

## OCTOBER MAGIC

I've always loved October. The days are usually crisp and bright. The leaves turn crimson and gold. It's football weather, but baseball's fat lady still has to hit her high note before the boys of summer put the bats and balls away. And when I was a kid, the fat lady's song started, "To look sharp and feel sharp too, choose the razor that is best for you...", followed by the announcer's words, "The Gillette Cavalcade of Sports brings you the World Series". I don't guess anything could excite me as much as that sound, not Tarzan's "I---E---I---E---I", or the Lone Ranger's "Hi-yo, Silver", or even Richard Rodger's Victory at Sea music, my introduction, and what an introduction it was, to classical music (on second thought, my first taste of classical music may have been Peter and the Wolf in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade). The World Series meant that I could watch my hero, Duke Snider, center fielder for my beloved Brooklyn Dodgers, Dem Bums from Flatbush, hammer a Whitey Ford fastball over Mickey Mantle's head and over the fence in center in Ebbet's Field or Yankee stadium, home of the despised Bronx Bombers.

I don't know when or how I became a Dodgers fan. But in 1955, when I was 9, I absolutely loved them and I was ecstatic when they made it to the Series against the Yankees, who they had never beaten, falling to the hated pin strippers in '41, '47, '49, '52 and '53. I had to google these dates but I didn't have to google the Dodgers lineup: Catcher, Roy Campanella; 1<sup>st</sup>, Gil Hodges; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Junior Gilliam; short, Pee Wee Reese (who, btw, was from Louisville); 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jackie Robinson; left, Carl Furillo; center, Edwin "Duke" Snider; right, Sandy Amores. Their pitchers included Preacher Roe, Don Newcombe, Clem Labine and the little lefty, Johnny Podres. I'll try to remember as many Yanks as I can without googling: catcher, Yogi Berra; 1<sup>st</sup>, Bill "Moose" Skowron; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Billy Martin; short, Phil Rizzuto; 3<sup>rd</sup>, maybe Tony Kubek, but I think he was later; left, Enos Slaughter(?); center, Mickey Mantle; rt, Elston Howard(?). Pitchers, Whitey Ford and Don Larsen are all that come to mind. Oh, the managers were, for Brooklyn, Walt Alston and for NY, Casey Stengel.

The Series went to game 7. I don't remember anything about the first 6. All the games were played during the day. I don't think they played on Sunday, so the only game(s) I would have seen would have been on Saturday. But one year, it was probably '56 instead of '55, I begged Mom to let me stay home from school to watch a game, and, unbelievably, she let me. What a MOM! They don't come any better than that!

Dad was building our house on Rama Rd in October, 1955 and occasionally, after we got home from school, we, probably Bill and me but maybe 7 yr old Harry, too, would walk down the railroad tracks to Rama Rd and up to 2318, the site of our new home to be. I don't remember whether we made the trek just for the heck of it, to pick up dropped and bent nails and scraps of wood for our own construction projects, or because Dad had given us an assignment, such as sweeping out the sawdust and picking up the debris. But for whatever reason, I was at the house on Rama on that warm, sunny October day when the earth stood still as little Johnny Podres, the starting pitcher who went all 9, got the final Yankee out and I whooped and hollered as though it had been me who threw the final pitch. I don't remember how I heard the game, whether Charlton or "Uncle" Sanford Forbis or one of the other men building the house had the radio on or whether we had acquired our little transistor radio, the successor to our crystal radio set, by then, but I remember listening to the last few innings and being scared to death that

Mickey or Yogi or Moose would hit it out of the park and Dem Bums would remain bums, but with that last out, I became the happiest 9 year old on the planet.

What a feeling for a kid. I hope within the next couple of weeks, some kid, no a whole slew of kids, and hopefully some kids at heart will be as happy as I was in October, 1955 when the last pitch is thrown.