

Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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We enjoyed a fairly successful convention in West Palm Beach.

As Ted Hathaway will report in his update, we managed to change the name of Research in Baseball Index (RBI) to The Baseball Index (hereafter TBI) and sell a number of copies to convention-goers. We also began to generate some serious interest from web operations who are interested in making our data available to the public.

I am including a separate sheet with this issue of the newsletter and I ask that all Committee members fill it out and return it to me. For those of you who are on the mailing list solely because you are members of the SABR Board of Directors or are SABR Committee Chairs, there is no need to return it. I have become concerned that our mailing list is seriously out of date, as is the membership directory, and I know many of you have picked up e-mail addresses which are unknown to me. Those who do not return this form will be considered uninterested in remaining members of the Bibliography Committee.

On the book indexing project, Norman Macht jumped in first to volunteer to do an index for the upcoming Bill Werber book to be published by SABR, probably in 2001. At the convention, I spoke to Dan Ross of the Univ. of Nebraska Press: only one of the books Nebraska hopes to republish next year lacks an index. Dan said he couldn't tell me exactly which one because some rights negotiations were still in progress. However, he hoped to have those completed by the end of July, or roughly the time most of you will receive this newsletter. If anyone is interested in doing the index for this book, whatever it is, please contact me. Because of the production timetable, we will need to assign someone to the task by August (or well before our next newsletter). So, I'll take volunteers now and get in touch with you as soon as we know what book is in Nebraska's plans.

As for Southern Illinois Univ. Press, as far as I know, they will not need any additional indexes for 2001. Their plans extend to the Cubs and Cardinals books from the Putnam team histories series, for which we have already prepared indexes.

During the past quarter, Joe Murphy produced an index for *The Dodgers and Me* (1948) by Leo Durocher (and Harold Parrott) and Alain Usereau did one for Al Schacht's *My Own Particular Screwball* (1955). Ted Hathaway has volunteered to do an index for Jimmy Breslin's *Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?* (1963). The two completed indexes are available, as usual, from Len Levin's SABR Research Library, 282 Doyle Ave., Providence, RI 02906-3355.

I also proposed to the Committee that we produce a research guide to the Congressional hearings, mostly the Celler hearings, of the 1950s and 1960s. Doug Pappas of the Business of Baseball Committee has offered to join, but others are welcome. Please contact me.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a copy of my official annual report and a version of Ted Hathaway's RBI/TBI report. Please contact me or Ted if you have any questions.

The Baseball Index (TBI) 2nd Quarter 2000 Report

Ted Hathaway

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First, you will notice that "Research in Baseball Index" (RBI) is now simply "The Baseball Index" (TBI). The name change was precipitated by a complaint from Major League Baseball, which cited confusion with their own "RBI" program: Reviving Baseball in the Inner Cities. We believe this is a small change and given the pretty limited knowledge of the database there is unlikely to be any negative fallout from this change. So, please remember that RBI is now **The Baseball Index**.

Having my new IBM laptop along to this year's SABR convention made the job of demonstrating the database pretty easy and I spoke with many members about its content and capabilities. Most exciting, however, was our meeting **James Robinson** from the IdealLogical Co. This is a New York-based outfit responsible for some of the baseball content of the high-profile *CBS SportsLine* web site. James was very interested in hosting The Baseball Index on its web site. Further conversations led to a presentation before the SABR Board to explore this possibility.

What this will entail is that anyone will be able to search the Named Persons, Topics, and Author categories to find out what TBI lists for their research subject. Search results will be **free of charge** up to 100 source references. After this, researchers will be referred to the *The Baseball Index Data Service*, where the search can be conducted for a fee (as it is now). The database will also continue to be available for purchase. All revenues will go to SABR as before. James' company gains a valuable content source for its web site, SABR gets one of its resources on a high-visibility web site, gaining exposure both for the organization and the database, while researchers have direct access to this excellent resource. The object is that everyone stands to gain. Final approval of the agreement will come at September's SABR Board meeting.

As one can see from the annual report that follows, progress on building the database has continued at a rapid pace. Last year, we were delighted to present several certificates recognizing the accomplishments and commitments to building the database by several of our volunteers. This year, we acknowledge **John McMurray**. John has been involved with the project for several years, indexing mainly magazine articles, most notably from the short-lived but important publication, *Sports, Inc.* In recent years, John has focused on various current publications, such as *Sports Collector's Digest* and *Baseball Digest*. Gradually, he has totaled more than 1000 articles added to the database. John's work is a fine example of how slow and steady gets the job done. His contributions are most appreciated.

This past quarter, the stalwart **Brad Sullivan** contributed mightily to the growth of the Articles part of the database, adding 3392 entries. I am especially obliged to Brad this quarter, since I was unable to contribute much myself owing to the pressures of a new job and preparing for the SABR convention. Brad indexed 65 articles from *Baseball Digest* (1965), 329 from *Sports Illustrated* (1978-1979), 650 from *The Sporting News* for 1962, 841 for 1970, and 1453 for 1977. Brad also indexed 56 articles from the 1961-1963 issues of *Time*.

Bob Timmermann greatly increased his contributions this past quarter, adding 366 articles, mostly from *Sports Illustrated* (1972-1976). Bob attended his first SABR convention this year to give a presentation on Harry Kingman. Bob is currently working on local California publications.

Terry Smith added another 85 articles from the 1913 issues of *Baseball Magazine*. **Alain Usereau** contributed indexing to two dozen articles from French language Canadian publications. **Bernie Esser**, one of our most important book catalogers, contributed 51 articles indexed from various California team publications.

Some other indexing of note: *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1859-1860) – 121 articles; *Spirit of the Times* (1874) – 131 articles; and *The New York Times* (2000) – 57 articles.

My deepest appreciation to all who have contributed to building The Baseball Index. The advent of access to the database over the World Wide Web is very exciting and represents a major milestone in realizing its full potential. I will have more news in the next newsletter.

TBI Statistics

File	Level 5	Level 4	Other	Total
Books	5,099	2,237	10,849	18,185
Book sections	9,045	3,727	206	12,978
Articles	102,666	1,372	7,281	111,319
Total	116,810	7,336	18,336	142,482

Annual Report of the Bibliography Committee, 1999-2000

Andy McCue

Chairman, SABR Bibliography Committee

The Bibliography Committee was founded in 1983 by Frank Phelps and seeks to discover, organize, and provide information about books and other research materials which might be of interest to SABR members and other baseball researchers. The Committee currently has 75 members working on a variety of projects.

Our major project is an annotated electronic catalog of baseball research materials, currently called Research in Baseball Index (RBI). However, we are in the process of searching for a new name. [The new name is The Baseball Index, or TBI.]

In the past year, RBI has grown by 40% to just more than 140,000 books, articles, films, and other research sources. It now includes 18,000 books, 12,500 book sections, and 110,000 magazine and newspaper articles. The database covers items from 1850s newspaper articles to books released this past spring. As a volunteer effort, this accomplishment is solely the work of a dedicated crew of volunteers, starting with project team leaders Ted Hathaway and Andy McCue. Top volunteers include Brad Sullivan, Bernie Esser, Tim Cashion, Terry Sloope, Steve Milman, Joe Murphy, Steve Roney, Bob Timmermann, John McMurray, David Marasco, Bob Boynton, and Terry Smith.

The database has been accessed by more than 300 SABR members and has produced \$2300 for the SABR treasury in the past year. Ted Hathaway and Evelyn Begley have been exploring the possibilities of grant funding, which will allow us to post RBI on the SABR web page. The funding would be used to procure and customize software to allow members to search the database themselves and also to collect the fees.

Two long-time Committee members continued to produce the Committee's two longest-running projects. Committee vice-chair Skip McAfee has produced the Committee newsletter since 1988 and continues to make improvements. Rich Arpi started his 13th year of researching and editing *Current Baseball Publications* (CBP), the quarterly listing of baseball books and periodicals, which the Committee has produced since 1986. This past year, through the efforts of Steve Roney and Ted Hathaway, CBP has been mounted on SABR's web page to

make it more accessible to all SABR members. CBP, along with Committee newsletters and book reviews, are available at www.sabr.org/cbp.shtml. In addition, Hathaway and McAfee helped reformat CBP to reduce newsletter mailing costs substantially.

The Committee's project to provide indexes to important baseball books published without them expanded tremendously and was rewarded with its first commercial publication. Committee members produced 21 new indexes during the year, raising the total to 60. All of these indexes are available through Len Levin's SABR Research Library. In addition, the Univ. of Nebraska reprinted two Roger Kahn books with indexes by Committee members. Skip McAfee provided an index for *A Season in the Sun* while Roger Erickson did one for *Good Enough to Dream*. McAfee also produced the index for a Southern Illinois Univ. (SIU) Press reprint of Alfred H. Spink's *The National Game* (2nd ed., 1911). Both SABR and the Committee were identified in the index credits. Next year, SIU Press plans to begin reissuing all of the Putnam team histories, with indexes prepared by Committee members. In addition, SABR Publications Director Mark Alvarez has started talks about the Committee providing indexes for SABR books.

Book Review

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

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HAND TO MOUTH; a Chronicle of Early Failure

Paul Auster. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997. 449p. \$12 (paper)
ISBN 0-80505-489-8

A cloth edition of this book was published, I gather, in the same year. It comprises a text (Auster's account of his youthful efforts to make a living) and three appendices: a) three plays; b) a description of a baseball card game Auster invented; and c) and *Squeeze Play*, a detective story published in 1982 under the name of Paul Benjamin that involves major league baseball. Only the three plays contain no mention of baseball. Each of the other sections has its interest for SABR members.

Auster's chronicle of early failure contains an account of his invention of a baseball card game and of his efforts to have that game manufactured and marketed (p.108-122). He hoped to make enough money selling the game to free up time for his writing. The game itself involves two decks of 96 cards each. There were two major problems: 1) timing—"computer games were all the rage that year ... and I was hoping to strike it rich with an old-fashioned deck of cards" (p.115); and 2) "the consensus here," articulated a toy company executive, "is that without big league players and their statistics, the established competition is insurmountable" (p.120).

The same executive called the game "unique, innovative and interesting ... it is the only table-top baseball game without a lot of trappings, which makes it faster-moving" (p.120). Appendix 2 (p.215-235) prints the rules of the game and color reproductions of all 192 of the playing cards. There is a Viking-Penguin edition of *Hand to Mouth*, probably more readily available than these Holt editions, but it does not reproduce the playing cards in color.

Auster describes the curious publishing history of *Squeeze Play* at the very end of his memoir (p.126-129). He never mentions the name of the publisher of the cloth edition but includes this intriguing description (p.128): "Production of my novel dragged on for two years. By the time it was printed, he had lost his distributor, had no money left, and to all intents and purposes was dead as a publisher. A few copies made it into a few New York bookstores, hand-delivered by the publisher himself, but the rest of the edition remained in cardboard boxes, gathering dust on the floor of a warehouse somewhere in Brooklyn. For all I know, the books are still there." A mystery of sorts here: I have never seen a cloth copy, and my paperback copy (Avon Books, 1984) lists a copyright date of 1982 but no previous publisher.

The text of *Squeeze Play* is of limited but genuine interest to SABR members. There are, throughout, portraits (speculative, I imagine) of a rapacious owner and a self-centered former ballplayer, the latter dead

before the action of the book begins. Of much more interest is the description of a baseball stadium and a game there that takes up a chapter late in the book (p.420-429).

Auster catches the awe of entering an urban baseball stadium (p.422): "It's almost impossible to take it all in at once. The sudden sense of space is so powerful that for the first few moments you don't know where you are. Everything has become so vast, so green, so perfectly ordered, it's as if you've stepped into the formal garden of a giant's castle."

He also comments on the mesmerizing quality of the game itself (p.422): "For the next two or three hours the geometry of the field in front of you will hold your attention completely. In the middle of the city you will find yourself enveloped in a pastoral universe watching a white ball fly around in space and dictate the actions of eighteen grown men." The game, as might be expected, ends in a squeeze play, and contemplating this enables the narrator to solve the mystery.

[Andy McCue adds the following information: "I have never seen a hardbound copy of *Squeeze Play*, but I do have a 1982 paperback. This could explain the 1982 copyright of Terry's 1984 Avon reprint (the most common available version). The trade-sized paperback has a highly garish pinky/purple cover, with a series of shapes breaking up the cover into several sections, most of them filled with drawings. The drawings are fairly amateurish, as are the production values of the book as a whole. The publisher is listed as Alpha/Omega Book Publishers, Inc. of New York. There is no separate ISBN or other indication that a hardbound copy is available.]

Book Review

Ted Hathaway

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THE TENTED FIELD; a History of Cricket in America

Tom Melville. Bowling Green (Ohio): Bowling Green State Univ. Popular Press, 1998. 280p. ISBN 0-87972-770-5

Although "Our British Cousin" has long been compared with baseball, I was impressed after reading this and other books on Cricket with how dissimilar the games are. Apart from some bare externals the differences are enormous. Yes, one player throws a ball and another tries to hit it with a bat, there are "outs" and "runs" and "innings", but the similarities largely end there. The equipment is entirely different, fielding is largely de-emphasized, the batter serves *both* a defensive and offensive function, the batter need not run after striking the ball and may remain at bat literally for hours, there is no baserunning to speak of, the pitcher takes a running start before throwing the ball, the *entire* side must be put out before batting, there's the totally alien concept of the wicket and bails, and so forth. Cricket seems to be to baseball much as Rugby is to American Football. Remember the classic British assessment of baseball - "Why, it's nothing but Rounders dressed up!" - does *not* compare it with Cricket. Yet, the games are undeniably congeners and share a mutual history in our sporting past.

Anyone researching the history of baseball, particularly the early years of the game, will inevitably run across contemporary accounts or discussions of Cricket. During baseball's formative years, the two games were clearly on equal footing and there was much conjecture over which sport would hold sway among Americans. While it is well known which sport won out, leaving Cricket as a mere footnote in American sports history, the actual history of the sport in our country is little known, even among baseball historians. Its historical role, however, is certainly relevant to baseball history and should prove an interesting subject for baseball readers and researchers. Tom Melville's *The Tented Field* is the first effort to comprehensively chronicle Cricket's history in America, providing a fine historical study of the game's development and decline.

Melville spends much of the book grappling with the question of why Cricket never made it as an American sport and this is its principle strength. He quickly dismisses the old argument that Americans went into the Civil War playing Cricket and came out playing Baseball. Melville offers considerable evidence that Americans were eagerly

playing both games before, during, and after the War. Cricket's decline as a *popular* game didn't start until the late 1860s and even then continued to hold a strong interest in various pockets throughout the United States. Melville also downplays the strictly nationalist argument that Americans rejected Cricket as a "British" game, embracing Baseball as their own. While admitting some significance to this, Melville points out that Cricket had been played in America since colonial days and Americans were familiar enough with it that the taint of "Britishness" wouldn't have occurred to them. This is a connection 20th-century Americans were more likely to make, not their countrymen of the 1860s. He also rejects the argument that Americans didn't play Cricket because it was perceived as an elitist sport. While it was a popular sport at many "exclusive" clubs into the 20th century, most sporting clubs of the elite didn't have Cricket teams, while more modest institutions, such as schools and academies, continued to play the game.

Melville points to two major factors in explaining Cricket's failure to take root in America: 1) the development of distinct cultural preferences among Americans with respect to the structure of sports; and 2) the unwillingness or inability of American Cricketers to adapt the British rules of the game to American interests and preferences. Americans chose Baseball, Melville asserts, because they liked the more rapid turnover and interplay, and greater player participation Baseball afforded over Cricket. If Cricket had adapted to these preferences—and there were numerous attempts to do so throughout the latter half of the 19th century—it might have been otherwise. But Americans changed and grew the old, simple games of "One Old Cat" and "Town Ball" into a sport entirely their own and much more suited to their preferences, while Cricket's development continued to take place beyond our shores.

Yet despite this failure, Cricket actually has had a fairly long and significant history in the United States. The initial decline in interest in the 1860s did not signal impending doom, and in many areas the game thrived for decades. The popularity was largely restricted, however, to English immigrants, and a few areas where, for some reason, the game took hold; most notably, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, in fact, is the one place in the United States where Cricket has maintained a consistent presence, if not flourished, since the 1830s. Haverford College, for example, has had cricket teams for more than 160 years and has long had the only varsity cricket program among U.S. colleges. John A. Lester's admirable history, *A Century of Philadelphia Cricket* (1951), chronicles the unique role this city played in the game in the United States. Melville does not understate Philadelphia's prominence in U.S. Cricket, but hastens to point out that other towns and colleges continued to play the game into the 20th century; notably Ripon College in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, Melville stops his history in 1914, when U.S. teams played their last first-class matches with foreign teams. The game had been in decline for several years before then, but it hastened afterward. The few stellar players the United States had were moving into retirement (e.g., J. Barton King, the greatest of U.S. Cricketers whom even the British acknowledge as one of the finest bowlers ever to grace the pitch). By the 1920s, the game had largely disappeared from the sports pages, but never from the field of play. It is still played much today, if largely by foreign-born players and visiting students. Nevertheless, Melville does not address even this fact, but stops his narrative almost a century ago. I wish he had continued.

In addition to Melville's fine analysis of the game's failure as a major sport in America, I was also impressed by his scholarship. He clearly reviewed all the available sources and nearly half the text consists of source notes and bibliography. There is also a lengthy appendix listing all U.S. cities in which Cricket teams were formed, along with several photographs.

As recently as a half-century ago, the sports pages were filled with news of boxing to a degree that almost rivaled baseball. One can go back another hundred years and find the same truth. Today, however, boxing gains almost no press whatever, save the occasional heavy-weight title fight. How sports evolve, capture the public attention and excitement, then decline, fade from view, is a fascinating and often mysterious process. Rising a little before baseball in our country's sports history, Cricket once rivaled the National Pastime—if briefly—in popularity. While I recommend Lester's *A Century of Philadelphia Cricket* for anyone wanting a real "feel" of how the game was played in

the United States, Melville's analysis of the American experience with Cricket is interesting, illuminating, and much needed.

Other resources on Cricket in America:

Kirsch, George B. *The Creation of American Team Sports: Baseball and Cricket, 1838-1872*. Urbana (Ill.): Univ. of Illinois, 1989. 277p.

Betts, John Richard. *America's Sporting Heritage, 1850-1950*. Reading (Mass.): Addison-Wesley, 1974. 428p.

Riess, Steven A. *Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920*. Wheeling (Ill.): Harlan Davidson, 1995. 221p.

Lester, John Ashbury. *A Century of Philadelphia Cricket*. Philadelphia (Pa.): Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1951. 357p.

[George Bernard Shaw, who once asked "Who is this Baby Ruth? And what does she do?", wrote the following in 1924: "It was as a sociologist, not as a sportsman—I cannot endure the boredom of sport—that I seized the opportunity ... to witness for the first time a game of baseball. I found that it has the great advantage over cricket of being over sooner."—Ed. note]

Book Review

John McMurray

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THE BOYS OF THE SUMMER OF '48

Russell Schneider. Foreword by Hal Lebovitz. Champaign (Ill.): Sports Publishing, Inc., 1998. 205p. \$29.95

This book was published to commemorate the golden anniversary of Cleveland's last World Series winning team. The book is particularly valuable to anyone studying the 1948 Indians because a) it is meticulously researched and b) the author interviewed 12 players and one coach from that team and devotes a chapter to each.

The first four chapters provide a broad overview of Cleveland's '48 season, including a detailed recounting of the one-game playoff with the Boston Red Sox and the subsequent World Series with the Boston Braves. In Chapters 5 thru 17, Schneider relies on first-hand accounts from former players to reconstruct important games and events from that season. The members of the '48 Indians team whom Schneider interviewed for the book were: player-manager Lou Boudreau, Bob Feller, Ray Murray, Larry Doby, Steve Gromek, Eddie Robinson, Bob Lemon (recently deceased), Gene Bearden, Al Rosen, Ray Boone, Bob Kennedy, Allie Clark, and coach Mel Harder.

The strengths of this book are many. Through his interviews, Schneider consistently strives to get to the bottom of issues surrounding the '48 Indians, even if some of the topics themselves are controversial. How was Doby treated by his teammates when he broke the color line in the American League? Did Indians' players attempt to steal opponents' signs by spying from the stadium scoreboard? What was it like for Rosen to be among the first prominent major leaguers of Jewish faith? Did Cleveland players get along with Hank Greenberg, who was then an Indians executive? How did Boudreau react amidst rumors that team owner Bill Veeck was trying to trade him? All of these questions are explored in an in-depth fashion. Far from being a history that focuses only on the sunny aspects of this World Series-winning season, Schneider's probing interviews provide a realistic and vivid accounting of the team and its players both on and off the field.

The book is also filled with a broad collection of excellent photographs, many of which are group photos. There is a picture of Boudreau with Babe Ruth and Joe Cronin, and another in which Tris Speaker, Boudreau, Greenberg, and Bob Hope are all wearing Indians uniforms. Each person who was interviewed for the book is well-

represented in photos from the '48 season, and there is a recent photograph of each included at the end of his respective chapter.

One limitation of the book is that it lacks an index, without which, for example, it can be difficult to locate the many anecdotes about Satchel Paige that are included in Schneider's chapters on the former members of the '48 Indians. Murray, Kennedy, Robinson, and Clark are some of the players who discuss Paige's time with Cleveland (p. 74, 107-108, 158, and 168, respectively), but their reflections might be overlooked by researchers because of the lack of an index. Also, because the one-game playoff and the World Series are such important topics throughout the book, the author would have been well-served to include box scores for these games and the team's post-season statistics. While complete regular-season batting and pitching statistics for members of the '48 Indians are listed following the epilogue, there is unfortunately no tabular data or any box scores in the book for Cleveland's playoff and World Series appearances. Of course, all of this information can be easily obtained and many of the important numbers are woven into the text, but it would have been a nice complement to have had all of that material readily accessible in the book.

These concerns are minor and are more than counterbalanced by the many great first-hand stories that fill the book. Feller discusses (p.63-64) the famous pickoff play at second base in Game 1 of the 1948 World Series. Boudreau recounts (p.52-53) the day he pinch hit while injured for Thurman Tucker and delivered a key two-run single against New York, helping the team to an important late-season victory: "It was second only to winning the playoff game—and we never would have gotten to the playoffs if we hadn't beaten the Yankees that day." Clark even relates (p.168) that he was in attendance at Yankee Stadium the day that Lou Gehrig gave his retirement speech in 1939. These former Indians also discuss their post-playing careers, their families, and their opinions of modern-day baseball in the book. In addition, there is a 16-page chapter entitled "Gone But Not Forgotten" devoted to 16 deceased players and two deceased coaches from that Cleveland team.

Schneider's book is an excellent read and invaluable to anyone seeking a balanced historical perspective on the 1948 Indians team. Schneider's skill in interviewing and his experience writing about Cleveland baseball are evident throughout the book. *The Boys of the Summer of '48* comes highly recommended.

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"It doesn't work!"