



(From left) Vince Lloyd, Jack Rosenberg and Jack Brickhouse before a game at old Comiskey Park in the early 1960s.



## ***Brickhouse Sox's best friend for 20 years on TV — and beyond***

*By George Castle, CBM Historian*

One of the most long-lasting stereotypes in Chicago sports is Jack Brickhouse was so closely identified with the Cubs that the White Sox might as well have not existed for the enthusiastic man for all seasons.

And the numbers certainly give a shred of truth to the image. Brickhouse typically handled at least 140 Cubs games from 1968 until 1980, the year before he gave up play by play work. The '81 season was shredded in the middle by the second-longest player strike ever. Earlier, the Cubs televised all their home games while the Sox blacked out almost all their home night games,

But history is recorded and can't be purged. Brickhouse was the Sox announcer for WGN-TV for the first 20 seasons the team televised games, starting in 1948. And as a backer of all Chicago teams, he was instrumental behind the scenes in Bill Veeck's return to Sox ownership late in 1975, thus preventing the franchise from being moved to Seattle.

Brickhouse's last Sox broadcast took place on Oct. 1, 1967 against the Washington Senators at old Comiskey Park, at the end of the disheartening collapse of a near-miss season and end of the Go-Go Era. Only those seriously into middle-age relate his work to the Sox.

**Letters to the Editor**  
YOU TELL TELEVISION

**Yeah, How Bout It?**  
When is someone going to tell Eddie Fisher how to speak to an angel?  
JOAN WISCH, Chicago

**To Each His Own**  
Jack Brickhouse might be a wonderful fella but he is so obviously a Sox fan that his commentary of the Cubs' games is almost to the pitiful stage. Being the Cub fan that I am, I suffer. . . .  
PAT EBERT, Skokie, Ill.

Does Jack Brickhouse drink the Cubs' shower water? He sure shows it. . . . Whether he realizes it or not his favorites from the North side haven't got a chance. He'll be sorry for rooting for the Cubs 'cause come October, the Sox will be in the World Series.  
EVELYN SNYDER, Chicago

● *Guess it's all in your point of view, huh?—Ed.*

**Dueling letters in a 1953 TV Guide edition debated Jack Brickhouse's preferred Chicago team. But most who knew him believed he loved the White Sox as much as the Cubs.**

“A lot of Sox fans of a certain generation feel that Jack was simply just another shill-announcer for the Cubs because they actually never heard him broadcast a White Sox game,” said Sox historian Mark Liptak, a contributor to the Chicago Baseball Museum.

“Nothing could be further from the truth. Jack was, in fact, as big a Sox fan as he was for the Cubs. All you have to do to dispel any notions of Jack not caring for the Sox is to listen to the excitement in his voice as he broadcast on WGN-TV the game from Cleveland on Sept. 22, 1959. When the Sox won the pennant, Jack was electric in his enthusiasm.

“And he was so caught up in the moment that when he was recapping the final totals before they started the ‘Tenth Inning’ show from the locker room he forgot to find out the attendance. Jack said on the air, ‘the attendance for tonight...we don’t have it and I’m not going to find out now...’”

Rich Lindberg, the Sox’s official historian, backs up Liptak’s portrait of Brickhouse to a tee.

“What people don’t realize about Jack Brickhouse is that I believe he loved the Cubs and White Sox on equal terms,” he said.

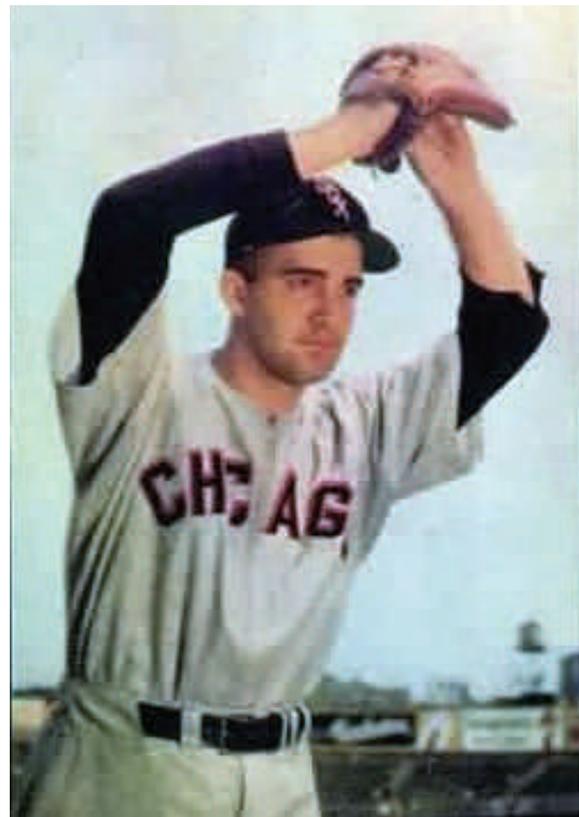
Those who worked with Brickhouse on Sox telecasts or were the beneficiary of his play-by-play on the South Side know he was in the Sox’s corner.

“He did them (Cubs and Sox) with equal sincerity and flair,” said Jack Rosenberg, Brickhouse’s writer/assistant in the booth and WGN’s longtime sports editor. “We get asked that a lot. We looked at them as we did the Cubs. We had an obligation to both and we carried it out. He was a professional all the way. He treated them both as his assignment and did them both.”

### **Announced Sox games ‘like a fan’**

During the Brickhouse broadcast era, Billy Pierce’s White Sox tenure was longer than any other South Sider with the exception of Nellie Fox. The ol’ lefty knew his team had an advocate up in the booth.

“He announced our games like he was our fan,” Pierce said. “Jack Brickhouse was enthused in whatever he did. He was a professional. That was a key word for Jack Brick-



**Billy Pierce, whose Sox starts Jack Brickhouse reported on for 13 years, knew his team broadcaster was ardently pro-South Siders.**

house for me. To have Jack doing our games meant he was part of us. Jack Brickhouse was just known as a Chicago announcer. He did everything and he did it well.

“Jack just got along with everybody. He’d come into the clubhouse and everybody would talk with him. He’d be in the dugout and fellas would talk with him. He was just a friendly, nice gentleman.”

Said 1960s third baseman “Pistol Pete” Ward: “Jack was a very friendly guy and was always very fair to the White Sox.”

Pierce went so far back with Brickhouse – to his third season televising baseball in 1949 – that he had a clear memory of the Hall of Fame broadcaster’s first WGN baseball partner.

“I remember he had Harry Creighton, who drank the beer,” he said. “That was a fun time. I knew Harry a little bit. He’d be a different announcer in the first inning and the ninth inning (after imbibing). Somebody has to be up there covering things, and that was Jack.”

Brickhouse gets lost in Sox history simply because the team televised fewer home games than the Cubs when both franchises shared WGN for 20 seasons. Chicago-area children got into the habit of dashing home from Chicago to watch the final few innings of the Cubs’ all-daytime home schedule. However, early in TV history the Sox banned the televising of home night games because of a perceived negative effect on attendance. That turned out to be a discredited theory and actually hurt the Sox’s profile in the city in the long run. Not until the last few years of WGN’s time with the Sox, starting in the mid-1960s, did the team relent and allow even a handful of home night games on the station.

So, Brickhouse’ profile on Sox telecasts was not as high as it was for the Cubs. Meanwhile, radio announcer Bob Elson, who had been instrumental in WGN hiring Brickhouse in 1940, was considered synonymous with the team after his decades of radio baseball work dating back to the early 1930s.

### **Brickhouse draws prime-time road Sox assignments**

With their cameras dark at home at night, WGN tried to compensate somewhat by televising more night Sox road games than they did for the Cubs starting at the dawn of the 1960s. If the station aired a Cubs game at home and the Sox road game in prime time on the same day, Vince Lloyd would stay home to work the North Siders while Brickhouse typically went out of town with the Sox.

In one frantic week starting July 1, 1962, Brickhouse covered the Sox-Indians doubleheader at Comiskey Park on Sunday. He then flew with the Sox to Detroit to telecast a Monday night game on July 2. Then he flew to Cincinnati to handle the Cubs-Reds night telecast July 3. On Wednesday morning, July 4 he zipped back to Chicago and rushed to Comiskey Park to broadcast the Sox-Orioles holiday twin bill. After an off-day Thursday, July 5, it was off to Cleveland the next morning to helm the Sox-Indians prime-time Friday telecast.

Municipal Stadium, in fact, hosted the best-remembered Brickhouse Sox broadcast call of all time for the Sept. 22, 1959 American League pennant-clincher. WGN's first road telecast for either the Cubs and Sox was Aug. 30, 1958 at the original Busch Stadium in St. Louis. The '59 telecast out of Cleveland was not originally scheduled. But the game was quickly added when the Sox – several of whom had appeared on Ed Sullivan's CBS-TV show in a remote pickup from Chicago on Sept. 20 – were in line to clinch their first pennant in exactly four decades on that Tuesday night.

**WE THINK YOU'LL LIKE**

6:55 p. m.—9—Baseball. Jack Brickhouse describes the game between the Cleveland Indians and the White Sox at Municipal stadium.

7:30 p. m.—11—Puerto Rico. Governor Luis Munoz-Marin of Puerto Rico explains Operation Bootstrap, an experiment by which the Puerto Ricans themselves have developed their economy.

7:30 p. m.—2—Route 66. Martha Hyer plays a blind widow who asks Tod Stiles [Martin Milner] and Buz Murdock [George Maharis] to buy her a gun which she claims she needs for protection against the gangsters who murdered her husband in "Absence of Tears." [R]



MARTHA HYER

Friday, July 7, 1961

**When WGN-TV televised the Cubs home day game and White Sox road night game on the same day, Jack Brickhouse typically handled the prime-time telecast.**

Audio tapes of Brickhouse's call of Luis Aparacio fielding a Vic Power grounder, stepping on second to force the runner and firing to first to end the game have circulated for decades. "The 40-year wait is now over!" he exclaimed for emphasis.

[Listen to Brickhouse's call of the pennant-clinching double play. >>](#)

When a Brickhouse exhibit that I was fortunate to curate was opened at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in 2001, I ensured the pennant-clinching call would be prominently displayed. The visual part of the telecast had long since been obliterated because videotape was expensive and usually re-used in 1959. However, the museum was able to come up with newsreel footage of Aparacio's play. Brickhouse's call was synchronized to the action on the film for the exhibit.

Also preserved was the audio of Brickhouse's participation in the Tenth Inning Show live from the merrymaking Sox clubhouse. He joined announcing partner Lou Boudreau in chatting with execs, coaches and players as soon as he made his way down from the booth.

[Listen to Brickhouse handle interviews in the Sox's celebrating clubhouse in Cleveland. >>](#)

Still another rare piece of audio in existence is Brickhouse's live WGN-Radio broadcast on the Sox plane coming back to Midway Airport. Franklyn MacCormack, freshly hired as the All-Night Showcase host, is heard introducing Brickhouse. Along with Lou Boudreau, Brickhouse went on to chat with the celebrating Sox. In an action that would be prohibited today due to FAA and other security regulations, Brickhouse stayed on the

air as the plane landed at Midway. He even stuck his microphone out the captain's cockpit window to capture the noise of the tens of thousands of fans who welcomed the team home in the wee hours.

### **Teams with Scully on '59 World Series telecast**

Within days, Brickhouse enjoyed his highest national profile since he was at the NBC mic for Willie Mays' all-time catch on Vic Wertz during the 1954 World Series. Veeck, then in his first Sox ownership run, preferred Brickhouse work the national telecast of the Fall Classic with the Dodgers. He teamed with Vin Scully, but was not on the air for Ted Kluszewski's two home runs in Game 1 in Comiskey Park.

[Listen to Brickhouse call of Game 2 of the 1959 World Series. >>](#)

Brickhouse went on to call the games for a series of Sox contenders through 1967. His next-most-famous broadcast after the '59 events was Joel Horlen's no-hitter against the Detroit Tigers in the first game of a doubleheader on Sept. 10, 1967 at Comiskey Park. Still in existence is the color kinescope – a film of the live telecast – of shortstop Ron Hansen's throw to first baseman Cotton Nash to retire Dick McAuliffe. The clip also was used in the Brickhouse broadcast-museum exhibit.

[Watch the final two outs of Joel Horlen's no-hitter announced by Brickhouse. >>](#)

“He had a lot of class,” said Horlen, now happily retired and playing golf in San Antonio. “He wouldn't say anything that would embarrass you. He would get some of your own feelings about it. He really liked us. He fit right in with the whole team, practically.”

A near no-hitter by Horlen four years previously showed the Sox how fair Brickhouse could be when recapping a game.

“I have to go back to the night of July 29, 1963,” said Liptak. “The Sox were in Washington playing the Senators. Horlen took a no-hitter into the ninth inning and was only leading 1-0. In that half with one out Chuck Hinton hit a bleeder up the middle that got through for a hit. Then with two out, Don Lock hit a curveball into the seats to win the game.”



**Joel Horlen is mobbed by teammates after his 1967 no-hitter (photo courtesy Leo Bauby collection).**

“Then, on the ‘Tenth Inning Show,’ Brickhouse interviewed Horlen. You talk about a tough situation! How do you talk to a guy who within 10 minutes lost a no-hitter and a game? Just watching Jack handle that stuck with me for all these years. He did it with dignity and professionalism, not trying

to badger Joe or be sensational, but simply trying to find out what happened and how he felt. Jack also had sympathy in his voice -- you could hear that.”

Horlen knew how Brickhouse would handle what he often called a “disastrous turn of events” on the air.

“If you won or you lost, everything was smooth,” he said. “He just wanted your opinion of some of the things that happened in the game. He was a real first-class guy.”

Said Pierce: “You had a man who knows the game and he asks you the questions that are very pertinent at the time. He did it with ease and wouldn’t put you on the spot. He got the questions that people were interested in, and you can answer. To me, he was the ultimate pro announcer. Whether the game was tight or not, he could make it sound good. He did a very good job promoting players. He knew their histories. It goes back to being a professional all the way around.”

### **Players on a lift to gab on ‘Tenth Inning’**

When the game wasn’t as impactful as the Horlen outings, players did not mind taking the elevator to the upper-deck Comiskey Park pressbox to guest on the “Tenth Inning.” They worked in a different era when every public appearance did not feature an expensive price tag.

“The word money has changed things a lot,” Pierce said. “There was not money going on the show. You might get a gift. In 1959, when we won the pennant, half the ballclub was probably making \$15,000. Money has changed people’s attitude to about what you can get them to do. It isn’t as easy to get them to go to charity affairs. “

Sox owner Art Allyn made one of the most ill-advised moves in team history to shift the games

off WGN for WFLD-TV (now Fox-32) for the 1968 season. Two years prior to the actual shift, Brickhouse tried to retain the rights in a lunch with Allyn, “strongly urging,” in Lindberg’s words, to stay put. He advised the owner the concept of a superstation, with games available well beyond the Chicago market, was not far off in the future.

“They would be destroying much of their marketing strategy and would suffer in the long run,” Lindberg said of Brickhouse’s message to Allyn. “He was absolutely right. He



**Jack Brickhouse told Sox owner Art Allyn (right, with Ed Short and Al Lopez) that a superstation with a wide audience could soon develop. But Allyn was dead-set on switching from WGN to get more games and more money from the lightly-watched WFLD-TV.**

did that because he had equal affection for the White Sox as he did for the Cubs. And that is something people don't understand or realize because he broadcast the Cubs for so many years."

Allyn television move made brought a short-term financial gain that kept the Sox financially afloat during the darkest seasons in team history from 1968-70. But the Sox indeed suffered a long-term loss in exposure to the market with only a portion of the Chicago TV audience able to receive UHF signals at the time. TV sets were not mandated by law to have UHF tuners until 1964, and too many older sets were still in use at the end of the 1960s. Moreover, reception on sets that did receive UHF signals was much less reliable than the VHF Channel 9.

So the Sox and WGN went their separate ways. But Brickhouse never lost his affection for the franchise. After the Jerry Reinsdorf-Eddie Einhorn ownership took over the team, Brickhouse was always welcome at events that had a tie-in to him at both Comiskey Park and U.S. Cellular Field.

As with the broadcast museum, Brickhouse's Sox connections will be dutifully remembered when the Chicago Baseball Museum opens its brick-and-mortar home. A permanent exhibit on Chicago's man for all seasons will have a noticeable South Side flavor.

## ***Brickhouse plays behind-the-scenes role in saving Sox for Chicago in 1975***

*By George Castle, CBM Historian*

The situation couldn't have been more dire.

Nearly crippled financially, Sox owner John Allyn almost missed his final team payroll, close to the end of the 1975 season. Attendance had fallen to 770,000 in the recession-wracked 75-win season. Bad publicity multiplied when Allyn fired announcer Harry Caray, live on Johnny Morris' WBBM-TV's early-evening sportscast.

Noises grew louder that Allyn would bail out and sell the Sox to new owners, with the team moving to Seattle, which was "owed" a franchise from Major League Baseball after the bankrupt expansion Pilots fled for Milwaukee following their inaugural season in 1969.

Making matters even worse, American League owners – never big fans of Bill Veeck – told the Baseball Barnum his Sox ownership bid to keep the franchise in town in the autumn of '75 was under-capitalized.

Out of the limelight, Jack Brickhouse came to the rescue to help save the White Sox for Chicago. Totally identified by 1975 with the Cubs and their 140-plus

games televised on WGN-TV, he had never lost his affection for the Sox or his relationships with those who could back the team.

“Veeck’s re-entrée back into Chicago would not have been possible without the behind-the-scenes moves by Jack Brickhouse,” said Rich Lindberg, the Sox’s official historian who went on to chronicle future Sox chairman Jerry Reinsdorf’s business moves on behalf of the South Siders.



**Sox historian Rich Lindberg (left) credits Jack Brickhouse with a key behind-the-scenes role in rounding up enough investors to stock the ownership group of Bill Veeck (right) in 1975.**

“Jack Brickhouse putting the proper people together, making the right introductions, advocating for baseball and just doing an awful lot,” was Lindberg’s description of the broadcaster’s role to assist Veeck. “He, too, was one of the unsung heroes. Both Jack Brickhouse and John Allyn (being patient in waiting for Veeck’s group to coalesce) were really responsible for ensuring the future of the Sox in Chicago after 1975.

“Brickhouse helped line up investors to come in with Veeck. I don’t think his unheralded role in helping keep the Sox in Chicago has ever been properly acknowledged.”

With additional money infused into Veeck’s group, the AL finally approved the purchase from Allyn. Veeck and GM Roland Hemond quickly set up shop in the hotel lobby at the winter meetings with a sign reading, “Open For Business.”

Obviously, Brickhouse never held it against the Sox for bolting WGN for WFLD-TV before the 1968 season. He proved to be a booster for the city above and beyond his own station loyalties.

“An owner needs help, no question about it, from people around the city,” said Sox pitching great Billy Pierce. “It pays to have the right people with you. Jack was pro-Chicago, without question.”

He impressed potential Veeck investors in the same manner he did Lindberg.

“Jack Brickhouse was one of the nicest, most pleasant men I’ve ever known,” said the historian. ‘Sometimes his language was a little bit salty. But, then again, he was in the world of baseball all those years. I dearly miss him.’”