

Fouled Away

Clifton Blue Parker

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A hundred and ninety-one. Mention the number anywhere near a ballpark and before you can ask who or what, fans will almost certainly shape their lips with a single word: Wilson. They'll tell you Hack Wilson, a burly, bull-necked outfielder who roamed Wrigley Field in the 1920s and 1930s, was the man who drove in 191 runs in 1930--more than most players had hits. A few of them will know that in 1929, Wilson racked up 159 RBI and hit 39 home runs. Still fewer might be able to tell you that for the four seasons 1927-1930, the slugger hit no fewer than 30 home runs a season and drove home no fewer than 120. But you are unlikely to find more than a handful of fans who know how the Cub great's career came to an end. Or when. Or why. The heir apparent to Ruth's title of world-beater, Wilson was a star by his late 20s and a record setter by 30. But he was also an alcoholic who was as practiced at swinging his fists as he was his bat. By his early 30s his days as a full-time player were behind him, and by 48 he was dead; his son refused to claim the body. This biography examines the turbulent life and career of one of the most dominant short-stint powerhitters ever to pull on a uniform. From Wilson's early career as a steelworker, through his time as the beloved ballplayer and icon for the City of Big Shoulders to his days as a down-on-his-luck baseball washout and itinerant laborer, an unflinching look at this Hall of Famer is provided.



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