



## Chapter Eight – by Russ and Kay Hively

With his best swing Larry connected with the ball and hit a high pop fly to right center field. The runner on second base tagged up. The right fielder caught the ball. Then the runner on second base beat the ball home and tied the game. Larry was out, but he had earned an important sacrifice by moving the runner from second base all the way home.

Larry looked across the street at Uncle Chuck. His favorite uncle and his new friend, Mr. Williams, were clapping and cheering for him. It felt really good to have two such great fans. The next batter hit a home run to give Larry's team a one-run lead. This one run was enough to win the game.

When Uncle Chuck and Larry got home after the game, supper was almost ready. The men washed their faces and hands and sat down to eat. Halfway through the meal Mrs. Green said that a package had come for Larry. She said it was from his father and he could open it when they finished eating.

So much had been happening that Larry had forgotten that his father had promised to send a package. Now that he was reminded about the package, Larry got excited. He began to eat faster so he could open the package. However, his mother and Uncle Chuck seemed to take their time. In fact, it seemed like they had never eaten so slowly in all their lives.

Finally everyone was finished. Mrs. Green reached into a drawer and got a small square package wrapped in brown paper. She set it on the table in front of her son.

Quickly Larry tore into the package. Inside he found a baseball and a note. The baseball was brand new. Larry laid the ball on his lap and began reading the note.

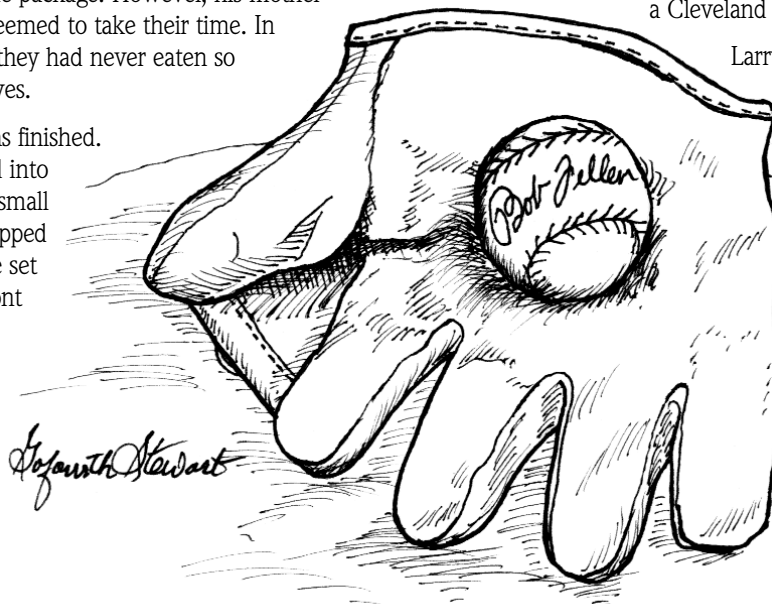
The note said that the baseball was a gift from one of his father's shipmates. Larry's father also wrote that his buddy had signed the ball. Larry read further down the note where his father said that when the war ended and they all got back to Cleveland, the shipmate would take the whole family to an Indians ballgame.

Carefully Larry picked up the ball and turned it over in his hand. There, right between the seams, was Bob Feller's signature. Larry gasped. Then he remembered that his hero, Bob Feller, had volunteered for the Navy right after Pearl Harbor was bombed. Now Larry's favorite baseball player was serving on the USS Alabama – the same ship as his dad.

Larry showed the ball to his mother and uncle. Once again, he had a prize to put on his dresser. Larry could hardly believe that he had a baseball signed by the great Bob Feller.

Now Larry had two things to look forward to when the war ended. His father would be coming home, and he would be going to a Cleveland Indians ballgame with Bob Feller.

Larry could hardly believe what had happened to him in the last few days. As he placed his new ball on the top of his dresser, Larry just knew there were more wonderful things to come.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart both live in Neosho, Mo. Co-author Russ Hively lives in Newtonia, Mo. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2005.

## Learning Extensions – Things to Think About and Do

- Bob Feller enlisted in the Navy after something happened at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. What happened at Pearl Harbor? Why did many people enlist in the military after Pearl Harbor?
- Did Bob Feller really serve on the USS Alabama? Did Bob Feller play for the Cleveland Indians after the war? Confirm these facts by checking more than one source.