



SABR Nineteenth Century Committee

Overlooked Legend Award

2017 Preliminary Election Nominees

The 2017 SABR Nineteenth Century Overlooked Base Ball Legend Award is dedicated to the memory of committee members **Bob Gregory** and **Charles Faber**.

Biographies compiled by Adam Darowski, Joe Williams, and Bob Gregory.

Charlie Bennett

Born: November 21, 1854, **Died:** February 24, 1927

Years: 1878–93

Category: Player (Catcher)

Bennett was one of the greatest catchers of the Nineteenth Century, starring for Detroit and Boston of the NL. He was a powerful hitter who often ranked among the leaders in homers and slugging percentage while finishing in the top 10 in bases on balls six times. His defense was stellar and he was a leader on the field. He led NL catchers in fielding percentage seven times, putouts three times, and ranked in the top five in games caught 10 times. He caught Lee Richmond's perfect game in 1880, the first perfect game in professional baseball history. He was also an innovator in the use of equipment by popularizing the use of a chest protector and the catcher's mitt. During the offseason in 1894, he had an accident trying to catch a train and lost both of his legs, thus ending his career. He retired with the most games caught in history with 954. In 1896, Detroit's new ball park (Bennett Park) was named after the city's beloved hero. Bennett was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2015 and 2016, finishing 10th last year.

Tommy Bond

Born: April 2, 1856, **Died:** January 24, 1941

Years: 1874–84

Category: Player (Pitcher)

Bond was the best pitcher of the second half of the 1870s and the last living veteran of the NL's inaugural season. Bond is the only NL pitcher to win 40 games three times. He paced the league in wins, ERA, and strikeouts two times each and is the all-time leader in strikeouts per walk (5.04). Bond won the first pitching Triple Crown in 1877, winning 40 games with a 2.11 ERA and 170 strikeouts. He led Boston to back-to-back pennants in 1877 and 1878. Bond's effectiveness essentially disappeared when the mound was moved back to 50 feet in 1881, winning only 13 more games the rest of his career. Bond was the first Major League player born in Ireland. Today, the top pitching honor in the Irish Baseball League is called the Tommy Bond Best Pitcher Award. He

finished his career ranked third with 234 wins against 163 losses, a 2.14 ERA, and 972 strikeouts (compared to only 193 walks).

Charlie Buffinton

Born: June 14, 1861, **Died:** September 23, 1907

Years: 1882–92

Category: Player (Pitcher)

Buffinton, who was born and later died in Fall River, Massachusetts, was one of the most successful workhorse hurlers of the 1880s. He joined Boston in 1882 and quickly established himself as a strong partner with Boston's other ace, Jim Whitney. From 1883 to 1885 the pair threw nearly 92% of all innings for Boston. Buffinton appeared in the outfield more than on the mound in 1883 (hitting .238), but still won 25 games. In 1884, he went 48–16 with a 2.15 ERA and 417 strikeouts, trailing only Providence's Old Hoss Radbourn by 11 wins and 24 strikeouts. In 1886, Buffinton won only seven games, but played a bit more at first base and some in the outfield (hitting .290). He joined Philadelphia in 1887 and won 20 or more games in each of his three seasons with the team. He joined the Philadelphia club in the Players' League in 1890 (winning 19) before joining Boston of the AA in 1891 (going 29–9 with a 2.55 ERA). In 1892, he joined Brooklyn in the NL but retired when asked to take a pay cut following a 4–8 start. Buffinton won more than 60% of his decisions (233–152) with a 2.96 ERA. His 1,700 strikeouts ranked seventh all-time when he retired. He is one of just 10 pitchers in history with three seasons of 10+ Wins Above Replacement (per Baseball-Reference).

Bob Caruthers

Born: January 5, 1864, **Died:** August 5, 1911

Years: 1884–93

Category: Player (Pitcher/Outfielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/92fe6805>

Caruthers was among the greatest all-around players of his day. He was an outstanding pitcher and a hard-hitting outfielder who had a solid reputation as a defensive player and a base runner. As a member of St. Louis of the AA, he led the

Browns to the pennant in 1885, with a 40–13 record and leading the league in wins, winning percentage, and ERA. The Browns won the pennant again in 1886 with Caruthers going 30–14 with a 2.32 ERA while hitting .334, slugging .527 and leading the league with a .448 OBP. The 1887 season was more of the same—a pennant, a 29–9 record, and a league-leading .763 winning percentage, at the same time hitting .357, slugging .547, scoring 102 runs, stealing 49 bases, and posting a .463 OBP. After the season, Caruthers was traded to Brooklyn of the AA where he would play for four seasons, winning 110 games while contributing to pennant winners in 1889 and 1890 (Brooklyn’s first season in the NL). In 1892, he went back to the Browns, now a NL team, and played primarily in the outfield, having career highs in games, at bats, hits, and walks. He finished with a 218–99 record, an ERA of 2.83, and a .391 OBP for his career. Caruthers was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2010–2016, finishing second last year.

Jim Creighton

Born: April 15, 1841, **Died:** October 18, 1862

Years: 1857–62

Category: Executive/Pioneer

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/2d2e5d16>

Creighton was baseball’s first superstar and possibly its first professional. His life came to a tragic end just six months after his twenty-first birthday, making the young ballplayer a baseball legend and fueling the lore that makes baseball our national pastime. He was a tremendous hitter but made his mark on baseball history by revolutionizing the pitcher position with his swift and accurate pitching that didn’t allow batters to get a solid hit on the ball. Prior to Creighton, the focus for pitchers was to toss the ball to the batter so they could put the ball in play. In 1860, he joined the Excelsior Club of Brooklyn and became the game’s most dominant pitcher while teaming with catcher Joe Leggett to form the best battery in the nation. On November 8, 1860, Creighton pitched the first recorded shutout against the St. George Cricket Club, 25–0. Creighton was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2012–2016, finishing third last year.

Bud Fowler

Born: March 16, 1858, **Died:** February 26, 1913

Years: 1878–1909

Category: Executive/Pioneer

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/200e2bbd>

Fowler, who grew up in Cooperstown, was a pioneering African-American baseball player and promoter. He was primarily known for his play as a catcher, pitcher, and second baseman. He traveled the country for 30 years, playing at all levels of baseball except in the majors—not because he wasn't talented enough but simply because of the color of his skin. He was the first African-American in Organized Baseball when he played with the Lynn Live Oaks in the International Association in 1878. Fowler faced racism from fans, team administrators, and teammates, thus making each stop usually a brief one despite often being the best player on the team. As early as 1883, he tried to form a "colored league" and in 1887 formed the first successful African-American barnstorming team, the New York Gorhams. In 1894, he would be the driving force behind the establishment of the famed Page Fence Giants.

George Gore

Born: May 3, 1854, **Died:** September 16, 1933

Years: 1879–92

Category: Player (Outfielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/6e664ded>

Gore was a speedy center fielder who had a knack for getting on base and scoring runs. In 1,310 games, he scored 1,327 runs, including seven seasons of 100 or more (and two other seasons where he scored fewer than 100 runs but still led the league). He was a hard hitter who also took a walk, leading the league in bases on balls three times and finishing in the top seven in on-base percentage ten times. Gore retired a .301 career hitter with a .386 on-base percentage. He was the table setter for many championship teams. He played on NL championship teams in 1880, 1881, 1882, 1885, and 1886 with Chicago, and world championship teams with the New York Giants in 1888 and 1889, beating the AA pennant winners in the "World Series" while batting .455 and .333, respectively. On June 25, 1881, Gore stole seven bases in a

single game, a record he shares with Billy Hamilton. Gore was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009 and 2011.

Paul Hines

Born: March 1, 1855, **Died:** July 10, 1935

Years: 1872–91

Category: Player (Outfielder)

Hines, an outstanding defensive center fielder, was among the best all-around players in the game for 20 seasons. He started his career with Washington of the NA before becoming a member of the Chicago White Stockings in 1874 and playing for the first NL champion in 1876. In 1878, he joined Providence and became baseball's first Triple Crown winner when he led the league with 4 homers, 50 RBIs and a .358 batting average. He also led the league in total bases, slugging percentage, and on-base plus slugging. He followed his historic season with another batting title in 1879, while also leading the league in games, hits, and total bases as the Grays won their first NL championship. In 1884, along with Old Hoss Radbourn, Hines led the Grays to the NL pennant before defeating the AA's New York club to win the first "World Series." Hines ended his career with 1,217 runs (sixth all-time), 2,133 hits (third), 549 extra-base hits (fifth), 855 RBIs (seventh), and a .302 batting average. Hines was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009 and 2011–2016, finishing seventh last year.

Dummy Hoy

Born: May 23, 1862, **Died:** December 15, 1961

Years: 1889–1902

Category: Player (Outfielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/763405ef>

Hoy played 14 seasons in four major leagues, spending the most time in Cincinnati and Washington of the NL. Hoy was deaf and had difficulty speaking. Despite his challenges, he was among the best center fielders and leadoff hitters in the game. He accumulated 2,048 hits, 1,429 runs, 121 triples, 596 stolen bases, and 1,006 walks while hitting .288 with a .386 OBP. In 1901, at the age of 39, he played for the AL

champion White Stockings, leading the league in walks and hit by pitches. When he retired, he ranked ninth in games played, second in bases on balls, fourth in stolen bases, and sixth in hit by pitches. He was the career leader in games played in centerfield (1,727) until 1920. Hoy has been credited with the use of hand signals in the game but that is open for debate. Still, the deaf boy from Ohio became one of the best players of his era. Hoy was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2013–2016, finishing fourth last year.

Bobby Mathews

Born: November 21, 1851, **Died:** April 17, 1898

Years: 1869–87

Category: Player (Pitcher)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/e7ad641f>

Mathews, winner of 297 games (first all-time when he retired), was a pioneer pitcher in the development of both the spitball and the curveball. He was the winning pitcher in the NA's first game in 1871. In 1872, he joined Baltimore as their ace, winning 25 games and leading the league in strikeouts. Mathews joined the New York Mutuals in 1873, becoming their workhorse while leading the league in strikeouts in both 1873 and 1874. Despite the Mutuals being a subpar offensive team, Mathews managed to become the third winningest pitcher in the NA's existence. From 1877 to 1882, Mathews bounced around from team to team, which ultimately cost him the three "major-league" wins he needed for 300. He won just 39 games in those six seasons, although he was a key contributor as the change pitcher for the champion Providence Grays in 1879. His career was rejuvenated in 1883 when he joined the AA's Athletics and led them to the championship. It was the first of three consecutive seasons of 30 wins for the hurler. Mathews finished his career with a record 4,956 innings pitched and a 2.86 ERA. Mathews was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009, 2010, and from 2012–2016, finishing fifth last year.

Jim McCormick

Born: November 3, 1856, **Died:** March 10, 1918

Years: 1878–87

Category: Player (Pitcher)

McCormick was a workhorse pitcher, debuting with Indianapolis of the NL in 1878. He joined Cleveland in 1879 and started 60 of the club's 82 games, winning 20 and leading the league with 40 losses. His fortunes reversed in 1880, as he went 45–28 and led the league in wins, starts (74), complete games (72), and innings (657.2) while posting a 1.85 ERA. He continued to be Cleveland's first-choice hurler until jumping to Cincinnati of the Union Association during the 1884 season. With the Outlaw Reds, he would lead the circuit in ERA (1.54), going 21–3. After the UA folded, he returned to the NL, going first to Providence before joining Chicago. With the White Stockings, he would win another 51 games (against just 15 losses) while helping them to back-to-back NL titles before retiring after an unsuccessful season with Pittsburgh. Overall, McCormick went 265–214 in ten seasons. His 265 wins ranked third all-time when he retired while his 1,704 strikeouts were tops in history. His 2.43 ERA was lower than the two other pitchers who had over 4,000 innings pitched at the time (Mathews at 2.86 and Pud Galvin at 2.70). McCormick led the league in multiple categories over his decade of play, leading in wins, ERA, games, and innings pitched twice each, and complete games three times.

Ed McKean

Born: June 6, 1864, **Died:** August 16, 1919

Years: 1887–99

Category: Player (Shortstop)

McKean was a dependable, hard-hitting shortstop for the Cleveland Blues in the AA and Cleveland Spiders of the NL. He was the starting shortstop for almost the entirety of the franchise's existence, only transferred to the St. Louis Perfectos (with the rest of the team's stronger players) prior to the Spiders infamous 1899 season—their last as a big league club. McKean was among the top five shortstops in games played 10 times over a 12-season period, leading his league four times. He may not have won many

accolades for his defense, but his hitting ability was never questioned. McKean appeared in 1,655 games and hit .302 while slugging .417 (against a league average of .379). Among 19th century shortstops, his 2,084 hits, 158 triples, 636 walks, and 1,124 RBIs rank first and his 1,227 runs scored and 67 home runs rank second. To this day, the only shortstop with more 100 run/100 RBI seasons than McKean's four is Alex Rodriguez (with seven). McKean's durability was also outstanding, as he is the only 19th century player to appear in 120 or more games 12 seasons in a row (and he did it all playing for the same city).

Cal McVey

Born: August 30, 1849, **Died:** August 20, 1926

Years: 1866–79

Category: Player (First Baseman/Catcher/Outfielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/2d659416>

McVey was a premier batsmen and versatile ballplayer during his playing days. He gained prominence as a member of the legendary Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869 and 1870. He joined Boston in the NA for the next two seasons as catcher, helping the team win the NA championship in 1872. He played and managed Baltimore in 1873 but returned to Boston for two more seasons and two more NA championships. When the NA was no more, McVey was the league's third leading career hitter with a .362 average while being third in hits (476), tied for fifth in homers (8), and first in RBIs (277). In 1876, he joined the NL's White Stockings as their first baseman and change pitcher as the team won the pennant. After a two-year stint with Cincinnati, McVey gave up the majors and headed westward at the age of 29. He continued to play ball sporadically in California for almost another decade. When he left Cincinnati, he was the career leader in hits (869) and RBIs (449), third in runs (555), and fourth in games played (530) and batting average (.346).

Dickey Pearce

Born: February 29, 1836, **Died:** September 18, 1908

Years: 1856–77

Category: Player (Shortstop)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/db8ea477>

Pearce was the first great shortstop in baseball history and one of the first players to be paid. He revolutionized the game both on the field and at the plate. Prior to Pearce, shortstops were rovers that primarily backed up throws and handled relays from the outfield. Pearce, who had a strong throwing arm, positioned himself on the field according to the hitter at the plate. He would play in against weak hitters and back against stronger batsmen. At the plate, he was a “scientific” hitter who was primarily a leadoff batter. He has been credited with inventing the bunt, the fair-foul hit, and possibly the sacrifice bunt and the squeeze play. Pearce’s greatest seasons were with the legendary Atlantics of Brooklyn teams that dominated the late 1850s and 1860s. From 1857 to 1869, Pearce played in 239 National Association of Base Ball Players games with 876 runs scored, including leading the NABBP in runs scored in 1861. In 1858, he played for Brooklyn in two of the Fashion Race Course games, baseball’s earliest “all-star” games. The 5-foot-3½ pioneer played in the majors until 1877 but continued playing semi-pro and minor league baseball until 1883. He stayed close to the game for many years as an umpire and as a groundskeeper at Polo Grounds IV in 1890. Pearce was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2011.

Lipman Pike

Born: May 25, 1845, **Died:** October 10, 1893

Years: 1865–87

Category: Player (Outfielder/Infielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/7a6a0655>

Pike has been referred to as the first great Jewish baseball player and one of the first known paid players. Pike bounced around from team-to-team during his entire career despite being one of the game’s most powerful hitters. In 1866, he slugged six homers in one game while a member of the Athletics of Philadelphia. In 1871, he joined Troy of the NA and led the new league in homers with four. He played the next two seasons

with Baltimore, again leading the league in homers both seasons. He would lead the NL in homers in 1877 as well. His 16 homers in the NA are ranked first in the league's five-year existence and his 244 RBIs rank third. Other than a brief appearance for New York of the AA in 1887, Pike's major league career ended in 1881, leaving with the second highest career slugging percentage (.469, minimum 1000 plate appearances), third most homers (21), and sixth highest batting average (.323).

Al Reach

Born: May 25, 1840, **Died:** January 14, 1928

Years: 1858–1903

Category: Executive/Pioneer

Reach spent over 40 years in baseball. He was one of the best players of his era and one of the first to be paid. He played for the Eckford Club of Brooklyn from 1861–1864, participating on championship teams in 1862 and 1863. In 1865, he joined the Athletics and became their regular second baseman through the team's 1871 season when they won the NA championship. In 1874, he opened a sporting goods store which led to him forming the A.J. Reach Company. His company would go on to merge with Albert Spalding's sporting goods empire in 1892 but both companies retained their own identities. Reach balls, which was the official baseball of the AA from 1883–1891, became the official baseball of the AL and Reach's Official Base Ball Guide was published from 1883 to 1939. Reach became a founder and owner of the NL's Philadelphia franchise, now the Phillies, in 1883 until he sold his interest in the team in 1903. During his tenure, he built two ballparks, the first one burning down and replaced with what would be called the Baker Bowl, the first modern ballpark made from brick and steel. Reach was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2013–2015, finishing sixth last year. He was also a finalist on the Hall of Fame's Pre-Integration ballot in 2013.

Hardy Richardson

Born: April 21, 1855, **Died:** January 14, 1931

Years: 1879–1892

Category: Player (Second Base/Outfield)

Richardson was an outstanding offensive and defensive second baseman who also spent a considerable amount of time in the outfield over a 14-season Major League career. Richardson joined the Buffalo Bisons of the NL in 1879 and performed well right away, batting .283 and finishing second among third basemen in fielding percentage. He was part of Buffalo's "Big Four", along with Dan Brouthers, Deacon White, and Jack Rowe. The quartet played together from 1881 through 1888, when their Detroit club disbanded (the Detroit Wolverines had purchased the Buffalo franchise after the 1885 season). Richardson enjoyed what was likely his finest season in 1886, batting .351 while leading the NL in hits (189) and home runs (11, tied with Brouthers). The following season, he batted .328 as Detroit won the "World Series" against the St. Louis Browns. In 1890 with the Boston Reds of the Players' League, Richardson batted .326 and led the league in runs batted in (146) while finishing second in home runs (13), and fifth in hits (181). He hit .299 for his career and ranked among the top dozen all-time in hits (11th), triples (eighth), home runs (ninth), runs scored (12th), and RBIs (ninth) at the time of his retirement.

Jimmy Ryan

Born: February 11, 1863, **Died:** October 29, 1923

Years: 1885–1903

Category: Player (Outfielder)

Ryan was an outstanding outfielder and leadoff man who spent almost his entire career in Chicago. He joined the White Stockings in 1885, playing for a team that won back-to-back NL pennants. The rest of his career he mostly played on mediocre to poor teams. Ryan was a leading power hitter in his day, leading the NL in 1888 with 16 homers while finishing in the top 10 seven times. He hit 22 lead-off homers in his career, a record until Eddie Yost passed him in 1959. He twice hit for the cycle (1888 and 1891) and once scored six runs in a game (in 1894). Ryan had one of the great arms in history and still ranks third all-time in outfield assists behind only Tris Speaker and Ty Cobb with 375. Ryan retired with 2,014 games (third all-time), 1,643 runs (fifth), 2,513 hits (sixth), 451 doubles (fifth), 118 homers (fourth), 1,093 RBIs (12th), 726 extra-base hits (fifth), and 3,632 total bases (fourth) while batting .308 with a .375 OBP. Ryan was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2015.

Joe Start

Born: October 14, 1842, **Died:** March 27, 1927

Years: 1859–86

Category: Player (First Baseman)

Start had one of the longest playing careers in baseball history. His size and athletic ability made him one of the most powerful hitters of the 1860s and the game's finest defensive first baseman throughout his playing days. In the 1860s, he scored 824 runs in 194 NABBP games, leading the NABBP in runs in 1865 with 82 and in hits with 233 in 1868. From 1868 to 1870, he had 824 hits and 893 total bases in 154 games. In 1878, as a member of the Chicago White Stockings, Start hit .351 and led the NL in hits and total bases. "Old Reliable" has often been credited as being the first to play off the bag at first base and was known as being a sure-handed receiver of balls thrown to him. He played on several championship teams, including the 1864–1866 and 1869 Atlantics of Brooklyn teams, the NL-pennant winning Providence Grays in 1879, and in 1884, as the team's captain, the Grays won the first "World Series." He batted .300 in eleven NL seasons and led his league in fielding percentage at first base six times between 1872 and 1884. He retired ranked sixth in games (1,070), runs (852), hits (1,417) and total bases (1,744) while ranking seventh in RBIs (544). Start was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2012.

George Stovey

Born: May 1866, **Died:** March 22, 1936

Years: 1886–1897

Category: Player (Pitcher)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/8ff10f5c>

Stovey is considered by many to be the greatest African-American pitcher of the 19th Century. The left-hander never pitched in the majors due to the color of his skin. He started out his career with a semi-pro team in the Williamsport, Pennsylvania area, his hometown, in 1884 and ended it there in 1897 with the city's Central Pennsylvania League team. In between, he was a star in the top minor leagues and with black baseball's greatest clubs of the time. The curveballer, who had a tremendous pick-off move to first base, emerged with the Jersey City club of the Eastern League in 1886.

He started 31 games and completed them all, going 16–15 with a 1.13 ERA and 203 strikeouts in 270 1/3 innings while walking just 43 batters. In 1887, he joined Newark of the International Association where he teamed up with catcher Fleet Walker to form the first black battery in integrated organized baseball. He led the league with 33 wins and had a 2.46 ERA in 424 innings. As baseball's color line was being drawn, Stovey moved around between top black teams, including the Cuban Giants and New York Gorhams, and integrated-league teams. He went 60–40 with a 2.17 ERA in 102 games in the top minor leagues. He became an umpire in the minors and around Williamsport when his playing days were over.

Ezra Sutton

Born: September 17, 1849, **Died:** June 20, 1907

Years: 1869–1888

Category: Player (Third Baseman)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/26da490d>

From the time he entered his twenties, many regarded Sutton as one of the top third basemen in the country. In 1869, he played for the Alerts of Rochester. The Forest City club of Cleveland, a professional club, was impressed when facing him and offered him a contract for the 1870 season. He remained with the club through 1872, including the first two seasons of the NA. Sutton joined the Athletics in 1873, where he joined other Philadelphia and Boston players in Harry Wright's baseball and cricket tour of England and Ireland. In 1875, Sutton agreed to join the Chicago White Stockings. Because the season was still underway, the negotiations were considered tampering. This helped usher Hulbert's creation of a new league—the National League (though Sutton eventually stayed with Philadelphia). Sutton joined Boston in 1877 and stayed there until his release in 1888, winning three pennants. Sutton hit .294 in 1,263 games, ranking fifth all-time in hits (1,574), sixth in runs (994), and sixth in RBIs (672) at the time of his retirement.

George Van Haltren

Born: March 30, 1866, **Died:** September 29, 1945

Years: 1887–1903

Category: Player (Outfielder)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/15954c4c>

A pitcher in his early years with a 40–31 record, Van Haltren became a premier center fielder and leadoff hitter with the New York Giants after earlier productive stops in Chicago (NL), Baltimore (AA and NL), Brooklyn (PL) and Pittsburgh (NL). When his major league career was over, he had accumulated 2,544 hits (fifth all-time), 1,642 runs (sixth), 161 triples (10th), 1,015 RBIs (17th), and 583 stolen bases (fifth) with a .316 batting average and a .386 on-base percentage. He scored over 100 runs 11 times and batted .300 or more 12 times. The mustached Van Haltren, an outstanding defensive stalwart with a tremendous throwing arm (three times led the NL in assists from the outfield), finished in the top 10 in hits, triples, runs, batting average, stolen bases, total bases, and on-base percentage a grand total of 42 times. Van Haltren was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2010 and from 2014–2016, finishing ninth last year.

Chris Von der Ahe

Born: October 7, 1851, **Died:** June 5, 1913

Years: 1881–99

Category: Executive/Pioneer

Von der Ahe was the owner and the “Boss President” of the St. Louis Browns from 1881 to 1899. A German immigrant, Von der Ahe started out in the grocery and saloon business before becoming a baseball entrepreneur. In 1881, he purchased the St. Louis Brown Stockings, who would join the AA in 1882. Von der Ahe was a powerful force in the AA and has been credited with bringing baseball back to St. Louis after the Brown Stockings dropped out of the NL in 1877. He fully supported the AA’s three main differences from the NL, a cheaper admission fee that was affordable for the “common man” (25 cents), Sunday games, and the sale of alcohol at the ballpark. During his tenure, he introduced a beer garden, a stadium club, a water ride, and a race track among his many gimmicks to attract people to the park. Eventually, many of these ideas failed and contributed to his financial downfall but he planted the seed for future

innovators like Bill Veeck. Before the AA merged with the NL in 1891, the Browns would win four straight pennants (1885–1888) and the “World Series” in 1885 and 1886. He also helped keep the AA afloat financially during their battles with the Players’ League and the NL in 1890 and 1891. Von der Ahe was a finalist on the Hall of Fame’s Pre-Integration ballot in 2016. Von der Ahe was an Overlooked Legend finalist for the first time in 2016, finishing sixth.

Will White

Born: October 11, 1854, **Died:** August 31, 1911

Years: 1877–86

Category: Player (Pitcher)

SABR Bio: <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/508f0e22>

White came from a baseball-playing family that included older brother, Hall of Famer James “Deacon” White. White made his debut with Harry Wright’s Red Stockings in 1877, throwing to Deacon and forming the first brother battery in major league history. He also became the first player to wear spectacles in a major league game. The brothers joined Cincinnati for the 1878 season with Will going 30–21 with a 1.79 ERA and leading the team to a second-place finish. In 1879, he established himself as one of the game’s most dominating throwers by going 43–31 with a 1.99 ERA and leading the league with 75 complete games and 680 innings pitched. The 1880 season was a disastrous season for the Cincinnati club, which led to an 18–42 record for Will and to the team’s withdrawal from the NL. In 1881, White decided to skip the season and tend to his Cincinnati business but did pitch and lose two games for the NL’s Detroit club in May. In 1882, Will joined the Cincinnati club of the newly-formed AA and became the league’s best pitcher, going 40–12 with a 1.54 ERA while leading his team to the first championship of the league. He followed the next year with a 43–22 record while leading the league with a 2.09 ERA and six shutouts. He won 34 games in 1884 and 18 in 1885. He pitched three games in 1886 but his arm was dead. He finished his career ranked third all-time with 36 shutouts, fourth with 394 complete games, fifth with 403 games pitched and 3,542 2/3 innings pitched, and ninth with 1,041 strikeouts. His 229 wins ranked sixth and his 2.28 ERA tied for seventh among pitchers with at least 1,000 innings pitched.

Ned Williamson

Born: October 24, 1857, **Died:** March 3, 1894

Years: 1878–90

Category: Player (Third Baseman/Shortstop)

Williamson is best known today for holding the single-season home run record for 35 years before Babe Ruth took the crown, but his defense is where he provided the most value on the diamond. Williamson began his career with the Indianapolis Blues of the NL in 1878 before joining Chicago, becoming a key part of five pennant winners. In 1883, he set a Major League record (that would be broken four years later) with 49 doubles. His total was aided by the short dimensions of Chicago's Lakeshore Park (where a ball over the fence was considered a double). In 1884, a change to the ground rules awarded a home run for balls hit into the stands. Williamson responded by shattering the home run record with 27 (previously 14). Chicago left Lakeshore Park after the season and Williamson would never hit more than nine home runs again. After the 1888 season, he injured his knee while on Albert Spalding's World Tour and was never the same. He was finished after the 1890 season and died from dropsy at age 36. In addition to the home run and doubles records, he led third basemen in assists six times, fielding percentage and double plays five times each, range factor per game four times, and putouts once. He also led shortstops in double plays and assists once each.