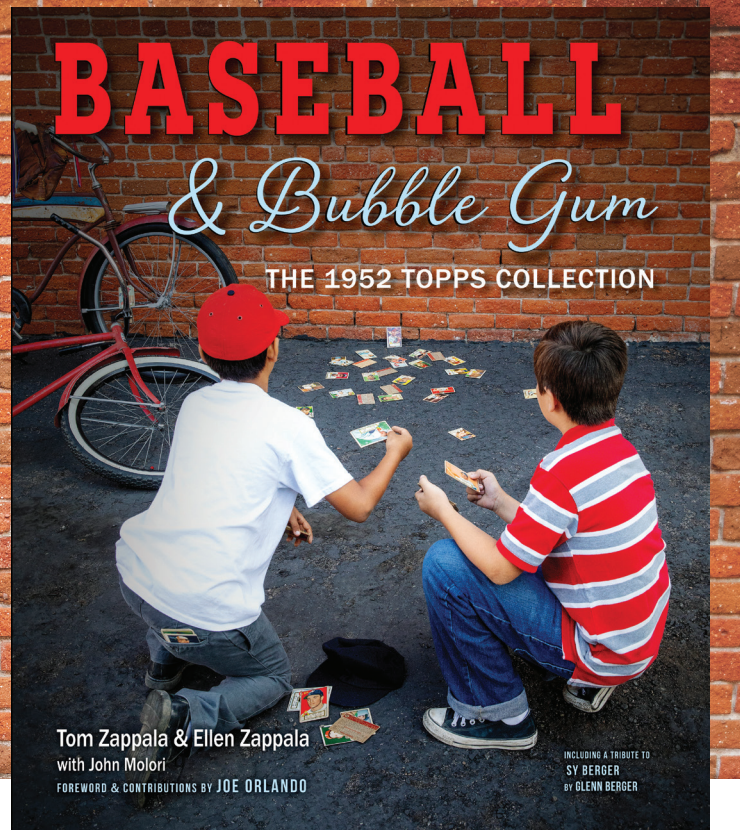




An Ode to the Classic 1952 Topps Baseball Card Set



The latest book in Tom and Ellen Zappala's card collecting series offers up sensory delight in the backstories and current-day fascination surrounding the legendary Topps issue

Our five senses have an amazing power that can draw us back in time, even as far back as our childhood. For those who grew up loving the game of baseball and were fortunate enough to attend a Major League game as a kid, that is especially true.

Just close your eyes and you can recall the smell of a field's freshly cut grass; the sight of a favorite player stepping into the batter's box; the feel of the soft pocket of a perfectly broken-in glove you hoped would be used to capture a fouled treasure; the sound of ash or pine hitting horsehide followed by the crowd's immediate reaction; the taste of a hot dog and, perhaps, a tiny sip

of your father's beer that your mom was to never know about.

The senses also serve as a powerful tool for recollecting the past for those who were sports card collectors as kids.

Few things hold the sensory vividness as the smell of gum wafting up or the sight of a much sought-after card in a freshly opened pack of cards. What can pull a card collector back in time more than remembering the feel of wax packs in your hands while waiting to pay for them at a candy store counter and wondering what may be inside? Offering an equally intense sense of mental time travel is recalling the sound of a card wedged through a bike's spokes that made it tick like a motor the faster you rode and the taste of those pink rectangle strips lightly dusted with powdery white sugar.

As a kid growing up just outside of Boston in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Tom Zappala's senses were stirred by the game of baseball and the men, equipment, venues and cards associated with it.

"I was passionate about baseball and cards; although, my friends and I thought of them in the way the manufacturers originally did: That they would be something to play with," says Zappala. "We flipped them and

Phil Rizzuto



Volumes could be written about Phil "The Scooter" Rizzuto. One of the best defensive shortstops to ever play the game, the diminutive Rizzuto was a five-time All-Star who played on seven Yankees World Series championship teams and was the American League MVP in 1950. He also took home the Babe Ruth Award in 1951. A student of "small ball," Rizzuto is considered one of the best bunters in baseball history. With a repertoire of bunts in his arsenal for any situation, Rizzuto consistently led the league in sacrifice hits. After his playing days were over, Rizzuto became a beloved broadcaster for the Yankees on both radio and TV for over 40 years. His signature expression, "Holy Cow!" still resonates to this day. Inducted

into the Hall of Fame in 1994, Rizzuto passed away in 2007 at the age of 89.

Career Stats			
AB:	5,816	HR:	38
R:	877	RBI:	563
H:	1,588	OPS:	.706
BA:	.273		

Teams
New York Yankees AL (1941–1942, 1946–1956)

Robin Roberts

One of the most dominant pitchers in the National League between 1950 and 1955, Robin Roberts was durable with a quick, moving fastball and pinpoint control. With the Philadelphia Phillies, Roberts had a stretch of six 20-game seasons. Part of the 1950 "Whiz Kids" team, his 20 wins helped the Phillies secure the pennant for the first time in 35 years. In 1952, Roberts compiled a sparkling 28–7 record with a 2.59 ERA. He was so durable that between July 1952 and June 1953, he pitched 28 complete games in a row. A seven-time All-Star, Roberts led the NL in complete games five times, innings pitched five times, wins four times, and strikeouts twice. After his MLB career, Roberts coached and managed at the collegiate level and spent time as a broadcaster. The 1976 Hall of Fame inductee passed away at the age of 83 in 2010.

Career Stats	
Record:	286–245
ERA:	3.41
IP:	4,688.2
Ks:	2,357
Throw:	RH

Teams
Philadelphia Phillies NL (1948–1961)
Baltimore Orioles AL (1962–1965)
Houston Astros NL (1965–1966)
Chicago Cubs NL (1966)



Jackie Robinson



The man who broke baseball's color barrier in 1947 when he proudly strode onto the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers, Jack Roosevelt Robinson, did more than make six All-Star teams in his 10-year MLB career. He posted 203 hits and won a batting title in 1949, and propelled the Dodgers to their first world championship in 1955. Over his MLB career, Robinson batted .311 and had an astounding 19 steals of home. But there is more. He was a star at UCLA, a Negro Leagues standout, and a second lieutenant in the US Army. Robinson even played himself in the film, *The Jackie Robinson Story*. His stellar career paved the way for Robinson to become the first African American inductee to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. Simply said, he changed America. Sadly, soon after the Dodgers retired his number "42," Robinson, a diabetic, died at 53 years old in 1972.

Career Stats			
AB:	4,877	HR:	137
R:	947	RBI:	734
H:	1,518	OPS:	.883
BA:	.311		

Teams
Brooklyn Dodgers NL (1947–1956)

Red Schoendienst

Hall of Famer and ten-time All-Star Albert "Red" Schoendienst was a great ballplayer, manager, and coach. A hitting machine and standout second baseman, Schoendienst batted out 2,449 hits to go along with his .289 lifetime batting average. Also a defensive standout, his .9934 fielding percentage in 1956 stood as a National League record for second basemen for 40 years. As a player, Schoendienst won the 1946 World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals, the 1957 Series with the Milwaukee Braves, and he led the NL with 200 hits in 1957. He coached the 1964 world champion Cardinals and as the Cards manager, he won the 1967 World Series, the 1968 NL pennant, and posted a 1041–955 record in 14 years. He coached the Cardinals until 2011, winning three more Series. The 1989 Hall of Fame inductee and baseball lifer passed away in 2018 at the age of 95.

Teams
St. Louis Cardinals NL (1945–1956, 1961–1963)
New York Giants NL (1956–1957)
Milwaukee Braves NL (1957–1960)



Career Stats			
AB:	8,479	HR:	84
R:	1,223	RBI:	773
H:	2,449	OPS:	.724
BA:	.289		

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played a game called scalers, in which you would kneel down about 15-feet in front of a brick wall and toss your cards. If you landed your card on another card, you won all the accumulated cards. If someone tossed a card and it landed against the wall, you would try to knock it down with another card, and if you

did you also got all the cards."

Having started to collect cards in the late 1950s, Zappala says he has vivid memories of walking to a local store where he would purchase packs.

"As soon as I got outside, my story was the same as that of thousands upon thousands of American kids at the time. I would rip open the packs, stick a piece of gum in my mouth, and go through the cards to see who I got."

In 1959, when Zappala was 7 years old, there were, of course, no card guides or Internet. So unless a kid had a father, uncle or older brother who collected cards when they were young, saved them, and then passed them down along with information about them, there was really no way to get any sort of historical perspective on the cards that had come prior.

It was for that reason that a young Tom Zappala had no idea that just less than a decade earlier,



Ellen Zappala

in 1952, the same year he was born, the Topps Gum Company of Brooklyn, New York, had put out a set of 407 cards that had been the brainchild of Sy Berger, a Topps employee who teamed up with designer Woody Gelman to create what sports cards historians would many



Tom Zappala

years later deem to be the most important postwar baseball card set ever produced: the 1952 Topps set.

Using the kitchen table of his apartment on Alabama Avenue in Brooklyn as their workspace, Berger and Gelman came up with a design that included a colorized photo of the featured player along with a facsimile autograph and his team's name and logo on the front. On the back, the new design called for information that included the player's height, weight, birthdate, stats and a short biography.

The set, which was the largest ever produced at that time, became the standard for sports card design and, as time went by, saw Berger recognized within the hobby as "The Father of Modern Baseball Cards."

That backstory, as well as the cards themselves, would have been lost on the then-7-year-old Zappala who, back then, never even knew such a set existed. Little did he know the day would come when he would become so enamored by these cards that they would inspire

him and his wife, Ellen, to produce a beautiful coffee table tome to add to their award-winning series of baseball collectors' books.

Just released, *Baseball & Bubble Gum: The 1952 Topps Collection*, beautifully documents the 1952 Topps offering that, along with the 1909-11 T206 set and the 1933 Goudey release, has come to be revered within the sports card collecting hobby as one of "The Big Three."

Initially preparing to release *Baseball & Bubble Gum: The 1952 Topps Collection* in late July at the 2020 National Sports Collectors Convention in Atlantic City, those plans were dashed when the convention was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The original plan was to roll out their latest book with events that were to include personal appearances, discussions and signings by the Zappalas; a special guest appearance by one of the surviving players featured in the '52 Topps set; and a discussion with Joe Orlando, the president and CEO of Collectors Universe, parent company of Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA), who contributed the foreword and the fourth chapter in the new book.

Although they hope to continue with those plans in the winter during the now-rescheduled show, Zappala says he wanted to keep on schedule for the book's release and is more than pleased with what it offers to those who love baseball, sports cards, and this historic set.

Sports Market Report (SMR) recently met with Zappala to discuss *Baseball & Bubble Gum: The 1952 Topps Collection*, which he calls the most enjoyable book he, his wife, and their team have ever worked on. We began our meeting with Zappala by asking him what made this book so special.

Tom Zappala (TZ): Since we started this collection series, we



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have had many people suggest that we do books on the 1933 Goudeys or the T205 set. Those are both great ideas and not ones we have ruled out, but there is just something about the 1952 Topps set that resonates with so many collectors. There is no doubting that it ranks right up there with the T206 set, and I think one of the reasons for that is because there are still people alive today who collected those cards as kids. That makes them something more than historically significant, such as is the case with the T206 cards. The '52 Topps cards still have the power to bring back childhood memories for those who got them when they were first released.

It is also the set that started the second generation of collecting and has become iconic due to all the great Hall of Famers that are featured in it. On top of that, you have the Mickey Mantle card, which is one of the most famous and sought-after cards in the hobby.

For many people, the 1952 Topps set is much more than just another great group of baseball cards. It is a set that changed the game – not the game of baseball, but the collecting card hobby. It ushered in a completely new era of how cards were designed and collected. Because of those reasons, and more, we thought it was a natural for our next book.

Sports Market Report (SMR): What were some of the other reasons?

TZ: That set was produced during an extremely interesting time in history – the history of the world, of America, and of the game of baseball. The careers of many players in this set were interrupted by service in World War II or the Korean War. It was also when the color barrier was being broken in baseball, and Major League Baseball fans were introduced to players like Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella and Monte Irvin, all of



whom we cover in the book.

SMR: For those who may not be familiar with your other books, can you give an overview of what readers can expect to find in this book?

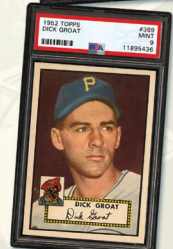
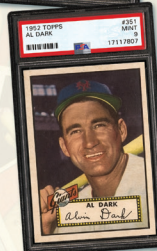
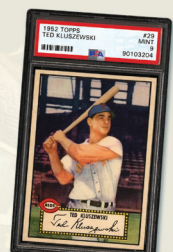


The Uncommons

The word “uncommon” refers to someone or something “out of the ordinary,” or “unusual.”

In this chapter, we discuss the players who were not Hall of Famers, yet were not your everyday

common players. Although not worthy of Cooperstown, some of these men had excellent careers. Others had experiences outside of the diamond that warrant additional attention. Whether they had very successful Major League Baseball careers, were war heroes, or became famous or infamous after their careers ended, they were all certainly a bit unique. Meet the “Uncommons” of the 1952 Topps Collection.



THE UNCOMMONS 17

TZ: This is both a history book that will appeal to those who love Americana and popular culture and an incredible resource for those who are serious sports card collectors. We cover the history of the game and the players of that time, as well as provide a look at the '52 Topps set from the collecting perspective. We also include extensive narratives on each individual player found in the set – something about both his professional and personal life. We cover their stats, but we also offer interesting, funny and touching personal stories about some of these amazing men – things that very few, if anyone, knew about them.

We have broken the book into chapters that highlight the Hall of Famers and those who are not as well-known – the Uncommons and the Commons. The final chapter, “A New Era Begins,” written by Joe Orlando, focuses on the cards themselves – the specifics on each card, the rarities and the nuances of

the collection. His chapter is written purely from the standpoint of a collector. I really feel that this book is our best attempt at blending the history of the game and the hobby together. To me, those are the things that made it the most enjoyable book we have done.

SMR: Most serious card collectors know a lot about the '52 Topps set. But for those who are not that well-versed in the set, can you share a bit about what readers can expect to learn about these cards from reading your book?

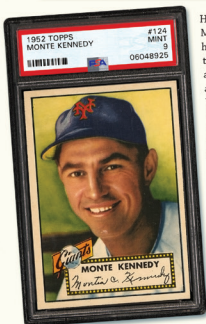
TZ: Well, I'm sure anyone who collects cards knows it is the set with Mickey Mantle's first Topps release, which is the pinnacle of the set and one of the most important cards in the hobby. And yet, even though that card and the entire set are so revered by today's collectors, when it came out, that was not the case by a long shot. The sales started out strong but waned as each series was

released. The company couldn't unload the cards on anyone. In the late 1950s, just to get rid of them, they were being offered for next to nothing and still nobody wanted them.

So, around 1960, to make room in their warehouse, Topps decided to dump thousands of cases of these cards into the ocean. Joe Orlando goes into detail about the now-infamous “dump” in his chapter and reveals how Sy Berger rented a barge and had them dumped because they were deemed worthless. Joe also writes about the big find of '52 Topps cards that surfaced in 1986 and how that sent shock waves through the hobby.

What I think people will really be fascinated to learn about is something I didn't know, and that is how many of the players who are featured in the set served in World War II and the Korean War, many of whom fought overseas and came back as war heroes. Some of them were even Purple Heart recipients.

Monty Kennedy



Hard-throwing lefty Monty Kennedy played his entire career for the New York Giants as both a spot starter and reliever. Because World War II cut short his minor-league development time, Kennedy developed his skills while in the military. Throughout his career, Kennedy's biggest problem was his lack of command on the mound. As a rookie with the Giants in 1946, Kennedy led the National League with 116 bases on balls. His best season was 1949, when he posted a 12–14 record with a 3.43 ERA. Kennedy appeared in Game Four and Game Five of the 1951 World Series, pitching a total of three innings in relief. After eight years in the majors, he worked as a police officer and detective in Virginia for 20 years, staying close to the game by playing on the police baseball team. Kennedy died in 1997 at the age of 74.

Career Stats	
Record:	42–55
ERA:	3.84
IP:	961.0
Ks:	411
Throw:	LH

Teams

New York Giants NL (1946–1953)

Leo Kiely

A mid-season call-up to the Red Sox, Leo Kiely compiled a 7–7 record in 1951 before losing two years to military service in Korea. While overseas, he became the first Major League player to play in the Japanese Pacific League, posting a 6–0 record with a 1.80 ERA for the Maebashi Orions in 1953. Upon his return to Boston, Kiely had a few so-so seasons and was sent down to the minors for seasoning in 1957. That year, his exceptional 21–6 record as relief pitcher for the Pacific Coast League's San Francisco Seals earned him a trip back to Boston. Kiely became a dependable middle-relief guy for the Sox, but was eventually traded to the Kansas City A's where he performed well until bone chips in his elbow caused his retirement in 1960. A heavy smoker, Leo Kiely was 54 years old when he died from cancer in 1984.



Career Stats	
Record:	26–27
ERA:	3.37
IP:	523.0
Ks:	212
Throw:	LH

Teams

Boston Red Sox AL (1951, 1954–1956, 1958–1959)
Kansas City Athletics AL (1960)

Johnny Klippstein

If you looked up the word “workhorse,” Johnny Klippstein's picture would be right there. Both a starter and reliever during his 18-year major-league career, Klippstein came up to the Cubs in 1950 at 22 years old and pitched until he was 39. He had some solid seasons for the Cubs and the Reds during the first part of his career. During the second half of his Major League stint, Klippstein successfully morphed into a middle reliever and closer. With Cleveland in 1960, he led the league with 14 saves. Klippstein played in two World Series, winning a ring with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1959. He was on the Twins AL pennant team that lost to the Dodgers in 1965. He retired in 1967 with 101 career wins and 65 saves. An ardent Cubs fan, Klippstein lived in the Chicago area, where he died in 2003 at age 75.



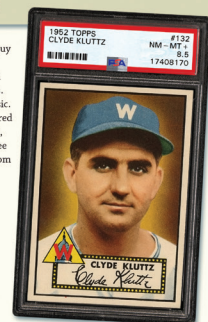
Career Stats

Record:	101–118
ERA:	4.24
IP:	1,967.2
Ks:	1,158
Throw:	RH

Teams
Chicago Cubs NL (1950–1954)
Cincinnati Redlegs/Reds NL (1955–1958, 1962)
Los Angeles Dodgers NL (1959–1959)
Cleveland Indians AL (1960)
Washington Senators AL (1961)
Philadelphia Phillies NL (1963–1964)
Minnesota Twins AL (1964–1966)
Detroit Tigers AL (1967)

Clyde Klutzw

A platoon catcher for six teams in nine seasons, Clyde Klutzw was a good bench guy who could jump into the lineup and do a nice job. On May 1, 1946, he made the news for being on three different teams in one afternoon. The Giants traded him to the Phillies around noon and two hours later he was swapped to the Cardinals. The Cards won the World Series that year, but Klutzw did not play in the fall classic. His primary contribution to the game came after his playing days. Klutzw discovered future Hall of Famer Catfish Hunter while scouting for the Kansas City Athletics, and, while working as Yankees director of scouting, Klutzw signed Hunter as a free agent. He worked as director of player development for the Baltimore Orioles from 1976 until his death from heart problems at the age of 61 in 1979.



Career Stats	
AB:	1,903
R:	172
H:	510
BA:	.268
HR:	19
RBI:	212
OPS:	.671

Teams

Boston Braves NL (1942–1945)
New York Giants NL (1945–1946)
St. Louis Cardinals NL (1946)
Pittsburgh Pirates NL (1947–1948)
St. Louis Browns AL (1951)
Washington Senators AL (1951–1952)

And then, of course, the set coincided with the breaking of the color barrier in baseball.

From a collector's standpoint, I hope it sparks an interest in our readers to collect the set. I think there are too many collectors out there who think you must have zillions of dollars to put this set together, but that's not the case. Of course, a set like this is extremely expensive in high grades, but in low grades it is a very doable set. Let's face it, very few collectors can pay

feel this book in particular has been greatly enhanced by the magnificent photography. The cover is amazing. It is a photo of these two young boys who are really brothers – Roman and Luis Curiel – flipping cards. They are dressed in period clothing with bikes of the era. Getting that shot was a real team effort. That photo shoot was done in Southern California on a hot summer day, so I have to throw out a big salute to the boys for putting up with a long day in the heat.

That photo also came together

Chrissie, and her photos appear throughout the book. To make a book like this work, the visuals are of paramount importance, and she really captured our vision with her amazing images.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to John Branca, the nephew of the pitching great Ralph Branca. John allowed us to use images of his complete 1952 Topps set. As many serious collectors know, his collection is one of the finest in existence, and it was very kind of him to share

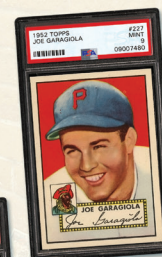
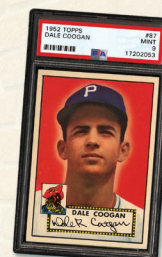


A New Era Begins

The Elements that Make the 1952 Topps Baseball Card Set the Most Iconic of the Postwar Age

In this final chapter, Joe Orlando, president and CEO of Collectors Universe, parent company of Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA), breaks down

the overwhelming appeal of the 1952 Topps baseball card set, from composition to design to its place in pop culture. This section is dedicated to the collector and to those who might consider taking their swing at building this masterpiece, a set that includes the most recognizable baseball card ever made.



\$2.8 million dollars for a high-grade Mickey Mantle card. But collectors should know that a low-grade example can be obtained for far less than you might expect.

SMR: Along with the stories, this book contains beautiful photos that are works of art suitable for framing all on their own.

TZ: Yes. We have always made sure the images we use in our books are of the highest quality, and we

thanks to Jackie Curiel, who is the boys' aunt and the chief of staff at PSA. She is a great person who did amazing work in making this book come together. Jackie is talented, dedicated and fun to work with. Her help was truly invaluable.

The cover photo was shot by Chrissie Good, who is a very talented senior photographer for Collectors Universe. This was the second project in which we worked with

it in our book for the enjoyment of our readers.

I also have to say thanks to Chris Ivy of Heritage Auctions, Levi Blean of 707 Sportscards, Leighton Sheldon of Vintage Breaks, Pete Putman, "Staten Island Joe" Marino, and collector Tom Killeen for contributing images and memorabilia that we used in the book.

And while I'm talking about the team that made this book hap-

pen, I have to say that beyond the images, there were a lot of people who made this collaborative effort a real success. John Molori provided us with great research and historical narratives on many of the players. His knowledge of baseball gave this book a depth of information and enjoyment it would otherwise not have had.

This is the sixth book project Ellen and I have produced with Peter E. Randall Publisher, and because of their knowledge and expertise, along with the help of so many talented people, it is one of which we are all very proud.

SMR: As someone who knows this set so well, is there any one card that stands out to you for any reason?

TZ: For me, I am most fascinated with the cards of the players that



had great stories beyond their baseball careers. Whether it was fighting in the war or the jobs they had in the off-season – working in factories, farms or restaurants – that is what makes some of the cards stand out to me.

From strictly a visual standpoint: I like the Gus Zernial card. It is this great shot of him giving the “OK” sign and it looks like there are six baseballs by his bat that are defying gravity and just hanging in the air. I also think the Eddie Matthews and Andy Pafko cards are interesting due to their rarity. They are very hard to find in high grades, and Joe Orlando explains why that is. The Pafko was the number one card in the set and the Matthews was the last card, so, as collectors know, the first and the last card of any set take the brunt of the damage that comes from han-

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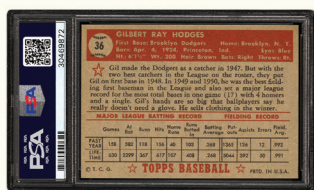
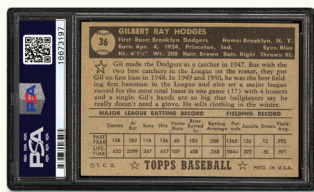
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Composition, Variations, and Errors

Like many baseball card issues of the era, the 1952 Topps set offers its share of variations and error cards which enhance the intrigue and difficulty of the issue. As we covered earlier in the chapter, the Basic set contains 407 total cards. For those tackling the greater challenge of the Master set, there are many additions to consider, and some of them will cost you a pretty penny if you decide to take collecting 1952 Topps cards to another level. Before we proceed, please keep in mind that while we cover most of this historic set's major components, not every variation is covered in this book. Hobbyists continue to uncover new distinctions and debate which ones should be cast as mere printing errors or unworthy anomalies versus collectible variations.

First, let's start with Series 1. The low-number series, which is considered the second toughest group in the set, next to the high-number run, contains a nice mix of stars, errors, condition rarities, and variations. For example, cards 1-80 can be found with either black or red printing on the reverse. That means you already need 80 more cards, one of each color, to complete the Master version of the set. The red backs have better print quality than the black backs, which makes sense since the black backs were made first and Topps was able to improve the quality on the second try during the red back run. It's important to note that all the cards from Series 1 were printed on gray stock.

"... cards 1-80 can be found with either black or red printing on the reverse."



The Pafko card, the leadoff man for the set, and #80 Herman Wehmeier are two of the more challenging cards in high grade. Since one series was issued at a time, Pafko and Wehmeier were often at the top and bottom of the stack, which meant more potential exposure to the elements and rubber bands. Several Hall of Famers appear in Series 1, including the likes of Phil

"Gus Zernial's... bat appears to have six gravity-defying baseballs attached to it."

Rizzuto (#11), Warren Spahn (#33), and Duke Snider (#37). The series also includes a fun card of Gus Zernial (#31) where his bat appears to have six gravity-defying baseballs attached to it. Even though this group has its fair share of stars, some of the most desirable cards in the run belong to names that the average person may not be familiar with.



222 BASEBALL & BUBBLE GUM

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dling and, sometimes, having had rubber bands put around them.

SMR: Most books and periodicals that feature stories about collecting sports card sets leave out an important element: the gum. That is not the case with your book.

TZ: [laughing] No. In our book, we even have stories about the gum. You know, I think some people forget, or maybe never even knew, that Topps was originally formed in 1938 as a chewing gum company. As the competition in the gum market grew, Topps first unveiled Bazooka with the little comics and that led to putting the gum in packs with baseball cards. And so, when Sy Berger came to Topps and produced the first card set, you would get a pack of six cards wrapped in wax and a piece of bubble gum for five cents.

Sy's son, Glenn Berger, wrote a tribute to his father for our book. I had the opportunity to meet with Glenn up in New Hampshire, and

as a part of his contribution to the book, he shared his memories of being in the Topps gum plant as a kid. We even have images in the book of old pieces of gum from the '52 Topps packs.

SMR: This beautiful book will be a true treasure for those who are passionate about the game of baseball, cards, and especially this storied set. It's easy to see why you found it to be the most enjoyable one you and Ellen have done to date.

TZ: It's a great story about the most iconic postwar baseball card set in the hobby's history. Between the end of two wars and the advent of television, which gave everyone the opportunity to see their favorite players and teams play from the comfort of their homes, this set was created during an era that made it historic, even though it wasn't received that way at the time.

And then there's the players – some of the biggest legends to have

ever played the game: Mantle, Yogi Berra, Robinson, Warren Spahn, Duke Snider. This book offers so much, including insightful glimpses of what life was like for these athletes during such an amazing period of our nation's history. It was a true joy to work on this book, and Ellen and I are so grateful that we can now share it with those who appreciate this magnificent set of cards. Along with being educational and informative, I think it will also give those who love this set a lot of wonderful memories and a great sense of nostalgia.

For more information and to order copies of Baseball & Bubble Gum: The 1952 Topps Collection, or any of the Zappala's other books, click on www.tomzappalamedia.com. It is also available through Amazon.