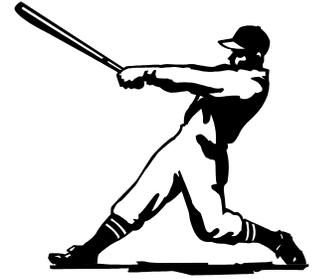




Baseball Lives



Volume II

Issue Three

Spring-2007

Baseball Deaths 2006

Paul Lindblad
 Rod Dedeauz
 Merv Connors
 Bubba Morton
 Willie Smith
 Bob Repass
 Seth Morehead
 Carlos Martinez
 Frank Campos
 Stan Galle
 Rankin Johnson
 Bill Abernathie
 Mark Freeman
 Scott Breeden
 Ace Adams
 Jake Wade
 Curt Gowdy
 Ray Poole
 Kirby Puckett
 William Metzger
 Paul Minner
 Thorton Kipper
 Bill Piero
 Royce Lint
 Billy Hitchcock
 Jimmy Outlaw
 Bill Baker
 Dutch Fehring
 Oscar Acosta
 Billy Queen
 Sibby Sisti
 Russ Swan
 Steve Howe
 Dave Bartosch
 Jim Delsing
 Paul Penson
 Jeff James
 Cy Williams
 Jim Lemon
 Eddie Malone
 Bill Fleming
 Ron Jones
 Eric Gregg
 Si Simmons
 Rocky Nelson
 Frank Dolson

Words from Mark Armour

The Biography Project continues to hum along, with over 500 biographies on the site. In related news, two fine new SABR books have been recently released, filled with biographies that will be included in our project soon, likely in 2008. The first book, *Deadball Stars of the American League* (David Jones ed., Potomac, 2007) you likely have heard about, and you have copy if you were a member in 2005. (Yes, it was late.) If you do not have this book, you can and should buy it on-line in a number of places.

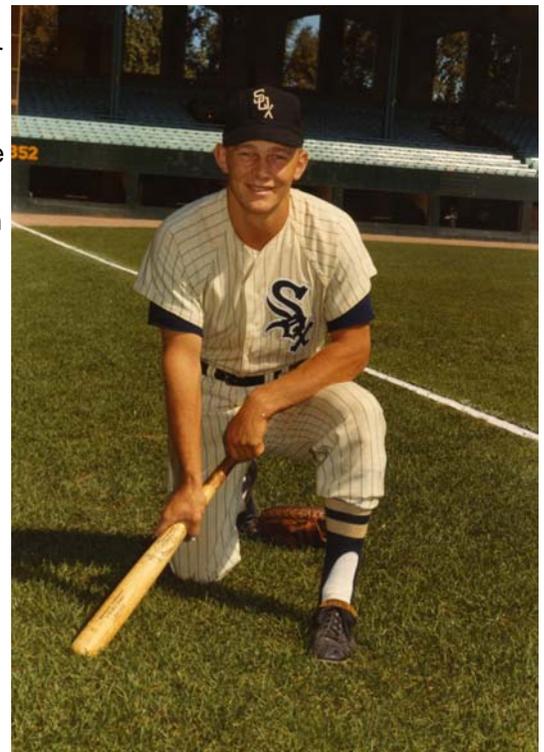


The second book, *The 1967 Red Sox: The Impossible Dream and the Birth of Red Sox Nation* (Bill Nowlin and Dan Desrocher eds., Rounder Books, 2007) is filled with biographies of each person who played one or more games for the team, along with the coaches, executives, and broadcasters. There are also another 15 or so articles about the team from various angles. Gentleman Jim Lonborg and Tom Werner contributed forwards. There are 300 photographs, including a 16-page color selection. This is the second in a series of books put out by the Boston chapter, following their 2005 book on the 1975 Red Sox. These will be followed by books on the 1918 Red Sox and the 1948 Braves/Red Sox.

Do you have an interest in a particular team? The 1927 Yankees or the 1962 Giants? Why not consider putting together a book of biographies? It would be a lot of fun and get you involved with lots of other SABR members with similar interests. The BioProject would help you with editing, guidelines, etc., but you can have as much autonomy as you want to have. The Boston projects are a model to work from, and I can personally vouch for both the great pleasure in working with good people, and also the outstanding final product. The two Red Sox books are among SABR's finest achievements in my 25 years in the society.

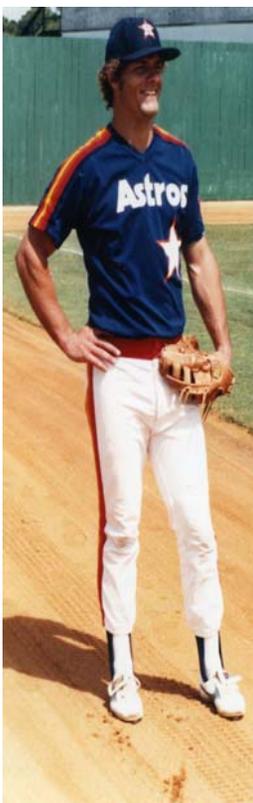
I hope everyone is looking forward to the 2007 baseball season and that your team stays in contention until the final weekend.

Mark



Jim Sargent Biographies

Bob Borkowski
Red Borom
Joe Brovia
Cy Buker
Jim Delsing
Bobby Mavis
Eddie Mayer
Tom McBride
Les Mueller
Jim Northrup
Russ "Rusty" Peters
Bob Powell
Harvey Riebe
Tommy Saffell



Who is this Astros player?

First Correct Answer
wins a 1947 Bantam
Book - *Babe Ruth* by
Tom Meany'

Submit your entry to
Mike Cooney at
mwc2002@hotmail.com

Jim Sargent - BioProject Author

Old-Time Baseball, or How I Play the Game

My father bought my first baseball glove when I was a fifth grader at Tanner Elementary, a country school outside of Flint, Michigan, in the Kearsley District. Born in 1941, I grew up on the southwest side of Flint, then a largely working class city of about 200,000 and home to the factories of auto manufacturers such as Buick, Chevrolet, and Fisher Body.

I can recall my earliest memories of baseball: seeing my older brother Bob, eleven years my senior, playing ball with a bunch of neighborhood kids on the brick pavement of Zimmerman Street around 1946. Three years later, Bob was in the Marines and our family moved to a new house in the country just beyond the northeast border of Flint. Kids from the neighborhood would get together and play ball on a vacant lot after school or in the summer. I didn't have a glove, so I would borrow one from a kid who was batting.

One day during the summer of 1950, while playing ball at a family picnic at Richfield Park, I found an old ball glove that fitted on my left hand. I figured left-handed kids like me had to take the glove off to throw, so that's what I learned to do. The next spring, when I was in the fifth grade, my father bought me what he called a "southpaw" glove. Now I could catch with one hand and throw with the other! I remember my dad used to talk about the favorite team of most people in Michigan, the Detroit Tigers.

During those years my buddies and I began buying baseball cards in bubble gum packs at a nearby corner store. Naturally my favorites were the Tigers, and after 1953, everyone I knew wanted Al Kaline's Topps card. My father and mother took my younger brother George and I to a few Tiger games, where we saw the big leaguers we had on baseball cards. As the years passed, I played first base and outfield in summer sandlot ball as well as for JV and varsity teams at Kearsley High. I worked at an A&P supermarket during my senior year, so I didn't get to play varsity in 1958. But I played for the Montrose team in a county league in 1959 and 1960.

Later, after completing my undergraduate Bachelor's at Eastern Michigan in 1964 and my Master's and Ph.D. in U.S. History at Michigan State,

I embarked on a college teaching career. I taught American History at Clemson University beginning in 1970. After two years at Ball State, I moved to Roanoke and Virginia Western Community College in 1977. Starting in 1989, when my daughter Christianna was eight and my son Bob was six, I coached tee ball and then "minor leagues." We also collected baseball cards, a pastime that brought back fun childhood memories. In 1991 I subscribed to a now defunct magazine called *Oldtime Baseball News*. Over the years I had written a string of scholarly articles and a book, *Roosevelt and the Hundred Days of 1933* (1981), so I decided to try writing old-time baseball stories.

For my first topic I picked Charlie Maxwell, the popular Tiger outfielder of the late 1950s. I wrote to Maxwell, told him of my interest, and he agreed to a telephone interview. I probably spent most of a year researching and profiling Maxwell's career. I repeated the experience with Ray Boone, a Tiger hero from the mid-1950s. Having enjoyed creating two articles, I contacted, interviewed, and profiled Bob Powell, a Flint native and Michigan State All-American flychaser who became a "bonus rookie" with the Chicago White Sox in 1955. Bob and I are still friends as a result of my article about his baseball career.

In the mid-1990s I expanded my research and writing to include players from other sports, like Lynn Chandnois, Joe Schmidt, and Lou Creekmur of the NFL; Andy Bathgate, Red Kelly, and Dean Prentice of the NHL; and former NBA aces like Paul Arizin, Arnie Risen, and George Yardley, the great Detroit Piston forward and my basketball hero.

Also in 1996, while writing for a 1946-centered issue of *Oldtime Baseball*, I contacted and wrote about former National League outfielder Danny Litwhiler, who played part of his 11-year career for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1943 and 1944. I linked the Litwhiler story with articles I wrote about Enos Slaughter of the Cardinals and Bobby Doerr of the Boston Red Sox—heroes on opposite sides of the 1946 World Series. Five years later, on a spring vacation trip to Florida, I met Litwhiler. As a result of our conversations and letters, we conceived the idea of co-authoring his baseball memoir. Temple University Press published *Danny Litwhiler: Living the*

Baseball Deaths 2006

Roland Seidler
Charles Johnson
Moe Drabowsky
Walt Kellner
Bill Johnson
Paul Campbell
Leo Wells
Chink Zachary
Jack Urban
Chet Hajduk
Angel Fleitas
Howdy Groskloss
Elden Auker
Con Dempsey
Dino Restelli
Earl Wooten
Junior Thompson
Charlie Wagner
Ted Davidson
Victor Dernal
Jerry Dahlke
Gordie Mueller
Al Gardella
Jack Banta
Syd Thrift
Buddy Peterson
Craig Kusick
Joe Koppe
Clyde Vollmer
Al Heist
Buck O'Neil
Ivan Murrell
Cory Lidle
Eddie Pellagrini
Johnny Callison
Tony Curry
Jack Radtke
Fred Marsh
Joe Niekro
Si Simmons
Rocky Nelson
Red Hayworth
Johnny Sain
Buddy Kerr
Garton Del Savio
Jimmie Armstead Jr.
Pete Suder
Bo Schembechler
Willie Grace
Pat Dobson
Bill Graham
Eddie Mao
Sam Calderone
Pete Mikkelsen
Billy Klaus
Ernie Oravetz
Jose Uribe
Irv Hall
Cecil Travis
Larry Sherry
Sam Chapman

Jim Sargent Continued

Baseball Dream in late 2006. I was asked to participate in a reunion of the Philadelphia A's Historical Society on October 21-22. There I was honored to sign, along with Danny, copies of the book.

In retrospect, I grew up loving the game, but I lacked the talent to play professional baseball. Today I tell friends that to talk with and profile the careers of players like Hal Newhouser, Mickey Vernon, Merlin Olsen, Bill Gadsby, and Arnie Risen is

my way of *playing the game*. In fact, helping bring to life the careers of little-known big leaguers like Lloyd Merriman, Joe Brovia, and Red Borom is every bit as satisfying as working with former stars like Gene Woodling, Dom DiMaggio, and Bill Freehan. As a historian, I will always love to play the game. For me, SABR's BioProject, by adding to our collective memory the stories about players from earlier times, is a very worthwhile endeavor.



From the Editor

In a recent email, Mark Armour wrote: "One of the stated goals of this project from the start was to spawn committee or chapter subprojects, to focus on a certain group of players. The inspirations for this project included the *Green Mountain Boys of Summer*, a book of biographies edited by Tom Simon and put out mainly by the Vermont SABR group; and of course the *Deadball* projects which were underway at the time the Biography Project got going in 2002.

Mark Armour recently announced that Bill Nowlin is now a Vice Chair of the BioProject committee. Bill will be focusing on team projects. Watch for the next **Baseball Lives** newsletter for words from Bill Nowlin.

I want to thank BioProject member Bob Brady for his interesting article which appears on page four of this newsletter.

I encourage others to submit material. After all, this is your newsletter. What drives your interest in baseball? How do you select your biography subjects? What research methods do you use. And the list goes on. It doesn't have to be long. It doesn't have to be serious. If you have a fun—true but fun—story, we want to hear from you.

Also, in an effort to get more interest in our newsletter, I have included—in this issue—a contest with a prize every baseball fan would love to have. The rules of the contest are easy.

- ◆ You must be a BioProject member
- ◆ You may submit only one entry.
- ◆ Submit your entry to mwc2002@hotmail.com with the subject line of **Baseball Lives Contest**
- ◆ The first correct entry wins.

Good Luck—and send me your articles. *Mike Cooney*

"The Pitcher only had a ball, I had a bat."

Hank Aaron

"What's the use of doing in three pitches what you can do in one?"

Grover Cleveland Alexander

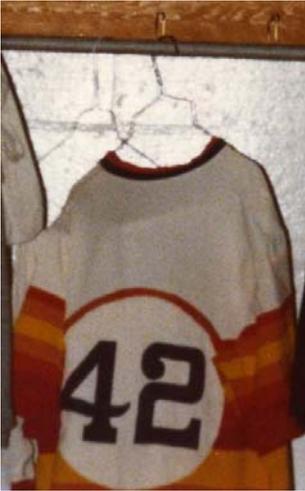
"He also had a Doberman that acquired a taste for beer. They both cut down, but how would you like to encounter a Doberman kicking a six-pack-a-day habit?"

Nolan Ryan on Oil Can Boyd

"Sometimes I hit him like I used to hit (Sandy) Koufax, and that's like drinking coffee with a fork."

Willie Stargell on Steve Carlton.

From *The Quotable Baseball Fanatic* edited by Louis D. Rubin, Jr.



Bob Brady Writes

Research Can Be Fun! Part II

Mike Cooney's piece on the above subject in the last newsletter really struck home with me. I was pleased to learn that others share my passion for combining biographical research with memorabilia collecting. Like Mike, I pick up baseball memorabilia, mostly ephemera, from time to time and from a variety of sources. True to the old adage, "one man's junk is another man's treasure," my accumulation is eclectic and my "finds" usually consist of obscure stuff of little interest to today's investment-conscious collector. And that's where the fun and challenges come in! An aged document of this sort can serve as the jumping off point for research into a player's life or an occurrence where few have ventured and interesting discoveries await.

What are the types of things that have set me off on a quest? At one time or another, letters, telegrams, business cards, contracts, press releases, passes, ticket stubs, player assignment documents, scouting reports, cancelled checks, endorsement agreements, release forms and line-up cards have stimulated a desire in me to learn more about the ballplayer linked to a particular piece.

My usual *modus operandi* is to first try to find photographs of the subject to add a human touch to fuel my research efforts. From there, it's on to the usual sources of biographical research on-line or in libraries and dusty historical repositories. Usually, a story starts to emerge that leads to the need to employ more creative techniques and, in some instances, to interviews and reminisces with the ballplayer or surviving colleagues and relatives. A rewarding by-product has been sharing the research results and copies of the materials with those associated with the documents.

One of my most interesting and satisfying adventures involved tracking down the tale behind a discarded file of a San Francisco Giants minor leaguer from Illinois who played just a year of short-season rookie league ball. Buried in the folder was a newspaper clipping that noted the death of the prospect in an auto accident while driving home after the season's last game.

This find turned out to be a true "Field of Dreams" moment for me. I had the file in my possession for several years and was constantly drawn back to it given the tragic nature of the

young player's demise. Finally, this past year, the urge to research into its background became so great that I put aside existing projects in order to "Go The Distance" and uncover Richie Ferrell's story. It was the thirtieth anniversary of the death of this prospect that bore a similar name to an unrelated Hall of Famer and fellow catcher. I also strongly sensed that part of my then unknown mission was to find a more appropriate home for his file that had fortuitously ended up in my hands.

That file, while obviously slim, was rich in information. It contained reports from the Giants scout who tracked the lad from high school to college and recommended his drafting. It revealed that Ferrell's signing involved a modest bonus of \$6,000. He would use much of the money to purchase a new car that he drove to his initial assignment with the Great Falls (MT) Giants and that was involved in his fatal accident. At the Pioneer League post, various Giants personnel, including 1952 NL MVP Hank Sauer, would evaluate Ferrell's progress and send reports to the home office where their remarks were transcribed onto a manila card by a secretary using a manual typewriter. That card was also included in the file.

The usual research sources were quickly exhausted given Ferrell's brief professional career in the low minors. Searching for a photograph led to a contact with the current coach of his college who not only provided a portrait of Ferrell but also of the ball field named in the latter's honor with his retired number hanging on its outfield fence. The coach was kind enough to introduce me to colleagues of Ferrell, including his college coach (John Boles, ex-manager of the Florida Marlins), a teammate (Sal Rende, minor league batting star and 1990 *Sporting News* minor league manager of the year), his best friend and his brother, all of whom generously shared their cherished memories with me and strongly urged me on.

Along the way, I learned that three of Ferrell's minor league teammates made it to the majors and all three eventually managed professionally, including one, Bob Brenly, who claimed a Worlds Championship with the Diamondbacks. Ferrell's Great Falls manager, later an independent team skipper, helped restart ill-fated Yankees hurler Corey Lidle's baseball career after the latter was released in the low minors by the Twins. What eventually emerged was a portrait of a remarkable individual whose short life deeply touched those around him and whose enthusiasm for the game continues to be passed along by his colleagues still associated with the National Pastime at high school, college, minor league and major league levels.

That thin file resulted in a paper that I hope will eventually be published. Whether or not this occurs, I have derived a rich satisfaction from having gone the distance. Richie Ferrell's family and friends reacted favorably to my piece and have further circulated it to

Help! Help!

This page will be dedicated to material written by our SABR BioProject members

ARE YOU NEXT?

Help make this Your Newsletter



Words From the Editor in Chief—Jan Finkel

Style—we know what it is until we try to define it. Making the task difficult is that it has two aspects that are equal in importance but unequal in scope. It's like looking at an irregularly constructed geometric form.

On the one hand, style means the gritty little details of writing. As SABR members, we want to be consistent in how we present our work, so some consistency of style and presentation is desirable. Do we write RBI or RBIs, lefthander or left-hander, centerfield or center field? According to the SABR Style Manual, revised and issued in June 2006, it's the latter in all three cases. Not everyone will agree with everything in the manual, and some points are open to interpretation and negotiation. That's fine, for as the authors of the manual point out, it's a work in progress. Minor quibbles aside, the SABR Style Manual will take care of 99% of anyone's questions on the details.

But there's a flip (and much larger and more difficult) side to the question of style. It involves the whole writing package—sentence and paragraph structure, word choice, tone, organization, and so forth.

Remember when we were in school and we'd talk about our teachers? "Dr. So-and-So knows it," we'd say, "but he can't get it across" or "Professor This-and-That knows it, but she can't explain it." Or we'd listen over beers to our roommate—it was never us, of course—because Dr. Grumble Grump "gave" him or her a disappointing grade on a paper because of style, whereas "Professor Good Guy grades us strictly on our content."

What, then, can we make of this baby giant called style? Whole books have been written on the subject, and most of them (with the exception of William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White's masterful, brief *Elements of Style*, from which I tend to lift my ideas on style) range from vaguely helpful to downright dreadful. I don't claim

to solve the problem here, but I can offer a few suggestions.

The road to style runs directly through knowledge. Dr. So-and-So, a friend of mine argues, can't get it across because he doesn't know it. In short, we do our homework so thoroughly that we can digest and explain it down to the finest point. We may not be elegant, but we can be clear.

A first step toward greater clarity is to cut excess verbiage. Let's be honest: Almost everybody's writing could go on a diet.

One way to trim fat is to limit use of the passive voice. The active voice has two advantages. It's usually more concise. Moreover, it has the subject of the sentence doing or being something. We shouldn't overwork the passive voice, but we shouldn't ignore it altogether, either.

A good second step is to scrutinize all modifiers and their antecedents. Generally speaking, if we frequently need more than two adjectives or adverbs, we probably haven't chosen the best nouns or verbs. As Mark Twain put it, "Use the right word, not its second cousin."

Closely related is what another friend of mine does when he's editing his work. He tries to delete a line (a word here, a phrase there, and so on) from every paragraph until he can't delete another thing. He gets good results, as his writing is about as sleek and lean as Catherine Zeta-Jones.

None of this is easy. The only way to better style or more clarity is to write and edit, write and edit again, write and edit still again, and so on and so on. Remember the fellow who got off at Grand Central Station and asked a police officer how to get to Yankee Stadium. Said the officer, "Practice, practice, practice."

Jan

Bob Brady (Continued)

to many others whose paths crossed his. At the family's request, the file was donated to his college and now resides in a trophy case honoring his memory. The legendary baseball front office executive Roland Hemond, currently serving with the White Sox, became aware of the piece through his professional association with John Boles, now in the Mariners front office. Coincidentally, Great Falls is now a Pale Hose affiliate and Hemond forwarded a copy to the team's general manager for inclusion in their ballpark's Hall of Fame room. Who would have thought that all this would result from undertaking a study of an obscure minor leaguer whose folder was nearly consigned to oblivion during a big league club's housecleaning?

What's on the docket for the future research? Among my collectibles are two items with an automotive orientation that are piquing my curiosity. Stanley Klopp expired before the driver's license of his that I have in my possession. With a nickname of "Klippity" and a one-season big league career with the old Boston Braves, this righthander seems to have biographical research potential. Additionally, a receipt from Ed Wright's Dyersburg, TN gas station prompts me to want to know more about this hurler who played for the Braves and the defunct Philadelphia Athletics. With photos of both already in hand, I'm ready to commence some serious digging!

Bob Brady



SABR BioProject
Committee



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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

Bill Nowlin - Vice Chairman

knowlin@rounder.com

Trey Strecker—Vice Chairman

tstrecker@bsu.edu

Lyle Spatz - Assignment Editor

spatzl@bellsouth.net

Tom Ruane - Egroup Owner

truane@vnet.ibm.com

Warren Corbett - Contacts Co-ordinator

wpcorbett@hotmail.com

Mike Cooney - Newsletter Editor

mwc2002@hotmail.com