

# The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XIV, No. 4: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" SEPTEMBER 2014

## THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by **John McMurray**

Mike Lackey's *Spitballing: The Baseball Days of Long Bob Ewing* and Gerald C. Wood's *Smoky Joe Wood: The Biography of a Baseball Legend* surely are two of the most thorough and carefully-crafted biographies of Deadball Era players ever published. Both works include meticulous original research, sharp prose, and an account of each player's life which is probing and personal. Yet, after a given work's publication, it is easy to lose sight of the patience and endurance required to publish works of such size and depth. Here, each author was writing his first full-length baseball player biography, and the struggles, pitfalls, and frustrations which each encountered offer perspective for authors who might be considering writing biographies of subjects from the Deadball Era.

In accepting the Ritter Award at SABR 44, presented by our Committee for the best book set primarily in the Deadball Era published during the year prior, Lackey told members of the Deadball Era Committee about the long research and writing process that was required to tell the

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## DEADBALL AT SABR 44

Quality, not quantity, was the watchword for Deadball-related events at SABR 44. Only three events immersed themselves in our subject, but each one of these proved informative and entertaining. On Thursday night, the Deadball Era all-star team selected by committee members earlier this year squared off against their 19<sup>th</sup> Century counterparts. The game



**Ritter Award winner Mike Lackey (left), with Deadball Era Committee chairman John McMurray.**

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featured unexpected outbursts of offense, including a bases-loaded double by Roger Bresnahan that keyed the Deadballers 7-4 victory. A summary of game action, with box score, is presented, within.

Early (very early) Friday morning, the annual meeting of the Deadball Era Committee began with chairman John McMurray's overview of committee-related activity over the past year, followed by newsletter editor Bill Lamb's yearly solicitation of contributions of material for upcoming issues. The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the 2014 Ritter Award to Mike Lackey, author of *Spitballing: The Life and Times of Long Bob Ewing*. In accepting the award, Mike expressed his "profound thanks" to the selection sub-committee, remarking that there could be "no higher honor" for him than to be the recipient of an accolade named for the esteemed Lawrence Ritter. In his thoughtful remarks, Mike also shared some of the research and writing lessons learned during the 16 years that he spent working on the Ewing book, and urged those in attendance to pursue writing subjects that excited their passions the way that

fellow Ohioan Bob Ewing had inspired his book. Thereafter, Jan Finkel informed attendees of the current status of the BioProject, repeating prior cautions against allowing bio subjects or family to censor player profiles. Steve Steinberg supplied an update on the pictorial history of Deadball Era World Series that he and Tom Simon are editing; publication sometime in 2015 is anticipated. Peter Bjarkman, author of the Dolf Luque entry in the recently published book *The Miracle Braves of 1914*, provided insight into his research interests, while Herm Krabbenhoft gave a condensed version of his findings on RBI records for the Deadball Detroit Tigers.

On Saturday, Herm was back on his feet, providing conference-goers definitive proof that Heinie Zimmerman's 1912 RBI total was undercounted by prior baseball statisticians, and that Zimmerman was the true National League RBI leader that season. The lively Krabbenhoft presentation was a convention favorite, receiving one of three honorable mention citations for the best oral presentation at SABR 44. (Mike Hauptert's presentation on NL founder William Hulbert was chosen as the winner.)

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The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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## DEADBALL BIOS

Since the release of the last newsletter, the BioProject has continued to post bios of Deadball Era figures, including Bob Shawkey, Boyd Cypert, Frank Corridon, Harry Colliflower, Bob Wicker, Henry Killilea, Emil Haberer, Arnold Hauser, Alan Storke, Ed Summers, Vive Lindaman, Ferdie Schupp, Dave Black, Joe Harris, Bob Connery, Sport Sullivan, Nat Evans, and Lefty George. In addition, the Games Project has posted stories about random games from the Deadball Era. If you have not yet checked these new bios out, we urge you to do so.



## **DEADBALLERS DEFEAT 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ALL-STARS, 7-4**

### **BRESNAHAN VOTED GAME MVP**

Four innings of shutdown relief pitching and a bases-loaded double by Roger Bresnahan paced the Deadball Era All-Star team to a come-from-behind 7-4 victory over their 19<sup>th</sup> Century counterparts. The contest featured unexpected outbursts of offense, with Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, Kid Nichols, and Tim Keefe each being treated roughly by opposing batsmen. At game's end, Bresnahan was tabbed most valuable player, while teammate Tris Speaker (three hits) and 19 C leadoff man Billy Hamilton (two hits, two runs scored) were also cited for outstanding play.

The 19 C squad wasted no time getting on the scoreboard. Hamilton drilled Johnson's first pitch to center for a single, and moved around to third on a groundout and a base-hit by Ed Delahanty. A Cap Anson sacrifice fly to deep left plated Hamilton with the game's first run, and allowed Delahanty to take second. A Sam Thompson single then got Delahanty home. Only Honus Wagner's grab of a scorching Hugh Jennings liner prevented further damage to the Johnson stat line.

The Deadballers responded in their half of the frame. With one out, Tris Speaker singled off Amos Rusie and advanced to third when Ty Cobb followed with a hit. The rally appeared stillborn when catcher Buck Ewing nailed Cobb trying to steal second, but a clutch two-out double by Nap Lajoie put the Deadballers on the board. An inning later, the Deadballers knotted the score at 2-2 with an unearned run off Charlie Radbourn, tallied via a Wagner single, a stolen base, and a two-out throwing error by 19 C third baseman John McGraw.

McGraw promptly atoned for the miscue. With Hamilton on second by means of a bunt single and a stolen base to begin the third, McGraw drove a hanging Christy Mathewson fadeaway into the right field stands, giving the 19 C club a 4-2 lead. From that point on, the Deadball relief corps held the opposition scoreless, with Grover



***Game MVP Roger Bresnahan***

Alexander throwing blanks in the fourth and fifth. Meanwhile, the Deadballers crept a run closer in the bottom of the fourth, scoring without benefit of a base-hit. With Wagner on second via a walk issued by Kid Nichols and a stolen base, another two-out throwing error by third baseman McGraw made the score 4-3.

In the bottom of the fifth, the decisive Deadball rally commenced with a leadoff double by Speaker. He advanced to third on a groundout, and then remained there when Lajoie was awarded first on catcher's interference. Although Nichols was plainly laboring, 19 C manager Ned Hanlon chose to stay with the normally reliable right-hander. A pinch-hit single by Eddie Collins confounded the decision and knotted the score at 4-4. Belatedly summoned to the mound, Tim Keefe provided little relief. He walked Frank Baker to load the bases, bringing up Roger Bresnahan, who immediately unloaded them with a three-RBI double to left-center. A groundout by pinch-hitter Jimmy Collins brought the inning to an end, but the damage had been done. The Deadballers now led 7-4. Addie Joss and Mordecai Brown hurled scoreless frames in the sixth and seventh, while Cy Young kept the Deadballers in check. With the score still standing 7-4, the game was called after 6½ innings on account of darkness. The victory was awarded to Alexander who pitched two innings

of scoreless, one-hit relief. Nichols took the loss (although only one of the three runs that he surrendered was earned). Bresnahan, Speaker, and Cobb (two hits, two stolen bases) were the offensive stars for the winners, while Hamilton, Delahanty, and Thompson each had two hits for the 19 C squad. After the game, Deadball manager John McGraw declined comment on the defensive play of the 19 C third baseman, but expressed admiration for his being able to take the redoubtable Mathewson deep.

## GAME NOTE

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century vs. Deadball Era All-Stars game was a joint venture of SABR's 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Deadball Era, and Games & Simulations committees. The lineups were selected by vote of the membership of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Deadball groups cast earlier. The game was played at SABR 44 in Houston on July 31 under the simulated game rules used by the Great American Fantasy League, and could not have been played without the interest and efforts of SABR board member Ty Waterman and G&S Committee chairman Steve Krevisky. The participation of team managers Chuck Hildebrandt (Deadball) and Gary McIntosh (19<sup>th</sup> Century) was also important to the game's success, as was the assistance of Jeff Twardus and Paul Salzgeber. Our thanks to each of them and to all the convention goers who stopped by to catch some of the game action.

Eddie Collins of the Athletics pulled off a star stunt last season that was not given the proper notice at the time. Eddie vamoosed all the way home from second on a fly ball to the outfield. Baker hit the ball to Browne, the Washington outfielder, and Collins dashed for the plate and made it safely.

*The Spokane Press, February 18, 1910*



***From left: Game officials Ty Waterman and Steve Krevisky, with Chuck Hildebrandt (Mgr. McGraw), and Gary McIntosh (Mgr. Hanlon).***

## DEADBALL 7, 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY 4

19 C	AB	R	H	RBI	PO	A	E	DEADBALL	AB	R	H	RBI	PO	A	E
Hamilton, CF	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	Sisler, 1B	4	0	0	0	10	1	0
McGraw, 3B	4	1	1	2	1	0	2	Speaker, CF	4	2	3	0	1	0	0
Delahanty, LF	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	Cobb, RF	4	0	2	0	1	0	0
Kelly, PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Lajoie, 2B	3*	1	1	1	0	1	0
Anson, 1B	2	0	0	1	12	2	0	Jackson, LF	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
Thompson, RF	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	Alexander, P	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Jennings, SS	3	0	0	0	1	5	0	E. Collins, PH	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Young, P	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	Crawford, LF	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ewing, C	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	Wagner, SS	2	2	1	0	3	2	1
McPhee, 2B	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	Baker, 3B	2	1	0	0	1	1	0
Rusie, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Bresnahan, C	3	0	1	3	0	2	1
Keeler, PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Johnson, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Radbourn, P	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	J. Collins, PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
White, PH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Mathewson, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nichols, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Wheat, PH-LF	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Keefe, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Joss, P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Davis, PH-SS	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	Brown, P	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>

Sac Fly: Anson  
 Stolen Base: Hamilton  
 HR: McGraw  
 DNP: Brouters, Browning  
 MGR: Hanlon

\*Lajoie awarded first base on catcher's interference in fifth inning.  
 Stolen Bases: Cobb, 2; Wagner, 2.  
 Out Stealing: Cobb, 1.  
 Two-Base Hits: Lajoie, Speaker, Bresnahan  
 DNP: Chance, Kling  
 MGR: McGraw

19 C	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K	DEADBALL	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K
Rusie	1	3	1	1	0	0	Johnson	2	3	2	2	0	0
Radbourn	2	2	1	0	0	0	Mathewson	1	3	2	2	0	0
Nichols (L)	1 1/3	2	3	1	1	0	Alexander (W)	2	1	0	0	1	0
Keefe	2/3	1	2	2	1	0	Joss	1	0	0	0	0	0
Young	1	1	0	0	0	0	Brown	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E	LOB
19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	7	3	5
DEADBALL	1	1	0	1	4	0	x	7	9	2	6

Game called after 6½ innings because of darkness (aka the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Committee meeting)

### BATTERIES

19 C: Rusie, Radbourn (2), NICHOLS (4), Keefe (5), Young (6) and Ewing.

Deadball: Johnson, Mathewson (3), ALEXANDER (4), Joss (6), Brown (7) and Bresnahan.

## **MANNING VAUGHAN AND HIS LONG FORGOTTEN BASEBALL WRITING STYLE**

by **Dennis Pajot**

Manning Vaughan was the main baseball writer of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* for much of the Deadball Era. His style was colorful and full of panache. While researching the deadball Brewers I fell in love with his writing style. Vaughan had a wonderful way of bringing baseball games to life in people's parlors or at the local drinking establishments. Vaughan was a "homer" when the Brewers were winning, honest when things went bad, and always fair and gracious to the opposing team.

Manning Vaughan was born in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1887, where his father, John, was in the laundry business. The family moved to Milwaukee a few years later, where the senior Vaughn established a laundry company. Manning graduated from South Division High School in Milwaukee in 1905.<sup>1</sup> His love of sports began early. Later in life Vaughan told this story about attending games at the old ball grounds at 16th and Lloyd Streets: "There were hundreds of knotholes in the fence at the old Sixteenth St. Park, and the kids used to stand on barrels, bicycles, boxes ... anything to see the games. My folks refused to permit me to attend the Sunday games, but one Sunday afternoon I was at my favorite knothole intent upon the game when suddenly I heard dad's whistle. Dad later said that I dropped from the bike on which I was standing as though I'd been shot." In high school Manning took up writing about the school's sport teams and became manager of the football and baseball teams. He also told a story of how, as manager of the South Division High School nine, he once arranged a game with Lake Forest Academy, against his principal's wishes, on a school day. The boys went down and defeated the Illinois team, but they had a difficult time "squaring" themselves with their principal when they returned.<sup>2</sup>

After high school Vaughan attended the University of Wisconsin for a time. His newspaper work began in 1906 when he joined the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Vaughan stayed with that morning paper, covering baseball, boxing, wrestling, college football, and auto racing -- eventually becoming the sports editor --until 1924, when he switched over to the evening-published *Milwaukee Journal*. Of course, Vaughan was a member of the Milwaukee Press Club, and its president from 1925 to 1929. Vaughan married Matter (Mattie), about 13 years his junior, and had one child, a daughter named Gloria.<sup>3</sup> Manning's brother, Irving, was a sport writer for the *Chicago Tribune*.<sup>4</sup>

In 1929 Vaughan told readers his opinions on ball players and his writing about them: "Ball players, like other performers, are more or less temperamental. They don't like to be criticized, even when they deserve to be, but they take everything that's written about them in pretty good grace, and realize that the sport writers work on the theory that it is easier to praise than blame. Personalities are never entered into on the sport page, where accurate accounts of actual events are recorded."<sup>5</sup>

Manning Vaughan traveled to Hot Springs, Arkansas, in spring 1932 to cover another spring training session of the Brewers for the *Journal*. In March he had an accident in which he fractured his skull. He refused to go to the hospital at first, but finally did on April 2. Five days later he died from his injuries at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. At his bedside were his wife and 9-year old daughter.<sup>6</sup>

The next day a number of local baseball writers paid tribute to Manning Vaughan. It is appropriate to quote a few here, starting with Art Schinner of the *Wisconsin News*: "Vaughan wrote in the language of baseball, which had a vernacular and an appeal of its own. A jargon, as it were, which only the baseball fan understands and appreciates. He knew the game in all phases, grew up with it literally. He understood its characters and with a large personal acquaintance among men who traveled its path, he had an unlimited reservoir of knowledge plus

humor from which he drew his daily tales of the diamond.”<sup>7</sup>

Ronald McIntyre of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*: “He was one of the few baseball writers who never grew tiresome. No matter how dull the day or how uninteresting the ball game Manning always found something amusing and entertaining to pass along to his readers. His pen and his tongue were sharp, but never biting. The only fault he found with people was that many of them took themselves too seriously. In this age of suspicion and excessive criticism Manning met the test of a great writer. He could always find something worthwhile in everything. If he found it necessary to criticize he did it in a humorous way that left no sting. Many of the present day writers have built up reputations as humorists by criticizing everything and everybody. Manning didn’t have to hold anyone up to ridicule to be funny. He was a natural humorist.”<sup>8</sup>

I think the best way to sum up Manning Vaughan’s role in Milwaukee baseball is to quote what was written in the *Milwaukee Journal* one year before his death: “Vaughan knows baseball. He’s been studying, writing, eating and sleeping baseball for so many years the game’s a part of him. Without baseball Vaughan wouldn’t be Vaughan and without Vaughan, baseball wouldn’t mean nearly so much to Milwaukee and Wisconsin fans.”<sup>9</sup>

However, the man who best summed up Vaughan’s life was Oliver Kuechle: “Manning’s friends were legion. They ranged from baseball league presidents down to kids. All admired him for his ability and those who knew him at all, loved him for his kindly human qualities. He was a friend to all. Perhaps no man in sporting circles in Milwaukee was ever asked as many favors as Manning. It was the penalty of the popularity he enjoyed and the unrivaled position he held. Yet never, to my knowledge, did he refuse a man anything within his power, from a pass to a baseball game to a job. He gave me my first of each — my first pass and my first job. There will never be another like him.”<sup>10</sup>



***Manning Vaughan***

What follows are some of Vaughan’s description of events, plays and players. This is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to his entertaining style. Like most writers Vaughan showed the thrill of victory in his writing the day after. In a “dazzling victory” over the Indianapolis Indians he wrote the game was “one of the kind that made contests of the late Mr. Merriwell and other gents of dime novel lure such wonders in the eyes of kidhood. It fairly sparkled with ticklish situations, wonderful plays, impossible stops and catches, double plays which killed the enemy just in the nick of time and kept the big weekend crowd in a riot from barrier to post.”<sup>11</sup>

In July 1912 Hugh Duffy’s Brewers played an exciting game and Vaughan responded: “Duff’s athletes splashed base hits to all corners of Athletic Park Wednesday afternoon, ran bases like a lot of second story agents, whaled four Columbus pitchers to the queen’s taste and toppled the chesty gents from the capital of O-

high-O from their lofty first place perch. Madcap pastiming such as staged on Wednesday has not been seen in this part of the universe in a long while. The Brewers simply went nutty and Mr. Friel's able pitchers must have thought they were mixed up in the New York gambler's war before the finish."<sup>12</sup>

But also like most writers, Vaughan was sharper with the quill in the agony of defeat, such as his description of a Brewer loss in 1912, writing the team showed "all the snap and dash of an embalmed herring, surrounded by a can."<sup>13</sup> A series of loses could bring Manning Vaughan's wrath. He opened his report of an August 1910 game this way: "What are you kicking about? Think of the poor scribe who has to go out every day and watch that stuff." He continued: "Jawn Jay's [Brewer manager John McCloskey] gingerless Ginger Snaps, playing with all the animation and dash of a flock of steam rollers, hoisted some more of their slapstick comedy on the common people yesterday, dropping another game to the submarine Colonels. The count of the laughable affair was 9 to 3."<sup>14</sup>

Vaughan's telling of how the Louisville Colonels scored a number of runs in one inning in one of the games during this losing stretch is worth repeating in full: "Magee, who was some bearcat yesterday afield and at bat, started the free for all with a slow roller to Lewis, which he beat to first. Schreck dittoed. Richter did the suicide act, both runners advancing. Robinson pelted a terrific shot down the third base line. Harry [Clark] stuck his sugar magnate's anatomy in front of the rap, but it was too warm to handle, and the Sycamore Kid not only reached first in safety, but Magee sprinted over with run No. 1. Fournery went out, and the bugs began to make themselves believe that Cutting would southpaw himself out of the mess with few injuries. But the kid soon set them right by passing Stanley, populating all the sacks. Meyers, of statuesque pose and possessor of a pair of pins that would make Anna Held bawl, cracked a long double down the third base line, crowding Schreck and Magee [correctly Richter] across. Doyle walked. Pickering laid down a slow rolling grasser and

surprised even the bat kids by beating it out, Stanley scoring. Magee, up for the second time during the inning, ended a good day's work with the club by peeling off his second hit of the round. The rap scored Meyers. Doyle also tried to tally but the extra burden of carrying a black eye (the gift of Spike Shannon) round the bags slowed him up so much that Spencer chucked him out at the plate with a pretty peg."<sup>15</sup>

Vaughan could even make a rain-out seem more than it was — and poke fun at the famous frugality of Milwaukeeans. In July 1912 he wrote: "No gentle reader and others, the Mudhens did not bite us on Saturday. It rained instead, and Mr. Harstel and his aspiring young men beat it for Kansas City at an early hour, after spilling some hectic language for the benefit of the local weather guesser. This alleged humor has been used 1,234,678 times, but it still goes in the bush league, so here it is again. As any one knows who lives within Milwaukee and its suburbs, the leaking began early in the morning and continued to fall in such large chunks all day long that the ballyard looked like a bird's eye view of Lake Mish. The regular patrons didn't care much as Toledo has been a jinx all season, but the bargain hunters were greatly peeved. Seeing two games for two bits is great stuff with many of our fans, but as there will be two double attractions the next time the Mudhens flutter into town, they can save their money until then."<sup>16</sup>

Small crowds at Brewers game could even ignite Vaughan imagination. "A dime museum shower shortly before 3 o'clock kept the attendance down to about 183, but the courageous 183 saw pastiming worth going miles to see. After the stuff good crowds have been forced to digest lately it really was too bad there was not a large gathering on hand."<sup>17</sup> A few days later a game was attended by only "ninety odd pneumonia proof bugs."<sup>18</sup> Fans could get rowdy and Vaughan did not overlook it. In 1914 the umpire ejected a fan from the grounds for throwing a bottle of beer at a player. Vaughan wrote: "Be that as it may, tossing bottles is a dangerous pastime, especially when a guy's head is the

target. It may go at a free for all wake or a Third Ward ball, but not in a ballpark, and [umpire] Murray is to be commended for his action. Incidentally we suggest that suds be served in rubber bottles in the future.”<sup>19</sup> Of course, the umpires were not immune from Vaughan’s pen. On a close call in another game he wrote: “it was so close that Murray could have called it either way without hurting his conscience any, presuming, of course, that he has one, which we doubt.”<sup>20</sup>

Of course, baseball is really about baseball players. And Vaughan had thoughts on all types of players. Writing in 1914 on Happy Felsch’s antics in spring training: “Felch [sic], it seems, is getting wise to himself and if he cuts out the monkey work there is no reason why he should not be the sensation of the league this season. He is smacking the ball on the nose and while the pitchers are not using any hooks on him he is whaling the ball so hard that the leather almost peels off when he kisses one on the trademark.”<sup>21</sup> Toward the end of the season Felsch hit a mammoth home run, clearing the left field fence at Milwaukee’s Athletic Park by 50 feet. “The drive was a whale, for the ball sailed clear over Eighth street, and hit the top of Mrs. Herman Hassenpfeffer’s mansion.\* A couple of carpenters, who were on the roof laying shingles, were nearly hit by the ball, and every time Happy came to bat after that they made ready to duck.”<sup>22</sup> [\*Note: Mrs. Hassenpfeffer was a creation of Manning’s typewriter. Her famous lawn and windows were the ending spot for many home runs over the left field fence over the years. One day a lady approached Manning at the press box and asked why Mrs. Hassenpfeffer had never moved in the past twenty years. Vaughan told the lady “Mrs. Hasenpfeffer won’t move until I quit the newspaper game.”<sup>23</sup>]

Vaughan described a two-run inside the park homer by manager-third baseman Harry Clark this way: “Taking a terrific swing at the pill, the little manager flogged the ball far over Claude Rossman’s head in deep left. It kept going until it hit the pole, placed there for the pennant Clark and his gang won for Milwaukee last season.

Forgetting all about his maimed pin, Clark plodded through the mud and slime like a quarter horse, passed second while the Miller gardeners were still scrambling for the ball, rounded third when the pill started back for the diamond, and by a big slide through the grime beat the shuck to the plate, giving us two runs and winning the game.”<sup>24</sup>

Vaughan was never one to just drop a line toward the end of a column to let his readers know a player was let go, and many times gave a reason for the action. Writing of the sale of pitcher Charley Wacker, Vaughn wrote: “Wacker was one of the most promising youngsters that ever broke into the A.A., but like many young fellows, he had a weakness for the white lights. His deportment here was anything but exemplary. When he wasn’t pitching he was having a good time, and as he only pitched about six hours a week, it’s no trick to figure the time he spent hitting ‘er up.”<sup>25</sup> When veteran pitcher Lou Manske was cut from the team, Vaughan gave this descriptive account: “Unser Louie has been hanging on by his eyelids for some time. McCloskey has been on the point of tying a can to his dainty person on a dozen different occasions, but kept putting it off. Yesterday before sending the little fellow in to pitch he informed him that if he did not show any of his old time form he would be shipped to St. Joe, Mo. to labor in the Western League. Now, sending any one to St. Joe is little short of a crime, so Louie sweated and steamed and chucked his head almost off trying to return a winner. But it wasn’t in him, and he started for the wild of Missouri before the third inning had ended.”<sup>26</sup>

Vaughan had a number of players over the years he seemed to pick on, but it was obvious he had great affection for these guys. Ralph Cutting was a left-handed spitball pitcher who was somewhere around 5-foot-4 inches tall. The “Diminutive Port Sider” was singled out by Vaughn throughout his time with the Brewers for his size.<sup>27</sup> Vaughan loved calling the “sawed off southpaw’s”<sup>28</sup> spitball the “Codfish ball.”<sup>29</sup> When Milwaukee pitcher Stoney McGlynn made a

mental mistake in a game, Vaughan told his readers that “some of the Vermont granite in McGlynn’s dome was put on public view.”<sup>30</sup> One day outfielder Newt Randall took off from second base on a single to right. On the throw to the plate: “The peg was wild, however, hitting Newt on the dome, and bounding away to the stand. Of course by this we do not mean to cast any reflections of the stuff concealed in Newt’s head.”<sup>31</sup>

When a local boy of Polish descent -- James Jachowski -- pitched well, Vaughan wrote: “They were cutting large capers along Mitchell street last night, and any one not familiar with the cause would have thought it was Kosciusko’s natal day if he had happened to stroll along the Polish boulevard about 9 o’clock. But, nay, nay, Pauline, nothing like that. The gang was simply celebrating the great work of the old side kick and countryman, Jim Jach.”<sup>32</sup> Manning Vaughan told us how the Iowa boy Cy Slapnicka looked on the mound one afternoon in 1914: “He was wilder than a pickled chauffeur in spots but tightened up like a clam when the home athletes

were within speaking distance of the platter. Only four blows were combed off his volcanic smokers, and they were worth about as much as a plugged dime.”<sup>33</sup>

It was the Deadball Era on the playing field, but a lively era for baseball writers!

*Milwaukee baseball historian Dennis Pajot is a regular contributor to the newsletter.*

## NOTES

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2. *Milwaukee Journal*, May 25, 1931.
3. *Milwaukee Journal*, April 7 and 8, 1932; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 8, 1932; Milwaukee Press Club website — Past Presidents.
4. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 8, 1932.
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11. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 14, 1912.
12. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 25, 1912.
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18. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 14, 1910.
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20. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 26, 1913.
21. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 16, 1914.
22. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 16, 1914.
23. *Milwaukee Journal*, April 8, 1932.
24. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 19, 1914.
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27. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 8, 1911.
28. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 19, 1913.
29. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 10, 1910, February 10, 1912, and July 27, 1912.
30. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 9, 1910.
31. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 7, 1912.
32. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 20, 1914.
33. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 16, 1914.

### 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:

**Scott Altland**  
**Jeffrey Bobeck**  
**Ben Brink**  
**Bob Emling**  
**Bob Gaines**  
**Jim Gallagher**  
**Terry Hamblin**  
**Charles Leerhsen**  
**David Rapp**  
**Kris Rutherford**  
**Steve York**

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.

**ACCURATE RBI RECORDS  
FOR THE PLAYERS OF  
THE DEADBALL ERA:  
PART 3 – THE PLAYERS ON  
THE 1919 DETROIT TIGERS**

by **Herm Krabbenhoft**

Is it 69 or 70? According to the research of Ernie Lanigan, Ty Cobb amassed 69 runs batted in during the 1919 season.<sup>1</sup> According to the research of David S. Neft, Ty Cobb accumulated 70 runs batted in during the 1919 campaign.<sup>2</sup> Since Lanigan and Neft give different numbers for the RBIs achieved by Ty Cobb in 1919, both Lanigan and Neft cannot be correct. One of them has to be incorrect. Who is incorrect – Lanigan or Neft? Or, are both Lanigan and Neft incorrect?

Ty Cobb, a Hall of Famer who played for the Detroit Tigers from 1905 through 1926, was, arguably, the greatest player during baseball's Deadball Era. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to expect (demand?) that The Georgia Peach's statistical record should be accurate. So, during the final season of the Deadball Era, did Tyrus Raymond bat in 69 teammates or 70 teammates – or some other number of teammates? In this article I present the results of my research to ascertain the accurate RBI records for Ty Cobb and each of his teammates on the 1919 Detroit Tigers.

**INTRODUCTION**

In Parts 1 and 2 of the title series I provided the accurate RBI numbers for the players on the 1919 Boston Red Sox and the 1906 Detroit Tigers, respectively.<sup>3,4</sup> Significantly, I irrefutably proved that the RBI numbers currently shown on the various baseball websites (e.g., Baseball-Reference.com) and given in all of the most recent hard-copy baseball encyclopedias (e.g., the 2008 edition of *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*) are wrong for most of the 1919 BoSox players (19 out of 30). Likewise for most of the 1906 Jungaleers (16 or 17 out of 24). It is important to emphasize that “all” of the pre-1920-season RBI numbers given in these

sources are those from Neft's research as presented in the 1969 edition of the Big-Mac. None of the RBI numbers from Lanigan's research, which covered the 1907-1919 period, were utilized in any of those sources.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the different RBI numbers for Cobb, Lanigan and Neft came up with different RBI numbers for at least five other players on the 1919 Detroit Tigers, including Hall of Famer Harry Heilmann; see Table 1.<sup>6</sup>

**RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

In order to achieve accurate RBI numbers for each of the players on the 1919 Tigers team, the modus operandi that I followed consisted of trying to ascertain the “complete details” for each of the 618 runs scored by Detroit. Obtaining “complete details” means determining the following three items for each run:

- (a) The identity of the player who scored the run.
- (b) The run-scoring event (e.g., a 1-RBI single; a 1-RBI grounder, batter safe on a fielding error; a 0-RBI grounder, batter safe on a fielding error; a 1-RBI bases-loaded walk; a 0-RBI balk; etc.)
- (c) The identity of the player who completed his plate appearance during the run-scoring event.

To obtain these “complete detail” items I relied on the game accounts (text descriptions and box scores) provided in multiple independent newspapers: the three major daily newspapers published in Detroit – the *Free Press*, the *News*, and the *Times* – and at least one daily newspaper published in the city of the team that opposed the Tigers. With regard to the guidelines for crediting or not crediting a batter with a run batted in, I adhered strictly to the 1931 official scoring rules. It is important to appreciate that while runs-batted-in was not an official statistic until the 1920 season, runs-batted-in was not even defined officially until 1931.

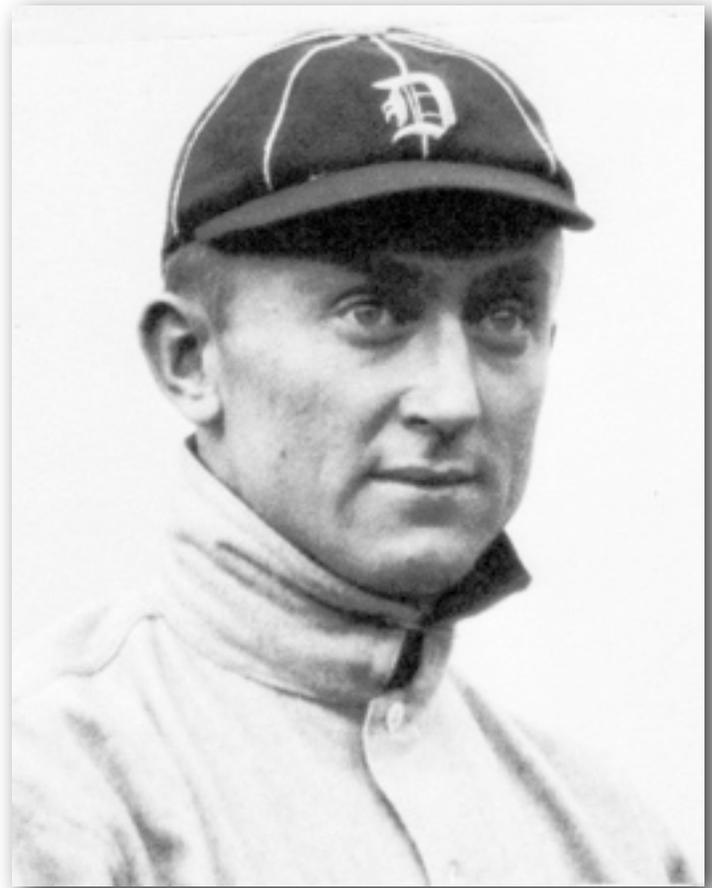
Next, to assess the viability of the runs-scored and runs-batted-in numbers from my research, I compared my RBI numbers with the

corresponding RBI numbers provided on the Retrosheet.org website. Upon completion of my research (March, 2014), there were seven games for which my RBI numbers did not agree with Retrosheet's RBI numbers. There were also 61 games for which Retrosheet did not yet have RBI numbers included in their box score file (and derived player daily files). So, I provided a comprehensive summary of the evidence that I had obtained in support of my RBI numbers to Retrosheet's Tom Ruane and Dave Smith. After review of the documentation, we achieved complete agreement on all the RBI numbers, which were then incorporated on the Retrosheet.org website, specifically the box score file (and derived player daily files).<sup>7</sup>

## RESULTS

Following the above-described research procedures I achieved definitive RBI numbers for the players on the 1919 Tigers team for each of the 140 games Detroit played – EXCEPT for one game – the final game of the season, on September 28, in Chicago, which the Jungaleers won by a 10-9 score. Regrettably, each of the text descriptions of this game provided in the *Detroit Free Press*, *Detroit Journal*, *Detroit News*, *Detroit Times*, *Chicago American*, *Chicago Daily Journal*, *Chicago Daily News*, *Chicago Evening Post*, and *Chicago Tribune* gave absolutely no information about any of the ten runs scored by the Tigers (as well as the nine runs scored by the White Sox). Only the *Chicago Herald-Examiner* provided details for some of the runs scored by the Tigers – complete details for the one run Detroit scored in the first inning and incomplete details for Detroit's two third-inning runs, four fourth-inning tallies, and three eighth-inning markers. Appendix One (available on the SABR.org website) summarizes all of the information pertinent to the ten runs scored by the Tigers in this game.

Appendix Two (available on the SABR.org website) presents a comprehensive summary of the details for each of the 618 runs tallied by the Tigers. Appendix Three (available on the SABR.org website) presents the Day-By-Day



**Ty Cobb**

runs-scored and runs-batted-in log for each Tigers player.

Table 2 presents the RBI records for each man who played for Detroit during the 1919 season. The first column lists the 25 players on the 1919 Tigers team; an asterisk preceding the player's name indicates that he participated in the September 28 game. The second column presents the actual RBIs garnered by each player through the game on September 27 (i.e., the penultimate game of the season). The third column presents the RBIs the players achieved in the final game of the season, on September 28, as suggested by the analysis given in Appendix One; "dnp" indicates that the player did not play in the game on September 28. The fourth column gives the RBIs the player had through the game on September 28 – i.e., for the full season. The fifth column gives the full-season RBIs the player earned according to the research of David S. Neft, as presented in the first (1969) edition of *Big-Mac*. The last column gives the absolute-

value differences between the full-season RBI numbers ascertained in my research and the full-season RBI numbers claimed by Neft in Big-Mac; a value in parentheses indicates that Neft's RBI number is less than the RBI number from my research.

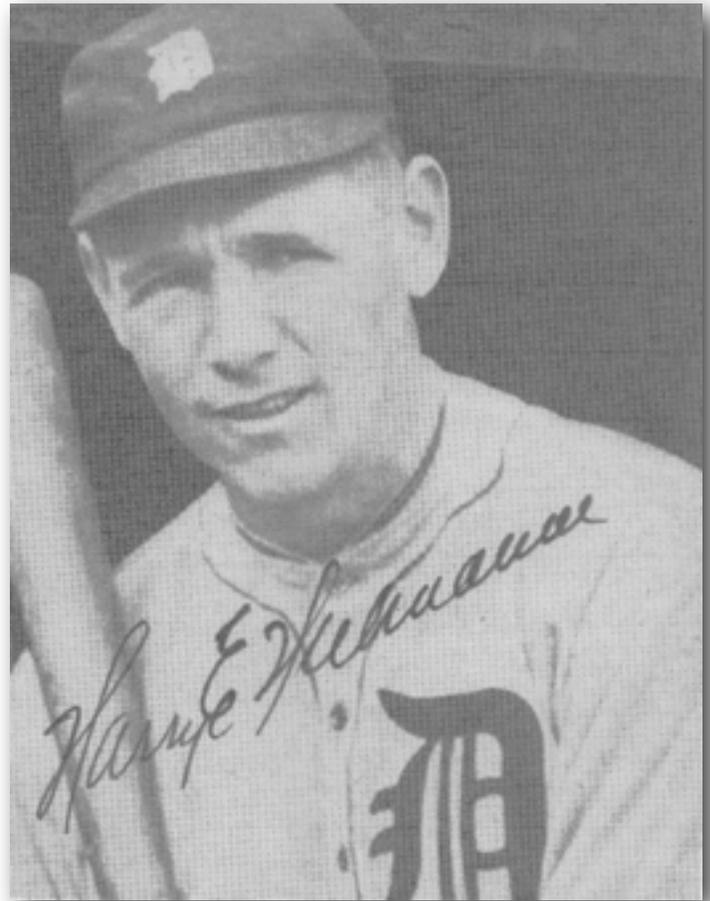
As can be seen, my RBI numbers differ from Neft's RBI numbers for more than half of the players – 15 of the 25 players (i.e., 60 percent). For seven of the players, my RBI numbers are greater than Neft's RBI numbers. For example, Donie Bush actually had 33 RBIs, not 26 RBIs. For eight of the players, my RBI numbers are less than Neft's RBI numbers; for instance, Ben Dyer actually had 5 RBIs, not 15 RBIs. For the ten players for which my RBI numbers and Neft's RBI numbers are the same, each of the players had five or fewer RBIs.

Table 3 presents a comparison of my RBI numbers with Lanigan's RBI numbers for the five players for whom Lanigan's RBI numbers are available. For Ty Cobb, Harry Heilmann, Bob Jones, and Bobby Veach, my RBI numbers are a less than Lanigan's RBI numbers. For Ira Flagstead, my RBI number (47 or 48) is either one RBI less than Lanigan's RBI number or the same as Lanigan's RBI number.

## DISCUSSION

The most-important item for discussion is the accuracy of the RBI numbers presented here – whose RBI numbers are correct? ... Lanigan's? ... Neft's? ... Krabbenhof's?

First and foremost, the RBI numbers from my research, as presented in Tables 2 and 3 for the players on the 1919 Detroit Tigers team, are totally reliable. I collected rock-solid evidence to support the details for each of the 608 runs scored by the Bengals in their first 139 games (i.e., through the September 27 game). Furthermore, as stated above, my RBI numbers for these first 139 games are in complete agreement with the RBI numbers now given on the Retrosheet.org website – i.e., there is 100% correspondence between my RBI numbers and Retrosheet's RBI numbers for each player on a game-by-game basis for each game from the first



**Harry Heilmann**

game through the 139th game of the 1919 season. For Detroit's 140th (last) game (September 28) of the season, unfortunately, complete details for each of the 10 runs scored by the Tigers were not provided in the accounts presented in the various newspapers published in Detroit and Chicago. Nonetheless, as described in Appendix One, I was able to achieve definitive RBI numbers for eight of the twelve players who participated in the game – including Hall of Famers Ty Cobb and Harry Heilmann (as well as team RBI leader Bobby Veach). Moreover, as mentioned above, the details for each of the runs scored by the Tigers during the 1919 season are presented in Appendix Two – and, therefore, are readily available to anyone who wishes to review them. However, as previously pointed out in Parts 1 and 2, that is not the case with the RBI numbers claimed by Neft – *there is absolutely no documentation available to support Neft's RBI numbers*. Likewise, apparently there is no game-

by-game documentation extant to support Lanigan's RBI numbers.

So, returning now to the number of RBIs actually achieved by Ty Cobb in the 1919 season ... the correct number is 67 RBIs – not 69 RBIs as claimed by Lanigan; not 70 RBIs as claimed by Neft. And, not 70 RBIs as given by each of the following: (a) *Total Baseball* (the seventh edition, 2001, by John Thorn, Pete Palmer, and Michael Gershman); (b) *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia* (the fifth edition, 2008, by Gary Gillette and Pete Palmer); (c) the Baseball-Reference.com website (accessed on May 30, 2014); (d) the MLB.com website (accessed on May 30, 2014). That there is unanimous agreement among these four sources is not because each of them independently came up with 70 RBIs for Cobb. Rather, each of these sources has 70 RBIs for Cobb because each utilized the same source. Thus Baseball-Reference.com and MLB.com employ the RBI numbers from Pete Palmer's database of baseball statistics – which is also the source for the RBI numbers given in *Total Baseball* and *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*. Moreover, Palmer employed precisely the same RBI numbers given in Neft's 1969 Big-Mac in creating his database for the full-season RBI statistics for the years prior to 1920. So, Neft's Big-Mac is the ultimate source for all pre-1920 RBI stats currently available in other sources. And, as shown here – Table 2 – Neft's RBI numbers for most (60%) of the players on the 1919 Tigers are wrong. Likewise for *Total Baseball* and *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia* and Baseball-Reference.com and MLB.com (the official website of Major League Baseball).

In addition to yielding the accurate full-season RBI numbers given in Table 2, my research (Appendix Three) allows one to correctly ascertain each player's longest consecutive-games streak for: (a) scoring at least one run, (b) batting in at least one run, and (c) producing at least one run (i.e., either scoring or batting in at least one run).<sup>8</sup> In previous presentations and articles I reported that the longest such streaks,

since 1920, for Detroit Tigers players are as follows:<sup>9-13</sup>

- (a) Consecutive Games RUN Scored (CGRUNS) – 16 games, Doc Cramer (1944).
- (b) Consecutive Games RUN Batted In (CGRUNBI) – 12 games, Mickey Cochrane (1934) and Rudy York (1940).
- (c) Consecutive Games Run Produced (CGRP) – 22 games, Billy Rogell (1934).

Examination of Appendix Three affords the longest CGRUNS, CGRUNBI, and CGRP streaks for each of the players on the 1919 Detroit Tigers; see Table 4.

Inspection of Table 4 reveals that Ty Cobb assembled the longest CGRUNS streak – a seven-gamer. Donie Bush and Harry Heilmann were next in line, each with a six-gamer. Bobby Veach put together the longest CGRUNBI streak – a seven-gamer. Cobb copped second-place honors with a six-game CGRUNBI streak. Veach also manufactured the longest CGRP streak – a ten-gamer. Ira Flagstead had the next-longest CGRP streak, a nine-gamer. For comparison, it is noted that for the players on the 1919 Boston Red team Babe Ruth was tops among his teammates in each of these consecutive-games streaks – CGRUNS (7); CGRUNBI (7); CGRP (10).

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

My research incontrovertibly proves:

- (a) Ty Cobb actually had 67 runs batted in during the 1919 season.
- (b) Lanigan's 69-RBIs for Cobb is incorrect.
- (c) Neft's 70-RBIs for Cobb is incorrect.
- (d) Neft's RBI numbers for Harry Heilmann, Bobby Veach, and a dozen more players on the 1919 Tigers are incorrect.

So, for each of the three team-seasons during the Deadball Era that I have thus-far researched – the 1919 Red Sox and the 1906 and 1919 Tigers – the RBI numbers claimed by Neft – and perpetuated by *Total Baseball*, *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*, Baseball-Reference.com,

and MLB.com – for most of the players are incorrect: 1919 Red Sox (63% wrong); 1906 Tigers (67% or 71% wrong); 1919 Tigers (60% wrong).

What will research on other team-seasons yield in terms of ascertaining accurate RBI numbers for the players of the Deadball Era? And, who holds the record for the longest CGRUNBI streak during the 1901-1919 Deadball Era? According to the research carried out thus far, Babe Ruth and Bobby Veach are tied for the longest CGRUNBI streak – each with a seven-gamer in 1919. Hopefully, fellow SABR members – particularly those of the Deadball Era Committee – will join in to carry out the necessary research on their favorite teams so that accurate RBI records can be ascertained for all of the men who played before 1920.

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2. *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).
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4. H. Krabbenhoft, “Accurate RBI Records for the Players of the Deadball Era: Part 2 – The Players on the 1906 Detroit Tigers,” *The Inside Game*, Vol. XIV, No. 3 (June 2014), 4.
5. As described in Reference 3, Lanigan’s RBI numbers were used in: (a) the second (1951) through the eighth (1990) editions of *Daguerreotypes of Great Stars of Baseball* (St. Louis: J.G.Taylor Spink); (b) *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball*, by Hy Turkin and S.C. Thompson, (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, first published in 1951); (c) *The Official Baseball Guide* (St. Louis: The Sporting News, starting in 1954).
6. In Reference 1, only those players with at least 33 RBIs are listed. Lanigan’s RBI numbers for players with less than 33 RBIs on the 1919 Tigers team were apparently never published and could not be found anywhere, including the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library.
7. Email correspondence with Tom Ruane and Dave Smith, March 28, April 14, April 15, and April 16, 2014.

8. Runs Produced (RP) is defined as runs scored plus runs batted in minus home runs; see H. Krabbenhoft, “Who Invented Runs Produced (RP)?” *The Baseball Research Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Summer 2009), 135.
9. H. Krabbenhoft, “Runs Scored and Runs Batted In Corrections and Consecutive Games Streaks: Detroit Tigers (1945-2006),” Presentation given at the SABR Convention (SABR 37), St. Louis, July 26-29, 2007.
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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With tremendous appreciation I gratefully thank these people for their outstanding help in providing me with photocopies/scans of game accounts from newspapers to which they had access: Steve Boren, Keith Carlson, Dave Newman, Dave Smith, Gary Stone, Dixie Tourangeau, and Walt Wilson. I also gratefully thank Tom Ruane for his superb effort in reviewing the evidence that I assembled in order to achieve accurate R/RBI numbers.

*This article is the latest installment in Herm Krabbenhoft's continuing investigation of Deadball Era statistics.*

The sensational charge has been made by Manager Hendricks of Springfield that Cooley, Johnston and Plummer, the best men on the team, did shady work in Wednesday’s game with Terre Haute. The three men have been suspended.

*The Pittsburgh Press, May 27, 1905*

**TABLE 1: RBI NUMBERS FOR PLAYERS ON THE 1919 DETROIT TIGERS ACCORDING TO LANIGAN AND NEFT.**

Player	RBI (Lanigan)	RBI (Neft)	Δ
Ty Cobb	69	70	1
Ira Flagstead	48	41	7
Harry Heilmann	95	93	2
Bob Jones	54	57	3
Bobby Veach	98	101	3

NOTE: The |Δ| column gives the absolute-value difference between Lanigan's RBI number and Neft's RBI number for each of the players. It is also appropriate to point out that runs-batted-in did not become an official statistic until 1920. Thus, there is no officially-recorded record of the RBIs earned by Ty Cobb and his fellow players on the 1919 Detroit Tigers team. So, prior my RBI research on the 1919 Tigers, all that we had were the conflicting unofficial RBI numbers from Lanigan and Neft.



*1919 Detroit Tigers*

**KING'S BRIDGE STADIUM  
NOT UNTIL NEXT YEAR**

NEW YORK—President Farrell of the Highlanders has decided not to build the new stadium at King's Bridge until next year

because of certain obstacles. His lease on the Hilltop grounds does not expire until April, 1913, so that he is in no hurry to move. He has purchased the King's Bridge property outright, however.

*The Washington Times, March 23, 1911*

**TABLE 2. THE RBI RECORDS FOR THE PLAYERS  
ON THE 1919 DETROIT TIGERS.**

Player	Krabbenhoft		Krabbenhoft		Neft	Δ
	(through 9-27 game)	(9-28 game)	(through 9-28 game)			
*Eddie Ainsmith	34	1 or 2	35 or 36		32	(3 or 4)
*Doc Ayers	1	0	1		1	0
Bernie Boland	4	dnp	4		4	0
*Donie Bush	33	0	33		26	(7)
*Ty Cobb	65	2	67		70	3
*George Cunningham	5	0	5		5	0
Hooks Dauss	13	dnp	13		14	1
Snooks Dowd	0	dnp	0		0	0
Ben Dyer	5	dnp	5		15	10
Howard Ehmke	5	dnp	5		5	0
Babe Ellison	13	dnp	13		11	(2)
Eric Erickson	1	dnp	1		1	0
*Ira Flagstead	47	0 or 1	47 or 48		41	(6 or 7)
*Harry Heilmann	92	0	92		93	1
Bill James	0	dnp	0		1	1
*Bob Jones	52	0 or 1	52 or 53		57	5 or 4
Rudy Kallio	0	dnp	0		0	0
Dutch Leonard	4	dnp	4		4	0
*Slim Love	0	0	0		0	0
Willie Mitchell	0	dnp	0		1	1
Chick Shorten	26	dnp	26		22	(4)
*Oscar Stange	16	0, 1 or 2	16, 17 or 18		15	(1, 2 or 3)
*Bobby Veach	97	0	97		101	4
Archie Yelle	0	dnp	0		0	0
*Ralph Young	26	0	26		25	(1)

**TABLE 3: RBI NUMBERS FOR PLAYERS ON THE  
1919 DETROIT TIGERS ACCORDING TO LANIGAN AND KRABbenhOFT.**

Player	RBI (Lanigan)	RBI (Krabbenhoft)	Δ
Ty Cobb	69	67	2
Ira Flagstead	48	47 or 48	1 or 0
Harry Heilmann	95	92	3
Bob Jones	54	52 or 53	2 or 1
Bobby Veach	98	97	1



**TABLE 4. THE LONGEST CGRUNS, CGRUNBI, AND CGRP STREAKS FOR PLAYERS ON THE 1919 DETROIT TIGERS.**

Player	G	R	RBI	HR	RP	Longest CGRUNS Streak	Longest CGRUNBI Streak	Longest CGRP Streak
Ainsmith	114	42	35 or 36	3	74 or 75	3	3	6
Ayers	24	1	1	0	2	1	1	1
Boland	35	2	4	0	6	1	1	1
Bush	129	82	33	0	115	6	3	6
Cobb	124	92	67	1	158	7	6	8
Cunningham	26	4	5	0	9	1	2	3
Dauss	34	7	13	0	20	1	3	3
Dowd	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dyer	44	11	5	0	15	2	2	2
Ehmke	33	6	5	0	11	2	1	2
Ellison	56	18	13	0	31	4	3	5
Erickson	3	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Flagstead	97	43	47 or 48	5	85 or 86	4	3	9
Heilmann	140	74	92	8	158	6	5	6
James	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Jones	127	37	52 or 53	1	88 or 89	3	4	4
Kallio	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leonard	29	2	4	0	6	2	1	2
Love	22	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Mitchell	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shorten	95	<b>*35*</b>	26	0	61	3	2	4
Stanage	38	9	16, 17 or 18	1	24, 25 or 26	2	3	3
Veach	139	87	97	3	181	3	7	10
Yelle	6	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Young	125	63	26	1	88	4	2	8

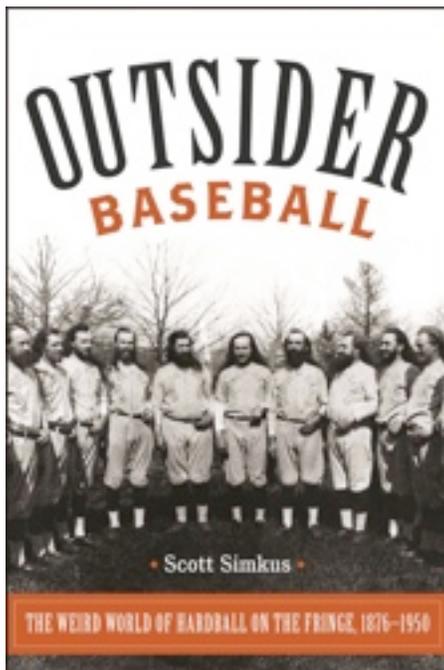
NOTE: The Run entry for Shorten is 35; the asterisks indicate that this value is different from the 37 shown in baseball's official Day-By-Day (DBD) records. The 37 in baseball's official DBD records is the consequence of an arithmetic error - the correct sum is 35. It is pointed out that the incorrect 37 is given in the various baseball encyclopedias (e.g., The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia) and shown on the various baseball websites (e.g., Baseball-Reference.com).

**BLAMES CIGARETS  
FOR TEAM'S FAILURES**

ST. LOUIS—Manager Clark Griffith, of Washington, blames his team's failure to be higher up in the race on the fact that no less than five or six of his players are inveterate cigaret smokers and inhalers. He has made himself

plain on the matter of cigaret smoking and there is apt to be a decided falling off of the habit. The Nationals' manager argues that it is impossible for a player to do himself justice when he takes liberties with cigarets, and he called all his smokers to task and gave them to understand that the habit must cease if they expect to be of any service to their team.

*The Pittsburgh Press, July 29, 1914*



**OUTSIDER BASEBALL:  
THE WEIRD WORLD  
OF HARBALL ON THE  
FRINGE, 1876-1950**

**BY SCOTT SIMKUS**

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Reviewed by  
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Now that nearly anyone good enough to play major league baseball can do so, the time when things were different seems quaint, even forgettable. Questions still linger, though. Besides the basic unfairness of the old days, even major leaguers could not be sure how good they were. What was it like when major leagues and minor leagues competed with each other? Was the Negro

National League a bona fide major league? Did Sadaharu Oh play major-league-caliber baseball? What would happen if we could accurately compare all the best players of all time? The answers to these and many more previously unanswerable questions, says Scott Simkus, lie in the numbers. Not numbers that float in ultra-specialized, highly technical ether, but numbers that are accessible to just about anybody. And the numbers don't lie.

In this sweeping study of the professional game from its origins through 1950, Simkus builds a house of baseball with rooms for everyone, constructed at a furious, double-espresso pace. Simkus, the lead consultant for the Negro League All-Star set produced by the Strat-O-Matic Game Company, builds his comparative system around a set of numbers he calls STARS: Service Time, Age, Rating System. Since ball players typically hit their peak at about age 28, Simkus built a point system around that crucial year, rewarding major league longevity and assigning bonus points for Hall of Fame election. While the overall concept is simple, it requires careful calibration to achieve reliability. Simkus evaluates teams by adding together the STARS scores for the top 17 players on a team (the top 14 players for early teams). In a feat of numerical legerdemain he alludes to only briefly, he creates a compensatory system

that fairly compares Negro Leagues players with white players. If you pour enough players into this system, the law of averages trumps the exceptions. An occasional towering prodigy like Mike Trout flattens under a tsunami of statistical evidence.

Hunches about the fascinating realm of outsider baseball shrivel beside Simkus' concrete evidence. STARS numbers reveal that in 1890 the American Association lagged significantly behind both the National League and the Players League, that the American League achieved parity with the National League in 1902, and that the 1934 Pittsburgh Crawfords and Chicago American Giants of the Negro Leagues trailed only the American League champion Detroit Tigers. The evidence is compelling, although it requires at least a grain of faith; it would be helpful to include a website where intricacies, particularly the Negro League equalization strategy, could be explained in more detail.

Along the way, Simkus covers a dazzling spread of outsider baseball, from the semipro Brooklyn Bushwicks to Cuban barnstorming teams. He complements his STARS numbers with statistics that relegate the play of women such as Jackie Mitchell and Babe Didrikson to the realm of novelty and show that winning percentages claimed by House of David teams were inflated. He uses throwing distance to

calculate pitching speed in the pre-radar-gun era: Satchel Paige likely threw 99 or 100 mph in his prime, a tick harder than Roger Clemens, and Babe Didrikson's fastball, topping out at 70 or 71 mph, would have suited a high school boys' team. In the exact middle of the book, his "Continental Divide" chapter creates a fictional league from the best outsider players in 1921, concluding that it would match up favorably with both major leagues; in other words, a third of top baseball talent lay outside the majors. No wonder barnstormers were so much fun to watch.

These examples do not do justice to the scope of Simkus' work. His numerical analysis, careful inclusion of virtually every significant outsider, narrative skill, and well-honed instincts make the fascinating but elusive world of outsider baseball both accessible and comprehensible. His work will be foundational for countless future projects.

Like any good book, this one leaves readers wanting more. Part of "more" rightfully belongs to future projects, but part of it would make this impressive volume even better. The opening scene in the book, set in Arthur David "Superman" Pennington's basement, could be exploited as a definitive, unifying reference to the central problem of a generation of black ballplayers too young to experience the Negro Leagues' glory days and too old to play a

full career in the major leagues. The powerful narrative material of chapters 33 and 34, describing the crucial, incendiary time just before Jackie Robinson hit the major leagues in 1947, deserves more development. In Chapter 29 Simkus asserts that major league baseball has been racially accepting since at least 1962. In other words, "there was no longer any blatant, systematic discrimination preventing African Americans and dark-skinned Latinos from excelling in baseball" (p. 209). In fact, Major League Baseball "had become a true meritocracy" (p. 208). While this is true, it is not quite the whole story. Ask Reggie Smith or Sam Horn if the playing field seemed level. The impact de facto racism had on baseball players after segregation ended eludes quantification. It is also impossible, by the way, to gauge the effect on play of substandard living and travel conditions endured by barnstormers who played three games a day, dragging portable light systems around the country behind their dilapidated buses, or the wear and tear on the arm of a pitcher who started a game every two or three days. Numbers don't lie, but neither do they tell the entire story.

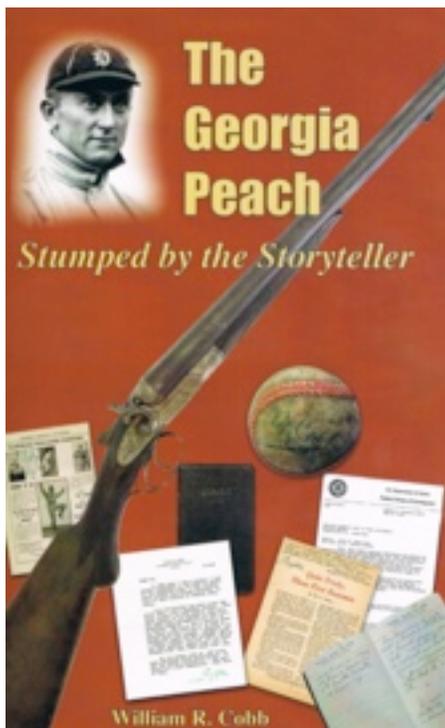
This book does not necessarily need to hit the 700-page, magisterial-tome threshold, but it could use upwards of 50 more pages to supply connective tissue among the scattered topics, to pull the

sparkling narrative pieces and the data analysis into a tighter structure, and to weave the Art Pennington thread more significantly into the overall fabric. The writer's skill and diligence merit editing rigorous enough to root out the manuscript's conversational infelicities and structural inconsistencies. This volume deserves a place in the league of outstanding baseball writing, and it comes close. Its most outrageous – while potentially feasible – idea comes in the closing pages, where Simkus describes a Universal Baseball Database that could accurately divide all players from all time into five plausible divisions. We can hope that Scott Simkus will stay in the middle of the fray, with more books on the way.

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Norman Elberfield of the New York Americans is perhaps the most noteworthy exponent of the art of throwing with either hand in the business, but it is doubtful if he uses his gift in this direction half a dozen times during the season.

*(Washington) Evening Star,  
September 5, 1903*



**THE GEORGIA PEACH:  
STUMPED BY THE  
STORYTELLER**

**BY WILLIAM R. COBB**

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This slim volume is an updated and expanded version of the McFarland-SABR award winning article with the same title that appeared in the Summer 2010 issue of *The National Pastime* published by the Society for American Baseball Research. William R. (Ron) Cobb, no relation to Ty Cobb, is a leading light in a growing body of historians, researchers, and memorabilia collectors that have mounted a

major challenge to what might best be described as the “Ty Cobb Devil Theory” promoted by Al Stump in his 1994 Cobb biography, and reinforced in the film *Cobb*, based to a large extent on Stump’s writings and featuring an almost satanic-appearing Tommy Lee Jones in the title role. This group of “Ty Cobb Revisionists” has managed to provide a more balanced and nuanced view and understanding of Cobb as a human being as well as a baseball player. Their major weapon has been meticulous research that has disproved or called into question a substantial number of the claims and allegations that have cast Cobb in a bad light.

Ron Cobb’s primary focus is on the controversy surrounding a shotgun that supposedly belonged to Ty Cobb and claims that it had been the weapon his mother had used to kill his father in 1905. The gun had been part of a large collection of Cobb memorabilia in the famed Barry Halper Collection. When the Ty Cobb Museum in Royston, Georgia was approached about authenticating it, board member Ron Cobb began researching it, soon discovering that Al Stump was Halper’s source for the gun and its provenance. Additional research in primary documents showed that Stump had removed a substantial amount of Cobb’s possessions from his home under rather questionable circumstances. The shotgun had been

described originally as one that Cobb used for hunting for many years with no mention of the 1905 murder. Research in several newspapers and governmental records concerning the death of Cobb’s father and his mother’s trial revealed that a pistol had been used and not a shotgun. An in-depth review of secondary literature on Cobb revealed no mention of the shotgun killing until the publication of Al Stump’s “Ty Cobb’s Wild Ten-month Fight to Live” in *True-The Man’s Magazine* in December 1961.

Although this article was largely overblown, containing questionable statements and factual errors, Stump’s sensationalistic and lurid writing style helped make the piece popular, unfortunately insuring its inclusion in a number of baseball anthologies. Actually, Stump spent only a few weeks off and on with Cobb the last months of his life and had no contact with him the last two months. Those who cared for Cobb in his last few weeks of life tell a different story and strongly deny allegations of loaded guns and other Cobb antics. SABR researchers have disproved Stump’s “Cobb Killed A Man” story by examining contemporary newspaper accounts, autopsy reports, and government records, none of which support Cobb’s supposed claims by Stump. Finally, Stump’s assertion that Cobb’s funeral was shunned by the baseball community does

not stand up to the fact that his family had specifically requested a private funeral.

Most disturbing about Stump was the cottage industry he appears to have conducted in forging letters, diaries, and photographs in Cobb's hand, many of which had significant baseball history content and supported Stump's negative depiction of Cobb. Apparently much of this material worked its way into Stump's 1994 book before entering the baseball memorabilia market and eventual exposure as being fraudulent. Ron Cobb makes an excellent point with his rhetorical question: "What Stump stories about Ty Cobb are NOT either outright fantasy or gross exaggerations based loosely on questionable fact?" (p. 46). Given these facts, scholars and historians should treat any Stump Ty

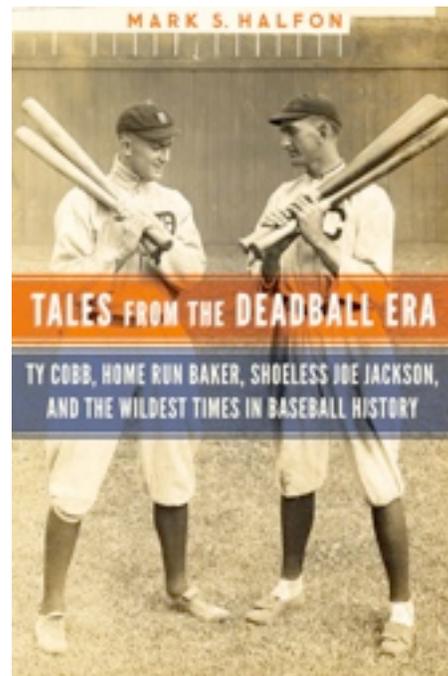
Cobb story with great suspicion, and demand additional research and documentation. This expanded version of Ron Cobb's article includes a foreword by Peter Nash, whose online blog "Hauls of Shame" has shined major light on forged and stolen baseball memorabilia, and several more newly identified examples of Stump forgeries of Cobb diaries and other documents.

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## TALES FROM THE DEADBALL ERA: TY COBB, HOME RUN BAKER, SHOELESS JOE JACKSON, AND THE WILDEST TIMES IN BASEBALL HISTORY

BY MARK S. HALFON

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It is not at all far-fetched to say that instead of the dog wagging the tail, it is the tail or, more aptly, the "tales" that wag the dog when it comes to the Deadball Era. For the years 1901-1919 are full of interesting stories that have become the stuff of baseball lore, forming the core of Mark Halfon's new

book about the Era. In order to accomplish his task, Halfon, a philosophy professor with an obvious love for early twentieth century baseball, divides his text into three parts.

The first portion of Halfon's text, entitled "Deadball Era Highlights," takes a look at a number of topics beginning with the impact of cheating in the major leagues during the Era, described as rampant and widely accepted. Various examples follow, and therein are the "tales." Following a similar pattern the author turns to a description of baseball as it stood at the turn of the century, a discussion of the advantages pitchers enjoyed over hitters during the Era, the science of "inside baseball," and the overriding rowdy conduct of various players and managers as the Era progressed. The participants' lives and times are described through liberal use of quotes from Lawrence Ritter's *The Glory of Their Times* and other well-known Deadball sources. Part 2 of the book, entitled "Deadball Standouts," takes a look at three of the Era's giants: Ty Cobb (batter), Walter Johnson (pitcher), John McGraw (manager) and the 1908 "Merkle game" (described as "a game for the ages"). Part 3, entitled "Beyond the Deadball Era," studies the effects of events occurring toward the end of the Era and into the early 1920s that changed the game and brought the Deadball Era to a close. These include

rule changes that favored the batter, a more lively baseball, the emergence of Babe Ruth as a hitting force, the beaming death of Ray Chapman, and the Black Sox Scandal and its aftermath. An interesting postscript looks at how the various factors that set the Deadball Era and the "lively ball" eras apart have placed an imprint on the record books. The author aids the reader with an interesting photo section, footnotes, a bibliography, and an index.

The energetic manner in which Halfon presents his material is a particular strength. Although there are lots of facts and figures, as well as game descriptions, the story line never bogs down. The text does tend to jump around, but seemingly with purpose and never to distraction. Given the number of facts presented, the text would have benefitted by a thorough fact check as occasional errors do appear. Also unlike some recent books such as *Mysteries from Baseball's Past: Investigations of Nine Unsettled Questions*, edited by Angela J. Louisa and David Cicotello [reviewed in Vol. XI, No. 2 (April 2011), 5], this is not a quest to determine the story behind the story. The "tales" are pretty much taken at face value and there is little here that is new—the Merkle game and the Black Sox Scandal have been hashed and rehashed. Sometimes offering the tales as fact works well, sometimes not. An example of the latter is the author's

treatment of the Black Sox Scandal, particularly Game Eight where it is stated as fact that Chicago pitcher Lefty Williams and "possibly" his wife were threatened with harm unless Williams pitched to allow the Cincinnati Reds to clinch the 1919 World Series (p. 153). According to Halfon the threats were made at the instigation of gambler Arnold Rothstein who had a large stake in the outcome. The alleged threat and Williams' exceedingly poor pitching performance, as well as the nature and extent of Rothstein's participation in the scandal, have been the subject of much speculation, but nothing more. A notation in the text or a footnote would assist the reader here and elsewhere when unsettled matters are stated as fact. On the whole, however, *Tales from the Deadball Era* is a very entertaining book, one that underscores why so many baseball historians are drawn to the Era, wanting to read and write about it. As such, Halfon's book definitely belongs on the bookshelf next to the other tales of the Deadball Era.

*Rick Huhn's latest book on the Deadball Era is The Chalmers Race: Ty Cobb, Napoleon Lajoie, and the Controversial 1910 Batting Title That Became a National Obsession (Nebraska, 2014). Rick is a founder and co-chair of the Hank Gowdy Columbus (OH) chapter of SABR.*

# **BIG CHIEF: THE SHORT, TURBULENT LIFE OF OUTFIELDER JOHN BENDER**

by **Bill Lamb**

Between the two of them, the baseball-playing Bender brothers embodied much of the popular turn-of-the-century American Indian stereotype, both positive and negative. Tall, dignified, and stoic, Charles “Chief” Bender epitomized the Noble Savage. He was also one of the finest pitchers of the Deadball Era. Never the staff workhorse, Chief Bender was manager Connie Mack’s money pitcher, the man on the mound when the Philadelphia Athletics most needed a pennant race or World Series victory. Although not altogether accepted by the white-centric sporting world, Bender’s abilities were much respected by it, as exemplified by his 1953 induction into the Hall of Fame.

Older brother John “Big Chief” Bender was an altogether different character. Good-sized and with a striking facial resemblance to his celebrated sibling, John was a lesser talent who also lacked his brother’s stable temperament. Frequently bedeviled by the effects of drink, Big Chief was a troubled man, widely perceived by the sports press and fandom as likeable but unreliable, the arch-typical chronically-alcoholic Injun. A fine defensive outfielder but only a mediocre batsman, John Bender never rose higher than mid-level minor leagues, bouncing from team to team while leaving a trail of fines, suspensions, and other disciplinary sanctions in his wake. He even spent three years on baseball’s blacklist, the result of a drunken, near-fatal stabbing of his manager with Columbia of the South Atlantic League. The year of Big Chief’s restoration to playing eligibility saw the Bender brothers attain their respective destinies. In October 1911, Charley pitched the A’s to their second consecutive World Series title, but John was unable to bask in any of the family glory. Weeks earlier, hard living and a weak heart had put him in his grave at age 32.

Gaps and conflicts in US and tribal censuses make suspect any biographical narrative about

Native Americans born in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. But in all likelihood, John Charles Bender was born in or about Crow Wing County, Minnesota in October 1878. He was the second of at least 11 children<sup>1</sup> born to Albertus Bliss Bender (1849-1922), a homesteader of Dutch or German descent born in Massachusetts,<sup>2</sup> and his half-Ojibwe (Chippewa) wife, the former Mary Razor (or *Pay shaw de o quay*, c.1855-1930). When John was still a boy, the ever-multiplying Bender family moved to the White Earth Reservation in northwestern Minnesota to farm acreage doled out to Indian claimants by the government. Thereafter, John was among the vanguard of reservation children sent to the Philadelphia area to further their education at Episcopal Church-run prep schools. In time, a number of younger Bender siblings would follow them East.<sup>3</sup>

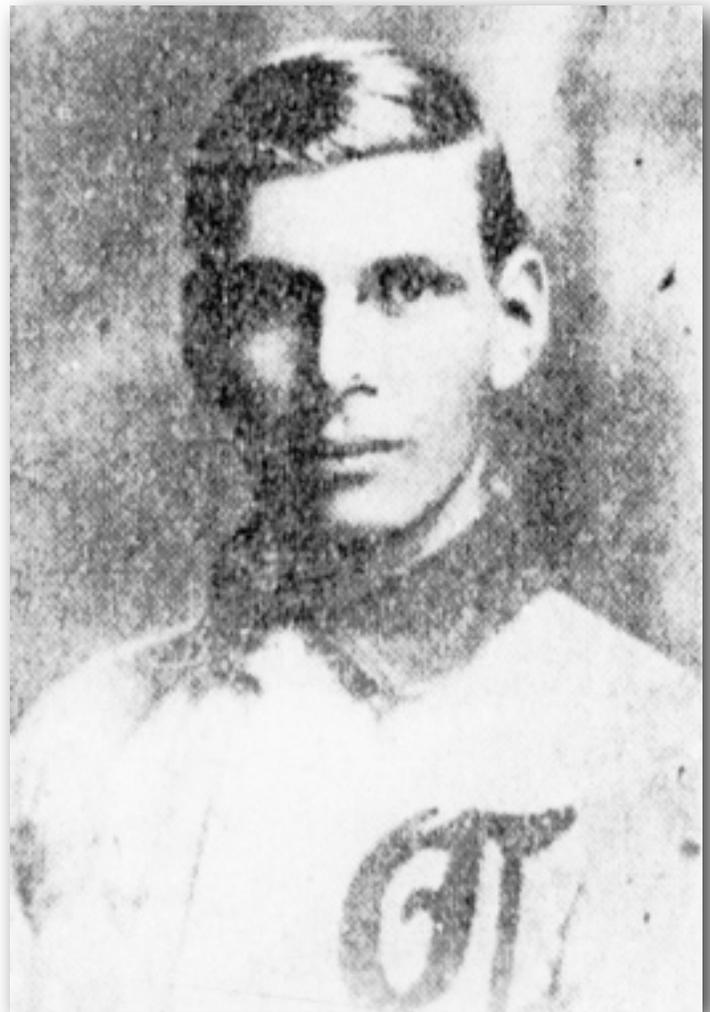
On September 5 1896, John Bender was admitted to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup> Either simultaneously or shortly thereafter, his younger brother Charles joined him there. The Carlisle program was designed to immerse Native American youngsters in Christian values and the dominant European-American culture, but the school soon became known more for its athletic teams. John and Charley became members of the Carlisle football and baseball teams, although one Chief Bender biographer asserts that John “didn’t develop at Carlisle to the point where he earned a spot on the varsity [baseball] squad.”<sup>5</sup> Other sources state that John Bender, like his brother, was a star pitcher at Carlisle.<sup>6</sup> Whichever the case, John’s time at Carlisle ended abruptly. He was expelled from school on unknown grounds on March 8, 1900.

Tribal census records invariably place John Bender back on the White Earth Reservation during his post-Carlisle years, but his actual whereabouts are unknown until he began playing professional baseball in 1902.<sup>7</sup> Now 24-years-old, he was presumably close to the six-foot-plus/190 pound ballplayer depicted in a photo of Big Chief Bender published in the March 15, 1908 edition of the *Augusta (Georgia) Chronicle*. With the exception of one ill-fated pitching

audition, the lefty batting/righty throwing Bender played his entire career in the outfield. That career began with stints playing for a terrible (14-71) Sheldon team in the Class D Iowa-South Dakota League, and mediocre ones in Cavalier (15-32) and Fargo (30-26) of the independent Northern League. Seeing action in 49 games total, Bender batted a promising .300.<sup>8</sup>

John returned to the now-Class D Northern League the following summer, batting .302 in 63 games for the (41-51) Duluth Cardinals.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Charley inaugurated his Cooperstown-bound career with a 17-win rookie season for Philadelphia. His older brother began the 1904 season with the Hartford Senators of the Class D Connecticut State League, but was released after hitting only .188 in 21 games. Thereafter, John Bender returned once again to the Northern League, landing a berth with Fargo. Back in familiar surroundings, he batted a career-high .343 in limited (29 games) action. A regrettable precedent was also established there: Bender and teammate Joe Lynch were suspended for “going too heavy on the liquid portion of Fourth of July celebrations.”<sup>10</sup> In 1905, Bender signed with the Charleston Sea Gulls, commencing a multi-season odyssey through the Class C South Atlantic (SALLY) League. John would call Charleston home for the remainder of his life. He also initiated a relationship with the College of Charleston, in time becoming the school’s football and baseball coach. Perhaps most important, Charleston was the place where John met future wife Theresa Delany, the daughter of Irish immigrants.

In his first Charleston go-round, Bender hit .264, posting the second-highest batting average on the offensively-challenged Sea Gulls (whose team BA was a dismal .201).<sup>11</sup> Early the following year, John made the first of his recorded court appearances, being fined \$20 by a Charleston police court “for applying a vile epithet to a spectator.”<sup>12</sup> Soon thereafter, he was dispatched to a league rival, the Augusta Tourists. Between the two clubs, Bender batted a SALLY League-respectable .234. But the highlight of the Bender season occurred away from the diamond. On



*John Bender, c. 1906*

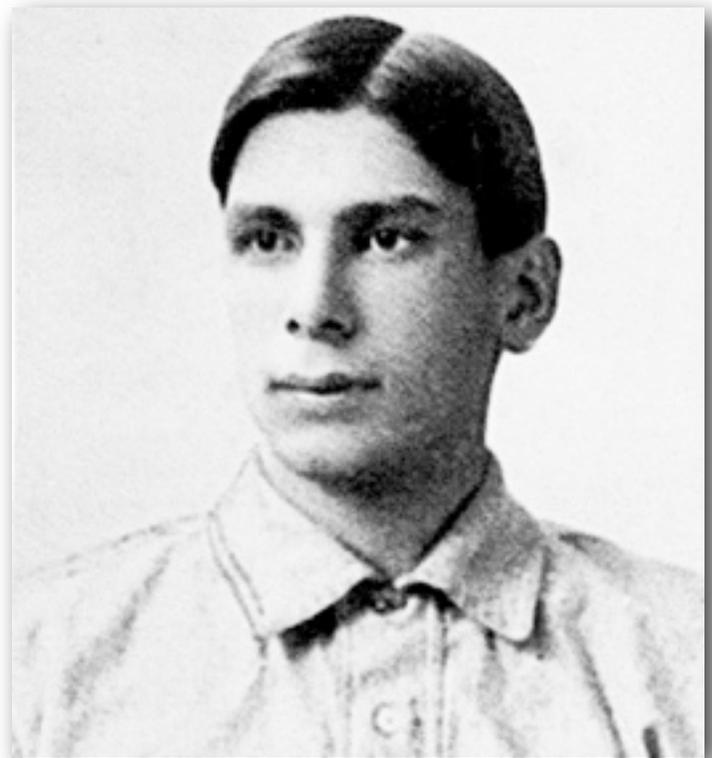
August 26, 1906, John and Theresa were married at the Delany residence at 115 Calhoun Street in Charleston,<sup>13</sup> the place where the couple would live for the entirety of their childless five-year marriage. After the ceremony, league president Charles W. Boyer presented the newlyweds with a silver service, a gift from Augusta teammates and club management.<sup>14</sup>

With club permission, Bender spent the early spring of 1907 coaching the College of Charleston baseball team. When he joined Augusta, trouble was not long in following. On May 9, Bender failed to appear at the ballpark for a league game, drawing a \$10 fine and an indefinite suspension.<sup>15</sup> Once reinstated, he managed to avoid problems for a while. But on August 1, Augusta manager Dick Crozier fined Bender \$20 and suspended him indefinitely for “violation of

team rules.”<sup>16</sup> Despite this, a .250 batting average in 106 games earned Bender a place on the Augusta reserved list for the 1908 season.<sup>17</sup>

That season would be a tumultuous one. Early in the campaign, a “hilariously happy” Bender was deemed unfit to make a road trip to Charleston.<sup>18</sup> In May, he was reportedly released by Augusta, with the hometown newspaper lamenting that “Bender when right is a good fielder, a fairly good hitter, and has one of the greatest arms in baseball. ... Booze has been the undoing of the Big Chief.”<sup>19</sup> But new manager Charlie Dexter was apparently unwilling to give up on Bender, who had “one of the strongest and swiftest right arms in baseball.”<sup>20</sup> Dexter wanted to convert him into a pitcher, but the idea was kyboshed by club management. Bender was released by Augusta, only to be signed by another SALLY League club, the Columbia Gamecocks. Still drinking to excess, Bender was soon fined and suspended indefinitely by his new club. When restored to the roster, Columbia manager-first baseman Win Clark decided to try Bender as a pitcher, inserting him into a July 10 game hopelessly lost to Macon. Eight hits later, Columbia starter Gus Salve was back on the mound, thus bringing the pitching career of “one of the greatest arms ever seen in the South” to its one-appearance conclusion.

Within a fortnight, the life of John Bender would be irrevocably altered. After a Saturday game in Jacksonville, Bender went out drinking with a friend and was arrested that evening for public intoxication.<sup>21</sup> Manager Clark then bailed Bender out and escorted him to the *Iroquois*, the steamship booked to return the club back to South Carolina. Shortly after Bender had gotten on board, a ship steward sought Clark’s intervention with Bender following complaints made by female passengers. “That night at the supper table, Bender again began to annoy the lady passengers and Clark was again called down.”<sup>22</sup> Bender, “crazy drunk,” wanted to fight, but Clark refused to accommodate him while the two were aboard ship. Evicted from the dining area, Bender waited for Clark to finish his meal and then attacked him in a ship’s corridor. Clark



**Charles Bender, 1903**

knocked Bender to the floor and had the better of the fight until onlookers interceded. It was then discovered that Clark had been stabbed and was bleeding from wounds to the arm, chest, and torso. Providentially, a young physician named Weeks was among the *Iroquois* passengers. Summoned to the grievously wounded victim, Dr. Weeks stanching the blood loss, and then, using fishing line, closed the wounds via 40 to 54 improvised sutures – accounts varied. Meanwhile, Bender was placed in irons until the *Iroquois* reached Charleston.

Once the ship reached port, Clark was rushed to the hospital, treated, and later pronounced out of danger.<sup>23</sup> Bender, meanwhile, was turned over to federal authorities for prosecution, as the incident had occurred on the high seas rather than in the jurisdiction of a particular state.<sup>24</sup> Pending proceedings in the United States District Court, Bender was placed in lock-up. Thereafter, testimony by eyewitness Augusta players established a prima facie case against Bender, but with the victim on the mend, Bender was released on \$1,000 bond posted by his wife.<sup>25</sup> When sufficiently recovered, Clark testified, albeit reluctantly, against Bender, but

made plain that he had forgiven Bender and did not wish to see him prosecuted. Still, the evidence presented left US Magistrate Arthur Young little choice but hold over the Bender charges for trial during the coming court term.<sup>26</sup> But prosecutors, presumably acting upon Clark's wishes, declined to pursue the case, and the charges were quietly dismissed about a year later.<sup>27</sup>

Baseball was not so lenient with the Big Chief. Within 24 hours of the incident, Bender had been fined and suspended by the Columbia club, with SALLY League president Boyer vowing to seek Bender's permanent banishment from

Organized Baseball.<sup>28</sup> The advice of counsel inhibited Bender from discussing the incident, but his contrition was evident to those having contact with him. He also benefitted from the fact that, notwithstanding the assault and his other failings, Bender was well-liked by teammates, league officials, SALLY League fans, and the local press. Once it was clear that Win Clark would recover – he would return to manage in the minors until 1939, but never again took the playing field – many observers felt sorry for Bender and were not averse to his eventual return to the game. Nevertheless, his immediate baseball prospects appeared bleak.



*Coach John Bender (top row, derby) and College of Charleston baseball team, c. 1909*

Columbia retained the suspended Bender on its reserved list for the 1909 season,<sup>29</sup> and supporters, particularly in his adopted hometown of Charleston, hoped for Bender's reinstatement. In the meantime, John busied himself with coaching duties at the College of Charleston. He also reportedly became involved in running a local restaurant.<sup>30</sup> Prior to the 1909 season, Columbia club brass refused to seek Bender's reinstatement by the league, but later relented, following receipt of a telegram sent by prominent Charleston citizens. Columbia agreed to petition for Bender's reinstatement, conditioned upon his payment of an unsatisfied \$50 fine. The club would then sell his contract to Charleston.<sup>31</sup> League president Boyer, however, was having none of it. Bender would remain the property of Columbia and on the league blacklist. In March 1910, a petition for Bender's reinstatement to new SALLY League president Cap Joyner was referred to the collective club ownership,<sup>32</sup> but no action was taken.

Early in 1911, Charleston manager Ed Ransick contacted Columbia regarding release of Bender to the Sea Gulls, a maneuver designed to foster his reinstatement by the league. Momentum was building in Bender's favor, with SALLY League sportswriters publicly urging leniency upon league officials,<sup>33</sup> progress which Bender then jeopardized by getting himself arrested on street robbery charge.<sup>34</sup> Notwithstanding that, Columbia club president F.C. Williams put his imprimatur on the Bender reinstatement petition,<sup>35</sup> and on March 20, 1911, league president Joyner granted the application, directing Bender to report immediately to Columbia.<sup>36</sup> As Bender was making ready to rejoin the club, another happy event occurred. The Philadelphia A's came to town for a pre-season game against the Charleston Sea Gulls, occasioning the first meeting of John and Charley Bender in nine years.<sup>37</sup>

Bender was anxious to get back into uniform, but increased age (he was now 32) and the three-year layoff had taken their toll. Toward the close of spring training, the *Macon Telegraph* reported that "Chief Bender is also trying for a

place on the [Columbia] club, but the old war horse has slowed up considerably, and he will have a tough time beating Marty Krug out of the left field job."<sup>38</sup> Shortly thereafter, Bender was released. He then signed with Charleston. His tenure was short-lived. After batting a meager .189 in 38 games, Bender was released again, the *Charleston Evening Post* observing that Bender "is not considered fast enough for the rejuvenated club and has not hit as well as an outfielder should."<sup>39</sup> Bender's final professional destination was a distant one: the Edmonton Eskimos of the Class D Western Canada League. But even such modest competition was now too much for Big Chief. In 33 games, he batted a soft .213, with only three extra-base hits. The day before the league season ended on September 3, Bender was given his walking papers for a third time in 1911.

For reasons unknown, Bender did not immediately head for home. Instead, he lingered in Edmonton. On the morning of September 25, he had breakfast in a local café. Suddenly and without warning, John "Big Chief" Bender collapsed and died.<sup>40</sup> He was 32. A Coroner's Certificate subsequently cited "acute dilatation of the heart" as the cause of death.<sup>41</sup> News of Bender's death was conveyed to SALLY League fans via reportage that sometimes maintained that Bender had died in the middle of an Edmonton game,<sup>42</sup> a canard that would not be discredited for decades.<sup>44</sup> Following a slow railway passage to Charleston, funeral services were conducted at the Bender residence on Calhoun Street. Among those paying their respects were a large contingent of College of Charleston athletes.<sup>44</sup> Suffering from the flu and in need of rest for upcoming World Series assignments, brother Charles Bender was noticeably absent.<sup>45</sup> On October 7, 1911, John Bender was laid to rest at St. Lawrence Cemetery in Charleston. Meanwhile some 770 miles to the north, Charley Bender took the mound against the New York Giants in the Series opener. Chief would drop a 2-1 decision to Christy Mathewson that afternoon, but would pitch brilliantly throughout the Series, winning Game 4 and the

decisive Game 6 for the World Champion Athletics.

Products of the same blood and upbringing, the Bender brothers were distinguished by differences in talent and temperament. When it came to baseball, Charles would go on to great major league success and, ultimately, immortalization in Cooperstown. His older brother John, a minor league journeyman, would die young and fall into the obscurity that shrouds his memory to this day. Neither fate is undeserved.

*Bill Lamb is the editor of The Inside Game.*

## NOTES

1. Chief Bender biographies maintain that Albertus Bender was of German descent, but Chief himself described his father as Dutch. See *The Sporting News*, December 24, 1942. Paternal grandfather William Bender was also American-born – in New York around 1825. Although only one-quarter Ojibwe, Charles, John, and the other Bender children for whom there is photographic evidence were all distinctly Indian (black hair, coppery skin, Native American facial features) in appearance.
2. In chronological order, the Bender children who survived childhood were Maud (born about 1873), John (1878), Frank (1881), Charles (1884), Anna (1886), Elizabeth (1888), Emma (1890), Albert (1892), Fred (1894), George (1900), and James (1902).
3. According to a recent Chief Bender biography, John, Charles, and their younger sister Anna were enrolled at the Educational Home in Philadelphia in July 1891. Later, younger siblings would attend the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia. See Robert Peyton Wiggins, *Chief Bender, A Baseball Biography* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2010), 13-17.
4. John Bender, Carlisle Indian Industrial School records, folder 377.
5. See Tom Swift, *Chief Bender's Burden: The Silent Struggle of a Baseball Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 164.
6. See e.g., *Sporting Life*, June 15, 1907. See also, "The Curious Case of John Bender," by Rich Necker, accessible on-line via [http://www.attheplate.com/web/1911\\_4.html](http://www.attheplate.com/web/1911_4.html).
7. According to another Chief Bender biography, John Bender played for a semi-pro baseball team in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania after he was expelled from Carlisle. See William C. Kashatus, *Money Pitcher: Chief Bender and the Tragedy of Indian Assimilation* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Penn State University Press, 2006), 27. This assertion, however, must be viewed with caution, as most else said about John Bender in the Kashatus book is mistaken or improbable.
8. Statistics presented herein have been taken from Baseball-Reference.com and *The Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff, eds. (Durham, North Carolina: Baseball America, Inc., 2d ed. 1997).
9. Accounts differ regarding whether John played under the alias McCoy (*Sporting Life*, July 30, 1904) or used his own name, *Sporting Life*, December 16, 1905.
10. As reported in *Sporting Life*, July 23, 1905.
11. Throughout Bender's tenure in the circuit, batting averages in the South Atlantic League would be inordinately low, even by Deadball Era standards. In 1905, only league two players (Ty Cobb and Paul Sentell) posted batting averages over .300.
12. As per *Sporting Life*, May 2, 1906.
13. As reported in the *Charleston Evening Post*, August 27, 1906. The wedding ceremony was performed by the Reverend P.L. Duffy, a Catholic priest.
14. As per the *Augusta (Georgia) Chronicle*, August 28, 1906. See also, *Sporting Life*, September 15, 1906.
15. As reported in the *Augusta Chronicle*, May 9, 1907, and the *Macon (Georgia) Telegraph*, May 10, 1907.
16. As per the *Augusta Chronicle*, August 1, 1907, and *Sporting Life*, August 17, 1907.
17. As noted in *Sporting Life*, October 2, 1907.
18. As euphemistically reported in the *Augusta Chronicle*, April 19, 1908. Bender was unable to make the trip due to "the quantity and quality of the liquid refreshment that he had taken on board the day previous," according to the *Macon Telegraph*, April 19, 1908.
19. *Augusta Chronicle*, May 8, 1908.
20. According to the *Augusta Chronicle*, May 11, 1908.
21. The events related above were reported nationwide. The instant account is drawn primarily from reportage in the *Charleston Evening Post*, *Charleston News and Courier*, and *Columbia (South Carolina) State*, July 21-24, 1908.
22. *Columbia State*, July 24, 1908.
23. The skillful work aboard ship by Dr. Weeks spared two lives: those of stabbing victim Clark

and his assailant, as well. Having laid in wait and then attacked an unarmed man with a knife before a host of witnesses, Bender would assuredly have been tried, convicted of premeditated murder, and executed had Clark died.

24. As per the *Charleston Evening Post*, July 20, 1908, and *Charleston News and Courier*, July 21, 1908.
25. As reported in the *Charleston News and Courier* and *Columbia State*, July 24, 1908.
26. As reported in the *Charleston News and Courier* and *Columbia State*, August 2, 1908.
27. According to Wiggins, 104.
28. As reported in the *Charleston Evening Post* and *Charleston News and Courier*, July 21, 1908.
29. As per *Sporting Life*, October 8, 1908.
30. According to obituaries subsequently published in *Charleston Evening Post*, September 26, 1911, and *Charleston News and Courier*, September 27, 1911.
31. As per the *Charleston News and Courier* and *Columbia State*, May 14, 1909.
32. As reported in the *Columbus (Georgia) Daily Enquirer*, March 16, 1910, *Columbia State*, March 17, 1910, and *Charleston News and Courier*, March 18, 1910.
33. See e.g., the *Augusta Chronicle*, March 12, 1911.
34. As reported in the *Charleston News and Courier*, March 12, 1911. Bender was accused of taking \$15 from one L.M. Harley on Meeting Street. Following Bender's arrest, charges were referred to a Charleston magistrate, but their disposition is unknown to the writer.
35. Williams later said that a letter from Bender's wife had moved him to intercede on the suspended player's behalf, as per the *Charleston Evening Post*, September 28, 1911.
36. As reported in sports pages throughout the SALLY League, March 20-21, 1911.
37. According to the *Charleston Evening Post*, March 25, 1911.
38. *Macon Telegraph*, April 2, 1911.
39. *Charleston Evening Post*, June 6, 1911.
40. Slightly differing accounts of Bender's final moments were published in the *Edmonton Journal* and *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, September 25, 1911. A more accessible account of Bender's death is provided by Rich Necker, "The Curious Case of John Bender," cited in endnote 6, above.
41. Acute dilatation of the heart is the sudden distention of a cavity of the heart, a sudden and often fatal condition.

42. See e.g., the *Charleston Evening Post*, September 26, 1911, and *Charleston News and Courier*, September 27, 1911.
43. Among other places, the demise during a game yarn was subsequently perpetuated in the Bill James Historical Baseball Abstracts of 1985 and 2001. For the definitive rendering of the facts surrounding the death of John Bender, see Robert M. Gorman and David Weeks, *Death at the Ballpark: A Comprehensive Study of Game-Related Fatalities, 1862-2007* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2008).
44. As reported in the *Charleston News and Courier*, October 7-8, 1911.
45. Despite the common bonds of blood and baseball, Charley and John Bender were not close. Charley's situation was also complicated by the untimely passing of sister Anna Bender Sanders only four days after John's death.

#### JUDGE PRAISES REAL BALL FAN WHO THRASHED "SEAT HOG"

It is entirely justifiable to thrash a person who puts his feet on the back of seats at a baseball park and refuses to remove them when requested, according to a decision given in Judge Calhoun's court in Atlanta Tuesday. The decision was given in the case of Edward Maddox who was tried for assault and battery on R. C. Bate at the Atlanta baseball park.

Maddox was at the park with his wife and two other women and Bate sat behind them. The evidence showed that Bate put his feet on the back of the seats and that the dresses of the women were soiled as a result. Maddox asked Bate to remove his feet. The latter paid no attention to the request and then Maddox rose and punched Bate half a dozen times in the face.

Judge Calhoun in charging the jury instructed them that Bate's feet were in the wrong place and that Maddox was justified. The judge also charged that if more men would do as Maddox did there would be few "hogs" at ball games. The jury promptly acquitted Maddox.

*The Milwaukee Journal, September 23, 1909*

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

*continued from page 1*

story of Cincinnati's Bob Ewing, especially since research materials about Ewing's life were scarce: "For a long time, for many years, I didn't even allow myself to think I was writing a book," said Lackey in his remarks in Houston. "And I certainly never told anybody that I was writing a book. I shied as far away as I could from the 'b-word' because I was very much intimidated by it. As much writing as I have done in my life — most of my career, I was a newspaper columnist — I got trained and geared to write 650 words, three times a week, 650 words and stop. And I said, 'I don't know how to write a book. It's too long, it's too complicated, I can't sustain a story for that length. I just do not know how to do that. It's totally alien to my experience.' Of course, what I finally figured out — it took me a long time — is that you don't have to write the whole book at a sitting. What you really have to do is to break it down into manageable chunks, break it down into chapters. And then I literally would outline each chapter, what was going to be in it."

Lackey's preferred method was to compile as many facts about his subject as he could: "Basically, my process was just to look in every possible corner that I could think of that might shed some light on Bob Ewing or his career or times that he lived in or baseball in those times or the people he was associated with," said Lackey. "I'm sure I'm a little bit obsessive about things like that. I've sometimes referred to myself as a 'fact junkie.' But I really did feel it was necessary to find as many facts as I could and put them all in a big pile. Because until you do that, you really don't know what you don't know." Remarkably, as Lackey noted, it took him approximately as long to research Ewing's life (from 1997 to 2013) as it did for Ewing to play his entire professional baseball career almost exactly one-hundred years prior. Lackey related that he was often in and out of the process of writing the book, putting his work down and coming back to it. Throughout the writing process, fact-checking and tinkering was



***Seymour Medal winner Gerald C. Wood (left), with SABR Executive Director Marc Appleman and Dorothy Seymour Mills.***

consistent, leading up until just days before the manuscript was finalized in April 2013.

Breaking the task down into manageable parts helped Lackey to handle this gargantuan effort, which he has described as being similar to "an archaeological dig": "The thing that finally got me over the mental block about trying to attack something that size, it comes down to the answer to that classic question: how do you eat an elephant?," said Lackey. "Well, the answer is, one bite at a time. And that's what writing a book was to me, it was like eating an elephant."

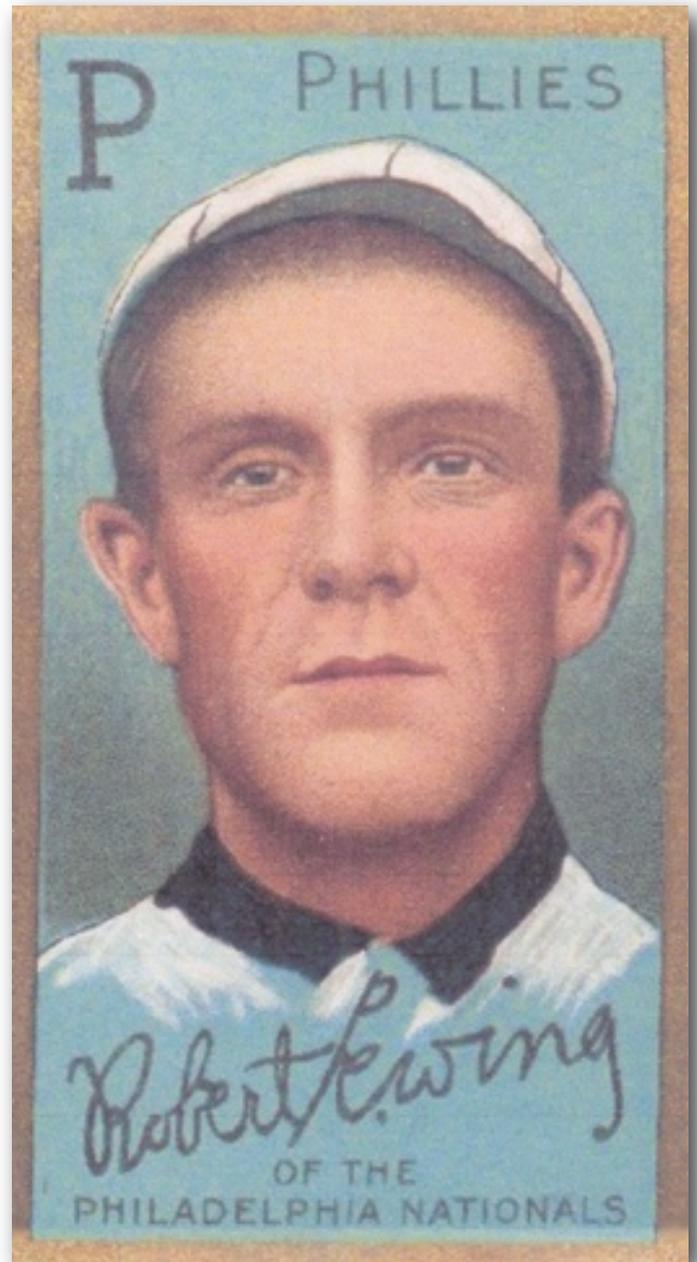
Gerald C. Wood, Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at Carson-Newman University, won the 2014 Seymour Medal for *Smoky Joe Wood*, which is presented annually (if there is a book worthy of recognition that year) at the NINE Spring Training conference for the best book of baseball history or biography published during the year prior. Wood, whose writing has typically focused on theater and film, had previously published seven other books, including being co-author of *Northsiders: Essays on the History and Culture of the Chicago Cubs*. While he had never spent more than a year-and-a-half writing a book previously, the exploration into Joe Wood's life — which included extensive interviews with family members, most notably with Robert K. Wood, Joe Wood's last surviving son — and mining through audio tapes set the stage for a ten-year project. "I am not a patient person," said Wood, "but I had to practice patience."

Wood's extensive research allowed him to include rich personal details in the book, which had never before been published: "After hearing Joe Wood's voice on those tapes, I decided that the tone of the book was going to be to reveal as much of the intimate life, the details, the everyday existence of Joe Wood as I could because I had the sources available," said Wood. "I was able to tell what he had for breakfast, what he put in the refrigerator, how he ate his ice cream, even what kind of soap he used when he was in his 70s."

Gerald Wood too would occasionally feel overwhelmed by the daunting task of chronicling Joe Wood's life: "Only about twice a day," said Wood. "Mainly, I think that happens when you bump up against a wall or you're looking for something you can't find. On my computer, each chapter had its own file. When I was overwhelmed, I would just close whatever file I was working on. Temporarily, that feeling of frustration would go away, and I would just jump into something else."

In completing his book, Wood cited the importance of the relationships which he developed with historical societies and librarians who could quickly handle his research requests, which provided him with time to travel and research. Wood likened the experience of writing his roughly 350-page biography of Joe Wood to being a history detective, gaining inspiration from the PBS show of the same name which illustrates how a team of researchers goes to great lengths to answer complex and unknown questions of historical consequence: "You do become a history detective [in writing a Deadball Era biography]," said Wood. "And I think you need to enjoy that part of the process. There are many people — especially in the post-modern world — who are bored by history, and they shouldn't write this type of thing because they end up cutting too many corners, writing things that aren't accurate, or embellishing. When I started, I didn't know if I could be a history detective, but I was glad to find out that I could."

It is telling that both Lackey and Wood could maintain such dedication to their respective



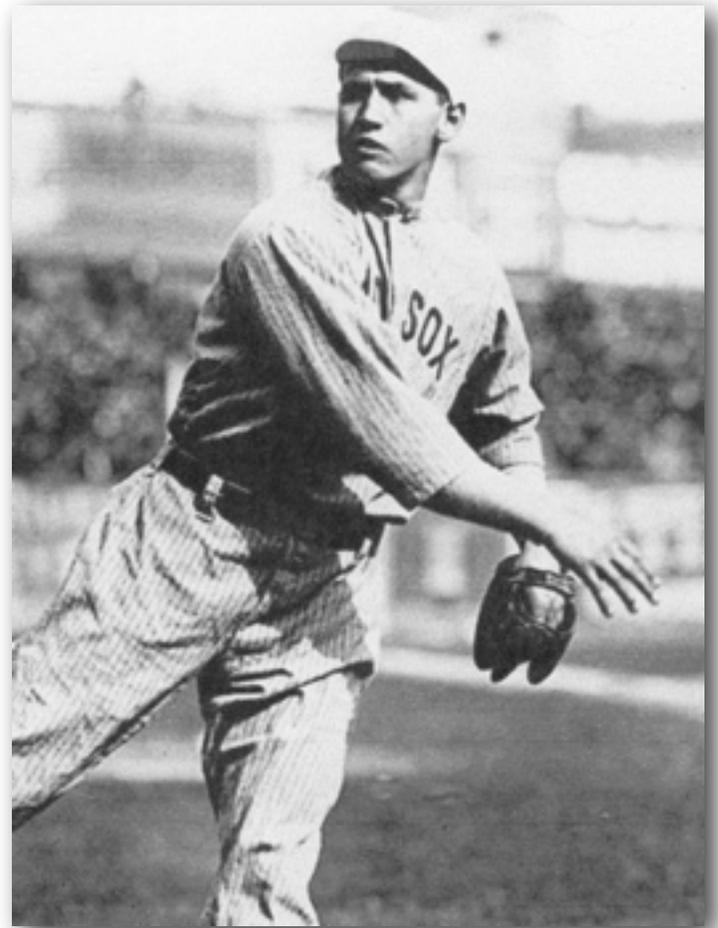
***Long Bob Ewing***

subjects for over a decade, from the beginning of their research until each book was published. Gerald Wood offers this idea of why he remained so focused on writing about Joe Wood: "I go back to that cliché which says that as you get older, you're wise to get interested in history, because that's where you're going to," said Wood. "Today, I care less and less about politics, but I sure care more about the things that shaped the world and shaped me. So I care about the '40s and the '50s, and I certainly care about baseball because baseball was a major part of my life, which was a

way that I connected with the world as a child. Baseball is really important to me, it's what shaped me.

“Going back to the Deadball Era is like forensics. You're taking things that have been dead to the world, and you're bringing them back to life. And so the farther you go back, the more exciting the forensic work is. “One of the sweetest things people in the Wood family said to me was, ‘we're so glad you did this book because, otherwise, granddaddy and grandmamma would have been lost.’ It may not be quite that dramatic since Wood was already a major figure in baseball history, but they made the point that the history is worth preserving or it will otherwise be gone forever. And, as Mike Lackey showed, they didn't have to be great players to have stories that are worth telling.”

When it comes to writing full-length biography, it is particularly important for an author to have a story worth recounting in great depth. Lackey noted at SABR 44 that if an author has to ask whether the tale is worth writing in book form, it probably is not. Similarly, Wood reflected that: “At some point in your pursuit of a baseball biography, you have to ask yourself, ‘Is there a story here?’” Once he had determined that Bob Ewing's biography would be of broader and longstanding interest, Lackey emphasized in his remarks in Houston that remaining excited about his subject, even during periods of inactivity, was key. “[O]nce I came back to it, I never lost my enthusiasm for it,” said Lackey. “If you have that kind of a story to tell, I think you can write a book. My other problem was that I didn't know if anybody would be interested in reading this book. But if you're excited about it and can tell the story well, I think you're going to find that there are other people who are also going to be interested.”



*Smoky Joe Wood*



*The Washington Times, April 10, 1913*

Audio of Mike Lackey's remarks at SABR 44 can be accessed via <https://sabr.box.com/shared/static/r4xghh6uieuhonah2hvj.mp3>.