

**Hugh S. Fullerton,
the Black Sox Scandal,
and the Ethical Impulse in Sports Writing**

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Acknowledgement and Introduction

Here's the thing about original research: You get to be a kid again. You're innocent. Everything is new. Everything is for the first time. You're the first man on the moon. You're Lewis. Or Clark. Your mission, if you'll pardon the pop culture reference, is to go where no man — or woman — has gone before.

And here's the thing about writing: You get to put your mark on the research. For eternity, really, you are now part of the subject you have researched and reassembled.

I have lived with the subject of this research, Hugh Fullerton III, for a very long time, even though he died almost three years before I was born. To most people, Fullerton is the man who uncovered the fix of the 1919 World Series, remembered as the Black Sox scandal. For more than a quarter century preceding that World Series, Fullerton was the best known and most read sports writer in America. Working out of Chicago between 1893 and 1920 before the City on the Lake ceded the center of the baseball — and therefore the sports — universe to New York, Fullerton had the guts to write about a subject most American journalists, especially sports writers, ignored: gambling.

I always wondered why he did it. Why Fullerton and not Ring Lardner or Grantland Rice, sports writers better and longer remembered than the man who was mentor to the former and a role model for the later. A man who, if you know baseball in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, was a combination of Peter Gammons and Bill James. Why did Hugh Fullerton fade from most baseball fans' collective memory?

So I started to research the subject. I learned that Hugh Fullerton I had been educated in the 1840s by none other than William Holmes McGuffey, compiler of the famed McGuffey Readers of the late 19th century Middle Border America. The very same schoolbooks that a young Hugh Fullerton III studied from and, my research discovered, returned to in his later life. My research trail took me to Miami, Ohio, and McGuffey Hall, a library and museum on the Miami University campus. It was there that I

discovered Fullerton's correspondence between 1936 and his death in late 1945 with Dr. Harvey C. Minnich, perhaps the foremost McGuffey scholar and president of the McGuffey Society.

Finding those letters was like being a kid again.

And then I started to write and become, as my late friend and Black Sox scholar Gene Carney would call me in his book, "Burying the Black Sox," the leading authority on the life and motivation of Hugh Fullerton III.

Like most kids and researchers, I needed guidance in completing this project, which became the subject of this master's thesis, "Hugh S. Fullerton, the Black Sox Scandal, and the Ethical Impulse in Sports Writing." That support came from Michigan State University, where I began pursuit of a Master of Journalism degree in 1990, and concluded at George Mason University in 1997. Dr. Stephen Lacy, my friend and advisor, shepherded this lapsed academic and practicing sports writer through my coursework, research and writing every step of the way. But between 1993 and 1996, the writing languished as my career took me from East Lansing to Northern Virginia and USA Today. I needed, to be frank, a good kick in the can, and I got it from the late Roy Rosenzweig, the founder and director of the Center for History and New Media at GMU. How Roy found the time amazes me even today. But he was fascinated by my original research on the subject matter, and the connection I had made between Fullerton and McGuffey.

It is to the credit of these two men, professors Lacy and Rosenzweig, that this thesis and bibliographical essay exists. They encouraged my curiosity and interest in a heretofore obscure connection between Fullerton and McGuffey. Together, we all came to believe, as did Gene Carney, that the ethical impulse and motivation in Fullerton's life and career resulted in a heroic act of journalism that, for almost a century, cost him his reputation.

Hopefully, this thesis helps restore that deserved reputation.

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Hugh S. Fullerton, the Black Sox Scandal, and the Ethical Impulse in Sports Writing

History is the study of the past in all its splendid messiness, writes the historian Simon Schama. And for a baseball fan, what more splendid mess could there be than the crooked World Series of 1919? F. Scott Fitzgerald, no great baseball fan despite his friendship with Ring Lardner, found the Black Sox scandal to be the perfect metaphor for American disillusionment after World War I. Fitzgerald wrote his great American novel, *The Great Gatsby*, with its memorable references to the fix, within easy memory of the scandal. Fitzgerald understood that the illegitimacy of the defining event of the Great American Pastime represented the ultimate deception of American popular culture that is so well articulated in the mythology, if not the reality, of baseball.

Although most sportswriters of the day had a sense that the 1919 World Series between the heavily favored Chicago White Sox and underdog Cincinnati Reds was not on the square, only one among them had the courage at the time to write it. Hugh S. Fullerton, then 46-years old and considered among the leading baseball writers of his era, wrote the story that Lardner, given his cynicism, and Grantland Rice, in the sweetness of his nature and style, would not and could not write. “The fake world series of 1919

produced some of the worst newspaper reporting that the American press ever has been guilty of, and while all of us who were detailed to cover the show were not fired for missing the greatest sport story in 20 years is something that I have never understood. We were terrible,” wrote columnist Westbrook Pegler from the more convenient perspective of 1932. Yet today, we celebrate Lardner, revere Rice and barely remember Fullerton, who may have been more respected than either in their day. “Mr. Lardner obviously had his suspicions,” Pegler continued in the same *Chicago Tribune* column, “but he was a trained seal by this time and his job was only to make merry to the extent of a few hundred words a day.” Only Fullerton spoke up, and Pegler could only wonder at why:

Even a story hinting darkly that something was “wrong” would have saved face for us, but not a word was written to this effect until the series was over and Hugh Fullerton took a cautious chance. Hugh wrote that there had indeed been something wrong. ... In fact, it looked as though Mr. Fullerton might be ostracized as an enemy of the game until the story of the fake exploded and not only justified his insinuations but made them seem timid and weak. However, he alone of all the hundreds who were working on the story of the world series had the gumption and the newspaper sense to touch the fake at all.¹

From an even more distant perspective today, Pegler’s question still resonates: Why was the fix generally ignored until almost a year later, when a Cook County, Illinois, grand jury brought indictments against the eight Chicago players involved? Even more important, why did Fullerton, who was better known for his prognosticating skills and tracts on the science of baseball, refuse to ignore it as well? What separated Fullerton from his peers? The purpose of this paper will be to demonstrate that a combination of journalistic persistence and moral indignation, or ethical impulse, motivated Fullerton to his single-most courageous act: exposing the Black Sox scandal. As a result, Fullerton

¹ Westbrook Pegler, “Nobody’s Business,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1932.

and the emerging profession of sports writing will be viewed in a larger and more revealing historical perspective. Previously unexamined personal correspondence and a more thorough examination of Fullerton's wide-ranging writing will provide greater insight into his role and a better understanding of the emerging sports journalism of the first quarter of the twentieth century.

To do this, it is necessary to examine details of the fix and resulting cover-up; to understand the nature of professional baseball before 1920, commonly regarded as a watershed year in the game's history because of the introduction of the lively ball; and finally, to recognize the influence of gambling on the game from its professional beginnings in 1869 well into the 1920s. Outside of that baseball context, Fullerton needs to be re-examined beyond his sports writing, for which he is almost exclusively remembered, when remembered at all. Much like the scandal itself, Fullerton needs to be viewed within the larger social context of the era in which he lived and the fix took place. A lifelong student and devotee of the grade school textbooks popularized by William Holmes McGuffey in the middle third of the nineteenth century, Fullerton emerged from a Victorian agrarian America into an urban industrial society influenced by this country's first organized reform movements. Therefore, it is important to understand cultural and literary developments in American society from the late-Victorian Era through the reform movements that became known as progressivism as the country emerged from World War I. Any examination of the Black Sox scandal, as Fitzgerald came to understand, parallels the disillusionment that many reformers experienced after the Great War. Like many progressives who grew up as children of the Victorian Era, Fullerton ultimately found solace and even renewed hope in a reemerging McGuffeyism in the 1920s right up

until his death in late 1945. It is the lessons from the McGuffey Readers of Fullerton's childhood, among the numerous other influences on his life and career, that stand out as having shaped his view of life, baseball and, ultimately, the crooked World Series of 1919.

Who Was Hugh Fullerton?

Hugh Fullerton never intended to be a hero. In fact, he may never have perceived himself to be a muckraking progressive attempting to reform the game he loved to his dying day, a quarter century after writing the most important and vilified story of his life. Fullerton wrote that story in the *New York Evening World* on December 15, 1919, two months after the shocking upset of the Chicago White Sox by Cincinnati in the World Series. Fullerton stunned and upset his many friends in Organized Baseball with an article titled, "Is Big League Baseball Being Run for Gamblers, with Players in the Deal?" In the story, which he could not get published in Chicago² and which was severely watered down by his New York editors, Fullerton described his observations and experiences both during and after the Series.³ "He was like a bird dog on the scent and never let go of the story," wrote another renowned baseball writer, Frederick G. Lieb. "From gamblers, politicians and players, he pieced together a story."⁴ Adds Laurence R.

² Neither the *Herald-Examiner*, the Chicago newspaper that originated Fullerton's syndicated column at the time of the 1919 World Series, nor the *Chicago Tribune*, for which Fullerton wrote eighteen of his twenty-two years in the city, would print his stories of a fix because they feared being accused of libel.

³ Hugh S. Fullerton, "Is Big League Baseball Being Run for Gamblers, with Players in the Deal?" *The New York Evening World*, Dec. 15, 1919, pp. 3, 20.

⁴ Frederick G. Lieb, "Fullerton, Famed Forecaster, Named Spink Award Winner," *The Sporting News*, November 7, 1964. Fullerton was the third sports writer to receive the Spink Award for distinguished baseball writers in the Hall of Fame. J.G. Taylor Spink, the founder of *The Sporting News*, and Ring Lardner preceded Fullerton into the Hall.

Connor, who worked with Fullerton late in his career at the *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, “He hated sham and double-dealing and what he was often quick to denominate as ‘crookedness’ in any field of work.”⁵ But Fullerton was a solitary voice at the time. His career and reputation never fully recovered from stepping outside the game’s conservative establishment, of which he and almost every sports writer who remained in the profession was a part. As Harold Seymour writes in his classic examination of the game’s early years, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, “The belief that baseball was honest and upright constituted an article of secular faith in the America of those far-off, less complicated decades early in the century.” An editorial on October 5, 1906 in the *Chicago Tribune* stated: “Baseball is one of the few sports which have not been contaminated by evil influences. ... And there is the belief everywhere that each player is honest.”⁶ Quoting from an editorial from *The Nation* written in 1920, Seymour points out that “we do not trust cashiers half as much, or diplomats, or policemen, or physicians, as we trust an outfielder or a shortstop.”⁷ Or, as much as America trusted “Shoeless” Joe Jackson and Oscar “Happy” Felsch, both outfielders, or Swede Risberg, the shortstop -- three of the eight Black Sox who conspired to throw the Series. To think and write otherwise, despite mounting evidence, was unthinkable and almost unprintable in America in 1919. Yet Fullerton risked doing both with his story in *The Evening World*:

Professional baseball has reached a crisis. The major leagues, both owners and players, are on trial. Charges of crookedness among the owners, accusations of cheating, of tampering with each other’s teams, with attempting to syndicate and control baseball, are bandied about openly. Charges that gamblers have

⁵ Laurence R. Connor, “Fullerton Praised for Versatility, Persistence,” *The Ohio Newspaper* (Vol. 38, No. 3, December, 1956, Columbus, Ohio).

⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, October 5, 1906, p. 8.

⁷ Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age* (Oxford University Press: New York and Oxford), 1971, p. 274.

succeeded in bribing ballplayers, that games have been bought and sold, that players are in the pay of professional gamblers and that even the World's Series was tampered with are made without attempt at refutation by the men who have their fortunes invested in baseball. ... Some are for keeping silent and "allowing it to blow over." The time has come for straight talk. How can club owners expect writers, editors and fans to have any faith in them or their game if they make no effort to clean up the scandal?⁸

Reaction from the baseball establishment to "the peddlers of scandal" was quick and harsh, even though the peddler was perceived by many to be the dean of America's baseball writers.⁹ The very next day, the morning *New York World* responded to the story, quoting White Sox owner Charles Comiskey:

I can say that we have discovered nothing to indicate that the team double-crossed me or the public last fall. Do not get the impression we have quit investigating. I am still working on the affair, and will go the limit to get any evidence to support the truth of these charges. And if I land the goods on any of my players I will see to it that there is no place in organized baseball for them. There will be no whitewashing or compromising with crooks, but as yet not one bit of reliable evidence has turned up.¹⁰

Baseball Magazine, a mouthpiece for the franchise owners, attacked Fullerton personally, calling him an "erratic writer. ... If a man really knows so little about baseball that he believes the game is or can be fixed, he should keep his mouth shut when in the presence of intelligent people."¹¹ The *Spalding Official Baseball Guide* of 1920 took Fullerton to task for basing his accusations, in part, on his pre-Series prediction that the

⁸ Hugh S. Fullerton, "Is Big League Baseball Being Run for Gamblers, with Players in the Deal?" *The New York Evening World*, Dec. 15, 1919, p. 3. It is important to note that the newspaper did not start the story on, or promote it from, the front page.

⁹ Of Fullerton's reputation, Lieb wrote in the 1964 *Sporting News* article: "Lardner wrote better and Charles Dryden was funnier, but for the first quarter of the century, Hughie Fullerton was better known to the general public than any other baseball writer. He literally was Mr. Baseball Writer. He was the game's greatest dopest. He perhaps had a lot to do with the use of the slang word dope, now happily discarded by most writers, for analysis of inside baseball."

¹⁰ *New York World*, Dec. 16, 1919, p. 10. Comiskey may have suspected the fix, but he lacked the hard evidence to prove it and, ultimately, the resolve to undermine his ball club and business. Eventually, Comiskey did indeed compromise with crooks.

¹¹ Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, pp. 295-7.

White Sox, one of the great teams of the dead ball era, would win easily. “When anyone undertakes to assert that any athletic pastime which does not result according to ‘dope’ is not fairly played, it seems that the ‘dope’ craze has gone a little beyond the bounds of reason and, one may add, justice.”¹² Westbrook Pegler, in his 1932 *Chicago Tribune* column praising Fullerton, also remembered that “Fullerton was denounced as a suspicious gossip and a destructive critic” for his expose.¹³

The ferocity of the attacks were in sharp contrast to the respect and high regard that his peers held Fullerton. That attitude was expressed by Grantland Rice in *American Magazine*. “Fullerton is a vital part of baseball,” Rice wrote in 1912 of the man the magazine described as “the greatest baseball reporter in the world” in the introduction. “The game has produced but one Wagner, one Anson, one Mathewson, one Lajoie, one Cobb -- and one Hugh S. Fullerton.” Rice got right to the heart of Fullerton’s talent:

There are others who have seen as many games. ... But there have been few others with all of this who have had as keen an insight into the spirit of both play and player and who have achieved deductions with so much skill and keenness -- who have excavated as deeply beneath the surface for all of importance that might lie below the obvious and who have applied the result of these excavations to the general trend of the contest.

Fullerton was a respected observer of the game, having played it himself, Rice continued. “He is well over six feet and his frame is as lank as his eyes are keen and as his drawl is magnetic, and there isn’t much around him that his eyes miss seeing or that his ears miss hearing.”¹⁴ If that was a prescription for a good ballplayer, it was also the description of a great reporter.

¹² Connor, “Fullerton Praised for Versatility, Persistence,” p. 6.

¹³ Pegler, “Nobody’s Business,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1932.

¹⁴ Grantland Rice, “Interesting People: Hugh S. Fullerton,” *American Magazine*, June, 1912, pp. 160-2.

Fullerton's specialty was his prognostication, or doping, of pennant races and particularly the World Series. Fullerton believed that the very essence of baseball lay in the certainty that he could predict baseball games and season-long results by applying a quantitative, or scientific, system.¹⁵ Much as Frederick Winslow Taylor, in *The Principles of Scientific Management*, first published in 1911, believed that "the fundamental principles of scientific management are applicable to all kinds of human activities," Fullerton believed the science of "averages and comparisons" could be applied to baseball.¹⁶ This was an accepted and popular approach at that time in an increasingly progressive America, both socially and politically. The very essence of this progressivism was, writes David B. Danbom, "the desire to force public behavior to conform to standards of value rooted in Christianity or science."¹⁷ Fullerton's Christianity, or ethical impulse, was firmly rooted in his Ohio education. The science, by which he arrived at his baseball predictions, was based on placing mathematical values on positions and players, not unlike the work of Bill James in his annual *Baseball*

¹⁵ "There is nothing in our national life as acutely American as baseball ... the only perfect mathematical game ever invented by man," Fullerton wrote in his final article, published shortly after his death in *Esquire*, "Inside Baseball" (May, 1946), p. 78.

¹⁶ Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1911), p. 7. As Fullerton explained in "A Daring Prediction: This Year's Winner Picked in Both Leagues," *American Magazine* (Vol. 81, May, 1916), "All you have to do is to take the guide books for five years, find out exactly what a player has done, hunt up the figures on each youngster coming from the minor leagues ... compare the eight clubs position by position, then compile the figures until you have made up the teams, and see the value of each team. Simple, is it not?" (p. 26).

¹⁷ David B. Danbom, *The World of Hope: Progressives and the Struggle for an Ethical Public Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), p. ix. Danbom adds: "By 1910, these Christian progressives, who hoped to reform America through regenerate people, were challenged by more scientific reformers who judged truth empirically and valued efficient behavior more highly than individual character." (viii). Fullerton probably fell somewhere between the two, although left to his figures, he would have chosen the numbers every time. Wrote Fullerton in "A Daring Baseball Prediction," "You have no idea what a thrill I got when, after six weeks of studying, calculating, compiling position after position, then assembling infields, outfielders, pitchers and catchers, I commenced to add up and discovered what the 'dope' showed. It was like having the bases clogged, two out in an extra inning game in the World Series." (p. 26)

Abstracts. The system was imbued with what Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick characterized as “the hopefulness and optimism which the reformers brought to the tasks of applying science and administration to the high moral purposes in which they believed.”¹⁸ Baseball, to Fullerton, epitomized high moral purpose. But it was also a game in which the results made perfect sense.

Fullerton proved to be peerless in his rate of success, resulting in the syndication of his predictions throughout the country for more than a decade preceding the 1919 World Series. “His greatest contributions within the profession were two in number,” wrote Connor. “One was his ability, proved time and again, to forecast accurately the outcome of either individual baseball games, or whole series of games.”¹⁹ The second, of course, was his expose of the Black Sox scandal, aided by his unwavering belief that the numbers just didn’t add up. Fullerton detailed his system in *American Magazine* in 1916: “These are not guesses,” he wrote. “For a long period of years I have been studying ‘dope’ on baseball, and am convinced that it is possible to figure in advance exactly where teams will finish.”²⁰ Fullerton explained in the story that he had used the system for more than twelve years. His first great success came in 1906 when he attracted national attention by picking the “Hitless Wonder” Chicago White Sox to defeat the great Chicago Cubs, who had won a still-record 116 games, in the World Series.²¹ The day

¹⁸ Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormack, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, Inc, 1983), p. 118.

¹⁹ Connor, “Fullerton Praised for Versatility, Persistence,” p. 5.

²⁰ Fullerton, “A Daring Prediction: This Year’s Winner Picked in Both Leagues,” p. 25.

²¹ This is one baseball’s great stories, told well by Lieb, one the game’s great storytellers, in his obituary of Fullerton that appeared in *The Sporting News* on January 3, 1946: “With the Cubs a three-to-one favorite, Jim Keeley, former city editor of the Chicago Tribune, was skeptical when Hughie submitted his story predicting the weak-hitting Sox, because of their strong pitching and ability to win on few hits and runs, would defeat the great team of Tinker, Evers and Chance. Hughie even designated the games and forecast

after the series ended, the *Tribune* belatedly printed the story in full with this editor's note:

When it was known that two pennants would come to Chicago, H.S. Fullerton of "The Tribune" wrote an analysis of the two teams, telling why the White Sox would win the world's championship. Some one in authority, who thought he knew it all, refused to take a chance in printing Mr. Fullerton's forecast, but it has been verified so remarkably by the games as played that it is now printed just as it was written.²²

The story enhanced his reputation. "The incident made Fullerton a minor celebrity and," writes Jonathan Yardley somewhat unfairly, "some sports writers have argued, he coasted on it for the rest of his career."²³

Fullerton was much more than a one-year wonder, however, following up with easy picks of the Cubs over Ty Cobb's Detroit Tigers in 1907 and 1908, and Pittsburgh's upset of Detroit in 1909. "By that time newspapers all over the country were clamoring for Hughie's pre-World's Series dope," writes Lieb.²⁴ Fullerton missed on his predictions in 1910, 1914, 1919, of course, and in 1922, the last time his Series picks can be found. But it was Fullerton's unshakable belief in his own scientific system of forecasting that fortified him with the persistence to make his second great contribution to baseball: writing that the 1919 World Series had not been on the level. That absolute confidence in his system, combined with his moral indignation, was based on more than the figures and

the scores of the games he believed the Sox would win. Keeley was reluctant to print Fullerton's dope, fearing it would backfire and make the newspaper look ridiculous. So he struck a compromise with Hughie; if Fullerton would predict rain for one of the days, the public would consider it a big joke, and he would run the story. Hughie agreed, and even his rainy day forecast added to his laurels as a prognosticator. He picked the White Sox to win the first and third games on a Tuesday and Thursday, the Cubs to win the second on Wednesday and rain for Friday. And he hit everything right on the nose. The Sox won the first game, 2 to 1; the Cubs took the second, 7 to 1; the White Sox swung back to win the third. 3 to 0, and then, sure enough the Series was held up by a day of rain on Friday."

²² Hugh S. Fullerton, "Series Verified Fullerton's Dope," *Chicago Tribune*, October 15, 1906, p. 4.

²³ Jonathan Yardley, *Ring: A Biography of Ring Lardner* (Random House, New York: 1977), p. 69.

his knowledge of the science of baseball. Combined with his moral indignation, it created an ethical impulse in his writing that permitted Fullerton no other course of action.

Fullerton's national reputation as a baseball writer who both understood and loved the game was firmly established well before the Black Sox scandal. Charles Fountain, in his excellent 1993 biography of Grantland Rice, wrote, "Chicago rivaled New York as a newspaper town, and as a sports writing town it was without equal. Hugh Fullerton of the *Examiner* stood at the head of the class."²⁵ Jonathan Yardley, in his biography of Ring Lardner, wrote that Fullerton, along with I.E. (Sy) Sanborn and Charles Dryden, were "the three most prominent Chicago baseball writers of the time."²⁶ By 1919, Fullerton had written more than 100 freelance magazine articles, the majority of them for *American Magazine*, among the largest (its circulation would peak at more than a million in the 1920s) and finest contemporary American magazines in the first quarter of the century. It was also the favorite magazine of the muckrakers, progressive journalists who pioneered investigative journalism, called the literature of exposure at that time. The magazine was a unique experiment among periodicals because it was owned after 1907 by some of the foremost muckraking journalists of the period: Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker and John S. Phillips. "The muckrakers were ... the press agents for the Progressive movement," writes Arthur and Lila Weinberg.²⁷ "All

²⁴ Frederick G. Lieb, "Hugh, Who Was Game's Original Dopester, Dies at 72," *The Sporting News*, January 3, 1946.

²⁵ Charles Fountain, *Sportswriter: The Life and Times of Grantland Rice* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 83.

²⁶ Yardley, *Ring*, p. 81.

²⁷ Arthur and Lila Weinberg, *The Muckrakers: The Era in Journalism that Moved America to Reform -- The Most Significant Magazine Articles of 1902-1912* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. xviii.

of progressivism's distinctive features found expression in muckraking, the literary spearhead of early twentieth century reform," writes Link and McCormick.²⁸

Sports writers are rarely if ever included in studies of, or discussions about, muckraking.²⁹ A case can be made for including Fullerton, however, considering his prolific output in *American Magazine* and his coverage of the Black Sox scandal. Media coverage, certainly, was national in scope, and the scandal had significant cultural impact.³⁰ "Behind the exposes of the muckrakers," Link and McCormick write, "lay the progressive attitude toward industrialism. It was here to stay, but many of its aspects

²⁸ Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, p. 24.

²⁹ Louis Filler, in *Muckraking and Progressivism in the American Tradition* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publisher, 1976 and 1996), spends several pages discussing the Black Sox scandal's impact on American culture, but fails to address the issue of media coverage. He writes: "A later generation made much of a chapter in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* that saw American corruption in the event. The novel told something about the American character -- not overmuch, but something -- and less about the shadows through which progressivism was passing, into an uncertain future." (p. 421) Filler mentions Ring Lardner and claims the scandal made him "a bitter cynic ... Baseball was only a game, but it took its toll." (p. 422). Lardner, however, as his writing demonstrates, was a cynic long before the Black Sox scandal. In a phone interview on September 14, 1994, with the noted Fitzgerald and Lardner scholar, Matthew J. Bruccoli, he credited Lardner with introducing Fitzgerald to the gambler Arnold Rothstein and that Lardner undoubtedly influenced the younger Fitzgerald's impression of the scandal: "It's true that they would sit up together night after night drinking. You have to remember that Fitzgerald was only 27 in 1923, when he was writing *Gatsby*. Lardner was about ten years older. Fitzgerald really was a hayseed then; he was not sophisticated at all. He didn't have any inside dope or information on anything like sports or gambling or the rackets. It is most likely that Fitzgerald's source for information on sports and the Black Sox scandal was Lardner. That's pure guesswork, but who else would he have gone to? Lardner was an insider in that world; Fitzgerald was an outsider in that world. I had a letter from Lardner to Fitzgerald in which he told him how the first Dempsey-Tunney fight was fixed, but the publisher wouldn't let me use it. Lardner had spent years and years traveling on trains and living in hotels with ballplayers. He knew what petty, venal, dirty, uneducated people ballplayers were. Lardner had written "You Know Me, Al." Lardner had absolutely no illusions about ballplayers or what they were capable of doing. It is believed in some circles that the Black Sox scandal broke Ring Lardner's heart. But he had lost faith in sports and baseball long before that. Far from being shocked about the scandal, he knew about it all along. I would insist to my dying breath that Lardner had already lost his faith in the purity and decency of American sports and baseball. To think otherwise, bluntly, is naive thinking. Lardner knew what was going on as he covered each day's game. No. Lardner would have known. I refuse to see Ring Lardner as an innocent country boob."

³⁰ Eliot Asinof, in *1919: America's Loss of Innocence* (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1990), argues that: "There is no more telling incident in America's loss of innocence than the fixing of the 1919 World Series." (p. 346). Asinof writes that four major events that year, including the scandal, had critical impact on American cultural history: Woodrow Wilson's defeats at the Paris Peace Conference and the rejection

seemed to be deplorable.”³¹ That attitude was inspired by two guiding principles: a near religious evangelicalism that surfaced in secular literature, including sports coverage, and an abiding faith in the sciences. Fullerton, may not have thought of himself as part of any specific progressive movement, but he fervently believed in the ideology professional baseball was creating for itself, and in the purity and unyielding honesty of his figures. The first may not have distinguished him from his peers, but combined with the second, it made him a unique player during the Black Sox scandal.

Fullerton had co-written a book on baseball with the great Cubs second baseman, John Evers, *Touching Second: The Science of Baseball*, in 1910 that was excerpted in *American Magazine* throughout 1911. The book and magazine articles further solidified his growing reputation as a knowledgeable and scientific baseball man. But being a writer of eclectic interests, Fullerton wrote less about baseball and more about a variety of off-sports subjects in the periodicals after 1912.³² The baseball man, it seems, was something of a renaissance man as well. “His specialty is whatever happens to be at

of the League of Nations by the United State Senate, renouncing the President’s idealism; enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment on prohibition; and the Red Scare.

³¹ Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, pp. 24-5.

³² In a letter from Fullerton’s grandson, Hugh S. Fullerton V, to me on October 18, 1992, he points out that less than half of Fullerton’s 146 researchable magazine articles and stories were sports related, and more than a third was fiction. “The man who staked his reputation on his knowledge of baseball and ability to write a good yarn showed that he could write about a wide variety of subjects, for a wide variety of publications,” Hugh V wrote. “Also, a few have *non de plumes*. I know this, because one has the byline of his wife’s half-brother, who was not a writer to my knowledge! Apparently, he either thought his reputation as a sportswriter would be lessened, or his credibility as a serious writer doubted, if it were known that he wrote other kinds of material, especially the inspirational articles he had in *American*.” In correspondence Hugh V included, a letter to Fullerton from Ralph Hale, editor of Small, Maynard & Company, Publishers, in Boston dated April 9, 1917, reads in part: “You may be sure that I shall not give away the identity of Ralph Stuart. ... When a man is particularly successful, as you have been, in any one kind of writing, nobody wants him to write anything else.”

hand,” wrote Grantland Rice, “whether it be baseball, cooking, golf, climate, people or local industries.”³³

Fullerton’s character was irrevocably forged while growing up on America’s Middle Border.³⁴ Born on September 10, 1873 in Hillsboro, Ohio, Fullerton would maintain a lifelong and ultimately consuming interest in William Holmes McGuffey and his Readers, the schoolbooks of his youth. The connection has been neglected in the scattered mentions of Fullerton, thus obscuring a potential source for his moral indignation with the compromising influence of gambling on the essential science of baseball from which his reputation as a prognosticator and journalist depended. As a youngster, Fullerton’s mother and many of their neighbors were active in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, which had its earliest roots in Hillsboro. Growing up, he wore the uniform of the Boys’ Temperance League.³⁵ Like many journalists and authors who were born in the late nineteenth century, writing would become an attractive alternative to preaching without a pulpit.

It is a peculiarly American notion that all men (it took the Suffrage Movement and the 19th Amendment to add women to the equation) can make of their lives what they will. The ideas that support this conviction, and the success literature that expressed it, makes up what Richard Weiss calls the American myth of success. The belief that opportunity existed for everyone was pervasive in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

³³ Rice, “Interesting People,” p. 161.

³⁴ Lewis Atherton, in *Main Street on the Middle Broder* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), defined the Middle Border as Midwestern country towns from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa to the eastern farming areas of Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas after 1865. Church, school and home furnished “an extensive code of morality” for the sons and daughters of the Middle Border (p. 72).

³⁵ Hugh S. Fullerton, “The Crusade,” *Everybody’s Magazine* (June, 1919), p 60.

centuries, but had its roots in early American Puritanism, in the writings of Benjamin Franklin and in the novels of Horatio Alger Jr. From essays on the general conduct of daily health to self-help literature, this preachy style found new expression in the rags-to-riches and inspirational writings of the late Victorian and progressive periods. “The ‘rags-to-riches’ tradition in the nineteenth century centered around the ethical maxims of industry, frugality, and prudence,” writes Weiss, “in short, around the behavioral patterns enjoined by the Protestant ethic.”³⁶ McGuffey’s Readers were similarly centered, and given their influence on Fullerton, it is not surprising that his wide range of topics, including baseball, fell into the patterns of traditional American success literature. His first work of fiction, “Test o’ Nerve,” appeared in *American Magazine* in December, 1913, a thinly disguised account of a real situation that was inspirational in tone. Fullerton seemed especially interested in real-life Horatio Alger types, and used that model to create the three-volume Jimmy Kirkland series in 1915. In 1916, Fullerton began writing an occasional series for *American* about the Get Out and Get On (GOGO) Club, which was based on a club in a Midwestern city (most likely Chicago) whose members were involved in helping each other achieve success. When a member did so, he had to leave the club. Therefore, the club was a gold mine of success stories. The ideal world that this style of literature yearned for was a harmonious one, marked by moderation in all behaviors. However, as Weiss points out, “The values embodied in the myth of success conflicted with the day-to-day practices of a rapidly industrializing society. This clash lent the myth a reformist tendency ... the commitment to open

³⁶ Richard Weiss, *The American Myth of Success: From Horatio Alger to Norman Vincent Peale* (New York, London: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1969), p. 5.

opportunity was and is an important weapon in the reformer's ideological arsenal." Weiss concludes that the reform movements of the Progressive Era were, in a significant sense, an attempt to translate success literature into social realities.³⁷ Baseball provided Fullerton with an ideal tableau for playing out the literature of success, and businessmen/owners like Charles Comiskey could not have asked for or invented a better accomplice. H. Addington Bruce, who wrote on psychological topics early in the twentieth century, argued that professional baseball enjoyed unchallenged pre-eminence in and influence on American life during the Progressive Era:

Physical fitness, courage, honesty, patience, the spirit of initiative combined with due respect for lawful authority, soundness and quickness of judgment, self-confidence, self-control, cheeriness, fair-mindedness, and appreciation of the importance of social solidarity, of "team play" -- these are the traits requisite as never before for success in the life of an individual and a nation. ... It is safe to say that no other game -- not even excepting football -- develops them as does baseball.³⁸

As organized sports, with baseball in the forefront, accommodated itself to the benefits of capitalism, it preyed, in effect, on the American dependence for moral guidance that had, for so long, been provided primarily by religion. Today, the relationship of sport and morality has been tested and stretched beyond recognition.³⁹ But professional baseball in the late nineteenth century was just evolving into a game whose profitability depended greatly on spreading and believing in its own mythology and moral correctness. That profit motive, therefore, benefited enormously by positioning

³⁷ Weiss, *The American Myth of Success*, pp. 7-8.

³⁸ H. Addington Bruce, "Baseball and the National Life," *Outlook* 104 (May, 1913), p. 104.

³⁹ *New York Times* columnist Robert Lipsyte, on March 16, 1997 wrote: "As megasports loses its traditional posture as a secular religion and becomes absorbed, physically and morally, into the larger entertainment industry, the joining of the two fantasies, sports and movies, becomes more and more historically useful." (Sports, p. 9). It might be argued that sports has squandered the moral high ground it began to claim from religion in the middle third of the nineteenth century.

the game as a secular religion. Steven A. Riess calls this the baseball creed, which had its roots in the game's professional origins in the 1860s, and became fully institutionalized, widely accepted and generally approved by the early 1900s. The creed was also the reformer's ideal vehicle. "As fully articulated," writes Riess, "that social construct touched base with the prevailing broad-based progressive ethos which promoted efficiency, order, traditional values, social control, and acculturation."⁴⁰ All the virtues that McGuffey Readers had inculcated into a generation of easily influenced schoolboys like Fullerton presented themselves for mimicry in baseball: "fair play, gentlemanly virtue, self-reliance, middle-class decorum, community pride, and rural traditions," Riess adds. "This creed was an important stage in the development of the contemporary American sports ideology."⁴¹ Baseball thrived on its ability to convince the public that it could improve the spectator, or fan, in some socially beneficial way. Accomplishing that goal required respectability, and an eager-to-please media willingly reinforced the myth. John R. Betts argues that there had to be a great deal of intellectual justification for a positive role for sports like baseball before organized sport could gain the respectability and acceptance it craved.⁴² To accomplish that, baseball required a vanguard movement. And for the fledgling business dressed in baseball flannels, Hugh Fullerton and his peers came around at the right time -- at least until the mantle of respectability dropped away with the Black Sox scandal.

⁴⁰ Steven A. Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 221.

⁴¹ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 222.

⁴² John R. Betts, "Minds and Body in Early American Thought," *Journal of American History* (43: March, 1968), pp. 787-805.

This new breed of sportswriters benefited as well, of course. Generally disdained within their own newsrooms, they became the true believers among the growing masses of sport's disciples. "In the Progressive Era, club owners and sympathetic journalists created a self-serving ideology for baseball," writes Riess. "They encouraged the public to believe that the game was one of the foremost indigenous American institutions and that it epitomized the finest qualities of a bygone rural age."⁴³ As the print media became increasingly proficient at conveying information as a result of technological advances like the telegraph, distant athletic events could be reported on and distributed to a growing mass readership. "The exploding urban centers, with their vast number of immigrants, provided unparalleled markets for the consumption of recreation, new outlets for commercialized leisure," writes Elliott J. Gorn.⁴⁴ Professional sports and mass-marketed newspapers were coming of age together in the last third of the nineteenth century and becoming part of mainstream urban American life. Traditional moral verities such as honesty and diligence, which had for so long been preached from the pulpit in regard to the work ethic, now became the language of sports and play, hammered home daily in the newspaper. The very core of Puritan and Victorian ideology in America, soon to be followed by progressive reformers and muckrakers, was finding a new platform. It was a good time for a man like Fullerton, raised on the lessons of pious McGuffey Readers, to be a sports writer.

⁴³ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 41.

⁴⁴ Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, N.Y., p. 107.

Hugh Fullerton's McGuffey connection

It is no coincidence that Fullerton's body of work, which ranged from his baseball coverage and prognostications to magazine articles on non-sports topics to the three Horatio Alger-style youth novels in 1915, resemble the lessons he learned as a boy from McGuffey Readers. In 1921, for example, Fullerton imitated those lessons in an article, "The Ten Commandments of Sport, and of Everything Else," that appeared in *American Magazine*. "These ten commandments apply to life as much as they do sport," he wrote. "They are the principles of conduct which all sportsmen must obey if they want to remain within the pale."⁴⁵ The commandments form the backbone of Fullerton's Jimmy Kirkland series of boys' books, which were published by the John Winston Company in Philadelphia at a time when Fullerton's popularity was at or near its peak. Despite the books' literary deficiencies, the evolving plot remarkably foreshadows the Black Sox scandal four years later and provides Fullerton with perhaps his best platform for everything he had learned from the McGuffey Readers of his youth.⁴⁶

In the first volume, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys' Team*, Fullerton begins the story of James Lawrence Kirkland, a 15-year-old orphan who is traveling to live on

⁴⁵ Hugh S. Fullerton, "The Ten Commandments of Sport, and of Everything Else," *American Magazine*, Vol. 92 (August, 1921), p. 54. Fullerton's "Code of a Good Sport" consisted of: "1. Thou shalt not quit. 2. Thou shalt not alibi. 3. Thou shalt not gloat over winning. 4. Thou shalt not be a rotten loser. 5. Thou shalt not take unfair advantage. 6. Thou shalt not ask odds thou art unwilling to give. 7. Thou shalt always be ready to give thine opponent the shade. 8. Thou shalt not *under* estimate an opponent, not *over* estimate thyself. 9. Remember that the game is the thing, and that he who thinketh otherwise is a mucker and no true sportsman. 10. Honor the game thou playest, for he who playeth the game straight and hard wins even when he loses."

⁴⁶ In the introduction to *Old Favorites from the McGuffey Readers* (New York: American Book Company, 1936), Fullerton writes of William Holmes McGuffey: "And the man who taught us how to study and work, also taught us how to play. More than forty selections in his readers taught fair play and sportsmanship. In a time when sports and games were rude, rough, sometimes almost savage he preached the doctrine of fair play and honor. He was, in fact, the father of sportsmanship in the classroom, the workshop, and on the playing field." (p. vi)

his godfather's Oregon ranch. His adoptive father, Major Lawrence, is known as "The Timber King," one of the wealthiest men in the state, having made his fortune in timber, mining, oil development and cattle ranching in true late-nineteenth century rags-to-riches style. "He had come into the West a poor boy," Fullerton writes of the Major, "and, after struggles and hardships, had won competence and that great wealth with the development of the country."⁴⁷ It is no coincidence that Kirkland is an orphan. Almost without exception, the heroes of Alger's 107 novels, which enjoyed sales of more than seventeen million volumes, were orphans.⁴⁸ It is no coincidence, either, that Kirkland idealizes the Algerian and McGuffey litany of hard work, honesty, selflessness and persistence. These heroes, writes Weiss, "exemplify a genuine decency."⁴⁹ It is not difficult to draw similarities between Fullerton and Alger, whose father was a Unitarian minister and an abolitionist and whose sister was active in the temperance movement. Like McGuffey, there was a strong distaste for the social effects of industrialism and an even stronger assertion of the traditional Protestant virtues that found a home in the middle class, progressive reform movements. Alger's writing, similar to the progressive tendencies in Fullerton's inspirational fiction and non-sports magazine articles, reflected the reformer's tendency to recreate the more harmonious society in which he had been raised. "His heroes come from another time, another society, another reality," writes Weiss.⁵⁰ So, too, does Jimmy Kirkland.

⁴⁷ Hugh S. Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, Publishers, 1915), pp. 58-9.

⁴⁸ Weiss, *The American Myth of Success*, p. 53. Alger's greatest sales took place during the Progressive Era, "when nostalgia for an imagined time of equal opportunity was running high." (p. 60)

⁴⁹ Weiss, *The American Myth of Success*, p. 53.

⁵⁰ Weiss, *The American Myth of Success*, p. 59.

During his trip to Oregon, Kirkland meets and is befriended by “Gatling” Krag, a professional baseball pitcher. “Krag’s goodness of heart and his unfailing sympathy for all creatures in distress was a team joke,” Fullerton writes.⁵¹ Krag provides Kirkland with savvy advice throughout the first two books, writing him letters that serve as school lessons in the finest McGuffey tradition in the first book, and even coming to work on the Shasta View Ranch as foreman in *Jimmy Kirkland of the Cascade College Team*. For example, in one of his letters, Krag instructs Kirkland:

Kid, there is one thing you must learn if you ever are going to be a ball player, and that is to take it as it comes. Fight as hard as you can to win every game, and, if they beat you, grin and come back at them harder than ever the next time. If you worry over games that are lost, you will never win. Forget the lost ones and go after those that are yet to be played.⁵²

On the ranch, Kirkland, who is called Larry by his godfather, organizes a baseball team, drawing from the diverse background of the ranch workers’ children: Chinese, Japanese, Irish and Mexican youngsters practice the McGuffey lessons of hard work, teamwork and trust in a far-sighted view of racial cooperation for that time. This was, after all, the darkest days of Jim Crow America and a time when Japanese and Chinese immigrants were being denied entry into the United States and eligibility for citizenship. Fullerton writes: “I thought there wouldn’t be any kids to play with, but there are a lot of them on the ranch, only they are Mexicans and Chinese and Japanese and Negroes and all kinds, even Indians; but I’ve found them just like other boys.”⁵³ Although Kirkland regularly

⁵¹ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, p. 19.

⁵² Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, p. 30.

⁵³ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, p. 52. Later in the book, Fullerton writes: “The spectacle of boys of almost every race in the world, gathered under his roof on terms of frank equality, and enjoying themselves, pleased the democratic spirit of the Major.” (p. 121) Later on, the Major says: “There are no niggers, or Japs, or Chinamen, on this ranch. It is not the color that makes a man, or a boy. It is honesty, self-respect and cleanliness.” (p. 142)

turns to Krag for advice about baseball, he receives a healthy dose of guidance from Major Lawrence as well:

It is this way, boys. ... You fellows have been working hard and faithfully ... It is a good thing for each one of you and a good thing for the ranch. ... It is a good thing for all you boys to learn while you are young to work together for the good of all. Larry tells me that what wins in baseball is teamwork -- each boy forgetting himself and working for the team, and that is exactly what wins in a ranch, or a mine or in business. If you learn to work together in a baseball game, you'll learn to work together when you grow up and go into businesses for yourselves.⁵⁴

Charles Comiskey himself could not have been more succinct or spread the preferred image of the game more effectively.

The Kirkland story concludes with a pennant-fixing scam in *Jimmy Kirkland and the Plot for a Pennant*. That book, ironically, is dedicated to Charles A. Comiskey: “The man to whom, more than all others, the honesty and high standard of professional baseball is due, this little volume is dedicated with the sincere regard of a student to his preceptor.”⁵⁵ Given the real scandal that Fullerton would confront just a few years later, and that Comiskey would attempt to cover up, the book is remarkably prophetic and astute. In *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, Fullerton had immediately set the record straight on the team’s principles: “Shasta View did not play for money or engage in gambling.”⁵⁶ Fullerton demonstrates his grasp of the inside game of baseball in the third and final book. Four years before the gambler Joseph “Sport” Sullivan conspired with White Sox first baseman Chick Gandil to propose the fix that became the Black Sox scandal, Fullerton wrote about gambler Easy Ed Edwards, a pitcher named Adonis

⁵⁴ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, p. 139.

⁵⁵ Hugh S. Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland and the Plot for a Pennant* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, Publishers, 1915), p. 3.

⁵⁶ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland of the Shasta Boys Team*, p. 228.

Williams and their plot to throw ball games and, ultimately, the pennant. The crookedness is uncovered by Technicalities Feehan, a baseball writer (and thinly disguised stand-in for the author) who notices an irregularity in the statistics that points to wrongdoing. “It is impossible to construe the figures to mean but one of two things,” Feehan tells Kirkland, who is going by the alias of Jimmie McCarthy in the novel. “Either it is mere coincidence or Williams is deliberately trying to lose the pennant ... and things do not happen in baseball with that regularity.” Technicalities knows this as certainly as Fullerton, who even provides Feehan’s motivation in sharing the information: “I deserve no thanks. It’s merely in the line of square dealing and justice.”⁵⁷ The players respect Feehan, even if they find him and his figures a bit peculiar. “He’s a square little guy,” said Swanson. “And he’s got more brains in that funny-looking little head of his than this whole bunch has. He dopes things out pretty nearly right, and when he is convinced that he is right he goes the limit. ... Old Technicalities has him doped crooked in the figures.”⁵⁸ Fullerton may have given away the plot before it happened for real in 1919, and for the same reasons: He was a square guy, and he had the Black Sox doped crooked in the figures.

Like Jimmy Kirkland, the fictional hero of his 1915 series, Fullerton had yearned to wear his hometown’s baseball flannels. As a teenager, Fullerton wrote for the Hillsboro newspaper and played baseball for the town’s team, as well as for neighboring Lynchburg and Wilmington. He briefly attended Ohio State University, where he was a catcher for the college team, but dropped out and played second base for Olean, New

⁵⁷ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland and the Plot for a Pennant*, pp. 153-4.

⁵⁸ Fullerton, *Jimmy Kirkland and the Plot for a Pennant*, p. 156.

York, in the Iron and Oil League, and then for a team in Charlottesville, Virginia. Possessing a good eye for the game, Fullerton realized he wasn't going to play baseball at a higher level, so decided to write about it instead.⁵⁹ Fullerton was 18-years old when he went to work for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. By 1893, he had moved on to Chicago, fast becoming the sports writing capital of baseball. He first worked for the *Chicago Record*, but later and more prominently for the *Chicago Tribune*, where he wrote off and on for eighteen years. Fullerton's columns and prognostications were syndicated nationally in the years before the fix and resulting scandal, permitting him to move easily to New York City in the 1920s, where he worked for the *Evening World*, *Evening Mail*, the Bell Syndicate and *Liberty Magazine*. It is difficult to piece together a totally accurate chronology of Fullerton's career, especially during the two decades before he died on December 27, 1945 at the age of 72. As Fullerton grew older and his reputation faded, particularly his ability to make reliable prognostications during baseball's new lively ball era, he also worked for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Columbus Evening Dispatch*.⁶⁰ Despite his admission to the Hall of Fame in 1964, nearly 20 years after his death, Fullerton has continued to fade from baseball memory. Barely mentioned except within the general context of the Black Sox scandal, his protégé, Ring Lardner, and his peer, Grantland Rice, continue to grow in stature. It is almost as if the Black Sox scandal, as a

⁵⁹ Fullerton's final story appeared in the May, 1946, issue of *Esquire*, printed just a few months after his death. In it, he wrote: "I was playing with the town team before I was in high school. Oddly enough I wasn't a very good player, yet had the reputation of knowing more about the game than the others did. Nor was I good catcher. I insisted upon catching for the joy of having the whole game in front of me and because I could direct play."

⁶⁰ There is scant record of Fullerton's career after his Chicago years. Also, his freelancing output declined. However, Laurence R. Connor provided some insight into Fullerton's later career at the *Columbus Evening Dispatch* in "The Ohio Newspaper": "...my impression of Hugh Fullerton, gained during the few years I was privileged to work in the same office with him, was that he was an old-timer who still retained

piece of history too elusive for historians before Eliot Asinof wrote *Eight Men Out* in 1963, swallowed up and destroyed everyone involved.

It was during the later years of his career when he worked inside the office rather than outside at the ballpark, that Fullerton's interest in William Holmes McGuffey and his Readers began to consume him. The inner workings of a newspaper, particularly the copy desk, can have a stultifying effect on even the most enthusiastic journalists, especially those whose reputations were dependent on their byline, thus encouraging diversions. "Some died with their green eyeshades on, and some simply declared emotional bankruptcy and went crazy," writes Robert Lipsyte about the sports copy desk at *The New York Times*, where he broke into the business in 1957. In *SportsWorld: An American Dreamland*, one of the most insightful books written on American sport, Lipsyte writes that the copy desk was populated by "the cranky, wretched ground mechanics of sports journalism, a dozen men who sat around an island of wooden desks correcting, shortening, and usually improving the hot dispatches of ... the traveling sportswriters whom they envied and hated." It was a place staffed by editors who believed "all games fixed, all athletes cretins, all reporters on the take, all fans suckers."⁶¹ It could hardly have been a place of comfort for one of the greatest reporters during baseball's early years.

Not as active in the press box after leaving Chicago, Fullerton's ever-shifting interests locked on to the McGuffey Readers of his early education. The Readers were

the enthusiasm, the sharp nose for news and the ability for happy and cogent phrasing which had made him a great reporter."

⁶¹ Robert Lipsyte, *SportsWorld: An American Dreamland* (New York: Quadrangle Books/The New York Times Book Co., 1975), pp. 5-7.

enjoying the first of a number of revivals that periodically have impacted on American education. In 1927, *The Saturday Evening Post* printed his story, “That Guy McGuffey,” establishing his reputation as a foremost authority among the textbooks’ faithful. At the centennial celebration in Oxford, Ohio, marking the publication of the first McGuffey Reader, Dr. C. Harvey Minnich, director of Miami University’s McGuffey Museum, awarded Fullerton the degree of Doctor of Letters and called him “the greatest among students of McGuffey’s life” and “the greatest living authority of the educator.”⁶²

Fullerton’s grandfather, Hugh Fullerton I, was a Presbyterian minister in Southern Ohio and had been ordained by McGuffey while president at Ohio University. His father, Hugh II, had attended Miami University, where McGuffey also had been president. On May 14, 1938, Fullerton wrote to Minnich, who was secretary-treasurer of the Federation of McGuffey Societies at Miami of Ohio in Oxford, about his family’s McGuffey connection:

I have two problems about McGuffey that trouble me. One was that my grandfather was prepared for the ministry by McGuffey but where I cannot make out. ... He sent his four sons to Miami, largely because of McGuffey. ... McGuffey also assisted Robert Fullerton (Hugh Fullerton’s younger brother by sixteen years) who became a missionary and died in India after a rather remarkable career.⁶³

It would appear that the Fullerton family tended to the remarkable. Hugh I was an outspoken abolitionist before the Civil War.⁶⁴ His father, Hugh II, was a doctor with the Union Army in the Civil War who spoke Greek and Latin was a renowned raconteur in

⁶² “McGuffey Reader Centennial Is Celebrated by Thousands,” *The New York Times*, July 26, 1936. The subhead to the headline reads: “Degree Conferred on Hugh S. Fullerton for His Studies of Schoolbook Author’s Life.”

⁶³ All correspondence was obtained from the McGuffey archives, part of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Hillsboro, where he was a pharmacist. In answer to Fullerton's letter, Minnich wrote on May 26 to the Miami registrar, a Mr. Smyser, for information about the five Fullertons who attended the school. Smyser returned the letter with the information, written out longhand. On June 3, Minnich responded to Fullerton, inviting him to a McGuffey gathering at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, later in the month. In the letter, Minnich also documented the Fullerton family school history at Miami. The Minnich-Fullerton correspondence resumed in association with a Minnich project, begun in the mid-1920s, to build a memorial to McGuffey in Oxford. It was eventually dedicated in June, 1941.⁶⁵ Fullerton wrote a second article for *The Saturday Evening Post* that appeared on June 6, 1941, titled "Two Jolly Old Pedagogues: After 116 Years William Holmes McGuffey Gets a Monument." The article praised Minnich who, "For the great part of the last twenty years ... had worked to raise the memorial to McGuffey." But much like his piece in *The Saturday Evening Post* 14 years earlier, Fullerton's intent was

⁶⁴ In a letter on November 25, 1992, Hugh S. Fullerton V wrote to me of Hugh I: "His last sermon, a real barn-burner, was preached at Chilicothe. After the sermon he was mugged by street toughs who objected to his abolitionist views. He was stunned by this response to righteousness, and died a few months later."

⁶⁵ The correspondence involving the memorial, though anecdotal, further reflects on Fullerton's strong McGuffey connection. In a letter dated July 16, 1940, Minnich informed Fullerton of a royalty check for \$933.35 for his work as co-editor of *Old Favorites From The McGuffey Readers* (New York: American Book Company, 1936), which was bankrolled by Henry Ford. Although he did not ask outright, Minnich told Fullerton that the Federation of McGuffey Societies was about \$1,000 short to complete the memorial and that, "We are hoping that some of the McGuffey friends will help us in raising the necessary amount." There is no response in the file from Fullerton, and on September 4, Minnich wrote again, going into great detail about the memorial, adding, "and hope it will please you." Minnich added that the Federation planned to publish a list of donors, and that "we hope you make some small contribution if you desire to have your name in this list. It wouldn't look right without it." On October 7, Minnich wrote: "I have had no response to my letter of Sept. 4. I am worried for fear I may have said something I shouldn't have said in that letter, or that you may be ill (Fullerton indeed was in poor health). The show couldn't go on without you, and we are planning, of course, that you shall be with us June 14 and 15, 1941, which seem now the likely dates for the dedication." Obviously, Minnich was worried that he had offended Fullerton over the royalty check and donation suggestion. Fullerton finally responded on November 21 from the family home in Englewood, New Jersey, after summering in New Hampshire, where "we were secluded in a New Hampshire village all summer and most of the time out of touch with the world." There is no

to praise McGuffey. “His system and his books guided the minds of four fifths of the school children of the nation in their taste for literature, in their morality, in their social development and, next to the Bible, in their religion.” McGuffey’s disciples, Fullerton continued, “absorbed the rudiments of their philosophy, their culture and their sportsmanship from the McGuffey Readers.”⁶⁶ Chief among those disciples, of course, was Fullerton himself.

Fullerton’s 1927 article, often quoted in articles and books about McGuffey and his Readers, provides convincing evidence for their influence on his life and writing. Henry Steele Commager, in a foreword to a 1962 paperback edition of *McGuffey’s Fifth Eclectic Reader*, emphasized the influence that the Readers had on American education, culture and morals. At the height of the Readers’ popularity, Commager points out, education was considered primarily moral rather than intellectual: “From the First Reader on through the Sixth that morality is pervasive and insistent: there is rarely a page but addresses itself to some moral problem, points some moral lesson.”⁶⁷ Commager argues that it was the Middle Border generation, educated from the 1840s through the ‘80s, that was “most elaborately and persistently exposed” to the Readers. “Industry, sobriety, thrift, propriety, modesty, punctuality, conformity -- these were the essential virtues, and those who practiced them were sure of success.”⁶⁸ The Readers helped shaped what Commager calls “that elusive thing that we call the American character.” Given that

mention of a donation, but he writes that there are “health conditions in the family” and that he hoped to be able to attend the dedication. Fullerton was battling liver and gall bladder conditions at that time.

⁶⁶ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Two Jolly Old Pedagogues: After 116 Years William Holmes McGuffey Gets a Monument,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 16, 1941, p. 27.

⁶⁷ Henry Steele Commager, foreword to *McGuffey’s Fifth Eclectic Reader* (New York: New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1962), p. vi.

⁶⁸ Commager, p. viii.

Fullerton was educated in Hillsboro, Ohio, deep in the Middle Border, during the late 1870s and throughout the following decade, it is reasonable to believe that he was part of the generation Commager writes was “most elaborately and persistently exposed.”

Fullerton, in “That Guy McGuffey,” writes that the Readers were “the finest moral and cultural forces in the United States during the formative period of the West.” He

continues:

His texts in each book were chosen to give lessons in patriotism, integrity, honesty, temperance, politeness, courage and industry. ... Every edition and every revision ... had the same aim, and the effect upon the morality and the literary taste of the Middle West was greater, perhaps, than anything else during the era of settlement and development.⁶⁹

The Fullerton family connection is mentioned: correspondence between McGuffey and the Reverend Hugh Stuart Fullerton “regarding the need of systematic education and uniform texts for the children.”⁷⁰ And of his own education, Fullerton writes:

In our schools, when I started, we used a primer -- whether McGuffey’s I do not know -- which must have been a relic, for the First Reader immediately replaced it. ... Every lesson contained also a moral or religious lesson, and after many of the lessons the moral was printed. ... Always virtue triumphed and sin and evil were punished.⁷¹

Fullerton recalls the Fourth Reader:

I have a copy of the Fourth Reader we used ... There are copious rules ... Gosh, what fun we had in the Fourth Reader! ... There was a series of questions printed after each lesson which had to be answered, so a fellow could not just read a piece without thinking of the meaning and the moral, or pretty soon he would find himself down at the foot of the class, or maybe even standing in a corner with a dunce cap on his head.⁷²

⁶⁹ Hugh S. Fullerton, “That Guy McGuffey,” *The Saturday Evening Post* (November 26, 1927), p. 14.

⁷⁰ Fullerton, “That Guy McGuffey,” p. 57.

⁷¹ Fullerton, “That Guy McGuffey,” p. 57.

⁷² Fullerton, “That Guy McGuffey,” p. 58.

The Readers had something to say about everything, including gambling. It was a lesson the young Fullerton would carry into his professional career and that he likely remembered in 1919. “Then there was Timothy Flint’s Effects of Gambling,” he writes of an essay that first appeared in the Fifth McGuffey Reader in 1857. “Gosh, after we read that we were almost afraid to play seven-up, and Lonny Pierson refused to say ‘Shuffle’ when we played authors with cards for fear he would become a confirmed gambler. McGuffey’s moral lessons sunk home with some of us, anyhow.”⁷³ The essay could not have been more pointed in its condemnation of gambling:

The love of gambling steals, perhaps, more often than any other sin, with an imperceptible influence on its victim. ... My dear reader, let me implore you, by the mercies of God and the worth of your soul, to contemplate this enormous evil only from a distance. ... Another appalling view of gambling is, that it is *the prolific stem, the fruitful parent, of all other vices*. Blasphemy, falsehood, cheating, drunkenness, quarreling, and murder, are all naturally connected with gambling. ... Allow yourself to become a confirmed gambler, and detestable as this practice is, it will soon be only one among many gross sins of which you will be guilty.⁷⁴

For Fullerton, too, gambling was the root of all evil -- and certainly the root of what would eventually undermine the game he so dearly loved.

Gambling was a major theme for a pair of three-part series Fullerton wrote for *American Magazine* in 1914 and *Liberty* in 1927. The first series, “American Gambling and Gamblers,” was the result of research Fullerton had done in more than thirty

⁷³ The essay was used until 1866, then dropped until the 1885 edition, before being dropped again, according to a letter on October 4, 1993, from Frances D. McClure, Assistant to the Head, Special Collections and Archives, The Walter Havighurst Special Collections at Miami University. It was the 1866 series that Henry Ford had reprinted in 1932, Ms. McClure says, and the edition that Fullerton likely would have studied.

⁷⁴ Timothy Flint, Lesson LX, “Effects of Gambling,” an essay in Wm. H. McGuffey, LL.D., *McGuffey’s New Fifth Eclectic Reader: Selected and Original Exercises for Schools* (Cincinnati and New York: Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co., Electrotype Edition, c. 1866), pp. 204-208.

communities across the country.⁷⁵ “There is more gambling to-day in the United States than ever before,” Fullerton wrote. Echoing the lessons he had read in McGuffey Readers, right down to the use of italicized type used in the Flint essay, Fullerton preached: “*Politics, the saloon, and gambling are as inseparable as the owl, the prairie dog and rattlesnake of tradition. They are interdependent and cannot prosper without cooperation ... it exists because the voters regard it as a ‘harmless’ vice, until it strikes home at them.*”⁷⁶ The lesson had, indeed, sunk home. His later series in *Liberty*, “Are Baseball Games Framed?” was pegged to the scandal involving Ty Cobb, Tris Speaker and Joe Wood, three of the greatest players in the history of the game. “America’s national game again has been smeared over by slimy hands of gamblers,” wrote Fullerton in his introduction, referring back eight years to the Black Sox scandal.⁷⁷ “The fact that organized baseball’s settled policy for years of ‘keeping quiet for the sake of the sport’ has been the very thing that made crookedness possible, is overlooked.”⁷⁸

Fullerton was not alone in his enthusiasm for the Readers. Mark Sullivan, in *Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925*, had a great deal to say, all of it positive, about McGuffey Readers. Of the educator himself, Sullivan wrote that McGuffey “had a large influence in determining the thoughts and ideals of the American people. ... To probably nine out of ten average Americans, McGuffey had a large part in forming the mind of

⁷⁵ Fullerton, in “The Fellows Who Made the Game,” *The Saturday Evening Post* (April 21, 1928), writes: “Many of the old reporters carried unusual sidelines ... They had much time to read and study while on the road, and a number used it to research.” (p. 185) Obviously, Fullerton was one who used his time on the road “to study and research.”

⁷⁶ Hugh S. Fullerton, “American Gambling and Gamblers: Preying Upon the Wage Earners,” *American Magazine*, February, 1914, p. 33.

⁷⁷ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty*, March 19, 1927, p. 23.

America.”⁷⁹ Like many prominent Progressive Era figures, Henry Ford may have invented the symbol of progress in twentieth century America, the automobile, but his values were rooted in the Victorian morality of the previous decade. “His faith was strong if bigoted and contradictory,” writes Roderick Nash of Ford, “in this nervous clinging to old values even while undermining them.”⁸⁰ Ford was born in 1863, ten years before Fullerton, and the McGuffey Readers also were the staple of his moral education. With the wealth to spread the gospel as he understood it, Ford believed in a McGuffey morality mixed with a Horatio Alger-determination that was the essence of Fullerton’s writing as well. Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, became Ford’s repository of the past, even to the point of moving and rebuilding the cabin in which McGuffey was born and raised. By 1925, Ford owned one of the few complete collections of the many McGuffey editions, and in 1936 financed the printing of *Old Favorites From the McGuffey Readers*, for which Fullerton was one of several co-editors and wrote the forward. Sullivan, in reviews of *Old Favorites* and Minnich’s companion book, *William Holmes McGuffey and His Readers* (New York: American Book Company, 1936), emphasized the importance of studying education to adequately understand the history of a period. The author of *Our Times*, which dealt with the American generation that turned adult between 1900 and 1925, assessed the schools and textbooks from about 1860 to 1900. The use of McGuffey Readers, Sullivan says, was “practically universal throughout America (although this was not the case in New England, the Pacific Coast and the South

⁷⁸ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? Ty Cobb’s CAREER Is the Best Answer to Scandal Charges,” *Liberty*, March 26, 1927, p. 35.

⁷⁹ Mark Sullivan, *Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925, America Finding Herself* (New York, London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), pp. 12, 15.

after the Civil War). McGuffey, in short, because of the leverage of his Readers, had a large part in forming the mind of America.”⁸¹ Ford, at about the same time that *Our Times* was published in 1927, financed the distribution of a complete set of the Readers. And Fullerton, Sullivan points out, published his article, “That Guy McGuffey,” in *The Saturday Evening Post* during that same year. Taken together, the three events attracted further attention to the Readers and to the growth of McGuffey Societies throughout the country.

Americans, argues Phylis McGinley, have always been fond of the good old days, a time “blurred by the mists of history, softened and gently tinted, the virtues of the past magnified, the faults reduced to molehills.”⁸² With the decline of the Readers in American classrooms by the 1920s, McGuffey Societies were formed, especially in the Midwest, “motivated by both nostalgia and some sincere reservations about the progressive textbooks that were supplanting the McGuffeys.”⁸³ The Readers never ceased to appeal to Fullerton throughout his long and prolific career, always providing a panacea for the country’s ills. In the year that he died, Fullerton wrote a touching letter to his old friend Minnich from Southern Pines, N.C., that summed up his world view and the social significance he placed on the Readers:

(Fullerton asked Minnich) ... if any plan has been evolved to carry on the McGuffey tradition after we are all gone. I’ve been sick for a long time and am now better after four months of hospitals and bed. At my rate of improvement I will get well just in time to die of old age. ... My wife and I have been working on a plan to organize

⁸⁰ Roderick Nash, *The Nervous Generation: American Thought: 1917-1930* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company), 1970, p. 154.

⁸¹ Mark Sullivan, “The Most Influential Volumes in America,” *New York Herald Tribune*, January 3, 1937.

⁸² Phylis McGinley, “Lessons for Today: From McGuffey,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 20, 1951, p. 9.

⁸³ Stanley W. Lindberg, *The Annotated McGuffey: Selections from the McGuffey Eclectic Readers, 1836-1920* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976), p. xxii.

small groups in many communities to study and teach youngsters the arts, crafts, traditions and songs of early America which naturally fits in with the McGuffey idea. ... (There is) unexpected interest among the new generation. ... I feel that something must be done to save the American form of government and to offset the trend toward Sovietizing the United States -- and hope to contribute a little toward that end.⁸⁴

Minnich responded:

(I am) greatly delighted to know you are quite well again and harnessed for a new enterprise. ... They (McGuffey schools) have a pretty strong tendency toward the modern organization of schools, and yet, they are fond of the name McGuffey. The teachings of social objectives in the public schools has never been uniformly organized or formalized. While there is a spirit of moral instruction in these schools, there is yet no formalized course of study, nor is there formalized moral instruction in their philosophy of education. ... Believe me, I was delighted to hear from you and to know that you were well enough to undertake a new enterprise. Let me hear from you again, often if possible.⁸⁵

The Readers have enjoyed occasional revivals since Fullerton's death. Harry Truman, on several occasions while president, pointed out the virtues of a McGuffey education. In 1961, the town of Twin Lakes, Wisconsin, debated the use of McGuffey Readers as the school textbooks. And as recently as 1982, the Bristol, Virginia, school system returned to the Readers in grades one through six.⁸⁶ Simply put, the Readers have continued to appeal to "the affectionate memories of those who were school children in the second half of the nineteenth century."⁸⁷ More than 122 million copies of the Readers were distributed between 1836 and the 1920s; more than 150,000 copies were sold as recently as 1983.⁸⁸ McGuffey Societies literally mushroomed across the country,

⁸⁴ The letter, dated February 13, 1945, is from the McGuffey archives, part of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

⁸⁵ The letter is dated February 27, 1945.

⁸⁶ "The McGuffey Story: It Started in Bristol," McGuffey Reader Progress Report, 1982-83, prepared by Evelyn Murray, who was in charge of the Virginia town's reading program.

⁸⁷ Dolores P. Sullivan, *William Holmes McGuffey: Schoolmaster to the Nation* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1994, p. 21.

⁸⁸ "Ah, Good Old McGuffey," *U.S. World & News Reports*, May 2, 1983, p. 76.

beginning in Columbus, Ohio, with the Fifth Reader Club in 1918. By 1935, the Indianapolis society suggested a national federation of clubs to be headquartered at Miami University, where Minnich had launched the campaign in 1927 to erect a McGuffey memorial on the campus where the educator has been president nearly a century earlier. Today, the monument Minnich worked so hard and for so long to erect stands as a tangible reminder of the educator's influence. And so, too, does Fullerton's best work on the Black Sox scandal stand as a testament to lessons learned from those childhood textbooks.

Gambling and it's impact on baseball

By September of 1920, almost a full year after the fix, the baseball world was preoccupied with Babe Ruth's assault on the fifty home run mark (he would hit a record fifty-four) and tight pennant races. Attendance increased from 6.5 million in 1919 to 9.1 million in 1920, led by the Yankees (Ruth's new team after being traded from Boston) with 1.3 million.⁸⁹ The deadball era was over. Yet, the reality of the game had not changed for the better. The crooked World Series of 1919, when eight members of the Chicago White Sox agreed to lose to the Cincinnati Reds in exchange for payments from gamblers, was not an aberration, the isolated act of a handful of evil players and gamblers acting outside of their element. The scandal was the culmination of corruption dating back to the very beginnings of the professional game in the 1860s and baseball's

⁸⁹ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 15.

first game-fixing in 1865.⁹⁰ “Despite the rhetoric of professional baseball which claimed the sport was free of that vice, baseball was strongly tainted by gambling,” writes Steven A. Riess. “In fact, several baseball owners were professional gamblers, horsemen, heavy bettors, or friends of professional gamblers.”⁹¹ What ultimately proved most scandalous about the crooked 1919 World Series was not merely the fix by the players, but the attempted cover-up carried on by Organized Baseball, assisted by the gamblers themselves. Illinois States’ Attorney Maclay Hoyne, who called for the grand jury to investigate the Black Sox scandal in 1920, was a friend of White Sox owner Charles Comiskey. When Hoyne lost his bid for reelection before the actual trial began, he took the confessions when he cleaned out his papers, then turned them over to Alfred Austrian, Comiskey’s attorney, and William Fallon, who represented the gambler Arnold Rothstein.⁹² “It was a game of cheaters cheating cheaters, pally,” Abe Attell, the gambler who manipulated the fix, told Eliot Asinof.⁹³ Baseball owners were in denial -- profitable denial -- that the game had a gambling problem. “Most of us who were connected intimately with the game believed that (baseball could not be framed) to be true, and found it difficult to believe anything else,” wrote Fullerton of the prevailing attitude in

⁹⁰ Daniel E. Ginsburg, *The Fix Is In: A History of Baseball Gambling and Game Fixing Scandals* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1995). Ginsburg’s book provides the most detailed history of gambling and game fixing to date, right through Pete Rose’s suspension from baseball for gambling. According to Ginsburg, William Wamsley was the central figure in a game fixing scam in 1865 that involved Tammany Hall leader William M. “Boss” Tweed and was uncovered by baseball’s first great sportswriter, Henry Chadwick. “Bending the rules by paying players helped create an atmosphere in baseball that was conducive to dishonest play. If clubs were willing to pay players secretly to assure victory, it was not too great a leap for gamblers to pay players secretly to assure defeat!” Ginsburg writes (p. 5). Almost from the moment baseball players were first paid, gamblers saw an opportunity to capitalize.

⁹¹ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 279.

⁹² Eliot Asinof, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), pp. 130-1.

⁹³ Eliot Asinof, *Bleeding Between the Lines* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 105.

1927.⁹⁴ Fullerton and some of his peers knew better by then, but the game he cherished in a lifetime of observation and writing certainly did not want to read about it in the newspapers. “Honest and diligent,” writes Eliot Asinof, “Fullerton resented any implications of evil-doing that would sully the reputation of the game he loved.”⁹⁵

Ironically, the strongest implications would be his own.

Fullerton made significant contributions on the subject of gambling both before and after his newspaper stories at the time of the Black Sox scandal. The first appeared in 1914 in three installments in *American Magazine*. An editor’s note preceding the first installment read:

This is a frank study of a phase of life and morals in America. Professional gambling is much changed since “the old flush times,” but it is still carried on very widely and supported by people of every class. These articles are the result of long travels in many parts of the United States. They are real contributions of human and public interest.⁹⁶

In the series, Fullerton wrote that he had studied “the gambling situation” in more than thirty locales and had come to a conclusion:

There is more gambling to-day in the United States than ever before. ... Betting on baseball results is the largest development of recent years. ... Men who had made books on (horse) races all their lives saw the possibilities of baseball gambling. Last year, in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Detroit, I found race “bookies” abandoning their game entirely and devoting all their time to baseball books.⁹⁷

Fullerton revisited the subject in 1927 while serving as an editor in New York of *Liberty*, which was subtitled, *A Magazine of Religious Freedom*. The three-part series, titled, “Are

⁹⁴ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? Ty Cobb’s CAREER Is the Best Answer to Scandal Charges,” *Liberty* (March 26, 1927), p. 35.

⁹⁵ Asinof, *Eight Men Out*, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Hugh S. Fullerton, “American Gambling and Gamblers: Preying Upon the Wage Earners,” *American Magazine* (February, 1914), p. 33.

Baseball Games Framed?” detailed his knowledge of gambling on baseball and game fixing:

The truth is that, until the Black Sox scandal, players bet heavily, associated with gamblers, favored opposing players they liked, and even made small effort to beat certain teams late in the season after their own were out of the pennant race -- and neither they nor the owners or managers thought they were doing wrong.⁹⁸

Fullerton continued that his suspicions dated back as early as 1908:

Since 1908 I have been “off” baseball -- suspicious of some phases of it -- and satisfied that the relations between gamblers and some players were so close as to endanger the reputation of the entire institution. I watched for ten years before I could get what I considered sufficient evidence to charge actual crookedness, and then, when I denounced the Chicago Black Sox during and after the World’s Series of 1919, I was assailed from all directions and an attempt was made to assassinate me. This only strengthened my convictions that the series was crooked.⁹⁹

In the article, Fullerton detailed his suspicions:

In 1910 there was so much smoke about baseball I was convinced there was fire. I was told by a big gambler that a certain player had taken money to throw games, and I reported that to his manager. Neither of us believed the charge, but we were worried, and in 1911, the close relations between gamblers and players were alarming. I watched two American League players for weeks and saw them in frequent conferences with gamblers. ... I knew gambling was getting its grip on the game, and frequently wrote and argued, warning the owners of the danger.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Fullerton, “American Gambling and Gamblers: Preying Upon the Wage Earners,” *American Magazine*, pp. 33, 37.

⁹⁸ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty* (March 19, 1927), p. 24.

⁹⁹ Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty*, p. 24. Further on in the article, Fullerton details the attempt on his life. The story is fascinating and worth retelling: “The attempt to shoot me was made under the viaduct of the Illinois Central at Fifty-third Street in Chicago. My wife and I were to start for New York early the following morning. I went downtown to bid some friends good-by, and was followed by a man whose face I knew. A new subway was being built under the tracks, and I started under it, then remembered an errand and went back to a drug store. Returning through the dimly lighted subway I was accosted by a man who demanded to know if I was Fullerton. ‘No; Crane,’ I exclaimed, using the first name I could think of, and brushed past. As I stepped into the light another voice cried: ‘That’s the ----’ and two shots were fired. I started to run, fell, and the men fled. I got up unhurt and fled in the other direction, into a garage. Fearing I would be held as a witness and our trip East spoiled, I made no complaint, not even telling the family until we left the city. But I was satisfied that, if the crooks thought it important enough to get me out of the way, there must be much truth in the charges against the players.” (p. 24).

¹⁰⁰ Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty*, p. 27.

A year later, Fullerton was also aware of rumors that a Tammany Hall politician had fixed the 1912 World Series between the New York Giants and Boston Red Sox.

Three things made it difficult, even for Fullerton with his mathematically based prognostications, to prove that a baseball game had been fixed: cheating was difficult to detect; it was not in the best interests of someone involved in a fix to come forward; and Organized Baseball preferred to conceal any evidence that the game was fixed in order to protect its investment. “It is difficult for a reporter to get evidence,” Fullerton wrote in *Liberty*. “The honest players object to squealing and the dishonest ones cover up.”¹⁰¹ Ironically, the corrupt ball players were in league with the owners. It was a self-contradictory strategy: repeated insistence that the game was incorruptible, and repeated efforts to conceal the evidence of its corruption. “The fact that organized baseball’s settled policy for years of ‘keeping quiet for the sake of the sport’ has been the very thing that made crookedness possible, is overlooked,” Fullerton wrote.¹⁰² Considering that, the attempted cover-up of the Black Sox scandal was consistent with past practice by the owners until they found it necessary to name a commissioner to restore the game’s integrity.

Fullerton’s allegations of a World Series fix in 1919 were largely forgotten by the start of the 1920 season, the rantings of an “erratic writer” whose prognostications had proven to be wrong.¹⁰³ But accusations on September 4, 1920, in the *Chicago Herald-*

¹⁰¹ Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty*, p. 27.

¹⁰² Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? Ty Cobb’s CAREER Is the Best Answer to Scandal Charges,” *Liberty* (March 26, 1927), p. 35.

¹⁰³ In its quite personal attack on Fullerton following the writer’s allegations about the series, the Boston-based monthly, *Baseball Magazine* wrote:

Examiner of a fixed game between the National League Chicago Cubs and Philadelphia Phillies (“\$50,000 Bet on the Cubs and Phillies Sure-Thing Game”) rekindled suspicions. On September 7, a Cook County, Illinois, grand jury convened to investigate rumors about that game and baseball gambling in general. The *Philadelphia North American*, in a page-one story written by Jimmy Isaminger on September 27, reported the names of the eight Chicago White Sox players and detailed the 1919 series fix. Fullerton had reported on the day after the Series that seven Chicago players would not return for the 1920 season, but that story immediately had been discounted by its very source: Comiskey.¹⁰⁴ On September 28, Eddie Cicotte and Joe Jackson, two of the players named in the Philadelphia story, detailed their involvement in signed confessions to the grand jury.

“A dopester whose first name was Hugh
Said the White Sox would win five to two.
But the Reds with a rush
Put the dope on the crush
Now the dopester still bellows “bugh-hugh!”

The verse is quoted in Eliot Asinof’s *Eight Men Out* (p. 135). Asinof’s account is easily the most authoritative, and therefore most quoted, source of information on the Black Sox scandal, even though it is deliberately undocumented. In his preface, Asinof referred to the need for “the complete privacy of many of my sources” who “chose to remain anonymous.” (xiii) However, Asinof wrote a remarkable, book-length bibliographical essay in 1979 titled *Bleeding Between the Lines*, in which he detailed his research and how he went about writing *Eight Men Out*. Asinof’s rich and readable history is well complemented by: Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 274-339; Benjamin G. Rader, *Baseball: A History of America’s Game* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 99-111; G. Edward White, *Creating the National Pastime: Baseball Transforms Itself, 1903-1953* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), pp. 84-126; Daniel E. Ginsburg, *The Fix Is In*, pp. 100-162; and Victor Luhrs, *The Great Baseball Mystery: The 1919 World Series* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1966). In Luhrs account, he makes a weak argument for the innocence of the eight Black Sox players.

¹⁰⁴ According to G. Edward White in *Creating the National Pastime*, Fullerton was in Comiskey’s office following the eighth and final game of the series when manager Kid Gleason told the owner that some of his players had been bought. The next day, October 10, Fullerton wrote in the *Chicago Herald-Examiner*: “Yesterday’s game also means the disruption of the Chicago White Sox ballclub. There are seven men on the team who will not be there when the gong sounds next Spring.” The next day, *The New York Times* reported that Comiskey was offering \$20,000 “for a single clue to lead to evidence that any of his players had deliberately attempted to throw any of the world series games to the Cincinnati Reds.” But Comiskey also doubted that was the case. “There is always some scandal of some kind following a big sporting event like the world’s series,” *The Times* quoted him as saying. “These yarns are manufactured out of whole cloth and grow out of bitterness due to losing wagers. I believe my boys fought the battles of the recent world’s series on the level, as they have always done.”

Despite the players' testimony, the grand jury's final report to Judge Charles MacDonald on November 6 expressed an abiding faith in the game:

The jury is impressed with the fact that baseball is an index to our national genius and character. ... Baseball is more than a national game, it is an American institution, having its place prominently and significantly in the life of the people. ... The national game promotes respect for proper authority, self-confidence, fair-mindedness, quick judgment and self-control.¹⁰⁵

The trial eleven months later was a farce. The county had changed prosecutors in the interim, and three of the original prosecutor's assistant attorneys worked with the defense. Comiskey paid for the players' defense. Because there was no explicit Illinois statute forbidding the fixing of baseball games, Judge Hugo Friend ruled that the players could only be found guilty of conspiracy to defraud the public.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the player confessions taken by the grand jury nearly a year earlier mysteriously disappeared, although Jackson's reappeared in the possession of White Sox owner Charles Comiskey's attorney when the ballplayer sued the owner for lost wages in 1925. That left the testimony of two minor gamblers as the only evidence against the players, and the jury acquitted all eight, taking about as much time as another jury needed many decades later to acquit O.J. Simpson in his first murder trial. The jurors joined in on a wild courtroom

¹⁰⁵ Rader, *Baseball: A History of America's Game*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁶ Asinof, in *Bleeding Between the Lines*, interviewed Judge Friend about the trial. "I'll never forget it. It was my first major trial. By George, I was no older than the ballplayers!" Friend told Asinof. "They were making a farce out of the law," Friend said of the legal maneuvering that took place. "Those stolen confessions, for example ... that was arranged by Arnold Rothstein's lawyer, William Fallon, but the man who gained the most from it was Comiskey himself." When Asinof asked the Judge if he thought Comiskey was in on it, Friend replied: "Of course! I'd heard that Rothstein and Fallon met with Alfred Austrian, Comiskey's attorney, big Chicago law firm, you know. Without the confessions, the D.A. had no real case." (p. 111) White, in *Creating the National Pastime*, concludes that Rothstein, through Fallon, convinced Comiskey that it was in his best interest to have the players found innocent so that he could reinstate them. Baseball's new commissioner, Judge Kenewaw Mountain Landis, had other ideas, of course.

celebration, lifting the players on their shoulders and joining them to celebrate at a West Side Chicago Italian restaurant that night.

The celebration, of course, was short-lived. Baseball's new commissioner, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, immediately banned the eight Black Sox from professional baseball for life.¹⁰⁷ Said the judge whose ruling had paved the way for baseball's exemption from antitrust legislation in 1915: "Regardless of the verdict of juries, no player that throws a ball game, no player that sits in a conference with a bunch of crooked players and gamblers where the ways and means of throwing games are discussed, and does not promptly tell his club about it, will ever play professional ball."¹⁰⁸ Bill James, in his *Historical Baseball Abstract*, wrote that at least thirty-eight major league ballplayers were implicated in gambling scandals between 1917 and 1927, and that nineteen of them, including the eight Black Sox, were either banned or effectively blackballed. "I don't think many people realize how many of them there were," James wrote.¹⁰⁹

From its earliest days, professional baseball had indulged gamblers, even though its rhetoric suggested otherwise. Although stories of corruption continued to leak out, Landis took a far less tolerant view of gambling, and there was no hint of scandal throughout his tenure, which ended with his death in 1944. Landis had been named commissioner of major league baseball in 1921, not only because of the Black Sox scandal, but because of the internal discord among the owners. He was an

¹⁰⁷ Landis, according to White in *Creating the National Pastime*, "did not think that the conspiracy charges had much chance of success in court, and had already resolved to ban the indicted players, regardless of the jury's verdict." (p. 110)

¹⁰⁸ J.G. Taylor Spink, *Judge Landis and Twenty-Five Years of Baseball* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1947), p. 84.

uncompromising moralist and a lifelong baseball fan who believed in the game's self-serving image. "After their unsuccessful effort to cover up the Black Sox scandal failed," wrote G. Edward White of the owners, "and they confronted the cozy relationship between baseball and gambling that the scandal had revealed, they determined to restore their position as an incorruptible moral enterprise by dissociating themselves from gamblers and associating themselves with an uncompromising moral zealot."¹¹⁰ Landis, in a conversation with Fullerton after the Black Sox scandal, spoke to the significance of baseball in his mind: "Baseball is something more than a game to an American boy; it is his training field for life work. Destroy his faith in its squareness and honesty, and you have destroyed something more; you have planted suspicion of all things in his heart."¹¹¹ In Fullerton, as well as almost every sports writer at the time, Landis had the perfect audience.

How sports writers confronted the Black Sox scandal

When Hugh Fullerton came to Chicago in 1893 to work in the sports writing capital of America, he was a pioneer. Sports sections had only just begun to carve out their place in the newspaper business as circulation boosters in an era of Yellow Journalism and the emerging muckraking style of investigative reporting. Bylined stories were the exception. Sportswriters were lightly regarded in newsrooms, which derisively viewed them as members of what *New York Herald Tribune* city editor Stanley Walker

¹⁰⁹ Bill James, *The Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (New York: Villard Book, 1986), pp. 133-9.

¹¹⁰ G. Edward White, *Creating the National Pastime*, pp. 125-6.

¹¹¹ Lee Lowenfish, *The Imperfect Diamond: A History of Baseball's Labor Wars* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1991), p. 104.

characterized as the Toy Department in *City Editor*, his 1934 journalism classic. Covering games at ballyards where gamblers mingled openly with the players was hardly the place for men like Fullerton or Grantland Rice, a graduate of Vanderbilt. It was not an atmosphere that encouraged the harder-edged style of reporting that was beginning to emerge elsewhere in the newsroom. For that reason alone, it is valuable to examine Fullerton, and particularly his expose of the Black Sox scandal, within the context of his profession at the time. What emerges is a picture that clearly, if painfully for him, separates Fullerton from his peers and even from the game-turned-business that he so dearly loved. Though his public reputation was destroyed and his impact lost on future generations of sports writers, it is not too late to credit him for being ahead of his time. He was a trailblazer in the profession who went beyond the “Gee Whizz!” exaltations of the romantic, uncritical and ultimately dominant Grantland Rice school, and the sour, cynical complaints of the “Aw Nuts!” writers, dominated by Ring Lardner and Damon Runyon, who abandoned the profession.¹¹²

Sports coverage, particularly of boxing and horse racing, first emerged in American newspapers as early as the 1830s in such New York newspapers as the *Sun*, *Transcript* and *Herald*. The public’s fascination with both is not difficult to fathom: You could gamble on the results, and liquor was plentiful. Sports weeklies like the *Spirit of*

¹¹² For a more detailed description of how these schools of sports writing developed, see: Stanley Walker, *City Editor* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1934), pp. 115-133; Charles Fountain, *Sportswriter: The Life and Times of Grantland Rice* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 3-9; and Robert Lipsyte, *SportsWorld: An American Dreamland* (New York: Quadrangle Books/The New York Times Book Co., 1975), pp. 170-184. In *City Editor*, Walker wrote of Rice, who dominated the field for decades when writers like Lardner and Runyon abandoned the sports department for more serious endeavors: “Seeking to be a word-painter, (he) loaded his pop-gun with red paint and fired at the rainbow. ... It was magnificent and, may God bless us all, pretty terrible. A school of Rice imitators, never as good as Rice at his best, and much worse than Rice at his worst, grew up.” (pp. 123-4).

the Times and the *New York Clipper* remained popular until late in the century, when newspaper chains began to seize upon the circulation opportunities that they perceived sporting coverage provided to them with male readers.¹¹³ Writing in *Collier's* magazine in 1911, Will Irwin pointed out that publishers sought to “find the class of news which interests the greatest number of people -- and this was sports for men and love of scandal for women!”¹¹⁴ For publishers like William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Herald* and James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald*, the coverage of sports seemed to appeal to the best, or perhaps the worst, tenets of Yellow Journalism and sensationalism. Sports writing began to develop into its own genre with its own distinctive vernacular. Sports writers “enjoyed greater literary freedom” and created an “exaggerated, colorful descriptive style.”¹¹⁵

The newspaper business had been undergoing significant changes as well in the decades immediately preceding 1919. In the late nineteenth century, expanding urban markets and increasing public literacy provided fresh impetus and opportunity for competitive publishers. The advent of the Linotype machine, faster and bigger presses, decreasing newsprint costs, the use of the telegraph to send stories faster, and developments in photography all contributed to adding more pages to newspapers.¹¹⁶ To

¹¹³ For a concise overview of the development of sports coverage in American newspapers, see John Stevens, “The Rise of the Sports Page,” in the Gannett Center Journal: Sports and Mass Media,” Vol. 1, No. 2 (New York: Columbia University, 1987), pp. 1-11.

¹¹⁴ Will Irwin, “The American Newspaper,” as cited by Frederick W. Cozens and Florence Scovil Stumpf, *Sports in American Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 115.

¹¹⁵ Robert W. McChesney, “Media Made Sports: A History of Sports Coverage in the United States,” chapter two in Lawrence A. Wenner, editor, *Media, Sports & Society* (Newbury Park, Calif., 1989), p. 53.

¹¹⁶ The cost of newsprint, for example, dropped from \$40 to \$2 between 1860 and 1890, according to John Stevens in “The Rise of the Sports Page” in *Sports and Mass Media*. For additional discussion of the growth of American newspapers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Preston William Slosson, *The Great Crusade and After, 1914-1928* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930), Vol. XII

pay for filling those pages, publishers attempted to attract new readers and advertisers with the addition of novelty sections, including sports pages. In the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a general consolidation of ownership, particularly by large chains such as Hearst, Scripps-Howard and Coe and Lee, and greater syndication of material among newspapers. Fullerton and Ring Lardner, for example, were among the most heavily syndicated sports columnists in 1919. Writes Preston William Slosson, “Though journalism was a bigger business than ever, it was also more strictly a business than ever.”¹¹⁷ Publishers were not covering professional sports out of the goodness of their hearts. It was good business.

In Chicago at *The Tribune*, there had been sporting coverage since July 4, 1847, when an unnamed writer had described a race before a crowd estimated to be about 5,000 spectators between a white man on a horse, an Indian named White Foot, and a black barber named Louis Isbell.¹¹⁸ Certainly, this was the kind of novelty publishers were looking for to generate new territory in their newspapers. By the 1890s, a daily newshole allotment of a column-and-a-half had expanded to three columns. And by 1919, sports had equal space with the business news, taking up three full pages, including targeted advertising, on weekdays, and four-to-six pages on Sunday. *The Tribune* appointed Harvey Woodruff as its first sports editor in 1909 and featured a column called “In the Wake of the News,” written by Hugh Edward Keough until his death in 1913, followed

of the *American Life* series; and Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976).

¹¹⁷ Slosson, *The Great Crusade and After, 1914-1928*, p. 346.

¹¹⁸ For a full account of the story, see Arch Ward, editor, *The Greatest Sport Stories from the Chicago Tribune* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1953), pp. 3-4. Isbell won, by the way.

by Fullerton for a year and Ring Lardner until 1919. For the World Series that year, the paper boasted in its promotion to have the largest sports staff in the nation.¹¹⁹

Sports as a mass leisure institution began to take shape between 1870 and 1900, particularly with the growth of professional baseball and college football.¹²⁰ But the sports pages, or section, and sports writing consolidated in both format and voice in the early twentieth century. According to a study of the *Chicago Tribune* sports section from 1900 to 1975, “As sports grew, so did the sports page.”¹²¹ By 1919, the sports column, the human interest story, the pregame advance or buildup, and the postgame story or analysis, were all firmly in place on the sports pages of newspapers all over the country.

At the same time, a symbiotic relationship was developing between the press and the business of sport that served the economic needs of both. “The increasing impersonal quality of city life,” write Frederick W. Cozens and Florence Scovil Stumpf, “created a great need for vicarious personal contacts and for humanized materials which would permit the illusion of sharing an emotional experience.”¹²² And what better way to satisfy that need was there than an umpire bellowing, “Play ball!”? Entrepreneurs like Albert Goodwill Spalding, a pitcher during the early days of professional baseball in the 1870s and later the president of the Chicago White Stockings before Charles Comiskey, sought to popularize the game of baseball. He had a willing ally in the press and the new sports

¹¹⁹ Although Lloyd Wendt’s book, *Chicago Tribune: The Rise of a Great American Newspaper* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1979), is 861 pages, precious few are devoted to its sports coverage (see pages 179, 218-219, 291, 303, 315, 359, 363, 452-454, 615, 726-727, and 739-731). There are no references to Hugh Fullerton, and only three to Ring Lardner.

¹²⁰ For further discussion about the growth of American sports during this period, see Peter Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The promise of American Sport* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

writers, who actively worked to legitimize the game -- and themselves -- as a cultural institution.¹²³ Sports was becoming the new mover, shaker and shaper of American nationalism and social cohesiveness, replacing the traditional American Puritan legacy that had viewed organized play with hostility. “All sides now recognize that their interests are identical,” the *Reach Guide* of baseball editorialized in 1889. “The reporters have found in the game a thing of beauty and a source of natural employment. The game has found in the reporters its best ally and most powerful supporter.”¹²⁴ Sports, particularly baseball, supported civic pride and boosterism and did not question existing social conditions and mores, particularly of gender and race. “It offered the spirit and excitement of conflict and struggle in a politically trivial area.”¹²⁵ No cultural institution was more perfectly suited than baseball to the task for post-World War I America and the Jazz Age.

Consistent with the wholesome, near mythic image profitably created for the game by men like Spalding and Comiskey, baseball became part of the commercial entertainment and mass leisure culture that was emerging from late-Victorian Era cultural restraints. “The Victorian middle-class attitude toward sport and physical recreation had begun to shift in the 1840s and 1850s,” writes Warren Goldstein, “a development with important consequences for the history of all American sports.” Goldstein cites a number of causes: “concerns about the growth of cities and sedentary occupations, a Protestant

¹²¹ Janet Lever and Stanton Wheeler, “The Chicago Tribune Sports Page, 1900-1975,” *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 1984, p. 299.

¹²² Cozens and Stumpf, *Sports in American Life*, p. 115.

¹²³ For a more complete study of the early years of baseball, see Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

¹²⁴ Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, as cited by McChesney, p. 351.

¹²⁵ McChesney, p. 57.

moral code emphasizing individual self-control, and a growing faith in social progress.”¹²⁶ To many Americans at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was no obvious merit in sport or a sense that it contributed to individual character or moral improvement and health. That remained the traditional role of religion. By the end of the century, however, sport began to enjoy a higher moral tone and greater utility to society, paralleling and even surpassing religion in its claim for social esteem and recognition. “Sport became the religious ritual of the machine age ... at a time when the explanatory didactic power of religion was somewhat muted,” writes Donald J. Mrozek.¹²⁷ The emergence of sport and its accompanying sense of American exceptionalism and distinctive purpose, though partially built on myth, also served as a timely replacement for the closing of the frontier, which had served a similar purpose. Sport, and baseball in particular, transformed itself into a surrogate, or moral equivalent of the American frontier. Athletic playing fields like the baseball diamond replaced it. Writes Mrozek: “It was a legacy of the Enlightenment. It was an inheritance from Puritanism. It was the myth of Jacksonian democracy. It was the cultic belief of the scientific experts. In all, it was a firmly lodged component in the American system of dealing with life and its complexities.”¹²⁸

As baseball emerged from the Victorian shadows to dominate the new Progressive Era’s sports scene at the start of the twentieth century, major league attendance doubled between 1901 and 1908 to more than 7 million. The World Series

¹²⁶ Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 31.

¹²⁷ Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), p. 11.

¹²⁸ Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910*, p. 230.

became the conclusive event of the season, rivaled only in interest by presidential elections.¹²⁹ Newspapers expanded their coverage of sports from a few columns a day to whole sections. And in season, baseball dominated that coverage. Sports writers, generally, were still held in low esteem.¹³⁰ But newspaper owners, like the team owners, knew a profitable enterprise when they saw it. For example, the *Chicago Tribune's* coverage of sports was “somewhat indifferent” until baseball was spread by soldiers during the Civil War; newshole was “reluctantly” given up by the news department for major events. But by 1919, sport received equal newshole with business: three pages weekdays, four on Sunday.¹³¹

Frederick Allen Lewis, in *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* published in 1931, wrote that sports had become “an American obsession. ... Promoters, chambers of commerce, newspaper owners, sports writers, press agents, radio broadcasters, all found profit in exploiting the public’s mania for sporting shows.”¹³² Sports writers cared about the success of baseball because their personal careers and the perception of their peers and the public were wrapped up in it. “By promoting baseball,” writes Riess, “they were advancing themselves professionally and helping their papers compete for readers.”¹³³ It was a two way street, as an editorial in *Editor & Publisher*

¹²⁹ Riess, *Touching Base*, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁰ Paul Gallico, in *Further Confessions of a Story Writer* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co., 1961), wrote that sports journalism paid poorly and that many sportswriters were “lushes and tramps ... one grade above the office cat.” (p. 11). Stanley Walker, in his classic history of newspapering at the *New York Herald Tribune, City Editor*, wrote that the sports section was perceived as the newspaper’s “poor relation ... Publishers and managing editors knew it was necessary, but they didn’t like it.” Walker credited Damon Runyon, Grantland Rice, Ring Lardner and Hugh Fullerton as writers who “brought to the business a grown-up judgment, some sense of proportion, a gentlemanly taste and even some literary quality.” (p. 116)

¹³¹ Wendt, *Chicago Tribune*, p. 452.

¹³² Frederick Allen Lewis, *Only Yesterday* (New York: Perennial Library Harper & Row, 1964), p. 66.

¹³³ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 17.

pointed out on July 2, 1927: “Without the assistance of the newspapers, sports would never have attained their present popularity. Sports officials are among the first to admit the debt that baseball, football, boxing and other sports owe the papers.” It was a marriage made in heaven.

Baseball writers were more than willing to play ball with the team owners, happy accomplices in spreading an ideology that taught children traditional American values not unlike the lessons Fullerton had learned in school from McGuffey Readers. However, as Riess points out:

Just because the ideology coincided with certain fundamental beliefs does not mean that it was accurate. ... The public saw baseball as a true reflection of contemporary society. If one accepted the fundamental assumptions that baseball was a democratic sport epitomizing all that was best in America, then it made a lot of sense that it could be utilized by Americans wishing to preserve a familiar social order and indoctrinate children into the traditional value system. Baseball’s symbolic function was to demonstrate the continuing relevancy of old values and beliefs in an increasingly modern, urban era.¹³⁴

By focusing during the years after the Black Sox scandal on his fascination with McGuffey Readers, Fullerton demonstrated his faith in that familiar social order. His persistent belief in those late Victorian Era values, as demonstrated in his writing, contributed to Fullerton’s willingness to uncover the fix, even after Organized Baseball turned against him.

As with this ideology of social and moral purpose was developing, the revenue from liquor sales and gambling continued to drive the sports boom that had begun in the mid-eighteenth century. Professional baseball, which had begun as a working class sport, needed to be respectable to be profitable. That meant entrepreneurs like Spalding had to

¹³⁴ Riess, *Touching Base*, pp. 8-9.

overcome the public perception of rowdy fans, players prone to drinking and, most significantly, gambling. Although it was not illegal, gambling was not compatible with the early twentieth-century aspirations of baseball as the personification of American middle-class values. “Crookedness and baseball do not mix,” Comiskey pontificated.¹³⁵ Spalding, in his autobiographical history of baseball, recognized that, “The elimination of the betting evil was the cornerstone of the success of Base Ball.”¹³⁶ The success of the game and, therefore, the profitability of the business, required separating baseball in the minds of urban American families from boxing and horse racing as a wholesome American pastime. The game needed to mirror America’s perception of itself as a foursquare land of equal opportunity and limitless possibilities. “The belief that baseball was honest and upright constituted an article of secular faith,” writes Harold Seymour. “Americans regarded baseball as no mere commercialized amusement. It was set apart as the ‘national pastime,’ an institution occupying a niche just below belief in God and respect for motherhood.”¹³⁷

Baseball required honesty, but its traditional association with gambling indicated otherwise unless ignored or covered up. “Betting on the results of games naturally begot collusion between those who bet their money and some of those who played the game,” Spalding wrote. “Per consequence, it was soon discovered that unprincipled players, under pretense of accident or inability to make points at critical stages, were ‘throwing’ games.” So perception and reality parted ways. Spalding wrote what he wanted baseball

¹³⁵ G.W. Axelson, “Commy”: *The Life Story of Charles A. Comiskey* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1919), p. 317.

¹³⁶ Albert G. Spalding, *America’s National Game* (New York: American Sports Publishing Co. 1911), pp. 189.

¹³⁷ Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, p. 274.

fans to believe, not what actually was happening. By 1911, when his book appeared, he wrote that “the press of the country was united in its conviction that the game was clean; that gambling had been kicked out.”¹³⁸ It was all self-serving rhetoric.

Fullerton and his peers remained, for the most part, willing accomplices with the growing baseball industry, the symbiotic relationship between them a matter of mutual survival. “Being a sportswriter,” wrote Jimmy Breslin in his biography of Damon Runyan, “was the same as being a welfare recipient, but without any supervision.”¹³⁹ It was a common practice for the travel expenses of a baseball beat writer to be paid by the professional teams they covered.¹⁴⁰ “A reporter who didn’t write what a club liked could get dropped from its retinue -- so he faced pressure from his employer as well as the club to write the company line.”¹⁴¹ Fullerton was as close to Charles Comiskey as any reporter covering any professional team. “Comiskey is my dearest and perhaps oldest friend, who would protect me, even at his own expense, if he thought I needed it, and would never do anything to hurt me,” Fullerton wrote in a letter to Captain Joseph Medill Patterson, the owner and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, on January 10, 1923. “I have found him secure and honest, unless swayed by strong prejudice as he sometimes is, and a man with the most wonderful memory, which would hardly be at fault.”¹⁴² How Fullerton could

¹³⁸ Spalding, *America’s National Game*, pp. 189, 301, 308-9.

¹³⁹ Jimmy Breslin, *Damon Runyan* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1991), p. 113.

¹⁴⁰ Tom Meany, *There’ve Been Some Changes in the World of Sports* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), pp. 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Yardley, *Ring*, pp. 24-25. Fullerton himself wrote of the relationship in “The Fellows Who Made the Game”: “The sport owes its popularity and probably its continued existence to earlier generations of scribes who gave their talents and the newspaper space of their bosses to popularize the game and its players. ... In fact, the majority of reporters with teams were bitterly partisan, as much so as largely regarded by the players as part of the team and were expected to uphold the team in its arguments with opposing clubs. The majority did.” (pp, 17, 184)

¹⁴² Correspondence from the Joseph Medill Patterson papers, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, box 8, folder 5.

have remained so loyal and devoted to Comiskey, despite the owner's role in covering up the scandal, remains one of the mysteries of the writer's life.

Stanley Walker wasn't the only editor in the newsroom, however, who came to oppose the cozy relationship between sports writers, newspapers and the business of sports. The sports writer's daily job, said Paul Gallico, a former sports writer from the "Aw Shucks!" school, was to "peddle treacle about the baseball heroes and soft-pedal the sour stuff."¹⁴³ Walker recognized the potential problems inherent in this style of "luxuriant verbiage when no spade could be called a spade."¹⁴⁴ It has taken decades, but the "Aw Nuts!" school has finally won out, as evidenced by current columnists such as Robert Lypsite of *The New York Times*, Michael Wilbon of the *Washington Post*, and Bob Verdi of the *Chicago Tribune*, just to name a few.¹⁴⁵ The price the profession paid along the way, however, was to lose many of its brightest stars like Lardner, Runyan, Gallico and Heywood Broun, who turned to other sections of the newspaper, or to writing short stories, or to covering the theater. Fullerton, thought of as a sports writer when remembered at all, wrote on a far wider spectrum than was generally realized. In an

¹⁴³ Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁴ Walker, *City Editor*, p. 115.

¹⁴⁵ Just how much sports sections have changed is pointedly evident by looking at *The New York Times* Sports/Sunday section of April 13, 1997. The lead story at the top of the section is "A Special Report: Playing with Pain," titled, "Painkillers, and Addiction, Are Prevalent in N.F.L." The article is promoted off the newspaper's front section. Also above the fold on the first sports page, Dave Anderson's "Sports of the Times" column, "A Seamier Side Exposed At Augusta," deals with a travel director in Georgia who killed himself two days earlier after he was unable to fill an order for passes to the Masters golf tournament. On page 2 of the section, Robert Lipsyte has a column on *Sports Illustrated's* new women's sports magazine. And on pages 4-5, the weekly "Perspective" pages present a four-part package in its season-long coverage of the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking baseball's color barrier. The main story, "In Print, Cheerleading and Indifference," deals with how the print media covered the story; a sidebar, "An Ally In a High Office," details Commissioner Albert "Happy" Chandler's role in Robinson's breakthrough; a second sidebar on jazz musician Benny Goodman's racially mixed recording sessions in the 1930s; and a chart chronicling notable firsts by blacks in baseball, "Through the Door That Robinson Opened." It's a section Hugh Fullerton would have admired.

article Fullerton wrote in 1921 titled, “Baseball Reporters Who Broke Into Literature,” he pointed out more than twenty-five political writers who got their start in the “Toy Department”: Gus Krager, who covered the Cincinnati Reds before becoming one of the deans of the early Washington, D.C., press corps; Jim Allison, who also covered the Reds before becoming a political writer based in the Midwest; also Broun, Lardner and even H.L. Mencken, and O. Henry. “It seems to me that almost every political writer of whom I had acquaintance had been a baseball reporter,” he wrote. “Some of us, of course, are congenital lowbrows, yet it is remarkable what a great contribution sport has made to the literature of the United States.”¹⁴⁶

In the decade immediately preceding the Black Sox scandal, three of the preeminent baseball writers, or dopesters as they were known at the time, were Fullerton and I.E. (Sy) Sanborn from Chicago and Charles Dryden from New York. Lardner, whose early jobs in the business came on recommendations from Fullerton, and Rice were influenced by all three. By considering Dryden’s and Sanborn’s contributions to their craft, it is possible to see just how sports writing was practiced before the Black Sox scandal.

Dryden began writing in San Francisco in 1890 before moving to New York City in 1898. Walker credits Dryden, as much as any single writer, for creating a whole new style for the sports pages.¹⁴⁷ A sample of Dryden’s work demonstrates just what Walker meant:

¹⁴⁶ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Baseball Reporters Who Broke Into Literature,” *Literary Digest* 69 (April 21, 1921), pp. 57-8.

¹⁴⁷ Walker, *City Editor*, p. 118: “Dryden stimulated, if he did not actually originate, the idea that sports ... could be written differently from a market report. Poor fellow, he has much to answer for. He created a young and lively language for sports; writers without his good sense got the idea that all sports should be

Just as the golden orb of day burnished the pellucid waters of Tampa Bay ... the Cubs departed on board a flat little steamboat to play a team of soldiers forty miles away. ... To get here we traveled 900 miles by rail, making three complete circuits of 300 miles each over a nervous landscape that rose up and sifted through the coach windows and down a fellow's back for a period of two nights and one day.¹⁴⁸

It was Dryden who wrote the famous line that Washington was “first in war, first in peace and last in the American League.”¹⁴⁹ There were many imitators, but few as good as Dryden at his best and most worse than Dryden at his worst.

Sanborn covered the White Sox for the *Chicago Tribune* during the 1919 season and the World Series. Until 1919, when Lardner left *The Tribune* to go into syndication, Sanborn and Lardner would alternate coverage of the White Sox and Cubs, the two Chicago teams. Sanborn's style was typical of the day, full of hyperbole and praise. Consider this game story from September 25, the day the White Sox clinched the 1919 American League pennant:

Beyond the power of the ultimate mathematical or mundane mishap to thwart them, Chicago's White Sox made themselves immutably and eternally champions of the American League for 1919 by trimming the Browns yesterday, 6 to 5, in one of the gamiest uphill battles they have ever staged. With the ace of their pitching staff, Eddie Cicotte, knocked off the mound before the tireless attack of the enemy, with Capt. Collins banished from the scrap by a peevish umpire for kicking over a hair line decision at the plate, and with the score board indicating that they did not have to beat the Browns in order to cinch the pennant, the Gleasons kept on battling until, by means of a resistless rally in the last half of the ninth, they won their own pennant with lots of margin to spare.¹⁵⁰

Behind the surface of writing style, however, are the issues of journalistic integrity. And in that arena, Fullerton may have known no peer nor set a better example

written in a bizarre patois, and that to use good English was a sissy trick. He had no idea of founding a school of writing. He merely planted a few seeds, and a lush lot of vegetation grew up, much of it rank and unpruned.”

¹⁴⁸ Yardley, *Ring: A Biography of Ring Lardner*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁹ Yardley, *Ring: A Biography of Ring Lardner*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, September 25, 1919, p. 23.

had the generations that followed him known him better. The Black Sox scandal provided sports writers of the time with a unique challenge, as Westbrook Pegler pointed out years later, but only one was up to it. Fullerton, however, was not the only sports writer who knew that baseball was crooked. “Among the sports writers,” writes Donald Elder in his biography of Lardner, “Ring and Hugh Fullerton were the first to suspect a fix.”¹⁵¹

Grantland Rice, in his autobiography, claims to have been aware of all the stories that were circulating as well. What separated Fullerton, however, was his willingness to write about it while others remained silent.

Rice, like most of his peers, refused to believe that a fix was possible. “Probably the hardest sport to fix is baseball,” he wrote in *The New York Times* on October 28, 1919, the first time he referred to accusation of a World Series fix in print. “In baseball, there are too many men to be reached to make it sure. And a baseball crowd isn’t very easy to fool.” But Rice, unlike Fullerton, allowed himself to be fooled because he didn’t want to believe baseball could be manipulated by gamblers. “I felt as though I’d been kicked in the stomach,” Rice wrote in his autobiography, published shortly after his death in 1954, concentrating on his reaction to the allegations rather than why he chose to ignore them.¹⁵² When Fullerton wrote his scandal-breaking story on December 15, 1919, Rice did not respond, even though he wrote for a competing New York paper (he was on vacation, and ignored the story when he returned). “Sometimes we wonder if, after all, is there very much sport that is real sport beyond the amateurs,” he wrote, continuing to concentrate on his own sense of betrayal by baseball, rather than examining his own

¹⁵¹ Donald Elder, *Ring Lardner* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 159.

complicity by not addressing the growing scandal. Writing in his *Times* column on October 24, 1920, he complained: “The rest may be called competition, or amusement, but just how much of it is sport?” Enough of it, obviously, to keep him gainfully employed and writing prolifically for 53 years, until the summer of 1954.

Lardner, always the cynic, knew just as well as Fullerton that the Series was fixed, yet he wrote nothing so bold. “The sellout was on. He could smell it,” Asinof writes of Lardner in *Eight Men Out*. “Nothing more; just smell it.”¹⁵³ After the first game, he confronted one of eight players involved, pitcher Eddie Cicotte, and asked him about a fix. Cicotte was Lardner’s favorite player on the team, and the writer wanted to believe him. But he couldn’t. In a now near-mythic incident on the train to Cincinnati that sports writers and the teams shared, an inebriated Lardner is supposed to have passed through the isles singing:

*I'm forever blowing ball games,
 Pretty ball games in the air.
 I come from Chi
 I hardly try
 Just go to bat and fade and die;
 Fortune's coming my way,
 That's why I don't care.
 I'm forever blowing ball games
 And the gamblers treat us fair ...*¹⁵⁴

If the verse never made it into his nationally syndicated column, it had a sobering impact on him. Four months before he died in 1933 at the age of 48, Lardner wrote: “My interest in the national pastime died a sudden death in the fall of 1919, when Kid Gleason saw his

¹⁵² Grantland Rice, *The Tumult and the Shouting: My Life in Sport* (New York, A.S. Barnes & Company, 1954), p. 106.

¹⁵³ Asinof, *Eight Men Out*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁴ Asinof, *Eight Men Out*, pp. 93-4.

power-house White Sox lose a world's series to a club that was surprised to win even one game.”¹⁵⁵

That left Fullerton, who subsequently admitted he had information that the Series was fixed. “Information that all was not well with the series was furnished to me prior to the opening game,” he wrote for the first time on October 20, 1920. He continued:

I confided my information to Christy Mathewson, one of the most famous and most honest of players and managers ... Neither of believed the reports true. Yet we watched every game and every play, and in the eight games we marked as “suspicious” just seven plays. Any one of those plays could be explained on the theory that the mistakes were honestly made, as well as on the theory of dishonesty. Plainly the outsider cannot tell to a certainty.¹⁵⁶

Fullerton elaborated on just what he knew in 1919 in his 1927 series on gambling in baseball:

The night before that infamous series started, I was told flatly that it was fixed, and was invited to “get in.” I did not believe it, but was worried. Christy Mathewson and I debated it for hours. I went to Barney Dreyfuss and to others the day of the first game and told them something was wrong and to be watchful, only to be pooh-poohed. I told Garry Herrman on the morning of the first game, and his response was: “We’ll beat ‘em without any fixing.” It was impossible to convince anyone that baseball could be fixed. The night before the series started, I sent out a note to precede my story, warning readers not to bet, as suspicious rumors were afloat. Out of thirty papers, I never found one that printed it.¹⁵⁷

Through it all, even years later until Pegler spoke up in 1932, Fullerton’s peers remained silent. Fullerton may never have written so eloquently on the scandal as he did in 1920 in

The New Republic:

Baseball (the business) stands indicted. Baseball (the sport) has received a blow from which it will be a long time recovering. Eight ball players, men who were

¹⁵⁵ Yardley, *Ring*, p. 216.

¹⁵⁶ Hugh S. Fullerton, *The New Republic* (October, 20, 1920), p. 183.

¹⁵⁷ Hugh S. Fullerton, “Are Baseball Games Framed? The Inside Story of What Led Up to the Major League Scandals,” *Liberty* (March 19, 1927), p. 24. Barney Dreyfuss was owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates; Garry Herrman was the chairman of the three-man National Commission that ruled baseball before Judge Landis.

honored far above their station or deserts, by a thoughtless public, have been revealed to be takers of bribes. The officials, to whose welfare the business and sport of “organized” baseball was entrusted, have been exposed as incompetent. The honest ball players, or the majority of them, stand before the public as mildly guilty of being accessories after the fact, in that all save a few knew or suspected that crookedness was going forward and failed to protect their own reputations, their business and the sport from the ones who were guilty.

The revelations made by the members of the Chicago White Sox team in their confessions before the Chicago Grand Jury shocked the entire nation and, worse, wrecked the faith of millions of boys. The most severe blow to the sport was not that these skillful athletes sold out their loyal supporters, and accepted bribes from gamblers, but that baseball *can* be made crooked without detection by outsiders. It has been the favorite defense of officials, club owners, umpires and players in every case in which collusion between players and gamblers has been alleged that the game could not be played dishonestly for any length of time without detection. It was this theory that enabled the dishonest players and the gamblers to reap their harvest. They proved that the game can be and has been successfully manipulated, provided the honest players on the teams do not “squeal.” They proved that the theory that outsiders can detect signs of crooked work is erroneous.

... The ethics of criminals, especially gamblers, forbid informing upon the guilty and, so long as the ball players who are personally honest persist in adopting this code, it will not be difficult for those players who are willing to sell themselves to find buyers.

... The club owners have always adhered to the policy of secrecy and have whitewashed every scandal and charge of crooked work on the grounds that it was “for the good of the game.” Their policy encouraged the crooked ball players and tempted the weak ones who until then had remained honest.

During the season of 1919 gamblers openly boasted that they or others controlled ball players on a number of clubs. The former racetrack gamblers, who dislike baseball save as a means of muleting the public, sneeringly asserted that the game was more crooked than horseracing ever was.

Through it all the officials in charge of baseball adhered to their policy of curing an evil by declaring it did not exist and by using their influence over consciously or unconsciously subsidized sporting writers to suppress the accusations and punish those who demanded an investigation.¹⁵⁸

It is unlikely that any sports writer before Fullerton had written anything quite like this before. And thanks to the influence of Rice and the “Gee Whizz!” school of sport writers, it would be decades before anything quite like it would be written again.

¹⁵⁸ Fullerton, *The New Republic*, pp. 183-4.

Studs Terkel, the Chicago chronicler of popular culture, played the part of Fullerton in John Sayles' 1988 film, "Eight Men Out," based on Eliot Asinof's book. He recalls the sports writer this way:

Nineteen-nineteen was the beginning of America's loss of innocence, and of a moral decline that led to the sophisticated decadence of the twenties. ... I knew of Hugh Fullerton. Vaguely, in my mind, he had a hat on at the typewriter. I also knew he was the one who exposed the scandal, and underwent an ordeal: the slings and arrows of an enraged Chicagodom. He's a study in disillusionment.

Terkel, like most observers of Fullerton, considered him no social reformer, however, unaware of his formative years and later pursuits and interests. Terkel continues:

Baseball writers of that day weren't that socially minded, except for Ring Lardner. They followed the owners of the clubs. The players themselves were disorganized, and were more or less serfs of the owners. So the players were easy marks for gamblers: They were being paid pittance and then tossed aside. After the scandal, there was a great deal of cynicism. And baseball was saved by one man: Babe Ruth. He salvaged the game.¹⁵⁹

Paul Gallico also paid tribute to Fullerton in a sidebar to the writer's final article in *Esquire* in 1946. In it, he classified Fullerton with two of the leading practitioners of the "Aw Nuts!" school:

Many years ago, when I began life as a fledgling sports writer, one of the men I admired from afar along with such heroes as Bill McGeehan and Damon Runyon was Hughie Fullerton. For if anyone knew and could write about the baffling inside of the game of baseball, it was Hughie. ... Later on, I had the pleasure of meeting him and found that the personality that contained all this baseball lore was a sweet and charming one and that he was a fine old chap in addition to being a genuine sage of sport.¹⁶⁰

But writing about the Black Sox Scandal, which should have been Fullerton's finest moment, ultimately proved to be one of his last in the spotlight.

¹⁵⁹ Susan Linfield, "Studs Terkel: World Serious," *American Film*, July/August, 1988, p. 48.

¹⁶⁰ Paul Gallico, with "Inside Baseball" by Hugh S. Fullerton, *Esquire*, p. 79.

As his prognostications continued to fail in baseball's new lively ball era, Fullerton would experience the frustration of trying to serve two masters: Organized Baseball and his conscience. Following the 1922 season, he attempted to write an extensive series of articles (64 separate pieces by his count) on Charles Comiskey for the *Chicago Tribune*, even though he was now working in New York City as an editor for *Liberty* magazine. The articles on Comiskey were to be published in advance of the 1923 season, but in order to do so, he needed to clear them first with Comiskey -- at the insistence of the newspaper! Fullerton expressed his frustration with his continuing efforts to write anything about the 1919 World Series in a letter to Captain Patterson of the *Tribune*:

The four (articles) dealing with the crooked worlds series, he (Harry Grabiner, Comiskey's personal secretary) had laid aside entirely. We made corrections as Harry read. We spent some five hours at this, having lunch there. Harry wrote in corrections and killed out some paragraphs. During this Comiskey was extremely entertaining ... Three articles we threw away entirely; one because it reflected in a way upon an old friend who was dead, and two because Commy said, while the stories had been told many times and he never had denied them, they were not true ... We had another morning and revised the stuff. When we reached the crooked worlds series both Commy and Grabiner warned me that we must be very careful in dealing with it. We took the four articles I had written and literally revised them to pieces -- and they still were not satisfactory.¹⁶¹

On the same day, Frank Smith, sports editor of the *Tribune*, sent a note to the newspaper's attorney, Arthur Crawford, saying that the articles would not be printed: "Mr. Comiskey informed me today that he would not under any circumstances permit the series of articles written by Mr. Fullerton to go out, even with the corrections he has tried to make in them so that they would be truthful and readable." On January 11,

¹⁶¹ Correspondence from the Joseph Medill Patterson papers, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, box 8, folder 5.

Crawford wrote Patterson: “I saw Grabiner today and there is no doubt that the series as written by Fullerton could never be approved by Comiskey. Fullerton was not accurate in anything from all reports.” Patterson killed the series.¹⁶² It was Fullerton’s last attempt at writing anything substantive about the 1919 World Series until his series, “Are Baseball Games Framed?” in *Liberty* magazine in 1927.

Hugh Fullerton’s Progressive times and Victorian morals

Because the Black Sox scandal transcends baseball in our cultural history, it is as much an American tragedy as it is a piece of the game’s folklore. “The Black Sox affair was only the first scandal in a decade of scandals,” writes Lardner biographer Donald Elder. “But it administered a profound moral shock to the public, and to a dedicated baseball fan it must have seemed very close to a personal betrayal.” Why is such significance attached to a game? Because, Elder continues, baseball “embodied a code of honor and sportsmanship that was almost sacred to America’s view of its character and way of life.”¹⁶³ In 1919, there could not have been a more dedicated baseball fan in America than Hugh Fullerton. After eight players on the Chicago White Sox conspired in varying degrees with gamblers to throw, or fix, the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds, the impact on Fullerton had to have been staggering. But even before Judge Landis banned the players from baseball in 1922 for life and eventually eradicated the influence of gamblers from the game, baseball had reinvented itself, with Babe Ruth on center stage and New York City as the new sports media capital. There was no

¹⁶² Correspondence from the Joseph Medill Patterson papers, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, box 8, folder 5.

audience for Fullerton's criticisms and no place in the game, it would seem, for the dean of the country's baseball writers.

But even the Babe couldn't have reinvented baseball alone. As always, he had willing accomplices in the press during sport's so-called Golden Age in the 1920s, writes Robert Lipsyte in *SportsWorld*: "Without the aid and abatement of sportswriters, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis would never have been able to revirginize baseball after the 1919 Black Sox scandal."¹⁶⁴ It was not the Golden Age of sports, Lipsyte argues. It was the Golden Age of sports writing. Landis and Organized Baseball were successful as well because the professional baseball mythology was built on the intrinsic American values and goals they needed to maintain for their business's profitability. But the importance of professional baseball, particularly during the first quarter of the twentieth century, goes beyond dollars and cents. Writes Steven A. Riess:

If one accepted the fundamental assumptions that baseball was a democratic sport epitomizing all that was best in America, then it made a lot of sense that it could be utilized by Americans wishing to preserve a familiar social order and indoctrinate children into the traditional value system. Baseball's symbolic function was to demonstrate the continuing relevancy of old values and beliefs in an increasingly modern, urban era.¹⁶⁵

In that sense, baseball and McGuffey had always been a good fit. And Fullerton was both the ultimate baseball man and the ultimate McGuffeyite, spreading the gospel until that fateful World Series of 1919. Given his core value system, as well as his professional reputation, Fullerton could hardly have thought or acted otherwise.

¹⁶³ Elder, *Ring Lardner*, p. 161.

¹⁶⁴ Lipsyte, *SportsWorld: An American Dreamland*, p. 170.

¹⁶⁵ Riess, *Touching Base*, pp. 7-8.

If professional baseball was built on an invented ideology, however, it remained successful, ever-more profitable and even useful after World War I and the Black Sox scandal. American intellectuals and progressives had emerged cynical and alienated following the war. “Many clung tightly to the familiar moorings of traditional custom and value,” argues Roderick Nash. “Others actively sought new ways of understanding and ordering their existence. Americans from 1917 to 1930 constituted a *nervous* generation, groping for what certainly they could find.”¹⁶⁶ Many Americans merely reaffirmed their basic values and beliefs that were rooted in nineteenth century Victorian culture. Supposedly long forgotten, those values remained intact in 1919. If progressivism was waning, as Link and McCormick argue, it was because the reformers were a “varied and contradictory lot” as opposed to members of a unified movement that had attempted too much rather than accomplished too little.¹⁶⁷ It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Fullerton, given his McGuffey morality and Horatio Alger-determination, had a guiding ethic to turn to when his world was turned upside down by the Black Sox scandal. So, too, did many Americans, who found that bygone morality so appealing.

In searching for Hugh Fullerton’s motivation fifty years after his death and nearly eighty years after his defining moment, the splendid messiness of history always offers a convenient excuse: We can only guess. Many questions still remain: Why did Fullerton leave Chicago after the World Series in 1919? Was it because he was frustrated that he couldn’t get his story about the fix published in his adopted hometown, or because he was about to embark on a new career direction, like so many of his peers, as a magazine

¹⁶⁶ Nash, *The Nervous Generation*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, p. 2.

editor at *Liberty*? Exactly what was his role at the *New York Evening World*, and how long did he remain at the paper? Why did his magazine output dwindle after the scandal? When did his health begin to fail, and what impact did that have on his later career? When and why did he return to Columbus to conclude his newspaper career? How long before 1927, when he wrote “That Guy McGuffey” for *The Saturday Evening Post*, did his interest in McGuffey and his Readers begin to surface? Why was he preparing a series of stories for the *Chicago Tribune* on Comiskey during the winter of 1922-23? What became of that material? And most important, what became of his relationship with Comiskey after his series of articles was canceled? These are all subjects for additional research and potential enlightenment.

But perhaps we can find some order in the splendid messiness that likely will always surround the Black Sox scandal. Warren I. Susman, the respected cultural historian, gave even the amateur historian explicit permission to fashion facts from the world of words, especially if they are the words and thoughts of the subject, and create other words and new propositions. “The writing of history is as personal an act as the writing of fiction,” writes Susman. “As the historian attempts to understand the past, he is at the same time, knowingly or not, seeking to understand his own cultural situation and himself.”¹⁶⁸ Asinof wrote *Eight Men Out* without any pretense that his interpretation was the ultimate or complete history of the Black Sox scandal, even if most historians writing since 1963 have chosen to regard his book as such. “I don’t have any lock on history,”

¹⁶⁸ Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. xiii.

writes Asinof. “All historical events can be interpreted from varying points of view.”¹⁶⁹ It was for just that reason -- the varying and inaccurate point of view that a made-for-television version attempted from his book -- that Asinof wrote *Bleeding Between the Lines*. The book also was his attempt to explain what had attracted him to the Black Sox scandal in the first place. “It matters. It still matters,” Oscar “Happy” Felsch, one of the Black Sox, told him years later.¹⁷⁰ The truth always matters.

The role that Hugh Fullerton played in exposing the Black Sox scandal matters, too. Fullerton wrote many words, none more courageous than those that exposed the scandal. He courageously broke from the norm for journalists who were reporting and writing sports in 1919. There had to be a unique motivation for him to do what Grantland Rice and Ring Lardner could not and would not do, something deeper than his moral indignation and pique over violation of his mathematical equations and prognosticating system. If Fullerton was not the first sports writer to demonstrate an ethical impulse in his writing, he certainly has not been the last. If Fullerton is not included in studies of muckraking, then perhaps he should be. That is what makes his persistent pursuit of the Black Sox scandal and gambling’s early influence on baseball so significant, so worth remembering: “a muckraking tirade,” *Baseball Magazine* was quick to label it.¹⁷¹ Organized Baseball was ready to ignore and write off Fullerton if it could. But it couldn’t. Neither should we.

¹⁶⁹ Asinof, *Bleeding Between the Lines*, p. 43.

¹⁷⁰ Asinof, *Bleeding Between the Lines*, p. 79.

¹⁷¹ Eliot Asinof, *Eight Men Out*, p. 210.