

Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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I'd like to start off this issue of the newsletter by welcoming four new members to the Bibliography Committee:

1) Ron Replogle (P.O. Box 854, Hopkins, MN 55343) is actually a veteran Committee volunteer although he only formally joined the Committee at the Kansas City convention this summer. Ron has been providing many entries to Research in Baseball Index (more about this later), especially of some more obscure books. Ron's special interest is the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL).

2) John E. Spalding (1875 S. Bascom Ave., Suite 116-257, Campbell, CA 95008). In the July 1996 issue of this newsletter, I commended John's guide to baseball guides as a very useful research tool. For \$14.95, you get a book that lists all the feature articles that have appeared over the years in all the standard guides, registers, and record books from 1869 to 1995. It's invaluable. John also has published several books on the Pacific Coast League and is working on more.

3) Gregory P. King (2665 Belmar St., Sacramento, CA 95826-3651) is primarily interested in the Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers and proved a demon Dodger trivia expert at the recent Los Angeles regional meeting.

4) Wayne L. McElreavy (P.O. Box 1154, Claremont, NH 03743-1154) is bursting with ideas and I hope to get him involved in Research in Baseball Index, although he's showing a lot of interest in creating indexes for some older books.

Indexes

Joe Murphy has volunteered to index Warren Brown's *The Chicago Cubs* (1946) and Brad Sullivan is working on Harold Kaese & R.G. Lynch's update of *The Milwaukee Braves* (1954) in the Putnam team history series. That leaves only Fred Lieb's *The Baltimore Orioles* (1955) not spoken for among the Putnam series. We could also use an index to James M. Kahn's *The Umpire Story* (1953), also of the Putnam series.

I recall the suggestion from Tim Wiles at the Baseball Hall of Fame. Tim and his researchers would most like to see indexes for *Judge Landis and 25 Years of Baseball* (1947) by J.G. Taylor Spink and *The Old Ball Game* (1971) by Tristram P. Coffin. These are two books they check regularly which lack indexes. (Tim, we're still waiting for more suggestions.)

I see from *The SABR Bulletin* that Joe Murphy's updated index to SABR publications is available from SABR Headquarters in disk form or hard copy. I commend it to all of you who spend time flipping through old issues of *Baseball Research Journal* trying to find

an article you know is there. Joe's work is very useful—and very fast and easy to search, especially on a computer.

In regard to Frank Phelps' index to *The Sporting News Baseball Register* (1940–1995), I'm happy to report that I have sold enough copies to cover our printing costs. I will soon pass the remainder of the copies (about 75) to SABR Headquarters to sell. The pamphlet lists all players, managers, coaches, umpires, and former stars who appeared in a *Register* and lists the years they appeared. Those looking for a copy can send me \$6 (includes postage).

Research in Baseball Index (RBI)

You may remember RBI vividly as Baseball Online, a subject I've been harping on for a mere six years or so now. Ted Hathaway, who's the major force in running the project, and I concluded we needed a new name. Baseball Online had been usurped by somebody who was actually online, something we hadn't been able to accomplish in any meaningful way. Also, it seemed most likely that the database is going to be provided on disk, on CD-ROM, or perhaps even on paper. So, we scrambled around and came up with "Research in Baseball Index". It's still the same project and still in need of volunteers. A fuller report from Ted appears below, as well as a table showing how the database is doing, which is pretty damn well.

I would like to acknowledge some of the volunteers who've been so helpful. On the book side, which is my bailiwick, Bernie Esser is our leading producer, closely followed by Ron Replogle, Joe Murphy, and Steve Milman. Ted, who handles administrative aspects and the periodicals side, wants to canonize Brad Sullivan and Tim Cashion (who helps Ted and I run the project). Ted also wants to mention Ray Lisi, Skip McAfee, Bob Boynton, John McMurray, Terry Sloope, and Ron Kaplan.

Quick Review of Committee Projects

I recommend that you pitch in on one or more of the following:

1) RBI. An annotated, electronic catalog of baseball research materials, primarily composed of books and periodical articles, but also containing audio and video recordings, ephemera, and other items.

2) *Current Baseball Publications*. The third quarter version of this publication is included with this issue of the newsletter. In it are listed the baseball books, publications, and periodicals that have been published recently. It is compiled by Rich Arpi (3620 W. 32nd St., #105, Minneapolis, MN 55416). For non-Committee members, it is available from SABR Headquarters for a nominal subscription fee.

3) Newsletter. Produced quarterly by editor Skip McAfee (5533 Colts Foot Court, Columbia, MD 21045), it contains Committee news, research requests, and book reviews. All are invited to contribute in any way they see fit.

4) Book indexes. Using the Chicago style manual, we produce indexes for important baseball books that were published without them. There are literally thousands of books that could use this treatment.

That's all for now. Please get involved.

Research in Baseball Index (RBI)

Ted Hathaway

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We just completed this year's update of the RBI Cataloging Manual. Although it is nearly the same length (115 pages), it con-

tains dozens of new entry numbers and topic items, as well as expanded indexes, clearer instructions, and more examples. Copies of the abbreviated manual are free from either me or Committee Chairman Andy McCue. Copies of the full manual are free only to RBI volunteers. If you would like a copy for your own purposes, they are available from me for \$15 (includes postage).

I also completed recently a large mailing requesting donations of literature from magazine publishers and major and minor leagues and their teams. The response was impressive and I am still receiving items nearly every day. To date, I have gathered: eight major league team programs/yearbooks, ten major league team media guides, 12 minor league media guides, 42 minor league team programs/yearbooks, 13 minor league team media guides, eight Hall of Fame induction programs, and one rule book.

I also received numerous team newsletters/magazine programs and other publications:

Dodgers Magazine (two issues)
Blue Crew Newsletter (one issue)
Line Drive (Dodgers) (one issue)
Mariners Magazine (three issues)
Giants (two issues)
Ballpark News (Giants) (one issue)
Palm Beach Post (one issue)
Quake Rumbblings (Rancho Cucamonga Quakes) (two issues)
Southern Bases (one issue)
Wolf Briefs (Erie SeaWolves) (four issues)
Dodgers Alumni News (one issue)
Orioles Magazine (three issues)
Red Sox (six issues)
Cubs Quarterly (one issue)
Angels Halo Insider (one issue)
Hardball (two issues)
Giant Gold (14 issues)
Fanning the Flames (one issue)
Chicago Cubs Vineline (eight issues)
Dodgers Dugout (five issues)
Baseball's Active Leaders (18 issues)
Vintage & Classic Baseball Collector (eight issues)
The Glove Collector (three issues)
Outside Pitches (Orioles) (51 issues)
Boston Baseball (seven issues)
Ron Shandler's Baseball Forecaster (14 issues)
Brit Ball (10 issues)

If anyone is interested in cataloging any of these publications for RBI, please contact me.

I am also updating and expanding our RBI Web sites. We have already attracted volunteers (e.g., Terry Sloope and Keith Smith) using our old Web site. We hope to have even more success with the new sites. Tim Cashion has generously provided us with ample Web space for our new pages. I will mention the new Web address in the next newsletter.

Dave Pratt continues to work on our new software program and hopes to have it completed by the end of the year. I will continue to update Committee members on any further developments.

RBI Statistics

Level	Number	% change over last year
<i>Books</i>		
5	3,540	43.9%
4	1,435	20.3%
<u>Other</u>	<u>9,667</u>	<u>3.5%</u>
Total	14,642	12.7%

<i>Book Sections</i>		
5	6,157	21.9%
4	1,291	72.1%
<u>Other</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>5.4%</u>
Total	7,487	28.3%

<i>Magazine/newspaper articles</i>		
5	23,058	156.8%
4	0	-100.0%
<u>Other</u>	<u>3,040</u>	<u>-58.5%</u>
Total	26,098	60.1%

<i>Total</i>		
5	32,755	98.7%
4	2,726	40.2%
<u>Other</u>	<u>12,746</u>	<u>-23.7%</u>
Total	48,227	37.3%

Book Review

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

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SPORTSWRITER: The Life and Times of Grantland Rice.

Charles Fountain. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 293p. \$25.

There is considerable material of interest to SABR members in this biography of Grantland Rice, particularly in the first two-thirds of the book. Fountain includes a brief section (p.39-40) on the childhood ball games Rice played. He relates in some detail (p.48-57) Rice's baseball career at Vanderbilt, where he was eventually captain of the varsity. He tells the story of Rice's "discovery" of Ty Cobb (p.69-70). He covers Rice's year as a baseball writer in Cleveland and his composing of his "Casey at the Bat" parodies (p.78-82), as well as his first years in New York City covering the Giants (p.120-125) and his relationship with Babe Ruth (p.157-161). Fountain also covers in some detail Rice's reaction to the events of 1919-1921: the 1919 World Series and subsequent scandal and the creation of the commissionership and appointment of Judge Landis (p.168-180).

None of this is particularly new, and the book's title suggests its focus might be on the development of sportswriting over the first half of the twentieth century. Since Americans have learned much of what they know about baseball through sportswriters, this is an important subject. As it turns out, the book is more exclusively a biography of Rice, but Fountain does also treat sportswriting, and I'll try to summarize here his understanding of its development.

On the surface, it's simple: Fountain describes sportswriting before Rice, then Rice's domination of sportswriting, then sportswriting after Rice. Fountain locates the appearance of the sports page in American newspapers in the 1880s and notes that the best writers of sports soon left for other positions. He cites Richard Mandell (p.60) to the effect that "sports writers were poorly paid and were often the tools of promoters". Fountain then concentrates (p.61-62) on the "bizarre patois" developed by sportswriters in the 1890s to describe sports contests.

Fountain has occasion to comment on sportswriting in Chicago at the time Rice moves from his job in Cleveland back to Nashville in 1907. He mentions Hugh Fullerton, Hugh E. Keough, and Charley Dryden (and that Rice especially approved of Keough for his sentiment and Dryden for his wit) and reminds us that Ring Lardner will turn up in Chicago soon. But he doesn't make clear that these are Rice's colleagues in a new kind of sportswriting. In fact, I find myself here assuming that they are, rather than being able to quote Fountain (see p.83-84).

Fountain spends some time distinguishing the "Gee Whiz!" school of sportswriting from the "Aw Nuts!" school (p.133-136). He describes the distinction as a natural, inevitable division among sportswriters. (It may be that this is the best way of describing twentieth century sportswriting up to World War II.) Fountain compares Rice, the gee-whizzer, to colleague W.O. McGeehan, the aw-nutser. One is an optimist, the other a pessimist. Once again the writing style is most important. It is curious that "sportswriting" does not occur in the book's index, but "Gee Whiz!" sportswriting and "Aw Nuts!" sportswriting do.

Fountain is hard on sportswriting in the 1930s, noting that most of Rice's gifted colleagues had either died or moved on to other kinds of writing. He concludes (p.256) that "sports-page readers in the thirties were ... left with liars, sycophants, pretenders, and imitators". They either imitated Damon Runyon or Rice himself. Fountain mentions prominent members of a new breed to emerge after World War II: Red Smith, Jimmy Cannon, John Lardner, Dick Young. But he's a little vague about how they changed sportswriting in postwar America. Rice is his example of the prewar sportswriter who is being left behind (p.268, 278). Postwar sportswriters found their stories beyond the playing fields, in locker-room interviews, rather than in game descriptions, for radio and television were now describing the games.

I wish Fountain's history of the sportswriter were more full. In addition to his comments of changing styles of sportswriting, its craft, I'd like to know more of the economic, social, and cultural contexts of sportswriting. It may just be that Fountain's focus—Grantland Rice, because he was a celebrity sportswriter—removed himself from these contexts. In any case, we learn much more about Rice than about sportswriting in this perhaps mistitled book.

Book Reviews

Ron Kaplan

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LETTERS TO MICKEY

Fans and Friends of Mickey Mantle. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. 138p. \$18

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED PRESENTS MANTLE REMEMBERED

Introduction and original text by Robert W. Creamer. New York: Warner Books, 1995. 95p. \$14.95

THE LAST HERO: THE LIFE OF MICKEY MANTLE

David Falkner. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. 255p. \$24

As this review is written, the Yankees have just won the American League pennant for the first time in 15 years. The next stop is the World Series, a venue which Mickey Mantle saw 12 times in his first 14 seasons. The original "Mr. October", Mantle had long been an American icon/hero. But his life took on a new essence following admission of his addiction problems, his stint at the Betty Ford Clinic, and finally, his battle against cancer. Following his death in August 1995, he once again became the subject of numerous accounts of his life. Doubtlessly, some of these projects were put together hastily to maximize the commercial impact his passing would have.

Letters to Mickey is a collection culled from the thousands received by the ailing Yankee during the last few years of his life. Most came during his hospital stays, although there are some from his days at the Ford Clinic.

The epistles were written by a cross-section of people. Represented here are children too young to have witnessed Mantle's prowess on the field, senior citizens who did, and baby boomers for whom Mantle was a genuine hero. One missive told of a grand-

mother who would lock the kids out of the house lest they distract her attentions from watching #7 on the TV. Those who never cared for baseball but were well aware of Mantle's status relate stories of family members and how his existence affected their lives.

Most of the letters obviously are there to pull at the reader's heartstrings. There are pleas for Mantle to "hang in there" from fans for whom he was such an inspiration. Abuse victims found their escape in the Yankees' and Mantle's exploits. Alcoholics wrote to express their gratitude that Mantle came forward and admitted his problem, enabling them to find the strength to seek help. Cancer patients and their families also thank Mantle for opening the eyes of the general public. With his final illness, he brought attention to organ donor programs in a way that no advertising campaign could.

Letters to Mickey includes Mantle's "last letter to his fans", which reads like a mea culpa for his assumed wrongdoings. During the last few months of his life, Mantle was wont to discuss these "sins", including his alcoholism and his poor performance as a family man.

But there are problems with this type of book. In an effort to be as authentic as possible, the letters are recreated from their original form. Many handwritings are difficult to decipher; even copies of typewritten notes are illegible in many cases. This may sound picayune, but in a book containing no other narrative, page after page of hard-to-read letters add up, regardless of the sentiment behind them. In fact, the number of letters is daunting, despite what must have been an extremely difficult piling down. There is no question of Mantle's place in Americana. He was transgenerational, a hero to thousands. But we get the point. It's difficult to believe that many readers can get all the way through *Letters to Mickey*.

Another book that came out almost immediately after Mantle's death was issued by *Sports Illustrated*. *Mantle Remembered* is introduced by Robert Creamer, author of such books as *Babe and Baseball in '41*. Calling on the magazine's archives, this slim volume is broken into three sections: "The Early Years" (1951-1956), "The Prime Years" (1957-1964), and "The Later Years" (1965-1995). Touchingly illustrated with nostalgic black-and-white photos, the stories are neither doting nor harsh, an excellent representation of Mantle's career from a rookie with unlimited potential to an oft-injured prototype for the superstars of today to a soul lost in retirement.

One particularly amusing item is "Mantle and Maris in the Movies", from April 1962. The story reports on the M&M boys as they cash in on their fabled 1961 season by stepping in front of the Kleig lights to appear in *Safe at Home*, considered to be one of the worst baseball movies ever filmed. Although generally amused by the movie-making process, Mantle complained: "I never saw such a business. Seems you stand around all day doing nothing and then do about five minutes of the show." Sounds a bit like what some critics say about baseball's pace.

The other stories are a mixture of triumph and melancholy. On the one hand, Mantle is lauded for his strength and speed and undeniable talent. On the other, he is pitied for the way his body betrayed him. Mantle is the subject of awe when managers, teammates, and opposing players marvel at how he hauled his aching body back onto the field time after time. His attempts to come back in the 1961 World Series from an abscess that was still bleeding is legendary. But how much more could he have been, could he have done, had he invested time in rehabilitation for his numerous injuries, rather than believing his body and skills would never leave him?

There were seemingly limitless expectations placed on Mantle by thousands of baseball fans in general and Yankee fans in particular. In his introduction, Creamer explains: "He was in the World Series twelve times in fourteen years. Autumn after autumn he was not just on a local but on a national stage." Creamer concedes that other players, such as Musial, Mays, or Williams, might have been better, but because their appearances in the Fall Classic were no-

where as constant, they never won that national audience.

The Last Hero was released at the beginning of 1996 and is the most in-depth study of Mantle. David Falkner, author of several baseball works, including biographies of Jackie Robinson and Billy Martin, starts with Mantle's humble beginnings in Depression-era Oklahoma, his tutelage under the hand of his beloved, doomed father, Mutt. Falkner injects little known anecdotes to separate this book from the many that have previously been published. For example, he notes that had a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals (the local favorite for Mantle's family) not been rained out, Mickey might have worn red birds on his jersey instead of pinstripes.

Other interesting tales, in light of how biographies have moved to include the darker side of their subjects, include George Weiss, one of the most parsimonious general managers in sports history, blackmailing Mantle to take a smaller raise lest Weiss be forced to show some compromising photos to Mickey's wife, Marilyn.

Once again we read of Mantle's dazzling highs, mixed with indications of troubling times, including drinking, infidelity, and, for all practical purposes, the abandonment of his sons during their childhoods.

It is the examination of Mantle's life after retirement that will most sadden his fans. "Though Mantle was just 31 as he entered the 1963 season, the great years were behind him," writes Falkner. Even as the Yankees were winning the 1964 Series, the team was collapsing. Yogi Berra was an ineffectual manager and was fired after the season. Players aged, became injured, and their replacements were not of the same character—"Roger Repoz instead of Riger Maris", as Falkner puts it. As one of the last links with the old Yankee dynasties, Mantle took an unfair brunt of fan's impatience, unaided at times by his own brusqueness with the public and media.

Falkner credits Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* for being the instrument that laid Mantle low in the eyes of baseball fans, reporting heretofore sacred secrets players kept for each other within the confines of the locker room. "It was the age of the antihero, and Bouton's irreverence fit the times perfectly." Castigated as a Judas, Bouton led the way for the new age of biographies that paint their subjects in less-than-ideal colors.

For all his shortcomings, Mantle in retirement was a pitiable figure. The monies he'd earned during his career wasn't enough, investments he'd made never panned out, and he was reduced to hiring on as a glad-hander for country clubs, department stores, and, in 1980, a casino, which led Commissioner Bowie Kuhn to ban him from holding a job in organized baseball. Falkner notes that Mantle would not have suffered the indignity of trying to make a living off his past glories had there been a job for him in the game. Mantle had wanted to coach or manage, but there was never anything available—not unlike Babe Ruth's desire to lead his team from the bench when he'd finished leading them with his bat.

With the nostalgia craze of the 1980s, Mantle became the subject of national interest once again. And with his admission that he was an alcoholic he became the object of affection once more, as if that admission had made him more human, more approachable. Mantle's television appearance with Bob Costas did more to revive his legend than anything else up to that point. A bemused Mantle confessed that he never understood why he was held up to such adoration, and how uncomfortable it was for him to handle.

With the news that Mantle was seriously ill, all was forgiven. During his final days, Mantle tried to make some good out of his illness, as Falkner poignantly depicts.

The Last Hero's strength lies in Mantle's life after baseball. There are plenty of books that tell and retell accounts of his on-the-field (and some off-the-field) exploits. It is only a sorrowful situation such as Mantle's abrupt physical decline that a soul-cleansing of this sort comes out.

With time, there will surely be more books on Mantle, both favorable and damning. These three comprise a sort of "rush to judgment" endemic to the passing of a legend. Time and a more detached examination of Mickey Mantle's life is required to do his story justice.

High Hose

Skip McAfee

When I was first exposed to baseball, fielders left their gloves on the field when coming in to bat, scoreboards were non-exploding and hand-operated, there was peace and quiet (non-music) between innings, non-confrontational umpires wore coats and ties and signaled outs by raising their right arms upward, a sacrifice fly was a squashed bug, a designated hitter was a sister who was allowed to whack you, and a pitcher's vocabulary did not include terms such as mechanics, movement, location, velocity, command, closer, circle change, cut fastball, backdoor slider, split finger, and rotator cuff. And the players wore their socks in such a way that you could tell what color they were.

Yes, of course, baseball changes with the times, but I do appreciate those few throwbacks who wear their hose high, or at least semi-high. Here's an all-star team of current high hosers (can we recruit more?):

1b	Will Clark
2b	Kevin Seitzer
ss	Ozzie Guillen
3b	Chipper Jones
of	Darryl Strawberry (high hoser, briefly)
of	Curtis Goodwin
of	Derek Bell(??)
dh	Jim Thome
c	Sal Fasano
p	Joey Hamilton
bench	Mike MacFarlane
	Don Slaught
	Mike Grace
	John Wetteland
	Joey Eischen
	C.J. Nitkowski
	Mark Johnson

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