

# Beating the Bushes



*A publication of the Society for American Baseball Research  
Minor League Committee*

Spring 2020

Apr 6, 2020

## The life and astounding historical trove of baseball's GOAT statistician

By Nick Faris

**I**t was winter in California, which meant Bill Weiss, the busiest statistician in baseball, was consumed with piecing together the story of the 1892 San Jose Dukes. Something strange went down on the mound in San Jose that long-lost season, Weiss once told a Sports Illustrated reporter who'd asked him to reflect on his decades of service to the sport. Two pitchers combined to start and complete all but a handful of the Dukes' 170-plus games: George Harper, a righty on the cusp of the majors, and J.D. Lookabaugh, whose yeoman's effort enabled him to hurl more than 800 innings - and whose name, within a couple of seasons, vanished from rosters of the day.

"Probably threw his arm out," Weiss said.

This - the 800 innings; the belated appreciation of Lookabaugh's toil - all took place many years ago, but as vignettes of Weiss' work go, it's evergreen. Weiss was a caretaker of baseball's present and its past, and he was tireless. Across his adulthood he tracked stats for more than a dozen minor leagues. He saved every scrap of information that he unearthed about the game: thousands of books, team batting totals from the 1950 Pacific Coast League season, copies of *The Sporting News* that dated back to World War I.

His understated explanation for why he bothered digging into Lookabaugh one offseason doubled as a summary of his professional ethos: "I enjoy historical research."

To say the least. Bill Weiss died in 2011, at 86, and his friend Carlos Bauer, a fellow researcher of the minor leagues, remembers him today as the greatest baseball statistician who ever lived. For years, Bauer's been part of a small team of Weiss admirers working to do for him what he did for untold thousands of players from a desk in his bungalow in San Mateo, California. Like Look-

baugh, their contributions to the sport had an endpoint, but a trace of them persists, preserved for the interest of anyone who may ever care enough to know.

When Mark Macrae, the executor of Weiss' estate, organized the contents of his late friend's archive so that it could be transported from San Mateo downstate to San Diego, he filled 650 banana boxes in Weiss' garage. You could commit a lifetime to reading what Weiss compiled in his, Macrae said, and still leave the task halfway incomplete. The saving grace for anyone who'd ever dare to try: with no necessary or obvious entry point, they could start to delve into the material from just about any page.

How about we start with the questionnaires.

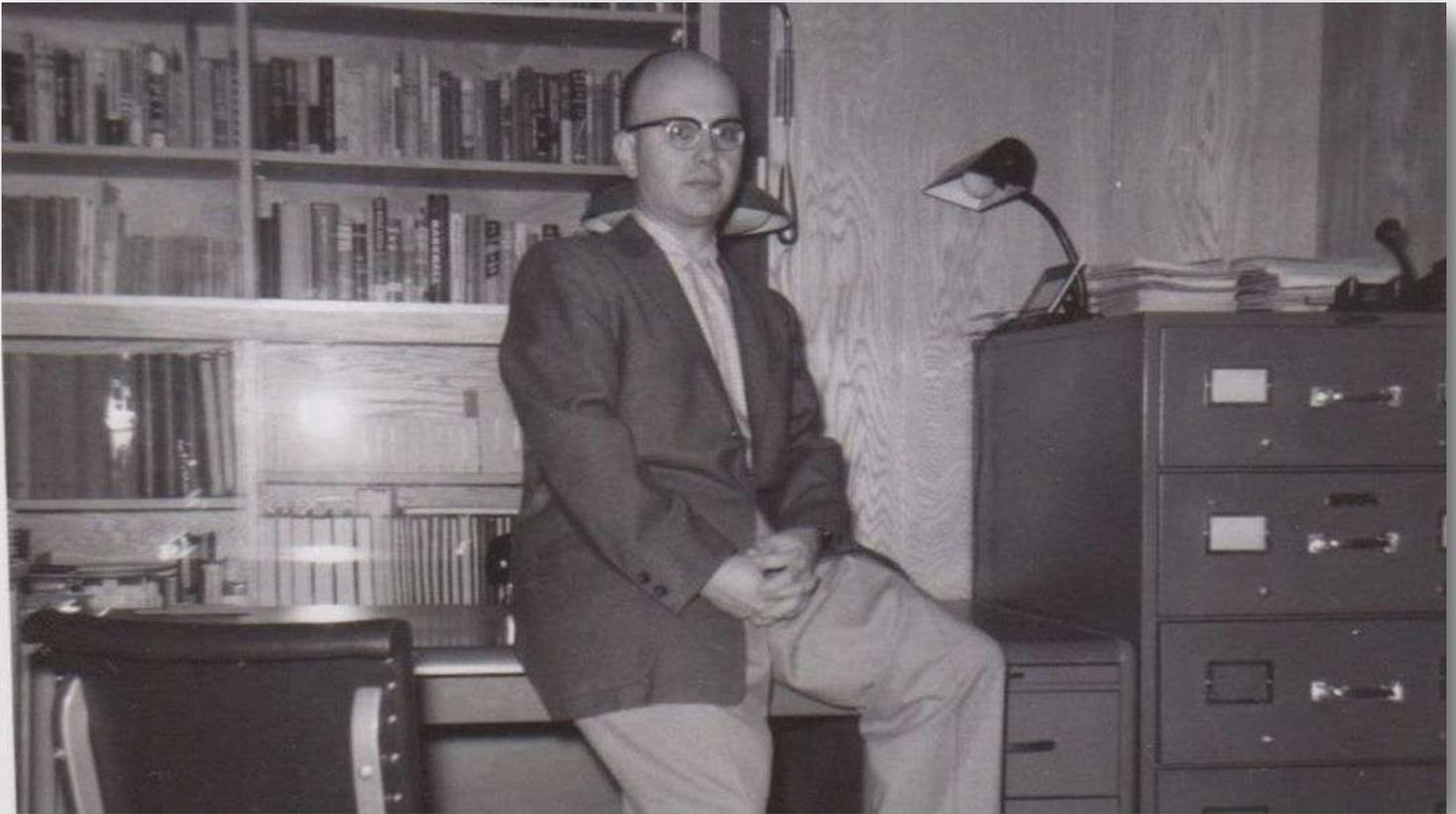
For six decades, from 1945 to 2005, Weiss made a habit of mailing biographical surveys to minor-league teams around the U.S., seeking details about most any player who signed a pro contract in that period. The forms asked the players to note their position and home address; their high school and the name of the scout who discovered them; their interests and offseason occupation, if applicable, and assorted memories of their early years in the game.

Weiss kept every paper that was returned to him, building a one-of-a-kind collection of personal sketches that as of last year resides in full on Ancestry.com. The questionnaires present firsthand insight into the lives of more than 120,000 young ballplayers, some of whom wrote back to Weiss shortly before they ascended to big-league stardom.

Consider, for example, this sample of current MLB managers, who each answered a Weiss questionnaire at the outset of his playing career:

Writing in 1968, Houston's Dusty Baker recounted his most unusual experience in baseball: briefly delaying a game in Greenwood, South Carolina, because he had to use the restroom.

- The Angels' Joe Maddon listed his hobbies in 1975: "Reading, (attempting to) paint, observing people."



*Bill Weiss in the 1950s. Courtesy of Mark Macrae*

- Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell's most humorous experience in the game, circa 1992: when the umpire of a summer-league game in Alaska ejected the PA announcer for arguing a call via his microphone.
- Yankees manager Aaron Boone's most interesting on-field experience, circa 1994: "Someone lit my shoelaces on fire during a game in college."

Many thousands of Weiss' correspondents were never widely known, though some overlapped with celebrated namesakes. Take Frank Robinson - not the first-ballot Hall of Fame outfielder, but the pitcher who peaked in Triple-A in the years following World War II, and whose 1949 questionnaire hints at his contributions to that cause. This Robinson tossed a no-hitter in Hawaii as a teenager serving in the Marines. In 1945 he helped storm Iwo Jima, the scene of his most interesting experience in the military: getting off the island "under my own power and without injury."

Across the decades, responses betray the earnestness of the writer's youth. In 1953, when Al Kaline was 18, the future "Mr. Tiger" wrote that his ambition in baseball was "to be liked by all the players and fans." In 1966, when Reggie Jackson was 20, the future "Mr. October" revealed his ambition: "To be 1/2 the ballplayer Willie Mays is." A few years before he was named American League Rookie of the Year, Lou Whitaker blew through the allotted three lines on his 1975 questionnaire to explain that getting to

play and love baseball was his greatest thrill.

"Just can't wait until the game start again," Whitaker wrote. "It's just around the corner, few more months."

Were Weiss to have filled out a questionnaire of his own, he might have included morsels such as these: He was left-handed. He landed his first jobs in baseball in the summer of 1948, tracking stats for Texas' low-level Longhorn League and managing the box office for a nearby league's Abilene Blue Sox. (He slept on one of two twin beds in the team owner's spare room, as did a succession of players who'd just been acquired.) He moved west to San Mateo in 1950. He kept stats for the Triple-A Pacific Coast League and an abundance of loops that dissolved too soon or that endure today: the Sunset League, the Pioneer League, the Western International League, the California League.

He never had any children. He loved his wife, Faye; black cocker spaniels, of whom they owned several in 56 years of marriage; and baseball, where he found joy in the work.

Weiss was a mainstay at the winter meetings from the 1940s onward. He struck up connections with players, coaches, scouts, and executives; Sports Illustrated's Tom Verducci once wrote in passing in an otherwise unrelated story that Weiss "knew everybody." If a veteran employee of this league or that one retired, his records weren't trashed but shipped to San Mateo, where Weiss built an annex to his home to accommodate the material he couldn't fit in his

offices, basement, garage, or enclosed front porch.

"I don't think the man ever threw anything away," said Dick Beverage, a former president of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR).

Weiss was born in 1925 in Chicago, where he first saw the Cubs play at Wrigley Field when he was five, and where he realized in short order that his future in baseball would never be as a player. Indeed, the great irony of Weiss' devotion to his favorite sport was that he didn't get to attend many games. He was drawn from a young age to baseball's recorded history, especially as it pertained to lesser-known minor leaguers, whose stats and backstories were difficult to pin down. When he came to gather stats professionally - and obsessively - he was on call 24/7 from March through October, juggling data from his myriad employers and happily bound to a meticulous routine.

Say a California League game ended close to 10 p.m. in Modesto, 90 minutes away from San Mateo. The scorekeeper would shift his notes onto the official scoresheet and, before the advent of the fax machine, drive the paper to Weiss' home. He'd walk down the long driveway, open a chain-link gate, and circle to the back door. Just inside, Weiss napped on a recliner in his office, cocker spaniel on his lap. The dog would stir, the jingling of its collar waking Weiss, who'd receive the visitor and then step to his desk to type up the numbers.

"The next day, mail comes in," said Macrae, Weiss' long-time friend. "The leagues that were further away, they'd have to mail the stats in. His wife would go down to the post office and she'd pick up anywhere between 30 and 200 pieces of mail, every day. She'd bring them back in and he'd just sit there, type, and analyze."

From the start of his career, Macrae said, Weiss understood the value of the information he stockpiled. Another hallmark of his trove of materials were the sketchbooks, more than 200 in all, that he created in the offseason for minor leagues and MLB organizations. Inside, Weiss included writeups about every prospect in a given system, populated by details he'd gleaned from a range of sources: the player's stats; nuggets from the several dozen local newspapers to which he and Faye subscribed; anecdotes the player had shared in a questionnaire. Before the internet made such content ubiquitous, the books were a go-to resource for teams and insiders across the game.

Weiss abhorred computers, preferring to work on a typewriter. Stats fascinated him partly because they showed how players progressed or faltered, streaked or slumped, day by day and year over year, and his mind was sharp enough to process or recall such numbers on a moment's

notice. Tell him a player's at-bat and hit totals and Weiss could determine his batting average without a calculator. Give him the name of someone's grandfather, Macrae said, and he'd know how many games he played for Abilene in 1948.

During the SI interview in which he contemplated his career, Weiss regaled his questioner with a peculiar story about the '48 Longhorn League season. Two games played consecutively that year were monumentally lopsided: the Midland Indians thumped the last-place Del Rio Cowboys 31-0 and then 40-4. In the second game, one poor Del Rio pitcher was left on the mound to go the distance; a mere 29 of the runs he surrendered were earned.

"I didn't see it," Weiss said. "But I've got the scoresheet."

When Weiss died, the first stage of the quest to preserve every such paper in his possession fell to Macrae, a SABR member who met Weiss at a baseball card convention in 1974, when he was 12. Macrae impressed Weiss with his knowledge of players from the early 20th century, prompting the statistician to share his phone number and recommend they keep in touch. Macrae handed Weiss a slip of paper with his name and address.

Their friendship grew over the decades. Weiss made time to chat on the phone in-season during rare breaks. When Macrae was older he'd drive Weiss to baseball dinners around the San Francisco peninsula. As Weiss got older and his mobility became limited, Macrae went to his house weekly to help with bills and to fetch documents for various projects from Weiss' maze of an archive.

"He'd say, 'Go into the back room, take two steps, turn right. Green cabinet. Open the cabinet. Second shelf from the top, center column,'" Macrae said. "And that's how we would find things."

Eventually, it came time for Macrae to organize Weiss' material as best he could, employing his 650 banana boxes in service to the goal of sending the collection to a permanent home. Finding that new guardian took two years. One potential recipient wanted only part of the archive; Weiss had wanted it to remain whole. Plans for another would-be repository - a proposed minor-league museum in North Carolina - fell through for lack of funding.

Instead, a safekeeper surfaced down Interstate 5 in San Diego, whose main public library branch houses an expansive baseball research center. In 2014, the library announced that it had obtained Weiss' trove in partnership with the local SABR chapter. The boxes were driven 500 miles south from San Mateo in four truck trips.

"Long story short," said Tom Larwin, the president of

SABR's San Diego Ted Williams chapter, "we got about 16 tons of archival material that moved down from the Bay Area in California - and became my life for a few years."

Larwin is a retired civil engineer who set aside his consulting work when the archive arrived. He and Bauer - the researcher who considers Weiss the GOAT statistician - inventoried the contents of the acquisition over the course of months. They happened across a Navy surplus industrial scanner, on which they began to digitize player and team stat logs, scoresheets from bygone games, and league guides dating to the 1800s. The scope of what Weiss amassed by himself eclipses even Cooperstown, Bauer said: "I don't think they have copies of the official averages of the 1940 KITTY (Kentucky-Illinois-Tennessee) League."

Larwin and Bauer's work remains ongoing, even after they digitized about 20,000 of Weiss' player questionnaires and then outsourced the lion's share of that formidable task to Ancestry. Those images, about 124,000 in all, are now searchable by name on the genealogy company's website. There's Wade Boggs, listing Abner Doubleday as a distant relative (seventh cousin). There's Bob Gibson, recalling a basketball game he played in college against the Harlem Globetrotters. There's Tommy John, hurling 21 strikeouts in a game against inmates at a federal penitentiary. There's John Smoltz, disclosing his adolescent nickname: "Holy."

Larwin and Bauer came to their shared objective - making much more of the archive publicly accessible online - from different positions. Bauer knew Weiss for decades, having met him when Bauer set about producing a Pacific Coast League encyclopedia. Weiss shared what he knew about old players whose stories were elusive; he let Bauer study documents at his home. Bauer came to appreciate Weiss' unique and profound influence on stat-keeping: he cared so much and was painstakingly accurate for so long that he forced other practitioners of the genre to improve.

Larwin, meanwhile, never met Weiss.

"But I feel like I know him very well," Larwin said. "I've

read some of his correspondence. I'm touching pieces of paper and pages of books that probably he only touched. I have this connection with him. I can only imagine how baseball consumed his life - to see all these things that he collected."

In his baseball lifetime, this steward of history accrued a few more cherished titles and distinctions. For 25 years starting in 1959, Weiss was president of the Peninsula Winter League, a Bay Area circuit whose alumni include Hall of Famers Joe Morgan and Willie Stargell. He joined SABR in 1971, becoming the nascent organization's 34th member. Minor League Baseball named Weiss its "King of Baseball" for the 1977 season. In 2001, he helped devise for MiLB a ranking of its [100 best teams](#) from the 20th century.

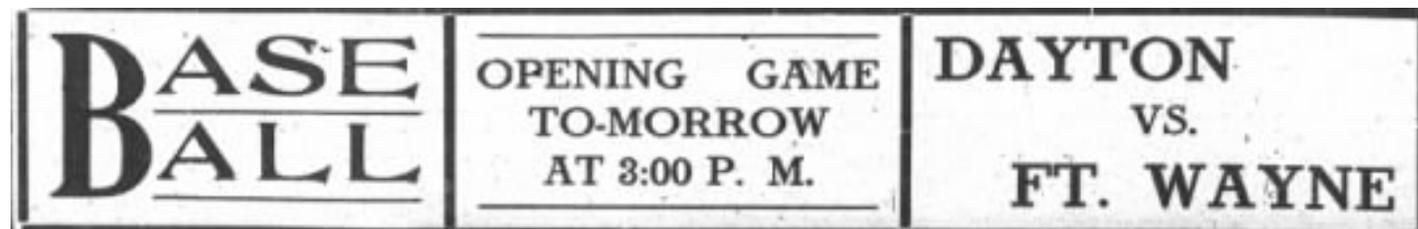
He did it all with Faye by his side. The Weisses took no elaborate offseason vacations; instead they had season tickets to hockey's San Francisco Seals, and unfailingly they stayed busy. Faye handled the daily mail runs; she combed through the sports sections of the newspapers sent their way, seeking miscellany about players that Bill could include in a future sketchbook. Faye was an avid reader, Macrae said; she devoured novels, and read the paper every day until she died in 2018 at 93. Their bungalow was sold that year, he said, and subsequently was torn down.

One day a year or two after Bill died, Macrae headed to the house to inch ever closer to packaging the sum of the man's work. He opened a box of sports-collecting publications from the mid-'70s and found a surprising keepsake, which he pocketed for himself.

Long after he would have memorized the information, Weiss had held onto a reminder of their first meeting: the paper on which a precocious 12-year-old wrote his name and address in 1974.

"There was no reason to save it," Macrae said. "He saved it."

***This article originally appeared on [TheScore.com](#). It is reprinted here with permission.***



*The Fort Wayne Sentinel Apr 29, 1912*

# THE 1929 SAN DIEGO ACES AND ITS NOTABLE PLAYERS

By Tom Larwin

The San Diego Aces played in the Class D California State League that had one ill-fated season in 1929. The league was not formally established until late March, set its Opening Day for two weeks later on April 10, and had its last game played on June 16, in the middle of what was scheduled to be a 21-week season.

This new California State League had four teams: Bakersfield Bees, Orange County Countians, San Bernardino Padres, and San Diego Aces<sup>1</sup>. Despite its shaky start San Diego's new team in this league garnered substantial community support. The 1929 Aces would be the city's first professional baseball team since the 1913 San Diego Bears, a team in the Southern California League.

San Diego was the new league's largest city and benefited from relatively good fan support. Of the league's four teams it was the most successful. The team finished the shortened season with the league's best record and they were officially awarded the pennant as league champions. They were San Diego's first professional sports champion team.

The existence of the Aces and it being a championship team are well-kept secrets in San Diego. Not much can be found in local sports history articles or books about the team.

Nonetheless, research into the team some 90 years later has discovered several players from the Aces who had varied and interesting connections with history. In alphabetical order the following are introductions to six notable players from the team.

- **Sam Agnew** was the team's player-manager and also a vice president of the club. He was 42 years old in 1929 and was in the last years of a playing career that started in 1910. Agnew's career consisted of 1,100 games over 11 seasons in the Pacific Coast League plus another seven seasons and 563 games at the major league level.

The interesting connection for Agnew was being the Boston Red Sox catcher for a baseball Hall of Famer in the 1918 World Series by the name of Babe Ruth. Agnew caught for Ruth in the Game 1 shutout win and was also Ruth's catcher for the first eight innings in the Game 4

win<sup>2</sup>.

- **Dave Colley** was the team's best pitcher—and perhaps its best hitter. He started nine games for the Aces and had a won-loss record of 6-2. On June 2, in the first game of a Sunday double-header, he pitched his best game of the season, a two-hit masterpiece. He faced the minimum 21 batters<sup>3</sup>. He helped the win by going 3-for-3 and raised his batting average to a team-leading .463.

The historical connection for Colley was a tragic one. On June 7, five days after he pitched so well, the 31-year old Colley died unexpectedly. The apparent cause was traced back to a hand injury several weeks earlier and then a fall at the ballpark on June 2. Nothing too unusual; however, Colley was not feeling well on June 3 and confined to bed. On June 4 he had surgery on his hand. Late on June 6 he returned to the hospital and died early the morning of June 7. There was speculation that untreated diabetes appeared to be the cause of his death<sup>4</sup>.

- **Dan Crowley** was the Aces' first baseman for every one of its games. Crowley grew up in Los Angeles and had some minor league experience prior to 1929 with teams in the Utah-Idaho League.

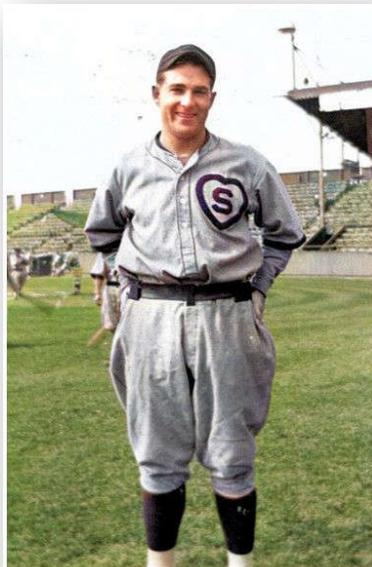
There were several interesting aspects to Crowley's connection with history, all about baseball. For instance, his last year of minor league baseball was a short stint with the Pacific Coast League (PCL) Hollywood Stars. Colley's stint included what has been referred to as "the greatest one-week career of any ballplayer in L.A. baseball history."<sup>5</sup>

He also was a mentor to numerous major league players during the 1930s-1950s and for 60 years led the renowned "Crowley All-Stars" in Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup>

- **Larry Gillick** was the team's workhorse pitcher getting into one-third of the team's games and starting in 15. He ended the season with a record of 7-9. Gillick would go on to have a modest minor league career primarily with Sacramento and Oakland of the Pacific Coast League.

His interesting connection with history was to have a son who became a member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The son, Pat Gillick, was elected by the Veterans Committee in 2010 and inducted as a team executive.

- **Rod Luscomb** was a 21-year old San Diego boy who joined the team in late April, primarily as an outfielder. He went on to have a decent season with a .295



Gillick with Sacramento (PCL) in 1934  
Photo courtesy of Alan O'Connor

(Continued from page 5)

batting average plus he was the starting pitcher in three games. The 1929 season with the Aces was his only season in professional ball.

His interesting connection has to do with another San Diegan, Ted Williams. Luscomb was 11 years older than Williams and was director at the city's North Park playground where Williams learned to hit. Luscomb, who was called "my first real hero" by Williams, would serve as his batting practice pitcher, confidant, mentor, and life-long friend.<sup>7</sup>

- **Lee Ramage** was another San Diego boy, only 18 years old and an infielder on the team. He played in only six games which turned out to be the extent of his pro baseball career.

However, Ramage did end up with a professional sports career. He became a heavyweight boxer. From 1929 through 1939 he posted a record of 49-14 with 23 knockouts. Ramage had two bouts with future heavyweight champion, Joe Louis. Their first fight was in December 1934 and the second one in February 1935. It was early in Louis' career who came into the first fight with an 11-0 record. Louis won both fights with TKOs. The 1935 fight

was in Wrigley Field...the Los Angeles version.

**Editor's note:** A book on San Diego baseball history from 1870-1935 with an emphasis on four professional teams during that era, is in the works by Tom and Carlos Bauer.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The Orange County team, based in Santa Ana, had trouble from the start and by the end of May was relocated twice, to Pomona and eventually, to Coronado.

<sup>2</sup>The Red Sox won the Series, four games to two, versus the Chicago Cubs.

<sup>3</sup>In accord with league rules one game of the double-header was to be seven innings in length.

<sup>4</sup>Ted Steinmann, *San Diego Union*, June 8, 1929, pp.1,3.

<sup>5</sup>Scott Ostler, "An All-Star and His Collection of Stars," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1984, pp.19-20.

<sup>6</sup>Rick Obrand, "The Sandlot Mentors of Los Angeles," *The National Pastime*, SABR 2011.

<sup>7</sup>There are numerous references to Luscomb's influence on Williams in these books: (a) Ben Bradlee, Jr., *The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams*, Little, Brown and Company, 2013; Leigh Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, Doubleday, 2014; (c) Bill Nowlin (ed), et al, *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*, Rounder Books, 2005.

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## A 1941 Night Game In Hartford

By Bob Brady

**B**y 1941, over half of the major's ball clubs had committed to scheduling night ballgames at home. Neither of Boston's teams had made the move, with the Red Sox still opposed but with Braves' management seemingly much more open to considering games under the lights based on their favorable experiences at opponents' ballparks. The Tribe's ownership syndicate's new investor **Lou Perini** prodded team president **Bob Quinn** to investigate that alternative more vigorously.

Quinn had aided the Braves' Class A Eastern League affiliate Hartford Bees in the installation of lights at their home field. Scheduling an evening exhibition game there during the major league All Star break would contribute additional information to the team's decision making process. A parent vs. farm club contest was set for July 8, 1941 at the Connecticut capital city's Bulkeley Stadium. The gates would open at 6:30 p.m. with the contest's start to follow at 8:30. Fans were forewarned that Bees' regular season passes would not be honored but that no increase to usual admission prices would be assessed. The

last visit by the big league club had taken place back in August of 1934 when Hartford performed in the Class B Northeastern League. That contest drew a robust turnout of 7,400. In order to play this exhibition, Bees Business Manager **Charlie Blossfield** had to obtain the permission from the Yankees-affiliated Binghamton Triplets to postpone the scheduled July 8 game and reschedule it as part of a doubleheader later in the season.

**Casey Stengel's** Braves had wrapped up the first half of the '41 campaign unimpressively. At 29-42, the ball club was buried in 7th place, 19.5 games behind the league-leading Dodgers. They'd headed toward the hiatus after losing and tying a doubleheader shortened by rain in Brooklyn on July 6. Given the undistinguished club performance to date, the Braves sent only shortstop **Eddie "Eppie" Miller** to the Midsummer Classic at Detroit's Briggs Stadium on July 8. The parent's Hartford line-up was further depleted as outfielders **Johnny Cooney** and **Paul "Big Poison" Waner**, pitchers **"Sailor Bill" Posedel** and **Dick "Leif" Errickson** and catcher **Ray Berres** stayed behind in Boston.

Although officially the "Bees," Hartford's ball club was referred to in newspaper accounts such as by *The Hartford Courant*, as the "Senators." By whatever name, the team was replicating its Boston sponsor's performance,

claiming 7th place in the Eastern League (27-38) and trailing the leading Williamsport Grays by 14 games. The Bees were led by skipper **Jack Onslow**, a former catcher with “cups of coffee” with the 1912 Tigers and 1917 Giants. His younger brother, Eddie, would play briefly in the majors as a first baseman for the Tigers, Indians and Senators. The siblings had both appeared on Detroit’s 1912 roster. Eddie had managed Hartford in 1938. **Jack Onslow** had been employed by the Boston Bees in 1935 to conduct “Baseball on the Air,” a Hub-based radio instructional show on the Yankee and Colonial Networks. He also scouted for the team and was credited with the signing of **Sibby Sisti**. The senior Onslow would go on to direct the White Sox in 1949 and part of 1950.

Interest in the contest among Connecticut baseball enthusiasts was derived from the fact that the ’41 Tribe featured several Hartford “graduates.” Eight alumni were to attend this homecoming. Their ranks included hurlers, **Art “Lefty” Johnson** (1940), **Frank LaManna** (1940) and **Tom Earley** (1938-39), outfielders **Don Manno** (1939) and **Chet Ross** (1938), second basemen **Carvel “Bama” Rowell** (1939) and **Bill “Whitey” Wietelmann** (1939) and third sacker **Sibby Sisti** (1938-39).

The lefty-righty duo of Johnson and LaManna had anchored Hartford’s mound staff in 1940, winning 17 and 13 games, respectively. Earley was remembered for his ’38 13-inning complete game 1-0 gem against Wilkes-Barre where he struck out 11 Barons. A former Yankees farmhand, Manno was picked up from Binghamton in 1939 and ended up splitting his time between the outfield and first base over the course of his 71 games as Boston chat-tel. He would be returned to Hartford during the second half of the ’41 season. Although only appearing in 56 games for the ’38 Bees, Ross was recalled for hitting 5 homers in 5 days and for making 4 hits in 4 consecutive tries as a pinch hitter. Rowell was a fly chaser while in Hartford in ’39. During that season, he was the Eastern League’s base-stealing champ while batting a respectable .297 and clubbing 15 homers. Wietelmann was a 20-year-old shortstop during his sole Hartford campaign. While possessing a weak bat (.235), he excelled on the field, leading the Class A circuit in fielding chances and assists. Later in 1941, Wietelmann also was sent back to the Bees by the Braves. Sisti made his professional debut in Hartford in 1938 as a 17-year-old third baseman fresh out of Buffalo, New York’s Canisius High School. Still in his teens, he received an emergency promotion to the majors from the Connecticut ball club the following summer when the Tribe’s regular shortstop, **Eddie Miller** was injured. The youngest player in the big leagues remained with the Braves as a jack-of-all-trades before becoming the team’s regular third baseman in 1940.

The 1941 Bees’ roster included a number of players with past and future Braves ties. Catcher **Stan Andrews** had been with the big league club in 1939-40. Pitcher **George “Barney” Barnicle** had received a call-up in 1939 and would return to Braves Field for brief appearances in 1940-41. Outfielder **Ralph Hodgins** had ventured to the Wigwam in 1939 as had infielder **Otto Huber**. Flychaser **Mel Preibisch** had received a 1940 promotion to Boston that would be repeated in 1941. Southpaw **Bob “Ace” Williams** had a cup of coffee with the parent in 1940 and a return cup after WWII service in 1946.

The 1941 Hartford Bees also featured players that later became Boston Braves: pitchers **John Dagenhard** (1943), **George Diehl** (1942-43) and **Jim Hickey** (1942, 1944), infielders **John Dudra** (1941) and **Skippy Roberge** (1941-42, 1946) and outfielder **Tommy Neill** (1946-47).

The ballgame attracted a crowd of 5,558, the largest fan gathering at Bulkeley Stadium of the current season. To put this into perspective, there were numerous occasions that the Braves failed to draw that many to the Wigwam in 1941. Bulkeley’s grandstand had filled to capacity before the game had begun, forcing latecomers to head to the bleachers for seating. The Tribe’s dugout was stormed by pre-game autograph seekers of all ages, giving accommodating Braves players a penmanship workout. Up in the press box, **Duffy Lewis**, famed Red Sox outfielder of yore and current Tribe traveling secretary, observed the goings-on.

The visiting big leaguers did not disappoint their Connecticut fans and populated the line-up with ex-Hartford players. Sisti, Ross, Rowell and Wietelmann started and performed on the field for most of the game. Manager Stengel chose **Frank LaManna** as his starter and included relief appearances by alums **Art Johnson** and **Tom Earley**.

The Braves edged out their Hartford affiliate, 8-7, but the locals handed the parent club a scare before losing. The game commenced ominously for the Bees as Braves centerfielder **Max West** hit a towering fly over the the right field fence to put two runs on the scoreboard. However, it wasn’t until the 6th inning that the Tribe scored again through the combination of a West double followed by a single by left fielder Ross. The crowd responded enthusiastically the first time that ex-Bees Sisti, Ross, Wietelmann, Rowell and LaManna came to the plate. Sisti and Rowell contributed highlights for the Hartford fans. Sibby stroked two doubles and a single while “Bama” turned

(Continued on page 8)

in a couple of fielding gems at second base.

Hartford alum, LaManna started for the Tribe but lasted only three innings, allowing the Onslowmen to plate three runs for a 3-2 lead. Similarly, Johnson, the Bees best pitcher in 1940, was treated roughly during his 7th inning stint, giving up two runs to the Connecticut farmhands. Throughout the contest, Braves skipper **Stengel** entertained the crowd with his antics coaching at third base.

The Bees' "**Barney** **Barnicle**", still on the Eastern League's suspended list due to medical issues, started for the home team and acquitted himself well over nearly 8 innings before tiring. Although he allowed 13 hits (many of the "scratch" variety), he didn't issue a base on balls until the 7th inning. With a 6-3 lead, Barnicle recorded two outs in the top half of the 8th but then was tagged for three runs that tied the score. He was replaced by "**Ace**" **Williams** who would prove not to be one.

**Tom Earley**, another Hartford graduate, replaced Johnson for the Tribe in the 8th but was the victim of poor

support in the field. An error led to a Bees run that broke the deadlock. It seemed that the Bees would claim victory as Williams recorded two outs in the 9th before disaster struck. Rowell then singled and when pinch hitter **Buddy Grempp** tapped a ground ball to the infield, no one covered first base, allowing the tying run to score. Weak hitting Braves catcher **Al Montgomery** promptly singled and the winning run crossed the plate as Earley held the Bees scoreless in the bottom half to secure the victory.

The contest served to bolster support for illuminating Braves Field given its evident popularity in Hartford. However, WW II intervened and wartime material restrictions precluded the immediate deployment of light towers at the Wigwam. Once the ban was lifted, the Braves were set to go, inaugurating night baseball in Boston on May 11, 1946 before 34,945 fans. The popularity of baseball under the stars led to a crowd that hadn't been seen at Gaffney Street stadium since 1933. The Red Sox would follow suit just over a year later and turn on the lights to a capacity crowd of 34,510 at Fenway Park on June 13, 1947 despite owner **Tom Yawkey's** continued less than enthusiastic support for evening contests.



Asheville Citizen-Times Apr 28, 1915

# ALEXANDER BANNWART: AN IM- PROBABLE LIFE IN MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND BEYOND

by Bill Lamb

The life of Alexander Bannwart unfolded like that of a junior-grade Baron Munchausen – except that Bannwart's adventures were real, not make-believe. He first stepped onto the public stage in 1906 when, despite being bereft of professional ball playing experience, he somehow managed to land a berth with the Lowell (Massachusetts) Tigers of the Class B New England League. And before the season was out, Bannwart (then known as Al Winn) had maneuvered himself into becoming nothing less than the Lowell field manager and club owner – neither the first nor last time that the bold and self-confident young man would manage to acquire something of considerable value without the apparent financial means to do so. Some years later, Bannwart became the force guiding the fortunes of the 1915 Colonial League, the short-lived minor league affiliate of the outlaw Federal League.

An ambitious, impressively-educated man, Alex Bannwart's improbable sojourn in baseball was merely prelude to a random, often frenetic life that thereafter saw him dabble in high-end real estate; launch quixotic campaigns for elective office; get arrested for maintaining an unlicensed dance salon-*rendezvous* spot; work as a Depression Era custodian and as a golf and tennis pro; tour the South Pacific as a World War II USO entertainer, and advocate for utopian world governance organizations. At the time of his death in 1951, Bannwart was the owner-operator of an urban parking lot and a local political activist. But what preserves his modest hold on present-day memory is a singular event occurring on the eve of American entry into World War I in early April 1917. While a member of a Boston-area pacifist delegation sent to Washington in opposition to the war authorization call of President Wilson, Bannwart got into a highly-publicized Capitol Hill fistfight with a prominent war supporter who was perhaps the most powerful man in the United States Congress: Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.

The eventful life of Alexander William Bannwart<sup>1</sup> began in Basel, Switzerland, on Christmas Day 1880. He was the youngest of three children born to shoemaker Franz Bannwart and his native-German wife Theresa (nee Metzger).<sup>2</sup> While Alex was still a toddler, the family emigrated to the United States and settled in Boston. Notwithstanding the fact that his father died while he was

still a teenager and his mother eked out a living as a cook and rooming house proprietress, Bannwart managed – magically – to enroll in Phillips Academy, an exclusive prep school for boarding high school students located 35 miles away in Andover, Massachusetts. He flourished there, acting as secretary of the literary society and participating in debate competitions.

Upon prep school graduation in 1902, Alex was admitted to Princeton University, among the most prestigious (and expensive) educational institutions in the country – where his experience at Phillips appears to have repeated itself. Again without any visible financial means, he nonetheless spent four years on the Princeton campus and took an active part in university life, including intramural athletics. A sturdily-built 5-feet-7/160 pounder, Bannwart was a member of his class baseball team and its undersized heavyweight match wrestler. He graduated in 1906 with an undergraduate degree in law, but not without attracting the thinly-veiled disdain of classmates for the way in which the self-assured, smooth-talking Bannwart had evidently conducted himself while at school. A pseudo-humorous prophecy published in the 1906 Princeton yearbook envisioned the future "A.W. Bannwart, President of the Habitual Nerve and Assurance Company" as standing "accused of extracting one nickel and three pennies from a child's bank." It would not be the last time that our protagonist was the subject of unfavorable comment.

With Princeton diploma in hand, Alex returned to Massachusetts and promptly enrolled in Harvard Law School. While awaiting the start of classes in September, another facially inexplicable event occurred. Despite the absence of any significant playing experience, he gained a spot on the roster of the Lowell Tigers, the talent-starved cellar-dwellers of the Class B New England League. Finding Alexander Bannwart too much of a mouthful, Lowell manager Fred Lake immediately dubbed his new recruit *Al Winn*. The alias would stick with Bannwart for the duration of his time in the circuit.

Al Winn saw only sparing game action for the Tigers but when given the opportunity, his performances were borderline-adequate, surprisingly. In five starts at second base from July 7 to 13, he went 3-for-16 (all singles), at the plate and handled 18 of 22 fielding chances successfully.<sup>3</sup> By now, however, Winn/Bannwart had his sights set on more than just additional playing time. A budding entrepreneur, he envisioned taking over control of the financially-troubled ball club. And on July 20, 1906, the Lowell franchise was awarded to second baseman Winn when local businessmen failed to match the \$500 that he had posted for the right to be awarded club stewardship.<sup>4</sup>

In mid-August, Winn released manager Lake and assumed on-field command of the team, as well.<sup>5</sup> The change had little immediate effect on club fortunes. The Tigers continued losing and staggered home a dismal 28-86 (.246), a full 45 games behind the league champion Worcester Busters.<sup>6</sup> But at least the franchise had survived the season.

As soon as the 1906 campaign was completed, club owner-manager Winn began making moves to revitalize the Lowell club, including assaying its removal to a new, more centrally-located ballpark in the city. "Lowell is all right as a baseball city. All it wants is a winning ball club and that I propose to have for next season," the 25-year-old informed the press. "If nothing happens I will have a conveniently situated ball ground and will equip it in first rate style. I am on the track of some promising young ball tossers and propose to land a pennant winner next season if hard work will get it."<sup>7</sup> As would almost invariably prove the case, how Winn (Bannwart), a law school student who had no apparent source of income, would finance such plans was left unsaid. But somehow – and Winn obviously had silent backers – he pulled it off.<sup>8</sup> The Tigers would begin the 1907 season in Washington Park, a newly-constructed, 3,500-seat state-of-the-art ballpark located near a downtown Lowell train station. Construction costs were estimated at \$10,400.<sup>9</sup>

A complimentary off-season mention in the *Boston Herald* described Winn as "young, energetic and a hustler, and possesses in a huge degree the abilities that bring success."<sup>10</sup> Even Midwestern newspapers were taking notice of "Alex Winn," the "youngest baseball manager in the country."<sup>11</sup> The progressive political instincts that would guide the club boss's later life manifested themselves in early 1907. He opened still-uncompleted Washington Park by matching his Lowell Tigers against a fast pre-Negro League nine, the Philadelphia Giants. A 4-0 setback to the black pros left him undaunted. "Confidence has been magnate Winn's watchword, and it is hoped that his efforts will be appreciated," said local sportswriter Herb E. Webster in his report of the contest.<sup>12</sup>

Under field leader Winn, Lowell showed a modest improvement in 1907. A 48-60 (.444) log elevated the Tigers to sixth-place in New England League standings, but still left the club 26 games behind repeat-champion Worcester. As the previous season, Winn himself ap-

peared in only a handful of Lowell games and did not figure as a player in future club plans. Indeed, the owner's interest in his ball club seems to have waned by 1908. Although officially listed as Lowell manager, Winn apparently left day-to-day supervision of the Tigers to one-time NY Giants pitcher Jack Sharrott.<sup>13</sup> Winn also discontinued his legal studies, leaving Harvard Law School sometime during the year without completing his degree requirements. Ensuing efforts to divest himself of the Lowell ball club, however, were complicated by an injunction obtained by former Lowell Tigers outfielder (and erstwhile Harvard Law classmate) Alex O'Brien who had filed a reserve clause-based lawsuit against Winn.<sup>14</sup> This legal restraint, plus a \$1,000 difference in negotiations, subsequently frustrated the anticipated sale of the club to former major league outfielder and manager Patsy Donovan.<sup>15</sup> The Lowell Tigers remained under Winn auspices till late-June 1909, when new ownership finally took control.<sup>16</sup> With that, Al Winn reverted to being Alexander Bannwart.



Bannwart, circa 1906

Bannwart returned to hometown Boston where he commenced a fitful career as a real estate speculator. In March 1912, however, his name was back on newspaper sports pages as the secretary of a budding Boston-area semi-pro baseball league.<sup>17</sup> The venture never got off the ground. But three years later, Bannwart assumed a prominent role in the activities of a baseball circuit of far more import: the 1915 minor Colonial League.

Organized in 1914, the Class C Colonial League was a tightly-knit, financially circumspect six-team Massachusetts-Rhode Island circuit that pooled team revenues and kept traveling expenses to a minimum. Ostensibly a member of Organized Baseball, the Colonial League was quietly subsidized by Robert B. Ward, the wealthy principal owner of the Brooklyn Tip-Tops of the outlaw major Federal League.<sup>18</sup> Over the winter, the pretense was dropped and the Colonial League openly affiliated with the Feds.<sup>19</sup> The split was made official the day after the 1915 season started, with the Colonial League publicly withdrawing from the National Association of Professional Baseball Clubs, Organized Baseball's overseer of minor league operations.<sup>20</sup>

The newly-independent Colonial League was an eight-club loop, with expansion fueled by the affiliation of existing ball clubs in Hartford, New Haven, and Springfield, all formerly members of the Class B Eastern Association, (Continued on page 11)

while less-populous Woonsocket (Rhode Island) was dropped.<sup>21</sup> The league was nominally headed by holdover president Charles B. Coppen, the respected sports editor of the *Providence Journal*. To safeguard Federal League interests, Robert Ward installed his ne'er-do-well nephew Walter G. Ward in league headquarters as CL treasurer. But the real force in Colonial League operations was none other than the modestly-credentialed but irrepressible Alexander Bannwart, elected league vice-president and secretary.<sup>22</sup> Among other responsibilities, Bannwart crafted the Colonial League's 130 game schedule for the 1915 season; oversaw Federal League reimbursements for farmed-out major league players whose contract salaries exceeded the \$1,200 Colonial League player salary limit;<sup>23</sup> exercised administrative control of league affairs, and generally served as the public face of the league office.

Given the financial plight of its parent organization – the Federal League was struggling to stay solvent – the fiscal distress quickly encountered by its Colonial League farm clubs came as little surprise to many observers. And by early-July, the collapse of the league seemed imminent.<sup>24</sup> Widely perceived as being the "whole works, [including] president, and bouncer of the Colonial League,"<sup>25</sup> Bannwart became a lightning rod for the criticism by disaffected sportswriters, particularly those in places like Hartford and Springfield where the hometown club had forsaken the familiar Eastern Association to join the Colonials.<sup>26</sup> Demerits were assigned Bannwart for failure to enforce player salary limits, for intrusion upon the management of individual Colonial League clubs, and for his role in the conversion of an independent minor league to one subservient to the renegade and financially-failing Federal League.<sup>27</sup>

Retrenchment – weakling franchises in Fall River and Taunton were jettisoned on July 10 – permitted the league to continue the season. But it did nothing to stifle the swelling chorus of disapproval of Bannwart's stewardship of the circuit. Finally and under pressure from within, a "heart-broken" Alexander Bannwart resigned his league offices on August 10.<sup>28</sup> A league correspondent was unmoved, attributing the impending doom of the Colonial League to the "capers of Al Bannwart,"<sup>29</sup> while league treasurer Walter Ward's reply to the Bannwart resignation letter reportedly closed with the cutting putdown "hope that he will be more of a success in his next job."<sup>30</sup>

As the Colonial League headed for oblivion at the close of the 1915 season,<sup>31</sup> Bannwart remained visible. A good natural athlete, he began entering local tennis tournaments. He also had to dodge creditors. But most of Bannwart's energy was soon devoted to progressive polit-

ical causes. A longtime admirer of US President Woodrow Wilson – as a student Bannwart had entered Princeton the same year that Wilson assumed the post of university president – Bannwart campaigned locally for Democrat Wilson's reelection in 1916, primarily because Wilson had kept America out of the war raging in Europe. But in early April 1917, Bannwart was stunned by the President's publicly stated intention to ask Congress for a declaration of war against Germany and its allies. Bannwart thereupon joined a congregation of Boston-area pacifists headed for Washington, DC, to protest the call to arms.

Upon arrival in the Capitol, the group headed toward the offices of Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, ordinarily the leader of Republican Party opposition to Wilson policies but an enthusiastic proponent of American entry into the Great War. After a short back-and-forth in which Lodge affirmed his support for a war declaration, insults were traded by the Senator and Bannwart (although who called whom a "coward" and a "liar" was later disputed). A scuffle thereupon ensued, started by a punch from the bantamweight 67-year-old Lodge to the nose of the brawnier, much-younger Bannwart.<sup>32</sup> Senate aides quickly descended upon the fray and administered a sound pummeling to Bannwart, who was then taken into custody and charged with assault. Within hours, Bannwart was released, his \$2,000 bond posted by a fellow pacifist protester. In the meantime, Lodge, basking in the glow of near universal admiration of his feistiness, announced that he would not prosecute the assault charge.<sup>33</sup> Bannwart thereupon provided the capstone to this farce. Reportedly persuaded by the logic of Wilson's Congressional message, he changed positions, and urged his colleagues to support the war effort – only to be hooted down at a pacifist gathering and drummed out of the peace movement.<sup>34</sup> Shortly thereafter, Bannwart announced that he would be enlisting in the US Army Reserve<sup>35</sup> – but never did. Rather, he sued Lodge for defamation, claiming that his reputation had been damaged to the tune of \$20,000 by the allegation that he had initiated the fracas with the slightly-built, elderly Lodge.<sup>36</sup> In time, the suit was settled out-of-court by formal Lodge acknowledgment that he, not Bannwart, had thrown the first punch. No money changed hands.<sup>37</sup>

As he neared age 40, Alexander Bannwart receded into obscurity. But over the ensuing decades his name would periodically surface in local newspapers, most often as a hapless candidate for Massachusetts elective office.<sup>38</sup> In between long-shot political campaigns, Bannwart took graduate courses at Harvard, oversaw a garage for Sinclair Oil, and headed a newly-organized association of Boston taxi cab owner-operators. But the Bannwart venture that captured most media attention focused on a

three-story brownstone mansion in Boston's ritzy Back Bay that he had somehow managed to acquire. At first, the premises, complete with lavish furnishings and butler/maid service, were offered for rent (by the day or hour) to "Millionaires for a Day."<sup>39</sup> When that scheme failed to generate income, Bannwart converted the mansion into an unlicensed dance hall-social spot, which soon got him arrested by the Boston Police. Following conviction in local court and an unsuccessful appeal, Bannwart grudgingly paid a \$25 fine.<sup>40</sup>

The arrival of the Great Depression saw Bannwart's fortunes spiral downward. He eked out a living as a custodian in Weston, Massachusetts, and then as a tennis and golf pro in greater New York City, before finding employment with the United States Merchant Marine Academy. During World War II, he toured the South Pacific for the USO, entertaining the troops with table tennis exhibitions. After hostilities ceased, he advocated for American entry into utopian one-world governance organizations.<sup>41</sup> He also spent time in a Boston courtroom vainly trying to secure a share of the considerable estate left by his estranged sister Emilie, a successful Boston realtor.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, settlement of the case revealed a likely source of financial support for various Bannwart endeavors. A clause of Emilie's will declared: "I have left no provision in this will for my brother Alexander W. Bannwart as I have given him substantial sums of money during my life."<sup>43</sup>

In old age, the now-bewhiskered Bannwart settled in Jersey City where he – curiously as always – managed to acquire an income-producing downtown parking lot and campaigned for progressive candidates for local political office.<sup>44</sup> On February 21, 1959, the long and eventful life of Alexander William Bannwart came to its end at Jersey City Medical Center.<sup>45</sup> He was 78. Never married, the deceased was survived by his older brother Carl and nephew Carl T. Bannwart. His remains were cremated at the Garden State Crematory in nearby North Bergen, New Jersey.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Baseball-Reference lists our subject's birth name as Alexander Winn Bannwart, adopting the New England League alias that Bannwart played under as his middle name. Scholastic and alumni records published by Phillips Academy and Princeton University, however, give his name as Alexander William Bannwart, as does a retrospective on his encounter with Senator Lodge recently published by the Massachusetts Historical Society. See "Object of the Month: President of the Massachusetts Historical Society in a Fistfight – War Declared," posted April 2017.

<sup>2</sup>The older Bannwart children were brother Carl (born 1872) and sister Emilie (1873).

<sup>3</sup>As reflected in the Lowell box scores published in the *Boston Herald*, July 8 to 14, 1906.

<sup>4</sup>As reported in "Winn Buys Lowell," *Boston Herald*, July 21, 1906: 12, and "Winn Purchases the Lowell Team," *Boston Journal*, July 21, 1906: 5.

<sup>5</sup>As per "Players Were Scrappy," *Boston Herald*, August 21, 1906: 12; "Lake Released," *Pawtucket* (Rhode Island) *Times*, August 21, 1906: 12; and "Lowell to Miss Game," *Pawtucket Times*, August 23, 1906: 12.

<sup>6</sup>New manager Winn continued his predecessor's practice of using second baseman Winn sparingly. A likely incomplete survey of published Lowell box scores yields the following season-ending stats for Winn: a .238 BA/.857 FA in seven games played.

<sup>7</sup>As quoted in the *Boston Herald*, September 6, 1906: 14.

<sup>8</sup>When Winn unloaded the Lowell franchise in June 1909, the club's *Sporting News* correspondent lit into him for short-sighted spending, failing his unidentified financial backers, and leaving the new club owners with a near-bankrupt operation that had lost the lease to Washington Park. As a result, the Tigers had been forced to return to their former grounds at unsatisfactory Spalding Park. See Herb E. Webster, "Hard Luck for Winn," *The Sporting News*, July 8, 1909: 1.

<sup>9</sup>Per Dick H., "Clemente Park: A History," Lowell History and Politics, Richard Howe.com, posted April 29, 2016, and "Washington Park," [www.projectballpark.org/ne/washington/html](http://www.projectballpark.org/ne/washington/html). Washington Park continued in service until razed in 1929. The grounds are now the site of a community playground named for Roberto Clemente.

<sup>10</sup>See "Lack of Harmony in Big Ball Leagues," *Boston Herald*, November 18, 1906: 32.

<sup>11</sup>See "Sporting Shop Talk," *Kalamazoo* (Michigan) *Gazette*, February 26, 1907: 6.

<sup>12</sup>Herb E. Webster, "Even Break for Lowell," *The Sporting News*, April 27, 1907: 7.

<sup>13</sup>According to Lowell correspondent Webster in *The Sporting News*, April 29, 1909: 1. Modern baseball reference works list Arthur Daly as part-season manager of the 1908 Lowell Tigers.

<sup>14</sup>See "To Test Reserve Rule," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 11, 1908.

<sup>15</sup>See "Donovan To Get Lowell Club," *Baltimore Sun*, January 25, 1909: 10. Regarding the proposed purchase price, Winn/Bannwart reportedly demanded \$11,000 for the franchise, while Donovan only offered \$10,000.

<sup>16</sup>See again, Herb E. Webster, "Hard Luck for Winn," *The Sporting News*, July 8, 1909: 1. See also, "Winn Gets Permission To Sell the Lowell Club," *Boston Journal*, June 12, 1909: 5.

<sup>17</sup>See "In Greater Boston," *Sporting Life*, March 9, 1912: 8. The eight-club circuit was to field teams in Dorchester, Cambridge, Somerville, Malden-Medford, Waltham-Newton, Chelsea-Everett, and South Boston.

<sup>18</sup>According to at least one press report, Bannwart had served as distributor of the Ward funds allocated to Colonial League clubs in 1914. See "New Englanders Welcome Visits," *Springfield (Massachusetts) Union*, January 14, 1915: 19.

<sup>19</sup>See e.g., "Arrangements for Federal League Farm Complete," *Norwich (Connecticut) Morning Bulletin*, May 14, 1915: 4. For a succinct overview of events, see "Minor League History: Colonial League," posted on the Dutch Baseball Hangout website January 17, 2016.

<sup>20</sup>As reported in "Throws O.B. Over," *Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican*, May 21, 1915: 14; "Withdraws from Organized Ranks," *Springfield Union*, May 21, 1915: 27, and elsewhere.

<sup>21</sup>The Colonial League clubs held over from 1914 were located in Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton, Massachusetts, and Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

<sup>22</sup>As reported in "W.G. Ward Officer in Colonial League," *Boston Herald*, April 23, 1915: 10; "Colonials Lined Up," *Springfield Republican*, April 23, 1915: 12, and elsewhere.

<sup>23</sup>The Colonial League had established a \$1,200 player salary maximum for the 1915 season. Federal League clubs who farmed a player out to their CL affiliate were obliged to make up the difference for any such player whose stipend exceeded the Colonial League maximum. See "The Colonial League," *Sporting Life*, April 3, 1915: 14.

<sup>24</sup>See e.g., "Colonial League Almost Ready To Throw Up Sponge," *Norwich Morning Bulletin*, July 9, 1915: 4; "Colonial League To Finish Season Declares Mr. Ward," *Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Times*, July 9, 1915: 17.

<sup>25</sup>As described in "League Will Stick," *Springfield Union*, July 7, 1915: 11. A month later, the newspaper declared "Mr. Bannwart is technically secretary of the league [but] Bannwart is really president and general director and answerable not to [league president] Copen at all, but only to Robert B. Ward, the man with the wad." See "He May Be Years Ahead of Time," *Springfield Union*, August 6, 1915: 18.

<sup>26</sup>Particularly pointed criticism of Bannwart was published in the *Hartford Courant*, *Springfield Republican*, and *Springfield Union*, July 7-9, 1915.

<sup>27</sup>See e.g., "He May Be Years Ahead of Time," *Springfield Union*, August 6, 1915: 18.

<sup>28</sup>As reported in the *Bridgeport (Connecticut) Evening Farmer*, *Pawtucket Times*, *Springfield Republican*, and elsewhere, August 12, 1915.

<sup>29</sup>"Connecticut Prospects," *Sporting Life*, August 28, 1915: 5.

<sup>30</sup>Per "Bannwart Loses Job," *Springfield Republican*, August 12, 1915: 10.

<sup>31</sup>Like its sponsor the Federal League, the Colonials went out of business during the winter of 1915-1916. Decades later, the name Colonial League was revived by a Class B circuit that played in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut from 1947-1950.

<sup>32</sup>At the time, Lodge maintained that Bannwart had thrown the first punch. See e.g., "Pacifist Attacks Senator," *Middletown (New York) Daily News*, April 2, 1917: 1, and "The Attack on Mr. Lodge," *Boston Herald*, April 3, 1917: 14. A century later, it is now generally conceded that Lodge, not Bannwart, started the fisticuffs. See e.g., Nik DaCosta-Klipa, "100 Years Ago, the US Entered WWI – and a Senator from Massachusetts Punched a Protester in the Face Over It," [www.boston.com/news/history](http://www.boston.com/news/history), posted April 6, 2017.

<sup>33</sup>See e.g., "Lodge Called Coward, Fells His Accuser," *Boston Journal*, April 3, 1917: 1; "Repentance Frees Lodge Assailant," *New York Times*, April 4, 1917: 10; "Congratulations for Lodge," *Washington Post*, April 4, 1917: 2.

<sup>34</sup>See "Assailant of Lodge Turns War Supporter," *Boston Herald*, April 4, 1917: 4; "Pacifists Claim Promise of Votes," *New York Times*, April 5, 1917: 4; "Bannwart for World Nation," *Springfield Daily News*, April 5, 1917: 3.

<sup>35</sup>See "Bannwart Enrolls as Plattsburg 'Rookie,'" *Boston Herald*, May 8, 1917: 14; "Lodge Assailant Joins Reserves," *New York Times*, May 8, 1917: 5; "Man Lodge Felled Enlists," *Washington Post*, May 8, 1917: 1.

<sup>36</sup>As reported in "Pacifist Sues Lodge," *Washington Post*, May 10, 1918: 5, and elsewhere.

<sup>37</sup>Per "\$20,000 Suit Against Senator Lodge Settled," *New York Tribune*, April 14, 1919: 4; "Lodge and Pacifist 'Kiss and Make Up,'" *Washington Times*, April 15, 1919: 7. For a cogent retrospective on the Lodge-Bannwart incident, see the April 2017 post of the Massachusetts Historical Society cited in endnote 1, above.

<sup>38</sup>See e.g., "Bannwart Also Ran," *Boston Herald*, September 8, 1920: 7. His "amusing candidacy" placed dead-last in both the Democratic and Republican Party primaries for a Massachusetts legislative seat.

<sup>39</sup>The daily rate for use of the mansion was \$50, according to Albert Apple, "The Referee," *The (Danville, Virginia) Bee*, June 6, 1924.

<sup>40</sup>As reported in "Dance Mansion Quartet Guilty," *Boston Herald*, December 24, 1924: 16; "Bannwart Fined \$25 for Unlicensed Dance," *Boston Herald*, March 26, 1925: 17. See also, *Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Sentinel*, March 26, 1925.

<sup>41</sup>See "Federal Union Planned," (*Uniontown, Pennsylvania) Morning Herald*, March 15, 1948: 1.

<sup>42</sup>See "100,000 Will Fight Case to Wait Depositions," *Boston Herald*, March 6, 1951: 7; "Spinster's Broker Had 'Best Friend,'" *Boston Herald*, April 5, 1951: 39.

<sup>43</sup>See "\$19,500 to Hanlon, Compromise Settles Bannwart Will Contest," *Boston Herald*, November 24, 1951: 3.

<sup>44</sup>See e.g., "Citizen Group Formed for Better Government," (*Jersey City) Jersey Journal*, February 16, 1953: 2.

<sup>45</sup>Per "Parking Lot Owner: Alexander Bannwart, 78; Goatee Was A familiar Sight," *Jersey Journal*, February 23, 1959: 10.



# WHEN MUSIAL DID NOT WEAR NO. 36 – OR DID HE?

By Brian Walton

When and why did the number 36 become affixed to the back of what appears to be a Stan Musial road uniform from 1942? This mysterious St. Louis Cardinals uniform connects the Hall of Famer Musial with a fascinating, but obscure former minor leaguer named Roland Chalifoux, but the chain is not yet entirely closed.

Sometimes we work incredibly hard for a story.

Other times, the story finds us, but with the hard work still ahead.

Such was the latter case following the receipt of an email from a man who had read about my long quest for the explanation of a photo that depicted Stan Musial wearing a St. Louis Cardinals no. 19 uniform. My effort to prove the related events from 1942 ran from 2009 until its final resolution in 2013.

This new inquiry immediately piqued my curiosity, pulling me into a new Musial quest.

This is the story of a Musial uniform that found its way to a war hero and later a Cardinals minor leaguer, who treasured it for decades before his son gave it to an 87-year old St. Louis native and decorated neurosurgeon.

Dr. Wolff Kirsch, now a California resident, has in his possession a 1942 Musial road uniform, complete with identifying name and year stitching on the tail and the one-year only HEALTH patch on the left sleeve commemorating the Hale America Fitness Campaign.

However, the number on the back presents the mystery – it is neither 6, nor is it 19 – it is 36!

After months of investigation, I do not yet have a definitive explanation of why a Musial uniform was numbered in this manner – hence one of the reasons I am sharing this story with you. Perhaps a reader will provide the lead that will enable me to close the loop.

My current primary theory is that this is a recycled uniform, sent to a Cardinals minor league affiliate after St.

## From where did the uniform come?

Dr. Kirsch received the uniform as a gift from Dr. Roland Chalifoux, Jr., a colleague. Dr. Chalifoux shared an oft-repeated family explanation of its history. His father, Roland Sr., who was a Cardinals minor leaguer in the late 1940's, had been befriended by Musial. Father told son (and everyone else) that the uniform was originally a gift from Stan to Roland Sr., who passed it to Roland Jr., and eventually to Dr. Kirsch.

## How might Chalifoux have connected with Musial?

Though both served during World War II, the elder Chalifoux was primarily in Europe, while Musial was assigned to multiple bases stateside – from Maryland to Hawaii.

Once they returned to baseball post-war, they were in very different places – both geographically and from a career perspective. As a result, I struggled to identify how a relationship could be formed between an established major league star and a minor league pitcher seemingly distant from St. Louis in every way. Upon his discharge from the service, Chalifoux played for an unaffiliated Class C team in Canada in 1946 and the next season as a Cardinal farmhand in Class B.

With Chalifoux pitching for the 1947 Allentown Cardinals, a possible explanation for the hand-me-down uniform to have become his seemed to present itself. However, that idea was mortally wounded when I located an Allentown program (in the collection of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C.), only to learn that Chalifoux wore no. 12 with the club.

Further, no one on that Allentown team, including the manager, was assigned a number higher than 24.

Still, the parent Cardinals could have sent the recycled no. 36 uniform, which was unused in Allentown and secured by Chalifoux as a keepsake. We will almost certainly never know if this occurred.

I later proved that Chalifoux also pitched for the 1948 Lynchburg Cardinals for three months, information that had been lost in the annals of time. Securing a numeric  
(Continued on page 16)



Musial no. 36 uniform (courtesy Wolff Kirsch)

(Continued from page 15)

roster from this club for verification remains an important open item.

In either case, why no. 36 and why would the 1942-only shoulder patch still be affixed five or six years later? Again, this entire hand-me-down line of thinking is speculation that may never be proven, though I believe it to be the most likely explanation of the uniform's lineage.

Any ideas that readers have that might help solve this mystery, please contact me via the email address at the bottom of this story.

### Continue if your curiosity is plqued

What follows is substantial additional background on the key players in this story – Roland Chalifoux and Dr. Wolff Kirsch – as well as further background about multiple blind alleys I explored and vacated.

If you are only casually interested in these events, you may want to stop here. However, if you are like me and enjoy a good mystery, please continue!

### “The minor leaguer”

Roland “Lefty” Chalifoux was a talented, decorated and giving individual who served his country and his community for decades. Born in 1924 in Lewiston, Maine, he also died there 77 years later, in 2001. In between, he lived an active and diverse life, much of which revolved around sports.

The 5-foot-11, 175-pounder was a three-sport star in high school, with hockey joining baseball and football among his interests. He graduated in 1943.

From there, it was off to war. Chalifoux became a decorated soldier in World War II, receiving a Purple Heart, Oak Leaf cluster and four bronze clusters. His heroics in the European Theater included being wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. Chalifoux was a tank commander and took shrapnel to the throat. His attributed his life being saved to field surgery conducted by a German doctor.

In these two wartime photos provided by his son, Chalifoux is standing, second from the right, in the Belgium

photo. In the German one, he is at the far left.

Like so many servicemen, Chalifoux returned home to baseball, as new leagues were being created and inactive circuits were revived to satisfy post-war fan demand for entertainment. In 1946, the left-handed pitcher's professional debut occurred in the opening season of the Class C Border League for the unaffiliated Granby (Quebec) Red Sox.

In 1947 at the age of 23, Chalifoux pitched in relief for the Allentown (PA) Cardinals of the Class B Inter-State League. This was a St. Louis farm club.

In 1948, however, he was back in Granby, which had moved to the independent Provincial League, and outside the governing body of what is now Minor League Baseball, then called the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues. The next season, Chalifoux played for Granby, Drummondville and St. Jean, all in the Provincial League, and returned to St. Jean for 1950, the same year the Provincial League joined the NAPBL as a Class C circuit.

Chalifoux's 1948 and 1949 stats appear to have been lost, but over the three years his online records exist – 1946, 1947 and 1950 – he logged a record of 16-33 with a 5.34 ERA, primarily as a starter. His statistical history (the portion of which has been preserved) can be [viewed at Baseball-Reference.com](http://Baseball-Reference.com).

### Player Index cards

What I shared above is what the commonly-accessed and familiar records tell us about Chalifoux's professional pitching career. I knew there could be more, however, and there is. Quite a bit more, in fact.

Chalifoux, Roland F.  
27 River St., Lewiston, Me.

BULLETIN NO.	DATE	RELEASED		INACTIVE LISTS		APPLICATIONS		ASSIGNMENTS		RESERVED	CLUB	CLUB
		CONTRACT	TIME	RETIRED	RETIRED	RETIRED	RETIRED	RETIRED	RETIRED			
4	3-16-48										West Frankfort	Lynchburg
5	3-26-48											Lynchburg
8	5-20-48											"
9	6-19-48											"
9	6-30-48											"
	1948											Lynchburg
1	12-8-48											Lynchburg
2	2-2-49											Lynchburg
5	4-8-49											"
6	4-26-50											St. Jean
7	4-26-50											St. Jean
8	6-27-50											"
9	6-29-50											"

Roland Chalifoux MiLB Player Card

headquarters.

Minor League Baseball has kept a treasure trove of records of players from this era, with key transactions having been recorded on index cards, which are still on file in their St. Petersburg, FL

Upon securing Chalifoux's card, I learned many more details about his career. When playing for Granby in 1946, he appeared to have been Cardinals property, per-

(Continued from page 16)

haps on loan to the unaffiliated Red Sox. At the end of that season, his contract was assigned to Allentown, where he went on to pitch in 1947, including in the Inter-State League playoffs, as newspaper accounts confirm.

This is where the prior story diverges, however. As 1947 closed, Chalifoux was moved to the West Frankfort (IL) Cardinals roster, a Class D club that played in the Illinois State League. During the spring of 1948, he was shifted again, this time to the Class B Lynchburg (VA) Cardinals, apparently never playing for West Frankfort. (The Lynchburg club went on to win the Piedmont League title in 1948 as they did in 1944 and again in 1949.)

While Chalifoux was assigned to Lynchburg, from late March through June of 1948, there is no online statistical record of him appearing in any game action. He was on the disabled list for three weeks in late May into early June. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, he was suspended and at the end of the month was ruled to be ineligible, per his player card.

The Cardinals kept Chalifoux on reserve that winter before he returned in February 1949, still listed on the Lynchburg roster. On April 8, he was released. There is no further record on his card for 1949, as he likely returned to the Provincial League, where his Baseball-Reference record indicates he played that season.

In 1950, with St. Jean, which as noted above was then back in the NAPBL, Chalifoux reappeared with a new contract. However, in late June, he was suspended and released two days later. That appears to be the conclusion of his five-year organized baseball career.

But, it wasn't.

### **Online newspaper archives**

Researching Chalifoux via online newspaper archives became a third major endeavor, leading to many additional facts learned. It was not a path I had planned to take, but the more I learned about Chalifoux, the more I wanted to know.

Despite there being no formal records, newspaper accounts of Chalifoux's 1948 on-field exploits are fairly plentiful. He pitched for Lynchburg of the Class B Piedmont League, including as the Cardinals' starter on the second game of the 1948 season, on April 23.

Soon, Chalifoux was moved into a relief role. June 13, 1948 may have marked his final game as a Cardinals farmhand. At Norfolk, the left-hander relieved future major-leaguer Johnny Klippstein with Lynchburg down 5-0 in the second inning and threw the final 7 2/3 innings, yielding five additional runs on 10 hits. As noted in his

player card information above, a few days later, he was removed from the active roster.

Note the "Lefty Ed Ford" who dominated for Norfolk in this game is none other than future Yankee and Hall of Famer Whitey Ford. (h/t reader Michael Roberts)

In another interesting item of trivia nested in a story that might be considered trivia itself, Chalifoux and his Lynchburg teammates trained in the spring of 1948 in Albany, GA, a facility used by the Cardinals in the 1940's and 1950's for minor leaguers. Seven springs earlier, Albany was the very camp at which sore-armed 20-year old Class D pitcher Stan Musial began his historic conversion to the outfield.

My unproven theory as to why Chalifoux's 1948 Lynchburg stats (and even his presence on the team) are not captured in the standard online record sources – which do include his many teammates – is that he was inactive at the end of the season. Gone and forgotten, perhaps. (Update: SABR member Chuck McGill reminded me that stats from players of the day who had limited action were called "less thans" and their results may not have been represented individually.)

On August 31, 1949, Chalifoux made his only appearance in the national publication *The Sporting News*, at least that I can locate. In an article about the Quebec Provincial League, it was noted that the pitcher was traded from the first-place Drummondville Cubs to the Granby Red Sox.

Also mentioned was that in his first outing for "St. Johns" (on August 18), Chalifoux had pitched a six-inning no-hitter against Sherbrooke. (Apparently, St. Johns was an alternate representation for St. Jean.) This no-hitter is also mentioned in compilations of minor league no-hitters I have seen elsewhere.

A February 18, 1950 item in the *Montreal Gazette* noted that Chalifoux had been signed by the St. Jean Braves, again consistent with his player card in that he returned to the ball club for a second season.

However, Chalifoux did not give up sports after his release by St. Jean. In the winter of 1950, he returned to the ice with the Berlin (NH) Maroons, well-known as a top Eastern hockey team after earlier having played for their rival, the Lewiston Pepperells.

He reappeared on the baseball diamond as well in July 1951, playing for the Winona Chiefs of the Southern Minnesota League. It was an amateur circuit, which attracted local, college and professional players, including former Negro Leaguers. That season, Chalifoux went 3-1, allowing 53 hits, 22 walks and 17 strikeouts, but there is no

(Continued from page 17)

record of innings pitched or runs allowed.

In the fall of 1951, Chalifoux stayed in the area, signing with the Rochester (MN) Mustangs of the American Amateur Hockey Association. In those days, he was often known as “Rollie”, though later he went by “Lefty”, or perhaps one was a hockey nickname and the other baseball-related.

The forward and center was tough, but also superstitious. From the Winona (MN) Daily News on February 13, 1952:

**‘He was gashed in a hockey game recently. When the doctor completed sewing up the wound, he told Rollie, “Well, that is it, son. It took 13 stitches.” “Thirteen,” Chalifoux cried. “That is bad luck. Will you please put in one more?” The doc complied, so it goes into the records as 14 stitches, not 13, and Rollie can rest a little more easily.’**

Just a few days afterward, Chalifoux’s fortunes improved as he moved from the below-.500 Mustangs to the playoff-bound Sioux City Suhawks, also in the AAHL.

Less than two months later, Chalifoux the pitcher was back for a second summer with the Winona Chiefs. Appropriately, the left-hander is at the far left of this 1952 team picture.

However, by late June, the then-28-year old was released by Winona. His final season record was 2-1 with a 4.07 ERA over 24 1/3 innings. Chalifoux gave up 11 earned runs on 26 hits to go with 12 walks and 15 strikeouts. Based on all of my research, this was his actual swan song as a baseball player.

### Post-baseball

Just because the pitching phase of his career (apparently) ended in June 1952, however, it did not mean the talented and well-traveled athlete was ready to retire.

In fact, Chalifoux returned to the ice with the Berlin Maroons in an amateur hockey career that continued until 1956. It only seemed fitting that Chalifoux laced up his skates for a team known as “The Flying Frenchmen”, winners of multiple national championships in the 1950’s and into the 1960’s. Chalifoux had first played for the Maroons in the late 1940’s and again on the 1954 National Champions.

After his playing days ended, Chalifoux officiated hockey at the high school, college and professional ranks and coached hockey and American Legion baseball. During the day, he delivered mail for the United States Postal

Service for 36 years – an especially interesting number in the context of this story!

In his later years, Chalifoux noted without regret that his baseball career was likely compromised by his choice to remain active in hockey, as well.

“Maybe I would have been better off to stick to baseball in my playing days,” Chalifoux told Bob Gardner of the Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation in 1995. “A separated shoulder caused by a hockey injury probably ended any real chance I had to make it all the way.”

It certainly wasn’t the money that kept Chalifoux going all of those years.

“I can’t imagine today’s salaries,” he said. “My best year (playing professional baseball) was \$1,700.”

Given how Chalifoux felt in 1995, one can only imagine what he would say today.

In 1995, Chalifoux was inducted into the Auburn-Lewiston (Maine) Sports Hall of Fame. His plaque notes:

### ***Roland “Lefty” Chalifoux***

*Exceptional performer on some of Lewiston H.S. great all-time football, baseball and hockey championship teams in 1942-43. Entered World War II service earning Purple Heart for battle wounds. Skated for Lewiston Pepperell’s Berlin Maroons, Bates Fabrics and Rochester, Minnesota (A.H.L.). Worumbo & Winthrop Mills semi-pro grid teams, pro baseball in Canadian League and N.Y. Giants farm team in Rochester, N.Y. Pitched for Auburn Asas in first game in Pettingill Park. Organized and coached Lewiston Legion baseballers. Baseball and hockey official for over 30 years.*

In the following photo, Chalifoux, second from the left, holds his plaque on induction night, April 7, 1995. Others (from the left) are Gerard Delisle, Mrs. Frank Daunis, Allen Harvie and Pennell Woodard.



(Continued from page 18)

## Blind alleys

For a future Chalifoux researcher, open questions to explore include his semi-pro football exploits as well as the Giants minor league chapter of his baseball career, for which I have uncovered no evidence.

One of his two sons, Roland Jr., became a neurosurgeon. Years later, Roland Jr. presented the no. 36 Cardinals uniform to his colleague, Dr. Kirsch, as a gift. Unfortunately, no photographs or documentation of any kind are available to assist in validating the uniform's history.

### The uniform's "caretaker"

I almost feel guilty every time I communicate with Dr. Wolff Kirsch. The 87-year old is a decorated scholar, neurosurgeon and inventor currently working in Alzheimer's disease research, a crucial endeavor for our society.

Kirsch grew up in University City, Missouri, across from Flynn Park Grammar School. He recalls that during World War II, he and his mates converted the tennis courts into a diamond. This make-shift ballfield was visible from the apartment of Browns general manager Bill DeWitt Sr., who lived with his family on the second floor of the Pershing duplex facing the courts.

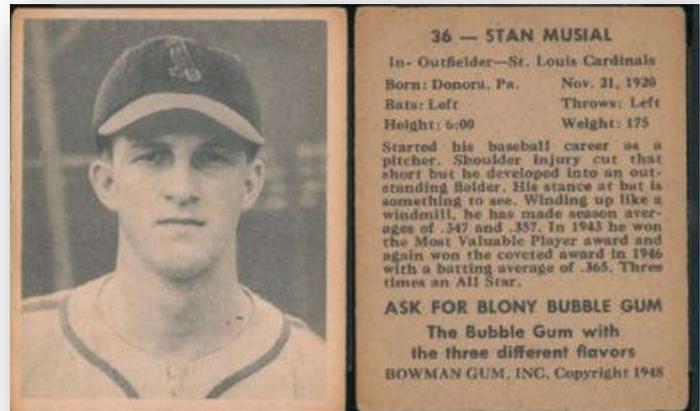
The Kirsches' fandom came to life when his brother, who was the better athlete, received an offer from the Browns after throwing a no-hitter in a suburban league game in 1945. But he, too, went to med school. Their Uncle Harry was employed by the Brownies as a scout.

In 1942, the six-year old who later became Mrs. Kirsch was in Europe. After she and her family successfully evaded the Nazis, they were eventually liberated through the heroics of soldiers like Chalifoux.

For obvious reasons, the proud St. Louisan Wolff insisted their first child be named "Stanley". In the late 1960's, when Musial's business office was notified of the naming, they provided a bat as a gift, a keepsake which Stanley Kirsch still treasures today.

Wolff Kirsch studied biochemistry and completed his neurosurgery training at the Washington University School of Medicine. Over his distinguished career, he has secured more than 40 United States and international patents based on discoveries resulting from his research efforts, was instrumental in obtaining \$10 million in research grants and has had almost 200 papers published in medical journals.

Dr. Kirsch currently serves as director of the Neurosurgery Center for Research, Training, and Education at Loma Linda University in California.



Stan Musial "rookie" card, 1948 Bowman

As I began my search, I wondered if Musial might have worn no. 36 for a short period at some point relatively early in his long career. Imagine my excitement when a simple Google search unearthed this baseball card.

The Bowman card confused me, as it is dated 1948, but has what I know is a spring training 1942 photograph of Musial. Its money shot – or at least I thought it was – was the identification on the back, which says "36 – Stan Musial".

As I soon learned, this Musial card is considered his "rookie card" by collectors because it was his first. But the "36" is not a reference to his uniform number – it was the sequence of the Musial card in the Bowman 1948 series. Strike one!

I went down another unproductive trail – at least to-date – as I explored whether Musial could have worn no. 36 after no. 19 during his first St. Louis spring training camp, in 1942. In the initial no. 19 search, it took me years to find just one spring 1942 roster. Still, I asked that gentleman if he had another from later in camp. The answer was "no". I also tried my peer members of SABR among other sources, but again came up empty.

Lowering the odds further was the fact that coach Buzzy Wares wore no. 36 in spring 1942, but sometime afterward moved to no. 26 (which had been assigned to pitcher Howie Krist that spring). It seems almost certainly out of the question that Stan ever wore no. 36 in a regular season game – such as briefly to open the 1942 season. An Opening Day 1942 roster confirming Stan with no. 6 would eliminate this highly unlikely scenario almost completely.

This brings me back to the thought that the uniform was more likely re-numbered for minor league re-use. It would seem to highly reduce the possibility that it had

(Continued from page 19)

been in Musial's possession to directly gift to Chalifoux, however.

As noted above, there is no clear tie of the Musial no. 36 uniform to the 1947 Allentown Cardinals. Chalifoux did not play for West Frankfort in 1947 or 1948, but spent three months of that 1948 season as a member of the Lynchburg Cardinals.

Could he have acquired the Musial uniform while in Virginia? Securing a copy of the 1948 Lynchburg roster with player numbers appears to be the key to unlock that answer.

None of the local or regional historical reference sources in Virginia could verify, nor did online newspaper archives answer the question of whether Chalifoux was assigned no. 36 with Lynchburg – a logical explanation for how the old Musial uniform could have come into his possession.

Professional baseball in Lynchburg continues today with the Cleveland Indians high-A affiliate, the Hillcats. While no office records from the 1940's still exist, the team historian and recently-retired long-time general manager of the club, Ronnie Roberts, enthusiastically joined my search, canvassing local fans and volunteering his own time to review newspaper microfilm records.

Though Roberts has not yet located a 1948 Cardinals numeric roster, he did find this grainy photo from the April 24, 1948 edition of the Lynchburg News. While the specific player is unidentified, the details of the uniform the team wore that season are clear. They appear to match the style of our mystery Musial no. 36.

### What is next?

Roberts continues to canvass local individuals, but seems close to calling off his branch of the search for a 1948

Lynchburg numeric roster. I've gone as far as posting a notice on the local Craigslist site, hoping to locate an old scorecard pack rat in the area.

Dr. Kirsch realized that especially with no documentation, professional authentication would be crucial to both verify the uniform's legitimacy and set its value. He also learned that it would take a \$2500 investment up front to have this service performed by a reputable memorabilia firm – a sizeable fee. To be avoided was an auction house that offered to do the authentication at no charge. If it sounds too good to be true...

Instead, Dr. Kirsch and his wife have been discussing the possibility of donating this unique piece of Musial history to a museum where it can be enjoyed by many. I have put in a good word on behalf of a certain entity about which most readers of this article are already familiar!

### Acknowledgements

Among the many who have helped me along the way in this journey to date include Don Drooker of [rotisserieduck.com](http://rotisserieduck.com) (memorabilia advice), Ronnie Roberts of the [Lynchburg Hillcats](#) (1948 Lynchburg Cardinals), Jeff Lantz from Minor League Baseball headquarters (Chalifoux player card), Cathy Keen of the Archives Center, National Museum of American History (The Smithsonian) (1947 Allentown Cardinals roster), Ralph Tuttle and Erin Simpson of the [Auburn-Lewiston Sports Hall of Fame](#) (Chalifoux Hall of Fame program and photo) and of course, Dr. Wolff Kirsch, who started me down this most interesting, but still winding path, as well as Dr. Roland Chalifoux Jr., who provided the war-time photos of his father.

Brian Walton can be reached via email at [brian@thecardinalnation.com](mailto:brian@thecardinalnation.com) or for fastest turnaround, pose your questions on The Cardinal Nation's [members-only forum](#). Follow Brian on [Twitter](#).



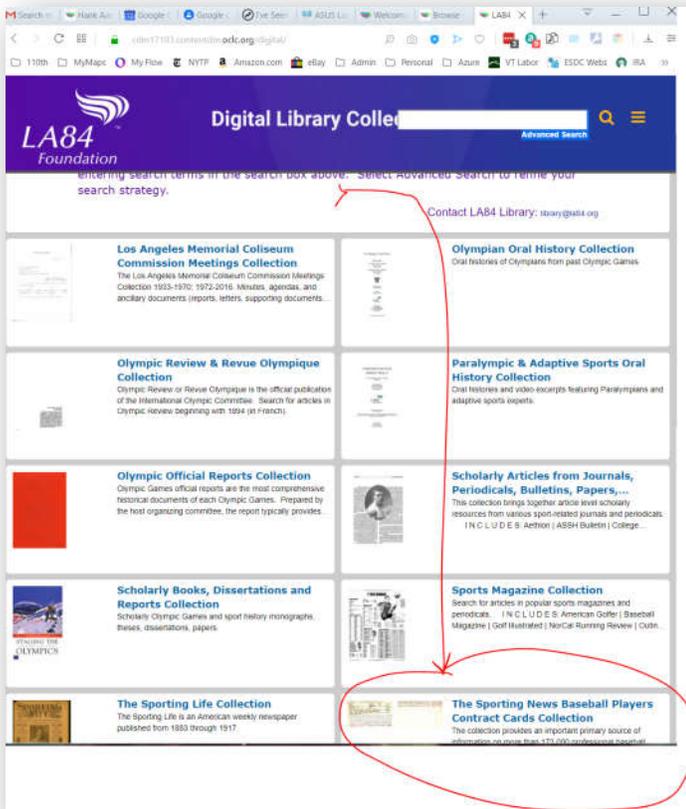
The Des Moines Register May 15, 1910

# TSN Cards are live

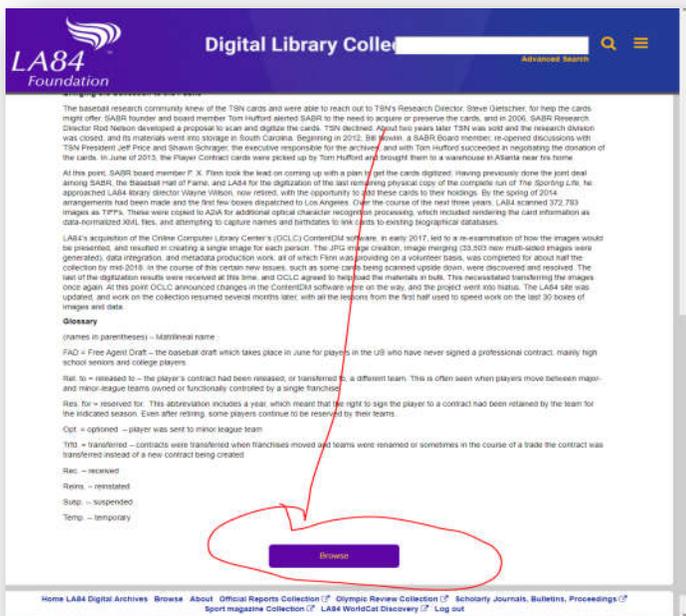
By F.X. Flinn

Here's a how-to with some tips:

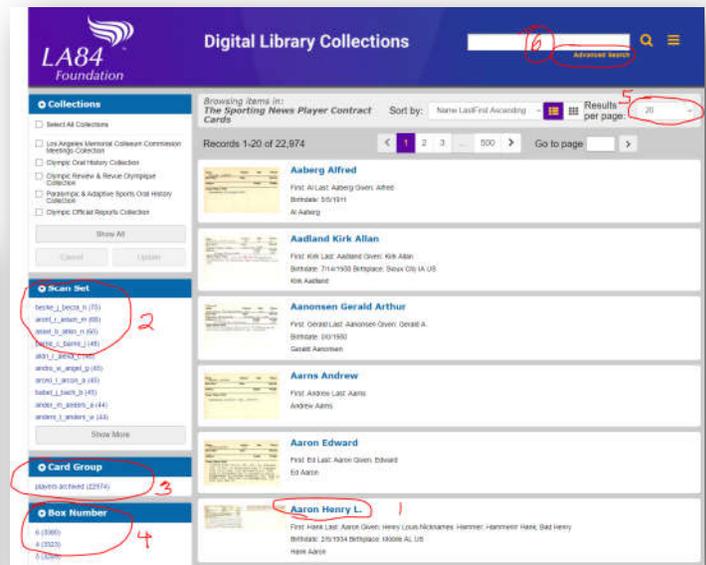
- 1) Go to the LA84 Digital Library Collections
- 2) scroll down and click on the TSN collection:



- 3) you get to the collection description, and when you finish reading it, or simply scroll or page down, at the bottom of this long page is a button labeled Browse that



- 4) The main display page:



Notes --

- 1 -- Click on the player name to have their card page come up
- 2 -- cards were scanned about 50 at a time; the scan\_set is the name of the group using this pattern:  
up to first 5 letters of last name of first card \_ first name initial first card \_ up to first 5 letters of last name of last card \_ first name initial last card.
- 3 -- the only Card Group loaded so far are the cards that were in the archives when TSN stopped using this system and computerized things. other groups are Current Players, Umpires and Executives; plus there are a smattering of 2 and 3 card players. I'm planning on getting all those loaded next, and then follow allon with boxes 8 - 49, the rest of the archived players. That way Tommy Aaron, Harvey Wendelstedt, and Don Aase will show up.
- 4 -- Box by box counts and a way of just diving into a particular box
- 5 -- you can set this to see up to 200 cards at a time, and change from a list to a grid
- 6 -- If you click on the words Advanced Search you get this screen:

LA84 Foundation Digital Library Collections

Advanced Search

Collections

Select All Collections

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission Meetings Collection

Olympic Oral History Collection

Olympic Review & Revue Olympique Collection

Paralympic & Adaptive Sports Oral History Collection

Olympic Official Reports Collection

Enter Search Term:

All fields

Please enter a Search Term:  All of the words

Enter Date:

on  e.g. YYYY-MM-DD

OK now the search drop down box will have the TSN fields. Just for fun select Player Contract Info:

The Sporting News Player Contract Cards

United States Olympic Committee Reports Collection

Special Olympics 2015 World Summer Games

LA84 Research Reports Collection

LA84 Coaching Manuals Collection

SportsLetter Collection

Images

Donna de Varona Title IX Collection

Helms Athletic Foundation Collection

Women's Southern California Golf Association Collection

Olympic Curriculum Collection

Trust me on this, you want to uncheck "Select All Collections" and then click Show all.

As shown below, check the TSN card collection and then click Save:

Advanced Search

Collections

Select All Collections

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission Meetings Collection

Olympic Oral History Collection

Olympic Review & Revue Olympique Collection

Paralympic & Adaptive Sports Oral History Collection

Olympic Official Reports Collection

Scholarly Journals Bulletins Proceedings Collection

Scholarly Books, Dissertations and Reports Collection

Sports Magazines Collection

The Sporting Life Collection

The Sporting News Player Contract Cards

United States Olympic Committee Reports Collection

Special Olympics 2015 World Summer Games

LA84 Research Reports Collection

LA84 Coaching Manuals Collection

SportsLetter Collection

Images

Donna de Varona Title IX Collection

Helms Athletic Foundation Collection

Women's Southern California Golf Association Collection

Olympic Curriculum Collection

Enter Search Term:

All fields

All fields

Display Name

Card Group

Name Details

Birth Information

Death Information

Career Began

Career Ended

SABR Biography

Baseball Reference

Name LastFirst

Characteristics

**Player Contract Info**

Published Career

Citation

ScanID

SABR PersonID

Retrosheet ID

BBRef PlayerID

BBRef RegisterID

Type in what you are looking for -- say "Scout"

Enter Search Term:

Player Contract Info

Scout All of the words

Enter Date:

on  e.g. YYYY-MM-DD

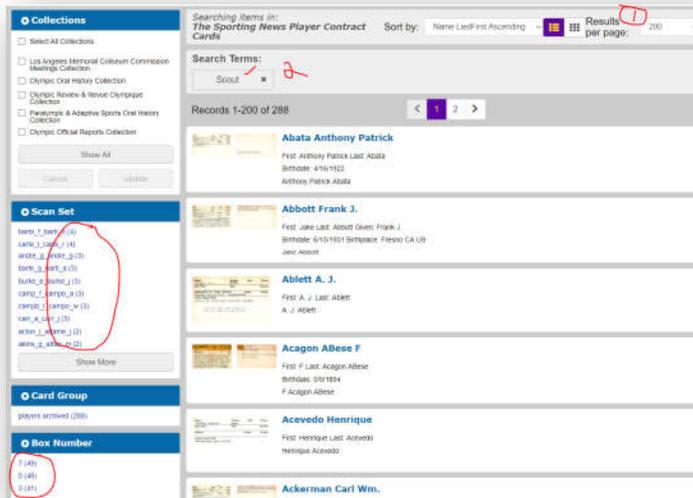
and click on Search:

1 -- I've set it to show me 200 results

2 -- I could X on the Scout to get rid of the search which returned 288 results in the first 7 boxes totaling some 23K cards, a rate of 1.25% for the collection

3 -- Scan sets show 0 to as many as 4 cards per set. The scan sets with the most 'Scout' returns are on top

4 -- Boxes listed in order of number of 'Scout' returns



## Chairman's Note

I hope everyone is doing well.

Approximately 16 months ago we sent out a questionnaire to committee members to learn about the projects that you were pursuing. These initiatives are included on the SABR.org site. You can check out the list by logging on to SABR.org and clicking on to Committees, Minor League Research Committee and then member/interests: <https://sabr.org/research/minor-leagues-research-committee/member-interests>

I want to update the list so if you have a project that you want included or wish to revise your project currently listed on the site, please email the information to me at [George.pawlush@wilkes.edu](mailto:George.pawlush@wilkes.edu)

Since assuming the role as committee chairman, we have batted around a number of ideas regarding a committee project. I'd like to propose an idea and get your feedback. Between 1978 and 1992, the Committee produced three volumes of "Minor League Stars" books that featured minor league career records of many players who spent most of their playing days in the minor leagues and be-

came legends to the fans that followed them. You can access the three volumes on our minor league page here:

<https://sabr.org/research/minor-leagues-research-committee>

I propose that we produce a new book to include 25 to 30 stories (1500 to 2000 words each) on prominent minor league teams, league presidents, owners, general managers, and field managers, who made significant contributions to minor league baseball. If there is sufficient interest to proceed, I will ask SABR members for nominations, then have a committee pare down the list and recruit authors. What do you think? Let me know.

As part of SABR's 50th Anniversary celebration, Mark Armour has asked Andy McCue to lead a project to identify the 50 best baseball books published in the "SABR Era," from August 1971 until today. He would like minor league committee members to send nominations to him at [mccue@sabr.org](mailto:mccue@sabr.org). Andy is trying to identify the general run of baseball books you've read over the years. It's not just the histories and biographies to consider, but anything that caught your interest and contributed to your understanding of the game.

## Beating the Bushes

A publication of the Society for American Baseball Research  
Minor League Committee

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