

# Benswanger's Bucco Career Full of Firsts

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

a girl cousin at a party), and they won again the year Sam Dreyfuss was married in 1927.

Bill was at Cooperstown, N. Y., when the Hall of Fame was dedicated in 1939.

He saw Catcher George Gibson, later twice manager of the Pirates, make the last hit for the club at Exposition Park and its first at Forbes Field.

He saw Max Carey steal most of his 63 bases in 1916.

He recalls that it was not until 1918 that the fans began to keep balls batted into the stands. In that year, men in service were permitted to retain the balls. Previously, the park police ran them down.

### Started Ladies' Day in '32

He was president of the Pirates when Sunday baseball was legalized in Pennsylvania in 1932 and also when the first night game was played at Forbes Field in 1940.

He started ladies' day and boys' days at his park in 1932 and began numbering his players' uniforms in 1933.

He began painting the distances to the various fences in 1933, at the suggestion of a fan.

In 1925, he saw Glenn Wright, the Pirates' shortstop, make an unassisted triple play at Forbes Field.

He thrills at Wilbur Cooper's record of more than 200 pitching victories.

He recalls that the Pirates lost the pennant on the final day of the 1908 season when Umpire Hank O'Day called a fair ball foul in Chicago. But for this ruling, the Merkle game play-off between the Cubs and Giants would not have been necessary, since they would not have tied for the lead.

He fought the "pirating" of the Pirates' games by radio from the window of a home overlooking Forbes Field in 1935 and, by court decision, established radio rights as a by-product belonging to the club.

He sat in on meetings that elected Ford Frick president of the National League and Happy Chandler as commissioner of baseball.

He recalls seeing Wagner outplay the great Ty Cobb in the 1909 World's Series and Rookie Babe Adams' three pitching victories in that series.

### Beaten by Big Blow

He was president of the club when it was beaten out dramatically in the 1938 season and makes the point that, contrary to popular opinion, it was not Gabby Hartnett's home run in the gloaming off Mace Brown that did in the club managed by Traynor. He explains:

"We still had a series with the Reds to play in which we could have recovered. Actually, it was a hurricane in the East that beat us. We were in first place in September and were rained out for a week and that knocked us off stride.

"Then there was another one we blew in 1932, my first season as head of the Pirates. We went into New York for seven games, a single game and three double-headers. We lost the first game and won the next six and were hotter than a firecracker.

"Then we moved to Philadelphia and Jumbo Elliott shut us out. We lost four straight there and were cooled off. Before we could regain our equilibrium we lost ten straight. We lost the pennant by four games."

Bill recalled how he acquired some of the players who starred for the clubs he directed. Art Griggs dug up Arky Vaughan for him off the sand-

## Made Front-Runners of Freebooters



**BARNEY DREYFUSS**, shrewd and practical baseball magnate who built the Pirates into a National League power, was photographed with his wife while they were on vacation at Pasadena, Calif., during the middle of the 1920s.

lots of Fullerton, Calif. George Cutshaw, a former Pirate second baseman, recommended Bob Elliott. He picked up Fritz Ostermueller, taking him at the recommendation of Paul Waner after Branch Rickey had sold him off the Brooklyn club to Syracuse.

Frankie Gustine was snared from the Chicago sandlots and Lee Handley was signed for a \$20,000 bonus after Commissioner K. M. Landis had declared him a free agent.

He bought the entire Harrisburg club of the Eastern League to gain title to a shortstop-third baseman, Billy Cox. Preacher Roe was bought from the Cardinals' Columbus farm and later, along with Cox, sold back to Branch Rickey, then general manager of the Dodgers.

Johnny Rizzo was purchased from Columbus when Rickey refused to part with Enos Slaughter, also at the time with Columbus. Slaughter was the man Benswanger wanted and he offered to buy both Slaughter and Rizzo to get Enos, but Rickey refused to part with Slaughter.

Benswanger's thoughts returned to his association with Dreyfuss.

"You'll pardon me," he said, "if I seem to brag a little about my father-

### 50-Cent Top Price on Seats for 1903 Buc World's Series

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Baseball was vastly different back in 1903 when Barney Dreyfuss talked the Boston Red Sox into playing the first World's Series between the champions of the National and American leagues.

Top price for seats for the Series was 50 cents, with bleachers or general admission at some of the games 25 cents.

Box-office statements among Dreyfuss' effects reveal that the largest attendance at one game was 18,801, with receipts of \$9,400.50.

The clubs divided the swag evenly.

in-law. To me he was one of baseball's real solid men. Baseball was his business. He depended upon it for his living. He took big gambles and a few times was on the verge of going broke.

### Fought Sisler Decision

"He was a fighter for what he thought was right. He fought the decision of the old National Commission which deprived him of the services of George Sisler and always contended that he would have won several more pennants with this fine player, who was awarded to the Browns. He helped to bring about the commission's dissolution. Ban Johnson and Garry Herrmann and John McGraw were enemies in his sight.

"He always knew what he wanted, which was a winning team, and was willing to pay the price to get what he needed. He didn't have a farm system, but he had good scouts. Joe Devine, on the Coast, dug up the Waners, Gus Suhr, Hal Rhyne, Ray Kremer, Walter Schmidt and other stars. Bill Hinchman came up with Claude Passeau, Cookie Lavagetto and others. Carleton Molesworth in the South was responsible for Pie Traynor, Charlie Grimm, Johnny Morrison, Whitey Glazner, Kiki Cuyler and Johnny Goetz. Art Griggs and George Muehlebach, owner of the Kansas City club were other good contact men.

"Barney could be a stubborn man

### Benswanger Calls Buc Park 'House That Wagner Built'

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—"Yankee Stadium has been called the House that Babe Ruth built," says Bill Benswanger, former president of the Pirates, who held down that post the only other time the Pittsburgh club was host to the All-Star Game, in 1944.

"You can say just as truthfully that Forbes Field is the House that Honus Wagner built," he added. "He was as much the Pirates as Ruth was the Yankees."

He relied implicitly on his judgment and he knew a player when he saw one. He seldom missed.

"I recall suggesting one day that we try to get Chuck Klein from the Phillies and he cut me off short, saying there was no chance. However, he slept on the idea, and the next day he had me write a letter making overtures, which he signed. We didn't get Chuck then, but he eventually did land with us and was a sensation as a home-run hitter."

How does Benswanger think baseball has changed since his days as an executive?

Mainly in the way the clubs are operated, he believes. Back in the old days, most of the owners ran their own show; today, most of them have other interests and hire general managers to operate the club.

### No Pensions or Bonuses

There were no player representatives, pensions or large farm systems and bonuses were few and modest. Baseball was played mostly in the daytime; now daylight games are the exception.

"I'm not criticizing or saying that the changes are for the better or worse," Bill was quick to say. "You have to keep up with the times and times have changed. Television has altered our mode of living, and you can't halt the march of progress. You have to know the problems of the clubs to qualify to judge their operations."

Asked if he thought there is too much emphasis on night ball and that it was a better game when most of the games were played in the daytime, he replied:

"I like to see games at night and it is obvious from attendance figures that more people can attend at night. However, there is another factor to consider. In the spring, the clubs take their players to the warmest climes. Then they come north and play most of the games in the cooler and often chilly night air."

Getting back to Honus Wagner, his pet baseball subject, Benswanger said: "The Pirates had an obligation to be loyal to Honus throughout his life. He was one of the outstanding players who refused to jump to the American League despite a tempting offer. And the most money he ever made in a season was \$10,000 in only one year did he listen to bad advice and hold out."

### Almost Broke in '32

From Dreyfuss' files, he dug out a memorandum which revealed an offer of a \$2,500 bonus to Tommy Leach to jump to the "outlaw" league. Tommy turned it down.

One of the times Barney almost went broke was during the first World War. Another time was during the depression.

"Barney ran a one-man show, with Sam Watters, secretary of the club, as his right-hand man," Benswanger said. "He kept his accounts and his papers locked in this desk. When he died and I took over and gained access to them, I discovered that we had only a few thousand dollars in our account aside from ownership of the franchise and the park. We needed at least three times that much to finance the training trip and the banks were not lending money in 1932. Proving that all is not gold that glitters."

Although frequently accused of being penurious, Dreyfuss paid his players well and after the first (unofficial) World's Series, which he instigated by challenging the Boston Red Sox, American League champions, he added his share of the receipts to the players' pool so that, although they lost the eight-game Series, the Pirates received more than the winning Boston players.

He paid the San Francisco club \$90,000 in cash and players for Paul Waner and Hal Rhyne, but received Lloyd Waner for nothing the following year, 1927. Paul brought his kid brother to camp with him and the pair went on to great fame together. Lloyd hit 198 singles in his first season, a record that still stands.

Benswanger also recalled that Dreyfuss for years drafted the schedules for both major leagues, a duty assigned by the league presidents, and was reluctant in not giving his club the better of it.

"He was a man of pride and principle," Bill Benswanger says of the manager whose family he is proud to have named.

## Frank Fingers Old Hand Valo for Injun Lift

### Elmer Expected to Supply Sock in Lefty Brigade; Hardy Sent to Rainiers

By IAL LEBOVITZ  
CLEVELAND, O.



In an effort to balance the Indians' one-sided attack, General Manager Frank Lane has brought Elmer Valo back to the majors. Lane purchased Valo's contract from Seattle (Coast) and, to make room for the lefthanded pinch-hitter, Carroll Hardy was optioned to the Rainiers. Valo brings a much-needed southpaw bat to the Indians. Until his arrival, the Tribe had but two lefthanded hitters in the Wigwam, Tito Francona and Russ Nixon. When both were in the lineup, Joe Gordon had no lefthanded hitters on his bench.

And even when Nixon didn't start, Gordon was reluctant to pinch-hit with him, because he and Dick Brown are the only catchers on the roster. If Nixon pinch-hit and Brown suffered an injury, the Indians would be out of a catcher. So Gordon was in no position to manipulate, especially after Francona became the regular center fielder.

The Indians hated to part with Hardy, but it was painfully evident that he never could develop into a major leaguer while sitting on the bench.

"I know it's the best thing for me to go out," he admitted. "I hate to leave this team, but with Francona hitting so well I know I'd get little chance to play up here."

### Valo Hit .320 for Seattle

Valo came to the Indians with 18 years of major league experience. Most of his time was spent with the Athletics. Later he also was with the Phillies and the Dodgers.

The 38-year-old Valo was batting .320 for Seattle when Lane purchased his contract. He joined one of his former Philly teammates, Granny Hamner, and the pair gives the Indians a bench seasoned in age and experience. When a team is shooting for the pennant, it is in no position to experiment with youth. In a clutch situation, a wise head is a better risk than one that hasn't been around.

Hamner's presence, for example, proved valuable when Billy Martin fell on his shoulder and injured it. Ray Webster, 21-year-old rookie, first was given the chance to fill in for Martin, but it became clear that more experience was needed. So Hamner received the call and he added savvy to the infield.

But during the second game of a double-header against the Red Sox, on a warm, humid day, Gordon decided it would be wise to rest Hamner. The manager surprised all observers by naming big Jim Baxes to replace Granny. No one had figured Baxes as a keystone man.

### Jim's Homer Wins Game

In his debut here he did amazingly well, standing solidly and fearlessly as the runners hit him on double plays. He handled perfectly all his chances and hit a home run to give the Indians and Herb Score a 1 to 0 victory.

This performance, naturally, rated Baxes further consideration at second. The big Greek grinned with delight over his contribution. "I hadn't played second in about ten years," he admitted. "I played it a little at St. Paul, but didn't like it too much so they put me back on third. But during the past few weeks I've been working out at second, just in case I was needed. I'll play anywhere for this club, just so I can stay up here."

Gordon denies he used Baxes as an offensive measure. "Really it was a defensive one," he insists. "I had been watching him work out around the bag and he had good action. He's like a big cat."

Tribe Tidbits: Don Ferrarese's arm is responding to X-ray treatment. . . . Bobby Locke lost 15 pounds in his Cleveland Stadium debut, but his brilliant pitching helped the Indians beat the Orioles, 3 to 2. . . . By All-Star Game time, Indians' home attendance was almost as much as it was all last season. . . . Joe Gordon had movies taken of his batters during a Red Sox double-header. Also of Herb Score's pitching. These are to be used for analytical purposes.

## Benswanger Picks Al Lopez on 1932-46 Pirate All-Stars

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — Bill Benswanger, former president of the Pirates, picks the following all-star team of players who performed for the Pittsburgh club during his regime, from 1932 to 1946:

Gus Suhr, 1b; Pep Young, 2b; Arky Vaughan, ss; Pie Traynor, 3b; Johnny Rizzo, Lloyd Waner and Paul Waner, of; Al Lopez, c; and Ray Kremer, p.

His all-time Pirate best since 1902, when he saw them play for the first time:

Charlie Grimm, Gus Suhr, Kitty Bransfield and Elbie Fletcher, 1b; George Cutshaw, Claude Ritchey, Pep Young, Jack Miller and Rabbit Maranville, 2b; Honus Wagner, Glenn Wright and Arky Vaughan, ss; and Pie Traynor, Bobby Byrne, Mike Mowrey and Lee Handley, 3b.

Fred Clarke, Max Carey, Paul Waner, Lloyd Waner, Vince DiMaggio, Kiki Cuyler, Carson Bigbee, Chief Wilson, Jimmy Sebring, Clyde Barnhardt and Johnny Rizzo, of.

Walter Schmidt, George Gibson and Al Lopez, c; and Wilbur Cooper, Ray Kremer, Jack Chesbro, Deacon Phillippe and Babe Adams, p.