Last Winter, a fellow Tribe fan was offering ideas for history articles.

“What about Ten Cent Beer Night?” I replied that well, it’s a pretty depressing story. I take this writing-about-the-Indians thing seriously, but it is for fun. I can’t imagine spending any more time than I already have in pondering such idiocy on the part of the Tribe front office and the fans who attended that game. And the visual of then-Ranger Mike Hargrove fist-fighting his way through Clevelanders to his dugout nauseates me. So, nah- you won’t find further development of that subject in this corner.

Same goes for other upsetting subjects, such as Little Lake Nellie. Ray Chapman, Tony Horton and Jimmy Piersall, too. At least, as central topics.

“Well, what about featuring Mel Harder?” Oh, yeah- I’m on board with a guy like that. There weren’t many figures whose lives were as interwoven with the Indians franchise as he. But that‘s the issue. With an article of typical length, it would be a challenge to portray Harder’s career- and his significance to the Indians- without just jamming it with so many facts that it would read like a Wikipedia piece.

And there it is. If an article sounds like something Tribe fans can easily Google, then what’s the point in writing about it? *Monotone: “Mel Harder was born on October 15, 1909, in Beemer,*

Nebraska .
He graduated from
Tech High School
in
North Omaha, Nebraska
."

Another factor in not featuring many Hall of Fame-caliber figures: their bios have already been written (and read) by armies of writers and readers. What can I provide here that you have not heard about Bob Feller? Admittedly, a fresh piece can be written based on interviews with experts and contemporaries. Or, with a book review.

Another solution: rather than structuring a piece around the biography of a player and then fitting some stories around it, it seems a lot more interesting to try featuring some interesting stories and sliding the player into them. In this manner, particular facets of a player can be featured. The fear of biting off more than can be chewed might be allayed.

Then there is the rare case of a player like Satchel Paige. Here's a guy who's way bigger than life, a popular pitcher from the Negro leagues who'd eventually have some success in the majors. In his prime, he'd pitched in dozens of exhibitions against major league hitters. They

vouched for his status as a premier pitcher of his time.

Internet stories on Paige indeed are prevalent. However, they are likely to depict a caricature rather than attempt to paint a broader picture. Mainly, they can tend to be limited to the famous quotes and the “who knows how old he was?” question. Don‘t get me wrong; the lighthearted, nonsensical quotes are great, and do provide a small window into Paige’s personality.

From the old Collier’s magazine (1953), Paige’s ‘Rules For Staying Young’:

"Avoid fried meats which angry up the blood."

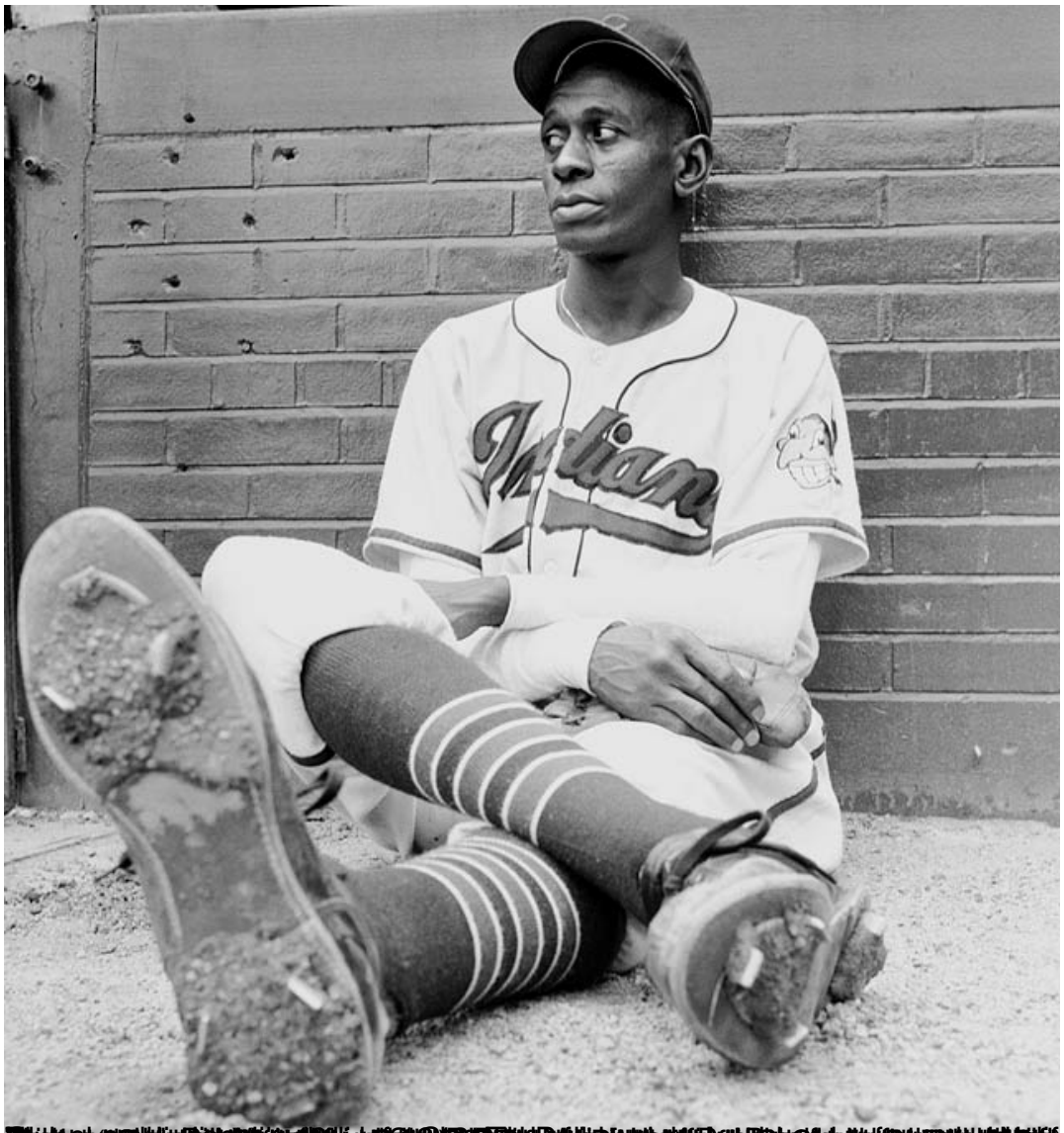
"If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts."

"Keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move."

"Go very light on the vices, such as carrying on in society—the social ramble ain't restful."

"Avoid running at all times." "And don't look back—something might be gaining on you."

On the subject of Paige’s date of birth, reporters as well as the player himself have milked that subject through the decades. The story is that Paige had so many siblings that his mother wasn’t able to keep track. The truth appears to have been established many years ago: he was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1906.



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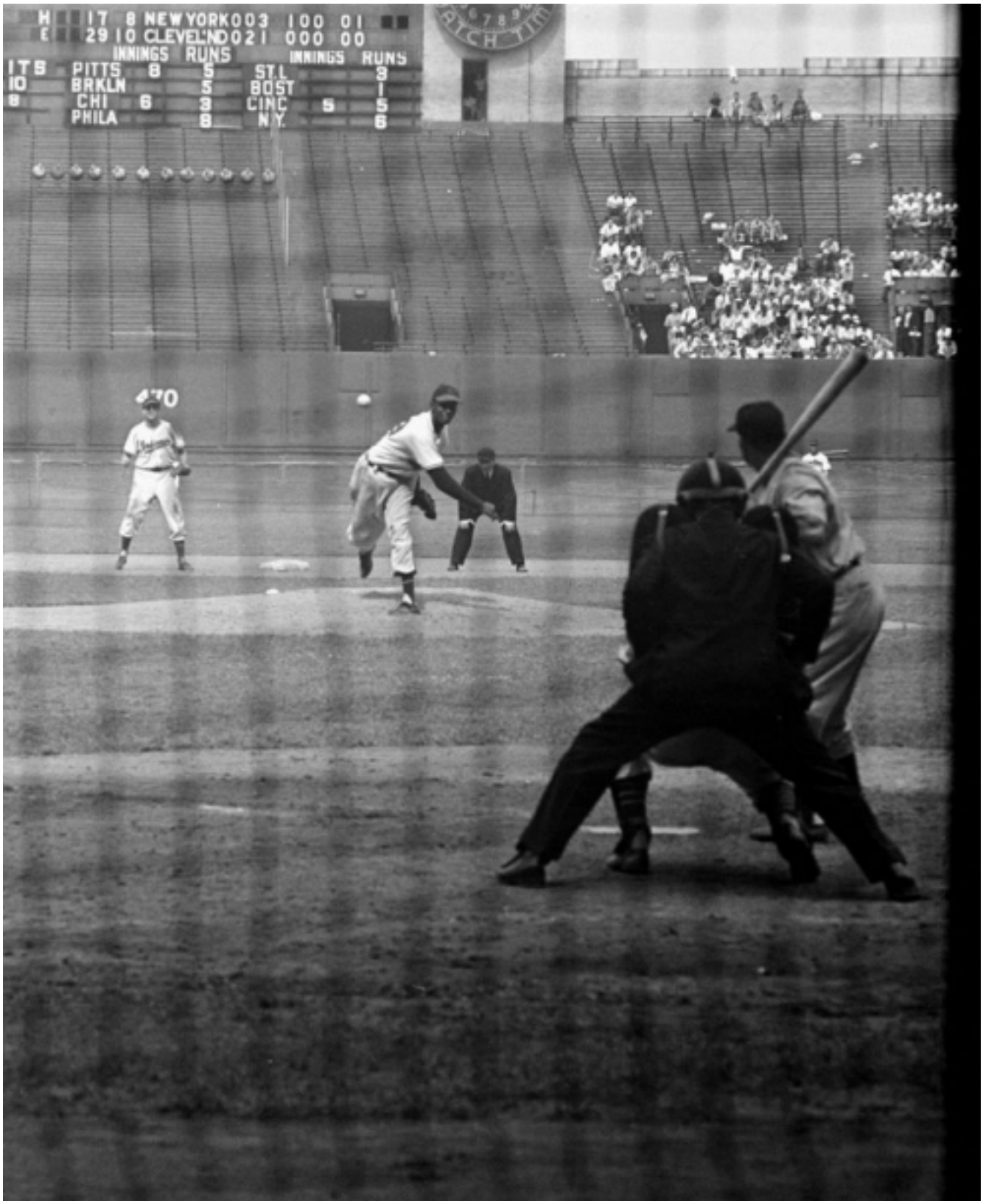
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