Guide to the Lou Gehrig Scrapbooks, 1920-1942

National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

National Baseball Hall of Fame
25 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

www.baseballhalloffame.org

This guide to the scrapbooks was prepared by Howard Hamme, Intern 2007 and reviewed by Claudette Burke in December 2007.
Collection Number:
BA SCR 54
BL-268.56 & BL-269.56

Title:
Lou Gehrig Scrapbooks

Inclusive Dates:
1920-1942

Extent:
2.2 linear feet (5 scrapbooks)

Repository:
National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
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25 Main Street
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Abstract:
This collection contains the scrapbooks of Henry Louis Gehrig, with materials collected by his wife Eleanor Gehrig. The scrapbooks cover the years 1920-1942, with a variety of materials documenting Gehrig’s activities on and off-field, beginning with his youth and ending with coverage of his death.

Original donated scrapbooks were in two volumes. Conserved in October 2005 by NEDCC.

Acquisition Information:
This collection was a gift of Mrs. Eleanor Gehrig in 1956.

Preferred Citation:
Lou Gehrig Scrapbooks, BA SCR 54, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Access Restrictions:
By appointment only. Available Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A Finding aid and microfilm copy available.

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Separations:
None
History

Lou Gehrig had 13 consecutive seasons with both 100 runs scored and 100 RBI, averaging 139 runs and 148 RBI. He set an American League mark with 184 RBI in 1931, hit a record 23 grand slams and won the 1934 Triple Crown. His .361 batting average in seven World Series led the Yankees to six titles. A true gentleman and a tragic figure, Gehrig’s consecutive games played streak ended at 2,130 when he was felled by a disease that later carried his own name. He married Eleanor Twitchell in 1933.

Gehrig died in 1941 from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, later to be known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Source: www.baseballhalloffame.org/hofers

Scope and Content

The scrapbook collection is made up of newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, telegrams, poster boards, endorsements/advertisements and cartoons concerning Gehrig during the years 1920-1942. Topics include: batting titles, endurance record, contract negotiations, Gehrig’s film projects, marriage, barnstorming with Babe Ruth, retirement, and his death. There is also articles about the movie, ‘Pride of the Yankees,’ the biopic about the life and times of Gehrig.

System of Arrangement

These scrapbooks were originally in two books. After conservation, this became a five-volume collection.

Volume 1: BL-268.56 (parts 1, 2, and 3)
Volume 2: BL-269.56 (parts 1 and 2)

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names
Walsh, Christy, 1871-1955
Ruth, Babe, 1895-1948
Gehrig, Lou, 1903-1941
McCarthy, Joe, 1887-1978
DiMaggio, Joe, 1914-1999
Huggins, Miller, 1880-1928
Ruppert, Jacob, 1867-1939
Gehrig, Eleanor, 1904-1984
Gehrig, Christina
Gehrig, Heinrich

Corporate Names
- New York Yankees
- New York Giants
- Chicago Cubs
- St. Louis Cardinals
- Pittsburgh Pirates
- American League
- Eastern League
- Columbia University

Subjects
- Tour- Japan
- Spring Training
- World Series
- Barnstorming
- Movies
- Salary
- Amyothropic Lateral Sclerosis

Forms
- Endorsements
- Clippings
- Box scores
- Black-and-white photographs
- Advertisements
- Handbills
- Telegrams

Content List

BL-268.56 Volume 1 Part 1
1920-1933

The first item is a poster of Gehrig with the words, ‘Play the game clean and hard. Play to win, but, if you can’t win—be a good loser. That’s the code of a true sportsman.” There is a copy of his signature and it is dated September 5, 1927.

News articles begin with mementos of Gehrig’s high school baseball team going to Chicago for a championship game in 1920 and articles of his football career at Columbia University, newsprint photos of game play included. Magazine articles and photos display his pitching career at Columbia, 1923. Columbia game recaps are also found. Numerous articles discuss his prowess as a hitter. While in college, there are remarks made that he may be the next Babe Ruth.
Articles progress to Gehrig being recruited by the New York Yankees. He begins to play for the Hartford in 1923. Numerous articles go into his powerful hitting and other exploits as a Hartford player in the Eastern League. Articles progress to Gehrig playing for the Yankees beginning in 1925. Article topics include: Collegiate stars of the Yankees, 1925; Ford Frick writing about Gehrig, 1926; Baseball’s most important rookie, 1926; the 1926 World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals, with game recaps; Gehrig’s rising popularity; how his mother supported him and how she makes pickled eels for the entire team; “The Man Who is Known as Lou”; Ruth and Gehrig to appear in vaudeville, 1927; Gehrig wins ‘Player Crown’ - 1927 American League; 1927 World Series; Death of Miller Huggins, 1928; tour of Japan with other baseball stars and their families, 1931; contract negotiations, 1932; a feature story entitled, ‘The Hero of the World Series, 1932; and features about his relationship with Eleanor Twitchell.

This volume includes many newsprint photos: high school baseball team; college baseball and football teams; action shots of his early baseball career with Hartford; fishing; with his mother; with his future wife; with Babe Ruth and Miller Huggins; crossing home plate after hitting his fourth homerun of a game, June 3, 1932; 1928 World Series shots; 1928 Yankee team photo with all players (two versions). Also included are newsprint cartoons of Gehrig and Ruth, various years. There are also a number of poster boards. One has ‘New York Yankees, The American League Champions 1927’; an advertisement that Gehrig becomes sports staff at the N.Y. American. Other interesting items are clippings that advertise Lou Gehrig’s serial story entitled, ‘Following the Babe!’ a narrative in ’30 peppy chapters.’

BL-268.56 Volume 1 Part 2
1933-1936
A handwritten letter from Walsh congratulating Gehrig on June 30, 1933 and a telegram from Ruppert congratulating him on 1308 consecutive games played, August 17, 1933. This volume includes articles and photos of Gehrig fishing, golfing, at a hockey rink, wrestling with Ruth. Articles of injuries such as playing with a broken toe and getting hit on the head in June 1934. More comparisons of Gehrig to Ruth and on Gehrig’s on track to beat Ruth’s home run record. Articles and photos of the barnstorming tour to Japan and a Christmas card from Japan to Eleanor and Lou. Gehrig honored at a dinner, April 13, 1935, in NY with a telegram from Hubert Lettman, NY State Governor. On August 8, 1935, Gehrig played his 1600th consecutive game and receives A.L. MVP. Scrapbook moves on to 1936, with more articles on his great playing, playing through injuries and playing his 1800th consecutive game. Gehrig is awarded MVP for 1936. He accepts the movie role of Tarzan.

BL-268.56 Volume 1 Part 3
1932-1935
News articles include his 29th birthday; his wedding in September of 1933; feature about his wife; his home life; Mrs. Gehrig reading his fan mail. An article from Collier’s entitled, ‘Baseball Bride’, discusses a few different reactions to being the wife of a baseball legend. This volume also includes stories about Eleanor’s song composing interests and
her song, ‘I Can’t Get to First Base With You’ from 1935. There are many black and white photos in this book: wedding celebration; decorating a Christmas tree in 1933; fishing in 1934. Many photos are of the 1934 barnstorming tour of Japan with various baseball celebrities (Mr. and Mrs. Ruth, Connie Mack, Jimmie Fox); their vacation to India, Egypt, Greece; dining on the ship with other guests. Also found in this part are two tickets for La Traviata with Beniamino Gigli. Most notable photo is of the Gehrigs’ working on this scrapbook.

BL-269.56 Volume 2 Part 1
1937-1939
This volume recaps highlights of Gehrig’s 1936 season, along with salary negotiations. In March 1937, Gehrig sings a Hollywood contract to do future films. Articles debating what Gehrig is worth and March 21, 1937, DiMaggio signs on. August 3, 1937, celebrates his 1900th consecutive game. Articles covering the World Series, and again, salary negotiations. March 1938 is the premiere of Rawhide, includes an advertisement and photos of Gehrig in costume. May 31, 1938 is Lou’s 2000th consecutive game and articles on the World Series. In January of 1939, Jacob Ruppert dies and Ed Barrow is elected NY Yankees president. Articles start showing up about Lou slowing down, showing signs of age and on May 2, 1939, Gehrig ends his own streak and is replaced with Babe Dahlgren.

BL-269.56 Volume 2 Part 2
1939-1942
This volume has many articles on Gehrig’s playing days, his health, and comparing him to Ruth. Articles include Gehrig’s arrival at the Mayo Clinic and prognosis. Coverage of Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day, July 4, 1939. There are many newsprint photos of Gehrig in the dugout, during the World Series, recalling his career and working for the Parole Board. There are many articles about his death, funeral and monument. In July 1942, the movie ‘Pride of the Yankees’ is released.