

Yesteryears

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Pitcher Satchel Paige's best years were behind him when he joined the Cleveland Indians in 1947. Paige appears pensive as he was photographed by George Brace, a Chicago photographer who specialized in baseball.



George Brace poses with Jeff Heath and Bob Feller of the Cleveland Indians on opening day in 1940. Feller then went out and pitched the only opening day no-hitter in major league history.

Lens caught early baseball from sluggers to mascots

George Brace's vintage work in new album

By the Associated Press

BEFORE BASEBALL BECAME double-knits and DHs, it was flannel and fun. In the era when photographer George Brace worked ball games with a camera and an eye for the eye-catching, players were only too happy to pose for him, sometimes serious, sometimes clowning around.

Beginning in 1929, Brace wandered the fields with his camera, shooting the scene from sluggers to mascots, from clubhouse boys to ticket takers.

"Anything in uniform," he said. "If it was baseball, we photographed it."

The result was thousands of pictures from a different time in baseball. A selection of Brace's vintage work from the '30s, '40s and '50s has been collected in "The Game That Was," a nostalgic look at the sport before the game-face, corporate mentality moved in on it.

This is a baseball family album that covers the subjects Brace found intriguing.

The photographer's portrait of a smiling, relaxed Lou Gehrig pleased the slugger so much he ordered copies to sign and send to fans. He didn't charge for them, either.

Brace caught a curious sideways glance by Satchel Paige, perhaps checking to see if anybody was gaining on him. Babe Ruth looked happy as he held a bat and posed with his wife, Claire, for the cameraman. And Tommy Lasorda was a kid, a winless left-hander far removed from his decades-long run as manager of the Dodgers when Brace's camera found him.

On the first day of the 1940 season, Brace posed in the



New York Yankees great Lou Gehrig smiles as he was photographed by George Brace. Gehrig liked the picture so much he ordered copies of it and gave autographed prints to fans — for free.

Cleveland dugout with Bob Feller and Jeff Heath. Then Feller went out and threw the only opening day no-hitter in baseball history. And when they planted ivy at the outfield wall in Wrigley Field, Brace recorded the defining moment in baseball gardening history.

Brace dressed pudgy Paul Dominick, the Cubs' mascot in the 1930s, in catcher's gear for a fun picture and shot the Comiskey Park clubhouse boys, brothers Art and Ephraim Colledge, who shared a single, unexplained nickname of "Sharkey."

The nickname origin of usher

Joe Murphy, though, was simple. Whenever he was asked to estimate Wrigley Field's attendance, he'd say "40,000." Thus, he became "Forty Thousand Murphy."

Dominick moved from baseball to Hollywood and the "Our Gang" series. The two Sharkeys and Forty Thousand Murphy faded into obscurity, their enduring link to baseball history found in the darkroom of a photographer who found them interesting and took their pictures.

More photos on page 4



Workers at Chicago's Wrigley Field were snapped by George Brace as they planted the first of the ballpark's famous vines in 1937.



They shared an unexplained nickname, 'Sharkey,' but in real life they were brothers, Comiskey Park clubhouse boys, Art and Ephraim Colledge



Brace dressed 1930s Cubs mascot Paul Domerick in catcher's gear for a light-hearted picture, published in his book, 'The Game That Was.'



New York Yankees slugger Babe Ruth poses with his wife Claire in this Brace photo. Players often asked the photographer to make family pictures for them.



He was a winless lefthander when he was photographed by George Brace. Tommy Lasorda was years away from his stint as the manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers but already had that winsome smile.



Comiskey Park usher Joe Murphy always estimated attendance at 40,000 so he became known as '40,000 Murphy.'

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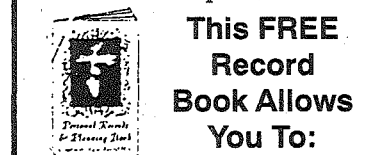
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