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## Five Years Before Pete Rose

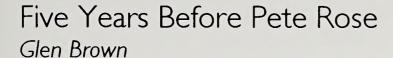
Glen Brown College of DuPage

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I bought a box of baseball cards at Tessie's candy store on Elizabeth Street for two dollars, forty packs frosted in glucose and a yield of players we'd swap like big-league managers making trades.

Sometimes two or three Emie Banks cards turned up in one box, a bait for any Cubs addict in '58. I was the only White Sox fan on Elizabeth Street that year, a pariah who went to Wrigley Field carrying a bag of peanut butter

sandwiches for munching, baseball cards for autographs and gum for wagering with enemies on the game's outcome. We'd always arrive just in time for batting practice; I'd cheer for the challenger in town--

Reds, Dodgers, Phillies, it didn't matter--amid jeers. I'd bet forty sticks of gum against the Cubs each game, come home overdosed on sugar, my jaws sore from chewing.