

# On This Date **September 20, 1944**

Purchased by the Philadelphia Phillies from the Wilmington Blue Rocks twenty-four hours earlier, 28-year-old catcher [Joe Antolick](#) makes his major league debut on September 20, 1944, against the Cincinnati Reds.

Pinch-hitting for reliever [Andy Karl](#) in the bottom of the ninth inning of a 6-4 loss to the third-place Reds, Antolick grounds out to Reds' pitcher [Bucky Walters](#).

A two-time Interstate (B) League All-Star, the [Hokendaugua](#), Pennsylvania, native had just finished his season with Wilmington hitting .353 with two home runs and 40 RBIs when he is called up to Philadelphia.



Called "The Mad Russian" by his teammates, Antolick starts his pro career on August 5, 1938, with the Kingsport (Tenn.) Cherokees, where he 2-for-4 with an RBI in an 8-1 win over Newport. Signed from the Egypt club of the semipro Lehigh Valley League, the "husky" catcher will hit .169 in 23 games in his debut season.

At the end of the 1940 campaign, Antolick is sold to the Boston Bees and is assigned to Bridgeport of the Interstate (B) League but elects not to report and remain a security guard at the Bethlehem Steel plant. He returns to organized baseball in 1943, signing with the Allentown Wings.

On July 16, 1951, Antolick is the player-manager of the Wilson Tobs of the Coastal Plain League when he is released with the Tobs in fifth-place with a 39-38 record.