

1956 Bowman Baseball Card Photographic Image Contact Proofs:

This document deals with recently discovered 4"x5" photographic negative contact proofs of images from the archive of noted sports photographer William Jacobellis that appear to have been selected for use in the proposed 1956 Bowman baseball card set.

Background

Contact proofs of photographic negatives are created by laying a photographic negative, emulsion side down, on top of an unexposed piece of photographic paper. The combination is then placed below a photographic enlarger, exposed to light, and the photographic paper is processed to reveal the positive print of the photographic negative. When exposed to light long enough to achieve a properly exposed print, the resulting image is as close to the quality of the original negative as you can get without using the negative itself. You can achieve the same quality of the original negative in an enlargement by also exposing the paper used for the print long enough to reveal all of the details contained in the negative. The larger the print produced, the longer the paper will have to be exposed to achieve a properly exposed print. Fine art prints are created by using long exposure times to reveal the smallest details in the resulting print. Most wire photo enlargements are produced on deadline, so there is not normally the time available to enable producing a print of the highest quality to match the negative in order to meet the publishing deadline. The processing of wire photos on deadline often included processing the print through a fixer bath that was of stronger strength than fine art fixer concentration, followed by a shorter water bath than normal in order to get access to the print, get it dried and then transmit it for publication. This process results in prints that, as they age, may display fixer burn scars or fading images, if they were not left in the fixer bath long enough to permanently preserve the image. Negatives processed in high concentration fixer baths and short water baths often display fixer burn scars and will have the telltale fixer smell as they age.

Many wire/newspaper staff photographers did not produce contact prints for posterity. If they produced them in the darkroom at the sporting event, they were used to determine the proper exposure time and then discarded in the darkroom. Many experienced wire/newspaper photographers could tell by looking at a negative what type of paper they needed to use and the processing time for the resulting print in each of the chemical baths (i.e., developer, stop bath, fixer), so there was no need to produce a contact proof. Freelance and fine art photographers more often produced and retained contact prints with the corresponding original negative so that they could easily refer back to their archive and select a negative to print when a client requested a particular subject.

Photographer: William N. (Bill) Jacobellis

Bill Jacobellis was a freelance photographer who self-published his own annual baseball pictorials in the 1950's to mid-1960's and also worked for the New York Post. His images illustrated many of the most popular baseball card sets of the Golden Age of baseball cards in the 1950's. His images graced the fronts of at least some of the cards in the following baseball cards sets of the era:

1952 Bowman – many of the cards in the set are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images.

1953 Bowman- many of the images were either shot in color and black & white for Bowman and the original images do not reside in the archive.

1954 Bowman – many of the cards are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images.

1955 Bowman – many of the images in the set appear to be color images shot for Bowman with a handful of rookies that were color painted versions of black & white images from the Jacobellis archive.

1953 Topps – a handful of rookie card fronts with color painted versions of his black & white photographic images. It also appears that Bill helped procure photography for Topps for this issue. This is evidenced by the handful of contact proofs of dupe negatives that are in the collection that were used on 1953 Topps card fronts (including Tony Bartirome, Vern Bickford and Bobby Del Greco).

1954 Topps – many of the cards in the set are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images. It also appears that Bill helped procure photography for Topps for this issue. This is evidenced by the handful of contact sheets of dupe negatives that are in the collection that were used on 1954 Topps card fronts. This includes two contact sheets of the image used in the background for the Hank Aaron rookie card. The image is of Hank while he was an infielder with the Jacksonville Suns.

1955 Topps – many of the cards in the set are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images.

1955 Topps Doubleheaders – many of the cards in the set are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images, although the paintings are not done to the same realistic standard as the regular Topps issue. The set uses the full length images from the background image of the 1955 Topps regular baseball card set.

1956 Topps – many of the cards in the set are color painted versions of his black & white photographic images.

1956 Topps Pins – Used the headshot portraits from the regular 1956 Topps baseball card set.

1957 Topps - many of the images appear to be color images shot for Topps with a handful of rookies that were color painted versions of black & white images from the Jacobellis archive.

1958 Topps - many of the images appear to be color images shot for Topps with a handful of rookies or group shots that were color painted versions of black & white images from the Jacobellis archive.

1952 Tip Top Bread Labels – Black & white images of most of the top players of the era.

1953 Northland Bread Labels - Black & white images of most of the top players of the era.

1955 Robert Gould statue cards – Jacobellis’ images were used for line art drawings included on the card fronts.

The following analysis is based upon a review of several thousand 4”x5” photographic negative contact proofs that exist from the Jacobellis archive. Bill would produce anywhere from 1 to 6 contact proofs of each large format (4”x5” or larger) photographic negative in his archive and store them in the paper negative sleeve with the corresponding negative. In most cases, only 1 or 2 contact proofs were ever created for a particular 4”x5” negative. Bill would also make a single contact proof of many of the 2 ¼” x 2 ¼” negatives and most 35mm negatives strips. Bill used the backs of the contact proofs to often record when a particular image was submitted to Bowman, Topps, or both of them. He would also include cropping and edit marks that corresponded to publication of the image in his self-published baseball annuals. Bill also misspelled some player’s names, especially for images taken early in the player’s career (see images 13 and 18 later in this document). It also appears that Bill had some of his images represented by Phil Burchman in the mid-1950’s. There are a number of contact proofs that include either the Phil Burchman studio stamp, sticker or hand written name on the reverse. These are often crossed out or written/stamped over (see image 15 later in this document). This is also confirmed by searching the Sports Illustrated vault online (<http://www.si.com/vault>) for the name, “William Jacobellis” and the results include a handful of published image acknowledgements credited to “William N. Jacobellis from Burchman” (1955) or “William N. Jacobellis-Burchman” (1956 and 1957). By 1960, Bill’s images in Sports Illustrated are credited to, “William N. Jacobellis”.

Not all copies of a contact proof would be marked with the card company usage, but in most cases, since only 1 contact proof of a particular negative was ever created, many card used image contact proofs do include card company notation. Specifically, when Bill submitted an image to Bowman Gum, he initially marked most of the images with the designation, “BG52” or “JC” to denote images submitted for the 1952 Bowman set (1952 Bowman being the first baseball card set that used Bill’s images on a large scale after having at least his image of Willie Mays used in the 1951 Bowman set)(see Images 1, and 2).

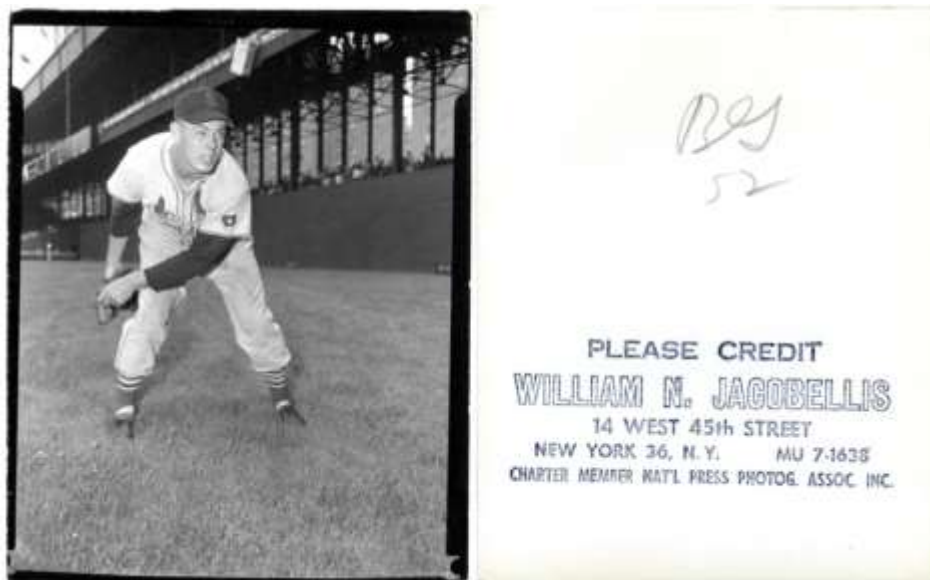


Image #1 – Cliff Chambers contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #14 and 1954 Bowman card #126).

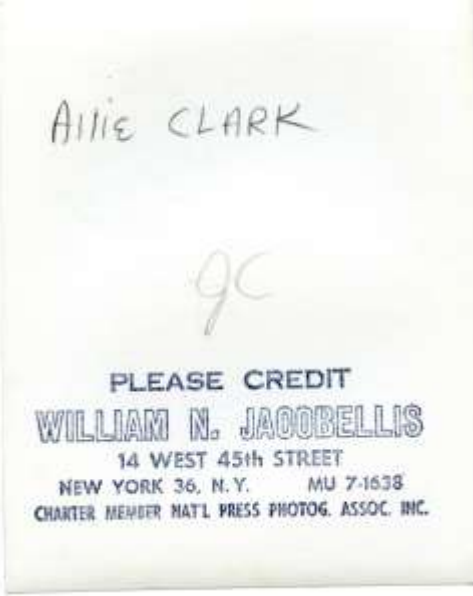


Image #2 – Allie Clark contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #130).

Other Bowman submitted and/or published images included the designations of, “BG”, “Bowman” or “Bowman Gum”(see Images 3, 4 and 5).

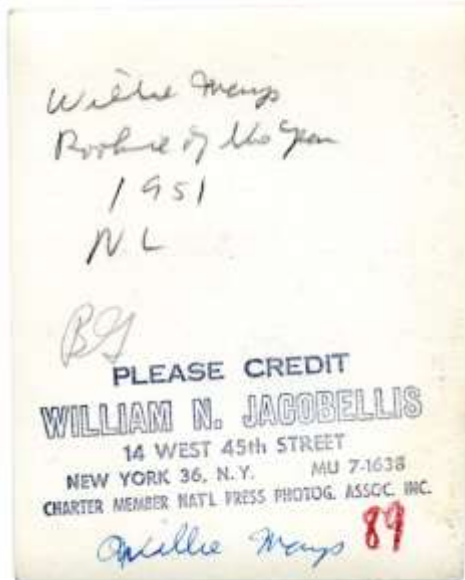


Image #3 – Willie Mays contact proof (used on 1954 Bowman card #89)

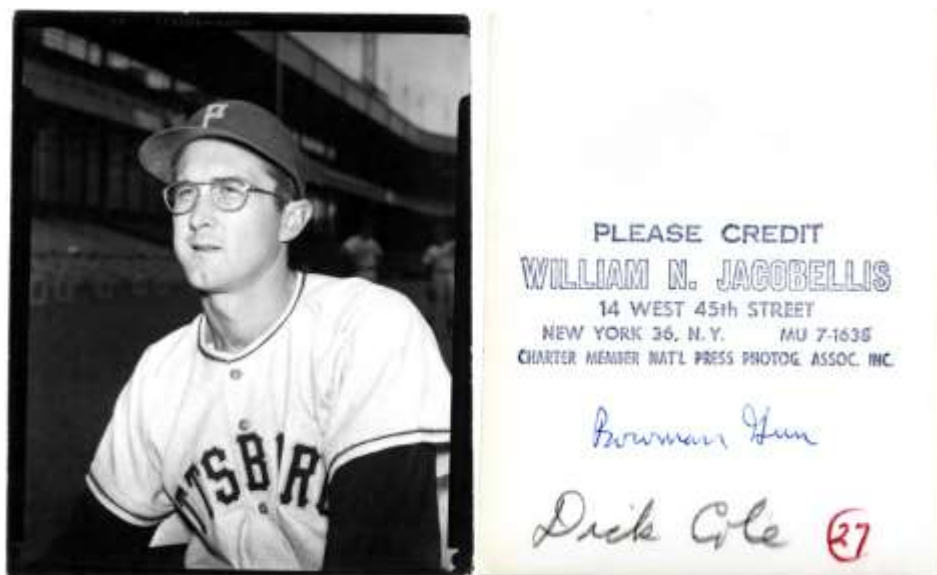


Image #4 – Dick Cole contact proof (used on 1954 Bowman card #27).

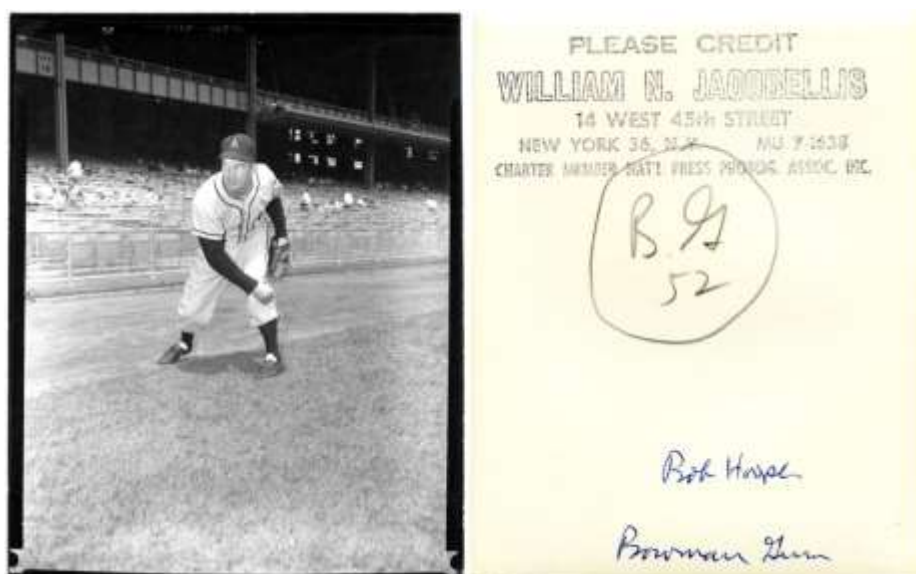


Image #5 – Bob Hooper contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #10).

The designation, “JC” is believed to denote the contact person at Bowman to whom Bill submitted the images for consideration for use on their cards. There are a couple of contact proofs that include the notation, “Bowman – JC” or “J.C. Bowman” (see Images 6 and 7).

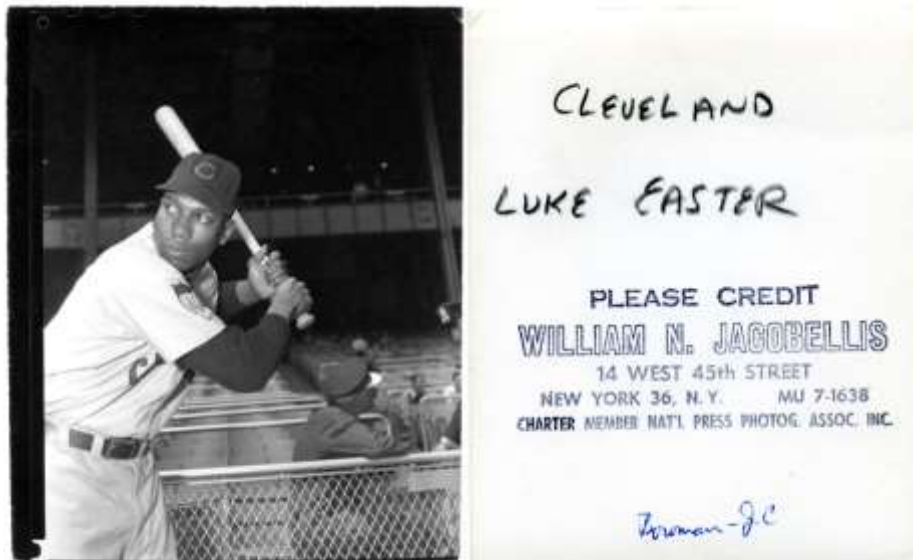


Image #6 – Luke Easter contact proof (used on 1954 Bowman card #116).

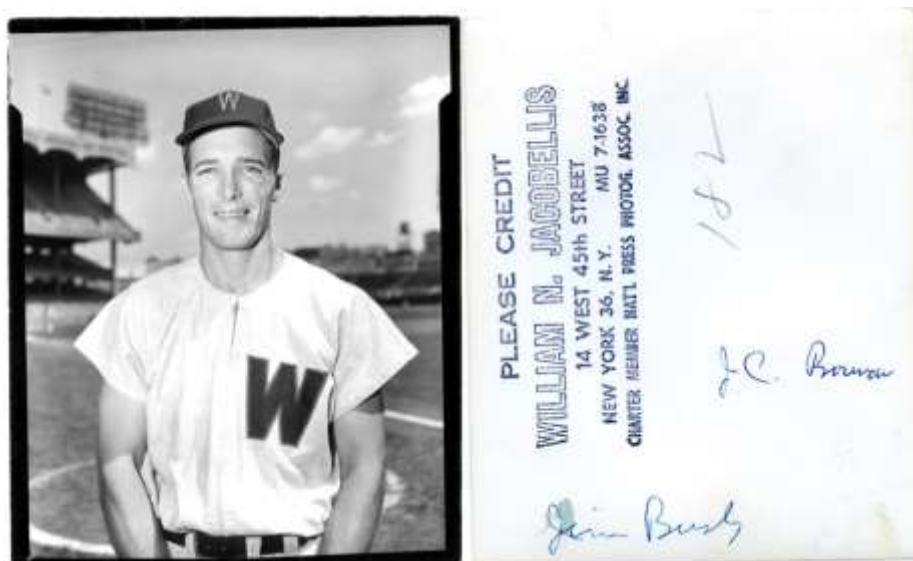


Image #7 - Jim Busby contact proof (used on 1954 Bowman card #8).

This also believed to be true because images with the JC notation only appeared on Bowman baseball cards (see images 8, 9 and 10).

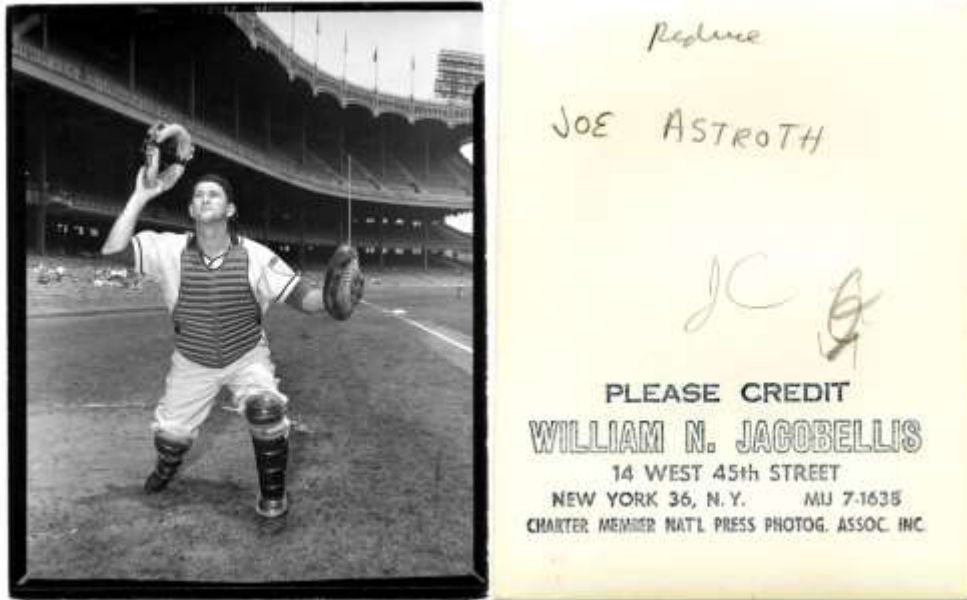


Image #8 – Joe Astroth contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #170).

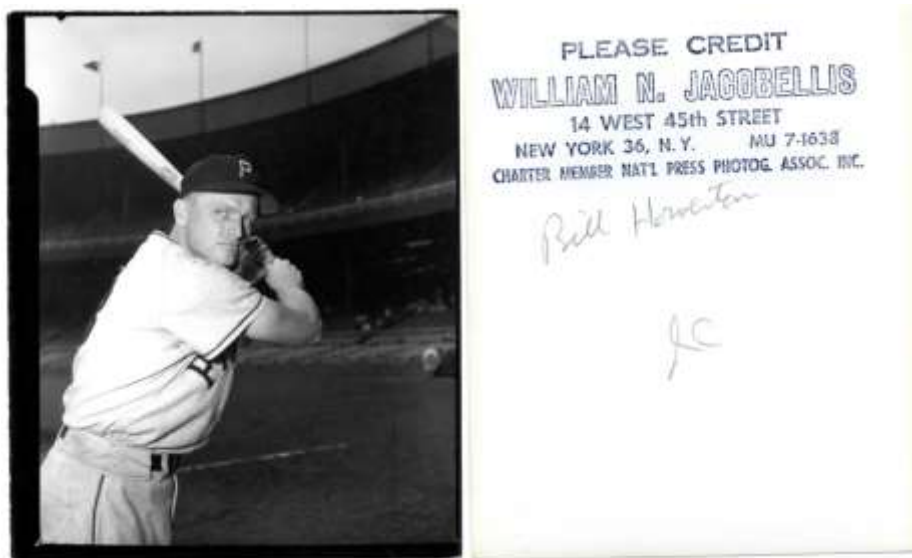


Image #9 – Bill Howerton contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #119).

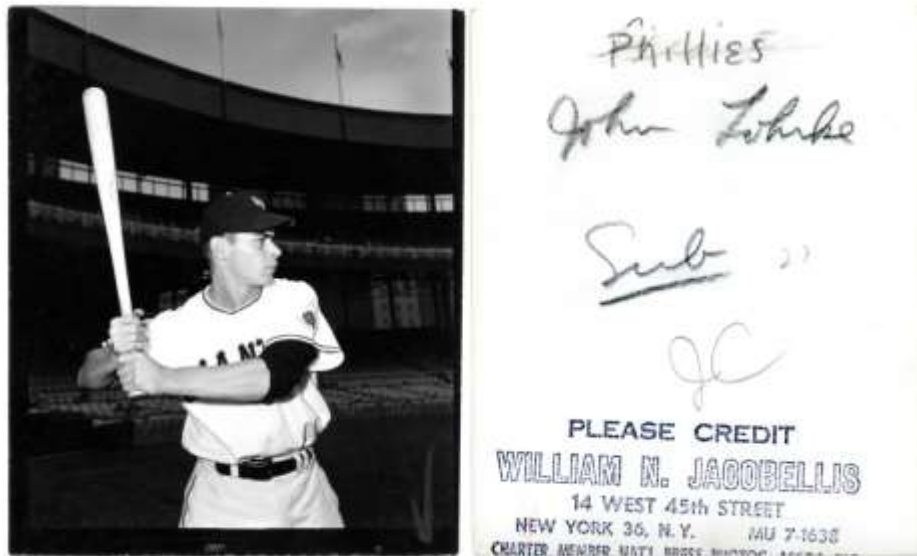


Image #10 – Jack Lohrke contact proof (used on 1952 Bowman card #251).

There are contact proofs in the archive with the JC notation that did not appear in any Bowman card sets, so this may have indicated that the images were submitted to Bowman for consideration, but not selected for publication. This is demonstrated by several images of coaches that carry the notation, JC52” on the reverse of a copy of the contact proof of an image for each coach. These images did not appear in the final Bowman issue, although several cards of coaches did appear in the card set. To further substantiate the belief that the JC notation represents images submitted to Bowman, when Bill submitted images to Topps, the images are marked on the reverse with the designation, “BenSol” and in some cases, “Ben Solomon” or “Bennie Solomon” (see Images 11,12 and13).

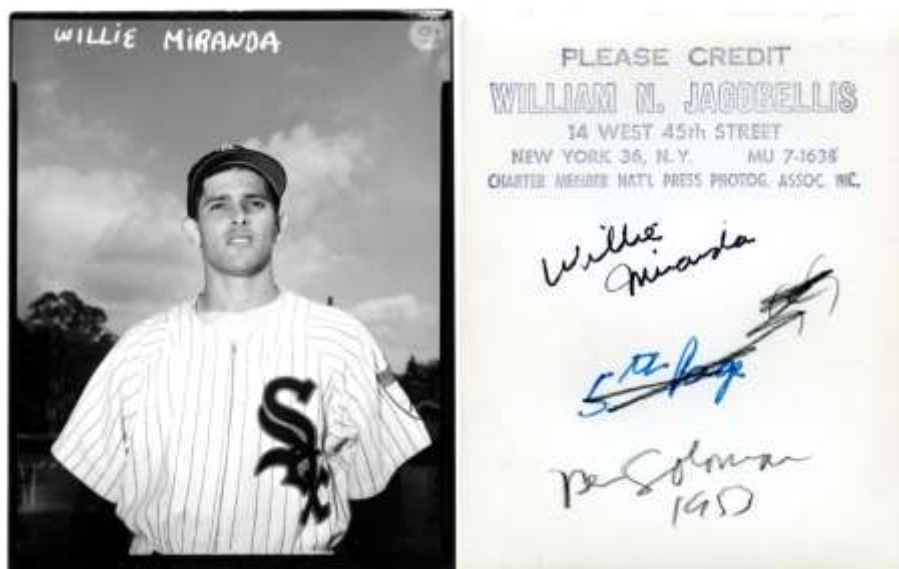


Image #11 – Willie Miranda contact proof (used on 1953 Topps card #278).

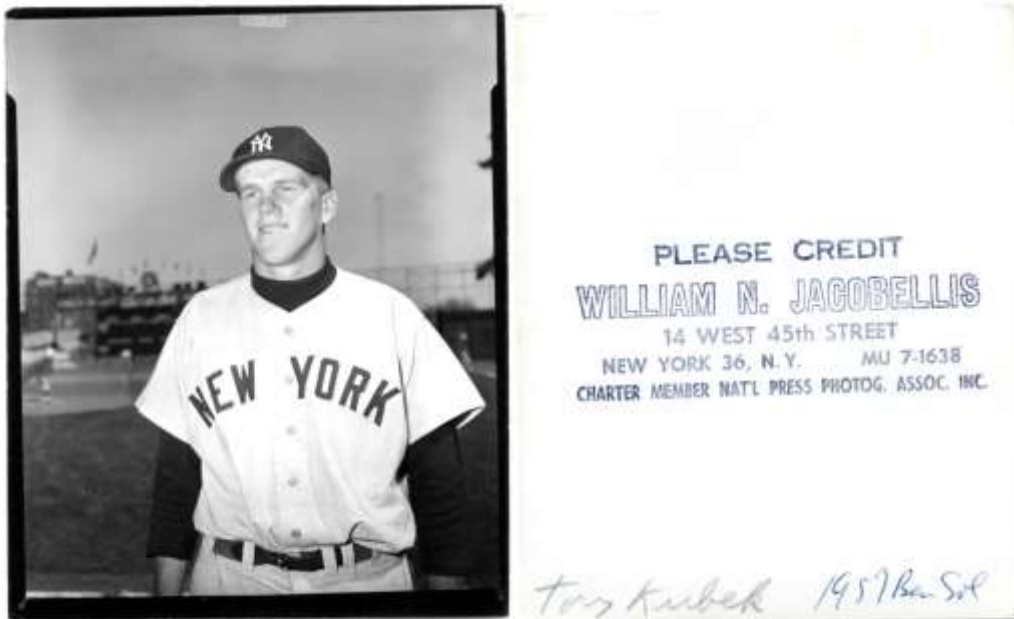


Image #12 – Tony Kubek contact proof (used on 1957 Topps card #312).



Image #13 – Sandy Koufax contact proof (used on 1956 Topps card #79).

Bill marked none of the images submitted to Topps with the word Topps. Ben Solomon was a partner with Woodie Gelman, the Topps art director. There are a couple of contact proofs that carry the notation, “JC or BenSol” (see image 14 as an example).

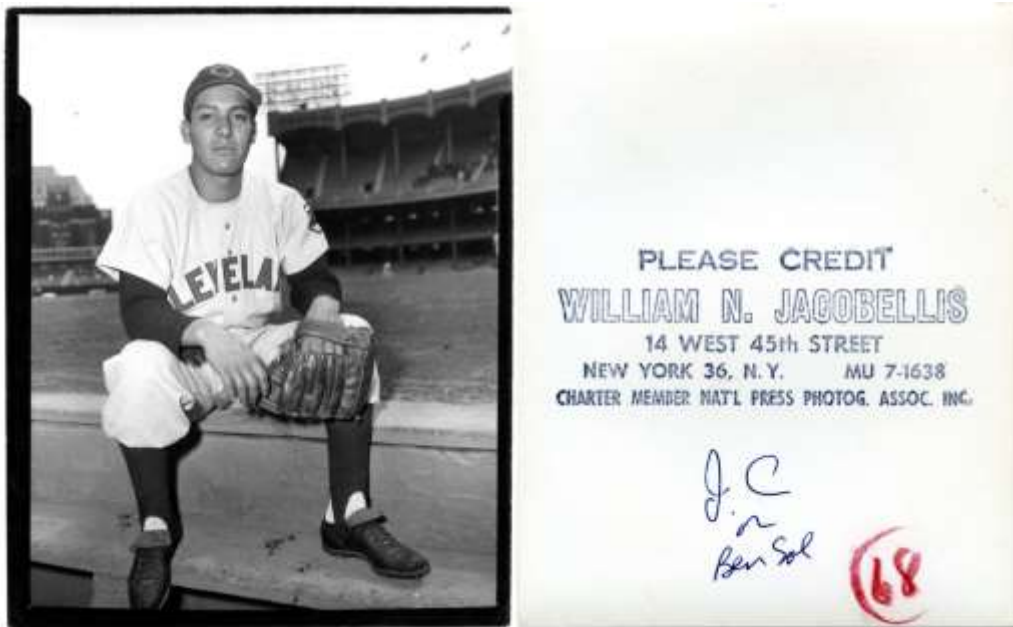


Image #14 – Bobby Avila contact proof (used on 1954 Bowman card #68).

To date, there are thirty-three (33) contact proofs of twenty-seven (27) different images that appear to have been submitted for consideration for the 1956 Bowman baseball card set. All of these images carry the designation, “JC 56” or “JC ‘56” on the lower portion, usually the lower right, of the reverse of the prints (see the images contained in Appendix A).

There are images in the collection that also contain the year 1956 on the reverse, but these images were used for Bill’s 1956 Baseball Pictorial annual magazine and carry the designation on the lower reverse of, “BP 1956” or “56 BP” or “1956 BP” for 1956 Baseball Pictorial (see images 15, 16 and 17).

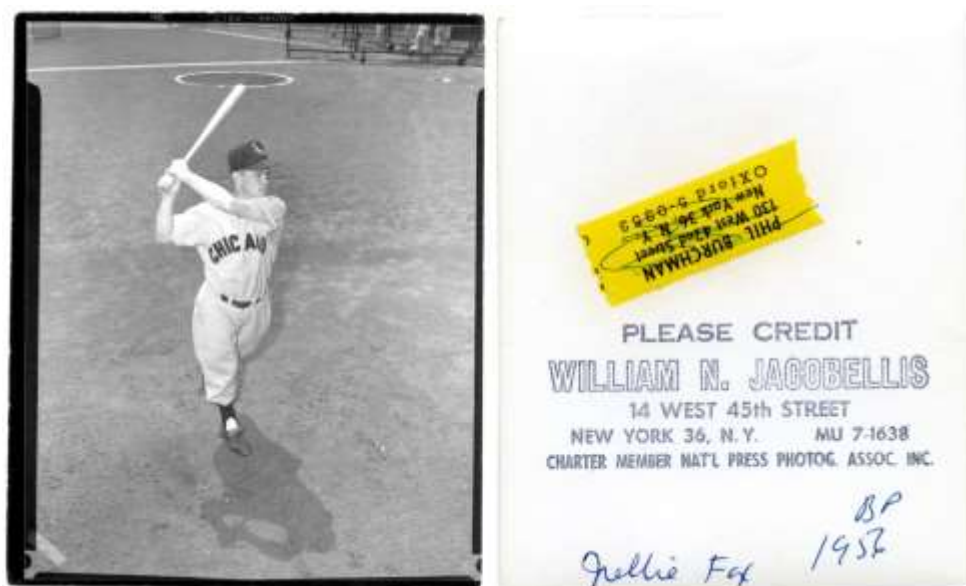


Image #15 – Nellie Fox contact proof (published in 1956 Baseball Pictorial, page).



Image #16 – Tommy Byrne contact proof (published in 1956 Baseball Pictorial, page).

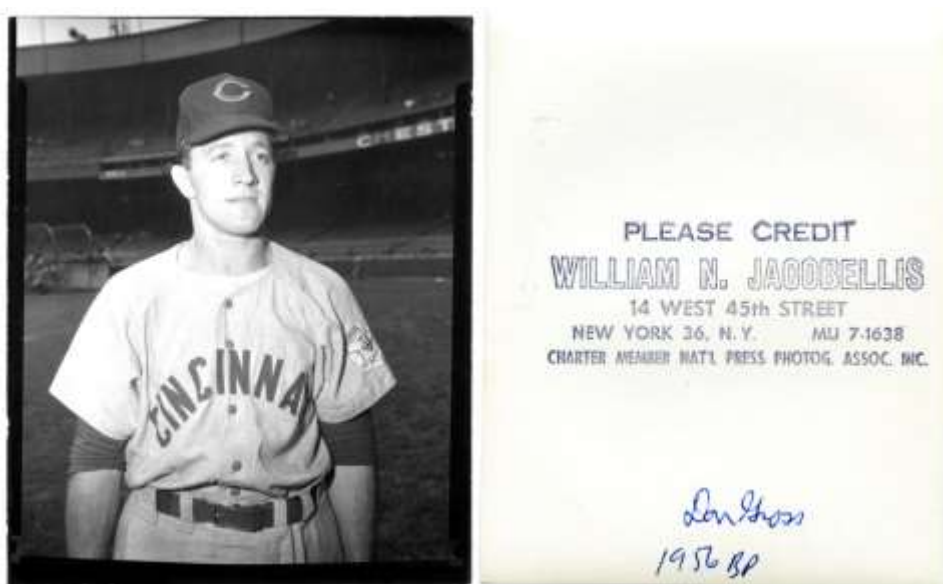


Image #17 – Don Gross contact proof (published in 1956 Baseball Pictorial, page).

A further review of the images that carry the, “JC56” or “JC’56” designation shows that there is a posed portrait and a posed full length image for several of the players, which fits in with the market tested design for the proposed 1956 Bowman baseball card set as detailed in the Bowman baseball card market report discovered in the files of Woody Gelman in 1983.

There is also an image of Clem Koshorek that is marked, “Possible Bowman or Ben Sol?” (see image #18, misspelled name on the front of the print). Koshorek is one of the players whose card mock ups were featured in the Bowman baseball card market report, although none of the mockups used this image.

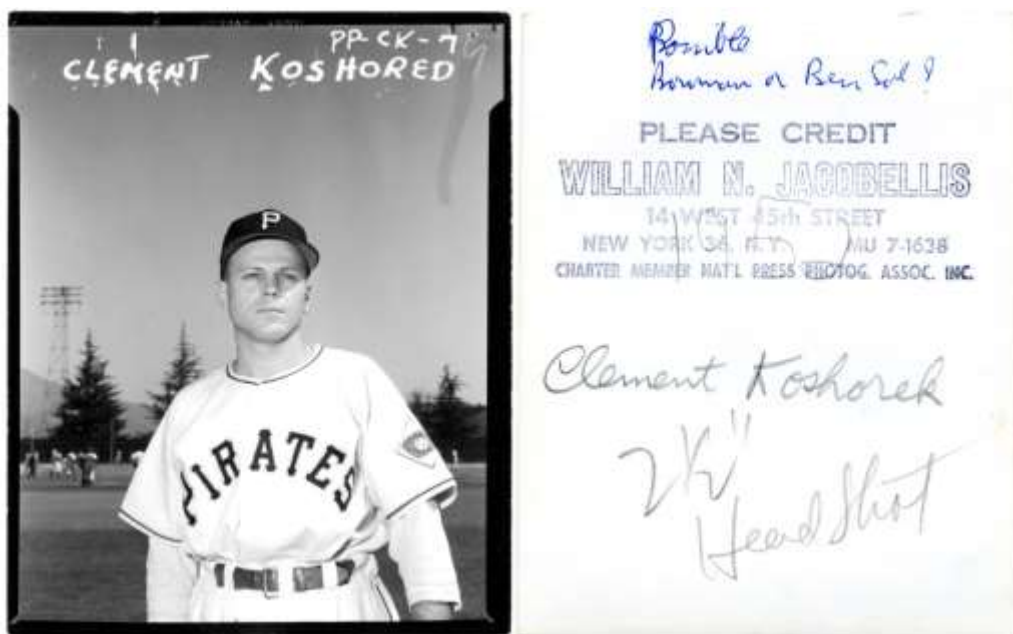


Image #18 – Clem Koshorek contact proof.

The assemblage of Jacobellis' contact proofs that include the "JC56" or "JC'56" designation were all located together amongst the rows of contact sheets within the archive, except for three additional copies of the Faye Throneberry image, which were located in one of his individual player negative sleeves. All of these additional prints also carried the "JC56" designation. There are also additional contact proofs of the Bob Bowman portrait and Fred Hutchinson full length pose that were unmarked. There is also an additional contact proof of the Bob Bowman portrait that is marked with BenSol on the reverse, although it was never published on a Topps card.

A couple of the JC56 prints also include ballpoint pen that crossed out the team name on the jersey and logo on the hat on the front of the contact proof. This appears to indicate to whomever may have to paint the final card image to use the players' current team, not the team in the image.

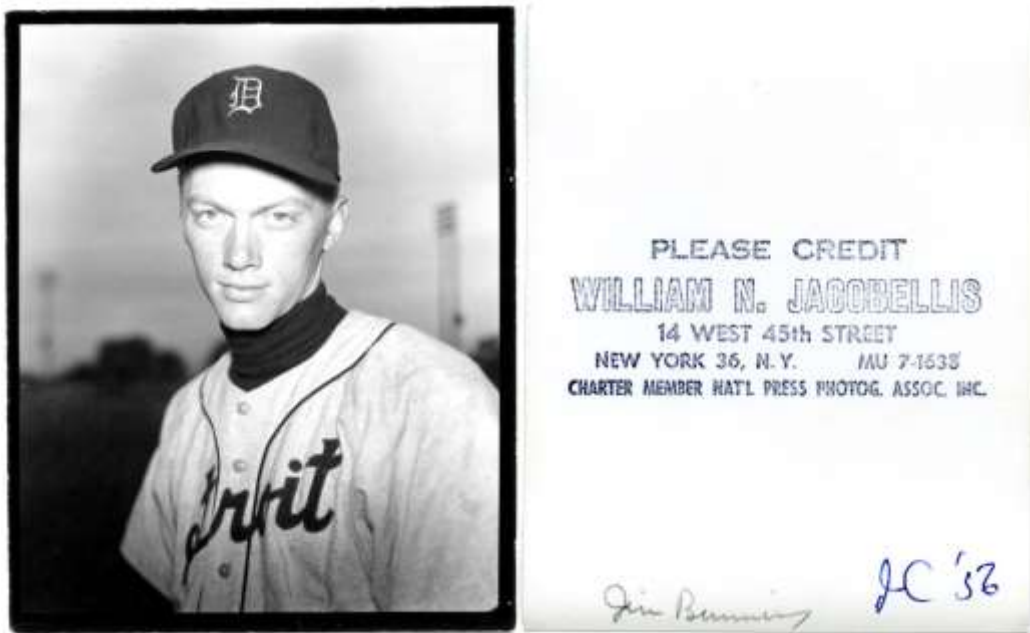
Based upon the way that Bill marked the reverse of his archives contact proofs and the markings on the reverse of the JC56 denoted proofs, it is plausible and logical that these prints were selected for inclusion in the 1956 Bowman Baseball card set, if it were ever produced.

Appendix A

1956 Bowman Baseball card photo image contact proofs



Jim Bunning contact proof #1



Jim Bunning contact proof #2



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Bob Bowman ? JC '56

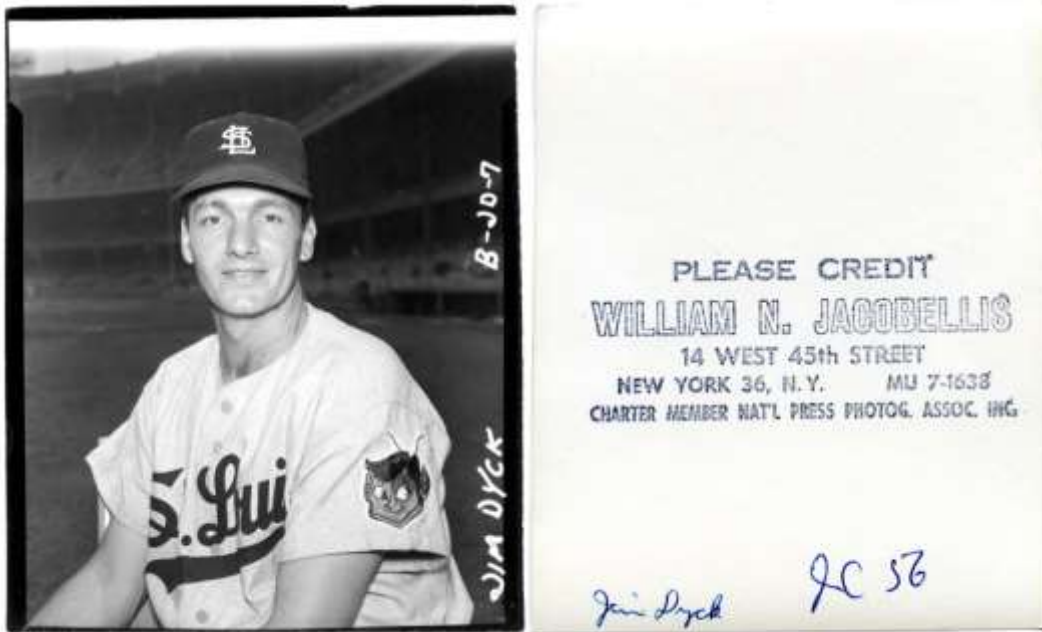
Bob Bowman contact proof #1



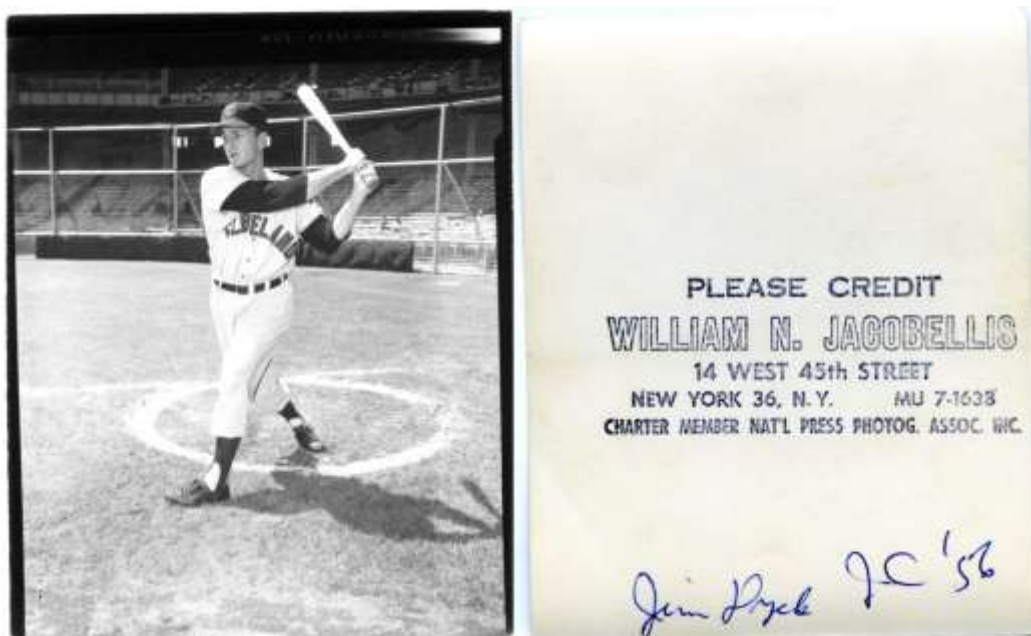
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Bob Bowman JC '56

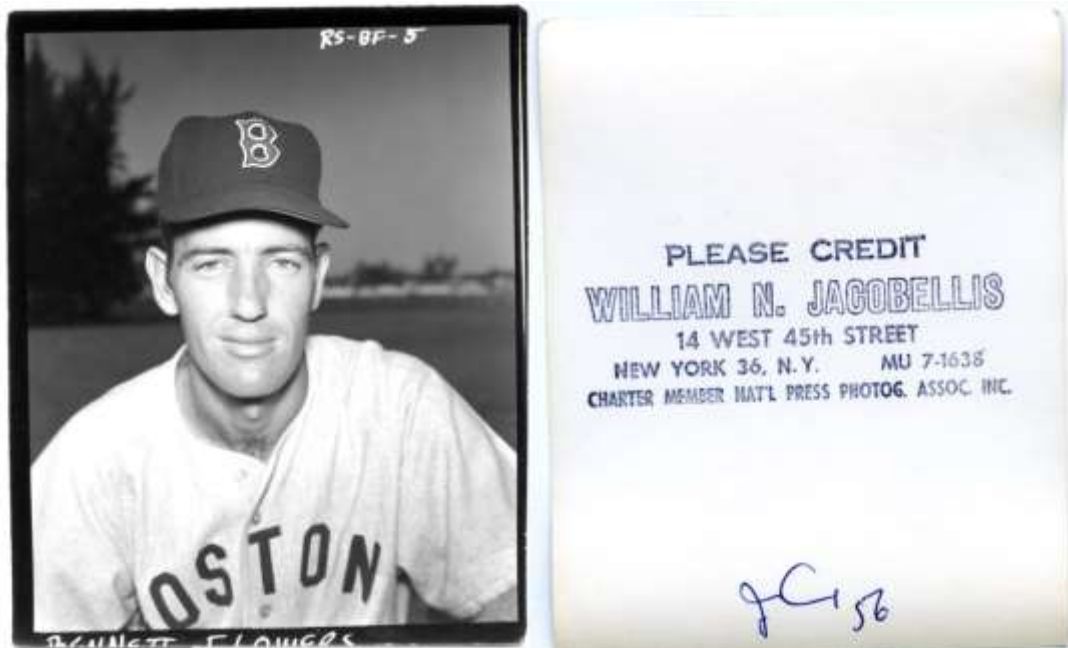
Bob Bowman contact proof #2



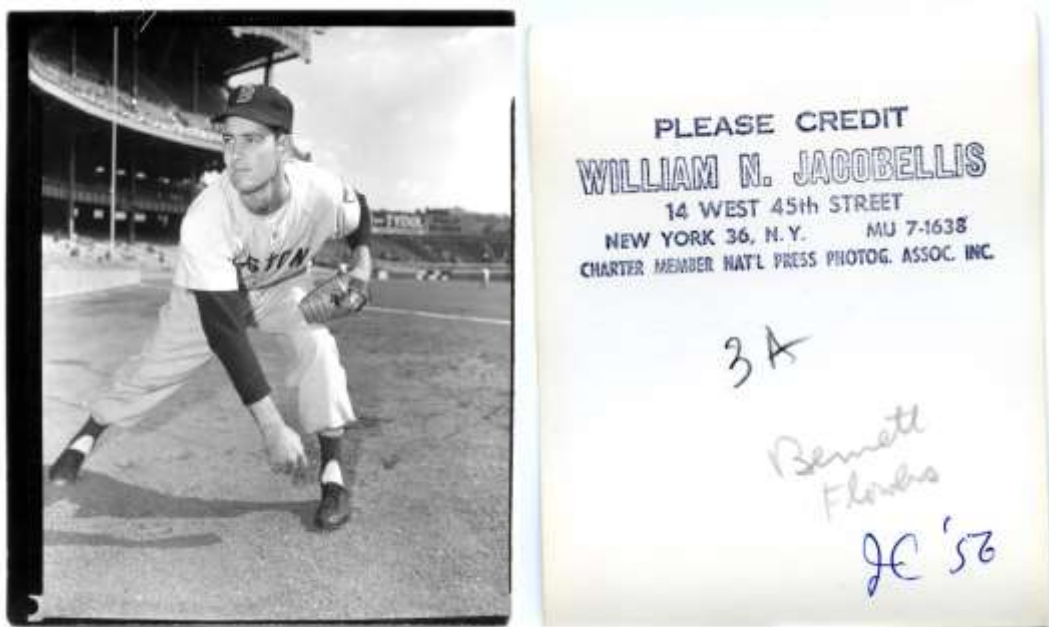
Jim Dyck contact proof #1



Jim Dyck contact proof #2



Bennett Flowers contact proof #1



Bennett Flowers contact proof #2



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Dick Donovan *JC '56*

Dick Donovan contact proof #1



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JC '56

Dick Donovan contact proof #2



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QC '58

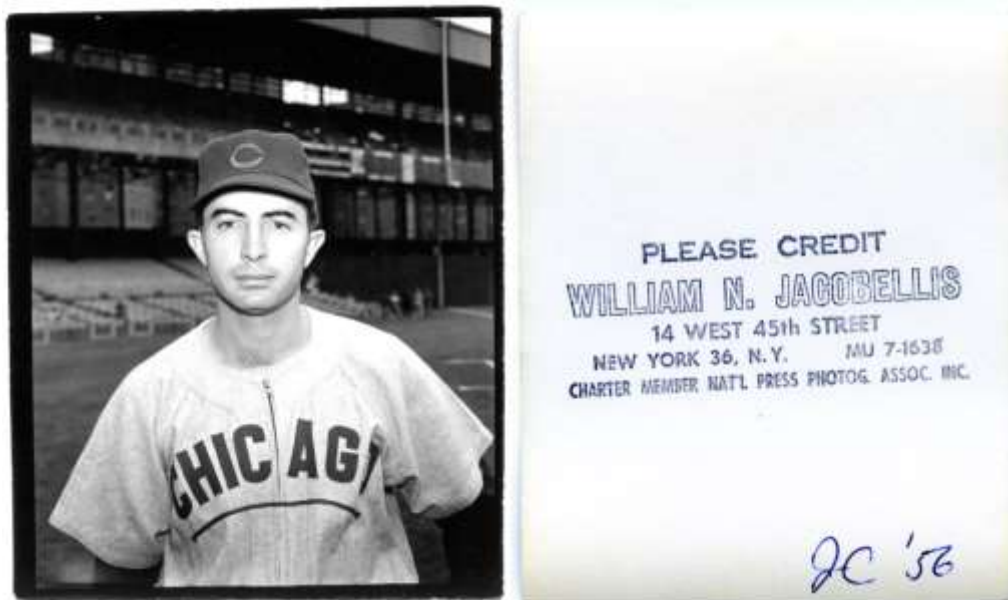
Fred Hutchinson contact proof #1



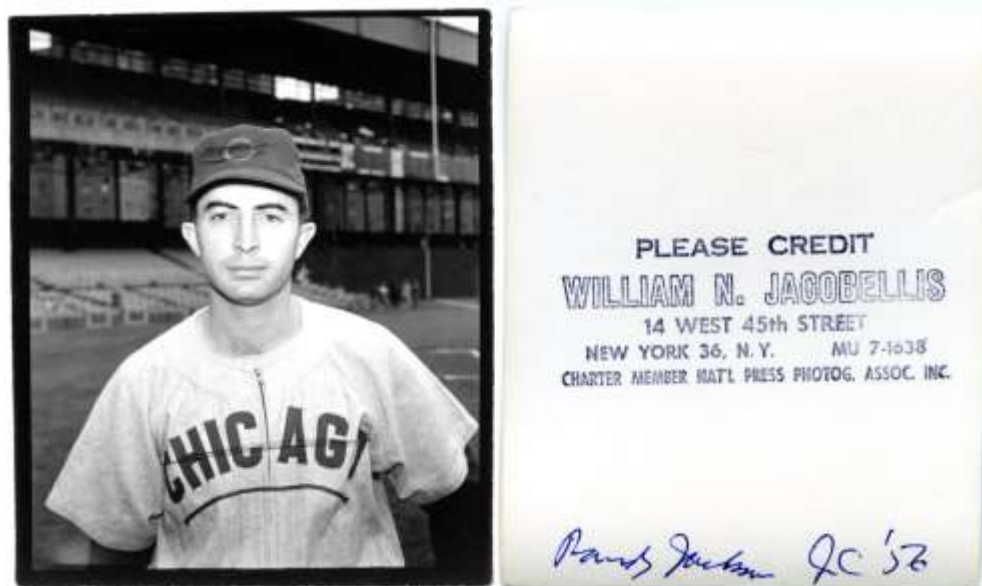
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Fred Hutchinson QC '58

Fred Hutchinson contact proof #2



Randy Jackson contact proof #1



Randy Jackson contact proof #2



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Connie Johnson JC '58

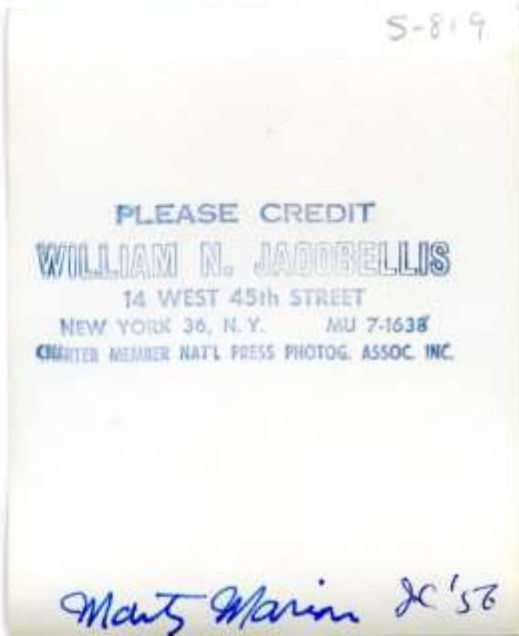
Connie Johnson contact proof #1



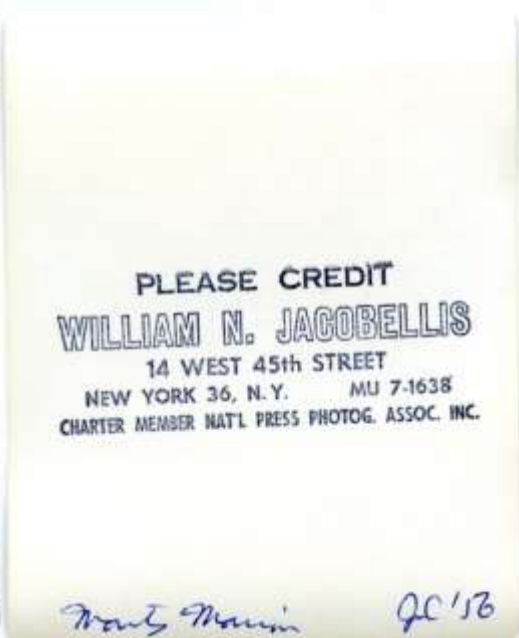
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Connie Johnson JC '58

Connie Johnson contact proof #2



Connie Johnson contact proof #1



Marty Marion contact proof #1



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Marty Marion 2C '56

Marty Marion contact proof #3



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2C '56

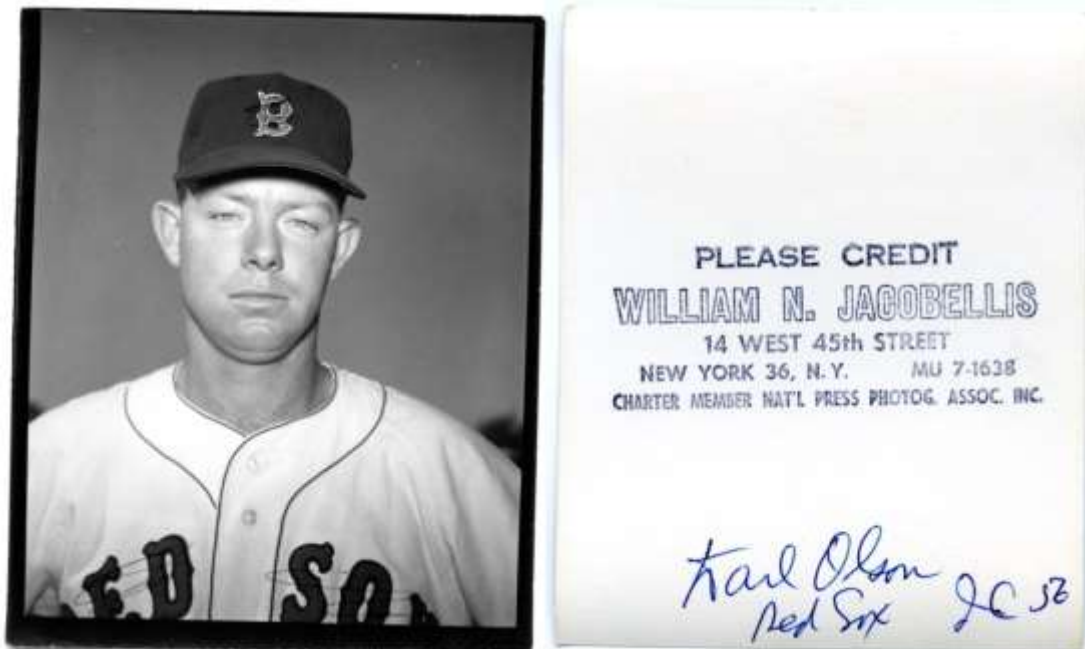
Jim Brideweser contact proof #1



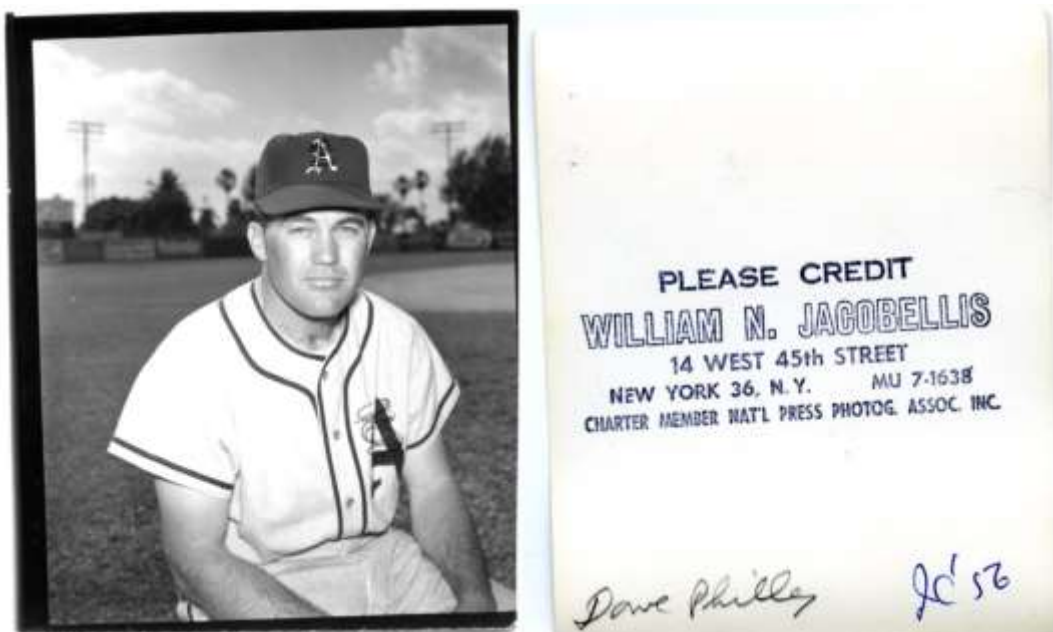
Felipe Montemayor contact proof #1



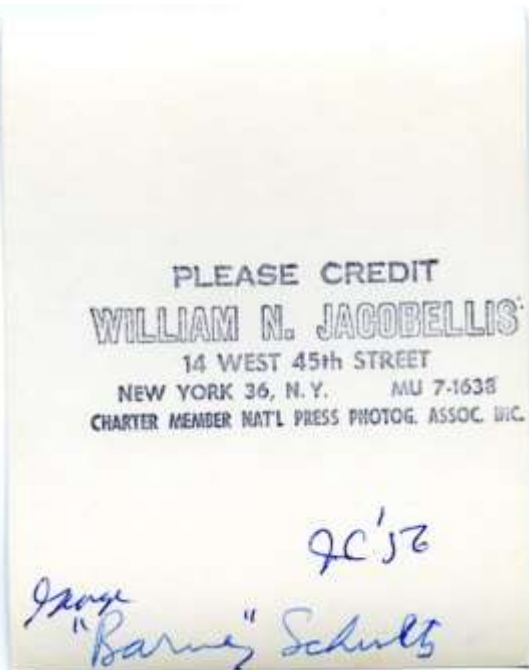
Walt Moryn contact proof #1



Karl Olson contact proof #1



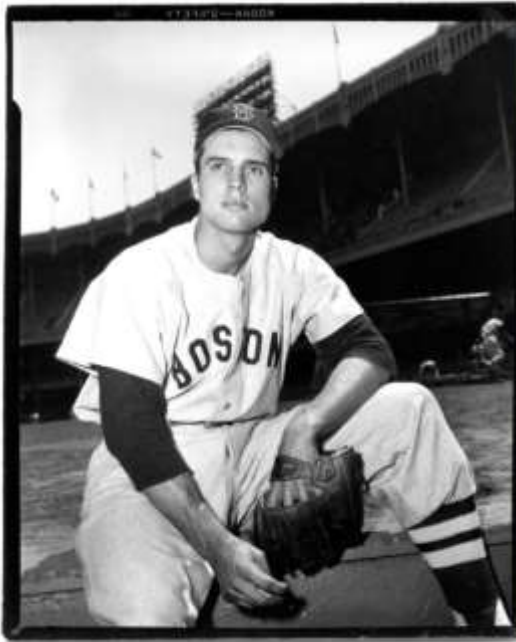
Dave Philley contact proof #1 (used on 1954 Topps card #159)



Barney Schultz contact proof #1



Barney Schultz contact proof #2



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QC '56
Faye Throneberry

Faye Throneberry contact proof #1



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Lee Walls

QC '56

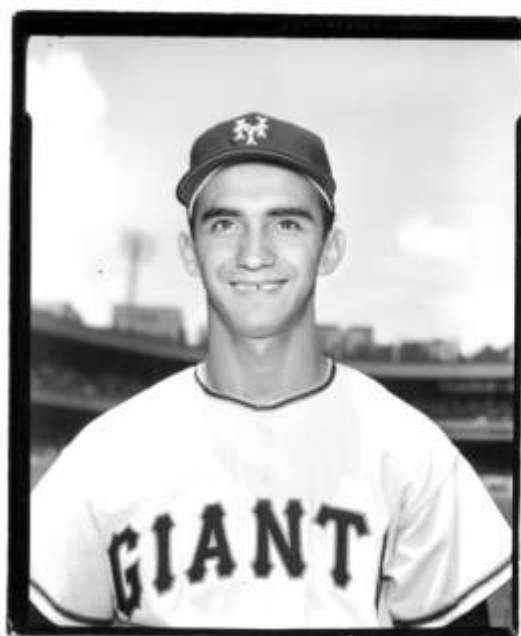
Lee Walls contact proof #1



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JC '56

Clyde McCullough contact proof #1



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JC '56

Ray Monzant contact proof #1