Rizzuto, Phil (1918-) Encyclopedia Article

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Rizzuto, Phil (1918—)

New York Yankees shortstop and colorful television and radio announcer Phil Rizzuto gave new meaning to the exclamation "Holy Cow!" The wiry New York native debuted with the Yankees in 1940 and, except for a three-year stint in the Navy during World War II, made the baseball team his lifelong living. Keystone of the team's defense in the 1940s and 1950s, he was voted the American League's Most Valuable Player in 1950 and inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1994. "The Scooter" became a Yankees sportscaster after retiring from play in 1956, bringing his tremendous personal warmth to the game. He appealed to fans not only with his enthusiasm and insider's knowledge but with rambling personal anecdotes, amusing commentary, and descriptions of Italian delicacies he consumed with colleagues in the broadcast booth. His *cri de cow* —used to describe everything from bad calls to violent rainstorms and grand slams—was adopted in a rock song by Meat Loaf and served as the title of a book of his on-air musings translated into free verse.

Further Reading:

Halberstam, David. *Summer of '49.* New York, William Morrow and Company, 1989.

Kelley, Brent. *Baseball Stars of the 1950s.* Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland & Company, 1993.

Peyer, Tom, and Hart Seely, editors. *O Holy Cow! The Selected Verse of Phil Rizzuto.* Hopewell, New Jersey, Ecco Press, 1993.