

*The Russell Etling Company Announces the  
Development of a Major New Project...*

# VIVA BASEBALL!

## *Cuba & the Game We Love*

**T**he most successful museum exhibitions have that special combination of rare and compelling content, unique collections displayed in dramatic settings, engaging and enlightening educational value, social and historical relevance, and brand name marketing appeal. *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will be one of those exhibitions.



## INTRODUCTION

Baseball has been a part of the fabric of Cuban life and culture since the late 1860's. The island was home to the world's second oldest professional baseball league, founded in 1878, only two seasons after the United States' league. For decades, American teams competed in (pre-Castro) Cuba, fielded farm teams there and welcomed their players to our country. The Cuban people have long shared the same passion for baseball that Americans have, and Cuba

has given us some of the greatest athletes to ever play the game. Players of Cuban birth or heritage continue to make an enormous contribution to Major League Baseball.

This story however, is rarely told and has never been the subject of a major museum exhibition. *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will change that.



Oriente Team (1880's)



Almendares Team (1890's)

With an exhibition, illustrated catalogue, possible video documentary and range of promotional and merchandising opportunities, *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will build large audiences through a variety of media. It will provide a powerful vehicle for corporate and media partners, merchandisers and exhibition venues that join in the project's development.

Almendares Team (1920's)



## THE COLLECTION

*VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will be drawn from the extraordinary collection of Miami resident Orestes Chavez. Over the last 25 years, Mr. Chavez has assembled arguably the world's largest and most significant private collection of Cuban baseball memorabilia, covering a century of the game in that country, as well as the Cuban and Cuban-American players who have excelled in the United States. With the exception of a handful of pieces displayed at special events, this world-class collection has never been seen by any audience...anywhere.

Of its vast assortment of objects, photographs and documents, the Chavez Collection contains nearly 170 jerseys. These jerseys represent: over 80 different professional and amateur teams from the pre-Castro era; a number of post-Castro Olympic, National and Regional teams; and dozens of American Major League Baseball teams. No collection in existence comes close to containing the breadth and number of jerseys of this type.

The collection has thousands of historic photographs, and hundreds of collectibles from the teams and stars of the game, including player documents (contracts, identification cards, etc.), bats, balls, gloves, trophies, baseball cards, and fan souvenirs from both Cuba and the United States.

Through his longtime friendships with many the greatest Cuban ball players and their families, Mr. Chavez has assembled representative artifacts that span these legends' extraordinary careers. These include numerous pieces from the collections of the legendary Orestes (Minnie) Miñoso, the first black player to don a Chicago White Sox



Gold Medal Olympic Team (1996)



Habana Team Souvenirs



Orestes (Minnie) Miñoso  
Memorabilia



Amorós Memorabilia

uniform, and Edmundo (Sandy) Amorós, whose Game 7 sprinting catch of Yogi Berra’s hit and relay to Pee Wee Reese was key to Brooklyn’s victory in the 1955 World Series. Amorós items include the flag that flew over Yankee Stadium that exciting day. Also featured in the exhibition will be the

National Baseball Hall of Fame ring of Ysora (Chico) del Castillo, who played in the All-American Girls



Professional Baseball League during the 1940’s and 1950’s. Numerous jerseys will be displayed from the career of Liván Hernández who defected to the United States from Cuba in 1995 and went on to become the

Most Valuable Player in the 1997 World Series while playing for the victorious Florida Marlins. The Chavez Collection also has jerseys and memorabilia that span the career of the controversial “bad boy of baseball,” José Canseco, who was the American League Rookie of the Year in 1986 and, with the Oakland A’s, 1988’s Most Valuable Player. It was in this year he became the first player in Major League Baseball history to achieve 40 home runs and 40 stolen bases in the same season. The collection includes his 30th stolen base.



José Canseco Memorabilia



In addition to its baseball memorabilia, the Chavez Collection also contains artifacts from other sports that reinforce Cuba’s great history of producing world-class athletes. A recent addition, which will be featured in the exhibition, is the rare silk fight robe of Kid Chocolate, one of the most popular boxers in New York from the late 1920’s to late 1930’s. Cuban-born with the name Eligio Sardinias-Montalbo, Chocolate never lost a fight as an amateur and racked up 21 knockouts in 21 bouts as a pro before taking on New York in 1928 at the age of eighteen. He went on to claim the World Junior Lightweight Champion 1931-1933 and the New York State Athletic Commission Featherweight Champion 1932-1934 titles.



“Kid Chocolate” wearing, and later in life with, his silk fight robe

## A BROAD AUDIENCE

Beyond its fascination for those who love baseball and its history, *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will have a special resonance for a number of other specific audiences.

The exhibit will tell an important story relating to the African diaspora (the dispersion of African people and culture across the globe) and sports' impact on the civil rights movement.

Cuban teams were integrated long before U.S. teams, and many Cuban players of African heritage went on to excel both in the American Negro League, as well as in the Major League Baseball. The Chavez Collection has materials from the grim years of slavery in Cuba, as well as more empowering artifacts from famous Afro-Cuban and African-American players who played both in Cuba and the U.S.



Cuban pitcher Eleva Casanova with Dodger Luke Hamlin (1941)



Cuban Stars Team of the American Negro League (1920's)

Cuba's enthusiasm for baseball and cultivation of superior athletes was not



Cubanas Women's Team (late 1940's or early 1950's)

restricted to men alone. Eight Cuban women played in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, made famous in the film "A League of Their Own." League teams also trained and played in Cuba and the exhibition will shed light on their history.

The exhibition is honored to display an extremely rare jersey worn by a member of the amateur Centro Israel Team in 1943-1944. Where during this period in history, half a world away, Jews were being forced to wear the Star of David as a form of persecution, on this moving testament to history, that powerful religious symbol is displayed with pride. When showing this jersey, Mr. Chavez has seen men weep in remembrance.



Centro Israel Team (1943-1944)



Babe Ruth and Roger Hornsby in Cuban cigar advertisement (1920's)

While chronicling the United States' and Cuba's shared emotion for baseball for nearly a century and a half, *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* can't help but also document the Cuban peoples' parallel struggle for freedom in their island paradise. In the late 1800's, Cubans' rejection of their Spanish rule was symbolized by their choice of baseball over bullfighting as the "national sport." In 1891, in fact, the first U.S. "big leaguers" began touring Cuba for winter exhibition games. In 1902 Cuba installed its first President, Tomás Estrada-Palma, and the exhibition will feature a document with his signature. Over time, U.S.



teams and their players, from Babe Ruth to Tommy Lasorda, repeatedly trained and played in Cuba during the off-season. In the 1940's and 1950's the Washington Senators and Cincinnati Reds fielded farm teams in Cuba, the Habana Cubans and Sugar Kings respectively.

With Fidel Castro as dictator, the nature of baseball in Cuba, as well as our two nations' close



Thomas (Tommy) Lasorda (center) while on the Marianao Team during the Major League off-season (early 1950's)

interaction on the field of play, changed radically. Under Communism, the Cuban Professional League was disbanded in favor of state-sponsored regional and national teams, and over 80 years of regular play between Cuban and American teams came to an end. Major League Baseball however, continued to attract those Cuban players with the willingness and courage to defect to America for a chance to play in the "big show." The drama of their stories will be a moving and powerful section of the exhibition.



Lívan Hernández, Cuban defector and later 1997 World Series MVP

## THE EXHIBITION

*VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* will offer audiences an opportunity to journey through the history of the sport on the island and witness how players of Cuban birth or heritage helped shape the history of American baseball. The collection will allow visitors to come face to face with the past by viewing authentic items from another time and place. Most important, the exhibition will provide insight into the careers and lives of the individual players whose memorabilia is featured, revealing the universal passion for the sport that baseball lovers of all nationalities have.



Hall of Famer Atanasio (Tony) Pérez, St. Patrick's Day Cincinnati Reds Jersey (1975)

Artful and dramatic presentation complimented by well researched, but user-friendly, interpretative text will provide context and depth for each item in the



Russell Etling Company's previous *NAPOLÉON* exhibition.

collection, allowing the exhibition's story to come alive for the viewer. The Russell Etling Company, who is organizing the project and directing its development, brings over two decades of museum exhibition development and production expertise to the project. The exhibition is currently projected to encompass approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and will feature more than 200 rare artifacts, photographs and documents accompanied by introductory text panels, labels, electronic media and scenic elements. Cases or frames will be provided for the majority of pieces in the collection.

Mr. Chavez's strong contacts with veteran ball players will allow the organizers to interview these former athletes on film, recounting their memories of playing the game both in Cuba and the United States. It is hoped the project will incorporate these priceless historical records into a major television documentary, as well as into multimedia elements in the exhibition. The oral histories, along with historical film footage, presented on touch screen computers and film loops, will



Habana Manager Salvador Hernández Uniform (1948)

accompany artifacts, adding context to the pieces and animating the exhibit with dramatic moving images and powerful audio tracks.

The exhibit will also come with a complete kit of approved marketing materials and images for our clients' advertising and promotional needs. A catalogue will not only provide the visitor a quality souvenir of the exhibition but, with the unique nature of the collection, become a "must-have" reference for baseball memorabilia enthusiasts. The catalogue also serves as one of the exhibition's vehicles to recognize its corporate partners.

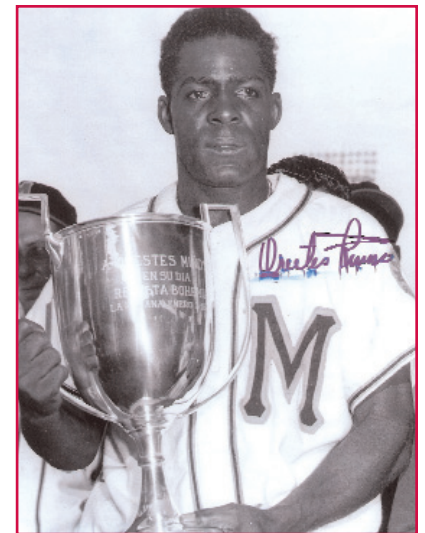
## VENUES

*VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* has the potential for bookings in a variety of exhibition venues. It is a natural for the Baseball/Sports oriented Halls of Fame and Museums that can be found across the country. Many of the nation's great Major League Baseball Stadiums now maintain museums or exhibition spaces onsite for their thousands of fans.

Communities with large audiences of Cuban heritage (Miami, Tampa, the Metropolitan New York/New Jersey area and Los Angeles) also are key target markets. The exhibition's celebration of players of African heritage expands that market, as well as the possibility of presenting the exhibition in civil rights-themed venues. Finally, the National Geographic Museum in Washington, which premiered the Russell Etling Company's current traveling exhibition, *NAPOLÉON An Intimate Portrait* ([www.napoleonexhibit.com](http://www.napoleonexhibit.com)), would be a natural for this important new exhibition.



Ysora del Castillo



Orestes (Minnie) Miñoso



## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Many of the materials and images in the Chavez Collection can be licensed for merchandising (with copyright approvals, if any, that might be necessary).

This provides a “treasure trove” of potential revenue vehicles for the exhibition’s merchandising partners, as well as the exhibition venues. It also provides an opportunity for the



Parcheesi featuring Cuban Teams' logos (1950's)

exhibition’s key lead sponsors to extend the reach of their brands.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

The organizers of *VIVA BASEBALL! Cuba & the Game We Love* are currently assembling a dynamic team of corporate and media partners who will have the privilege of associating their brands and building their audiences with this very special property. Gary M. Stern is serving as the organizer’s agent for the exhibition and is overseeing the development of all corporate relationships. He brings more than 30 years of experience in the development, marketing, promotion and exhibiting of world-class events.

For more information contact:

Gary M. Stern  
(561) 313-2211  
MarketingManGMS@gmail.com

or

Russell Etling  
(305) 448-4336  
RE@russelletling.com