



# The Hobby in 1947

By George Vrechek

In school we had to write reports on books we had read. “Good-bye, Mr. Chips” and “The Old Man and the Sea” were popular subjects since the books were a only little over 100 pages. Why volunteer to read 700 pages of “Moby Dick”?

You might think that writing about card collecting 60 years ago would also be a pretty easy task in that there were practically no cards issued in 1947, nor for the five prior years other than some regionals. What were collectors doing in 1947 and where do you start looking for the answer?

## ***The Card Collector’s Bulletin in 1947***

I’ve found early hobby research is almost a one-stop investigation – pick up *The Card Collector’s Bulletin*. As I described in previous articles, *The Card Collector’s Bulletin* was the invention of Jefferson Burdick in January 1937. He began with a two-page newsletter in which he listed 15 other collectors. The publication grew modestly to a dependable, bi-monthly issue written primarily by Burdick. By the dawn of 1947 however, changes were noticeable. The Bulletin had ballooned to 12 entire pages! There were 8 ads including a pricey one-pager by Paul Magriel of New York City who invested \$1 to advertise his interest in “clean condition” pugilists especially A&G No. 29 and 43, T9, T219, T223 through T226. Wirt Gammon (Sports Editor for the Chattanooga Times) advertised that he had “been promised 3 Wagners and 3 Planks clean with nice sides in a deal and expect them soon. Advise me cash price you offer.” He later ran a full-page ad looking to trade tobacco insert, E, D and R sports cards.

The “R” (for recent) designation was apt in that 1933 Goudeys were only 14 years old – the equivalent today of 1993 Topps which you would not call “early” or vintage. Collectors of “recent” cards had to be satisfied with the nice-looking 1941 Playballs (or the not-so-nice looking 1943 MP&Co) until 1948-9 when Leaf, Bowman, and MP&Co issued cards.

# THE CARD COLLECTOR'S BULLETIN

Volume IX

April I, 1947

Whole No. 47

## RESEARCH NOTES

Just after reading our few words on early cigarette cards in the last Bulletin, Mr. C.G. Sturtevant ran across a most interesting article along the same lines which he has sent to us. We are fortunate in knowing Mr. Sturtevant as his work as National Historian of the Circus Fans Association brings him constantly in touch with early historical matter of all kinds. The article in question appeared in the NEW YORK MERCURY of Sept. 24, 1897. The MERCURY, which is subheaded as "The leading literary and amusement journal" started in 1839 and had a very large circulation. It was a weekly publication of newspaper format, covering theatres, amusements both local and traveling, and literary and sports reviews of the week.

More than a full column is given under the heading CIGARETTE PHOTOS and the subhead "An objectionable nuisance that Gomstock will suppress". Continuing: "The vigorous warfare waged by the MERCURY about a year ago against the vulgar photographs that filled the windows of cigar stores as advertisements for certain brands of cigars and cigarettes drove the disgraceful exhibition from public view; but the cigar and cigarette manufacturers who depended on these pictures to sell their goods did not give up their methods. They had the photographs which public opinion forced them to withdraw from view copied in small sizes, and one of these was placed in every five-cent box of cigarettes."

The MERCURY reporter goes on to report on the extent to which such pictures harm the youthful mind and then quotes the laws governing the matter. As enforcement of the law is the special province of Mr. Anthony Gomstock, it next interviews that gentleman, who expressed his

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DO YOU NEED WAGNER OR PLANK IN #T206 (form. 52I)?

I have been promised 3 Hans Wagners and 3 Planks "clean with nice sides" in a deal and expect them soon. Advise me cash price you offer. Preference will be given those who offer me the cards below.

I offer \$2.00 a card for these cig. cards:

(any one card in each set):

(specific needs):

T215 Red Cross

G300 Ex. Lg. Old Mill

T4 Ex. Lg. Obak

T332 Philately (baseball)

Gross #680

Beck #403

Goodwin #173

#T81- U.S. Marine, Italy Sailor.

#T210 or #T211-

Atlanta: Walker.

Mobile: Berger, Bittroff,

Chappelle, Rhotan, Wagner.

Montgomery: Smith.

Memphis: Dick, Steele.

Nashville: Kelly

New Orleans: E. DeMontreville.

Sporting News set: Nishoff.

(any I need):

Buchner #284 (baseball)

Also want shaving mug with baseball player or scene on it, and ash tray in shape of football stadium.  
Also Confederate currency.

WIRT GAMMON

812 Mount Vernon Circle,

Chattanooga 5, Tenn.

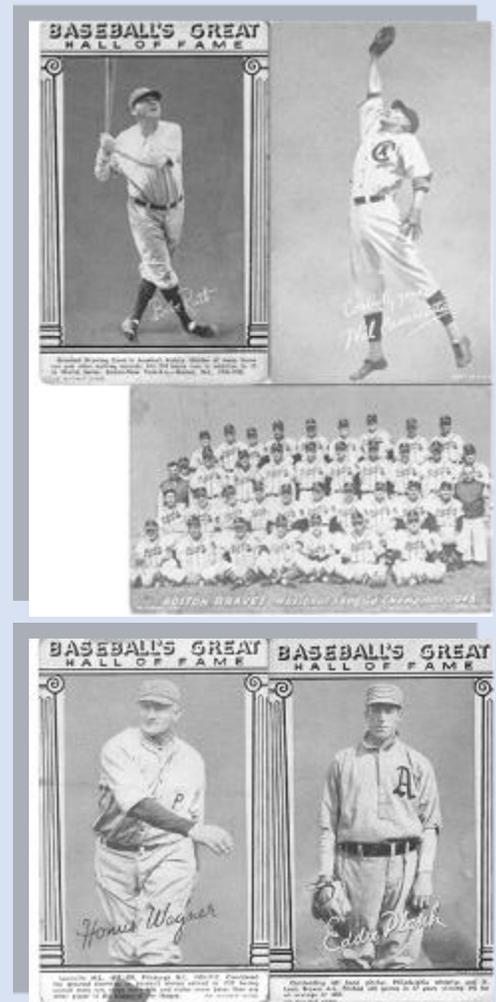
## Exhibits Keep Rolling

At least the Exhibit Supply Company was doing something with card issues throughout the 1940s. Exhibits were 16-card sets from 1939 to 1941 and 32-card sets from 1942 to 1946, all with salutations, and in many cases the same players and poses from year to year. In 1947 they went to a 64-card set adding 35 cards without salutations while retaining 29 with salutations. The salutation poses continued along with the star players such as DiMaggio and Ted Williams. Like a comic book hero, Williams never aged in his exhibit cards. The pose with the salutation was included in printings through 1961, all of this according to exhibit guru and *Penny Arcade* editor Bob Schulhof. Schulhof's wonderful research was based on reading Elwood Scharf's *Trader Speaks* and talking to ESCO owner Chet Gore. ESCO issued Hall of Fame cards in 1948.

## Bulletin Ads

Others who forked over 25 cents or so to advertise in each issue included: Ralph Cummings of Fisherville, Mass.; Dr. Lawrence Kurzrok of New York City; Donald Van Brakle of Saranac Lake, N.Y.; Lionel Carter of Chicago; Anthony Mancor of St. Louis; and Syd Townsin from England looking to swap stamps and English tobacco cards for U.S. issues. Collector John Wagner liked to draw and would illustrate his ads; otherwise there were no photos and few illustrations in the 1947 issues. Hugh Johnson of Bowling Green, Kentucky advertised that he wanted to sell his entire collection of 56 complete sets and 35 partial sets of 19<sup>th</sup> Century insert cards.

A collector who advertised in the Bulletin told me the audience was limited and that the responses were pretty limited as well. Such conditions resulted in card prices not escalating dramatically. For example, Johnson wrote the same collector shortly thereafter, "I suppose you have seen my ads announcing that I am breaking up my entire collection of over 8,000 different cards. Since I could find no buyer with the cash to swing the whole lot, I am selling in sets. If you are interested in Goodwin #162 Champions, I have that set complete in what I think is very nice condition and it was a tough job to get all fifty and a few cards here and there. The price is \$22.50 and I'll send on approval if you say so."



## Bray's Card Auctions

Burdick contributed all the news and articles and Charles Bray got 4 of the 12 pages to run his 17<sup>th</sup> Mail Card Sale. Bray of East Bangor, Pennsylvania, began collaborating with Burdick a few years earlier and became the vehicle for collectors buying and selling their needs and surpluses. Burdick pointed out to readers. "Mail sales and the Bulletin are entirely separate – the former handled by Mr. Bray and the latter by Mr. Burdick – and communications regarding each should be rightly addressed so as to avoid delays." Bray would list the estimated value of the item auctioned. Readers would mail in their bids. Each lot went to "the highest bidder at a slight advance over the second high bid." Bray received 10% of the sales price.

Collector Lionel Carter remembered being able to limit the total amount committed to the entire auction as well. He usually stopped at \$10 for his aggregate bids. He would buy lots in one auction, pull out the cards he needed while upgrading the condition of those he already had, and then send back the cards he didn't need to be auctioned again by Bray the next month. Most lots seemed to sell at under Bray's values. For example, Bray lists 479 different T206s including one badly damaged Plank for \$22.99. The auction price realized 6 weeks later was \$14.75. Oh, I'm getting ill. How about 49 T201 Mecca Folders realizing \$5.25, 146 T205s for \$6.75 and 60 T207s for \$7.75? Typically, cards sold in lots and the prices were \$3 to \$8 for the entire assortment of 30, 50, or several hundred cards. A lot of actresses (tobacco inserts from the late 1880s) changed hands.

...ate all the material that is sent in for the sale...  
for the next sale is a job that starts on completion of the  
present one and continues right up to the printer's deadline.

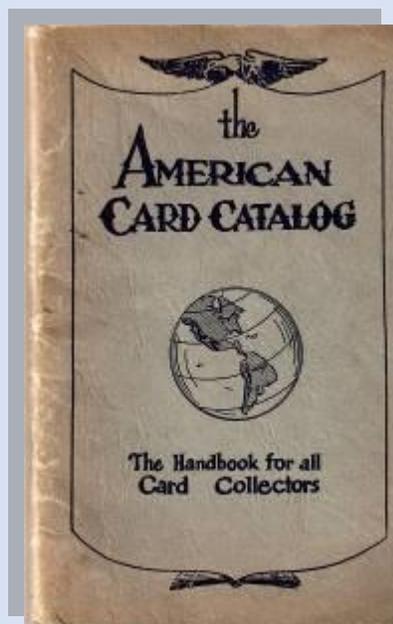
Prices realized in the Eighteenth Sale are as follows:

1	4.75	27	2.00	55	3.00	84	2.50	111	2.00	138	3.25	170	5.25	200	3.00
2	4.75	28	2.50	56	2.50	85	4.75	112	3.75	139	8.75	171	3.25	201	2.00
3	4.50	29	19.25	57	1.75	86	3.75	113	3.00	140	9.00	172	5.25	202	1.25
4	5.25	30	2.25	58	3.25	87	3.00	114	8.25	141	6.75	173	3.00	203	1.50
5	3.25	31	2.25	59	3.75	88	4.50	115	4.25	142	15.00	174	3.25	205	.75
6	7.50	32	6.00	60	4.00	89	4.75	116	3.50	145	5.25	175	5.75	207	5.25
7	4.50	33	2.75	61	2.25	90	1.25	117	1.00	146	4.25	176	5.25	208	5.25
8	5.00	34	2.75	62	2.25	91	1.00	118	1.00	147	2.75	177	4.25	209	2.50
9	3.00	35	10.50	63	2.75	92	3.75	119	3.25	148	9.25	178	2.25	210	2.00
10	8.25	36	24.25	64	18.75	93	2.75	120	2.25	149	5.00	179	2.75	211	1.50
11	7.50	37	6.50	65	3.75	94	0.1	121	0.1	150	0.1	180	0.1	212	1.50
12	8.50	38	7.50	66	18.00	95	0.1	122	0.1	151	0.1	181	0.1	213	1.25
13	12.25	39	10.75	67	1.15	96	0.1	123	0.1	152	0.1	182	0.1	214	1.1
14	12.75	40	3.50	68	2.75	97	0.1	124	0.1	153	0.1	183	0.1	215	2.00
15	12.75	41	2.50	69	1.75	98	0.1	125	0.1	154	0.1	184	0.1	216	6.00
16	8.25	42	2.50	70	4.25	99	0.1	126	0.1	155	0.1	185	0.1	217	1.00
17	3.25	43	4.25	71	5.50	100	0.1	127	0.1	156	0.1	186	0.1	218	1.60
18	12.25	44	4.25	72	4.25	101	0.1	128	0.1	157	0.1	187	0.1	219	2.00
19	35.50	45	6.75	73	2.00	102	0.1	129	0.1	158	0.1	188	0.1	220	2.00
20	18.00	46	8.25	74	1.25	103	0.1	130	0.1	159	0.1	189	0.1	221	2.50
21	12.75	47	4.00	75	12.50	104	0.1	131	0.1	160	0.1	190	0.1	222	2.75
22	43.00	48	3.00	76	24.00	105	0.1	132	0.1	161	0.1	191	0.1	223	1.75
23	22.25	49	15.00	77	2.50	106	0.1	133	0.1	162	0.1	192	0.1	224	3.25
24	7.25	50	3.50	78	3.00	107	0.1	134	0.1	163	0.1	193	0.1	225	1.75
25	1.40	51	3.50	79	7.25	108	0.1	135	0.1	164	0.1	194	0.1	226	2.00
26	7.75	52	12.75	80	.75	109	2.50	136	2.50	165	3.75	195	.50	227	1.25
		53	31.00	81	3.00	110	3.75	137	3.00	166	4.75	196	3.00		

CHARLES R. BRAY, EAST BANGOR, PENNA.

## The 1946 Catalog

The biggest news in these issues involved updates and clarifications to Burdick's 1946 American Card Catalog. This 144-page, bound, typeset publication had four photographs, 13 pages of ads, 10 pages of text, and single-line listings of card sets and prices per card, as well as a few prices for individual cards such as \$10 for Plank and \$25 for Wagner. Burdick covered a wide range of collectibles: inserts (including albums, silks, and pins), advertising cards, postcards and exhibits. Advertisers included Walt Corson, Steve Vanco, Wirt Gammon, Preston



Orem, Hugh Johnson, H.M. Myers, John D. Wagner, Jack Wise, Lionel Carter, Charles Bray and Burdick. Interspersed in Burdick's 10 pages of text were words of wisdom such as, "Do not try to get cards by writing to the firms that issued them. This is invariably a waste of time." "Like all avocations, the pleasure derived from cards is proportionate to the effort expended. It is not an 'easy' hobby with unlimited supplies easily available. Assembling an extensive collection of any type of card will require extensive search and take generous amounts of patience and perseverance."

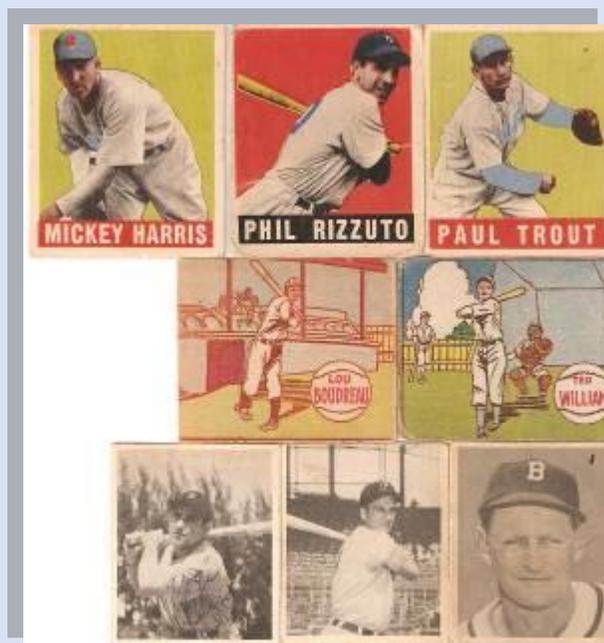
In the Bulletin Burdick admitted to a bit of frustration in putting together the catalog. He printed 1,000 copies (double the 1939 issue) and priced them at 75 cents, a price felt too high by some subscribers. Burdick threw in a year's subscription to the Bulletin (a 30-cent value) if you sent in a dollar. However, late in the process he announced that the deal would be 5 issues of the Bulletin rather than 6, a 25-cent value and hence no discount. The boys really threw their nickels around in those days. Burdick also had to contend with a number of typos and errors. He thanked Bray, Carter, Wagner, White, Kurzrok and Col. Sturtevant for their help. Over 500 of the 1,000 1946 Catalogs were sold in the first year which exceeded the number of 1939 Catalogs ever sold.

86		
R315—	Portraits, name in panel (36) h&w 3¼ x 5¼	.05
R316—	Portraits 3½ x 4½ h&w, autograph name	.05
R317—	Portraits 2¾ x 3¾, h&w or colored and all smaller sizes	.02
R318—	Batter Up (192) National Chicle, in various colors	.02
R319—	Big League 1933 (240) Goudey	.02
R320—	Big League 1934 (96) Goudey	.02
R321—	Big League 1935 Goudey puzzle cards	.02
	4 portraits on faces, 33 diff. faces and 73 diff. backs, 9 puzzles in h&w. Puzzles 1, 8, and 9 in 12 parts lettered A to L. Puzzles 2-7 in 6 parts lettered A to F. Some backs with two diff. faces. Complete about 120.	
R322—	Big League 1936 (25) h&w, game on back (Goudey)	.02
R323—	Big League 1938 (48) Goudey Heads Up (241-288)	.02
R324—	Big League 1941 (33) Goudey plain backs	.02
	Each in red, green, yellow, or blue h&g.	
R325—	Big League Knot Hole League (24) Goudey, no picture	.02
R326—	Big League Baseball Movies (26) Goudey, small	.05
	Numbered 1-13 with two parts each number.	
R327—	Diamond Stars (108) National Chicle	.02
	1933 averages on green backs 1-24, 1934 averages on green backs 1-84 and blue backs 75-84, 1935 averages on blue backs 75-108 plus 12 shin numbers.	
R328—	Famous Athletes (113) United States Car. (32)	.05
R329—	Foto Fun (100) player photo in folder 2¾ x 3¾	.02
R330—	Double Play (75) Gum products, 2 nos. to card	.02
R331—	Football Stars (26) National Chicle	.02
R332—	Major League Secrets (50) Schutter-Johnson	.05
R333—	Play Ball (24) DeLong Gum Co.	.08
R334—	Play Ball—America (162) Gum, Inc., Card No. 126 not known, h&w	.02
R335—	Play Ball—1939 (240) Gum, Inc., dark sepia	.02
R336—	Play Ball—1941 (72) Gum, Inc., Hall of Fame	.02
R337—	Series of 24 (Ballplayers) 401-424	.02
R338—	Sport Kings (48) Goudey	.02
R339—	Sport Kings Varsity Game (24) Goudey, no picture	.02
R340—	Sport Kings (6) Goudey Extra large	.25
R341—	Sport Packs, 2 x 3½ pgs. des.	.01
R342—	Town Movies (13) Baseball Series, Goudey large size	.01
R343—	Touchstone 100 Cards, Mayfair candies (24) 1½ x 2½	.02
R344—	How to Play Baseball (20) 3¼ x 6 paper, Nat. Chicle	.02

The Catalog had to last until another revised catalog was printed which wound up being every seven years. Therefore, Burdick needed to advise his readers of price changes, errors and additions through the bi-monthly Bulletins. The 1946 Catalog itself had a rare version. Due to a collating error during the production of the first 350 copies, some were bound missing pages 57-64 and duplicating 41-48 in their place. Sets were added such as: "338 Baseball Players – California League 25 cents" and "D50 Baseball Players, Niagara Baking 3 cents." Other items mentioned again showed the interest in informing the advanced collector e.g., "Appendix 4 – Isabelle Everson, has been seen with Series 2 back error in the #71a type (Dukes Mixture). Name spelled both Everson and Evesson."

### News for the Advanced Collector

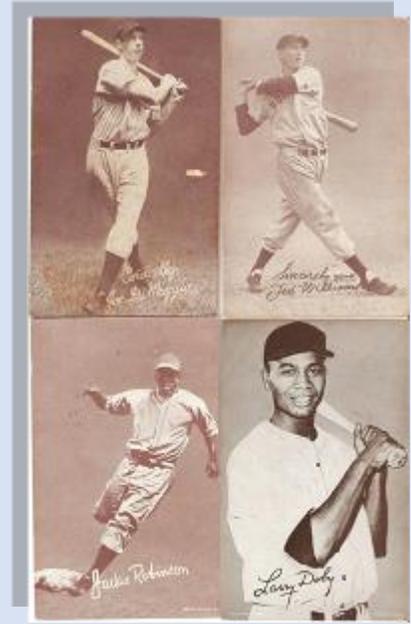
The articles and news in these issues were likewise geared to the advanced collector or dealer (antique, stamp or coin). Burdick wrote about scarcities, variations, printing errors, checklists, classifications, issuers, advertising cards, Currier & Ives cards, hobby publicity and prices. Prices had climbed initially about 20% over the 1946 Catalog prices but now seemed to be receding. Sports were only a fraction of the card-collecting subjects covered. Burdick had several long articles on answering the question: "When were tobacco inserts first issued?" He concluded, after lengthy scholarly analysis of James B. Duke's business practices, "We don't know, and what's more, don't believe that anyone else does." Another topic was "When will cards be issued again?" The shortages of paper supplies and print material due to the war were still a problem. The Bulletin reported the passing of P.H. Nagle "one of our few remaining old time collectors who collected the early cards at the time they were issued" (1886).



The only new sports issue mentioned and advertised was the Sports Exchange's "Set Number One" picturing 18 players for \$1 and issued by the Sports Exchange. John Seifert of Youngstown, Ohio, published the *Sports Exchange Trading Post* beginning in 1945 and had been offering writers \$2.50 in War Stamps for each story accepted. There were a number of other newsletters in the 1940s that were directed to fans. They might have ads from the same people who were in the *Card Collector's Bulletin* in addition to appealing to collectors of programs and autographs. Their main focus though was the sport or particular team. Bob and Helen Jasperson's hobby publication, *Sport Fan*, was still a few years off.

## The World of Sports in 1947

If you wanted to know what was going on in sports in 1947, none of these publications were of much help. The year was certainly memorable with Jackie Robinson coming to the Dodgers (along with Dan Bankhead) and Larry Doby to the Indians. DiMaggio beat out Ted Williams for MVP honors despite better numbers by Ted. The Dodgers and Yankees feuded early in the year with Leo Durocher getting suspended for the entire year and Charlie Dressen for 30 days. The teams met in the World Series for the second of seven classic Series between them. The Yankees prevailed in seven games which included Cookie Lavagetto breaking up Bill Bevens' no-hitter, Al Gionfriddo's catch of Joe DiMaggio's drive and a pinch-homer by rookie Yogi Berra.



The 1947 football season started with 105,840 fans watching the College All-Stars defeat the defending NFL Champion Chicago Bears 16-0. Like the Yankees and Dodgers, the Bears and Cardinals were in the glory years of their own cross-town rivalry. The Eagles and Rams were the other elite teams vying for attention with the upstart All-America Football Conference's Cleveland Browns and San Francisco 49ers. Fans were still more interested in college teams such as Army, Notre Dame and Michigan, but Sid Luckman, Charlie Trippi, Bob Waterfield and Bobby Layne were starting to attract more fans to the pros.

The NHL featured Maurice Richard, Toe Blake, Ted Lindsay, Max Bentley and rookie Gordie Howe. The Maple Leafs and Canadiens were the teams to beat – there being only three others a team could beat anyway. In basketball everyone would have had rookie cards in that the Basketball Association of America (precursor to the NBA) was in its initial season with immortals such as Bones McKinney and Max Zaslofsky and teams like the Pittsburgh Ironmen, Providence Steamrollers and St. Louis Bombers – all knick-names thankfully retired. In golf, Sam Snead won the 1946 British Open, Ben Hogan the 1946 PGA and Jimmy Demaret took the 1947 Masters.

## Collectors Connect

Few collectors met face to face with most contact coming through the mail. Burdick's advice was to look up any fellow collectors if you visited another part of

the country. I can imagine spouses asking, “Who did you invite for dinner??” The Bulletin mentions such occasions:

- Victor White of Seattle stopped to see Burdick in Syracuse for a day and showed him recent issues by Standard Oil.
- H.W. Eucker of Cleveland came to view Burdick’s collection.
- “Wirt Gammon went to St. Louis to cover the 1946 World Series and found himself out of luck – no hotel rooms available. It looked like a park bench, until he recalled that collector Charles Barker is also a St Louisan. He looked him up and slept in a bed thereafter. Incidentally, it was the first time that Wirt had ever seen another fellow’s collection and the visit was most enjoyable to both.”
- Walt Corson and Bill Christie got together in Florida. In 1947 Corson opened an antique shop in Philadelphia, Collectors Haven, and assembled a huge card collection purchased by Frank Nagy in the mid 1960s,
- Burdick took the train to Chicago and viewed cards maintained by O.C. Lighter, publisher of *Hobbies Magazine*.
- Burdick also visited with Don Abel and H. Bruce Spencer, viewed the late B.K. Edward’s collection and visited with the Petersons at their Hobby Bazaar store in Chicago.
- Burdick journeyed by train again to see Charles Bray who commented that “the boys were bidding up the Early candy and gums pretty good. I think it concerns the baseball issues almost exclusively.”
- In Hartford, Burdick dropped in on early dealer Samuel Tanenbaum.
- Burdick visited collector Dr. Kurzrok in New York City, who wrote, “Sorry to be away so long but have been operating and delivery babies day and nite. Need 1933 Big League 56, 73, 238.”

### **Burdick’s Donation to the Met**

1947 ended with Jefferson Burdick announcing in the Bulletin that he had decided to donate his entire collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. He mentioned his “uncertain physical condition and the fact that there will be no immediate survivors to carry out my wishes.” Until his death 15 years later, he organized his 305,000-card collection for the Met where it resides today.

1947 marked a transition period from the organization of the hobby, development of the classification system and Burdick’s daily involvement in the Bulletin to the eventual issue of new cards in the late 1940s, the arrival of other publications and the transfer of the Bulletin to Charles Bray in 1949. There weren’t any new sets to collect of note, but collectors were saving their nickels for the boom to come.

*This article appeared in Sport Collectors Digest in 2007. Thanks to SCD for allowing us to post the article on the OBC website. Contact George Vrechek at: vrechek@ameritech.net*