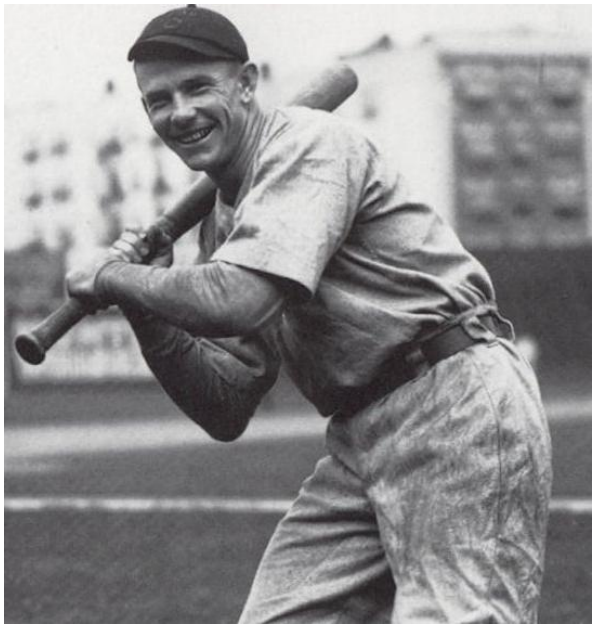
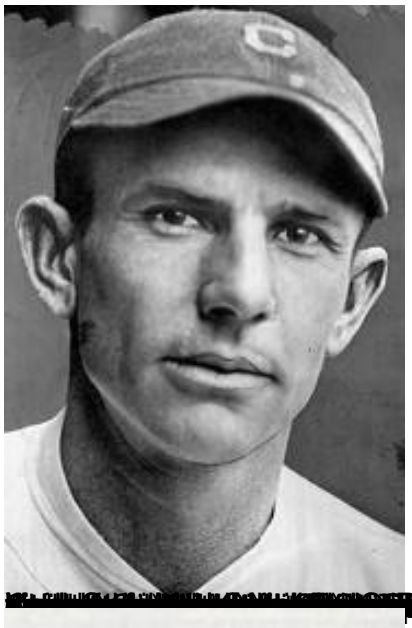


My father has a particular way of referring to the Cleveland Indians.

If they are looking pretty good, he calls them "his" Indians. If they look to be down and out, they are "your" Indians. Recently, it's typically been, "What do you think about your Indians?" He hasn't committed to whose team they are yet, this season.

One figure from my Dad's youth who was a beloved fixture with "his" Indians was Jack Graney.

John Gladstone Graney, who hailed from Canada, came up to the then-named Cleveland Naps in 1908, the same year that Shoeless Joe Jackson debuted with the Philadelphia Athletics (they would become teammates two years later, when Jackson was dealt to Cleveland). On the field, whenever he heard shouts of his nickname, "Glad", he knew someone from his old neighborhood was in the crowd. Graney was a pitcher, and in spring training showed himself to have a cannon for an arm. However, he was also extremely wild. Tribe player/manager Nap Lajoie (who the team was named after) had Graney throw to several batters. Lajoie later commented that each batter had to wait 5 minutes before he got a pitch to hit. Lajoie himself got in the batter's box, and with Graney throwing as hard as he could to impress the future Hall of Famer, the manager received a beanball, was knocked out cold, and spent the rest of the day with an ice bag on his head. Lajoie told Graney, "Anyone as wild as you belongs in the Wild West. You're going to (Pacific Coast League) Portland." (Voices of Summer, Curt Smith).



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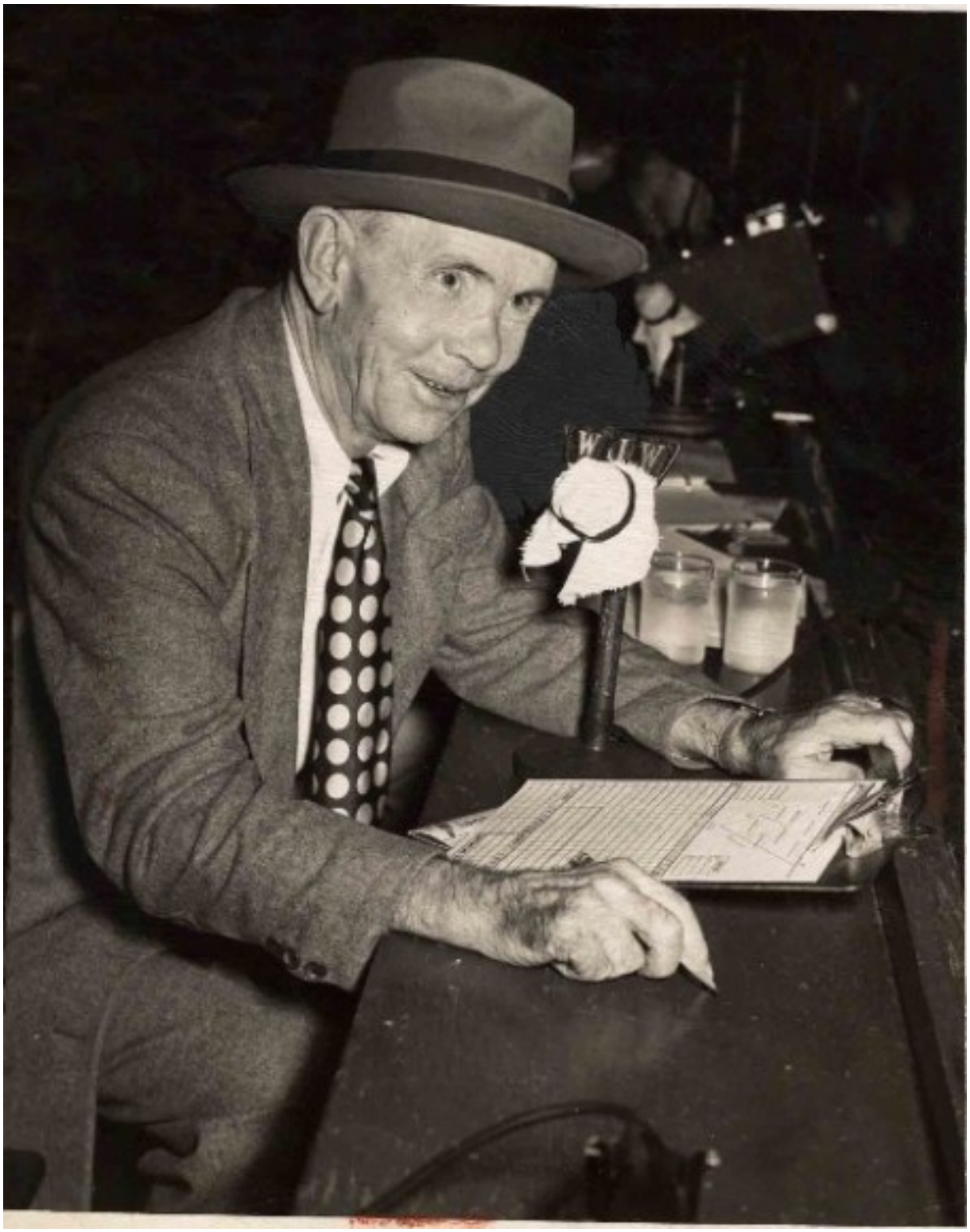
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