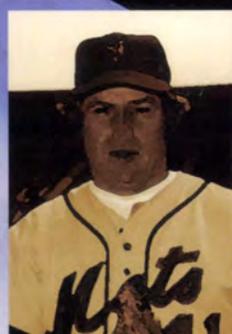
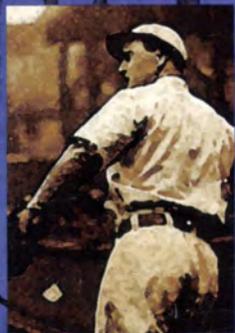


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SAN FRANCISCO

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THE 28TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF
THE SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

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THE SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
JUNE 25 - 28, 1998

HOSTED BY:

SABR

LEFTY O'DOUL
C H A P T E R



On The Cover

Members of the Baseball Hall of Fame who were born and/or raised in Northern California:

Left to right, top to bottom:

Frank Chance (Fresno), Joe Cronin (San Francisco), Joe DiMaggio (Martinez)
Lefty Gomez (Rodeo), Chick Hafey (Berkeley), Harry Hooper (Santa Cruz)
George Kelly (San Francisco), Ernie Lombardi (Oakland), Joe Morgan (Oakland)
Frank Robinson (Oakland), Tom Seaver (Fresno), Willie Stargel (Alameda)

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BASEBALL HISTORY

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Lefty O'Doul

by Richard Leutzinger

Lefty O'Doul had a meteoric career as a big league ballplayer but his contributions to baseball continued for a lifetime. He pitched four seasons in the American League but anyone who blinked might not have noticed. He made only 34 appearances in that time, barely one per month.

His most noteworthy pitching achievement—if you can call it that—was when he faced 16 Cleveland Indians batters and gave up 13 runs in a single inning in 1923. No pitcher in this century has had a worse inning.

O'Doul was also in and out of the National League in a flash. During seven seasons as an outfielder, he again left behind in his vapor trail records that may never be broken. These, though, were records others would envy.

His .398 average in 1929 is the highest in this century by a National League outfielder. His 254 base hits are an NL record. And he became the only player in history to hit more than 30 home runs and strike out fewer than 20 times in the same season, with 32 homers and 19 strikeouts.

In 1930 O'Doul batted .383 and two years after that hit .368 to win his second National League batting title. By 1935 he was gone. His .349 lifetime average is the fourth highest of all time but is not listed among baseball's career records. O'Doul played only 970 games, 30 fewer than required to qualify.

Impressive as they are, O'Doul's accomplishments as a player rank only as footnotes to his long and distinguished career as a minor league manager, batting instructor, good will ambassador for baseball and diplomat.

O'Doul was happy to return home to San Francisco, even though he'd batted .316 in 1934, his final big league season. He had signed on as player-manager of his hometown Seals of the Pacific Coast League. He managed the club for the next 17 years.



At least one of his players graduated to the major leagues every season, even though the Seals were an independent organization, a farm team for no one.

O'Doul spent an additional six seasons managing four other Coast League teams. He turned down numerous offers to manage in the major leagues because of his love for the West Coast, and for San Francisco in particular.

He and Rogers Hornsby were widely recognized as the premier batting instructors of their day. One of O'Doul's first pupils was Joe DiMaggio in 1935, when both were with the Seals. DiMaggio improved his average 57

points from the previous season, although O'Doul refused to take credit. "Nobody taught Joe DiMaggio to hit," he said. "I was just smart enough to leave him alone. He didn't need my help, believe me."

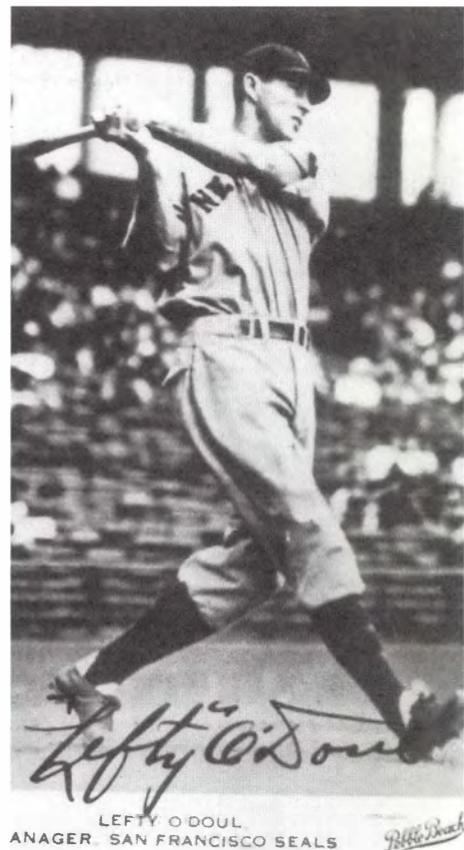
DiMaggio knew otherwise. He continued to seek O'Doul's advice, even after achieving stardom with the Yankees.

Dom DiMaggio, Joe's little brother, also played for O'Doul in San Francisco. He claimed he wouldn't have reached the major leagues without O'Doul's help. "He was far and away the finest batting instructor that ever put on a baseball uniform," he said.

Another of O'Doul's pupils in San Francisco was Ferris Fain, who later won two American League batting titles. "I learned it all from him," he said of O'Doul. "I was lucky to have received my apprenticeship from him."

Ted Williams also sought O'Doul's advice, while a rookie with the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League. O'Doul told him: "You just keep doing what you're doing and don't let anyone change you."

O'Doul didn't confine his teaching to players in the Coast League. Even before retiring as a major league player, he spent much of his off season time teaching San Francisco youngsters how to play ball. He was an icon in their eyes.





Richard Leutzinger Collection

"Lefty" and "The Kids" had a mutual admiration society going in San Francisco

He gave them bats and balls by the dozen, sometimes even between innings of Seals games. To stop that practice, the club made an agreement with Lefty to sponsor an annual O'Doul Kids Day, letting thousands of youngsters into the game free, and giving them balls and miniature O'Doul bats.

O'Doul never turned down requests for his autograph. Once, two boys approached his table in a restaurant. "Mr. O'Doul, we're sorry to ask while you're eating, but would you give us your autograph?" Lefty's reply: "Boys, I would have been very upset if you hadn't asked."

He sponsored youth teams all the way from Brooklyn to Vancouver at various times during his career as a player and manager.

When it came to popularizing baseball, though, O'Doul's most significant efforts were in Japan. San Francisco sportswriters called him "The Father of Baseball in Japan" because of the major role he played in starting professional baseball there.

O'Doul made more than 20 trips to Japan, sometimes at his own expense. He first went as a player with an all-star team in 1931, but most of his visits were as a teacher and coach. He was as revered by Japanese children as by their American counterparts.

Baseball became so popular in Japan that play continued without interruption through most of World War II, even though it was the national pastime of the enemy.

American ballplayers and all-star teams were banned from visiting Japan from 1937 until after the war.



Dick Hobbins Collection



Dick Hobbins Collection

O'Doul was one of the first to go back, in 1946, laying groundwork for the resumption of relations between Japanese and American ballplayers.

The greatest achievement of O'Doul's long life in baseball may have been leading his San Francisco Seals on a six-week tour of Japan in 1949. The country was still mired in postwar depression, and diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan were ice cold. In just 40-odd days, O'Doul and the Seals managed to restore the nation's morale, break the postwar tension in Japanese-American relations, and lay a new foundation of friendship between the two countries.

General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.S. occupation forces in Japan, was astounded at the impact O'Doul had made. "All the diplomats together would not have been able to do that," he said. "This is the greatest piece of diplomacy ever."

Lefty O'Doul

Introduction to “Casey at the Bat”

by Ron Fimrite



Can there be a soul alive on these shores so culturally impaired that he cannot respond with a twinkle of recognition to the immortal lines that begin, “The outlook wasn’t brilliant for the Mudville nine that day...?”

Probably not, for “Casey at the Bat” may well be the most familiar as well as the most popular of all American poems. It has been recited endlessly on the stage and on radio and television. It has been made into movies and set to music (it even became an opera). And academics have gravely contemplated its interior nuances. It is undeniably a staple of American folklore.

But it was written pseudonymously as newspaper filler by a young scholar who dismissed it as a trifle, never earned more than five dollars for it, and never wrote anything of consequence again. Indeed, not all of the irony in “Casey” is contained within its text.

The poem first appeared under the byline “Phin” in the Sunday edition of *The San Francisco Examiner* on June 3, 1888. It was unceremoniously sandwiched between an unsigned editorial and an essay by the newspaper’s star columnist, Ambrose Bierce. Local readers found it amusing enough, and there was some speculation that “Mudville” might in reality be Stockton, a particularly cheerless community back then northeast of San Francisco. But the poem was hardly clasped to the bosom of the reading public outside the immediate Bay Area.

It was written, in the first place, only by an accident of fate. The editor-publisher of the *Examiner* at the time was the not-yet-famous William Randolph Hearst. Before he was expelled from Harvard for pranks that included sending autographed chamber pots to his professors, Hearst had been business manager of the campus humor magazine, the *Lampoon*, then edited by his friend, Ernest Lawrence Thayer. Unlike Hearst, young Thayer was a brilliant student, a disciple of the philosopher William James, who would graduate Magna Cum Laude in 1885. After Harvard, Thayer sailed for Europe in the vain hope of escaping the prospect of running his father’s profitable woolen mills in Worcester, Mass. He was, after all, a philosopher, not a man of commerce. At least, so he thought

Hearst, meanwhile, had inherited the *Examiner* from his father. Sensing the need for a humor columnist, he cabled Thayer in Paris, imploring him to take the job, at least temporarily. Thayer, still fleeing the family business, accepted. But he stayed in San Francisco barely a year before surrendering at last, in December of 1887, to his responsibilities back in Worcester. For a few months afterward, though, he mailed some remaining ballads and ditties back to the *Examiner*. The last of these was “Casey at the Bat.”

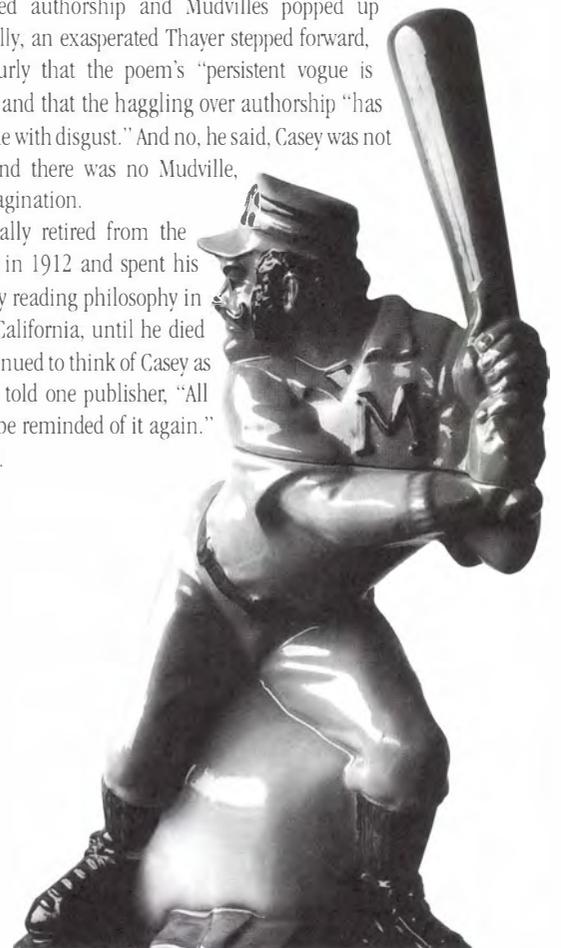
And that would have been the end of it had not a then popular New York novelist, Archibald Clavering Gunter, been visiting San Francisco at the time of “Casey’s” publication. Amused by the poem, he clipped it from the paper and took it home with him. On August 14, 1888, Gunter was visiting with his friend, the actor DeWolf Hopper, when Hopper told him he desperately needed some baseball material since players from the Giants and Chicago White Stockings were scheduled to be in the theater that night. Gunter met with Colonel McCaull, who owned the theater. McCaull then gave Hopper the “Casey” clipping.

And when on that fateful evening Hopper dropped his voice from B-flat to low-C at the line, “the multitude was awed,” he saw in the audience Giants catcher Buck Ewing’s “gallant mustachios give a single nervous twitch.” Ewing’s mustachios were not alone. In fact, Hopper’s recitation was such a rip-roaring success that he would spend the better part of his remaining 47 years repeating it—by his own estimation, some 10,000 times.

When he first came across the poem, Hopper had no idea who had written it. No one did, except Hearst and Thayer, and for months afterward, many an impostor claimed authorship and Mudvilles popped up everywhere. Finally, an exasperated Thayer stepped forward, commenting sourly that the poem’s “persistent vogue is unaccountable” and that the haggling over authorship “has certainly filled me with disgust.” And no, he said, Casey was not a real person and there was no Mudville, except in his imagination.

Thayer finally retired from the woolen business in 1912 and spent his last years happily reading philosophy in Santa Barbara, California, until he died in 1940. He continued to think of Casey as “nonsense” and told one publisher, “All I ask is never to be reminded of it again.”

Fat chance.



Ron Fimrite is a Senior Writer for *Sports Illustrated*.

Casey at the Bat

A Ballad of the Republic, Sung in the Year 1888

by Richard Thayer

*The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
The score stood four to two with but one inning more to play.
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.*

*A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that—
We'd put up even money now with Casey at the bat.*

*But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.*

*But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;
And when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,
There was Johnnie safe at second and Flynn a-bugging third.*

*Then from 5,000 throats and more there rose a lusty yell;
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
It knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.*

*There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.*

*Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.*

*And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.*

*From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted some one on the stand;
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.*

*With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."*

*"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud,
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.*

*The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.*

*Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.*

This is the original version of Casey—word for word, comma for comma—exactly as it appeared in the fourth column on the fourth page of the San Francisco Examiner, Sunday morning, June 3, 1888.

Cal McVey Abandoned His National League Career To Come West... For Good

by Darryl Brock

Described as a “most genial boniface” when he opened a San Francisco saloon in 1885, Calvin Alexander McVey (“Mac” to his friends) got a kick out of patrons who marveled at his hands: big ham fists with discolored lumps and knobs, odd-angled joints, and mangled fingers. A formidable, wide-bodied individual (5’9”, 195 pounds in his playing prime), McVey doubtless served as his establishment’s bouncer; he had a talent for bare-knuckles pugilism, and back in his Boston days was given to sparring with heavyweight champ John L. Sullivan.

But it was the newly ascendant “National Game,” not boxing, that had battered his hands. For 25 years, many of them as a catcher, McVey snared rocketing balls (“finger-breakers” in the parlance of the time) barehanded. During those pre-glove decades, digital disfigurements were the proud emblems of a “ballist,” who was expected to play through all but truly disabling injuries. Even a considerate manager might say, as Harry Wright once did, on spotting McVey’s black and blue swollen masses. “Well, Mac, the hands look kind of bad. You can rest up today. Go out and play first base.”

The game shaped Cal McVey’s life as profoundly as it did his hands. Born in 1850, he learned “base ball” (it remained two words for a quarter century) as it spread over the nation in the wake of the Civil War. A husky boy still in his mid-teens, he faced Washington’s top-ranked Nationals when they toured his hometown Indianapolis in 1867. He lashed a hit his first time at bat, but afterward “burst” his hand, according to a reporter, trying to spear a liner, and had to leave the contest, his pain soothed only by glory.

Mac’s play for the Indianapolis Westerns the next season brought him to the attention of Wright, then recruiting the first openly all-paid squad. Mac signed on as the Cincinnati Red Stockings’ rookie right fielder—at 18, easily the youngest of those pioneer pros. In 1869, taking on all comers and winning 60 times without a loss, the team rode the new transcontinental railroad over hills and plains, bound for the “Pacific Slope,” where Mac first encountered the charms of California.

Dubbed the “Invincible Nine,” their exploits flashed across the country by telegraph, the Red Stockings were eagerly awaited in San Francisco. Poster-sized chromolithographs of the players sold briskly, and advertisers were busy dreaming up new angles. One merchant announced the sale of “Red Stockings and all kinds of underwear, shirts, ties, etc.,” while an ad for a marine aquarium began, “Those lionized Red Stockings are going out to see Captain Foster’s educated sea lions!”

More than 2,000 people mobbed the Broadway wharf the night they arrived by river steamer from Sacramento—a foreshadowing of what would come. During their 11 days in the city the players enjoyed little privacy. Their rooms at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, located at Bush and Sansome, were often under virtual siege, and reporters shadowed them on their sightseeing tours through Chinatown’s alleys and across the expanse of dunes out to Cliff House near the Golden Gate. Rubberneckers thronged the music halls where they attended



Doug McWilliams Collection

burlesque and minstrel shows, and gawked when they visited the bustling Mechanics’ Fair to view such Gilded Age marvels as Pullman’s opulent new Silver Palace Car and the golden spike recently pounded by Leland Stanford at Promontory Point.

The series of matches against top local clubs took place on the Recreation Grounds, at 25th and Folsom, the West Coast’s only fenced-in ballpark. Opened two years before by Australian immigrants August and William Hatton,

the facility also hosted circuses and velocipede races, as well as cricket, ball and track (“pedestrian”) events—anything that would draw a paying crowd. On the Red Stockings’ game afternoons, streets around the ballpark were chaotic. Drivers maneuvered buggies, wagons and delivery carts close to the fences, then climbed atop them, blocking traffic as they stubbornly refused to budge from their vantage points. Crowds funneling into the ballpark’s narrow entrance gate were swelled by passengers from the Omnibus Railway Company’s horse-drawn shuttles arriving from downtown—round trip and ticket a bargain at 50 cents, coaches departing from Montgomery Street’s Metropolitan Hotel every five minutes.

Inside the grounds, over the wooden clubhouse, the rivals’ standards fluttered beneath Old Glory with her 37 stars. Next to the clubhouse stood the Ladies’ Pavilion, a covered grandstand for the fair sex and escorts, where satin-bedecked women fluttered colored team ribbons and twirled parasols. The outfield was ringed by carriages that had entered through a special gate on 26th Street. On the “bleaching boards” and in roped-off “bull pens” outside the baselines, men roared and tossed their derbies high; in these civilized times they were less prone than earlier in the city’s lurid history to distract fielders by shooting off guns.



Cincinnati Baseball Team 1869

John E. Spalding Collection

Scorekeepers and the press perched behind two long tables on the first base line.

Games were advertised to begin at two o'clock, but often started up to an hour late due to the jammed streets. Given their high scores and a 15-minute "intermission" after the seventh inning (regarded by an accompanying Cincinnati sportswriter as a "dodge" to sell liquor), most of the games required more than two hours to complete. Betting was furious—not on whether the locals would win (conceded an impossibility), but on whether they'd manage one-half (or less optimistically, one-third) the Red Stockings' run totals.

The famed eastern visitors, playing 91 years before the advent of Candlestick Park, found the weather a greater challenge than anything posed by their outclassed opponents. The afternoon wind, "a fearful gale" in the words of the Cincinnati writer, swept over the city's dunes, lifting clouds of sand "at times so violent that the striker was almost blinded." Even on mild days, "a stiff breeze constantly blowing put a drawback to heavy batting."

Heavy batting was a relative concept, however. The Red Stockings racked up 50 hits per contest and swept the six games by the average score of 56 to 6. Mac shone among the team leaders. His 50 at bats produced 34 hits (a nifty batting average of .680), including 22 doubles, a triple, and two home runs (slugging percentage 1.280). Scoring 42 runs and stealing safely six times, he was put out on the bases only twice. In the field he caught everything that came his way except one windblown fly that carried beyond his straining fingers—not the last time a visiting outfielder would be so bedeviled.

The Red Stockings took the measure of the city and its ballclubs all too quickly. Travel-weary and increasingly bored, most were ready to depart well before the games were finished—although they did marvel at the size and profusion of local vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Few of the players would return; none would opt to resettle in the Golden State.

None, that is, except Mac.

Baseball next took him to the opposite coast. In 1871 he accompanied Harry Wright to Boston, and for the next five seasons played in the National Association, averaging .362 and helping power the Red Stockings to a string of pennants. Mac had joined an elite handful of America's top-paid players. In 1876 he accepted \$3,000—an astonishing sum during a depression-mired decade—to play for Chicago's powerful entry in the newly formed National League. Mac and his mates promptly captured the first-ever NL flag. For three more seasons he starred, boasting later of slamming balls out of every National League park. By then he had married and begun a family. In an era when athletes' careers were generally shorter and far less lucrative than today's, Mac, after a decade of professional play, remained securely at the top.

Then, at age 29, he left it all behind.

It happened at the close of the '79 season, when he brought a touring club to the Bay Area. On the way, according to one source, he "won \$4,200 on a \$700 flyer in mining stocks and immediately quit the baseball game for that of mining broker." Another account had him opting for the area's mild year-round weather, sandstorms notwithstanding. "Stricken with the climatic affliction," a local newspaper observed, "and ignoring all offers from the East [Cal McVey has] determined to make San Francisco his home."

Whatever the attraction, Mac sent for his family. Joining Oakland's Bay City Club, he was soon playing on diamonds in San Francisco, Alameda, San Jose, and Sacramento. In an important late-season 1880 contest he demonstrated that his skills had not slipped. Playing the alien position of second base, he went errorless while notching five putouts and ten assists, participated in a double play, and at the plate rapped two hits and scored twice. "The palm for superior playing," wrote an admiring *San Francisco Chronicle* sportswriter, "must be accorded to McVey."

Mac's share of gate receipts from such Sunday heroics rarely exceeded \$100, however—a far cry from big-league money. Moving around, he mixed baseball with a number of enterprises: saloon keeper, stock agent, mining supervisor, cigar store proprietor. As superintendent of a Hanford irrigation company, he formed a team "for my own diversion," he said, proudly adding, "From 1882 to 1885 we beat all the clubs in the surrounding country." Returning to San Francisco, he played briefly for the powerful Pioneers, averaging .308 late in 1885, at the age of 35. The next year he ventured to San Diego, where he organized a new ballclub, the Hamiltons, and anchored them for three seasons. Finally, in 1891, after assisting the San Jose Dukes to the California League pennant, Mac hung up his spikes at age 41.

Devastated in later years by the loss of his beloved wife, Abbie, to injuries sustained in the Great Quake of '06, Mac lived on until 1926. He passed away at age 75 in San Francisco, his residence not many blocks from the site of the old ball grounds where he had first come to play nearly 57 years before.

"I withdrew from baseball," he once said, "but my heart has always been with the boys on the diamond."

The same diamond, he might have added, that had swept him from one era into another.

And carried him across a continent.



Catching a finger-breaker

Courtesy of the Author, D. Brock

The California League In Professional Baseball

by Bill Weiss

The Class A California League is in its 55th season, but professional baseball in California and on the Pacific Coast dates to 1878 when the Pacific League was organized in San Francisco. The first California League made its debut a year later; its 1880 constitution and by-laws refer to the league as “The California Base Ball League of Professional Ball Players.”

Both the California and Pacific Leagues comprised four clubs playing weekends only in the city of San Francisco. The Pacific League folded in July.

The first in a long line of California League players to graduate to the majors were Jerry Denny and “Grasshopper Jim” Whitney. Whitney, who pitched the Knickerbocker team to the championship, had a 23–6 record with a 1.49 ERA. Denny, with the runner-up Athletic club, hit only .209, but that was fifth-best in the league. Whitney won 31 games for Boston in 1881 and pitched the club to the National League pennant in 1883 with a 38–22 record. He pitched in the majors for 10 years, dying of consumption in 1891 at age 33. Denny moved up to Providence in 1881 and played in the National League for 13 years. He is considered the best-fielding third baseman of his time and still holds the major league record for most chances per game among players with 1,000 or more games at that position. In 1884, he hit the first World Series home run.

The California League remained a four-team, San Francisco, weekends-only organization until 1886. That season, teams from Sacramento and Oakland replaced two of the San Francisco clubs, but the schedule remained at 30–35 games. In 1887 the schedule was 46 games and the following year it increased to seven games. In 1888 Stockton replaced Sacramento. Stockton, reputedly the site of the famous “Casey at the Bat” game, won the pennant. Among the Stockton star players was catcher George Stallings who, 26 years later, managed the “Miracle Braves” to the 1914 World Series championship.

Perhaps the most important figure in the California League in the 1880s was Walter Wallace, manager of Haverly’s Theater in San Francisco. He entered the

Haverlys into the league in 1883 and they won the pennant the next four seasons. (Wallace’s daughter, Edna, later married DeWolf Hopper, whose dramatic recitation made “Casey at the Bat” famous.)

During the late 1880s baseball flourished in the area and crowds of 15,000–20,000 on a Sunday were common.

In 1889, the Haverlys, now owned by Henry Harris, bought the Pioneers thus forming the first “San Francisco” team. Sacramento replaced the Pioneers and the schedule increased to 94 games. In 1890, the same four teams—San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton and Oakland—played a 139-game schedule, the longest in professional baseball up to that time.

In 1891 the schedule increased again, to 147 games. San Jose won the pennant behind the amazing pitching of George Harper and Nick Lookabaugh, who together pitched every inning of the 147 games! Harper had a record of 47–32, pitching 79 complete games, 704.1 innings. Lookabaugh was 43–25, pitching 577 innings. George Stallings was their catcher.

After the season, San Jose challenged Portland, Pacific Northwest League winners, to a best-of-19 series for the championship of the Pacific Coast. It began on Thanksgiving Day and ended in a dispute January 10, 1892. With the series tied at nine wins apiece, the score of the final game was tied 3–3 in the eighth. With San Jose runners on second and third, the Portland manager protested a decision at second. While Portland argued, the runner on third stole home and was called safe. The Portland manager took his team off the field, the umpires forfeited the game, and San Jose was the Pacific Coast champion.

The 1891 season also saw what may have been baseball’s first woman owner. In the latter stages of the season, Mrs. Laura Vice furnished the funds to keep the financially distressed Sacramento club afloat and eventually took over the franchise. In 1892 the California League expanded the schedule once more, this time to 177 games and, for the first time, went beyond Northern California with Los Angeles replacing Sacramento. The greatest distance in the league had been the 110 miles between San Jose and Sacramento. Now it was 400 miles to Los Angeles, a city that was growing rapidly, but still had one-sixth the population of San Francisco and only a few more people than Oakland.



Jim Whitney

Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Bill Weiss is a long time baseball statistician and historian.

Attendance declined and Los Angeles owner G.A. Vanderbeek persuaded the other owners to split the schedule. San Jose won the first half by one percentage point over Los Angeles, .576 to .575. Los Angeles won the second half by three games over Oakland as San Jose slumped to last place. Los Angeles won the post-season playoff, five games to two with one tie, but a dispute over the playoff caused the league directors to declare the two teams co-champions.

Harper and Lookabaugh continued their remarkable feats of endurance, although they didn't pitch every game. Harper, 37–38, pitched "only" 697 innings. Lookabaugh set professional baseball records which, it is safe to say, will never be matched. He pitched 803 innings in 91 games with 90 starts, 89 complete games and 88 decisions (45–43)!

San Jose owner Mike Finn had lost money in 1892 and moved his team to Stockton for the 1893 season, the only change in the league's makeup. However, things did not go well for the league from the outset. The entire country was in the grip of a depression and attendance kept falling. Oakland was in deep financial trouble with the players complaining they were not being paid, and the club was sold on May 19. Finn was having personnel problems in Stockton and he sold the team to John Moore on May 27. John J. Mone the San Francisco attorney who had been president of the league since 1882, was fired by the directors on June 5, with only San Francisco's Henry Harris supporting him.

San Francisco businessman Bob Weiland replaced Mone. Once again the league voted to split the season, at least in part to help Stockton which was far behind third-place San Francisco. The second half began July 5, with Moore having moved the Stockton club to Sacramento. On August 9 Sacramento declined to travel to Los Angeles unless that club guaranteed them more money. Los Angeles owner Al Lindley refused and on the 14th both clubs disbanded, killing the league.

There were two interesting sidelights to the 1893 season. One was the appearance in the California League with its first future Hall of Famer, Clark Griffith, who posted a 30–17, 2.20 ERA record for Oakland. The next year he moved up to Chicago.

The second event was the playing of the first night game on the Pacific Coast on July 2, 1893, at Athletic Park in Los Angeles with the Angels beating Stockton, 5–2. It was an exhibition that did not count in the standings. The *Los Angeles Times* called it "burlesque baseball." There were 20 arc lights strung around the field between four tall posts, and a moveable searchlight on top of the grandstand. The stands were full, but there was no accurate count of the crowd.

John Spalding, in his excellent book "Always on Sunday. The California Baseball League, 1886–1915," says, "Everyone expected the California League would rise again in 1894. But, it did not and would not be resurrected for the next four years. Big time professional baseball was dead in Northern California, victim of the severe economic downturn that gripped the country in the early 1890s, growing interest in other sports . . . plus greed and rank mismanagement within

the league.

The California League returned in 1898, going back to a 48-game weekend schedule. The only operator from previous years was Henry Harris of San Francisco. There were eight teams: Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Stockton, Athletics (San Francisco) and Fresno, which was replaced by Watsonville in August. In 1899 the league dropped the Athletics and Stockton and went to a 92-game schedule. In both years the smaller cities suffered financial problems. In 1899 San Jose disbanded on August 28 and the league dropped Watsonville for scheduling purposes.

In 1900 the league played a 92-game schedule with Stockton replacing Santa Cruz. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the season was the most successful since 1889 and that only Stockton failed to show a profit.

Los Angeles, whose population had doubled in 10 years, was back in the league in 1901, replacing Stockton. The league played a varying number of games, from Sacramento's 144 to champion San Francisco's 162.

The same four cities returned for the final year of the first incarnation of the California League, playing from 168 to 186 games with Oakland winning the pennant.

Following the 1902 season, which ended December 8, the California League voted to add Portland and Seattle and change the name to the Pacific Coast League. The PCL still flourishes 95 years later.

In February 1903, the California State League was organized with teams in Stockton, San Jose, Petaluma, Vallejo, San Francisco and two teams in Oakland. The league played a weekend schedule, much like the California League of the 1880s. (Although the league was officially the California State League 1903–1915, some people called it the California League and it was popularly known as just the State League.)

Other towns drifted in and out of the California State League for the rest of the decade: Fresno, Lodi, Santa Cruz, Alameda and even a U.S. Army team from the Presidio of San Francisco. Clubs called Oakland and San Francisco were primarily traveling teams, providing opponents for the stalwarts such as Stockton, San Jose and Sacramento who played the vast majority of their games at home.

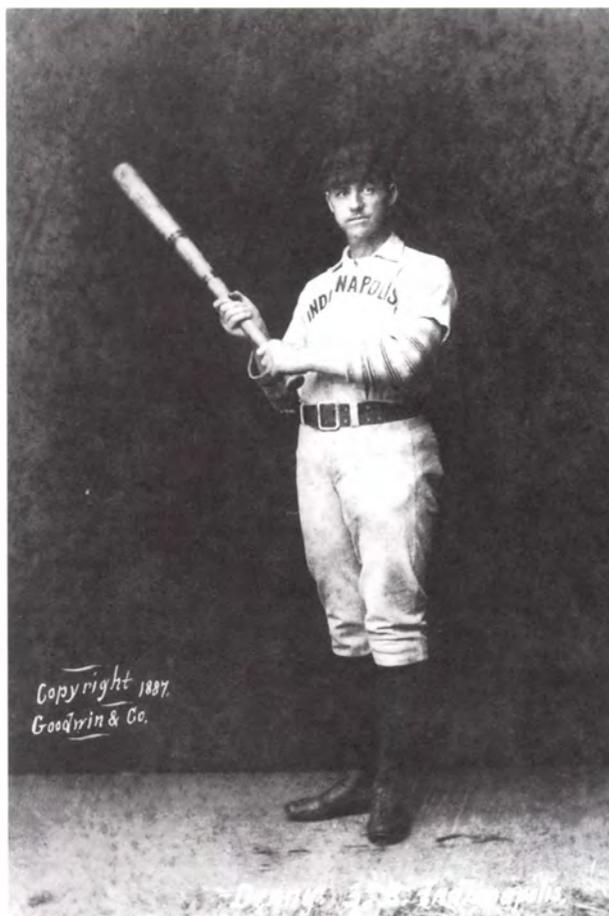
Stockton was the dominant team of that period, winning pennants in 1903, '05, '06, '07, '08.

The league operated outside the structure of the National Association and was called an Outlaw League because they refused to

honor the reserve clause or contracts signed by players with other leagues. When the California State League increased its schedule to 56 games in 1907 and 78 games in 1908, they became a real thorn in the side of the Pacific Coast League.

By 1909 there was an all-out war between the two leagues. Stockton manager Cy Moreing built a new park in Oakland and took some of his better players there. He nicknamed his team the Invaders.

Negotiations began between PCL President J. Cal Ewing and CSL President Frank Herman, a San Francisco sportswriter, to end the war between the leagues.



Jerry Denny

Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY

They reached an agreement on October 3 to bring the outlaw league into Organized Baseball. The CSL halted play immediately although there were seven weeks remaining on the schedule. Stockton, winners of the first half, and Oakland, leading the second half, had a playoff for the championship with Oakland winning, 4 games to 3.

The California State League entered Organized Baseball in 1910 as a Class B league. Class A was the highest level at that time and there were five Class A leagues, including the PCL. There were six teams in the league, Fresno, San Jose, Stockton and three clubs operated by PCL teams: Oakland, San Francisco and Sacramento. The latter three played in the PCL parks when the Class A teams were on the road. Only Stockton escaped financial problems. Sacramento and San Francisco folded May 31. The league dropped to Class D, the lowest rung on the National Association ladder, on June 6. The next day Oakland moved to Merced. When Fresno closed up shop on June 25 because it was unable to pay its players, the league disbanded.

Aside from the PCL, there was no professional baseball in the area for the next two years. In 1913 some PCL clubs started a reorganized California League, dropping the word "State", believing that to be a jinx. Teams were placed in Fresno, San Jose, Stockton and Vallejo. PCL proxy Allan Baum was the league president. Vallejo moved to Watsonville on July 6 but the league played its full 123-game schedule with Stockton again winning the pennant.

The four-team league started the 1914 season with Modesto replacing Watsonville, but it lasted only until June 1. Only San Jose was in the black, but apart from financial woes, "Sporting Life" reported an odd twist to the demise of the Modesto club. At a meeting to see what could be done to boost attendance, "The citizens declared themselves. They had had an independent team known as the Modesto Reds which wore red uniforms. They put it into the State League and the uniforms were changed in color. If the league backers would consent to Modesto's wearing red uniforms again, they would back the team. If not, they wouldn't. The other teams wouldn't agree and the league was buried.

The California State League was revived for 1915, with Modesto back in the fold, but the league died once and for all on June 2.

That was the end of professional baseball in the smaller cities of Northern and Central California for the next 25 years. Almost every year, newspaper stories would appear saying that Pacific Coast League owners were contemplating or planning to organize a California League to use as a feeder or farm league, but with one exception nothing ever happened.

In 1929 PCL clubs did back a four-team Class D California State League, but it was in Southern California with Bakersfield the northernmost city. It collapsed on June 17 after playing 60 games.

Finally, in August 1940, the present-day California League was organized with eight teams, all owned by or having working agreements with major league or PCL clubs. The Class C league began its first season with teams in Anaheim, Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Stockton. San Jose was to have been in the league, but their new all-concrete stadium was not finished and they were replaced by Merced. Riverside, owned by Cincinnati, and San Bernardino, operated by Hollywood, dropped out on June 29.

Following the United States entry into World War II in December, 1941, only four teams started in 1942: Fresno, owned by the Cardinals; Santa Barbara, owned by the Dodgers; and independents Bakersfield and San Jose. Restrictions on night games near the coast hurt attendance, but it was gas rationing that caused the league to suspend operations for the duration of the war on June 29. San Jose owner Bob Ripley had tried a unique travel arrangement. When the Owls went to other cities, he gave each player a Greyhound schedule and a bus ticket. It was up to the player to get himself and his uniform to the right place at the right time. The player with the lowest batting average had to carry the bats and the pitcher

with the worst ERA was responsible for the bag of practice balls.

The California League resumed play in 1946 with six teams and has been going ever since. The six were Bakersfield, Fresno, Modesto, Santa Barbara, Stockton and Visalia. San Jose and Ventura were added in 1947, Bill Schroeder, who was instrumental in organizing the league, was president 1941-47. In 1947, six of the franchises were major-league owned and two, Stockton and Modesto, were independent.

Attendance mushroomed after the war, reaching a peak of 789,940 in 1949 under the leadership of former PCL outfielder Jerry Donovan, who was president 1949-55. In the 1950s attendance throughout the minors began to drop, due principally to the advent of television as a rival entertainment and exacerbated in many areas by the arrival of home air conditioning.

The California League maintained its eight-team structure until 1959 when it dropped to six clubs for three years. Except for 1965 and 1976, the league has had a minimum of eight teams since then. Ex-major league infielder Eddie Mulligan became league president in 1956 and served until he retired after the 1975 season.

Attendance reached a low point in 1965 when the six-team league drew only 128,836 for the entire season, an average of 21,743 per club or 333 per opening. San Jose led at the gate with 34,517.

Minor league attendance improved slowly from that point and grew steadily through the 1970s. During the presidency of Bill Wickert (1976-81), financial stability was the goal. In 1979 the California League operated with 10 teams for the first time.

Joe Gagliardi became league president in 1982 and under his leadership the California League has prospered. In 1997 the league set a new attendance record for the seventh time in eight years with a total of 2,061,689, an average of 2,988 per opening. Last July 5, Lake Elsinore set a new record for single game paid attendance with 8,357. Rancho Cucamonga holds the record for the best attendance for a season, 446,146, set in 1995. On the last day of the 1997 season, Rancho Cucamonga became the first Class A team in history to sell two million tickets in a five-year span.

All 10 California League teams have full Player Development Contracts with major league clubs. The Brooklyn-Los Angeles Dodgers have owned or been affiliated with a California League team in every one of the league's 56 seasons.

This year Bakersfield, Lake Elsinore, Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino and Visalia make up the league's Freeway Division. High Desert, Lancaster, Modesto, San Jose and Stockton form the Valley Division. Modesto, now in its 52nd season, has been in the California League the longest. Bakersfield is in its 51st year, Stockton its 49th, San Jose its 47th and Visalia its 46th.

All the southern teams are playing in facilities built in the 1990s. High Desert opened its park in 1991. Rancho Cucamonga in 1993, Lake Elsinore in 1994 and Lancaster and San Bernardino in 1996. Modesto's park underwent a \$3,000,000 renovation in 1997.

The California League is justifiably proud of its part in developing major league players. In the modern era, the California League has produced five Hall of Famers: Don Drysdale (Bakersfield), Rollie Fingers (Modesto), Reggie Jackson (Modesto), Joe Morgan (Modesto) and Don Sutton (Santa Barbara). Recently retired players who should make the Hall include George Brett (San Jose) and Kirby Puckett (Visalia).

Surveys taken annually for the past 27 years show that at least 25% of all major league players on opening day rosters have played in the California League. Among current stars are Mark McGwire, Ken Griffey Jr., Sean Estes, John Wetteland, Roberto Alomar, Rickey Henderson, Chuck Knoblauch, Dennis Eckersley, Pedro Martinez, Mike Piazza, Raul Mondesi, Eric Karros, Rod Beck, Mike Bordick, Denny Neagle, Will Clark and Jim Edmonds.

Oakland Pitcher Broke Color Line in 1916 Game

by Steven Lavoie

A tiny trading card is a precious reminder of the East Bay's bold efforts to end racial discrimination in baseball.

In 1916, the African American whose likeness is printed on the card, Jimmy Claxton of the Oakland Oaks, accomplished what no other member of his race had done in 27 seasons nor would do again for 30—he played baseball on a team of Caucasians. His appearance on a baseball card was a first for a black player, according to Pacific Coast league historian William J. Weiss of San Mateo.

A shortage of strong, healthy throwing arms had the old Oaks of the Pacific Coast League mired in last place in the powerful PCL.

Throughout the spring of 1916, team secretary Herb McFarlin tried desperately to deal for some decent pitchers. Nothing worked out.

State of emergency

Bitter rivals, the Los Angeles Angels were coming to town for a Memorial Day weekend series that featured a Sunday doubleheader. The Oaks pitching staff was not physically equipped to endure the weekend.

The state of emergency forced McFarlin to reach into the thriving East Bay baseball community for someone who could throw a baseball. He found Claxton—a hard-throwing 23-year-old from Canada. The Oaks attributed Claxton's dark skin to his race—American Indian—and produced an affidavit to that effect, Weiss said.

But East Bay fans knew better. The lefty was pitching for a local all-black team, the Oakland Oak Leafs. He was no Indian—he was black. His mother was white, his father was French, American Indian and black. That trace of African ancestry was enough to keep Claxton out of the league.

He played anyway.

The “big Indian” showed up early at the park on May 28, 1916 for his first assignment—a start in the opener that day against the Angels.

Full of nerves, he struggled into the third inning—allowing three Angel runs to cross the plate. The Oaks came back to tie the score, only to lose in the last inning after a close call at first base. Umpire Bill Guthrie, who made the call, was rewarded with a hail of debris tossed from the crowded grandstands by angry Oaks fans.

After peace was restored, a photographer snapped pictures of the Oaks for a San Francisco candy company for use on that year's baseball cards enclosed in packs of Zee-Nut caramelized peanuts. Claxton delivered his best overhand motion for the camera.

In the second game, the Angels continued their batting display. Oakland ace Speed Martin began the parade of Oaks pitchers who gave up 10 runs going into the final inning. The Angels threatened to score even more before Claxton was called in to get the final out in a 10–5 Los Angeles victory.

It turned out to be Claxton's last out as well, at least in the organized professional baseball leagues. According to Weiss, Claxton “stayed around the rest

Reprinted courtesy of the Oakland Tribune. The National Baseball Library and Archive and William J. Weiss of the Society for American Baseball Research contributed to this article.

of the week” before being quietly released.

Unimpressive ERA

The “big Indian's” career across the color line lasted 2 1/3 innings, ending with his earned run average at a forgettable 7.71, when he returned to obscurity on the sandlots with his fellow black players.

Except for the baseball card in several collections, Claxton left behind few traces during a long pitching career that took him across the country—to cities like Oakland and villages like Good Thunder, Minnesota—playing on black and Indian teams.

He was born in 1892 in Wellington, British Columbia, Canada but his family immigrated to Tacoma, Washington when he was just 3 months old. By age 13, he was playing ball as a catcher for a town team in Roslyn, Washington. In 1912, he switched to pitcher, and joined a team across the state in Chester, outside Spokane. In his first start, he struck out 18 batters. In 1916, Claxton found his way to the East Bay, pitching effectively for the Oak Leafs. After his brief stay in the PCL, he returned to the all-black Oakland team and later hooked up with the Shasta Limiteds—a local railroad-sponsored team that won titles in the 1919 and 1920 state tournaments sponsored by the *Tribune*. He also was among the Limiteds' batting leaders.

A long career

By 1924, Claxton was back home in Tacoma, where he helped break the color line in the city league. He later landed a steady job pitching for the Chicago Union Giants, an independent team of black players that toured the smaller cities of the Midwest playing the House of David. He won 20 games, losing only one for the Giants. He went on to Edmonds, Wash., to win all 20 starts there.

In 1932, his name shows up alongside Luis Tiant, Sr. on the roster of the Cuban Stars—a top-level Negro League team. Tiant's son, Luis, Jr., went on to star in the major leagues.

Again he returned to Tacoma, playing with various clubs in the area. According to Weiss, he was still pitching semiprofessionally at age 61 when he threw a two-hitter. He last played in an oldtimers game in 1955 and died March 3, 1970 as an unsung hero of racial discrimination.



George Van Haltren

by Frederick Ivor-Campbell

In his major league debut in Chicago with the White Stockings on June 27, 1887, Californian George Edward Martin Van Haltren struck out the first batter to face him, then went on to tie a National League record by walking 16 men in a 17–11 loss to Boston. (No National League pitcher since has walked more than 14 batters in a game.) But Van Haltren settled down after his shaky inaugural to win 11 of his 17 remaining starts that season, yielding on average fewer than three walks per game.

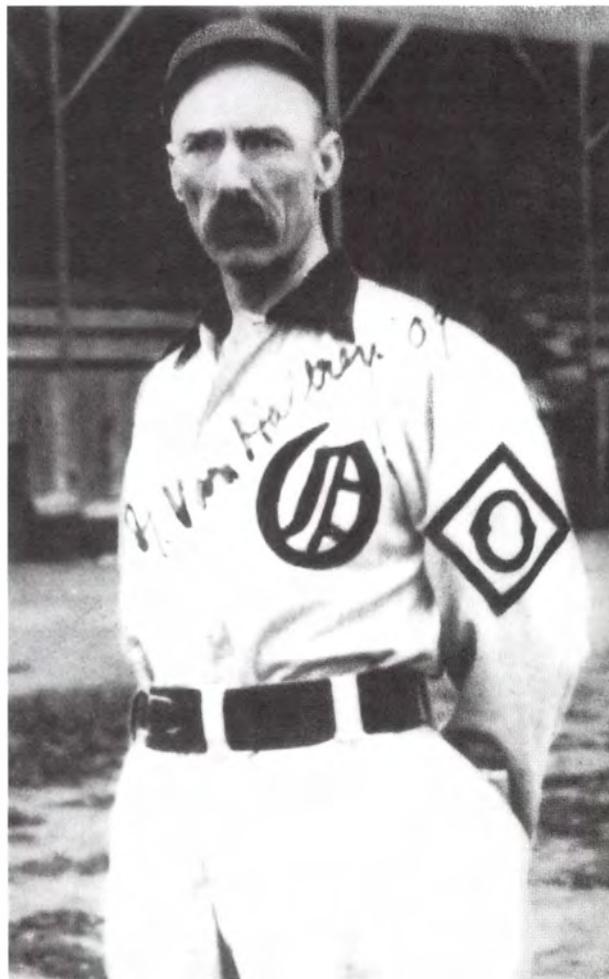
One of the most popular and highly regarded ballplayers to come out of the West in the nineteenth century, Van Haltren was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 30, 1866, but he grew up and learned baseball in Oakland, California. He began his professional career in 1886 with Oakland's Greenhood and Morans, a club organized by tailors and clothing store owners Jacob Greenhood and James T. Moran. In May 1886, a few games into the summer season, the G&Ms deserted the California State League to fill a vacancy in the California League, which until that season had consisted only of clubs in San Francisco. Van Haltren, pitching all but one of his club's games, compiled a 13–12 record as the G&Ms finished third in the four-team league. He batted only .237, but that was good enough to lead his team and rank third in the league.

That winter Van Haltren signed with Pittsburgh for \$1,400, but he was soon traded to Chicago for the brilliant but troublesome pitcher Jim McCormick. Van Haltren, offered a raise in pay to remain in Oakland, tried to back out of his big league contract, but Chicago president A.G. Spalding held on to his new pitcher by threatening to blacklist him and prevent other major leaguers from playing off-season in California. Before Van Haltren could report to Chicago, however, his mother became ill, and Rip (as he was called) obtained the club's OK to arrive late. He began the season in Oakland, but a month after his mother died he reported to Chicago and embarked on a 17-year major league career.

The California League season extended into November, and Van Haltren would return after the National League season ended to finish out the year in California. But his fame lay in the East—as a hitter and baserunner.

Rip pitched in 20 big league games in 1887, 30 the next year, and 28 in 1890. But almost from the start of his major league career he was used primarily in the outfield. From 1891 on, he pitched only 15 more games, all but one of them in relief. He did well enough in the box—compiling a 40–31 big league record, with a 6-inning no-hitter in 1888—but his potency at the bat and skill on the bases were too great for him not to be used every day. In the 13 years from 1889 through 1901 his batting average fell below .300 only once. In 11 of those seasons he scored more than 100 runs, and twice drove in more than 100. He stole over 30 bases 11 years in a row, with a high of 75 in 1891.

Chicago sold its difficult ace John Clarkson to Boston after the 1887 season, despite his 38 victories that year. Van Haltren was expected to take up much of the slack, and his pay was raised to \$2,500. But despite four shutouts, including the short-game no-hitter, Rip pitched only .500 ball (13–13) in 1888. In 1889 he was not used as a pitcher at all, and responded with his first .300 season at the bat, 126 runs scored, 81 driven in, and a career-high 9 home runs.



Dick Dibbins Collection

George Van Haltren, Oaks

Van Haltren, along with most of the National League's best players, jumped to the outlaw Players League for the 1890 season, signing with the Brooklyn club managed by John Montgomery Ward, the driving force behind the new league. Because Brooklyn had to scramble to assemble a team after some of its expected players from the Indianapolis club jumped back to the National League, nothing much was expected from the team. But "Ward's Wonders" surprised everyone with a second-place finish behind Boston. Once again alternating between the outfield and the pitcher's box, Van Haltren won 15 games against 10 losses as the club's third best pitcher. More significantly, his .335 batting was also the team's third best, and in slugging he ranked second only to the powerful Dave Orr.

When the Players League folded after one season, Brooklyn's National League club hoped to sign Van Haltren, but the offer of a \$3,500 salary, \$1,000 of it in advance, lured him in 1891 to Baltimore in the American Association.

Offensively, Rip's 1891 season was among his finest. His 251 total bases ranked second in the Association, both his 180 hits and 136 runs scored (in 139 games) tied for second, his 75 stolen bases ranked third, and his .318 batting average ranked fifth. He also duplicated his 1889 career-high 9 home runs. When Orioles manager Bill Barnie quit just before the end of the season, Van Haltren filled his place for the final games and was named to manage the club in 1892.

In the American Association merger with the National League after the 1891 season, Baltimore was one of four AA clubs to survive. Van Haltren proved a disaster as manager and was relieved of his duties after a 1–10 start. Baltimore finished deep in the cellar of the 12-team league in the first half of its split season, but—now managed by Ned Hanlon—played around .500 in the middle of the pack for six weeks of the second half before fading to tenth place. Rip was not there for the finish, though. He was unhappy playing under Hanlon, and in September the new manager began the famous series of trades that built the Oriole powerhouse of the mid-1890s, sending Van Haltren to Pittsburgh for left fielder Joe Kelley and \$2,000. Rip was hitting over .300 (though at Pittsburgh he slipped to .293 for the season), and the young Kelley had not yet demonstrated his major league potential. But Hanlon must have seen something in him, for although Van Haltren remained a star player for another decade, Kelley outperformed him nearly every season en route to the Hall of Fame.

In 1893 Van Haltren's batting average rose 45 points to .338, and his on base average rose 49 points to a career-high .422. Seen in isolation, the rise appears significant, but in this first season of the new, longer 60'6" pitching distance, league batters as a whole improved nearly as much as Rip had done, so his relative offensive production remained about the same as the year before. Still, he was one of the top performers on a Pittsburgh team that finished second to Boston with the club's best record prior to its glory years at the start of the twentieth century.

The first seven seasons of Van Haltren's major league career were divided among four clubs in three leagues; the remaining 10 Rip played for a single club, the New York Giants. His first Giant season found him once again under the leadership of Monte Ward, starting for a team that spurted from seventh place to third in one week at midseason, then in mid-September overtook Boston to finish second. But because 1894 inaugurated the postseason competition for the Temple Cup, Rip found himself in his first—and, as it turned out, only—World Series, facing the now mighty Baltimore Orioles. Though Baltimore had won the pennant, New York swept the Series, finishing with a 16–3 rout in Game 4. Van Haltren shone. He scored the Series' first run in the fifth inning of Game 1 after tripling, and garnered six more hits for a .500 Series average. (He had to leave the final game in the sixth inning after colliding with Oriole shortstop Hughie Jennings while trying to stretch a single into a double.) Following the Series, Rip was awarded a silver bat as the Giants' most popular player.

When entrepreneur and Tammany Hall politician Andrew Freedman purchased control of the Giants that winter, manager Ward retired to his law practice, and the Giants embarked upon eight dismal seasons under the oppressive reign of their abrasive new owner. Freedman ran through 13 managers during his ownership, if we count George Davis twice for his two tries at the job. Even John B. Day, who had founded the club in 1883, came back to manage the team briefly in 1899. Of all the managers, only Scrappy Bill Joyce—with a third-place finish in 1897—brought the club in higher than seventh.

Among the players, only Van Haltren remained a Giant through Freedman's full tenure. Although the club's performance in the Freedman years disappointed the fans, Van Haltren himself enjoyed several of his finest seasons. He reached a career high in slugging in 1895 (.503), and a new batting high of .340, which he topped the next season with his career peak .351. His career-best 21 triples in 1896 tied for the league lead, and his 136 runs scored tied his personal best. In 1898 he



Doug McWilliams Collection

George Van Haltren, New York

surpassed the 200 hit mark for the only time as a major leaguer, with 204. In 1901, his final full big league season, Rip extended to nine his consecutive seasons batting over .300.

Freedman's final season as owner also saw the beginning of the end of Van Haltren's major league career. On May 22, 1902, Rip, hitting only .261 at the time, broke his ankle sliding into second base and was out for the rest of the year. By the time he returned for the 1903 season, John T. Brush was the Giants' new majority stockholder, and John McGraw was the club's manager. In his brief stint as Baltimore skipper in 1891–92, Van Haltren had managed the then-teenage shortstop. Now a 30-year-

old McGraw was the aging Van Haltren's manager. Rip played 84 games in 1903, but he batted only .257, and McGraw released him after the season's end. Just as he had been traded away from Baltimore as part of Ned Hanlon's Orioles rebuilding project, now he was released as part of McGraw's Giants rebuilding. Rip would not be around to enjoy the first of McGraw's 11 Giant pennants the next year.

No longer a major leaguer in 1904, Van Haltren was by no means out of baseball. He returned to the West Coast, where he played and managed five seasons and part of a sixth in the new Pacific Coast League. He never again hit above .300, but in the lengthy PCL seasons he compiled impressive hit totals of 253 in 1904 for Seattle (while setting a league record of 941 at bats), and 220 the next year in 220 games for Oakland, where he played and managed until he was let go in June, 1909, at age 43. He finished the 1909 season as a PCL umpire, scouted for the Pittsburgh Pirates during the next two years, and umpired in the Northwestern League in 1912.

As Rip's active career in baseball wound down and ended, he continued to earn his way as a skilled lather and plasterer. He died September 29, 1945, in Oakland, at age 79.

Some believe that with his .316 lifetime major league batting average and his rank among the top 20 in stolen bases (583), top 30 in runs scored (1,639), and top 40 in triples (161), George Van Haltren belongs in baseball's Hall of Fame. He did receive one vote in the first veterans ballot cast in 1936, and it can be argued that lesser players have been enshrined. It is little consolation to know that other stars of his era—like Pete Browning, Bill Dahlen, Bid McPhee, Jimmy Ryan, and Harry Stovey—also remain outside the Hall. But it may be consolation enough to honor Van Haltren as one of the very best major leaguers—perhaps the best—to come out of California in the nineteenth century.

St. Mary's Has Sent Players to Majors for 100 Years

By Steven Lavoie

Fans of professional football hear incessantly of the collegiate connection to their game. Jerry Rice breaks another record and a color man invariably broadcasts the receiver's alumni status at Mississippi Valley State. In the last Super Bowl, Oakland Raiders fans who happened to attend Stanford University were seen at local sports bars rooting for the ultimate arch-enemy simply because John Elway is a former Cardinal.

When Reggie Jackson broke his leg sliding into home in the 1972 American League playoffs, his alma mater was not even mentioned. When Jeff Kent came over to the San Francisco Giants in a trade for Matt Williams, the infielder's record-breaking years with the California Golden Bears were met with derision verging on hostility.

The baseball program at St. Mary's College of California has endured that lack of respect for more than a century as it continues to churn out big leaguers.

A barehanded third baseman began the tradition when St. Mary's alumnus Jerry Denny joined the Providence Grays of the National League in 1881. An alum of St. Mary's has performed in the Major Leagues during 102 of the next 118 seasons.

Baseball came west with the Gold Rush and found fans among missionaries at the college's new campus, overlooking the Excelsior district on University Mound in San Francisco. In 1872, after a fire burned down most of the city, including their college, students were ready to resume their educations and get back to baseball. They named their team the Phoenix at their new hillside facility.

Brother Agnon McCann showed up in 1879 and made baseball a priority. The Phoenix had already earned its reputation on the sandlots of the Bay Area. McCann took it into the stadium, after the city finally found a plot that would grow enough grass for a real ballpark at Eighth and Market Streets.

Denny became the first star on that field given the imaginative name "Central Park" and McCann became the drillmaster for a new era in the National Pastime.

Crowds of "cranks" packed the stands to watch Denny and The Phoenix make the throws and powder the baseball. Denny went East and completed a 13-year career in the Major Leagues, with a career year in Indianapolis in 1889, when he drove in 112 runs with 18 homers on a losing team, competing in a league with Hall of Famers Dan Brouthers and Cap Anson.

In 1884, Denny's home run in game two defeated the Metropolitan of New York in an interleague face-off between champions of competing major leagues. In Denny's last season, with the Louisville Colonels in 1894, he was one of a few who still took the field without a mitt.

As Denny stubbornly resisted leather, the Christian Brothers of St. Mary's sought a warmer climate in 1889 and moved their campus to Oakland. Their decision would take their program to the Hall of Fame.

By then, six former members of The Phoenix were playing Major League ball, including Alleghany of Pittsburgh's battery of Fred Carroll, catcher, and Ed "Cannonball" Morris. With Carroll behind the plate, Morris won 41 games in 1886 to lead the American Association.

The new St. Mary's campus at 30th Street and Broadway was ideal for baseball. Brother McCann engineered a well-drained diamond behind the main campus, later made famous by football coach Slip Madigan as the "Old Brickpile."

The Phoenix flourished in Oakland under McCann's sophisticated leadership. The new campus provided education for pre-collegiate students, too; McCann created a four-tiered program, ranging from the "midgets" in high school to the collegiate varsity.

Heavyweight boxing champion Jim Corbett's kid brother, Joe, became the first big star on the Oakland diamond. After pitching The Phoenix to consecutive intercollegiate titles in 1893 and 1894, "Young" Corbett signed with Ned Hanlon's Baltimore Orioles.

Before his 21st birthday, Corbett hurled the 5-0 shutout against Cleveland that gave the O's their first championship in 1896 a title that placed Hanlon at the vanguard of the game as we know it.

In the off-season, Oaklander Rip van Haltren of the New York Giants would come home to help groom young players at St. Mary's. So would Hal Chase of the New York Yankees, who spent his youth on the sandlots of the South Bay. With their guidance, The Phoenix won 12 consecutive titles in the California-Nevada Baseball League at the start of the 20th century.

Chase coached the best of those teams in 1907, when St. Mary's won all 27 of its games and sent its entire starting roster to the professional ranks. Phoenix ace Harry Krause accepted Connie Mack's standing offer to sign the winningest St. Mary's pitchers. With the Athletics, Krause went on to lead the league in earned run average. Acrobatic outfielder Harry Hooper joined his fellow St. Mary's alumnus, Duffy Lewis, in the outfield of the Boston Red Sox to begin a long career that would lead him to the Hall of Fame.

Hooper and Lewis returned to the "Brickpile" in 1911 for a pre-season exhibition against The Phoenix. Elmer "Tiny" Leonard of Napa pitched nine scoreless innings against the Red Sox, to give St. Mary's a 1-0 victory over their Major League opponents. The shutout was preserved when a throw by outfielder Ed Lynch gunned down future Hall-of-Famer Tris Speaker at the plate for the final out. Leonard also signed with the A's.

Year after year, St. Mary's continued to supply talent to the Major Leagues. Former Phoenix pitcher Dutch Leonard signed with the Boston Red Sox, and led that team to a pennant in 1914, with the lowest single-season earned run average (0.96 or 1.01, depending on which record book you read) in baseball history.

Reprinted courtesy of the Oakland Tribune. Research by Paul J. Zingg, author of Harry Hooper: An American Baseball Life, contributed to this article. An earlier version ran as a column in The Oakland Tribune on April 9, 1995.

The 1907 St. Mary's College Phoenix nine, undefeated in 27 games, was led by Harry Krause and Future Hall of Famer Harry Hooper.

Every member played pro baseball.

*From left (Top Row) Clarence Duggan, Pete Lennon, Tom Feeney, Jack Brady, Mickey Thompson, Hooper;
(Middle Row) coach Hal Chase, Krause, Ed Burns, Charlie Enright, Brother Joseph;
(Bottom Row) Joe "Ike" Hamilton and Frank Dunn.*



Doug McWilliams Collection

Joe Oeschger went on from St. Mary's to pitch the longest complete game in Major League history for the Boston Braves, who tied the Brooklyn Dodgers 1-1 in 26 innings on May 1, 1920. Fellow alumnus Lew Fonseca won the American League batting title in 1929.

The stream of stars continued from St. Mary's after the college renamed its sports teams The Gaels and moved to a new campus in Moraga in 1928. Catcher Gus Triandos went on to the Baltimore Orioles and two All-Star teams in the late

1950s. Broderick Perkins, Von Hayes and Tom Candiotti, who has returned to the East Bay, are more recent former Gaels in the majors.

When speedster James Mouton, traded in the off-season to the San Diego Padres, made the cut with the Houston Astros during spring training in 1995, he became the 55th alumnus of St. Mary's to play in the major leagues a total few colleges have surpassed.

The Mightiest ‘Oak’ – Buzz Arlett

by *Steven Lavoie*

In its “golden age” of the 1920’s, Eastern baseball fans had the Great Bambino—a made-to-order superstar salesman of the game named George Herman “Babe” Ruth. Fans out west had their own American hero—a 6’3” switch-hitting, hometown favorite named Russell “Buzz” Arlett.

During 13 seasons with the Oakland Oaks of the old Pacific Coast League, women swooned, opposing pitchers cringed and turnstiles whirled in every league city as Arlett grew bigger than life on the diamond. His play led the Society for American Baseball Research to rank Arlett, 50 years after he retired, as the outstanding minor league player of all time. His charm and consistency led Oaks fans to vote him their all-time favorite player.

Heroic figure

To those who saw him play, Arlett was “The Mightiest Oak,” “built on heroic lines,” a local sportswriter noted, and “handsome as most male movie stars are supposed to be and aren’t.”

He was born in 1899 in Elmhurst, now a district in East Oakland, one of four sons of a pioneer California family whose home at 1430 Auseon Avenue was just blocks away from Elmhurst Grounds where teams sponsored by local merchants faced off in weekend baseball games. The four Arlett brothers—Alexander, Russell, Richard and Harry Jr.—were mainstays in those games.

Alex “Pop” Arlett, the eldest, once had a streak of 24 straight wins, 17 of them shutouts, while pitching for the Elmhurst Merchants Association team. He went on to play professionally in the California State League until it folded in 1915, and later won a seat on the Oakland City Council.

In 1918, the family rented a cabin in Boyes Hot Springs near Sonoma where the Oaks were in spring training, playing scrimmages with East Bay semipro teams like the Arletts.

Buzz Arlett, who once threw a ball through a ballpark fence while pitching in Newark, took the mound in one spring exhibition game for the Maxwell Hardware club. Using a fastball and vicious spitter, he shut the Oaks down, 1–0, and won a spot on Oakland’s roster. He quit his job at the Oakland Traction Company, where he earned 11 cents an hour, to play ball full time, winning consistently in the PCL until 1923 when his arm gave out.

Like Babe Ruth before him, the sore-armed Arlett was moved to the outfield to keep his powerful bat in the lineup. He responded with a .330 batting average, 19 home runs and 101 runs batted in in 149 games.

His spot in the lineup secure, he became the most consistent and dangerous hitter in the league. In 1927, Arlett helped bring the Oaks a PCL championship.

In honor of his performance that year, the Oaks filled the park with fans for “Buzz Arlett Day.”

The Depression brought hardship to the Oaks, forcing the team to sell the contracts of five key team members, including Arlett, who went to the Philadelphia Phillies for \$15,000 cash. He left the PCL as its all-time career leader in home runs (251) and runs batted in (1,188)—two records that still stand.

Reprinted courtesy of the Oakland Tribune.



Doug McWilliams Collection

Big league flop

As a 31-year-old rookie major leaguer, Arlett floundered in the outfield in front of the notoriously bilious Philadelphia fans. A Phillies teammate, who knew Arlett’s lackadaisical fielding from the PCL, saw him coming and suggested that groundskeepers put a rocking chair in right field to make Arlett more comfortable.

Bad fielding reduced his major league career to a single season. By 1932, he was back in the minor leagues with the Baltimore Orioles of the International League, where he became only the third man in history to hit four home runs in one game twice in the same season.

From Baltimore, he went to Birmingham, Alabama and finally to the Miller’s of Minneapolis, where he retired in 1934 to a profitable tavern business.

For years, Arlett’s East Bay friends clamored for him to come home. A reprise “Buzz Arlett Day” in 1946 brought him back for a 10-day-long tribute, but he returned to Minneapolis, where he died in 1964.

Seals Stadium

by Stephanie von Buchau

The deeply cynical among us understand that between the Boys of Summer and the Field of Dreams, an awful lot of gas is expended in the name of baseball nostalgia—and that most nostalgia is humbug. Yet when it comes to the vanished ballparks of our youth, like Seals Stadium of the Pacific Coast League, nostalgia is not humbug; it is life blood.

Dave Newhouse, sports columnist for the Oakland Tribune, who attended his first game at Seals Stadium the same year I did, 1948, mists over when he breathes. "It was the most beautiful minor league park ever!" A more prosaic Dario Lodigiani who played second and third base for the San Francisco Seals between 1949 and 1952, agrees: "Of all the parks in the league—and there were some fine ones—everybody knew that Seals Stadium was the best."

Even those of us vitally interested in whether the Brooklyn Dodgers would finally beat the damn Yankees in a World Series still spent most of our allotted homework time fantasizing about the Seals in their jewel of a yard at 18th and Bryant Streets, nestled between San Francisco's Potrero and Mission districts. When

the New York Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958, displacing the Seals and causing the eventual destruction of Seals Stadium, most Seals fans switched allegiance, but some of us never forgave the interlopers and could never accept Candlestick Park as a substitute for the field of our childhood dreams.

There was pro baseball in San Francisco even before my great-grandparents arrived on the boat from Sicily in the early 1880's. The PCL evolved from the California State League in 1903. The next year it joined the National Association, eventually rising to a Triple-A rating; it was often referred to as "the third major league." The Seals played their games in Recreation Park at Eighth and Harrison. It was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire, a temblor 16 times more powerful than the Loma Prieta quake that struck the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1989 "Bay Bridge" World Series between the Giants and the Oakland Athletics.

A new Recreation Park, seating 15,000, was built at 15th and Valencia, and the Seals also played "home" games in Oakland and at Ewing Field in S.F.'s foggy



Jack Dobbin's Collection

Richmond district. This was the era that witnessed such Seals heroes as first baseman Harry Heilmann, outfielders Paul Waner, Smead Jolley and Earl Averill, shortstop Frankie Crosetti, and pitchers Dutch Reuther and Sam Gibson, who won 29 and 28 games respectively in the championship years of 1928 and 1931. It was in this latter season that the Seals opened their proud new stadium, a \$600,000-\$1 million steel-and-concrete ballyard whose modern construction material gave it the nickname, “the Queen of Concrete.”

In the first official PCL game played at Seals Stadium, April 7, 1931, with Ty Cobb in attendance, the hometown nine beat Portland, 8–0. (Coincidentally, on April 15, 1958, the new San Francisco Giants whipped the Los Angeles Dodgers at Seals Stadium—the first official major league contest played on the West Coast—by the same score.) After winning the PCL championship the opening season in Seals Stadium, the team managed to do it again only two more times (1935 and 1946; winning the playoffs in 1944 and 1945) before the final 1957 season, when the Seals took the PCL flag by winning 101 games. Other notable Seals Stadium years include 1935–51, when the team was managed by colorful S.F. native, Frank “Lefty” O’Doul; 1941, when San Francisco hosted the first PCL All-Star game; and 1959, when Willie McCovey was called up from Phoenix by the Giants. In his first major league game, Willie Mac got four hits, two of them triples. The final game was played in the old park on September 20, 1959; the Giants lost, 8–2, to the Dodgers.

Photos of Seals Stadium prove that oft-repeated metaphor, jewel box, but there was nothing like actually being there. Odors of new-mown grass and freshly-baked bread (from a nearby bakery) mingled with intoxicating smells from the Hamm’s Brewery across the street. From the patron’s point of view, Seals Stadium was deliciously intimate, seating slightly more than 18,000. After the Giants moved West, they played only two seasons (‘58–‘59) in Seals Stadium. By 1960, baseball was already big business and you couldn’t conduct big business in a yard that held only 23,000—the maximum that could be squeezed in after the Giants installed bleachers in left field.

The stands behind home plate stretched down to the foul poles and rose in one precipitous, uncovered single deck up to the light standards. Even from the last row you could read the brand name on the first baseman’s mitt. The seats were made of metal frames with green wooden slats—strong, wide seats that, with the addition of a cushion brought from home, kept your tush comfy through those traditional Sunday doubleheaders. Those seats, product of an industrial nation as yet too proud to believe in planned obsolescence, were saved when Seals Stadium faced the wrecking ball in 1959, and were shipped, along with the equally durable light standards, to Tacoma’s new Cheney Stadium, home of the PCL Tacoma Giants.

The bleachers in right field were backless benches installed in 1946. Until 1958, left field consisted of a 20-foot-high wall that reached from the foul pole to the center field scoreboard. When Paul Fagan bought the Seals in 1945, hoping to introduce major league baseball to the West Coast, he decided that it would be a classy move to ban advertisements from the outfield walls. He also provided sumptuous ladies’ restrooms and a glass-enclosed radio booth behind home plate, from which Don Klein announced home games and recreated road games, complete with sound effects, on a 10-minute teletype delay.

For all the intimacy and user-friendliness of Seals Stadium for the patrons, it was even better for the ballplayers. Though the dimensions vary slightly, depending on who you read, Lawrence Ritter’s memorable *Lost Ballparks* reports that it was 365 at the left field foul pole and 350 at the right field marker, with a depth of 404 feet in dead center and 424 to right center—in other words, major league distances. Klein, the Seals radio announcer between 1949 and 1955, says that “the Stadium was outstanding because its measurements were challenging enough to produce a well-balanced game. The Giants wouldn’t have had the

weather problems they’ve experienced at Candlestick if they’d put a doubledeck on Seals Stadium.”

Echoing Mark Twain’s probably apocryphal remark that “the coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco,” Dario Lodigiani agrees with Klein. “You know what nighttime in San Francisco can be like in the summer, but nobody ever complained about the weather the way they do today. The wind blew, but it was high and we didn’t feel it much on the field. It helped the batter, though. If you hit the ball to right, it seemed that sometimes the wind held it in the park, but to left or left center, whoosh, it really carried; it was like a jet stream got hold of it.”

Lodigiani also praises Fagan’s accommodations for his players. “The clubhouse was outstanding, best in the PCL. (When Seals Stadium was first built, it boasted three clubhouses, for the Seals, the visitors and the San Francisco Missions, a PCL team that shared the stadium through 1937, when the franchise went south to become the Hollywood Stars.) Some clubhouses had those little metal lockers like in high school, but at Seals Stadium, we had big wide ones, plenty of room for your stuff.” There was also a barber chair, shoeshine stand, and draft beer on tap. Lodigiani says, “If you couldn’t play in the majors, Seals Stadium was the place to be.”

The competitive size of the park gives the baseball adventures that took place there the same epic patina that colors major league exploits. In 1933, Seals rookie Joe DiMaggio set the still-standing PCL hitting streak record. He got at least one hit in 61 straight games between May 28 and July 26, when Oakland Oaks pitcher Ed Walsh Jr. finally shut him down. One of Klein’s favorite Seals Stadium memories is the season-ending doubleheader on September 13, 1953, when Seals rookie Tony Ponce pitched the nine-inning opener and the seven-inning nightcap, going all the way in both, defeating the Los Angeles Angels, 4–2 and 1–0, the ninth such feat in PCL history.

Klein, Dave Newhouse, PCL historian Dick Dobbins (author of *Nuggets on the Diamond*, an entertaining compendium of PCL lore), and I agree that one of our most thrilling baseball experiences from those halcyon days of Seals Stadium was the 17-inning game that Al “Inky” Lien threw against the Hollywood Stars on September 10, 1950. This nail-biter included such “nuggets” as Seals’ outfielder Brooks Holder deliberately dropping a foul ball with the bases loaded in the 14th and the score still 0–0, to keep the



Al Lien

Dick Dobbins Collection

runner on third from tagging up; and the Seals’ fleet-footed Jackie Tobin opening the bottom of the 17th with a double, stealing third, and then scoring on a sac fly, in a bang-bang play at the plate, for the game’s only run.

In an era of fragile millionaire pitchers who cannot even get 17 outs, can you conceive what kind of baseball god could go 17 innings? And win 1–0? It happened not at the Polo Grounds or Yankee Stadium or Fenway Park, as fabled as those ballparks may be. It happened at Seals Stadium, on a sunny Sunday afternoon that, typically, was turning a bit cold and foggy by the time Tobin’s teammates mobbed him at home plate. The next day, Al Lien’s weary, smiling, beer-drenched face appeared in a huge photo on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle*’s Sporting Green. I kept that photo until it turned brown and literally disintegrated long after they had torn down my favorite ballpark.

The Missions— San Francisco's Other Team

*Richard E. Beverage
President, PCL Historical Society*

In recent years there has been a degree of uncertainty about the Bay Area's ability to support two major league teams. That was not the case in 1925, when the question was: could the Bay Area support three teams? San Francisco and Oakland had franchises in the Pacific Coast League (PCL), that minor league of near major league quality, but that was not enough for the City. The politicos of the era needed and demanded continuous baseball, just like the great rival to the south, Los Angeles, had enjoyed since 1909. Southern California had two ball clubs in the Coast League, the Los Angeles Angels and the Vernon Tigers. The teams shared facilities, and one was always at home. But in November, 1925 owner Eddie Maier of the Vernon club put his franchise up for sale. The Salt Lake City team was moving to Los Angeles, and Maier did not have the resources to compete with two teams. In January, 1926 he sold the Tigers to Stanley Dollar, a San Francisco shipping magnate who wanted to establish a second team in the City, and William McCarthy, the former president of the PCL who would be the president of the new club, for approximately \$250,000. The new owners received approval from the league to move the franchise, which was given the formal-sounding name of The Mission Club of San Francisco.

Almost immediately, there were problems for the new organization. The Oakland club had demanded an indemnity of \$140,000 to permit the Mission club to encroach upon its territory, an amount that Dollar and McCarthy considered outrageous. But finally, William Wrigley of Los Angeles and Bill Lane of the new Hollywood club agreed to pay half of the money with the rest of the PCL clubs sharing the balance. Shortly after that issue had been resolved, a controversy developed over the team's nickname. McCarthy announced that the club would be called the Mission Bears and would wear blue and gold trimmed uniforms with a bear emblem on the front. Unfortunately, the University of California, across the bay in Berkeley, had long identified its athletic teams as the Golden Bears with identical colors, and it considered the logo as its property. The University announced plans to file a lawsuit to force the Mission club to abandon its use of the bear. The problem simmered all during that first season until McCarthy finally agreed to pay a small settlement and coin a new name for the club in 1927, the Mission Bells.

Although Vernon had finished in the cellar in 1925, the new team was much improved with the addition of several new players, and the Mission club finished in third place in 1926. The most important acquisitions were pitcher Bert Cole, a native of San Francisco, and outfielder Ike Boone. Cole came down from Detroit and posted a 29–12 mark, the best record ever by a Mission pitcher, while Boone became a fan favorite with his .380 average and 32 home runs. The club was strong up the middle with second baseman Mickey Finn, shortstop Gordon Slade, and center fielder Evar Swanson, all youngsters who would be with the club for the rest of the decade.

The Bears might have improved on that record were it not for managerial problems. Maier had selected Walter McCredie as his new manager for 1926, but that proved to be a bad decision. The Judge, who had a long history with the Portland club, was in declining health and was forced to give up the post by the

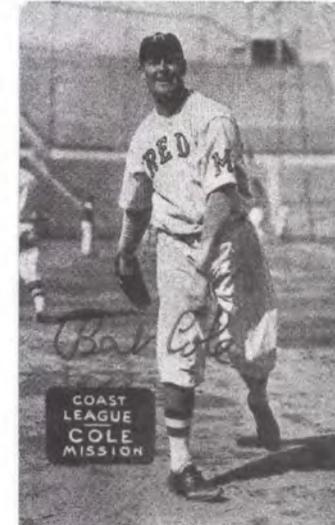
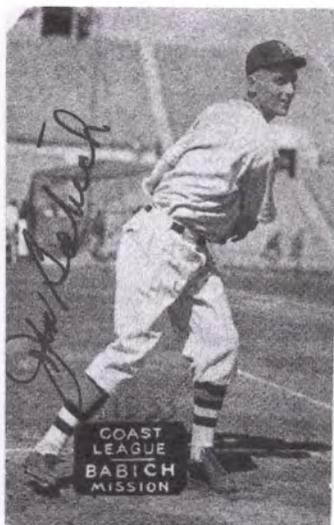
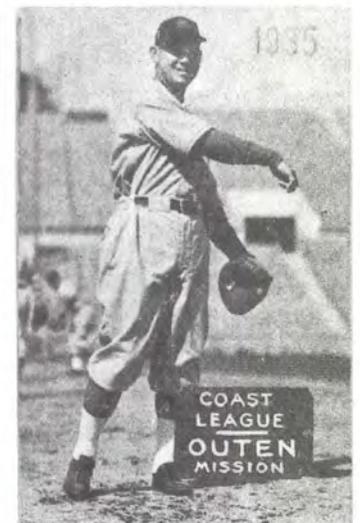
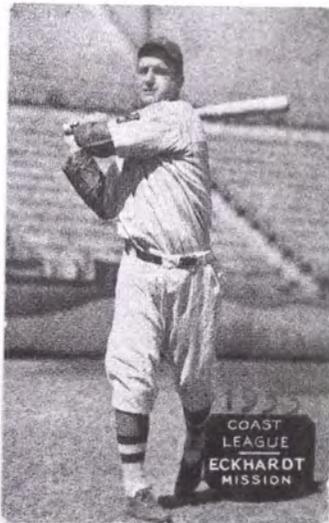
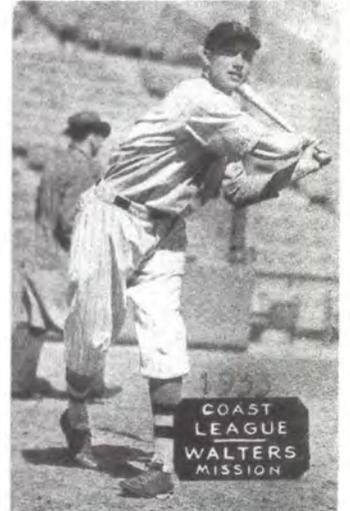
middle of May. The decision was sudden, and while McCarthy decided who would replace him, coach Butch Schmidt ran the Bears. On August 13, Wild Bill Leard, a veteran Coast Leaguer who had been out of baseball for the previous two years, took over for the balance of the season. Although he had great difficulty in abiding by his own training rules and had little or no respect from his team, Leard was hired again for the 1927 season in what was one of McCarthy's worst decisions.

The Mission Bells fell to seventh place in 1927, as the club once again had three managers. Leard was fired after the season was two weeks old; McCarthy let him go after he missed a game in Seattle and showed up so drunk the next day that his players locked him in the clubhouse. Catcher Roxy Walters served as temporary boss until the end of the month, when Harry Hooper was given a two-year contract as playing manager. The only member of the Baseball Hall of Fame to ever grace a Mission roster, Hooper was a local product, having attended St. Mary's college before beginning his major league career with the Red Sox. He had been out of baseball for a year before assuming the Mission job, and it was hoped that his presence would help attendance. The club was in third place when Hooper took over, but it missed the big bat of Ike Boone, who had been drafted by the White Sox, and had no pitcher comparable to Cole, who was also in the major leagues. At the end of the season McCarthy ousted Hooper even though his contract had another year to go.

The new manager was Wade "Red" Killefer, who had already won PCL pennants at Los Angeles and Seattle, but had lost his job when the Seattle club changed ownership. It was under his leadership that the Missions enjoyed their greatest success. The 1928 team was improved to the point where it could challenge for the pennant. The PCL offered a split season that year, and the Bells finished in fourth place overall, winning more than half their games. They batted .301 as a team and featured an outfield with five men hitting over .340—Fuzzy Hufft, .379; Evar Swanson, .346; Ping Bodie, .352, were the regulars, and part timer Wes Griffin hit .343. In July the Reds brought back Ike Boone in a trade with Portland, and he gave an inkling of what was ahead by hitting .407 in 72 Mission games.

The left-hand-hitting Hufft was acquired from Killefer's old Seattle team in May. He was a natural for Recreation Park, where the Bells played. A western version of Philadelphia's infamous Baker Bowl, Old Rec had a right field fence that was only 235 feet from home plate with a chicken wire screen some 50 feet high. In order to be successful there, a hitter had to have an uppercut swing to clear that short fence, and this Hufft had. He remained with the Bells until June, 1931, hitting .367 during that span with 107 home runs, most of which were hit at home. But he was an atrocious outfielder with a weak throwing arm, and that deficiency kept him from advancing to the major leagues. At one point in 1929 the exasperated Killefer benched Hufft for several games after an especially costly error, even though he was hitting .365 at the time!

Mission pitching had improved with veteran Herm Pillette and Carl Holling pitching consistently well with ERAs below 3.00. The big name on this staff was Ernie Nevers, an All-American football player at Stanford who later played



Mission's All-Stars

George Burns, Mickey Finn, Gordon Slade, Bucky Walters, Ox Eckhardt, Erar Swanson, Ike Boone, Chick Outen, Bert Babich, Herm Cole, Dutch Lieber and Johnny Pillette

professional football with such skill that he is a member of that sport's Hall of Fame. Nevers came down from the St. Louis Browns and posted a good record of 14–11, despite an ERA of 4.37. After falling to 7–8 in 1929, Nevers retired from baseball to devote his full effort to his football career. Late in the season the Bells picked up Clyde Nance, a young right-handed pitcher from Seattle who posted a brilliant 7–1 mark over the last five weeks of the season, including two shutouts and eight consecutive complete games. Only 22, Nance seemed destined for a great career, but his life ended abruptly on March 31, 1929 when he was killed in an automobile accident while returning to San Francisco from his home in Fowler, California.

At the end of the season, the Mission club was sold to a group of Los Angeles investors, who promptly fired McCarthy and appointed Killefer as the president of the club. This gave Red a great deal of latitude in acquiring players, and he was very active during the winter of 1928–29. He purchased third baseman Eddie Mulligan from Dallas, outfielder Pete Scott from Pittsburgh, and first baseman Jack Sherlock from Detroit; and sent incumbent first baseman Chili McDaniel to Seattle for the battery of Bert Cole and Fred Hofmann. Later he signed pitcher Dutch Ruether, who had been released by the Seals, and traded center fielder Evar Swanson to Cincinnati for Walter "Cuckoo" Christensen, another center fielder, who had a bit of a zany streak in him but was an extremely skilled outfielder. Among his many foibles was a tendency to turn cartwheels in the outfield after making a good catch. On one occasion with two runners on base in the ninth inning and the Missions ahead by a run with two out, a routine fly ball was hit in Christensen's direction. The center fielder decided to celebrate the apparent victory with a cartwheel before he caught the ball. Unfortunately, the ball went over his head, the runners scored and the Missions lost, and Killefer had to be restrained from attacking Cuckoo.

The club had a new nickname for 1929—the Red's—after Killefer. Whatever name they were called, the Missions became strong favorites to win the pennant after these moves. After a slow start, they took over the lead on April 25 following a nine-game winning streak and were eight games ahead by Memorial Day. The club was batting .330 and had as awesome a group of hitters as the PCL had seen in years. Although there had been no plans for a split season in 1929, the club owners were fearful of a runaway that would kill attendance and agreed to end the first half on June 30, leaving the Red's as winners. The second half saw the Hollywood Sheiks come to the fore, and it was a dogfight. The two teams battled to the very last day, and the Missions blew a chance to win the pennant outright by losing a doubleheader to the last place Seattle Indians to finish one game behind the Sheiks. That meant the two teams would play a seven-game series to decide the PCL championship, and once again the Reds were strong favorites. But after winning the first two games, the Reds lost the next four, including three straight at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles. Neither Ike Boone nor Fuzzy Hufft hit a home run in this series, an important factor in the demise of the Reds. It was as close as the Mission club would ever come to a PCL pennant.

The Reds of 1929 were one of the great clubs in PCL history. They batted .319 and scored over six runs a game. Ike Boone had one of the most memorable seasons in minor league history, hitting .407 with 55 home runs and 218 RBI. Needless to say, he led the league in all three categories. Hufft was almost as potent, hitting .379 and contributing 39 homers to go along with 187 RBI. Jack Sherlock was the third member of this team to surpass 150 RBI with 156. Only third baseman Eddie Mulligan among the regulars failed to hit .300. The defense was outstanding; shortstop Gordon Slade and catcher Fred Hofmann were considered the best in the league at their respective positions. That contributed greatly to the much improved pitching staff. Bert Cole and Herm Pilette led the way with records of 24–12 and 23–13, respectively. In a season when the average number of runs scored per game was in excess of 4.50, these aces boasted marks of 3.45 and 3.59.

Mert Nelson, a youngster, came of age with a 17–10 record, and Dutch Ruether contributed 14 wins. The loss of Clyde Nance undoubtedly cost this club the pennant.

Everything was downhill for the Reds after 1929. The season was no sooner over than the stock market crashed, portending the onset of the Great Depression that would haunt this club for the balance of its existence. While still a potent offensive force, the 1930 club was weakened after Finn and Slade were sold to Brooklyn as a package for \$50,000, funds the Reds would badly need. The loss of these two, together with the decline of Bert Cole, weakened after a bout with pneumonia, brought the Reds down to second division level. They finished in sixth place during the first half of yet another split season and then slid all the way to the bottom of the league by September.

Ike Boone began the 1930 season determined to out-do his performance of 1929. By June 1 it appeared that he would succeed. He was hitting .467 at that point and dropped off only slightly from that mark during the next three weeks. But the Missions needed money; on July 1 Boone was sold to Brooklyn for \$40,000. He was hitting .448 with 96 RBI along with 22 home runs. Had he stayed the entire year he might have broken several Coast League hitting records. The Reds were not the same after that, and attendance fell precipitously. They had drawn a very satisfactory 275,996 in 1929; 1930 crowds were half that number, and the Reds would never again draw over 200,000.

Having lost their star players, the Reds were about to lose their manager as well. At the winter meetings in December, 1930 Red Killefer took ill and was rushed to a hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan, his home town, where he was diagnosed with cancer. He underwent treatment, improving to the point where he felt able to participate in spring training, but he suffered an early relapse and was forced to leave the team in the middle of March. This left a tremendous void in the management of the club, both on the field and off, with the impending economic crisis of the Depression just ahead. Joe Bearwald was elected president and first baseman George Burns, a veteran of 16 major league seasons became the manager. He did a creditable job through the first half of yet another split season in the PCL, but when Bearwald hired Joe Devine as a coach and scout for the Reds, the situation became uncomfortable for Burns, who thought Devine was after his job. He asked for and received his release at the end of June, and the new manager was Devine, of all people. Devine did not distinguish himself at the helm as the club began the second half in last place and stayed there.

In the past the Missions had boasted a slugging team that usually ranked at or near the top of the PCL in most offensive categories, but that situation changed abruptly in 1931 when the club moved to the new Seals Stadium. If Old Rec park resembled a closet, Seals Stadium was more like an airport. The distances were 365 feet down the left field line, 404 to dead center and 385 feet to right field with power alleys as deep as 424 in right-center field, and the fences were 20 feet high all around. The days of the Mission power hitters were no more. In 1930 the Reds hit 98 home runs in Old Rec; in 1931 they hit 11 while playing in Seals Stadium, and several of those were of the inside the park variety.

Although Mission attendance climbed to 162,914 in 1931, partly because of the novelty of the new park and night baseball, which was played in San Francisco for the first time that year, the increased revenue was offset by the much higher rent for Seals Stadium, and the Missions had to re-group. No longer would they be able to acquire veteran players who were relatively expensive. They would have to rely on inexperienced youngsters, mostly from the sandlots of the Bay Area, who were much cheaper. This wasn't a totally negative development, for Devine was a good judge of talent, and during his time with the Reds he signed Dick Gyselman, Babe Dahlgren, Bud Hafey, Johnny Babich, Joe Coscarart and Bill Brenzel, all of whom were eventually sold to major league teams at considerable profit. That cash flow sustained the franchise during the severe economic conditions of the next

three years when attendance fell drastically.

In one of Killefer's last moves he purchased outfielder Oscar "Ox" Eckhardt from the Detroit organization, and he was the heart of the Mission offense during the next four years. Eckhardt was a minor league hitting star who never was able to make the grade in the major leagues, appearing in only 24 games with Brooklyn and Boston in the National League in a professional career of 12 years. Eckhardt had been a football star at the University of Texas and had a powerful physique at 6'1" and 200 pounds, but he was not a power hitter, A left-handed hitter with a pronounced closed stance, Eckhardt rarely pulled the ball, slicing the ball to left field most of the time. Opponents generally shifted the outfielders in that direction, and it was not unusual for the right fielder to catch one of his fly balls in left center field. Eckhardt had great speed, frequently beating out ground balls to the infield for base hits, and he was always in double figures in triples. In 1931 Eckhardt hit .369, winning the first of three straight PCL batting championships, and led the Reds with 117 RBI. He repeated in 1932, hitting .371 and then had the best season of his career in 1933 when he hit .414 with 143 RBI. His hitting was about all that Mission fans had to cheer about in those years; the club finished last in 1932 and seventh in 1933.

Gabby Street, the former manager of the St. Louis Cardinals, took over the manager's post in 1934, and the Missions had their best team since they moved to Seals Stadium. Unfortunately, that was the year that Los Angeles won 137 games to completely dominate the league, and the Missions were a distant second. This club was very entertaining with a fine defense and an outfield in Eckhardt, Bud Hafey, and Lou Almada, each of whom hit better than .320. Babe Dahlgren was the best first baseman in the league, and Almada covered center field in spacious Seals Stadium like a blanket. The pitching staff was led by Clarence Mitchell, a spitballer who won 19 games at the age of 43, Johnny Babich, Dutch Lieber, and Hollis Thurston. Babich was 10-3 when he was sold to Brooklyn in July, and Lieber had his best year since joining the club in 1930 with a 19-13 record. But the Depression was probably at its worst in San Francisco that year with a Teamsters strike virtually shutting down the City for two weeks in July, and only 90,719 fans showed up at Seals Stadium to watch the team.

Street remained in charge in 1935 when the PCL elected to split its season once again. The Missions were strapped for cash and listed only 14 players on its reserve list when spring training opened. Three-fourths of the opening infield were Bay Area products: first baseman Roy Mort, second baseman Al Wright, and third baseman Eddie Joost. They, along with shortstop Clyde Beck, had to play every day, for there was no money for replacements. Eckhardt, Almada, and Fred Berger, the younger brother of National League slugger Wally Berger, were also iron men in the outfield. Berger hit 23 home runs as a Mission after coming over from Seattle in April, the highest total ever posted after the Reds moved over from Recreation Park. The club started poorly, suffering a 13-game losing streak in May, and finished last during the first half, but then made an abrupt change for the better for the second half and were legitimate pennant contenders. They reached first place on August 25 after splitting a doubleheader at Portland, but the pitching staff, led by Walter "Boom-Boom" Beck and Wayne Osborne, was overworked and the club was unable to sustain the championship pace, finishing in second place, 3 games behind the Seals.

1935 was the year that Ox Eckhardt and Joe DiMaggio waged a terrific battle for the league batting championship, and fan attention was focused on that event almost as much as the pennant race. Eckhardt had a torrid first half and was hitting .422 on June 1, but DiMaggio soon caught him and the two were only points apart through most of August and September. On the final day DiMaggio hit a fly ball that Seattle center fielder Bill Lawrence should have caught, but it fell for a double while Lawrence was clowning around. DiMaggio immediately motioned to the official scorer that it should be an error; later he said that he didn't want to

win the title on a play like that. Eckhardt finished at .399, one point better than the soon-to-be Yankee Clipper.

Street had a contract to manage the Missions in 1936, but at the winter meetings he renounced it, threatening retirement unless he could get a job near his home in Missouri. The Reds had little choice at that point and released him; after a month went by they signed Willie Kamm for the next two seasons. This was a popular choice, for Kamm was a local product who had starred for the Seals before advancing to the Chicago White Sox in 1923. Kamm had more talent to work with; the Sacramento club was in extreme distress and was forced to sell off its players at bargain prices. The Reds added outfielders Max West, a fine young prospect, and Harry Rosenberg, another Bay Area product. Rosenberg hit .334 with 99 RBI to lead the Reds as they won half their games to finish in a fifth-place tie with Los Angeles. The club had no power, hitting just 24 home runs, only two of them at Seals Stadium.

The Hollywood club had moved to San Diego for the 1936 season, and late in the year the first rumors that the Missions might replace the Seals in Los Angeles began to appear. Although attendance in Seals Stadium improved to 113,394 in 1936, that was not enough to sustain a viable PCL franchise. In addition, Herbert Fleishhacker, the principal owner of the Reds, had suffered greatly during the Depression, and was unable to provide any finances for the club.

Secret negotiations began in earnest at the winter meetings of 1936, and it soon became known that the Missions were for sale. The rumors had an impact on the playing field. The Reds played poorly from the beginning of 1937 and were in last place after the first week of the season. In spite of good offensive performances by Rosenberg, West, and catcher Chick Outen, they were unable to mount any consistent winning pattern. From July to the rest of the season, the Reds were merely playing out the string. They finished the season buried in the cellar behind seventh place Oakland. The Reds ended the season at home when Joe Bearwald announced that the club was moving to Los Angeles. It had been sold to a group of Los Angeles businessmen headed by George Young and Don Francisco and would play in Wrigley Field in 1938.

The Mission club was jinxed almost from the beginning, and in retrospect it was not a good business decision to move a third baseball team into the Bay Area. The onset of the Depression and the move to Seals Stadium doomed the franchise; perhaps it could have survived had it remained in Recreation Park. But that is speculative, to say the least.

A number of great players wore the Mission uniform in the 12 years in San Francisco. This lineup might have won that elusive pennant which could have kept the club in the City.

1B	George Burns	1930—.349, 22 HR, 131 RBI
2B	Mickey Finn	1929—.347, 5 HR, 64 RBI
SS	Gordon Slade	1929—.302, 16 HR, 115 RBI
3B	Bucky Walters	1933—.376, 16 HR, 91 RBI
LF	Ox Eckhardt	1933—.414, 12 HR, 143 RBI
CF	Evar Swanson	1928—.346, 4 HR, 58 RBI
RF	Ike Boone	1929—.407, 55 HR, 218 RBI
C	Chick Outen	1935—.367, 7 HR, 62 RBI
P	Bert Cole	1926—29-12, 2.63 ERA
P	Herm Pillette	1929—23-13, 3.59 ERA
P	Dutch Lieber	1934—19-13, 2.50 ERA
P	Johnny Babich	1933—20-15, 3.62 ERA

Practice In Paradise: The 1946 Seals in Hawaii

by Paul L. Wysard

Most Mainlanders may not realize that the Hawaiian Islands are home or haven to large numbers of seals, especially those from the Monk family, often seen resting on secluded beaches. In the spring of 1946, this population was increased by the arrival of over 40 quite different Seals—the San Francisco, ball-playing variety.

Club owners Charles Graham and Paul Fagan, known for first-class management, including major league-level salaries, air travel, and other amenities, had made the intriguing decision to hold spring training in Honolulu. Fagan was almost certainly the driving force behind the adventure; he had a home and various business interests in the Islands, which at the time were a United States Territory.

Following the arrival of the owners just after the middle of February, the players began to appear, individually and in small groups, and by March 1, Manager Lefty O'Doul had set up shop in the old Honolulu Stadium. After several days of fundamentals and loosening up, O'Doul split the team into two groups, the Whites and the Maroons, and a series of intrasquad games began.

The accessible and affable O'Doul was immediately popular with the fans and sports reporters who attended the games and workouts. He wore flower leis on the field, chatted with anyone, umpired the bases, encouraged autograph sessions, and occasionally even set aside his beloved green outfits in favor of florid "aloha shirts." During one batting practice session, he wandered about, cradling a large, ripe pineapple.

Lefty endeared himself even further to the local folks when he told a reporter, "I've never seen a club round into shape so fast in a week." He probably caused a stir among Chambers of Commerce back home when he went on to say, "This place has it all over California for training."

Several players jumped off to quick starts at the plate. Future two-time American League batting champion Ferris Fain and slugger Sal Taormina rattled the fences and seats for the Maroons. Third baseman-outfielder Don White socked homers for the Whites, aided by slap-hitting infielder Del Young. Shortstop Roy Nicely of the Maroons was also admired. The hitting was potent enough to cause O'Doul to wonder out loud if the supply of balls, some of which came from nearby downsizing military bases, was a bit too lively.

The pitchers were behind at the beginning, but there were some very good arms to see. Al Lien was a workhorse, young southpaw Bill Werle showed his big league potential, old Cliff Melton was solid, and 25-year-old righthander Larry Jansen was on the threshold of a 30-win season.

The Seals took their show to other fields as well: 3,500 assembled at Navy-Marine Furlong Field, near Pearl Harbor, for a double-header. Other games were played on high school and community park diamonds. The competition was almost always followed by fanfare, food and fun. The Seals were a big deal in a smaller city on an island without significant professional baseball. Little kids wanted to touch them, adults wanted to talk and to entertain them, but those players certainly gave as much as they got.

There were some interesting injuries. Young hurler Frank Cvitanich came up



Cliff Melton

with a sore arm from too much canoeing in off hours, and righthander Bob Chesnes was plopped into a hospital with a bad back. One day, San Francisco News beat writer Bucky Walter was hit in the face with a foul ball, which shattered his glasses and left a prominent bruise.

But those little setbacks were shrugged off; everyone was having a wonderful time, highlighted by celebration of O'Doul's 49th birthday at a huge party at Trader Vic's restaurant. Visiting writers enjoyed that bash, but were already far ahead of the field on the party circuit, hosting and being hosted at various watering holes and ethnic eateries.

For the rest of their stay, the Seals' main tasks were to hone their skills for the season opener against the Seattle Rainiers on the 29th and to decide which players would be kept. "We have 40 fine Triple-A caliber people here," Graham told the newspapers, "but only 25 can make the club." If it were up to the fans in Honolulu, all 40, somehow, would be on the team.

Opposition was provided, over a set of 17 games, by an all-star squad of local amateurs and semiprofs, augmented by major leaguers who were still in the process of mustering out of World War II service. Among them were New York Giants power hitter Willard Marshall, Yankee pitcher Mel Queen, late-'30s spot starter "Boots" Poffenberger, and Cardinal first base prospect Vernal "Nippy" Jones. All except Poffenberger played in the big leagues in the season ahead, and Jones ended up in the World Series.

Although Marshall lit up the Seals' staff (around .400 and 4 homers) and Queen and Poffenberger pitched well, the Bay Area visitors dominated, 11 games to six. As the series dwindled down to the last game or two, the Seals began to leave for the West Coast in small packs; post-war travel was still quite limited in scope and numbers.

And so Practice in Paradise ended, but it was a blessing, as O'Doul had suggested, because the Seals won the 1946 PCL pennant handily and drew over 670,000 at the gate—a minor league record at the time. The club took home a check for \$15,000, surely much less than it spent, and hardly the kind of money which would tempt most owners to return. But Paul Fagan was not a conventional owner. He was wealthy, of course, yet also endowed with both vision and boldness. All of this led him into another engagement, in the spring of 1947, at the tiny and picturesque town of Hana, on the east coast of the island of Maui. That remarkable island is now a primary international tourist destination, but 50 years ago it was a quiet plantation community. Fagan was developing a very upscale, hideaway hotel in little Hana, and he knew Seals spring training would maximize promotion and publicity. Business aside, however, an important influence was the fact that he simply loved the place.

In both years, but especially in 1946, the San Francisco Seals left a legacy of very good baseball and even better feelings. Their visits, coupled with the birth and growth of the football 49ers, created legions of Hawaiian fans very much devoted to the fortunes of teams from the City by the Bay.

Renaissance Baseball, Lefty & Casey Collide

by Dick Dobbins

The unveiling of the 1946 Pacific Coast League season after World War II was tantamount to exposing organized baseball's best kept secret to the world. This minor league, the Pacific Coast League, was playing a brand of baseball that would have made any city in the U.S.A proud. It was a renaissance of baseball.

Organized baseball had suffered through a decade-long depression during the 1930s only to be plunged into world war as the 1940s arrived. While many minor leagues couldn't survive the pressures, the Pacific Coast League tottered, but stood its shaky ground. It was said, with a good deal of accuracy, that it took each team the sale of one young prospect a year to the major leagues to keep the tide of red ink from submerging the ship.

But when Johnny came marching home, baseball was saved. And possibly no section of the country benefited more than the West Coast. During World War II, hundreds of thousands of troops from all over the country had left for the Pacific front through debarkation points in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. Many had liked what they saw, and returned to stay after the war.

War industries along the Pacific Coast attracted many more, and at the war's conclusion, they also remained. The result was a huge population increase on the West Coast in post-war America.

These Americans had made good money during the war and had no place to spend it. When peace came they bought, and they also spent heavily entertaining themselves. Baseball was there for them.

In the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area, things were active on the baseball front. New money was injected into both local teams. Clarence "Brick" Laws and Joe Blumenfeld, two wealthy theatre-chain operators, purchased the Oakland Oaks, while San Francisco's aging owner, Charles Graham, sold a partial team ownership to wealthy financier, Paul I. Fagan.

Back in Oakland, with Laws orchestrating the changes, the Oaks Ball Park was completely renovated and expanded. Over the previous 15 years, the ballpark had been allowed to deteriorate. New lights were installed. The clubhouse was renovated, new bleachers were installed and a new coat of paint appeared throughout.

But of even greater significance was the hiring of Charles Dillon "Casey" Stengel to manage the Oaks in 1946. Stengel had only mediocre success in his previous managerial stints, but he came with high recommendations. Laws opened up the checkbook to him to acquire new players, and Stengel countered by pledging a championship to Oakland in three years.



1946 PCL Champion San Francisco Seals

Back Row: Cliff Melton, Dino Restelli, Joe Sprinz, Al Lien, Bill Werle, Bones Sanders, Larry Jansen, Frank Seward, Ray Harrel,

Doug Loane, Jim Tobin, Emmett O'Neil, Trainer Leo Hughes

Second Row: Manager Frank "Lefty" O'Doul, Bernie Ubalt, Don White, Sal Tuormina, Ted Jennings, Roy Nicely, Joe Hoover, Mel Ivy, Del Young

Front Row: Ed Stutz, Neill Sheridan, Doug Orgradowski, Don Trouner, Ferris Fain, Mascot "Winky" Morris, Hugh Luby, Frank Rosso,

Vince DiMaggio, "Chuck" Matzen, Ball Boy



Doug McWilliams Collection

Paul Fagan found the San Francisco situation in similar stages of disrepair. Beautiful Seals Stadium had become dingy and unappealing, so Fagan set out to make it the most attractive ballpark in America.

The park was painted, and the unsightly but profitable advertising signs were removed from the outfield fences. Flower boxes appeared in the front office windows, and a carriage entrance was constructed for Fagan's socially prominent friends. Attractively dressed usherettes were conspicuous by their presence, and a band played between innings. Indeed, Seals Stadium became the most beautiful ballpark in America.

On the field, Frank "Lefty" O'Doul had managed the team for a decade, but the past few seasons had been difficult. His talented players had all been in the service. But the prospects for 1946 looked good.

Fagan owned a huge ranch on the island of Maui in the Hawaiian Islands, and he told Graham he would underwrite the costs of holding spring training in Hawaii. It would be a great local attraction, and the Seals could play the military teams that were still on the Islands.

His gamble was a total success, as a profit was actually made, and the team returned to San Francisco in excellent condition and relaxed. The only problem of the whole trip was getting the team back. With returning soldiers having priority for the limited travel accommodations, Seals players returned to the mainland in three's and four's.

Enthusiasm for the 1946 season was enormous. The Seals were at full strength and Seals Stadium sparkled like a diamond. O'Doul had an impressive squad, competently manned at every position. His stars included a stocky first baseman, Ferris Fain, a mercurial center fielder, Bernie "Frenchy" Uhalt, an under-weight, light-hitting shortstop, Roy Nicely, and a balanced and marvelously talented pitching staff.

Casey's job in Oakland wasn't that simple. The 1945 Oaks left little to work with. When the dust from spring training had settled, only four players from the previous season remained. But two of them were Les Scarsella, a two-time Most Valuable Player in the league, and Billy Raimondi, the perennial All-Star catcher.

Using his contacts throughout baseball, Stengel acquired veterans wherever he could. The Oakland clubhouse had a revolving door in 1946. But the team quickly became competitive.

Throughout the season, the Seals and Oaks battled each other head-to-head for the league lead. As the two teams pulled away from the rest of the field, enthusiasm grew for the battle of the locals. The side-show of Casey and Lefty brought fans to the park in droves.

As an experiment, the traditional Sunday doubleheader was split, with a morning game played on one side of the bay and an afternoon game played on the other. This was an immediate success.



1948 P.C.L. Champion Oakland Oaks

*Top Row: Lou Tost, Harry Lavagetto, Les Scarsella, Jack Salvesson, Nick Elten, Les Webber, Ernie Lombardi, Thorton Lee, Loyd Christopher, Will Hafey
Middle Row: Bill Raimondi, Brooks Holder, Mel Duezabou, John Babich, Casey Stengel, Dairio Lodigiani, Ralph Buxton, Merrill Combs, Aldon Wilke, Floyd Speer
Bottom Row: Ed Fernandez, George Metkovich, Ray Hamrick, Billy Martin, Chuch Symonds, Maurice Van Robays, Earl Jones, Charlie Gassaway*

Doug McWilliams Collection

O'Doul's pitching staff was anchored by Larry Jansen, who had been inactive during the war. Jansen developed a slider and won 30 games, losing only 6, and established an all-time PCL ERA standard of 1.57. Pitching behind Jansen was a balanced crew of lefties Cliff Melton, Al Lien, and Bill Werle and righthanders Frank Seward, Ray Harrell, and Frank Rosso. With the exception of Lien, who won eight each pitcher won at least 11, and Seward's ERA of 3.12 was the highest.

Fain was the offensive leader of a balanced attack, leading the league in runs scored and runs batted in, and the team in home runs with 11. While no offensive statistics were spectacular, the Seals knew how to hit when it counted.

But the team won with its defense. Fain was a master at first, and the double play combination of Hugh Luby and Nicely was dependable and flawless. Roy Nicely was a poor hitter, but nobody denied he was a major league shortstop. He made the difficult plays look routine. To this day, old timers rave about his skills. And in the outfield, veteran Frenchy Uhalt provided the experience to cover for the young crop of outfielders, Don White, Dino Restelli, Neill Sheridan and Sal Taormina. Observers have called this one of the league's finest teams.

While the Seals and Oaks fought each other doggedly all season long, a spurt by the Seals at the end opened up a 4-game lead. The Seals attracted 670,563 fans to establish a minor league attendance record that lasted almost four decades, and the Oaks, in their little handbox, attracted 633,549. These attendance figures had to be attractive to the major leagues, as they topped the attendance of several of their major league brethren.

After the season concluded, Jansen was sold to the New York Giants and Fain and Wally Westlake of the Oaks were drafted, by Philadelphia (A.L.) and Pittsburgh respectively. At contract time, each received an initial contract for appreciably less than they had made on the Coast in 1946. This was a problem Coast Leaguers regularly faced as they moved up to the major leagues.

In 1947, a heated race developed between the Los Angeles Angels and the Seals, with the teams ending the season in a flat-footed tie. The Angels won a single-game playoff to defeat San Francisco for the league championship. The Oaks, facing a bout of injuries to key players, slipped to fourth. While the Seals were virtually the same team as in 1946, Stengel had continued his tinkering to improve his squad. They would be stronger in 1948.

At the end of spring training, the consensus of sportswriters was that the Seals were the favorite for the pennant. Young Bob Chesnes, a phenomenal athlete, had been sold to the Pittsburgh Pirates after going 22–8 for the Seals in 1947. Along with cash, the Seals received catcher Dixie Howell, pitcher Ken Gables and outfielder Gene Woodling.

Woodling had been discarded by both Cleveland and Pittsburgh, but O'Doul felt Gene could still hit. Working long hours with him, O'Doul got Woodling to go into a Musial-type crouch. This allowed Woodling to pull the ball, something lacking in his earlier trials, and he started spraying the ball to all fields.

Although Woodling broke an ankle, causing him to miss six weeks of the season, he batted .385 with 107 RBI, a league-leading 13 triples and 22 home runs, plus the Most Valuable Player trophy. Woodling was so hot, he even pinch-hit with a cast on his ankle, legging out a single!

But the surprise team in 1948 was Casey Stengel's Oakland Oaks. Stengel's three-year pledge was due, and he didn't disappoint. The race developed into a two-team race, the Oaks and the Seals, as the Angels dropped off the pace in mid-season.

The joke about Casey's Oaks was that there was one team leaving, another playing today, and a third team coming in. Not true, but Stengel kept making changes until he got what he wanted.

Casey liked the veterans, especially if they were left-handed. With the right field wall being an inviting 300 feet away, he had his reasons. With Nick Etten at first, George Metkovich, Les Scarsella and Brooks Holder in the outfield, Merrill Combs at short and power hitting pitcher Will Hafey all portside, the Oaks had a hometown advantage.

In 1946, Lefty O'Doul had learned to juggle his pitching staff so that Cliff Melton, Al Lien, and Bill Werle got the assignments at Oakland, giving 30-game-winner Larry Jansen and the other righthanders a week off. In 1948, Lien, Werle, Melton and newcomers Tommy Fine and Dewey Soriano got the duty.

But some veteran righthanders could also do Casey's calling. All-star catcher Bill Raimondi and future Hall of Famer Ernie Lombardi handled the catching, while brash Billy Martin and veterans Cookie Lavagetto and Dario Lodigiani got most of the calls at second and third.

Casey Stengel's New York Yankees were known for their platooning. It was at Oakland that Stengel polished his technique. As a sample of Stengel's willingness to platoon, 13 pitchers recorded victories, 25 by Ralph Buxton and Floyd Speer, the designated relievers. No pitcher on the 1948 Oaks threw 200 innings. Whether it was Stengel's uncanny sense of timing or pitching coach Johnny Babich's knowledge of his pitching staff, the Oaks had the most effective staff in the league.

When the Oaks beat Sacramento in the first game of the final Sunday double-header to cinch the championship, the city of Oakland exploded with joy. For too many years, they had taken a back-seat to their more sophisticated West Bay rivals. The parade down Broadway in Oakland was huge, and Casey was the unchallenged star.

But the glory days in the Bay Area were ending. Stengel left for New York and many of his old stars were released. In San Francisco, beloved owner Charles Graham died late in the season, bringing gloom over the whole franchise.

And the winds of change were being felt. Baseball no longer had a captive audience. People were watching the upstart San Francisco 49ers, and the major leagues were starting to use that new device, television, to extend their influence over the minor leagues.

By 1954 the Seals were bankrupt, and a year later the Oaks moved to Canada. Three years later, baseball would be back—the New York Giants would be in Seals Stadium.

But for purist fans, the post-War era would have to live in their memories... Billy Raimondi, Gene Woodling, Casey and Lefty were all gone... but they could never be forgotten.

Dick Dobbins is a long-time historian of west coast baseball. His most recent work is "Nuggets on the Diamond". He is currently finishing an oral history of the Pacific Coast League.

Fresno Shows the Japanese How To Do it: Baseball in The Making

by David A. Hendsch

One may wonder how baseball became so firmly entrenched in Japan. Part of the answer is based on Japan's historic interest to westernize. More importantly, the Japanese people passionately absorbed this game into their culture as an educational, social, and spiritual activity.

My interest in the entrenchment question was sparked by my father's baseball experience in Japan. In 1927, he barnstormed Japan as a member of the Fresno Japanese American Baseball Team. I recognized a connection between his trip and the rationale for the Japanese international baseball exchange program instituted and promoted by Dr. Isoo Abe in 1905.

Several questions came to my mind regarding this connection. I needed to know what my father contributed to his team. Given the Fresno team was unique, it raised a question about distinctive characteristics. What was the core of this team? Given my father and his teammates contributed to baseball science in Japan, what did they accomplish? Finally, there was the existence of an international baseball exchange in Japan. How did Fresno compare to other participating amateur teams?

These concerns impelled my search for information about baseball making through international exchanges in Japan. Baseball making is defined in the inductive sense that you build an improved game based upon direct experience.

As raw material for research, I was fortunate to rely on two scrapbooks filled with baseball memories from Japan. One was compiled by my father and the other by teammate Harvey Iwata. Both corroborated similar context and details, as well as revealing some interesting differences.

A Historic Perspective

The entrenchment process was rooted in a 30-year evolution in Japan's baseball culture. By 1900, a competitive gap occurred between university baseball teams. Particularly, Waseda and Keio Universities were unbeatable. They needed competition. Looking to the United States and the Hawaiian Islands, baseball

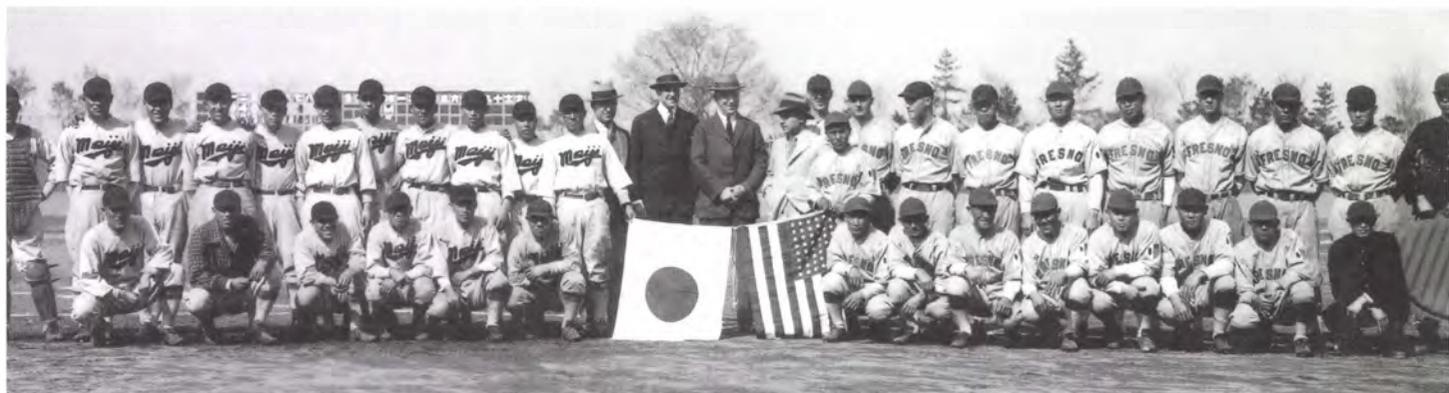
teams were found to challenge the mettle of these leading Japanese teams. An amalgam of baseball interests was created by Professor Isoo Abe from Waseda University in 1905. He encouraged the Meiji government to subsidize a baseball trip for Waseda University to the United States, including Fresno, Ca. on the itinerary.

His experiment worked out beneficially for the Japanese government, although it was a financial disaster for Abe. Coincidentally, at the time of the Waseda baseball tour, the Japanese achieved a huge international surprise, defeating the Russian army and navy in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Americans seeing the polite and courteous behavior of the baseball team identified strongly with Japan, while fearing the rise of widespread anarchy in Russia. The government received an unintended benefit from the baseball team as goodwill ambassadors. In a complementary way Abe promoted the improvement of Japanese baseball through exchanges with the U.S., as well as international goodwill. The first U. S. visitor to Japan was the University of Washington in 1908.

With a history of baseball development in Japan as early as 1873, the culture thrived in its new relationship with the U.S. Each year international exchanges brought new input for the Japanese. National tournaments were organized for university and high school level play after 1914, intensifying a competitive spirit. By 1927, baseball exchanges were regularly scheduled with amateur and professional teams from the U.S., and Japan's performance on the baseball diamond improved measurably.

The Immediate Challenge

Suppose you were a Japanese agent charged with the task of scheduling an international baseball exchange during the year-long celebration of a new Emperor. Recent experience ruled out American major league teams, because they tended to win all their games, no contest. The most recent competition with a university team was an embarrassment for the U.S., and a loss of reputation for the university. Japanese baseball managers were pressuring to win, but against



Official Opening Ceremonies, Meiji Stadium, Tokyo. Meiji University and Fresno, April 8, 1927

Fresno was invited to Japan by Meiji University and the Tokyo Shinbun newspaper. Ken Zenimura, Fresno's shortstop/coach, played against cousins on the Meiji team.

Fresno won four games from Meiji. Overall, Fresno won 40, lost 8, and tied 2. No other amateur team to date has played a 50 game schedule in Japan.

No Japanese university team defeated Fresno in the 1927 tour; one team tied. Fresno played baseball and saw sights in Japan, Korea, Manchuria and Hawaii from April until mid-August. They returned home the first week of September.

reputable opponents. So! What to do?

There was an American Japanese baseball team from Fresno, Ca. This team was particularly suited to offer Japanese baseball clinicians an object lesson. In 1926, the Fresno Athletic Club was State Champion of the Japanese League. Previously, they had toured Japan in 1924, compiling a record of 21 and 7. They fit a profile of modeling the best of amateur baseball in California, and matched Japanese against Japanese Americans, a crowd pleasing attraction.

Unbeknownst to the Japanese agents, the 1927 Fresno team was loaded with greater talent than the 1924 team, a combination of Japanese and non-Japanese players, giving baseball observers a richer baseball experience.

Personal Profiles

The original touring team from Fresno included 17 players: 14 Nisei and 3 non-Japanese. Personal profiles represent players playing 40 games or more in Japan, and one non-Japanese who played substantially fewer games.

Harvey Iwata

Harvey Iwata, 27, was the left fielder for the Fresno Athletic Club. He was a former Captain of the Fresno High School baseball team, a high school league champion and a member of Fresno Athletic Club Japanese League Champions in 1926. He was an excellent fielder, third-best hitter on the Japanese Tour, and speedy on the base paths. Overall, he played better as the tour progressed. In Japan his batting average was .333 and in Hawaii .346.

Ty Miyahara

A 27-year-old third baseman, he was a former member of the Hawaiian Asahi Club. He was a strong hitter, and a capable infielder. His Japan batting average was .323, and in Hawaii .263.

Ken Zenimura

Shortstop Ken Zenimura was a 27-year-old player and the manager of the Fresno Athletic Club. A graduate from Mills High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, and a team captain for the Honolulu Asahis, he was a superb infielder and base stealer. His Japan batting average was .295 and in Hawaii, .222.

Mike Nakano

Mike Nakano, 21, was the first baseman. He was voted the best first baseman of the 1926 California Japanese League. A consistent hitter, his Japan batting average was .385 and his Hawaiian average .250.

John Nakagawa

John Nakagawa, 20, was the center fielder. He pitched and played outfield for the 1926 Fresno High School Championship team. He was regarded as a Japanese Babe Ruth for the number of home runs hit. He earned honors as best hitter in Japan, and was an extraordinary fielder. His Japan batting average was .388 and in Hawaii .289.

Ken Furabayashi

A graduate of Orosi High School, a farming town near Fresno, 20-year-old Ken Furabayashi was a member of the F.A.C. 1926 California Japanese League Champions. He was an excellent outfielder. His Japan batting average was .269 and in Hawaii .074.

Charlie Hendsch

Charlie Hendsch, 24, was a reserve left-handed pitcher. A student at Fresno State College, he was captain of both his high school and college teams. He played semipro ball in the Taft Oil Field League. He was known for his ability to hit, both right- and left-handed, and hit .400 in Japan. He played in six games, winning at least five. He did not participate in the Korean, Manchurian or Hawaiian parts of the tour.

Although these selected players were the most talented among the Japanese American Team, the remaining members of the team were endowed with comparable skills, ensuring a uniformly high level of play. Additionally, to play a schedule of 51 games in three months time, about three games a week, each player needed physical strength, stamina and general good health. Board and lodging were hotels, dormitories, and in some cases host families. Physical and social adaptation became a continuous source of stress and exhaustion for these ball players.

The Fresno team lost 8 games. One was against the Royal Giants, a team from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, touring Japan concurrently. A member of the Negro Baseball League, the team had a reputation for playing at a professional level. They beat Fresno, 9–1.

This game demonstrated a complete game of American standards and umpiring. Performances by both teams revealed strength of individuals, team strategy and organization. A performance of a strong amateur team against a professional team was a powerful contrasting lesson to Japanese observers, no doubt tempting Japanese promoters of professional baseball to reorganize their efforts.

Significant for Japanese clinicians was Fresno's 2–1 loss to Wakayama Chugaku, which in June 1927 won a high school baseball competition to tour California during the summer. (They were in Fresno during August.) In this game, Wakayama was able to subdue the Fresnoans with superior pitching and hitting strategy.

To a lesser extent, a game with the Waseda Reserves displayed strong pitching and hitting. The Waseda varsity had won the 1926 National University Baseball Tournament, and watched their younger team members play Fresno from the bleachers. The efforts of Wakayama and Waseda gave Japanese observers a chance to envision Japan's promising baseball future.

In researching other teams that beat Fresno, two wins by Tararazuka stand out. This team was made up of older baseball players, Kiyoshi Oshikawa and Yasushi Kono for example, formerly the pride of Waseda University. Originally the team was named the Shibaura Kyokai. They were regarded as being the first professional baseball team in Japan in 1921. In game two, Tararazuka decidedly defeated Fresno 12–5; games one and three resulted in a toss-up between the two opponents.

Outcomes

The general effort by Fresno was triumphal; everywhere they traveled a baseball trial awaited Japanese opponents. The Royal Giants (23–1) and Fresno (41–8–2) provided an immediate snapshot of American competency, one shared by Nisei, black and white players. In the U.S. racial divisions created separate but equal leagues, and little chance for similar interracial play.

What practical value did this baseball experience have for the Japanese?

A baseball editorial from the Asahi Shinbun, in late April, said that Japanese university nines were discredited in every phase of the game, a scathing rebuke of their present level of play. Public pressure was focused on initiating greater improvement, and professional level play. Fresno was criticized too. Pitchers lacked control; their form was imperfect; too many batters were hit. Catchers received a mixed review. But compliments went to Fresno's hitting ability, fielding excellence, and speed on the base paths. Fresno gave these writers something to think about—a paradigm for winning.

Fresno served to boost Japanese competency in baseball, a primary purpose of summer barnstorming. Connection with individual major leaguers and Herb Hunter's All-American Major League teams contributed particularly to the dominance of Waseda and Keio Universities during the 1920s. Fresno added a twist by bringing three outstanding white players—two pitchers and a catcher—to

offer a contrast in styles and teamwork. Lessons from observing pitching-catching batteries provided essential tools in Japan's improvement program.

As showmen, Fresno gave their audiences something to "ooh and aah" over. They were continually bashing the ball and scampering on the bases, while stifling opposition. They demonstrated classy baseball, as well as character. In visiting Korea or Manchuria, they shared their baseball savvy over a wider spread of the Empire than any other touring baseball teams to date. Japanese players were wringing their hands to get a piece of Fresno—they had real stuff.

Unlike most other baseball visitors, Fresno did not expect a financial guarantee or a percentage of profits from their hosts, and paid their own way. For a baseball exchange, the Japanese baseball establishment was exposed to a superior amateur baseball team model.

Fresno played a longer schedule, winning 80 per cent of the contests, a feat no other amateur team achieved in the 32-year history of international baseball exchanges. Ironically, it was Fresno's behavior on Japan's baseball diamonds that demonstrated the essence of Showa, the current political ideal in Japan, a practicing expression of civilized peace and harmony.

The Japanese baseball establishment was serious about improving their baseball competency. A strong pressure was growing for professional baseball in Japan. Slowly, changes occurred in the teaching and in the practice of baseball. In particular, the pitching-catching problem was addressed. By 1935, the antecedents to the Tokyo Giants were organized and traveling to the U.S., signaling the beginning of professional baseball.

Another excursion from California, including Fresno players and following the 1927 schedule, occurred in 1937. This last baseball exchange before World War II, involved the Kono Alameda All-Stars. They achieved a record of 41 wins, 20 losses and 1 tie. The Japanese amateur game had improved greatly in 10 years. It heralded an evolution that undergirded the 1990s Japanese reputation as a world class baseball power.

BASEBALL EXCHANGES BETWEEN JAPAN & U.S., 1905-1937

Year	Japan to U.S.	W-L-T	U.S. to Japan	W-L-T
1905	Waseda U.	7-19-0		
1907			St. Louis-Hawaii	5-3-0
1908			U. Washington	6-4-0
1908	Keio to Hawaii			
1908			Reach All-Amer.	17-0-0
1910			U. Wisconsin	3-4-0
1910			U. Chicago	9-0-0
1911	Keio U.	29-20-1		
1913			Stanford U.	
1913			U. Washington	
1913			N.Y. Giants/Chi.W.S.	1-0-0
1914	Keio U.		Seattle BB Club	
1914	Meiji U.	26-28-2	Seattle Asahis	
1915			U. Chicago	
1918			Seattle Asahis	16-9-0
1920			U. Chicago	8-4-2
1920			Hawaii Asahis	11-7-0
1920			Seattle Mikados	
1920			Major L. All-Stars	20-0-0
1920			U.C. Berkeley	7-3-0
1920	Waseda U.	15-23-0		
1921			Seattle Asahis	8-3-0
1921			U. Washington	23-12-0

Year	Japan to U.S.	W-L-T	U.S. to Japan	W-L-T
1921			Squamish Indians	16-2-0
1921			Canadian Stars	
1921			Vancouver Asahis	
1921			Hawaii All-Stars	
1921			Hawaii Hilo	
1921			Hawaii Nippon	
1921			Sherman Indians	
1921			U. Indiana	
1922			Major L. All-Stars	15-1-0
1922			Seattle Mikados	13-11-0
1923			Fresno	21-7-0
1924	Meiji U.	15-21-1	U. Chicago	13-3-5
1925			Stanford U.	8-9-0
1926			Fresno	41-8-1
1927	Wakayama High (didn't play)		Royal Giants	23-1-0
1927	Waseda U.		Major L. All-Stars	
1928	Keio U.			
1929	Meiji U.			
1931	Hosei U.		Major L. All-Stars	17-0-0
1932	Rikkyo U.		Royal Giants	23-1-0
1934			Major L. All-Stars	17-0-0
1935	Tokyo Giants			
1936	Tokyo Giants			
1936	Waseda U.			
1937			Fresno	41-20-1

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The Original San Francisco Giants

by Steve Bitker

The late baseball commissioner Bart Giamatti said that much of what we love later in sport is what it recalls to us about ourselves at our earliest memories of a time when all that was better was before us, as a hope, and that the hope was fastened to a game. Hall of Fame writer Leonard Koppett calls this the Golden Age, the earliest days of a fan's awareness, when the names and events on the field are indelible, and grow more golden with the passage of time.

For all who love the game of baseball there is such a time, and for me it has its roots in the 1958 season, when the Giants brought major league ball to San Francisco. I was only five years old then but have distinct memories of the '58 Giants that will stay a part of me forever. They represent some of my earliest and most cherished childhood recollections.

My parents took my brother and me to Seals Stadium, near downtown San Francisco, early in that '58 season for our first big league ball game. I remember walking into an auditorium-like building, holding my dad's hand tightly as we made our way through a dimly lit and crowded corridor, before exiting to our right through an open door to the most beautiful sight I'd ever seen. The diamond was

covered with glistening green grass, sparkling white bases, and sunshine. It was intimate, it was elegant, it was regal in my eyes, and now I was watching the same ballplayers on the trading cards I collected, performing in their clean white flannels. When I wasn't glued to action on the field I was transfixed by the Hamm's Brewery's flashing mug high behind the stands in back of home plate. The mug would gradually fill with beer to its foam-covered top, flash on and off three times, then start all over again. That alone could keep this five year old's attention, whenever there was a break on the ball field. Years later I would discover that I wasn't the only one transfixed. The late Don Drysdale, for one, said he didn't remember much about losing the first big league game in West Coast history, but did recall looking up at the big Hamm's beer glass on the brewery, and watching it fill again and again. Drysdale said he was intrigued by it, adding that after getting knocked out early in that historic opener, he could have used a cold beer.

When the games at Seals Stadium ended, the outfield wall would open magically, allowing fans to walk down to the field and across the grass out to the



Doug McWilliams Collection

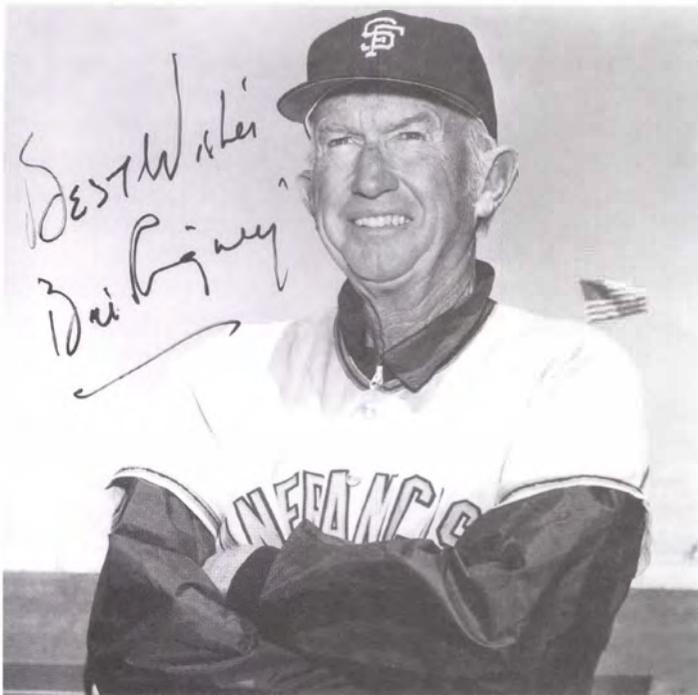
Front Row: Ray Crone, Bob Schmidt, Bob Speake, Jim King, Herman Franks, Mgr. Bill Rigney, "Salty" Parker,
Wes Westrum, Jim Davenport, Nick Testa, Ray Jablonski, Stu Miller

Second Row: Eddie Logan (Clubhouse Mgr.), Pete Burnside, Andre Rogers, Hank Sauer, Allan Worthington, Daryl Spencer, Ruben Gomez, Jim Constable,
Curt Barclay, Willie Kirkland, Dan O'Connell, Marv Grissom, Frank Bowman (Trainer)

Top Row: Paul Giel, John Antonelli, "Whitey" Lockman, Jim Finigan, Ramon Monzant, Don Taussig, Valmy Thomas,
Orlando Cepeda, Willie Mays, Mike McCormick, Ed Bressoud

parking lot and the surrounding streets of the neighborhood, beyond right and center field. There were times, of course, when my folks parked closer to home plate, but they understood the thrill their kids always got walking across their field of dreams, even if it occasionally meant doubling back on 16th Street to get to our car.

Unfortunately, Seals Stadium was torn down after the '59 season because the Giants were moving to Candlestick Park. Trading Seals for the 'Stick should go down as the worst deal in San Francisco Giants history, the Cepeda-for-Sadecki trade in '66 notwithstanding. Sadecki threw 23 complete games, with eight



Dick Dobbins Collection

Bill Rigney

shutouts and a 2.80 earned run average in his first two full seasons with the Giants. But Candlestick was such a colossal blunder from its inception that fans and players continue to pay for that mistake to this day. Talk to the guys who played at both Seals Stadium and Candlestick and, to a man, they'll tell you that moving to the 'Stick was a mistake, that Seals Stadium should have been enlarged and the Giants should have stayed right where they were, at 16th and Bryant Streets. San Francisco baseball legend Lefty O'Doul lamented the destruction of Seals Stadium, saying what a crime it was to tear down the most beautiful little ballpark in America.

I'll never forget Seals Stadium, nor will I forget the players who made up the 1958 Giants. I followed them throughout their careers, even when they played in other countries. Ruben Gomez, for example, pitched marvelously for many years in the Mexican League and in Puerto Rico, long after he shut out the Dodgers, 8-0 in that first major league game played on the West Coast. Willie Kirkland became a folk hero in Osaka, Japan when he played for the Hanshin Tigers, learning to speak excellent Japanese in the process, long after he started that first game as a rookie right fielder for the Giants. Daryl Spencer became a legend in Japan with the Hankyu Braves, also long after he started at shortstop in the '58 opener. Leon Wagner became a great home run hitter in the American League. Bill White became an outstanding player with St. Louis, and later became National League president, helping to keep the Giants in San Francisco when it looked as though they were going to be sold and moved to Tampa following the '92 season. Stu Miller and Al Worthington became outstanding relief pitchers in the American

League. Ed Bressoud became a power-hitting all-star shortstop with the Boston Red Sox. Felipe Alou blossomed as an all-star outfielder with the Atlanta Braves, and later as manager of the Montreal Expo. Others, fortunately, enjoyed the greatest success with the Giants, including Willie Mays, Orlando Cepeda, Mike McCormick, Johnny Antonelli and Jim Davenport. Still others wound up wonderful careers here in San Francisco: Hank Sauer, Whitey Lockman and Marv Grissom. The list goes on and on.

These men were my heroes as a child. I memorized their vital statistics on the backs of my cards and, when I wasn't at the ballpark itself, I listened to the games on the radio, often as I lay in bed at night, eyes closed, seeing every play before me, as Russ Hodges and Lon Simmons called the action. As I got older, as all of us got older, this hero-worship of the players appropriately faded, even as our love of the game itself continued to grow. In subsequent years that love has been sorely tested by labor issues, expansion, realignment, second-place teams going to the playoffs, domed stadiums, artificial surfaces, network television influence and overall greed by the owners and players that somehow managed to force the first cancellation of the World Series in 90 years. I found myself wishing I could go back in time to the innocence of my childhood when these ballplayers seemed larger than life, when baseball was unquestionably the national pastime, when Topps cards were the only cards, and when the baseball winter meetings (and all the trade talk that surrounded them) got as much or more coverage in the local papers than the NBA, NHL and NFL combined. Yet through it all baseball remains relatively unchanged from the game we fell in love with as kids. Baseball itself continues to survive, and even thrive, despite the efforts of so many within the game to destroy it. For us, it will always remain the national pastime.

Finally, there is no better spokesman for the '58 Giants (or for the game of baseball) than the team's manager Bill Rigney, who is on the verge of celebrating his 60th anniversary in professional baseball. Is he tired of it? Never. Does he tire of talking about the game? Never. Is his memory not what it once was? Hardly. There are few, if any, better treats in baseball than sitting down for a few minutes or, better yet, a few hours with Bill Rigney. I consider myself fortunate to have done so.

The 1958 San Francisco Giants won 80 games and lost 74, finishing third in the National League, 12 games behind the pennant-winning Milwaukee Braves. So why write a book about these guys? Why write a book about a team that nobody ever confused with The Boys of Summer? Well, first and foremost because these guys are the original San Francisco Giants the guys who brought big league ball to San Francisco. The '58 Giants were supposed to finish in the second division of the National League but, in fact, were in first place much of the season, as late as July 30th, after finishing a distant sixth in '56 and '57. But that was when they were the New York Giants. And that's why this '58 Giants team was something very special. It was San Francisco.

For those of us who have held this game close to our hearts ever since 1958, the original San Francisco Giants will forever be magical in a way that not even the 1962 National League champion Giants were, because the '58 Giants were first. And fans all over the Bay Area responded accordingly. Despite a seating capacity of under 23,000, Seals Stadium drew 1,272,625 fans in 1958, nearly doubling the Giants draw in '57 at the Polo Grounds in New York.

More than anything else, The Original San Francisco Giants is a tribute to these gentlemen who introduced major league ball to San Francisco. A way of saying thanks. Sure, if these guys hadn't done it, some others would have. But these are the men who did it. Their stories are rich and varied. Hopefully, this book will help preserve their memories of the game, our memories of them and their rich contributions to baseball in San Francisco.

The Original San Francisco Giants, published by Sports Publishing, Inc. has just been released.

Baseball's Baby Bull The Bay Area's Very Own

by Herb Fagan

When Major League baseball first came to the Bay Area in 1958, the city of San Francisco was far more cohesive than it is now. The City by the Bay had its proper share of common heroes and common passions: columnist Herb Caen; symphony conductor Pierre Monteux; a football team called the 49ers; and an exciting rookie first baseman and slugger supreme, 20-year-old Orlando Cepeda, baseball's inimitable "Baby Bull."

To say that Cepeda won over the Bay Area baseball fans would be an understatement. Unlike the great Willie Mays, who was a New York transplant, the "Baby Bull" was a San Francisco original, its first home grown "superstar." He was "Cha Cha" the dancing master, a nickname given him by teammate Johnny Antonelli, an exciting young presence, a Latin charmer whom the city embraced like a native son.

"Right from the start I fell in love with the City," Cepeda later recalled. "There was everything that I liked. We played more day games then, so I usually had at least two nights a week to myself. On Sundays I'd go to jazz workshops for jam sessions. I'd stay in San Francisco three or four weeks after the season ended just to enjoy it."

Nor did it take long for the "Baby Bull" to enjoy instant celebrity. Manager Bill Rigney, who inherited a sixth place team from New York, wisely gave San Francisco the pleasure of creating its own heroes. And there was no brighter star than the "Baby Bull," who had been likened to a young Josh Gibson in his native Puerto Rico.

The setting could not have been better for the first Major League game ever played on the West Coast, when the Giants opened on April 15, 1958 against their arch-rivals, the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"Here I was only twenty years old so very excited," Cepeda recalled. "I looked across the field and saw many of the same players who were heroes of mine as I was growing up. Great players like Duke Snider, Gil Hodges, Don Newcombe, and Pee Wee Reese."

In his second turn at bat that day, the "Baby Bull" slugged a home run over the right field fence. The fans cheered wildly as the Giants, behind right-hander Ruben Gomez, defeated the Dodgers, 8-0. Cepeda continued to wield the bat with the authority of an established veteran. Life magazine ran a feature story in June touting "The Rookie Bull of Baseball."

Cepeda speaks of manager Bill Rigney with the highest esteem. "Bill was the only great manager I ever played for. He knew how to treat people and right from the beginning he made me feel wanted. Bill built the ball club. In 1958 we were all rookies—Felipe [Alou], myself, Willie Kirkland. He really put that team together. Then in mid-1960 they let him go. No reason at all, they just let him go."

Cepeda's rookie season was a gem. He immediately established himself as one of the game's top young sluggers, hitting .312 with 25 home runs and 96 RBI. He led the league in doubles (38), and hit for 309 total bases. He was unanimously named National League Rookie of the Year, the second time any player in either league garnered the cherished award by a unanimous vote. Frank Robinson was a unanimous choice in 1956. In July 1959, *Look* magazine ran a feature on the



Photo by Doug McWilliams

Orlando Cepeda, 1958 Giants

"Baby Bull:" "Orlando Cepeda: Will He Surpass Willie Mays?"

During his peak years Cepeda's offensive stats were so imposing, one shudders to think what he could have done with two healthy legs during his entire career. By age 24, the Giants' "Baby Bull" was already 17 home runs ahead of Hank Aaron's pace at a similar age. During his first six seasons with the Giants (1958-1963), Cepeda slammed out 191 home runs, drove in 650 runs, and hit at a .310 clip. (Aaron's totals during his first six seasons include 179 home runs, 617 runs batted in and a .323 average.)

A pretty fair judge of talent by the name of Ty Cobb was suggesting the very same thing. The "Georgia Peach" was a Cepeda booster.

"He (Cobb) came to Arizona from 1959 to 1962. Each time we played the Cubs he would come to see me and talk with me. He would point to Willie (Mays) and say to me, 'Too bad you're playing with that guy there. You should be playing

somewhere else where people can know and appreciate how well you really play ball.' I liked Ty Cobb. He was a humble man and always treated me with respect."

The Baby Bull put everything together in 1961, hitting .311 to accompany his league leading 46 homers and 142 runs batted in. Baseball Digest named him as the "Best Bet to Beat (Roger) Maris." The numbers pointed to an MVP season. But MVP honors eluded him and went instead to the Reds' Frank Robinson. Not taking a thing away from Robinson, whom he greatly admires, Cepeda felt justifiably slighted.

"As a ball player Frank was right there with everybody. He could do it all, but I should been MVP in '61. Frank had a hell of a year, but not like mine."

The Giants won the National League pennant in 1962, besting the Dodgers in a three-game postseason playoff. The Giants' offense was just awesome. They scored 878 runs, more than any Major League team between 1954 and 1981. They led the National League in home runs (204) and the majors in slugging average (.448) and hitting (.278). Detroit had 209 home runs that year.

San Francisco had its first NL champion, and the City boomed with excitement. "The City really opened its arms to us," Orlando recalled. "So many people were waiting for us at the airport as we flew in from L.A., but we didn't have a lot of time to celebrate. With the play-offs taking up time, we had to get ready for the World Series immediately."

The Giants battled until the final out in the World Series against the New York Yankees. Cepeda was in the on-deck circle when Willie McCovey's line shot to right was speared in dramatic fashion by Bobby Richardson, giving the Yankees their 20th World Championship.

Cepeda's 1962 numbers were again outstanding: .306, 35 HR, 114 RBI. His next two seasons were more of the same. In 1963 his numbers read .316, 34 HR, 97 RBI; in 1964 he was .304, 31 homers and 97 RBI.

In his seven full seasons as a San Francisco Giant, the "Baby Bull" hit 222 homers (30 per season), drove in 747 runs (106 per season), hit over .300 six times, barely missing at .297 in 1960.

It seemed as though nothing could stop him—except his bad knees, and two seasons of playing with constant pain. Following an injury-ridden 1965, when he played in just 33 games, the Giants traded him to the St. Louis Cardinals for pitcher Ray Sadecki.

While Sadecki was winning just 27 games for the Giants over the next three seasons, the "Baby Bull" remained as much a winner as ever. He won Comeback Player of the Year honors with the Cardinals in 1966, then led the Redbirds to a World Championship in 1967 and another National League title in 1968.

Unanimously selected National League MVP in 1967 (.325, 25 HR and 111 RBI to lead the league), he remains the only Major League player in history to be unanimously chosen both Rookie of the Year and MVP. Traded from the Cardinals to the Atlanta Braves for Joe Torre, Cepeda immediately helped lead the Braves to a National League West title in 1969. In 1970 he put together his last great year, hitting .305 with 34 HR and 111 RBI.

But the leg injury erupted again, and he was limited to just 78 games in 1971. In 1972 he returned to the Bay Area for a proverbial last "cup of coffee," when the Braves traded Cepeda, bum leg and all, to the Oakland A's for former 31-game-winner Denny McLain—an unusual trade of two former MVPs both deemed to be washed up. Cepeda wanted out.

"I was discouraged. I stayed there for three months, then I went to Puerto Rico. Charlie Finley sent me a telegram saying that if I didn't call him after a couple of days, he was going to release me. I never phoned back, so I was released."

But not quite through. Picked up by the Boston Red Sox in 1973 as a DH, Cepeda hit .289 with 20 home runs and 86 runs batted in. He was named designated hitter of the year, as the Red Sox became the fourth team for which the



Photo by Doug McWilliams

Orlando Cepeda, 1972, A's

"Baby Bull" hit 20 or more home runs. "1973 was a hell of a season for me and one that I am very proud of. I literally played with one leg."

Orlando Cepeda closed out his seventeen-year big league career a lifetime .297 hitter, with 379 home runs and 1,365 runs batted in. Considering four injury-riddled seasons, that's a record which few can match, and one with true Hall of Fame credentials.

He played in an era when baseball was at its best, with and against the like of Hank Aaron, Ernie Banks, Stan Musial, Sandy Koufax, Bob Gibson and Warren Spahn. These were the days when players did not curse out fans, have high-powered agents, and charge \$80 for an autograph. Free agency and long-term contracts belonged to the future, and your favorite team was akin to family.

But these Hall of Fame numbers pale when compared to Orlando Cepeda's record in the game of life. Admittedly, his life hit rock bottom in 1976 when he was arrested at the San Juan Airport for retrieving two boxes of marijuana from Colombia which were addressed to him. What followed were nine years of "pure hell" as he describes them—years he will discuss fully for the first time in his upcoming book to be published by Taylor Publishing Company this summer.

In need of faith—a spiritual force big enough to dwarf his sea of torment and guide him toward a more positive future—he was introduced to the tenets of Buddhism. It would change his entire life.

Today, Orlando Cepeda is a contented man, at peace with himself and the world. Moreover, he is back where he belongs. Since 1987 he has worked as Vice President of Community Relations for the San Francisco Giants. His willingness and drive to help young people keep themselves on the right track has earned him praise here and abroad.

Active in numerous youth and community organizations throughout Northern California, he spends time visiting hospitals and schools speaking out against drug abuse. With the same unique charisma he so effectively employed as a big league ballplayer, he speaks to the Puerto Rican communities in New York and other urban areas about the importance of staying in school.

His magnetic personality still puts him in demand for personal appearances, speaking engagements and talk shows. He is an icon here in the Bay Area, and an inspiration to the entire Latin Community everywhere. A true Hall of Famer both on and off the ball field, he is character and integrity at work.

Four decades after his auspicious rookie season, San Francisco still loves its "Baby Bull," and the feeling is mutual.

No Place Like Home: Billy Pierce's 1962 Season

by Francis Kinlaw

Players wearing the uniform of the San Francisco Giants have performed many amazing feats in the four decades since the franchise moved west from New York, but no player has produced a more intriguing record than Billy Pierce did during the 1962 season. As the Giants engaged a season-long pennant race that culminated in a memorable playoff series against their archrivals from Los Angeles, Pierce was called upon to pitch 12 games at Candlestick Park—and he proceeded to nail down 12 wins! He then converted his victory total at the so-called “Wind Tunnel” to a baker’s dozen by casting a spell on the powerful New York Yankees in Game Six of the World Series.

Because the '62 Giants edged the Dodgers for the National League flag by such a narrow margin, the significance of Pierce's contribution to the pennant drive is obvious. The lefthander posted a 16–6 record and an earned run average of 3.49 in 162 innings, achievements that were unexpected by many baseball observers and certainly unforeseen by the Chicago White Sox. Pierce had been a mainstay in the Windy City from 1949 through 1961, but the Pale Hose traded him to San Francisco on November 30, 1961 (The deal also sent Don Larsen to the west coast, while the Chisox obtained pitchers Eddie Fisher, Dom Zanni, and Verle Tiefenthaler, and first baseman/outfielder Bob Farley).

Although only Fisher would later make a splash in Chicago and Larsen would be a valuable addition to the Giants, the trade was not considered to be one-sided. Pierce's victory total had dropped to 10 in 1961, and he had been able to complete only 13 of 58 games in the past two seasons—after leading the American League in that category in 1956, 1957, and 1958. Even Alvin Dark, his new manager, stated during spring training that he planned to reduce the veteran's role to that of a spot starter.

Pierce's weak performance in Cactus League action—31 runs allowed in 14.2 innings—temporarily gave credence to the views of those who believed that his best days were behind him. But the story line changed drastically when the regular season began, as the seven-time American League All-Star was victorious in his first eight decisions.

Pierce's amazing string of important triumphs at Candlestick Park in 1962 merits analysis and, after facts relating to each of the 13 games have been reviewed, explanations for the establishment of such an unusual record will be evident.

April 13, 1962

Pierce retired the Cincinnati Reds' first 13 batters and gave up only two hits as he and the Giants rolled to a 7–2 victory. Throwing an assortment of fastballs and sliders on a breezy and chilly evening, Pierce allowed a solo home run to Wally Post in the fifth inning but remained in control throughout the contest. He received a standing ovation from the crowd of 23,775 when he was relieved by Stu Miller with one out in the top of the eighth inning.

April 29, 1962

After Jack Sanford had recorded a three-hit shutout against the Cubs in the first game of a doubleheader, Pierce matched that performance in the nightcap by blanking Chicago with a three-hitter of his own. Aided by three double plays, he

faced only 30 batters and allowed only one Cub to advance past first base. The Giants, in the meantime, were supporting Pierce with six runs and 12 hits.

May 15, 1962

Pierce was spotted a six-run lead in the first three innings, and then wobbled to victory over the Cardinals on a cool evening. He surrendered two runs in the fifth inning (one on a homer by Bill White) and was removed from the game in the eighth after another run had crossed the plate and Doug Clemens and Ken Boyer singled. Miller stymied the Cards' budding rally, and San Francisco won, 6–3.

May 20, 1962

Pierce pitched a complete game against the Houston Colts—an expansion club in its first season—as the Giants salvaged a split of a Sunday doubleheader with a 7–4 win. The Giants' hitters had produced six runs in the bottom of the first inning before Pierce was victimized by Bob Aspromonte's two-run homer with two out in the top of the second. (The drive, which followed a base on balls to Hal Smith, passed just inside the right field foul pole.) Pierce yielded seven hits, but the Colts were able to put a sequence of safeties together only in the fifth inning, when Hal Smith and pinch hitter Pidge Browne both doubled and Don Buddin singled.

May 25, 1962

Pierce staggered to a 10–7 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies and was fortunate to be credited with a win. He threw his slider effectively in the early innings, but nevertheless allowed 11 hits and required help from Miller in the ninth inning.

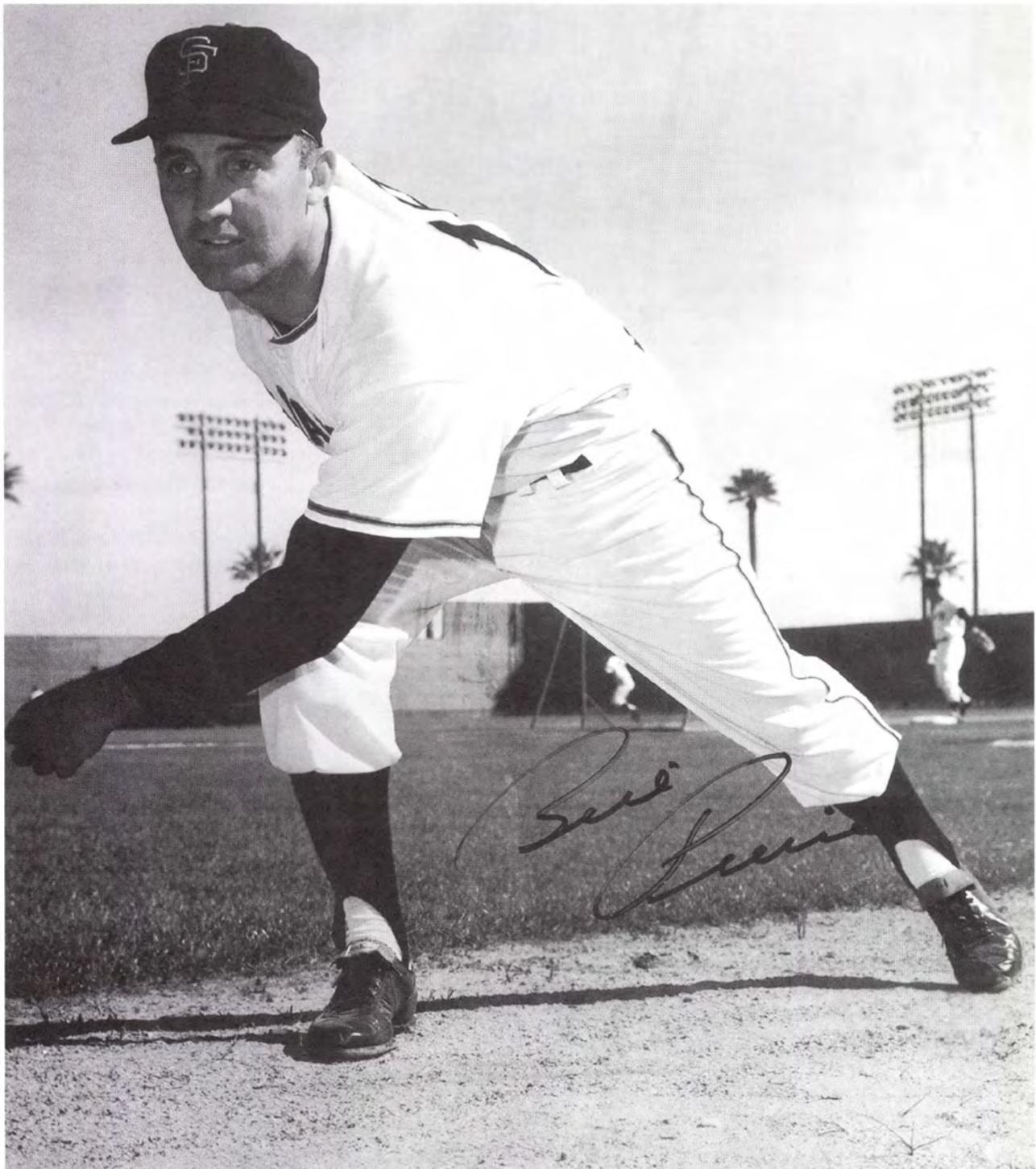
The Phillies scored a run in the first inning on a triple by Johnny Callison and a sacrifice fly by Ted Savage. Then, with San Francisco leading 4–1 in the fifth inning, Pierce escaped from a jam by fanning the dangerous Roy Sievers with the bases loaded and two out. The Giants were holding a comfortable 10–1 lead three innings later when three runs crossed the plate, two of them on a home run by Tony Gonzalez. When Callison smashed a three-run homer in the top of the ninth, Miller was called upon to preserve the victory.

August 2, 1962

Having been out of action from June 14 (when he suffered a spike wound in Cincinnati) until July 15 (when he lost to the Mets in New York), Pierce received his first starting assignment in more than two weeks and defeated the Cubs by a 4–3 score. Singles by Don Landrum and Ron Santo produced a Chicago run in the first inning, but Pierce then shut the proverbial door until two men had been retired in the top of the ninth. With victory within his grasp, Pierce experienced difficulty as Billy Williams and Andre Rodgers walloped back-to-back solo homers, but Larsen answered Manager Dark's distress call and enticed pinch hitter Bob Will to swing futility at a 3–2 slider to end the contest.

August 6, 1962

Pierce scattered six hits and recorded his first complete game since May 20 as the Giants rolled to a 9–2 victory over the Phillies Supported by an offense that delivered 17 hits and provided six runs in the first two innings (Willie Mays homered in both stanzas), Pierce retired 13 men in succession at one point and



Dick Dobbins Collection

entered the seventh inning with a 9–0 lead. The Phils did score two runs on a single by Gonzalez and doubles by Savage and Sievers, but the outcome of this afternoon game was never in doubt.

August 11, 1962

The Dodgers battered Pierce for three runs in the top of the first inning (Jim Gilliam was safe on second baseman Chuck Hiller's fielding error, Willie Davis was hit by a pitch, and Tommy Davis homered over the right field fence), but the lefty maintained his composure and was rewarded with the 200th victory of his career. The Giants began to erase the three-run deficit by scoring twice in the fourth inning, and then Willie McCovey pinch hit for Pierce in the sixth inning with two

men on base. McCovey's 430-foot shot into the right-field bleachers handed Don Drysdale his first loss after 12 consecutive wins and presented another win to Pierce. Miller pitched the final three innings in relief and limited the Dodgers to one run.

August 31, 1962

Pierce had a dismal beginning on this foggy, misty, and cold evening as leadoff hitter Eddie Kasko of the Reds homered off the left field foul pole on a 3–2 pitch in the top of the first inning, but the Giants then took control and posted a decisive 10–2 win. Although Leo Cardenas' solo homer later produced Cincinnati's second run, Pierce virtually slammed the door after Kasko's blow; he allowed no

more hits until the fifth inning and was touched for only five safeties while pitching the entire game.

September 8 1962

Pierce hurled seven innings and surrendered 10 hits as the Giants defeated the Cubs, 7–2. After working his way out of tight situations in each of the first four innings, Pierce lost his shutout when Andre Rodgers, Moe Thacker, and Billy Ott singled in the top of the sixth. Chicago's other run crossed home plate an inning later when Ken Hubbs walked, Ernie Banks singled, and Billy Williams hit into a 4–6–3 double play. By winning, the Giants remained a mere one-half game behind the Dodgers with three weeks left in the season.

September 26, 1962

With a 6–3 defeat of the Cardinals, Pierce improved his record to 15–6 and attained his highest victory total since posting 17 wins for the 1958 White Sox (he had won 18 games in 1953, and had reached the 20-game plateau in both 1956 and 1957). All of the Cards' runs resulted from a home run by pinch hitter Stan Musial in the eighth inning, but the drive by the future Hall of Famer was one of only three hits allowed by Pierce in seven and one-third innings.

Despite the victory, time was growing short for the Giants; they trailed the Dodgers by two games with only four to play.

October 1, 1962

Elated that his ballclub had been able to tie the Dodgers for first place on the final day of the regular season and force a best-of-three playoff series, Dark selected his valuable southpaw to oppose Sandy Koufax in the opening game of the decisive set. Pierce proved equal to the tough assignment on a sunny and virtually windless afternoon; disbursing three hits (singles by Andy Carey and Ken McMullen, and a double off the bat of Doug Camilli) and allowing only four baserunners. As Pierce used 109 pitches to extend the Dodgers' string of scoreless innings to 30, Mays tagged two homers and Jim Davenport and Orlando Cepeda each slugged one. (Two days later, Pierce would pitch the bottom of the ninth inning of the third playoff game and seal the National League championship by retiring the Dodgers in order).

October 15, 1962

Pierce responded to a pressure-packed situation by tossing a tidy three-hitter against the Yankees to even the World Series at three games apiece, and in doing so shoved aside the disappointment associated with his outing in the third game of the Fall Classic. (He had lost the earlier game in New York by a score of 3–2 as the Bronx Bombers scored three times in the seventh inning with an unearned run resulting from errors by outfielders Felipe Alou and McCovey). Pierce handcuffed the Yanks on this afternoon, permitting only a solo homer to Roger Mans in the fifth inning and a double by Clete Boyer in the eighth that was followed by Tony Kubek's run-scoring single. The adversity late in the game was short-lived, however, as Pierce avoided a second heartbreaker by disposing of Tom Treat, Mickey Mantle, and Maris in the ninth inning.

OBSERVATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

How can Pierce's incredible record in Candlestick Park be explained? Statistics from the 1962 season clearly reveal two fundamental factors upon which his high degree of success was based:

Offensive Support

In the 12 regular-season games pitched by Pierce in San Francisco, the Giants' offense produced an average of 7.08 runs. Lineups featuring Mays, Cepeda, Davenport, McCovey, Alou, Harvey Kuenn, and either Tom Haller or Ed Bailey posted ten runs on two occasions and provided at least four runs in each game. In his 11 starting assignments in road games, Pierce was forced to rely on his own

abilities to a greater extent, because his teammates averaged only 4.09 runs per game.

Pierce's Performance

Pierce's exceptional won-loss record at home and his 4-6 record in other National League ballparks were indicative of his relative levels of effectiveness, because he was certainly a better pitcher at home than on the road. His earned run average in the 12 regular-season games at Candlestick Park was 2.70, but he allowed 4.89 runs per contest when away from the "City by the Bay."

In addition to these two important factors, at least two other variables apparently influenced Pierce's fortunes in San Francisco and on the road:

Quality of Opponents

Pierce thrived against second-division teams at Candlestick Park, compiling an 8-0 record against the Cardinals, Phillies, Colts, and Cubs. (He did not pitch in San Francisco against the last-place Mets.) In contrast, his cumulative record against the "bottom five" was 3-3 when on the road.

Ballparks

The extent to which characteristics of ballparks contributed to Pierce's success in 1962 may be observed by contrasting his effectiveness in three starting assignments against the Cubs in San Francisco with his starts in Chicago. Pierce dominated the Cubs at Candlestick Park, winning all three games while registering an earned run average of 1.82, but at Wrigley Field he won only one of three decisions and his ERA jumped to 5.29! Similar patterns emerged against the Giants' two major challengers in the National League's pennant race. He won two games at "The Stick" against Los Angeles while allowing 1.20 runs per nine innings, but gave up five runs in four innings in losing his only decision at Dodger Stadium. And he defeated the Red's twice in San Francisco by holding Cincinnati's hitters to 2.20 runs per game, but dropped two of three games at Crosley Field as his earned run average rose to 3.52 in those appearances.

Pierce himself believes that his winning streak was fostered by a combination of fortuitous circumstances. He gives credit first to his teammates who, he emphasizes, were not only good hitters but also members of "a good team." He also notes the favorable characteristics of Candlestick Park, including its consistently cool weather which was kind to his 35-year-old body.

Pierce acknowledges that he generally had good control of his pitches and that he was able, in a windswept ballpark, to "pitch to the elements." Since the prevailing breezes blew toward right field, and because opposing managers loaded their lineups with right-handed hitters against him, Pierce was able to lure hitters into pulling the ball toward the wind. To do so, Pierce "kept fastballs on the inside corner of home plate, placed sliders carefully, and threw fewer curves than in other ballparks."

Although he continued to pitch in the big leagues for two more years, Pierce's exceptional performance during the Giants' championship season can be viewed as the "last hurrah" for his long and impressive major-league career. He returned to hurl 99 innings for San Francisco in 1963 (many of them in relief), but won only 3 games and lost 11 as his earned run average increased to 4.27. Assigned almost exclusively to the bullpen in 1964, he won 3 games without a loss and posted an ERA of 2.20 in 49 innings.

As one of the best pitchers of his generation, Billy Pierce should be remembered for many achievements: 211 victories, a lifetime earned run average of 3.27, and a perfect game for eight and two-thirds innings against the Washington Senators in 1958. But his winning of 13 consecutive games in Candlestick Park in 1962—12 in the midst of an intense pennant race and one in the bright glare of a World Series stage—will always stand as an unusual and even unique feat.

The Year of the Fox

By Wayne Strumpfer

The 1997 major league baseball season marked the first time in 26 years that the San Francisco Giants and the Los Angeles Dodgers finished 1–2 in the National League Western Division. Recently, the manager of the '71 Giants was interviewed at his home in San Mateo, California. With the skipper's help, here is a look back at that magical season for the Giants.

The 1971 San Francisco Giants were a unique ballclub. Manager Charlie Fox mixed four future Hall of Famers, numerous wily veterans, and an eclectic group of promising rookies into a spirited team that held on to win the National League Western Division championship by one game over the arch-rival Los Angeles Dodgers. Willie Mays called the '71 Giants the most spirited club the Giants had produced since the move to San Francisco. The 40-year old Mays "felt young just to be a part of it" So did most Giants' fans.

From 1965 through 1969, the Giants had finished second five consecutive seasons. In 1970, after a slow start, owner Horace Stoneham fired manager Clyde King in May, and replaced him with Charlie Fox. Fox had been with the Giants organization since he joined the 1942 New York ballclub as a backup catcher. His career lasted seven at bats before he headed overseas for military service in the Navy during World War II. Returning to baseball in 1946, Charlie found himself an out-of-shape third-string catcher behind Ernie Lombardi and Walker Cooper. Shortly thereafter, at the young age of 24, Fox was given an opportunity to manage the Giants' minor league team at Bristol, Virginia, in the Appalachian League.

Over the years, Fox worked with great baseball minds like Carl Hubbell, Bill Rigney, and Herman Franks. Franks, who managed the Giants from 1965 through 1968, was Charlie's mentor. "He was the best manager I'd ever seen. He was always two, three innings ahead of most people," says Fox. "I managed a long time in the minors and after two months in the big leagues with Franks, I knew four times as much as I thought I knew when I came up."

For reasons unknown to Fox, he was passed over for manager in 1969 in favor of Clyde King. Charlie looks back at that time and still relishes the opportunity to have taken over the team at that time. "All the young people we had on that ballclub had matured by 1969. I worked with them in the instructional league. I just marvel at the club we had put together in '69."

Finally, after replacing King the preceding year, Fox was getting his chance to manage his first full season in the majors in 1971. Coming out of spring training, Fox had a lot of confidence in his ballclub, although he was concerned with the depth of his pitching staff. "I had about seven or eight youngsters there, and the backbone of the club was naturally Juan Marichal and Gaylord Perry, and two fine relievers in Don McMahon and Jerry Johnson." Although Charlie says he had little or no hesitation in going with the young arms, his patience was often tried.

Ron Bryant, a young southpaw who would go on to win 24 games in 1973, was 7–10 for the 1971 Giants. Fox recalls, "I had a lot of confidence in Bryant, but he was a little childish. He just couldn't realize he was in the big leagues and there was no fooling around here. But he came along pretty good during the season." Steve Stone, who was 5-9 that season as a rookie, had a fine curve ball, according to Fox. Working with Stone was occasionally frustrating because "we could not get



Charlie Fox

Dick Dibbins Collection

him to realize you set the batter up and then go with your strength, in his case the curve ball." Years later, Stone would go on to win 25 games and the Cy Young Award for the Baltimore Orioles. Fox believes Stone was just not quite ready for the majors when the Giants brought him up in 1971.

John Cumberland was another young arm on the club. Cumberland was one of the few youngsters on the Giants not to come from their farm system. John began his career with the New York Yankees in 1968 and came to San Francisco in a trade during the 1970 season. Cumberland started 21 games for the Giants in 1971 and won nine games while posting a 2.92 ERA.

The key to the Giants' success in 1971, however, were the duos of Marichal and Perry in the starting rotation and McMahon and Johnson in the bullpen. "Without Marichal and Perry, we would never have won the division," says Fox.

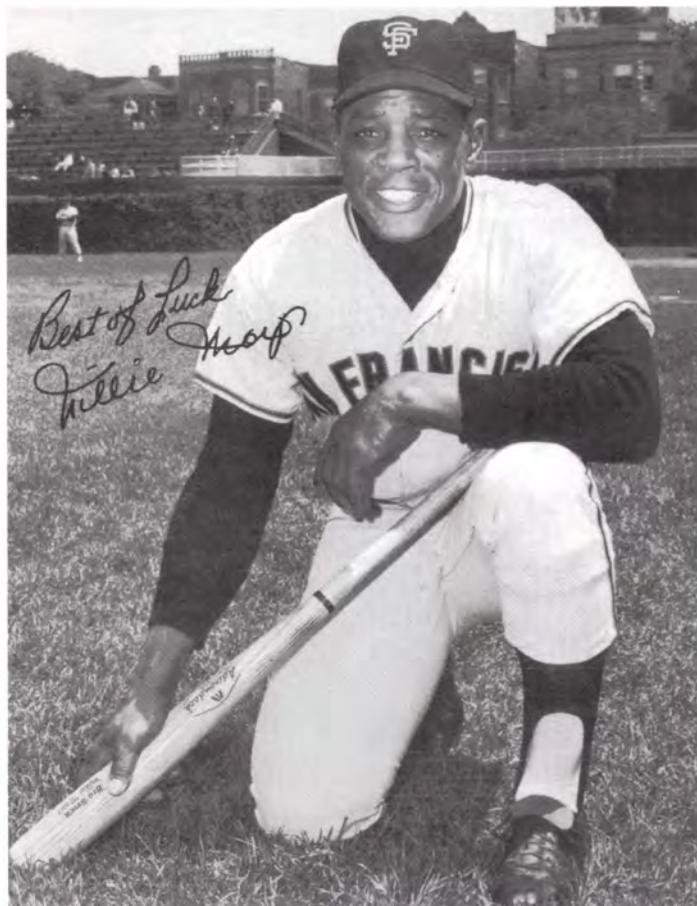
Marichal, who was later elected to the Hall of Fame, was coming off an injury-plagued season in 1970. Juan won 18 games in 1971, in what would be his last winning year for the ballclub. Marichal was consistent throughout the season, pitching a near no-hitter in mid-April, and then pitching a five-hitter in the season finale, clinching the division title for San Francisco.

Future Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry had his typical work-horse year in 1971. Starting 37 games and pitching 280 innings, Perry was 16–12 with a 2.76 ERA. Charlie Fox's respect for Perry is obvious. "Gaylord pitched his heart out every time out there." During the season, Fox noticed Perry would often struggle in the sixth inning. So in the last part of the season, Charlie started breaking up the inning by going out to the mound and talking with the pitcher about nothing in particular. Once the umpire would come out, Fox would stall for another minute or two by chatting with him. When Fox was back in the dugout, Perry would re-group and settle down. The strategy worked as Gaylord was a strong performer down the stretch, including his win against Pittsburgh in the first NL Playoff game.

The bullpen duo of McMahon and Johnson produced 22 wins and 22 saves in 1971. Jerry Johnson had come over from the St. Louis Cardinals in 1970 and really came into his own for the Giants in 1971, pitching in 67 games and posting a 12–9 record. Fox tells the story of one day when he told Johnson to stay home and rest his arm. Late in the game, however, when Fox needed an arm out of the bullpen, there was Johnson, telling the pitching coach he was ready to come in and win the game. And Johnson did just that. Forty-one-year-old Don McMahon threw in 61 games in 1971 and doubled as a part-time pitching coach, according to Fox. "McMahon would come into a game and tell the youngsters, 'now watch me,' and then set down the side in order. He'd come into the dugout, call the bullpen, and ask what they thought and we'd see the towels waving in the bullpen."

Charlie Fox was never concerned about his offense in 1971. "The team had a great rapport with one another, they got along well together and enjoyed playing the game. Of course, we were an exciting ballclub. We hit and run a lot and ran the bases well." The team was anchored by future Hall of Famers Willie Mays and Willie McCovey, but Fox believed the true star of that season was rightfielder Bobby Bonds.

"The best thing about the year was how Bobby Bonds showed how he



Dick Dobbins Collection

Willie Mays

belonged in the majors with the likes of Mays and McCovey." Fox speaks fondly of Bonds. "He learned from Mays, talking about what pitcher threw what pitches to get him out." Fox hit Bonds leadoff most of the season despite the fact that Bobby led the team with 33 home runs. "With Mays and McCovey hitting 3–4, you didn't have to worry about power in the middle of the lineup. I can't remember how many times late in the season Bobby would come through with a three-run homer to win a game. There's no question in my mind that Bonds was the most clutch player on the '71 squad." Bonds' speed was also a help in the leadoff spot, as he stole 26 bases that year.

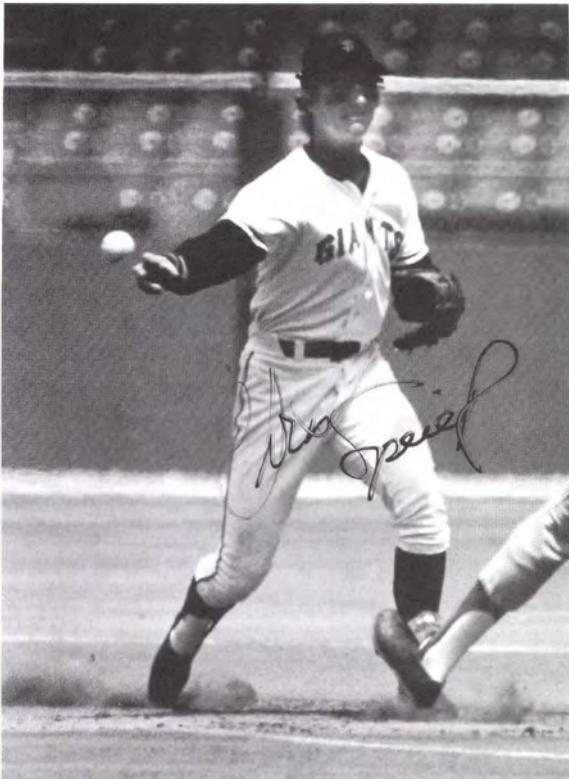
1971 saw the great Willie Mays' last full season with the Giants. Mays started the year with four home runs in the first four games. But Willie turned 40 years old in May of that year and Fox developed a system for resting the aging superstar. Because the fans would come out on the weekend to see the great legend, Fox would always rest Mays on Friday night and let him start both Saturday and Sunday. This way, the majority of the fans were pleased and the Giants had a rested Mays down the stretch. It was a special year for Mays, marking the 20th anniversary of his big league career. And just like he did as a rookie in 1951, Mays led the Giants to the postseason. Charlie Fox has little doubt that if Mays had played his career in a more hitter-friendly stadium instead of Candlestick Park, Willie would have broken Babe Ruth's home run record before Hank Aaron.

Fox talks about Mays and Bonds and the emphasis today that is put on a player hitting 30 home runs and stealing 30 bases. Fox was a coach on the 1965 Giants when Mays hit 52 home runs. "Willie could have done 50–50 that year if the Giants would have let him. Due to the risk of injury, we asked him not to steal much that year." Likewise, Bonds could have easily stolen four more bases in 1971 to complete a 30–30 year, but statistics were not a focus on this ballclub.



Bobby Bonds

Dick Dobbins Collection



Chris Speier

Dick Dobbins Collection

Charlie Fox, as a former catcher himself, had a special friendship with the Giants' backstop, Dick Dietz. Dietz was second on the team in 1971 with 72 RBI and improved a great deal on defense. Fox worked with Dietz on mechanics and legend has it that Charlie spent the winter of 1970-71 thumping his fist into a new glove to break it in for his catcher. "Dietz had a nickname of 'The Mule' and he was a workhorse. He was strong and healthy and caught a tremendous number of games for us and never wanted out."

The Giants had their share of characters on the 1971 ballclub as well. "Dirty" Al Gallagher was the team's regular third baseman who would frequently dive for line drives after they were already past him and into left field. Fox remembers Gallagher to be a 'happy-go-lucky' type of player. The middle infield had to be good with Al at third because he just played for the sake of being out there." Gallagher was also known for his clothing style. "He would come into the clubhouse for a night game and be dressed in some outrageous outfit," Fox reminisces. "There would be some hootin' and hollerin' and the clubhouse would always light up."

Fran Healy was another personality in the clubhouse. The Giant's catcher that year was an offensive threat off the bench and was a "jolly guy with a quick wit," according to Fox. Pitching coach Larry Jansen would force Healy to sit at the end of the bullpen bench because he would be so loud Jansen couldn't hear when the bullpen telephone rang.

Another player Fox has fond memories of on the 1971 Giants was their 21-year-old rookie, Chris Speier. Speier up in nearby Alameda and was promoted from Double A Amarillo to be the team's regular shortstop. Charlie Fox first saw Speier in the fall instructional league and thought immediately that this was his shortstop. Fox looks back now and believes the team may have rushed the youngster a bit by bringing him up so fast, but Speier handled it well, playing solid defense and contributing on offense. Fox recalls a play the Giants made against the Reds' Johnny Bench during the season. Bench grounded one up the middle and second baseman Tito Fuentes "dove and batted at the ball with his bare hand

like a handball. It deflected to Speier who threw to McCovey at first to gun down Bench. Those two would turn your head if you were a baseball man."

San Francisco favorite Willie McCovey also contributed in 1971, with 18 home runs and 70 runs batted in while limited to only 95 starts at first base. "Stretch" suffered from a nagging knee injury that would eventually require surgery. When McCovey did play, the Giants offense was always turned up a notch. When Mac would not play, Fox often used Mays at first base. Fox noted, "You take out a McCovey and put in a Mays, you don't lose much."

The Giants other option at first base was a 6' 6" rookie out of the University



Gaylord Perry

Dick Dobbins Collection

of Southern California, Dave Kingman. In 1971, Kingman hit .278 with 6 home runs and 24 runs batted in while playing in only 41 games. Fox remembers the towering first baseman best for his majestic home run that clinched the division title in the season finale in San Diego. Kingman, a last-minute replacement for an injured Bobby Bonds, hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning to cap a 5-1 Giants' victory. As Kingman watched the ball fly over the fence, he thrust both fists into the air and raced around the bases to enter a dugout full of delirious teammates.

The 1971 San Francisco Giants started off fast, winning 27 of their first 36, then held on to win the NL West by beating the Los Angeles Dodgers by a single game. The Giants would lose to the soon-to-be World Champion Pittsburgh Pirates, three games to one, in the NL Playoffs. It was a magical season as the Giants fielded four future Hall of Famers, several budding superstars, and numerous rookies who would go on to fine careers.

Charlie Fox says it best: "I think that was the finest bunch of young fellas that you want to put together and go to a war. They proved it by going right down to the last bell. We had a chance to be in the World Series, but it wasn't meant to be. But they never gave up. The team had fun and the spirit was fantastic."

The 1971 Giants will always be remembered in San Francisco as The Year of the Fox.

Vida Blue, His Greatest Year

by Glenn Dickey

There are good years and there are great years and there are years which simply defy description, which is the kind of year that Vida Blue had in 1971 as the Oakland A's won their first American League West divisional championship.

Great things had been expected of Vida from the time he signed after being a great all-round athlete in high school, a great pitcher and a quarterback who had been offered college scholarships; his high school football coach, in fact, negotiated his contract with the A's. In 1970, he had a 12–3 record with a 2.08 ERA in Triple-A ball at Iowa. Brought up in September, he was 2–0, and one of those two wins was a no-hitter.

But nobody, including Blue, quite expected what would happen in 1971.

"I was in the zone all year," Vida remembered. "It was tremendous, all the attention, the magazine covers, the interviews. I loved it. I just had great confidence that nobody would be able to hit me."

For the most part, he was right. He finished at 24–8 with an incredible 1.82 ERA, striking out 312 batters in 301 innings, pitching eight shutouts, allowing only 209 hits, an average of less than seven hits per nine innings. He won both the Cy Young and Most Valuable Player awards.

But mere statistics don't tell the whole story. Vida was the big story in baseball that year, a young, handsome, exuberant man with a great talent and a zest for life. Game after game, he would flash that great fast ball past hitters, talk exuberantly with reporters after the game and sign autographs as long as there were fans asking for them.

Vida has always had a close relationship with fans; even now, he says, he's thrilled when people come up to him to talk about his career. In that magical year of 1971, there were more fans in the autograph lines and in the stands than any other player saw. When the final attendance figures were in, an enterprising writer, Ron Bergman, who was following the A's for the *Oakland Tribune*, figured that nearly 1/12th of all the people who paid to see American League games that season had seen Blue pitch.

"But, I don't want to sound mushy about this, but I couldn't have done it by myself," said Blue. "I got a lot of help from that guy with the handlebar mustache (Rollie Fingers). And Dick Williams really helped. That was his first year as manager, and he taught us how to win. He was tough but fair."

It started with an otherwise unpleasant off-season, spent in an Army reserve unit. "I was in basic training at Fort Bragg," said Blue, "and I was in the best shape of my life when I reported to camp that year. I don't remember what kind of spring I had, but it must have been a good one because I got the opportunity to start the opening game in Washington. That made me the last visiting pitcher to start a Presidential opener, because the next year, the Senators moved to Texas and became the Rangers."

He won that game, of course, as he won almost all his games in the first half of the season. Oddly, though, the one game he remembers most in that stretch was a loss.

Glenn Dickey writes for San Francisco Chronicle Sports. Reprinted from A's Magazine. Courtesy of Jim Bloom, Oakland Athletics Baseball Club.

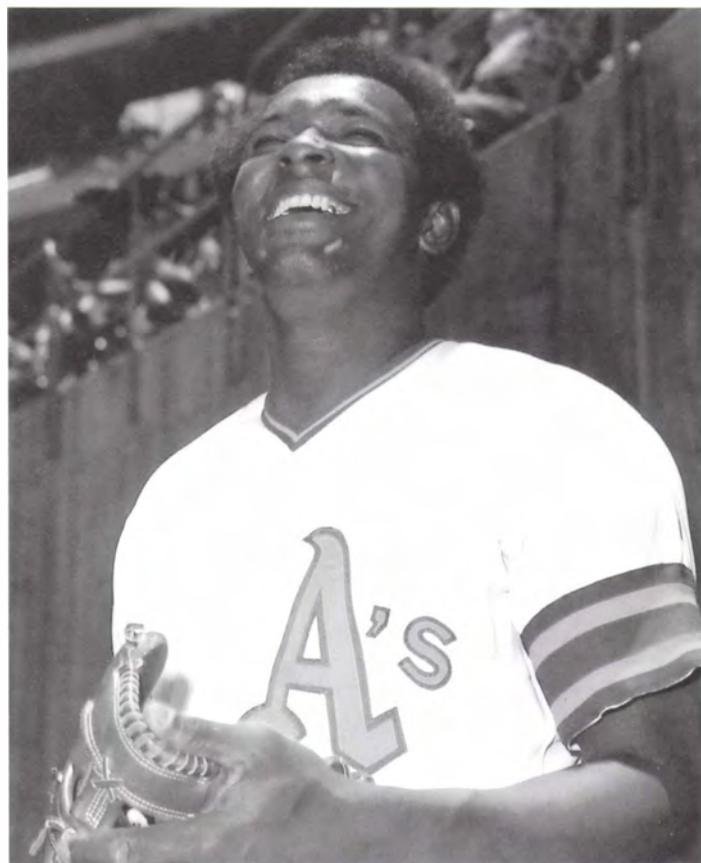


Photo by Doug McWilliams

Vida Blue

"We came into Boston and there was a huge buildup because I was 9–1 and Sonny Siebert was 10–0," he said. "Well, I lost the game because I gave up home runs to Rico Petrocelli and Doug Griffin, who didn't hit much over .240 lifetime but I guarantee you he hit about .475 against me. But it was just such a thrill to me because of all that baseball means in Boston and all the attention we got."

By the time the All-Star game rolled around, Vida was 1–3, and there was talk that he might even reach the magical 30-win plateau.

The All-Star Game was another thrill, as Blue was the winning pitcher for the American League, even though he gave up a home run to Hank Aaron. "Somebody told me it was Hank's first extra-base hit in an All-Star game," Vida said. "You never like to give up a home run, but you don't feel so bad when it's Hank Aaron who hits it."

In the bottom of the third, Reggie Jackson pinch-hit for Blue and hit a home run which everybody remembers, a drive that hit the top of the light standard opposite the right field stands, narrowly missing going out of Tiger Stadium. The ball was hit so hard that it caromed back onto the playing field, to be grabbed by Willie Mays, playing center for the National League. "To be honest," said Blue,

with deadpan humor, "I don't think I could have hit the ball that far."

Playing for the A's in those days, of course, meant playing for Charlie Finley, and the A's owner always had to find a way to take at least some of the spotlight away from his stars. His first attempt with Blue was an announcement that he would pay Vida to change his first name to True. It was an outrageous suggestion to Vida, who had been named after his father.

"My dad died when I was only 17," said Vida, "so I always thought that everything I did was to honor him. I don't know how much Finley was willing to pay because he never said. I think my response pretty much took care of that idea."

Then, Finley presented a Cadillac to Blue, which Vida regarded as a mixed blessing. "I don't think he realized what a putdown that was for a black at the time," said Vida. "Actually, at that time, Reggie was associated with Doten Pontiac, and that was what I wanted—a Pontiac.

"The Cadillac had a 25-gallon gas tank and it was a real gas guzzler. I told Charlie I couldn't afford to fill it up with what he was paying me, so he gave me an ARCO gas card. I used to go into the gas stations and if I saw, say, a poor woman with five kids, I'd go over and tell her to use my card to fill up. I didn't figure it was going to break Charlie, but after that year, he took my card away."

The second half of '71 wasn't as successful for Vida, and the A's lost three straight to the Baltimore Orioles in the American League Championship Series. Still, it was obvious that the A's were the coming team in the American League, and it seemed Blue would be a big part of their future success. The A's did indeed win the next three World Series, but Blue's path was much rockier.

In the off season, Blue went in to talk contract with Finley. "I was this young, naive kid from the south. I worked my ass off for him and I thought I deserved it. I just thought I'd get a raise automatically."

Finley told him, "Vida. I know you won the Cy Young and the MVP, that you

had 301 strikeouts, that you were 24–8. You deserve a big raise, but you're not going to get it."

"He treated me like a colored boy," Blue said. "It changed my whole perspective about the game of baseball."

The contract dispute lasted until May. When he came back, Blue's attitude and work ethic were changed. "I maybe didn't take that extra lap I should have to keep in top condition," he said. "I wasn't mature enough to realize that people were only going to look at my record. I would be the one who would be blamed."

Vida finished the season 6–10, losing his one World Series start.

After that, Blue got back on course, winning 77 games in the next four seasons as the A's won two more World Series and three straight divisional titles. But he never quite approached the brilliance of that first great year.

"I read somewhere that Al Kaline said he felt sorry for (Seattle shortstop) Alex Rodriguez because he had such a great first year and he'll never be able to match it. That happened to me. Even though I had a couple of 20-win seasons after that, people always wondered why I didn't do better. They held me to an impossibly high standard, but then, I did, too. I know now that I was too stubborn. I was throwing 85-90 per cent fast-balls in those days. The hitters adjusted but I didn't do enough adjusting to them. I was probably 26 before I really learned to pitch."

But Blue knows, as we all do, that he had an outstanding career, winning 209 games, winning All-Star Games for both leagues (he was the National League's winning

pitcher in 1978, while with the Giants), pitching in three World Series. "It was special to be part of those World Series teams," he said. "That's something nobody can ever take from me."

And, for one magical year, he reached a level few have ever reached in major league history. "I wish that every player could have one year like that, where he's at the very top of his game. There's nothing like it."



Vida Blue 1972, receiving Cy Young Award and MVP Award from A.L. President Joe Cronin

Photo by Doug McWilliams

Babe Pinelli: Mr. Ump

by Larry R. Gerlach

At approximately 3:15 p.m. on Monday, October 8, 1956, Babe Pinelli's right arm shot upward ending Game 5 of the World Series. Pinelli did more than punch out Brooklyn Dodgers pinch-hitter Dale Mitchell to conclude a 2-0 New York Yankees victory; his called third strike completed Don Larsen's perfect game, the first in World Series history. It was also the culmination of Pinelli's umpiring career and a moment that fixed his—and Larsen's—place in baseball history. Having previously decided to retire after the Series, the 61-year-old Pinelli sat in the umpires' dressing room tearfully reflecting upon both his career and the magnitude of the historic last game that was "my greatest thrill in 40 years of baseball." But not a single reporter or baseball official appeared to ask his thoughts about the game or to congratulate him on his 22 years as a highly respected National League umpire. Crew member Tom Gorman later recalled, "Nobody showed, not the commissioner [Ford Frick], not the president of the National League [Warren Giles]. I thought it was a disgrace."

Sports officials normally fade into historical oblivion, but Pinelli remains widely known because of the belief that he kicked the call. Second-guessers continue to contend that Larsen's final pitch was really low and outside the strike zone. Babe, whose vision tested 20-20 immediately after the Series, later recalled that Larsen had "the greatest pin-point control I've ever seen" and that "there was no doubt in my mind" about the pitch: "Larsen hit the corner of the plate with a beautiful fast ball" that was "just high enough. It was easy to call—and I called it."

If "just high enough" is taken as the operative phrase implying that the pitch may have been beyond the precise parameters of the official strike zone, then Pinelli's call was both correct and courageous. Aware since the sixth inning that no Dodger had reached base, he knew the unwritten rules of the game held that a batter shall not take a close pitch with two strikes in the bottom of the ninth with a perfect game on the line. Babe Pinelli made the right call, a gutsy call, just as he had done throughout his life.

Rinaldo Angelo Paolinelli was born in the Western Addition section of San Francisco on October 18, 1895, the second of four children born to Rafael and Ermida Silvestri Paolinelli, immigrants from Lucca, Italy. When his father, who owned a produce market, was killed by a falling telephone pole during the devastating 1906 earthquake, Pinelli, age 10, left the fourth grade to help support the family. He sold newspapers until old enough at age 12 to get a regular job, first separating nuts and bolts at Dyer Brothers' Steel Works, then as an errand boy, and finally as a commercial sign painter. (Inexplicably, he painted with his left hand but was right-handed in all other activities.)

Pinelli, who said he was "born with firecrackers in my blood," used his fiery

temper and fistic prowess to survive on the mean streets around Bush and Steiner. Hauled to the police station at least seven times for fighting, the brash and belligerent, yet likable, youngster was a West Coast version of a Dead End Kid. "He'd take no lip from anybody," a childhood pal recalled. "He'd fight at the drop

of a hat if he thought he was right." Pinelli loved sports, especially, baseball. Initially, the older kids chased him away when he wanted to play ball and called him "Baby" when he cried; however, his skills soon brought notoriety on the Hamilton Park diamonds and his nickname became "Babe." Pinelli briefly thought about becoming a professional boxer after winning (as Battling Joe Welch) a two-round amateur bout in his late teens, but Spike Hennessy, the legendary high school and sandlot baseball coach who served as Babe's surrogate father, encouraged him to give up boxing and concentrate on baseball.

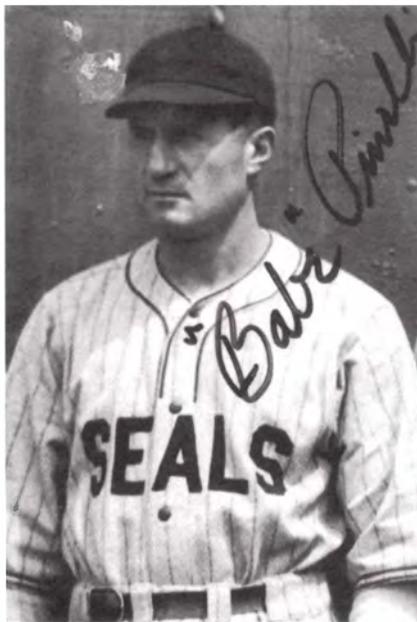
By 1916 Pinelli had demonstrated sufficient skills as a third baseman in semipro leagues in Oregon (1913), Utah (1915), and San Francisco, to earn a trial with Portland of the Pacific Coast League. Released by the Beavers before the season began, he signed that summer to play the following year with the Salt Lake City Bees of the PCL. With a professional career in the offing, he married his childhood sweetheart, Mabel Genevieve McKee, on December 2, 1916.

Following the advice of San Francisco News sportswriter Tommy Laird, Pinelli signed a second contract to play with Portland in 1917, disingenuously obtained his release from the Bees, Anglicized his name to Ralph Arthur Pinelli, and joined the Beavers. Despite hitting a meager .199 in 79 games, the 5' 8", 160-pound Pinelli impressed manager Wilbur "Raw Meat" Rodgers with his scrappy style of play and remained with the club when it moved the next season to Sacramento. As a former teammate noted, "Babe was a hustler. He couldn't tolerate anybody who didn't go 100 percent."

When the PCL suspended play on July 14, 1918 because of World War I, Pinelli, who had hit .267 in 94 contests with the Senators, was sold to the Chicago White Sox as a wartime replacement. He made his debut on August 3 against the Philadelphia As, playing third base and hitting 1-for-3 in the clean-up slot. Used sparingly thereafter, his first tour in the majors was unimpressive as he hit a mere .231 and committed 11 errors (.847) in 24 games at third base.

Back with Sacramento in 1919, he hit a modest .252 but stole 51 bases, 22% of the team's total. He also continued to display a combative attitude and hair-trigger temper. Angered when Rodgers docked him \$50 for not playing "while recovering from a foot injury," Pinelli on August 1 badly beat the skipper in a closed-door clubhouse fight. Both men considered the incident a "family feud," and Babe got his money back.

Acquired by the Detroit Tigers in 1920 to shore up their leaky infield, Pinelli



Babe Pinnelli, Seals

Dick Dobbins Collection

displayed versatility by playing third base (74 games), shortstop (18) and second (1). He also revealed mastery of the hidden-ball trick, catching Stuffie McInnis of the Red Sox and Sam Rice of the Washington Senators in consecutive games. His cockiness and resentment of the ethnic taunts directed at the second Italian-American in the league produced frequent “flare-ups,” and a misinterpreted clubhouse comment led to a prolonged falling out with Ty Cobb. Sold to Oakland after the season, he blamed, mistakenly, the Georgia Peach in the press for his departure; it was instead due to his hitting .229 with no home runs in 102 games.

Thanks to batting tips from teammate and former major leaguer Denney Willie, Pinelli enjoyed a banner year with the Oaks in 1921, batting .339, scoring 127 runs, and pilfering 47 hassocks. But the “firecrackers” again threatened his career. On May 21 in Sacramento, ex-National League umpire Bill Byron, the so-called “Singing Umpire,” ejected Babe for protesting a called strike. During the ensuing argument, Byron ripped off his mask, accidentally hitting Pinelli on the jaw. Babe forthwith punched “Lord Byron” in the eye, knocking him to the ground. When Byron (and Al Jolson, who was in the stands) described Pinelli’s action as “instinctive,” PCL President William McCarthy imposed a \$50 fine and a five-day suspension instead of banishment.

The Cincinnati Reds then purchased Pinelli for \$35,000 and three players to replace Heinie Groh in 1922. (Ever cocky, Babe returned his first contract for \$10,500 unsigned, as he did each year of his major league career.) On Opening Day against Grover Cleveland Alexander of the Chicago Cubs, he went 2-for-4 with a triple and stole a base; he also struck out twice with men on base and made “a serious error.” In his first full major league season, he led the league’s third basemen in putouts (204), assists (350), and errors (32).

A fixture at third base during the next three seasons, he was part of the Reds’ all-Bay Area infield with fellow San Franciscans Ike Caveney at short and Sammy Bohne at second, and Oakland-born Lew Fonseca at first base. A good contact hitter with little power, he hit .305 in 1922, slipped to .277 in 1923, but rebounded in 1924 to enjoy his finest season: .306 with 70 RBI, 23 stolen bases, a .956 fielding average—all personal bests in the majors. He again led third sackers in putouts (182) and assists (318).

The “firecrackers” kept exploding as he admittedly had “no trouble finding trouble.” Numerous fights with opponents stemmed from their resentment at his “bush-league” needling and use of the “hidden ball” trick (he hid the ball in his right armpit), and Babe’s “fist cocked” response to the bench-jockeying directed at the first Italian-American in the National League. The most ignominious incident occurred on July 25, 1926. Boston Braves coach Art Devlin and Pinelli had been jawing for weeks. As the Reds left the field in the third inning, Babe recalled, “I bumped into Devlin on the coaching lines—and stepped all over his feet with my spikes. He howled like a coyote—and, of course, started swinging.” One of the greatest bench-clearing brawls in baseball history ensued, with order restored only by police intervention. Pinelli was ejected, fined \$100, and sat out the next day’s game because of a sore hand.

He also fought with teammates. His criticism of Rube Bressler led to a clubhouse fight. Dolf Luque, also a hot-head, chased after Pinelli once with a baseball bat and again with an ice pick. Another time Luque shouted, “We go outside. We get two taxicabs. You get in one, I get in one. We get guns. We go away. We fight duel.”

In 1924 Pinelli began thinking about umpiring as a way to stay in baseball. Unable to play in spring training because of an injury, he volunteered to umpire an intrasquad game. He had always considered the umpire “as a necessary evil, possibly as a natural enemy,” but confessed that “before the day was over, I’d changed my mind. The umpire was as necessary a part of baseball as the players.” Senior National League umpire Bill Klem and George Moriarty, the American League umpire who had been Babe’s teammate in Detroit, encouraged his interest,



Babe Pinelli, Oaks

but both advised him to learn to control his temper. In preparation for a post-playing career, he studied umpires, talked with them about their work, and continued to umpire intrasquad games. He also greatly reduced his umpire-baiting and was infrequently thumbed for arguing with an arbiter.

Babe’s fielding and batting dropped off badly after 1925, and he became a utility player. In late June 1927 the Reds sold Pinelli, then hitting a paltry .197 in 30 games, to San Francisco for \$17,500. He did not go quietly. Upon being told the news, he attempted to kill the messenger by charging after manager Jack Hendricks, who locked himself in his room while an irate Pinelli pounded on the door.

His major league playing days were over. In eight seasons, Pinelli appeared in 774 games, batted .276, hits homers, drove in 298 runs, and swiped 71 bases. A marginal fielder, he posted a .947 fielding average.

Pinelli flourished upon returning to the PCL. He hit .324 in 49 games for Nick Williams’ Seals in 1927, and during next three years batted .310, .311, and .313 as San Francisco, led by the likes of Ike Boone, Smead Jolley, Lefty O’Doul, and Earl Sheely, pounded PCL pitching. He had learned to curb his fiery temper on the field, although a Seals teammate recalled, “When the fans would get on him at old Recreation Park, he had to be restrained from going into the stands after them.”

On July 4, 1929 Babe displayed fireworks of a different kind against the Seattle Indians at Recreation Park. Exploding for the best offensive game of his playing career, he went 6-for-6, hit three home runs (two grand slams and one inside-the-park), and drove in 12. Alertly noticing that Seattle’s catcher, Charlie Borreani, held his glove straight up for fastballs and down in a scoop position for curves, Pinelli recalled he was “never fooled by a pitch”.

Released by the Seals in mid-season 1931, Pinelli, then 35, signed with the Oakland Oaks. He hit .307 in 1932 but was released after the season due to declining fielding skills and an absence of power (no homers in 554 at bats). During 10 PCL seasons he had batted a respectable .295, but hit only 13 homers. Babe went out on a low note: On September 30 he called umpire Forrest Cady a “blind bat” while arguing a strike call and was tossed from his final game. (Babe later said the umpire was Bill Burnside, but the box score lists Cady as the plate ump.)

An unceremonious departure as a player notwithstanding, Pinelli, armed with recommendations from sportswriters Tom Laird and Abe Kemp and several PCL club officials, asked league President Hiland L. “Hi” Baggerly for a job as an umpire. Advised to get experience, Babe bought an umpiring outfit and during the winter and early spring worked college, semipro, and major league exhibition games in the Bay Area. To the great surprise of many, he was hired in 1933 as a PCL umpire without any professional experience and despite a deserved reputation as a hot-head. “I’ll be a credit to you in a couple of months,” Babe told Baggerly, and predicted, “I’ll be with one of the major leagues inside of two years.”

Thus Pinelli began his professional umpiring career, as he had his professional playing career, in the Pacific Coast League, the “third major league.”

He worked in 1933 with veteran arbiter Perle Casey, who Pinelli thought was “the best at handling players I’ve ever seen.” The consummate diplomat, Casey advised, “I don’t want to see you get mad, Babe, until I do. When I burn up, you come over and cool me down.” In 1934 he teamed with ex-major league umpire Bill Guthrie, an aggressive arbiter who taught him how to take charge of ball games.

The National League bought Pinelli’s contract for \$1,500, and in 1935 he became the first Italian-American hired as a regular umpire in the major leagues.

Assigned to work with veterans Albert “Dolly” Stark and crew chief Charles “Cy” Rigler, he broke in at third base on April 16 in Boston as the Braves won the season opener, 4-2, over the New York Giants. Three days later he worked the plate for the first time, proving his mettle by twice calling third strikes on the legendary Babe Ruth and not backing down from the Bambino’s beefing.

A dapper dresser, Pinelli soon became one of the most respected umpires in the Senior Circuit. Unlike his behavior as a player, his deportment as an umpire was even-handed and even-tempered. In a *Sport* magazine poll conducted in 1955, National League beat writers named Pinelli the arbiter who was “coolest in crisis” and “most cooperative with writers.” Ironically, he enjoyed a better reputation with players and managers than with some umpires who felt he went too far in placating players and readily admitting wrong calls.

Nicknamed “the Soft Thumb” because of his reluctance to eject players and managers, perhaps because of his own fiestiness, he averaged about three ejections per season during the heyday of Frankie Frisch’s St. Louis Gashouse Gang and Leo Durocher’s Dodgers. Leo the Lip, a notorious umpire baiter, said, “Pinelli never took me seriously. There were times when he knew I would be out there complaining, so he always stood there and let me have my say.” Babe and Leo clashed a number of times, and on September 6, 1953, when Carl Furillo of the Dodgers and Durocher, then manager of the Giants, were grappling on the ground, Pinelli could be heard yelling, “Kill him, Carl, kill him!”

During 22 years in the majors Pinelli, who became a crew chief in 1950, umpired four All-Star games (1937, 1941, 1959, 1956), six World Series (1939, 1941, 1947, 1948, 1952, 1956), and called four no-hitters (Ed Head 1946, Rex Barney 1948, Jim Wilson 1954, and Larsen).

He also umpired numerous historic games. Pinelli was at third base at Crosley Field in Cincinnati on May 24, 1935, for the first night game in major league history, and at Forbes Field on June 4, 1940 for the first night game in Pittsburgh. He was at second base on October 5, 1941, when Mickey Owen of the Dodgers dropped the third strike on Tommy Henrich with two out in the ninth inning, sparking a game-winning Yankee rally, and on October 3, 1947, when Dodgers pinch-hitter Cookie Lavagetto doubled home two runs with two out in the bottom of the ninth to ruin Yankee Bill Bevens’ no-hitter and give Brooklyn a 3–2 victory. Assigned in 1946 to the first playoff in National League history, he was the home plate umpire for the second and concluding game of the Cardinals sweep of

the Dodgers. And on April 15, 1947, he was behind the plate at Ebbets Field when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

When St. Louis manager Eddie Stanky engaged in obvious stalling tactics hoping to reach the hometown curfew on July 18, 1954, Pinelli as crew chief demonstrated his courage and respect for the integrity of the game by awarding the game to the visiting Phillies—the last National League forfeit until August 10, 1995.

On June 8, 1948, at Sportsman’s Park in St. Louis, a moment of umpiring irony occurred as Harry “The Cat” Brecheen of the Cardinals lost a perfect game when Johnny Blatnik, the Phillies lone base runner, was called safe on a bang-bang play at first—by Babe Pinelli.

As a former player, Babe appreciated the performances of outstanding players. From his perspective behind the plate, Stan Musial, Willie Mays, and Ted Kluszewski were the best hitters; Don Newcombe, Bob Friend, Robin Roberts, and Ewell Blackwell were the best pitchers. But Ty Cobb, he maintained, was the greatest player he ever saw.

Called “the Lou Gehrig of the umpires, our Iron Man” by Tom Gorman, Pinelli claimed he never missed a game in 22 seasons, a span of some 3,400 games. Luck preserved the skein on two occasions. On April 17, 1945 he was bedridden with the flu when rain washed out the season opener in Brooklyn. On June 28, 1941 Pinelli radioed Boston manager Casey Stengel that the boat his crew was taking from New York to Boston had become fogbound off Cape Cod; Babe, Al Barlick, and Lee Ballanfant arrived in the

second inning and replaced the two players (Johnny Cooney and Freddie Fitzsimmons) chosen to call the game. Thereafter, whenever Stengel thought Pinelli missed a call, he’d shout: “You’re still fogbound.”

Mae Pinelli never missed a game during Babe’s playing career, but refused watch him umpire regular season games. She did, however, attend World Series games and root for the National League. Once, when asked if she ever got angry when people disputed Babe’s decisions, she replied like an umpire’s wife, “No, I don’t get angry. I just figure, well, they saw it that way and Babe saw it right!”

Babe Pinelli retired in 1956 after 22 years of callin’ ‘em with a pre-union pension of \$187 a month. He and Mae moved from San Francisco to Sonoma County, and for several years Babe was a scout for the Cincinnati Reds. Reflecting upon his career, he said, “All told I was in baseball 40 [42] years. 16 [18] as a player. If I had to do it all over again, I’d concentrate on umpiring. It’s the best job in baseball. You have no worries about streaks or slumps. You don’t care who wins. I worried much more as a player than as an umpire.”

In 1953 Pinelli published with Joe King *Mr. Ump*, the first commercially published umpire’s autobiography. He hoped the book, aimed at teenagers, would “show youngsters interested in sports that their ambitions can be fulfilled regardless of obstacles.” Babe Pinelli, whose life was a testimonial to determination, died on October 22, 1984, at age 89 in a convalescent home in Daly City, California. He is buried in Holy Cross Cemetery in San Francisco.



Babe Pinelli in 1957

UPI Photo, Courtesy of Corbis-Bettman

Charlie Finley's Swingin' A's

by Dick Dobbins

When Charlie Finley manipulated American League owners into approving the move of his Kansas City A's to Oakland, CA, to start the 1968 season, Missouri Senator Stuart Symington commented that "Oakland is the luckiest city since Hiroshima."

Out in Oakland, politicians boasted of their accomplishment, and East Bay residents showed their excitement, albeit restrained. What were they getting into with this "tyrant from the Midwest"?

Finley hired Bob Kennedy, former Cubs manager, to lead the A's, while Finley himself assumed the role of general manager. Local icon Joe DiMaggio was hired as vice president and head coach, but both titles were more ceremonial than operational.



Charles O. Finley

Photo by Doug McWilliams

Dick Dobbins is a baseball historian. Reprinted from the A's Magazine. Courtesy of Jim Bloom, Oakland Athletics Baseball Club.

For his first season in Oakland, Finley announced an ambitious schedule of promotions—photo day, bat day, farmers day, hot pants day and a multiple of others. But an overriding flaw permeated his promotions—they promoted Finley, not Reggie, Catfish, Campy Campaneris, or Blue Moon Odom.

Opening day in 1968 was indeed a gala occasion. In pre-game festivities, Baseball Commissioner Bill Eckert and AL President Joe Cronin stood alongside Governor Ronald Reagan and Finley as "the rockets' red glare" shone over a packed house at the Coliseum. Dignitaries were everywhere to be seen.

The Baltimore Orioles were the evening's opponents as Lew Krausse started and took the loss in Oakland's first major league game. Finley's victory fireworks display would have to wait for another day.

But it was the second evening that would be telling to Finley: Just over 5,000 fans paid to enter the Coliseum—roughly one-tenth of the previous evening's crowd.

On May 8, Catfish Hunter tossed a perfect 4-0 game against the Twins before slightly more than 6,200. But later on in the season, a packed house came to celebrate the return of Casey Stengel and his 1948 Oakland Oaks, pennant winners in the Pacific Coast League 20 years earlier.

By the end of the season, A's attendance was 837,466, approximately 100,000 above the previous season in Kansas City, but far below Finley's expectations.

On the field, Kennedy had tolerated Finley's interference, and even returned the A's a winner, 82-80, good enough for sixth place, but not good enough for

Finley; Kennedy was replaced by Hank Bauer for 1969.

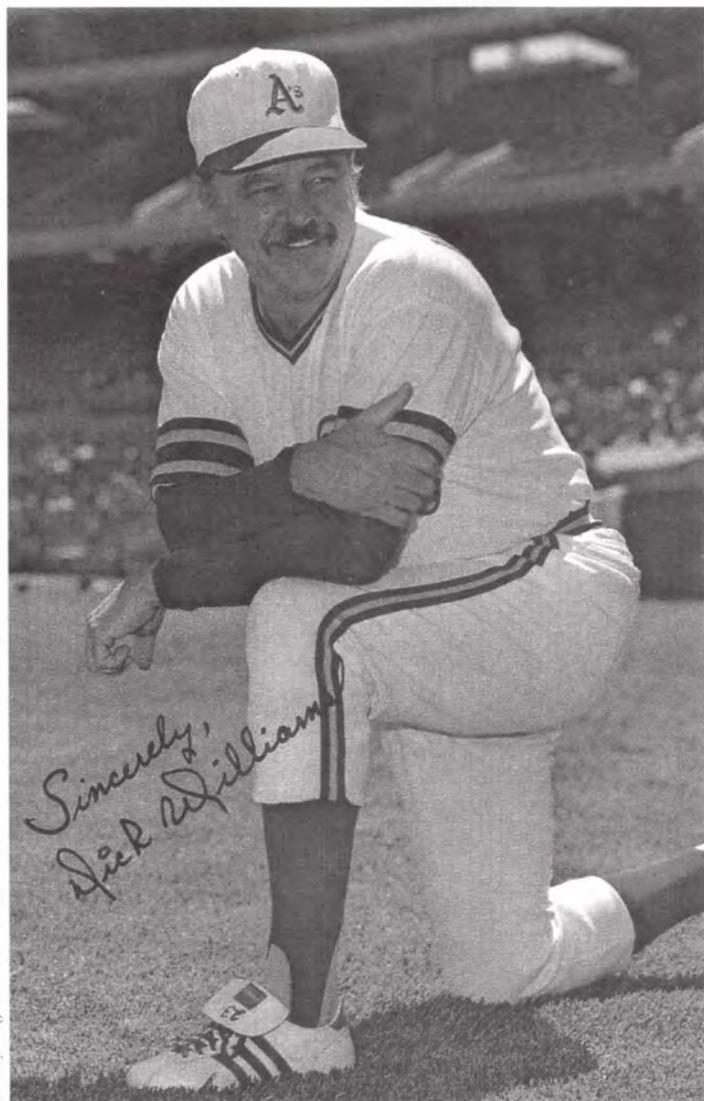
The team improved to 88-74 and challenged Minnesota for the lead before a rash of mid-season injuries dropped the A's nine games behind the Twins. But Finley had undermined Bauer all season.

Bauer, a former Marine, had demanded his players be well groomed, but Finley didn't support him and Bauer lost control of his club. Finley would acquire a player and not inform his manager. The player's arrival was often Bauer's first clue of a roster change. Still, Bauer had to be accountable for the team's failures, and with two weeks remaining in the season, he was fired.

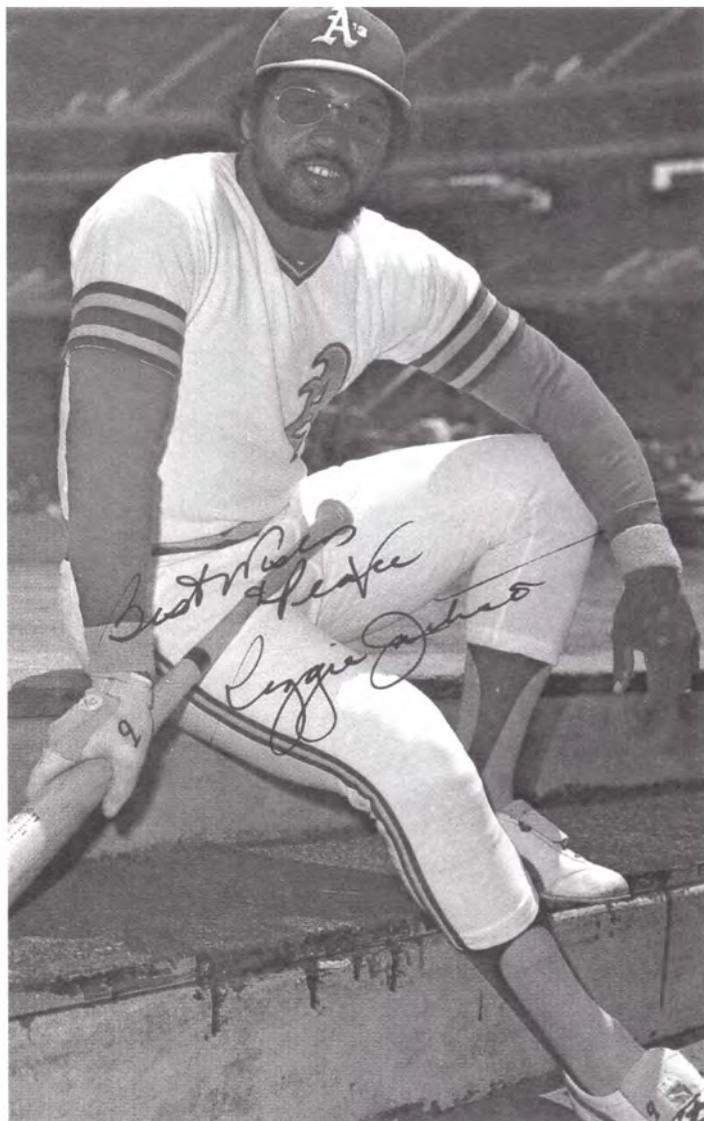
Johnny McNamara was elevated from coach to finish out the season, and he was rehired for 1970. McNamara had managed many of the A's players in the minors, and was a popular choice with them, but Finley was not through pot-stirring.

Finley looked upon Reggie Jackson as his true star, and Jackson's 1969 statistics confirmed his feelings. But when Reggie demanded to be paid as a star should, Finley balked.

In 1969, Jackson had held out, finally settling for \$18,000. Now he wanted \$60,000 for 1970. Finley countered with \$40,000, and the negotiations became bitter. The combatants finally settled for \$45,000 plus perks just a few days before the regular season started.



Dick Williams



Reggie Jackson

Dick Williams had led the "cry-baby" Boston Red Sox into the 1967 World Series, but like all managers he had later been fired for not winning. Finley found he was available to take the helm in 1971, and promptly hired him.

Williams was a no-nonsense kind of guy. He defined each player's roles and would take nothing less than 100-percent effort from each. When Finley made efforts to create turmoil on the club, it was Williams who stepped in as a buffer between players and owner.

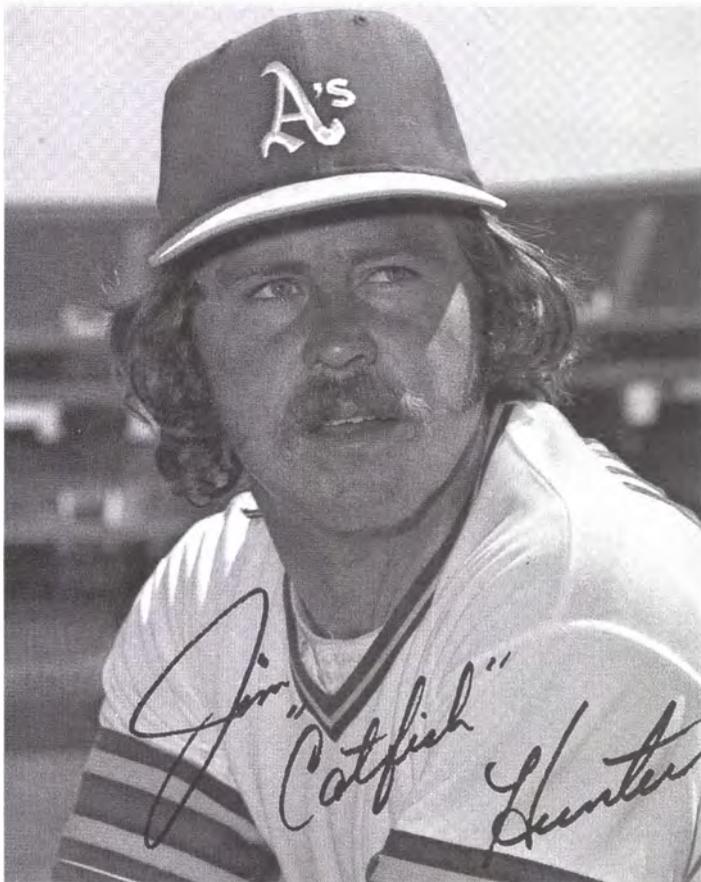
Although he was a taskmaster on the field, Williams did not allow things like hairstyle and dress to get in the way of good baseball. The motto "Swingin' A's" started meaning more than just batting proficiency.

As players started growing longer hair and mustaches, so did Williams. Finley grasped the idea and staged a Mustache Day, giving bonuses to any player who would grow one. Pitcher Rollie Fingers' handlebar mustache was the class of the team and became a trademark through the rest of his career.

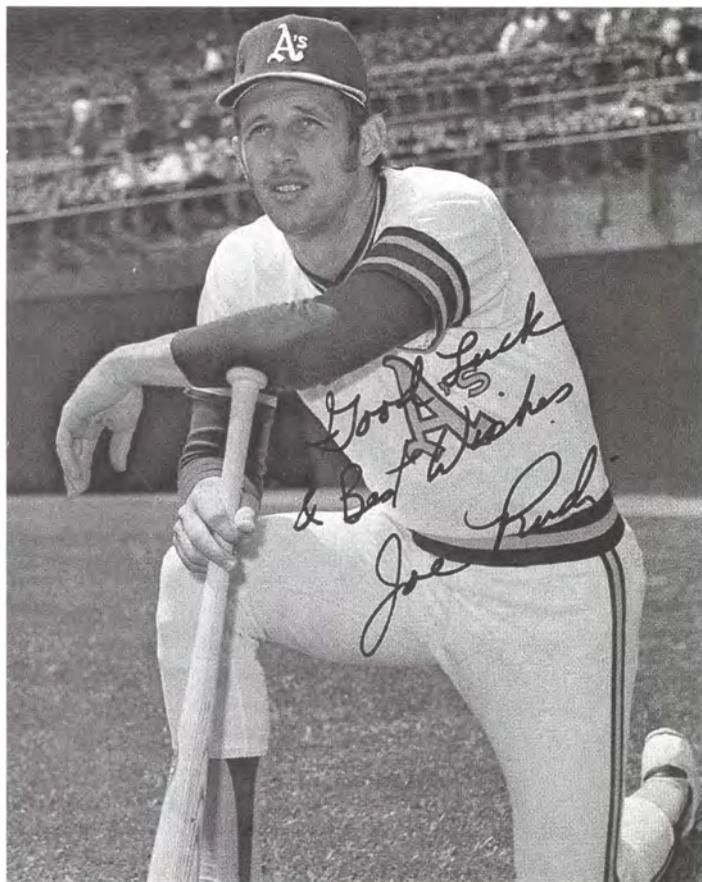
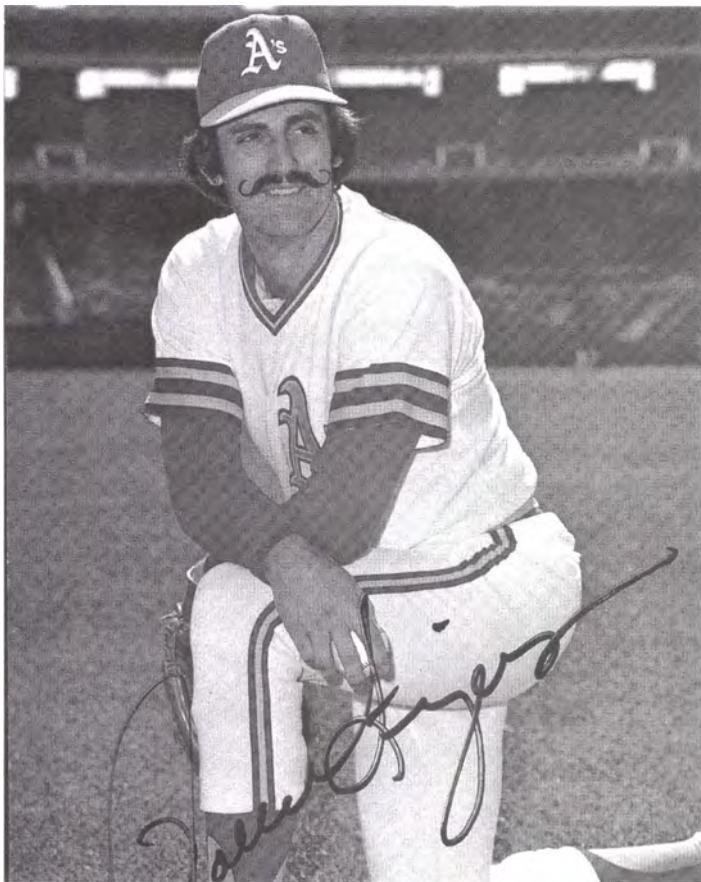
The 1971 A's flourished under Williams, winning 101 games and winning the Western Division by 16 games! Young Vida Blue was the rage of the league, winning 24 games and both the Cy Young and Most Valuable Player awards in the American League. Catfish Hunter won 21 games, and Reggie Jackson rebounded from his poor season the year before.

Photo by Doug McWilliams

Photo by Doug McWilliams



Jim "Catfish" Hunter, Bert Campaneris, Rollie Fingers, Joe Rudi



Photos by Doug McWilliams

Although the As were swept by Baltimore, 3-0, in the Championship series, the As gained the confidence to come back in 1972, and Charlie Finley finally had found a manager he didn't have to fire.

Spring training was met with great anticipation by the A's players and their fans, but once again Finley went to battle with one of his stars. This time it was Vida Blue.

Blue, a sensitive young man, had been the center of baseball's attention in 1971 while earning \$16,000. Everywhere Vida pitched attendance increased by thousands over the daily average. Finley openly boasted that Vida was underpaid and that the owner was cashing in on the young pitcher's success.

As a show of appreciation, Finley staged a day for Vida, giving him a baby-blue Cadillac El Dorado with license plates "V BLUE." Away from Finley, Vida said, "I'd rather have had a Grand Prix."

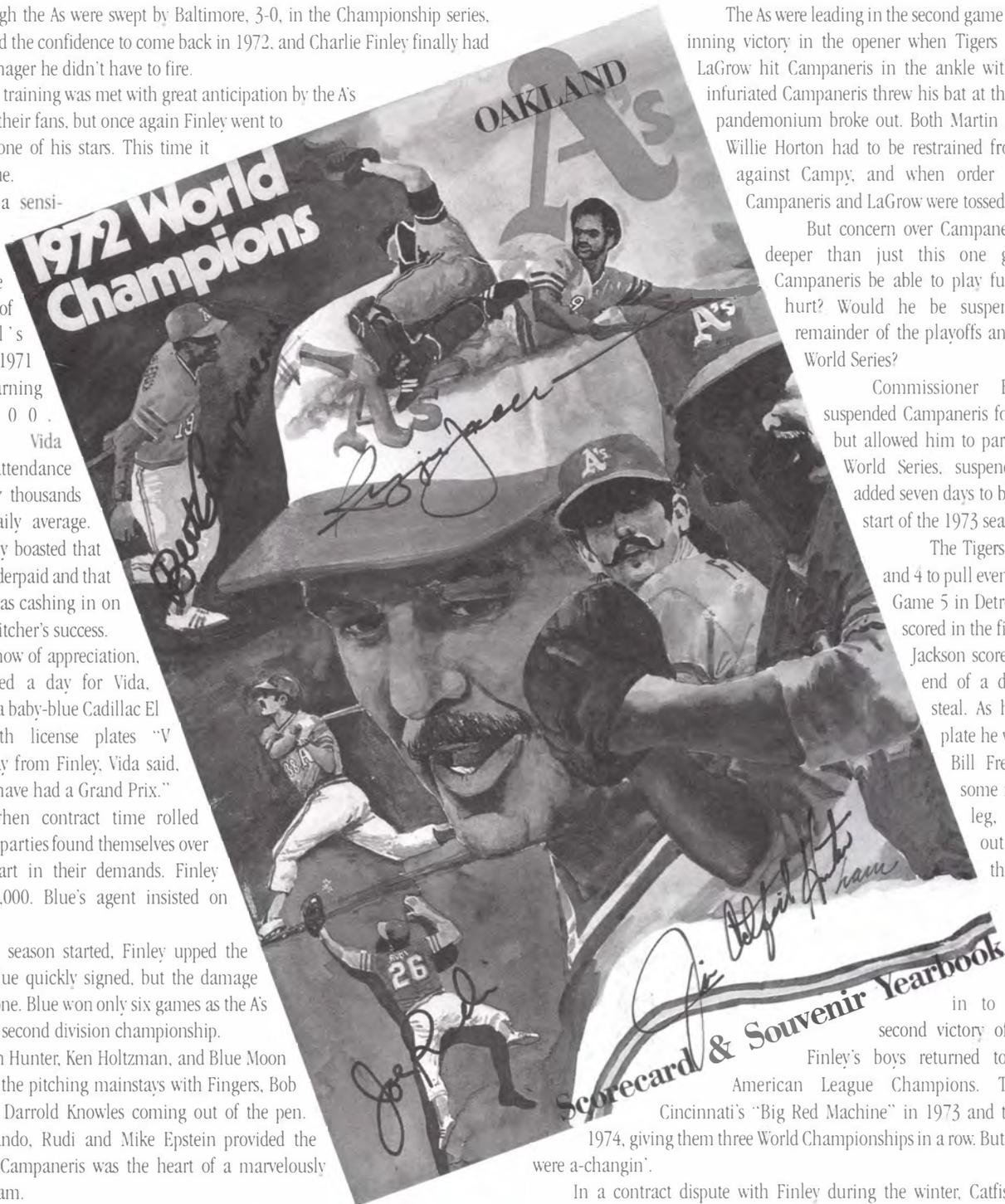
But when contract time rolled around, the parties found themselves over \$50,000 apart in their demands. Finley offered \$50,000. Blue's agent insisted on \$115,000.

As the season started, Finley upped the ante and Blue quickly signed, but the damage had been done. Blue won only six games as the A's cruised to a second division championship.

Catfish Hunter, Ken Holtzman, and Blue Moon Odom were the pitching mainstays with Fingers, Bob Locker and Darrold Knowles coming out of the pen. Jackson, Bando, Rudi and Mike Epstein provided the power and Campaneris was the heart of a marvelously balanced team.

Finley was in better communication with his manager, and whenever there seemed to be a special need, Finley performed magic by filling it.

The American League Championships matched Billy Martin's feisty Detroit Tigers against the As in a five-game Series gripped by suspense, violence and a key injury.



The As were leading in the second game after an extra-inning victory in the opener when Tigers pitcher Lerrin LaGrow hit Campaneris in the ankle with a pitch. An infuriated Campaneris threw his bat at the mound, and pandemonium broke out. Both Martin and outfielder Willie Horton had to be restrained from retaliating against Campy, and when order was restored, Campaneris and LaGrow were tossed.

But concern over Campaneris status was deeper than just this one game. Would Campaneris be able to play further? Was he hurt? Would he be suspended for the remainder of the playoffs and possibly the World Series?

Commissioner Bowie Kuhn suspended Campaneris for the playoffs, but allowed him to participate in the World Series, suspending him an added seven days to be served at the start of the 1973 season.

The Tigers won Games 3 and 4 to pull even, necessitating Game 5 in Detroit. The Tigers scored in the first, but Reggie Jackson scored on the back end of a daring double-steal. As he crossed the plate he was blocked by Bill Freehan, tearing some muscles in his leg, putting him out for the rest of the season.

The A's scored again in the fourth, and

Blue came in to save Odom's second victory of the playoffs.

Finley's boys returned to Oakland as American League Champions. The A's beat Cincinnati's "Big Red Machine" in 1973 and the Dodgers in 1974, giving them three World Championships in a row. But the times, they were a-changin'.

In a contract dispute with Finley during the winter, Catfish Hunter was declared a free agent, setting off the biggest flesh auction in baseball annals for his talents. Finley could see the handwriting on the wall.

Realizing his arbitrary control over the players was being eroded by free agency and arbitration, Finley decided to sell off his stars, only to be rebuffed by the commissioner once again.

Finley realized it was time to get out of baseball.

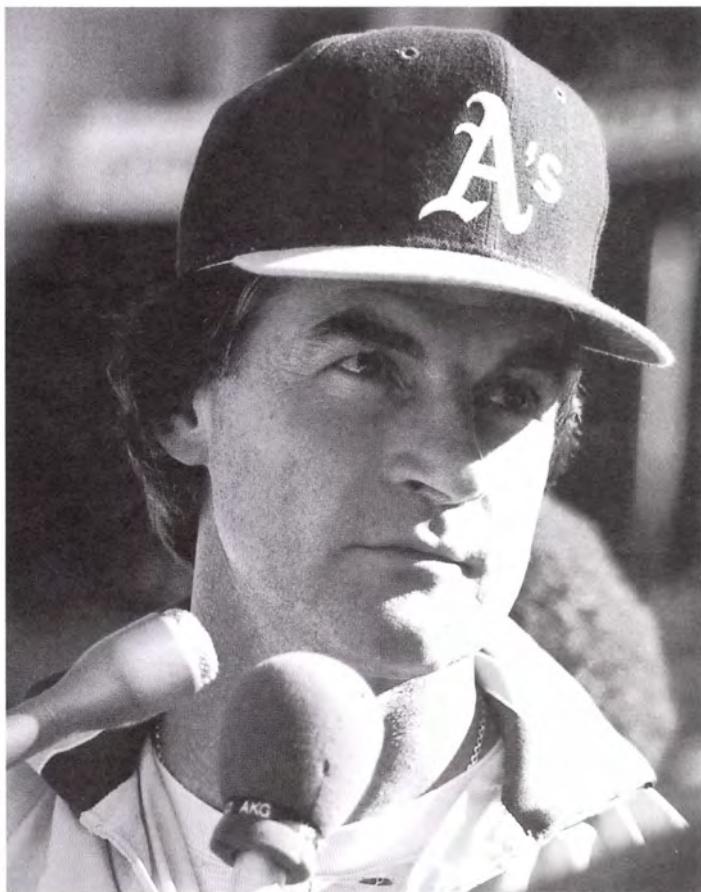
The Earthquake Series 1989 Athletics Versus Giants

by Glenn Dickey

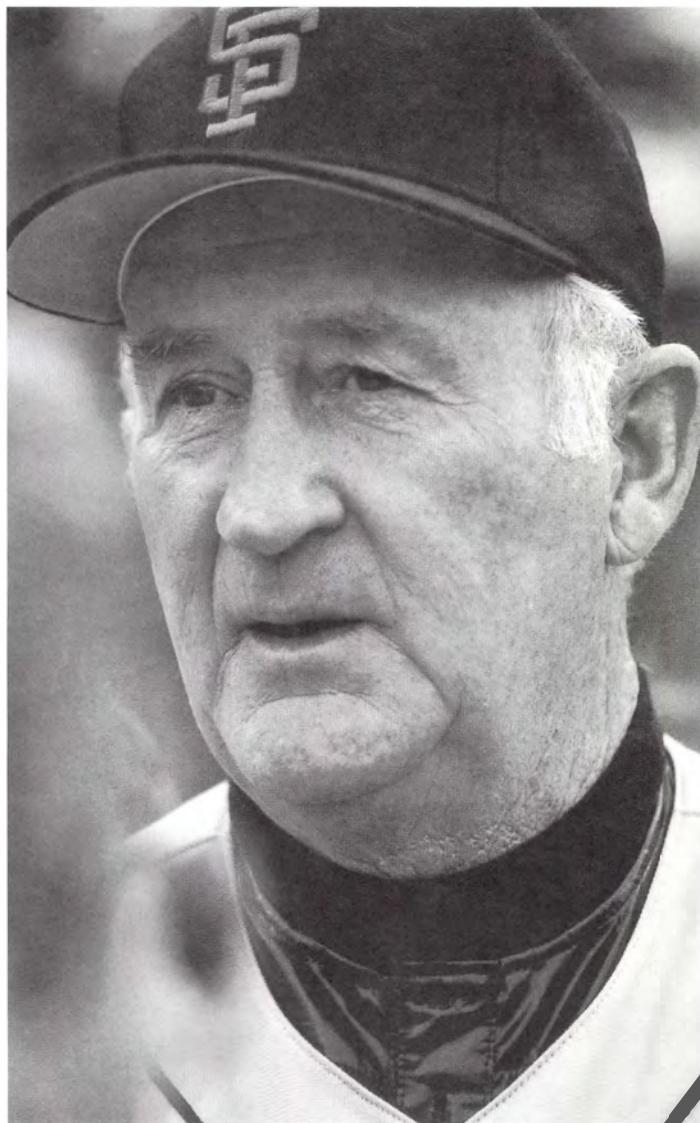
It was the World Series for which Bay Area fans had long been waiting. The matchup of the Oakland Athletics and the San Francisco Giants in the Battle of the Bay. The first time that teams from the same geographical area had met in the Series since the battles in the mid-'50s of the New York Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers.

But when it was finally over, the Loma Prieta earthquake would be what everyone in and out of the area would remember.

The Series was important for both teams because it meant bragging rights in the area. But, it was most important for the A's who felt they had something to prove. The previous season they had won an Oakland record 104 games but had been upset by the Los Angeles Dodgers in a five-game World Series. They were favored again in the '89 Series and this time they were determined to live up to their favorite role.



Tony LaRussa



Roger Craig

Though the 1989 team won five fewer games, this A's team was better than the year before. In the off-season, General Manager Sandy Alderson had signed free agent pitcher Mike Moore. Moore fit nicely into the No. 2 starter role with 19 wins, two behind Dave Stewart's 21 and two ahead of Bob Welch's 17.

In mid-season, Alderson had brought Rickey Henderson back in a trade with New York, and Rickey gave the team a great complement to their sluggers, Jose Canseco and Mark McGwire. Injuries had limited Canseco to just 65 games, but by the time the postseason arrived, he was healthy and the A's attack was at its most potent.

Photos by Doug McWilliams

Glenn Dickey writes for the San Francisco Chronicle Sports. Reprinted from the A's Magazine. Courtesy of Jim Bloom, Oakland Athletics Baseball Club.



Mark McGwire and Will Clark

The Series opener in Oakland was all A's as Stewart pitched a five-hit shutout, not allowing a Giants runner to get as far as third until the ninth inning, and the A's backed him with 11 hits, including homers by shortstop Walt Weiss and designated hitter Dave Parker.

"That was probably my best game of the year," Stewart remembered years later. "I didn't even have my usual struggle in the first inning. I had great stuff and great control all the way."

Moore was almost as good in the second game, giving up just one run in the first seven innings before giving way to Rick Honeycutt. A's closer Dennis Eckersley, arguably the best of all time, shut down the Giants in the ninth in the 5-1 A's win.

The Giants were only slightly more competitive in this game, with the game tied at 1-1 going into the bottom of the fourth.

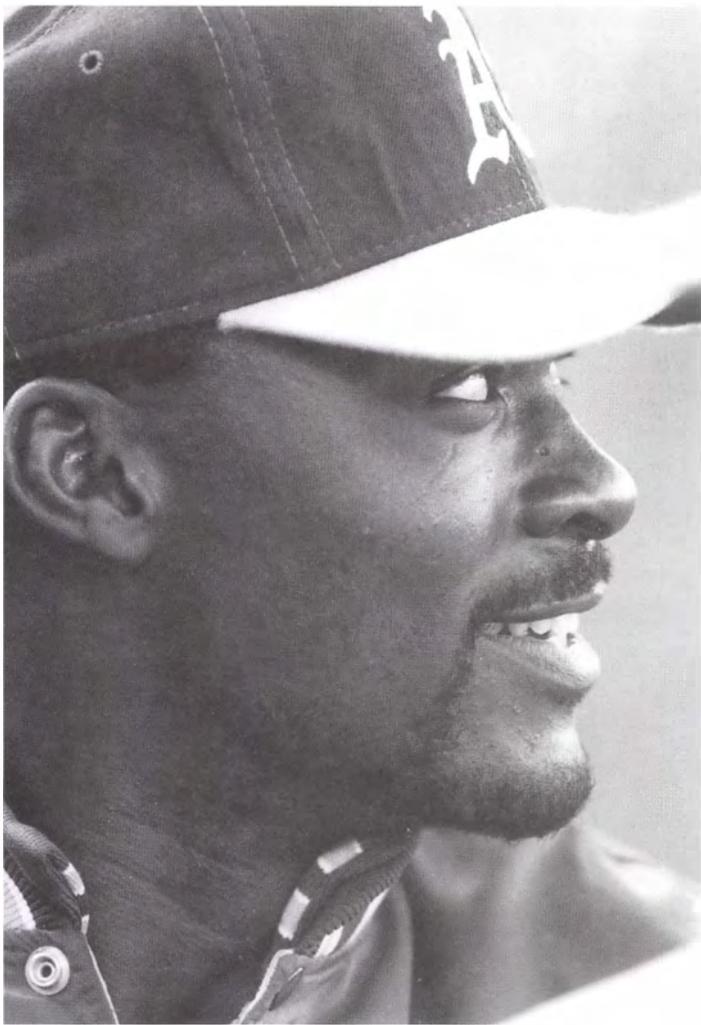
Canseco began with a walk off Giants starter Rick Reuschel. Dave Parker followed with a drive that just missed being a home run, inches below the top of the right field wall, the double scoring Canseco. Dave Henderson walked and McGwire struck out, and then Terry Steinbach hit a three-run homer. The game could have been called at that point.

Parker jumped up and down with joy as he was coming home on Steinbach's homer. "I figured this was pretty much it for me in the Series," he said, "so I was savoring the moment." As the designated hitter, Parker would not be in the lineup for the games at Candlestick, and he was obviously assuming the A's would be able to wrap up the win within the next three games without returning to Oakland for more games.

Nonetheless, as the Series transferred to Candlestick, Giants Manager Roger Craig remained optimistic. "We had had the best home record in the league that



Photos by Doug McWilliams



Dave Stewart

season," he said later, "so I thought we could get back in it at home."

Baseball soon became irrelevant, though. Shortly after 5 o'clock on October 17, as pre-game ceremonies were being held at Candlestick, the Loma Prieta earthquake hit. Power went out at the ball park—first the main system and then the backup generator. Players quickly gathered in the middle of the field with their families, so they wouldn't be hit by anything falling from the stands. In the stands, about a third of the spectators in the upper deck left, but others stayed where they were. Surprisingly, there was no panic.

In the upper deck a section had been set aside as an auxiliary press section, with working tables and television monitors. Writers and spectators who walked into the area looked at the monitors and saw shots of the large gap in the Bay Bridge, which had buckled and broken from the shock. Obviously, there would be no game today, nor for a long time to come.

Though the quake had been centered about 80 miles south of Candlestick, there was extensive damage throughout the area. In addition to the Bay Bridge, the double-decked Cypress Freeway in Oakland had collapsed, and sections of highways in San Francisco and approaching it from the south were heavily damaged. The Series was credited with saving lives. Many people who would otherwise have been commuting on the Bay Bridge and surrounding highways were either at Candlestick or home preparing to watch the game on TV.

Houses built on fill in San Francisco's Marina district had collapsed. Many buildings in downtown Oakland, including the City Hall and other government

buildings, suffered damage that would not be repaired for years, if ever.

Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent said the Series would continue but he gave no date. There was discussion that the remainder of the Series might be played at the Oakland Coliseum, which had suffered no structural damage, but after Candlestick was thoroughly examined, it was decided that the Series could be continued there.

In the interim, players felt as confused and lost as everybody else. "I spent a lot of time working with earthquake victims," said Stewart, an Oakland native. "I was relieved when we finally played baseball again, because it took my mind off all the tragedy."

Eleven days passed between the second and third games, the longest break in World Series history, and that time allowed A's Manager Tony La Russa to go back to Stewart and Moore for the next two games, bypassing Bob Welch. Ironically, Welch, who had developed an affection for San Francisco on road trips while he pitched for the Dodgers, lost his home in San Francisco's Marina. He was the only player on either team to live in San Francisco, and he did not return after the earthquake.



Mark McGwire

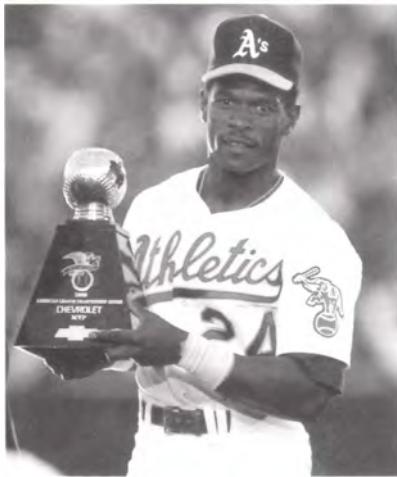
Photos by Doug McWilliams



Candlestick Park right after the Earthquake

Dusty Baker, then a coach for the Giants, thought the A's ability to go back to Stewart settled the issue for them. "Not that facing Bobby Welch was exactly a walk in the park," said Dusty later. "but in those days, Stew was just about unbeatable in a big game."

Stewart wasn't nearly as sharp in this game as in his first start — "I was able to focus all right, but I just ran out of gas." But, the A's hitters were awesome, with five homers (tying a Series record for one game), including two by Dave Henderson, in a 13–7 win.



Rickey Henderson

"It just seems like we play better when Stew pitches," said Steinbach. "It's not like we don't play good for the other guys, but when Stew is pitching, we just feel like something good is going to happen."

It was more of the same in Game 4. Rickey Henderson led off the game with a home run, and the A's got off to an 8–2 lead behind Moore. Moore got a two-run double in the second, the first hit for an American League pitcher in World Series play in 10 years. When Moore came out after six innings, the Giants

rallied and closed the gap to two runs, but the A's still won the game, 9–6. So, the A's had swept the Series and were World Champions again for the first time since 1974, but the post-game celebration was muted. "We couldn't be too happy," said La Russa. "knowing how much others were suffering."

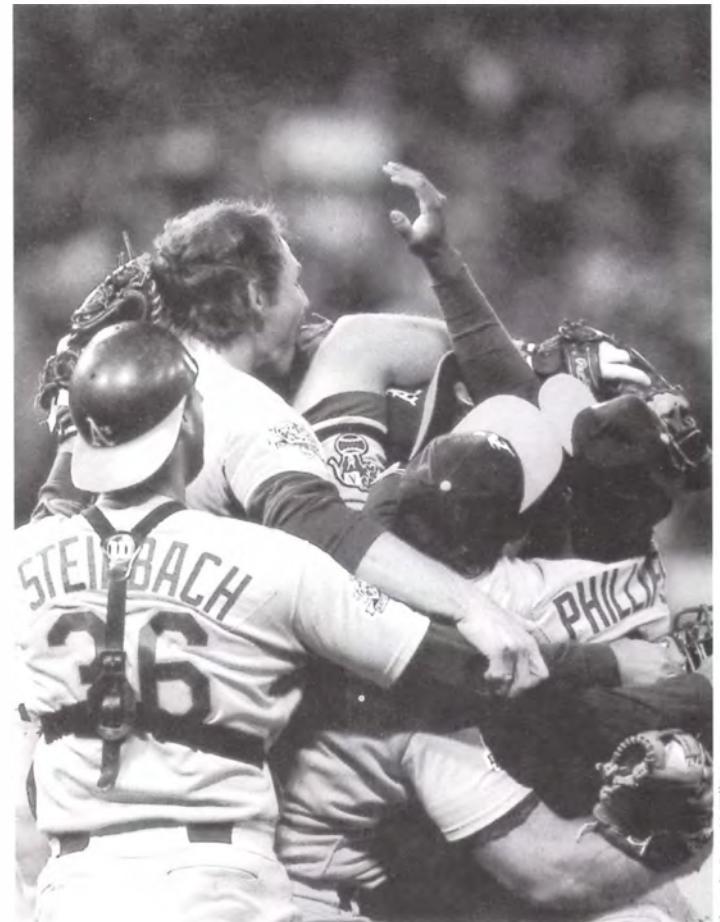
There has never been a more dominant team in the World Series. In baseball legend, the 1927–28 Yankees have always been thought of as the best team in history, as they swept two consecutive World Series. In 1927, the Yankees outscored Pittsburgh, 23–10. In 1928, they outscored St. Louis, 27–10. But the 1989 A's scored 32 runs, a record for a four-game Series, and outscored the Giants by 18 runs.

"This showed that the best team did not win last year (when the A's lost to the Dodgers)," said Parker. "We've had the best record in baseball the last two years. Everybody thought we should win last year but we fell short. This year, we were not

to be denied. These players turned into man-eating tigers when the games resumed."

Stewart was named the Series MVP but said he wanted to share it with Rickey Henderson, who had hit .474. The A's hit nine home runs, another record for a four-game Series.

This A's team was the best in baseball since the great Cincinnati Reds team of 1975. It had everything: pitching, power, speed and defense. The proof was the World Series, yet, the A's dominance had a hollow ring in the wake of the earthquake's destruction.



Photos by Doug McWilliams

1989 World Series: Greatest Blowout of All Time

by Barry Mednick

By any measure, the 1989 World Series provided the most lopsided competition in Fall Classic history.

San Francisco Bay Area fans celebrated a dream season, with their two favorite teams completing exciting pennant races and emerging from hard-fought playoffs to meet in October. For the Athletics, the Series provided an opportunity to erase the memory of the previous autumn's failure against an inferior Dodger team. Giant fans ended 27 years of frustration with a playoff victory over the Cubs. But instead of exciting games on the field, the Battle of the Bay was upstaged by the Loma Prieta earthquake.

The A's easily won the initial contests in the Coliseum. After the longest between-game gap in Series history, the Giants returned to Candlestick Park to face Dave Stewart and Mike Moore, the very same pitchers that had dominated games one and two. The results were no different from in Oakland. The Athletics focused on victory and remained undistracted. The Giants, nervous from the outset, quickly conceded.

RUN DIFFERENTIAL (Winner's runs scored minus loser's runs scored)

1910 A'S	4 games	CUB S	1 game	20
1936 YANKS	4	GIANTS	2	20
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	18
1932 YANKS	4	CUB S	0	18
1928 YAN KS	4	CARDS	0	17

Viewing runs scored, 1989 falls in among contests featuring the Yankee dynasty. In 1910, the rising young A's surprised the older Cubs as Jack Coombs won three games.

Joe DiMaggio hit .346 in his first series in 1936. Not included on this list: the 1960 Yankees outscored Pittsburgh by 28, but lost in seven games.

BATTING AVERAGE DIFFERENTIAL

1990 REDS	4	A'S	0	.110
1922 GIANTS	4	YAN KS	0	.106
1985 ROYAL S	4	CARDS	3	.103
1910 A'S	4	CUB S	1	.094
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	.092
1976 REDS	4	YANK S	0	.091
1979 PIRAT ES	4	ORIOLES	3	.091

Batting average only relates part of the story. In 1990, Billy Hatcher hit .750, breaking Babe Ruth's 1928 record, and Chris Sabo followed with a .563 average. The Giants of 1922 were paced by Heinie Groh, .474, and Frankie Frisch, .471.

SLUGGING PERCENTAGE DIFFERENTIAL

1928 YANKS	4	CARDS	0	.247
1976 REDS	4	YANKS	0	.241
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	.239
1969 M ETS	4	ORIOLES	1	.173
1939 YANKS	4	REDS	0	.172

Slugging percentage and on base percentage (below) give a truer picture of the Athletics' domination. Every A's starter homered, except Mark McGwire. Giants' first baseman Will Clark had no RBI, and Ernest Riles, the DH, failed to get a hit.

In 1928 Ruth and Gehrig combined to hit .593, with seven home runs and 13 RBI.

The Yanks knocked Grover Alexander out of game 2 in the third inning.

ON BASE PERCENTAGE DIFFERENTIAL

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	.125
1985 ROYALS	4	CARDS	3	.116
1922 GIANTS	4	YAN KS	0	.115
1990 REDS	4	A'S	0	.114
1961 YAN KS	4	REDS	1	.108
1932 YAN KS	4	CUB S	0	.101

Focusing on Giant pitching failures more clearly displays the A's mastery. The earthquake swallowed up the Giants' best opportunity for victory, facing Storm Davis in Candlestick in game 3. Davis, more than half a run a game worse than any other A's starter, had posted a 2-7 record, 6.18 ERA in his only National League season. His 19 wins resulted from superior run support.

EARNED RUN AVERAGE DIFFERENTIAL

1932 YANKS	4	CUB S	0	6.01
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	4.71
1928 YANKS	4	CARDS	0	4.09
1936 YANKS	4	GIANTS	2	3.46
1976 REDS	4	YANKS	0	3.45

1932 was the year of Ruth's called shot off Charlie Root. Lou Gehrig hit .529, three homers, eight RBI.

SF starting pitching failed remarkably.

EARNED RUN AVERAGE—STARTERS

1984 TIGERS	4	PADRES	1	13.94
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	11.77
1947 YANKS	4	DODGERS	3	9.64
1932 YANKS	4	CUB S	0	9.50
1970 ORIOLES	4	REDS	1	9.15

In 1984, Alan Trammell hit .450, two HR, six RBI; Kirk Gibson hit .333, two HR, seven RBI while Padre starters pitched less than three innings in four games, and five innings in the other game.

AVERAGE INNINGS PITCHED—STARTERS

1984 TIGERS	4	PADRE S	1	2.07
1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	3.25
1947 YANKS	4	DODGERS	3	3.33
1923 YANKS	4	GIANTS	2	4.06
1970 ORI OLES	4	REDS	1	4.13

In 1947, an itchy Burt Shotton limited all Dodger starters to a maximum of 4 2/3 innings. But that exciting Series presented Cookie Lavagetto's hit to destroy Bill Beven's no-hitter and Al Gionfriddo's famous catch of Joe DiMaggio's line drive.

MAXIMUM INNINGS PITCHED--STARTERS

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	4.00
1947 YANKS	4	DODGERS	3	4.67
1984 TIGERS	4	PADRES	1	5.00
1970 ORIOLES	4	REDS	1	6.67
1928 YANKS	4	CARDS	0	7.00
1963 DODGERS	4	YANKS	0	7.00
1980 PHILS	4	ROYALS	2	7.00
1981 DODGERS	4	YANKS	2	7.00
1993 PHILLIES	2	BLUE JAYS	4	7.00

Rick Reuschel was the only Giants' starter to reach the fifth. In contrast, Stewart and Moore completed at least six innings every game. A's starters pitched 29 innings while the bullpen threw seven. The SF relievers combined for 21 of the 34 innings pitched.

INNINGS LED

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	0
1963 DODGERS	4	YANKS	0	0
1966 ORIOLES	4	DODGERS	0	0
1950 YANKS	4	PHILS	0	1.5
1927 YANKS	4	PIRATES	0	2.0
1907 CUBS	4	TIGERS	0	2.5
1914 BRAVES	4	A'S	0	2.5

The 1963 Dodger relievers pitched 2/3 inning. L.A.'s ERA was 1.00. The Yankees hit .171, scoring only four runs. The 1966 Orioles were even more dominant, with an ERA of 0.50. The Dodgers scored two runs in the third inning of game one followed by 33 scoreless innings. But the Orioles also struggled at the plate, keeping all games close.

Limiting inspection to four-game-series, how often did the winning team take a four run lead?

Not only were the Giants the only team to trail by four in all games, they fell early in each game, facing an almost insurmountable lead by the fifth inning of every game.

4 RUN LEAD (4-0 SERIES)

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0
•	2nd inning		
•	3rd inning		
•	4th inning		
•	5th inning		
1928 YANKS	4	CARDS	0
•	3rd inning		
•	7th inning		
•	8th inning		
1976 REDS	4	YANKS	0
•	4th inning		
•	7th inning		
•	9th inning		

The designated hitter made its first appearance in 1976, the previous four-game sweep. The Reds' Dan Driessen hit .357, while Yankee DHs had one hit. The 13 other Series in which losing team did not win a game were all closer.

RUNS CREATED DIFFERENTIAL (SIMPLE FORMULA)

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	20.47
1985 ROYALS	4	CARDS	3	18.35
1979 PIRATES	4	ORIOLES	3	15.87
1970 ORIOLES	4	REDS	1	15.68
1910 A'S	4	CUBS	1	15.65
1947 YANKS	4	DODGERS	3	15.62

The 1985 Series was well balanced until the 11-0 finale. Bret Saberhagen and Danny Jackson combined for a 1.06 ERA. The Cardinals had game 6 and the championship in hand until umpire Don Dekinger missed a call at first base and Jack Clark followed with a crucial error.

In 1979 Willie Stargell hit all three Pirate homers, batting .400, seven RBI.

LINEAR WEIGHTS DIFFERENTIAL (ON BASE PCT * SLUG PCT)

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	133
1976 REDS	4	YANKS	0	113
1928 YANKS	4	CARDS	0	104
1990 REDS	4	A'S	0	099
1932 YANKS	4	CUBS	0	091
1970 ORIOLES	4	REDS	1	087

AVERAGE LEAD IN 5TH INNING (4-0 SERIES)

1989 A'S	4	GIANTS	0	5.25
1954 GIANTS	4	INDIANS	0	2.5
1963 DODGERS	4	YANKS	0	2.5
1990 REDS	4	A'S	0	2.5
1907 CUBS	4	TIGERS	0	2.2
1927 YANKS	4	PIRATES	0	2.0
1939 YANKS	4	REDS	0	2.0
1966 ORIOLES	4	DODGERS	0	2.0

1954 was known for Mays' catch in centerfield, but Dusty Rhodes went 4-for-6, two HR, seven RBI.

To punctuate the A's complete control of the Series, note that they became the first team to score more runs than opponent's hits.

1910: Philadelphia A's scored 35 runs and allowed 35 HITS

1928: NY Yankees scored 27 runs and allowed 27 HITS.

1932: NY Yankees scored 37 runs and allowed 37 HITS.

1989: Oakland scored 32 runs and allowed only 28 HITS.

Could there ever be a more one-sided sweep?



Photos by Doug McWilliams

49 Who Crossed the Bay, Giants and A's

by Mark Camps

When the 1997 season came to a close 49 players had logged regular-season playing time with both the San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's. While many made little or no impact —hello, Brad Komminsk—there were a handful who were celebrated on both sides of the Bay.

Players who have achieved at least a modicum of success with both clubs:

PLAYERS WITH AT LEAST 10 HOME RUNS FOR EACH TEAM:

- Dave Kingman 100 with A's, 77 with Giants
- Mike Aldrete 18 with A's, 14 with Giants
- Stan Javier 23 with A's, 10 with Giants

PLAYERS WITH AT LEAST 100 HITS FOR EACH TEAM:

- Billy North 664 with A's, 252 with Giants
- Kingman 406 with A's, 278 with Giants
- Stan Javier 475 with A's, 200 with Giants
- Felipe Alou 655 with Giants, 158 with A's
- Aldrete 275 with Giants, 145 with A's

PLAYERS WITH AT LEAST 1,000 AT BATS FOR EACH TEAM:

- Kingman 1,702 with A's, 1,242 with Giants
- North 2,447 with A's, 1,006 with Giants

PITCHERS WITH AT LEAST 10 WINS FOR EACH TEAM:

- Vida Blue 124 with A's, 72 with Giants
- Kelly Downs 47 with Giants, 10 with A's

PITCHERS WITH AT LEAST 100 STRIKEOUTS:

- Blue 1,315 with A's, 704 with Giants
- Downs 494 with Giants, 104 with A's
- Dave Heaverlo 133 with Giants; 113 with A's

PITCHERS WITH AT LEAST 100 INNINGS:

- Blue 1,945.2 with A's, 1,131.1 with Giants
- Heaverlo 237.2 with Giants, 221.1 with A's
- Downs 762 with Giants, 201.2 with A's
- Elias Sosa 223.2 with Giants, 109 with A's

BAY AREA BAFFLER: Name the three players who have appeared in postseason games for both teams. Answers below. (See answer on page 60)

ONE NAME, TWO PLAYERS, BOTH TEAMS:

Steve Ontiveros was a member of the Giants and A's. However, he was two different players. The Giants' Ontiveros was an infielder 1973–76; the A's Ontiveros was a pitcher who toiled at the big-league level 1985–88 and '94–95.

LOPSIDED TRADES:

There have been very few trades during the 30 years that both teams have existed



Dick Dobbins Collection

on the West Coast. Without much of an argument the Giants have gotten the better of the deals.

In 1978, the Giants acquired Blue for seven mostly mediocre players, including such luminaries as Alan Wirth and Phil Huffman.

In 1988, the Giants picked up Rod Beck for Charlie Corbell.

In 1990, in what is believed to be the last player-for-player deal between the two clubs, the Giants got Darren Lewis (and minor-leaguer Pedro Pena) for Ernie Riles.

It hasn't been entirely a washout for the A's scouts and front-office staff. At the end of the 1987 season, the Giants gave up on free-agent-to-be Dave Henderson. The next year, Hendu joined the A's where he became a permanent fixture on their pennant-winning teams and one of most prolific sluggers.

RANDOM NAMES:

The only brothers to have played for both are the Alous: Matty, Felipe and Jesus. Hall of Famers who have played for both: Joe Morgan, Willie McGovey. Current managers who have played for both: Felipe Alou, Dusty Baker and Phil Garner. Two players who have hit a home run for the A's and pitch for the Giants: Matty Alou and Dave Kingman. Alou pitched two innings for the '65 Giants and hit one home run for the '72 A's. Kingman tossed four innings for the '73 Giants and hit 77 home runs 1971–74.

THE 49 WHO PLAYED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BAY:

Mike Aldrete, Gary Alexander, Felipe Alou, Jesus Alou, Matty Alou, Dusty Baker, Bill Bathe, Vida Blue, Ollie Brown, Ernie Camacho, Orlando Cepeda, Joe Coleman, John D'Acquisto, Kelly Downs, Randy Elliott, Tito Fuentes, Phil Garner, Rich Gossage, Dave Heaverlo, Dave Henderson, Stan Javier, Jay Johnstone, Ed Jurak, Bob Kearney, Mike Kingery, Dave Kingman, Brian Kingman, Brad Komminsk, Bob Lacey, Gary Lavelle, Johnnie LeMaster, Darren Lewis, Willie McGovey, Willie McGee, Joe Morgan, Bill North, Marty Perez, Luis Quinones, Dave Righetti, Ernie Riles, Rick Rodriguez, Alejandro Sanchez, Scott Sanderson, Lary Sorensen, Elias Sosa, Gary Thomasson, Rusty Tillman, Manny Trillo, and Ed Vosberg.

*Mark Camps covers baseball for the San Francisco Chronicle.
This was published in the San Francisco Chronicle.*

The Baseball Journey of Jimmie Reese

by Tom Willman

August 28, 1988. Angels vs. Yankees. was Jimmie Reese day at Anaheim Stadium. Jimmie was then in his 17th year as the California Angels' conditioning coach. He was 86 (born October 1, 1901), and still suiting up, still hitting fungoes the way a carpenter drives nails. He could "pitch" batting practice with his split fungo bat, work pitchers with sharp grounders until their tongues hung out, shorthop infielders black and blue. He once hit a flagpole on a bet at a distance of more than 200 feet.

On this sunny Sunday afternoon, a crowd of 40,000 watched while a short film of his fungo work played on the big outfield screen. They saw video messages of congratulation from Sparky Anderson in Detroit and Nolan Ryan in Houston. Then they watched a brief ceremony behind home plate in which Jimmie was given a lifetime contract and a rocking chair, and they heard the usual things about his long baseball career: He had been a bat boy with the L.A. Angels of the Pacific Coast League back in 1917; he had been Babe Ruth's roommate on the Yankees; and had become such great friends with Ryan that one of the pitcher's sons had been named Reese.

In fact, a proper appreciation of Jimmie Reese only began there. In Jimmie, baseball's living memory reached back to dead ball days. He had worked out with players who had begun their major league careers in the 1890s, had trod the field with the immortal Frank Chance and Wahoo Sam Crawford. He recalled sharing the Babe's boulevard nights, helping Lou Gehrig out of a slump, and watching Ted Williams as a skinny minor leaguer endlessly checking his swing in a clubhouse mirror. He recalled Grover Cleveland Alexander's control and Dizzy Dean's dusters. He remembered crowds gathering for batting practice displays of Reggie Jackson, just as they had for the Babe a half-century earlier.

And he could recall the first time his team had honored him with a day: in August, 1927. That day, the congratulatory messages were telegrams from Bob Meusel and Tony Lazzeri of the vaunted 1927 Yankees, and Harry Heilmann, who would hit .398 for Detroit that year. They were honoring Jimmie as the star second baseman of the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League. He was the toast of the Coast, regarded as perhaps the best-fielding second baseman in the game, East or West, and big league teams were begging to trade for him.

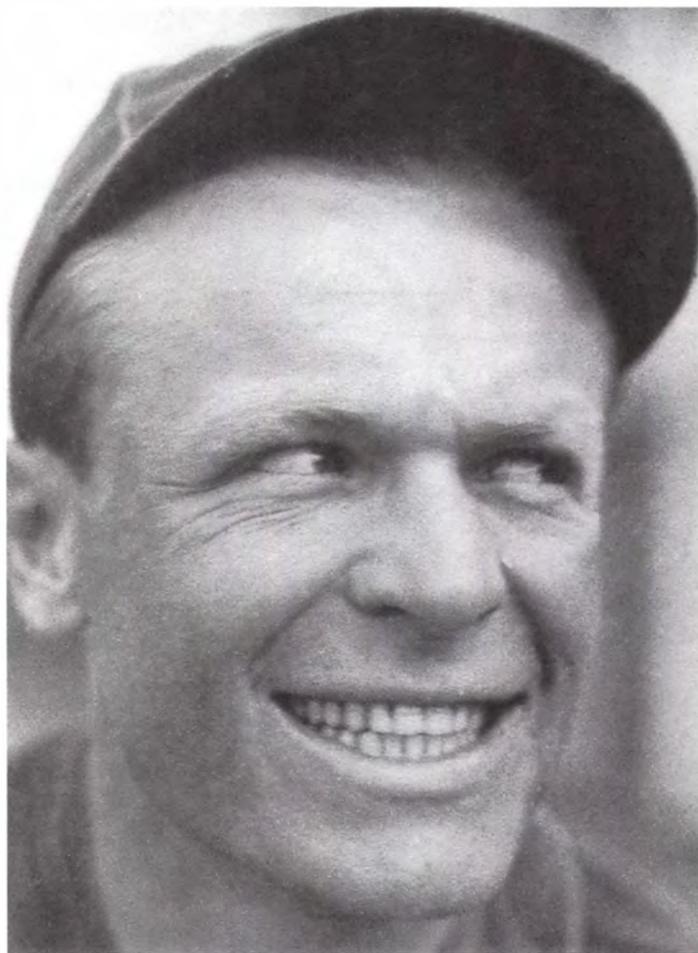
Jimmie Reese was born in New York but came to Los Angeles as a small boy with his mother and sister. The record lists his name variously, the last name usually Solomon, but from the time he was a schoolboy he was simply known as Jimmie Reese, the name apparently coming from a family friend and mentor. As a youth, Jimmie got a job as a newsboy, hawking papers on street corners. He already had three of the tools that would make him a success for the rest of his life—a dazzling smile, a winning personality and great hustle—and he became a sort of urban Huck Finn. He was still a boy when his newspaper manager gave him the lucrative territory of the U.S. Navy submarine base at San Pedro. Jimmie was soon living on the base, sending money home to mom, wearing dress blues and hanging out with the base's ball team when he wasn't attending San Pedro High.

From this point on, Jimmie Reese spent the rest of his life in the company of

big-leaguers. Lefty O'Doul, Fred Haney, Bob Meusel, Harry Heilmann and Howard Ehmke were among those who played service ball there during the 'teens. Inevitably, in that crowd, he was soon part of the scene around L.A.'s Washington Park, home of the PCL Angels. By 1917 he had hustled his way into the batboy's job. Frank Chance, the manager, paid him every Sunday with a dollar and a baseball.

The seasons rolled over and by the early 1920s the batboy had played school and semi-pro ball. His slick fielding had won him a nickname, "Pelican," and he was chafing for a chance in the Coast League. Jimmie remembered a conversation with Red Killefer, by then the Angels' manager, who had taken him under his wing.

"I told him one time I wanted to be a ballplayer and he said, 'Well, Jimmie, I love you like a son, but,' he says, 'there's only one thing you can do. You're a good fielder. But you can't run, you can't hit, you've got a bad arm.' I wanted to be a



Jimmie Reese, Oaks 1927

Dick Dobbins Collection



Photo by Doug McWilliams

Jimmy Reese Coach with the California Angels talking with Ken Brett

shortstop, and you had to be a good arm to play shortstop. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘I’ll play second base.’ He said, ‘Well, you still need a great deal. It’s hard to figure that you’ll ever play better than Class A ball.’

“Yeah, he told me. You know, he meant it as a father would to a son. I says, ‘Well, I’m gonna make it anyway.’ I didn’t know anything. That was my life.”

So he kept playing, wherever he could. He went to spring training with the San Francisco Seals in 1924 but was cut. He went off to Eureka, tore up the Northern California bush league and was picked up by the Seals’ cross-Bay rivals, the Oaks, that same year. A week after joining the team they were playing a series in Seattle. The manager there was none other than Red Killefer. On Wednesday night, Jimmie went home with him and enjoyed Mrs. Killefer’s home cooking. The next afternoon, with the game on the line and the bases loaded, Killefer ordered an intentional walk to get at Jimmie. Jimmie doubled to left to win the game.

From the start, Jimmie played with panache. He played headlong, diving, leave-your-feet baseball, and he quickly became a fan favorite. Writers loved him, too, because he was Horatio Alger in spikes—the former batboy who made himself a player by hard work and hustle. Lyn Lary, just 19, had taken over shortstop for the Oaks, and he and Jimmie quickly forged a dashing, acrobatic doubleplay partnership that would flourish for four years. As Jimmie matured through 1925 and 1926, the veteran baseball men around the league began comparing him to the best fielders they’d ever seen, and the headiest, players like Johnny Evers and Eddie Collins.

In 1927, the Oaks won the PCL championship. Playing in 191 games, Jimmie hit 295. He set a fielding record, handling 1,294 chances with just 21 errors, for a fielding percentage of .984, far better than any second baseman in the

majors. The White Sox, Reds, Dodgers, Pirates, Cubs and A’s were all mentioned as bidding for his services, and he might have had a long big league career with some of them. As it was, the Oaks wanted to sell him and sidekick Lyn Lary together, and the price was high. In December 1927, it was announced they had been sold for \$150,000—to the New York Yankees.

The Yankees already had two young Californians Mark Koenig and Tony Lazzeri, at short and second. When baseball writers asked the Yankees’ free-spending owner, Col. Jacob Ruppert, what he wanted with two more, he replied, “They tell me that Lary and Reese are so good that I am buying them so they cannot play against me.” He could afford to keep them on the shelf in case he needed them, and that’s what he did. Jimmie didn’t join the team until the spring of 1930.

Yankee manager Miller Huggins, who had loomed as a patron, had died at the end of 1929. The team was unsettled in 1930, eclipsed by the great Philadelphia A’s, and in ‘31 Joe McCarthy took over, determined to make changes. Jimmie wound up in St. Paul. In 1932 he played for the St. Louis Cardinals, but they were in transition, too. He hit .265 for them and registered the highest fielding percentage of all National League second basemen. But Jimmie was back on the Coast by February of ‘33, this time for good. In later years, Jimmie liked to say it was Uncle Charlie that got him—pitiless big-league curve balls—and that the fates put him behind two great second basemen in Tony Lazzeri and Frankie Frisch. He did not say it bitterly, and his numbers do not reflect failure. In any case, his stay in The Show was all too brief—three seasons in which he hit respectably and fielded with his usual elan.

Jimmie came home to the L.A. Angels in 1933, and he picked up where he left off. He again held center stage as the acrobatic star, and in these years, if you were on the Coast, it was great to be young and an Angel. Jimmie had fans in Hollywood—Groucho Marx, William Powell (“The Thin Man”)—and the team was one of the great minor league clubs of all time. In ‘33 they played .600 ball, won 114 games, and finished first. In ‘34, they took both halves of a hastily split season with 137 wins, and trounced a PCL all-star team four games out of six. Jimmie hit .330 and .311 those years, and was his usual self in the field. After that, his offensive numbers began to decline. In the late ‘30s he wound up with San Diego where he enjoyed a last hurrah as a player, winning another PCL pennant in ‘37.

For most of the next three decades, Jimmie was a fixture in the league, a familiar coaching figure under a dozen managers in Seattle, Hawaii, Portland, and San Diego. He had a whole career, 1948–62, coaching for the Padres. “Then,” Jimmie recalled, “Fred Haney called me in one day and says, ‘Would you like to go back to the major leagues?’ I says, ‘I’ve been waiting for years.’ ‘Well, you got it. You’ll be a coach next year.’” And from that spring of 1972 until his death in 1994, he was a coach for the Angels. He went to his grave in his uniform, No. 50.

Through all the years, Jimmie Reese was faithful to the game, grateful for his opportunity, and a believer in the idea that there was an obligation to hustle, practice hard, play hard all the time. Probably few of the players he worked on with his relentless fungoes understood that he wasn’t asking anything of them that he wouldn’t have given himself. Nolan Ryan was one who did; Gary Pettis, the Angels’ fleet center fielder, was another. At Jimmie’s funeral, Pettis told a story of how one day he was in center when an opposing batter homered far over his head, a towering shot. Pettis drifted back on it to watch it go out. When the inning ended, he found a place on the bench next to Jimmie, and Jimmie asked him, “What happened on that fly?” Pettis, taken aback, replied that the ball had gone 10 rows deep into the stands. “Come out early tomorrow,” Jimmie responded, “and we’ll work on it.”

Jimmie Reese had a wonderful baseball life, but it would be hard to say who got the better of the deal, Jimmie or the game he loved.

From Golden Gate Park to the Big Leagues

by Norman Macht

All-Star ball players are nothing new to the Bay Area. When the 51st major league All-Star game was played at Candlestick Park July 10, 1984, San Francisco simply reasserted its rightful place as the brightest star in the baseball firmament.

"This city has been the nation's most fertile source of big league ball players since Robert Blakiston left town to join the Philadelphia Athletics in 1882," claims George Stanton, former president of the Old Time Baseball Players Association.

"More players went to the big leagues from Golden Gate Park, alone, than from any other park in the world. Last count was 34. From 1922 to 1924 the entire Cincinnati infield grew up in the park: Lew Fonseca at first, Sammy Bohne at second, Ike Caveney at short and Babe Pinelli at third. Pinelli later became an umpire. That team finished second to McGraw's Giants two years in a row."

The Bay Area's elder native sons could field an all-star team team that would outshine either side appearing at Candlestick Park that year. The line-up would include George "Highpockets" Kelly at first; Tony Lazzeri at second; Joe Cronin at shortstop, and Willie Kamm on third. Kelly and Kamm live in Millbrae. The outfield would be covered by the great trio of Lefty O'Doul, Joe DiMaggio and Harry Heilmann.

"The DiMaggios played ball in North Beach, but the rest were Golden Gate products," Stanton says. "For some reason we didn't develop many pitchers or catchers. We'd have to cross the Bay to pick up Ernie Lombardi as our catcher; and for pitchers, Lefty Gomez from Rodeo, George Pipgras and Dutch Ruether from Alameda, Jim Tobin from Oakland and Duster Mails, who was born in San Quentin—outside the walls.

"For bench strength, how about Mark Koenig, Frank Crosetti, Ping Bodie, and Dom and Vince DiMaggio?"

"Cronin, who managed at Washington and Boston and later became president of the American League, would be our manager.

"With five of them in the Hall of Fame and two others (Kamm and O'Doul) who belong there, no other city could match that line-up."

What made San Francisco the leading training ground of the nation from 1900 to World War II?

Mark Koenig, who played on the 1926-28 New York Yankees powerhouse, grew up a block away from the park. "The City was full of baseball fields," he recalls. "Golden Gate Park had ten diamonds back to back. A big wire fence separated them. There were ten pickup games going on at one time.

"One corner of the field, at Ninth and Lincoln, was reserved on Sunday for the Park Bums. They were the elite, the big time in the park ranks.

"It wasn't organized into leagues or anything. We'd just choose up sides and play. But there were always scouts hanging around."

Stanton recalls that "there was a lot of interest among businessmen. They'd sponsor teams, providing shirts and equipment. George Freund was one. He owned a string of drugstores around town.

"We had to sign up to use a diamond. They were city parks, but a man named Al Erle, who worked for A. G. Spalding, was in charge of scheduling the

games. He was one of the founders of the old timers association. There's a park in the city named for him."

Stanton, who lives in Sonoma, hosted a St. Patrick's Day feed for several years, at which Erle, Freund, former fire chief Bill Murray, Kelly, Koenig and other old timers were regulars. "But everybody got too old to get around easily," Stanton says.

Another factor in the city's baseball boom was the San Francisco Seals, one of the most successful minor league operations in the history of the game. (For several years the city supported two teams in the Pacific Coast League, the Seals and the Missions.) At the old Seals Stadium, where Babe Ruth once hit a 700-foot home run in an exhibition game, Dr. Charles Strub and Charley Graham signed many a hometown boy, and sold a steady supply to the major leagues: Heilmann, a .400 hitter; Kamm, who cost the White Sox a then-record \$100,000 and two players in 1922; O'Doul; Jimmy O'Connell; DiMaggio.

But not all Golden Gaters made the Hall of Fame or even the big leagues.

Like George Stanton.

A funny thing happened to George on the way to the 1924 Olympics. Somebody tossed him a baseball.

"I'd won the 56-pound-weight throw in the 1921 national games. Finished second in the javelin. Somebody told me, 'You can make the '24 Olympic team. Go over to the park and work out to stay in shape. Shag flies.'

"I was 21. I'd never touched a baseball. Lived out on 19th Avenue. We didn't have a ball field near us. We spent our time chasing rabbits in the dunes and selling them. Two for a quarter.

"So I went over to the park. Got into a game of catch, drew some attention, got invited to play for the Park Bums one Sunday. That was a big honor for a beginner."

Standing six-foot-five, weighing 225, the young Stanton was touted as a left-handed Walter Johnson. "They said I could throw as fast as Johnson, but I was wild. Couldn't find home plate. Word got around there was a big fireballer in Golden Gate Park. Pretty soon I had five big league offers.

"My father said New York was where the money was, so I signed with the Giants. Showed up at spring training in San Antonio, Texas, in 1922. It was the biggest ball park I ever saw.

"One day I'm pitching batting practice and the manager, John McGraw, steps into the box to take some swings. He was the greatest manager of them all. By this time he was a little heavy around the middle. I could throw lightning bolts, so I was scared to death of hitting him. I lobbed the first pitch up like a girl.

"McGraw started cursing—the air was usually blue around him, anyhow. 'Put something on it,' he yelled. The coach standing behind me told me to throw as hard as I could. The catcher yelled the same thing.

"So I reared back and poured it on. McGraw never saw it. The ball plonked him in the ribs, almost knocked him down. He held himself up by leaning on the bat.

"He stood back in there and again they told me to cut loose. So I fired away.

Hit him in the same spot. He went down like he'd been poleaxed. There was dead silence. Nobody moved. They didn't dare try to help him up.

"After a few minutes he pulled himself up and staggered off. That was the last batting practice he ever took. And it was the closest I ever got to the big leagues."

Stanton played in the minors until 1929 when he began a 31-year career on the San Francisco police force.

Another chapter-writer in the city's baseball history is Joe Sprinz. Born in St. Louis, Sprinz caught for the Seals from 1938 to '46. His contribution to the lore of the city came during the 1939 World's Fair at Treasure Island.

"We'd read where Gabby Street, the Washington catcher, had caught a baseball dropped from the top of the Washington Monument," Joe recalls. "So we thought we'd pull the same stunt at the fair."

"Lefty O'Doul went up in the tower, about 400 feet up, and dropped a ball, and I caught it. I caught five in a row."

"Well, we thought, this is too easy." So Duster Mails says, "The Goodyear blimp is flying over the fairgrounds. Why not get those guys to throw a ball out?"

"We give the ball to the pilot and he takes off. He's hovering about 1,200 feet up and he drops the ball. It comes down weaving around like a belly dancer. I get a bead on it, then wham—it hits me in the head. I wake up in the hospital with a broken jaw. It's my birthday—August 3, 1939."

The Old Time Baseball Players Association still celebrates San Francisco's unique place in the world of baseball.

Some Northern California Baseball Trivia

Compiled by Paul Hirsch

- Who was the first batter in the first regular season major league game in Northern California?
- Not including Gene Tenace who was still mostly a catcher then, the 1972 A's had three first basemen on their World Series roster. Name them.
- To what city did the Oakland Oaks move when they left the Bay Area in 1956?
- This former Giant made the last out in two of Sandy Koufax's no hitters; in 1963 for the Giants and in 1965 for the Cubs. Who was he?
- Name the architect who made the City of San Francisco an offer it couldn't refuse to build a ballpark for the Giants on his land at Candlestick Point, and then stopped construction when it becomes clear the stadium would not be named for him.
- Before Herb Washington, the A's had another player used primarily for pinch running. His nickname was the Panamanian Express. Name him.
- Who replaced Reggie Jackson in the A's lineup for the 1972 World Series after Jackson injured his leg scoring the winning run in the deciding game of the ALCS?
- Which major league team had a working agreement with the Seals during the Seals' last year in San Francisco?
- Who replaced Bill Rigney as Giants' manager in 1960?
- Name the two pitchers who between them started all four games for the A's in the 1989 World Series?

Sandlots, Kranks and Muffins

One of the greatest charms of baseball is that it has changed so little in the past 150 years. Of course, there have been subtle changes, particularly in the terminology.

"Sandlot baseball is a term that originated in San Francisco. In 1850, when San Francisco was chartered as a city, what is now the greater Civic Center area was then a large sand hill designated as Yerba Buena Cemetery. By 1860 the Board of Supervisors authorized the removal of the graves and the leveling of the hill, making the area a somewhat bare park. By 1869 the City was ready to move City Hall from Portsmouth Square to the Civic Center, but in the intervening ten years the "Sand-Lot" had become a training ground for young ballplayers. San Francisco sportswriters coined the term "sandlotters" for young ballplayers, and by the beginning of the 1900s the term had spread everywhere.

Other baseball terms didn't make it. The term "muffin" was once used to describe a mediocre or error-prone player; today it survives in a different form, as in, "he muffed an easy catch."

Another unique 19th century term is "kranks" for fans. Its usage developed as a word out of the installation of turnstiles in eastern ballparks in the 1870s: One "crank" of the turnstile let in one customer. Kranks then were much like devoted fans now, not only attending games but keeping score, tracking statistics and players and reading newspaper accounts of the game.

"Hippodroming" meant play-acting and throwing the game, usually for gamblers. Hippodroming and drunkenness were factors—along with the lure of money—that led to efforts to properly regulate the game in the latter part of the 19th century.

The ultimate humiliation in early baseball was to be "Chicagoed," or shut out. On July 23, 1870, the New York Mutuals defeated the Chicago Club by then the remarkable score of 9-0. In all of 1870 there were only three "Chicagos," while in 1871, the National Association's first year, there were all of six shutouts.

The reasons for the high scores seen in early games are logical. Fielders did not wear gloves, playing surfaces were primitive, balls were sheepskin-covered rubber and yarn; pitchers still tossed underhand and the batter could request the placement of pitches."

— Dick Dobbins

ANSWER TO BAY AREA BAFFLER: (from page 56)

The three players who have appeared in postseason games for both the Giants and A's:

- Matty Alou (1962 World Series with Giants, 1972 American League Championship Series and World Series with A's)
- Kelly Downs (1987 NLCS, 1989 NLCS and World Series with Giants; '92 ALCS with A's)
- Stan Javier (1988 ALCS and World Series, 1989 ALCS and World Series with A's; 1997 Division Series with Giants)

10. Dave Stewart and Mike Moore

9. Tom Sheehan

8. Boston Red Sox

7. George Hendrick

6. Allen Lewis

5. Charles Harney

4. Harvey Kuenn

3. Vancouver

2. Mike Epstein, Mike Hegam, Don Michner

1. Gino Cimoli

ANSWERS TO THE TRIVIA QUESTIONS:

A Nickname For All Occasions

by John E. Spalding

The use of nicknames in baseball has diminished greatly since the heyday of the practice in the first half of this century. Sacramento ball clubs shared in this rich American tradition, where telling honesty required a heavyset guy like George Lial to be called "Tubby" and another with a lousy disposition on the mound, "Grumpy" Guy Fletcher.

In a 1981 study of major league nicknames, James K. Skipper Jr. found the most popular were Lefty, Red, Doc, Bud or Buddy and Dutch. Capital City players bore all of these, plus quite a few others.

The best known among the Senators/Solons called "Lefty" was Claude Williams, later one of the eight Chicago Black Sox players who conspired to throw the 1919 World Series. Ex-Sacramento first baseman Arnold "Chick" Gandil was another of the conspirators.

Answering to "Red" were pitchers Garth Mann and George Munger, plus one other redhead, Ross "Brick" Eldred.

A battery of "Docs" operating on the diamond would include James Crandall—called the "Doctor of Lost Games" as a relief pitcher—and catcher Les Cook.

Player and manager John "Buddy" Ryan got his nickname because his middle name was Budd, but there was the case of the pitcher named Beasley—called Bud—because that was his given name, not a nickname.

Names from ethnic groups include "Dutch" (Clarence Hoffman, Bert Lerchen, Murl Prather, Walter Ruether), "Frenchy" (Stan Bordagaray, Joe Raymond) and "Fritz" (Fred

Mollwitz). Like many Native American players, Moses Yellow Horse was called "Chief." Irishmen included Joseph "Patsy" O'Rourke and Mark "Patsy" McGaffigan. Emil "Irish" Meusel was German, but the players thought he looked like a son of the auld sod.

Nicknames of "Honolulu Johnnie" Williams and "Seattle Bill" James honored their home towns. Gil "Miz" DeForrest was from Missouri.

Many nicknames derived from physical attributes. Skinny pitcher Charles Baum was called "Spider" and Ira Colwell was "Slats." Tall Ben Hunt was "High Pockets." Big players were called "Moose" (John Cano, Warren Fralich), while

portly Albert Gould was "Pudgy" and husky Ray Perry was "Buffalo." Slowpokes were "Truck" (Charles Eagan, Harry Hannah).

Frank Morehouse was a little guy, hence "Jockey." Another diminutive player was Frank Scalzi, called "Skeeter" or "Snuffy" (for a comic strip character).

Blondes Earl Sheely and William Wietelmann were "Whitey" and Henry "Cotton" Pippen was blond as a boy. Elmer "Specs" Shea wore glasses. Ernie Lombardi was called "Schnozz" for his big nose.

Demeanor identified Wilbur "Raw Meat" Rodgers—who behaved as if he'd been eating some—Ted "Bull" Easterly, Harold "Rowdy" Elliott and several "Deacons" (Carroll Jones and Edward Van Buren). Hustling John Martin was "Pepper" and, similarly, Ralph Young and Elton Prentice were "Pep."

Behavior on the mound gave us Elwood "Speed" Martin, a fast pitcher; William "Wild Bill" Piercy, who was, and John "Duster" Mails, who liked to knock batters to the ground with inside pitches.

Country boys included Forrest "Hick" Cady and two named "Rube," Ed Kinsella and Oscar Peters.

Age came into play with Ellsworth "Babe" Dahlgren, Paul "Pop" Gregory, Herm "Old Folks" Pillette and John "Schoolboy" Knight. Marino "Chick" Pieretti got his nickname not from his youth, but because a doctor had to remove a chicken bone from his throat. Ernest "Kid" Mohler was playing for Sacramento past the age of 40.

Joe "Flash" Gordon's nickname came from a comic strip and William

"Duke" Kenworthy inherited several million dollars from an English family estate.

Joyner "Jo Jo" White's nickname derived from his pronunciation of his home state of Georgia—"Joe Jah".

Elliot Wills was "Bump" because he fell down a lot while trying to learn to walk as a toddler.

Other monikers remain a mystery to me, so I can't tell you how Sylvester "Blix" Donnelly, Roy "Deedle" Moran, Allyn "Fish Hook" Stout or Elwood "Kettle" Wirts got their nicknames.

But Vernal "Nippy" Jones told me he was nicknamed after his father, who was called "Nip" because he enjoyed taking a nip of whiskey on occasion.



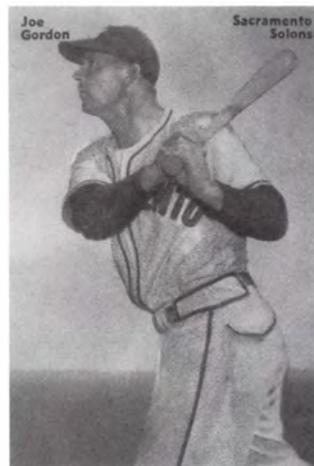
GUY FLETCHER
1946 Solons Pitcher
Photo by Joe Benetti

"Grumpy"



BAUM, SACRAMENTO, P. C. L.

"Spider"



"Flash"

By John E. Spalding, an author of many west coast baseball books. Formerly with the San Jose Mercury News. Article excerpted from "Senators and Solons".

Northern California Pacific Coast League Members of the Hall of Fame

A photo essay by Doug McWilliams

OAKLAND OAKS— 6



GEORGE KELLY
1933, 1949 to 53



BILLY HERMAN
1950



CASEY STENDEL
1946 to 48



MEL OTT
1951 to 52



ERNIE LOMBARDI
1927 to 30, 1948

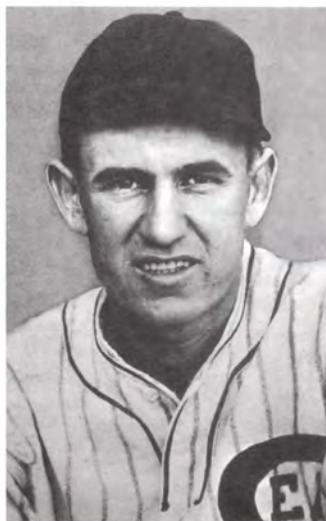


RAY DANDRIDGE
1953

SAN FRANCISCO SEALS— 9



JOE DiMAGGIO
1932 to 35



LEFTY GOMEZ
1929



TONT LAZZERI
1941



ARKEY VAUGHN
1949



EARL AVERILL
1926 to 28



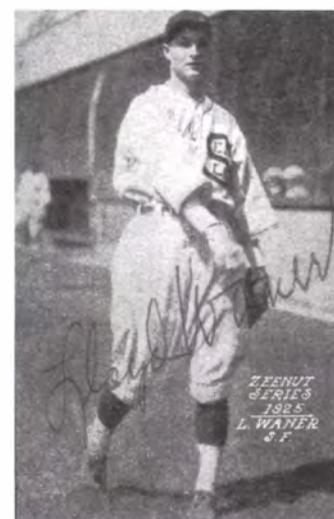
FRANK CROSETTI
1928 to 31



HARRY HEILMAN
1915



PAUL WANER
1923 to 25



LLOYD WANER
1925

MISSION REDS— 2



HARRY HOOPER
1927



ERNIE NEVERS
1928 TO 29
*Football Hall of Fame

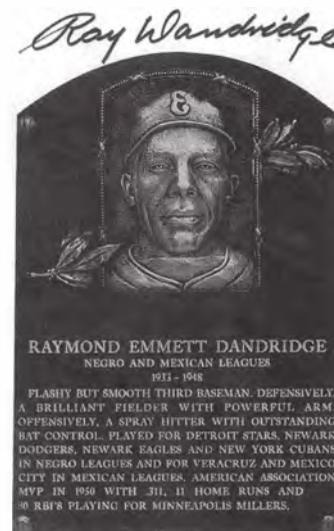
SACRAMENTO SOLONS— 3



DAZZY VANCE
1919



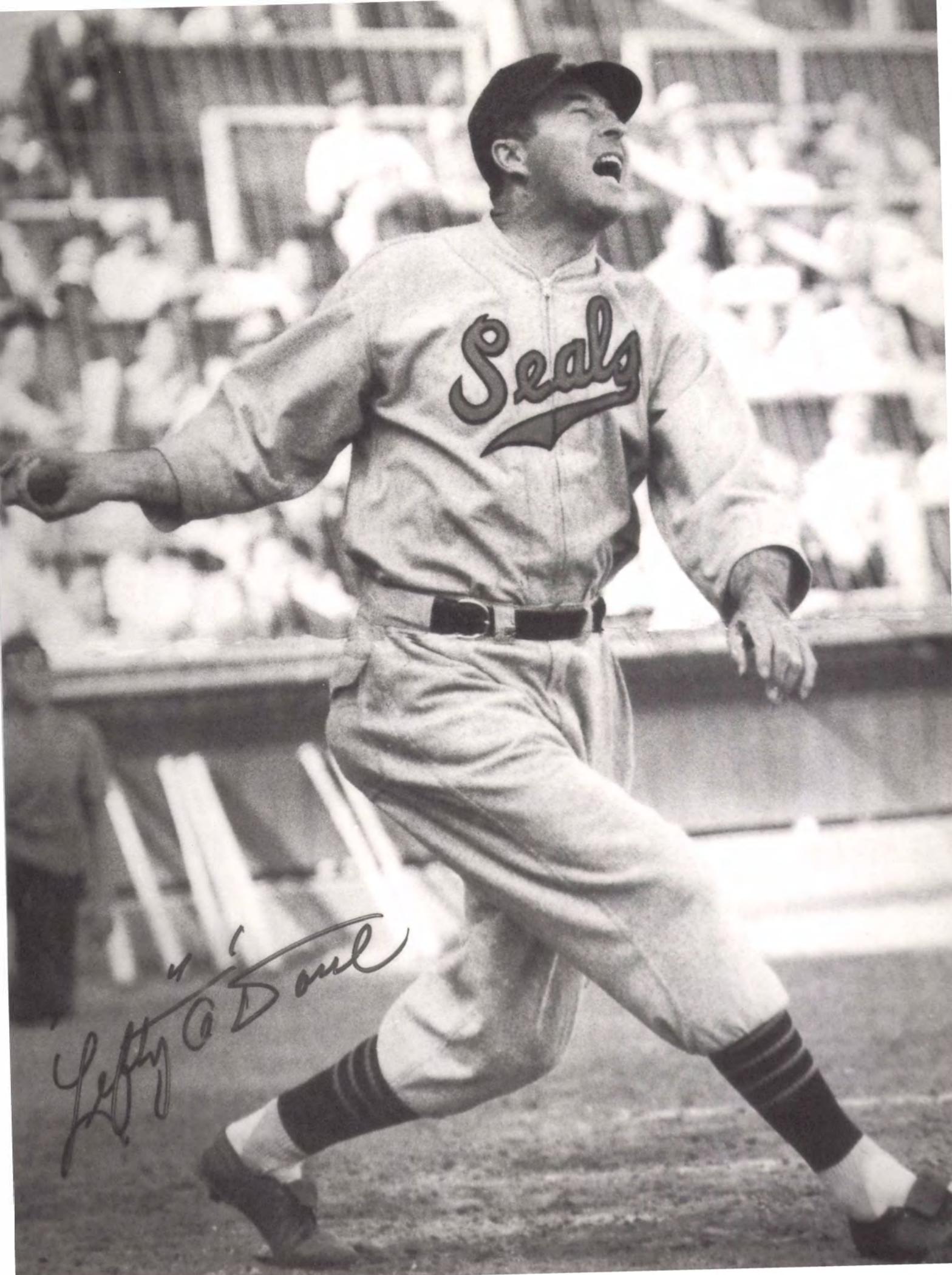
ERNIE LOMBARDI
1948



RAY DANDRIDGE
1953

Courtesy of Hall of Fame

Photos from Dick Dobbins and Doug McWilliams Collections



Seals

Lefty ⁴¹ @ Doul



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