



Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report
March 1991

Nameless National Association Player Found

Bob Richardson captures the *Find of the Month* award for identifying the mysterious Mr. Nevins of the 1873 Elizabeth Resolutes. This required some yeoman detective work and although the findings are not indisputable, circumstances indicate that it is highly improbable that we have misidentified Nevins as Alexander Brown Nevin, 1874 graduate of Yale University.

Our story begins on April 30, 1873 with the Elizabeth Resolutes in New Haven for an exhibition game with the Yale University nine. Pitching for Yale was one Alexander Brown Nevin. While Yale didn't play again until May 7, the Resolutes traveled to Boston for a game May 2. The game was rained out and the team returned to Elizabeth for a game on May 6. It was in this game that "Nevins" debuted for Elizabeth, playing right field. On May 7, Nevin was back in the lineup for Yale, pitching and playing the outfield until Yale completed their season on May 31.

On June 17, "Nevins" rejoined Elizabeth to fill in at third base for the injured Jim Clinton. He played 12 games, departing after the July 23 contest in plenty of time to rejoin Yale in the fall. In 1874, Nevin was Yale's regular third baseman, generally batting fifth or sixth in the order, the same position that "Nevins" regularly hit for the Resolutes. Although no newspaper saw fit to mention the Elizabeth player's first name, I think Bob has shown that Alexander Brown Nevin is the player we have been seeking.

A great job of research!

A Geography Lesson

When Dick Thompson was down at the Weymouth, Massachusetts City Hall the other day, he learned that Weymouth is one city and there is no official distinction between East, South, and North Weymouth. (Whatever happened to West Weymouth?) Anyway, we always try to be accurate in our geographic entries. That is why we have several players listed as being born in Austria-Hungary, even though it no longer exists. If anyone is aware of any other discrepancies such as this, please let me know. By the way, don't you dread the confusion that will arise when we have our first player from the Russian republic of Georgia?

Convention News

I hope that everyone is planning to attend the SABR convention in St. Louis, birthplace of missing ballplayer Toots Coyne. As always, the main highlight of the convention will be the biographical research committee meeting. It will be held Friday, June 26, at 11:30 A.M. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Thorny Problem

In January, our *Mystery of the Month* featured Jack Thornton, who supposedly died in 1893 in Pensacola, Florida of yellow fever. Lefty Blasco sends along an obituary from the 1894 Reach Guide that states that the man who died in Florida was our 1891 Philadelphia pitcher. Now the question is: Who was the Thornton playing first base for Dallas in 1896?

Just Call Me Merkle

As all of you know, Fred Merkle is famous for a boner that cost his team the 1908 pennant. Last month your committee chairman proved that

he is not immune to Merkleitis. I changed the birthdate of Fred Goldsmith to 1852 based on an article I read in the 1939 *Sporting News* which referred to Goldsmith as one of the oldest living players and listed his age. I foolishly assumed (never assume) that our information was wrong and I changed it.

This points out a problem that can occur within this committee. Careful research can correct an error but then someone can stumble onto the wrong fact and change it back again. Corroborating evidence is important and in this case, Rich Bozzone sent me a copy of Goldsmith's birth record which listed the date of 1856. When you send me data, please make sure that you send me a copy of your source as well.

Death of a Coach

Bill Weiss sends along the death of a non-playing coach. Golden Desmond Holt died June 11, 1991 in Sherman Oaks, California.

The 1920 Census

The 1920 census has finally arrived and I am happy to report that it is completely soundexed and very readable. It contains 49 states (missing Alaska) as well as Puerto Rico and the Panama Canal Zone. One thing that I don't like is that an adult child who lives with a parent doesn't have his own listing in the Soundex. For instance, if 70-year-old Joe Quest lives with his 90-year-old father, Chester, you would have to look under Chester to find him.

I started by looking through the states alphabetically beginning with Alabama in an attempt to find Ben Hunt. As luck would have it, I did manage to locate him in Wyoming and it was the only page of the microfilm that I couldn't read. I have all the luck.

Beware of the Undead

Speaking of the census, I came across an interesting story the other day relating to the 1900 census for St. Joseph, Missouri. This illustrates an interesting dilemma that we might run into sometime.

St. Joseph was a booming city around the turn of the century and when it came time to take the census, the citizens of St. Joseph were intent on showing an increase in population from the 52,324 that the city showed in 1890. The 1900 total ballooned up to a figure of 102,979 thanks to some overly zealous census takers. The census

takers toured the cemeteries of St. Joseph, listing as citizens the names that they found on the headstones. They acquired hotel registers and listed the names found there as permanent residents. Shopowners were listed under both their home and business address. When the final figure was announced the citizens celebrated their fine growth.

However their joy was short-lived when the federal government announced that they were sending a federal investigator to St. Joseph to check on the sudden growth spurt. He arrived on a Friday and the following day a group of citizens took him downtown so he could investigate the situation. Along his route, they stopped at various "watering holes" where they provided the investigator free beer and bourbon.

They propped the bleary-eyed fellow up against a lamppost and invited him to count the people as they went by. The count went into the hundreds as the thoroughly soused investigator endeavored to count the busy Saturday shopping crowds. After about an hour the investigator was led to the telegraph office where he sent the following wire to Washington:

"Can find no padding. Think figure of 102,979 is too small. Population must be at least 200,000."

The figure of 102,979 still stands. However in 1910, the population dropped to 77,403. So if you have any ballplayers to track in the 1900 St. Joseph census, they may have been rising from the grave.

Will We Be Helping The Mob ?

Regarding Joey Jay, last month's *Mystery of the Month*, Bob Richardson wonders if Jay is really in the witness protection program, what if we find him and then the Mafia bumps him off? Would that be the *Find of the Month*? Just a thought.

Birthday List

Well, it happened to me again. Last month I mentioned the birthday of Louis Rosenberg. Then I discover from Bill Weiss that Rosenberg died last year. And I learned from Bill Haber that Andy Woehr, mentioned in our January report, died in 1990. Not only do I continually seem to send birthday wishes to deceased players, but recently I wrote a "widow" to ask her the death date of her late husband and learned that he was

still alive. Oh well, here (hopefully) is the list of nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in April.

April 19	Bernie DeViveiros	91
April 22	Ray Bengé	90

Who Is This Guy?

On July 14, 1879 a man named Magner made his only major league appearance, playing the outfield for Cincinnati. We list this man as William John Magner, born in 1855. This is probably wrong as there was a career minor leaguer named William John Magner, who died June 27, 1913 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I don't have the documentation on this but I believe that someone proved that William John Magner was elsewhere when the game in question was played in Cincinnati.

The *Sporting Life* of April 23, 1884 states that John T. Magner, the well-known St. Louis player, is now a clerk in the post office in St. Louis. On June 10, 1885 *Sporting Life* mentions that Magner wants to re-enter the diamond even though he weighs 300 pounds. (Kind of an early day Cecil Fielder.) The book The National Game by Al Spink, published in 1910, mentions that Magner was alive at the time and working in the mailing room of a St. Louis newspaper. There was a John Magner who died July 20, 1923 in St. Louis. This gentleman was a retired building

contractor who was born in England in 1844. Quite likely not our boy. Can anyone find the Magner who was working for the St. Louis paper and is our March *Mystery of the Month*?

The Scoreboard

	IN	OUT	PCT
Total Complete Names	13708	75	99.456
Total Complete Births	12967	816	94.080
Total Complete Deaths	6781	501	49.198
Total Assumed Alive	6501		47.167
Total Bats	12370	1312	90.411
Total Throws	12645	1037	92.421
Total Heights	12540	1142	91.653
Total Weights	12464	1218	91.098
Total Debut Dates	13783	0	100.000
Total Questionnaires	9902	3881	71.842
Total Completion			91.9342

Andrew Francis Harrington

By Dick Thompson

B: November 13, 1888, Wakefield, Massachusetts

D: November 12, 1938, Malden, Massachusetts

A. Frank Harrington was one of three pitching brothers from Wakefield, Massachusetts. His college successes, first at Holy Cross and then Boston College, led to a contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1911. He pitched briefly for Milwaukee that year but was released due to a sore arm. In 1913 he sandwiched an 8-13 mark for Lynn of the New England League around his only major league appearance, which came with the Cincinnati Reds.

Following his graduation from Boston College in 1912 and Harvard Law School in 1915, Frank went on to become a recognized authority in real estate, business, and corporate law. He was also a lecturer for the Massachusetts Board of Education. Chronic stomach ulcers contributed to his death in 1938.

Joe "Bunk" Harrington (1886-1947) graduated from the University of Rochester in 1912 and later advanced his education at MIT. As an expert in sanitary engineering he worked for the Red Cross in Europe prior to the United States' entry into WWI. For that work he received a special citation from the Serbian government. As a pro, Joe pitched in the Ohio-Penn, Twin States, and Colonial leagues. His high school batterymate, Joe Casey, caught for the Detroit Tigers.

Billy "Kid" Harrington (1892-1971) ignored the educational route of his brothers and made baseball his career. He played professionally from 1911 to 1929 and made stops in the New England, Western, American Association, Northwestern, Eastern, and NY-Penn leagues. Highlights included 21 and 23 game win seasons for Lynn in 1911 and 1912 and 21 wins for Denver in 1914. And while Bill Harrington never received the major league shot that he seemed to have earned, he did in 1917, while a member of the Butte, Montana team, have the unique experience of having been the teammate of a 46-year-old journeyman pitcher named McGinnity and the famous Benjamin Franklin Hunt.

Thanks to Jack Kavanagh, Ray Nemec, Bob Richardson, Tom Shea, Bob Hoie, and Bob Davids for their input into this article.

New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:

1903 Marshall, Joseph Hanley	No New Information	(H1)
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New Information Received:

1991 Beltre y Valera, Esteban	B: Dec 26 1967 Ingenio Quisfueña, Dominican Republic	(H1)
1989 Berroa, Geronimo Emiliano	Name: Geronimo Emiliano Letta Berroa Real name: <u>Geronimo Emiliano Letta y Berroa</u>	(H1)
1928 Boggs, Raymond Joseph	D: <u>Grand Junction, Colorado</u>	(H1)
1890 Burke, Edward L.	BL	(M1)
1891 Burrell, Frank Andrew	B: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u>	(T3)
1985 Coleman, Vincent Maurice	B: Sep 22 1961	(H1)
1991 De La Rosa, Francisco	Name: Francisco De La Rosa y Jimenez	(H1)
1912 Dowd, John Leo	Name: John Leo O'Dowd B: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u>	(T3)
1991 Eusebio, Raul Antonio	Name: Raul Antonio Bare Eusebio Real name: <u>Raul Antonio Bare y Eusebio</u>	(H1)
1991 Fajardo y Navarrete, Hector	Name: Hector Fajardo y Nabaratte B: Nov 16 1970 Sahuayo, Mexico	(H1)
1890 Ford, Thomas Walter	D: <u>May 27 1917</u> <u>Chattanooga, Tennessee</u>	(H4)
1991 Garcia, Ramon Antonio	Name: Ramon Antonio Garcia y Fortunato B: Feb 9 1969	(H1)
1875 Goldsmith, Fred Ernest	B: May 15 1856	(B3)
1890 Hart, Robert Lee	B: May 16 1866	(C1)
1882 Hecker, Guy Jackson	B: <u>Youngsville, Pennsylvania</u>	(T1)
1991 Hernandez y Figueroa, Jose Antonio	B: <u>Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico</u>	(H1)
1991 Hernandez, Roberto Manuel	Name: Roberto Manuel Hernandez y Rodriguez	(H1)
1913 Howley, Daniel Philip	B: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u> D: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u>	(T3)
1930 Liebhardt, Glenn Ignatius	D: <u>Mar 14 1992</u> <u>Winston-Salem, North Carolina</u>	(S1)
1914 Luque, Adolfo	Name: Adolfo Domingo de Guzman Luque	(H1)
1991 Mercedes, Luis Roberto	Name: Luis Roberto Mercedes y Santana B: Feb 15 1968	(H1)
1886 Moolic, George Henry	D: <u>Methuen, Massachusetts</u>	(R1)
1934 Mulligan, Joseph Ignatius	B: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u>	(T3)
1912 Nash, Kenneth Leland	B: <u>Weymouth, Massachusetts</u>	(T3)
1991 Neagle, Dennis Edward	B: <u>Gambrills, Maryland</u>	(H1)
1873 Nevins,	Name: <u>Alexander Brown Nevins</u> B: <u>Oct 3 1850</u> <u>Allegheny City, Pennsylvania</u>	(R1)
	D: <u>Oct 10 1921</u> <u>Pensacola, Florida</u>	