

BABE RUTH

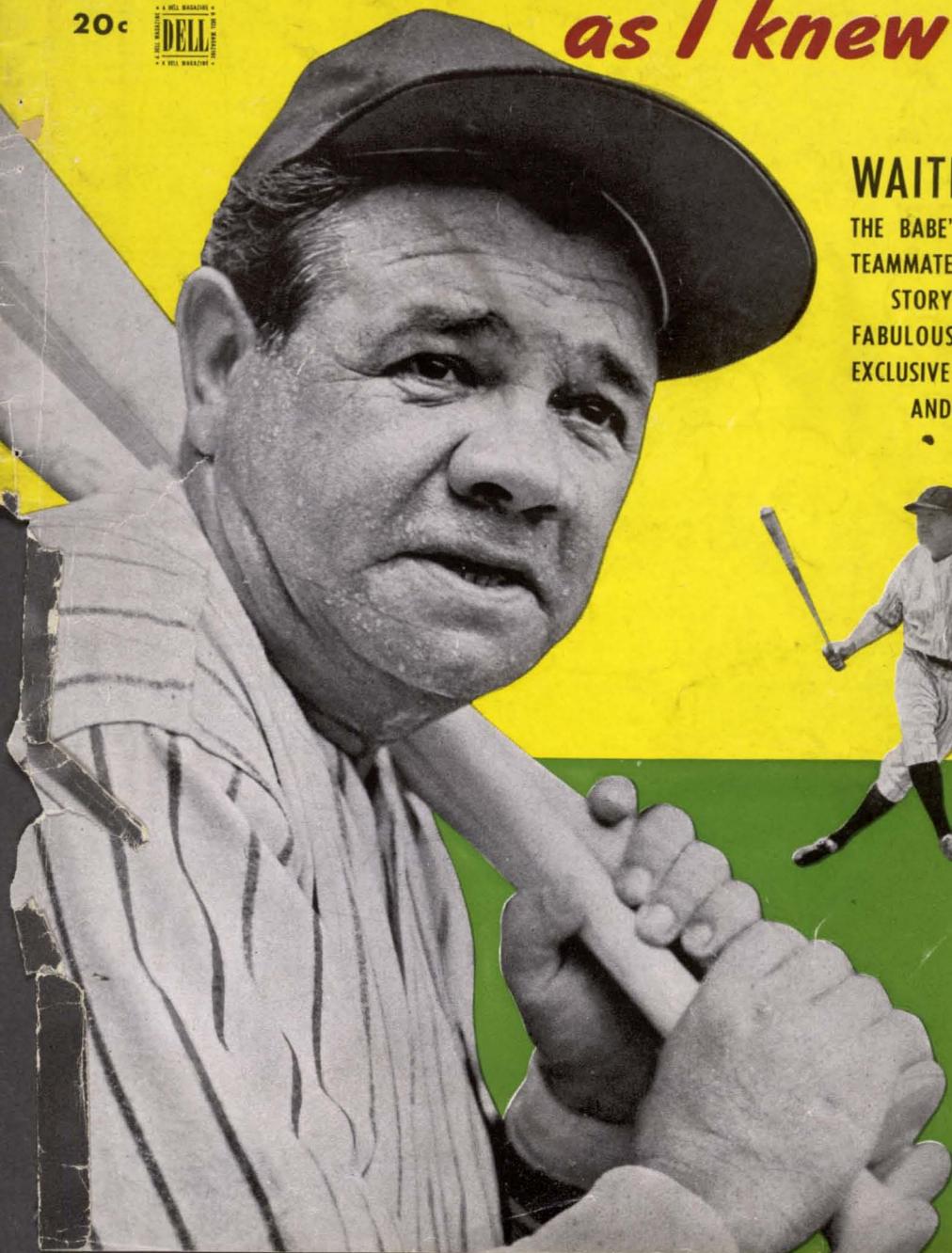
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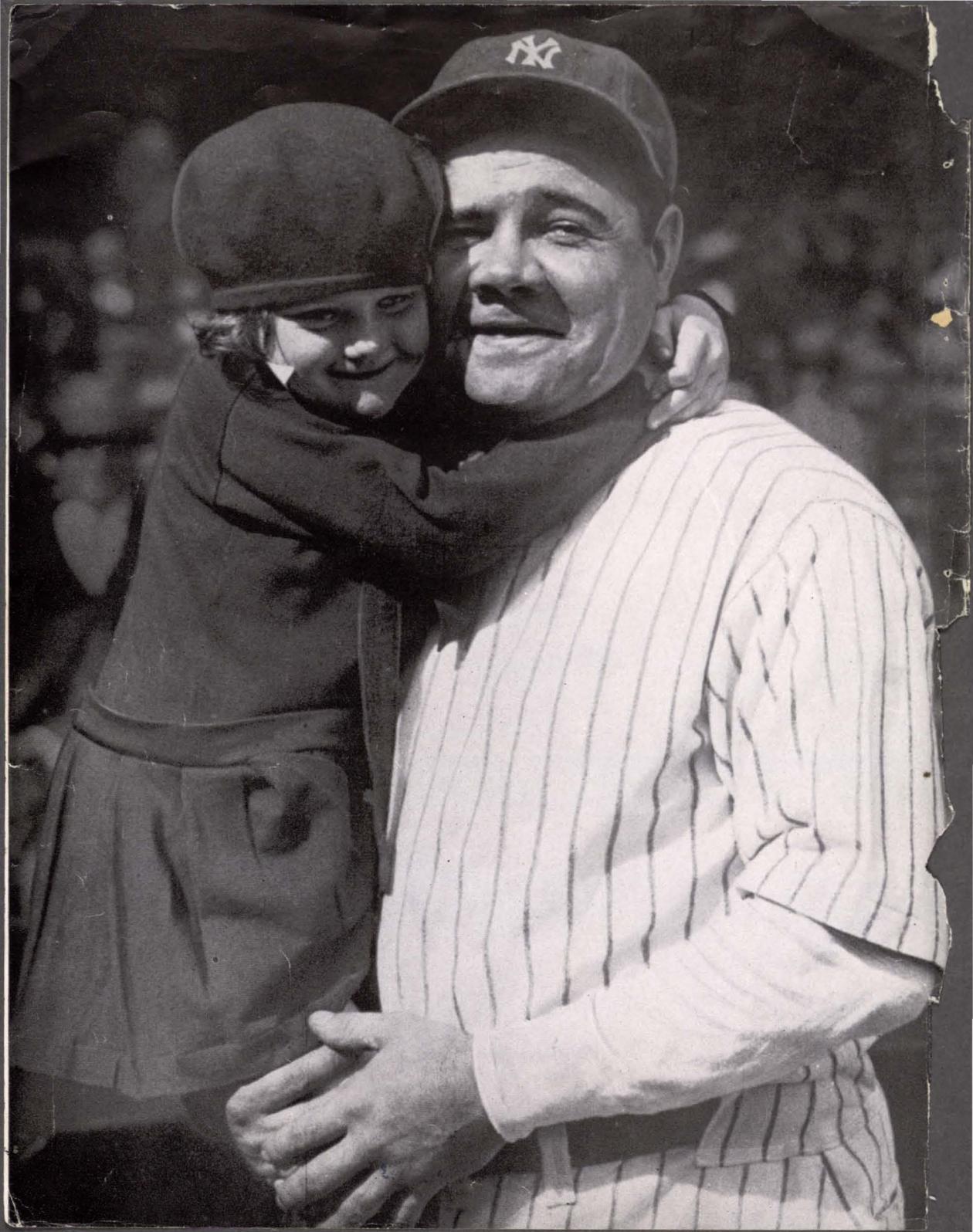
• HILL MANAGER •
DELL
• HILL MANAGER •

as I knew him

BY

WAITE HOYT,
THE BABE'S FRIEND AND
TEAMMATE; AN INTIMATE
STORY OF RUTH'S
FABULOUS CAREER WITH
EXCLUSIVE PHOTOGRAPHS
AND RECORDS





BABE RUTH

AS I KNEW HIM—BY WAITE HOYT



Waite Hoyt, now sportscaster and radio director of station WCPO Cincinnati, spent fifteen years playing on the same diamond with Babe Ruth. A great ball-player himself, Hoyt was top pitcher of the 1927 Yankee World Champions with a record of 22 games won, 7 lost.

• I MET Babe Ruth for the first time in late July, 1919. There was nothing unusual in the meeting. It was the routine type of introduction accorded all baseball players joining a new team. I had just reported to the Boston Red Sox and was escorted around the clubhouse meeting all the boys. McInnis, Shannon, Scott, Hooper, Jones, Bush and the rest. Ed Barrow, the manager, was making the introductions and when we reached Ruth's locker, the Babe was pulling on his baseball socks. His huge head bent toward the floor, his black, shaggy, curly hair dripping downward like a bottle of spilled ink.

Ed Barrow said, "Babe, look here a minute."

Babe sat up. He turned that big, boyish, homely face in my direction. For a second I was startled. I sensed that this man was something different than the others I had met. It might have been his wide, flaring nostrils, his great bulbous nose, his generally unique appearance—the early physical formation which later became so familiar to the American public. But now I prefer to believe it was merely a sixth sense which told me I was meeting someone beyond the usual type of ball player.

I learned later that Ruth's indifference to formality was part of his charm, out of which has grown so many unforgettable stories. Had I known this at the time, I would have understood when he casually said, "Pretty young to be in the big league, aren't you, kid?"

Knowing something of his history, I replied, "Yep—same age you were when you came up, Babe."

By that time Ruth had turned back to dressing. I was talking to the back of his head.

In 1919 Ruth was not yet a full-blown star. For the four previous years he had been a standout lefthanded pitcher for the Red Sox, as widely known as Hal Newhouser, of Detroit, is today. He had pitched in two World Series, 1916 and 1918. In 1916, against Brooklyn, he distinguished himself in World Series play by pitching 29 consecutive scoreless innings.

However, Babe had shown evidences of becoming a powerhouse slugger and Ed Barrow wanted Ruth's dynamite in the regular Boston lineup. So 1919 became the year of the Great Experiment—the Great Conversion. By the time I reached Fenway Park, the experiment was considered a success. Ruth was playing regularly in left field and was justifying Barrow's gamble.

In those formative years with the Red Sox, Ruth's antics were looked upon as huge jokes. His utter failure to remember places, people and incidents was refreshing material for humor in the clubhouse. The ball players told with glee how in the 1918 World Series against the Cubs, Ruth was ordered to "brush off" Leslie Mann, a rugged right handed batter. Ruth not only forgot the identity of Leslie Mann but went the orders one better. He hit little Max Flack with a pitched ball, and later told his manager, "I got Mann for you, didn't I?"

Not long after I had joined the Red Sox, Ruth was assigned to one of his already infrequent hurling chores. He was to pitch against Ty Cobb & Co., of Detroit. In the clubhouse before the game, Ed Barrow called a meeting to study the weaknesses of the Detroit batting order. Barrow handed Ruth the score card and waited for Ruth to begin his analysis. Ruth looked over the Detroit batting order. Bush, Veach, Cobb, Heilman, Jones—they

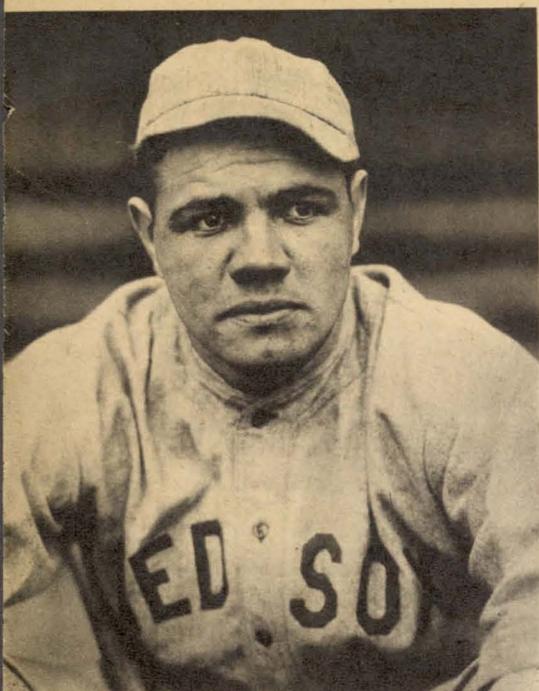
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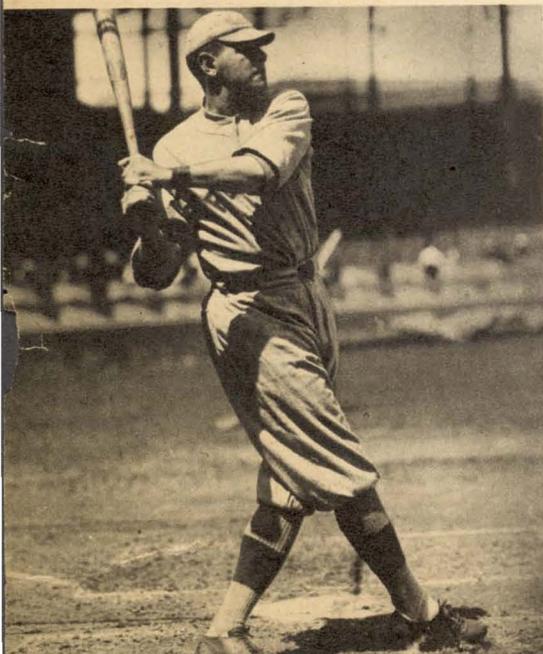
← Left: Babe hugs daughter Dorothy after slugging one of his early home runs during World Series.

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Though he had pitched in two World Series for Boston—1916 and 1918—Babe in 1919 was not yet a headline star.



When Babe made the switch from pitcher to slugger, he gained weight; biceps swelled, wrists grew stronger.

all got one and the same treatment. Ruth chanted in a rapid monotone, "I'll pitch high inside and low outside. High inside and low outside. High inside and low outside."

Barrow ended the tortuous ritual in a hurry saying, "Aw, forget it, Babe. Just go out and beat 'em." Babe did.

Such was Ruth. He was not an ordinary ball player.

I came to know him intimately for twenty-nine years, first as a teammate, then as an opponent, and finally as a friend. It seemed to me Ruth's entire life was predestined. How else can you explain the meteoric rise from anonymity at St. Mary's Industrial School to heights never before or since attained by a baseball player?

Athletes such as Bill Tilden, Jim Thorpe, Jack Dempsey, Bobby Jones, Honus Wagner, Ty Cobb, Joe Louis and Jesse Owen have known the respect and adulation of the special clientele to which their sport appealed. But those gentlemen were outstanding because of athletic prowess measured in terms of statistics and championships.

Babe Ruth was Champion of Champions.

His history was not merely a list of baseball feats, but one which, uncontrolled by Ruth, served first to revive a game looked upon after the 1919 Black Sox scandal with nasty suspicion. Secondly, the force of his bat, and the power of his personality revolutionized the industry, bringing baseball out of the stereotyped doldrums into the flash and brilliance of a high-level entertainment loved by men, women and children alike. Ruth won for baseball its Number One position in American sports. He did it all with a large bat, a homely face, a warming charm, a bad boy complex, an inherent love for his fellow men, an almost ludicrous indifference to convention and a personal magnetism more irresistible than the flute to the cobra.

I have always felt Ruth was a man with a mission, although I am sure Ruth was never conscious of the important role he was playing. Later when his mission had been fulfilled and he sat in his trophy room on Riverside Drive, Babe may have looked through his scrapbook and studied the millions of words his career inspired. But his attitude on the field was always that of a boy lost in the pleasure of his play. No thought of overstaying his time, no regard for the consequences. He played baseball as if to say, "Gee, ain't this fun? And to think you get paid for it!"

IN BOSTON, Babe began his development, not only as the slugger supreme, but expanded physically and mentally and culturally as well. It was as if the whole structure of the man began some sort of metamorphosis. With each home run he gained new confidence—new stature.

Even his body began to change. As a pitcher he had weighed about 185 pounds and stood six feet two inches. He took on weight. His wrists grew stronger. His biceps enlarged. His physical endowments changed to suit the new pattern.

No one I have ever met looked like Babe Ruth. His moon face was in itself an advertisement. Very few people have considered the facial contours of the Babe, yet it was one of his most important assets. His homeliness was classic. No one failed to recognize Ruth, no matter where he was. He was the cartoonists' dream and, of course, profited thereby. The name "Babe" fitted him like a lastex girdle. "Babe" was an easy word to roll out, coupled with "Ruth" was easy on the ears, eyes and tongue. His actions were in perfect keeping with his name.

Ruth's life can be divided in four separate phases. His early days in St. Mary's, his first years in baseball, his stardom and his life after retirement. He made many discoveries. Lacking parental guidance and without the experimental freedom necessary to the developing child, Ruth reached the big league compelled to create his own personality. It was necessary for the Babe to establish his own values—to form his own estimates of people, things and situations.

If anyone had explained the value of a dollar to the Babe the explanation was wasted. Money and fame came too quickly, and



Ruth and Leonard pitched for the Red Sox in 1915. Babe was the top southpaw hurler. Also on the squad were Foster, Mays and Shore (above).

in the beginning, Ruth was wholly at a loss to understand how to deal with the pressures this fantastic fame was forcing upon him. He was like a kid who has never been allowed candy and is suddenly presented with a truckload. Baseball was the instrument which pried off the lid to his treasure chest. And he just wasn't prepared for it. He made mistakes. Some serious. Some silly. But his progress was always forward.

Ruth, in the summer of 1919, was the big laughing boy—delighted with his job like a kid on Christmas morning. Everything was a surprise. People loved him. Forgave him. On he went rollicking to new heights, to new adventures.

Before Babe Ruth, home runs had been a scarce commodity in baseball. Ruth began supplying the item with astonishing regularity. Word of the new sensation spread. Sports writers stared at the records as Babe's totals mounted. The historians discovered that Ed Williamson of the Chicago Cubs of 1884 had blasted 27. Gabby Cravath of the Phils had clouted 24 in 1915. By September, Ruth had passed the twenty mark and was creeping up on Cravath. Soon he was by Gabby and sneaking up on Williamson.

Part of Babe's charm during that period was his utter unconsciousness of the sensation he was causing. In the clubhouse he was the practical joker, sawing off bats, clowning, telling wild tales

of his excursions the night before. The world was a glamorous package tied with a pink ribbon for the Babe—a personal present to Mr. Ruth.

After he hit his twenty-sixth homer, and seemed likely to tie and pass all major league marks in that department of slugging, the City of Boston, in co-operation with the Knights of Columbus, decided to give him a "day."

September 20th, 1919, was the day set aside for the honoring of the big, overgrown youngster who was standing the baseball world on its ears. A double header was scheduled with the famed Chicago White Sox, later to become infamous because of the crooked dealings in the 1919 World Series. Nevertheless, the White Sox were a great ball club, with Jackson, Collins, Schalk, Risberg, Weaver, Cicotte, Kerr and Williams. Williams was a left-handed pitcher, a good one, a fellow who could thread a needle with any pitch. Pants Rowland selected him to pitch the first game. The White Sox were pennant bound. They fought. They hustled. The first game was tied when the ninth inning came up. Williams retired the first two Red Sox batters.

Ruth strode to the plate. The fans were calling for a home run. It was one of the first occasions on which fans exhibited a real belief in the potentiality of their hero. Fans had always



Babe always used to eat a very exacting pre-game luncheon. The menu: a couple of hot dogs and a mug of bicarbonate of soda.

The Yankees paid about \$108,000 for Ruth's transfer. At first he objected to being traded, but a \$20,000 contract changed his mind.



called for home runs but most of the time their demands had been born of desperation rather than hope.

Ruth justified their faith that day by walloping a long home run over the LEFT FIELD FENCE off Williams, a LEFTHANDED PITCHER. The magnitude of that feat will be lost on the newer fans today, but back in 1919 it was nothing short of colossal. Left-handed batters just did not hit home runs off lefthanded pitchers over the left field wall. After the game, the Chicago White Sox players, who had not yet been touched by the taint of crookedness, crowded the Boston clubhouse shaking hands with Ruth, yelling congratulations, shouting, "How'd you do it, big boy? Where'd you get that drive?" Even the losing pitcher, Lefty Williams, came in to express his horrified disbelief to the Babe.

The City of Boston had picked a good day to honor Ruth. It was that homer which tied Ed Williamson's great record of 27, and Babe became a greater hero over night. He had given his first real demonstration of the uncanny opportunist he was to become—the Babe just naturally delivered in the clutch.

We, his teammates, began to halt in our practice to watch the big fellow at the plate. The baseball grapevine was buzzing excitedly—a new giant was among us! Players, fans, reporters—all watched the phenomenon.

Williamson's record was tied—now we wondered if he could break it. He broke it September 24, 1919, in New York. We played the Yankees that day. I was the Boston pitcher. I allowed the Yankees one run in the first inning. Bob Shawkey was my pitching opponent. After the first inning, Shawkey and I battled it out. Bob held us until the ninth inning. In the ninth, Babe strode to the plate listening to the good-natured ribbing of the New York fans.

"Y're so good," they yelled, "see if you can hit a homer now." The Babe answered them with one of the longest homers hit before or since. The ball sailed over the roof of the right field grandstand and landed in a field back of the historic ball park. Joe Jackson had once hit a homer on the roof but Ruth was the first one to clear it. His blow tied the score.

The game went overtime. In the twelfth inning, the Yankee first baseman, Wally Pipp, tripled with one out. Derrill Pratt scored him with a long fly and we were beaten 2-1.

Although they won, the Yankees had not had a man reach first base between the first and the twelfth inning. That meant I had pitched ten perfect innings of baseball. It was my first year in the big league. Naturally, being young and eager, I devoured all the praise I could. I could hardly wait for the next morning's news stories. Despite the defeat, I thought some praiseworthy mention would be made of my ten perfect innings. Then I had my first lesson in the cost of playing with the world's greatest ball player. Quite properly the headlines screamed the news of Babe's cracking the home run record. Vivid descriptions of his 28th homer clearing the grandstand roof. But no mention of me. Down at the end of the piece one line was given to the Boston pitcher.

It said, "Hoyt pitched for Boston."

I was to know another version of that incident in after years, again Ruth's teammate. As our Yankee ball club pulled into four cities, the sports pages would say, "Ruth and twenty-four other ball players arrived in town today."

THIS WAS the price we paid playing with the big fellow—but it was worth it. Babe returned it to us ten times over, and none of us who played with him would ever trade that experience for all the headlines in the country.

Those days in Boston were merely conditioners for the Babe. It was as though he were in a baseball prep school. He dressed carelessly, acted carelessly, lived from day to day. It never dawned on Ruth there were still other worlds to conquer. On days off in Boston, he was still the kid. He went fishing with Everett Scott. He and his first wife, Helen, played cards at the homes

of the other players. Babe was unmannered and uninhibited. He was completely undisciplined and didn't care to change.

He was not at all conscious of the tremendous responsibility his future position of baseball idol would bring. He ran rampant though the glorious days and nights. We all wondered how long it would last.

IF BOSTON had been his baseball prep school he graduated with honors and entered the College Of Experience in New York. In the winter of 1919-1920, Harry Frazee, the Boston owner, short of cash for his theatrical enterprises, sold Babe to the Yankees for about \$108,000. The purchase price was another feather in Ruth's cap, for in those days, such a king's ransom for a baseball player was unheard of. Ruth at first objected to the transfer. He had felt secure in Boston. New York was a huge, forbidding place. Ruth always said New York cost him so much dough he couldn't afford to live there. A \$20,000 season's contract changed his mind.

So Ruth became an opponent of mine for a year. In that 1920 season I pitched against him twice. I was sick most of the summer and didn't pitch regularly, but on July 25th, I faced Ruth in the Polo Grounds. I had reasoned the only way to stop him was to make him supply his own power. I threw him a high looping slow ball. Today, Rip Sewell of the Pirates calls the same pitch the "bloopier ball." Ruth booped my scientific pitch high into the upper deck of the right field grandstand. I became another name on Babe's growing list of victims.

New York was Ruth's laboratory for Great Experiments. His assault on the Big City was as spectacular as his game. Like a cat investigating a new home Ruth visited the gay spots. His exhaustive study of the Manhattan bistros took the form of a scientific investigation. The big town was new to him. It didn't awe him long. That season he belted fifty-four home runs; it was then the writers dubbed him the "Sultan of Swat," "The Mighty Bambino," "Bustem Babe," The "King of Swat."

The first wave of hero worship engulfed him. He was the recipient of a flood of gifts, fan mail and telephone calls. Ruth was busy from the time he awoke until the dreamy hours of morning. They said his pace was too fast. He wouldn't last. The Babe didn't agree. And at the end of the 1920 season he was a bigger hero than ever.

The Yankees did not win the pennant in 1920, and Miller Huggins the manager decided to strengthen the club further. He raided the Boston Red Sox again, and brought down McNally, Harper, Schang and me.

Close to the Babe again, I immediately noticed the change. In Boston he had been a surprised young man—hardly able to assimilate the extravagance of success. Now he was sure of himself. He was developing poise, demanding respect when it was slow to appear voluntarily. He at last realized he was a man apart and above the ordinary ball player.

He requested special considerations in the clubhouse. A pay telephone was installed. There was a waste basket by his locker—his private mail box. Thousands of letters went unanswered, but Ruth liked the receptacle there as a mute testimonial to his popularity. Ruth had discovered money and fame and was using them as instruments for self gratification and pleasure.

But true to the legend that was Ruth, his excesses only fed his ego. Never in Ruth's baseball career was he tormented by conscience, or by the physical distress excesses bring to others. Among baseball players Ruth's hardness in face of late hours and over indulgence was more talked about than his home runs.

It was in 1921 that Ruth's fame penetrated the inner recesses of the social world. Even the Four Hundred of New York became curious. They wanted to know what made the Big Fellow tick.

It became our custom, when Ruth entered the clubhouse, slyly to approach him, look in his eyes and discover the lights of adventure burning there. More often they were merely embers of adventure. One afternoon, we said to him, "Babe you look a

little worn. Where were you last night?"

Babe who was notorious for grammatical boners, replied, "Oh, me? Why I was down to a big place on Fifth Ave. Did we have a time. When we walked in, there was a guy with a green apron on. I said, 'Rack 'em up on table six.' The guy looked surprised, but he handed us a glass of champagne. We didn't bother with glasses after that. Me and a bunch got out back by a fountain. We drank the grape right out of the bottle. We dove in the fountain—dragged each other out by the heels. What a fracas."

"We know all that," we said, "but whose party was it?"

Babe looked confused for a few seconds and then replied, "Well, Mrs. ——— was the hostess and Mr. ——— was the hoster."

Babe's peregrinations in the social world were short lived. He didn't care. He was Ruth and who were they? Babe was always indifferent to the fame and fortunes of others. People were people. Why should he worry about them. In his philosophy, they were all fine. Everybody was a "good fellow." But as for their reputations, their troubles, that was their business. Anyway, they couldn't hit home runs.

When Marshal Foch, the Commander of all the Allied forces of World War One, visited here in 1921, he was received in New York with open arms. The usual reception at City Hall. Ticker tape and confetti floated from the office windows. It was summer, and Marshal Foch had been persuaded to attend his first baseball game. The Yankees were then still tenants of the Polo Grounds and it was the Yankee team which was to play host to the world-famous hero. At two forty-five, the motor cavalcade

bearing the Marshal drew near the Polo Grounds. The park was bedecked with French and American Flags. The stands were crowded. The line of autos came through the center field gates. The band played the Star Spangled Banner and the Marseillaise. The crowd rose to its feet. As Marshal Foch alighted from his motor car and stepped into Col. Ruppert's private box, the players lined up at attention to one side of the Yankee bench. He was attired in a powder blue French uniform, with myriad battle ribbons and insignia pinned to his chest. We, the ball players, were to have the privilege of shaking hands with the great French Marshal. Babe Ruth was to be our master of ceremonies. He was there to make the speech of welcome on behalf of the ball players.

When it was time for Ruth to speak, the crowd was hushed. Marshal Foch bent over to catch Ruth's words. They were slow in coming, as the Babe was flustered. Finally he managed to blurt, "Hey Gen., they tell me you were in the war."

A similar incident occurred at the Yankee Stadium later in the twenties. Cal Coolidge was President of the United States. Just before one game, word reached the bench that President Coolidge was arriving. Once again we were to line up to meet a dignitary. Once again Ruth was to speak for the ball players. We filed by shaking hands with Mr. Coolidge. Babe Ruth finally arrived in front of the quiet mannered President. Ruth again was flabbergasted. He whipped out a big, red bandana handkerchief, mopped his face and snorted, "Hot as hell, ain't it Pres.?"

President Coolidge sat down. Presidents and bat boys—they were all alike to the Bambino.

In 1920, a big footwear manufacturer offered to give the King of Swat a pair of shoes for every home run he clouted. The Babe accepted the offer, on the understanding that he could give them all away. He

decided to donate them to the kids at a Catholic Orphan Asylum. Below, The Bambino and Mrs. Ruth give the shoes to excited lines of waiting children in front of New York's Grand Central Palace.





BABE SPREADS OUT

Mr. Ruth took New
York by storm and in return
the Big Town
took the Babe to
its heart. Babe was king
pin, and just
beginning to enjoy it.

BABE WAS indulging in fancies of largesse. He had to have the biggest car—the biggest of everything. Babe felt his position called for magnitude. He supplied it. Babe bought a big twelve-cylinder Packard roadster. A custom built, maroon job. A hulking giant of a car.

Those were the days before traffic lights in New York, and Babe used the streets as race tracks. We nicknamed his car "The Ghost Of Riverside Drive." It was a common sight to see Babe ripping along the Drive at ninety miles an hour—followed by a picture in the next morning's paper. "Ruth gets another speeding ticket." There was Babe always smiling, shaking hands with the Judge, who probably asked how Babe hit all those homers.

The players had a parking space inside the Polo Grounds next to the clubhouse. We'd hear the roar of that motor far in the distance and flock to the windows to see him charge in, always with the radiator cap missing and the water steaming and spurting like Old Faithful.

The clubhouse telephone was always busy. Ruth had twenty-four secretaries, as the ball players always dove for the phone to rib the caller. Half the calls were business. Someone wanting the Babe to make an appearance, or rope him in on some wildcat project. Others were from feminine admirers who didn't know a baseball from a powder puff, but they knew Ruth. Those were the calls we grabbed. Ruth, of course had no idea who they were. We made more dates for Babe than he ever dreamed of. We of course told the ladies we were Ruth, and admitted we certainly could hit the ball—and had plenty of money—and could they meet us in the Astor Hotel lobby at 8:00? We often wondered how many of those girls waited all night for Ruth to show up.

One particular phone call was the tip-off to Babe's lack of memory and complete unconcern about famous folk. After the 1921 season Ruth had been invited to make a motion picture in Hollywood. Ruth made the film and in the process met Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. The two darlings of the motion picture industry



The Yankees moved into their own park at the end of the 1922 season. About that time, Babe and Helen Ruth (above) began having trouble at home. They agreed to a separation later on.



Center, one of the first radio interviews at the "House That Ruth Built." Sportscaster is Graham McNamee. Below, a familiar scene at the Yankee training camp, St. Petersburg, Florida.



were married not long after and planned a trip to Europe for their honeymoon. They had promised to get in touch with Babe when they reached New York. One afternoon the clubhouse telephone rang. Ruth went to the phone and "yeahed," and "sured" for a while, then said, "Sorry, can't make it. I gotta see a party." Ruth hung up abruptly. "Who was that?" I asked. Ruth snorted as he loped off, "Oh a coupla actors I met in Hollywood. They wanted me down for dinner. A guy would go crazy goin' out for dinner every night."

RUTH LIVED at the Ansonia Hotel in New York. It was rather a Bohemian existence. His suite was shared with the first Mrs. Ruth, an adopted daughter, Dorothy, and anyone who cared to drop in. It was constantly crowded with visitors; strangers and friends. Ruth didn't know one from the other, as Babe rarely recalled meeting people. A room service waiter had a path worn from the kitchen downstairs to the Ruthian throne room. Babe was paying all the checks. Little Dorothy Ruth hardly slept—and Helen (Mrs. Ruth) could hardly keep track of the new arrivals. Ruth wandered about making promises he never kept. Entering business deals he forgot ten minutes later. Life was crowding in on Ruth. The pressure was cumulative. But still the big guy hit more and more home runs and worried his way deeper into the hearts of the public. He hit 59 home runs in 1921 and was most instrumental in helping the Yankees win their first American League pennant.

Two incidents that season bore out the man's infinite capacity for ballplaying efficiency under duress. The Yankees ran into a flock of doubleheaders. We were terribly short of pitchers; finally, manager Miller Huggins called a clubhouse meeting and asked, "Who shall we pitch today? There isn't anyone left."

Ruth spoke up. "I'll pitch, Hug."

The Yankee players looked at him in astonishment. Ruth hadn't pitched an inning in over two years. Detroit was our opponent. Detroit with Cobb, Heilmann and the rest. One of the best hitting ball clubs in baseball.

Huggins astonished us further by agreeing, "All right Babe, you try it."

Babe Ruth pitched six or seven innings. He struck out the great Cobb twice, and retired only after he'd begun to weaken. We won the game.

In late Septembér, we Yankees, leading the league, were ahead of Cleveland by the slim margin of a game and a half. The Indians arrived at the Polo Grounds for a crucial four-game series, and it was obvious that if Cleveland should take four straight, or even three out of four, the Yankees might hit the chutes. We won the first and second games and lost the third. The final game of the series came up. If we could beat the Indians in that final game, it was almost certain we would win the pennant.

The Yankee pitchers that day weren't particularly effective, and Cleveland jumped out in front. The Yankees tied the score. Then went ahead. Pitchers were parading in and out of the box like tin soldiers. The Polo Grounds fans were in a frenzy. Cleveland would score runs, always one short of tying the score. Ruth would come up and blast a homer. Twice in the game Ruth saved us with home runs. He also delivered sundry other hits to keep the Yankees ahead. We won that game 8-7. It is established fact that two spectators died in the grandstand during the contest. It was one of the wildest games ever played.

We came into the World Series of 1921 against the Giants with Ruth on the injured list. He had developed a serious infection in one elbow. He played five games, but had to bow out after the fifth because the pain was too much for him. That year the World Series was decided on the basis of the first five of nine victories. Ruth was lost to us the last three games. Whether or not the result would have been different, no one can say, but the series went to eight games, with the Giants winning, five games to three. I remember one amusing incident in the series. The Giants were giving the Babe an unmerciful riding, ridiculing his broad nose

and his looks in general. The Giant players accompanied the personal references to his profile with stray bits of horrible profanity.

In the clubhouse after one game, Ruth was burned to a crisp. "Those lousy so and sos. I'll get them. In fact I think I will right now." Ruth, with Bob Meusel as a second, invaded the Giant clubhouse. There was a wild scene with the Babe challenging little Johnny Rawlings. Pancho Snyder and others of the Giants jumped in to defend Rawlings. It was touch and go for a few seconds, then Babe calmed down. Recognizing the futility of the argument, Babe finished lamely, "I don't mind you guys calling me a ———, and a dirty ———. (he named all the violent cuss words). That part's all right. But when you start mentioning my looks, that's a different matter. I don't mind the cuss words but you gotta cut out them personalities."

IN THE early twenties Ruth got along well with the rest of the team. Perhaps it was because their paths never crossed. Ruth was too much in the public eye—and too much in public for us. We couldn't keep up with the Babe. We didn't have the money in the first place, and we couldn't stand the strain and still play ball.

There was one player with whom the Babe didn't see eye to eye. That was pitcher Carl Mays. Carl had the unfortunate trait of expecting perfection from his infielders and outfielders, and when one made a mistake behind him, Mays told him all about it. Ruth, who had played with Mays in Boston, didn't go for Carl's comments on the abilities of his mates. Mays was a big, rugged boy, tough in his own way. A melee between the two would have been something to see. There were many clubhouse arguments between the two, but the fight never came off. Mays knew, I believe, that Babe had reached such an unassailable position that any big fight with him would have brought about Mays' release.

Little Miller Huggins, the Mite Manager of the Yanks, was in those days hamstrung between two official forces. Col. Ruppert, the majority stockholder of the Yanks, liked Huggins. Col. Til' Huston did not. But Huston liked Ruth. It was Huston who used to invite Ruth to go hunting down in Dover Hall, Georgia. It was Huston who defended Ruth when Ruth broke the training rules. Ruth's stature as a ball player soon exceeded Huggins' position as manager, and Huggins had the very devil of a time making him behave.

The Yankees of 1922 were a collection of ball players operating as a team, but much divided in spirit. There were frequent fights and arguments. It was one hectic period.

Huggins, who weighed but 145 pounds, had many an oral bout with Ruth, who now weighed well over two hundred. The arguments usually developed when the Yankees were on the road. They would start with Huggins questioning Ruth's whereabouts on the previous night.

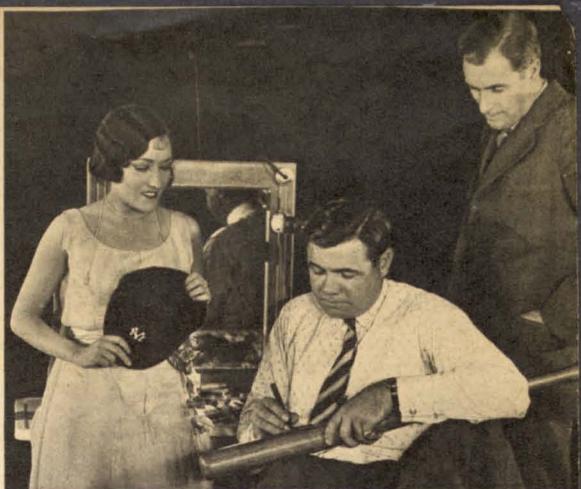
Ruth would say, "If you don't like it, why don't you send me home?"

Hug would answer, "If you don't want to play for this ball club, why don't you go home?"

Ruth would retort, "You won't be here next year. It will be either you or me, wait and see."

Of course Hug was there until he died. Ruth came to love the little guy, and Huggins eventually loved Ruth. But the Babe was a real Peck's bad boy in the early twenties.

In St. Louis, in 1922 Babe and Wally Pipp had a set-to. Pipp was the Yankee first baseman and first base in St. Louis was quite near the players' bench. Pipp had been having a bad spell afield. Ruth, in his then superior manner, took it upon himself to criticize Pipp. After a particularly bad play on Pipp's part, Wally was first in at the bench. Ruth was jogging in from left field. Pipp was as white as the towel with which he was mopping his face. His voice trembled as he said, "If that big monkey says anything to me, I'll punch him right on that big nose." Sure enough, Ruth jumped down saying, "For God's sake, Pipp—"



The Babe was a celebrity among celebrities. In Hollywood (above) the king autographs a baseball for cinema queen Gloria Swanson. Big Bill Tilden, another famous gent, looks on.



In spite of their arguments, Manager Miller Huggins (center) and the Yankee problem child grew to be close friends. Below, the Babe greets paralyzed World War I vet Larry Levinson.



Ruth never finished the sentence. Pipp reached out and clouted the Babe right on the promised spot and Babe's already large beak swelled like a blowfish. Ruth and Pipp crowded into the deep recesses of the St. Louis dugout and started swinging. Home Run Frank Baker, a peaceful gent, stepped in between them. Baker was punched on the eye by Ruth—and in the back of the neck by Pipp.

Meanwhile the game was held up waiting for Ruth, who was due at the plate. Huggins and Baker pulled the men apart, but they threatened to settle it in the clubhouse later.

Ruth, first at bat, hit a home run over the right field stands. Pipp, still raging, followed Ruth and slugged another homer. After the game, Marty McManus, the St. Louis second baseman, said, "You fellows should fight every day. It does you good."

Ruth and Pipp shook hands in the clubhouse later. Babe never criticized anyone again.

RUTH on the road, was an incurable sightseer. And no one knew where he went nights. It was enough that he was at the ball park every day, walloping his home runs. Ruth's roommates became an object of discussion. They were basking in the Ruth limelight—or so everyone thought. The colorful Italian, Ping Bodie, was once asked how it felt to room with such a hero. Ping replied, "I don't know. I only room with his suitcase."

Ruth had many roommates before the Yanks consented to park him alone. There was Bodie, Fewster, Roth, Hofmann, and Jimmy Reese. Before long, all of them were released. Ruth had nothing to do with it—but word got around that it was a jinx to room with the Babe.

By this time none of us called him "Babe." He was known as either the Big Bam, George, or more commonly "Jidge." "Jidge" was really "Gigge"—a contraction of his first name George.

At the end of the '22 season, Col. Huston sold out to Col. Ruppert, who then became sole owner of the club. Ruppert threw his support solidly behind Huggins, and for the first time the Little Man was in full authority. Ruth at first didn't recognize the power of the new Huggins and challenged it at every turn. Huggins finally had Ruth on the carpet before Ruppert, who, in no mincing words, told the home run king where to head in.

Ruth turned to other sources of expression. The Yankees had moved to their own park, the Yankee Stadium. Sports writers dubbed it, "The House That Ruth Built." It was true enough—for despite Babe's unpredictable escapades, he was ever the Sultan of Swat, the world's greatest ball player. The Stadium opened in

1923—and Ruth immediately christened the right field bleachers with a home run, helping to win the game from the Red Sox for Bob Shawkey.

The "Sultan" had a locker right next to the clubhouse entrance, jammed with mementos fans had sent him. Its floor was littered with letters. Babe never learned to open his mail. Doc Woods, the trainer, served as Ruth's secretary. Doc and the entire team. Woody opened all the envelopes which bore business addresses. We opened the blue and pink ones. It was wonderful. Delightful. The ladies were quite frank in their invitations, and often we experienced fleeting pangs of envy for Babe's home run prowess. It was well known on our club that a year or two before, Babe, in his rush to sample the tasty delights of life, had merely torn up his mail. Doc Wood pieced a lot of it together and discovered over six thousand dollars in checks Ruth had destroyed. Checks for endorsements and royalties.

Back in 1923, one summer's day at the Stadium, Miller Huggins shuffled up to the batting cage. Strolling behind him, was a broad shouldered, good looking kid. Huggins said, "Let this youngster hit a few."

The kid looked shy and awkward. We stepped aside. Ruth stood with one foot on the batting cage rail. The boy picked up Ruth's pet bat, a 46-ounce weapon. Babe grunted. "Don't use that one, son."

Then as an afterthought, he hurriedly corrected himself. "Go ahead, you can't hurt it. I got others."

The youngster hit at a couple of balls and did not do so well. He rolled them to the infield. Suddenly, he uncorked a drive high up into Ruth's favorite parking space, the right field bleachers. He walloped another, then another. The Babe looked interested. Not many American League sluggers had hit the ball in his private domain. Who was this powerful young kid?

The name was Lou Gehrig.

THE BIG BAM had begun to take on polish. His manner in the presence of strangers and upon introduction was one of as much grace as his limited education permitted. He was better tailored. Better shod. He struggled to be the courtier.

They tell one story concerning his new manner, but I can't vouch for its authenticity. In Florida one winter, he supposedly pulled his big automobile into a gas station. Babe was out of the car while the attendant was gassing up. A Rolls Royce pulled alongside Ruth, and a dignified member of the Palm Beach colony, a well upholstered dowager, leaned out of the window to inquire,

Ruth's boisterous habits frequently brought him trouble. Here he was snapped when leaving court just after being cleared of assault charge.

Mounted below are some of the balls the Babe knocked over the fence. He autographed each of the souvenirs for admiring fans.



"May I ask if you are not Mr. Babe Ruth?"

Babe, now able to recognize quality in something other than a hickory bat, replied, "You are quite correct, Modom."

Modom continued, "Mr. Ruth, is your car equipped with hydraulic brakes or are they mechanical?"

Ruth gave a courtly bow and said in his most cultured tone, "Modom, I haven't the slightest consumption."

Babe was notorious for his failure to identify things and people by name. In fact it was a Ruthian delight to coin his own labels for anything which might enter the Ruthian kingdom. But make no mistake, if Ruth gave the appearance of ignorance, it wasn't wholly true. Babe was just too busy to worry about gadgets and appurtenances, or names or people. He called everyone "Keed," which, to his mind, blanketed all mankind. It was sufficient that he recognized them.

In Detroit, Harry Heilmann was given his annual "Day." It was always a big occasion. Harry received gifts of all sorts, usually including a Cadillac car. This day, Harry was presented with a Great Dane. Harry had no home for the handsome brute, so he asked Ruth if he would take it.

Ruth said, "What kind of a dog did you say it was?"

Harry replied, "A Great Dane."

Ruth said, "Oh, if it's a Great Dane, I'll take it."

Dugan was always very close to Ruth. The Babe liked Jumping Joe. And it was Dugan who often came to Ruth's financial rescue in his wild periods of squandering. Babe considered ten-dollar bills as so many cigar wrappers. I was Dugan's roommate. It was inevitable that when the Yawkees reached Knoxville on their northern trek each spring, our phone would ring. Mr. Ruth, asking for a loan. It was always \$1500. Joe would turn to me and say, "How do you feel about it—wanna loan the Bam some dough?"

That part of it was a foregone conclusion. Ruth had raised the standards of players' salaries. We, as players, owed the Big Fellow a lot. Dugan and I would sit down and write out checks for \$750 each. We knew we would get it back the first pay day. We not only got our money back—Ruth added six percent interest as well. Babe had heard it was right to pay interest on any loan he had made. He gave us six percent, although he had had possession of the money just over a month.

He was like that in all money matters. No one ever cheated the Babe—no one wanted to. If he borrowed from you, he paid up. If you borrowed from him, he forgot how much he had loaned you and was forever surprised at the repayment. Babe wasn't foolish. He just wasn't interested in petty cash. His earning capacity, it seemed to him, was limitless and eternal.

Babe's domestic life was becoming ensnared. Helen Ruth found the position of celebrity's wife too much to handle; Helen just couldn't keep pace with her husband. He had fallen so much under public ownership, there was nothing of the original Babe left. He was still kind. He was still generous. But as for home life—there was none. Helen had neither the ability nor the inclination to ride herd on the Babe whose earnest efforts at domesticity never succeeded. One try was really an admirable experiment. He had bought a farm in Sudbury, Mass. He was going to try his hand at gentleman farming.

The house was a beautiful colonial. Moreover, it was crammed with furniture the former owners had left. Babe bought the place, lock, stock and barrel. He invited some of the ball players out to see it. The furniture we recognized at first glance to be valuable antiques, probably worth as much as the property.

The Babe went to work remodeling the premises, and the next time we visited his farm we were amazed at the extent of his effort. He had spent thousands on concrete floors and new wings for the outbuildings. He had stocked a few of everything; chickens, turkeys, cows, horses. The priceless antiques were gone. "Where," we asked, "are those rare pieces you had here?"

"Oh those," the Babe said, "I paid a guy to move them all the hell out. It was just junk."

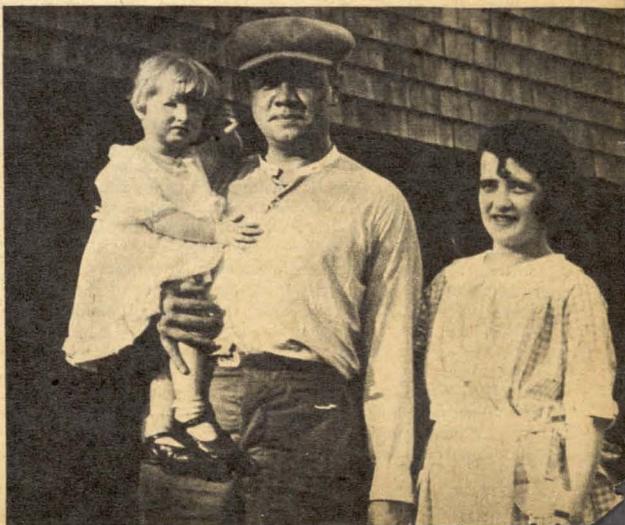
Ruth had a small lake on the farm. He invited teammate Bullet Joe Bush up for a hunting expedition. The expedition consisted of taking a row boat out on the pond at night, and shooting bull frogs with huge shotguns by lantern light. Ruth exploded one broadside which capsized the boat and spilled both into the water.

"That," wrote sports writer Paul Shannon caustically, "is my idea of great sport."

Ruth's farm was just a brief interlude in his hunt for domestic stability. The end was coming. One afternoon, a rather vicious dog he owned leaped the fence into a neighbor's pasture and chewed the udders off a prize cow. It cost Ruth \$5000 and that was the end of the farm.

Ruth was still knocking 'em dead in baseball. His home run productivity fell off in 1923 and 1924—but he was still the champ. He was still knocking 'em further and more majestically than anyone else. But in the background his personal life was disintegrating. Helen Ruth finally decided it would be better if she and the Babe separated. Helen retired to a friend's house in Boston, little Dorothy went with her. On trips to Boston, Ruth had them stay at the hotel with him. He idolized Dorothy, but he just hadn't the necessary time to allot to the role of loving father.

Ruth and Lou Gehrig made the greatest slugging duo in major league history. Below, they watch early Notre Dame football game.



BABE GROWS UP

WITH BABE and Helen separated, Babe rolled along alone. Instead of letting the collapse of his domestic life slow him down, Babe's momentum increased. Now was the time he might have stopped to wonder where he was going. He had falsely evaluated his salary as all the money in the world. He had falsely evaluated his importance as home run king. He mistakenly thought his citadel impregnable. Ruth couldn't believe anyone would want to haul him down from his lofty perch, didn't realize many people in the country were unobtrusively out-earning him, that there were many people with large homes and large incomes who found other, inconspicuous methods for making a living.

He was always a great dramatist on the field. With a flick of his hand, a doff of his cap, he could bring thousands to their feet cheering hoarsely. In his own specialized department, the Bambino rivaled John Barrymore. Like Barrymore, his antics didn't always seem spontaneous now, and he was beginning to overdo it. The ballplayers sensed Ruth's tension, realized that something frightening was happening within that gigantic legend that Ruth had become. His fabulous personal escapades were shaded with pathos, for the Babe was no longer sampling life. He was wolfing it down in immense, oversized doses. Although we all recognized his undiminished baseball genius, we knew we were witnessing a gradual disintegration of Ruth, the man.

About that time an incident occurred in Washington which led to a two year breach in the Babe's relations with me. I had pitched the third of a four game series and Miller Huggins had given me permission to return to New York ahead of the team. When the rest of the boys got back, Mays came over to my locker and said, "Babe says not to talk to him anymore."

It was a silly business. Babe, in his growing, formless anxiety, considered my early return a personal affront to his station. I went over to ask the big guy about it, but Babe was short and adamant.

"Skip it," he said, "you and I are through."

I said, "That's okay with me. It's mutual."

So we didn't speak for two years, except for one brief flurry. One afternoon, while I was pitching, the Bam missed a catch in right field. It didn't strike me that he had made a special effort to get the ball, and I struck a critical pose in the box—hands on hips—a sign that ball players will understand. On the bench, after the inning, Ruth felt called upon to deliver some choice epithets. The next inning, I was knocked out of the box and took the long hike to the shower room where I waited for the blow-off I knew was coming.

The Babe was first into the clubhouse after the game and opened up on me right away.

"You lousy bum," he began, "you're not going to show me up!"

"What do you figure to do about it?" I said.

"I'll punch you in your . . . nose," yelled Babe.

"You're not tied, you fathead," I shouted back.

At that point we both rushed at each other, fists flying. Huggins jumped in between us. And Huggins, little Huggins, was the guy who was punched. The rest of the boys pulled us apart, and the feud continued.

About a year after that fracas, the Yanks were on a night train out of St. Louis. We were all sitting in the men's wash room when Ruth walked in with a few bottles of beer he'd bought to give the gang. He offered me a bottle, and I said "No thanks, Babe."

"Aw, go ahead," Babe said. "It's all over—that argument—a lot of damn fool nonsense anyway. Forget it."

I was quick to forget it. I really liked the big fellow.

1925 was a tough year for Babe Ruth. His batting average fell below 300 for the first time, he appeared in only 99 games and hit but 25 homers. He had made involved business commitments. He was deep in debt. He was wrangling continuously with Miller Huggins. Besieged on all sides, Ruth met the situation the only way he knew; he fought with everyone, indulged in maudlin self-pity. And he blamed everyone but himself. It was the lowest point in Ruth's career. The fact that he eventually outgrew the entire period is testimony to his innate greatness.

IN THE meantime, Manager Huggins was having his own troubles.

The Yankees, champions in 1921, '22 and '23, had blown the 1924 pennant to Washington. In 1925, Huggins was frantically trying to build a new machine, the nucleus of which was supposed to be Ruth. The Babe was not cooperating. He stormed through the season alienating the public, the ball players and the sports writers. The blow-off finally came in St. Louis.

Much has been written about the famous scene. Many versions of what took place in the clubhouse that day have been spread, but this is the word-for-word account. I know, because I was the only other man there.

I was to pitch that day, and as was my habit, had delayed going out to the field. Miller Huggins was sitting there in the corner, knees bobbing nervously as they always did when he was overwrought. I knew, of course, that he was gunning for the Babe. He had been after him the whole trip, and Ruth had been keeping wild hours in direct defiance of his orders.

Suddenly the Babe burst through the door, his coat over his shoulder, his necktie awry. He was late for batting practice and he knew it. Hug rose to meet him, and this is the exact conversation that took place.

"You don't have to dress today, Babe," said Huggins.

"Yeah? And why not?"

"Because I have suspended you," continued Huggins. "I am fining you five thousand dollars and I am sending you back to New York."

"Suspending me!" Ruth snorted. "That's great stuff. What for?"

Life was crowding
in on the big fellow. First
his home life
collapsed, followed by a
batting slump. Then
came the blowoff.

"You know what for, Babe."

"Why you little runt!" The Babe was yelling now. "You'll never get away with this."

Huggins, who had already discussed the problem with Col. Ruppert, smiled grimly. "That we shall see."

The Babe towered over him. "I made you, you runt, you! I wish you were my size. I wish you weighed 200 pounds. I'd beat your ears off!"

"I wish I did weigh 200 pounds," said Hug. "I might beat your ears off. But there will be no more argument. Your ticket is ready, and you leave for New York tonight." Huggins got up to leave, signalling the end of the discussion. By that time I was out of the door and galloping to the Yankee bench with the unbelievable news.

Ruth didn't go to New York. He went to Chicago to see Commissioner Landis. Landis was not in to the Babe. He stormed back to New York and went up to his hotel apartment on the Concourse Plaza. His chauffeur had been in an accident. A process server was waiting in the lobby. So were a dozen sports writers. He shoved his way through the scribes, sent the process server flying over a nearby desk and stamped to his rooms alone, like an injured child.

Ruth had hit rock bottom.

THE YANKEES finished the season without the Big Bam and wound up in seventh place. Ruth was nowhere to be found. He seemed to be an outcast. The great, wonderful world had come crashing about him and no one could convince him that the chaos was entirely self-made.

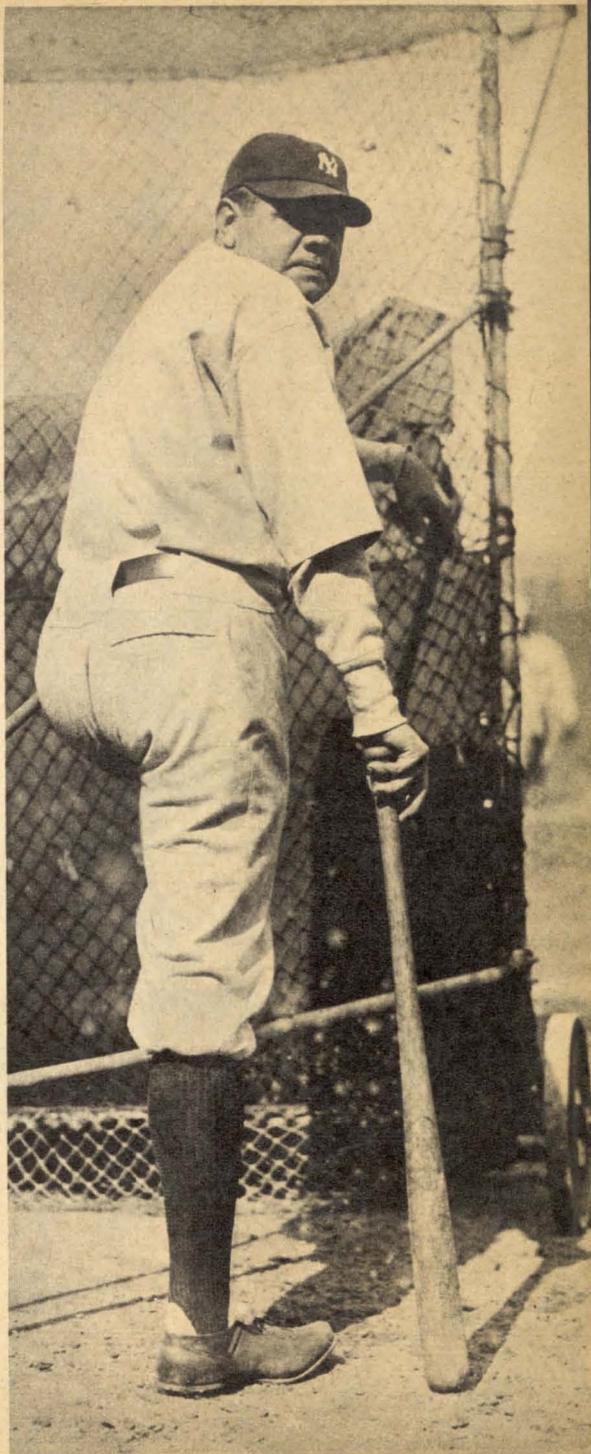
It was his manager, Christy Walsh, who finally pulled the Babe out of his shattering doldrums. Christy convinced the Babe that it was time to make amends, and advised a reconciliation with the sports writers as a starter. He arranged a big banquet for the reporters, at which Mayor Jimmy Walker made his famous speech that concluded: "The dirty-faced kids in the street look up to you, Babe. Don't fail them!"

When the Big Bam got up to speak, his eyes were brimming with tears. He realized that he was absolutely wrong. He told them that. He told them he hadn't meant to mistreat all his friends. He said all he wanted to do now was live a decent life and play baseball.

The speech was not melodramatic. The Babe was promising to be what millions of Americans hoped he'd be. Babe Ruth was to keep his promise.

If the sports writers were suspicious at first, Babe's actions soon had them convinced. He did a complete about-face, and was welcomed back into the fold, like the prodigal son. His reputation soared to even greater heights than ever before. And it stayed there.

Babe Ruth had grown up.





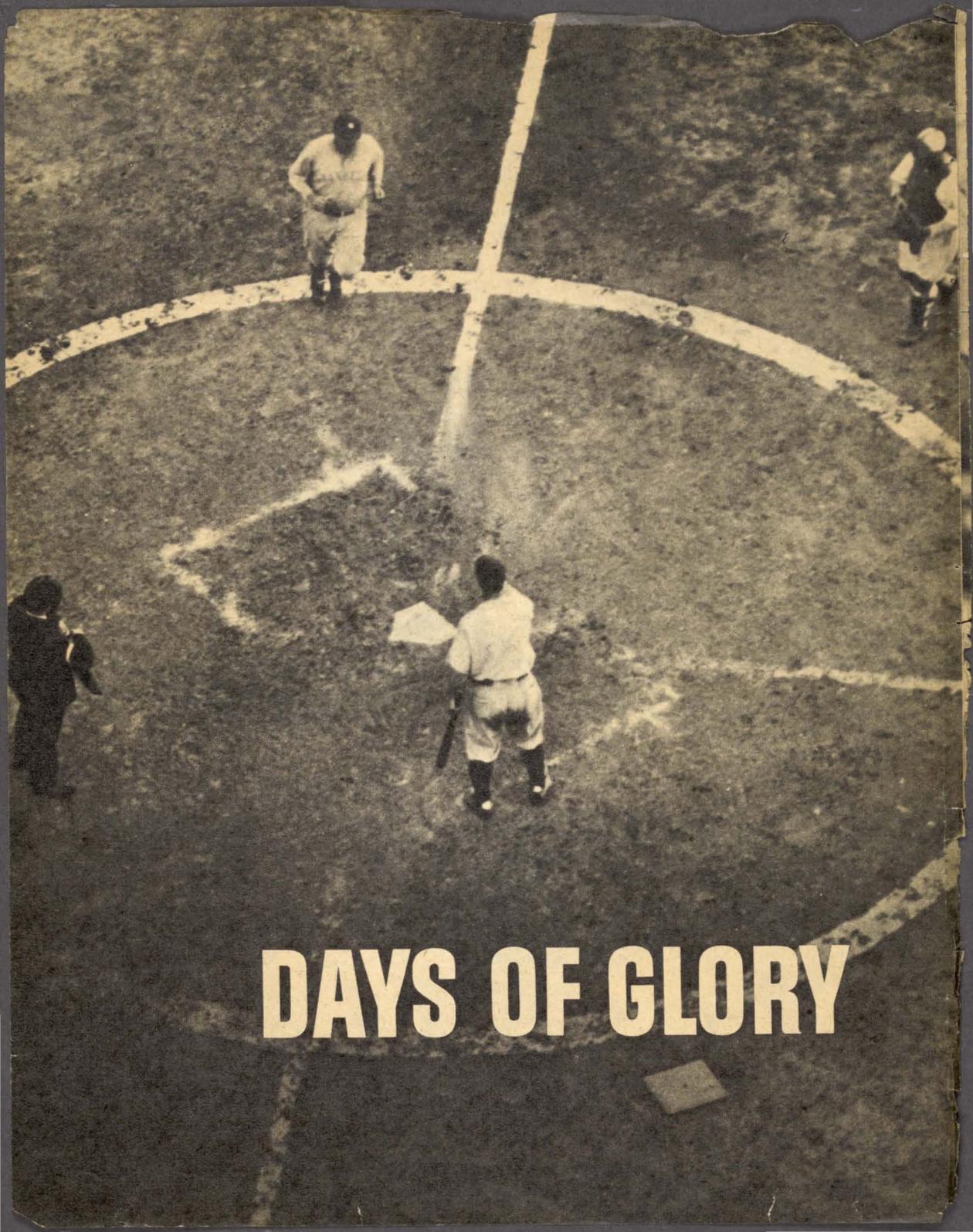
■ The secret of Babe Ruth's place in the hearts of young America, wrote one reporter, was his own great love for children, especially those of lesser privilege. For Babe had been one of these, and knew the great emptiness of their lives. To those children he gave freely and casually, without self-consciousness or patronage. He gave them his friendship. He visited them countless times in hospitals, in sickbeds everywhere. He welcomed them when they thronged to his side wherever he happened to appear. It was something he accepted as a duty, and even more, a privilege. They say that Babe was often mystified by the undiminished adulation which attended and blessed him long after his active playing days in base-



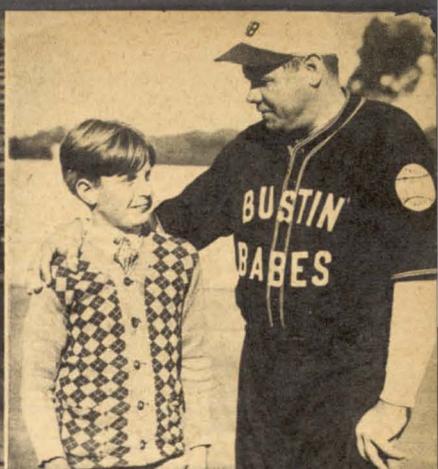


ball were ended, but it was no mystery to those who knew and loved him. For Babe Ruth was a symbol to every youngster who had heard his name, from Tallahassee to Tokyo. He was what all boys dream about being, and he earnestly tried to live up to their ideal. There was the time little Johnny Sylvester was fighting to recover from a severe operation. His doctor, who knew Ruth, brought Johnny the best medicine he knew, a visit from The Bam himself. And Johnny asked Babe a small favor. He asked him to hit one home run for him that afternoon. Babe promised, and he did. He always kept his word to kids. The love and esteem of the young was the real wealth and treasure of Babe Ruth, and he was rich indeed.





DAYS OF GLORY



THE YEAR 1926 began another bombastic succession of Yankee pennants, with Babe Ruth as the key man. In spring training, the team had looked hopeless. One scribe wrote that we were merely a collection of isolationists working out on the same diamond. That same writer predicted we would finish in seventh place again. Maybe eighth. The truth is, we looked that bad. Then came the trek north, with a series of exhibitions against the Dodgers. We started to click. Miraculously, we beat the Brooklyn team in six straight games.

Riding back to the hotel with Dugan and me, the Bambino made one of his careful predictions. "If we can take every game from the Dodgers," he said, "we'll win the pennant." We did beat them—twelve straight. And we won the pennant hands down.

Ruth, in his new role of baseball player, business man and goodwill ambassador was a wonderful guy. He was still a big kid; but his habits had moderated. His automobiles were still enormous, but the colors were subdued. His suits were smartly cut and stylish. In the old days, he used to wear a huge diamond horseshoe pin as his Tuxedo button. The new Ruth discarded that as bad taste. Indeed, the Babe had become one of the best dressed men in America.

And he was sublimely happy in those days. Christy Walsh had taken over the entire financial burden. Ruth didn't collect his checks—they went into a special fund from which Babe drew expense money. Ruth was turning into an executive.

I was in Ruth's room in Chicago when the advertising director of a big department store phoned him. Although I could only hear Babe's half of the conversation, I was able to piece together the proposition. Babe had endorsed some line of underwear. The store was planning to put it on display. The guy was trying to high pressure Babe into standing by the underwear counter in the store each morning of his stay in Chicago.

Ruth said: "I can't say anything without consulting my business manager. You'll have to call him in New York. No. No. I'll tell you now, it's gonna cost you a thousand dollars an hour." There was a sudden stupefied click and the conversation was over. But in twenty minutes the phone rang again. Same man. Ruth was paid the unprecedented sum of one thousand dollars an hour to stand next to a pile of underwear.

Babe Ruth's life was now running like satin. His playing was at peak form. He was really in his glory and carrying his teammates right with him. He worked with the rest of the boys,



Upper left, author Hoyt, Babe and Huggins, 1926. Upper right, Ruth on exhibition tour with lad who found \$10,000 and returned it. Meeting the Bambino was the kid's best reward. Above, Babe signs one of his goldplated contracts, as Col. Ruppert, Ed Barrow watch with approval.

With Big Bam
back in the fold, the
Yankee cannons
began to roar again. And
the Babe once more
led them all.

improved mediocre batters beyond their wildest ambitions. He made baseball playing look so easy. It has been said that the Bambino never made a mistake on a ball field. Of course that's exaggerated, but for the life of me, I can't personally recall a single boner the big guy ever pulled.

Everything the Babe did was fabulous. One day, in Boston, with a strong wind blowing toward the plate, he hit a high towering fly. The left fielder came running in to get it and kept coming. He never got near it—the ball landed in the infield, nearly beaming the shortstop. The ball had been hit so high, that Ruth was able to gallop all the way around the bases for a home run. Probably the first and last infield home run in history.

In the same Fenway Park he pulled another stunt, but this one will never show on the records. He was up at bat with two strikes against him. Just as the pitcher started his windup, a pigeon swooped down from center field and flew directly over the plate. Babe swung and missed, and started to walk away. The umpire called him back, and gently told him he'd struck out swinging at a bird.

The most fabulous story circulated concerns the time in the 1932 World Series when Ruth pointed to the center field bleachers and hit the next ball right to that spot. The feat made history, but we Yankees saw the Babe pull that one before.

There used to be a horrible drunk named Conway who haunted Boston's Fenway Park. The ball players knew him fairly well, since he was a regular and most vociferous fan. Conway did not seem to like the Babe. He said so loudly and often. One day,

after striking out his first two times at bat, Ruth was ushered to the batter's box with a stream of Conway's invectives heard all over the Park. Babe backed away from the plate and pointed to the right field seats. As usual, the Babe was up to the occasion. A deep home run followed. When he reached the plate after rounding the bases, he stopped, turned toward Conway and made a deep, courtly bow. Then he had Conway thrown out of the place. That was five years before the Chicago incident, and I always thought the memory of that day prompted Ruth to pull the later stunt against Charlie Root.

Those were the days that Ruth was obeying orders. When Huggins told Ruth to "push one to left" against the Athletics one afternoon, he pushed it to the left field bleachers for a block-busting home run.

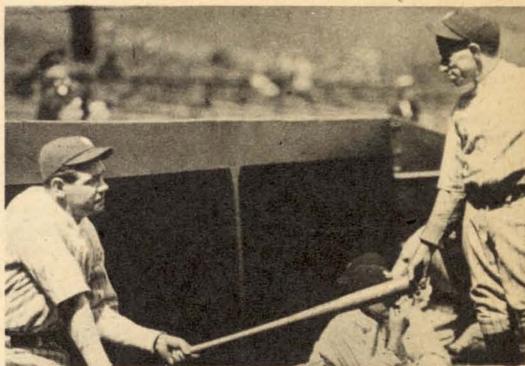
In Cleveland, the right field wall of League Park was heightened by a tall wire screen. Ruth hit many balls over that screen. One fine day he hit one *through* it. The Cleveland players sadly shook their heads.

In Detroit, Babe had some of his biggest days. One homer he hit in Navin Field, carried over the right center field bleachers. It rolled down a street which ran at right angles to the avenue behind the right field fence. A boy chased it for blocks on a bicycle. The sports writers could see that from the press box. "It nearly went downtown," they wrote.

In St. Louis, the King Of Swat was in a terrible batting slump. He took up a "fungo stick." A long thin underweight bat, used to knock flies in practice. He clouted a homer on the roof of



Gov. Al Smith and the Babe became close friends. At right, Gehrig.



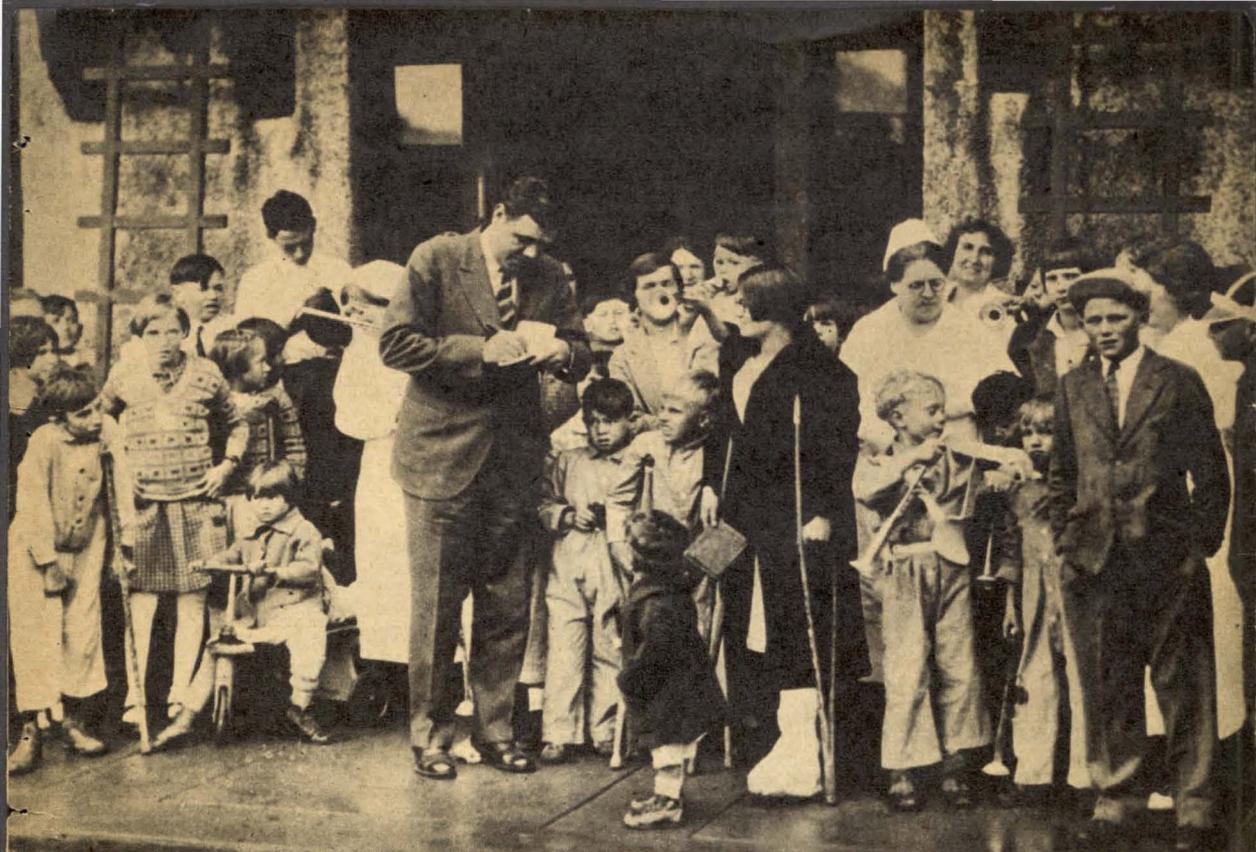
Yank mascot hands Ruth his favorite club during practice session.



Ruth nullified even the paralyzing pitching of Walter Johnson (left).



During this 1926 Series game with St. Louis, Babe hit 3 homers.



One day the Yankee team arrived in St. Paul, Minnesota, for an important game. They were greeted by a torrent of rain that washed out the contest and sent the boys grumbling back to their hotel rooms. The Babe went off quietly by himself. He spent the entire afternoon

at the St. Paul Home for Crippled Children entertaining the bed-ridden kids from ward to ward with jokes and stories. The Babe could create a holiday spirit in the most forlorn and sickly child by the simple process of being himself. He loved kids, and they couldn't help knowing it.

the right field stand and snapped his slump.

In Chicago, they renovated Comiskey Park. They added a second tier to the right field stands. The architects said, "No one will ever hit a ball on that roof. Not even Ruth." The first time at bat, Ruth hit a home run over the newly constructed grandstand.

One of his greatest feats was performed in Chicago. Herb Pennock was pitching against Mike Cveugros. The game was nip and tuck. A pitcher's battle all the way. The game was being played on "getaway" day—the last day of the series. The Yankees were to leave on the 6:45 train out of Chicago. An hour's leeway for packing and taxi rides was required to make the train. At five-thirty the game was still in progress and Mark Roth, the Yankee secretary, was tearing his hair. In desperation Mark paid a visit to the Yankee bench. Roth said to Miller Huggins, "Miller, if this game isn't over soon we'll miss that train. What'll I do?"

Ruth was in earshot. In fact, he was the first man up in that inning. He was just picking up his bat. He turned to Roth and said, "Don't worry Mark. We'll make that train. I'll fix that."

Ruth fixed it. He hit a home run which won the game. The Yankees just caught the train.

The Yankees won the pennant in 1926, but they lost the World

Series to a fine Cardinal team. That was the classic in which Grover Cleveland Alexander starred, striking out Tony Lazzeri with the bases filled. That was a heart breaker for me, because I had started the game.

Ruth was criticized for trying to steal second in the ninth inning with two out. Bob O'Farrel, the Cardinal catcher made a perfect peg to second. Ruth was the final out. The game was lost, but despite the murmurs from the fans, the Yankee players never blamed Ruth; they all knew it was good baseball to try to get the tying run on second.

Ruth, always the individualist, was picking up exotic habits. He had become a user of snuff—his daily diet was two boxes—and his regular sneezes almost blew the spectators out of the grandstands. Like all ballplayers, Ruth was highly superstitious. But Ruth's superstitions passed all standard bounds.

The Big Bam entered the clubhouse one afternoon holding his stomach.

"Woody," he said to our trainer, "I got a pain in the gut. What shall I do?"

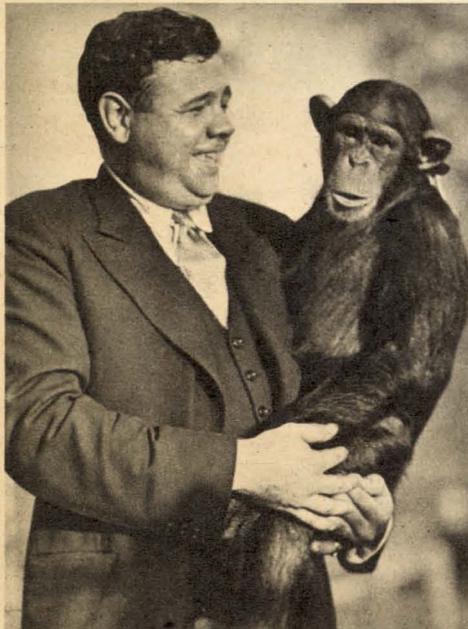
Woody answered, "Try a little bicarb."

Ruth groaned, "What's bicarb?"

Woody explained, "Just a little powder you mix in water. It'll



Two of baseball's great men, Ruth and Rogers Hornsby; the time, 1928. Both are members of every all-time great team compiled, and the odds are they will remain forever.



Though Ty Cobb batted 3,000 more times than Ruth, he scored only 70 markers more. Ty played with concentrated fury. To Babe baseball was fun, like visiting the St. Louis zoo.

relieve that congestion." This seemed like a pretty sound idea.

Ruth said, "Fix up a jug of that stuff."

The bicarbonate of soda must have had the desired effect, for the Great Stomach Ache was relieved. That afternoon Ruth swatted a home run. He must have attached some significance to his actions before the game for, after that, he never missed his mug of bicarbonate of soda before he went on the field. Ruth called it "milk."

Then another afternoon he bounced in the clubhouse proclaiming a terrific hunger. Woody recommended a quick visit to the kitchens of the Stadium caterers, Harry Stevens & Co. Ruth was back soon with a pair of hot dogs which he downed in four gulps. In the ball game that day, Babe stroked another homer. Now his luncheon menu was complete. Before each game a couple of hot dogs followed by a wash of bicarbonate of soda. His before-game-snack became part of the Ruthian ideology.

Baseball players wear two sets of stockings. The outer pair are of decorative design, knitted of wool or similar substance. The outer pair has no feet, merely a band which grips the arch of the foot. The inner pair is long, white cotton sweat socks. A player will use his sweat socks two or three games. If they are merely dirty, he'll have them laundered. If they develop holes, he throws them away. Ruth followed the custom of all his mates, until one day, he socked a special home run. He happened to remember he used a new pair of sweat socks that day. From then on it was a new pair every day.

As Ruth's taste for street clothes changed, he became more meticulous about his baseball uniform. He ordered special caps. Caps with broader peaks. Caps with fuller headpieces. The Ruthian figure had rounded and billowed to gigantic proportions so his uniform was cut to a draped effect.

In contrast, the glove he used was as flat as a pancake. A ten-year-old boy would think it an insult to show it to the gang. It



The Cardinals finally won the 1926 World Series, but in spite of the defeat, Ruth managed to add to his own glory. He slugged three

home runs in one game and led the parade. Before the game: Huggins, Nick Altrock, Babe, John McGraw, Hornsby and manager Christy Walsh.

had no "pocket." It wasn't treated with oil. It was just a plain old leather mitt.

Babe never used sliding pads. Pads which tie around the waist and strap around the legs under the pants. Consequently, in sliding, Babe ripped patches of skin from the sides of his thighs. Through every season Babe wore two or three such "strawberries," washed with alcohol, covered with a bandage of adhesive tape and gauze under his uniform.

Babe's civilian ensemble became the camel's hair coat, the camel's hair cap. The coat he never fully donned. He wore it like an opera cape—loosely draped over his massive shoulders. In truth, it was becoming. He must have borrowed the idea from a New York theatrical magazine.

THE PUBLIC had now discovered the new Ruth. He retained many of his old habits in moderated form—acquired new ones more satisfying to himself and his public. He partook of the flowing bowl quite freely but, in keeping with his enormous capacity for all types of intake, Ruth suffered no repercussions. His health was always good. His eyes clear. His senses bright.

To the baseball players who found even moderate indulgence distressingly penalizing, Ruth's tempered excesses were still a source of wonder and annoyance. How he got away with it none of them understood. Ruth baffled them with daily clouts to the outer barriers.

The usual crowd of hero snipers say Babe Ruth was a good-time-Charlie, a night club denizen. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Babe used to go out—sure—but usually to a couple of favorite spots at which he was assured privacy.

One was a tavern in New Jersey, Donohue's. Mr. Donohue went so far as to build a private entrance to a private room for Ruth. He didn't do it for the money Babe spent there. Babe's parties never numbered more than four or five, if that many.

In St. Louis, Ruth haunted a place operated by a rotund German woman. She cooked the most wonderful spareribs this side of Heaven, and the Babe could eat spareribs three meals a day. Many times when the Yankees had to hit the road out of St. Louis right after a game, Ruth would order twenty-five to thirty racks of spareribs from her to be delivered right to the train. The team used to occupy an entire sleeping car, so the Babe set up shop in the ladies' room, selling the ribs to the boys at a quarter a rack—plus all the home brew you could drink.

On the road, Babe never had the usual hotel room assigned to the other boys. The Yankee officials installed him in a sumptuous suite, as befitted the King of Diamonds. Immediately after games, Ruth retired to his suite. He changed to a red moray dressing gown and red moroccan slippers. A long sixty cent cigar protruded from his lips, for all the world like the Admiration Cigar trademark. The king was in the throne room. His subjects were permitted audience. And the subjects came in droves. I have seen as many as two hundred and fifty people visit the Babe in a single night.

About that time, somebody invented Ladies' Day. St. Louis was one of the first major league teams to woo the fair sex in this way, and they responded as the ladies would to a bargain sale—turning out by the thousands in a shrieking, excited mob. Especially when the Big Bam was in town. One Ladies' Day in St. Louis, the girls were swarming around the clubhouse like stage-door Jills. The team had to push through the crowd to reach the door, a flimsy affair, half frosted glass, half wood. Suddenly, the surging crowd leaned with all its collective strength on the barrier and it just gave way. The door flew open revealing the team in various phases of undress with the Babe in the center of the stage. Whether the astonished ladies ever tell their grandchildren about their most intimate glimpse of the Home Run King is something, I'm afraid, which we will never know. (Continued on page 26)



THE 1927 YANKEE TEAM

CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD



In 1926 they won the American League Pennant, in 1927 they finally reached the summit once more, a team that still ranks as one of the greatest organizations in baseball history. Reading left to right, front row: Walter (Dutch) Reuther, Pitcher; Joe Dugan, 3rd base; Ben Passhall, Outfield; Benny Benbough, Catcher; Myles Thomas, Pitcher; Mike Gazella, Infield; Ray Morehart, Infield; Eddie Bennet, Mascot. Center row, left to right: Bob Shawkey, Pitcher; Joe

Giard, Pitcher; John Grabowski, Catcher; Charlie O'Leary, Coach; Miller Huggins, Manager; Arthur Fletcher, Coach; Herb Pennock, Pitcher; Jules Wera, Infield; Pat Collins, Catcher; Back row, left to right: Lou Gehrig, 1st base; Bob Meusel, Left Field; Babe Ruth, Right Field; Wilcey Moore, Pitcher; George Pipgras, Pitcher; Earle Combs, Center Field; Waite Hoyt, Pitcher; Tony Lazzeri, 2nd. Base; Mark Koenig, Short Stop; Urban Shocker, Pitcher; Cedric Durst, Outfield.

The great Babe Ruth, who feared no pitcher, climbed out of a tiny window that day to escape the assemblage. The sight of that huge bulk squeezing his white-flanneled rump through an undersized dormer is something I will never forget.

THE YANKEES were riding high in 1927, sweeping through the American League like a flight of jet bombers. Ruth, of course, was the bell cow. He was hitting home runs like a man possessed, reaching for his own record of 59 (hit in 1921) which he hadn't approached since. When the last game of the season rolled around, the Bam had just 59. We were playing Washington, with wise old Tom Zachary scheduled to pitch against us. Zach wasn't too fast, but he had the type of queer stuff which bothered the sluggers. In the clubhouse before the game, Ruth was holding forth on the possibilities of making a homer. "I'll bet anyone ten bucks I hit one," he said. There were no takers. When Ruth gave voice to one of his inspired hunches, we knew what to expect.

The Babe hit no homers the first three times at bat. He had one more chance—one to break his record. The crowd was silent, waiting; the boys on the bench watched tensely. Ruth got no instructions from the manager when he strode to the plate. He needed none. And he got his home run, breaking the record with his last at-bat of the season.

Just before the World Series that year, we had our clubhouse meeting to decide allotments of the series money. There was a question of what share one youngster would receive. He hadn't been particularly instrumental in winning the flag and opinion was divided. Ruth led the faction that wanted him to get a full share.

"You fellows are yapping about losing some two hundred bucks apiece," he argued. "If we beat Pittsburgh, we'll get about six thousand bucks each. But even if the series only lasts four games, I'll be losing four thousand. I can get twenty-five hundred a game in exhibition work—it costs me dough to play in the series. Now what are you kicking about?" The kid got a full share.

Ruth had reached his supreme pinnacle. There were no more worlds to conquer. Although he still liked his good times, the wild, Rabelaisian days were passed. Except for one lapse during the 1928 season. The Yanks were in Chicago, and the Babe had run into some old friends. Huggins warned the team about curfew, with his eye on the big guy in the corner. Ruth was veering toward another fine, but he didn't seem to notice.

The Babe reported late for batting practice the next day, and Huggins was seething. He turned to Mark Roth, the club secretary, and said, "This is it."

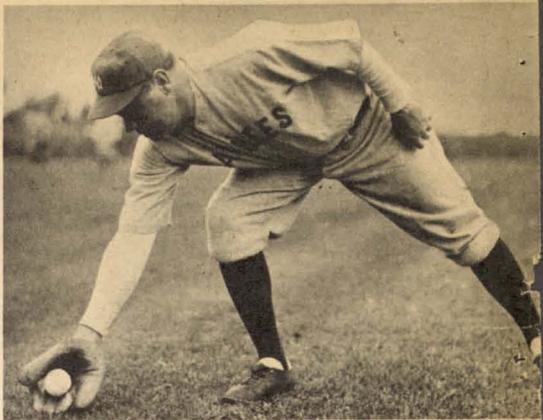
That afternoon Babe Ruth hit two home runs, a double and a single. He won the game singlehanded. After dinner that night, a group of us were sitting in the hotel lobby. Roth and Huggins were side by side near the exit when Ruth breezed past dressed to the teeth, on his way to "see a party," as he used to say. Roth looked quickly at Hug.

"You going to fine him now?" he whispered.

"Aw, shut up, Mark," said Huggins.

It was Miller Huggins who used to describe Babe Ruth's value in the lineup as "the most destructive force ever known in baseball." He didn't mean the force of Ruth's homers alone. The mere presence of the Babe created a disastrous psychological problem for the other team. Even when he wasn't hitting, the opposition was fearful that he might start. We won the 1922 pennant because of that one factor. The last month of 1922, Ruth didn't hit at all. But the opposing pitchers kept walking Ruth to get to Wally Pipp, and Pipp was hitting over four hundred at the time.

RUTH BECAME embroiled in politics for the first time in 1928. It was an election year, and Al Smith was running against Herbert Hoover. Babe was a great friend of Smith's. At the time, Babe was bylining a regular syndicated article appearing in Republican and Democratic newspapers alike. The column was carefully nonpartisan.



Babe's notion of training rules might have been flimsy, but there never was a minute in which he forgot his responsibilities to baseball and the folks who paid admission.



He did all he could to help Al Smith's cause in the 1928 presidential campaign. Here he poses with Leo Deigel, Joe Turnesa and Maureen Orcutt—"Golfers For Smith" publicity.



Babe made headlines refusing to pose with Hoover during the 1928 campaign, but after the whole thing died down (in 1933) the two old campaigners finally got together in public.



When Miller Huggins passed away, Joe McCarthy took over the managerial chores of the Yankee organization. By that time the big guns of

the Yank lineup had made history: The sportswriters called them murderers' row. Among the killers were Gehrig, Lazzeri, Combs and Babe.

HOW BABE RUTH HIT 60 HOMERS

Homer	Date	Against	City Made	Homer	Date	Against	City Made	Homer	Date	Against	City Made
1	April 15	Ehmke, Philadelphia	New York	21	June 12	Uhle, Cleveland	New York	41	Aug. 27	Nevers, St. Louis	St. Louis
2	23	Walberg, Phila.	Philadelphia	22	16	Zachary, St. Louis	New York	42	28	Wingard, St. Louis	St. Louis
3	24	Thurston, Wash.	Washington	23	22	Wiltse, Boston	Boston	43	31	Welzer, Boston	New York
4	29	Harris, Boston	Boston	24	22	Wiltse, Boston	Boston	44	Sept. 2	Walberg, Phila.	Philadelphia
5	May 1	Quinn, Phila.	Philadelphia	25	30	Harris, Boston	New York	45	6	Welzer, Boston	Boston
6	1	Walberg, Phila.	Philadelphia	26	July 3	Lisenbee, Wash.	Washington	46	6	Welzer, Boston	Boston
7	10	Gaston, St. Louis	St. Louis	27	8	Whitehill, Detroit	Detroit	47	6	Russell, Boston	Boston
8	11	Nevers, St. Louis	St. Louis	28	9	Holloway, Detroit	Detroit	48	7	MacFayden, Boston	Boston
9	17	Collins, Detroit	Detroit	29	9	Holloway, Detroit	Detroit	49	7	Harris, Boston	Boston
10	22	Karr, Cleveland	Cleveland	30	12	Shaute, Cleveland	Cleveland	50	11	Gaston, St. Louis	New York
11	23	Thurston, Wash.	Washington	31	24	Thomas, Chicago	Chicago	51	13	Hudlin, Cleveland	New York
12	28	Thurston, Wash.	Washington	32	26	Gaston, St. Louis	New York	52	13	Shaute, Cleveland	New York
13	29	MacFayden, Boston	New York	33	26	Gaston, St. Louis	New York	53	16	Blankenship, Chicago	New York
14	30	Walberg, Phila.	Philadelphia	34	28	Stewart, St. Louis	New York	54	18	Lyons, Chicago	New York
15	31	Ehmke, Phila.	Philadelphia	35	Aug. 5	G. Smith, Detroit	New York	55	21	Gibson, Detroit	New York
16	31	Quinn, Phila.	Philadelphia	36	10	Zachary, Wash.	Washington	56	22	Holloway, Detroit	New York
17	June 5	Whitehill, Detroit	New York	37	16	Thomas, Chicago	Chicago	57	27	Grove, Philadelphia	New York
18	7	Thomas, Chicago	New York	38	17	Connally, Chicago	Chicago	58	29	Lisenbee, Wash.	New York
19	11	Buckeye, Cleveland	New York	39	20	Miller, Cleveland	Cleveland	59	29	Hopkins, Wash.	New York
20	11	Buckeye, Cleveland	New York	40	22	Shaute, Cleveland	Cleveland	60	30	Zachary, Washington	New York

In 1927, after having hit only 18 home runs throughout July and August, Ruth had to step his pace up considerably during September to put together his total of 60. In that month he hit 17, three of them in one day against Boston on Sept. 6.

Late in the summer, however, Babe was caught in the fray. We were playing in Washington and arrived to find the field ablaze in red, white and blue bunting. We knew some big wheel was going to be at the game, and were very impressed by a battery of cameras that had been set up in front of the box.

Ruth volunteered some explanation. "There's a guy coming out to the game. I gotta have my picture taken with him." The guy turned out to be Herbert Hoover.

Dugan decided to give the Babe a little riding. "Jidge," he said solemnly, "you better be careful, Jidge—you're a buddy of Smith's, and he wouldn't like that."

"I never thought of that," said Ruth soberly.

Soon a messenger arrived from the Washington bench to tell the Babe that all the photographers were ready. "I changed my mind," Babe informed him. "Tell Hoover if he wants to meet me I'll be glad to get together with him under the stands. But not in public. I'm a friend of Al's."

That night the wires were crackling with the news that Babe Ruth had slighted Herbert Hoover. All the Republican papers that carried Ruth's column were threatening to cancel their contracts but like all such Ruth problems, it was soon forgotten.

BABE RUTH had long since discovered golf. He'd been playing the game for years. It was a natural for Ruth, since it meant freedom to use his tremendous power. He could hit the ball great distances, but had trouble controlling his shots. As his life underwent a metamorphosis, so did his golf. He understood you couldn't overpower everything—not even a golf ball. As he learned polish in life, he learned the touch in golf and was, in 1928, down in the seventies. There were few baseball players that could top him.

A goodlooking rookie outfielder joined the squad in the spring of 1929. He was well set up, good wrists, good arms. One afternoon, after practice, we asked the youngster if he'd like to join us in a round of golf. The kid's eyes lit up. He turned out to be quite a discovery; shot 69 his first time around at the Jungle Country Club.

We didn't mention his score to the Babe, but we admitted he was pretty good and rigged things so that Ruth was nudged into challenging him. The kid was a rank busher, and as a busher had practically no money to toss around in betting, so we surreptitiously got up a pool to back him. Babe thought it was going to be a walkover.

The rookie gave Ruth a lesson in advanced golf, even outdrove the slugger, which saddened the Bambino no end. Babe finished eight down. Since then, the kid has beaten many other golfers besides Babe; just a few years ago he carried Byron Nelson to extra holes in the Professional Golfers' Association at Dayton, Ohio. His name is Sammy Byrd.

INEVITABLY the day came for a parting of the ways. In 1930, I left the Yankees on a trade to the Detroit Tigers. It was tough leaving the team on which I had enjoyed so many happy years. Intuition told me the best had passed. Common sense told me that with Ruth facing me, instead of backing me, things were going to be mighty different. A reporter once asked me to what I owed my pitching success. I had a ready reply: playing with Babe Ruth on my side.

After a year with Detroit, I was again traded, this time to the Philadelphia Athletics, the club of Grove, Simmons, Fox, Cochran and Earnshaw. Connie Mack's outfit. The day came when I was selected to pitch against my old teammates. I wanted to win, of course, just as they wanted to beat me. That's baseball. I did fine for six innings. In fact, I had a shut-out. In the seventh, with two out, the Babe came to the plate. He was leaning in, and I figured to handcuff him with an inside fast ball. Behind the right field wall, in Philadelphia, there's a street. On the far side of the street stand a row of houses, and behind them another row of houses and still another street. Somewhere along that street they found my carefully planned inside fast ball where the Babe had put it. As I watched the big guy rounding the circuit, I thought to myself; "I've seen you hit over six hundred of those homers, big boy, but I *still* don't know how you do it." Then I got mad.

Babe's final separation from his wife Helen came in 1926. Three years later she was burned to death in a fire in Watertown, Mass. Babe was heart-broken, probably conscience-stricken—he had never been mature

enough to appreciate marital responsibility. Mrs. Ruth left an estate of \$50,000, but to the Babe she bequeathed only \$5. The rest went to their daughter Dorothy, who had been adopted as a foundling.





Hollywood tempted the King of Swat for the second time. When this photo was taken he was making a series of films. Babe detoured on his way to the studio to umpire a baseball game for neighborhood kids.



The day finally came when the big fellow had to step aside for younger blood. In 1932, Babe posed with Jimmy Foxx who had totaled most home runs. Neither Foxx nor anyone else could top Babe's peak.



It was a sad day for both Ruth and Lou Gehrig when the two most devastating sluggers in any league parted company. They embraced tearfully at later meeting; Lou Gehrig Day, 1939 at Yankee Stadium.



Making his first appearance in the Phillies' Park since the World Series of 1915, the Babe was greeted with this floral tribute from the entire gang, as his team (the Braves) played the Athletics in 1935.



A picked team of the American League defeated the stars of the National League in 1933, with Babe hitting one of the last home runs of his long career. Here the Boston bat-boy welcomes him across home plate.



Though Babe Ruth's active playing days were about finished, the Big Guy just couldn't leave the game to which he had given his entire life. It was a slow farewell, with several unhappy attempts at

taking a subordinate role. For the most part, Babe and Mrs. Ruth were to be seen in the first row of the grandstand, enthusiastic spectators at the events which they had previously always been so much a part of.

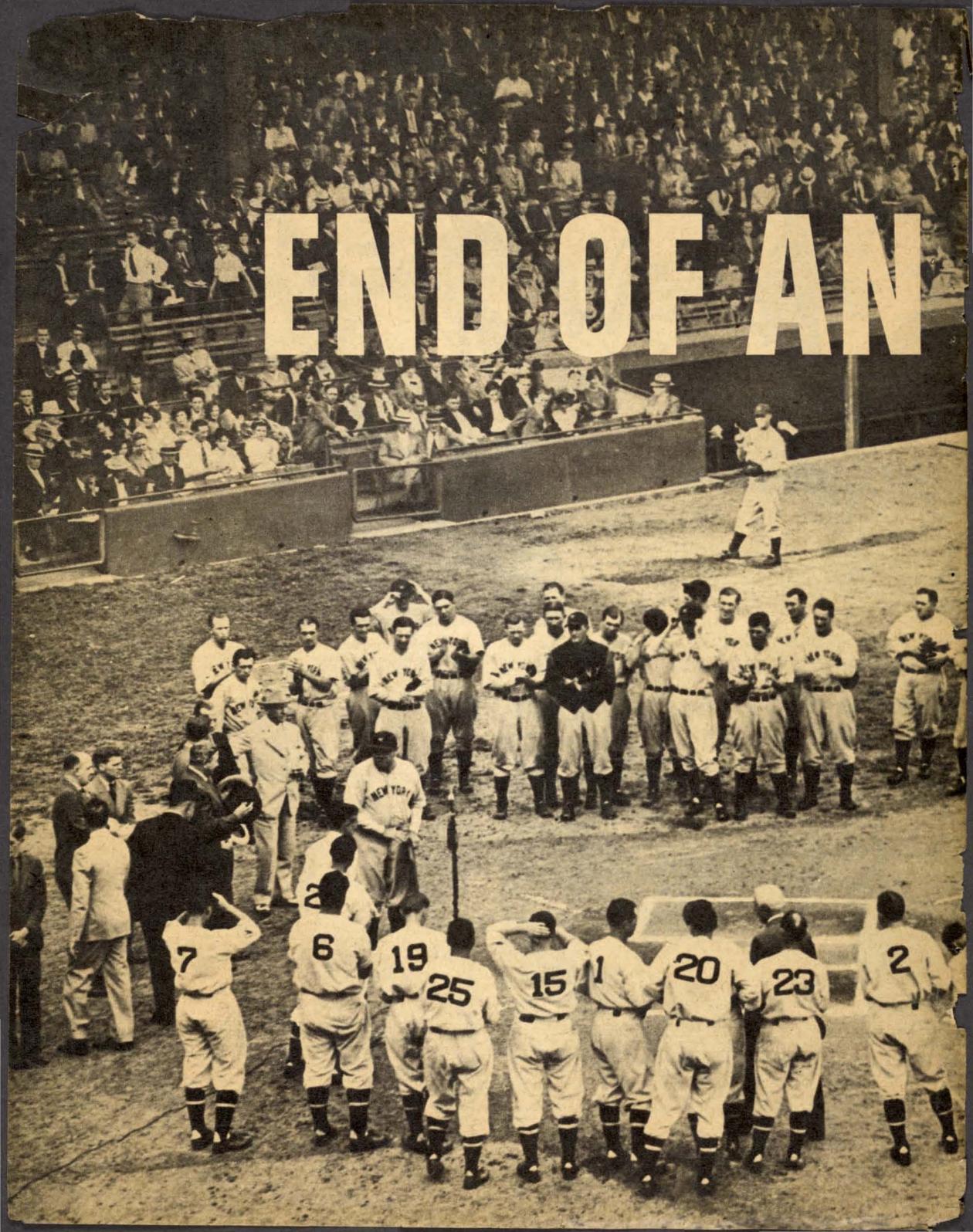


He tried out as a coach for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1938. Like Babe's stay with the Boston Braves, this turned out unhappily. As Babe told it, Rickey was supposed to call him back, never got around to it.



Another time, Ruth thought he'd take a stab at being an umpire, but never found a place for himself within the baseball organization after he made his final appearance as an active player with the Braves.

END OF AN





ERA

★ On Sept. 30, 1934,

Babe Ruth left the regular Yankee

lineup. They gave him a

scroll signed by thousands of

friends who would

never forget him. The first name

was Franklin Roosevelt.

TO OTHER biographers I leave the tales of Babe Ruth's declining days, the coming of Joe McCarthy, the sad period Ruth spent with the Boston Braves. I prefer the lighter side of the Babe's career. Like the tense conferences held in the enemy camps on strategy in pitching to the big fellow: I remember a day in May, 1935. I remember the last home runs hit by the Big Bam. Ruth was with the Boston Braves, his power ebbing, his eyes and legs failing. He had consented to make one last road trip with the Braves, and we met again in Pittsburgh where I was playing with the Pirates.

Before the game, Pi Traynor, Pirate manager, held his pow-wow on pitching strategy. He held the score card in hand, running down the Braves line-up to analyze batting weaknesses. Red Lucas was scheduled to pitch, and he had one question. "How do we pitch to Ruth?" One of the other players broke in, "Aw, he's through. He's not hitting. Nothing to worry about."

"Never mind about him being through," said Lucas. "I'm the guy pitching to him, and he might start again."

Suddenly a great light dawned on the Pittsburgh players. Why, here was Hoyt sitting in a corner. Hoyt had played with and against the Babe for fifteen years. Hoyt would know how to pitch to him.

I spoke my piece. "The best way to pitch to Ruth," I told them, "is to pitch behind him. He has no weaknesses except deliberate walks. You have your choice—one base on four balls, or four bases on one ball."

The boys were peeved. I assured them I wasn't-kidding.

Guy Bush, once a great pitcher for the Cubs, said, "I pitched against him in the '32 series. I got him out throwing sinkers."

"So did Charlie Root," I answered. "Charlie threw the Babe a sinker that the Babe dropped into the center field bleachers."

The meeting ended without reaching a formula, and Lucas went out to the mound. Ruth came up the first inning as the crowd rose in a mighty ovation. He took his familiar pigeon-toed stance and waited. Lucas scratched, pawed the ground with his spikes,

took a long windup and pitched. Ruth hit a tremendous home run over the roof of the right field pavilion.

On the players' bench, I nudged Cy Blanton. "What did I tell you, Cy? He should have pitched behind him."

When Ruth came up to bat for the second time, Lucas was soaping in the showers and Bill Swift was pitching. Babe connected with a fast ball and hit it far into the center field seats. In the seventh inning, when Ruth was up again, Guy Bush, the Mississippi Mudcat, was pitching. The sinker specialist. He put on a big show whipping two strikes past the big fellow. Bush was hot. He bounced up and down as if his knees were all springs. Sort of a free-wheeling effect. His third pitch came after a fancy, exaggerated windup to throw Ruth off balance. Ruth hit it for his third home run of the ball game. I nudged Cy Blanton again. Cy looked back at me and winked.

FOR SOME years before his retirement, the Babe had found domesticity a pleasant retreat from the constant pressure of the spotlight. Christy Walsh was partly responsible for the change, but more so was Claire Hodgson Ruth, his wife.

Claire had given up a promising career as an actress to marry Ruth in 1929, months after the tragic death of his first wife, Helen. Claire was a beautiful, intelligent girl and Babe didn't have to think twice about asking her.

There have been many compliments tossed Miller Huggins' way on his success in managing Babe Ruth. I haven't heard enough compliments on the way Claire Ruth managed her husband. Her task in the domestic league was by far the most difficult. She guarded the minimum of privacy the Babe needed. She watched the exchequer. She ran the home. Ruth for once in his life, subordinated his impulses to his love for his wife. And make no mistake—Claire could talk baseball on equal terms with any major leaguer. After Christy Walsh surrendered Babe's business management, Claire took over those chores too. She was not only a fine wife, she was Babe's buddy.

Several years after the Babe retired, I had the opportunity of studying the domesticated King in his new domain. I had a favor to ask of the big fellow, and telephoned for an appointment. Claire told me to come right up. Mrs. Hoyt and I spent a pleasant evening in the well known Riverside Drive apartment. One of the rooms had been set apart as a combination trophy room and study. There, in a heavy leather armchair, we found the Sultan of Swat, puffing slowly on an oversized pipe. To one



sider sat Mrs. Ruth, occasionally interrupting the conversation to scold Babe mildly when he forgot a name or date. Babe was talking about his pictures, cups and deer heads. He never pointed to a prize—merely blew a shaft of smoke in the direction of the special object. I followed a blue ribbon of smoke to a large frame.

"That's what I'm proudest of," said Ruth. "You see there a picture of every one of the sixty balls I hit for home runs in 1927. There's not another picture like it in the world. Every ball has written on it the date it was hit and the name of the pitcher it was hit off. What tickles me most is that I hit the last home run the last time at bat on the last day. Remember?"

He puffed silently for a moment. "See that picture over there?" he continued suddenly, "That was taken in Manila." It was a picture of the Babe shaking hands with half a dozen or so Filipinos.

"We had a time over there. Those Hawaiians tried to give me the business."

"Filipinos, Babe," said Mrs. Ruth.

"Yeah—Filipinos. Well, anyway, there must have been 30,000 people out there that day. All you could see was heads jammed together. They tried to tell me there were only 10,000 in the park. I stood to lose a bundle of dough. I said, 'no money—me no play.' I've been looking at crowds all my life. I know 30,000 when I see them. So this Hawaiian says . . ."

"Filipino, Babe," said Mrs. Ruth.

" . . . Filipino says, 'me no un'ers'an.' I picked up my glove and started for the gate. The guy understood that all right. We played and got paid."

"Who'd you play?" I asked.

"We wanted to split our troupe up," explained the Babe, "five or six major leaguers on each side with the rest local talent. But out of the stand rained cushions, bottles, straw hats—everything. They didn't want us to split up. So we played an all star team and beat them 35 to nothing, or something. That's what they

wanted, a slaughter. Tough people, those Hawaiians."

"Filipinos," said Mrs. Ruth.

"Aw, what the hell," Babe said. "Make it Eskimos. We beat 'em!"

I saw another picture on the wall, Babe being interviewed. It reminded me of a time in Nashville during an exhibition game. I guess it was the shortest interview on record. Ruth was sitting idly watching pre-game batting when some cub reporter parked himself beside The Bam and announced that he was a roving columnist doing a series of articles about the opinions of famous people on world events.

"I have selected the Chinese situation for you," he said. "Mr. Ruth, what do you think of the Chinese situation?"

The Bambino gave him the answer sublime. "The hell with it," he said.

THROUGH the years I saw the Ruths many times again, at their apartment, at banquets, benefits, on the golf links. He was always the same old Babe—a joke, happy grin, ever willing to discuss baseball. His biggest disappointment was the failure of baseball to give him a chance at managing. Babe was the fellow who made many a magnate. He raised salaries, made baseball the national pastime. He deserved the chance. Some said he should start in the minors and work up. That really rankled.

"I was as big as any of them," Babe told me. "Did Frisch start in the minors before he managed the Cards? Or Hornsby? Or Terry? Or Ott? Or Traynor? What a line."

Baseball missed the boat on that one. Babe might have failed. If he had, the baseball world could always have been able to say that he had been allowed to try. He had been part of the game all through its growing pains, part of its very heart. Even as a player he'd helped develop hidden talent among his teammates. Any way you look at it, the Babe should at least have had his chance.

Before leaving on a Pacific barnstorming tour, Babe, Mrs. Ruth (right) and daughter Julla (left) go Mexican at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

When Babe Ruth's troupe arrived in Honolulu they were given a welcome fit for visiting royalty. Ruth was almost smothered by flowered leis.



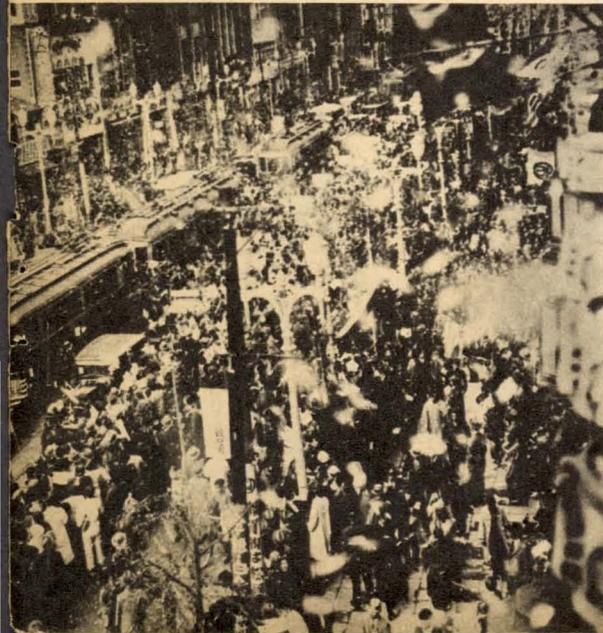




Everywhere Babe Ruth went, he was met by the same hysterical crowds fighting to get a glimpse of their hero.

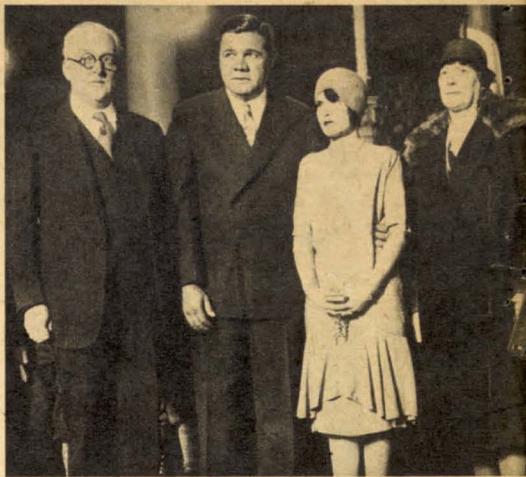
In Tokyo they turned out by the hundreds of thousands to cheer the Babe with banzais. After the parade, he gave the usual autographs.

Kids are the same all over the world, as this picture will testify; these Japanese lads got to meet the Bam during an exhibition game.





In 1925 Babe met Mrs. Claire Hodgson. She was from Georgia, her father was a teacher at the University there. She had been on the New York stage. They were married in 1929, after Helen Ruth's death.



Above, Babe and the beautiful Claire leave St. Gregory's Roman Catholic Church after their wedding. This second marriage proved as successful as the first had been ill-fated.



By this time Babe had settled down somewhat. He was receiving an annual income from a trust fund he had established with an insurance company. Willing to accept responsibility, he even helped with the dishes.



Babe kisses Claire for luck before a game. It worked—later Babe socked his first home run of the season. This was shortly before he declared his voluntary retirement from active participation in 1935.



Babe receives a kiss from his daughter Julia. The Babe had been vacationing in Florida following the first of what later turned out to be just one of many operations to block the progression of his illness.



Mrs. Ruth had a daughter, Julia, by a previous marriage. Babe adopted Julia; Mrs. Ruth adopted Dorothy. Above, in the lawyer's office for the adoption. All moved to Riverside Dr.



Claire Ruth did not try to hide the irrepressible Babe on a farm. She liked the city, its activities and its people as much as he did. Above, with comedian Joe E. Brown, Inter-League All-Star Game.



In May of 1940, Julia married Richard Flanders. The wedding took place at Babe's now famous, Riverside Drive apartment. Above,

Babe, Mrs. William Flanders, the groom's mother, and new hubby look on as Julia cuts her cake. Sister Dorothy is also married.

BABE RUTH'S LIFETIME

YEAR-BY-YEAR WITH THE SULTAN OF SWAT

1914—Left St. Mary's Industrial School, Baltimore, to sign contract with Baltimore Orioles for \$600 at age of 20. Was purchased by Boston Red Sox during season for \$2900 and farmed to Providence. Hit his first home run in professional baseball.

1915—Regular pitcher with Red Sox. Pitched in 32 games, won 18 and lost six. Made world series debut as pinch hitter, grounding out on pitch by Grover Alexander.

1916—Pitched in 44 games, won 23, lost 12, finishing with earned run average of 1.75. Beat Dodgers, 2-1, in 14 innings in only start in world series.

1917—Won 23 games, lost 13 and batted over .300 first time with a .325 mark in 52 games.

1918—Won 13 games, lost seven, batted .300 with 11 home runs. Won his two starts in world series against Cubs, 1-0, and 3-2, to run consecutive scoreless inning string to 29, a record.

1919—Became regular outfielder, hitting 29 home runs and batting .324 in 130 games. Had no decisions as pitcher.

1920—Sold to Yankees for \$125,000 and awarded a salary rise to \$20,000, he hit 54 home runs and batted .376.

1921—Hit 59 home runs and boosted average to .378 with \$30,000 salary. Hit .313 in world series against Giants.

1922—Hit only 35 home runs in first year of five-year contract at \$52,000.

1923—Came back with 41 circuit blows, then in series with Giants batted three homers for a new record.

1924—Hit 46 homers although Yankees fell to seventh place. Led league in batting with .378.

1925—Fined \$5000 and suspended by Miller Huggins for "misconduct on playing field."

1926—Batted .372 with 47 homers and set world series mark with three home runs in one game against Cardinals.

1927—Signed three year contract with Yankees for \$70,000 a year and set new record in home runs with 60. Hit two homers and batted .400 in world series.

1928—Batted .323 with 54 home runs and again hit three homers in one series game, with a .625 batting average on ten hits in four games.

1929—Batted .345 with 46 homers.

1930—Signed record breaking salary of \$80,000 a season for two years. Batted .359 with 49 homers that season and .373 with 46 four-baggers in 1931.

1932—Contract cut to \$75,000. Hit 41 home runs during season two more in world series for a record total of 15 in eight series.

1933—Got \$52,000 salary and batted .34

homers with .301 mark.

1934—Last season with Yankees. Salary—\$35,000. Hit 22 homers, batted .288 in 125 games.

1935—Joined Boston Braves as vice president. Hit three homers in game in Pittsburgh. Quit club soon thereafter.

1938—Coached Dodgers under one year contract.

RUTH'S PAY BY SEASONS DURING BASEBALL CAREER

Babe Ruth's salary by seasons for his professional baseball career follows:

Year.	Team	Salary.
1914	Baltimore (I. L.)	\$ 600
1914	Boston (A. L.)	1,300
1915	Boston (A. L.)	3,500
1916	Boston (A. L.)	3,500
1917	Boston (A. L.)	5,000
1918	Boston (A. L.)	7,000
1919	Boston (A. L.)	10,000
1920	New York (A. L.)	20,000
1921	New York (A. L.)	30,000
1922	New York (A. L.)	52,000
1923	New York (A. L.)	52,000
1924	New York (A. L.)	52,000
1925	New York (A. L.)	52,000
1926	New York (A. L.)	52,000
1927	New York (A. L.)	70,000
1928	New York (A. L.)	70,000
1929	New York (A. L.)	70,000
1930	New York (A. L.)	80,000
1931	New York (A. L.)	80,000
1932	New York (A. L.)	75,000
1933	New York (A. L.)	50,000
1934	New York (A. L.)	35,000
1935	Boston (N. L.)	40,000
1938	Brooklyn (N. L.)	15,000

Total \$925,900
*Bought by Red Sox from Baltimore and farmed to Providence (I. L.).

REGULAR SEASON RECORDS

Highest slugging percentage (extra base hits) season, 100 or more games—847, New York, 142 games, 1920.

Highest slugging percentage, American League—692, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

Most years leading American League in slugging percentage, 100 or more games—13, Boston and New York, 1918-1931, except 1925.

Most runs, season (American League)—177, New York, 152 games, 1921.

Most years leading American League in runs—8, Boston and New York, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928.

Most home runs—714, Boston (A.), New York

(A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914 to 1935 inclusive, 708 in A. L. and 6 in N. L. Most home runs, league—708, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

Most home runs, season—60, New York, 151 games, 1927.

Most home runs, two consecutive seasons—114, New York, 60 in 1927, 54 in 1928.

Most years leading American League in home runs—12, Boston and New York, 1918 (tied) 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931 (tied).

Most consecutive years leading American League in home runs—6, New York, 1926 to 1931 (tied in 1931).

Most home runs, season, on road—32, New York, 1927.

Most years, 50 or more home runs, American League—4, New York, 1920, 1921, 1927, 1928.

Most consecutive years, 50 or more home runs, season, American League—2, New York, 1920-1921; 1927-1928.

Most years, 40 or more home runs, American League—11, New York, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932.

Most consecutive years, 40 or more home runs, American League—7, New York, 1926-1932 inclusive.

Most years, 30 or more home runs, American League—13, New York, 1920 to 1933, excepting 1925.

Most times, two or more home runs in one game—72, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914-1935; 71 in American League, 1 in National League.

Most times, three home runs in a double-header—7, New York, 1920 to 1933.

Most home runs with bases filled in one season—4, Boston, 130 games, 1919 (tied).

Most home runs with bases filled in two consecutive games—2, New York, Sept. 27, 29, 1927, also Aug. 6, second game, Aug. 7 first game, 1929 (tied).

Most home runs, 5 consecutive games—7, New York, June 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 1921 (American League and tied major league).

Most home runs, two consecutive days—6, New York, May 21, 22, 22, 1930, 4 games.

Most home runs, one week—9, New York, May 18 to 24, second game, 1930, 8 games (tied).

Most total bases, season—457, New York, 152 games, 1921.

Most years leading American League in total bases—6, Boston and New York, 1919, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1928 (tied).

Most extra-base hits—1,356, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914 to 1935 inclusive; 506 doubles, 136 triples, 714 home runs.

Most long hits, American League—1,350, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 in-

RECORDS

In 22 years in the major leagues, the Big Bam amassed a total of seventy-six records, sixty-two of which still are unsurpassed.

clusive; 506 doubles, 136 triples, 708 home runs.

Most extra-base hits in one season—119, New York, 152 games, 1921; 44 doubles, 16 triples, 59 home runs.

Most years leading American League in extra-base hits—7, Boston and New York, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1928.

Most consecutive years leading American League in extra-base hits—4, Boston and New York, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921.

Most extra bases on long hits—2, 1920, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914-1935 inclusive.

Most extra bases on long hits, American League—2, 902, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

Most extra bases on long hits, in one season—253, New York, 152 games, 1921.

Most years leading American League in extra bases on long hits—9, Boston and New York, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1929.

Most consecutive years leading American League in extra bases on long hits—4, Boston and New York, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921.

Most years 200 or more extra bases on long hits—4, New York, 1920, 1921, 1927, 1928.

Most years, 100 or more extra bases on long hits—14, Boston and New York, 1919-1933 inclusive, except 1925 (tied).

Most runs batted in—2,209, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914-1935 inclusive.

Most runs batted in, American League—2, 197, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

Most years leading American League, runs batted in—6, Boston and New York, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923 (tied), 1926, 1928 (tied).

Most consecutive years leading American League, runs batted in—3, Boston and New York, 1919, 1920, 1921.

Most years, 100 or more runs batted in—13, Boston and New York, 1919-1933 except 1922 and 1925 (tied).

Most consecutive years, 150 or more runs batted in, league—3, New York, 1929, 1930, 1931 (tied).

Most bases on balls—2,056, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914-1935 inclusive.

Most bases on balls, American League—2,036, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

Most years leading American League in bases on balls—11, New York, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933.

Most consecutive years leading American League in bases on balls—4, New York, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933.

Most years 100 or more bases on balls, American League—13, Boston and New York, 1919

1920, 1921, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934.

Most consecutive years, 100 or more bases on balls, league—5, New York, 1930-1934 inclusive (tied).

Most strikeouts, 1,330, Boston (A.), New York (A.) and Boston (N.), 22 years, 1914-1935 inclusive.

Most strikeouts, American League, 1,306, Boston and New York, 21 years, 1914-1934 inclusive.

WORLD SERIES RECORDS

Most series played, 10, Boston (1915, 1916, 1918); New York (1921, 1922, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1932).

Most series batting .300 or better—6, New York (1921, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1932).

Highest batting percentage, four or more games, one series—625, New York, 1928.

Most runs, total series—37, New York (A.).

Most runs, one series—Nine (four-game series)—New York, 1928; eight (six-game series), New York, 1923; eight (six-game series), New York (1923).

Most runs, one game—4, New York, 1926 (tie).

Most consecutive games, one or more runs, one or more series—9, New York.

Most hits, one series—10 (four-game series), New York (1928).

Most two-base hits, one series—3 (four-game series), New York, 1928.

Most home runs, total series—15, New York, 1921, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1932.

Most home runs, one series—3 (six-game series), New York, 1923; 4 (seven-game series), New York, 1926.

Most home runs, one game—3, New York, 1928.

Three home runs in one game—New York, 1932.

Most total bases, one series—22 (four-game series), New York, 1928; 19 (six-game series), New York, 1923.

Most total bases, one game—12, New York, 1926, 1928.

Most extra-base hits, one series—6 (four-game series), New York, 1928; five (six-game series), New York, 1923 (tied).

Most extra-base hits, total series—22, Boston and New York.

Most extra bases on long hits, total series—54, Boston and New York.

Most extra bases on long hits, one game—9, New York, 1926, 1928.

Most times player batting in three runs on long hit—2, New York, 1927, 1932 (tied).

Most bases on balls, total series—33, Boston and New York.

Most bases on balls, one series—8 (six-game series), New York, 1923; 11 (7-game

series), New York, 1926.

Most bases on balls, one game—4, New York, 1926 (tied).

Most strike-outs, total series—30, Boston and New York.

HIS BIGGEST DAY

New York at Chicago (N. L.), World Series game Oct. 1, 1932, where he called his home run shot against Charlie Root.

NEW YORK (A.)	ab.	r.	h.	po.	a. e.
Earl Combs, cf	5	1	0	1	0 0
Joe Sewell, 3b	2	1	0	2	2 0
Babe Ruth, rf	4	2	2	2	0 0
Lou Gehrig, 1b	5	2	2	13	1 0
Tony Lazzeri, 2b	4	1	0	3	4 1
Bill Dickey, c	4	0	1	2	1 0
Ben Chapman, rf	4	0	2	0	0 0
Frank Crosetti, ss	4	0	1	4	4 0
Geo. Pipgras, p	5	0	0	0	0 0
Herb Pennock, p	0	0	0	0	1 0
Total	37	7	8	27	13 1

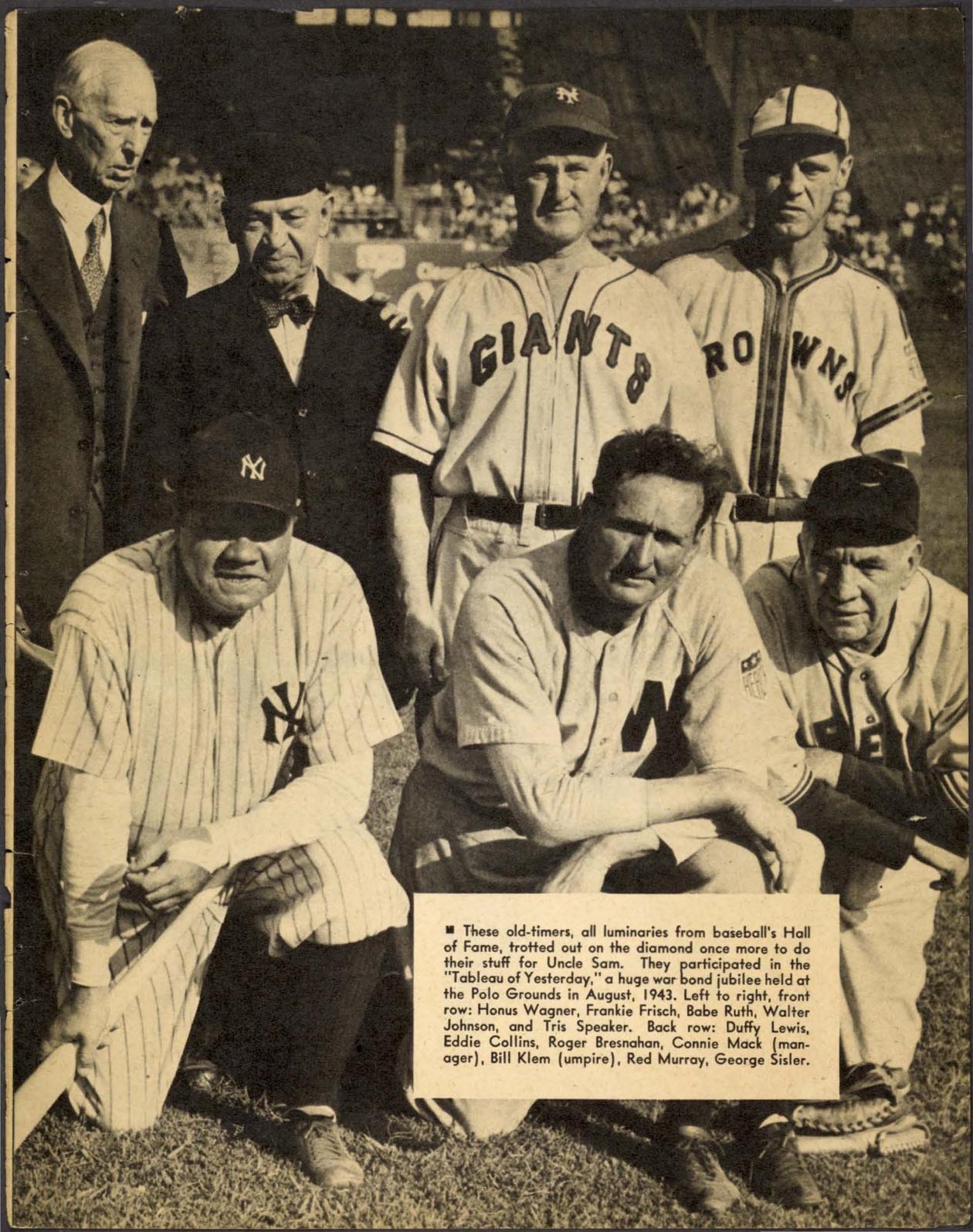
CHICAGO (N.)	ab.	r.	h.	po.	a. e.
Bill Herman, 2b	4	1	0	1	2 1
Woody English, 3b	4	0	0	2	3 0
Kiki Cuyler, rf	4	1	3	1	0 0
R. Stephenson, lf	4	0	1	1	0 0
John Moore, cf	3	1	0	3	0 0
Chas. Grimm, lb	4	0	1	8	0 0
Leo Hartnett, c	4	1	1	10	1 1
Billy Jurgas, ss	4	1	3	3	3 2
Charles Root, p	2	0	0	0	0 0
Pat Malone, p	0	0	0	0	0 0
Jake May, p	0	0	0	0	0 0
Bud Tinning, p	0	0	0	0	0 0
aMark Gudat	1	0	0	0	0 0
bMark Koenig	0	0	0	0	0 0
cRollie Hemsley	1	0	0	0	0 0
Total	35	5	9	27	9 4

aBatted for Malone in seventh.
bBatted for Tinning in ninth.
cBatted for Koenig in ninth.

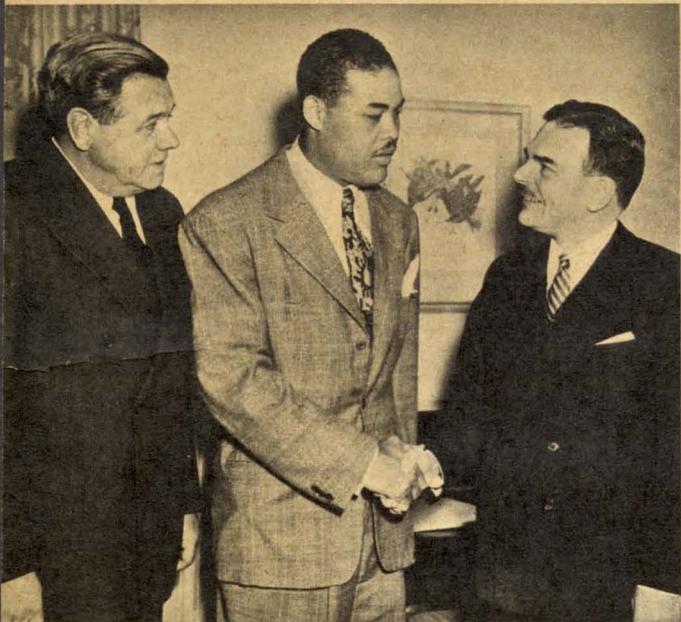
New York 3 0 1 0 2 0 0 0 1—7
Chicago 1 0 2 1 0 0 0 0 1—5
Runs batted in—Ruth 4, Gehrig 2, Cuyler 2, Grimm, Chapman, Hartnett.

Two-base hits—Chapman, Cuyler, Jurgas, Grimm. Home runs—Ruth 2, Gehrig 2, Cuyler, Hartnett. Stolen base—Jurgas. Double plays—Sewell, Lazzeri and Gehrig; Herman, Jurgas and Grimm. Struck out—By Root 4, Malone 4, May 1, Tinning 1, Pipgras 1, Pennock 1. Bases on balls—Off Root 3, Malone 4, Pipgras 3. Hits—Off Root 6 in 4 1-3 innings, Malone 1 in 2-3, May 1 in 1-2, Tinning 0 in 2-3, Pipgras 9 in 8, Pennock 0 in 1. Hit by pitcher—By May 1. Winning pitcher—Pipgras. Losing pitcher—Root. Umpires—Van Graftan, Magerkurth, Dinneen and Klem. Time of game—2:11. Attendance—49,986.





■ These old-timers, all luminaries from baseball's Hall of Fame, trotted out on the diamond once more to do their stuff for Uncle Sam. They participated in the "Tableau of Yesterday," a huge war bond jubilee held at the Polo Grounds in August, 1943. Left to right, front row: Honus Wagner, Frankie Frisch, Babe Ruth, Walter Johnson, and Tris Speaker. Back row: Duffy Lewis, Eddie Collins, Roger Bresnahan, Connie Mack (manager), Bill Klem (umpire), Red Murray, George Sisler.



The retired champion of baseball met the soon to be retired boxing champ, Joe Louis, at Thomas Dewey's campaign headquarters. Mr. Dewey, at the time, was running for re-election as Governor of New York.



One of the Babe's last batting lessons: this lucky four-year-old picked up a few pointers from the world's foremost expert. Ruth was relaxing at Miami Beach after his illness in 1947.



Babe meets Babe, with a friendly kiss. Babe Didrikson-Zaharias, top notch woman athlete, has broken almost as many records as her illustrious namesake. At this golf tournament, Babe Ruth was strictly a spectator.



Ruth family group: one of the last pictures of the Babe and Mrs. Ruth, taken during the Bambino's Miami vacation. His voice almost completely gone, Babe never lost his happy grin.



The Sultan of Swat and the Manassa Mauler. Two of Sport's all-time heroes got together during the playoff of the Little World's Series, the American Legion play-offs at L.A.'s Gilmore Stadium.



For the sake of Fiorello La Guardia, the Bam hoists a bat to his shoulder once more. Both beloved New York figures died within a short time of each other. Neither knew he suffered from deadly cancer.



Mayor William O'Dwyer visited Ruth several weeks before his death. Former signed a proclamation designating July 26 as Babe Ruth Day. Babe left the hospital to attend the celebration.



Babe was never too busy or ill to accommodate a fan. Rough estimates say he signed over a million baseballs, sometimes saw 250 fans a night—reasons why the sight of the Babe's car always brought cheers.



BABE BOWS OUT

On June 13, 1948, Babe walked out to greet the cheering crowds. Once more it was Ruth's day . . .

No one at the stadium knew it was to be his last.

I SAW Babe Ruth for the last time last June, the day they celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of Yankee Stadium. All the old Yanks were invited to join in the festivities with a banquet and an old-timers game. Babe couldn't make the banquet, but he did make that one last appearance in the "House that Ruth built."

Babe had kept his old Yankee uniform, the uniform with the famous number 3. Claire Ruth said he was like a child for two weeks before the big day. He insisted that the already spotless suit be sent out for cleaning. His baseball shoes were sent out for another polishing.

It was a rainy Sunday and Ruth walked into the familiar clubhouse escorted by his good friend, Paul Carey. His face lighted up like a roman candle at the sight of all his old teammates. His voice was just a croak, his shoulders pitifully thin. But the Babe was in great spirits. He called everyone by their old nicknames—or at least the nicknames he had coined. You'd have to have known the Babe to understand how deeply moved he was to be back in his old stamping grounds, even for such a fleeting moment.

His old friends gathered around him; Dugan, Meusel, Pipp, Bush, Jones, Mays, Shawkey, Koenig and dozens of others. The Ruth magnetism was at work again. It always had operated as strongly on the ball players as on the fans. Players who, in their active days, were known to be sphinxes suddenly began babbling. The presence of Ruth brought out the whole wonderful past in a tumultuous flood.

Then we were on the field. Each of the old-timers was announced to the crowd. Ruth was last to be presented. That was a moment. Like an echo from the past, we saw the big fellow having his day. All of us standing along the foul lines heard the deep thunder of the ovation, realizing all this man had done for us, realizing that Babe Ruth was a baseball player apart—a man apart.

Then it was all over.

ON AUGUST 16, 1948, I was sitting at my broadcasting table in Cincinnati, waiting for the baseball game to begin, when suddenly there it was.



When Babe Ruth walked out on the infield wearing his famous number 3, players, coaches, fans—everyone joined in the ovation. Upper left,

two typical pictures of Ruth in 1947. He was still suffering the after-effects of a delicate neck operation, and was in a weakened condition.

"Babe Ruth, the greatest of the baseball heroes, the Sultan of Swat, died at Memorial Hospital, New York, at 8:01 this evening."

We had all expected Ruth's death, having followed the hospital bulletins all afternoon. But it was just as much of a sickening jolt as if I hadn't known. It was as if someone had chipped part of my life away. The lives of baseball players are so interwoven; the successes of some are vital to the successes of others.

I remembered, years back, when baseball players had conjectured about how the Babe might end his days. It hadn't seemed conceivable to us that his tremendous vitality and force would ever succumb to the sicknesses which plagued others. He had never felt normal reactions to pain or distress. They tell me he didn't, even in his final battle with cancer. Ruth fought the disease beyond the limits of endurance of the average person. But this time, despite his efforts, the opposing pitcher had too much.

I WAS invited to serve as an honorary pall bearer at Babe's funeral services at St. Patrick's Cathedral. It was the least I could do for the big fellow.

I have no maudlin sorrow for Ruth's passing. I believe he lived a rich, full, complete life. He was at times a Peck's bad boy—but the kind of bad boy it's easy to forgive. At times he didn't understand. Other times he did understand, but didn't care. But he did care about baseball. He loved the game, his greatest love beyond all else. He brought joy and thrills to millions. He was a man predestined to greatness. Ruth in the end was looked on not as a mere athlete, but as a world personality. Stature like that does not arrive through error.

Perhaps the best summation is in the prayer delivered at the end of the Mass in St. Patrick's.

... "May the Divine Spirit that inspired Babe Ruth to overcome hardships and win the crucial game of life animate many generations of American youth to learn from the examples of his struggles and successes, loyalty to play their positions on all American teams. And may his generous hearted soul, through the mercy of God, the final scoring of his own good deeds, and the prayers of his faithful friends, rest in everlasting peace."



When baseball's immortal home run king died, his immediate family and a small circle of friends were at his bedside, and many other friends from nearby dwellings, jammed the doorway of Memorial Hospital.



They hit home runs at the Polo Grounds; Durocher fought the umpire, but nothing could erase the undertone of sorrow. Before exhibition game with Giants, Yanks stand in tribute after Babe's death.



Down the broad aisle of lofty, vaulted St. Patrick's they bore the casket—75,000 persons, some of whom had gathered at daylight, huddled in the rain as the beloved Bambino began his last journey.



Over 5,600 friends sat and stood in the nave, hushed in humility, as Babe Ruth, who received Communion in the humble chapel of St. Mary's, received last rites in the majestic Cathedral on 5th Avenue.



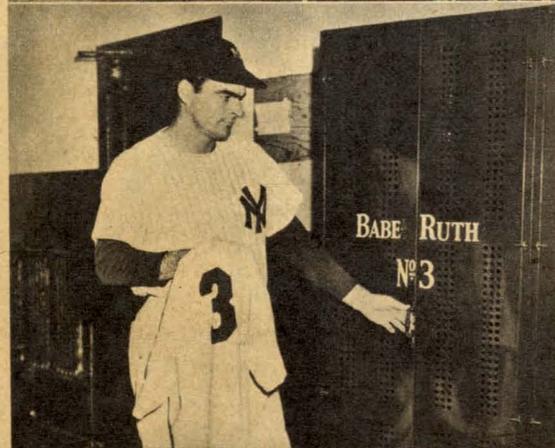
Because he had so many friends, Babe's family requested that funeral services be open. Above, his widow, daughter Julia and son-in-law arrive at St. Patrick's for Requiem Mass.



Hosts of mourners, young and old, paid tribute to the 53 year old hero. Above, the flower-decked casket is carried past a double row of honorary pallbearers, headed by Gov. Dewey and Mayor O'Dwyer.

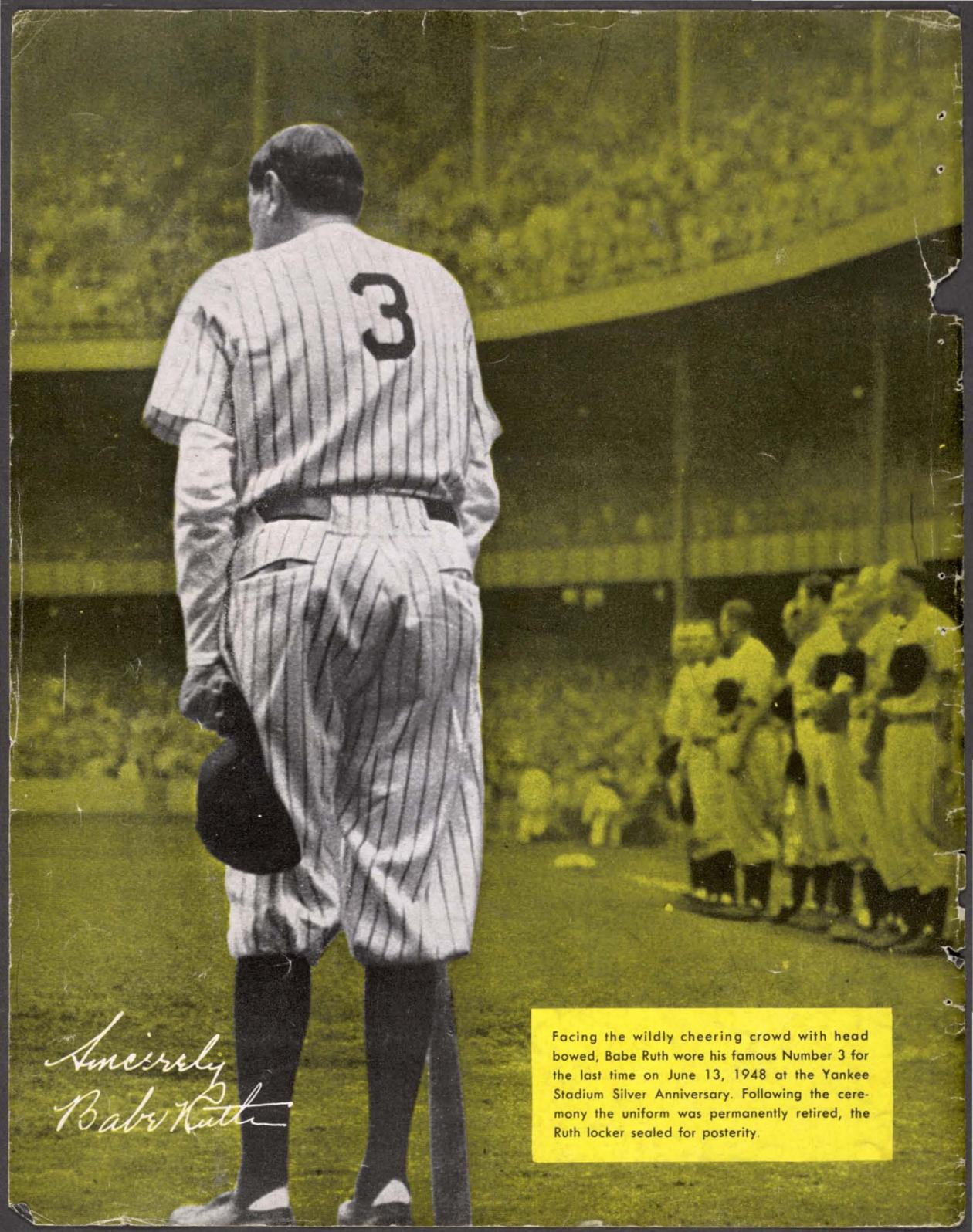
To the boys of St. Mary's, Babe's life and fame held a special significance. They gathered to add their prayers to those offered throughout the world.





■ A crowd greater than any that ever had gathered to do homage to the big fellow under sunny skies came to bid him a silent farewell in grayness and rain as the people of America paid their final tribute to Babe Ruth. For two days he lay in state at the Yankee Stadium while an estimated 82,000 waited to file past his bier. They were housewives, business men, people from every walk of life. There were thousands of unaccompanied children who stared wide-eyed at the quiet figure, and hurried nervously away. The family had requested no flowers, yet the great lobby was almost filled with roses and lilies and orchids sent from all over the country. The following day a Solemn Requiem Mass was held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Attending were the famous; Gov. Dewey, Mayor O'Dwyer of New York, Mayor Curley of Boston, Mayor D'Alesandro of Baltimore, Jack Dempsey, Joe Di Maggio, Connie Mack, Mrs. Lou Gehrig and many more. And there were the humble mourners. There was the woman who rose from a sickbed to hobble on crutches to the Mass. And, as ever, there were the children. Seventy-five thousand surrounded the Cathedral where Cardinal Spellman presided. Uncounted thousands lined the route of the cortege. Another six thousand were at the Gates of Heaven cemetery where the Babe was laid to rest.





*Sincerely
Babe Ruth*

Facing the wildly cheering crowd with head bowed, Babe Ruth wore his famous Number 3 for the last time on June 13, 1948 at the Yankee Stadium Silver Anniversary. Following the ceremony the uniform was permanently retired, the Ruth locker sealed for posterity.