

Baseball: The Nation's First National Pastime

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In the pages of his 1905 annual *Official Base Ball Guide*, Albert Spalding called for the creation of a special commission to determine the historical origins of the game of baseball. Spalding occupied a position of prominence in the baseball community, first as an excellent pitcher during the nascent years of the National League. In the late 1880s Spalding organized a world tour of famous baseball players, exhibiting the game to unfamiliar foreign spectators, as well as founding the famous sporting goods manufacturing firm. He was influential because of his company's fortunes and for being an ambassador for baseball with the expertise of a former player.

Out of a misplaced sense of national pride, Spalding challenged the prevailing view that baseball descended from the English game of rounders, a position advocated by the venerable Henry Chadwick, the nation's first baseball historian. Spalding accused Chadwick of promulgating that view due to his English birth. About a year later, Spalding's commission was formed and, after some investigation, determined that baseball was entirely American, the invention of Civil War hero Abner Doubleday.¹ The story that Doubleday invented baseball was cemented by the 1935 decision to build the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, Doubleday's hometown.

The conclusions of Spalding's commission, then as now, flew in the face of historical evidence. Many scholars have since thoroughly debunked it, finding the origins of baseball not only in British games like rounders and cricket, but also in those played by Native Americans.² Yet Spalding's motivation is understandable given baseball's national significance at the turn of the century. Baseball was already considered a "time-honored game" in 1845.³ Documents from the period before the Civil War dub baseball an "old fashioned game" and note that it "has been known in the Northern States as far back as the memory of the oldest inhabitant reacheth [sic]."⁴ Numerous accounts of "bass-ball," "goal ball," "base," "four old cat," and

“town ball,” each describing a game resembling baseball, can be found in writings from the mid-nineteenth century. By the time Spalding was a player, baseball was a long-established part of American culture, already the “national pastime.”

Spalding’s desire to see baseball enshrined as an entirely American institution is matched by arguments that baseball evinces the character of American life. Many have said that nineteenth-century pastoral living produced baseball’s rhythm. Unlike many games invented during the industrial booms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, baseball has no clock, reflecting rural farm life, where the only temporality is that of the sun. There are many accounts of early baseball matches ending not because one team had won, but because the sun had set. Baseball also seems to embody the ambivalent relationship between individuality and collectivism so central to American identity. While the game centers on the confrontation between two individuals, the hitter and the pitcher, neither can win the game without the assistance of others: for the pitcher, the fielders arrayed behind him, and for the hitter, those who follow him in the lineup.

As poetic and right-seeming as these claims may be, they are difficult to prove. What Spalding observed in his lifetime, and what many have observed since, is that baseball reflected and embodied so much of the American experience. Rather than relying on evocative explanations for baseball’s rhetorical status as the national pastime, by examining baseball’s history we can find that the sport provided meaning for certain segments of the American population and a stable identity during massive changes in American society. In other words, baseball became the national pastime during the nineteenth century, and maintained that status into the first decades of the twentieth, because it provided for the identities of various social groups while reflecting larger trends in the nation, which further reinforced the ability of Americans to see their own experiences in the sport. However, it should be remembered that the notion of the “national pastime” was always a contingent one, embodying a vision of the nation that was only available to some and that predominantly appealed to and reflected the experiences of certain groups of Americans.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GAME: URBAN PRIDE AND BROTHERHOOD

In the periods leading up to and following the Civil War, more and more organized baseball teams began to appear. These teams were amateur in almost every sense of the word, but their creation reflected trends in

mid- to late nineteenth-century American society, and they formed the basis for the eventual professionalization of baseball. Baseball's growth was fueled by needs for fraternity and order, engendered by the urbanization of American society and the subsequent emergence of white-collar occupations tied to growing governmental and corporate bureaucracies.

Baseball found popularity in East Coast cities around midcentury with two separate groups of males: a subset of the petite bourgeoisie and young boys. Men who found themselves working as clerks, craftsmen, artisans, and lawyers, as well as some in the working class, played baseball with increasing enthusiasm in the mid-nineteenth century. They played in the afternoons and evenings in city parks, a short distance away from where they labored in urban centers. A few things marked this group of men. For one thing, their occupations had irregular schedules, giving them time to play baseball when there was still enough light to see the ball.⁵ Few worked at demanding physical jobs, so they were not exhausted when they arrived at the field. Moreover, playing baseball was just part of belonging to a larger fraternal order. Baseball teams were the central node of social clubs that were as devoted to eating, drinking, and holding dances as they were to playing the game. For those men "unmarried and living away from home in impersonal boardinghouses, [baseball supplied] . . . excitement, opportunities to display their individual physical skill, companionship, and a sense of belonging."⁶ Alienated by urban life and without families or other means of social belonging, baseball offered men an identity as a member of a team and fraternal order.

Baseball exploded in popularity in the 1880s, prompted by the existence of an entire generation of men who had grown up both playing and watching the game. Ronald Story argues that, for boys growing up in the mid-nineteenth century, baseball essentially constituted a youth culture. Boys played because baseball provided for their particular social and psychological needs: the opportunity to demonstrate physical prowess in a structured form, comradeship in an alienating and chaotic urban environment, and the chance for individual accomplishment and recognition within a communal framework. Story writes that "[p]laying serious baseball was often the best, if not the only way for boys to see their names in print . . . rosters and lineups, and box scores later, publicly acknowledged players' existence not only as *belonging* persons but as *persons*."⁷ In other words, during an era when the existence of both the working class and adolescents was barely acknowledged, baseball at least gave boys a chance to receive accolades and peer recognition. Even Babe Ruth's childhood experiences spoke to baseball's power for generations of urban boys:

Barely seven years old, after running feral in the streets of Baltimore, already fond of beer, whiskey, chewing tobacco, and small larcenies, he [Ruth] was newly arrived behind the barred walls of St. Mary's Industrial School. Even the toughest seven-year-old thug must have felt lost and scared among all those older, bigger boys. He turned to baseball. . . . To those hundreds of wild, cooped-up kids, the game offered fun and status, order and release.⁸

As participation in baseball grew, so too did its prospects as a spectator amusement. Some of the fraternal teams and players became skilled enough to charge admission to see games, and those boys who had grown up playing wanted to continue watching as adults. Of course the increase in leisure time and disposable income of a larger part of the population aided in turning baseball into a spectator sport. It became one of a number of spectator amusements available to late nineteenth-century patrons, including prizefighting, vaudeville and minstrel theater, and proto-cinematic spectacles like the diorama and magic lantern slideshow. In effect, these entertainments moved the public sphere from the saloon, coffeehouse, and public square into entertainment halls and newly built baseball stadiums. By the 1920s the twin popularity of baseball and cinema had established spectatorship as the predominant public mode of amusement in the United States.

In addition to providing urban men and boys with a source of comradeship and urban audiences with an entertaining spectacle, baseball in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave urban residents a sense of civic pride at a time of great mobility and demographic shifts. Industrialization brought a mass of new residents to northern cities, fleeing declining opportunities in agriculture for increasing ones in factory work. These included a large influx of African Americans from the rural South, as well as numerous European immigrants. Culture and language clashed in cities like Boston, New York, and Baltimore. Once professionalized, baseball teams came to represent cities rather than just fraternal societies, occupational guilds, or company employees.⁹ As a result, teams could provide a nexus for identity centered on place instead of specialized group membership. As early as 1870, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* took considerable pride in the local team's victory over Cincinnati, the best team of the day. Most telling was the accusation of mercenariness on the part of "the organization which chooses to call itself Cincinnati's, but which, in membership, as in repute, belongs to the four quarters of the country" juxtaposed against "a Brooklyn victory won by Brooklyn boys . . . [who]

represented all that was subtle in the science, all that was brave in the spirit and all that was bounding in the blood of Brooklyn.”¹⁰ In 1888 the *New York Times* published a defense of baseball against a “number of intelligent and respectable citizens of New York [who] are daily disgusted at the evidence of the interest taken . . . in the game of baseball.”¹¹ The author pointed out that no other force had generated more local pride in the city than baseball, a significant achievement given that “there is no city in the world that is more deficient in public spirit than New-York [sic].”¹² Baseball was a unifying force in the late nineteenth century: not only did it bring together boys and men who sought an identity in large, anonymous cities, but with its establishment as a spectator sport, baseball provided a means to bring urban residents together with feelings of civic pride in their team’s accomplishments.

However, even while baseball united amateur players and later, urban audiences seeking entertainment, professional baseball in the late nineteenth century created antagonisms among baseball players themselves. As in many other occupations, the professionalization of baseball created high barriers of entry.¹³ Moreover, professional leagues required a high level of capital investment, making players subordinate to various magnates who could afford the costs of stadium building, travel, organization, and administration necessary to accommodate paying crowds and a league structure. To control the costs of player salaries, which quickly became the largest expense in owning a professional team, proprietors in the National League, American Association, and Northwestern League signed an agreement in 1883 establishing the reserve clause.¹⁴ The clause allowed teams to “reserve” a handful of players, meaning that no other team could negotiate a contract with them in the off-season; teams were prevented from bidding against one another for the services of star players, thus driving up player salaries and cutting into the owners’ profit margins. The players, in other words, could only contract with the team holding them in reserve, abolishing any leverage they might have in negotiations. Eventually the reserve clause expanded to include almost every member on a team’s roster.

In combating the reserve clause and other unfair practices, baseball players took part in the widespread labor disputes occurring across the country. While baseball players had better pay and working conditions than, say, railroad workers on the Pullman trains, they still rightly felt exploited by their employers and sought improvements in their contracts.¹⁵ Led by John M. Ward, president of the Brotherhood of Ball Players, a number of players and their backers formed the Players’ League. The war

of words between Ward and the National League, led by Albert Spalding, relied on arguments common during that period of industrial labor strife. Ward accused the owners of being, in essence, greedy capitalists, asserting that "there was a time when the League stood for integrity and fair dealing; to-day it stands for dollars and cents."¹⁶ The National League, in response, cast the players as ingrates and invented sinister motives for the Brotherhood, drawing on anti-union rhetoric.¹⁷ Ultimately the Players' League lasted only one season before its investors were bought out by the National League, proving, as in many other instances during the Gilded Age, that money trumped ethical labor practices.

THE PROMISE AND LIE OF THE NATIONAL PASTIME: CELEBRITY, MEDIA, AND ASSIMILATION

Part of baseball's great success was a matter of timing: the mass media and their methods of publicity worked to build the game's popularity and produce its celebrity figures. During the nineteenth century American newspapers underwent massive growth, as both the number of newspapers and their circulation increased. With newspapers looking to appeal to ever greater readership, reporting on baseball became an obvious solution. Baseball teams already used advertising in papers to challenge other teams during the early "fraternity" phase of the game; the link between the growth of baseball and the circulation of newspapers was already well established by the time the game was professionalized.

Once it became a topic of regular reportage, baseball's best and most colorful players naturally became local, and eventually national, celebrities. Already by 1862, the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported on the untimely death of James P. Creighton, who supposedly died due to injuries sustained while playing. Although the funeral notice was tinged with irony, the *Eagle* reported that his burial was attended "by a large number of friends and relatives," no doubt because "[t]here are few who have not heard of Mr. Creighton."¹⁸

Two decades later, baseball had its first national celebrity, Mike "King" Kelly, who was not only handsome and friendly, but also popular for his "innovative circumvention of the rulebook."¹⁹ Kelly is credited, perhaps falsely, with inventing a number of now common strategies, including sliding. His fame was a product of the time in which he played; not only was it supported by newspaper coverage and the emergent publicity mechanism of the baseball card, but he became a vaudeville performer and the subject of a popular music hit, "Slide, Kelly, Slide," and was perhaps the

inspiration for the arrogant titular character in Ernest Thayer's famous poem "Casey at the Bat." Kelly was so beloved in Boston that fans there reportedly bought him a horse to ride on his way to the ballpark.²⁰ Of course, Kelly was of Irish descent, and Boston was a heavily Irish city; thus, Kelly's popularity was due not only to his gregarious personality and skill in aiding the Boston team, but to his ethnicity. Ethnic pride mixed with fandom, civic honor, and celebrity, establishing a pattern for coming decades.

The techniques of publicity associated with baseball—primarily newspaper reports and picture baseball cards—were honed by the turn of the century, as was the public's appetite for celebrity. The early part of the twentieth century saw baseball become fully integrated into American popular culture. Baseball was the subject of poetry, prose, and a previously unprecedented level of sports journalism.²¹ A number of baseball-related songs were recorded and became best sellers during the first decades of the century.²² The lasting impact of such publicity mechanisms is clear; while contemporary baseball fans may not know about King Kelly, almost all have heard of luminaries of the 1910s like Honus Wagner and Ty Cobb.²³

In the 1920s and 1930s radio broadcasts of baseball added to the mystique surrounding games, inaugurating a "Golden Age" in which players were mythic characters, unlike any before or since. As Benjamin G. Rader writes, radio fueled fans' imaginations:

While remaining loyal to the basic facts, the announcers could add drama by resorting to hyperbole or altering the rhythm and inflection of their deliveries. . . . Because listeners could not see what was happening, they were free to take liberties with the content of what they heard on radio. Rather than visualizing the shortstop merely stopping a routine ground ball, the listener might imagine that it had been a hard smash, or an ordinary fly ball might be transformed into a long drive.²⁴

The radio era was the period when baseball could truly call itself the "national pastime," the most popular sport in the country. Radio enabled fans who lived far from the ballpark, or who couldn't afford to attend a game in person, to hear and experience live baseball. Urban and rural audiences united around big city teams; "[l]ocal teams were no longer, strictly speaking, local; they became the 'property' of entire regions of the country."²⁵ Baseball on the radio also aided baseball stars in becoming national celebrities: not only did more people hear about a player's exploits in real

time, but endorsement opportunities increased for players in their home markets and, eventually, nationally.²⁶

No one better embodied the growing celebrity of baseball players and their transformation during the 1920s into mythic heroes than Babe Ruth. By the time Ruth established himself as a player, celebrity culture was in full swing in the United States. Film stars and musicians, in addition to athletes, were nationally recognized. In an increasingly mass-mediated society, celebrities became bigger than life idols upon which the public projected their desires and confirmed their assumptions about American society. Ruth fulfilled those roles nicely, rising from poverty to success and adopting the persona of a big kid playing a beloved game. He was known for his hearty appetite and penchant for vice, but famously endeared himself to children and seemed to genuinely enjoy their company. Ruth also parlayed and extended his fame through endorsements and guest appearances, the same methods contemporary athletes use to build their celebrity brands.²⁷ Numerous apocryphal stories about Ruth emerged during his playing career and persist today, including his "called shot" in the 1932 World Series and his fulfilled promise to hit a home run for a sick New Jersey boy. He became so famous that, more so than perhaps any prominent American of the 1920s and 1930s, Ruth's name and appearance are still recognized by many Americans, more than 60 years after his death.²⁸

Steven Riess has demonstrated that, beginning at the turn of the century, the class status of baseball players demonstrably increased. Unlike in the nineteenth century, when baseball playing was considered a questionable profession, in the early twentieth century baseball players were increasingly drawn from the ranks of the middle class. Many had some college education and were raised by fathers from professional and skilled occupations. Riess concludes that "professional baseball . . . was greatly overrated as a source of upward mobility during the Progressive Era," especially for recent immigrant groups like Italians, Jews, and Slavs.²⁹

However, the celebrity status of various players helped establish the acceptability of immigrant groups in the United States. In other words, baseball aided in the assimilation of European ethnic groups into American society. During the 1880s and 1890s, a period when the Irish were subjected to discrimination, many players were of Irish descent, including the famous and beloved King Kelly. Honus Wagner's clearly German name and ancestry did not prevent him from achieving stardom in a country wary of non-Anglos. Wagner even played through part of the First World War, when vicious anti-German propaganda circulated around the

country. In the 1920s and 1930s, Tony Lazzeri and later Joe DiMaggio were among the most famous Italian Americans in the country. DiMaggio in particular helped engender wider acceptance of Italian Americans when many looked at Mussolini and Al Capone and considered Italians thugs and gangsters.³⁰ He not only served in the armed forces during the war, but also dated famous actresses, including Marilyn Monroe, and became a staple of New York high society. Similarly, Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers suffered through anti-Semitism while demonstrating that Jews were as much a part of America's game as anyone else.

The celebrity of baseball players promoted the game itself, making it one of the premier entertainments of the 1920s and 1930s; it also encouraged the acceptance of some ethnic groups. However, there were still two large segments of the American populace who were shut out of the glory and fame showered on baseball stars: African Americans and women.

THE IRONY OF THE FULFILLED PROMISE: BREAKING COLOR, GENDER, AND GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

While baseball enabled white ethnic groups to integrate more easily into American society during the first half of the twentieth century, the African American experience with baseball was the opposite. In its early decades, professional baseball seemed to grudgingly accept the integration of blacks into American life that marked the period of Reconstruction. While racism still marred much of American society, the mood of Reconstruction, which produced a short-lived period of black legislators, for example, carried over into baseball. African Americans would sometimes play with white teammates, and occasionally all-black teams would have matches against white teams. Incidents of racism were predictably and unfortunately common during this brief period of integration. For example, during a minor league match between a Cleveland team visiting Louisville in 1881, the Louisville Eclipse refused to play when Moses Fleetwood Walker, Cleveland's black catcher, took the field.³¹ Five years later, *Sporting Life* reported that "New York has been seriously considering the engagement of Stovey, Jersey City's fine colored pitcher" but asked "would the League permit his appearance in League championship games?"³²

The "color line" barring black players from the most visible and profitable Major Leagues was not instituted until 1887, and even then it was not an official policy or league rule, but merely a "gentlemen's agreement" among league owners not to employ black players. The establishment of the color line coincided with the passage of many Jim Crow laws in

southern states after the withdrawal of Union troops that marked the end of Reconstruction. To its continued shame, baseball imitated the mainstream of American society in the post-Reconstruction period. As in other social realms, baseball preferred to bar African Americans from participation, in effect forcing them to build their own parallel, separate culture.

While the mainstream of professional baseball failed black players, many still took to the game. At the start of the twentieth century, black baseball teams were an established part of urban communities, sustained by large black populations that had their own neighborhoods and a separate economy.³³ In 1920, with the establishment of the Negro National League, a series of Major Leagues featuring black players, collectively known as the "Negro Leagues," took root around the country. The Negro Leagues represented a level of play on par with Major League Baseball (MLB), but because of the contingent nature of being an enforced subculture, they never enjoyed the stability and financial success of the MLB and its affiliates.

With the creation of the Negro Leagues, fans could consistently see black players perform at the highest level of play. The Leagues provided African Americans with heroic idols at a time when mainstream culture denied them any positive representation at all. The Negro Leagues of the 1920s and 1930s featured many of the greatest black players of all time, including Oscar Charleston, Cool Papa Bell, and Josh Gibson.³⁴ To many commentators, the Negro Leagues demonstrated that African American athletic and cultural achievement was equal to that of white mainstream culture.³⁵

Women were also excluded from baseball's mainstream during the sport's Golden Age. The only prominent woman involved with professional baseball in its early decades was Helen Britton, who owned the St. Louis Cardinals from 1911 to 1916, and although some college teams were formed in the nineteenth century, women were mostly relegated to spectatorship. A great many accounts of early professional games note the presence of women in the stands. When the National League formed in 1876, one of its goals was to provide standards of conduct, both on the field and in the crowds, to meet the approval of Victorian society.³⁶ What that meant was creating sufficient propriety for women to attend the games. The League was only partially successful; at the turn of the century, there were still complaints of "obscene language" and rowdy behavior driving women away from games.³⁷

However, some of the most famous baseball fans during the Golden Age were women, including Mary Ott for the Cardinals, Lolly Hopkins for the Red Sox, and Hilda Chester for the Dodgers. As well known as

these women were to players and other fans, however, Stephen Fox notes that women made up only 10 percent of baseball crowds in the 1910s. The number rose to 35 percent by the 1980s, so we can probably estimate women constituting perhaps one-fifth to one-quarter of the spectators during the Golden Age.³⁸ Still, despite the fame of some female fans and the growing presence of women in the stands, there were few outlets for women to play baseball, and women who did attend games were still marginalized and condescended to by both players and other fans alike.

Ironically, when baseball was finally poised to fulfill its potential as the national pastime, its popularity and cultural relevance waned. Jackie Robinson's heroic challenge to the color line in 1947 all but ended the practice of barring African Americans from the MLB. Teams quickly noticed Robinson's impact on the field and at the gates for the Dodgers and raided the Negro Leagues for players. While this ended the heinous practice of exclusion, it also resulted in the destruction of the Negro Leagues, which for years had provided African Americans with a sense of pride and represented a business established by African Americans for the benefit of black communities.³⁹

The establishment of women's professional leagues during the Second World War also provided women with the chance to play baseball. Most prominent among these was the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which lasted from 1943 to 1954. During the league's early years, it drew as many fans as the MLB.⁴⁰ These leagues, like the larger integration of women into the workforce during the war, demonstrated that women had an important role to play in public life and in the labor force. Around the same time, softball rose in popularity among women, to the point where women's softball teams became standard at high school and collegiate levels. Though softball is the only "version" of baseball that allows women to compete professionally and on the international stage, through the Olympics, that is a far cry from the days when Henry Chadwick scoffed at the mere thought of "American ladies playing base ball!"⁴¹

Finally, the 1950s saw the MLB become transcontinental for the first time. While minor league baseball had been played in the western states for decades, the departure of the Dodgers from Brooklyn to Los Angeles and the Giants from New York to San Francisco symbolized the growing significance of the West to the American economy and society and a shift of power away from New York as the epicenter of American culture. It was the first time that the MLB, for better or worse the most visible baseball institution and therefore tasked with representing and preserving the game, had spanned the coasts.

In other words, in the 1940s–1950s baseball expanded to include greater numbers of participants, especially at the most prominent professional levels. The professional game's geographic reach increased, and with it the ability to represent and cater to more spectators. However, as baseball was truly becoming national, other spectator sports and leisure activities threatened its popularity and cultural relevance. A more mobile and suburbanized population reduced the identification people had with urban-based teams and reduced opportunities to see baseball games in person. And while television may have mitigated that reduction in opportunity, it also offered a bevy of programming that competed with baseball.

Moreover, other spectator and participatory sports grew in popularity in the postwar period. In the 1920s and 1930s the sporting public's attention was divided among baseball, horse racing, and boxing. After the war, however, the field grew to include, most prominently, football and basketball, but also hockey, professional wrestling, and eventually, soccer. Baseball shrank to occupy a much smaller niche in the attention of the public. There are many possible reasons for this—sheer demographics, the supposed “television friendliness” of football, the relatively leisurely pace of baseball—but explaining that phenomenon is outside the scope of this chapter, although it deserves serious attention and research.

There is a strong case for baseball being the national pastime of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that does not rely on poetic evocations of the game's link to the American character, whatever that may be. During that period, baseball was an immensely popular spectator sport and a significant part of popular culture. Baseball provided Americans with heroic figures whom most of the public knew and related to. Moreover, baseball reflected many of the changes in American society, meaning that it spoke to Americans on a deeper level than just as entertainment. However, its role as the national pastime was circumscribed by the powerful forces of inequality during its history, and ironically, after baseball finally began to fulfill its national promise, its national scope declined.

NOTES

1. For primary source documents pertaining to the creation of the commission and its findings, see Dean A. Sullivan, ed., *Early Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1825–1908* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 279–295 (chapter 8).
2. “Ball Playing among Native Americans (1837),” in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 4–5.

3. "The First Reported Baseball Games between New York City-area Clubs (1845)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 11.
4. See "The New York Base Ball Clubs (1854)" and "Formation of the National Association of Base Ball Players (NAABP) in New York (1857)" in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 19 and 22–23, respectively.
5. Warren Goldstein, "The Baseball Fraternity," in *Baseball History from Outside the Lines*, ed. John E. Dreifort (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 13.
6. Benjamin G. Rader, *Baseball: A History of America's Game*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 13.
7. Ronald Story, "The Country of the Young: The Meaning of Baseball in Early American Culture," in *Baseball History from Outside the Lines*, ed. John E. Dreifort (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 27–28.
8. Stephen Fox, *Big Leagues: Professional Baseball, Football, and Basketball in National Memory* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1994), 48.
9. Goldstein, "The Baseball Fraternity," 13–17.
10. "The Significance of the Defeat of the Red Stockings by Brooklyn (1870)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 79.
11. "Baseball Promotes 'Local Pride' in New York City (1888)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 157.
12. From our perspective, it is hard to imagine such a state of affairs in New York City.
13. The still-existent National League and the powerful American Association were both formed in the 1870s, the same decade when the American Bar Association and the American Chemical Society, for example, were both founded. Professional societies established rules of entry and conduct for specialized occupations, in baseball just as much as in the legal or scientific professions.
14. "The Tripartite Agreement (1883)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 128–130.
15. Rader, *Baseball*, 62.
16. "The 'Brotherhood Manifesto' (1889)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 188.
17. "A History of the Player Revolt from the Owners' Perspective (1890)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 198–201.
18. "The Premature Death of Baseball's First Superstar (1862)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 48.
19. Bill James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 36.
20. Rader, *Baseball*, 55.
21. Dean A. Sullivan, ed., *Middle Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1900–1948* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 35.
22. "Descriptions of Baseball Recordings (1908, 1909)," in Sullivan, *Middle Innings*, 44–47.
23. Of course, Wagner famously refused to allow his likeness to appear on the American Tobacco Company's baseball card of 1909, making the few that

- were printed the most valuable baseball cards in history. The common story goes that Wagner did not want children buying the tobacco the cards were packaged with.
24. Rader, *Baseball*, 175; Tony Silvia devotes an entire chapter to methods used by radio broadcasters to increase the excitement of baseball games and play on their audiences' imaginations in *Baseball Over the Air: The National Pastime on the Radio and in the Imagination* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 35–55 (chapter 2).
 25. Silvia, *Baseball Over the Air*, 25.
 26. *Ibid.*, 21.
 27. Rader, *Baseball*, 133–135.
 28. For more on Ruth's life, career, and celebrity status, see chapter 10 on Ruth, by Gina Anne Conley, in this volume.
 29. Steven A. Riess, "Professional Baseball and Social Mobility," in *Baseball History from Outside the Lines*, ed. John E. Dreifort (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 35.
 30. Richard Ben Cramer, *Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 100–102.
 31. "Prejudice against an African American Player in Louisville (1881)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 117–118.
 32. "Baseball 'Notes and Comments' (1886)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 141.
 33. Lawrence D. Hogan, *Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006), 154–156.
 34. Many baseball historians and scholars claim that Gibson was the greatest catcher to play in *any* league in professional history.
 35. Hogan, *Shades of Glory*, 156–160.
 36. Rader, *Baseball*, 50.
 37. "The Brush Purification Plan (1898)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 240.
 38. Fox, *Big Leagues*, 74–78.
 39. Hogan, *Shades of Glory*, 376–377.
 40. Rader, *Baseball*, 173.
 41. "The Ancient History of Base Ball (1867)," in Sullivan, *Early Innings*, 61.

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