

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee



VOL. XVI, No. 3: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!"

JULY 2016

DEADBALL AT SABR 46

SABR 46 in Miami is fast approaching and we hope for a strong turnout of DEC members. Regrettably, this year's convention includes only two facially Deadball Era-related presentations. But the two on the docket look like good ones. At 10:45 am on Friday July 29, Dr. Millard Fisher will present RP 20: "Ty Cobb as Seen through the Eyes of a Batboy," a different take on the Georgia Peach based on conversations with batboy Jimmy Lanier, testimonials offered by Tigers players, and the presenter's own research. Particularly interesting will be comparing the Fisher assessment of the Cobb persona to that offered in Charles Leerhsen's recent Ritter Award-winning biography of Cobb. The venue is the Brickell Room.

Another likely standout presentation is RP 27: "Baseball and the Yellow Peril: Waseda University's 1905 Tour," by Rob Fitts. The presenter, SABR's foremost authority on Asian baseball, was the Doug Pappas Award winner for outstanding convention presentation at SABR 42 in Minneapolis, and this presentation promises to be equally interesting and informative. Rob will make his remarks in the Tuttle/Monroe Room at 2:15 pm on Saturday, July 30.

The annual meeting of the Deadball Era Committee will be conducted in the Brickell Room on Saturday, July 30 at 6:00 pm (the

sunrise time slot apparently being unavailable this year). As always, the meeting highlight will be the formal presentation of the Larry Ritter Award. The 2016 recipient is Charles Leerhsen, author of *Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty* (Simon & Schuster, 2015).

As noted in the announcement of the award by selection committee chairman Doug Skipper, "Leerhsen peels back the many layers of his subject's strident persona and examines the events that shaped Cobb's highly competitive and combative personality. ... In all, [the bio] presents a complete and well-rounded portrait of an outstanding ballplayer and a complex man." Upon being informed of the award, Charlie expressed his deep appreciation, but a family commitment will prevent him from attending the meeting to accept his honor in person. We are hopeful, however, that he will be able to join us via "Skype."

The meeting will also include DEC chairman John McMurray's overview of committee affairs, a status update on ongoing DEC projects, and general discussion. All convention attendees are cordially invited.



ON THE INSIDE:

1913 Detroit Tigers RBIs

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Stealing Games

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George and Bill Hunter

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GAMES AND BIOPROJECT

Since this space last appeared, both the Games and BioProject have published items that should be of interest to DEC members. New Games Project entries include accounts of the victory that moved the Hitless Wonders of Chicago into first place in the 1906 pennant race by Stephen V. Rice; the October 3, 1909 audition of new talent by Washington manager Clark Griffith per Mike Lackey, and the May 5, 1904 perfect game pitched by Cy Young from Jerrod Cotosman. Meanwhile, the BioProject has produced profiles of Deadball figures Jim Hackett, Art Weaver, George Zabel, Rube Peters, Bill McGilvray, Jimmy Wiggs, George Chalmers, Danny Hoffman, Bones Ely, Jack Rowan, Don Brown, and Sam White. As always, we urge you to check out these offerings if you have not already done so.

NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

Mike Cormany
James Flanagan
Glenn Lautzenhiser
Donald Longo
Phil Snyder
Jarred Stewart

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.

TY COBB STUNT

CATCHER WARING JUMPS INTO STAND AT TERRE HAUTE AND BEATS SPECTATOR

TERRE HAUTE, IND.—During the game with Wheeling yesterday catcher Waring, of Terre Haute, went in to the grand stand and whipped a spectator who is said to have insulted Mrs. Waring. The spectator was arrested but released tonight. No charge was filed against Waring.

Youngstown Vindicator, June 20, 1912

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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BASEBALL TODAY
CHICAGO
WORLD'S RECORD BREAKERS
VS. PITTSBURG
West Side. Two Games Today. First Game
Called at 2 p. m.

SOUTH SIDE BALL PARK.
BASEBALL TODAY.
WORLD'S CHAMPIONS.
White Sox Vs. Detroit.
Game called at 5 p. m.

Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1907

**ACCURATE RBI RECORDS FOR
PLAYERS
OF THE DEADBALL ERA:
PART 9—THE PLAYERS ON
THE 1913 DETROIT TIGERS**

by **Herm Krabbenhoft**

According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the official statistician of Major League Baseball, the major league record for an individual player for the most consecutive games with at least one run batted in is 17 by Ray Grimes of the 1922 National League Chicago Cubs. The corresponding mark for the American League is 14 by Tris Speaker of the 1928 Philadelphia Athletics.¹ However, it is noted that at the beginning of the “Runs Batted In” section in the 2015 edition of *The Elias Book of Baseball Records* is the statement that the RBI records are “Since 1920 — Prior seasons not compiled on official scores.” Thus, any Consecutive Games RUNS Batted In (CGRUNBI) streak from the Deadball Era equal to or greater than 14 in the Junior Loop or 17 in the Senior Circuit is excluded from consideration.

So, the salient question is: “What is the “unofficial” record for the longest CGRUNBI streak?” To address this query I launched a research effort a few years ago, with the primary focus being on the players from the Deadball Era, particularly the players on the Detroit Tigers. It may be pointed out that during the latter two-thirds of the Deadball period, i.e., the 13 seasons from 1907 through 1919, a Detroit Tigers player topped the AL in RBIs nine times, Ty Cobb occupying the throne four times, Sam Crawford wearing the crown twice, Bobby Veach claiming the blue ribbon two times, and Crawford and Veach sharing the title once. And for the entire Deadball Era (1901-1919) Crawford and Cobb finished one-two in total RBIs for the American League. Thus, the Detroit Tigers had three viable candidates for having assembled a CGRUNBI streak longer than and prior to the 14-gamer accomplished by Speaker.

To ascertain accurate CGRUNBI streaks, one needs accurate Game-By-Game (GBG) RBI records. As it has developed, there are three independent sources of “unofficial” RBI statistics for players of the Deadball Era:

- (1) From 1907 through 1919, Ernie Lanigan contemporaneously compiled runs-batted-in stats and reported his RBI numbers in various publications.^{2,3} Unfortunately, it appears that whatever GBG RBI statistics Lanigan compiled are no longer extant.
- (2) During the mid-1960s, David S. Neft directed a research effort to retroactively determine the RBI numbers for all players from the 1891-1919 period. Neft’s RBI numbers were first published in 1969 in *The Encyclopedia of Baseball*.⁴ Subsequently, Neft’s full-season RBI numbers were incorporated into the independent baseball statistics databases maintained by Pete Palmer and by STATS.⁵⁻⁸ Regrettably, Neft’s GBG files for the 1905-1919 seasons were destroyed in a warehouse fire before they could be donated to the Hall of Fame (as had been done with the GBG files for the 1891-1904 seasons).
- (3) For the past several years, Tom Ruane has been managing Retrosheet’s pre-1920 Box Score initiative. Through its Spring-2015 release of updated and expanded information, Retrosheet had box scores for every MLB game played during the 1914-1919 period. Significantly, the Retrosheet website also provides (derived from its Box Score file) Player Daily files — GBG tabulations of each player’s batting, fielding, and pitching statistics. Unfortunately, for many of the Deadball Era teams, no RBI information is provided for many of the games. For example, before I commenced my “Accurate Deadball RBIs” project, for the six seasons between 1919 and 1914, the Detroit Tigers played a total of 890 games. But the Retrosheet box scores had no RBI statistics for 397 (45%) of these games, the

breakdown of games with “RBI-blanks” being 1919 (61 games), 1918 (53 games), 1917 (70 games), 1916 (80 games), 1915 (73 games), and 1914 (60 games).⁹ Fortunately, as detailed in previous articles, my research efforts have greatly reduced the number of games with “RBI-blanks” — 1919 (only one game); 1918 (only one game); 1917 (five games); 1916 (only one game) — and thereby allowed me to accurately determine the longest CGRUNBI streaks for the Tigers players in these years.¹⁰⁻¹⁴

At the outset of the RBI research described in this article, focused on the 1913 Detroit Tigers, there were no Retrosheet box scores. Thus, the research discussed herein was carried out with the two-fold purpose of generating accurate runs-scored and runs-batted-in numbers on a GBG basis for (a) my CGRUNBI project and for (b) Retrosheet’s Box Score project.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The same modus operandi employed in my previous research efforts was utilized here.¹⁵ Thus, for each of the 625 runs scored by the Tigers in 1913, I sought to obtain the three

critical components: (a) the identity of the player who scored the run; (b) the details of the run-scoring event [e.g., a 2-RBI double, a 0-RBI balk, a 1-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 0-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 1-RBI bases-loaded walk, etc.]; and (c) the identity of the player who completed his plate appearance during the run-scoring event (i.e., the player who could be credited with batting in the run). And because runs batted in were not recorded officially until 1920, and were not even defined officially until 1931, I followed the 1931 official scoring rules to credit or to not credit a player with an RBI. I then provided the complete documentation I assembled to Retrosheet’s Tom Ruane and Dave Smith for their independent review, upon which we achieved 100% agreement and Retrosheet incorporated all of the runs-scored and runs-batted-in numbers in its Box Score file for inclusion in its Fall-2015 release of updated and expanded information.¹⁶

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the RBI numbers, according to my research, for each of the 43 players who participated in at least one game for the Detroit Tigers in the 1913 campaign. Also shown for



comparison are the RBI numbers claimed by Neft.⁴⁻⁸

Probably the most-striking aspect of Table 1 is that for several players two RBI numbers are given in the “RBIs (Krabbenhof)” column — for example, Donie Bush is shown with “37 or 38” RBIs, according to my research, while Neft has a single-specific RBI number (40). What’s the reason for these “either-or” RBI numbers? The explanation is simply that the game accounts presented in the various newspapers did not provide sufficient information for me (as well as Retrosheet) to confidently assign credit for batting in a run to one player or another. For example, in the game on April 11, the Tigers played the Browns in St. Louis and scored six runs. The various newspaper accounts provided complete details for all of Detroit’s runs except for the two runs the Tigers scored in the eighth inning. Here are the descriptions given for the two runs Detroit tallied in the eighth frame:

April 11, 1913 — Detroit at St. Louis — Eighth Inning — Detroit scored 2 runs

Detroit Free Press (DFP) — “With Vitt out in the eighth, the Tigers started a rally that drove Hamilton to cover. Successive singles by Crawford, Gainer, Moriarty, and Deal sent one man in and left the bases filled. Louden fouled for the second out, and then Hamilton wild-pitched Gainer home. This finished Hamilton and Baumgardner came on watch. He sent Rondeau to first on balls and then got out of trouble when High, batting for Klawitter, hoisted a fly to Walsh.”

Detroit Journal (DJ) — Nothing at all.

Detroit News (DN) — “In the eighth inning they again made four hits in a row, got a base on balls, and Hamilton made a wild pitch, but all of this netted only two runs.”

Detroit Times (DT) — Nothing at all.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (SLGD) — “With Vitt out in the eighth, Crawford, Gainer, Moriarty, and Deal singled in rotation, Crawford scoring and leaving the bases still packed. Louden fouled to Agnew, but when



Eddie Onslow

Hamilton cut loose a wild pitch, allowing Gainer to score, [manager] Stovall took Hamilton out and sent in Baumgardner. The latter walked Rondeau, but when High was sent in to bat for Klawitter, the best he could do was to pop up to Walsh.”

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (SLPD) — Nothing at all.

St. Louis Republic (SLREP) — “In the eighth the Tigers connected for four solid singles in a row and got one run. A wild pitch with the bases full was responsible for the second tally in the eighth. With men on second and third the Detroit gang had a great chance to tie up the score. After Hamilton pitched two balls to Rondeau, Stovall chased him to the bench and stationed Baumgardner on the hurling hill. Baumgardner walked Rondeau, but forced High to pop to Walsh for the third out.”

St. Louis Star-Times (SLST) — Nothing at all.

Based on the descriptions given in the *DFP*, *DN*, *SLGD*, and *SLREP* accounts, it is not possible to state unequivocally who batted in the first run in the eighth inning. We know for certain that, with one out, the next four batters — Crawford, Gainer, Moriarty, and Deal — each singled, which produced one run and left the bases loaded. Therefore, we can state with 100% confidence that Crawford scored that first eighth-inning run. BUT there are two reasonable (i.e., not far-fetched) scenarios that can be conjectured for the run scored by Crawford — (a) Crawford singles; Gainer singles, advancing Crawford to second or third; Moriarty singles, scoring Crawford and advancing Gainer to second; Deal singles, advancing Gainer to third and Moriarty to second, or (b) Crawford singles; Gainer singles, advancing Crawford to second; Moriarty singles, advancing Crawford to third and Gainer to second; Deal singles, scoring Crawford and advancing Gainer to third and Moriarty to second.

In scenario (a), Moriarty has a 1-RBI single. In scenario (b), Deal has a 1-RBI single. Since none of the descriptions provide any indication of which scenario actually occurred, it must be concluded that for the inning (and as it turned out, also for the game), Moriarty had either 1 RBI or 0 RBIs, and that Deal had either 0 RBIs or 1 RBI. (Of course, both Moriarty and Deal cannot have 1 RBI, i.e., either Moriarty had 1 RBI or Deal had 1 RBI.) And, therefore, for the entire 1913 season, Moriarty had either 28 or 29 RBIs and Deal had either 2 or 3 RBIs.

The fact that Neft shows a single-specific full-season RBI number for Moriarty (30) and Deal (3) indicates that he and his research staff either found a source that provided complete details for the two eighth-inning runs that permitted their assignment of single-specific RBI numbers for each of these players in the eighth inning (and the entire game) OR they guessed a scenario [perhaps scenario (b)] to arrive at single-specific RBI numbers for each of these players in the game. As mentioned above, the Day-By-Day records (“ICI sheets”) compiled by Neft and his research team are no longer extant.



Sam Crawford

In addition to the “either-or” RBI situation in the April 11 game, there are two other games with “either-or” RBI issues:

* July 20, 1913 — Detroit vs. New York. The question is: “Who batted in the run scored by

the Tigers in the fourth inning?” Here’s the description given in the *New York Press*: “Crawford tripled to start the fourth and Cobb walked. Crawford scored on a force play.” Similar descriptions were given in the accounts provided in the *Detroit Free Press*, *Detroit Journal*, and *New York Times*. None of the accounts stated which Detroit batter hit into the force-out and collected the RBI for driving in Crawford. The only batters who could possibly have hit into the 1-RBI force-out were Bobby Veach, Del Gainer, and Red McKee. Thus, each of them had either zero RBIs or one RBI in the fourth inning — which translates to the full-season “either-or” RBI numbers of 65-or-66 for Veach, 29-or-30 for Gainer, and 20-or-21 for McKee.

*September 12, 1913 — Detroit at Boston. The problem here is that there are two different scenarios reported in the newspaper accounts. The *Boston Globe* description (copied by the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit Times*) states: “The fifth [Detroit] run was made in the ninth on a double by Gainer and a single by Louden.” The *Boston Herald* description (copied by the *Detroit Journal*) states: “Gainer counted the fifth and last Tiger run, in the ninth, when he doubled and scored on a fielder’s choice and an out.” So, one description states that Louden drove in Gainer with a 1-RBI single, while the other description suggests that Gainer doubled, advanced to third on a fielder’s choice, and scored when someone made an out. The only batters who could possibly have made a 1-RBI out were Lefty Lorenzen and Donie Bush. Thus, Lorenzen, Bush, and Louden each had either zero RBIs or one RBI in the ninth inning — which extrapolates to the full-season “either-or” RBI numbers of 0-or-1 for Lorenzen, 37-or-38 for Bush, and 24-or-25 for Louden.

With regard to dealing with these “either-or” RBI issues for the individual games, Retrosheet has left the relevant RBI cells in their box scores blank. For example, for the game on April 11, 1913, while each of the other Tigers players have numbers (including zero) in the RBI cells of the

Retrosheet Box Score, Moriarty and Deal each have blanks. Likewise, in their Retrosheet Player Daily files, Moriarty and Deal have a blank in the RBI cell for the game on April 11, 1913. For the full-season RBI numbers, Retrosheet and Baseball-Reference utilize Pete Palmer’s database of baseball statistics. And as disclosed in a previous report,¹² Palmer and Gary Gillette have chosen to show the minimum RBI number, their rationale being that, based on the best currently-available evidence, the player certainly had at least the minimum number of runs batted in.

Moving on now to some other items that emerge from my research, inspection of Table 1 reveals that my RBI numbers are different from the corresponding RBI numbers claimed by Neft for at least 20 of the 43 players (47%) on the 1913 Detroit Tigers team. Focusing on the twelve players who were regular field-position performers with at least 100 at bats [Crawford (609 at bats), Bush (597), Veach (491), Cobb (428), Gainer (363), Vitt (359), Moriarty (347), Stanage (241), Louden (191), Baumann (191), McKee (187), and High (183)], it is seen that my RBI numbers and Neft’s RBI numbers are different for eleven of the players (92%). The largest absolute-value difference is ten RBIs (Crawford). In this regard it is worth reiterating that I assembled rock-solid evidence in support of my GBG runs-batted-in numbers — and the derived full-season RBI numbers — for each player from the game accounts given in multiple independent newspapers AND that my supporting documentation (provided in the Appendix) was independently reviewed by and concurred with by Retrosheet and included in its Fall-2015 release of updated and expanded information. In contrast, there is no such supporting documentation extant for the full-season RBI numbers claimed by Neft.

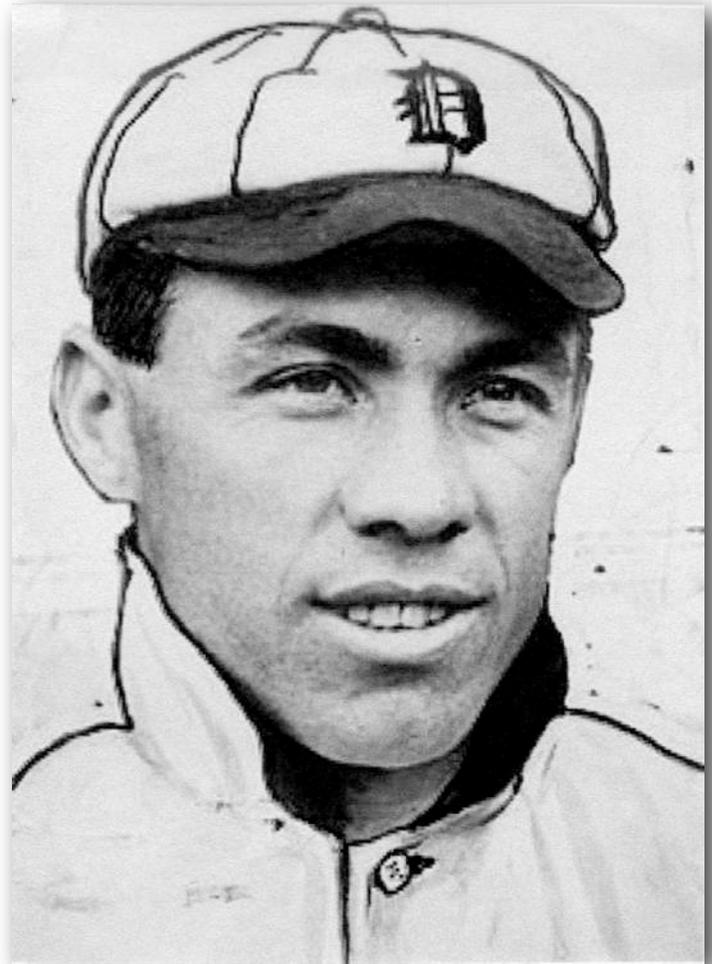
Now, with accurate RBI numbers — on a Game-By-Game basis — in hand, one can confidently ascertain the longest CGRUNBI streak for each player on the 1913 Detroit Tigers. Examination of the complete GBG RBI information now available on retrosheet.org (and also provided in

the Appendix) yields the following CGRUNBI results for the players on the 1913 Tigers. Eddie Onslow came up with the longest CGRUNBI streak — a 7-gamer. That Onslow fashioned the longest CGRUNBI streak is indeed surprising — because he played in just 17 games and had but 9 runs batted in. Next in line behind Onslow were Crawford and Baumann with 5-CGRUNBI streaks.

How does Onslow's 7-CGRUNBI streak rank among those achieved by the players who compiled the longest CGRUNBI streaks for their teams during the 1913 season? To find out, one can simply examine Retrosheet's Player Daily files for each player on each team. Tables 2 and 3 collect the relevant information for the American League and National League, respectively.

Inspection of Table 2 reveals that Onslow's 7-CGRUNBI streak was the longest in the AL (although Cleveland's Joe Jackson and Philadelphia's Frank Baker might have also achieved 7-gamers — if they had at least one RBI in each of some "RBI-Blank" games). Similarly, as pointed out in Table 2's NOTE 3, Del Pratt of the Browns might have achieved a CGRUNBI streak of up to 11 games. The longest CGRUNBI streak in the National League was nine games, accomplished by two players — Bob Fisher of the Brooklyn Dodgers and Vic Saier of the Chicago Cubs.

Finally, where does Onslow's 7-CGRUNBI streak stand among the longest streaks achieved by the Tigers players during the 1916-1919 seasons previously researched? It's the longest, although Bobby Veach also had 7-gamers in 1916 and 1919.^{10,13} The longest CGRUNBI streaks for the Tigers in 1917 and 1918 were 5-gamers by Ty Cobb and Harry Heilmann in 1917, and 4-gamers by Heilmann and Veach in 1918. For the 1914 and 1915 seasons, tentatively, the longest CGRUNBI streaks by Tigers players, according to the RBI information presently available on Retrosheet's Player Daily files, are 5-gamers by Sam Crawford in 1914 and Ossie Vitt in 1915. So, Onslow and Veach have the longest CGRUNBI streaks found thus far for the Tigers during the Deadball Era. The record for the longest



Paddy Baumann

CGRUNBI streak by Detroit Tigers players since 1920 is 12 games — by Mickey Cochrane in 1934 and by Rudy York in 1940.¹⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Examination of the information currently available on Retrosheet for the men who played during the 1913-1919 seasons reveals that longest CGRUNBI streaks were 9-gamers achieved by Fisher (1913 Dodgers), Saier (1913 Cubs), and Happy Felsch (1919 White Sox). Next were 7-gamers accomplished by Onslow (1913 Tigers), Sherry Magee (1914 Phillies), Veach (1916 and 1919 Tigers), Frank Baker (1916 Yankees), Benny Kauff (1916 and 1918 Giants), Joe Jackson (1917 White Sox), and Heinie Zimmerman (1919 Giants). It is pointed out that these CGRUNBI streaks have not yet been corroborated by published Play-By-Play accounts on the Retrosheet website and that because of the

numerous games with “RBI-blanks” there may be other CGRUNBI streaks equal to or greater than these. It is hoped that other researchers will join the quest to ascertain accurate RBI records for their favorite players and teams and thereby also reduce the number of games with “RBI-blanks” in the Retrosheet box score file (and derived Player Daily files) — and thereby also contribute toward answering the question posed earlier: “What is the unofficial record for the longest CGRUNBI streak?”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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11. Herm Krabbenhoft, “Accurate RBI Records for the Players of the Deadball Era: Part 5 — The Players on the 1918 Detroit Tigers,” *The Inside Game*, Volume XV, No. 2 (April 2015), 12.
12. Herm Krabbenhoft, “Accurate RBI Records for the Players of the Deadball Era: Part 6 — The Players on the 1917 Tigers and White Sox,” *The Inside Game*, Volume XV, No. 5 (November 2015), 1.
13. Herm Krabbenhoft, “Accurate RBI Records for the Players of the Deadball Era: Part 8 — The Players on the 1916 Tigers,” *The Inside Game*, Volume XVI, No. 1 (February 2016), 17.
14. Preliminary results suggest that the number of games with “RBI-blanks” for the 1915 and 1914 seasons have also been greatly reduced — 1915 (five games); 1914 (two games).
15. Herm Krabbenhoft, “Accurate RBI Records for the Players of the Deadball Era: Part 1 — The Players on the 1919 Boston Red Sox,” *The Inside Game*, Volume XIV, Number 1 (February 2014), 1.
16. (a) Herm Krabbenhoft, emails to Tom Ruane and Dave Smith, August 7 and 18, 2015, and (b) Tom Ruane, email to Herm Krabbenhoft, August 18, 2015.
17. Herm Krabbenhoft, “Discovering and Correcting Errors in Baseball’s Official Records for Detroit Tigers Players — Runs and RBIs,” Presentation given at the Detroit SABR Chapter Meeting, October 27, 2012.

**TABLE 1. RUNS-BATTED-IN NUMBERS
FOR PLAYERS ON THE 1913 DETROIT TIGERS**

Player	RBIs (Krabbenhof)	RBIs (Neft)	Δ §	Player	RBIs (Krabbenhof)	RBIs (Neft)	Δ
Paddy Baumann	23	22	1	Lefty Lorenzen	0 or 1	1	?
(George Boehler)	0	0	—	Baldy Louden	24 or 25	23	?
Joseph Burns	1	1	—	Red McKee	20 or 21	20	?
Donie Bush	37 or 38	40	?	George Moriarty	28 or 29	30	?
(Al Clauss)	0	0	—	George Mullin	1	1	—
Ty Cobb	66	67	1	(Lou North)	0	0	—
Ralph Comstock	1	3	2	Eddie Onslow	9	8	1
Sam Crawford	73	83	10	(Steve Partenheimer)	0	0	—
Hooks Dauss	9	7	2	(Pepper Peploski)	0	0	—
Charlie Deal	2 or 3	3	?	Wally Pipp	5	5	—
Jean Dubuc	14	11	3	Al Platte	1	0	1
(Heinie Elder)	0	0	—	(Ray Powell)	0	0	—
Del Gainer	29 or 30	25	?	(Erwin Renfer)	0	0	—
Frank Gibson	2	2	—	Henri Rondeau	6	5	1
(Charlie Grover)	0	0	—	Oscar Stanage	20	21	1
Marc Hall	2	3	1	Guy Tutwiler	5	7	2
(Charlie Harding)	0	0	—	Bobby Veach	65 or 66	64	?
Les Hennessey	0	0	—	Ossie Vitt	34	33	1
Hugh High	17	16	1	Ed Willett	13	13	—
Fred House	0	1	1	(Lefty Williams)	0	0	—
(Al Klawitter)	0	0	—	Carl Zamloch	0	0	—
Joe Lake	4	4	—				

NOTE: A player whose name is enclosed in parentheses indicates that the player had zero RBIs and ten or fewer at bats.

§ The |Δ| column gives the absolute-value difference between my RBI number and Neft's RBI number. An entry enclosed in parentheses indicates that my RBI number is less than Neft's RBI number. A question mark (?) indicates that there is not a definitive absolute-value difference between my RBI number and Neft's RBI number.

Manager McGraw has announced that if both New York teams win the pennants this year, there will be no post-season series for the world's championship, but that the Giants will play any other American League team if his men win the bunting. McGraw is counting chickens before the hen even starts setting, but what a roar would go up from everywhere if both New York teams should win out and Brush should refuse to play the Highlanders in the face of the agreement between the leagues for such a series!

Chicago Tribune, July 17, 1904

BALTIMORE WANTS TO ENTER MAJORS

BALTIMORE—A plan has been launched here by the Greater Baltimore Booming committee to place Baltimore in the big league baseball circuit. It is planned to raise at least \$200,000, and make bids for one of four franchises. These are the Boston Nationals, Brooklyn Nationals and the St. Louis Nationals and Americans. The main purpose of this scheme is to advertise Baltimore.

The Toledo News-Bee, May 20, 1911

**TABLE 2. LONGEST CGRUNBI STREAKS
FOR PLAYERS ON AMERICAN LEAGUE TEAMS.**

Team	RBI-Blank G	RBI Leader (RBIs)	Longest CGRUNBI Streak	CGRUNBI Streak Leader (RBIs)	CGRUNBI Streak
BOS	10	Duffy Lewis (90)	6	Duffy Lewis (90) Larry Gardner (63)	6
CHI	1	Buck Weaver (52)	2	Babe Borton (13)	4
CLE	50	Joe Jackson (71)	3 (7)	???	???
DET	0	Sam Crawford (73)	5	Eddie Onslow (9)	7
NY	10	Birdie Cree (63)	4	Birdie Cree (63) John Knight (24)	4
PHI	38	Frank Baker (117)	4 (7)	???	???
STL	44	Del Pratt (87)	4 (11)	???	???
WAS	12	Chick Gandil (72)	4 (5)	Chick Gandil (72) Howie Shanks (37)	4 (5)

NOTES: (1) The “RBI-Blank G” column gives the number of games for which the Retrosheet Box Score does not include RBI statistics. While Detroit is shown with zero (0) “RBI-Blank” games, as previously discussed, there are three games for which two or three players have blank RBI cells. Fortunately, these blank RBI cells had no impact on the player’s longest CGRUNBI streak.

(2) For the “RBI Leader (RBIs)” and the “CGRUNBI Streak Leader (RBIs)” columns, the RBIs are those given on the Retrosheet “Player Profile” pages (i.e., Neft’s RBI numbers) — EXCEPT for Detroit’s Sam Crawford and Eddie Onslow, for whom the RBIs are from this work (i.e., Table 1).

(3) For the “Longest CGRUNBI Streak” column, for CLE, PHI, STL, and WAS, the entry in parentheses indicates the maximum longest CGRUNBI streak the player could have achieved — if he had at least one RBI in each of some “RBI-Blank” games. For example, for Del Pratt of St. Louis, the longest bona fide CGRUNBI streak he achieved was a 4-gamer (June 26, 27, 28, and 29). He had zero RBIs in the June 25 game; the RBIs he may have accomplished in the games on June 30 and July 2 (2 games) are not indicated in his Retrosheet Player Profile pages (i.e., there are blanks in the RBI cells). He had zero RBIs in the July 3 game. Thus, for the games from June 26 through July 2, Pratt had a CGRUNBI streak of at least four games and perhaps five, six, or seven games. Moreover, for the 11 games from May 13 through May 24, Pratt could have fashioned an 11-game CGRUNBI streak: he had no RBIs in the May 12 game; he had one RBI in the May 13 game; the games on May 14, 15, and 16 are “RBI-blank” games; he had one RBI in the May 17 game; the games on May 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 are “RBI-blank” games; he had one RBI in the May 24 game; he had no RBIs in the first game of the May 25 double header. Thus, if Pratt batted in at least one run in each of these eight “RBI-blank” games, he would have an 11-CGRUNBI streak.

(4) For the “CGRUNBI Streak Leader (RBIs)” and “CGRUNBI Streak” columns, “???” indicates that, because of the number of “RBI-blank” games, it is not possible to identify the team’s CGRUNBI Streak Leader and the length of his CGRUNBI Streak.



Robert Edgren 1913

**TABLE 3. LONGEST CGRUNBI STREAKS
FOR PLAYERS ON NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS.**

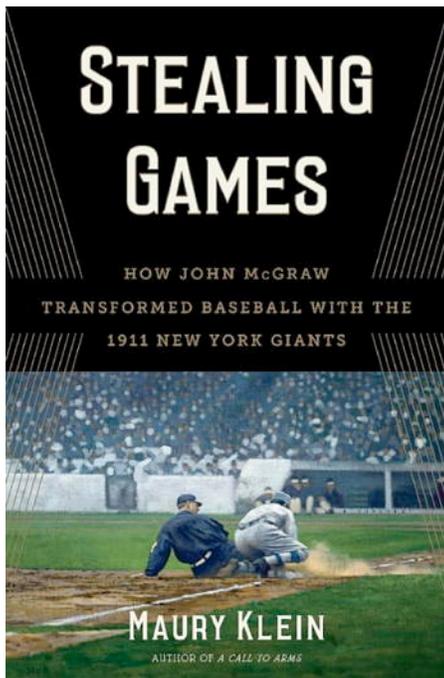
Team	RBI-Blank G	RBI Leader (RBIs)	Longest CGRUNBI Streak	CGRUNBI Streak Leader (RBIs)	CGRUNBI Streak
BOS	7	Joe Connolly (57)	3 (4)	Rabbit Maranville (48)	4
BRK	0	George Cutshaw (80)	4	Bob Fisher (54)	9
CHI	3	Heinie Zimmerman (95)	5	Vic Saier (92)	9
CIN	10	Dick Hobitzell (62)	4	Dick Hoblitzell (62) Joe Tinker (57) Armando Marsans (38) Rafael Almeida (21)	4
NY	6	Larry Doyle (73)	4	Art Fletcher (71)	6
PHI	19	Gavvy Cravath (128)	4 (5)	Sherry Magee (70)	6
PIT	0	Dots Miller (90)	5	Dots Miller (90) Chief Wilson (73)	5
STL	23	Ed Konetchy (68)	3 (4)	Jimmy Sheckard (17)	4

NOTES: See NOTES in Table 2 for general considerations.

(1) For STL, there are three players who could have achieved 5-game CGRUNBI streaks — if they had at least one RBI in each of some “RBI-Blank” games: Mike Mowrey, Miller Huggins, and Arnold Houser. There are six other players who could have achieved 4-game CGRUNBI streaks — if they had at least one RBI in each of some “RBI-Blank” games: Ed Konetchy, Rebel Oakes, Possum Whitted, Charlie O’Leary, Lee Magee, and Steve Evans.



El Paso Herald, February 6, 1915 (Walt Hoban)



**STEALING GAMES:
HOW JOHN MCGRAW
TRANSFORMED
BASEBALL
WITH THE
1911 NEW YORK GIANTS
BY MAURY KLEIN**

2016. Bloomsbury Press
[ISBN: 978-1632860248. 400
p., \$28.00 USD, Hardcover]

Reviewed by
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There are many things Maury Klein gets right in his book, *Stealing Games: How John McGraw Transformed Baseball with the 1911 New York Giants*. Yes, McGraw was a brilliant and sometimes innovative manager. He was also autocratic and controlling, arrogant, abrasive, and pugnacious. What's more, he was a loving husband and a fiercely loyal friend who could

be exceedingly generous with complete strangers. He rose from a hardscrabble childhood and against heavy odds to become one of the stars of Ned Hanlon's old Baltimore Orioles. Klein makes it clear that it was under Hanlon that McGraw learned many of the strategies and often shady tactics that he took with him to guide the Giants to ten pennants in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The one thing Klein gets wrong, arguably, might not even have been his decision. That's the title of the book. A case can be made (and the author does a fairly good job of making it) that the fiery Giants manager did indeed transform baseball. To suggest, however, that the transformation didn't occur until the 1911 Giants team won the pennant is a bit of a stretch. Klein's evidence for this assertion is the fact that the team stole a record 347 bases and played an aggressive running style of baseball throughout the season. But this was true, in a general sense, for all of McGraw's teams in the decade before 1911— from the pennant-winners in 1904 and 1905 (both led the NL in stolen bases, and, by the way, home runs) and all the teams that failed to win anything in the five subsequent years. And, not to put too fine a point on it, the clubs that were finishing ahead of McGraw's Giants— the Cubs and the Pirates— were pretty much playing the same kind of

baseball, sacrificing, stealing, playing for one run, and getting great pitching.

It's only a matter of time before there will be at least one book written about each major league season. Klein, a veteran historian embarking on his first baseball book, has made a savvy choice in deciding to chronicle 1911. The Cubs and the Pirates were in decline but still dangerous, and St. Louis and Philadelphia were both surprisingly strong. That backdrop provides Klein with the material, culled mostly from contemporaneous newspaper accounts, to report on virtually every Giants game. He also nicely incorporates passages from Christy Mathewson's *Pitching in a Pinch* and Blanche McGraw's *The Real McGraw*. In addition, Klein introduces the reader to life in New York in the first part of the century when devastating fires and oppressive heat waves were major news stories. Just as the season began, fire destroyed the Polo Grounds stands, forcing the Giants to play their home games in Hilltop Park. Klein correctly credits Giants' owner John T. Brush for immediately deciding to rebuild on the site. By June the Giants were back in their "new" home.

Stealing Games is more than just an interesting retelling of the 1911 season. It's also a compelling synthesis of baseball history from 1890 through the deadball era. In the first half of the book Klein

intertwines McGraw's early years with the rough-and-tumble of the 1890s pennant races and the coming of the American League. Klein covers McGraw's disputes with Ban Johnson and the bitter outcome that resulted. Most important, the author describes the Little Napoleon's rise, first in Baltimore and then New York, as the young player-manager begins to develop his abilities as a leader and tactician. Klein has an engaging way of explaining how simple innovations—hitting the cutoff man, for instance — came to be. And he doesn't flinch in relating examples of the rowdy, oftentimes illegal, tactics McGraw learned in his Orioles days and took with him to New York.

No history of the Giants and McGraw would be complete without a reference to the events of 1908, culminating in the Merkle game and its aftermath. Here Klein touches on the shadowy bribery charges surrounding the Cubs-Giants makeup game and includes, in an appendix, a critique of the Brush Report. He takes issue with those who blame league officials for covering up a potential scandal, some who even suggest inaction in 1908 led directly to the 1919 World Series fix. Klein argues convincingly that the Brush Committee had very little leeway for action and, in any event, that comparing the 1908 "scandal" to 1919 "is absurd

and a serious misreading of history."

In a short prologue, Klein presents a snapshot of spring training in 1911 in Marlin, Texas, as McGraw micro-manages every aspect of his team's activities on and off the field. McGraw was certainly a good tactician but his greatest strengths as a manager were his leadership qualities and organizational abilities. To his way of thinking (and managing), "discipline and control" mattered above all else. He sought out players, through trades and free-agent acquisitions, who could be molded into his kind of player. This was, for him, the essence of team-building. Once McGraw imprinted his way of doing things on the field, his players could very gradually be trusted to perform on their own, relatively independently.

But tellingly — and Klein makes a point of this — McGraw's 1911 team performed poorly on those occasions when the manager was away, either suspended or attending to his ailing wife. For whatever reason, the Giants were

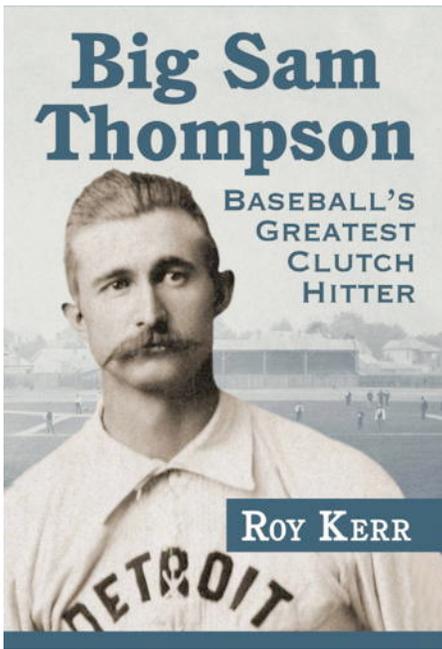
unusually reliant on McGraw's hands-on direction from the bench or the coaching lines. His influence — through canny substitutions, timely base stealing, hit-and-runs, or even the occasional umpire-baiting — appeared to be decisive.

Though the Giants' success in 1911 was predicated on their explosive, disruptive speed, it is also true that they led the league in nearly all offensive categories. And they had the league's best pitching. Furthermore, Klein barely makes mention of the fact that the new cushioned-cork-center baseball was introduced during the 1910 World Series and adopted for the 1911 season, making the high-scoring season a Deadball Era anomaly. McGraw transformed baseball, there can be little doubt. But it would be wrong to suggest it was all down to winning a pennant in 1911 with an aggressive running game. The Little Napoleon was so much more than that.

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**BIG SAM THOMPSON:
BASEBALL'S
GREATEST
CLUTCH HITTER
BY ROY KERR**

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Reviewed by
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Big Sam Thompson: Baseball's Greatest Clutch Hitter is the fifth comprehensive biography written by Roy Kerr. These works all focus on nineteenth century ballplayers and Kerr's latest biography brings to life an obscure Hall of Fame player, Sam Thompson. Kerr begins by writing about Thompson's early years in Indiana and continues with his National League playing days in Detroit and Philadelphia. As

Kerr writes about the playing days of Thompson, he weaves Thompson's various talents into the narrative of the baseball seasons. Stylistically, he opens with an overall season summary and then backtracks to describe the details of the season including some of Thompson's specific achievements. To complete the biography, Kerr writes about Thompson's life after his playing days and devotes the final chapter to the long wait for Thompson's election to the Hall of Fame.

Thompson was born into a large, established Indiana family in 1860 and owing to his unique baseball skills, was the only member of his family to move out of his home state. Kerr spends time in the first chapter exploring how this occurred, and how Thompson was unearthed by minor league baseball's talent sleuths. Although having no basis in fact, the most popular tale about Thompson's discovery was that promoter Dan O'Leary heard about this very good but extremely shy player who was "out building a house" and O'Leary went to fetch him to play for his team. Sam ended up playing for the Danville and Indianapolis teams in the Northwestern League, and when that league folded his contract was purchased by the Detroit Wolverines. Thompson spent the next fourteen years building his Hall of Fame resume in the National League.

Thompson played at a time when the rules of the game

were changing. Some of his greatness was due to his ability to adapt to these changing conditions. In the days before gloves, Thompson became one of the best defensive players in the game and was a natural with his power and clutch hitting abilities. Because of Thompson's personality, he became known as the "gentleman of the game" in an era when most players were rough and unrefined.

Kerr highlights many interesting details and stories while reliving Thompson's best years in Philadelphia with the Phillies. Although the Phillies never won the pennant during Thompson's tenure, Kerr finds plenty to recount, such as Thompson's connection with Harry Wright, how he played on a team with five other Hall of Famers, and along with Ed Delahanty and Billy Hamilton formed arguably the greatest outfield in major league history.

Kerr also draws attention to some lesser known facts about nineteenth century baseball. I found it interesting that Thompson was the first player to use sunglasses on the field due to the glaring sun in right field of his home ball park, the Philadelphia Base Ball Grounds. Kerr also explains how Thompson became a member of the Brotherhood of Professional Base-Ball Players, actually signing a contract with the Philadelphia Brotherhood team only to later change his mind and jump back to the Phillies. After eight full and

two partial seasons in Philadelphia, Thompson ended his career in 1898 with the Phillies.

After his major league career ended, Thompson returned to Detroit where he played with the Detroit Athletic Club. He even had a cameo Deadball Era appearance with the Detroit Tigers at the end of the 1906 season when the Tigers were short of outfielders. Kerr explains that this was a not a typical practice of many nineteenth century stars in the early twentieth century. Thompson stayed connected with the Tigers until his death, and he was a fixture on the Tigers bench with his good

friend from the Wolverines, Charlie Bennett.

Kerr's final chapter details the events of the long wait for Thompson's eventual election to the Hall of Fame and the supporters who were instrumental in securing his election. Thompson had many people championing his case, notably Dick Mittman, an Indianapolis sportswriter; Victor Meyer, an amateur baseball historian from New Jersey; and Bob Broeg, a sportswriter from St. Louis. Their efforts finally paid off in 1974, 78 years after his last full major league season, when Thompson was elected to the Hall of Fame.

I have not read Kerr's other biographies, but based on this book, I look forward to reading them. Kerr's thoroughly researched book provides excellent detail on nineteenth century baseball and brings to life one the greatest players of that era. The appendix lists Thompson's team, league and all time records. I highly recommend this book for your collection.

Steve Ginader is a longtime SABR member and a lifetime fan of the Philadelphia Phillies. He is currently employed as a logistics manager in St. Paul, Minnesota.

WAR ON BASEBALL POOLS

CAMPAIGN BEGUN AGAINST GAMBLING IN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

NEW YORK—Officials of the baseball clubs in New York, Brooklyn and Jersey City joined today with the police in a crusade to suppress pool selling on baseball games. District Attorney Cropsey of King's County has taken up the legal question of selling baseball pools which, he says, he has been informed was going on at wholesale in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Agents have been assigned by Mr. Cropsey to collect evidence to be presented to a grand jury. The police commissioners in Jersey City have called a special meeting for next Wednesday to consider the question of baseball pools.

Investigation shows that in hundreds of saloons and cigar stores tickets are sold in what are known as "blind pools." Pool selling is said to be going on also in other cities.

Boston Evening Transcript, May 10, 1912

THE BASEBALL BUG

The baseball bug's the first we note,
A bug of tough and brazen throat,
Whose ordinary tone of speech
Is half a roar and half a screech.
On bleachers he is mostly found,
Creating divers kinds of sound,
Like "Oh, you robber! Oh, you chump!
Who ever chose you for an ump?
Yah! Slide, you Hogan! That's the style
What! Out? He made it by a mile!
Aw, get an umpire! He's too raw!
Ain't he the worst you ever saw?"
The baseball bug when he's at home
Has baseballitis in his dome.
He reads the dope, he keeps the score,
At office, restaurant and store.
He talks the game with wisdom deep.
He dreams and talks it in his sleep.
You well may smile with comfort snug
If you are not a baseball bug.

—Berton Braley in Puck.

The Cairo (Illinois) Bulletin, May 26, 1911

GEORGE AND BILL HUNTER: THE FIRST TWINS TO PLAY MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

by **Bill Lamb**

Twins are much rarer in major league baseball than they are in the general population. In the history of the game, only nine sets of twin brothers are known to have played at baseball's ultimate level. This is the story of the pioneer pair: long forgotten Deadballers George and Bill Hunter. George, a left-handed pitcher and switch-hitting outfielder, debuted with the Brooklyn Superbas in 1909 and lasted through the early days of the following season. When his lefty-all-the-way brother Bill was summoned from the minors for a short tour of outfield duty with the Cleveland Naps in August 1912, the Hunters became the first twins to play major league ball.

George Henry and William Ellsworth Hunter were born in Buffalo on July 8, 1887. The twins formed the middle pair of the six children raised by Canadian-born blacksmith Charles Hunter (1853-1935) and his wife Isabel (1862-1910), a Pennsylvania native. As youngsters, the brothers attended Buffalo public schools but quit after the eighth grade. At age 18 they were still living at home and employed as glazers.¹ Their baseball journeys followed the familiar path of sandlot ball to amateur teams to the semi-pro ranks. While still in their late-teens, the twins graduated to the ball club sponsored by Buffalo's Pullman Car Company, the reputed semi-pro champions of western New York.²

While identical in appearance, the twins were not clones. George (5' 8", 165 lb.) was slightly larger than Bill (5'7½", 155 lb.) and a more versatile player. Hence, his baseball career advanced quicker. While his brother remained with the Pullmans for the 1907 season, George became a full-fledged professional, signing with the Wilkes-Barre Coal Barons of the Class B New York State League.³ Once in Wilkes-Barre, he was used primarily as a pitcher. On the mound, George was not a hard thrower, relying on



George Hunter, 1909

breaking stuff, including "an incurve that cuts the inside corner of the plate," a pitch that few NYS League batters proved able to handle.⁴ But while the local press regularly extolled his performance, George pitched in hard luck, too-often on the wrong end of low-scoring decisions. Although no official pitching statistics survive for the 1907 New York State League, his record ended in the neighborhood of 12-15.⁵ He also made a handful of appearances in the outfield, bolstering the Barons' underwhelming offense with a .301 (28-for-93) batting average.

Such performance did not go unnoticed. Hunter was scouted by several major leagues teams, and drafted by the National League Brooklyn Superbas that September.⁶ The following spring,

George's mound work favorably impressed Brooklyn manager Bill Donovan, but a surplus of left-handed pitching on the Superbas' roster and inexperience dictated Hunter's option to the minors for more seasoning. He would spend the upcoming campaign with the Nashville Volunteers of the Class A Southern Association. Meanwhile, back in Wilkes-Barre the Barons attempted to fill the void left by George's departure by signing his twin brother Bill. But the results were not much to the liking of Barons manager Abel Lezotte or the Wilkes-Barre faithful. Placed in the outfield, Bill fielded well but did not hit. With his batting average hovering around .200, he was tried on the mound in late-inning relief against Albany in an early June contest. The move backfired when Hunter surrendered the lead and was tagged with a 9-8 loss. But the real debacle occurred the following week when Bill was given a start against league-leading Binghamton. A four-run Binges first inning established that the Hunters were far from identical in the hurling talent department and marked the end of Bill's professional pitching career. It also concluded his tenure in Wilkes-Barre. The day after the Binghamton outing, Bill Hunter was unconditionally released.⁷

A month later, Bill caught on with the Charlotte Hornets of the Class D Carolina Association. Here, he showed decently in 20 games, batting .280 and playing sound outfield defense. When the Carolina Association finished its season in mid-August, Bill returned to Buffalo to play out the year with the Pullmans.⁸ By that time, his brother George had completed a successful season in Nashville and been recalled to Brooklyn. He saw no late-season action for the Superbas but was thereafter placed on the Brooklyn reserve list for the 1909 season.⁹

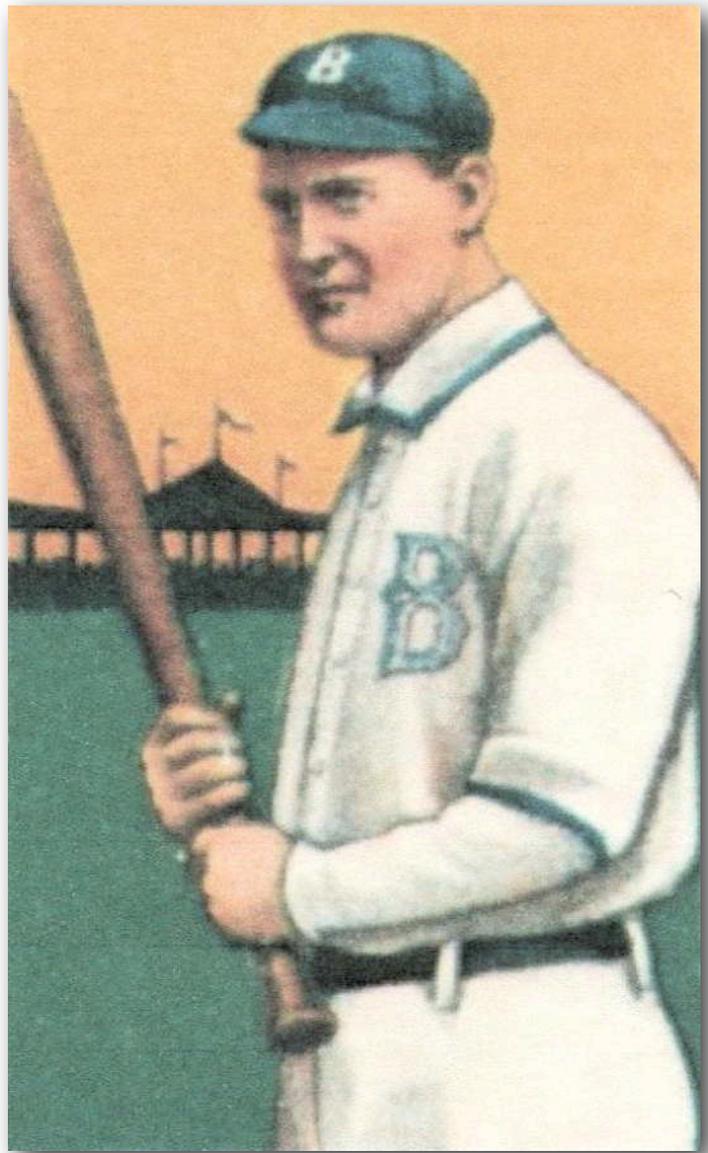
The year 1909 saw the Hunter twins at opposite reaches in their pro careers. Bill spent the season out of Organized Baseball entirely, his playing confined to semi-pro ball. George, meanwhile, made the Brooklyn Opening Day roster, and soon assumed the role of spot starter. He made his major league debut on May 4, pitching the



first part of home doubleheader against the Boston Braves. For four innings, George hurled impeccably, holding the opposition scoreless while protecting a 3-0 lead. But an inning-ending pop-fly collision with catcher Bill Bergen resulted in a shoulder injury, and Nap Rucker assumed Brooklyn pitching duties in the fifth. Boston immediately hammered Rucker for four runs, leaving Hunter with a no-decision in the eventual 7-6 Brooklyn loss. Hunter soon recovered and fared well in his next outing, a complete-game 4-1 triumph in Boston on May 29. In addition to garnering his first major league victory, George registered his first big leagues hit, as well – a RBI double off Braves' lefty Tom Tuckey.

Thereafter, George alternated pitching performances with more frequent appearances in the Brooklyn outfield. Pitching primarily in doubleheaders, he continued to throw well, but suffered the customary fate of those hurling for a bad (55-98, .357) ball club. By season's end, the Hunter log stood at a dreary 4-10 – a fine 2.46 ERA in 113 1/3 innings pitched notwithstanding. In 23 games in the outfield, his fielding was substandard (.871 FA), but a .228 batting average (28-for-123) near-matched the team .229 norm. Given his youth (22) and lack of previous big leagues experience, it was a decent beginning and many observers predicted a bright baseball future for George. Typical was the assessment of syndicated Midwest sportswriter Tommy Clark, who declared that Brooklyn “seems to have another find in George Hunter, a rattling good left-handed pitcher, a good hitter, a fast baserunner, and a clever fielder – a good all-around youngster.”¹⁰ That December, moreover, Hunter was placed (as an outfielder) on an all-star team headlined by future Hall of Famers Three Finger Brown and Addie Joss bound for a 12-game exhibition tour of Cuba.¹¹ In all, George had every reason to hope for a lengthy and successful major leagues career as the year drew to a close.

Sadly, the promise of his rookie year went unfulfilled. Although the nature and origin of his coming misfortune have been lost to time, it



1910 George Hunter playing card

seems likely that George's arm failed. Still, he survived the winter housekeeping that saw a horde of Brooklyn roster members released or sent to the minors. But Hunter remained fastened to the bench once the 1910 season began. His lone game appearance came in Pittsburgh on May 9, 1910, when he was sent to the outfield in the 10th inning following the ejection of Superbas centerfielder Al Burch. Nothing was hit his way during that frame and the game ended in a 1-0 Brooklyn victory. Unbeknownst to George Hunter, his major league career was now completed.

In late May, Hunter was released on option to the Montreal Royals of the Class A Eastern

League. His stay there was brief and unhappy. An attempt to pitch was a one-inning fiasco that yielded a 7-0 Montreal defeat. He did no better as an everyday player. George's outfield defense was poor and his batting worse, a .192 BA in 17 games. Thus, Montreal was happy to unload Hunter when the Wilkes-Barre Barons expressed interest in acquiring him. By early-August, George was back with the club where his professional career had begun only three seasons earlier. Although still a young man, Hunter was no longer a major league prospect, and he would play out his career in the New York State League, first with Wilkes-Barre, thereafter Elmira. He hung up the glove at the end of the 1917 season, having batted a Deadball Era-respectable .271 in 112 games for the Elmira Colonels.

While his brother's professional career was fizzling, the previously unpromising baseball fortunes of Bill Hunter underwent dramatic revision. Bill had returned to Organized Baseball in 1910, but had failed to impress playing in the Class B Three-I League (Rock Island, 1910; Danville, 1911, both in Illinois). By mid-1911, he had been demoted to the Brandon (Manitoba) Angels of the remote Class D Western Canada League. Here, his prospects unexpectedly began to brighten, doubtless fueled by a .375 BA in 23 late-season games. Hunter remained at D-level ball in early 1912, but moved to a more accessible venue in Flint, Michigan. By late-July, his .370 BA topped Southern Michigan League batsman, and his outfield defense was superb; Hunter reportedly went the first 79 games of the Flint Vehicles' schedule without committing a fielding error.¹² All of this caught the eye of Cleveland Naps scout George Huff, who also liked what he saw when he took in several Flint games. Thus, when an injury to Naps centerfielder Joe Birmingham left Cleveland in urgent need of a replacement, Huff recommended Hunter's acquisition.

On August 4, 1912, Cleveland signed Bill Hunter as part of a late-season club youth movement. He made his major league debut two days later, sent up as a ninth-inning pinch-hitter in a game against Boston. Tasked with facing Smoky Joe



Bill Hunter, 1910

Wood, then in the midst of a dominating (34-5/1.91 ERA/258 strikeouts) campaign, Hunter promptly struck out. But onlookers sympathized, with the *Cleveland Leader* observing, "There's no disgrace in that. Better hitters than Hunter will probably ever be have been fanned by Wood in a pinch."¹³ Days later, Hunter did much better in his second appearance, with a base-hit and three walks in five at-bats, and outstanding defense in centerfield. Several more hits followed in ensuing games, leading Cleveland sportswriter Ed Bang to comment "this boy Hunter is making quite a hit with the fans by his nice out fielding, batting, and good work on the paths."¹⁴

Regrettably, Bill could not keep it going, His hitting soon faltered and a weak throwing arm had been exposed. On August 21, the Cleveland

Plain Dealer asserted that Naps manager Harry Davis had “placed the ‘won’t do’ tag on third baseman [Howard] Baker and centerfielder Hunter at Washington yesterday, sending the two youngsters to the bench.”¹⁵ From there on, Hunter saw only sporadic action, and then none at all once Joe Birmingham replaced Davis at the Cleveland helm for the campaign’s final month. Bill Hunter played his last major league game on September 1, 1912, going 0-3 in a 6-3 loss to the St. Louis Browns.¹⁶ In total, his major league career consisted of the 21 games that he had played for Cleveland in 1912. In those contests, he had batted a humble .164 (9-for-55), with six runs scored and two RBIs. His outfield defense, however, had been flawless: 36 chances accepted without an error.

After the 1912 season, Bill Hunter was sold back to Flint. He later found a home with the Des Moines Boosters of the Class A Western League, turning in six solid seasons. Hunter then spent several seasons playing semi-pro ball in Alma, Michigan before finishing his professional career with the Hamilton (Ontario) Tiger Cats of the Class B MINT League in 1923. He was 36 when he finally quit the game.

Both twins had married young, but their domestic situations would take different courses. George’s marriage to the former Anna Alexander proved a happy one, lasting almost 60 years. But the couple had no children. Bill’s union with Emily Schaefer produced two offspring, but had dissolved by the time that the 1920 US Census was taken. Bill lived the remainder of his life single, an unattached boarder in Alma, then Battle Creek, Michigan where he worked at the Kellogg’s Cereal Company factory until he took ill in early 1934. Diagnosed with bladder cancer, he returned to Buffalo for his final days and died at a sister’s residence on April 10, 1934. William Ellsworth Hunter was 46. George, meanwhile, had settled into long-term employment at the US Post Office in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, retiring in 1956. George Henry Hunter died in a Harrisburg hospital on January 11, 1968, age 80, and survived by wife Anna.

At present, more than a century separates us from the major league playing days of George and Bill Hunter. Like many others, their careers were brief and their memories now long-forgotten. But one thing endures, immutable: George and Bill Hunter will forever be the first twins to play major league baseball.¹⁷

This article is an amalgam of the writer’s individual BioProject profiles of George and Bill Hunter.

1. As per the 1905 New York State Census.
2. As reported in *Sporting Life*, March 7, 1907, and the *Buffalo Evening News*, April 13, 1934..
3. As reported in *Sporting Life*, March 30, 1907.
4. As per the *Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Times*, July 17, 1907.
5. As guesstimated by the writer from perusal of 1907 box scores published in the *Wilkes-Barre Times*.
6. As reported in the *Wilkes-Barre Times*, September 10, 1907, and *Sporting Life*, October 19, 1907.
7. As per the *Wilkes-Barre Times*, June 10, 1908.
8. See the *Charlotte Observer*, August 13, 1908.
9. As reported in the *Wilkes-Barre Times*, September 25, 1908.
10. As published in the *Canton (Ohio) Repository*, September 12, 1909, *Daily (Springfield) Illinois State Register*, September 22, 1909, and elsewhere.
11. As reported in the *Daily Illinois State Register*, December 3, 1909, *Grand Forks (North Dakota) Herald*, December 4, 1909, *Denver Post*, December 6, 1909, and elsewhere.
12. According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 1, 1912.
13. *Cleveland Leader*, August 6, 1912.
14. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 17, 1912.
15. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 21, 1912.
16. Hunter’s final appearance in a Cleveland Naps uniform came on September 4, 1912. He went 2-for-4 in an exhibition game against the Fort Wayne Railroaders of the Class B Central League.
17. The distinction of being the first twins to appear in the same major league game belongs to Joe and Red (Maurice) Shannon of the 1915 Boston Braves. On October 7, 1915, the Shannons were mid-game infield replacements in a season-ending game against the New York Giants.