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An Analysis of the Growth of Organized Professional Baseball 1955-1970

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Eastern Illinois University

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE GROWTH OF ORGANIZED

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL 1955-1970

(TITLE)

BY

Thomas E. McDevitt

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLE	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE	5
NEED	5
LIMITATIONS	6
MAJOR LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS	6
Changing of Circuits	6
MINOR LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS	10
DEFINITION OF TERMS	11
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	13
3. METHODOLOGY	15
4. THE GROWTH OF ORGANIZED PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL 1955-1970	17
1955	17
1960	23
1965	28
1970	33
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	38
SUMMARY	38

Chapter	Page
CONCLUSIONS	42
APPENDIX	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	53
VITA	54

TABLE

Table	Page
1. Total Professional Baseball Teams in Each Area by Year (and Percent)	40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Professional Baseball Teams 1930-1970	4
2.	Professional Baseball Teams 1955	20
3.	Professional Baseball Teams 1960	25
4.	Professional Baseball Teams 1965	31
5.	Professional Baseball Teams 1970	35
6.	Cities Continuously in Professional Baseball 1955-1970 and Cities Continuously in Professional Baseball 1930-1970	44

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Spectator sports have become a part of the culture of the United States. Each week, television networks carry the sports that are in season on a national basis. Baseball shares a part of the television entertainment. It is played on an amateur basis at various age levels, and in the professional ranks it has different levels of expertise. Because of the interest of the public, it has been called our "national past-time." The sport is very popular, especially at the Major League level where over 16,000,000 people paid admission to watch baseball in parks in 1955,¹ 19,000,000 in 1960, 24,000,000 in 1965, and almost 29,000,000 in 1970.²

The first professional baseball league was organized in 1871, and was called the National Association. Teams in the league at the start of the 1871 season were located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Troy, New York; New York, New York; Rockford, Illinois; Washington, D. C.; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and

¹The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: New York World Telegram, 1956), p. 806.

²The World Almanac and Book of Facts (St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1972), p. 909.

Cleveland, Ohio.³ In 1876, the National League was organized and twenty-five years later, its present rival, the American League was formed.⁴ There were four other leagues of Major League classification prior to 1916, but they disbanded after only a few years of operation.⁵

The first professional minor league was organized in 1877, and was called the International Association. It continues to exist today and is known as the International League. The charter members of the International Association were Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Columbus, Ohio; Manchester, New Hampshire; Rochester, New York; Lynn, Massachusetts; Guelph, Ontario; and London, Ontario. Rochester and Columbus remain as members of the original league.

In 1919, Branch Rickey created the "farm system" for the St. Louis Cardinals.⁶ The introduction of the "farm system" rapidly led to an increase in the number of teams in professional baseball, and other teams in the Major League classification followed in the making of their own minor league teams, which brought better players into the Major Leagues because of the experience they had received in the minor leagues.

³H. Turkin and S. C. Thompson, The Encyclopedia of Baseball (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1951), p. 381.

⁴Ibid., p. 385.

⁵Ibid., p. 398-401.

⁶Ibid., p. 392.

Hard times were the result of the depression which started in 1929, but baseball teams were approximately the same in number comparing 1930 to 1935. By 1940, professional baseball was growing again, only to be adversely effected by World War II. The higher classifications managed to support teams during the next five years, and the Triple-A (AAA) classification of baseball began in 1946. Prior to this time, the highest minor league classification was Double-A (AA). In 1950, with the war over, professional baseball had grown to total 57 leagues which encompassed 443 teams. Only five states, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Wyoming, were without teams. In 1955, the 7 classifications had 34 leagues with 239 teams, a loss of 204 teams which represented a decrease of over 46 percent of the teams in professional baseball 5 years earlier (See Fig. 1).

In 1960, the number of leagues had decreased to 22 and the teams to 152. In 1965, a further decline was observed. Eighteen leagues supported 133 teams in organized baseball. A significant change in professional baseball took place in 1961, as the Major Leagues expanded from sixteen to twenty teams. This was the first growth of professional baseball teams at that level since before 1916.⁷

⁷The Encyclopedia of Baseball (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1969), p. 421.

of Teams

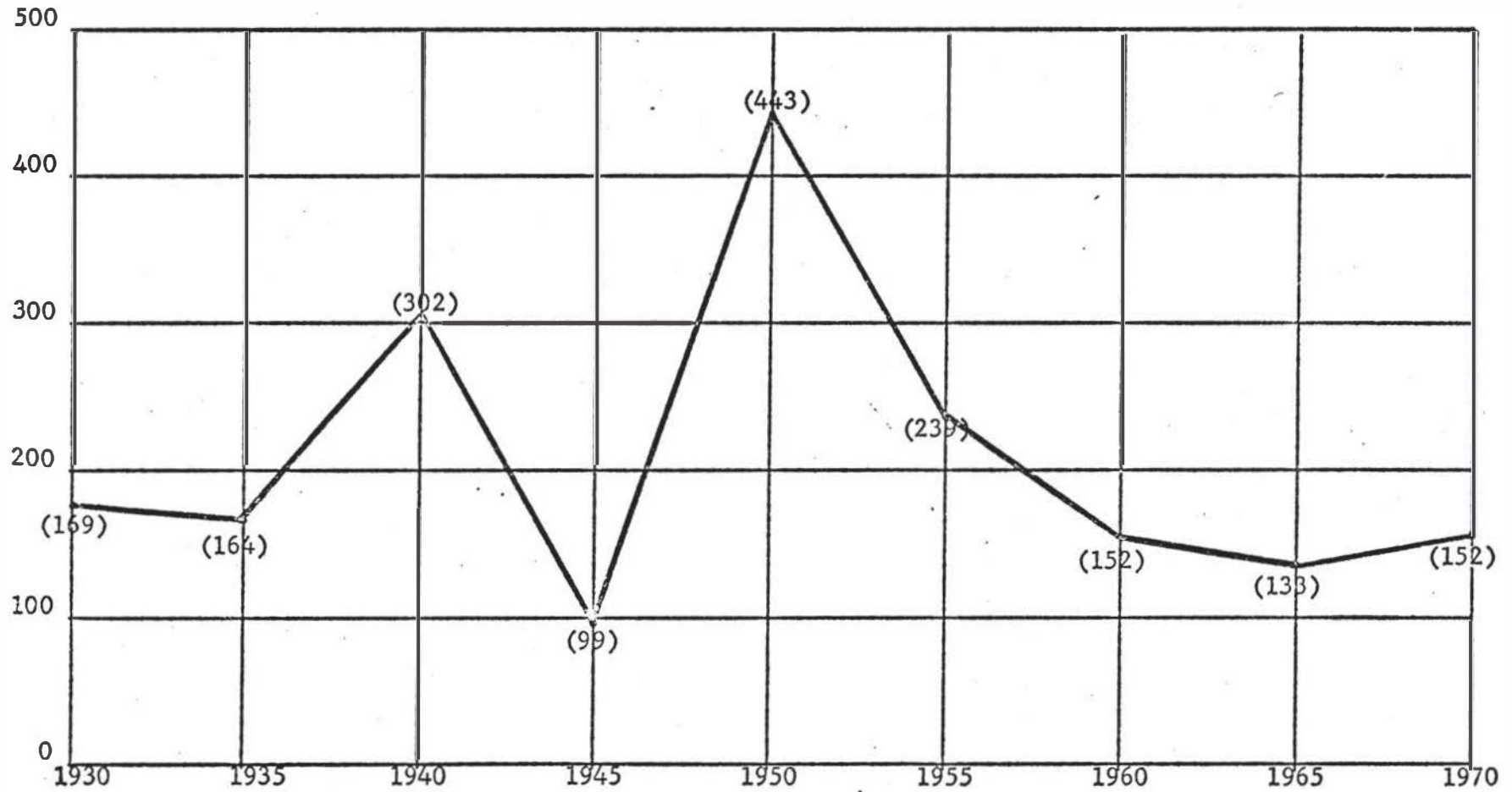


Figure 1

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAMS

1930 - 1970

Expansion in the Major Leagues continued and by 1970, there were twenty-four teams in the American and National Leagues with each league having two divisions. The winner of each division played a best three-out-of-five series to determine the pennant winner and represent their league in the World Series. There was an increase in the number of leagues to 19 and teams to 152 in 1970, compared to only 18 leagues and 133 teams 5 years previous. Because of the interest shown in professional baseball, a more detailed and specific observation as to the location of the sport should be made. Where has it been and where might it go?

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to investigate and identify the geographical areas within the United States which had supported organized professional baseball during the years 1955-1970. Five year intervals were studied to better determine the pattern of teams that have continuously remained in professional baseball.

NEED

The study may be of interest and importance to the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball and to the Office of the National Association of Professional Baseball. By studying the locational pattern of professional baseball since 1955, one might be able to have better comprehension

of the geographical areas that will continue to support the sport, especially at the minor league level. Any minor league club that can support itself, financially, will in turn save the parent Major League club that supports it thousands of dollars.

Because of the public's general interest in the sport they may want to know something about this particular phase of the game. Collectors, whose hobby is acquiring anything and everything about baseball, might also show an interest in the study.

LIMITATIONS

In 1955 and 1960, there were seven classifications of professional baseball (Major, AAA, AA, A, B, C, and D). In 1963, all of the class B, C and D leagues were regrouped and given a new classification called class A. The former class A and AA leagues were given the classification AA. AAA and the Major League classifications remained the same. Therefore, the reader should keep in mind that most of the class A teams in 1965, if not new to professional baseball were formerly class B, C or D teams.

Washington, D. C., for geographical purposes, was included as a part of Maryland in the study.

MAJOR LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS

Changing of Circuits

Should a Major League team in one circuit wish to

transfer to a city in the other Major League, not less than three fourths of the clubs in the other Major League must give their consent and the following conditions must be complied with:

1. The Major League intending to include a city in the other Major League must notify the Commissioner of Baseball and the other Major League no later than midnight of October 31 of the preceding year in which it intends to begin operating in the newly selected city.

2. The Major League intending to operate a team in the newly selected city must satisfy the Commissioner of Baseball as to the intention of the club to operate in the newly selected city for a period of not less than five years, and convince the Commissioner that the owners of the newly selected club are sound financially and characterwise.

3. Any park owned or occupied by the new club must not be within five air miles of the club which was previously established in that city, unless otherwise agreed upon by both clubs.

4. The new club, before it begins its first year in operation, must pay the club previously established in the city \$100,000 plus one half of the established club's annual fees that it pays to the National Association Leagues. Financial disagreements will be settled by the Commissioner of Baseball.

5. Either Major League may include in its circuit any city in the other Major League, if the city has a

population of 2,400,000 or more. The consent of the other Major League or its clubs is not needed, but the previous four conditions must be complied with. The last official census will be used for population purposes. However, in no event may any city sponsor more than two Major League teams.⁸

In the event a Major League club would want to transfer to a city that is not presently in the Major Leagues, approval for such a change is a responsibility of the league in which the Major League club is a member. If a Major League club relocates in another city, the club must notify the Commissioner of the transfer as soon as the agreements or proceedings that effect such transfer have been completed. Fifteen days after delivery of such notice to the Commissioner, but no later than February 1 before the up-coming season, the Major League concerned will be amended to reflect the change in location. The city from which the Major League club transferred shall be declared vacated by the transferring club and its league unless another club member of that league wishes to occupy it. However, the transfer must be completed prior to the expiration of fifteen days after the notice was delivered to the Commissioner.⁹

If a Major League or a Major League club desires to locate in a city in which a National Association club (a

⁸Earle W. Halstead, The Baseball Bluebook (St. Petersburg: The Baseball Bluebook, Inc., 1973), p. 507.

⁹Ibid., pp. 507-508.

minor league club) is operating, it must notify the Commissioner of its intention to do so between October 1 and October 31, inclusive of both dates, of the preceding season in which it plans to begin operating in the newly selected city. However, no territory occupied by a National Association club shall be included in a Major League until the National Association club and its league have been compensated as mutually agreed upon by both parties. If an agreement cannot be attained, then, the matter will be submitted to arbitration before a committee of seven persons. Three individuals will represent the Major League and Major League club and three individuals will represent the National Association club and its league. The seventh member of the committee will be agreed upon by the six members or if they cannot agree upon the seventh member, then, the Commissioner will appoint the seventh member. Within ten days after the findings of the committee, the National Association territory shall be deemed as Major League territory unless the Major League or Major League club which plans to occupy the newly acquired territory fails to comply with the compensations as put forth by the arbitration committee within thirty days. In that case, the territory shall remain National Association territory.¹⁰

In order to protect the existing Major League Circuits, no National Association league shall be located

¹⁰ibid., p. 606.

within five miles of any Major League city unless written consent is given by the Major League involved.¹¹

Each Major League club must support one class AAA, AA, and A team. This ruling became effective in 1972, thus, assuring the minor leagues of at least seventy-two teams in future years.¹²

MINOR LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS

The National Association has set up various requirements for the different classifications within the minor leagues. Prior to 1963, the chief requirement had to do with the population of cities within a league. The minimum league population for class AAA was 3,000,000; class AA was 1,750,000; class A was 1,000,000; class B was 250,000; class C was 150,000. Class D leagues had no minimum league population requirements to meet.¹³ Today, there are no population requirements for minor league teams. However, each league president requires that parks meet general standards, and that the operator meet certain unwritten personal standards.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid., p. 607.

¹²Ibid.

¹³H. Turkin and S. C. Thompson, The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball (New York: A. S. Barnes Publishing Company, 1962), p. 567.

¹⁴Based on personal correspondence from Wm. J. Wood, Asst. to the President of the National Association of Professional Baseball, December 19, 1973.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Organized

Refers to all teams which come under the direction of the Office of the Commissioner of Baseball or the Office of the National Association. Often it was omitted so as not to confuse the reader.

National Association

All professional baseball teams in the minor leagues.

Farm System

The creating of minor league teams by a Major League team. The parent Major League team supplies the minor league teams with players and helps to finance all or part of the expenses of the minor league team.

Northeastern States

The area north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River, but it included all cities located on the immediate shores of said rivers, the states of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and all states north to the Canadian border. This area is considered to be the Manufacturing Belt of the United States.

Southeastern States

The area east of the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio River, and south of the states of Pennsylvania and Maryland. It does not include any cities located on the south shore of the Ohio River, but does include cities located on the west shore of the Mississippi River.

The West

All of the area west of the Mississippi River except those cities located on the west shore of said river.

Operator

Individual or individuals who are in charge of a team's total functions, financial and otherwise.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of the study was to investigate and identify the geographical areas in the United States which had supported organized professional baseball during the years 1955-1970. A review of related literature was necessary in order that one might be brought up to date on the subject.

In 1959, "A Geographical Analysis of Professional Baseball Within the United States 1930-1955," was written by Thomas E. McDevitt. It showed that professional baseball teams have been located in every state in the United States except Wyoming (See Maps in Appendix).

From 1930-1955, professional baseball was located in most areas and states. Chief centers of concentration were the Northwest, the Southeast, and the Northeast. Other important areas were located in the lower Mississippi River valley, East Texas, Oklahoma, and near the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri border.¹⁵

Professional baseball was a sport which was not

¹⁵Thomas E. McDevitt, "A Geographic Analysis of Professional Baseball Within the United States 1930-1955" (unpublished Master's thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1959), p. 88.

consistent in its location or in the number of teams which supported it during the 1930-1955 period (See Fig. 1 and maps in Appendix). World War II kept Major League teams from moving west.¹⁶ The larger cities, especially those on the west coast were growing rapidly, and could have supported Major League baseball.¹⁷ Although not perfected as we know it today, plane travel would have kept transportation problems to a minimum.

During the 1930-1955 period, lower classification teams tended to be in closer geographical proximity than those of higher classification. The study also indicated that in 1955, many people would prefer to stay at home and watch TV rather than attend the minor league games in the area. Television appeared to be a contributing factor as there were 443 teams in 1950. In that same year, there were 107 television stations serving approximately 8,000,000 receivers. In 1955, there were 239 professional teams, a decrease of over 46 percent from 1950. However, there were over 584 commercial television stations and almost 39,000,000 sets in American homes. That was an increase of almost 545 percent in stations and almost 500 percent in sets from 1950 to 1955.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: New York World Telegram, 1956), pp. 790-791.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

It was felt the best way of determining what locations have been supportive of professional baseball was to approach the study historically.

Most of the data collected was mapped and graphed to indicate the growth pattern of professional baseball. The names of all teams in professional baseball were acquired for the years indicated in the study from the Baseball Guides of 1956, 1961, 1966, and 1971. After obtaining the names of all the teams, each was accurately located on a map with the use of a Rand McNally Road Atlas as reference. Numbers were given to each team depending upon its classification. The number seven (7) was given to all teams which were in the Major League classification, six (6) was given to those in the AAA classification, five (5) was given to those in the AA classification, four (4) was given to those in the A classification, three (3) was given to those in the B classification, two (2) was given to those in the C classification, and one (1) was given to those in the D classification. In addition, a graph was made to show all of the teams involved during the years covered by the study, and also during the years from 1930 to 1955 (See Fig. 1).

Five year intervals were studied in an attempt to

better determine the general pattern of concentrated areas in professional baseball, the specific centers of concentration, and to identify teams which have continuously remained in professional baseball, during the years studied.

A letter of inquiry was sent to the Commissioner of Baseball. The Office of the Commissioner sent xerox copies of selected pages from the 1973 Baseball Bluebook which were of help concerning Major League requirements. A second letter from the Office of the National Association of Professional Baseball was received giving information about minor league requirements. Data were also collected from the World Almanac and Book of Facts, The Encyclopedia of Baseball, and "A Geographical Analysis of Professional Baseball Within the United States 1930-1955."

The study describes the major areas of concentration, specific centers of concentration, indicates past trends, and compares the 1955-1970 study with a similar study made by the writer which involved the 1930-1955 era of baseball.

Chapter IV

THE GROWTH OF ORGANIZED PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL 1955-1970

The purpose of the study was to investigate and identify the geographical areas within the United States which have supported professional baseball from 1955-1970. The fifteen year period was investigated in five year units of time, namely 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1970.

1955

There were 239 professional baseball teams located within the United States in 1955 (See Fig. 1). Sixty-three (26%) of these teams were located in the Northeastern States. The Southeastern States supported seventy-six (32%) teams in professional baseball. The remaining 100 teams (42%) in professional baseball were located in the West.

Eight states failed to support professional baseball in 1955. These states were Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Nevada and Wyoming. It should be noted that four of the eight states without teams were located in the New England region, and two states were along the eastern seaboard. The state having the most teams was Texas with twenty-four, followed by Georgia with twenty, New York with fifteen, California with fourteen,

Specific Centers of Concentration in the
Northeastern States

There were three clustered centers in the Northeastern States which supported professional baseball in 1955. They were the Erie, Pennsylvania-Southern New York State center, the Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland center, and the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Combined, these three centers of concentration possessed thirty-three (52%) of the sixty-three professional baseball teams in the Northeastern States. The remaining teams were evenly distributed throughout the area.

Erie, Pennsylvania-Southern New York State. This center, which covered approximately 48,750 square miles, supported 16 (25%) of the 63 teams in the Northeastern States. Six class D teams formed the nucleus of the center with four class A teams being represented. Three class AAA teams, and three Major League teams were also located in the center with the Major League teams being located in the New York City complex (See Fig. 2).

Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland. This center covered approximately 30,000 square miles. The center had ten teams (16%) in the Northeastern States. Four class B teams, three class A teams, and three Major League teams made this a center of concentration for professional baseball (See Fig. 2).

The Upper Mississippi River Valley. This center was located along the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri, to Dubuque, Iowa, some 300 miles. The center supported seven teams (11%) in the Northeastern States. The larger river towns supported professional baseball of the low minor league classifications. St. Louis, Missouri, was the only Major League city in the center. Six other cities supported class B and D teams (See Fig. 2).

Specific Centers of Concentration in
The Southeastern States

Three clusters of professional baseball teams were concentrated in the Southeastern States in 1955. They were the Virginia-West Virginia-North Carolina-South Carolina-Northeastern Tennessee center, the Georgia-Florida-Southeastern Alabama center, and the Lower Mississippi River Valley-Southwestern Kentucky center. These three concentrations supported seventy-one (91%) of the seventy-six professional baseball teams in the Southeastern States.

Virginia-West Virginia-North Carolina-South Carolina-Northeastern Tennessee. This center covered approximately 122,000 square miles, and supported 28 teams (37%) in the Southeastern States area. Most teams were in the lower classifications. There were sixteen class B teams located in this concentration. Eight class D clubs were also supported along with two class A teams and two class AAA teams (See Fig. 2).

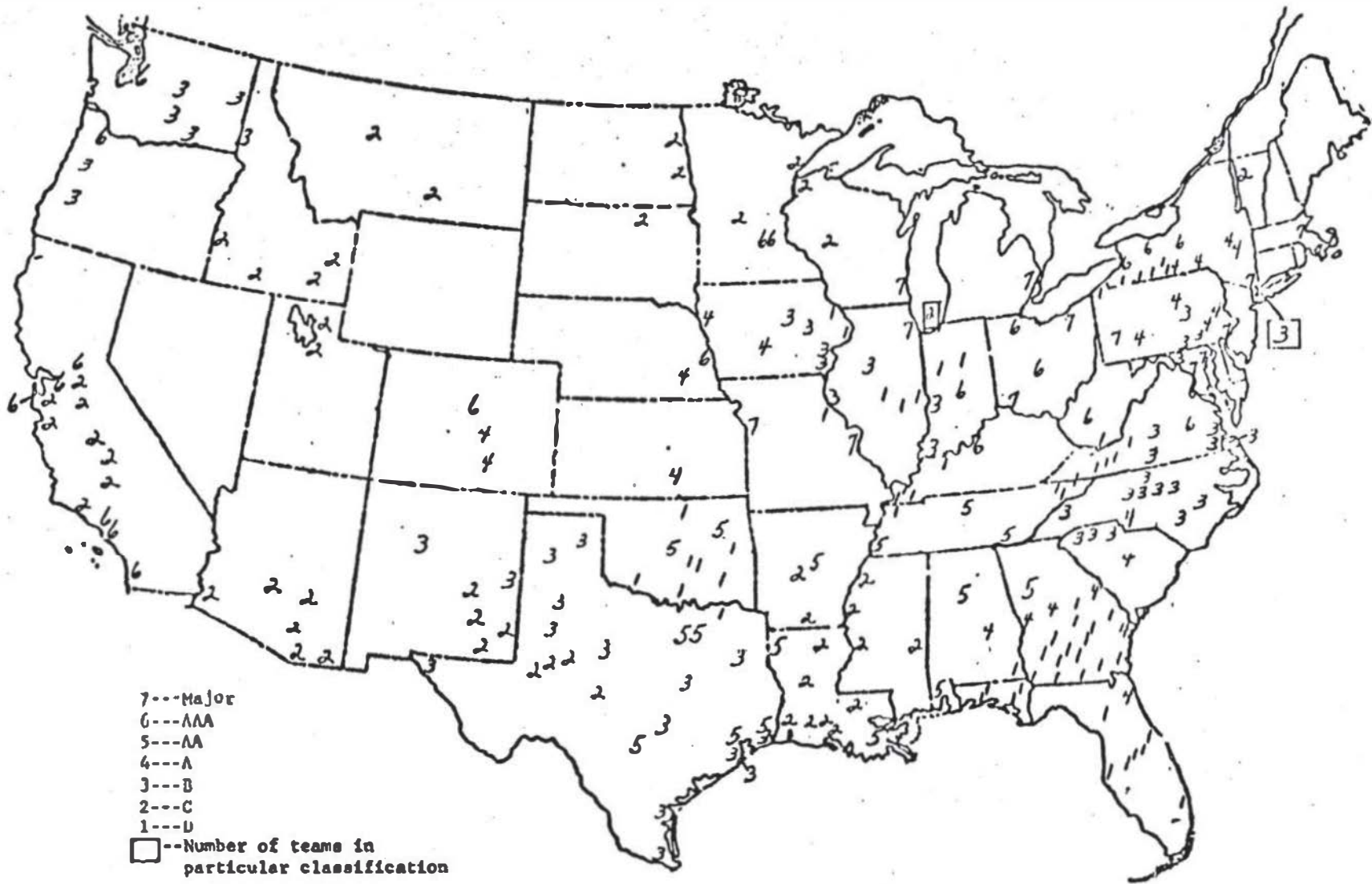


Figure 2

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAMS

1955

Georgia-Florida-Southeastern Alabama. This center covered a territory of approximately 120,000 square miles. It possessed within its boundaries thirty-three professional baseball teams (43%) in the Southeastern States area. Class D teams made this a center of concentration as twenty-seven teams belonged to this classification. In addition, there were five class A clubs, and one class AA team (See Fig. 2).

The Lower Mississippi River Valley-Southwestern Kentucky. This center followed the Mississippi River from the mouth of the Ohio River to New Orleans, Louisiana, a distance of 600 miles. It also included the extreme southwestern part of Kentucky. Eight teams (11%) were in this center of the Southeastern States, four in class C, and two each in classes D and AA (See Fig. 2).

Specific Centers of Concentration in the West

Populated centers in this area were scattered. As a result, centers of concentration were not as intense as those in the Northeastern States or the Southeastern States. There were four main centers of concentration. They were the Oklahoma-Arkansas-Louisiana-Texas-Eastern New Mexico center, the California center, the Northwest Center, and the Southern Arizona center. These centers had within them 85 (85%) of the 100 teams located in the West.

Oklahoma-Arkansas-Louisiana-Texas-Eastern New Mexico. This center included every team in said states except one in

New Mexico and two in Louisiana. It covered a territory of approximately 455,000 square miles, and supported 48 (48%) of the teams in the West. Texas, alone, had twenty-four teams. Class C and class B teams made up the bulk of this center as, together, they possessed thirty-one teams. Nine class AA teams and eight class D teams were also located in the center (See Fig. 2).

California. This center covered approximately 66,000 square miles. Fourteen teams (14%) were clustered along the coast and in the central valley. Eight class C and six class AAA teams made this a center of concentration in the West (See Fig. 2).

The Northwest. This center included the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and northern Utah, an area of 406,000 square miles. It supported seventeen teams (17%) in the West. Three classifications were located in the Northwest, namely C, B and AAA. The eight class C teams made up the nucleus in the center, followed by seven class B teams, and two class AAA teams (See Fig. 2).

Southern Arizona. The Southern Arizona center covered approximately 60,000 square miles and was sparsely settled. Only the larger cities were able to support professional baseball as six class C teams (6%) made this region a center of concentration in the West (See Fig. 2).

1960

There were 152 professional baseball teams located within the United States in 1960 (See Fig. 1). Forty-six (30%) of these were located in the Northeastern States. The Southeastern States supported fifty-one teams (34%) in professional baseball. The remaining fifty-five teams (36%) in professional baseball were located in the West.

Nine states failed to support professional baseball in 1960. These states were Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, Mississippi, Arizona, and Wyoming. Five of the nine states without teams were in the New England region. The state having the most teams was North Carolina with sixteen, followed by Florida with thirteen. New York, Iowa, California and Texas, each, supported nine teams. In 1955, Texas was the leading state which supported professional baseball teams as it had twenty-four. Georgia followed Texas as the best supporter of professional baseball teams in 1955 as it possessed twenty teams. In 1960, Georgia supported only three teams.

Specific Centers of Concentration in the Northeastern States

There were three centers of concentration in the Northeastern States which supported professional baseball teams in 1960. They were the Erie, Pennsylvania-Southern New York State center, the Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland center, and the Upper Mississippi River Valley center.

These were the same concentrated centers as in 1955. Combined, these three centers possessed twenty-four (52%) of the forty-six professional baseball teams in the Northeastern States.

Erie, Pennsylvania-Southern New York State. In 1960, this center covered 48,750 square miles, about the same territory as it did in 1955. It supported ten (22%) of the forty-six teams in the Northeastern States. This was a loss of six teams over 1955. Six class D teams continued to be the nucleus of the center. In addition, there were two class AAA teams, one class A team, and one Major League team located in the center (See Fig. 3).

Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland. This center covered approximately 42,000 square miles in 1960. It supported seven teams (15%) in the Northeastern States. This was a loss from 1955 as it had supported ten teams. Four class A teams and three Major League teams represented the only classifications, but made this a center of concentration (See Fig. 3).

The Upper Mississippi River Valley. This center was located from St. Louis, Missouri, to Dubuque, Iowa, a distance of about 300 miles. In 1960, it supported seven teams (15%) in the Northeastern States. That was the same number of teams it had supported in 1955. The larger river towns supported professional baseball of the low minor

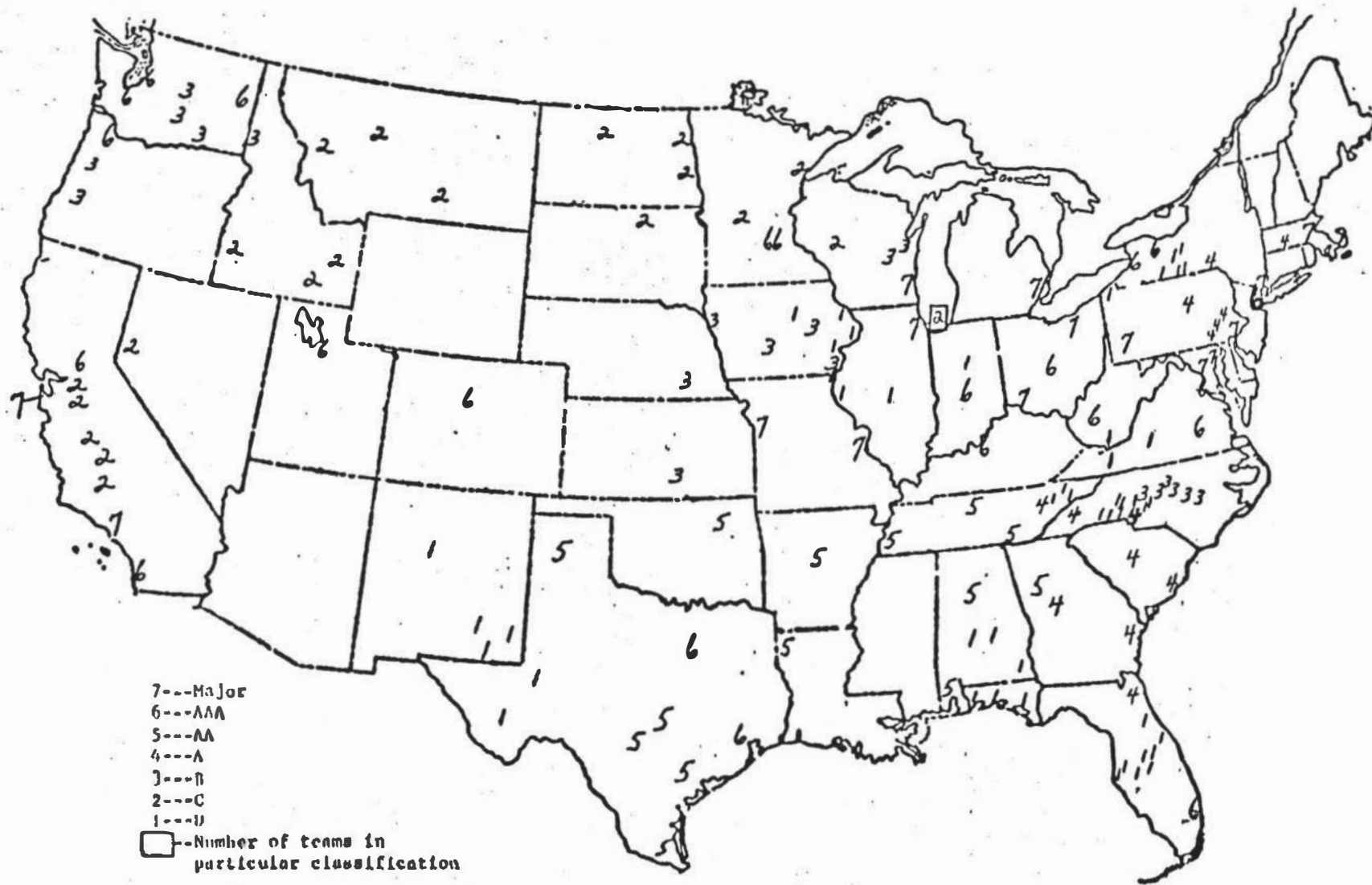


Figure 3

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAMS

1960

league classifications. St. Louis, Missouri, was the only Major League team in the center. Six other cities supported five class D teams and one class B team (See Fig. 3).

Specific Centers of Concentration
In the Southeastern States

In 1960, there were only two centers of concentration as compared with three in 1955. The two centers were the Northeastern Tennessee-North Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula center. These two centers of concentration supported thirty (59%) of the fifty-one professional baseball teams in the Southeastern States area.

Northeastern Tennessee-North Carolina. This center covered approximately 35,000 square miles, and supported 20 teams (39%) in the Southeastern States. Most teams were in the lower classifications. Eleven class D teams, six class B teams, and three class A teams made this an intense center of concentration for professional baseball in 1960 (See Fig. 3).

Florida Peninsula. This center covered the width of the Florida peninsula for approximately 350 miles. It possessed within its boundaries ten professional baseball teams (19%) in the Southeastern States. Eight class D clubs, located in central Florida, made this a center of concentration. In addition, there was one class A team and one class AAA team in this center in 1960 (See Fig. 3).

Specific Centers of Concentration In the West

In 1960, there were only two chief centers of concentration in the West as compared with four in 1955. The main centers in 1960 were the Reno, Nevada-California center and the Northwest center. Together, they supported twenty-seven (49%) of the fifty-five teams in the West.

Reno, Nevada-California. This center differed slightly from 1955 as it included Reno, Nevada. Otherwise, it covered approximately the same 66,000 square miles as it did five years previously. With the exception of Reno, Nevada, the ten teams (18%) were located along the coast and in the central valley of California. Six class C teams, two class AAA teams and two Major League teams made this a center of concentration in the West (See Fig. 3).

The Northwest. This center included the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Northern Utah, an area of 406,000 square miles. It supported seventeen professional baseball teams (31%) in the West in 1960. This was the same number of teams that it supported in 1966. Three classifications were located in the Northwest, namely, C, B and AAA. Six class C teams and six class B teams made up the nucleus of the center, followed by five class AAA teams (See Fig. 3).

1965

There were 133 professional baseball teams located within the United States in 1965 (See Fig.1). Forty-three teams (32%) were located in the Northeastern States. The Southeastern States supported fifty teams (38%) in professional baseball. The remaining forty teams (30%) in professional baseball were located in the West.

Sixteen states failed to support professional baseball in 1965. These states were Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona and Nevada. Five of the sixteen states were in the New England region. Seven other states without professional baseball teams were located in the Mountain and Great Plains' regions of the West. The state having the most teams was Florida with seventeen, followed by North Carolina with fifteen, New York with twelve, and California with ten. In 1960, North Carolina was the leading state supporting professional baseball teams with sixteen, followed by Florida with thirteen.

Specific Centers of Concentration In the Northeastern States

There were three centers of concentration in the Northeastern States which supported professional baseball teams in 1965. They were the Southern New York State center, the Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland center, and the Upper

Mississippi River Valley center. For all practical purposes, these were the same centers of concentration as in 1955 and 1960. Combined, the three centers possessed twenty-four (56%) of the forty-three professional baseball teams in the Northeastern States.

Southern New York State. In 1965, this center covered approximately 35,000 square miles. It did not include Erie, Pennsylvania, as it had in 1960. The center supported twelve (28%) of the forty-three teams in the Northeastern States, an increase of two teams since 1960. Six class A teams comprised the nucleus of the center. In addition, there were three class AAA teams, two Major League teams (both in New York), and one class AA team (See Fig. 4).

Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland. In 1965, this center covered approximately the same 42,000 square miles as it had five years previously. It supported six teams (14%) in the Northeastern States, a loss of one team since 1960. Three Major League teams and three class AA teams represented the only classifications in this center of concentration (See Fig. 4).

The Upper Mississippi River Valley. This center continued to be located from St. Louis, Missouri, to Dubuque, Iowa, a distance of about 300 miles. In 1965, it supported six teams (14%) in the Northeastern States, one less than it had supported in 1960. The larger river towns supported

professional baseball at the low minor league classifications. St. Louis, Missouri, remained the only Major League team in the center, while five other cities supported class A teams (See Fig. 4).

Specific Centers of Concentration
In the Southeastern States

In 1965, there were only two centers of concentration in the Southeastern States area. The two were the Eastern Kentucky-Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North Carolina-Upper South Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula center. These two centers of concentration supported forty-six (92%) of the fifty professional baseball teams in the Southeastern States.

Eastern Kentucky-Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North Carolina-Upper South Carolina. This center covered approximately 102,000 square miles, and supported 29 teams (58%) in the Southeastern States. Most teams were in the lower classifications. Twenty-four class A teams and five class AA teams made this an intense center of concentration for professional baseball in 1965 (See Fig. 4).

Florida Peninsula. This center covered the same territory it had in 1960. It possessed within its boundaries seventeen professional baseball teams (34%) in the Southeastern States, a gain of seven teams since 1960. Sixteen class A teams dominated this center, five of which were

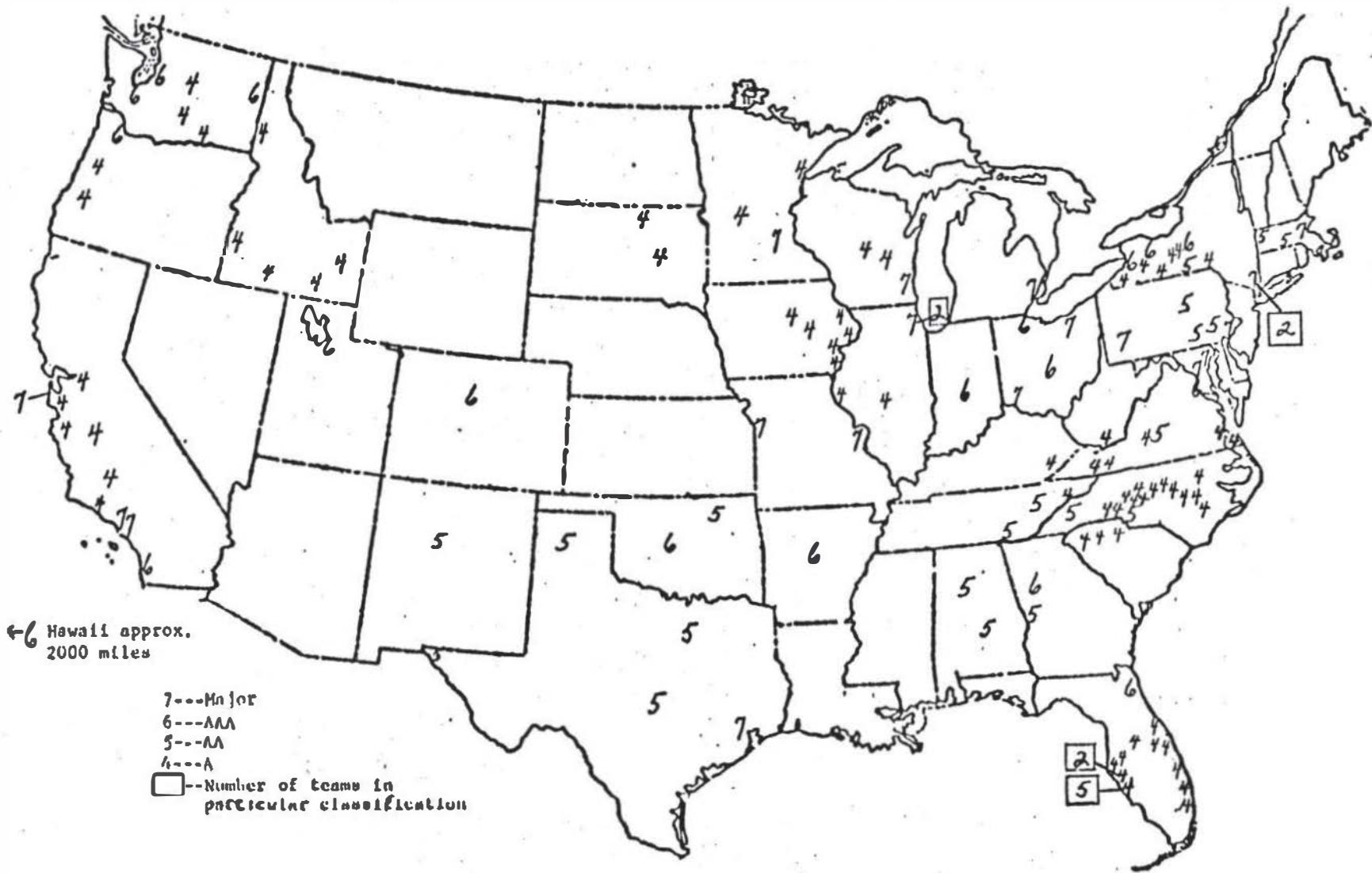


Figure 4

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAMS

1965

located in one community and two in another. In addition, one class AA team was to be found in the center (See Fig. 4).

Specific Centers of Concentration in the West

There were only two centers of concentration in the West in 1965. The centers were the California center and the Northwest center, the same ones as in 1960. Together, in 1965, they supported twenty-five (63%) of the forty professional baseball teams in the West.

California. This center differed slightly from 1960 as it excluded Reno, Nevada. It covered approximately 66,000 square miles. Ten teams (20%) were located along the coast and in the central valley. Six class A teams, three Major League teams, and one class AAA team made this a center of concentration in the West (See Fig. 4).

The Northwest. In 1965, this center included the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and northern Utah, an area of approximately 259,000 square miles. It differed from 1960 as it did not cover Montana. In 1965, the center supported fifteen professional baseball teams (30%) in the West. This was a loss of two teams from 1960. Two classifications were located in the Northwest, namely A and AAA. Ten class A teams comprised the nucleus of the center with five class AAA teams also being located in the center (See Fig. 4).

1970

There were 152 professional baseball teams located within the United States in 1970 (See Fig. 1). Forty-six teams (30%) were located in the Northeastern States. The Southeastern States supported fifty-three teams (35%) in professional baseball. The remaining fifty-three teams (35%) in professional baseball were located in the West.

Eight states failed to support professional baseball in 1970. These states were Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New Jersey, Delaware, Mississippi, North Dakota and Wyoming. Three of the eight states were located in the New England region and two were located along the eastern seaboard. The state having the most teams was Florida with twenty-one, followed by New York and California with twelve each. In 1965, Florida was also the leading state in supporting professional baseball teams as it had seventeen, followed by North Carolina with fifteen. In 1970, North Carolina supported only eight teams, its lowest number of any year in the study.

Specific Centers of Concentration In the Northeastern States

There were only two centers of concentration in the Northeastern States which supported professional baseball teams in 1970. They were the Southern New York State center, and the Southern New England-New York City center. Combined, these two centers possessed seventeen (37%) of the forty-six

professional baseball teams in the Northeastern States. In the previous years of the study, three centers of concentration had existed. The Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland center and the Upper Mississippi River Valley center ceased to support professional baseball teams in the quantity as they had in the past, although both centers still possessed teams within their boundaries.

Southern New York State. In 1970, this center covered approximately 20,000 square miles, and did not include New York City as it had previously. The center supported ten (22%) of the forty-six teams in the Northeastern States. This was a loss of two teams, both being located in New York City, over 1965. Seven class A teams made up the nucleus of the center. In addition, there were two class AAA teams and one class AA team (See Fig. 5).

Southern New England-New York City. This center which covered Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York City, and included boundaries of approximately 15,200 square miles. It supported seven professional baseball teams (15%) in the Northeastern States. Four class AA teams and three Major League teams made this a center of concentration for the first time in the study.

Specific Centers of Concentration In the Southeastern States

In 1970, two centers of concentration were located in the Southeastern States area. They were the Eastern

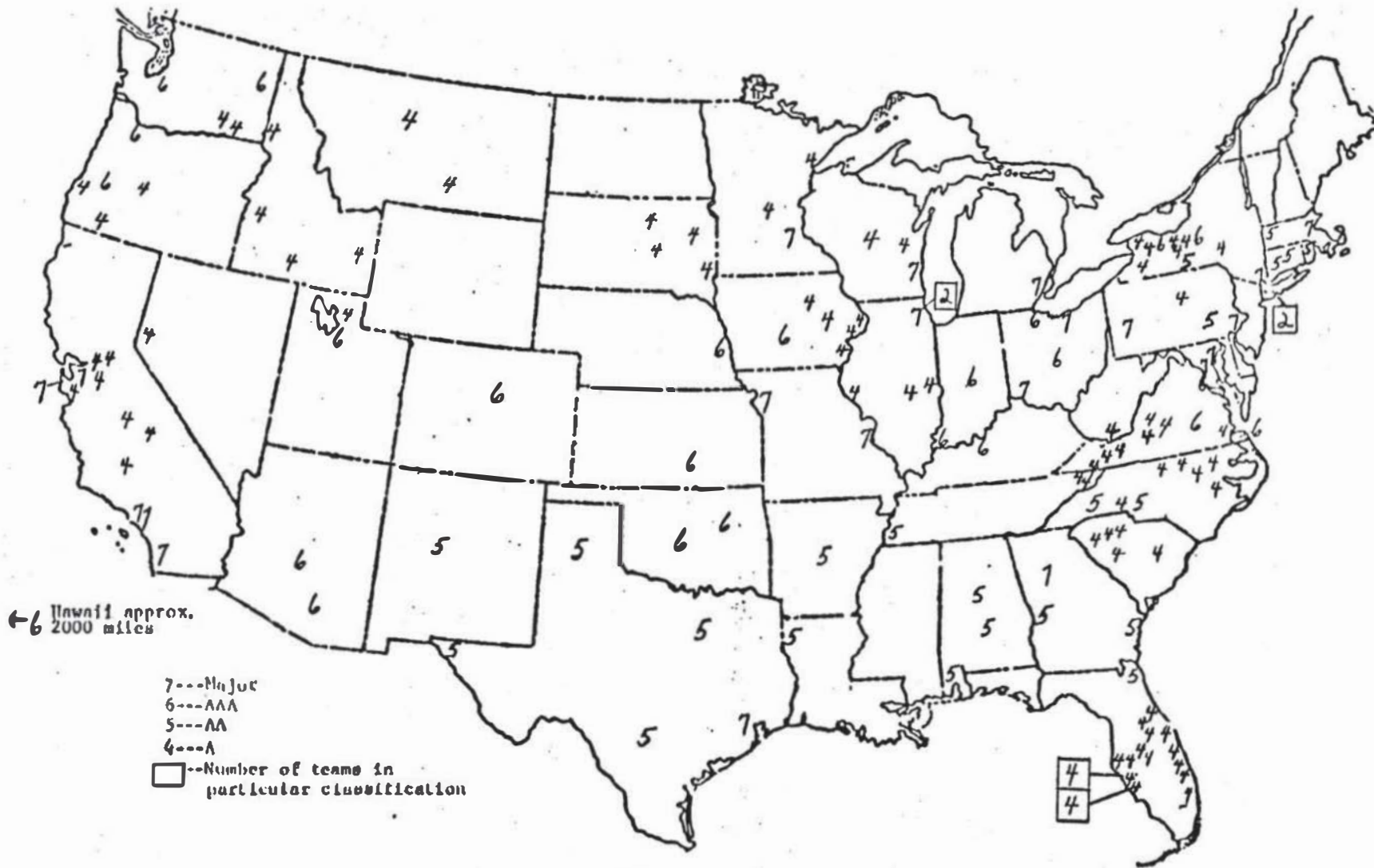


Figure 5

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAMS

1970

Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North and South Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula. Both were centers of concentration in 1965. In 1970, these two centers supported forty-six (87%) of the fifty-three professional baseball teams in the Southeastern States.

Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North and South Carolina. In 1970, this center covered approximately 105,000 square miles. It excluded eastern Kentucky, which was part of the center in 1965, but included more of South Carolina. The center supported twenty-five professional baseball teams (54%) in the Southeastern States, a loss of four teams from 1965. Twenty-one class A teams made up the nucleus of the center, along with two class AA teams and two class AAA teams (See Fig. 5).

Florida Peninsula. This center covered the same territory as it had in 1960 and 1965. It possessed twenty-one professional baseball teams (46%) in the Southeastern States, a gain of four teams over 1965. Twenty class A teams dominated this center, eight of which were located in Bradenton and Sarasota, Florida. One class AA team was to be found in this center of concentration in Jacksonville (See Fig. 5).

Specific Centers of Concentration in the West

There were two centers of concentration in the West in 1970. They were the Reno, Nevada-California center, and

the Northwest center. Combined, they supported thirty (57%) of the fifty-three professional baseball teams in the West.

Reno, Nevada-California. This center differed slightly from 1965 as it included Reno, Nevada. Otherwise, it covered approximately 66,000 square miles. With the exception of Reno, Nevada, the thirteen teams (25%) were located along the coast or in the central valley of California. Eight class A teams and five Major League teams indicated a gain of two teams over 1965, and made this a center of concentration in the West (See Fig. 5).

The Northwest. This center included the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and northern Utah, an area of approximately 406,000 square miles. It differed slightly from 1965 as it included Montana. In 1970, the center supported seventeen (32%) of the fifty-three professional baseball teams in the West, a gain of two teams since 1965. Twelve class A teams made up the nucleus of the center with five class AAA teams also being located in the center (See Fig. 5).

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to investigate and identify the geographical areas within the United States which supported professional baseball during the years 1955-1970. The change in areas were studied in five year intervals to identify those teams that had continuously remained in professional baseball.

A review of related literature revealed nothing other than a previous study done by the writer concerning the 1930-1955 era. In writing the thesis, the historical method was used as it was felt to be the best method of investigating and evaluating the material.

Professional baseball has various requirements concerning the major and minor leagues. These requirements were specifically stated at the major league level and were concerned with the changing of circuits, relocation of teams, territorial rights, and the supporting of minor league teams. Prior to 1963, minor league requirements were based chiefly on the total league population. Today, the minor leagues require only that parks meet general standards as set forth by the president of the league to which a team may belong.

In addition, the operator of the team is expected to meet certain unwritten personal standards. From the time the first professional baseball league was organized in 1871, until 1970, professional baseball teams have been located in many cities. The introduction of the Farm System by Branch Rickey was a contributing factor.

In 1955, professional baseball supported 239 teams; in 1960, 152 teams; in 1965, 133 teams; and in 1970, 152 teams. The study dealt with three areas, namely the Northeastern States, the Southeastern States, and the West. There were centers of concentration within each of the three areas named. In 1955, the Northeastern States supported sixty-three (26%) professional baseball teams in the United States (See Table I). The specific centers were the Erie, Pennsylvania-Southern New York State, the Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland, and the Upper Mississippi River Valley. The Southeastern States, in 1955, supported seventy-six (32%) of the teams in professional baseball (See Table I). The specific centers of concentration in that area were the Virginia-West Virginia-North Carolina-South Carolina-Northeastern Tennessee center, the Georgia-Florida-Southeastern Alabama center, and the Lower Mississippi River Valley-Southwestern Kentucky center. The West supported 100 professional baseball teams (42%) in 1955 (See Table I). The specific centers of concentration in that area were the Oklahoma-Arkansas-Louisiana-Texas-Eastern New Mexico center, the California center, the Northwest

center, and the Southern Arizona center.

In 1960, the Northeastern States supported forty-six (30%) professional baseball teams in the United States (See Table I). The three specific centers of concentration were the same centers which existed in 1955. The Southeastern States in 1960 supported fifty-one (34%) of the teams in professional baseball (See Table I). The specific centers of concentration in that area were the Northeastern Tennessee-North Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula center.

TABLE I

THE TOTAL AND PERCENTAGE OF PROFESSIONAL
BASEBALL TEAMS WITHIN EACH AREA IN
A STATED FIVE YEAR PERIOD

Area	1955	1960	1965	1970
Northeastern States	63 (26%)	46 (30%)	43 (32%)	46 (30%)
Southeastern States	76 (32%)	51 (34%)	50 (38%)	53 (35%)
The West	100 (42%)	55 (36%)	40 (30%)	53 (35%)
Total	239	152	133	152

The West supported fifty-five professional baseball teams (36%) in 1960 (See Table I). The specific centers of concentration were the Reno, Nevada-California center, and the Northwest center.

Until 1963, professional baseball had seven classifications: D, C, B, A, AA, AAA and Major League. Beginning

with the 1963 season, the class D, C and B leagues were regrouped and called class A. The former class A and AA leagues were reclassified as class AA. The AAA and Major League classifications remained the same.

In 1965, the Northeastern States possessed forty-three (32%) professional baseball teams in the United States (See Table I). There were three specific centers of concentration. They were basically the same centers which existed in 1955 and 1960, the Southern New York State center, the Eastern Pennsylvania-Maryland center, and the Upper Mississippi River Valley center. The Southeastern States in 1965 supported fifty teams (38%) in professional baseball (See Table I). It had two specific centers of concentration, namely, the Eastern Kentucky-Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North Carolina-Upper South Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula center. The West supported forty teams (30%) in professional baseball in 1965 (See Table I). The specific centers of concentration were the California center and the Northwest center.

In 1970, the Northeastern States possessed forty-six (30%) of the teams in professional baseball (See Table I). There were only two specific centers of concentration as compared to three centers in previous years studied. The two specific centers were the Southern New York State center, and the Southern New England-New York City center. The Southeastern States in 1970 supported fifty-three teams

(35%) in professional baseball (See Table I). It had two specific centers of concentration. These were the Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Virginia-North and South Carolina center, and the Florida Peninsula center. The West supported fifty-three professional baseball teams (35%) in 1970 (See Table I). It continued to have only two specific centers of concentration, namely, the Reno, Nevada-California center, and the Northwest center.

CONCLUSIONS

States not supporting a professional baseball team in the study were Maine, New Hampshire, Delaware and Wyoming. Wyoming also failed to support a professional baseball team in the 1930-1955 study made by the writer.

The State of Michigan failed to support a minor league team during the time period in the study. All other states supporting a Major League team supported at least one minor league team during some year of the study.

Sixty-three (63) cities have continuously supported professional baseball from 1955-1970 (See Fig. 6). Twenty-seven (27) cities have continuously supported professional baseball from 1930-1970 (See Fig. 6). Those centers continuously supporting professional baseball were:

1. The Southern New York State center, excluding New York City, continuously supported professional baseball. It possessed twelve teams in 1955, eight teams in 1960, ten teams in 1965, and ten teams in 1970. Most of the cities of

southern New York which supported professional baseball had populations ranging from 35,000 to 500,000.

2. The Eastern Tennessee-Southern West Virginia-Southern Virginia-North Carolina and Upper South Carolina center supported twenty-nine professional baseball teams in 1955, twenty-seven teams in 1960, twenty-eight teams in 1965, and twenty-five teams in 1970. North Carolina was considered to be the nucleus of this center.

3. The Florida Peninsula center showed continued progress in supporting eight teams in 1955, ten teams in 1960, seventeen teams in 1965, and twenty-one teams in 1970. Major League teams training in Florida have developed excellent facilities, and with many of the older generation retiring in Florida this region should continue to be a center of concentration for professional baseball.

4. The Central Valley and West Coast of California center was a constant supporter of professional baseball teams. The center supported fourteen teams in 1955, ten teams in 1960, ten teams in 1965, and thirteen teams in 1970.

5. The Northwest center, geographically the largest center, remained the most constant in supporting professional baseball teams. It supported seventeen teams in 1955, seventeen teams in 1960, fifteen teams in 1965, and seventeen teams in 1970. There were few large populated cities.

The Northwest center was approximately the same geographical size as the entire Northeastern States area.

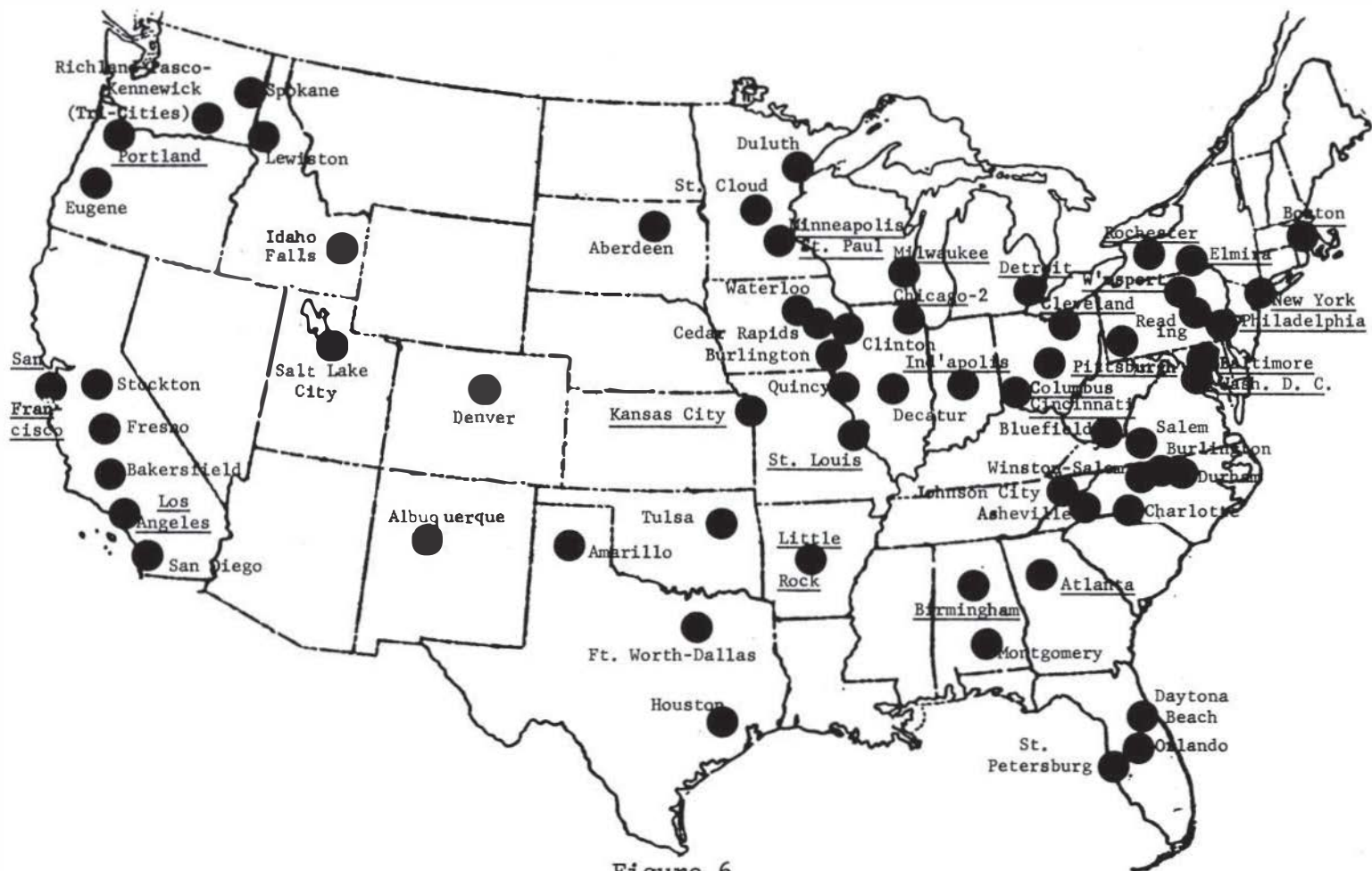


Figure 6

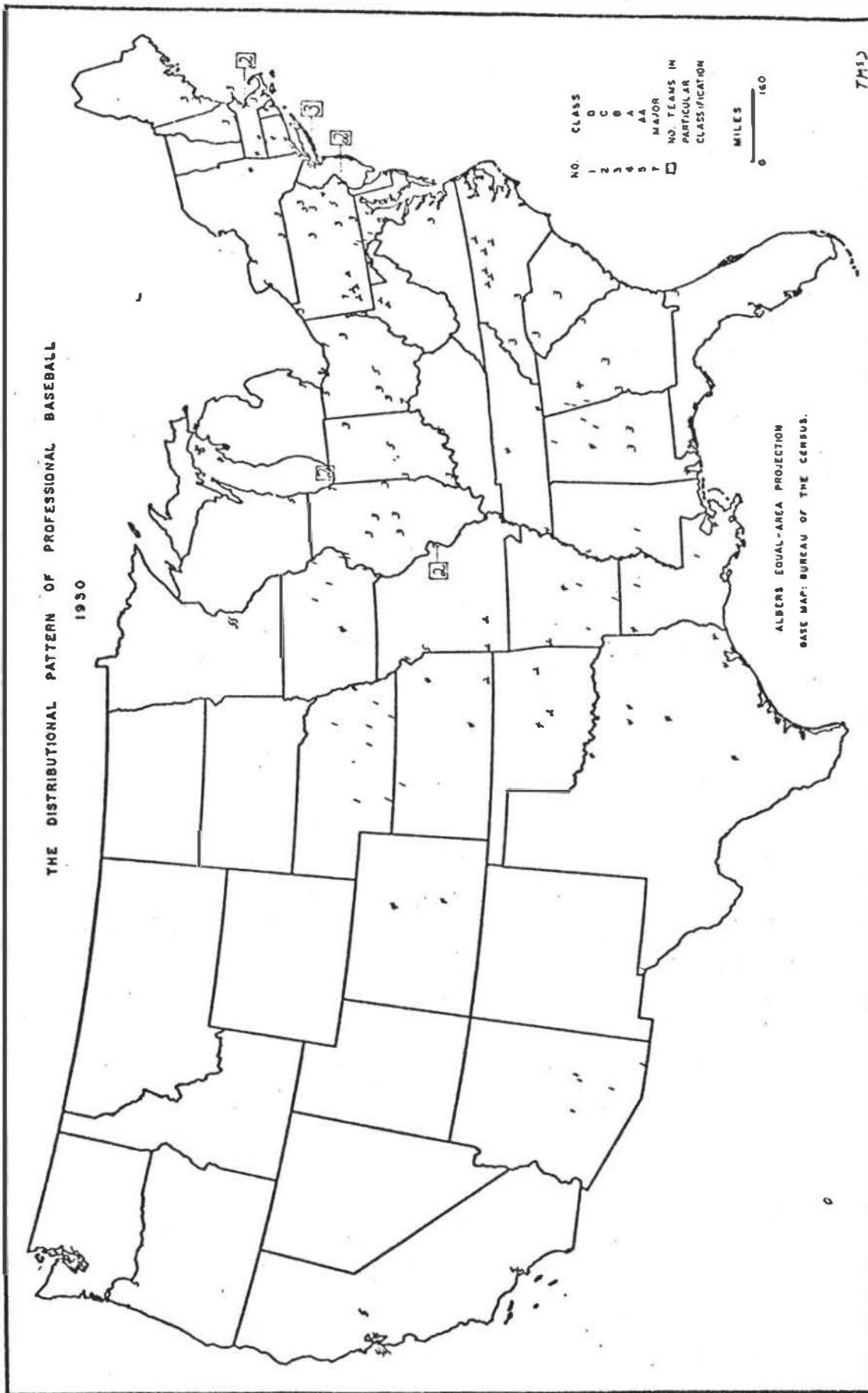
CITIES CONTINUOUSLY IN PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL 1955-1970 and

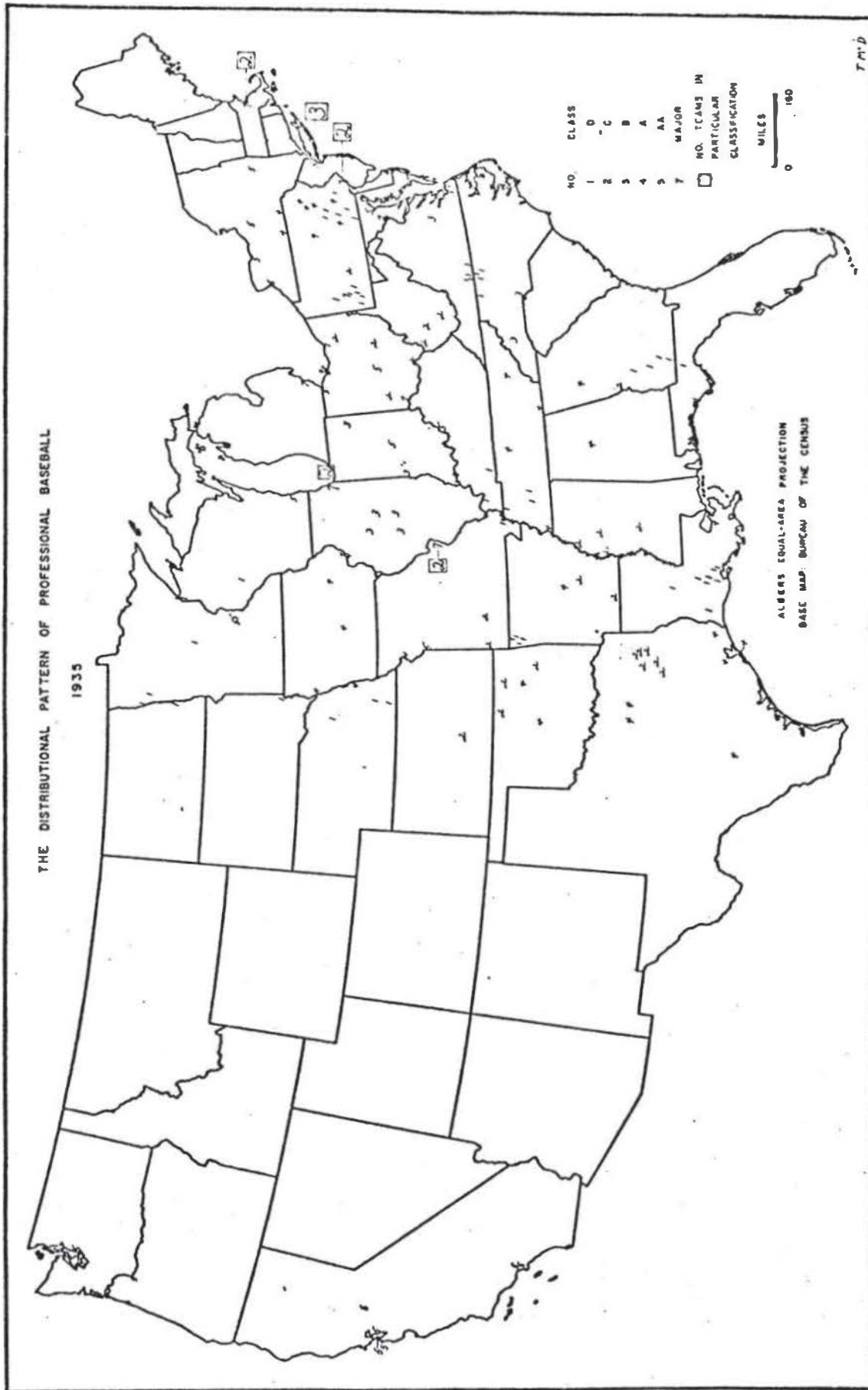
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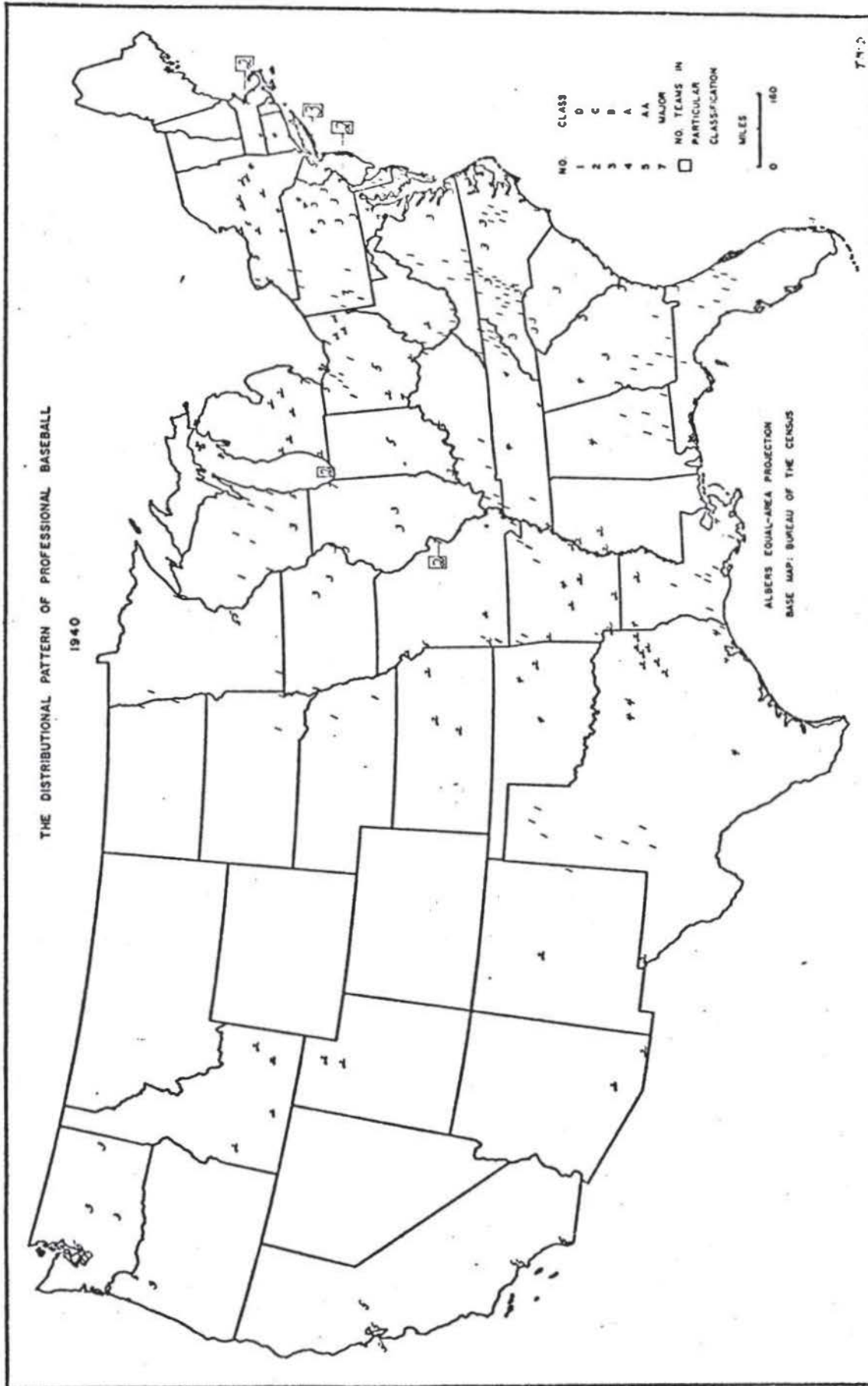
1930-1970

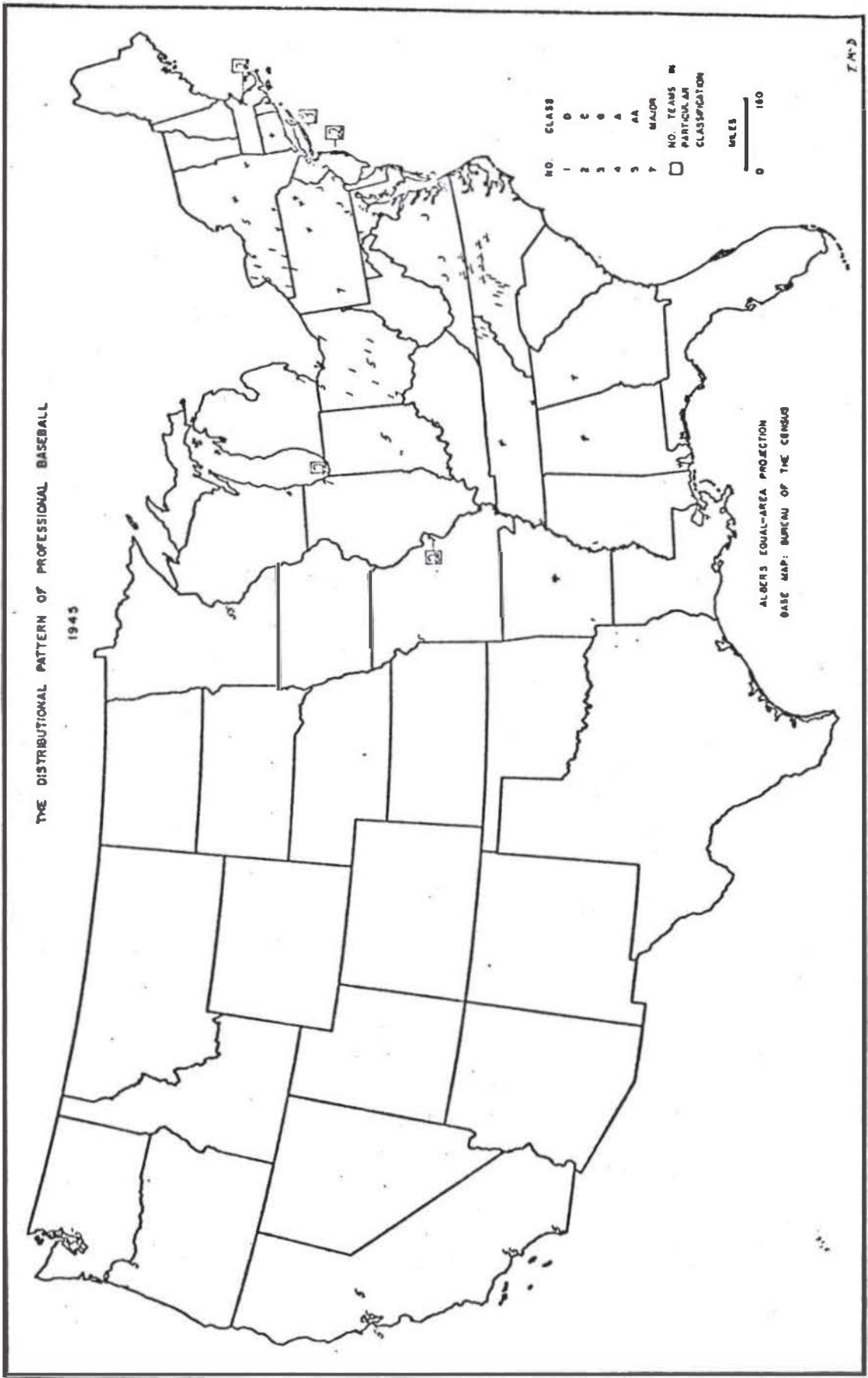
In 1955, the Northwest center supported 17 professional baseball teams and was occupied by approximately 6,000,000 people. The Northeastern States area supported 63 professional baseball teams and was occupied by approximately 73,000,000 people. In 1970, the Northwest center again supported seventeen professional baseball teams. At this time, it had a population of approximately 7,000,000 people. The Northeastern States area supported 46 professional baseball teams and had a population of almost 95,000,000.

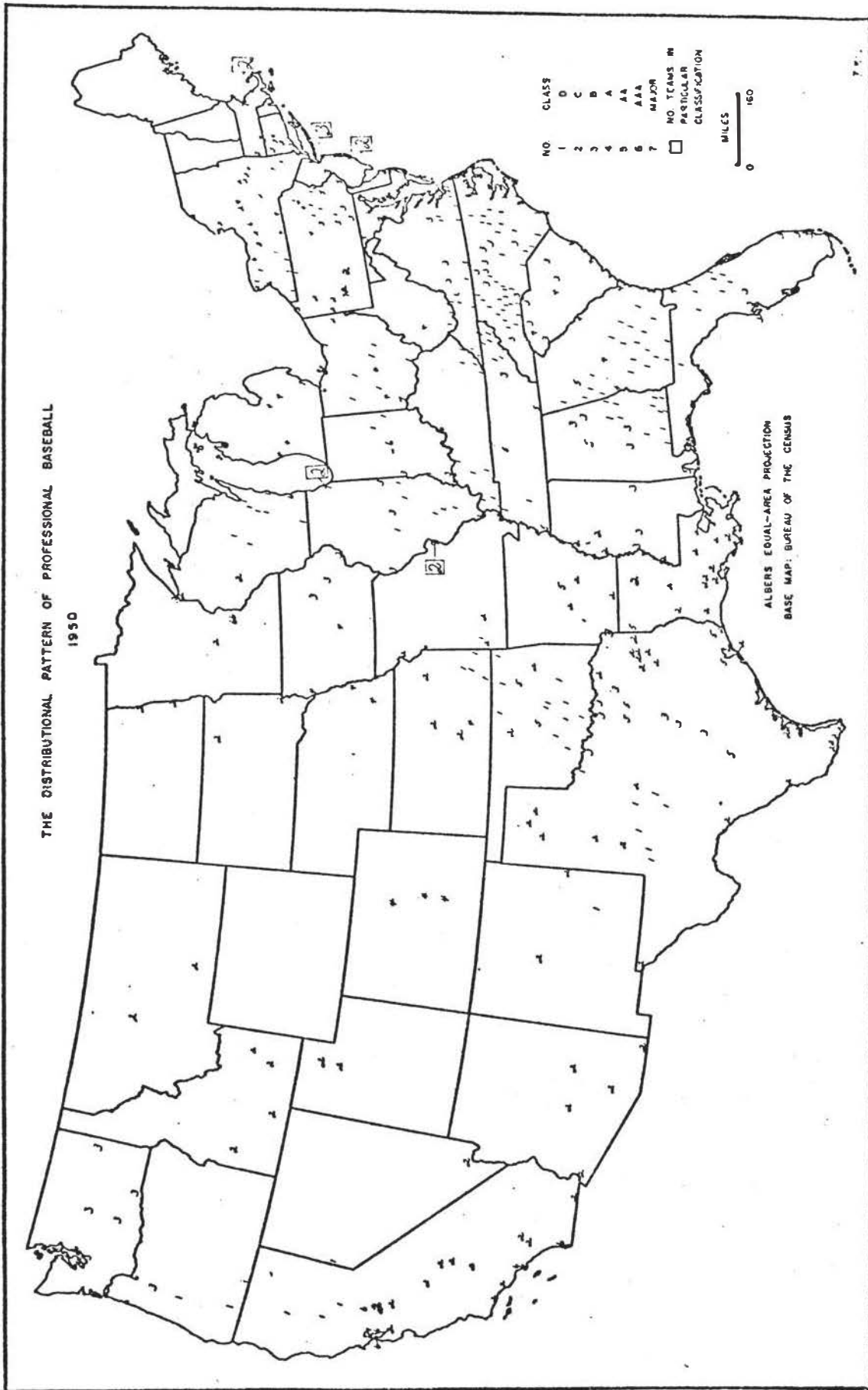
APPENDIX

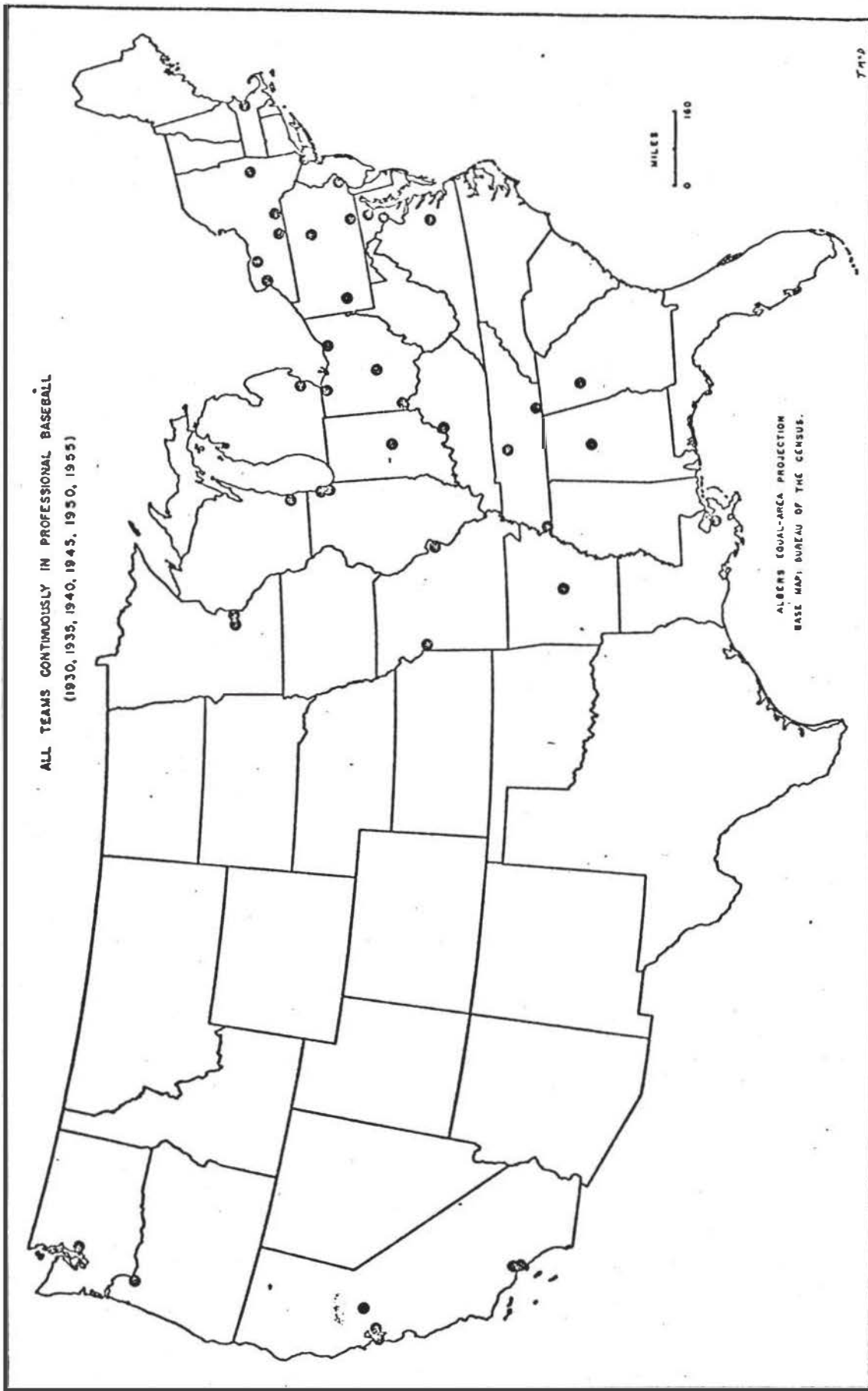












ALL TEAMS CONTINUOUSLY IN PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL
(1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955)

ALBERS EQUAL-AREA PROJECTION
BASE MAP: BUREAU OF THE CENSUS.

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VITA

Thomas E. McDevitt was born the second son of Thomas A. McDevitt and Louise Frese McDevitt on December 25, 1934. He is from Irish-Italian descent.

He spent over half of his life in jail before he was twenty-four years of age. His father was the Sheriff of Effingham County, Effingham, Illinois, and the family resided in said "house."

After graduating from Effingham High School in 1952, McDevitt entered Eastern Illinois University. At Eastern, he earned four letters in baseball, was on a conference baseball champion, led the conference in hitting one year, was named "All-Conference" two years, and elected "Most Valuable" by his team-mates. Upon graduation from college, he signed to play professional baseball with the St. Louis Cardinals and played at Allentown, Pennsylvania; Albany, Georgia; Columbus, Georgia; Winnepeg, Canada; Billings, Montana; and Syracuse, New York.

Between baseball seasons, he acquired a M. A. degree in Geography from Southern Illinois University, and has since acquired the equivalent of a second Master's degree in Guidance.

Presently, Mr. McDevitt is an Academic Adviser at

Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, is married to the former Marilyn K. Probst, and the couple have four children.