

After the St. Louis Browns and Veeck shifted their sights to Baltimore, Miller saw an opportunity. “So, I called Perini, and I said I thought now was the time if he wouldn’t sell to me for him to move the Braves to Milwaukee. Lou said: ‘I’ve been thinking about it, too.’”

The article continued that it would cost Perini \$500,000 to \$700,000 to move the team. He would have to recover that money. The author Birtwell asked Miller why it would cost so much. Miller lamented, “He has a terrific loss on the Brewers. He has to move to Toledo, a place where baseball has already failed. He also was forced to cancel a \$320,000 radio and television contract in Boston...Lou had to take a loss on all his advance advertising, all his advance ticket sales and programs and promotions.” These costs would have to be covered in order for Perini to move.

Ford Frick again made headlines when he suddenly backtracked on his original statement by announcing that baseball clubs did not need his approval to move and that he “only settles controversial matters between the clubs.” This about-face by the commissioner opened the door for Fred.

When Lou Perini said he had been thinking about moving the Braves to Milwaukee and because of Frick’s new stance, Fred quickly went to work. Fred called Perini again.

He said, “I asked him if the Braves could be moved here this year. How long are you going to love Boston as much as you do?” Perini replied, “All right, if you can work out a satisfactory deal for County Stadium, I’ll come.”

Fred called a secret meeting with the Milwaukee County Park Commission. Within two hours, Fred and the committee had secured a favorable deal for Perini. The Braves would pay a token rental fee of \$1,000 a year for two years.

The final incentive that convinced Perini to make the move to Milwaukee was Fred’s purchase of the Braves’ radio and television rights for five years. Fred more than made up for the Braves’ and Brewers’ losses in moving the team by paying a large price for the rights. The Miller Brewing Company paid a total of \$1 million for the rights. The brewery would pay \$200,000 each year of the team’s first five years in Milwaukee.

Fred didn’t stop there. He was convinced of the Braves success and guaranteed Perini that the Brewery would purchase \$25,000 worth of Braves tickets for each

of the first five years. The tickets would mainly be used on the brewery's special High Life Night at the stadium. Fred commented on the special night by saying, "Each Miller employee will receive three tickets for the September 25 event. The Miller High Life band will also be on hand for the festivities."

Hall of Fame Braves pitcher Warren Spahn further illustrated Fred's confidence in Milwaukee's ability to support Major League Baseball. Spahn stated: "Miller underwrote the move to Milwaukee and guaranteed Perini a new stadium and 850,000 people in attendance in 1953, and that's the reason the ball club moved there." The guarantee would provide a payment from Miller to Perini for every fan if attendance was under 850,000.

Fred stated; "My ambition is to make Milwaukee a sports center and keep it that way."

Along with these incentives, Perini knew that County Stadium had 10,000 parking spaces. Parking would provide additional revenue for the team. The parking aspect was an advantage other teams didn't have. The East Coast teams were land locked and didn't have parking for the fans.

The incentives were too good to pass up. Perini knew he was being handed a good deal. Perini spoke of his relationship and the influence of Fred Miller in an article titled "Perini Praises Miller." Perini said, "Fred and I have become good friends. It is men like Fred Miller, whom I've learned to know in Milwaukee, that made me turn to your city."

Fred had worked hard to get a stadium built and bring a big league team to his city, and during the process, he had cemented a deal that Miller Brewing Company would have exclusive rights for all beer sales at County Stadium. These rights understandably divided the citizens of Milwaukee. The other breweries and their employees weren't jumping on board to support Milwaukee's quest for Major League Baseball. But Fred was convinced he had earned these exclusive rights and didn't want to give them up. Finally, Fred's cousin, brewery vice-president and large shareholder Lorraine Mulberger, stepped in and said that they should open up the rights to the other Milwaukee breweries. Fred wisely consented, bringing everyone on board to welcome the Braves to Milwaukee.

Perini was all in to move the Braves to Milwaukee. The final step was

convincing the other National League owners to approve the shift. The meeting took place on March 18, 1953. The day before the National League owners met, the American League owners had turned down Bill Veeck's proposal to move the St. Louis Browns to Baltimore. The reason given was that it was too close to the start of the season. Denying the Browns move to Baltimore put the Braves move to Milwaukee in jeopardy as a precedent had been set. The night before the meeting, the people of Milwaukee flooded Warren Giles, the National League president, and the National League owners with phone calls and telegrams. They were frantically appealing to the owners to approve the move.

Perini, who needed a unanimous vote from the eight National League Club owners, made a flawless presentation. The *Milwaukee Journal* reported: "Lou Perini was in top form. He gave the speech of a lifetime to his fellow National League owners. He spoke for almost an hour." Perini's impassioned speech did the trick. The National League owners unanimously approved the move. It's interesting that during the meeting Perini was asked if Fred Miller had any stock in the team. Perini's comment was an emphatic "No! He's just a very close friend."

The owners and commissioner were concerned that baseball team ownership was changing to corporate ownership. They certainly did not want two teams to be owned by breweries.

Warren Giles commented on this aspect: "Perini's prestige and the affection we have for him were an influencing factor in what we did. A final consideration was that he definitely did not want to sell the club. I think that made a great deal of difference."

The National League vote was in direct contrast of the American League vote. The American League vote was an obvious rebuke of Veeck. The owners didn't approve of the way Veeck ran a Major League team. The owners didn't approve of his circus acts and wild promotions at the ballpark. The owners held baseball traditions more reverently in this era. The owners also didn't approve of the way Veeck used the media in forcing a move.

Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick stated: "Veeck hurt himself in St. Louis. What's bad about the whole thing is that instead of going to the proper people, he went about it in the wrong way and got the country stirred up."

Fred also had an opinion on Veeck. He said, "I honestly believe it is to