

# The INSIDE GAME



The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XIV, No. 2:

“LET’S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!”

APRIL 2014

## THE 2014 RITTER AWARD WINNER; MIKE LACKEY’S SPITBALLING: THE BASEBALL DAYS OF LONG BOB EWING

At the conclusion of a “hotly contested competition,” the Larry Ritter Award Committee chose *Spitballing: The Baseball Days of Long Bob Ewing* by Mike Lackey as the 2014 Ritter Award winner. The Lackey work chronicles the life and times of a previously uncelebrated pitcher, providing an insightful portrait of a journeyman player’s lot during the Deadball Era in the process. As reflected in the remarks of Gail Rowe, the selection committee chairman, *Spitballing* is praiseworthy on multiple levels. “First, it focuses on Bob Ewing, a little known player, who during most of his career was not even the best player on his team,” observed Rowe. “Also, Lackey’s interest in, and treatment of Ewing’s longtime wife and partner Nelle Hunter Ewing, is unusual in baseball biographies, demonstrating his wife’s strong influence upon Bob and those around him. Impressive, too, is Lackey’s resistance to the usual author’s tendency to claim more for his subject than he deserves.”

## EDITOR’S NOTE

The recent selection of the 2014 Ritter Award winner and a happy bounty of material on hand has prompted the publication of this supplemental issue of *The Inside Game*. Our next regular newsletter issue, complete with John McMurray’s column, original research articles, and three new book reviews, will appear on schedule in late-May/early June, as will succeeding 2014 issues. A five-issue newsletter year is not unprecedented. Five issues of *The Inside Game* were published ten years ago in 2004. We look forward to presenting another five-issue year in 2024. In the meantime, enjoy. Bill Lamb, Editor.

The award committee was particularly impressed by Lackey’s understanding that his subject was not a superstar or, even, a star. The author made no effort to exaggerate Bob Ewing’s role or his success in baseball, even while giving Ewing the praise he deserves. Lackey thus offers his readers a superbly-drawn portrait of one of early baseball’s grinders and his era. In addition, Lackey provides his readers imposing and informative footnotes and an impressive

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***Baseball on Trial***  
previewed by Bill Lamb ..... page 21

bibliography. Finally, the author writes well and argues his conclusions persuasively and clearly. The book's publisher, Orange Frazer Press of Wilmington, Ohio, also received commendation. The committee found *Spitballing* the best designed and most attractively presented of the works under Ritter Award consideration. "The editors and publisher took care with this production, serving its author and his readers spectacularly," the committee concluded.

Upon receiving news of the award, Lackey, a retired newspaper reporter, columnist, and editor in Lima, Ohio and longtime SABR member, was gracious in response. "This is unbelievably great news. Just being in the running was an honor and more than I dared to hope for when the book was published," he said. "To be selected for the award against such impressive competition is a tremendous honor and a humbling experience. Thanks to all committee members for their hard work and serious deliberations. I know they had a hard job this year and a book like mine could easily have been overlooked amid all the excellent nominees

from better known authors and bigger publishers."

When contacted thereafter by the newsletter, Mike reiterated those sentiments, taking pains in the process to acknowledge the assistance that he received while researching and writing *Spitballing*. "Receiving the Ritter Award is at once an exhilarating and a humbling experience," he said. "It is an extraordinary honor to see my name added to the lists of previous recipients who have contributed so much to our understanding of the Deadball Era. But it shouldn't be forgotten that it was a team effort." Mike also provided us with insight into both his subject and how he went about exploring the life and times of Long Bob Ewing. Rather than paraphrase Mike's observations, we

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The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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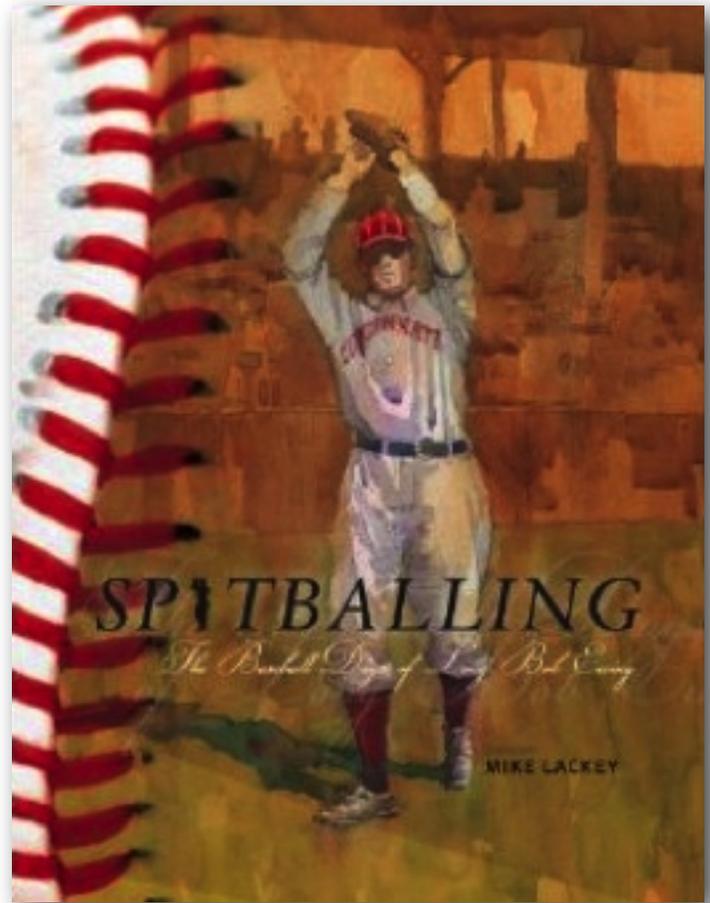


Photo by Craig J. Orosz

**Mike Lackey**

are pleased to republish them in their entirety on page 19.

The Ritter Award presentation will be conducted during the Deadball Era committee meeting at the SABR convention in Houston this summer. The ceremony will be covered in the post-convention newsletter. The other finalists for the 2014 Ritter Award were: *Napoleon Lajoie: King of Baseball*, by David L. Fleitz (McFarland); *Black Sox in the Courtroom: The Grand Jury, Criminal Trial and Civil Litigation*, by William F. Lamb (McFarland), and *Smoky Joe Wood: The Biography of a Baseball Legend*, by Gerald C. Wood (Univ. of Nebraska Press). In addition to Gail Rowe, the members of the Ritter Award Committee are Jack Carlson, Mark Dugo, Craig Lammers, John McMurray, Mark Pattison, Doug Skipper, and Trey Strecker.



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**MISSING... FOUND... PHANTOM:  
THE ACCURATE  
RUNS-SCORED RECORD  
FOR THE 1906 DETROIT TIGERS**

by **Herm Krabbenhoft**

According to baseball's official records, the 1906 Detroit Tigers TEAM scored 518 runs. And, when one adds up the runs scored by the Tigers in each of their 151 games, one gets a total of 518 runs scored. But, baseball's official records also show that the sum of the runs scored by the individual PLAYERS on the 1906 Tigers is only 515 runs – i.e., three runs less than the TEAM total of 518 runs.

The “three-missing-runs” situation persisted for more than 60 years – until the spring of 1969, when the first edition of David S. Neft's *The Baseball Encyclopedia* was published by Macmillan. “Big-Mac” correctly presented the Tigers TEAM with 518 runs scored. And for the

sum of the runs scored by the individual PLAYERS, it had 516 runs scored. Therefore, one of the “three-missing-runs” had been found. The one “missing-run” found was credited to Ty Cobb. Thus, while baseball's official Day-By-Day (DBD) records for Cobb showed him with 44 runs scored in 1906, Big-Mac showed him with 45 runs scored. No explanation or justification was provided for changing Cobb's 1906 runs-scored total from 44 runs to 45 runs.

Then, five years later, another “missing-run” for the PLAYERS on the 1906 Tigers team was found. In the 1974 edition of *The Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (co-edited by Neft and Richard M. Cohen), Sam Thompson was listed with four runs scored even though baseball's official DBD records for Big Sam showed him with three runs scored in 1906. No explanation or justification was provided for changing Thompson's 1906 runs-scored total from three runs to four runs.<sup>1</sup> During the subsequent 39 years the remaining “one-missing-run” condition

continued. Thus, the most-recent editions of the various baseball encyclopedias show 518 runs scored by the 1906 Tigers team and 517 runs scored as the sum of the runs scored by the individual players.<sup>2-6</sup> And each of these baseball encyclopedias shows Ty Cobb with 45 runs scored and Sam Thompson with four runs scored. Likewise for the baseball databases presented on various websites on the Internet.<sup>7,8</sup> That was the state of affairs when I commenced my research in May-2013 to ascertain the accurate runs-scored records for each of the players on the 1906 Detroit Tigers team.<sup>9-12</sup>

## RESULTS

Utilizing previously-described research procedures, I have irrefutably ascertained the identities of the players who scored each of the 518 runs scored by the 1906 Tigers team.<sup>12</sup> The complete details for each run are presented in the Appendix. Table 1 presents the pertinent full-season runs-scored information for each player on the 1906 Tigers team. Three runs-scored values are given for each of the 24 men who played for the 1906 Tigers:

- (a) The runs-scored according to the official DBD records;
- (b) The runs-scored according to the various baseball encyclopedias;
- (c) The actual runs-scored (i.e., the runs-scored based on the research described in this article).

Inspection of Table 1 reveals that there is complete agreement between the three sources for the runs-scored numbers for all but four players – Ty Cobb, Fred Payne, Ed Siever, and Sam Thompson. Let's take a close look at the runs-scored differences for each of these players.

**Ty Cobb** – actually scored 45 runs (not 44 runs as shown in his official DBD records). The “missing-run” in Cobb’s official DBD records for 1906 was in the game on April 22. According to Cobb’s official DBD records, Cobb did NOT play in that game; there is NO stat line for Cobb for the game on April 22. However, Cobb did play in the April 22 game between the Tigers and the Browns in St. Louis. He was the starting right



*Ty Cobb*

fielder and batted clean-up. The Tigers won the game, 4-3, with Cobb scoring a run in the fourth inning. (See the Appendix for complete details).

**Fred Payne** – actually scored 24 runs (not 23 runs as shown in his official DBD records and in all of the various baseball encyclopedias and websites). The “missing-run” in Payne’s official DBD records for 1906 was in the game on August 7. According to Payne’s official DBD records, Payne did NOT play in that game; there is NO stat line for Payne for the game on August 7. However, Payne did play in the August 7 game between the Tigers and the Senators in Detroit. He was the starting right fielder and batted second. The Tigers lost the game, 6-5, with Payne scoring a run in the third inning. (See the Appendix for complete details).

**Ed Siever** – actually scored six runs (not five runs as shown in his official DBD records and in all of the various baseball encyclopedias and websites). The “missing-run” in Siever’s official DBD records for 1906 was in the game on June

11. According to Siever's official DBD records, Siever did NOT play in that game; there is NO stat line for Siever for the game on June 11. However, Siever did play in the June 11 game between the Tigers and Red Sox in Detroit. He was the starting pitcher and batted ninth. The Tigers lost the game, 7-5, with Siever scoring a run in the third inning. (See the Appendix for complete details).

**Sam Thompson** – actually scored three runs (just as shown in his official DBD records, not four runs as shown in all of the various baseball encyclopedias and websites). Thompson played in just eight games in 1906. Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of the runs scored by the Tigers in those eight games. The complete details for each of the runs scored by the Tigers in each of the eight games that Thompson played for Detroit are provided in the Appendix.

## DISCUSSION

The most important item for discussion is the accuracy of the runs-scored information based on my research for the 1906 Detroit Tigers. The runs-scored numbers generated from my comprehensive and in-depth research are 100% accurate. The pertinent supporting documentation for each and every one of the 518 runs scored by the 1906 Detroit Tigers – obtained from game accounts (including text descriptions and box score statistics) presented in multiple independent newspapers – is provided in the Appendix. Therefore, the “Runs Scored (Actual)” numbers shown in Table 1 are completely accurate. So now, after more than 107 years, the “three-missing-runs” have been found. The players who scored these runs, one run each, have been identified: Ty Cobb, Ed Siever, and Fred Payne. Furthermore, the phantom run erroneously credited to Sam Thompson has been quashed. And, finally, the runs scored by the 1906 Detroit Tigers TEAM and the sum of the runs scored by individual PLAYERS are equal.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With sincere thanks I gratefully acknowledge these individuals for their fantastic help in



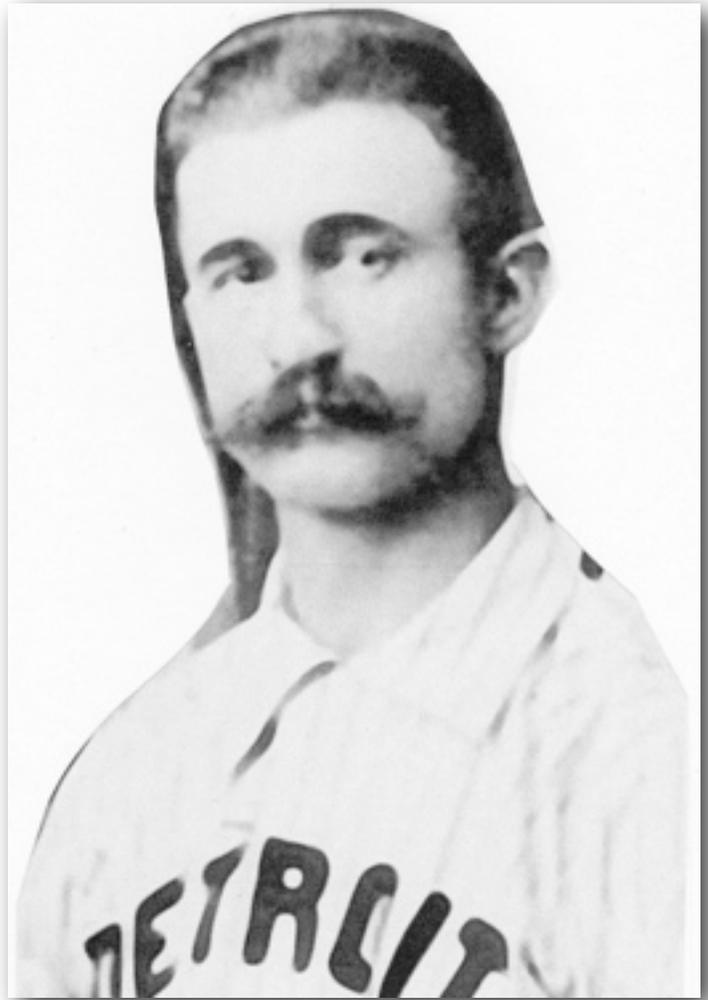
**Ed Siever**

providing me with photocopies/scans of vitally-important newspaper accounts: Ron Antonucci, Steve Boren, Keith Carlson, Mark Moore, Dave Newman, Dave Smith, Gary Stone, and Dixie Tourangeau. I should also like to thank Steve Elsberry for providing other useful information.

*Herm Krabbenhoft's record-altering statistical research has been published in various baseball journals, including the February 2014 issue of The Inside Game. The appendices to the instant article can be reviewed on-line at SABR's Deadball Era Committee webpage: <http://sabr.org/research/deadball-era-research-committee-newsletters>.*



**Fred Payne**



**Sam Thompson**

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. It is also noted that in the fourth edition of *Daguerreotypes of the Great Stars of Baseball* (St. Louis: The Sporting News, 1961), Thompson was shown with three runs scored in 1906; but in the next (1968) edition, Thompson was shown with four runs scored. No explanation or justification for the change from three runs to four runs was provided.
2. Rick Wolff, *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (New York: Macmillan, 1996).
3. Bill James, John Dewan, Don Zminda, Jim Callis, Neil Munro, *STATS All-Time Major League Handbook* (Northbrook, Illinois: STATS, 2000).
4. John Thorn, Phil Birnbaum, Bill Deane, *Total Baseball*, (Kingston, New York: Sport Media Publishing, 8th ed., 2004).
5. David S. Neft, Richard M. Cohen, Michael L. Neft, *Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2007).
6. Gary Gillette, Pete Palmer, *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia* (New York: Sterling, 2008).
7. Baseball-Reference, accessed December 1, 2013, [www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com).
8. Retrosheet, accessed December 1, 2013, [www.Retrosheet.org](http://www.Retrosheet.org).
9. Some of the results given in this article were first described in a presentation given on August 1, 2013 at the SABR Baseball Records Committee meeting during the National Convention of the Society for American Baseball Research in Philadelphia (July 31-August 4): Herm Krabbenhoft, "Runs Scored ... Missing ... Found ... Phantom."
10. For a report on the correction of runs-scored errors in baseball's official record for players on the 1945-2007 Detroit Tigers, see: Herm Krabbenhoft, "The Authorized Correction of Errors in Runs Scored in the Official Records (1945-2007) for Detroit Tigers Players," *The Baseball Research Journal*, Vol. 37, (2008) 115.

11. For a report on the correction of runs-scored errors in baseball's official record for players on the 1920-1944 Detroit Tigers, see: Herm Krabbenhoft, "The Authorized Correction of Errors in Runs Scored in the Official Records (1920-1944) for Detroit Tigers Players," *The Baseball Research Journal*, Vol. 40, Spring 2011, 66.

12. Herm Krabbenhoft, "Additional Corrections in the Official Records (1920-44) of Runs Scored for Detroit Tigers Players," *The Baseball Research Journal*, Vol. 42, Fall, 2013, 99.

**TABLE 1: RUNS-SCORED BY THE INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS ON THE 1906 DETROIT TIGERS**

Player	(a) Runs Scored (Official DBD)	(b) Runs Scored BB Encyclopedias	(c) Runs Scored (Actual)
⇒ <b>Ty Cobb</b>	44	<b>*45*</b>	<b>*45*</b>
Bill Coughlin	54	54	54
Sam Crawford	65	65	65
Red Donahue	2	2	2
Bill Donovan	5	5	5
John Eubank	8	8	8
Gus Hetling	0	0	0
Davy Jones	41	41	41
Ed Killian	7	7	7
Chris Lindsay	59	59	59
Bobby Lowe	11	11	11
Matty McIntyre	63	63	63
George Mullin	13	13	13
Charley O'Leary	34	34	34
⇒ <b>Fred Payne</b>	23	23	<b>*24*</b>
Jack Rowan	1	1	1
Germany Schaefer	48	48	48
Frank Scheibeck	1	1	1
Boss Schmidt	13	13	13
⇒ <b>Ed Siever</b>	5	5	<b>*6*</b>
⇒ <b>Sam Thompson</b>	<b>*3*</b>	4	<b>*3*</b>
Jack Warner	15	15	15
Jimmy Wiggs	0	0	0
Ed Willett	0	0	0
⇒ <b>SUM</b>	515	517	<b>*518*</b>

**JENNINGS ON THE STAGE**

Hugh Jennings, manager of the Detroit Tigers, Monday made his debut in vaudeville at Hammerstein's, New York, in a sketch entitled "The New Mascot." Assisting Jennings is Ben Smith, an old time Minstrel Man.

*The Toledo News-Bee, November 19, 1912*

**THREE BATTERS IN ROW  
HIT THE FIRST BALL FOR HOME RUN**

TEMPLE, TEX.—What is believed to be a new world's record was established in the Middle Texas league game on Sunday between Brenham and Temple. In the eighth, the first three batters up each hit the first ball pitched over the fence for home runs. Temple won.

*The Pittsburgh Press, June 16, 1914*

**TABLE 2: RUNS-SCORED INFORMATION FOR THE  
EIGHT GAMES PLAYED BY SAM THOMPSON**

#	Game	OPP	R# (I)	Run-Scorer	Event	RBI-Batter
1	8-31	STL	1 (5)	McIntyre	S <sup>2</sup>	Thompson
			2 (5)	O'Leary	S <sup>2</sup>	Thompson
			3 (5)	Crawford	D <sup>1</sup>	Lindsay
			4 (5)	Lindsay	SB	-----
			5 (8)	Payne	SF <sup>1</sup>	O'Leary
2	9-01	STL	1 (1)	McIntyre	T <sup>1</sup>	Crawford
			2 (1)	Crawford	SF <sup>1</sup>	Thompson
			3 (7)	Coughlin	S <sup>1</sup>	Siever
3	9-03 (1)	STL	1 (2)	Thompson	S <sup>1</sup>	Coughlin
			2 (9)	Crawford	SF <sup>1</sup>	Mullin
4	9-03 (2)	STL	0	-----	---	-----
5	9-04	STL	1 (5)	Schmidt	IS + E-4	(McIntyre)
			2 (6)	Crawford	T <sup>1</sup>	Thompson
			3 (6)	Thompson	T + E-9	(Thompson)
6	9-08	CHI	1 (2)	Thompson	S <sup>1</sup>	Schaefer
			2 (2)	Coughlin	S <sup>1</sup>	Schmidt
			3 (9)	Schmidt	S <sup>1</sup>	Crawford
7	9-09	CHI*	0	-----	---	-----
8	9-10	CHI*	1 (1)	Cobb	T <sup>1</sup>	Crawford
			2 (9)	Payne	IS + E-6	(Schmidt)

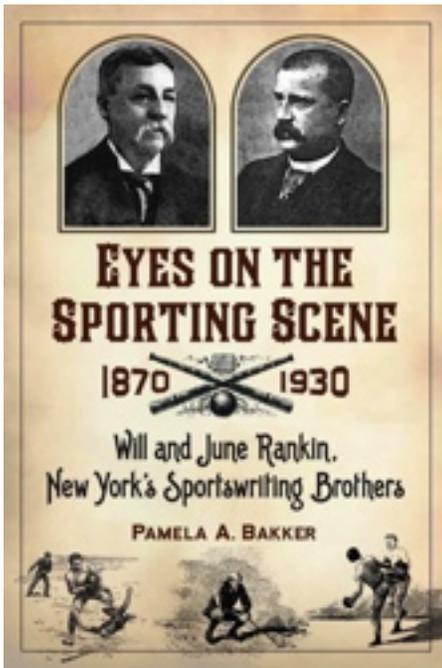
**WANT NEW DEAD BALL RULE**

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**SIX-FOOT STRIP OUTSIDE FOUL LINES  
TO HELP BATSMEN**

PITTSBURG—Claiming that the foul-strike rule as interpreted today is interfering with good batters of both leagues, George L. Moreland, the well known baseball statistician of Pittsburg, will appear before the Committees on Rules of the major leagues the coming winter and submit an amendment to the rule, which if adopted he thinks will go far toward improving batting. His idea is to have a line drawn parallel with the foul lines just six feet outside, and a drive which lands between these two lines shall not be scored as a strike against the batsman. Mr. Moreland said in explaining his diagram tonight:

“The foul-strike rule was made for the purpose of preventing scientific batsmen from making the game look foolish by fouling off all the good balls. It was never meant to handicap the real hard batter, who does his best to hammer the ball out hard, and who often hits what would have been good for three bases had it been a few inches further in, but the best he gets out of this for his honest effort is a strike called on him. My idea now is to begin at third base and draw a line parallel with the foul line only six feet outside clear to the fence. Do the same on the first base side of the field, and call every ball which lands inside these two lines neither foul nor strike, but a dead ball. This will give such batters as Lajoie, Donlin, Cobb, Leach, Crawford, Wagner, Lumley and Lobert a better chance.”

*The Philadelphia Record, September 6, 1908*



**EYES ON THE  
SPORTING SCENE,  
1870-1930: WILL AND  
JUNE RANKIN,  
NEW YORK'S  
SPORTSWRITING  
BROTHERS**

**BY PAMELA A. BAKKER**

2013. Jefferson, NC:  
McFarland & Company  
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-7314-4;  
Ebook ISBN:  
978-1-4766-0167-0.  
228 pp. \$39.95 USD, Softcover  
(6" X 9")]

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When you read Pamela Bakker's credentials, you see that she has music and theology degrees. That makes you wonder why she ever took on a book about two Deadball Era sportswriters, Will and June Rankin. You learn,

however, that Will and June were family members. June was Bakker's maternal great-grandfather. "When I was a child in the 1950s, I heard stories about Jun or June, short for Junior," writes Bakker. "My grandfather used to say they were celebrities in their day. However, I did not really discover the full details of their lives until I reached adulthood and took the mantle of the family genealogist..." (pp. 1-2). Bakker establishes the Rankins' family history dating back to the eighteenth century in Pennsylvania and emphasizes the family was impacted greatly by the Civil War.

"The title of the book is really a little misleading in just focusing on sports, though that was surely what they did," reads a segment of the Preface, "because their lives also reflected the sweeping changes happening within the United States following the Civil War" (p. 3). Will and June started their involvement in baseball as players, on amateur and semi-pro teams around 1866. They played what was called "The New York Game." Bakker demonstrates that the Rankins played several roles in baseball. For example, Will is acknowledged as the first official scorer for Major League Baseball in 1876, scoring for the Mutual Base Ball Club in the National League. Subsequently, June was official scorer for the Metropolitan Base Ball Club and New York Base Ball Club Giants.

Will is listed as writing for more than twenty publications in his career. June, who also wrote about golf and boxing, wrote for a dozen. Both were firmly based in New York, but covered their sports from a national perspective. "Will's coverage of baseball was unique in that it tended to encompass the entire national game in a more modern sports voice, without many of the flowery 1800s popular phrases," writes Bakker. "Instead of just focusing upon the New York metropolitan area, he mentioned games from coast to coast and many in-between" (p. 41). In fact, Will was credited as being the first to set up reporting networks for baseball in major cities to provide accurate and timely information, perhaps as early as 1874.

Bakker thoroughly explores the Rankins' stance on the so-called "Baseball Wars" between the National League and competing leagues during the game's formative years. "June's writing continually opposed the control of the game by a small group," writes Bakker. "He had criticized the National League directly while on the Judiciary Committee of the International Association for being a clique" (p. 101). Bakker does a fine job of examining the Rankins' relationship with Henry Chadwick, often referred to as the Father of Baseball. Will worked with Chadwick at the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and *New York Clipper*. There was a mutual

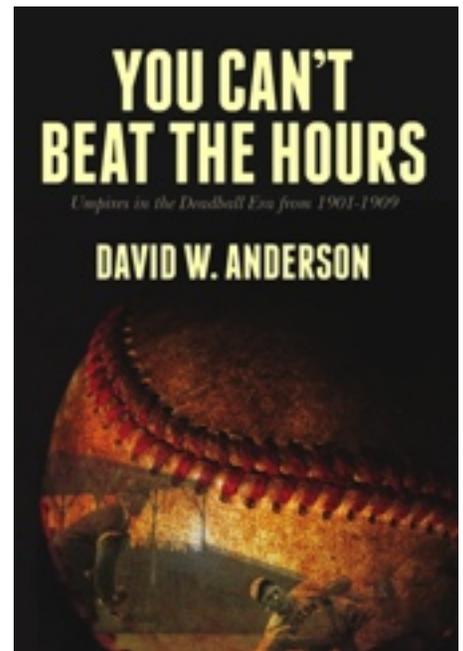
respect among the three, but Will split with Chadwick on some issues. For example, he was the first to publicly confront Chadwick on the origin of baseball being from rounders or town ball. Instead he looked at the origins of the New York Game as the early precursor of the game. Bakker shows that, as the Rankins matured, they became even more involved in compiling the history of sports. Will wrote numerous histories of baseball and individual clubs. June branched out into golf and boxing. He wrote and edited several respected histories of baseball and golf.

For some purists, Bakker might not delve deeply enough into the actual on-field coverage and baseball details of the Rankins' era. More actual examples of the Rankins' writing would have given the reader a better feel for their talents and styles of sports writing in the era. Occasionally the book falls into a litany of off-field developments in the structure of the game, different leagues and where the Rankins were working at the time. For

some, the extensive background of historic details in arenas beyond baseball might prove distracting.

Overall, Bakker has drawn extensively from some of the histories by the brothers, newspaper files, family histories, books and archival collections. She has produced a detailed work that helps readers establish the Rankin brothers as principals in a period of great changes in American sports in general, and in sports journalism.

*Gregg Hoffmann, a veteran, award-winning journalist from Wisconsin, writes the Midwest Diamond Report Blog and does cover stories for Game Day, the Milwaukee Brewers' program. He is the author of Down in the Valley: The History of Milwaukee County Stadium (2000), holds emeritus status after serving on the faculty at UW-Milwaukee, and is a member of the Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter of SABR.*



**YOU CAN'T BEAT THE HOURS: UMPIRES IN THE DEADBALL ERA FROM 1901-1909**

**BY DAVID W. ANDERSON**

2013. North Charleston, S.C.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform  
[ISBN 978-1-48018-458-9. 241 pp. \$14.95 USD, softcover (6" x 9")]

Reviewed by  
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As an umpire aficionado (some might call it a fetish), I was elated when I learned that a book about Deadball Era umpires was being published. When I found out the author was David Anderson, with no shortage of credentials on the subject, I was ecstatic. Anderson is a former chair of SABR's Umpires & Rules Committee, a frequent contributor of insightful

### **BIOPROJECT DEADBALLERS**

Since our last newsletter, the BioProject has published profiles of a number of Deadball Era players including Alex Gaston, Cy Pieh, Herb Thormahlen, Will Forman, Sammy Vick, Emil Leber, Scotty Ingerton, Charley Pittinger, Jim Bluejacket, Jimmy St. Vrain and Carl Lundgren. The BioProject has also recently expanded its scope, offering articles on individual games of note. Of interest to DEC members are accounts of World Series games played between Pittsburgh and Detroit (1909) and Boston and the New York Giants (1912). If you have not already read them, we urge you to check these bios out.

columns on the era to this newsletter, a professional umpire himself, and author of *More Than Merkle* (2000), a groundbreaking work in its coverage of umpires. Alas, the depth of disappointment often equates the height of anticipation that precedes it. Frankly, reading *You Can't Beat the Hours* is a frustrating experience. Ban Johnson said a good umpire is the umpire you don't even notice. You can say the same about proofreaders and editors. This book validates the importance of an editor, and that even the best writers need one.

The book features fifty-two umpire biographies, many of which are quite brief. Four introductory chapters provide the reader an overview of the life of a Deadball Era umpire, covering such subjects as his equipment, signals, and integrity (or lack thereof). The title comes from an exchange between two of the period's veteran arbiters. Silk O'Loughlin was expounding about how miserable an umpire's life can be, when his partner Tim Hurst interrupted him by saying, "You can't beat the hours."

In this well-researched book, the author has unearthed

numerous entertaining anecdotes about early umpires. Fascinating characters enliven its pages, as the reader learns how demanding, and often dangerous, the life of an umpire was in the Deadball Era. Significant umpires, previously overlooked, such as Big Bill Brennan and Jack Egan, finally get their proper coverage. Sprinkled throughout the text is sound advice from long-ago arbiters that will help any umpire of any era. Even knowledgeable fans will gain a greater appreciation of how influential these rugged men in blue were in the development of the game we all love.

Unfortunately, few readers will have the persistence to dig out these nuggets of excellence. Exasperated at having to re-read sentences to learn their meaning, most will soon pick up another book. To say that the editing is "sloppy" would be inaccurate because this would suggest that some editing was performed. Regardless of how large your baseball library, you will be hard pressed to find a book with more typos and errors in syntax. Grammatical and punctuation errors, incomplete sentences, and missing, repeated, or misspelled words are on

virtually every page. An entire paragraph is repeated, word for word, on consecutive pages. What is so maddening is that a cursory review by a novice proofreader would have transformed this infuriating book into a fine one.

In *The Inside Game* (February 2013), Anderson shared his thoughts on writing the book: "I chose to self-publish ... because the book publishing industry has changed ... and we will be seeing more of this type of work in the future. I guess I am a guinea pig here, but that is the way it is." If true, this does not auger well for book lovers because, regardless of the method of publication, editors are necessary. Although failing to secure an editor is the most egregious decision, other choices are also problematic. For a book clearly designed as a reference work, the absence of an index and bibliography is unacceptable. The book also suffers as a research work by strangely listing the umpires by the year in which they worked their first game after 1901, rather than alphabetically, making it difficult to find any particular arbiter. The book does include 565 footnotes, demonstrating the author's excellent research skills, albeit nearly 100 of the notes

### CORRECTION

In the February newsletter, Mark Pattison's review of *Ball Players in the Great War* by Jim Leeke identified National League infielder Eddie Grant as the only still-active player killed in World War I. As committee member Cliff Blau advises, Grant had been retired from baseball for several years before he was killed in 1918. Prior to his entry into the military, the Harvard-educated Grant had been practicing law. Thanks to Cliff for alerting us to the need to clarify the matter.

mention the source as merely "Baseball Hall of Fame file." There are eight pages of umpire photographs; a better choice would have been to include the umpire's image with his biography, but this may have been cost prohibitive.

Each essay opens with the umpire's statistics — date and place of birth and death; years and leagues worked in the majors; total number of plate games, base games, and ejections; and, if applicable, the number of World Series games worked. The format is confusing and does not lend itself to ready research. To learn the number of MLB games an umpire worked, the reader must add together the totals from different leagues. The stat line for Chief Zimmer — National League, 1889, 1901, 1904, 153 games — is misleading because it indicates that he was a full-time umpire for three years. In actuality, he worked 151 of his 153 NL games in 1904. Clearer understanding and more information would have been provided had the numbers been listed by year, and not by

league, as on the back of a baseball card or in a baseball encyclopedia.

It is peculiar that the book identifies only the years 1901-1909 as the Deadball Era, presumably because baseball adopted the lively cork-centered ball in 1910-1911. While technically this may be correct, most baseball historians recognize the following decade as also part of the era because of the continued style of play. As a result, absent are prominent deadball arbiters Ernie Quigley, George Hildebrand, and George Moriarty, each with more than 3,000 games umpired. Also curious is the length of entries devoted to various umpires. Tom Lynch, the first to umpire 1,000 MLB games and an umpire supervisor for three years as NL president, is an enormously influential figure in umpire history. Yet, his biography is barely one page, not much longer than the entry for Charles Lanigan, who worked four games his entire career. Bill Suppen, and his seven games as a substitute umpire, is bestowed a biography; Mal

Enson, pitcher of a no-hitter and umpire of 922 games, is not. There are some factual errors in the book (Silk O'Loughin worked the plate for 10 no-hitters, not seven) and material is surprisingly missing from a few biographies (Bill Dinneen being the only man to both pitch a no-hitter and call one as plate umpire). Nonetheless, these omissions are quibbles and many of the author's decisions, although peculiar, are not major flaws.

If a friend were to ask me to recommend the best book about Deadball Era umpires, I would heartedly endorse, without hesitation, David Anderson's book. I am referring, of course, to his great earlier work — *More Than Merkle*.

*Dennis Bingham is a longtime Chicago umpire and free-lance writer. Serving on several league protest boards, his passions include the study, history, and interpretation of baseball rules. In 1988, he co-founded SABR's Umpires and Rules Committee with Larry Gerlach and Bob McConnell.*

### GREAT YEAR FOR BASEBALL

America's devotion to its national game—baseball—is not matched anywhere, for no other country has a game that in any way approaches it in popularity. It is the one sport that has thousands of interested and enthusiastic followers. This year has been a wonderfully successful one in all leagues and as the end draws near the rivalry for the pennants is greatly increased. The true follower says "May the best team win." This same sentiment is also true in medicine—the best deserves to win, and this explains the phenomenal success of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. For 56 years it has proven its right to be called "the best" in cases of Poor Appetite, Belching, Heartburn, Sick Headache, Indigestion, Costiveness, Bilioussness, and Malaria, Fever and Ague. We urge you to try a bottle this very day.

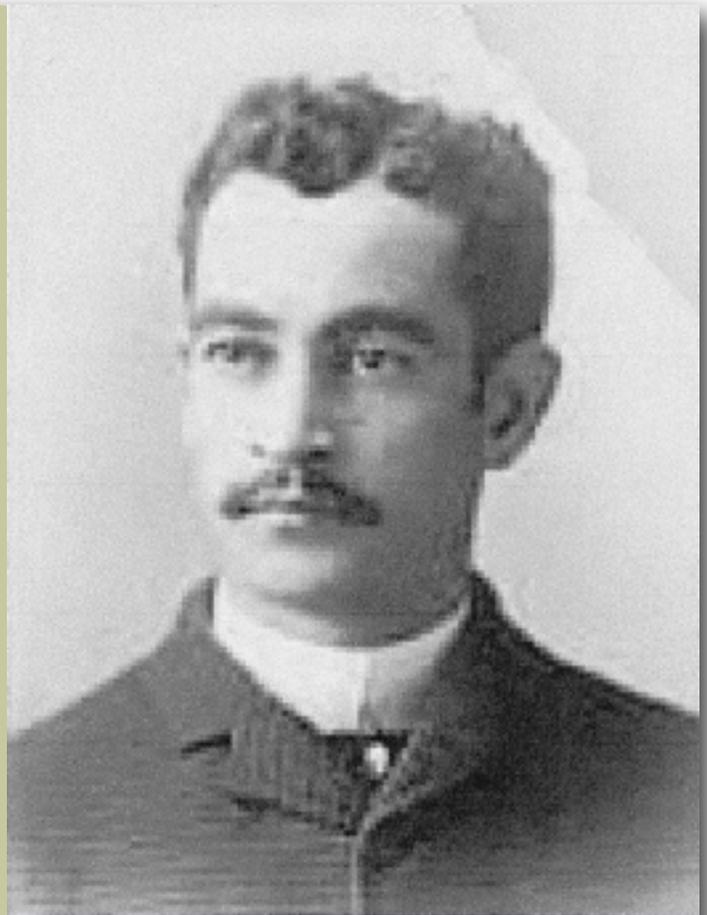
*The Milwaukee Journal, September 14, 1909*

## TONY MULLANE LOOKS BACK ON FONDER TIMES

“Do you know,” said veteran pitcher Tony Mullane a few days ago, “the baseball crowds nowadays are either a cold-blooded lot or else wonderfully blasé, as my college friends would put it? One thing is sure – the modern fan, though he may love the game with all his soul, is much less a sentimentalist than he used to be. Moreover, he has no longer the implicit confidence in favorite players he used to have.”

Tony continued, “In bygone days, when Anson, Brouthers, Connor, Tip O’Neill, or Browning came striding to the plate, bat in hand, with three on bases and two out in the ninth, the crowd would give a joyous shout of welcome, and then the fans would settle back, almost childish in their complete trust and happiness – absolutely certain that the great batsman would put the ball far out in the woods, and never even dreaming of failure. If he hit it, the stands would go wild. If he didn’t, there would be a feeling of disappointment like the snapping of 15,000 heartstrings, but the fans would be back the next day with confidence fully restored and the same implicit belief in the men they loved.”

“How is it nowadays? Why, the stands are full of cold-blooded, cynical calculators who at that point figure out the chances like a pawnbroker counting up interest. Even if Lajoie comes up in a crisis, the fans will say: ‘He only has one chance in three of hitting it safe and the pitcher is going to put on extra steam.’ Instead of trustfully waiting for him to hit the ball and be



*Tony Mullane*

heartbroken if he fails, they only remark, ‘Just what was to be expected,’ and go home to supper.”

“Oh, yes, the game is popular and draws the crowds, but the crowds have different parts, somehow or other, from the people of the long-ago,” Mullane concluded.

*New York Press, January 18, 1904*

Contributed by Steven King

### TO TRANSFER GAMES

The Baltimore-Jersey City International league baseball games, scheduled for Baltimore next week, have been transferred to Wilmington, Del., because of the Star Spangled Banner celebration in Baltimore.

*The Toledo News-Bee, September 5, 1914*

The sensational charge has been made by Manager Hendricks of Springfield that Cooley, Johnston and Plummer, the best men on the team, did shady work in Wednesday’s game with Terre Haute. The three men have been suspended.

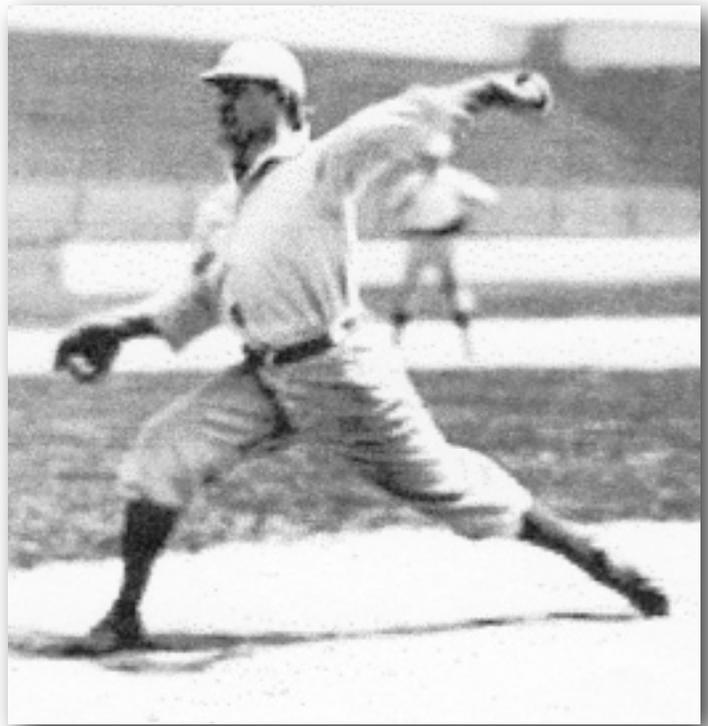
*The Pittsburgh Press, May 27, 1905*

## THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION SQUABBLE OF 1902

by **Bill Lamb**

Installed in many of the cities of the recently deceased Southern League, the Southern Association of Base Ball Clubs (SA) had enjoyed a successful inaugural campaign in 1901, and looked forward to even greater achievement in its sophomore season. But such hopes were dashed when hostilities broke out between the management of the Memphis Egyptians and the rest of the league. At issue was Memphis boss Charley Frank's signing of players under contract elsewhere. As the 1902 season progressed, play on Southern Association diamonds was overshadowed by events in the league office and various courtrooms, with dueling lawsuits and injunctions, player ineligibility decrees, threats of franchise suspension, resignation of the Association president, and a near fracture of the league itself consuming the energies of the rival parties and the attention of SA fans. In the end, the hard-nosed Frank, backed by the fortune of an equally hard-nosed Memphis millionaire, prevailed, with a Southern Association reconstituted more to Frank's liking emerging from the fracas.

The 32-year-old Frank, a one-time National League outfielder, had been a prime mover in the creation of the eight-member Southern Association and was a minority stockholder in its Memphis Egyptians franchise. In 1901, Frank had managed the club to a near-miss (75-48) third-place finish in the debut SA pennant race, all the while remaining vocal on league affairs. Frank's attempts to exert influence did not always endear him to fellow SA club bosses, particularly Abner Powell of New Orleans and Mike Finn of Little Rock, both of whom would figure prominently in the drama to come. At season's end, the league championship was awarded to the (78-45) Nashville Vols, piloted by Frank's good friend and league ally Newt Fisher.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, the Southern Association made another move of consequence in the events which lay ahead: the SA joined the National



*Jimmy St. Vrain*

Association of Professional Baseball Leagues (NAPBL), the newly formed official overseer of minor league play.

Frank returned to the Memphis helm for the 1902 season, but when the club got off to a mediocre start, he began making moves to bolster the Egyptians roster. His first recruits came from the American Association. Shortstop Charlie Babb of the Indianapolis Indians and second basemen Bill Evans of the Columbus Senators reported to Memphis in mid-June. For a time, controversy would attend Frank's signing of the two,<sup>2</sup> but the real bone of contention would be Jimmy St. Vrain, a diminutive left-hand pitcher recently released by the Chicago Cubs. "A little, sawed-off specimen of southpaw humanity ... no bigger than a cake of soap,"<sup>3</sup> St. Vrain had pitched creditably (4-6, with a fine 2.08 ERA) during a 12-game audition with the Cubs, but had been sent down to acquire more seasoning.<sup>4</sup> Before leaving Chicago, St. Vrain had signed a Cubs contract for the 1903 season. But for the remainder of 1902, he signed to pitch for Memphis. This prompted an immediate protest from the Tacoma Tigers of the Pacific Northwest League. St. Vrain had played for Tacoma in 1901,

and the Tigers maintained a reserve clause-based right to St. Vrain's return to their club. The claim did not impress Charley Frank. As far as he was concerned, if Tacoma had a claim upon St. Vrain's services, it should have been taken up with Chicago club president James Hart.<sup>5</sup> Frank then dispatched St. Vrain to the mound against New Orleans, who bested the little lefty, 1-0, on June 23. Days later, a two-hit, 7-2 victory over Shreveport put St. Vrain in the win column.

Tacoma reacted to the rebuff by seeking redress from the NAPBL. While the issue of St. Vrain's eligibility was under NAPBL review, manager Mike Finn refused to put his Little Rock nine on the field against St. Vrain. After St. Vrain had thrown a handful of pitches to an empty batters box, the umpire declared the game forfeited to Memphis. Hour later, the NAPBL upheld Tacoma's claim to St. Vrain, placing him under suspension until he reported to the Tigers.<sup>6</sup> Southern Association President John Bailey Nicklin thereupon reversed the ruling on the field and awarded the forfeit to Little Rock. Manager Frank ignored the NAPBL edict, and on July 5, St. Vrain retook the mound against New Orleans, who played the game under protest. After little Jimmy threw a two-hit, 3-0 shutout at the Pelicans, President Nicklin announced that St. Vrain would no longer be permitted to pitch in the SA.<sup>7</sup> That determination was affirmed at a contentious Southern Association meeting held in Chattanooga on July 8. Frank was defiant, publicly stating that he would pitch St. Vrain whenever his regular turn came, and that he would put himself on the field, as well. NAPBL Secretary John H. Farrell responded in kind, declaring that his organization, which the SA had voluntarily chosen to join, had been founded to prevent contract jumping; that Frank's failure to heed NAPBL and SA directives regarding St. Vrain constituted insubordination; that Frank was immediately suspended for ten games, and that Frank would be expelled from Organized Ball if he persisted in his defiance.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, Tacoma manager Jay Andrews was demanding \$1,000 for St. Vrain's release. Otherwise, the club would insist upon SA recognition and enforcement of Tacoma's



***Charley Frank***

exclusive right to the pitcher's services.<sup>9</sup> Farrell then upped the ante, declaring that, if unabated, Frank's insubordination might warrant the expulsion of the Memphis Egyptians franchise itself, music to the ears of the Memphis Chickasaws, an independent club itching for admission to the Southern Association.<sup>10</sup>

This kind of rhetoric launched Frank backers to the barricades. Memphis club president B.M. Bruce announced that ownership fully supported Frank. So did Nashville Vols manager Newt Fisher. He had reviewed the documents proffered by Tacoma in support of its claim upon St. Vrain and deemed them entirely wanting.<sup>11</sup> Memphis club attorney Caruthers Ewing then swung into action. He entered the local chancery court and obtained an injunction from Chancellor T.M. McConnell which enjoined

Southern Association “interference” with Frank’s management of the Memphis team. That included attempts to prohibit Frank’s use pitcher St. Vrain in league games.<sup>12</sup> NAPBL President Pat Powers responded with a telegram to Southern Association officials threatening to withdraw his organization’s protection of the Memphis club, thus exposing its player roster to raids by other teams. This, in turn, prompted attorney Caruthers to make application to Chancellor McConnell for expansion of the extant injunction to cover action adverse to Memphis club interests by the NAPBL.<sup>13</sup> The minor league establishment then doubled down, wiring SA president Nicklin that Frank had been suspended indefinitely and the Memphis club fined \$100 for use of the ineligible St. Vrain.<sup>14</sup>

The situation came to a head in New Orleans on August 6. Disregarding president Nicklin’s instruction to abide the McConnell injunction for the time being, Pelicans field boss Abner Powell had the police bar St. Vrain, Frank, Charlie Babb, and Bill Evans from entering the New Orleans ball park. Powell had SA umpire Ed Cline kept out, as well, designating George Chabot, a local amateur player, as the game’s arbiter. With only eight uniformed Memphis players inside the gates, umpire Chabot forfeited the game to New Orleans. Sometime later, attorney Caruthers sought to have Powell held in contempt, but Chancellor McConnell declined to exercise jurisdiction over the acts of a non-Tennessee resident occurring outside the state. At Memphis’s next scheduled stop, Little Rock manager Mike Finn announced that his club would not play against St. Vrain or Frank as long as the two were banned by the NAPBL – regardless of any directive to the contrary issued by president Nicklin or the command of Tennessee court orders. Shortly thereafter, a Southern Association meeting was hastily removed from league headquarters in Chattanooga to nearby Georgia in order to avoid service of Tennessee process on SA officials. As soon as the meeting convened, league president Nicklin resigned. He was replaced by Judge William M. Kavanaugh of Little Rock, formerly the SA vice-president. The assemblage then



***League President William M. Kavanaugh***

adopted motions made by Abner Powell to permanently transfer SA headquarters from Chattanooga to Little Rock; to declare as forfeit all Memphis games in which Jimmy St. Vrain and/or Charley Frank had played; and to charge Memphis the regular \$50 fee that had been incurred by any team travelling to Memphis to play a game now deemed forfeit.<sup>15</sup> Again, legal retaliation by Memphis was not long in coming. Local deputies greeted the arrival of the train back in Chattanooga with service of new Memphis lawsuits upon the Southern Association. These actions sought \$10,000 damages against each of the other SA clubs, save Nashville. Available club assets (like uniforms, equipment, etc.) would be attached pending the disposition of these suits whenever a defendant club came to play a game in Memphis, beginning with Powell’s New Orleans club.<sup>16</sup> The plaintiffs would also attach the \$8,000 in SA funds on deposit at the Merchant’s Bank in Memphis.

Negotiations to settle the lawsuits ensued, with Memphis agreeing to drop its actions against individual SA clubs, and to seek damages only from league coffers. In the meantime, SA clubs (particularly Memphis collaborator Nashville) were instructed by new president Kavanaugh not to play any game in which Memphis attempted to pitch St. Vrain, pending the outcome of the settlement talks. The Southern Association then sought out a friendly judicial forum of its own, seeking injunctive relief from the chancery court in Little Rock. As a courtesy, Pulaski County (Little Rock) Chancellor Thomas B. Martin contacted Chancellor McConnell, his Tennessee counterpart, before proceeding. Much to Memphis's alarm, McConnell was amenable to deferring to Martin, placing disposition of all the outstanding issues in a Little Rock courtroom. Pending a final resolution of the matter, Chancellor Martin entered a preliminary order that: (1) enjoined Memphis from playing St. Vrain or Frank in any state; (2) prohibited Memphis attachment of SA club assets; (3) prohibited the SA from taking action against the Memphis franchise, and (4) enjoined the parties from filing any more lawsuits against each other.<sup>17</sup> Back on the diamond, Nashville (80-40) breezed to a second consecutive Southern Association pennant. With the Jimmy St. Vrain 12-4 record on the field converted into 12 additional losses by SA officials, Memphis finished a non-competitive (57-62) fifth in league standings.

With judicial proceedings now anchored in a hostile venue, the tough-minded Frank decided upon another tack: the formation of a rival southern baseball circuit, with teams placed in most of the existing SA cities, plus Mobile and Montgomery. "It is a fight to the finish and survival of the fittest," said Frank about the nascent conflict of southern baseball circuits.<sup>18</sup> This new league, moreover, would align itself with the outlaw American Association, not the NAPBL.<sup>19</sup> That aspect of Frank's plan was rendered stillborn by American Association entry into the NAPBL at the close of the 1902 season. But by then, Frank had acquired an ally far more powerful than the American Association: Sam T.

Carnes, a Memphis industrialist whose electric power and asphalt production-based fortune dwarfed that of the modestly endowed club owners of the Southern Association. Carnes thought that "Charley Frank and the Memphis club were the victims of a conspiracy in the St. Vrain case"<sup>19</sup> and was prepared to back both the Frank club in Memphis and other teams in the new circuit – to the tune of a staggering \$800,000.<sup>20</sup> Understandably concerned, president Kavanaugh immediately dispatched peace emissaries to parlay with Frank and Carnes, but the two initially brushed them off. Faced with the determination of Frank and the deep pockets of Carnes, the Southern Association quickly capitulated, dismissing the litigation before Chancellor Martin in Little Rock and accepting one-sided settlement terms in return for the abandonment of the proposed new circuit by Frank and Carnes. Among other things, the league immediately restored Frank to good standing and returned him to command of the Memphis franchise. Frank was reimbursed by the league for all losses that he incurred during the 1902 season, and provided an unspecified damage award by the SA, as well. All in all, the SA paid Frank about \$20,000 for his troubles during the season.<sup>21</sup> A matter of principle to Frank, all the St. Vrain game forfeits were wiped from the SA record book. Last but perhaps most significantly, the Southern Association was reconstituted along franchise lines proposed by Frank for the 1903 season.<sup>22</sup>

With the matter finally resolved, the principals in the Southern Association squabble of 1902 went on with their lives. Judge William M. Kavanaugh took an active role in Arkansas Democratic Party politics and briefly served as an interim United States Senator in 1913. He remained in office as Southern Association president until his death on February 21, 1915 at age 49. Combative Charley Frank remained a fixture in the Southern Association for the remainder of his life, managing league clubs in Memphis, New Orleans, and Atlanta until illness forced his resignation early in the 1922 season. He died in Memphis of Bright's Disease on May 24, 1922. He was 51. Little Jimmy St. Vrain, the root cause

of the controversy, left Memphis at the end of the 1902 season. Notwithstanding his Cubs contract for 1903, he never got another shot in the major leagues. Jimmy returned to the Tacoma Tigers midway in the 1904 season, and pitched professionally until at least 1909. Thereafter, he worked as an electrician until his death from a stroke in Butte, Montana on June 12, 1937. He was 66. Surviving all of the combatants was the Southern Association itself, its operations continuing uninterrupted for decades, until changing times, television, and a reluctance to integrate brought the SA to an end at the close of the 1951 season.

*Bill Lamb is the editor of The Inside Game and the author of the BioProject profile of Jimmy St. Vrain.*

## NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*The Inside Game* is pleased to welcome the following SABR members who have expressed interest in the Deadball Era to the committee:

***Lee Allen***  
***Andrew Padyk***  
***Michael Remillard***

We look forward to their active participation in committee endeavors. These new committee members, as well as our newsletter contributors, can be contacted via the SABR directory.

1. Although Nashville (78-45) had posted a better record than Mike Finn's Little Rock Travelers (76-45), the league championship was shrouded by disputes attending the season-ending series between the two clubs. The pennant was bestowed on Nashville only after a review of the contests and a vote by the league board of directors. See *Reach's Official American League Base Ball Guide for 1902*, 183.
2. At the time, the American Association was deemed an "outlaw league" and thus not afforded the player contract protection extended to members of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues. After some skirmishing between Memphis and Southern Association officials, the Egyptians were permitted to play AA contract jumpers Babb and Evans.
3. Descriptions of St. Vrain subsequently published in the *Cincinnati Post*, January 23 and 25, 1905.
4. At the time, it was believed that St. Vrain was a youngster. But the boyish-looking pitcher had gotten a late start in professional baseball and had just turned 31. For more on St. Vrain's true age, see his BioProject profile by the writer.
5. As per the *New Orleans Item*, June 24, 1902.
6. As reported in the *Washington Post*, July 4, 1902.
7. As per the *New Orleans Item*, July 6, 1902.
8. As reported in the *Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser*, July 12, 1902.
9. As per *Sporting Life*, July 12, 1902.
10. As per the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, July 20, 1902.
11. As reported in the *New Orleans Item*, July 25, 1902.
12. As reported in the *Seattle Daily Times*, July 23, 1902, *Anaconda (Montana) Standard* and *Rocky Mountain (Denver) News*, July 24, 1902, and elsewhere.
13. As reported in the *New Orleans Item*, July 29, 1902.
14. As reported in the *Charlotte Observer* and *Dallas Morning News*, July 29, 1902.
15. As per the *New Orleans Item*, August 12, 1902.
16. As reported in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, August 15, 1902.
17. As reported in the *Columbus (Georgia) Daily Enquirer*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Montgomery Advertiser*, August 17, 1902.
18. As quoted in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, November 9, 1902.
19. As per the *Charleston News and Courier*, November 28, 1902.
20. As per the *Montgomery Advertiser*, November 23, 1902, and *Charleston News and Courier*, December 3, 1902.
21. According to Frank in 1908. See the *Charleston News and Courier*, August 13, 1908.
22. As reported the *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate* and *Washington Post*, December 11, 1902, *Sporting Life*, January 3, 1903, and elsewhere.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE WRITING OF SPITBALLING

by Mike Lackey

Three of my abiding interests are history, baseball and newspapers. All three came together in the writing of my book. As a lifelong Cincinnati Reds fan, a college history major and a career newspaperman, maybe I was fated to write about Bob Ewing. The journey began in August 1997, when a SABR member named Rich Topp launched an effort to identify the burial places of all former major league players. I looked up a half-dozen obituaries from my newspaper for him. Then one day I drove out to the little country cemetery where Bob Ewing was buried. I found a common headstone he shares with his wife, Nelle, decorated with a baseball and a bat.

A question immediately occurred to me: Fifty years after his death, how much could a diligent researcher still learn about Bob Ewing? Realizing this near-forgotten figure from the Reds history had lived his entire life 15 miles from my home, I felt almost obligated to find out. At the same time, in 1997 baseball was in its steroids Dark Ages. I wasn't nearly as aware or as outraged as I should have been about performance-enhancing drugs, but I was sufficiently disenchanted with the state of the game to have written a column officially "resigning" as a fan. It seemed to me that a contest of infinite subtlety and variety had been reduced to nothing more than one long, tedious round of Home Run Derby. So the search for Bob Ewing became at the same time a search for more interesting baseball. And perhaps for a less corrupt era of baseball -- although if I expected that, I should have known better.

It quickly became clear that virtually nothing had been written about Ewing since his retirement. He was mentioned briefly in the Putnam histories of the Reds and Phillies (where the lone reference called him George Ewing, the first name he never liked and never used). I realized that if I was going to get any more than the bare statistical bones of Ewing's story, it would have to be painstakingly dug out of the newspapers of

the time, one nugget of information at a time. One of my sisters likened the process to a treasure hunt. I came to think of it as an archaeological dig.

One of my first steps was to look up Ewing's obituary in *The Sporting News*. That's where I learned that he was a spitball pitcher. At that, I was hooked. I'd always been curious about the strange and somewhat mysterious history of the dampened delivery and I began to envision a sort of dual biography, the down-and-dirty spitball sharing the stage with the upright and reticent Ewing. Especially at first, my process was decidedly old school. I sought out Ewing's eight surviving grandchildren, who were helpful and supportive, but they couldn't tell me much because he died before any of them were born. All his close friends were gone too.

With far fewer resources available online than there are today, I haunted libraries, sent inquiries to historical societies, enlisted librarians and friends across the country for research assistance. With Amazon.com in its infancy and several useful books that have since been reissued then out of print, I leaned heavily on interlibrary loan and called on book search services (now extinct?) to find copies -- at \$100 each -- of *Touching Second* (1910) by Evers and Fullerton, and *The Cincinnati Reds* (1948) by Lee Allen. I bought 10 years' worth of microfilm of both *Sporting Life* and *The Sporting News*. I read miles of microfilm. My favorite vacation of all time was a week in Cincinnati spent doing nothing but reading old newspapers. Along the way I tripped over all kinds of side stories that would serve to situate baseball within the wider culture -- stories of the St. Louis World's Fair, Halley's Comet, the Harry Thaw murder trial, and the 1913 flood.

In retrospect, my methods weren't efficient but they were thorough. I tried to stick my nose into every corner I could think of that might contain any scrap of useful information about Long Bob and his world. Those countless side trips ultimately helped to determine the shape of the book. But for years I resisted even using the B-word. I couldn't imagine that I was writing a

book; I was just working on a local history project that kept expanding, sometimes in unexpected directions.

The writing *per se* wasn't a problem, or shouldn't have been. I'd made my living as a writer of sorts since the 1960s. But as a newspaper columnist, I was geared to write 650 words and stop. I was intimidated by the thought of attempting anything so large and complex as a book. It took me a long time to understand that the key was to organize the material, then break the writing down into manageable chunks. Most of the writing was completed by 2006, but still there were distractions (a job), procrastinations, and a medical crisis that put me on the disabled list for more than a year. As a result, fine tuning and the search for the last couple of elusive facts continued into the spring of 2013. In the end, it took me as long to write the book as it took Ewing to play his entire baseball career exactly 100 years earlier.

The project could have died any number of times, but I never lost interest and was always able to return to it with undiminished enthusiasm. That was thanks largely to the regular stimulation provided by SABR and especially the Deadball Era Committee. Invaluable assistance came from my editor, Tom Simon, founding chairman of the DEC; as well as Ray Nemec, Steve Steinberg, Gabriel Schechter, Norman Macht, and numerous others who generously shared their knowledge, research and sources.

Receiving the Larry Ritter Book Award is at once an exhilarating and a humbling experience. It is an extraordinary honor to see my name added to the list of previous recipients who have contributed so much to our understanding of the Deadball Era. But it shouldn't be forgotten that it was a team effort.

**RAY CHAPMAN WILL  
SPRINT BACKWARDS**

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CLEVELAND—Ray Chapman was to have cavorted in the shortfield in yesterday's Washington-Nap game, but Dr. M. H. Castle, club physician, crossed Manager Birmingham at the last minute. He does not think Chappie will be ready for another week.

In the meantime Ray will spend most of his practice time running backwards. A half dozen players who dropped out of their team lineup because of fractured ankle bones got themselves back in trim by running backwards.

"A player favors an injured leg when he runs forward," said Lee Fohl, Waterbury manager, who visited President Somers Sunday. "When he runs backward he must bear full weight on the injured limb. It gets sore at first, but the player rapidly rounds into shape.

*The Pittsburgh Press, June 16, 1914*

**BALL SURPRISED**

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ST. LOUIS—The petition of President Ball of the St. Louis Americans to dismiss the suit of players Derrill Pratt and John Lavan for \$50,000 each was overruled in the circuit court here yesterday. The court ruled the cases must go to a jury. The players sued Ball for alleged slander, basing their petitions on a newspaper interview with Ball in which he was quoted as saying certain players had "laid down." The date for the trial has not been set.

*Youngstown Vindicator, January 20, 1917*

The man who gains an appointment as a league umpire is now mentioned as having a record for fairness. In a couple months' time he will be known as a highway robber and a coward.

*The Pittsburgh Press, March 11, 1905*

## PREVIEW: BASEBALL ON TRIAL: THE ORIGINS OF BASEBALL'S ANTITRUST EXEMPTION

BY NATHANIEL GROW

*Baseball on Trial* is an engaging blend of legal scholarship and baseball history that illuminates how the game gained its controversial exemption from antitrust laws. Making thorough use of court records and impressive original research, author Nathaniel Grow, an assistant professor of legal studies at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business, takes the reader through the litigation first instituted by the Federal League in 1914 through the unanimous decision rendered by the United States Supreme Court in 1922. In terms clear and intelligible to the non-lawyer, Grow also provides an overview of how antitrust law was viewed a near-century ago and, in the process, renders the outcome of the case understandable, even to the reader who may not agree with it. The audience for the work is not confined to those seeking a better understanding of baseball-labor relations or students of sports jurisprudence. *Baseball on Trial* will appeal to all committee members looking for an interesting and well-told account of landmark events in baseball history. Published by the University of Illinois Press, the book can be ordered on-line via <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/56snn7zy9780250238198.html>, or by telephone at (800) 621-2736.

Bill Lamb

