

THE BALTIMORE CHOP

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE/BABE RUTH CHAPTER



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH



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Union Park Marker Dedication April 19

By David B. Stinson

At noon on Friday, April 19, 2024, the BBRC will hold a dedication ceremony of the Union Park historical marker placed by the chapter on the front façade of the St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center at 321 E. 25th St. in Baltimore.

Union Park's grandstand was located directly adjacent to (west of) St. Ambrose, and a portion of the playing field was located directly behind it. Union Park (Oriole Park III) was home to the American Association Orioles in 1891 and the National League Orioles from 1892 to 1899.

April 19 is significant because it was on that day 130 years ago that the 1894 National League Orioles opened their season at Union Park, defeating the New York Giants, 8-3.

Speakers at the ceremony will include Michael Gibbons, BBRC board member and director emeritus and historian of the Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum, Professor Bernard McKenna, author of *The Baltimore Black Sox: A Negro Leagues History, 1913-1936*, Burt Solomon, author of *Where They Ain't: The Fabled Life and Untimely Death of the Original Baltimore Orioles, the Team That Gave Birth to Modern Baseball*, Janet Marie Smith, BBRC board member, and Bill Stetka, director, Orioles alumni.

A reception will follow at Peabody Heights Brewery, 401 E. 30th St., which is located on the former site of Oriole Park V. Light refreshments will be served and Old Oriole Park Beer (and other PHB selections) will be available for purchase at the brewery.

President's Message

Happy new year! Yes, the 2024 major-league season is upon us, and the Orioles look to defend their 2023 AL East title.

Most of us have longed for this time of year. There are "other sports" to follow, and many do, but for me personally, I have counted down to spring training from the moment the World Series came to an end.

Coming off a 101-win year, things look to be very rosy again here in Birdland. Top prospects, young core lineup, and a desire to pick up where they left off in 2023 will push this team ever further. The local fan base expects big things from our Birds, so now it is time to see if they are up to the task.

Changes have come to Charm City. The Orioles are under new ownership, and we will likely see significant upgrades to

Say Hello to Two New Chop Features



'Minor Matters'

"Minor Matters" debuts in this issue on Page 4.

The Orioles' minor-league depth reminds veteran baseball writer Pete Kerzel of a time in team history when Triple A stars had a hard time making it to Baltimore.

Kerzel will be *The Chop's* guide to minor-league baseball.

What's your baseball destination?

There are a lot of them across the country, including two of our favorites in Baltimore (Babe Ruth Museum and Peabody Heights Brewery, site of Oriole Park V).

The Chop's occasional look at baseball sites begins on Page 5 with the GroveWood Baseball Museum in Tennessee. Jamison Pack reconnected with baseball, fell in love again, started collecting, and ...

President ▶ Page 11

Calendar

Regularly scheduled events

Zoom registration links are sent by the chapter

Peeps @ The Peeb (in-person and Zoom)

Conversation, nibbles, libations
 First Wednesday of the month, 7-9 PM
 Peabody Heights Brewery, 401 E. 30th St., Baltimore

SABR Speaker Series (in-person only)

Second Saturday of the month, noon-2 PM
 Babe Ruth Museum, 216 Emory St., Baltimore

Called Shot Lunch (in-person only)

BYO lunch and talk baseball
 Third Wednesday of the month, noon
 Babe Ruth Museum, 216 Emory St., Baltimore

Baltimore Baseball Babble (Zoom only, March-November)

Free-for-all baseball chat, not recorded
 Last Sunday of the month, 7-9 P.M.

April

13: SABR Speaker Series, Paul Scimonelli will talk about his book on Joe Cambria

17: Called Shot Lunch

19: Union Park marker dedication, noon, 321 E. 25th St., Baltimore

28: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 2, Jack Bales will discuss his research on Lewis Meacham

May

1: Peeps@ The Peeb, Noah Gittell on his book *BASEBALL: The Movie*

11: SABR Speaker Series, Patrick Montgomery will discuss his book *Baseball's Great Expectations*

15: Called Shot Lunch

26: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 3, Zak Ford will talk about his new book *Called Up*

June

5: Peeps @ The Peeb, Justin McKinney will discuss his research on 35 Mystery Men

8: SABR Speaker Series, TBA

19: Called Shot Lunch

30: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 5, Steve Dittmore will talk about his forthcoming book on the life of Jim Gilliam

July

3: Peeps @ The Peeb, Don Zmida on his book *Equality Batted Last: Minnie Miñoso, Ernie Banks and the Long Struggle to Integrate Chicago's Major League Teams*

13: Bryan Hoch will discuss his book *62*

17: Called Shot Lunch

28: Baltimore Baseball Babble, Inning 6, Paul Semendinger on his book *The Least Among Them*

Trivia Question

The 2024 season marks the 40th anniversary of the last time an Orioles' pitcher won 20 games in a season. In total, 11 different pitchers have posted 20-win seasons for the Birds, with Jim Palmer (eight times), Mike Cuellar (four times), and Dave McNally (four times) achieving the feat more than once. Can you name the eight pitchers who won 20 games or more in a season as an Oriole just once?

Answer on Page 5.

Chop Deadlines

Summer 2024	June 30
Fall 2024	September 30
Winter 2024-25	December 31
Spring 2025	March 31

SABR Spotlight on ... Mark Millikin

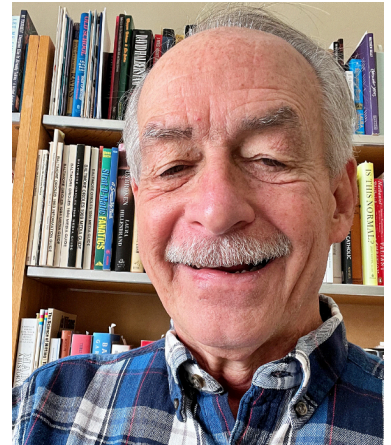
Mark Millikin hails from Baltimore but now calls Raleigh, North Carolina, home.

He's been a SABR member for 33 years, and his baseball tastes reflect his roots. He saw his first ballgame at Fenway Park, but Oriole Park at Camden Yards is his favorite and his favorite teams are the O's and the Rays. His favorite baseball memory is Game 3 of the 1966 World Series, when he was one of 54,445 at Memorial Stadium to see the O's edge the Dodgers, 1-0, as Wally Bunker scattered six hits.

Millikin's favorite player list is Ted Williams ("starting in 1957"), Brooks Robinson ("starting in 1963"), and Jimmie Foxx ("starting in 1990").

He is retired, except when doing free-lance writing, and his hobbies cover popular music (focusing on the 1960s and early '70s), sports (baseball, NFL football, college basketball), baseball research and writing, American history, and marine science.

Something most people don't know about him? "I was a research fishery biologist and then a fishery manager for NOAA Fisheries (U.S. Department of Commerce) for 39 years."



SABR Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter

Formed 2015

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Find us on [Facebook](#), too.

Babe Ruth: The Billion-Dollar Man?

By Frank Amoroso

The signing of Shohei Ohtani for \$700 million over the next 10 years by the Dodgers rocked the sports world this winter. Ohtani's unique skill set as an elite pitcher and explosive batter has triggered comparisons to the American icon, Babe Ruth. Ohtani is a sensational two-way player whom many call the Japanese Babe Ruth.

Now that the 2024 season is here and hope springs eternal, Ruth vs. Ohtani is one of those questions that baseball fanatics can debate forever. Given that many consider Babe Ruth the greatest baseball player ever to don a major-league baseball uniform, is it fair to conjecture that Ruth would be baseball's first billion-dollar man?

The remarkable achievements of "Showtime" Ohtani have brought renewed attention to the exploits of the Bambino. Comparison of the two players over their first 674 major-league games yields the amazing result that Ohtani and Ruth have almost identical home run and win totals. Babe stroked 159 homers and Ohtani 160. The comparison is eerier when their identical win/loss record of 35 wins and 18 losses is considered.

Of course, there are so many variables and differences in baseball and the world from a century ago to today that any comparisons are subject to a mind-boggling array of qualifications. When asked which player was the best, Google's AI Bard concluded that the question was impossible to answer. With the caveat that no definitive conclusion is possible, analyzing available measurables is one of the true pleasures of being a sports fanatic, especially when it comes to baseball with its quintessential obsession with statistics.

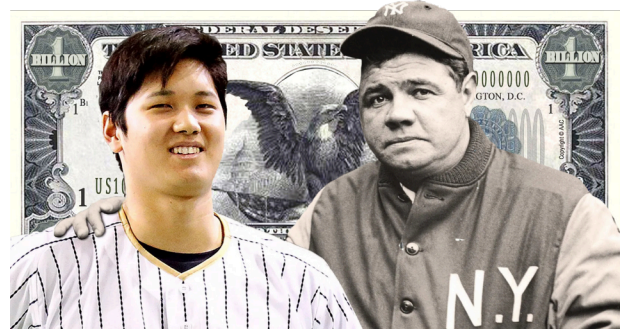
By many batting metrics, Babe is superior to Shohei. Ruth's career batting average is 70 points higher (.342 vs. .272). Similarly, home run percentage (6.7 vs. 5.9), on-base percentage (.474 vs. .358), and strikeouts per season (60 vs. 126). While it is easy to respond to any baseball statistical comparison by arguing that the stats are cherry-picked or inconsequential due to the myriad of differences between eras, one aspect of their respective careers is jolting in its starkness. If Ohtani averages 50 homers a year over his 10-year contract, he will still be 43 homers behind Ruth.

Ohtani has been touted as the only player ever to hit a ball with an exit velocity of over 100 mph and pitch a ball at over 100 mph. Without getting into the unavailability of such measurements in Ruth's era, Ohtani probably surpasses Babe in these categories.

Ruth debuted as a pitcher and spent his first six seasons predominantly as a pitcher. His career pitching record was 94-46. Babe spent his first four seasons with the Red Sox as a pitcher. He only did double duty as a pitcher and a hitter for a couple of seasons at the end of his Red Sox tenure. After he went to the Yankees in 1920, he performed almost exclusively as a batter. Remarkably, Ohtani has done both during the first six seasons of his MLB career. During the 2023 season, Ohtani broke Ruth's record for the most strikeouts by a player who has also hit over 100 home runs.

Despite his impressive production on the mound, Ohtani would have to win another 60 games on the mound to surpass Ruth's career win total. Given the fact that Ohtani had his second Tommy John surgery this past winter and is not expected to pitch during the 2024 season, there are questions about his future production as a pitcher.

The on-field achievements of both Ruth and Ohtani make them highly prized marketing commodities. Babe Ruth was the first celebrity athlete, and he benefited from the perfect storm--peace, prosperity, and a muscular optimism for the future. The Great War was over (15-22 million estimated to have died), and the Spanish flu pandemic (up to 50 million estimated deaths) was over. The shroud was lifted from the



country and the decade known as the Roaring Twenties was about to explode. The Babe was the perfect hero at the perfect time.

The New York Evening Post commented on Ruth's ubiquity: "Babe Ruth is as much a part of the daily life and thought of this nation as the milkman, payday, Prohibition, the Bible and evolution." He leveraged his celebrity to generate substantial outside income by endorsing a mind-boggling array of products, from cars to cigars, Victrolas to Red Rock Colas, and everything in between. Babe's legendary trips to play baseball in Cuba and Japan enhanced his commercial appeal on the international market.

In a similar vein, Ohtani has the charisma and business acumen to generate immense marketing value for himself, the Dodgers, and MLB. Ohtani is at the forefront of MLB's efforts to expand its reach into international markets. He is a handsome young man with an impeccable image. To many, he is considered the face of the Dodgers and major league baseball. Savvy marketers have dubbed him "Showtime," an obvious play on his first name.

Details about Ohtani's contract present an intriguing picture. It includes \$2 million per year in salary starting in 2024 and \$68 million in salary deferred annually until 2034 to be paid over the following decade. This significant deferral of salary liberates the Dodgers from the weight of his contract and enables them to pay other players more each year over the next decade. The team used this flexibility to sign the most highly sought-after free-agent pitcher, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, to a record-breaking \$325 million contract. Nor should one feel sorry for Ohtani and his paltry \$2 million salary. It has been reported that last year he made \$50 million from endorsements. In addition, the deferral will likely reduce his tax bill significantly in the future, depending on where he decides to reside.

The adage that best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry has reared its ugly head. Recent revelations about the payment of the gambling debts of his interpreter from Ohtani's bank accounts have sent shockwaves through the establishment. The worst-case scenario could end his baseball career and tarnish his sterling reputation beyond repair.

These reports raise the question as to whether Ohtani shares another trait with the Babe. Much has been written about Ruth's gambling excesses while barnstorming in Cuba in 1920. According to noted Ruth biographer, Jane Leavy, the Bambino lost between \$65,000 and \$130,000 gambling in Cuba. Gangsters chased Ruth across Cuba trying to collect their pound of flesh. After the debacle in Cuba, Babe vowed that he was "off the ponies for life."

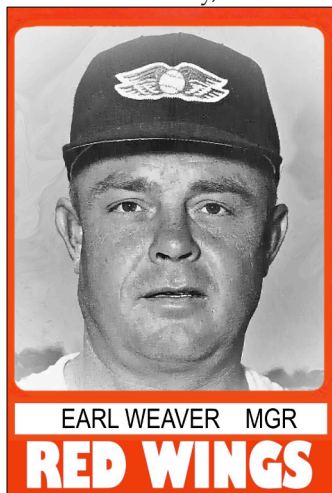
There is much uncertainty about the Ohtani matter, which is currently under investigation. The latest explanation proffered by his lawyers is that Ohtani was the victim of a

This Orioles Farm Bumper Crop Isn't the First

By Pete Kerzel

Despite the fact that the Orioles won 101 games and the American League East in 2023, most of the chatter throughout spring training was focused squarely on the organization's impressive collection of young players and their chances of flying north with the big-league team instead of being farmed out for additional minor-league seasoning.

That's what happens when you have the No. 1 prospect in the minors for three consecutive offseasons--catcher Adley Rutschman in 2022, shortstop Gunnar Henderson in 2023, and shortstop Jackson Holliday in 2024. Rutschman and Henderson are already firmly entrenched in the O's lineup, and the most-asked question in Sarasota this spring was whether Holliday, selected first overall in the 2022 First-Year Player Draft, would join them at Camden Yards for the March 28 opener against the Angels.



EARL WEAVER MGR
RED WINGS

If prospecting is your thing, it's a good time to be an Orioles fan. The trio of top prospects heralded the O's choice by several publications as having the top farm system in baseball, a nod to shrewd drafting and player development by vice president and general manager Mike Elias and the Baltimore brain trust. A once-bereft farm system is suddenly awash in talent. Remember when a big debut--think Matt Wieters in 2009--seemed like a rarity rather than an everyday thing?

Never mind if you're a recent Gold Glove winner like infielder Ramón Urías, the American League's selection at third base two seasons ago. With guys like Henderson, Holliday, and Jordan Westburg forcing their way into the lineup, even a sure-fielding veteran like Urías is suddenly an odd man out.

Never mind if you're a steady offensive and defensive performer in the outfield, like Anthony Santander, who has slugged 61 homers and driven in 184 runs in the past two campaigns. With up-and-comers like Colton Cowser, Heston Kjerstad, and Kyle Stowers pressing for playing time, every trade discussion seems to include the former Rule 5 pick's name.

"Mike Elias did what he said he was going to do when he took the job. He was going to start from the ground floor up, and he was going to build a winner," says former Orioles pitcher Ben McDonald, now an analyst on the Mid-Atlantic Sports Network. "He's done it. In order to do that, you've got to hit on your draft picks. ... Think of the '19 draft when you get Gunnar Henderson and you get Adley Rutschman in the same draft with back-to-back picks. That's going to go down as a historical draft for the Baltimore Orioles because you're talking about two difference-makers."

It appears the Orioles are awash in an embarrassment of riches. They were able to package two intriguing prospects--lefty D.L. Hall and infielder Joey Ortiz--to acquire ace pitcher Corbin Burnes from the Brewers. Third baseman Coby Mayo was raking during spring training in Sarasota, and manager Brandon Hyde noticed improvement in his defense, which has caught up to his bat. Catcher Samuel Basallo, though slowed by a stress fracture in his right elbow that no one seems too concerned about, has zoomed up the

prospect rankings.

And while this bonanza of minor-league talent seems like a once-in-a-lifetime proposition (albeit one forged on the futility of three seasons of 100 or more losses sandwiched around the COVID-shortened 2020 campaign), astute Orioles fans of a certain age will remember a similar period when the farm was so well-stocked that burgeoning superstars were forced to wait their turns at Triple-A Rochester.

Hall of Fame manager Earl Weaver, who took over when Hank Bauer was fired at the 1968 All-Star break with his team languishing in third place, had a simple philosophy when it came to young players: They waited their turn, and if they were lucky enough to be called up, they had better be prepared to play, as opposed to warming the bench and waiting for an opportunity.

Case in point: Merv Rettenmund, who was the Minor League Player of the Year in 1968 at Rochester, where he slashed .331/.459/.588 with 22 homers and 59 RBIs, earning the Ball State product a 31-game cup of coffee in Baltimore. Weaver, a master of manipulating the then-25-man roster, figured out creative ways for Rettenmund to get playing time, even though each of his three starting outfielders in 1969--left fielder Don Buford, center fielder Paul Blair, and right fielder Frank Robinson--appeared in at least 144 games (in the pre-designated hitter era, no less). Rettenmund never returned to the minors and enjoyed a long major-league career, playing six of his 13 seasons with Baltimore.

The 1969 season started an interesting era of Orioles baseball, with the team winning 100 or more games in each season between 1969 and 1971 and appearing in three straight World Series (with the 1970 world championship over the Reds their lone October success). After a third-place

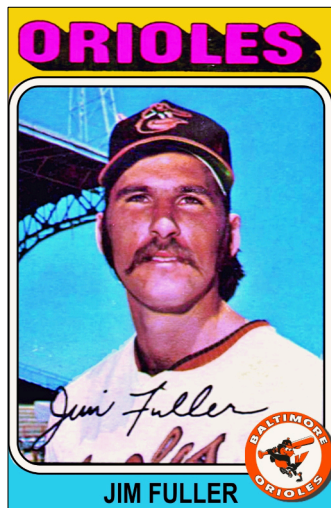
finish in the AL East in 1972, Weaver managed two straight American League East champions, though they topped out with 97 wins in 1973 and 91 victories in 1974, losing in both years to the Oakland A's, who won three straight World Series during their dynasty between 1972 and 1974.

But as long as the Orioles were competitive, it made it hard for Triple-A players champing at the bit--no matter the otherworldly stats they might have put up.

Outfielder/first baseman Jim Fuller used a power bat to zoom up the O's farm--hitting 33 homers and driving in 110 runs with Single-A Miami in 1971, crushing 34 homers with 107 RBIs between Double-A Asheville and Rochester in



DON BAYLOR OF/1B
RED WINGS



JIM FULLER

Destination ... GroveWood Baseball Museum

By John Gullion

The question – when writing about the GroveWood Baseball Museum--is where to begin.

Is it with the history? Do you dazzle your readers with names like Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, Aaron, or Griffey Jr.?

Is it with the incongruity? There's a baseball museum--with many high holy relics of the game--tucked away in a strip mall in a fairly nondescript East Tennessee community.

Is it with the serendipity? By luck and happenstance, the museum is less than 100 yards from Sherwood Park which has served as the center of both professional and amateur baseball in Morristown (population 30,431).

All of those things are worthy avenues of entry, but if you want to get to the heart of the GroveWood Baseball Museum, the hows and the whys of the thing, you have to start with the who.

Meet Jamison Pack, a real estate investor from the tiny mountain community of Newport, about a 30-minute drive from Morristown, depending on who's behind the wheel. It starts with a little boy with a passion for baseball, cards, and collecting, a passion fueled by his father and grandfather, and a passion rekindled by a trip to Cooperstown later in life.

"For me, it's my dad and my Papaw," Pack said. "I actually have a wall here at the museum dedicated to them. ... I remember on the back of my T-ball card when I was 5, it asked, 'Who is your favorite baseball player?' and I said, 'Dale Murphy.' That was because my dad's favorite player was Dale Murphy."

As Pack grew and began to focus on his professional life, his interests changed. He didn't collect cards. His attention faded from the game.

Then, in 2013, he slowly fell back in love with the game, and later a trip to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown rekindled a dormant passion.

"Once I got back into it, started collecting some autographs," he said. "After I first visited the Hall of Fame, that's when I really dove into the history. It was so cool to be right there in front of a Ty Cobb jersey or that bat that Babe Ruth used or all the historic items that they've got there."

"I started reading books, really diving in, especially the early 1900s baseball era and from there started picking up some game-used and player-owned stuff, and that's really where that started. And then it just kind of took off from there, I got a little obsessed with."

All that obsession led to a 3,500-square-foot museum to house his collection.

What's in that collection? How much time do you have?



Items connected to Ruth--the 13th home run ball from 1927--and Gehrig and Cobb and dozens of items used and worn and signed by the elite of the elite. The collection starts in the 1860s and moves through the history of the game by decade. There are personal letters, mementoes, and more. There's homework from Cubs 1962 Rookie of the Year Ken Hubbs, who made his professional debut in Morristown in 1959. Other items include Thurman Munson's checkbook and the last foul ball he hit.

But it goes much deeper. For every big-name star, there are names that are lost to all but the most serious fans of the game. Names like Rabbit Maranville, Frankie Frisch, Willie Kamm, and Bob O'Farrell are all represented.

Did you ever wonder what happened to the catcher's mitt O'Farrell was wearing when he threw Babe Ruth out in the ninth inning of the last game of the 1926 World Series? It's here, in Pack's museum in Morristown.

Pack has items worn by Hank Aaron, Nolan Ryan, Joe DiMaggio, and Yogi Berra. The great Braves teams of the '90s are heavily represented, as well as his beloved '86 Mets.

You can't buy a ticket to tour the GroveWood Baseball Museum--which is named in honor of Lefty Grove and Smoky Joe Wood.

But you can go online and schedule a free tour. As word of the museum has grown, Pack has begun hosting ticketed events featuring legends such as Fergie Jenkins, Steve Sax, Andruw Jones, and Doc Gooden. More--including his dad's favorite player, Dale Murphy--are scheduled or in the works.

The goal of the museum is not to turn a profit but to make connections. For Pack, the items in his collection are more than relics; they're totems holding the stories of the people who held, hit, or wore them.

They are the meeting place where he can commune with fellow worshippers of the church of America's pastime.

Nothing is better for Pack than when a guest sees an item that sparks a story.

"That's my favorite part of it, hearing their stories. Why do they love baseball? Their memories. Their favorite player, favorite team. Whatever drew them to baseball because that part always comes out at some point," he said. "Especially on the small group tours where I get to talk with them and find out, there's an era or an exhibit somewhere in here where they're like 'Oh, I loved them.'"

"It's so much fun. That's what it comes down to. It's so much fun to love baseball and baseball history and connect with people who love baseball the same as you. That's been one of the best parts."

"The slogan is 'A Collection That Connects Us.' I feel like that's what it is and that's what it's for."



Trivia Answer

Steve Barber (1963), Pat Dobson (1971), Mike Torrez (1975), Wayne Garland (1976), Mike Flanagan (1979), Steve Stone (1980), Scott McGregor (1980), Mike Boddicker (1984.)

Another tip of the editor's cap to Jody Madron for this question.

Getting There

Morristown, Tennessee, is a seven-plus-hour drive from Baltimore. The closest airport is in Knoxville, but the closest airport with nonstop service from BWI is Nashville, more than three hours away. Morristown is also home to the Crockett Tavern Museum, built on the site of the boyhood home of Davy Crockett.

The O'sgood Files

By Patrick Brown

On January 28, 2024, just after his death on January 23, Charles Osgood was honored by *CBS News Sunday Morning*, a show he anchored for 22 years. During the show, there was a piece he had done about his growing up in Baltimore after his family moved there from New York. On several occasions in the segment, he mentions his love of baseball, particularly the home team, the minor-league Baltimore Orioles, then an Indian farm team. However, he apparently was not always enamored of their play, as he described them as “a ... AAA team often playing AA ball”.¹ The segment served as a companion piece to his memoir about a year in his childhood (1942) when he was 9 years old, and he repeated that sentiment and others about the subpar performance of the team in the memoir even as he talked about much he and his father enjoyed going to Memorial Stadium and seeing the Orioles play.² Since studies have shown that fandom is usually determined at a young age,³ it is not surprising that he would have these memories of his early baseball experiences 60 years later. However, what was it about the 1942 Orioles team that led to this strong feeling of ineptitude, and was it justified?

First, despite Osgood's being a respected journalist, his memory of the facts in this case leaves something to be desired. In 1942 the Orioles played in Terrapin Park, also known as Oriole Park (V).³ In fact Oriole Park (V)⁴ was the home of the International League Orioles until it was destroyed by fire on July 4, 1944.⁵ As to their level of play, technically, he was at least half-right. While the 1942 Orioles played in the International League which was one of the highest minor leagues at the time, officially the classification of the league was Double A. The Triple A designation would not be used until 1946. So the 1942 Orioles did, in fact, play “AA ball”.

Factual mistakes aside, was the team itself as bad as he remembered it to be? Offhand, it does not appear to be. Their record in 1942 was a respectable 75-77, good for fifth place in the eight-team league. While they finished 16½ games behind the regular-season champion Newark Bears, it should be noted that the Bears, a Yankee affiliate, ran away with the league title that year: The second-place team, the Montreal Royals, finished 10 games back. The Orioles finished fourth in batting in the league, averaging 4.28 runs per game. The hitting star was 21-year-old first baseman Eddie Robinson,⁶ who finished the year with a .306 batting average, 27 home runs, and a .527 slugging percentage, all team highs. Robinson would end his baseball career 15 years later as a member of the major-league Orioles with his last at-bat coming on September 15, 1957, against the Indians.

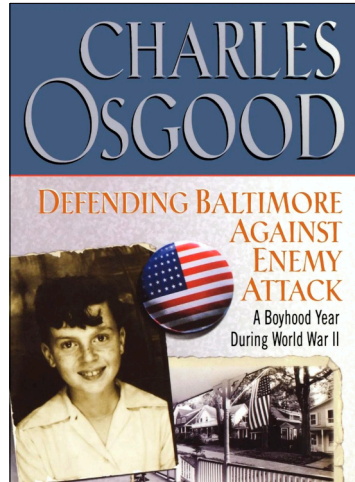
To give him the benefit of the doubt, it is possible that what led to Osgood's disparaging remarks and less than outstanding memories of their play was the 1942 Orioles' performance in the field. They finished next to last in the league in team fielding percentage with a .963 mark (205 errors in 152 games) and had a league low double plays turned (98, 12 fewer than the next higher team). While infield defense in general was an issue, a major contributing factor to that poor fielding percentage was the play of the

regular third baseman, 21-year-old Bob Lemon,⁷ who finished the year with a .939 fielding percentage (33 errors in 147 games). Lemon would later make his mark as a Hall of Fame pitcher for the Indians, winning at least 17 games a year from 1948-1956 with 20 or more wins season in seven of those years.

While he may have a few factual inaccuracies and his representations of the team failures may not be totally deserved, Osgood's love of baseball is evident in his recounting of his 9-year-old self walking into the ballpark and getting his first sight of the field, being at games with his father, and getting pleasure from just watching the game. Perhaps he was just following the dictum of another writer, who was also interested in baseball, Mark Twain: “Never let the truth get in the way of a good story.”

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Bonus Trivia Question



With a Nod to the Baby Birds of 1960

Date: July 4, 1960

Place: Fenway Park

Naming the Oriole is so easy that we'll give it to you. It is Walt Dropo, who the Orioles used as a right-hand-hitting first baseman to spell the left-handed-swinging Jim Gentile.

The woman in the picture is wearing the recently released Joe Ginsburg's #22 jersey. She was a Hollywood star who married a Baltimorean. Can you name this person?

The photo is from the Boston Public Library, and the answer is on Page 12.

The Weiss Minor-League Questionnaires: What We Found

Tippy Martinez: The Last Laugh

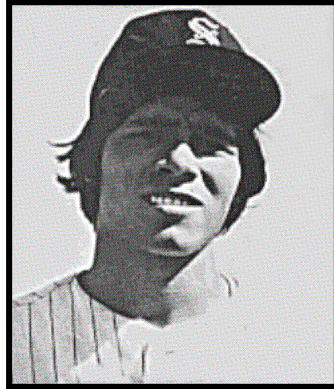
By Patrick Brown

One of the most eventful games in Orioles history occurred on August 24, 1983, when the Orioles played the Blue Jays at Memorial Stadium in Baltimore.¹ While the game featured, among other things, a game-tying home run by Cal Ripken Jr. (on his 23rd birthday) in the bottom of the 10th inning followed in the same half-inning by a game-winning three-run homer by infielder-turned-emergency catcher Lenn Sakata, what the game is most noted for is that all three outs in the top of the 10th inning resulted from pickoff throws from left-handed pitcher Felix “Tippy” Martinez to first baseman Eddie Murray.

The Orioles had used several personnel moves to tie the game 3-3 in the bottom of the ninth, but in doing so had used up all their players on the bench and the team’s two catchers. Manager Joe Altobelli had to improvise, and so he moved second baseman Sakata to catcher (he was replaced at second base by outfielder John Lowenstein.). The top of the 10th started inauspiciously when the Blue Jays’ Cliff Johnson homered on the first pitch of the inning from Tim Stoddard. When Barry Bonnell followed with a single, Altobelli brought in Martinez. Everybody in the stadium knew that Bonnell was going to test “catcher” Sakata’s arm, and, in fact, the next hitter, switch-hitting Dave Collins, stepped into the left-handed batter’s box against southpaw Martinez to help hide the runner on first from the catcher’s view. However, Bonnell took such a large lead that Martinez easily picked him off. Collins eventually walked, and again everybody knew that the speedy Collins (he had stolen 79 bases for Cincinnati in 1980) would be trying to steal second as soon as possible. Again, Martinez picked off an overanxious Blue Jays baserunner. The next batter, Willie Upshaw, followed with an infield single that second baseman Lowenstein could not make a play on. Whereupon, Upshaw was promptly picked off as well for the third out of the inning, setting up the offensive heroics of the bottom of the 10th, culminating in the walkoff homer by catcher Sakata.

No one could have foreseen this turn of events. Or could they?

There is an ongoing SABR project to transcribe the Weiss Baseball Player Questionnaires, a collection of self-completed surveys of professional baseball players from 1945-2005. (These questionnaires are also available now on ancestry.com). While the project entails capturing things like the player’s ambition, background, and signing scout as well as the date the filled-in questionnaire was received which is stamped at the top, there are other questions whose answers are not being captured. My wife Karen and I have volunteered to assist with this project, and we happened to get a survey filled out by Tippy Martinez. It is date-stamped September 14, 1972, almost 11 years before this game. Of particular interest is his answer to the question “What



Tippy Martinez
Syracuse Chiefs LHP

A Stroll Down Memory Lane, 1963-64

By Ruth Sadler

Probably every baseball fan has had the same dream: playing in the major leagues. For most of us, the dream comes when we’re young and naïve, playing ball in the neighborhood, with no idea how daunting the road to the majors is. The weeding out begins in youth baseball, when it’s obvious that some of these kids are really good, or maybe just a lot better than the rest. As ballplayers hit their teens, more are left behind. For those still in the chase, it’s a persistent dream.

That was brought home to me when I volunteered to help transcribe the Bill Weiss minor-league questionnaires.

Weiss, who died in 2011 and was SABR member #34, is remembered as a baseball statistician extraordinaire and minor-league researcher. His collection of baseball research was donated to SABR’s San Diego Ted Williams Chapter and the San Diego Public Library, which houses the Sullivan Family Baseball Research Center. The collection includes more than 100,000 questionnaires that Weiss sent to minor-league teams between 1945 and 2005 seeking information on players who had signed pro contracts. His forms asked about their high school and amateur days, hobbies, and most interesting or unusual incident in baseball. SABR only wanted some of the information transcribed: “ancestry or descent”, high school and college sports, offseason occupation, scout who signed him, ambition in baseball, and whether any family members played pro ball.

Volunteering in any way to help SABR is a labor of love because we love baseball. According to Steven Vogel, who is in charge of the transcribers, there are about 40 people involved in this project, including about 30 transcribers. The goal is to have all questionnaires transcribed before SABR 52 in August. Vogel’s April 2 report said that more than two-thirds of the forms had been transcribed.

I volunteered for this adventure in late October. Serendipitously, my “bucket” was questionnaires from 1963 and 1964; depending on the month, I was in seventh, eighth, ninth, or 10th grade, so I felt right at home, especially with two male cousins who graduated high school in 1960 and 1964, peers of these players. It was fun to see their hobbies, some universal (girls), some very ‘60s (cars, surfing, water-skiing, jazz).

Transcription could be problematic. Some players had penmanship that would make their second-grade teachers proud; some had taken mechanical drawing and had draftsman’s printing; many were serviceable; some were illegible, even after computer-screen magnification.

The baseball amateur draft began in 1965, all of these players were signed by scouts. The only draft in their lives was that of the U.S. Army. Most players were signed by local scouts whose names came up frequently, others by former players with recognizable names. Some took pains to mention that they were signed by the farm director himself or the assistant farm director; alas, that was no guarantee of even a cup of coffee.

The most common baseball aspiration I came across was, not surprisingly, to play in the major leagues. Some ambitions were low: just to get to the majors or play in Yankee Stadium. Others were loftier: to beat Sandy Koufax, to be at least as good as Willie Mays or Micky Mantle, to get into the Hall of Fame, to have a long major-league career. Many said they wanted to get to the majors as fast as possible, or even set a time limit of four or five years!

Follow Along With BBRC!



By Taylor Malone

Baseball isn't the only thing in full swing—so is the official social media channel for BBRC!

My name is Taylor Malone, and I work full-time as the marketing and social media manager at the historic Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. As a massive baseball fan, I was thrilled when chapter president Peter Coolbaugh asked me to share my skills with BBRC. Hopefully, you've already seen several of my posts on our official Facebook page over the past couple of months.

Let's discuss why it is important for BBRC to be as much of a titan online as it already is within the SABR community.

BBRC Website Update

BBRC will soon have its own website!

I believe that we have a lot to be proud of at BBRC, and as the webmaster, I'm excited to put all of that in a single landing place.

The bones of the site exist, but we aren't ready to publish it. I do, however, want to tell you what it will look like and what I will need from everyone else:

We will be highlighting the work and research done by the members of BBRC. Have you recently published a book? Presented your research? Just have something cool you've discovered and want to share? Once the site is up, I'll open up my email for any and all accomplishments, with none being too small.

We will be keeping a one-stop-shop list of all upcoming events. But I can't be at everything. As "upcoming events" become archived as "past events," I will appreciate pictures and such, the same kinds of things you will send Taylor Malone for social media.

Also, what do you think should be on the site? Using other SABR sites as models, what do you like? What do you think we can't live without? How do we keep our website as a living archive of the work that we do?

--Patrick Regal

Bringing new people into the BBRC family takes a village. Even the most successful digital campaigns can't thrive without a human touch. According to a recent study by Nielsen, 92% of consumers trust recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising. And we're pretty lucky, because rather than trying to sell a product, we are selling a great time and a welcoming community of baseball fans! It makes all of our jobs pretty easy.

People are influenced to take action on things when it's recommended by someone close to them. This used to mean when you got together for coffee, or when you were chatting on the phone, but today, you can talk up your favorite things, people, and places by sharing your thoughts online. That's pretty neat, if you ask me.

How can you get involved? If you have a Facebook account, make sure you give BBRC a "follow" and a "like." This not only creates more visibility for the channel, but allows you to become part of our online community. If weekly chats aren't enough for you, join the conversation with other members in the comments of our posts. If you really like a post, "share" it with your friends on Facebook. This will expose the channel to new people (hopefully, new potential members!).

Answering your frequently asked questions:

- Is Facebook the only social media platform that BBRC has? Yes, it is ... for now. It takes awhile to fully understand a channel. What do people like to see? What posting times are best? How are we reaching new people? Once I have some of those questions answered, we may expand to another platform, but for now, it is just Facebook.

- What if I'm not on Facebook? That's okay! As I mentioned earlier, your word of mouth is our most important marketing tool—online and offline.

- How do you decide what content to publish? Right now, I'm taking big swings (pun intended) and seeing what sticks. As someone who is new to BBRC and to SABR, I am still figuring out what you like to see from the page. The best way to gauge your thoughts on posts is to leave feedback. Love something? Comment and tell me. That is extremely valuable and will help shape future content.

- Can I suggest content ideas? ABSOLUTELY! While I may be the person behind the screen for the BBRC Facebook, it should be a representation of our community. Shoot me an email with a photo, story, event, or idea, and we can work together to get it social media-ready. You can reach me directly at TaylorL.Malone@gmail.com.

I hope to see you all at the ballpark, at a meeting, or online in the near future!

Welcome, New Members

		Interests (if indicated)
Geoff Arnold	Baltimore	
Nelson Barnes	Reisterstown	Ballparks
Jim Carroll	Duryea, PA	
Irina Clements	Falls Church, VA	Yankees; '70s baseball; Brooklyn Dodgers; baseball landmarks; minor leagues; spring training; umpires and rules; women in baseball
Dan Galloway	Ijamsville	Orioles
Steve Heineman	Ijamsville	Statistics; stat books; baseball books; baseball board games; Yankees; Nationals; 1970s
Roch Kubatko	Baltimore	
Tippy Martinez		
Bob Militello	Gambrills	
Melanie Newman	Baltimore	
Hayden Ravert	Oxford, PA	Statistical analysis of players; measurable stats on salary; artificial intelligence and machine learning; baseball records; educational resources; games and simulations; minor leagues; science and baseball
Matt Rice	Finksburg	Cincinnati Reds; minor league baseball; ballparks; baseball and the arts; baseball card history and influence; baseball landmarks; collegiate baseball; minor leagues; scouts
Oliver Vogel	Phoenix (MD)	Statistical analysis

1960: The Orioles' First Pennant Race

By Barry Sparks

For the first six years the Orioles were in Baltimore, a pennant race was as foreign to them as a French dictionary.

The club finished an average of 30 games out of first place. The closest they came was 17½ games behind the pennant winner in 1958, and the farthest was 57 games back in 1954.

All that, however, changed in 1960, when veteran manager Paul Richards guided the Birds to an 89-65 record and a second-place finish. The Orioles were the surprise of the American League. They were in first place for 41 days, occupying the top spot as late as September 14.

The team was tied for first place with the Yankees when the clubs faced off in a highly anticipated and crucial four-game weekend series September 16-18 at Yankee Stadium.

After finishing 20 games behind the White Sox in 1959, the Orioles entered 1960 as the dark horse in the American League.

Richards, who had been nurturing a group of youngsters, acknowledged that it was a big risk to go with younger players because they were unpredictable.

In spring training, he said he expected the Orioles would win a lot of close games. "We're going to have a good defense and outstanding pitching," he said. "Pitching will be our strong point. We could have the youngest Big Four in the majors with Milt Pappas (21), Jerry Walker (21), Jack Fisher (21), and Chuck Estrada (22)." He was counting on veterans Hoyt Wilhelm and Hal Brown to add depth and experience to the staff.

The infield was revamped with rookies Marv Breeding at second base and Ron Hansen at shortstop, replacing Billy Gardner and Billy Klaus, respectively.

Richards counted on rookie Jim Gentile at first base and center fielder Jackie Brandt, acquired during the offseason from the Giants, for extra power in the lineup. He said lack of power hurt the club in 1959.

Although the Orioles lost five of the first six games of the season, the club went 19-9 in May and led the American League by two games by Memorial Day. Fueled by the "Kiddie Korps" and timely hitting, the Orioles were in the thick of the pennant race.

Baltimore enjoyed a strong August with a 22-8 mark, but trailed the White Sox by three games and the Yankees by 2½ games entering September.

A quirky schedule had the Orioles playing only two home games after September 4.

The season was on the line when the Orioles arrived in New York on Friday, September 16, for the four-game series. In the series opener, veteran Whitey Ford faced 22-year-old lefty Steve Barber. The Yankees built a 4-0 lead as Hector Lopez delivered a solo homer in the fourth inning and Roger Maris added a two-RBI blast in the fifth. The Orioles loaded the bases in the top of ninth with two outs. Jim Busby pushed across two runs with a double against reliever Bobby Shantz, but the O's fell short, 4-2, before 50,332 fans.

On Saturday, Estrada faced off against the Yankees' Bob Turley before 49,055. Mantle slammed a two-run homer in

the bottom of the first inning. The O's knotted it on Brooks Robinson's RBI single in the fifth and Gus Triandos's solo shot in the sixth. Berra homered in the bottom of the inning, and Gentile retaliated with a solo homer in the top of the seventh. The Yankees rallied for two runs in the bottom of the eighth on Bobby Richardson's two-RBI single to secure the 5-3 victory.

Nearly 54,000 fans, the most ever to see the Orioles play, watched the Sunday doubleheader.

The Orioles were never in this game, as the Yankees knocked out starter Jack Fisher with a five-run third inning. Yankees starter Art Ditmar got relief help from Jim Coates as they coasted to a 7-3 win. In the nightcap, Ralph Terry tossed a two-hit shutout. Hard-luck loser Milt Pappas surrendered just five hits, and both Yankee runs scored on sacrifice flies.

After the Yankees swept the Orioles, Larry Merchant of the Philadelphia Daily News wrote: "Paul Richards' castle-in-the-sky dream came crashing down in the graveyard of American League hopes, Yankee Stadium. The Orioles never led in the four-game series."

Richards said: "The Yankees out-pitched us, outhit us, out-fielded us and got all the breaks. That's a pretty tough combination to cope with. But I'm still fond of this club. I

was willing to go with it and I'm willing to lose with it. It's a good club and it will get better."

At the end of the weekend, the Orioles were four games out of first place with nine games remaining. The Yankees ran away with the pennant, as they finished the season with a 15-



World Series tickets the Orioles were allowed to print while still in the race.

streak. Meanwhile, the Orioles went 6-3 and finished in second place, eight games behind the New Yorkers.

Richards's faith in his youthful staff paid off. Estrada (18-11), Pappas (15-11), Barber (10-7), Fisher (12-11), and Walker (3-4) accounted for 58 wins. Veterans Brown (12-5) and Wilhelm (11-8) provided the mound experience.

Shortstop Ron Hansen (.255, 22 homers and 86 RBIs) was voted American League Rookie of the Year, and Jim Gentile (.292, 22 homers, and 98 RBIs) provided a big bat in the lineup. Brooks Robinson had his breakout season with a .294 average, 14 homers and 88 RBIs. Hansen, Gentile, and Estrada were named to the 10-man Topps All-Star Rookie Team.

As Richards predicted in spring training, the team won a lot of close games: 37 comeback wins, including 10 walk-offs.

Although the Orioles didn't win the 1960 pennant, they were contenders with a young and exciting team, as well as a bright future.

BBRC 7, January 15: A Day of Baseball, Plus Snow



BBRC 7 (SABR Day) was held on the Martin Luther King holiday, January 15, at Peabody Heights Brewery. Before the snows came, speakers held forth. Mike Gibbons, director emeritus of the Babe Ruth Museum (top left), talked about Martin Luther King and Jackie Robinson; Jay Seaborg and Tom Delise (second and third from left, top row) spoke about the subject of their book *Foxy Ned Hanlon*; former Orioles reliever Tippy Martinez (top row, right) had everyone laughing about stories from baseball to tacos; Marty Payne (bottom row, left) shared his knowledge of Eastern Shore baseball; BBRC president Peter Coolbaugh (bottom row, second from left) was the emcee; new social media maven Taylor Malone and webmaster Patrick Regal (bottom row, third from left) enjoyed the day, and Charlie Vascellaro talked about his days at the former *Diamond Magazine*. (Jim Considine photos)

2024 Hall of Famers vs. the Orioles

The 2024 Hall of Fame class was announced in January and will be inducted in July.

Only **Todd Helton**, in 12 games against the Orioles, fell short of his Hall of Fame numbers. The O's held him to a slash line of .267 / .333 / .867, while his career numbers were .316 / .414 / .953.

Adrian Beltre had 119 games against the Orioles, going

.291 / .339 / .837 compared to .286 / .337 / .865 in his career.

Joe Mauer did better against Baltimore than other opponents, slashing .339 / .405 / .905 in 77 games vs.

.306 / .388 / .827 in his career.

As manager of the Tigers, **Jim Leyland** had a .540 winning percentage and was 31-28 (.525) against the O's. Over 22 years, his winning percentage was .506.

massive theft. In a recent statement to the press, Ohtani denied ever wagering on sports; in particular, he denied betting on baseball, which is a cardinal sin in the world of baseball. Ohtani claimed that he was the victim of a massive theft perpetrated by his former interpreter, Ippei Mizuhara, who lied about Ohtani's alleged knowledge that \$4.5 million was paid to an illegal bookmaker from the player's account.

It is much too early to speculate about what any investigation will uncover. Until the results are reported, the time-honored principle of American jurisprudence applies, and Ohtani is presumed innocent until there is evidence proving otherwise. There is a great deal at stake for all involved, and the best course is to reserve judgment until the facts have been gathered, marshaled, and fairly assessed.

Ruth's career ended almost a century ago and his legacy and impact on the sport has been the subject of innumerable articles, books, and debates over the years. Ohtani's career is a work in progress, and time will tell what his ultimate legacy and impact will be. During his career, Babe Ruth pushed the envelope and consistently commanded the highest salary in the game. A century ago, players were not permitted to have representation during salary negotiations. In today's economic climate and with the advocacy of a high-powered, modern-day agent, there is little doubt that Babe's uniqueness as a ballplayer and pitchman would result in a contract eclipsing Showtime's contract and make him baseball's first billion-dollar man.

President ▶ From Page 1

Camden Yards and the area around it over the next few years, thanks to the new lease and money from the state of Maryland.

Oriole Park may be 32 years old this season, but it is still fresh and vibrant. We here at the BBRC like to keep people focused on baseball and help keep the game vibrant. Yes, there are stats and history, but the game is so much more. It parallels our nation's history going back to the Civil War and is part of the very fabric of our society. It is why Opening Day should be a national holiday. There is no other sport like baseball, and true fans know and believe that sentiment.

As we head into the late spring and summer, stay tuned for more chapter activities such as a joint MiLB game, our annual game at Camden Yards, and our monthly Zoom meetings and in-person lunches. We also hope to start a new fundraising campaign for a third ballpark marker in the city of Baltimore later in the year.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy the game and the 2024 season as it unfolds before our eyes.

SABR Day at Shirley Povich Field

June 30 at Shirley Povich Field will be a tripleheader for SABR members beginning with a 9 AM talk by Bruce Adams, founder of summer wooden-bat league team Bethesda Big Train. At 10, the Big Train faces the Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts in a Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League game. That will be followed by a lunch conversation with the writers from Stadium Journey (<https://www.stadiumjourney.com/>). The Big Train (bigtrain.org) is celebrating its 25th anniversary this season. For information on the SABR event, contact Adams at bruce@greaterwash.org.

1972, and 39 homers with 108 RBIs for Rochester in 1973. But with a logjam in the outfield and Boog Powell holding down first base, there wasn't room for Fuller, who logged 73 games with the Orioles but could never replicate his minor-league power, leading to his 1974 release.

Similarly, outfielder/first baseman Roger Freed mashed for three minor-league seasons--31 homers and 103 RBIs for Single-A Stockton in 1968, 22 homers and 90 RBIs for Double-A Dallas-Fort Worth in 1969, and 24 homers and 130 RBIs for Rochester in 1970. But with no path to playing time in Baltimore, the Orioles dealt Freed, then 24, to the Phillies in a deal that netted them lefty Grant Jackson in December 1970. Unlike Fuller, Freed enjoyed an eight-season major-league career and acclaim as one of the top pinch-hitters of the late 1970s (in 1977 for the Cardinals, he slashed .391/.440/.609 as a pinch-hitter and .398/.463/.627 overall).

But it wasn't just fringe major leaguers who were blocked by veterans from the late 1960s to mid-1970s in Baltimore.

After middling seasons in the lower minors from 1967-69, second baseman Bobby Grich broke out at Rochester in 1970, hitting .383/.503/.570 over 63 games (but with only 23 of his 90 hits for extra bases). He got into 30 games with the O's and was on the postseason roster, but with Davey Johnson capably manning second base and Mark Belanger holding down shortstop, opportunity was scarce. Grich, then 22, returned to Rochester in 1971 and made the brass take notice by slashing .336/.439/.632 with 32 homers and 83 RBIs in 130 games. Johnson slumped to a .221 average in 1972, and coming off a third-place finish, the Orioles sent Johnson to the Braves in a blockbuster trade that brought slugging catcher Earl Williams to Charm City. Grich, who took over second base as Johnson struggled, spent five seasons as the primary occupant of the keystone, earning three All-Star selections, four Gold Gloves, and down-ballot MVP votes over a five-year stretch before departing for the Angels in free agency.

With the outfield spots filled with productive major leaguers, slugging Don Baylor also had trouble carving a path to Baltimore. In 1970, he slashed .327/.429/.583 with 22 homers and 107 RBIs for Rochester, numbers that should have done the trick. But the Orioles won the World Series that year and Baylor, then 22, returned to Triple-A in 1971, where a .313/.422/.539 output with 20 home runs and 95 RBIs finally convinced the Orioles to ship Robinson to the Dodgers to open a roster spot for Baylor. For most of the next four seasons, Baylor was the regular right fielder, until he was packaged with pitchers Mike Torrez and Paul Mitchell in the April 1976 blockbuster that brought right fielder Reggie Jackson and pitchers Ken Holtzman and Bill VanBommel to Baltimore from the A's. But Jackson lasted only a year in orange and black, signing as a free agent with the Yankees in the offseason for five years and \$3.5 million, while Baylor spent just one season in Oakland, signed with the Angels in free agency and enjoyed a 19-year major-league career.

That 1970 Rochester squad also included a speedy 19-year-old outfielder who would soon make his way to the bigs: Rich Coggins, who held his own against more experienced pitchers in 43 games. By 1973, Buford was also gone, and both Coggins and 26-year-old Al Bumby had made their way to Baltimore. Bumby won the 1973 AL Rookie of the Year award and spent 13 years as an Oriole; Coggins stayed in Baltimore through 1974, and was dealt to Montreal with pitchers Dave McNally and Bill Kirkpatrick in exchange for outfielder Ken Singleton and Torrez.

Tippy ► From Page 7

would you consider your greatest thrill or more humorous experience in baseball?"

His answer: "When I first learned how to pick-off base-runners ... It really was humorous to see the runners expecting a throw to home and then getting picked off."

It seems that at least for one game in 1983, Tippy had the last, and best, laugh.

Reference

1. <https://sabr.org/gamesproj/game/august-24-1983-tippy-martinez-picks-off-three-blue-jays-in-one-inning/>

The Babe, the Birds, and the SABR Games Project

By Patrick Brown

The SABR Baseball Games Project was formed in 2014 to research, write, and publish accounts of major-league regular-season, postseason, and All-Star games, including Negro Leagues games, along with other games of historical significance such as in the minor leagues or international or exhibition contests. As of March 7, 2024, the project consisted of 4,740 articles. Annually the project counts down the 50 articles with the most page views in the previous year. In the list for 2023, both Babe Ruth and the Orioles are well represented with eight articles total (four each) in the top 41, including the most viewed article of the year:

1. [September 20, 1998: Cal Ripken decides to end consecutive game streak at 2,632](#) (11,456 views)

Author: [Thomas J. Brown Jr.](#) Posted August 15, 2022.

11. [May 30, 1935: Babe Ruth plays his final major-league game with Boston Braves](#) (3,183 views)

Author: [Thomas J. Brown Jr.](#) Posted November 30, 2020.

12. [September 6, 1995: Cal Ripken surpasses Lou Gehrig's unbreakable record with 2131st consecutive game](#) (3,175 views)

Author: [Ralph Peluso.](#) Posted August 15, 2022.

24. [June 23, 1917: Boston's Babe Ruth and Ernie Shore combine to no-hit Senators](#) (1,963 views)

Author: [Dirk Lammers.](#) Posted December 21, 2022.

31. [August 24, 1983: Tippy Martinez picks off three Blue Jays in one inning](#) (1,392 views)

Author: [Austin Gisriel.](#) Posted May 5, 2014.

36. [May 5, 2021: Orioles' John Means throws a unique, near-perfect no-hitter in Seattle](#) (1,259 views)

Author: [Mike Huber.](#) Posted April 29, 2022.

40. [June 1, 1925: Babe Ruth returns from 'Bellyache Heard 'Round the World'](#) (1,217 views)

Author: [Josh Berk.](#) Posted December 14, 2020.

41. [July 11, 1914: Babe Ruth makes his major-league debut with Red Sox](#) (1,209 views)

Author: [Joe Schuster.](#) Posted November 30, 2020.

For more information about the SABR Games Project, contact John Fredland at johnfredland@gmail.com.

William & Mary Negro Leagues Exhibit

The Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, is hosting an exhibit on Negro Leagues baseball through May 31. The exhibit, from the collection of W&M alumni Derrick C. Jones and Denise Mitchell Jones, has artifacts from 1920-1960. For information on the exhibit and hours, see <https://libraries.wm.edu/exhibits/negro-leagues-baseball-1920-1960>.



Tippy Martinez and Lenn Sakata reunited for the 40th anniversary of the O's 1983 world championship. (Baltimore Sun)

BBRC Receives SABR Grant For Aberdeen Ballpark Marker

By David B. Stinson

On March 14, 2024, SABR announced the recipients of its local grants for 2024. BBRC member Ben Ernst of Aberdeen, South Dakota, spearheaded a successful drive to purchase and place a historic marker at the former site of Aberdeen Municipal Ballpark, aka Pheasant Park, in Aberdeen, South Dakota. BBRC received a grant for \$2,440 toward this undertaking.

Aberdeen Municipal Ballpark was home to the Aberdeen Pheasants from 1946 to 1971. The park was constructed in 1936 and completed as a New Deal Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. It was located on the campus of Northern State University, and university president Dr. Neal Schnoor has granted SABR permission to place the marker on its campus where the ballpark was once located.

The Pheasants were members of the Northern League and from 1954 to 1971 were an affiliate of the Orioles. Many notable ballplayers either played for or managed the team, including Mark Belanger, Bo Belinsky, Al Bumbry, Tito Francona, Don Larsen, future Hall of Famer Jim Palmer, Lou Piniella, Cal Ripken Sr., Bob Turley, and future Hall of Famer Earl Weaver. On June 8, 1964, the Orioles, the Pheasants' parent club, played an exhibition game at the ballpark with a team that included future Hall of Famer Brooks Robinson and Luis Aparicio, as well as fan favorite Boog Powell. The Orioles defeated Aberdeen's "Baby Birds", 6-3. This is the only known game played by a major-league team in South Dakota.

The marker will be revealed on June 8, the 60th anniversary of the Orioles' visit. Ernst has reached out to former Pheasants telling them about the marker and inviting them to attend the reveal.

The plaque will be the first SABR marker in the state of South Dakota. Congratulations, Ben!

Bonus Trivia Answer

Actress Dorothy Lamour, who married Baltimorean William Ross Howard III.

Thanks to film buff Jim Considine for this teaser.

Contributors to This Issue

Frank Amoroso writes historical fiction and has just released *Diamond Fever*, the rollicking story of Babe Ruth's barnstorming tour of the exotic, mysterious, and dangerous island of Cuba in the fall of 1920. His Wopper trilogy chronicles Babe's early life, Vol. 1 *Pigtown*, his professional debut, Vol. 2 *The Show*, culminating with the Red Sox World Series victory in 1918, Vol. 3 *The Series*.

Patrick Brown, membership director for the Baltimore/Babe Ruth Chapter, hails from Harrison, New Jersey (Exit 15W on the Jersey Turnpike) and is a lifelong Yankees fan. He retired after a 40-year career as a mathematician with the Department of Defense.

John Gullion is the managing editor of the *Citizen Tribune* in Morristown, Tennessee.

Pete Kerzel will be writing about the minor leagues for *TBC*. He covered the Orioles and Nationals for the Associated Press, *MLB.com*, *Press Box*, and other publications and retired after the 2022 season as managing editor of *MASNsports.com*.

Barry Sparks has been writing about baseball for more than 50 years. His first article appeared in the July 1970 issue of *Baseball Digest*. He is the author of four books, including *The Search for the Next Mickey Mantle: From Tom Tresh to Bryce Harper*.

David B. Stinson is vice president of the Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter and the administrator and photographer for the lost ballpark website *deadballbaseball.com*. He is the author of *Deadball, A Metaphysical Baseball Novel*.

Weiss ► From Page 7

I worked slower than I could have, but I found so many fun rabbit holes to go down!

I was a sucker for players with interesting ambitions: to be an owner, a manager, be a credit to the game and his God. Most of them never made it to the majors, or achieved their baseball ambition. Many never made it out of the low minors; some never made it past a spring tryout.

There were some sad stories, the saddest that of Bruce Gardner, a promising pitcher, college player of the year at Southern Cal in 1960. In the offseason he was a pianist/composer and worked with Herb Alpert and Phil Spector (big music names of the period). However, he had injured his arm on National Guard duty and never recovered full use of it. Despite success in his other career, failure to achieve his baseball ate at him, and he committed suicide in 1971 at the age of 32.

How strong is the dream? A 30-year-old who had been in the low minors from 1952-1956, hope to make the majors before his mother died. His career ended in 1964 in the Mexican League.

Some players hoped for a trip back to the majors.

Dom Zanni pitched in the majors from 1958-1963. At 31 with a 4-year-old and 1-year old, he listed one hobby: "Fishing—my children take care of any more hobbies." He got back to the majors briefly in 1965 and 1966.

Some found success elsewhere.

Hiroshi Takahashi signed with the Nankai Hawks out of high school and was one of three players sent to the U.S. as part of a development deal with the Giants. He returned to Japan after one year and had an 18-year pro career. In 1974, he was the first player in Nippon Pro Baseball to play all nine positions.

Norm Isaacs, who had a pilot's license, ran a cargo business in the offseason to help pay his competitive fishing entry fees. His baseball career ended in 1964 with a ruptured arm muscle. He kept flying and fishing, becoming a noted fisherman.

Dick Shull, a standout athlete from a small Indiana town, signed with the White Sox after two years in the Army. After a 2-for-4 game, he told the manager he was going home. He told a reporter, "I was just a homesick farm boy and wanted to come back home to the farm." He retired after a 33-year career in law enforcement.

Bob Poynter, was cut when a rotator-cuff injury failed to heal. He spent 14 years with General Motors, then moved back to Indiana, where he has run a car dealership since 1979 and supported youth sports.

Some interesting finds

- Someone from my hometown: He spent two years in the low minors.

- Someone who couldn't remember the name of the scout who'd signed him two years before.

- Men dotting their i's with circles (like sixth-grade girls), too many to attribute it to girlfriends filling out the forms.

- A player who listed his offseason job as working for "Daddy".

- **Nationality, descent:** At one time *The Sporting News's Baseball Register* listed "ancestry," so this was not apparently an unusual category (showing what an all-American game baseball was?). In my "bucket," responses varied. Some players left it blank, others put U.S. citizen and others listed the lands of their ancestors. Many Black players listed "Negro," and some left it blank.

People

- Future Orioles **Paul Blair**, **Gene Brabender** (his ambition was "to pitch in the World Series"—he was on the 1966 postseason roster but didn't play), and **Wally Bunker** (his goal was the Hall of Fame).

- Former Oriole and Baltimore native **Barry Shetrone**, who played two games with the Senators in 1963 and was trying to get back to the majors, but his baseball career ended with four years in Double A and Triple A.

- **Wilbur Wood**, at 22, was selling mutual funds in the offseason and hoped for a 10-year career. His knuckleball carried him through 17 years in the majors and three All-Star picks.

- **Rick Wise** hoped to pitch 20 years in the majors but put in 18. He played in the Little League World Series, threw a no-hitter in the Babe Ruth World Series, striking out 25 in a 12-inning game. He was seven months out of high school when he signed: "struck out 22 men in the State-Metro All-Star Game held in Eugene," he wrote. "Received Most Outstanding Pitcher Trophy of the series. Signed my first pro contract in Eugene at the conclusion of the series." He wasn't a strikeout pitcher in the majors but famously pitched a no-hitter and hit two home runs June 23, 1971.

- **Relatives who didn't make it:** **Al Lopez's** son, **Milt Pappas's** brother, **Ken Keltner's** son.

Names

James Whitcomb Riley Jr. : Related to the poet (1849-1916)? I couldn't find out.

Al Unser: not the NASCAR driver, but a wartime big-leaguer and father of major-leaguer Del Unser.

Offseason jobs

From the past: working in the layaway department, photo lab tech, draftsman, recreation department worker, warehouseman at Montgomery Wards (national retailer that went out of business in 2001), sporting goods salesman.

Unusual: professional handicapper, private investigator, income tax consultant, deputy sheriff and tax appraiser.

The last word

Tom Timmerman (Tigers 1969-1974): "Scout that signed me never saw me play."

Orioles Ownership—A Look at the First 70 Years

On March 27, the day before the Orioles' 71st opening day, MLB owners approved new ownership of the team. A group led by Baltimore native David Rubenstein purchased controlling interest in the team from the Angelos family

with the option to purchase the rest of the Angelos stake.

Over the Orioles' first 70 years in Baltimore, there were six owners. A look at how they did.

Owner	Seasons	World Series Titles	AL Pennants	Other Playoffs
Clarence Miles	1954-1955	0	0	0
Joseph Iglehart	1956-1965	0	0	0
Jerold C. Hoffberger	1965-1979	2	5	2
Edward Bennett Williams	1980-1988	1	1	0
Eli Jacobs	1989-1993	0	0	0
Peter Angelos	1994-2023	0	0	6

How the Team Finished

The Clarence Miles Years

8-Team American League (1954-1955)							
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place	6th Place	7th Place	8th Place
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

The Joseph Iglehart Years

8-Team American League (1956-1960)									
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place	6th Place	7th Place	8th Place	9th Place	10th Place
0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0		
10-Team American League (1961-1964)									
0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

The Jerold C. Hoffberger Years

1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place	6th Place	7th Place	8th Place	9th Place	10th Place
10-Team American League (1965-1968)									
1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
6-Team American League East (1969-1976)									
5	2	1	0	0	0				
7-Team American League East (1977-1979)									
1	2	0	1	0	0	0			

The Edward Bennett Williams Years

7-Team American League East (1980-1988)						
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place	6th Place	7th Place
1	3	0	1	1	1	2

The Eli Jacobs Years

7-Team American League East (1989-1993)						
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place	6th Place	7th Place
0	1	2	0	1	1	0

The Peter Angelos Years

5-Team American League East (1994-2023)				
1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place
3	4	4	11	8