



# Outside the Lines

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## **Right Idea, Wrong Color: Comparing Two Successful Franchises Across the Color Barrier**

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### **Introduction**

Between 1915 and 1917 two baseball organizations in two leagues segregated by race made major structural changes to their organizations. As a result, the New York Yankees and the Hilldale Daisies went on to become the dominant teams in their respective leagues

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## **Bob Quinn: Father of the Farm System**

By  
Craig Lammers

The Quinn family has been a part of baseball for over a century. The first member of the family to achieve baseball prominence was Bob Quinn, perhaps best remembered today for his work with the St. Louis Browns, Boston Red Sox and the Baseball Hall of Fame. But his most important work was as business manager of the American Association's Columbus Senators.

Quinn built the American Association's first back to back champions from 1905 to 1907. His player development ideas were decades ahead of their time and were also a significant influence on another Ohioan, Branch Rickey.

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## **Ed Barrow and a Third Major League**

by  
Dan Levitt

Hall of Fame executive Ed Barrow secured his legacy during his years with the Yankees. He joined New York's front office after the 1920 season as their first de facto general manager.

Prior to Barrow's joining the Yankees, the team had never won the pennant; during his 24 year tenure from 1921 through 1944 New York won fourteen pennants and ten World Series championships. Barrow had apprenticed well for the Yankee position; he had spent nearly his entire adult life holding almost every conceivable job in baseball, including scorecard hawker.

From 1911 through 1917 he was president of the International League, designated (along with the American Association and the Pacific Coast League) as the highest classification minor league. The International League consisted of many of the largest northeastern cities in North America that did not have a major league team: Baltimore, Buffalo, Jersey City, Montreal, Newark, Providence, Rochester, and Toronto. Three of these cities – Baltimore, Buffalo and Providence – had an extended run with a major league team in the nineteenth century.

During the first part of the 1910s, Barrow's first years as president, the league was profitable and successful. In 1913, however, a new outlaw league, the six-team

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Federal League, began operation in a number of larger cities in the Midwest. Because the new league's players came from outside of Organized Baseball, most baseball owners initially remained aloof. The Federal League's teams consisted predominately of local semi-pro players, aging ex-major leaguers, and journeyman minor league veterans. Late that first season, the Federal League decided to expand to eight teams, invade some larger eastern cities, and challenge the existing order as a third major league. To compete, the Federals assembled a financially strong group of owners that compared favorably with the major leagues.

At the time minor league franchises were generally owned by baseball men and politically connected businessmen of unexceptional wealth. The owners in Barrow's International League were at a significant disadvantage when confronted with a league backed by some of America's wealthy industrialists. The problem manifested itself most acutely in the two markets competing directly with the new league, Baltimore and Buffalo. In Baltimore, the International League team was owned by Jack Dunn, a brilliant baseball operator, but with few financial resources outside his franchise. Buffalo president J.J. Stein headed up one of the International League's most poorly capitalized franchises.

The other International League franchises were also insufficiently capitalized for a drawn out battle. Newark and Providence were owned by major league interests. A syndicate led by Brooklyn Dodger owner Charles Ebbets controlled the Newark franchise, and a Detroit group including William Yawkey, Frank Navin, Ty Cobb and Hugh Jennings owned the Providence club. Because of the impact of the Federals on their major league teams, neither – particularly Ebbets – had extra funds available to expend in defense of their International League franchises. A corporation that included Bill Devery, part owner of the Yankees and a shady ex-New York Police Chief, controlled the Jersey City club. The other three franchises, Toronto,

Table 1--1914 Population (000s)  
Cities With AL, NL, FL, IL & AA Franchises

| City         | City Pop | Metro Pop | Teams |
|--------------|----------|-----------|-------|
| New York (1) | 2,615    | 6,475     | 2     |
| Chicago      | 2,185    | 2,447     | 3     |
| Brooklyn (2) | 2,065    | 6,475     | 2     |
| Philadelphia | 1,549    | 1,972     | 2     |
| St. Louis    | 687      | 829       | 3     |
| Boston       | 671      | 1,520     | 2     |
| Cle/Toledo   | 561      | 613       | 2     |
| Baltimore    | 558      | 659       | 2     |
| Pittsburgh   | 534      | 1,043     | 2     |
| Montreal     | 471      | NA        | 1     |
| Detroit      | 466      | 501       | 1     |
| Buffalo      | 427      | 489       | 2     |
| Toronto      | 377      | NA        | 1     |
| Milwaukee    | 374      | 427       | 1     |
| Cincinnati   | 364      | 564       | 1     |
| Newark       | 347      | 6,475     | 1     |
| Washington   | 331      | 368       | 1     |
| Minneapolis  | 301      | 526       | 1     |
| Jersey City  | 268      | 6,475     | 1     |
| Kansas City  | 248      | 340       | 2     |
| Indianapolis | 234      | 238       | 2     |
| Providence   | 224      | 396       | 1     |
| Louisville   | 224      | 286       | 1     |
| Rochester    | 218      | 249       | 1     |
| St. Paul     | 215      | 526       | 1     |
| Columbus     | 182      | 222       | 1     |

Source: 1910 Census (1911 Census for Canadian cities)

Highlighted rows indicate International League Cities.

(1) Manhattan and Bronx; entire NY area for metropolitan population

(2) Brooklyn and Queens; entire NY area for metropolitan population

Montreal, and Rochester, were principally owned by baseball men of modest means.

To add some perspective, Table 1 summarizes the various market sizes in 1914. The chart underscores how competitive the Federals made the struggle for fans in a number of cities. Furthermore, it highlights that in Baltimore, Buffalo and Toronto, the International league was in some of the largest North American cities. (Montreal, despite its size, it was a perennially struggling franchise.)

At their December 1913 winter meetings, Barrow and his owners discussed ways of countering the threat from the Federal League. The American Association

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*Ed Barrow* (Continued from page 2)

advocated a plan to end the regular season after 112 games and then play an interleague series with the International League. The International League owners, however, feared that fans would have little interest in a bunch of exhibition games after the regular season and turned down the proposal.

The International League and American Association also petitioned the major leagues to eliminate the major league-minor league draft. The draft had long been a sore spot between the high minors and the major leagues. It allowed teams to select players – for a meaningful but not particularly generous fee – from a lower classification league. The exact draft rules changed often, but in general a team could lose one or two players in a season. Owners and fans in the high minors often resented being cast as second best, and the bitter confrontation with the Federals, who promoted themselves as major, exacerbated this problem. Barrow hoped to rescind the draft, at least during the battle with the Federal League. Although sympathetic to the plight of the minors, the major league magnates never agreed to Barrow's request. Many felt that eliminating the draft was tantamount to conferring major league status, further diluting their own monopoly. Additionally, the draft provided a source of relatively inexpensive, well-trained talent.

Despite Barrow's best efforts, by June it was clear that the International League was in big trouble. Table 2 summarizes the overall 1914 losses. Clearly, the modestly capitalized International League teams were in severe financial distress.

Jersey City, though not in direct competition with the Federals, was drawing only 200-500 fans per game. In Montreal the players were so disgusted with the poor attendance that they sent a delegation to petition owner Sam Lichtenhein to either trade them or sell the club. The players later complained that they could not "play winning ball in that city," and warned they might strike if the franchise was not transferred.

In Newark, President Charles Ebbets, Jr. had to bor-

Table 2--1914 Profit Summary (000s)

| City         | NL   | AL   | FL    | IL    |
|--------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| New York     | 120  | (20) |       |       |
| Chicago      | 50   | 70   | 20    |       |
| Brooklyn     | (25) |      | (60)  |       |
| Philadelphia | (20) | 18   |       |       |
| St. Louis    | 30   | (10) | (50)  |       |
| Boston       | 90   | 75   |       |       |
| Cleveland    |      | (80) |       |       |
| Baltimore    |      |      | 10    | (43)  |
| Pittsburgh   | (30) |      | (38)  |       |
| Montreal     |      |      |       | (40)  |
| Detroit      |      | 30   |       |       |
| Buffalo      |      |      | (30)  | NA    |
| Toronto      |      |      |       | (30)  |
| Cincinnati   | (5)  |      |       |       |
| Newark       |      |      |       | (30)  |
| Washington   |      | (15) |       |       |
| Jersey City  |      |      |       | NA    |
| Kansas City  |      |      | (40)  |       |
| Indianapolis |      |      | 12    |       |
| Providence   |      |      |       | (12)  |
| Rochester    |      |      |       | NA    |
| Total *      | 210  | 68   | (176) | (200) |

Source: New York Times, January 31, 1915; Atlanta Constitution, February 7, 1915; The Sporting News, various dates.

Highlighted rows indicate International League Cities.

\* In aggregate, the National, American, and Federal League almost surely performed worse than suggested by this table. Overall International League losses were variously estimated at \$150,000 and \$200,000. Based on reports that spotlight individual team losses, the aggregate loss for the league most likely approaches the high end of the estimates.

Author's note:

These figures are from several newspaper accounts. The National League figures in particular are probably exaggerated to the high side; it is highly unlikely that any league, in aggregate, turned a profit in 1914.

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*Ed Barrow* (Continued from page 3)

row \$2,000 from his father to meet payroll. Rochester's weekday games drew only 800-1,200 patrons, versus 2,000-3,000 in previous years. But it was in Baltimore that the crisis manifested itself most acutely. Despite the team's first place showing, at the gate the fans overwhelmingly chose the putative major league Federals over the International League.

On June 20, 1914 Barrow led a delegation that included Dunn, Stein, and J. J. McCaffrey and Joe Kelley from Toronto to a meeting at New York's Waldorf-



International League Meeting, February 9, 1914  
George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress,  
LC-B2-2995-9[P&P]; LC-DIG-ggbain-15508

Astoria hotel with the National Commission to plead for some relief from the mounting losses. In the period before the current commissioner system, Organized Baseball was governed by the National Commission, a three-man panel comprised of the two league presidents and chairman Garry Hermann, president of the Cincinnati Reds. Barrow and his owners lobbied for either financial support or an elevated status for the International League through the elimination of the draft and other changes.

Barrow, Dunn and company were surprisingly successful and received provisional support from the commission to create a third major league within the Organized Baseball structure. American League president Ban Johnson, first among equals on the National Commission and the most powerful man in baseball,

announced after the meeting: "There will be a third major league, and I think it will be a good thing for the peace of Organized Baseball. It is true that the commission has not formally ratified the new project. But that is only a question of formality. We will now see how far the Federal League can go against real major league opposition on every hand. Let me tell you the new circuit will soon prove its merits over the so-called class of Gilmore's league."

The principal scheme for the third major league involved peeling off the four strongest markets from the International League – Baltimore, Buffalo, Toronto and Newark – and merging them into a new league with four from the American Association, most likely Indianapolis, Toledo, Milwaukee, and either Minneapolis, Louisville or Columbus. The remaining franchises in the two class AA leagues would then be formed into a new minor league.

An alternative proposal floated from the meeting had the new league placing new, Organized Baseball sanctioned teams in existing major league cities. In this version Baltimore, Buffalo, and Toronto would be joined by other International League and American Association franchises transferring into the major league cities of Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland, with Newark potentially moving to Washington. The latter alternative never had any chance of success. No major league owner would voluntarily permit another major league team in his city, even assuming the game dates could be scheduled to eliminate conflicts. (For example, to discourage the Federal League from invading his city, Cleveland Indian owner Charles Somers moved the Toledo American Association franchise, which he also owned, to Cleveland to present a full slate of baseball games.)

Unfortunately for Barrow and Dunn, the entire third major league scheme died quickly over the next couple of weeks. As the plan reached a wider audience, strong opposition developed among a number of interested parties. While a few major league owners were lukewarm, most were hostile to adding a third major league to the already fierce competition for fans and players.

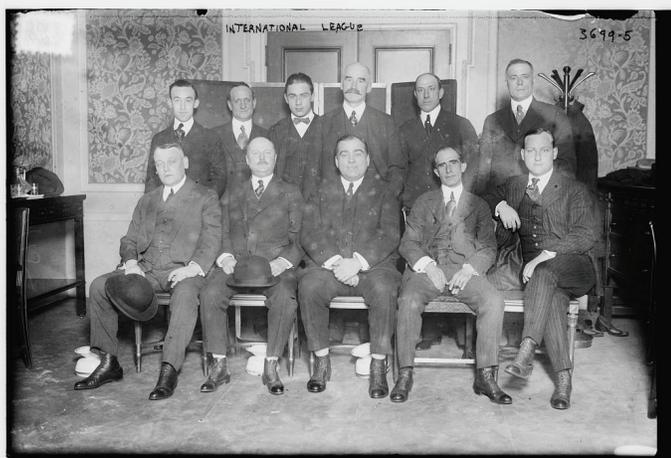
Furthermore, the American Association owners had not been consulted in advance and showed little interest in the proposal. Indianapolis and Kansas City – the

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two American Association teams competing directly with the Feds – had both fared tolerably. Many of the other franchises were certainly losing money, but most owners felt the situation was not dire enough to warrant the dissolution of their league. As their hopes died, Barrow and the potentially major league International League cities felt betrayed and disappointed. Barrow naturally had hoped to found a new, solvent major league of which he would be president. The other members of Barrow's delegation thought they were on their way to becoming major league owners.

In retrospect, it is hard to gauge whether the third major league option was ever feasible. In any case, Barrow and Johnson failed to manage the political side of the issue with any sensitivity. Such a radical step required backroom lobbying with both major league and American Association owners well in advance of any announcement. Consensus building was not a strength of either Barrow or Johnson, dooming any new third major league scheme.



International League Executives, 1916  
George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress,  
LC-B2- 3699-5; LC-DIG-ggbain-20616

Despite the financial hardships, Barrow held his eight team league together through the end of the season. He restructured the ownership in Buffalo, and relocated the Baltimore franchise to Richmond. In 1915, however, the struggle grew increasingly desperate. Over the second half of the season Barrow not only had to manage his league's affairs; he was also essentially running the Jersey City and Newark franchises,

which had been forfeited to the league. When the season finally ended the International League was still intact – but just barely. Relief appeared, however, after the 1915 season when Organized Baseball and the Federal League agreed to a buyout of the upstart league's owners, terminating the Federal League.

Unfortunately, the demise of the Federal League did not lead to a prosperous year for the International. By the end of the 1916 season, none of the teams had banked more than a token profit. In aggregate, the league's franchises lost another \$100,000 in 1916 and many were in severe financial distress. With these losses, the owners were more restless than ever regarding the major league-minor league draft. As major league attendance recovered, the high minor leagues strongly resented the price damping effect that the draft placed on player sales. In the fall of 1916, the ongoing financial troubles of the International League again led to revived discussions of a third major league. Once more the new major league would consist of some amalgamation of the International League and the American Association. In an interview after the 1916 season, American League President Ban Johnson remarked that he "rather liked the idea" of a third major league.

Johnson was not really advocating for a third major league, but simply offering a casual opinion. He may also have been posturing relative to the Baltimore Federal League owners' lawsuit. (The Baltimore Federal League owners had rejected the settlement dissolving their league and sued Organized Baseball for violation of the anti-trust laws. This was the lawsuit that eventually led to the famous Supreme Court decision exempting Organized Baseball from anti-trust laws.) As the most powerful man in baseball Johnson's comments received publicity beyond what he probably intended. At that time, Barrow was in the midst of trying to organize his clubs for the upcoming 1917 season. He did not want any distracting rumors of impending major league status for select teams. Barrow called the idea of a third major league "preposterous" and stated that the International League would operate in 1917 as a class AA league. Barrow did squeeze in the caveat, however, that a third major league would come about only as a last resort in the event of a disastrous 1917.

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By the start of the 1917 season, the country began mobilizing for World War I, and Barrow feared for his league's profitability. By July a couple of International



League teams were considering disbanding after the season, and the economic outlook appeared bleak enough to qualify under Barrow's caveat. Furthermore, as the league struggled financially, there was some sentiment to cut Barrow's salary.

In the midst of this renewed turmoil, Barrow again received the tacit approval of Johnson and the National Commission for a third-major league. This time he also enlisted several American Association franchises. Named the Union League, this new league would consist of four International League franchises (Baltimore, Buffalo, Toronto, and probably Newark) and four from the American Association (Indianapolis, Louisville, Toledo, and possibly Columbus) with Barrow as president.

The politics of the proposed Union League were quite complex. The major leagues supported its creation as a way of helping the minors survive without requiring their active financial support. Additionally, several reports suggested that the Baltimore franchise in the new league would go to the Baltimore Federal League owners as a compromise to settle their lawsuit. Also many major league owners did not envision the Union League as true third major but, at least initially, as a step below. For example, the new league would likely be exempt from the major league-minor league draft but would not have a member on the National Commission. Johnson also viewed it mainly as an act of wartime expediency. The plan contemplated that those International League and American Association franchises not included in the Union League would join lower classification minor leagues in their geographic area. This would displace some teams in those leagues which would then in turn need to be shifted themselves, creating a domino effect on the lower minor leagues. Thus the Union League would require territorial restructuring of the minor leagues.

Struggling financially themselves, the lower minor leagues had no interest in significantly disrupting their operations by reorganizing along the lines Barrow suggested. Additionally American Association President Thomas Hickey and the four leftover franchises in the two merging leagues had no desire to see their dissolution. At the National Association meetings in mid-November the minor leagues decisively voted down the restructuring proposal 11-2, effectively ending Barrow's hopes for the Union League.

Straightforward and blunt as always, Barrow, unfortunately, had not learned the correct lessons from his failed attempt at a third major league in 1914. Once again, his strength of will and passive support from the National Commission were not sufficient to compel the baseball establishment to submit to a considerable restructuring. Barrow again displayed a lack of awareness of the need for the behind-the-scenes politicking that such a substantial project demanded.

Not surprisingly the Union League scheme created a rift between the proposed participants and those left behind. With this festering distrust among the franchise owners and the survival of their league in doubt, their mood was hostile, gloomy, and pessimistic. At the league meeting on December 10 1917, Barrow took the offensive. He declared the Buffalo franchise, now under the control of Joseph Lannin (who had become disillusioned with Barrow over the Union League fiasco), forfeited to the league. The Buffalo franchise owed roughly \$18,000 including player's salaries, league fees, and guarantees to visiting clubs.



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With Lannin neutered, the owners addressed two issues: whether to suspend operations for 1918, and Barrow's future as league president. In a sign of the league's distress, the former failed by only a 4-3 vote; Rochester, Richmond and Providence voted to put the league on ice for a year. As to the latter, Barrow had underestimated the lingering resentment generated by his failed attempt to establish the Union League. The four franchises not included in the Union League allied with Dunn to force Barrow's resignation. (Dunn believed – probably correctly – that the Union League would have squeezed him out for the Federal League owners in Baltimore)

Ultimately, the offended owners voted 4-3 to reduce Barrow's salary from \$7,500 to \$2,500, an insult they correctly perceived would oblige Barrow to resign. At the end of the meeting Barrow and Lannin nearly came to blows. Barrow's two staunchest supporters, Toronto's McCaffery and Newark's Jim Price, held Barrow back, telling him "Don't hit him Ed, he's got a bad heart." Now effectively out of a job, Barrow remained bitter. He later grumbled that if the league chose to degenerate to the level of a Class B league, he was happy not to be a party to it.

Dan Levitt is the co-author of [Paths to Glory](#), winner of the 2004 Sporting News-SABR Baseball Research Award. This paper was originally presented at SABR37.

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during the 1920s.

### **Franchise Histories**

Colonels Jacob Ruppert and Tillinghast L'Homme-dieu Huston purchased the New York Yankees after the 1914 season from William Devery and Frank Farrell for \$460,000. At the time the colonels purchased the Yankees, the franchise hardly resembled the financial juggernaut and perennial pennant winner it was to become. The club was on shaky financial ground and had finished in the first division only three times since moving to New York in 1903.<sup>1</sup> During the next five years they would go from a perennial also-ran to a contender, ultimately becoming the dominant team in Major League Baseball.

Hilldale followed a similar trajectory, although they had a winning record every year from 1911-1931.<sup>2</sup> The club was organized in 1910 as a local cooperative in the Philadelphia area. In the middle of the decade a few of the player-owners made a bold strategic move to reorganize and compete on a national level, becoming the best club in the country on its side of the color barrier.

The Hilldale Baseball and Exhibition Company was officially incorporated in January of 1917. While team records indicate a plan to incorporate with capital of \$10,000, there is no evidence that the owners actually contributed that amount. It does, however, fix an upper bound when trying to compute a return on capital.

Though they followed similar paths, the two clubs have very different stories to tell because of the leagues in which they played. The Yankees played in the American League, a model of stability. The Yankees had been the last team to move, coming from Baltimore in 1903. No other American League franchise would move until the Browns fled St. Louis in 1954. Beginning in 1904 until the league expanded

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<sup>1</sup>Hauptert, Michael J. and Kenneth Winter, "Pay Ball: Estimating the Profitability of the New York Yankees, 1915-1937," *Essays in Economic and Business History* XXI (Spring 2003), pp 89-102.

<sup>2</sup>Lanctot, Neil, *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing: The Hilldale Club and the Development of Black Professional Baseball, 1910-1932*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1994, p 232.

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in 1961 the Yankees played at least 148 games every year against the seven other AL teams.<sup>3</sup> Besides the World Series, they played no other meaningful games during that span.

Hilldale operated in a completely different environment. Even after joining the National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs (NACPBC) in 1921, the ability of the league to discipline either the players or the clubs was very limited. Hilldale, or any other team, could, and often did, play any team that would agree with them on price and place to play. As many as two-thirds of their games each season were non-league exhibition games, the majority of those against white teams.<sup>4</sup>

The league was also much less stable. Teams frequently renege on their obligation to play league games when they could engage a more lucrative opponent in an exhibition match. This behavior, along with the shaky finances of some franchises, resulted in teams coming and going from the league on a regular basis, sometimes in mid season.

**Club Operations**

The scheduling of non-league games was necessary for the financial survival of the franchise. The proceeds from these contests accounted for an important share of their revenues. Exhibition games were scheduled on off days during league-scheduled road trips as a means of financing the cost of the trip. Without the proceeds from these games, many road trips would have resulted in net losses for Hilldale. Home exhibition games were also scheduled on off days. Sometimes an exhibition game was scheduled on the same day as a league game, either as a separate game, scheduled later in the day, or occasionally as a substitute for a league game that did not promise to be a par-

ticularly good draw. Their initial experience was that these teams would not play for a share of the gate, instead demanding a guaranteed flat fee.

The guarantee system presented a challenge for Hilldale in scheduling. The team had to negotiate dates, opponents and fees separately for each of these exhibition games. These business decisions were crucial because of the thin margin on which the team operated. Sunday and holiday games could generate big crowds with the right competition, and the loss of even one such lucrative payday could spell the difference between profit and loss for the year.

The Yankees, on the other hand, belonged to the American League, which scheduled all league games and mandated a percentage share of the gate for the visiting team. The threat of expulsion from the lucrative monopoly that was (and is) Major League Baseball kept teams from abandoning the league schedule to arrange exhibition matches on their own. Thus, the Yankees never had to worry that their opponent would be a no-show. And without the need to schedule exhibition matches to make ends meet, the Yankees saved on this considerable operating expense.

The Yankees innovated in other ways. One significant example was Yankee Stadium, opened in 1923 at a cost to the Yankees of \$3.1 million. Yankee Stadium was a highly profitable investment because it provided new streams of income for the team. Yankee concession income increased more than tenfold from a high of \$8000 in 1921 to an average of more than \$94,000 a year over the first five years in Yankee Stadium. The Stadium also produced lucrative sources of income beyond MLB games. The Yankees regularly leased their stadium for boxing matches, college and professional football games, and the occasional Negro League baseball contest. Finally, the Yankees saved \$100,000 in rent they had previously been paying at

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<sup>3</sup>With the exception of the shortened war years of 1918 and 1919, when they played 123 and 139 games respectively.

<sup>4</sup>Lanctot, 1994, p 62.

<sup>5</sup>Hauptert, Michael J. and Kenneth Winter, "Yankee Profits and Promise: The Purchase of Babe Ruth and the building of Yankee Stadium," in Wm. Simons, ed., *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture*, McFarland & Col: Jefferson, NC, 2003.

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the Polo Grounds.<sup>5</sup>

A big advantage the Yankees had in building the Stadium and making decisions in general was the wealth of the colonels and the support of the American League to allow them access to credit. Both elements allowed the Yankees to weather early financial setbacks and build their grand stadium.

Hilldale also constructed a park, but had to do it with annual improvements out of their operating budget. As a result, Darby Field was a modest and continual work in progress. The steel and concrete edifice of Yankee Stadium stood in stark contrast to the wooden bleachers of Darby Field. Whereas Yankee Stadium had a seating capacity of 58,000 when it opened, Hill-

dale could seat only a few thousand. Hilldale's highest recorded single game attendance was 5,565 on May 31, 1926.<sup>6</sup>

Discrimination actually benefited the owners of the Hilldale Club in one regard by giving them a version of the reserve clause. While they could not easily prevent players from jumping to other colored teams, they did not have to compete with the deep pockets of MLB. Hilldale's salaries were a tiny fraction of the Yankees but there was no chance that players would be lured to the Yankees. Discrimination also limited the other economic choices of the players so that baseball was an attractive choice despite the relatively low salaries (Table 1). The color barrier in baseball and discrimination in society allowed Hilldale to get great players for low salaries.

**Table 1: Average Salaries 1915-29**

| Year | Average Wage All Industries Excluding Farm Labor |           | Average Yankee Salary | Average Salary Black Textile Mill Workers |           | Average Hilldale Salary |
|------|--|-----------|-----------------------|---|-----------|-------------------------|
|      | Annual   | Six Month | Baseball Season       | Annual                                    | Six Month | Baseball Season         |
| 1917 | \$887  | \$443.50  | \$3,964               | \$282.60                                  | \$ 169.56 | \$217                   |
| 1918 | \$1,115  | \$557.50  | \$2,456               | \$363.60                                  | \$ 218.16 | \$304                   |
| 1919 | \$1,272  | \$636.00  | \$3,647               | \$554.40                                  | \$ 332.64 |                         |
| 1920 | \$1,489  | \$744.50  | \$4,933               | \$721.80                                  | \$ 433.08 |                         |
| 1921 | \$1,349  | \$674.50  | \$6,854               | \$392.40                                  | \$ 235.44 | \$331                   |
| 1922 | \$1,305  | \$652.50  | \$7,928               | \$345.60                                  | \$ 207.36 |                         |
| 1923 | \$1,393  | \$696.50  | \$8,318               | \$415.80                                  | \$ 249.48 |                         |
| 1924 | \$1,402  | \$701.00  | \$8,443               | \$450.00                                  | \$ 270.00 |                         |
| 1925 | \$1,434  | \$717.00  | \$8,622               | \$410.40                                  | \$ 246.24 |                         |
| 1926 | \$1,473  | \$736.50  | \$7,956               | \$401.40                                  | \$ 240.84 |                         |
| 1927 | \$1,487  | \$743.50  | \$11,324              | \$408.60                                  | \$ 245.16 |                         |
| 1928 | \$1,490  | \$745.00  | \$11,667              | \$417.60                                  | \$ 250.56 |                         |
| 1929 | \$1,534  | \$767.00  | \$12,397              | \$428.40                                  | \$ 257.04 | \$738                   |

Notes: Textile wages estimated from Wright. Six month wage represents length of baseball season.

Sources: Wright, Gavin, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War*, Basic Books Inc.: New York, 1986, US Census, Cash Thompson archives, Hauptert-Winter Yankee Financial Records

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<sup>6</sup>Cash Thompson Archives, The African American Museum, Philadelphia, PA.

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**Financial Performance**

Hilldale had essentially no assets other than a bank account and a grandstand worth perhaps a few thousand dollars. Thus an analysis of their cash basis is a good indication of their financial condition. The increase in their cash balance each year approximates their profits. This measure indicates a very profitable enterprise, especially relative to the modest size of the initial investment, and certainly comparable to the alternative.

Reported team profit figures are reduced by distributions to owners. As the owners often worked for the club, at least some of these distributions can be considered wages, thus this cash basis provides a lower bound estimate for profits. That is, some of the distribution to owners is a return for their work and some is a return on capital. We make the profit minimizing assumption that all transfers to the owners are salary, not dividends on their investment. This decreases reported profits because salaries are costs, while dividends are paid out to owners from profits.

**Table 2: Profitability of Hilldale and Yankee Franchises**

| Year | Hilldale |                   | New York   |                   |
|------|----------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
|      | Profit   | Return to Capital | Profit     | Return to Capital |
| 1917 | \$1,916  | 19.2%             | \$(58,136) | -12.6%            |
| 1918 | \$1,339  | 13.4%             | \$(46,651) | -10.1%            |
| 1919 | \$2,413  | 24.1%             | \$106,972  | 23.3%             |
| 1920 | \$8,948  | 89.5%             | \$374,079  | 81.3%             |
| 1921 | \$6,510  | 65.1%             | \$176,502  | 38.4%             |
| 1922 | NA       | NA                | \$270,875  | 58.9%             |
| 1923 | \$6,107  | 61.1%             | \$494,071  | 107.4%            |

Source: Hauptert-Winter Yankee Financial records

Profit is one measure of the financial success of a baseball franchise, but it is insufficient because it does not take into account the resources needed to generate the profit. Return on investment provides another measure of the effectiveness of an entity. We calculate an owner's return on investment by dividing profit by investment.

Using the \$10,000 figure for Hilldale's capital, the returns range from 13% to 89% in the years for which we have complete data (Table 2). It appears Hilldale made a good business decision to go professional and that decision was bolstered by good management decisions. Like the Yankees, they leased their stadium when they were on the road. They also sold ballpark advertising to generate additional income, in part used to pay bonuses to big name players like Spotswood Poles and Otto Briggs.

The independent wealth of Ruppert and Huston and the availability of credit through the American League allowed the Yankees to overcome financial losses in the early years of the colonels' ownership. Like Hilldale, their returns on investment are extraordinary (Table 2).

To put these returns in perspective, we compare them to market alternatives such as the stock market and corporate bonds. While the stock market was a better investment from 1915-17 than were the Yankees, beginning in 1918 the return on the investment in both ball clubs outdistanced the market every year, often in astounding fashion. When compared to the more conservative returns of the bond market, the gains look even more impressive (Table 3).

**Conclusion**

Both the New York Yankees and the Hilldale Daisies were remarkably successful financially and on the field from 1915 to 1929. Owners in both franchises were rewarded for the astute risks they took. The Yankees under Colonel Ruppert became the most successful sports franchise in history. Ruppert made shrewd investments and the Yankees were buoyed by their membership in the monopoly that is Major League Baseball.

Hilldale, on the other hand, had none of the advantages that the Yankees had. They started without a league and never belonged to one that even remotely resembled the strength and stability of the American League. They came from a smaller town, faced a color barrier, and lacked the financial resources of the Yankees. The actions of the players who became management demonstrate that they recognized their comparative advantage as front office executives. They could evaluate talent and knew the business side

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*Right Idea, Wrong Color* (Continued from page 10)

of the game. Perhaps that first change from a player cooperative to a management organizational system ingrained the need for change and innovation. It worked for fifteen years, until the Great Depression wiped them out, leaving the Yankees to enjoy the twin peaks of financial success and diamond domination by themselves.

**Table 3: Rates of Return on Selected Assets 1915-1929**

| Year | Annual Growth Rate of DJIA (%) | Moody's Seasoned AAA Corporate Bond Yield (%) | Return to Capital New York Yankees (%) | Return to Capital Hilldale Daisies (%) |
|------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1915 | -3.87                          |   | -15.95                                 |  |
| 1916 | 78.23                          |   | 8.91                                   |  |
| 1917 | -2.44                          |   | -12.6                                  | 19.2                                   |
| 1918 | -22.35                         |   | -10.1                                  | 13.4                                   |
| 1919 | 10.15                          | 5.35  | 23.3                                   | 24.1                                   |
| 1920 | 32.02                          | 5.75  | 81.3                                   | 89.5                                   |
| 1921 | -33.24                         | 6.14  | 38.4                                   | 65.1                                   |
| 1922 | 8.57                           | 5.34  | 58.9                                   | NA                                     |
| 1923 | 24.28                          | 5.04  | 107.4                                  | 61.1                                   |
| 1924 | -1.55                          | 5.09  | 76.5                                   |  |
| 1925 | 23.74                          | 4.95  | 16.9                                   |  |
| 1926 | 32.89                          | 4.82  | 85.5                                   |  |
| 1927 | -2.26                          | 4.66  | 78.66                                  |  |
| 1928 | 31.19                          | 4.46  | 34.13                                  |  |
| 1929 | 46.25                          | 4.62  | 42.50                                  |  |

Sources: Hauptert and Winter 2003

This study was made possible in part by a Yoseloff-SABR Research grant.



*Bob Quinn* (Continued from page 1)

Like Rickey, Bob Quinn started his baseball career as a catcher beginning in the 1880's. Playing primarily for Ohio minor league and independent teams, Quinn was a good defensive catcher though a rather ordinary hitter. His first real association with baseball in Ohio's capitol was as a backup with the Columbus team in the 1895 Interstate League. The team and league failed in midseason.

Quinn's important association with baseball in Columbus began during the last year of the 19th Century. The Interstate League was in its final season and Quinn was appointed field manager. He inherited a rather nondescript team and finished sixth, even seeing action in 33 games as a backup catcher and utility player.

After that season, as Columbus moved to the American Association, Quinn relinquished the job as field manager to concentrate on his duties as the team's business manager – equivalent of the modern day general manager. It was in the area of finding and developing talent that Quinn's genius would be realized.

From the beginning Quinn was impressed with players who knew the game and had the ability to develop young talent. Five members of the 1901-02 Columbus teams – Jack McAllister, Angus Grant, Bade Myers, George Fox and Hub Knoll – later became successful minor league managers. Fox, for instance, had a talent for developing pitchers.

Finding those players was Quinn's job and he was good at it. He got many from the central and southern parts of the state. One of those youngsters was a pitcher from Ohio Wesleyan, Cliff Curtis. Curtis' college catcher was Branch Rickey.

In the summer of 1902, Rickey was a member of a team Quinn undoubtedly saw a lot of, the Portsmouth Navies. Portsmouth had one of the most talented independent teams in Ohio during the 1902 season. Six members of the team had either previously or subsequently played major league baseball. The Glory of Their Times includes shortstop Al Bridwell's memories of his signing by Quinn. But even more interesting is the thought of Ohio's three most innovative

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*Bob Quinn* (Continued from page 11)

baseball men spending an afternoon at Portsmouth's Millbrook Park. In addition to Rickey, the Portsmouth team included outfielder Billy Doyle, soon to be one of the first great scouts in major league history. Each of the three spent a decade working for the St. Louis Browns. Baseball history in St. Louis might have been much different if it had been the same decade.

The cases of Bridwell and pitcher Harry Hardy demonstrated the strength and weakness of Quinn's early system. Bridwell proved not ready to play in the American Association. When a thirteen-man roster limit was enforced, there was concern over where Bridwell would go. There were even some rumors that he'd return to the Navies before Quinn was able to place him with Atlanta of the Southern Association.

Hardy's case illustrates a double problem. Quinn was tipped off on the southpaw who spent most of 1903 with the Sidney, Ohio, independent team. When he arrived to scout the pitcher, the Sidney manager intentionally held him out of the game. One contemporary source said, "Hardy jumped out of the stand sore as a boil and Bobby had a talk with him anyhow." Quinn signed Hardy but didn't have a place for him on the 1904 team, optioning him to Decatur of the Three-I league. A dispute soon developed with the Decatur club, straining relations between the two teams. This likely cost the Senators the services of Hardy and infielder and Columbus native Billy Purtell.

Purtell was one of many players Columbus would sign from the local semipro ranks. Initially they optioned him to the nearby Newark, Ohio, team. Arrangements like that were the beginnings of what would become a farm system. In the spring of 1904, Purtell and another promising infielder were sent to Newark along with a sore-armed pitcher Ivor Wagner who managed the team and played second base.

Independent baseball in Ohio had not yet developed into the Class C and D leagues that Quinn would use so effectively. However, in the middle of 1905, a confederation of industrial and independent teams known as the Protective Association entered organized ball as the Class C Ohio-Pennsylvania League. There was some hostility to the O-P League. Some teams represented the loss of players to the former outlaw teams.

Quinn, however, saw a mutually beneficial arrangement between his team and the new league.

After winning the 1905 pennant, the Senators played a series of exhibition games against the former independent teams. This arrangement wasn't entirely new, but it was more extensive than in previous seasons. Quinn turned down what would have been a lucrative home game against the Cardinals to play at Lancaster. Columbus lost to Lancaster, but also had an opportunity to see what the Lancaster players could do. Two years later he added Lancaster pitcher Rube Geyer. Geyer had three successful seasons for Columbus before being sold to the Cardinals. That same week, Columbus played at Zanesville and ended up drafting catcher Bert Blue, an important part of two pennant winners. He also acquired a pitcher-outfielder named Curt Elston who was later sent to the Lancaster club on option to make up for the loss of Geyer.

Quinn's method of sending players to multiple minor league clubs in the area was an improvement, but not without its faults. There were hard feeling in Lancaster during the 1907 season after an optioned outfielder was called up by the Senators and later sent to Youngstown, a rival of the Lancaster team.

The differences between the eastern and southwestern teams in the Ohio-Pennsylvania League were creating rumors of minor league realignment. Those rumors became reality in early 1908. Lancaster, Mansfield, Marion and Newark were voted out of the Ohio-Pennsylvania League. Those cities were joined by Lima and Springfield (soon replaced by Portsmouth) to form the Ohio State League. The organizational meeting was held in Columbus, and Bob Quinn agreed to become president of the new league. The new job created new responsibilities, but it also created new opportunities for the placement and scouting of talent.

Soon those possibilities would expand into a farm team. Lima had first had professional baseball in 1888, when they were reportedly a Chicago farm team. The west central Ohio city had independent professional teams and was briefly in organized ball in 1895, 1905 and 1906. After the first ownership group in Lima failed to organize, the franchise was awarded to former major leaguer Bill Clarke. Clarke had most recently played in the American Association and had

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*Bob Quinn (Continued from page 12)*

no experience as an owner. Just weeks before the season started, Clarke left Lima because of a family illness. Just days later, he announced his intention to sell the team.

The new Ohio State League president acted quickly, persuading Senator owner Thomas Bryce to purchase the Cigarmakers as a farm club. After the purchase, Quinn sent infielder Nick Kohl to serve as manager. More importantly, Quinn sent several young players not quite ready for the American Association. Among those was outfielder Alex "Duke" Reilly a semi-regular for the 1907 American Association pennant winners, and several young pitchers from the Columbus City League.

City League managers were just the beginning of what would soon be a network of Quinn scouts. He also found an important assistant among the fourth estate. The Ohio State Journal was one of the most influential area newspapers of the early 20th century. Sports editor Robert Read was one of the first Columbus sports-writers to receive a byline. He was also one of Quinn's trusted confidantes. Read played a significant role in Quinn's acquisition of pitcher Wilbur Cooper. Cooper began that season with Mansfield of the Class C Ohio-Pennsylvania League but was released early in the season. Cooper reportedly hopped a freight to nearby Marion to join the Ohio State League team there. Read and Lima manager Al McClintock were impressed with Cooper's efforts and Quinn purchased the future major league star from Marion with the idea of farming him out for a year or two. Cooper was pressed into service late in 1911 after pitcher Thomas Lessard died unexpectedly. Cooper showed enough late in 1911 to begin 1912 in Columbus, and took advantage of the opportunity winning sixteen games before being sold by Quinn to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Quinn also used at least one umpire for his scouting and player evaluation. William "Two Bits" Bierhalter was at least partially responsible for the entry of Hank Gowdy and Wally Gerber into professional baseball. He also appeared in at least one Columbus team picture. Even when umpiring outside of the American Association and the Ohio State League, Bierhalter kept in touch with Quinn.

His Columbus responsibilities limited the amount of time he could spend in Ohio State League ballparks. Lima managers Kohl and later Jim Jackson were able to recommend players from other Ohio State League teams. The first season in Lima would lead to a pitching boost for the Senators. Columbus native Fred "Laddie" Linke one of the young players sent to Lima, won 22 games for Columbus. The Senators also purchased pitcher Elmer Brown from Marion. Brown never did much with Columbus, but helped Senator farm clubs for a couple of years before being sold to the St. Louis Browns. Quinn also lost a pair of pitchers. He purchased Kirby White and Walter Justis the aces of the Lancaster staff, but neglected to recall them to Columbus by a late August deadline and lost them to the Cubs and Browns respectively for the Class D draft price.

An even bigger loss to baseball in Columbus occurred on Sunday July 12, 1908. That morning, Senator owner Thomas Bryce had dinner with Cleveland's Ernest Barnard. Afterward the two went to Columbus' Neil Park. While Barnard visited with Quinn in the club offices, Bryce stopped to visit with Columbus manager Bill Clymer and some of the players. Bryce left for his seat in the grandstand next to John McGraw and Giants owner John Brush. Almost immediately upon reaching his seat, the 45-year old Bryce suffered a fatal heart attack.

The death of Bryce could have spelled the end of Quinn's farm system but it didn't. He returned as Ohio State League president in 1909 and had to deal with financial crises in Lancaster and Newark. The Newark team even played some home games at Neil Park. After the league assumed control of Newark, Quinn found another useful assistant. Joe Carr, coach and organizer of the Panhandle football team in Columbus, took over the day-to-day operations of the team while Quinn tried to find a buyer for the team. When that was unsuccessful he eventually sold the team's players and folded the franchise.

Quinn bought two players for Columbus, including Pete Johns who eventually played six years with the Senators before joining Quinn's Browns in 1918. Carr meanwhile might have made an even more important discovery. In 1910 he steered young football standout Frank Nesser to the Senators. Nesser never made an

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*Bob Quinn* (Continued from page 13)

impact for the Senators but starred for more than a decade in the low and mid-minors while continuing his career as one of the best players in professional football. Carr continued his association with professional baseball. When Carr was elected President of the Ohio State League that same year, Carr was his assistant, keeping Quinn's trusted associates in charge of the Class D league. Carr later became President of the National Football League, undoubtedly using organizational lessons learned from Quinn in helping the NFL survive its difficult early years.

A professional football scandal indirectly led to Quinn's second Ohio farm team. In 1906, Akron manager Walter East, playing for the Massillon Tigers in the off-season, was implicated in a scheme to throw the big game against the Canton Bulldogs. Also implicated was John Windsor co-owner of the Akron baseball team. In the summer of 1907, an Akron owners' meeting erupted in violence. Windsor and the team's other owner Ben Campbell got into a fistfight over the retention of East as Akron manager. A Lancaster, Ohio reporter said it was "the first time two men got into the fight over another man." Naturally that made the Akron ownership situation shaky. By the early weeks of 1910, the future of baseball in Akron was in doubt.

Bob Quinn saved Akron baseball by purchasing a majority interest in the team. Akron had won consecutive Ohio-Pennsylvania League pennants in 1909 and 1910 and Quinn promised a winning team for 1910. As manager he sent the man who was already becoming his most trusted baseball man.

Lee Fohl had been drafted by Quinn from Youngstown after the 1906 season, serving as a backup catcher for two seasons. In 1909, he spent most of the season managing Quinn's Lima farm, winning a pennant and helping to develop a young college pitcher George Kahler into a key member of the 1910 Senators. More than any man other than Quinn himself, Fohl would be responsible for the success of the Columbus farm system. He had the abilities Quinn needed, an ability to develop young players both pitchers and hitters and, perhaps more importantly, the eye for talent on other teams – players who could be purchased or drafted by Columbus. Quinn's faith in

Fohl was so great that Quinn later hired him as manager of the St. Louis Browns. Fohl was instrumental in the development of one player and the signing of another who'd have great success after Quinn and Fohl moved onto the Browns.

Infielder Wally Gerber was recommended to Quinn by Bierhalter after his release by Marion of the Ohio State League in the spring of 1910. Quinn saw potential in the teenaged infielder. After a couple of years under Fohl's direction, Gerber stepped in as the Senator shortstop in 1912 at the age of 20. While Gerber was playing for the Akron team, Fohl saw a high school pitcher who completely dominated the opposition. He signed the player to a contract for the 1911 season. For a time it looked like George Sisler might report to spring training in Akron but a former Portsmouth catcher had other ideas.

After being declared ineligible for further college competition for playing with the 1902 Portsmouth team (though there is evidence he received far less money than promised by Portsmouth management), Branch Rickey became the Ohio Wesleyan baseball coach. He was recognized as one of Ohio's and the Midwest's best college coaches and Ohio Wesleyan was considered a baseball power in the region. Rickey sent several players into professional baseball. A handful, including Curtis, Cleon Webb and Fred Potts, reached the major leagues. Rickey was learning Quinn's methods and began to employ them with that young lefthander, George Sisler and another Michigan collegiate standout Ernie Koob. As Columbus business manager, Quinn lost the money he'd have made from selling Sisler to the Pirates, but as it turned out he was able to build the Browns around Sisler's talents.

Unlike fellow American Association member Indianapolis, Quinn's farm system took the needs of the farm clubs into consideration. Players were sent to the clubs sometimes even when the farm clubs didn't need their services. Infielder Harry Daubert, for instance, was sent first to Akron and then Lima. When neither club needed an infielder, Quinn optioned him to the Western Canada League, returning him to Lima the following season. When Quinn did require the services of an Akron or Lima player, he usually was able to send a competent replacement. In 1909, Pitcher George Upp went briefly to Lima. Just two seasons before, Upp

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*Bob Quinn* (Continued from page 14)

had won 27 games for Columbus' pennant winners.

Negatively Quinn's farm system was one of the factors behind the demise of the Ohio-Pennsylvania League. Akron dominated the league in 1910-1911 and some of the other sizable cities also were becoming *de facto* farm teams. This meant the league soon consisted of haves and have-nots, reducing attendance and causing criticism in cities like Canton that operated independently. Also in 1911, the league's Steubenville franchise was purchased by Monte Cross as a Phillies farm team. The operation was a complete disaster. Debts were left unpaid and that team made it impossible for Steubenville to field a team the following season. Ultimately Akron, Canton, Youngstown and Erie joined the Class B Central League. The O-P, after trying to operate without those communities, folded after the 1912 season.

1912 also marked the beginning of a decline in Quinn's farm system. Local ownership was found for the Lima team. Quinn still sent players there and continued to do so in 1913 when the team was sold to Hamilton, Ohio, interests, it was on a smaller scale. Also by 1912, it was becoming clear the Akron operation was losing money. Lack of fan support and the unwieldy size of the Central League convinced Quinn that an alternative was needed.

The day after the 1912 season ended, Quinn announced his intention to leave Akron and field a farm team in Columbus. Local buyers were found for the Akron franchise. As part of the agreement Akron kept some of their 1912 players, most notably pitcher Bill Doak. Quinn was the owner of the new Columbus team nicknamed the Cubs. He likely could have joined the Central League, but instead joined former Central teams, Akron, Canton, Erie, Wheeling Youngs-

town and Zanesville in the Interstate League. Like the Central, the Interstate was a Class B league.

This new farm team might have been a success but for the events of late March 1913. Heavy rains especially in north central and west central Ohio caused severe flooding throughout the region. Minor league cities were devastated by the floods. Loss of life in Columbus and Dayton was heavy and the situation in Zanesville was so serious the team was nicknamed the flood sufferers. Only Erie was untouched by the floods.

With former Youngstown manager Bill Phillips in charge of the Indianapolis Federal League team, Interstate League teams were also losing players to the out-law league. Finally the Interstate's Steubenville team was still responsible for debts incurred by the 1911 team.

Quinn's Columbus teams lost relatively few players to the Feds and the flooding was confined to a small area of the city. The Cubs might have survived, but the league as a whole was forced to disband in mid-season. Quinn sent Fohl and several players to Huntington of the Ohio State League, but the end of the Columbus Cubs effectively ended Bob Quinn's farm system.

Because of the Interstate's demise, Quinn lost one of his most promising players. Pitcher Sam Jones was released by Zanesville in June, but Quinn and Fohl saw promise in the youngster and signed him for the Cubs. Jones appeared in just five games for the Cubs before the league folded. Since Huntington didn't need another pitcher, Quinn tried to send Jones to Chillicothe also of the Ohio State League. Jones refused to report and wasn't reserved by Quinn for 1914. During that off-season, Billy Doyle signed Jones for Cleveland's Portsmouth farm.

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*Public Cowboy No. 1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry* by Holly George-Warren. Oxford University Press, 406 pp. \$28.

Only pick up this book if you are a) very interested in country and western music, or b) determined to write a biography of the longtime owner of the Los Angeles/California/Anaheim Angels and want to know about the rest of his life.

Holly George-Warren has written a nice biography for the music aficionado. Her details of recording sessions rival those books by our colleagues who want to record every plate appearance their subject ever had. She puts him in the context of the growth and spread of country and western music with tremendous context and background knowledge.

However, I found two passing (less than a sentence) mentions of his ownership of the Angels and the book essentially cuts off in the early 1960s, as his singing career ended but just as his years as a baseball owner began. There is also little discussion of the investments in radio, television and hotel properties that gave him the fortune to buy the franchise.

However, if you are going to be his biographer, there is excellent material on his early years, his music career and the drinking and womanizing that characterized much of his life. It's a very good biography of a part of the man's life that isn't going to fall into the interest area of SABR members.

Reviewed by Andy McCue

*Bob Quinn* (Continued from page 15)

Ultimately short lived, Quinn's Columbus farm system was decades ahead of its time. Most of its qualities such as ownership of farm teams, a group of scouts and managers and even having players under option to more than one team in the same league were used by Branch Rickey and other major league executives decades later. Bob Quinn was truly one of baseball's great innovators.

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