

Hello. I know we have a bus to catch so let's take a fast trip across Canada and meet six builders of Canadian Baseball. All of these men contributed greatly or at least have some sort of notoriety to baseball in their area or in a couple cases major-league baseball.

## A Journey Across Canada...



Let's start out West in Vancouver.

## Vancouver



Bob Brown, Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame inductee from 1989, and inaugural member of the British Columbia sports Hall of Fame, was a player, owner and promoter. He had the moniker Mr.



Bob Brown.  
Hall of Fame inductee  
1989.

Inaugural member of  
BC Sports Hall of  
Fame.  
Player, Owner,  
Promoter 1876-1962

Baseball, as he was involved in Vancouver baseball in some manner or another for over 60 years.

He was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and starred in football and baseball at Notre Dame. He later went out west to play low-level professional baseball in Montana, Oregon and Washington. In 1910 he took ownership of the Vancouver Beavers of the Class B Northwestern League; he was also a player and their manager. The cigarette card at left shows him as a player in 1910.

1910  
Cigarette Card



The team had some success, finishing second in a four-team league with an 89-71 record, but Bob hit just .190. He brought on new managers and recruited players, and became champions quickly. He also built a stadium called Athletic Park for the Beavers; 6,000 people showed up on opening day 1913.

The Beavers disbanded in 1922 but Bob Brown remained active. For the next 16 years he was involved with a succession of semi-pro teams. In 1937, the professional Maple Leafs started to play in the Western International League; in 1939, they were renamed the Capilanos by new owner Bob Brown.

## 1942 Western International League Champions Vancouver Capilanos



Here he is in 1942 as the owner of the Vancouver Capilanos, Western International League champions. The Western International was a feeder league for the Pacific Coast League. Brown loved to tell the story of this 1942 team, as they won the league title by .001 due to a rainout in Tacoma.

One of his innovations was introducing night baseball. He had attended a tennis match in Washington state, a match for which artificial lights had been used. This gave him the idea to bring lights to baseball. But he didn't just have a baseball game: he had multiple games involving a variety of other events, including sprints and relay races for men and women. Boys under the age of 14 could chase a greasy pig (the boys had to wear a bathing suit or old clothes). He played a



# Night baseball comes to Canada

doubleheader of 7-inning games. It was a success, and he held many more night games afterwards.

Brown was very popular in the area and the media loved him. Below is an article from his retirement party, at which he's recounting some tales of his life in baseball. Here he's telling the story of an unnamed player at a game in Spokane

# Bob Brown reminisces about his life in Baseball

## Baseball Days

As told to ANDY LYTTLE

by R.P. BOB BROWN



BE TWEEN times, in fact, even when he was managing the Aberdeen Black Cats in 1906-07, Bob Brown was doing a tidy job of second basing, short-stopping and baiting umpires in the various towns then forming the Northwestern league.

Aberdeen, Tacoma, Spokane and Butte were in the loop and Bill Hurley was the Cats' first sacker and field captain.

"Hurley," said Brown, leaning back with a reminiscent gleam in his eyes, "was the greatest minor league player I've ever known. He had color in quantity and not a little real diamond skill.

"Those were tough days in baseball. Our juncos were hung. There was a continual shortage of funds. We had to dig in and fight like heck to get by. Hurley was a great flitting ball player, the type that doesn't come twice in a generation."

**A NIGHT IN SPOKANE**

There was that night, too, in Spokane that one of the players got into a jam with a fighting fireman. He was real tough, but so was this ball player. The player had his man down and was booting and spurring him loyally, when two bluecoats hove into view.

Leaving his man incapable of further action for an hour or two, our hero started moving away from the officer at a high rate of speed. Down the cobbled alleyway he was fairly flying and he barely ignored several y. 2. commands to halt.

So the bold policeman yanked his

bat, an army 45, and turned it blazingly in the runner's direction. The boy was really sitting by this time, but the officer's third shot struck him in the hip just as the leg was being straightened into its stride.

The bullet plowed down the leg and lodged below the knee. Brown got the call for aid and ran over shortly after midnight. To reach the town lockup it was necessary to pass through a very shady part of the city.

Mr. Brown repaired to Dodge Brinker, then a youngster of 20 or so, and finally persuaded the big feller to accompany him.

**READY TO PLAY AGAIN!**

They had to dig up \$300 to get their fighting comrade out of jail and into hospital. It was the last week of play, and the next day but one, after this adventure, the injured player arrived at the park with thirty yards of gauze stuffed in the wound and declared he was ready for play.

"No blackie blank forty-five can knock me out," he advised all and sundry. "Give me a uniform."

He was finally persuaded to leave the ball yard and later, with the advice of all hands ringing in his ears, was induced to jump his bail, by this time reduced to \$300, and to head for the comforts of home.

Kate that winter the bullet was located well under the knee and extracted.

"And," said Brown, "that crack of his about playing wasn't booby. The ace-of-sun meant it. Yes, he was tough and a great ball player, too. He's very tough alive and highly respected today, so you'll just have to guess at his identity, as far as I am concerned, anyway."



getting into a dispute with fans and the local police. The player ended up with a bullet below his knee; the story seems to be about his old friend Joe Tinker.

Like others he was involved in bringing Babe Ruth to town. Babe barnstormed in Vancouver. Just before he boarded a boat in 1934 to play in Japan, they played a game on a wet Vancouver day. Commenting on Vancouver's rainy weather, Ruth reportedly told his teammates "If these people can take the weather, so can we. We're gonna give 'em a ball game."

## Prince Rupert



Next we're going to go to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, a small town of about 12,000 that's a 1500 kilometre drive from Vancouver. There's no significant baseball or sports history there...except for some hunting records probably...but it was the birthplace of Dewey and Max Soriano. We're going to focus on Dewey



### Dewey & Max Soriano

- Dewey & Max Soriano in 1941, 26 years before they launched the Seattle Pilots
- Dewey was a very good pitcher, 1939 Seattle Rainiers of the then AA PCL

more because he was an established player throughout his career, and he was more of the front man for the team in the early days. Dewey moved to Seattle at the age of 6 but always talked about Prince

Rupert. Here's his Baseball Reference page; you can see he made it as high as AAA

## Dewey Soriano entry on Baseball Reference

for five years.

Dewey worked really hard for a major league team for Seattle. He had played and coached in the region throughout his career, and had become Commissioner of the Western International League, replacing the aforementioned Bob Brown. But what he really wanted was a team for Seattle. In his role as commissioner he had pushed for expansion of the Western International League, and had even instituted a 20-second pitching rule to speed up games.

Here's some of the promotional copy they were using. On the boat image you'll see some recognizable names such as Frank Crosetti and Sal Maglie; these were the coaches for the inaugural season.

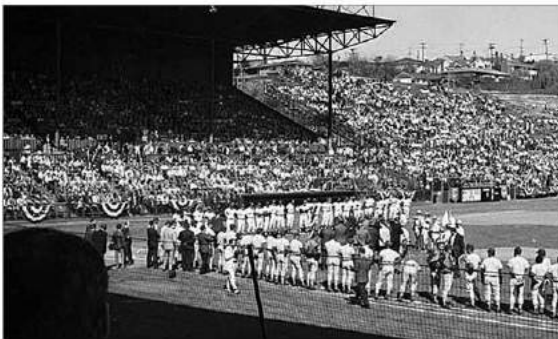


In 1967 the push was on to bring Major League Baseball to Seattle

In a sign of things to come, the Sorianos needed money, and sold 47% of the team to former Cleveland Indians owner William Daley. The team had to pay the Pacific Coast League \$1 million to make up for the loss of the Seattle Angels of the PCL, a very successful team at the time. As well, they were unable to share television revenues for their first three years.

On April 11, 1969, Opening Day, things were looking good. The fans were happy; they finally had a major league team for Seattle. On and off the field things went

## Opening day arrives



wrong. They were using a stadium that wasn't ready for the Major Leagues. The scoreboard wasn't ready until right before opening day, and water pressure in the stadium didn't work after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. Dewey Soriano had dreamt of an indoor stadium for Seattle, and had proposed the idea as far as back as 1956.

They lost a lot of money, as average attendance was 8,000. One game against the Yankees drew less than 2,000. The excitement of opening day had disappeared by the summer months. Bookkeepers were telling them in May that they wouldn't be able to make money on this team. At the end of the season, William Daley refused to put up any more money, and the writing was on the wall.

They just didn't have the money to carry the team throughout the year. It was inevitable that the team had to be moved, or something had to be done to find local ownership. One possibility was a fellow named Fred Danz, who owned

These 1970 clippings discuss where the team might possibly go; among the options were Dallas and Milwaukee. Baseball did return to Milwaukee with the



A six-foot effigy with a sign reading "Thanks Max and Dewey" was found hanging from a ramp leading to a monorail terminal.

The year-old Pilots appear definitely headed for Milwaukee following an order issued by a federal bankruptcy referee which should remove restrictions against the proposed sale.

Max Soriano is secretary-treasurer of the Pilots and a part-owner. His brother is president of the club.

until an interview six years later. They were getting death threats and abusive phone calls, bearing the brunt of the blame for baseball's failure in Seattle. They were hung in effigy in a downtown mall. The



brothers had a falling out after the team moved, and Dewey passed away in 1998.

Next head east to Toronto, and to another Canadian Baseball Hall of Famer, 1985

## Toronto



inductee Jack Kent Cooke, who bought the Toronto Maple Leafs International League baseball team on July 4, 1951. Cooke was a well-known radio station owner and magazine publisher. When he bought the team he promised entertainment, and he came through. The first thing he did was spend \$57,000 to clean up Maple Leaf Stadium; for his first game as owner he gave everybody free hot dogs and soft drinks.



### Jack Kent Cooke 1985 Hall of Fame Inductee 1912-1997

- Buys the Maple Leafs
- With Leon Day & Charlie White 1951

Here's a picture of him with Leon Day, a Negro League veteran who would only pitch 14 games for the Maple Leafs, and young catcher/third baseman Charlie White, who spent two years in

Toronto but played 62 games in the majors.

Jack Kent Cooke was a showman. He knew what he was doing; he knew how to bring people into the stadium. The Maple Leafs regularly led the league in attendance, sometimes outdrawing major league teams. Among his numerous and varied promotions were ladies days, on which he gave away orchids and hosiery to all ladies attending the game. He often gave away prizes, including baseball equipment and a pony for children, and cars for adults.

**THE TIGER FAN, THE MALE, THE TIGER MUST BE THE TIGER.**

**All This And Baseball, Too**

Approximately 10,000 fans saw the Leafs beat the Athletics in Toronto last night but it wouldn't be surprising if many of the customers couldn't find the seats more easily.

Baseball, it would appear, is a safe alternative with Jack Kent Cooke. The Toronto discount store, aiming at new fans, is having more fun than New Britain at home of these days.

Last night the Toronto Leafs gave away a TV set, an auto, a radio, an electric range and a radio. And, as though all that along with the ball game might fall short of satisfying the paying customers, Cooke added a special prize sweepstake.

Tuck Broderick, 35, 45-dancer and the pick of the crop of the performers and personalities in the Leafs City.

Now, there's all that! Just picture what Silver Streaks could do by firing up the action for a million more fans. If the boys played more than two innings, there would have to be the 100,000 fans at every home to see that same crowd.

Members of the Fourth Estate were not left out of the fun.

Incidentally, the Leafs won this game from the Athletics — their second straight. As we mentioned, it wouldn't make a big difference to Toronto fans, though. A fan sitting away from the back deck in a row can't really be expected to believe if both sides lose or whether the Leafs win or not.

**New Lottery Charge Laid**

TOLEDO, Ohio, (UPI) — The Ontario government has charged Jack Kent Cooke with running a lottery during the games. Customers would look for a winning number in a program that they had to buy; Cooke was fined \$250 after a fan won \$2,000.

## Jack Kent Cooke, Showman

- Promotions galore at the ballpark
- Runs afoul of the Ontario Government

The Ontario government had issues with his methods, as he was charged with running a lottery during the games. Customers would look for a winning number in a program that they had to buy; Cooke was fined \$250 after a fan won \$2,000.

**Third Major Ball League Plans Formed**

NEW YORK (AP) — The formation of the third major league was announced today and the formation of a third major league will be announced between July 1 and July 15.

William Shaw, who heads Major League, Inc., proposed a new league to be formed between July 1 and July 15.

Shaw announced his plan last night the director of the club before the proposed new league, between all the third major league. He said there are two groups, one headed by Mr. Charles E. Fennell, of Washington, D.C., and another by Mr. P. J. Davis, of Baltimore, Md. The new league is the one of the most of the International League.

Shaw wouldn't name the other member clubs of the third league. He said the members of the club to three cities will identify themselves in the next few days.

Other cities expected to be for franchises in the new league include Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Kansas City, Mo., and St. Louis.

**Cooke May Get Tigers**

TORONTO (UPI) — The Globe and Mail says there is a strong possibility a group headed by Toronto millionaire Jack Kent Cooke will be the new owner of Detroit Tigers of the American League.

The newspaper says Cooke bid \$1,000,000 for the franchise. It says the figure is "within \$500,000 of the top bid, submitted by the group headed by Mr. Bill Veech, former owner of Cleveland Indians and St. Louis Browns."

The story adds:

"The figures were first published yesterday by Life Staff, sports writer of the Detroit Free Press, who said there was a third group with a bid in excess of \$10,000,000 headed by Robert Goldstein, Hollywood producer."

"Contacted at his home last evening, Cooke would neither confirm nor deny the Detroit report."

"He pointed out that all bidders had been sworn to secrecy and is not that he could not make any comment."

Cooke owns Toronto Maple Leafs of the International League.

## Tries for bigger things

- Almost gets the Detroit Tigers
- Creates the Continental League

Like so many others, he always thought of bigger things. In 1956, he tried to buy the Detroit Tigers, and almost succeeded. He made a bid of \$5.2 million, in the face of competing bids

from Bill Veech and a Hollywood producer. The winning bid was from local radio executives who would keep the team in Detroit.

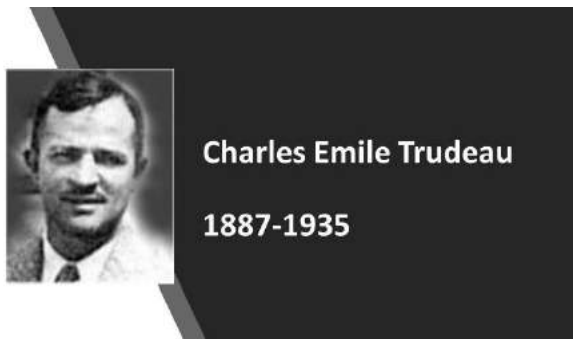
When the Dodgers and Giants moved west the city of New York desperately wanted another team, and there was a serious attempt to create something called the Continental Baseball League. There were owners lined up, and there were cities, including Buffalo, Toronto, Montreal and New York. Jack Kent Cooke was a big part of that baseball initiative. Of course MLB reacted by giving us the Mets, and that scuttled the plans of the Continental Baseball League.

Soon afterwards, Cooke got out of baseball, selling the Maple Leafs for \$50,000. He moved to the U.S., getting involved in other sports and media enterprises.

## Montreal



Now further east to Montreal, and to Charles-Émile Trudeau, the grandfather of our current Prime Minister. Trudeau was a sportsman who was also very



## Business



successful in business. The gas station on the left was called Golden Eagle in English; you might recognize it now as Ultramar. He also owned Belmont Park, a well-known Montreal amusement park, something along the lines of Coney Island.

Trudeau loved the Montreal Royals, but like Jack Kent Cooke, he also had visions of major league baseball. He made a serious bid to buy the St. Louis Browns, a bid that came so close to succeeding that it was actually thought that St. Louis would be moving to Montreal for the 1934 season.

In 1935 he went down to Florida to join the Royals for spring training, where he unfortunately contracted pneumonia and died.

- Bids for Major League franchise
- Dies at Spring Training in 1935

#### Montreal Club To Bid For Franchise

MONTREAL, Nov. 11.—The Montreal Baseball Club definitely will bid for a franchise in the Major Baseball League at next month's meeting in New York, according to Hector Martin, president of the club.

Martin, with Charles Trudeau, vice-president of the club, will attend the annual meeting of Major Leagues at New York. Should franchise be offered and the price not go too high, they intend trying to bring a Major League team to Montreal, Martin stated.

Official indications are that the St. Louis Browns, of the American League, and Cincinnati Reds, of the National League, may be placed on the market.

#### J. C. E. TRUDEAU DIES IN FLORIDA

French Canada Loses Prominent Business Man

Principal Owner of Royals Baseball Team Was at Spring Training Camp

An outstanding French-Canadian business man, vice-president and largest shareholder of the Montreal Royals Baseball Club, J. C. E. Trudeau, died last night at the Orange Grove hospital in Orlando, Fla., after a short illness. He was in his 45th year.

Onward to the parish municipality of Saint-Dunstan-du-Lac-Beauport, 18 kilometres north of Quebec city, a town of roughly 7,000 people known for little

## Lac Beauport



other than skiing, golf and fishing. But it also gave us 2004 Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame inductee Joseph Lannin, with whom we should all be familiar. Lannin came from a poor family, and at the age of 15, when his mother died, he did the





Joseph Lannin  
2004 Inductee to the  
Hall of Fame

1866-1928

unthinkable: he walked to Boston. Today that almost 410-mile journey would take about 150 walking hours.

He went to Boston because he knew of people who were in the fur business. Having found that not to his liking, he very quickly got a job

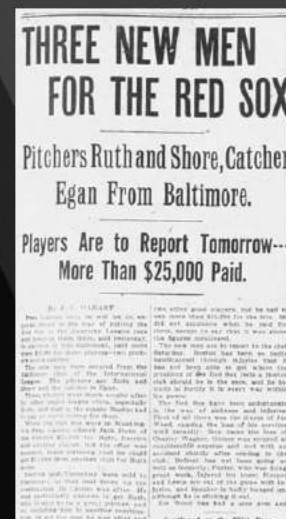
as a bellboy at the Adams Hotel in Boston, where he spent his time listening to the stories of the wealthy hotel customers, gathering tips on how to invest.

He became very successful, buying his own hotels, and was an avid sportsman. Because he loved baseball he acquired a minor share in the Boston Braves franchise. When an opportunity arose to get controlling interest in the Boston Red Sox, he bought 50% of the team in late 1913 for \$200,000, and the other 50% in 1914.

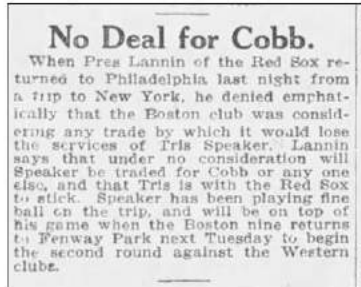
One of his first actions as owner was to bid on some young players who were available, including pitchers Ernie Shore and Babe Ruth, and catcher Ben Egan. His payment was reputed to be \$25,000, a payment that altered the course of the franchise. The sellers, the 1914 Baltimore Orioles, are shown below.

## Building the Red Sox

- Acquiring Shore, Egan & another left handed pitcher
- The 1914 International League Baltimore Orioles



As well there were rumours that Lannin was working with the owner of the Detroit Tigers on a trade of Tris Speaker for Ty Cobb. The trade was very close to happening; had it happened, two superstars from that era, Ruth and Cobb, would



## Building the Red Sox

- Ty Cobb for Tris Speaker
- The World Champions of 1915

have been teammates. Nonetheless, in 1915 all Lannin's work building the Red Sox paid off when they became world champions.

In a 1935 article, Lannin tells the story of this rural Canadian boy walking to Boston. He eventually sold the team for \$750,000 due to his issues with Commissioner Ban Johnson, the stress of owning a team and, surprisingly, his issues with how the game was being umpired.

He was killed, or at least he died, when he fell from a hotel window in Brooklyn. The death was suspicious enough that it was actually considered a

## Joseph Lannin



"There's no doubt he had a pretty significant impact on the game despite his brevity. He might have (been bound for Cooperstown) had he stuck around and lasted longer in the game."  
- Canadian baseball historian Bill Humber.



murder when it first happened, as it was a small window that he fell through. No evidence has ever been found as to who could possibly have done it. As Bill Humber says, this is a guy we should all know about.

Finally, back to Montreal, and eastward to the Maritimes, for a fellow named

## Montreal



Joseph Page.

Page was a baseball player in the 1880s. In 1888 he ended up playing in Canada. He liked it so much that he stayed in Montreal, and within a year he took a position at the Canadian Pacific Railway as a baggage handler, a brakeman, and then as a promoter. In this last position his role was getting people to use the

trains. He did so by creating small leagues of 4-6 teams in a region, the train service being the primary means by which the players and fans could travel to see the games. He was very successful, starting 15 leagues

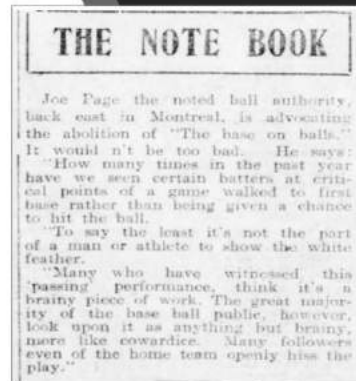
Joe Page  
"Father of  
Baseball in  
Canada"

1865-1947



across Quebec and the Maritimes, and cross-border leagues between Canada and the United States.

Page was a quirky guy, with no fondness for walks. He was also instrumental in bringing the Royals and professional baseball to Montreal.



Joe Page doesn't like base on balls

Baseball was becoming very popular in Quebec in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it was mostly anglophones who were interested. Semi-professional and amateur players and leagues were popping up around the province.

When the stadium for the Eastern League Rochester Blackbirds was destroyed by fire on July 16, 1897, Joe Page swung into action. He had the team moved to Montreal within a week. This was the first incarnation of the Montreal Royals. He



MONTREAL VS. WILKESBARRE AT MO'L JULY 25:

MONTREAL, A.B.B. P. A. R.	WILKESBARRE, P. A. R.
Shannon, ss 6 3 3 1 4 0	Bottens, lf 3 2 1 1 0 0
Lynch, lf 5 3 2 4 0 0	Shannon, 2b 4 2 2 4 3 2
Shearon, rf 7 5 6 2 0 0	Meaney, rf 4 0 0 1 2 0
Dooley, lb 7 3 4 12 0 0	Goskel, lb 3 0 1 11 0 1
Richter, 3b 6 4 2 1 0 0	Betts, cf 4 2 2 4 1 0
Henry, 2b 5 2 5 2 3 0	Gonding, c 3 1 1 4 2 0
Baker, cf 6 1 4 3 0 0	Atherton, 3b 4 0 0 1 2 0
Berger, c 5 0 1 2 1 0	McMahon, ss 4 0 1 1 3 2
Belcourt, p 6 1 3 0 4 0	Odwell, rf 3 0 0 0 1 0
Total 53 22 30 27 12 0	Total 32 7 8 27 13 5
Montreal 1 7 6 3 4 9 0 1 0-23	Wilkesbarre 0 0 0 4 3 0 0 0 0-7

Earned runs—Montreal 10, Wilkesbarre 2. Two-base hits—Lynch, Shearon 2, Baker. Home runs—Shannon, Dooley, Richter, Henry, Shannon, Betts 2, Gonding. Passed ball—Gonding. First on balls—By Belcourt 1, by Odwell 3, by Meaney 7. Hit by pitcher—By Belcourt 2. Stolen bases—Shannon, Lynch. Double plays—Shannon, Henry, Dooley; Betts, Shannon, Gonding. Sacrifice hit—Berger.



Montreal Royals first game  
July 24, 1897



had the stadium and knew there would be a demand. The stadium (shown above right) was Atwater Stadium; for those who know Montreal, it's where Alexis Nihon Plaza is now, across from the Old Forum.

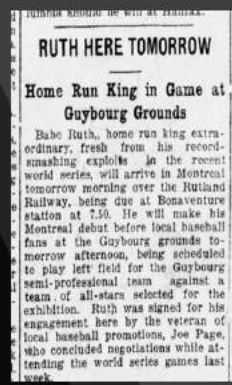
Baseball was gaining popularity in Quebec thanks to Joe, and there was a budding star: francophone pitcher Louis Belcourt was signed, and he started the first game for the new Royals team. Opening day attendance was 4,000 people; to the surprise of many, the total included many francophones. The box score from that game, a 22-7 victory over Wilkes Barre, is shown above centre. The next year the Royals won the Eastern League championship, and baseball was on its way in Montreal.

Because of his connections in the baseball world and his position at the Railway, Joe was helpful to major league teams when they needed to travel. He helped John McGraw take the New York Giants and Chicago White Sox to London after the 1924 World Series, and had them play games in Montreal and Quebec on the way before getting onto the *Empress of Britain* for their voyage. As well, he set up the 1934 tour of Japan for Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jimmy Foxx and others. Once again they stayed in Canadian Pacific hotels and boarded the *Empress of Japan* for their month-long tour.

Page brought Babe Ruth to Montreal twice. The first time there was a home run hitting demonstration before the game; Ruth hit all the balls into the St. Lawrence River so they couldn't play the game, but the fans were happy. The next time he brought Ruth to town he went out and bought every baseball he could find in

- Joe Page brings "The Babe" to Montreal in 1926

- Joe Page and the World Series



Montreal to make sure the same thing didn't happen. The second game had Ruth and Gehrig playing for a local semi-pro team against Chappie's All Stars, an all-

black barnstorming team led by Chappie Johnson.

Joe Page also served as the editor of the Canadian edition of the Spalding Baseball Guide. He never missed the World Series; just before he died in 1946 a cartoon was published in which the umpire says it's OK to start the World Series now that Joe Page has arrived. In the Maritimes and Quebec Page was considered the father of Canadian

April 4, 1947



baseball; for what it's worth, he was also called the father of hockey in the northeastern United States, as he was doing similar things for hockey.

I'd love to get these 6 guys together around a table and hear their stories, to see what they agreed and disagreed about, and to hear their theories on building teams, leagues and stadiums.

## Talking about baseball history...

What I think I sound like:



Vs what I actually sound like:



Warren Campbell  
November 2019

