

The Guiding Genius of the National League

John T. Brush, a Dominant Personality in Organized Baseball

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The Baseball Magazine is devoted without reservation to the interests of the national game. Our pages are always open for discussion to players or magnates, and it is with pleasure that we present the following article on John T. Brush, from the pen of his personal friend and admirer, Charles W. Murphy, president of the Chicago Nationals. Mr. Murphy has been granted free rein to disclose his opinions, and this character sketch of one of the most prominent men in organized baseball by another man equally prominent, furnishes a theme of striking interest to the sport-loving reader.

An invitation to write a story came to me recently, a story which in my judgment would be something new and really worth while. I wanted very much to comply with the request of the enterprising managers of the Baseball Magazine, and it did not take me very long to decide upon a theme—John T. Brush. I may say that this theme is absolutely of my own choosing, because I feel sure that were I to consult Mr. Brush, he would frown down the attempt to make him the subject of a magazine story.

It has always been my opinion that the good things we may say of a man should not be withheld until he has passed to the great beyond, but rather expressed during his lifetime, so that he may know at least in a measure, what his acquaintances think of him.

If anything I may say in praise of Mr. Brush seems too extreme, it must be overlooked because I am a great admirer of the President of the New York National Baseball Club. I have a special interest in him, since he, more than any other one man except the Hon.

Charles P. Taft, brother of our beloved President, was responsible for my present position in organized baseball. Still, I am, not trying to pay any debt of gratitude in writing this story, since all the articles I might be able to write from now to the millennium would not even in part repay Mr. Brush for what he has done for me.

John T. Brush has accomplished more in the interests of baseball than any one whom I have ever known. At the very time this voluntary story is being written, he is erecting a marvelous monument to the National Game in New York City, which will as well be a lasting memorial to his own memory.

Mr. Brush, with all his marvelous activity, has not been in the best of health for some time, and last winter, he went South on the orders of his physicians to escape the rigors of the northern climate. While he was stopping at San Antonio, Texas, the Temple of the Mystic Shrine was dedicated at Indianapolis, Ind., where Mr. Brush lived for some years. While the ex-



JOHN T. BRUSH.

FOR MANY YEARS MR. BRUSH HAS BEEN A LEADING SPIRIT IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE. THE FLATTERING PERSONAL OPINIONS OF HIS GREAT FRIEND AND ADMIRER, MR. MURPHY, ARE NOT IN ANY WAY EXAGGERATIONS OF THE TRUTH. THE RECENT TICKET SCANDAL OVER THE WORLD SERIES, ALTHOUGH IT CREATED MUCH COMMENT AND LEFT A MYSTERY STILL UNSOLVED, CAST NO WORD OF BLAME ON THE OWNER OF THE GIANTS. NO ONE EVER HAS OR COULD ACCUSE MR. BRUSH OF CONDUCT OTHER THAN FOR THE BEST WELFARE OF ORGANIZED BASEBALL.

ercises were in progress, a telegram of good cheer from Mr. Brush reached the hall at Indianapolis, and nearly one thousand men stood up and cheered for many minutes when they learned that their one-time member was regaining his physical strength. These men had been his neighbors for years. They knew the man.

In the early days of Mr. Brush's career in baseball, Horace Fogel, now president of the Philadelphia National League Club, was manager at Indianapolis. This was nearly a quarter of a century ago. Mr. Brush became interested in organized baseball solely through civic pride. At one of the meetings of the directors of the Indianapolis Club, he made the remark, "Fogel, I am new at this game, but I want to get all the records, rules, and other data pertaining to baseball, and bring myself up to date."

He became a voracious reader of records and historical facts, and today probably no man is more familiar than he with the growth of professional baseball. Certainly no other man has done more to foster constructive legislation and permanently establish the good name of the sport.

Brush is the author of the resolution for the suppression of rowdiness on the ball field, which caused so much talk several years ago, and which accomplished so much towards insuring the good reputation of the game.

As a member of the committee on constitution of the National League, he has also done much to bring about those safeguards which have won for baseball the respect, confidence and esteem of press and public. He has always shown himself alive to any movement which will perpetuate the national pastime, and render it worthy of the support of the best of American citizenship. He realizes more clearly perhaps than any other person now identified with the game, that it must be kept absolutely just and honest to retain the confidence of the people.

For a long time Mr. Brush was chairman of the Executive Committee of the National League, which practically governed the game in lieu of president. One of his first official acts was the appointment of the daughter of a certain writer who had always opposed him, to a position of responsibility, which position she now fills with signal fidelity and ability. He has done many other acts of kindness for others who opposed him in baseball politics and has employed men on the New York Club purely out of sentiment and because of incidents which have occurred in the past.

It may not be generally known, but John T. Brush is full of sentiment. He promptly forgets a wrong, but always remembers a favor. No one who knows him can truthfully charge him with ingratitude.

From Indianapolis Mr. Brush went to Cincinnati as club owner and thence to New York. When he put his guiding hand to the wheel, a new era dawned in baseball. With the substantial aid of his first lieutenant, John J. McGraw, he has built up a most formidable organization. One would be charged with lese majeste if he were to say anything in New York against the Giants.

On April 14th, the wooden stadium at the Polo Grounds was destroyed by fire. While the embers were still hot, Mr. Brush could have disposed of his holdings at a handsome figure, but the would-be purchasers were not baseball men, and the owner of the Giants did not think of the money he could have secured, but rather of the game. He had practically dedicated a quarter of a century of his busy life to baseball, and he felt that the sport needed his counsel and advice.

Of course, his modesty would have prevented him from saying that, but his act in refusing to sell his holdings at a handsome profit is the answer. So, while the embers of the old Polo Grounds were still smouldering, he began the erection of the magnificent new stadium.



CHARLES W. MURPHY.

THE OWNER OF THE CHICAGO CUBS IS ONE OF THE MOST AGGRESSIVE FACTORS IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE. HIS STRONG PERSONALITY HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN LINKED WITH WHOLLY POPULAR MEASURES, AND HE HAS HAD OPPONENTS IN POLICY. BUT IT IS SUCH MEN AS HE WHO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TREMENDOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL GAME.

The first thing to be accomplished was the securing of a lease of this historic property, which would justify a building calculated to eclipse the Coliseum of Rome, and become one of the great show places of New York city.

After five weeks, the negotiations to obtain a lease of the Polo Grounds were completed, at an annual rental

which would appal the average club owner. Then Mr. Brush told John Whealan, Andrew Freedman, Ashley Lloyd, and the other stockholders that New York must have the finest baseball park in the world, regardless of expense.

"Gentlemen," he said, "The Giants and the Polo Grounds must endure to

the end of time, and it is for us to erect not a mere fireproof shed, but a park which the followers of baseball in this city can regard with pride. It must be the typical show place of New York. There must not only be sufficient room to play the game, but seats ought to be provided for all possible spectators. Fifty thousand people see football games in England, and I see no reason why our National Game of baseball in this country should not draw out as many followers.

"We must summon sculptors, and call assistants of every kind, so that our decorations will not only be durable, but in full keeping with the importance and prosperity of the National Game. They must be emblematic of the greatest outdoor sport known to the world. The decorations alone will cost more than the average new steel and concrete plant, but when we have finished this work, we will be able to look upon it with a feeling of pride.

"We must have a plant so elaborate and spectacular that the visitor from Jacksonville, Fla., and from Los Angeles, Cal., will go home, and tell all his neighbors and friends of the wonderful new Polo Grounds in New York city."

Mr. Brush, as usual, had his way, and just before the World's Series, when he insisted upon the members of the National Commission paying a personal visit to the Polo Grounds with President Shibe and himself, he was able to show them something in baseball architecture fully fifty years ahead of the time.

"This beats them all put together," said "Uncle Ben" Shibe.

The members of the National Commission were all equally impressed.

Then came the record-breaking crowd of fans to see the wonderful structure. They sat in boxes encased in Italian marble, and saw the seals of every city in the National League worked in colors, surrounded by Corinthian figures done in the style of the best architects and sculptors of the land.

They not only saw the number of each box done in gold leaf, but they also saw the name of the holder worked out in a similar manner—and those names! Captains of commerce and finance, judges of the supreme court of the United States, senators, members of congress—men whose names are household words throughout the country, all showed clearer than words can express the type of people who support our National Game. All who were present had words of commendation for the genius and energy of the great designer, John T. Brush.

The work of this remarkable man stands a silent witness against those who have criticised some of his public acts, particularly those for which he has been in no way responsible, namely, the recent ticket speculation during the World's Series.

Remedial legislation in baseball has always been the forte of Mr. Brush, since the beginning of his active connection with the game. Changes have been very frequent, and many constructive rules have been required in order to meet these changes.

In the thirty-six years of its existence, many different cities have been represented in the National League Circuit. Chicago and Boston are the only charter members now remaining of the time-honored organization. City after city was dropped from the circuit during the early years of its history because they could not properly support a team.

In those days, when Mr. Brush was interested in the Indianapolis Club, his team contained such stars as Jerry Denny and Jack Glasscock. These players and others of their ability received big salaries, but Indianapolis could not, of course, compete with Chicago, Boston, and other large cities, owing to the method in which the gate receipts were then divided. At that time the visiting clubs received a cash guarantee of but \$125.00 per game.

Mr. Brush and some others lead the fight for an equal division of the gate

receipts at home and abroad, and finally won out. The result was the adoption of Section 48 of the National League Constitution, which provides for an equal division of the gate receipts and which cannot be repealed save by unanimous vote.

This section of the National League Constitution enabled cities like Troy, N. Y., Worcester, Mass., Providence, R. I., Indianapolis, Ind., and others of equal size to support Major League baseball at least for a period and keep the circuit of the whole league intact year after year.

Many other sections of the National League Constitution are due to the fertile brain of the president of the Giants. He was always quick to see any evil in organized baseball, and one of the first at all times to devise ways and means to eradicate such evils.

Most measures for regulating baseball sprang from the constitution of the National League. It is the foundation rock upon which the whole structure of the modern game is built. Most of the steps in the progress of the game have been the results of spirited and extended debate in the councils of this league.

In the American League the meetings do not last long enough for debates to ensue, and thus the labor of one mind only can be dedicated to the betterment of the National Game. According to Mr. Brush's idea, this way of conducting a league is not the best possible and whatever prosperity the American League has enjoyed, has been in spite of, and not on account of, such a policy.

In the National League, the Brush idea of taking plenty of time for a thorough discussion of all important matters has gone on for thirty-six years, and is more popular now than in those early days, when it required

the best thought of every mind interested to insure the future success of the game.

It has been the policy of some baseball officials to give out the statement year after year that all club owners make a lot of money, when at the very time such statements have appeared in print many magnates have been trying to sell out.

Mr. Brush, I need hardly say, is an opponent of such a policy. There is not the money in baseball that many league presidents would have the public believe. This annual assumption of simulated prosperity, according to the Brush idea, is unnecessarily misleading to both press and public.

Naturally, some clubs make profits, but the majority do not. This is especially true of the so-called Minor Leagues, which have just experienced the worst season of the past decade.

Generally speaking, of course, the Major League Clubs are now on a fairly sound financial foundation, and John T. Brush has done more than any one person connected with baseball to bring this condition to pass.

In closing, I say, "All honor to John T. Brush, who has lived long enough to realize his ambition, namely, the erection of the most elaborate structure ever dedicated to outdoor sport in the greatest sport-loving city in the world, with the possible exception of Chicago."

I must use the soft pedal at this juncture, as I am treading on dangerous ground.

In summing up the career of Mr. Brush, I would say without hesitation that he has done more for the ball player, for the patron of the game, the sporting writer, the owner, and every one else connected with baseball directly or indirectly, than any other man now living.