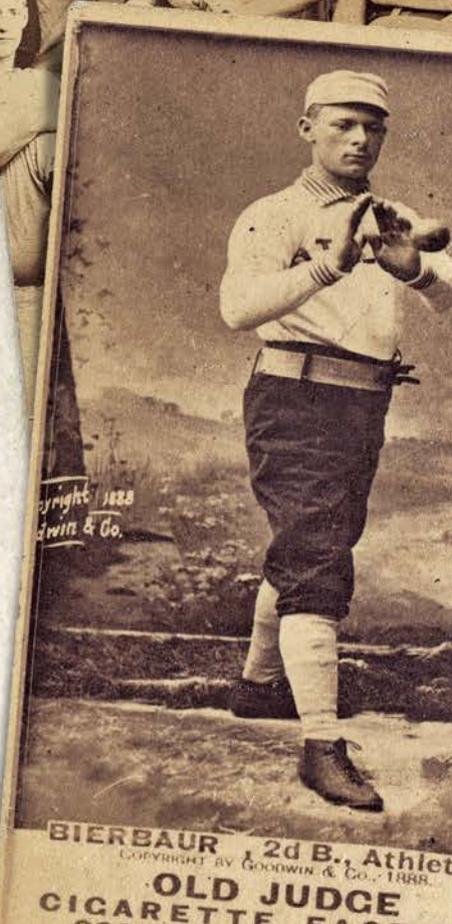
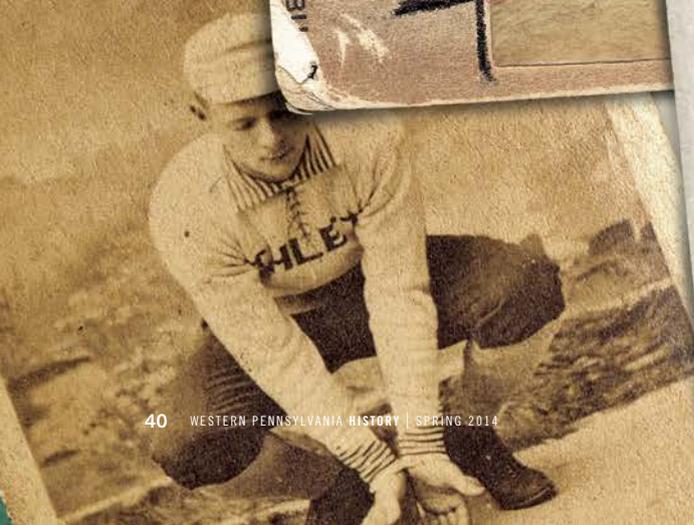
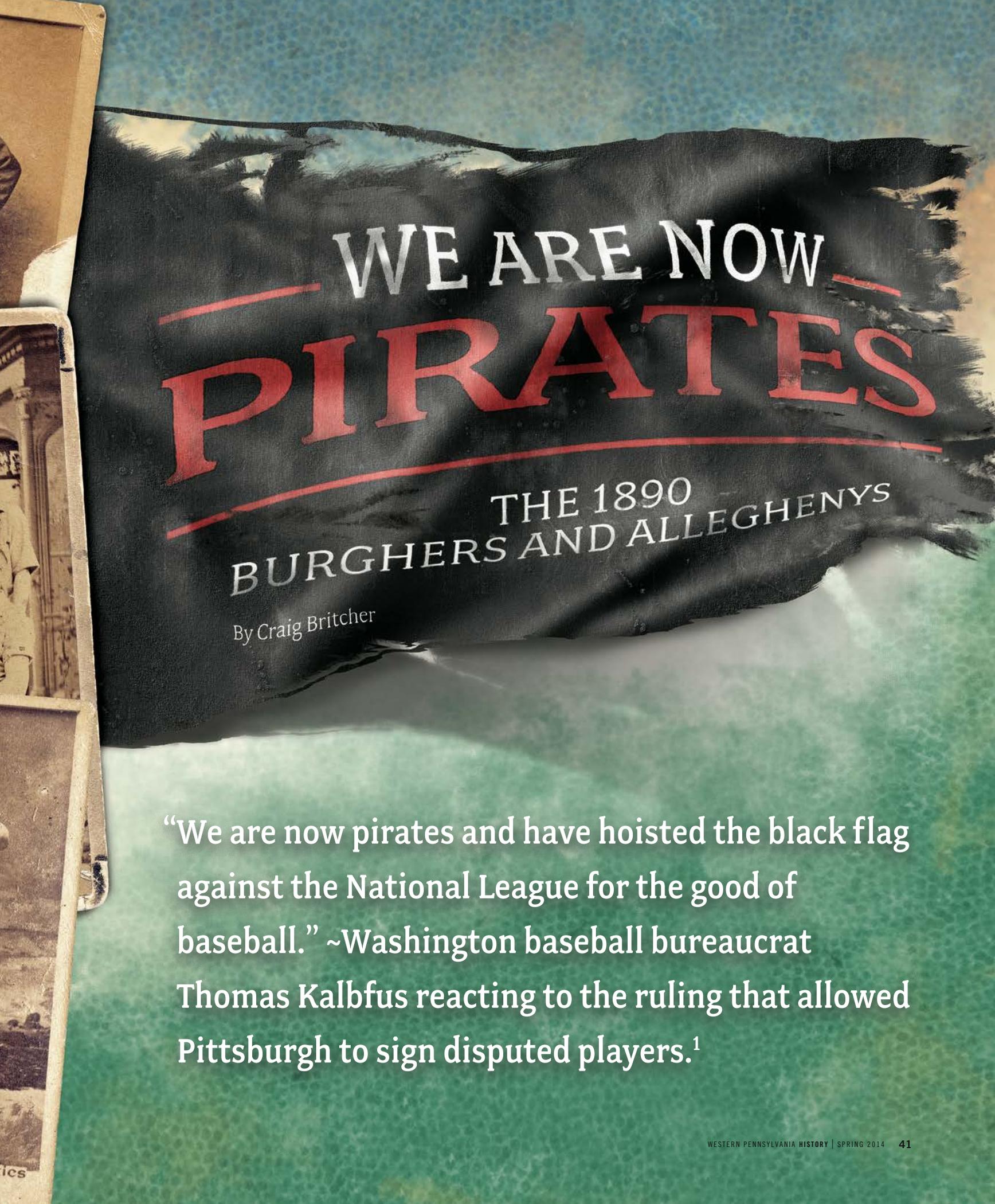


BAKER,
THE ALLEGHENY CLUB OF 1885.
COLUMBIAN



GEORGE
CAT





WE ARE NOW
PIRATES

THE 1890
BURGHERS AND ALLEGHENYS

By Craig Britcher

“We are now pirates and have hoisted the black flag against the National League for the good of baseball.” ~Washington baseball bureaucrat Thomas Kalbfus reacting to the ruling that allowed Pittsburgh to sign disputed players.¹

During the 2014 preseason, the Pittsburgh Pirates designated the bold capital “P” as its primary logo. In differing fonts, the “P” has appeared on the uniform breast, sleeve, and hat of Pirates players throughout most of the franchise’s history. By 1948, the Pirates proudly sported black and gold lettering, after the team changed from red and blue trim and lettering on white and gray uniforms. However, the use of “Pirates” as the official team moniker has a more complicated history. “Pirates” first appeared on the 1912 jersey in small white print, featured vertically on the blue button lapel.² Road jerseys did not feature the name, stitched on horizontally, until 1933. In fact, the franchise did not begin as the Pirates at all—the team was once known as the Alleghenys. This is the story of the fascinating and chaotic events leading up to the tumultuous season of 1890, which set the stage for Pittsburgh’s baseball team to be called what fans know it as today—the Pirates.

The earliest mention of “base ball” in the Pittsburgh area seemingly is found in a diary entry of “Uncle” Al Pratt, who recalled playing on “the Commons of Allegheny” in 1858.³ After the Civil War, organized teams such as Pittsburgh’s Enterprise, Olympic, and Xantha clubs were said to be among the best amateur teams.⁴ Amateur cricket clubs also existed. Allegheny City (now Pittsburgh’s North Side) seems to have been a popular place for the rising sport: in 1876, the Allegheny team formed and began play within the minor league International Association in 1877, but dissolved the following season. A new Pittsburgh Alleghenys team (also spelled “Alleghenies” by some), led by owner Denny McKnight and manager Al Pratt, began its first major league season in 1882, playing at Exposition Park, situated between modern-day PNC Park and Heinz Field.⁵ Formally, the legal name of the charter club was the “Allegheny Base Ball Co., of Pittsburgh.”⁶

Mediocre years and heavy drinking in the American Association led many to call it the

“Beer and Whiskey League.” The association competed against its rival, the National League, by charging cheap admission prices, providing fans with liquor and beer (often made by the team owners themselves), and scheduling Sunday games.⁷ The Alleghenys failed to post a winning record until the arrival of eventual Hall of Famer James “Pud” Galvin in 1885.

In 1887, Alleghenys’ manager Horace Phillips and new owner William Nimick took advantage of an opportunity to replace the defunct Kansas City Cowboys in the more established National League. The Alleghenys’

Phillips was committed to a mental institution, where he passed away seven years later.

Ward leads the Brotherhood

Though not an Allegheny, a player born in the Allegheny Mountains of central Pennsylvania influenced the course of baseball more than any other in the late 1880s. John Montgomery “Monte” Ward was born 120 miles northeast of Pittsburgh in Bellefonte, Pa., in 1860, and attended Pennsylvania State University.¹⁰ Hall

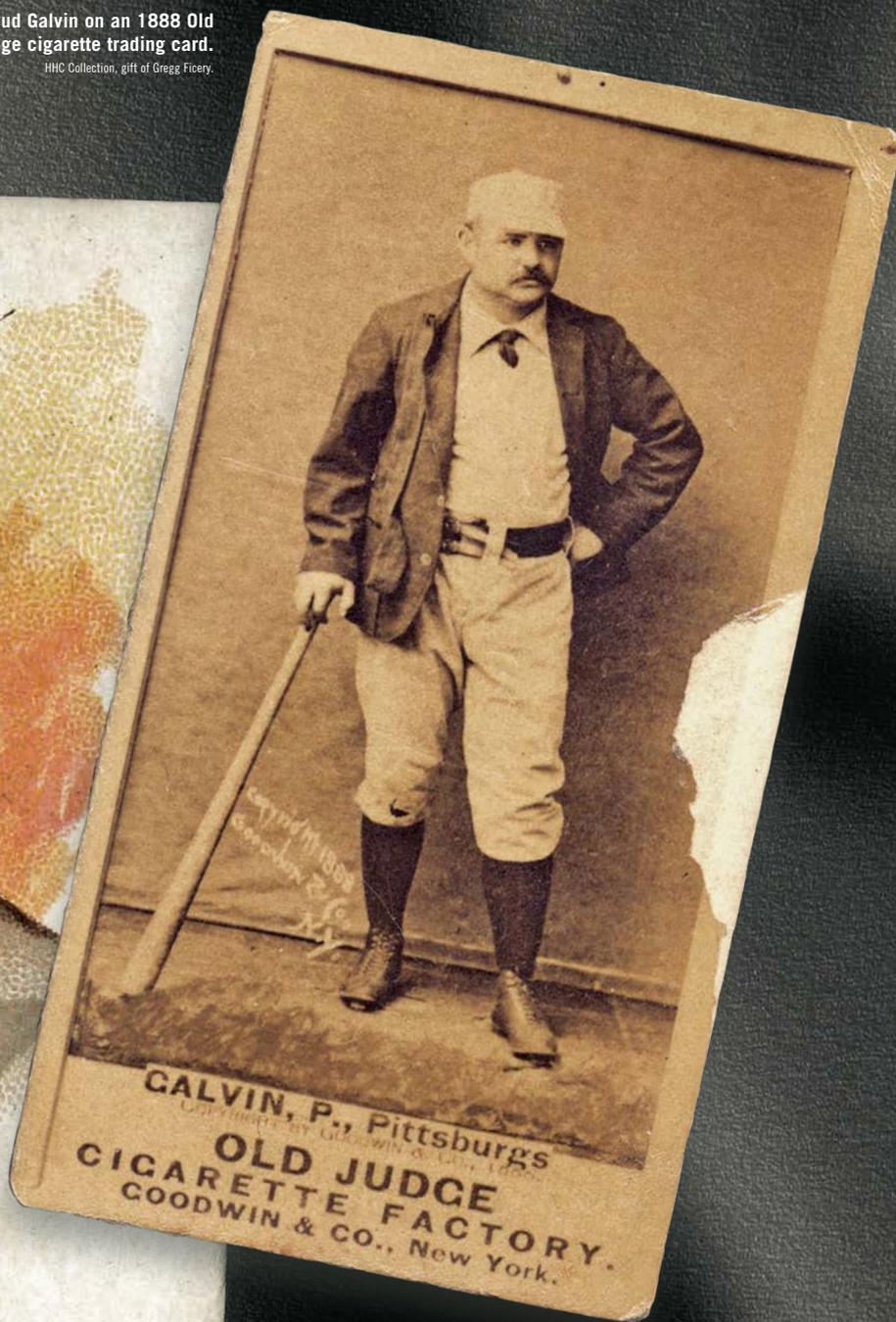
Teams of this era often were simply referred to by their league affiliation, such as “Nationals” or by adding an “s” to the end of the city’s name. Team names were often informal and changed sporadically.

season began on a discordant note; legend has it that catcher Fred Carroll buried his dead pet monkey (it was also the team’s mascot) behind home plate before the season’s opener on April 30.⁸ Oddities continued in 1889, when Pud Galvin participated in a Pittsburgh college’s medical study on the effects of an elixir containing animal testosterone that was touted to boost endurance.⁹ A more tragic situation soon became evident as Allegheny players noticed manager Phillips’ frequent memory lapses and erratic behavior. During the season,

of Famer Monte Ward is revered by many baseball historians as one of the most fascinating men in the game’s history. A naturally combative player, Ward took extreme issue with ownership’s control of players in his early years. He studied in the off-season, became multilingual, and earned political science and law degrees from Columbia University.¹¹ In 1885, Ward led four of his fellow New York Giants to secretly form the “Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players.”¹² The Brotherhood grew as a type of union and soon profoundly impacted

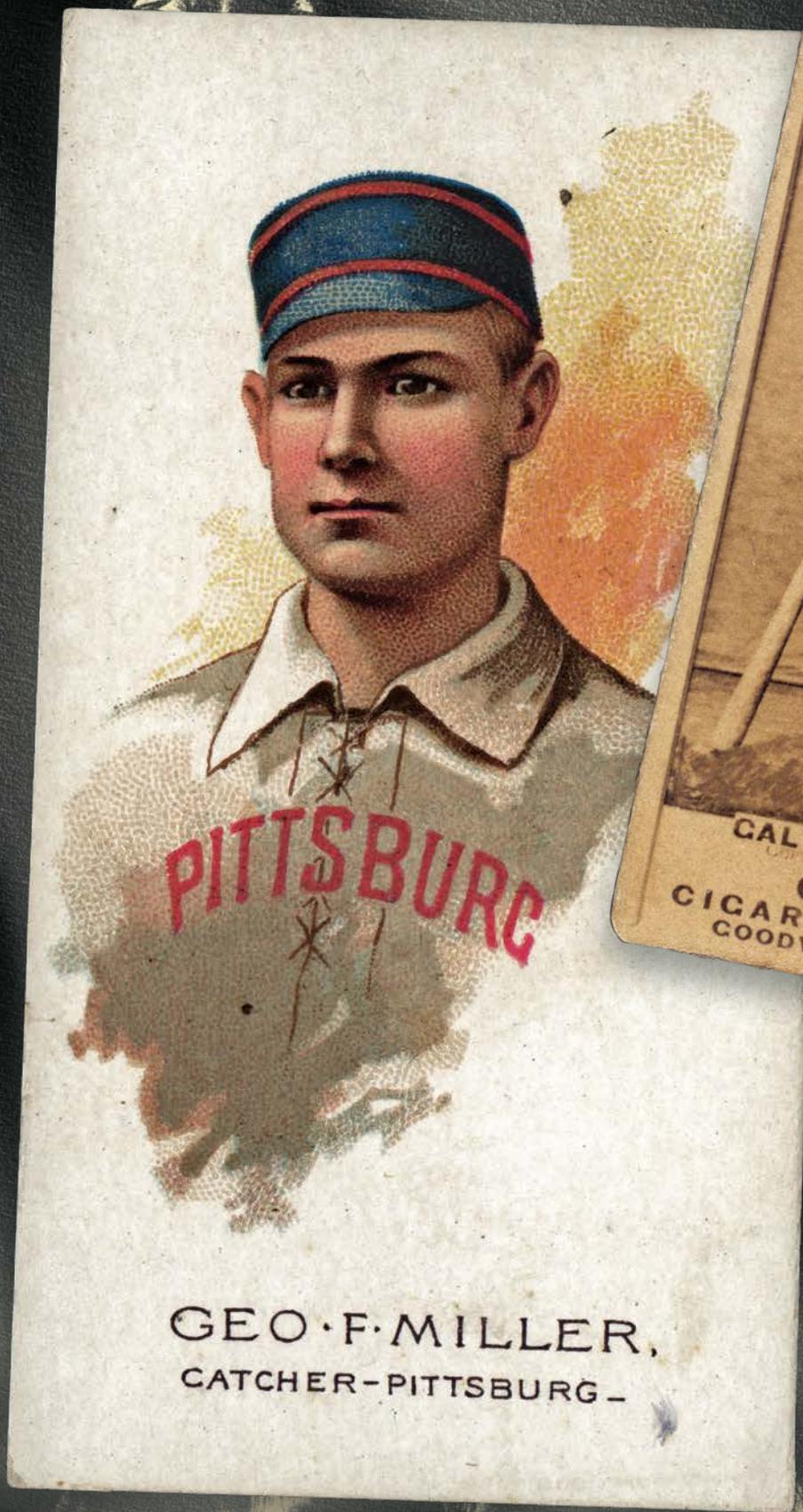
Pittsburgh Allegheny pitcher Pud Galvin on an 1888 Old Judge cigarette trading card.

HHC Collection, gift of Gregg Ficery.



Pittsburgh Allegheny player "Doggie" Miller on an 1888 Allen & Ginter tobacco company's trading card. During 1890 and '91, Miller unbelievably played five positions each year — 6 different total — catcher, first, second, shortstop, third, and outfield.

HHC Collection, gift of Gregg Ficery.



Pittsburgh baseball. Poised to advance the interests of his Brotherhood members, the ably equipped Ward traveled extensively to gather support. The National League owners countered his arguments, and increasingly reasoned to newspapermen that contractual control of players from year to year and team allegiance allowed financial security for all players and provided necessary structure for baseball's survival.

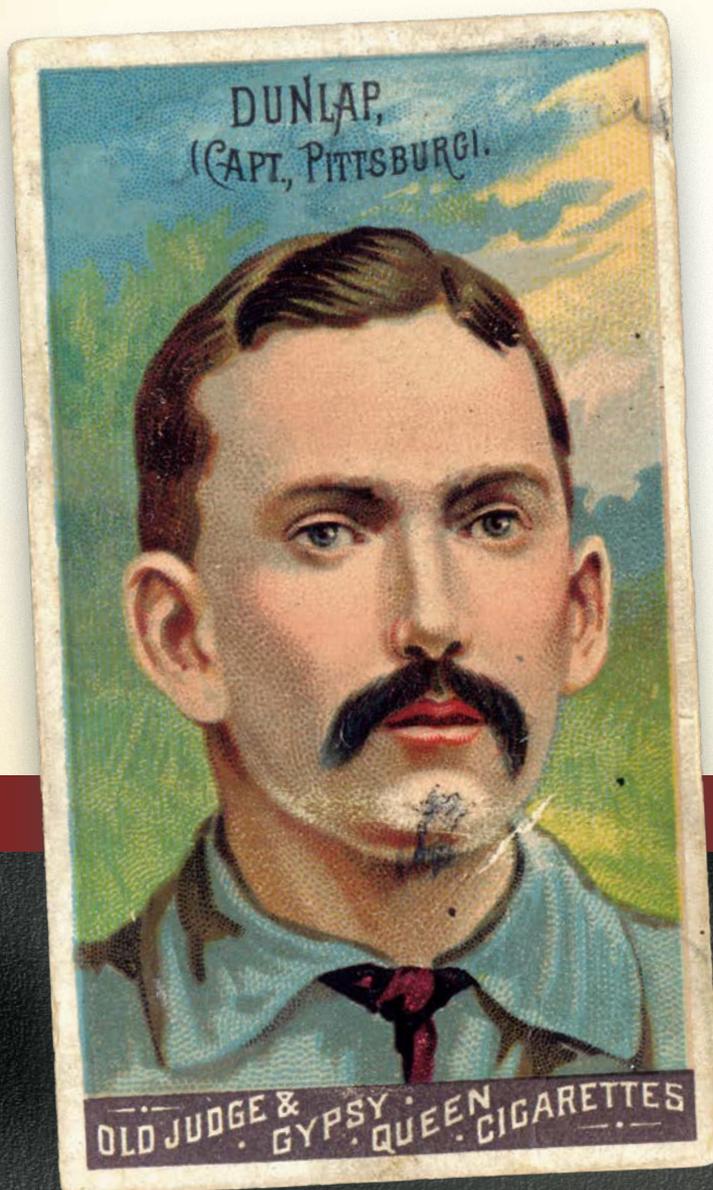
In 1888, Ward and John Tener, an Irish immigrant to Pittsburgh, played alongside some of the era's best players on the World Tour team

sponsored by Chicago White Stockings owner and sporting goods magnate Albert Goodwill Spalding.¹³ Spalding saw Tener's abilities and appointed him treasurer of the tour. Ward also identified with his atypically intellectual teammate and later appointed him secretary of the Brotherhood. After outfielder Ned Hanlon returned from the World Tour, he was sold to the Alleghenys as a player/manager. Spalding remained a powerful National League figure headed into turbulent times.

By 1889, Monte Ward's Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players numbered 170

members and was no longer so secret. Together they constituted the nation's first sports union, though they did not adopt that label. The reserve clause remained the core problem—owners held strict control over the players' contracts and reserved their rights from season to season. Players wanted the Brush Classification System (a grading scale used to determine a player's salary partially based on character) struck down. They also demanded that salaries could not decrease while players remained reserved. The Brotherhood threatened to strike in the summer of 1889, but instead formed its own league that winter, the "Players' National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs" or more simply, the Players' League.¹⁴ Competition from this new league kicked off a battle between baseball kingdoms, known as "The Brotherhood War."

Subscribers to the *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette* in the fall and winter of 1889 read daily rumors of which players would sign with each league, learned of threatened and real lawsuits, and perhaps for the first time actively considered how much a player should earn.¹⁵ Players were "loyalists" or "traitors" depending on the speaker's allegiance during the Brotherhood War. Daily baseball discussion deep into the winter served as a testament to the game's popularity in the region. On Christmas Day, the *Gazette* polled and reported, "Out of 2,257 signatures on the base-ball question in this city, only 421 are in favor of the old League [Allegheny] club."¹⁶ The reporters largely sided with the Pittsburgh Players' League team as well. The few players nationally rumored to



Pittsburgh Allegheny second baseman Fred Dunlap on an 1888 Goodwin Champions trading card.

HHC Collection, gift of Gregg Fiorenza



Exposition Park and neighboring field, c. 1914. The Pittsburgh Rebels of the Federal League played here in the park's final years.

Detail of photograph by Detroit Publishing Company, Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division. Identification help from Bob Williams.

Exposition Park

Exposition Park (today referred to as Exposition Park III) was the home for the Pirates through June 1909, when owner Barney Dreyfuss moved the team to his newly built Forbes Field in Oakland. The renegade park housed one last team, the Federal League Rebels, in 1914 and 1915. The Federal League was the last Major League rival, named after the team's manager Rebel Oaks. Former Brotherhood Secretary John Tener by this time truly achieved his potential as a Renaissance man: he concurrently served as both Pennsylvania's governor and National League president for almost two years. In a role-reversal, the ex-Brotherhood pitcher exerted his influence to help alleviate the threat of the upstart Federal League.

Read more about Tener at <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/c90d4ea9>

BAKER,

THE ALLEGHENY CLUB OF 1885.

COLUMBI



This rare cabinet card with manager Horace Phillips sitting with his Alleghenys in 1885 is believed to be the earliest Pittsburgh baseball card in existence. Top row: Art Whitney, “Jones” (never played), Fred Carroll, Phillips, Rudolph Kemmler, Tom Brown, Milt Scott. Middle row: Charlie Eden, Billy Kuehne, George “Doggie” Miller, Charles “Pop” Smith, Fred Mann. Bottom row: Pete Meegan and Ed Morris.

HHC Collection, courtesy of the Pittsburgh Pirates Baseball Club.

be leaving their Brotherhood contracts were fiercely labeled “deserters.”¹⁷ Most of the 1889 National League Alleghenys roster joined their manager Ned Hanlon in jumping to the new Players’ League franchise and so too brought their fans’ allegiance.

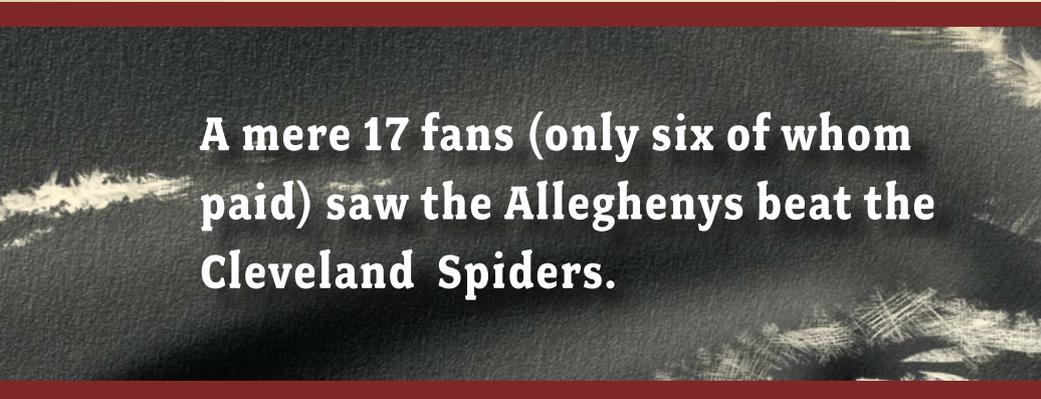
That winter seemingly brought as many battles to the courtroom as were scheduled on the field in the coming year. Even Pittsburgh lost its “h” in a United States Board on Geographic Names ruling (reinstated in 1911).¹⁸ Three major leagues—the National League, the Players’ League, and a weakened American Association—all vied for fan interest and gate profits, largely in the same cities. An ominous question emerged: would fans turn away from the national pastime altogether as a result of the constant fighting?

The 1890 National League Alleghenys

The 1890 preseason proved challenging for National League Alleghenys owner William Nimick and its new manager, Guy Hecker. Rumors abounded as uncertainty over the coming season reigned. Still, a confident front needed to be maintained in the press. New talent was scouted in the minor leagues, in the American Association, and throughout the rest of the National League. Only four Alleghenys from the 1889 roster returned to play in Recreation Park: pitcher Bill Sowders, catcher-turned-third baseman Doggie Miller, second baseman Fred Dunlap, and outfielder Billy Sunday.¹⁹ The Sowders’ family itself divided on the Brotherhood issue, as Bill’s brother John

signed with the Players’ League’s Brooklyn club. Doggie Miller, a Brotherhood deserter, turned out to be the Alleghenys’ best player. “Sure Shot” Dunlap signed with the Players’ League also, but over the winter argued with and parted from the Brotherhood after long, drawn-out contract talks. Billy Sunday solidly patrolled the outfield and later was known as the nation’s foremost evangelical preacher of the first two decades of the 20th century.

Scouting and attempts to sign other teams’ players proved unfruitful. All told 46 players would fill out the season’s roster. With an average age of 24, the team was mockingly dubbed the “Innocents.” The National League announced its schedule after the Players’ League, choosing most often to schedule games on the same days and in the same cities



A mere 17 fans (only six of whom paid) saw the Alleghenys beat the Cleveland Spiders.

as the Brotherhood. Attendance served as a crucial measure in deciding which league would survive.

A grim season loomed as the franchise was in financial straits. On April 23, 1890, a mere 17 fans (only six of whom paid) saw the Alleghenys beat the Cleveland Spiders 20-12. However, winning ways would not endure, and early mediocrity quickly changed to futility. In May, the team dropped to last place, where it would remain for the rest of the year. Team president J. Palmer O'Neill had no choice but to release Dunlap, one of his highest paid players. In August, outfielder Billy Sunday was traded to Philadelphia for two poorly regarded players and \$1,100.²⁰ Unable to fill the stands, the Alleghenys would "host" approximately 29 of its late season home games on the road, mostly in other National League parks, though the team also played in Canton, Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia.

Three late season losses against the Brooklyn Bridegrooms capped the tough luck in the first ever triple-header in major league history. Fittingly, the games were scheduled on Labor Day, September 1, though the day would not officially become a nationally recognized holiday until 1894. In the first game, down 10-0 with two outs in the ninth inning, the Alleghenys miraculously rallied. Doggie Miller tripled, yet was thrown out at the plate trying to score the tying run. Sportswriters could not have scripted a more unbelievable ending.²¹ The

Alleghenys lost their 23rd consecutive game the following day.²²

Once the season mercifully ended, the team's future was in doubt. In 1889, approximately 117,338 fans paid admission to Recreation Park (capacity estimated at 9,000). In 1890, season attendance dropped over 90 percent, down to approximately 16,064. Even though the league minimum admission was 50 cents, an exception was made to charge 25 cents in Pittsburgh and in some other cities. Pittsburgh's National League Allegheny home date attendance averaged only 411 spectators.²³ Its 23 wins against 113 losses remains the second worst season in major league history, trailing only the 1899 Cleveland Spiders (20-134).

The 1890 Players' League Burghers

At its inception, the Pittsburgh Players' League club faced the challenge of creating a suitable home field. The financial backing of four prominent Pittsburgh businessmen helped renovate and relocate the grandstand of Exposition Park.²⁴ Throughout the league, crucial supporters funded new grandstands and improvements to existing facilities as vested shareholders alongside the players. Ground was broken in January 1890 for a revised Exposition Park (distinguished in current times as Exposition Park III) between present-day Heinz Field and PNC Park.²⁵ Pud Galvin's

appointment to supervise the relocation and construction of the grandstands is evidence of just how invested some players were in the new league's success.²⁶ Early season rains stalled construction, however, and occasional flooding threatened the park. During construction the team stayed in shape by playing handball in the old park's summer theater. Soon 6,500 seats flanked a gigantic field that is estimated to have measured 400 feet to left, 515 feet to center, and 380 feet to right.²⁷

The blue-collared people of Pittsburgh saw their favorite players fight ownership and the reserve clause. Memories of coal mine and railroad strikes in the region over the previous decades remained as Pittsburghers fought for better working conditions. The labor movement had spread to baseball and the Players' League club, soon known as the Burghers, became the fans' team.

The era's biggest star, Cap Anson of the Chicago White Stockings, remained in the National League, but most of the best players such as Roger Connor, Buck Ewing, Charles Comiskey, Old Hoss Radbourne, and Mike "King" Kelly played for the Brotherhood in the Players' League.²⁸ Their level of play eclipsed the established National League's ball players'. All told, 10 former Alleghenys joined returning hometown pitcher John Tener, Brotherhood secretary. Their seven newly formed opponents awaited: the Boston Reds (the eventual champions), Brooklyn Ward's Wonders, Buffalo Bisons, Chicago Pirates, Cleveland Infants, New York Giants, and Philadelphia Quakers.

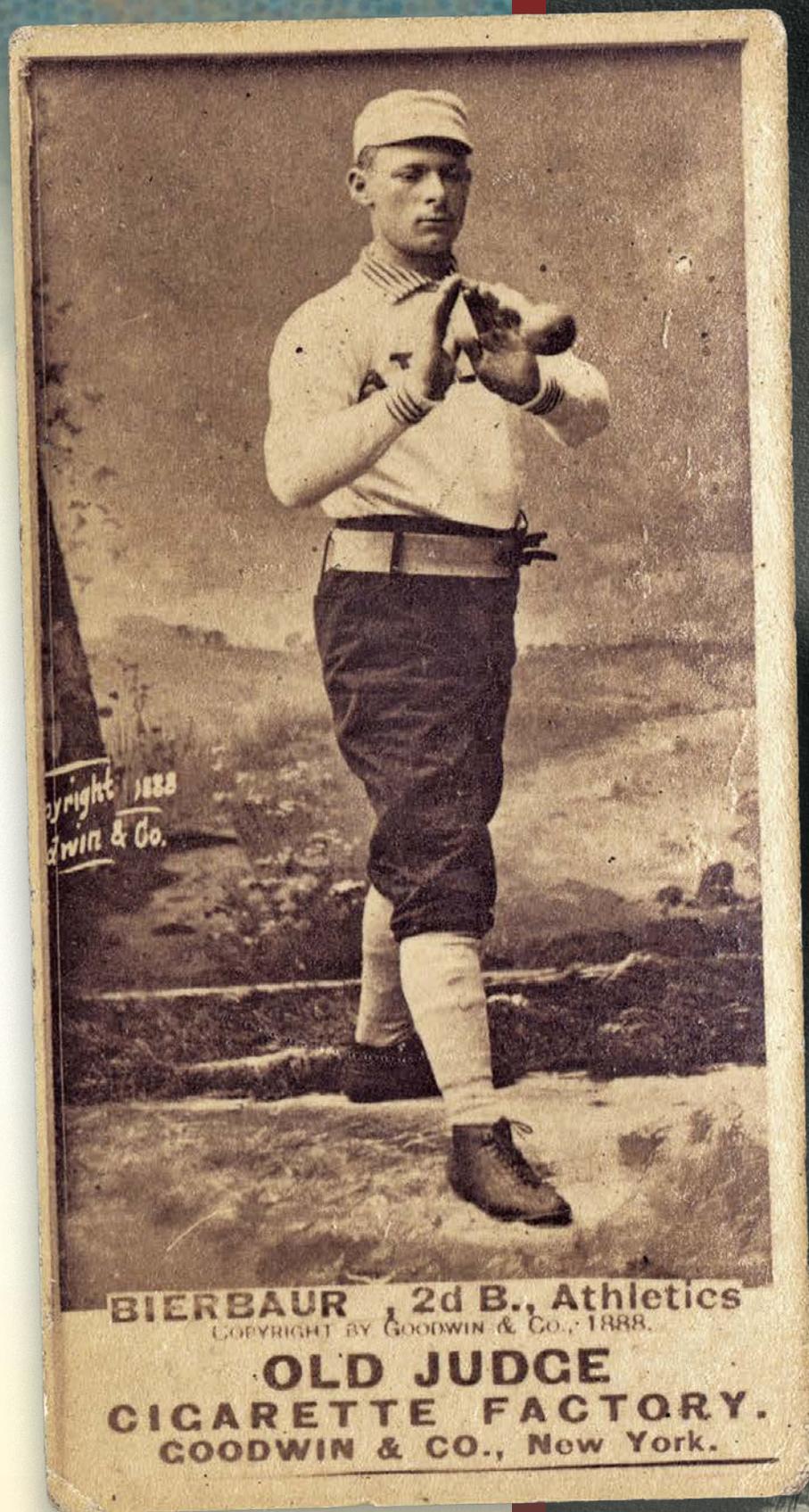
Player/manager Ned Hanlon (a Brotherhood member since 1886) led the Burghers to a 60-68 record. Old-timer "Uncle" Al Pratt joined as a stockholder and director. On July 14, 1890, the team dropped into sixth place, where it would remain for the rest of the season. A former Allegheny first baseman, 22-year-old Jake Beckley proved to be far and away the Burghers' best player, hitting nine home runs while driving in 120 runs and co-leading the

league with teammate Joe Visner in triples with 22.²⁹ Outfielders struggled to limit extra-base hits in the expansive Exposition Park outfield. Though the team finished in sixth place amongst eight teams, it was clear that the Burghers were talented. Hanlon, Beckley, and Galvin are now all enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame (Hanlon as a manager).

While both leagues lost money in 1890, Players' League investors seemed to focus on their own interest rather than league survival.³⁰ Newly constructed ballparks had to be paid for, yet these also provided attractive venues for consolidated teams in several cities. In Pittsburgh, a new sport gained popularity that winter; the first meaningful football games between club teams began in Allegheny City.³¹ Gradually over the winter months, the Players' League disbanded as a result of a complexity of circumstances. Baseball's national structure seemingly could not support the three competing and bickering major leagues. Compromising talks and attitudes over league independence parlayed into consolidation talks between National and Players' League clubs who shared cities. Investors and players focused on survival. By January 1891, the Players' League was dead.³² John Thorn, the current Official Baseball Historian for Major League Baseball, characterized the Players' League as a "failed utopian experiment."³³ Some National League owners spun the folding of the Players' League, claiming that the Brotherhood was incapable of managing a league and also citing the reserve clause as an imposed necessity. Unfortunately (or "fortunately" in some minds) the reserve system ruled the game until the efforts of Marvin Miller and Curt Flood challenged it in 1970 to set the stage for free agency.

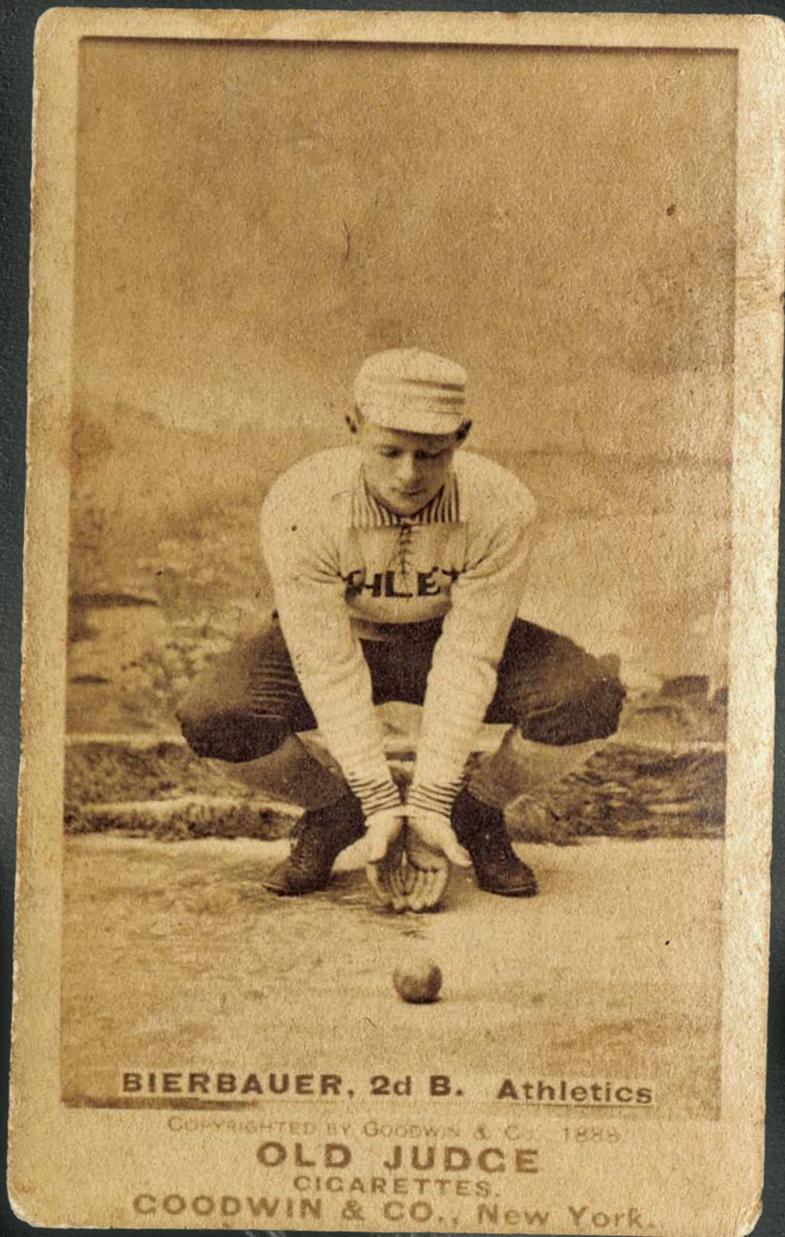
Reconciliation Amidst Chaos

Pittsburgh became the second city after New York to consolidate its National League and Players' League teams following the 1890 season.³⁴ Once again, management changed the



LEFT AND RIGHT
Philadelphia Athletic second baseman Louis Bierbauer on 1888 Old Judge cigarettes trading cards.

HHC Collection, gift of Gregg Ficery.



“Hanlon had to cross the ice on the harbor in a bitter storm, but he finally reached Bierbauer’s shack and before leaving had secured his signature to a contract to play with Pittsburg.”

club’s legal identity, this time to the “Pittsburg Athletic Co.”³⁵ This new Alleghenys club prepared for the 1891 season in Exposition Park with several former Burghers financial backers on its board of directors. Players’ League players, even leader Monte Ward, were allowed to return to their original clubs without fear of reprisal or being blacklisted as sometimes occurred in past disagreements. Many of the Burghers returned to the Alleghenys, but pitcher John Tener retired and entered the banking field, set to embark on a successful second career.³⁶ Meanwhile, the American Association weakened and disbanded within a year. Perhaps as a result of its horrible season, seemingly no club proved as tenacious as the Alleghenys in bolstering its roster by acquiring newly available talent. As in the previous winter, chaos and rumor filled the sports gossip page.

At the center of much of the chaos, the Philadelphia Athletics fell victim to a costly clerical oversight and lost one of the best second basemen in the game, Louis Bierbauer. *Sporting News* founder Alfred Spink recalled,

Ned Hanlon, then managing Pittsburg, went to Erie in the depth of the Winter to secure a contract from Bierbauer. He found him on Presque Isle Peninsula, his favorite “hang-out.” Hanlon had to cross the ice on the harbor in a bitter storm, but he finally reached Bierbauer’s shack and before leaving had secured his signature to a contract to play with Pittsburg.³⁷

On January 19, 1891, Ned Hanlon signed Erie-native Louis Bierbauer and presented him with a \$1,000 advance on his \$4,500 salary.³⁸ Bierbauer and Monte Ward had proven a formidable double-play combination for the 1890 Brooklyn Ward Wonders. Pittsburg wanted the pair. Ward even telegraphed Bierbauer in Erie to not sign with anyone, so that they could play together.³⁹ In the end, however, the Pittsburg Baseball Club happily settled for Louis Bierbauer alone. Hanlon, J. Palmer O’Neill, and Guy Hecker continued to travel the tri-state area and beyond to bolster the roster.

Understandably, the Bierbauer controversy remains a confusing issue, similar to the entirety of the Brotherhood War, with modern references oversimplifying its end effect. From 1889 to 1890, the National League club in Philadelphia changed its name from the “Quakers” to the “Phillies.” The 1890 Players’ League franchise adopted the name “Quakers.” Then, after the 1890 season, American Association officials expelled the Philadelphia Athletics and subsequently awarded the franchise’s spot to the Philadelphia Quakers of the defunct Players’ League, so that an entirely new Philadelphia Athletics team started the 1891 American Association season. The former Quakers’ owners, brothers Earl and George Wagner, hired longtime Athletics owner and recent manager Bill Sharsig to continue managing the team. This occurred after the deadline to reserve players had passed. The Wagners clearly trusted Sharsig. With everyone’s heads spinning from the changes, it is easy to see how a clerical error was made. And really, that error may have arisen as a result of American Association President Zach Phelps’ mismanagement.⁴⁰ On February 2, the

Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette quoted Sharsig explaining Bierbauer’s omission from the club’s reserve list:

Last fall ... I had a long interview with President Phelps in regard to the status of the Athletics Players who had joined the Brotherhood.... I saw Phelps at Frankfort and he assured me that the players would revert to the Association and it was not necessary to send in their names in the list for 1891. I followed his instructions.... If we don’t get Bierbauer the Athletic club will be boycotted in Philadelphia.⁴¹

Indeed, the club received more than 100 boycott letters from fans.⁴² Furthermore, Ned Hanlon claimed, “I wired Mr. Phelps, of the American Association, asking whether or not Bierbauer was reserved. Mr. Phelps replied that neither the association or a club in it had reserved him.”⁴³ On February 14, a newly created national board of league officials settled the confusing claims and the fates of five disputed players—including those of Hanlon signees and ex-Brotherhood players Bierbauer and catcher Cornelius McGillicuddy (better known as the future Hall of Fame manager

Connie Mack). Fredrick Lieb, in his 1948 history of the Pittsburgh franchise, quoted an unnamed American Association official’s argument, “The action of the Pittsburgh club in signing Bierbauer was piratical.”⁴⁴ The identity of the official may be lost and the “piratical” or “act of piracy” storyline has often been repeated in simplified form without primary documentation. In consideration of contractual rights stipulated in an accord known as the National Agreement, the National Board ruled in Pittsburgh’s favor regarding both Bierbauer and Mack.⁴⁵ The Board’s summary explained, “Undoubtedly the Pittsburg Club has the legal right to the man, but morally it has not. It ought to withdraw its claim; but as it does not we must reluctantly decide in favor of Pittsburg.”⁴⁶

On March 1, the *Pittsburg Dispatch* printed Thomas Kalbfus’ earlier reaction to the Board’s ruling. The Secretary of the Washington Statesmen team of the American Association sounded off in a vengeful tone: “We are now pirates and have hoisted the black flag against the National League for the good of baseball.”⁴⁷ He and many other members of the American Association were furious, viewing the undermining of each league’s player contracts as a threat to the entire order of the game. Soon the accusatory term was directed to the Alleghenys, and slowly a new team name was born.

The “piratical” signing of Bierbauer has long since been credited as the source of the Pirates’ name, though the team’s cumulative efforts of the 1890-91 winter further solidified the moniker. The warring American Association withdrew from the National Agreement and incidences of contract jumping and enticement occurred. Guy Hecker signed “Louisville Slugger” Pete Browning and J. Palmer O’Neill signed Columbus’s Charles Reilly and Mark Baldwin.⁴⁸ A native of Pittsburgh’s South Side and former Penn State student, Baldwin proved to be a true Pirate (he played for the Brotherhood’s Chicago Pirates) and an agent of mayhem. He signed with two teams and

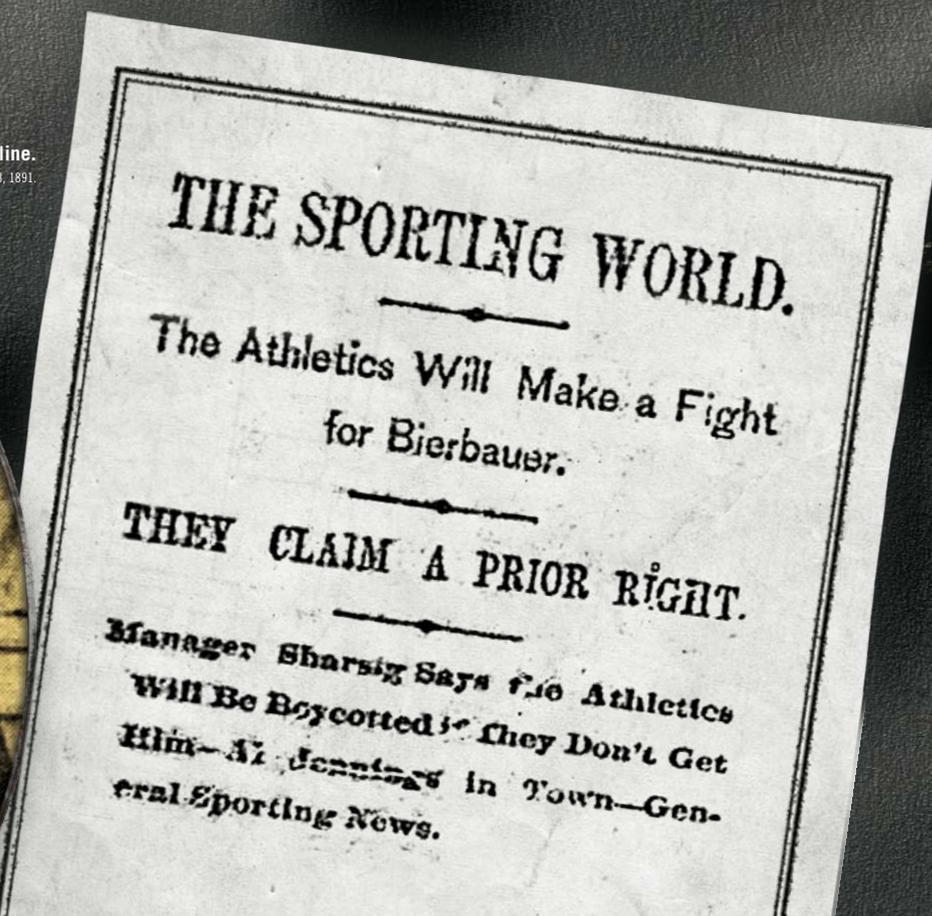
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Bierbauer headline.

Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, February 3, 1891.

The first use of the word "Pirates" may have been said or telegraphed by Washington Statesmen team secretary Thomas Kalbfus in February 1891. Eventually Pittsburgh, not Washington, became known as the "Pirates."

The Washington Times, August 20, 1908. Library of Congress
Chronicling America.



nearly a third during the winter, the last and final being the Alleghenys on March 1. Two days later, the Pittsburgh pitcher (while under contract) traveled to St. Louis in an attempt to lure away Jack Connor and Silver King, one of the association's best pitchers. St. Louis Browns' owner Chris von der Ahe claimed to hold King under contract and ordered Baldwin arrested. Charges were dropped, but the ensuing storyline runs much deeper, with court hearings over the next seven years. Pittsburgh, however, retained King's rights thanks to Baldwin's efforts.⁴⁹

By at least the second week of the season and throughout 1891, sportswriters in other cities were referring to "the Pirates" of Pittsburgh. From Chicago, May 3, "Rain prevented today's game between the local team and the band of pirates from Pittsburg."⁵⁰ The headline in Cincinnati on May 6 read, "Baseballists who disgrace the diamond

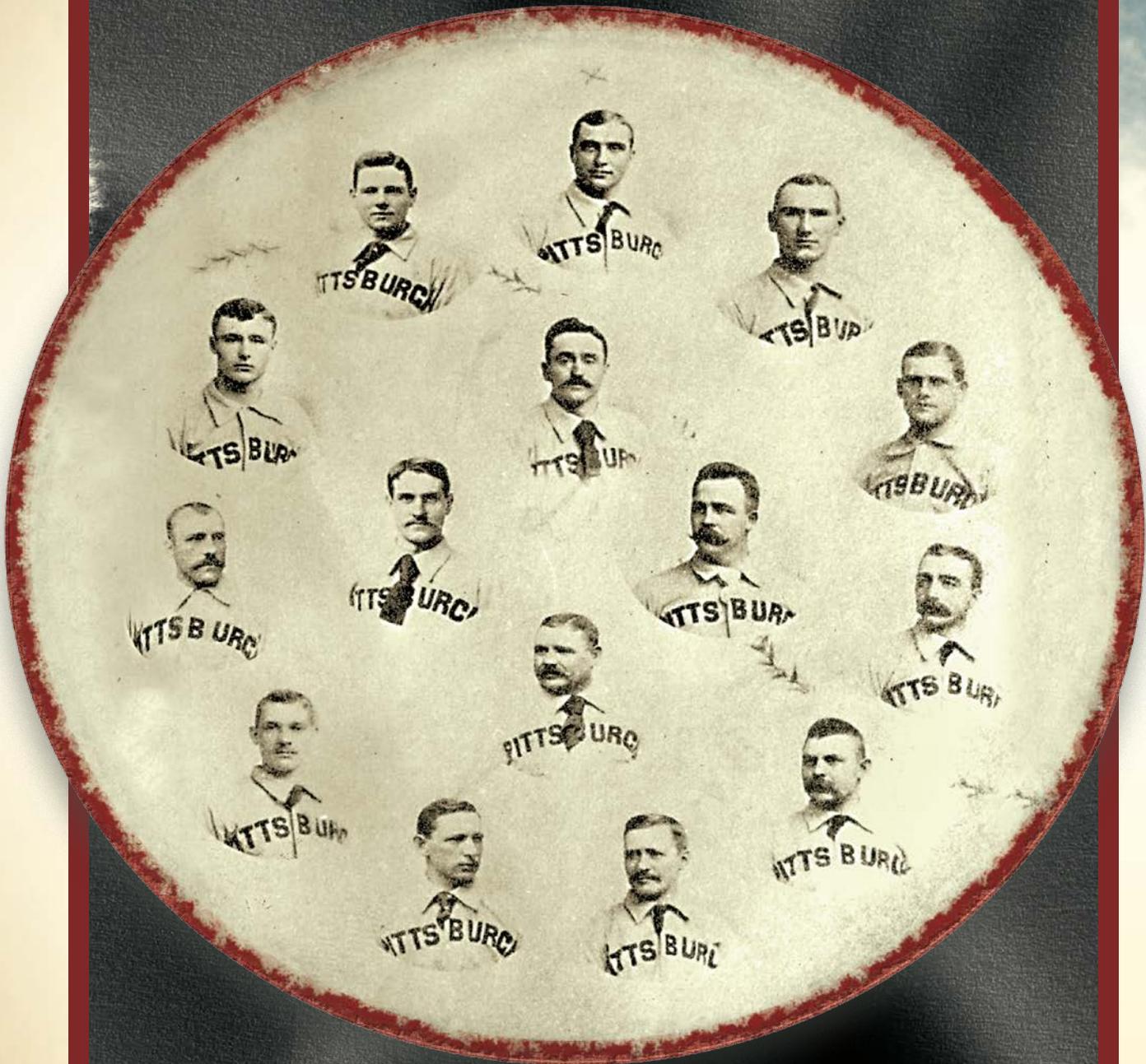
represented in J. Palmer O'Neil's [sic] Pittsburg pirates. Can they play honest ball? The public asks," and "To-day O'Neil's pirates, Pittsburg's all star aggregation, or as best named the contract jumper team...."⁵¹ Some simply called J. Palmer O'Neill "the Pirate" or "J. Pirate O'Neill."⁵² Pittsburgh papers seemingly only reported others using the moniker until sporadically calling the team "the Pirates" very late in the season. Oddly, the *Pittsburg Press* for a spell in August and September of 1891 took to calling the team the "Pets."⁵³ Clearly the informality of team names has changed drastically over the last century. While known exclusively as "the Pirates," the team legally remained the "Pittsburg Baseball Club" and did not officially or more actively adopt the name "Pirates" for more than a decade.⁵⁴

During that spring of 1891, the revamped team headed south with high aspirations for the

coming season. The Pirates played the Cleveland Spiders in the first spring training game ever held in the state of Florida.⁵⁵ That 1891 season is now regarded as the first season the team was known as the Pirates. In 1892, Pittsburgh papers and the city embraced the name "Pirates."⁵⁶ Lou Bierbauer played for the Pirates through 1896. He no doubt cheered his former team while listening to radio broadcasts in his Erie home, as the Pirates beat the Washington Senators in the 1925 World Series. As first noted by author Richard Peterson in *The Pirates Reader*, friend and newspaper writer John Carney remembered, "Louie loved the Pirates and rooted for them until the day of his death in 1926."⁵⁷ He was a true Pirate until the end. 

Craig Britcher is Curatorial Assistant to the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum and a Society for American Baseball Research, Forbes Field Chapter member.

In 1891, the Pirates played the Cleveland Spiders in the first spring training game ever held in the state of Florida.



1890 Dabs Studio Pittsburgh Burghers team cabinet card. Outer circle, clockwise from the top: Harry Staley, Jake Beckley, Jocko Fields, Jerry Hurley, Bill Kuehne, Ed "Cannonball" Morris, Yank Robinson, Al Maul, Joe Visner, Tommy Corcoran, and Tom Quinn. Inner circle, clockwise from the top: Ned Hanlon, Fred Carroll, Pud Galvin, and John Tener.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Identifications by David Nemecek from his *The Great Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Major League Baseball*.

- ¹ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, March 1, 1891, 6. Library of Congress Chronicling America Newspaper database. Cited as “secretary Kalbfuss [sic] of Washington.” Kalbfuss’s identity is confirmed in *The Sunday Herald*, March 8, 1891, 7, and *The Evening Star*, February 14, 1891, 12.
- ² http://exhibits.baseballhalloffame.org/dressed_to_the_nines/database.htm.
- ³ Heritage Auctions’ description of Al Pratt’s 1920 diary, sold in 2012, <http://sports.ha.com/c/item.zx?saleNo=7051&lotNo=81013>.
- ⁴ William E. Benswanger, “Professional Baseball in Pittsburgh,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, nos. 1 and 2 (March-June 1947): 9-14.
- ⁵ www.baseballreference.com. This website is invaluable as a source for most player records, attendance, statistics, game dates.
- ⁶ J.M. Kelly, *Handbook of Greater Pittsburg* (J.M. Kelly Co. Publishers, 1895), 31. Thanks to Bob Williams of Portland, Oregon, and Dan Bonk of Pittsburgh, for the source. The article quotes the name “Pittsburg,” believed to be an 1895 correction.
- ⁷ David Nemeč, *The Beer and Whiskey League: The Illustrated History of the American Association—Baseball’s Renegade Major League* (New York: Lyons and Burford Publishers, 1994), 16, 19-39.
- ⁸ Primary citation of this legend has not yet been documented.
- ⁹ Roger Abrams, *The Dark Side of the Diamond: Gambling, Violence, Drugs and Alcoholism in the National Pastime* (Burlington, Mass.: Rounder Books, 2007), 105-109.
- ¹⁰ Monte Ward (1860-1925), playing career 1878-1894.
- ¹¹ Frederick Ivor-Campbell, Robert L. Tiemann, and Mark Rucker, eds., *Baseball’s First Stars* (Cleveland: Society for American Baseball Research, 1996), 5, 167. See also, Charles Alexander, *Turbulent Seasons: Baseball in 1890-1891* (University Park, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2011), 10-15.
- ¹² Frank H. Brunnell, *The Players’ National League Official Guide for 1890* (Chicago: Chicago Opera House, 1889), 7.
- ¹³ Tener Family Papers with detailed correspondence regarding the 1888 Spalding World Tour, 1844-1946, HHC Detre Library & Archives, Pittsburgh, Pa. See also Daniel Ginsburg, “John Tener,” in the Society for American Baseball Research Biography Project, <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/c90d4ea9>.
- ¹⁴ Brunnell, 7. See also Ethan Lewis, “A Structure to Last Forever: The Players’ League and the Brotherhood War of 1890,” www.ethanlewis.org/pl/.
- ¹⁵ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, December 1889. HSWP and Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, December 25, 1889. HSWP and Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, December 1889. HSWP and Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ¹⁸ www.popularpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-info/pittsburgh-history/whatsinanh.aspx.
- ¹⁹ www.baseballreference.com.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Ronald G. Shafer, “Brooklyn Played in First Triple-Header,” *When the Dodgers Were Bridegrooms* (blog), August 18, 2011, <http://www.brooklyndodgershistory.com/brooklyn-played-in-baseballs-first-triple-header>.
- ²² www.baseballreference.com.
- ²³ *Ibid.* See also www.baseballalmanac.com.
- ²⁴ Alexander, 47.
- ²⁵ Philip J. Lowry, *Green Cathedrals: The Ultimate Celebration of Major League and Negro League Ballparks* (New York: Walker Publishing Co., 2007), 184-185.
- ²⁶ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, October 1889-March 1891, HSWP and Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ²⁷ Lowry, 184-185. These dimensions are approximate.
- ²⁸ David Nemeč, *The Great Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Major League Baseball*, 2nd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006) for biographical background.
- ²⁹ www.baseballreference.com.
- ³⁰ Alexander, 74-75, 101. In referring to the Burghers’ ledger and citing an 1890 *Sporting Life* article, “Ella Black [journalist] called the claim of local investors that the club made money or at least broke even ‘absurd.’”
- ³¹ PFRA Research, *Three A’s for Football. The A.A.A. Introduces Football to Pittsburgh: 1890*, http://www.profootballresearchers.org/Articles/Three_As.pdf/.
- ³² Alexander, 112-114.
- ³³ John Thorn, *Baseball in the Garden of Eden: The Secret History of the Early Game* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 206, 234-242.
- ³⁴ Alexander, 108.
- ³⁵ Kelly, 31. In this instance, “Pittsburg” without the “h” is correct and unchanged.
- ³⁶ Ginsburg.
- ³⁷ Alfred H. Spink, *The National Game*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: The National Game Publishing Company, 1911; reprint, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 191-192. First found cited in Richard Peterson, ed., “Becoming the Pirates” in *The Pirates Reader* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press: 2003), 34-36.
- ³⁸ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, October 1889-March 1891, HSWP and Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ³⁹ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, February 4, 1891, 6. Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ⁴⁰ Alexander, 120-123.
- ⁴¹ *Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette*, February 2, 1891, 6. Hillman Library Microfilm.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, February 4, 1891, 6. Library of Congress Chronicling America newspaper database.
- ⁴⁴ Frederick G. Lieb, *The Pittsburgh Pirates* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1948), 21.
- ⁴⁵ Alexander. See also Norman L. Macht, *Connie Mack and the Early Years of Baseball* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 72-89.
- ⁴⁶ *The Sunday Herald and Weekly National Intelligencer*, Washington, D.C., February 15, 1891, 8. Library of Congress Chronicling America newspaper database.
- ⁴⁷ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, March 1, 1891, 6. Library of Congress Chronicling America Newspaper database. Cited as “secretary Kalbfuss [sic] of Washington.”
- ⁴⁸ Browning first asked a young woodworker, Bud Hillerich to fashion him a bat, which he swore by. Hillerich went on to form Hillerich and Bradsby and in 1894 trademarked the name “Louisville Slugger.”
- ⁴⁹ Brian McKenna, “Mark Baldwin,” in the Society for American Baseball Research Biography Project, <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/41f65388>.
- ⁵⁰ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, May 3, 1891, 6. Printed from a Chicago correspondent’s account. Library of Congress Chronicling America newspaper database.
- ⁵¹ *Pittsburg Dispatch*, May 7, 1891. Reprinting of *The Post* (Cincinnati) May 6, 1891, 6. Library of Congress Chronicling America newspaper database.
- ⁵² Harold Seymour (with uncredited research and writing by wife Dorothy Seymour), *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 251, and survey of the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, 1891.
- ⁵³ Research of John Dreker, with permission, *Pirates Prospects* blog writer.
- ⁵⁴ Dan Bonk and Len Martin, “The First World Series & Its Pittsburgh Connections,” *Western Pennsylvania History* (Fall 2003): 17.
- ⁵⁵ Macht, 87. Pittsburg lost 6-3.
- ⁵⁶ Survey of the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, 1892. Library of Congress Chronicling America newspaper database.
- ⁵⁷ Harry Keck, *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, March 9, 1955. First found cited in Richard Peterson, ed., “‘Godfather of Pirates’ Lies in Unmarked Grave” in *The Pirates Reader* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 36.