Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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Comments from the Chair

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Having just seen the Mariners beat the Yankees in the bottom of the 11th to move to the second round of the playoffs, I'm regaining confidence that the game will survive. Randy Johnson vs. Jack McDowell in relief and Junior Griffey having fun playing ball. For a moment, it's a game.

Our Committee has had a rather quiet three months. Based mostly on interest spurred at the Pittsburgh convention in June, we've added six new members (see listing below). Dick Clark and Rob Edelman already have filled out forms for Baseball Online and David Nemec generously donated a copy of his latest book, which I had the pleasure of cataloging myself.

Speaking of Baseball Online, as my nature compels me to do, the database has grown yet again, as seen from the accompanying table. Yet, we can always use more help.

For those who are not on the SABR electronic mailing list (and for anyone with a computer and a modem, I urge you to join), Ted Hathaway and I have been making an effort to gain some aid in actually putting Baseball Online *online*. We hope that the exposure this will provide will generate more volunteers and perhaps some financial support to help keep the database growing.

We still have had no luck generating any interest on the part of foundations. Ted has put that effort on the back burner for the moment. But, if you have any good ideas about where we might find a foundation or similar group interested in supporting the project, contact Ted (5645 Fremont Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55419; e-mail: hathae@msus1.msus.edu).

In other Committee efforts, Jim O'Donnell got lucky and the Committee will benefit. Jim wandered into a Bellingham bookstore to find a copy of Shirley Povich's *The Washington Senators* (1954) from the Putnam series, with a dust jacket, for $20. Jim has volunteered to prepare an index for the book. And Bob Boynton reports that he will index Fred Lieb's *The St. Louis Cardinals* (1944) from the Putnam series. That leaves only the Yankees, Orioles, Cubs, updated version of the Braves, *The Umpire Story*, and *The Story of the World Series* to be spoken for.

Frank Phelps is making substantial progress in the index to The Sporting News' *Baseball Register* (1940–1994) project, with a lot of computer help from John Green.

Tom Shieber sent an interesting article—"Rare and Historical Baseball Books: A Survey of the Game in Print from 1744 to 1921" by Barry Sloate, a longtime collector of older baseball books—from the Sept. 1995 issue of *The Vintage & Classic Baseball Collector*. I find it very interesting reading from one of the authorities in the field, and it has numerous illustrations of the books he discusses. For a copy of the 10-page article, send me $1.

Baseball Online Statistics

Level	Number	% change over last year
Books		
5	2,460	32.2%
4	1,193	17.1%
Other	9,339	1.4%
Total	12,992	7.5%
Book Sections		
5	5,049	65.2%
4	750	185.2%
Other	37	428.6%
Total	5,836	75.4%
Magazine/newspaper articles		
5	8,978	73.9%
4	1	0.0%
Other	7,323	19.5%
Total	16,302	44.4%
Total		
5	16,487	63.6%
4	1,944	51.6%
Other	16,699	8.8%
Total	35,130	31.5%

New Members of the Bibliography Committee

Dick Clark: 1080 Hull St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198. (Dick is also co-chair of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee.)

Rob Edelman: 378 Division St., Amsterdam, NY 12010. (Rob is the author of *Great Baseball Films*, published last year.)

Jan Finkel: 91 Laurel Lane, Swanton, MD 21561. (Jan is a retired English professor.)

Stephen Johnson, III: 62 King St., Oberlin, OH 44074

David Nemec: 1517 Irving, San Francisco, CA 94122. (David is the author of *The Beer and Whisky League*, a history of the major league American Association, as well as several other books.)

Corey Seeman: 1084 Covington Pl., Allison Park, PA 15101. (Corey is with the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and leads its effort to develop more resources on baseball in western Pennsylvania.)

Book Reviews

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith
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OCTOBER 1964
David Halberstam. New York: Villard Books, 1994. 381p.

With the publication of *October 1964*, together with *Summer of '49* (1989) and *The Fifties* (1993), this distinguished journalist makes a trilogy dealing with the deep changes in mid-20th century America. In *The Fifties*, only seven pages (692–698) are devoted to sports, and most of these concern basketball player Bill Russell. The other two books concern themselves primarily with major league baseball. *October 1964* seems to me the least successful of the trilogy.

The problem may lie in the title, which suggests that the book will focus on the 1964 World Series between the New York Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals. It doesn't. Halberstam covers

the '64 series in 35 pages toward the end of the book. The sixth game gets a little more than a page. He actually tells the story of how two pennant-winning major league teams negotiate the season, insisting, in the process, on comparing the two teams. For Halberstam, the Yankees represent baseball's past, the Cardinals its future. This doesn't work as well as Halberstam hopes, and the dual responsibility of telling the story of the season and maintaining the comparison of the two organizations leaves the author with unassimilable material. There are several brief and unintegrated chapters.

Despite this central difficulty, we learn a lot about the Yankee and Cardinal organizations at midcentury. The key ingredient for Halberstam is race. The Cardinals were able to integrate black players (indeed, Bob Gibson, Curt Flood, Lou Brock, and Bill White are among the most important players on the '64 team); the Yankees were not.

Halberstam mentions various changes taking place in American culture and in major league baseball. In addition to changing attitudes about race, he speaks of "a new, more affluent America of the sixties" (p.116), of an emerging consciousness of a gap between generations (p.121), and of a "new media society" (p.163). Within major league baseball, the "new element" was speed on the field (p.140). Off the field, more plentiful ancillary money was making players less dependent on the ballclub (p.174). There is even movement toward a "free-market situation" with respect to players (p.292, 356).

The New York Yankees will have nothing, or as little as possible, to do with these changes. They are racist, smug about their superiority to opponents, and domineering over their own players. The whole organization was geared to pleasing a white, middle-class audience, and it was feared that the presence of blacks would drive this audience away (p.54). As a consequence, the Yankees were "one of the last teams to get around to entering the chase for talented black players" (p.223). Yankee smugness shows most clearly in the general underestimation of Cardinal players—particularly the black players—in the Yankees' World Series scouting reports (p.338). Halberstam comments more than once on the team's tendency to suppress the stats of its own starting pitchers so as to negotiate their contracts more easily (p.41, 188); and in retelling the story of Roger Maris' 1961 pursuit of Babe Ruth's home run record, Halberstam emphasizes that the Yankees did nothing to either protect him from the media or reward him for his accomplishment (p.169–170).

The Cardinals, on the other hand, were able to deal better with the changes occurring in the larger culture, though perhaps Halberstam has exaggerated their differences. Over and over again, he returns to the subject of race and how racial tensions on the Cardinals were minimized. He priases owner Gussie Busch for his attitude toward race (p.57), notes that by 1964 "the Cardinals had become something of a model in terms of their racial composition and attitudes" (p.56), remarks on how much black Cardinal players "liked and trusted" manager Johnny Keane, praises the entire Cardinal organization for understanding "the social problems of integration" (p.205), and cites baseball union leader Marvin Miller twice on how well the Cardinals "had managed to deal with the issue of race" (p.53, 365). When the reserve clause is challenged by a player in the early 1970s, it is Cardinal Curt Flood (p.364). Aside from the question of race, though, it would seem that the Cardinal management became more reactionary as the decade progressed. Witness Busch's famous 1968 diatribe and his appointment of Bob Howsam to succeed Bing Devine as general manager.

Race, though, is what Halberstam focuses on, and he describes a culture of black baseball operating within the major leagues and which extends to players on the Yankees as well as the Cardinals. Halberstam's treatment of George Crowe (p.61–63) concludes that "he merged the culture of the two races, for he was a black man who had lived for a long time in a black man's world, and when he came to the white man's world he brought with him a distinctly black sense of dignity and pride". Others who clearly did so are scouts Buck O'Neil—shown by an uncle that black players were the best players in the world and that the baseball they played was different, "all about speed and aggressiveness"—who prepared Lou Brock for the majors (p.144–145) and Bill Yancey, who took Al Downing to meet and talk with old-time Negro League players to get a sense of his heritage (p.225). These scenes are among the most illuminating in the book.

Halberstam is generally fun to read. Throughout the book there are vignettes that are valuable for themselves. He tells of Mickey Mantle's comment after hearing Maris booed: "Roger has stolen my fans" (p.11). Or Stan Musial's advice to Curt Flood on how to wait on the curve ball (p.60): "Well, you wait for a strike. Then you knock the shit out of it." Or Tom Seaver in a confrontation with an older Bob Gibson, shouting "you better know that I throw a lot harder than you do now, you old fart" (p.272).

Halberstam lists 76 interviewees (alas, neither Mantle nor Flood among them) and a bibliography of 69 titles. There is no index. There are 16 pages of photographs, beginning with a priceless one of Roger Maris eyeing with suspicion the plaque of Babe Ruth in center field in Yankee Stadium.

THE MAN IN THE DUGOUT: Baseball's Top Managers and How They Got That Way. Leonard Koppett. New York: Crown Books, 1993. 404p. $22.50

JULY 2, 1903: The Mysterious Death of Hall-of-Famer Big Ed Delahanty. Mike Sowell. New York: Macmillan, 1992. 326p. $20

I review these books together but not because their subjects are similar; they aren't. *July 2, 1903* treats major league baseball at the turn of the century, with the emphasis on the career of Ed Delahanty. *The Man in the Dugout* is an analytic history of big league managers, focusing mainly on the 20th century. The two books are similar in that they fall short of their goals in much the same way.

Koppett calls his analytic model "family tree analysis"; he argues that all successful major league managerial styles descend from three managers—John McGraw, Connie Mack, and Branch Rickey. Or is it four? Later in the book he adds Clark Griffith as a fourth seminal influence (p.208). "Our focus," he contends, "is how different managers have gone about being successful, and what the roots of that success are" (p.xi). His sketches of the careers of major league managers are "essays, not biographies" (p.43). Unfortunately, the analytic model doesn't work very well. Most managers, we find, derive from at least two of the great managers. Frank Frisch, for instance, "in running the game and making baseball decisions ... was pure McGraw", but "at the same time ... was being exposed to Rickey's ideas and systems" (p.189). I wonder too if Rickey shouldn't be considered more of a general manager than a field manager. Koppett seems to realize this, because at the end of the book he notes that what emerges mosty clearly is how baseball activities and experiences are "interconnected": "it's a small world" (p.395).

The problem in *July 2, 1903* is a similar one, though much intensified. The book's title indicates that it will focus on Delahanty's death, but that's not what happens. In fact, there's surprisingly little material on Delahanty in the book. For long stretches, he is not mentioned, and it's easy for the reader to forget about him entirely. The context overwhelms the book's purported subject, and reading it—if you want to know about Ed Delahanty—becomes a disagreeable experience.

These two books, however flawed, are not without their value. Koppett's in particular is excellent in its detail, though by no means as good as his *The New Thinking Fan's Guide to Baseball* (1991). Of particular interest are his analyses of Connie Mack's habit of positioning fielders with his scorecard (p.79), Al Lopez and the changing position of the manager in the 1960s (p.178), Earl Weaver's devotion to the three-run homer and to statistics (p.322), and the persistent hiring of "recycled" managers (p.376). Though Koppett

doesn't cite sources (the book has an index but no bibliography), he writes often from personal experience with particular managers, and these may ultimately prove the most important parts of the book.

And though Sowell's book seems to me to fail as a study of Ed Delahanty, it is more successful in two other ways: 1) it provides a worm's-eye view of the events surrounding the establishment of the American League as a second major league (the book may be most valuable for the picture it draws of these events); and 2) it brings the mayhem of early 20th-century baseball to the forefront, with its interest in death and disaster (evinced also by Sowell's 1989 book, *The Pitch That Killed*). In addition to Delahanty's death, Sowell finds occasion to mention the deaths of Jim Creighton (p.61) and Charlie Ferguson (p.67), the "drunken rampage" of Ned Garvin (p.150), the suicides of Win Mercer (p.179) and Harry Pulliam (p.306), Charles Comiskey's feeling of being "victim of a strange curse" (p.211), the collapse of the stands in Philadelphia in which 12 people died (p.294–295), and the insanity of Ed Doheny (p.298).

One last caveat about Sowell's book. Like Koppett, he's a journalist functioning as a historian. He includes a brief bibliography, and the book has an index; but material with no discernible relation to the book's subject crops up. Consider this paragraph (p.64):

"Del also hooked up with Bob Allen, a local player whose boyhood friends included a fellow by the name of Warren Harding. Both Allen and Harding were destined to become leaders in their chosen fields. Allen eventually became president of baseball's Southern Association. Harding became president of the United States."

Since neither Allen nor Harding reappears in the book, it's hard to regard this as anything but padding. Here's another suspicious paragraph (p.97):

"'Be less impetuous, Edward,' [Harry] Wright would say on those occasions Delahanty returned to the bench cursing and berating himself. 'Be less hasty. Calm yourself. Modify your speech. It doesn't do you a bit of good to be too strong in big words. It won't help make you a better ballplayer.'"

It's hard to imagine this conversation actually taking place, or if there's evidence that it did, what Sowell's source might have been. Use this book with care.

SEPARATING THE MEN FROM THE BOYS: The First Half-Century of the Carolina League.
Jim L. Sumner. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994. 260p. $17.95

I've not had much practice in reading league histories, and so I don't quite know how to evaluate this one. I wanted to read it because North Carolina is my adopted home state and because Rocky Mount, my adopted home town, has had two spectacular years in the league since I've lived here—a championship year in 1975 and a disastrous one (their final record was 24–114) in 1980.

I get the impression that Jim Sumner, curator of sports, recreation, and leisure at the North Carolina Museum of History, was commissioned to write this book. For the past ten years or so, he has written on various aspects of sport in North Carolina: he's clearly staked out the history of sport in this state as his study. In the preface, he writes that John Hopkins (president of the Carolina League) contacted him "for ideas to commemorate" the 50th anniversary of the league and acknowledges the assistance of both Hopkins and Miles Wolff, among others. So this is by no means an unauthorized history.

What goes into the history of a league? What Sumner has done is provide a month-by-month summary of each pennant race, supplemented by the various administrative changes, such as franchise moves and agreements with major league clubs. Along the way we get blow-by-blow accounts of crucial series, accounts of record-setting performances (would you believe that Chuck Weatherspoon of the Wilson Tobs hit *seven* grand slam homers during the 1961 season?), and the principal statistics of the leading players of each team. Appendices list league leaders in batting average, home runs, runs batted in, games won, and earned run average. Player-, pitcher-, and manager-of-the-year awards are listed. There are brief accounts of all league all-star games. There is a strong bibliography, listing works on the minor leagues and on North Carolina history. The book has an index.

But even as it delivers all this information, the book is not a happy read. One year follows another with deadening regularity, and the overall result is reader somnolence. To his credit, Sumner works hard to mitigate this mood, and a lively humor and an eye for the odd often inform his narrative. I was happy to learn of pitcher Turk Wendell, whose eccentricities include talking to the ball and brushing his teeth between innings (p.207). And the account of a 1959 game between Wilson and Raleigh, called by Sumner "one of the rowdiest in league history", is a delight.

Sumner also uses a kind of sidebar device, distinguished from the main text, to develop at greater length items of interest only mentioned in the main text. Thus we have a page set aside on "The Revival of the Minors" in the 1980s (p.179). Another covers the integration of the Carolina League (p.45); a third treats the unusually dismal season of the Rocky Mount Pines in 1980 (p.156). There are many more, touching all sorts of subjects. These add considerable detail and substance to the narrative. The story of the dismal Pines needs one more detail: conscious of their underdog status, the Pines took to playing the theme from Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* in the background as they announed their starting lineup for each game. It didn't help.

Published by John F. Blair, North Carolina's most distinguished trade publisher, the physical book is also something of a disappointment. The narrow margins make the pages seem crowded, and many of the large number of illustrations seem poorly reproduced. Photographs of several of the league's ballparks do appear and make one wish for more. In fact, a more rewarding history of the league might begin with its ballparks, with the changing social ambience and the underlying economics of minor league baseball. For now, Sumner's history, which centers on the achievements of the athletes and relegates other concerns to the periphery, will do just fine for a start.

THE ANNOTATED BASEBALL STORIES OF RING W. LARDNER, 1914–1919
George W. Hilton, ed. Stanford (Calif.): Stanford University Press, 1995. 631p. $35

Hilton's edition of Lardner's baseball stories makes an odd couple with Matthew Bruccoli's *Ring Around the Bases: The Complete Baseball Stories of Ring Lardner* (1992). Neither is complete. Bruccoli leaves out "The Courtship of T. Dorgan"; Hilton, while including that story, stops at 1919, omitting three later uncollected stories, and the six stories collected in 1933 as *Lose with a Smile*. Both books cost $35. While both are worth the money, I suspect SABRites will be happier with Hilton's edition. I know I am. That's because of Hilton's introduction, the many annotations to the stories he provides, the many photographs in the book, and the bibliography.

In the introduction, Hilton declares his primary interest in Lardner's fiction to be the way Lardner uses fact in his stories, their "empirical content" as he calls it. He's happiest with the Jack Keefe stories, which are filled with the names of actual ballplayers of the time, and considers "Lardner's dropping of actual teammates and real surroundings from his fiction in 1915 ... a mistake" (p.28). This focus determines the nature of his annotations; the "actual teammates and real surroundings" are to the best of Hilton's considerable ability all identified. The annotations (and the introduction) do more than this. There are brief and succinct annotations explaining the economics of the game at the time, the workings of the reserve system, and various conventions and terms of the game. We learn lots about the geography of Chicago and even the coach fare from San Francisco to Chicago in 1913, a fact that causesd us to reflect again on Jack Keefe's penuriousness (he sent Hazel less than half of what a ticket then cost).

The illustrations are many and various. There are photos of the many players and officials of the game mentioned in the stories, but this is just the beginning. A Lardner account of a White Sox game in a Chicago newspaper is reproduced, as is the first page of the first Jack Keefe story in the *Saturday Evening Post* (where Al Blanchard's last name appears for the only time). Many of the *Post* illustrations are also reproduced as are photos of the parks, spring training sites, hotels, and even the ship Jack Keefe calls "the Umpires of Japan". It's quite an impressive gathering. The bibliography, which Hilton calls a "Bibliography of General Works on Lardner", is a bit perplexing. Only 13 works are listed, including three unpublished doctoral disseertations and one master's thesis. A clarifying note from Hilton would have been helpful here.

In his introduction, Hilton summarizes the many Jack Keefe stories that don't concern Keefe the ballplayer, and this too is very helpful. I must take exception, though, to Hilton's understanding of the character of Keefe, an understanding that he doesn't support very clearly. He asserts (p.9) that "Keefe is not the 'L'l Abner' of Al Capp's world who through decades learned nothing and never moved intellectually beyond his Appalachian origins. From the outset on the spring training trip of 1913, Keefe learned and developed." As a last note to the last Keefe story, Hilton asserts that "even at the end he was still learning" (p.327). I'm not sure what Hilton thinks Keefe learns; but I'm pretty sure that the whole point of Jack Keefe is that he never learns the first thing about himself. As a fictional character he doesn't develop, he only stands more revealed. Oddly, Hilton refers to Keefe's "personality disintegration" during the 1919 season, which seems inconsistent with the notion of him learning and developing (p.15).

With all this, Hilton's annotated Lardner is a splendid achievement. Stanford Univ. Press has made a large book of it, more than 600 pages, with unusually wide margins. There is an index. Most every page illustrates the care and attention Hilton has given to Lardner's stories over a period of many years and for this he deserves our thanks. We can only hope he'll decide the later baseball stories merit a second volume.

CRACKING THE SHOW

Thomas Boswell. New York: Doubleday, 1994. 350p. $23

Boswell has the reputation of being the best daily newspaper columnist writing about baseball today. *Cracking the Show* will not diminish that reputation; it's also evidence that, in addition to writing a good column, he puts together a pretty good book.

It's not that easy. Collections of newspaper columns tend to wear out this reader. The experience of reading column after column—without the 24-hr rest and other kinds of reading the daily paper affords—can be quite numbing. I guarded against this by reading about 40 pages a week so I wouldn't get overloaded. But I needn't have worried. Boswell includes longer essays and also creates longer essays by grouping together columns on the same subject. He includes not just columns from the *Washington Post* but other assignments from the *Post* magazine to *Playboy* to *Inside Sports*.

It figures that the Baltimore Orioles would get more than their share of space in *Cracking the Show*. There are several columns on Cal Ripken gathered together. Mike Mussina is the subject of an 11-page essay. The Orioles of the late 1980s are the subject of five essays. And there is a column of reminiscence about Tom Cheney's 21-strikeout game for the Senators against the Orioles in 1962.

But there's a whole lot more than this: a bunch of columns on Pete Rose, two on Nolan Ryan, two about Carlton Fisk that focus on his discussions with Deion Sanders on the subject of how baseball is played in the major leagues. Frank Thomas, Juan Gonzalez, Cecil Fielder, and Barry Bonds are grouped together as the "New Breed"; six other players are called "Old Goats". There are columns on the World Series between 1989 and 1993: Boswell calls the 1991 Braves–Twins epic the "best bad series in history" (p.223) and gets in his shots (p.213) at the Metrodome ("the world's largest high school gym". Other subjects include Bo Jackson and Fernando Valenzuela. Boswell's columns on Whitey Herzog were of special interest to me because they described Herzog's philosophy of building a team around speed and relief pitching. Another essay on the advisability of hitting the first pitch also seemed of unusual interest. The book ends with essays on the recovery of umpire Steve Palermo and the Orioles' last game at Memorial Stadium, both full of good feeling.

Ending the book this way suggests its principle of organization. In an age when all seem intent on outdoing each other in denouncing major league baseball, Boswell has tried to put together a book that is positive and optimistic in tone, in spite of the presence of considerable unpromising material. For this book, Boswell announces, "the Prophet of Doom is on vacation" (p.x). This doesn't mean he doesn't criticize the game; the very first essay deplores the increase of greed as an element of baseball-card collecting. It does mean the good and bad achieve a balance: the essays on Rose (a sort of anti-hero) are followed by several on Ripken (a contemporary heroic figure). Boswell ridicules negative attitudes toward the contemporary game in the following summary of the last inning of the 1992 National League playoffs (p.333):

"Francisco Cabrera, an unknown reserve, hits that miserable jacked-up ball through the infield in a game forced into the A.M. to please TV in the seventh game of an interminable NLCS between two teams of overpaid slackers." Boswell continues: "And the hair on the back of your neck stands up for an hour. ... So, maybe, baseball will adapt itself to this new vessel and thrive." All this in a column that vehemently opposes the new playoff scheme.

Toward the end of the book there is a series of columns on Bart Giamatti and Fay Vincent that will be of special interest to those of us who are trying to sort out the politics and economics of the contemporary game. Boswell advances the hypothesis of a series of strong commissioners (Ueberroth, Giamatti, Vincent) set in motion by Bowie Kuhn, and now, of course, at an end. This opposes the commissioner bashing that has gone on in other recent books on the game. Boswell begins his book with the statement "I have no sense that the sport has any basic difficulties that matter in the long view" (p.x). Let's hope he's right.

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