

Warning: count(): Parameter must be an array or an object that implements Countable in /home/lasvega1/mopupduty.com/wp-includes/post-template.php on line 284



(<http://mopupduty.com>)

CLEANING UP THE MESS OTHER SITES LEAVE BEHIND

Baseball History(<http://mopupduty.com/category/old-timey/>), Baseball Lore(<http://mopupduty.com/category/baseball-lore/>), Biography(<http://mopupduty.com/category/bio/>), Callum(<http://mopupduty.com/category/callum/>), Commentary(<http://mopupduty.com/category/commentary/>), YouTube Baseball(<http://mopupduty.com/category/youtube/>) / November 18, 2010

Jimmy Piersall Bio

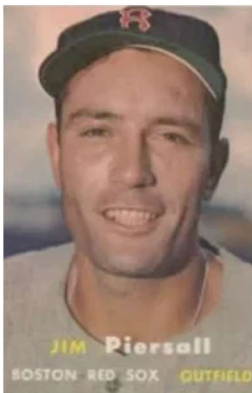
by Callum Hughson(<http://mopupduty.com/author/newcal/>)



(http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Jim_Piersall.jpg)

There are a great many interesting baseball players throughout the history of the game and you can read about many of them in our [bio section](http://mopupduty.com/index.php/category/bio/). However, there may not be a more interesting player than the colourful Jimmy Piersall.

[Jimmy Piersall](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/p/piersj101.shtml) is a former centrefielder for the Boston Red Sox, Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators, New York Mets and California Angels. Although a superb ballplayer, it was his mental illness that defined his career. Piersall played with bipolar disorder/manic depression, a condition where periods of excitability and high energy alternate with profound sadness.



(<http://i1.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jim-piersall.jpg>)

Jimmy was born in Waterbury, Connecticut on November 14, 1929. He began his professional baseball career at the age of 18, signing with the Boston Red Sox in 1948. He would reach the majors 2 years later in a September call up at the age of 20. He played in 6 games.

In 1952 he became the Red Sox starting centrefielder and began to refer to himself as “The Waterbury Wizard.” The kind of cockiness and swagger displayed by the rook chafed the veterans on the team. This was just the beginning of clubhouse strife with Piersall at the centre.

Piersall began to unravel early on in the season. Before a game against the Yankees on May 24, Piersall goaded Yankees infielder Billy Martin into a fistfight. Following the scrap, he fought with teammate Mickey McDermott in the Red Sox own clubhouse. Subsequently he was removed from the lineup and broke down crying on the bench.

Piersall’s behaviour grew increasingly bizarre. Ironically enough this helped a great deal towards endearing himself to the Red Sox fans – some of them even paid his fines! He ran up the screen behind home plate. When running to first base, he would spread his arms like he was an airplane. In the batter’s box he would drop his bat and imitate the pitcher’s motion. He would leave the plate and run to first and whisper to a runner. On June 28th, Jimmy Piersall was sent to the minor league Birmingham Barons to get straightened out.

(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Jim-Piersall.jpg>).

In only 3 weeks in Birmingham, Piersall was ejected from games 4 times. On one occasion during an at bat following one in which he struck out, Piersall brought a water pistol with him and sprayed the plate. “Maybe now you can see it,” he said to the umpire.

Following the incident he received a 3-game suspension. At the urging of the team doctor, Piersall agreed to enter the mental health facility in Westborough State Hospital in Massachusetts. Piersall was diagnosed with “nervous exhaustion” and received electroshock therapy. It resulted in severe memory loss; Piersall was unable to remember most of the previous year. In addition to the electroshock therapy, Piersall received psychotherapy counselling which he claims helped him a great deal.

“The Red Sox rallied to his support – in a way that is unusual even today. His teammates visited him in the hospital. He thought his career was over, but the Red Sox brought him back for the 1953 season. They paid the expenses for his recovery, including recuperation and coaching in Florida.”

Although on the surface it appears to be an altruistic move by the Red Sox, the situation might have been different had Piersall not have been an incredibly fine ballplayer. Teammate and Hall of Famer Ted Williams called him one of the best outfielders of the 50s and 60s. Yankees manager Casey Stengel said he was the best right fielder he had ever seen. “He’s great, but you have to play him in a cage.”

When in centrefield, Piersall was widely considered the best defensive player at his position during the time that he played. He was a thinking man’s centrefielder; he had exceptional anticipation and positioned himself perfectly for each hitter, he got great jumps on the ball and had an outstanding throwing arm (before injuring it in a throwing contest with Willie Mays.) A teammate of Piersall’s in 1959, Tito Francona recalled a time when Piersall was showing him the ropes of centrefield.

“When Francona replaced Piersall in center for Cleveland in 1959, Jimmy would stand in the bullpen and position him. Once, with Elston Howard of the Yankees up, Piersall told Francona to move toward right center. Francona, figuring the right-handed Howard would pull the ball against the pitcher, who did not have much speed, shifted toward left center instead.”

“ But Howard hit the ball to right center. “That’s the last time I didn’t listen to Piersall,” Francona said. ”

Piersall received an outpouring of support and praise from his loyal fans upon his return. In his first game back with the Red Sox he went 6/6 – the first Red Sox player to have 6 hits in a single game in franchise history. He played 153 games that season and finished 9th in MVP voting. Recalling that period in his career, Piersall stated: “Probably the best thing that ever happened to me was going nuts. Who ever heard of Jimmy Piersall before that happened?”

This was a unique situation because mental illness was not as well understood and had a much greater stigma attached to it in the 50s than it does now. At that time it was usually kept hidden, but in Piersall’s case, his struggle was documented publicly.

The following season Piersall told his story on a television show. “I did it to get it off my chest,” he says. “It was one of the best things I did to get better.” Piersall extended his talk into a 2-part op-ed in the Saturday Evening post, titled *They Called Me Crazy – and I was*. He was quoted as saying “Mental illness is no different from any kind of illness.” This was a powerful anti-stigma message that was delivered nation wide – a message that was ahead of its time.

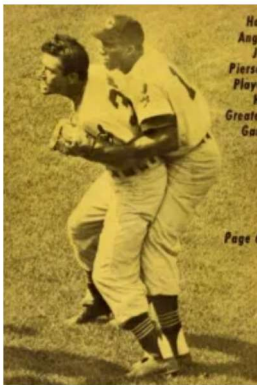
He then went on to author 2 books on the subject: *Fear Strikes*

Out(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0803287615/qid=946860927/sr=1-1/103-5301694-8197441>), based on

his public battle with bipolar disorder (you can read some of it [here](http://books.google.ca/books?id=3eJ1GOANsiEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=jimmy+piersall&source=bl&ots=DT0eptb4PJ&sig=wSPRkUNIPrG6oOvR54l35c88OeY&hl=en&ei=c)(<http://books.google.ca/books?id=3eJ1GOANsiEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=jimmy+piersall&source=bl&ots=DT0eptb4PJ&sig=wSPRkUNIPrG6oOvR54l35c88OeY&hl=en&ei=c>

and *The Truth Hurts*(http://www.amazon.com/Truth-Hurts-Jimmy-Piersall/dp/0809253771/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1289589453&sr=1-2).

A movie was adapted based on *Fear Strikes Out*, but it is only loosely based on Piersall’s life. Jimmy doesn’t approve.



(<http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jimmy-piersall.jpg>).

In 1956 Piersall enjoyed one of his finest seasons. He played in all 156 games, led the league in doubles with 40, drove in 87 runs while scoring 91, and had a .293 batting average. The following season he hit 19 home runs and scored over 100 runs. He won a gold glove in 1958.

Was Piersall “cured” from his manic depression? Maybe... maybe not. Piersall was traded to the Cleveland Indians in 1958. Teammate Tito Francona said “Jimmy was smart as a fox. Every time he got kicked out of a game, he made more money. People sent him money to pay his fines. I remember a game in Yankee Stadium where he ran to second base and did jumping jacks. Then he ran behind the monuments and sat down.”

Teammate Rocky Colavito remembers the time he was playing next to Piersall in the Indians outfield in old Tiger Stadium vs. Detroit. “He was in center and I was in right. All of a sudden, I saw him running to the 395-foot sign in center where two fans were sitting by themselves. He came back laughing. I asked

him what happened and he said, `Those two guys have been yelling at me through the whole game. I just spit in their face.’”

Many more incidents followed.

In June of 1960, Piersall threw both an orange and a baseball at Comiskey Park’s exploding scoreboard. Later that month, he threw a bat at Yankee pitcher Jim Coates after Piersall was thrown at for supposedly timing Coates’ warm-up pitches. He later wore a little league helmet during an at-bat against the Tigers.

He once stepped up to bat wearing a Beatles wig and playing “air guitar” on his bat, led cheers for himself in the outfield during breaks in play, and “talked” to Babe Ruth behind the center field monuments at Yankee Stadium. In fact, the most memorable of Piersall’s on-field antics occurred in New York.

Two incidents happened within three weeks of each other in 1961, both in Sunday doubleheaders against the Yankees.

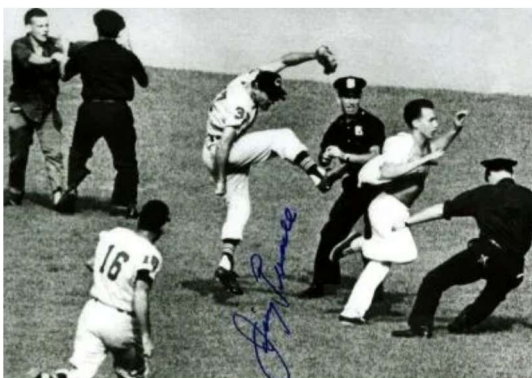
Before a crowd of 56,307 in Yankee Stadium, a burly fan climbed over the fence and ran at Piersall in center. The fan claims to have wanted to shake his hand. “You touch me and I’ll kick you in the rear,” Piersall said, reasoning the man could have a knife. The fan squared off at Piersall, then ran. Piersall kicked him in the rear.



(NY12)NEW YORK, Sept. 11--FANS STOP GAME--This is sequence of events yesterday at New York's Yankee Stadium as two teenage fans raced into the outfield during the Yankees-Cleveland Indians game. At top from left, one of the fans falls to ground after Cleveland centerfielder Jimmy Piersall hit him with a left. Then the other fan gets a kick from Piersall. Indians' Johnny Temple (16) runs in to lend a hand as do police. (AP Wirephoto) (320601mr-dns) 1961

([http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-](http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jimmy-piersall1.jpg)

[content/uploads/2010/11/jimmy-piersall1.jpg](http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jimmy-piersall1.jpg)).



([http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-](http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Piersall-Kickass.jpg)

[content/uploads/2010/11/Piersall-Kickass.jpg](http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Piersall-Kickass.jpg)).

The next incident took place in front of 57,824 at Yankee Stadium. Two teenaged fans, aged 17 and 18, were berating Jimmy Piersall's teammate, Vic Power. When Piersall shouted in defense of Power, the teens charged over the fence, calling Piersall a nut and throwing punches. Piersall defended himself well, dropping one of the teens with a strategically placed punch to the face as teammate Johnny Temple and police helped out.

"I didn't mind if they yelled at me," Piersall said. "But when they came on the field, it was a different story."

(<http://i2.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Jimmy-Piersall.jpg>).

Piersall refused to press charges after the skirmish. "I've had 117 fights and that's the first time I've ever won," he said.

After these incidents against the Yankees, Indians team physician Donald Kelly ordered psychiatric treatment on June 26.

"That boy is sick" remarked Satchel Paige, one of the few ballplayers who had an inkling as to what was really going on.

After a brief absence to deal with more "nervous exhaustion," Piersall was back and up to his old tricks. When facing his former team, the Red Sox, Piersall was ejected for the 6th time after running back and forth in the outfield while Ted Williams was at bat. He had to meet with the Commissioner and it seemed to settle him down. For a while.

He came back in the 1961 season to hit .322, finishing 3rd in the batting race while winning his second gold glove. But his antics still didn't stop. In the fifth inning of the June 23 game against the Philadelphia Phillies, Piersall ran the bases while facing backward (though in the correct order) after hitting the 100th home run of his career off Phillies pitcher Dallas Green.



(<http://i0.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Home-Run-Backwards.jpg>).

(http://mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Jimmy_Piersall.jpg).

Piersall retired with the California Angels and then went on to a career in broadcasting. Bill Veeck, then-owner of the Chicago White Sox and lover of spectacles and flamboyancy, hired Piersall to cover Sox games. Piersall was as controversial on the air as he was on the field, much to Veeck's delight. However, Piersall's act began to wear thin. When Piersall criticized White Sox slugger Greg Luzinski for failing to run out a grounder, Luzinski threatened not to re-sign with the club if Piersall remained on the job.

Umpires threatened to forfeit a game against the White Sox in 1981, saying Piersall’s taunts in the broadcasting booth were inciting the crowd. That same year Piersall was suspended for calling baseball wives “horny broads.” He was fired shortly after for being too critical of the team and its management.

“I have not made an awful lot of friends in my lifetime,” Piersall said. “But my dad once told me that if you have too many friends you become a follower.”

Piersall is still in radio, hosting a sports-talk show in Chicago three times per week where he continues to freely rant. He spends his winters in Arizona with his second wife, Jan, to whom he has been married for 20 years. He says he is set financially.

“I’m the gooney bird that walked to the bank,” he said. “I’m doing better than most of those guys who said I was crazy.”

When looking back at his career, Piersall prided himself most on getting opposing players angry, hoping to distract them. “Now the players pat each other on the ass,” he said.

(<http://mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/piersall.jpg>)



Jimmy Piersall, Player-Coach for the California Angels, uses Dep for Men.

**Jimmy Piersall just had his hair styled.
Anybody care to crack wise?**

(<http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/jim-piersall1.jpg>)

Anybody care to crack wise?


If you know Piersall, you'll cool it. The Angels' outfielder swings his fists as accurately as he swings a bat.

So how come a tough cookie like Jimmy goes in for hair styling? For the same reason about 5 million other guys do. It makes him look better.

Piersall's stylist shampoos his hair and then shapes it wet. It's better than a plain cut, because now the hair really fits his face, instead of just lying there. You don't even notice that it's thinning a little on top.

For the actual styling job, Jimmy's stylist, like many professional barbers, uses a clear, clean gel called Dep for Men. It has no grease or alcohol, so it can't make the hair look sticky, or cause any damage. Then he finishes with a shot of Dep for Men Hair Spray, and Jimmy's hair stays neat for hours.

Piersall uses Dep for Men every morning, and goes right on looking neat. If you'd like to do the same, get your hair styled. And don't forget the Dep for Men.



(<http://io.wp.com/mopupduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/dep-gel.jpg>)

[youtube KHIGQHYWl68] [youtube G61H3lJKi8o]

Related

Baseball In
Israel(<http://mopupduty.com/baseball-in-israel/>)
May 8, 2007
In "Callum"

Beto "Bobby" Avila
Bio(<http://mopupduty.com/beto-bobby-avila/>)
August 10, 2010
In "Baseball History"

Toronto Blue Jays Managerial
History(<http://mopupduty.com/toronto-blue-jays-managerial-history/>)
May 2, 2008
In "Baseball History"

⌂

The Sporting News

THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS WEEKLY

Trade Mark Registered
Founded March 17, 1886

Published by
Chas. C. Spink and Son, 2012-18 Washington Avenue, St. Louis 66, Mo.

Subscription Price \$12 a Year Six Months \$6.25 Three Months \$3.25

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Vol. 153 MARCH 28, 1962 No. 10

Printed in U. S. A.
51

IT'S TOUGH LIFE MARIS LEADS

One of the occupational hazards of being a famous baseball player who hits a record number of home runs, Roger Maris grumbles, is that you have to put up with a lot of newspapermen who twist things you say, paint an incorrect picture of the type of man you are and give you a bad reputation with the customers.

So, Mr. Maris told a reporter that he is going to solve the whole thing by not giving out any more interviews. That'll fix everybody. Poor Mr. Maris.

Wonder if he has ever stopped to think that one of the occupational hazards of being a baseball writer is being forced to stand around and cool his heels waiting for the arrival of the great star. Wonder if he realizes that there are many things writers would prefer to do than ask questions of a grumbling, pouting athlete who answers in monosyllables, sneers at questions he thinks are foolish, then brushes everybody aside as he hastens to the shower.

Maybe it would fix things if the writers accommodated Roger Maris by deciding that they wouldn't bother him any more—especially in the season when he may not hit 61 or even 41 home runs. They won't do it, of course. In fact when that time comes, they'll still be waiting for him with much more sympathy and understanding than he has shown them.

Some day Mr. Maris will realize that and appreciate it. The sooner he does, the better off he'll be.

GRIDIRON LIFELINES IN DANGER

For those who started a controversy a few months ago with the claim that within the next decade or so professional football would replace professional baseball as America's No. 1 sport, there should be some sobering thoughts.

Since the end of the last college season, a dozen more schools have dropped the sport. Figures are not as complete at the high school level, but unofficial statistics show that at least 100 secondary institutions no longer will field football teams. Here in St. Louis within the past week, the entire seven-school Catholic football league indicated that it was giving up the sport.

Now the retort may be made that baseball is losing teams, too, at the minor league level. There is a considerable difference between losing teams at fundamental amateur levels and primary professional levels.

More youngsters are playing in organized diamond leagues at an earlier age than at any time in history. The Little Leagues and other organizations for the small fry will funnel a constant supply of talent for professional ball.

If the primary life lines of football are cut off, however, at high school level, there isn't much hope that the professional game ever will have enough talent to surpass baseball.

'BIBLE' FRISKIER THAN EVER AT 76

It is considered impolite to bring up the subject of birthdays past the age of perhaps 40. But if somebody wants to brag about a birthday at an advanced age, no one is likely to object.

This newspaper was 76 years old on St. Patrick's Day. There has never been a descendant of St. Pat's favorite land who would stoutly aver: "I'm getting better with age." THE SPORTING NEWS doesn't think it is improving with age, but does feel like a young colt as it looks forward to the coming baseball season.

Being associated with a young man's sport, THE SPORTING NEWS feels, has always kept it virile. You can't be talking about enthusiastic young men without catching some of their spirit.

Every new issue is an exciting challenge. Somewhere, every day in baseball, somebody is making news for our readers.

And these are the people we would most like to thank—our readers. Their enthusiasm for baseball has been a constant incentive to THE SPORTING NEWS to keep providing the best coverage. That is our promise to our best friends, our readers, as at 76 and fresh and eager as a young pup, we move briskly into a new year and new season.

DIZ STILL THROWING CURVES, POPPING OFF

Dizzy Dean has made a good living for better than 20 years by popping off. He popped off when he pitched, but had the neat ability to back up his comments with performance.

Since his career was summarily ended in the late '30s, Dean has parlayed his gabiness, his knowledge of baseball and his total disdain for the amenities into a fortune. Baseball fans have laughed at his sallies. He has been critical of club owners, managers, players today who don't have the enthusiasm of the old-timers.

After making these salty comments, Diz laughs all the way to the bank. He probably chuckles daily alongside the swimming pool adjacent to his palatial home in Arizona. He probably roars with laughter as he plays golf, even on the days when his three-hour, twice-a-week stint at the ball park interferes.

Diz was in form the other day when he accused the club owners of lacking interest in baseball, the players of not possessing the talent or desire of his playing days.

Diz also said that if it weren't for the sponsors' money poured into the sport for its advertising appeal, the game would fold.

Sounds like the ol' fogger was making a strong pitch for his own sponsor. You can't quiet Diz—no how.

DeWITT'S ANSWER TO PESSIMISTS

Bill DeWitt quickly supplied the most effective answer of all to a national sports magazine's headlined feature that "The Reds Is Dead," because of the injury to Gene Freese. DeWitt bought the club for \$4,625,000 and the president and general manager could well have asked afterward: "Does that sound as if the Reds is dead?"

Certainly DeWitt, being the smart baseball man that he is, must have full confidence that the Reds will continue to be a contender, if not a pennant winner, or he wouldn't have entered into negotiations to buy the club from the Crosley estate.

With a small park, the Reds have to depend on full attendance for most of their games to provide a profit to the owners. If they were to fall back deep into the second division, it is quite likely that the attendance would drop off and the club become a liability.

Bill DeWitt expressed his confidence in the club and in the city of Cincinnati by buying the team. We compliment DeWitt on this forthright action, killing once and for all any rumors that a club's future hinges on any one player. We wish DeWitt many years of progress in the home of the champions.

Povich

Piersall Takes Home-Run Cut at His Critics

'Trouble-Makers Want to Make Something of My Old Mental Problems'

By SHIRLEY POVICH

In the Washington Post
POMPANO BEACH, Fla.



Jim Piersall

years ago that I came out of the hospital and I've never been arrested for anything.

"Sure, when I was traded to the Washington club, I did say, 'If you are not traded to the Yankees, what's the difference?' I said that and so would any other ball player who is realistic. Everybody wants to be with the Yankees. But that doesn't mean I don't want to play for Washington.

"Why wouldn't I want to play for the Senators? They're paying me more money than I ever got anywhere. They'll get everything I've got. I'll never be anything but an all-out ball player. It's the only way I can play the game and the only reason I ever got into the big money.

"No manager I ever had or any club I ever played with or against can say I ever gave it anything but the big try. I've broken my ribs and gotten big headaches from crashing into fences. I expect to crash into a few more, for the Senators, and also to come up with the ball. And I'll slide on my belly or my nose to get an extra base for whomever I'm playing with.

Answers Scribe Critics

"In Cleveland, the writers said I was money-mad and that Piersall will do anything for a fee. Sure, I made all those banquet appearances, and I represent some manufacturing firms in the off season, and I made money on my book and my movie, 'Fear Strikes Out.' But who said it is dishonorable to make money?"

"Listen, here's a story that you never heard. Back in 1948 when I was a schoolboy in Waterbury, Conn., you know what money-mad Piersall did? He turned down cold a \$25,000 bonus offer from the old Boston Braves to sign for practically nothing with the Red Sox. Does that sound like I was out only for the dough?"

"I turned down the big contract with the Braves because I wanted to play ball and that was the year when the rule said bonus kids could not be farmed out for two seasons. I knew I would have to sit on the Braves' bench. So I signed with the Red Sox who would let me play at Scranton. I had faith that the money would come in later, if I could prove I could play big league ball.

"I don't know what happened to me when the Red Sox brought me up in 1952 for the second time. That's the year I cracked up. I believe the other ball players when they tell me how I was acting up and mimicking other players and the umpires, and getting thrown out of games. I don't have any memory of the day in Cleveland when they say I went to bat in a sitting position against Mike Garcia.

"The Red Sox were disgusted enough to send me to Birmingham. One day down there, I came out with a water pistol and squirted it at the umpire. Another day, I started out on the ball field with almost nothing on until they hauled me back. These are the things my friends on the ball clubs told me about. I have to believe them.

"Believe me, I didn't know why



OVER-- THE FENCE

By DAN DANIEL

Mullin Does Another Masterful Performance

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.

The 1962 Official Baseball Guide, published by THE SPORTING NEWS and compiled by J. G. Taylor Spink, Paul A. Rickart and Cliff Kachline, winged into town the other day and at once began to fill a long-felt want.

Writing baseball, or operating a sports column, minus the Guide is like shooting quail with a sling shot, or eating spaghetti with chop sticks. It can be done, but not intelligently.

What struck me at once was the colorful cover of the Guide—in fact, the most chromatic in the long history of the publication.

In the best manner of the Rembrandt of the sports cartoonists, my pal Willard Mullin, the cover presents Babe Ruth as the Sultan of Swat, with his 60 homers in 154 games on one throne, and Roger Maris, labeled the Rajah, on an adjacent kingly seat with his 61 home runs in 162 games.

The Babe's noggin is decorated with a fez, the Rajah's head with a turban; Maris is smiling. I dunno if Mullin meant it to be that way, but Ruth is surveying Maris with one of those looks which might be interpreted as going with "What are you doing here?"

Leave it to Taylor Spink to get out a Guide so embellished with tid-bits that the tedium of page after page of figures is relieved for the fan who wants to tear into the book a big chunk at a time, not merely as a reference compendium.

Those supposedly extraneous items give me a big kick. For example, on Page 156, we find that on July 13, 1961, Mack (The Knife) Jones, an outfielder just in from Louisville, made four hits, one of them a double, in a 6 to 3 Milwaukee victory in St. Louis.

This, we are told, tied the record set by Casey Stengel with the 1912 Dodgers, and matched by Willie McCovey with the 1959 Giants.

Now, then, did you know that last season Bill Monbouquette of the Red Sox struck out 17 Senators on May 12, in Washington, and Art Mahaffey of the Phillies fanned 17 Cubs on April 23, in Philadelphia?

The Boston hurler's feat set an American League high for strikeouts under the lights.

Did you know that Len Green, Minnesota outfielder, had the best batting streak in the majors last year, with 24 games? He hit for .362 in that skein.

While on the "did you's," Page 137 also reveals that 17 big leaguers made five hits in a game, Orlando Cepeda and Roberto Clemente each performing the feat twice.

Home-Run Fever Hit Minor Clubs

Looking through the minor league section of the Guide, I decided to investigate the extent of the home-run fever of 1961 in that area.

I ran into evidence that the four-base epizootic had hit the minors as well as the Big Time.

I noted that batting championships had been won with averages quite up to the generality of past years. I did not discern evidences of tampering with the ball. No minor league sluggers were in the upper 40s or 50s in homers.

In the American Association, Houston led the clubs in home runs with 131, and Cliff Cook of Indianapolis, currently a third-base candidate with the Reds, achieved the individual title with 32.

International League figures showed the Buffalo club, with an impressive 161, as the team leader, with five clubs over the 100 level.

Rochester's Boog Powell, now left fielding for Baltimore, won the individual laurels with 32.

In the Pacific Coast League, seven clubs hit 100 or more and Hawaii, with 163, set the pace.

Catcher Gene Oliver of Portland, now with the Cardinals, made the strongest individual showing with 36.

Reaching down into the Texas League, I found Tulsa's 130 tops, with Craig Sorensen, San Antonio left fielder, setting the pace at 27.

I do not spot Sorensen on any major roster. He hit .291, drove in 78 runs, but struck out 91 times and was charged with 15 errors.

How Did It Go in the Lower Minors?

How did the home-run boys fare in the lower classifications? Let's take a gander at Class C—the Northern League, to be precise. Grand Forks hit 82 in 127 games and Outfielder Pat Owens of that club got 24.

In the Pioneer League, also Class C, a six-club circuit, there was a real home-run story associated with some high earned-run pitching.

The most powerful team was located in Magic Valley, building up a sort of Brigadoon yarn in lower-case baseball.

Magic Valley, representing Twins Falls, Idaho, and adjacent towns, piled up the amazing total of 161 homers. Was it the rarified air? Were the fences short?

Outfielder Bobby Sanders of Magic Valley hit 40, with an average of .325.

Now let me take a look at Class D, the New York-Pennsylvania League, for example.

Batavia hit 152 homers, and three other clubs went over 100. Outfielder Art Blunt of Batavia contributed 35.

In the Sophomore League, El Paso hit 123 and its Jose Cardenal, a flychaser, picked up 35. But Tommie Martz of Hobbs took the batting title with .387. He hit only four home runs.

Now we come to some real slugging in the lower company, the Class D Midwest League. Waterloo set a circuit record with 155.

Third Baseman Dave Hall of Waterloo got 13 homers in the first 20 contests.

After 59 games, Hall, with 22 homers, 90 runs driven in and a .403 average, was promoted by the Red Sox to their Johnstown farm. Bob Lawrence, also of Waterloo, hit 30 for the season.

Figures here, averages there, they lie between the prismatic covers of Taylor Spink's Guide, for you to peruse and translate. They all mean something.