

CARD COMMENTS  
September - 1960  
Subs. \$2.50 yr.  
VOL. 3 - No. 2



# 'Card Comments' magazine

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Old copies of this card collecting publication offer a view of what collecting was like in the early 1960s

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By George Vrechek

# CARD COMMENTS

Vol. 3, No 4

Nov. 1960

\$2.50 Yr.



LLOYD WANER—Outfield—PITTSBURGH PIRATES

*The cover of the November, 1960, issue of Card Comments.*

We are easily tempted to view earlier days of card collecting as strange times when prices were ridiculously low and collectors uninformed about issues, scarcities and manufacturers' motives. After all we don't have to go back too many years to find Willie Mays' 1953 Topps at 10 cents.

In 1960, in my final moments of boyhood interest in card collecting, I purchased an all-encompassing checklist of players appearing on baseball cards. As a bonus to the "Master Baseball List," I received a one year subscription to *Card Comments* magazine published by Gor-

don B. Taylor of New York. I recently reread some of those 1960 and 1961 issues and found them informative. Collectors of the time were more frequently on target than off. Using *Card Comments* as a barometer of what was going on at the time we can learn from the past.

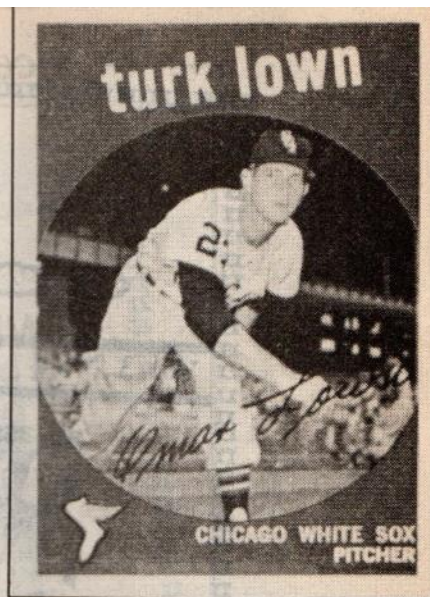
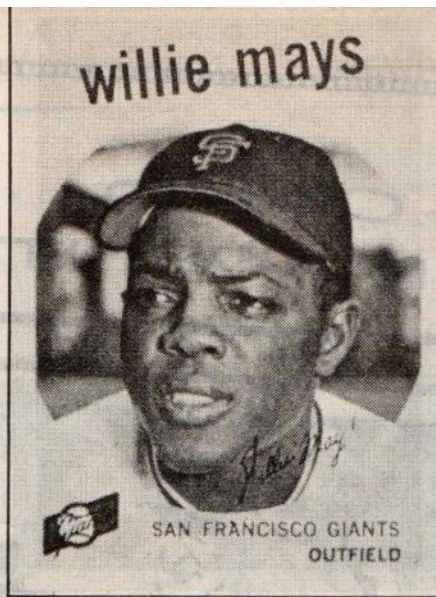
*Card Comments* started with just a few pages per issue in the late '50s. It grew to usually a 24-page monthly with printing strictly right off the typewriter, but with relatively frequent photographs. Features included an editor's page, letters to the editor, articles by

readers, a Who's Who in Cards, checklists, and at the most four pages of advertising.

### Scarcities — Topps

What did collectors of the time know about the relative scarcity of certain cards? Gordon B. Taylor, in addition to publisher, was in the business of selling cards. Reportedly, Taylor was an engineer who tried to develop a full-time mail order business. He distributed a price list that he updated periodically.

(COMMENTS, Page 42)



The price list shows that star cards held no real premium over common player cards. You could get a Willie Mays for the same price that you'd pay for a Turk Lown.

## COMMENTS

(From Page 41)

Ignoring the prices for a moment, we can look at what was considered scarce or in demand by reviewing the price list.

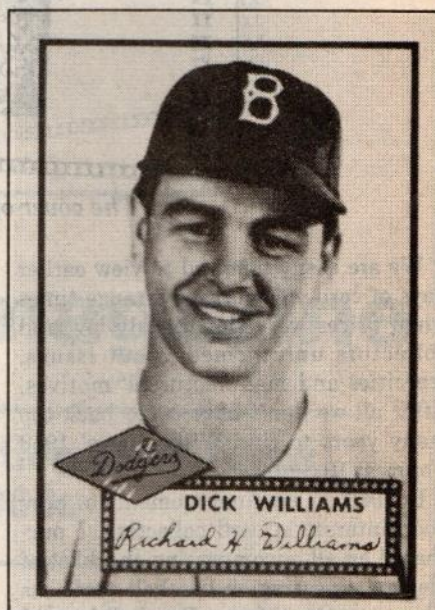
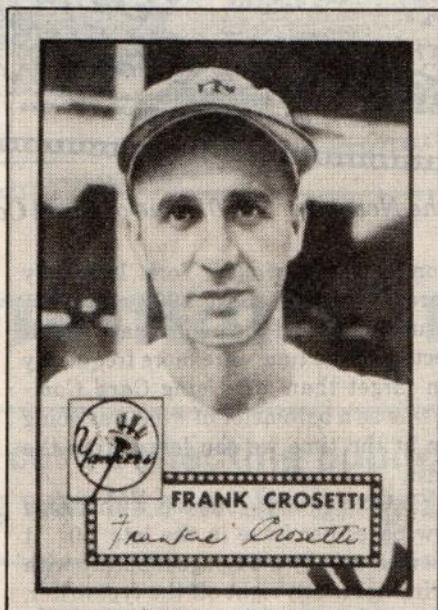
The first thing we notice is that commons and stars were all priced the same — Mantle and Mays would cost you the same as Turk Lown or Ebba St Claire. High numbers, though, are identified in some years. High number 1952 Topps are at a premium (five times the value of low numbers). Semi-highs are not identified, but black back low numbers are

at a premium over red backs. I remember always preferring black backs to red backs at the time. "Error" cards are identified as #48 and #49 — Page and Sain, but also #39 Dizzy Trout.

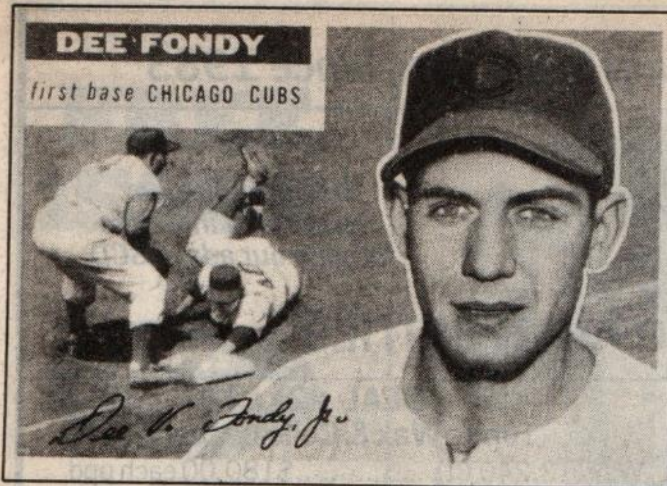
There are frequent finds discussed of wrong backs. This just might be a case of wrong backs that Taylor happened to have or there may be an error rather than a variation on the Trout card, but I couldn't find it.

From 1953 to 1956 there is no mention of high numbers at a premium.

(COMMENTS, Page 44)



The price list does indicate that premiums were placed on high numbered cards in specific sets. For example, high numbered '52s had five times the value of their low numbered counterparts.



Low numbers with white backs from the 1956 Topps set were given a premium over the same cards with

grey backs. The 1956 Dodgers team card is listed "very scarce" in the price list.

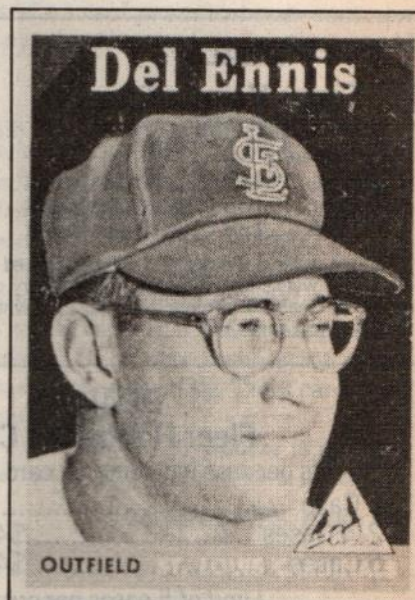
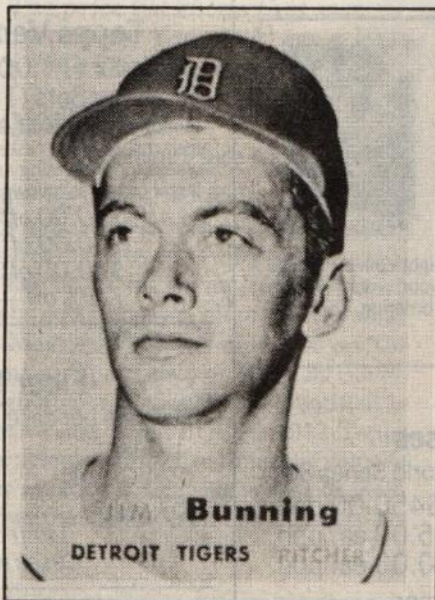
**COMMENTS**

(From Page 42)

1955 Doubleheaders are three times the price of the regular issue, though. Low numbers from 1956 with white backs are more expensive than grey backs. Team cards are at a slight premium, but it is in 1957, rather than 1956, that a distinction is (erroneously) made between dated and undated team cards. The 1956 Brooklyn Dodgers team card #166 is listed as very scarce — probably because they were not easy to wrestle from New York collectors.

The scarce 1957 middle series is properly at a premium (OK — 7 cents rather than 4 cents). There is proper mention of the 1958 yellow letter variations although they missed a few numbers. Numbers 443, 446, 450, and 462 were properly identified as scarce — as

(COMMENTS, Page 46)



Cards from the 1957 "middle series," left, were given a premium value — seven cents instead of the normal four. The yellow letter variations in the '58 set were mentioned, but the price list missed a few of them.

# CARD COLLECTORS

PRICE LIST No. 7 . . . NOV. 1, 1960



PRICE 25 CENTS

GORDON B. TAYLOR

160 WEST 77TH STREET, NEW YORK 24, N. Y.

<p>10.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1952</p> <p>407 cards in set, numbered 1-407, with 311-407 extremely scarce. 2 5/8" x 3 1/4" in full color. #1-80 also appear in black or red backs. Three error cards exist.</p> <p>Set (407 cards)..... \$ 79.00          Single cards (1-310 - Red backs).... .10          Single Cards (1-80 - Black backs).... .20          Single Cards (311-407)..... .50          Error Cards - #1s 39 - 48 - 49 ..... 1.00</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1953</p> <p>274 cards to set, numbered 1 to 280 with #1s 153-261-267-268-271-275 not issued. Full color measuring 2 5/8" x 3 1/4".</p> <p>Set..... \$ 27.40          Single Cards..... .10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1954</p> <p>250 cards in set, numbered 1 to 250, with Ted Williams on both #1 and #250. Full color and measuring 2 5/8" x 3 1/4".</p> <p>Set..... \$ 15.00          Single Cards..... .06</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1955</p> <p>206 cards to set, numbered 1-210, with numbers 179-185-203-209 not issued. Measure 2 5/8" x 3 1/4" in full color.</p> <p>Set..... \$ 10.30          Single Cards..... .09</p>	<p>11.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1955 DOUBLEHEADERS</p> <p>66 cards in set, measuring 2 1/8" x 4 7/8" in color. Cards are made so that two players are shown, one when card is flat, and one when it is folded. When placed side by side in numerical order cards form a continuous picture.</p> <p>Set..... \$ 9.50          Single Cards..... .15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1956</p> <p>340 cards to set, 2 5/8" x 3 1/4" in full color. #1-180 also appear with white backs. #166 is scarce.)</p> <p>Set..... \$ 15.46          Set 11-180-White backs)..... 12.16          Single Cards (Gray backs)..... .04          Single Cards (White backs)..... .06          Team Cards (Gray backs)..... .10          Team Cards (White backs)..... .15          #166 (Either back - very scarce).... 1.00</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1957</p> <p>407 cards, 2 1/2" x 3 1/4", in full color. Team cards appear both with and without date on front.</p> <p>Set (Without dated team cards).... \$ 18.12          Single Cards (#1-264 and 353-407).... .04          Single Cards (#265-352)..... .07          Team Cards (Undated)..... .10          Team Cards (Dated)..... .15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">****</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1958</p> <p>494 cards numbered through 495, with #145 not issued. Full color measuring 2 1/2" x 3 1/4". Certain cards exist with players name in yellow. Four numbers - 443-446-450-462 are very scarce.</p>
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The front cover of Taylor's price list is shown at left, while two pages are shown at right. Notice that a complete 1957 Topps set, which was three-years old at the time, cost \$18.12.

## COMMENTS

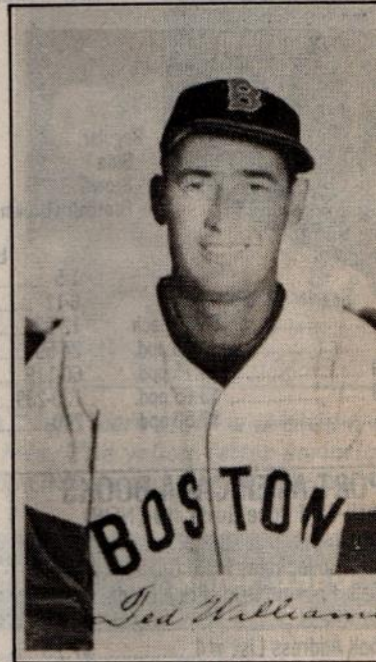
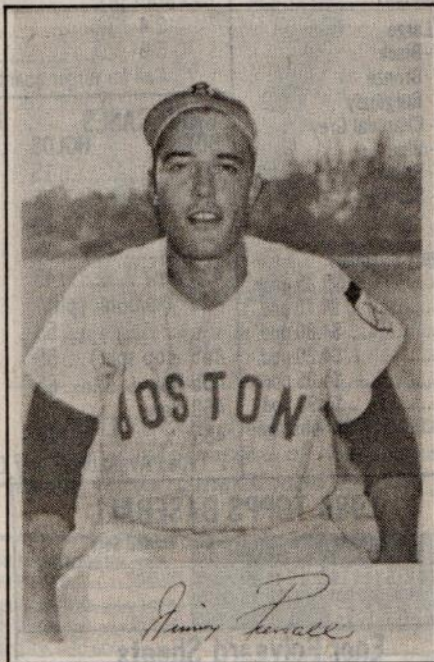
(From Page 44)

expensive as any card available for sale in any year. Stan Musial is usually the only star listed in any year at a premium — probably because of his absence from cards between 1954 and 1957 and the demand for his card to complete team sets. In 1959, Killebrew and Campanella join Musial as "scarce" or more properly, higher demand. In 1960, it's Musial, Mantle and McCovey described as scarce.

### Scarcities — Bowmans And Other Issues

No scarce series in Bowmans are identified with the exception of 1955 where #1-50 and #201-320 are thought of as tougher — just a little off from the current Beckett Guide. Variations are listed, but they missed Kuenn and Palica. They were also aware of the Williams/Piersall 1954 variation and asked the top price for either card — \$1.00.

The 1959 Fleer Ted Williams #68 has been discussed frequently in hobby literature. I have to go with a *Card Comments* article in 1960 stating "According to Jim Martino, Trading Card Manager of Fleer's, after #68 was printed and a certain number actually distributed they found that the other player pictured . . . was under contract to Topps and so all remaining stock of this num-



The price list made reference to the Piersall/Williams card #66 in the 1954 Bowman set. It listed the price for either card at \$1, which was for any single card in the list.

ber was withdrawn." Also, card #80 in the 1960 Fleer issue was Pepper Martin "and was withdrawn and never issued at all for the same reason."

### Who Was Who in Cards

*Card Comments* doesn't provide conclusive evidence of who was active in the hobby. Articles tended to feature the most recent person to join their Trading Card Collectors Club of

America — generally 10-16 year olds. (A reader writes "many who collecting today will quit the hobby when they enter high school and more work than the hobby previously." And readers call the hobby "Mr. Taylor") We find familiar names, though.

Richard West, a 14-year-old

(COMMENTS, Page 44)

Sports Collectors

## COMMENTS

(From Page 46)

Edwardsville, Ill., was the first name I recognized. West reported that his 1953, 1954 and 1955 Topps sets were stolen, but that he had rebuilt his collection to nearly 15 complete sets. Based on that early experience, show promoter and columnist West must have learned to keep an eye on his table.

Barry Newman of Cambridge, Mass., appreciated the response to his ads — he probably wishes he had sold fewer cards back then at the prices asked. Mike McDaniel of Louisville, Ky., who still advertises in *SCD* classifieds as interested in trading, is trying to trade for Hal Bevan to complete his 1953 Bowman Black and Whites. Jack Smalling of Ames, Iowa, had 50,000 doubles to sell. Dan Even writes about matchbook covers. Larry Fritsch helps fill in checklists of 1955 Johnston Cookies and the 1948 Leafs which were still pretty mysterious.

Jim Zak of Cicero, Ill., a long-time Chicago-area collector contributed a checklist of Zip Speedway winners. Jim recently opened his own card store in Berwyn, Ill., and, until recently, had a complete collection of the *Card Comments* issues. George Husby, an *SCD* advertiser and table holder at Chicago shows, was a 16-year-old in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., in 1960. George was already complete sets between 1953 and 1960, but looking for traders. Gar Miller was unloading 1,800 non-sport cards and looking for pre-1948 cards. B.A. Murry of Centralia, Ill., and a George Vrechek tied with five correct answers to the August 1960 issue quiz. Jim and Bill Heitman (T-206 expert), ages 15 and 11, are shown sorting T-205s on a card table.

I have probably missed identifying numerous other still active collectors. It shows that once you get the bug you don't give it up easily.

### Complaint Department

Only recently have collectors complained about card companies. Right? Not based on my readings of *Card Comments*. Fleer and Leaf had just come on the scene and they got the full treatment along with Topps. Readers' and the editor's comments in 1960 include: "Topps has virtually controlled the card industry by way of their exclusive con-

**DO YOU REMEMBER**  
By Dan Even

Are you a fellow that remembers every player who ever donned a major league uniform? Well, if you are here is a twenty player list, all of whom have appeared in the last five years but who are relatively obscure. Let's see how many of them you can get correct. Just pick the team he played for. The answers appear else where in this issue. If you like this feature let me know and I'll put twenty of these "stars" in each month. Editor's note: Dan's address is 506 West Locust St., Dubuque, Iowa.

- |                       |                    |                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Art Swanson        | 2. Angelo LePetri  | 3. Gar Shifflett    |
| 4. Tom Yewcic         | 5. Bob Powell      | 6. Don Zanni        |
| 7. Don Rudolph        | 8. Gordon Windhorn | 9. Bob Conley       |
| 10. George Perez      | 11. Ron Moeller    | 12. Stu Locklin     |
| 13. Reno Valdes       | 14. Don Pavletich  | 15. George Thomas   |
| 16. Charles Lindstrom | 17. Ed Keegan      | 18. Roger McCardell |
| 19. Steve Kraly       | 20. Bob Roselli    |                     |

**THIS AND THAT**  
By Tom Harden

It seems like the Braves players really like to cross up the baseball card collectors. Illustrated below are two examples of what I mean. Both players are shown pitching and batting the wrong way. The 1957 card of Hank Aaron shows him batting left but he is right handed all the way. On the 1959 card Lou is throwing left handed, but he too is a righty.



A page taken from an issue of *Card Comments*. Notice that the story at the top of the page was written by current SCD columnist Dan Even.

**COMMENTS**

(From Page 48)

tract. This is good business, but is it fair to the consumer? We are forced to buy cards at their price no matter what the quality. This type of stranglehold on the hobby would hinder its now phenominal growth." Fleer's Card Manager hopes that "our competition with Topps will result in better quality cards and an increasingly better value to the consumer in the 5 cent package."

More quotes: Topps can't match Leaf in "design or originality." "Fleer, as usual, has done a much better job on their cards . . . Topps no longer cares about quality — their cards have been getting steadily worse over the past three years — this year's issue (1961) is the worst yet — very poorly centered . . . heavily covered with wax." The 1961 stamp inserts were "poorly perforated" lending little to potential attractiveness . . . needing more thought and consideration. The 1960 Football Funnies on

cards are "jokes that appeal to the intellectual second grader" (Probably Topps target market anyway).

And "recently an independent gum maker was arrested after he tried to bribe someone to obtain the plans of a packing machine developed by Topps . . . Just a reminder, though sad, how important the field of card publishing is becoming."

The Publisher explains that since

(COMMENTS, Page 54)

Sports Collectors Digest

MAJOR MYSTERY OF MAJOR LEAGUE CARDS  
By: Thomas Harden

Probably the cheapest and poorest appearing cards in the last 15 years were those issued by the Leaf Gum Company of Chicago. They only issued one set of baseball, one set of football and one set of fighters, but it is the baseball set that is causing much ado among collectors right now.

These sets were issued in 1948-1949, when the field was apparently "wide-open", and it was the baseball set again that got them into trouble. Bowman Gum started that year, also, and they "got there first". Bowman brought suit against Leaf claiming they had exclusive contracts with the players. Bowman won and Leaf was forced to take their cards off the market, which is the reason for their scarcity. That's history--now for the mystery---

It has been a common belief among collectors that the set of baseball cards consisted of 149 skip-numbered cards. This theory is now a thing of the past. Cards numbered up to 168 have been found. This is now thought to be the limit of the series, but there may be more. Also it now appears that skip-numbering did not exist, and the cards were numbered consecutively from 1 to 168. However there are still a few numbers missing between 1 and 168. I have found there are five error cards in the set, and there may be more when the missing cards are located. Of the 168, only 80 have been found.

To see if we cannot locate the missing cards, let's start a checklist on this set. Who knows, you might hold a card which would lead to more discoveries---so let's see if we can't get a complete list of the 168.

Editor's note: Listed below are the numbers we have in stock at the minute---this will start the checklist---who can provide more---send the #'s and name in and we'll list them here each month.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| #27-Mickey Harris   | #31-Lou Brissie       |
| #38-Ted Kluszewski  | #42-Kent Peterson     |
| #46 Johnny Mize     | #47-George Vico       |
| #49-Del Ennis       | #50-Dick Wakefield    |
| #53-John Vandermeer | #56-Larry Jansen      |
| #57-Bob McCall      | #59-Luke Appling      |
| #61-Jake Early      | #65-Bob Elliott       |
| #72-Hank Edwards    | #73-Pat Seerey        |
| #77-Roy Smalley     | #82-Johnny Lindell    |
| #84-Sid Hudson      | #86-Ralph Weigel      |
| #91-Ralph Kiner     | #95-George Stirnweiss |
| #97-Martin Marion   | #102-Gene Hermanski   |
| #106-Lou Boudreau   | #117-Joe Gordon       |
| #136-Cliff Aberson  | #159-Mizell Flatt     |



GRAB BAG WINNER FOR SEPTEMBER

Gerald Moe - 618 North 2nd St., New Richmond, Wisconsin---Congratulations  
Don't forget---it is worth \$1.00 in trade!

*Mysteries of the 1948 Leaf set were also haunting collectors and writers in the early 1960s, as evidenced by this article by Thomas Harden.*

COMMENTS

(From Page 50)

magazines go out at less than first class postage delivery is slower "and we have no control over how long it will take" your copy to arrive. Readers ask the editor to "stick to card news and drop the stale sports news." And "at the moment 90 percent of the work is being done by a handful of collectors."

Well, you get the picture. You can complete the other complaints yourself.

Articles of Interest

There were numerous articles in the small monthly issues that showed the depth of the collectors' interests.

B18 1912 baseball blankets are discussed as are the 15 millimeter and 18 1/2 millimeter "Yours Truly" and the "Made in U.S.A." on Exhibit cards. As to the T-206 Wagner, a reader doubts that Wagner objected because of his name being associated with tobacco in that he permitted a cigar to be named after him and he is shown on a card tak-

ing a chew of tobacco. A "single copy of the card is said to be worth \$75."

Information was rather sketchy on 1950 Drakes, 1947 Tip Tops and 1948 Leaf. Readers were asked to help complete checklists. Collectors report finding only 80 cards of perhaps 168 1948 Leafs. Today, 98 cards are known. The 1948 suit by Bowman against Leaf is described.

Readers asked the editor why these

(COMMENTS, Page 50)



D I D Y O U K N O W T H A T . . .

An error exists in Topps 1953 which has not been previously reported. Thomas Kheel and Craig Raynor tell us they have number 149 and number 126 which have identical backs but different pictures.

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Silverthorne reports that card #75 of Fleers Baseball Greats appears with Kiki Cuyler's record on the back and Walter Johnson's picture on the front.

\*\*\*\*\*

Peter Aron reports that card number 361 of Topps 1960 baseball says that Bob Oldis was born on January 5, 1930 where as the Pirates record book shows his birth date as 1929.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nels Hansen reports that the card manufacturers all seem to be using the wrong birthdate for Ted Williams. His birthdate is August 30, 1918 and the following cards show it as October 30, 1918: RM52-AL23; T55--2; T54-1; B54-66; B51-165; B50-98.

\*\*\*\*\*

Brian Silverthorne reports the following errors in Fleer's Baseball Greats - #50 has Tony Lazzeri's picture and Frank Chance's writeup; #26 has Branch Rickey's picture and Bob Feller's writeup; # 69 has Zack Wheat's picture and Waite Hoyt's writeup.

\*\*\*\*\*

Gary Nucherenore reports that the Topps 1960 football cards of Sam Huff call him a Defensive Tackle on the front and a Linebacker on the back; Tom Terry is shown as Halfback on the front and a fullback on the back.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bill Zimpleman reports that Topps 1959 Baseball card #536 spells Dan Kravitz' last name as "Kravatz" on the back; card number 101 in Topps 1959 football shows Jim Ray Smith as a member of the Cleveland Browns but his emblem is that of the Detroit Lions while the card of Dave Middleton (#113) is just the reverse.

\*\*\*\*\*

Robert Wilkinson reports that he has found a Fleers Baseball Greats cards with the picture of Ed Walsh on the front and a record of Al Simmons on the back.

\*\*\*\*\*

Benedict Emanuele and George Schumacher report that they have found a couple of errors in Topps 1955 football cards---they tell us that they have cards of Gaynell Tinsley and Whizzer White with the correct name and team on the back but with the commentary reversed.

*Errors and variations were of interest to collectors in the early '60s, just like they are today.*

## COMMENTS

(From Page 54)

had been only six series totalling 572 cards in 1960 rather than the 616 expected. Answer: "Topps never finalizes its set until the last moment and it depends entirely upon the reception that the cards in the first few series get as to when the final series and the ultimate size of the set is issued. (So we've been told.)" By Topps themselves? Did they talk to collectors in those days?

Maybe there is a missing seventh series out there somewhere in Topps' attic? Error cards, how to get autographs, and the 1954 *Sports Illustrated* baseball cards are discussed.

In general, there is evidence of serious interest in collecting, of checklisting and sharing information. There are no discussions of potential card value increases. There are no discussions of high demand or rookie cards. 1960 collecting news gives the impression that there was no particular rush to get

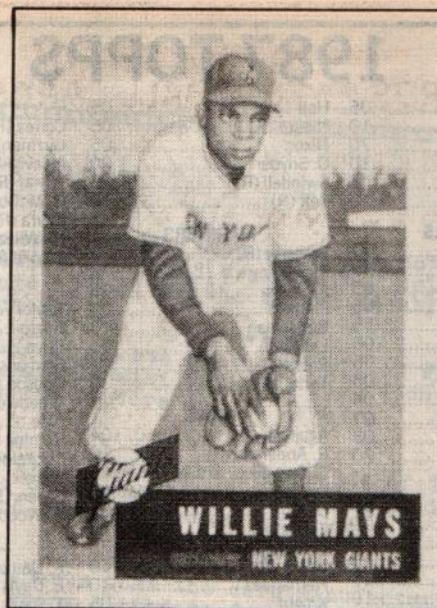
something before someone else did and the price went up.

## Prices

Well let's get down to it for a few final paragraphs. How bad can we feel about what we could have purchased for a pittance in those days?

If you had gone wild and purchased all the major sets at full retail in 1960 from Gordon B. Taylor to include 1951-

(COMMENTS, Page 62)



Card prices of the early '60s make today's collectors green with envy. A '52 Mantle sold for 50 cents (There was a catch — you had to include 10 cents postage). A

'53 Topps Mays could be had for 10 cents and a '54 Aaron cost six cents! A complete 1959 set, however would have cost \$103 by today's standards.

## COMMENTS

(From Page 60)

1960 Topps, 1948-1955 Bowmans, 1959-60 Fleers, and 1960 Leaf you would have shelled out \$513. Condition of cards is not typically mentioned with prices, but if you assumed you could be strange and ask for "EX-MT" only at those prices, you would have cards valued at \$31,028 in recent *SCD* price guides. Yes, but \$31,028 isn't what it used to be. Even with price levels adjusted the returns would be more than adequate.

What about some individual card prices from Taylor. How about the 1954 Bowman Williams for \$1, 1952 Topps Mantle for 50 cents. (Although if you had ordered just the Mantle you would

have had to add 10 cents for postage and handling in that the total order was 50 cents or less). 1953 Topps Mays was 10 cents, the 1954 Aaron would be six cents, etc., etc. Prices through readers' classifieds were usually less. Illness sets in.

But let's feel a little better by looking at it from the 1960 vantage point. To buy a complete set of one-year-old (1959) cards from Taylor would have cost you \$27.92. Price level adjusted to 1986 dollars the \$27.92 would be the equivalent of \$103 today. Would you pay \$103 for a set of 1985 Topps? Most probably not — apparently a lot of collectors felt that way in 1960 otherwise there would be a lot of collectors today with intact 1959 sets that they picked

up at irresistible prices. The prices were not all that irresistible. I know I never spent a nickel on cards from Taylor — darn it!

According to *Card Comments* the hobby was taking off in the early '60s. The takeoff sputtered for awhile and within a few years Taylor dropped the publication. Taylor's mail order business and inventory were reportedly sold to Bruce Yeko, who operated a mail order business from his New York apartment in the mid-'60s. Woody Geman had a similar publication at the time, *Card Collector*, which was discontinued after a few more years. But while they were with us these publications provided a forum for the collectors of the day.

This article appeared in the May 1, 1987, issue of *Sports Collectors Digest* and is reprinted here on the OBC Library page with the consent of SCD. George Vrechek can be contacted at [vrechek@ameritech.net](mailto:vrechek@ameritech.net).