

An Informal History of

***THE
NORTHERN
BASEBALL
LEAGUE***

by

HERMAN D. WHITE

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Walter H. Brovald

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Herman D. White was born October 29, 1894 near Necedah, Wisconsin. He was one of eight children.

As a youngster, he played sandlot baseball and later played ball for Germantown in the Wisconsin Valley League as a pitcher until an arm injury forced him to end his playing days. He married Frieda Stehle at New Lisbon, Wisconsin, on June 16, 1920 and in the following year settled in Eau Claire, where he associated himself with an uncle, A. E. White, and a brother, H. A. White, in the White Machine Works, manufacturing engine parts.

For his contributions to baseball, he was the sixth person inducted into Eau Claire's Baseball Hall of Fame; those previously honored were all baseball players: Henry Majeski, Billy Bruton, Andy Pafko, Henry Aaron and Wes Westrum.

White was also a distinguished business and civic leader in Eau Claire, including service as mayor and city councilman. He was also well-known for his philanthropy, particularly toward Luther Hospital in Eau Claire, as well as the Boy Scouts and the YMCA. For his work in behalf of the hospital, he received the first Good Samaritan Award. He was a president of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce and Eau Claire Rotary Club. During World War II he was county chairman of the Selective Service board.

He died October 29, 1976 (his 82nd birthday), at Luther Hospital, following a six-month illness.

Editor's Preface

Herman White was my mother's brother, one of my father's long-term employers, father of my closest childhood companion, and an inveterate storyteller.

As I handset the type for this book, I had the opportunity for reverie, recalling Uncle Herman at our home or his, telling of incidents from his life as a farm youth or regaling us with anecdotes about his experiences as a baseball league executive. I could remember, too, the many times I accompanied Uncle Herman and his family to Eau Claire Bears' games at Carson Park, envious of my cousin, Bill, who was the team's batboy, but proud to be with Uncle Herman, intimate of players and club managers in both the minor and major leagues.

Years after the Bears (later the Eau Claire Braves) and the Northern League itself passed from the scene, I urged Uncle Herman to write a personal history of the league he had headed for so many years. I like to think that the text for this booklet, passed on to me after his death, was a response to my suggestion.

As interesting and as valuable as the recollections in this book are, it falls short of the work I had hoped for. Uncle Herman was all too brief and far too modest. Most unfortunate of all, he did not share any of the many personal anecdotes he told so well. Readers of this history are the losers in that. Uncle Herman was an extraordinary man, in a dozen different dimensions. This book is a restrained reflection of only one of them, but I am honored and pleased to have printed it, and to dedicate it to his memory and to the memory of my cousin, Bill.

Walter H. Brovald

St. Paul, Minnesota
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The Organization of Professional Baseball

BRIEFLY sketching the makeup of professional baseball clubs we would point out that the National League was formed first in the year 1876 and the American League in the year 1900 as a direct competitor for player talent and popular support.

Finding this competition very expensive, the two leagues reached agreement regarding player contracts and salaries in what has always been referred to as the National Agreement, styling themselves as "Major Leagues" in 1903. Thus there was left in the previously organized National Association of Professional Baseball Clubs all of those clubs, leagues and associations which were trying to operate in the less populous cities in the country. They quickly became known as the "minor leagues."

These so-called minor leagues were divided into five different classifications: AA, A, B, C, and D. This was to assure more equal competition for each club according to city population, financial ability, playing fields, number of players allowed, and players' salaries.

The Northern League, when organized, was admitted to the National Association as a Class D league. The midseason player limit was 14. The maximum salary for a player was \$1200 per month, except if a player-manager was used, he could be paid more. There was no requirement as to city population.

Minor league clubs very early in their history faced a serious problem. The major league teams, in their quest for talent, took players from the minor leagues with little restraint and often without any compensation to the minor league clubs. When the major leagues elected Judge Kenesaw M. Landis as commissioner of baseball in 1920, the National Association of Baseball Clubs promptly acknowledged his authority. The Association successfully sought his help in enforcing provisions of the National Agreement regarding the transfer of players between clubs and leagues. This was essential if the minor leagues were to endure.

General Economic Conditions in 1933

LATE in 1929 the United States stock markets suffered the greatest decline in history. This was the begin- of what came to be known as The Great Depression; it was to last for years. There was a wholesale closing of banks and businesses. Not only cash but credit disappeared. Jobs were hard to find, especially for younger men. The government advised everyone to start a garden to supplement their food supplies and reduce living expenses.

There were no welfare assistance programs or Social Security to help ease the burdens. Anyone with 25 cents in his pocket could get a full choice steak dinner with pie for dessert. But most did not have the 25 cents,

If the head of a family had a fair and steady job, he could expect to work about 50 hours per week and be paid once month at the average rate of about 50 cents an hour. There was no vacation pay, no health insurance of any kind, no pension plans, no retirement benefits, and the only job security was to be the best and most loyal employee on the payroll. One could only hope his family was not hit by sickness or an accident.

It wasn't a good time for baseball. Decreasing attendance began to alarm professional baseball in 1930. In the National Association of Professional Baseball Clubs, 25 member

leagues finished the season in 1929, but this number was reduced to 21 in 1930 and to 16 in 1931. When the association held its annual meeting in December 1931 only five leagues were reasonably certain of being able to complete the season. The delegates appointed a special committee and instructed it to frame a reorganization plan for consideration at the 1932 annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

When that meeting convened, there were representatives from 11 leagues which had operated for at least part of the past season or which hoped to operate in 1933; but again there only five which had definite plans to do so. The committee's report was adopted and almost all of its provisions carried out.

A promotional department under the direction of Joe Carr was set up to operate out of Columbus to assist the operating leagues and to help form new leagues. A press bureau was established in the office of John H. Farrell, the association's secretary-treasurer, in Auburn, N. Y. It was to be headed by L. R. Addington, who was to serve as press and public relations director. This bureau was also to keep the official records of all league players and clubs, which were in a confused state. In what proved to be an important move, the leagues asked Judge William G. Branham of Durham, North Carolina, to accept the presidency of the National Association. He set up an office in Durham and continued as president until failing health forced him to retire in December 1946.

The Organization of the Northern League

THE economic situation of the world and the organization of professional baseball were the two factors contributing most to the start of the Northern Baseball League.

The decreasing number of professional baseball clubs and leagues meant that many players who had no other vocation were available. In addition there were younger boys who dreamed of becoming major-leaguers who wanted a chance.

Among the professional players who found themselves out of baseball were Bruno Haas, outfielder-pitcher, who had played with St. Paul and the Philadelphia A's; Richard (Dick) Wade, outfielder with the Washington Senators; John (Johnny) Mostil, all-star centerfielder for the Chicago White Sox; Johnny Anderson, George Treadwell, Walter Gilbert and others. Most of these men lived in the midwest and had at one time or another played in leagues operating there.

A former Northern League had not operated since 1922; therefore, all these cities were so-called "open territory," but only a few of them still had adequate playing fields.

Bruno Haas was the prime mover in getting an organization started. He contacted people in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and learned that he could arrange to use Sherbourne Park (a good playing field) with seating for 3500 -- but no baseball could be played on Sundays. Thus encouraged, he contacted Dick Wade at his home in Duluth and learned that he and his father, Frank, would be interested in an operation in Superior, Wis., until they could get permission to use Duluth's municipal park, which had been leased to others. From this start, contacts were made in other area cities where amateur teams were playing.

Haas also contacted Mr. Hugo Goldsmith, the sporting goods manufacturer of Cincinnati, who agreed to pay part of the out-of-pocket expenses of organizing the league as part of a contract by which his company was to furnish each club ten dozen baseballs free for spring training in exchange for their buying their uniforms and equipment from his company.

Without this contract, it is unlikely that the league could have started, since the league had adopted a rule that at least one new ball had to be used in each game. Cheaper balls were used for spring practice and all foul balls were promptly returned to the game no matter where they might land. One club conserved its free baseballs so well that it had two dozen to sell to the local high school at the end of the season.

Clubs were organized in Winnipeg, Superior, Crookston, Minn., Grand Forks, N. D., Fargo, N. D. and Moorhead, Minn. (jointly), Brainerd, Minn., Little Falls, Minn., and Eau Claire, Wis. But some of these were in precarious financial positions from the outset.

A playing schedule of 126 games was drawn up. The season was to start the first week of May and end on Labor Day, with double-headers on national holidays. However, two days before the scheduled opening date, the club at Little Falls decided it would be unable to operate. This meant that all of the remaining clubs would have recurring open dates during the season. These open dates were used to play amateur teams on the best terms that could be arranged, Sometimes the "take" did not even cover the cost of travel, but it did keep the players working.

Russell L. Vold, a Grand Forks salesman, was elected league president and instructed to set up an office in Grand Forks, buy a typewriter, and hire an assistant. But this was never done because no funds were provided. So there was no office for the clubs to report to until later in the season. In midseason the player-managers of four teams met at a highway intersection as they traveled to their next playing sites. They discussed their dissatisfaction with Vold, removed him as president and named Danny Boone of Crookston to replace him.

After the season Vold sued the league and its directors for salary, expenses and degradation of character. The case was brought in the Polk County Court in Crookston. After the directors had made two fruitless trips at their own expense to be present at the trial and the plaintiff failed to show up, the judge agreed to dismiss the complaint. There was one condition: the court costs had to be paid. No one knew where Vold was, so the only party left was the league. The league's attorneys advised the court that the league treasury contained only \$30.47 with no prospect of raising more. Whereupon the finding for costs was set at \$30.47 and the court was paid. The defense attorneys, O'Brien & Silvestri, of Crookston, were never compensated.

The Clubs and Their Cities

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, Canada, a club in the former Northern League which was forced to suspend operations in 1917 because of World War 1, was the largest city in the league with a population of more than 200,000. Sherbourne Park had a baseball field with about 3,500 spectator seats and was available for lease.

Baseball games played in Winnipeg before the middle of May were liable to find cool weather, but games in midsummer were assured of a long twilight evening and could start as late as eight o'clock and still play nine innings without lights. Games for paid admissions could not be played in Winnipeg on Sunday, but were moved to adjoining St. Boniface and played on a pass-the-hat basis under auspices of the local Catholic Church, helping assure good attendance and gate receipts. Otherwise two games were scheduled for Saturday for two separate admissions, the park being emptied for an hour between games. Admission prices were: adults, 25 cents and children, 10 cents each, with six cents and three cents respectively going to the visiting club and two cents for each adult going to the

league. These "gate splits" were changed many times in later seasons, but in Winnipeg the admission prices remained until taxes and gate splits forced the club to suspend operation in 1945, when the club was moved to Aberdeen, S. D. Winnipeg re-entered the league for the season of 1954.

It was the visiting clubs' share of these gate receipts that kept the league going the first few years. Because no Canadian holidays fall on the same dates as holidays in the U. S., there was always a great effort by the other clubs to get Canadian holiday dates in Winnipeg while Winnipeg always spent the U. S. holidays south of the border. When Bruno Haas ceased operating the Winnipeg club a sale to a Winnipeg group headed by Charles McFadden was arranged at a price of \$10,000. It was the first Class D league franchise ever sold and the price paid is still a record among Class D Leagues.

It deserves mention that the record for total number of runs scored in a nine-inning professional baseball game was set in Winnipeg on August 16, 1933. Winnipeg defeated Eau Claire 35-19. There were 49 hits for 93 bases, yet the game was played in two hours and forty minutes. A very strong wind caused fly balls to do many tricks, including going over the fence for home runs.

The Superior club was operated in 1933 by Frank Wade, father of Richard (Dick) Wade, former outfielder for the Washington Senators of the American League. Dick acted as field manager and played right field. The Wades were residents of Duluth and wanted to operate a club in that city as soon as they could get a lease on the city-owned park which would be available to them in 1936. In the meantime games would be played in a park located in the railroad yards near downtown Superior. The park had a short rightfield fence and ground rule doubles down the line by left-handed hitters were not too difficult. Because of railroad switching activities, smoke and steam from switch engines frequently clouded the playing field.

William Berg headed a group of businessmen which took over the Superior franchise when Wade moved his club to Duluth. Veteran catcher George Treadwell managed the Superior club for several seasons. A new municipal park was built on the eastern edge of the city and the club operated there until 1956, when it was moved to Wausau.

The Duluth club was located in the league's second-largest city and for the first few years operated in the park used in the old league, but then a new park, seating 4,000, was built. It was named Wade Stadium in honor of the Wades. Frank Wade was one most loyal and tireless workers for the league up to the time of his death.

Crookston, with a population of around 7,000, was the smallest city represented in the league. A group of local businessmen operated the club out of the old Minnesota League park. The club had money in its treasury from former operations; perhaps that's why Lute (Danny) Boone, former major league shortstop, chose to manage this club. In mid-season 1933, Boone was chosen league president. He, in turn, picked E. E. Turnquist of Crookston as league secretary-treasurer. They continued in these offices until the end of the 1935 season.

People of the Crookston area were good supporters of their club and even with the limited population the club was able to continue operations until the 1942 season, when the franchise was moved to Sioux Falls, S. D.

Grand Forks, N. D. and East Grand Forks, Minn., separated only by the Red River of the North, operated a Greater Grand Forks Club. Its games the first few years were played in the East Side park where ground rules were necessary because of a short left field fence.

Later, a fine municipal park, with player dressing rooms, was constructed on the west side of the river. Johnny Anderson, a former good-hitting major league player, took over as president and field manager of the club. After four seasons, Anderson, believing attendance should be better, moved the club to Jamestown, N. D, for 1936-37. Attendance, however, was worse than ever, so the club returned to Grand Forks. Eventually, Anderson encountered severe problems and the club was taken over by an organization of businessmen.

Fargo, N. D, and Moorhead, Minn. are separated by the Red River. They had operated in the previous Northern League as the Fargo-Moorhead club and won pennants in 1915, 1916, and 1917 before the league disbanded because of World War I. Games were played in a park located in Moorhead where the former Northern League games were played. The club was managed by Leo Snyder and owned by people from both cities. During the first two seasons of the new club there was much dissension between the two groups and at the end of the 1935 season both factions agreed to turn direction of the club over to Steve Gorman of Fargo. Gorman soon had arranged a connection with the Cleveland American League club and Northern League fans were to get their first look at the to-be-famous Bob Feller, although his name did not appear in an official box score in the league. Except for the war years of 1943-44, the Fargo-Moorhead club operated until it moved to Bismarck-Mandan in 1962.

The Brainerd-Little Falls (Minn.) club was operated and managed by Ray Mergens, a brother-in-law of Bruno Haas. The team was expected to draw well from lakeside vacationers but it did not work out, so the club was moved to Brandon, Manitoba, for the 1933 season. It returned to Brainerd for the following two seasons, then moved to Wausau, Wis. In Wausau, the old Wisconsin-Illinois league park was used until after the break for World War II, when Wausau joined the Wisconsin State League. The franchise subsequently was moved to St. Cloud, Minn.

The Eau Claire, Wis., club undoubtedly had the poorest chances of success of all the clubs starting the league in 1932. Still, many of its problems were typical of those faced by most of the clubs in the new league.

A letter addressed to "Baseball Club, Eau Claire, Wis.," written by Bruno Haas, was delivered to the sports department of the Eau Claire Press Co. It was referred to David Quinn, who managed a group of young local boys who played amateur baseball against teams of the same makeup from nearby towns. Quinn attended league organization meetings and agreed to join the league, making a \$50 deposit. He had no playing field, but did induce a local contractor, L. G. Arnold, to build an eight-foot-high board fence around a sandy field he was able to rent. It was called Chappell Field after its owner. There were no seats or shade from the sun.

John (Johnny) Mostil, former star centerfielder of the Chicago White Sox, was hired to manage the club and to assemble the players. Many area players of above-average ability were sent letters, worded like this one:

"Dear Frank: I would give you a trial with the Eau Claire club and the proposition is this: \$40 per month and expenses on the road. You pay your own expenses at home and in training; also your own transportation to training camp. You furnish your own uniform, shoes and cap for training. We start training about April 20th and season starts May 4th. Kindly let me know if this is satisfactory to you."

In addition to those invited, nearly 300 boys between the ages of 16 and 20 hiked (or hitchhiked) to try out for the team. The manager, having no coaches or assistants to help

him evaluate the players, had a real problem. But a club was assembled and after a few games at home, 14 players and the manager went on the road, crowded into two seven-passenger Studebakers previously owned by an undertaker. One of the cars pulled a two-wheel trailer loaded with the baseball equipment.

The "other end" of the league was 550 miles away, nearly all of them rough gravel road. On each trip the club made it was necessary to send four new tires to about Grand Forks so that the much overloaded cars could get back to Eau Claire. When the club returned from its first trip west the players' first paychecks were due them, but they learned the club had no money, so there would be no payday. They kept right on playing.

Late in June, while the club was on the road, some of the community's businessmen learned that Quinn had decided to give up the club by default. He had scheduled an exhibition game in Whitehall, Wis. for July 4 (an open date); he would then split the day's gate receipts and disband the club. A businessman's group decided to attach the July 4 gate receipts, take over the franchise, and guarantee the salaries of players who finished out the season. The players were happy to agree.

Several times, the business group was on the verge of giving up the operation. But each time Herman D. White, now acting as club president, polled the directors, the answer was, "Let's wait and see. If we don't have a rainout in Winnipeg, we won't be too badly off." It did not rain on the Eau Claire club in Winnipeg -- the league's best-drawing team at the time -- all year.

In August, the club had the opportunity to sell the contract of its first baseman (Anderson) to the Moline, Ill. club for \$300. The offer was accepted; the club needed all the dollars it could get. In this case, however, not much profit resulted. Professional baseball rules at the time provided that money for the sale of players would pass through the hands of the league president, who had the right to deduct any money the club might owe the league. When the team managers had removed Vold as league president in midyear they had failed to notify the National Association office through which all player contract assignments and payments had to pass; therefore, the association forwarded the \$300 check to Vold. He used the money to pay some personal bills. Eau Claire officials, at the request of the baseball club, arrested Vold. His attorney and the club, after a long negotiating session, agreed on a settlement which left the club with much less than the original \$300.

On the day after the last game of the season, the directors called the players in one by one and asked them to state how much, if any, of their contract salary they had received during the season. Their oral statements were accepted as correct (most of them claimed to have received amounts of only 15 to 50 cents the entire summer); they were given checks for the balance due them, together with their release.

There was no thought, as those checks were being issued, that the club would operate the following year. Bills were outstanding for the fence around the playing field, tires for the cars, gasoline and oil, playing field rent, uniforms, and bats and balls. But early in the new year, baseball fever returned. There was even a public drive for money to build a covered grandstand seating 500 and to rent portable bleachers for about 600 more spectators. Player contracts were awarded and the new season begun. The club's money troubles would persist, but baseball was to stay firmly rooted in Eau Claire for many years.

The Umpires

THE original set-up for umpires in the league was at least different. Four league umpires were to be on the payroll at a very modest salary, with no allowance for expenses. In addition, each club would arrange for a local man to umpire on the bases for their home games; in an emergency, a local ballplayer could be used. The so-called league umpire was to move from city to city within the league by traveling with the moving club. Many times he would get into an argument with the players over a play and it would be a chilly ride for both umpire and the players to the next town. Also, an umpire had to be ready at the club's hotel when the team decided to depart, whatever the hour of day or night.

Although the league had only two traveling umpires during the first season and one of them, Amby Moran, stayed in his hometown of Winnipeg nearly all season, the umpiring situation improved with each season. The league soon was able to pay fair salaries and traveling expenses.

Local umpires were hired by the home club on a per-game basis. If a ballplayer was used, he did not get any extra pay. This set-up made it just a little more difficult for a team to win road games. Beginning with the 1936 season the league employed eight fulltime umpires. and provided for their transportation by paying one man of each pair for the use of his car. Beginning in 1938, the league served as a training ground for American League umpires. The AL contributed to each trainee's salary.

The Players

Surely it would be very hard for anyone, including professional baseball players, to realize just what the conditions were approximately 40 years ago.

There was almost nothing for boys to do during the summer when schools were closed for vacation. If they were offered a chance to play baseball, get some cash and living expenses on the road, they did not pay much heed to salaries promised. So when it was announced that a new baseball league was being formed, would-be players flocked in to try their luck.

Because Eau Claire was nearest large cities, more than 300 boys showed up there. Each boy was required to bring his own uniform, including stockings, cap and shoes, for the tryouts, and many of them also brought a bat and ball. Each club trained at home (except Winnipeg, where snow was still on the ground), but none of the clubs provided much help to the boys in finding a place to eat and sleep, only directions to the field where the day-long trials were to be held.

Most of these boys were from 16 to 20 years old and had never been away from home before in their lives, but there were a few who had some experience playing with their school teams or in summer amateur games. However, homesickness was quite a problem for the managers as they tried to sort out the more able players and assign them to positions they might play best. In almost every case, the manager had no one to help him with this work. so it was a tedious process; many a youngster, despairing of his chances with one team, would hitchhike to another camp. There the waiting would begin again.

If and when a manager decided a boy could make the team, he was offered a contract for a salary of \$40 to \$70 per month. He would of course have to pay his own room and board when his club was playing at home. Clubs made arrangements with a hotel (often second-rate) in each city to accomodate the club on the road; the room charge was generally a dollar a night, two players to a room; there was usually a daily dollar limit per player for meals. Most players, after they had become acquainted in their club's home community, managed

to find lodging (and sometimes meals, too) with the family of some local fan at very favorable rates or free. But paydays for the players were not always on time, because the clubs often did not have the money to meet them. However, all players were paid in full at the end of the season, even if it was necessary for the clubs to ask local fans for donations.

Here are the names of just a few of the boys who played their first professional baseball games in the Northern League and then graduated to higher classifications and became stars in the major leagues: Arnold Anderson (a first baseman and the first contract-player sold to the majors), Morris Arnovich and Stanley Sperry, the first players to be drafted from the league, Jimmy Pofahl, Otto Meyer, Phil Masi, Bob Feller (later Cleveland's crack pitcher), Norman Masters, Blix Donnelly, Andy Pafko, Jim Delsing, Russ Meyer, Morris Martin, Roy Mack, Bill Zuber, Stanley Spence, Charlie Scuche, Don Larson (the World Series perfect-game pitcher), Bob Turley, Henry Aaron, Billy Bruton, Henry Majeski, Wesley Westrum, Joe Torre, Lou Brock, Ray Boone, Wes Covington, Charles Tanner, Ray Katt, Bill Freehan, Gates Brown and many others.

Two boys, playing in separate twilight games in Winnipeg, suffered fatal injuries by being hit in the face by pitched balls. They were Ebnet, a second baseman for Fargo-Moorhead, and Tkack, a Superior shortstop.

Transportation

The Northern League was soon known not only as the strongest Class D league in professional baseball, but it also was easily the one covering the most distance. The distance from Eau Claire to Winnipeg was some 350 miles of rough, mostly graveled road. Later, when Wausau replaced Brainerd, it became 650 miles. To illustrate this great expanse, one Wausau player figured out that if his club should become confused in direction and traveled an equal number of miles east instead of west the team would pass Pittsburgh's Forbes Field by some four miles.

Even if the clubs could have stood the expense, travel by rail was impossible because of both train and playing schedules. There was the same problem with public bus travel. Of course, there were no lighted parks in the league, so all games were played in the daytime or as twilight games. This and the long trips made overnight trips necessary. The Winnipeg club purchased a used Greyhound bus and that was the talk of the league. Most of the clubs traveled in two seven-passenger, secondhand cars, with a trailer behind one of them to carry the team's baggage. In as much as the player limit was 14, there was not much room for a player to sleep or even to rest. It was fortunate that these players were young and could recuperate quickly. (Remember that they might also have to find room for an umpire to ride with them. He was not always welcome.) Usually one car was driven by the club manager and the other by a player. If the club did not have a playing manager, it meant one more to carry or that the club would have to go with one less player.

As the seasons went by, one club after another purchased small 15- to 18-passenger buses which were a great improvement. Because of the rough roads and the heavy overloads, it was often necessary to send an extra set of tires to the club on the road in order to insure that it would be able to make a complete trip around the league.

The Duluth club was one which had an 18-passenger bus. On the morning of July 24, 1948, a quiet, sunny Saturday, the club was traveling from Eau Claire to St. Cloud, when on Highway 36, in St. Paul, Minn., between Dale Street and Western Avenue, a heavily loaded large truck crossed the center line on a rise in the road and collided almost head-on

with the players' bus. Both truck and bus burst into flame from ruptured gas tanks. Some persons working in a nearby field and passing motorists pulled a few of the players from the bus before they were burned too badly, but three players were either burned to death or killed in the crash. Both the truck driver and club manager George Treadwell, who was driving the bus, were also killed. Treadwell was a resident of Superior, Wis. The dead players were: Gerald (Peanuts) Peterson of Proctor, Minn., an outfielder; Gilbert Krirdla, Duluth, an outfielder who played under the name of Gilbert Tribble; and Donald Schuchman, St. Louis, Mo., a pitcher. Seven other players were critically injured and the remaining seven sustained minor injuries. Of these 14, only four ever played professional baseball again.

The other clubs in the league immediately replaced the players on the Duluth club and about a week after the accident, the team was able to resume its schedule. Professional ball clubs all over the country donated proceeds from benefit games; this money was distributed equally among the injured players and the families of those who were killed, including the truck driver's family.

League Officials

WHEN first organized, the Northern League chose Russell L. Vold as its first president. However, he never did have an established central office to which clubs could make official reports. Clubs became dissatisfied with this situation by mid-season; Vold was deposed and Danny Boone and E. E. Turnquist of Crookston as secretary. This arrangement continued through the 1934 season, but in November of that year when league officers met at the convention of the National Association in Dayton, Ohio, many changes were made. Herman D. White of Eau Claire was chosen as temporary president with the understanding that he would be allowed to name the league secretary. He chose Barney M. Neary, also of Eau Claire, who served in that office until the close of the 1961 season. White remained president through the 1957 season when Peter Bradbury of Aberdeen was elected. White was back for the 1960 and 1961 seasons, succeeded by Brooks Brokol of Grand Forks.

During White's tenure the league became well established and was known throughout baseball as financially sound. The league also was able to move from a D to a C classification and to effect player working agreements for each of its clubs with major league chains. White was also the first Class D league president ever to be chosen as a member of the National Association executive committee, to which he was reelected for four consecutive terms; he served as chairman for three terms. White was also a promoter of the Wisconsin State League as a Class D professional loop and continued as its president for ten years.

Early Pennant Winners

1933	Superior beat Brandon in split-season playoff.
1934	Superior over Fargo-Moorhead; split-season.
1935	Winnipeg over Fargo-Moorhead; split-season.
1936	Jamestown over Eau Claire; four-game series.
1937	Duluth won championship and four-game series.
1938	Superior over Duluth in finals of four-game playoff.
1939	Winnipeg won championship, four-team series.
1940	Grand Forks won championship, four-team playoff.
1941	Wausau over Eau Claire in four-team playoff,

1942 Eau Claire over Winnipeg, four-team series.
1943-1945 League did not operate.
1946 St. Cloud won championship and four-team playoff.
1947 Aberdeen over Sioux Falls in four-team playoff.
1948 Grand Forks in four-team series.
1949 Eau Claire over Aberdeen in four-team playoff.
1950 St. Cloud over Sioux Falls, four-team playoff.
1951 Eau Claire over Grand Forks, four-team playoff.

(In 1939, Robert A. Schmidt of the Duluth Dukes was the batting champion of all professional baseball with a .441 average.)