

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

FALL 2009

Society for American Baseball Research

Nineteenth Century Notes is a publication of the Nineteenth Century Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research

Fred Ivor-Campbell 1935-2009

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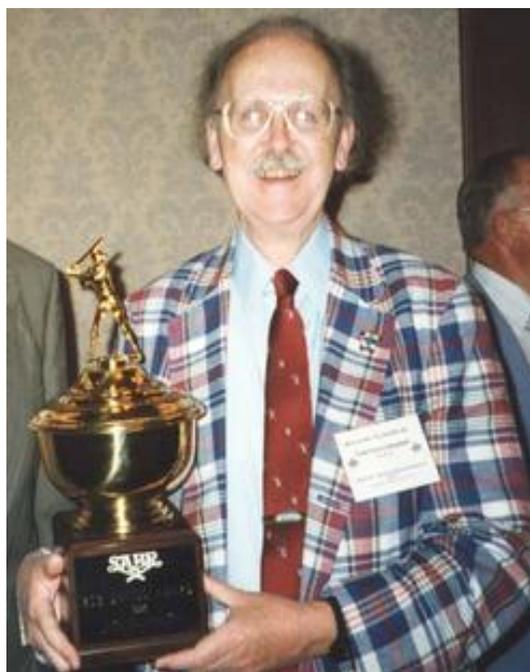
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Editor's Note: The following appreciation by Ed Achorn of the life of past Nineteenth Century Committee Chairman Fred Ivor Campbell appeared in the *Providence Journal* on August 4, 2009. Used by permission.

When I was writing a book about Old Hoss Radbourn — the pitcher who won an astonishing 59 games in a single season, more than anyone in the history of major-league baseball — I knew there was one man I had to see.

Frederick Ivor-Campbell was

probably the world's foremost expert on Rad-



Fred Ivor-Campbell accepting the Bob Davids Award for 2003

bourn, who pitched for the Providence Grays of the National League in the 1880s. Mr. Ivor-Campbell, a leading figure in the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), had written about him (elegantly) for *American Heritage* magazine and other publications. And he lived in Bristol.

Still, I felt some trepidation. Researchers can be strange people, haughty, fiercely

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Chairman's Corner by Peter Mancuso

My report of our Annual Committee Business Meeting, held during SABR 39 follows.

2009 Overlooked 19th Century Baseball Legend Award...In case you haven't heard, Pete Browning edged out Deacon White as this first year's selection of

the Overlooked 19th Century Baseball Legend. Overlooked Legends Project Chair, Joe Williams and project committee member Charles Faber were on hand to make the announcement. Bob Gregory, the third project member was unable to attend but was certainly

there in spirit. Congratulations to all three for a job very well done, 200 members of the committee cast their ballots. Another of our committee members, Ralph Paluso has recently joined this project committee.

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Fred Ivor-Campbell (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

protective of their scholarly turf.

But at one of my talks about the legacy of political corruption in Rhode Island a while ago, the man who introduced me mentioned I was working on a book about early baseball. After the speech, a few people gathered around to shake hands, or chat about Rhode Island's colorful civic culture.

At the end of the line was a slender, older man with a white beard, a gentle voice, an infectious giggle and sparkling eyes. He asked me about my book. It was Mr. Ivor-Campbell himself, who had come with his wife, Alma.

After some urging ("Oh, no, you don't have to do that!"), he agreed to let me buy him lunch in Bristol.

The man I had been worried about confronting turned out to be not only keenly intelligent (a Harvard undergraduate who had gone on to teach English at the University of Rhode Island) but also gentlemanly, open and eager to share his own research and collection, as well as put me in touch with some wonderful folks who owned Radbourn-related treasures.

He offered to read my manuscript — for no compensation other than the joy of delving into a topic that fascinated him. Friends had read and loved it, but when Fred praised it effusively, I was walking on air. Not only that, he was tough on me. He returned it with, probably, 100 or more meticulous

notes, catching errors (some remarkably arcane) and improving the flow of the writing. I have been around professional editors all my working life, and have rarely seen a better job.

In recent months, we spent hours in his living room, talking about early baseball, laughing about some of its characters. I asked Alma, sitting across from the sofa, if she thought we were kooks to be into this topic so intensely. She just laughed. The love between those two, who had been married for nearly half a century, was palpable. She smiled to see him happy, and she obviously admired him. She knew he had a national reputation for his superb scholarship and generous assistance to other historians.

As a fellow library lover and a proud Bristolian, Fred gave me a tour of the renovated Rogers Free Library in town. He used its computers for e-mail, and was quick to check out the best new history books. On the way out, I noticed a little plaque bearing his and Alma's name, suggesting they had made a generous contribution, in spite of their modest circumstances.

Several days ago, I asked Fred and Alma to a lobster dinner at my house, as a small thanks for all their help with the book. I still have Fred's entirely characteristic response among my e-mails: "We're happy to accept your kind invitation, though a copy of the book would be more than enough thanks for what was, to me, a

pleasure that turned into a renewal of enthusiasm over Radbourn and the Grays. . . . We like lobster, though I'm uneasy with the extravagance."

Fred, 73, wanted to talk to me about a new SABR book he was editing about the 1884 Providence Grays.

On Saturday, my wife and I bought four lobsters, laid a beautiful table in the screen house, brought down some of the baseball materials Fred had lent me, and waited. The appointed hour came and went, with no sign of them. Half an hour passed. That was totally out of character; Fred was always punctual. I called his house, beginning to worry. No answer, then or later. I prayed he had simply forgotten (highly unlikely) or been called away on an emergency and had sent an e-mail to my work instead of calling me (impossible).

Fred, I later learned, had been killed on Friday afternoon on Route 195 in Fairhaven, and Alma seriously injured. Police said a truck had veered across the median of the highway and, going the wrong way, hit Fred's Toyota head-on.

What are the odds?

Last week, words of genuine grief and admiration poured out from baseball scholars around America: "deeply scholarly man". . . "a delightful sense of humor". . . "Any favor anybody ever asked him, he would drop his own research. Unlike most of us, what he was

(Continued on page 3)

Fred Ivor-Campbell (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

after was not knowledge, but wisdom". . . "Fred wrote a magnificent piece in 2007. . . That essay won a prize as the best historical essay of the year in baseball". . . "He was so generous a spirit, always a smile."

How could such a wonderful man be taken from us, while those who prey on others are allowed to live, gloat and prosper? Such a question is as old as mankind.

But I do know Fred's generous spirit will live on, inspiring

everyone who has come in contact with him and his work. And that, if there is a heaven, he is already there, giggling over the latest baseball mystery he has solved via a personal interview with Old Hoss Radbourn.

Chairman's Corner (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

A profile of Browning appears later in this Newsletter.

19th Century Baseball Conference...Due to the overwhelming affirmative response to my survey to those who attended the inaugural 19th Century Base Ball Conference we will again hold the conference next spring (tentative date, Saturday April 17, 2010) and again at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY. For now, please, save this date and I will be confirming it or announcing another date within the next month or so. Complete registration and oral research proposal information will be contained in our winter newsletter.

Frederick Ivor-Campbell...If you have not received the tragic news, Fred Ivor-Campbell, former Chair of our committee, former SABR Vice President and Board Member and recipient of the Bob Davids Award was killed in a auto accident near his home in Rhode Island just a week before SABR 39. His wife Alma is currently recovering from serious injuries

received in the same accident. Having received over 50 emails and notes expressing both condolences for Fred and wishes for Alma's recovery, I assembled all into a portfolio which Ed Achorn (author of the Appreciation that opened this issue) delivered to Alma who is in a rehab facility. Ed reports that Alma is making good progress and was most appreciative of all the sentiments she has and continues to receive.

I also received a half-dozen recommendations on how our committee might establish some lasting tribute to Fred. I assembled all of these ideas and queried all of the former Nineteenth Century Committee Chairs. After taking into consideration the comments I received from my predecessors I have advanced a proposal to SABR's Executive Director and Board to name our 19th Century Base Ball Conference, "The Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Base Ball Conference." With the Board's approval, I will seek Alma Ivor-Campbell's consent to rename the conference.

"Greatest Baseball Games of the 19th Century," Committee Book Project...Committee meeting attendees accepted the proposal to undertake a book project, "Greatest Baseball Games of the 19th Century." This proposal began to gather steam back in the late spring when John Thorn posted a commentary on what he thought was the greatest baseball game of the 19th century. A half dozen other committee members chimed in with their choices. I discussed this with those who initially contributed and presented the book project idea to SABR's Publications Director, Nick Frankovich. Nick presented it to the SABR Board who liked the idea. It was agreed then that I would present the idea at the committee meeting in Washington. I did so, and we now have, for lack of a better description, a preliminary editorial board for this project, currently comprised of Bob Bailey, Bill Felber, Bob Tiemann, John Thorn, Craig Waff and myself. Watch your emails or mail from the committee on how to be part of it.

(Continued on page 4)

Chairman's Corner (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Missing From The Archives... Dorothy Jane Mills gave a brief overview of missing letters from the Harry Wright scrapbooks, housed in the New York Public Library. If you "Google" "Dorothy Mills, Harry Wright letters" you will find further details on this very grave matter. Unfortunately, it may be the tip of the iceberg. More to follow...

Union Association Project Proposal... Bob McConnell has raised a proposal to launch a systematic research project aimed at each of the thirteen teams/cities that were part of the 1884 Union Association (UA). Bob has a list of each city and its team and will coordinate the assignments.

Unlike the American Associa-

tion project which spanned a decade of material, it is felt that the single season UA would make this a manageable undertaking. Please, contact Bob directly if you are interested in taking part.

Beyond the Committee Meeting... On Saturday morning, Bob Bailey, Joe Williams, Joe Mancuso and myself met with SABR's webmaster, Peter Garver to discuss the future of a Nineteenth Century Committee website. As a preliminary step, Joe Williams has been conducting a survey of the current site to catalog what is already contained in our online archive. If you would be interested in taking part in the future upgrade of our website, please contact me directly.

Chairman's Award... I have taken the liberty to create a "Chairman's Award" so that each year, I have the opportunity to publically recognize a committee member for outstanding service to the committee or one of its projects. My first year's choice was a no-brainer for me. Bob Bailey, our Vice Chairman and editor of "Nineteenth Century Notes" was presented with a replica 19th century bat (Burlingame model from the Phoenix Bat Company) bearing the SABR logo containing the words "Nineteenth Century Committee" in place of a manufacturer's emblem and the words "2009 Chairman's Award" above the recipient's name where the model name usually appears. Thank you Bob for all that you have done.

Research Requests, Announcements and Other Stuff

Asylum Box Scores

The 1892 Middletown (NY) State Homeopathic Asylum Baseball team played the NY Giants twice, the Asylum team's only two losses of the season. Frank Ceresi (fceresi@fcassociates.com) is seeking the box scores for those two games; August 12th and October 13th. Also, the box score for a game against the Cuban Giants played on June 28th.

Radbourn Book Coming

Fellow Committee member Ed Achorn's upcoming book, "Fifty-nine in '84: Old Hoss Radbourn, Barehanded Baseball & The Greatest Season A Pitcher Ever

Had," Smithsonian Institute, will be coming out this Spring. Ed acknowledges the proof reading efforts of our late former chairman, and his dear friend, Fred Ivor-Campbell.

"A Game of Inches" Updating Committee Member, Peter Morris is currently working on an updated edition of his award winning book, "A Game of Inches" and is seeking suggested corrections and improvements on the first edition. The books table of contents can be viewed on line at: [http://www.petermorrisbooks.com/ta-](http://www.petermorrisbooks.com/ta-ble_of_contents_game_of_inches.htm)

[ble_of_contents_game_of_inches.htm](http://www.petermorrisbooks.com/ta-ble_of_contents_game_of_inches.htm) . Contact Peter directly at: moxbib@comcast.net with your suggested input.

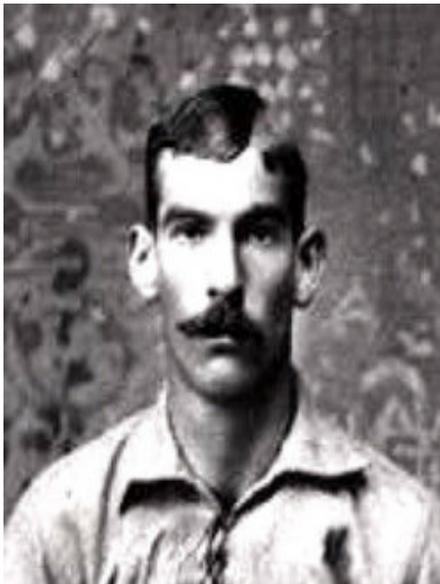
Call Them On-line Film Strips

John Thorn alerted our 19cBB on-line group of a unique approach (in my view) to presenting baseball history. Search on-line for "Baseball Grows Up, Randall C Brown" and you will come upon a website called "Vimeo." There, in turn, you will find Eight Innings (as of this writing) of former SABR member Randall Brown's efforts to share our National Pastime's history.

Pete Browning—The 2009 Overlooked 19th Century Base Ball Legend by Joe Williams

Louis Rogers "Pete" Browning was born during the early stages of the Civil War on June 17, 1861 in Louisville, Kentucky. One of eight children, Browning grew up to become a talented teenage athlete and a star amateur baseball player in Louisville.

When the American Association (AA) began play in 1882, the



Pete Browning in 1882

Louisville Eclipse joined the upstart major league with Browning as its star player. In his first season as a pro, the 21-year-old Browning led the AA in batting average (.378), on-base percentage (.430) and slugging percentage (.510), while also leading his team in runs, hits, doubles, home runs, walks and total bases. This was pretty amazing considering Browning was already deaf from

an inner ear condition known as mastoiditis. The malady was uncomfortable and painful.

Browning's days with Louisville of the AA lasted until 1889. During the Browning years, Louisville rarely contended for the league championship despite Old Pete's superior batting. He won another batting title in 1885 (.362) while also leading the league in games (112), hits (174) and on-base percentage (.393). Other than his disappointing 1889 season, when he only hit .256 in 83 games, Browning finished second or third in the batting race in his other four AA seasons with batting averages of .338, .336, .402, and .313. His .402 average in 1887 was the second highest in AA history after Tip O'Neill's .435 average that same season. The 1887 season was also Pete's best season for runs (137), hits (220), triples (16), RBI (118) and stolen bases (103).

In 1890, Browning, like many other stars of the day, joined the rebel Players League. Playing for the Cleveland Infants, Pete won his third batting title with a .373 average and also led the league in doubles with 40.

Browning's final seasons were in the National League. He split time with Pittsburgh and Cincinnati in 1891, batting .317, which was good for third in the league. He again split time with two teams in 1892, playing for Cincinnati and his hometown Louisville Colonels. He re-

turned to Louisville for the 1893 season and hit .355 in a limited role before finishing up his major league career with St. Louis and Brooklyn the following year. His career .341 batting average and .403 on-base percentage are among the best in baseball history.

Often referred to as tall and



Depiction of Bud Hillerich and Pete Browning at the Louisville Slugger Museum, Louisville, Ky.

lanky, the Gladiator was a colorful character and his legacy is surrounded by legends and myths. He called his eyes "lamps" and was said to stare into the sun to improve them. He named his bats after biblical figures, thought that there were only so many hits in

Pete Browning (cont.)

each bat, and retired the bats once the hits were no longer in them. Of course the most widely know legend has to do with the Louisville Slugger line of bats. Browning was often referred to as the Louisville Slugger in his day. According to bat-maker Hillerich & Bradsby legend, the first custom made bat made by the now-famous firm was for Browning in 1884. This is most likely not true but it is part of baseball lore forever.

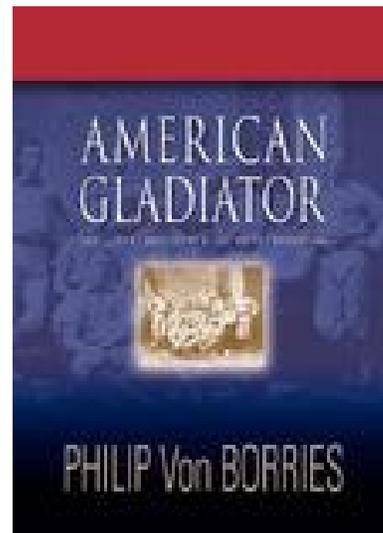
Browning's life came to an end on September 10, 1905. His inner ear condition, along with his well-documented alcoholism, played a large part in his early death at age 44. Browning's final resting place is Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

Visit the following websites for more information on the career and life of Pete Browning: Pete Browning Player Page, [Baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/b/brownpe01.shtml), <http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/b/brownpe01.shtml>

Philip Von Borries, "Pete Browning," The Baseball Biography Project, <http://bioproj.sabr.org/bioproj.cfm?a=v&v=1&bid=29&pid=1712>

Editors Note: In 2007 Philip Von Borries published the first biography of Pete Browning. The book is titled: American Gladiator: The Life and Times of Pete Browning. The book is available from Booklocker.com in paper-

back (\$14.95) and e-book formats (\$10.95).



“Big League” Leaders— NL Category Leaders 1892-1899

Batting Average	Stolen Bases	Wins
1892– Dan Brouthers, BKN .335	1892– Monte Ward, BKN 88	1892– Bill Hutchison, CHI 36 Cy Young, CLE 36
1893– Billy Hamilton, PHI .380	1893– Tom Brown, LOU 66	1893– Frank Killen, PIT 36
1894– Hugh Duffy, BOS .440	1894– Billy Hamilton, PHI 100	1894– Amos Rusie, NY 36
1895– Jesse Burkett, CLE .405	1895– Billy Hamilton, PHI 97	1895– Cy Young, CLE 35
1896– Jesse Burkett, CLE .410	1896– Joe Kelley, BAL 87	1896– Kid Nichols, BOS 30 Frank Killen, PIT 30
1897– Willie Keeler, BAL .424	1897– Bill Lange, CHI 73	1897– Kid Nichols, BOS 31
1898– Willie Keeler, BAL .385	1898– Ed Delahanty, PHI 58	1898– Kid Nichols, BOS 31
1899– Ed Delahanty, PHI .410	1899– Jimmy Sheppard, BAL 77	1899– Joe McGinnity, BAL 28 Jay Hughes, BKN 28

The 1882 Baltimore Club by Clifford Blau

On November 2, 1881, six baseball clubs met and organized a new league, the American Association of Base Ball Clubs (AA.) They were the Cincinnati, St. Louis, Eclipse of Louisville, Allegheny of Pittsburg, Atlantic of Brooklyn, and Athletic of Philadelphia clubs. In February, however, the Atlantics, run by Billy Barnie, determined that they would not be able to raise sufficient capital to successfully run the club in Brooklyn, and withdrew. At the next meeting of the AA, in mid-March, the Baltimore club was accepted as the sixth member.

Henry Myers, a professional ball player since 1875 who had been playing with various clubs in Baltimore since 1879, organized the team and served as its manager. The club initially comprised Tricky Nichols, pitcher; Bill Jones, catcher; Charles Householder, first base; Bill Wise, second base; Jacob Aydelott, third base, Myers at shortstop, Frank Burt in left field, Ed Whiting in center field, and Charles Waitt in right field, with Alder as substitute. By late April, Aydelott had been replaced by Harry Jacoby and John Shetzline was playing second, with no sign of Alder. Jones and Whiting switched positions. This team that Myers had put together would prove to have the worst hitting, pitching, and fielding in the AA. They would also manage to win even fewer games at home than on the road, a

remarkable feat in a league in which, until mid-July, the home team could hire anyone it wanted as umpire. After early May, they were never out of last place.

Home for the Baltimores was Newington Park in Baltimore. They wore gray uniforms with red stockings, belts, and trim. The 80-game schedule began in Philadelphia on May 2, with



Ed Whiting

Baltimore quickly showing what it was made of by blowing a lead after the sixth inning, letting the Athletics score three in the seventh and four more in the eighth. They won their first game two days later, with Jacoby homering and scoring three runs. Wise left the club for a steady job in Washington and he was replaced by local amateur Nick Scharf, who had some problems defensively and offensively and lasted just ten games, but that was long enough for him to tie for the club leadership in home runs with one. Change pitcher Doc Landis, who had quickly been released by the Athletics after the May 4 loss, was added and would become the team's top pitcher. The home opener on May 9 drew a

paid crowd of about 2500, with many more people on top of wagons and roof tops outside the grounds getting a free look, which would prove to be a problem all year long. The Baltimores lost their first six games on the home stand. Burt was released at the end of May and Gracie Pierce was signed to replace him. Pierce, besides becoming team captain, took over at second base, with Shetzline shifting to third, Jacoby moving to right, and Waitt going over to left. This didn't help. After a 3-11 start in May, the team really hit the skids, losing 15 championship games in a row. Their next league win came on July 6 in Pittsburgh; they would win six of their eight games against the Alleghenys there, including four in a row in August. They did win some exhibition games along the way, though, including a 25-4 victory over the Quaker City club on June 3.

Cincinnati made a triple play against the Baltimores on June 6 when with the bases loaded, Pop Snyder intentionally dropped a third strike and then stepped on home, followed by throws to third and second which forced out the runners. They fell victim to the same ploy on July 26 against St. Louis. But when Billy Taylor of the Alleghenys tried it on August 12, it backfired. He made a wild throw to third, and Tom Brown followed with a 3-run triple which gave Baltimore the 6-4 win.

On June 28, in Cincinnati, both teams failed to score until the

The 1882 Baltimore Club (cont.)

tenth inning, when they both pushed across four runs. Following a rain delay, Landis found the wet ball difficult to control and gave up another seven runs, yielding two triples to Harry Wheeler. Cincinnati pitcher Will White brought out a box of saw dust with him and used it to dry the ball off before each pitch and shut Baltimore down in the bottom of the inning. The two clubs set a Major League record which still stands with 15 runs in extra innings.

Baltimore added two new players, amateur Monk Cline and Brown, a California pro whose playing career lasted until 1899, in RF. Brown was installed in the cleanup slot and would be the club leading hitter with a .326 OBA and .370 SA. Cline took over center field where Landis and Nichols played when they weren't pitching. The club played much better after these additions, going 13-24 in the second half of the season. They showed a new competitiveness upon returning home for four games against first-place Cincinnati starting July 11. Baltimore took the first game 9-6 and lost 1-0 the next day on a disputed umpire's call. A hit down the left field line by Waitt seemed to tie the game in the seventh until Michael Walsh called it a foul ball. Walsh then had to run for his life as the fans poured out of the stands, although order was restored after a few minutes. Nichols was released, so Bill Wise returned to take his place in the box in front a capacity crowd, but a five for five game by Pop Snyder

and the usual inability to hit led to a 6-0 defeat. The final game was another close one, with Cincinnati taking it 6-4 despite Baltimore throwing out four runners at home. Bill Geiss, a semi-pro from Chicago, was signed as the new change pitcher; he would go on to have a long pro career, but would rack up an ERA more than two runs higher than the league average in 1882. After their losing streak ended, the



Gracie Pierce

Baltimores won 11 of their next 21 games with their new players. They then reverted to their losing ways. They suffered an additional indignity on September 5 when they were forced to start the game without their uniforms, which had been left at the train station when they returned home from a road trip. The uniforms were finally delivered in the fifth inning. Trailing 3-0 at the time, they at least outscored the Alleghenys 1-0 once they were properly dressed. Meanwhile, they continued their success in exhi-

bition games, smashing the Actives in Reading 25-0 and 12-3 in mid-September. A loss against the Merrit club in Camden, NJ followed, when future big leaguer Bob Emslie held them to one hit, but the Baltimores rebounded for an 8-1 win on September 16. Whiting, perhaps their only player in demand, signed a 1883 contract with the Eclipse Club in early July. He ended up catching in 72 of the 74 games Baltimore played, leading the league in most defensive categories.

A couple more personnel changes were made. Gracie Pierce became ill and left the club in late August; he was replaced by Bill Smiley, who had been released by St. Louis. In mid-September, a new pitcher, Jack Leary, replaced Geiss, and he would win two of his three starts. Still, the club finished the season with a record of 19-54. At this time, there was talk of a new club being formed to represent both Baltimore and Washington and replace the Baltimores in the AA. That was followed by another, more substantive challenge, as a group led by George Cassidy leased Newington Park for 1883.

The club played some exhibition games after the close of the championship season, including three straight losses to Harrisburg and the Actives of Reading, and then went quietly into that good night. It didn't even send a representative to the AA meeting which awarded the Baltimore franchise to the new team managed by Billy

The 1882 Baltimore Club (cont.)

Barnie, which would come to be known as the Orioles.

NOTES:

Most books show the 1883 Baltimores as a continuation of the 1882 club and many have Harry Von der Horst as owner in 1882, but the newspapers of the time, including the Baltimore Commercial-Advertiser, Baltimore Day, New York Times, and the New York Clipper all agree that Myers' club resigned and was

replaced by the newly created club led by Barnie. The 100% turnover in players in accord with the 1883 club being a new organization.

The 1896 Reach Guide's obituary of Myers pegs him as owner of the 1882 club, and a June 16, 1894, article in the Sporting News about Barnie states he was sole owner of the 1883 club, later bringing in Von der Horst, although it is not clear

if that was in 1883 or 1884.

Other sources used include:

Baseball-Reference.com

Retrosheet

SABR Triple Play Database

Much of the research for this article was done by Marty Payne.

Pioneer Project Update from Peter Morris

Dear Pioneer Project Contributors,

We have several important pieces of news. The first is that our initial hope of publishing the contributions in book form in the spring of 2010 has proven unrealistic. As a result, instead of rushing things and potentially ending up with embarrassing errors, we are now targeting the spring of 2011 as a publication date with McFarland as publisher. With so many contributions already complete or near completion, this will give us plenty of time to do the editing and cross-checking necessary to ensure uniformly high quality. And of course the extra time will give you more opportunity to review any suggestions and approve any edits.

To meet those goals, I am very excited to announce that Dr. Jan Finkel has agreed to join our team. Jan is an outstanding copy editor and one of SABR's real gems. With the

project now entering this new stage, Jan will be taking over from me as the project's primary contact person for questions about style, content, contributions, and deadlines. By all means, feel free to cc me and other members of the Pioneer Project team on your messages, but responses will generally come from Jan so as to ensure uniformity. Jan's email address is jfinkell@comcast.net

Because of the new publication date, we are establishing a new deadline of January 31, 2010. Contributors who have not yet submitted a draft are requested to let us know as soon as possible if they foresee a problem with this date. Those of you who have already submitted drafts will be hearing from Jan about those entries.

The new publication date also means that we are open to new contributions. If any of you are

interested in taking on additional clubs, or if you know of people not yet involved who might be interested in contributing an entry, please let us know. A fairly up-to-date listing of clubs and contributors can be found on my website (http://www.petermorrisbooks.com/pioneer_assignments.htm). But we are also open to entries on clubs not listed. While it is key to the project to include all of the most famous clubs of the era, we are also looking to include a geographic cross-section of clubs and to tell the histories of at least a few clubs that were neither famous nor successful. So please give some thought to whether there are any additional clubs you might want to tackle.

And thank you again for agreeing to participate in this important project!

Presidential Pitch by Jerrold Casway

American presidents have been associated with baseball for more than a century and a half. William Howard Taft, a former pitcher in his younger and leaner years, became the first president to participate in a major league opening-day ceremony. On 15 April 1910, Taft, seated behind the Senators' bench, was asked by the team's owner, Clark Griffith, to throw out the first ball at the season opening game against Connie Mack's Athletics. (1) Washington won the game 1 to 0 as Walter Johnson threw a one-hitter against Eddie Plank. This inaugural practice has been reenacted up to the present day by successive presidents. (2)

Before Taft, nineteenth-century presidents, however, had only a passing interest in the national game. Lincoln and his son witnessed a ballgame on the ellipse and got caught up in the rooting. (3) Presidents Johnson, Grant, Arthur, Harrison and Cleveland were familiar with the sport, attended an occasional game, invited players to the White House and commented on the moral character of the game. The most famous presidential image was a 1860 Currier and Ives political cartoon entitled, "The National game, Three Outs and One Run," depicting a victorious Lincoln brandishing a bat over his three political rivals. (4)

Our twenty-fifth president, William McKinley, had a strong interest in baseball and was an avid fan. From Canton, Ohio, President McKinley knew many of the Cleveland and Cincinnati

ballplayers. Often, as Governor of the Buckeye State, McKinley attended ball games and political gatherings where players congregated. Through Cleveland's political boss, Mark Hanna, players of Ed Delahanty's ilk became acquainted with the future president. (5)

Before the opening of the 1897 ball season, President McKinley cleared his calendar and met with National League President, Nick Young and play-



The Happy-Go-Lucky 25th
President
William McKinley

ers from the Washington Senators. At the White House, McKinley chatted with the players and front office personnel. When he spoke with manager Gus Schmelz of Washington, the President was reminded of how he threw out the first ball for the 1892 Western League season. Managing the Columbus ball club, Schmelz told McKinley his players were moved by his gesture which inspired them to a

league championship. Hoping to repeat this success, he asked the President to do same for the Senators on opening day. McKinley acknowledged the Columbus incident and said he would try to see his way clear to repeat his performance at National Park. Schmelz and his players were excited by this prospect and their reception. But McKinley could not make the 22 April opening day game against Brooklyn, nor was he able to accept a similar invitation from the Baltimore Orioles, (6) thus denying himself the opportunity of being the first President to initiate a major league opening-day custom.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Evening Star, 15 April 1910.

(2) W. Mead & P. Dickson, Baseball, The President's Game, Washington D.C., 1993.

(3) Evening Star, 12 July 1914.

(4) New York Public Library, Spalding Collection. G. Kirsch, Baseball in Blue and Grey, Princeton, 2003, p. 21.

(5) J. Casway, Ed Delahanty in the Emerald Age of Baseball, Notre Dame, 2004, p. 122.

(6) Sporting Life, 21 April 1897 & 27 April 1897. B. Felber, A Game of Brawl, Lincoln, Nebr., 2007, p. 64. See also Mead & Dickson, Presidential Game, pp. 13-4.

Washington Convention Points of Interest

The recent SABR National Convention in Washington had several items for those interested in 19th Century baseball.

A presentation by Todd Peterson on blackball star George Wilson explored Wilson's rise as a left-handed pitcher with the Page Fence Giants in the 1890s. Wilson pitched in the Michigan State League in 1896 going 29-9 for the Adrian team.

In the late 1890s he moved to Chicago and joined the Columbia Giants before moving on to Wisconsin and Minnesota at the turn of the century.

Compared to Rube Waddell and Amos Rusie by several news reports Wilson pitched through 1909 when he returned to his Palmyra, MI home.

Peterson's presentation included many photos of small town teams with which Wilson played and he told a good story of a black ballplayer making his way through the upper Midwest in the 1890s and 1900s.

Doug Rubin had a poster presentation entitled "How Did the Railroads Affect the Choice of Early National League Franchises."

He presented maps and data on railroads and how they affected decisions concerning team schedules, travel expenses, and franchise location. One intriguing map plotted the rail lines from Boston to Chicago and the most direct route passed through National League cities of 1882 in an almost straight line. The route included Boston, Worcester, Troy, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago.

It was only a short hop to pick up Providence. We often think of franchise selection in terms of big metropolitan areas with sufficient population and media to support a team. But in the 19th Century travel costs may have rivaled salaries as a major cost consideration when a league needed to add a franchise.

Monica Nucciaroni, author of the recent *Alexander Cartwright: The Life Behind the Baseball Legend*, addressed one topic from her book with a presentation entitled "An Overview of Alexander Cartwright's Life and the Claims for His Baseball Fame."

Nucciaroni described her detailed research tracking Cart-



wright on his journey across the country to the California Gold Fields and ultimately to his final home in Honolulu. She combed through journals and diaries for Cartwright and those he travel with and delved into a large array of primary sources to try and separate some of the facts from the legend.

There appears to be insufficient evidence to tie Cartwright to some of the claims made in

his name to spreading baseball during his journey although he did play the game in the course of his travels.

Grab a copy of her book to get the full story. Nucciaroni's presentation received an Honorable Mention from the judges for the Pappas Award for the Best Oral Presentation at the Convention.

Craig Waff had an interesting poster presentation called "Reconstructing the 1845-1860 Era." Craig has been working for several years on a project to catalog base ball games played during the early non-professional days of the game.

The presentation expanded on his listing posted on the Protoball/RetroSheet website of over 1,500 games played throughout the country during this period.

This more than a list of dates and teams. Waff includes the city where the game was played, the field (if known), scores, and other data gleaned from meticulous research through 19th Century source material.

Go to the RetroSheet site and peruse the listing. It is a wonderful research tool.

David Fleitz gave a talk called "The Green and the Blue: The Irish American Umpire, 1880 to 1965."

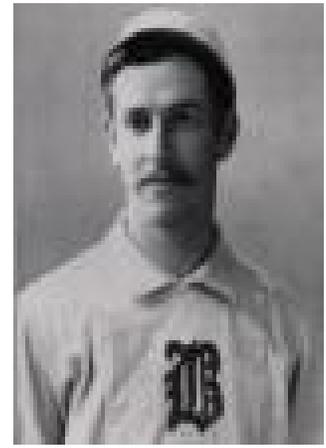
Fleitz took the audience for a trip among the shamrocks of the umpiring profession. Names like Honest John Kelly, Tim Hurst, and Bill Dineen came forth. Umpires and players who became umpires with a Hibernian connect were on display through Hall of Fame member Jocko Conlon of more recent vintage.



Willie Keeler
NL Batting Champion
1897 & 1898



Billy Hamilton
NL Stolen Base Leader
1894 & 1895



Kid Nichols
NL Wins Leader
1896, 1897 & 1898