



**Biographical Research Committee Monthly Report
January 1992**

Missing Cuban Ballplayer Found

Our member from south of the border, Dr. Jose Jimenez of the Dominican Republic, captures the *Find of the Month* award for locating Ricardo Torres of the 1920-22 Senators. As most of you know it is extremely difficult to get anything out of Cuba. The United States doesn't even send mail to Cuba. But Jose managed to obtain a contact on the island who was able to track down Torres.

That leaves only two missing Cubans who are assumed deceased. Alfredo Cabrera of the 1913 Cardinals was born in the Canary Islands (unquestionably the greatest Canarian to play in the majors) but is supposedly buried in Colon Cemetery in Havana. And Rafael Almeida of the 1911-13 Reds is also apparently buried in the same cemetery and is rumored to have died in March of 1968. If anyone is making a trip to Havana anytime soon, be sure to check these guys out. Congratulations, Jose, on a great find!

Two New Players

We have two new ballplayers. Collins and Leonard were two local Brooklyn sandlotters who filled in for St. Louis September 12, 1892. Unfortunately, we don't know their first names but how many Collins's and Leonards can there be in Brooklyn? These players were once listed as phantoms but Pete Palmer and Ralph Horton have found documentation that they did indeed play. It's nice to know we are not running out of players to track down.

Possible New Feature

Bob Tiemann has an excellent idea for the newsletter. Bob suggested that each month we feature a biography of the month. Perhaps after we collect enough of these, they can evolve into a committee publication. We are kicking it off (Ecch! A football term!) this month with Bob's biography on Cy Falkenberg. Of course, I need your help to get this going. If you have anyone on whom you can write a short, one page biography, send it along and I'll publish it in a future newsletter. Actually, the more unknown the player, the better. It's much more interesting to learn about players on whom little has been written. Of course, I doubt that a biography of Babe Ruth would fit on one page.

Members in the Media

It was a busy month for some of our members. Pete Palmer was featured in an article in *USA Today Baseball Weekly*. Also mentioned in the article were Dave Vincent and Dave Smith. (Mama said there'd be Daves like this.)

Bill Haber was the subject of a column by Bill Madden in the *New York Daily News*. The column directly led to Bill locating missing ballplayers Robert Conley, Billy Ott, and Bob Giallombardo.

Bob Anderson published an article on our committee's work and specifically his search for John Stedronsky in the *Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly*. Bob is also giving the banquet speech at the National Archives Genealogical Institute in Washington in July. His topic: Asa Brainard.

Help a Fellow SABRite

David Gough is working on a biography of Burt Shotton. If anyone has any information on Shotton that they think might be useful to the book, please write David at 2308 Candlewood Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22308.

Charles Sweasey

The very first *Mystery of the Month* that I featured when I became chairman was a possible error in the death date of Charlie Sweasey of the National Association. Jack Dougherty sent me obituaries of both the player we carry, who died in 1908 in Newark, New Jersey and Charles James Swasey, who died in 1939 in Fort Worth, Texas. Both obituaries carry detailed information about their baseball careers, but it would appear that we carry the correct man, since Swasey moved to Fort Worth in 1873, but if anyone has any other biographical info on Sweasey or Swasey, let me know.

Errors

Just as in baseball where a play can be scored a hit or an error, the same is true in biographical research. We do very well in tracking players down, but I believe that in past years we have made errors which have crept into the encyclopedias. I would like to do an article on those possible errors. If there are any players which have information that you suspect may be wrong, send them to me along with the reason you are suspicious of what we have and I'll write it up in a future newsletter.

Dreams Can Come True

Last month I alluded to the remote chance of meeting Michelle Pfeiffer when I was discussing the difficulty of tracking down missing players. However, I have since learned that one of our committee members did indeed meet Michelle Pfeiffer.

Scott Flatow was sitting in a cafe in New York City reading a book on the '60s when Michelle Pfeiffer (and, unfortunately, her boyfriend, Fisher Stevens) approached him and asked about his book. They asked how he liked it, etc. This only leads to the inescapable question: What if he had been reading the committee newsletter? I'll bet Fisher Stevens would have been history.

Trivia To Amaze Your Friends

I have always been somewhat dismayed that my home town, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, has never had a native son play in the major leagues. This, quite obviously, is a result of its greatest athlete deciding to go into baseball research at the age of 6. Anyway, that got me to thinking

about what is the largest city in the United States that has not been birthplace to a major leaguer. I was quite surprised at the result. Coming in first by a wide margin was Virginia Beach, Virginia with a population of 393,069, far outdistancing Aurora, Colorado with 222,103. Just in case anyone asks you.

Last Month's Mystery

Joe Simenic has discovered the source of the Oct. 12, 1918 death date for David Rowe. The necrology in the *Reach Guide* of 1919 states, "Oct. 12 - David Roth, a catcher, formerly of the Athletics and White Sox, died of pneumonia at Baltimore, aged 32 years." Obviously, this isn't our boy. Of course, Roth never played for the Athletics or the White Sox, so he was a phony too.

From Pinstripes to Just Stripes

The arrest of Julio Machado in connection with a killing in Venezuela brings to mind players who had been convicted of murder. Dick Thompson contributes this list and asks if anyone has any additions to it.

Sam Crane: Served 15 years for murder.
Ralph Schwamb: Sentenced to life for murder.
Frank Harris: Life sentence for murder.
Red Barron: Convicted of manslaughter in death of his wife.
Tacks Latimer: Sentenced to life, second degree murder.
Charlie Sweeney: Sentenced to 10 years for manslaughter. Released early to be California League umpire.

Old-Timers

Each month I publish a list of nonagenarians celebrating birthdays that month. Many of them only had a cup of coffee in the major leagues. Bob Davids sent me the following list of the oldest players to have played at least ten years in the majors. It looks like a pretty fair group of ballplayers. Ages are given in years and months.

Dummy Hoy	99-6
Fred Parent	96-11
Milt Gaston	96-0
Larry Kopf	95-11
Joe Wood	95-9
Ray Fisher	95-1

Elmer Flick	94-11
Edd Roush	94-10
Stan Coveleski	94-8
Frank Foreman	94-6

Birthday List

That brings us to this month's birthday list. The only nonagenarian celebrating a birthday in February is Andrew Woehr. Andy turns 96 on February 4. The committee wishes him the best.

Mystery of the Month

Our first *Mystery of the Month* for 1992 was contributed by Bob Richardson and it is a good one. John Thornton pitched for Washington in 1889 and Philadelphia in 1891-92. We list him as dying in Pensacola, Florida August 31, 1893. Supposedly he died of yellow fever.

However, in 1895 the *Boston Herald* reported that Jack Thornton "was reported dead two or three years ago, but is playing 1B at Dallas." Later the *Herald* says, "Jack Thornton, Chicago's Iowa pitching find, has been farmed out to Detroit for 1896." Do we have the proper John Thornton?

The Scoreboard

	IN	OUT	PCT
Total Complete Names	13707	77	99.441
Total Complete Births	12962	822	94.037
Total Complete Deaths	6759	510	49.035
Total Assumed Alive	6515		47.265
Total Bats	12370	1313	90.404
Total Throws	12644	1039	92.407
Total Heights	12535	1148	91.610
Total Weights	12459	1224	91.055
Total Debut Dates	13784	0	100.000
Total Questionnaires	9902	3882	71.837
Total Completion			91.9081

Frederick Peter "Cy" Falkenberg

By Bob Tiemann

B: December 17, 1880, Chicago, Illinois
D: April 14, 1961, San Francisco, California
BRTR 6'5" 180 lbs.

Cy Falkenberg was a long, tall right-handed pitcher who achieved his greatest success after he mastered the emeryball. His 19-year career saw him bounce back and forth between the majors and high minors several times during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Falkenberg first gained prominence pitching for the University of Illinois where he shared the spotlight with teammate Carl Lundgren. Both turned pro in June of 1902, Lundgren going to the Chicago Nationals, while Falkenberg went to Worcester of the Eastern League. Cy was a quick success, and his contract was sold to Pittsburgh at the end of the season. Although he made the 1903 squad in spring training, he could not break into the champion Pirates' pitching rotation and was farmed back to Worcester in June. After a brief recall in August, he was sold outright to Toronto (EL) in September, 1903.

After nearly two years with the Maple Leafs, Cy finally made it back to the big leagues when he was sold to Washington in August 1905. By the end of the year he had posted a nifty 7-1 record for a bad team. A hard-thrower with control troubles, he led the AL in walks in 1906 while finishing second in strikeouts. He remained with the Senators until he and Dave Altizer were purchased by Cleveland for \$10,000 on July 23, 1908. The Naps were trying to buy the pennant, but Falkenberg was a bust, going just 2-4 and not pitching at all down the stretch. He reached double digits in wins for Cleveland in both 1909 and 1910 but pitched sparingly in 1911 after George Stovall became manager.

In 1912 he was sent back to the minors, hurling for the Cleveland farm team in Toledo. In the bushes he picked up the emeryball. Using a strip of emery cloth sewn onto the heel of his glove, he would rough up a spot on the ball about the size of a quarter. Pressing his fingers down on this spot gave an extra hop to his fastball. Although he at first claimed he was throwing a fadeaway, his emeryball took the AL by storm when he returned to the Naps in 1913. Falkenberg won his first 10 decisions before losing on June 9 in Boston. Cy was understandably distracted, since his wife was giving birth to a son in Washington that day. He finished the season with a 23-10 mark, then jumped at the big bucks offered by the upstart Federal League. He was the ace of the pennant-winning Indianapolis staff in 1914. He pitched the pennant-clincher on the next-to-last day of the season, beating Dave Davenport and St. Louis 4-0 in a battle of the two tallest pitchers in baseball history up to that time. In 1915 the FL banned the emeryball, Cy's record fell below .500, and he was traded to Brooklyn for Tom Seaton in late August.

He was back in the bushes in 1916, pitching with the Indianapolis American Association team. He was called up with Connie Mack's woeful Athletics in May 1917, but in July he was returned to Indianapolis, where he remained through 1918. In 1919 he pitched for Seattle and Oakland in the Pacific Coast League but called it quits when the emeryball was banned the next winter.

He moved to San Francisco and worked as a machinist. He became prominent in the local bowling scene, managing an alley and sponsoring tournaments. As for baseball, he often railed against the ban on foreign substances and claimed that players of his day were tougher and better than the pampered stars of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s.

New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:

None

New Information Received:

✓ 1894 Ball, Arthur N2	B: Apr 1876	(D2)
• 1899 Barry, John C. N	Kentucky	
✓ 1928 Boggs, Raymond Joseph N	B: Oct 27 1878	(S1)
✓ 1884 Cahill, John Francis Patrick 2	D: Nov 27 1989	(S3)
1898 Casey, James Patrick	B: Apr 30 1865	(D2)
✓ 1951 Ciaffone, Lawrence Thomas N	D: Oct 31 1909	
✓ 1892 Collins, N	Weight: 157	(R1)
✓ 1958 Conley, Robert Burns	D: Dec 14 1991	(H1)
✓ 1924 Dobb, John Kenneth N	Brooklyn, New York	
✓ 1944 Durrett, Elmer Charles N	New Player	(H5)
1942 Flores, Jesse Sandoval	Debut: Sep 12 1892	
✓ 1944 Gassaway, Charles Cason N	Is Alive	(H1)
✓ 1939 Glossop, Alban	D: Jul 31 1991	(H1)
1899 Goeckel, William John	Muskegon, Michigan	
✓ 1901 Grosart, George Albert N	D: Jan 17 1992	(B3)
• ? 1884 Hutchinson, William Forrest	Waxahachie, Texas	
1902 Lamer, Pierre 2	Real Name: Jesse Flores y Sandoval	(H1)
✓ 1892 Leonard,	D: Dec 17 1991	(B1)
1913 McAvoy, James Eugene	Orange, California	
✓ 1939 McCosky, William Barney N	D: Jan 15 1992	(C1)
✓ 1899 McGinnity, Joseph Jerome	Miami, Florida	
1882 Merrill, Edward Mason	D: Jul 2 1991	(H1)
✓ 1942 Murphy, Edward Joseph	Walnut Creek, California	
✓ 1900 Pittinger, Charles Reno N2	BR	(R1)
1902 Porter, Odie Oscar	Name: George Albert Grossart	(D2)
✓ 1871 Quinn, Joseph C.	B: Apr 11 1880	
	D: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	(S1)
	Name: William Forrest Hutchison	(S1)
	Height: 5-10 Weight: 170	(R1)
	New Player	(H5)
	Debut: Sep 12 1892	
	D: Jul 6 1973	(BX)
	B: Apr 11 1917	(H1)
	Real Name: Joseph Jerome McGinty	(H1)
	B: May 1860	(D2)
	Kentucky	
	D: Dec 10 1991	(H1)
	Joliet, Illinois	
	B: Jan 12 1872	(T1)
	TL	(S1)
	B: Aug 1849	(D2)

1884 Reilly, Joseph J.

1895 Sexton, Frank Joseph N

✓ 1924 Thomas, Herbert Marx N

✓ 1920 Torres, Ricardo J.

✓ 1931 Weaver, Montgomery Morton N

1895 Wilson, Frank Ealton

Debut: Apr 21 1884

Weight: 160

Name: Herbert Mark Thomas

D: Dec 4 1991

Starke, Florida

Name: Ricardo J. Torres y Martinez

B: Apr 16 1891

Regla, Cuba

D: Apr 17 1960

Regla, Cuba

Name: Montie Morton Weaver

B: Helton, North Carolina

Weight: 165

(S1)

(R1)

(H1)

(V2)

(J1)

(H1)

(R1)