



Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report
December 1993

George Cobb Found

Our *Find of the Month* for December is the kind I really enjoy because it combined the efforts of several committee members. All will share in the coveted award.

George Cobb had been listed for years with a San Francisco connection. Various people had tried for years to find something in San Francisco on him with no success. The big break in the case came when Pete Morris sent me a note that Cobb began playing professionally in Charles City, Iowa in 1888. Since I had never checked for Cobb in Iowa, I decided to run him through the 1880 Iowa census. I found a George W. Cobb, age 14, in Independence, Iowa, just a stones throw from Charles City. He was the right age and had the right middle initial.

I wrote the historical society in Independence and they sent me obituaries on every one of his family except George. I was somewhat encouraged by the fact that one of his nephews played semi-pro ball and was nicknamed "Ty." The obituary of Cobb's father mentioned that George was living in Pomona, California.

I asked Joe Simenic about Cobb and Joe found him playing in the California League. Unfortunately, I could not find Cobb in the 1900 California census. I checked the California death index and found a George W. Cobb who was the right age who died in Los Angeles County in 1926. I then wrote Rick Johnson and asked him to check the Pomona papers in hopes of finding an obituary of Cobb that might mention baseball, since at this point we had no assurance that the Cobb we found was the baseball player.

Rick found the obituary, which may feature the largest headline ever announcing a player's death. The obituary appeared on the front page of the *Pomona Bulletin* and ran for two pages under the one-inch high banner, "GEORGE W.

COBB IS CALLED BY DEATH." It also contained a picture of Cobb. The obituary details his baseball career, which began as a player at the University of Iowa. It even mentions his stint with the 1892 Baltimore Orioles. (It neglects to mention his 10-37 W-L record.) The reason that he was so renowned in Pomona was that he was the head of the Los Angeles County Fair for many years, but it certainly made it easy to verify that he was the ballplayer. Great work by all involved!

Turk Burke

Another case that took a group effort to solve was that of the player that we had erroneously listed as Walter R. Burke. Tom Shea had written me several years ago that Walter Burke was not the 1887 Detroit player. I had pulled an obituary of Walter at that time and it neither confirmed nor denied that Walter was the ballplayer in question.

Once again, Pete Morris started the ball rolling on this one when he found a note indicating that Burke was born in Cincinnati and grew up in Atchison, Kansas. I checked the 1900 Atchison census and found a William R. Burke, born in Ohio, who was the right age to be the ballplayer. Unfortunately, that was not his listed occupation. Again, I enlisted the help of Joe Simenic. Joe found that Burke was always listed as "Turk" Burke or W. R. Burke. Promising, but not definite.

Then Mike Welsh broke the case. Mike made a trip to Atchison and found an 1890 listing in the city directory for Turk Burke, occupation ballplayer, and he was listed at the same address as William R. Burke was for the next several years. Mike was then able to locate Burke's death in Atchison in 1939. Another fine example of committee teamwork!

Last of the Gashouse Gang?

In every obituary I have seen of Burgess Whitehead, he is referred to as "the last surviving member of the Gashouse Gang." Naturally, anytime I see a statement like this, I have to check it out. Clifford Rankin "Pat" Crawford, reserve first sacker for that team, lives in Morehead City, North Carolina. I noticed that *USA Today Baseball Weekly* later printed a retraction. Did anyone write them and let them know of the error?

Errata

Sometimes the eyes and the fingers down talk to one another. In last month's report, the death of Cecil Glenford Boland should have been Cecil Glenford Bolton. Obviously, I was looking at the Edward Boland line above it. Keep me honest.

New Members

Please welcome Joe Wayman, P.O. Box 4203, Downey, California 90241 to the committee. Joe's code number will be W4.

Last In, First Out

1880 - Stephen Dignan	07/11/1881
Arlie Latham	11/29/1952
1881 - John Morrissey	04/29/1884
Fred Lewis	06/05/1945
1882 - James Egan	09/26/1884
James Wylie	08/17/1951
1883 - William Cramer	08/12/1885
George Winkelman	05/17/1960
1884 - Ted Firth	04/18/1885
Al Maul	05/03/1958
1885 - William Collver	03/24/1888
Charles Hallstrom	05/06/1949
1886 - Leonard Sowders	11/19/1888
Connie Mack	02/08/1956
1887 - Fred O'Neil	03/07/1892
Fred Chapman	12/14/1957
1888 - William Blair	02/22/1890
Dummy Hoy	12/15/1961
1889 - Owen Clark	02/08/1892
John Doyle	12/31/1958

Birthday List

There are several nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in January.

Jan 6	Robert Barnes	92
Jan 12	Joe Hauser	95
Jan 14	Russell Scarritt	91
Jan 16	George Fisher	95
Jan 27	Milt Gaston	98
Jan 28	Pat Crawford	92
Jan 29	Ray Hayworth	90

With a Name Like That, We Can't Find Him?

Our last *Mystery of the Month* for 1993 is a man with probably the most unusual name among our missing players. (Huyler Westervelt fans may dispute this.) Elwood Otto Wagenhorst was born June 3, 1863 in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. We list his death as February 12, 1946 with the place of death unknown. I have never been able to find anything on this player, either in Pennsylvania or anywhere else. Does anyone know anything about him? I would also like to know the source for his birth and death dates.

The Scoreboard

	IN	OUT	PCT
Total Complete Names	14080	72	99.491
Total Complete Births	13373	779	94.496
Total Complete Deaths	6955	484	49.145
Total Assumed Alive	6713		47.435
Total Bats	12780	1268	90.974
Total Throws	13031	1017	92.761
Total Heights	12994	1054	92.497
Total Weights	12918	1130	91.956
Total Debut Dates	14152	0	100.000
Total Questionnaires	9963	4189	70.400
Total Completion			92.0169

New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:

1896 Freund, Lawrence L.	No New Information	(C2)
1993 Sanders, Scott Gerald	No New Information	(C1)

New Information Received:

1887 Burke, Walter R.	Name: <u>William R. Burke</u> B: <u>Nov 1865</u> D: <u>Mar 17 1939</u> <u>Atchison, Kansas</u>	(W3)
1938 Duxton, Ralph Stanley	D: <u>1987</u>	(S3)
1892 Cobb, George Washington	Name: <u>George Woodworth Cobb</u> B: <u>Sep 25 1865</u> <u>Independence, Iowa</u> D: <u>Aug 19 1926</u> <u>Pomona, California</u>	(J3)
1902 Curran, Simon Francis	TL	(T3)
1872 Fletcher, G. H. E.	Name: <u>George Horace Elliot Fletcher</u> B: <u>Apr 21 1845</u>	(C1)
1988 Gibson, Paul Marshall	TL	(D7)
1935 Hayes, James Millard	D: <u>Nov 26 1993</u> <u>Lithonia, Georgia</u>	(D7)
1941 Hughson, Cecil Carlton	B: <u>Buda, Texas</u>	(H1)
1945 Kish, Ernest Alexander	D: <u>Dec 21 1993</u> <u>Kirtland, Ohio</u>	(S1)
1941 Mackiewicz, Felix Thaddeus	D: <u>Dec 20 1993</u> <u>Olivette, Missouri</u>	(H5)
1931 Mattingly, Laurence Earl	D: <u>Sep 8 1993</u> <u>Olney, Maryland</u>	(M3)
1932 Reder, John Anthony	D: <u>1990</u>	(S3)
1960 Sadowski, Edward Roman	B: <u>Jan 19 1931</u>	(H1)
1940 Schulte, Herman Joseph	D: <u>Dec 21 1993</u> <u>St. Charles, Missouri</u>	(H5)
1954 Shantz, Wilmer Ebert	D: <u>Dec 13 1993</u> <u>Lauderhill, Florida</u>	(H1)
1944 Shemo, Stephen Michael	D: <u>Apr 13 1992</u>	(T1)
1941 Shirley, Alvis Newman	D: <u>Nov 7 1993</u> <u>DeSoto, Texas</u>	(H1)
1894 Smith, Thomas Jefferson	Name: <u>Thomas Edward Smith</u> Height: <u>5-07.5</u> Weight: <u>165</u>	(R1)
1946 Tate, Alvin Walter	Name: <u>Walter Alvin Tate</u> D: <u>May 8 1993</u> <u>Bountiful, Utah</u>	(PP)
1936 Weir, William Franklin	D: <u>Sep 30 1989</u> <u>Anaheim, California</u>	(C1)
1894 West, Frank	Weight: <u>180</u>	(R1)
1945 Williams, Fred	D: <u>Nov 2 1993</u> <u>Meridian, Mississippi</u>	(C1)
1990 Young, Clifford Raphael	D: <u>Montgomery County, Texas</u>	(H1)