

# NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

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SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

Nineteenth Century Notes is a publication of the Nineteenth Century Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research

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## The Odd Case of Patrick McKenna by Bob Tiemann

**S**tandard references show that one Patrick McKenna played one major league game for the St. Louis National team in 1877, going 1-for-5 with a strike out. What they do not reveal is that he lined into a triple play in his only big league game, and that by hitting into the three-ply killing, he was able to get his only hit.

The Brown Stockings found themselves short-handed in early July. On the 6th, center fielder Jack Remsen was called to his home in Brooklyn

when his wife fell seriously ill. Remsen remained in the East for the rest of the season, though he did play for St. Louis when the team visited Boston and Hartford in September. In his absence, the Browns tried out four rookies in center field: McKenna, Harry Little, Jack Gleason, and Leonidas Lee. All were local St. Louis amateurs, though Lee was described as “a member of one of the East Coast college nines” (Princeton). The manpower crisis became acute when pitcher Fred “Tricky” Nichols developed a felon on the

little finger of his pitching hand on July 13. [A felon is a painful abscess of the deep tissues of the palmar surface of the fingertip that is typically caused by bacterial infection and is marked by swelling and pain.] It kept him out of the lineup for two weeks.

McKenna’s one game for St. Louis came at home on Saturday, July 14, against Boston, the NL’s eventual pennant winners. He played first base and batted leadoff for a local team called the Grand Avenues and was deemed an “excellent

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Co-Chairs’ Corner

by Peter Mancuso

### The 2024 Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference

dates are Friday and Saturday, **April 19 & 20** at our usual venue, the National Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum in Cooperstown, NY (see photos of the 2023 Conference on page 10). We are now accepting Abstracts for proposed 20-

25 minute Research Presentations. Please, email to Peter Mancuso, peterplus4@earthlink.net a 200 – 400 attached Word document with title and contact information describing a presentation on any topic of 19<sup>th</sup> century baseball. PowerPoint or other A/V are not required but are encouraged, and

are not due until a month prior to the Conference. **The Deadline for Abstracts is October 31, 2023.** Acceptance results will be communicated back personally within 30 days after the deadline.

**The Annual 2023 Co-Chairs’ Award** for ser-

*(Continued on page 4)*

# The Odd Case of McKenna (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

amateur.” The Browns slotted him into Remsen’s slots in the lineup: Center field, batting sev-



George Wright

enth. The 1877 rules mandated that the home team bat first (for the only season in history), and the Browns opened with two runs thanks to a two-out, two-run single by Davy Force against Boston pitching star Tommy Bond. Force would finish the game 5-for-5, and St. Louis piled up 19 hits in a 10-3 victory. Leadoff man Mike Dorgan scored four of the home team’s runs. Joe Blong, a local product like McKenna, had a strong outing in just his third start in the pitchers box, striking out nine batters.

McKenna caught an easy fly in the bottom of the first for his only fielding chance of the game. In the top of the second he struck out leading off. The Browns added another pair of runs in the top of the third, force adding another two-out, RBI hit. After the Reds got one back in their third, the St. Louis recruit opened the fourth with a “hard liner that took a

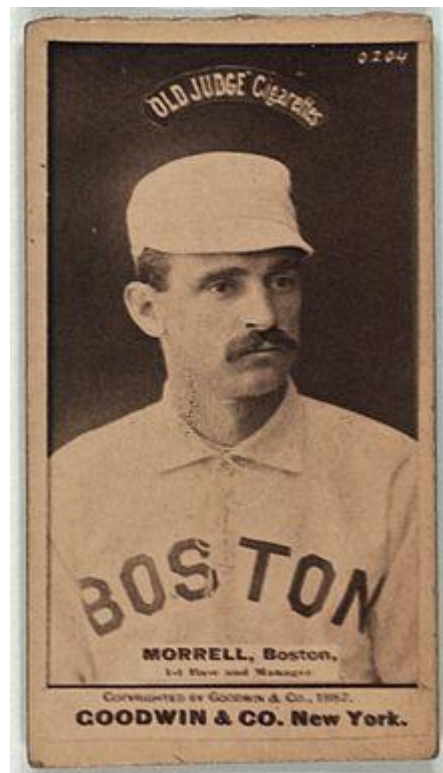
lucky bound from Bond to 3B Harry Schaefer, and the striker was thrown out.”

St. Louis added three more runs in the fifth (Force getting another RBI single), but McKenna ended the inning with an easy pop out to first base. The following frame added another three tallies to the home team total, with Mike Dorgan’s second triple of the game driving two runners. The Browns’ lead was up to 10-1, and two Boston runs in the bottom of the ninth were of little importance.

Singles by Force and Joe Battin put men on first and second as McKenna came up for his fourth at bat. This time he “drove a fierce liner direct at [second baseman] George Wright.” Wright made the catch and threw to first baseman John Morrill to double Battin off first. Morrill then returned the ball to Wright, who stepped on second to retire Force before he could get back to the bag completing “a brilliant triple play.”

Today’s fan might think that McKenna’s hard hit out came in what might have been his final at bat of the game. After all, the home team was ahead by nine runs going into the eighth inning. However, St. Louis was batting in the top of the inning, as mandated by NL rules in 1877 (and 1877 only). Even so, by modern rules his team would need to get at least two men on base for McKenna’s spot in the order to come around to bat in the ninth inning. But the rules back then stated “the first striker in each inning shall be the batsman whose name follows that of the third man out in the preceding (sic) inning.” This old rule had

been added to the expanded rule book in 1868. In practice it had likely been around prior to that. It



John Morrill

would last one more season before the 1879 rules changed the wording to “the first batter in each inning shall be the batsman whose name follows that of the last man who has completed his turn (time) at bat in the preceding inning.” This rule has remained in effect ever since.

For McKenna, the old rule assured him of an at bat in the next inning. His liner to George Wright had been the first out of the seventh, Battin got caught off first base and became the second out and Force was the last man out in the inning at second base. So Battin led off the eighth for St. Louis and grounded out. Getting his extra

*(Continued on page 4)*

# The Odd Case of McKenna (cont.)

National League Box Score from July 14, 1877 (appeared in St. Louis Globe Democrat July 15, 1877 page 7.)														
St Louis	T	R	1B	P.O.	A.	E.		Boston	T	R	1b	P.O.	A.	E.
Dorgan, r.f.	5	4	3	4	0	3		Wright, 2b	4	1	1	4	3	2
Clapp, c.	5	1	2	6	1	2		Leonard, l.f.	3	0	1	3	0	0
McGeary, 2b	5	3	3	1	2	1		O'Rourke, c.f.	4	1	1	3	0	0
Croft, l.f.	5	0	1	4	0	0		White, r.f.	4	1	2	1	2	0
Force, s.s.	5	0	5	3	2	0		Sutton, s.s.	4	0	1	1	0	1
Battin, 3b	5	0	1	1	0	0		Bond, p	4	0	0	0	3	0
McKenna cf	5	0	1	1	0	0		Morrill, 1b	4	0	0	9	1	1
Blong, p	4	1	2	1	9	1		Brown, c.	4	0	0	5	1	2
Dehlman, 1b	4	1	1	6	0	0		Schaefer, 3b	4	0	1	1	2	0
Total	43	10	19	27	17	7		Total	35	3	7	27	12	6

Total Bases On Hits— St. Louis 23; Boston 7. Three-base Hits— Dorgan 2. Two-Base Hits— Clapp 1; McGeary 1. Bases on called balls— Leonard. Runs Earned— St. Louis 7. Time of Game— Two hours and ten minutes. Umpire— Mr. Burtis.

St. Louis	2	0	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	10
Boston	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3

## Additional Game Statistics of Interest to the Modern Fan

Struck Out— by Blong 9 (Wright 2, O'Rourke, White, Bond 2, Brown 2, Schaefer.

By Bond 3 (McKenna, Dehlman 2.

Runs Batted In— St. Louis-10 (Dorgan 2, Clapp 3, McGeary, Force 4.

Boston-1 (Leonard)

Stolen Bases— St. Louis 3 (Dorgan 2, McGeary)

Caught Stealing— Boston 1 (White)

Picked Off— St. Louis 1 (Dehlman)

Ground into Double Play— St. Louis 1 (McGeary)

Double Play— Boston 1 (Schaefer to Wright to Morrill)

Triple Play— Boston 1 (Wright to Morrill to Wright)

Passed Balls— St. Louis 1 (Clapp)

Boston 1 (Brown)

Left on Base— St. Louis 6, Boston 6

Earned Runs (using modern rules)- St. Louis 7, Boston 1

Attendance- "only tolerable""

## The Odd Case of McKenna (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

chance, McKenna “placed a safe fly over second” for a base hit. He was left on third base and did not get up in the ninth inning.

The Browns gave another local a chance and Patrick returned to the

Grand Avenues, although he left that team in a dispute with the club officers in August. He was not called back to play for the Browns again, and his “Big League Career” ended with a batting average of .200 and a field-

ing average of 1.000. He may be the only player in history to hit into a triple play in his one and only game. But without that triple-killing, he probably would show a .000 average in the books.

## Chairman's Corner (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

vice to our Nineteenth Century Committee was announced at our Annual Business Meeting during SABR 51 in Chicago. This year's recipient is **Sam Gazdziak** who two years ago, took on the **Chair of our 19cBB Grave Marker Project Committee**. Sam was partly responsible for the marking of the graves of Luiz Castro in Queens, NY; then went on to Ed Williamson in Chicago, IL; then assisted the San Diego SABR Chapter with another marker placement and; most recently, the placing of a monument on the grave of 19<sup>th</sup> century pitching great **Bobby Mathews**. A dedication and a baseball burial tour led by SABR's Babe Ruth Chapter will take place at New Cathedral Cemetery, Baltimore, Sat. August 26, 2023.

**The Overlooked 19<sup>th</sup> Century Baseball Legends Project Committee** conducted its 2023 final SABR-wide election this past May and June to determine the 2023 Overlooked Legend. The results were announced at this year's Annual Business Meeting of the Nineteenth Century Committee at SABR 51. Please, see, inside this issue for the full election results.

**The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Baseball Speakers Series** has been finalized for Season IV, September 2023 through May 2024. A full schedule of these popular monthly illustrated Zoom Meeting Research Presentations along with: presenter's names, titles and a brief description of each talk are contained in this newsletter. So mark your calendar for every second Tuesday

evening of the month from September through May at 8:p.m, eastern time for the 40 – 50 minute presentations.

**NEW: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Baseball Book Club** has already gotten underway by the time you read this newsletter. Several Group Emails have already been sent to all of our Nineteenth Century Committee Members in June to announce this new program. We are fortunate to have four outstanding **19cBB Book Club Moderators: Matt Albertson, Jack Bales, Jim Chakulski and Kevin Kreiner**, each discussing an important and informative book during this summer quarter.

Bob Bailey and Peter Mancuso, Co-Chairs, “...because, baseball history is not only baseball



# Some of Willie Keeler's Best Fielding Performances

## by Brian Marshall

Baseball fans, researchers and historians have all seen fantastic, great, phenomenal catches by outfielders over the years while either witnessing them live or watching them live on television or as highlights on television. I suspect most of those people have seen video of the Willie Mays over-the-shoulder basket catch or video of an outfielder diving to make a catch, or an outfielder crashing into the outfield wall while making a catch, or an outfielder catching the ball in the very webbing of their glove to make the game saving play. Those plays are watched in amazement and wonder but how many readers would believe that each of those sorts of plays had also been made by the outfielders during the nineteenth century. The major difference being that the outfielders didn't have the benefit of a glove, with webbing, that extended well past the end of the fingers, to make the catches with. In the nineteenth century the players used their hands to catch the ball. Oh, towards the end of the nineteenth century, it is true that some of the players may have worn a "mitt", as they were known at the time, of sorts but that mitt was nothing like the size and style of glove that the players wear in the game today.

This article will present and discuss examples of catches, and plays, that were made by one William Henry Keeler aka "Wee Willie" Keeler during the time, 1894 through 1898, that he played for the Baltimore Orioles. Keeler may have been small in stature but he was big in playing ability and is/was probably best known for his

ability to make a hit by "hitting them where they ain't" as Keeler was known to have said. Hitting wasn't Keeler's only strength, he also excelled at base running and fielding.

Keeler made catches in the outfield that could arguably



Willie Keeler

have been considered both truly phenomenal, and extraordinary at the same time, while also providing a full display of his athleticism. It is the opinion of this researcher that some of Keeler's catches may be easier to achieve by the outfielders in the game today simply because the outfielders today can reach out and catch the ball in a large glove. The difference being that Keeler didn't have the benefit of the increased surface area that a large glove provides. From an athleticism perspective it is the opinion of this researcher that Keeler may have had an edge because he was both quick and

fast. His quickness was demonstrated many times running to first base to beat out a bunt and his speed was demonstrated each time he had to run to catch up with a fly ball that was apparently headed to be a safe hit but ended up in Keeler's hands as a catch.

Willie Keeler came to the Baltimore Orioles in a trade that, in hindsight, seems to defy logic. On December 29, 1893 Manager Hanlon of the Orioles acquire none other than Dan Brouthers, an established and proven commodity at the time, and Willie Keeler, an up-and-coming player, in exchange for two journeyman players, Billy Shindle and George Treadway. A person has to wonder what Manager Dave Foutz of Brooklyn thought he was getting in acquiring Shindle and Treadway. Neither Shindle, an infielder, or Treadway, an outfielder, had the pedigree of Brouthers although Shindle was considerably more experienced than Keeler. From a batting perspective both Shindle and Treadway were sub-three hundred hitters while both Brouthers and Keeler had batting averages above three hundred in 1893. Then, of course, with hindsight being 20/20, there is the ultimate factor being that both Brouthers and Keeler would go on to become Hall of Famers, an honor that neither Shindle or Treadway have achieved.

The diminutive Keeler patrolled the territory in right field, an area dubbed "Keeler's Garden" by the journalists of the

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Willie Keeler's Best Fielding Performances (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

time for the Baltimore Orioles from 1894 through 1898. At the time when Willie Keeler came to Baltimore the right field area at Union Park was an interesting place to say the least. Firstly it was about five feet, give or take, lower than the area around home plate and secondly it was something on the order of a quagmire that featured areas of standing water at times. The description of right field that appeared in *Green Cathedrals*, Fifth Edition follows;

"Fly balls to right field were quite an adventure because the field sloped steeply down to the right field fence, and because the water from a nearby stream (Brady's Run) created a perpetual swamp in right by oozing underneath the outfield fence."

Authors Evers and Fullerton in their book, *Touching Second: The Science of Baseball*, stated that the right field area at Union Park was downhill with a high fence, suitably constructed for advertising purposes, along its outer margin. The intriguing aspect about the right field fence was that it apparently sloped rather significantly. According to authors Evers and Fullerton the right field fence sloped at an angle of about 65 degrees. An idea of the sloping relationship of the fence in right field with respect to the field is provided by *The Baltimore Sun* in the following quote;

"Brouthers's (sic) home run in the fifth was somewhat unusual. The ball went over Canavan's (Cincinnati right fielder) head on the line, struck the right field fence,

rolled up it and then disappeared over it."

Regarding the Brouthers home run, it stands to reason that if the right field fence was perpendicular to the ground surface the ball would have quite likely bounced off it back towards the field rather than rolling up it and disappearing over it. A further quote that supports the fence having a sloping orientation with respect to the field is the following;

"In the first inning, when Latham sent the ball to the centre-field fence for a two-base hit, Keeler literally ran up the fence and caught the sphere before it got back to the ground. His quick fielding prevented Arile (sic) from making three bases."

A play that reeks of athleticism, effort, and borders on being truly phenomenal was Keeler's somersault catch and subsequent throw to first base to complete a double play is described in the quote below;

"The greatest play of the game was a catch by Keeler in the fifth inning. With one out and Jones on first base, Anderson hit a low line fly to right field. Keeler ran up on it like a flash, stuck his hands under it just before it touched the ground, turned a somersault, with the ball tightly squeezed in his hands, and, jumping up, threw it to Doyle, completing a double play on Jones, who had run around to third base."

The somersault catch and throw-out play may have been the great-

est individual play of Keeler's career but it also may have been one of the greatest plays by an outfielder in the history of MLB. Keeler's catch was made without the benefit of a humungous glove, like the outfielders wear in the game today, and after turning a somersault in making the catch, Keeler still had the presence of mind to make the throw to first base to complete a double play. There have been a number of spectacular diving catches, catches at the wall and over the shoulder catches made by outfielders over the years but I suspect not many, if any, that involved running hard to catch a ball, then catching the ball very near the ground, then turning a somersault while still hanging onto the ball, then having the capacity to make a throw to complete a double play. Wouldn't it be special to have video of Keeler's play? The play apparently was truly stunning to say the least and was/is quite possibly unprecedented in MLB history.

Just two days after his somersault catch and throw-out play, Keeler made a catch that was considered to be "the most sensational catch seen at Union Park this (1897) season". The catch was made off the bat of Jake Beckley in the fourth inning of a game played on April 30, 1897 against the New York Giants. According to the *Baltimore American* Beckley had made "violent contact with one of Hoffer's fast ones". The catch was described in *The Baltimore Sun* as follows;

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# Willie Keeler's Best Fielding Performances (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

"Beckley picked out a good one, caught it right, and it went sailing for the right field fence. Keeler was after it like a flash, as usual. He kept ahead of it until he got to the fence and had to stop. Then he saw that the ball, if let alone, would strike the boards above his head. He made a running jump up on the fence and caught the ball. As he took it one foot was on the side of the fence and the other dangling in the air. When he returned to terra firma with the ball in his hand there was a perfect roar of applause."

With Keeler apparently being able to run up onto the fence to catch Beckley's hit it lends further credence to the right field fence being sloped with respect to the field.

Keeler may have made one of the first over the shoulder catches in MLB history. The catch happened during an intra-squad game in Macon, Georgia prior to the 1897 season. The game was played on March 25, 1897 and the play, made in the third inning, was described in *The Baltimore Sun* as follows;

"Reitz (of the Champions aka Regulars) hit a long low fly to deep right, which Keeler (of the Yanigans) went after like a flash, dashing through the mud and water that covers the deep outfield, and he got the ball on the dead run as it came over his shoulder. It was one

of these great catches wherewith "Willie" is wont to electrify the crowd in mid-season and fill the hearts of bleacherites with tumultuous joy."

The *Baltimore American* reported that Keeler "had to run back clear to the fence, and jump several of the small-sized lakes in right field to get it."

Willie Keeler may have made one of the most unique catches in MLB history. The catch occurred on May, 10, 1897 in a game against the Washington Senators at National Park aka Boundary Field in Washington, D.C. A peculiarity of the Senators' ballpark at the time was the three strings of barbed wire on top of the six foot high right field fence. In the first inning Kip Selbach hit a liner that was headed for the bleachers in right field but Keeler ran to the ball, leaped up, stuck his hand into the barbed wire fencing and managed to latch onto it. The catch literally stole a home run away from Kip Selbach. The truly amazing thing, in addition to the fact that Keeler made the catch through the barbed wire fencing, was that he came away from it unscathed and was able to continue playing.

The reader can decide for themselves, but *The Washington Post* article contains statements that may be considered contradictory related to how Keeler caught the ball. The first statement was; "... Keeler stopped the passage of the sphere by shoving his left arm into the barbed wire netting..." and the second statement was; "... Willie Keeler, advanced on a side run, flung his left arm over the

barbed wire fence, and clung to the ball."

This is purely speculative but the fact that Keeler was able to continue playing supports the notion that he did not have a deep gash in his arm or his hand from the barbed wire fencing. If he had, the gash quite likely would have required immediate medical attention and included stitches, which would have delayed the game to attend to Keeler and very possibly put him out of the game. *The Washington Post* article provided some insight regarding Keeler's well being with the following statement; "Willie's escape from scratching his hand on the barbed wire was as marvelous as his catch."

In the game on August 20, 1897 against the Cleveland Spiders, Keeler made two great catches and one of them was described in the *Baltimore American* as follows;

"Willie made a grand run down to the fence, and then, grabbing the ball, ran up the fence like a squirrel."

The "Ran up the Fence Like a Squirrel" catch suggests that the right field fence was sloped with respect to the field.

During a game played on August 7, 1895 between Baltimore and Philadelphia, the bases were full, there was one out in the eighth when Keeler made a catch then followed it up with a tremendous throw to home plate to complete a double play and end the inning. The play was

(Continued on page 8)

## Willie Keeler's Best Fielding Performances (cont.)

(Continued from page 7)

described in *The Baltimore Sun* as follows;

"Hamilton hit a fly to Keeler and when it was caught Boyle started home from third. To reach home safely meant to tie the score. No sooner had the ball settled in Willie's hand than he sent it whizzing to the plate. It bounded straight into Clarke's hands and Boyle was nailed by six feet. This was the best play of the game."

Keeler's catch of a Stenzel hit was considered, at the time, to be the greatest catch at Union Park. The catch, and subsequent double play, was made in the ninth inning of the second game of a double header with Pittsburgh on August 30, 1895. The play was described in *The Baltimore Sun* as follows;

"Beckley was on first, with one out, when Stenzel sent the ball on a line for the right-field fence, near the foul line. It seemed surely a three base hit, and Beckley sped for home to save his club a shut-out. Keeler, while going at full speed after the ball, threw

out his left hand just as he was about to strike the fence, and the ball stuck there. Beckley was already

likely be considered alongside the Keeler somersault catch and throw-out play as two of the greatest fielding plays Keeler

made during his career. Both were spectacular in nature, both reeked of athleticism and both resulted in double plays at first base.

With men on second and third and none out, Willie Keeler made a hard run, then a tremendous catch, then made a throw to complete a double play at second base. The game was played in Cincinnati against the Cincinnati Reds on May 8, 1896. The play was described in *The Baltimore Sun* as follows;

"Burke hit a liner to right centre, which looked perfectly good for a hit, so good in fact that the base-runners started for home, although nobody was out. Keeler seemed to be provided with wings for he caught the

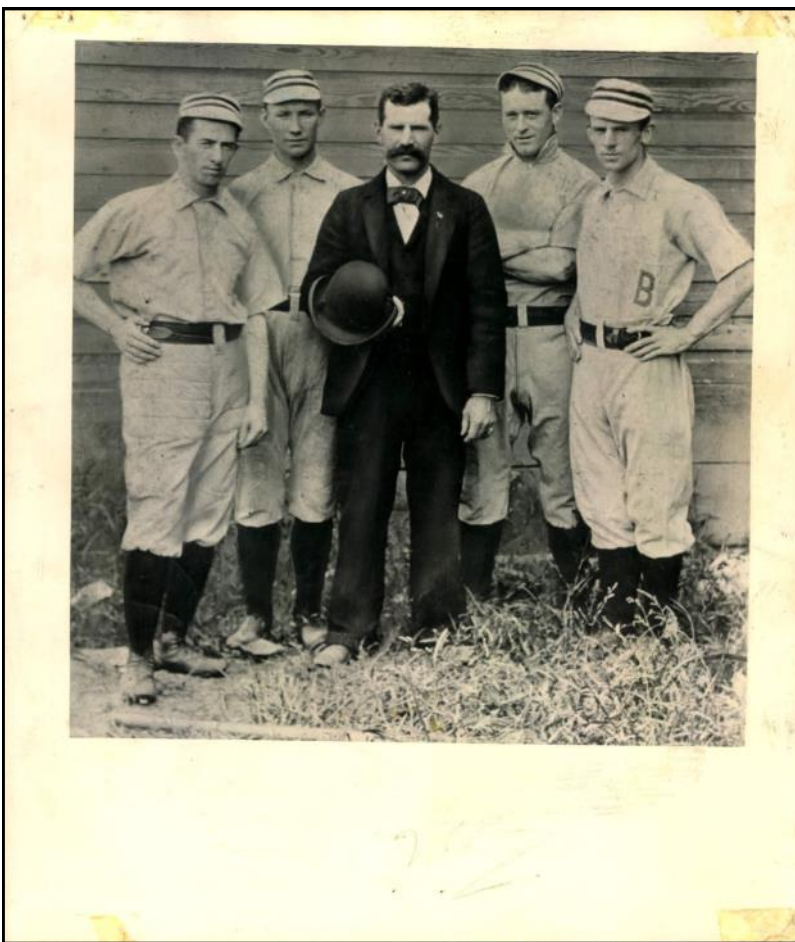
ball in its swift flight toward the fence and made the double play at second base."

passed third base. He refused to believe that Keeler had caught the ball and came in and touched the plate, but Billy, after he had scraped himself off the fence, tossed the ball into Carey and the game was over."

This catch and double play can

In their book, *Touching Second: The Science of Baseball* authors Evers and Fullerton describe a catch, on page 294, by Keeler that raises questions. The

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Willie Keeler, Hughie Jennings, Thomas Murphy, Baltimore Groundskeeper, Joe Kelley, John McGraw



## Willie Keeler's Best Fielding Performances (cont.)

(Continued from page 8)

description alludes to a game involving the Boston Beaneaters and a hit by a player named "Stahl" who apparently "drove a long fly to right that seemed likely to win the game for Boston". Given that the game was played in Baltimore, and it involved Willie Keeler, it placed the game between the 1894 and 1898 seasons. During that time frame, the only "Stahl" that played for the Beaneaters was Chick Stahl, who played for the Beaneaters beginning with the 1897 season. That meant that the play described by Evers and Fullerton had to have happened in 1897 or 1898 during a game in Baltimore. The author conducted research to determine the details regarding the specific game that the "Stahl" play oc-

curred in but that effort failed to identify an applicable play. It is unclear, at this point, what specific play Evers and Fullerton were describing on page 294 of their book.

The author wonders if Evers and Fullerton may have erred when they referred to Stahl and the Beaneaters but it is important to understand that the description of the catch is similar to catches Keeler had made at Union Park, and that are described in this article.

When a biographer writes a biography of a player it isn't often that they include many details, if any, regarding great fielding performances and/or the great plays made during a single game. The details of these great fielding performances and plays are not only important aspects of

a player's baseball career but they are just as important as a player's batting performances and therefore need to be told. This article has discussed a number of the extraordinary catches/plays that were made by Willie Keeler during the time that he played for the Baltimore Orioles. It is unfortunate that we don't have the benefit of a video for each of the plays but we do have the newspapers and the journalists of the time more often than not described the phenomenal/extraordinary plays of the period. The great fielding catches and plays made by Willie Keeler, during the nineteenth century, are all the more impressive because the plays were made in the hands without the benefit of a glove, with webbing, that extended well past the end of the fingers.

## News & Notes

-19th Century Committee member Justin McKinney is the recipient of the 2023 Baseball Research Award for his book entitled *Baseball's Union Association: The Short, Strange Life of a 19th Century Major League*.

--In 1960 the Chicago White Sox placed the player's names on the back of their uniform. But the origin of the idea went back a few years. From the *Sporting Life*, June 20, 1891, page 9: "A Novel Suggestion, A "Fan" Would Like Ball Players Names Placed on Their Shirts. To: Editor *Sporting Life*:— Kindly permit the space

necessary for a suggestion that will, in the writer's estimation, add greatly to the interest in our national game. Not only those who go occasionally, but the steady goers, lovers of the game (and even "fans") find it difficult to recognize the visiting players and call them by name, even by the aid of a score card, as very few keep the score, so that after the first or second inning, they are completely mixed up... This trouble can be overcome by having the name of the player in large letters across the breast, either worked in his shirt or on a band that can be buttoned across

his bosom. This, the writer thinks, will add greatly to the convenience and be appreciated by every one interested in the game." (signed) A "Fan"

-The Origins Committee Newsletter was released in May. Check the Committee's webpage at SABR.org to peruse articles on the early, early game of baseball and recent Protoball additions.



# Photos From the Fred

photos by Dixie Tourangeau



Co-chair Peter Mancuso opens Fred Conference in HOF Grandstand Theater



Breakfast in the Giamatti Library.  
We do love to eat.



Mitch Lutzke presents on the Page Fence Giants



Bullpen Theater Audience



19th Century Artifact Display including first edition  
*Peverelly American Pastimes*



Bob Mayer Member Spotlight Interview

# 19th Century Speakers Series 2023-2024

The fourth season of the 19th Century Baseball Speakers Series has been set and each speaker and topic is listed below.

The series presents research presentations via Zoom to the Committee membership from September through May. Each session is held on the second Tuesday of the month and starts at 8 PM Eastern Time. The SABR office distributes a link to the sessions on the day of each presentation.

This year's series is as follows:

September 12, 2023 at 8 PM EDT. Bill Humber presents "An Unheralded Ancestry: Baseball's Missing Chapter." Humber explores the North American development of baseball that includes the contributions to the growth of the game in Canada.

October 10, 2023 at 8 PM EDT. Jack Bales presents "The Mysterious Lewis Meacham: The Untold Story of William Hulbert's Right-Hand Man." Lewis Meacham was a Chicago sports reporter and ally of Hulbert as he worked to found the National League and put Chicago at the center of the baseball world.

November 14, 2023 at 8 PM EST. Justin McKinney presents "The 1890 Philadelphia Athletics: How a Pennant Contender Became the Worst Team of All Time." McKinney tells the story of the woeful 1890 Athletics. A proud franchise that struggled financially, could not pay their players, and ended the season with a pick-up team.

December 12, 2023 at 8 PM EST. Gregory Wolf presents "Bill Hutchison: A Forgotten Star, Standing 55 1/2 Feet From Home Plate." From 1890 to 1892 Hutchison won 121 games and was a top pitcher in the NL. He fell off dramatically in 1893 when the pitching distance was increased by five feet. But there are other factors that may have been more important in his decline. Wolf will examine the major league career of Bill Hutchison.

January 9, 2024 at 8 PM EST. Tom Gilbert presents "Amateurism, True Crime, and Baseball." Gilbert will present some neer-do-wells of the amateur era of baseball's development who had serious run-ins with the law while playing baseball and beyond.

February 13, 2024 at 8 PM EST. Matt Albertson presents "The Scorecard Vote: A Fan's View of the 1895 Phillies." In 1895 the Philadelphia Phillies had a fan vote for the most popular/most valuable Phillie. Albertson will examine the 1895 Philadelphia season and how the fans selected the winning player.

March 12, 2024 at 8 PM EDT. Paul Browne presents "Hustling' Dan O'Leary." While largely forgotten today, Dan O'Leary was always ready to give reporters a lively story, or commit some outlandish act that got his name in the papers. He once bet the team's payroll on a game to "motivate" the squad to victory. If they won they would be paid and treated to a sumptuous meal. If they lost, they lost their pay. Browne will profile the colorful O'Leary as he "danced on the edge of fame and infamy."

April 9, 2024 at 8 PM EDT. Elena Dugan presents "In Spite of His Color, He Is Captain of the Baseball Nine This Year." Dugan will focus on the lives and amateur athletic careers of three Phillips Andover players: Chentung Liang Cheng, a Chinese student, graduating class of 1881; William Taylor Burwell Williams, a Black student, graduating class of 1893; and William Clarence Matthews, also a Black student, graduating class of 1901. Of the three, Matthews is the most well-known, but all three help us better understand the complicated and often-awkward lives of players on integrated baseball teams in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

May 14, 2024 at 8 PM EDT. Vincent Ciaramella presents "Death By Drinking Seawater: The Short Tragic Life and Career of Tom O'Brien." The presentation certainly portends an interesting story of a player's attempt to combat seasickness, make a trip to Havana, and ultimately cause his premature death. In addition O'Brien was not the only player on his ship to ingest seawater but only O'Brien succumbed.

Join us the second Tuesday each month from September to May for tales of the 19th Century.



# 19th Century Book Club Reminder

**T**his is a reminder of our Summer 2023 quarter of our 19cBB Book Club discussions. (with this edition of the Newsletter being issued after the SABR Convention, the July 12 Book Club Session may have already been held). All Nineteenth Century Committee Members will receive a Committee-wide group email from SABR during the month immediately prior to each quarter of the annual cycle, e.g. in June for the Summer cycle covering July, August, and September. There will also be a reminder, about a week in advance of each discussion sent to all Committee Members to alert them to the upcoming discussion.

All **19cBB Book Club** discussions will take place at 8:00p.m., ET unless specifically stated otherwise. All sessions will be recorded on YouTube and become available on the SABR website within several days of the session, under "Virtual Events" if you should miss the session. The Moderator will determine (dependent on the size of the group) if the group members should be muted or not and use of the chat and/or hand signal buttons. Naturally, we ask members to be respectful in terms of language and being aware of not dominating a discussion.

All Book Club sessions are designed to encourage participation by attendees with a lively exchanges of the book under discussion.

We ask all Committee Members interested in a specific book(s) to obtain the book(s) at their earliest convenience and begin reading the book(s) as soon as possible in time to finish the book(s) before the respective discussion date. Please, use the moderators' emails sparingly.

**All books, unused and used**

copies, are available on Amazon and abebooks.com

**First Discussion Moderator, Jack Bales, Email:**

[jbales@umw.edu](mailto:jbales@umw.edu)

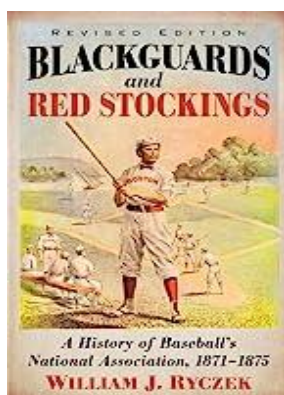
**Via Zoom Meeting, Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 8:p.m., ET. "Spalding's World Tour: The Epic Adventure That Took Baseball Around the Globe – And Made It America's Game";** Lamster, Mark; 2006; Public Affairs; NY; 341 pages.



**Second Discussion Moderator, James Chakulski, Email:**

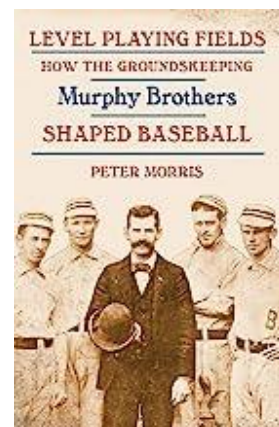
[jchakulski@yahoo.com](mailto:jchakulski@yahoo.com)

**Via Zoom Meeting, Tuesday, August 1, 2023, 8:p.m., ET. "Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National Association, 1871-1875;"** Ryczek, William J.; 1992 (2026 Revised); McFarland Publishers; Jefferson, NC; 272 pages.



**Third Discussion Moderator, Matt Albertson, Email:** [malbert86@gmail.com](mailto:malbert86@gmail.com)

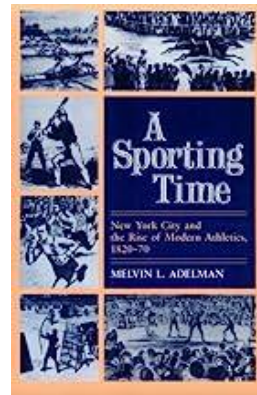
**Via Zoom Meeting, Thursday, August 24, 2023, 8:p.m., ET. "Level Playing Fields: How the Groundskeeping Murphy Brothers Shaped Baseball";** Morris, Peter; 2007; University of Nebraska Press; Lincoln, NB; 184 pages.



**Fourth Discussion Moderator, Kevin Kreiner, Email:**

[doctorkreiner@gmail.com](mailto:doctorkreiner@gmail.com)

**Via Zoom Meeting, Thursday, September 14, 2023, 8:p.m., ET. "A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-1870";** Adelman, Melvin L; University of Illinois; 1986; Urbana and Chicago; 389 pages.



# Annual Meeting Report

The Nineteenth Century Baseball Committee held its Annual Meeting at the SABR National Convention in Chicago on July 6.

Reports were delivered on various Committee Projects. Bob LeMoine, head of the Orem Citation Project, reported that while they have good progress locating the sources of many of the items referred to in Orem's 1881 to 1882 addenda to his original publication, the effort has slowed recently. He noted that with the amount of on-line newspapers and other sources you can work from home to gather these citations and forward them to Bob. Bob's email is [Librarybobl@gmail.com](mailto:Librarybobl@gmail.com).

Adam Darowski announce that Bobby Matthews had been selected as the 19th Century Overlooked Legend for 2023. More details on Matthew's selection can be found on page 15 of the Newsletter.

Sam Gazdziak, chair of the 19th century Grave Marker Project has received this year's Co-Chairmen Award for his service to the Committee over the past year. Sam worked through the supply chain difficulties to get the long-awaited grave marker for Bobby Matthews placed in New Cathedral Cemetery, Baltimore. The Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter of SABR will hold a dedication ceremony on August 26 at the cemetery. Sam also submitted a report on potential unmarked graves he is working on. These include Charlie Sweasey in Evergreen Cemetery, Hillside, NJ; Dick McBride and Fred Dunlap in Lawnview Cemetery, Rockledge, PA; Tom York in Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY; Ned Cuthbert in Bellefontaine Ceme-

tery, St. Louis; Bill Dahlen in Evergreens Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY; and Charley Jones in Lutheran All Faiths Cemetery, Middle Village, NY. We need folks to visit these cemeteries to confirm that the graves are unmarked, find the exact location of the plot, and talk with the Cemetery Administrators on the cemetery rules for our group to place a marker on the grave. Sam can be contacted at [grievousangel@gmail.com](mailto:grievousangel@gmail.com).

Also announced at the Meeting was the start of the 19th Century Book Club. This is a Zoom activity for members to engage in a discussion of books on 19th Century Books. We have four Moderators ready to lead groups in the discussion of books selected by the Moderators. The first session will be held at 8PM eastern time via Zoom on July 12. Jack Bales will be the Moderator and the book will be *Spalding's World Tour* by Mark Lamster. The SABR office will send out Zoom links to all committee members.

The dates for the Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Baseball Conference were announced. The 2024 conference will be held at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown on April 19-20, 2024. Call for abstracts for presentations will be announced later in July with an October 31 Deadline. Details for the Conference will be announced in the Winter 2024 Committee Newsletter.

It was announced that all future 19th Century Baseball Interdisciplinary Symposia will be held via Zoom. Anyone interested in holding such a Conference can contact Peter Mancuso or

Bob Bailey to discuss organizing a Zoom Conference in your area.

During the Convention the SABR Board announce the formation of a Research Preservation Committee. While the Committee is still in the formative stages its general function is to collect baseball research from various sources and develop ways to preserve and make it available to SABR members for their use,

For example, many SABR members maintain research lists of compilations of dates, documents, or events that would be useful in someone's research if they knew it existed. The general idea is to gather this material and develop a methodology to post it on the SABR website and make it available to SABR members. Think of the Research Resources Page many, many, many times larger.

For example, at the Convention we discovered members who collect data on Inside-the-Park Grand Slams. A member has a raft of data on the Dixie Series between the Texas League and Southern Association played from 1920 to 1958 (with a few futile attempts to revive the series in the 1960s and 1970s). There is also a member who is working to compile every selection in the Rule 5 draft.

These items may not be exciting as integrating Negro League statistics into the Major League statistics, but we are better off having them preserved than lost.

If you wish to let us know of any research you have developed over the course of your rolling through microfilm or some dusty library collection



# Report on Orem Citation Project

by Bob LeMoine

For the past couple of years, a group of us 19th-century folks have dabbled with Preston Orem's book, *Baseball From the Newspaper Accounts (1882-1891)*.

This book was issued as an e-book through SABR as part of a 19th Century Committee Project. It is available at no cost for download by all SABR members at the SABR website.

This volume presents reproductions of Orem's comb-bound supplements to his self-publish hard-back volume entitled *Baseball (1845-1881) From Newspaper Accounts*.

Orem produced these volumes by traveling throughout the country visiting major city libraries and making notes from the local papers on major league baseball.

Orem meticulously documented newspaper coverage of this era in the days before digitized newspapers.

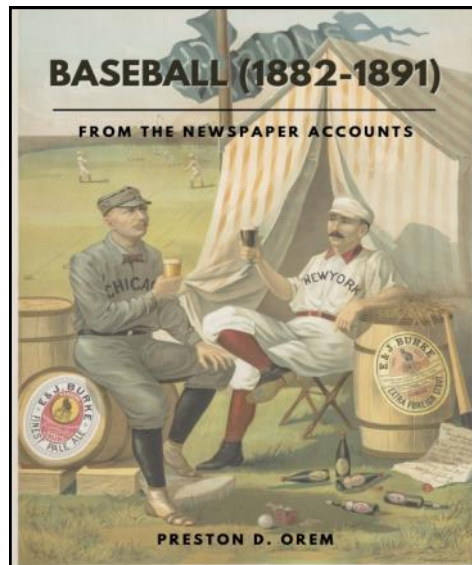
Our task is to find these original sources, since during Orem's day there was little expectation of including citations of your sources. Just locating the sources (mostly via microfilm) was enough of a project.

It is our goal to provide citations for quotes in Orem's work for researchers going forward.

So, a few of us have gone exploring where Orem located his sources, using the new technology we have available to use (newspapers.com and other sources).

Below is an example of a page documenting these citations.

This was an easy one: you can see how many of these significant quotes from the newspapers come from the *New York Tribune*. It isn't always like that, and sometimes we have to give up on a particular quote. So, this is a work in progress with no hard deadline. If



you would like to come on board this unique adventure, or have questions, feel free to reach out to me.

Bob LeMoine:  
LIBRARYBOBL@GMAIL.COM

Samples of citations for *Baseball From Newspaper Accounts (1882-1891)*

**Page:** 522

**Quotation:** "Why, the National League will get the best..."

**Source:** "Players Now Anxious for Peace," *New York Tribune*, October 25, 1890: 3

**Page:** 522

**Quotation:** "Until the fellow capitalists..."

**Source:** most of these quotes on this

and following page are found in "Legal Action Probable," *New York Tribune*, November 3, 1890: 3

**Page:** 523

**Quotation:** "Is it not true..."

**Source:** "Disagreement on Union," *New York Tribune*, November 6, 1890: 12

**Page:** 524

**Quotation:** "10-year agreement"

**Source:** "Growing Desperate," *New York Tribune*, November 6, 1890: 3

**Page:** 525

**Quotation:** "booby pennant"

**Source:** "The Baseball Wranglers," *New York Tribune*, November 14, 1890: 4

**Page:** 525

**Quotation:** "syndicate of capitalists"

**Source:** "Baseball Situation still Muddled," *New York Tribune*, November 15, 1890: 8

**Page:** 525

**Quotation:** "crow was no longer..."

**Source:** "Cincinnati Expelled," *New York Tribune*, November 15, 1890: 7

**Page:** 526

**Quotation:** "he will guide us," "I can't for the life of me,"

**Source:** similarly worded: "The Players' League," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 15, 1890: 6

**Page:** 526

**Quotation:** "Manifesto," (and the following speech on that page)

**Source:** "The War Practically Over," *New York Tribune*, November 16, 1890: 6

## 2023 19th Century Overlooked Legend

**R**obert T. “Bobby” Mathews has been selected as SABR’s Overlooked 19th Century Baseball Legend for 2023. The announcement was made on Thursday, July 6th in the Adams Ballroom at the Nineteenth Century Committee’s annual business meeting at SABR 51 in Chicago.

In the Spring, a total of 201 SABR members submitted their votes for the 2023 Overlooked 19th Century Base Ball Legend — a 19th-century player, manager, executive or other baseball personality not yet inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. The ballot consisted of twelve candidates, three from each of four tracks: Players from the Major Leagues (1876–1900), Pioneers/ Contributors, Managers/ Executives/Umpires, and Black Baseball.

Previous Overlooked Legends were Pete Browning in 2009, Deacon White in 2010, Harry Stovey in 2011, Bill Dahlen in 2012, Ross Barnes in 2013, Doc Adams in 2014, Tony Mullane in 2015, Jack Glasscock in 2016, Bob Caruthers in 2017, Dummy Hoy in 2018, Jim Creighton in 2019, Bud Fowler in 2020, Charlie Bennett in 2021, and Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker last year. White became the first Overlooked Legend to be voted into the Hall of Fame in 2013. Fowler followed him with his 2021 selection and summer 2022 induction.

Robert T. Mathews, winner of 297 games (first all-time when he

retired), was a pioneer pitcher in the development of both the spitball and the curveball. He was the



Bobby Mathews

winning pitcher in the National Association’s first game in 1871. In 1872, he joined Baltimore as their ace, winning 25 games and leading the league in strikeouts (57). Mathews joined the New York Mutuals in 1873, becoming their workhorse while leading the league in strikeouts in both 1873 (79) and 1874 (101), becoming the first pitcher to lead a league in strikeouts three years in a row. His 42 wins in 1874 was second only to Al Spalding’s 52 wins.

Despite the Mutuals being a subpar offensive team, Mathews managed to become the third winningest pitcher (131 wins) in the NA’s existence behind Spalding (204) and Dick McBride (149), and the league’s all-time leader in complete games (236)

and strikeouts (329). From 1877 to 1882, Mathews bounced around from team to team, which ultimately cost him the three “major league” wins he needed for 300. He won just 39 games in those six seasons, although he was a key contributor as the change pitcher for the champion Providence Grays in 1879.

His career was rejuvenated in 1883 when he joined the American Association’s Athletics and led them to the championship. It was the first of three consecutive seasons of 30 wins for the hurler. Mathews finished his career with a record 4,956 innings pitched and a 2.86 ERA. Roger Clemens is the only pitcher with more career wins not in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Mathews was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009, 2010, and from 2012–2023, finishing second last year.

For an extended biography of Bobby Mathews see [his SABR bio](#) written by Brian McKenna.

Earlier this year, the SABR 19th Century Grave Marker Project placed [a new grave marker at the site of Mathews’ burial](#) at New Cathedral Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland. The Baltimore/Babe Ruth Chapter of SABR will hold a dedication ceremony on August 26, 2023.

For more information on the Overlooked 19th Century Baseball Legends Project, visit [SABR.org/overlooked-19th-century-baseball-legends](http://SABR.org/overlooked-19th-century-baseball-legends) or contact Project co-chairs Adam Darowski ([adarowski@gmail.com](mailto:adarowski@gmail.com)) and Joe Williams ([overlookedlegends@gmail.com](mailto:overlookedlegends@gmail.com))

# 2023 Overlooked Legend Results

Name	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Ballots	Points
<b>Bobby Mathews</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>444</b>
Chris Von der Ahe	26	20	25	23	29	123	360
Al Reach	17	27	26	23	18	111	335
George Stovey	16	28	26	18	17	105	323
Tommy Bond	17	22	18	20	19	96	286
Grant “Home Run” Johnson	20	14	15	20	13	82	254
Paul Hines	13	21	15	13	24	86	244
Octavius Catto	18	11	14	15	11	69	217
Cal McVey	16	9	12	12	16	65	192
Joe Start	9	11	14	18	15	67	182
Frank Bancroft	2	7	7	11	15	42	96
Arthur Soden	1	3	5	6	6	21	50

