

The Shot Heard 'Round the World

Brooklyn Dodgers vs. New York Giants

October 3, 1951

A PSLC Show and Tell Presentation

By Scott Ney (October 26, 2022)

In 1951, the Giants came from behind to tie the Dodgers in the National League Standings

- The Dodgers had a 13 ½ game lead over the Giants on August 11
- The Giants won 16 straight games between August 12 and August 27
- The Giants won their final seven games, while the Dodgers lost six of their last 10 games
- Both teams finished with 96 – 58 records

A three-game playoff was scheduled to break the tie between the Dodgers and Giants

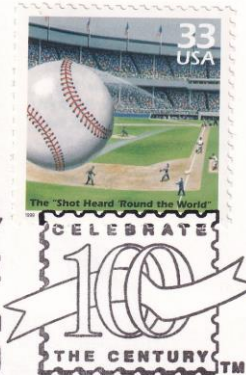
- Prior to 1969, there were no post-season playoff games – the first place team of the National League met the first place team of the American League in the World Series
- The first place tie between the Dodgers and the Giants caused the first playoff series in National League history
- Game 1 was played in Brooklyn at Ebbet's Field
- Games 2 and 3 were played at the Polo Grounds in Upper Manhattan

The Giants won Game 1 by the score of 3 – 1.

Largely forgotten is that the Dodgers' starting pitcher in Game 1, Ralph Branca, gave up a two-run home run to Giants' third baseman Bobby Thomson in the 4th inning. Thomson's home run put the Giants ahead in the game, 2 – 1.



FIRST DAY
OF ISSUE
1950s



THE SHOT HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

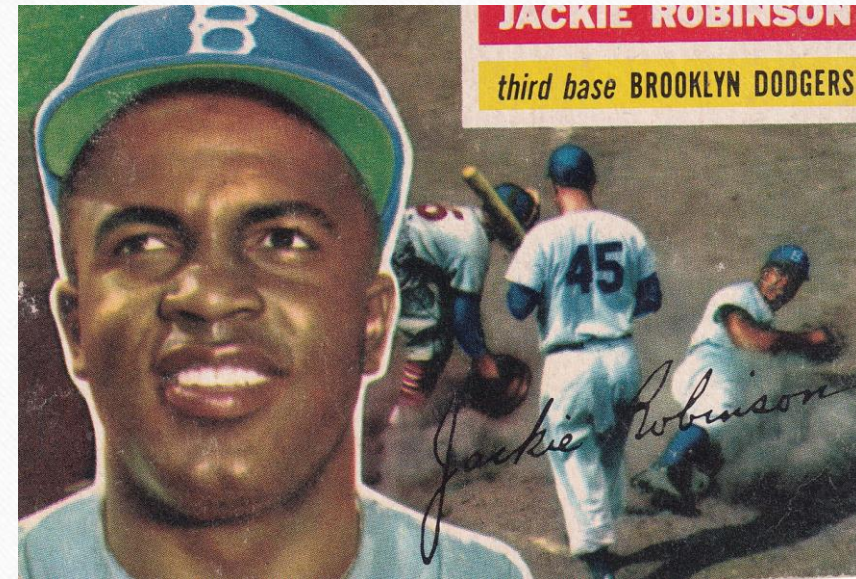
Ralph Branca and Bobby Thomson

The 1951 New York Giants came from 13½ games back to win the National League™ pennant in dramatic fashion on October 3, 1951. The Brooklyn Dodgers held a 4-1 lead in the bottom of the 9th in the final game of a three-game playoff. The Giants scored one run, and had one out with two men on base when Bobby Thomson homered off Ralph Branca to give the Giants the pennant.



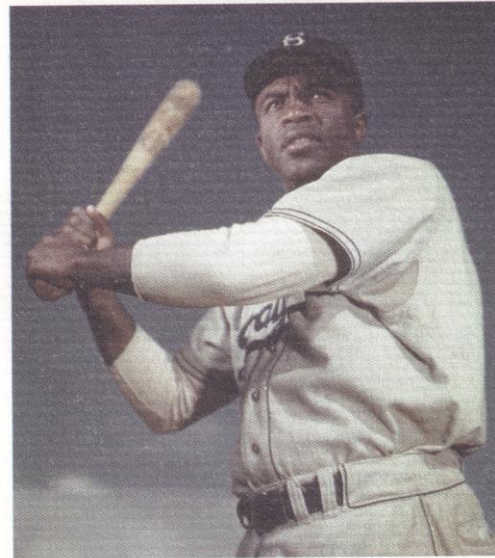
Game 2 was a blowout, with the Dodgers routing the Giants 10 - 0

Dodgers' second baseman Jackie Robinson hit a two-run home run to left field in the top of the first inning, to put the Dodgers ahead 2 - 0. Robinson knocked in the third run of the game in the fifth inning, and his teammates broke the game open in the sixth inning, scoring three runs on three hits. They would go on to score four more runs before the game ended.



The Dodgers wasted no time getting started in Game 3

In the top of the first inning, Jackie Robinson's single off Giants' starting pitcher Sal "The Barber" Maglie scooted between Al Dark at shortstop and Thomson at third, allowing Dodgers' shortstop Pee Wee Reese to score the first run of the game.



Jackie Robinson gained fame with the Brooklyn Dodgers for his superior fielding, hitting, and base-running abilities.

Celebrate the Century
Jackie Robinson
1947

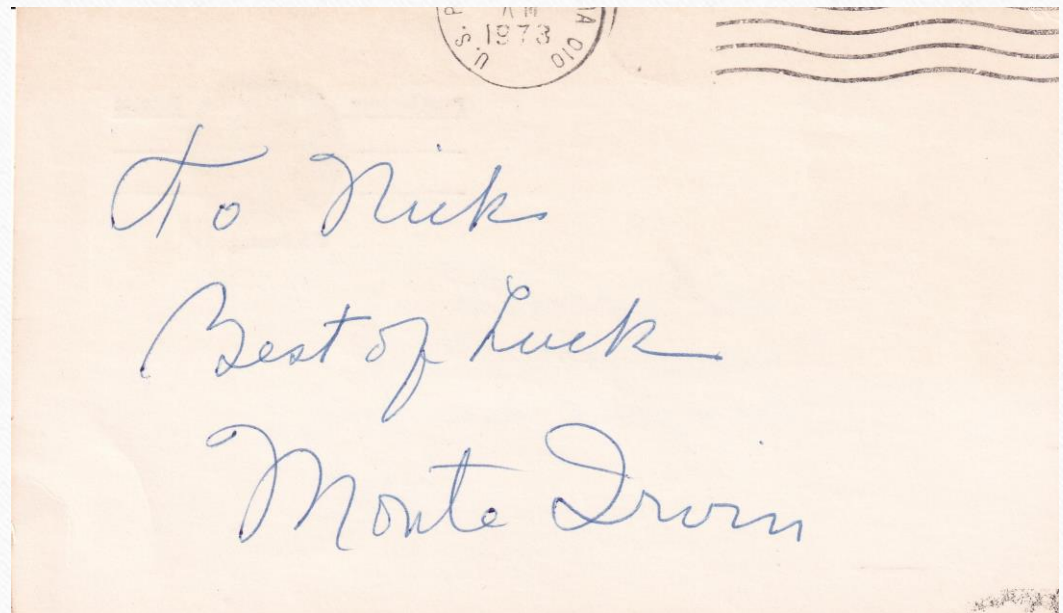


FIRST DAY
OF ISSUE
1947



After the first inning, no runs were scored by either team until the seventh inning

In the top of the seventh inning, Bobby Thomson hit a fly ball to centerfield off of Dodger's starting pitcher Don Newcombe, deep enough to allow teammate Monte Irvin to score. Newcombe got the next batter, rookie centerfielder Willie Mays, to ground into a double play. The game was tied at 1 – 1 after seven innings.



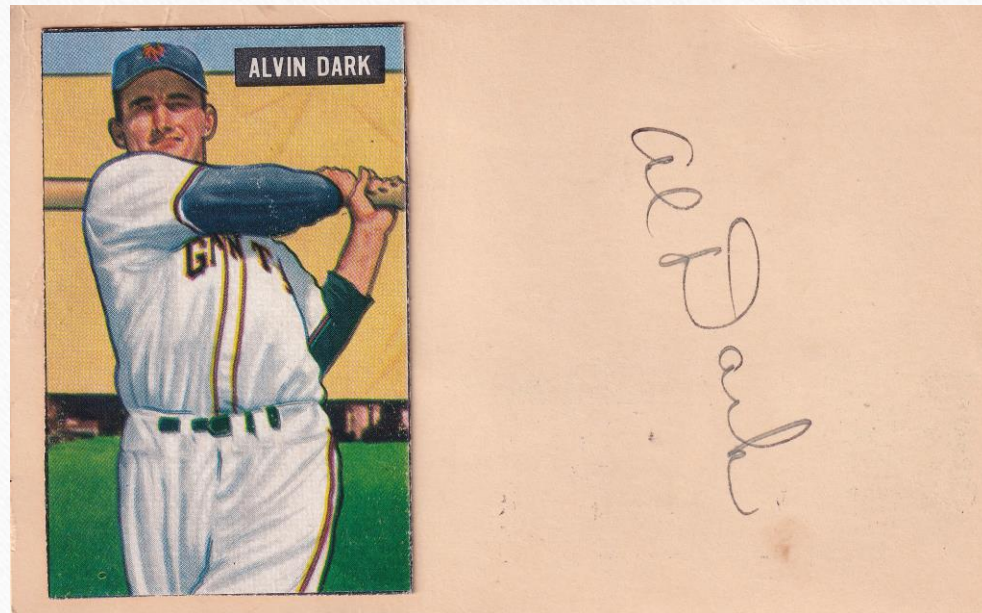
The Dodgers took a 4 – 1 lead in the top of the eighth inning

- Pee Wee Reese and Duke Snider hit one-out singles
- Reese scored on a Sal Maglie wild pitch with Robinson at the plate; with first base open, Jackie was walked intentionally
- Left fielder Andy Pafko singled Snider home
- Third baseman Billy Cox hit a two-out single to send Robinson home with the Dodgers' fourth run



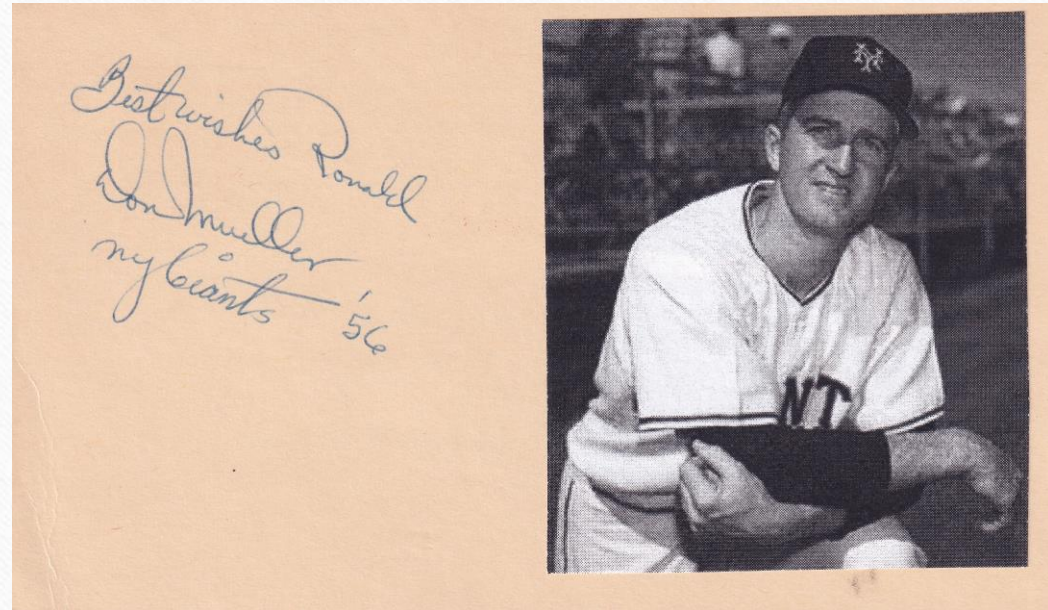
With Don Newcombe still pitching and the Dodgers ahead 4 – 1 in the bottom of the ninth, Al Dark led off for the Giants

- Dark hit a single which was nicely placed between first and second base
- Right fielder Don Mueller singled to right field, sending Dark to third base
- Left fielder Monte Irvin's at bat ended with a foul pop to Dodgers' first baseman Gil Hodges



Then, a breakthrough for the Giants

With one out, first baseman Whitey Lockman doubled to left-centerfield, sending Al Dark home with the Giants' second run, and Mueller to third base. That was all for Don Newcombe; manager Chuck Dressen took the ball and gave it to Game One's starting pitcher, Ralph Branca. Meanwhile, Giants' manager Leo Durocher sent Clint Hartung into the game to run for Don Mueller at third base.

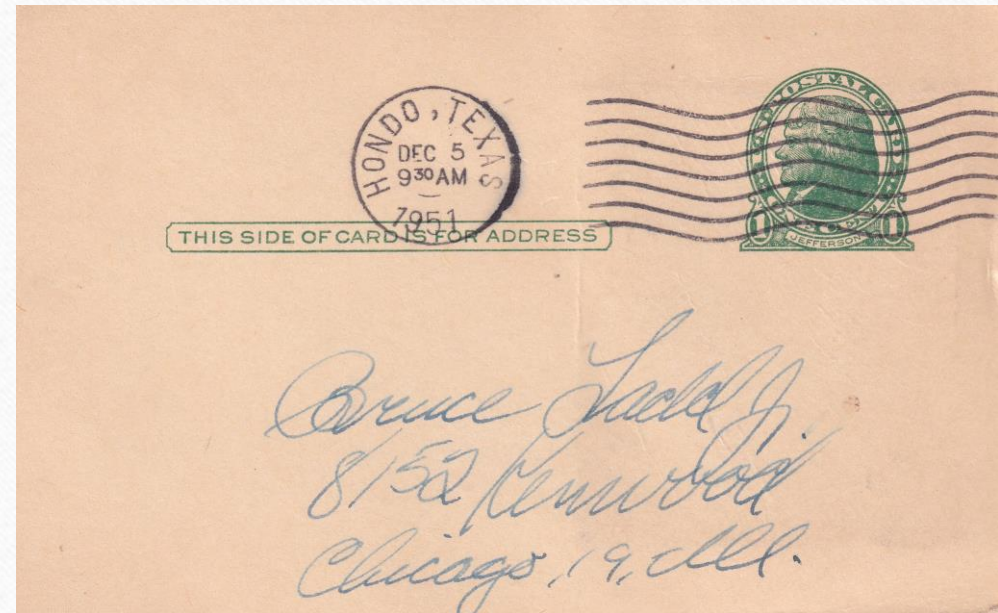
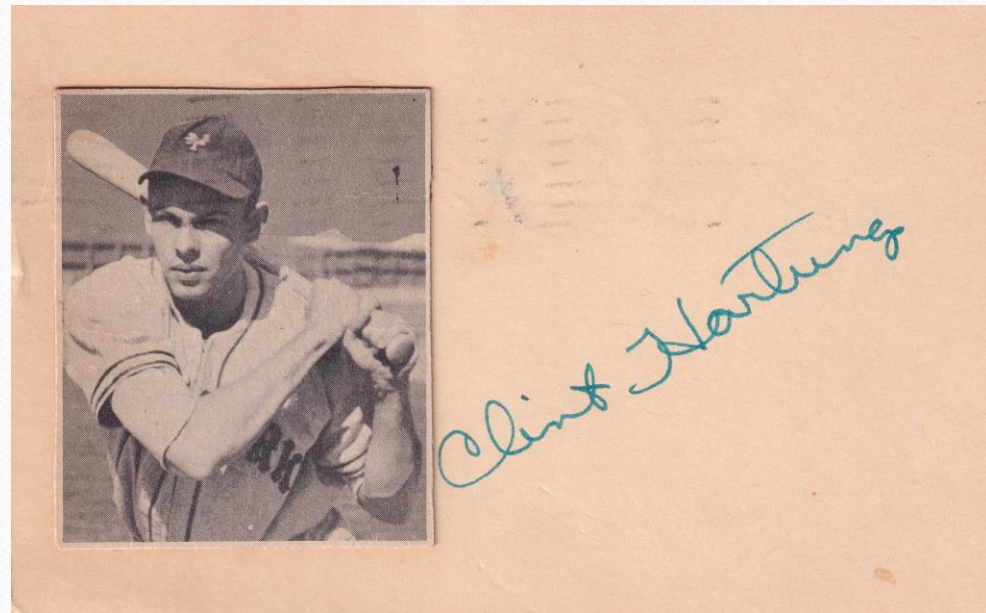


Legend has it that a man in Brooklyn asked his mother to tape-record the last half-inning of the broadcast on WMCA

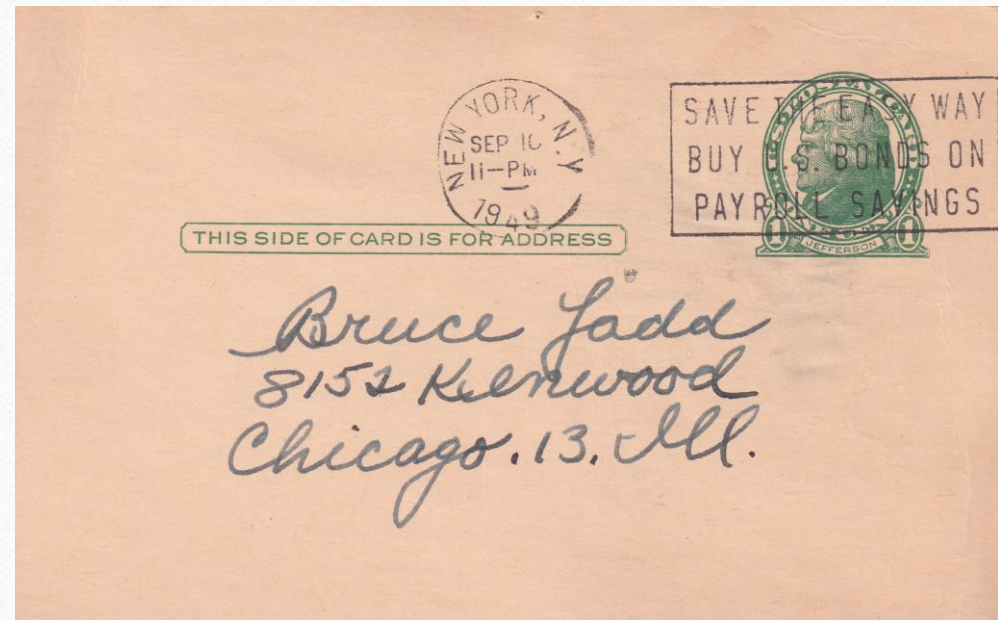
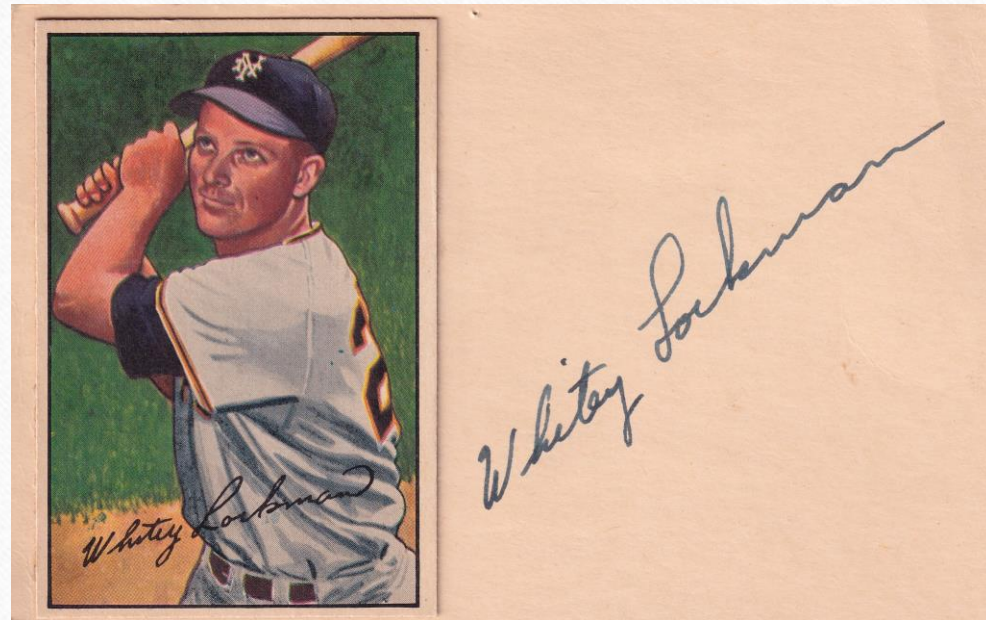
The man, Lawrence Goldberg, was at work. There were several TV and radio broadcasts which fans might have heard, depending on where they were located in the New York City area, and nationwide. This tape, containing the famous call of the final at-bat by Giants' radio broadcaster Russ Hodges, is the one generations of baseball fans who were not around for the game have heard.



Russ Hodges: “Hartung down the line at third,
not taking any chances . . .



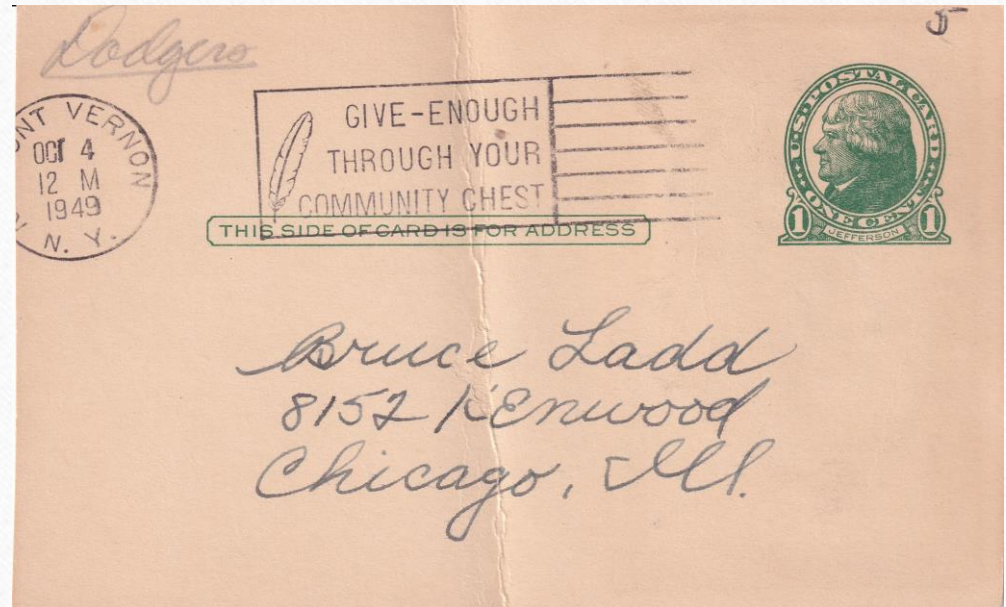
Russ Hodges: “Lockman without too big of a lead at second, but he’ll be runnin’ like the wind if Thomson hits one.”



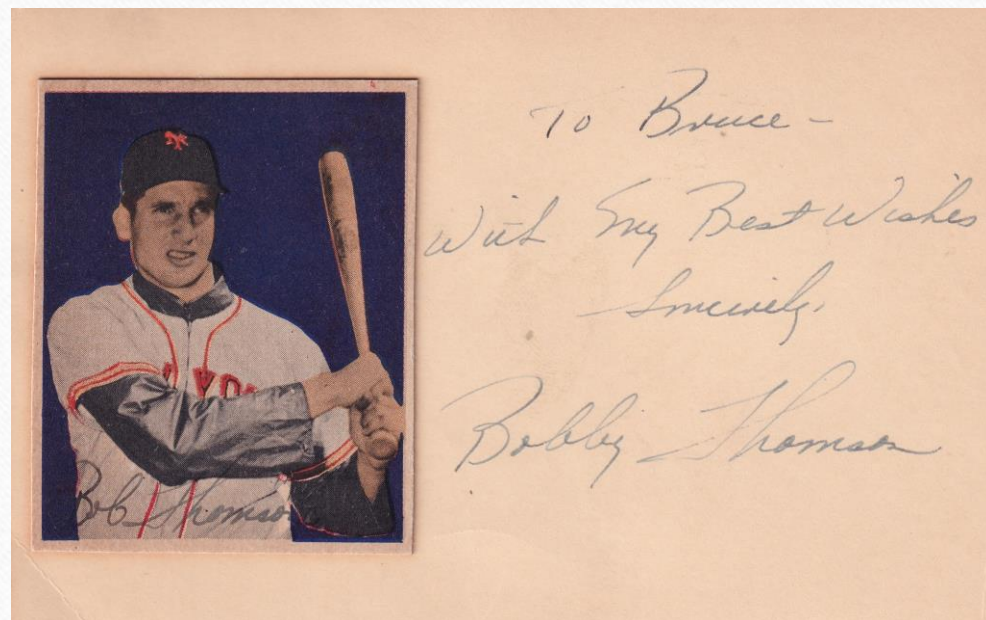
Russ Hodges: “Branca throws . . .



Best Wishes
Ralph Branca



Russ Hodges: “Theres’ a long drive! It’s going to be, I believe . . .”

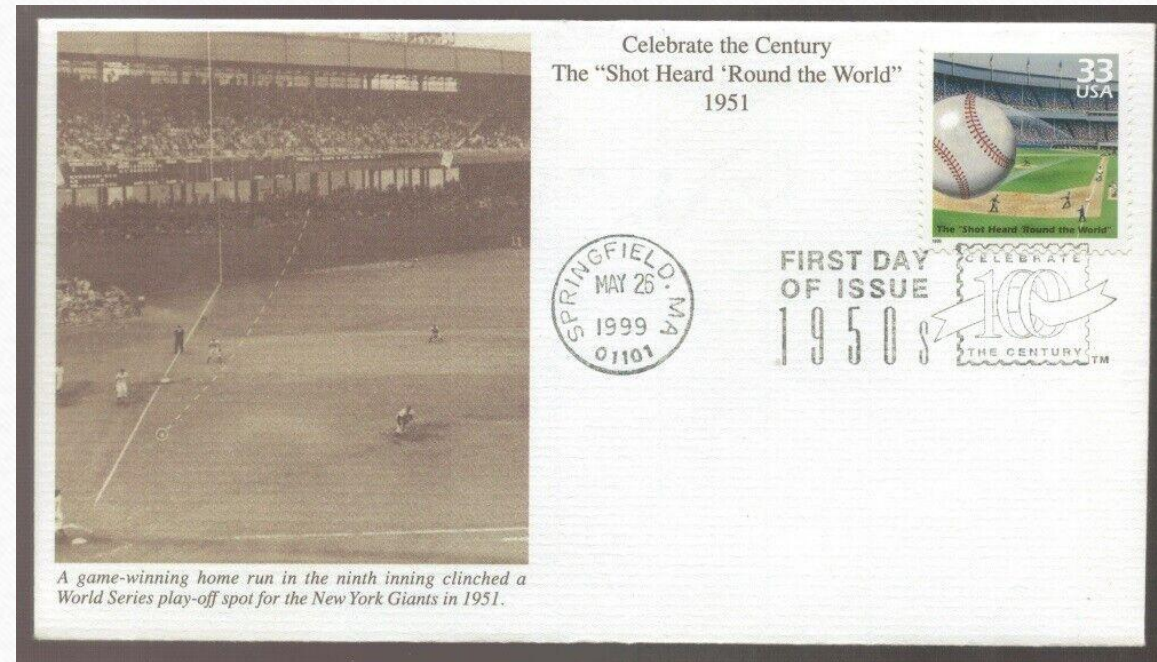


“The Giants win the pennant!”

- “The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!”

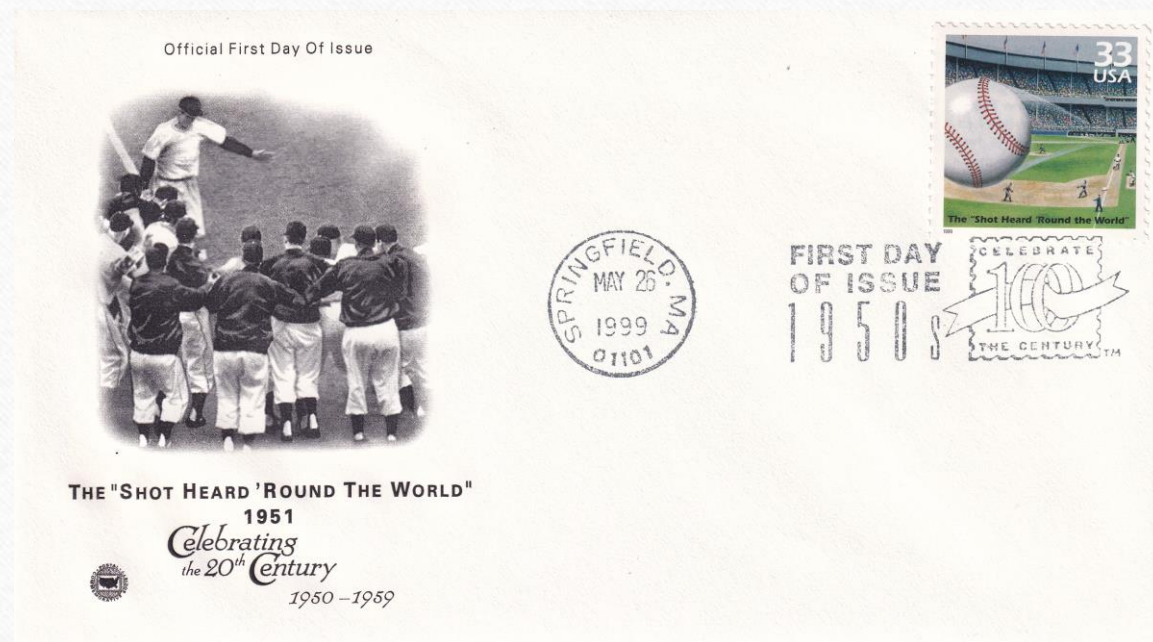
Hodges continued to describe the scene at the Polo Grounds for his listeners

“Bobby Thomson hits into the lower deck of the left-field stands . . . The Giants win the pennant, and they’re going crazy! They’re going crazy! Oh, oh!!”



“I don’t believe it! I don’t believe it! I *do not* believe it!

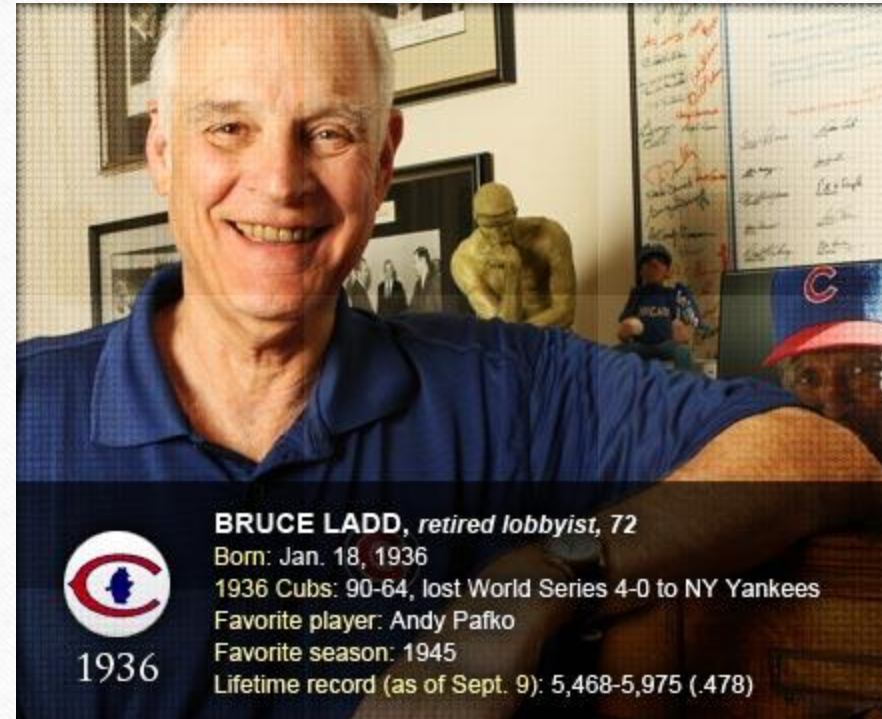
“Bobby Thomson hit a line drive into the lower leftfield stands, and the whole place is going crazy. The Giants . . . won it by a score of 5 to 4, and they’re picking Bobby Thomson up and carrying him off the field!”



Post-script: Decades ago, a boy wrote to his baseball heroes, asking them to return a postcard with their autograph on it.

He received many replies, and his collection included the quartet of men – Hartung, Lockman, Branca, and Thomson – who are forever linked in the annals of baseball history because of that moment on Wednesday, October 3, 1951, at 3:58 p.m. local time. Bruce Ladd became a lobbyist in Washington DC, and used baseball as a way to connect with people. He passed away on February 18, 2020 at the age of 84 years.

(picture credit: ESPN.com)



Thanks for watching!

