

4 MINNEAPOLIS SUNDAY TRIBUNE B April 16, 1961

## Step by Step, Here's How We Entered Big Leagues

By CHARLES JOHNSON  
Sports Editor

Oct. 26, 1960, will be a day long remembered in the history of sports in Minneapolis, St. Paul and the Upper Midwest.

At approximately 3 p.m. that day in the Savoy Hilton hotel in New York, President Joe Cronin of the American league made this momentous announcement:

"The American league today has granted permission to Calvin Griffith to move his Washington baseball franchise to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul for the 1961 playing season."

THAT DECISION ended a seven year drive by civic, business and sports leaders of this area to get major league baseball.

Through that period, the old St. Louis Browns, the old Philadelphia Athletics, New York Giants, Cleveland Indians and the Washington Senators appeared within the grasp of this area.

One by one these teams went elsewhere until last October, when Calvin Griffith ended three years of negotiations with Minneapolis and St. Paul interests by agreeing to make the move.

Did the Twin Cities have a real good chance to get any of the other teams mentioned above?

Let's take them one by one. Bill Veeck and the St. Louis Browns were only lukewarm about this territory. When Baltimore agreed to buy the franchise at \$2,600,000 and had a stadium ready, it went big league. That was in 1953.

IN 1954 Twin Cities people were offered the Philadelphia Athletics franchise for \$3,500,000. This was turned down because a campaign was on then to raise \$4,500,000 to build Metropolitan stadium.

"We have all we can do to complete such a drive without involving this area in another out-

lay of more than \$3,000,000 in the purchase of a baseball franchise," was the unanimous sentiment of business and civic leaders.

Before the Bloomington facilities were built, Horace Stoneham of the New York Giants indirectly hinted that he might move his club some day. He was partial to the Twin Cities if they had adequate facilities.

Negotiations continued for the Giants. But in 1957, San Francisco joined Los Angeles in an all-out bid to get the

New York and Brooklyn franchises. San Francisco's "give-away" offer on cheap rent, a new stadium and other concessions won out over Minneapolis and St. Paul.

HOPES FOR a major league club sagged badly with this turn in events. However, when the Boston Red Sox took over the Minneapolis ball club of the American Association in 1958, the outlook brightened. The Red Sox hinted that they were making this move to protect the territory for the American league.

In July 1958 Griffith was on the verge of asking permission to move here for the 1959 season. He changed his mind. Again late in the 1959 season Griffith indicated he was ready. He withdrew again.

In the meantime, Cleveland had shown some interest in this territory. At one stage negotiations became rather serious, but legal entanglements in the Ohio city contract stymied this project.

THROUGHOUT 1960 Griffith continued correspondence with Minneapolis and St. Paul leaders about an eventual move. He wasn't taken too seriously in most quarters until the night of last April 25 in New York.

That was the first time he indicated that he would take



**Winding Up** Among promising starting pitchers with the Twins is Paul Giel, here winding up for the toss. A few years ago Minnesotans were cheering his prowess on the University of Minnesota football field.

the bull by the horns the next day at the special meeting of the American league. Long into the night he dickered with Gerald Moore, chairman of the metropolitan sports area commission and E. W. Boyer, vice chairman.

Griffith stated his definite terms for transfer of his franchise. He demanded an answer from the Twin Cities groups by 9 a.m. Oct. 26, one hour before the American league was to meet.

Through the wee sma' hours of the morning, Moore and Boyer discussed Griffith's offer with Gordon Ritz, Wheelock Whitney, Jr. (original backers of the Continental league) and this writer.

About 3 a.m. there was a meeting of the minds. Moore was instructed to phone Griffith.

Twelve hours later—3 p.m. Oct. 26—Minneapolis and St. Paul had a franchise in the American league.

**A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE**

**MURRAY'S**

*Famed Silver Butter Knife Steak dinner for two!*



**Murray's**

**RESTAURANT AND COCKTAIL LOUNGE**  
26 South 6th Street • Minneapolis, Minn. • Federal 9-909

Free guest parking after 6:00 P.M. at the Dyckman Garage



Two DREICER AWARD Steak  
**SILVER BUTTER KNIFE**  
Complete double Sirloin steak dinner for two

**GOLD BUTTER KNIFE**  
Complete double porterhouse steak dinner for two or three