
A Trip to the National Baseball

Hall of Fame

By Victoria Fortune



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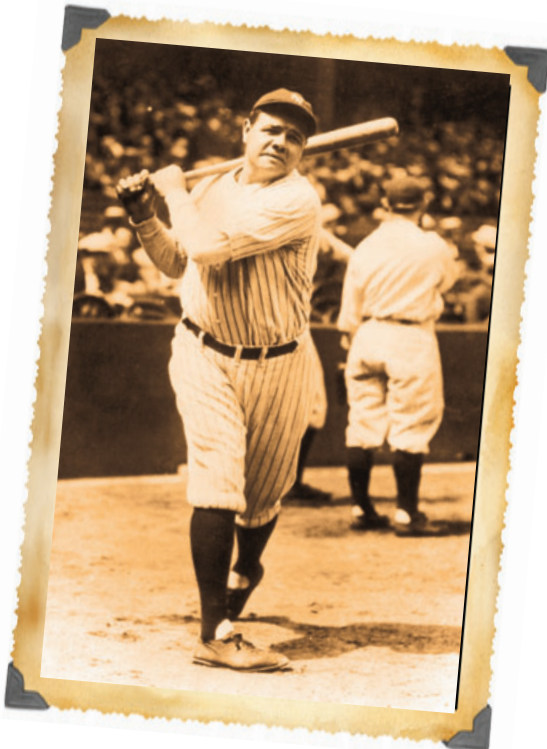
Chapter One

You Learn Something New Every Day

Have you ever been sure you knew something, only to find out you were completely wrong? Recently, my dad and grandpa took my cousin, Rick, and me on a trip to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. I play softball, and Rick plays baseball. We are both pitchers and huge fans of the game. We thought we knew everything there was to know about baseball, but we were amazed by how much we learned.



The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum,
located in Cooperstown, New York



Famous players in baseball history: (left to right)
Jackie Robinson, Babe Ruth, Roger Maris, and
Alta Weiss

Chapter Two

The Dead-Ball Era

I always thought Babe Ruth was best known for his home-run record, but Grandpa says Ruth's real **legacy** is that he happened and the dead-ball era.



George Herman "Babe" Ruth

"Back in the early 20th century," Grandpa explained, "baseball was a pitcher's game. The pitcher's mound was higher, and the strike zone was bigger. Scores were typically low because these factors **avored** the pitcher over the batter."

"That doesn't sounds fair," I remarked.

"You're right, Victoria, but Ruth **consistently** knocked it out of the park," Dad added. "His high scores made the games exciting and attracted more fans. More fans meant more money. In 1920, the Baseball League changed the game to favor batters. The balls were wound more tightly so they would travel farther. The distance of the outfield was shortened. **Consequently**, Ruth's home run hits went up year after year. In 1927, he hit 60 home runs! That record lasted until Roger Maris beat it with 61 home runs in 1961."



Fans at a baseball game in the early 20th century

Chapter Three

The Women of Baseball

Next we came to the most surprising **exhibit** of the day: a floor-length wool dress.

"Why is there a dress in here?" Rick asked.

"The plaque says this dress was worn by Alta Weiss, a pitcher back in the early 1900s," I said.

"Victoria, are you telling me she played in a dress?" Rick asked.

"Yes, it says here she was a baseball player, and that was her league's official uniform." I replied.

"I'm also surprised there was baseball for women back then," Rick said.

"Oh, sure," Dad answered. "In the 1940s, during World War II, there was a league of female players. At that time, most of the male players were overseas fighting. The women's league was very successful. It even lasted for a while after the war, until it **folded** in 1954."

"My team will be excited to know this!" I said.

"Victoria, your team is good, but I wonder if players with dresses would've performed just as well," Rick said.

"Don't be fooled by their uniforms, Rick," Grandpa interjected. "Even though they were expected to dress a certain way, that didn't stop them from playing a great game. They slid into bases, and made **notable** home runs! Plus, women didn't just play against other women."

"That's right," Dad said. "Women like Alta Weiss, who played in the early half of the century, played with the men. I wouldn't be surprised to see women on pro teams in the future," he said, winking at me.



Alta Weiss

Chapter Four

Breaking the Barrier

Finally, we came to an exhibit about Jackie Robinson. I believed he was the first African-American man to play in the major leagues.



A memorial plaque honoring Jackie Robinson

However, there were African-American players who played before him, in the late 1870s, just after the National League was founded. Then in the 1880s and 1890s, the team owners **barred** players of color from the League. That agreement lasted until Branch Rickey, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, decided to sign Jackie Robinson. Rickey was determined to break the color **barrier**. He chose Robinson not only because he was one of the best African-American players, but also because he felt Robinson had the strong character and will to take on the challenge during a time when **discrimination** was high.

By the end of our trip, we had discovered so much about baseball. From its most famous players to lesser-known ones who also made an impact, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is a treasure trove of information about the sport.



Branch Rickey signing Jackie Robinson to a major league contract in 1947

Glossary

bar: to officially prevented participation in something.

barrier: something that prevents progress or makes it difficult for someone to achieve something.

consequently: as a result.

consistently: unchanging in achievement.

discrimination: unfair treatment of someone because of his or her religion, race, or other personal features or beliefs.

exhibit: something interesting put in a museum or other public place so people can look at it.

favor: to give someone an advantage in some way.

fold: to closed down because an organization or group was not able to make enough money.

legacy: something that someone has achieved that continues to exist.

notable: deserving special notice.