

# Keeler Began Career On Jewish Holiday

BY FREDERICK LIEB.

It was on a Jewish holiday that that famous little son of swat, Willie Keeler, first started to hit them "where they ain't" in the big league games. "And I figured it always brought me luck," explained Wee Willie some 27 years later.

Willie, a Brooklyn boy, broke in with the Giants under the management of old Pat Powers on Sept. 30, 1892. The Giants were playing the Phillies on the Polo grounds.

Keeler still occasionally comes up for air. He was sitting in the Polo grounds press stand late last season, when he recalled reminiscences of his first big league game.

"It seems a long, long time since I started out there," said Willie. "I was only 20 then, and I never was big for my age. I guess I looked like a little fellow alongside of fellows like Busie, Swine, Roger Connor and Delahanty. Pat Powers put me on third base, and the Phillies thought I was a pretty good player."

Keeler, however, saw from the files that he was not so good. He made a very favorable impression. A New York daily, in its comment of the game, said: "Keeler made his debut as a Giant, and did remarkably well. He is a fast runner and a good fielder. Manager Powers doubtless has a find in him."

If the Phillies regarded little Keeler as a joke, his work that afternoon didn't prove that he was one. He got one hit, scored a run, stole two bases and handled both of his fielding chances without an error. Perhaps when he stole his bases the Phillies couldn't see him, he was so tiny.

It is amusing to look back and note the two famous leading men of the Baltimore Orioles, Keeler and McGraw, both were regarded as baseball jokes when they began their major league careers so tiny that no one would take the mysterious, proving conclusively the old saying that the best goods come in small packages.

**Started With Sluggers.** Keeler, destined to become one of the game's most remarkable basemen, started his major league career with the famous sluggers of the Phillies who were such noted sluggers as Billy Hamilton, Sam Thompson, Ed Delahanty, Roger Connor, Ed Lave Cross, while among Keeler's fellow players on the Giants were such noted sluggers as Tim Lincecum and Hughie Clegg.

Who among these battling stalwarts would have believed that this Brooklyn kid might win batting races and that would surpass the great marks of Connor, Hamilton, Thompson and Delahanty?

Keeler also saw two of the game's greatest pitchers in his big league debut. The first big league pitcher that Wee Willie tried his wits against was the speed king of his day, Alton Chase, who in the box for New York. Though the Quaker biffers made only five hits, Keeler managed to make the Giants lose the game by a score of 3 to 4.

Keeler played eight games at third base and he played eight games with the Giants that fall. Wee Willie proved the outfit that he could hit, as he hit safely in seven straight games before he was stopped in the eighth game by Boston. He hit by a double in the eighth game, and he hit by a double in the ninth game at bat for an average of .267.

Willie scored five runs for the Giants that fall, and by a freak twist of fate he completed his major league career 18 years later by scoring five runs for the Giants in the season of 1910.

Keeler, who came to the Giants from the Birmingham team, wasn't permitted to stay long in New York. There was a change in ownership of the New York National in the following winter and John Montgomery Ward succeeded Pat Powers as the Giant manager. Keeler broke his ankle early in the 1893 season, and the Giants sold him to Brooklyn, his home town, for \$300. The Giants believed he was too small and too light for big league use.

**Considered Too Light.** Brooklyn didn't keep him either. He, too, was considered too light to be of any service in the city of Churches, and Willie's next move was out of the big city entirely—to Baltimore. He joined the Orioles in 1894. The year that season the Orioles won their first championship with a team which for batting ability, speed and cunning never had an equal.

Keeler fitted in with that Oriole bunch like a snug glove. Though he played third base when Pat Powers gave him his first chance in New York, his natural position was the outfield, and in Baltimore Keeler, Kelly and Brady became the most famous outfielders in the game.

Keeler hit .302 in his first year in Baltimore, and he didn't go under that figure until 1901. In 1897 he led the national league hitters with the remarkable average of .432. Keeler is the only batsman who ever lived who has made over 200 hits in eight consecutive seasons, from 1894 to 1901, inclusive. Cobb has collected more than 200 hits seven times, but these were scattered over a 19-year period. Burdette hit 200 in one season.

Keeler hit 200 hits six times and Lajoie five. Hans Wagner only bagged 200 hits twice in his long career.

Keeler remained in Baltimore until Hanlon shifted the management of his Oriole club to Brooklyn, where he was pennant in 1899 and 1900. During the American league war Willie jumped with that club, his old Baltimore teammate, McGraw, signed him to a Giant contract in 1910, enabling Keeler to finish his major league career with the same famous club with which he started.

In addition to his hitting records, Keeler contributed one of the gems of baseball literature when he gave his recipe for hitting. Asked by a reporter how it was he managed to get so many hits, Willie made the historic remark of "Why, I just hit 'em where they ain't."

NEW YORK NATIONALS.				
AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A. E.
Willie Keeler, 2b.	5	1	1	0
Harry Lyons, cf.	5	0	2	0
Jack Doyle, 2b.	5	1	0	1
Mike Tolan, 1b.	5	1	1	0
Buck Ewing, c.	5	0	1	0
John McMahon, lb.	4	0	2	1
Sam Thompson, rf.	3	1	1	0
Amos Rust, lf.	4	0	1	0
Shorty Fuller, ss.	4	1	1	0
Totals	38	4	11	2

PHILADELPHIA NATIONALS.				
AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A. E.
Billy Hamilton, lf.	4	2	2	0
Bill Hallman, 2b.	4	0	2	0
Sam Thompson, rf.	3	1	2	0
Ed Delahanty, cf.	4	0	1	4
Lave Cross, 3b.	4	0	0	2
Roger Connor, lb.	2	0	10	2
John Clements, c.	3	0	5	0
Bob Allen, ss.	3	1	1	2
Tim Keefe, p.	2	0	0	0
Totals	29	5	27	12

**Earned runs—**New York 2, Philadelphia 2. **First base on balls—**Off Rustie 3, off Keefe 1. **First base on errors—**New York 1, Philadelphia 1. **Left on bases—**New York 6, Philadelphia 3. **Struck out—**By Rustie 4, by Keefe 2. **Stolen bases—**Keeler 2. **Wild pitches—**York, Sept. 30, 1892. (Copyright, 1920, by Al Munro Elias.)

President Harry Frazee announced in Boston last week that he and J. J. Lannin had come to an agreement as to the sum due Lannin on the purchase of the Red Sox and that payment had been made. Frazee and his associates now are, it is stated, in full ownership and control of the club and can do as they please with it. Following the announcement there was renewal of reports that the club soon will be in the hands of entirely new owners. Possibly Ben Johnson's visit to the East has something to do with such a sale.

Report from Eastern league circles is that Jack Flynn may be put in charge of the Providence club, which has been turned over to the league by Ben Mouton, the former backer.

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George Carpentier, France's heavyweight champion, can take part in no more fights until Feb. 15, 1921, except under the sanction of with the consent of Charles F. Becker, his English theatrical promoter, according to an announcement by William A. Brady.

A story from New Haven has it that John Meyers has decided to return to his apple orchard this year and will not return to the New Haven club, thus breaking the hold of the battery of Bender and Myers that was expected to be a big advertising feature.

Another man who was connected to the story was well up the apple tree of the game and was called by the name of Bob Quinn of the St. Louis Browns. Bob Quinn is the hardware man in the city and he is a big fellow. He is a big fellow and he is a big fellow.

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Albert G. Hill, one of the London Olympic runners, is expected to be one of the English runners who will shine in the coming Olympic games at Antwerp. In a recent journey at Glasgow, Hill finished second in the one-mile race, covering the distance in 1:44.2. He was scratch man.



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