

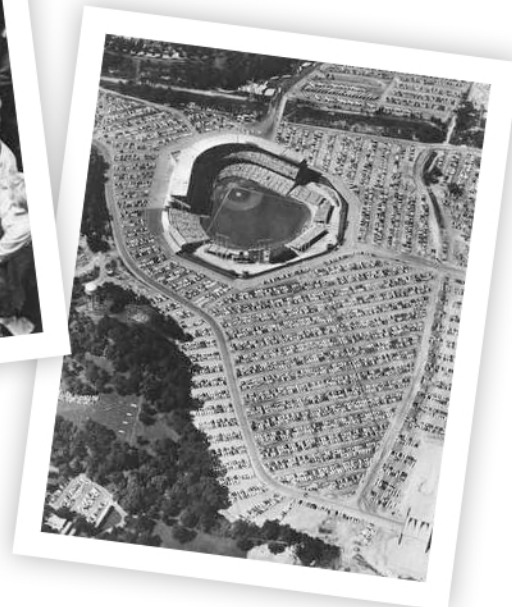
# The aking of ilwaukee Stories

Historical Time Period : 1953-Present

## Bushville Wins



*1957 Milwaukee Braves  
Win the World Series*



*Milwaukee County Stadium*

### Connecting to “The Making of Milwaukee”

Video Chapters: #15 - The Exploding Metropolis

Curriculum Chapter: Gr. 5-12 - Modern Milwaukee

This story is historical fiction. The setting, events and baseball players’ names are real but the Milwaukee family names (only) have been fictionalized.  
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## *Bush League Wins! Milwaukee's Baseball Fever*

Jack Brinkman pounded his fist into his baseball glove. Even though there was snow flying that February afternoon in Milwaukee, Jack was eager to get outside to play baseball. Every summer he and his friends played pickup games at the park just down the street from his house. And Jack played on a Little League team, too. When ice and snow covered the ground, Jack oiled his baseball glove and dreamed of playing ball on warm summer afternoons. In the summer, he carefully read the sports section of *The Milwaukee Sentinel* every morning and knew the names of almost all the professional baseball players.

Jack could not recall a time when he did not love baseball. Almost everyone in his family was a baseball fan. Or, as his mother reminded him, a fanatic! Maybe it was because his father, both his uncles, and even his grandfather followed the game so closely.

In 1957, Jack was eleven years old. The year was the most important one in Milwaukee's baseball history because Milwaukee's team, the Milwaukee Braves, had made it all the way to the World Series. Many people were surprised by the Braves' success because Milwaukee's National League professional team was only four years old!

According to Jack's grandfather and father, Milwaukeeans had loved baseball for a very long time. Back in the late 1800's, professional baseball clubs played at Borchert Field, located on North 8<sup>th</sup> Street near Burleigh and Chambers. In the 1930's, a minor league team called the Milwaukee Brewers played there. Jack's father had great memories of the days before World War II when he went to games at Borchert Field. When the United States was fighting in the war, Jack's father worked the night shift at the Harley Davidson factory making motorcycles for the U.S. Army. Because so many people worked at night they could not go to evening games. So, some of the Brewer's games were held in the morning. One time the ushers even dressed in pajamas and handed out donuts and cereal to the fans.

World War II ended in 1945. Right after the war, the city of Milwaukee began to grow and change in ways that surprised young and old. When large numbers of soldiers returned from the war to Milwaukee they wanted to settle down, have families, and build homes. In fact, so many babies were born during that time period, they became known as the "baby boom" generation. Jack was born in 1946 so he was one of the "boomers". To educate all these children, many new schools were built. To house all the families, thousands of new homes were constructed. There was building going on everywhere and it continued into the 1960's. Milwaukee became a bustling metropolitan region. By the early 60's, it was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest city in the U.S., boasting 741,324 citizens.

The building project that Jack's family was the most interested in was Milwaukee County Stadium. Construction began on Milwaukee's first large stadium in 1950. Even though Jack was only four years old, he could remember how his family, led by his father and grandfather, would drive to the stadium site to watch the construction in progress. The stadium was the first professional ballpark in the United States paid for with public funds. That means the taxpayers of Milwaukee paid for the stadium.

There was just one very big problem: Milwaukee did not have a major league baseball team. Some people called Milwaukee "bush league" because it only had a minor league baseball team. Bush league also implied that Milwaukee was second-rate or somehow inferior to other cities. So everyone was taking a chance and hoping Milwaukee would get a team. Finally, in 1953, the Brinkman's and all of Milwaukee were thrilled when the Boston Braves announced they would move to Milwaukee. Finally, Milwaukee was in the big leagues!

Now that the Braves were coming to town, the people of Milwaukee felt that nobody could call them "bush league" again.

On the Sunday after the announcement, nearly 60,000 Milwaukee fans went to County Stadium just to imagine their new major league team playing in their new major-league stadium. A few weeks later, on April 13, 1953, Jack and his family joined thousands of Milwaukeeans in County Stadium to watch the Milwaukee Braves play against the Boston Red Sox. That year Milwaukee set a National League record and drew 1,826,297 fans to their new stadium. They finished in second place, with a 92-62 record.

Then just four years later, in 1957, the unbelievable happened. The Milwaukee Braves won the National League pennant! They played the New York Yankees in the World Series. Milwaukee had great pitching by Warren Spahn and Lew Burdette, and strong hitting by Henry "Hank" Aaron, "Red" Schoendienst, and Eddie Mathews. But the Yankees were a fine team, too. It would not be easy to beat the Yankees. All of Milwaukee's baseball fans became more and more excited as the World Series games drew near. Jack resented how the Yankee players and manager, Casey Stengel, described Milwaukee fans as "bush league". He knew that the Braves were a good team and that the Milwaukee fans were maybe even more loyal than Yankees fans.

Finally the series began. The first two games were played in New York City and each team won one game. Jack's family managed to get tickets for the third game which was played in Milwaukee. It was very exciting to be in the packed stadium at a World Series game. Milwaukee fans were disappointed, though, because the Yankees won 12 to 3. But the Braves won the next two games at County Stadium before going back to New York. After the Yankees won there, the series was tied at three games to three.

The seventh and last game, the one that would decide the series, was played in New York City. At home in Milwaukee, the Brinkman's were glued to their television set. Who would win the final game and the World Series? Excitement filled the air. "Bush league" or not, Milwaukee Fans were captivated by the event as they watched their team play at Yankee Stadium.

That final game was exciting. In the last inning Mel Allen, the television announcer, shouted these words into the microphone;

*"Here we are at Yankee Stadium in New York. It's the bottom of the ninth inning and the Milwaukee Braves are leading five to nothing. After coming in second place last year, this team is very close to winning the World Series."*

Allen called the last out.

*"There are two outs, and the bases are loaded for the New York Yankees. Bill Skowron, the "moose", is up to bat. Lew Burdette pitches the ball and Skowron hits the ball to third base. Eddie Mathews picks up the ball and throws it to first. Skowron is out, and the Milwaukee Braves have won the World Series! I'll bet they are jumping for joy in Milwaukee right now."*

Allen was right. The people of Milwaukee, including Jack and his family, were elated. The Brinkman's hopped in their Chevrolet and drove to downtown Milwaukee. When they finally made it downtown, they joined thousands of fans on Wisconsin Avenue to celebrate the Braves' victory. People were cheering, screaming and hugging each other. Jack even spotted a man with a sign that said, "BUSHVILLE WINS!" The Milwaukee Braves were on top and the people of Milwaukee felt that way too. The Brinkman family celebrated for a long time and did not get home until very late that night. They all went to bed excited and proud to be Milwaukee baseball fans.

The next year the Braves made it to the World Series again but this time the Yankees won. Throughout the early 60's the Braves continued to play in Milwaukee but then the unthinkable happened. In 1965, the Braves moved to Atlanta and Milwaukee was without a major league team. It was five years before another

team, the Seattle Pilots, moved to Milwaukee and changed their name to Milwaukee Brewers. The Brewers made it to the World Series in 1982 but were beaten by the St. Louis Cardinals. This time around names like Robin Yount and Paul Molitor captured the hearts of Milwaukee fans.

Today, Jack is a grandfather and his family still roots for the Brewers. They love going to the new stadium called Miller Park, and Jack is proud that his grandchildren are Brewers fans. Jack will never forget the day in 1957 when his home team, the Milwaukee Braves, won the World Series. It remains one of the most exciting days of his life. It was the day that proved once and for all that Milwaukee was not bush league, but big league.