

This Day in History... July 18, 1927

Ty Cobb Becomes First Member of the 4,000 Hit Club

On July 18, 1927, Ty Cobb made baseball history, becoming the first player to reach 4,000 career hits.

Born on December 18, 1886, in Narrows, Georgia, Tyrus Raymond Cobb didn't play baseball just for fun. "Play every game as hard as you can...as aggressively as you can," he once said. "You can't worry about the next play or tomorrow because you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring." His intense style and desire to win earned Cobb the respect of fellow players.

Cobb was nicknamed the "Georgia Peach," after his home state. His 24-year professional baseball career began in 1905 with the Detroit Tigers. Cobb played for the Tigers until 1926, doubling as the team's manager for the last five years. He finished up his career with the Philadelphia Athletics.



Ty Cobb stamp from the Legends of Baseball issue.



Cobb was nicknamed "Georgia Peach" after his home state.

July 18, 1927, was just another day on the field as far as Ty Cobb was concerned. Playing for the Philadelphia Athletics, he received a warm welcome from the fans of his former team, the Detroit Tigers. Ty went on to get two hits in four at-bats. But for baseball fans, it's an important day – the day Cobb got his 4,000th hit, a first in the sport's history.

Other players had gotten over 3,000 hits before. But little attention was given to such statistics in those days. In fact, the game's announcers and most newspapers didn't even mention the feat. And the one paper that did mention his hit in the first inning called it a "fluke double," as the ball bounced out of the right-fielder's glove.

Cobb is one of the most celebrated players in baseball history. He eventually had 4,191 hits, a record that wasn't broken until 1985. Cobb set 90 records during his career, some of which he still holds today, including highest career batting average and most career batting titles.

Cobb's intimidating, spikes-high slide was notorious in the major leagues. Some said that he filed his spikes on the dugout steps before each game. But few can dispute Cobb's immense contributions to the game of baseball. He won nine consecutive American League batting titles, and 12 overall. His career batting average was .366, and he stole 892 bases.

In 1936, Ty Cobb was one of the famous "First Five" inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Ty Cobb, who felt that "baseball was one hundred percent of my life," won more votes than any other candidate that year. Cobb retired a wealthy man, having invested in Coca Cola and serving as its spokesman. He died on July 17, 1961.



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