

Infielders: Anson to Dittmer

Among all the Iowans who have played in the infields of big league teams one name stands out: Adrian C. "Cap" Anson, the great first baseman of the Chicago White Stockings from 1876 to 1897. Anson was born in Marshalltown in 1851. When the town organized its first baseball team in the 1860's Henry Anson, town founder, played third base while his oldest son, Sturgis, played center field. Young Adrian at first had to be content to play on a second string club. Sturgis was an excellent player, but not as fanatical as were his younger brother and his father, who gulped their suppers in their haste to play baseball.

After Adrian was promoted to the first team as second baseman the club won the state championship at Belle Plaine in 1867. Adrian later attended the State University of Iowa for a brief period and was at Notre Dame in 1869 and 1870. He admits that he was a rather wild youth, far more interested in sports than in an education. He excelled at all games but baseball was his life.

In 1870 Marshalltown took on the touring Forest City team of Rockford, Illinois, in an exhibition game. The Rockford club was one of the best in the nation, chiefly because of the exploits of two

local residents, Ross Barnes and Albert Spalding. The Marshalltown players, therefore, were happy when they held the score down to 18 to 3 in favor of the Forest Citys. Followers of the Rockford team were used to bigger scores, however, and so they played another game the next day which the Forest City nine won, 35 to 5.

Rockford was impressed with some of the local talent, however, and when they decided to enter a professional team in the National Association in 1871 they signed Sam Sager and Adrian Anson of the Marshalltown team. Sager did not last long with Rockford, but Anson became a regular member, receiving \$65 a month. Spalding and Barnes had joined Boston, however, and without these stars Rockford finished last in the league and disbanded at the season's end.

Anson then signed with the stronger Philadelphia Athletics at a salary of \$1,250 a year. Like Boston's Cal McVey, Anson served as a jack of all trades with Philadelphia, playing the outfield, all the infield positions and frequently catching. By 1875 his salary had risen to \$1,800.

In 1874 the Athletics and Boston crossed the Atlantic to demonstrate baseball to the English. Although the American players knew little about the game, they defeated some of England's finest cricket teams at their own sport. Later, in 1888, Anson and Spalding led the Chicago team on a grand tour of the world.

Anson agreed to play for Chicago in 1876 for \$2,000. Anson's fiancée, a Philadelphia girl, objected to his moving to Chicago. The Athletics offered Anson \$2,500 if he would stay with them. Anson, therefore, asked Chicago President Hulbert and Spalding, who had been named team manager, for his release. Spalding refused, since he placed too great a value upon Anson's services. Unlike many of the players of that day, Anson could be depended upon to stay in condition during the baseball season. He was also a man of his word, and this resulted in his honoring his contract with Chicago when he could not get his release.

Spalding managed the club in 1876 and 1877 and then retired to devote himself to his sporting goods business. A year later, in 1879, Anson was appointed manager and captain of the White Stockings. It was at this time that he placed himself permanently at first base and received his nickname of "Cap."

Under Anson's leadership Chicago dominated the National League through most of the 1880's. After finishing third in 1879 they were league champions the following three years. They finished second in 1883 and fourth in 1884, but returned to the top again in 1885 and 1886. Although the team was a contender several times thereafter, it won no more pennants under Anson.

As manager Anson was known as a strict taskmaster, but he and Spalding, who became club

president, overlooked habits in many of their stars which no manager or owner would tolerate today. They instituted spring training in the South in 1886, however, in an effort to get the players back into some kind of condition after their winter dissipations. In addition, Anson is credited with raising team play to new levels of perfection.

As a player Anson was regarded as a model first baseman. Offensively, from 1874 to 1897 he hit .300 or better every year except 1891 and 1892. Four times he led the National League in hitting and twice he hit more than .400, although the glitter of his .421 mark in 1887 is dimmed by the fact that bases on balls counted as hits that season. He is credited with 3,524 hits during his career, more than any player except Ty Cobb. Counting his five years in the National Association Anson was a big league player for 27 years, a record equalled by no one. Only Mel Ott and Ty Cobb have played with one club as long as Anson did with Chicago. In 1897, at the age of 46, Anson was still Chicago's first baseman and he hit .302.

Anson was the baseball idol of his day. The greatest thrill in the early lives of Connie Mack and John McGraw was when they first played against him. In 1891, when McGraw was an eighteen-year-old player with Cedar Rapids in the Three-I League, Chicago stopped by one day for an exhibition game. McGraw, the first man up for the local team, hit a clean single. As he ran

past Anson at first the brash rookie remarked, "Say, old-timer, so that's what you call big league pitching, eh?" He and Anson had several arguments during the game, but afterwards the great star congratulated young McGraw on his play and even suggested that Chicago might use him some day. "Gee," McGraw later recalled, "but I was chesty over having attracted the attention of the great Anson!"

A man with strong prejudices, Anson's opposition to Negroes in organized baseball was a chief factor in creating an unwritten rule that was not broken until Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson in 1945. Anson hated James Hart, Spalding's hand-picked successor as president of Chicago, and the feeling was mutual. When Anson's contract expired in 1897 Hart forced Spalding, who remained the club's chief stockholder, to choose between him and Anson. Spalding valued Hart's business ability too highly, and so reluctantly agreed that his old teammate should not be rehired. Relations between Anson and Spalding deteriorated rapidly after that, with Anson bitterly attacking Spalding in his autobiography. But in 1910 Spalding still referred to Anson as "one of the greatest ball players that ever lived."

Anson signed to manage the New York Giants in 1898 but resigned within three weeks after a fight with the owner. On the whole, his later years were a rather sad contrast with the glory

he had known as a ball player. He died in 1922 just as he had been named as manager of Chicago's Dixmoor Golf Club. His fame remained, however. In 1939 he was made a member of baseball's Hall of Fame. Back in his old home town the town's baseball teams are invariably called the "Ansons." The Marshalltown Ansons captured the Iowa Open Baseball title in 1954, much as Anson's team had done in 1867.

More recently another first baseman, Hal Trosky of Norway, Iowa, was a man to be reckoned with. After a brief appearance with Cleveland in 1933, Trosky won the job as the Indians' regular first baseman in 1934 as he batted .330 and slammed out 35 home runs. During Trosky's time the majors were full of first basemen like Lou Gehrig, Jimmy Foxx, Hank Greenberg, Zeke Bonura, Dolf Camilli, and Johnny Mize. As fielders some of these big men could not move off the proverbial dime but they were devastating batters.

Trosky more than held his own in such company. In 1934 and in 1937 he hit three home runs in a single game, and during his first six seasons he hit a total of 180 home runs. In 1936 Trosky had his greatest year, batting .343, hitting 43 home runs, for a club record that stood until 1953, and leading both leagues with 162 runs batted in.

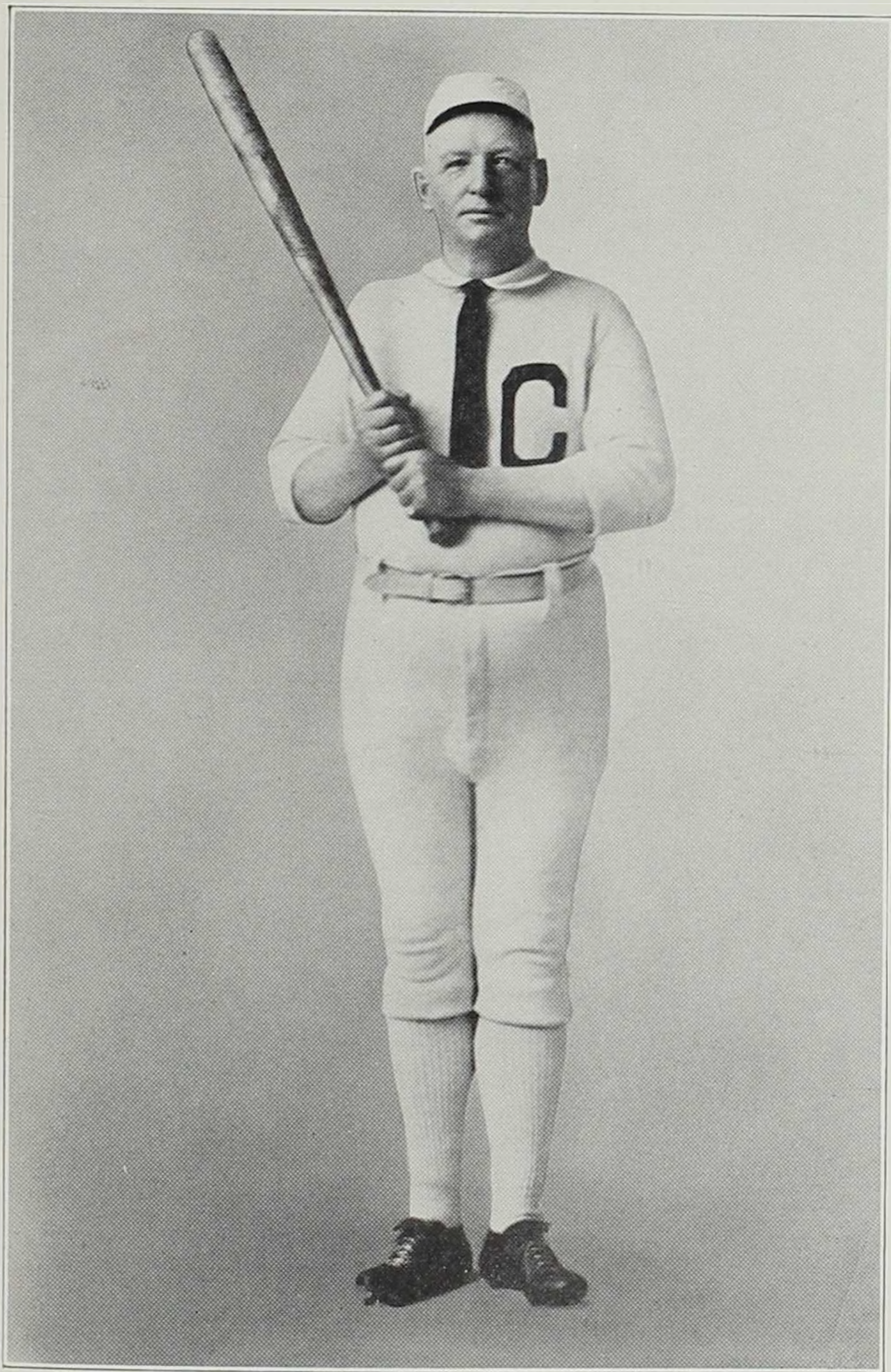
After his batting average fell to .298 in 1937 Trosky batted .334 and .335 in 1938 and 1939 respectively. He dropped to .295 in 1940. During

this year the famous revolt by the players took place against manager Oscar Vitt of the Indians. Many fans who were down on Trosky because of his batting slump charged that he was the leader of the so-called "Cry Babies." When asked to give his reasons, one such fan, deceived by the name Trosky, declared, "What can you expect? He's a Russian, isn't he?" Actually, Trosky was no more the leader of the revolt than were several other members of the team. Later, when a truce had been patched up, Trosky once ran over from his first base position during a game and persuaded Vitt not to put in a relief pitcher, although the manager had already waved the man in from the bull pen. Vitt shortly made Trosky field captain of the team.

In 1941 Trosky's career came to a virtual end as a result of severe migraine headaches which forced him to go into voluntary retirement before the season was over. He was only 29 at the time, with several good years apparently ahead of him. In 1944 and 1946 he tried a comeback with the Chicago White Sox, but he was not his old self.

Another brilliant infielder, Joe Quinn, was born in Australia but was raised in Dubuque. Quinn played for eight big league teams between 1884 and 1901. During this long career as a second baseman, however, he hit only twice over .300. He also managed the St. Louis and Cleveland clubs of the National League in 1895 and 1899 respec-

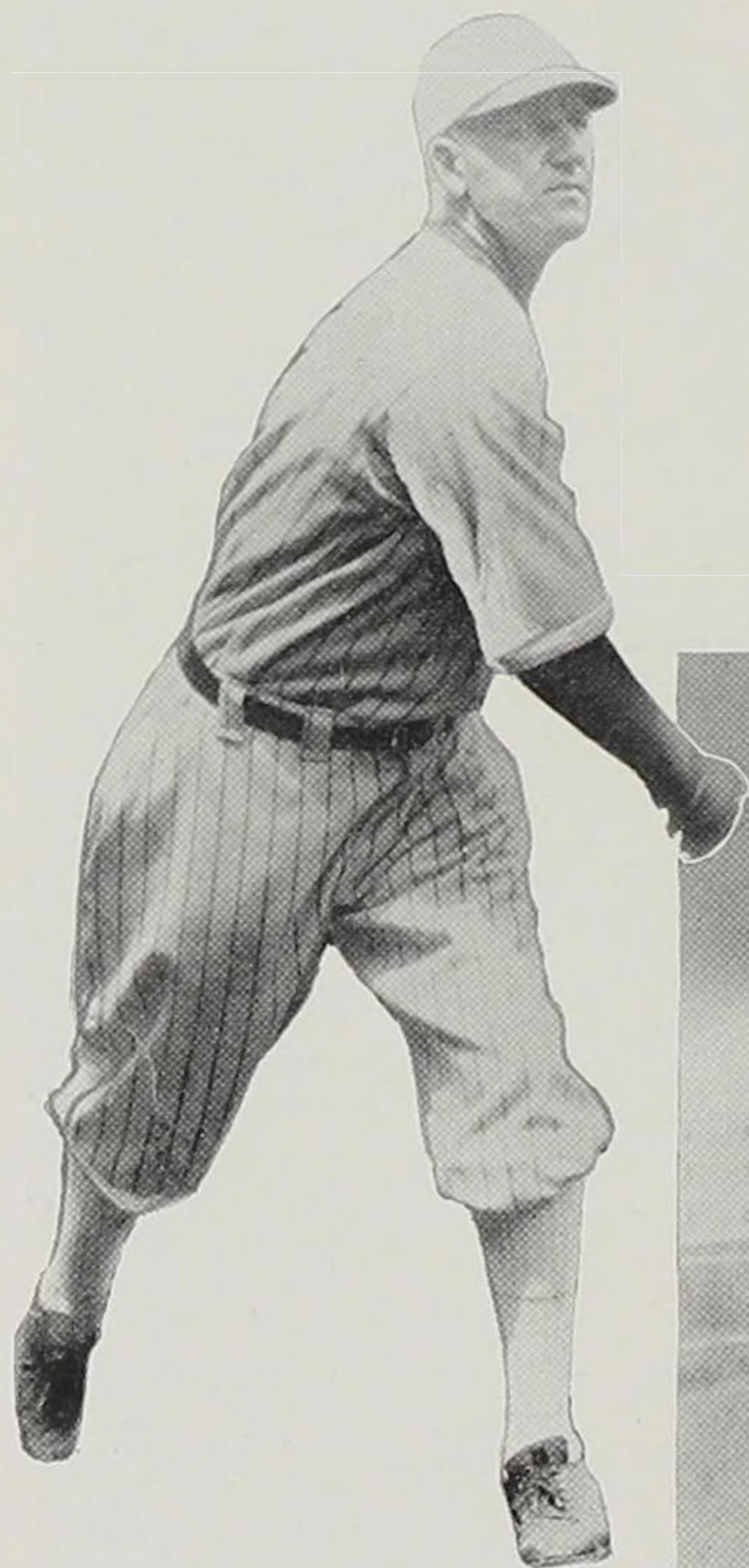
IOWA'S MOST FAMOUS OLD-TIME BASEBALL STAR



Courtesy Underwood and Underwood

Adrian C. "Cap" Anson faces the photographer near the end of his long and brilliant career as manager and first baseman of Chicago of the National League.

FROM WHITE STOCKING TO WHITE SOX



Urban "Red" Faber of Cascade (above) was 40 years old when this picture was taken in 1928. However, he won 13 games that season, and managed to win 36 more games before he retired at the age of 45 after 20 years with the Chicago White Sox.

Ames' Billy Sunday (below) poses in his White Stocking uniform in a photographer's studio during the 1880's. Cap Anson complained that Sunday's throw was hard to handle since it landed "in the hands like a chunk of lead."



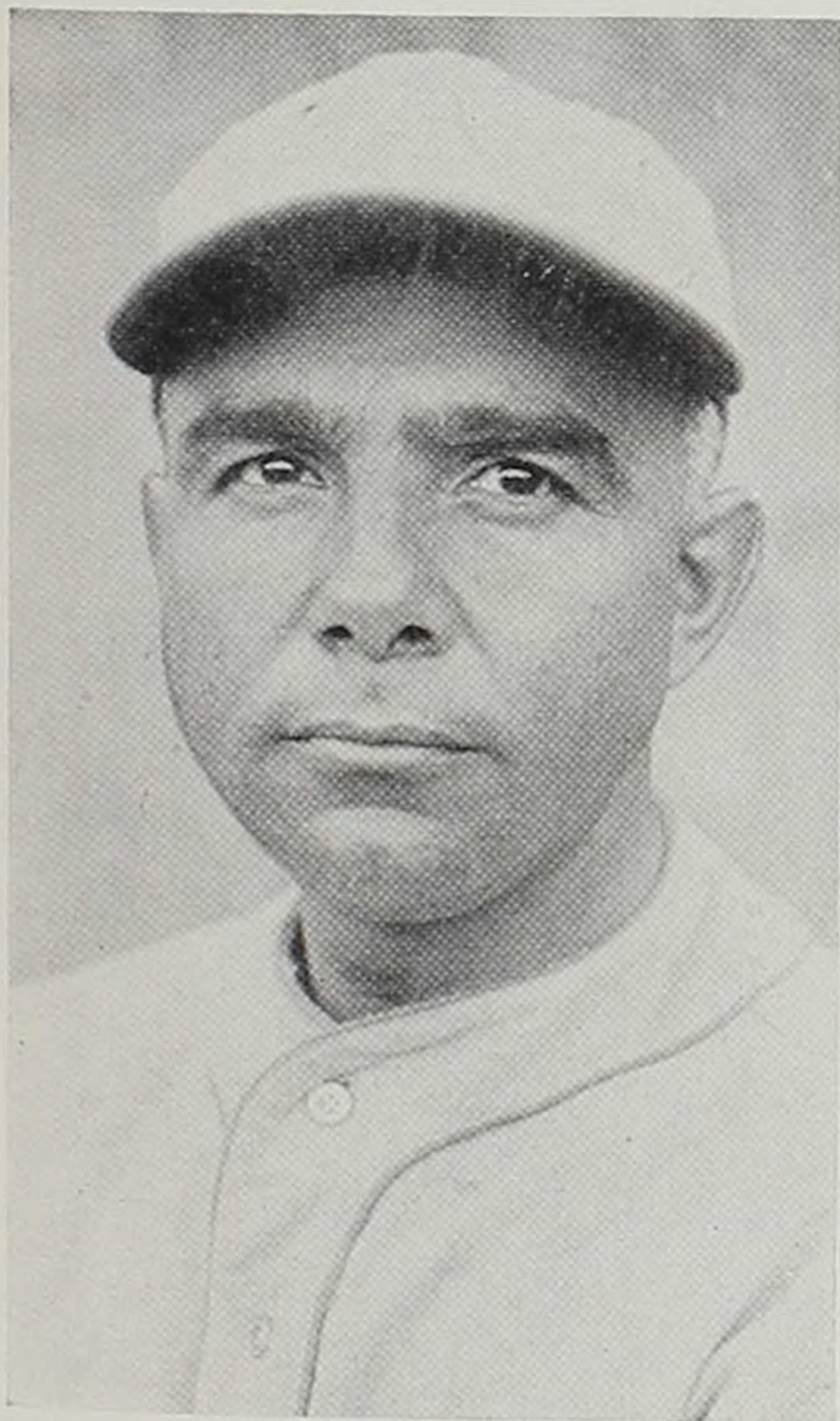
FAMOUS NAMES OF THE PAST



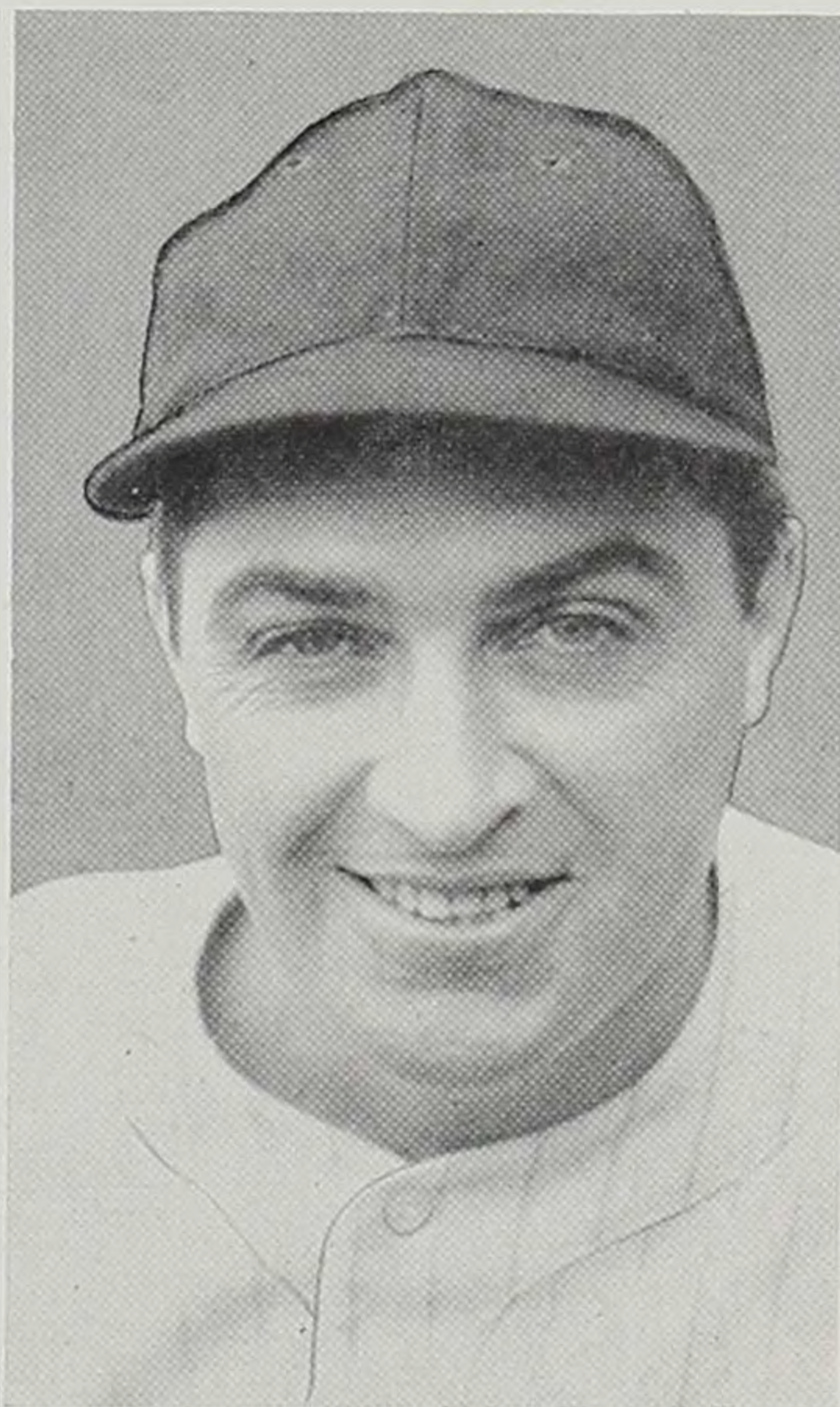
FRED CLARKE
Born in Madison County



ED BARROW
Raised in Des Moines

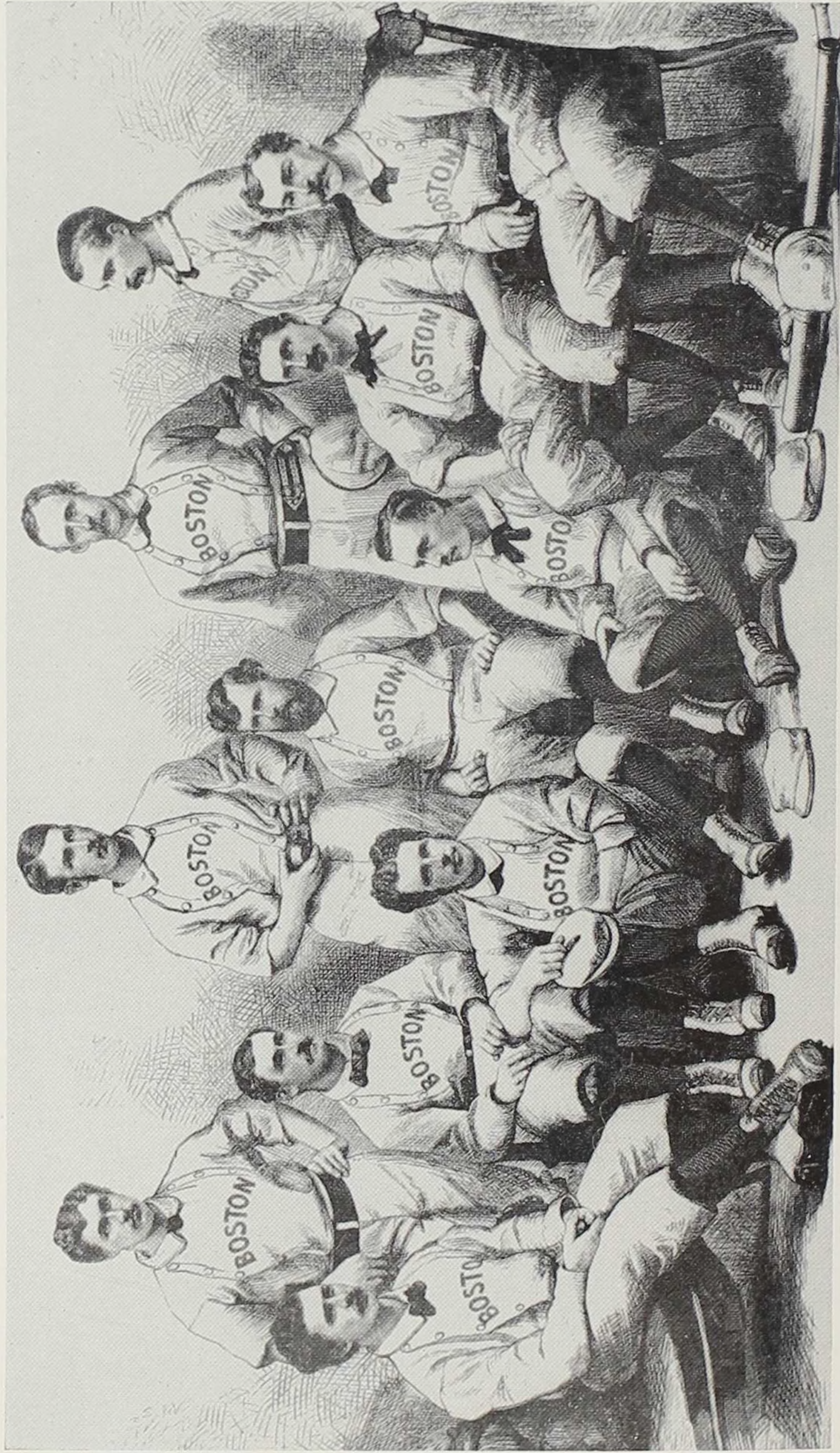


EDMUND "BING" MILLER
Born in Vinton



EARL WHITEHILL
Born in Cedar Rapids

THE BOSTON RED STOCKINGS, CHAMPIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, 1874



Boston was the undisputed king of baseball from 1872 through 1875, as it won four straight National Association championships. In 1875, the Association's last year in existence, the Red Stockings won 71 games while losing only 8. In this engraving from *Harper's Weekly*, June 27, 1874, Iowa's Cal McVey stands at the left. Standing with him (left to right) are the other members of Boston's "Big Four": Albert Spalding, Deacon Jim White, and Ross Barnes. The bearded man is Manager Harry Wright, while the

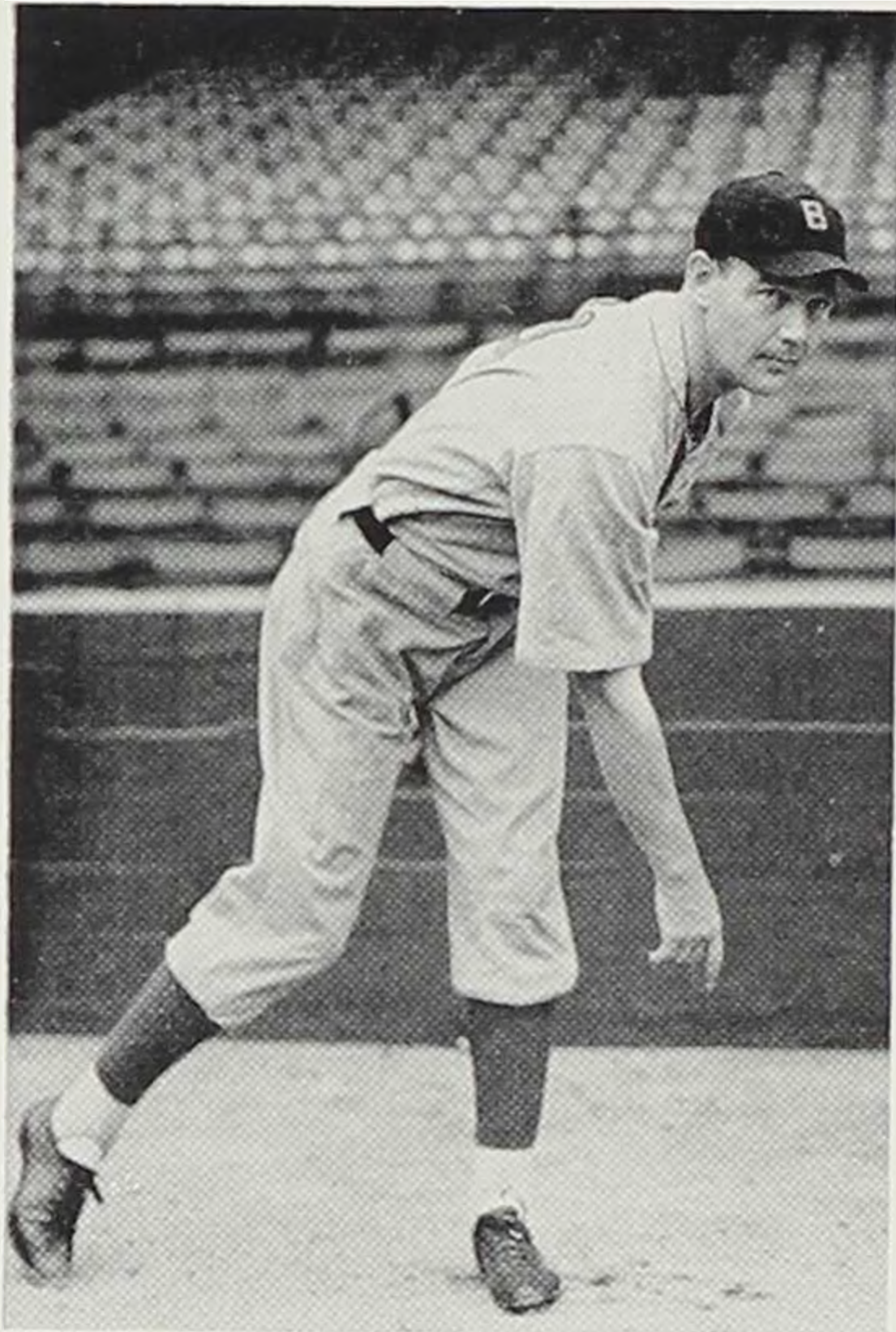
Harper's Weekly, June 27, 1885. The bearded man is Manager Hal Wright, while the
Boston's "Big Four": Albert Spalding, Deacon Jim White, and Ross Barnes. The
player with his cap on his knee is Wright's brother, George.

THE CHICAGO WHITE STOCKINGS, CHAMPIONS OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE, 1885



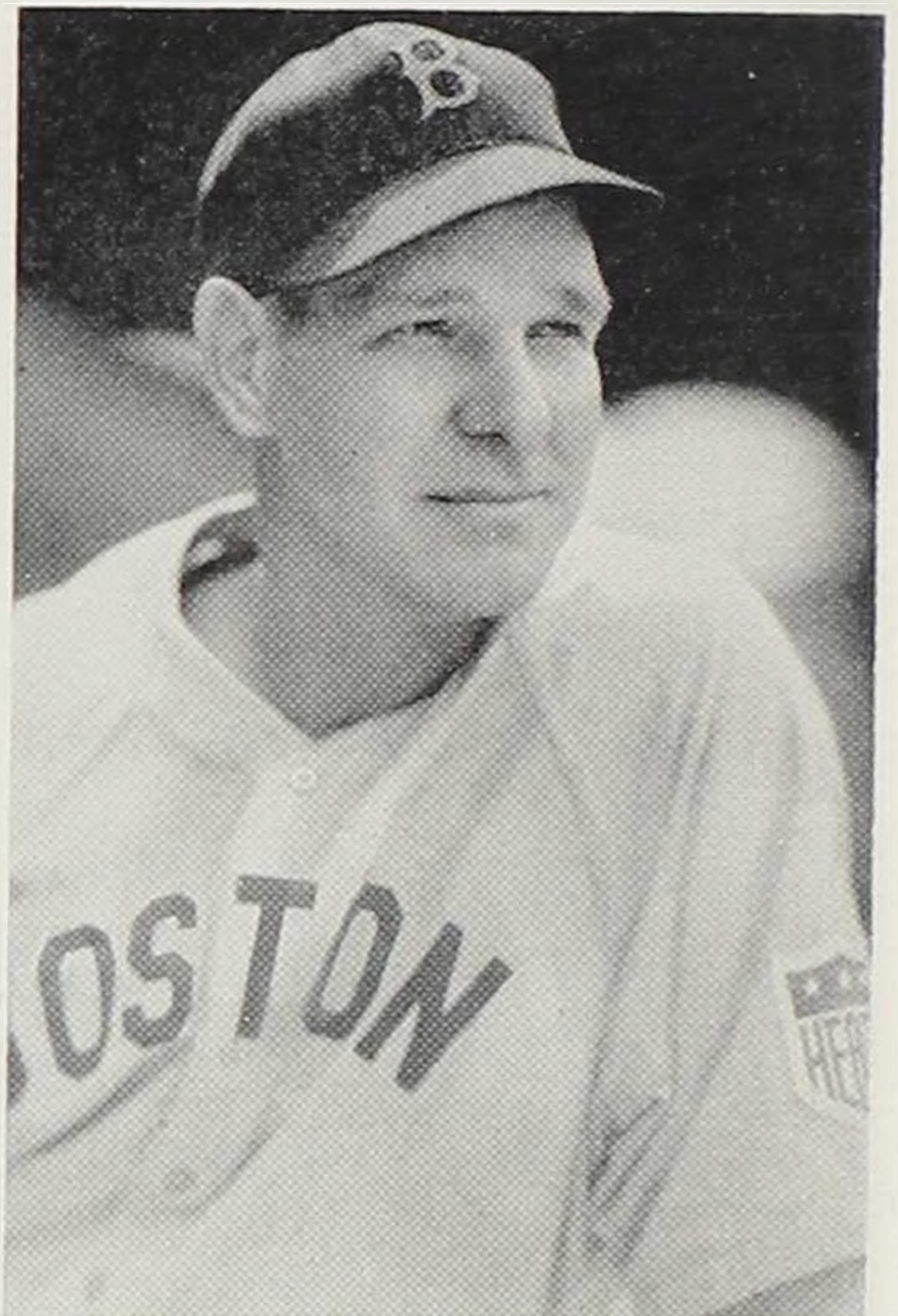
After a close race, Chicago beat out New York for the National League pennant in 1885, for the fourth of five championships which the White Stockings were to win under the leadership of Cap Anson. *Harper's Weekly* for October 17, 1885, in which issue this picture appeared, commented that Chicago's players were "a good-featured, honest-faced, and sturdy-looking set of young Americans." Third from the left in the rear is Cap Anson, while Billy Sunday sits at the right in the front. Next to him is the famous pitcher, John Clarkson.

FOUR IOWA PITCHERS



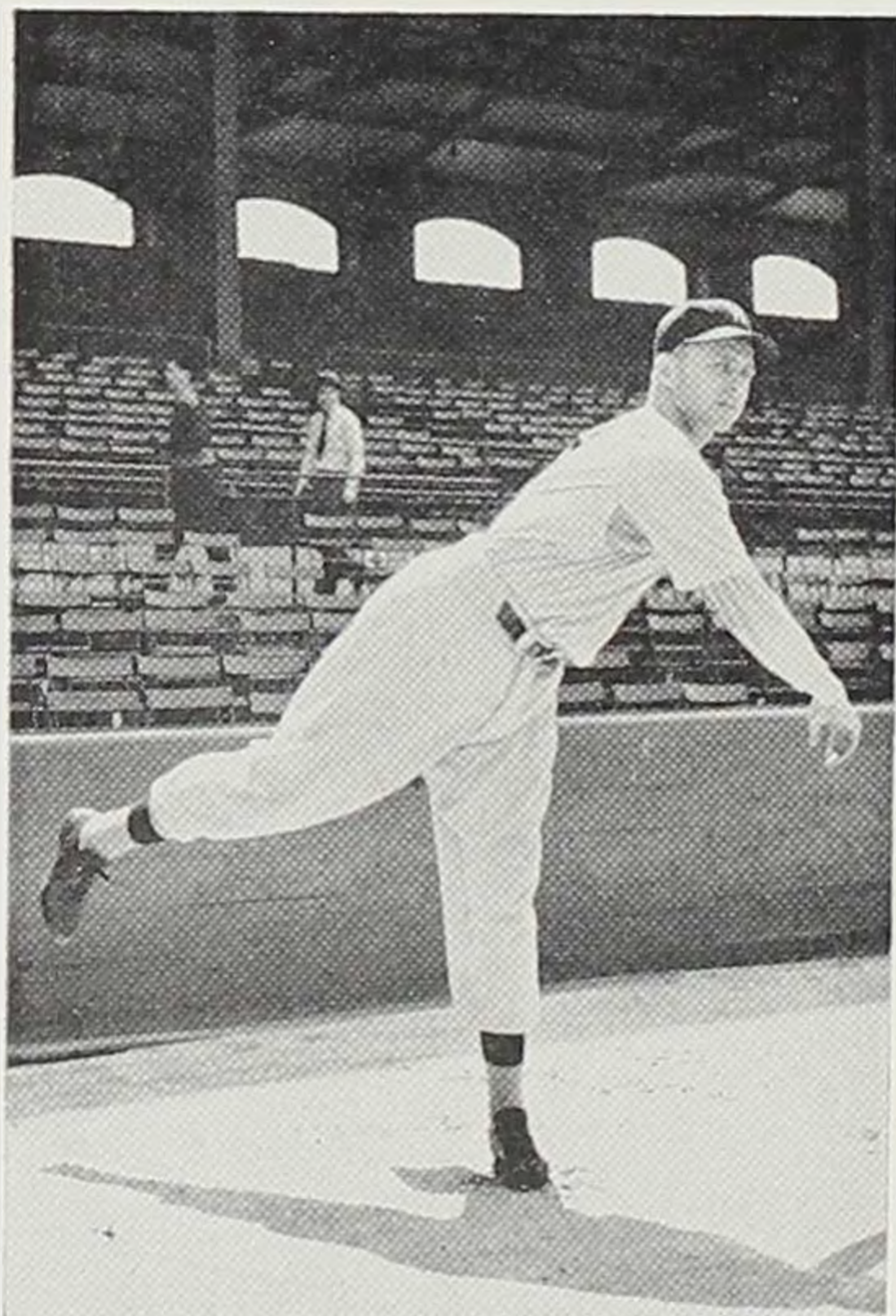
Courtesy American League

GEORGE PIPGRAS
Denison



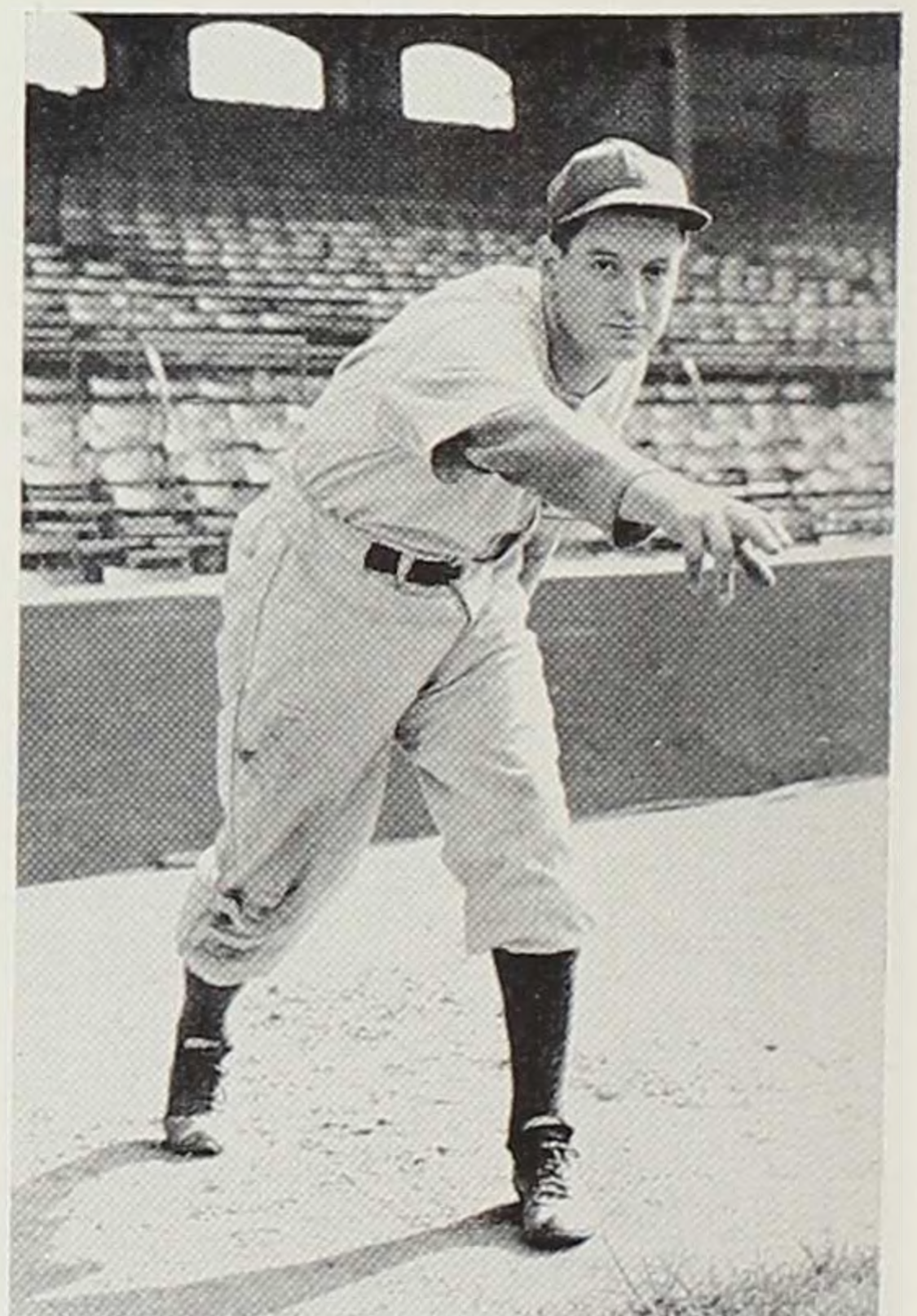
Courtesy Otto Vogel

MACE BROWN
North English



Courtesy American League

BILL ZUBER
Amana



Courtesy American League

DON BLACK
Salix

FOUR WHO PLAYED IN THE MAJORS



Courtesy Des Moines *Register and Tribune*

Hal Trosky, the former hard-hitting first baseman of the Cleveland Indians from Norway, Iowa, gives some advice in 1949 to a Cedar Rapids pitching hopeful, Arnold Pavileck, on what it takes to reach the big leagues.



PAT GHARRITY
C, Iowa City

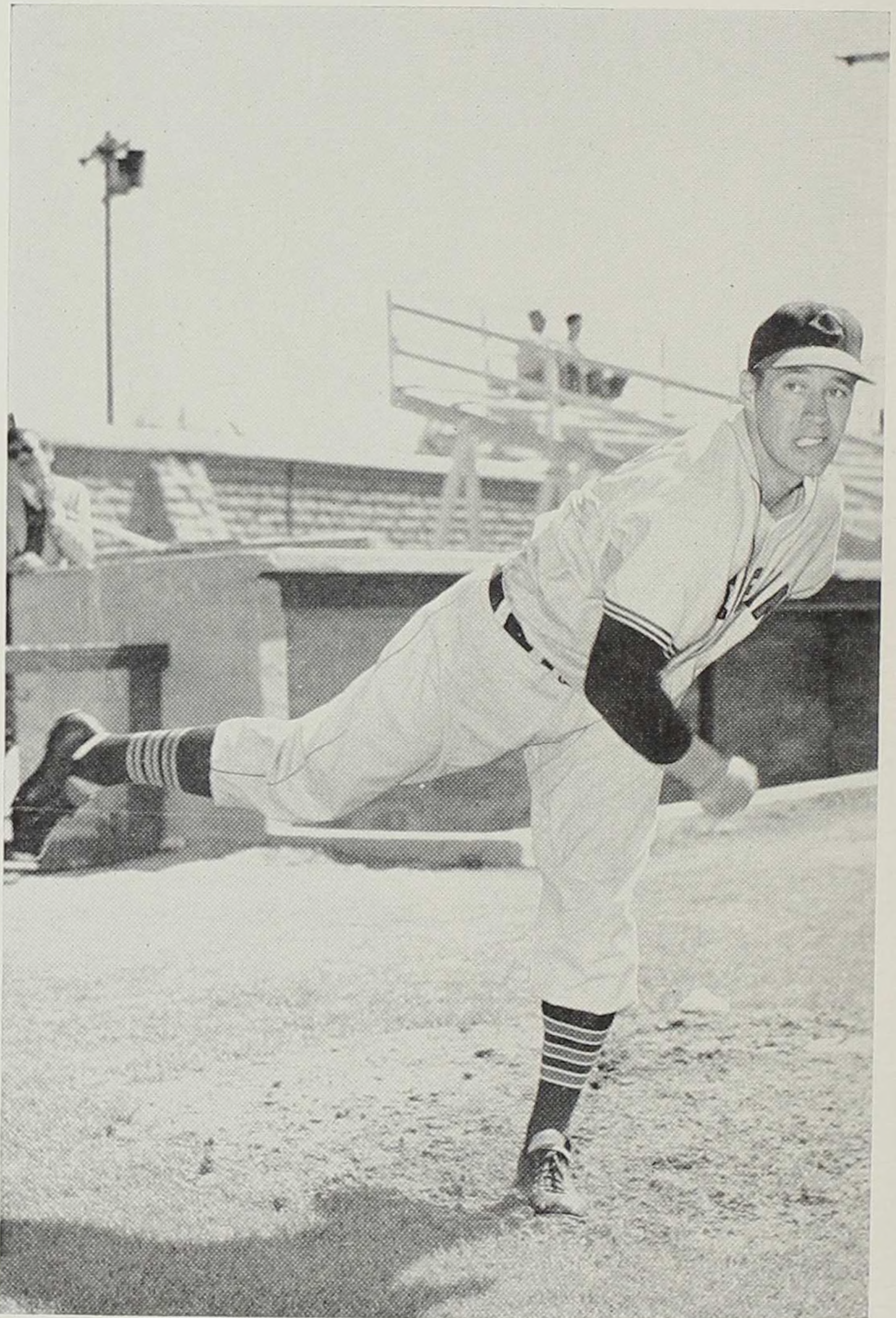


OTTO VOGEL
3B-OF, Davenport



JACK DITTMER
2B, Elkader

IOWA'S MOST FAMOUS ACTIVE PLAYER



Courtesy Cleveland Indians

Bob Feller of Van Meter warms up. As the 1955 baseball season began, Feller had won more games as a major league pitcher than any other Iowan, while his total strikeouts placed him third among all the pitchers who have played in the majors.

tively. Recently Jack Dittmer of Elkader, a baseball and football star at the State University of Iowa, has shown some promise of developing into a star second baseman with the Milwaukee Braves as has Gene Baker of Davenport with the Cubs.

One of the best known shortstops of the 1920's was Dave Bancroft of Sioux City. Among the smallest men ever to play regularly in the majors, "Beauty" Bancroft stood 5' 8½" and weighed only 145 to 160 pounds during his playing days. He broke in with the Philadelphia Phils in 1915 at the age of 23 and was one of the few to perform well for Philadelphia in the World Series that year after the team won its first National League championship.

Bancroft stayed with the Phils until the summer of 1920 when he was traded to the New York Giants. His great playing was largely responsible for lifting the Giants into first place in 1921, and in the next two years. Bancroft went to Boston in 1924 as manager of the Braves. This was a thankless task since the Braves were a perennial second division club. In Bancroft's first season the team finished last, losing 100 games for the third straight year. He raised them to fifth place in 1925, but in 1926 and 1927 the team fell back to seventh.

After the latter season the Braves sought a new magician, and Bancroft moved to Brooklyn, where he finished out his career as a player, before re-

turning to the Giants as a coach from 1930 to 1933. Besides being a defensive standout, Bancroft was also a capable batsman, averaging .319, .321, and .304 with McGraw's champions of 1921-1923, while he did his best to inspire his Braves by hitting .319 in 1925, and .311 in 1926.

Among catchers none has been more durable than Hank Severeid of Story City, who broke into the majors with Cincinnati in 1911, then played with the St. Louis Browns from 1915 to 1925 when he was traded to Washington. He wound up his big league career with the Yankees in 1926, but continued playing in the minors until the end of the 1937 season when, at the age of 46, he hung up his catching paraphernalia for the last time. During his 29 years in organized baseball Severeid caught 2,603 games, more than any other catcher on record.

Hank Severeid was the Browns' regular catcher from 1916 through 1924, catching over a hundred games a year except for the war year of 1918. During much of this time the Browns were one of the league's weak teams, but for a brief period in the early 1920's, led by the mighty George Sisler, they were a serious contender. During these years Severeid was a man to be reckoned with at the bat, averaging .324, .321, .308, and .308 from 1921 through 1924. In 1925, with the Browns and Senators, Severeid hit .361.

GEORGE S. MAY