

THE

SABR Review

OF BOOKS

A FORUM of BASEBALL LITERARY OPINION

FRANK MERRIWELL'S SECRET OR TRYING TO STEAL THE DOUBLE SHOOT



BY
BVRT L. STANDISH

"I WILL GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS," SAID CUTTER, "TO SHOW ME HOW TO THROW THE DOUBLE SHOOT."

BASEBALL HISTORY



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I see Sabermetric Review as a publication whose time has come not just in the sense of filling the void left by the stopping of The Bill James Baseball Abstract Newsletter but in the sense that the field of baseball research needs to hear from new voices. Sabermetric Review is a sign of progress that I welcome wholeheartedly. — Craig R. Wright

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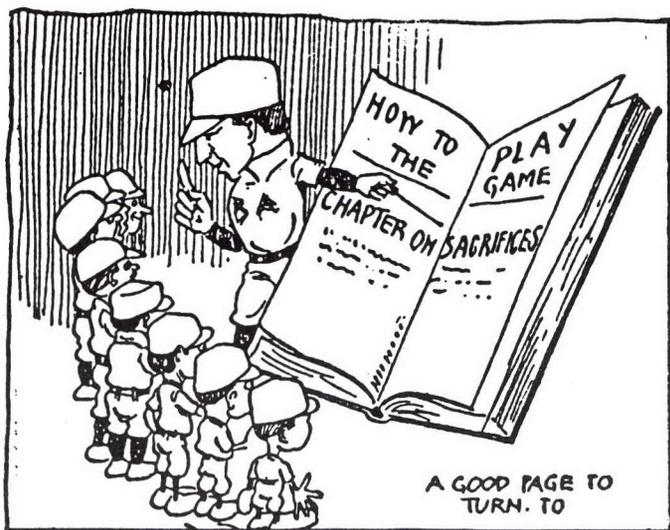
Welcome to the first issue of *The SABR Review of Books*. This new publication tries to tap the two universal loves of SABR members: the love of reading baseball books, and the love of a lively discussion. We hope to provide an economic service—which baseball books are worth the money, and which aren't? But perhaps even more importantly, we want to re-create that energetic expression of opinion that's sure to happen whenever SABR members get together—at a regional meeting, a national convention, or the local pub.

And just like a late-night SABR discussion, *The SABR Review* is not particularly disciplined or formal. There's a lot of variety here: from heady opinion to well-documented analysis, from academic-style dissertations to casual appreciations. Of course you won't agree with everything; what fun would that be? But you'll get your chance.

Because your writing and your opinions are what will make *The SABR Review* all it can be. Submit reviews, submit essays, submit ideas. What is the reason for the recent explosion in books about the Negro Leagues? You'll find out in the next few pages. What's the best book ever written by a manager? We'll try to answer that one in the future.

Hope you enjoy Number One. We hope to hear from you for Number Two.

Paul Adomites, Editor



Cover and interior design by John Thorn, illustrations courtesy of John Thorn.

The SABR Review of Books

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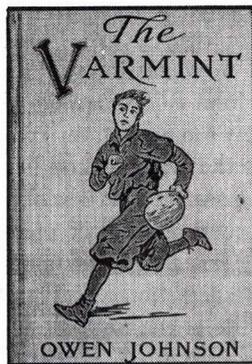
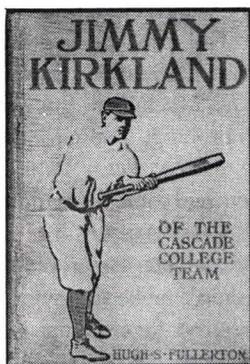
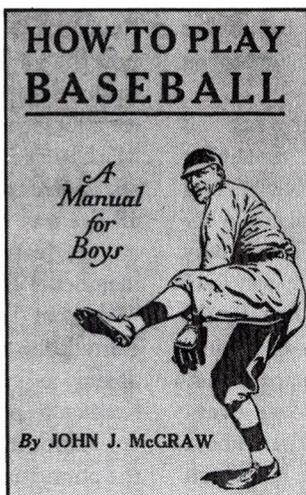
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In this issue . . .

Baseball lives in all seasons. So the first issue of *The SABR Review* takes a look at two of the newest works on non-regular-season baseball: *A Baseball Winter* and (on Spring Training) *The Short Season*. We cover Jim Kaplan's diary of the '83 season, too. But we don't forget the history, with reviews of the two latest books on two of baseball's prime movers, Ban Johnson and A.G. Spalding, discussed by A.D. Suehsdorf and Luke Salisbury.

And what are the newest of the great baseball writers saying? In this issue we review the latest by Bill James, Roger Kahn, Peter Gammons, and Dan Okrent. Plus a special treat: a brief reminiscence of the immortal Red Smith by his teammate on the All-Time Great Writers Team, Bob Broeg.

Two of the national pastime's oldest skills are also its most overlooked. Jack Carlson and Frank Boslett analyze what Bill Curran has to say about de-

fense in Mitts, and what Kevin Kerrane learned about putting the *Dollar Sign on the Muscle*.

Most of us started loving baseball at an early age, and most remember the almost sinfully delicious feeling when we discovered that we could actually *read* about it, too. That's why this issue takes a special three-way look at those early books that first forged the magical link between the game and the imagination for many of us. Leverett Smith overviews what juvenile baseball literature has been about since its beginnings. Jack Kavanagh tells us about a star, Baseball Joe Matson, who lasted 16 years (and outlasted a writer or two). Next, Phil Bergen takes an in-depth look at how the works of John R. Tunis were clues to our society's mores, from pre-World War II to the Vietnam conflict.

Since much of the best of baseball writing occurs in shorter pieces, the anthology has long been a staple of baseball readers' libraries. Tom Jozwik looks at one of the newest, *The Armchair Book of Baseball*, edited by John Thorn, and has the audacity to compare it to Charles Einstein's *Fireside Books*. That's a tough league to hit in.

SABR researchers will be happy to hear about a new book that compiles baseball biographies in one volume for the first time. David Porter previews his *Dictionary of American Sport Biography: Baseball*.

In addition to single-book reviews, *The SABR Review* will also take on larger subjects. In this go-round, there are three great ones. First, if you've ever wanted to know which books tell the real story of Negro League baseball, you'll find out in Jules Tygiel's essay, "The Negro Leagues

Revisited." Mark Gallagher analyzes how the Yankees have served as fodder for baseball literature in a special way for a long time. And graphic specialist Mark Rucker looks at the more important *illustrated* works of baseball history, all the way back to 1832 (!)

A feature we'll make a regular member of *The SABR Review's* lineup is "Personal Favorites." In this issue, Darrell Berger sees Pat Jordan's *A False Spring* as baseball's "beat" (as in Kerouac) epic.

Another feature we'll continue is the phone survey. This time around we talked to people whose books *we* read to ask the deceptively simple question: What baseball book do you return to most often? Of course, they all answered *The Macmillan Encyclopedia*. But after probing, Leonard Koppett, Lawrence Ritter, Peter Palmer, and some others had some intriguing things to say.

A Special Note: As a rookie editor, I admit I didn't make it easy on any of the contributors for this first issue. I'll try to be nicer next time folks, but thanks more than a million. Also thanks to Luke Salisbury and Cappy Gagnon, for their early and highly appreciated support; to John Thorn who, unlike anyone else, saw what this publication really could be and made the whole process a lot easier on me than it might have been. Thanks to Kim Zoeller, my secretary, who never batted an eye when I asked her for help that didn't make sense (even to me). Thanks to George and Trixi for art help. And especially to Rosemary, who was a demon with the typewriter, a saint with patience, and a wife who did what all great SABR wives do: she *understood*.

The Negro Leagues Revisited

By Jules Tygiel

Those of us who discovered baseball during our formative years in the 1950s confronted a paradox which our youthful minds could not quite appreciate. We knew of Jackie Robinson and his heroic efforts to end segregation, and we gloried in the achievements of black players, who only a decade earlier could never have appeared in a big league game. Yet we had no sense of where the Roy Campanellas and Don Newcombes, the Larry Dobys and Monte Irvins had learned their craft and polished their skills while awaiting the call of the majors. For most of us these players had materialized out of thin air, sent by the gods of baseball to thrill and delight and to usher in a golden age of brotherhood and base stealing. That there had once existed a flourishing domain in America known as the Negro Leagues had been instantly forgotten. That several teams still struggled on the margins of the national pastime would have greatly surprised us.

Thus, the Negro Leagues, "invisible" during their best years, almost totally disappeared from American memory in the 1950s and 1960s. Even in the black community, baseball fans savored the hard-won fruits of integration and turned their gaze away from the legacy of black baseball. "The big league doors suddenly opened one day," wrote sportswriter Wendell Smith, "and when Negro players walked in, Negro baseball walked out." Not until 1970, when Robert Peterson published his path-breaking *Only the Ball Was White*, did the veil that had dropped over the Negro Leagues begin to lift. Today, while the stars of black baseball remain under-represented in the Hall of Fame, they have received a far fairer share of attention in the literature of the 1970s and 1980s, giving us a broad appreciation of the role of the Negro Leagues in baseball history and in the culture and community they served.

Nowhere is the neglect of the Negro Leagues more apparent than in the two primary academic histories of baseball. Both Harold Seymour and David Voigt in their multi-volume studies deal briefly with the exclusion

JULES TYGIEL is Professor of History at San Francisco State University, Commissioner of the Pacific Ghost League, and author of *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*.

of blacks in the 1880s. Black ballplayers then disappear from both narratives, reappearing again only in Volume III of Voigt's work in a brief prelude to the Robinson saga. The Negro Leagues fared no better in accounts of baseball integration. Most biographies of Robinson written in the 1950s, including Robinson's own *Wait Till Next Year*, co-authored with Carl Rowan, mention his stint with the Kansas City Monarchs, but provide few details other than a critique of the heavy travel schedule and loose style of play.

Those determined to learn more about the Negro Leagues in the 1950s and 1960s had to search diligently. The standard work on the topic was *Sol White's Official Baseball Guide*. White, a former professional player, chronicled the nineteenth century travails of blacks in organized baseball, their ultimate exclusion, and the formation of the early black barnstorming clubs. But White's book, originally published in 1907, had long since passed out of print. (Camden House in South Carolina reissued this classic in 1983.)

Brief glimpses of life in the Negro Leagues could be found in at least two of the books about the first blacks to cross baseball's color line. Although "Doc" Young's 1953 volume, *Great Negro Baseball Stars And How They Made the Major Leagues*, focused primarily on those players who had advanced from the Negro Leagues into the majors, chapters on the black stars of the preintegration era and those in the minor leagues offered insightful information. A skillful, perceptive writer whose talents rank him with Wendell Smith and Sam Lacy, the deans of black sportswriting, Young provided an introduction to the stars, if not the world, of black baseball. In 1964 Jackie Robinson provided another overview of the integration process in *Baseball Has Done It*. This wonderfully revealing collection of interviews with black major leaguers also included reminiscences by Negro League stars Terris McDuffie and Bill Yancey.

Player autobiographies offered other information on black baseball. Roy Campanella's *It's Good To Be Alive* (1959) gave one of the best accounts of life in the Negro Leagues. Campanella chronicled his discovery by the Bacharach Giants as a 15-year-old prospect, his later career with the Baltimore Elite Giants, and his apprenticeship as a catcher under the tutelage of Biz Mackey. Campanella's account, still fascinating reading, introduces the reader to barnstorming in the United States and winter ball in the Carribean. Intermingled with the interminable travels and poor accommodations was the special amalgam—power and speed, "spitballs, shine balls, and emery balls"—which characterized Negro League play. Campanella's frustrations of being relegated to a Jim Crow league are evident, yet he concludes, "A Negro ballplayer playing ball in the United States might not have lived like a king, but he didn't live bad either."

Far less enlightening is Satchel Paige's autobiographical effort, *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever*, published in 1962. Paige's legendary reputation had always transcended the Negro Leagues and his brief, but successful, major league stint had firmly fixed him in the public mind. Writing in a folksy style, fully in keeping with the image he had long cultivated, Paige and co-author David Lipman dwelled more on the pitcher's skills, eccentricities, and exploits than black baseball itself. Nonetheless, the weak administrative structure of the Negro Leagues and the team-hopping habits of the players are readily apparent.

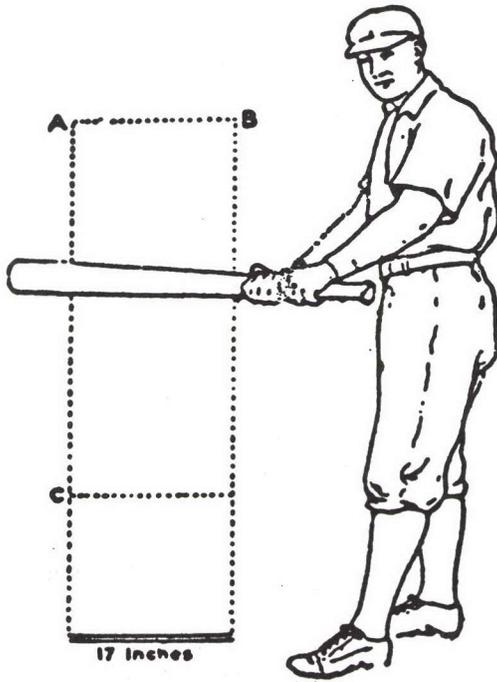
For the remainder of the sixties, books about the Negro Leagues or books even mentioning the era of black baseball, remained rare. Both Willie Mays and Hank Aaron devoted a few pages to their brief tenures with the Birmingham Black Barons and Indianapolis Clowns respectively in their autobiographies *Willie Mays: My Life In and Out of Baseball* (1966) and *Aaron, r.f.* (1968). Jack Orr included a chapter on the Negro Leagues in *The Black Athlete* in 1969. Little existed to sate the curiosity of those who remembered black baseball or younger people who had seen references to it.

The long drought came to an end in 1970 with the publication of Peterson's *Only the Ball Was White*. Poring over black newspapers and interviewing former players, Peterson painstakingly pieced together the history of blacks in baseball from the days of Bud Fowler, a nineteenth century second baseman, to Jackie Robinson's historic breakthrough. Peterson introduced a new generation of readers to John Henry Lloyd, "Cool Papa" Bell, Rube Foster, and a host of other Negro League stars. Appendices to *Only the Ball Was White* included capsule biographies of Negro League greats, year-by-year standings for the leagues, box scores for the East-West All Star Games, and an alphabetical listing of hundreds of players and the teams they had performed for. Peterson's book, still the best overview of the subject, marked a watershed in the historiography of the Negro Leagues, opening up a broader interest in the research of others and spawning a new generation of Negro League historians, most of whom had never seen a segregated contest.

Two events in 1971 further contributed to the sudden growth of interest in black baseball. The National Baseball Hall of Fame, succumbing to pressures from fans and the media, belatedly began to recognize the Negro Leagues by admitting Satchel Paige and setting up a Negro League committee to consider additional nominees. (The Hall of Fame insensitively planned to commemorate these stars in a separate section until protests of "Jim Crow" forced full inclusion.) In August, 1971 the "Cooperstown 16" launched the Society for American Baseball Research. As the organization grew, it established a Negro League committee to

coordinate research and facilitate communication among members interested in black baseball. SABR journals, most notably the annual *Baseball Research Journal* and later *The National Pastime*, offered a place for Negro League writers to publish their works and a forum for discussion.

The new breed of Negro League aficionados faced a difficult task in recreating baseball in the Jim Crow era. As Peterson had warned, unearthing the history of the Negro Leagues was “like trying to find a single black strand through a ton of spaghetti.” Team records were largely unavailable. Major newspapers and mainstream sports journals like *The*



Sporting News had rarely covered black games. Black newspapers like the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender* offered a more promising source, but only major public and university libraries held significant collections of back issues. As a result, oral history became the primary tool of the Negro League chroniclers.

The most prolific of the interviewers was John Holway, whose *Voices from the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (1975) became the model for the genre. Holway had sought out Negro Leaguers since the 1960s and his collection includes talks with 18 players and Effa Manley, the former owner of the Newark Eagles. Using their own words, the black athletes brought alive the itinerant lifestyle and flamboyant play of the Negro

Leagues. One controversial theme ran through both the player accounts and Holway's writing: that in the age of Jim Crow the quality of black baseball was equal, if not superior, to the major league variety. In addition to editing the colorful accounts of the long-forgotten stars, Holway compiled records of games between black players and major league squads between 1886 and 1948. In the 445 contests which he unearthed, Holway discovered that blacks had won 269 and lost only 172, with four ties.

In 1973 two unique and entertaining looks at the Negro Leagues appeared simultaneously. *Some Are Called Clowns* by Bill Heward is one of the most unusual and delightful baseball books ever written. Heward, an aspiring pitcher, described his three seasons in the early 1970s with the Indianapolis Clowns, the final remnant of the old Negro Leagues. Heward complements his own experiences on the barnstorming tour with a keen sense of the club's history. The result is a fine blend of entertainment and analysis, a glimpse into a dying world which has now passed into oblivion. Novelist William Brashler offered another look at black barnstormers in *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings*, a fictional account which became a very entertaining and underrated feature film.

By the mid-1970s national interest in black baseball had reached a level surpassing anything that had existed while the leagues were still alive. Ocania Chalk amassed information on the Negro Leagues in *Pioneers of Black Sports* (1975). Art Rust, Jr. combined his own reminiscences with those of Negro League players in "Get That Nigger Off The Field" (1976). *Sam's Legacy*, a second novel dealing with black baseball appeared in 1974. By 1977, the Hall of Fame had admitted eight Negro Leaguers, before abruptly and inexplicably disbanding the special committee which considered them, effectively barring the door to future admissions.

Long ignored by the media and the baseball establishment, players like Buck Leonard, Ray Dandridge, and Willie Wells found themselves besieged by amateur and sometimes professional historians armed with tape recorders. Interviews with former Negro League players began to appear in numerous regional and national periodicals and in SABR publications. In one of the best of these interviews, Pulitzer Prize winner Theodore Rosengarten teamed with Lorenzo "Piper" Davis to produce "Reading the Hops" in *Southern Exposure*. James A. Riley and Dick Clark produced additional articles based on player reminiscences. In 1983 Riley produced a Who's Who of Negro League play, *The All-Time All-Stars of Black Baseball*, which profiled several hundred athletes who had appeared during the Jim Crow era. John Holway continued his contributions with a series of short profiles including *Bullet Joe and the Monarchs* (1984) and *Smoky Joe and the Cannonball* (1985), as well as numerous articles.

Two books by Negro League participants supplemented the work of the oral historians. In 1976 Effa Manley published her own account, *Negro Baseball . . . Before Integration*, which unfortunately proved far less outspoken and interesting than the author herself. The following year, Quincy Troupe, a former catcher, who had once had a "cup of coffee" in the majors, offered his autobiography *20 Years Too Soon*, which lovingly recreated his decades in the Negro Leagues, on the barnstorming tours, in Latin America, and finally in organized baseball. Troupe's book, generously decorated with photographs from his scrapbooks, contains a wealth of information about black players and black baseball.

The oral histories and autobiographies of the 1970s and 1980s capture the flavor of life in the Negro Leagues and greatly enhance our knowledge, but as analytical tools they have severe limitations. Human memories tend toward the exaggerated and romantic. They deal largely with selected moments and places rather than the broader picture. As oral history piles upon oral history, the reader often receives variations on the same theme



with little focus or historical direction. Contrary to popular opinion, oral histories do not speak for themselves; they require commentary to place them into historical perspective.

Often, good biographers will provide this perspective, but book length chronicles of Negro League stars have been rare. In 1978 William Brashler published *Josh Gibson: A Life in the Negro Leagues*, a good effort which amply demonstrates the pitfalls of books of this type. Brashler knows the Negro Leagues and writes well, but apparently could not gather enough information to fill a book about the great catcher. This slim volume includes both Brashler's personal recollections (not of Gibson, but of Ted Williams) and a chapter on what happened to Gibson's best friend, Sam Bankhead, after Gibson's death. Thus Brashler's book is pleasurable, and in spots, revealing, but ultimately unsatisfying.

One author who has attempted to move beyond the usual Negro League focus is Jerry Malloy. Malloy has published two excellent articles in *The National Pastime*. In "Out at Home" (1983) Malloy gives a detailed

account of the 1887 International League season: the key turning point for black exclusion in the nineteenth century. "Black Bluejackets" (1985) examines the history of the Great Lakes Naval Station team, which included numerous Negro League stars and future major leaguers Larry Doby and Chuck Harmon during World War II.

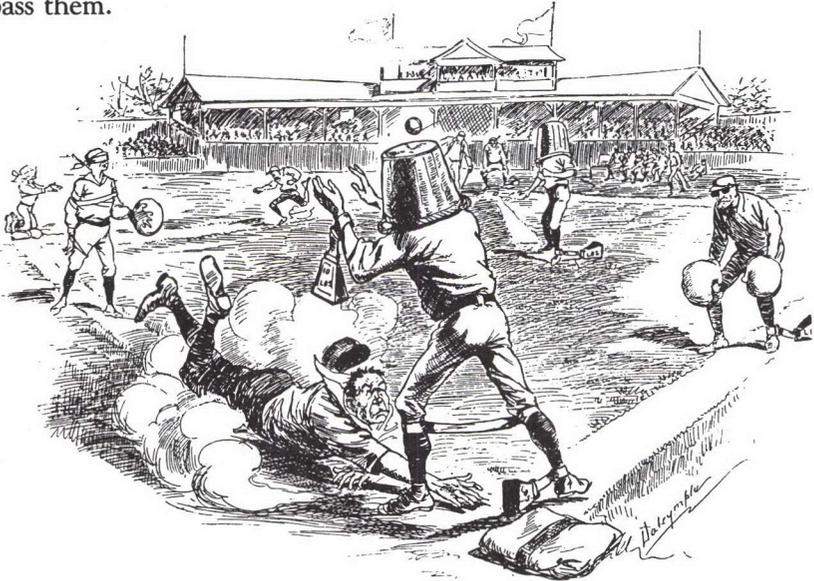
In the early 1980s academia belatedly discovered the Negro Leagues. My own volume on baseball integration, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*, appeared in 1983. Although primarily concerned with black players in organized baseball, the Negro Leagues took their rightful place as an integral part of the story. In the 1940s and 1950s they became the fount of major and minor league talent, an important transitional agency in the recruitment of black players. I chronicled their ultimate decline and the fate of the great black stars of that age, and analyzed the manner in which Negro League playing styles transformed the national pastime and improved the game.

Baseball's Great Experiment was published simultaneously with Donn Rogosin's *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues*, the first major overview of the subject since Peterson's book. Rogosin's work derived from his Ph.D. thesis in American Studies and offered a rich cultural panorama of "The World That Negro Baseball Made." Rogosin addressed not only the activities on the field or the internal league dynamics but the importance of baseball in black communities during the first half of the twentieth century. Rogosin stressed the origins of the players, their role in black America, their itinerant lifestyle, and the "Latin Connection." Based on extensive interviews, *Invisible Men* provided a systematic and in-depth look at the black athletic experience in the years before integration.

While both Rogosin's book and my own received widespread publicity, a more recent study, *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball* (1985) by Janet Bruce, has gone largely unnoticed. This is unfortunate, because not only has Bruce produced one of the best books about the Negro Leagues, but her work marks an important new direction for baseball history in general. Relying not only on oral histories, but local newspapers and archival sources, Bruce examines the often talked about, but seldom studied, relationship between team and community. She places the history of the Monarchs firmly within the context of the evolution of black life in Kansas City, describing how blacks embraced their baseball representatives and where the team itself fit into black society. Bruce also traces the impact of the club's decline on Kansas City itself. Historians studying any baseball team, black or white, will benefit greatly by Bruce's pioneer work.

A soon-to-be-published manuscript, Rob Ruck's *Sandlot Seasons*, takes a similar, yet equally original approach. Ruck studied the history of

black sports in Pittsburgh, the home of both the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays. Ruck's emphasis, however, is not only on professional sports, but on their relationship to the games played in the city's sandlots. En route, he takes us on a tour of the black community rarely seen in most histories, from bourgeoisie to numbers runners, and from schoolyards to stadiums. While some readers may find both Ruck's and Bruce's books too "academic," no serious student of black baseball should bypass them.



GIVE PITTSBURG A CHANCE!

A SUGGESTION FOR A HANDICAP GAME OF BASE-BALL.

Thus, after forty years of baseball integration, and two decades of relative obscurity, the Negro Leagues have become a fertile ground for both baseball history and broader sociological approaches. Black baseball has attracted both widespread interest among baseball "buffs" and a level of respectability in academia. Dozens of taped interviews exist as primary sources for future writers. Yet much work remains. Additional team studies, analyses of the barnstorming phenomenon, and bicultural attempts to understand Latin baseball represent but a few of the areas requiring further efforts. If indeed baseball played a significant role in the black community, we must also assess how the disappearance of the Negro Leagues affected black culture. No one has yet attempted a thorough analysis of how integration changed the way in which baseball is played or the large number of sons of Negro Leaguers who have reached the major leagues. In addition, evidence must continue to be amassed on behalf of the many black athletes still unfairly barred from the Hall of Fame.

Those who tread in this arena must also bear in mind the ultimate irony of baseball integration. The Jackie Robinson saga stands as one of the most sacrosanct in our folklore. It symbolizes American fair play and the beginning of the end for the national disgrace that was "Jim Crow." The universal acceptance of blacks in baseball stands as a testament to the achievement of Robinson and those who followed him. No one would question that the disappearance of the Negro Leagues marked a step forward in our social evolution. Yet something vital and distinctively American died with the passing of black baseball. At their height, the Negro Leagues were a \$2 million empire, largely controlled by blacks, employing hundreds of players and offering a form of cultural identification to millions of fans. Today more blacks play in the major leagues, yet fewer make their living from baseball. Black athletes serve as role models for both black and white youth, but they do so in an economic and organizational context far removed from their own ethnic and racial communities. We cannot resuscitate the Negro Leagues, nor would we want to. Nonetheless as the efforts of Negro League historians demonstrate, we can honor them and utilize them as portals to our divided past.

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Baseball Joe Matson: The Greatest Player Who Never Was

By Jack Kavanagh

Let others praise the literary giants who have brought their skills to baseball fiction. Wolfe, Farrell, Malamud, Harris, Coover, Kennedy deserve kudos. But I toss my cap in the air and shout, "huzzah!" for Lester Chadwick, the author who invented the exploits of the Baseball Joe series.

The canon covering Baseball Joe's career is contained in 14 novels, published by Cupples & Leon, from 1912 to 1928. These differ from other juvenile books about baseball as they trace the personal and professional history of the principal character from his early teens in *Baseball Joe of The Silver Stars*, to his ultimate major league achievement in *Baseball Joe, Pitching Wizard*.

Joe Matson is 15 years old in the first book and 34 when the series ends. He moves from town team to prep school and into Yale. Unlike Frank Merriwell who remained an undergraduate at Old Eli for dozens of dime novels, Joe Matson left after a single season of varsity pitching to enter professional baseball.

A season in the Central League and he is drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals. His potential as a rookie catches the eye of the New York Giants management and a trade is arranged which brings Baseball Joe to the team of his role model, Christy Mathewson.

Chadwick drew extensively on the actual events of baseball to provide Baseball Joe the circumstances of the books. The series runs approximately parallel to a passing scene which saw the transition from the dead ball era to the lively ball and the advent of the home run. In the

JACK KAVANAGH *"flung himself gladly and headlong into retirement, eager to allow a suppressed writer's lifestyle free rein."* He has written for baseball publications and general interest ones. His mystery novel, *The Coopers-town Caper*, will be published soon. He is also seeking a publisher for *"The San Diego Chicken Ain't Kosher,"* tracing the history of baseball clowns from Germany Schaefer (see 1985 SABR Research Journal) through Altrock, Schacht, and Patkin to today's plastic mascots.

course of the 14 novels we find Joe Matson touring the world as a member of the world champion Giants, resisting the temptations of the Federal League, being shamed by the Black Sox and adapting to the lively ball.

Although the backgrounds and circumstances changed with the times, the plots did not. The books are formula-written with a villain for each, either with a conspiracy to frame Joe for a crime or to kidnap him so he will miss "the big game." Joe never failed to show up for any crucial game, often dragging a covey of villains behind him.

If you are looking for unique plotting, you'll not find it in these books. If complex personalities intrigue you, you'll be disappointed to know Baseball Joe Matson is a one-dimensional demi-god.

However, the Baseball Joe series was only intended to serve boys coming to maturity from 1912 until the eve of World War II. As the books were passed down from older brother to younger, they imparted tidbits of the actual history of the game, playing tips, strategy insights and an understanding of the framework of organized baseball. These are peripheral values to hero-worshipping young readers. Foremost, Baseball Joe is the best of pitchers, steals bases when he wishes, and develops into a batter with the "hit 'em where they ain't" adroitness of Willie Keeler and the power to drive the ball a tad farther than Babe Ruth.

Joe combines the skills of Cobb, Speaker, Lajoie and Wagner. About the only thing he *didn't* do was go behind the plate. The author was probably stumped on how to have Joe pitch to himself.

The Baseball Joe books were among the first juvenile novels we ever read, taking them in random order in the early 1930s. I doubt if all 14 trickled down from older family members whose hand-me-downs in juvenile literature kept me enthralled during my pre-teen years.

However, I recently borrowed the entire series from a friend who has collected them all. I was able to read my way from the time when young Joe Matson and his family move to Riverside, a town on a river coursing somewhere through New England, until the last book, published 16 years later. Read in maturity, these books are amusingly arcane. However, they also are tinged with a personal nostalgia for a time which was disappearing as my own adolescence began.

I am sure my own interest in baseball's past was first awakened by these books. Chadwick, a pen name borrowed knowingly from The Father of baseball writers, Henry Chadwick, injects considerable historical information into his stories. For example, while Joe is traveling by train to spring training, he meets an old man who says he played right field for the Cincinnati Red Stockings of 1869. The old-time ballplayer tells Joe about the early years of the game, adding he was in the lineup the day Paul Hines made the first unassisted triple play.

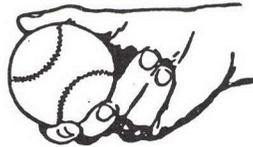
Contemporary historians are quick to deny this and can show box-scores to back up their debunking of the accomplishment. However, Lester Chadwick was quoting the beliefs of his time and, as the books are works of fiction, the Hines unassisted triple play makes a better story.

Throughout the novels, Joe Matson experiences events which served to teach the juvenile reader the realities of life in professional baseball. Joe resents the fact that his contract can be sold without his consent, but accepts this as necessary "for the good of the game."

Joe can always see the other fellow's viewpoint, but stands with the establishment whenever a crisis occurs. A boy reading the books for



The Drop Ball



The Fadeaway Ball

excitement, for accounts of games played, for the suspense as Joe escapes one dastardly plot after another, unconsciously absorbs a great deal of baseball background.

Chadwick blended fact and fiction. He barely hid the actual identity of real life players: Hornsby was Mornsby; Ruth was Roth ("look out for his beanball") as a pitcher and Kid Rose, later, as a slugger. Joe's idol and mentor on the Giants was Hughson, famous for his fadeaway. McRae is the bellicose Giant's manager.

Baseball Joe Matson began playing in New England, as a boy, on a town team, after his family had moved to Riverside. The Matson family consisted of the father, an inventor and early century wimp. He is constantly being swindled by evil partners whose ill intent is always apparent to his son. Mother Matson, who hopes young Joe will enter the ministry, flutters from crisis to crisis, and presumably found Joe, and his sister, Clara, a year younger, under a leaf in the cabbage patch.

The family is 110% four square in every virtue but Joe is the first to recognize he has been living in the 20th century for a decade. Even so, Joe's boyhood transportation is by bike, with an oil lamp on the handle-bars, or by hiring a livery rig from the town stable to chase fleeing villains.

Joe's athletic skills are utilized from time to time by the author to resolve a crisis. Joe enables a man to escape a burning building by hurling up a ball of yarn and attaching a stout rope to it so the man can slide down to safety.

In another situation, Joe first meets Mabel Varley, the romance of his life, when she caroms past him, helpless in a carriage lurching behind a

runaway horse. Joe stops the animal in its tracks by throwing a stone and hitting the horse in the head, knocking it unconscious.

This first meeting with Mabel begins a succession of appearances in subsequent books which even the most juvenile of readers realized must someday lead Baseball Joe to the altar. Actually, Joe's courtship of Mabel extends from *Baseball Joe in The Central League*, through four intervening books, until Joe and Mabel finally tied the knot in *Baseball Joe, Home Run King*.

There was a break in the series after 1918, due, most likely, to the First World War and the scarcity of paper for juvenile books. Although the books parallel the real events in baseball, the author seems to have overlooked World War I. Unlike Matty, the obvious counterpart for the fictionalized Matson, Baseball Joe not only doesn't go to war, he is oblivious of it.

It is quite likely that the Edward Stratemeyer "fiction mill" changed horses behind the pseudonym, Lester Chadwick, at this point. To give this project a literary mystique it doesn't deserve—after all, we're not going to divide into camps over authorship, (no Baconians need apply)—it can be observed that the books from 1912 to 1918 contain vastly more baseball historical references. Also, the dialogue is characteristically dotted with what I will suggest is "the Stratemeyer stammer."

This is a dialogue device, in which the personal pronoun is repeated, to connote stress and determination: "I - I'd rather fight than give in."

But more significant in the books from 1922 on, is that Joe's upward mobility, having been attained on the Giants, no longer serves as the book's achievement pinnacle. Where Joe had been able to end each book looking forward to a coming season played at a higher level—sandlot, to prep, to college, to minors, to majors, to the Giants—once with New York, each successive season had to top the last. This was to lead to problems for the author, whoever wielded the pen behind the pen name.

Eventually, Baseball Joe had done it all. He rarely won a crucial game without pitching a no-hitter. When a base hit would do, he customarily belted the ball out of sight. He had been carried off the field in triumph by his teammates so often they were becoming stoop-shouldered by the task.

Whether it was ordained that *Baseball Joe, Pitching Wizard* was to be Joe Matson's swan song, instead of another of a continuing series of extraordinary accomplishments, is left to conjecture by those familiar with the publishing world. I think it was.

There had been a lapse of three years since Baseball Joe had left his readers agape in wonderment. In 1925's *Baseball Joe, Champion of the League*, the Giants win more games than any team ever had. Joe, of course, pitches the final victory and, for a variation on the theme of personal

contribution, doesn't hit a home run. Instead, he scores from first base on a single.

This caps a season in which Joe Matson leads the league in niceness, decency, and celibacy; and, incidentally, batting average, home runs, stolen bases and, when pitching, strikeouts and earned run average. It didn't seem possible for Joe to exceed the excess of success in the future.

Sensibly, the author behind the series—let's credit Edward Stratemeyer with blocking out these books, if not providing the final manuscript—tried to phase Joe out. Missing from the list of Baseball Joe books in the Grobani bibliography is the 1926 *Baseball Joe, Club Owner*.

Joe leaves the major leagues with a sore arm, the consequence of evil doings by the villains in the prior volume. This plot seems to be an effort to close the circle of novels at twelve. When the publisher agreed to permit Joe to leave the big leagues, there was a tacit awareness this would deprive the books of the most attractive elements for juvenile readers. We—for I was among them—wanted Joe to conquer more baseball worlds, not settle down in a front office job in a minor league city.

Joe is back in his boyhood hometown, Riverside, now strangely relocated in the Midwest. It might be that a new hand has taken up the pen behind the pseudonym and didn't remember Riverside was in New England, or the marketing people at Cupples & Leon may have thought it better for circulation to locate in mid-America.

Joe buys the franchise and finds three of his old Silver Star teammates still in the lineup. He encounters a new set of blackguards and reveals himself as a closet bigot. At one point he explains, about Moe Russnak, the book's bad guy, "He's a Jew that lives in Pentolia (rival city). Not that I have anything against him because of his race. Our shortstop, Levy, is a Jew and he's as fine a fellow as there is on the team."

Having delivered himself of the classic brotherhood bromide, but not introduced Levy to his sister, Clara, who will wed Joe's best friend, another WASP, Joe manages the team, in a nonplaying role, to the pennant. He then gives the franchise to his dependent father, whose patents have been stolen again and again during the series, and his brother-in-law, Mabel's brother, Reggie Varley.

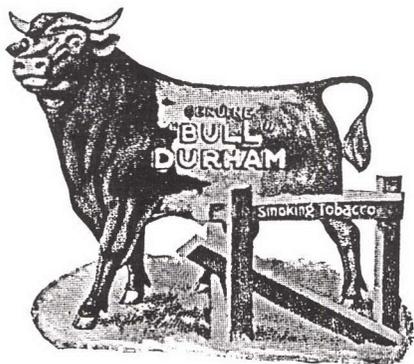
The series might have ended at that point, but someone decided, in 1928, to bring Joe back to the major leagues, his arm restored. One can sense Lester Chadwick chafing at having to find more worlds—and World Series—for his protagonist to conquer. Possibly it crossed the author's mind to have Baseball Joe tumble off Coogan's Bluff, locked in combat with the book's villain, as Conan Doyle, bored by the exploits of Sherlock Holmes, had sent him over Reichenbach Falls in the clutches of Professor Moriarity.

In the end, Chadwick used a more appropriate means and more diabolical. He gave the plot a final twist by writing finis to a series with a climax that could never be exceeded in a subsequent book.

Joe had purged baseball of two teammates who had accepted bribes from gamblers. Despite having to replace them with two untested rookies, the Giants win yet another pennant and provide Joe with an obligatory encore in the subsequent World Series. Baseball Joe's readers know their hero will win; we read only to learn how he will do it this time.

Joe is concerned about the two rookies who have replaced the crooked veterans. He worries how they will stand up to the pressure of championship games and fears they will embarrass themselves by making crucial errors on balls hit to them. Joe has the solution. He avoids the risk of shaky-handed fielders by not allowing the ball to be batted to them. His solution? *He methodically strikes out all 27 batters as they come to the plate.*

If there's to be a plaque honoring Baseball Joe Matson erected in the Baseball Hall of Fiction Fame, let it be noted that Joseph Matson, born in 1894, died of over-achievement in 1928. The series ended at that point. The books remained in circulation for a decade or more longer and still appear in secondhand bookstores. They are fun to read, loaded with historic detail and, if they were part of your own boyhood, leave you awash in nostalgia.



A Tour of Yankee Literature

By Mark Gallagher

The literature on the New York Yankees is presumably indicative of baseball literature generally, except, of course, that Yankee literature, like Yankee tradition, Yankee Stadium, Yankee uniforms and Yankee hot dogs, has a pinch or two of special interest, the Yankees being the Yankees.

It is a literature driven by a robust market, not only in New York and surrounding geography but across the continent and around the world. Yankee fans are everywhere. Ian Smith of Glasgow, Scotland, a SABR member, described himself in correspondence with me as “a Yankee fanatic.”

But there is another component of the market that is big, too—the Yankee hater component. A book entitled *The Bronx Zoo* is transparently beamed at Yankee-phobes as well as Yankee-philes. A Yankee hater buys *The Bronx Zoo* to see what the low-life pinstripers may be up to now, for the title appeals to all the attitudes and prejudices that make the Yankee hater what he is.

By Yankee literature I mean not only books but also newspaper writings, which in New York can be something special. I don't happen to know what *literature* in the narrow sense means exactly, but I know that words blowing in the gutter the day after they're written are no less for the transience of their medium. However, here, I concentrate on books.

What *has* happened to Yankee writings over the decades? They have grown better, much better, more adult, and there's more of them—much more of them, although, it should be said, there is a down side to the recent literature, too.

You may have seen one of those old ballpark photos where the crowd looks almost comic in its homogeneity—white men sitting stiffly, side by side, in dark suits, white shirts, dark ties and strawhats. Scissored male

MARK GALLAGHER has written several books on the Yankees, including *The Yankee Encyclopedia* (1982), and is currently working on a book chronicling the home runs of Mickey Mantle (due out in 1987 from Arbor House).

figures. The women were home doing what the day called for, washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday, baking on Wednesday. The kids were reading inspirational sports books, learning how to become fit members of a principled adult society.

Things have changed. The ballpark crowd is more representative of all elements of society. Kids know the score; sophisticated youth can weed out the fake heroes from the real ones better than their counterparts of yesteryear, who were sheltered by the journalistic mores of the day, which tended to gloss up player images. Fans are more casual—you might not see one man in a suit and tie on a trip to the ballpark—but they demand more honesty. By and large the Yankee literature is more honest and more adult, and that is good.

My own Yankee collection begins, in terms of age, with a book that quite possibly owes its value to a source of inside information. No doubt about it, Yankee literature—any literature in part involving reportage—leans heavily on those capable of reliable disclosure. It was with the help of wonderful insider Waite Hoyt that Frank Graham wrote a history of the club at the 40-year mark, a book which sketches the beginning of the big Yankees picture.

I found Graham's *The New York Yankees: An Informal History*, first released in 1943, a solid and candid book. Hoyt, the great Yankees pitcher who had become club historian of sorts, doubtless was instrumental in making this book what it is.

Graham didn't stir controversy, and neither did he duck it. But what was controversy then and what is controversy now—and remember, we're talking Yankees—are two different creatures.

Graham wrote that Earle "Doc" Painter, longtime Yankee trainer, was let go after the Yankees loss in the 1942 World Series because Manager Joe McCarthy never liked him and used the loss, the Yanks' only defeat in eight Series appearances under McCarthy, as a convenient hook on which to hang the firing.

Good, honest speculation, and why not? Marse Joe wouldn't give Painter or anyone else an explanation for the firing. However, it wasn't exactly Thurman-hates-Reggie/Reggie-hates-Billy/Billy-hates-George stuff. It lacked the palpable passion of the '80s.

Graham included a special page of appreciation to Hall of Famer Hoyt who was with the rollicking Yankees of 1921-1930. Through Hoyt, Graham probably got more anecdotal material on the Yankees of the '20s than he could ever hope to get from the lid-clamping, news-managing Yankees of the '30s.

The thing about Hoyt was that besides being articulate, intelligent and witty, he was reliable. He liked to tell it the way it was.

He had helped several authors with their books. I corresponded with him in 1978 about a Yankee book I was attempting. He replied, "I have assisted in so many books I truly am shy of participating in any others." But being the grand gentleman that he was, he did offer assistance, and on more than one occasion, too.

Graham did another book, a laudatory biography of John J. McGraw, and still another biography that was issued a year before his informal Yankee history, this one called *Lou Gehrig—A Quiet Hero*.

I have heard tell that the Gehrig biog was written for kids and I am not surprised. Anyway, this Graham book, in retrospect, is disappointing. The dialogue is unconvincing—Graham couldn't possibly have gotten all of that down so perfectly. And too much time is spent with Lou Gehrig, a decent man, in his final days; human empathy is one thing, but an endless dwelling on Lou's final hours is maudlin.

But what rankles me is the way Graham either missed or glossed over the Gehrig-John McGraw relationship. Lou had a football scholarship to Columbia. He also played some for the Columbia baseball team, and, in an exhibition game against Hartford, hit a couple of attention-attracting homers. The Hartford papers later announced his signing by the Hartford club.

However, as Norton W. Chellgran pointed out in the 1975 *Baseball Research Journal*, the next day the new man was called Lou Lewis. Two weeks later Lewis was gone without explanation; the folks at Columbia got him out of Hartford. Lou sustained a suspension but his amateur status was intact.

Veteran sportswriter Fred Lieb, one of Gehrig's best friends, has related that McGraw told Gehrig he could play pro ball and college football, too. "Oh, you can do both," McGraw is said to have told Lou. "You'll play in Hartford (preparing for the Giants) under the name of Lewis. Nobody will know that Lewis of Hartford is the same guy as Lou Gehrig of Columbia."

Gehrig became a football star at Columbia and later signed with the Yankees. He remained bitter toward McGraw. "In 1921 McGraw was a sophisticated, experienced baseball man and I was a dumb, innocent kid," Gehrig told Lieb. "Yet he was willing to let me throw away a scholarship as though it was a bundle of trash."

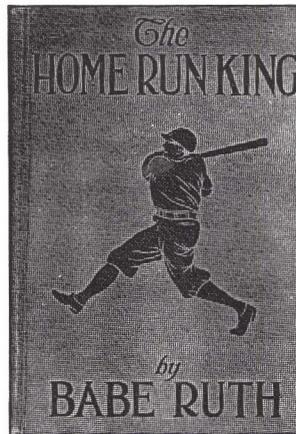
Lieb reported this in his 1977 memoirs, *Baseball As I Have Known It*. The way Graham told the story 35 years earlier, the story that misled SABR member Fred Stein and me in our preparation of a book manuscript on the market competition between the Giants and Yankees, the Hartford manager, one of McGraw's many bird-dog scouts, took Lou to the Polo Grounds for a tryout, but McGraw wasn't interested. The manager, one

Arthur Irwin, then signed the strapping youngster to a Hartford contract. McGraw is clean, according to this version.

Gehrig was partly to blame for his situation. He should have confided in his Columbia coach before signing anything. But he was a kid; McGraw and Irwin were big boys, and Graham exonerated the former by implication and rationalized the latter's jeopardizing of Lou's amateur status as the work of "a hearty and pleasant old chap who merely did as any other scout would have done in the circumstances."

Graham portrayed Gehrig as a strong silent type—the type that America would have as its hero. Heroes, heroes, heroes. The sports sections of the papers were chock-full of them. Sports journalism for decades was peachy-cream stuff. Veteran reporters covering the Yankees got close to the Yankees so they could write upbeat stories about them.

Then came the Chipmunks. Born of the '50s, the 'Munks didn't enter the realm of reality until they had a name, and that didn't happen until the '60s. One version has it that they got their name when a newsman of the



old school saw some of them in animated discussion and grunted scoffingly, "They look like a bunch of chipmunks." And so the name and the reality. The Chipmunks could indeed get into their work. They were inquiring and, above all, irreverent, and they were headquartered in New York where the Yankees are headquartered.

Jack Mann explained Chipmunkery in his excellent 1967 book, *The Decline and Fall of the New York Yankees*. Mann portrayed himself, Stan Isaacs, Phil Pepe, Maury Allen, George Vecsey, Steve Jacobsen, Leonard Koppett and others as 'Munks—guys who wanted to have some fun in their day-to-day reporting and to be able to occasionally go beyond day-to-day reportage.

“If they made no attempt to relate the billion-dollar industry of show sport to the society in which it exists, they wouldn’t be doing anything but writing stories about games,” was the way Mann put it.

Chipmunks covering the Yankees had a friend for a time in Yankee President Mike Burke, who occupied the pinstriped throne for a relatively brief time, but Burke aside, they were faced with a long, deeply instilled Yankee tradition of nondisclosure.

Nondisclosure stemmed in part from Joe McCarthy’s insistence on a certain demeanor for the Yankees collectively and for Yankees as individuals, a demeanor that signaled a quiet and efficient “class.” It owed first and foremost, however, to wonderful Edward Grant Barrow who came to the Yankees as business manager in 1920 and left as club president in 1945.

Barrow ran an iron-fisted show and kept in the background. “The spotlight,” he wrote in his 1951 autobiography, *My Fifty Years in Baseball*, written with James M. Kahn when Barrow was 83, “should be reserved for the players and the players alone.” Nothing was necessary to promote the game, not even night baseball. (Yankee Stadium didn’t acquire lights until after Barrow’s departure.) The game was enough—“Baseball doesn’t need a carnival or sideshow,” Barrow declared.

With Barrow as your general manager, if you weren’t lucky enough to count a Babe Ruth among your personnel, you weren’t going to have a helluva lot of color. Wit, maybe—the wit of a Gomez, perhaps—but swashbuckling color, no, not even a whole lot of human interest.

When Barrow, who himself had a most colorful past that began on a wagon train bound for Nebraska, became teamed with rulebook Joe McCarthy, who joined the club in 1931, there was no limit to the Yankees’ discreet decorum. Rule breakers were unwelcome, especially those Southern boys.

McCarthy had a prejudice—no, a conviction rather than a prejudice, according to Barrow, “because he had reasoned things out in his own way,” against Southern ballplayers. Barrow wrote that McCarthy “thought they were too hot tempered and defeated themselves.”

In another Barrow passage, he wrote Joe thought that players who came from the hill country of the South were particularly onerous.

“They’re all moonshiners back there,” Joe once said, “and they’re just naturally against the law. They resent any kind of rules or discipline.”

Barrow gave a couple of examples of talented, temperamental players traded away by McCarthy for the good of the team. But Barrow didn’t say how McCarthy’s views affected his opinion of Bill Dickey, born in Louisiana and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Barrow also revealed Tony Lazzeri’s epilepsy in terms decidedly insensitive by today’s standards. Barrow, who believed Lazzeri was “one of

the greatest ballplayers I have ever known,” said other clubs passed over the Pacific Coast League star because he “took fits.” But after an elaborate check into Lazzeri’s background, Barrow decided to take a chance and purchase his contract. “As long as he doesn’t take fits between 3 and 6 in the afternoon, that’s good enough for me,” Barrow said at the time.

There was a stigma attached to epilepsy. Barrow always feared that Lazzeri would have a seizure on the field, but, to Ed’s relief, Tony’s attacks were confined to the clubhouse or a railroad car. The Lazzeri story could have been a great inspiration to other epileptics, but views on epilepsy were not as enlightened as they are now, and the story was covered up. “I don’t believe the public ever knew this about him (Lazzeri),” wrote Barrow. “Certainly we took every precaution we could to see that the public never did, and in this the sportswriters traveling with the club were likewise as considerate of Tony’s feelings and welfare.”

So the writers sat on the story. It is doubtful that the same story could ever be covered up today, which is probably the way things should be. But in the ’20s and ’30s, when Lazzeri played, a player’s faults, and, unfortunately, epilepsy was seen as a fault, often went unreported. The clubs and writers scratched each others’ backs. Contrast that with today’s headlines of drug and alcohol problems. If you appreciate an open society, you’ve got to say that today’s situation is healthier.

The Chipmunks weren’t about to toe the company line. They wouldn’t even use the word “we,” as in “who are we going to pitch tomorrow, Skipper?,” a typical question from the old-school writer. A Chipmunk was a reporter, not a booster.

The Chipmunks not only changed the press’s day-to-day approach, but they changed the book literature, too. A case in point is Mann’s own *The Decline and Fall of the New York Yankees*. It not only details why the Yankee Dynasty toppled, but it delves into the chinks in the Yankee armor back in their perfectionist glory days.

The Yankees were far from being the most accessible baseball team to the press. The traditional pattern was that Yankee management would issue only the information that served its purposes—injuries would be covered up, for one thing—and the old-school writers would settle for what they got. The Chipmunks would not. To Yankee management, Chipmunkery threatened management’s ability to control the news.

Yankee players resisted the Chipmunks, too. Around the locker room, a Chipmunk was a reporter who asked too many damn questions, including questions about players not as players but as human beings. A good writer, to a player, was one who didn’t probe, one who stuck to whatever happened on the field. A bad writer was a “ripper.” A ripper sometimes did no more than tell the truth.

The Yankees collapsed in 1965, then fell to the cellar in 1966. Mike Burke took over as Yankee president and pledged a new era of openness around the club. He even went to the New York Baseball Writers annual outing—something Dan Topping, his predecessor, had never done—played for the Chipmunks in the softball game and was awarded a Chipmunk sweatshirt. The Chipmunks liked Burke for his openness, but Burke's Yankees didn't win, and it wasn't long before Burke was gone and George Steinbrenner was the big cheese in the South Bronx.

The first earthshaking Chipmunk influence in the book literature appeared in 1970, three years after *Decline and Fall*. It created a sensation. *Ball Four*, by Jim Bouton (with Leonard Shecter) blew the lid off clubhouse secrecy.

Bouton wasn't a Chipmunk—he was a Yankee pitcher of the 1960s who won 21 games in 1963—but Shecter was. They violated the rule of the clubhouse that says “all that is said here and is seen here stays here.” What Bouton did was expose some Yankee debauchery.

Shecter had already taken the halo off sports heroes with his 1969 book, *The Jocks*. In this book he rips into the hypocrisy surrounding the sports world, from the magnates to the stars, sparing no one, including his own profession of journalism. It is such a biting book that the numbed reader can't discern Shecter's legitimate points from his bitter tirades.

The Yankees, for example, a club Shecter covered for the *New York Post*, and the team's individual players, are a special target for his slings and arrows. To Shecter, Joe DiMaggio had become vain and lonely. Yogi Berra's 1961 autobiography, *Yogi*, was “a terrible book, cheap and phony and transparent.” Mickey Mantle had only himself to blame for his leg problems because he didn't do his off-season exercises.

Shecter was not well-liked in the Yankee clubhouse. He was seen as a ripper, the No. 1 ripper in the eyes of Roger Maris, whom Shecter portrays as “a griper.” But Shecter says he liked Maris, or rather his accessibility, when Roger joined the Yanks in 1960, and even felt that Roger handled his next, 61-homer season reasonably well. He even wrote a paperback on Maris, *Home Run Hero*. When Maris encountered all his problems with the fans in 1962, however, Shecter wrote a *Post* story saying, basically, that Maris was at fault for reactions that were causing the fans to intensify their abuse. According to Shecter, Maris cursed him for the story and they never talked again.

Shecter argues that ballplayers don't understand the job reporters have to do. “The last thing a ballplayer cares about are the precepts by which a newspaperman is supposed to live,” wrote Shecter.

He explains how in 1963 Yankee pitcher Bill Stafford was going bad—Stafford's career was in jeopardy, in fact—and after another bad

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performance, Stafford told Shecter he didn't want to talk. Shecter persisted, in the correct opinion that if a player could talk reams when winning, he should find the grace to talk when losing. But what Shecter failed to understand, or at least acknowledge, was the tremendous pressure building up inside Stafford. My God, this young man was watching his professional career slip away. But Shecter left him alone only after a mouthful of fist became a distinct possibility. Respect is another one of those two-way streets.

Shecter's favorite was Casey Stengel—"the only great man I ever knew." He was especially grateful to Stengel for overlooking a mess Shecter got into in 1958 when he reported a brief cigar-jamming scuffle between pitcher Ryne Duren and coach Ralph Houk that a rewrite man over-amplified. The rest of the Yankees shunned Shecter, but Stengel, recognizing the nature of Lenny's profession, bought Shecter a drink.

Stengel won a lot of points like that with reporters, who doted on him. But while Shecter revealed some of the cruel things Casey said about his players—of the slumping Moose Skowron, who played despite serious injuries, Casey said, "The way he's going I'd be better off if he was hurt"—it didn't seem to bother him much. Stengel had Shecter's loyalty, much the way the "house men" writers Shecter so loathed were in the clutches of the club they covered.

As Bouton and Shecter turned the clubhouse inside out, Geoffrey Stokes in his excellent 1984 book, *Pinstripe Pandemonium*, explored the Yankee psyche. Perhaps only a book on the scrutinized Yankees could include a chapter on the psychology of the Yankees.

Stokes examines the 1983 Yankees, maintaining that these Yankees, runners-up to Baltimore in the American League East, were without effective leadership. The team had been leaderless since the death of Thurman Munson in 1979. And the pine-tar fiasco, throwing the team into disarray, was a situation that demanded leadership. No one stepped forward, wrote Stokes.

Graig Nettles was the senior Yankee and team captain in 1983. He was the unquestioned leader on the field, smart, alert and tough in the clutch, but he wasn't a dominant presence in the clubhouse. He didn't understand, or it was never explained to him, what his captaincy meant. For example, when Steve Kemp was benched and his spirits fell, Nettles made no move to pick him up. Don Baylor tried, but like Kemp, he too was a first-year Yankee who was still feeling his way around.

Dave Winfield certainly possessed a physical presence. But Winfield, too, showed Stokes a limited concept of leadership, calling himself "an influential peer." He resisted anything rah-rah—good for him—but he also resisted taking command. He felt it enough to lead with bat and glove.

Ironically, quiet Willie Randolph, the least likely leader at first glance, a player whose injuries were sometimes questioned, was serving a key function of leadership. The younger Yankees volunteered to Stokes that it was Randolph who made them feel welcome on the team. Randolph revealed that Munson had put him at ease when he joined the club in 1976, and Willie was making a conscious effort to do the same for others.

The real probers and derobers of the Yankees, however, have been members or former members of the family. Joe Pepitone, the Yankee first baseman of the '60s, was one of the first of the Yankees to come out with his own book after *Ball Four*. Pepitone had told Peter Golenbock in *Dynasty* how upset he was over Bouton's writing unflattering things about Mickey Mantle in *Ball Four*, such as how Mantle would duck kids asking for autographs. "Kids grew up with a lot of good images about Mickey Mantle," Pepitone told Golenbock. "They felt good just thinking about him, and the next thing you know they're depressed because of what Jim wrote. Why should Jim give a shit? He's not going to see the kids' faces, see the way they feel."

So what did Pepitone do? He wrote a book in which he told a couple of stories that could have *really* hurt Mickey's image with kids, although to my way of thinking, the stories made Mantle more human and appealing than ever. Joe's book, *Joe, You Coulda Made Us Proud*, written with Barry Stainback and published in 1975 by Playboy Press, shouldn't be read by kids, anyway. Pepi, an original, dared to tell, just as he dared to be different in his playing days.

One story has All-American-boy Mantle getting stoned smoking marijuana with Joe before a game and not only losing all of his fabulous coordination at the plate but also passively accepting a strikeout when he normally exploded in anger. Pepi stressed that this was Mantle's first and only experiment with pot. All the same, the Mick would probably have voted not to have the story told.

The other story, more in keeping with the Mantle legend, had Mantle and Pepitone oversleeping after a night on the town and, having missed the team bus, taking a limousine to West Point for an exhibition game. Loaded on vodka, they made quite a scene when the limo arrived—right on the playing field. Mantle, in *The Mick*, never addressed the marijuana tale but made a point of saying that Pepitone exaggerated the details of the West Point story.

Pepi was soon joined by a long pinstriped line of authors.

However great the World Champion 1977-1978 Yankees may have been with bat and glove, they were veritable giants with the pen. No less than eight Yankees of 1977-1978, including Manager Billy Martin, joined with collaborators to write books on their days with the Yankees.

The books include *Thurman Munson*, by Munson with Martin Appel (1978); *The Bronx Zoo*, by Sparky Lyle and Peter Golenbock (1979); *Guidry*, by Ron Guidry and Golenbock (1980); *Number 1*, by Billy Martin and Golenbock (1980); *Yankee Stranger*, by Ed Figueroa and Dorothy Harshman (1982); *Balls*, by Graig Nettles and Golenbock (1984); *Reggie*, by Reggie Jackson with Mike Lupica (1984); and *Sweet Lou*, by Lou Piniella and Maury Allen (1986).

All of these Yankees were, or are, big stars, with the exception of Figueroa, who maybe should have been. Figgy was the unsung hero of the 1976-1978 campaigns, winning 19, 16 and 20 games over those three pennant-winning seasons. But he wasn't great. He wasn't colorful. He wasn't even personable. What was he trying to do with his *Yankee Stranger*?

He was telling us from the very title that he was an outsider (who happened to be from Puerto Rico) and that we had in store an outsider's fresh perspective. But Figgy only reveals that he has a thin skin and he supplies no more than overkilled stories and inanity, telling us, for example, that Bill Lee is funny, Nolan Ryan throws hard, and Carl Yastrzemski is always "a tough guy for me to face." Thanks, Figgy.

Figgy is not exactly alone. There is a certain inanity in all of these books. Worse, in at least some, there is a certain grub-for-the-buck "candor." One wonders and worries. Is it better to get it from a writer type, or an historian type, or to place one's faith in firsthand accounts from jocks either exorcising past torments or joining in the spirit of squeezing bucks from the printing press, or both?

Reservations aside, by and large, the player books make for good reading. They've got the necessary color and off-color and they're free of much of the phoniness that used to plague us in baseball literature. My favorite is Munson's. No big rips, fair treatment for friend and foe alike.

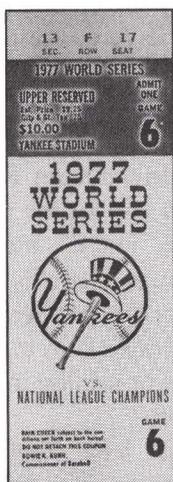
I became a little upset when, on April 24, 1984, the *New York Daily News*, the paper of sports columnist Mike Lupica, Reggie's co-author, ran the blaring headline: REGGIE BLASTS 'RACIST' YANKEES. Racism, of course, was just one of several slaps Jackson laid on his former club in this scoop by Paul Needell from Jackson's yet-to-be-released book.

But that isn't what made me angry. The Jackson story was old stuff really. What ticked me off, and amused me a little, too, was something on the inside pages of the *Daily News*, a column by Lupica, whom I consider without peer as a witty sportswriter. (Lupica has, however, allowed his intense dislike for George Steinbrenner and Billy Martin to warp his objectivity when writing about the Yankees.) Lupica was cheering an exciting April of sports in New York. "There had been too many Aprils around here in which the only racy sports news came when Boss Steinbrenner blew his nose or had his hairspray back up, but this time it is

different,” he wrote. “For now Boss Steinbrenner and his Yankees have to fight it out in headlineland with fine hockey, and basketball . . . and a vastly interesting young baseball team known as the New York Mets.”

I thought that Lupica was trying to have it both ways. After all, he was a party to Jackson’s revelations exploiting controversy that *on that very day* were monopolizing the headlines of his paper. I said so in a letter that the *Daily News* was kind enough to print.

There is nothing wrong with controversy. It sells books. The problem is that the public has to be wary; is it honest controversy that sheds light, or trumped-up controversy to sell books? Take former Colt Bubba Smith,



who in his book declared that the 1969 Super Bowl, which the Colts lost to the Jets, was fixed. Presumably, the allegation sold a few more books; it did not trigger any investigations to my knowledge. And it didn’t get me to buy the book. (Bubba, who is great in his TV beer commercials with Dick Butkus, stands a better chance of getting me to buy the beer.)

Of the greatest Yankee ballplayers—Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle—the Mick has been the most prolific author. Gehrig never got to write a book before his tragic and early death. DiMaggio in 1947 wrote *Lucky To Be a Yankee*, and Ruth a year later wrote *The Babe Ruth Story*. Mantle, besides his 1964 work, *The Quality of Courage*, was involved in four books about his life story, playing career, or both. These were *The Mickey Mantle Story*, by Mantle as told to Ben Epstein (1953); *The Education of a Baseball Player*, by Mantle with Bob Smith (1967); *Whitey and Mickey*, by Ford, Mantle and Joseph Durso (1977); and *The Mick*, by Mantle with Herb Gluck (1985).

The tones of the latter two were drastically different from the gee-and-goshisms of the first two which portrayed Mickey as the All-American boy, meaning countryside boy. In *The Mickey Mantle Story*, Mantle said: "I'm loaded with hayseed and aim to stay that way. Don't get me wrong. I'm not knocking the city way of life. But those big city apartments and townhouses always struck me as foolishly paying your money to eat and sleep in a jail."

Part of Mantle's charm is that fame never really changed him. But one doesn't spend 18 baseball seasons in New York without acquiring a certain amount of sophistication. Mantle acquired a great deal.

The Mick is one of the best baseball books ever published. Though Mickey is known to clam up rather than cut someone down, he is very honest about his opinions in this book and about his own weaknesses, too. He said of Duke Snider: "I loved the Duke. In fact, I would have loved to have been the Duke. Listen, you could practically fit Ebbets Field right inside Yankee Stadium." Mickey speculates he might have hit 15 more homers a year playing in Brooklyn.

I have read that Pete Rose considers himself—wrongly, in my opinion—the greatest switch-hitter of all time. Perhaps Mickey read it, too, because he had a pretty good zinger for Rose. "The world's greatest singles hitter," Mantle called him. "He chokes the bat, protects the plate, and concentrates on getting a piece of the ball. It's his thing. And I have a world of admiration for him. However, if I had played my career hitting singles like Pete, I'd wear a dress."

Books on the Yankees have changed in focus over the three decades from Joe DiMaggio's *Lucky To Be a Yankee* to Sparky Lyle's *The Bronx Zoo* in 1977, as their titles imply.

There have been histories, pictorial histories, anthologies, encyclopedias, date books, diaries, quiz books and individual biographies. There have even been books catering to Yankee haters, like the 1981 book, *Diary of a Yankee Hater* by Bob Marshall and the 1982 *The Official New York Yankees Hater's Handbook* by William B. Mead. I accepted the latter with a chuckle and even kidded with Bill about it at a SABR meeting, telling him I was offended that none of my books was listed among his sappiest books about the Yankees. (Bill replied that he wasn't aware of them. Huh?)

But Bill's book is troubled with little inaccuracies. Bill blames Yankee General Manager George Weiss for firing broadcasters Mel Allen and Red Barber, when, actually, Weiss himself was canned after the 1960 season, while Allen lasted through 1964 and Barber through 1966. Oh well, I have mistakes in print, too, and Bill would probably say it didn't matter; they were all fired by *some* heartless Yankee executive.

On the serious side, *Dynasty*, the 1975 book by Peter Golenbock that chronicled the great Yankee teams of 1949 through 1964, did a great service for Yankee fans. Golenbock got behind the scenes of those fabulous teams with a series of illuminating interviews. Each interview made a statement about the interviewee. For example, Gil McDougald came across as a tremendously warm human being, something that could have been overlooked when McDougald played for the Yankees and the players were often seen as interchangeable and replaceable parts in a distant, smooth-running machine.

Golenbock's interviews also exposed some fabrications, such as Mickey Mantle's mysterious ailment in 1957, known at the time as "shin splints." Nobody knew exactly how Mickey came up with this ailment—all the official explanations didn't ring true—but what was obvious was that Mantle had a huge cut in his shin, keeping him from running well and ruining what might have been an unprecedented second straight Triple Crown season.

Tom Sturdivant told Golenbock the true story. According to the Yankee pitcher, he and Mantle were coming off the golf course when Mickey, upset over developments in his friendly bet with Tom, but really more annoyed with Sturdivant's high-pitched giggle, swung his putter at a tree limb overhead. The putter either missed the limb or snapped it in two; whatever, it ended up stuck in Mickey's leg. Shin splints. Mantle confirmed the basic story in *The Mick*.

Dick Lally penned *Pinstriped Summers*, a great 1985 book that picked up the Yankees where *Dynasty* left off in 1965. He addresses the problems the press had with the Yankees, and wrote of how the 1962 arrival of the Mets in New York, a National League stronghold, didn't ease those problems.

New York reporters like Bob Lipsyte, George Vecsey, and Lenny Shecter made the infant Mets fun. They wrote hip stories about a losing team and hip fans celebrated losing. Vic Ziegel, who started covering the Yankees in 1964, in the days of smug success, told Lally there were a "lot of flatout house men" in those days—writers who toed the company line. These writers overidentified with the Yankees. "You know, when the team started to lose, those guys were much harsher on the club than the younger writers," Ziegel told Lally. "The reason they came down so hard was because they were bitterly disappointed. They were crushed. They had to cover games all year, and the team wasn't good anymore. It made them furious."

Possibly the best baseball biography ever written was *Babe*, the 1974 Ruth biography by Robert W. Creamer. Almost incredibly, the field was wide open; *Babe* was the first objective, adult, full-length biography of America's greatest sports hero. (Marshall Smelser followed in 1975 with

another excellent book on Ruth, *The Life That Ruth Built*, that unfortunately was released on the heels of the Creamer work.)

Creamer set up his book brilliantly. Ruth was bigger than life, everyone's hero—his hero—but Creamer, in his words, wanted “to go beyond the gentle inaccuracies and omissions of the earlier accounts and produce a total biography, one that, hopefully, would present all the facts and myths, the statistical details and personal exuberance, the obvious and subtle things that combined to make the man born George Ruth a unique figure in the social history of the United States.”

Creamer held true. He told the Ruth story as completely as it can be told. He put the pieces together of Ruth's life, in part, through an exhaustive series of interviews. Listen to what Waite Hoyt wrote to Creamer: “I am almost convinced that you will never learn the truth on Ruth. I roomed with Joe Dugan. He was a good friend of Babe's. But he will see Ruth in a different light than I did. Dugan's own opinion will be one in which Dugan revels in Ruth's crudities, and so on. While I can easily recognize all of this and admit it freely, yet there was buried in Ruth humanitarianism beyond belief, an intelligence he was never given credit for, a childish desire to be over-virile, living up to credits given his home-run power—and yet a need for intimate affection and respect, and a feverish desire to play baseball, perform, act and live a life he didn't and couldn't take time to understand.”

A few years ago I stopped in at the Babe Ruth Museum, birthplace home of the Babe, in Baltimore. The best thing there was Creamer's *Babe* manuscript. It was inspiring. Especially considering the disillusionment this Yankee fan felt when he discovered that the Babe Ruth birthplace was an ill-disguised excuse for an Orioles' shrine. Upstairs, in the Ruth bedroom, where the Creamer manuscript was kept, a few people poked in their heads for a polite look-see. Next door, though, was where the real action was, Baltimoreans milling around various tributes to the local club. Somehow, the whole setup seemed as phony as the Babe was genuine.

Anyone wanting to gain an historical perspective on the Yankees could achieve his or her purposes nicely by reading just three books. These are *The New York Yankees, An Informal History*, (the version I have was updated through 1950); *Dynasty*, covering the years 1949 through 1964; and *Pinstriped Summer*, covering a period that begins with 1965 and runs up to recent times.

No doubt there will be a fourth book addressed to the final decade and a half of the 20th century. If this newcomer proves deserving, the Yankees will enter the 21st century well documented. Which is good, because once that century line is crossed, the events of the dislodged century will tend to dim; having them tacked down on paper will serve posterity.

It's Really about *Sports Illustrated*

By Joseph Overfield

PINE-TARRED AND FEATHERED (A Year on the Baseball Beat)

Jim Kaplan

280 pp., Algonquin Books,

Chapel Hill, NC

\$15.95

When you pay \$15.95 for *Pine-Tarred and Feathered* by Jim Kaplan, a staff writer for *Sports Illustrated*, you get your choice of the following:

1. A day-by-day account of the 1983 major league baseball year.

2. An inside look at how *Sports Illustrated* works.

3. A frank self-analysis of the psyche of a writer striving for space and recognition on a slick sports weekly where everyone is inevitably compared to Frank DeFord and Ron Fimrite.

The name of the book is something of a fooler. Kaplan did not even cover (he was on vacation) the famed George Brett-Pine Tar Incident at Yankee Stadium. And, as far as I can see, nobody gets "feathered" in the book, so that part of the title remains cryptic. Strange, too, is the absence of page numbers. Whether this omission was deliberate or a printer's faux pas, I do not know. I do know it can be disconcerting.

Kaplan graduated from Yale and then went on to the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern. He served

his apprenticeship covering high school sports for the *Minneapolis Star*. He joined *Sports Illustrated* in 1970 as checker, an assignment so humble it is not even included in the 28 tiers of jobs listed on the magazine's masthead.

Jim Kaplan is not the first to attempt a baseball diary. James T. Farrell's *My Baseball Diary* (1957) is a classic. It deals with the writer's life-long love affair with baseball, rather than with a single season. Of more recent vintage is Gordon H. Fleming's *The Unforgettable Season*, a day-by-day account of the 1908 (or Fred Merkle) season, as told in the words of the writers who covered the games. Dissimilar as the books are, there are two areas of consonance between Farrell's book and Kaplan's. One is in their introspection and the other in the innate love of baseball that permeates both books. This is not to say that *Pine-Tarred and Feathered* is as good as *My Baseball Diary*. One might say that reading Farrell's book is like listening to the Boston Symphony, while reading Kaplan's is like listening to the Boston Pops. Still pretty good company!

JOE OVERFIELD is a semi-retired Buffalo businessman whose history, *The 100 Seasons of Buffalo Baseball*, was published in 1985. Joe has also contributed articles to SABR Research Journals and National Pastimes.

Pine-Tarred follows the 1983 baseball year from January through December as seen through the eyes of a roving reporter, whose assignments take him to most of the major league cities and even to the College World Series at Omaha. His insights on the baseball people he interviews (Ron Kittle, Greg Walker, Dickie Thon, Doug DeCinces, Jim Kaat and Paul Owens, to name a few) are trenchant yet fair. His sympathies are patently with the players, vis-a-vis management. For June 15 he writes: "Hernandez traded to the Mets for two pitchers. At a time like this I hate baseball. All I could think of was the pain and frustration Hernandez must feel." Later events, of course, have shown the reason for the trade and have made it clear that whatever pain and frustration Hernandez suffered were self-inflicted.

A problem in doing this kind of book is finding something newsworthy for each day. A certain amount of froth is unavoidable. Example: March 6 - "Dined alone and had a hot fudge sundae." There is the occasional slip, such as calling Jim Baumer of the Phils' front office Balmer on two occasions. (*In My Baseball Diary*, Farrell was guilty of a much more egregious gaffe when he wrote that former umpire Red Ormsby was found broke and dead in a cheap hotel. An erratum hastily mailed out to book dealers explained that Red Ormsby was very much alive and a substantial and respected citizen of Chicago.)

Such cavils aside, the reviewer must give pluses to Kaplan for his perceptive and usually positive view of the game. He writes: "Every game is unique. As a talking game it beats all

the rest put together." And this: "Baseball is as much a game of reflection as reflexes." And then on defense: "The most remarkable moments of baseball are great fielding plays, frozen in time and space—Wambsganss, Gionfriddo, Amoros, Mays, Nettles, and Brooks Robinson."

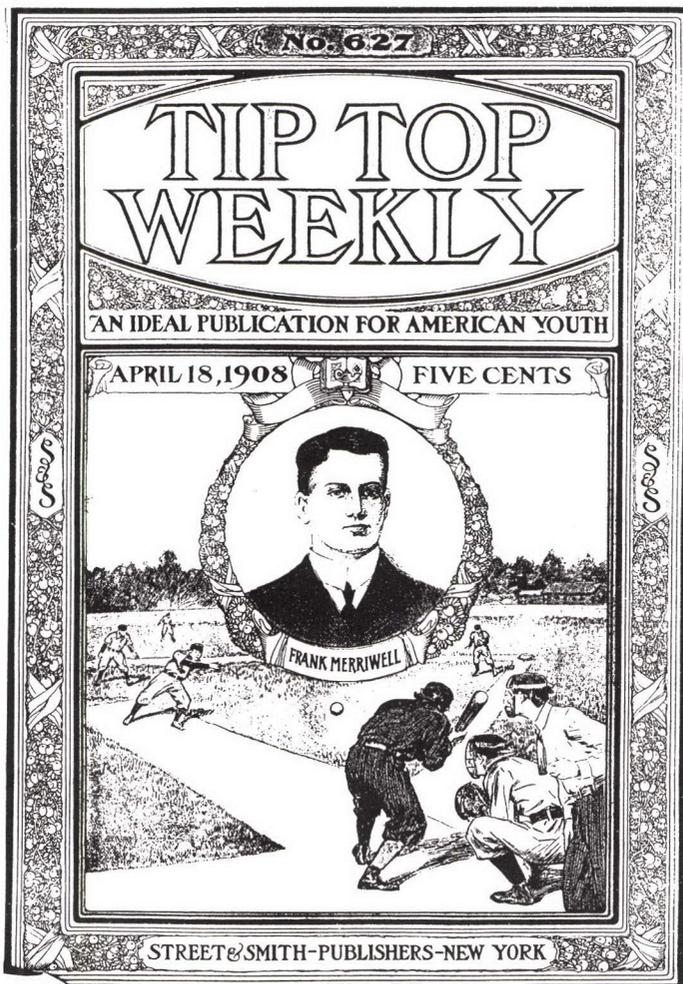
Kaplan's revelations on what makes *Sports Illustrated* tick were heady stuff to this reviewer, a charter subscriber. One learns of the almost adversary relationship between writer and editor, strained at times almost to the breaking point by last-minute changes in assignments, days or weeks with no assignments at all, the cutting of 600-word articles to 400 words, and nitpicking (the writer's word) changes in words and punctuation. Kaplan tells of an article he wrote on chess. He was proud of this line: "The knight is the favorite piece of the Russians because it can move in eight different directions—none of them straight-forward." When the story ran, this line had been excised. Whose decision had it been? Hard to say, since an *S.I.* article has to run a gauntlet made up of the checker, the copy editor, the proofreader, the lawyer, the editor of the department, and two or three managing editors. Not to mention the final reader, whom Kaplan did not list.

The author does not spare himself in his self-appraisal. He obviously suffers from the disease common to most writers—basic feelings of doubt and insecurity. He reveals himself to be a hypochondriac, and the book is sprinkled with details of his current symptoms, eating fads, and health-related resolutions. He is constantly concerned about his relationship with his two teenage sons, who live with their

mother. Of his failed marriage, he says, "I can't say my job ended it, but it helped." He tells about wanting to take his boys to Cooperstown and then worrying about securing the cheapest means of transportation. And then there is the titillating (to the reader; not to the writer to whom it was traumatic) incident in the barber shop: March 6 - "Paid \$6.00 for a haircut and left a \$1.00 tip. I asked for a receipt.

The barber fumbled around, then turned on me and shouted, 'Get out of here!' " A receipt in a barber shop? Could it be that tonsorial expenses go on the swindle sheet?

Overall, *Pine-Tarred* is a pleasant story. In his first at bat, Kaplan has not hit a home run with the bases full, but he has come through with a solid base hit. Well worth reading.



The Search for Better Evidence, Historically Speaking

By Jay Feldman

THE BILL JAMES HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

Bill James

Villard Books, 721 pp., \$24.95

The Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract is not an easy book to review, because it's a work that requires a certain savoring, and in book reviewing, you don't have that luxury. I have to confess that when it came to this book, I broke my cardinal rule of book reviewing, which is: *Read the whole book*. If I'd observed that tenet in this case, it would probably be somewhere around 1990 before I finally got the review done. It's not just the 721 pages; it's the vast scope of the book. The *Historical Baseball Abstract* is a formidable effort, and a major contribution to the literature of baseball.

One of the choices you have to make is just how to approach the tome. The work is divided into three main sections: "The Game," "The Players," and "The Records". The first section stands on its own, while the other two are companion sections. There will be some people, no doubt, who sit down and read the book from cover to cover. Others, like myself, will use it as a coffee-table type of volume—pick it up and leaf through for a headline that catches the eye, or look up a ballplayer

and see what James has to say about him. However you approach the work, though, you will (1) almost certainly be impressed (once again) by James' vast knowledge of baseball, and (2) most likely learn a heckuva lot about the game.

One of the main things to emerge for me was a change in the way I regarded Bill James' work. Partly as a result of the focus of his annual abstracts, and partly due to the image of him as (forgive me, Bill) "the father of sabermetrics," I have tended to look upon James—and I don't think I'm alone in this—as a statistician. Of course, there are statistics and statistical analysis galore in the book. (I got a headache just *looking* at the fourteen different "technical" versions of the Runs Created formula.)

But as he says, "Sabermetrics is not numbers; it is the search for better evidence," and I think the *Historical Baseball Abstract* establishes that Bill James is more than anything else a baseball historian, and as such, his knowledge of the sport is truly awesome.

JAY FELDMAN has written for Sports Illustrated. He is currently working on a book about "Baseball for Peace: The Nicaraguan Goodwill Baseball Tour."

And as always, James is fun to read. His iconoclastic, opinionated, often provocative ideas are put forth in his by-now-familiar, articulate, breezy style. Sometimes he cracks you up: "Walt Bond was not destined to be a great player, and destiny in his case was unusually forceful. Bond was 6'7" and fairly mobile for a big guy; his natural position was first base but the Indians had him playing the outfield. He had hit .320 at Salt Lake City, fourth in the Pacific Coast League, with only 11 homers but 12 triples. The Indians had finished under .500 in '61 and '62, and you might think a 6'7" guy who could run and hit baseballs out of sight would make an impression on them, but the Indians have never been the kind of organization that would let itself be intimidated by common sense. Joe Adcock was, like Walt Bond, a great big guy who could hit home runs and play first base, and he had the advantage of being thirty-five years old whereas Bond was only twenty-five, so that winter the Indians traded two young outfielders and a pitcher to acquire Joe Adcock. Bond was assigned to Jacksonville and told to work on his grammar or something."

There are many, many places where James takes particular pains to help us see some aspect of baseball history in a new way. For example, I learned a lot about the structure of professional baseball in the first four decades of this century from "Minor League Baseball Stars," a long article in "The Game" section. In fact, after spending some time with this book, I can't help but cheerfully admit what huge gaps exist in my own knowledge of baseball history.

The concept I found most satisfy-

ing is the distinction James draws, when ranking the greatest players of all time, between a player's "peak" value and "career" value. "When you ask who is a greater player than whom," he writes, "do you want to know which one was more valuable at some moment in his career, or do you want to know which one was more valuable over the course of his career? You absolutely, positively have to answer that question before you select your list of the greatest players ever. . . . Because if you don't decide, you've got two correct answers to every question. . . . Who was a greater left-handed pitcher, Warren Spahn or Sandy Koufax? If you want to know which was the more valuable pitcher at some moment in his career, it is absolutely clear that the answer is Koufax. If what you want to know is which pitcher was more valuable to his teams over the course of his entire career, it is equally clear that the answer is Spahn."

With the introduction of this concept, James has provided us with a beacon to illuminate the murky, "greatest-of-all-time" discussions which have been going around in circles since baseball began. Now we see that much of what has been debated in these discussions has been apples vs. oranges.

James makes a habit of showing us new ways of thinking. About Babe Ruth, he writes, "Napoleon said that 'Without the revolution, I am nothing.' Like Napoleon, Babe Ruth was a remarkable man who came along at one of the gates of history, when the old ways had been destroyed and men were anxious to be shown the way to a safe new place." It shouldn't surprise us if, in years to come, the same can be said of Bill James.

A Reminiscence of Red Smith

By Bob Broeg

To me, a secret of Red Smith's success—and I always teased him by calling him Walter Wellesley—was, in addition to his obvious love affair with the King's English, the background by which he surged to the top in our field and his strict reportorial responsibility that made his writing accurate as well as entertaining.

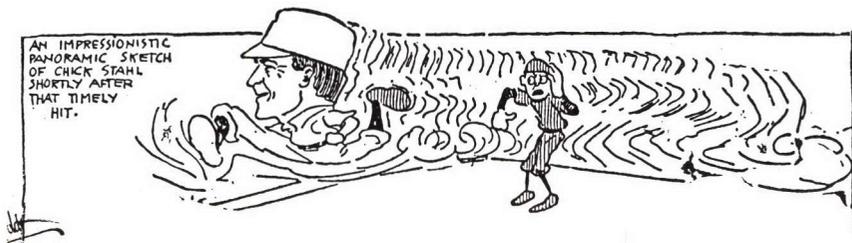
As a kid in Green Bay, Red read Milwaukee papers. At South Bend in college, he read the Chicago papers. He apprenticed at Milwaukee, then put in seven years at St. Louis where, in addition to traveling with two pennant-winning ball clubs, 1930-31, he also blossomed by covering topflight crime stories and nonsports features.

Coupled with several more years, traveling in and out of Philadelphia, doubling up covering big league baseball and writing a column, he was figuratively a Gulliver in Lilliput when he stepped into the main event in New York (1945).

There, until his death, he continued to write marvelously at the painstaking pace best exemplified by press critic A.J. Liebling, who wrote: "I can write faster than anybody who writes better and I can write better than anybody who writes faster."

Walter Wellesley (Red) Smith was a verbal nitpicker, a fussy budget behind the typewriter. So we who read him were richly rewarded by the heavyweight champion of sportswriters.

BOB BROEG, member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Veterans' Committee and Board of Directors, has received numerous honors for his career in sportswriting. In addition, he has written 12 books, is finishing Number 13 and beginning Number 14.



COMING BACK WITH THE SPITBALL



A PITCHER'S ROMANCE
by
JAMES HOPPER

Founding Father of the American League

By A.D. Suehsdorf

BAN JOHNSON: CZAR OF BASEBALL

Eugene C. Murdock

294 pp., Greenwood Press, Westport,
CT

(Contributions to the Study of Popular
Culture, No. 3)

\$29.95

At the height of his power, Ban Johnson was a wonder to behold. In March he toured the eight cities of his American League domain, investigating each club's finances, the condition of its park, and the likeliness of its prospects for the pennant race ahead. At season's end the tour was repeated to appraise each club's performance on the field and in the counting house. There was nothing cursory about these inspections. Anything not to his liking was corrected, pronto. For Ban—as Eugene C. Murdock has amply documented in this first-rate biography—ruled absolutely. In the 17 years between 1903 and 1920, he was acknowledged by friend and foe alike to be baseball's czar.

Ohio-born, the fifth child of a career educator, he was an indifferent student who attended several colleges without graduating from any. He drifted into sports writing and editing, then found the ideal outlet for his latent skills in the newly developing vocation of baseball executive.

Becoming president of the Western League in 1894, he ran it successfully and with zeal, and by 1901 had transformed it into the upstart, but major, American League. He attracted suitably wealthy owners, established franchises, fought his way into National League strongholds, appointed managers, assigned players, and arranged schedules that spread travel costs equally among his clubs. Most importantly, he developed a staff of able umpires and backed them unswervingly in suppressing rowdiness on the field.

These efforts won parity with the National League, drew enthusiastic crowds (by 1902 the AL, with 62% of the NL's population, sold half a million more tickets), and built a structure that operated unchanged for more than 50 years. Inevitably, Ban was the American League's representative on the National Commission that maintained

A. D. SUEHSDORF *retired as editorial director of Ridge Press, New York publishers, in 1979, and is now indulging his lifelong interest in baseball research. He is the author of The Great American Baseball Scrapbook (Random House, 1978), and has contributed a number of entries to David L. Porter's forthcoming Biographical Dictionary of American Sports, (See page 49, Ed.) plus articles for several SABR publications.*

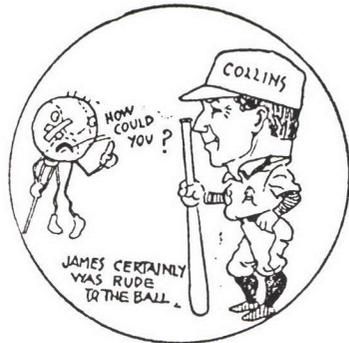
the owners' control of the game, and because his energy, wit, and imagination dominated the other two members—both National Leaguers—he became, in fact, czar.

He looked the part: He was a tall man for his era, with his burly figure clad in custom-tailored suits, a vest warming a good stomach for whiskey, a stiff collar around a stiff neck, a no-nonsense face eyeing the world through the persnickety man's rimless pince-nez, and hair closely cropped, with a center part appropriate to a dispenser of even-handed justice. He had a czarist personality, too: pompous, bull-headed, autocratic, hot-tempered. Will Harridge, his secretary, found him a rigorous boss. Charlie Comiskey, a staunch ally in forming the American League and a long-time drinking companion, found "Beebee" (as he always called him) a touchy friend, much like himself. Others knew him as an unbending opponent and a good hater.

He liked his tittle and occasionally it did him in, particularly in the later years, when enemies lay in wait and he needed his wits about him. Yet he also was a principled man, an admirable organizer, and a strong leader. Altogether, he was a businessman of his time, counterpart to the magnates and tycoons who owned and ran agricultural, industrial, and financial America.

As czar, his powers derived from the consent of the governed and his achievements were many. He fought "syndicate" baseball—the destruction of honest competition by mutual ownership of franchises—although he was not averse to pouring Charley Somers' money into Cleveland,

Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia when forming the AL. He met the Federal League threat head-on and guided baseball successfully through the stringencies of World War I. As head of "Ban Johnson's league," he



interpreted rules, adjudicated disputes, ordered suspensions, levied fines, compiled and issued statistics. He persuaded President Taft to become the first chief executive to throw out a ceremonial first ball. He was concerned with old and indigent players (though against player unions). He tried to stop overt gambling at the parks (though without much help from the clubs). He struggled to speed up games (they were taking two hours by 1915). He encouraged press coverage and was himself always a good news source. He broke the old habit of not announcing line-up changes by ordering that both the umpire and the press box be informed.

Unfortunately, like tycoons before and since, Ban Johnson was not flexible enough to move with the times. By 1920, when, as Murdock says, "the great work was done," changes inside and outside of baseball were making him outmoded.

Saddest and most painful was Ban's unawareness that his own hubris

had made his decline inevitable. The extravagant exercise of power without the saving grace of compromise had made him great; eventually, it made him unbearable. Owners, particularly the new, postwar breed, were no longer willing to concede his authority in decisions affecting their fortunes. Principally, it was decisions in disputes over the ownership of players that undermined his support.

Barney Dreyfuss was aggrieved when he lost George Sisler to the Browns and Gavvy Cravath to the Phillies. The Braves—and National Leaguers generally, in a knee-jerk reaction—were furious when they lost a pitcher to the Athletics. The Red Sox, whose owner, Harry Frazee, had acquired the club without reference to Ban and who had been at odds with him ever since, were outraged by a Johnsonian suspension of Carl Mays. And most seriously, the friendship of 30 years' standing was destroyed when Ban took Jack Quinn away from Comiskey and awarded him to the Yankees. The Commy who once declared, "Ban Johnson is the American League," was now heard to shout, "I made you, and by God I'll break you!"

Ban's intention to deal fairly and impartially counted for nothing. The wounds his actions inflicted were deep and never healed. Even when he was right, the injury was often exacerbated by his overbearing manner. In some cases, he simply made irretrievable mistakes.

Late in 1920, the awkward and unsatisfactory National Commission was abolished and Kenesaw Mountain Landis was elected commissioner of

baseball with more authority than Ban ever enjoyed—including no recourse from, or public dispute of, any action he might be pleased to take. Unwisely, Ban stayed on as the American League's virtually powerless president.

The Byzantine maneuvering that achieved his defeat was complicated by the Black Sox scandal which, with Landis's approval, Ban sought to resolve for the good of baseball by digging up new and convincing evidence against the culprits. Although he found enough to secure an indictment, the trial resulted in a blanket acquittal of the players. It was a slap at Ban that the narrow and vindictive Landis compounded by personally deciding to ban the Eight for life.

Ban clung to his meager duties through the 1927 season. His health evidently was failing; he appeared to be what the newspapers of the time called "a broken man." His few remaining friends in the American League prevailed upon him to resign. Sorriest to see him go were the umpires he had dignified as symbols of baseball's integrity. In 1931 he died.

Professor Murdock, who is Chairman of the Department of History at Marietta College, in Marietta, Ohio (one of Ban's alma maters), has brought all of his professional expertise to this book. It is thoroughly researched, including some of the last possible first-person reminiscences and insights from Johnson family members. It is well organized, cleanly written, annotated in the best scholarly fashion, and appropriately indexed. All in all, it is an essential study of one of baseball's prime movers.

Baseball's First Master of Self-Promotion

By Luke Salisbury

A. G. SPALDING AND THE RISE OF BASEBALL

Peter Levine

184 pp., Oxford University Press
\$16.95

Albert Goodwill Spalding was certainly one of the most important, if not the most important figure, in the "rise of baseball." As an early star, club owner, league leader, sporting goods magnate, and mythologizer, he certainly deserves a biography; so it was with high expectations that I shelled out sixteen dollars and bought Oxford University Press's latest contribution to baseball literature. The first clue that this book might not be definitive is its length. Only 147 of its 184 pages are text. The rest, as befits a professional historian, are notes.

Anyone familiar with Seymour and Voigt's excellent histories knows the rough outlines of Spalding's career—how the skinny 17-year-old pitcher of the Rockford Forest Cities defeated the mighty Cincinnati Reds, was invited to join that early powerhouse, moved to Boston with George Wright, jumped to Chicago and joined forces with William Hulbert, the godfather of baseball bosses, helped found the National League, got control of the Chicago club, started the sporting goods house that bears his name and made him rich, went on a World Tour,

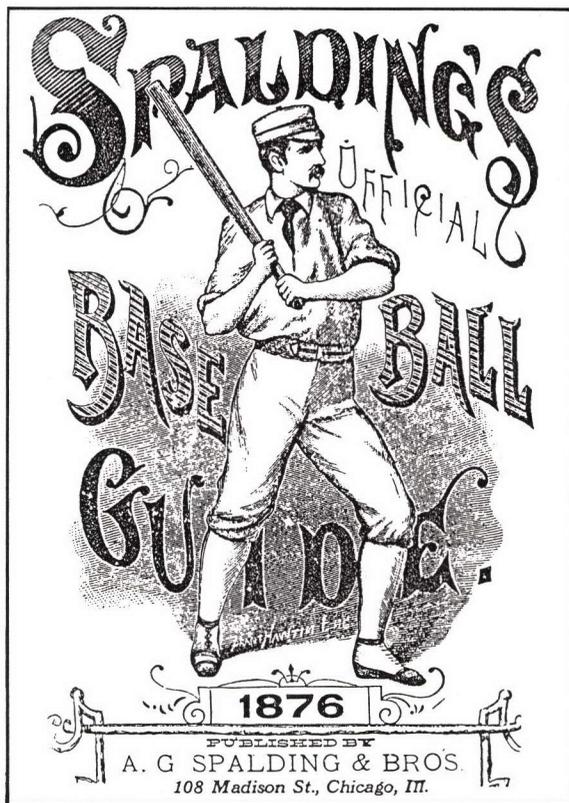
fought the Players League, was responsible for the Doubleday myth, retired to California where his life of leisure was interrupted only by an unsuccessful run for the Senate, died, ascended to the baseball pantheon, and was later enshrined in Cooperstown. Anyone familiar with A.G.'s (as he liked to be called) life, might expect some insight into this dynamic career, or new information concerning his role in such matters as the founding of the National League, the demise of the Players League, acceptance of the American League, or the evolution of the standard player contract. Such historical digging and insightful speculation is not to be found in this book.

Spalding was a master of self-promotion. He knew he was himself good copy and knew how to use the media. Whether A.G. was leaking negative stories about his own White Stockings because bad publicity was better than being ignored, buying a New York paper during the Brotherhood war to serve as his own semi-official organ, or manipulating public opinion about the origins of baseball with the Mills Commission, Spalding knew the power of print. A.G. was

LUKE SALISBURY teaches English at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. He is working on a book on baseball trivia, and has published fiction in *Pulpsmith* magazine.

always making pronouncements and promoting himself. Professor Levine no doubt read the voluminous Spalding material, but he seems to take A.G. at face value and accept Spalding's assessment of himself as a champion of middle class virtue and the "messiah of baseball."

A.G. was caught up in the mood of an industrializing America that had recently experienced the bloody Haymarket riot, and he reflected the feelings of many middle class Americans who associated labor unrest with fears of violence and revolution.



The book's opening paragraph tells us that Spalding "relished stories that glorified his rags-to-riches rise to financial success" but actually came from a solidly middle class background. This is the first and last time Professor Levine questions anything A.G. said about himself. Consider what Levine says about Spalding's motivation for destroying the Players League:

Are we really to believe that Spalding crushed the Players because of the Haymarket riot rather than greed? Levine rightly points out that Spalding had a plan for a "baseball trust" with two major leagues, limited salaries, and a "four-tiered ranking of any other professional baseball leagues." Isn't this what John Ward was fighting? Levine devotes only five pages to the Players

League, and is so enamored with the idea of A.G. as a champion of middle class values that he loses sight of the fact that in the world of baseball, Spalding was an autocrat with almost absolute power, who resembled John D. Rockefeller, not Ben Franklin. As to Spalding's motivation in crushing the Players, one expects more from a professionally trained historian than a general statement of how a certain class of people in 1890 felt about labor unions.

The issue of who segregated baseball is briefly raised. The standard histories tell us that Cap Anson was responsible with his possibly apocryphal, "Get that nigger off the field." It hadn't occurred to me until I read this book that Spalding owned the team and had to be at least an accessory. On July 20, 1884, A.G. had his secretary Jonathan Brown write to the Toledo club requesting that they keep Moses Walker off the field when the White Stockings met the American Association team in an exhibition game. Levine writes, "Regardless of who instigated the exclusion, demands like the one in Brown's letter took their toll." I should say they did, and if Spalding is responsible, or even partly responsible, he ought to get the credit he deserves. Unfortunately, Levine dispenses with the matter in three sentences.

There are some interesting details here. I didn't know that on the World Tour of 1888-9 Spalding was so impressed by the rickshaw that a reporter thought he might start manufacturing them in the United States. This, I suspect, tells us more about A.G.'s politics and sense of his place in the world than all the pronouncements about sport and virtue. I also didn't

know that Spalding, who could make John Ward sound like a bomb-throwing anarchist and posture that the destruction of the Players League had moral value, carried on an extramarital affair which produced a son who lived with A.G.'s sister. A.G.



later married the child's mother, and she introduced him to the occult discipline of Theosophy. Discovering that two men as different as W.B. Yeats and A.G. Spalding were Theosophists at approximately the same time is one of the joys of reading biography.

Levine is at his best when placing baseball in a cultural context. He points out that sports effectively served as a spiritual alternative to the frontier after the close of the frontier was noted in the 1890s. Baseball helped socialize immigrants and ease the shock of urban living for new city dwellers by "its ability to offer a visual tie with a rural past." Where Levine is weakest is in not looking at the game from the point of view of those who played it, rather than those who owned it.

A.G. Spalding And The Rise Of Baseball is an important, if flawed, addition to the literature of the game.

Preview:

Biographical Dictionary of American Sport: Baseball

Volume I of a multi-volume series
to be published by Greenwood Press

By David L. Porter

Have you ever tried to find biographical information on sports figures and needed to consult several different sources to locate the data that you wanted? It is often very time-consuming to examine several different sources in search of biographical data that should be available in one reference book. To help remedy this problem, I am editing a multi-volume *Biographical Dictionary of American Sport* to be published by Greenwood Press.

The first volume, tentatively scheduled for publication in the spring of 1987, concentrates on baseball figures, while subsequent volumes treat notables from football, other major outdoor sports, and major indoor sports. Each volume has comprehensive biographies of over 500 notable sports figures. Biographies are listed alphabetically and range from 250 to 900 words, depending on the relative importance of the sportsman. Most subject entries are deceased or retired, but some active participants are included. The baseball volume ranges alphabetically from Hank

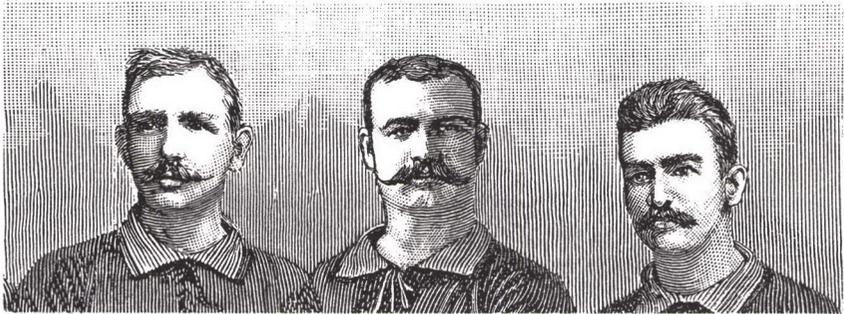
Aaron to Robin Yount and begins chronologically with Alexander Cartwright.

The selection of the subject entries for the baseball volume proved very challenging. The 517 baseball figures ultimately selected include 431 players (54 first basemen, 29 second basemen, 29 third basemen, 39 shortstops, 145 outfielders, 25 catchers, and 137 pitchers) and 86 managers, umpires, executives, and/or administrators. (Baseball writers and broadcasters appear in a subsequent volume.) Nearly all baseball subjects met three general criteria being used for all volumes. First, they were born or grew up in the United States or its territorial possessions. Notable exceptions, such

DAVID L. PORTER is *Louis Tuttle Shangle*, Professor of History and Political Science at William Penn College in Osaloosa, Iowa, where he teaches *American Sports History*, among other courses. He has written two books on the U.S. Congress, as well as many articles for professional journals.

as pioneers Henry Chadwick and Harry Wright, played crucial roles in baseball's development. Second, they made extraordinary diamond accomplishments. Principal measurement standards included membership in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, notable statistical achievements and records, major awards earned, and association with championship teams.

of Fame member satisfying the three general criteria is included. Over 300 others met certain specific criteria. Batters usually qualified by hitting near or above .300 lifetime, making 2,000 or more hits, knocking in over 1,000 runs, or belting more than 300 home runs. Pitchers usually qualified by winning at least 175 major league games and/or compiling outstanding win-loss



A. C. ANSON, 1st B.

J. McCORMICK, P.

M. J. KELLY, C. F.

THE CHICAGO BASE-BALL CLUB — PHOTOGRAPHED BY C. H. MOSHIER.

Third, they made a major impact in baseball history. The biographies describe the subject's baseball accomplishments and achievements and their importance in baseball history. Most entries excelled in the National Association, National League, American Association, and/or American League. Forty-four starred in the Negro National League, Eastern Colored League, and/or Negro American League. Robert Peterson's *Only the Ball Was White* and James Riley's *The All-Time All-Stars of Black Baseball* aided in the selection of Negro Leaguers.

Final selections were made after thorough research of Baseball Encyclopedias, *The Sporting News* publications, National Baseball Hall of Fame *Yearbooks*, and general baseball histories. Every National Baseball Hall

percentages and excellent earned-run averages. Others demonstrated extraordinary fielding and/or running ability. Moses Fleetwood Walker and Lou Sockalexis, the first Black and Indian major league baseball players, are included. Managers, executives, and administrators qualified by making exceptional impacts on the development of their particular teams or leagues. New York State, Ohio, California, Pennsylvania, and Illinois furnished the most biographical entries.

The 104 contributors were enlisted mainly from SABR and the North American Society for Sport History membership rolls. Many are university or college professors, including those teaching Baseball or American Sport History courses. Others work as public or private schoolteachers,

writers, publishers, editors, journalists, librarians, consultants, or government employees. Alan Asnen, Terry Baxter, Gaymon Bennett, Lowell Blaisdell, William Borst, John DiMeglio, John Evers, James Harper, Merl Kleinknecht, Douglas Martin, Frank Olmstead, Frank Phelps, Duane Smith, Luther Spoehr, and Adie Suehsdorf each generously contributed at least 10 biographies. Some other baseball biographers include Charles Alexander, Ellery Clark, Bob Davids, Cappy Gagnon, Larry Gerlach, John Holway, Frederick Ivor-Campbell, Gene Karst, Gene Murdock, Joseph Overfield, Robert Peterson, Steve Riess, James Riley, Emil Rothe, Leverett Smith, Jr., Fred Stein, and David Voigt.

Biographical entries are patterned after the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Personal data includes the subject's (1) full given name at birth; (2) nicknames; (3) dates and places of birth and death; (4) parental background; (5) formal education; (6) wife and children; and (7) major personal characteristics. Contributors found complete personal biographical data on most entries, but could not fill significant gaps on some nineteenth century or Negro League subjects. Biographies also describe the subject's (1) entrance into professional baseball; (2) main positions played; (3) teams played for with respective leagues; (4) career batting, fielding, and/or pitching records and achievements; (5) notable individual records set, awards won, and All-Star and World Series appearances; and (6) overall impact on baseball. Managerial entries feature their teams piloted with inclusive dates, major statistical achievements, career won-loss records and per-

centages, premier players developed, and philosophy, strategy, and innovations. Sketches of umpires, league officials and club executives highlight their positions held, notable accomplishments, and impact on baseball history.

Several contributors interviewed or corresponded with the biographical subjects, relatives, or acquaintances. For the most part, subject entries, relatives, and acquaintances cooperated fully with the contributors in supplying biographical data. Contributors collectively used primary source material at the National Baseball Library in Cooperstown, New York; *The Sporting News* in St. Louis, Missouri; baseball club offices; local newspapers; libraries and historical societies; and municipal governments. The biographies collectively may furnish the most complete personal background data yet available in a single reference source and frequently provide corrective personal and statistical data. *The Baseball Encyclopedia* and other baseball biographical reference works occasionally contain erroneous personal and statistical data. Amusing anecdotes fill the dictionary. Readers will enjoy Yogi Berra's malapropisms, Rube Waddell's zany antics, the daffy Brooklyn Dodgers' base-running blunders, and numerous other rich anecdotes. Appendices list subject entries by categories, main position played, and state of birth as well as other reference data.

The *Dictionary* should prove a valuable addition to the personal libraries of any serious-minded baseball historian and an essential reference work for any public, college, and university library.

How Hard Do You Look at What Went Wrong?

By David Q. Voigt

BEYOND THE SIXTH GAME

Peter Gammons

280 pp., Houghton Mifflin

\$15.95

If it be true that there be hell on earth, then one of hell's torture chambers must surely be Fenway Park, where each baseball season for nigh unto 70 years, fans have suffered as world championship hopes for their Red Sox annually go a'glimmering. But if ordinary fans suffer so, how much more bitter the cup of woe for the local sportswriters who must chronicle the action?

One such condemned scribe is Peter Gammons of the *Boston Globe*, and in *Beyond The Sixth Game*, he disgorges his impassioned feelings for any reader masochistic enough to want to know what happened to the Red Sox since the fateful year of 1975.

Indeed, Gammons writes as a zealous Red Sox partisan. The tone is evident from the beginning when he introduces the 1975 Red Sox, "the dynasty of the future," in their World Series confrontation with the Cincinnati Reds, "the established dynasty." True to form, the Red Sox lose the Series, but not before winning "the most memorable game of the most memorable World Series of a baseball generation." Brave words those and hyperbolic, but one must remember that such sentiments are widely shared

in Boston and are reflective of decades of Yankee envy, paranoia, and defeat.

What happened to Boston's dynastic dream of 1975 is the question upon which Gammons spends his considerable writing strength. His chief explanation is that the Seitz decision in the Messersmith case (followed hard after by the reserve clause-circumventing 1976 Basic Agreement) empowered and enriched players in such manner as to revolutionize the major league baseball world. Thereafter, players assisted by zealous agents wrung megabuck contracts from club-owners by dint of such procedures as salary arbitration and re-entry draft auctions. The new marketplace enabled well-finished rivals to snag star players and thus undermine the dynastic hopes of both the 1975 Red Sox and Reds.

To be sure, the Red Sox might have played the new bidding game to better advantage, but fate intervened by precipitating a crucial leadership crisis. In 1976 longtime Red Sox owner Tom Yawkey died without designating

DAVID Q. VOIGT is a Professor of Sociology/Anthropology at Albright College where he teaches a course in Baseball in American Culture. The author of American Baseball (3 vols.), he is currently completing a single volume history of the game to be published early next year by Penn State University Press.

a successor. In 1977 the team fell into the hands of a group headed by Buddy Leroux and Haywood Sullivan, with Yawkey's widow exerting considerable influence. This disastrous succession made for monstrous blunders, which Gammons painstakingly details. The in-fightings and inefficiencies of the Leroux-Sullivan years are other reasons vouchsafed by the author for the failure of recent Red Sox fortunes.

Amidst his lamentations on the team's leadership crisis and the financial upheaval of the baseball world, the latter circumstance one he nostalgically deplores, author Gammons provides a narrative and chronological thread to guide the reader through the seasons of 1975-1984. The thread begins with the 1975 season and continues in labyrinthian fashion until 1983 where it is lost amidst an eloquent paean to the retiring Carl Yastrzemski and a final diatribe against the woeful state of the game wrought by greedy players and acquiescent owners.

In narrating the agonizing defeats and dashed hopes of the Red Sox in these years, Gammons supplies a godspenty of rationalizations. Thus, the 1976 season failed because of Yawkey's death and unrest caused by spiraling salaries elsewhere. The Yankees, who embarked upon the first of their three consecutive league championships, are given little credit. In 1977 the victorious Yankees are dismissed as a lucky team which greedily stockpiled talent from the re-entry drafts. Boston's 1977 failing is blamed on Manager Don Zimmer's inability to forge an effective starting pitching corps. In 1978 the same problem accounted for Boston's defeat in a memorable campaign which had all the earmarks of a certain Boston

triumph; however, the slugging Sox were deadlocked by a resurgent Yankee team. In the playoff game at Fenway Park the lucky Yankees benefited by three lucky breaks. These blessings in-



cluded a change in the wind that allowed Bucky Dent's drive to go for a home run, a fortunate bounce that enabled Yankee outfielder Lou Piniella to make a key fielding play, and a quirky break on reliever Goose Gossage's fastball that jammed Yastrzemski, forcing him to pop up for the final out. At this point the critic may only think, but dare not mention, the late Branch Rickey's observation that "Luck is the residue of design."

The same pitching problem plagued the Red Sox in 1979 and 1980, but even more disruptive was the loss of such key players as Tiant, Lee, Fisk, Lynn, Hobson, and Bureson to other teams. In 1980 Manager Zimmer was scapegoated, and in 1981, Manager Ralph Houk arrived to shore up the bullpen and provide an illusion of respectability which lasted until 1983 when the Red Sox suffered their first losing season since 1966.

Gammons' narrative of the seasons of 1975-1983 is marked by sprightly detours that will delight any reader. Such forays take the form of artfully written characterizations of Red Sox players and principals. The "tall, clean, angular, and patrician" Carlton Fisk, one of only six catchers ever to "score and drive in one hundred runs while batting .300 in the same season," contrasts starkly with the "short, almost dumpy, dirty" Thurman Munson. The gifted, but erratic slugger George "Boomer" Scott, once was asked his opinion of Biafra and replied, "I've never faced the muddafukka, but by the third time up I'll hit a tater off him." Another black slugger, Jim Rice, a victim of Boston's peculiar brand of racism is reputed to have "snapped baseball bats and golf clubs in half by checking his swings." Flaky Bill Lee, the gifted lampoonist who hung the nickname "Gerbil" on Manager Zimmer, also contributed more to the team's public image than any player of the last 25 years. Manager Zimmer, completely dedicated to his job, "never earned a paycheck outside baseball," was mercilessly pilloried by Boston radio pundits he compulsively listened to while driving home from games. Pitcher Looie Tiant, the soul of the team, had new players doing "double takes at the sight of Tiant smoking his dollar cigar in the whirlpool or sometimes even in the shower." And the peerless Yastrzemski, who managed a .417 "big game average," but "never achieved the one thing he wanted . . . one World Series championship ring," is forever fated to "wake up remembering three pitches from three men named Gibson, McEnaney, and Gossage, and his ensuing three swings

that provided the final outs of the 1967 and 1975 World Series and the 1978 American League East playoff." Such is truly the stuff of Greek tragedy. Small wonder then that Boston fans staged "Athens vs. Sparta" vendettas with Yankee fans over the years 1973-1978.

While fans and serious readers, buoyed by Gammons' dashing prose, will wallow in such descriptions and bless the author for also providing useful statistical summaries such as the salary data in the Appendix, the book is not without flaws. Above all, one yearns for an index; surely a book published in the Athens of America might have offered such an elementary crutch. Beyond this, *Beyond The Sixth Game* suffers from organizational problems which result in the repetitious retelling of such matters as the financial impact of the re-entry draft. Moreover, Gammons' discussion of the reserve clause lacks historical perspective; in citing only two challenges to the reserve clause, the author overlooks 19th century challenges by players in state courts, as well as the great Brotherhood War of 1890. Finally a couple of glaring errors pock the narrative, as when the late Clark Griffith is mentioned as the owner of the Twins or when Ted Williams is credited with batting .405 in 1941.

But such criticisms need not stay readers from *Beyond The Sixth Game*. This is a good, impressionistic club history, one that fans and baseball historians will welcome. As for Red Sox fans, who knows? Mayhap if enough of those fans read this book, it could prove to be the penance required to unlock the gates of hell at Fenway Park!

The Boys of the Bushes

By Dick Beverage

GOOD ENOUGH TO DREAM

Roger Kahn

351 pp., Doubleday and Company

\$16.95

So you'd like to run a baseball club?

So would I. So would Roger Kahn.

The difference between us and Mr. Kahn is that he did it. In 1983 he and his agent, Jay Acton, purchased the majority interest in the minor league Utica Blue Sox. Mr. Kahn was installed as president of the club. The results are chronicled in one of the more charming baseball books of the last year and aptly titled *Good Enough to Dream*.

Roger Kahn's writing credentials are impeccable. He covered the Brooklyn Dodgers for the *New York Herald Tribune* during their glory days of the early 1950s and immortalized that club in his widely acclaimed *The Boys of Summer*, written in 1973. Since that time he has been a free lance writer, with several impressive efforts to his credit.

In the spring of 1983, after more than five decades of fandom, Mr. Kahn became a club owner. For the small sum of \$15,000 and along with 22 other entrepreneurs, he purchased the less-than-thriving Utica franchise in the Class A New York-Pennsylvania League. Class A is the lowest rung of

the ladder in Organized Baseball, and the reader learns that the Utica Blue Sox are even lower than that. The function of the minor leagues today is to provide a training ground for future major league players. Such was not the case in Utica. The Blue Sox were orphans, the only one of the 10 clubs in the league without a major league working agreement. They obtained their talent from a small company called Texas Star Baseball. Texas Star took the unwanted players of other organizations, signed them, assigned them to independents such as Utica, and reaped whatever profits there were by selling their contracts at the end of the season.

The Utica club had not exactly prospered before Kahn took over. One of his first crises was the matter of a \$4,500 electrical bill from Niagara Mohawk Power and Light. It seems that the previous owners had neglected to pay the final bill. Naturally, the utility was unwilling to restore power to

DICK BEVERAGE is the author of two books on the Pacific Coast League: team histories of the Los Angeles Angels and the Hollywood Stars. His main research attraction is to the PCL, but he has been cursed with lifelong Cub mania. During his spare time, Dick is a practicing accountant and corporate officer of a plastics company.

Murnane Field, the home of the Blue Sox, until this "oversight" was cleared up. No lights mean no fans and money. Mr. Kahn arranged to pay the bill. This problem is characteristic of the lower minor leagues. How are we going to survive? Do we have enough baseballs for tonight's game? Is there enough toilet paper? The reader soon discovers that there is more to the game than just what goes on between the foul lines.

Kahn settles quickly into his duties as president of the Blue Sox: 14-hour days, seven days a week. But Kahn loves it. He is surrounded by a number of delightful people, all of whom are very carefully described by the author—the manager, Jim Gattis, who is a poor man's Tom Lasorda; the general manager, Joanne Gerace, a 31-year-old native of Utica who works so hard and is occasionally reduced to tears by the frenetic pace; statistician Mike Zalewski, who rarely shaves and has an eye for every young lady in Utica; Kahn's daughter, Alissa, 16 and red-headed, the scoreboard girl who enjoys being around the young ball players. And there are the players themselves—Barry Moss, Roy Moretti, John Seitz, Willie Finnegan, Don Jacoby. Each is shown to be exceptional in his way, and each is shown to have a special weakness that led him to the Utica "orphans."

The season begins on June 19, and very quickly, it becomes an "Us versus Them" scenario. The Blue Sox players are a little bit older than the average player in the league and more experienced. The Sox are also playing to win. No development of future big leaguers here. They break out to an early lead. There is grouching from the other cities. A few decisions go against Utica.

It becomes clear that the major league affiliates do not want Utica to win. And the reason is obvious. The players who are performing so well for the Blue Sox are someone else's mistakes. It does not reflect well upon an aspiring farm director that his rejects are helping to defeat the players that he kept. The Blue Sox players know this, and the knowledge brings them closer together. As the pennant race draws to a close, it is Utica and Little Falls Mets who are neck and neck.

Kahn is a masterful storyteller, and he builds the suspense as the Mets and Sox go down the stretch with only a half game separating the two teams. And then finally, the Blue Sox demonstrate that some things are right with the world after all. Little Falls loses its final game, and Utica finishes in first place. The Blue Sox defeat Newark in the divisional playoff and are declared champions of the New York-Pennsylvania League.

This book reads like a novel, a credit to Kahn's writing skills. He lets his characters tell the story, although he himself is an integral part of the action. His style in this regard is reminiscent of the late great sports columnist of the *New York Journal-American*, Frank Graham. But the book is more than a novel. Kahn is a very knowledgeable baseball observer, not a George Plimpton. Throughout, he poses important questions.

Did the baseball establishment have it in for Utica? Maybe so. League President Vince McNamara lets Kahn know in no uncertain terms who is running the league when he rules against Utica concerning a makeup of a rainout late in the season. (Kahn's interpretation of the league constitution

seems to be correct.) Later, McNamara goes against Utica when a game is called, and Kahn has to refund \$5,000 to his customers. Also, it seems curious that the league all-star team had only one representative from the first place Blue Sox, who led the league in batting, home runs and ERA. Don Jacoby, whose .386 average and 22 home runs were second and first respectively, was

selected as the designated hitter. Neither of the two outstanding pitchers, Roy Moretti and John Seitz, were mentioned.

I recommend *Good Enough to Dream* very highly. It's a good read. Perhaps not as good as *The Boys of Summer*, but it is very well written and provides a lot of first-hand information about running a ball club.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Greatest Hits:

First — Learn Control of Ball

By Denton T. ("Cy") Young

There are young players in base ball who have what might be called natural control. Before they picked up a base ball for the first time, I venture to say that they could throw stones and pebbles more accurately than their companions, even if they were not able to throw them so far. Possibly every other boy in the neighborhood could throw a green apple swifter, but it was this particular boy, with his greater accuracy, who hit the mark.

That is what I call natural control, and the moment that boy begins to practice pitching, if he should, it will be found that he keeps the ball near the plate all the time, and that he is effective against other teams, much to the surprise of his companions, who note that he is not a swift thrower nor a long-distance thrower.

Every boy, who tries to become a pitcher, should make an effort to secure the same control of a ball as this boy has with his natural gift of accuracy. Speed is decidedly a bad qualification for pitching unless accuracy goes with it. That is why so many slow pitchers are successful in professional base ball. Speed that gives bases on balls is equivalent to giving base hits, and to permit hits to be made is the first step toward defeat.

To obtain this control of the ball, which is so essential to success, there is nothing to my mind like practice. It is not necessary that one should paint out a white spot on some dark background and throw at it until tired. I know of young pitchers who have tried that sort of thing, and it always amused me. The most that it did was to accustom them to hitting with some accuracy a stationary target. A batter is not a stationary target, hence the worthlessness of such practice.

I would have a young player, even if he possesses some natural control, and surely if he possesses none, pitch to a catcher over an improvised plate. Better still, if he can get somebody to be the batter while he remains pitcher all the time.

DENTON TRUE ("CY") YOUNG, *baseball's winningest pitcher, prepared these remarks for the Spalding book "How to Pitch" (1912).*

Providing it is not possible to get any one to act as batter, be sure to have the plate—a piece of board the proper size will do—and the catcher behind it. The catcher should sign for a high ball and a low ball, and whether the beginner knows much about curving the ball or not, he should be asked to put it first to one side of the plate and then to the other to improve his accuracy.

Young players will be astonished to see how much this simple practice will do to assist their efficiency. After awhile they will quite unconsciously copy the cross-fire of which so much is heard nowadays. Cross-fire is only the ability of the pitcher to direct the ball across home base on a certain angle between the pitcher and the plate.

My advice would be not to try to use speed while this practice is going on because that is wearing on the arm. Merely get the ball to the plate with sufficient force to cause it to come within the batter's reach, at a certain point which the pitcher had in mind when he permitted the ball to leave his hand.

Young players may have watched the professionals warm up before the game, and no doubt have seen the catcher drop his glove in front of him to act as a temporary base. The warming up is not so much to develop the speed in the pitcher's arm, which would be bound to come out in an inning or so, as it is to get the arm trained to do what the pitcher wants it to do.

I did not give a base on balls in the game in which I allowed no hits and no runs to be made, and I knew almost from the very first ball which left my hand that afternoon that I should be able to put the ball exactly where I wanted to. I should advise all young pitchers to seek the same result. It may take a long time to succeed, but there is likely to come a day when the pitcher suddenly discovers that he has got control at last, and from that moment he is the master of the batter and need have little to fear as to his future.

Having learned accuracy in the delivery of the ball, the next thing is to master the curves. Some may have thought that it was essential to know how to curve a ball before anything else. Experience, to my mind, teaches to the contrary in this respect.

Any young player, who has good control of the ball, will become a successful curve pitcher long before the beginner who is endeavoring to master both curves and control at the same time. The curve is merely an accessory to control. Witness how many good pitchers there were before the curved ball was heard of and how many there are now who employ straight balls as much as they do curves in their work.

Phone Survey:

What Baseball Book(s) Do You Return to Most Often?

ROGER ANGELL

The Glory of Their Times, by Lawrence Ritter, because it opened up a whole era for so many of us. It was an essential sort of work, yet done with such modesty and elegance. Ritter did a tremendous amount of labor in researching all those players, but he just presented them to us with such honesty and directness. Its publication was an astonishing event.

In addition, the first two Jim Brosnan books (*The Long Season*, *The Pennant Race*) were refreshing, because they were the first first-person player writings that were convincing. Brosnan's attitude was compellingly different, because he was both involved and amused by what he saw, and because he was not only observing it, he was observing himself at the same time.

MARTY APPEL

The fondest memories of a baseball book go back to when I was a kid, and Gene Schoor's biography of Mickey Mantle. It was the first baseball biography I ever had, and I used to do a book report on it every year. There's another, kind of an obscure one I think was self-published about eight or nine years ago, *The San Francisco Giants, An Oral History*, by Mike Mandel. In it he interviewed everybody who had anything to do with the Giants in their first two decades. It was a marvelous book, with the one shame being that Willie Mays wouldn't participate unless he was paid. There was a real sense of a joy of recollection, and the people really let their hair down for this writer. All modern players, but they really had interesting tales to tell. One more: Pat Jordan's *A False Spring*.

JOE GARAGIOLA

You're gonna get everyone mad at me. My favorite baseball books are the *Fireside* books. I love those books. You can open 'em to any page and get lost. Pick it up, put it down, anytime. Great airplane books. I also love Roger Angell's books.

BILL JAMES

It might be *Nice Guys Finish Last*, with Leo Durocher and Ed Linn. I like that book a lot. The use of the language is extraordinarily good. *Veek as in Wreck*, Linn's other book, gets a lot of praise for its foresightedness and the quality of the writing, but I think *Nice Guys Finish Last* matches it in those respects. I find the record of 40 years of controversies and people very engrossing. I have a lot of favorite books, but that's one I like to mention because it doesn't get mentioned often.

LEONARD KOPPETT

The Glory of Their Times. It's the best baseball book I ever saw, because of the combined quality of who the people are and the immediacy of what they have to say. And, of course, it was the first time somebody had done this. Excellent. The timing: the distance in time between when it came out and the time the book was talking about was perfect. In addition, that was the first time anyone treated the subject as an historian. Veeck's first two books—*Veeck as in Wreck* and *The Hustler's Handbook*, are in a class by themselves. If you want to know about baseball, and particularly the promotion of baseball, they are excellent. Plus being a helluva good read. I also liked Garagiola's book, very well done, and I liked Bouton's second book (*Ball Five*) much better than the first. By the second book, he had a lot more understanding in it, instead of just being a wise guy. In the second book, it came across as, "Hey a lot of those things I made fun of in the first book, I found out why they happened."

TONY KUBEK

I rarely read sports books. I'm not trying to be flippant. I found out years ago when I read books that were written about incidents I was involved in, that it wasn't the way it happened. I don't know whether it was the author or the publishing company that wanted to sensationalize, but they never really came off the way it happened. They're not that factual. For example, when Peter Golenbock started *Dynasty*, I was one of the first people he called. He spent three days with me, and I put him in touch with Roger Maris, and Mickey. And when the book came out, there were so many factual errors I stopped counting. I just looked through one I got recently, *A Baseball Winter*, and I enjoyed it. It was written by a lot of good sportswriters.

DAN OKRENT

The three volumes of the *Fireside* set. I go back to them constantly, for the variety, the surprise. I don't think that necessarily any one of the three volumes has *the* best stuff written in their particular era, but the bizarre range that Einstein brought to the books really makes them special.

PETE PALMER

The 1969 version of the *Encyclopedia*, which has fewer mistakes. I've been doing a lot of research on the teens and 20s. Looking at my desk here I've got *The Sporting News* publications for 1985, the Guide and Register. *Daguerrotypes*, the Macmillan book, the David Neft book and my book, which hasn't come out since 1979, but I still have it because it's more convenient than some of the others for some things. There are the SABR Research Journals, baseball guides and registers from previous years, and press guides. ("Small desk," Ed.) Most of the stuff I've been doing involves using the 1969 Macmillan Encyclopedia. Most of my books are reference books.

LARRY RITTER

On reflection, my favorite is *Veck as in Wreck*. The runner-up is *My Baseball Diary* by James Farrell. And No. 3 is Donald Honig's *Baseball America*.

ALLAN ROTH

There are the baseball reference books, which I have to use in my work, and I use them all the time—*The Sporting News* annual books, *Guide*, *Dope Book*, *Elias Bureau Record Book*. And then there are leisure books, and then there are the combinations, like Bill James' new book. James is very, very clever. I read a lot of Red Smith's books. Probably the book that I have enjoyed the most over the years is a book I was very close to for two reasons: one, the writer is a very close friend, one of my closest in the sports world, and two, I was part of that book in a sense—I was with *The Boys of Summer*. I knew all the people in it very well. As close as I was to the events and the people, the book was still on the money.

DAN SCHLOSSBERG

My own *Baseball Catalog* took me three years to put together, and it covered a lot of different kinds of areas of baseball: foods, superstitions, World War II. It was originally published in 1980, and it's been revised for re-release in '87. Actually, my favorite baseball book that's not my own is *The Baseball Hall of Shame* by Nash and Zullo. I think it's very funny and very clever. Another is *A Baseball Winter*, by Terry Pluto and some others.



One Game Does Not a Season Make

By Jeffrey Neuman

NINE INNINGS

Dan Okrent

312 pp., Ticknor & Fields (cloth)
\$16.95

McGraw-Hill (paper) \$5.95

synecdoche: a figure of speech by which a part is used to indicate the whole (e.g., fifty sails to mean fifty ships).

Nine Innings is a look at the whole of the game of baseball through a detailed examination of one baseball game, a June, 1982 meeting between the Baltimore Orioles and Milwaukee Brewers. The game, a seesaw battle won by the Brewers, 9-7, provides the framework for a series of digressions and discussions of the state of modern baseball, working literally from the ground (and its keepers) up. The premise is a terrific one; what baseball fan, sitting forward in his seat at the park or back in his easy chair by the TV, doesn't reflect back on the previous games in the series, or the previous years of the team, or the deals and manipulations that brought about the situation in front of him? But the premise is also a damned difficult one to pull off in a book, and *Nine Innings* is only intermittently successful.

Okrent has certainly done his homework. His topics range widely; in the first 10 pages of the book, he touches on the composition of the

County Stadium field, the contents of a typical ballplayer's locker, the starting pitcher's preparation on game day, the life of a recently fired manager, and the dynamics of the ball-strike count. His later topics include scouting, the sale of broadcast rights, the relationships between players and reporters, and the background behind the big Brewers-Cardinals trade of 1980. These are all interspersed among the inevitable mini-biographies of the day's players and analyses of game situations that come up. And, oh yes, the game.

It sounds like an awful lot, and it is—far too much. The many topics are dropped in almost at random, and are left abruptly to go back to the game, or onto another topic. The discussion of scouting is placed not at the beginning of the game, when it could provide insight into how the players came to be there, but at the top of the eighth in a tied game, a situation that cries out for an in-depth analysis of the options now confronting the managers. The most interesting stories have little to do with the game being played; Okrent's reporting and writing are far better in the discussion of Milwaukee's reporters than at any point when he's writing

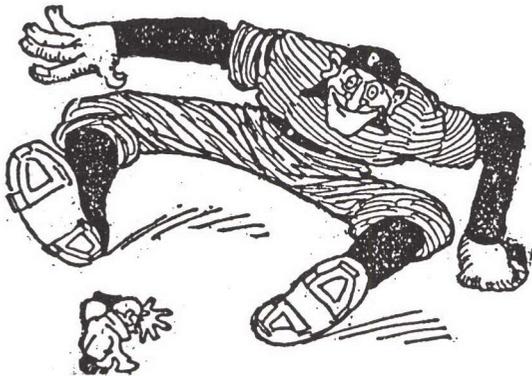
JEFFREY NEUMAN is the director of sports reference books at Macmillan Publishing Company. He is also co-editor of *A Baseball Winter*, reviewed in this issue.

about either the game or the players. When Okrent does turn his attention to the field, he strains to find new ways to word the familiar, and the strain shows, as when he describes the contest as "25 men. . . attempting to touch their feet safely on a pentagonal piece of rubber more times than their opponents," or writes that batters' successes "punctuate the steady drizzle of failed moments that so [fill] the offensive part of the game."

There's a very fine line between telling a specific story and telling a story that is meant to stand for hundreds of similar, untold stories. Okrent clearly has the latter in mind, but with a few exceptions like the fine portrait of Jim Gantner that appears toward the end of the book, the story rarely rises above the individual. Little here will be new to most baseball fans; his discussion of the evolution of the commissioner's office, or his treatment of the coming of free agency and the 1981 strike, tell us nothing we haven't already heard dozens of times. Even the lengthy discussion of the Simmons/Fingers deal will be familiar to readers of the old *Inside Sports*, where the material first appeared five years ago. Unlike

the best baseball writing, this is a book that will be enjoyed least by those who love the sport most.

Ultimately, *Nine Innings* fails because Okrent seems not to have trusted his own premise. The digressions are so intrusive that the reader has great difficulty remembering anything that is happening in the game itself, the ostensible topic of all the digressions. The book has no continuity, no flow to it; its rhythm, proceeding in fits and starts, is much more like that of a baseball season than a baseball game. That its true subject is not the dynamic of a single game is tacitly conceded by Okrent in his inclusion of not one but two epilogues, one providing the final results of the 1982 season, another covering the events in the seasons since. For major league baseball teams, it is the season, not the single game, that is the natural unit of measurement. Okrent's book is far closer to the flood of season diaries that have come since Jim Brosnan's ground-breaking efforts than it is to being ground-breaking itself. And the promise made on its cover, that it is "the anatomy of baseball as seen through the playing of a single game," remains unfulfilled.



A Worthy Successor to the *Firesides*

By Tom Jozwik

THE ARMCHAIR BOOK OF BASEBALL

John Thorn, editor
388 pp., Scribner's
\$19.95

Its dust jacket ballyhoos *The Armchair Book of Baseball* as "A lavish celebration of the national pastime from an all-star lineup of writers, reporters, and raconteurs." While the lineup is strong enough to make the anthology a winner in the baseball book league, it isn't without its light hitters.

The Armchair Book, edited by SABR publications director John Thorn, can be viewed as a sequel to the three-volume, Charles Einstein-edited *Fireside Book of Baseball* series of a generation ago. Like the *Firesides*, *The Armchair Book* includes fiction as well as nonfiction, poetry as well as prose. Thorn explains in the book's introduction, "The general principles of selection were two: to bring together the best writing that, when collected, would present a panoramic view of today's game and how it got to be that way and to include no more than one piece by any writer." Thorn also notes that the book focuses "principally (on) the past two decades, a period that began with pundits anointing professional football as the new national pastime and closed with baseball at unprecedented heights of popularity." The period, Thorn contends, has

"brought an outpouring of good, fresh baseball writing—so much, in fact, that I could more easily have gathered a book three times this size with no diminution of quality."

A much thicker *Armchair Book* might not have been a bad idea, for, even after some 20 years, the superb *Fireside* collection proves to be a difficult act to follow. The only *Fireside* volume I own, the earliest in the series, boasts ballpark sketches by the incomparable Gene Mack and cartoons from *Sport*, *True* and *The New Yorker*; photographs of Eddie Gaedel at bat, Willie Mays afield and Babe Ruth at a microphone during his farewell appearance at Yankee Stadium; a handy "Index of People"; and blockbuster personality profiles of Connie Mack, Satchel Paige and Branch Rickey. *The Armchair Book* contains a couple of outstanding personality profiles—Tom Boswell's Reggie Jackson and Gay Talese's Joe DiMaggio—but the new opus includes no photographs and no index. There are illustrations by James Stevenson in *The Armchair Book*, but only a modern art fan would prefer them to the *Fireside*'s sketches and cartoons.

TOM JOZWIK is a full-time insurance investigator and part-time sportswriter. He has served on many SABR committees, and is a member of the board of directors.

The weaklings in *The Armchair Book's* batting order are Chet Williamson, Joe Durso, and Glenn Eichler—or, more accurately, the pieces with which Thorn represents these writers. They're the book's Ted Lepcio, Ray Oyler, and Casey Wise. Williamson's fictionalized account of a 1933 Yankee Stadium visit by Mohandas K. Gandhi is in terrible taste, treating a giant of 20th century civilization as a whistle-blowing buffoon. Durso's article on Henry Aaron's 715th home run is only slightly less moribund than the 1960 Kansas City Athletics—surprising because I have enjoyed Durso's sufficiently lively prose in *The Sporting News*. I wish that a different piece about the Aaron shot heard 'round the world—say, an excerpt from George Plimpton's book *One for the Record*—had been included instead. Eichler's treatment of "George Brett's Vanished and Restored Homer," while it represents a unique approach in dealing with an incident that the media smothered (not covered, *smothered*), requires a lengthy explanation by Thorn and contains some vulgar name-calling that many readers are likely to find offensive.

It is delightful that Thorn included columns by Jimmy Cannon and Red Smith, but they could've been better represented. I would've preferred Cannon's 1962 article, "Jackie Robinson's Precious Gift," or his 1969 piece "Babe Ruth" (both of which can be found in the 1978 collection, "Nobody Asked Me, But . . .") to his tongue-in-cheek article on baseball fans which appears here. Also, I would rather have seen Smith's 1948 piece on umpire George Magerkurth, his 1952 column on Connie Mack, or his 1958

sketch of Roy Campanella than his 1959 obit of Howard Ehmke.

It's too bad that *The Armchair Book's* editor was unable to find space for Pat Jordan, Joe Garagiola, Furman Bisher, and Joe Falls. Thorn has assembled a winning team of writers, such .300 hitters on the baseball beat as Lee Allen and Roger Angell, Robert Creamer and Jerome Holtzman, Bill James and Blackie Sherrod. Also represented are such heavy hitters in the American letters loop as Philip Roth, William Safire, Irwin Shaw, Wilfrid Sheed, John Updike, and several people better known for nonliterary pursuits: ex-U.S. Senator Eugene McCarthy, ex-ballplayer and baseball reserve clause challenger Curt Flood, movie director John Sayles, paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, and Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth.

Ueberroth's foreword is delightful, but even better are Boswell's "Mr. October" article; Allen's *Hot Stove League* chapter on corpulent, bald, bowlegged, and bearded ballplayers; Holtzman's transcription of old-time sportswriter Richards Vidmer's recollections; and Sherrod's report of Lenny Randle's assault against his manager, Frank Lucchesi.

Boswell, who manages to get Nathaniel Hawthorne's Hester Prynne and mythological King Midas into the same paragraph of a baseball story, cleverly observes in the story that "Few men match (Reggie Jackson's) knack for having a good idea, then mopping the floor with it. If Jackson discussed the Bill of Rights long enough, he'd make you want to repeal it." Allen, the late Baseball Hall of Fame historian, provides a little grist for the trivia mill:

Bobby Mitchell of the 1877 Cincinnati team was the original major league southpaw pitcher; Lave Cross and Honus Wagner were baseball's kings of bowleggedness; the National Anthem was not sung regularly at ball games before World War II; and none of the signers of the Declaration of Independence wore a beard. Holtzman's interview with Vidmer—a self-proclaimed “playboy or rounder” who knew Dwight Eisenhower and Omar Bradley when they were West Point cadets, who later befriended Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, who “married a rajah’s daughter,” and who inspired the Katharine Brush novel *Young Man of Manhattan*—may well be *The Armchair Book*'s most intriguing entry. Sherrod's eyewitness account of the infamous Randle outburst is a solid news article that manages to include some elements more commonly found in fiction. The graphic article opens with a simile and closes in a manner remindful of O. Henry.

Among the other highly enjoyable selections were:

Roth's “My Baseball Years.” In this eloquent essay, the writer offers wonderful descriptions of Newark's Ruppert Stadium and Dodgers' broadcaster Red Barber, observing that “perhaps baseball—with its lore and legends, its cultural power, its seasonal association, its native authenticity, its simple rules and transparent strategies, its longeurs and thrills, its spaciousness, its suspensefulness, its heroics, its nuances, its lingo, its characters, its peculiarly hypnotic tedium, its mythic transformation of the immediate—was the literature of my boyhood.”

William Least Heat Moon's “Beans.” In this excerpt from a non-

fiction book, a failed sportscaster bemoans contemporary baseball terminology. “I miss the old clichés,” he tells the author as they watch a televised ball game in a North Dakota tavern. “They had life. Who wants to hit a fastball with a decimal point when



he can tie into somebody's ‘heat’? And that's another thing: nobody ‘tattoos’ or ‘blisters’ the ball anymore.’ ”

Art Hill's “A Stroll Through *The Baseball Encyclopedia*.” Hill's tantalizing tribute to the baseball book notes that “Literary allusions are not common in baseball, but an interesting one comes along now and then. In recent years it has become fairly general to say of a poor infielder that he plays like the Ancient Mariner. That is, “He stoppeth one of three.”

Don Hoak's “The Day I Batted Against Castro,” an autobiographical account written with Myron Cope.

The Castro in this piece is Fidel, not Bill, and the piece concludes with the assessment: . . . “with a little work on his control, Fidel Castro would have made a better pitcher than a prime minister.”

Jonathan Yardley’s “Frank Chance’s Diamond.” In this excerpt from his biographical study *Ring*,

Run Baker; and outfielders Ty Cobb, Joe Jackson, and Tris Speaker. Elsewhere in the selection, Yardley deftly contrasts Cobb and Mathewson: “Cobb probably was the most hated man ever to play major league baseball. He was a racist, a bully, and a psychopath. He drew no distinction between teammates and opponents; he fought

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Yardley reveals Ring Lardner’s all-star team of 1915 players: pitchers Willie Mitchell, Nap Rucker, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Walter Johnson, and Christy Mathewson; backstops Jimmy Archer and Ray Schalk; infielders Jake Daubert, Eddie Collins, Rabbit Maranville, and Home

them all, and all of them detested him. Mathewson, on the other hand, was such an upright, kind, and selfless individual that some skeptics wondered if he was for real. He was a graduate of Bucknell, he looked like a combination of Dink Stover and Frank Merriwell, and according to Hugh

Fullerton, he 'specializes in chess and when on the circuit spends his evenings at chess clubs playing the local champions.' ”

McCarthy's "Baseball? Boing-ball." Beneath the witty title is an equally witty indictment of ballpark artificial turf.

Douglass Wallop's "The Devil's Due." This is an excerpt from the novel *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant*, which became the musical "Damn Yankees."

The Armchair Book contains some great one-liners. Peter Gammons notes that, toward the end of Boston's ultimately disastrous 1978 campaign, "Fenway Park was like St. Petersburg in the last days of Czar Nicholas." Pete Rose is quoted as saying, "I'd walk through hell in a gasoline suit to keep playing baseball." Talese recalls that, when Joe DiMaggio's marriage to Marilyn Monroe ended, "Oscar Levant said it all proved that no man could be a success at two national pastimes." And Jim Murray contributes the two-liner, "Men usually become legends posthumously. Nothing promotes the growth of a legend like the demise of anyone who might contradict it."

Thorn's prefaces for all the entries are unfailingly urbane and they reflect

the editor's vast knowledge of the game's history and of literature in general. The prefaces compare favorably with Einstein's *Fireside* forewords.

Thorn's longer contribution to the anthology, "September 30, 1907: You Are There," originally appeared as a chapter in the book *Baseball's Ten Greatest Games*. Like the prefaces, Thorn's narrative of an important Tigers-Athletics game is well worth reading.

The Armchair Book, like writer Hill's description of *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, "ranges from the awe-inspiring to the ineffably trivial." Thorn hasn't totally succeeded in his effort to avoid pieces that had been anthologized elsewhere, and *The Armchair Book* is not devoid of typographical errors and dated observations. But the typos and dated comments are few—and understandable in a 388-page book whose selections reach as far back as 1866—and certainly a previously anthologized piece of the caliber of John Kieran's poem "A Query" will read just as well the second or third time around.

If *The Armchair Book* isn't perfect—well, neither were the 1927 Yankees.

NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN



The Eight Per Cent Solution

By Frank Boslett

DOLLAR SIGN ON THE MUSCLE: The World of Baseball Scouting

Kevin Kerrane

352 pp., Beaufort Books, \$15.95

321 pp., Avon Books (paper), \$4.95

"The last real Americans," says Jack Pastore, Assistant Scouting Director of the Philadelphia Phillies, "are baseball scouts." The history, character, and machinations of these men are the subject of *Dollar Sign on the Muscle*—undeniably the definitive work on this business.

The truly serious student of baseball could gain a general insight into scouting by first reading *A False Spring* by Pat Jordan and "Scout" by Roger Angell. *A False Spring* dramatizes the Bonus Era with scenes of scouts trying to sign Jordan out of high school in 1959. "Scout" (in *Five Seasons*), illustrates the draft era by following several scouting trips Angell took with the late Ray Scarborough in 1975.

Dollar Sign on the Muscle seems to be a labor of love for Kevin Kerrane, who was able not only to interview scouts from 15 Major League teams, but was also privy to the Phillies Scouts' Manual and was permitted to sit in on their 1981 draft.

Three of the scouts—Brandy Davis, Jack Pastore, and Jim McLaughlin—became, "Invaluable resources by checking facts, arranging

interviews with other scouts and offering exceptionally candid advice." Most often their opinions conflicted, but even this was an advantage to him. Some of the views he expresses are really triangulations of theirs.

As Kerrane followed a scouting season during the 1981 strike-disrupted season, he looked at amateur players and listened to baseball men put the dollar sign on the muscle. He tried to watch games the way scouts do, with less interest in the subtleties of action or the beauties of scenery than in the talent, potential and price tag of the individual performer. He was advised to "scout the player, not the game"—focusing as much on what happens between innings, when that good-looking shortstop fields practice grounders and snaps his throws to first.

The book is divided into three sections: Spring: The Past; Summer: The Present; Fall: The Future. It clearly defines the responsibilities of each level of scouting at each time of the year.

Kerrane notes that, "Scouting is professional baseball's personalized way

FRANK BOSLETT is a Pittsburgh-based writer. Although he has written on subjects from baseball to auto racing, he has always harbored a secret desire to compete in a Japanese Industrial Basketball League as a power forward. "Only 5'6", but he plays like 5'9"."

of renewing itself, from year to year and generation to generation." Also, he points out that scouts are wrong 92 percent of the time. Out of every hundred players signed to professional contracts, about eight will ever appear in a major league game.

Kerrane breaks down the history of scouting into four eras beginning with the Bird Dog Era (?-1919) where there was much luck in a young man getting into professional baseball at all and even more luck in getting to the major leagues. Ballplayers in this era were signed by minor league owners and simply sold upward. Thus, the bird dog, who if given permission to sign a prospect, received a finder's fee. One such bird dog was University of Michigan Coach Branch Rickey. It is generally conceded that during this era, baseball's first full-time scout emerged: Larry Sutton, who after 20 years of bird dogging for Brooklyn, became their scouting specialist in 1909.

The Second Era was Ivory Hunters: The Rickey Era (1919-1946). This era produced the farm system. The scouts explored the backroads and mill and farm towns of America, searching, as the saying went, for "the arm behind the barn."

It was during this era that the system of Branch Rickey was developed—the system that depended on teaching. Rickey applied scouting insights to teaching and vice versa. His principle of quality out of quantity also led Rickey and full-time scout Charlie Barrett to devise tryout camps and to hire more scouts.

Third Era Scouting was entitled the Traveling Salesmen: The Bonus Era (1946-1965). This era actually began in 1941 when the Detroit Tigers

signed Dick Wakefield for a bonus of \$52,000 and a new car. Twenty years of bidding wars depleted club treasuries and eventually led to the institution of the draft in 1965. The Pirates under Branch Rickey lost so much money and were burned so often that they decided not to offer \$10,000 to a young pitcher named Sandy Koufax. As a lifelong Pirate fan, this practically caused me to be reintroduced to yesterday's lunch.

With the institution of the draft in 1965, the Fourth Era began—Investment Analysts (1965-present). The amateur draft, modeled after those in other pro sports, would eliminate the open market on young players by constraining their right to bargain. The first draft had the intended effect of holding down bonus payments. Its effects on scouting were more subtle. A scout's primary job now was to give advice without making decisions—the way an investment analyst might pass along opinions on new properties that his corporation might or might not be able to acquire. Then the scout would try to sign draftees by persuading them that the club's offer was preferable to college or to waiting six months until the next draft when another club could similarly constrain them.

The further steps in this line of the baseball business led to the formation of the Scouting Bureau, a combine of teams which share expenses and information. Kerrane goes to great lengths to elicit the opinions of scouts regarding the Bureau's value to their teams. Naturally, as the Bureau waters down many of the skills scouts have developed over the years, they are unanimous in their derision of this system.

Sprinkled throughout the book are other opinions of scouts and how

younger and older men differ in their thinking. Most of the older scouts, and many of the younger ones, consider the radar gun "a gimmick," stating the obvious, that "the gun doesn't show movement of the ball." But most simply shrug their shoulders, say, "management wants to see numbers," and decide it's here to stay.

Another change brought about by the draft era is the end of the scouts' fierce guarding of their information. Now, with the unlikelihood that you will be able to draft that phenom you've been trailing, swapping information on a reciprocal basis becomes more advantageous.

Kerrane identifies the scout as much of a dreamer as the players he is scouting. They are saying, if not at this camp, then maybe at the next, some undiscovered boy arrives with all five tools and no bad habits—a natural athlete, eighteen years old, just out of high school (where they didn't have a baseball team, so no scouts saw him), eligible and eager to sign a low-bonus contract. The dream plays like background music at each new camp, where the scouting process is again telescoped into a few hours, without benefit of advance reports, repeated observations, or actual game conditions.

As the new era unfolded so did the emergence of the young scouts. Kerrane describes the new generation as college-trained, inured to bureaucracy, unthreatened by technology, fluent in the language of numbers. They maintain a respectful distance from the more colorful and intuitive traveling salesmen, the kind of men who first trained them. He says they regard most of the million-mile scouts as vanishing Americans, not as career

models. There are, they realize, rewards of jobs in the front office or in the "real" world outside baseball. But the young scouts, more than they realize, have been shaped by their teachers.

Young Carmen Fusco of the Mets claims he got into scouting because, "I knew a guy. . . ." He says, "Pro experience isn't necessary anymore. What's important is being analytical, organized, mobile, able to do a lot of reporting. The scouting directors look for younger guys now because we can put up with all the travel, and maybe they figure we don't need money as bad. But that's why I want to work my way to the front office—less travel, more money."

Finally Kerrane wraps up his treatise with a study of the economics of the new era. The shift from family to syndicate ownership was a shift from old money to new money and, in scouting, from pure traditionalism to cost-consciousness. Further cuts in the staff were inevitable.

Kerrane maintains that scouts draw their logic from the structure of the game itself—a game demanding versatility more than specialization, looseness more than strength and the ability to pay constant attention through long stretches of inactivity. Some scouts group these virtues under the general heading of "life."

Dollar Sign on the Muscle is a well-documented, impeccably organized work—must reading for anyone who considers himself a serious student of the game of baseball. It dispels many preconceived notions as to exactly what constitutes a good ballplayer and can even change even the way one watches games, especially at the amateur level.

Personal Favorite:

Revealing a Larger Truth

By Darrell Berger

A FALSE SPRING

Pat Jordan

Pat Jordan pitched four consecutive no-hitters as a Little Leaguer in Fairfield, Connecticut, which earned him a trip to Yankee Stadium and an interview with Mel Allen. He was a Milwaukee Brave bonus baby in 1959. He had his picture taken with Warren Spahn.

In three years his career was over, having never emerged from Class C. A decade later he wrote *A False Spring*, which is not only a detailed account of the sociology of baseball at the time, but arguably the best baseball autobiography of all time. It is about failure.

Even the best books by baseball personalities, like *Veeck as in Wreck* and *Ball Four* have been co-written by professional sportswriters. Jim Brosnan's efforts are notable exceptions. But *A False Spring* stands above all of them because, like *The Natural*, it uses baseball as a means to reveal larger truth.

We remain baseball fans, not merely for escape, but for the entry it gives us into life's deeper meanings. Yet there is a coyness to the depth of baseball. It does not yield itself easily, just as the emotions of men together are not easily displayed.

Therefore, Jordan accomplishes a

rarity, a look inside the emotions of the gifted player. He was gifted; the Braves originally valued him as highly as Tony Cloninger, Phil Niekro, and Rico Carty. That his emotions are revealed through failure is what raises *A False Spring* from sportswriting to literature.

It is the story of a young man trying to find himself, a physical young man of innocent intelligence and diffident sensitivity. As such Jordan brings to baseball what Jack Kerouac brought to hitchhiking.

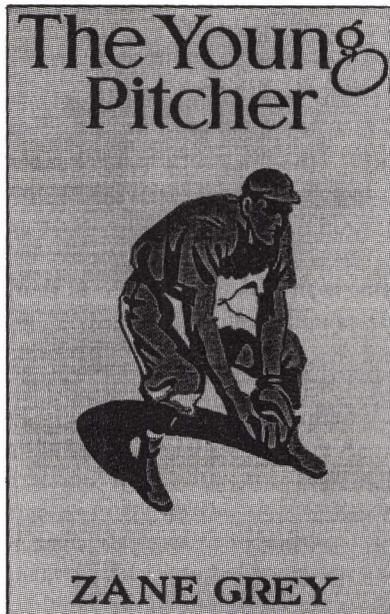
A False Spring is essentially a beat generation account of baseball, even though it was written 20 years after Kerouac's first novel was published. Its most obvious parallel is with Kerouac's *Visions of Duluoz*, his autobiographical novel of the years immediately after he left Lowell, Massachusetts on a football scholarship to Columbia University. There he met Allen Ginsberg and others who were to dominate the darker corners of American literature for a generation.

Both Kerouac and Jordan were anointed by their families to take their

DARRELL BERGER writes book reviews monthly for *Baseball Hobby News*. He is a Unitarian-Universalist minister, lives in Scituate, Massachusetts, collects baseball cards, and is a Tiger fan.

athletic ability into the world and return with fame and fortune. Both encountered immediate opposition for the same reason: they didn't fit in, or chose not to.

Both possessed a distant, disturbing vision. Both failed their athletic potential because their vision distracted them. Both also lacked discipline.



Here Jordan is especially candid. He writes, "Success in baseball requires the synthesis of a great many virtues, many of which have nothing to do with sheer talent. Self-discipline, single-mindedness, perseverance, ambition—these were all virtues I was positive I possessed in 1960, but which I've discovered over the years I did not." This combination of arrogance and self-loathing is almost a textbook definition of "beat," as Kerouac's writings developed it in the 1950s.

Through this chronicle of failure we see an inverted image of what base-

ball success must be, and see it far better than through any book written by or about the great baseball heroes.

Kerouac and Jordan also preserve the details of their times. Kerouac described the roadside distractions of the post-war years in *On the Road*, *Lonesome Traveler* and others. Jordan details the transient life of bush league towns like McCook, Nebraska, where in 1959 a town ordinance prohibited nonwhites from living in the residential section, and Palatka, Florida, where the swamp encroached upon the games, and snakes roamed the outfield.

Both also revel in their fascination and disgust with those on the lowest rung of society, the barflies and rooming house dwellers one encounters while starting at the bottom of any enterprise. Like Zola, Dreiser and other realist novelists, Jordan describes their lives with surgical precision, occasionally uncovering genius or nobility, like minor league manager Ben Geraghty, a kind of baseball Zen master that turned boys into big leaguers.

Yet neither Jordan nor Kerouac put his talent on the line sufficiently to succeed, and both ultimately dropped out. Unfortunately for Kerouac, this meant a return to his mother's house and the early death of a terminal alcoholic.

Fortunately for Jordan, his failure was only the failure of a game. When he dropped through the bottom of professional baseball, his life had barely begun, and *A False Spring* ends with intimations of that realization.

Jordan finally comprehends the reason for his failure, but far too late. His only success came in the Instructional League, after he worked with Braves' pitching coach Whitlow

Wyatt. The old curveballer gave Jordan control by altering his pitching motion, making it more compact. It was a bad bargain, for in doing so he lost the speed that made him a prospect.

He writes, "I deliberately frustrated the natural limits of my talent in the hope that this would bring me—not success, even—but simply the absence of failure. Such a cowardly satisfaction! And one that ultimately led to a failure so without the satisfaction a nobler failure might have had, that I have yet to come to grips with it . . . to admit that I have destroyed my talent, the one thing in me that was special to me. It doesn't matter what that thing was or how trivial it might have been. It only matters that such a thing did exist in me, as it does in us all, and that by refusing to risk perfecting it I was denying what most truly defined me."

Or at least had defined him up to age 21. But while he was facing the awful truth that he didn't have what it takes to be a ballplayer, another truth was unfolding. He did have what it takes to be a writer, a writer of big league caliber.

There must be an interesting story here, too, the former jock who searches for a purpose after the dream dies. He must have found a mentor, a literary Whit Wyatt to show him the quirks of mind that failed him on the mound could support him at the typewriter.

Yet as good as *A False Spring* is, as good as his other writing is, Pat Jordan is not as well-known, nor probably as rich, as his talent as a writer would indicate is within his grasp.

Perhaps the personality which kept him from the top in baseball still fights success, the only difference being

that writing allows for a greater range of commitment and zeal than sports, and Jordan can be what he wants to be as a writer, in a way that the all-or-nothing world of sports could never tolerate.

Jordan's most recent work is a "Sidelines" column in the Swimsuit issue of *Sports Illustrated*, 1986. This light, amusing and peaceful first person account tells of a greying, self-conscious 44-year-old whose wife cajoles him into riding a beach bike along the shores of Fort Lauderdale, where he now lives in a two-room, beachfront apartment.

It is writing by a man at home in his life, who undoubtedly would not be happy as a senior writer or editor of a magazine, or fighting for the top of the best seller list. That would be too much like baseball.

He is now only a few miles south of Palatka, where his baseball career drained from him. But he is his own man, in a way that being even a Hall of Famer could not have given him.

This most honest account of failure made the writer a success. Though the middle-age beach biker doesn't mention his past, somewhere in that Fort Lauderdale apartment there must be an old photograph of a young man in a Braves' uniform, standing next to Warren Spahn.



The Art of Glove

By Jack Carlson

MITTS - A Celebration of the Art of Fielding

William Curran

240 pp., William Morrow and Company

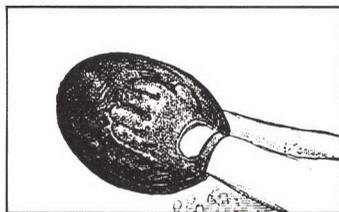
\$15.95

Look in the baseball section of the local library, and what do you see? Books about teams, managers, records, hitters, pitchers, umps, and statistics. Until *Mitts*, by SABR member Bill Curran, there were not any books about that major part of baseball called defense.

Author Curran wants to fill the gap: first, by lauding the good fielder, and second, by going beyond that and showing that the importance of good defense is often overlooked. He does it with a mixture of facts and personal experiences dating back to his New York youth of the '30s. He also tells how fielding has changed through the years and connects it with the evolution of mitts and gloves. It's Curran's claim that the biggest change in baseball during the last 50 years is improved fielding and defensive strategy.

Curran disagrees with those who say that the modern mitt (glove), along with artificial turf playing fields, is responsible for defensive improvement. The improvement is due, in the last 50 years that encompasses the author's memory, to better athletes. There doesn't seem to be that much to argue about there. The baseball players of the '80s are, on the whole, bigger, stron-

ger, and faster than those of the '30s, so it's only natural they would be better at fielding. Today's players are usually 52-weeks-a-year athletes who stay in condition, use exercise machines in the off-season, and maintain full-time training (Terry Forster and a few others excepted). Fifty years ago, it was much more the custom to get out of condition over the winter and use spring training to reach maximum shape. Even earlier,



during the 1890s, spring training was often short and in locations like Charlottesville, VA, so players frequently used the first month of the season to condition themselves. Those early weeks of the season must have been error-filled!

The book mentions the famous "bad example" of Zeke Bonura—a high fielding average year after year, but

JACK CARLSON has been a SABR member since 1982 and a *Pirate fan(atic)* since 1935. A retired aeronautical engineer, he now spends even more of his time reading baseball books and pouring over SABR microfilms in search of data for a long-term project. He now resides in *Beavercreek, Ohio, which is Reds country.*

practically a statue at first base. Zeke, it is claimed, caught everything that came at him but would reach for nothing, hence a high fielding average. A look at Bonura's career shows that for four of his first six years in the majors, he led the first basemen of his league in total chances per game and finished second and third the other two. Hardly the numbers of a fielder who wouldn't reach for anything.

If you believe this book, no fan back of first base was safe in the '30s because of the wild throws, and that the game was an error-filled horror. This



is not exactly borne out by the stats as presented by the author. He states that the errors per game were 2.61 in the '20s and 1.74 in the '70s. Since the author first became a fan in the '30s, it is proper to review that period and compare it with the '70s. During the '30s, there were 2.32 errors per game, or only slightly less (.58) than the .6 errors per game difference from the '70s. This hardly changed the game from a comedy of errors into one of perfection. Using an average of six games per week, the fan of the '30s saw about 3.5 more errors a week than the '70s fan. That may be statistically significant, but it is doubted that the average fan would even notice the difference.

Sure, fielding has improved over the years and it continues to improve. During the 1880s, there were 8.09 errors a game! That is a noticeable difference, although there aren't any fans today who have witnessed this change. A graph of errors per game by decades shows a smooth hyperbolic curve with an asymptote of 1.5 errors as the best we can expect in the future. So far in the '80s, the major leagues are averaging 1.66 errors per game. So, unless some revolutionary change occurs, we cannot expect to see much further improvement in fielding.

Mitts mentions that the glove came into use in the 1880s and was significantly improved around 1920 with the development and introduction of the Bill Doak model. Despite these "revolutionary" events, no significant or sudden reduction in errors per game followed. The graph stayed smooth at those times. This seems to further Curran's claim that it wasn't the glove, or the improved glove, but the better athlete that was the reason for better fielding. Other factors can be considered: more games per year and, therefore, more experience and chances to improve; better training and teaching as early as high school; exposure to TV, where youngsters can see how the major leaguers play their positions.

Curran states that Bill Terry and Joe DiMaggio were close to perfection and today's gloves wouldn't improve their fielding. However, their numbers are no longer impressive. Terry's league-leading averages of '34 and '35 would make him a typical NL first baseman in 1984. DiMaggio's fielding average and chances per game are *below* those of today's top center fielders.

The Bid McPhee story is confused. On page 76, it is stated that McPhee played *without* a glove during his career, while page 151 says that he did use a glove late in his career. Also, shortstop Bobby Wallace was rejected by Pittsburgh's Connie Mack in the 1880s after a tryout. Connie arrived in Pittsburgh in 1891 as a player and became the manager in 1894, so he could not have turned down Pittsburgh native Wallace, who began his major league career in 1894.

A great source of fun and dis-

cussion in *Mitts* is the author's All-Defense team, and a position by position review of his candidates. If, as author Curran opines, Pete Rose is really baseball's best defensive player ever, why didn't he make the team?

But, nits and opinions aside, this book fills a need and explores a relatively untouched area. It is written with humor, feeling and enthusiasm. The fan who wants to get a basic acquaintance with the history of baseball fielding and glove development will find *Mitts* worthwhile. Read and enjoy.

Something Is Always Taking the Joy Out of Life : : By BRIGGS



© 1937, P. Lorillard Co., Est. 1760

OLD GOLD

The Smoother and Better Cigarette

.. not a cough in a carload



15¢

The Hot Rod League

By Frederick Ivor-Campbell

A BASEBALL WINTER

Terry Pluto and Jeffrey Neuman, eds.
312 pp., Macmillan
\$16.95

Fueled by reflection on summers past and hope for summers to come, the hot stove league warms and brightens the long winter of every baseball fanatic. Major league executives, though, expect more from winter baseball talk than heat and light: they look for movement. For them, winter talk fuels not only the hot stove but the hot rod. One could say that winter for major league clubs is the season of the hot rod league. In general it is a season of hope. But as *A Baseball Winter* ably shows, the baseball hot rod, while it sometimes springs forward, is just as likely to lock into reverse or break down altogether.

This book, which records the activities of five major league clubs from the end of one season to the start of the next, is such a good idea that I'm surprised books like it haven't long since become a staple of baseball book publishing. Other books have dealt with baseball winters, of course, but their coverage has been scattered and incidental, tucked into club histories and baseball biographies and books on issues like player/management relations. *A Baseball Winter* is the first book I know of to take as its central interest the off-season itself.

To make this book, five writers—Ross Newhan, Marty Noble, Peter Pascarelli, Terry Pluto, and Tim

Tucker—followed the 1984-85 off-season activities of the Angels, Mets, Phillies, Indians, and Braves, producing reports which editors Pluto and Jeffrey Neuman have blended into a single diary-like account. The five clubs represent not only both major leagues and wide geographical distribution, but diverse administrative styles—from the loud, wide-open Phillies to the secretive Mets to the chaotic Indians. The editors were fortunate also in achieving a diversity they couldn't determine in advance: clubs whose winter activity strengthened them (Angels, Mets) and clubs whose efforts proved largely futile.

The focus is on club management. Players are depicted, by and large, as management sees them: as parts to be bought, modified, repaired, exchanged, and discarded in the never-ending effort to build a winning vehicle.

Winter tinkering with the makeup of baseball teams is nearly as venerable as baseball itself, but the need for almost continuous off-season club activity dates only from the revolution in player relations sparked by the advent of free agency a decade ago. Before free agency, the off-season activity of club executives, though sometimes frustrating, was uncomplicated and straightforward: buying, selling

FREDERICK IVOR-CAMPBELL is taking a break (perhaps permanently) from teaching college to research and write baseball history.

and trading players, and haggling with them over salaries.

Today, though, with the increase in players' rights, negotiations are more harrowing and the resulting contracts more complex and costly. The demands in time, effort, and expense that negotiations now entail form one of the two chief winter concerns of major league executives.

Their other major concern is the quality of their teams: the development and evaluation of players, the maintenance of their fitness, and their rehabilitation after injury. Developments in these areas, too, have reached new levels of sophistication and cost, and absorb more off-season attention than they used to.

Added to these concerns are occasional crises that—like the Indians' search for new ownership in 1984-85—sometimes all but engulf a club's ongoing needs.

Baseball's new complexities call for a new kind of executive. Once upon a time the hot rod could be repaired or rebuilt with cheap parts, simple tools and a little know-how; today's models require sophisticated equipment and high-tech expertise.

How today's off-season affects the lives of baseball people is the subject of *A Baseball Winter*. We read about owners and players, managers and coaches, scouts and agents, even a secretary or two—576 persons in all, according to the book's index. Although most members of this huge cast pass only briefly across the stage, many play important roles, and several are spotlighted with extended portraits that form some of the book's most memorable segments: John Sain, for example, the Braves' iconoclastic pitching

coach; Andre Thornton, whom the Indians view as the key to their rebuilding effort—if they can sign him to a new contract; Joe Lefebvre of the Phillies, who, although his career may be near its end because of a knee injury, has only gratitude for what baseball has given him; Cory Snyder, the Indians' hot infield prospect, and his father who comes with him to spring training. Also among the book's highlights are the stories that move along in fits and starts over the course of the winter: the Phillies' continuing effort to dump Al Oliver (with the authors stringing us out for a hundred pages before telling us why he is no longer wanted); the Indians' winter-long attempt to find someone to buy the club; and Bob Horner's struggle to return from his latest disabling injury, a broken wrist.

Despite the fact that the book is a joint effort of six writers and editors, it is briskly written in uniformly clear, direct prose. Yet differences in narrative style can be detected: the writers rely in varying degrees on direct quotation, for example, with Peter Pascarelli (who covers the Phillies) even employing dialogue in behind-the-scenes conversation, giving a sense of intimate familiarity with the club's inner workings that is not found in the reports on the other four clubs.

Though the most memorable elements of *A Baseball Winter* may be its portraits of people, the book is perhaps most useful in its portraits of the procedures of modern baseball management: free agency, arbitration, the re-entry draft, and the like. Once or twice the explanation of specialized terms is inadequate. ("Type A player," for example, is defined only in an ambiguous parenthetical comment many pages

after the term is first introduced.) But most of the time, the definitions and explanations, set as they are in the context of events, are models of clarity and enlightenment.

Some readers might wish *A Baseball Winter* had more depth—more analysis and evaluation, with perhaps less mere information. They could point out that there is little in the book that one could not have learned by reading the daily sports pages and sporting weeklies. But the editors have chosen to provide information rather than commentary, material for our reflection rather than their own analysis. They have chosen to give us not history, but the stuff of history.

I, for one, am grateful that, in giving us a book published so soon after the events depicted, the editors and authors have resisted the tempting path of instant analysis. They give us the information; we can decide for ourselves the relative merits of the ball clubs' different decision-making styles, and of the moves and decisions that result. *A Baseball Winter* provides fuel for the hot stove.

But if there is little in *A Baseball Winter* that the diligent reader could not have found elsewhere, the editors, by bringing together half a year of baseball activity into one volume, give the reader a sense of the sweep and significance of the off-season that a day-to-day reading of its bits and pieces could not provide.

Devotees of the 21 clubs not covered in the book may wish the editors had selected somewhat differently. And those of us who can't get enough of a good thing would have liked coverage of more than five clubs. But Pluto and Neuman were wise to limit them-

selves to a manageable number: enough clubs to provide diversity without overwhelming the reader. My favorite team is not one of those represented, but I found myself more than adequately entertained and instructed by the doings of the teams that are. More than that, I found my horizons broadened. My eyes pay attention now when I see the name of Dave LeFevre, or Steve Jeltz, or Paul Zuvella in the papers. My ears prick up now when Howard Johnson comes to bat in NBC's game of the week. And I need no longer risk the embarrassment of never having heard of the "legendary" Phillies scout Hugh Alexander.

One final note: even with the aid of computer technology, indexes are a bother to prepare and an expense to print, and many books on baseball omit them—even books like Thorn and Palmer's *The Hidden Game of Baseball* and Peter Gammons' *Beyond the Sixth Game* whose usefulness is severely hindered by their absence. The editors and publisher of *A Baseball Winter* deserve our thanks for including an index. Despite an error here and there, I found it most helpful in tracing the activities of several individuals through the off-season, and in refreshing my memory of persons first mentioned early in the book whose roles I lost track of as new characters began to pile up in my mind. I only wish the editors had also included references to the specialized terms and concepts the book deals with.

The flaws of *A Baseball Winter* are few, the virtues many. But entertaining and informative as the book is, it may be even more welcome as a precursor of books to come. I hope it starts a trend.

What's So Special about Spring Training?

By Paul D. Adomites

THE SHORT SEASON: The Hard Work and High Times of Baseball in the Spring

David Falkner

Times Books, 276 p, \$16.95

No true baseball fan should live out his or her life without visiting Spring Training at least once. There is magic there; there you can view a game built on more than a century of tradition in a brand-new way. The pleasures of Spring Training are the pleasures of spring itself intensified.

Sad to say, David Falkner's book bears the same relationship to Spring Training as his book on Sadaharu Oh did to Japan. Both are starting points from which to talk about something else.

The book consists of a loose collection of articles given names that lead you toward thinking that Spring Training really is at the core of his approach. But it just isn't.

Falkner begins by outlining the history of Spring Training, and quickly finds fault with the history of writing on the subject.

"There is probably no other single body of prose in the English language in which writers seem quite so hard-pressed to come up with something, anything, than the collected newspaper accounts of spring training over the last half-century. Something, anything . . . rather than baseball."

So Falkner writes about baseball. He writes about trainers, owners, coaches, and a game or two, and three players he likes so much he feels compelled to describe them as "Three Just Men."

And he writes about baseball well. He describes George Steinbrenner as a Broadway producer (one that "Zero Mostel might have invented"). A two-page description of Pete Rose hitting ground balls to Dave Concepcion uses the rhythm of hit-catch-and-throw to tap into the temperaments and history of those two men in remarkably clean fashion.

But the reader is consistently left feeling unfulfilled. Where is the stuff about Spring Training—the stuff that makes it such a uniquely baseball (compare it to pro football's torture camps) and American experience? Interestingly, the few paragraphs Falkner devotes to the Spring Training experience are some of the richest in the book.

But Falkner consistently leaves that subject out in the cold, and in the process leaves two big holes in the infield dirt of his thesis.

First, it's never really clear *when* these pieces are being written. Later that afternoon? Later that season? On several occasions he refers to a player's

PAUL D. ADOMITES edited this edition of *The SABR Review*.

performance in the *World Series* of the following season.

Though it seems like that shouldn't be seen as a serious error, it is. Because time (more precisely, temporal perspective) is largely what Spring Training is about: the rich sense of seeing the future in the present tense (called "hope").

The second gap is even more frustrating: a lack of sense of place. The conversations in the book seem disembodied. With few exceptions, there is no attempt to put the reader in the scene. What Spring Training looks and feels like is largely ignored. And believe me, Spring Training looks and feels quite a bit different from the big league experience most fans are used to.

The parks themselves are funny and weird. Players run in the outfield during the game. There is green grass, not plastic turf. (Except in Fort Myers, where the always-studious Royals play on a field with an artificial infield and a grass outfield.) The whole experience of baseball is not what it is the rest of the time, but Falkner doesn't seem to want to tackle the subject. He is content to interview and interview and interview. (Don't you hate articles where every other paragraph is a long quote from someone else?)

Perhaps Falkner feels that what baseball people tell him in the spring is somehow essentially different from what they would say in September, and so that hinge of differential is what makes this book a book about Spring Training. Maybe.

Another element seems missing: Falkner doesn't act (or think like) a fan. To me, the fan's perspective is a big part of what makes a March game in

Sarasota so different from a July game in Chicago. Overhearing pitchers in a bullpen talk about how much they like the "pop" in the mitt of a rookie catcher is something few of us would ever hear apart from the close quarters of a Spring Training park. I once stood ten feet from Willie Stargell as he delivered a stern but friendly lecture to a handful of youngsters (no other adults were within earshot) about why they should eat breakfast every day, and I learned something about Willie Stargell that sitting behind first base in Three Rivers Stadium for years could never have taught me.

It is possible, I guess, that Falkner is right when he claims those kinds of stories aren't really about "baseball," and as such get in the way of the "real" stories. And maybe it is also true that after a few paragraphs, there isn't that much to say about the ways Spring Training is different. But I have been to Spring Training, and it is different, and I wished David Falkner would have used his skills to talk to me about the specialness of that experience, instead of just writing another nice set of articles about today's baseball players.

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Roy Tucker, Not Roy Hobbs:

The Baseball Novels of John R. Tunis

By Philip Bergen

A person's first impression of baseball literature usually comes from library books, usually from the juvenile fiction section. Judging from what I see as a librarian, there are no more series of baseball books being published today for 8 to 12-year-olds. But if you are a bit older than the video generation, you may remember the Duane Decker Blue Sox series, each book centering on an individual player from that team. Perhaps you remember the Bronc Burnett series by Wilfrid McCormick or the Chip Hiltons written by basketball coach Clair Bee, rather unrealistic accounts of teenagers playing for high school or American Legion honors. These boys played other sports (and starred in those, too), abstained from social contact with girls, and hung around with their chums, to use a word which fit in well with that milieu. Fatherly coaches explained "inside baseball" didactically, and usually a glory-seeking teammate or revengeful rival provided the plot's conflict, which invariably came down to a hit in the bottom of the ninth inning (or a strikeout if the hero was on the visiting team). These books were entertaining, easily read, and quickly forgotten.

Certain authors were not so easily digested. Ralph Henry Barbour's sporting novels, while formulaic, described the world of the privileged at the turn of the century in fascinating terms, mixing accounts of ball games with life at New England prep schools, class distinctions, and a snug sense of a time gone by forever. Barbour's books were fun to read and thought provoking. So were those of John R. Tunis.

John R. Tunis today is regarded as out-of-date for today's youth, and perhaps he is. His novels have been incorrectly written off as typical of all boys' sports fiction, full of derring-do by wildly implausible heroes living in a make-believe world. It does Tunis a disservice to be classified like that, both as an author and as an instructor to the youth of his time.

Examining Tunis is much easier today than with other boy's authors. Tunis wrote nine baseball novels in the period from *The Kid From*

PHILIP BERGEN is a librarian at The Bostonian Society, the historical society for the city of Boston. At age 3, his mother took him to Braves Field. But he's still waiting for the Red Sox to win a World Series.

Tomkinsville (1940) to *Schoolboy Johnson* (1958) and many of them are still available with a reasonable amount of searching. In addition, students of Tunis are fortunate enough to have his 1964 autobiography, *A Measure of Independence*, which provides an insight to the man and his career.

As with Ralph Henry Barbour, John R. Tunis was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1889, the son of a Unitarian minister. After his father's death, when Tunis was six, his mother boarded Harvard students, an occupation which provided income and an impetus for her children to value education:

Education was her whole being, she believed in it with a passion that not many persons have for anything today. It was a source with her. She held it with both hands, cherished it. That we should receive an education also was her principal aim in life, all her energies were bent toward that goal, to this end she dedicated her tremendous determination. Of course we were going to college! Of course we were going to Harvard! The only question was how.

From his grandfather Roberts, Tunis learned to appreciate American history and the Boston Nationals of Billy Hamilton and Fred Tenney. From his extraordinary mother, Caroline Roberts, he received an enthusiasm for life that never waned, judging from the tone of his autobiography, which is written in a self-mocking tone flavored with an optimistic outlook for life.

Tunis did go to Harvard, graduating with the class of 1911 and passing through his collegiate career with Conrad Aiken, Heywood Broun, and Robert Benchley. But he was an indifferent student and preferred athletics, especially tennis, to study.

Unlike the traditional picture of a Harvard education opening doors for success, Tunis pounded the pavements before finding a job as a manual worker in a Massachusetts cotton mill, making 12½ cents an hour. With the arrival of World War I and a new bride happening simultaneously, Tunis debarked for Europe and began a close association with France. After his separation from the Army he began his writing career from a lack of other prospects and wrote for the *New Yorker* and *New York Post* while stubbornly continuing to free-lance articles during the Golden Age of Sport. Tunis quickly specialized in tennis and covered the Davis Cup for many years, wrote a novel about women's tennis which sold quite well and even had it adapted for the movie "Hard, Fast and Beautiful." During the Depression Tunis kept his head above water with his wits and pen.

In the late 1930s his first juvenile novel, *The Iron Duke*, dealt with a Midwestern boy who comes East and gets lost in the world of Harvard. Not originally planning a juvenile book, Tunis had to be convinced that its appeal would be to young readers, but *The Iron Duke* continues to be a well-read story and it launched a second career for Tunis as a novelist for

young people. After a sequel which took Jim Wellington through the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Tunis tried his hand at baseball fiction:

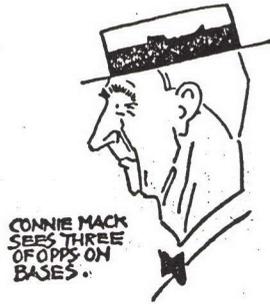
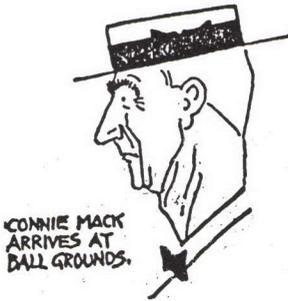
The next morning I piled in to see Mrs. Hamilton, my editor at Harcourt, Brace. Would she, I asked, be interested in a big league baseball story? Again good fortune intervened. She must have been one of the few junior book editors in New York, and surely the only Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar, who had regular seats behind the plate at the Polo Grounds each week. She nodded to my question, immediately agreed on an advance of \$200, with which I hoped to pay my own way south to the baseball training camps in Florida. Without hesitation she gave me that vote of confidence every writer needs at such a moment.

Of Tunis's nine baseball novels, eight center on the fictional Brooklyn Dodgers, including the Roy Tucker trilogy, *The Kid From Tomkinsville*, *World Series*, and *The Kid Comes Back*. The ninth, *Buddy and the Old Pro* follows baseball from the other end of the spectrum, junior high school baseball in the Midwest. Tunis's Dodger books are fiction, but fiction based to a great degree on fact (the preface to *TKFT* reads "The author wishes to state that all characters were drawn from real life") and it is part of the charm to a ball fan today to match a character to his real life contemporary. This narrow line between truth and imagination helps contribute to the appeal of the series, especially to young boys whose idea of the major leagues does not include profanity, agreeable women, or long nights on the road. The forties and fifties were a simpler time, but not as simple as Tunis implies. The idea of creating fiction using real teams and ball parks, and even using an occasional real life figure (Connie Mack and Al Schacht come to mind) enables the reader to familiarize the setting of many of the events with an understanding gleaned from other accounts of the game. Descriptions of Braves Field, Crosley Field, the Polo Grounds, and even minor league parks in Nashville and Augusta, give the Tunis books a verisimilitude which other authors lacked.

Although *The Kid From Tomkinsville* was not his first book for youngsters, it was his first baseball novel and the longest, fullest of his attempts to explore the inside world of major league ball. Roy Tucker, Tunis's penultimate hero, is a Roy Hobbs without flaws and the namesake character. We follow him from his Connecticut hometown to Florida on the day coach, a rookie pitcher in awe of his surroundings.

Tunis wisely starts off the novel with Tucker's departure from the Tomkinsville railroad station, embarrassed by the community's turning out to honor its star athlete while the train's passengers gawk and smirk. (If you imagine Jimmy Stewart in the Tucker role throughout his career, you'll be close.) At the same time Tunis picks up the communal thread of other ballplayers heading to Florida. Some are confident stars roaring

down South in their roadsters; others are fading reserve catchers with families, just trying to hang on for another year. Their attraction for the game and its tenuous hold on the players is the string which pulls them south every spring. Tunis started his research with a spring training in Clearwater, so his account of practices, hotel life, and the general bonhomie of the ball club is sharply drawn.



As is typical with most juvenile fiction, Roy Tucker makes the team, pitches a no-hitter in the first night game played in Brooklyn (sound familiar?), and tears up the league the first time around. His mentor, veteran catcher Dave Leonard, steadies him through periods of doubt, catches his no-hitter, and is then released by the Dodgers as being over the hill. Horseplay in the clubhouse leads to a career-threatening elbow injury, and Roy is forced to switch to the outfield in order to stay in the game. He is attacked in his hotel room by a drunken teammate and nearly thrown out the window, an episode that is rather lightly treated by Tunis in a "boys will be boys" manner. It is one of the few episodes of player dissipation shown in his stories. Gabby Gus Spencer, the Durocheresque Dodger manager, is killed off in a fortuitous auto accident (all done very swiftly in a page) and is replaced by Leonard, who challenges the Kid's

self-pity with his taunting phrase, “only the game fish swim upstream.” Dave Leonard is patterned after veteran Luke Sewell who befriended Tunis in Florida and served as a source of information on the details of a ballplayer’s life.

Unlike other Tunis books *TKFT* takes place over a two-year period and Roy Tucker, after a year as a pitching phenom, returns to Tompkinsville to reclaim his job as night-time soda jerk and to work on his swing in the barn during the day. His second season is spent chasing down the arrogant Giants—a feat not so easily performed in 1940. Stationed in the outfield for good, Roy battles a late season slump and saves the pennant with an extra inning circus catch at the wall of the Polo Grounds. No one body of Tunis’s writing is as exciting as the last game of the season when Player-Manager Murphy is forced to eat his words “Is Brooklyn still in the league?” *TKFT* captures the self-doubt and roller coaster emotions of every rookie, and changes Roy Tucker from an exceedingly naive country boy to a seasoned professional ballplayer. Yet never in his long career does Roy lose the earnestness and team spirit that characterizes his rookie season. Capturing the natural skill of Roy Hobbs with the All-American character of Jack Armstrong, Tucker is an ideal hero for a juvenile book, though the adult reader will find him a bit low on human faults.

For Tunis, ever the democrat, writing about Brooklyn and its working class population of rabid Dodger fans was a wise decision. Throughout his books, most notably *Highpockets*, he expresses the sense of community shared with fan and player and the underdog mentality inherent at Ebbets Field. *TKFT*, while regarded as a juvenile novel, was of sufficient quality and interest that it was printed as a Victory edition paperback for soldiers during World War II. The plot is fast moving, the baseball scenes are realistic, and Roy Tucker is just the patriotic, aw-shucks hero who would appeal to Americans of all ages during the war. Realistically illustrated with charcoals by Jay Hyde Barnum, *TKFT* is still an engaging read nearly half a century after its publication.

The immediate sequel to *TKFT*, *World Series* (1941) is somewhat of a letdown from the excellence of *The Kid*. The Dodgers Series opponent mysteriously changes from the Yankees (at the end of *TKFT*) to Cleveland, and the corresponding loss of excitement is evident. The Indians were inserted solely to provide a train ride out and back and to introduce a Bob Feller-like flame thrower who beans the Kid in the first game. The Dodgers fight back to victory from a 1-3 deficit, engage in a brawl after another brushback incident, and capture the Series in seven, but the excitement is less riveting than the drama of the regular season. Tunis realizes that the months’ long tension of the pennant chase is

eradicated from the two-week glitz of the Fall Classic. More of the excitement in *World Series* is off the field—a raucous party for the Dodgers when they are on the verge of defeat, a municipal dinner which turns into a Gashouse Gang stunt wherein ballplayers dressed up like painters manage to douse the pompous Dodger owner with whitewash, and the lure of easy money for endorsements and radio shows—but the soul of the novel lacks the intensity of its predecessor. The winning home run is hit by a nondescript teammate, and Roy's only act of note is his slugging an obstreperous sportswriter who has called him washed up. Despite a long series of Dodger successes in subsequent volumes, this is the only one to deal with the World Series, and it does so in a way that suggests that its hoopla is more than the event itself.

The third Dodger novel *Keystone Kids* (1943) is perhaps the most interesting of all the baseball series, for it is more than a sports story. Written during the height of World War II, it is a combination of sports and democracy in action and emphasizes the American way of life through teamwork and a multi-national coalescing. The slumping Dodgers are revived by the arrival of the Russell brothers, up from Nashville to take over at short and second. Both make good, and Spike Russell's leadership abilities are recognized when he is named player-manager of the team. (Did Lou Boudreau have a brother?) For the rest of the series Spike Russell ran the Dodgers firmly, with the sense of an active player. Complicating the rookie manager's problems is the arrival of rookie catcher Jocko Klein from the minors. He quickly becomes the target of anti-Semitic remarks from opposing bench jockeys and from his teammates who accept his quiet manner for cowardice. Spike Russell's attempts to rally the team behind the catcher are met with indifference and resistance from his younger brother Bob who contends that all Jews are yellow, and that Klein should be abandoned to fight his own battles. Finally, in a showdown with outfielder Karl Case, Klein stands his ground:

“Get outa the way, you kike you; get outa the way and let a man hit who can.”

The rookie tottered, stumbled, then found his feet. Old Fat Stuff in the box stood watching; the crowd around the batting cage came alive. Everyone realized something was going to break at last. It did. The boy reacted quickly. He grabbed the nearest bat and, turning, was at the plate in three strides.

“Look, Case.” He waved the club at the astonished fielder.

“That stuff's over. I'm the catcher of the Dodgers, get it? If you wanna slug it out, OK.”

Case hesitated. He started to lay on with his bat, to go for this fresh busher, when his eyes rested on Klein's hands. They were white

and tense around the handle of his club; they looked as if they meant business. The big chap looked down at the stocky figure across the plate, at those hands tightening around the handle. What he saw, he didn't care for. He shrugged his shoulders. "O.K.," he murmured casually. "O.K., pal." Then he moved away.

Klein battles his way back to acceptance, until his teammates go into the stands in Philadelphia to fight for him, against a group of redneck fans. In a remarkable passage, Tunis defines teamwork by showing how each member of the team was descended from people who settled America and came together to better their families.

These were some of the things Spike did not know about his team, the team that was lost and found itself. For now they were a team, all of them. Thin and not so thin, tall and short, strong and not so strong, solemn and excitable, Calvinist and Covenanter, Catholic and Lutheran, Puritan and Jew, these were the elements that, fighting, clashing and jarring at first, then slowing mixing, blending, refining, made up a team. Made up America.

. . . . Gosh yes. Spike had forgotten about Chiselbeak. Old Chisel, the man no one ever saw, who took your dirty clothes and handed out clean towels and cokes, and packed the trunks and kept the keys to the safe and did the thousands of things no one ever saw. Chisel was part of the team, too; and, though Spike didn't realize it as he followed his team along the concrete runway, part of America also. He was the millions and millions who have never had their names in the line-up, who never play before the crowd, who never hit home runs and get the fans' applause; who work all over the United States, underpaid, unknown, unrewarded. The Chiselbeaks are part of the team, too.

In a very entertaining and thought-provoking way, Tunis explores the reasons why the country is at war and the dangers of one's self-interest overcoming that of the common good. The spectre of anti-Semitism in the major leagues was as far as Tunis would go, although at the same time, his juvenile novels *All-American*, *A City for Lincoln*, and *Yea, Wildcats!*, all set at the high school level, deal with racial segregation and Negro athletes not being able to compete with whites. Basketball coach Don Henderson, in *Yes, Wildcats!* stands down an Indiana lynch mob on the courthouse steps, and shames the ringleaders by comparing the town to the integrated high school team which had worked together for a common purpose. Tunis's failure to go further than dealing with Jews in baseball was typical of the period, in which Negroes playing professional baseball were verboten, though they were allowed to compete in high school and college sports. Given Tunis's proven democratic and egalitarian tendencies, it would have been very interesting if *Keystone Kids* could have been

extended farther in its stridency; but also, given the time, the book was a refreshing revelation for the general tenor of the time. Aimed at an impressionable audience, it went far in showing how prejudice could hinder all manner of collective effort. *Keystone Kids* won the 1943 Child Study Children's Book Award for breaking ground with its subject matter for that age group.

Rookie of the Year (1944) continues the Dodger season after *Keystone Kids* and follows Spike Russell's team towards a final showdown with the Cardinals. Jocko Klein's troubles are referred to in passing, but the catcher



MUGSY MCGRAW
LEARNING HIS
LESSONS

is by now an accepted part of the team and his hustling brand of ball makes him a favorite in Brooklyn. Karl Case has been traded to the Braves, eliminating his aging bat and his prejudice from Flatbush* and the problem at hand is with rookie pitcher Bones Hathaway. Hathaway's fondness for John Barleycorn is not as pronounced as with other Tunis characters on the Dodgers (see Raz Nugent in *Young Razzle*) but he and his roommate become pawns in a power struggle between Russell and business manager/traveling secretary Bill Hanson, who resents the young skipper as a Johnny-come-lately. Hanson is a traditional front-office type—glib,

* Interestingly enough, Karl Case shows up again in *Schoolboy Johnson* (1958), again playing the outfield for the Dodgers. Instead of being in his dotage, he is described as a hustling veteran with a strong arm. Evidently his politics have changed during his exile, as he is shown in an extremely sympathetic light. Unlike his earlier appearances where he is described as figuring his batting average as he runs down to first base, the elder Case is a team player like Roy Tucker. Evidently playing the outfield makes one younger and more liberal. Jocko Klein, in *SJ*, has been released and is managing Birmingham.

brash, and full of baseball tales from days gone by—and is not above sabotaging Dodger morale and success on the field to ingratiate himself with owner Jack McManus. The fact that Hanson is a sideline troublemaker is compared to that of a non-combatant in wartime, a sensitive point in 1944. Spike Russell, as player-manager, can be seen to have shouldered both of the roles of general and foot soldier. Misunderstandings and false accusations abound until Hanson's perfidy is discovered, and Hathaway returns from suspension to walk on the field in the midst of a game to save the team. It was very difficult to top *Keystone Kids*, and *ROTY* is among the weakest of the Tunis stories. Certain aspects of wartime America are evident, but the traitorous Hanson is atypical of Tunis's Dodger organization. Hanson is eventually thrown out of baseball by McManus and evidently becomes a publicity man for the Roller Derby or a New Jersey politician.

The Kid Comes Back (1946) returns to the story of Roy Tucker, and carries him from a bomber crash over occupied France to a German prison train to America and Ebbets Field. It is a war story and a baseball story, and expresses through Tucker the uncertainty of the returning veteran.

The conflict in *The Kid Comes Back* lies within Tucker himself and uncertainties about his health (a back problem from the plane crash) and his value to the team at a new position, third base, contrast the differences between personal satisfaction and the value of the team as a whole. While it does not replace Mackinlay Kantor's *Glory For Me* as the best fiction piece about World War II returnees, it does provide a war yarn and a baseball story for young readers and a good deal more for those somewhat older.

Highpockets (1947) is a tall, gangling rookie from North Carolina. Cecil McDade is a great hitter, indifferent fielder, and self-centered individualist more concerned with his average and personal success than the team's. Among the first of his post-war breed, McDade causes resentment among the rest of the Dodgers. Contrasted to McDade is Roy Tucker who is injured (again) in making a wall-crashing catch. Highpockets' self-concern is shaken only when he runs over a Brooklyn boy in his new car after Cecil McDade Day.

The victim, Dean Kennedy, is unusual for his age; he's a Brooklyn boy who is uninterested in baseball, preferring his stamp collection instead. To him Cecil McDade is no hero, just an inconvenient adult who has put him in the hospital. Faced with indifference, Highpockets' struggle to win the boy's friendship and to realize the value of teamwork is the core of the novel. Tunis's ability to present baseball as a unifying thread throughout New York is evident from the passage reflecting the progress of the big game:

In the taverns all over town, in Manhattan and the Bronx, and of course in Queens, crowds hung around the television sets, watched Spike Russell have a field day at short, saw Highpockets' tight face when he came to bat, and big Jim Duveen, pitching the game of his life, mow down the Brooklyn sluggers. On the streets, strangers spoke to strangers as they never do in New York, and everybody asked the same thing, "Anybody scored yet?" All afternoon white-coated soda jerkers came out of corner drugstores and posted up goose eggs on the sheet stuck to the front window pane. Folks sat in taxis long after they paid the bill, because for once drivers were content to sit and listen too, and manage the Dodgers for a change. Around the parked cars by the curb, little knots of people bent forward in silence, nodding as the Brooks pulled themselves out of hole after hole, inning after inning. Truck drivers even made peace with their enemies, the traffic cops, hurling the latest score at them as they turned into the main avenues of town.

Highpockets was written during the high water mark of New York City baseball; this passage expresses the communal sense of the game's ritual before television fragmented the audience. Interposing the ballplayer with the stamp collector, Tunis points out that not everyone is interested in the national pastime, and this makes *Highpockets* a better story. Interestingly, McDade himself is virtually neglected in subsequent Dodger novels; he had served his purpose and was then discarded by Tunis as an uninteresting character.

Young Razzle (1949) is a singular book in the continuity of the Dodger series, but it is not an especially good job by Tunis and is an uninteresting read. It is not a book strictly about the Dodgers. Much of the plot takes place in the minor leagues. The protagonist of the novel is not a Dodger, but a New York Yankee rookie. And the Dodgers blow a 3-1 lead in the World Series and lose in the bottom of the ninth. Not only that, *Young Razzle* has a slap-dash quality to it that indicates a novel written in haste. An extra-inning pennant-winning game with the Giants is dismissed with a few pages, and the seven-game World Series is condensed into 50 pages. (It rated 300 in *World Series*.)

The problem with YR is that Tunis splits the attention of the book between a father and son; one on the way up, the other hanging on one final year. Joe Nugent is bitterly resentful of his father for abandoning him and his mother over the course of his career. Raz Nugent is a Kirby Higbe type character—very much his own man and unencumbered by discipline or training rules. His colorful antics don't make up for his mediocre pitching, and his inability to control his drinking and his temper push him into the minor leagues, where he faces his son on the field for the first time. Despite his faults Raz appears very proud of Joe and rejoices in his

promotion to the Yankees. When Raz is recalled by the Brooks he applies himself, loses weight, and becomes a useful pitcher. Joe, on his side, gradually appreciates his father's courage and skill, and a final reconciliation occurs at the seventh game's conclusion. With some thoughtful writing, this might have made a passable, if somewhat farfetched tale. (What if Phil Niekro had a son . . . ?) But what develops is a typical boy's story of the period, unremarkable from any other author's, using the interesting characters from the Tompkinsville trilogy and *Keystone Kids* as mere background fillers. If the rest of Tunis's writing were like this, there would be no need to write articles examining his quality.

By 1958 when the last Dodger book was published, both baseball and the Dodgers had undergone changes. Tunis was pressed to catch up with them and it shows in *Schoolboy Johnson*. The most obvious baseball fact about the Dodgers in 1958 was that they were no longer in Brooklyn—instead trying to hit high flies to left 3,000 miles away. Much of the Dodger appeal lay in their location, and Tunis bravely sets his story back in Flatbush, despite facts to the contrary. This in itself was not calculated to win a large readership among boys to whom being up-to-date is more important than tradition. The plot for *Schoolboy Johnson* is centered around a young headstrong pitcher who loses his cool in tight situations. It is unremarkable and no better than those offered by Tunis's competition in the juvenile fiction race. What is remarkable (surrealistic, perhaps) is the Roy Tucker character and his passage through time.

From 1940 to 1958, with time out for war duty, is a long time for a fleet centerfielder, even Roy Tucker. In fact, at the beginning of *SJ*, Tucker is released, an over-the-hill veteran who winds up playing third base in the Sally League—a counterpoint to the schoolboy who has his career ahead of him. Through a chance set of injuries, Roy is re-signed by the Brooks, and at age forty, returns to dazzle the National League with his speed and ability. In one sequence he confuses the Braves (Tunis *does* have them in Milwaukee), getting the winning run across by running wild on the bases (shades of Davey Lopes). It is evident that all of Tucker's skills and charm are still there, so why was he released? The ultimate team player would have been offered one of those "jobs in the organization" which are always given to loyal sorts who keep their nose clean. Even stranger is the romantic subplot between the schoolboy and Maxine Tucker, Roy's daughter, who has never been mentioned in any previous novel. If Maxine is a store decorator with an established career, she must be in her early twenties, yet neither child nor mother appears in a careful reading of the other Kid novels, and judging from Roy's apple pie and milk character, he has been a bachelor throughout his long career. Just why Tunis felt the need to include this mystery character is puzzling, for no explanation is

made about death or divorce. Roy and Maxine live together, but the questions about the Tucker girl and the setting make the novel very disquieting for a fan of the baseball stories and perhaps it was a fitting way for Tunis to end his series. With the Dodgers moved from Brooklyn, and with Roy Tucker's past catching up with him, there was nothing more to write.

The one non-Dodger baseball story, *Buddy and the Old Pro* (1955) takes place on the sandlots of a Midwestern town and is one of Tunis's very best works. Buddy Reitmayer, shortstop and captain of the Benjamin Franklin school team, lives and breathes baseball as does his hero, Mr. McBride, a former major league star cut from the Ty Cobb mold. When McBride moves to Petersburg and gets a coaching job to augment his work as a night watchman, the conflict between playing clean baseball and winning at all costs is presented. What a star major leaguer is doing at a menial job and coaching a school team is not explained satisfactorily, nor is it clear why there is no adult coaching Buddy's team, but here as in no other Tunis story is the conflict between good and evil so well defined. McBride's team intimidates the Franklin boys with beanballs, bench jockeying and sliding in with spikes high, and the volunteer umpire is no match for the gamesmanship of the ex-big league terror. Buddy's team, in sneakers and ragtag uniforms, is not able to fight back. When Buddy takes a third strike with the bases loaded to end the game, he throws a temper tantrum that rivals McBride's best, embarrasses his parents, and reflects the doubts he has about the way to play the game. There are nice touches Tunis interjects, such as the closing of the Franklin school at the end of the year (and its consolidation as Curtis P. Gerstenslager Jr. High), and the inability of adults to take the boys' problems seriously. The local sports editor is seen as absent-minded and ineffectual, and only Buddy's father is able to appreciate the injustices of matching boys against a major leaguer, and the wisdom of playing by the rules vs. the winning at-all-cost approach. As Tunis was in his mid-sixties when he wrote *BATOP*, he shows a remarkable appreciation of what it is like to be twelve and playing ball for keeps. Significantly he places the setting away from a Little League, and one can believe that he feels that boys should be allowed to play and have fun on their own—not a novel idea even in 1955 but one which bears repeating. Even at the school level many of the tensions and situations of the game are identical to those of the major leaguers and *BATOP* is not noticeably different from the Dodger books in game description. Buddy Reitmayer's taking a third strike is part of a boy's growing up, and if he is unable to be considered a prospect by the major leagues (as he feels on the way home), he is able to grow up a wiser individual, not as apt to accept the infallibility of his heroes.

In *The Other Side of the Fence* (1953), a non-baseball novel, Tunis takes the unusual step of making his protagonist a comfortable Connecticut teenager who is bound for Yale. Setting out on a cross-country trip with an unreliable friend, Robin Longe decides to set out on his own and hitchhike his way across America. Using his wits and golfing ability to catch rides and provide odd jobs, he meets a variety of people and sees both good and bad sides of America. Tunis's skills describing scenery and regional distinctions are well used, and the historical setting of Connecticut suburban life in the Eisenhower era provides us with an unlikely underdog, the preppie naive traveller. Sport is taken as the great common denominator, as everyone from truck drivers to teenagers to businessmen are bound together from a mutual love of the game. Robin's acceptance in California is sealed by his athletic skill, and his desire to succeed in individual sports is shown to be related to his desire to make it across the country on his own. *TOSOF* is not readily found these days, but it is well worth the search.

After *Schoolboy Johnson* Tunis continued to write juvenile fiction. His book *His Enemy, His Friend* (1967) written when he was seventy-seven and set in the familiar location of France, was a savage indictment of war and its long-term effect on countries and people. It was obviously his personal statement on Viet Nam. Again, the subjugation of individual glory for the sake of the common good is seen as man's ultimate goal.

John R. Tunis died in his beloved Connecticut in 1975. He had written over 30 books and more than 2,000 magazine articles, mostly on sport, and had seen Babe Ruth replaced by Reggie Jackson as the nation's sports hero—both Yankee right fielders who could hit home runs. Throughout his 50-year career he had observed the role that sports played in building the character of adolescents in America and had attempted to better his audience by his stories, which glorified self-sacrifice, team spirit, and the ability to improve oneself through hard work. The opening words of *A Measure of Independence* puts it best. "I am the product of a parson and a teacher. Any such person is forever trying to reform or to educate, himself if nobody else." Tunis attempted to identify that which is beneficial about sport and character by using the most popular sport of his day—baseball—as the vehicle. That his works are still read and enjoyed today reflects the skill of his writing and the aptness of his lesson.

(For those persons who grew up with Roy Tucker and the Dodgers it must be rewarding to consider that Roy's number was never retired, and is now worn with distinction by Fernando Valenzuela.)

Illustrated Baseball: Rucker's Personal Look

By Mark Rucker

NOTE:

The following compilation of illustrated baseball books has been necessarily limited by my own research interests. I am predominantly a 19th century researcher, though my involvement carries into the early 1900s. My library contains volumes which reflect this bias, and consequently the following short list is strongest in pictorial coverage from 1930 back. Dozens of illustrated books have been issued to which I have no access, and dozens more which I don't know about. So, please keep these restrictions in mind when perusing this catalogue. It is by no means comprehensive, but I hope it will be of some use to readers with an interest in the early game.

Robin Carver's Book of Sports for Boys, Boston, 1832. This little juvenile contains a woodcut of boys playing "Base Ball" on Boston Common. It is the first illustration of the game in America under that name. Pirated from a London volume of 1829, this picture later appeared in many other children's books.

Base Ball Player's Pocket Companion, Mayhew & Baker, Boston, 1859. This exceedingly rare book of only 35 pages bears a gold-stamped illustration on the limp leather cover and four full-page illustrations of "Massachusetts Game" players on the inside.

The American Boy's Book of Sports and Games, Dick & Fitzgerald, NY, 1864. Very nice woodcuts of game scenes, with posed player illustrations to demonstrate technique. Base ball is but one section of many.

Book of the Muffin, by S. Van Campen, Taber Bros., New Bedford, MA, 1867. The first fully illustrated book. Each of the sixteen pages contains one or two woodcut illustrations, mostly humorous, of contests in progress and players in action. The primitive drawings some of which are hand colored, are wonderful. Players appear in 1850s uniforms, though the

MARK RUCKER is a freelance artist who specializes in drawings and paintings which could be described as "cross-cultural realism." A co-chairman of SABR's 19th Century Committee, he has edited some society publications and the photographic spreads in *The National Pastime*.

book was published in the next decade. Very rare: there are only three copies known.

Yachtville Boys, by Caroline E. Kelly Davis, Hoyt, Boston, 1869. An early rare book with one fine steel engraving illustration. The cover has a design of crossed bats, a ball, and a belt incised in gold. The frontispiece engraving depicts an amusing scene in the story with a baseball theme.

Our Base Ball Club, novel by Noah Brooks, Dutton, NY, 1884. Introduction by Al Spalding. Inside illustrations are black & white drawings of games and players. The best of the images are the color litho covers. A full game scene is on the front, and the Chicago White Sox team with a base ball motif on the back.

Sports and Pastimes of American Boys, by Henry Chadwick, Rutledge, NY, 1884. The tome covers many sports, but has a large section on baseball. There are a few small cuts, a reproduced version of an 1860s game scene, and a full-page, full-color illustration.

Base Ball A. B. C., McGloughlin, NY, 1885. This extremely rare volume contains drawings of players in alphabet shapes.

Athletic Sports in America, England, and Australia, by Harry Palmer, Hubbard Bros., 1889. This eye-popping tome is perhaps the highest quality book on baseball published in the 19th century. It contains hundreds of illustrations, many full-page. Baseball takes up the lion's share of the contents, with large B & W photos of every major league team in 1889, and four-color images. Photos and woodcuts chronicle the tour of the Chicago and All-American All-Stars around the world, including team shots in exotic locations, advertising posters for the tour, and the sites visited.

Walter Camp's Book of College Sports, by Walter Camp, Century, NY, 1893. There are 114 pages on baseball in this instructional, with handsome woodcuts demonstrating how to play all aspects of the game.

Art Gallery of Prominent Base Ball Players of America, National Copper Plate Co., 1895. I have only seen the large pages removed from this book: big-format engravings of teams from the late 19th century. Most books were dismantled to frame the prints and the pages dispersed.

Boston Base Ball Club, 1871-1897, by George V. Tuohey, Miller Press, Boston, 1897. Printed photos of the Boston Red Stockings, 1874, 1879, 1883, 1892, and 1896 are included throughout the book. Also find pictures of managers, club officers, and individual full-figure portraits of the '97 team members. Additional photos include such Beantown favorites as Harry Wright, King Kelly, George Wright, Radbourne, Clarkson, with many more. This one is scarce.

A Ball Player's Career, by Adrian Anson, Era Publishing Co., Chicago, 1901. Many high-quality photos of Anson, his family, the teams

he played on, tour photos, important baseball personages, and the interior of Anson's poolhall improve this self-serving autobiography.

Athletics at Princeton, by Frank Presbrey and James Moffatt; Frank Presbrey & Co., NY, 1901. Photos of many of Princeton's teams and players, starting with the 1860s. This thick book is dominated by baseball.

Baseball 1845-1871, by Seymour Church, author and publisher, San Francisco, 1902. A much sought after volume with full-color plates on the large folio pages, featuring California players and game scenes, along with many other large and small photos of varying interest and importance to baseball history.

Old Boston Boys and the Games They Played, by James De Wolff Lovett, Riverside, Boston, 1906. Approximately 90 pages on baseball in this early Boston history. The chapters cover the inception of baseball in New England, particularly east coast Massachusetts. Included are photos of the Lowell of Boston teams, players with Lowells from 1865-1868, early Harvard U. teams, George Wright, and other popular Bostonians.

Base Ball in Cincinnati, by Harry Ellard, Johnson & Hardin, Cincinnati, 1907, 1908. A limited edition issue, which is loaded with plates concerning early baseball history, major figures in the game's early days in Cincinnati, 1860s Queen City players, Red Stockings teams and celebrities 1868-69. Also found are images of the teams of 1885, 1889, and their new "Palace of the Fans."

The National Game, by Alfred J. Spink, National Game Publishing Co., St. Louis, 1910. A fabulous book for pictures, many available nowhere else, with some important 19th century team shots. Containing over 180 photos of players, officials, writers, teams—strongest in the 1900-1910 era.

Touching Second, by Johnny Evers & Hugh Fullerton, Reilly & Britton, Chicago, 1910. 5x7" photos of Evers, McGraw, Chance, Collins, etc., are spaced throughout the book.

America's National Game, by A. G. Spalding, American Sports Publishing Co., NY, 1911. This famous, bright blue (sometimes tan) book contains over 100 photo images, which show 19th century teams and stars, including some of the earliest. Also, photos demonstrating other forms of ball games, pictures of famous people on and off the field, and pictures from Spalding's around the world tour are included. Particularly fine are the fold-out photos of stadiums and groups.

Book of Base Ball, by Patten & McSpadden, Collier, NY, 1911. The best pictorial book from the first years of the century. It's crammed with high-quality photos of past and contemporary famous diamond figures, featuring action shots of the day's heroes. Game scenes, portraits, and diagrams abound.

Humor Among the Minors, by E. M. Ashenback, Donohue & Co., Chicago, 1911. Includes full-page portraits of officials, writers, players, and teams of the majors and minors.

Pitching in a Pinch, by Christy Mathewson, Putnam, NY, 1912. Twenty plates with 1910 era stars, umpires and action.

How to Play Base Ball, by John McGraw, Harper & Bros., NY, 1913, 1914. Illustrations of major leaguers and the games they played in accompany the instructional text. 30 black & white photos.

Richter's History and Records of Base Ball, by Francis Richter, author & publisher, Philadelphia, 1914. A rare and wonderful piece with 21 top-quality pictures. Nineteenth century teams and players, groups of portraits of prominent hurlers and batters are mixed with league officers' photos.

Commy, by Charles Comiskey, Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1919. Not too many photos show up in this book, but some nice ones. There are the 1884 St. Louis Browns, along with the Chisox teams Comiskey owned or managed, tours of the White Stockings teams, and shots of the Old Roman himself.

Spink Sport Stories, by Al Spink, by Spink Sport Stories, St. Louis, 1921. This three-volume set features short pieces on famous personalities in all sports, with heavy baseball coverage. Portraits of players in halftones accompany the biographies, along with some action photos. Good info and great pictures here of early 20th century stars.

The Science of Base Ball, by Byrd Douglas, Thomas Wilson & Co., 1922. Very grainy and crude halftones of celebs of the 1915-20 years are sprinkled through the text. Game shots and demonstration photos are included to amplify written descriptions.

The H Book of Harvard Athletics, by John A. Blanchard, Harvard Varsity Club, 1923. All sports at Harvard are covered with a large baseball section. Photos of every Harvard team from 1866 to 1923 are the book's real value.

The Big Baseball Book for Boys, M. G. Bonner, McGloughlin, Springfield, MA, 1931. Handsome full-page photos of Cobb, Cochrane, Johnson, Ruth, Abner D., and more.

History of Baseball in California and the Pacific Coast Leagues, 1847-1938, Fred W. Lange, author & publisher, Oakland, CA, 1938. The best book I know of on the subject with photos of West Coast teams from the 1870s, '80s, '90s and forward. Interspersed also are cameos of on and off-field California characters.

Baseball: The Fans' Game, by Mickey Cochrane, Funk & Wagnalls, NY, 1939. Twenty-four photos, incorporated in groups, all from the '30s, serve to depict the lessons the author seeks to impart.

McGraw of the Giants, by Frank Graham, Putnam, 1944. McGraw and the favorites he managed are the subjects of the twenty-two illustrations selected for inclusion here.

They Played the Game, by Harry Grayson, Barnes, NY, 1945. Small pictures of players, and one or two of teams from the 1880s are offered.

75th Anniversary of the National League, published by The National League, 1951. Liberally filled with tinted and B & W photos from 1876 to its date of issue. There are many small pictures in some daring layouts.

Ball, Bat and Bishop, Robert Henderson, Rockport, NY, 1947. This tome traces the history of games played with spheres, and illustrates the thesis with twenty-nine plates and six cuts, most of which date from antiquity.

The Story of Baseball, by John Durant, Hastings House, NY, 1947. There are 282 pages in this history replete with more pictures than copy. All are B & W portraits and scenes beginning in the 1830s, many of which I have seen nowhere else.

The Washington Senators, by Morris Beale, Columbia, Washington, DC, 1947. A hard-to-find book on baseball history in our nation's capital. Photos and drawings are scattered throughout from the 1870s onward.

The Babe Ruth Story, by Bob Considine, Dutton, NY, 1948. Forty-nine photos of the Babe in all aspects of his life and career.

The Dodgers, by John Durant, Hastings House, NY, 1948. More pictures than text here, covering Brooklynites from the 1860s into the 1940s. The bulk of the illustrations are post-1920.

The Story of the World Series, by Fred Lieb, Putnam, NY, 1949. Plenty of black & white shots of the Series from 1903 to the '40s. Thirty-nine different players represented.

The Yankees, by John Durant, Hastings House, NY, 1949. A picture album of the team from their Highlander days to the DiMaggio era.

The Great Baseball Managers, by Charles Cleveland, Crowell, NY, 1950. Illustrations of McGraw, Mack, Anson, McCarthy, Chance, Huggins, Durocher, Stengel, etc.

Pictorial History of American Sports, by John Durant and Otto Bettman, A. S. Barnes, 1952. Contains four short sections of baseball, each devoted to an historical period, within a well-designed format.

The Home Team, by James Bready, author and publisher, 1958, with three subsequent editions. A pictorial chronicle of baseball in Baltimore, 1860s to the present. A thorough resource for research in any era, there is great variety of illustrations, including photographs, prints, diagrams, and cartoons.

Fireside Book of Baseball, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, by Charles Einstein, 1956, 1958, 1966. Contemporary photos are interspersed sparingly along with

cartoons and drawings, all illustrations heavy on humor. Good reading, but the pictures are of little interest.

Baseball (1845-1871), by Preston D. Orem, author and publisher, Altadena, CA, 1961. Reproduces many of Spalding's images from his *National Game*.

Baseball in America, by Robert Smith, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, NY, 1961. A large, splendid picture book, laced with images from early baseball days to the 1950s. I find this one continually useful.

Old Timers Photo Album, JKW Sports Publications, NY, Vol. 1-4, 1961—. Player photos are strewn about the pages in a peculiar style. Some issues cover participants from all decades, while others feature modern players only.

The Story of Baseball, by John Rosenburg, Random House, NY, 1962, 1964. A baseball account with numerous illustrations, some of which are not available or so well reproduced elsewhere.

The Glory of Their Times, by Lawrence Ritter, Macmillan, NY, 1966. The twenty-two plates follow the articles from Rube Marquard to Paul Waner. This book is a modern classic.

Only the Ball Was White, by Robert Peterson, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970. A somewhat sparsely illustrated book with important and obscure pictures of black teams and players. Especially fine are the group shots from the dead ball era.

Baseball, by Earl Schenk Miers, Grosset & Dunlap, NY, 1971. An odd little book, with a good assortment of photos, including a number from the Victorian days and later which you won't find anywhere else.

Baseball. Diamond in the Rough, by Irving Leitner, Criterion, 1972. An early game researcher's reference, containing woodcuts, photos, prints, and diagrams from the sport's beginnings. Drawing on the New York Public Library's collection, Leitner has done an excellent job with the material.

The World Series—A Complete Pictorial History, by John DeVaney and Burt Goldblatt, Rand McNally, NY, 1972. You guessed it!—photos from every Series, highlighting stars, fans, and memorabilia. Over 400 illustrations.

Illustrated History of Baseball, by Robert Smith, Grosset & Dunlap, NY, 1973. The second of these coffee-table volumes includes all new material from the book. It is organized just like its predecessor, and is just as good.

The Ballparks, by George Kalinsky and Bill Shannon, Hawthorn, NY, 1975. The best picture book on ballparks yet issued. Photos dominate the pages, covering every major league city, and every stadium extant or demolished.

The Illustrated Book of Baseball Folklore, by Tristram Coffin, Seabury Press, NY, 1975. A bizarre selection of pictures is included, some good 19th century photos, mixed with miscellaneous items from all eras, many of which are useless and dull.

That Old Ball Game, by David Phillips, Regnery, Chicago, 1975. An excellent, big book with pictures and captions from the 1860s to the 1930s. Fine reproductions, and a fine variety.

A Baseball Century, Macmillan, NY, 1976. Color and B & W illustrations fill this volume. Team histories, souvenirs and artifacts from all eras accompany the well-executed artwork.

The Cincinnati Reds, by Ritter Collett, Jordan-Powers, Virginia Beach, 1976. A picture history of the Reds, thorough and well-designed. This book is worth finding, even if you hate the Reds.

The Game and the Glory, Joseph Reichler, editor, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976. A classy, large book with big color photos. Coverage of contemporary scene predominates, but sprinkled about are photos of historical interest.

Baseball's Best. The Hall of Fame Gallery, by Martin Appel and Burt Goldblatt, McGraw-Hill, NY, 1977. Photos of all Hall members in portrait and action are of high quality.

The Pittsburgh Pirates, by Richard L. Burtt, Jordan, Virginia Beach, 1977. From the Allegheny Nine to the Pirates' teams, this book depicts them all. Some color plates can be found in this well-conceived edition.

The Great American Baseball Scrapbook, by A. D. Suehsdorf, Random House, NY, 1978. This large format book is the first to illustrate baseball memorabilia from its beginnings in a glossy color layout. Just about every type of collectible can be found.

The Image of Their Greatness, by Lawrence Ritter and Donald Honig, Crown, NY, 1979. This book is packed with photos, of all sizes, from twentieth century baseball. Good quality and lots of variety. This book is still available.

The Relief Pitcher, by John Thorn, Dutton, NY, 1979. Forty-one photos accompany this chronicle, from Jack Manning to Rich Gossage.

The Ultimate Baseball Book, by Daniel Okrent and Harris Lewine, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1979. Everyone has this, the bellwether of new pictorials. Gorgeous graphics, knock-out photo reproductions, and color plates put this book on top. It covers baseball through its history. The hardcover is preferred over the paper edition, because it contains the beautiful full-color sixteen-page spread.

The 100 Seasons of Buffalo Baseball, by Joseph Overfield, 1985. Illustrations of the teams and players of prominence from Buffalo are presented in photos and line drawings. Coverage starts in the 1800s.

Baseball Juveniles: Where We All Started

By Leverett T. Smith, Jr.

Who reads baseball juveniles? It's pretty sure the kids still do; those series books in the shelves at Braswell Memorial Library here in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, look pretty well-thumbed to me. I'm hoping that adults do, too, or that they will. There's a kid in each of us still capable of enjoying them, and an adult who is also interested both in the quality of the book and in what these books say to kids. What I've tried to do here is first establish what kind of book a baseball juvenile is, then say a little about how and where they can be found (this is not always easy), and then make a few specific recommendations. I'll append a list of the best books and articles I know of on the subject.

Baseball juveniles emerge in the late 1890s as a late and seldom used subject matter in dime novels. Gilbert Patten's Frank Merriwell books are the first successful version of the baseball juvenile. A particularly glorious essay on these books by Patten, Ralph Henry Barbour, and William Heyliger is Robert Cantwell's "A Sneering Laugh With The Bases Loaded," published in *Sports Illustrated* in 1962. Cantwell relishes the sheer unreality of this formula fiction and deplores the later advance of realism in baseball juveniles. Much of the other commentary has not been on baseball juveniles as such, but more generally on sports juveniles. And there has been a concern for the sort of book they are. Sports juveniles have been compared to folktales, fables, and myths in their ability to communicate values to the reader. Michael Oriard, in his book on American sports fiction, *Dreaming of Heroes: American Sports Fiction, 1868-1980* (1982), makes the largest claims for juvenile sports fiction, asserting that both athlete-hero formula stories and myths come from the same source. He says that

The formulaic character of the athlete-hero and his enormous appeal to his juvenile audience and to the adult popular mind indicate that the sources of that formula may be the same sources that spontaneously produce mythic

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symbols . . . heroic myths are allegories of the process of maturation.

Juvenile fiction is fundamentally concerned with the same process.

At less exalted moments than this, Oriard identifies the "greatest value of popular, particularly formulaic, literature" as its ability to distill "many of the most pressing concerns of our culture into virtually pure forms." Another scholar of the literature of sports in the United States, Christian Messenger, while not as excited as Oriard about the possibilities of the significance of formulaic literature, sees the dime novel as functioning as "a barometer for a set of safe, conventional ideas concerning personal morality and public success." Even at this least estimate, we seem to have, in our baseball juveniles, rather a significant form of popular literature.

Though both Messenger and Oriard are primarily interested in the sports juvenile as a way of looking at the adult sports novel, which developed later, and many who write about sports juveniles consider that only those produced during the years before World War I are worth consideration, actually sports—and baseball—juveniles continue to be produced right up to the present. But Oriard and Messenger consider the changes in the genre since World War I to be of little significance. Oriard states that "today . . . the athlete-hero is remarkably similar to his earliest appearances on the American scene." Likewise, the plot remains the same, with its inevitable conclusion in the final Big Game, inevitably won by the correct team. Oriard tells us that "Frank Merriwell became a model for a tradition of juvenile sports literature that continues to the present," and like Cantwell, he characterizes more recent heroes as "somewhat more realistic Frank Merriwells." Messenger finds only a change of scene after the glory years of the school sports story, which he places before World War I. He writes that

When Owen Johnson concluded his critique of Yale in 1911 and Gilbert Pattern relinquished control of the Merriwell series in 1913, they left Ralph Henry Barbour and a host of newcomers to shift the focus of the school sport story to high school and state university environments which reflected the movement of sport in the nation as well.

Others have attempted to keep a focus on juvenile sports fiction up to the present, and from these we can get a sense of the way they have changed since World War I. Walter Evans' article in the *Journal of Popular Culture* is representative of these. He thinks there are two different sorts of juvenile sports fiction: the school sports story, in which an outsider makes himself part of the group through athletic prowess, and the series sports story, in which the hero's abilities are acknowledged from the beginning. Both, he finds, are "dependent on successful integration into society for their resolution." Later, Evans elaborates on this motif of "successful integration."

The integration motif mirrors the young boy's drive to understand and become an accepted part of society beyond the family. The reading of sports stories is a learning experience in which the outside world is reduced to insiders and outsiders, and the means of becoming an insider—conformity to the code—is demonstrated through the integration of the boy-hero, the outsider, the little brother figure, and the poor sport. Boys spend much of their lives learning to become functioning elements of society; sports fiction indicates that conformity to an established mode of behavior is more crucial to integration than academic success, physical dimensions, age, class, or other factors.

This notion of integration into a successful group is a central continuity of juvenile sports fiction, but there are others. Ordinarily the same



cast of characters (boy-hero, outsider, little brother figure, poor sport) inhabits each book, and there is a “sportsman’s code”—a devotion to athletics and to purity (painful modesty, great loyalty, and devotion to the needs of the team)—which informs each book.

These are large continuities; what about changes in the formula? Messenger, for instance, sees schoolboy society opening up to more middle-class environments like high schools and state universities. Evans notices this, too, and in addition he finds that adults, and particularly adult villains, become more important. Both he and Oriard find occasional involvement in serious social issues in later juvenile sports fiction. In looking at baseball juveniles, I can add more. First, there is the new sub-genre of the Little League baseball novel, as practiced particularly by Matt Christopher. Secondly, because of its early identification as a professional sport, baseball does not lend itself particularly well to the

school sports novel. There always have been school sports novels focused on baseball, but early on, there began to be an emphasis on the professional game as a setting. Lester Chadwick's *Baseball Joe* series, for instance, begins with Joe as a schoolboy, but quickly graduates him to professional baseball. This often leads to modifications in Evans' "sportsman's code," something formulated more with schoolboy stories in mind. Finally, there is another change that comes because of the history of children's books. Sports have become a subject matter for children's books which are not formula stories, so we now have a category of "serious" children's books which are not simply formulaic. In addition, there is a new kind of children's book written specifically for a teenage audience. Generally called "problem" novels, for their insistence on regarding growing up as a difficult process, some of these now have a baseball setting.

Formula stories set in schools, Little Leagues, in professional leagues, as well as serious stories with baseball settings: these are the sorts of books which can be found. Where do we find them? Very seldom in our local bookstores. Written mostly for school children, they tend to be sold to libraries rather than bookstores. I try to spend one day a month browsing in second-hand bookstores, and one of the first things I do is look among the juveniles for stories with a baseball setting. The library is another good place to find these books, though Rocky Mount's library has only one baseball juvenile published before 1960. To get these older books is somewhat difficult unless you have a good research library handy. Most serious readers know that hard-to-get books can be gotten, if your local library doesn't have them, through interlibrary loan. Unfortunately, this is not always true of juvenile books; librarians have traditionally viewed juvenile literature as not significant enough to order through interlibrary loan. My suggestion here is that you remind yourself and the librarian that you are not just an interested reader but a researcher. Show the librarian your SABR card; adopt a serious mien. This has worked for me. But it helps to have a librarian friend, or to be one yourself.

There is no foolproof bibliographic source for looking up material for baseball juveniles. Children's literature bibliographies, often organized by subject matter, are also very selective, often listing only one or two novels by an author of baseball juveniles. The best sources I've found are Anton Grobani's *Guide to Baseball Literature* (1975) and Michael Oriard's *Dreaming of Heroes* (1982). Grobani's contains a section called "Fiction," under which juveniles are listed. He makes no effort to distinguish between juveniles and adult novels, and occasionally his listings are incomplete, but he is a reliable place to start. Authors are listed chronologically by the date of their first baseball novel. Oriard's *Dreaming of Heroes* contains a "Checklist of American Sports Fiction." As in Grobani, there is no focus

here on baseball juveniles, but if the reader has some idea whom he is looking for, it is a useful checklist. It is more current than Grobani's and Oriard has had the benefit of using Grobani's. It helps to remember that Oriard lists all sports fiction, not just baseball fiction, for each author.

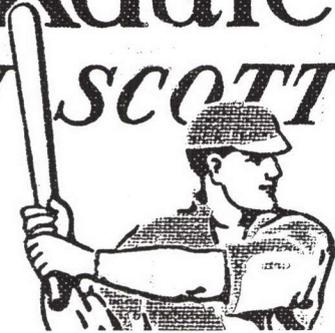
I enjoy reading formula fiction, but I more enjoy reading fiction which manipulates formula to develop character and to test systems of value. Many recent baseball juveniles seem to be doing just that. Here are some I have found in Braswell Memorial Library: Bill J. Carol's *High Fly to Center*, Robert Lipsyte's *Jock and Jill*, Leonard Everett Fisher's *Noonan: A Novel About Baseball, ESP, and Time Warps*, and Martin Quigley's *The Original Coloured House of David*. These all run strange changes on the traditional juvenile formula and force us toward questions of character and value. Bill Carol's *High Fly to Center* (1972) is a story of Little League baseball in which the characters are unusually interesting. Not only is Little League action kept to a minimum, but most of the conventions of the juvenile formula are ignored. It is important, for instance, that there is no Big Game. At the beginning of the book the principal character, Mickey Ortega, finds his family requires him to leave his Little League team to participate in the family vacation. Because he thinks of himself as a future major leaguer and of his Little League experience as crucial to that, he runs away from his vacationing family, hoping to rejoin his team. He never makes it. Two things happen: he loses his wallet, but meets a young man in Phoenix who has career plans just as set as his but whose earning power has been inhibited by a stickball incident. A shoeshine boy, Charley Johnson, has one hand in a cast. Mickey helps him rather than trying to rejoin his team. Meanwhile, his sister who is trying to follow him, has become lost in the woods. The moment he learns this, Mickey gets in touch with his parents and helps find his sister. The vacation is resumed with Charley in attendance as Mickey decides his family and friendships are more important now than a possible major-league career. He has matured. The relationships between Mickey and his sister and Mickey and Charley are well-drawn and present clear value conflicts not entirely resolved by Mickey's decision that, right now, family and friendship are more important than baseball. There is not much description of baseball in the book; I don't know why it's called *High Fly to Center*, but it's a thoughtful book about how baseball dreams can affect one's life.

Robert Lipsyte's *Jock and Jill* (1982) is a modern and ironic treatment of the traditional juvenile sports novel with its Big Game ending. It's a problem novel, meant for teenagers, and its title nicely suggests Lipsyte's meaning—that events will have a disastrous conclusion, and that because of sports. The hero's name is Jack, of course, Jack Ryder, who is star pitcher for his high school team. Jack is looking forward to the cham-

pionship game in Yankee Stadium, the inevitable Big Game. However, unlike his predecessors in baseball juveniles, this hero needs cortisone shots and greenies to keep his arm well and his energy level up. In the weeks before the game, he is jolted out of his routine by an involvement with Jillian, a young lady undergoing psychiatric treatment. In the course of their adventures they meet Hector, a former gang leader who has developed a social conscience, and when Hector is arrested just before the big game at Yankee Stadium, Jack and Jill seize the stadium during the game to protest Hector's arrest. At the end of the book, conventional order is restored. Jill is sent away for more psychiatric treatment and Jack is reunited with his cheerleader girlfriend, Kristie. Jack, however, looks at

The New Boys at Oakdale

MORGAN SCOTT



the sports world with clearer eyes; instead of the final athletic triumph, we have personal growth in a complex world.

Leonard Everett Fisher's *Noonan: A Novel About Baseball, ESP, and Time Warps* (1978) has presented us with another vision of baseball and America, this one not so positive. This novel also satirizes the juvenile sports story formula, by involving itself in things other than the Big Game: there is time travel, and a fully developed vision of the future of professional baseball. The plot involves Johnny Noonan, a 14-year-old pitcher, who is hit on the head by a foul ball in 1896; he wakes up in 1996 and finds that he has the power to will the baseball where he wants it to go (a handy power for a pitcher to have). Returning to 1896, he finds he still has this power. He pitches an inning and a half against the Cincinnati Reds and stuns them. But in this Big Game, things go awry; the game is

rained out, and all parties agree not to report Johnny's curious pitches. When he starts another game, he finds he has lost his powers. At the book's end, Johnny is back sweeping up his father's saloon, and the owner of the team he played for has been committed to a mental hospital.

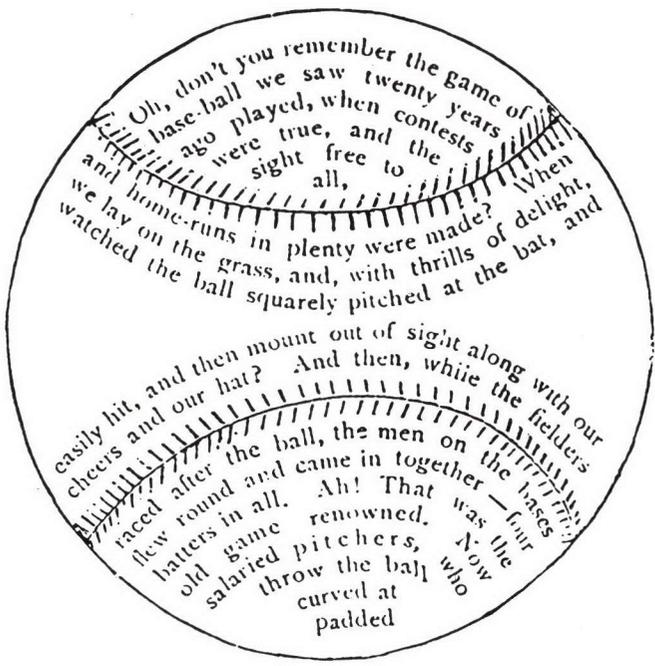
At the heart of the novel is a vision of baseball as played in the future: electronic equipment has taken the place of umpires, there are no fans at the games anymore (except in Chicago, where at Wrigley Field all is the same), and the games are played in ballstudios and fans watch on television. Players are recruited from all over the world, and many of them do a little spying on the side. Each team must have a linguist, so that communication among the players is possible. Fisher's vision of the future of baseball is not a nice one: baseball in 1996 is called "the tedious symbol of the new malaise" of American society.

Perhaps the best of these recent books is Martin Quigley's *The Original Coloured House of David* (1981). In it we meet in fiction the "phonograph needle pitch" Quigley describes at the beginning of *The Crooked Pitch: The Curveball in American Baseball History*. I like the book because it treats both baseball and humanity in a serious, realistic way without pretension. Like most juveniles, it's the story of a young man's growth into manhood. In *Dreaming of Heroes*, Oriard says that all juvenile sports fiction stops short of the hero's achieving maturity; he says that the athlete-hero is "for all his benevolent virtues . . . essentially a self-centered hero . . . no real maturity is achieved in his allegory of maturity—the athlete-hero remains a child." In Quigley's novel, the hero grows out of his self-centeredness, completes his mythic journey, and returns home. In the book, Timmy (who finally earns the right to be called Tim) Nelson is frustrated by the events of the Fourth of July in his hometown in rural Minnesota in the 1920s, and as a result, he contrives to join the touring Original Coloured House of David baseball team in its travels through rural Minnesota and North Dakota. He becomes Speedy Deefy, a deaf-and-dumb albino Negro, and experiences the horrors of racial prejudice. The black ballplayers are vividly portrayed, particularly Mr. Tetley, leader of the team and "a man of considerable erudition" who is a kind of wisdom figure, who is given to such pronouncements as "that's what we're made of—flesh and blood and the stories we know." Tim helps this group get through their schedule of games; he has replaced a player who fell sick on the Fourth of July in Tim's hometown. He gets to know all the team as human beings and helps the sick player to die. By the time the Big Game (in which he is roughly treated as a pitcher but which the team wins) has ended, he has learned enough about himself and humanity to participate as a man in the feast that blacks and whites attend together at the book's end.

Readers do need to beware of baseball juveniles. Many writers do not take the composition of baseball juveniles seriously. As a consequence, they do not take the trouble to report the games accurately, just as they do not take the trouble to create real characters. I have run across four instances in which the losers in the Big Game get four outs in the last inning. But, increasingly, writers of juvenile books are taking more care and reporting both the games and the people who play them more accurately. Those of us who are happy with the sheer unreality of the early baseball formula stories still have a great deal to read, though it is not always easy to find. Those of us who like serious fiction, for children as well as adults, are beginning to have a lot to choose from, too.

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and

masked catchers

lame and gate-money,

music and seats all reserved,

is all that is left of the game. Oh

□ give us the glorious mat □ ches of old, when love □

of true sport made □ 'em great, and not

this new-fashioned affair al-

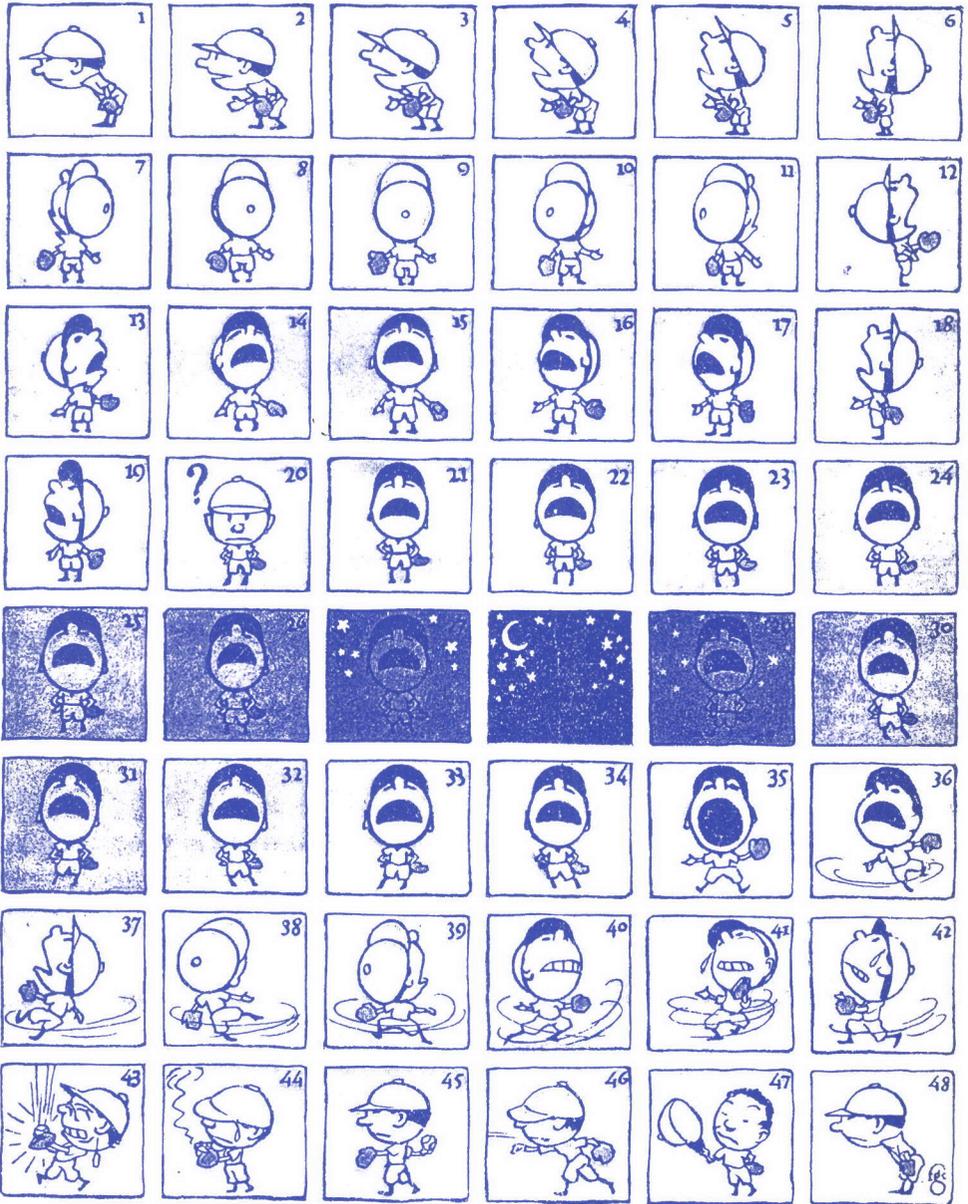
ways sold for the huddle

they take at the

gate.

□

H. C. DODGE.



"A HIGH FLY"
 from LIFE, Sept. 17, 1914