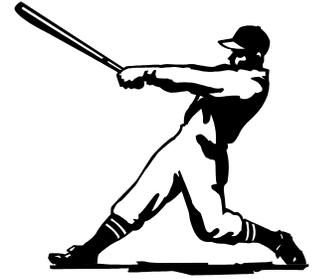




Baseball Lives



Volume 1, Issue 3

August 2005

SABR 35

New Biographies

- ◆ Babe Adams
- ◆ Buzz Arlett
- ◆ Dave Bancroft
- ◆ Ginger Beaumont
- ◆ Jake Beckley
- ◆ Bill Bergen
- ◆ Kitty Bransfield
- ◆ John Brush
- ◆ George Burns
- ◆ Bobby Byrne
- ◆ Howard Camnitz
- ◆ Larry Cheney
- ◆ Cupid Childs
- ◆ Joe Connolly
- ◆ Tom Connolly
- ◆ Doc Crandall
- ◆ Gavy Cravath
- ◆ Ron Diorio
- ◆ Mike Donlin
- ◆ Patsy Donovan
- ◆ Mickey Doolan
- ◆ Larry Doyle
- ◆ Barney Dreyfuss
- ◆ Eddie Dyer
- ◆ Bob Emslie
- ◆ Billy Evans
- ◆ Art Fletcher
- ◆ Hank Gowdy
- ◆ Heinie Groh
- ◆ Ned Hanlon

Words from Mark Armour

A few years ago at lunch, an acquaintance of mine mentioned that there was a woman in town whose father played for the 1915 Indians. Doing the math in my head, I realized that this woman would have to be quite old. In reality, I doubted the story - - more than likely something had gotten lost in the translation, perhaps he played minor league ball for a few years. Nonetheless, I decided to check it out.

It was true. The woman lives a half mile from me and is now 84 years old. Her father, Theander Harstad, pitched several years of minor league baseball and spent the 1915 season with the Indians, finishing 3-5 in 32 games. A few years later he enrolled in dental school, and got his degree during a few off-seasons. He spent most of the next 60 years as a dentist in a small town in north central Oregon. But never mind about all that, you can just read his biography on our web site.

The highlights of this project were the several meetings I had with his daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Fenner. This story is not really in my area of interest, or expertise - - what interested me was seeing the enthusiasm on Mrs. Fenner's face when she talked about her father. His career was essentially over by the time she was born, but he lived until she was in her sixties, so she heard all the stories over and over. She had a scrapbook, she had souvenirs. Best of all, she actually interviewed him, took notes in longhand and typed up the transcript. It's as if she knew someone would be coming to ask her someday. He was a wise man, someone who had a healthy perspective on his brief career in baseball when compared with raising a family and taking care of people's teeth. I began the project trying to accomplish something for myself, but soon I felt responsible to her - - I wanted her father's story to be told well. She liked the result. So did I.



MARK ARMOUR AND MANAGER EDDIE MATHIEWS

"Everyone seemed to love Pete the player: the writers, the umpires, the ground crew, everyone associated with the game. We respected him so much that we that we sometimes forgot to assess his playing skills adequately. No one ever said that about Cobb. No one ever said that Cobb was the kind of guy they would have enjoyed playing with, that he brought out the best in you. No one ever said that they respected Cobb so much that they forgot how good he was."

Craig R. Wright (Sportswriter)

"One of the games greatest players has engaged in a variety of acts which have stained the game, and he must now live with the consequences of those acts."

A. Bartlett Giamatti

We occasionally are contacted by people like Mrs. Fenner: sons, daughters, nieces, grand-nephews, etc. Each of them likely have stories, or memories, maybe more, maybe scrapbooks. I really urge some of you to take on a project like this. You might start out thinking "I have never heard of this guy," but chances are that by the end, the project will be personal to you. I stumbled into this story, and I am grateful.

Mark Armour

Steve Steinberg - BioProject Author



The Bio Project: The Making of a Researcher

The Bio Project is an ambitious undertaking that will amass a large biographical database for future reference and research. Equally important, it provides a wonderful opportunity for SABR members to make significant research contributions. Every Hall of Famer was once a rookie, and every SABR researcher has a first project. The Bio Project provides that opportunity, to make meaningful contributions to the rich mosaic of baseball history. Pick a baseball personality who catches your fancy, discover him in your research, and then share your findings with the world.

Including: Ray Caldwell, Bill Doak, Del Pratt

Then I stumbled upon Urban Shocker, a ballplayer with a remarkable name and a compelling story of courage and love of the game. How could I have never heard of him? He had 19-11 and 18-6 seasons for the 1926 and 1927 New York Yankees, while dying of heart disease. I was hooked. I was drawn in, chosen to tell his story.

Shocker opened a door to the past and led me to Miller Huggins, who traded away the promising young pitcher in his first move as Yankee manager. Hug then spent years trying to undo one of his rare mistakes, as Shocker blossomed into stardom in St. Louis. He finally traded for Shocker seven years later. Huggins was a feisty little guy who overcame great odds to succeed as both a player and a manager. My research and interest have led me to write extensively on these two men who died long before their time. My work on Shocker also led me to my first two Bio Project subjects, Ray Caldwell and Del Pratt. (Both are up on www.bioproj.sabr.org.) Caldwell was a teammate of Urban's on the 1916-1917 Yankees; the wily veteran and the promising youngster were fined after they went out drinking and partying late one 1917 evening. Caldwell was a fascinating study, and the more I dug, the more compelling the story got and the more I was captivated. He was an immensely talented pitcher whose pitching ability was exceeded only by his proclivity for liquor. Both Grantland Rice and Fred Lieb compared his ability to Christy Mathewson's. Yet "his escapades were legendary," wrote the *New York Times* when he died, and there is indeed a sense of tragedy in his falling short of his potential.

Late in 1998, I had never heard of SABR, and the last research paper I'd done was in college, almost thirty years earlier. I was approaching the age of 50 and decided to give up a career in retail apparel. When I began my transition away from that life, I had no alternative lined up. As difficult a time as that was, in retrospect it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I had countless choices available to me; I gravitated to baseball history, even though I hadn't been that much "into" the game. At least so I thought.

I began reading baseball biographies, and a lot of them: Ruth, Cobb, Mathewson, Hornsby, and more. In my prior world I spent so much time keeping up with the retail trade that I rarely read a book.

Pratt was another overlooked and complex guy. The second best second baseman of the second decade of the 20th century (second to Eddie Collins), he's the man Huggins gave up Shocker (and four other players) for. A brilliant pure hitter, he was also stubborn and difficult off the field. This led the Yankees to part ways with him just as they were entering their period of dominance in the early 1920s.

I don't pick my research subjects. I truly believe they pick me. I'm driven by an enormous sense of discovery and curiosity. My role is to bring back those personalities who've dropped through the cracks of history. I'm not sure whether I'm *discovering* them as much as I'm *recovering* them, or perhaps *uncovering* them. Once I'm working on a story, others will surely surface, tempting nuggets for future mining.

Steve Steinberg

From the Biography of Del Pratt

Del Pratt was arguably the second-best second baseman of the second decade of the 20th century. And his argumentative nature let the *New York Times'* John Kieran to call him "the greatest clubhouse lawyer baseball ever knew."

Del was a solid fellow, standing 5-foot-11 and weighing 175 pounds. He gained a reputation as a terrific second baseman even though he wasn't known for his defense at first. . . . The *Post-Dispatch* said later that season that he was a "juggler," not an infielder. . . . A few years later, *The Sporting News* called him the best second baseman in the game . . . (For more go to www.bioproj.sabr.org)

SABR 35

August 4-7

Toronto



New Biographies

- ◆ Claude Hendrix
- ◆ Buck Herzog
- ◆ Bill James
- ◆ Bumpus Jones
- ◆ Benny Kauff
- ◆ Bill Klem
- ◆ Johnny Kling
- ◆ Larry Kopf
- ◆ Lefty Leifield
- ◆ Hans Lobert
- ◆ Fred Luderus
- ◆ Rabbit Maranville
- ◆ Rube Marguard
- ◆ Armando Marsans
- ◆ Dan McGann
- ◆ Joe McGinnity
- ◆ McQuillan, George
- ◆ John McGraw
- ◆ Dots Miller
- ◆ Mike Mowrey
- ◆ Charles Murphy
- ◆ Hank O'Day
- ◆ Silk O'Loughlin
- ◆ Dode Paskert
- ◆ Bob Powell
- ◆ Harry Pulliam
- ◆ Bugs Raymond
- ◆ Bobby Richardson
- ◆ Cy Rigler
- ◆ Wilbert Robinson
- ◆ Edd Roush
- ◆ Nap Rucker
- ◆ Dick Rudolph
- ◆ Tom Saffell
- ◆ Vic Saler
- ◆ Jimmy Sheppard
- ◆ Fred Snodgrass
- ◆ Bill Sweeney
- ◆ Dummy Taylor

From the Editor in Chief

If I had my way, every writer and editor of English would have a first-rate dictionary, the *Harbrace College Handbook*, and William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White's masterful *Elements of Style*. The *Harbrace* isn't the liveliest reading in the world, but since it doesn't tell you anything wrong and its successors are primarily copies of it, you might as well get the original. Strunk and White's little book is portable, wonderfully written, and loaded with wisdom. It might be the one book every writer and editor must have.

What to glean from these treasures? Five principles—I don't like calling them "rules"—jump out at me.

First, don't overwork the passive voice, but don't ignore it, either. It's generally better to have the subject of a sentence doing something.

Second, avoid making verbs out of nouns. "Access" and "impact" are great nouns; let them keep doing the job they've done so well.

Third, never start a sentence with a number. Don't say "1948 was Musial's best year." Instead say "The 1948 season was Musial's best" or "Musial had his best year in 1948." The latter is preferable because it has Musial doing something.

Fourth, spell out the names of months and states: "October" as opposed to "Oct." and "Pennsylvania" instead of "PA" or "Pa." or "Penn." And while I'm thinking about it, go with "University" instead of "Univ." and "Street" as opposed to "St."

Finally, and this one really gets to me, "snuck" is **not** the past tense of "sneak." The past tense of "sneak" is "sneaked." We've lost that battle, but I will keep on fighting.

Will this solve every problem? No. Will it improve all writing by at least half? Yes.

Jan Finkel

New Biographies

- ◆ John W. Taylor
- ◆ Jeff Tesreau
- ◆ Frank Thomas
- ◆ Roy Thomas
- ◆ Jim Thorpe
- ◆ Joe Tinker
- ◆ John Titus
- ◆ John Trener
- ◆ Zack Wheat
- ◆ Hooks Wiltse
- ◆ Heinie Zimmerman

Author Directory Needed

Tom Ruane wrote: One suggestion: I recently visited the web-site and one thing I would have liked to have seen is an author's directory.

Today the author link is found to the right of the biography you are reading. You can click on the ball player's name and go to his biography.

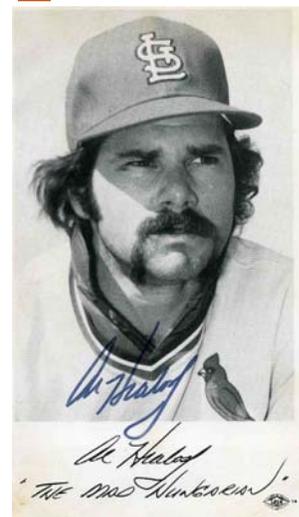
However, as Tom stated in his follow-up, there is no link to an Author's biographies if you want to start with the Author's name. There is an Author's page listed on the web-site. When you go to this page, there is no material. Perhaps the first thing that could be added to this page would be a complete list of Authors along with a list of the biographies they have completed, with a link to those biographies.

Mike Cooney

The 1869 *Cincinnati Red Stockings* were baseball's first all-professional team. The salaries ranged from \$600 to \$1400 for star shortstop George Wright. The team toured the country, agreeing to play any team willing to pay them a third of the gate receipts. Over a two-year period, the *Red Stockings* won a record 130 games without a defeat. They won games by scores of 100-2 and 94-7. Despite the winning streak, and minuscule salaries, the club showed a profit of only \$1.39

From: [Baseball's Most Wanted](#)

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More From Steve Steinberg



“Yet when you look back, what people didn’t realize, and still don’t, was that we got the ball rolling on integration in our whole society. Remember, this was before Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka. When Branch Rickey signed Jackie, Martin Luther King was a student at Morris College. We showed the way it had to be done, by just keeping on and being the best we could.”

Buck O’Neil



ProQuest is a wonderful tool, as revolutionary to research as the invention of microfilm was back in the 19th century. It’s free to SABR members, accessible on the Members Only section of SABR.org as an online research tool. It brings millions of newspaper pages across the Internet, coupled with powerful OCR Search technology. And ProQuest is always adding more pages and additional newspapers, going back to the 19th or early 20th century. For me, it is a powerful aid, *once I know what I’m looking for*. It pulls up all the citations (for me, that’s usually a name, but it could also be a topic) with laser-like focus. Remember to search using more than one spelling for names that can be spelled more than one way, especially early in a player’s career, when he’s not well known. Names are often misspelled in newspapers, and ProQuest’s search mechanism brings back “hits” you request only when they appear exactly that way. Early in Lou Gehrig’s career, for example, his name appeared in print with a number of spellings.

What if you’re not sure where to start or just whom or what you’d like to research? There is no better way to start than to “work” microfilm of a specific period and/or city (team) that you think you might be interested in. Going through the film chronologically provides context and exposes you to countless impressions. For me, it’s thrilling time travel; I never know what I’m going to find. Perhaps the answer to an unsolved mystery. Or maybe a trail that leads to a future story.

Where do you get the microfilm? A couple of possibilities. First, Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is a wonderful feature of our nation’s public library system. It brings microfilm to your hometown, even if it’s not a large city. Just ask the reference desk of your library for details. They may refer you to the reference book or database that lists newspapers by state and city, along with the corresponding institutions that have each paper on film. (Not all will lend their microfilm through ILL, especially if they have the only copy available of that paper’s film.)

Second, SABR’s Lending Library has both *The Sporting News* and *Sporting Life* on microfilm (the latter appeared on a weekly basis only until 1917), as well as *Baseball Magazine*. Unlike a specific city newspaper, *TSN* and *SL* expose you to baseball in many places, including the minors.

Once you’ve identified a possible research topic or subject, the *Baseball Index* is a catalogue database that gives the citations (book, magazine, etc.) for your topic. An ongoing effort of SABR’s Bibliography Committee, it tells you what’s been done on your topic and where you’ll find the articles. Just go to www.baseballindex.org and do a search for your subject.

Then, once a personality or topic “grabs” you, the ProQuest Search mechanism enables you to pull specific searches with amazing speed, from a growing line-up of newspapers. Paper of Record, www.paperofrecord.com, a smaller company that works in a similar way with smaller newspapers, has *The Sporting News* on-line. While it’s not free to SABR members, we receive a discount for subscribing.

A couple of my favorite research resources are the bio clip files at the Baseball Hall of Fame Library in Cooperstown and (often overlooked) the library of *The Sporting News* in St. Louis. Both require advance notice, if you’re planning a visit. Yet both are accessible without making the trip. The Hall of Fame copies small files at no charge, with a fee for larger ones (more than 10 pages). If they are backed up, Cooperstown-area researchers and SABR members Bill Deane and Eric Enders can pull and copy your files quite quickly for a reasonable cost. *The Sporting News*’ senior managing editor, Steve Gietschier, can put you in touch with similar people in St. Louis who can retrieve *TSN* files you need.

Just now I’m getting the bio files of the 1916 New York Yankees copied from both libraries. (I already had some of the files, including those of Caldwell and Shocker.) I’ve been thinking about an article on that ill-fated team, which fought its way to first place in late June. The Yankees stayed there for a month, until they suffered an incredible rash of injuries that finally brought them down. Many of the men had short big league careers and relatively small bio files, people like Fritz Maisel and Charlie Mullen. Yet there are stories waiting to be told, tales that emerge from snippets in the files.

Did you know that Maisel was nicknamed “Flash” and that he led the AL in stolen bases with 74 in 1914? More remarkably, in early 1916, the Yankees were offered one Joe Jackson in a straight-up trade for Maisel and turned it down.

Mullen was born and died in my hometown of Seattle. Fellow SABR member Eric Sallee shared Mullen’s 1963 obit with me. Charlie starred on a 1908 Seattle high school team that barnstormed across the country. He managed a Western League team at the age of 25 and was an army baseball coach in World War I. He later became the president of both the Seattle Stock Exchange and the exclusive Broadmoor Golf Club—not the typical career path of a ballplayer of the early 20th century. I’ve now located Charlie’s son here in Seattle, a man well into his eighties, with (I am told) stories, scrapbooks and a sharp memory. I plan to contact him. I sense a story.

Steve Steinberg

About Steve Steinberg

*I'm a former apparel retailer who sold my 80-year-old family firm in 1998 and thus ended my way of life forever. Since early 1999, my love of baseball has taken me back in time, where I've spent thousands of hours researching the events and personalities of the game. My articles have appeared in baseball journals, *The National Pastime* and *NINE*, including a creative piece on Shocker's return to the Yankees in *NINE*. Most recently, I've enjoyed writing bios for both the upcoming *AL Deadball Stars* book and, of course, the Bio Project.*

*My book **Baseball in St. Louis, 1900-1925** was published by Arcadia last year. My feature article on Yankees' manager Hall-of-Fame Miller Huggins appears in the **New York Yankees 2005 Yearbook**. I'm looking for a publisher for **The Genius of Hug**, a revealing book of Huggins' wisdom and insight, in his words and the words of those who knew him, each quote accompanied by a photo.*

*Later this year I plan to return to my Urban Shocker manuscript and finish **Shocker! Discovering a Silent Hero of Baseball's Golden Age**. My baseball history web site, www.stevesteinberg.net has a lot of material on the spitball. I live in Seattle with my wife of more than 20 years and three children, who are between the interesting ages of 13 and 20.*



Dave Bancroft by Trey Strecker

Dave "Beauty" Bancroft was Honus Wagner's successor as the National League's premier short-stop. A brainy on-field leader with tremendous defensive range, Bancroft was especially adept at scooping up bad-hop grounders and cutting-off outfield throws to hang up runners between bases. He believed that "the business of batting and fielding is a contention between minds," crediting his uncanny intuition in the field to a rigorous study of opposing batters, but he also had extremely quick hands and could move gracefully in either direction. Though he batted only .248 during his five seasons in the Deadball Era, the switch hitting Bancroft became known as a "timely swatter and a good waiter;" he ranked second in the NL in bases on balls in 1915 and third in 1916 and 1918.

McGraw finally retired in June 1932 but Bill Terry was appointed player-manager to take his place. A disappointed Bancroft finished the year under Terry and retired from major-league baseball. He returned to his native Mid-West where he managed sporadically in the minor leagues . . .

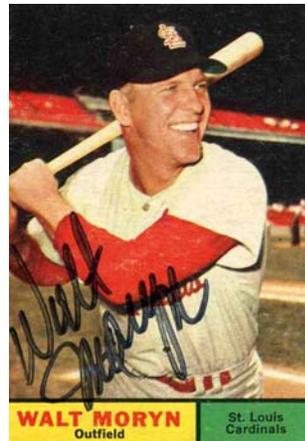
Later Bancroft spent three years managing Max Terry's all-girls team, which took him across the United States and to South America and Cuba. When he finally left baseball he became a warehouse supervisor for Interprovincial Pipeline Company. Retiring in 1956 to pursue his favorite pastimes of hunting and fishing . . .
For more - www.bioproj.sabr.org

From the Editor

This is our third BioProject newsletter. I hope both BioProject members and non-members alike enjoy it. Whether a member or a non-member, you will gain insight and inspiration from the words of Steve Steinberg. I want to thank Steve for taking the time to make this, our SABR35 edition, the best yet.

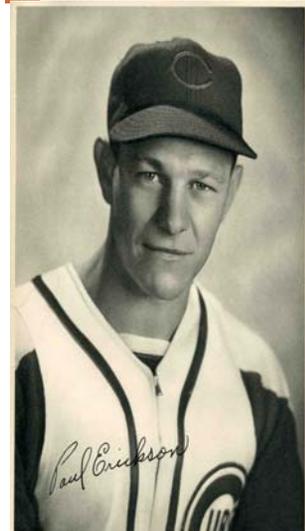
I want to invite everyone to the BioProject meeting during SABR35. I also invite input from each of you for ideas or material for inclusion in future edition of *Baseball Lives*.

Mike Cooney



New York Giants catcher Jack Warner was suspended five days for striking an umpire in 1903. Two days later, he was used as a substitute umpire when the men in blue didn't show up.

From *Baseball's Most Wanted*



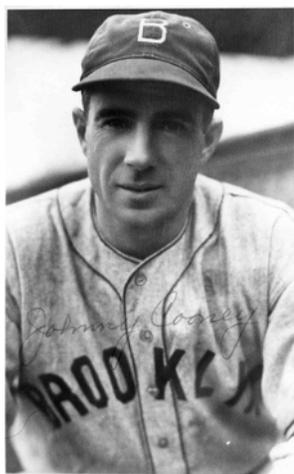
SABR BioProject
Committee



*Baseball Lives
with
Baseball Lives*

Bioproject.sabr.org

SABR Biography Project



The Baseball Biography Project (TBBP) is an ongoing effort to produce comprehensive biographical articles on every person who ever played or managed in the major leagues, as well as any other person who touched baseball in a significant way. The project is run by the BioProject Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research. (SABR)

Mark Armour - Director
markjane@comcast.net

Jan Finkel - Editor in Chief
jfinkel@mindspring.com

Lyle Spatz - Assignment Editor
spatzl@bellsouth.net

Tom Ruane - Egroup Owner
truane@vnet.ibm.com

Mike Cooney - Newsletter Editor
mwc2002@hotmail.com