



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of American History*  
*Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Ronald Gabriel Collection of Baseball Memorabilia

NMAH.AC.1178

Josiah Gould

2011

Archives Center, National Museum of American History  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Ronald Gabriel Collection of Baseball Memorabilia
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1178
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1912-2009
<b>Extent:</b>	2 Cubic feet (7 boxes)
<b>Creator:</b>	Gabriel, Ronald L., 1941-2009
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The collection consists of newsletters <i>Dodgers Line Drives</i> , <i>Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club Newsletter</i> , and <i>Gabe-o-gram</i> , albums of trading cards and Hall of Fame postcards, many of which have been autographed. There are also photographs of teams, individual players, and a photograph of Ronald Gabriel with Babe Ruth. There is a large scrapbook containing over 1000 autographs and several items of baseball ephemera, including placemats, magnets, scorecards, team schedules, programs, and posters.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection bequeathed to the National Museum of American History by Ronald Gabriel through Tom Cholis, October 15, 2008.

### Related Materials

#### Materials in the Archives Center

Archives Center Sports Memorabilia Collection, circa 1970 to present, #796

Ronald S. Korda Collection of Sports and Trading Cards, 1952-1996, AC0545

Lebanon Valley Baseball League Collection, 1936-1963, AC0067

Eleanor Linkous Washington, D.C. Sports Memorabilia Collection, 1925-1956, AC0774

Lou Newman Collection of Baseball Memorabilia, 1895-1999, AC0696

Sioux City Ghosts Collection, 1920s-1983, AC0634

Stall and Dean Company Records, 1898-1998, AC0669

### Processing Information

Processed by Josiah Gould (intern), March, 2011; supervised by Vanessa Broussard, archivist.

## Preferred Citation

Ronald Gabriel Collection of Baseball Memorabilia, circa 1912-2009, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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## Biographical / Historical

Ronald Gabriel (1941-2009) grew up in Brooklyn, just two miles from Ebbets Field, home of the Dodgers. He quickly became engrossed in the baseball atmosphere around his home and developed a passion for the sport that would shape his entire life. He regularly wrote letters to baseball teams asking for player autographs. As a result he compiled a massive collection of signatures, including those from Joe DiMaggio, Warren Spahn, Mickey Mantle, Leo Durocher, Bob Feller, and hundreds more. He continued collecting baseball memorabilia for the rest of his life. The Dodgers were his team. He was born in 1941, just in time to watch the Dodgers become one of the greatest franchises in baseball history, winning pennants in 1941, 1947, 1949, 1952, and 1953. Finally, after losing to the New York Yankees in their previous five World Series, Ronald Gabriel witnessed the Brooklyn Dodgers win the 1955 World Series.

Even after his team moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in 1958 Gabriel remained passionately devoted to the Brooklyn Dodgers. He published a newsletter called *Dodgers Line Drives* that lasted until 2009 and started the "Worldwide" Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club in 1975 in honor of the twentieth anniversary of their World Series victory. He was also a guest speaker at George Washington University for a class called Race, Sports, and the American Dream, where he talked about Jackie Robinson. His baseball knowledge extended far beyond the Dodgers. He became a widely known baseball historian, acted as vice-president of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), and established the Washington Metro Chapter of the SABR. Later in his life Gabriel was honored by the Dodgers when they inducted him into the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame, an honor not usually given to fans. Gabriel was an important part of the Dodger community. He became close friends with a number of widows of former players and visited them often. Ronald Gabriel died in July, 2009 at the age of 68.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection includes baseball memorabilia acquired over Ronald Gabriel's lifetime as a fan, especially of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

**Series 1, Newsletters, 1944-2008**, includes newsletters for the *Dodgers Line Drives* which Gabriel published, as well as the *Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club*, which he founded in 1975. He also authored a newsletter called the *Gabe-o-gram*. *The Brooklyn Bums* was a newsletter to which Gabriel subscribed.

**Series 2, Photographs, circa 1947-2006**, consists of one oversize photo of Babe Ruth, a folder containing collectible photographs, and five packs of team photographs of the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers. Notably in this series is the photograph of Ronald Gabriel as a child standing with the "Great Bambino," Babe Ruth.

**Series 3, Baseball Ephemera, 1912-1990**, contains five subseries: Subseries 1, Trading Cards; Subseries 2, Postcards; Subseries 3, Scrapbook; Subseries 4, Posters; and Subseries 5, Ephemera. There are two albums of baseball trading cards dating from 1912 to 1973 and two albums of autographed Hall of Fame postcards. The scrapbook contains 144 pages and over 1000 autographs acquired by Gabriel as a boy. There are oversize posters documenting Duke Snider Restaurant & Bar (autographed by Duke Snider), 1989 and "Catch Baseball Fever," undated. The ephemera includes game tickets, a letter from Dodgers' long timeradio broadcaster Vin Scully, advertising, product packaging, baseball placemats, programs, team schedules, programs, scorecards, magnets, and several other small items.

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## Arrangement

The collection is organized into 3 series.

### **Series 1, Newsletters, 1944-2008**

### **Series 2, Photographs, circa 1947-2006**

### **Series 3, Baseball Ephemera, 1912-1990**

Subseries 1, Trading Cards, 1912-1973 (Bulk, 1940-1954)

Subseries 2, Postcards, undated

Subseries 3, Scrapbook, undated

Subseries 4, Posters, 1955-1982

Subseries 5, Ephemera, undated

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Baseball
- Baseball players
- Collectibles
- Collectors and collecting
- Sports -- Collectibles

### Types of Materials:

- Baseball cards
- Ephemera -- 20th century
- Ephemera -- 21st century
- Newsletters -- 20th century

Newsletters -- 21st century  
Packaging  
Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 20th century  
Photographs -- Photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 2000-2010  
Placemats  
Scrapbooks -- 20th century  
Tickets

Names:

Brooklyn Dodgers (Baseball team).  
Ruth, Babe, 1895-1948

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Newsletters, 1944-2008

Box 1, Folder 1	<i>Gabe-o-gram, 1975-1983</i>
Box 1, Folder 2	<i>The Brooklyn Bums Newsletter, 1987-1989</i>
Box 1, Folder 3-6	<i>Dodgers Line Drives, 1944-2008</i>
Box 1, Folder 7-9	<i>The Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club Newsletter, 1987-2000</i>

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## Series 2: Photographs, circa 1947-2006

Box 1, Folder 10      Personal photographs, undated  
[Image\(s\)](#)

[Ronald Gabriel with Babe Ruth : black-and-white photoprint], circa 1948  
*1 Item (approx. 4" x 2-3/8").*

[Image\(s\): \[Ronald Gabriel with Babe Ruth : black-and-white photoprint, ca. 1948.\]](#)

Gabriel, Ronald L., 1941-2009, Collector  
Photographer unidentified.

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.

Silver gelatin on paper.

Major horizontal crease; losses.

## Local Numbers

AC1178-0000001.tif (AC Scan)

In Box 1, Folder 10.

Names:	Ruth, Babe, 1895-1948
Topic:	Baseball
Genre/	Photographs -- 1940-1950 -- Black-and-white photoprints
Form:	-- Silver gelatin

Box 1, Folder 11	Assorted baseball photographs, 1941-2006
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Brooklyn Dodgers team photographs, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Los Angeles Dodgers team photographs, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Hall of Fame picture pack, undated
Box 6, Folder 1	Babe Ruth photograph, undated

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## Series 3: Baseball Ephemera, 1912-1990

Box 4; Postcards, undated

Box 5

Box 2, Folder 6 Scrapbook, undated  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 6, Folder 2; Posters, 1955-1982  
Box 7, Folder 2-4

Box 7, Folder 1; Ephemera, 1949-1993  
Box 2, Folder 8-10;  
Box 6, Folder 3-5

Box 2, Folder 7; Trading cards, 1912-1973  
Box 3

Ted Williams [color baseball card], 1957  
*1 Item (approx. 3-1/2" x 2-1/2".)*

[Image\(s\): Ted Williams \[color baseball card\], 1957.](#)

Gabriel, Ronald L., 1941-2009, Collector  
Ink on paper.

Creases.

Local Numbers

AC1178-0000007.tif (AC Scan)

In Box 3.

Names: Williams, Ted  
Topic: Baseball  
Genre/ Baseball cards  
Form: Collecting cards  
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Reproductions

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