

# COUNTRY BOY'S DREAM COME TRUE

## Bob Feller, at 17, Left the Iowa Cornfields to Stand Big League Sluggers on Their Ears; He's New Idol of Youth.

By WILLIAM C. UTLEY

**S**PRING fever in the country is baseball fever this year—big league baseball. Tall gangling kids are leaning on hoes with a far-away look in their eyes and dreaming of breezing 'em past the Giants, the Cardinals, the Yankees.

Freckle-faced youngsters, stretched out on the cool grass around the old swimmin' hole, conjure up visions of making Mel Ott run for cover with a blazing fast ball, or handcuffing Al Simmons with a jack-rabbit inshoot. Still other boys stare at the pages of history and algebra books and find them covered with "earned runs" averages and strikeout records.

Reason: Bob Feller, christened Robert William, of Van Meter, Iowa. Other boys in their teens dreamed of walking right out of the cornfields to the major leagues and standing the heavy hitters on their burning ears. Bob Feller actually did it. Which proves that America is still America, and a country boy can make good overnight in the "big time" if he has the heart.

Feller's "Color" Rivals Ruth.

Babe Ruth was that kind of a boy, even if he came from a big city. He was an orphan who had to make his way in the world. He became baseball's highest paid player, reaching at his peak a contract which called for \$30,000 for a single season. He was a national hero with his 50 or 60 home runs a year, and in every open field and sandlot the kids were gripping heavy bats at the end and swinging for all they were worth in the effort to ape their idol by lambasting one into the next congressional district. With his hulking frame, his good humor, his Horatio Alger history, he was probably the most colorful figure sport has ever produced.

Up to now. They are saying that Feller will be a greater hero to young America than even the mighty Babe. Since that memorable day, September 13, 1936, when Bob Feller, wearing the gray uniform of the Cleveland Indians though he was only seventeen years old, struck out 17 Philadelphia Athletics to break an American league record which had stood for 23 years, and tie the major league mark set by the great Dizzy Dean himself, the Iowa farm boy's name has been at the tip of every youthful tongue.

It's a good thing. Bob Feller is a clean, strong, healthy boy—a real boy. He is not afraid of hard work, never forsaking chores on his dad's farm, even for baseball, until he made baseball his profession. He'll get \$10,000 for playing this year, and another \$40,000 from advertising testimonials. But he still wears the same size hat. He hasn't taken up smoking, drinking or dancing, his studies go on under a tutor for he hopes to be graduated from high school, and he gets 12 hours sleep a night.

Better than anything else he likes to pitch that baseball. He has everything, except a change of pace perhaps, but he doesn't miss that much. Sport writers say his fast one is as fast as Walter Johnson's a generation ago; about Johnson they used to say, "How can you hit what you can't see?"

Coach Wally Schang of the Cleveland team, who, in his day, caught Eddie Plank and Chief Bender and others famed in the annals of the game, says: "There was never anyone like him. Mark my words—he'll go down in history as the greatest pitcher who ever lived." But the most important praise of all came from Umpire Bill Klem, grizzled veteran who has called 'em as he saw 'em for longer than most of us care to remember. After watching Feller make the National league champion New York Giants look like grammar school boys trying for his fast ball, Klem said: "I've never seen anything like it."

Son Lives Father's Dream.

How did Bob Feller get that way, at an age when most boys are trying to train that cockwold out of their hair to look slick at the high school "prom"? The answer is found in William Andrew Feller, the tall, wiry Iowa farmer who gazes with mingled awe and satisfaction at his son's exploits. It was all part of the senior Feller's plan. Never succeeding in his own ambition to become a professional ball player, he determined to make one of his son.

Accordingly, Bob's baseball education began early—when he was four. He and his father played catch, using the barn for a backstop, for Bob's control wasn't very good then, either. By the time he was fourteen young Feller could throw them in fast enough to crack his father's ribs, and he did. That was when Dad got a little careless judging the hop on Son's smoke ball. The barn's sides were apparently more solid than those of Mr. Feller, for they were only dented a bit when Bob let loose with a wild one.

Bob could throw a baseball 275 feet by the time he was nine, and 360 feet when he became thirteen; that is farther than the distance from the outfield fence to the home



Bob's dad and sister, Marguerite, join him for dinner at a hotel where the Cleveland Indians are stopping.

plate in most major league ball parks, and there are few big league players who can throw a ball that far on the fly.

Dad Feller thought Bob was ready to begin playing in 1932, so to make sure he would start under the right circumstances Mr. Feller built a good baseball diamond on their 360-acre farm, provided fences and a small grandstand. He organized his own team, the Oak Views, with Bob playing shortstop and chasing the cattle and fowl out of the "park" before the games. Playing short in 1933, Bob hit .321, which means he made a safe hit in just about one of every three trips to the plate. He had a throw that nearly tore off the first baseman's hand.

Bob Starts a Game.

In grade school young Bob had liked to pitch, and had organized a nine to give the Van Meter high school team some practice. With Bob on the mound the little fellows licked the high school in seven of eight practice games. Dad Feller remembered this in the third inning of a game in Winterset, Iowa, in the spring of 1934. The Oak Views had hired a pitcher to hurl this important encounter. He had to be taken from the game with the bases full and nobody out in the third inning. Bob was sent in to pitch. He struck out the next two batters and got



Ready to heave a fast one.

two strikes over on the third. Then the runner on third tried to steal home. A perfect throw from Bob enabled the catcher to nip him at the plate.

By the middle of that July the Oak Views had decided Bob was good enough to be used as a starting pitcher, and let him start a game against the Waukee, Iowa, team.

"I was fifteen years old then," says Bob, "and weighed about 140 pounds. I'm six feet now and weigh around 185." He was wild against Waukee, but when he put men on the bases by virtue of walks he relied on the fast one to get himself out of the hole. "I still do that today," he says. "Pitching for Cleveland, I have fanned three in a row, using nothing but speed."

Bob struck out 23 Waukee players, allowing two hits, and the Oak Views won, 9 to 2.

Bob Sees World Series.

And so it went. Game after game, Iowa's boy wonder went on to fan 13, 15, 18 or 20 of the opposing nines, allowing only two or three hits and often pitching a shutout. By the end of the 1934 season he had rolled up the almost incredible record of 157 innings pitched, 25 games won against four lost, and 360 strikeouts. He allowed only 41 hits and 21 earned runs. To top it all off, his batting average for the year was .403, a phenomenal mark.

Bob got his reward that fall after the season in Iowa was over. His dad took him to St. Louis to see the World Series games. They lived in a tourist camp, and it was great fun. But the quality of major league baseball, even as played by the Gas House Gang (who were to learn about a young man named Feller at a later date) and the classy Detroit Tigers, failed to give Bob cold feet. After watching some

of the game's famous pitchers at

their work, Bob said, "I think I can do better than that."

The next year word got 'round to Cyril C. Slapnicka, scout and assistant to the president of the Cleveland American league club, that there was something burning up the Iowa cornfields and it wasn't the drouth. With some misgivings he journeyed out to give Bob Feller the once-over.

What Slapnicka saw he was reluctant to believe. But after watching a few games he finally became convinced, and signed Bob Feller to a contract with the Fargo-Moorhead club of the Northern league. There is a rule in organized baseball which forbids a major league club to sign an unattached amateur player until he has served an apprenticeship with a team in some minor league.

\$100,000 Bid for Him.

Some clubs contended last winter that this rule had been violated in the Feller case and that, therefore, Feller should be declared a "free agent" by Judge Kenesaw M. Landis, high commissioner of baseball. A "free agent" is a player who is not the property of any club and may sell himself to the highest bidder.

Although Bob actually never pitched for any minor league club, he had been owned by two, and Landis decided that he was still the property of the Indians. It was reported that other clubs had been ready to offer Bob as much as \$100,000 as a bonus for signing a contract if the commissioner had decided otherwise.

The Fargo-Moorhead club had immediately turned Bob over to New Orleans, in the Southern association. New Orleans retired him last spring so that he could attend high school. As soon as his school semester was over, Cleveland drafted him from New Orleans. Manager Steve O'Neill of the Indians allowed the youngster to play with a semi-pro team in the Great Lakes city, so the Indian brain trust could keep an eye on him. They didn't have to watch him for long.

On July 8 O'Neill decided Bob was ready to taste big time opposition, and allowed him to pitch three innings of an exhibition game against the St. Louis Cardinals. The Gas House Gang looked no tougher to Bob from the pitching mound than they had from the grandstand in that World Series of 1934. They hardly even saw his fast ball and his curve had them breaking their backs, just as had the cornfield swingers out in Iowa.

Bob Wins Dizzy's Praise.

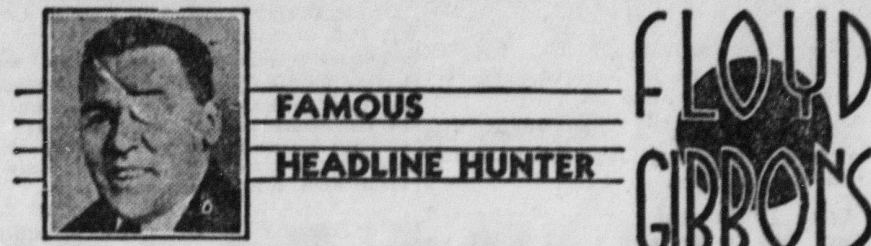
At the end of his three-inning stretch Bob had struck out eight Cardinals, including some of the cream of their far-famed attack. They got only one run and three hits off him. Even Dizzy Dean was moved to talk about some one other than himself. "The kid's got plenty of stuff," he admitted. Pepper Martin, another of the league's topflight stars who had gone down before Feller's blazing pitches, testified, "I couldn't find his curve ball at all. He knows how to pitch."

It was enough to convince O'Neill that Bob Feller was no dream, but a real flesh-and-blood baseball player. He nominated the kid on August 23 to start his first full major-league game.

The results were all that could be asked for. As Bob walked from the field two hours later, after striking out 15 batters of the St. Louis Browns, the crowd roared. A seventeen-year-old boy had come within one strikeout of tying the American league record set by the immortal Rube Waddell in 1909. "Heck," said Bob Feller, "I did better than that back in Iowa!"

As it has been related, he did better than that in the American league, breaking Waddell's mark three weeks later against the Athletics. He finished the season with a record of five won and three lost, and in 62 innings he had fanned 78 batters. His earned-runs average, the best measure of a pitcher's effectiveness, was 3.34, second only to the veteran Lefty Grove of the Boston Red Sox.

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**FAMOUS HEADLINE HUNTER**  
**FLOYD GIBBONS**  
**ADVENTURERS**  
**Hell Everybody**  
**CLUB**

"Buried—But Not Dead"  
By FLOYD GIBBONS

**A**DVENTURE sure laid an icy hand on the shoulder of Joseph Kurtz, who sent me one of the best written yarns I've had to date. Joe lives in Brooklyn now and at last writing could have used a job. He gave up his youthful ambition to be a mining engineer as a result of events related in today's story, and switched to mechanical engineering. But, if you ask me, the magazines are looking for people who can write like Joe.

Accordingly, I'm following his script pretty close. In April, 1920, Joe was a surveyor with the Glen Alden Coal company, Scranton, Pa. It was his first job, and he was assigned to investigating "pillar robbing" in the Cayuga mine. I'll explain.

Miners must leave enough coal to support the roof of the mine, which consists of shale, a scaly rock, that caves in easily. Pillar robbing means stealing coal from these remaining supports, and is illegal, since it may cause cave-ins in which workers are killed, gas and water mains burst, even explode, and brick buildings standing on the land collapse. It's earthquake, fire and flood.

Fine Place for an Avalanche.

The Cayuga had been deserted for fifty years. Inside Joe and three companions found pillars cracked and crumbled by the weight of millions of tons of rock they had held up for five decades. As supports they were useless and might just as well have been mined out. Old timbers erected by miners to protect themselves in those far, bygone years were rotted, useless. A touch and they collapsed to fungi-infested, mildewed dust. Not much between Joe and the millions of tons of rock over his head.

Worse, the workings were of the "pitch" type—each chamber like a long, sloping tunnel, some very steep. The roof was dangerously cracked. Slabs of shale hung so loose a breath would send them crashing to the floor. Fallen rock covered the steeply-slanting floor in sizes from a fist to a dining-room table. This "gob" can start an avalanche on the slanting tunnel floor.

Joe's duties—lovely job!—were to climb over this loose rock, covered with slime. If he made it, it was safe for the others to come up. If he didn't and started a fatal avalanche—Joe forgot to tell about that.

A Pocket of Gas Was Ignited.

Well, sir, Joe climbed gingerly upward, clinging to the glistening coal pillar at the side, peering ahead by the faint light of the lamp fastened above his capvisor. He stepped, light as a falling feather, testing every foothold. At the top of our "human fly," as Joe calls himself, was to establish a point for the transit—a surveyor's instrument—to shoot at.

Joe never made it. Twenty feet from the top—Bom! An explosion like a giant bassdrum shook the earth in a bolt of livid flame. GAS! Joe's light had ignited a pocket of whitedamp!

Splinter! Crack! Crash! The shock jerked rock toppling from the roof, dropped it on the loose "gob" on the steeply-slanting floor! THE SLIDE WAS ON!

At first, with thumps scarcely audible above the rolling rumble of the waves of flame over his head, then, in a roaring crescendo, jagged rock raced, leaping and thundering downward past Joe, hurtling into the hell of darkness far below.

Buried—and in Inky Darkness.

Joe's lamp had gone out with the explosion. But above him was a blinding glare—a marching surf of blue-and-red-streaked fire, lighting up the chamber overhead. Blistering white heat above—thundering flood of angry rock below! Joe clung to the pillar on his stomach, ducking hurtling rocks, shrinking from the blazing heat above. With clawing fingers and toes that vainly sought foothold in the hard floor, he lay there—it seemed ages—aching muscles a-torture. The slide diminished. The "carbonic oxide" above burned fitfully, threatening any second to seek out its rainbow flames another pocket, spreading in chain explosions through the underground terrain, burying Joe and his companions.

Joe thought of the others. Had they been crushed to a jelly-smear under those tons of rock—trapped in some doghole or cross-cut in a pillar?

The rolling flames died, went out. In the inky black Joe groped for a match, lit his lamp. The floor was clear. He stepped out. Instantly he tobogganed down on a slab of rock he had overlooked. Four hundred feet below he brought up short on the heap of loose rock. It had blocked the entrance completely.

No Wonder Panic Seized Him.

Joe was CAUGHT LIKE A RAT. He sat on a rock, wondered that he was not frightened, began to figure his chances of seeing sunlight again. It seemed suddenly very precious, sun and open air. Air! The rock had sucked much out, the explosion had driven more out and the fire had burned he didn't know how much of the life-giving oxygen in that black pit. Would the rest last till they got to him?

Then, Joe says, panic did grip him. He shouted himself hoarse. He smashed a rock repeatedly against a pillar, listened. Not a sound. Just silence. TERRIBLE SILENCE. Joe saw slow death ahead—suffocation, thirst, starvation. Unwounded, he wished for death—swift death, rather than this drawn-out agony. Now he could only wait helplessly.

Joe says he prefers to forget the next nine hours. Imagination can be the most horrible form of torture. But—his companions had escaped. With all hope gone for Joe, they had notified the surface. A relay of rescue crews, working as only mine rescue crews can, dug through the pillar from an adjoining chamber and pulled Joe out nine hours later.

From that day on the only coal Joe can stand looking at is in a stove. He quit the mining engineer career cold. But I still say he can write like a professional. What do you think?  
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Bees Do Not Sting You

if You Display No Fear

According to the popular notion, insects are physically unable to penetrate the human skin no matter how hard they may ply their stingers, because the pores are then closed, notes a writer in the Indianapolis News. The United States Bureau of entomology investigated and reported that the belief has no foundation in fact. The stinger of a bee does enter the skin through the pores, and these tiny openings may be slightly affected by breathing, but the difference is not sufficient to interfere with the operation of the bee's stinger. If bees do not sting a person while he holds his breath or clenches his fists it is not because they can not sting under such conditions, but because the person is then likely to be more quiet.

Bees seem to be able to detect the slightest sign of fear in a human being and are stimulated to sting by any quick, nervous movements. A person who remains quiet and who shows no fear is not in great danger of being stung. Bees, however, are repelled by certain body odors, and some persons do not excite and anger bees as others do.

Macaroni Club Figured

in "Yankee Doodle" Song

The word "macaroni" in the song, "Yankee Doodle" is more than merely nonsense. It is a remnant of eighteenth century English slang, declares a writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

About 1772 a group of young Englishmen of wealth and leisure, most of whom had spent considerable time on the continent and particularly in Italy, formed a fashionable organization which they called the Macaroni club. The name was taken from the fact that as one of their peculiarities or individualities, they served macaroni at the club dinners. The dish was then little known in England, and was practically introduced in that country by the Macaroni club.

The Macaronis also sought for singularity in dress and manners. They wore immense knots of artificial hair, projecting behind very small cocked hats; carried walking sticks adorned with tassels of bright colors, and affected very tight jackets and knee breeches. "Macaroni" soon came to be a derisive term for an effete man, but in its earliest popular use it had something of the suggestion of such expressions as "ritzy" and "high hat."

Sunbonnet Girls to Applique on a Quilt

So quaint, so colorful—these adorable "Sunbonnet" maidens with their bobbing balloons—you won't be able to wait to applique them on a quilt! The block measures 9 inches. Here's a long-looked-for opportunity to utilize those gay scraps you've been saving. You



Pattern 5724

can use the same design on scarfs and pillows and so complete a bedroom ensemble. The patches are simple in form—you'll find the work goes quickly. In pattern 5724 you will find the Block Chart, an illustration for cutting, sewing and finishing, together with yardage chart, diagram of quilt to help arrange the blocks for single and double bed size, and a diagram of block which serves as a guide for placing the patches and suggests contrasting materials.

To obtain this pattern send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) to The Sewing Circle Household Arts Dept., 259 W. 14th Street, New York, N. Y. Write plainly your name, address and pattern number.

Mail Service in Alaska

Alaska is the show place of mail service, the last frontier, the region of the greatest variety of mail transportation in the world. There one may see the mail carried by railroad, wheeled horse vehicles, horse sleds, dog sleds, reindeer sleds, by men on foot and on snowshoes, by steamboat, gasoline boat, the white man's row-boat, the Eskimo kayak and the airplane.—Washington Post.

Why Laxatives Fail In Stubborn Constipation

Twelve to 24 hours is too long to wait when relief from clogged bowels and constipation is needed, for then enormous quantities of bacteria accumulate, causing GAS, indigestion and many restless, sleepless nights. If you want REAL, QUICK RELIEF, take a liquid compound such as Adierika. Adierika contains SEVEN cathartic and carminative ingredients that act on the stomach, BOTH bowels. Most "overnight" laxatives contain one ingredient that acts on the lower bowel only. Adierika's DOUBLE ACTION gives your system a thorough cleansing, bringing out old poisonous waste matter that may have caused GAS pains, sour stomach, headaches and sleepless nights for months. Adierika relieves stomach GAS at once and usually removes bowel congestion in less than two hours. No waiting for overnight results. This famous treatment has been recommended by many doctors and druggists for 35 years. Take Adierika one-half hour before breakfast or one hour before bedtime and in a short while you will feel marvelously refreshed. At all Leading Druggists.

Books Are Company

If you can entertain yourself, you are fortified against many a long evening without company. Try the companionship of books.

To Women:

If you suffer every month you owe it to yourself to take note of Cardul and find out whether it will benefit you.

Functional pains of menstruation have, in many, many cases, been eased by Cardul. And where malnutrition (poor nourishment) had taken away women's strength, Cardul has been found to increase the appetite, improve digestion and in that way help to build up a natural resistance to certain useless suffering. (Where Cardul fails to benefit, consult a physician.) Ask your druggist for Cardul—(pronounced "Card-ul.")

Show Intelligence

You don't hear babies using the baby talk that grown people utter to them.

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