

acquired fortune in jeopardy. By 1981 Modell was in danger of losing everything. At that time, he attempted to cheat the Gries family out of millions of dollars through shady business dealings within the Brown's corporate structure. Bob D. Gries prevented him from doing so by taking legal action. In the end, Modell was left with his debts plus significant legal expenses. Modell remained mired in personal debt until 1995, when the City of Baltimore bailed him out by subsidizing the franchise's move east.

While the story of the most memorable Cleveland Browns games at Cleveland Municipal Stadium and the recollections of the players who created the Brown's legend as told by Keim is interesting and worth reading, it masks the reality of professional football in Cleveland. It documents the emotional attachment of Cleveland football fans to the Cleveland Browns, but it also masks attention from Art Modell's greed and the complicity of the National Football League in the rape of Cleveland's identity. Despite protestations to the contrary, communities—like Cleveland—have a major financial, as well as emotional, investment in the professional sport franchises that bear their community's name. Unfortunately, these investments are generally ignored by sports writers and NFL franchise owners.

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ZIEMBA, JOE. *When Football Was Football. The Chicago Cardinals and the Birth of the NFL*. Chicago: Triumph Books, 1999. Pp. v + 408. Illustrated. Appendices. \$24.95 cb.

*When Football Was Football* is not the quickie pictorial history of a professional team that we see all too frequently that clearcut a lot of valuable Canadian forests. Bather, it is a meticulously and prodigiously researched narrative history that not only tells the story of one of the oldest franchises in pro football history, the Chicago Cardinals, but also provides a stunning portrait of "prairie football" in its early decades. Prairie football is named after the Illinois prairie, as the city's empty lots were commonly called "prairies." On these "prairies" such neighborhood club teams as the Logan Squares, Pullman Thorns, East Chicago Gophers, and Racine Cardinals (named for their location on Racine Avenue) would compete on Sunday afternoons in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The Arizona Cardinals today are recognized as the same franchise as the original Chicago Cardinals from the city's south side that entered the National Football League in 1921. The team traces its history back to 1899, thus making it the oldest franchise in pro football. For argument's sake, this reviewer will accept that notion, but believes that when a franchise changes cities it should forfeit any previous franchise arrangement that gives them the name and colors. The Cardinals' name and colors should have died when the team moved to St. Louis in 1960, as did the Cleveland Browns team when it moved to Baltimore a few years ago.

Ziemba, the son of a former Cardinals football player, in his fastidious research has done much to clear away the mists of legend and rumor that have engulfed the franchise to provide a well-documented and factually accurate portrait of the Cardinals in their early days, as well as to explain the actual origins of the team. Ziemba has established that

Thomas Clancy and the brothers Pat and Chris O'Brien had formed a neighborhood football team in 1899 called the Morgan Athletic Club (MAC). The O'Briens in turn split away from the MAC in 1901 to form the Cardinal Social and Athletic Club football team, then morphed into the Normal Athletic Association football team by 1904. The following season would find the O'Briens and teammates rejoining the Morgan Athletic Club.

Ziembra's trail on the O'Briens, however, ends with the 1905 season, and he finds no mention of the MAC, Cardinals, or O'Briens from 1906 through 1916. O'Brien finally resurfaces in 1916 as an organizer of the Racine Cardinals. The author contends that "with O'Brien as the link between the Morgan Athletic Association and the Racine/Chicago/St. Louis Arizona Cardinals, the team can claim an unequaled heritage dating back to 1899." Note that Ziembra carefully chooses his words. He is not claiming the franchise dates back to 1899, only that "the heritage" dates back to 1899.

The Chicago Cardinals were one of the least successful franchises in the National Football League. The team won exactly two championships, 1925 and 1947, but in most seasons the Cardinals were mired in the bottom half of the standings. Some all-time greats who wore the Cardinal colors were Paddy Driscoll, Ernie Nevers, Charlie Trippi, and Marshall Goldberg. The 1925 championship seems suspect, as it was won through loose scheduling (resulting in a scandal where to beef up its schedule the Cardinals played a game against a team that included students from local Englewood High School) and strange politicking that somehow deprived the Pottstown Maroons (which beat the Cardinals during the season) of the NFL title. Ziembra's account of the wild 1925 season is riveting.

The 1947 championship, on the other hand, was a glorious achievement. Under coach Jimmy Conzelman, the Cardinals beat Philadelphia 28-21 for the NFL championship after compiling a 9-3 league record. The following season was splendid as well, with a record of 11-2 marred by a defeat at the hands of Philadelphia in the NFL title game. After that there was a string of losing seasons until the franchise moved to St. Louis in 1960.

As to why the Chicago Cardinals fared so poorly in the NFL, Ziembra illuminates many factors. Chris O'Brien was continuously beset by financial woes, which forced him to unload his most famous star, Paddy Driscoll, to the cross-town rival Chicago Bears in 1926. During the 1930s and 1940s, the team was never settled in a home, and inexplicably for a number of years competed on the north side of Chicago in the same venue as the Bears, Wrigley Field. In addition, Charles Bidwell, who purchased the team in 1933, was a Bears fan. Ziembra relates one time where after the Bears came from behind to just nip the Cardinals, Bidwell entered the dressing room, shaking his head, and saying "wow, that was close."

Much of Ziembra's history understandably exhibits a certain sameness after 1925, and I only regained enthusiasm for the 1947 season and the machinations that led up to the Cardinals abandoning Chicago after the 1959 season. Ziembra's book serves as an excellent companion to Keith McClellan's *The Sunday Game: At the Dawn of Professional Football* (1998), a history of semi-pro teams in the Midwest (centered largely in Ohio and Indiana) prior to the formation of the National Football League. As with the McClellan work, however, *When Football Was Football* is a narrative account; a profes-

sional historian might want a somewhat more analytic approach from Ziemba regarding the nature of the Chicago neighborhoods that gave rise to the Racine Cardinals and “prairie football” in general.

The scholarly value of Ziemba’s work is unfortunately severely limited by the almost complete absence of scholarly apparatus. There are no endnotes, no bibliographic essay, and no index. From the information provided in his acknowledgements, the author has made use of such repositories as the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the Library of Congress, the Chicago Historical Society, and the Chicago Board of Education Archives, as well as many local public libraries. In the body of the text, the author provides some citations, so we know he examined such local newspapers as the *Michigan City Evening News* and the *Woodstock Sentinel*. Ziemba derived a great deal of information on the Morgan Athletic Club during 1899 to 1905 from the *Chicago South Side Daily Sun*, thus alerting other historians of the value of this resource in tracing early neighborhood sport information. But absent a bibliographic essay, historians who wish to follow-up will be frustrated as to what repository this resource was found. Appendices includes a biographical profile-section on key individuals connected with the Cardinals, a list of Cardinals “greats,” and complete game-result records from 1899 to 1959.

*When Football Was Football* belongs on the bookshelf of any sport historian who has an interest in the origins of professional football or sports played on the neighborhood level in urban America.

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