

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

Volume 6, Number 1: "Let's get this lumpy, licorice-stained ball rolling!" Feb. 2006

Chairman's Column: Poet vs. Pedant

By David Jones
dcjo63077@yahoo.com

There are two sides to my obsession with baseball history. For lack of better terms, I will call them the poetic and the pedantic. First, there is the poetic, that part of me that delights in immersing myself in the unvarnished beauty of Deadball Era baseball, in using words to recapture the speed and grace of Dode Paskert patrolling center field, the brutal force of Heinie Zimmerman's swing, or Jesse Burkett's churlish disposition, his artful manner of using profanity to express frustration or bewilderment. In my duties as editor for *Deadball Stars of the American League*, I have tried to encourage my fellow writers to bring out these personal touches in their portraits of the 136 men who will be included in the book, once it is released. (Alas, only the fickle god of layout can say exactly when that will be, although we are inching closer with each passing day).

Whenever I explain to someone that I write baseball history, I usually try to justify the vocation by presenting the game in its most poetic aspects. I try to hide from view the other aspect of my baseball history obsession, the pedantic side. This is the part of me that is willing, indeed, eager, to spend countless

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Bonesetter Reese: Baseball's Unofficial Team Physician, Part 1 of a Series

By David Anderson
danderson46@comcast.net

The image of a small town doctor is embedded in American folklore. The kindly but gruff doctor with a heart of gold and healing talents beyond those of mere mortals is a mythic ideal. As with all myths, this ideal contains a kernel of truth. Television doctors, such as Doc Adams of 'Gunsmoke,' 'Bones' McCoy of Star Trek and Marcus Welby, all contribute to the myth building. Judging from what we now know, the citizens of Youngstown, Ohio and by circumstance, the growing sport of professional baseball, had such a medical paragon in the person of a Welsh immigrant named John D. "Bonesetter" Reese.

Anyone who studies Deadball

Era baseball will sooner or later encounter the Bonesetter as a footnote to other subjects. Because he shunned publicity, he can be a shadowy figure. But the record is clear. Reese was more than just a mere curiosity. His healing talents had a genuine impact on the game of baseball during the early part of the twentieth century.

An issue of *Sporting Life* published in April 1924 summed up his career, "Reese has done more for baseball...than anybody else in the country not directly connected to the game. Through his remarkable miracles in bloodless surgery (and restoring muscles and tendons) "Bonesetter" Reese has prolonged the active life of countless baseball stars and preserved them for the fans of the country to cheer."¹

Such praise would surely warrant a measure of curiosity about Reese on the part of researchers, but little beyond *Child of Moriah*, a biography written by Reese's grandson in law, David L. Strickler, has been published.

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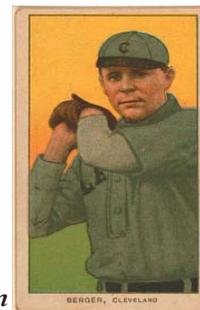
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Heinie Berger



Glenn Liebhardt

Parallel Lives?

By **Steve Constantelos**
sbconstant@hotmail.com

Years ago, two of the first T-206 tobacco cards I bought were those of “Heinie” Berger and Glenn Liebhardt, both hurlers, both Naps. As the years passed and I acquired more knowledge of Deadball days, these two always stuck together in my mind. Beyond the more obvious commonalities I mentioned above, there was good reason for this. Perhaps more so than those famed Pittsburg twirlers, Sam Leever and Deacon Phillippe, my two subjects led parallel lives.

These two German-named Cleveland Americans have remarkably similar records, with a 958 “similarity score” (on a scale of 1,000 for perfect similarity) as noted on the Baseball Reference.com website. Both were Midwesterners. Charles Berger was born on January 7, 1882 in LaSalle, Illinois (near the banks of the Illinois River) and Glenn John Liebhardt on March 10, 1883 in Milton, Indiana (in the central eastern part of the state). Berger and his family moved to Greenfield, Indiana (between Milton and Indianapolis) before he embarked on his professional career. Both were right-handed pitchers, and Berger measured 5’9” while Liebhardt grew to 5’10”. Both were featured pitchers on the near-miss 1908 Naps team, Berger pitching in the big leagues from 1906-1909, Liebhardt from 1907-1910—all in a Cleveland uniform.

Their careers began not dissimilarly. From one of two possibly contradictory accounts of Liebhardt’s early days we learn that he grew up playing ball in the Cleveland sandlots and tossed a no-hitter on July 8, 1904 while pitching for the Three-I League’s Rock Island entry. The other account states that Liebhardt started out briefly with the Indianapolis Reserves and went on to pitch for an independent club in Greenfield, where Berger was also trying his arm. Liebhardt soon left for Arizona and a cowboy life, but before he even began was learning the spitter from one of its pioneers, Elmer Stricklett, and pitching in Los Angeles. 1904 and 1905 found Liebhardt in Omaha, and then on to Memphis in 1906, where he

added to his growing iron man reputation by pitching six doubleheaders, winning the first 11 games and losing the twelfth.

In 1903, Berger moved from Greenfield to a Muncie, Indiana club that disbanded early in the season. He moved on to Piqua, OH and then to Columbus, helping lead the Senators to American Association pennants in 1905 and 1906, going 25-14 and 28-13 those seasons. Berger was the premier pitcher of the AA in 1906, leading the league with eight shutouts and 11 games giving up four hits or less. He also struck out over six batters a game.

Both men joined the Naps at age 24, pitching little in their first years, a lot in the next two seasons, and only a little again in their fourth and final years in the big leagues. In 1906, Cleveland paid a “fancy price” for Liebhardt, who joined the rotation in 1907. Berger, billed by some as “the greatest pitcher since Matty” was purchased in 1907 for a princely sum of \$6,500. He grew to be called “the \$6,500 gold brick” when he did not live up to expectations. In mid-1907 Cleveland tried to waive the “phlegmatic” Berger, but New York manager Clark Griffith blocked it, luckily for our story. Berger had improved by the end of 1907.

Berger threw a spitter often, like Liebhardt, as is obvious from his recounting some harrowing 1908 games he pitched in. Both pitched in 90 games over their major league careers, Berger starting 68 games to Liebhardt’s 66. Berger’s career record is 32-29, with 176 walks and 337 strikeouts and an average 2.60 ERA. Liebhardt was 36-35, with 183 walks and 280 strikeouts, and a sparkling 2.17 ERA. Each gave up three home runs in his career. Each performed similarly at the plate, both earning 38 total bases and executing 13 sacrifices in their career, good for 13 runs and 11 RBI apiece.

Both men pitched for Columbus (including the 1910 team) after their release by the Naps, and both pitched for several other clubs before they hung up their spikes for good in 1916, or so it seemed. Pitching in local Cleveland leagues, Liebhardt and Berger went head-to-head one day. Berger led the Telling-Strollers to an 18-inning 3-2 victory over the Baileys, striking out 27 in the effort. Liebhardt was no slouch, striking out 17 that day. In an August 17, 1924 exhibition game in Cleveland, Berger relieved Cy Young (after his two innings of scoreless ball), giving up a run to their old-time sandlotter opponents. Liebhardt then relieved Berger, giving up a run in two innings’ work. Glenn also went two-for-two at the plate.

Both men also left this earth at about the same time and place—Berger died of heart disease on February 10, 1954 in Lakewood, OH, a suburb of Cleveland, the city where Liebhardt died on July 13, 1956. In retirement, Liebhardt trained his son and nephew (Dutch Henry) for the big leagues, managed a paint company, and loved to fish. Berger was a shipping clerk in retail furniture. Somehow, I feel sure he had a favorite fishing hole too.◆

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Committee Chair

David Jones: dcj063077@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor

Charles Crawley: crcrawley@yahoo.com

Assistant Editor

John McMurray: mcmurrayj@aol.com

Database Manager/Distributor

Dan Desrochers: desrochsox@comcast.net

A History of Bennett Park— Detroit's First Major League Ballpark: Part 2

By **Ron Selter**

rselter@socal.rr.com

No listed dimensions for Bennett Park were found in the usual ballpark books (1,2,3). The 1901 dimensions: LF 345, CF 432, RF 370 (all dimensions are in ft.), were derived entirely from an 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, and ballpark photos (4). The diagram of the park and the dimensions of the park's land plat were derived from the 1897 Sanborn. The only known dimension was LF in 1910—from the 1910 Opening Day article in the Detroit Free Press. The artist's renditions of the park in Diamonds (p. 230) and Baseball Memories 1900-1909 (p. 52) were used to position the grandstands and playing field on the park diagram (2,5).

The description of the 1901 configuration of the ballpark was taken from Benson's Ballparks of North America (6). In its original configuration Bennett Park had a small scoreboard in LC just to the left of the back of the CF clubhouse (photo in Baseball Memories p. 10). A small tool shed was to the right of the clubhouse in front of the RC-CF fence. Behind the RC-CF fence (on the northern edge of the ballpark) was a lumberyard. The first reported change in the park's configuration (Benson-Ballparks of North America p. 49) was in 1908 before the start of the season. It consisted of: (1) the acquisition of the adjacent lumberyard property and the movement of the RF-CF fence back a considerable distance, (2) the construction of additional sections of grandstand seating in front of the old infield grandstand, and (3) the erection of permanent bleachers in fair RF territory. Because of the additional rows of seats in front of the grandstand, the home plate was moved about 40 ft towards CF (7). The additional grandstand section can be seen in a photo of the third base foul area and grandstand (7). There is also photographic evidence of some RF bleachers in a 1907 World Series photo of Bennett Park (1). In this photo (The Corner p.

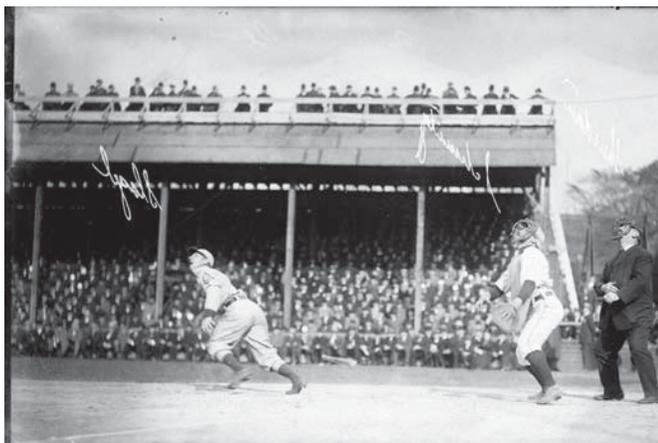
158-159, and Baseball Memories p. 51) low temporary bleachers are visible in right center next to the other larger and higher bleachers in RF. It is believed that both sets of bleachers were temporary seating constructed for the 1907 World Series. If the larger and higher RF bleachers had existed during the regular season, the distance to straightaway RF would have been reduced to about 325-335. At that distance a goodly number of Bounce and on-the-fly HRs into the RF bleachers should have occurred. A review of all HRs hit at Bennett Park for the 1907 season showed no HRs hit into any outfield bleachers (8)

The same photo (The Corner p. 158) reveals the RC-CF fence to be aligned with the back of the RF bleachers. The relative configuration of the RC-CF fence is shown again in a 1911 photo (The Corner p. 215). This photo also shows the RC fence to be again aligned with the back of the RF bleachers. The bleachers were built in part of the area that was added to the ballpark in 1908 (in what had been the lumberyard behind the 1907 RF fence). Thus the area of the ballpark's land plat was significantly increased for the 1908 season. During the expansion of the ballpark in the 1907-08 off-season, a clubhouse was built beneath the grandstand. This allowed the removal of the CF clubhouse and tool shed. In CF there was a new short diagonal CF fence adjacent to the new scoreboard. A new and larger scoreboard was situated slightly to the left of dead CF. The enlarged land plat was shown on the Sanborn map and was used to estimate the RF dimensions for the 1908 and subsequent seasons. The next reported change was in 1910 and consisted of the addition of two small sections of seats to the grandstand (Benson-Ballparks of North America). In Benson there is no report of bleachers in LF. The photo of temporary LF bleachers built for the 1909 World Series (Baseball Memories 1900-1909 p.53) confirms that as late as the end of the 1909 season there were no permanent bleachers in left field. For the final two seasons of its existence, the park's seating capacity was increased by the construction of shallow permanent bleachers in LF. There is a report of "permanent bleachers in RF and LF" (The Corner p. 215) at the start of the 1911 season. However, research into the newspaper accounts of home runs in the 1910 and 1911 seasons showed the LF bleachers to actually have been in place and in use during the 1910 season (8). Later research found a description of the LF bleachers in use on Opening Day 1910 (9). This same Opening Day story gave the new LF distance as 295 (8). The 1911 photo (The Corner p. 215) which shows the new scoreboard also shows double height billboards in LC and a billboard above the scoreboard.

Another photo, this one included in a video on classic ballparks, shows both the depth and width of the LF

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World Series game played at Bennett Park in
Detroit, Michigan, Oct. 8, 1907.
SDN-006084, Chicago Daily News negatives
collection, Chicago Historical Society.



Touching Second, by John J. Evers and Hugh S. Fullerton.

Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2004. [ISBN: 0-7864-18699] 275 pages, \$27.00.

Reviewed by **Mark Dugo**
claydad96@aol.com

Originally published in 1910 and re-printed in 2005 as part of the McFarland Historical Baseball Library, *Touching Second* is a concise, well-detailed baseball book that provides wonderful analysis of the game as it was played during the Deadball Era and also of its most famous players.

Evers (pronounced “eeevers”), of course, is the historically significant and forever to be lauded second baseman of the famous “Tinkers to Evers to Chance” double play combo of the Chicago Cubs near the beginning of the 20th century. At the time of the original publication of this narrative, Evers was widely recognized as one of, if not the, best second baseman in the game. His ferocious desire to win and his determination in fielding, hitting, and hustle made him a leader among some very great (and last to win a World Series) Chicago Cubs baseball teams. His being well-versed in the rules of the game led to Fred Merkle forever being labeled “Bonehead,” as Evers, calling attention to Merkle’s blunder, could arguably be identified as having single-handedly won the World Series for the Cubs (boy, could us Cub fans use a player like Evers now!) in 1908.

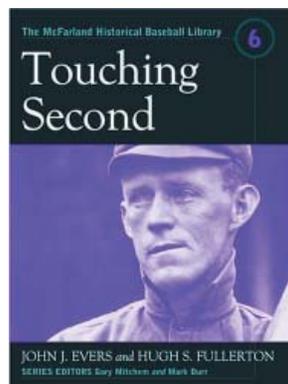
It was this knowledge and expertise that provided the impetus for Evers to discuss his knowledge of the game and its players in printed form for *Touching Second*. Widely popular upon initial publication, *Touching Second* covers not only what it takes to be successful at second base, but at every position as well. Evers believed strongly that in order to win baseball, you had to think faster, quicker and better than anyone else. He believed this so much, in fact, that he suggested that thinking evolved the activity from a game into an exact mathematical sport. The more you understood about the skill set of the players, the strategy

of what to do and when, and perfected these into timing and chance, then the better chance that you had of assuring ultimate victory.

The chapter topics range from the obvious of playing second base to umpiring, base running, batting, pitching and managers and their duties. Spread amongst each chapter are comments regarding stars of the day (mostly all to be Hall of Famers in later years including Ty Cobb (“brilliant, thinks for himself and not much bothered by bench orders”), Eddie Collins, Mordecai Brown, Franck Chance and Honus Wagner.

In “Fine Points of the Game” Evers chronicles actual game events and details how they could have improved the situation if they used Evers’ brand of thinking and expert decision-making abilities. It is unique in those situations at the time which Evers had listed to prove how his theories operated and ultimately proved successful are rather common sense in today’s baseball world. I would be interested to investigate further to see if the events are listed because they were sure fire even in those days or maybe because they were viewed as radical at the time.

Touching Second was thoroughly enjoyable reading to this Deadball fan. I only wish the Cubs of today had players (and a manager) bright enough to determine the outcome of a game without waiting on the reliance of a three run home run in the ninth. ♦



Spitting on Diamonds: A Spitball Pitcher's Journey to the Major Leagues, 1911-1919, by Clyde H. Hogg.

Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005. [ISBN: 0826215696] 329 pages, \$34.95.

Reviewed by **Norman Macht**
normanmacht@netzero.com

Bradley Hogg was a spitball pitcher whose major league record was 20-30 in two full season with the Phillies (1918-19) and three brief stints with the Boston Rustlers/Braves (1911-12) and Cubs (1915). Hogg also won 121 games in seven years in the minor leagues, including 27 at Los Angeles in 1917. He was a lawyer in Americus, Georgia where he died at age 47 in 1935.

Hogg’s best years were at Mobile in the Southern Association 1913-15 and with Los Angeles in the PCL 1916-17, and if you’re interested in those leagues in that era, this part of the book may appeal to you.

A few factual errors occur, but not many: the decision to shorten the 1918 season was not made before the season started; Frank (not John) Farrell, president of the Yankees, was not a member of the National Commission; Chief Bender was not a Crow; the first legal Sunday game in New York was earlier than April 17, 1912.

Hogg’s story might have made an interesting TNP article. But when Clyde H. Hogg, a free-lance writer in Norfolk, discovered five years ago that his great-uncle had been a big league pitcher, Clyde decided to write a book about his ancestor’s life. He faced a challenge: how to make a 300-page book out of a brief and undistinguished baseball career.

This is how he did it:

- Extensive use of newspaper accounts of most of Hogg’s game appearances, arrivals at spring training and departures at the end of each season (more than half the text seems to consist of newspaper clips, both relevant and irrelevant)

- Sociological commentary on everything from racism to the style of

sportswriting of the time

- Repetition (every spring, we're reminded that Hogg had to pay \$30 for his two uniforms)

- The insertion of "future Hall of Famer" in front of the name of every player mentioned who later gained that honor

- Mention of the equivalent in today's dollars whenever a figure is used for salaries, train fares, etc.

- 31 pages of appendices (a few, listing payroll data, are of interest)

- In an effort to portray the social context of the times, the reproduction of random irrelevant news items that happened to catch the author's researching eye. Examples (just the headlines, not the stories that are quoted):

Teachers Dismissed

Advice to Girls

Suffragists At Tea With Circus

Women

Movies to Boost Navy Recruiting

Astor Baby Costs \$30,000 Per

Year, Says His Mother

Some of these news items seem to have been chosen primarily to provide a springboard for cute or witty wordplay, usually requiring stretches like Stuffy McInnis reaching for an errant throw.

Another authorial habit is the gross overuse of sentences beginning with "ironically," in cases that were, at best, coincidences.

Page 35 provides back-to-back examples of what awaits the reader:

"Ironically, while Bradley was breaking into the major leagues in Brooklyn, several men in Oregon were breaking into something else," completely ignoring the fact that the Wild West had already been tamed:

"September 2, 1911: Ashland, Oregon

"Express Train Held Up."Robbers Blow Open Safe on Southern Pacific

"Southern Pacific train number 13, southbound, was held up at Sims, south of here, tonight. Two safes were blown open, but it is said no one was injured. The robbers obtained but little booty. - *New York Times*

"Ironically, at the same time train robbers were reliving the past, the future of mail service was up in the air:

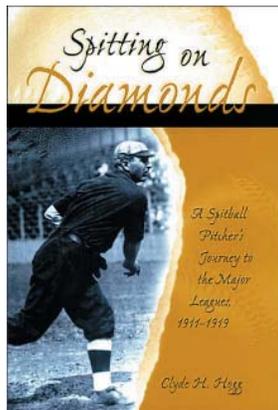
"September 1, 1911: Long Island, New York

"Delivery of Mail By The Air Route

"Experiment to be Tried at Nassau Aviation Meet on Long Island

"Delivering mail by aeroplane in [sic] the latest innovation to be experimented with on the coming meet of the Nassau Aviation Corporation to be held Sept. 23-30. . ."

Well, enough of that. You get the idea. This is the kind of book you'll enjoy, if you enjoy this kind of book. I found it a tedious read, but, then, I'm an old curmudgeon. ♦



Bad Bill Dahlen: The Rollicking Life and Times of an Early Baseball Star, by Lyle Spatz.

Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005. [ISBN: 0-7864-19784] 252 pages. \$29.95 softcover. Order at (800) 253-2187 or at www.mcfarlandpub.com.

Reviewed by **John McMurray** (jmcmurray04@yahoo.com)

Bad Bill Dahlen by Lyle Spatz provides a comprehensive study of the life of one of the Deadball Era's most underappreciated stars. Dahlen, who excelled at shortstop primarily for the Chicago Cubs, Brooklyn Superbas, and New York Giants during a 21-year career from 1891 to 1911, is remembered as a player with exceptional hitting and defensive skills whose fiery and untamed temper frequently got the better of him. Much of the book centers how Dahlen's outbursts and lack of discipline affected his performance.

In the book's Introduction, Spatz contends that Dahlen is the best of the old-time players not currently in the Hall of Fame. Spatz cites Dahlen's outstanding offensive statistics as well as his superior defensive skills relative to other shortstops of the period. "Thus," Spatz says, "the intention of this book is to familiarize current generations with Dahlen's career and his accomplishments and to provide them with the information necessary to decide his Hall of Fame worthiness."

Dahlen is portrayed in the book as a player of great accomplishment. Spatz notes, for example, that early in the 1900 season, "hardly a day passed without the local newspaper making a reference or two to one or more of [Dahlen's] spectacular stops, catches, or throws." When the Giants traded for Dahlen prior to the 1904 season, manager John McGraw is quoted as saying that "there were mighty few better than Dahlen." Similarly, Superbas manager Ned Hanlon said at the time: "I've parted with Dahlen, and somehow, I feel I have just parted with half my team."

Yet Dahlen's playing success was frequently counterbalanced by his raucous and undisciplined behavior. According to Spatz, "writers in every city he played in would at various times question [Dahlen's] judgment, and more seriously, his dedication to the game." In the book, Dahlen is described at times as being lazy, insubordinate, half-asleep on the field, and "the personification of pig-headedness."

Dahlen's mercurial nature and his penchant for fighting with umpires and other players colored his career. A telling example occurred during the 1911 season: while Dahlen was frequently praised for his brilliance as Brooklyn's manager, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* noted Dahlen's four ejections in one week for arguing with umpires and said "at the rate he is going, manager Dahlen is managing about two and one-third innings per game. The rest of the game he is in the clubhouse, or under the stand, or

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hours entering numbers, most of them irrelevant, into Excel spreadsheets for no particular reason. This is the part of me that wants to find out what percentage of Hobe Ferris's career hits went for extra bases, and where this ranks among all hitters of the Deadball Era. During the past weekend, as the weather outside vacillated from 50 degrees and sunny to 15 degrees and snowy, I have allowed this tortured, humorless monster out of his cage. This weekend I have spent way too much time entering basic demographic data for each of the players featured in both the National League and American League volumes of the Deadball Stars. Why did I do this? I don't really know. Why am I going to share this information with you? Because I imagine there are at least a few of you out there who read that sentence about Hobe Ferris and wondered what percentage of his hits *did* go for extra bases, and where that *does* rank among hitters during the Deadball Era. (Answer: 20 percent, and it ranks 21st. Gavy Cravath is first at 38.1 percent).

Of the 272 bios featured in the two volumes of Deadball Stars, 243 played a substantial part of their careers during the Deadball Era. Thirty four of them were born in the state of Pennsylvania, which was the most for any state. (Ohio came in second with 33). In a sign of how much things have changed over the last 100 years, more of our Deadballers were born in Vermont (3) than Florida (0). Only one Deadballer was born before the end of the Civil War (Patsy Donovan, born on March 16, 1865, in Ireland). The last Deadballer, Rogers Hornsby, was born 31 years later, on April 27, 1896. Two sets of Deadballers were born on the same day: Bill Donovan and Rube Waddell, both born on October 13, 1876, and Donie Bush and Doc Crandall, both born on October 8, 1887. The most common cities our Deadballers hailed from were Chicago and Cleveland, both with six. (New York was next with five, followed by Philadelphia, Kansas City, Cincinnati, and St. Louis with four.)

Had enough? I hope not, because for every birth there must follow a death, and I looked at all those as well. Not surprisingly, California was a common resting place for the best players of the Deadball Era: 28 of them died there, tied with Ohio for the most of any state. Florida, despite having zero Deadballers born there, had 15 die there. The first Deadballer to die was, of course, Ed Delahanty, who passed away on July 2, 1903. In all, 12 Deadballers died before the era came to an end: Delahanty, Chick Stahl, Dan McGann, Addie Joss, Bugs Raymond, Rube Waddell, Osee Schrecongost, Harry Steinfeldt, Jake Beckley, Eddie Grant, Germany Schaefer and Cy Seymour. Conversely, the last Deadballer to pass away was Edd Roush, who died nearly 86 years after Delahanty fell off the bridge and into eternity, on March 21, 1988, at the ripe old age of 94. That wasn't the oldest Deadballer, however: Freddy Parent, the only one of our 243 Deadballers to live to see his 96th birthday, took the honors in that category. (The youngest to die was, of course, poor Ray Chapman, aged 29 when he took a Carl Mays fastball off his skull.) Two sets of

Deadballers also died on the same day: Jimmy Austin and Wally Schang both passed away on March 6, 1965, and Ed Reulbach and Ty Cobb both died on July 17, 1961. (A third Deadballer, Mike Mitchell, passed away one day before Cobb and Reulbach, making that a particularly morbid week for the Deadball Era.) And if Chicago and Cleveland were the cities where Deadball Stars were made, New York was where they went to die. Ten of them passed away in the nation's biggest city. Special honors in this category, however, have to go to Saranac Lake, New York, whose healing waters failed to mend the four Deadballers who died there.

Having gone this far with my demographic study, I finally reached the point where my poetic side awoke from its midwinter slumber to find that my pedantic side had trashed the house in a blizzard of meaningless numbers and arcane trivia. Disappointed, my poetic side attempted to restore some dignity to the baseball history profession by imagining the way John Titus shifted his toothpick in his mouth while at the plate, or the way tall Eppa Rixey looked when he stood on the mound and stared down the opposing batter. That side has tried to handle writing this column; but as I sit here contemplating what sentence I should use to end this piece, I find myself absolutely needing to inform you that the average lifespan of a Deadball Star was 70.45 years. Eh, what the hell. Not everything in life is poetry anyway. ♦

Bonesetter Reese, continued from page 1.

The dearth of information about Reese can be attributed to a number of factors. Strickler's book is out of print and difficult to obtain. The author of this article was able to read the book with the assistance of an inter-library loan through the University of Notre Dame. Reese himself was publicity-shy and never wrote memoirs. Finally, Reese has always been a footnote to larger stories. Most baseball fans have 'met' him by reading biographies of stars such as Honus Wagner and Rogers Hornsby.

But even this brief acquaintance is fraught with misconceptions. Baseball authors have described him in a variety of ways. In *Honus Wagner: A Biography*, Dennis and Jeanne Burke DeValeria, Reese was depicted as, "... part chiropractor and part masseuse, treating injuries he diagnosed as wrenched tendons and displaced muscles; he was pronounced a miracle worker after he treated Leach for a leg ailment the previous year." (1902)² The DeValerias noted that Wagner was cured of a leg ailment in late 1903 and that Reese accompanied the Pittsburg club during the 1903 World Series for a fee of \$500.

In *Honus Wagner: The Life of Baseball's "Flying Dutchman"*, Arthur D. Hittner noted Wagner's first encounter with Reese in 1903, noting, "Bonesetter was not a physician and claimed no medical training. Using massage, manipulation and a touch of mysticism, the former steel worker and oil driller had nevertheless achieved the reputation of a miracle worker throughout professional baseball."³

In his fine biography of Rogers Hornsby, Charles

Alexander chips in with this description, “Hornsby was only one of many ballplayers who visited Reese, an elderly, totally unschooled former Welsh coal miner whose skills at skeletal manipulation were so renowned that the Ohio legislature gave him special medical certification.”⁴

In the *Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball*, Jonathan Fraser Light put it plainly. “Reese was a popular early trainer. He had no medical training but was good at manipulation and message.”⁵

While all of the above descriptions provide a glimpse of Reese’s work, they all include a measure of inaccuracy. Yes, he was a Welsh immigrant. He learned the bonesetting trade from a fellow iron worker. But there is no evidence that Reese ever set foot in a coal mine or on an oil rig, or that he was a mystic. As for being totally unschooled, Reese owned an extensive library on anatomy and his knowledge of the subject guided his practice. Putting the unschooled issue to rest, Reese attended Medical School at Case University in Cleveland for three weeks in 1897. From the above, it is fair to state Reese’s image has not entirely been brought into full focus by baseball historians. ♦

(Endnotes)

¹ David L. Strickler, *Child of Moriah*, (Four Corners Press, 1984), 181.

² Dennis and Jeanne Burke DeValeria, *Honus Wagner: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995) 122.

³ Arthur D. Hittner, *Honus Wagner: The Life of Baseball’s “Flying Dutchman”* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996) 118.

⁴ Charles C. Alexander, *Rogers Hornsby: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 113.

⁵ Jonathan Fraser Light, *The Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1997) 749.

Bennett Park, continued from page 2.

bleachers (9). Visible are 14 rows of seats which were the basis of the estimated depth of the LF bleachers. The estimated depth of the LF bleachers in combination with the known LF dimension for 1910 (295) was the basis of the 1908-09 LF dimension (330).

In addition, in this part of the video the scoreboard is visible as part of the CF diagonal fence—only in this photo the scoreboard is amongst the upper tier of billboards. As this photo shows the LF bleachers it must be in either 1910 or 1911.

In summary, most of the Bennett Park dimensions were estimated from the 1897 Sanborn map and contain a moderate amount of uncertainty. All dimensions were checked against, and are consistent with, the available photographic evidence and the HR record.

(1) Richard Bak, Charles Vincent and the Detroit Free Press, The Corner, 1999

(2) Michael Gershman, *Diamonds: The Evolution of the Ballpark*, 1993

(3) Philip J. Lowry, *Green Cathedrals*, Revised Ed. 1992

(4) Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Detroit 1897: Vol. 2, Sheet 28

(5) Marc Okkonen, *Baseball Memories 1900-1909*, 1992

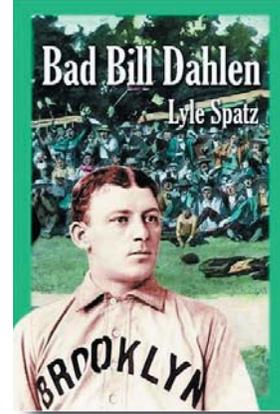
(6) Michael Benson, *Ballparks of North America*, 1989

(7) Richard Bak, *A Place for Summer*, 1998

(8) Research by the author from game accounts in the Detroit Free Press

(9) Detroit Free Press April 17, 1910

(10) “America’s Classic Ballparks,” VHS by Jeff Daniels, 1990



Bad Bill Dahlen, continued from page 5.

somewhere else, far from active participation in the strife, where his giant intellect might be supposed to guide his henchmen to victory.”

This biography is meticulously researched and brings Dahlen’s character and character flaws vividly to life. The author’s recounting of Dahlen’s contentious relationship with Cap Anson will also be valuable to students of the period. Spatz, however, focuses more on Dahlen’s on-field actions than he does on the motivations behind the shortstop’s erratic, ill-tempered behavior. Rather than being a psychological study, Spatz devotes his primary attention to Dahlen’s baseball successes and failures.

Spatz makes few references to Dahlen’s Hall of Fame candidacy in the text, choosing primarily to discuss it in the Introduction, in the final chapter, and in several appendix tables which show where Dahlen rates statistically against contemporary members of the Hall of Fame. While Dahlen measures up well relative to other Hall of Fame shortstops, it is less clear how Dahlen’s behavior both on and off the field should impact his election to the Hall of Fame. Dahlen, for instance, is described in the book as being vulnerable to the hidden-ball trick due to inattentiveness, and he is portrayed as a player who would try to get ejected from games so that he could go to the racetrack. It is for the reader to decide if Dahlen’s statistical accomplishments outweigh the detriment to his own team caused by his exceptionally disruptive behavior.

Bad Bill Dahlen is a very well-researched baseball book and an excellent read. Though Spatz states that he believes Dahlen should be in the Hall of Fame, the author does not shy away from presenting his subject’s flaws. Spatz’ book is distinguished by its strong writing and by its balanced and detailed coverage of Bill Dahlen’s extraordinary career. ♦

Iron Man's Grave

By **Gabriel Schechter**

gschechter@baseballhalloffame.org

I have been in communication with a descendant of Joe McGinnity from his wife's family. They are planning a major ceremony honoring McGinnity on May 9, 2006, at his gravesite in McAlester, Oklahoma. They will be rededicating the gravesite and renovating the marker. Here is a description I received of the changes to be made to the marker:

"His grave marker got removed in February. We are adding baseball bats on each side in the front and 5 baseballs below his name, baseball shoes on one side and a glove on the other. On the back we are adding a design and under that we add his NBHF and under that his parents' and grandparents' name. Then a poem. Then we add our family crest and we add the words that his family did this for him in 2006. The back will also contain 2 bats on each side and we will have all of the old engraving darkened and the new darkened."

If anyone is interested in contributing toward this effort and/or attending the ceremony, please get in touch with me and I will put you in touch with McGinnity's family. ♦

Editor's Note: see

http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/library/columns/gs_051101.htm
for Gabe's article on McGinnity from the Hall of Fame Newsletter.

A Monument to Merkle

By **David J. Stalker**

attheballyard@yahoo.com

A memorial monument for Fred Merkle was donated to The Watertown Historical Society in September of 2005 by Dave Stalker, members of the Merkle family and Archie Monuments. I presented my idea to his family members, and they agreed to help me fund the memorial, and Archie Monuments of Watertown offered their time. The family has asked to remain anonymous.

Fred was quoted as saying, "he just wished that people would forget." Of course he was referring to the September 23, 1908 play. The play that was responsible for giving him the undeserving nickname bonehead. The name bonehead does not appear on the monument. From now, until the end of time, when the casual observer reads the words on the memorial, and reads about Fred for their first time, he or she will see Merkle for what he really was. He was a great ballplayer that was born in Watertown, Wisconsin. The person who has heard the bonehead story, and reads it, will see that there is so much more than just the 9-23-08 play. For these reasons I feel as though I am granting him his wish, in helping people forget, or at least look past the infamous play.

Fred is buried in Florida, with an unmarked grave. We felt as though he deserved so much more. He now has a beautiful monument in his memory.

The monument can be viewed at 919 Charles Street on the Historical Octagon House and Museum grounds in Watertown, Wisconsin. ♦



Portrait of pitcher Joe McGinnity, National League's New York Giants baseball player. SDN-003755, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago Historical Society.



Photo of Merkle Monument in Watertown, Wisconsin, courtesy of David Stalker. The monument reads "This memorial is dedicated to the life of Fred C. Merkle. Born in Watertown, WI, Dec. 20, 1988. His father, Ernst Merkle, was a school teacher at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Watertown at the time of Fred's birth. Fred made his major league debut on 9-21-1907. His outstanding talent, intelligence and dedication to the game of baseball spanned 3 decades, having been a member of 6 World Series teams: 1911, 1912, 1913, 1916, 1918, and 1926. He was a potent line-drive hitter, agile first baseman and a speedster on the basepaths. He played for the New York Giants, Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago Cubs and New York Yankees. Donated in 2005 by the Merkle Family, David J. Stalker & Archie Monuments."