



**Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report
December 1992**

John Roach Lost

Every month I generally feature the *Find of the Month* with a headline like, "**Richard Topp Found.**" This month our *Find of the Month* is a player who we thought we had but who is actually the wrong man. Joe Simenic wins the award for digging this out.

John Roach made his only major league appearance on May 14, 1887 for the New York Giants, losing a tight 17-2 ball game to Philadelphia. We had listed Roach's death as March 1, 1915 in Sandusky, Ohio. The man who died in Sandusky was Charles Reark, whose obituary referred to him as an "old Brooklyn National League outfielder." The 1916 Reach Guide carried an obituary, but referred to him as Charles "Roach." Apparently, this is how his death was attributed to John Roach. Anyway, Reark certainly is not the New York pitcher, nor was he even a Brooklyn outfielder. So add John Roach to your list of missing players.

New Members

Please welcome Doug Siff, 14 Evelyn Road, Plainview, Long Island 11803 to the biographical committee. Doug's code number will be X4. Also change Jon Dunkle's address to P. O. Box 19703, Greensboro, North Carolina 27419.

Jack Of All Trades

Trivia question:

Who is the only man to be a major league player, manager, owner, umpire, and architect of a major league stadium?

Answer below.

Red Sox Totally Clean

I'll bet that's the first time you've ever heard the Red Sox described that way. Fred London informs me that of the original 16 teams, the Red Sox are the first to have all of their alumni accounted for. Ben Hunt, of course, was the last and by far the toughest. Anyone know Ed Quick's birthday? That will clean up the Yankees.

Still More Hockey

Joey Beretta has found one player who played both major league baseball and major league hockey. James Norman "Jim" Riley played second and first for the 1921 St. Louis Browns and the 1923 Washington Senators. He also played right wing for the 1926-27 Detroit Red Wings. Pay attention; this question could show up in the next SABR trivia contest.

Robert Schulz reports that the Kevin Collins who is an NHL linesman is not the former Met player. Both were born in Springfield, Massachusetts but the ballplayer was born 08/04/46 and the linesman was born 12/15/50. However, NHL linesman Gord Broseker did play minor league baseball in the Texas organization from 1969-72. By the way, were any linesmen from Wichita? Maybe Glen Campbell could sing about them. (That's my last bad joke for the year.)

What Child Is This?

Joe Simenic found a man named Childs listed in the box scores as first baseman for Columbus (AA) May 31, 1883. We show no such player. Joe suspects that this might be James C. Field who debuted on June 2. Can anyone check on this, perhaps in the Columbus papers?

Marcellus

Obviously, I should be shot for not knowing more of the history of biographical research, but Frank Marcellus was a wealthy amateur baseball statistician from Philadelphia. He kept ledgers with daily entries for all major league players from 1876 through the 1950s. He gave these to S. C. Thompson and they formed the basis for the first encyclopedia. Thanks to Bob McConnell and Bob Davids for providing this information.

Manuel Cueto

The *Sporting News* in March of 1941 contained an obituary for Manuel Cueto and stated that he had died recently in Panama. We list Cueto as dying June 29, 1942 in Regla, Cuba. Was the *Sporting News* wrong and what is the source of the Cuban death date?

Holiday Greetings

I hope everyone had a nice holiday season. I'm excited because for Christmas, my girlfriend got me season tickets to the Royals. She said that she couldn't find Matthew Porter's death date so she got me the next best thing. I'm ready for the season to start.

Answer to Question

Jimmy Manning, the architect of the ballpark the Washington Senators used in the early part of this century.

Birthday List

We have several former players celebrating birthdays in January, including our featured *Biography of the Month*, Milt Gaston. Be sure and send a card.

| | | |
|--------|---------------|----|
| Jan 6 | Robert Barnes | 91 |
| Jan 12 | Joe Hauser | 94 |
| Jan 14 | Russ Scarritt | 90 |
| Jan 16 | George Fisher | 94 |
| Jan 27 | Milt Gaston | 97 |
| Jan 28 | Pat Crawford | 91 |

Tryin' To Find Ryan But Needin' To Find Sheehan

Joe Simenic has provided our December *Mystery of the Month* and it is a good one. There

are three Ryans who crop up in the Union Association and there is a good deal of confusion as to who is who.

John A. Ryan is the man who pitched with the Baltimore Unions. He came to Baltimore from the Muskegon team and the 1884 *Reach Guide* lists his home as Birmingham, Michigan. He spent the winter of 1884 in Atlanta and in 1886 was working as a hotel clerk in Portsmouth, Virginia. The notes on John A. Ryan seem consistent throughout *Sporting Life*.

Things get more complicated when researching the Ryan who played with Wilmington and Washington. A couple of notes from *Sporting Life* are revealing. On September 3, 1884 it says, "Daniel Sheehan is the real name of Ryan, left fielder of the Wilmington club." On October 15, 1884 it says, "Dan Sheehan, an old time Washington player, is now on the District police force." In covering the game involving Wilmington, the *Baltimore American* stated, "Daniel Sheehan of this city (Washington) took Say's place in left field." All games involving Ryan/Sheehan were played either in Washington or Baltimore adding weight to the possibility that the player was from the Washington area. Bob Davids found a local player named Ryan playing with a local Washington team called the Waverlys. This may or may not have been Sheehan. Anyone who wishes to sort out the Ryan/Sheehan confusion is encouraged to do so.

The Scoreboard

| | IN | OUT | PCT |
|-----------------------|-------|------|---------|
| Total Complete Names | 13873 | 73 | 99.476 |
| Total Complete Births | 13133 | 813 | 94.170 |
| Total Complete Deaths | 6845 | 497 | 49.082 |
| Total Assumed Alive | 6604 | | 47.354 |
| Total Bats | 12537 | 1306 | 90.566 |
| Total Throws | 12809 | 1034 | 92.531 |
| Total Heights | 12711 | 1132 | 91.823 |
| Total Weights | 12634 | 1209 | 91.266 |
| Total Debut Dates | 13946 | 0 | 100.000 |
| Total Questionnaires | 9907 | 4039 | 71.038 |
| Total Completion | | | 91.8112 |

Nathaniel Milton "Milt" Gaston

By Greg Beston

B: January 27, 1896, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey
BTRR 6-01 185

If there was ever an example of a hard-luck pitcher, it would have to be Milt Gaston. Pitching for five American League clubs between 1924 and 1934, Gaston was only fortunate enough to play on two winning teams. True to his surroundings, those two seasons would be the only two in which Gaston would boast a winning record. The member of several cellar-dwelling teams, Gaston was forced into the workhorse role on the pitching staff as he was never able to display his true pitching talents.

In a real-life story of rising to the top, Milt Gaston went straight from the sandlots of New Jersey to the mound of Yankee Stadium. A rookie for the New York Yankees at age 28, Gaston became one of baseball's top relievers. He was nicknamed "Doc" for his ability to cure "sick ball games" when he would come in from the bullpen and stop an opponent's rally. This role seemed to fit Gaston, but it would be short-lived as he was traded to St. Louis in the off-season.

From 1925-27, Gaston was the Browns' top pitcher, winning 15, 10, and 13 games respectively, but as the Browns plummeted into the second division, so did Gaston's winning percentage. He led the American League with 18 losses in 1926, and followed that with 17 more in 1927. During his time with the St. Louis Browns, Gaston was best known for yielding four of Babe Ruth's record 60 homers in 1927, but after three frustrating seasons in St. Louis, Gaston was traded to the Washington Nationals.

Gaston's luck did not change in the nation's capital as he went 6-12 and had a disappointing 5.51 ERA. But a season of hard work was salvaged, as Gaston was able to pull off a career-high three shutouts, including one of particular note. On July 10, 1928 during Washington's 9-0 win over Cleveland in the second game of a doubleheader, Milt Gaston shut out the Indians despite allowing 14 hits. Some 60 years later, it still stands as the American League record.

After one season with the Nationals, Gaston was traded to the Boston Red Sox. During his three years in Boston, the Red Sox finished in last place twice, as Gaston lost a total of 52 games while winning only 27. Despite respectable ERAs during his three years in the Hub, Gaston had nothing to show for his hard work except bad luck. A bright memory of Boston is the fact that Milt and his brother Alex were battery mates with the Red Sox in 1929.

Milt Gaston closed out his career with a three-year stint with the Chicago White Sox from 1932-34. He was never involved in the game of baseball after 1934, and he eventually became the deputy sheriff of Hillsboro County, Florida. In addition to eleven solid seasons in the big leagues, Gaston is still the holder of several major league records and a respectable .200 career batting average. Today, at the age of 96, Milt Gaston always has time to look back at his rewarding major league career. To this day, it remains unfortunate that Gaston was never able to enjoy the success of a winning team.

New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:

None

New Information Received:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|
| ✓1927 Beckman, James Joseph N | Is Deceased | (T1) |
| 1886 Bishop, William Robinson | Debut: Sep 13 1886 | (S1) |
| 1884 Black, Robert Benjamin | Debut: Aug 19 1884 | (S1) |
| 1948 Blatnik, John Louis | B: Bridgeport, Ohio | (C1) |
| 1910 Bowser, James H. | Name: James Harvey Bowser | (H1) |
| 1884 Brennan, James Augustus | Debut: Apr 20 1884 | (S1) |
| 1884 Cronin, Daniel T. | Debut: Jul 9 1884 | (S1) |
| ✓1943 Curtis, Vernon Eugene N | D: Jun 24 1992 | (OT) |
| | <u>Cairo, Illinois</u> | |
| ✓1930 Detore, George Francis | Real name: George Francis DeTore | (H1) |
| | D: Feb 7 1991 | |
| | <u>Utica, New York</u> | |
| 1883 Devine, Walter James N | Debut: May 9 1883 | (S1) |
| ✓1890 Dolan, John | Add Patrick Henry Dolan's 1892 WAS NL | (S1) |
| | record. | |
| ✓1892 Dolan, Patrick Henry N | Delete WAS NL record. Record belongs to | (S1) |
| | John Dolan. | |
| | Debut: Apr 26 1895 | |
| 1877 Dorgan, Michael Cornelius | D: Hartford, Connecticut | (H3) |
| 1886 Fuller, Edward Aston White 2 | Debut: Jul 17 1886 | (S1) |
| ✓1884 Gillen, Thomas J. | Add 1 game with PHL (NL) in 1884 | (S1) |
| ✓1952 Gorman, Thomas Aloysius N | D: Dec 26 1992 | (T1) |
| | <u>Valley Stream, New York</u> | |
| ✓1897 Hannifan, Patrick James | Name: Patrick James Hannivan | (S1) |
| | TL | |
| 1899 Hoey, Frederick C. (MGR) | Name: Frederick Chamberlain Hoey | (H1) |
| | B: 1866 | |
| 1935 Jorgens, Orville Edward | D: Colorado Springs, Colorado | (H1) |
| 1883 Kennedy, Edward | Debut: May 1 1883 | (S1) |
| 1886 King, Charles Frederick N | Debut: Sep 28 1886 | (S1) |
| ✓1942 Lowry, Samuel Joseph N | D: Dec 1 1992 | (H1) |
| | <u>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</u> | |
| ✓1945 Maglie, Salvatore Anthony N | D: Dec 28 1992 | (T1) |
| | <u>Niagara Falls, New York</u> | |
| 1898 Maupin, Henry Carr | Height: 5-07 Weight: 150 | (W3) |
| ✓1934 McGee, Daniel Aloysius | B: Sep 29 1911 | (H1) |
| | D: Dec 4 1991 | |
| | <u>Lakehurst, New Jersey</u> | |
| 1912 Miller, Elmer N | Debut: Apr 26 1912 | (S1) |
| 1911 Ovitz, Ernest Gayheart | Name: Ernest Gayhart Ovitz | (HF) |

1931 Phelps, Ernest Gordon N

1898 Pickett, David T.

1929 Prudhomme, John Olgus N

1887 Roach, John F.

1944 Rochelli, Louis Joseph N

1884 Ryan, John A.

1884 Ryan, John M. N

1927 Schuble, Henry George

1883 Shaw, Frederick Lander

1886 Shindle, William

1884 Sladen, Arthur W.

1884 Slattery, Michael J.

1934 Stainback, George Tucker N

1948 Walker, Albert Bluford N

1940 Wilborn, Claude Edward N

1884 Wyman, Frank C.

D: Dec 10 1992
Odenton, Maryland

Debut: Jul 21 1898

Is Deceased

Delete death date. Wrong man.

D: Oct 23 1992

Delete real name of Daniel Sheehan.

BL

Name: Daniel Sheehan

B: Washington, D. C.

D: Oct 2 1990

Baytown, Texas

Debut: Jun 18 1883

Debut: Oct 5 1886

Debut: Aug 22 1884

Debut: Apr 17 1884

B: Aug 4 1911

D: Nov 29 1992

Camarillo, California

D: Dec 12 1992

Morganton, North Carolina

D: Nov 13 1992

Roxboro, North Carolina

Debut: Jun 10 1884

(D7)

(S1)

(OH)

(S1)

(H1)

(S1)

(S1)

(H1)

(S1)

(S1)

(S1)

(S1)

(H1)

(C1)

(C1)

(W1)

(S1)