



## Ray Chapman

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

### Introduction

Ray Chapman was a shortstop for the Cleveland Naps/Indians from 1912-1920. Though considered one of the best shortstops to ever play the game of baseball, Chapman is more famous for being the only Major League Baseball player to die from being struck by a ball. On August 16, 1920, Chapman was beamed by a pitch from Carl Mays of the New York Yankees, a submarine style pitcher with a history of being surly. Upon striking Chapman, the ball made such a loud cracking noise that Mays thought the ball had come off the bat. Mays threw the ball to first to complete the play before he turned to home and realized that Chapman had collapsed to his knees. Bloodied and unable to speak, Chapman was taken to a New York hospital where he died 12 hours later on August 17, 1920. The Cleveland Indians would go on to win their first World Series that same year, donating Chapman's share of the bonus money to his widow, Kathleen Daly Chapman. The following year, Major League Baseball established the rule to replace any ball that becomes dirty or damaged. It would not be until 1970 that it became mandatory for all batters to wear helmets. Ray Chapman is buried in Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio.

### Important Dates

- 1917: Ray Chapman sets team record for steals in a season with 52 (stood until 1980).
- 1918: Chapman leads the American League in runs scored and walks.
- August 16, 1920: Chapman is struck on the head by a pitch from Carl Mays.
- August 17, 1920: Despite surgery, Chapman dies in a New York City hospital.
- August 20, 1920: Chapman's funeral is held at St. John's Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio. Thousands were in attendance.
- 2006: Chapman is inducted in the Cleveland Indians Hall of Fame.

### Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: Ray Chapman, Cleveland Indians, shortstop, bean, die, memorial, mourn, Carl Mays, funeral.
- Use specific date ranges when looking for articles in order to narrow your results.

### Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Ray Chapman Helps Indians](#)" *Bismarck Tribune* (Bismarck, ND), July 20, 1917, Image 6, col. 5.
- "[Picking the All-American Baseball Team for the Fans](#)" *Ogden Standard* (Ogden City, UT), December 22, 1917, Image 22.
- "[Over the Sport Trail](#)" *New-York Tribune* (New York, NY), March 9, 1918, Image 14, col. 3.
- "[Star Infielder of Cleveland Hit in Head by Pitched Ball; Fate in Doubt at Midnight](#)" *New-York Tribune* (New York, NY), August 17, 1920, Image 12, col. 1-2.
- "[Hundreds Mourn Chapman](#)" *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, TX), August 18, 1920, Image 9, col. 4-5.
- "[All Baseballdom Mourns Loss of 'Chappie'](#)" *Washington Herald* (Washington, D.C.), August 19, 1920, Image 8, col. 4.
- "[Ray Chapman, Killed in Baseball Game](#)" *Hartford Herald* (Hartford, KY), September 1, 1920, Image 2.