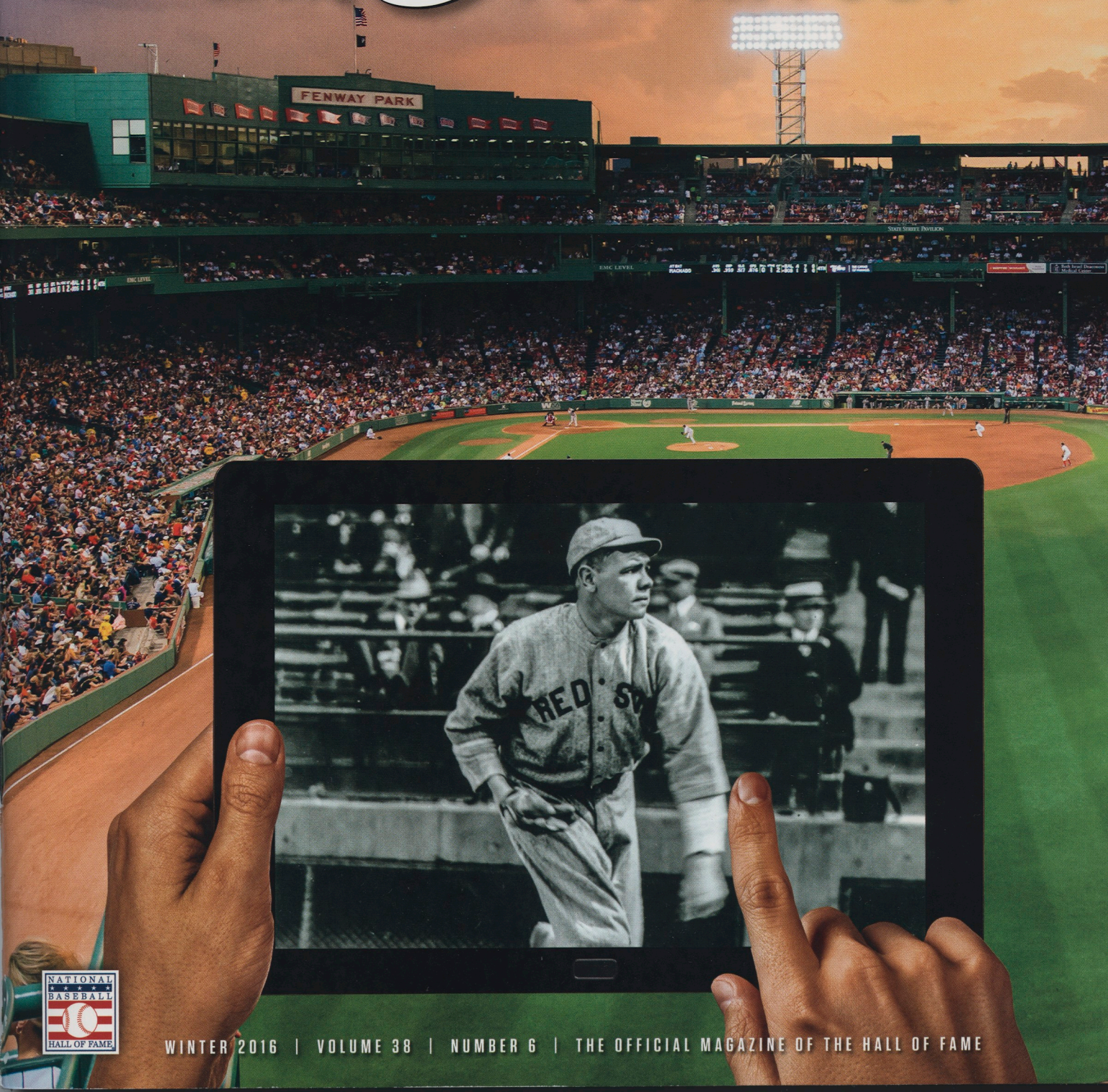


PRESERVING HISTORY. HONORING EXCELLENCE. CONNECTING GENERATIONS.

# MEMORIES *and Dreams*



WINTER 2016 | VOLUME 38 | NUMBER 6 | THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE HALL OF FAME

# FROM THE PRESIDENT > JEFF IDELSON



**A** decade has passed since the largest class in history was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. On Induction Sunday in July 2006, the crowded stage in Cooperstown featured newly minted Hall of Fame closer Bruce Sutter, along with 17 history makers from the Negro Leagues who were enshrined post-humously for career excellence realized in the shadows of the then-segregated major leagues.

In addition to the election of Sutter, the father of the split-finger fastball, there were many other compelling stories among the 17 Negro Leagues legends that summer. We learned about Frank Grant, who anchored the all-black Cuban Giants of the 1890s; pitcher José Mendéz, the first internationally renowned Cuban baseball star; Alex Pompez, a team

owner who went on to scout for the Giants and helped open the doors to the majors for Caribbean-born players, including Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal and the Alou brothers; and Newark Eagles owner Effa Manley, who became the first woman with a plaque in Cooperstown.

As baseball fans, we were also introduced to Cristóbal Torriente, who, along with Mendéz, doubled the number of Cuban-born baseball players in Cooperstown. They joined “El Maestro” Martín Dihigo, elected in 1977, and Tony Perez, who fled Cuba for Puerto Rico at age 16 and earned his Cooperstown stripes in 2000.

A five-tool center fielder with a similar build to Hack Wilson (but with speed), Torriente was a star in the Negro Leagues and in his homeland. He played 10 seasons in the Negro Leagues for multiple teams. From 1920-22, he led the Chicago American Giants to their first

three Negro National League pennants. He was a part of the first class elected to the Cuban Baseball Hall of Fame in 1939.

In fall 1920, Babe Ruth joined a New York Giants squad that barnstormed Cuba. Ruth had just finished his first season in pinstripes and set a major league record with 54 home runs, breaking his own record of 29 – hit the year before as a member of the Red Sox. Over a nine-game series at Havana’s Almendares Park, Ruth batted .345 with a pair of home runs.

Torriente, meanwhile, played in that series for the Cuban team and homered three times in one game, prompting his fellow countrymen to call him the “Babe Ruth of Cuba.” This was reported in newspapers on Nov. 19, 1920, including the *Washington Post* and the *New York Herald*, introducing Torriente to Americans.

Fast-forward 96 years to today as we embark on our journey to digitize the Museum’s collections. When we began preparing our first digital releases – featuring the “Original Five” electees from 1936 as well as a treasure trove of materials related to the Negro Leagues, (both now searchable through PASTIME at the Museum’s website at [collection.baseballhall.org](http://collection.baseballhall.org)), we came across a story of the future Hall of Famers crossing paths in Havana.

We were able to match the newspaper account to a photograph of Babe Ruth in our collection, which had never been identified. We now know the photo of Ruth was from a game in Cuba, and as baseball fans, we can enjoy this rare image of him, and the story that accompanies it, for the first time. Anyone with internet access now has Hall of Fame access. Pretty cool!

We are at the tip of the iceberg in Cooperstown – with two centuries of wonderful history to share with students, teachers, fans and historians. We have the framework in place and a dedicated staff to lead the charge. And the beauty of digitization is multifold. Not only are we able to share our collections, but we protect newspapers, scrapbooks, images and artifacts from having to be handled as frequently, assuring their long-term sustainability as well.

The history in Cooperstown belongs to us all. And through digitization, it will be enjoyed by us all.



This photo of Babe Ruth playing baseball in Havana is part of the Museum’s online collection at [collection.baseballhall.org](http://collection.baseballhall.org).



# Worth the ‘Waite’

Archive’s digitized oral history recordings reveal insights into Hoyt-Ruth friendship.

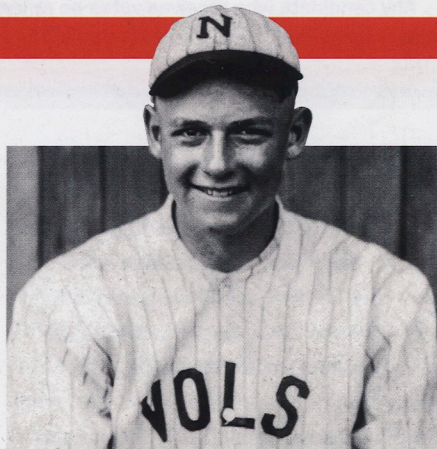
BY LARRY BRUNT

**W**aite Hoyt had a remarkable life in baseball. He signed with the New York Giants as a 15-year-old high school student, earning the nickname “Schoolboy.” He appeared briefly with the Giants as a baby-faced 18-year-old in 1918, then pitched in the big leagues for the next 20 years, suiting up for seven different teams.

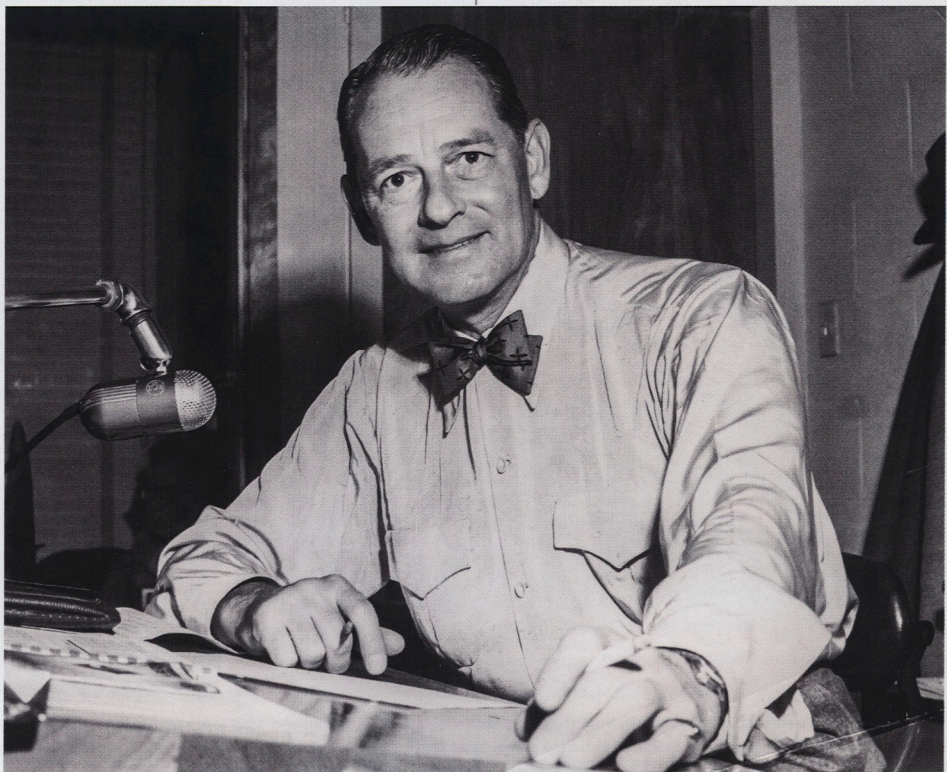
He earned his place in the Hall of Fame principally on the strength of his nearly 10 years with the Yankees, where he was instrumental to the 1920s Bronx Bombers dynasty. Hoyt played in six World Series, winning three championships, and was probably the most important pitcher on the powerhouse 1927 Yankees when he led the American League in wins (with 22) and all of baseball with a .759 winning percentage. He was even better the next year, going 23-7.

Five months after retiring as a player in 1938, Hoyt hosted his first regular radio show, doing 15-minute sports wrap-ups. After providing color commentary for Red Barber and the Dodgers, he was hired by the Cincinnati Reds, where he did play-by-play for 24 seasons and called more than 4,000 games. While he wasn’t as polished as some announcers, he made up for it with his sincerity and deep knowledge of the game, and listeners looked forward to rain delays when Hoyt would tell stories. And one of his favorite subjects, always, was Babe Ruth, a former teammate in both Boston and New York.

In 1981, over the course of two days in October, for nearly six hours, Hoyt, then 82 years old, recalled some of those stories in an



Drafted as a 15-year-old, Waite Hoyt made his major league debut for the New York Giants at age 18 at the end of the 1918 season, the same year this photo was taken. **Below:** After a career on the mound that earned him election to the Hall of Fame, Hoyt became a popular broadcaster, calling games for the Cincinnati Reds for 24 seasons. His oral history of Babe Ruth is a part of the Museum’s online offerings at [collection.baseballhall.org](http://collection.baseballhall.org).



interview for the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Recorded on cassette tapes, this oral history was recently digitized as part of the online PASTIME offerings at [collection.baseballhall.org](http://collection.baseballhall.org).

“I could tell stories about that guy all day long,” Hoyt says on the tapes, and then he talks about Ruth for nearly an hour. First on his agenda – in a voice that is loud, definitive and about as agitated as Hoyt sounds during the entire interview – was to clear up some popular misconceptions:

*To begin with, let me tell you this about Babe Ruth. He was not fat. And he did not have skinny legs. He had rather tapered ankles, that’s true. But ... the calves of his legs were very good sized, and he was not fat. He had a big chest and he had a very small fanny and he was not big around the waist.*

He also emphasized that Ruth was not a drunk. He may have drunk, as they all did, and he may have at times been drunk, but in no way did he miss a game because of that.

“Never. Never. Never,” Hoyt says, punctuating each word as definitively as possible.

Apologizing in advance for being “so frank,” he confesses that “we used to compare him to an Airedale or a dog or a sheep hound or something.” He’d go out “carousing” all night, “visiting his girlfriends,” then come home to a “very respectable family, and the family would pat the dog on his head and say, ‘What a nice dog Rover is.’ Ruth was like that.”

Hoyt doesn't gloss over Ruth's faults. "He was a womanizer, there is no doubt about that."

He also tells of a time the Yankees played in Detroit on Harry Heilmann Day, when Heilmann was presented with a number of gifts, including a Great Dane ("jeez, a beautiful animal"), but Heilmann didn't know what to do with it.

"So he sent the clubhouse boy over, and the clubhouse boy said [to Ruth], 'Mr. Heilmann wants to know if you'd like to have that dog.' And Babe says, 'What kind of dog is it?' The kid says, 'A Great Dane.' And Ruth says, 'Well, if it's a great dame, I'll take it!'"

Hoyt says Ruth "did not know the social graces." He recalls a time when he was pitching and a fly ball was hit to Ruth in right field. Hoyt says it looked like Ruth "short-legged it, meaning he didn't take long strides, and pulled up short, and the ball fell for a base hit." Hoyt stood on the mound, shaking his head, hands on his hips, glaring at Ruth. After the inning, Ruth stormed into the dugout: "Don't you ever show me up again."

Hoyt was pulled from the game and had just finished showering when it ended.

"I was sitting on my bench in front of my locker without any clothes on," when Ruth raced up to him, calling him names and saying, "I'll punch you in the nose."

Hoyt snapped back, "'Well, you're not tied.' So he took a kick at me, with his spikes on, and he's in full uniform." Hoyt jumped up and they exchanged blows, teammates trying to pull them apart, with manager Miller Huggins, who was all of 5-foot-6 and 140 pounds, climbing between the two men to break it up (and not without suffering a few blows himself). Then, with a voice more quiet, sounding humbled, maybe embarrassed, Hoyt says, "But Ruth, after that, he and I didn't speak for a couple of years."

The ice was finally broken after a series in St. Louis. It was on these trips that Ruth would arrange for one of the women's rest-rooms on their Pullman car to be converted into a makeshift saloon. There would be some home brew "plus about 15 or 20 racks of spare ribs. ... He would set up shop and charge 50 cents for all the beer you could drink and all the ribs you could eat."

On one such trip, Hoyt walked by the open door of Ruth's "bar" and muttered, "No, no," he didn't want any. But for Ruth, it had gone on



Waite Hoyt (right) and Babe Ruth spent nearly 11 years as teammates, most of them with the Yankees dynasty of the 1920s.

for too long. "Ah, come on," Ruth said. "Let's forget this. This is ridiculous." They made peace over beer and ribs on the rattling train home.

"Ruth was a very good guy," Hoyt says, as if lost in memory. He remembers a time when the Yankees had a meeting on potential World Series shares. Some didn't want to give a player who had been on the team only a couple of months a full share if they won. Ruth stood up and said if the guy didn't get a full share, he would sit out the Series. There was no further discussion.

He mentions Ruth's warmth with fans, his philanthropic work, his love of children, his generosity with teammates – filling his bathtub with ice and beer and hosting after-game parties in a red robe with a velvet collar and in red Moroccan slippers.

Hoyt then becomes serious for a moment, describing his own religious beliefs – his belief in "a power greater than ourselves, God, or destiny, or whatever you care to call it. ... If there is a Judgement Day," Hoyt says, "I believe that Ruth will receive more pluses than minuses." He concludes with a story to illustrate, he says, "how Ruth was, at the bottom of his heart."

It was in the winter of 1947-48, a cold day, when Waite and "Mrs. Hoyt" went to visit Ruth in his hotel suite, where Ruth was dying from cancer. Ruth, he says, was on the sofa, "slumped low with his head almost below his knees. He had a glass of beer on the table," one of the only things he could keep down. They visited, talking mostly with Ruth's wife, Claire, because Babe was so sick "he could hardly talk."

After an hour or so, the Hoyts said they needed to get going. As they rose, Ruth stirred. He struggled to lift himself out of the sofa. Hoyt describes the rest:

*So he said, "Hey, wait a minute, doll," to Mrs. Hoyt. "I've never known you. I've never given you anything either," he said. So, he went into the kitchen ... and he opened the refrigerator door and there were two orchids in there. And he came out with the orchids and he gave them to Mrs. Hoyt and he said, "Here. Do me a favor. Don't forget the old Babe, will ya?"* 🍷

*Larry Brunt was the Museum's digital strategy intern in the Class of 2016 Frank and Peggy Steele Internship Program for Youth Leadership Development.*

# BRINGING HISTORY INTO THE FUTURE

MUSEUM LAUNCHES DIGITAL ARCHIVE PROJECT BY MAKING COLLECTION OF BABE RUTH SCRAPBOOKS AVAILABLE ONLINE ... AND THERE'S MORE ON THE WAY.

BY CRAIG MUDER

**T**hey are scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings, detailing the larger-than-life figure that was George Herman “Babe” Ruth.

Photo after photo, story after story ... first-hand accounts of one of the first media stars of the 20th century.

And then, a headline that could have been ripped from a 21st-century mobile device – one that seemingly predicted the future: “Ruth Scoring One of His Three Home Runs Shown in Photos Sent By Phone” – *The Evening World*, Oct. 7, 1926.

Below the headline are three photos – taken Oct. 6, 1926, in St. Louis, Mo., during Game 4 of the World Series. The miracle of modern technology had allowed the transmission of those images across the country via telephone lines, showing readers in New York City what Ruth had done the previous day.

It's the kind of history that formerly was only found in Cooperstown at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. But on Sept. 7, these and other pieces became available to fans and researchers around the world through the Hall of Fame's Digital Archive Project.

With the launch of the project, 25 volumes of 10 different Babe Ruth Scrapbooks in the Museum's collection debuted online. These one-of-a-kind scrapbooks, created by Ruth's agent Christy Walsh, provide a unique look at the slugger's career through letters, stories and photographs, and give a glimpse at the authentic Babe Ruth.

Additional digitized material – including photos, audio, video and text – from the collection is being published every other week as the Museum adds to the PASTIME (Public Archive System To Interact with the Museum Electronically) online collection, available at [collection.baseballhall.org](http://collection.baseballhall.org).

The Ruth Scrapbooks are filled with unique images (Ruth saluting General John J. Pershing after The Babe was sworn in as a private to the 104th Field Artillery of the New York National Guard), news (Ruth's famous “bellyache” in April 1925 is documented in page after page of stories) and the vernacular of the day (each time Ruth was subjected to surgery, he

went “under the knife,” according to the headline writers).

Using PASTIME, visitors to the Museum's website can immerse themselves in history. This fall, additional packages debuted featuring Negro Leagues documents, records of the Class of 1936 Hall of Famers and contemporary photos from Hall of Fame traveling photographer Jean Fruth.

Many of these materials are available to the public for the first time, allowing fans to browse the Museum collection as they plan their visit to Cooperstown, or continue their exploration of baseball history after they tour the Museum.

With more than three million Library items, a quarter of a million unique images and 40,000 three-dimensional artifacts, the Museum preserves an immense physical collection that brings baseball history to life. Through the Hall of Fame Digital Archive Project, the Museum, over the next several years, will continue to digitize its collections and Library archive, making PASTIME the premier online resource of baseball history. The project's goal is to provide online access to the precious artifacts and documents preserved in Cooperstown, while ensuring that they are digitally archived for future generations.

The PASTIME digital asset management system has been developed on open source standards that will allow other cultural institutions to benefit from this leap forward in digital artifact preservation. Museums and educational institutions around the world will have access to this system built by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

The project is dependent upon the continued generous donations of passionate baseball fans, along with support provided by Market NY through I LOVE NY, New York State's Division of Tourism, as a part of the State's Regional Economic Development Council awards.

To support the Hall of Fame Digital Archive Project, please visit [baseballhall.org/DAP](http://baseballhall.org/DAP). 📍

*Craig Muder is the director of communications for the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.*