. Highstrung, ready to react to any perceived slight, goaded by a ruthlessly competitive press looking for any angle that would sell papers, billed as the next Babe Ruth who was sure to hit home runs with every turn at bat, young Ted had a tough year in 1940. It would be a year in which, as Michael Seidel put it in his biography of Williams, "Everyone and everything were indicted as co-conspirators: fans, press, management, teammates, Boston's streets, its climate, its trees."

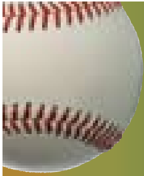
Maybe it began with the decision to move Williams to left field, simply to make play in the outfield easier for him? That switch, though, also brought Williams closer to sniping fans who demanded perfection: no dropped balls, fiery throws to the infield, no missed opportunities.

Or it could have begun when the right-field fence was moved in 23 feet (7 meters), in an obvious attempt to give the new lefty an advantage. It did not work; at Fenway, Williams would hit only nine home runs for the season.

Incident upon incident materialized to reveal Williams's troublesome second year in the majors. On July 21, Williams told a Cleveland reporter of a visit he had made to his uncle, a fireman in Yonkers, New York. As Williams remembers, it was a quiet day and everyone was just lounging around playing cards. "Hell," Williams told Harry Grayson, as related in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*, "you can live like this and retire with

a pension. Here I am hitting .340 and everybody's all over me. Maybe I shoulda been a fireman."

Although the Yankees were not the first to pick up on this fireman reference, they were the most effective in exploiting it. In a game soon to follow, their bench let loose with sirens, cowbells, firemen's whistles, and taunts of "save the child, save the child," as Williams came to the plate. Williams



FENWAY PARK

Fenway Park, home to the Red Sox since its construction in 1912, measures 310 feet (94.5 meters) down the left-field line; 379 feet (115.5 meters) in left-center field; 390 feet (119 meters) in center field; 420 feet (128 meters) in deep right-center field; 380 feet (116 meters) in deep right field; and 302 feet (92 meters) down the right-field line. The odd dimensions of the park were never intended to provide a tempting target for home-run hitters, but to keep non-paying customers out of the park. For the most part, it worked.

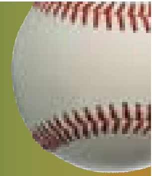
The ballpark was named by John Taylor, then the Red Sox owner, because it was built in an area of Boston known as the Fens. Before the park's construction, the Red Sox had been called the Puritans, the Pilgrims, and the Plymouth Rocks.

Fenway Park is known for being one of the last major-league parks to still have a hand-operated scoreboard. Green and red lights are used to signal balls, strikes, and outs.

As well known as Fenway Park is for its scoreboard, it is downright famous for its left-field wall—known as the Green

had difficulty concentrating, though he could not suppress a laugh either.

Perhaps Williams should have received more support and protection from the Red Sox front office. Today, with public-relations machines in full press mode, a player is often safeguarded in such matters. Not in 1940, and certainly not in Boston.



Monster. James Buckley, Jr., in his book, *Classic Ballparks*, calls it "the single most famous physical landmark in Major League Baseball, perhaps in all of sports."

Built to follow Lansdowne Street behind left field, it stands 37 feet (11 meters) tall, a huge target for right-handed hitters. In 1947, the wall was painted a trademark special "Fenway Green."

In 2003, the Red Sox created a set of in-demand, to-die-for seats atop the Green Monster. Today, according to Buckley, Boston-accented fans can be heard on their cell phones shouting to envious friends, "Dude! I'm on the Monstah!"

In 1940, Ted Williams's second year with the Red Sox, management decided to pull the right-field fence in 23 feet (7 meters) closer to home plate. The idea was to make it easier for their new "Babe" to smack more over-the-fence home runs. It did not work, and new construction in the coming years erased the supposed advantage the move gave to Williams. Still, the new field space became known as "Williamsburg" in honor of sweet-swinging Ted Williams.

"His dealings with writers is his business," Tom Yawkey, the Red Sox owner, told the press, as related in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life.* "Bad language, not hustling on the field is ours. I feel sorry for him. He had the writers and the fans, practically the whole world, at his feet. Now he is tossing it all away, and he is the only loser."

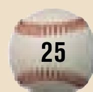
Ted Williams, barely 22 years old at season's end, was, it would seem, on his own.

1941: The Year of Magical Happenings

On September 1, 1939, Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland. Two days later, France and Great Britain declared war on the Third Reich. World War II had begun.

Vast areas of Europe were soon smoldering battlefields. France, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium fell to the German Blitzkrieg in 1940. By the summer of the following year, the Germans had conquered most of Western Europe and had invaded the Soviet Union to the east. Only the United Kingdom, across the English Channel, remained beyond the Führer's grasp, though the bombing of London threatened to reduce that city to rubble.

Most Americans spent 1941 fearing that the European fire-storm would suck them in. While aviator Charles Lindbergh led the isolationists, urging the United States to, at the least,



remain neutral, there were others who felt America should, and would, come to the aid of her allies—with fighting men.

And despite President Franklin Roosevelt's best efforts, the Great Depression, though considerably weakened, still lingered; in 1941, the unemployment rate stood at a stubborn 9.9 percent.

No wonder, then, that the country eagerly turned to sports, particularly baseball, to provide diversion from its anxieties and troubles. Ted Williams would help supply that distraction by having his best season ever.

Yet it did not start out that way. Williams was late for spring training, as usual. Two weeks later, in an exhibition game against the minor-league Newark Bears, his right cleat got caught in the dirt, breaking his right ankle. Williams would not start to play baseball full time until April 29.

When he did, though, when "The King of Swing" began to swat, it would be the beginning of something big—really big.

On May 7, at Comiskey Park, in a game against the Chicago White Sox, Williams smashed a 500-footer into the right-field seats. It was the third inning. Later, with the game tied, it went into extra innings.

Charlie Wagner was now pitching for the Red Sox. The sun had set, and the field was darkening. Williams told Wagner to hold the White Sox; he was going to hit a home run and get the team out of there. To this day, Williams's eleventh-inning rocket launch is considered the longest homer ever hit at Comiskey Park. Some put it at 600 feet (183 meters). The fun season had begun.

ALL-STAR SPECTACULAR

In early July, the immortal Babe Ruth passed through Boston, his old hometown. "When I first saw Ted Williams swing a bat, I knew he would be one of the best," he told the press, as revealed in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*. "He's loose and easy,

Ted Williams receives congratulations from Joe DiMaggio *(left)* and coach Marv Shea after hitting a home run that gave the American League the win in the 1941 All-Star Game at Briggs Stadium in Detroit. Williams and DiMaggio were the undisputed stars of the 1941 season. Both recorded achievements that have not been matched since.

with a great pair of wrists. Just a natural. Williams ought to be one of the first hitters in years to pass .400."

From May 17 to June 17, "Teddy Ballgame" had done better than that. His average for the 31-day period was a stratospheric .477. Furthermore, in the same four weeks, Williams

had 52 hits and smashed in 10 home runs. As the All-Star break approached, there was little doubt he would make the American League roster.

And a good thing, too. For the American League and for Ted Williams, it would be the defining game of the season.

Williams loved the All-Star Game because it allowed him to check out so many major-league pitchers in one place, on one day. It was a chance to research the competition he would face the rest of the season and beyond.

On July 8, the American League met the National League at Detroit's Briggs Stadium. By the end of the eighth inning, the National League, powered by Claude Passeau's pitching, led 5-3.

In the ninth, the American League loaded the bases. Joe DiMaggio then topped a grounder to Eddie Miller at short, which drove in a run. The score was now 5-4.

With two out and two on base, Ted Williams came to the plate. The stadium went berserk. On a 2-1 pitch, Passeau, by now a nervous wreck, fed Williams a sliding fastball, belt high. "The Kid" told himself to swing, but to swing early. The collision sent the ball onto the right-field roof, resulting in a three-run homer and a 7-5 American League victory.

"Well, it was the kind of thing a kid dreams about and imagines himself doing when he's playing those little playground games we used to play in San Diego," Williams recalled in his autobiography. "Halfway down to first, seeing that ball going out, I stopped running and started leaping and jumping and clapping my hands, and I was just so happy I laughed out loud. I've never been so happy, and I've never seen so many happy guys."

And the season was only half over!

RIVAL PLAYERS

Hitting above .400 in a one-month stretch is an accomplishment. Getting to base four out of ten times in the majors, for

any length of time, is noteworthy. Exceptional hitters, however, can make such a thing happen in almost any season—for a while. Going into the All-Star Game, Joe DiMaggio, the "Yankee Clipper," had been hitting .408 since May 15. During the same period, Ted Williams, "The King of Swing," was batting .412.

Hitting .400 for an entire season, however, is another matter. Since 1901, only seven players had done it. Before 1941, the last one to accomplish the feat was Bill Terry of the New York Giants in 1930. Barely crossing the mark, he hit .401 for the season.

At the All-Star break, the traditional halfway mark of a season, it looked as if Ted Williams had a good chance of doing what Terry had done 11 years earlier. Baseball began to take notice, and the excitement, in this year of magical happenings, was palpable.

But by the break, another player, on another team, was also getting attention. On May 15, in a game against the White Sox, DiMaggio went 1-for-4—to start a hitting streak. "The hardest part of a hitting streak is building it to the point where it is a streak worthy of being noticed," DiMaggio said in his autobiography, *Lucky to Be a Yankee.* "And once it is attracting attention, then you find the pressure on you. Nobody, including myself, paid any attention to my hitting streak, or its humble beginning, until it had passed 20."

The race, or rivalry, was on. How high would DiMaggio's consecutive-game hitting streak go? Would Williams end the season at .400 or above?

In DiMaggio's fifty-third game of the season, he passed George Sisler's 41-consecutive-game streak, established in 1922. Joe McCarthy, then manager of the Yankees, told DiMaggio he was free to swing at any ball he chose. "He never gave me the 'take' sign once," DiMaggio remembered.

Going into a game against Cleveland, on July 17, before a crowd of 67,468, DiMaggio had hit safely in 56 consecutive

games. "I think I was unlucky in the game in which my streak was stopped," DiMaggio recalled. "I hit the ball cleanly, but Lou Boudreau came up with it, even though it took a bad hop, and turned it into a double play."

One streak was over, never to be equaled again. Another one, however, was still in play. Williams, to date, was batting .398.

WAITING ON THE PITCH

Ted Williams was always looking for an edge. He never believed he possessed natural talent, that he was a born hitter. The opening sentence of his book, *The Science of Hitting*, written with John Underwood and published in 1970, declares, "Hitting a baseball is the single most difficult thing to do in sport." Williams worked tirelessly all his baseball life to master that truth, to gain a hitting advantage.

To that end, he even worked the umpires, using them as his personal scouts. According to Vinnie Orlando, Johnny Orlando's brother, as reported by Leigh Montville, "On the field, when he was on base, he'd strike up a conversation and ask the umpires how the pitchers were throwing. . . . If they were relying on the fastball or curve. Things like that."

Williams did not like rookie pitchers; they were too unpredictable. He much preferred to face good, experienced ball handlers, ones he had studied and analyzed.

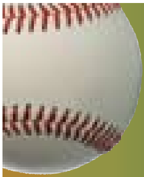
When Williams stood at the plate, challenging a seasoned pitcher, it allowed him to develop the most valuable luxury a hitter could have: the ability to wait on the ball. "Sure, sometimes you wait too long and the ball is past you," he explained in his autobiography. "But that usually means you are going to get the same pitch the next time, and nothing pleased me more than to get a second crack at a pitcher who thought he had put one past me. I couldn't *wait* to get up again."

For Williams, the greatest compliment would come when a catcher complained, "Williams hit the ball right out of my

Ted Williams's quest to bat over .400 during the 1941 season drew national attention. Whether he would achieve that mark came down to the final day of the season, in a doubleheader against the Philadelphia Athletics.

glove." It meant that he had waited; he hadn't been too quick to swing.

As the 1941 season wound down and Williams was in range of hitting .400, his relationship with Boston and its fans improved considerably. In fact, Williams even began to visit hospitals and the sick at home, something he would do often in the years to come, with little or no fanfare. In



THE .400 CLUB

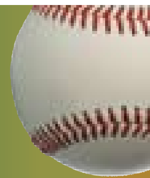
Since 1901, only eight major-league players have averaged .400 or better. Two of them, Ty Cobb and Rogers Hornsby, did it three times. George Sisler did it twice. The last player to cross the .400 threshold was Ted Williams, batting .406 in 1941.

Of course, before 1901, there were those who had averaged over .400—in some cases considerably higher. In 1887, a particularly good year for high achievers, Tip O'Neill averaged .485, Pete Browning finished the season at .457, and Bob Caruthers was right behind at .456. In that year, though, bases on balls were counted as hits. And until 1901 in the National League and 1903 in the American League, foul balls not caught were not counted as strikes, giving hitters a distinct advantage. For these reasons, crediting hitters with a .400-plus season is pretty much confined to the modern era.

Here is the list of the eight greats who qualify:

1901	Nap Lajoie, Philadelphia (AL)	.426
1924	Rogers Hornsby, St. Louis (NL)	.424
1911	Ty Cobb, Detroit (AL)	.420

one case, a woman wrote Williams, asking him to visit her brother, a fan, in a Boston hospital. He not only made the visit, he stopped at the gift shop on the way up to the room and bought the fellow a box of candy. Obviously, "Mister Wonderful" was, indeed, feeling wonderful as the season stretched into its final games and averaging .400 seemed within his grasp.



1922	George Sisler, St. Louis (AL)	.420
1912	Ty Cobb, Detroit (AL)	.409
1911	Joe Jackson, Cleveland (AL)	.408
1920	George Sisler, St. Louis (AL)	.407
1941	Ted Williams, Boston (AL)	.406
1923	Harry Heilmann, Detroit (AL)	.403
1925	Rogers Hornsby, St. Louis (NL)	.403
1922	Ty Cobb, Detroit (AL)	.401
1922	Rogers Hornsby, St, Louis (NL)	.401
1930	Bill Terry, New York (NL)	.401

Of the eight who bested .400, all but three were left-handed. The youngest was Joe Jackson, just 22; and the oldest, Ty Cobb, at 35 in 1922. Their average age was 27. Williams was 23 when he finished the 1941 season.

Williams had the fewest hits in his .400 season, only 185. This is probably because he drew 145 bases on balls in 1941. No other .400 hitter walked more than 90 times. It is testament to the fear opposing teams had of Williams that he was given so many free passes at the plate.

.406 DOWN TO THE WIRE

In the last 10 days of the season, Williams's average dropped almost a point a day. As the weather cooled, Williams, in typical fashion, began to slump. From a high of .436 in June, his average went up and down; he was hitting .402 in late August. Going into the last day of the season, in a scheduled Sunday doubleheader in Philadelphia, Williams was batting .3995.

Williams could have sat out the last two games. Technically, a .3995 would be rounded up to .400. He would end the season with what he had strived for, membership in the exclusive .400 club.

There was no lack of advice as to what "Teddy Ballgame" should do.

"Johnny Orlando, the clubhouse boy, always a guy who was there when I needed him, must have walked 10 miles with me the night before, talking it over and just walking around," Williams recalled in his autobiography.

On the same night, Hugh Duffy, who hit .440 in 1894, counseled Williams. "Listen, kid," he said, as reported in *Baseball in '41*, by Robert Creamer, "it's an honor to hit .400. I know because I once hit .400 myself. But it won't mean a thing unless you earn it the right way. Go out there tomorrow and show 'em you're a .400 hitter."

Williams did not need the lecture. He told his manager he did not want any of this sitting-it-out talk. "If I couldn't hit .400 all the way, I didn't deserve it," he stated in his autobiography.

In the opening game of the doubleheader, as Williams first stepped to the plate, Philadelphia Athletics catcher Frankie Hayes informed him, "Ted, Mr. Mack told us if we let up on you he'll run us out of baseball. I wish you all the luck in the world, but we're not giving you a damn thing."

What the Athletics and Mr. Mack—Connie Mack, their legendary manager—would not give, Williams simply took. He went 4-for-5 in the first game and 2-for-3 in the second, taking it to the wire with a season-ending .406.

As great an achievement as hitting .406 was in 1941, its full impact would not be known until the decades rolled on, when no one was again able to match it. Although Ted Williams is one of only eight major-league players to hit over .400 in the modern era (since 1901), he has been the last to do so. Like Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak, batting .400 isn't likely to be seen again.

4

Flying High

Tora! Tora! Tora! The signal to attack, attack, attack, given by Japanese Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo in the early morning of December 7, 1941, began a day of infamy, as President Franklin Roosevelt would soon tell a stunned and disheartened nation. Striking from the west, the raiding foe appeared in two swarms, 353 aircraft in all, their bee-buzzing propeller whine fracturing the lazy calm of Oahu, Hawaii's most populated island. Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Pacific Fleet's headquarters, was their main objective, though not their only target. Destruction would be islandwide, with devastating results.

Torpedo bombers led the first wave with 183 planes, their aim to destroy as many battleships and aircraft carriers as possible. The U.S.S. *Arizona* took an early hit, sinking with

1,177 men aboard. In total, 12 ships were sunk, including five battleships.

Within an hour of the first wave, a second, consisting of 170 dive-bombers, attacked U.S. air bases across the island. American P-36 Hawks and P-40 Warhawks, parked wingtip to wingtip to minimize sabotage vulnerability, were destroyed by the dozens in a matter of moments. Of the 188 American aircraft destroyed or severely damaged that day, 155 never got off the ground.

Japan's daybreak attack on Oahu, begun at 7:35 A.M., was all over by 1:00 P.M. The carriers that launched the assault from 274 miles (441 kilometers) away, headed home.

Left behind were 2,388 dead and 1,178 wounded Americans. Fifty-five Japanese airmen and nine submariners were also killed in action.

America was at war.

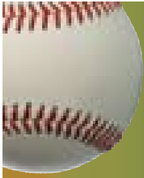
Of the 580 major-league ballplayers in the early 1940s, 540 of them would eventually serve in the military. Most were drafted or enlisted under threat of being drafted. Ted Williams was one of them. He was not, however, the first to sign up—far from it. Indeed, Williams held back, seeking a hardship deferment, until the public's wrath became so intense, he had little choice but to enlist. When Williams did finally join, he served with distinction.

IN OR OUT?

Coming off of a fabulous 1941 season, naturally Ted Williams wanted the opportunity to play again in 1942. But then everyone wanted a chance to pursue their goals, live uninterrupted lives. Yet the country had been attacked. America and Americans would have to fight back, regardless of one's politics or personal preference. The nation would need strong, capable fighting men—millions of them. Baseball players were expected to do their part, set an example. Being the athletes

they were, in prime physical shape, few could expect exemption from military service. One who did, however, was 23-year-old Ted Williams.

Before the war's onset, Williams held a 3-A draft board classification. Such a designation was for married men with children and those who were the sole support of a family member. Williams's mother, now divorced, was receiving all



BASEBALL AND THE WAR EFFORT

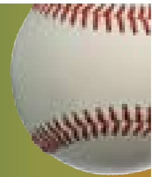
Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers or Bob Feller of the Cleveland Indians? It is a tossup as to which one was the first major leaguer to enlist in the military after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. "Hammerin Hank" Greenberg, who had played in three World Series and two All-Star Games, hit 58 home runs in 1938, and was the American League's MVP in 1940, had actually enlisted back on May 7. By the time the war started, though, he had been discharged. Now, two days after Pearl Harbor, Greenberg re-enlisted, giving up his $55,000 yearly salary for $21-per-month Army pay.

Bob Feller, the pitcher who had three no-hitters and a record-sharing 12 one-hitters, enlisted in the U.S. Navy the same day Greenberg went into the Army. Having served as an anti-aircraft gunner on the battleship *Alabama* and seeing action in Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and the Marshall Islands, Feller was the first to state, "I am no hero. I came back. I never met a bullet with my name on it."

Others were quick to serve as well, most notably Stan Musial and Joe DiMaggio. A total of 540 major-league players and 4,076 minor leaguers saw military service during World War II.

her income directly from her son. Being her only support, Williams rated the 3-A classification.

But with the war on, a war that would eventually place 16 million Americans in uniform, Williams's local draft board reclassified him 1-A (available immediately for military service) in early January 1942. It was now no longer a question of *whether* Williams would be called to serve, but *when.*



Whether baseball should be played during the war became an immediate issue. The country's entrance into World War I ended the 1918 baseball season a month early. Would, should, the whole season be canceled in 1942?

Not according to President Franklin Roosevelt. In a famous written statement from January 1942, known as the "Green Light Letter," the president told Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, "I honestly feel that it would be best for the country to keep baseball going. Baseball provides a recreation which does not last over two hours or two hours and a half, and which can be got for very little cost. And, incidentally, I hope that night games can be extended because it gives an opportunity to the day shift to see a game occasionally."

Roosevelt's call for more night games backfired in at least one case. Wrigley Field in Chicago was all set to install lights for the 1942 season. Construction was to begin on December 8, 1941. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, the metal for the light towers was donated to the war effort. Wrigley Field would not get its lights until 1988, the last major-league ballpark to light up the night sky.

Williams fought the reclassification to 1-A, claiming that it just was not fair. "The quickest route to a solution to this whole matter is to earn some big dough this year, then just as soon as I lay down my bat in September or October, I'm in the Navy," he said in his autobiography. The local draft board was not buying it. It turned him down. Williams did not leave it there, however. He retained a lawyer, and the next appeal went all the way to the president. Roosevelt reclassified Williams back to 3-A.

If Williams thought that was the end of it, however, he was mistaken. "Unpatriotic" and "yellow" were the kinder words that the press and the fans were now yelling. Williams's decision to attend spring training only made things worse. Quaker Oats canceled its $4,000 endorsement contract with "Teddy Ballgame" because of the bad publicity.

On May 22, 1942, deferment or not, Williams bowed to the inevitable and signed up, to be trained as a naval aviator. He would, however, be allowed to play out the 1942 baseball season.

It would be a Triple Crown-winning year for Williams, batting .356 with 36 home runs and 137 RBIs. It would not be the only year he earned the most coveted achievement in baseball.

In November, Williams was called to active duty as a naval cadet.

FLIGHT SCHOOL ONE, TWO, THREE

First stop, in an arduous training program to become a naval pilot, would be Amherst College and its U.S. naval aviation preliminary ground school. Normally, a military pilot was required to have a college degree. The Amherst program was set up to take in trainees like Williams who lacked such a credential. They would be immersed in all the basics, like navigation, aerodynamics, math, and aeronautics. "I wasn't exactly overconfident about getting through, not having gone beyond Herbert Hoover High," Williams stated in his autobiography. "But I had no trouble fitting in, and I made up my mind I

Ted Williams *(right)* communicates with Red Sox teammate Johnny Pesky during naval aviation training at Amherst College in Massachusetts in December 1942. Earlier in the year, Williams won the Triple Crown, leading the American League in batting average, home runs, and runs batted in.

was going to give it my best." Indeed, Williams achieved a 3.85 grade-point average in all subjects covered.

Next stop, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for preflight training. "I'll never forget getting off the train at Chapel Hill, just at dusk," Williams recalled in *My Turn at Bat*. "The cadets already there were hanging out the windows watching us, and

as we passed, one guy hollered, 'OK, Williams, we know you're there, and you're going to be sor-ry.' "

Yet Williams went on to record, "I never was sorry. All of it was absolutely different from anything I'd ever been through, and even the hairiest times were interesting."

To be sure, and to the surprise of almost everyone who knew Williams, he seemed to be adjusting to military life just fine. Johnny Pesky, a teammate who had joined up with Williams, probably said it best, according to Montville in his biography of Williams, "A lot of guys, knowing Ted's reputation as a pop-off, waited for him to explode. But he never blew any fuses or got a single bad behavior demerit. If anything, he took a little stiffer discipline than the others, sort of stuff like, 'Oh, so you're the great Ted Williams, huh?' "

From Chapel Hill it was on to basic flight training in September 1943 at Bunker Hill Naval Air Station at Kokomo, Indiana, where Williams logged 100 hours in a Piper Cub.

Williams's last operational training stop was the Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida. It was a boisterous, frenzied place. Of the 61,658 sets of wings the Navy would issue from 1942 to 1945, all pilots would come from either Pensacola or Corpus Christi, Texas.

In Florida, Williams learned to fly F4U Corsairs. He also set a student gunnery record. The record was important to Williams, all the better to down enemy planes. Williams's instructor at the base, who had seen combat in the Pacific, said that, if he could have shot better, he would have taken out more Japanese Zeros. Williams, with his 20/10 vision, was determined to down plenty of enemy aircraft. During the training at Pensacola, cadets were asked if they wanted to graduate into the Navy Air Corps or the Marines. Williams chose the Marines.

TOP GUN

Two years after America's entry into the war, by early 1944, an ultimate Allied victory, if not assured, seemed likely. Actually,

the conflict in the Pacific had taken a decisive turn a mere six months after the calamity at Pearl Harbor. It was now the Japanese who would suffer humiliating defeat. It happened over a four-day period, from June 4 to 7, 1942, at Midway, a group of small islands, appropriately named, given their location was equal distance from the United States and Japan.

The Japanese had hoped to lure America's remaining carriers into a trap and destroy them. Instead, Japan lost four of its own carriers, crippling its Pacific fleet and allowing the U.S. Navy to seize the strategic initiative. The Midway victory, along with the earlier daring Doolittle raid on Tokyo itself (using 16 B-25s launched from aircraft carriers), put the United States in an upbeat mood. Within the next two years, significant progress in the European Theater, with glass-bubbled, gun-turreted B-24 Liberators bombing Germany around the clock, added to the optimism.

Yet Ted Williams was right not to plan on an early discharge, with hopes of returning to Fenway Park, anytime soon. Still in Pensacola, Williams was offered a position as an instructor. "I took it because it would mean extra flight training, and I figured I would need all I could get if we were going into combat," he volunteered in his autobiography. "Right after that I got my orders to go to Jacksonville for operational training—combat training."

For Williams, the next 18 months would be a time waiting and wondering. But at least he would not be doing it alone. On May 4, 1944, the day Williams made second lieutenant in the Marines, he married Doris Soule. They would have tied the knot earlier, but there was a ban on cadets being married.

As busy as Williams was in training others to fly, being stationed in Florida, he could use his flying to advance his number-one hobby—fishing. He looked for good fishing spots from the air. "He would pick out an inlet where some old-timer was having some success," Montville reports in his biography, *Ted Williams*. "Then he would buzz down to see how many fish

Cadet Ted Williams and his fiancée, Doris Soule, visited Boston in July 1943 so Williams could play in a special city-sponsored baseball game. The two married a year later, on the same day that Williams received his wings as a second lieutenant in the Marines.

were in the boat, then fly back to the base, land the plane, and drive out to the inlet."

On August 18, 1945, the fun ended, or so it would seem. Williams finally received overseas orders. He was to proceed toward Pearl Harbor and assignment for combat.

BASEBALL IN PARADISE

On April 25, 1945, American and Soviet troops linked up at the River Elbe near Torbau in Germany, effectively cutting the war-decimated country in two. Five days later, Adolf Hitler, who predicted that his Third Reich would last 1,000 years, committed suicide in his underground bunker. On May 7, Germany surrendered to the allied command.

Three months later, on August 6, 1945, the United States dropped the atomic bomb known as "Little Boy" from a high-flying B-29 Superfortress on Hiroshima, Japan. The nuclear weapon killed an estimated 140,000 people, mostly civilians. Three days later, a similar bomb, called "Fat Man," fell on Nagasaki, killing an additional 74,000.

Though Ted Williams surely knew the end was at hand and his chances of actually seeing World War II combat were slim to none, he had no choice as to whether he would be shipped out to the Pacific. "I was in San Francisco waiting for a boat when the war ended," he reflected in *My Turn at Bat.* "If you had your orders, though, they were carried through—if you were scheduled to go to Siberia, you went to Siberia. They just didn't put a stop to things. I was in Honolulu when they finally froze me."

Williams would wind up in paradise, not preparing himself for combat but playing baseball. He would end the war participating in the game he left behind.

Hawaii was home to the 14th Naval District League, with no less than 116 major-league ballplayers. The Army had its own league, too. Together, "Service Baseball," as it was called,

Ted Williams signs his discharge papers from the Marine Corps in January 1946 in San Diego. Instead of serving one more year and completing his military obligation, he remained in the Marine reserves. Williams wanted to get back to his wife and the Red Sox.

saw the likes of Joe DiMaggio, Joe Gordon, Stan Musial, Johnny Pesky, Alvin Dark, and Bob Kennedy. Crowds of 10,000 to 12,000 showed up for a game. The Service World Series, with Navy versus Army, attracted 40,000 for every game. There were those who said the series was better than the World Series back home, with its replacement players, between the Chicago Cubs and the Detroit Tigers. Williams and Musial were the big stars, loving every minute of the playing time they were getting—thanks to Uncle Sam.

On January 12, 1946, Williams was released from the Marines. He would remain, however, in the ready reserves. Williams could have stayed an enlisted man, spent a year in the China Theater, and been done with any future military obligation once and for all. But Williams, eager to get home to his wife and to the Boston Red Sox, put the decision aside. He would remain a Marine, if only on reserve, by default. As it turned out, 1946 would not be the last time he would wear the uniform.

5

Back in the Swing of It

Like many major leaguers returning from the war, Ted Williams harbored doubts about being able to pick up where he had left off. Any apprehensions, however, were dispelled in one mighty blast, on June 9, 1946, at Fenway Park, in the second game of a doubleheader against the Detroit Tigers, when Williams connected. The resulting impact is, today, indelibly marked by a lone red chairback strutting itself among a sea of green seats, deep in the right-field stands.

The chair marks the spot where Williams hit the longest home run in Fenway history, an estimated 502 feet (153 meters). Joseph A. Boucher, a construction worker from Albany, New York, had been taking in the game, on a sun-splattered Sunday, wearing a protective straw hat. "How far away must one sit to be safe in this park?" he complained to

The lone red seat in Fenway Park marks the spot in the right-field stands where Ted Williams hit the longest home run in Fenway history—an estimated 502 feet. Here, a rose was placed on the seat on July 5, 2002, after Williams's death.

Boston Globe writer Harold Kaese, shortly after Williams's ball blew a hole in his hat, careered off his head, and bounced a dozen rows higher.

Clearly, Williams was still up to hitting them out of the park. The "Splendid Splinter" had returned from his military experience every bit the hitter he was four years earlier.

There was one man, however, player-manager Lou Boudreau of the Cleveland Indians, who figured that, if he could not thwart Williams's home runs, maybe he could hold

down the base hits, 85 to 90 percent of which were being knocked to the right side of the diamond. On July 14, in a game at Fenway Park, Boudreau shifted his infield and outfield to the right—way right, in what would come to be known as the Boudreau Shift, something Williams was forced to contend with the rest of his career.

Williams, of course, knew what was happening and what it meant. "In effect, they are now telling me, 'Go ahead, hit to left field, have yourself a single,'" he recalled in *My Turn at Bat*. "'We'll sacrifice singles to take away your doubles and runs any day.' They're tickled to death if I go to left because the only thing they're really afraid of is the long ball."

Williams spent his remaining years doing pretty much what Boudreau, and other managers who implemented the shift, had expected. As a result, he was accused of not trying to hit to left, to beat the shift. "The hell I wasn't," Ted remembered in his autobiography. "I was just having a hard time hitting to left field." Not that hard, however, as Williams would demonstrate soon enough in a most dramatic and consequential fashion.

ALL-STAR GLORY

In baseball, an "Eephus pitch" is a "junk pitch," a "nuthin' pitch." Actually, the name derives from "eephus-eiphus-ophus," which is a crap-shooting phrase for the high lob of the dice. As pitched, the ball usually involves a parabolic throw to the plate, often arching as much as 30 feet (9 meters) off the ground.

Hitters do not like the Eephus pitch. The ball appears to move in slow motion. Hitters typically get anxious, swing wildly, and ground out.

Rip "Showboat" Sewell, a pitcher with the National League Pittsburgh Pirates, was master of the Eephus pitch. In a sense, he had no choice. Supposedly, Sewell had been shot in the foot in a hunting accident and had to come up with a delivery that did not rely on pivoting the foot. Eephus was his answer. After appearing in more than 300 major-league

games in the 1930s and '40s, no one had hit a home run off his specialty balloon toss.

On July 9, 1946, in the All-Star Game played at Fenway Park, with the American League massacring the National League 8-0, Williams faced Sewell. Williams had been having a great All-Star Game, with a homer and two singles to his credit. One more homer would cap the day. Everyone in the ballpark knew just what type of pitch would be heading Williams's way.

After taking two strikes, Williams crept up in the batter's box. Some say he was actually running toward the pitcher's mound at the time he hit the ball, a movement that would have resulted in a declared out had the umpire spotted it. No matter, Williams made contact, matching the downward arc of the ball with a mighty upward swing of his bat.

The game was broadcast by radio all over the country. When Williams's mother was told of her son's latest, greatest, strangest home-run blast, her only comment, as reported in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*, was, "Ted hit a balloon? That's very good. He's a wonderful boy."

The wonderful boy and his Red Sox were having the best possible season—so far. Now, if they could only capture the pennant, something they had not done since 1918—the year of "The Kid's" birth.

WORLD SERIES DOWNER

Ted Williams finished his first post-World War II season with a .342 average, 123 RBIs, and 38 homers. He led the American League in runs (142) and total bases (343). He was named the Most Valuable Player with little dissent.

On September 13, in a game against the Cleveland Indians in their home park, Williams found himself staring out at the latest version of the Boudreau Shift. Williams took the bait, so to speak, and smacked one on line to center field. The ball rolled 400 feet (122 meters) and came to rest near the outfield

In the 1946 World Series, the St. Louis Cardinals shifted their infield when Ted Williams came up to the plate. The infielders were *(from left)* Marty Marion, shortstop; Whitey Kurowski, the third baseman playing on the right side of second base; Red Schoendienst, second baseman; and Stan Musial, first baseman. Such a formation was known as the Boudreau Shift, named after Lou Boudreau, player-manager of the Cleveland Indians. He used it because most of Williams's hits went to the right side of the baseball diamond.

fence. It was Boudreau himself who tried to relay the ball to home plate—without luck. The inside-the-park home run had beaten the shift, won the game 1-0, and clinched the pennant for the Red Sox. It would now seem things could go only one way—down, and, unfortunately, they did.

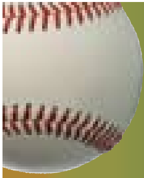
The World Series, against the St. Louis Cardinals, the only one Ted Williams would ever play in, represented the low point in a year that just a few days earlier had been going so right for "Teddy Ballgame." True, in a tune-up game before the series began, Williams took a spinning curveball on the elbow and badly bruised the bone. Whether that would account for his dismal performance in the seven-game series was never fully determined. Williams did not use his injury as an excuse, though he did state, in his autobiography, "I do think it is hard to hit in a World Series. It is usually played in cooler weather, for one thing. You play the games in strange parks, and usually against pitchers you never saw before."

Still, with 25 at-bats, "The King of Swing" garnered but five hits, all singles, for a depressing .200 average. The Red Sox lost the final game 4-3—and thus the Series. The night before, Williams recalls telling those around him how he would give anything if the Sox could win tomorrow, that he did not care if he did not get a hit, just so the team won the game. There were those, however, who were not so sure he meant it. Soon Williams was being called "the inventor of the automatic choke." Images of his prewar persona, self-centered, a one-man band, a loner, resurfaced. Was Ted Williams playing the game for himself or for his team? Did he know the difference?

Yes, he knew the difference. In a poignant statement, as quoted in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*, he ventured, "Who up there in the press box can judge whether a man hits home runs as a tribute to his wife, for his own ego, in memory of his mother, for his salary, for God, or for his team?"

When the team train pulled out of St. Louis, 28-year-old Williams went to his compartment, closed the door, put his head down, and cried.

The following year, Williams would win his second Triple Crown.



TRIPLE CROWN: THE EPITOME OF EXCELLENCE IN BASEBALL

The Triple Crown is, by any standard, the most difficult of all baseball awards to obtain. This is all the more interesting since no actual "award" is given: no plaque, no certificate, nothing one can put their hands on. That noted, for a player to have achieved the Triple Crown is a consummate accomplishment. To be a Triple Crown recipient, a player must lead in three categories at season's end: (1) home runs, (2) batting average, and (3) runs batted in. To have led in two of the three categories, let alone all three, is notable. Ted Williams won the Triple Crown not once, but twice.

Here is a listing of all the winners, according to the *2006 ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*, with the year won, team, and stats (home runs, batting average, and runs batted in):

NAME	YEAR	TEAM	HR	BA	RBI
Hugh Duffy	1894	Boston (NL)	18	.440	145
Nap Lajoie	1901	Philadelphia (AL)	14	.426	125
Ty Cobb	1909	Detroit (AL)	9	.377	107
Rogers Hornsby	1922	St. Louis (NL)	42	.401	152
Rogers Hornsby	1925	St. Louis (NL)	39	.403	143
Chuck Klein	1933	Philadelphia (NL)	28	.368	120
Jimmie Foxx	1933	Philadelphia (AL)	48	.356	163
Lou Gehrig	1934	New York (AL)	49	.363	165
Joe Medwick	1937	St. Louis (NL)	31	.374	154
Ted Williams	1942	Boston (AL)	36	.356	137
Ted Williams	1947	Boston (AL)	32	.343	114
Mickey Mantle	1956	New York (AL)	52	.353	130
Frank Robinson	1966	Baltimore (AL)	49	.316	122
Carl Yastrzemski	1967	Boston (AL)	44	.326	121

TRIUMPHANT SEASON

The 1947 season opened well enough for Williams, but by early September, the old, prone-to-frustration-when-things-didn't-go-just-right Ted was in full form. On September 5, in a game against the A's at Shibe Park, Williams had gone 0-for-4 when he came up for his last at-bat. He swung at a pitch, missed, and headed for the dugout. The umpire followed him to the batter's circle and, according to Michael Seidel, whispered, "Jeez, Ted, it's only strike two." The embarrassed Kid returned to the batter's box, swung at the next pitch, and hit the ball over the wall for his twenty-eighth home run of the year.

By season's end, Williams had amassed 32 homers, 114 RBIs, and a .343 batting average—enough to win his second Triple Crown but not enough to garner the league's MVP award, which went to Joe DiMaggio. According to rumor (restated often enough to "become" fact), Williams missed the award by only one point, because Boston writer Mel Webb left him off his ballot. If, it was said, Webb had placed Williams just tenth on his list, Williams would have been the year's Most Valuable Player. Subsequent research, however, shows that Webb did not even vote that year. And the three Boston writers who did all chose Williams first.

On January 28, 1948, Doris Williams gave birth to a baby girl, Bobby-Jo. Ted missed his first child's arrival—he was off fishing. Never mind that the baby was delivered two weeks earlier than expected, the Boston press jumped all over papa Ted for not being present. What kind of guy was this Williams who could not even make it to the blessed event on time? When Williams did get to Boston, he let them know. "The heck with public opinion," Williams announced, as recounted in *My Turn at Bat*. "It's my baby. It's my life."

The 1949 season, perhaps the most competitive in American League history, came down to a final two games in New York, with the Red Sox and the Yankees, as usual, battling for the pennant. The Sox needed to win just one of

Ted Williams smiled as he got his first look at his five-day-old daughter, Bobby-Jo, in a Boston hospital in February 1948. He was on a fishing trip when she was born. The Boston press, which was often at odds with Williams, criticized him for not being present for his daughter's birth.

two games. They lost both. Despite the team's failure, 1949 was one of Williams's best years, as he amassed a .343 batting average (same as in 1947), 43 home runs, and 159 runs batted in. He almost had another Triple Crown; just batting average held him back. Both Williams and George Kell of the Tigers batted .343. Taken out another decimal point, Kell nudged Williams, .3429 to .3427. The 1949 MVP award, though, was Williams's—hands down.

SOLO ACT

Despite personal triumphs in amassing amazing baseball stats in his immediate postwar years, as the twentieth century crossed its halfway mark, Williams's relationship with Boston fans and writers turned downright ugly.

Williams's frustration took center stage in a doubleheader against the Detroit Tigers on May 11, 1950, in his hometown park. In the first game, Williams dropped a fly ball hit by Aaron Robinson, and the fans let loose with a chorus of boos.

In the second game, with the bases loaded, "Mister Wonderful" let a ball hit by Vic Wertz skip through his legs. According to *Boston Globe* writer Larry Whiteside, "With thunderous boos descending upon him, Williams bowed three times to various sections, then made an obscene gesture."

Before Williams's next turn at bat, he spit in the direction of fans sitting near the Red Sox dugout, an expression he would perfect in the months to come.

Press reaction was devastating. "Williams removed himself from the ranks of decent sportsmen," Austen Lake wrote in the *Herald* the next day. "Yesterday, he was a little man, and in his ungovernable rage, a dirty little man."

Jim Murray, of the *Los Angeles Times*, summarized the feelings many had about Williams during this time in his career when he said, years later, "He played the Yankees four times a game. The rest of the team played them nine innings."

Williams, of course, had an answer to all the "solo act" accusations going around. "You can say what you want about the game of baseball, it's an individual game first, and it's impossible for me to help you field the ball, or for me to hit the ball for you," he volunteered in his autobiography. "The greatest thing I can do for the team is make damn sure I'm doing my best. The best thing I can do for you, a teammate, is give encouragement. I can't do your job for you."

6

"Commie" Combat in Korea

Early 1952, and Ted Williams was a happy, contented man. True, his previous playing season had not been particularly remarkable. Yet Williams had led the league with a solid .556 slugging percentage and 144 free passes to first base. And as spring training commenced, "Teddy Ballgame" had agreed to keep swinging for $90,000 a year—a huge sum at the century's midpoint. Williams would never be a truly wealthy man, though at times he would be comfortable, even well off.

Williams, now 33, with a wife and a daughter, was a family man ready to continue earning a living playing baseball, something he loved doing more than anything else. Six games into his 1952 season, however, playtime came to an abrupt halt.

Two years before, on Sunday, June 25, 1950, 135,000 North Korean troops stormed across the 38th parallel, invading South

Korea. What would come to be known as a three-year "police action" had begun. Before a truce was signed on July 27, 1953, 54,246 American soldiers would die. More than 2.5 million Koreans on both sides would perish. Today, 35,000 U.S. troops remain stationed along the tense Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas.

On May 2, 1952, Ted Williams, an inactive reservist, was called to active duty to fly jets in the Korean War. He had not flown in seven years. "They picked on me because I was a ballplayer and widely known," Williams lamented in his autobiography. "I was at the height of my earning power. I had already served three years. My career was short enough without having it interrupted twice."

But the military needed combat pilots. That they preferred to engage older World War II flyers, with no jet training, rather than send younger enlisted jet pilots (many of whom remained stateside as instructors), was something not only Ted Williams found unaccountable. Still, he would go; he would not bellyache.

In a final game against the Detroit Tigers, on April 30, 1952, the Red Sox gave Williams his "day," a "wish you God's speed" sendoff. He was presented with a memory book signed by 400,000 fans. "This is the day I will always remember," he told the 24,764 people gathered in the stands, as reported in *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*. "And I want to thank you fans, in particular, from the bottom of my heart." In his final at-bat, Williams hit a two-run, game-winning homer to beat Detroit.

JET SPEED

From a salary of $90,000 a year, plus a substantial take in endorsements, Williams was now earning a paltry $608.25 a month as a Marine Corps captain. Upon reporting to the Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Pennsylvania for an eight-week refresher course, Williams was looking at a possible

Two young fans presented Ted Williams with a memory book, signed by 400,000 people, during “Ted Williams Day” in 1952 at Fenway Park. He played just six games that season. On May 2, he returned to active duty with the Marines to fight in the Korean War.

12- to 18-month military hitch. "I'm praying for a quick truce," he said, as reported in *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life*.

The Willow Grove course, flying SNJs and Corsairs, was a snap for the seasoned World War II "retreads," as they were called. The crews would log 90 hours in the air before moving on to Cherry Point, North Carolina, and jet training.

"I was impressed with the jets the minute I got in one," Williams recalled in *My Turn at Bat*. "Easy to fly, easier than props because they had no torque, less noise, tricycle landing gear. Wonderful flight characteristics. Turn one over and it would just r-o-l-l, nothing to it."

There was a problem, however, with the Grumman F9 Panther jets that Williams was asked to fly. Given his height, it was not going to be easy for Williams to fit into the plane's cockpit, and even more difficult to eject, should that ordeal be necessary. "They say they build those jets for guys up to 6'3", but when I used to put on a chute, life raft, and survival kit, my head would scrape the canopy top, and my legs would be doubled up under the instrument panel," Williams explained in Michael Seidel's biography. "I used to be convinced that if I had to bail out with the pilot's ejection device, I'd leave both my shin bones in the ship."

From Cherry Point it was on to El Toro, California, to await transfer overseas. Williams, not pleased to be back, told a friend that he thought he was going to die.

In February 1953, Williams finally arrived in cold, grim South Korea. He was assigned to the VMF-311 group. The "V" meant his squadron flew airplanes. The "M" meant the pilots were Marines. And the "F" meant the pilots would be flying fighter planes.

After taking the customary two "practice" runs with flights over the bombline (the area where the ground war was being fought) to familiarize themselves with plane operation and enemy topography, pilots were expected to go into actual combat. The third time was anything but a charm for Ted Williams,

however. It would be a flight in which he almost fulfilled his grim prediction of death.

CRASH LANDING

The fateful mission, on a run to scout out a tank and infantry training school 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, took place on February 16, 1953. "Our target was an encampment, a large troop concentration," Williams related in *My Turn at Bat*. "We were nearing the target when I lost visual reference with the fellow in front of me. I swung out to pick him up, and when I got back on target, I was too low."

Williams was supposed to be low, of course. The squadron was to drop daisy cutters, anti-personnel bombs that hit and spread out. Yet Williams had descended below the minimum 2,000-foot (610-meter) level. He was himself a target for thousands of enemy soldiers in the encampment below. Splattered by small-arms fire, Williams's Panther was the only fighter to be hit.

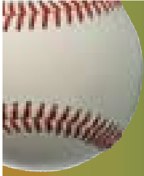
"When I pulled up out of my run, all the red lights were on in the plane and the damn thing started to shake," Williams continued in his autobiography. "The stick stiffened up and was shaking. I knew I had a hydraulic leak. Fuel warning light, fire warning light, there are so many lights on a jet that when anything serious goes wrong the lights almost blind you. I was in serious trouble."

With pilot Larry Hawkins, in an accompanying Panther, helping to guide him back to base, Williams reached for altitude as a safety factor. "The thinner air helps in case of fire, and if you get up another 10,000 feet you can glide 35 to 40 miles if the engine fails," Williams explained.

Williams, now at 18,000 feet (5,486 meters), was sure he would soon have to bail out. It was the last thing he wanted to do, dreading the prospect of leaving his kneecaps behind.

Approaching a safe airfield, though not the one he had taken off from, all Williams wanted to do was get down. But

his plane was falling apart, on fire, and barely under control. "I came in at about 225 miles an hour, twice as fast as you'd ordinarily do it," Williams remembered. "I hit flush



JETS OVER THE NORTH

The Korean Conflict saw the world's first jet battles. The United Nations forces flew F9 Panthers and F-86 Sabres, while the North Koreans responded with MiG-15s.

The MiG-15 was a formidable weapon, designed and built by the Soviet Union. The plane had a higher service ceiling than the F-86, outclimbed it, and was faster at high altitude, above 20,000 feet (6,096 meters). The American F9 was also outclassed by the Soviet MiGs. Given that the enemy had what was essentially a superior airplane, U.N. forces had to counter with better pilots. They did. During the conflict, the North Koreans lost six Mikoyan MiG-15s to only one F9F loss.

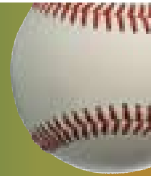
The Grumman-manufactured Panther was the first American jet to see combat. It first flew on November 24, 1947. Since there was not enough space in the wings and fuselage for the fuel-thirsty jet, permanently mounted wingtip fuel tanks were added soon after manufacturing began. More than 700 Panthers were commissioned. It was the most extensively used fighter in the Korean War. The Panther was the fighter plane flown by Ted Williams.

Below are specifications for the F9F-2 Panther.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Crew: 1
- Length: 37 feet 5 inches (11.3 meters)

and skidded up the runway, really fast. No dive brakes, no flaps, nothing to slow the plane. All the time I am screaming, 'When is this dirty S.O.B. going to stop?' Geez, I was mad. I



- Wingspan: 38 feet (11.6 meters)
- Height: 11 feet 4 inches (3.8 meters)
- Wing area: 250 square feet (23 square meters)
- Empty weight: 9,303 pounds (4,220 kilograms)
- Loaded weight: 14,235 pounds (6,456 kilograms)
- Maximum takeoff weight: 16,450 pounds (7,462 kilograms)
- Powerplant: 1 X Pratt & Whitney J42-P-6/P-8 turbojet

PERFORMANCE

- Maximum speed: 575 miles per hour (925 kilometers per hour)
- Range: 1,300 miles (2,100 kilometers)
- Service ceiling: 44,600 feet (13,600 meters)
- Rate of climb: 5,140 feet per minute (1,567 meters per minute)

ARMAMENT

- 4x20mm M2 cannons
- 2,000 pounds (910 kilograms) of bombs or 6x5-inch rockets on underwing hardpoints

SERVICE

- Maiden flight: November 24, 1947
- Retired: 1958

always get mad when I'm scared, and I was praying and yelling at the same time."

The plane skidded to a stop at the runway's edge. Williams dove out of the cockpit, took a somersault, and slammed his helmet to the ground. Whether crashing a jet fighter or striking out at the plate, Ted Williams always found a vivid way to display his frustration.

"I WAS NO HERO"

"Williams Crashes Jet, Walks Away Uninjured" read the headline in the *Boston Globe* soon after his near-fatal mission. It was typical of what was being reported, not only in Boston but around the country. Williams had become a folk hero overnight. And it may have changed his persona for good. "If the 1946 World Series forever tagged him with the image of the me-first personal achiever, the crash at K-13 in the F9 Panther jet more than compensated," Leigh Montville wrote. "He had his own trump card."

Williams did not see it quite that way, or at least he never voiced such sentiments. "I was no hero," he said in his autobiography. "There were maybe 75 pilots in our two squadrons, and 99 percent of them did a better job than I did."

Yet John Glenn, the future astronaut and United States senator, for whom Williams flew wingman, could not have disagreed more with Williams's modest declaration. According to Jim Prime and Bill Nowlin, in *Ted Williams: A Tribute*, Glenn said of his comrade in arms, "He did a great job, and he was a good pilot. He wasn't out there moaning all the time or trying to duck flights, or anything like that. He was out there to do a job and he did a helluva good job. Ted ONLY batted .406 for the Red Sox. He batted a thousand for the Marine Corps and the United States."

Williams would fly 39 reconnaissance missions over enemy lines before his time in Korea ended. During days not in the air, Williams read books, wrote letters, and took to photography

Ted Williams is shown in the cockpit of an F9 Panther jet while taking a refresher course in September 1952. In February 1953, Williams crash-landed his burning jet while returning from a combat strike in Korea. He walked away from the damaged plane.

with a passion. And he hunted ducks, plenty of ducks. "We shot a lot of ducks," Edro Buchser, Williams's warrant officer, said, as reported in Montville's biography. "We did this mainly because my men had been out and we knew where the ducks were. . . . We'd sometimes, Ted and me, kill 100 ducks a day

between us. He was the better duck hunter, so I'd say he killed three for every two that I'd kill."

Combat missions in the morning, duck hunting in the afternoon. Such was the absurdity of the Korean Conflict.

SICK OUT

For all his flying and duck hunting, toil and recreation, Ted Williams spent more than his share of down time incapacitated with illnesses—often serious ones. He would fly six or eight missions and then have to see a doctor.

Williams was hospitalized with pneumonia, his shaky respiratory system giving out early in his tour of duty. "I was really sick, the sickest I've been in my life," he reported in *My Turn at Bat*. "They flew me by helicopter to the hospital ship off Pohang, and I don't know how many days they had to feed me intravenously."

He spent 22 days on that ship. After Williams returned to duty, he soon developed problems with his ears and throat. At high altitude, Williams's Eustachian tubes (in the middle ear) would become inflamed. Lack of good cabin pressurization in the F9 Panther did not help.

With his medical problems worsening, and having flown 39 missions in five-and-a-half months, Williams was given a release from combat. He was sent to Hawaii for surgery on his inner ear. Yet when Williams got to Honolulu, they figured he might as well go on to the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Once there, the authorities simply decided to muster him out of the military. The date was July 10, 1953.

In less than a week, on July 14 to be exact, Ted Williams was again playing baseball. He threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the 1953 All-Star Game in Cincinnati. Soon he signed a new contract with the Red Sox and began to work out with the team in late July. On August 16, he was back in the lineup.

Though Williams would obviously have an abbreviated season, playing in only 37 games with 91 at-bats, in 1953 he hit 13 homers and had a .901 slugging percentage. His average for the year was .407. Had that been his number for a full season, Williams would have topped his 1941 mark of .406—by one-thousandth of a percent.

All Baseball All the Time

On January 19, 1954, Doris Soule Williams filed a petition for divorce from "Mister Wonderful." "I don't think Ted ever wanted to be married," she would say later, as reported in Leigh Montville's biography.

Ted Williams made the whole thing seem like no big deal. "Nothing sensational, nothing unusual," he said in *My Turn at Bat*. "Doris and I had gotten on different paths, that's all."

Doris, to be sure, saw it differently—decidedly so. She told the court that Ted had mistreated and abused her. That he had used language that was profane, abusive, and obscene. And that he had swore at her in public and private. Nobody familiar with Williams's persona as the "cursing king" had reason to dispute Doris's accusations.

Personal matters aside, Ted, now 35, showed up for spring training in Sarasota, Florida, on March 1, 1954. Sixty seconds into practice, he went for a ball hit to the outfield. "I started in for it," Williams remembered in his autobiography. "It was sinking fast, and I speeded up, and when I realized I couldn't get it and tried to slow down I began to stumble, then I fell. I tried to roll on my shoulder as I hit, to cushion the impact, and I heard the pop." Williams had broken his collarbone. Surgery, to install a six-inch stainless steel pin, would be necessary. "The King of Swing" would not play again until May 15.

While recuperating, he announced that 1954 would be his last year in baseball. Williams, with plenty of time on his hands, agreed to write a series of articles for the *Saturday Evening Post*. In one such feature, he chose to tell the world that his career was ending. "Even before I broke my collarbone on my first day of spring training last month, I had made up my mind to quit at the end of this season," he declared. No one believed him.

But when spring training began the next year, Williams's name was not on his old locker door. It was, however, on the Red Sox roster. Truth be known, Ted Williams did not know what to do. It took the finalization of his divorce, on May 9, 1955, to allow Williams to focus on what was most important in his life—baseball.

"The Splendid Splinter" wound up playing 98 games in 1955. He batted .356, hit 28 homers, and drove in 83 runs. He was named "Comeback Player of the Year."

STAT MAN

Eddie Mifflin, a fan and, by his own admission, a baseball statistical freak, had been on to Ted Williams. In late 1954, Mifflin, spying Williams waiting for a train at Union Station in Baltimore, approached his hero. "You're not really going to quit, are you?" he asked Williams, as recounted in *My Turn at*

Johnny Orlando, the Red Sox clubhouse manager, places Ted Williams's uniforms, cleats, cap, and bats back in his Red Sox locker at Fenway Park on May 11, 1955. Williams had said that the 1954 season would be his last, and he did not report to spring training in 1955. He returned to the Red Sox in May, after his divorce from his first wife was finalized.

Bat. Williams did not even look up, his head buried in a newspaper, but responded, "Yeah, I think I am."

"You're not going to quit with Greenberg hitting more home runs than you, with DiMaggio hitting more home runs," Mifflin fired off. "You got a chance to hit 500 home runs. Only [Babe] Ruth, [Jimmie] Foxx, and [Mel] Ott ever did that. You could be in the top five in RBIs. You could get 4,000 total bases. You don't have 2,000 hits yet."

By now, Mifflin had Williams's attention. The "Stat Man" was telling Williams things he had never thought of before.

Thus began a curious relationship, one that put Williams on a goal-setting mission to beat the records. Every few weeks, Mifflin would contact Williams, sending him Western Union telegrams to congratulate the slugger on achieving another milestone. Williams responded enthusiastically; he now had a reason to continue to play.

The 1956 season started out typically enough, with Williams hitting like the slugger he was and cursing the fans who came to heckle him.

On August 7, in a game against the Yankees at Fenway Park, Williams and his fans reached a boiling point. In front of 36,530, the largest park attendance since World War II, Williams missed a fly ball hit by Mickey Mantle in the eleventh inning. The fans let him have it. And Williams did likewise, tossing off three big gobber spits.

Williams returned to the dugout, still steaming, and spotted a giant metal water cooler bolted to the wall. He ripped it from its moorings. Water splashed everywhere.

Whether it was the spitting or the ripping, Red Sox management reacted by slapping "Teddy Ballgame" with a $5,000 fine, a levy shared only with Babe Ruth.

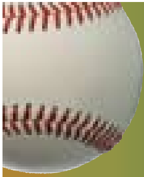
Curiously, the next day, dubbed Family Night, in a game against the Baltimore Orioles, fans did a 180-degree turnaround. To Williams's amazement, they cheered him from the

moment he set foot on the field. "From 1956 on," Williams was to recount years later, according to Montville, "I realized that people were for me. The writers had written that the fans should show me they didn't want me. And I got the greatest ovation I ever got."

The Red Sox front office never sought to collect on the $5,000 fine.

COMEBACK KID

On October 4, 1957, a month and a half after Ted Williams turned 39, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the



SPUTNIK

Until October 4, 1957, anything and everything humans threw up came down—no exceptions. "What goes up must come down" was as valid as the 24-hour day, summer following spring, and round hula hoops.

That truism changed forever when the U.S.S.R. launched the world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik I. Known as "fellow traveler" in English, the metal ball, 23 inches (58 centimeters) in diameter, with a low-powered radio transmitter capable of doing no more than sending out an endless series of tone bursts, shook the world. As author Paul Dickson was to write almost 50 years later, "Sputnik was the shock of the century."

Americans could not believe that the "backward," communist Russians had beaten the "advanced," freedom-loving United States with such a stunning technological achievement. They, and the world, were in for even more immediate surprises.

A month after the launch of Sputnik I, the Soviets did it again—big time. Sputnik II went up on November 3, 1957, carrying a barking payload, a 14-pound (6-kilogram) female mongrel

U.S.S.R., launched a rocket into space. The payload it carried stayed there. Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite, circled the earth once every 90 minutes, sending out a monotonous beep, beep, beep, letting the world know that the space age had begun.

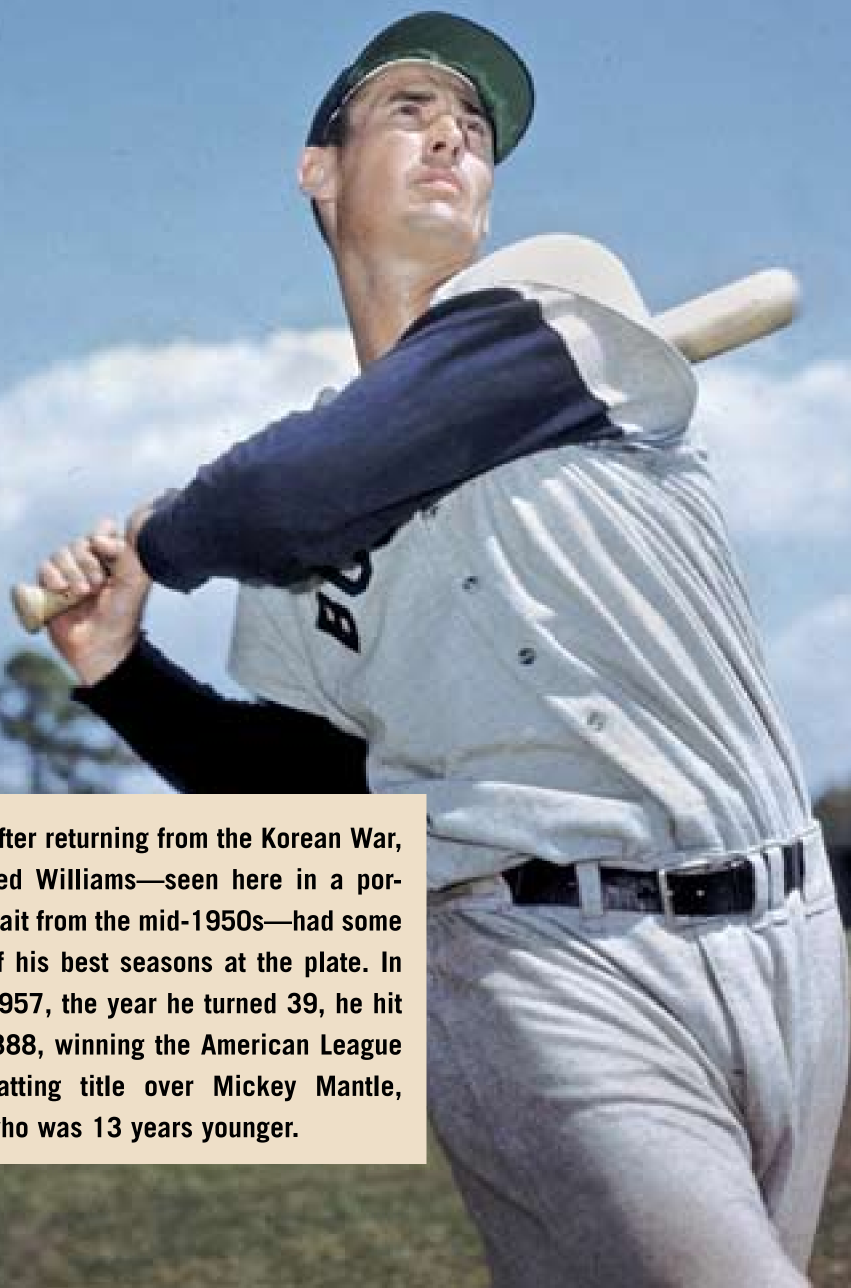
Like Pearl Harbor, the Soviet launch would soon shock the United States out of its complacency, in this case, its years of endless summers, sending it on a trajectory marked by a new emphasis on science and technology. But as the year's baseball season took off, the only launches Americans wanted to see were into the outfield. Baseball was having its

named Laika. The satellite weighed 1,118 pounds (508.3 kilograms), contained a life-support system, and was, in effect, the first biological spacecraft. Sputnik II stayed up for five months. On the fourth day, however, the satellite overheated and poor Laika died.

One month later, the United States was ready with its own contribution to the space age. Known as Vanguard, the rocket was to put a 3.2-pound (1.4-kilogram) satellite into orbit. The trip lasted but two seconds, with the rocket exploding on its launch pad at Cape Canaveral in Florida. The failure was declared a "national disaster." American prestige had suffered a stunning blow.

As the years went by, the United States achieved much success in space. America is still the only country to have placed men on the moon. However, almost a dozen countries have gone into the satellite business, some in a big way. And there have been deep space probes, some even leaving our solar system.

Some things go up and never come down.



After returning from the Korean War, Ted Williams—seen here in a portrait from the mid-1950s—had some of his best seasons at the plate. In 1957, the year he turned 39, he hit .388, winning the American League batting title over Mickey Mantle, who was 13 years younger.

moment in the sun, a year and a decade like no other. For Williams, 1957 would be what Montville called “a late-career masterpiece.”

It would be Williams’s best start ever. From the season’s onset until June 1, he batted .409. In the last half of the season, Williams averaged .453. “Teddy Ballgame” ended regular-season play at .388.

In one remarkable stretch, during the last half of September, Williams reached base 16 consecutive times. Four of his six hits were homers on four consecutive at-bats. He walked nine times and was hit by a pitch once. The Associated Press voted Ted Williams the Athlete of the Year.

If 1957 gave Williams his greatest start, 1958 marked his worst. By May 20, he was hitting only .225. Maybe it was just an old man playing a young man’s game. Maybe it was really time to hang it up.

Slowly, his batting average crept up until he was in a late-season race for the batting title. Toward the end of September, though, he was struggling again, hitless in his last seven at-bats. Williams could feel the strain, the disappointment in his performance. He was not a happy man.

On the 21st, in a game against the Senators in Fenway Park, Williams, in the third inning, turned away from the plate in disgust, launching his bat into the stands. The knob end struck 60-year-old Gladys Heffernan, the housekeeper for former Red Sox manager Joe Cronin, on the head.

Williams was crestfallen. It was, to be sure, an accident. Williams rushed to Heffernan, apologized, and followed her to the first-aid room. When he took one look at her bloody cheek, he cried. Williams said he wanted to die. Heffernan, for her part, did not blame Williams. “I felt awfully sorry for him,” said Heffernan, who was not seriously hurt, as related in Montville’s book. “You could tell by the look on his face how badly he felt. It was an accident.”

PAIN IN THE NECK

Over the years, Ted Williams may have been a pain in the neck to a lot of Boston fans. In early 1959, before spring training, he became his own pain in the neck—literally.

"In the spring of 1959 I was sitting under the coconut trees with a bat in my hand, out back of my house in Islamorada on the Florida Keys, telling an old friend what I thought I was going to do that season, how good I felt," Williams related in *My Turn at Bat*. "I got up and started swinging the bat, just swinging it as though it were a fly swatter. I didn't realize it then, but I hurt my neck that day. I'm sure of it."

Williams wound up in traction for three weeks, suffering from a pinched nerve. He would not start to play ball until May 12. It might have been better had he stayed home in Florida, fishing.

In his first game of the season, Williams went 0-for-5. He went 1-for-22 (.045) out of the gate and did not crack .200 until June 23. Williams finished the year at .254—the only year he did not hit above .300. "I had a miserable year," he declared in his autobiography. "I was absolutely miserable the whole year." Tom Yawkey, the Red Sox owner, called Williams up to his apartment at the Ritz-Carlton for a chat.

"Ted, I think you ought to quit," the manager said outright, as stated in *My Turn at Bat*. "You've had a great career. . . . Why don't you just wrap it up?"

Telling Ted Williams to do one thing was sure to get him to do the opposite, and Yawkey should have known that. Maybe he did. In any case, Williams was not about to go out on a down note. He kept thinking about his five previous seasons at .345, .356, .345, .388, and .328. Even at 41, Williams felt he could do that sort of thing at least one more time.

The Red Sox, backing off on the suggestion that Williams quit, offered him $125,000 to play again in 1960, the same amount paid the previous year. Williams would have none of

it. "Tom, look," he said in *My Turn at Bat.* "I had a lousy year, the worst I ever had. . . . I want to take the biggest cut ever given a player."

Ted Williams, voluntarily, played the 1960 season for $90,000, almost a 30 percent pay cut. On Opening Day, April 18, "The Splendid Splinter" hit his 493rd home run, tying Lou Gehrig's career mark. On June 17, he entered the exclusive "500 club." And on August 16, the *Sporting News* named Williams the Player of the Decade for the 1950s. If 1960 was to be Ted Williams's last year, it sure looked as if he was going out on an upswing.

LAST AT-BAT

The crowd was small, 10,454 fans. Perhaps the cold and dreary late-September day had something to do with it. Nonetheless, those assembled in what author John Updike famously referred to as "a lyric little bandbox of a ballpark" in his "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" article for *The New Yorker*, were there to witness the end of an era. Ted Williams's career in baseball had touched four decades: the 1930s, '40s, '50s, and now the '60s.

His September 28 speech, before the Fenway Park faithful, was pure Williams: "Despite the many disagreeable things said about me by the Knights of the Keyboard [sportswriters]—and I can't help thinking about them—despite these things my stay in Boston has been the most wonderful thing in my life," he said as reported in the *Boston Globe.* "If I were asked where I would like to have played I would have to say Boston with the greatest owner in baseball and the greatest fans in America."

Playing the Baltimore Orioles in a meaningless game (since the Yankees already had the pennant), Williams walked in the first inning.

In the third inning, he flied to center.

In the fifth, he flied to right.

"My stay in Boston has been the most wonderful thing in my life," Ted Williams told the crowd at Fenway Park on September 28, 1960—the day of his final game.

When he came to bat in the eighth inning, everyone knew this would be the last time they would see Ted Williams swing professionally. The crowd grew quiet, respectful, and anxious.

The first pitch was a ball.

The second was a strike.

On the third pitch, Williams tried to be a bit quicker. “I hit it a little better than the others that day,” he remembered in his autobiography. “I had a little extra on it. . . . It kept going and then out.”

“I had never before heard pure applause in a ballpark,” Updike recalled in his *New Yorker* article. “No calling, no whistling, just an ocean of handclaps, minute after minute, burst after burst, crowding and running together in continuous succession like the pushes of surf at the edge of the sand.”

“I had done what every ballplayer would want to do on his last time up, having wanted to do it so badly, and knowing how the fans really felt, how happy they were for me,” Williams said in *My Turn at Bat.* “If there was ever a man born to be a hitter, it was me.”

As Williams rounded the bases, “like a feather caught in a vortex,” Updike wrote, he kept his head low, his arms in a steady, purposeful swing. “The Kid” did not tip his hat. “It just wouldn’t have been me,” Williams insisted. “It just wouldn’t have been me.”

Get a Good Ball to Hit

There are now generations of Americans who never saw Joe DiMaggio reach for a fly ball. To one generation, the folks who came of age in the 1980s, DiMaggio was simply "Mr. Coffee," hawking a home brewing machine. Likewise, there are aging Bostonians who cannot recall seeing Ted Williams swing for the fences in Fenway Park. They remember him, in the 1960s, hawking Sears's outdoor and recreational equipment as head of the "Ted Williams Sears Sports Advisory Staff."

It's hard to know if DiMaggio was ever a coffee aficionado. There is no doubt, however, about Williams's love and knowledge of the outdoors. Passing judgment on fishing and hunting equipment was a natural for "The Thumper" upon his retirement from baseball. "Ted had been a fisherman almost before he was a ballplayer," John Underwood recalled

in *It's Only Me*, his reflections of life with "The Splendid Splinter."

Yet after retirement, in 1960, Williams could have stayed in baseball. He could have been a Yankee!

"Nobody knew this, but the Yankees tried to hire me to play one more year in 1961," Williams revealed in *My Turn at Bat*. "Shortly after my last game, [Williams's agent] Fred Corcoran got a call from Dan Topping, the Yankees' owner. . . . According to Fred, Mr. Topping said, 'Would Williams play one year with the Yankees, strictly pinch-hit for us for what he's making now—$125,000?'"

Williams passed on the deal. "What did New York have to offer?" he retorted. "A lot of bad air and traffic jams. . . . I wasn't interested. I was never going to hit another ball in a big-league park."

There had been talk at one time of a deal to trade Williams for DiMaggio. Ted would become a Yankee and Joe a member of the Red Sox. "The feeling was that a right-handed power hitter like Joe was made for Fenway Park, with that short fence in left field, and I was better suited for Yankee Stadium, with right field so handy," Williams stated in his autobiography. When the Yankees would not toss Yogi Berra into the mix, the agreement fell through.

Being the public face of Sears, Roebuck & Company, setting up his own baseball camp for kids, and hunting and fishing all over the world kept Ted Williams a busy man in the years after he "Bid Hub Fans Adieu," to use John Updike's phrase. There was also a new woman in his life. Her name was Lee Howard, a beautiful 36-year-old Chicago socialite. They were married on September 26, 1961. They divorced on October 13, 1966.

INTO THE HALL

In 1966, with 93.38 percent of the vote, Ted Williams was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, the first year he was

Ted Williams was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1966, his first year of eligibility. During his induction speech, he said he hoped that famed Negro League players like Josh Gibson and Satchel Paige would be voted into the Hall of Fame.

eligible for the honor. No surprise, of course, until it is realized that voting is done by the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA), a group known to have had its quarrels with "Mister Wonderful" over the years.

Still, in his induction speech, Williams was magnanimous and grateful to the people he often referred to as “The Knights of the Keyboard.”

“I received two hundred and eighty-odd votes from the writers,” he said, as reported on the *Negro League Baseball Players Association* Web site. “I know I didn’t have two hundred and eighty-odd friends among the writers. I know they voted for me because they felt in their minds and in their hearts that I rated it, and I want to say to them: Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.”

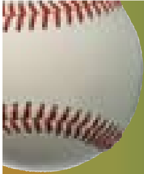
Yet, that statement aside, it was what Williams said a little later about opportunity, opportunity for all, that was to mark him as a man of uncommon fairness, an individual ahead of his time:

“Baseball gives every American boy a chance to excel,” Williams intoned. “Not just to be as good as anybody else, but to be better than someone else. This is the nature of man and the name of the game. I hope some day Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson will be voted into the Hall of Fame as symbols of the great Negro players who are not here only because they weren’t given the chance.”

In late 1968, Williams wed yet again, hoping the third time would be the charm. He married Dolores Wettach, a fashion model who had appeared in *Vogue* magazine. Dolores, like his previous wife, Lee, was a knockout. She was also pregnant, making Williams a new father at age 50. Furthermore, thanks to his daughter, Bobby-Jo, Williams was also a grandfather. Though Dolores would give Williams two children, John Henry, named after the steel-driving man, and Claudia, this marriage, too, was destined to fail, the divorce coming in 1971. Even so, Williams wrote in his autobiography, “I can tell you those two kids mean the world to me and are growing into fine young people. Dolores deserves most of the credit.”

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

In the years leading up to his retirement as a player, Ted Williams was often asked about his post-playing plans. When considering his options, Williams was open to all possibilities



JOHN McGRAW: "LITTLE NAPOLEON"

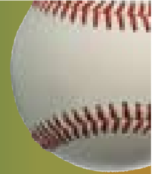
John McGraw was an arrogant, abrasive, and pugnacious tyrant of a manager who put winning ahead of everything else. No wonder he was nicknamed "Little Napoleon."

Born in Truxton, New York, on April 7, 1873, scrawny McGraw began his professional baseball career in 1890. A left-handed batter, he could hit for average, batting over .321 in nine consecutive seasons. As a fiery third baseman, McGraw was notorious for tripping, blocking, or otherwise obstructing base runners as the game's lone umpire followed a ball to the outfield. He took his skills and tenacity as a player with him as he moved on to become probably the most famous and successful major-league manager ever.

McGraw began to manage in 1901, with the Baltimore Orioles. In his first year, McGraw did an unheard-of thing in buying the contract of African-American player Charlie Grant from the Negro League Columbia Giants. Given the unofficial, but real, color barrier at the time, when no African American could play in the major leagues, McGraw tried to pass Grant off as a Cherokee Indian. It did not work. Yet McGraw deserves credit for trying to integrate baseball on the basis of talent alone, 46 years before Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson in 1947.

Though McGraw started his managing career with the Baltimore Orioles, it was his incredible 30-year run managing the New York Giants that made him the phenomenon he was. As the Giants' manager, McGraw amassed a win-loss record of

but one, making it clear to everyone who asked and many who didn't that whatever he chose to do, managing a major-league baseball team was not on the list. It was out of the question. "When Yawkey asked me what I wanted to do when I quit



2,583–1,790 and won 10 National League championships and three World Series.

True to his temperament, early on McGraw developed such an animosity toward Ban Johnson, the American League president, that when the Giants won the National League championship in 1904, he refused to play the American League in the newly organized World Series.

As manager, McGraw did not always get it right. There were mistakes, missed opportunities.

In 1921, 17-year-old Lou Gehrig showed up for tryouts at the Giants' ballpark, the Polo Grounds. After seeing Lou let a ball clumsily snake through his legs, McGraw was reported to have cried, "Get this fellow out of here! I've got enough lousy players without another one showing up."

Years later, Gehrig reflected on the incident, saying, as reported in Jonathan Eig's *Luckiest Man*, "I have often thought, because of later developments, if he had given me a real opportunity to make good and taken pains with me, the baseball situation in New York perhaps would have been a lot different in the years that were to come." McGraw's failure to sign Gehrig is considered by many to be the most glaring error a major-league manager ever made.

McGraw retired in 1932 but was called back into the game to manage the National League team in the first All-Star Game of 1933. His team, though, lost to the American League, 4-2. He died on February 25, 1934. McGraw was voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937.

playing," he related in *It's Only Me*, "I'd always tell him I'd like to do something, but I sure as hell didn't want to manage."

In February 1969, with nearly a decade to reflect and with the constant urging of acquaintances in the game, Williams changed his mind. He agreed to manage the cellar-dwelling Washington Senators. "I took this flight from sanity for two reasons," Williams stated in his autobiography, "The price was right ($1.5 million), and the man who offered it was the smartest guy I ever met."

The contract was for five years with a "no cut" clause. The first year was fun. The last year did not exist—Williams quit after the fourth season.

For Williams, managing was a chance to put his baseball theories into practice, at least those that involved hitting. His players were in awe of him. "It was," as Montville observed, "as if a face from Mount Rushmore had come down to give advice."

At one point during spring training, Williams gathered the devoted around him. He told his players that in the first seven innings he always tried to hit the top half of the ball because he wanted to hit line drives. After the seventh, he looked to smack the ball's bottom half, all the better to hit home runs. Players trying just to make contact with Nolan Ryan's 95-mile-per-hour (153-kilometer-per-hour) fastballs stood open-mouthed. They could not relate.

In addition to his famous "Get a good ball to hit" admonishment, Williams would insist that his players look lively, be alert to what was going on around them. "Now you can sit on the bench, pick your nose, scratch your bottom, and it all goes by, and you're the loser," he instructed in his "bible," *The Science of Hitting*, first published in 1970. "The observant guy will get the edge."

In 1969, the Senators went from last place to winning 10 more games than they lost, a 21-game improvement over the previous year. The club's batting average climbed from .224 to .251. The Senators finished fourth in the American League

East. Ted Williams was voted the American League Manager of the Year.

THE SCIENCE OF HITTING

In his first year as a manager, Williams put into practice what would appear the following year in his classic guide to hitting a baseball, *The Science of Hitting*. The book's material was first serialized in *Sports Illustrated*. The manual has become a masterwork, still available today, with many vivid color illustrations of the authority himself, his expanded gut airbrushed out.

On the book's first page, Williams justifies his claim that hitting a baseball is the hardest thing to do in sport:

> What is there that requires more natural ability, more physical dexterity, more mental alertness? That requires a greater finesse to go with physical strength, that has as many variables and as few constants, and that carries with it the continuing frustration of knowing that even if you are a .300 hitter—which is a rare item these days—you are going to fail at your job seven out of ten times?

Williams would go on to make the point that with a 90-mile-per-hour (145-kilometer-per-hour) pitch, a batter is working with only four-tenths of a second, from the instant the ball leaves the pitcher's hand until it crosses the plate. "And you still don't think it's the toughest thing to do in sport?" he again asked in *The Science of Hitting*.

Williams was also a stickler for having a player take the first pitch during his first time at bat. "Even if that first pitch is a strike, you've refreshed your memory of the pitcher's speed and his delivery," he said in his book. "You see if he's got it on this particular day. You've given yourself a little time to get settled, to get the tempo."

Over the years, much has been made of Williams's eyesight, his 20-10 vision. "Ted Williams sees more of the ball than any

man alive," Ty Cobb was to remark. Williams made less of the matter, even downplayed it. "A lot of guys can see that well," he volunteered in *The Science of Hitting*. "I sure couldn't read labels on revolving phonograph records as people wrote I did. I couldn't 'see' the bat hit the ball, another thing they wrote, but I knew by the feel of it. A good carpenter doesn't have to see the head of the hammer strike the nail, but he still hits it square every time. What I had more of wasn't eyesight, it was discipline."

In sum, Williams told his players that inaugural year as manager to get a good ball to hit, use proper thinking, and be quick with the bat. The results were impressive—the first year. Then things fell apart.

FADE AWAY

As a rule, great players do not make great managers. Generally, such managers find it hard to accept less from their players than they themselves were able to give. It frustrates them to be working with lesser talents.

For starters, given Williams's emphasis on the offense, it was easy to see why field positions failed to get his full coaching and managerial attention. In *The Science of Hitting*, Williams declared, "For an outfielder, hitting is 75 percent of his worth, in most cases more important than fielding and arm and speed combined. . . . When it comes down to it, the guys people remember are the hitters."

Then there was Williams's well-known disdain for the most important position on a baseball team—pitcher. "Pitchers as a breed are dumb and hardheaded," he stated in his manual. "He has too inflated an opinion of what he's got."

Being that baseball is the only major sport where the team on offense does not control the ball, this is an astonishing opinion for a manager to hold. "Good pitching always stops good hitting" is a baseball truism. According to Kevin Kennedy, in his book, *Twice Around the Bases*, "Bob Gibson in 1968, Ron

As manager of the Washington Senators, Ted Williams talks with outfielder Frank Howard during spring training in the early 1970s. In 1969, his first season leading the Senators, Williams was named the American League Manager of the Year. Managing, though, was not for Williams, and he only lasted three more seasons.

Guidry in 1978, Dwight Gooden in 1985, Roger Clemens in 1986, and Sandy Koufax in any of his peak years—all were nearly unhittable."

Williams came to understand his limitations as a manager as well as the "impossibility" of the job. "Looking back," he confessed in *My Turn at Bat*, "I have to say that my first impression was right on target: managing *is* essentially a loser's job, and managers are about the most expendable pieces of furniture on earth."

In 1972, the Washington Senators moved to Texas, becoming the Texas Rangers. A year later, Williams resigned as manager. The team had compiled a 273–364 (.429) record. Williams had run out of enthusiasm; he had run out of patience.

Gone Fishing

Known officially as the *Tarpon atlanticus*, the silver-king tarpon of the Florida Gulf Coast is considered by many to be the world's most exciting game fish. Of prehistoric ancestry, the tarpon is a champion, hard-fighting fish, averaging 25 to 80 pounds (11 to 36 kilograms), though 100-pound (45-kilogram) tarpon are common. Once hooked, the fish frequently displays twisting, acrobatic leaps into the air in a vicious attempt to free itself. The average score for a tarpon fisherman is one catch for every ten strikes. Ted Williams would typically go one-for-five.

On an illustrative fisherman's day in 1967, Williams, in his "down period" between ballplaying and managing, went fishing in Islamorada, Florida, an island village 68 miles (109 kilometers) south of Miami and 82 miles (132 kilometers)

north of Key West. With him were writers John Underwood and Edwin Pope.

The fishing was good, and, in between snags, Williams sought to relate a fish story to his novice colleagues. As the tale is told, it was a time when Williams was going through his paces for a movie photographer looking to get footage for a Sears commercial. The tarpon at play actually jumped into Williams's boat.

"I could see by the pattern of its jumps that it was heading right for me, and I kept yelling for him [the photographer] to 'get ready, get ready!'" Williams related in *It's Only Me.* "A big fish, too, a hundred pounds or more. It was like an explosion in the boat. Tackle flying, blood flying. I finally wrestled it down and was able to take the hook out and release it, and when I asked the photographer if he got it, he said no. He'd stopped to change the reels and missed the whole damn thing."

Williams responded in a predictable fashion—as though he were in the ballpark. "I blew up," he continued. "Paid him off on the spot and told him to get the hell back to shore. Broke my rod over my knee, pulled my anchor and went home."

But that was not the typical Williams on a typical fishing day—on the contrary. "It has always seemed a contradiction to some people, my love for a sport that would require so much patience," he pondered in his autobiography. "Old no-patience 'Teddy Ballgame' willing to wait half the day in an open boat for one nibbly strike, and no guarantee he'll get it."

Maybe Williams's attitude adjustment was simply a result of being away from the limelight as a ballplayer. Williams often fished alone, out in his custom-made 17½-foot (5.3-meter) open boat with its 100-horsepower engine. As Montville observed, "The tarpon and the bonefish never asked for an autograph or wrote a bad word. . . . For Ted Williams, fishing was his dessert."

ISLAMORADA BY THE SEA

It was also his escape. Islamorada, first sighted by Spanish adventurers on May 15, 1513, remained for centuries but a small trading and fishing village. By 1912, a railroad stretched down the Florida Keys, all the way to Key West. In 1928, a road followed, and the Keys began to flourish.

They were still fairly unsettled when Ted Williams took to exploring them during his World War II training in Pensacola. By the 1950s, saltwater fly-fishing had become popular. In 1953, Williams bought a house in Islamorada, visited often during the off-season, and he took to the sport with the same dedication and scientific inquiry he had devoted to hitting a baseball.

Nothing Williams ever did was half-measure. To baseball fans, he was the best hitter the game ever saw. To his Marine buddies, he was the finest fighter pilot they had known. And his fishing guides claimed they had never fished with anyone so demanding of himself.

There are acquaintances who believe Williams was one of those rare individuals who might have been the world's best, or close to it, in three disciplines: baseball hitter, fighter pilot, and fly fisherman. Pundit Steve Sailer called him "possibly the most technically proficient American of the 20th century, as his mastery of three highly different callings demonstrates."

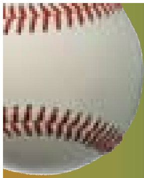
Williams did not suffer fools lightly. If someone tried to fake it, pretend he knew more about fishing than he did, Williams would jump all over him, making the guy feel like a mouse. As Underwood was to point out, "One, he is a perfectionist; two, he is better at it than you are; three, he is a consummate needler; and four, he is in charge."

For Williams, fishing allowed him to succeed at another sport. And it gave him the quiet freedom to do so far away from his other sport, the one with all the noise and hassle.

Fishing in waters off Florida, Ted Williams reels in a bonefish in February 1955. Beginning in the 1950s, Williams kept a home in Islamorada in the Florida Keys. Fishing was one of Williams's lifelong pursuits, and he went at it as he did hitting—with practice and study.

THE MIRAMICHI RIVER

Seeing Ted Williams swinging for the fences in the wide expanse of a baseball park, it is hard to conjure an image of him bent over a basement workbench, an incandescent light focused on his hands, a tiny, delicate artificial fly forming in a vice grip. But Williams would do this for hours on end, quietly, alone, not even with the radio on. Tying flies was part of the



GETTING HOOKED: THE INTERNATIONAL GAME FISH ASSOCIATION

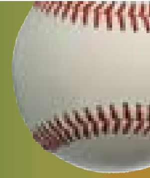
The International Game Fish Association is a nonprofit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, rulemaking, and recordkeeping. Conservation, according to the organization's 2006 president, Rob Kramer, is the key word. "No matter where you fish in the world, protecting our game-fish populations for the next generation of anglers is of the highest priority," Kramer says on the association's Web site, www.igfa.org. "Teaching our children resource stewardship and ethical angling practices is critical."

The association maintains a huge, 60,000-square-foot museum and hall of fame in Dania Beach, Florida. Visitors enter the museum to find 170 species of game fish that earned world record status suspended overhead. The largest mount is Alfred Dean's 2,664-pound (1,208-kilogram) great white shark caught in Australia in 1959.

As of 2006, 66 people had been inducted into the hall of fame. There are authors like Zane Grey and Ernest Hemingway. Curt Gowdy, the broadcaster, is there. And so, of course, is Theodore S. Williams.

job, the job of catching fish. Williams, of course, never considered fly-tying a "job." He loved every minute of it: the skill required, the patience demanded—and the solitude.

Artificial flies, made from fur, feathers, and various materials, are tied together with thread. The creation is bound in sizes and colors to match naturally occurring fish food. Or it is simply chosen to excite fish into striking the fly. Tying flies



The museum, according to the International Game Fish Association's Web site, is designed to:

- **Tell the story and celebrate the history of fishing and of the IGFA.**
- **Pay tribute to the legacy of sportfishing pioneers and greats.**
- **Display the science and artistry of this important international sport.**
- **Interest the public in pursuing the sport of fishing locally and worldwide.**
- **Most importantly, promote ethical angling and habitat conservation worldwide.**

The association is recognized as the official keeper of all saltwater and freshwater world records. According to its Web site, "There are over 7,100 categories, from fly rod to conventional, freshwater and saltwater." There are separate programs for junior anglers: "smallfry" (10 and under) and "junior" (11 to 16). A junior angler not only can compete against those in his or her own category, but can also set records in the "adult" categories.

is an art form, a skill mastered with dedication and a keen eye for detail. Ted Williams had both in abundance, especially after he more or less abandoned the crowded Florida Keys for the more tranquil Miramichi River, on the northeast coast of New Brunswick, Canada.

The river is, with its tributaries, 400 miles (644 kilometers) of great fishing. It is home to the Atlantic salmon, an anadromous fish that spawns in freshwater but spends much of its life at sea. It is, by all accounts, the heartiest, smartest game fish in the world.

Ted Williams would spend decades, off and on, fishing the Miramichi River. Next to the tarpon, the salmon gave him the greatest thrill, the highest high. In John Underwood's book, *It's Only Me*, Williams exploded with enthusiasm in describing but one of his countless encounters with the devious opponent:

> It was cold as hell, and the wind was ripping down the river. But I'd been tying flies all summer and I had a yellow butt on a double-8 with a short shank, and I laid it out there. . . . Then there was a big boil, and I put it out again, and there was that beautiful roll and the feel of weight that you get when he's taken the fly. *Whoosh*. He was way downriver before he jumped, and I could see him for the first time. . . . He fought like hell for about 30 minutes. A 20-pound hook-bill. The best I ever got on the Miramichi.

Williams mastered the art of fishing as he did the art of hitting. He studied strategy and the physics of casting. He talked to experts. And, of course, he practiced, practiced, practiced. As with hitting, Williams was determined to be the best. In 1999, he was inducted into the International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame, an honor he treasured every bit as much as its counterpart in baseball.

THE JIMMY FUND

Ted Williams was not all play, play, play, be it swinging a bat or casting a fishing rod. There was another side to "Teddy Ballgame," one he fought to keep from public view. It was the private Ted Williams, seeking, out of the glare of notoriety and publicity, to do good, to help people in desperate need, especially children.

Williams always liked kids. Maybe it was the kid in him. He forever seemed to find time for them, whether patiently providing one-on-one batting instruction, signing autographs, or finding a ballpark seat for a youngster who had traveled more than 100 miles (161 kilometers) just to see him play.

It was through charity, though, that Williams was to find his most lasting and meaningful connection with children.

In 1948, members of the Boston Braves gathered around the hospital bed of a 12-year-old cancer patient dubbed "Jimmy," to protect his identity. The event, sponsored by the Variety Children's Charity of New England, was broadcast on national radio. The contributions poured in.

Thus was born the Jimmy Fund, today New England's best-loved charity. When the Braves moved to Milwaukee in 1953, the Boston Red Sox adopted the Jimmy Fund as the team's official charity. When Ted Williams returned from Korea that same year, he made the charity his own cause. Williams's first act in raising money was to insist that guests at a "Welcome Home Ted" dinner pay $100 a head—with all proceeds benefiting the Jimmy Fund.

Of course, over the years, there were the innumerable visits to sick kids. According to the Jimmy Fund's Web site, "Ted made countless unheralded (and, at his request, unreported) visits to children being treated for cancer at the Jimmy Fund Clinic. Tales abound of kids waking up to find the 'Splendid Splinter' standing over them, or parents learning at checkout time that 'Mr. Williams has taken care of your bill.'"

Ted Williams *(right)* shares a laugh in July 1999 with Einar Gustafson. In 1948, Gustafson was a 12-year-old cancer patient for whom a nationwide fundraising appeal was made. From that appeal, the Jimmy Fund was formed. Williams was one of the Jimmy Fund's greatest supporters, though much of what he did he sought to keep private.

Once, when Williams was asked about his hospital visits, he snapped, "What I do for the Jimmy Fund, I do for the kids." He wanted things kept private.

Yet when Williams arrived in Boston in 1999 to throw out the first ball at the All-Star Game, he was in for a surprise. Earlier in the day, with cameras rolling and nowhere to hide, Williams was introduced to a Mr. Einar Gustafson, the original "Jimmy" of the Jimmy Fund. Most everyone thought the man was long dead. In 1948, pediatric cancer had a dismal 10 percent survival rate. Nonetheless, here was "Jimmy," 63 years

old and remarkably fit. The men embraced, both falling all over each other to say what a pleasure it was for one to meet the other.

"One of the big regrets of my life is that I have been given one million times more credit for just being around the Jimmy Fund than I ever deserved," Williams was to say some time later, as reported by the Fund. "It has meant so much to me in my life."

TRUE LOVE—AT LAST

Louise Kaufman was no Lee Howard or Dolores Wettach, not in the looks department anyway. No one would see in her a glamorous Hollywood actress or a New York fashion model. Born in 1912, six years before Ted, Louise would always look like what she was, the older woman. Yet, when they met—she in her early forties, he in his late thirties—they became buddies and lovers. It was a relationship that would last a lifetime.

In 1957, after her divorce from her first husband, Louise took up residency in Islamorada. She became a passionate fisherman, having once set a women's world record by catching a tarpon weighing 152 pounds (69 kilograms), about 30 pounds (14 kilograms) more than she weighed. She belonged to the International Women's Gamefishing Association.

By the time Ted and Louise first met, Williams was long divorced from his first wife, Doris. But as the decades rolled on, Ted would marry again, and again, to Lee Howard in 1961 and Dolores Wettach in 1968. With the announcement of each new marriage, Louise was devastated. Yet after each divorce, Louise would be back. "She had proved to be, after grand trial and grand error, the one woman who could fit inside the blast area," Leigh Montville observed in his *Ted Williams* biography. "He was, if there ever had been, a man who needed unconditional love. She had it to give."

In the summer of 1993, Louise became sick, seriously so. She was 81 and suffering from a bowel obstruction. She died

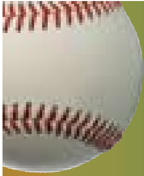
on August 10. On the phone with author and friend John Underwood, Williams cried openly, great, gasping sobs. “I loved her, John,” he said, “God I loved her.”

After the funeral in Columbia, South Carolina, Williams returned to the Miramichi, where he had been fishing, and finished out the season. He was now 75 years old. He was not in good shape, physically or emotionally. He was looking his age. He was an old man.

The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived

In 1991, the nation paused to remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As expected, it was a somber occasion, the fiftieth anniversary of the entry of the United States into World War II, the greatest military struggle of the twentieth century. Bostonians, like all Americans, took time to reflect on the dead, the wounded, and the millions whose lives were torn apart by the worldwide holocaust. Unlike others throughout the country, though, New Englanders were eager to celebrate a special fiftieth-anniversary observance of their own. It had been a half-century since their hometown idol had hit that magic .406. This was definitely a milestone worth commemorating, all the more so because Ted Williams's feat of hitting above .400 had never since been equaled.

The Red Sox arranged a "Ted Williams Day" to honor the achievement. During the ceremony, on May 12, the 72-year-old Williams did what he had refused to do almost his entire baseball career—he tipped his hat. "It was the Ted Williams



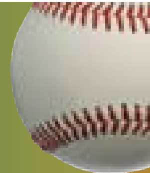
MR. ALL-STAR

On a sweltering afternoon on July 6, 1933, at Comiskey Park in Chicago, 47,595 baseball fans gathered to witness the antics of the game's most glittering assemblage of ballplaying talent ever gathered at one time. The first All-Star Game pitted the best of the National League, led by manager John McGraw, against the finest the American League could muster, headed by manager Connie Mack. It was a novel idea, billed as a one-time deal to help boost attendance at the Chicago World's Fair. So successful was the initial event, won by the American League 4-2, that the game has been played as a "Midsummer Classic" ever since.

The World Series may have belonged to Mickey Mantle and Joe DiMaggio, but the All-Star Game was all Ted Williams's. He enjoyed the greatest individual performance in the game's history.

For Williams, the Midsummer Classic was a chance to check out the competition on the mound and to see a variety of pitchers at their best. "I always liked the All-Star Game because I got a chance to see all the pitchers," Williams told *Boston Globe* reporter Dan Shaughnessy in 1999. "I wanted to see the best pitchers, and the best pitchers in the league with the best records were there, and I got a kick out of that. I enjoyed that. Sometimes I got struck out, but I enjoyed being there."

we've all waited to see," said Lib Dooley, a longtime season-ticket holder, in *Hitter: The Life and Turmoils of Ted Williams*, Ed Linn's biography of Williams. "There is a joy in living now that wasn't there before. The anger is gone."



Following are statistics from Williams's All-Star Game appearances (note: in 1959 and 1960, two All-Star Games were played):

YEAR	AB	R	H	HR	RBI
1940	2	0	0	0	0
1941	4	1	2	1	4
1942	4	0	1	0	0
1946	4	4	4	2	5
1947	4	0	2	0	0
1948	0	0	0	0	0
1949	2	1	0	0	0
1950	4	0	1	0	1
1951	3	0	1	0	0
1954	2	1	0	0	0
1955	3	1	1	0	0
1956	4	1	1	1	2
1957	3	1	0	0	0
1958	2	0	0	0	0
1959	0	0	0	0	0
1959	3	0	0	0	0
1960	1	0	0	0	0
1960	1	0	1	0	0
Total	46	10	14	4	12

That year was also the one that Williams, primarily through the efforts of his son, John Henry, entered the sports marketing business in a big way. There would be Grand-Slam Marketing, various real estate projects, the Internet, and, of course, autographing.

Williams placed his signature on almost anything: photographs, baseballs, hats, cards, bats—for a price. And he did so with his right hand. After all, Williams fished right-handed, he opened doors right-handed, and he held a spoon right-handed. Though he batted lefty, he did almost everything else from the other side.

Thank goodness, too. In that eventful year of 1991, Ted Williams suffered the first of what would be many strokes. With this one, he lost 25 percent of his vision. In early 1992, he had a second stroke. In 1996, there was a third, one that left Williams with little more than tunnel vision. And the left side of his body was affected, too; often it would feel "sleepy." It was a good thing he wrote with his right hand, so he could continue signing those popular autographs.

FATHER BALLGAME

The 1999 All-Star Game was to be a game like no other. After all, it was not only the end of a decade, but the end of a century—indeed, a millennium. The game, having returned to Fenway Park for the first time in 38 years, would witness the greatest gathering of baseball talent in any one place. And Ted Williams would be the center of all the attention.

Before the game, 33 candidates for the All-Century team were introduced. There, among others, were Hank Aaron, Sandy Koufax, Willie Mays, Cal Ripken, Juan Marichal, Bob Feller, and Yogi Berra. The present All-Stars included Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, Derek Jeter, and Nomar Garciaparra. Sadly, Mickey Mantle was gone, having died in 1995, and Joe DiMaggio had passed away but four months before the game.

Still, it was an incredible lineup, an evening for fans and players alike to savor and cherish.

When the last name was announced, the crowd roared, nearly drowning out the jets that buzzed the park after the National Anthem. Ted Williams emerged from center field in a golf cart, waving to the fans as he passed, tipping his hat all the way to the mound. He would throw out the first pitch.

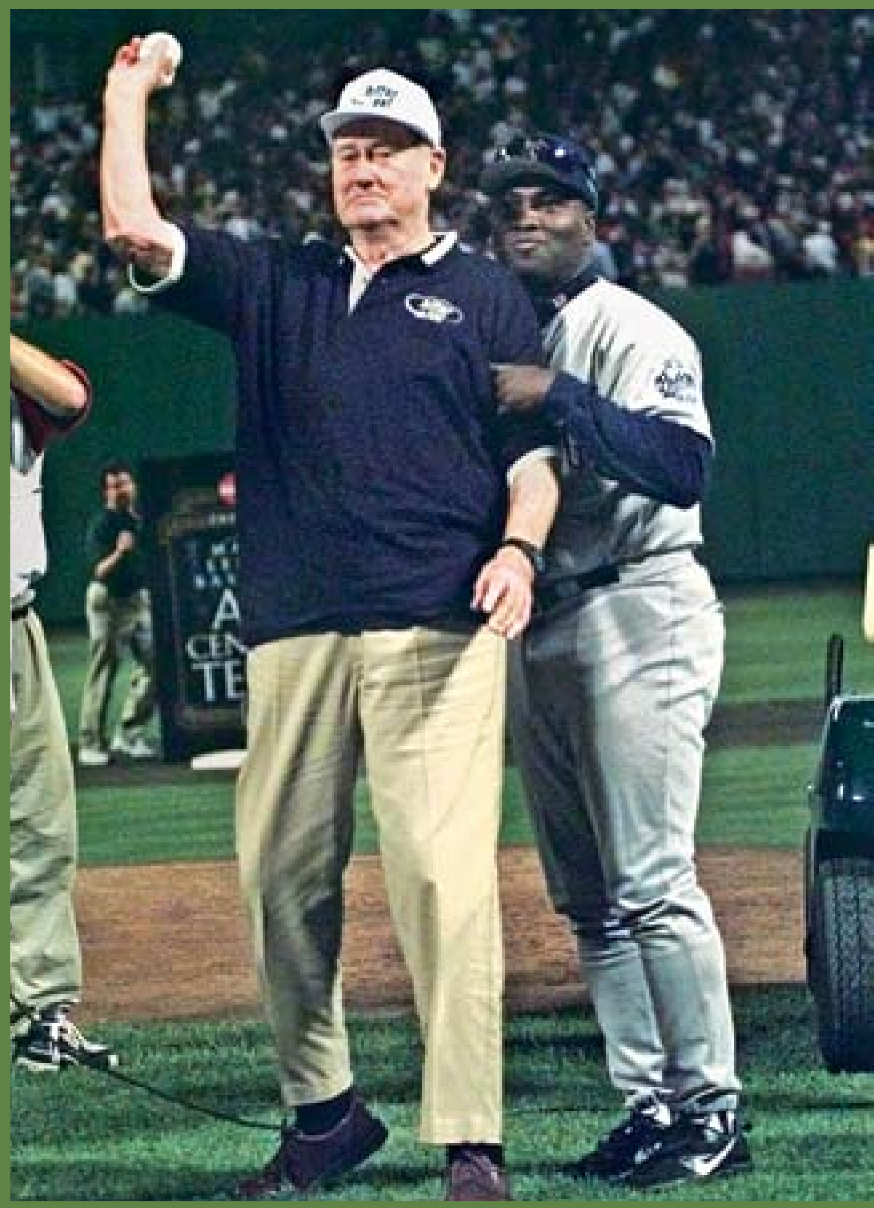
Williams rose gingerly from the cart, his two most recent strokes and a broken hip showing in the 80-year-old's strained expression. Tony Gwynn was at his side to steady him and point the way. "Where is he?" Williams asked, referring to his target, Carlton Fisk, in the batter's box, as reported by *Boston Globe* columnist Dan Shaughnessy. Gwynn steadied Williams, as "Teddy Ballgame" let a soft pitch fly, inside but all the way to the plate. Fisk rushed to the mound to hug his hero.

He was not alone. By now "Father Ballgame," as many would refer to him soon enough, was mobbed, every player, past and present, reaching out to touch the oldest living All-Century candidate. "Where's Sammy, Sammy Sosa? Williams demanded. "Where is Mark McGwire?"

All Williams wanted to do was sit there, in front of 35,000 fans, and talk baseball. "Did you guys ever smell the wood when you foul one real hard?" he was reported to have asked. Many nodded that they could, though it was obvious they never had. McGwire, among others, choked up. Williams, too, had tears pouring from his eyes. The announcer asked everybody to go back to the dugout, the All-Star Game needed to begin. Everybody said no. "This is the chance of a lifetime," said Rafael Palmeiro. "The game can wait."

NOT WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

At 80, Ted Williams, though still alert to his surroundings, aware of what was happening to him, was not in good shape. He was a sick man; he was a man dying.



With a little help from Tony Gwynn, 80-year-old Ted Williams threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the 1999 All-Star Game, held at Fenway Park in Boston. After that pitch, many of the All-Stars gathered around Williams to talk baseball, delaying the start of the game.

In November 2000, Williams had a single-chamber pacemaker installed to control a heart that was at times firing too fast, overworking itself. A few weeks later, it became apparent that the pacemaker had not solved Williams's heart problems. A more invasive, truly life-threatening procedure would be required—open-heart surgery.

The operation took place on January 15, 2001, in New York City, where Williams had been flown from Florida in a private jet. When told by his doctor, Rick Kerensky, that the operation, risky for anyone, and particularly for an 82-year-old man in poor health, had but a 50-50 chance of success, Williams replied, as quoted in Leigh Montville's biography, "You know what? I've had a hell of a life. I have no regrets. If I have to die on the operating table, so be it."

A team of 14 doctors, nurses, and technicians spent nine and a half hours working on Williams. He did not die in the operating room that day, but he would need to remain in the hospital for the next five weeks. During that period, his kidneys began to fail. He needed dialysis. A staph infection set in. He was given vancomycin, the most powerful antibiotic in existence at the time. On February 19, 2001, Williams was transferred to Sharp Hospital in San Diego for rehabilitation. He would remain there for 16 weeks.

During these declining months, Ted's son, John Henry, had taken the lead in managing both his father's health issues and his business concerns. The two intersected in an interesting, almost macabre, way, when it was revealed that John Henry had placed a curious instruction on his father's medical chart. No matter what the doctors and nurses needed to do to make Ted Williams, if not well, at least comfortable, motion of his right arm was not to be impaired in any way. Williams might yet live to sign more autographs.

Whether Williams ever took to applying his signature in his last few weeks is questionable. What isn't is his rapid fall to the end. On July 5, 2002, at Citrus Memorial Hospital in Inverness,

Florida, Ted Williams—"The Kid," "The Splendid Splinter," "Teddy Ballgame," "Mister Wonderful," died of congestive heart failure. He was 83 years old.

DEEP FREEZE

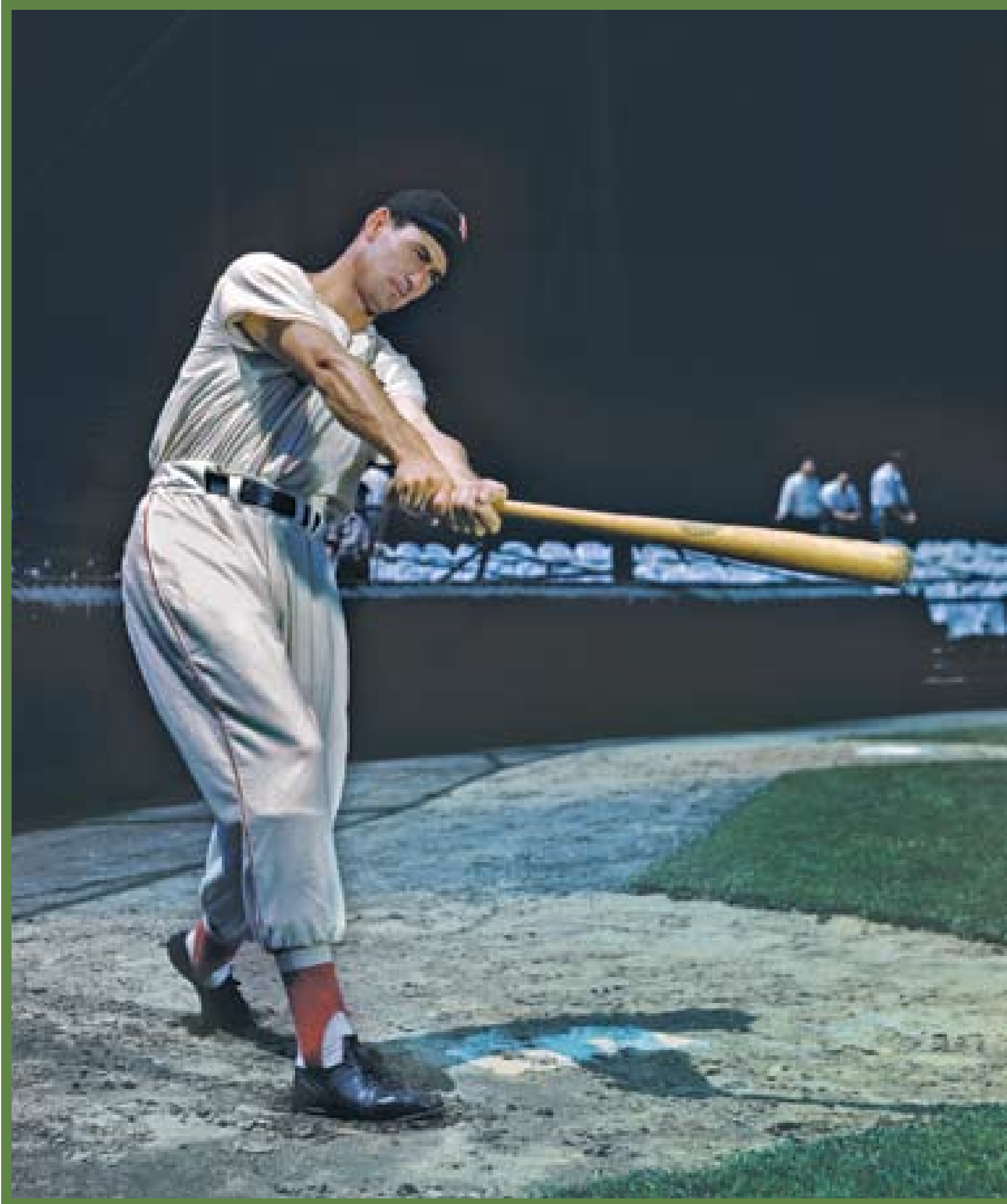
In the waning months of his father's life, John Henry wrested increasing control of Ted Williams's life, determining where the great ballplayer lived, the medical treatment and care he received, and, of course, what he signed. With death, the control did not cease—it took on a new life.

It's difficult to know exactly when John Henry became enamored with the field of cryonics, the technology of freezing humans and other animals with the intention of future revival. But soon after Williams's death, the son had his father's body "prepared" and shipped from Ocala, Florida, to the Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Scottsdale, Arizona. The hope, unrealistic as it might be, was that some day, in the distant future, science would be able to repair Williams's failed organs and restore the "Splendid Splinter" to life.

But was that the real reason for the freeze? Did John Henry actually care that, long after he would be dead, his father would be resurrected? A more sinister possibility for John Henry's action soon emerged. Was John Henry proposing to use his father's body to extract its DNA and sell it so that, as Bobby-Jo said in Montville's biography, "There would be hundreds of little Ted Williamses running around?"

Is this what Ted Williams would have wanted? John Henry produced a will, of sorts, claiming that, indeed, this was the case.

The will immediately became suspect. Written on a wrinkled, single sheet of oil-stained paper, it supposedly superseded an earlier "official" will, signed and notarized in 1996. In that previous will, Ted Williams made it clear that he wanted to be cremated and his ashes "spread off the coast of Florida where the water is very deep," as reported in *It's Only Me.*



Ted Williams, shown here in a portrait taken during spring training in 1950, excelled as a hitter, as a fighter pilot, and as a fisherman. He lived a full life, which is what should be remembered, not the notoriety that followed his death.

In the end, what did it matter? Ted Williams was dead. And soon, too, would be his son, John Henry, of acute myelogenous leukemia. His body was shipped off to Alcor, honoring a previous request he had made. John Henry was 35 years old.

THE GREATEST HITTER WHO EVER LIVED

The story of Ted Williams's death is not the story of his life.

What many people resent most about John Henry is that, through his actions, he continued his father's story beyond its natural end point. Ted Williams, above all, was about life. All his achievements, as a baseball star, a Marine pilot, a sports fisherman extraordinaire, revealed a man full of life. In one way or another, Williams was forever in one's face. Never subtle, always boisterous, most were glad for the contact.

"They can talk about Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb and Rogers Hornsby and Lou Gehrig and Joe DiMaggio and Stan Musial and all the rest," said Carl Yastrzemski soon after Williams's death, as quoted in the *Baseball Almanac*, "but I'm sure not one of them could hold cards and spades to Ted Williams in his sheer knowledge of hitting. He studied hitting the way a broker studies the stock market and could spot at a glance mistakes that others couldn't see in a week."

Although Williams's last years were difficult and draining, it is worth noting that he lived to experience verification of his most cherished childhood dream. As reported by John Underwood, on the sixtieth anniversary of his rookie year in Boston, at the 1999 All-Star Game in Fenway Park, as he circled the base paths in a golf cart, the announcer repeated, over and over again, for Williams to hear, "There goes the greatest hitter who ever lived."

STATISTICS

TED WILLIAMS

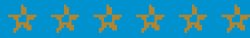
Primary position: Left field (also RF)

Full name: Theodore Samuel Williams • Born: August 30, 1918, San Diego, California • Died: July 5, 2002, Inverness, Florida • Height: 6'3" Weight: 205 lbs. • Teams: Boston Red Sox (1939–1960)

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	H	HR	RBI	BA
1939	BOS	149	565	185	31	145	.327
1940	BOS	144	561	193	23	113	.344
1941	BOS	143	456	185	37	120	.406
1942	BOS	150	522	186	36	137	.356
1946	BOS	150	514	176	38	123	.342
1947	BOS	156	528	181	32	114	.343
1948	BOS	137	509	188	25	127	.369
1949	BOS	155	566	194	43	159	.343
1950	BOS	89	334	106	28	97	.317
1951	BOS	148	531	169	30	126	.318
1952	BOS	6	10	4	1	3	.400
1953	BOS	37	91	37	13	34	.407
1954	BOS	117	386	133	29	89	.345
1955	BOS	98	320	114	28	83	.356
1956	BOS	136	400	138	24	82	.345

(continues)

Key: BOS = Boston Red Sox; G = Games; AB = At-bats; H = Hits; HR = Home runs; RBI = Runs batted in; BA = Batting average



(continued)

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	H	HR	RBI	BA
1957	BOS	132	420	163	38	87	.388
1958	BOS	129	411	135	26	85	.328
1959	BOS	103	272	69	10	43	.254
1960	BOS	113	310	98	29	72	.316
TOTALS		2,292	7,706	2,654	521	1,839	.344

Key: BOS = Boston Red Sox; G = Games; AB = At-bats; H = Hits; HR = Home runs; RBI = Runs batted in; BA = Batting average

CHRONOLOGY

1918 **August 30** Born Theodore Samuel Williams in San Diego, California.

1936 Signs contract with the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League.

1937 **February 3** Graduates from high school.

December 1 Signs contract with the Boston Red Sox.

1938 Farmed out to the Minneapolis Millers of the American Association.

1939 Has a spectacular rookie year with the Red Sox, leading the American League in runs batted in.

1941 Finishes season with a .406 batting average, the last major-league player to bat over .400.

1942 Wins Triple Crown (batting .356 with 36 home runs and 137 RBIs) and joins the military.

1943–1945 Misses three seasons because of military service.

1946 Is named American League Most Valuable Player; plays in his only World Series, but the Red Sox lose to the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games.

1947 Wins Triple Crown for the second time (batting .343 with 32 home runs and 114 RBIs).

1949 Wins the American League Most Valuable Player award.

1952 **May 2** Called back into military service.

1953 **February 16** Crash lands his wounded jet.

1954 **March 1** Breaks his collarbone in spring training.

1956 **August 7** Fined $5,000 for spitting at fans.

1957 Reaches base 16 consecutive times; hits .388, and The Associated Press names him Athlete of the Year.

1958 **September 21** Flings bat and hits fan.

1959 Shows up to spring training with neck pain; has worst season at bat, finishing with a .254 average.

1960 **June 17** Hits his 500th home run.

September 28 Hits a home run in his final time at-bat.

1966 **July 25** Inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

TIMELINE

1918
Born on August 30 in San Diego, California

1939
Has a spectacular rookie year with the Red Sox

1941
Bats .406, the last major-league player to hit over .400

1947
Wins Triple Crown for the second time

1953
Crash lands his jet during the Korean War

1918 — 1953

1969 Hired as manager of the Washington Senators; wins American League Manager of the Year award.

1972 Steps down as manager of the Texas Rangers (the Senators moved to Texas in the '72 season).

1991 **May 12** Boston Red Sox honor him with "Ted Williams Day" at Fenway Park.

1999 **July 13** Honored at the All-Star Game, held at Fenway.

2002 **July 5** Dies at Citrus Memorial Hospital in Inverness, Florida.

1960
Hits a home run in his final at-bat

1966
Inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame

1969
Hired as manager of the Washington Senators

1999
Honored at the All-Star Game

2002
Dies on July 5 in Inverness, Florida

1960 — **2002**

GLOSSARY

All-Star team A team for each league, consisting of the season's best players as voted on by the fans. The All-Star Game takes place in mid-July, symbolizing the "halfway point" of the major-league season.

at-bat An official turn at batting that is charged to a baseball player, except when the player walks, sacrifices, is hit by a pitched ball, or is interfered with by a catcher. At-bats are used to calculate a player's batting average and slugging percentage.

bandbox A ballpark with small dimensions, especially easy for home runs.

base on balls The awarding of first base to a batter after a pitcher throws four balls. Also known as a walk, it is an "intentional walk" when the four balls are thrown on purpose to avoid pitching to a batter.

batter's box The area to the left and right of home plate in which the batter must be standing for fair play to take place.

batting average The number of hits a batter gets divided by the number of times the player is at bat. For example, 3 hits in 10 at-bats would be a .300 batting average.

curveball A pitch that curves on its way to the plate, thanks to the spin a pitcher places on the ball when throwing. Also known as a "breaking ball."

doubleheader Two baseball games played by the same teams on the same day.

Eephus pitch A very slow pitch with a high-arching trajectory. Used to fool a hitter's timing, it is thrown very rarely.

farm team A team that provides training and experience for young players, with the expectation that successful players will move to the major leagues.

fastball A ball thrown at a high velocity by the pitcher. Many of today's major-league pitchers can throw more than 90 miles per hour (145 kilometers per hour).

Green Monster The left-field wall at Boston's Fenway Park, nicknamed after its color and height—37 feet (11 meters).

home run When a batter hits a ball into the stands in fair territory, it is a home run. A home run counts as one run, and if there are any runners on base when it is hit, they too score.

inside-the-park home run A home run in which the batter circles the bases, but the ball never leaves the field of play.

lineup A list that is presented to the umpire and opposing coach before the start of the game that contains the order in which the batters will bat as well as the defensive fielding positions they will play.

line drive A batted ball, usually hit hard, that never gets too far off the ground. Typically a line drive will get beyond the infield without touching the ground or will be hit directly at a player and be caught before it touches the ground.

pennant The title in the American League and National League. In Ted Williams's day, the pennant went to the first-place team in each league. Today, each league has two rounds of play-offs, with the champion earning the pennant. The two pennant winners meet in the World Series.

pinch-hit To substitute for another teammate at bat.

runs batted in Statistics that reflect the number of runs a batter has driven in with a hit or a walk. Also known as an RBI or ribbie.

slump A period of poor or losing play by a team or an individual player.

strike A pitch that is swung at and missed or a pitch that is in the strike zone and is not swung at. Three strikes and the batter is out.

strike zone The area directly over home plate up to the batter's chest (roughly where the batter's uniform lettering is) and down to his or her knees. Different umpires have slightly different strike zones, and players only ask that they be consistent.

Triple Crown Won by the batter who leads the league at the end of the season in batting average, home runs, and runs batted in.

walk See "base on balls."

World Series The championship series of Major League Baseball. The Series is played between the pennant winners of the American League and the National League in a best-of-seven play-off.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Angell, Roger. *Game Time: A Baseball Companion.* New York: A Harvest Book/Harcourt, Inc., 2003.

Dickson, Paul. *Sputnik: The Shock of the Century*. New York: Walker & Company, 2001.

DiMaggio, Joe. *Lucky to Be a Yankee.* New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1951.

Eig, Jonathan. *Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Halberstam, David. *Summer of '49*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1989.

Kennedy, Kevin, with Bill Gutman. *Twice Around the Bases: The Thinking Fan's Inside Look at Baseball.* New York: Harper, 2005.

Linn, Ed. *Hitter: The Life and Turmoils of Ted Williams.* New York: A Harvest Book/Harcourt Inc., 1994.

Mantle, Mickey, and Mickey Herskowitz. *All My Octobers: My Memories of Twelve World Series When the Yankees Ruled Baseball.* New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Montville, Leigh. *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Nowlin, Bill. *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*. Burlington, Mass.: Rounder Books, 2005.

Rampersad, Arnold. *Jackie Robinson: A Biography*. New York: Random House, 1997.

Seidel, Michael. *Ted Williams: A Baseball Life.* Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

Underwood, John. *It's Only Me: The Ted Williams We Hardly Knew*. Chicago: Triumph Books, 2005.

Underwood, John, and Ted Williams. *Fishing the Big Three.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

Williams, Ted, with John Underwood. *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969.

Williams, Ted, and John Underwood. *The Science of Hitting*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986.

Williams, Ted, with David Pietrusza. *Ted Williams: My Life in Pictures*. Kingston, N.Y.: Total Sports Publishing, 2001.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Browne, Ian. "A Fitting Tribute to Williams." *MLB.com*, July 22, 2002.

Chamberlain, Tony. "The Fisherman: Boatload of Talent Extended to Another Sport." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Duffy, Bob. "Exclamation Mark." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Duffy, Bob. "Out With a Bang." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Dupont, Kevin Paul. "Legends' Tales." *Boston Globe*, July 22, 2002.

Dupont, Kevin Paul. "Tunnel of Love for Williams on Day of Dedication and Tributes." *Boston Globe*, December 16, 1995.

Edes, Gordon. "The Early Years." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Edes, Gordon. "The Keyboards Were Always Spelling Trouble." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Edes, Gordon. "Red Sox Tales." *Boston Globe*, July 22, 2001.

Gammons, Peter. "Williams an Unquestioned Hit With Him." *Boston Globe*, July 7, 2002.

Shaughnessy, Dan. "Easily, He Was the Brightest Light." *Boston Globe*, July 12, 1999.

Shaughnessy, Dan. "In Right Field, a True Seat of Power." *Boston Globe*, June 9, 1996.

Shaughnessy, Dan. "Ted's All-Star Games." *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2002.

Underwood, John. "Going Fishing With the Kid." *Sports Illustrated*, August 21, 1967.

Updike, John. "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu." *The New Yorker*. October 22, 1960.

FILMS

Great American Pastimes Company, *Baseball in the News: Volume 1, 1951-1955*. 1984.

WEB SITES

Baseball Almanac
http://www.baseball-almanac.com/

Baseball Links
http://www.baseball-links.com/

Fenway Park
http://boston.redsox.mlb.com/bos/ballpark/history.jsp

Heavyhitter.com (baseball links)
http://www.heavyhitter.com/

Historic Baseball
http://www.historicbaseball.com/

International Game Fish Association
http://ww.igfa.org

The National Baseball Hall of Fame
http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/

Official Site of Major League Baseball
http://mlb.mlb.com/index.jsp

The Official Ted Williams Web Site
http://www.tedwilliams.com

FURTHER READING

BOOKS

Buckley, Jr., James. *Classic Ballparks*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books. 2004.

Burleigh, Robert. *Home Run: The Story of Babe Ruth*. New York: Voyager Books/Harcourt Inc., 1998.

Golenbock, Peter. *Red Sox Nation: An Unexpurgated History of the Boston Red Sox*. Chicago: Triumph Books, 2005.

MacKay, Claire. *Touching All the Bases: Baseball for Kids of All Ages*. Tonawanda, N.Y.: Firefly Books Ltd., 1996.

McCormack, Shaun. *Ted Williams*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2003.

Mintzer, Rich. *The Everything Kids' Baseball Book*. Cincinnati: Adams Media Group, 2004.

Morgan, Bill. *Ted Williams*. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks, 1993.

Morgan, Joe. *Baseball for Dummies*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley Publishing Inc., 2005.

Nowlin, Bill. *Ted Williams at War*. Burlington, Mass.: Rounder Books, 2007.

WEB SITES

Baseball Reference
http://www.baseball-reference.com

The Official Site of the Boston Red Sox
http://boston.redsox.mlb.com

Remembering Ted Williams
http://www.sportingnews.com/archives/williams

Ted Williams Museum
http://www.twmuseum.com

PICTURE CREDITS

PAGE

2: Getty Images
6: AP Images
10: AP Images
15: Getty Images
19: AP Images
27: AP Images
31: Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images
41: AP Images
44: AP Images
46: © Bettmann/Corbis
49: AFP/Getty Images
52: AP Images
56: AP Images
61: Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images
67: AP Images
72: AP Images
76: Getty Images
80: © Bettmann/Corbis
84: AP Images
91: Focus on Sport/Getty Images
95: AP Images
100: AP Images
108: AP Images
111: Diamond Images/Getty Images
113: AP Images

COVER

Photo file/Landov

INDEX

2006 ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia, 54

All-Star Games, 38, 68, 87, 100, 106–107, 112
  playing in, 28, 50–51, 104–105
American League, 32, 55, 87, 88–89
  MVP, 38, 51, 55, 57
  pennants, 52, 55, 57
Averill, Earl, 8

Baltimore Orioles, 73, 79, 86
Baseball
  fans, 9, 18, 20–21, 24, 33, 40, 57, 60, 71, 73–74, 78, 79–81, 104, 107
  scouts, 11
Baseball in '41 (Robert Creamer), 34
Baseball Writers' Association of America, 84–85
Batting
  .400 club, 27–29, 32–35, 66, 69, 103
  high school averages, 3, 7
  major-league averages, 20, 22, 27–30, 32–35, 40, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 69, 71, 77, 78
  minor-league averages, 3, 11, 17
  practice, 3, 4–5
  records, 32–33, 35, 73, 79
  slump, 1, 3, 34
  titles, 17, 40, 55, 57, 77
Berra, Yogi, 83, 106
Boston Braves, 99
Boston Red Sox, 47, 99, 104
  1940 season, 21–24
  1941 season, 25–30, 32–35
  contracts with, 12, 59–60, 68, 78–79
  fans, 20–21, 24, 32, 57, 60, 73–74, 78, 79–81
  Fenway Park, 20, 21, 22–23, 43, 48, 50, 51, 73, 77, 79–81, 82, 83, 106, 112
  management, 12, 14, 21, 22, 23–24, 73–74, 78–79
  minor league, 14, 16–17
  rookie year with, 20–21, 112
  spring training, 12, 13–14, 16, 40, 71, 78
  teammates, 13–14, 21, 26, 42, 58
  and the World Series, 53, 66
Boudreau, Lou, 30, 49–50, 51–52
Breitbard, Bob, 7
Brooklyn Dodgers, 9
Buchser, Edro, 67
Bush, Donie, 16

Caldwell, Wos, 7
Chicago Cubs, 47
  Wrigley Field, 39
Chicago White Sox, 29
  Comiskey Park, 26, 104
Classic Ballparks (James Buckley, Jr.), 23
Clemens, Roger, 90
Cleveland Indians, 29–30, 38
  games against, 49–50, 51–52
Cobb, Ty, 89
  baseball career, 32–33, 54, 112
Collins, Eddie, 12
Corcoran, Fred, 83
Cronin, Joe, 14, 77

Dean, Alfred, 96
Detroit Tigers, 38, 47, 57
  games against, 48, 57, 60
Dickson, Paul, 74
DiMaggio, Joe, 82, 104
  baseball career, 8, 28, 55, 73, 83, 112
  death, 106
  hitting streak, 29–30, 35
  Lucky to Be a Yankee, 29
  military, 38, 47
Doerr, Bobby, 13, 18
Duffy, Hugh, 34, 54

Feller, Bob, 38, 106
Fisk, Carlton, 107
Foxx, Jimmie, 54, 73

Garfield Elementary School, 4
Gehrig, Lou, 87
  baseball career, 18, 20, 54, 79, 87, 112
Germany, 25, 45
Gibson, Bob, 90
Gibson, Josh, 85
Glenn, John, 66
Gooden, Dwight, 90
Gowdy, Curt, 96
Grand-Slam Marketing, 106
Grant, Charlie, 86
Grayson, Harry, 21
Great Depression, 1, 4, 11, 18, 26
Greenberg, Hank, 38, 73
Grey, Zane, 96
Guidry, Ron, 90
Gustafson, Einar, 100–101
Gwynn, Tony, 107

Hawkins, Larry, 63
Hayes, Frankie, 34
Heffernan, Gladys, 77
Heilmann, Harry, 33
Hemingway, Ernest, 96
Herman, Babe, 14
Hitler, Adolf, 25, 45
Hitter: The Life and Turmoils of Ted Williams (Ed Linn), 105
Home runs
  final at-bat, 81
  minor league, 17
  records, 48, 73, 79
  season, 20, 28, 40, 51–52, 54, 55, 57, 60, 69, 71
Hoover High School
  baseball at, 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 40
Hornsby, Rogers
  baseball career, 16–17, 32–33, 54, 112

International Game Fish Association, 96–97, 98
Islamorada, Florida,
  home in, 78, 92, 94, 101
It's Only Me: The Ted Williams We Hardly Knew (John Underwood), 82–83, 110
  fishing in, 93, 98
  as manager in, 87–88

Jackson, Joe, 33
Japan
  at war, 36–37, 38, 42–43, 45
Jimmy Fund, 99–101
Johnson, Ban, 87

Kaese, Harold, 49
Kaufman, Louise, 101–102
Kell, George, 57
Kerensky, Rick, 109
Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego, The (Bill Nowlin), 7, 18
Klein, Chuck, 54
Korean War, 99
  events of, 59–60, 62–68
Koufax, Sandy, 91, 106
Kramer, Rob, 96

Lajoie, Nap, 32, 54
Lake, Austen, 57
Landis, Kenesaw Mountain, 39
Lane, Bill, 10–11
Lazzeri, Tony, 8
Lindbergh, Charles, 25
Lombardi, Ernie, 8
Luckiest Man (Jonathan Eig), 87
Lucky to Be a Yankee (Joe DiMaggio), 29
Luscomb, Rod, 5
Lutz, Johnny, 5

Mack, Connie, 34, 104
Mantle, Mickey, 54, 73, 104, 106
McCarthy, Joe, 29
McGraw, John, 86–87, 104
McGwire, Mark, 106–107
Medwick, Joe, 54
Mifflin, Eddie, 71, 73
Miller, Eddie, 28
Milwaukee Braves, 99

Minneapolis Millers, 14, 16–18
Miramichi River, 96–98, 102
Murray, Jim, 57
Musial, Stan, 38, 47, 112
My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life (autobiography)
childhood in, 4–5, 28
family in, 55, 70, 85
major leagues in, 12, 14, 21, 34, 50, 53, 58, 71, 78–79
as manager in, 88, 91
military in, 40–41, 45, 60, 62, 63, 68
minor leagues in, 17
retirement in, 81, 83

Nagumo, Chuichi, 36
National Baseball Hall of Fame
members, 18, 83–85, 87
National League, 28, 32, 50–51, 87, 104
Negro League, 86
Newark Bears, 26
New York Giants, 9, 29, 86–87
New York Yankees, 10, 79
games against, 22–23, 55, 57, 73
management, 29, 83
Yankee Stadium, 18, 20, 83
Nowlin, Bill, 66
The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego, 7, 18

O'Doul, Lefty, 3
Orlando, Johnny, 14, 30, 34
Orlando, Vinnie, 30
Ott, Mel, 73

Pacific Coast League, 1, 8–11
Paige, Satchel, 85
Palmeiro, Rafael, 107
Passeau, Claude, 28
Pearl Harbor, 45
bombing of, 36–37, 38–39, 43, 75, 103
Pesky, Johnny
teammate, 42, 47
Philadelphia Athletics, 34, 55
Pittsburgh Pirates, 50
Pope, Edwin, 93

Rickey, Branch, 86
Ripken, Cal, 106
Robert, Chick, 5
Robinson, Aaron, 57
Robinson, Frank, 54
Robinson, Jackie, 86
Roosevelt, Franklin, 26, 36, 39, 40
Ruffing, Red, 20
Ruth, George "Babe," 21, 112
baseball career, 73
on Williams, 26–27
Ryan, Nolan, 88

Sailer, Steve, 94
San Diego, California
family in, 4, 11–12, 13, 17
San Diego Padres (major-league team), 9
San Diego Padres (PCL), 9, 10
contract, 11
owner, 10–11
playing for, 1, 3, 11, 18
San Francisco Seals, 1, 3
Science of Hitting, The (Underwood and Williams)
theories in, 30, 88–90
Sears, Roebuck & Company, 82–83, 93
Sewell, Rip "Showboat," 50–51
Shaughnessy, Dan, 107
Sisler, George, 29, 32–33
Sosa, Sammy, 106–107
Soviet Union, 25, 45, 74–75
Sputnik, 74–75
St. Louis Cardinals, 11
and the World Series, 53

Taylor, John, 22
Ted Williams Day, 104
Ted Williams: A Baseball Life (Michael Seidel), 16–17
major leagues in, 21–22, 24, 26–27, 53, 55
military in, 62
Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero (Leigh Montville), 77, 101, 109, 110
Doris in, 18, 70
fans in, 74

fishing in, 93
high school baseball in, 8–9
hitting in, 30
as manager in, 88
military in, 42, 43, 45, 60, 66–67
minor leagues in, 16
Ted Williams: My Life in Pictures, 5
Ted Williams: A Tribute, 66
Tehachapi Mountains, 13
Terry, Bill, 29, 33
Texas Rangers, 91
Triple Crown
winning, 17, 40, 53–55, 57
Twice Around the Bases (Kevin Kennedy), 90

Underwood, John
friendship, 93–94, 102, 112
Updike, John, 79, 81, 83

Vanguard rocket, 75
Villarino, Joe, 8

Wagner, Charlie, 26
Waner, Paul, 3, 8
Washington Senators
games against, 77
manager of, 88–91
Webb, Mel, 55
Wertz, Vic, 57
West, Max, 14
Whiteside, Larry, 57
Williams, Bobby-Jo (daughter), 55, 59, 85, 110
Williams, Claudia (daughter), 85
Williams, Danny (brother), 12
Williams, Dolores Wettach (wife), 85, 101
Williams, Doris Soule (wife)
divorce, 70–71
family, 55, 59
marriage, 43
relationship with Ted, 17–18
Williams, John Henry (son), 85
death, 112
marketing, 106, 109–110
relationship with Ted, 109–110
Williams, Lee Howard (wife), 83, 101
Williams, May Venzor (mother), 11, 12, 51
and the Salvation Army, 4
support of, 38–39
Williams, Sam (father), 4, 12
Williams, Ted
awards and honors, 17, 32–35, 40, 53–55, 57, 77, 79, 83–85, 89
behavior, 3, 14, 16, 20–21, 42, 55, 57, 66, 70, 73–74, 77, 93, 112
birth, 4
charity, 99–101
childhood, 4–5, 7–9
chronology, 115–117
death, 109–110, 112
divorce, 70–71, 83, 85, 101
education, 1, 4–5, 7–11
endorsements, 40, 60, 82–83, 93
fishing and hunting, 5, 17–18, 43, 45, 55, 67–68, 82–83, 92–94, 96–99
injuries and illnesses, 53, 68, 71, 78, 106, 107, 109
as manager, 87–92
marriage, 43, 83, 85, 101
military, 36–43, 45, 47, 60, 62–68, 94, 99, 112
physical appearance, 3, 5, 18, 62, 89
retirement, 79–81, 82–83, 86
statistics, 113–114
World Series, 38, 47, 87, 104
1946, 53, 66
World War I, 39
World War II, 60, 62, 73, 94
and baseball, 37–39, 45, 47
events of, 25, 36–43, 45, 47, 103

Yastrzemski, Carl, 54, 112
Yawkey, Tom
and the Red Sox, 24, 78–79, 87

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RONALD A. REIS is the author of 15 books, including young adult biographies of Eugenie Clark, Jonas Salk, Mickey Mantle, and Lou Gehrig.