# Louisville Slugger Encyclopedia Article

## Louisville Slugger

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# Louisville Slugger

Louisville Slugger is the name for America's most popular baseball bat. In 1884, Bud Hillerich, a manufacturer of wooden posts, columns, bowling balls and pins in Louisville, Kentucky, produced a custom-made bat for major league star Pete Browning. While swinging the new bat, Browning soared out of a slump and initiated demand for Hillerich's bats. By 1894 the bats had acquired the name Louisville Slugger, which since then has appeared in an oval on each bat. The Louisville Slugger began the now ubiquitous practice of athlete endorsements of sporting goods when, in 1905, Honus Wagner (known to baseball fans as "The Flying Dutchman") gave permission for his autograph to be included on the bats. Over the century, other famous ball players whose signatures have appeared on Louisville Slugger bats include Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Hank Aaron, and Johnny Bench. These endorsements, as well as the records that have been broken by players while using the bats, firmly established the Louisville Slugger's reputation. Most notably, Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs in 1927 using Louisville Sluggers made to his specifications.

**The Transportation Building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.**

## Further Reading:

Arnow, Jan. *Louisville Slugger: The Making of a Baseball Bat.* New York, Pantheon Books, 1984.