



**Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report**  
**September 1993**

## The Quest Is Over

Joe Quest, the number one player on our Top 20 Most Wanted List, has been found. I found him with an assist from Pete Morris, so I am giving myself the *Find of the Month* award.

First of all, let's recap where we last left Quest. Quest was born in 1851 in New Castle, Pennsylvania. He played with a variety of teams until 1886 and is known to have coined the phrase, "Charley Horse." After his playing career, he took residence in Chicago. In 1907 he was implicated in an embezzlement scandal and skipped town, leaving for parts unknown.

Pete Morris suggested I check California for him since he played briefly in the minors there after his major league career ended. On my next trip to the library, I checked the 1920 California census and found this entry in San Diego:

Joseph L. Quest	68	B: Pa.
Joseph " "	16	B: Ill.
Robert " "	14	B: Ill.
Helen " "	10	B: Ala.

This traced Quest's path perfectly. I then checked the 1910 Alabama census and found Quest living in Citronelle, Alabama. Interestingly, his occupation was listed as "own income." Translation: embezzlement money.

I then went to the Mormon library and checked the California death index where I found his death in San Diego on November 14, 1924. Replacing Quest on our Top 20 list will be Lou Sylvester who is featured as this month's *Mystery of the Month*.

### New Members

Please welcome the following new members to the biographical committee:

Sigmund Menchel (M3)  
P.O. Box 355  
Miller Place, New York 11764

Alan Feinberg (F3)  
P.O. Box 50569  
Washington, D.C. 20091

David Nemec (N3)  
1517 Irving Street  
San Francisco, California 94122

Pete Cava (C2)  
7143 Mohawk Lane  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46260

### Phonies

Often, as we try to track down missing players, we find an obituary and lament the fact that it doesn't mention baseball. On the opposite end of the scale are the obituaries which say that someone played baseball when he really didn't.

Richard Schrader recently sent me an obituary of a man named Robert Lawson. The obituary stated that Lawson played centerfield for the New York Yankees from 1938-40. Pure poppycock! And this happens all the time. Just another one of the hazards of biographical research.

### Haber Sends Death Of Aber To Paper For SABR

I hope you all noticed that thanks to Bill Haber, *Baseball America* is now printing obituaries of former major leaguers. They recently published a list of all players who had died earlier in the year. Hopefully this will also lead to learning other player deaths that we might otherwise have missed. (Wasn't there another magazine that used to do this?)

## Another Actor

Tom Hufford sends along the story of Jesse Baker, who was James Cagney's double for many years. Baker was actually a missing ballplayer until a few years ago when a clue from Wally Shaner led to his capture. Shaner, interestingly enough, ran the Lido show at the Stardust in Las Vegas. The Lido was Las Vegas's longest running show until it closed last year.

## I Guess I should Have Studied

I never realized when I became chairman of this committee how many subjects I would have to know something about. I was a math major and the only time I use that is when I determine that if a player debuted in 1886, his 1879 birth date is probably wrong. Here are some examples of what I mean:

**Geography** - Pete Palmer recently sent me a list of all towns we have listed which do not appear on any map. When I have some spare time I intend to go through it. Some towns, of course, have changed their name.

**History** - Bob Tholkes sent me a list of all players we list as born in Germany before Germany was a country. A couple were born in Prussia, and one was born in Wurttemberg. For the sake of simplicity, I will leave these as Germany.

**English** - After all, I have to write this newsletter, don't I?

**Spanish** - I have often had to write to Latin players or to Latin American countries. It helps to know Spanish.

**Medicine** - Ever try to decipher the cause of death on a death certificate?

## Birthday List

There are several nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in October if you'd like to send a card.

Oct 1	Jimmie Reese	92
Oct 10	Homer Peel	91
Oct 20	James Uchrinscko	93
Oct 22	Isaac Kahdot	92
Oct 28	Henry Boney	90

You will also notice that we are reporting the death of the second oldest living ballplayer in Robert Cassius Wright. Bob Wright died at 101 and is the oldest man never to be the oldest of all time as Chet Hoff is still going strong at 102. Hoff and Edward Gill are the two remaining survivors of the dead ball era.

## Sufferin' Succotash

Our *Mystery of the Month* for September was one of Lee Allen's favorite players, Lou Sylvester. Lou Sylvester was born February 14, 1855 in Springfield, Illinois, a birth date that would appear to be accurate. He was the son of Joseph and Mary Sylvester who were born in the Madera Islands, which were a part of Portugal. (There's that geography again.) He had two sisters, Emma and Julia, and two brothers, Frank and George. In 1880, Lou was living in Elgin, Illinois with his wife, Jennie, and his daughter, Della. He had gotten married about 1876.

By 1900 he and his brother, George, had moved to San Diego where they had opened Sylvester Brothers Painting. He lived there until at least 1920 although I found a person I believe to be him in the 1926 San Diego city directory. Here he disappears and I could not find him in the California death index. George died in San Diego on August 19, 1946. I could find no obituary in the San Diego paper. I did find an obituary of George's wife, Edna, when she died in 1944. She left two children, George and Maryjane, and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale near Dave Rowe and Casey Stengel. Anyone have any ideas on where to go from here?

## Coming Attractions

Be sure and read next month's newsletter as we will list all of the 1993 rookies. Due to expansion we will have over 200 this year. Stay tuned.

## The Scoreboard

	IN	OUT	PCT
Total Complete Names	13875	72	99.484
Total Complete Births	13162	785	94.372
Total Complete Deaths	6921	484	49.624
Total Assumed Alive	6542		46.906
Total Bats	12575	1269	90.834
Total Throws	12826	1018	92.647
Total Heights	12783	1061	92.336
Total Weights	12708	1136	91.794
Total Debut Dates	13947	0	100.000
Total Questionnaires	9910	4037	71.055
Total Completion			92.0042

## New Monthly Data

### Questionnaires Received:

None

### New Information Received:

1926 Allen, Ethan Nathan	D: <u>Sep 15 1993</u>	(C1)
	<u>Brookings, Oregon</u>	
1875 Arundel, Harry	B: <u>Feb 1855</u>	(D2)
1936 Atwood, William Franklin	D: <u>Sep 14 1993</u>	(S1)
	<u>Snyder, Texas</u>	
1882 Burke, James	B: <u>Attleboro, Massachusetts</u>	(M4)
1912 Cather, Theodore P.	Name: Theodore <u>Physick</u> Cather	(D2)
1885 Coliver, William J.	Name: William J. <u>Collver</u>	(M4)
	B: <u>Mar 21 1867</u>	
	<u>Clyde, Ohio</u>	
1907 Craig, George McCarthy	Debut: <u>Jul 19 1907</u>	(P1)
1944 Dantonio, John James	Is Deceased	(H1)
1903 Deering, John Thomas	Weight: <u>180</u>	(M4)
1893 Donahue, Francis Rostell	Weight: <u>187</u>	(M4)
1898 Donovan, William Edward	<u>BS</u>	(M4)
1904 Dougherty, Thomas James	Weight: <u>195</u>	(M4)
1900 Eason, Malcolm Wayne	Height: <u>6-00</u>	(M4)
1893 Garry, John Thomas	<u>TL</u>	(C1)
1872 Hall, James	Delete death date. Death belongs to a woman named Jane Hall.	(D2)
1890 Halligan, William E.	<u>BL</u>	(M4)
1944 Hamner, Granville Wilbur	D: <u>Sep 12 1993</u>	(C1)
	<u>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</u>	
1935 Hill, Jesse Terrill	D: <u>Aug 31 1993</u>	(BL)
	<u>Pasadena, California</u>	
1879 Houck, Sargent Perry	B: <u>Mar 1856</u>	(D2)
1886 Hudson, Nathaniel P.	<u>BR</u>	(M4)
1912 Irvin, William Edward	<u>BR</u>	(M4)
1896 Johnson, Albert J.	Height: <u>5-09.5</u> Weight: <u>165</u>	(M4)
1907 Jones, Elijah Albert	Height: <u>5-11.5</u>	(M4)
1891 Letcher, Thomas F.	<u>BL</u>	(M4)
1945 Maier, Robert Phillip	D: <u>Aug 4 1993</u>	(H1)
	<u>South Plainfield, New Jersey</u>	
1902 McCarthy, Archibald J.	Height: <u>6-00</u> Weight: <u>160</u>	(M4)
1872 McDonald, Daniel	Height: <u>5-11</u> Weight: <u>154</u>	(M4)
1907 McDonald, John Joseph	Debut: <u>Sep 3 1907</u>	(P1)
1912 McGarvey, Daniel Francis	<u>BR</u>	(M4)
1912 Meaney, Patrick J.	<u>BR</u>	(M4)
1921 Merritt, Herman G.	Debut: <u>Aug 24 1921</u>	(M4)
1931 Moore, Eugene, Jr.	Debut: <u>Sep 19 1931</u>	(P1)
1909 Moriarty, William Joseph	B: <u>Aug 1883</u>	(D2)

1884 Morrison, Jonathan W.	B: <u>Ontario</u>	(M4)
1903 Nicholls, Simon Burdette	Height: <u>5-11.5</u> Weight: <u>165</u>	(M4)
1883 Pirie, James Moir	B: <u>Ontario</u>	(M4)
1871 Quest, Joseph S.	Name: <u>Joseph L. Quest</u>	(C1)
	D: <u>Nov 14 1924</u>	
	<u>San Diego, California</u>	
1902 Quinn, Clarence Carr	Weight: <u>210</u>	(M4)
1926 Reeves, Robert Edwin	Is Deceased	(H1)
1879 Reilley, Charles E.	Delete 1888 death date.	(S1)
1899 Roach, James Michael	Name: <u>Michael Stephen Roach</u>	(D2)
	B: <u>Dec 23 1873</u>	
	D: <u>New York, New York</u>	
1902 Roach, Skel	Name: <u>Rudolph Charles Roach</u>	(M4)
1904 Rossman, Claude R.	Weight: <u>188</u>	(M4)
1909 Scott, James	D: <u>Jacumba, California</u>	(C1)
1901 Siever, Edward T.	Name: <u>Edward Tilden Siever</u>	(M4)
1950 Sima, Albert	B: <u>Oct 7 1921</u>	(H1)
	D: <u>Aug 17 1993</u>	
	<u>Suffern, New York</u>	
1912 Smith, John Joseph	BR	(M4)
1886 Smith, William S.	Name: <u>F. William Smith</u>	(M4)
	B: <u>1863</u>	
	<u>New Orleans, Louisiana</u>	
	Delete death data. The Guelph death belongs to a different man.	
	Height: <u>5-08</u> Weight: <u>152</u>	
1906 Storke, Alan Marshall	Height: <u>6-01</u>	(M4)
1905 Sullivan, Dennis William	Height: <u>5-10</u>	(M4)
1907 Sweeney, William John	D: <u>Cambridge, Massachusetts</u>	(R1)
1898 Taylor, William H.	B: <u>Dec 1870</u>	(D2)
1895 Thornton, Walter Miller	BL	(M4)
1912 Ward, Joseph Nicholas	BR	(M4)
1898 Wood, Robert Lynn	Height: <u>5-08.5</u>	(M4)
1915 Wright, Robert Cassius	B: <u>Decatur County, Indiana</u>	(H1)
	D: <u>Jul 30 1993</u>	
	<u>Carmichael, California</u>	
1890 Wright, William Smith	Weight: <u>185</u>	(M4)