

The Baseball Magnates and Urban Politics In The Progressive Era: 1895 - 1920

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In the Progressive Era, club owners and sympathetic journalists created a self-serving ideology for baseball. They encouraged the public to believe that the game was one of the foremost indigenous American institutions and that it epitomized the finest qualities of a bygone rural age. Many sportswriters persuaded fans to regard the baseball magnates as benevolent, civic-minded individuals, dedicated to providing their fellow townfolk with exciting and clean entertainment.¹ Professional baseball however was not really “dominated” by such men, but by individuals with extremely close ties to urban political leaders who were usually members of local political machines. Ironically the national pastime which was said to exemplify the best characteristics of American society was operated by men who typified some of its worst aspects. In the period from 1901 to 1920, seventeen of the eighteen American and National League baseball teams were run by people with significant political connections. These club owners included political bosses, friends and relatives of men in what we could call high political places, and political allies like traction magnates and professional gamblers. In boss-riddled Cincinnati during the early 1900’s for instance, the Cincinnati Reds baseball team was owned by a syndicate which at one time included the city’s Republican boss, George B. Cox, his lieutenant, Water Works Commissioner August Herrmann, and the town’s mayor, Julius Fleischmann. The Baltimore Orioles were run by such men as John Mahon, the leading Democrat in Maryland, Sidney Frank, brother of a prominent city councilman, and Judge Harry Goldman. And the Philadelphia Phillies owners included several traction magnates, state senators, and a former New York City police commissioner.²

The close alliance between professional baseball teams and urban politicians was not unique to cities of any particular size or

¹Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age* (New York: 1971), II, pp. 62-64; David Q. Voigt, *American Baseball: From the Commissioners to Continental Expansion* (Norman, Okla.: 1970), II, 107-108; For typical contemporary attitudes towards baseball, see e.g., H. Addington Bruce, “Baseball and the National Life,” *Outlook*, 104 (May, 1913), 103-7; Hugh Fullerton, “Fans,” *American Magazine*, 74, (Aug., 1912), 462-7; William A. Phelon, “The Great American Magnate,” *Baseball Magazine*, 6 (Jan., 1913), 17-23; Allen Sangree, “Fans and Their Frenzies,” *Everybody’s*, 17 (Sept., 1907), 378-87; McCready Sykes, “The Most Perfect Thing in America,” *Everybody’s*, 25, (October, 1911), 435-46.

²The exception was Milwaukee, which was in the majors just in 1901. See Steven A. Riess, “Professional Baseball and American Culture: Myths and Realities, 1892-1923, With Special Emphasis

geographic location. Politicos were nearly always involved in the operations of the local ball clubs. A study of the professional baseball teams in such regionally representative cities like Atlanta, Chicago, and New York, dramatically suggests the strong link between baseball and politics. New York and Chicago were the two largest American cities at the turn of the century, and after 1903 they had between them five of the sixteen major league clubs. New York's politics were dominated by the notorious Tammany organization, while in Chicago, political machines were very active on the ward level. The southern commercial center of Atlanta was a considerably smaller town, ranking forty-third among all U.S. cities in population with 89,872 inhabitants in 1900. It had just one minor league team which played in the Class B Southern League. There was apparently no important political machine in Atlanta.

By examining the ties between professional baseball and local politicians in these three cities, it becomes clear that the relationship was a mutually beneficial one. Ball clubs with political allies secured preferential treatment from city governments with regards to assessments and various municipal services; inside information about real estate and traction developments; and protection against competitors and community opposition. Politicians benefited because the ball clubs were fine investments which provided them with sources of honest and dishonest graft, patronage for their supporters, traffic for their traction routes, and favorable publicity.

The baseball franchise in Atlanta was nearly always in the hands of important politicians. In 1895 the team was controlled by a joint stock company which included Councilman Joseph E. Maddox and Alderman Joseph Hirsch, who was the team's president. These executives needed whatever political influence they could muster because the East Side residents near Jackson and Old Wheat where Athletic Park was located wanted the field shut down as a public nuisance.³

The club's enemies had failed in 1894 to secure a court order preventing the team from playing at Athletic Park, but a year later the issue was brought before the city council. The fight was led by Councilman William J. Campbell, who claimed that noise from the

on Atlanta, Chicago, and New York," (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1974), chap. 3; Lee Allen, *The Cincinnati Reds* (New York, 1948), 73-75; Frederick G. Lieb, *The Baltimore Orioles* (New York, 1955), 24; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 March, 1903; *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 Feb. 1909; *New York Tribune*, 23 Dec., 1912.

³*Atlanta Constitution*, 4 Feb., 1895, 10 March 1896, 13 July, 1896.

park would disturb the residential community, crowds attending the games were of a disagreeable character, and order could not be maintained there. Joseph Hirsch tried to counter these points by guaranteeing that disorder would not be tolerated, and promising that the park would get the best possible police protection. However the community's petition was adopted, and the Atlanta Baseball Association lost its license.⁴

There was considerable public disapproval of this move, led primarily by the daily newspapers which strongly deprecated the council's action. The city fathers were persuaded to reconsider their decision, and a compromise was reached whereby the team was given a trial period to prove that it could keep order at Athletic Park. There were no problems there that season, but in 1896 the owners moved their team to Brisbane Park, located on the South Side at Ira and Crumley, which was said to be better serviced by public transportation. The Atlanta Traction Company had a route near the site, and it offered the franchise certain inducements to get it to move there. People living in the vicinity protested loudly but to no avail and the club had no difficulty in renewing its license.⁵

Traction companies were always deeply tied into local politics because of their need to secure long term franchises and obtain the right of eminent domain. These firms often owned amusement parks and baseball fields since they felt that these were excellent attractions for riders, and they wanted to be sure that their routes serviced these entertainments. Transit companies were important supporters of professional baseball in all parts of the country, especially the South, and cities like Augusta, Birmingham, Charleston, Macon, Mobile, Montgomery, and New Orleans, all received substantial financial backing from the streetcar lines.⁶

The Atlanta baseball team failed to last out the 1896 season. One year later, a new team was organized by attorney W.T. Moyers, but it survived for just two months. In the winter of 1898, Moyers requested assistance from the local traction interests who were receiving large profits from the fares of fans without contributing to the upkeep of the sport. Moyers persuaded the Atlanta Street Railway Company to support him, and their superintendent, F.W. Zimmerman, purchased

⁴*Ibid.*, 3 March, 1894, 3 April, 1894, 19 March, 1895.

⁵*Ibid.*, 19 & 20 March, 1895; *Atlanta Journal*, 9 & 11 April 1896.

⁶Ben B. Seligman, *The Potentates: Business and Businessmen in American History* (New York: 1971), 159; W.E. Harrington, "Report of Committee on Promotion of Traffic," *Street Railway Journal*, 30 (Oct. 26, 1907), 864; *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 Jan., 1898, 30 Jan., 1903.

stock in the club and became its vice-president. The firm had made \$600 on its ballpark route the year before, in spite of the abbreviated season, and Zimmerman was afraid that the streetcar line would lose money if the club failed again. He anticipated profiting by about \$3,000 in 1898, but his hopes were crushed for the Southern League collapsed early that season.⁷

Professional baseball was not resumed in Atlanta until 1902 when the Selma club of the revived Southern League was moved there by its owners E.T. Peter and Abner Powell, a former baseball player and owner of the New Orleans franchise. Powell bought out his partner a year later, and developed the enterprise into a profitable venture. He invested about \$10,500 in the club, and earned \$40,000 by the end of 1904. His success aroused the ire of fans who watched with distaste as the proceeds from their tickets went to an outsider. As in the case of other American cities, the Atlanta fans had a great deal of pride in their home town team. They preferred local control because they regarded the professional club as an important local institution which represented their city in inter-urban competition and vividly reflected the progressive character of their community.⁸ A clique of powerful politicians decided to try to drive Powell out and replace him with Atlanta owners by raising his taxes and establishing a license fee at an inordinately high level. A bill was introduced in the city council in 1904 which proposed charging Powell a fee of fifty dollars plus a five percent tax on his gross receipts, at a time when no other baseball team was taxed outside of its license fee. Abner Powell's enemies were unable to push this drastic measure through the council, and instead it was decided to set the license fee at \$200 plus another \$100 for police protection. In the meanwhile, the county officials also established an annual \$300 assessment against the ball club.⁹

Powell's difficulties were compounded that year because the municipality purchased the 189 acre Piedmont Park, which included the Piedmont Baseball Park where the Atlanta club had played since 1902, as well as other amusement attractions. Powell still had one year remaining on his lease, and had just signed an option to renew

⁷Ibid 13 July, 1896, 6 Sept., 1897, 23 Jan., 1898, 16 Feb., 1898; *Atlanta Journal*, 20 Jan., 1898; *Sporting Life*, 5 March, 1898.

⁸*Atlanta Constitution* 23 Dec., 1902, 16 Feb., 1904 23 June, 1905; *Atlanta Journal*, 27 May, 1904, 24 & 27 Jan., 1905; Raymond B. Nixon. *Henry Grady: Spokesman for the New South (Atlanta, 1943)*, p. 229.

⁹*Atlanta Journal*, 1, 27 May, 1904, 10 June, 1904; *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 May, 1904, 4 June, 1904, 27 Jan., 1905; *Atlanta Tax Ordinance For 1904-5 (Atlanta, 1905)*. #33.

with the previous owner, but he was afraid that the city would make it difficult for him in the future. He also was being plagued by the traction interests, who not only did not give him any financial assistance, but actually charged Powell five dollars before every game to guarantee their service.¹⁰ The owner was forced to accede to public pressure and sold his club for \$20,000 to a local syndicate which included Fire Chief W. R. Joyner, the team's president in 1889, and Lowry Arnold, solicitor of the criminal court.¹¹

Walthal R. Joyner had joined the fire company in 1870 when it was still a volunteer force, and remained after it became a municipal service, serving as fire chief from 1885 until 1906, when he resigned to become mayor. As fire chief, Joyner was the highest paid city official with a salary of \$4,000.¹² Joyner's group received financial support from the Georgia Railway and Electric Company, which hoped that the sport would generate traffic along its lines. The team was moved in 1907 from Piedmont Park to a site owned by the transit company on Ponce De Leon Avenue, directly opposite its amusement park.¹³ One year later, the streetcar line purchased complete control of the team which it kept until 1915, when the company sold it for \$37,500 to a group led by Councilman Frank H. Reynolds and J. W. Goldsmith, Jr. Goldsmith's father was a former Atlanta councilman, and his uncle was city comptroller. However the traction firm continued to control the ballpark.¹⁴

In the midwestern metropolis of Chicago, the influence of politicians on the baseball teams was just as keen as in Atlanta. The Chicago National League club was owned by Albert G. Spalding, one of the first professional baseball players, who was also founder and head of a great sporting goods company. His partners included attorney Charles M. Sherman, Cook County Sheriff Edward Barrett, and Adrian Anson, a former star ballplayer and manager, who was elected city clerk in 1905. The baseball park was the property of the A.G. Spalding Land Association, whose officers included Spalding, James A. Hart, the president of the team, John A. Walsh, a prominent banker and politician, and Charles T. Trego, a

¹⁰*Atlanta Journal*, 27 Jan., 1905; *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 April, 1910.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 27 Jan., 1905.

¹²*Prompt to Action--The Atlanta Fire Department 1860-1960* (Atlanta, 1961), 42-44.

¹³*Atlanta Journal*, 21 Oct. 1908; Wade Wright, *The Georgia Power and Electric Company, 1855-1956* (Atlanta, 1957), 88-89.

¹⁴*Atlanta Journal*, 27 Oct., 1908; 2 Nov., 1915; *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 Nov., 1915; *Atlanta Georgian*, 3 Nov., 1915.

Republican merchant and banker, and director of the Chicago Board of Trade from 1875 until 1879.¹⁵

The National League team enjoyed great success in Chicago during the late nineteenth century, and their good fortune encouraged the American League, which was founded in 1900, to place a team there. The franchise was awarded to Charles Comiskey, a native Chicagoan, who had been a ballplayer and manager before he purchased the St. Paul club of the Western League in 1895. Charles was the third son of John Comiskey, an Irish immigrant who arrived in Chicago in 1852. John Comiskey became a railroad executive and later entered local politics, serving a total of eleven years as alderman. He also held other high offices, including president of the city council, county clerk, and deputy United States internal revenue collector. This family background was immediately helpful for Charles Comiskey because a late winter had slowed down construction of his grandstand in 1900, but union artisans waived many of their rules proscribing night and Sunday labor so that John Comiskey's son would have his ballpark ready for Opening Day.¹⁶

In 1905 the Chicago Cubs were sold by Spalding's agent James A. Hart to Charles W. Murphy for \$105,000. Murphy was a former sports editor of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, assistant city editor of the *Cincinnati Times-Star*, and press agent for the New York Giants. Murphy had just been hired by the Cubs for a similar job when he discovered that the team was for sale. He immediately rushed to his former publisher Charles Phelps Taft, who loaned him \$100,000 to complete the transaction.¹⁷

Charles P. Taft was the older half-brother, and political adviser of Secretary of War William Howard Taft. Charles was an important power in Ohio Republican politics, and had once served in the United State House of Representatives. He had strong aspirations for a Senate seat, but decided instead to devote most of his attention to helping his brother get elected president. Charles P. Taft had married a wealthy heiress, and they invested a considerable amount of their money in professional baseball.¹⁸

¹⁵John W. Leonard, *The Book of Chicagoans, A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the City of Chicago, 1905* (Chicago: 1905), 1, 23, 44-45, 267, 540, 575; *Chicago Times*, 18 Dec., 1892; *Sporting News*, 24 Dec., 1892; *Chicago Daily News*, 18 July, 1919; Joel Tarr, "John R. Walsh of Chicago: A Case Study in Banking and Politics, 1881-1905," *Business History Review*, 40 (Winter, 1966), 451-66.

¹⁶Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago* (New York, 1957), III, 478; Gustav Axelsson, "Commy", *The Life Story of Charles Comiskey* (Chicago: 1919), 33-35, 39, 150.

¹⁷*New York Tribune*, 16 July, 1905; Edward Mott Woolley, "The Business of Baseball," *McClure's*, 39 (July, 1912), 245.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 245; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Taft, Charles P."

Charles Murphy's investment was a remarkable success and he quickly repaid the Taft loan, although Taft remained as a minority stockholder. In 1906, the Cubs made \$165,000, or more than the price paid for the controlling shares one year before. Taft estimated that the franchise earned \$1,260,000 for its stockholders between 1906 and 1915. During that decade the Cubs won four pennants (1906-08, 1910), two world championships (1907-08), and never finished worse than fourth in the league standings. Dividends on capital stock from 1907 to 1913 were an incredible 810 percent. However, competition from the Federal League and public resentment against Charles Murphy who fired his popular manager Frank Chance in 1912, and traded away several of the fans' favorite stars like Ed Reulbach and Joe Tinker in 1913, caused profits to plummet in the next two years to 20 percent and five percent, respectively.¹⁹

There was also considerable public displeasure over Murphy's mishandling of the ticket scalping problem. Speculators never seemed to have any trouble getting tickets and fans believed that politicians were supporting and protecting them.²⁰ The scalping of tickets probably received its greatest notoriety during the 1908 World Series between the Cubs and the Detroit Tigers when the Chicago fandom were unable to obtain tickets at the box office because the pasteboards had been secretly sold to speculators. Mayor Busse contemplated retaliating by forbidding the playing of the Series in Chicago on the grounds that the ballpark was unsafe, but the intercession of Corporation Counsel Edward Brundage on behalf of the Cubs owners deterred the mayor. The fans responded to the scalping scandal by boycotting the games played in Chicago.²¹

The combination of the ticket scalping scandals, the public alienation from Murphy by his trades of popular players, and his habit of making indiscreet comments to journalists which reflected poorly on baseball, persuaded the other National League owners to oust him before the start of the 1914 season. Charles P. Taft agreed to buy Murphy's controlling interest for about \$500,000 but he simultaneously announced his intention to sell the franchise as soon as possible. Several syndicates were formed to purchase the club, and they all included prominent Chicago politicians. One group consisted

¹⁹ Woolley, 245; *Chicago Tribune*, 18 March, 1916.

²⁰ *Chicago Daily News*, 23 Dec., 1911; *Sporting News*, 11 Jan., 1912.

²¹ *Chicago Daily News*, 10 Oct., 1909; *Chicago Record-Herald*, 10 Oct., 1908; *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 Dec., 1908; *Albany Times-Union*, 14 March, 1914.

of William Hale Thompson, a former alderman and future mayor, James A. Pugh, a promoter, who was Thompson's political ally, Charles A. McCulloch, a taxi cab executive and Republican politician, and John R. Thompson, a restaurateur and former county treasurer. Another combination included coal merchant John T. Connery, whose brothers were the city clerk and county recorder, his cousin Roger Sullivan, who was in his twenty-fifth year as a Cook County Democratic Committeeman, and was widely recognized as the dominant Democrat in the state, and Harry Gibbons, who had once run for county sheriff.²²

Taft did not find any of their offers acceptable, and held on to the club for two more seasons until he sold it early in 1916 for \$500,000 to Charles Weeghman the owner of the Chicago Federal team, and his associates. Weeghman's partners were prominent Chicago businessmen and they included Albert D. Lasker, who was the principal stockholder, C.A. McCulloch, A.D. Plamondon, William Walker, and William K. Wrigley. They were important figures in local and national Republican politics who lunched together daily to plot strategy. Lasker was a member of the Republican National Committee, and he and William Wrigley were prominent supporters of California Governor Hiram Johnson for their party's presidential nomination in 1920. After the nominating convention, they rallied to the side of the Republican candidate, Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio, and Lasker became his public relations director. Harding subsequently rewarded Lasker by making him head of the U.S. Shipping Board.²³

In Chicago, as in Atlanta, the magnates' political influence helped the teams cope with such matters as the city's building codes and licensing policies. Municipal laws generally stipulated certain requirements for the baseball club to fulfill before they received their license so that the ballpark would be kept safe for spectators and the games would not disturb the surrounding communities. Strict new building codes were written in many large cities during the Progressive Era and some of their sections had a direct impact on professional baseball. In Chicago, for instance, club owners had to

²²Seymour, 34-36; *Chicago Tribune*, 7, 22, 24, 26 March, 1914; *New York Tribune*, 8 March, 1914; Albert Nelson Margquis, ed., *The Book of Chicagoans, A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men and Women of the City of Chicago, 1917* (Chicago, 1019), III, 149, 554, 661, 675.

²³*Chicago Tribune*, 19 March 1914, 6, 16, 23 Jan., 1916; *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement* (New York, 1944), 1, 715; William Veeck, *The Hustler's Handbook* (New York, 1965), 267; John Gunther, *Taken at the Flood: The Story of Albert D. Lasker* (New York, 1960), esp. 98-125.

obtain frontage consents for their site, and were prohibited from constructing a park within 200 feet of a hospital, church, or school. In addition, no new ballpark could be built within the city's fire limits unless it was built with fireproof materials. This condition benefited the older established franchises against potential interlopers just as other progressive regulatory legislation assisted the large firms in other industries, like meatpacking, discourage new competition and eliminate their weaker rivals.²⁴

City inspectors were required to examine new baseball parks to make sure they were properly constructed, and then annually reexamine them to check for possible defects and safety violations. However magnates or their contractors could utilize their political influence to secure lax enforcement of the building codes. For example, when an addition was built to the grandstands at the Cubs' West Side Park in 1908, it was inadequately inspected because the contractor Michael F. Powers was a business partner of former Building Commissioner Joseph Downey.²⁵ These inspections were not intended to be punitive, unless the owners had foolishly incurred the wrath of some politico, but were aimed at discovering potentially dangerous violations which could then be rectified.²⁶

The license fee varied widely from city to city, depending, at least partly, on the amount of political power the franchise could muster. In the early 1900's, New York's standard amusement fee was \$500, but in Cincinnati, where the team was operated by members of the local Republican machine, the club paid just \$100 until 1912 when Mayor Henry T. Hunt's reform administration raised the levy to \$750.²⁷ Chicago's license fees were established on a sliding scale, which varied according to the ballpark's seating capacity. At first, the two professional clubs were assessed \$300 each while the several semiprofessional clubs paid \$100. Then in 1909 the amusement fees were substantially increased to a point where the Cubs were taxed \$1,000 because their field seated more than 15,000 and the White Sox were assessed \$700 since their smaller park seated fewer than 15,000.²⁸

²⁴Edgar B. Tolman, reviser, *The Revised Municipal Code of Chicago of 1905* (Chicago, 1905), #106, #109, #1117; Edward J. Brundage, *The Chicago Code of 1911* (Chicago, 1911), #356-61.

²⁵*Chicago Record-Herald*, 24 April, 1909.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 24, 26 April, 1909; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 21 March, 1903, 20 April, 1903.

²⁷John C. Thompson, *The Greater New York Charter of 1901* (New York, 1901), #1483; Barney Dreyfuss to August Herrmann, 15 June, 1912, August Herrmann Papers, The Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, N.Y.

²⁸*Chicago Daily News*, 17 Dec., 1909; *Chicago Tribune*, 18 Dec., 1909.

After World War I when the city was nearly bankrupt, various measures were taken to raise capital, including an increase in the license schedules for baseball parks. The license fee for fields with capacities in excess of 20,000 was set at \$2,000, and the impost on grounds seating between 15,000 and 20,000 spectators was made \$1,500. Comiskey Park fell under the higher rate since it seated well over 30,000 people, and the Cubs were assessed the lesser amount.²⁹ Then in 1921, Alderman Anton J. Cermak, the leader in the search for new sources of revenue, decided to raise previously established fees while also extending the licensing system to a variety of professions previously not covered. Cermak introduced a bill in the city council which called for a five percent tax on the gross receipts of the professional baseball teams. The local major league clubs were quite disturbed by the proposal, since if it had been operating one year before, the White Sox would have been taxed \$30,000 and the Cubs, \$20,000. Alfred Austrian, the attorney for both franchises, and a familiar figure to local politicians, met with the city council's Committee on Revenue, and tried to demonstrate the folly of Cermak's bill. Austrian convinced the aldermen not to adopt that legislation, and instead provided them with a compromise measure they later enacted, which doubled the established license fees for the major league teams.³⁰

The baseball teams expected that as taxpayers, they were entitled to police protection, both inside and outside their fields. The danger of riot or some lesser disturbance always existed whenever thousands of people gathered in one place, and crowds at ball games tended to be particularly unruly. Fans jostled with each other as they lined up for tickets, and once inside the park they tended to make themselves obnoxious by shouting caustic comments at players, umpires, and other spectators. Besides preserving peace, police officers were also needed to deter gambling inside the parks and ticket scalping outside. Chicago's municipal patrolmen were assigned to duty inside the ballparks even though it was private property. The teams were not charged for the service, which amounted to a daily savings of twenty

²⁹*Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, 1918-1919 (April 2, 1919); 1947, *Ibid.*, 1919-1920 (Dec. 29, 1919), 1689, 1691; *Ibid.*, (April 7, 1920). 2534. The original bill had called for a maximum fee of \$3,000. Parks seating 10,000-15,000 were assessed \$1,000; 4,000-10,000 paid \$350; and others paid \$75.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 1920-1921 (Feb. 4, 1921), 1746; The license fees for the smaller parks were not affected. *Chicago Daily News*, 26 Jan., 1921, 3 Feb., 1921; Alex Gottfried, "Anton J. Cermak, Chicago Politician: A Study in Political Leadership," (Ph. D. diss. University of Chicago, 1952), 275-6.

to fifty dollars. Several bills were introduced in the city council to assess the magnates for the cost of this protection, but they were never passed.³¹

The single most important problem that faced Chicago baseball executives in the first twenty years of the century was not recruiting ballplayers, discovering a suitable location for their ballparks, keeping taxes low, or securing police protection. Rather the principal dilemma was the disclosure in 1920 that the previous year's World Series had been fixed by several White Sox players in the interest of certain professional gamblers. Despite the rhetoric of professional baseball which claimed the sport was free of that vice, baseball was strongly tainted by gambling. In fact, several baseball owners were professional gamblers, horsemen, heavy bettors, or friends of professional gamblers. The sport served as a nexus between politics and organized crime.³²

While the main attraction of baseball was the action of the game, unlike horse racing for instance, the nature of the sport was highly conducive to betting, and people wagered on the outcome of ball games, the number of hits and runs, and even the probability of a batted ball being caught. Gambling on baseball was popular throughout the nation, especially in cities like Boston and Pittsburgh where there were no race tracks to interest the betting crowd. The baseball owners spoke out against pools and other betting systems because they were afraid that public gambling on the sport might harm its prestige and reputation for honesty, and thereby its appeal, by encouraging fans to believe that gamblers were fixing games.³³

But in spite of their rhetoric, the baseball owners did little to curtail the gambling menace. Signs were posted inside the parks which

³¹For examples of disorders, see *Chicago Record-Herald*, 15 Oct., 1906, 22 May, 1907; *New York Tribune*, 17 April, 1911; *New York Times*, 12 April, 1912, 16 Aug., 1920; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 12 April, 1912; *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 Aug., 1919. In 1904 the Cincinnati management had to put a special officer near the players' bench to protect visiting athletes from the abuse of fans, and conversely, spectators from players. T. B. Collier to August Herrmann, 14 July, 1904, August Herrmann Papers. The Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown. N.Y.; *Chicago Times*, 5 July, 1895; Ring Lardner, "The Cost of Baseball," *Collier's*, 48, (March 2, 1912), 30; *Proceedings of the Chicago City Council, April 10, 1899-April 4, 1900* (May 8, 1899), 281-2; *Ibid.*, 1919-1920 (Jan. 14, 1920), 1897; *Ibid.*, 1921-1922 (July 21, 1921), 903; *Ibid.*, 1928-1929 (Dec., 19, 1928), 4139; 1929-1930 (January 3, 1930), 1909; Bruce Smith, *Chicago Police Problems* (Chicago, 1931), 256.

³²Charles Weeghman, for instance was a personal friend of Mont Tennes, the head of the Chicago Gambling ring. Seymour, 300. On gambling and organized crime, see Mark Haller, "Urban Crime and Criminal Justice: The Chicago Case," *Journal of American History*, 57 (Dec., 1970), 622-4; 631, 634, 635; *idem*, "Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social History*, 5 (Winter, 1971-72), 221-7.

³³Seymour, 274-6; Hugh Fullerton, "American Gambling and Gamblers," *American Magazine*, 77 (Feb., 1914), 37.

declared that betting was forbidden there, and private police roamed the stands to discourage open wagering. Only on rare occasions were any bettors evicted from the premises. Professional gamblers were seldom arrested, and rarely convicted, since it was very difficult to prove a case against them and because they were protected by influential political allies. In addition, there was no great demand for strict enforcement of the anti-betting codes because the professional gamblers were dispensing a desired service for their clients and did not harm innocent bystanders.³⁴

The gambling problem was climaxed by the revelation near the end of the 1920 season that the 1919 World Series between the Chicago White Sox and an apparently inferior Cincinnati Reds team had been fixed by eight White Sox players in the interest of the infamous Arnold Rothstein. When Charles Comiskey first became suspicious that the outcome of the Series had been prearranged, he visited with his friend, States' Attorney Maclay Hoyne, who promised to keep the matter out of the courts while Comiskey tried to clear up the affair by himself.³⁵ Hoyne cooperated fully with Comiskey and did not initiate an investigation of the rumored fix until after Chicago Cubs President William Veeck, Sr. reported receiving a number of telegrams and telephone calls warning him that the Cubs game scheduled for August 31, 1920 was fixed. Hoyne then called for a special grand jury to investigate the entire matter of baseball gambling, responding both to the growing public demands for an inquiry, and his own need for a campaign issue for the forthcoming primary election.³⁶

Hoyne lost his bid for reelection, but before leaving office, he stole the confessions made by several of the indicted ballplayers together with their waivers of immunity. The people behind this theft were Alfred Austrian, Comiskey's lawyer, and William Fallon, the attorney for Arnold Rothstein. The loss of that testimony severely hampered the prosecution's case, and the defendants were found not guilty. Nevertheless, Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis, the newly appointed commissioner of baseball, refused to reinstate the athletes. In 1924, when Joe Jackson, one of the eight players involved in the scandal, sued to regain some back pay, the missing documents were

³⁴See e.g. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 Sept., 1903; *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 Jan., 1904, 5 May, 1912, 20 March, 1920; *New York Tribune*, 30 July, 1912, 27 June, 1914; *New York Times*, 17 June, 1913, 25 May, 1920.

³⁵Elliot Asinof, *Eight Men Out* (New York: 1963), 130-1.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 149-52; Seymour, 197-8.

conveniently produced by Comiskey to prove Jackson's complicity in fixing the World Series.³⁷

The far reaching political ties of Chicago Baseball Clubs seem almost minor in comparison to the situation in New York City where the notorious Tammany Hall organization was intimately involved in the affairs of local baseball teams since the late 1860's. The New York Mutuals, for instance, a leading amateur club of the post-Civil War period, was controlled by the unscrupulous William Marcy Tweed, who got the city government to contribute \$30,000 to its upkeep. The players were ostensibly city employees, but they were really being subsidized to play baseball.³⁸

Tammany had complete control of professional baseball in New York City until 1890 when several Republican politicians established a Brotherhood League team there. That association lasted just one year, but the competition bankrupted the Tammany owners of the New York Giants, who agreed to merge their club with the Brotherhood team. The Giants were operated for the next four years by Republicans Edward Talcott, a stockbroker, Cornelius Van Cott, postmaster of New York, and General Edward A. McAlpin, a tobacconist and realtor who had been active in elective politics before becoming a leader in the Republican club movement.³⁹

The Democratic organization regained control of the franchise in January, 1895, when Andrew Freedman, a rising young realtor, purchased the controlling interest for \$48,000. Freedman had joined Tammany in 1881 at the age of twenty-one, and he soon became an intimate friend of Richard Croker, the machine's future boss. Freedman was able to secure many choice business opportunities because of his close ties with Croker, and the two men cooperated in several ventures. Freedman never held any governmental position, but he did have enormous political influence through his alliance with Boss Croker and as a member of Tammany's powerful finance committee, which was its central policy making body. He also served as treasurer of the national Democratic party in 1897.⁴⁰

³⁷Seymour, 328, 331.

³⁸Harold Seymour, "The Rise of Major League Baseball to 1891," (Ph. D. diss., Cornell University, 1956), 101.

³⁹*New York Times*, 26 Oct., 1904, 13 April, 1917, 7 April, 1941; Mrs. Blanche McGraw. *The Real McGraw*, ed. by Arthur Mann (New York: 1953). 170.

⁴⁰*New York Tribune*, 24, 25 Jan., 1895; *New York Times*, 3 Dec., 1897, 18 April, 1899, 5 Dec., 1915, 30 March, 1944; *Sporting Life*, 25 Dec., 1897; *Dictionary of American Biography* s.v. "Freedman, Andrew."

Freedman ran his baseball team as if it were an adjunct of Tammany, fighting with the baseball players and the press, encouraging rowdy baseball playing, and bullying his fellow magnates into accepting many of his demands. For instance, the league awarded him an annual grant of \$15,000 just so he would continue leasing Manhattan Field which was adjacent to the Polo Grounds and was the logical site for a competing league to use for a ballpark.⁴¹

Interlopers were afraid to invade New York as long as Andrew Freedman remained in baseball since he controlled most of the suitable locations for baseball fields through leases or options, and also because invaders knew that even if they did somehow secure a good lot, Freedman would use his political clout to get streets cut through their property or disrupt their transit facilities.⁴² The American League hoped to establish a New York franchise, but they were deterred by Freedman's presence. The association proclaimed itself a major league in 1901, but a New York team was essential to certify that higher status and to obtain greater profits. Thus the American Leaguers were quite interested in the outcome of the 1901 mayoralty election because experts gave the Fusion ticket a good chance to beat the machine, and the baseball people anticipated that if the election went poorly for Tammany, Freedman would lose his power to prevent them from putting a team in the borough.⁴³

Tammany was indeed soundly defeated in the elections as Seth Low was elected mayor, and William Travers Jerome was selected district attorney. Several newspapers predicted that the American League would soon establish a club in Gotham as a consequence. But in spite of the debacle, Freedman was still strong enough to forestall the efforts of the new league.⁴⁴ However the election did harm the Giants president's power within National League councils, by encouraging some of the other owners to finally stand up to him. An effort was actually made by the Spalding faction to ostracize him at the League's annual winter meeting in December of 1901 as a first move towards taking his franchise away from him. But enough magnates remained loyal to Freedman to prevent the move.⁴⁵

⁴¹*Sporting News*, 24 Aug., 1895; *New York Tribune*, 23 April, 1896, 4 June, 1898, 14 Dec., 1899.

⁴²*Sporting Life*, 11 Nov., 1899, 26 Oct., 1901.

⁴³*Chicago Daily News*, 15 June, 1901.

⁴⁴*Sporting Life*, 16 Nov., 1901.

⁴⁵Annual Meeting of the National League and American Association of Professional Baseball Clubs.

Nine months later, Andrew Freedman sold his team to John T. Brush, the former owner of the Cincinnati Reds for \$200,000, keeping just a few shares of stock. Freedman said he was disappointed in his investment which had never reached its potential, and was tired of the abuse being heaped upon him from all quarters. Furthermore, he had more important business matters to attend to, principally the construction of the New York subway system. He was a director of the company that built the underground, and Freedman used his influence to block the Interborough Rapid Transit Construction Company from agreeing to subsidize an American League team early in 1903. He also prevented the Fourth Avenue Line from building a station close to the Brooklyn Dodgers playing field.⁴⁶

John T. Brush, the new Giants owner, was a highly successful Indianapolis clothing merchant, who first got into baseball when he acquired the Indianapolis team of the American Association in 1887 for a nominal sum. Three years later he purchased the Cincinnati Reds for \$25,000, and then sold them in 1902 for \$146,000.⁴⁷ A newspaper story was published several years later which asserted that Cincinnati's Republican political machine had apparently forced Brush to sell his club to them. The journalist alleged that a rumor had reached Brush that York Street was going to be extended through the ballpark as part of a series of municipal improvements. Brush was perturbed by the gossip and met with a local politician who advised him to sell the team to the Republican organization for a fraction of its real worth. Brush denied the story, but he did sell the franchise to a consortium comprised of Boss George B. Cox, Mayor Fleischmann, and August Herrmann.⁴⁸

New York at this time had a second National League team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, as a result of the city's annexation of Brooklyn in 1898. The owner of that team was Charles Ebbets who had just purchased the club. He had been a printer until 1883 when he was hired by the Brooklyn franchise as a sort of general factotum, and his duties included printing scorecards and selling tickets.⁴⁹ In 1898

December 10 to 14, 1901" (1902). n.p.; *Sporting News* 9 Nov., 1901, 28 Dec., 1901; Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York, 1960), I, 317-22.

⁴⁶*New York Times*, 30 Sept., 1902, 5 Dec., 1915; *Sporting News*, 4 Oct., 1902; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 8 Jan., 1903; "The Business Side of Baseball," *Current Literature*, 53 (Aug., 1912), 170; Mrs. McGraw, 176-77.

⁴⁷Woolley, 243; Voigt, 108.

⁴⁸Norman Rose to William Gray, 29 April, 1911, August Herrmann Papers. The Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, N.Y.

⁴⁹*New York Times*, 19 April, 1925; Frank Graham, *The Brooklyn Dodgers: An Informal History* (New York, 1945), 7.

Ebbets moved his enterprise from its distant site in Brownsville to its original location near the Gowanus Canal in Red Hook where the team was much more accessible to its fans. He received considerable financial support in this venture from streetcar magnate Al Johnson, brother of Cleveland's future mayor, Tom Johnson. The traction executive had routes located near the old site which he expected would benefit from the traffic of fans attending games.⁵⁰ Fifteen years later, Ebbets moved his team to another spot in Flatbush, where he nearly went bankrupt building a modern fireproof stadium. Consequently he had to take in the McKeever brothers, who were prominent Brooklyn contractors, as partners. They were active in politics, and Steven McKeever had served a term in the city council.⁵¹

Charles Ebbets himself, was a notable political figure, having served several years as an alderman and a term in the state assembly. In 1904 he ran for the state senate but was defeated in the Roosevelt landslide.⁵² Ebbets tried to put his political skills to practical use by campaigning for reform of the blue laws which proscribed Sunday baseball in New York. Sunday reform received substantial Tammany backing for it was a popular measure among its constituents. Ebbets hoped to secure Sunday baseball by staging Sabbath games in 1904, 1905, and in 1906, by circumventing the prohibitory laws. He did not sell tickets of admission to games, but admitted fans free if they purchased programs or magazines for fifty cents or seventy-five cents or if they volunteered a 'donation'. He received cooperation from the police who rarely made arrests for violations, and from magistrates who rarely convicted anyone tried in their courts. However the vigorous Sabbatarian organizations prevailed because they secured redress in higher courts, and got a reform police commissioner to force Ebbets to cease his efforts at evading the law. Charles Ebbets and his allies then turned to the state legislature where they hoped to repeal the blue laws. Sunday reform bills had been introduced in Albany each year since 1897, but upstate rural Republicans controlled both chambers, and the Democrats rarely even got their bills out of committee. Only after World War I, when a broad coalition of labor leaders, veterans organizations, reformers, and Tammanyites, was established did the "repressive" Sabbath laws get amended to permit

⁵⁰*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 10 Jan., 1896, 15 March, 1898; *New York Tribune*, 16 March, 1898; *Sporting News*, 1 Dec., 1906.

⁵¹Graham, 35.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 7.

Sunday baseball. The results of this crusade indicated that the urban political machines were not omnipotent and could not do everything they wished.⁵³

New York became the site of a third major league team in March, 1903, when the American League finally succeeded in placing a franchise there. American League President Ban Johnson had tried for some time to find a group of non-Tammanyites who had sufficient influence to counter Andrew Freedman and obtain a suitable site for a ballpark. But he was unsuccessful, and in desperation acceded to Tammany and granted the franchise to some politicians who found a location for a baseball field that Freedman did not control. The syndicate was ostensibly headed by Joseph Gordon, a former owner of the New York Giants, who had been an assistant district leader, state assemblyman, and city buildings superintendent. The real owners, though, were Frank J. Farrell, a leading gambler, and William Devery, a former police chief. Tom Foley, the leader of the Second District, and a future sheriff, was a minor stockholder. The lucrative construction contracts were awarded to Thomas McAvoy, the Tammany leader in Washington Heights where the new field was located.⁵⁴

Frank Farrell was said to be the head of New York's gambling trust in 1901, which allegedly included Chief Devery, Police Commissioner Joseph Sexton, City Clerk J. F. Carroll, Mayor Van Wyck, and Tim Sullivan, the powerful leader of the Third District. Farrell had important interests in several local poolrooms, and he owned a luxurious casino, designed by the noted architect Stanford White, which was frequented by members of High Society. He also had substantial holdings at the Saratoga Springs resort, and was a partner with Julius Fleischmann in a major racing stable.⁵⁵

Farrell's associate, William Devery, had joined the police force in 1878, and he advanced rapidly through the ranks, aided by his political friends, Richard Croker and Tim Sullivan. Devery was

⁵³Steven A. Riess, "Professional Sunday Baseball: A Study in Social Reform, 1892-1934," *Maryland Historian*, IV. (Fall, 1973), 98-104.

⁵⁴*Chicago Daily News*, 11 March, 1903; *New York World*, 13, 14 March, 1903; *New York Times*, 15 March, 1903; Woolley, 254; "Tammany Newspaper Clippings, 1913-34," in the Kilroe Collection, Columbia University; Al Fein, "New York Politics, 1897-1903: A Study in Political Party Leadership," (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1954), 81-91.

⁵⁵*New York Times*, 20 Oct., 1901, 31 Aug., 1902, 2 Dec., 1902, 26 Feb., 1926; Maxwell F. Marcuse, *This was New York: A Nostalgic Picture of Gotham in the Gas Light Era*, revised and enlarged (New York, 1969), 170-1; Loyd Morris, *Incredible New York: High Life and Low Life of the Last 100 Years* (New York: 1951), 226.

appointed police chief after a turbulent twenty-year career during which he was repeatedly castigated for taking bribes to permit gamblers and keepers of disorderly houses to operate. Throughout his flamboyant tenure, Devery could usually be found at the corner of Twenty-eighth Street and Eighth Avenue, meeting with bailbondsmen, dive owners, and pool room operators. His regime was so blatantly corrupt that the state legislature decided in 1901 to abolish his position, and replace it with a commission system. However Tammany circumvented the intent of that reform by getting the new police commissioner to appoint Devery as his deputy, and then the commissioner left the department in his hands. When the Fusion mayor, Seth Low took office on January 1, 1902, one of the first things he did was relieve Devery of his post.⁵⁶

After the disastrous election in the fall of 1901, William Devery broke with the Croker wing of Tammany which had blamed him for their defeat. He ran for district leader of the Ninth Ward in 1902, and defeated the regular organization's hand-picked candidate. Tammany's executive committee then issued him an unprecedented rebuff when they refused to accept his claim for admission to the central committee as the duly elected leader of the Ninth District. Miffed by this rebuke, he left the regular party and established his own district organization which was strong enough to elect an assemblyman. Buoyed by this success, Devery ran for mayor on an independent slate in 1903, but was soundly thrashed.⁵⁷

The close relations between the owners of the New York baseball clubs and Tammany Hall helped the teams obtain favored treatment from the police department, which not only maintained order outside the playing fields, but also patrolled the environs of the ballparks. In 1907, however, this service was discontinued by the reform police commissioner, General Thomas A. Bingham, who decided to enforce the law which prohibited the use of municipal police within private property unless there was some manifest danger present. Bingham's decision was immediately tested by the New York Giants, who publicly announced that they would not engage any private police for the Opening Day game that year, and warned Bingham that he would be responsible for the consequences. The result was a riot when many of the 17,000 spectators swarmed over the field at the beginning of the

⁵⁶*New York Times*, 9 April, 1899, 21 June, 1919; *New York Sun*, 11 June, 1919.

⁵⁷*New York Times*, 4 Nov., 1903; Morris R. Werner, *Tammany Hall* (New York: 1928), 487-91; Fein, 128-9, 142-3.

ninth inning. After fifteen minutes of chaos, the management appealed to police officers stationed outside for assistance, but the constables refused to go inside and help quell the disturbance.⁵⁸

Bingham's action was supported by the *New York Times* which noted that the law was quite clear in its proscription of the use of city patrolmen to police private grounds. Bingham had previously complained of the way his staff was often weakened whenever officers were detailed to perform work that should have been done by special police at the expense of individuals running the particular event. He felt entrepreneurs should be made to realize that the cost of protection was a necessary and expected expense, and that people who assembled crowds for their own private financial gain should pay for the safeguarding of the affair out of their profits.⁵⁹

After this confrontation, the Giants decided to hire a number of uniformed Pinkerton agents to keep order at the Polo Grounds. The New York Americans retained retired policemen for their field. As long as there was no disorder, these operatives were adequate. But on those occasions when the fans did get out of control, the special policemen were virtually useless because they did not have any legitimate authority or power, and the spectators refused to listen to them. Besides, the guards were probably more frightened of the spectators than the fans were of them, and they were careful not to antagonize the crowds.⁶⁰ The owners continued for some time to try to reverse Bingham's decision and get uniformed policemen to patrol their events, but the city government only relented on rare occasions.⁶¹ This was another of those rare instances when the political machine failed to assist the local ball clubs.

The police continued to work outside the ballparks, and as in Chicago, one of their biggest problems was ticket scalping. Extensive preparations were announced by the New York police to eliminate scalping at the 1912 World Series. Plainclothesmen and other officers

⁵⁸*New York Times*, 12 April, 1907; Scrapbooks of Henry Chadwick, 5, (1907), A.G. Spalding Collection, New York Public Library.

⁵⁹*New York Times*, 13 April, 1907; *Sporting Life*, 1 June, 1907.

⁶⁰*New York Times*, 13, 1907; John J. Hockey, *Our Police Guardians* (New York: 1925), 152-53. For examples of disorders which the special police could not cope with see the newspaper clipping for 30 May, 1907 in Diary of Henry Chadwick, A.G. Spalding Collection. New York Public Library; *New York Times*, 23 April, 1908.

⁶¹*New York Times*, and *Chicago Daily News*, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, Sept. 1908: City police were assigned to patrol the Polo Grounds for the weekend series between the Giants and the Cubs which would decide the league champion. Charles Ebbets urged the municipality to allow him to use off-duty police to guard his park. See *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 3 April, 1912.

were detailed to keep known speculators from obtaining extra tickets at the public sale, and an area was cordoned off for fans waiting in line for tickets. The first one hundred individuals in line were recognized as either plainclothesmen, uniformed officers, or speculators, and people with pull were seen going through the ticket offices several times. Instead of going to the end of the queue, these repeaters returned to the front where policemen helped them back into line. Scalpers also obtained additional paste boards by buying them from people who had waited in line or by bringing boys and women with them to purchase tickets. One leading sportswriter estimated that a quarter of the reserved seats were sold to speculators.⁶²

In 1915 and 1919, respectively, the Yankees and Giants were sold to men with substantial influence in Tammany Hall. William Devery and Frank Farrell sold their club for \$460,000 to Jacob Ruppert, Jr., the heir to the Ruppert Breweries fortune, and Tillinghast Huston, a civil engineer who made his fortune in Cuba after the Spanish-American War. The old owners had become estranged from each other as they bickered over the disappointing performance of their team on the field and at the box office, especially in comparison to their rivals, the Giants. Furthermore, they were both in dire need of funds.⁶³

Jacob Ruppert, the principal figure in the new Yankee management, was an important Tammanyite. He joined the organization in 1888 at the age of twenty-one, in search of prestige, power, and protection for the family business. Ruppert eventually became a sachem of the association and served as a member of its finance committee. He was personally selected by Boss Croker in 1897 to run for the presidency of the city council in order to balance the ticket with a German candidate. However Croker had to withdraw the nomination because it failed to placate the German-Americans who had expected the mayoralty nomination, and since it aroused the jealousy of the other New York brewers. As a reward for his party loyalty, Ruppert was nominated for Congress from a Republican district in 1898. He was elected in an upset and served in that position until 1907.⁶⁴

The New York Giants were sold by the Brush family in 1919 to

⁶²*New York Times*, 8 Oct., 1912; Sid Mercer in the *New York Globe*, 8 Oct., 1912, cited in *Sporting News*, 17 Oct., 1912.

⁶³Frank Graham, *The New York Yankees: An Informal History* (New York: 1951), 19-21.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 21; *New York Times*, 1, 2, 10 Oct., 1897.

Charles Stoneham for one million dollars. Stoneham was a member of Tammany Hall and counted Al Smith and Tom Foley among his political allies. He was a curb market broker of dubious integrity who had several brushes with the law because of his shady business transactions. Charles Stoneham had two minor partners in the baseball team, John J. McGraw, the Giants' manager, and Magistrate Francis X. McQuade, who was a leading figure in the movement for Sunday baseball. McQuade had handled several cases involving baseball playing on the Sabbath in his capacity as a judge, and he always released the defendants and urged reform of the antiquated codes. Stoneham's investment was quite profitable as the club made \$296,803 in 1920, which was the most any National League club made that year. But the Yankees, who were Stoneham's tenants at the Polo Grounds did even better, earning \$373,862⁶⁵

The close ties that existed between local politicians and the professional baseball teams in Atlanta, Chicago, and New York, were typical of the relationship that existed between most franchises and their communities in the Progressive Era. A ball club's political associations were often direct, in which case the team's executives were themselves party leaders or elected officials. In other instances, the political elite were friends of the owners or else they were closely tied to a traction company which supported the ball club. Political connections were useful for the baseball teams because they received preferential treatment from the city governments in matters relating to taxation and municipal services, their owners were privy to confidential information about real estate and traction developments, and they were protected against potential competitors and other enemies. In return, the politicians manipulated the local baseball for their benefit in several ways. They used the franchise as a source of honest graft and patronage, as an inducement to encourage people to travel on the traction routes they operated, and to improve their public image.

The domination of professional baseball by urban politicians reflected their ubiquitous presence in all aspects of city life. Businessmen and leaders of various public institutions had to come to

⁶⁵*New York Tribune*, 17 Feb., 1919; Seymour. *Baseball*; II, 140, 390; For examples of Stoneham's low character, see *New York Times*, 12 Feb., 1908, 13 Nov., 1923; *Sporting News*, 25 Nov., 1923; Mrs. McGraw, 265; In McQuade's most notable Sunday case, he found McGraw and Christy Mathewson, then the manager of the Cincinnati Reds, innocent of desecrating the Sabbath by playing a Sunday game at the Polo Grounds. See *New York Times*, 20, 21, 22, Aug., 1917; U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Study of Monopoly Power, *Organized Baseball*, 82nd Congress, (1951), 1st. session, serial 1, Part 6, 1599, 1600.

terms with them if they wished to be successful. However even though the machines were extremely powerful, they were not omnipotent, as the New York magnates discovered when they attempted to play Sunday baseball or when they tried to prevent a reform police commissioner from withdrawing police protection inside their ballparks. The preeminence of politicians in the national pastime created an interesting paradox since contemporaries regarded baseball as an institution which epitomized the finest qualities of a bygone age, like individualism, honesty, competitiveness, courage, and fair-mindedness, and which certified the relevancy of these values in an urbanized, industrialized, and bureaucratized era. Yet the sport was controlled by urban bosses, the enemy of the old-stock Americans who believed in these traditional American values. The machine politicians symbolized to them all that was evil in American society.

