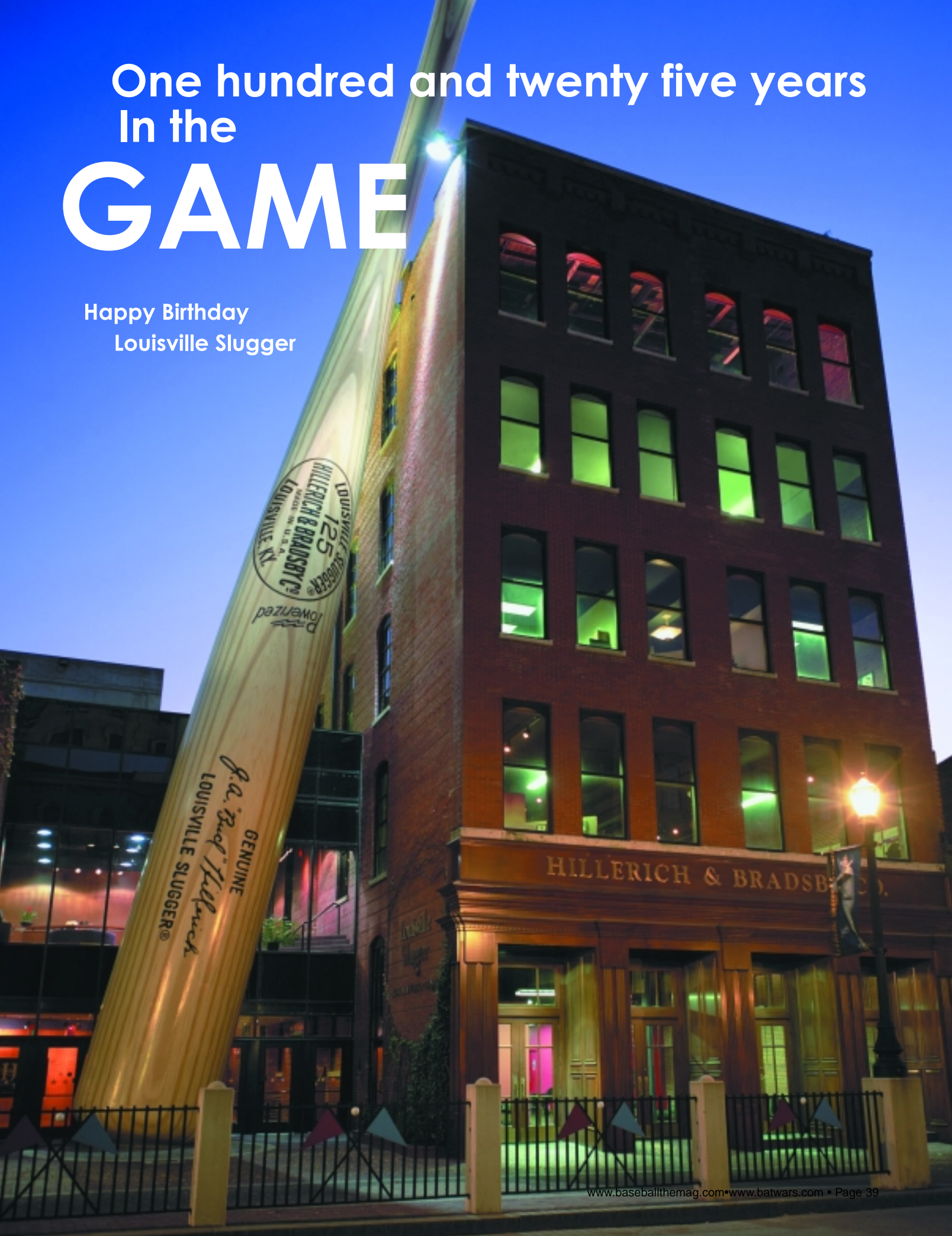


# One hundred and twenty five years In the GAME

Happy Birthday  
Louisville Slugger



# There is of course a changing of the

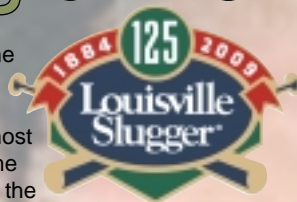
One hundred and twenty-five years. Think about that! The United States of America, as a sovereign republic, is only about one hundred years older than Louisville Slugger.

To put the time line of one hundred and twenty-five years in perspective, go back and think of the things you have seen change. If you are relatively young, say, under twenty, you have seen your cell phone go from a basic communication device (and parental tracking device) to a mini computer and camera. If you are in your late twenties, you saw the cell phone shrink to the size of a business card from that thing that used to weigh your Dad's pants down, often referred to as the "butt phone." If you are in your thirties, dang, you will remember we used to haul that first wireless giant around in a bag - in fact, we even called it a "bag phone!" If you're in your forties and beyond, the idea that phone would ever come off the wall or even be "un-corded" was way beyond any technology you would have ever dreamed of.

Is the technological evolution of the game of baseball any different? Time goes by fast and takes many things from the days past with it and the same is true of the game of baseball. But, if you love baseball, then you know something special. You know that there is a mystique connected with the history of the game that overrides new technology, a magic of sorts that brings people from all walks of life together. We all crane our necks to admire the



long ball off the bat, or thrill to the pick out of the air at short that results in the bam-bam double play. Baseball is magic. Baseball is timeless.



And through baseball's storied history, the most steadfast guardian of America's Favorite Pastime has been Louisville Slugger. In America and all the corners of the world that baseball reaches, "Louisville Slugger" is "baseball."

For most of you reading this magazine, as far as you are concerned, Louisville Slugger has always been...well...Slugger. And you may figure that it is a baseball company that has just "always been around."

The truth is, Louisville Slugger wasn't Louisville Slugger at all and just like the cell phone in your gear bag, it had a beginning. The business began from a wood-working shop in Louisville, Kentucky, owned by a German immigrant named J. Frederick Hillerich (pronounced Hill-rick). Mr. Hillerich began his career in woodworking as an apprentice wood turner and rose to the title of master craftsman. Mr. Hillerich happened to have a son, John Andrew "Bud" Hillerich, who had developed a deep love for the game of baseball when the organized play of the game was in its infancy.

Which was why Bud was at the game the day Pete "The Old Gladiator" Browning's bat broke instead of at his Dad's shop working. But what a day of hooky, baseball history and American industry history it turned out to be.

The year was 1884, Browning was fighting a slump, one that appeared to deepen when he broke his favorite bat. After the game, Bud Hillerich invited the despondent Browning to the shop where he said he'd create a new bat. Browning and Hillerich picked out a piece of white ash. Bud then began fashioning the new bat according to Browning's direction. They worked through the night, Hillerich periodically letting Browning take practice swings. Finally, Browning pronounced the bat just right.

The following day, Browning used the Hillerich bat to go three-for-three. The bat pulled Browning out of his slump and put the Hillerichs in the bat business. Despite his father's protests, Bud Hillerich continued making bats. It soon became a major part of the business. First called the "Falls City Slugger," it became known as the "Louisville Slugger" by 1894. Today, Louisville Slugger, whose corporate entity is Hillerich & Bradsby, is the oldest and largest such business in the world.

Bud Hillerich's tenure and activity with the company continued until his death in 1946 at 80. He was en route to the annual baseball meeting in Los Angeles, California when he died. The rest, as they say, is history, with a Hillerich still guiding the one hundred and twenty-five year old Louisville Slugger through the bat and ball sport industry.

If it's your turn to help pick out the family road trip this year, make sure to put the Louisville Slugger Museum on the list. Interactive exhibits, a factory tour, a glimpse of a major leaguer and haunting history await everyone in the family at 800 West Main Street.

If you love baseball, you'll love this museum, dubbed the "first museum ever devoted to hitters."

## The Babe Tracks The Long Ball

•In early spring 1927, Babe Ruth strode into the Hillerich & Bradsby plant. "Turn me out some bats," the Babe said. "I want the Sam Crawford model but one inch longer." The H&B wood turner went to work. The Babe hefted each bat as it was produced, 19 in all. He frowned constantly. Later, he wrote from New York, asking that they be shipped to him from Louisville anyway. After that, no message of endorsement was necessary. The Bambino discovered they were better bats than first impressions had led him to believe. He hit his record 60 home runs with them that year.

# generations in the game of baseball... but not a changing of the guard.

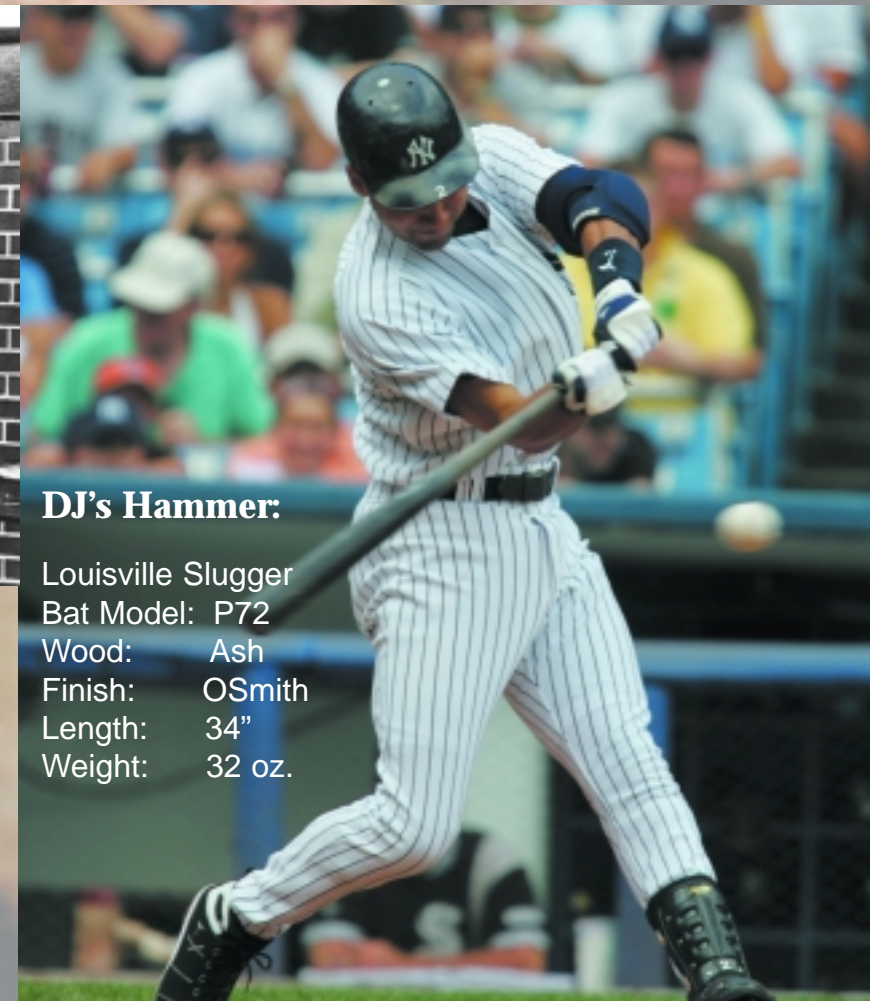


## Joe DiMaggio Shows Off His Louisville Slugger

•The number 125 has been inside the Louisville Slugger oval logo since at least 1916. The 125 indicates the timber that bat was made from is top grade professional baseball bat timber. Nice piece of trivia 92 years after the 125 first appeared when it is the company's 125th anniversary.

## The Fussiest Man in Baseball

•Ted Williams once complained about the way the handles tapered on his bats. He sent them back, saying their grips didn't feel right. They weren't. H&B staff members measured the grip with calipers against the models he had been using. They discovered that Williams' new bats were 5/1000ths of an inch off. Every Spring during his playing years, Williams would visit the Louisville Slugger plant. He would hardly break stride saying hello to executives in the office, but once with "his boys" in the factory, he called them by name and greeted them as old friends. Williams would soon be out of his coat and on a ladder, hand-picking timber for his bats. He spent time with each employee, as if to refresh them on how he wanted his bats made each year. In October of 1993, Williams wrote to H&B vice president Bill Williams, "I'd have been a .290 hitter without a Louisville Slugger."



### DJ's Hammer:

Louisville Slugger  
Bat Model: P72  
Wood: Ash  
Finish: OSmith  
Length: 34"  
Weight: 32 oz.



## And the hits keep coming...all through the generations.

### FACTS ABOUT LOUISVILLE SLUGGER® WOOD BATS

**1. How many trees does it take to make a season's bats?**  
About 40,000 per season.

**2. Does H&B own its own forests?**  
H&B owns about 7,500 acres of timberland in Pennsylvania and New York. The company also purchases timber from other sources.

**3. From what kinds of timber are bats made?**  
In our history we have used Northern White Ash, Hickory, Oak, and Maple. Today approximately 50% of Major League Baseball® bats we make are Ash and 50% are Maple.

**4. Why do players prefer Ash or Maple?**  
Ash has just the proper amount of tensile strength and resiliency required. These properties, in the finished bat, transmit power or drive. The weight of ash is also favorable, being very much in line with what is demanded. Maple is more dense than ash and, thus, considered a little harder. It is also heavier, which makes it challenging to find high grade light-weight maple for MLB bats. Today's players demand lighter weights than players of years ago, in large part because all of today's MLB players grew up as kids playing with lighter aluminum bats. Physics professors who've studied the properties of ash and maple say there's no real difference in how one performs over the other when made into baseball bats.

**5. Wasn't ash always the most popular?**  
Yes, for decades. But after some players started having success hitting home runs with maple in the 1990's more players started asking

for maple bats. Years ago, much hickory was used. Hickory has many desirable bat qualities, but it is too heavy to meet the demands of today's players who like lighter bats for the reasons noted in #4.



**6. What part of the country does the best bat timber come from?**  
The best white ash comes from parts of Pennsylvania, New York, and several other northeastern states where the terrain, soil, and climate are most favorable to its growth. Louisville Slugger also harvests its maple timber from this area.

**7. What are "Billets" and how many are in the process of seasoning at all times?**  
Billets are 3" round and 37" long solid cylinders of wood extracted in one piece from the harvested trees. Though exact figures are never made public, there are hundreds of thousands.

**8. When the billets are seasoned, what follows?**  
They are dowelled to uniform size, inspected for defects, sorted by quality, weighed and manufactured into different sized baseball and softball bats.

**9. How many Louisville Slugger wood bats are made yearly?**  
Today, approximately 1.8 million, including souvenir bats.

**10. What have been the most wood bats H&B has made in one year?**  
Six million.

**11. In addition to the Pros, where are wood bats most often used?**  
Wood bat usage has declined because of greater reliance on aluminum and composite materials at the amateur levels of baseball and softball. Wood bats are used at all levels of professional baseball (Major League, AAA, AA, A, Rookie, and Independent Leagues) as well as some wood bat amateur baseball leagues.

**12. How many other U.S. companies are in the wood bat business?**  
Several dozen.

**13. What did ball players use before Louisville Slugger bats?**  
They purchased bats from other companies or they simply had their bats made by wood turning shops in their home towns.

**14. How do today's bats compare with those of yesterday?**  
Today's bats are lighter. They have larger barrels and thinner handles. Both Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron used similar shaped model bats, however, Ruth was known to order bats that weighed as much as 42 ounces. The R43 model bats Ruth used to hit his record 60 homeruns in a 154 game season in 1927 were 35-1/2 inches long and weighed 38-1/2 ounces and were made from hickory. Many of Hank Aaron's bats weighed 33 ounces and were made from ash.

**15. How many models does H&B make?**  
Even though there are over 8,000 variations, the players today only choose from approximately 300 popular models.

**16. What were some of the "extremes" used by players?**  
• Edd Roush of the Cincinnati Reds used the heaviest bat, a 48 ounce piece of timber.  
• Billy Goodman, who won the batting championship in 1950, while with the Boston Red Sox, used a very light bat. It was just 30 ounces.

• Joe Morgan, former Most Valuable Player of the Cincinnati Reds also used a 30 ounce bat.  
• The longest bat in our history was used by Al Simmons, a 38" bat. Simmons played with Philadelphia and Boston in the American League during the 1940's.  
• The shortest bat ever ordered for regular play was a 30 1/2", order by Willie Keeler, who played with the Yankees.

**17. Whose model is the most popular today?**  
Jose Cardenal's Model C271. Today it is used by dozens of MLB players including Alex Rodriguez and Ken Griffey, Jr.

**18. Are there any nicknames for bats?**  
Timber, Lumber, Stick, Black Death, Black Betsy.

**19. Describe the bats of Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, Mickey Mantle, and Roger Maris.**  
• Ruth often used a 36" and 42 ounce bat with a medium handle and medium barrel, although the his orders also show some variance in length and weight, especially going to lighter bats later in the season.  
• Hank Aaron used a bat similar to Babe Ruth's except his was 35" long and weighed 33 ounces.  
• Mickey Mantle used a medium handle and a small to medium barrel, at 35" and 32 ounces.  
• Roger Maris used a medium barrel with a medium handle. also worth noting that MLB does not permit bat handles to be less than 16/19 of an-inch in diameter.

© Hillerich & Bradsby Co. 2008, 800 West Main, Louisville, KY 40202