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Creating the National Pastime: The Antecedents
of Major League Baseball Public Relations

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One historian noted, "scholars should consider alternatives to public relations, rather than assuming that it had to emerge exactly as it did." Public relations as it exists today and as it evolved in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century was not predetermined. Delving deeper into the antecedents of public relations can help facilitate a better understanding of public relations and its relationship with business. This article analyzed how late nineteenth century Major League Baseball (MLB) leaders viewed publicity and the press. The MLB officials used a variety of techniques—such as bribing and threatening reporters and starting their own publications—besides hiring press agents to overcome press attacks during a management-labor battle in 1890. This study suggested that not all monopolies had to develop press offices to deal with unfavorable publicity.

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Creating the National Pastime: The Antecedents of Major League Baseball Public Relations

INTRODUCTION

During the initial days of the management-labor battle called the 1890 Brotherhood War, Major League Baseball (MLB) owners read the players' accusation that the magnates were making "money at the sacrifice of the dignity of the game and at the expense of the players' rights as men" in the sporting press.¹ In addition to being angry with the players, the owners "blamed the class of young base ball journalists, new to base ball matters as they existed over a decade ago" for presenting the players' side.² From the owners' point of view the sports journalists should have ignored the Brotherhood War, as it framed baseball not as a game but as a fight between labor and capital. Yet, owners would learn over the course of the 1890 season that not all in the sporting press heeded their demands anymore; competition had allowed journalists to choose sides, and some chose the players. The owners responded, not by hiring press agents, but by taking the players to court, trying to bribe the players and the sportswriters, lying to the press, and starting their own publications.

Many scholars note that during the Gilded Age and Progressive era, when agitation over the industrial trusts produced political and journalistic criticism of the free enterprise system, American businesses used one of the forerunners of public relations—publicity—to help defend their corporations.³ Although these scholars presume that hiring press agents to deliver publicity was the only, or at least the best, method to deal with the negative press generated by muckrakers, one historian noted, "scholars should consider alternatives to public relations, rather than assuming that it had to emerge exactly as it did."⁴ Public relations as it exists today and as it evolved in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century was not predetermined. Delving deeper into the antecedents of public relations, and the alternatives available

to nineteenth century executives, can help facilitate a better understanding of public relations and its relationship with business.

Current scholarship almost completely ignores how pre-twentieth century management handled critical press coverage, limiting an understanding of the development of corporate reputation approaches.⁵ As one historian asserted, "Before the profession of public relations, there was the practice." To understand that practice and the vocation that followed, historians must "examine much earlier periods" and "look for a more inclusive cast of PR actors."⁶ As another historian noted: "No one has examined organizations that tried approaches other than PR."⁷

This article attempted to fill this gap with an analysis of how late nineteenth century Major League Baseball leaders viewed publicity and the press. The players' union, called the Brotherhood, started a new league, run and managed by the players, in 1890 to combat the encroachment of owner power over their professional lives. The MLB owners used a variety of business tactics—such as shrewd negotiation and revenue sharing—to defeat the upstart league. This win cemented the desired economic and organizational demarcation between management and labor. The MLB owners' actions demonstrated that some business leaders before the twentieth century chose other options besides public relations-type activities to deal with unfavorable publicity.⁸

The analysis of the 1890 Brotherhood War suggested that public relations was not predestined to develop as a response to negative press coverage. Considering alternatives available to MLB officials, as well as other nineteenth century business executives, could shed light on why some organizational leaders chose to use the publicity function and why some did not. According to one historian, "Starting with the assumption that [public relations] need not have

emerged as it did, makes explicit the thinking of its originators."⁹

In the case of MLB during the late nineteenth century, the industry did not need to hire press agents because the owners received positive newspaper coverage without them. Only when competition for professional baseball players and fans, and for newspaper coverage, occurred did positive newspaper coverage of MLB experience interruptions. In these instances, the industry's leaders had a tremendous bearing on which business techniques were or were not used to overcome negative press coverage. For example, Albert Spalding, owner of the Chicago team and the unofficial leader of the owners during the Brotherhood War, fought to maintain control over the national pastime, including what messages the baseball-consuming public would receive from newspapers. This desire for control included maintaining authority for press relations rather than relegating this role to hired press agents.

METHODOLOGY

To understand Spalding's motives for how he handled press relations during the Brotherhood War, the author examined primary documents available at the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library. Spalding wrote a book in 1911 that detailed how he helped William Hulbert start the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs (NL) in 1876, and described his philosophy and actions during the 1890 Brotherhood War. Considering this work was developed and published decades after these incidents, it should not be taken alone as a reliable source for consultation. The haziness of memory and the desire to be remembered in a positive light may have skewed the recollection. Yet, the work does provide some clarification of Spalding's attitude toward business, labor and the media. The Spalding Papers at the Hall of Fame Library contained personal and business correspondence from the studied time frame. These papers provided further insight into how one MLB official handled his fellow owners, the players, and the press.

Next, the author examined newspaper accounts of the NL's creation in 1876 and the

1890 Brotherhood War. Major dailies in cities with major league teams as well as the leading sports weeklies of the era were included. The dailies included Boston Daily Globe, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, Chicago Herald, Chicago Tribune, Cleveland Leader, Cleveland Plain Dealer, New York Clipper, New York Times, New York Tribune, and New York World. The weeklies included Sporting Life and The Sporting News. Other publications included Ball Players' Chronicle, Players' National League Guide for 1890, and Spalding's Base Ball Guide & Official League Book. The publications were selected due to their availability at the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library.

Articles from these publications gave additional elucidation into how Spalding and the other owners perceived the players and their new league and their plan of action in defeating the players. The articles provided a means to study the messages the players and the owners presented.

Fully understanding each side in the 1890 management-labor crisis from the perspective of public relations history required a background on public relations historiography, the standard view of public relations' inception, Major League Baseball from the start of the National League in 1876 through the 1890 Brotherhood War, and how sports journalists interacted with MLB officials both before and during the labor battle. These sections comprise the remainder of this study.

BACKGROUND

The Business History Frame. Studying the antecedents of MLB public relations is important because, according to one historian, few studies on public relations in business history literature exist, and the histories of many industries and corporations are incomplete because their programs to craft an image for their businesses have not been explored or analyzed.¹⁰ "One of the most distressing aspects of the critique of public relations from outside the business community has been the paucity of serious analysis," argued another historian. "Questions concerning the reasons for its growth and the nature of its im-

pact are surely worth more attention that they have thus far received."¹¹ A different historian agreed, "Public relations strategies and tactics are increasingly used as weapons of power in our no-holds barred political, economic and cause competition in the public opinion marketplace, and thus deserve more scholarly scrutiny than they ever had."¹²

Those studies that do exist tend to use business historian Alfred Chandler's paradigm to explain corporate public relations history.¹³ Chandler examined a large number of case studies to spot the most important trends in the ascent of the corporate enterprise. This investigation allowed Chandler to reduce a complex historical question—Why did the large corporate structure emerge as it did—into a straightforward explanation.¹⁴ For public relations history, the Chandler paradigm could help identify the main reasons for the field's development.

Historian Richard Tedlow, for one, used a Chandlerian approach to public relations history. After examining dozens of public relations case studies, Tedlow reasoned that corporate public relations developed in response to four factors: the increasing size and specialization of organizations, the social-cultural environment, a government-business rapprochement, and advances in the journalism-communications industry. Tedlow argued that the corporation as an entity grew rapidly during the latter half of the nineteenth century, in part, due to a government that encouraged and blessed this evolution. As a corporation expanded, important functions became departmentalized. Public relations was deemed vital to the business system because corporations operated in a social-cultural-political environment that supported the power of public opinion. Many corporate leaders recognized that they needed practitioners fluent in mass media operations to influence public opinion.¹⁵

While Tedlow's work does shed some insight into the field's development, the tendency to generalize in public relations historiography is troubling due to insufficient evidence. Chandler examined thousands of business case histories; the corporate public relations

field lacks even a small fraction of this number of studies. As one historian noted, "a definitive history of corporate public relations cannot be written without studies of more people, more agencies, and more companies."¹⁶

Some of these studies have been done. A small number of autobiographies and biographies have added to the understanding of corporate public relations history, but they are limited in number and are often apologetic or ignore the practitioner's faults.¹⁷ A few institutional histories, usually focused on monopolies such as the railroads in the nineteenth century and utilities such as AT&T, have been written.¹⁸ But, historians must examine more subjects, both on an individual and organizational level, before using Chandler's paradigm to explain the development of corporate public relations.

The study of the antecedents of MLB public relations will provide one piece of the data necessary to apply this framework. Before understanding how a study of MLB will add to public relations history, it is necessary to know the standard view of public relations initial establishment.

Conventional wisdom regarding 19th-century PR. The biggest problem with current public relations history literature is not so much that it is flawed; rather, the trouble is that too much is left out by adhering so closely to the business history frame. This frame has encouraged scholars to consider public relations only after 1900 and only as a full-time vocation. One historian called for studies of the "antecedents" of public relations such as "press agency, advertising, reform movements, civic volunteerism, fundraising, and showmanship, in addition to political campaigning and war propaganda."¹⁹ One of these antecedents, press agency, has typically been tied to public relations as an example of the function's earlier, less exemplary model of communication, which eventually gave way to the more ideal two-way symmetrical form of public relations.²⁰ Further study of press agency—when it was used and when it wasn't used—will further enhance an understanding of public relations.

Press agency has existed for centuries. Ever since Johann Gutenberg's invention of printing

from movable type around 1450 marked the beginning of mass literacy and the age of the mass media, individuals and organizations have possessed a venue for mass dissemination of messages. Americans especially valued the printing press. By the time of the American Revolution, the colonies had thirty-seven newspapers, and these newspapers had become a focal point for political and social discussion.²¹

This environment—along with other factors such as advances in transportation and communication, and a public becoming increasingly urbane, diverse and literate—helped foster the development of the penny press in the 1830s. When newspaper prices dropped to a penny each, circulation and readership grew, but so did advertising prices. To reach this growing audience, organizations began to use press agents, who tried to get the organizations into the newspapers without paying for advertising by manufacturing news. Traveling circuses and theaters especially utilized these press agents. By 1880, more than two hundred and fifty such touring companies competed for business, and the competitors turned to press agency to gain an edge. Many of these press agents were not as concerned with presenting factual information as they were in generating media coverage. For example, in 1876, press agent John Burke put "Buffalo Bill" Cody's exaggerated exploits on news wires and visited press offices and theater companies to ensure coverage. This press agency formed the roots of what would become the public relations function.²²

This antecedent of public relations became more institutionalized in a few organizations in the period between the Civil War and the end of the nineteenth century. During this time, American society shifted from an agrarian to a corporate system due to the establishment of capital-intensive production facilities on a large scale; product-specific marketing, distribution and purchasing; and an integrated professional management team.²³ This management team placed the workforce in departments to increase efficiency. This desire for organizational specialization partially explains the placement of press agents into corporate publicity departments.²⁴ In 1884, the American Medical Associa-

tion employed publicists to counter the propaganda of animal lovers. Four years later, the Mutual Life Insurance Company organized a "literary bureau" to put out publicity.²⁵

Corporations began to place press agents into departments due to the industrialization of the United States following the Civil War. One historian noted, "In the 25 years from 1875 to 1900, the United States doubled its population, a population fed by waves of immigrants, jammed people into cities, enthroned the machine and mass production, spanned the nation with rail and wire communications, developed the mass media of press and popular magazine, ...and replaced the versatile frontiersman with the specialized factory hand."²⁶

Management also placed publicity specialists into departments or hired press agents as a partial response to public displeasure with monopolies. Muckraking journalists during the Progressive era exposed how some businesses corrupted politicians, increasing public anxiety about the rising power of corporations. Corporate leaders worried about these attacks because the rise in literacy and changes in printing technology and the print media during the nineteenth century had created newspapers and magazines that reached a mass audience.²⁷

Many attacked organizations hired journalists to explain their actions. Corporations used newspapers because it was the medium in which many were being attacked. Also, many companies were already using newspaper advertising to communicate with their markets, which made the transition to using publicity in this medium natural. And press agents in the early nineteenth century had focused on obtaining newspaper coverage, so the model for garnering free publicity already existed.²⁸

These press agents were typically former journalists. Newspapers, like other organizations at the turn of the century, consolidated its operations. As a result, the pay and the work environment for journalists suffered. At the same time, journalism college graduates flooded the job market. Some journalists joined labor unions; others hunted career opportunities elsewhere—many in publicity.

Public relations also emerged and grew in

response to American democracy. The American political system, built upon popular sovereignty, legitimized the power of public opinion, which during the Progressive era was focused on inspecting institutions and leaders. Management used public relations to respond to this scrutiny.²⁹

Yet, muckrakers alone cannot explain the development of public relations. Some corporations valued publicity before the muckrakers. In 1858, the Borden Company, a producer of dairy products, issued a financial report to its stockholders. In 1883, AT&T reviewed their services and prices to ensure good community relations. These two efforts demonstrated an interest in improving relations between the organization and its publics even before muckraking forced businesses to do so. Also, U.S. department stores at the turn of the century used publicity to stimulate public awareness and loyalty, not to deflect muckraking attacks.³⁰

Developments within the business environment other than muckraking created a need for public relations. Unprecedented rates of growth among corporations, increased rationalization and centralization of management, and the need for larger markets brought new management problems. Management responded to these issues with scientific management, industrial psychology, welfare capitalism, and advertising, as well as public relations.³¹

Reviewing management options to deal with an ever-changing world can more fully explain why some leaders turned to public relations. The standard view of the field's developing years provides some insight into public relations' start, but a more complete understanding of the field can occur only by adding new insights from in-depth studies of the organizational, political, and social uses of public relations. Tracing the development of one industry offers rich possibilities for grasping the ways in which social and business trends and events affected the decision on how to respond to negative publicity. Examining one industry in depth may not result in an Emersonian ideal of reflecting a whole world in a raindrop; however, by studying specific experiences it may make the study of public relations history more comprehensible in a way

that differs from the generalized. Some components of the field that may be concealed when viewed as a whole—such as the influence of an industry's leadership—can be distinguished through close inspection. The following section contains this inspection of Major League Baseball.

MLB & MLB PR

During the Gilded Age, one group of historians asserted, "Getting competitors together, organizing the market, getting rich by charging all the traffic would bear ? this seemed to be the American way. Business was king, and in business the word of the day was "Organize."³² Baseball followed the trend of the day when a group of businessmen saw a way to organize the popular sport into a profit-making entity. The urbanization and industrialization of the latter nineteenth century had helped baseball grow from a diversion before the Civil War to a sport increasingly driven by commercialism and played by professionals after the war. William Hulbert and his colleague Albert Spalding completed this transformation in 1876 when they organized the National League. This business structure applied specialization, increasingly a characteristic of post-Civil War American life and industry, to the game. Although at first player-managers ran baseball clubs, now the players would concentrate on skills relevant to the game, while owners would focus on business affairs.

The players revolted by creating the Players' National League in 1890, an attempt by skilled laborers to regain control over the sale of their product from the profit-driven entrepreneurs. While the Players' League only existed for one season, it marked the final and only challenge to the organizational structure of professional sports. Major League Baseball, as the earliest organized professional sport, set the standard for other sports leagues that followed. The National League was (and is) a cartel, whose members competed on the field but cooperated to a certain extent off the field to secure continued attendance. In this organizational structure, the players were contracted employees and had no ownership interest in the clubs. Players had

no voice in league operations, and the owners could trade or sell the players to other clubs without the player's consent.³³ The Players' League was the only attempt to create a rival league organized on a different basis.³⁴ This new league was a cooperative venture, where players would invest in the clubs, the Players' League financial backers—not owners—would divide the profits equally with all the players, and player trades were only by player consent. Had it succeeded, the Players' League may have established a new system of organizing sports, but the new league's demise at the end of the season solidified the governance system that separated the duties of management and labor.

Post-Civil War Baseball. The split between management and labor could occur only after the sport had grown in popularity from a neighborhood diversion to a leisure activity capable of generating profits. Changes in post-Civil War America helped spur this growth. Urbanization created a group of participants and spectators in the nation's Eastern and Midwestern cities, while industrialization provided the standard of living and sufficient free time necessary to support commercialized spectator sport. Railroad travel allowed professional sports teams and their fans to travel from city to city as the telegraph and penny press opened the gates to a rising tide of sports journalism. Newspaper and magazine publishers, which had followed the attitude of upper-class Americans and looked down on sports activities, began paying more attention to reader's interests in sports activities and results. Agrarian and religious anti-sport attitudes began easing, no longer restricting participation as either players or spectators.³⁵

In addition to these factors, sportswriters advanced baseball's benefits to American society. Baseball and the newspapers enjoyed a symbiotic relationship; coverage of baseball stimulated media sales while media coverage increased interest in baseball.³⁶ This relationship began in the mid-1850s when publisher William Trotter Porter covered baseball extensively in the *Spirit of the Times*. Until Porter's reports began appearing regularly, most publications largely overlooked baseball.³⁷ According to one 1920s

journalist who examined the history of the sports section, "The game [of baseball] took because Porter [editor of the *Spirit of the Times*] gave it publicity."³⁸

Later in the 1850, Frank Queen and Harrison Trent founded the *New York Clipper*, which devoted more space to baseball than Porter did. Writing most of the paper's baseball stories was Henry Chadwick. In 1858, Chadwick became the first baseball editor of a newspaper when he took this assignment with the *Clipper*.³⁹ Chadwick was one of the most prolific of the early baseball writers, promoting the game through the *New York Times*, *New York World*, the *New York Evening Telegraph*, the *New York Herald*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, and other eastern dailies. Chadwick originated *The Baseball Guide* published by *The Sporting News*. He wrote and edited the first baseball guide, *Beadle's Dime Baseball Ball Player* in 1860. In 1868, Chadwick wrote the first hardcover book in America devoted strictly to baseball, titled *The Game of Base Ball*. From 1869 to 1880, he edited the DeWitt's Guide and from 1881 until his death in 1908 edited *Spalding's Baseball Guide*. In all of his writings, Englishman Chadwick tried to make baseball a national sport for Americans as cricket was for the English. "Undoubtedly, the most popular summer pastime of America is the now national game of base ball," Chadwick noted. "In every way is it suited to the American character. It is quickly played; is full of excitement; it requires vigor of constitutions, manly courage and pluck, and considerable powers of judgment to excel in it, and moreover is entirely free from the objectional features which too frequently characterize the other prominent sports of the country."⁴⁰ By no means guaranteeing the game's success, this effort by early sportswriters to tie baseball into the cultural fabric of America helped increase the sport's popularity.⁴¹

Commercialism and professionalism. These factors fostered the increasing recognition of baseball as a viable leisure pursuit. Men bringing a standardized version of the game back to the industrialized and urbanized North and Midwest after the Civil War further accelerated the game's attractiveness, gradually leading to commercialism and professionalism. As the number

of teams and the level of competition escalated, the need for better players intensified, which led to strong, working-class players replacing the members who played in the baseball clubs organized before the war. Because the working-class players lacked the means to be true amateurs, they received jobs or other financial assistance from local business and civic leaders.⁴²

This trend toward professionalism culminated in Cincinnati where a group of business and political leaders announced a team of all-salaried ball players to represent the city. On an eastern tour in 1869, the Cincinnati Reds attracted large crowds and finished the season without a defeat. Other cities followed with their own all-salaried teams. Team organizers increased or started to charge admission to pay for these professionals, with many dividing receipts among the players. This swelled the ranks of professional players, many of whom jumped from team to team depending on the highest bidder, a practice termed "revolving."⁴³

Demarcation of Labor and Management. Organizers capitalized on this professionalism trend by forming the first professional baseball league, the National Association of Professional Baseball Players (NAPBP) in 1871. In the player-organized and managed NAPBP, players moved from team to team at will, garnering salaries based solely on their skills.

Public backlash against this early free agency soon occurred. Between 1871 and 1875, the public became disgusted and turned against baseball because players so frequently switched teams. Matters came to a head in 1875 when Chicago team owner William Hulbert signed four of the association's best players away from the Boston club.

Fearing retaliation from the other NAPBP clubs, Hulbert and one of the players he obtained from Boston, Albert G. Spalding, decided to break from the association and form a new league. Spalding argued that baseball was a business as well as a sport and should be managed accordingly. Hulbert, one of the first baseball owners who was not a former player, shared Spalding's view. The pair enticed other ownership groups to join the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs (NL), which in-

cluded teams from Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Hartford.⁴⁴

Just as trusts such as Standard Oil dominated business, the NL owners emulated these consortiums by creating their own cartel. Each NL club, a joint-stock company, financed the league administration, which ensured that the league emphasized the interests of member clubs over those of the players. The players may have resented the new league's check on their movement, but with the strongest teams in the new league they could do little but submit.⁴⁵

The new league brought four things to organized baseball: 1) the increased promotion of the game to the middle class by "cleaning up the game"—no booze at game, no Sunday ball, and no excessive drinking or cussing by players; 2) the monopoly of each club over its geographic area; 3) the institution of clubs run on business principles, putting the power into the hands of a few; and 4) the removal of players from financial decisions, reducing their share of the profits.⁴⁶

Spalding explained the league's operating principles: "Like every other form of business enterprise, Base Ball depends for results upon two interdependent divisions, the one to have absolute control and direction of the system, and the other to engage—always under the executive branch—in the actual work of production." Spalding argued that just because the players were the actual entertainment "producers" did not mean that they should actually manage the entertainment itself.⁴⁷

Spalding positioned the new league structure as a means to ensure baseball would remain a family game, played and managed by gentlemen. Yet, as a businessman, Spalding had other motives for the formation of the National League. Few entrepreneurs wait for demand; they create customers. In order to do so, sporting goods manufacturers promoted baseball, among other games, during the sports surge of the late nineteenth century.⁴⁸ Spalding was just such an entrepreneur. He and his brother had established A.G. Spalding and Bro. in the same year as the NL. The firm grew in large part due to the mass manufacture of baseballs and uniforms, advertising, and Spalding's close con-

nections with major league baseball officials.⁴⁹

In protecting his sporting goods investment, Spalding convinced Hulbert and the other owners that they needed to manage news of their cartel to minimize criticism. Hulbert and Spalding kept the meeting that created the new league secret from the press, with the exception of their associate, Lewis Meachem, an editor with the *Chicago Tribune*. The one reporter at the meeting, from the *Tribune*, immediately wired Meachem the summit's results.

In his article after the league's initial meeting, Meachem noted that the NL solved the main problem with the current state of player-run baseball, that player-managers could not control players who wanted to drink, fight and gamble. The editor predicted the NL owners would end "drunken behavior" and start a new era of "honest play." Players would gain under the new league, he argued, which "assures them lucrative employment as long as they are honest and work hard." Finally, to preempt a negative report on the league from the period's most influential baseball writer, Henry Chadwick, Meachem portrayed him as an old-fashioned, "dead weight on the neck of the game."⁵⁰

Chadwick seemed conservative to his contemporaries because he advocated that baseball players should uphold the good sportsmanship of cricket, a value contrary to competitive American ideals. Nevertheless, Chadwick remained a highly respected writer in baseball circles, and his writing carried great weight.⁵¹

Chadwick struck back against Meachem's "dead weight" charges eight days later, saying he wanted to stop the "growing abuses connected with the baseball fraternity" as much as the NL owners did. He wondered, however, if the owners wanted to make the game more honest, "what was there to prevent this work from being entered upon boldly, manfully, consistently and openly" instead of "this secret meeting with closed doors"? Chadwick labeled the exclusion of other teams from the baseball world an "anti-American method of doing business" and objected to the "secret and sudden coup d'état."⁵²

Meachem defended the league, proclaiming it the "most important reform since the history

of the game," but he and Spalding suspected that the *Tribune* alone could not counter general media criticism.⁵³ Therefore, Spalding launched his own journal, titled *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide*, from which he could speak directly to baseball fans, as well as advertise the products he sold in his new retail store in Chicago. Spalding also sought to soothe Chadwick by writing an apology to him for Meachem's attacks, but the NL magnate stressed that he thought the "future of baseball" depended on the new league. Ever the businessman, he closed the letter by announcing his new store in Chicago and asking Chadwick's newspaper to accept his ads.⁵⁴

What Spalding discovered with this incident may have shaped his future attitude toward sportswriters. Although he resented the league's attack on him, Chadwick, as well as other baseball writers, covered the National League favorably because it represented the "best professional talent of the country."⁵⁵ During this time, other industries used press agents to "endeavor to keep the name and business of their employers continually in the public eye."⁵⁶ Baseball owners, on the other hand, received publicity without trying. With the creation of their new league, the NL magnates learned that as long as they controlled the top player talent they could influence media coverage.

Creation of the First Players' Union: The Brotherhood. With the best players in its ranks, newspaper coverage and the fan base followed the National League. The NL marginalized its competition—the NAPBP never survived the NL coup and collapsed in 1876—and brought a more centralized organization to the game. Yet, the new league initially failed to achieve stability or profits for its members. At the end of the 1876 season only Hulbert's Chicago club showed a profit, and all eight clubs showed losses in the 1877 season.⁵⁷ For the remainder of the 1870s the league faced several problems such as lagging profits, players gambling on games, and teams failing to play a full schedule. In response, the owners awarded themselves in 1879 the right to "reserve" players as long as they desired; this reserve rule prevented players from moving to a new club in search of higher pay.⁵⁸ By 1883, NL

owners applied the reserve system to most player contracts, and by 1885 the owners agreed to a \$2,000 a year maximum player salary.⁵⁹

In addition to these new rules, the favorable national economic and social climate and increasing newspaper coverage helped the game prosper. After the Civil War, improved transit and communications systems and an explosion in manufacturing capacity resulted in competitive selling in an economy of abundance.⁶⁰ With economic prosperity came an increase in popular culture and leisure activities.⁶¹ As people began participating in and watching leisure activities such as baseball, newspaper coverage of that pastime increased, which, in turn, generated interest in the paper.

While competition for audience influenced newspaper coverage of baseball, competition among newspapers helped impact baseball coverage as well. In 1880, one-third of all dailies took the Associated Press news report.⁶² As a result, many papers contained the same news stories. In the drive to gain a news advantage over competitors, many editors turned to local and specialized news and special columns. This kind of reporting required larger staffs, which were then departmentalized into special sections such as foreign, city, financial, women and sports. Some reporters were placed on the sports beat and covered baseball because the thinking was that the sport instilled civic pride. The *New York Times* editorialized that despite the protestations of some, the furor over the game had some merit: "We hold that anything whatsoever that can excite the local pride of New York is so far a good thing." The editorial went on to argue that although the Times wished the local citizenry would get as excited about ridding the city of crime and garbage, New York City was so big and impersonal it needed the communal spirit of baseball.⁶³

By the 1880s, many daily newspaper editors recognized the interest in baseball, allocating a full page to sports with a focus on baseball. Charles Dana of the *New York Sun* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* pioneered the creation of entire sports departments. By the 1890s, most newspapers in America had created a sports staff and it was during this time that

sportswriting began to develop as a full-time job on the nation's newspapers.⁶⁴

In addition to the dailies, sporting weeklies that developed in the 1880s such as *The Sporting News* and *Sporting Life* expanded coverage of the game. In 1884, after only one year of existence, *Sporting Life* boasted twenty thousand readers, and within three years the circulation rose to forty thousand. By 1887, *The Sporting News* claimed sixty thousand readers. This availability of sports coverage meant that even those who could not attend baseball games could follow the sport.⁶⁵

The 1880s were a time of growth for not only newspapers and professional baseball but for most American business. The decade also was a time of business arrogance. Railroad magnate E. H. Harriman boasted, "I don't want anything on this railroad that I cannot control." Merchant Marshall Field made six hundred dollars an hour each day while his clerks earned a maximum of twelve dollars a week for a sixty-hour week.⁶⁶ As some urban workers organized themselves to deal with this corporate system, so too did NL players form a union, the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players, in 1885 to combat increasing baseball owner power.⁶⁷ Although the Brotherhood's leader, John M. Ward, declined to affiliate the union with the Knights of Labor, the foremost labor organization in the 1880s, the spirit of the Brotherhood was akin to the Knights whose motto was, "An injury to one is a concern to all."⁶⁸

The owners initially refused to recognize the new union. Yet, after media pressure forced the owners to meet with the Brotherhood, they gave ground on a range of issues, abandoning the two thousand-dollar salary ceiling introduced in 1885, for instance. This success helped the Brotherhood grow to more than one hundred members with a separate chapter in each NL city by 1887.⁶⁹

THE BROTHERHOOD WAR

The Inception of the Players' League. The owners, however, refused to totally acquiesce to the players. In 1889, they enacted the "Classification Rule," which gave the owners the power to

determine players' salaries according to their play on the field and their behavior off the field; that is, they penalized the players for public drunkenness.⁷⁰

The animosity between the players and owners festered and eventually came to a head when, after being sold by the Detroit owner to the Pittsburgh team, players Deacon White and Jack Rowe refused to show in their new city. A defiant White said, "No one can sell my carcass unless I get at least half." The owners blacklisted the pair; every player who competed against or with White and Rowe would be faced with expulsion from the league. This treatment infuriated the players' Brotherhood companions, many of whom suggested a strike to protest. Ward counseled White and Rowe to go to Pittsburgh, for he had other ideas besides a strike.⁷¹

Ward unveiled his response at a Brotherhood meeting on 14 July 1889. Ward suggested the players leave the NL and start their own cooperative league, with every player having a share of the profits and a voice in how the league operated. The players agreed that a representative from each Brotherhood chapter would "look up the feasibility of securing capital in his own city, and report at an early date." The players quickly found backers "willing to advance money to start a new league and upon terms most liberal to the players."⁷²

With the support of these backers the players formed an organization, called the Players' League (PL), with seven clubs in cities with National League teams (Boston, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago), plus Buffalo. This league was a throwback to baseball's early days, when player-managers ran the clubs in a democratic fashion. In this new league, players would share in the administration of the game for the first time since the NL's formation. A sixteen-person senate comprised of two people from each club—one chosen by players and one by backers—would govern the PL. An eight-man board (four players and four non-player "contributors") would run each club and select officers. Players would also reap financial rewards from this new organization. If the club generated profits the first \$10,000 would go to the backers, the next

\$10,000 to the players, and any additional profits would be distributed equally between the two. And in a move that particularly angered NL owners, the Players' League abolished the reserve clause and gave players three-year contracts. As a result of these measures, many of the NL's star players left the league to participate in the new venture.⁷³ Of 124 men who appeared in ten or more games for the PL, eighty-one were former NL players.⁷⁴

Battle in the Press. The Brotherhood took the war public when it released a "card to the public" to garner fan support for their new venture. In this address to the fans, they argued that they could no longer play for men who "have come into the business for no other motive than to exploit it for every dollar in sight."⁷⁵

Henry Chadwick, who had argued against the league when formed but now received a stipend from the NL for editing *Spalding's Guide*, fired the first salvo for the owners. The writer noted that the existing NL product was what the public wanted. "The public likes good base ball. Close and exciting games, full of exciting plays, heavy batting, sharp fielding and good base running," wrote Chadwick. Then, he argued against the possibility of the Players' League providing this product. "None of these features can be had without team work, and team work cannot be had without trained players who have banded together for more than one season. The reserve rule made good team work possible. Without it there never would have been so many good clubs, and without it base ball would never have risen to its present standard and popularity."⁷⁶

The players responded to these charges in their league guide, reiterating the National League's disregard for the interests of its players, and the inequity of the reserve rule and the "odious classification law." Ward also took a stab at the NL owners' desire to be known as civic-minded sportsmen when he described the PL backers as joining the cause "out of love for the sport and a desire to see it placed on a plane above that upon which it was being operated."⁷⁷

On November 30, the owners answered the players' charges with their own "address to the public." The address stated that the NL "has no apology to make for its existence or for its

untarnished record of fourteen years" because it "rescued the National Game from destruction threatened by the dishonesty and dissipation of the players." The owners argued that they gained little in serving as the ethical wardens of baseball, while, thanks to the reserve rule, the "salaries of players have more than trebled" since the National League's inception. The owners asked the public to reject the "overpaid players" who wanted to "again control [baseball] for their own aggrandizement, but to [the game's] ultimate dishonor and disintegration."⁷⁸

The New York Clipper published the players' responses alongside the NL statement. One player said, "If the poor League magnates are making such a puny profit, why are they making such desperate efforts to continue at the game?" The Brotherhood leadership argued, "If anything further were necessary to show the desperate state of mind into which the old League magnates have fallen, this last appeal to the public has furnished it."⁷⁹

The owners resented the *Clipper* for presenting both sides, but they were even more upset about the "prejudiced abuse of the National League" seen in other papers. The owners particularly disliked *The Sporting News* and *Sporting Life* because the two openly endorsed the Players' League. *The Sporting News* publishers remembered that Spalding had denied St. Louis a franchise in the NL earlier in the 1880s because he felt the city's immigrant population drank too much and did not behave properly. When the Players' League arrived, the publishers reveled in the prospect of new competition conquering Spalding, noting, "Of all the boobies in the base ball world he [Spalding] is the biggest."⁸⁰ *The Sporting Life* editor was more cautious. He sympathized with the players' desire to be treated as more than "mere machines" but refused to denigrate Spalding and the NL as *The Sporting News* did. Yet both journals opened their pages to PL spokesmen and answered NL owner charges against the new venture.⁸¹ When the NL owners claimed many of the players had second thoughts about the new league, *The Sporting News* editor interviewed more than fifty players "with a view to finding the truth." He concluded that support for the Players' League was "firm as a

rock." One player said, "I am with the gang, my boy. I have signed a Brotherhood contract." Another added, "My motto is no surrender."⁸²

Spalding and the NL owners refused to wait for words in the press to decide the outcome and worked to proactively break the union's league. After attempts to sign (or resign) the new league's star players had failed to stop the rebel circuit, the NL owners took the union to court. Victories for the players in New York State courts in January and March 1890 paved the way for the new player-run league to proceed.⁸³

Things looked good for the PL, but Spalding was a fearsome adversary. He had assumed unofficial leadership of the owners when William Hulbert died in 1882, and, as a reward for his support, Spalding's sporting goods company monopolized the National League's supply of baseballs and other equipment. With this domination, Spalding had built the nation's largest sporting-goods empire with offices in twenty-five American cities and many countries of the world, providing Spalding the financial wherewithal to withstand losses on his baseball team.⁸⁴

Although Spalding could withstand short-term fiscal losses, he and the other owners needed to win the Brotherhood War not only for long-term financial reasons, but also due to ideological reasons. The Players' League was not a commercial competitor with which the NL could eventually form an alliance. The National League had negotiated a settlement with its largest competitor since its inception, the American Association of Base Ball Clubs (AA), in 1883 to prevent NL players from jumping to the rival league, but also because the NL owners could understand and support the owner-centric organizational structure of the AA. On the other hand, the Players' League, run by players and not entrepreneurs, challenged the legitimacy of the owners' claim that the game needed them to manage it.⁸⁵

Thus, the owners formed a "war committee," headed by Spalding, who vowed that the battle with the Brotherhood would be a "fight to the death."⁸⁶ In preparing for this fight, the NL owners bonded each franchise for \$25,000, raised the visitor's share of gate receipts from

twenty-five to forty percent, and compiled a \$250,000 war chest to bribe PL stars to return.⁸⁷

At the same time, Spalding knew the battle with the players would be fought in the newspapers. "In place of powder and shell," he explained, "printers' ink and bluff formed the ammunition used by both sides." Spalding started a new weekly, *The New York Sporting Times* and installed sportswriter O.P. Caylor as its head. Caylor noted that the Brotherhood players were "living it up" with the security of long-term contracts provided by the new league.⁸⁸ Henry Chadwick went even further, decrying the Brotherhood as a "secret terrorist organization" that had forced many unwilling players into joining the new league. He declared the "Manifesto" a "revolutionary pronunciamento," and accused the Brotherhood men guilty of secrecy and ingratitude. In the same article, Chadwick gave evidence purporting to show that under the reserve clause, nearly every player had seen his salary increase every year, including those who were sold.⁸⁹ Journalist Harry C. Palmer also sided with the NL. Why should the players complain, asked Palmer, when they are engaged in a "business that is really a pastime and unquestionably a pleasure?"⁹⁰

ATTENDANCE

Despite all the rhetoric, fan attendance was the only precise measure to determine who was winning the war. In their determination to "fight to the death," according to Spalding, the owners scheduled their games opposite the Brotherhood games.⁹¹ This proved costly, as fans preferred the new league with its star players more than the more established National League. In covering the Players' League's first game, the *New York World* reported that twenty thousand fans watched the game, with another ten thousand turned away at the gate. In contrast, the "National League club drew 3,500, and possibly 1,500 of these went only after seeing it was impossible to get admittance to the Brotherhood Park."⁹²

The owners first tried to combat their losses at the gate by stressing how much the war was hurting the game. Spalding told one newspaper that the preoccupation of the fans with the bat-

tle between leagues would hurt allegiance to the game itself. He noted that before the advent of the Players' League, "men took a personal pride in the team of their city if that team played winning games," but that in 1890, when two clubs were vying for attention, the fan "does not know how or where [his team] stands, or whether he ought to be glad and rejoice or feel blue, and the consequence is that he becomes disgusted with the whole proceeding." Spalding observed that the fan more interested in the outcome of the struggle than in the game itself could discern the attendance figures in the paper, without ever going to the games. He closed his comments with a forecast that "interest in base ball will soon die out. I regret to say it, but I am convinced that it is the case."⁹³ Players' League officials dismissed Spalding's comments as an attempt to make the PL look bad, with one official stating, "The Players' League is more than satisfied with the outlook."⁹⁴

Before the season was half over, the national press was begging for an end to the struggle. "To carry on the war is only proving financially disastrous," declared *The Sporting News* editor. "With conflicting dates all over the country the crowds to one or the other must be diminished as the season progresses. Have not the rival forces had enough of the losing fight to change their dates and avoid any further trouble?"⁹⁵

Yet, the battle for fans in the press continued. After PL spokespeople, and perhaps the fans, ignored Spalding's warnings about the state of the game, supposedly impartial sportswriter Henry Chadwick entered the fray. Chadwick described a day in New York City in which the six Players' League games he saw "did not attract as many people as a single [National League] game did last June in the League arena." As for the attendance figures that demonstrated the Players' League superiority in attracting fans, Chadwick noted the numbers came "from the *New York World*, the Brotherhood organ of the city." He reasoned that he could determine more accurate attendance figures from personal observation and added, "Another thing showing the great falling off in most of these league games is that of the absence of the record figures in saloons and on the newspaper bulletins."

Even if the Players' League drew more fans, Chadwick noted that the type of PL fan reflected poorly on the new league. "On my visit to the Polo Grounds to see the New York-Brooklyn games, I was forcibly struck by . . . the difference between the character of the crowd which was present in the grand stand of the Polo Grounds and that of the people who last year thronged to the old games."⁹⁶

Considering the low attendance figures (despite other reports of the new league's success in this area) and the quality of the fan base, Chadwick reasoned, "The experience of the first three months of the professional campaign of 1890 has plainly developed the fallacy of the co-operative system of players and capitalists jointly running a professional organization successfully." Chadwick reinforced one of the NL owners' key messages when he wrote, "A baseball professional club can only be successfully managed when run on business principles, and the Brotherhood plan is in direct opposition to anything of the kind."⁹⁷ It is difficult to assess fan reaction to Chadwick's commentary, but the buying public seemed to prefer the Players' League since most of the best players participated in that league.

In an effort to combat flagging gate receipts, the National League owners lied about attendance. Spalding wrote about one incident that illustrated this tactic:

I recall being present one day at Chicago when the attendance was particularly light. At the close of the contest I was talking to [club] Secretary Brown, when a reporter came up, asking: "What's the attendance?" Without a moment's hesitation the official replied "Twenty-four eighteen." As the scribe passed out of hearing, I inquired, "Brown, how do you reconcile your conscience to such a statement?" "Why," he answered, "Don't you see? There were twenty-four on one side and eighteen on the other. If he reports twenty-four hundred and eighteen, that's a matter for his conscience, not mine."⁹⁸

Even with the losses at the gate, Spalding continued to predict "but one outcome of this fight,

and that is victory for the League."⁹⁹ The Players' League also postured in the press to put on a good front for the public. In short, the public was unable to tell just which league held the upper hand based on leadership comments. Depending on the newspaper one read, it was possible to perceive that the "public [continued] to favor the National League."¹⁰⁰

Behind the scenes, however, the NL owners were more frantic in their attempts to increase attendance than Spalding would have the public believe. For instance, according to *The Sporting Life*, Spalding's NL Chicago team left tickets to games—"as free as air"—in barbershops and saloons.¹⁰¹ When the Players' League still outdrew the NL, Spalding tried a different approach. He stationed "inspectors" at Brotherhood games to incorrectly count the crowds, then paid a syndicated Chicago reporter to promote the lower-than-actual, "faked attendance at Brotherhood games." Spalding noted his ruse hurt the "integrity" of the Brotherhood's reports, placing the players on the "defensive."¹⁰²

The sporting press took the NL-supplied Brotherhood attendance figures as accurate until August when a *Sporting Life* reporter discovered that the "inspectors" worked for Spalding. The writer confronted Spalding, who admitted, "We have done some lying ourselves, but nowhere near as strong as the other fellows." The *Sporting Life* writer then exposed that one National League team calculated attendance by first learning how many people attended the neighboring Brotherhood game, then inventing a larger figure.¹⁰³ After these discoveries the sporting press refused to repeat the NL numbers, but the damage had been done. As Spalding explained later, "attention was diverted from the pitifully small number of [NL] patrons."¹⁰⁴

Though attendance figures from 1890 are unreliable, the Players' League seemed to outdraw the National League throughout the season. One estimate found the final attendance to be 913,000 (PL) to 853,000 (NL)—thus making Spalding's strategy of discrediting this discrepancy even more important to the NL's fight.¹⁰⁵

Ways to influence press, players. Fabricating attendance numbers was only one example of the NL owners' approach to the media. The *Sporting*

News discovered that the Cincinnati NL owner bribed local newspaper reporters. "These are the same fellows who laughed last fall at the suggestion of a Brotherhood," a *News* writer said. "Well, you cannot blame them. They are paid to laugh the way they are laughing now just as they were paid to laugh anti-Brotherhood last fall."¹⁰⁶

The baseball owners also used the importance of advertising revenue to the newspaper industry to attempt to pressure editorial content. For instance, one magnate tried to convince businesses to stop advertising in *The Sporting News*, due to that publication's pro-labor stance. The editor replied that he was "supreme in his position." The owner's campaign, rather than discouraging advertisers, "created sympathy" for the *Sporting News*, and in the following month the paper's advertising revenue increased.¹⁰⁷

The NL owners tried the same bullying and bribing tactics on the players. The owners devised a scheme to discredit the players in which they would write a letter to the press under star player William "Buck" Ewing's signature stating that he realized the Players' League would fail. The scheme fell through when Ewing backed out because other PL players refused to join him. In another example, Spalding offered PL player Mike Kelly ten thousand dollars to rejoin the NL, but Kelly refused.¹⁰⁸

RESOLUTION

The longer the 1890 season went on, the worse the situation seemed for the NL. With the buying public favoring the Players' League, NL revenues fell. For instance, in 1889 the New York Giants had netted \$45,000 in profits, but the 1890 war caused such financial distress for the team that the other NL owners paid the Giants' owner \$80,000 to keep him from selling his team to PL backers.¹⁰⁹

The Brotherhood War also hurt the financial status of the PL teams. Construction contractors placed a lien for \$5,000 on labor leader John Ward's ball field, Eastern Park, to protect an unpaid balance due them since March.¹¹⁰ Within a week of the first lien, four other contractors also obtained liens totaling over \$10,000. On August 29, during the season and with Ward's team in first place, the firm of James Riley and Sons be-

gan foreclosure proceedings on Eastern Park.¹¹¹

Notwithstanding these setbacks, the Players' League made major two moves in the last days of the 1890 season that seemed to ensure their longevity. Soon after news leaked out of Philadelphia that the Athletics of the AA were bankrupt, and that players had not been paid for six weeks, prominent shareholders in the Philadelphia PL club bought the struggling NL franchise, with an eye toward consolidating both organizations in 1891.¹¹² Even more significant, the National League Cincinnati owners sold their franchise to a group of Players' League investors for \$48,000.¹¹³ The purchase served to strengthen the Players' League, as Cincinnati was a noted baseball town that traditionally drew large crowds. Furthermore, by buying a National League club in the midst of the season, the PL gained stature.

At this point, October 1890, the players held a dominant position. In less than one year from its first public declaration the Players' League had built eight stadiums, signed the leading players of the day, won court decisions invalidating NL contracts with players, and outdrew the older, more established National League. Yet, even the publications that supported the players called for a truce in the war. "The trend of public opinion plainly tells the baseball magnates that some means must be devised in the coming Winter to bring the present strife to an end," *The Sporting News* editor noted. "The war has done baseball no good, and it would be ridiculous to continue it."¹¹⁴ The publications supporting the NL owners concurred. A writer for *The Brooklyn Eagle* observed that in that borough, "the game has certainly lost much of its former popularity. The people seem to have had a surfeit and to be disposed to take a rest."¹¹⁵ Fans did seem to be turned off by the war, as combined PL, NL and American Association attendance in 1890 was less than the combined NL and AA 1889 attendance.¹¹⁶

Despite calls for a truce for the good of the game, publications such as *The Sporting News* assumed that the eventual compromise would include the Players' League, noting, "With all due respect, the Players' League is a pretty healthy Yearling." Still, *The Sporting News* editor

maintained that the new league must either compromise with the NL or go broke.¹¹⁷ The Players' League backers agreed. Worried over mounting losses, the financial backers of the PL team in New York met with Albert Spalding in October 1890 to discuss a compromise. Financially, both leagues had lost money, with estimated losses in the National League ranging anywhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000,¹¹⁸ while the PL had a total deficit of \$340,000 in 1890, with \$215,000 spent on plants and equipment, leaving operational losses of \$125,000.¹¹⁹

When Spalding asked how the Players' League stood financially, the PL representatives disclosed their losses for the season. Sensing an opportunity, Spalding kept quiet about the NL's fiscal woes.¹²⁰ The PL backers, new to the business of baseball, believed only they had lost money. They had expected profits of \$20,000; when they missed this figure they immediately wanted to salvage their investment and began negotiations with Spalding and the NL owners.¹²¹

"We had been playing two games all through—Base Ball and bluff," according to Spalding. "I informed the bearers of the truce that "unconditional surrender" was the only possible solution. "To my surprise, the terms were greedily accepted." Considering the months of negotiations between the NL owners and the Players' League backers that followed this initial meeting, it is doubtful that the players financiers "greedily accepted" NL terms as Spalding suggested; however, the die had been cast in favor of Spalding and the NL.¹²²

After months of negotiations, the war ended in favor of the NL owners. Many PL teams merged with their NL counterparts. The Players' League officially dissolved and all its players returned to the NL clubs for which they originally played. The NL owners instituted major salary reductions, as much as 50 percent in some cases and eliminated salary advances.¹²³

With this loss, the publications formerly in support of the Players' League suddenly began to champion the NL owners. *The Sporting Life* editor wrote that "the gentlemen who endeavor to run the Players' League and who possibly flattered themselves that in one short year they had mastered not only the art of base ball man-

agement but all the labrinthy and intricacies of base ball politics and diplomacy, may to-day have a less exalted opinion of their own abilities. It is also more than possible that they entertain a greater respect than ever before for the old National League."¹²⁴ The sporting press had been tamed.

LESSONS LEARNED

As the NL owners already knew and the players discovered during the 1890 Brotherhood War, "baseball is a business, not simply a sport."¹²⁵ The war solidified how this business/sport would be promoted. The war, according to Spalding, accomplished two things: It "established the absolute integrity of professional Base Ball, for in such a fierce conflict, if there had been any previous connivance for the selling of games, it would certainly have come to the surface during those strenuous times." This buttressed the owners' first precept that baseball was an American, that is, clean and admirable sport. It also "settled forever the theory that professional ball players can at the same time direct both the business and the playing ends of the game." This reinforced the owners' second precept that they were essential to the game's administration.¹²⁶

To promote this image, the NL owners learned to present consistent messages—such as the ownership system is necessary to the game's maintenance—to the public through the press. And, if some publications would not support these messages, then the owners learned to bribe, threaten, or lie to the reporters, or simply start their own house organs to ensure the desired message would reach the baseball-consuming public.

Several reasons may explain why the NL owners did not hire press agents or develop publicity departments to ensure favorable press scrutiny. The size of the administrative structure was one factor. In 1890, baseball teams typically had a small administrative staff, with the owners and perhaps a business secretary available to speak to the press. In short, Spalding, for instance, could and would often speak directly to a reporter. In addition, the entertainment nature of the industry played a role in how the owners related to the press. Sportswriters were going to

cover baseball even without press agents trying to entice them to do so. Thus, owners in this era did not see the need to add someone to an already small staff to guarantee something they were already receiving.

But, generating press coverage was only one part of the press agent's job. Another facet involved making sure the coverage was positive. The owners did not need help in this area either, until the 1890 Brotherhood War. During the Gilded Age, press offices had appeared in a few other organizations, such as railroads and utilities, but the NL owners opted to handle their own press relations. The owners followed Spalding's lead throughout the Brotherhood War. Spalding's desire for complete control over the game, including its players and its image, shaped his attitude toward media relations. He refused to relinquish control over that part of the game's business operations, maintaining authority over how the game was presented to both the press and the public. As one economist noted, in the nineteenth century, the "corporation was the instrument of the owners and a projection of their personalities."¹²⁷ Thus, baseball was presented as Spalding wanted it to be, as a game that exemplified American ideals and was best managed by owners such as him.

According to one historian, the motives for introducing the public relations function into a corporation are just as important as the outcomes.¹²⁸ Although companies and practitioners often describe the motive for using public relations to disseminate messages as the industry's right in the Miltonian notion of the marketplace of ideas, a more authentic intention may be market control of ideas. Spalding seemed to desire control over how the game of baseball was perceived, which may partially explain why he did not institute a publicity department for Major League Baseball.

Spalding understood the importance of the media, saying, "good, liberal roasts in newspapers of wide circulation are much more effective than fulsome praise."¹²⁹ Spalding and the other owners seemed to understand the power of public opinion and the importance of the newspaper to communicate with the public. Yet, this does not mean that Spalding would

take "roasts in newspapers" without retribution or without a strategy for disseminating his own messages. Spalding summarized the owners' attitude toward the media when he noted that if anyone on "either side should now appear laying claim to the lonesome honor of telling the truth in those days, I could convict him of having been guilty of disobeying 'general orders.'"¹³⁰ Although Spalding respected the mass media in terms of its ability to spread messages, he wanted to maintain control over the messages it broadcast.

While the owners learned during the NL's creation that baseball writers had to write favorably about their operation as long as they fielded the best product, the Brotherhood War cemented this lesson. Journalists for the *Sporting Life* and *The Sporting News* wrote negative articles about the NL during the Brotherhood War, but they began to cover the league favorably when opposition died. One historian noted that during the Gilded Age, Standard Oil officials began to show more appreciation of the power of the press and attempted to utilize it.¹³¹ Similarly, many baseball owners appreciated the power of the press, but, as opposed to other industries, they discovered that they could treat the press as they willed as long as they controlled the business of the nation's favorite sport.

CONCLUSION

Not every organization responded to press attacks by hiring press agents or starting press offices. During the Gilded Age, Standard Oil Company management purchased news coverage to defend the company from strong newspaper attacks. As one historian noted, "When the policies of prominent newspapers conflicted or threatened to conflict with those of Standard Oil, either top managers or their friends tried to learn the facts and to persuade editors and owners to adopt a more reasonable course."¹³² In the same period, both Mutual and Equitable life insurance companies paid a correspondent for several New York, Boston, and Washington newspapers more than two thousand dollars a year to suppress unfavorable articles.¹³³ On a political note, the Tweed political Ring had 89 newspapers on the payroll.¹³⁴

As these incidents show, using press agents to ensure favorable newspaper coverage was not the only option for monopolies under press attack. Other alternatives included policy changes. Theodore Newton Vail, president of AT&T, demonstrated how changes such as raising business phone rates while lowering general public phone rates, employing female operators, and telling executives to see through the public's eyes could impact profits. He also understood the value of publicity, instituting an internal communications campaign and requiring the corporate public relations department to keep its collective "ear to the ground." Yet, Vail also used advertising revenue to place stories.¹³⁵ To counter adverse media attention, management used a variety of business tactics and strategies.¹³⁶

Conventional wisdom regarding public relations history seems to suggest that the field developed as a direct result of businesses during the late nineteenth/early twentieth century period—especially monopolies such as railroads and utilities—developing publicity departments or hiring press agents to deal with unfavorable press coverage. Yet, according to one historian, businesses had been attacked before the Progressive Era began, public relations continued after muckraking ended, and non-business organizations such as churches and universities experimented with press offices even though they were not subjected to muckraking exposés.¹³⁷ Only by studying more examples of public relations and its antecedents can the field better explain when and why organizations and industries began to use public relations.

This article was not about public relations in the sense that it did not deal with a public relations or even a publicity department. Yet, assessing how management in one nineteenth-century industry addressed its problems, including negative press coverage, did provide a new in-

sight into the rationale for the development of public relations. This insight was the influence of leadership. Even with the start of bureaucratic approach to business, individual entrepreneurs did not disappear. Historians should consider the influence strong leadership had on the evolution of public relations in other industries to determine if this factor was indigenous to MLB. Studying MLB also demonstrated how the nature of the industry—the sport was both a corporate enterprise and a form of entertainment that became an integral part of American culture—hindered the growth of public relations and impacted how the function developed. Historians should consider how the makeup of the industries and organizations—that is, the type of product or service produced, and public perception of the industry—they study might impact the development and ongoing use of public relations.

Also, studying one industry from its antecedents to the implementation of a press office may enlighten. The National League started its first press office in 1922, MLB hired its first public relations agent in 1931, and the industry developed a public relations office in 1966. What happened in the industry and in its environment to cause major league baseball to undertake these actions? What factors spurred these developments? Why did bribing reporters and starting their own publications cease to be viable options for baseball executives? Answering these questions—studying how an industry moved from handling its own relations to hiring professionals to communicate for them—may provide insights into how the public relations field gained, and could continue to gain, credibility in the business world and in society at large. In sum, studying public relations history may inform its professionals on the present state of the field by providing knowledge of how the present came to be.

ENDNOTES

1. "The League Defines Its Position in the Controversy with the Brotherhood," New York Clipper, November 30, 1889.
2. Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide for 1890, 24.
3. For examples of those works dealing with the inception of public relations during the Progressive era, see Scott M. Cutlip, "The Nation's First Public Relations Firm," *Journalism Quarterly* 43 (Summer 1966): 269-280; Stuart Ewen, *PR!: A Social History of Spin* (New York, 1996); Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley, 1998); J.A.R. Pimlott, *Public Relations and the American Democracy* (New York, 1951); Stephen Ponder, "Progressive Drive to Shape Public Opinion, 1898-1913," *Public Relations Review* 16 (1990): 94-104; Alan Raucher, *Public Relations and Business, 1900-1929* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968); and Richard S. Tedlow, "The National Association of Manufacturers and Public Relations during the New Deal," *Business History Review* 50 (Spring 1976): 25-45.
4. Karen S. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," *Communications Yearbook* 23 (2000), 404.
5. A few studies of pre-20th century public relations do exist, most notably Scott Cutlip, *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century: The Antecedents* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1995) and Marvin Olasky, "A Reappraisal of 19th Century Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 11 (1985): 3-12.
- Many other pre-20th century studies focus on the American Revolution. See, e.g., Carl Berger, *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution* rev. ed. (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1976); Philip G. Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783* (University of North Carolina Press, 1941); and John Chester Miller, *Sam Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936).
- Or, they focus on individuals. See, e.g., F.F. Endres, "Public Relations in the Jackson White House," *Public Relations Review* 2 (1976): 5-12; Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); and A.H. Saxon, *P.T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
6. C.M. Byerly, "Toward a Comprehensive History of Public Relations," Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. August 1993.
7. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," 413.
8. For examples of other companies that used public relations in the nineteenth century see, e.g., John Brooks, "From Dance Cards to the Ivy League Look," *The New Yorker*, May 18, 1957, 74; Ronald A. Fullerton, "Art of Public Relations: U.S. Dept. Stores, 1876-1923," *Public Relations Review* 16 (Fall 1990): 68-79; Pimlott, *Public Relations and the American Democracy*; Alan R. Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 16 (Fall 1990): 19-26; and Richard S. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1979).
9. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," 405.
10. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations."
11. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*, 186.
12. Scott Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations, A History* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1994), x.
13. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image* and Ewen, *PR!: A Social History of Spin*.
14. Alfred Chandler, *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1990).
15. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*.
16. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," 381-420.
17. Autobiographies: See, e.g., Edward Bernays, *Biography of an Idea: Memoirs of Public Relations Counsel Edward L. Bernays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965); John W. Hill, *The Making of a Public Relations Man* (New York: David McKay, 1963); Henry C. Rogers, *Walking the Tightrope: The Private Confessions of a Public Relations Man* (New York: William Morrow, 1980); John E. Sattler, *Fifty Years Ahead of the News: A Lifetime of Practical Public Relations* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Sattler International, 1993).
- Biographies: See, e.g., B.E. Hainsworth, "Retrospective: Ivy Lee and the German dye Trust," *Public Relations Review* 13 (1987): 35-44; S. Henry, "Anonymous in Her Own Name: Public Relations Pioneer Doris E. Fleischman," *Journalism History* 23 (1997): 51-62; Ray E. Hiebert, *Courtier To The Crowd: The Story of Ivy Lee And The Development of Public Relations* (Iowa State University Press, 1966); Larry Tye, *The Father Of Spin: Edward L. Bernays & The Birth Of Public Relations* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1998).
18. *Agency/corporate public relations departments*: See, e.g., Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*; L.L.L. Golden, *Only By Public Consent: American Corporations Search for Favorable Opinion* (New York: Basic Books, 1968); L. Jarvik, "PBS and the Politics of Quality: Mobil Oil's 'Masterpiece Theater,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 12 (1992): 253-74; Irwin Ross, *Image Merchants: The Fabulous World of Public Relations* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1959).
19. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," 415.

20. For the "textbook" version of PR history see, e.g., Scott Cutlip, Allen H. Center & Glenn M. Broom, *Effective Public Relations* 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1994); Todd Hunt and James Grunig, *Managing Public Relations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984); and Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault, & Warren K. Agee, *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1998).
21. William L. Rivers, *The Opinionmakers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 3.
22. Cutlip, *Public Relations History*, 176-79. See also Dixon Wecter, *The Hero in America* (New York: Scribner, 1972), 359; *American Heroes: Myth and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1954); and Henry Nash Smith, *Virginland: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950).
23. Chandler, *Scale and Scope*.
24. According to Max Weber, the organization and its bureaucratic structure would help people deal with the complexities caused by industrialization and urbanization. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Glencoe, 1947), pp. 327-41. See also Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1996). Alfred Chandler suggested that managerial hierarchies were established along functional lines and that each function was administered by a department in 23, Chandler, *Scale and Scope*, 32.
25. Cutlip, *Unseen Power*, 2.
26. Cutlip, *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century: The Antecedents* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1995), 187.
27. J.A.R. Pimlott, *Public Relations and the American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 1951), 235; and Alan R. Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 16 (Fall 1990): 19.
28. Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations."
29. Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations," 19.
30. For examples of companies using public relations in the nineteenth century see, e.g., Pimlott, *Public Relations and the American Democracy*; Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations"; and Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*. For the *Borden Company*, see John Brooks, "From Dance Cards to the Ivy League Look," *The New Yorker*, May 18, 1957, 74. For department store public relations efforts, see Ronald A. Fullerton, "Art of Public Relations: U.S. Dept. Stores, 1876-1923," *Public Relations Review* 16 (Fall 1990): 68-79.
31. For management's response to the external environment as it relates to public relations, see Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*. For the rise of the marketing system, see Chandler, *Scale and Scope*, 8; Raucher, "Public Relations in Business: A Business of Public Relations"; Louis Galambos, *The Public Image of Big Business in America, 1880-1940: A Quantitative Study in Social Change* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975); and Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialization, 1885-1914* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).
32. William David Sloan, James G. Stovall, & James D. Startt, *The Media in America: A History*, 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Publishing Horizons, Inc., 1993), 238.
33. For a more complete analysis of the organizational structure, see Gerald Scully, *The Business of Major League Baseball* (Chicago: University of Chicago), 1989 and Roger G. Noll, ed, *Government and the Sports Business* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution), 1974.
34. Ethan M. Lewis makes a similar point in Lewis, "A Structure to last Forever: The Players' League and the Brotherhood War of 1890." Available online: www.empire.net/~lewisec/Players_League_web1.html. Accessed April 20, 2000.
35. John Richard Betts, "The Technological Revolution And the Rise of Sport, 1850-1900," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 40 (September 1953): 231-56; John Rumbarger, *Profits, Power and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930* (New York, 1989), xix.
36. Robert W. McChesney, "Sport, Mass Media and Monopoly Capital: Toward a Reinterpretation of the 1920s and Beyond" (master's thesis, University of Washington, 1985).
37. Jack Lang, "Baseball Reporting," *Total Baseball: History: Baseball & The Arts: Reporting*. Available online: <http://www.totalbaseball.com>.
38. William H. Nugent, "The Sports Section," *American Mercury* (N.Y.) 16 (February 1929): 333.
39. For a biography on Chadwick see "Henry Chadwick, the 'Father of Baseball,' Also Grand Dad of Diamond Chroniclers," *The Sporting News*, May 21, 1936, 22.
40. Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (University of Illinois Press, 1989), 196.
41. Crepeau, *Baseball: America's Diamond Mind*; Benjamin G. Rader, *Baseball: A History of America's Game* (University of Illinois Press, 1992); Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); and David Q. Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976).
42. Civic leaders paid for better players as the local baseball teams came to represent the city. The San Antonio News, for example, recommended the city support their ball clubs because a "base ball team is the cheapest advertisement any city can have. The constant keeping of a city's name before the people of a nation, as is done by a ball team, has an effect that can scarcely be estimated." See David Pietrusza, *Major Leagues: The Formation, Sometimes Absorption, And Mostly*

Inevitable Demise Of 18 Professional Baseball Organizations, 1871 To Present (Jefferson, N.C., 1991), 100-102.

43. For more on "revolving," see Henry Chadwick, "Revolving Secunda," *New York Clipper*, March 19, 1870.

44. One historian noted, "Önumerous instances of gambling and game throwing, and rowdy, drunken behavior by ballplayers had rapidly diminished baseball's status as a "gentlemen's game" and marked the professional version as a poor investment and as questionable fare for reputable people to enjoy." As a result, marketers such as Hulbert and Spalding wanted better organization. This mirrored the thoughts of middle-class America that the increasingly complex nature of American life required careful organization of every phase of human activity. Peter Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The Promise of American Sport* (New York, 1985), 23, 26.

45. Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York, 1960), 129; Lee Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond: A History Of Baseball's Labor Wars*, rev. ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1991), 28.

46. Ted Vincent, *Mudville's Revenge: The Rise and Fall of American Sport* (New York, 1994).

47. *Spalding's Base Ball Guide and Official League Book for 1885*, 96.

48. Richard Butsch, ed., *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Philadelphia, 1990), 88.

49. Betts, "The Technological Revolution and the Rise of Sport, 1850-1900," 245; *Sporting Life*, April 8, 1885; for example see meeting of the National League, December 4, 1878, in *Spalding's Guide for 1879*, 96, Publicity File, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library (hereafter referred to as NBHFL), Cooperstown, N.Y.

50. Lewis Meachem, "Some Further Account of the Formation of the National League of Base Ball Clubs," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 February 1876.

51. To see Chadwick's view of how the players should conduct themselves while playing baseball, see "Model Base Ball Player," *Ball Players' Chronicle*, October 31, 1867, Henry Chadwick File, NBHFL.

52. Henry Chadwick, "A Startling Coup di Etat," *New York Clipper*, February 12, 1876, Henry Chadwick File, NBHFL.

53. Lewis Meachem, "Further Facts Concerning the New Baseball League," *Chicago Tribune*, February 13, 1876.

54. Spalding to Henry Chadwick, February 27, 1876, reprinted in *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide for 1908*, 19-20, Spalding Papers, NBHFL. Spalding also soothed Chadwick by making him editor of the *Spalding's Guide* in 1881.

55. Henry Chadwick, "Baseball," *New York Clipper*, December 29, 1888.

56. Editorial, *The Fourth Estate*, December 22, 1898 as quoted in Scott Cutlip, *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century: The Antecedents* (Hillsdale, N.J., 1995), 179.

57. For a financial report on the league's first year of operation, see *New York Mercury*, December 9, 1876, Spalding Papers, NBHFL.

Of eight original NL teams, only Chicago and Boston still fielded teams in 1890. Between 1877 and 1890, twenty-three different cities held NL franchises although the league never had more than eight teams in one season. Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball*, 56.

58. "The National League Adopts a Player Reservation System," *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, October 3, 1879.

59. Allen Guttman, *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sports* (Chapel Hill, 1988); and Steven A. Riess, *Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Wheeling, Ill., 1995).

60. Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 22.

61. The 1880s brought Americans peace, relative prosperity, and expanded public space. In addition, leisure prospered as higher wages and shorter hours permitted workers to increase consumption of commercially-produced leisure.

Butsch, *For Fun and Profit*, 14. The 1880s also brought a quest for "real life," which drove the American bourgeoisie to pursue "strenuous life" in sports activities and to seek identity through consumption of goods and services. Bruce A. McConachie, "Pacifying American Theatrical Audiences, 1820-1900" in Butsch, *For Fun and Profit*, 61.

62. Richard A. Schwarzlose, *The Nation's Newsbrokers: The Rush to Institution from 1865 to 1920*, Vol. 2 (Evanston, Ill., 1990), Table I, p. 248.

63. Alan Richter, *A Brief History of Base Ball* (Philadelphia: Sporting Life Publishing, 1909), 10.

64. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: 1690 to 1960* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

65. *Sporting Life*, 28 May 1884; *The Sporting News*, February 7, 1887, Sports Journalism File, NBHFL.

66. Cutlip, *Public Relations History*, 188.

67. The owners had tried to control the Players' professional and social since the NL's formation, but the players were especially angered by the owners' desire to curb player drinking. The players did drink, some heavily. That was how baseball players had always behaved, starting in the 1840s when friends and neighbors joined in food, drink and baseball in their socialization. This attempt at prohibition emulated a Gilded Age tactic used by employers to break down traditional work practices. As one historian explained, "capitalists regarded temperance reform as integral and necessary to establishing a capitalist, industrial social order." See Allen Guttman, *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sports* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). See also Steven A. Riess, *Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1995); Steven A. Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); and Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 224-5.

68. Glenn Moore, "The Great Baseball Tour of 1888-89," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 11 (December 1994): 431-456.
69. Riess, *Sport in Industrial America*, 1850-1920, 171.
70. Under the Classification Plan, each year all players were classified into five groups depending on their "habits, earnestness, and special qualifications" as exemplified during the following season and receive a salary based on this classification. See Reach Guide for 1890, 99. The levels were as follows: Class A=\$2,500; Class B=\$2,250; Class C=\$2,000; Class D=\$1,750; Class E=\$1,500. Most players did not make the maximum within each class. According to the plan, if a player received more than his Classification salary, he was to be blacklisted, and his team was to be fined \$2,000.
71. Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 30-36.
72. "The Players' National League," *Players National League Guide for 1890*, 7. Many of these backers were real estate and traction moguls who saw the player-run league as an entry into what they thought would be a lucrative business of placing ballparks near their property. See David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 96-97.
73. *Sporting Life*, November 13, 1889, Players' League File, NBHFL. Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 35-36; Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 227-30.
74. Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 233; Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 36.
75. "The Brotherhood Takes the Great Players," *Sporting Life*, November 13, 1889. See also Henry Chadwick, "The Players National League," *New York Clipper*, November 16, 1889; "Big Strike Imminent," *The Sporting News*, June 22, 1889; "The Ball Players Meet," *New York Times*, December 17, 1889, Players' League File, NBHFL.
76. Henry Chadwick, "The Base Ball World," November 25, 1889, unidentified newspaper, Henry Chadwick Scrapbooks Reel One.
77. *Player's National League Guide*, p. 4.
78. Henry Chadwick, "The League Defines Its Position in the Controversy with the Brotherhood," *New York Clipper*, November 30, 1889.
79. Henry Chadwick, "Comments by Brotherhood Supporters," *New York Clipper*, November 30, 1889.
80. Will Spink, *The Sporting News*, September 28, 1889, Players' League File, NBHFL.
81. "The League Players Revolt," *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide for 1890* (reprint, St. Louis, 1889), 24.

"The *Sporting News* is the only sporting paper in America not controlled by the League bosses," the paper boasted, "Quite naturally, then, it is the only one to stand by the players in their fight for right and liberty." "Caught on the Fly," *The Sporting News*, October 6, 1889. *Sporting Life*, November 13, 1889, Players' League File, NBHFL.
82. "Firm As A Rock," *The Sporting News*, November 30, 1889. Despite this article, some PL players did eventually leave the upstart league. At least 30 players jumped from the PL to the NL during the season. Players Guide 1890, 99. But the NL also had problems. Of 124 men who appeared in ten or more games for the PL, 81 were former NL, 22 from the NL partner league the American Association, 15 from other circuits. See Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 233; Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 36.
83. Metropolitan Exhibition Co. v. Ward, 9 NYS 779 (NY Sup. Ct. 1890); "Ward Wins Fight," *New York Times*, January 29, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.
84. Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, 355-56. Spalding and brother J. Walter had opened a retail store in Chicago in 1876 with capitalization of about \$2,500. Two years later, the value had risen to \$12,000. By 1882, Spalding had acquired most of his sporting goods competition, including Reach, Wright & Ditson, Peck & Snyder, the St. Lawrence River Skiff, Canoe & Steam Launch Co., and George Barnard & Co. Butsch, *For Fun and Profit*, 80, 84-85.
85. Late nineteenth century business leaders worried that unregulated competition, particularly from competition that did not conform to the standards of the largest firms in the industry, would destroy both the quality of the product and the stability of the marketplace. Responses to such competition ranged from conciliation to destruction of rivals. Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Re-Interpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York, 1963).
86. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 285. "in shaping a policy that established baseball as a stable business enterprise and a national form of entertainment, A.G. was not above crushing potential business competitors and controlling the marketplace in a manner that a John D. Rockefeller or an Andrew Carnegie would have admired. Ö [He] knew from his own experience as a player that holding on to good talent was just as important as finding it." Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball*, xiii, 40.
- Late nineteenth century business leaders worried that unregulated competition, particularly from competition that did not conform to the standards of the largest firms in the industry, would destroy both the quality of the product and the stability of the marketplace. Responses to such competition ranged from conciliation to destruction of rivals. Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Re-Interpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York, 1963).
87. Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 235; Riess, *Sport in Industrial America*, 161.
88. O.P. Caylor, "Baseball's Contribution to the Economy," *Harper's Weekly*, May 31, 1890, Players' League File,

NBHFL. Spalding dissolved the *New York Sporting Times* after its usefulness ended in 1890.

89. Henry Chadwick, "Reserve Rule Benefits," *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 1890 and Spalding's Guide, 1890, 11-26, Players' League File, NBHFL.

90. Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 44-45.

91. "The Schedules Compared," *Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL. See also "Conflicting Dates," *The Sporting News*, March 29, 1890 and Henry Chadwick, "National League Meeting," *New York Clipper*, March 15, 1890.

Spalding said he would "conflict with the Players' in every way possible." in "A Fight To The Finish," *The Sporting News*, March 29, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

92. *New York World*, April 4, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

The attendance for the opening week was 31,885 for the Players' League, 16,367 for the National League, and 5,078 for the NL partner, the American Association. The Sporting News cheered, "The Brotherhood teams have scored the first blood and the first knock down." "Caught on the Fly," *The Sporting News*, April 26, 1890.

93. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 7, 1890, May 7, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

94. Comments of John Addison, Vice-President of the Players' League, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 7, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

95. *The Sporting News*, May 10, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

96. Henry Chadwick, "The Baseball War," Special correspondence of the Spirit of the Times, June 7, 1890, Henry Chadwick Scrapbooks Reel One.

97. Henry Chadwick, June 20, 1890, Henry Chadwick Scrapbooks Reel One.

98. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 179.

99. "A Chat With Spalding," *The Sporting News*, July 26, 1890, 2.

100. "Notes Of The Ball Field," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 24, 1890.

101. "Figures Will Lie: And So Will Magnates to Serve a Purpose," *Sporting Life*, August 9, 1890, 1.

102. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 286, 287.

103. "Figures Will Lie: And So Will Magnates to Serve a Purpose," *Sporting Life*, August 9, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL. "Players' League Important Special Meeting Held in New York," *Sporting Life*, August 30, 1890.

104. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 287.

105. Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 45.

106. *The Sporting News*, May 10, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

107. *The Sporting News*, May 10, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

This mirrored the words of a *Railroad Gazette* editor who would "entertain no proposition to publish anything in its journal for pay, except in the advertising columns." *Railroad Gazette* 15 (1883): 8, quoted in Cutlip, *Public Relations History*, 196.

The Sporting News editor claimed that this was not the only time the publication was subjected to threats, noting that he had received a barrage of postcard hate notices and threats to withdraw ads. Editorials, *The Sporting News*, May 10 & July 19, 1890; January 13, 1894, Players' League File, NBHFL.

108. A.G. Mills to J. Walter Spalding, July 18, 1890, Mills Correspondence, NBHFL. Henry Chadwick, "Stray Sparks From the Diamond," *New York Clipper*, January 10, 1891. Spalding, *America's National Game*.

Although this particular scheme failed, of the NL's estimated payroll of \$311,964, \$70,500 was used for "buy-back" bonuses for jumpers. So, the league had some success in bribing players. *Boston Daily Globe*, August 21, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

109. E.C. Alft, "The Development of Baseball as a Business, 1876-1900," Hearings Before the Subcommittee on the Study of Monopoly Power, House of Representatives, 82nd Congress, First session, Part 6, *Organized Baseball* (1951), 19-21.

According to Spalding, between 1885 and 1889 NL teams had earned an average of \$750,000 a year. Spalding, *Base Ball: America's National Game*, 174.

110. *New York Clipper*, September 13, 1890, September 20, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

111. "Ward's Club In Trouble," *The Sporting News*, September 6, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

112. *The Sporting News*, September 13, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

113. *The Sporting News*, October 4, 1890; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 5, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

114. "Caught on the Fly," *The Sporting News*, October 4, 1890, 2.

115. "Brooklyn Pleasures," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 6, 1890.

116. Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 45.

117. *The Sporting News*, October 18, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

118. *Boston Daily Globe*, August 21, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL; Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, 238.

119. *Sporting Life*, November 29, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.

120. For instance, Spalding's Chicago White Stockings lost \$65,000 during the 1890 season, yet he still had enough cash to buy out the Chicago PL team for \$19,000 with an additional \$6,000 to cover player contracts. *Chicago Herald*, October 28-29; November 1-2, 11-15, 23, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.
121. Spalding, *America's National Game*.
122. "Compromise Talk," *Sporting Life*, October 4, 1890. *The Sporting News*, November 22, 1890 also thought the war would soon be over in favor of the players, Players' League File, NBHFL. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 181.
123. For more detail on these negotiations, see, e.g., "End of the Base Ball War," *New York Times*, December 13, 1890; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 17, 1891; *Cleveland Leader*, January 17, 1891; *New York Tribune*, January 18, 1891, Players' League File, NBHFL. See also Henry Chadwick, "Stray Sparks From the Diamond," and "An Injunction," *New York Clipper*, January 18, 1891. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 181-82; see also Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond*, 50.
124. *Sporting Life*, October 18, 1890, Players' League File, NBHFL.
125. John M. Ward in an interview in *New York Clipper*, December 26, 1896, Ward File, NBHFL.
126. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 177.
127. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 2.
128. Miller, "U.S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," 404.
129. Spalding, *America's National Game*, 527-28.
130. *Ibid.*, 198.
131. Ralph W. and Muriel E. Hidy, *History of the Standard Oil Company* (New Jersey) *Pioneering in Big Business 1882-1911* (New York, 1955), 217.
132. *Ibid.*, 201, 213.
133. Cutlip, *Public Relations History*, 184-196 and Burton J. Hendrick, "The Story of Life Insurance," *McClure's* 27 (1906), 665. The reporter on the companies' payroll was Joe Howard Jr.
134. See James Parton, *Harpers Weekly*, July 1874 as quoted by Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 383.
135. Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin*, 85. See also Cutlip, *Public Relations History*, 197-99.
136. It would be interesting for historians to study when and why management stopped purchasing stories in the media and using advertising revenue to place stories, assuming these practices have stopped.
137. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image*.