

# BLACK SOX SCANDAL



Vol. 2, No. 2, November 2010

Research Committee Newsletter

## Leading off ...

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### Chairman's Corner

By **Jacob Pomrenke**

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The question has lingered in my mind — and, I'm sure, many of yours — since Gene Carney's untimely death last summer: What would the future hold for the Black Sox committee he worked so hard to help create?

I don't have the answer.

But I do know his optimism for this group was sky-high.

Many of us discussed how best to honor Gene in the weeks and months after he passed — I believe we took a great first step by getting his books and papers to Greenville, South Carolina, through a donation made by his widow, Barbara, to the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum and Baseball Library.

Gene once told me he was amazed at those researchers who had been traveling "on the Black Sox trail," as he liked to call it, for decades — when he had only gotten hooked later in life.

Like most people, he never realized that the Black Sox

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**Bill Marcley unloads boxes from the Gene P. Carney Collection, an archive of Black Sox-related books and files belonging to the late founding chairman of this committee, into his truck on Sept. 28 in the parking lot of Mountain Creek Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. Carney's collection was donated last month by his widow, Barbara, to the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum and Baseball Library. Through donations made by SABR members, the full cost of shipping the collection from New York to South Carolina was paid for and a donation of \$826.36 was made to the museum on behalf of the Black Sox Scandal committee. The family of Kate Jackson, Joe's wife, belonged to this church; her parents are buried in the churchyard. (Photo: Arlene Marcley)**

## 'A Night at the Museum'

By **Thomas K. Perry**  
and **Mike Nola**

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We are a small crowd, gathered on the back steps, talking baseball on Saturday night. Our voices wax and wane with our particular passions; yet, there is one wonderful common thread. Shoeless Joe Jackson. He's here.

They both are, Joe and Katie, part of us on a

### EDITOR'S NOTE

When Thomas K. Perry and Mike Nola got their first look at the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum some years ago, they told director Arlene Marcley, "We could

stay here all night!" Marcley decided to give them the opportunity to do just that. On August 7, 2010, during the SABR convention in Atlanta, Perry and Nola stayed overnight inside the museum. This is their story.

summer night in Greenville.

The city was the self-proclaimed textile center of the world, and the old mills provided a way of life for thousands who

came, wanting something better than they knew as tenant farmers.

"The mill village was their world, insulated in the most supportive,

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## ► MUSEUM

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nurturing and comforting way. Although they ventured outside the mill village, within the mill was their work, their family, their school, their church, their recreation, their world.”

Robert Thomas speaks true: Growing up on the mill hill makes you family, and Joe’s a brother. He moved on, though, did well for himself. Look at this house. No linthead would ever imagine living in such a fine place. And with the renovations, it is almost a dream, with a baseball library to boot.

Falling asleep among those books was like conversing with Babe, Diz, Jackie, Josh, Ty, Ted and a hundred other heroes. It doesn’t get any better than that. Well, maybe it does.

Joe and Katie’s place holds all sorts of items tracing their life together, mill village to big leagues and back again. Like this photo (pictured below), from their wedding day.



“Joe Jackson, the popular centerfielder of the local team, made the greatest home run of his career on Sunday. The home run was made on Cupid’s diamond and the victory was a fair young lady. On Sunday afternoon at 4:30 o’clock, Joe was married to Miss Katie Wynn.”

For better or worse, in sickness and health, they were there for each other.

Joe was a master at his craft, perhaps the most gifted natural hitter the game ever saw. You’d expect Ty Cobb to say something about that, and you’d be right. A glass case in the front bedroom holds the framed quote.

“He batted against spitballs, shine balls, emery balls and all other trick deliveries. He never figured anything out or studied anything with the same scientific approach I gave it. He just swung.”

The Peach, he studied. Joe, he hit the hell outta the ball.

This bedroom (pictured above-right) is where Joe died, just before Christmas in 1951, and now the ceiling is adorned with nicknames sportswriters gave to him – Shoeless Joe, Carolina Confection, Southern Star.

Gazing up at first light, you are rewarded with the reminders of what others thought of him, of what he remains to us.

There is a note from a young boy, holding a place of honor on the shelf above Cobb’s missive in that glass case. It was left on Joe’s

grave, words from one ballplayer to another.

“Mr. Jackson, please watch over me as I play your game to the best of my ability. I’m going to play for all the years you couldn’t. I know you were innocent. Somehow I know you are the greatest ever.” (Matt McRee #9)



We are baseball fans, in love with a game that wrapped itself around us long years ago, and our passion for its history deepens with the passing of time. Joe is part of that. Many of us believe him innocent of ever throwing a game. Many regard him as the devil incarnate, betrayer of the game

that brought fame to his doorstep.

Some of us, who came to the table convinced of his guilt, reversed ourselves after years of research and contemplation. For us, he’s the mill kid who made good.

In this house where Joe and Katie live, he is at ease with his place in history. There is nothing to prove or defend – his living did that for him.

It is now a sunny Sunday morning, and a Sabbath quiet moves along the city streets. Our thoughts rest, undisturbed.

“Peace be upon this place,” I almost say aloud, but do not.

There is no need for the ancient blessing. Peace has resided here for a long time.

**Thomas K. Perry is the author of numerous works on baseball history, including the play “Shoeless Joe,” which premiered in 1995, and “Just Joe: Baseball’s Natural, as told by his wife,” published by Pocol Press in 2007. Mike Nola is the official historian of the Shoeless Joe Jackson Virtual Hall of Fame, which he has run at blackbetsy.com since 1996.**

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# Q&A: Hauls of Shame founder Peter J. Nash

By Jacob Pomrenke  
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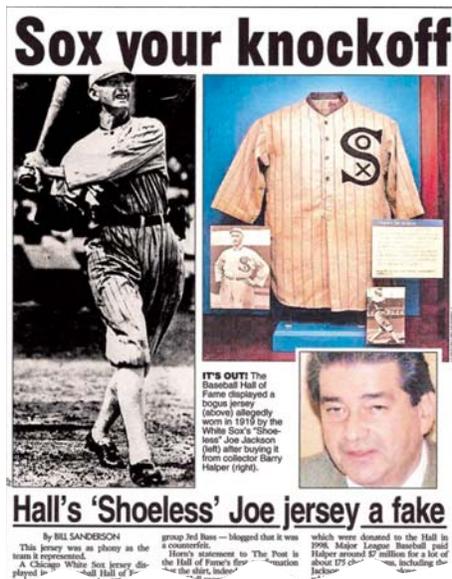
*Peter J. Nash's career path might be tough to duplicate. After touring the world with a No. 1 hit song as part of the rap trio 3rd Bass, Nash — a SABR member since the age of 12 — has authored two books about baseball and produced a film on the Boston Red Sox's "Royal Rooters" fan group. Today, Nash runs the Hauls of Shame website, investigating thefts and forgeries of artifacts from the Baseball Hall of Fame, the New York and Boston public libraries and other institutions. He splits his time between Boston and Cooperstown, New York.*



**Peter J. Nash**

*In August, HaulsofShame.com published an article disputing the authenticity of a Shoeless Joe Jackson 1919 White Sox jersey on display in Cooperstown. The Baseball Hall of Fame confirmed in October to the Chicago Sun-Times and New York Post that the jersey — acquired by MLB and donated to the Hall of Fame in 1998 as part of a \$7 million deal with the late Barry Halper, a renowned private collector and former part-owner of the New York Yankees — was a fake. Other items from Halper's famed collection, including a purported 1914 Babe Ruth rookie jersey and personal items said to have been owned by Ty Cobb, have also come under intense scrutiny recently. Recently, I spoke with Nash about Hauls of Shame, the Jackson jersey and troubles in the baseball memorabilia industry.*

**Q:** How did you get started investigating memorabilia?



**New York Post of October 4, 2010**  
(Photo credit: HaulsofShame.com)

**A:** I got into collecting many, many years ago. And through the years, I'd heard all sorts of rumors [about] thefts at the New York Public Library and then I actually had seen some evidence of it. ... And in 1995, I purchased two items from dealers at a show and they turned out to be Hall of Fame items. One was an 1897 photo of the Boston team in front of a Baltimore hotel. And I had actually gone physically into the Hall of Fame, into a 19th-century exhibit, and I saw this blowup on the wall of the same image. I figured, "Oh, well, the Hall of Fame must have this picture, too." But unfortunately, it had the exact same imperfections and a huge gash in the photo, in the corner. And sure enough, it was the exact same photo that [had been] in the Hall of Fame. ... So I got in touch with the dealers and ... I ended up getting reimbursed. So that's really where the whole interest in the Hall of Fame came up. Over the years, it's just compounded to the point where I just saw so much out there, just floating around and con-

stantly being sold, showing up fresh for the market. It's just totally out of control.

**Q:** Was the Barry Halper collection the first time that you realized the Hall of Fame might have acquired fraudulent items?

**A:** I'm sure that the Hall of Fame over the years has had donations from a family member who thought, "Oh, I thought this was the glove" or "I thought that was the ball." But nothing that was devious. ... And that just comes down to the honesty of the person donating it. ... The only big problem was this whole purchase from Halper, and in particular with the uniforms. It was really unbelievable, the amount of outright forgeries and misidentified [items]. ... Going back to the mid-eighties, Halper's claim to fame was that he had [a jersey of] every Hall of Famer except Eppa Rixey. And he [once] approached the Hall of Fame with plans to trade a Lou Gehrig jersey or someone else's jersey because the Hall of Fame did have the Rixey jersey ... but they couldn't do that. So that was like his going schtick. And a lot of those 19th-century uniforms [that Halper owned], I mean a majority of them were totally bogus. They were nowhere close to being authentic.

**Q:** Did the idea of the Jackson jersey being fake surprise you at all?

**A:** Listen, the whole situation with the Joe Jackson jersey is ... it's like [if this was] fiction, if I was a creative writer trying to come up with a story about memorabilia ... about fake memorabilia at the Hall of Fame, I mean, who wouldn't pick Joe Jackson's Black Sox jersey from 1919 to be the iconic item that you would focus attention on? And the fact that

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## ► NASH

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it's just on display for a decade, it's a pretty unbelievable story. ... I guess it all comes down to the fact that Barry Halper was a part-owner of the Yankees and ... And at that point, you've got to call him a liar to his face, you know, if you were going to question it. So I think there was some of that at play. ... [But] back in the mid-eighties, it was on the record that he did this whole cash transaction via mail and had a liaison to get the jersey, a whole convoluted story. ... It was clear that by 1998, '99, Halper's story had changed ... [he said] he got it from Joe Jackson's widow inside the house. When I first found that evidence, I was already skeptical. And the red flags went up all over the place.

**Q:** What about the jersey itself tipped you off?

**A:** I had no doubts about it. Just based on the manufacturer, there was no way that was Joe Jackson's jersey. No way it was ever a White Sox jersey. So when the Hall came out [in October] with the dye and the polyester [evidence], that just makes it a slam-dunk. ... Just looking at it in person, it was clear that the Jackson chain-stitching was way too bold. And the Sox logo was just jet-black. You see the other material around the collar was totally abnormal, like a purple color. ... And the

other thing ... that led me on the road, it didn't match any of the photos. I went on a mission to find any photo I could of the White Sox from 1917, '18, '19 and '20. And, I mean, if you can't find any player in that type of a jersey, over literally hundreds of pictures, then you know there's a problem. And one of those big problems was you could tell that when it was forged, it was forged from the famous 1917 photo where he's in front of the dugout, because his pants are up really high ... and that's the picture they even put with it, when it was on display with "Baseball as America" [traveling exhibit]. It just didn't get the O and the X right, either. There were so many problems with it. It's hard to believe it lasted a decade [on display].

**Q:** Was there a possibility that Jackson had the jersey made for him or bought it later?

**A:** Mike Nola asked about that, too. Anything's possible, you know? But it's highly unlikely. I interviewed Joe Anders [a friend of Jackson's later in life], and he told me pretty clearly he didn't remember any jersey or glove. The one thing people did remember ... and Mike found some articles about it ... was when Joe Jackson had his dry-cleaning facility in Savannah, there were news reports that he had his old glove and the Black Betsy [bat] in the window. And I also think there

was a 1917 panoramic shot of the White Sox that they also said he had. ... And the shoes that the Hall of Fame had with his stuff, I tried to check on those ... and those had been there for years. So I assume those had been donated by someone who had really got them legitimately early on. The [Hall of Fame] has gotten a lot of mileage sending that around the country. ... I guess on another level, with the controversy over Jackson's alleged involvement in the full-blown fix, it's pretty interesting. [Jackson] might get a chuckle out of the fact that Major League Baseball and the Hall of Fame are both embarrassed by this. So it's like revenge from the grave; not at his own hands, but, you know, "look at what these guys have got themselves into."

**Q:** Looking at the hobby as a whole, how widespread is the fraud?

**A:** When you look at the modern-day players, the more recent items, it's just rampant all over the place. They can probably never control it to some extent, because as long as people keep buying ... And if you're an ordinary collector or just an observer, and you see that Shoeless Joe Jackson's 1919 jersey made it into the Hall of Fame for a decade before it was found out that it was fake ... how sure can you be about your Mickey Mantle signed ball or replica jersey? With autographs, unless you

saw it signed right in front of you ... that's the only way you can be sure. ... And in my opinion, a lot of the authenticators, you know, are lacking considerably in their knowledge of what they're examining.

**Q:** How many leads do you get every day or every week?

**A:** Oh, just constantly. Some confidential, some not. But yeah, every week there's a couple of good leads that come in. And in a lot of cases, we have had a couple collectors say, "Hey, listen, I saw your article and I think I have a stolen item. What should I do?" So we'll try to give him some guidance. And in [several] cases, items have been returned to an institution. ... So it's good to get the word out there, because other collectors will know what to look for, too.

**Q:** What's the future hold for you and Hauls of Shame?

**A:** I'm [working] on two book projects. One is more about the Hall of Fame and the other relates more to the New York Public Library [thefts] and maybe the hobby in general. Somehow, everything is kind of interconnected. ... I actually can't keep up with the new amount of material. There's just so many other things developing. There's so many new stories to cover. It's not getting old at all. There's way too much to cover ... unfortunately.

## GENE CARNEY AWARD WINNERS



Grant King, Luke Shields and Dwight Vicks are honored by Clinton (N.Y.) High School principal Richard D. Hunt as the recipients of the 2010 Gene Carney Award. For the last four years, the Clinton High School SABR Chapter has honored graduating seniors who have performed outstanding work. Each student receives a commemorative baseball bat and a \$200 award. Carney, who died in July 2009, was a mentor and adviser to the chapter and provided materials and assistance for student research. (Photo courtesy of Richard D. Hunt)

## Black Sox documentary premieres in November

The rise and fall of the 1919 Chicago White Sox was the featured subject in the latest edition of Major League Baseball Productions' "Triumph and Tragedy" series, which began airing November 13 on MLB Network.

MLB Productions interviewed many members of this committee for the hour-long program, which featured a reading of Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis' famous judgment against the Black Sox players by former MLB

players and writers Bert Sugar and Frank DeFord.

The show was not simply a rehashing of "Eight Men Out" — it included photos and video clips never seen on television and also highlighted recent



developments that have come to light in the

Black Sox story, such as rumors of the 1918 World Series being fixed.

It is unknown if the show will become available on DVD; if so, details will be posted on the Yahoo group.

## ► CHAIRMAN

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scandal was a "cold case," not a "closed case."

But over the last few years, led largely by Gene's efforts, the case has become warmer, especially in light of the discovery of the lost Collyer's Eye issues, the Black Sox-related collection recently made available at the Chicago History Museum and the once-and-for-all debunking of the Eddie Cicotte bonus story and other apocryphal legends that have persisted over the years.

Gene laid the foundation for this committee with his own research, but he was

also interested in what other members had to say.

He encouraged all of us to visit the Chicago History Museum and give "another set of eyes" to the same documents he had seen.

One of Gene's greatest gifts was his ability to make everyone feel welcome in the conversation. He hoped to get as many people — and as many different perspectives — involved in the Black Sox committee as possible.

That's how I think each of us can best honor Gene's legacy here: by getting more involved, by asking more questions, by continuing to pursue new angles and seek new answers (or confirm the established

ones) to the complex Black Sox story.

What are some of the questions you've always wanted to know the answers to? Here are some of mine:

- ◆ Who was Sport Sullivan? Was he ever around baseball again after 1919?
- ◆ Where was Joe Jackson during his so-called "lost years" between 1926-31?
- ◆ What really happened with Dick Kerr's years-long suspension from the White Sox?
- ◆ What was in that "mystery package" delivered by Fred McMullin to

Buck Weaver during the World Series?

I'm hopeful someone here can help to answer those questions someday.

One of the greatest assets we have is that no matter what aspect of the scandal you're interested in, you can almost always find an expert on any particular subject to help.

That's one of my goals as chairman: to make more people aware of the expertise that exists here, and to help connect those who have questions with those who have answers.

**Jacob Pomrenke was confirmed by the SABR board as chairman after the Black Sox committee's annual meeting at the national convention in August.**

## SABR 40 CONVENTION RECAP



A highlight of the 40th annual SABR convention was a panel discussion on “Shoeless Joe Jackson, the Black Sox and the 1919 World Series.” A standing-room audience of about 250 attended. From left: Jacob Pomrenke, moderator; panelists Daniel Voelker; Furman Bisher; Mike Nola; and Paul Duffy. Not pictured: David Fleitz. (Photo credit: Tracy Greer)



SABR members wait in line to enter the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum and Baseball Library in Greenville, South Carolina, as Joe Jackson impersonator Dan Roberts, far right, greets them at the door. Two charter buses were filled for the Saturday afternoon trip from Atlanta. Afterward, members attended a Greenville Drive minor league game. (Photo credit: Mike Nola)



The sun sets over Fluor Field, home of the Greenville Drive — the Class A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox — in a game against the Rome Braves on August 7. Fluor Field features a replica of Fenway Park’s Green Monster and is built using bricks from old area textile mills. (Photo credit: Jacob Pomrenke)



Author Thomas K. Perry, left, and Mike Nola stand in Joe Jackson’s old living room after spending a “Night at the Museum” on August 7-8 in Greenville, South Carolina. (Photo courtesy of Mike Nola)



## FIND US ON FACEBOOK

In an effort to increase awareness of our committee — and of SABR in general — I’ve created a SABR Black Sox Scandal Research Committee page on Facebook. You can find it by typing “SABR Black

Sox” in the search bar on Facebook or by typing this link into your web browser: <http://tinyurl.com/29z7ul6>.

So if you’re already on Facebook, just find our page and click the “like” button.

— Jacob Pomrenke