

A Sharp Memory:

I was sitting in a waiting room with my 90 year old Father and lamenting the fact I could not remember a male classmate of mine from my 1970 high school class. Often times my 60 year old brain seems to have more and more of these types of lapses. Well, Mom had just finished her surgical procedure and the worry and anxiety that Dad had earlier now turned to relief and joy and his mind was released to wander into interesting places. I quipped with him about his ability (not mine) of still being able to name his entire high school football team members by name. Truth be told, he not only knows each team mate but also a story or two about each one with most of them being hilarious. Somehow the conversation moved to past events and Dad brought up a special date he went on with Mom. It seems that he had been planning it for some time, with the head cook at the Standish trading post restaurant. It was to be a double date to Tiger Stadium for a baseball game and finally the cook made an offer. As the date became reality, Dad now tells about the event that happened in 1940 with complete clarity and in specific detail.

As it turned out they drove to the double header of the American League leading Detroit Tigers. The Tigers went on to win the pennant that year and lost a close World Series to the Cincinnati Reds in 7 games, 4-3. (Interestingly enough, that rematch is again possible with great teams in the now).

What made the story pop for me was this 90 year old telling me that Bobo Newsom pitched and the Tigers won. Heck, I have gone to a number of major league games but remembering if my team won and who pitched gets fuzzy almost as I leave the stadium, let alone remembering it decades later. Dad went on to say Bobo was quite a character and that he pitched "both ends" of the double header. On top of that Bobo won the 2nd game as well. Well, that was quite a tale, but how could this be? Pitchers don't pitch in two separate games on the same day. Heck their arm would be so tight and usually loaded up with ice that it is almost impossible. And who in the world could have not just appeared in but won both games of a double header? With that, I had to question my Dad's memory. Surely, some of these events must have been scrambled and/or mixed a bit as he recalls things that happened so long ago. So what I will do is a google search to see where the story may have "gotten a bit embellished." I entered "Bobo Newsom 1940 double-header," and here is what I found and quite frankly it blew my mind. Dad was right! Bobo was the pitcher on Sept 25, 1940 and he did indeed win both games of the double header, a feat unheard of today and extremely rare in yesteryear.

I share this because the story told was an interesting historical event, but more-over it was the *way* and the *when* it was told that impressed me. Sometimes I can't remember what I had for supper the night before. Here is a tale told by my Father that happened 72 years ago that was shared with specific detail.

One more thing. Dad enjoyed his date immensely and was infatuated with my future mother completely. He was also ecstatic about the double win and his World Series bound Tigers. So happy was he, that he sang songs all the way home to Twining, MI that night. As Mom recalls (and as we all know) that was a painfully long time and one where even though she was falling for the guy, she now knew that singing would never be one of his talents. Many of us Sztanyo's have the same faulty gene.

Soon the relationship would get more serious and so would life's journey, as a wedding and a war were not far off. While the marriage has now lasted 70 years and still going strong, I can't wait to hear my next memory.

Mark Sztanyo