

# NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

WINTER 2021

SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

Nineteenth Century Notes is a publication of the Nineteenth Century Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research

## On the Wrong Side of the Tracks, Cy Young in the 1890s by Dixie Tourangeau

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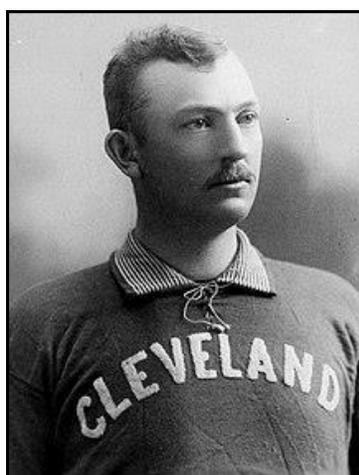
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**D**enton True Young didn't have just one great career, he had two. He was fabulous in the 1890s with Cleveland and St. Louis and symmetrically nearly as great in the first decade of the new century with Boston. Any probing analytics of his exploits and totals still prove jaw dropping even though most fans and researchers now take them for granted since these numbers have been perused and admired for 110 years. If someone is



Cy Young in 1891

going to take a microscopic look at any segment of Cy's profession,

a fresh "hook" is warranted.

It was hard to avoid Ohio's farm boy phenom while I was writing several stories for SABR's recent "Glorious Beaneaters" book. His first term of baseball employment fits like a puzzle piece with the Beans' 1890s decade of triumphs and better yet, those of the equally marvelous hurler he battled the most times over 20 full seasons - Charlie "Kid" Nichols. Baseball's madcap sorcerers were clairvoyant in

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Chairman's Corner by Peter Mancuso

**The Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference** is still the lead story of this regular column in the winter issue of this newsletter. Normally, I'm pointing to about four pages in this issue that contain all the details: the Program & Schedule, Registration Form, and Additional De-

tails you need to know for a full blown on-site (the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY) and the optional dinning events that seal the deal for the full two-day event and lodging.

This year, the Covid 19 pandemic has essentially made the call, first to postpone the live 2020 Fred for over a year to **April 2021**

and, now, to convert the original event to a **Virtual Fred Conference for April 22nd (Thursday evening) through Saturday afternoon, April 24<sup>th</sup>**; of course, without the normal social elements.

This is disappointing but

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## Cy Young (cont.)

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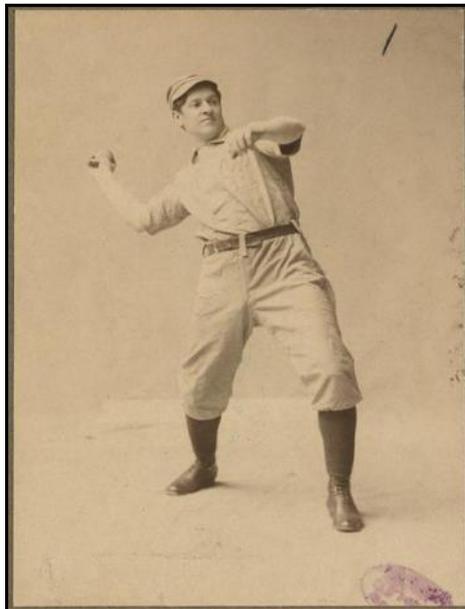
arranging this timeline for us to analyze and mull over into infinity. Their parallel scripts touch perfection.

During the “Gay Nineties” the Bostons were certainly the class of the game, with unsavory Baltimore second and Young’s often-overlooked Spiders being a close third, and having a legit case for themselves being second. Cleveland just never had that one more bat or solid arm to break through the B-hive of 1890s pennant winners – Boston, Baltimore and Brooklyn. Of the era’s great flingers, three stand tallest: “Kid,” “Cy” and the “Hoosier Thunderbolt,” Amos Rusie. Rusie (234-163) matched their outputs for several years but in the end only Young and Nichols ploughed through the entire era with aplomb. Lefty Ted Brietenstein deserves a nod as a very distant, but creditable, fourth (158-167).

Madison, Wisconsin native Nichols always held a slight advantage, since his team was better organized and that he began his career on day five of the 1890 campaign while Young didn’t get his big chance until August 6. Despite his 3-7 start, Nichols was 19-11 when Cy threw his first pitch. They first met September 22 in Cleveland with Cy (then 6-6) winning 5-4 in eight innings. Unfortunately, the victory was tainted by umpire George Strief who called an end to the game as Boston was scoring go-ahead runs in the ninth. His “darkness” reasoning was even hissed by the rabid 700 hometown rooters. Who could have forecast what the future held for these two rookies?

Young took the first two 1891

meetings 5-3, 6-1, against Nichols but Kid won the second two, 9-4, and 14-10, the latter when neither sophomore made the sixth inning. It was the only time that Nichols was lifted from a game in which he faced Cy. Boston eventually won the pennant and assembled a better team for 1892. Young



Kid Nichols in 1891

topped the NL with 36-12, 1.93 marks while Nichols was 35-16, 2.84. The difference was Cy besting Kid twice 5-3 and 7-2. Cleveland won the second half of the gimmicky split-season and played Boston in the October promoted “World Series.” In Cleveland Cy and Jack Stivetts first tied 0-0 before Young lost to him 3-2 two days later. Moving to Boston, Cy lost the final best-of-nine series game to Nichols, 8-3 at the South End Grounds. Boston swept, 5-0-1.

Mound to plate distance was extended to 60 feet-six inches in 1893 and bothered neither ace. Boston captured its third straight pennant behind Nichols’ 34-14,

3.52. Cy ended 33-16, 3.36. By then Kid and Cy were established stars, but they each had a reliable sidekick, Stivetts for Boston and George “Nig” Cuppy for the Ohio club. Boston’s champ roster hit .290 and the Spiders .300, but as usual Cleveland, 13 games out, didn’t have a third winning pitcher while Boston employed Harry Staley and Hank Gastright, who were (30-14) the difference. Crafty Beaneater manager Frank Selee always found third and fourth arms to help his club, other teams rarely did. In 1893 durable Frank Killen won 36 games for second place Pittsburgh. That season Cy split 1-1 with Nichols and 2-2 with “City of Bridges” native Killen.

Cleveland won 232 games over the next three seasons (Baltimore’s pennant trifecta), tipping Boston’s 228. Cy was 89-46, while Nichols posted an 89-43 mark. After seeing these two oppose one another ten times (plus Nichols’ post-season victory) in four years, baseball fans were deprived of what should have been many more such rival contests. The managers matched them up only four times in those three years, which they split. Preventing one ace from facing another had become the favored strategy.

In 1897 and 1898, Boston got back on the pennant track and ended Baltimore’s string of three straight flags as the Orioles had done to them. Nichols topped the circuit with 31 wins each year, besting Cy’s 46 total victories. Beaneater batters hit a two-year combined .305 to the Spiders .280. Kid defeated Cy three times in 1897, 4-1, 6-1 and 8-2 (Kid homered off Cy) and did not battle

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## Cy Young (cont.)

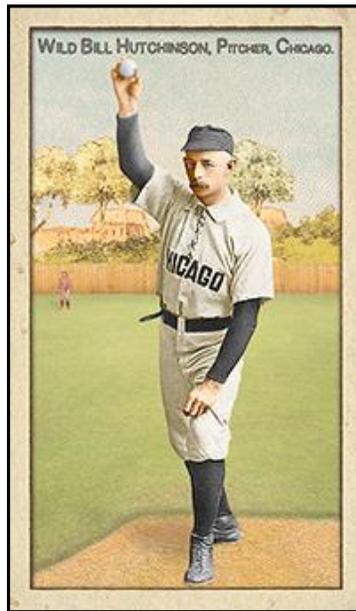
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him again as a starter until 1900 when Young wore Cardinal garb. There was a 10-inning, 6-6 tie in 1898 when both stars stepped into a September game as relievers. Young was dealt to the Perfectos/Cardinals in 1899 when the Cleveland roster was gutted purposely in favor of St. Louis by Frank and Stanley Robison, infamous brother owners of both teams.

On July 11, 1900, Nichols and Young matched pitches one last time in their careers, closing the decade and century between them. After 10 wonderful years they were even at eight regular season wins apiece, (not counting one 1893 game in which Cy left for a pinch hitter. Kid won in the tenth inning, 4-3.) For the only time in 20 outings Nichols shutout a Cy-pitched team, 3-0, at Robison Field. It was Kid's 302<sup>nd</sup> win. A month before at the South End Grounds, Nichols, coming off a six-week long injury layoff, reverted to his old form edging Charles "Deacon" Phillippe of Pittsburgh, 1-0, for his 300<sup>th</sup> victory, on a "Sliding" Billy Hamilton home run. His four shutouts tied him with Young for the League lead with two others.

In Cy's two St. Louis campaigns, he was 46-34 compared to Nichols' fading 34-35 Beaneater efforts. Young never caught Nichols' win total until 1902. They finished their 19<sup>th</sup> century combat at 311-167 (Kid) and 286-169 (Cy). Young posted a winning record against every NL team, except Boston. Selee's Beaneaters finished eerily even with Young at 26-26-1, 14-14-1 at Boston's cozy South End Grounds confines and 12-12 at League Park. (This does not include the 1892 Series of 0-2-1.) Two items in Cy's defense. First,

when he was with St. Louis, he lost seven of eight starts versus the past-their-prime Beans. Second, the Beaneaters were so overpowering at home, that Young's 14-14 mark should be considered as a great "morale" victory. Cy never shutout Boston in a Nichols game, however he did it twice to other Hub pitchers. In 1892 he and John



Wild Bill Hutchinson

Clarkson dueled nine, 0-0 innings before Boston cracked Cy for four runs in the tenth. On June 6, 1898, Young blanked host defending champ Boston, 2-0 with Ted Lewis being the loser.

During the 1890s Young faced almost 150 different pitchers, with a few of the better ones giving him obligatory problems. Naturally Nichols tops the list (8-10-1, one no decision), but versus Pittsburgh's Frank Killen he was 6-8, Breitenstein 5-7-1, and Rusie 3-5. Two moundsmen never lost to Cy in at least four regular season starts. John Ewing, brother of Buck, beat Young four times in 1891 (no one else ever turned that

one-season trick). "Deacon" Phillippe strung out four victories against St. Louis Cy and then took Game 1 of the 1903 World Series. Young finally beat the tireless Deacon 7-3 in Game 7 to end the noble streak at five and turn the Series tide.

On the other hand, Young had some favorite patsies that first decade. He whipped Chicago's Bill Hutchison, 8-1 in his very first game in August 1890 and though 40-game winner "Hutch" won the next three, Cy's career edge was 10-3, a part of his impressive 32-11 margin over Cap Anson's Orphans overall. (Icon Cap was 23-for-101 against the "farm boy" he ridiculed in 1890.) Against Bill "Brickyard" Kennedy, Cy was 7-3, versus Billy Rhines 5-2, Charles "Silver" King 5-0, Tony Mullane 6-2, and Boston's Stivetts 7-2 (Post-season 0-1-1). Taking the most consistent beatings was George "Win" Mercer, 7-1-1, who then lost another five in the AL in 1901-02. Still this is not likely why Mercer committed suicide in 1903.

With the St. Louis brass creating their own contract messes in 1901, laid back Cy was beckoned by the upstart American League, specifically Boston's primo third sacker and original manager Jimmy Collins, who was on a talent hunt. Young saw a solid and peaceful team being formed and with his catching pal Lou Criger and Spider pitching partner Cuppy, signed with Boston. He would now throw from a new Huntington Avenue Grounds slab about 800 feet away from where he toiled ineffectually for a decade trying to beat the Beaneaters

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## Cy Young (cont.)

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-- on the other side of the tracks. The two fields were separated by myriad rail lines and two brick walls.

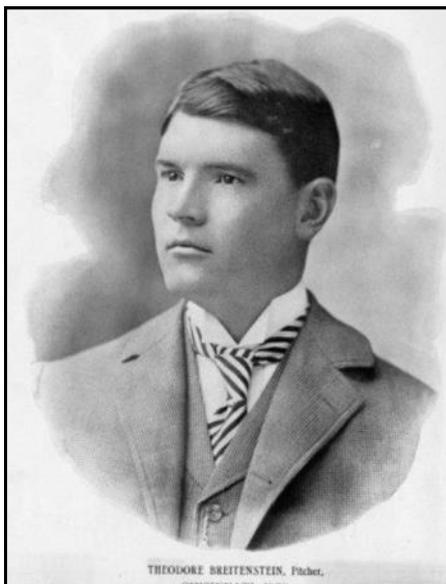
Titan Tidbits: Kid Nichols was a decent hitter (.226 career) and did very well (.296) against Cy. Young (.210) hit Kid at a .152 clip, including two triples.

In terms of offense behind them, Nichols' mates supported him with 6.3 runs while Cy got 6.0 from his Spider/Cardinal mates. In an odd and unnoticeable technical numerical twist, Young received a tad more support than his Spiders averaged per game in six of eleven seasons, while "deprived" Nichols got fewer runs than the Beaneaters averaged in nine of eleven campaigns. Kid managed to deal with it.

Cleveland never opened the season at home, Cy pitched eight road curtain-raisers and was 4-4, beaten twice by Breitenstein. His record in his first home games each year was 10-1, edged only by Chicago's Willie McGill in 1893 when Anson's two doubles, knocked in three including the two winners in the seventh inning. On that bitter cold May 4, Young got three hits/RBI in the losing effort. He did open both St. Louis seasons, winning 10-1 and 3-0.

On September 2, 1898, the two masters of the decade faced each other for the only time in relief roles. Ted Lewis (26-8, 2.90) was in the middle of a 13-game win streak, which was a main reason why Boston soon captured the flag. Spider Jack Powell (23-15) led the AL with six shutouts. Combined they completed 88 percent of their starts but neither had a good afternoon. By the fifth Kid and Cy were in with Boston ahead 6-3. Nichols

allowed three runs while Young gave up only two hits over six innings. Umpire Tom Lynch called the 6-6 game because of darkness before the eleventh



Ted Breitenstein

frame started.

In 1890s extra inning work Young was 16-9-4 (29 total, home 6-2), most games of which lasted 10 innings. His longest outing was a 16-frame, 1892 draw with Breitenstein, 3-3 at St. Louis' Sportsman's Park on June 24. Cleveland was second to Boston while St. Louis was second to cellar dweller Baltimore that split season. Cy gave up five singles, three to pitcher-turned flychaser "Parisian" Bob Caruthers and fanned no one. Breitenstein whiffed eight Spiders but three extra base hits accounted for their three tallies, including one in the bottom of the ninth in which Breitenstein failed to get out at first base when he dropped a short toss. Young was 5-1-1 that year working beyond nine

innings.

Over his 11 NL seasons Cy Young was 170-60 at home in Cleveland and St. Louis, for a .739 winning percentage. Though he performed dozens of masterpieces, he was not always the mythical "great Cyclone." In 1894, the Year of the Hitter, he gave up 22 hits and 16 runs in games against Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, in the latter he managed this dreadful feat in six horrid innings. It was then those pesky gods provided enough "darkness," to save one of their (future) own from further humiliation.

Honus Wagner of Louisville and Pittsburgh managed a .435 mark off Cy and Boston's Herman Long smacked four of Young's throws over a fence while five other players each hit three of Cy's 138 total given up. But early on it was a little slap hitter that taught the Ohioan an immediate lesson of how tough the major league was to make a living. By schedule coincidence of Cy's first four NL games in 1890, two were against Cincinnati, August 9 and 16, home and away. Each time he faced fellow rookie Billy Rhines, a very good pitcher (28-17, 1.95 best in NL) who began the season 13-1. They split with a 5-4 Cy win in ten frames and then a 10-0 Rhines whitewash. But in Young's mind the games centered around Reds' leadoff bat wizard, John Alexander "Bid" McPhee.

By most accounts he was likely base ball's most reputable citizen of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when qualifying candidates were rare. McPhee was never fined, never ejected, never drunk, played a brilliant

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## Cy Young (cont.)

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second base (.944, didn't don a glove until 1896) and was a dandy hitter (.272). He played with American Assn. Cincinnati from 1882-1889 and NL Cincy to 1899. In his first Young-pitched game, Bid was 2-for-5, double and triple, 2 RBIs. In the Rhines shutout McPhee opened the game with a home run, the first off Cy, and later singled (2-for-5, 2 runs, RBI). In two games he had hit for the cycle off "Farmer Young." He wasn't done.

Cleveland opened the 1891 season in Porkopolis on April 22, Cy against legend "Apollo of the Box," Tony Mullane. Young won his first Opening Day assignment, 6-3, but McPhee singled, doubled and tripled (3-for-5, run). One of his outs was a scorched fly ball to centerfielder George Davis, who caught it barehanded, running full speed away from the infield. The

awed crowd gave Davis a rousing round of applause despite him being in enemy garb and robbing their star of a real cycle. If Davis misplayed the sphere, the fleet McPhee could easily have circled the bases. Two days later, reliever Cy came into a 6-4 game in the seventh inning. Bid made the first out but in the ninth tripled (8-for-17), and scored the fifth run (Cy saved it). Young found tougher pitches to throw McPhee from then on, forcing him to about .200 through the end of 1891. Coincidentally McPhee struggled both in 1890 and 1891 at .256, two of his lowest averages in 18 years. In his sophomore season Young started five times (3-2) against Mullane, equal only to his five starts (1-3) against Detroit's George Mullin (1909) over 22 years.

NOTE: This piece could not have been written without extreme consultation with Retro-sheet's masterful program of seasonal game and player logs. Secondly, extended use was made of the Hall of Fame Library's ICI sheets for day-by-day stats for Denton Young and other players. Lastly, all day-after game stories were researched and confirmed by using online Newspapers.com issues from all appropriate cities, though it does not include any relevant Cleveland papers. Numerical conclusions and conjectures were created by the author.



## New 19th Century Group List-Serve

The 19cBB@yahoogroups which was discontinued on December 15, 2020 has been replaced due to the efforts of Cliff Blau. The new online chat group, [19CBB@groups.io](mailto:19CBB@groups.io), Here are Cliff's instructions for signing up with the new group:

I have established a new e-group courtesy of Groups.io. To join this group, you will have to establish an account with Groups.io if you don't already have one. To do this, go to <https://groups.io/>, find the link that says "Sign Up" and fill in your information. Once you've done this, search for the group 19CBB and

click the "Join This Group" icon. You will probably receive an e-mail asking you to identify yourself to the group owner. You can skip this if you are signing up with the same address you use on this group. I believe that everyone will be set to receive individual messages; if you prefer a digest, you can change your options in the Subscription tab. If you have any problems, feel free to contact me directly ([cliff@cliffblau.com](mailto:cliff@cliffblau.com)).

After the signup process is complete, you will probably not

notice a difference except you'll be using the e-mail address [19CBB@groups.io](mailto:19CBB@groups.io) instead of [19CBB@yahoogroups.com](mailto:19CBB@yahoogroups.com). The main difference is with Groups.io, we will be able to download the entire archive of past messages at any time (plus we'll once again have a file area to post pictures, articles, etc.)

As is true with the Yahoo! group, the new one will serve the Origins Committee as well as the 19th Century Committee.

## Chairman's Corner (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

there is a silver lining. Our Virtual Fred via SABR Zoom Meetings still has all the elements attendees of the live Fred have enjoyed for eleven years: the Keynote Address; the Member Spotlight Interview; the Special Presentation; the Panel Discussion and this year, thirteen Research Presentations (four more than what were available live, because six of the fifteen presentations had been double tracked); all for a fraction of the time and cost. See our "Program & Schedule," "How to Register," and "Additional Fred Details" in this issue.

**Brooklyn 19<sup>th</sup> Century Baseball Interdisciplinary Symposium** as you may recall was to be this past November at the facilities of our wonderful Co-Sponsor, **St. Francis College**, located in historic Brooklyn Heights, in downtown Brooklyn, but had to be postponed to next year, also due to the pandemic. We have, however, along with our sponsor, rescheduled this event to **Saturday, November 14, 2021**, again at the Brooklyn Height's Campus or, if need be, if the pandemic persists, as a virtual event.

Our planning during this winter and spring will be to design the **Brooklyn 19cBB Symposium** to be either presented live or as a virtual event if need be. We have even discussed how to substitute the live, optional Sunday morning Historic Brooklyn Baseball Tour as a narrated virtual video tour if necessary. The summer issue, July 1<sup>st</sup> will commence registration for this event, be it live or online.

Best Regards, Peter "...because, baseball history is not only baseball history."

## 19th Century Baseball Speakers Series

**A**s most of you know we have launched a 19cBB Speakers Series that is being broadcast as a Zoom Meeting the second Tuesday of each month at 8:pm ET.

The 19cBB Speakers Series has initially consisted of Research Presentations previously presented at the Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Baseball Conference ("The Fred") and will be re-presented each second Tuesday through May 2021. The starting time for each session will be 8:00PM, ET (7:pm CT, 6:pm MT & 5:pm PT) and will run for one hour.

Each Presentation has been and will be up to 35 to 45 minutes in duration, longer than the 20 to 30 minutes allowed at "The Fred" due to time constraints there. Presenters will be using the extra ten minutes or so



January Presenter  
Tom Shieber

to include additional research information and/or graphics. Topics were chosen for their popularity and for their visual content. Please, take a moment now to mark your calendars, keeping in mind your local time zone. The Schedule ahead is as follows:

Tues., Jan. 12, 2021, Tom Shieber, "Around the World with A.G. Spalding: The Mys-

tery of an 1888-89 Tourist's Diary"

Tues., Feb. 9, 2021, Don Jensen, "Baseball Fans Must Eat: The Life & Times of Harry Stevens, Hot Dog King"

Tues., Mar. 9, 2021, Jerry Casway, "Before Greenberg there was Pike" (Lipman Pike)

Tues., April 13, 2021 and  
Tues., May 11, 2021, TBA.

June thru August, School is Out.

This Series began in October with Jonathan Popovich, Joanne Hulbert in November and Bill Humber in December. YouTube video recordings of all these presentations can be found at the following link:

<https://sabr.org/19th-century-baseball-speaker-series/>

Jacob Pomrenke of SABR HQ has created this page so that all persons who missed the presentation or those who want to revisit it can do so.

# The National Association in 1872, the Frisky Boston Infield, and Baseball's First Dynasty

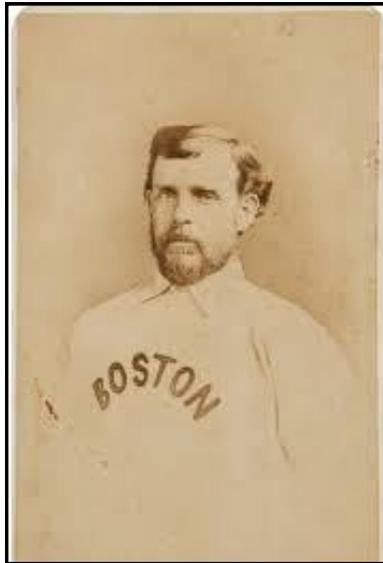
by Paul DeFonzo

The National Association's 1872 season marked the second year of organized baseball league play under fully professional aegis. The league continued to be plagued by organizational problems. A number of new teams were added for 1872 but most of them were weak or poorly managed and failed to complete the season. The strong Chicago club of 1871 was prevented from renewing its affiliation with the league due to the extraordinary event of the Great Chicago Fire in October of 1871. Ultimately, only four of the eleven teams which started the 1872 season played enough games to approach the semblance of a full schedule. The highest number of official games played by any team was 58.

Notwithstanding these problems, there were two significant developments in 1872.

First, the rules regarding pitching were being liberalized to allow the introduction of the curveball into league play. Up until that time pitchers were not permitted to bend the elbow during delivery of the ball, which was strictly underhand. The pitcher would now be permitted to bend the elbow, and, effectively, break the wrist during delivery. Although the delivery point of the ball still had to be below the belt, pitchers were always seeking an edge, and many took advantage of lax enforcement by umpires by consistently raising the arm angle to effect a sidearm delivery. This had the dual effect of allowing a

curve and, slowly but surely, moving away from a strictly underhand delivery. The pitching distance continued to be forty five feet from the home plate and



Harry Wright in 1872

pitchers were permitted to move around in a six foot by six foot pitching box, including delivery of the ball with a running start if it suited them. The pitching mound of the present era did not yet exist.

The reputed originator of the curveball, William 'Candy' Cummings, was promptly signed by New York. He led the league in innings pitched by a considerable margin with 488.

The other significant development was double edged. On the field Harry Wright's Boston club dominated the league and won the championship by a comfortable margin. The emergence of an undisputed league pennant winner was a great improvement following the uncertainty and controversy of the 1871 championship race which was decided behind closed doors after the conclusion of the

season. Unfortunately, the absence of a close race for the championship in 1872 sharply curtailed fan interest over the latter part of the season. Attendance suffered as the handful of teams still playing late in the season did so before sparse crowds.

As previously noted, only four of the eleven teams which started the season effectively completed their schedules, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. In some measure due to the limited pool of players who could be considered to have generated full season stats, Boston's infield dominated defensively in 1872.

All Boston infielders, excepting the catcher, led at their respective positions in total chances per inning, Charlie Gould at first base with 1.44, Ross Barnes at second base with .822, George Wright at shortstop with .779, Harry Schafer at third base with .623, and Al Spalding at pitcher with .344. Despite all these chances, Barnes and Wright up the middle also led the league in fielding percentage (the percentage of successful, errorless chances divided by the total chances). Boston yielded just under five runs per game. The second best defensive team yielded about six and one half runs per game.

In the final reckoning, 1872 was a disappointing sophomore year for the NA. There was no race to the pennant and too few teams with any staying power. However, the Boston infield recorded a truly unique record of friskiness and expertise un-

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## The National Association in 1872, the Frisky Boston Infield, and Baseball's First Dynasty (cont.)

*(Continued from page 7)*

matched by any other team in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the player pool against which the Boston infielders were competing was reduced for 1872, their dominance and the dominance of Boston over the rest of the league was no fluke.

The core of the infield, Barnes, Wright, Schafer, and Spalding, remained together as a unit for the duration of the life of the NA through 1875. During that time their ranks were supplemented by premier offensive performers 'Orator' Jim O'Rourke and Cal McVey, who both played at various positions on the infield as well as the outfield, and James 'Deacon' White at catcher, also a defensive standout. Four of the seven, Wright, Spalding, O'Rourke, and White, would be enshrined in Cooperstown. A fifth, Ross Barnes, has been recognized as an overlooked 19<sup>th</sup> century star by SABR. A listing of the categories, both defensive and offensive, in which this contingent led the league from 1872 through 1875 would only serve to glaze the eyes of the reader.

At this juncture it would be an injustice to fail to mention the remaining stars of the Boston contingent during this period, outfielders Andy Leonard, Fraley Rogers, Jack Manning, and George Hall. Manager Harry Wright ran the team on and off the field while simultaneously starring in centerfield and as a change pitcher. Harry would also be destined for Cooperstown.

The Boston team was chal-

lenged for the pennant in 1873 by Philadelphia and in 1874 by New York, both times winning by comfortable margins. In 1875, the last for the NA, Harry Wright and his Boston club compiled the best record in the history of big league baseball, throttling the rest of the league with a record of 71 – 8, a winning percentage of .899. The infield consisted of Deacon White at catcher, Cal McVey at first base, Ross Barnes at second base, George Wright at shortstop, and Harry Schafer and Orator O'Rourke sharing third base. Al Spalding compiled a record of 54 – 5 in the pitcher's box.

No one knew during the course of the 1875 season that it would be the last for the NA. Western clubs, spearheaded by Chicago owner William Hulbert, fought for dissolution of the NA and for creation of the National League following the end of the season. Hulbert ensured a powerful Chicago club given any contingency by signing Spalding, Barnes, White, and McVey to play for Chicago for 1876 even before completion of the 1875 season. When Harry Wright, on behalf of the powerful Boston club, acquiesced in the formation of the new league, the die was cast and the NA was done.

The National Association was now history, but the principals from 1872 continued to make their mark and establish a lasting legacy for big league baseball.

Chicago, with significant

contributions from the Boston quartet of Spalding, Barnes, McVey, and White, won its first pennant in 1876. Barnes, in particular, enjoyed an extraordinary season at bat while Spalding won every game during a July ten game winning streak which sealed the pennant for the White Stockings.

Nevertheless, Harry Wright was not done winning pennants. His Boston club would win two more championships in 1877 and 1878 with a number of the old guard from 1872, including younger brother George Wright, Harry Schafer, and Andy Leonard.

The Boston club of 1872 wrote the first chapter of the first baseball dynasty, Harry Wright's Boston clubs of 1872 – 1878, winners of six pennants in seven seasons. There would be later dynasties for other clubs, but Harry Wright's Boston dynasty persevered absent the existence of an extensive farm system, or a reserve clause in player contracts, or a sweetheart arrangement with Arnold Johnson in Kansas City, or a combination of the foregoing. Of equal or greater significance were the players whose abilities and teamwork ground out the wins, year after year.

I would like to finish with a flourish, by stating that the frisky Boston infield of 1872 forever staked its claim at initiating the first big league baseball dynasty by throwing down some dynastic leather. Unfortunately for me, they didn't wear gloves.

## News & Notes

-With sadness we pass along the news that committee member Skip McAfee died November 22, 2020 in St. Petersburg, FL. Skip was active in a wide-range of SABR projects and prepared the index for the 19th Century Committee's book *Inventing Baseball*. In the words of Committee member John Thorn, "Skip was a dogged, diligent researcher of wide interests, broad knowledge, and refined sensibility."

-Committee member Jim Mogan has a limited number of copies of

his book *19th Century Columbus Baseball* available for \$20 each. The self-published work uses notes from the late David Ball's collection of notes from Columbus, OH newspapers to record the brief major league history of Columbus teams. You can contact Jim at [Jmogan4oh@gmail.com](mailto:Jmogan4oh@gmail.com).

-Here's hoping everyone had a joyous holiday season. Turkey, hot stove talk, convincing yourself your team has a shot at the World Series this season. But

your poor, sainted editor got nothing but coal and switches. Following the Fall Article Beg-A-Thon no new articles showed up in the inbox. Alas and alack. But this is a new year. So let's all get into the holiday spirit and dash off 1,000 words or so on a topic that has at least a hint of connection with 19th Century baseball. I know it will brighten my New Year.



# A Few Uniform Stories from 1897

by Craig Brown

**P**reviously I wrote about the odd-ball and super weird road uniform of the 1897 Boston NL team. But there are other uni-related stories from this year to tell. Here are a few:

## **Opening day is when you first open the box to take the uniform out.**

"Opening day" was a disappointing one for the 1897 Orioles. The defending champs ordered socks with black-and-orange stripes in the style of the "old Orioles." But the orange turned out to be "a very sickly yellow," so Manager Hanlon "immediately wired for eighteen pair of solid black." So much for tradition. Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-baltimore/>

## **It's All About the Font.**

In Washington, the suits arrived in "big uniform boxes" which one newspaper noted the players then placed on their bicycles and "peddled serenely away." The Senators changed the style of the "W" on their shirts in 1897, hoping for a few more "W"s. Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-washington-dc/>

## **Quality is Job One.**

The new St. Louis uniform did not delight. The Browns wore brown, of course, but the team's finances were in the red. The new uniforms were described as the "cheapest thing in seven leagues" and were predicted to "shrink like a boiled sponge" in the first rain. Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-st-louis/>

## **Window dressing in Indy.**

The new uniforms of the Western League Hoosiers were proudly displayed in several clothing stores in town and featured something new from Spalding. Instead of "Indianapolis" on the home shirts, the letter "I" was used and displayed in a fancy script font. All in favor, say "I." Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-indianapolis/>

## **The craft of baseball imagery.**

The Phillies had a superb uniform in 1897, captured beautifully in a *Leslie's Weekly* "photo drawing" (half photo, half painting) by Lewis L. Rouch. We see Nap Lajoie, bat in hand, standing at the plate in his Philadelphia uniform, with New York catcher Jack Warner and umpire Thomas Lynch behind him. All are clearly rendered. Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-philadelphia/>

## **Blue, Blue, My World Is Blue**

Here's a newly discovered gem. This beautiful newspaper illustration of the Houston team was made by artist Ole J. May. It shows the Buffalos of the Texas League in their striking dark blue uniform. Made from a photo by Charles Blackburn, but where is the photo today? Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-houston/>

## **The Saints Preserve Us**

There was a double exposure in St. Paul. True, many team

photos have not survived, but we have two distinctly different images of Comiskey's crew from 1897. One of these was photo-mechanically reproduced in the *St. Paul Globe* on April 30, 1897. A new era had arrived: baseball imagery was now on newsprint. Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-st-paul/>

## **Here's the background behind the photo, literally.**

The setting for this photo of the 1897 New York team was the Lakewood Hotel, Lakewood, NJ, where the Giants lodged during spring training. Sweaters, old uniforms and a multitude of caps can be found. Manager Joyce had the men run the one-mile distance to the practice field every morning --- and then the team would "sprint back to the hotel for luncheon." Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-new-york/>

## **Black Is the Color**

Lastly, the background behind these Syracuse players has turned black. Actually this was intentional and the work of Syracuse photographer Philip S. Ryder. Describing the photo in 1897, one newspaper said that the black background represented a "new idea" and that "every admirer of baseball should obtain a copy." Illustration at: <https://www.threadsofourgame.com/1897-syracuse/>

## Program & Schedule

**2021 Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference (Virtual)  
Thursday, Friday and Saturday, April 22 – 24, 2021 via SABR Zoom Meeting**

### **Thursday, April 22, 2021, 7:45pm ET (6:45pm CT, 5:45pm MT, 4:45pm PT)**

**7:45 – 8:00** – Login

**8:00 – 8:10** – Welcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Fred and Thursday's Program

**8:10 – 8:40** – RP#1, **Tom Gilbert**, "Baseball's Man in Philadelphia, Col. Tom Fitzgerald"

**8:40 – 9:10** – RP#2, **Dennis Thiessen**, "Sunday as the Day of Rest, Riot and Revolt"

**9:10 – 9:20** – Pause & Break

**9:20 – 9:50** – RP#3, **Craig Brown**, "Elegant and Oddball: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Team Photos

**9:50 – 10:00** - Closing Remarks re: Friday's Program and Schedule

### **Friday, April 23, 2021, 11:45am ET (10:45am CT, 9:45am MT, 8:45am PT)**

**11:45 – 12:00** – Login

**12:00 - 12:10** – Welcome to Friday's Program

**12:10 – 12:40** – RP#4, **Edward Scahill**, "Hugh Jennings, John McGraw and Allegany College (Class of 1894)"

**12:40 – 1:20** – Keynote Address, **John Thorn**, "How We Got Here"

**1:20 – 1:40** – Pause & Break

**1:40 – 2:10** – RP#5, **Marty Payne**, "What's in A Name (Individuals' and Teams')"

**2:10 – 2:40** – RP#6, **Bill Humber**, "Baseball's Roots Revisited: Lessons from Hockey and Football's Modern Creation"

**2:40 – 3:10** – Pause and Break for Lunch (Registrants are on Their Own)

**3:10 – 4:10** – Panel Discussion: "How Did William. Hulbert's Early Death Impact the Development of MLB to 1900," Moderator, **Bill Ryczek**; Panelists: **Jack Bales**, **Bill Lamb** and **Richard Hershberger**

**4:10 – 4:20** – Pause & Break

**4:20 – 4:50** – RP# 7, **Matthew Lieb**, "Wringing Truth from Tragedy in the Life of Jim Devlin, 'Terror of the West'"

**4:50 – 5-20** – RP#8, **Jon Popovich**, "G.L. Werth: The Growth of Reconstruction Base Ball in Montgomery, AL, 1865-1875"

**5:20 – 5:30** – Closing Remarks Re: Saturday's Program & Schedule (OVER)

### **Saturday, April 24, 2021, 11:45am ET (10:45am CT, 9:45am MT, 8:45am PT)**

**11:45 – 12:00** – Login

**12:00 – 12:10** – Welcome to Saturday's Program

**12:10 – 12:40** – RP# 9, **Jack Bales**, "He Will Do Just What is Best, No Doubt: William Hulbert's Dismantling of the Chicago Base Ball Association"

**12:40 – 1:25** – Special Presentation, **Jim Gates**, Librarian Emeritus, Nat'l Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum, "The Penney Marshall Sheet Music Collection: New 19<sup>th</sup> Century Resources"

### Program and Schedule (Continued)

**1:25 – 1:35** – Pause & Break

**1:35 – 2:05** – RP#10, **Lauren Tuiskula**, “Frank Bancroft and the Blackstone Valley’s 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Legacy”

**2:05 – 2:35** – RP#11, **Larry Phillips**, “The Beginnings of Baseball in Cincinnati”

**2:35 – 3:00** – Pause and Break for Lunch (Registrants Are On Their Own)

**3:00 – 3:45** – Member Spotlight Interview: **Bob Bailey** Interviews **Tom Gilbert**

**3:45 – 4:15** – RP#12, **Chris Jones**, “Wolverines vs. Wildcat Stand: A Battle Over Barn Top Bleachers”

**4:15 – 4:25** – Pause & Break

**4:25 – 4:55** – RP #13, **Justin McKinney**, “Season on the Brink: The Finances of the Union Association”

**4:55 – 5:00** – Closing Remarks and the 2022 “Fred”

### How to Register for the 2021 Frederick Ivor – Campbell 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference - Virtual

All SABR Members are invited to register for the 2021 Virtual Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference (The “Fred”) which begins on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 8:00pm ET (7:00pm CT, 6:00pm MT and 5:00pm PT) and continues on Friday and Saturday, April 23 & 24, 2021. See the complete Program and Schedule above and on the previous page and, please, note that all times provided above are in the Eastern Time Zone, so be sure to adjust your log- in to your local time zone. There are no “single-day” fees. The \$35.00 cost is for the entire conference. When registering be sure to have your credit card ready. A link to the Virtual “Fred” Zoom Meeting will be sent to the email you provide as the conference approaches.

On-line Registration via the links to the appropriate section of the SABR website is the only means to Register. The cost is \$35.00 per person (per email address). You may also register other SABR or Non-SABR as guests. Each guest is \$35.00 and must have a separate email.

Here is the “Fred” registration link: <https://profile.sabr.org/events/register.aspx?id=1457177>

You will also be able to find this registration link — along with the schedule and details — on the Ivor-Campbell Conference page, <http://sabr.org/ivor-campbell19c>