

# The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

Volume 5, Number 2: "Let's get this lumpy, licorice-stained ball rolling!" May 2005

## From the Editor by Charles R. Crawley (crcrawley@yahoo.com)

(Editor's Note: Normally you would be reading the Chairman's Column here, but please allow me to pinch hit for David Jones, who's knee-deep in ALLigators.)

I have had the honor of editing this newsletter, started in such a wonderful fashion by Bill Lamberty, for the past few years. I would be the first to admit that I am not a Deadball expert, but a fan. And one of the main reasons I'm a Deadball fan is because of the Chicago Cubs of 1906-1910. In the best of all possible worlds, the Cubs would win the World Series and I could retire and devote myself to writing a book about the Cubs juggernaut of Tinkers, Evers, and Chance. (I think Three Finger Brown should have made it into that poem somehow, since he seems largely responsible for the Cubs success during those years.)

But my appreciation for a winning Cubs team has only grown into an admiration for the Deadball Era in general. I can remember watching Ken Burns's documentary on baseball and thinking that the one on the Deadball Era was the most fascinating. But taking on a newsletter like this has stretched my baseball knowledge. I'm amazed at the level of discourse that takes place on our listserv.

I appreciate all of you who've made contributions to the newsletter. I've had several challenges as editor, the least of which has been my lack of Deadball knowledge. First of all, I've had to learn how to work as online editor, which means that I have met very few of you in person, and our relationship is strictly cyber.

*Continued on page 3.*

## A Primer on Inside Baseball

by Mark Halfon (madprof21@optonline.net)

Deadball Era hitters struggled mightily at the plate. Runs were at a premium and batting averages plummeted. Home runs were a rarity and .300 hitters a luxury. Batters adapted to the changing environment by choking up on the bat or using a split-hand grip, allowing for greater control but reducing one's power. Hitters took shortened swings, and slapped, poked, or punched at the ball. Ballplayers were loath to take hard cuts and swing for the fences, and those that did might incur the wrath of their teammates.

A style of play evolved that came to be known as "Inside Baseball." It was a "scientific" game. It was a thinking man's game. The best of ballplayers strategized to gain an edge -- any edge. They were tacticians who dissected their opponents every move, paying attention to subtleties that might provide an advantage. The master of the Inside Game was Ty Cobb. Cobb realized that by "watching a third baseman's eyes as he prepared to take a throw from the outfield and twisting his own body accordingly, he could get in the path of the ball, deflect it with his back, and maybe come all the way home."<sup>1</sup> Deadball Era ballplayers were expected to evaluate and reevaluate both themselves and others, at the plate, on the mound, and in the field.

Disciples of Inside Baseball played for a single run at a time, and they started by getting on base -- by any means necessary. A base hit, base on balls or hit-by-pitch each suitably achieved the desired end. The best of hitters exhibited patience, mastered the art of guessing pitches, and struck at the most opportune moment. The ability to hit to all fields gave the batter a distinct advantage. A "smart" batter prepared for any eventuality. Cobb's split-hand grip, with his hands moving up and down the bat as the pitch approached, allowed him to change strategy in the middle of an at-bat. Within a split second, his eyes

*Continued on page 2.*

## What's Inside...

*A Little Something for the Nappers, by Steve Constantelos*

*Book reviews:*

- *Dead Ball and Double Curves, by Trey Strecker, reviewed by Patricia Wieja*
- *Harry Hooper, by Paul Zingg, reviewed by Mike Foster*
- *Taking in a Game, by Joseph Reaves, reviewed by James Elfers*
- *Ballparks of Toledo, by Rex Hamann, reviewed by Ron Selter*



## Three and Two Jack

Steve Constantelos discusses Jack Graney, page 2

## The Graney Generation: A Celebration of the Life and Careers of Jack Graney. \$10.

### Showdown at League Park: Wamby, Bagby, and Smith. Two CD set. \$19.95 + shipping and handling.

Both produced by and available at:  
October Productions Ltd, P.O. Box 202682, Cleveland,  
Ohio 44120 (Email: octoberproduct@aol.com).

Reviewed by **Steve Constantelos**  
(sbconstant@hotmail.com)

It is hard to say whether Jack Graney is most famous as the first batter to face pitcher Babe Ruth, as the roommate of Ray Chapman, or as the first ex-player to broadcast ballgames on the radio. This last reason, as well as his thirteen years of service as the capable leftfielder for the Cleveland American League team, led the Cleveland SABRites to name their local chapter after him. And on the fiftieth anniversary of his last baseball broadcast, Morris Eckhouse edited *The Jack Graney Generation*, a loving tribute to one of the great figures of Cleveland baseball culture.

The careers of "Three and Two Jack" are celebrated in a series of short essays in this booklet. His broadcasting, which always "made baseball sound like a sport" is detailed by Bob Baucher, Jim Kastro, and Peggy Beck, and Graney's last game (which featured Al Rosen battling for the triple crown) is covered by Morris Eckhouse, including transcriptions of some of Graney's calls that day (September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1953). Fred Schuld and Stephen Johnson III cover Graney's playing career, including the tale of Jack's bull terrier, Larry, who was adopted as the Indians'

mascot in the 'teens.

Though pricey for a thirty-page booklet, *The Jack Graney Generation* will be enjoyed by an old-time Cleveland fan, a curious Deadballer, or a baseball broadcasting enthusiast.

*Showdown at League Park*, although not strictly Deadball (as defined by the DEC), will be a welcome breath of the past's air on your next roadtrip or winter evening. This two-CD set is a simulated radio broadcast of Game Five of the 1920 World Series, where Cleveland defeated the Brooklyn Robins, five games to two. Eckhouse researched and supervised this broadcast, brought to life by Cleveland radio men Bob Becker and Mike Snyder. According to an Eckhouse interview at the start of the CD, the first baseball game broadcast was on Pittsburgh's KDKA on August 5, 1921, featuring the hometown team against the state-rival Phillies. The World Series was also aired on radio that year. Cleveland had to wait until 1929 for its own radio broadcasts!

Yes, this was the game where three great 'firsts' happened, and where the Tribe took the series lead and never looked back. It's a lot of fun hearing the voice-cracking announcers react to the first World Series grand slam (Elmer Smith), home run hit by a pitcher (Jim Bagby), and unassisted triple play (Bill Wambsganss) while the crowd roars and even falls out of the trees used by vantage points for locals who could not get into jam-packed League Park. You'll feel the electricity in the air as the Indians take the field in their home whites wearing black armbands in tribute to fallen comrade Ray Chapman. There are a lot of notable plays you've never heard about in this game as well, showcasing the prowess of Charlie Jamieson, Hy Myers, Joey Sewell, and Ivy Olson.

For you scorekeeping aficionados out there, this broadcast is based upon pitch-by-pitch newspaper accounts of the game. All the while, legendary Cleveland Deadball newspaperman Ed Bang feeds stats to the broadcasters, mostly accurate, although where the announcers got the idea that Doc Johnston had the lowest batting average (.292) of any regular on the club is anybody's guess (Wamby batted .244 in 565 at bats).

And really, despite the home runs, this is a Deadball affair after all—where else would a batsman of the caliber of Tris Speaker bunt in the first inning with men on first and second and none out?♦

#### *Inside Baseball, continued from page 1.*

scanned the field as he readied to drop a bunt, slap a base hit between infielders, or drive the ball into the gap.

Teammates who reached base had to be advanced around the diamond, usually ninety feet at a time. Every batter in the lineup, regardless of his power, had to be prepared to give himself up for the team. He might attempt to sacrifice bunt, hit-and-run, bunt-and-run, hit-behind-the-runner, squeeze, suicide squeeze, draw a base on balls, get hit by a pitch, or change strategy at a moment's notice. While the man at the plate pondered the possibilities, the base runner was likely "reading" the pitcher's delivery with thoughts of thievery. A swipe of any base, including home, was an ever-present threat. The base runner might be on

## The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

### Committee Chair

David Jones: [dcj063077@yahoo.com](mailto:dcj063077@yahoo.com)

### Newsletter Editor

Charles Crawley: [crcrawley@yahoo.com](mailto:crcrawley@yahoo.com)

### Assistant Editor

John McMurray: [mcmurrayj@aol.com](mailto:mcmurrayj@aol.com)

### Database Manager/Distributor

Dan Desrochers: [desrochsox@comcast.net](mailto:desrochsox@comcast.net)



### *Inside Baseball, continued from page 2.*

the move preparing to slide with sharpened spikes high.

Daring and aggressive base running served one well in the Inside Game. Speed and hustle contributed mightily to one's journey around the bases. "Thinking" runners searched for an edge. Cobb usually kicked the bag forward a few inches. The best of baserunners attacked the defense, hoping to draw a throw that might result in an extra base. Daring baserunners scored from first base on a single, while others took two bases on a wild pitch. Cobb did both in one game.<sup>2</sup> Aggressive runners scored from second on a sacrifice bunt or outfield fly. Squeeze plays were an option. Cagney runners used a delayed steal. Bold managers called for a delayed double steal. The defense had to be alert or their inattention would be exploited.

Thievery was a big part of the Inside Game. The premier base stealer of his era was the inimitable Cobb.<sup>3</sup> His legendary exploits on the base path created havoc for opposing teams. Scurrying back and forth, The "Georgia Peach" was an ever present threat to steal. He might swipe both second and third base, if not second, third, and home in one jaunt around the bases.<sup>4</sup> In one game, after reaching on a base on balls, Cobb stole second, third, and home on consecutive pitches.<sup>5</sup> Few baserunners approached his level of intensity or bravado on the base path. Cobb's approach to base running has been described as "daring to the point of dementia."

It was the Deadball Era. ♦

(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Alexander in Cobb, p. 44. (*Ty Cobb*, by Charles C. Alexander. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.)

<sup>2</sup> Alexander, Cobb, p.100.

<sup>3</sup> Cobb stole 96 bases in 1915, setting a ML record that lasted until 1962 when Maury Wills swiped 104 bases. Peach also amassed 892 steals in his career, establishing a ML mark that stood until 1977 when he was surpassed by Cardinals' speedster Lou Brock.

<sup>4</sup> Cobb stole second, third, and home on four occasions.

<sup>5</sup> On July 12, 1911, Cobb stole the three bases against Athletics southpaw Harry Krause.

### *From the Editor, continued from page 1.*

Secondly, I've had the challenge of getting content for the newsletter. It's very easy to get people to do book reviews, and one of my goals has been for *The Inside Game* to become the premier reviewer of Deadball books. Sometimes I've even wondered if we should change our name to The Deadball Era Committee Review of Books! While I've had trouble getting feature articles, I think in the near future we'll try some regular columns in addition to our book reviews and feature articles. Let me know if you have any ideas for columns you'd like to pursue.

Finally, I've had the challenge of being the typesetter as well as the editor. While this has traditionally been two jobs, the advent of desktop publishing has made it possible to be a real jack of all trades. But as a master of none, I want to say that I have struggled to make everything come out right, in addition to learning the frustrations of PageMaker (nicknamed "RageMaker"), and then making the conversion to In Design, which Adobe developed to replace PageMaker. If you see things that don't look right, that's probably because they aren't! So please be patient with me. I care a lot about how the newsletter looks as well as reads, but sometimes I don't have the skill or time to make it perfect.

Anyway, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank a few people who have been helpful to me, and please forgive any oversights, which is another problem for editors. I would like to thank Davy Jones and his predecessor Tom Simon, whose scholarship and encouragement makes this committee and newsletter go. My gratitude goes out also to John McMurray, who started and continues as a book reviewer, but also serves as our new Assistant Editor. John has a great pair of eyes, and any problems you read here are not from him but from my inability to implement all of his corrections. Finally, I'd like to thank Dan Desrochers, who distributes the online and paper versions of this newsletter. I'm still waiting for Dan's article on the 2004 World Series, connected, of course, to the 1918 Deadball Series, in which the Cubs came out on the losing end.

So while I wait patiently for the Cubs to mount a pennant challenge, I will recall the Cubs of old, and say how thankful I am for the Deadball Era, and for this newsletter which continues to celebrate and study it. ♦

### *Ballparks of Toledo, continued from page 6.*

The scope of *Ballparks of Toledo* includes the two ballparks, and also the Opening Days stories for each park. Tied in with the ballparks' histories are the role of the leading Toledo baseball men in Toledo baseball and the building of the ballparks. Players with significant accomplishments at the two ballparks are highlighted. Of notable interest is the story of one KC Blues player (a switch-hitting Yankee farmhand), who had a big night in 1951 when he went five-for-five with two tape measure home runs.

In summary, I found *Ballparks of Toledo* to be a well-written and carefully researched book about a narrowly focused but interesting topic. ♦

*Dead Balls and Double Curves: An Anthology of Early Baseball Fiction,*  
edited by Trey Strecker.

Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004. [ISBN 0809325616.] 332 pages, \$19.95, softcover.

Reviewed by **Patricia Wieja**  
(pwieja@vtlink.net)

Could Trey Strecker's timing be any better? His anthology of early baseball fiction arrives just as a Massachusetts attic yields a reference to the sport in a 1791 town ordinance.... earlier than the 1839 Abner Doubleday date and more in line with the Revolutionary War variations that some call the game's origin. Whether "bat and ball" or "rounders" on a New England green ever gain precedence over the Knickerbockers' version is for history to determine. It does, however, ensure that the first selection in this volume, an excerpt from James Fenimore Cooper's 1838 (move over, Abner) novel, *Home as Found*, sets a timely and appropriate tone. In this story, a group of young workmen are persuaded by a smooth-talking lawyer to move their game from the lawn in front of a wealthy family's home to the street. Using a bit of reverse psychology, a la Tom Sawyer, he tells the boys that the law forbids playing in the street and that it is "...very aristocratic to play ball among roses and dahlias." That does it...of course they relocate to the roadway.

Some of these selections are charming and familiar old friends-- Mark Twain's "Connecticut Yankee," Hank Morgan, organizing knights in full armor into teams... Ring Lardner's beleaguered owner in "Back to Baltimore," but I value the collection for bringing some lesser

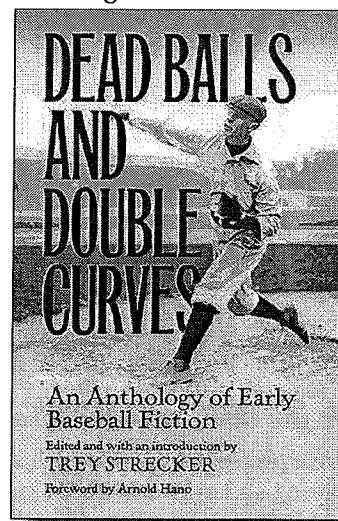
known vignettes to light. The action is wonderful, but there's more. Fantasy... a pitcher whose damaged tendon is replaced by the powerful leg muscle of an ostrich, as in Arthur Chapman's "The Strange Case of Southpaw Skaggs"... romance... a sweet young thing gives her beloved signs from the stands (Frank Chance's "The Bride and the Pennant") and the lovely Ivy, who takes in a game out of a desperate boredom - home on vacation from Miss Shont's School for Young Ladies - take s up with a pitcher and falls head over heels in love - with the game! How daring Edna Ferber's young heroine in "A Bush League Hero" must have seemed to her contemporaries.

The joy of the selections is not just in the play-by-play or the quaint characterizations, however; it's in the tone and the language. Baseball remains a measured game...with not much change in the rules or structure. So it's in the vocabulary that we see the evolution and appreciate the past. If you're used to frenetic, fast-talking commentators and the rapid fire punctuation of commercial breaks, you really will have to appreciate the relaxed pace, eloquent prose and reverential love of the game that is evident in these selections.

In these stories, a single at-bat might last 4 pages, even in an excerpt; a pitching arm is a "salary wing," loaded bases are "densely populated," and angry fans (or "bugs") issue "howls of disapproval," "loud imprecations," and a "furious buzzing." The worst insult from one team to another (cover your ears) is to call them, "A nurserymaids' union." My favorite description -- compare this to an ESPN call -- is at the end of Zane Grey's "The Redheaded Outfield" (1915). Here is his description of Reddie Ray's score: "He whirled around third base and came hurtling down the homestretch. His face was convulsed, his eyes were wild. His arms and legs worked in a marvelous muscular velocity. He seemed a demon -- a flying streak..."

No one is going to relish all 22 stories, but even the selections that seem arcane or stilted are brief - you won't suffer - and if you pick this volume up in the offseason, when you long for the crack of the bat over the

roar of the snowplow, you'll appreciate even the most dated that much more. The past is prologue - and baseball's past is rich. Thanks to Trey Strecker for reminding us. ♦



*Harry Hooper: An American Life, by Paul Zingg*

Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press  
[ISBN: 0252071700] 312 pages, \$20.00, softcover.

Reviewed by **Mike Foster**  
(mfoster@post03.curry.edu)

This past spring, and some eleven years since it first appeared to rave reviews back in 1993, Paul Zingg's pioneering biography, *Harry Hooper: An American Baseball Life* was reissued in paperback through the University of Illinois Press.

A longtime college professor, administrator self-confessed "sports nut," Paul Zingg has spent the better part of the past three decades researching, writing, and lecturing on the history of American sport. Also the co-author of a substantial study of the Pacific Coast League (Runs, Hits and an Era: The Pacific Coast League, 1903-1958) Zingg has penned a broad of range of writings, ranging

*continued on page 5.*

from baseball to concerns on higher education to his latest passion—golf. Additionally, he has served as a consultant for a wide range of sports history projects for museums and the press, notably Ken Burns' 1994 documentary, *Baseball*.

Initially conceived out of the author's fascination with early development of the game on the college and professional levels, Harry Hooper is without question Zingg's most ambitious project to date. "I was interested in the place and role of both levels of the game in American society," he writes in the book's introductory pages, "and particularly intrigued with the motivations of college ballplayers to explore the professional route, especially at a time when the respectability of the professional game was very much in doubt." (4) That fascination led him to the Hall of Fame and, in turn, to one of the Hall's most distinguished inductees, Harold Bartholomew Hooper.

Harry Hooper is a uniquely American tale. Beginning with Hooper's ancestral roots on the northern shores of Prince Edwards Island, Zingg traces the family story west to the hills of northern California, where Harry, born to a poor but devout sharecropping family in Bell Station in 1887, spent the vast majority of his years. Zingg devotes two chapters to Hooper's youth and school days at St. Mary's, concluding with his meteoric rise through the California minors and his jump to Boston in the spring of 1909. The bulk of the story (six chapters comprising better than half the book) then traces Hooper's career as a member of the Boston Red Sox (1909-1920), and a final chapter surveys the twilight of Harry's career in Chicago from 1921-1925. An epilogue recounts Hooper's life after baseball, including his election to the Hall of Fame in 1971 and death at age 87 in 1974.

Harry Hooper succeeds for two principal reasons. First and foremost is the author himself. A serious historian and one of the early stars of Deadball Era research, Zingg's knowledge of his subject is as spellbinding as his eye for historical detail. Without falling into a nostalgic

trap, the author weaves a tight narrative that recounts the game's deeply complex history through the life of one of its most distinguished figures. Hooper's career (including a generous statistical record) is presented fairly and in context, and the man himself, "everyman rather than superman" as Zingg puts it, comes across page after page.

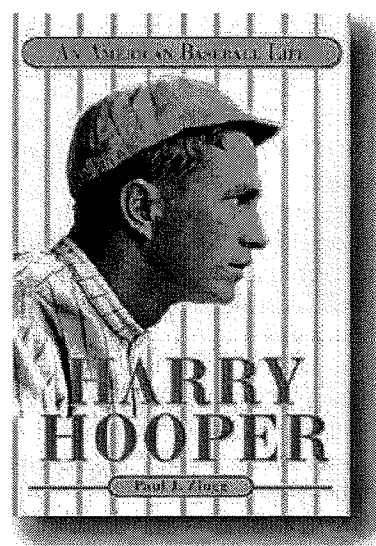
By the author's own admission, this was a story that would have been impossible to tell with this degree of intimacy had it not been for the enthusiastic cooperation of Harry's surviving children. Personal correspondence, oral histories, clippings, and (most riveting of all) Harry Hooper's private diary (kept for an all too brief period at the outset of his rookie season) opened vistas to the author, who, as he put it, "felt like Charlie in Willy Wonka's chocolate factory." Such finds are rare in baseball research — a fact any seasoned researcher will attest to — and it is much to Zingg's credit that he uses the material with great care and respect.

No reviewer is without his or her quibbles, of course, and so far as Harry Hooper is concerned, this writer is no exception. In recounting Hooper's bitter spring as a Red Sox rookie, for instance, Zingg incorrectly identifies Harry Casey as the Globe writer responsible for panning Harry Hooper's apparent lackluster work (Harry's real critic, not insignificantly, was esteemed newsman Tim Murnane). And, later in the story, Zingg incorrectly refers to Joe Wood's wife alternatively "Mae" and "May" (Smoky Joe's wife of 66 years was, in fact, Laura). Where Zingg acknowledges the cliquishness that nagged the Red Sox club for most of Hooper's years in Boston (writing frankly of Tris Speaker's off-the-field feuding with Duffy Lewis, for example) Zingg seems to dismiss the notion that Harry Hooper, too, might have been a party to the feuding.

Setting aside such incidentals, a re-read of Harry Hooper raises the far more intriguing question of baseball's quest for respectability and the role Harry Hooper, as a former collegian, team captain and one of its more dignified players, as an agent of change. Did Hooper, perhaps more

than other players of his generation, play a leading role in elevating the game away from its rowdy roots? If so, to what extent? True, Harry Hooper was among the early collegians to seize upon baseball as a professional career, and, equally true, he appears to have exemplified the highest standards of conduct on and off the field. Nevertheless, taking as evidence the planned proliferation of expensive new ball fields, the increasing appearance of women at games, and (coinciding, interestingly enough, with Hooper's debut in Washington in 1909) the presence of a sitting U.S. President at a big league park, the case can also be made that baseball was already well on his way to respectability by the time Hooper and his fellow collegians arrived on the scene. Was Harry Hooper an agent of respectability? A symbol of change? A combination of the two?

These compelling questions are clearly worthy of further examination. For now, however, we have the valued work of Paul Zingg to look through, and that in itself offers much food for thought. Now in paperback, as it was when it first appeared over a decade ago, *Harry Hooper: An American Baseball Life* remains baseball research at its very, very best. ♦



## *Taking in a Game: a History of Baseball in Asia*, by Joseph A. Reaves

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.  
[ISBN 0-8032-9001-2] 208 pages, \$16.95, softcover.

Reviewed by **James E. Elfers**  
(jeelfers@netscape.net)

With Ichiro Suzuki passing deadballer George Sisler and with Asian participation in America's pastime steadily increasing, the time is ripe for reading up on the game in Asia. Joseph A. Reaves' lively and highly informative tome provides a splendid overview of the game as played in the East.

As Reaves points out, baseball in Asia, while the same sport, is a very different game. Asian baseball games tend to be lower scoring affairs, with teamwork being valued more highly than individual efforts. Because they help the offense, Asian scoreboards include walks. It is often claimed that baseball in Japan and other Asian countries resembles the kind of play prevalent during the Deadball era, but that is a gross oversimplification. Asian baseball is definitely more "small ball" than the western game but it is NOT baseball as played in the USA circa 1915.

Interestingly, the years that made up the Deadball era were vitally important in the history of Asian baseball. A string of Continental tours in the 0's and Teens by the Reach All Stars, American college nines, and even major league teams ignited a passion for the game amongst the Japanese in particular. Not all of the exchanges were happy ones. Reaves relates the rather unconscionable behavior of Walter Johnson's favorite catcher, Eddie Ainsmith, when Ainsmith led a tour of Japan by young women baseball players in 1925. Not only was the tour a financial disaster, one of the young women died as a direct result of some rather unchivalrous behavior on the part

of Ainsmith. The various tours by American teams bore tremendous fruit however, for Japan became the center of baseball in Asia.

Make no mistake, the game has made spectacular inroads into Asia because of Japan. Japan took the game along when it built an empire before the Second World War. After the war, Japanese influence and determination caused the game to succeed in Korea, post revolutionary China, and Taiwan. Because of the Japanese influence, the game everywhere in Asia resembles the Japanese model.

Reaves us through the history of baseball in Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, and the Philippines. What is decidedly a growth industry in Japan, Korea and the Chinas is in serious decline in the Philippines--ironically the one spot in Asia that Uncle Sam held as a colony. Reaves' country-by-country approach provides thumbnail portraits of how "America's pastime" came to be adopted by such varied nations through Chinese exchange students, American soldiers, and Japanese apostles of baseball. Reaves' approach is also the book's main weakness, as we see some of the information repeated several times.

The state of Asian baseball is such that Ichiro Suzuki, Hideki Matsui, Hideo Nomo, Byung-Hyun Kim, and Chan Ho Park are not exceptions, but rather the beginning of what portends to be one of the most exciting trends for "America's game."♦

## *Ballparks of Toledo: 1897-1955*, by Rex D. Hamann.

Milwaukee: The American Association Almanac, Vol. 3, No. 6, July-Aug. 2004.  
Ordering information available at [http://kenkeltner.sabr.org/american\\_association\\_almanac.htm](http://kenkeltner.sabr.org/american_association_almanac.htm).

Reviewed by **Ron Selter**  
(r.selter@att.net)

This book, which is actually better described as a booklet, is titled *Ballparks Of Toledo*, and is by Rex D. Hamann, the editor and publisher of

*The American Association Almanac-A Baseball History Journal*. The entirety of Volume 3, Number 6 (July-August 2004) consists of *Ballparks of Toledo: 1897-1955*.

There were only two Toledo ballparks used for professional baseball in the 59-year time span covered by this book-Armory Park and Swayne Field. The first was Armory Park built in 1897 and used initially by the Toledo franchise in the Interstate League. The wooden park was oddly shaped with the right-field foul line hitting the fence at about 230 ft from home plate. The right field fence then angled out at about 135 degrees-rather like RF in the Polo Grounds-for a distance of about 100 ft. Because of the very short distance down the RF foul line, the park's ground rules called for balls hit over this portion of the RF fence to be two base hits. The RF-RC fence then ran roughly parallel with the LF foul line. LF was some 350 ft distant from home plate and the LF fence was at about 90 degrees to the foul line. The left-center field fence protected the park from a large natural gas storage facility call the Gas Tank. Armory Park was so named as a large National Guard Armory building was immediately behind the LF fence. The seating capacity was some 4500. The park became the home field of the American Association Toledo Mud Hens in 1902. The Mud Hens' tenure at Armory Park lasted until the team moved to Swayne Field for the 1909 season.

Swayne Field was a classic minor league park. It was a steel-and-concrete double-decked ballpark-the only one in the history of the American Association. The ballpark was named after Noah H. Swayne, a prominent Toledo baseball figure, businessman, and political leader. The park was located only one and a half miles from Armory Park in what was then (1909) the western edge of the city. The park consisted of a double-decked grandstand and bleachers (later roofed) down the 1B and 3B lines. Of interest and the exception to the times-the OF wall was 12 ft. high and made of concrete, which made the term knothole gang merely a figure of speech at Swayne Field.

*Continued on page 3.*