The Cincinnati Reds:
A History, an Era of Greatness, and Recollections of a Fan

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Cincinnati. To most baseball fans this city represents the beginning of spring and the start of a new season. For being the nation's first professional baseball team and a charter member of the National League, the Cincinnati Reds are given the honor of hosting the opening game of each new National League season. Since the original Red Stockings took the nation by storm, winning sixty-eight games against no defeats in 1869, Cincinnati's baseball fortunes have vacillated between the best of times and the worst of times. Growing up in the middle Ohio Valley region, I, like many other children of the area, became a Cincinnati Reds fan. This interest, for me, has grown into a passion. Over the years I have learned many things about the Reds and their history from my parents, my grandparents, friends, books, broadcasts, and other sources. In this thesis I will construct a brief history of the Reds and their importance to the city of Cincinnati. Then I will discuss the rise of the Big Red Machine and the powerful Reds teams of the 1970's, followed by a description of the dismantling of the Machine in the 1980's. The final section of this paper will reflect my own experiences of growing up in Reds' country.

The origins of the present day Reds can be traced to July 23, 1866. On this date at the law office of Tilden, Sherman, and Moulton, the Cincinnati Baseball Club was established by local attorneys Alfred T. Goshorn and Aaron B. Champion. Like other clubs of that era, the Red Stockings were comprised mostly of
urbane, upwardly mobile professionals. At this particular time the baseball clubs were more for the enjoyment of the professional class, although the working classes in Cincinnati enjoyed playing the game in open lots. The decision to make the Red Stockings a professional team, coupled with the success of the 1869 club, unified city-wide support for the team and eliminated any potential rifts between the different socio-economic classes. Baseball in Cincinnati has always appealed to all of the classes. This is in great part because of the close relationship between the team and its city. Unlike many of the other Major League clubs, the Reds have operated in a city which is a close-knit community. Large urban centers such as New York and Los Angeles would certainly notice the absence of their team, but these mega-centers of culture would find a sufficient substitute for their attentions. Cincinnati, however, would be devastated by the loss of the Reds. The Reds are a source of pride and identity for Cincinnati and the entire middle Ohio River Valley area. Through the best and worst economic times of this region, the Reds have served as a constant. Traditionally, when economic times are good, the Reds have been good, such as the late teens and early twenties, and periods of the fifties, sixties and early seventies. Also, some of the Reds' worst efforts came during the Depression of the late twenties and early thirties, as well as the recession of the early eighties. All of these clubs, from the finest to the most mediocre, have been a foundation for the city. To take the Reds from Cincinnati would
destroy the city's soul.

However, the Reds have not always been model representatives. Cincinnati fans will never be accused of possessing the same kind of loyalty held by the fans of the Chicago Cubs. Characteristically, when the Reds are good, the crowds are large and enthusiastic, but when the Reds are bad, morale and attendance both plummet. This pattern was noticeable beginning with the Red Stockings second year, 1870. Even though the team lost only six games, the club was disassembled because the fans lost interest and the owners lost money. By 1876, however, Cincinnati re-entered professional baseball as a charter member of the National League. The new Red Stockings bore no resemblance to their predecessors and proceeded to establish a 9-56 record, which is the lowest victory total ever for a National League team.²

Once Cincinnati regained baseball, several controversies ensued. In 1877, the National League office voided the Red Stocking's season because no one could discern who owned the team. Also, in 1881 the team was suspended for the season because it insisted upon serving beer at the games and playing on Sundays.³ After being banished from the National League, Cincinnati played an integral part in the formation of the American Association. The Association was comprised of six teams and became an immediate success.⁴ For both the town and the team, the Association represented an important accomplishment. The city proved that it could withstand pressure from the
Puritanical North and assert its own unique mid-western identity. Instead of submissively following the establishment, Cincinnati proved that it to could be a leader. The team also became a success during this period. More revenue was made with the new policies, and the team began to win more consistently, capturing first place in 1882 with a 55-25 record. Also during the 1880's, former Red Charley Jones became partially responsible for the anecdote that umpires are blind. According to the story, Jones, who was one of the day's top players, was spotted by his wife with another woman. His wife threw cayenne pepper into his eyes which made him unable to see well enough to play. He then retired and became an umpire.

Cincinnati returned to the National League in 1890. It was around the turn of the century that several important Cincinnatians began to emerge on the baseball scene. Some of the more significant baseball innovations came from Charlie Comiskey. Although he was manager of the Reds during the 1890's, his most significant contributions came after leaving the team. The best known of Comiskey's changes were the positioning of the first baseman off of the bag, increasing the number of umpires from one to two, and founding the Western League, which became the American League.

There are, however, three other personalities of this era whose contributions to the Reds have had lasting effects. Frank C. Bancroft, who was in charge of the Reds' front office, is responsible for starting the traditional celebrations on Opening
Day. This day is now a special Cincinnati holiday which is a source of great pride to Cincinnatians and Reds' fans of the area. The other two personalities were part of a syndicate which bought the Reds in the early 1900's -- city Boss George B. Cox and municipal official August (Garry) Hermann. These figures represented the corrupt aspect of the team. This period is probably most typified by the alleged association of Hermann in Baseball's 1919 Black Sox Scandal.

While several of the early twentieth century seasons were losing ones, by the end of the second decade manager Christy Mathewson began to turn the team around. He is primarily responsible for blending the talent which won the 1919 Series, even though he did not manage that season because of World War I commitments. (He was not able to be contacted in France prior to the start of the season.) The Reds were involved in one other game of interesting historical note during this era. On May 2, 1917, the Reds and Chicago Cubs played the only nine-inning dual no-hitter. Chicago's Jim (Hippo) Vaughn and the Reds' Fred Toney each pitched nine no-hit innings, but the Reds scored in the tenth to win. Toney won the game with a ten-inning no hitter, and baseball received its only dual no-hitter.

Following a relatively quiet period, Cincinnati once again moved into baseball's limelight on May 24, 1935. On this historic evening the Reds beat the Philadelphia Phillies two to one in the first Major League game played at night. This event was considered so important that from the White House President
Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed the telegraph key which turned on the lights. Night baseball created new excitement for the game at a time when the Depression had lowered morale across the country. Locally, the lights were a significant attendance booster which ignited the Reds out of a period of mediocrity.

Three years later pitcher Johnny Vander Meer pitched baseball's only two consecutive no-hitters. This accomplishment is one of the greatest feats by a Reds player, probably superseded only by Pete Rose's career hitting record. With the threat of war hanging over the world, the Reds finished the 1939 and 1940 seasons as National League champions. The 1940 Reds also won the World Series by defeating Detroit four games to three, giving Cincinnati its second World Series title.

Following the 1940 World Championship, the Reds fell back into their pattern of inconsistency. About the only interesting note from the 1940's was the debut of Joe Nuxhall during the 1944 season, at the age of fifteen. Because of the War, major league rosters were depleted. Therefore, Nuxhall became the youngest man ever to play in a major league game. This began a long association between the Reds and Nuxhall, which has seen him go from the diamond to the broadcast booth; he remains a fixture for Reds fans currently as one of the voices of the Reds on the radio.

Cincinnati remained a very bad team from the end of the War until 1956. With young stars like Ted Kluszewski, Gus Bell, and Frank Robinson, however, the 1956 Reds went 91-63 and drew more
than 1.1 million fans to Crosley Field. This attendance record would stand until the opening of Riverfront Stadium in 1970.\textsuperscript{13}

An interesting misnomer is evident here. Based mostly upon its Opening Day tradition, Cincinnati has long been acknowledged as a strongly supportive baseball town. However, especially among Cincinnatians, the fans are generally more of the fair-weather variety. According to ex-owner Bill DeWitt, "After Opening Day the people in town wouldn't go near the ball park. But they all thought they were great fans because they listened on the radio."\textsuperscript{14}

The Reds again reached the World Series in 1961, this time losing to the New York Yankees four games to one. Following their World Series appearance, the Reds had only one losing season during the 1960's. With the increase in support among the fans and the city, plans were made to build Riverfront Stadium.

The significance of the stadium goes far beyond merely being a nice place for the Reds to play. Cincinnati had plans for some sort of downtown stadium since 1925.\textsuperscript{15} The European emphasis on planning is especially evident in Cincinnati's Germanic heritage. In the planning of the stadium, however, numerous obstacles arose throughout the years. By the early 1960's it was apparent that if Cincinnati did not build a stadium soon, it would probably lose the Reds. Faced with the prospect of losing the soul of the city, Cincinnati unified and Riverfront became a reality. In the "Opening Souvenir Magazine," distributed at the first game played in Riverfront, an editorial published December 1, 1965, in the
Cincinnati Enquirer was reprinted. The editorial stated

We confidently predict that once the new stadium has become a reality, its greatest significance will not be as a remarkable new facility (although it clearly will be that) but as a monument to a new spirit in the Queen City - a spirit that admits no obstacles, a spirit that enlists the best that Cincinnatians have to offer, a spirit that gets things done.16

Clearly this editorial is indicative of the positive work ethic of the community. It also demonstrates that Cincinnati will support a winning effort, but because of its Germanic heritage the city expects nothing less than a total commitment and success. Accordingly, as the 1960's came to an end, all of Cincinnati could feel that great accomplishments were just ahead.

The Big Red Machine came of age during the 1970 season. During the decade of the 1970's the Reds were the most dominating team in baseball, winning six division titles, four pennants, and two World Series. After suffering through nearly a century's worth of off and on baseball, Reds fans were ready for their reward. As the Big Red Machine started to win, the new positive attitude of the team became contagious, and the entire region felt the exhilaration. It appears as if the city awoke with the Reds, and together they led a renewal of the region. As young stars such as Pete Rose and Tony Perez started careers during the early 1960's, the city was planning urban renewal with Riverfront Stadium as its cornerstone. A new sense of pride became evident throughout the region, with the 1970's and the Big Red Machine
becoming the crown jewel in the history of the Queen City.

The foundation of the Big Red Machine began in 1963 when a rookie named Pete Rose took spring training by storm. His reckless abandon and penchant for sprinting to first base after a walk earned him the nickname "Charlie Hustle." The Cincinnati native quickly became endeared to the hometown crowd, and he would remain the undisputed crowd favorite for over two decades. Rose was not alone for long, however. By the early 1970's, he was surrounded by a host of superstars including Tony Perez, Johnny Bench, Joe Morgan, and Dave Conception. With the addition of all these players, the Reds needed someone who could give the team an identity and mesh the many attitudes.

Bob Howsam was the man who took responsibility for the Reds image. During his tenure as General Manager (1967-1973) and President (1973-1978),17 Howsam blended the Reds into one of the most powerful and popular baseball teams ever. Even though he amassed one of the most talented baseball teams in the history of the game, he still was able to exert control over the egos and present a Cincinnati team as conservative as the region in which they played. This meant no facial hair, no high stirrups, black shoes, and dressing up on road trips, but the players raised few objections, and the city had a tailor-made ambassador.18 According to Eugene Ruehlmann, a Cincinnati attorney, two-term mayor, and force behind the construction of Riverfront Stadium, "The Reds of the seventies, with the conservative, old-fashioned image, were completely consistent with the city of Cincinnati."19
To Howsam's credit, he was able to maintain the Reds' image throughout a time of extensive civil upheaval in the United States. Some of the traditional image was helped by the diplomatic expertise of manager Sparky Anderson (who was never fully appreciated until after he was gone and the Big Red Machine had degenerated into a Little Red Engine) and also fate. For instance, the Reds were actually one of the first major league teams to wear colored spikes. Equipment manager Bernie Stowe had outfitted the 1969 Reds with red Adidas spikes for spring training; however, pitcher Jim Maloney and Tony Cloninger had problems with the shoes and reverted to their traditional black ones. Howsam decided that the team must be uniform in dress and, therefore, black shoes were henceforth required for everyone.20

The traditional image that the Reds represented was important both for rallying support among the region and demonstrating to the rest of the nation that wholesome role models could still exist. However, even more important than the image were the personalities who made up the Big Red Machine. The Reds' stars of the 1970's were hard workers, and this more than anything else made them congruent with the hard-working, blue collar Germanic heritage of the region. The Reds were also immensely popular because they not only worked hard, but they liked what they were doing, much like the people. An interesting parallel between Cincinnati's attitude, as opposed to Pittsburgh's, which is a similar city both socio-economically and geographically, is given by Dave Parker. In an interview with
Robert L. Harris he says, "I have lived and worked in two so-called blue-collar, working-class cities, and they are nothing alike. In Pittsburgh, everybody works hard and hates it; in Cincinnati they all work hard and love it."

Pete Rose represented this love of hard work and total commitment more than any other player. He was the crowd favorite, not only because of his hometown origins, but also because of his aggressive style. Rose, in a way, symbolized the contradictory and inferior way in which Cincinnati is viewed by her larger major league sisters. His wholesome (formerly) All-American attitude represented the positive aspects of the conservative mid-west, free of many of the problems plaguing other cities. But, just as the city, Rose also carried an attitude that bordered cockiness. Always considered the overachiever, he never felt he was given his due. It was this stigma which eventually led Rose to leave Cincinnati for Philadelphia. In a 1979 Sport Magazine interview, Rose said, "... when you feel you're number one in baseball, you shouldn't be paid number three on your team. ... It took me a long time to reach the top of my profession. And I should be rewarded for it." This is the same feeling that has plagued Cincinnati, even during good times. New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles tend to look down upon anything Cincinnati does as second-best. Therefore, when the Reds were able to grab national headlines with the Big Red Machine, it was a matter of pride both for the baseball fans and the entire community.
Outside of Cincinnati, Johnny Bench is probably the best known personality of the Reds. (Rose is clearly dominant in Cincinnati.) At the age of 22, Bench was ordained for greatness by Ted Williams, who wrote on a baseball, "To Johnny, a Hall of Famer for sure." Bench did not fail to live up to his vast potential, and he is arguably the best catcher of all time. Since he was a country boy from Bingham, Oklahoma, his down-home demeanor and superstar status quickly made him the favorite Red in the farming communities of Reds country. Bench, however, while being the most famous player from the Big Red Machine, is not generally credited as one of the leaders of the team.

For various reasons, Tony Perez, Joe Morgan, and Pete Rose emerged as the team leaders. While each of these players was a forceful personality, the reason they became the leaders was probably the result of the ethnic and racial composition of the Reds. Perez spoke for the Latin Americans, Morgan for the black Americans, and Rose for the Americans of European ancestry. The Reds, as manager Sparky Anderson has been quoted in several places, were "color blind." It is interesting to note the harmony on a team made up of so many egos and ethnic backgrounds. Once again this was probably to the credit of the three team leaders. Also important to the city is the parallel in relations between ethnic, especially black, groups. While Chicago and Detroit were rioting, and racial tensions were exploding throughout the nation, Cincinnati remained relatively free of the violence.
The Big Red Machine matured during the early 1970's, winning the pennant in 1970 and 1972, and winning the National League's Western Division in 1973. After losing the division to the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1974, the Reds and Cincinnati climbed to the height of the Big Red Machine era in 1975 and 1976. During this period the city was extremely supportive of the winning Reds. Moreover, the Reds drew well over two million fans per season several years during the 1970's, and as William Leggett observed, "...a forest of Big Red Machine stickers pasted on the rear of what seems like every car in town."\(^{25}\)

With the excitement of the Bicentennial added to the Reds exploits, the summers of 1975 and 1976 were certainly the glory years for the Reds and their fans. With respect to these two years, it is hard to identify which World Series victory was the crowning achievement of the Big Red Machine era. The 1975 victory over the Boston Red Sox had all of the drama of a Hollywood script, with the Reds finally winning Game 7 on a ninth inning Joe Morgan single. (This is the same Series with Carlton Fisk's famous twelfth inning home run to win Game 6.) As Pete Rose said after Game 6, "What the hell, it had to be the greatest World Series game in history."\(^{26}\) It was probably the greatest Series as well.

While the 1976 Series failed to produce the drama of its predecessor, this is the Series which affirmed the Big Red Machine as one of the all-time greatest teams. As the nation looked on, the Reds destroyed the New York Yankees in four
straight games, none of which were really close. Cincinnati proved that it was a dominating team, with the victory over the Yankees capping a seven year period which saw the Reds win five division titles, four pennants, and two World Series'. Regardless of which Series was the greatest moment for the Big Red Machine, one thing is certain. Following the 1976 World Series, Bob Howsam started the Machine toward its demise by trading Tony Perez to the Montreal Expos. Never again did the Big Red Machine possess the mystique of the early and mid-1970's.

Perez was the first to go, but by the sorry days of the early 1980's nearly every other cog from the Big Red Machine had either been traded or had opted for free agency. Following Perez were Rose, Morgan, George Foster, Ken Griffey, Ray Knight, and Don Gullet. Most of the blame for the dismantling has been placed upon Dick Wagner, the Reds' President from 1978 to 1983. About the kindest thing that can be uttered about Wagner by a Cincinnati fan is that "under him, the Reds' franchise took a plummet from the summit." Under Wagner the Reds became a cheap, penny-pinching organization which in 1983, when Wagner was fired, lost 101 games. Some of Wagner's more infamous moves were trying to replace Joe Morgan with Ron Oester, George Foster with Clint Hurdle, Ken Griffey with Cesar Cedeno, and Johnny Bench with, worst of all, Alex Trevino. Wagner got exactly what he paid for, a last place team. The city also acted accordingly, and attendance dropped five straight seasons before Pete Rose's return in 1984 halted this trend.
After Bob Howsam was re-hired in 1984, he immediately brought Rose, who was with Montreal, back to Cincinnati as a player-manager. This wildly popular move meant that Rose was able to break Ty Cobb's career hit record of 4191 in a Cincinnati uniform. Howsam also signed free agents Dave Parker and Buddy Bell, who, together with young stars like Eric Davis and Barry Larkin, led the Reds to second place finishes from 1985 through 1988. New owner Marge Schott, eccentric but well-intentioned, gave Howsam the money to build another great Reds team, but that has not happened yet. Schott, while spending freely for a winning team, has never been accused of being intimately familiar with baseball. In fact, according to a former Reds official, "She doesn't even know everybody on her own roster."30

With all of the renewed interest and hope in the Reds, it appeared as if 1989 would finally be the year Cincinnati would again reach the World Series. 1989, however, became a black year for baseball, and especially for the Reds. Favorite son Rose was implicated for betting on baseball and more specifically the Reds. Rumors abounded, and with the extensive injuries incurred by many key players, the Reds struggled to a fifth place finish. The Rose scandal was an especially cruel blow to a city who had believed that Pete was a man who could do no wrong. While he never admitted guilt, the overwhelming evidence against him left even most of the die-hard Rose fans expressing doubt. Commissioner Bart Giamatti finally ended the speculation about Rose's future by banning him from baseball in August 1989, but
the toll was already too great on the team for anything to be salvaged.

With the 1980's behind them, the Reds, with Marge Schott still at the helm, are ready to charge into the 1990's with a new attitude. The city and its fans celebrated the successful days of the 1970's and yearn once again to regain the greatness of that era. With the 1990's on the horizon, the city, with its new gleaming buildings representing the success of urban renewal, and a revamped baseball team willing to work hard to reach the top of the baseball world, Cincinnati once again believes it is upon the threshold of greatness.

EPILOGUE

I was three years old the day I became a Reds fan for life. It was a crisp summer evening when my father took me to Riverfront Stadium for a twi-night doubleheader against the Houston Astros. From this, my first recollection of Reds baseball, I retain two vivid memories. One is my first encounter with shelled peanuts. After eating half of the bag, I asked my father why the peanuts tasted funny, to which he replied that you were supposed to remove the shell before eating the peanuts inside. With this knowledge I have been able to enjoy countless bags of peanuts since. My other memory of my first trip to Riverfront is one which my father and I still laugh about today. I had been clamoring for a hot dog since about the seventh
inning. After the Reds failed to score in the ninth inning, dad gave in and went to get my red hot. While he was gone rookie Cesar Cedeno hit the game winning home run. My father never again went to get me something at a crucial point in a game.

The Reds ended that day with a split. Following that first trip to Riverfront, I became addicted to baseball and the Reds. Of course, in those successful days of the 1970's, it was not difficult to be a Reds fan. Growing up in Reds country meant fighting friends over who had the most Topps Johnny Bench's, arguing over who got to be the Reds in sand-lot games, and gathering around the radio each night for the Reds on radio. These were the glory years of the Reds, and every summer I spent hours each day pouring over stories and box-score exploits of my heroes. As I reflect, I am amazed at all the talent which the Reds had: Bench, Rose, Perez, Conception, Morgan, and Foster all blended skillfully by manager Sparky Anderson. Such a powerful line-up will probably never again be seen in Riverfront. At the time, though, I took it for granted that the Reds would always be great.

During the 1970's, I was able to make about four trips to Riverfront each season. Both sets of my grandparents were Reds fans, and some of my most interesting childhood learning experiences came on these trips. On one trip during the early 1970's, I learned about beer. My parents do not drink, but my grandfathers, who do drink, had taken me to the game. On this particular trip, I decided that I wanted a "Hudey." The
scoreboard kept showing Mr. Red singing a catchy jingle that went "It's have a Hudey Time, da da da da da da da ..." This made me want a Hudey which, of course, is Hudepohl beer. My grandfathers obligingly bought a Hudey, which I then gagged upon after taking my first drink. This was important life lesson number one. Beer is definitely an acquired taste. Following this experience, I no longer wanted a Hudepohl, and I also could not understand how my grandfathers could drink such an awful tasting beverage.

Not only did I have learning experiences, but also most of my childhood summers revolved around the Reds. During the school year I usually had to be in bed by 9:30, but if the Reds were on television I could count on my father to sneak me downstairs for the rest of the game. I always found these escapades especially exciting because I was getting to watch the Reds, and I was staying up past my bedtime without my mother's knowing. Of course, neither of my parents knew that even when Cincinnati was not on television, I still stayed awake at night listening to Marty Brennamen and Joe Nuxhall on the radio.

Late school nights were not the only times that I listened to the Reds on the radio, however. In Reds' country, many fathers start their sons listening to Marty and Joe at an early age. By the time I was ten, I rarely missed a broadcast. Whether cutting the grass, swimming in the pool, visiting a friend, or hanging out at the Little League park, I was always near a radio. Even today, despite some of my closest friends' protestations, I try not to miss a Reds broadcast. To me, the
coming of spring is announced the first time Marty proclaims, "And this one belongs to the Reds!" For non-Reds fans this is annoying, but to die-hard Reds supporters Marty and Joe are an institution we have grown up with.

Since the Reds are a regional team, several people in my community of Jeffersonville have season tickets. One of these people, Ted Throckmorton, is a friend of our family. He has been a long-time season ticket holder, and when Riverfront was built he was given four seats in the first row directly behind home plate. Usually my father and other friends went to the games when these tickets were available, so when he let me go to a game and sit in Teddy's seats for the first time I could barely contain my excitement. This trip took place during the summer of 1979. The Reds were in the pennant race again, and on this day they were playing Chicago. We went to the park early so that I could watch batting practice and get some autographs. While watching the Cincinnati players hitting, I noticed Marty doing an interview near the backstop. After he had finished he started walking off of the field. As he neared the stands he looked up and saw me standing next to the rail. I noticed that he was carrying a baseball with him, and then he asked if I wanted it. Receiving that ball was the biggest thrill I have had at a Reds game.

Following the Reds since 1976, however, has provided many disappointing times. The most frustrating experience for a Reds' fan is remembering the breakup of the Big Red Machine. I still
recall the disbelief I felt upon hearing that Tony Perez had been traded to the Montreal Expos. During the 1978 season our Little League took us on a bus to see the Reds against the Expos. The trip was quite an exciting event, but the one memory which I still have is of Perez hitting a mammoth home run to beat the Reds, while Dan Driesen, Perez' replacement with the Reds, had another mediocre night of a mediocre career.

The exodus of one superstar after another, while certainly a catastrophe to all Reds fans, was not quite my lowest point as a fan. For my twelfth birthday in October 1979, my father sent off for Reds' World Series tickets. I was ecstatic when we received tickets for Game 5 of the Series. All the Reds had to do was beat the Pittsburgh Pirates in the National League Championship Series, and I would probably get to go to the World Series. I have never followed three baseball games more intensely in my life. By the end of the third game it was apparent that Pittsburgh and their "Familee" would represent the National League in the Fall Classic. To be so close to seeing the Reds in the World Series was a thrill, but the subsequent letdown was equally depressing.

What the Reds have done since that last division title is establish themselves as the best second place team in baseball. Although they had the best overall record of any National League Western Division team during the 1980's, they were the only team not to win the division. What this has done to Reds' fans is to make them sympathize with Cubs' fans somewhat. Before I started
college, I often found myself rooting for the Cubs. However, after spending four years surrounded by some of the most obnoxious Cubs fans in the nation, I now detest the Cubs and hope that they finish last every year.

To conclude this epilogue I will discuss my favorite player and my hobby of collecting baseball cards. Johnny Bench was always my favorite Red. When I was in grade-school, I used to read all of the books written about him, draw pictures of him in his catcher's gear, and dream of being a catcher for the Reds one day. Whenever I went to Riverfront, it was always Bench's autograph which I wanted. Over the years I probably received his autograph ten times. Each time, though, it was an exciting experience. Since Bench was my favorite player, I never could get enough of his baseball cards and I continually tried to get more.

While growing up I became an avid baseball card collector. Since I was a Reds fan I tried to collect as many of the Reds' players as I could, but all of my friends did the same and often potential trades and friendships were strained by someone feeling cheated. Through the years I have managed to amass over 67,000 baseball cards, which are now stored in my grandparents attic. The favorite cards of my collection are those of Bench. Currently I have at least one copy of every Topps, Fleer, and Donruss card ever produced of the Reds famous catcher.

My final reflections upon growing up as a Reds' fan are nearly all positive. The Reds seem to fit the region which they
represent quite well. The conservative dress and appearance of
the team made them ideal role models for the entire area. Also,
the significant success of the 1970's teams made it easy to
become a Reds' fan. Some of my most vivid childhood memories are
of Carlton Fisk's home run in Game 6 of the 1975 World Series,
the interviews with Reds' players after the 1976 World Series,
and Pete Rose being interviewed on Donahue during his 44 game
hitting streak. While growing up I always dreamed of playing for
Cincinnati, and while I never will, the Reds will forever remain
my favorite team.

2. ibid, 133.

3. ibid, 133.


5. Baskin, 134.

6. ibid, 135.


8. ibid, 14.

9. ibid, 15-16.

10. Baskin, 140.


13. Baskin, 152.


17. Baskin, 199.

18. Walker, 44.

19. ibid, 138.

20. ibid, 43.

21. ibid, 57.


24. Walker, 68.


27. Baskin, 206.


29. Baskin, 166.

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