



The '30s  
**MEMORABLE  
TENANTS**

Lineman George Musso's 1934 Bears helmet



Wrigley100

# 1930s

## The **SUNNY SIDE** of CHICAGO

**AFTER** CUBS OWNER WILLIAM WRIGLEY DIED IN 1932, HIS SON, PHILIP KNIGHT (P.K.), took ownership of the club (along with a chewing gum empire). P.K.'s vision was to promote the game through "the fun, and the healthfulness of [baseball], the sunshine and the relaxation." It seemed to work: Wrigley Field attendance (879,167 average in the '30s) was first in the National League by a wide margin during those years.

The Depression had taken hold, and there was growing unrest in Europe, but the 1930s were still a fine time for baseball on the North Side of Chicago. The Cubs led the league in wins (889) during the decade and reached three World Series in seven years. (Yes, sigh, they lost all three.) This was the decade in which ivy was brought in to cover Wrigley's outfield walls; the Yankees' Babe Ruth (allegedly) pointed to the outfield and called his World Series home run; and the now iconic WRIGLEY FIELD, HOME OF CHICAGO CUBS marquee sign (painted blue until the 1960s) was installed over the main entrance. You want iconic? In '37, Wrigley added that hand-operated scoreboard (red at first, then painted green in '44 to reduce the glare from the sun) beyond centerfield, on which the Cubs began flying flags after each home game—white for a home-team victory, blue for a loss—a tradition that continues 81 days a year and, every once in a while, a few more nights in October.

The Bears continued to play at Wrigley and had heady success of their own, competing for three championships under George Halas—and winning the first, in 1933, before a home crowd of 21,000. In fact, by the late '30s baseball in October and football well into December were events that Chicago sports fans could practically count on.

—Ryan Hatch



### 1932

Well before there were bleachers on nearby rooftops, youngsters found ways to sneak peeks inside Wrigley during the World Series.

PHOTOGRAPH BY Dave Phillips

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE PHILLIPS FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE. CUBS OWNER PHILIP KNIGHT (P.K.) WRIGLEY'S SON, PHILIP KNIGHT (P.K.), TOOK OWNERSHIP OF THE CLUB (ALONG WITH A CHEWING GUM EMPIRE). P.K.'S VISION WAS TO PROMOTE THE GAME THROUGH "THE FUN, AND THE HEALTHFULNESS OF [BASEBALL], THE SUNSHINE AND THE RELAXATION." IT SEEMED TO WORK: WRIGLEY FIELD ATTENDANCE (879,167 AVERAGE IN THE '30S) WAS FIRST IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE BY A WIDE MARGIN DURING THOSE YEARS.

**BRONKO NAGURSKI**

A four-time All-Pro, the 6'2", 226-pound back won championships with the Bears in '32 and '33, throwing two TDs in the '33 title game.



**CHARLIE ROOT**

Righthander Root, a Cub for 16 seasons, set and still holds club records for wins (201) and innings pitched (3,137½).



**EDDIE ANDERSON**

The future Hall of Fame football coach led DePaul, which occasionally played at Wrigley before its program folded in '38, to a school-best six wins in '31.



**JOHN DILLINGER**

Public Enemy No. 1 is said to have gone to several Cubs games in disguise in '34, the summer he was gunned down a couple of miles from Wrigley.



**CHARLEY GRIMM**

"Jolly Cholly" skipped the Cubs to a 534–369 record from '32 to '38, which included two pennants—and much off-field banjo playing.



**WILLIAM VEECK SR.**

In 1919, William Wrigley had tabbed accomplished local sportswriter Veck to be Cubs VP. He was president when he died from leukemia in '33.

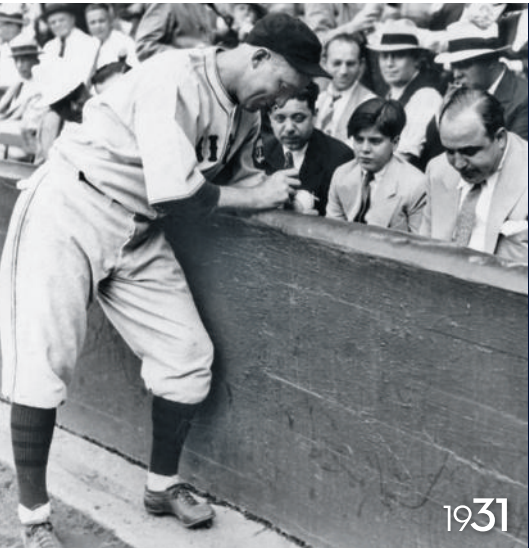


## TELLING NUMBERS

**51,556** FANS, Wrigley's largest crowd ever, who came to the park on June 27, 1930, to see the Cubs beat the Brooklyn Robins 7–5; with the Ladies Day promotion the paid attendance was only 19,748.

**191** RUNS BATTED IN by Hack Wilson in 1930, still the most in a season. That year Wilson produced one of the best offensive efforts in history, with 56 home runs, 105 walks and a 1.177 OPS.

**56½** YEARS of baseball the Cubs played before becoming, on June 30, 1932, the last team in the majors to add numbers to the backs of their jerseys.



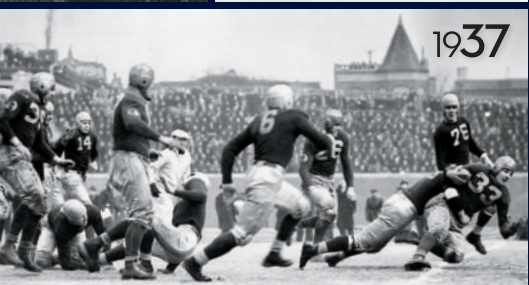
1931



1934



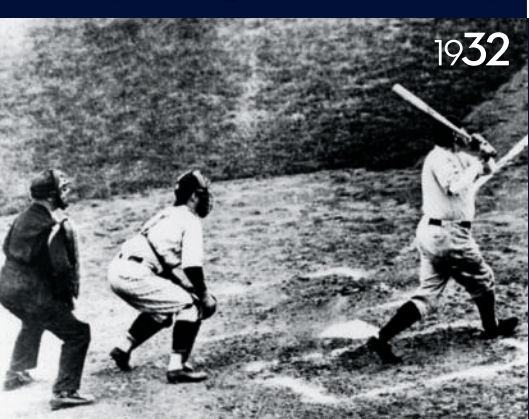
1934



1937

**CROOKS AND THE BAMBINO**

Wrigley was a gangster's paradise, with visits from John Dillinger and Al Capone (top, right, next to his son as Hartnett signs), while the fairer sex filled seats on Ladies Day. Wrestler Londos (on mat) rose up to overcome his challenger, and three years later Redskins QB Sammy Baugh (33) denied the Bears the title, despite taking some hits. Ruth's bat helped the Yanks sweep the Series—called shot or not.



1932

**1933**

After catching a pass from Bronko Nagurski, a helmetless Bill Hewitt pitched the ball to Bill Karr (22), who scored to lift the Bears over the Giants 23-21 in the first NFL title game.

PHOTOGRAPH BY Pro Football Hall of Fame/AP



HARTNETT

*The '30s*  
**WRIGLEY MOMENTS**

**1932** DURING Game 3 of the World Series, on Oct. 1, just before Yankees slugger Babe Ruth hits a fifth-inning home run off Cubs pitcher Charlie Root, many say the Babe pointed toward centerfield before the pitch, essentially "calling" his shot. Root's take? "I gave my life to baseball, and I'll only be remembered for something that never happened."

**1934** JIM LONDOS, the world heavyweight wrestling champion, defends his title in front of a crowd of 35,265 on Sept. 20, beating Ed (the Strangler) Lewis for the first time in 15 attempts. The more than \$96,000 in gross revenue stood as a record until 1952.

**1935** THE CUBS rip off 21 straight wins, still MLB's longest streak since 1916. Chicago's run begins on Sept. 4 at Wrigley, when it is 2½ games back, and ends with the club up six and the pennant secured.

**1938** TIED 5-5 with the Pirates with two outs in the bottom of the ninth and nightfall approaching on Sept. 28, Cubs catcher Gabby Hartnett smacks a two-strike pitch over the left centerfield wall, giving his team a half-game lead over Pittsburgh and a path to the pennant. Players and fans swarm Hartnett as he rounds the bases after what will become known as the Homer in the Gloamin'.

LEFT FROM TOP: AP; NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY (LADIES DAY); BETTMANN / CORBIS; AP; BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS/GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/CORBIS (HARTNETT)

