

Greenberg, Hank (1911-1986)

Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

[Greenberg, Hank \(1911-1986\) Encyclopedia Article.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Greenberg, Hank \(1911-1986\).....3](#)

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Noted as the first Jewish baseball star, Hank Greenberg became a hero to a generation of Jewish fans and led the way for greater Jewish opportunities in baseball. Greenberg debuted at first base for the Detroit Tigers in 1933 and faced anti-Semitism from fans and opposing teams. Yet "Hammerin' Hank" withstood this and managed to win two Most Valuable Player awards, earn four batting titles, hit 58 home runs in 1938, and get inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1956. Greenberg fought over four years in World War II, and set a precedent after the war by becoming the first Jewish owner and general manager in baseball. Greenberg's popularity changed America's perspective on Jews, and he has come to symbolize a hero who overcame prejudice to lead his baseball team, his country, and his faith.

Further Reading:

Greenberg, Hank, with Ira Berkow. *Hank Greenberg: The Story of My Life*. New York, Times Books, 1989.