



Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report
May 1997

Louis Pelouze Found

Louis Pelouze was a Detroit amateur who popped up in the outfield for St. Louis on July 22, 1886 when St. Louis found themselves short of outfielders. Louis has been found by Jay Sanford. Jay found a publication on the Pelouze family (No, it wasn't called *Pelouze News*.) and it listed Louis' death date but not the death place. However, Jay was able to track down Pelouze's grandson, George Leisure, who is a retired federal judge in New York City. George actually lived with his grandfather the last 5 years of his life and was able to provide Pelouze's height and weight, etc.

Louis Henri Pelouze III was actually the son of Louis Henri Pelouze II (no surprise there), a Civil War general, who was with Abraham Lincoln at the time of his death. Louis and his brother, William Nelson Pelouze, also a ballplayer, founded the Pelouze Scale Company in Chicago. Later he became a diamond broker in New York. Pelouze married Helen Ward, the daughter of David Ward, who, at the time of his death in 1900, was the richest man in Michigan. At the time of Pelouze's death, he was living at 660 Park Avenue in New York. Obviously, his major league career was just a blip on a very profitable and successful life. For this, Jay wins the *Find of the Month* award.

Committee Meeting

Our committee meeting in Louisville is scheduled for 9:00 AM on Saturday. I hope you all can make it. Let me know any items you want to discuss.

Standardized Death Certificates

Jon Dunkle sent me the following story regarding

an effort to develop standardized death certificates:

"Epidemiologists, demographers and other researchers who use birth and death statistics have an opportunity to improve and expand the data available on these topics. Data on national and state patterns in natality and mortality are produced from the compilation and analysis of the information from certificates filed in state Offices and reported to the National Center for Health Statistics. Certificates used in each state are based on model, or standard certificates, developed by NCHS working with the States. NCHS is conducting an evaluation project now to update the standard certificates of birth and death and the standard report of fetal death.

To enable the public health and research communities to participate in this evaluation process and to ensure that the information reported on the birth, death and fetal death records will meet the data needs of the future, NCHS seeks the input of a wide range of agencies, organizations, and individuals. To facilitate this process, NCHS will provide questionnaires to all organizations and individuals interested in suggesting changes to the standard certificates. To order a copy of the questionnaire or for more information, please write to George A. Gay, Special Assistant for Registration Methods, Division of Vital Statistics, NCHS, 6525 Belcrest Road, Room 820, Hyattsville, MD 20782, or send an E-mail to certquest@cdc.gov indicating which certificates you are interested in and whether you would like a hard copy or an electronic version of the questionnaire(s)."

Possible Lead

According to Pete Morris, Cap Anson's autobiography mentions that the St. Louis backers of the 1899 attempt to revive the American Association were Al Spink, Chris von der Ahe, and George D. Schaefer. Is there any possibility that this might be our long-lost player,

Orator Shaffer? If any of you want to research that, perhaps we can find the guy.

Birthday List

There are three nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in June. Make sure you send a card.

June 4	Edward Marshall	91
June 25	Ralph Erickson	95
June 28	Joseph Cascarella	90

Mr. Stanley, I Presume?

James Francis Stanley played 54 games for the Chicago Whales in 1914, playing a variety of positions and sporting a lusty .194 batting average. The amazing thing about Stanley is that we have absolutely no biographical information on the man. Nothing. We have his complete full name. He was supposedly from Chicago, but we have no proof of that. This certainly makes him a worthy *Mystery of the Month*.

According to his Sporting News index card, he played with Danville, Illinois in 1910, Seward, Nebraska in 1911, the Chicago Feds in 1913-14, and Youngstown, Ohio in 1915. Perhaps a newspaper from one of those cities might yield a biographical clue. I can't believe that we can't get one solid lead on Mr. Stanley.

The Scoreboard

	IN	OUT	PCT
Total Complete Names	14647	69	99.531
Total Complete Births	13973	743	94.951
Total Complete Deaths	7302	466	49.620
Total Assumed Alive	6948		47.214
Total Bats	13365	1245	91.478
Total Throws	13614	996	93.183
Total Heights	13611	999	93.162
Total Weights	13547	1063	92.724
Total Debut Dates	14716	0	100.000
Total Questionnaires	9980	4736	67.817
Total Completion			92.1853

Otis L. Johnson

By Pete Cave

B: November 5, 1883, Fowler, Indiana
D: November 9, 1915, Johnson City, New York
BS TR 5-09 185

Born Otis L. Johnson in Fowler, Indiana in 1883, Ote grew up in Muncie and played sandlot ball there. Fellow Hoosier Claude Berry recommended him to Dallas of the Texas League, where Johnson spent his first pro season in 1903. During the off-season, Ote worked at an unusual occupation. Johnson "makes \$6 to \$7 a day in the winter blowing fruit jars in a factory at Muncie," according to a contemporary newspaper article.

He moved from Dallas to Little Rock (Southern Association) in 1907 and led the Southern Association with 10 homers. When Little Rock's season ended in September he joined Portland for 41 more games (this was in the era when the PCL played well into the fall). Johnson played short and third for the Beavers, showing speed and power. He batted .280 in 187 games in 1908 with 34 doubles, 17 triples, 10 homers, and 38 stolen bases.

In 1909 Johnson hit one of the longest homers in PCL history. Portland manager Walter McCredie told reporter Mark Roth: "The drive of Ote Johnson's at Los Angeles this year was the longest clout I have ever witnessed. Out in center field they had a pavilion 150 feet long. Hits at Chutes Park, Los Angeles had never come within 50 feet of the pavilion. In a game last season against Los Angeles, Johnson put the ball clean over the pavilion and the ball bounced into the band stand for what I call the longest hit in the world.

Ote, known by now as "Home Run" Johnson, put up impressive numbers in 1909 (.293, 41 doubles, 6 triples, 13 homers, 45 stolen bases in 205 games) and the Highlanders acquired his contract. They assigned him to Jersey City of the Eastern League for 1910. He made the big club in 1911 and Sporting Life remembered him as "the freshest busher who ever joined the New Yorks." The paper said Johnson was "well-liked, although he made a bad start. The first day he reported at the training camp he told [New York manager] Hal Chase how to play first base and advised [catcher Ed] Sweeney that if he could get used to crutches he probably could get over the ground faster." Johnson batted just .234 in 71 games during his rookie year, playing mostly at shortstop. Apparently Johnson suffered an arm injury, and this may have contributed to the 31 errors he made.

Johnson spent the rest of his career playing for teams in New York State, but he never again played in the majors. He joined Rochester (International) in 1912 and helped the Binghamton Bingos to the New York State League pennant in 1913 with a .323 batting average. A fan favorite wherever he played, Johnson hooked up with Elmira (New York State) and played shortstop there in 1914-15. His 14 homers in 1914 topped the league.

Described as good-natured and a fan favorite wherever he played, Johnson and his wife settled in Johnson City, New York. On November 9, 1915, four days after his 32nd birthday, Ote went hunting with several companions about four miles west of Owego, New York, while Mrs. Johnson went to buy furniture for their new home. By about 3 p.m. the hunting party had bagged several rabbits. John W. Ash, one of Ote's companions, spotted a fox and fired at it, wounding the animal. The rest of the hunters began spreading out to head off the fox. "Running over rough ground," reported the Binghamton Press, "Johnson stumbled over a stone and lunged forward, his body across the muzzle of his gun. The stock of the gun struck the ground and both shells exploded, the shot entering Johnson's body diagonally."

The blast tore away the whole lower wall of Johnson's stomach and the upper wall of his abdomen. Ash, who saw the accident, was the first to reach Johnson. Ote managed to raise himself up on one elbow and said, "Boys, I'm done for." Johnson "rallied considerably," according to one report, as his companions carried him to an automobile. He told him that the wound wasn't as serious as he thought and that he would be all right. As the driver, Oliver Johnson, sped toward Owego, Johnson, according to the Press said: "Oliver, it is better that one should die than to kill us all in a wild attempt to save one."

In Owego, Johnson received first aid and was rushed to the hospital in Johnson City. He died at about 6 p.m. His wife, said the Press, was "overcome when she was told of the tragedy, and because of her nervous temperament, it is feared that her condition may become serious." His family and friends back in Muncie were notified at about 8 p.m. Viola Johnson, Ote's mother, left town to take charge of her son's body. After funeral services at the Methodist church in Johnson City, Ote was laid to rest in Riverhurst Cemetery in Endicott, New York.

That's the sad story of poor old Otis L. "Ote" Johnson, the glass blower from Muncie. Hard to believe, but with all the material available on him, it is unknown what the "L." in his middle name stood for.