


KELTNER'S HOT CORNER



Ken Keltner Badger State Chapter

December 2023 In This Issue:

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Upcoming Events

Keltner Book Club

Author Lincoln A Mitchell

The One Hundred Most Important People in Baseball History
Zoom Thursday, Dec 7 @ 7 PM CT
Register in advance [here](#).

Holiday Baseball Get Together

J&Bs Blue Ribbon Bar & Grill
Saturday, December 9 @ 2PM

Old Time Ball Players Hall of Fame Banquet

New Berlin Ale House
Sun, December 10th @ 4:30 PM
Honoring Bob Buege

Called Up with author Zak Ford

Zoom, Wed., Dec 13 @ 7 PM CT
Register in advance [here](#).

SABR 52

August 7-11, 2024
Minneapolis

Direct questions or comments to:
Dennis D. Degenhardt

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Happy Holidays

Upcoming Events

Holiday Baseball Get Together

Saturday, December 9 @ 2:00 PM

J&B's Blue Ribbon Bar & Grill - 5230 W Bluemound



With the busy holiday season upon us, can we slow down for a couple of hours to get together to talk baseball and stuff; mostly enjoying being with fellow SABR members. Let's do so at J&Bs, grab a table, and sit around sharing some holiday cheer and swapping stories on Saturday, December 9th.

Old Time Ball Players Hall of Fame Banquet

Sunday, December 10 @ 4:30 Social, 6:00 Dinner

New Berlin Ale House – 16000 W Cleveland Ave, New Berlin

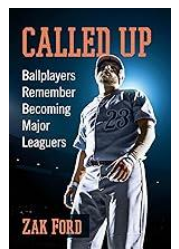
In addition to the Old Time Ball Players announcing their 42nd Hall of Fame Class, they will be honoring Bob Buege with the Paul Schramka Lifetime Achievement Award, a well deserved honor. Tickets may be limited, contact Greg Ebbert at 262-292-4002.

Called Up with author Zak Ford

Virtual, Wednesday, December 13 @ 7:00 PM CT

To reach the majors, a ballplayer must not only possess natural ability and world-class skills but must also overcome nearly insurmountable odds culminating with putting on a big league uniform.

Zak Ford captures the players stories on how they were called up to The Show drawing on original interviews with more than 100 players who debuted between 1961 and 2018. He will talk about the process and tell the callup stories of former Brewers.



Also, this book will make a great holiday gift.

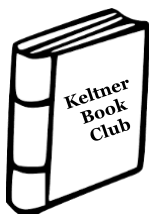
You can buy and/or learn about *Called Up* [here](#), a great holiday gift. We will have a drawing for one attendee to receive a copy of the book.

Register for the meeting [here](#).

Keltner Book Club News

By Mary Shea

Keltner Book Club Virtual Meeting Thursday, December 7th, 7:00 PM CT Special Guest: Author - Lincoln Mitchell



Our next book club selection will be *The One Hundred Most Important Players in Baseball History*, by Lincoln A. Mitchell. So, it's a countdown book, but this one focuses on players who aren't necessarily the greatest but have made significant and special contributions to baseball and society. Many are well known, but some are more obscure but nonetheless fascinating, including a few women. It includes plenty of unique insight and interesting nuggets and is really an enjoyable read.

Lincoln Mitchell has had a remarkable career as a scholar, political analyst, and writer. Read more about him and his work [here](#). More info on the book can be found [here](#):

All meeting attendees will be eligible for a drawing to win a copy of the book.

All are welcome to attend. You can register for the Zoom meeting [here](#). SABR will forward login instructions.



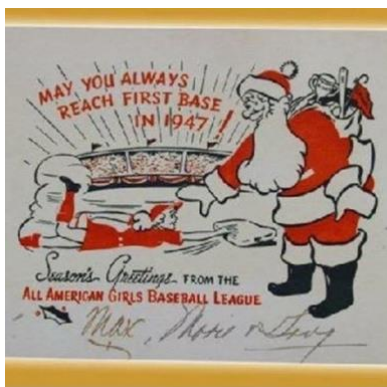
Looking Ahead to 2024!

What a year it's been! Thank you to all who joined us for virtual meetings. Our guests have been amazing, and our SABR members ask the best questions! I'm so appreciative of time spent with all of you talking about baseball and hope you enjoy the discussions as well.

There are a few really interesting books coming out next year, so look for a heads up about those in the January newsletter.

Happy Holidays to you and yours and wishing you a wonderful new year full of fun, good health, and baseball.

And, as always, happy reading! Mary



Recap Hinchliffe Stadium with Donna Muscarella



Stay Home With SABR: Donna Muscarella, "Hinchliffe Stadium"

We had the pleasure of having Donna Muscarella joined us to talk about Hinchliffe Stadium and her art on Wednesday, November 29th.

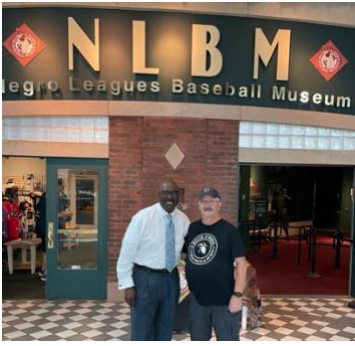
Having gone to her first ballgame at age 2 1/2 (and remembering it!), the ice breaker question about her earliest memory had to be even earlier. She replied about the Sunday dinners and arriving to find her grandfather listening to ballgames with an ear bud in one ear and a transistor radio by the other as she is demonstrating in the picture.

For us Midwesterners, she talked about the Great Falls of the Passaic River in Patterson, NJ. For most of us, we learned that the city was founded by Alexander Hamilton (yes of the \$10 fame). She also related how surprised she was to find that one of the few remaining Negro League ballparks was so close to her home. As a photo artist, she has taken numerous pictures of the Great Falls and when she read about Hinchliffe, she realized that the parking lot of the old building she parked by when taking those photos was Hinchliffe. From there her love of baseball and photography were paired capturing the old Negro League field. Watch the recording to learn more.

She also has taken her two passions creating baseball card art that includes a Hinchliffe set and mixed media cards ala Allen and Ginter. Jim Wilson won the drawing for a copy of her Hinchliffe baseball cards.

It was a fun evening with a very talented artist and baseball lover. You can enjoy the recording by clicking on Donna's picture or [here](#).

DDD's Discursive



I finally have settled on a title for my occasional notes, and in doing so, I'm getting carried away with looking for another D (and I live on Daisy Dr.), I found discursive - passing aimlessly from one subject to another; digressive; rambling. Seems right to me!

We have a new topic highlighted in the In This Issue. At the Fall meeting, Tom Rathkamp approached me with an idea for a new article for the Hot Corner. That was music to my ears. His concept is looking at different aspects of the game using stats to help understand why or why not. Great idea and the first article is a great start. Thanks, Tom. What jumped out at me was the strikeouts. I knew they were crazy but double, yikes! What did you see in the article.

We also have a return of Rex Hamann's American Association Ankle looking back 100 years to the 1923 Milwaukee Brewers. What a difference a century makes!

Not included this month is the article on the second (or third) Wisconsin players to make their debut in 2023. I had another busy month, especially chasing a toddler and I was unable to complete either.

As the year end is rapidly approaching, we are all busy. Dave Klement has pointed out that we have four events in six days (I add a Chapters Leaders meeting in there, too!). But that's okay by me since I enjoy the people we meet via zoom and in person, spending time with fellow Keltner members and taking baseball beyond the season (unlike many of you, I am in hibernation until spring training). Thank you all for your friendship, support, and kind words. We've had a fun year, and I am looking forward to another next year. Here's wishing you the best this holiday season with family and friends and may Santa be kind to one and all. I'm hoping to again skip the lump of coal, not sure how I've managed that so often. Happy Holidays.



Get to Know

Get to Know...Jim Misudek

How many people can make this claim, "I have worked for three MLB organizations that have called Milwaukee home, Milwaukee Brewers (2007-08), Atlanta Braves (2009-15); former Milwaukee Braves, and the Baltimore Orioles (2015-21); former Milwaukee Brewers (1901)." Fond du Lac Dock Spiders General Manager, Jim Misudek can.

James David Misudek, Jim, was born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin as Ken and Sue (Stollfus) Misudek's first son, born on January 5, 1984. Two brothers, twins, Mark and Dan followed. Dad is a retired computer engineer and the only Wisconsin IBM employee to reach 50 years with the company. His mom is a retired prison administrator. Misudek is proud to share baseball birthdays with fellow Fond du Lac native, [Jim Gantner](#), [Juan Nieves](#), [Charlie Hough](#), Ron Kittle, John Russell, Jeff Fassero, J.P. Arencibia, Eduardo Escobar, C. J. Cron, and [Ban Johnson](#).

Most of Jim's formal education occurred in Fond du Lac (French for "farthest end of the lake". Wouldn't that depend on what end of Lake Winnebago you are starting at?). He attended Roberts Elementary for kindergarten through sixth grade. Theisen Junior High School followed for the next three grades leading to Misudek's sophomore and junior years at Goodrich High School. His senior year in the fall of 2001, was in the new Fond du Lac High School, graduating with the Class of 2002. Staying close to home he attended the University of Wisconsin - Fond du Lac, now a branch of UW - Oshkosh earning his associate degree in 2004.



When asked about his earliest baseball memory, Jim replied, "Aside from playing, I recall walking into the seating bowl of County Stadium while hearing the voice of Bob Betts. Thankfully, I can still hear his voice in my head." His favorite team was the Seattle Mariners first and the Brewers secondly. Why? "[Ken Griffey, Jr.](#) is my all-time favorite player, by far, and as a right-handed hitter, [Edgar Martinez's](#) swing was the one emulated."

Misudek's baseball career started with Fond du Lac Youth Baseball, the city does not have the Little League brand, primarily playing first base, and he also pitched. When needed, he even covered third, left, and right

field, all of the corners of the diamond, through his sophomore year of college. Since UW-Fond du Lac did not have baseball, Jim started the club baseball program there. In high school, he also participated in high jump on the track and field team during his junior year.



The first step towards his career was attending the University of Wisconsin– La Crosse, majoring in and graduating with a major in Sport Management. While in school, Jim interned with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers in 2006 and as a Media Relations Intern for the Milwaukee Brewers the following year. In 2008, the Brewers asked Misudek to return but didn't have Media Relations Internship available. They instead found a position for him as a Sales Representative while finding media relations work for him as well. His final internship in 2009 was again as Media Relations Intern for the Cincinnati Reds where he did some traveling with the team.

In 2009, Jim became the Media Relations Coordinator for the Atlanta Braves.

There is an old saying in baseball, to move up - you need to move out and in 2015, Jim did so moving to the Baltimore Orioles as their Senior Manager, Baseball Communications. For both the Braves and Orioles, he was responsible for all team communications, including press releases, daily game notes, and media guides. He also coordinated all media and interview requests. He went to Spring Training for the entirety and on all team road trips. But the job didn't stop on the road, it was often more challenging, with a full staff as resources at home.

Misudek talked about working in media relations, "Life on the road is a grind - very long hours and the pace doesn't let up. It can be very invigorating, but also tiring." For the MLB jewel events, Postseason, All-Star Game and World Baseball Classic, Jim added, "I was selected by the Commissioner's Office to assist, a nice honor for those in the field." At these events, he did the usual, coordinating all media relations and communications as well as facilitating requests. One of his duties at these games was getting the end of game, on-field interviews with the media covering the event. "That was me in the background grabbing the players for those interviews."

What drew him to front office positions in baseball? "I was drawn to a career in baseball by all of the behind-the-scenes aspects of the game. Through my internships, I was able to see that the communications department was involved in multiple areas and worked collaboratively with everyone."

On the move again, Misudek was able to return home to Fond du Lac in 2021, becoming the General Manager of the Northwoods League's Fond du Lac Dock Spiders. The GM for the college development team is responsible for the team's operation while the field manager handles most of the players side of the business. As an organization, they have a simple mission statement, "Our team will create the best entertainment experience in Wisconsin so that every guest walks away with a smile and the desire to return."

What was the appeal to become the general manager of a team in a major college summer development league? Jim answered, "A few things were appealing to running a Northwoods League team. First, the team is located in my hometown of Fond du Lac. Since the team's inaugural season in 2017, I have followed their progress with much interest. After spending so much time away from Wisconsin, returning home was definitely a draw."

Continuing Jim added, "Second, the Dock Spiders share ownership with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers – the same organization in which I started my career in baseball. During my career in the game, including time with four Major League organizations, my current club has been the best to work for. This organization treats people better than most of the others I have worked for in the past."

And "Third, baseball at this level is largely free of some of the egos, bureaucracy, and general challenges that come with MLB jobs. There are certainly things that I miss about my previous roles, but having a direct effect on the way that people experience the game has been very rewarding. Community involvement for a team at this level is unbelievable and incredibly satisfying."

In the fall of 2007, Misudek met Jessica Blada, she was working for the Milwaukee Bucks at the time. A mutual friend with the Brewers, who knew her from working part-time in the Miller Park scoreboard control room, introduced them. Jim married the Oak Creek resident in November of 2014. He explained, "like most baseball weddings, plan on them between November and January." Jessica does marketing and events now with a dental equipment and software company. She has a baseball background that included working with Scott Bush with the then Fresno Triple-A team.

Misudek joined SABR while with the Brewers. "As a team communications professional, I feel that it is important to know as much as possible about all of the statistics by which players and clubs are being

evaluated.” This has worked well, “For so many years, writing and baseball research was a major part of my daily life. From media guides, daily game notes, press releases, and various projects, such as a media pitch for Dale Murphy for the HOF, I have written or contributed to many publications and research projects at the team and league levels.

The usual SABR follow-up question is about attending SABR events like the annual convention? Jim had a different aspect. “I have not attended any national SABR events but was largely involved in planning SABR 50 with Scott Bush, during my time with the Orioles.” By the time SABR 50 finally occurred, he had returned to Fond du Lac.

Most SABR members have special or unique baseball interests. Misudek does as well, “In addition to baseball history of all kinds, I have a keen interest in the following: ballparks, baseball design for uniforms and logos, team travel, baseball media, and baseball geography - where teams are located, may locate someday, or where people come from.”

If Misudek could have a “time machine moment” where or who would he go back to see? “Specifically, it would be extremely interesting to visit Milwaukee during the Braves 1957 championship run. I would like to see how the community rallied around the team and compare it to the Brewers’ 2008 run.” And Jim would like another visit, “I would love to see Major League Baseball games at some point during the late 1920s to 1950s. I would find it interesting to watch players from the “golden age” and compare their skills to those of players of today. I would also enjoy visiting many of the bygone ballparks, as well.”

What else would you like the membership to know about you that we may not know? Jim had interest in becoming a professional umpire when he was growing up, “I umpired various levels of baseball for over 10 years. While in college, I was officiating high school and college games. My jobs in baseball ultimately kept me from pursuing this, but I have missed umpiring since giving it up.” And “As you can guess, development is a major aspect of life in the Northwoods League. On the field, players, coaches, and umpires are looking to move on to the next level. Off the field, our staff and interns are looking to make an impact on the organization and move on to their next challenge. I find it equally rewarding to be a part of the journey for everyone – both on and off the field. I am incredibly proud to see them advance.”

In closing, any final words of wisdom, Jim? “Reaching out to the young people working in baseball (at all levels) will be the key to SABR’s future success. Many of the young people in the game are looking for ways to set themselves apart, as well as be involved in something meaningful. I strongly believe that SABR could serve both of these purposes.”



Stats & Stuff

Stats & Stuff

by Tom Rathkamp

In the 1950's and prior, the concept of “statistical splits” had not reached the baseball landscape. For years, managers suspected that a hitter might have fared better against left-handed pitchers than he did right-handers. However, parlaying that into actual game strategy did not pre-occupy a manager's psyche until decades later.

The 1957 World Champion Milwaukee Braves found success for many well-documented reasons. They had the pitching, hitting (including ample power), and defeating the mighty New York Yankees will always be “front and center” in Milwaukee sports lore. Aaron and Matthews, Spahn and Burdette, and an entire cast of additional talent put them over the top.

What did the Braves' glorious season look like, peering through several “split lenses?”

- Their two most successful months started with the letter A. They were **9-2** in April and **19-7** in August (**13-3** away from home). Starting fast and finishing faster book-ended their season.
- Clutch hitting turns losses into wins, in any era. The Braves hit **.245/.350/.448** with runners in scoring position, clearly better than their season totals of **.235/.315/.409**.
- Milwaukee County Stadium was a pitcher's park, without a doubt. Although park effects were not yet tracked, one glance at their home/road splits clears the fog – especially on the mound. Their team ERA was **3.55** at home, **4.13** away.

- Braves hitters defied the pitching advantage of the park. They hit **.235/.324/.412** at home; **.234/.307/.405** on the road.
- The Braves scored **362** runs at home, **363** away.
- Braves pitchers clouted six home runs, two each from their two best pitchers: Spahn and Burdette.
- The Braves had the same team batting average in June and July (**.274**).
- The 1957 World Series started on October 2nd and ended on October 10th. That's 7 games in 8 days. Imagine that occurring now.
- On July 25th, Warren Spahn had a **10-8** record after a lost to the Phillies. After that, he would reel off 9 straight victories, eventually finishing the season at **21-10**.
- How likely was it that Burdette would go **3-0** in the series? In the regular season, he had the highest ERA (**3.72**) of the four primary starters.
- Finding success against the stiffest of NL competition is key to most pennant races. Against the second-, third-, and fourth-place teams, the Braves went **41-25**, thanks mostly to a dominant **18-4** mark against the fourth-place Reds. They were at or above **.500** against all NL teams.

One of the fun (often intense) parts of baseball banter is the comparing of teams in different eras. We know that ballparks are smaller, that hitters whiff more today (in this author's view, at a disgusting rate), and that starting pitchers are a diminishing breed. Team success notwithstanding, a brief comparison between the 1957 Milwaukee Braves and 2023 Milwaukee Brewers adds clarity to the evolution of the game (biggest differences highlighted in **red**).

<u>Category</u>	<u>1957 Braves</u>	<u>2023 Brewers</u>
Games Played	155	162
Strikeouts (hitters)	731	1412
Walks (hitters)	461	591
IP - Starters	1052	898.2
IP - Relievers	359	564
# of pitchers used	14	34
# of hitters with +100 SOs	0	5

As you can see, the difference in games played is negligible in revealing the stark era differences. Numbers can reveal those differences in ways that words cannot, and vice versa. This column will strive to do both and hopefully provide more flavor to this wonderful newsletter.

Keltner Hot Corner Archives

You can now view or download past copies of the Keltner Hot Corner at: [Ken Keltner Badger State Newsletters](#)

Use of Links

Links in the *Keltner Hot Corner* are used to enhance the articles with the majority going to players SABR [BioProject](#) and [baseball-reference.com](#) as well as other related sites.

Who is Ken Keltner? See his SABR [Biography](#).

Schabowski's Super Stumpers

December Trivia By Rick Schabowski

Rick continues on a roll with some interesting and challenging questions this month. It may be the holidays, but Rick isn't taking it easy – Good Luck!



1. Who is the youngest player to hit his first HR in the major leagues?
2. Who are the two pitchers who tossed two no-hitters and a one-hitter in the same season?
3. The Oakland A's are moving to Las Vegas. Name the last franchise to relocate, the year, and the city they moved to.
4. Who is the only player to have a more than a 40-game hitting streak since Joe DiMaggio's 56-game streak?
5. Name the pitcher who holds the most consecutive strike outs in a single with 10

Do you have a baseball trivia question or two, to stump Our Stumper? If so, send your questions to [Rick](#) to see if you can trip him up and he'll include it in a future *Keltner Hot Corner* giving you credit - bragging rights - for your stumper(s).

Trivia Answers are [here](#)



Wisconsin Born Players SABR Bios

With the addition of the three new Wisconsin born major leaguers in 2023 there have been 257* total and 93 have SABR Bios written on them. To get to know these guys better, we will include a SABR Bio monthly starting from the oldest with a completed bio to the most recent. Yes, that will take at least eight years to complete, and longer as new bios are finished. If you are interested in seeing the entire list of these players, or there is a Wisconsin born player that interests you and needs a SABR Bio, contact [Dennis](#).

(*Includes J.P. Feyereisen who was born across the river in Minnesota because that was where his mom's doctor's birth hospital was located. She left Wisconsin for the birth and returned upon release.)

This month's Wisconsin bio is on Portage's George Davies, the 1,653rd major leaguer, 23rd from Wisconsin. He pitched for Milwaukee's third major league team, the 1891 Brewers.

George Davies

This article was written by [Bill Lamb](#)

By all outward appearances, George Davies was leading the good life in the early autumn of 1906. A dozen years removed from a short but respectable stint as a major leagues pitcher – he had won 10 games for the second-half pennant winning Cleveland Spiders in 1892 – Davies was now an eminent citizen of Waterloo, Wisconsin: an esteemed local physician, a member of various civic and fraternal organizations, and the happily married father of two young children. Family, friends, and neighbors were, therefore, stunned by the death of George Davies, found lifeless in his office on the evening of September 22, 1906. The 38-year old doctor had committed suicide.

An inquest concluded that the cause of death was an overdose of Bromidia, a powerful sedative.¹ If the coroner's jury further determined what caused this sad act of self-destruction, it saw no need to publish it. All that found its way into newsprint was that "the death of George W. Davies is deplored by a large circle of friends. He was himself a friendly man. His nature was genial, his attachments strong. His keen wit and bright intellect made him welcome in every circle. ... The entire community extends a heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved wife and little ones."² While



DR. GEO. W. DAVIES.

the Waterloo weekly was silent on the subject, many village residents privately suspected that a drinking problem was the root cause of the tragedy.

The regrettably too-brief life of George Washington Davies began in Portage, Wisconsin on February 22, 1868. He was the sixth and youngest child born to David Charles Davies (1833-1918) and his wife, the former Dorothy Roberts (1833-1887), both immigrants from Wales.³ George's father was himself a distinguished rural doctor and his children grew up in comfortable circumstances. Around 1869, the Davies family relocated to the nearby town of Columbus, Wisconsin, where George spent his youth. Intelligent and athletic, George excelled in both the classroom and on the baseball diamond, primarily as a right-handed pitcher. Following graduation from Columbus High School in 1885, he enrolled in Ripon College, a small liberal arts institution near Green Bay, where he remained for a year.

Davies entered the University of Wisconsin at Madison in the fall of 1888. At the time, the University did not field an intercollegiate baseball team, having only intra-mural competition between selected nines for each class. Davies served as captain and pitcher for the freshman class team. As an impressed upperclassman later recalled, "Davies, the freshman pitcher, is a rattler, and if he had been there to pitch all the freshman games they would probably be the champions."⁴ But by spring 1889, Davies had other pitching chores to attend to, namely, hurling professionally for the Milwaukee Creams of the Western Association.

Possessed of a blazing fastball and an effective overhand curve, Davies' imposing height (about 6'4")⁵ and less-than-pinpoint control made him an unnerving sight to opposing batsman, standing only 50 feet away at the time. Reporting on an early season three-hit/seven-strikeout victory posted against Minneapolis, *Sporting Life* remarked that, "Davies, a law student from the University at Madison [*sic*], was given a trial in the box by Milwaukee and turned out to be a phenom. The Minneapolis men could do nothing with his speedy delivery."⁶ Pitching for a losing (56-63) Milwaukee team, Davies went 23-11 (.676), with a 2.83 ERA in 309 innings pitched over the 1889 season. His 210 strikeouts, however, were offset by 155 walks, 16 hit-batsmen, and 17 wild pitches. Still, in the estimation of local *Sporting Life* correspondent William E. Smith, "Wisconsin's pride ... had cut a wide swath ... [and] his work was simply remarkable."⁷ At season's end, Davies returned to his studies at the University of Wisconsin, where he again pitched for his class nine and engaged in a memorable exhibition game duel against the Western Association champion Omaha Omahogs. "Given an enthusiastic welcome" by fellow students, Davies took the box for a picked University nine and faced off against Omaha ace Kid Nichols. Striking out 14, Davies pitched superbly but dropped a 3-2 decision.⁸

Davies returned to the Creams for the 1890 Western Association season but pitched far less effectively in significantly reduced work. That season also saw publication of the first of several veiled references to a drinking problem that would be printed during Davies' relatively brief professional playing career. Game accounts make frequent note of wildness, with the June 7, 1890 issue of *Sporting Life* declaring that "Davies' work thus far has been very unsatisfactory." Yet, the following week, *Sporting Life* correspondent Smith was hailing the work of Milwaukee hurlers Davies, Clark Griffith, and John Thornton as "especially strong," marred only by a "want of condition on the part of Davies on one or two occasions," often, if not invariably, sportswriter code language for being drunk.⁹

Davies regained top form late in the season, backing up a three-hit 5-0 shutout of St. Paul on August 19, with a one-hit 8-1 victory over Lincoln three days later. On the whole, however, Milwaukee was dissatisfied with Davies and released him several weeks before the season was over.¹⁰ The authoritative Baseball-Reference.com provides no individual statistics from the 1890 Western Association campaign, but extrapolating box scores published in *Sporting Life*, the writer estimates Davies' season log as: 12-9 in 30 appearances, with a 2.00 ERA in 203 innings pitched, and 109 strikeouts countered by 89 walks, six hit batters, and 12 wild pitches.

Although listed under the "Special Student" category in the 1890 edition of the Badger yearbook, Davies apparently left the University of Wisconsin sometime during the 1890-1891 school year

without graduating. For the near term, professional baseball would be Davies' primary concern. Notwithstanding his spotty performance in 1890, both the Chicago White Stockings of the National League and the Northwestern League Spokane Bunch Grassers reportedly expressed interest in the now 23-year old right-hander.¹¹ Davies, however, chose to remain close to home, reconciling with Milwaukee and re-signing with the team (now called the *Brewers*) for the 1891 season. Through mid-August, he was the best pitcher in the Western Association, going 23-7 (.767), with a 1.73 ERA in 271 innings pitched.

But if Davies' baseball fortunes were improving, the same could not be said for the game itself. The Players League War of 1890 had left the two surviving major league circuits, the National League and the American Association, in weakened condition – a situation that would redound, ironically, to George Davies' benefit. Bad feeling between the NL and AA in the off-season led to the latter's withdrawal from the National Agreement, the pact which obligated one professional league to honor player contracts signed with a team in a rival circuit and to refrain from engaging an unsigned player reserved to another team. The move was ill-considered and would hasten the death of the American Association.

The case of George Davies illustrates the contract instability in baseball that followed.

On August 8, 1891, Patsy Tebeau, player-manager of the NL Cleveland Spiders, paid Davies a discreet visit. With a \$500 cash advance on salary in hand, Davies signed a contract to play for Cleveland in 1892. He then returned to pitching Western Association ball, but not for long. In mid-August, the AA's doddering Cincinnati franchise collapsed. To fill the sudden void in league ranks, the American Association invited the WA Milwaukee Brewers to assume the Cincinnati spot, which it promptly did – causing, in turn, the dissolution of the Western Association a few days later.

On August 18, 1891, the Milwaukee Brewers made a successful AA debut, beating the St. Louis Browns 7-2 behind the strong pitching of George Davies. For the next six weeks, Davies proved his major league mettle, posting a solid 7-5 record, with a 2.85 ERA in 102 innings pitched against American Association competition. For Milwaukee's combined WA-AA 1891 campaign, Davies went a cumulative 30-12, striking out 197 batters in a yeoman 373 innings pitched. The Brewers, likewise, proved themselves major league-worthy, posting a respectable 21-15 record in their limited AA play, and the club had high hopes of retaining its big leagues status. But through no fault of Milwaukee, the American Association expired after the 1891 season. Some of its sounder operations were then absorbed into a swollen 12-team National League for the coming season. The Milwaukee Brewers were not among the chosen, being left to scramble for an 1892 berth in the newly formed Western League, a shaky minor league circuit that folded the following July.

The bitterness of William Smith, the Milwaukee correspondent for *Sporting Life*, was uncontainable, and found outlet in the form of censure of George Davies. According to Smith, Davies had signed a new contract with Milwaukee at the time that the Brewers were elevated to the American Association. The pact bound Davies to Milwaukee for the 1892 season, as well. This prompted Smith to label the Cleveland-bound Davies “a despicable contract jumper,” and “an ingrate with a capital I,” the last person whom Smith “thought capable of such a disreputable trick.”¹² Davies responded with an unpublished letter to *Sporting Life*, alleging that Milwaukee had failed to make payments required under his new Brewers deal, thus voiding that contract and allowing him passage elsewhere. In time, the baseball weekly concluded that “from all that can be learned, Davies acted honorably and in good faith, and the Milwaukee club is the only factor to be blamed” for Davies' defection to Cleveland.¹³ Regardless, George Davies was finished in Milwaukee and was now a member of the Cleveland Spiders. While he awaited the arrival of the 1892 season, Davies gained employment with a Dr. Stadler, in anticipation of commencing the study of medicine.¹⁴

Cleveland had been a 65-74 National League also-ran in 1891, the club more noted for the rowdy on-field behavior inspired by manager Tebeau than anything else. But the Spiders roster was not without playing talent. Outfielder Jesse Burkett and third baseman George Davis were just starting Hall of Fame careers, while shortstop Ed McKean, second baseman Cupid Childs, center fielder

Jimmy McAleer, and catcher Chief Zimmer were first-rate players then in their prime. The Cleveland pitching staff was thin, with Cy Young (27-22 in 1891) and Lee Vau (18-17) the only proven winners. Still, just prior to the start of season play, veteran New York Giants star Buck Ewing warned that “Cleveland is the club to keep an eye on. In Davies, they have acquired the cream of the Western [Association] pitchers.”¹⁵

An incidental effect of the demise of the American Association was the elimination of post-season inter-league championship play. From 1884 through 1890, the National League and American Association pennant winners had met in a post-season match to determine bragging rights in baseball. To fabricate a semblance of this popular, and sometimes lucrative, clash, the now 12-team National League divided its 1892 regular season into two parts, with the winner of the first half slated to meet the second-half winner (if a different club) in a post-season best-of-nine pseudo-championship series. George Davies started off strongly with his new club, holding Chicago to only four hits in a 5-1 Cleveland victory on April 26. But soon Davies was overshadowed in the Cleveland rotation by Nig Cuppy, on his way to a superb 28-13 rookie season, and John Clarkson, the aging but still formidable veteran acquired early in the season from Boston.

By late-May, Davies was plagued by a sore arm and bad luck. Cleveland finished the first half of the 1892 season in the middle of the pack, 11½ games behind Boston. Prior to the re-start, Davies was reportedly given the obligatory 10-days notice of his release by Cleveland, but the team ultimately chose to keep him, much to the relief of local *Sporting Life* correspondent Elmer E. Bates, who bemoaned Davies’ ill pitching fortune. As Bates saw it, Davies “is as good a pitcher as we have. It happens every year that one of our pitchers absorbs all the hard luck. It was Davies’ turn to do this the first season. He would pitch a game in which only four or five hits were made off him and lose it, while the next day one of the other pitchers might get touched up for ten or a dozen hits, but would get away with his game all right. Davies is a No. 1 man, and the Cleveland management were wise to keep him on the pay roll.”¹⁶

Davies would see little action for Cleveland in the second-half season. As Bates explained to readers, “George Davies, although in almost perfect condition, still haunts the bench. The other pitchers are doing such good work that Tebeau thinks it is wise to let a man who pitched great ball but who had bad luck the first season, lay off until he is urgently needed. Cuppy, Clarkson and Young are all doing splendid work.”¹⁷ Behind its sterling pitching trio, Cleveland surged to the second-half crown, its 53-23 record providing a three-game margin over Boston. George Davies did not make a second-half appearance until September 17, pitching in his customary hard luck and dropping a 3-1 decision to New York. In all, Davies contributed only one victory to the Spiders second-half log, an inconsequential win over Cincinnati on September 27.



Combining both halves of the 1892 season, Davies went a lackluster 10-16 (.385) in 215 innings pitched. Yet Bates’ lament about Davies poor pitching luck seems well-grounded. While not in the same realm as the superb numbers registered by Cy Young (36-12, with a 1.93 ERA in 453 innings pitched), Davies’ 2.59 ERA was only fractionally higher than those of Cuppy (2.51) and 17-game winner Clarkson (2.55), while his hits-per-innings-pitched ratio was slightly better than that of Clarkson and comparable to Cuppy’s. Davies did not appear in the post-season series against Boston. Manager Tebeau used only Young, Clarkson, and Cuppy in the box, as Cleveland was swept five games to none, managing only a scoreless tie in the opening contest. Weeks later, it was revealed that Davies “was never in good enough shape to face the Bostons,”¹⁸ a phrase which suggests that Davies may have been drinking again.

Davies altered his life’s course in the off-season. Following the path chosen by his father and older brother John, Davies formally embarked upon the study of medicine, enrolling in the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago. For the next several years, he would devote his non-baseball energies to his studies.

But Davies still wanted to pitch, and a number of clubs, including Chicago, were interested in him, his disappointing 1892 season notwithstanding. Davies began the 1893 season with Cleveland, but his pitching career would quickly succumb to a rule change. During the previous winter, the National League had eliminated the pitcher's box and elongated the pitching distance to 60'6" from home plate. Like many hurlers comfortable with the former set-up, Davies was critical, thinking that no more than an additional five feet was necessary to achieve the goal of increasing the game's offense.¹⁹ The NL batting explosions of 1893, and particularly 1894, may well have proved Davies correct, but he would not be around to say "I told you so" to the game's overseers. Hit hard in three early-1893 outings from the new pitching distance, Davies (0-2) saw no further action until consigned by Cleveland to the New York Giants on July 1. Davies fared little better with his new club. Although he managed a 1-1 record in five appearances for New York, Davies was again ineffective, giving up 41 hits and walking 13 in only 36 innings pitched.

At the end of the season, the Giants prepared to return Davies to Cleveland pursuant to some quiet understanding between the clubs, but Cleveland did not want him back.²⁰ Davies himself wanted another opportunity to pitch in New York, and had former Spiders teammate George Davis, now also with the Giants and a budding star after a breakout 1893 season, in his corner. *Sporting Life* reported that "pitcher Davies will not be released by the New York club. He received his salary in full and before leaving for Chicago ... he asked Treasurer [and de facto club boss Edward] Talcott to let him have another chance next year. Upon the advice of George Davis, [Giants player-manager John Montgomery] Ward will keep Davies. Davis says the ex-Clevelander can still pitch as well as anybody. Davies will not be reserved but he has promised to be on hand next March."²¹

As it turned out, George Davies would not get another chance in New York. Or anywhere else. His professional baseball career was over. During his major leagues career, Davies appeared in only 46 games, going 18-24 (.429), with a 3.32 ERA spread over 369 innings pitched. He struck out 166 batters while walking 127, hitting nine batsmen, and throwing 17 wild pitches. Although the club had no further use for him, the Giants did not officially release Davies. He remained reserved to New York through the 1894 season, with George Davis again counseling manager Ward that it would be a mistake to jettison Davies without giving him a trial. If given plenty of work, Davies "can still pitch winning ball," opined Davis.²²

Meanwhile, King Kelly, managing the Allentown Buffaloes of the Eastern League, publicly expressed interest in signing Davies,²³ while Charlie Cushman, Davies' former manager in the Western Association, placed Davies' name on the reserve list of the Milwaukee club in the latest incarnation of the Western League after the 1894 season.²⁴ All the while, Davies continued his medical school studies in Chicago. He graduated on April 3, 1895, sending Elmer E. Bates, his *Sporting Life* champion, a jocular note: "I have my diploma and shall begin killing 'em off at once, but I still read *Sporting Life* before I do my medical journals."²⁵

Following graduation, Davies moved immediately to the village of Waterloo, Wisconsin where he assumed the medical practice of his recently-deceased brother, Dr. John H. Davies. Handsome, personable, and from a highly regarded area family, George Davies thrived professionally, serving patients as both a general practitioner and a surgeon. According to the *Waterloo Democrat*, Dr. Davies "sleeps in the office and will attend calls at all times of the night."²⁶ He also immersed himself in community activities, joining various civic and fraternal organizations, while occasionally taking a turn on the mound for the village baseball team. When war with Spain threatened, Dr. Davies was among the locals immediately signing up to join a company of soldiers being organized in Waterloo,²⁷ but he was not called to actual military duty during the brief conflict that ensued.

In February 1899, Davies returned to Chicago to marry Grace Mae Phillips, a pretty 21-year old with relatives in Waterloo. In January 1901, Grace Davies gave birth to daughter Alberta Jane. Mother and baby were "doing splendidly" reported the *Waterloo Democrat*, "but it is a question whether George will be able to get his face straight again, as he has been smiling continuously since the event."²⁸ The arrival of son Phillips Sherwood Davies in July 1902 completed the family. The

only thing impairing this otherwise happy existence was a remnant from Dr. Davies' ball playing days – the drinking problem.²⁹

By 1905, the Davies household included widowed mother-in-law Amelia Phillips and her 82-year old mother Laura.³⁰ That same year, Dr. Davies was further licensed in allopathy, an early form of holistic medicine. Thereafter, the historical record is silent until the fateful events of September 22, 1906 were recorded. On that Saturday afternoon, Dr. Davies retired to his office, ostensibly to catch some sleep before the professional demands of the evening arrived. At about 9:00 pm, Grace and her mother entered to bid George good-night and found him lying lifeless on a couch. A fellow doctor summoned to the scene examined the deceased and concluded “that death had taken place not more than two hours before.”³¹ An empty vial of the potent sleep-aid drug Bromidia was found lying nearby. A coroner's jury concluded that George Davies had died from “an overdose of medicine taken as a sedative.”³² Given the stigma attached to suicide a century ago, local news accounts of the death did not explore any underlying causes. Dr. Davies' drinking was no secret to locals, and many quietly believed it to be behind the tragedy.³³

Following funeral services conducted by an Episcopal clergyman, George Washington Davies was laid to rest in Waterloo Cemetery. He was survived by his wife and two young children, his father Dr. D.C. Davies, his sister Julia Davies Mitchell, and brothers Lemuel and Robert Davies. Today, the grave of George Davies is marked by a large granite headstone, a silent reminder of an eventful and productive life that came to its end far too soon.

NOTES

1. As reported in the *Waterloo (Wisconsin) Democrat*, September 28, 1906.
2. *Ibid.*
3. The biographical details of this profile were derived from US Census data and various publications noted below, particularly the sketches of George Davies that appeared in the *Waterloo Democrat Annual of 1897* and the *Waterloo Courier*, March 15, 1928. The writer is indebted to Joel Zibell, Assistant Library Director, Karl Junginger Memorial Library, Waterloo, Wisconsin for researching and providing the Waterloo archive material. George's siblings were Julia (1859-1958), Charles (1861-1887), John (1862-1894), Lemuel (1864-1907), and Robert (1866-1908).
4. As related in Sidney Dean Thornley, *Diary of a Student at the University of Wisconsin, 1886 to 1892* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1939), 68. The writer thanks University of Wisconsin archivist David Null for bringing this insightful look at late 19th century college life and athletics to his attention.
5. Authorities such as Baseball-Reference and *Total Baseball* list no height for Davies, but an 1892 Cleveland Spiders team photo shows the “tall Sycamore from Wisconsin” to be a good two inches taller than 6'2” Cy Young. Davies' listed weight of 180 lb., presumably based upon a guesstimate printed in *Sporting Life*, December 18, 1890, is likely inaccurate, as the well-built Davies appears heavier than that in the Spiders team photo.
6. *Sporting Life*, May 25, 1889.
7. *Sporting Life*, October 3, 1889.
8. Played September 30, 1889, the game was recalled vividly by Sidney Thornley some fifty years later. See Thornley, 68.
9. *Sporting Life*, June 14, 1890. Sportswriter Smith, however, sought to forestall any fan condemnation of Davies, hastening to describe him as “an honest, reliable player ... and what mistakes he does make seem to be unavoidable.”
10. As subsequently noted in *Sporting Life*, December 19, 1890.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Sporting Life*, November 28, 1891. Further Smith criticism of Davies was published in *Sporting Life*, December 12 and 19, 1890.
13. *Sporting Life*, January 2, 1892.
14. As noted in *Sporting Life*, October 17, 1891.
15. *Sporting Life*, March 26, 1892.
16. *Sporting Life*, August 6, 1892.
17. *Sporting Life*, August 20, 1892.
18. *Sporting Life*, November 5, 1892.
19. As noted in *Sporting Life*, November 28, 1892.
20. See *Sporting Life*, September 2 and 9, 1893.

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21. *Sporting Life*, October 2, 1893. Interestingly, the versatile George Stacey Davis had pitched in a few 1891 games for Cleveland, and he and the similarly-named George Davies are occasionally confused for one another.
22. As per *Sporting Life*, March 3, 1894, citing a letter from Davis to his friend and mentor John Montgomery Ward.
23. As reported in *Sporting Life*, March 17, 1894.
24. As per *Sporting Life*, October 13, 1894.
25. As revealed by Bates in *Sporting Life*, April 6, 1895.
26. *Waterloo Democrat*, September 17, 1899.
27. *Waterloo Democrat*, April 29, 1898.
28. *Waterloo Democrat*, January 18, 1901.
29. During the research of this profile, the writer's suspicion that Dr. Davies was a drinker was confirmed by Joel Zibell of the Karl Junginger Memorial Library in Waterloo. At the turn of the last century, Mr. Zibell's grandmother was a servant/cook in Waterloo who knew Dr. Davies and had occasion to observe him when he was under the influence.
30. As per the 1905 Wisconsin state census.
31. *Waterloo Democrat*, September 28, 1906.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Among residents of Waterloo, it was understood, if left largely unspoken, that Dr. Davies' death was a suicide. Joel Zibell's grandmother was among the many in the community who privately believed that Davies' drinking was the cause behind his death, as per e-mail to the writer, October 17, 2012.



The American Association



Angle

by Rex Hamann,
The American Association Almanac

A Look Back at the 1923 Milwaukee Brewers

One hundred years is a long time. What happened during the 1923 baseball season may seem irrelevant today, after all, most fans care more about how their team is doing today. For Milwaukee baseball fans who haven't experienced a World Series in over 40 years, that four-decade span seems more like a century!

Looking back at the 1923 Milwaukee Brewers gives fans a chance to ponder aplenty. Did you ever stop to ask yourself who your grandparents and great-grandparents may have been rooting for back in the day, or what players were "household words" around town? There maybe not be much in common between the old Brewers and today's Brew Crew, but baseball is still baseball. Let's get to know the 1923 Milwaukee Brewers, a team our forebears would have known well.

Harry at the Helm



The 1923 season was not kind to the American Association's Milwaukee Brewers. Under manager **Harry "Pep" Clark** the Brewers finished in fifth place with a record of 75-91, 37 games in back of the Kansas City Blues who steam-rolled their way to a 112-win season under manager **Wilbur Good**. Milwaukee's season was not a complete washout as the club claimed circuit superiority with 121 triples and ranked second in club batting with a mark of .296. The 1923 league champion Kansas City Blues, after batting .315 the year before, led the league with a remarkable .316, establishing the all-time American Association record.

To Pg 1

Harry Clark at Borchert Field in 1924 (Bob Koehler Collection)

Clark, an early mainstay on the Milwaukee Brewers from 1904-1913, played the hot corner for Milwaukee's first American Association championship team ten years earlier. Born March 8, 1883 at Union City, OH, he took charge of the team for the final time in 1923, marking an exceptional lengthy career with the team that stretched back to 1904 when the young "Pep" batted .255 in 137 games.

Clark's best year with the Brewers came during the 1913 season. As a first-year skipper for the team, he helped forge the way to the city's first American Association championship that year with a club-best 222 total bases. The third-sacker also led the team that year in game appearances (165; tied with **Lena Blackburne**), hits (159), and triples (19). With the 1923 team, skipper Clark made five appearances with a pair of hits in 11 at-bats, including the last of 238



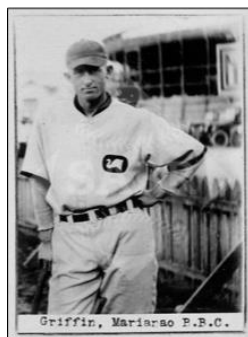
doubles collected during his 15-year career with Milwaukee. Clark held the record for the longest tenure of any American Association Brewer and was one of only a handful of Association players with 10 or more active seasons in the circuit from 1902 to 1962.



Clark remained a Milwaukee resident and lived at this house on the north side.

Clark passed away June 8, 1965 at the age of 72. His grave is located at Valhalla Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Position Player Notables



Ivy Griffin, ca. 1923

First-baseman **Ivy Griffin**, 26, was born at Thomasville, AL on Nov. 16, 1896. Appearing in 166 of 168 games in 1923, Griffin batted a staggering .362 with a .499 slugging percentage. His 329 total bases ranked second to **George Stone**'s 349, Milwaukee's top mark set in 1904. Griffin also led the team with 239 hits and 33 doubles, as well as with his nine home runs that year.

In his second of several seasons as a Brewer, he was the star of the show. Not only did he appear in every game for Milwaukee that year (the official total was 168; two were left undecided), but his overall season performance caliber was one of the strongest in Brewer history. Wielding a hefty bat, Griffin had a career year with the Brewers in 1923, leading the team in a number of categories (among qualifiers):

appearances: 166
games at position: 166
batting average: .362
total bases: 329
slugging percentage; .499

at-bats: 660
hits: 239
doubles: 33
home runs: 9
runs batted in: 112

In addition, Griffin's 15 triples were second only to outfielder **Ty Lober**'s club-leading 17.

A lefty-batting right-hand thrower, Griffin showed remarkable discipline at the plate with 48 bases on balls to just 36 strikeouts. He compiled 18 stolen bases, ranking third on the team, and scored 98 runs, tied with shortstop **Jimmy "Scoops" Cooney**, and second only to Lober's 118.

Harry Clark saw fit to bat Griffin fifth to start the season, behind left fielder **Paul Johnson**, in the April 19 opener against the Minneapolis Millers at Borchert Field. That contest, incidentally, set a record for opening day attendance as nearly 11,000 fans crammed into the ramshackle little ballpark. And while their Brewers fell, 10-2, that day, Kansas City also went one-up in the loss column, proving what happened on opening day *stayed* on opening day.

Just prior to the mathematical mid-season point, Griffin was batting .327 through July 12. His 102 hits ranked fifth in the league, tied with **Glenn "Buckshot" Wright** who carried a .364 average at the time.

It isn't often that a player's second half performance allows them to boost their batting average by 35 points, but that's exactly what Griffin did. By mid-August he was batting clean-up as his bat continued to sizzle, his average gaining ten points in one month's time. With 142 safeties Griffin ranked sixth, tied with KC's **Wilbur Good**, the Blues' manager/outfielder.

In the month that followed, Griffin boosted his batting average to .353, and he wasn't done yet. With 181 hits through Sept. 6, he ranked sixth once again. He proceeded to add yet another nine points to his average the rest of the way.

Griffin's season totals with league rankings (min. 380 at-bats):

Games: 166, 4th	Triples: 15, 4th (tied with five other players)
At-bats: 660, 4th	Home Runs: 9, 17th ^x
Runs: 98, 21st [*]	Stolen Bases: 18, 15th ^{xx}
Hits: 239, 2nd ^{**}	Total Bases: 329, 5th
RBI: 112, 5th	Batting Avg.: .362, 6th
Doubles: 33, 20th ^{***}	Slugging Avg.: .499, 13th

*tied with teammate Jimmy Cooney and Indianapolis outfielder **Wally Rehg**

two short of first baseman and future HOFer **Earle Combs

***tied with Indianapolis outfielder **Lloyd Christenbury** and Minneapolis first baseman **Ted Jourdan**

^xtied with Kansas City first baseman **Dud Branom**

^{xx}tied with Louisville outfielder Wilbur Good and St. Paul third baseman **Charlie Dressen**

Griffin, as one of the league's premier players, had a career year in 1923. He was a nifty first sacker as well as a superlative batsman. In his 166 games at first base he claimed a fielding percentage of .991 with only 15 errors; only Toledo's **Bill "Smiling Bill" Terry**, later elected into the Hall of Fame for his long career with the New York Giants, was better with a .993 mark in 107 games playing first base. The "cracker first sacker" was killed in a motor wreck during the summer of 1957, traveling across Georgia as a major league scout. His place of death is listed as Gainesville, GA. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54524510/ivy-moore-griffin>)

Milwaukee outfielder **Pat McNulty** ranked second in batting average among team qualifiers with his .313 batting average who appeared in 128 games. The 24-year-old was another lefty-batting right-hand thrower, as was Ivy Griffin with whom he bore a striking resemblance. McNulty hailed from Cleveland, OH and attended The Ohio State University. With exactly 150 hits, McNulty's brilliant batting helped the Brewers procure 163 runs, himself scoring 92 runs in addition to the 71 he batted in. He ranked third in doubles with 20, tied with catcher **Ginger Shinault**. McNulty slugged .413 with 198 total bases in which department he tied with fellow outfielder Paul Johnson who appeared in just three fewer games. One key stat belied his consistent hitting: he registered 68 bases on balls against just 37 strikeouts. Among the three regular outfielders, including Paul Johnson and Ty Lober, McNulty's .967 led the field. McNulty died May 4, 1963 at Hollywood, CA and is buried at Good Shepherd Cemetery in Huntington Beach, CA.

(<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/51849289/patrick-howard-mcnulty#add-to-vc>)

Another of the Brewers' most productive qualifying hitters was shortstop **Jimmy "Scoops" Cooney**, 28, from Cranston, Rhode Island. With cups of coffee hosted by the Boston Red Sox and New York Giants during the deadball era, Cooney's style reflected small-ball era strategy with his ability to steal bases. As a Brewer in 1923 he led the league by amassing 60 swipes, 18 more than the second-ranked players (of whom there were two). Cooney was in his four straight season as a Brewer and as a player who saw action in nearly every game during that four-season stretch he was likely a huge fan favorite in Milwaukee. During the 1923 season, he registered exactly 600 at-bats, connecting for 185 hits and posting a .308 batting average. Like Griffin and McNulty his keen eye enabled him to become a constant threat, collecting 40 bases on balls with just 26 strikeouts.

Cooney ranked fourth on the team with 19 doubles, but his overall power numbers were weak as reflected by his .383 slugging percentage. Cooney was 96 when he died at Cranston, RI and is buried there. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15771258/james-edward-cooney>)

Other key Brewer batters included:

Ty (Elmer) Lober, 30, outfielder, whose 247 total bases ranked second on the team. His 17 triples led Clark's squad and he appeared in 162 games, second only to Ivy Griffin's 166. Based on his total bases, Lober had a career year, batting .279. His 76 walks led the team; the year before he drew 78 free passes!

Ginger Shinault, 30, catcher, batted .297 with a fifth-ranked total of exactly 200 total bases.

Outfielder **Paul Johnson**, 26, batted .295 and with 198 total bases tied with fellow outer-gardener Pat McNulty while slugging an even .400.

Alex McCarthy, 34, third baseman, posted a .294 batting average while appearing in 161 games, third-most on the team. Milwaukee's oldest position player sure didn't act his age, covering the hot corner in 150 games in his third of five seasons as a Brewer in 1923. He drove in 72 runs, fourth best on the team, with 216 total bases, also ranking fourth.

Destined for the Hall of Fame, **Al Simmons** ("Bucketfoot Al"), was the pride of Milwaukee. Simmons began the season with the Shreveport Gassers of the Texas League (Class A) before advancing to Milwaukee (AA) for the second straight year. As a Brewer he appeared in 24 games as an outfielder, making 58 putouts with a pair of assists and one error. He batted .398 with a .480 slugging percentage.

Pitching Notables

The entirety of Milwaukee's pitching staff in 1923 consisted of eleven hurlers with two listed as left-handers, **Dinty Gearin** and **Nelson (Nellie) Pott**. Of the 11, only the record of **Lyle Bigbee**, 29, is not known as he split the season between Milwaukee and Louisville; his combined record was 2-3 with 19 game appearances. Pitchers Gill and Meek are not identified with a first name on baseball-reference; Gill appeared in just one game. However, Hamann's Milwaukee Brewers roster book (2009) lists **Harold Gill** and **Tom Meek**. Three names are included in the roster book which fail to appear on baseball-reference: **Cy Funke** (one game) and **Robert Stewart** (one game), and **Jim Robertson** (two games). Described below were Milwaukee's standout moundsmen.

Eddie Schaack, 24. Milwaukee's winningest pitcher with a record of 17-15. Little is known of the pitcher, but an internet search showed he was probably from the Chicago area (his sister is buried there). In 1923 he was in his third of fourth seasons with the Brewers, appearing in 37 games and posting a 4.89 ERA in 278 innings. His 1.396 WHIP was tops on the team. He walked 88, struck out 67, and gave up exactly 300 hits. He could also hit some, collecting three triples, three home runs and batting .256, all in the pitcher's role. Schaack died in 1978 at the age of 78 and is buried in Milwaukee at the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery, formerly known as Wanderer's Rest. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/212600489/edward-joseph-schaack>)

Dinty Gearin, LHP, 25. Gearin was in his fourth of 12 seasons with the Brewers, perhaps the longest tenured pitcher in Brewer history. In 1923 the Rhode Island native, at 5'4", was the most successful pitcher on the Brewers' staff, winning 12 games against just five defeats; whether he made any starts is in question. Gearin took the mound in 20 games, combining for 153 innings with a staff-best 3.76 ERA. He weighed just under 150 lbs., but the boy could pitch, walking 66 while striking out 70, and giving up just 8.7 hits per nine innings. His WHIP was just shy of the team lead with a 1.399 mark. He could also hit, as evidenced by his .337 batting average in 44 games with 92 at-bats. It was likely his best season in pro ball. Gearin passed away in 1959 at the age of 61 and is buried in Rhode Island. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/51276685/dennis-john-gearin#add-to-vc>)

Nellie Pott, LHP, 23. With a 13-17 record in 47 games, Pott did his part to share the load for Clark's crew, and judging by his 88-59 strikeouts to walks ratio his performances were a solid

contribution. As Milwaukee's workhorse, Pott more than merely "carried the load," he pulled the wagon, with 265 innings and 47 appearances to his credit. His record includes a pair of "exactlies": 350 hits allowed and 150 earned runs given up. Pott died in 1963, aged 64 years and is buried in Cincinnati. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/52736354/nelson-adolph-pott>)

With eight wins each were:

Jim Lindsey, 24

Ray "Brandy" Lingrel, 28

Dave Keefe, 26

Lindsey and Lingrel both had a record of 8-12, while Keefe struggled, registering a team-high 20 losses, also with eight wins in 218 innings of work.

A Season's Progress

After dropping the 1923 season opener April 19, the Brewers finished the month "even steven" with six wins against six losses in fifth place. Milwaukee's record through:

May: 14-21 in sixth place, 13 games behind first-place Kansas City

June: 27-37 in sixth place, 16½ games behind first-place St. Paul

July: 45-52 in sixth place, 16 games behind first-place St. Paul

August: 56-67 in fifth place, 28 games behind first-place St. Paul

September: 68-88 in seventh place, 35½ games behind Kansas City

The 1923 season ended Oct. 7 as fifth-place Milwaukee swept a doubleheader from the Columbus Senators, 9-0 and 3-1, to finish the season 75-91 (.452), 37 games behind the Kansas City Blues.

The following look at the monthly performance of the team shows a fairly consistent effort throughout.

Through May, Milwaukee swatters ranked seventh in league batting with a .264 average. With 161 runs scored Clark's men ranked last, and with 322 hits they ranked last. In the field, the Brewers were in a three-way tie for the second slot with a .962 fielding average with 56 errors; St. Paul led at .963.

Through June, the Brewers batted .278 but remained ranked seventh. With 306 runs they ranked sixth, and with 606 hits the team ranked sixth. In the field they ranked fourth, tied with Toledo, with a .959 fielding percentage. Their 106 errors ranked fourth. St. Paul led with a .966 mark.

Through July, Milwaukee batted .288, ranking seventh and tied with St. Paul. Their 997 runs ranked fourth, and their 521 hits ranked fourth. In the field, the Brewers ranked third with a .961 fielding percentage, tied with Columbus. They ranked fourth with 159 errors and third in assists with 1,289.

Through August, **Harry Clark's** crew batted .296, ranking fifth, between Minneapolis and St. Paul. Kansas City kept their edge ranking first with a .317 average. The Brewers claimed 679 runs, ranking third; with 1,277 hits they were fourth. In the field things took a downturn as their fielding average fell to .958, tied with Indianapolis for the sixth slot. Their 213 errors ranked sixth; St. Paul led with just 167 errors for a .968 fielding percentage. Milwaukee's 1,639 assists ranked second.

Milwaukee never gave up, despite the dominance of both Kansas City and St. Paul. Despite finishing in the second division for the ninth straight season, there were things to be optimistic about from the standpoint of a Brewers' fan. The most obvious of those things was their persistent batting. The Brewers finished second in team batting with a .296 average; Kansas City's .316 was well-beyond what Milwaukee achieved.

With 902 runs, the Brewers ranked third to the Blues' 1,083. With a scoring difference of that magnitude the superiority of the Kansas City offense becomes evident. The Brewers collected 1,741 hits, ranking second in that department. Perhaps the key trait of Milwaukee's batting was, aside from its competitiveness, it maintained a high level of production throughout the season, even improving as the season went on, at least from the standpoint of the averages looked at here.

Another attribute worthy of notice was the Brewers' fielding. Clark's 1923 entourage finished third in fielding percentage, just a point under second-ranked Toledo's .963; St. Paul led with a mark of .965. Milwaukee ranked third best in errors with 263; in assists they also placed third with 2,167.

Of course, in the grand scheme of things it's the wins and losses that matter. But for the student of baseball history wishing to go beyond the surface in the way they view the game, careful attention to such numbers and their patterns over time helps to form a solid basis upon which to advance one's interests.

Brewers vs. Brewers.....

Milwaukee finished the 1923 season 37 games behind the juggernaut Blues, a significant margin for any team, regardless of their position in the standings. But just how did that margin compare with previous Brewer teams in the American Association?

Using **Marshall Wright's** book "The American Association, Year-by-year Statistics for the Baseball Minor League, 1902-1952" (1997), each team's number of games behind is presented.

At the close of the 1902 season, the Association's inaugural year, the Brewers finished 30 games behind the front-running Indianapolis Indians who claimed the circuit's first championship. The sixth-place Brewers won 66 and lost 75 under **Bill Clingman** and **Joe Cantillon** that year. Not until 1910 would the team equal or surpass that mark when they again finished sixth, 30½ games in back of the Minneapolis Millers who won 107 games. In 1912 the fifth-place Brewers approached this mark by finishing 26 game behind the Millers once again. In 1916 under **Harry Clark** (through Aug. 14) and shortstop **Jack Martin**, Milwaukee finished in last place, a whopping 45 ½ games behind Louisville. Three years later Milwaukee (known as the Panthers that year) was again cellar-bound, 34 ½ games behind league-leading St. Paul. As the "Brewers" once again in 1920, the team finished sixth, a hefty 38 games behind St. Paul who won 115 games. And finally, in Clark's return to the helm in 1922, the team finished 22 ½ games behind St. Paul as a fifth-place entry.

Brewers vs. Blues.....

The Milwaukee Brewers took on the 1923 Champion Kansas City Blues in 24 head-to-head matchups during the 1923 season. Included in the schedule were doubleheaders in which the two teams battled on the Memorial Day (then Decoration Day), July Fourth, and Labor Day holidays.

Here are the outcomes of the "David vs. Goliath" games.

Date	Loc.	Score	Winner	Date	Loc.	Score	Winner
May 6	MIL	11-8	KC	July 4a	KC	5-3	MIL
May 10	KC	13-12	KC	July 4b	KC	4-1	MIL
May 11	KC	12-1	KC	July 5	KC	9-3	MIL
May 12	KC	9-8	KC	Aug 11	KC	8-7	KC
May 13	KC	7-2	KC	Aug 12a	KC	5-4	KC
May 30a	MIL	9-3	KC	Aug 12b	KC	6-4	KC
May 30b	MIL	5-3	KC	Aug 13	KC	13-3	KC*
June 23	MIL	13-9	MIL	Sept 1	MIL	7-5	KC
June 24a	MIL	17-5	KC	Sept 2	MIL	5-0	MIL**
June 24b	MIL	17-14	KC	Sept 3a	MIL	13-4	KC
July 3	KC	10-7	KC	Sept 3b	MIL	2-1	MIL

*The win extended KC's winning streak to nine games.

The shutout was the first dealt to KC in 238 games. **Nelson Pott tossed the gem, scattering nine hits. The game was reeled off in one hour, 45 minutes.

The series was scheduled to go 24 games but three straight postponements during the first set at Milwaukee threw a wrench into the works, hence, the two teams completed 16 tilts.

**Kansas City won 16, Milwaukee won 6.
Kansas City outscored Milwaukee, 179-128**

Brewer Birthday Boys

Thirteen members of the 1923 Brewers celebrated their birthday during the season, with some faring better than others on their big day.

Third baseman **Alex McCarthy** turned 33 May 12. Was 0-5 at the plate in a loss to Kansas City. **Al Simmons** turned 21 May 22. He was with the Class A Shreveport Gassers at the time.

Pitcher **Ray Lingrel** turned 28 May 31. He did not pitch in the loss to Kansas City.

Pitcher **Nelson Pott** turned 24 July 16. He did not pitch in the win against Toledo.

Outfielder **Oscar Melillo** turned 24 Aug. 4. Played in both ends of a doubleheader against Columbus. In the opener, the second baseman was 2-5 at the plate with five assists in the field and one error in Milwaukee's 7-6 loss. In the nightcap he had one hit in five trips with two assists as the Brewers fell, 18-10.

Outfielder **Ty Lober** turned 31 Aug. 12. Facing Kansas City in a twin bill, Lober was 2-5 in the opener as the Blues won, 5-4; in game two he had one hit in five trips with three putouts in center field in a 6-4 loss.

Catcher **Dick Gossett** turned 32 Aug. 21. No game scheduled.

LHP **Lyle Bigbee** turned 30 Aug. 22. Did not play.

Shortstop **Jimmy Cooney** turned 29 Aug. 24. A bounty of three hits in three at-bats befell the shortstop in a 7-4 Brewer win at Milwaukee. He registered six assists with three putouts. A busy birthday boy!

Outfielder **Paul Johnson** turned 27 Sept. 2. Did not play.

Catcher **Ginger Shinault** turned 31 Sept. 7. In a twin bill at St. Paul, he made the most of it with five hits on the day including a home run. In game one he posted three hits in five at-bats at the Saints won, 14-4. In the nightcap he brought good fortune with two hits in five trips, including a home run for the birthday boy!

Catcher **Russ Young** turned 21 Sept. 15. Did not play.

Team Demographics

According to ages posted on baseball-reference.com, Milwaukee's regulars averaged 27.8 years of age, third youngest among similar groups for each team in the American Association. The average was taken using the age of players with at least 100 game appearances. The Toledo Mud Hens were the youngest at 26.1, and the Columbus Senators (later Red Birds) were the eldest at 31.6. For a more accurate study of player ages each player's age in months would have to be determined for use in collective averaging.

The team's youngest regular position player was **Oscar "Ski" Melillo**, age 23, with 74 games at second base, and 15 in the outfield and a combined 102 appearances.

Their oldest was 33-year-old third baseman **Alex McCarthy** who covered the hot corner in 150 games and appeared in a total of 161 contests.

Chicago native **Fred Baldy** (aka Baldowsky) was the youngest player on the Brewer roster at 18. He appeared in 19 games, batting .167.

! Milwaukee's Oldest Position Player (exc. manager Harry Clark, 40 who appeared in 5 games) was **Sherry Magee**, 38, who played 47 games in the outfield.

That's quite a range!

Few players on the 1923 Brewers were from the region. Only two players on the 1923 roster, **Art Bues** (who may or may not have appeared in a single game) and **Al Simmons**, were from Milwaukee, although Pittsburgh native **Ty Lober** was a Milwaukee resident at the time.

Only two regular position players hailed from neighboring states, **Oscar Melillo** and **Alex McCarthy**, the youngest and oldest regulars on the team. Both players hailed from Chicago

according to the team's listing on baseball-reference.

The remaining regulars were largely from the northeast. Two notable exceptions included **Ivy Griffin** from Alabama and **Ginger Shinault** from Arkansas.

Bearing in mind 15 players are listed on baseball-reference as "unknown" for birth data, making conclusions based on the available data is difficult. During the course of researching this article, three players listed as "unknowns" were uncovered using such sources as Familysearch.org and Findagrave.com. Pitcher **Eddie Schaack** was discovered to be from Chicago and was born Sept. 30, 1899 with a death date of Jan 2, 1978; he is buried at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery in Milwaukee (see more on Schaack above). **Herb Herbstreith**, who pitched in one game and appeared in 17, was born Lloyd Herbert Herbstreith Feb. 26, 1899 in Kansas with a death date of Sept. 11, 1966 at Los Angeles, CA. And **Charles W. Palmer, Jr.**, credited with one win and one loss in 13 appearances, was found to be born Dec. 26, 1900 in Ohio with death occurring May 31, 1961 at Guilford, IN (Dearborn County). The likelihood is strong that these were in fact the players from the 1923 Brewers.

Career Years

While the 1923 Brewers fared poorly as the championship season progressed, a handful of players had a career year, in other words, they put up numbers collectively exceeding those from any other season of their career. There is no formula for determining a player's career year, for example, when two seasons appear close. In the examples found below, the number of total bases was referenced as the strongest indicator before other criteria were introduced in determining which season was a player's career best.

1. Ivy Griffin, 26. All-star numbers.
2. Pat McNulty, 24. His best season in Class AA or above.
3. Sherry Magee, 38. Combined career year between Milwaukee (AA) and St. Joseph (A); unique in the annals of American Association history.
4. Eddie Schaack, 24. Double career year, both as pitcher and batter, unique in the annals of American Association history.
5. Ray Lingrel, 28. Career year batting.

The American Association Almanac is a bi-annual print publication dedicated to the history of the old American Association. To subscribe, please contact [Rex Hamann](#) for further information.

Schabowski Super Stumpers December Answers:

1. Tommy Brown: SS Dodgers: August 20, 1945.
2. Virgil Trucks-1952 and Nolan Ryan-1973.
3. Montreal Expos – 2005 - Washington Nationals.
4. Pete Rose 44-game hitting streak in 1978.
5. Tom Seaver: April 23, 1970, vs. San Diego Padres.

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Above: A new roadside marker along Whitestie Avenue in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania honors Hall of Famer Hack Wilson. (Photo: Bill Pearce)

ELLWOOD CITY CELEBRATES HACK WILSON WITH HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

BY BILL PEARCE

When the Ellwood City (Pennsylvania) Area Historical Society recently rolled out the red carpet to honor one of its favorite sons, Hack Wilson, the date also marked the 89th anniversary of the legendary slugger's final Major League at-bat at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field. The historical marker dedication on Friday, August 25, 2023, was also an intersection of several baseball passions

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