

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XII, NO. 3: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" NOVEMBER 2012

THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by **John McMurray**

One of the challenges for authors in trying to portray scenes and dialogue from the Deadball Era is how to do so precisely. Since contemporary newspaper accounts—which typically do not contain dialogue—almost always serve as the primary source for accounts of events from one-hundred years ago, the difficulty of bringing Deadball Era events to life while staying true to known facts is significant. As Robert Peyton Wiggins, winner of the 2010 Larry Ritter Award for *The Federal League of Baseball Clubs*, noted (in an e-mail to me, cited with permission): “When deviating from these contemporary descriptions, a writer runs the risk of moving into the area of historic fiction.”

Sometimes a writer can find just the right account. Persistence, for instance, allowed Wiggins to locate a vintage 1910 *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* article describing Deacon Phillippe's inside-the-park bases loaded home run, which allowed Wiggins to vividly lay out the related scene in his book *Deacon and the Schoolmaster*. Still, Wiggins points out that it is important not to trust one source too fully: while recounting a snowball fight involving Phillippe and a group of local schoolgirls from a story

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REVISING DEADBALL ERA PITCHING STATS

by **Tom Ruane**

[Editor's Note: This past summer, the retroactive application of modern scoring rules to Deadball Era records was a lively discussion topic among members of the committee. In the article below, Retrosheet's Tom Ruane, one of the most thoughtful commentators on the subject, gives newsletter readers an overview of the issues involved.]

As Retrosheet works its way through generating box scores for every game played during the Deadball Era (and they have completed 1916 to 1919 as well as 1911 NL so far), it has renewed the debate over when and how to “fix” the statistics from these years. There are two types of things that may need correction. Let's take the one that isn't controversial first: simple bookkeeping or scorer mistakes. Before we start, however, it might be a good idea to describe how these statistics were generated to begin with.

It all began with an official scorer keeping a play-by-play account of a game. Once the game was over, the scorer would use this account to generate a sheet of player statistics to send to the league office, containing summary lines for each batter, pitcher, and team. Note: the actual play-

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by-play account was not sent (or in most cases, preserved), only the summaries. Once these sheets arrived at the league office, this information was then transcribed onto ledger sheets, one (or more) sheets for each batter, pitcher, and team. Unlike the data sent by the scorer to the league office, these ledgers have been preserved and are usually referred to as the Hall of Fame Dailies (since the Hall of Fame ended up with them and has made them available to researchers). Each sheet in these ledgers contained summary lines at the bottom (and often at the top) of each page and the final summary line for each batter/pitcher/team was used by the publishers of baseball guides and encyclopedias as their source of official statistics.

As you can imagine, there were several areas where mistakes could enter this process. The official scorer could err when converting his play-by-play description into each player's statistical line; numbers could be entered into the wrong boxes; the wrong player's ledger could be updated from the scorer's sheets; a game could be entered more than once; columns of numbers could be added incorrectly when creating the summary lines, and so on. We have

found numerous examples of each kind of these mistakes, and I think there is general agreement that these should be corrected as they are discovered.

So much for the easy part.

But what about differences between the scoring practices of the Deadball Era and today? While there are other areas affected by these differences (for example, the determination of runs allowed and innings pitched), the area of most concern is differences in the assignment of wins and losses. I recently wrote a paper (http://www.retrosheet.org/Research/RuaneT/pitdec_art.htm) that outlined some of the differences in how wins and losses were assigned at the time. Simply put: an official scorer (or in some cases even the league president) could decide to credit a win (or charge a loss) to the pitcher who was the most (or least, in the case of a loss) effective in the game, regardless of whether or not that pitcher was in the game when his team went ahead for good (or gave up the last go-ahead run of the game). And a starter did not have to pitch at least five innings to receive credit for a victory.

The INSIDE GAME

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NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Deadball Era Committee is happy to welcome newcomers to SABR who have expressed interest in the Deadball Era.

Paul Batesel
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Rick Johnson
Brian J. Kenny
Domingo Pacheco
Jim Pertierra
Joseph Rockne
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Mike Vance

They, as well as all who contributed to this issue, can be contacted through the SABR directory and, of course, all participation and contributions are most welcome.

So do we modernize these decisions or leave them alone? The modernist position starts with the assumption that the current rules are an improvement over those used in the past. Since at some point the leagues made a decision to replace the old method with a newer one, they must have felt that the new rule was better. If they are, why shouldn't the older players get the benefits of these improvements as well?

The next argument in favor of modernizing these decisions is that consistent statistical criteria are more useful to baseball fans and researchers attempting to compare players across eras than inconsistent ones. This argument is directly applicable to situations like the ones we find in 1876 (when a walk was considered a hitless at-bat) or 1887 (when walks were counted as hits), but not so much to wins and losses, since most people think that these are not particularly useful as a comparative measurement even if consistently applied. Which leaves us with the fairness argument: it is fairer to use consistent criteria, a level playing field as it were, in our determination of a player's statistics.

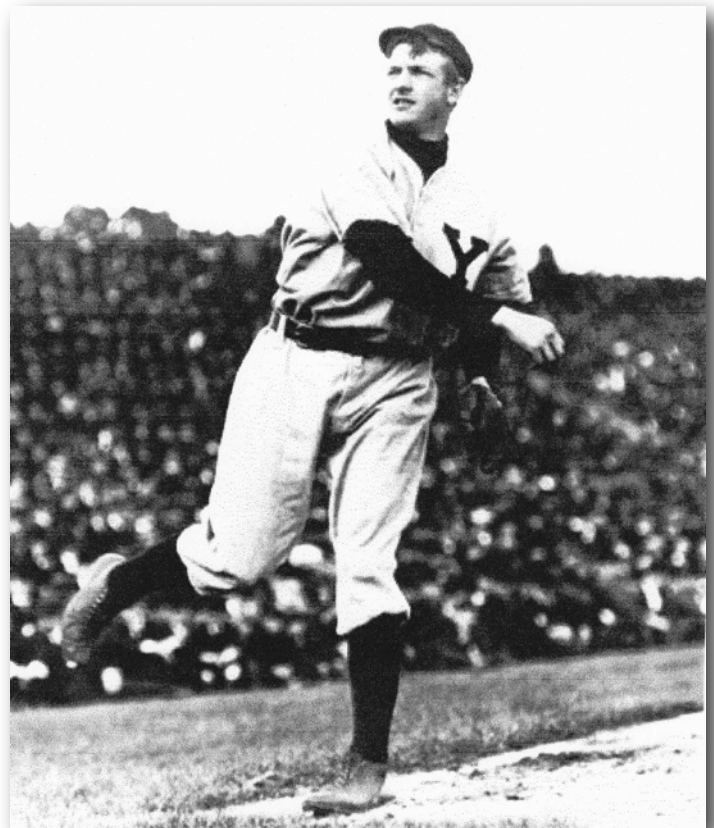
But is it? Rightly or wrongly, the older rules were in use at the time, and those rules changed the way the game was played and affected the goals and motivation of those involved. For example, managers would often remove their ace in the early innings if their team had a big lead, a practice that certainly wouldn't have been as widespread if the starter would have been ineligible for the win. Bonuses were commonly written into contracts based upon wins and winning percentage, and on occasion, a pitcher's usage would be affected by these goals. So is it fair to retroactively deny or grant wins and losses to pitchers who were told otherwise by the press and league at the time?

As a way of avoiding the controversy, people have suggested that perhaps our modern on-line encyclopedias could present two lines, one showing the statistics as determined using the rules of the time and the other using the modern ones. But there are several areas where the rules differ and I can imagine cases where, for example, we might want to permit starters to get

credit for wins with less than five innings while using the modern rules elsewhere. Or ensuring that relief pitchers were not charged with losses due to inherited runners scoring, but keep the other practices of the era. And so on.

The Deadball Era was a time of intense interest in the game's statistical record. It was also a period of change, as the increased popularity of relief pitching caused officials and fans alike to debate how runs, wins, and losses should be assigned. It is a debate that is still going on today. Feel free to visit the Deadball Era Committee section of SABRNation and take part in the discussion yourself.

Tom Ruane of Poughkeepsie, NY, is one of the driving forces behind Retrosheet and the 2009 recipient of the Bob Davids Award, SABR's highest accolade.



Application of contemporary scoring rules would reduce the career win total of all-time NL co-leader Christy Mathewson.

A 1911 MILWAUKEE JOURNAL BASEBALL QUIZ

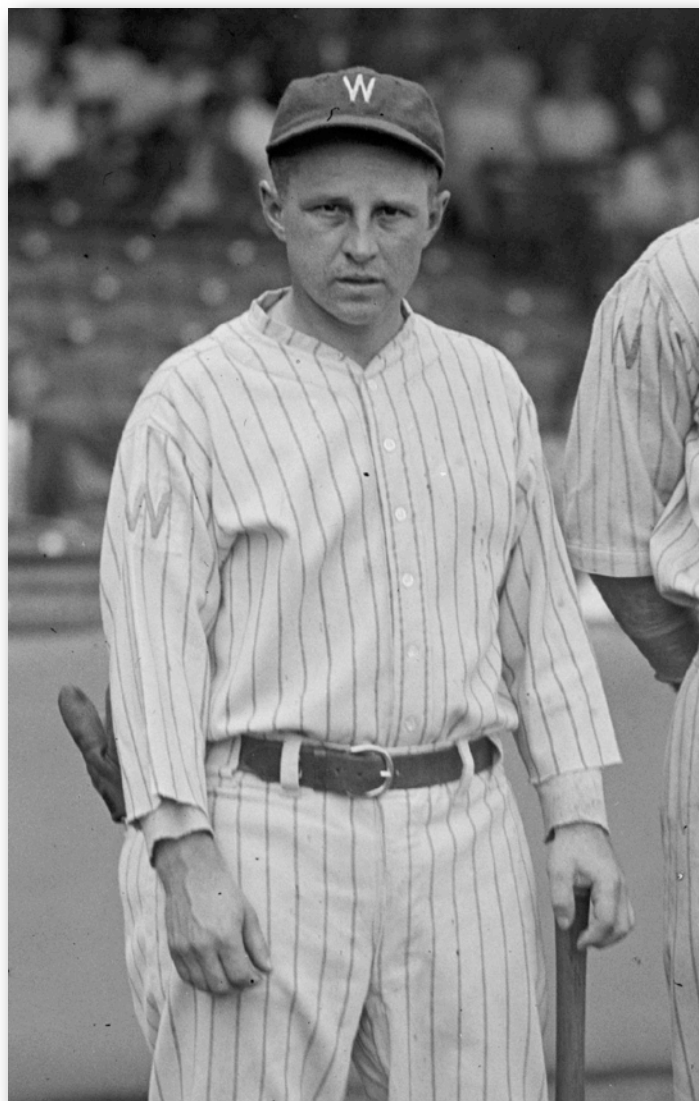
submitted by **Dennis Pajot**

Scenario: Two fast baseball clubs, the Milldale Sluggers and the Bifftown Champions, met for the most important game of the season. The Milldale club batted first and scored five runs through its nine innings at bat. Bifftown was held scoreless for the first eight innings, but indulged in a batting rally in the last half of the ninth. Two two-base hits, a triple, two singles, and four stolen bases, by four different men, and a base on balls had the Champions uncorked, when the Sluggers managed to put out the first Champions batter. At this point, a terrific wind and rainstorm stopped play, and at the end of fifteen minutes, the umpire called the game without play being resumed. Milldale was declared the winner.

Had the Champions been more fortunate in placing their hits, they would have won the game. But luck was against them, and they scored the **SMALLEST POSSIBLE** number of runs that could be made on the hits, stolen bases, and base on balls recorded.

Question: How many runs were scored when the game was called and how were they scored?

answer on page 23



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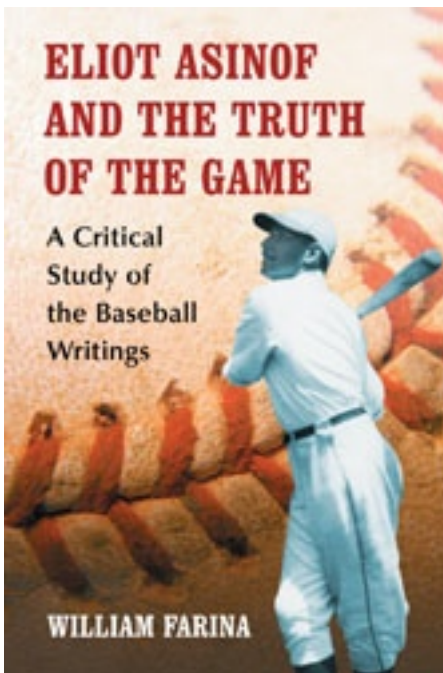
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DEADBALL BIOGRAPHIES

Since the last issue of *The Inside Game* appeared, the BioProject had posted the following biographies of Deadball Era figures: Frank Betcher, Charlie Boardman, Walter Clarkson, Bunk Congalton, Tom Doran, Joe Dugan, Duke Farrell, Rube Foster, John Godwin, Harry N. Hempstead, Jack O'Brien, Cy Morgan, Elmer Myers, Bert Niehoff, Art Rico, Kip Selbach, Aleck Smith, Dave Williams, Gary Wilson and Tiger Stadium (nee Navin Field). If you have not already done so, please check them out.



**ELIOT ASINOF AND
THE TRUTH OF
THE GAME:
A CRITICAL STUDY
OF THE BASEBALL
WRITINGS
BY WILLIAM FARINA**

2012. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland & Company
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Ebook ISBN
978-0-7864-8821-6.
250 pages. \$55.00 USD,
Paperback (6" X 9")]

Reviewed by
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William Farina, in *Eliot Asinof and the Truth of the Game, A Critical Study of the Baseball Writings*, argues that no one has written about baseball with more authority, conviction and insight than Eliot Asinof. Farina offers his thesis as a threefold axis. First, Asinof was

a highly talented writer who produced many writings on a wide range of subjects. Secondly, Asinof's experience as a minor league player made him unique in sports writing. Thirdly, Asinof's long career and life experiences gave him the ability to approach his subjects with a uniquely diverse and encompassing perspective.

There is no argument that Asinof was a talented writer. The sheer volume and variety of his writings on many subjects cannot be denied. It is also true that Asinof was a minor league baseball player as a young man, and that this gave him personal insight into the game. That Asinof's long career as a writer gave him a diverse and encompassing view may be true, but William Farina falls short of proving his argument that Asinof wrote with more insight and authority than others. Asinof published four books with baseball themes, *Man on Spikes* (1955), *Eight Men Out* (1963), *Strike Zone* [with Jim Bouton] (1967), and *Off-Season* (2000).

Farina develops his ideas well. However, his premise raises questions. Farina has set out to prove the unprovable, and this is his dilemma. His loyalty to his subject encourages him to view Asinof and his writings in a vacuum. He ignores the fine writings of authors writing in the same era. For instance, Roger Kahn's *The Boys of Summer* comes to mind.

Farina does give his readers a good understanding of the man Asinof was: smart, principled, and hardworking. Asinof also comes across as a compassionate man, worried about the world around him. His strength was his ability to reveal the injustice of society using baseball as his metaphor.

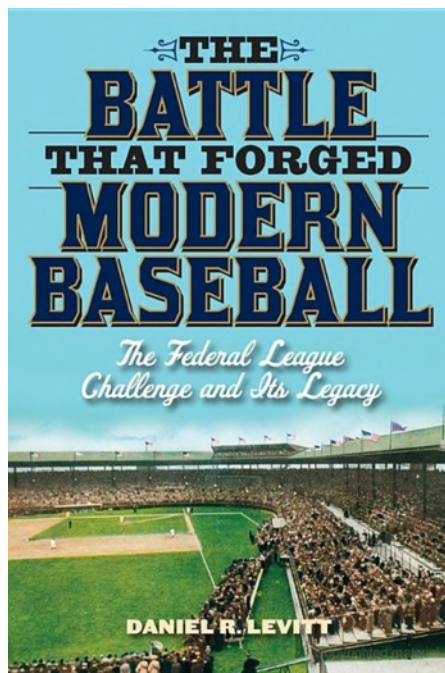
Farina documents his work impressively. His book contains an appendix with the timeline of the life and works of Asinof, chapter notes, and an index. Farina's presentation is clear. He discusses each of the above books in separate chapters. Although at times he becomes wordy, laying out his subject as if it were a legal brief, the reader is never unduly distracted.

Asinof will forever be remembered as the author of *Eight Men Out*, a fictionalized account of the 1919 World Series and the individuals involved in the "throwing" of that series. The book is so iconic in baseball literature that Asinof deserves broad recognition for it, and Farina credit for further highlighting Asinof's career. *Eight Men Out* stands as the pioneer account of the 1919 World Series scandal and serves as the starting point for any discussion of the subject. Asinof's other books, although enlightening regarding the socio-economic issues of the baseball world they describe, never captured the public's interest as did *Eight Men Out*.

There are only two types of baseball biographies. The first is a general, largely superficial and one-dimensional treatment where the author never reveals the true soul of his or her subject. Farina has mastered the second type, probing his subject deeply through the subject's own writings. One cannot finish this book without having a much clearer understanding of Asinof and his body of work. Farina is respectful of his subject, but never awed by him. If there are two types of baseball biographies, there are also two types of baseball readers. The first is the leisurely reader looking for light entertainment. The second is the reader who wants to know more, not just about the subject but what issues and forces forged her or him, and by whom was he or she influenced. Farina has given us a portrait of Asinof's professional career in the spirit of the second reader.

Eliot Asinof and the Truth of the Game: A Critical Study of the Baseball Writings, is not a book for all. But for readers working to further their understanding of one of the best baseball writers of our time I certainly would recommend this book.

Steve Cardullo, a retired Civil servant and lifelong Yankee fan, has written a SABR biography of Harry Grabiner.



**THE BATTLE THAT
FORGED MODERN
BASEBALL:
THE FEDERAL LEAGUE
CHALLENGE AND ITS
LEGACY**

BY DANIEL R. LEVITT

*2012. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee
Publishers*

*[ISBN 978-1-56663-869-2. 336
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Reviewed by
Marc Okkonen
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For any baseball history enthusiast, especially those who are intrigued by the so-called Deadball Era, the saga of the Federal League is a fascinating story often overlooked until recent decades. Author Daniel Levitt's *The Battle That Forged Modern Baseball* provides a thoroughly researched and well-crafted narrative of the

events surrounding this ill-fated venture to establish a third major league and how it influenced the structure of the game well into the twentieth century. In the less sanguine arena of venture capitalism, the plot has elements of a Greek or Shakespearian tragedy, and a cast of interesting characters willing to risk large sums of money in a high-stakes "poker game" in defiance of the *status quo* of big league baseball. In fact, Levitt introduces his text with a listing of the principal participants which he labels "Dramatis Personae."

In this book you will not find much detailed information about individual player performances or team records but this absence is by author design. Such data is secondary to the main thrust of the narrative, which is provide behind-the-scenes interaction of those key individuals who orchestrated the formation of the new league, and those who fought to resist it. Levitt did exhaustive research into period publications and correspondence records that provides insight into the personalities of these individuals and how they navigated through the legal and financial minefields of corporate baseball. The legal quagmire of trying to understand the quirks of player contracts and the controversial reserve clause, plus baseball's unique position with respect to anti-trust laws and interstate commerce are sometimes hard

to grasp for simple minds like mine, but this stuff is the “red meat” of the story. And, indeed, as the author suggests, the final outcome dictated the future path of major league baseball for decades to come.

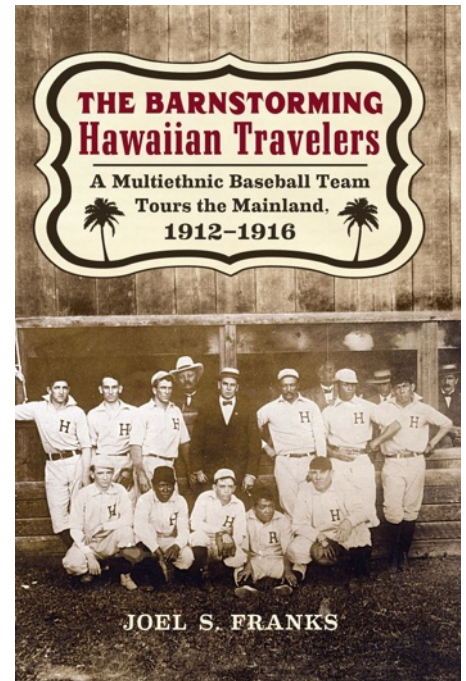
The ultimate collapse of the Federal League challenge solidified the status of the two major leagues and virtually negated any prospects of new leagues or franchise shifts until the 1950s. The Federal League settlement also guaranteed the continuation of baseball’s “plantation” system for years to come with no further threats of anti-trust legislation, players unions, or free agency in the foreseeable future. And, for better or worse, this misadventure indirectly led to the emergence of Kenesaw Mountain Landis as supreme commissioner. The tenure of Landis guaranteed the exclusion of blacks from organized baseball up to his death in the mid-1940s. A more benign leader might have opened the door sooner, especially during the difficult days of the Great Depression.

The biggest loser among FL cities was easily Baltimore, who refused to accept neither the terms of the final surrender nor the subsequent denial of major league status for their city. Their lengthy and eventually fruitless battle to get redemption in the courts is well related by Levitt. During this period and well into the twenties, Jack Dunn’s International League Orioles returned to occupy the home

park of the Federals and exacted a morsel of revenge and defiance toward their major league oppressors. Dunn’s teams managed to corral a gifted stable of talented players which were the “cream” of the high minor leagues, winning championships and refusing to accept lucrative offers by big league clubs for star players. The Orioles of the early twenties very likely could have competed with the best major league clubs of that period. The frustration of the Federal League experience to some degree gave Baltimore fans a memorable mini-dynasty of almost-major league excellence.

On a personal note, I was disappointed that Mr. Levitt gave little accreditation to my earlier SABR-sponsored booklet on this subject. But perhaps he found it more useful than his text indicates. In any case, this new work is well done; reading it was like reliving my past journey into this monumental drama. It is a tale worth retelling and revisiting for all baseball history buffs and I recommend it to be read and to be added to any respectable baseball library.

Marc Okkonen is the author of several highly regarded baseball publications, including The Federal League of 1914-1915: Baseball’s Third Major League (1989).



**THE BARNSTORMING
HAWAIIAN TRAVELERS:
A MULTIETHNIC
BASEBALL TEAM TOURS
THE MAINLAND,
1912-1916**

BY JOEL S. FRANKS

2012. Jefferson, NC:
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If you enjoy learning about the great untold stories of baseball, then you will want to read *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball teams Tours the Mainland, 1912-1916*, by Joel S. Franks. This is Franks’

follow-up work to *Asian Pacific Americans and Baseball: A History* (McFarland, 2008). With *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers*, Franks solidifies his position as an authority on Asian-American baseball. A lecturer of Asian-American studies at San Jose State University, he has written several books about Asian-American and sports history.

The book itself is organized chronologically. The first chapter provides historical context for baseball in early 20th century Hawaii and then covers the Travelers' (aka the misnomer "Chinese University of Hawaii") first barnstorming tour to the mainland in 1912. Chapters two through five summarize the tours between 1913 through 1916. The sixth chapter focuses on the post-tour experiences of a few all-star Travelers, including shortstop Vernon Ayau, outfielder Andy Yamashiro, pitcher Apua Kau, and the player Franks calls "arguably the most famous Chinese-American athlete of the early twentieth century," third baseman Buck Lai.

Franks acknowledges the danger of organizing the book chronologically, because readers will experience a repetition of events. He correctly believes the pros outweigh the cons. Franks' treatment of the Travelers' journeys demonstrates that even after successful tours to the mainland, the players continued to encounter bigotry

and racism on and off the field, especially in the press.

Telling the Travelers' story in chronological order also enables Franks to "give the readers a sense of movement, travel." During their nine-month tours of the U.S. mainland, the Travelers covered more than 25,000 miles and played over 100 games. He does a nice job of inviting the reader to join the team on their journey across America. While I noticed the repetition he warned about, as a baseball fan I think I've been trained to endure similar experiences by watching big-league games. In fact, at times I felt the Travelers' story was delivered with the same cadence and rhythm of a ball game – a series of familiar pitches interrupted by an unexpected and exciting hit.

Travelers' manager Al Yap, summarizing the team's purpose for barnstorming the mainland, said, "We want to show the fans of American that we know something about the game. We will do our best to win, but whether we win or not, I think that our tour will show the United States that we thoroughly understand the game." The Travelers not only won ballgames with their impressive talent, they won the respect of the players and communities they visited. However, despite their ability to open the minds of individuals, the institutional racism of organized professional ball and the press proved to be insurmountable.

In 1913 the Travelers' third baseman En Sue Pang was scouted and almost signed by the Chicago Cubs. But a big-league career for En Sue was not to be, for the color line was extended to exclude players of Chinese ancestry from the game. Likewise, in the press a barrage of racist terms were used to describe the multi-ethnic, multi-racial Travelers. In reading about the media buzz surrounding the Hawaiian Travelers one is reminded of "Lin-sanity," the media's recent fascination with NBA star Jeremy Lin. Attitudes of 1912 still exist, although a bit more subtle, a century later.

Franks missed a few opportunities to improve the overall experience for readers. First, most game summaries detailed only the names and accomplishments of the Travelers, and rarely discussed the opposing players. More details of the opposing teams might have provided greater evidence of the caliber of players the Travelers faced and demonstrated just how good they were as ballplayers. This was especially true in games versus Negro Leagues, semi-pro and college teams. Nonetheless, with over 720 footnotes reflecting hundreds of primary and secondary resources, Franks' research serves as a solid foundation for others to reference and dig deeper, if so desired.

Another opportunity for improvement was in the overall presentation of the information. Franks does an

excellent job in telling a concise story. But the challenge facing authors and publishers today is that readers are more sophisticated consumers of information. Readers want to do more than just read; they want to be entertained. Scholars and educators must deliver compelling “infotainment” to make an impact. This is achieved through infographics – tables, charts, data, photos, and maps. Rosters of the Travelers’ squads and a complete listing of the games with results from each tour would have helped. The end of each tour chapter could have included a statistically summary (games played, wins, loses, ties, etc.) and perhaps even some

attempt to provide batting and pitching statistics on the individual Travelers. Perhaps presenting a quantitative perspective on their tours might help broaden the appeal of their story and reach those who might not otherwise be interested.

Award-winning historian and author Robert K. Fitts rightfully calls *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* “a must read for any baseball fan interested in the international game.” Early 2012 marked the 100th anniversary of the Travelers’ tours to the U.S. mainland. Between now and the end of the 2016 is an ideal opportunity for anyone interested in sociology, race

relations, Asian-American history, U.S. history, and of course, baseball history, to pick up Franks’ latest book to learn about *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* and celebrate the fact that a multiethnic team played baseball in a town near you – a century ago.

Bill Staples, Jr., is chairman of the of the SABR Asian Baseball Committee, board member of the Nisei Baseball Research Project, and a past speaker at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. He received the 2011 SABR Baseball Research Award for his book: Kenichi Zenimura, Japanese American Baseball Pioneer (McFarland, 2011).

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Base Ball, A Journal of the Early Game, is an outstanding scholarly annual that covers the history of the game from proto-ball through the 1920 MLB season. The issue slated for release this Fall contains the following articles that should be of interest to Deadballers: *Take Me Out to the Ball Game: The Story of Katie Casey and Our National Pastime*, by George Boziwick; *Lost (and Found) Baseball Films*, by Rob Edelman; *Horace Fogel: The Man Who Knew (and Talked) Too Much*, by Steve Steinberg; and, *Rusie for Mathewson: The Most Famous Trade That Never Happened*, by Steven A. King. *Base Ball* is published by McFarland & Company, Inc., Telephone: 336-246-4460; E-mail: journals@mcfarlandpub.com.

GRIFFITH STADIUM: WASHINGTON AL, 1911-1919

by **Ron Selter**

The third ballpark used by the AL in Washington was Griffith Stadium. The park was known as National Park IV until 1922 when the name Griffith Stadium was adopted. Prior to the building of Griffith Stadium in 1911, the park site had been occupied by two prior major league ballparks. The first ballpark on the site was Boundary Park used by the National League's Washington franchise in the 1890s. The site was again used for a major league ballpark starting in 1904 when American League Park II was built. This site was in downtown Washington D.C. near the corner of Seventh St and Florida Ave Northwest. In 1911, the ballpark site was bounded on the north by Howard University and on the west by another property (Maryland House) that fronted on Seventh St. On the southern boundary there was another property, then an alley, then U St (previously Spruce St). On the east, Fifth St made up the final boundary of the park site.

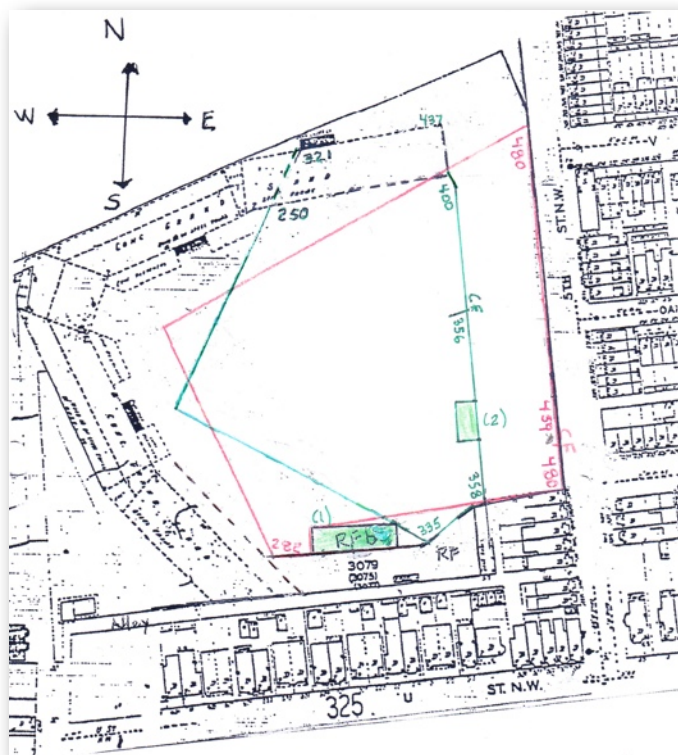
The prior wooden ballpark on the site, American League Park II, came to an unfortunate end. The ballpark burned down on March 17, 1911. The fire destroyed most of the stands⁽¹⁾. Surviving the fire were the first base bleachers and the outfield fences. The club rushed to build new and more fire-proof stands in time to open the 1911 season. The construction was directed by Osborn Engineering of Cleveland (the architect for several other Classic Deadball Era ballparks) and the work was performed by the George Fuller Construction Co. The steel-and-concrete double-deck grandstand had an estimated cost of \$125,000. By Opening Day (April 12, 1911), Griffith Stadium was only partially complete. At that time, the upper deck of the new grandstand and the grandstand roof were not finished, and the permanent seats in the concrete first base and third base pavilions were not yet installed. Instead, temporary wooden seats were used in the pavilions to start the season⁽²⁾⁽³⁾. For the first 32 games of the 1911 season, the ballpark was a

hybrid of some of the prior ballpark's stands and some of the new newly constructed Griffith Stadium stands. Because by Opening Day a substantial portion of the new stands were not ready for use, the field was oriented to permit use of the old surviving wooden first base bleachers from American League Park II. This orientation involved placing home plate between the planned permanent location of first base and the planned permanent location of home plate. As a result, home plate in its temporary location was rather close (about 40 feet away) from the center of the first base wing of the new grandstand. A result of this field alignment was that the LF line hit the new third base pavilion near the grandstand end of that pavilion and the RF line just cleared the end of the old first base bleachers that were thus, with this temporary configuration, just in foul territory. There was an in-play clubhouse in right-centerfield and a plan for a modest sized scoreboard (not installed until May) in RF. The total capacity of the ballpark on Opening Day 1911 was about 11,000. The outfield fences of AL Park II that had survived the fire were retained and together with the temporary location of home plate made CF relatively shallow.

On July 25, 1911, Griffith Stadium was officially opened with substantial fanfare. Home plate was moved to the northwest corner of the park site and centered in front of the new grandstand. In addition, the field was reoriented about 15 degrees towards RF. The outfield fences, left over from the prior ballpark, were removed in LF and CF and the new LF-CF boundary was the perimeter fence along Fifth St. As this realignment would have placed the RF bleachers, left over from American League Park II, in fair territory, they along with the on-field clubhouse in RF were removed. By July 25, the upper deck of the new steel-and-concrete grandstand was still not ready for use. It would not be used until September 7, 1911. With the opening of the second deck of the grandstand in September, the ballpark's capacity reached about 16,500.

Before the 1912 season, a shallow set of wooden bleachers was built in LF in front of the Fifth St fence. These bleachers were the last stands called

for in the original plans of the ballpark, and brought the total capacity of the ballpark to about 18,000. The LF bleachers, with a seating capacity of about 1,500, extended from the LF line to beyond left-center field. In the alcove, situated to the right of the end of the LF bleachers, were the in-play bullpens. At the start of the 1912 season, when the planned construction of Griffith Stadium was finally complete the park's stands consisted of: (1) a double-deck steel-and-concrete grandstand which ran from beyond first base to beyond third base, (2) two roofed concrete pavilions that ran from near the ends of the grandstand down the LF and RF lines, and (3) a shallow set of wooden bleachers in LF. Home plate and the grandstand were located in the northwest corner of the ballpark site with the LF line being canted a few degrees to the north of an east-west orientation.



**Griffith Stadium, original dimensions (green), later 1911 dimensions (red).
(1) indicates RF Bleachers of AL Park II.
(2) indicates clubhouse.**

The park site, the playing field, and the seating capacity of the ballpark were all expanded after the 1913 season. The Nationals (as the ball club was usually called in the Deadball Era) acquired properties (including a storage plant that was visible in photos) located behind the 1912-13 RF fence. These acquired properties were situated on the north side of the alley behind U St. The purchase of these parcels permitted an extension of the first base pavilion to the new property line, and the construction of a new higher wooden fence set further back from home plate. These changes resulted in a noticeable increase in the size of RF.

The Basis of the Park's Configuration and Dimensions

Dimensional data for Griffith Stadium in its Early 1911 configuration were estimated from the 1911 Basit map, articles, photos about the ballpark, and game accounts in the *Washington Post*⁽⁴⁾. With the temporary alignment of the field used in the early part of the 1911 season, the LF line intersected the third base pavilion at more than 90 degrees. The first foul ball was not hit into this pavilion until a game in early May. For this to have been true, the large majority of the pavilion must have been in fair territory. From the photos of the ballpark and the Basit map, it is clear that the RF foul line must have also intersected the RF fence at more than 90 degrees. Because of the limited time (about three weeks) between the fire that destroyed the prior ballpark, American League II, and the 1911 Opening Day, it was necessary to retain the old LF-CF fence from the prior ballpark. This fence was located 90 feet in front of and was parallel to the perimeter fence on the west side of Fifth St. This temporary configuration (referred to as the Early 1911 Configuration) made CF relatively shallow.

The basis for the Late 1911 configuration of Griffith Stadium was a 1911 Basit map (published by the G. W. Basit Map Co.) of the park and the various articles about the ballpark in the *Washington Post*⁽⁴⁾. This map showed the park's boundaries, and the location of the stands and perimeter fences. The realignment of the playing

field in July 1911 resulted in a new alignment for the RF fence. The RF fence now ran in a straight line to the building protection wall in CF. This fence was situated about 10 feet in front of the park's property line in RF.

The shallow set of wooden LF bleachers built before the 1912 season ran from the LF foul line to a point in CF (at 39 degrees off the LF foul line). The perimeter CF fence along Fifth St ran from the back right corner of the LF bleachers past dead CF to the sort of CF corner (located at 39 degrees off the RF foul line). At that point, there was a 95 degree angle as there were properties along the alley behind U St (on the southwest corner of the intersection of Fifth St and the alley behind U St.) that were not then and were never later part of the ballpark site. The far distant portion of CF between the CF end of the LF bleachers and the CF corner was used for the bullpens.

The 1911 dimensional data from the 2006 edition of *Green Cathedrals* (LF 407, left-center 393, and CF 421) turned out to be incorrect values for either the Early 1911 Configuration or the Late 1911 Configuration⁽⁵⁾. A clue to the park's actual RF dimension was found in the game account of a home run hit at Cleveland (July 27, 1912). This home run was hit by the Nationals' Danny Moeller and was hit over the RF wall and screen at Cleveland's League Park IV. Describing the home run, the game account in the *Washington Post* noted that the RF distance at the Cleveland ballpark (290) was about the same distance at the foul line as at the Washington ballpark (Griffith Stadium)⁽⁶⁾. Additional research established the actual RF dimension (282) was quite close to the estimated value of 280⁽⁷⁾. The Griffith Stadium LF dimension was far more than RF – an incredible distance of 480 feet in late 1911 after the playing field was re-aligned and the interior fence from the prior ballpark removed.

The new 1912 RF fence ran at more than 90 degrees to the foul line from the RF corner for about 100 feet to about straight-away RF. At that point, the fence made a 90 degree turn to the left (towards the infield) and ran about 35 feet before making another 90 degree turn (this time to the

right). The next section of the RF-CF fence was parallel to the alignment of the first section of the RF fence and ran all the way to the CF corner (this CF corner actually formed an angle of more than 90 degrees). A new, and modern for 1912, scoreboard was added above a portion of the RF fence. The planned dimensions of this scoreboard were reported as 150 feet in width and 20 feet in height to be mounted on top of the 10 foot RF fence. However, photos of RF from the 1912 season show the scoreboard located in right center to have had a total height of about 20-24 feet.

The short fence in RF had been an item of discussion during the 1911 and 1912 seasons. In January 1912, an article in the *Washington Post* noted that a high screen had been promised on top of the RF fence⁽⁸⁾. The January article in the *Post* stated that there were visiting batsmen to whom the short, low fence was a cinch. The screen, put in place sometime during the 1912 season, turned out to be a modest six feet in height and was mounted on top of the 10 foot RF fence. A game account early in the 1912 season noted a visitor's home run over the RF fence that would have been prevented if the screen had been in place⁽⁹⁾. This meant that in May the screen in RF had not yet been added. In seeking to remedy the problem of the short RF fence, the ball club purchased two plots of land behind the RF fence. In January 1912, a small plot, located behind the existing RF corner, and that ran along Boehr St was purchased. In May 1913, the Washington club closed a deal to acquire an additional parcel-the storage plant behind the existing RF fence⁽¹⁰⁾. In that same newspaper article, it was stated that one of the chief objections against the local grounds has been the fact that the RF fence had been so short. The new RF fence was not built until late in the 1913 season and was not in use until the 1914 season⁽¹¹⁾. At the same time, a building permit was obtained to build a CF concrete wall at Fifth St and the properties along the alley behind U St. This wall later became known as one of the building protection walls.

However, home run research in later seasons showed that the portion of the RF fence nearest

the RF corner was not increased in height. During the 1917 season, and again late in the 1919 season there were accounts of home runs over the “low section of the RF wall”⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾. Based on photos, the height of the low section of the RF fence in 1914-23 was estimated to have been 16 feet.

Given the known LF and CF dimensions and the existence of a Basit map, the Deadball Era dimensions for Griffith Stadium contain only a small amount of uncertainty. The following tables show the dimensions, fence heights and average outfield distances in the Deadball Era for each configuration of Griffith Stadium:

The Impact of the Park’s Configurations and Dimensions on Batting

The Early 1911 configuration of Griffith Stadium was used for the first 32 home games of the 1911 season. In this temporary configuration, the large majority of what would be the third base pavilion in the permanent configuration was actually in fair territory and the distance down the LF line was only an estimated 250 feet. Fair batted balls hit into the pavilion were ground-rule doubles and not home runs. To hit an Over-the-Fence (OTF) home run to LF a batter had to hit the ball completely over the pavilion. In 32 games there was only one such home run.

Dimensions (Derived From Park Diagrams)							
Years	LF	SLF	LC	CF	RC	SRF	RF
Early 1911*	250**	329**	399	356	347	358	335
Late 1911*	480	438	430	459	385	318	282
1912-1913	464	421	413	459	383	343	282
1914-1919	464	421	413	459	388	374	329
Backstop: 42 (Est.); Early 1911, 78 (7-25-1911)							
* Early 1911: Through 7-1-1911; Late 1911: 7-25-1911 to the end of season.							
** Balls hit into the third base pavilion (the portion in fair LF) were ground-rule doubles.							

Fences Heights (All Estimated From Photos)			
Years	LF	CF	RF
Early 1911	10	10-15	10
Late 1911	11	11-16	10
Early 1912	6	11-16	10-20
Late 1912-1913	6	11-16	16-24
1914-1919	6	11-20	16-24

Average Outfield Distances			
Years	LF	CF	RF
Early 1911	331**	364	354
Late 1911	445	442	325
1912-1913	428	436	326
1914-1919	428	436	367
** Balls hit into the third base pavilion (in fair LF) were ground-rule doubles.			

Architect: Osborn Engineering

Capacity: 12,000 (April 1911 Est.), 10,500 (July 25, 1911), 16,500 (September 7, 1911 Est.), 18,000 (1912-1913 Est.), 19,000 (1914-1919 Est.)

Park Size-Composite Average Outfield Distance: 350 (Early 1911 Configuration), 404 (Late 1911 Configuration), 397 (1912-1913), 410 (1914-1919)

Park Site Area: 6.1 acres (1911-1913), 6.5 acres (1914-1919)

Deadball Era Run Factor: 98 (Rank: AL 12 of 20)

Overall, Griffith Stadium in its first configurations (Early 1911) was an above average offensive park, but not in its later configurations. For the rest of the 1911 season and for the 1912 and 1913 seasons the ballpark was a noticeably below average offensive park. The impact of the shift from the Early 1911 configuration, (average outfield distance 350) to the much larger Late 1911 configuration (average outfield distance 404) was substantial. The batting park factor for runs in the Early 1911 Configuration was 121. In the Late 1911 Configuration the batting park factor for runs dropped to 77. The batting average park factor dropped from 106 to 94, while the doubles park factor dropped 25 percent from 123 to 92. (See Batting Park Factor table below). The reason for the decline in the doubles park factor was most likely due to the third base pavilion now being in foul territory and thus there were no more ground-rule doubles for fair batted balls hit into the previously very close pavilion. The run park factor for the Late 1911 Configuration appears to have been an anomaly as the run factor for 1912-13 was a very average 101. As for home runs, in the 1912-13 seasons with only a small change in the park's average size vs. the Late 1911 Configuration (the addition of the out-of-reach shallow bleachers in LF) there were 63 home runs, of which 63% were Inside-the-Park-Home-Runs (IPHR).

The home run data for 1911-13 proved just how true the complaints were about the short RF fence. All 30 of the OTF home runs hit in late 1911 and in the 1912-13 seasons were hit over the RF fence. The acquisition of additional parcels of land allowed the RF dimension to be increased to 329 for the 1914 season. At the same time, a higher wooden fence in a large portion of RF was constructed. The new and higher RF fence ran from the RF corner (now 329 feet from home plate) at 113 degrees to the RF foul line for about 75 feet until a point in RF (at 10 degrees off the foul line). From this point, the RF fence ran at a diagonal until it reached the CF corner. Starting with the 1912 season, the CF fence had two 90 degree corners at the CF end of the LF bleachers. The extent of the CF fence along Fifth St was to the east was limited, because the park site

excluded a few properties on the southwest corner of Fifth St and the alley behind U St.

The only three OTF home runs to LF or CF in the Deadball Era occurred in early 1911 with the temporary LF-CF fence. The only one to LF was over the third base pavilion that then extended far into fair LF. The two OTF home runs to CF occurred when the temporary configuration of the playing field in early 1911 made the CF dimension only 356. This close to average home run park factor was enhanced by the 18.3 per season rate of IPHR in the park's first three years of usage. After the expansion of RF before the 1914 season, the park became spacious in all fields with average outfield distances noticeable greater than the typical AL ballpark. The 1914 RF expansion had a major impact on home runs at the ballpark. Total home runs dropped from 31.7 to 7.5 per season. Starting in 1914, OTF home runs at the park became rare, about two per season, and all of these were over the RF fence. In the 1914-1919 time period, Griffith Stadium became the least hitter-friendly AL ballpark for home runs. Unlike at many other ballparks in the second decade of the Deadball Era, the proportion of IPHR remained high, amounting to 62% of the total home runs hit in the ballpark's nine Deadball seasons.

Consistent with the park's run factor for 1914-1919 of 98, the batting average and on-base park factors were 98-99, and the slugging park factors were 93-95. With the larger area in RF starting in 1914, ballpark had an increase in the triples park factor from 85 to 101. Home run data for the park and batting park factors are shown below in four tables:

Home Runs by Type at Griffith Stadium

Years	Total	OTF	Bounce	IP
Early 1911	13	8	0	5
Late 1911	19	9	1	10
1912-1913	63	23	1	40
1914-1919	45	14	1	31

Bounce: Bounce Home Runs

IP: Inside-the-Park

OTF: Over-the-Fence (Includes Bounce)

OTF Home Runs by Field at Griffith Stadium (Excluding Bounce)

Years	Total	LF	CF	RF	Unknown
Early 1911	8	1	2	5	0
Late 1911	8	0	0	8	0
1912-1913	22	0	0	22	0
1914-1919	13	0	0	13	0

Inside-the-Park Home Runs by Field at Griffith Stadium

Years	Total	LF	LC	CF	RC	RF	Unknown
Early 1911	5	1	1	0	2	1	0
Late 1911	10	3	2	4	0	1	0
1912-1913	40	12	3	19	4	1	1
1914-1919	31	8	2	15	3	3	0

Batting Park Factors at Griffith Stadium

Years	BA	OBP	SLUG	2B*	3B*	HR*	BB**
Early 1911	106	104	109	126	114	126	102
Late 1911	94	95	96	92	107	118	93
1912-1913	98	98	95	99	85	93	96
1914-1919	99	99	95	82	101	40	97

* Per AB

** Per Total Plate Appearance (AB+BB+HP)

The Griffith Stadium article is the latest informative profile of Deadball Era ballparks contributed to The Inside Game by Ron Selter of El Segundo, California.

- 1 *Washington Post*, March 18, 1911
- 2 *Washington Post*, April 9, 1911
- 3 *Washington Post*, April 13, 1911
- 4 G. W. Basit Map Co., Washington 1911, Volume 3 Sheet 17
- 5 Philip J. Lowry, *Green Cathedrals*, (Revised Edition) Reading MA, Addison Wesley 1992, p. 244
- 6 *Washington Post*, July 28, 1912
- 7 *Washington Post*, July 23, 1911
- 8 *Washington Post*, January 5, 1912
- 9 *Washington Post*, "Noted of the Nationals," May 9, 1912
- 10 *Washington Post*, May 31, 1913
- 11 *Washington Post*, August 28, 1913
- 12 *Washington Post*, June 17, 1917
- 13 *Washington Post*, September 28, 1919

A CONVERSATION WITH BIOPROJECT CHIEF EDITOR JAN FINKEL

Player profiles, ballpark histories, and other submissions to the SABR BioProject have greatly expanded our knowledge and appreciation of Deadball Era subjects. Recently, BioProject chief editor Jan Finkel, a most deserving recipient of the Bob Davids Award at the SABR convention this summer, responded to a series of questions posed by newsletter editor Bill Lamb. Here is what Jan had to say on a variety of topics.

BILL: With over 2,000 biographies already published and counting, how would you assess the current state of the BioProject? And what is the target number for completed biographies by the time of the 2013 SABR Convention?

JAN: I think the BioProject is in excellent shape. Mark Armour had a brilliant plan, and manages everything smoothly. We have over five hundred members and a dedicated corps of editors. About three hundred different writers have contributed at least one biography. Bill Nowlin has contributed three hundred bios; Len Levin has edited well over four hundred. I'd like to see us hit the 2,500 mark by the convention, but that may be a stretch.

BILL: Of all the biographies that you have reviewed, do you have a personal favorite(s)? And why so?

JAN: I can't really pick one or two, but my favorites are often of the obscure figures, the cup-of-coffee types. For one thing, I've never heard of at least half the figures that come in, so there's always something new. Again, the obscure figures often have a fascinating or poignant story that supersedes their playing career. Two that come to mind are Wally Snell by Charlie Bevis and John Carden by Bill Hickman.

BILL: For a typical biography subject, what is an acceptable amount of time between assignment of a particular biography to an author and the

submission of that biography to BioProject editors? To what extent has delay in completion of biographies been a problem, and have any measures been taken to address assignments that go uncompleted for extended periods of time?

JAN: We like to see a biography submitted within a year of assignment. It hasn't been a huge problem, but sometimes we've had to nudge a writer, make certain he or she is still committed to the assignment. If a writer no longer wants to do a piece, we announce the availability of the subject and reassign it when appropriate. In the interest of full disclosure, I can't say too much on this subject given how long I've been working on Juan Marichal.

BILL: In your opinion, what impact has the BioProject had on the appreciation of Deadball Era subjects?

JAN: I think it's been symbiotic. The beautiful *Deadball Stars* volumes that Tom Simon and David Jones managed and edited spearheaded much of what we do. And let's remember that Tom Simon's *Green Mountain Boys of Vermont* got everything started. At the BioProject we seek bios from every era of baseball, and I think we've encouraged appreciation of every era. We also have a significant number of pieces on minor leaguers, Negro leaguers, women, executives, umpires, broadcasters, scouts, ballparks, and organizations.

BILL: Name three (or more) currently unassigned Deadball Era subjects that you would like someone to take up, and why these three?

JAN: Two that have always intrigued me are Jim or Joe Nealon (I've seen him listed with both first names, a fact which already raises questions) and Ed Abbaticchio, who both played for the Pirates. Nealon only played two seasons but led the league in RBIs his first year; he was dead at 25. What happened? Abbaticchio was one of the first Italians if

not the first to play in the majors, and I've often wondered what he might have endured. I remember seeing a *Life* piece about Joe DiMaggio that was full of stereotypical drivel. Hank Greenberg and Jackie Robinson went through hell, and I wonder what it was like for Abbaticchio.

I don't have a specific third, but it would likely be a cup-of-coffee player, the kind that Charlie Bevis and Bill Nowlin write about so wonderfully. As I've often said, those players often have the best stories, precisely because baseball wasn't their whole life.

BILL: The BioProject has published a number of excellent team biographies. Is there anything in the works for a Deadball Era team bio?

JAN: The 1912 and 1918 Red Sox are finished and available. The 1901 Boston Americans and 1914 Braves are in the works. It's not a team biography, but a book on all the World Series of the period using contemporary accounts is progressing nicely. I'd like to see more. The 1901-03 and 1909 Pirates come to mind, but I grew up in Pittsburgh and am a little biased. The 1906-10 Cubs were extraordinary. The Red Sox dominated the second decade. The White Sox of 1906, 1917, and 1919 would be fascinating, as would the Reds of 1919. How about any number of Giants, Tigers, and Athletics teams? What about black baseball? I've gone on too long, but there's a lot of fertile ground.

BILL: As chief editor of the BioProject, what is the best part of the job? What is the most trying?

JAN: I don't like to brag—all right, a little bit—but I have the best job in SABR because I get to see every biography as it comes in. Nobody else I know gets to do that.

The worst part is telling a writer that his or her article just isn't working. I daresay all of our editors would tell you the same



Jesse Tannehill

thing. You have to be truthful, but you also have to be humane.

BILL: What are the most common shortcomings of BioProject submissions and what measures, if any, have been taken to improve the situation?

JAN: I can't speak for all of our editors. The obvious shortcomings are incomplete research, weak or unsupported assertions, and fuzzy writing. Most worrisome to me, though, is a lack of focus, a thesis if you like. I don't want to see an assortment of facts with no point; my first impulse is to ask, "Why are you telling me all this?" I also like to see the individualizing or personalizing detail, what makes the subject unique. As an example, there's a large handful of pitchers from the Deadball Era with about 185-199 wins: Babe Adams, Jack Chesbro, Sam Leever, Doc White, Ed Walsh, Deacon Phillippe, Jesse Tannehill, Rube Waddell, and somebody I've probably forgotten. Some are in the Hall of Fame, most of them aren't. You can only discuss their stats for so long. How do you show the individuality of each one? That the writers achieved this is what makes the *Deadball Stars* books so good.

The only way I know to improve the situation is to have a sound working relationship between writer and editor. Fortunately, we have that relationship ninety-nine percent of the time. Indeed, we have a number of writers who request a specific editor because they work so well together.

BILL: Name your personal Deadball Era all-star team, including four pitchers, one bench player, and a manager. (Players ineligible for the Hall of Fame or otherwise persona non grata can be selected.)

JAN: I've taken some liberties here with the pitching staff, the bench, and so on. I've listed everyone in alphabetical order. It's MY team, and I'm greedy enough to want every great player.

P—Grover Cleveland Alexander

P—Walter Johnson

P—Christy Mathewson

P—Eddie Plank

P—Cy Young

This is the most difficult position to choose because it was a pitchers' era. Mordecai Brown rates very high with Chief Bender just a little behind him. Joe McGinnity, Rube Waddell, Jack Chesbro, Ed Walsh, Joe Wood, Addie Joss, Jim Vaughn, and Jack Coombs all had some remarkable seasons, but I wanted durability and consistency, so I picked the above five. I also wanted a southpaw and didn't want to leave any of the others out.

C—Roger Bresnahan or Johnny Kling

1B—Frank Chance (also a nod to Stuffie McGinnis)

2B—Eddie Collins or Napoleon Lajoie (can't exclude either one)

SS—Honus Wagner (no contest)



Photo by Jacob Pomrenke

Jan Finkel (center) with past Bob Davids award recipients. Newsletter contributor Tom Ruane is in back row, over Jan's right shoulder.

3B—Frank Baker (I'm also a bit prejudiced in favor of Art Devlin)

OF—Sam Crawford or Joe Jackson (especially if I needed a triple)

OF—Tris Speaker

OF—Ty Cobb

Utility—Tommy Leach could help in many ways. Sherry Magee is the best player I haven't mentioned so far, and there has to be a place for him.

Manager—Fred Clarke (Honorable Mention to Frank Chance and Connie Mack; wouldn't want Hughie Jennings or John McGraw as gifts)

Note to newsletter readers: We hope to include a Deadball Era All-Star team ballot in the February 2013 newsletter, with the poll results to be published the following issue. So please start thinking about who to choose for your own team.

BILL: In your opinion, which was the best Deadball Era team, and why?

JAN: For a single season I'd have to go with the 1906 Cubs and the 1909 Pirates based on the sheer number of wins. The 1902 Pirates come into play because that 27½-game margin is impossible to ignore. Over a long haul it's the Cubs from 1906 through 1910. They averaged 106 wins a year. While I'm thinking about it, I want to say something about Tinker, Evers, and Chance. It's fashionable to denigrate their selection to the Hall of Fame, crediting Franklin P. Adams's poem and all that. Think of all those 530 wins, though. Nobody has ever put together five years of that caliber. Somebody must have been doing something right on that team. The Athletics of 1910-14 and Red Sox of the 1910s merit consideration as well.

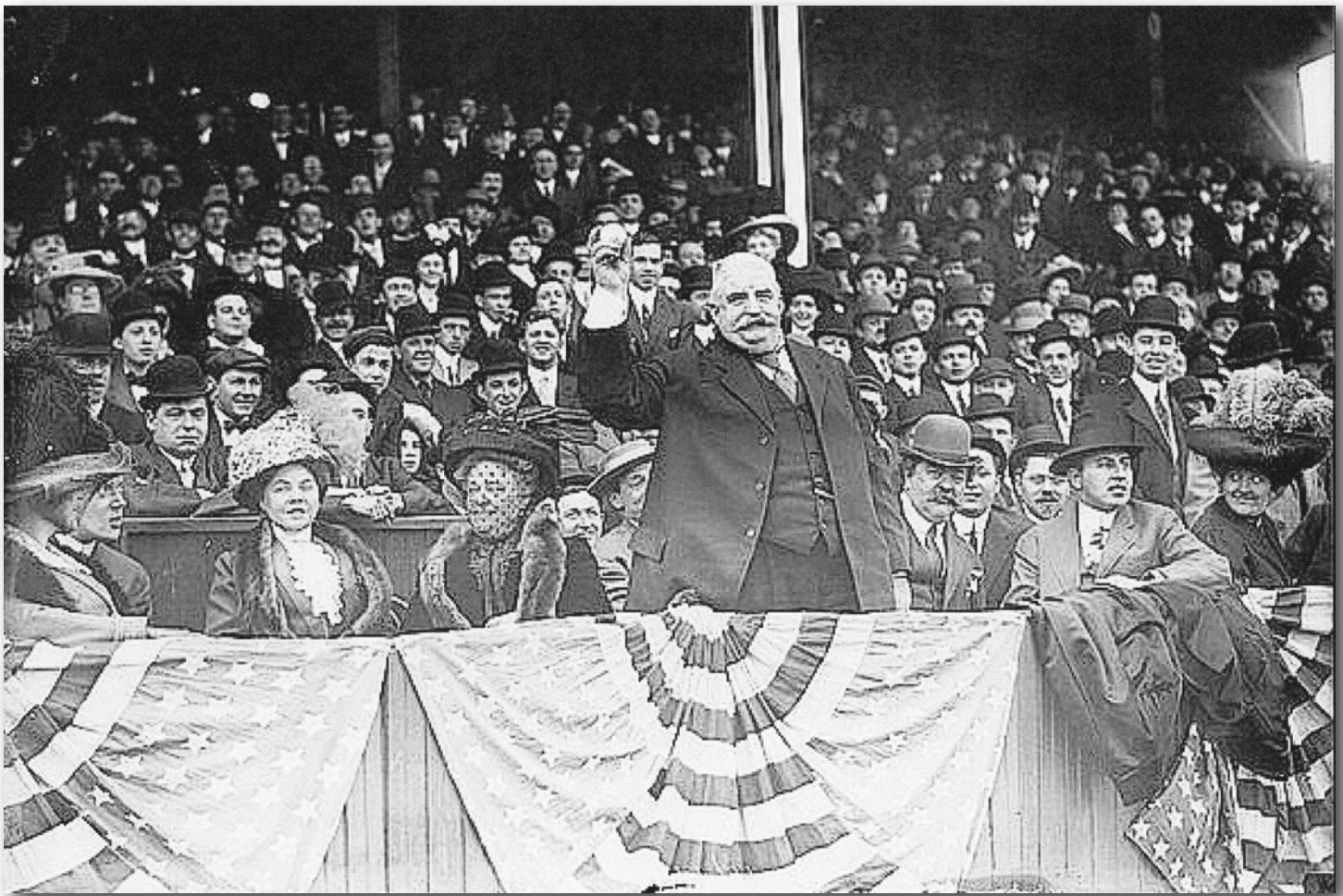
Jan Finkel, longtime college English professor and dedicated chief editor of the BioProject, received the Bob Davids Award at this year's SABR convention.

BILL DEVERY: A NOT-ALWAYS-SILENT DEADBALL CLUB OWNER

by **Bill Lamb**

From the Tammany Hall operatives backing the pioneer-era New York Mutuals through the tempestuous reign of Yankees owner George M. Steinbrenner, III, the ownership ranks of New York baseball clubs have often been populated with problematic figures. Sportswriters' villain Andrew Freedman, professional gambler Frank Farrell, shady stock trader Charles Stoneham, and six-times married Dan Topping would likely appear in any rogues gallery of Gotham team owners. But however dubious the public reputation of such men, same would pale in comparison to that of Bill Devery, a founding co-owner of the New York Highlanders. Devery had a negligible effect on club fortunes, having left operation of the franchise almost entirely to partner Farrell during the dozen years (1903-1915) that the two stewarded the club. But on the larger stage of turn-of-the-century New York City life, Devery was a major actor: a colorful and notoriously corrupt police official, a Tammany collection man and district organizer, and a favorite punching bag of reform orators and their allies in the press. A Gay Nineties Falstaff in size (about 6' and 260 lb. in his prime) and appetites (for food, liquor, and late-night revelry), Big Bill commanded attention wherever he turned up, being an unmistakable presence at any gathering and a fixture on the New York City public scene for a generation.

William Stephen Devery was born above a Manhattan saloon on January 9, 1854, the oldest of five children born to Irish Catholic immigrants. As a young man, Bill embarked on a bare-knuckle path toward upward mobility, working as a Bowery bartender and a sometime prizefighter. In 1878, Devery became a member of the New York City Police Department, reputedly making the standard \$200 contribution to Tammany coffers for the appointment. In due course, he advanced from patrolman (1878) to roundsman (1881) to



Hilltop Park, Opening Day, April, 1910. Club owner Bill Devery delivers the ceremonial first pitch.

sergeant (1884). As he advanced in rank and proved himself a reliable servant of Tammany interests, Devery was schooled in the collection of honest graft, the tariff imposed upon saloons, gambling dens, brothels, off-track betting parlors, dance halls, and other spots requiring police indifference by Richard Croker, the efficient and ruthless overlord of Tammany Hall. During the learning process, Devery cemented relations with Big Tim Sullivan, an East Side powerbroker who would serve as Devery's political godfather, and Frank Farrell, an enterprising Manhattan saloon keeper who, in time, would come to own several posh gambling casinos and control some 250 off-track betting spots.

Devery first came to public attention following his promotion to captain in 1891 and his subsequent assumption of command of the

Elbridge Street station, the police outpost in the heart of Manhattan's notorious Tenderloin district. Here, vice was rampant and protection payoffs were collected by police on virtually a door-to-door basis. Hauled before a legislative committee to answer the report of widespread corruption in his precinct -- with most of the graft allegedly collected by Devery himself -- Big Bill famously informed his inquisitors that, "Touchin' on and appertainin' to that, there's nothing doing." Reform elements in city government were skeptical of such denials and through the mid-1890s, Captain William S. Devery was almost constantly under investigation, indictment, or administrative charge. But Devery invariably managed to beat the rap and emerged unscathed, save for his reputation.

Devery's political star reached its apogee during the administration of New York City mayor Robert Van Wyck (1898-1901). A compliant Croker puppet, Van Wyck moved Devery up the police chain of command quickly, and in June 1898, Big Bill was appointed NYPD Chief. Critics howled, with the reform journalist Lincoln Steffens scoffing that Devery was "a disgrace, no more fit to be chief of police than the fish man is to be director of the Aquarium." Impervious to such censure, Chief Devery, an affable, unpretentious man whom reformers, even Steffens, found difficult to dislike personally, continued his brazenly corrupt ways. Almost every evening, Devery would leave Police Headquarters and take up station outside a Midtown watering hole called The Pump. There for hours, he would accept the cash tributes of those in need of police favor, while doling out rent money to worthy supplicants or finding a job for recent arrivals from Ireland. Meanwhile, a gambling protection racket controlled by Big Tim Sullivan, Frank Farrell, and Bill Devery was yielding the trio a fortune, a March 1900 New York Times expose estimating – without naming the beneficiaries – the take as in excess of \$3 million annually.

The myriad scandals of the Van Wyck administration led to its ouster in the municipal elections of November 1901. As soon as the results were posted, Richard Croker abruptly abandoned his Tammany throne, setting sail for the British Isles, far beyond the subpoena power of the incoming reform administration. Shortly thereafter, Devery, by now a Police Commissioner, was jettisoned from government employ, involuntarily retired from departmental service and left to tend to his Manhattan and Long Island real estate investments. With time now on his hands, Devery surveyed his political prospects. But control of Tammany would soon be assumed by East Side saloon keeper Charles Murphy, a taciturn organizational genius determined to purge the Wigwam of public embarrassments like Bill Devery. First, Murphy engineered Devery's removal as a Tammany district leader. He then arranged the humiliation of Devery at the New York Democratic Party

state convention. Wounded, Devery split from the party, making plans to run for New York City mayor as an independent in the election of 1903.

While Devery was fighting his political battles, friend and business partner Frank Farrell was bent on expanding his sporting interests. Although Farrell's first love was thoroughbred horse racing – he co-owned a highly regarded racing stable – Farrell was also a serious baseball fan. And in the Spring of 1903, American League president Ban Johnson was persuaded to award the moribund Baltimore franchise to Farrell and his silent business partner, Bill Devery. The purchase price was a nominal \$18,000, it being understood that the real cost to the new owners would arise from the removal of the club to New York, the acquisition of a suitable ballpark site, and the erection of a stadium. The new club owners were a study in contrast: Farrell, a small man, polite but guarded with the press, tried to keep a low public profile; Devery, large and growing ever larger, was a boisterous extrovert who basked in the limelight. Aside from an Irish heritage, one attribute that Farrell and Devery had in common was an unsavory reputation, a public relations problem remedied by making the outward face of their operation malleable club president Joseph Gordon, a Manhattan coal broker/politician and one-time president of the New York Mets of the American Association.

While figurehead club boss Gordon spoke publicly for the team popularly dubbed the New York Highlanders, Farrell ran the operation from behind the scenes. Preoccupied with his campaign for mayor, Devery confined his involvement to occasional but conspicuous appearances in the owners' box at newly-constructed Hilltop Park. That November, however, Devery's mayoral hopes were crushed at the polls. Of more than a half-million votes tabulated, only a mere 2,471 were cast for candidate Devery. The political career of Big Bill Devery was now effectively over and he gradually receded from public life. In 1907, meanwhile, Highlanders club president Joseph Gordon was formally deposed, with Farrell assuming that title for himself, in addition to continuing his role as de facto team general manager. From all

appearances, Devery took no active role in the operation of the franchise, his contribution to club welfare being limited to the second-guessing of Highlanders managers. And it was the exercise of that prerogative that set in motion the chain of events that led to a change in club ownership.

For the most part, the New York American League club had been a competitive disappointment, rarely in pennant contention during the first eleven seasons of its existence. In early 1914, Farrell attempted to ameliorate that situation, signing Frank Chance, formerly the Peerless Leader of celebrated Chicago Cubs teams, as manager of the nine now called the New York Yankees. Inheriting a roster of non-entities, Chance proved unable to achieve accustomed success, a failing that he eventually took to blaming on the purported tight-fistedness of the team owners. Having spent much of his personal fortune on the club, Frank Farrell found this hard to take. Following a tough 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia A's on September 12, Farrell and Devery entered the clubhouse, only to encounter Chance holding court with reporters on the shortcomings of club ownership. A heated argument ensued. When Devery branded Chance "a quitter," the manager launched a left hook at him, but missed. Those in attendance then broke up the altercation. After the situation had calmed, Chance apologized. But his tenure as Yankees manager was finished, Farrell formally accepting Chance's resignation after settlement terms – Chance's lucrative contract had another year to run – had been ironed out.

The days that Frank Farrell and Bill Devery would own the New York Yankees were also numbered. Having faced down far more formidable critics during their salad days in the Manhattan demimonde, Farrell and, particularly Devery, were unfazed by the censure of Chance champions in the press. And league president Johnson studiously avoided tangling with the two. But events were taking their toll. A Bronx stadium construction project had turned into an expensive boondoggle, sapping Farrell's finances, and he and Devery were now quarreling over money and other franchise

problems. Devery was also entangled in litigation with the International League over unsatisfied financial obligations of the Jersey City Skeeters, a Class AA minor league operation that he had perhaps capriciously purchased a few seasons earlier. By now, baseball had lost its charm for Bill Devery, and he wanted out. Reluctantly, Frank Farrell, who had come to relish running a major league team, the headaches notwithstanding, agreed to sell out as well. On January 30, 1915 and with Ban Johnson managing the negotiations, the New York Yankees were sold to local brewery owner Jacob Ruppert and millionaire construction engineer Til Huston. The franchise purchase price, a reported \$460,000, was split evenly between Farrell and Devery. Sadly, the sale of the club did more than mark the end of a baseball partnership. A longtime friendship was also drawing to a close. At the time of Bill Devery's death from a stroke on June 20, 1919, he and Frank Farrell had not spoken for several years.

Bill Lamb of Meredith, NH is the new editor of The Inside Game. This article is adapted from his recent BioProject profile of Bill Devery.



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MILWAUKEE JOURNAL QUIZ

continued from page 4

Answer: Two runs, scored as follows: The first Champions batter doubled to center, then stole third. The second man tripled to center, scoring the first man. The third batter bunted down the third base line and the Milldale third baseman, thinking the ball would roll foul, permitted it to roll toward third base. The batter kept on running and had reached second base when the ball finally stopped in fair territory near third. The man on third meantime could not score, as he would have been an easy out. The batter was credited with a two-base hit. The fourth batter bunted toward the pitcher, beating it out for a hit, and filled the bases. A triple steal then scored the man on third with the second Champions' run. The fifth batter was walked, again filling the bases. The sixth batter hit the ball toward left, but it struck the base runner going home from third and he was declared out. The batter, under the rules, was credited with a base hit. The next batter was retired without a run scoring. It was at this point the storm broke, two men having scored for the Champions.

The Milwaukee Journal of February 13, 1911 reported that a good number of people entered the contest. There were just ten people who had the correct answer that two was the minimum number of runs that could be scored on that offensive outburst, but their explanations "in every case failed to coincide exactly with the Journal's solution." From this statement, I gather that there were other solutions that came up with the same answer of two runs scored.

Dennis Pajot from Milwaukee is a frequent contributor to The Inside Game. The February 2013 issue of the newsletter will feature his treatment of perhaps the Deadball Era's most unusual trade.



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

continued from page 1

related by the pitcher himself in a 1902 article in *Sporting Life*, Wiggins took the extra step of verifying independently that there was actually a snowstorm in Pittsburgh during that month.

Indeed, meticulous research and confirmation is the stuff of which reliable history is made. In writing *Fenway 1912: The Birth of a Ballpark*, which won the 2012 Ritter Award, Glenn Stout focused on the smallest details to ensure that the opening scene of the book, which described how Jerome Kelly, the groundskeeper at Fenway Park, and his crew transported the sod from the Huntington Avenue Grounds to Fenway Park, was accurate:

"There was a short paragraph that I found in a newspaper report in January 1912 that referenced them moving the sod. But about all it said was 'Jerome Kelly and his groundskeeping crew moved the sod at the end of the season from the Huntington Avenue Grounds to Fenway Park.' I thought it was a really evocative scene. But how would I build it?

"I built the scene by finding out all I could about Jerome Kelly. I found out where he came from, where he was born, looked at census records, where he lived and worked before the Red Sox. I looked up who he lived with. I looked on maps and found out how close he lived to the ballpark. I looked on trolley maps to see if he would take the trolley to the ballpark or if he would walk. I worked to find out what buildings were in the neighborhood. I also looked at how groundskeeping was done then—I mean, were they using gasoline trucks or were they still using horse and buggies to move materials? It took all of that research to build that one scene. I couldn't say what Kelly would have seen on those streets unless I knew what he would have seen on those streets."

Stout emphasized that he is cautious and sets personal editorial boundaries when re-creating a scene. He also relies on other books written about his subject only to create a timeline to help in his own research; namely, to discern what

happened on what dates. Then, he uses those dates to locate vintage newspaper articles, the primary sources. In fact, in writing his book *Fenway 1912*, Stout said that he did not rely on other books about Fenway Park at all, other than to help create his timeline.

A further challenge arises in evaluating the reliability of sources in existence. Stout cited the ghostwritten stories attributed to Ty Cobb and others often written around the time of the World Series as being particularly problematic. "I came to the conclusion that they are totally without merit," said Stout. "They're made up by the sportswriters, generally not even based on a conversation with Ty Cobb. They're often just made up out of whole cloth."

David Fleitz, author of *Shoeless: The Life and Times of Joe Jackson* as well as several other baseball books involving the Deadball Era, noted similar pitfalls (in an e-mail to me, cited with permission): "Writers one-hundred years ago saw themselves as storytellers, not as historians. I've tried to keep that in mind. Just because a writer reproduced a conversation he supposedly had with Babe Ruth or Ty Cobb does not mean it's true. The story is colored by the writer's own prejudices and opinions."

Complicating matters, some current authors attempt to re-create vintage dialogue in their writing, taking great artistic license to simulate what players might have or could have said at a particular moment. The result is the creation of elaborate conversations which did not actually occur. Though Stout believes that creation of dialogue is not as pervasive in works of baseball history as it is in other fields, when it happens, "you end up with a historical record that is not only wrong but severely incorrect. Then, when you do something that is correct, you have readers who aren't paying close attention wondering why you don't have all this great dialogue or how come someone else has a play that you didn't write about. And it erodes the historical record. I'll hear people say, 'I had to create the dialogue because there are no interviews back then with that player,'" said

Stout. "Well, you can't go beyond what the material is. If you do, you need to call it fiction."

"You never use a quote that is not a direct quote in a published source," said Stout. "You have to go to the original source. People will sometimes say: 'But there are no quotes then. How do I write the story?' Well, that's when it's up to you to exhibit some skills as a researcher and a writer to find the quotes you can. If you don't find enough quotes, you have to have enough detail to re-create enough of the story that the reader does not miss the quotes."

An additional concern, according to Stout, is relying exclusively or primarily on online newspaper sources for historical research: "More and more, people are saying, 'If I can't get it online, I'm not going to bother,'" said Stout. "So you're getting more and more pieces written from the few newspaper archives that are readily available online. Fewer and fewer people are going to, say, the Boston Public Library, where there are six, eight, or ten daily newspapers available and looking through the microfilm of all of them. But that's what you have to do! However, today, people will look only at the *Boston Globe* because it's online. Then they'll look at the *New York Times*, and then maybe a few newspaper archives. Sometimes, I'll see a citation for a New York story with a quote from Davenport, Iowa. That tells me that the author went to newspaperarchives.com. But it also tells me that they're not savvy enough to know that the report in the Davenport, Iowa newspaper originated from a news service or from a New York paper and was reprinted. You see that all the time now."

In his written comments accepting the Ritter Award, which I read to attendees at SABR 42 in Minneapolis, Stout noted that it is striking how many of the basic questions surrounding Fenway Park had not been examined adequately. In fact, Stout believes that many new things can still be uncovered about major figures and events simply because no one has adequately done the research: "I tell people that rather than steering away from the stories they have been told, those are the exact ones you should look at. The

general thought is that they have been written about a lot, so there must not be anything there. But usually it means that they've been written about in the same way over and over again, so there's often a lot there. Sometimes, after you write about an event, people refuse to believe the new account, saying that someone would have written what you did a long time ago if it were true. Actually, people only thought they knew. Let's face it, newspaper reporters in general have been terrible historians when it comes to looking backwards. I mean, Fred Lieb's books, which are seminal in some sense because they're the first attempt at writing a comprehensive history, but they're almost useless in terms of facts because he was writing from memory."

In some sense, as Stout notes, each book of history serves as a building block, which underscores the need for accurate historical reporting: "Every book that is written is, to some degree, going to be disproved by a book that is written later," said Stout. "That's the nature of the business. History is cumulative. I've always been delighted when what I have done has inspired someone to look at a topic again and take it farther. You can, so to speak, be the first one to build on a property. But you also know: 'There could be a twenty-story building here. I can only go a story-and-a-half because I'm building a city.' That's how I look at it."

As newly-published books set in the Deadball Era abound, it is important for authors to take good care to make sure that their historical research is as accurate as possible. As Fleitz said: "I think that writing about Shoeless Joe Jackson or Cap Anson is, or should be, no different than writing about Napoleon or Winston Churchill. Otherwise, history becomes mere storytelling."

A NOTE FROM NEW EDITOR BILL LAMB

As I see it, my job is to preserve the excellence that *The Inside Game* has achieved under Mark Ruckhaus and his predecessors as editor. I have no plans for radical alteration of the newsletter and/or its content, which is just as well, as I am hardly an expert on Deadball (or anything else baseball, for that matter). Newsletter book reviews will remain in the capable hands of Dr. Gail Rowe, while Mark Dugo will keep an eye on me and newsletter content by continuing to serve as assistant editor. Dr. Bob Harris has graciously consented to come on board to handle graphics, layout, and computer-related publication matters, as my technology skills remain at Deadball Era level. All we need now is content to place in forthcoming newsletter issues.

The standout quality of past newsletters is a reflection of the contributions submitted by its readers. I hope that you will continue to submit material to us, as *The Inside Game* does not write itself. Anything of interest related to the Deadball Era – from an original research article to a project update, old newspaper item, event summary, obituary, etc. – will be received with appreciation. I also trust that you will feel free to offer suggestions for the betterment of the newsletter. And should newsletter content contain an erroneous or doubtful assertion, please let us know, as the editorial staff wants to preserve the reputation that the newsletter has earned for accuracy and reliability. Thanks very much and I hope that you have enjoyed this issue of *The Inside Game*.

NOTICE.

The increasing demand on The Journal's telephone service makes it necessary to inform the public that hereafter no information about baseball will be given between the hours of 3 and 5 o'clock.

THE JOURNAL CO.