

Wrigley Field's Last World Series: The Wartime Chicago Cubs and the Pennant of 1945

By Charles N. Billington, with a foreword by Andy Pafko

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321 pages, 25 Historic Photos, Statistics, Analysis, Bibliography, Index

Heartwarming Nostalgia

From an Italian family of 14, baseball afforded young Len Merullo with money and opportunities so amazing that his mother encouraged all of her young boys to practice baseball every day after school. pp.185-186

During his years with the Cubs, Andy Pafko met his wife in a Chicago church, the couple made their home in the Kelvyn Park neighborhood, and Pafko has been considered a Chicagoan since. pp. 297, vii

Andy Pafko didn't have much of an introduction to Chicago as he left the train at Dearborn Station to head straight for his major league debut in Wrigley Field. Just after he stepped into a major league ballpark for the very first time, Pafko drove in two runs with a double in his first major league at bat. At the plate for the second time later that day he got another hit and drove in two more runs. Chicago, meet Andy Pafko. p. 221

Andy Pafko's biggest night of the 1945 season began with gifts and praise from the Chicago Slovak Goodwill Club and ended with a grand slam home run against the Pittsburgh Pirates. p. 229

The 1945 Cubs clinched the pennant on Charlie Grimm's 23rd wedding anniversary. During the victory party, Grimm's wife asked for and received each of the players' neckties to make a quilt for her husband's anniversary gift. p. 237

Cubs' left-fielder "Peanuts" Lowrey was a former childhood actor in Hollywood who appeared in several baseball films as an adult, including *The Winning Team* with Ronald Reagan. p. 174

The 1941 Pirates v. Dodgers game was immortalized by Normal Rockwell's "Bottom of the Sixth" for the inning in which manager Frankie Frisch took the field with an umbrella in hopes of getting the game called due to rain while his team was ahead, but he was instead thrown out of the game. p. 68

As angry Pittsburgh fans—including uniformed servicemen—threw seat cushions on the field to express displeasure with the Cubs' decisive victories in a double-header at Forbes Field, they were captured by a *Life* magazine photographer. p.141

Historic Curiosities

Unlike the rooftop fans of today, what Cubs fan had a free view of Wrigley Field for game four of the 1945 World Series when he climbed onto the sloped roof of his home at 3709 N. Kenmore? p. 256

If Wrigley bought his ballpark its first set of lights in 1941, why were there no night games until 1988? pp. 20-21

Why did the Chicago Cubs move their spring training from beautiful, sunny, southern California to the wet weather and aggravating conditions of French Lick, Indiana? pp. 18-19, 111

What infamous curse was placed on the Chicago Cubs after an incident involving William Sianis and his pet goat, Sonovia, at game five of the 1945 World Series at Wrigley Field? p. 261

The Cubs were in the same city, losing to the same team, during the V-E Day celebrations and V-J Day. Where were they? pp. 148, 195

To assist with crowd control at Wrigley Field's 1945 World Series, the Andy Frain Ushers carried the newly introduced Handie-Talkie, which is now known by what name? p. 255

Cubs player Eddie Waitkus missed a shot at fame in the 1945 season due to war obligations, but was later made famous when shot by a deranged female fan in what Chicago hotel? His story became the inspiration for Bernard Malamud's *The Natural*, which was made into a movie of the same name. p. 291

Which baseball team of the 1940s cavorted with Ernest Hemingway during spring training in Havana, Cuba? pp. 83, 87-88

What made the 66-year veterans of baseball production, A.G. Spalding Company, manufacture an inferior balata baseball, resulting in the "dead-ball" era? pp. 34-35

