

University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire
Department of History

Beer, Brats, Cheese, and... Baseball
The History and Impact of Baseball in Wisconsin.

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Fall 2012

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Abstract

From the 1800s baseball became a passion for the citizens of the United States. Wars, recessions and scandals could not bring down what is known as “America’s Pastime”. However baseball and other professional sports have been getting a bad name since historians and economist have started to look at the correlation between the team and the community. The notion of, “build us a new stadium at the cost of the tax payers or we are taking our team elsewhere” has been a common trend since 1950’s. By looking at Appleton and Milwaukee this paper will look at the impacts baseball has on these communities both culturally and economically from 1966 to 2012.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all of the people that without them I wouldn't have the information for this paper. Special thanks go to: Carl Sanderfoot, Dayna Baitinger, Katina Shaw, Tim Petermann, and John Horne. Also thanks to the Milwaukee Brewers and Wisconsin Timber Rattlers for giving me the passion for baseball to come up with such an amazing topic.

I would like to dedicate this paper to all those mentioned above, and to my friends and family who have had to put up with me and my craziness while writing this paper. Also to all the millions of fans that make baseball such a great sport!

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Introduction

"Baseball is an American icon. It is the Statue of Liberty, the bald eagle, "In God We Trust," Mount Rushmore, ice cream, apple pie, hot dogs, and rally monkeys. BASEBALL IS AMERICA."
- VICTOR ALEXANDER BALTOV, JR., *Baseball Is America*¹

Picture this; the smell of burnt rubber, the back of semi-trailers and buses. People crying in the streets, the local bars filled to the brim and the city declaring bankruptcy. Sounds wonderful right? Well this is what some authors want to paint a picture in the mind of their readers about baseball and its impact on the community. Authors Dennis Coates and Brad Humphrey's article "The Stadium Gambit and Local Economic Development" researched 37 metropolitan areas and showed that the new stadiums had no measurable impact on the growth rate of real per capita income.² This may be true but Coates and Humphrey could be looking at cities that have other factors going into play or it could be just that time they were looking. Plus they do not take inconsideration the amount of money other teams bring in by booking hotels, eating at the restaurants, or other various incomes for the city and community.

Now picture this; the smell of fresh cut grass and popcorn, the sound of thousands of fans cheering and registers slamming, the sight of people with license plates from three states over pulling into the local restaurant. This is the impact I see and many others that baseball plays on the community. Kenneth Shropshire gives some

¹ Notable Quotes, "Baseball Quotes", http://www.notable-quotes.com/b/baseball_quotes.html (Accessed 11/28/12)

² Dennis Coates, and Brad R. Humphreys, "The stadium gambit and local economic development." *Regulation* 23, no. 2 (January 1, 2000): 15-20.

great examples of this in his book The Sports Franchise, Cities in Pursuit of Sports Franchises, Events, Stadiums, and Arenas. He states direct or indirect when and comes in the forms of increased tourism, stadium rental income, taxes and increase employment to name a few.³ One thing his book did not talk about was community relations such as donations or volunteering that goes a long way for a community. This paper will look at the history of baseball in the United States and in Wisconsin to show how it became the sport it is today and then it will look deeper at the history of two very predominate baseball cities in Wisconsin, Milwaukee and Appleton, and what impacts they have on the community culturally and economically.

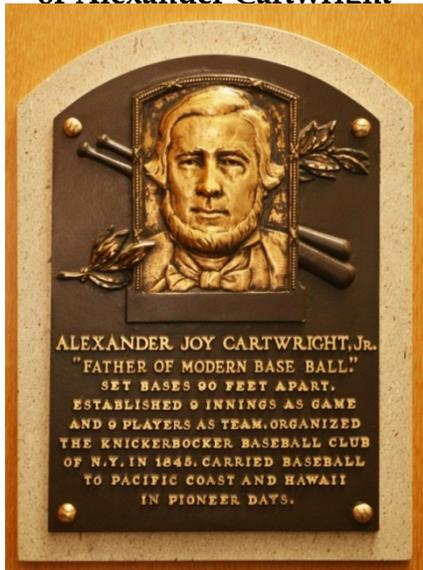
³Kenneth Shropshire, *The Sports Franchise Game: Cities in pursuit of sports franchise, events, stadiums, and arenas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995)

Baseball's History: United States

"Baseball was, is and always will be to me the best game in the world."
-Babe Ruth⁴

Baseball is known as American's Past time and was born here. In 1755 a lawyer, William Bray of Guildford, wrote in his diary about playing a game. In the 19th century baseball started to see teams popping up all over and bigger cities started to see clubs

Figure 1: Photo of a plaque of Alexander Cartwright



From the Baseball Hall of Fame

forming and competing against each other. It wasn't until 1945 when Alexander Cartwright, shown in figure 1, also known as the father of baseball⁵, came up with a clear set of rules for all teams to play by.⁶ The majority of these rules are still in place today, such as limiting the number of outfielders to three, tagging a runner instead of throwing the ball at him, and three outs in an inning.⁷ Cartwright was also involved in the first ever recorded baseball contest in 1846 when his Knickerbocker Base

Ball Club of New York took on New York Baseball Club at Elysian Fields in Hoboken,

⁴ Brainy Quote, "Baseball Quotes", <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/baseball.html> (accessed 11/28/12)

⁵ There is some controversy over Alexander Cartwright's claim to be the father of baseball or not. Some believe that three others came before Cartwright in making the sport what it is today and those three are Daniel Lucis Adams, William Rufus Wheaton and Louis Fenn Wadsworth. Each have been claimed to create some of the rules that Cartwright is credited for. C- John Thorn, "Debate Over Baseball's Origins Spills Into Another Century", *The New York Times*, March 12 2011

⁶ JacobS, "History of baseball in the United States" Livestrong.com, <http://www.livestrong.com/article/344008-history-of-baseball-in-the-united-states/> (accessed 11/28/12)

⁷ SportsKnowHow.com "History of Major League Baseball" <http://www.sportsknowhow.com/baseball/history/baseball-history-1.shtml> (Accessed 11/28/12)

New Jersey. That game ended in 23-1 win for the New York club. At the beginning baseball wasn't played for nine innings but rather until one team hit 21 runs. In 1857 they changed it to the nine innings to have a quicker game and lower scoring. Also in 1857, the National Association of Baseball Players was formed by nine teams from across the northeast United States, New York, Boston, Philadelphia Cleveland, Washington D.C. Rockford, Troy, New York Fort Wayne, Indiana. Each Team paid \$10 to enter the league.⁸

Even with the Civil War the soldiers were able to keep baseball alive and drove up participation in the sport after the war ended. The first "Professional Team" was the Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869. It was the first team to pay its players to play the game of baseball. In 1875 the National Association of Baseball Players had 13 teams but the fate of the league almost be ruined by gambling and alcohol. Then after multiple failed attempts by the players to make their own leagues, in 1884 and 1890, because of contract issues the American League was born in 1901. Two short years later the first World Series between the National League, previously the National Association, and the American League. This grew into a tighter bond between the two leagues and combined forces and eventually became Major League Baseball.⁹ That first World Series pitted the National League Pittsburgh Pirates versus the American League Boston Pilgrims, in which Boston won the eight game series 5-3. Only two times has their not

⁸ SportsKnowHow.com "History of Major League Baseball"

⁹ JacobS, "History of baseball in the United States"

been a World Series, in 1904 when the New York Giants refused to play Boston and in 1994 when the players were on strike.¹⁰

1905-1920 started the emergence of dominate teams such as the Chicago Cubs, New York Giants and Philadelphia Athletics and stars like Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Cy Young, Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson. But in 1919 baseball took a turn for the worse when the favorite Chicago White Sox lost to a big underdog in the Cincinnati Reds. Eight White Sox players were tried on charges of accepting \$100,000 to intentionally lose the World Series. This became known as The Black Sox scandal and put a besmirched on the league and game. To combat the growing allegations of gambling and other activities the league appointed a commissioner, federal judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Commissioner Landis brought baseball back with the help of a superstar Babe Ruth, who won back favor with the fans. In 1927 the New York Yankees started to become the powerhouse team with a lineup called "Murder's Row". Six of the nine players had averages over .280 in 1927 and they were Earle Combs (.356), Mark Koenig (.285), Lou Gehrig (.373), Bob Meusel (.337) Tony Lazzeri (.309) and Ruth's (.356). By this time baseball was back to being America's past time that even the Great Depression couldn't stop it. Baseball was broadcasted over the radio for those who couldn't make it to the game. To help out in the thirties baseball introduced the Most Valuable Player award (1933), the all-star game (1936) and the Baseball Hall of Fame (1936). Also to allow the working class to attend more games in 1935 at Crosley Field in Cincinnati the first ever major league game was played at night under lights. One of the

¹⁰ SportsKnowHow.com "History of Major League Baseball"

last teams to add lights, the Chicago Cubs in 1988, also were an innovator when World War II broke out their owner P.K. Wrigley provided an alternative to professional baseball when he started a women's pro league because all of the male players were fighting in the war.¹¹

Baseball's biggest and best move yet when the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1946 signed Jackie Robinson to a minor league contract. He was the first African American to play in the 20th century. In the 1840's brothers Moses and Welday walker played for Toledo until the fans heckling was too much. With one hundred and twenty five runs and twenty-nine stolen bases Robinson won the 1947 Rookie of the year award.¹² Robinson wouldn't have had a chance at an opportunity if it wasn't for the Negro league that started to play games around 1880's and took off in 1900s. Unlike its all white counterpart, the Great Depression took its toll on the league for it dissolved in 1931. The next Negro league sprung up and lasted from 1933 to 1949, founded by a bar owner from Pittsburgh named Gus Greenlee.¹³

Then baseball started to see some rocky history again. In 1966 the players formed the Major League Baseball Players Association to help them negotiate with the owners of their contracts and allowed them to move to different teams. Then there were a series of strikes and lockouts, the first in 1972 for thirteen days for better pension for retired players. Then an almost strike in 1973 for the right to salary arbitration. In 1981 a fifty day strike over the overs limiting free agency. Owners fought back by locking players

¹¹ SportsKnowHow.com "History of Major League Baseball"

¹² Ibid

¹³ Negroleaguebaseball.com, "Negro League History 101", <http://www.negroleaguebaseball.com/history101.html> (Accessed 11/28/12)

out in 1976 and 1990. The last controversy happened in 1994 when the two sides couldn't agree to a salary cap and the whole post season was lost.¹⁴

Even with all this turmoil and controversy fans still showed up to see some of the best play ball and break records. They got to see Hank Aaron go after Babe Ruth's all-time homerun record in 1974. Pete Rose going after Ty Cobb's all-time career hits record in 1985. Seeing Cal Ripken Jr. play for 2632 consecutive games. The most controversial of all seeing three players break the most homeruns in a season record all of which have been accused of using performance enhancing drugs.¹⁵

In 1939 Little League Baseball was formed to get more youth involved in baseball and get kids active. Little League Baseball has its own World Series competing against teams all over the world. It started with one league and thirty participants in 1939 to 7,123 leagues and 2,168,850 baseball participants around the world in 2012.¹⁶

Wisconsin

"Failure is part of success"
-Hank Aaron¹⁷

Baseball in Wisconsin can be traced as far back as the mid-19th century when settlers of New England and New York came to Wisconsin. Teams started to pop up in Wisconsin cities of Milwaukee, Madison, Janesville, and Beloit. These teams were fielded by the elite and the gentleman of the towns. Most professional and amateur

¹⁴ SportsKnowHow.com "History of Major League Baseball"

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Little League, "Little League Around the World"

<http://www.littleleague.org/learn/about/historyandmission/aroundtheworld.htm> (Accessed 11/29/12)

¹⁷ Brainy Quote

teams were made up of white men; Native Americans took a liking to it too, but unlike the white dominated baseball leagues the Native American teams had women on them. In 1912 baseball was more popular among Native Americans than lacrosse. Some

Figure 2: Charles Albert “Chief” Bender



From National Baseball Hall of Fame

Native Americans became legends such as Ojibwe Charles Albert “Chief” Bender, who is credited for creating the slider and won pitching honors in 1910, 1911, and 1914.¹⁸

The Wisconsin Baseball League was found in 1890 with six teams.¹⁹ In 1891 the Wisconsin Baseball League was ended abruptly because the pitcher from Green Bay was allegedly bought by the team from Marquette for \$300 and threw the game in the 5th inning. This concluded that all the teams were giving claims to the Championship.²⁰

The Wisconsin Michigan Baseball league was formed in 1892 which had six teams from the following cities: Oshkosh, Marinette, Green Bay, Marquette, Menominee and Negaunee-Ishpeming. Each team was allowed a salary of \$850 and the visiting team would get \$50 guaranteed with fifty percent of the gate fees on holidays and forty

¹⁸ Wisconsin Historical Society, “The Rise of Professional Sports”, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-046/?action=more_essay (Accessed 11/29/12)

¹⁹ BaseballReference.com, “1891 Wisconsin State League”, <http://www.baseball-reference.com/minors/league.cgi?id=e9ee8ac0> (Accessed 11/30/12)

²⁰ “Baseball Gossip”, Monroe Daily Independent, October 10, 1891

percent on Sundays.²¹ This league was only around for one year before disassembling. In 1900 to try and renew the rivalries between cities, Marinette, Green Bay, Oconto, Escanaba and Sturgeon Bay, the Northern Wisconsin League was formed to bring back base baseball that has been gone from these cities for several years.²²

For most teams, World War II took away their players but teams from Racine and Kenosha were part of Philip K. Wrigley's All-American Girl Professional Baseball League that played in contest over the Midwest and that later Milwaukee added a team. These ladies were under tight rules on and off the field regarding attire but they put up with it for the travel and the pay, which was three times the traditional woman's salary at the time.²³

In 1951 Little League Baseball was introduced to Wisconsin at Reedsburg. This team had to travel to other states to play teams, but in 1957 there were enough teams in Wisconsin and Michigan to have their own tournament to crown a state champion. Then in 1980 Wisconsin split into six districts that would battle it out in a tournament to determine the state champion to represent Wisconsin in the Great Lakes region tournament.²⁴ Also more amateur leagues popped up such as the Northwoods League in 1994 which supplied 98 players to the Major League. Such players as Andre Ethier (Dodgers), Curtis Granderson (Yankees), Casey McGhee (Yankees)²⁵, and Jordan

²¹ "Wisconsin Baseball", Evening Times, May 18, 1892

²² "Northern Wisconsin League", Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, May 1 1900

²³ Wisconsin Historical Society, "The Rise of Professional Sports"

²⁴ UNPAGE Publications, "Wisconsin State Little League Tournament Historical Results"
<http://www.unpage.org/wisconsin/> (Accessed 11/28/12)

²⁵ He played for the Milwaukee Brewers From 2009-2011. © ESPN.Com, "Casey MchGehee",
http://espn.go.com/mlb/player/stats/_id/29245/casey-mcgehee (Accessed 11/29/12)

Zimmerman (Nationals) all played some ball in this league.²⁶ Three professional teams called Wisconsin home the Milwaukee Braves from 1953-1965 and the Milwaukee Brewers from 1901-1902 and 1970- present.²⁷

²⁶ Northwoods League, "Northwoods League Alumni In Major League Baseball", <http://www.northwoodsleague.com/pdf/mlbalumni.pdf> (Accessed 11/29/12)

²⁷ The 1901-1902 Brewers and the current Brewers have no affiliation.

Milwaukee:

History of Major League Baseball

"This (baseball) is the greatest thing that has happen to Milwaukee since beer."
-Unknown Merchant, 1953²⁸

Milwaukee had its first taste of professional baseball in 1901, the Milwaukee Brewers who played at Lloyd Street grounds, but it was short lived as they were quickly moved to St. Louis to become the Browns the following year. Milwaukee served as a Minor League team city until 1953.²⁹ In 1950 ground was broke for Milwaukee County Stadium and finished in 1953 in hopes of luring a Major League team. ³⁰A sporadic Boston Braves team that only had attendance reach over one million three times saw a new low in 1952 when their attendance was 282,000. The owner of the Braves, Lou Perini, was losing over a million dollars a year in Boston. The fans didn't seem to care and even were reported to saying that they were the worst franchise in the history of baseball. Perini wasn't only the owner of the Boston Braves but also of a minor league team in Milwaukee.³¹ At the time a struggling St. Louis Browns team, the same team that had left Milwaukee in 1902, tried to make a push back to Milwaukee because the St. Louis Cardinals proved to be a more dominate team in St. Louis. ³² In 1953 Perini moved his team to Milwaukee to give Milwaukee the desired title of "Major

²⁸ "Sausages, Sauerbraten, and Sympathy", LIFE. July 6, 1953

²⁹ Sportsencyclopedia.com, "Milwaukee Brewers"

<http://www.sportsecyclopedia.com/al/mbrew/milwaukee01.html> (Accessed 11/29/12)

³⁰ Wisconsin Historical Society, "The Rise of Professional Sports"

³¹ Glen Gendzel, Competitive "Boosterism: How Milwaukee Lost the Braves" *The Business History Review* Vol. 69, No. 4, (1995)

³² Sportsencyclopedia.com, "St. Louis Browns"

League” status.³³ Some called it a “desperation move” while others were excited and claimed “This is the greatest thing that has happen to Milwaukee since beer.” Players were showered with gifts from fans. The Braves would have success thanks to a big-time star, Hank Aaron. Aaron was even quoted saying his best season was in 1957 when the Braves won the World Series over the New York Yankees. This success was short lived also, as attendance even after winning seasons would die off. The Braves were then sold to a Chicago group which transferred the team down to Atlanta in 1965. The city fought hard for its team, but it was too little too late and Milwaukee lost yet another professional team. ³⁴

Major League Baseball expanded its league in 1969 by two teams, Kansas City Royals and Seattle Pilots. Seattle wasn’t ready for a team and so a group, Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club INC., led by Bud Selig sought to acquire the team and move them to Milwaukee. ³⁵On April 1, 1970 a bankruptcy judge allowed the owners of the Pilots to sell the team to Selig and his group for \$10.8 Million. Upon hearing this news Selig was quoted as saying, “We are delighted with the decision, which apparently will permit the sale of the Seattle Pilots’ franchise to Milwaukee”. This almost didn’t happen, for the offer was set to expire at 10 am on April 1, 1970. The day before the American League had already voted and approved the transfer of the team. ³⁶ Once in Milwaukee the team didn’t fare well and had losing records for the first 8 seasons even though they had heroes such as Robin Yount, 1974-93, and Hank Aaron, 1975-76. Even

³³ “Major League” status is a status for a city that they have a professional team associated with them.

³⁴ Gendzel

³⁵ Sportsencyclopedia.com, “Milwaukee Brewers”

³⁶ “Pilots” Milwaukee Move Cleared”, Wisconsin State Journal, April 1, 1970

Mother Nature was against them in 1973 when the season opener was delayed four days after a 13-inch snowstorm hit Milwaukee. The turn for the Brewers came in 1978 when George Bamberger took over as manager and lead the team to a 93-69 season. Then the Brewers acquired of some key players that help changed the team, such as Rollie Fingers who was the first relief pitcher to win the Cy Young, given to the best pitcher in the league, and the Most Valuable Player Award in the same season. The Brewers saw some

success, but then returned to losing records year after year. In 1992 Selig became commissioner of Major League Baseball, and is still there in 2012, but it was his actions in 1994 were more noteworthy in which he canceled the

second half of the season and the post season because the players did not accept the owners demands for a new collective bargaining agreement.³⁷

With attendance dropping and losing income the Brewers needed to spark the team and the community so the plans for Miller Park were set. While building the new

Figure 3: Picture of crane collapse

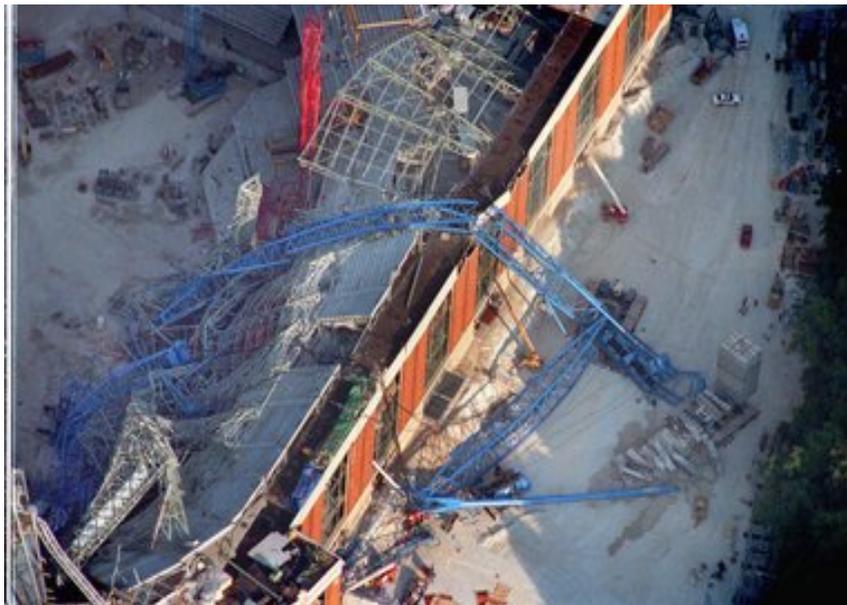


Photo from MLIVE.com article "It could have been worse: Past disasters show that crane collapses can be deadly"

³⁷ Sportsencyclopedia.com, "Milwaukee Brewers"

\$400 million 43,000 seat stadium disaster struck on July 14, 1999. A crane called “Big Blue”, the largest crane in North America at the time, was brought in to help assemble the new retractable roof and collapsed killing three construction workers.³⁸ This was a tragic event and also a setback to the stadium which was set to open April of 2000. The Brewers were able to move into their new stadium in 2001 with President George W. Bush and Commissioner and owner of the Brewers Bud Selig throwing out the ceremonial first pitches. The new stadium helped Brewer attendance and helped put the team in the black for the first time in years. In 2004 the Brewers made more news when the Selig family sold the Brewers to a group from Los Angeles headed by Mark Attanasio for \$223 Million dollars. There were questions if this would mean the team was leaving but, Attanasio reassured the public that the team was to stay.³⁹ Soon after all the excitement of a new stadium and even the new ownership the team fell back into its slump of losing seasons until 2007, their 25 year anniversary, where they finally posted a winning season. They made some headlines by acquiring C.C. Sabathia from the Indians on July 7th, 2008 to make a push for the playoffs and it was a risky move for C.C. was to become a free agent at the end of that season, when he would eventually leave for the Ney York Yankees. They did not win the division but made the playoffs as a wildcard. They ended up losing 3-1 to the Philadelphia Phillies in the first round. The Brewers would not make another post season run until 2011 when they won the division thanks to landing Zach Greinke and Shawn Marcum. In the postseason the

³⁸ “Facts and figures on Miller Park stadium”, Wisconsin State Journal, July 15, 1999

³⁹ Associated Press, “Selig family sells to Attanasio”, <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=1966198> (Accessed 11/29/12)

Brewers would use all five games to beat the Arizona Diamondbacks. Then they took on division rival St. Louis Cardinals in the Nation League Championship Series but the Cardinals were too much for the Brewers and beat them in six games to head on to the World Series, which they won.⁴⁰

Since 1978 fans couldn't say baseball in Wisconsin without talking about Bob "Mr. Baseball" Uecker. Born in Milwaukee, WI in 1935 he became a huge fan of baseball as a kid. He got his chance in 1956 when he signed with the Milwaukee Braves. He played for other teams before retiring with the Atlanta Braves. In 1971, when the Brewers were founded, he got his chance to reinvent himself by calling the game. He became the first former-player-turned-broadcaster to be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame, in 2001.⁴¹ He is known for his famous catch line "Get up, get out of here, and gone!" whenever a Brewer player hit a homerun.

Baseball's Impact Since 1966

"Playing baseball was my dream, and no amount of money could sway my opinion."
-Willie Stargell⁴²

With a stadium in place waiting for a team in 1966, baseball's impact wouldn't be felt until 1970 when the Brewers came. After the Braves took off the city had nothing but an empty stadium partially used here and there for other sports or programs. Most people in the city were waiting for a team to come back. In 1966 the Milwaukee Brewers

⁴⁰ Sportsencyclopedia.com, "Milwaukee Brewers"

⁴¹ Radio Hall of Fame, "Bob Uecker", <http://www.radiohof.org/sportscasters/bobuecker.html> (Accessed 11/29/12); biography.com, "Bob Uecker", <http://www.biography.com/people/bob-uecker-224920> (Accessed 11/28/12)

⁴² Brainy Quote

Baseball Club INC. tried hard to take on a one year old franchise that did not want to come as easily as they would like. Most fans were getting excited but some were skeptical and wanted something else. Bill Cary wrote in the March 12, 1970 Fond Du Lac Commonwealth,

“...If Milwaukee accepts, it will be purchasing mediocrity. The Brewers should wise up for once, stop bowing before baseball and tell the American League owners to go find another sucker.

What Milwaukee should do is wait for an established franchise, such as Cleveland, to become available, and then make every effort to land it. But let baseball find somebody else to bail it out of the mess it has put itself in.”⁴³

He was joined by fellow writer Dennis Hernet when Dennis wrote that the whole situation was more fun than a barrel of monkeys and almost as mystifying as the old shell game. ⁴⁴

On April 1st the news came that the city wanted to hear, the former Seattle Pilots have been sold for \$10.8 million. The name of the team, Milwaukee Brewers, reflected the city itself, for Milwaukee is known as the beer brewing capital of America with three major breweries calling Milwaukee home at this time, Schlitz, Pabst and Miller. Also Wisconsin was the leader of beer consumption in the country, downing 27.2 gallons of beer a year per ever man, woman, and child. So this not only was about city pride it was representing Wisconsin as a whole. ⁴⁵ When season tickets went on sale Thursday April 2nd the line was already formed before the box office opened at 9 am and the town responded by purchasing more than 1000 season tickets before business day closed. ⁴⁶ Another 1,200 were sold on Friday bringing the total to 2,200 in two days for the 45,000 seat stadium. ⁴⁷ If that wasn't

⁴³ Bill Cary, “Carried Away”, Fond Du Lac Commonwealth Reporter, March 12, 1970

⁴⁴ Dennis Hernet, “Milwaukee in Shell Game”, Manitowoc Herald Times, March 13, 1970

⁴⁵ “Brewers’ Famous Name” Manitowoc Herald Times, April 2, 1970

⁴⁶ “Milwaukee Miracle (Part 2) Unfolding”, Oshkosh Daily Northwestern

⁴⁷ “Brewers Ticket Sales Goes Good”, Capital Times, April 4, 1970

showing support for the team, on April 5th the team arrived to 8,000 cheering fans and a band at Mitchell Field, but before that fans were at the airport an hour and a half before the team landed blocking traffics for blocks. There were signs that said “Brewers #1” and “Who says Seattle?” Also there was a group of young men lifting Kegs over their heads with a sign that read “Brew for the Brewers.”⁴⁸

All the hype was short-lived for the Brewers would end up having multiple losing seasons. The next biggest impact the Brewers had on the city was when they built Miller Park. In 1996 the battle for how to fund the stadium was in play. Selig wanted the tax payers to pay close to \$210 million of the \$250 million stadium; Gov. Tommy Thompson declined this option several times. One of the things that was considered to go in order to bring the construction costs down was the retractable roof. A spokesperson for Selig said that was not an option for the roof is the linchpin for the new stadium and would guarantee fans baseball would be played in marginal weather and stating that because of this the projected regional economic benefits would be around \$200 million to \$324 million a year.⁴⁹ Selig even went to the paper to thank fans for this new stadium which he said will create 3,000 new jobs and opportunities for organizations, business, and individuals during construction. Along with this he claimed that Miller Park will support 2,000 jobs each year which would have an economic impact of \$320 million.⁵⁰ When it was all said and done the stadium cost \$400 million. The split of where money came from was \$90 million form the Brewers, 22.5 percent, and \$310 million from the five counties surrounding the ballpark, 77.5 percent. The

⁴⁸ “8000 Welcome Brewers Home at Milwaukee”, Manitowoc Herald Times, April 6, 1970

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ “Selig say ‘thanks’ for fan support”, Wisconsin State Journal, July 23, 1996

tax that was imposed was one-tenth of a cent sales tax.⁵¹ Even with the people paying for most of the park a poll taken showed sixty percent of the public said the public funding was worth it in Milwaukee.⁵²

Milwaukee is one of the smallest markets and also averaged some of the lowest payrolls (see chart 1). Even with this the Brewers are big time givers to the community. In the years 2010, 2011, 2012 the Brewers have donated \$1.5 million, \$2 million and \$2.5 million respectively between Community Relations and the Brewers Community foundation. Along with those dollars they have contributed on average of those three years 110 hours of community service between the staff, players, alums, and wives of the player. They also donated 90,000 items to other fundraising events in Wisconsin.⁵³ Some examples of the programs are 5k Famous Sausages run/walk, Little Brewers Club, Selig Scholars Program and many more that impact the community and the residence of Wisconsin.⁵⁴

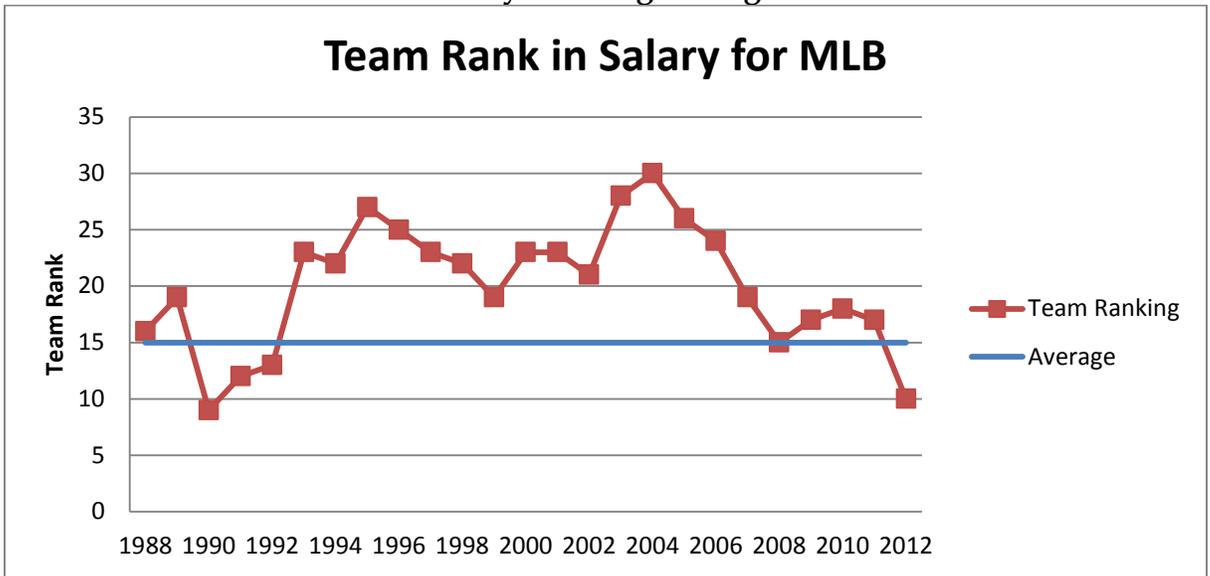
⁵¹ Ballparks, "Miller Park", <http://www.ballparks.com/baseball/national/miller.htm> (Accessed 11/29/12)

⁵² "Selig to tout Miller Park" Wisconsin State Journal, May 14, 2001

⁵³ Katina Shaw, e-mail message to author, November 26, 2012

⁵⁴ Brewers.com, "Brewers Community Foundation Program", http://mlb.mlb.com/mil/community/bcf_programs.jsp (Accessed 11/29/12)

Chart 1: Team Salary Ranking among MLB



Made by author. Data from USA Today

Appleton: History of Minor league Baseball

"One of the beautiful things about baseball is that every once in a while you come into a situation where you want to, and where you have to, reach down and prove something."
-Nolan Ryan⁵⁵

\$200 was what started a long history of baseball for Appleton. In 1891 four local businessmen posted \$200 to be a part of the six-team Wisconsin State League. This league ended up failing after one season. Eighteen years later some local investors purchase a Wausau franchise and relocated it to Appleton and renamed it the Papermakers. This team was part of the Wisconsin-Illinois League. The next year it would go on to win the league with their record of 74-45. They would remain in the league until their last season in 1914. Between the years 1940-1953 Appleton had an on and off again relationship with baseball and teams coming and going. Finally in 1958 baseball came to stay when the Fox Cities Foxes were created, a Three I league affiliate⁵⁶ of the Washington Senators. In 1960 they switched affiliation to the Baltimore Orioles and ended up winning the Three I League Championship. Two years later they switch to the Midwest League when the Three I League collapsed. The Foxes won a Midwest League Championship in 1964 two years before they switched affiliations again.

This time they switched to the Chicago White Sox organization and remained with them until 1986. During this time frame they won seven Midwest League championships, three of them in consecutive years, 1982-1984, and came close to

⁵⁵ Brainy Quote

⁵⁶ Affiliate in baseball is a farm system or minor league team that prepares prospects for the Majors

making it four consecutive in 1985 but lost to Kenosha in the first round. In 1967 they change their name to the Appleton Foxes, which stayed until 1995 when it changed to Wisconsin Timber Rattlers. The Foxes did not post a losing record until 1979 and during that time their managers went on to win four Manager of The Year Awards and their Owner, Ed Holtz, wins Executive of the Year Award five times.

After the 21 years with the White Sox, Appleton decided to change its affiliation again, this time to the Kansas City Royals, in 1987. They only had one winning season with them and it was their last season in 1992, which was their only playoff trip. That year Appleton got to showcase one of Wisconsin's own Joe Randa, from Kettle Moraine. The following year, 1993, they changed again to the Seattle Mariners which brought in one of the biggest names in baseball, Alex Rodriguez. Rodriguez was the number one

Figure 3: Aerial of Goodland Field



From Rattler Radio Blog

overall pick in the 1993 draft, later in his career he would be traded to the Yankees where he had made his name. Another star in the making for the team that year was Raul Ibanez who was an All-star catcher for the Phillies in 2009. This was the last year at Goodland Field and the last year being named the

Foxes for they moved to Fox City Stadium, which is where they still play today, and are now called the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers. In 1996 another future big name played for

the Timber Rattlers David Arias, also known as David Ortiz. Ortiz helped the Timber Rattlers to the championship, but they lose it in the final game. Also they received the Bob Freitas Award for best Class 'A' franchise in the Minor League. Over the next couple years their pitchers were the dominate force. In 1997 they break the record for most strikeouts in a season as a pitching staff with 1220 and then break it again in 1998 with 1274. In 1999, the 5th year at Fox City Stadium, they welcomed in their one millionth fan.

In the 2000's the Timber Rattlers saw some early success but couldn't keep it up. They set more records but this time it was with attendance. First in 2003 on July 25th they had a single game record crowd of 7,722 and the next month set the Midwest League record for attendance when they took a loss versus the Beloit Snappers at Miller Park in front of 14,447 fans. This started what is called the Battle of Wisconsin, which they would lose again in 2004. They meet the meet the Snappers again in 2003 in the first round of the playoffs and again fell victim to the Snappers. 2005 was the last time the Timber Rattlers made a playoff appearance as a Seattle affiliate. They were tied 2-2 in the series with the South Bend Silver Hawks and were tied in the final game until the Silver Hawks scored 3 runs in the 7th and eventually won 4-0. Also during the 2005 season two former Timber Rattlers made appearances in the big leagues and became household names Shin-Soo Choo played in 2002, and Felix Hernandez, played in 2003. On September 1, 2008 was the last game played as an affiliate of Seattle.

2009 started a new ear for the Timber Rattlers and a great one at that for they became an affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers just 100 miles south or about an hour and

half drive. Opening night was the first sellout of an opening night game in the team's history. They beat Quad City 2-1 in front of 5,487 fans. Due to the closeness of the parent team in 2009 the Timber Rattlers set a new single season attendance record with 253,240. They returned to Miller Park for a game in front of 17,880 fans on April 24, 2009 to beat Peoria 5-3. Despite all the hype and the new affiliation, the Timber Rattlers would have another losing season and miss the playoffs for 4 straight years. When Brewer stars needed rehab starts, such as Jeff Suppan (09-10, opening day starter), Dave Bush (2009), Doug Davis (2010) and Carlos Gomez (2010), the fans responded by packing the houses each time to see their heroes.⁵⁷

Baseball's Impact Since 1966

"There are only two seasons - winter and Baseball."
-Bill Veeck⁵⁸

In 1966 one of the big topics for the Foxes other than their new affiliation was to try and get improvements done to the stadium. They looked for help from their parent team but got a big denial for the much needed lighting and heated club house. It was said that the project would cost would range from \$150,000 to \$200,000. Once the denial came down another option was thrown out for a new sports complex that would cost \$500,000.⁵⁹ Not only were the Chicago White Sox not going to help pay for the improvements they were also forcing them to happen. In 1967 Robert Rahn, White

⁵⁷ Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, "Team History".

http://www.milb.com/ballpark/page.jsp?ymd=20060302&content_id=44710&vkey=ballpark_t572&fext=.jsp&sid=t572 (Accessed 11/28/12)

⁵⁸ Brainy Quote

⁵⁹ "Chisox Won't Finance Field improvements", Appleton Post Crescent, December 30, 1966

Sox's club president, said he would keep the team there but only if they showed signs of improvement towards a new stadium or to work on fixing Goodland Field.⁶⁰ Nothing was ever finalized before the start of the 1967 season. In June the decision was made to make repairs and that some of the funding for this would be from the waiver of the \$2000 rental fee for the use of the field from the county.⁶¹

Figure 4 Advertisement in paper



From Appleton Post Crescent, August 2, 1970

Anyone who read the Sunday paper on August 2, 1970 could go see the Appleton Foxes and Max Patkin, the baseball clown, take on the Burlington Bees that Sunday for \$.25 and the coupon at the bottom of the ad.⁶² These are some of the creative things minor leagues teams have to do to bring in fans. They don't have big stars and TV contract deals to help drive up attendance.

In the 1990'S Goodland Field was back on the hot seat for the Foxes. The field needed millions of

dollars of repairs and improvements. This time the board of directors decided they need a new stadium or they could lose profession baseball in Fox Valley. They also projected that the new stadium would boast average attendance from 700 to 2000. The original plan was for a \$4 million, 4,000 seat stadium.⁶³ Not everyone was thrilled about the new stadium. "Pfat" and Doris Filz, whose house was close to Goodland Field, supposedly

⁶⁰ "Exploratory Talks Continue On Sale of Good land Field", Appleton Post Crescent, April 11, 1967

⁶¹ "Committee Backs Aid to Goodland Field Project", Appleton Post Crescent June 8, 1967

⁶² Advertisement, Appleton Post Crescent, August 2, 1970

⁶³ "Baseball", Madison Capital Times, June 4, 1993

so close that they could wave to the radio play-by-play man and he would say hi to them over the radio, were saddened to see the team change fields. "Pfat" was quoted, "Early in the year, when you'd start to hear the ol' crack of the bats, we really enjoyed that, we knew spring was coming." But now they cannot even think about spring with no baseball or Goodland Field. They were not alone; Patti McFarland called the park her home away from home and will miss her "ballpark family" for some of them cannot make the trip to the new stadium. It took Marge Hinchley an hour to leave the stadium on August 31, 1994, the last game the Foxes would play at Goodland Field. She grew up only 6 blocks away.⁶⁴

The new \$5 million 5,500 seat Fox City Stadium was underway; completely privately-financed which is unheard of for baseball parks since the 1950's. The stadium is owned by a non-profit organization, Fox City Authorities, which is dedicated to improving the Fox Cities area's athletics. The team, much like the Green Bay Packers, is owned by the community. Not only did the Foxes get a new field they changed their name. They switched to the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers after a local marketing firm surveyed local area school kids.⁶⁵ In 1995 the home opener was all set but Mother Nature didn't want to cooperate. It was in the 30's and raining, which would eventually result in the early end of the game, but that did not stop a sellout crowd of 3,500 from seeing the first game at the new park. This number compared to previous years early

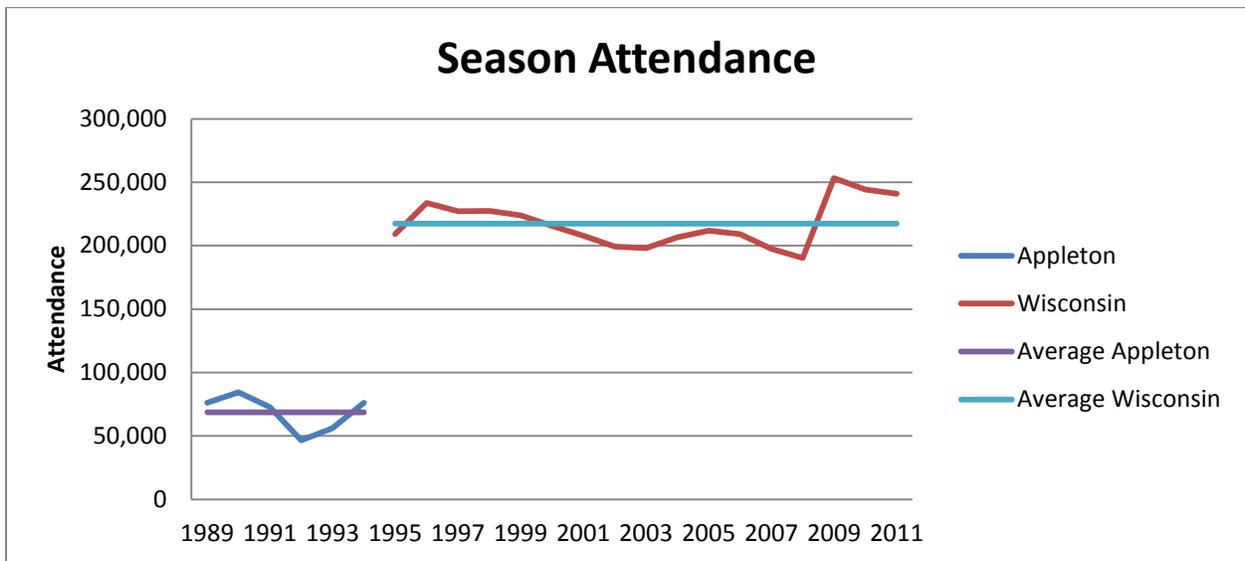
⁶⁴ "Appleton's Goodland Era Over", Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1994

⁶⁵ Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, "Team History"

games the team would only likely see 500 to 1000 fans. Not only was the one game attendance up but season holder tickets went from 115 to 800 with the new stadium.⁶⁶

They stadium would go through more improvements over the years by adding a covered picnic deck in 2000 and a new state-of -the-art scoreboard in 2008 to increase the fan experience. With the help of these improvements, the fans certainly showed their appreciation back. Once they built the new stadium their average season attendance was 216,364. Even when the recession hit the fans still showed up and got a big boost in attendance when they became an affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers in 2009, See chart 2.

Chart 2: Season Attendance



Data from Midwest League

Much like the Brewers the Timber Rattlers are very involved in their community and making sure they give back over the years. An example of this involvement is in

⁶⁶ "Timber Rattlers a popular draw", Wisconsin State Journal, April 23, 1995

the eight year old New York Deli. The owner Carl Sanderfoot has a great working relationship with the Timber Rattlers. He said over the years being there that the team would send its newer players his way for a bite to eat. Sometimes the whole team or the staff themselves would go there for lunch instead of the many “chain” restaurants. On a personal side Carl stated he has been in the area since 2001 and he and his wife have attended multiple games because he states, “It is a nice evening for something to do that isn’t going out to a bar. There is limited things to do around here.”⁶⁷ The team also puts on a lot of events to raise money for the community and other great causes such as Big Brothers & Big Sisters picnic, badges and baseball, strike out cancer, Fang’s reading program, three different benefit walk, play host to Donald Driver’s Charity Softball Game, and many more. Each year the Timber Rattlers participate in over 200 community events and donate up to 500 hours a year. In 2012 and 2011 the Timber Rattlers donated \$236,515.32 and \$222,205 or \$3.26 and \$3.06 per person that lives in Appleton respectively.⁶⁸ In 2012 the Timber Rattlers announced they will be adding on to their stadium to allow more fans to attend and also to get better use of their stadium in the offseason. This \$5.7 million expansion once again come at no cost to the community and will be privately funded.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Carl Sanderfoot, interview by author, Appleton, WI, August 18, 2012

⁶⁸ Dayna Baitinger, e-mail message to author, October 15, 2012

⁶⁹ Fox 11 News, “\$5.7 million expansion planned for Fox Cities Stadium”, http://www.fox11online.com/dpp/news/local/fox_cities/5-point-7-million-dollar-expansion-planned-for-fox-cities-stadium (Access 11/29/12)

Conclusion

"Get up, get outta here, gone!"

-Bob Uecker

Baseball has a rocky history but that's just like the nation that created it. The rich history, the scandals and everything else make baseball truly America's sport. There is still a lot to be learned about this sport and its impacts. Since this topic is still relatively young and not many valuable records have been saved it's hard to make a conclusive answer or whether or not baseball helps or hurts the communities it is in. Baseball started out as a game played between friends and turned into a multibillion dollar giant but that is not to say that baseball hasn't forgot about their fans along the way. As shown throughout this paper, baseball in Wisconsin ranks up there with beer, brats and cheese. Looking at the impact of the teams from Milwaukee and Appleton from 1966-2012, shows that their fans know when they come to the ball park they are not just a number they are family. There will be other opinions, such as Coates and Humphrey, that state baseball teams and stadiums are not good for the community because they take money away. This may be true for other parts of the county, but Wisconsin is its own breed and baseball makes Wisconsin stronger and builds better communities. There could be worse things our kids could be doing than playing a sport that teaches them teamwork.

Room for improvement on this subject would to try and track down more oral histories from people who might have been around when the Goodland Field was built

or even people who were there for the building of Fox Cities Stadium. I would also like to see how the teams over the future years here interact with their community.

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