

Sports Market Report

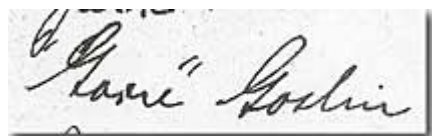
February 18, 2003

The Autograph Expert - Vintage Series

AUTOGRAPH ANALYSIS AND SIGNING HABITS OF HALL OF FAME OUTFIELDER LEON "GOOSE" GOSLIN

On a small farm in Salem, NJ, on October 16, 1900, Leon Allen Goslin was born. His ancestry was of English-Scottish and American-Indian derivation. Farm chores chiseled what was to become the 5'11, 185 pound frame, not to mention often bicycling over ten miles just to participate in sandlot games.

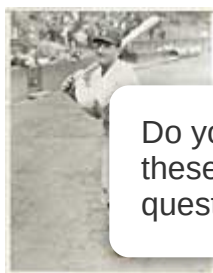
The blue-eyed, light brown-haired Leon was forced to quit County School of Salem at age 14 when his father became ill and unable to run his southern New Jersey farm. His family was forced to sell their land and relocate to downtown Salem. At sixteen, the right-hander began pitching for the semi-pro Salem All-Stars where he earned \$3 per game.



Goose Goslin 1933 signed album page (<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-1933-signed-album-01.jpg>)

While pitching in an industrial league, umpire Bill McGowan encouraged him to play professionally. Leon joined the Columbia Comers (Class C Sally League) in 1920 and was immediately switched to the outfield when manager Zinn Beck recognized his left-handed power at bat was better than ducking hard hit drives in the coach's box as Goslin pitched. Goslin's enthusiasm never waned and was later quoted "I never could wait for spring to come so I could get out there and swat those fastballs".

In 1921, Goslin caught the eye of minor league Baltimore Oriole owner Jack Dunn who planned a \$5000 offer, but the ever shrewd Washington Owner Clark Griffith beat him to the deal with a \$6000 contract. Not forgetting the guidance of McGowan years earlier, Goose coaxed Griffith to use his influence to have the future Hall of Fame arbitrator (1992) elevated to the American League.



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Goose Goslin 1934 signed wire photograph (<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-1934->

Goose debuted on September 16, 1921, and immediately responded with a bases-loaded triple that defeated Chicago. His nickname "Goose" derived from when he flapped his arms chasing flyballs, however when interviewed later in life, he pointed out that the alliteration was a natural, a gosling being a small goose. His bulbous nose also gave credence to another theory that warrants exploration.

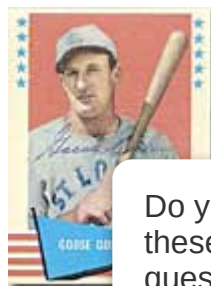
Terribly naïve as a rookie, he thought the opposing pitchers were throwing wildly rather than deliberately throwing at him. He was not intimidated by the big name pitchers, often not knowing their prowess. His swing was like the mighty Babe Ruth's, often ending up on the ground after putting everything into it. He never seemed satisfied that he got all of a pitch, even when sending it deep for a home run, of which happened 248 times.



Goose Goslin 1951 Karl Winger Questionnaire (<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-1951-Questionnaire.jpg>)

Goslin played for eighteen seasons, collecting 2735 hits and averaging .316. He was never considered quick, graceful or adept at playing the outfield and had to rely on his arm as his primary defensive skill. Regrettably, during spring training in 1928, he wandered over to a high school track and tried unsuccessfully to emulate the shot putters. For a half hour he threw the 12-pound metal ball like a baseball and permanently damaged his strong throwing arm.

The injury didn't spoil his batting average. He went on that season to edge out Heine Manush for the batting title (.379) by only one point and squeaking out a "lucky hit" in his last at bat to do so. He is the only Washington Senator to appear in every World Series game. As batting hero in the 1924 fall classic, he was instrumental in Washington's only World Championship. Despite hitting three home runs in the following year's series, the Senators lost to the Pirates in seven games. Tough times during the Depression years forced the Senators to trade their star. In 1930, he was assigned to the Browns for Manush and Alvin Crowder, played well with his zebra-striped bat (later made illegal by American League President Harridge) over three seasons before returning to the Senators pennant-winning squad in 1933. For the next four seasons, he joined the Tigers two championship teams, winning the World Series in 1935.



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Goose Goslin 1961 Fleer signed gum card. (<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-1961-Fleer-Gum-Card.jpg>)

During the 1934 series, he made an on field remark to umpire Bill Klem, calling him the dreaded moniker "Catfish." After a heated argument, the name calling led to an apology from Goslin on a crowded elevator. Unforgiving, Klem lambasted Goslin with a tantrum of "unripe" language that resulted in a \$200 fine from Judge Landis. Goslin remained unpunished.

Extremely popular with Detroit fans, and a fine performance in the 1936 season, resulted in Goslin's selection to his only All-Star Game. He was a member of five World Series teams. Goose finished his major league career where he started in Washington and participated in only 38 games. The hard-hitting slugger's final at bat was never completed. He wrenched his back on a powerful swing that summoned a pinch hitter, the only time this ever happened in his career. Goslin went on to become a player-manager for Trenton of the Inter-State League in 1939-40, and then managed the club in 1941, which became his last job in baseball. He commented, "A manager hasn't got any business being out in the field".

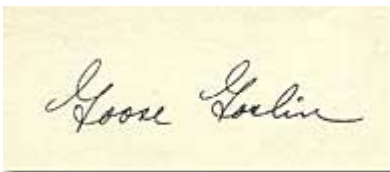


Goose Goslin Circa 1970-71 black and white 8x10 photo.

(<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-Circa-1970-71photo.jpg>)

On December 10, 1940, Goslin married Marion Wallace and resided on a 66-acre plot at Bayside in Bridgeton, NJ. He retired, playing golf and spending time relaxing in Florida. Goslin's wife died in 1959 and then Goose spent years operating a boat-rental concession, a fishing and crabbing business in Bridgeton, until 1969.

He expressed disappointment when his rival, Manush, was selected to the Hall of Fame in 1965 and that he was passed over. Three years later, on July 22, 1968, he was inducted with Joe Medwick and the late Kiki Cuyler and was quite emotional about the honor. This was to be the only ceremony he was to attend. Living alone, smoking heavily, he developed cancer and in July, 1970, his larynx was removed. Goose died at age 70 in a Bridgeton hospital, on May 15, 1971, just three days after Manush had passed away. He was buried in Baptist Cemetery in his birth home of Salem, NJ. He was survived by two brothers, Russell and James (his beneficiary) and a sister Mrs. Mary Trentham.



Goose Goslin Circa 1970-71 sec.

(<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/>)

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Goose, as he would refer to himself, was a cord at the ballpark or at home. The right-handed Goslin enjoyed an acutely slanted garrulous style of writing that gave the impression that his signature was almost going to "tip over".

Not often did he use a greeting or salutation fulfilling requests, but one might find he would employ "Hello ... " or even "Good Luck". The initial upstroke of the capital "G"s reaches high above all the other characters and combined to create a loop, eyelet and finishing loop before a series of sagging connector strokes chain together an uninterrupted "oose". Quotation marks were a trademark throughout his career, however, he might omit them towards the end of his life. The second identical "G" followed the same pattern on the "os" and continuing into the "l-i" and an "n" that better resembled a "u" with exaggerated terminal horizontal stroke. An angled dash over the "n" tended to be used over a dotting of the "i". Variations occurred in the closings of the "s"s and the height of the "l".



Goose Goslin Curteichcolor HOF plaque sec. version (circa 1970-71)

([https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-Curteichcolor-HOF-\(c.jpg\)](https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-Curteichcolor-HOF-(c.jpg)))

Towards the final year of his life, Goslin's signature became shaky, scratchy and jagged, not possessing the fluidity and conviction that he had once mastered. One could tell by his writing that the end was near. His failing health and increased demand for his signature just prior to his death resulted in the use of a ghost signer to respond to his mail requests. This version is far more common than his actual signature, especially on Curteichcolor Hall of Fame gold plaque postcards. Identifying these secretarial signed examples can most notably be picked out by the initial curled strokes, ampersand-like base of the "G"s, and elevated quotation marks. Even the "s" appears to close and overlap in a different fashion. The entire slant of the signature was inclined to be more upright and more rounded. The demand for his autograph increased significantly upon his new status as a member of baseball's elite class.



Goose Goslin gold HOF plaque postcard (Circa 1968-69).

([https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-gold-HOF\(Circa-1968-.jpg\)](https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-gold-HOF(Circa-1968-.jpg)))

So what can one expect to find in searching for Goose Goslin's autograph? His typical, well-centered index cards are the most common form of autograph and should range between \$150 and \$200. Government postcards deserve the usual 20% premium and are often postmarked from Southern New Jersey. His Hall of Fame plaque postcard is a rare jewel and should be priced at a minimum of \$4000. No, the versions may be half the price. Not terribly literate, expect to find handwritten letters or even typed notes (\$350 and up) are seldom offered and are limited in verbiage. Single signed baseballs should start at \$2500. Picture postcards (\$350 plus) and 8x10 black and white photographs

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(low end \$500) are always saleable. Stay away from offers of signed bats, jerseys, gloves, etc. These are most likely forgeries. Team signed baseballs and album pages are more likely mediums for his autograph specimen and their values are subjective. Canceled personal checks have never made their way into the market if they do exist at all.



Goose Goslin Perez-Steele Galleries 1981 postcard unsigned

(<https://images.collectors.com/smrweb/smr0303/Goslin-Perez-Steele1981.jpg>)

Goslin once described himself to writer Lawrence Ritter (*The Glory of Their Times*), "I was just a big ol' country boy having the time of my life. They didn't have to pay me. I'd have paid them to play. Listen, the truth is it was more than fun. It was heaven."

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