

The INSIDE GAME



The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XIII, No. 3: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" SEPTEMBER 2013

THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by John McMurray

Thanks to all who attended the annual meeting of the Deadball Era Committee in Philadelphia on August 2nd. Though our meeting was necessarily short due to running up against the departure time to make that night's Phillies-Braves game, I was so glad to see so many new (as well as familiar) faces there.

Those with an eye on the Committee's work know that we annually present the Larry Ritter Award to the best book set primarily in the Deadball Era published during the year prior; that our newsletter (which is among the most extensive in SABR) is published four times annually; that members contribute original work regularly to SABR's BioProject; and that, under the direction of Tom Simon and Steve Steinberg, members of the Committee are in the process of creating a book to tell the story of the Deadball Era World Series primarily through photographs. Yet is also worthwhile to explore some new channels during the next year, and I would love to receive your input as we do so.

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DEADBALL ERA ALL-STAR TEAM ANNOUNCED AT CONVENTION COBB, WAGNER, JOHNSON, AND MATHEWSON TOP VOTE-GETTERS

Time appears not to have dimmed the legend of Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Walter Johnson, and Christy Mathewson. Some 75 years after their inclusion in the inaugural class at Cooperstown, this quartet of immortals heads the Deadball Era All-Star team recently selected by members of SABR's Deadball Era Committee. Ten other Hall of Famers, plus Joe Jackson and Johnny Kling, fill out the 16-player all-star team roster. Placed in charge of this dream squad is the Deadball Era's winningest manager, John McGraw.

The all-star team election took place this past Spring, with 81 DBE committee members casting either an electronic or paper ballot. No eligibility conditions were imposed by election overseers, with a number of Black Sox stars and *persona non grata* like Hal Chase and Heinie Zimmerman appearing on the ballot. Pre-Negro League greats like John Henry Lloyd, Cristobal

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Torriente, and Smokey Joe Williams were also placed before the voters. Player selection was left entirely to committee members' discretion, but vote-casters were encouraged to focus on the performance of ballot nominees during the Deadball Era (1901-1919), rather than over their entire career. Of necessity, this minimized the election chances of those who may have played during the Deadball Era, but whose renown rests primarily in the 19th Century (Willie Keeler, Kid Nichols, George Davis, et al) or post-1919, like Babe Ruth and Rogers Hornsby. Voters, however, were free to disregard this advisory, and many did so, as the all-star team includes two players (Cy Young and George Sisler) whose greatest exploits fall largely outside the Deadball Era.

To the cognoscenti, the election outcome will probably hold few surprises, as most of the all-stars were obvious choices. Still, fairly competitive races were staged at catcher [Roger Bresnahan (34 first-place votes) over Johnny Kling (23)], first base [Sisler (37) over Frank Chance (25)], and second base [Nap Lajoie (52) over Eddie Collins (25)]. Fittingly, Kling, Chance,

and Collins form the three-player all-star team bench. Few will likely quarrel with the all-star pitching staff: Walter Johnson [75 votes], Christy Mathewson [74], Grover Alexander [59+1 bench player vote = 60], Cy Young [45], and Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown [38]. But the meager 12-vote support garnered by Eddie Plank, whose 326 Deadball Era victories are surpassed only by Mathewson's 373, will surprise some. The selection of McGraw as team manager was decisive; his 53 votes far out-paced the 12 votes tallied by his nearest competitor, Connie Mack. In all, 87 different Deadball Era players and managers received at least one all-star team vote, with 31 collecting at least ten per cent of the votes tallied. A more detailed breakdown of the vote appears on page 9, within. *The Inside Game* appreciates the interest of those who participated in the selection process and invites comment on the Deadball Era All-Star team from all its readers, whose views we will be pleased to publish in the November 2013 newsletter.

Please note that the player stats provided within are for their Deadball Era seasons only.

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

William Bartleson
Sarah Forcheski
Eric Frost
Matthew Gazda
Robert Gregory
Adam Nelson
Larry Rutenbeck
Robert Sawyer
Kyle West
Thomas Zocco

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.

DEADBALL ERA ALL-STAR TEAM ROSTER



OUTFIELD: TY COBB

Born: December 18, 1886, Narrows, Georgia
 Died: July 17, 1961, Atlanta, Georgia
 Ht: 6'1" Wt: 190lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1905-1919	1929	7301	1420	2713	708	1211	769	.372



OUTFIELD: TRIS SPEAKER

Born: April 4, 1888, Hubbard, Texas
 Died: December 8, 1958, Lake Whitney, Texas
 Ht: 5'11½" Wt: 193lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Left

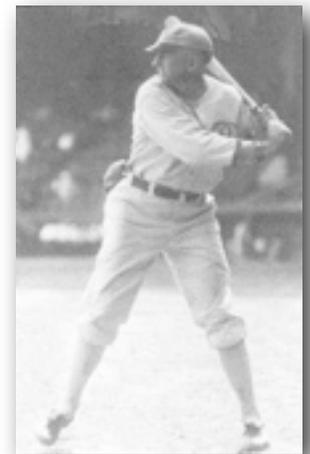


YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1907-1919	1619	5969	1052	2018	588	805	378	.338



OUTFIELD: JOE JACKSON

Born: July 16, 1887/1888, Pickens County, South Carolina
 Died: December 5, 1951, Greenville, South Carolina
 Ht: 6'1" Wt: 200lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1908-1919	1186	4411	768	1554	455	664	193	.352



FIRST BASE: GEORGE SISLER

Born: March 24, 1893, Manchester, Ohio
Died: March 26, 1973, Richmond Heights, Missouri
Ht: 5'11" Wt: 170lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Left



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1915-1919	613	2356	336	779	180	281	154	.331



SECOND BASE: NAP LAJOIE

Born: September 5, 1874, Woonsocket, Rhode Island
Died: February 7, 1959, Daytona Beach, Florida
Ht: 6'1" Wt: 195lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1901-1916	1988	7498	1083	2522	661	1141	293	.336



SHORTSTOP: HONUS WAGNER

Born: February 24, 1874, Chartiers, Pennsylvania
Died: December 6, 1955, Carnegie, Pennsylvania
Ht: 5'11" Wt: 200lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1901-1916	2298	8507	1414	2766	794	1375	601	.325



THIRD BASE: FRANK BAKER

Born: March 13, 1886, Trappe, Maryland

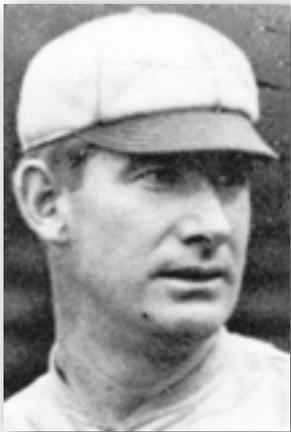
Died: June 28, 1963, Trappe, Maryland

Ht: 5'11" Wt: 173lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1908-1919*	1412	5420	811	1676	465	880	226	.309

*Baker sat out the 1915 season



CATCHER: ROGER BRESNAHAN

Born: June 11, 1879, Toledo, Ohio

Died: December 4, 1944, Toledo, Ohio

Ht: 5'9" Wt: 200lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right

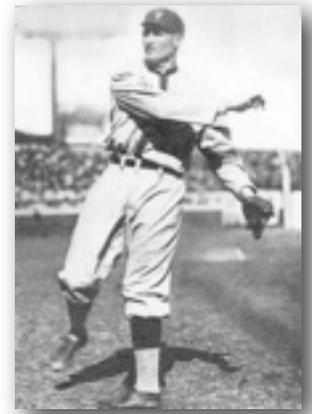


YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1901-1916	1438	4463	681	1246	315	527	212	.279



PITCHER: WALTER JOHNSON

Born: November 6, 1887, Humboldt, Kansas
Died: December 10, 1946, Washington, DC
Ht: 6'1" Wt. 200lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right

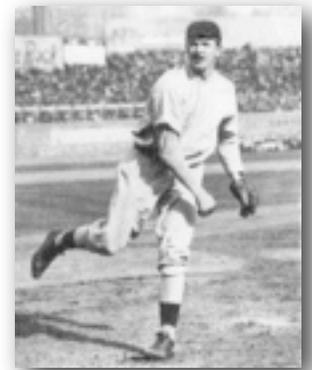


YEARS	GAMES	IP	WON	LOST	PCT	K	BB	ERA
1907-1919	544	4401.2	297	191	.609	2614	818	1.53



PITCHER: CHRISTY MATHEWSON

Born: August 12, 1880, Factoryville, Pennsylvania
Died: October 7, 1925, Saranac Lake, New York
Ht: 6'1½" Wt: 195lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	IP	WON	LOST	PCT	K	BB	ERA
1901-1916	630	4755	373	185	.668	2492	828	2.11



PITCHER: GROVER ALEXANDER

Born: February 26, 1887, Elba, Nebraska
Died: November 4, 1950, St. Paul, Minnesota
Ht: 6'1" Wt: 185lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right

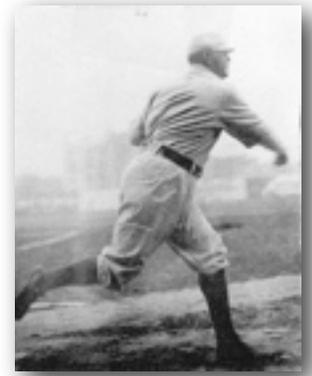


YEARS	GAMES	IP	WON	LOST	PCT	K	BB	ERA
1911-1919	362	2753	208	100	.675	1539	596	2.08



PITCHER: CY YOUNG

Born: March 29, 1867, Gilmore, Ohio
Died: November 4, 1955, Newcomerstown, Ohio
Ht: 6'2" Wt: 210lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	IP	WON	LOST	PCT	K	BB	ERA
1901-1911	401	3312.1	225	146	.606	1563	596	2.12



PITCHER: MOREDCAI "THREE FINGER" BROWN

Born: October 19, 1876, Nyesville, Indiana
Died: February 14, 1948, Terre Haute, Indiana
Ht: 5'10" Wt: 175lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	IP	WON	LOST	PCT	K	BB	ERA
1903-1916	481	3172.1	239	130	.648	1375	673	2.06



MANAGER: JOHN MCGRAW

Born: April 7, 1873, Truxton, New York
Died: February 23, 1934, New Rochelle, New York

Deadball Manager: 1901-1902 – Baltimore Orioles (AL)

1902-1919 – New York Giants (NL)

Record: 1671-1058 (.612) Pennants Won: 6 (1904, 1905, 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1917)

World Series Won: 1 (1905)



RESERVE: EDDIE COLLINS

Born: May 2, 1887, Millerton, New York
 Died: March 25, 1951, Boston, Massachusetts
 Ht: 5'9" Wt: 175lb. Bats: Left/Throws: Right

YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1906-1919	1716	6094	1136	1981	395	780	561	.325

RESERVE: FRANK CHANCE

Born: September 9, 1877, Fresno, California
 Died: September 15, 1924, Los Angeles, California
 Ht: 6' Wt: 190lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right



YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1901-1914	1115	3811	703	1129	270	547	378	.296



RESERVE: JOHNNY KLING

Born: February 25, 1875, Kansas City, Missouri
 Died: January 31, 1947, Kansas City, Missouri
 Ht: 5'9½" Wt: 160lb. Bats: Right/Throws: Right

YEARS	GAMES	AT-BATS	RUNS	HITS	XBH	RBI	SB	BA
1901-1913*	1246	4195	467	1139	258	508	124	.272

*Kling sat out the 1909 season

DEADBALL ERA ALL-STAR TEAM BALLOTING

	Starter	Bench	Total	Vote Percent*	Position
Ty Cobb	79	0	79	97.5	Outfield
Honus Wagner	77	2	79	97.5	Shortstop
Walter Johnson	75	0	75	92.6	Pitcher
Christy Mathewson	74	0	74	91.4	Pitcher
Tris Speaker	66	7	73	90.1	Outfield
Nap Lajoie	52	17	69	85.2	Second Base
Joe Jackson	53	8	61	75.3	Outfield
Grover Alexander	59	1	60	74.1	Pitcher
Frank Baker	50	2	52	64.2	Third Base
Eddie Collins	25	26	51	63.0	Bench
Roger Bresnahan	34	15	49	60.5	Catcher
Cy Young	45	0	45	55.6	Pitcher
George Sisler	37	2	39	48.1	First Base
Mordecai Brown	38	0	38	46.9	Pitcher
Frank Chance	25	6	31	38.3	Bench
Johnny Kling	23	4	27	33.3	Bench
John McGraw	43	NA	43	53.1	Manager

REMAINDER

Cristobal Torriente, 10-8-18 = 22.0% ... Addie Joss, 17-0-17 = 21.0% ... Zach Wheat, 4-13-17 = 21.0% ... Jimmy Collins, 14-2-16 = 19.8% ... Ed Walsh, 15-0-15 = 18.5% ... Sam Crawford, 7-6-13 = 16.0% ... Eddie Plank, 12-0-12 = 14.8% ... Connie Mack, 12-NA-12 = 14.8% ... John Henry Lloyd, 1-11-12 = 14.8% ... Edd Roush, 7-4-11 = 13.6% ... Ray Schalk, 9-2-11 = 13.6% ... Sherry Magee, 5-6-11 = 13.6% ... Smokey Joe Williams, 10-0-10 = 12.3% ... Louis Santop, 6-3-9 = 11.1%.

Less Than Ten Per Cent of the Votes Cast: 49 other players and 7 other managers.

* Percentages are the total votes received by the player divided by the number of ballots.

THE SAD TALE OF A MASCOT ON A LOSING STREAK

by Dennis Pajot

The following story shows us how players and managers can look elsewhere for an excuse when things are going badly. More importantly, it shows how the Deadball Era could be very uncaring about a young man's bad situation. Hopefully, nothing like this would be allowed to happen so openly today to a pre-teen or early teenager, without a word of concern or protest being expressed. That said, fidelity to the historical record requires us to chronicle the times, including its sometimes callous treatment of children, the use of racially demeaning nicknames, and the like, as they were, not as modern sensibilities would prefer them to be. So it is with this story.

On May 29, 1909, the Milwaukee Brewers — in first place in the American Association with a 26-13 record — entered the territory of seventh-place Kansas City (16-20). While in KC, the team picked up a mascot, a black youngster known only as “Snowball.” After splitting a four-game series with the Blues, the Brewers travelled to Toledo and lost two of three. The Milwaukee team then made its way to Columbus, where the Brewers lost four straight to the Senators. The Brewers high-tailed it out of Ohio and landed in Indianapolis on June 9. There, they lost the three games played to the Hoosiers, dropping the Brewers to third place in the AA pennant race. Of course, in baseball someone has to pay the price for a losing streak like this. In the Brewers' case, it was the new mascot.

To go back to the beginning of the mascot career of “Snowball Brewer,” he was first picked up by the Brewers while in Kansas City. It appears that no one knew his real name, or really anything else about him. His age was given as about 12 or 14 years old and he apparently owned only the pair of overalls that he travelled in. On the Brewers' trip from Kansas City to Toledo, Snowball slept under a sleeper berth on the train and made his mascot debut at the first game in Toledo. According to the *Columbus Dispatch*,



The Milwaukee Journal, Jun 22, 1909

Snowball Brewer

Snowball “looked like the cream in that stunning new uniform.” Exactly what he did is not clear, but it was reported that under the tutorship of catcher Charlie Moran, Snowball developed quite a string of stunts and became a general favorite. But after the Brewers dropped eight in a row, Manager John McCloskey told the players that Snowball would have to go. The mascot drew his unconditional release on Saturday, June 12. Just before the team left Indianapolis for Louisville, the players all chipped in and made up a purse to purchase a train ticket to send the kid back to Kansas City. But Snowball was not going to leave the team that easy. Instead of going to St. Louis as planned, he boarded a train for Chicago and transferred to Milwaukee, to wait for the Brewers to come home.

When he arrived in Milwaukee, Snowball went to Hugo Walter's tavern, located near Athletic Park, where the patrons took a liking to him and took care of him until the team got home. Waiting for the team to return home, Snowball was said to be having the time of his life. He was adding to his bankroll quite regularly by singing and dancing for Milwaukeeans in the vicinity of Athletic Park. One report said an impromptu song and dance stunt at Pabst Park brought in \$28.25 when the ball bag was passed through the crowd. As the *Milwaukee Sentinel* said: "Pretty soft for Snowball." Little other history survives about Snowball, but we do know that the young man liked his chicken, for when asked about this meal, he answered in a manner that made the questioner's mouth water.

The Brewers came home on the evening of June 15, after winning two of three games in Louisville. The next afternoon was a scheduled off day, but the Brewers and Minneapolis Millers made up a previously rained out game at Athletic Park. Manager McCloskey found out that Snowball had come to Milwaukee and was not happy: "He can't come in the park. We have broken the spell now and we want to keep away from it." However, Snowball did get into the park, marching up to the box office and plunking down his two bits. He sat in the bleachers, declaring to his former mentor: "You can't lose

me, Charlie." But just before the game started Snowball disappeared, thought probably to have been chased away by McCloskey.

As the Brewers continued their home stand, Snowball would come to the ball park every morning and peek through the cracks of the fence to watch practice. And he attended every game. The players had bought him some new clothes before dropping him, but he went back to wearing his overalls and jumper. Snowball was making his living by singing, dancing, and selling newspapers. On July 6, the Brewers left town for St. Paul. The first person to meet them at the depot was Snowball. But before he had time to give the players his best wishes, he was informed that he had better keep away from them. To make sure he was not on board the train, a careful search was made of the Brewers' car as soon as the train started. Snowball was not on this train, but on the train with the Blues, going to Minneapolis-St. Paul and then back to Kansas City.

A report in the *Milwaukee Journal* late in July said that Snowball was still clinging to the Blues, but there were rumors the players there were looking on him as a jinx, and that "the can was about to be fitted to him." Whatever the outcome of Snowball with the Blues in 1909, he was back in Milwaukee in the summer of 1910. On June 30, 1910, Brewer pitcher Stoney McGlynn

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS NEEDED

As previously noted, The Inside Game does not write itself. It relies upon submissions from the DEC membership. The core of each newsletter consists of original research articles. The current issue, like other recent ones, is founded upon material submitted by its small cadre of reliable contributors and the editor, and reflects their specialized research interests. As editor, I would like to expand the roster of newsletter contributors, widening our subject matter coverage in the process. So please consider this an invitation to join us. Submissions by those who have never tried their hand at writing a baseball piece are particularly encouraged. Stories need not be bristling with footnotes, although scholarly work is most welcome, and our editorial staff stands ready to assist in the research and writing process, if our help is wanted. I would also like to introduce a Letters to the Editor section into the newsletter – but I have not gotten any letters yet. So if you have a compliment or a complaint, or just want to air a view on something Deadball, drop us an e-mail and we will be pleased to publish it in the following newsletter. Thanks.

Bill Lamb via at wflamb12@yahoo.com.

decided to put on a roller skating and vaudeville show at Milwaukee's Ravenna Park roller rink.¹ McGlynn and his teammates "who could skate, amused themselves circling the rink on the small rollers." In addition, others entertained during the evening. One of these was Snowball. As a matter of fact, "the manner in which Snowball delivered the goods was the means of his receiving an engagement to sing and shake his feet in the dance pavilion" at Ravenna Park for a three-day engagement the next week. It was reported Snowball had been the talk of the town ever since the June 30 entertainment and good crowds were expected at the dance pavilion. Snowball told a reporter he would train a bit and have his voice in fine shape for the performance. He planned to sing some of the new popular hits of the day. Unfortunately, I could not find a review of the performances scheduled for July 6, 9, and 10 at Ravenna Park, and the subsequent activities of Snowball Brewer in and around Milwaukee are unknown.

Snowball, even as young as he was, had high hopes and big dreams. The *Milwaukee Journal* reporter said of the young man: "He is very enthusiastic since Jack Johnson beat Jeffries and says he will soon begin training for a career in the prize ring." Sadly, whether or not Snowball

ever fulfilled those hopes and dreams, in the boxing world or elsewhere, is a matter now lost to time.

Dennis Pajot of Milwaukee is a frequent contributor to The Inside Game and an active participant in on-line Deadball Era discussion panel.

NOTES

- 1 Ravenna Park was the last in a series of amusement parks located in the current Hubbard Park. Ravenna Park served as a retreat on the east bank of the Milwaukee River in Shorewood.

SOURCES

- Evening Wisconsin*, June 7, 1909.
- Milwaukee Journal*, June 8, 14, 15, 17, and 22, and July 8, 29, 1909; July 6, 1910.
- Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 15, 17, and 23, 1909; June 29, 1910.



STANFORD NINE TO THE ORIENT

**BALL TEAM OF 10 LEAVES FOR
 JAPANESE TOUR**

SAN FRANCISCO—The Stanford University varsity baseball team, 10 strong, sailed today for Japan, where, as guests of Keio university, Tokio, they will play not more than 12 games during a stay of 30 days. The trip will take 10 weeks and will be financed by a fund of \$3500 raised in Japan and a supplementary fund of \$500 raised at Stanford. On the way home the team will stop at Hawaii for a series of games against the Hawaiian-Chinese team now in this country, which defeated Stanford last season.

The (Spokane) Spokesman-Review, May 11, 1913

TO BOYCOTT BASEBALL

**FEDERATION OF LABOR HAS A GRIEVANCE
 AGAINST THE LOCAL CLUB**

It is probable that unless the American League managers make some agreement with the Baltimore Federation of Labor baseball will be boycotted by the members of labor unions during the coming summer.

At the meeting of the latter body last night it was announced that both non-union cigars and beer are being sold on the grounds, despite the fact that last season the managers had declared that in the future this would be remedied if possible.

Baltimore Morning Herald, May 1, 1902

MR. AND MRS. GEORGE DAVIS: LIVING IN SIN AND THEREAFTER

by **Bill Lamb**

Of the more than 300 figures enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, perhaps the most enigmatic is George Davis. Although occasionally embroiled in controversy during his heyday in turn-of-the-century New York – Davis’s role in the ouster of Giants’ manager Buck Ewing in mid-season 1900 and his controversial jump back to New York contract for 1903 precipitated considerable press censure – Davis neither sought nor received the kind of media/fan attention that his sterling 20-year playing career should have generated. A clean, scientific-type player in a raucous baseball age and a quiet, colorless man away from the diamond, Davis was rarely the subject of a *Sporting Life* anecdote or a baseball press profile. And he quickly faded from public consciousness once his MLB days ended in 1909. Indeed, once separated from the game, Davis receded into an obscurity so complete that his death in October 1940 went unnoted by press and public for almost 30 years.

Instigated by a glowing portrait of Davis by Joe Overfield in the SABR publication *Nineteenth Century Stars*, a revival of interest in the long-forgotten Davis emerged in the late-1980s. Several years thereafter, a provocative book about the Cooperstown-induction process by Bill James (originally entitled *The Politics of Glory*) brought more attention to Davis. In James’s estimation, Davis was a far superior player to inducted contemporary Joe Tinker and the best Cooperstown-eligible candidate not yet enshrined. In making the case for Davis, James re-published much of the material then contained in the Hall of Fame Library file on Davis, including an awkwardly worded excerpt about Davis’s post-baseball life contained in *The Dictionary of American Sports: Baseball*. In a likely misconstruction of the *Dictionary’s* text regarding Davis’s marital situation, James wrote, “A bachelor through his playing days, (Davis)

was married in St. Louis” around 1918. In this, James was mistaken. By the time of their arrival in St. Louis, George and Jane Holden Davis had held themselves out as married for almost 20 years. But recently discovered marriage records suggest a somewhat different story, namely, that for the first six years of their union, George and Jane were quietly flouting Victorian convention – an unmarried couple living in sin.

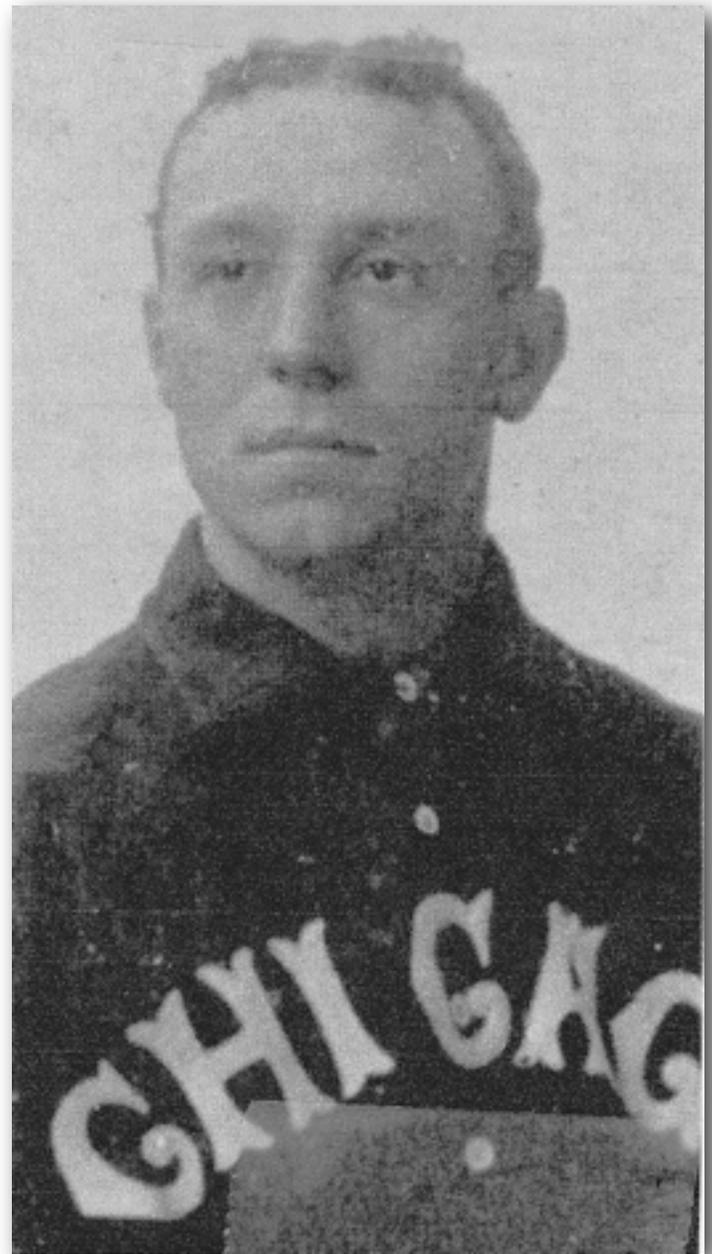
If a murky background leads to mutual attraction, the two were made for each other. Little is known about the personal life of either George Davis or Jane Holden. George Stacy Davis was born in Cohoes, New York on August 23, 1870, the fifth of seven children born to factory watchman Abraham Davis (born in Wales around 1836) and his English immigrant wife, the former Sarah Healy. George first came to local notice as a standout Albany-area sandlot baseball player and reached the National League Cleveland Spiders before he turned 20 years old. During the off-season, Davis lived in and around his hometown. The little that is known about the young George Davis has been uncovered by Walt Lipka, the longtime Cohoes town historian. Among revelatory matters found by Lipka is an 1897 incident involving two female residents of a Troy boarding house, now known only as *Kitten* and *Peaches*, who each came to believe herself engaged to George Davis. A minor scandal ensued when the two discovered each other and George fled the area, leaving his younger brother Charles (later the baseball coach at West Point) to deal with the situation. By Thanksgiving 1900, however, the matter was ancient history, with the *Cohoes Republican* reporting that George was back in town, introducing family to his wife, Jane.

Details about the early life of Mrs. George Davis are even sketchier than those of her husband. From US Census data and her 1948 Pennsylvania death certificate, it appears that Jane A. Holden was born in Philadelphia on June 18, 1873. She was one of at least nine children born to retail grocer Henry Holden, an immigrant from England, and his Irish-born wife Mary McGeaby. The death of Henry in the early 1880s left running the grocery to his widow and put the

Holden children to work at a tender age. But the whereabouts and activities of Jane are unknown until her arrival in Cohoes as Mrs. George Davis in late-November 1900.

In 1900, George, by now an established star with the New York Giants, and Jane were living together in an apartment in Harlem, informing US Census takers that they had been married for the past two years. By the end of the following season, George had worn out his welcome in Gotham, having just managed the Giants to a seventh place (52-85) finish. For the 1902 campaign, Davis donned the uniform of the Chicago White Sox, having signed a seemingly ironclad two-year contract with the Chisox upon his release by New York. Disregarding that pact at 1902 season's end, Davis then inked a lucrative new deal with NY manager John McGraw. Among the witnesses to Davis's jump back to the Giants contract was his wife Jane (according to the testimony of Davis friend/attorney John Montgomery Ward during the 1911 trial of Ward's defamation lawsuit against AL President Ban Johnson). Dueling claims upon Davis's services precipitated litigation by Sox owner Charles A. Comiskey and counter-suits by Giants boss John T. Brush, actions that, at one point, threatened to undo the fragile peace accord only recently reached between the National and American Leagues. In the end, Comiskey prevailed and Davis was obliged to return to the White Sox, for whom he played until his retirement at the close of the 1909 season.

During the contract controversy and its aftermath, George and Jane Davis remained in residence at their Harlem apartment, assumed by one and all to be husband and wife. But on-line Delaware marriage records uncovered by the writer cast doubt upon the status of their union. Notwithstanding the claim to census takers that they had been married in 1898, George Davis of New York City and Jane Holden of Philadelphia applied for a Delaware marriage license on December 5, 1904, paying the requisite \$3 license fee. The couple was united in matrimony on the same day by one Thomas S. Coulson at a place unknown. The personal information



George Davis, circa 1904

provided for Marriage Certificate No. 39426 (applicants' age, parents' names, etc.) leaves no question about the identity of the newlyweds. Witnesses to the ceremony were Jane's older sister Margaret Holden Grady and her husband Thomas. Having lived together for the previous six years, what prompted George and Jane to enter a formal marriage in December 1904 is a mystery. Jane was not pregnant (the couple's long union would be childless), and religious scruples (George was Episcopalian; Jane, Roman Catholic) do not appear to have been a factor. But a clue to the belated Davis-Holden nuptials

may reside in a record notation made by the marriage registrar: Jane had had a previous marriage. Obviously, the existence of another husband would have kept Jane from the altar until death, annulment, or divorce had removed the impediment to her re-marriage. The particulars of any earlier marriage involving Jane, however, are entirely unknown. Still, whatever the cause or case, Delaware records appear to establish a conclusive date for the wedding of George and Jane Davis: December 5, 1904.

The December 1904 marriage ceremony attracted no public notice, and the Davises apparently resumed the unobtrusive life that they had led before. The last significant sports page reportage on George Davis attended his arrival in Des Moines in late-March 1910 to manage the Boosters, the local club in the Western League. On occasion, the Des Moines press noted that Mrs. Davis had accompanied her husband to Iowa, and the 1910 US Census has George and Jane Davis residing together in Des Moines. Once at the Boosters helm, Davis repeated prior managing failures in New York, guiding a WL pennant-defending team to a dismal seventh place (72-96) finish. In the process, the Davis character remained true to past form. As elsewhere, Davis was affable but low key, an articulate, baseball-astute man, but one seemingly incapable of inspiring his charges or otherwise asserting leadership qualities. And as was the norm, Davis's off-the-field activities went entirely unreported. At season's end, he was released as Des Moines manager.

Following the disappointment in Des Moines, the Davises returned to Harlem, where George, a skilled kegler himself, managed a local bowling alley. Each Spring from 1913 to 1918, Davis coached the Amherst College baseball team. Fifty years after-the-fact, an Amherst alumnus recalled Coach Davis as having played high stakes bridge under the watchful eyes of a wife draped in diamonds, an unlikely tale that Hall of Fame historian Lee Allen could not substantiate and one dismissed by Bill James as apocryphal. During the summers, Davis also did some professional scouting, first for the Yankees, later

for the St. Louis Browns. By late 1918, Davis was totally out of baseball, living in St. Louis and reportedly working as an automobile sales representative.

St. Louis city directories record George and Jane Davis living at various local addresses into 1931. Thereafter, the couple relocated to Philadelphia, taking up lodgings in a Chestnut Street rooming house with Jane's sister, Helen Holden. This move may have been necessitated by the deterioration of George's health. Some years earlier, Davis had contracted syphilis, a then-untreatable venereal disease which sometimes took decades to manifest itself. In early 1934, Davis was admitted to the "Nervous Ward" of Philadelphia General Hospital. Two subsequent hospitalizations followed, with Davis being placed in the "Psycho Ward" in late August. On September 13, 1934, Davis was transferred to the Philadelphia Hospital for Mental Diseases (aka Philadelphia State Hospital or Byeberry), a warehouse for the incurably insane. He never left. In the meantime, Jane, unemployed and now in her early 60s, survived via family aid and public assistance.

George Davis died on October 17, 1940. He was 70 years old. The death certificate listed his cause of death as paresis, the end game for most syphilis patients. Davis had also suffered from arteriosclerosis and cellulitis. No public notice was taken of Davis's passing, and within a day he was buried in an unmarked grave in Fernwood Cemetery in nearby Lansdowne, Pennsylvania. The fate of Davis remained undiscovered until persistent inquiry by Cooperstown historian Allen unearthed it in 1968. Some thirty years later, a handsome headstone donated by the Northeastern New York SABR chapter was erected over the Davis grave.

Jane outlived her husband by eight years, plagued by late-life heart disease and a poorly-healed right hip, suffered in a fall on a city street. On January 22, 1948, she was stricken by a heart attack and died at Philadelphia Presbyterian Hospital. Jane Holden Davis was 74. Following funeral services, she was interred in the Holden-McCloskey family plot at Holy Cross Cemetery, a

stately Catholic burial ground not far away from George's final resting place. In permitting her to rest in consecrated soil, the Church evidently chose not hold against her the long-past years that George and Jane had lived outside the banes of matrimony.

For the past 25 years, the foremost research interest of newsletter editor Bill Lamb has been the career/life of Hall of Famer George Davis.

Baseball



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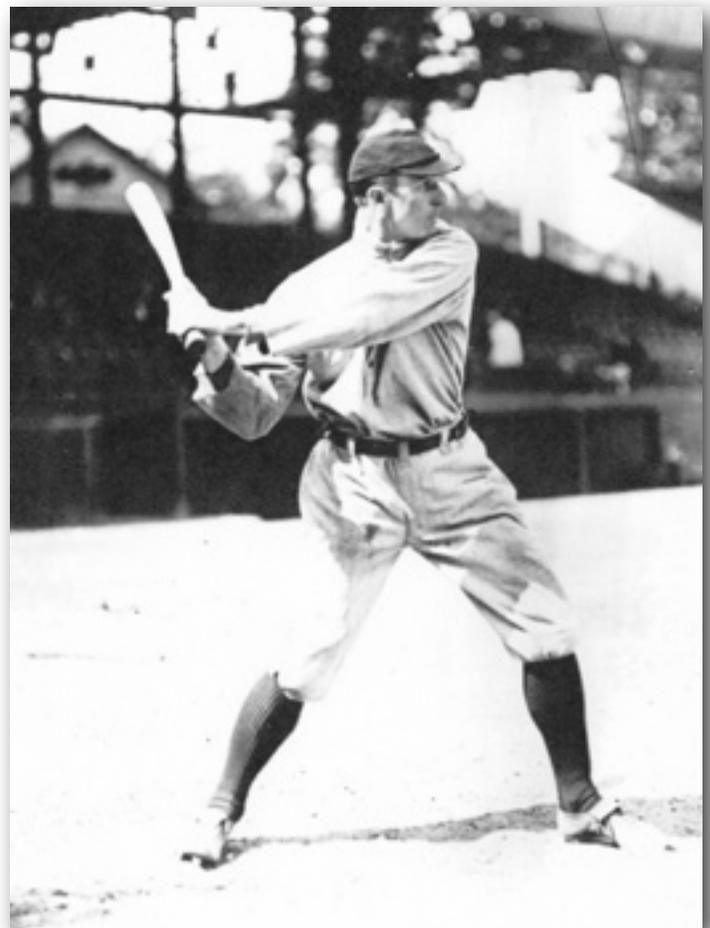
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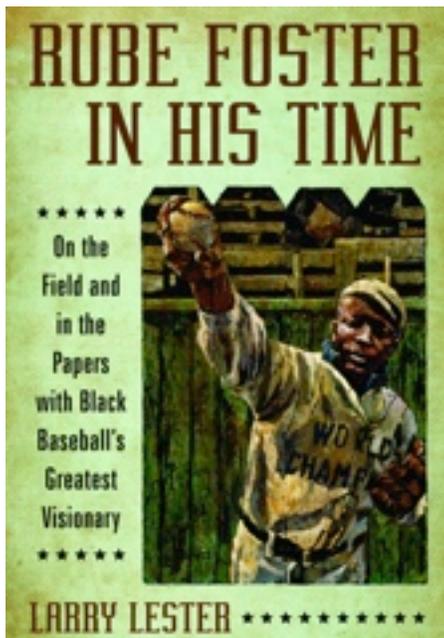
Berkeley Daily Gazette, July 6, 1914

DEADBALL BIOGRAPHIES

Just before the start of SABR 43, the BioProject published its 2,500th bio. The newsletter sends its congratulations to Mark Armour, Jan Finkel, and the rest of the BioProject on achieving this milestone. The latest BioProject entries include profiles of almost 40 Deadball Era figures, including Jimmy Cooney, Frank Lange, Truck Hannah, Ossie Vitt, Ad Brennan, and Frank Miller. If you have not yet read the new bios, please check them out. The biographies can be viewed at the SABR website via <http://sabr.org/bioproject>.



Ossie Vitt



**RUBE FOSTER
IN HIS TIME:
ON THE FIELD AND
IN THE PAPERS WITH
BLACK BASEBALL'S
GREATEST VISIONARY**

BY LARRY LESTER

*2012. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland & Company
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-3927-0.
256 pp., \$40 USD. Paperback
(7" X 10")]*

Reviewed by
Wes Singletary

There was no greater player or entrepreneur in early black baseball than Rube Foster. The big, strong-armed pitcher stormed out of the south to become the most recognizable figure in the black game's early history, a titan on a level with Babe Ruth himself, yet one who evolved into the ranks of management. Similarly, Larry Lester, author of *Rube Foster In His Time*, is a singularly

important figure in regards to the research of black baseball. Lester's NoirTech Research has provided many scholars with the archival photographs needed for their particular subjects, and his work with the SABR journal, *Black Ball: A Negro Leagues Journal*, and as Chairman of the Negro Leagues Research Committee, has been stellar. It is not surprising then to find that Lester, delving into his own exhaustive repository, should determine to pen a comprehensive documentary history of the legendary Rube Foster and the era that he so dominated.

In this work, Larry Lester goes beyond what many researchers could expect to find in gleaning the information necessary for this exceptionally well-documented look at the black game's early years, one that was dominated by Foster. Rube Foster was among the great African-American pitchers of the early 1900s, the leader of the legendary Chicago American Giants, a team that in 1917 captured not only the World Championship of black baseball, but also toured the country, taking on all comers, like no other team before it. As founder and president of the Negro National League, the first all-black league to survive for more than a season as a viable business enterprise, Foster established himself as something more than just another ballplayer, providing jobs and a venue in which African-American ballplayers

could participate. Lester goes to great lengths to examine this individual – one inning at a time – through his rise in the makeshift, barnstorming early days of black baseball, to his work in establishing the Negro National league, and his own team, the American Giants, to his untimely death.

While Lester tells the story well, it is the research accompanying the narrative that stands out. In so many works, the original reports of sportswriters from the black press in papers such as the *New York Age*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Indianapolis Ledger*, *Pittsburgh Courier* and others, is woven into the narrative of the contemporary author, with perhaps a citation for the research coming in the notes at the end. Lester goes out of his way to incorporate the actual reportage into his narrative, and does so in workable fashion, one not clumsy or lashed together. As with any outstanding documentary work of history, the actual research is the gist of this work, and can therefore be used by others seeking to expand upon their own study. Here is where the book adds value.

The author's appendices also include significant information, such as a daily record of Foster's pitching performances, his draft registration cards, birth certificate, and census records. What is most appealing, however, is the collection of team depth charts from 1902 – 1918 that Lester prepared and

included. This record, compiled from the black press and based upon the number of games played by Foster-led teams that Lester was able to uncover, is a valuable record for anyone researching other players or teams during this time frame.

Lester's narrative, while given over to the vast amount of research included within, does conjure a sense of being there for the reader. In expanding on black baseball and the Negro leagues, other outstanding ballplayers are detailed, those playing with Foster and against him. Lester reminds readers that the Cuban hurler Jose Mendez, *El diamante Negro*, was once described by Hall of Fame manager John McGraw, as the "greatest pitcher of all time." Other players, like Bullet Rogan, Spot Poles, John Henry Lloyd, Red Ant Wickware, Cyclone Joe Williams, and Foster's half brother Willie, are treated likewise, with ample research placing them within the context of their time. He also notes that Foster was named by more than two dozen historians as the top executive

in the Negro leagues over such black ball counterparts as J. L. Wilkinson, C. I. Taylor, and Ed Bolden, each of whom this book details in their relations with Foster.

In providing this thoroughly documented biography of Foster, Lester gets "behind the man," ably reconstructing the development of Foster's life and Black Baseball, while detailing all of the conflict and glory in both, from the perspective of its seminal participant. As he hoped he would, Lester has provided a "one-stop resource for those with a strong interest in Rube Foster, his teams and time, and the very rise of the Negro Leagues." While some may view it more as a reference guide than a definitive biography, I found the book fascinating and do recommend it.

Wes Singletary is the author of Al Lopez: The Life of Baseball's El Senor (1999), The Right Time: John Henry "Pop" Lloyd and Black Baseball (2011), and numerous articles on the history of baseball.



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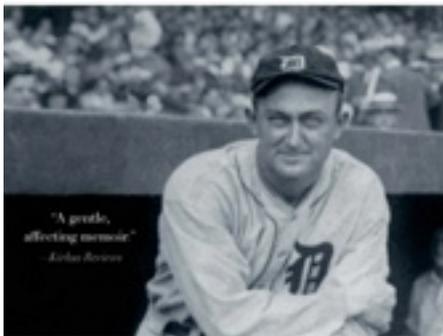
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*The (Pittsburgh) Gazette Times,
June 1, 1913*

As always, *The Inside Game* appreciates the review copies of the books featured in this issue that were generously provided to us by their publishers and we encourage your patronage. The Herschel Cobb memoir can be obtained from ECW Press, 2120 Queen Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4E 1E2 or Tel: 416-694-3348/E-mail: info@ecwpress.com. The Rube Foster and Black Sox judicial proceedings books were published by McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640 or Tel: 336-246-4460/E-mail info@mcfarlandpub.com.



**HEART OF A TIGER;
GROWING UP WITH MY
GRANDFATHER,
TY COBB**

BY HERSCHEL COBB, JR.

*2013. Toronto, Ontario:
Canada. ECW Press*

*[ISBN 978-1-77041-130-2.
296 pages. \$24.95 USD,
Hardcover]*

Reviewed by

Doug Skipper

theskipper1@hotmail.com

It is difficult to imagine Tyrus Raymond Cobb as a warm, kind, and compassionate father figure. But that is how Herschel Cobb, Jr., fondly describes his “granddaddy” in this riveting, compelling, and poignant memoir.

Ty Cobb, the greatest player of the Deadball Era, perhaps the best in the history of baseball, was a ruthless and vicious

competitor who used sharpened spikes to impose his will, flailing fists to fulfill his demands, and an acerbic attitude to assert his desires. Hated by foes and many of his own teammates, he was a combative loner, driven to succeed despite the toll it took on his human relationships. While tremendously successful in the game and in his financial investments, Cobb suffered two divorces and estrangement from his children. Though his own offspring resented his demanding and critical parenting, Cobb was a patient and compassionate grandfather to Herschel, Jr., his older sister Susan, and his younger brother Kit, the children of Cobb’s youngest son, Herschel, Sr., a sadistic and brutal bully who repeatedly terrorized and humiliated his youngsters.

The memoir opens with a horrifying example of that abuse, when six-year old Herschel, Jr. accompanies his father and grandfather on a hunting trip that ends with an enraged Herschel, Sr. physically and verbally attacking his son. Ty steps into the middle of the chilling incident and makes his son – who is dependent on his father’s financial support – back down. After Ty departs, the physical and emotional abuse resumes, and young Herschel and his siblings find no escape from their father and receive no protection from an alcoholic and adulterous mother who is disengaged and

disinterested in her children; she declares that she would prefer to be free of them. The father’s abuse is appalling and repulsive, the mother’s rejection stunning and heart-rending. When the senior Herschel dies young and unexpectedly, his son suffers a range of conflicting emotions; relief mingled with remorse and guilt. For the remainder of their childhood, he and his siblings are shuffled between the homes of their uncaring mother and members of his father’s extended family.

For a few weeks each year, “Granddaddy” Cobb re-enters their lives, and brings the children to his Lake Tahoe cabin, where young Herschel and his siblings swim, boat, and accompany their famous grandfather on social outings. The visits to the cabin and later to Cobb’s home in Atherton, California, are enjoyable, and the children learn life lessons from the only father figure in their lives. Herschel learns more about his grandfather’s baseball career. The elder Cobb is modest about his achievements, wealthy because he wisely invested in Coca Cola stock while a player, and is charitable to those down on their luck, particularly with old teammates and hard-working immigrant farmers. The elder Cobb, who enjoys listening to ballgames on the radio, reading books, and napping, seems melancholy, perhaps reflecting on the deaths of his two sons, perhaps on his failures in raising his own children or

maintaining his marriage with their mother.

Late in his life, concerned about his legacy, Cobb commissioned biographer Al Stump to tell his story the way he wanted it told. That biography, *My Life in Baseball: The True Record*, was published shortly after Cobb's death in 1961. While that account was generally objective, Stump took advantage of his access to seek out more sordid aspects of Cobb's later life, and appropriated memorabilia from his extensive personal collection. Stump later used what he learned to generate sensational magazine articles and another biography that was the basis for the motion picture *Cobb*, depicting the former ball player in his final years as a bitter, reclusive, racist, and argumentative alcoholic, and he sold off the memorabilia for profit. Interestingly, Herschel had encountered Stump once at his grandfather's home, and with the benefit of hindsight, recalled that Stump had pumped him for information about Ty's drinking habits, and that the elder Cobb had caught Stump removing memorabilia from his home.

Herschel's memories, written a half century after Cobb's death, challenge the Stump portrayal. Indeed, Herschel describes a loving father figure, who places the needs of his grandchildren before his own, and even appears to abstain from alcohol

during the visits. Herschel's portrayal helps balance our understanding of Cobb, though those interested in the career of the Detroit Tigers great would be best served to start their library with one of the more thoroughly researched biographies of the Georgia Peach, such as Richard Bak's *Peach (2005)* or Charles Alexander's *Ty Cobb (1984)*. Those with a more extensive Cobb collection may want to add this volume for the different perspective it provides.

However, the most compelling reason to add this memoir to your library is that it is well-written and emotionally gripping. While the subject of *Heart of a Tiger* is Ty Cobb, and the work has been called his "story of redemption," the true heroes are Herschel, his

sister Susan, and brother Kit. They endured the mental and physical abuse of a sadistic father, the rejection of a cold and self-absorbed mother, and it was they who overcame the emotional damage that was inflicted upon them with a little help from their family and a lot from one another, and persevered; so strongly that they were able to form healthy adult relationships.

Doug Skipper is a marketing research, customer satisfaction, and public opinion consultant from Apple Valley, Minnesota. A SABR member since 1982, he has written four biographies for Deadball Stars of the American League, has contributed to several SABR biographical publications, and is vice-president of the organization's Halsey Hall chapter.

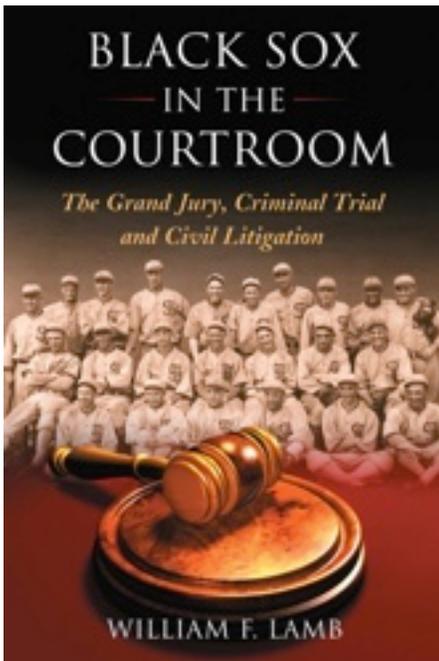
NEW WAY TO MAKE "SPIT" BALL EASY

ST. LOUIS—A solution has been found for the dreaded "spit ball." According to several of the Cleveland team licorice, just plain everyday black jack, vigorously applied to the hide of the ball makes it so sticky that the pitcher can not get it away from him in the proper method.

Saturday the Blues, knowing that Howell was to pitch for St. Louis, got together and solved the "licorice" scheme. Every time a player of the Cleveland club got the ball he would rummage in his pocket, put forth a piece of licorice, chew it and apply the juice to the cover of the ball, rendering it so sticky that it would not leave the pitcher's hand at the proper angle.

Howell tried for his spit ball time and again, but he could not get it working, and in five innings Cleveland sent Harry to the bench, wondering why his spit ball refused to work.

The Toledo News-Bee, May 2, 1905



**BLACK SOX
IN THE COURTROOM:
THE GRAND JURY,
CRIMINAL TRIAL
AND CIVIL LITIGATION**

BY WILLIAM F. LAMB

2013. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland & Company
[ISBN 978-0-7864-7268-0.
229 pages. \$29.95 USD,
Paperback]

Reviewed by
Tom Simon
tps@mc-fitz.com

In the last paragraph of *Black Sox in the Courtroom*, retired prosecutor William F. Lamb writes that his book's objective is "to provide a thorough, informative, and reliable account of the judicial proceedings precipitated by the outcome of the 1919 World Series In the end, it is for the reader to determine whether justice was done in the

judicial proceedings spawned by the Black Sox scandal. If such judgments are better informed for having read this text, the book has accomplished its objective" (p. 202).

Lamb has accomplished that modest objective, and then some. Nearly a century after the events in question, only fragments of the official judicial records survive; Lamb has tracked down and pulled together many of the missing pieces, mostly through his thorough review of contemporary newspapers, but also from other sources such as the documents recently obtained and made available to the public by the Chicago History Museum.

The book is well-organized, containing 25 short chapters with research notes at the end of each. Lamb leads readers chronologically from the games of the 1919 World Series to the suggestion of a scandal by newspaper reporters in late 1919, to the 1920 grand jury proceedings, to the 1921 criminal trial in Chicago, to the 1924 civil trial of Joe Jackson's breach-of-contract case in Milwaukee, and to the resolution of the civil cases of Happy Felsch, Swede Risberg, and Buck Weaver in 1925 (or perhaps as late as 1930). The most fascinating chapter is the last, in which Lamb points out the numerous errors in the way the judicial proceedings have been portrayed in Black Sox literature, most notably by

Eliot Asinof in *Eight Men Out* (1963).

Even though Lamb achieves his goal of remaining non-partisan, the text benefits greatly from his commentary based on his years of experience as a criminal prosecutor. He writes in a clear style that non-lawyers will easily understand, and the book is surprisingly error-free for a McFarland offering. I found only one small mistake; on page 4 Lamb lists Ross Barnes as a member of the original Cincinnati Red Stockings. Barnes did not join the team until after Harry Wright re-started it in Boston.

As for whether justice was done in these judicial proceedings, I will say simply that these cases did not give rise to the legal system's finest hour. None of the judges, lawyers, or litigants in this book distinguished himself nearly as much as its author.

Tom Simon is a civil lawyer in Burlington, Vermont. He founded SABR's Deadball Era Committee in 2000.

After today it will be more difficult to make home runs at Washington Park, Brooklyn. The fence in right field is being built up about 10 feet, doing away with canvas screens, which are seldom up.

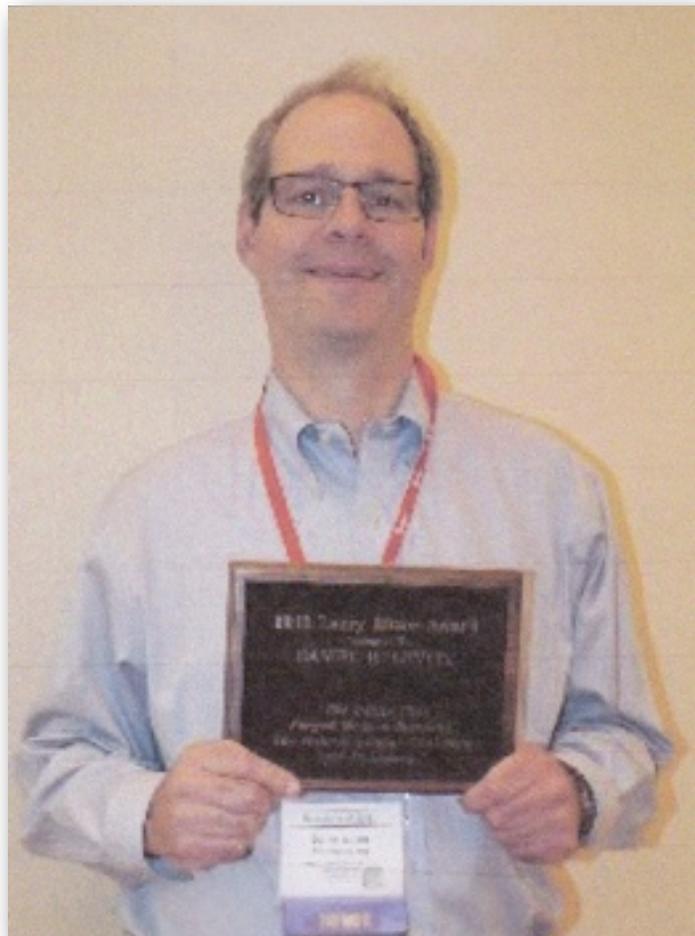
The Pittsburg Press, May 22, 1905

ANNUAL DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEETING RECAP

The annual convention meeting of the Deadball Era Committee was opened by Chairman John McMurray who provided attendees with an overview of DEC accomplishments over the past year. Newsletter editor Bill Lamb followed with brief remarks about the latest issues of *The Inside Game*, punctuated by a call for articles and/or other contributions to the newsletter by committee members. Particularly encouraged were submissions by members who have not previously tried their hand at writing. Chuck Hildebrandt, chairman of the Baseball and the Media Committee, then spoke about the objectives of this newly formed group, which include compiling biographical profiles of the sportswriters, columnists, and other media of the Deadball Era. Those wishing to participate in this worthwhile project are invited to contact Chuck at Chuck.sabr@gmail.com.

The highlight of the meeting was formal presentation of the 2013 Ritter Award to Daniel R. Levitt, author of *The Battle that Forged Modern Baseball: The Federal League Challenge and Its Legacy*. In presenting the Ritter Award plaque to Dan, John McMurray reiterated the comments of award subcommittee chairman Gail Rowe on this outstanding work, “a rare book that brings fresh perspectives and insights to conventional wisdom. ... Levitt offers readers a gracefully written, deeply researched, and original look at the Federal League and legacy.” In his brief acceptance remarks, Dan thanked the committee for the honor and graciously expressed his appreciation for the committee members who assisted him during the research of the book.

The meeting also featured the unveiling of the Deadball Era all-star team selected by the committee membership. Details on the all-star team roster are provided elsewhere in the newsletter. With the assistance of Steve Steinberg and Ty Waterman of the Games and Simulations Committee, we are now working on plans for a simulated game between the Deadball all-stars and a team of 19th Century greats to be



SABR Staff Photo

Ritter Award Winner Dan Levitt

conducted at the 2014 SABR convention in Houston. Further developments on this project will be announced in forthcoming newsletters.

Steve Steinberg (photos) and Tom Simon (text) provided an update on the World Series book project. To date, essays for 13 of the 17 Deadball Era matches (including the stillborn Series of 1904) have been received, but four years remain to be done: 1903, 1907, 1910, and 1919. Members interested in working on the project can contact Steve at ssteinberg@trinorth.com or Tom at tps@mc-fitz.com directly. Jan Finkel, principal editor of the BioProject, supplied his annual update on submissions. The past year has been an especially productive one, with the BioProject now surpassing 2,500 bios, many of which profile Deadball Era figures. Jan also passed along a caution to project authors: while input from the bio subject or a family member is always desirable, no bio subject/family member

may exercise editorial control over the final product. That is the exclusive domain of the author and his BioProject editor.

The meeting concluded with John's mention of DEC initiatives in the works, including an independent website for the Deadball Era Committee, and committee trips to prominent graveyards. The meeting then adjourned with many in attendance headed to that evening's Dodgers-Phillies game.

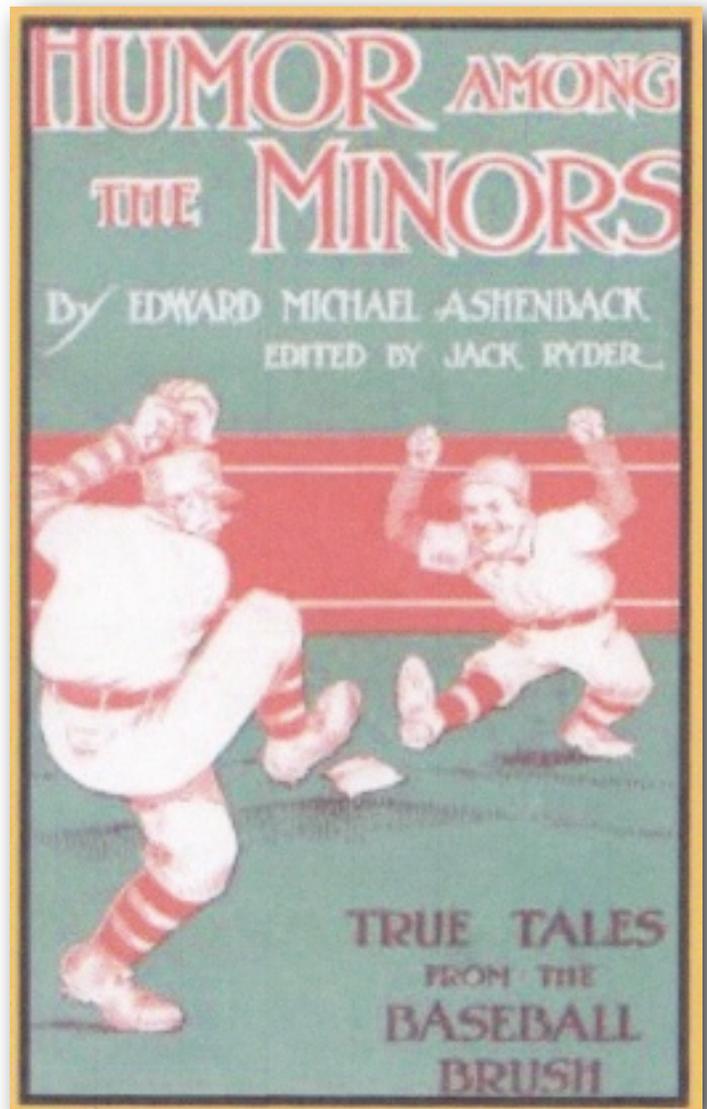


ASHENBACH RE-PRINT

Kevin McCann advises that a re-print has recently been published of *Humor Among the Minors: True Tales from the Baseball Brush*, a collection of stories and anecdotes about colorful personalities and amusing incidents in the late 19th-early 20th century game as told by Edward Ashenbach. Ashenbach spent 21 seasons as a minor league player, manager, and team owner, and was briefly a scout for the Cincinnati Reds prior to his death in 1912. In addition to reproduction of the original text, the new edition contains a biography of Ashenbach, as well as his playing statistics. The book is available on-line via <http://braybrepublishing.com/books/humor>.



Ed Ashenbach



DEADBALL DOINGS AT SABR 43

With Rube Waddell, the Federal League, Buck Weaver, the Wilbert Robinson-John McGraw estrangement, and the Baker Bowl featured on the menu, those with an appetite for Deadball Era baseball should have been well satisfied at the 2013 SABR convention in Philadelphia. These fascinating subjects and more were covered during well-attended presentations that enhanced our knowledge and understanding of important figures and events of the era.

In *Rube Waddell and the Great Straw Hat Mystery of 1905*, Dr. Steven A. King examined the circumstances attending Philadelphia A's manager Connie Mack's declination to use his staff ace during the famous all-shutout World Series with the Giants. Drawing upon his expertise as a practicing physician and clinical professor in psychiatry and dubious of the historical authenticity of many Waddell anecdotes, Dr. King differed with the often-published characterization of Waddell as autistic or mentally retarded. In King's estimation, Waddell was a man of close-to-average intelligence whose unpredictable, occasionally violent, behavior was most likely the product of chronic alcohol abuse. The 1905 season saw Waddell at near-peak, with his 27-10/1.48 ERA/287 strikeouts performance good for an AL pitching triple crown. Yet as the pennant campaign entered September, Waddell's mound appearances became less frequent, and rumors began to circulate. There were, for example, reports that Waddell was in the thrall of New York gamblers. In other quarters, Waddell was believed to be suffering from arm fatigue. Or that he had developed rheumatism in the shoulder from a long train ride next to an open window. Tellingly to Dr. King, he could find no immediately contemporaneous report of the now-famous railroad platform scuffle with teammate Andy Coakley, with or without the straw hat. That story only appeared in print well after the fact. By the regular season's end, Waddell was drinking heavily and ineffective in brief pitching appearances. At this date, it is



SABR Staff Photo

Dr. Steven A. King

impossible to ascertain with complete assurance precisely why Mack decided to sit out Waddell in the 1905 Series. But Dr. King is confident that whatever Mack's reasoning, it was not occasioned by an arm injury suffered by Waddell in some make-believe tussle with Andy Coakley.

A Federal League player recruitment maneuver was the subject of Dan Levitt's engaging presentation *Battle at the Dock: The Federal League Tries to Sign Major League Players as They Return from the Around-the-World Tour*. As the ill-fated Lusitania neared New York harbor, FL President James Gilmore and team owners of the new circuit waited for the chance to sign Tris Speaker, Sam Crawford, Lee Magee, Ivey Wingo, and other players on board the ship returning from the baseball world tour of 1913-1914. But Gilmore's public advertisement of FL intentions afforded MLB executives the opportunity to employ countermeasures, and in the end only second-tier targets Mickey Doolan and Steve Evans were secured by the Federals.

Dan's presentation revisited an incident captured in his outstanding book *The Battle that Forged Modern Baseball: The Federal League Challenge and Its Legacy*, this year's Ritter Award winner. Committee members who have not yet read the Levitt book are depriving themselves of a real treat.

Although its long tenure as a major league venue was not confined to the Deadball Era, the Phillies' 1915 National League pennant and the ensuing World Series were doubtless the highlight of the Baker Bowl's existence. In a presentation enhanced by some terrific slides, George Skornickel brought the long-gone Philadelphia ballpark back to life. Among interesting things, attendees learned that the gentle rise in the Baker Bowl playing surface – the left field fence was some ten feet above home plate – was necessitated by the fact that an underground train line ran under the park. Stranger still, for years a pair of sheep were kept under the left field bleachers – until the ram charged a Phillies executive wandering across the

field one afternoon in 1925. The sheep were given their unconditional release by the club the following day.

DEC member Steve Steinberg's passion for New York baseball was on display in *Uncle Robbie Moves to Brooklyn*, an examination of the 1913 separation of longtime friends Wilbert Robinson and John McGraw. Although the two maintained a façade of cordiality thereafter, Steve came to the conclusion that there was genuine estrangement between Robinson and McGraw, and that the Giants, particularly its pitching staff, suffered from Robinson's departure to Brooklyn. McGraw and Robinson died within months of each other in 1934, but reports of their late-life reconciliation should be received with caution.

A large audience gathered for a panel discussion sponsored by the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee. Much of the session was devoted to Patricia Anderson, the 86-year old niece and surrogate daughter of Buck Weaver. Mrs. Anderson coupled reminiscences of her Uncle



SABR Staff Photo

Dr. David Fletcher and Patricia Anderson

Buck – as children, she and her sister Betty were adopted by the Weavers after the death of their father – with a heartfelt account of the long effort by family and supporters to gain Buck’s reinstatement by major league baseball. Thereafter, committee chairman Jacob Pomrenke moderated a discussion of Eliot Asinof’s seminal scandal book *Eight Men Out* on the 50th anniversary of its publication in 1963. Panelists David Fletcher, the founder of the Chicago Baseball Museum and a longtime scandal researcher, and Bill Lamb, author of a recently published book on Black Sox judicial proceedings (reviewed in this issue of the newsletter), both voiced the opinion that, while still an entertaining book, *8MO* can no longer be deemed an historically accurate account of the scandal.

Reports on the Deadball Era all-star team unveiled at the convention and a recap of the DEC annual meeting are published elsewhere in the newsletter.



Buck Weaver

TO STOP BASEBALL GAMBLING

RADICAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN BY THE AMERICAN LEAGUE

CHICAGO—Efforts to stamp out gambling in baseball will be made immediately by the American League. President Johnson of the league will issue a bulletin to every American league club calling attention to the prevalence of betting and asking each club owner to enforce to the letter the section in the league constitution prohibiting gambling.

President Johnson figures that in order to discourage the gamblers it may be necessary to place under arrest everyone making bets at the ball park. If the city police cannot be entrusted to enforce the order he will recommend that the club owners assign a force of private detectives to ferret out the bettors and those receiving bets.

The Nevada Daily Mail, August 6, 1908



WILL REDUCE RED ROSTER

CINCINNATI—With Charley Street loaned to Boston and Dolan fortunately sent to where he can lose no more games for the Reds, the playing number of the team is down to 18. Blankenship will be retained until Sebring is back regularly in the harness, and then the staff will be reduced to 17 men, which President Herrmann has decided is plenty to carry through the balance of the season.

The Pittsburg Press, June 10, 1905

ELMER FLICK STATUE TO BE UNVEILED

On September 25, 2013, a bronze statue of Hall of Fame outfielder Elmer Flick will be unveiled in his hometown of Bedford, Ohio. The Flick statue was created by noted local artist Ron Dewey and will be permanently displayed in the Bedford town square. In a 13-year major league career shortened by illness, Flick, the American League batting champ in 1905, compiled offensive numbers well above most of his Deadball Era peers, an achievement recognized by his induction to Cooperstown in 1963. Flick died in Bedford in 1971, two days short of his 95th birthday.

The Flick statue will be located within an infield made of light brown pavers. The Elmer Flick Recognition Committee is offering for sale pavers that can be personalized or inscribed in the memory of a loved one for \$100 and \$50. For more information on ordering a paver or regarding the Flick statue dedication ceremony, contact DEC member Jim Wagner at jim.wags@sbcglobal.net or the Flick Recognition Committee via <http://www.elmerflick.com>.



The Pittsburg Press, May 3, 1908

Elmer Flick



SABR Staff Photo

***Elmer Flick Statue in Progress
at Workshop***

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

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One possibility, as I mentioned in Philadelphia, is to visit and examine prominent Deadball Era historic sites as part of short weekend trips, similar to what the DEC has done in the past with "Boiling Out." A popular suggestion has been to venture to Factoryville, Pennsylvania, the town of Christy Mathewson's birth. That trip could be combined with the annual "Christy Mathewson Days," a weekend celebration of Mathewson's life including displays and a parade, which takes place there each August. Another possibility often mentioned might be to travel to Walter Johnson's grave site in Rockville Union Cemetery in Rockville, Maryland. Such trips are intended to be accessible, relatively inexpensive, and something that would allow for exploration of areas which might be off-the-beaten path but that would also be of interest to researchers. Please let me know if there is a Deadball Era site that you might like to visit, and I will endeavor to make it happen as part of a DEC trip.

Additionally, we would like to launch our own independent website during the next year. The benefits of doing so are many: we could include more varied graphics and images, have more editorial freedom, and establish more of an Internet presence as a committee. More fundamentally, the website could also serve as the central location for news and developments relating to the Deadball Era. What would be especially helpful would be to learn about what content members would most like to see on a prospective site. In addition, I would invite the participation of anyone who has a technical background, as we will need a webmaster as well as individuals to help with content creation.

At SABR43, Chuck Hildebrandt, the Chair of the Baseball and the Media Committee, invited DEC members to work along with his Committee (of which I am also Vice-Chair) to explore the role of journalists during the Deadball Era. That involvement could be in writing original biographies of Deadball Era journalists; examining the prose and manner of reporting

during the period; or researching the relationship between ballplayers and the press. Given that the Baseball and the Media Committee is new, there is a lot of freedom in terms of determining projects on which you might like to work. Many members over time have wanted to become involved with studying and critiquing Deadball Era journalism, which provides the best window into events of the period. A joint project with this new committee provides us with a chance to delve into these issues.

Several members have expressed interest in focusing on the many characters of the Deadball Era who gave the period such a distinctive feel. That could be to concentrate on the quirky and unusual players from the perspective of their personalities, but it could also include owners, superstitions, and traditions as complementary facets. Many anecdotes from characters from the Deadball Era are chronicled in the two Deadball Stars books, but there is room for examination of characters not included in that book and for more insight into the lesser-known figures who made the game robust. Such work could take the form of a joint article or perhaps a small book, considering the broad range of Deadball Era personalities.

All of these initiatives would need contributions, but not so much that they would be excessively time-consuming. Put another way, you can take on as much work as would make you comfortable, and no prior research experience is required. I would welcome your input at deadball@sabr.org. We look forward to making this next year both interesting and edifying as the Deadball Era Committee continues to explore this unique period.

