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MINOR TREASURES

DIAMOND GEMS FROM THE GLORY DAYS OF MINNESOTA BASEBALL

STEW THORNLEY, TAYLOR SIMONS,
AND DAVE KAPLAN

Long before the Twins arrived in 1961, Minnesota was home to numerous professional baseball teams. The cross-river rivalry between the Minneapolis Millers and the St. Paul Saints raged for more than six decades. Future immortals like Ted Williams and Willie Mays, Duke Snider, and Roy Campanella thrilled legions of Millers and Saints followers. So did minor-league home run champ Joe Hauser and the post-war hero Eric Tipton. In its final decades the Saints and Millers echoed one of baseball's most legendary rivalries—the New York Giants vs. the Brooklyn Dodgers—because the Millers were the Giants' top minor-league affiliate and the Saints were the finishing school of future Dodgers. And the reborn Saints in the early 1990s reinvigorated the fun and soul of the game. Now officially affiliated with the Twins, they remain a sporting success beyond anyone's expectations.

But the seeds of greatness were sown in Minnesota even earlier. At the turn of the century, St. Paul was home ground for the nation's premier all-Black (pre-Negro League) baseball club—the St. Paul Colored Gophers—and Toni Stone, the first woman to play professional baseball full-time, learned the game on the St. Paul sandlots, just as Hall of Famers Paul Molitor, Dave Winfield, and Jack Morris did later.

Minor Treasures brings that early sporting landscape back to life through a cornucopia of fascinating baseball memorabilia and the rich tales behind each artifact.

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