

The INSIDE GAME



The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XII, NO. 1: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY, LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" APRIL 2012

THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by John McMurray

With the baseball season underway, here is a collection of committee news and opportunities to become involved:

Announcement of the 2012 Ritter Award:

On behalf of subcommittee chair Gail Rowe and the eight other selectors, I am pleased to announce that the 2012 Ritter Award winner is Glenn Stout for his book *Fenway 1912: The Birth of a Ballpark* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). The Ritter Award is given annually to the best book set primarily during the Deadball Era written during the year prior. The two other finalists from the original ten candidates were *Clark Griffith: The Old Fox of Washington Baseball*, by Ted Leavengood (McFarland) and *Baseball's Heartland War, 1902-1903*, by Dennis Pajot (McFarland).

Gail, who oversaw the selection process for the second consecutive year, noted that *Fenway 1912* was "engagingly written, creatively conceived and organized, extensively researched, and rife with fresh material." The Ritter Award will be presented at the Deadball Era Committee annual meeting at SABR42 this summer.

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TWENTY GREATEST BLUNDERS IN THE HISTORY OF BASEBALL REVISITED

[Editor's note: In the last issue, Steve Steinberg and Dennis Pajot presented an article which appeared in various newspapers approximately a hundred years ago with the above title--minus the "Revisited." Steve and Dennis took the time to expand on the blunders while reaching a dead end in some. They also solicited additional blunders as well any commentary related to the dead ends or anything contained in the extensive article.

We received exactly one response, from Cliff Blau, and which is reproduced here.

Back in my college radio days, it was thought that one listener call equalled 100 listeners. So, we could gauge how many people were listening based upon how many times the phone rang.

Apologies for the commentary, as the rest of it will be in my column at the end of this issue, but if that 100-1 ratio is still in effect, I'm mighty disappointed--mostly for Steve and Dennis, who really busted it in putting together the article and solicited responses only to hear crickets.

To Cliff: Thank you very much.

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REAL TO REEL

[Editor's note: This article, with the above headline, originally appeared in the Daily Journal, which covers Johnson County, Indiana, and was written by **Ryan Trares**. The subject matter--both Rube Waddell, as well as SABR member **Dan O'Brien**, who wrote a screenplay about the eccentric southpaw and is looking to bring it to the big screen--is right up our alley here at The Inside Game. Many thanks to Ryan and the Daily Journal for allowing their article to be reprinted here. Enjoy!]

From the depths of baseball history, Dan O'Brien has found the perfect movie character.

He's a man who wrestled alligators and showed up to the ballpark in a bright red firefighter's uniform. He did cartwheels on the pitcher's mound and played local kids for their marbles minutes before the start of a game.

But most importantly, he's also one of the best left-handed hurlers in baseball history.

For the past 17 years, O'Brien has been following the trail of the larger-than-life legend of George

Edward "Rube" Waddell. O'Brien, a Greenwood resident, has written a screenplay about the Hall of Fame pitcher, capturing his childlike exuberance for baseball, his offbeat sense of humor and his absolute dominance of the sport.

The hope is to turn Waddell's story into a feature film, and though his efforts haven't had success yet, O'Brien believes he's getting closer to seeing the movie made.

"I wanted to try and get inside Rube Waddell's head, which is a weird place to be," he said. "I don't have to make any of this stuff up. This is the way this guy just was."

In O'Brien's home is the evidence of his fascination.

His Greenwood office is filled with framed black-and-white photographs and photocopied newspaper articles. File cabinets overflow with obituaries, box scores, columns from the early 1900s and a deposition from a divorce case.

On his computer, more than 1,000 documents have been collected and stored.

"People ask, 'Will I ever stop researching Rube?'" he said. "Not likely. I'm always hopeful I'll find that one little nugget out there."

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The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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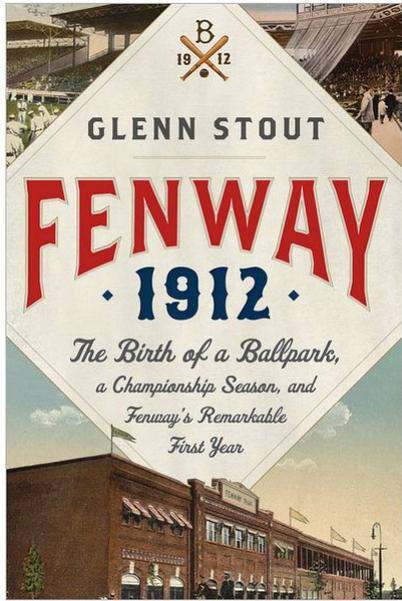
NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Deadball Era Committee is happy to welcome newcomers to SABR who have expressed interest in the Deadball Era.

Dirk Durstein
William Fragaszy
Derek Norin
Mark Pestana
Robert Ruzzo
Grant Smith

They, as well as all who contributed to this issue, can be contacted through the SABR directory and, of course, all participation and contributions are most welcome.

**RITTER AWARD
WINNER**



**FENWAY 1912:
THE BIRTH OF A BALLPARK,
A CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON,
AND FENWAY'S
REMARKABLE FIRST YEAR
BY GLENN STOUT**

*2011. New York:
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
[ISBN 978-0-547-19562-9.
416 pp. \$26.00 USD,
Hardcover]*

Reviewed by
William F. Ross

2012 marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of Boston's Fenway Park and we can expect a deluge of books covering "America's Most Beloved Ballpark." Glenn Stout, however, has stolen a march on the competition with the publication of *Fenway 1912*—an excellent and comprehensive history of the park and its first year.

Others may (and will) follow with their own takes on the park's inaugural season but it is hard to imagine that the wealth of material provided here could be improved upon. Mr. Stout weaves a fine narrative, keeping the facts straight, the thoughts witty and the story moving forward.

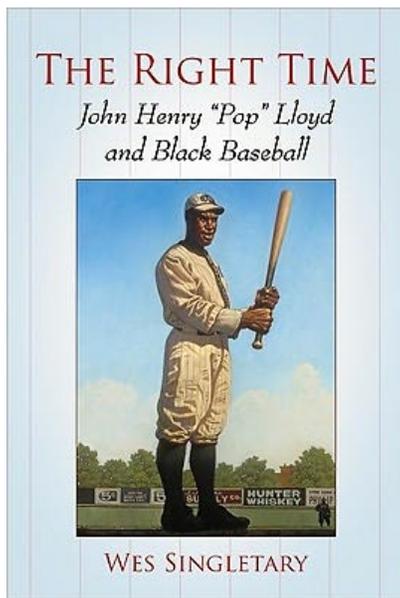
In 1911 the Taylors (father and son), then the majority owners of the Boston Red Sox, faced an important decision. The team's lease at the Huntington Avenue Grounds was up and, owing to the growing needs of the nearby rail yard, could not be renewed. The Taylors decided to approach the situation as an opportunity to better their own business interests. Noting that while the lease they paid at Huntington Avenue was a constant amount, providing a steady income for their landlord, the team's own income was more unpredictable, depending on gate receipts affected by the weather. Deciding to make a change, and in conjunction with a real estate venture they were developing in the Fens area of the city, the Taylors sold majority control of the team to new owners with the stipulation that the Red Sox would play in a park built and operated by the Taylors. (Team and field ownership would remain separate until 1923.) Architect James McLaughlin was engaged to design the facility and the

company of Charles Logue was contracted to carry out the construction. Thus was born Fenway Park.

Mr. Stout takes us through the stories large and small behind the sale of the team, the design and construction of the park, the regular season, and the 1912 World Series against McGraw's Giants. His narrative, based on impeccable research, casts a fairly wide net without losing the immediate focus of his tale. Although it wouldn't be built for decades, for example, he has time to touch on why the feature called "the Wall" in contemporary accounts received the nickname "Green Monster" that we know it by today. (It is only tangentially related to the color.) It helps, but is not necessary, to know some local baseball lore when reading this book. For example, in explaining what appear to be some of the most arcane ground rules you've ever heard of for the 1912 Series, such as the fact that a line drive that bounced between the horizontal—yes, horizontal—slats of a temporary fence in right would be a home run, Mr. Stout brings the information home by pointing out that Bucky Dent's homer in 1978 would only have been ruled a double. Of course, so would Fisk's walk off homer in the 1975 Series.

The book wraps up with a look at the latter careers of the key

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**THE RIGHT TIME:
JOHN HENRY "POP" LLOYD
AND BLACK BASEBALL**

BY WES SINGLETARY

2011. Jefferson, NC
McFarland and Company
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-3572-2.
[226 pp. \$29.95 USD.
Softcover]

Reviewed by
Todd Peterson

In August, 1913, John Henry Lloyd, then with the New York Lincoln Giants, was spiked so badly in a playoff game that he had to be taken to Chicago's Provident Hospital with a severed artery in his leg. That Lloyd was back performing for the Lincolns less than a month later speaks not only to the toughness of the era, but also to the measure of the man. It is doubtful that the future Hall of Famer missed many games due to bilateral leg weakness, tanning lamp burns, infected tattoos, or any other of the

remarkable ailments that befell the modern ball player. Often called the "Black Honus Wagner" (although the Pittsburgh legend reportedly said that the comparison should have been reversed) the South's greatest shortstop is the subject of Tampa historian Wes Singletary's intriguing new book, *The Right Time*.

Presenting his tome in (mostly) linear fashion, Singletary recounts the tale of John Henry Lloyd from his 1884 birth in Palatka, Florida, until his death in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1964. Lloyd's personal life is only lightly touched on, with an overwhelming focal point being his baseball career, beginning with his debut with the Jacksonville, Florida Old Receivers circa 1904, right up to his last bow with the Atlantic City Farley Stars in 1942. By faithfully describing the shortstop's glory days with the Lincoln Giants and Chicago American Giants, the author effectively makes the case that Lloyd was one of the finest baseball players of all time, black or white. Singletary demonstrates that, although kept out of organized ball by racism, Lloyd earned a good living and made his mark by playing all year round for over quarter of a century. "Pop" pulled on his uniform wherever "where the money was," with grueling regular seasons in the states immediately followed by winter ball in the Cuban

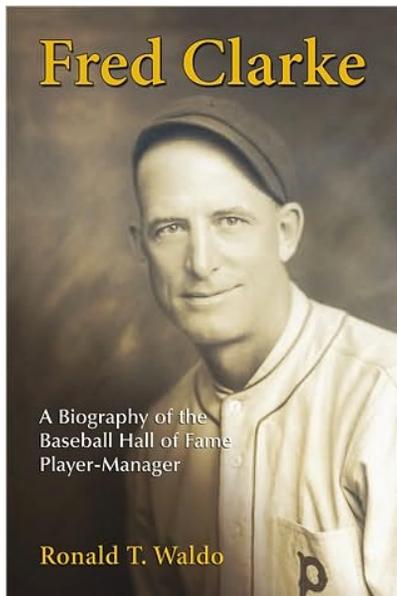
League. The distinguished infielder's gentlemanly nature; kindness, and generous spirit that made him one of baseball's most well-respected men are also emphasized.

In preparing his text, Singletary exhaustively mined African-American papers such as the *New York Age* and *Chicago Defender*. Hampered by the fact that there are few persons still around who knew Lloyd personally or saw him play, the writer wisely leaned on previous interviews conducted by heavyweight historians Robert Peterson and John Holway.

One factor that prevents *The Right Time* from being a definitive work, however, is the lack of more mainstream sources. Though he got more coverage in the black newspapers, Lloyd's career exploits also regularly appeared in the pages of the *Chicago Tribune*, *Brooklyn Eagle*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*, newspapers not referenced here, save for a smattering of articles published long after Lloyd had passed from the black ball scene.

The reader will also encounter a few factual errors along the way (The American Giants did not meet the Lincoln Stars in a 1917 playoff for example), and it would have been nice to have a complete as possible statistical accounting of Lloyd's career included.

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**FRED CLARKE:
A BIOGRAPHY OF THE
HALL OF FAME
PLAYER-MANAGER**

**BY
RONALD T. WALDO**

*2011. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland and Company
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-5933-9.
252 pp. \$29.95 USD.
Softcover]*

Reviewed by
Ralph J. Christian

To a large degree, Fred Clarke has been one of the most overlooked and under-appreciated members of the Hall of Fame. Much of this is due to his being so overshadowed by his protégé and teammate, Honus Wagner, one of the modern game's first superstars and member of the Hall's first class of inductees. Also, fans tend not to idolize managers, and the playing manager has become an alien concept to many. Even Clarke's election

to the Hall of Fame in 1945 in the first class of players selected by the Veterans Committee earned him little respect in fandom except for the most diehard and historians of the national game. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Clarke never wrote an autobiographical book or attracted a biographer during his lifetime or the fifty years following his death in 1960.

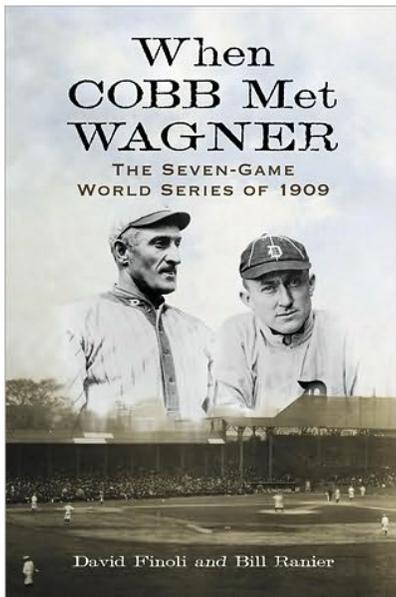
Pittsburgh journalist and baseball historian Ronald T. Waldo has helped to fill that gap with this first full-length biography.

Waldo's work is baseball biography pure and simple with a very heavy emphasis on Clarke's career as a player and manager with rather minimal attention to other aspects of his life. Research for the book appears to have been based largely on material contained in *Sporting Life*, *The Sporting News* and *Baseball Magazine*. Waldo traces Clarke's trajectory in baseball from the sandlots of Des Moines, Iowa, where he played on amateur teams organized by future Hall of Famer Ed Barrow in the mid-1880's to his arrival in the major leagues in 1894 and his subsequent career as player and manager in Louisville and Pittsburgh until his retirement as a full time participant in 1915. Waldo does an excellent job of bringing Clarke the player to life. Pugnacious, hard-nosed,

willing to win at all costs, refusing to take any guff from teammates or opposing players, and an outstanding hitter and fielder, Clarke quickly emerged as a National League superstar. In 1894, at the age of 22, Clarke became what Waldo described as "The Original Boy Wonder Manager" when he took over the helm of the Louisville Colonels and, five years later, became manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates when the two teams merged. A strongly focused, no nonsense managerial type, Clarke won four pennants and one world championship by the time he had celebrated his 37th birthday. Waldo views Clarke as similar to Ty Cobb because "both players played the game of baseball with a similar, fiery style."

While this book is generally a good read and contributes to our knowledge of baseball history, it falls short of the mark in terms of providing much insight into Clarke's personality and overall character. In large part, this and other shortcomings are due to the author's over reliance on what in fact are baseball trade journals for research instead of utilizing a broader range of available primary and secondary resources in various repositories in Iowa, Kansas, and Pittsburgh. For example, there is no indication that the author utilized either the

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**WHEN COBB MET
WAGNER:
THE SEVEN GAME
WORLD SERIES OF 1909**

**BY
DAVID FINOLI
AND
BILL RANIER**

*2011. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland and Company
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-4837-1.
283 pp. \$29.95 USD.
Softcover]*

Reviewed by
Paul Adomites

We've had books about league seasons, team seasons, and even single games. What we haven't tasted till now is a book about *one* World Series (Halberstam's *October 1964* came close, but...). Even though I'm a huge fan of both baseball literature and World Series play, I've always doubted that any Series could carry an entire book. So I opened David Finoli's and Bill Ranier's *When Cobb Met*

Wagner with joyful apprehension. Was I witnessing the birth of a new genre? That Series seemed like a good choice; it was definitely a monster. And as experts in all things Piratical, with a deserved reputation for keen-eyed research, Finoli and Ranier might have the chops to pull it off, to find enough to talk about to keep the effort from feeling too thin.

Sad to say, I was right the first time. In their 272 pages, Finoli and Ranier simply try too hard. In addition to 30-plus pages on how the two teams' 1909 rosters came to be, and about ten pages on each of the seven games, there is much unnecessary (and often repetitive) extra material. There is a short chapter on what the teams did after the Series ended (the Pirates had a parade; Ty Cobb had a trial), then chapters on each team's ballparks (the Pirates, of course, played in two home venues that year, as Forbes Field replaced Exposition Park in July), plus chapters on the teams' presidents, their managers, and nearly 70 pages of biographies covering every player on both teams. Then two chapters on how the teams fared after the '09 Series (neither did well).

Even more ungainly is the padding in the game chapters. Instead of being satisfied with game action, the authors apparently feel compelled to pile up factoids about each

player as the game rolls on, shuffling them into the play-by-play. We get not just batting averages, but dates and places of birth, off-the-field shenanigans, out-and-out repetitions, highly obvious editorializing, and more. By page 56, is it really necessary as Ty Cobb comes to bat in the second game to tell us he was "the greatest player ever to don a Detroit Tiger uniform"?

It's true that the book is handsomely illustrated with many rare photographs, despite occasional mis-captioning. Yet the prose never sizzles, never dazzles, and seldom even elicits a smile. And the text absolutely screams for some hard-knuckled copy-editing.

In trying too hard in *When Cobb Met Wagner* David Finoli and Bill Ranier wind up giving us much more than we need. Their book could easily have been 90 pages shorter, and it would have been much better. But then it might not have been considered a book. So the "single World Series" genre of baseball books remains untouched.



RASHOMON, BASEBALL STYLE

BY DENNIS PAJOT

[Editor's note: In 1950, the brilliant Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa, brought an equally brilliant film, Rashomon, to the screen. Though the story is a harsh and tragic one—the murder of a samurai and the rape of his wife—more importantly, it's also the story of how different people viewed the same event. And, while three views of the same play on a ball field pales by comparison with what occurred in the movie, Dennis Pajot has taken his both his real-life employment experience as well as his investigative skills and has done that here.]

Below are three descriptions of the same play from the 1913 World Series between Connie Mack's Athletics and John McGraw's Giants. After over thirty years of interviewing eyewitnesses at accidents and crime scenes, I know that people see the same incident differently. So three sportswriters seeing the same play differently does not surprise me. For whatever reasons, when things happen in real life speed, and we have no foreknowledge it is about to happen, our eyes and brains read the story differently than the next person. I guess that is one of the great things about being humans and not computers.

This is nothing new--think of Babe Ruth pointing to center field in the '32 Series--just something to keep in mind when reading differing accounts of any play. Most likely, the people relating the accounts here saw the play as they are describing it, not fabricating.

Back to 1913. In the top of the third inning of Game Five, Eddie Murphy led off with a single. Rube Oldring then hit a grounder to Larry Doyle, who fumbled the ball, allowing Murphy to take second base and Oldring to reach safely. Eddie Collins then bunted the runners over. Frank Baker was next and the infield moved up for a play at the plate.

The stage was set for another potential Fred Merkle boner—his third in five years.

If what happened was or was not a “bonehead” play, I’ll let others decide. This is not meant to be an exhaustive study. As I noted previously, the point here is to show how three baseball writers, presumably all at the game, saw and interpreted the play differently. All three accounts were from Philadelphia papers and are reproduced as they were written, so the journalists saw the play from their team’s perspective.

Philadelphia Inquirer, October 12, 1913

“This was the frame in which they clinched the championship, put Merkle back in his bone-headed class of 1908 again and upset Matty... Baker swung wickedly at the first pitch, but hitting on top of the ball sent it but very feebly to Merkle at first. This, however, was as good as a hit from later results. Baker started to tear down to first, but suddenly stopped just as Merkle was about to tag him. Baker backed a couple of steps back toward the plate, and this confused Merkle, who, forgetting Murphy on third, concentrated every thought on getting Frank. This was the play [third base coach] Harry Davis and Murphy were looking for, and Eddie by a fast sprint home dashed over the rubber before Merkle, being roused from his slumber, could throw the ball to [Larry] McLean. The toss was high and it was all that McLean could do to stop it. Baker, as soon as Merkle threw home, rushed to first, making that bag without McLean making the throw there. Oldring, in the meantime, rushed to third. The entire Giant infield was up in the air over the play, and McLean stood with the ball in his hands, apparently not knowing what to do with it. Mathewson had to rush up and grab the sphere, for Baker was making a bluff attempt to dash to second.”

Philadelphia Public Ledger, October 12, 1913 By D. L. Reeves, Sporting Editor

“Merkle then assisted the world’s champions to a run by making one of the blunders for which he is famed. Baker swing at the ball and it rolled close to the first base foul line. Merkle picked it up cleanly and ran a few feet toward the plate.

Murphy, seeing him with the ball, started to return to third base. It was then that Merkle decided to give chase to Baker, who had just passed him. He turned to either run after Baker or throw to Doyle, covering the bag, and like a flash, Murphy darted for the plate. Merkle heeded McLean's cry to throw the ball to him, but when the big backstop received the sphere it was high and little Eddie slid under him with the second run of the game."

Philadelphia Bulletin, October 12, 1913

"The tin horn sports have picked Merkle as the goat of the 1913 World's Series. In all the hotel bar-rooms within the glare of the electric signs along Main St., they were roasting McGraw's first baseman for the loss of the big title. The man who lost the pennant for the Giants in 1908 when he failed to touch second and who helped Snodgrass throw away the World's Championship last year, was universally condemned for this play in the third inning Saturday, which resulted in the Athletics getting the two runs across, which gave them the margin of victory.

"As a matter of fact, most of the critics contend that it wasn't Merkle's boneheadedness so much as the Athletics' brainy work which enabled Murphy to score from third and caused the Giants' first baseman to lose his head so that Baker was safe on first. Three times previously in the series, the Mackmen had lost runs by men being thrown out at the plate on short hits to first base.

"Twice on Wednesday, in the memorable game in Philadelphia—the only one the Athletics lost—(Amos) Strunk and (Jack) Barry were called out at home in the ninth inning. Again on Friday, Philadelphia fans saw Oldring retired in the same way on Collins' rap to Merkle, after the blond centre fielder had tripled in the first inning.

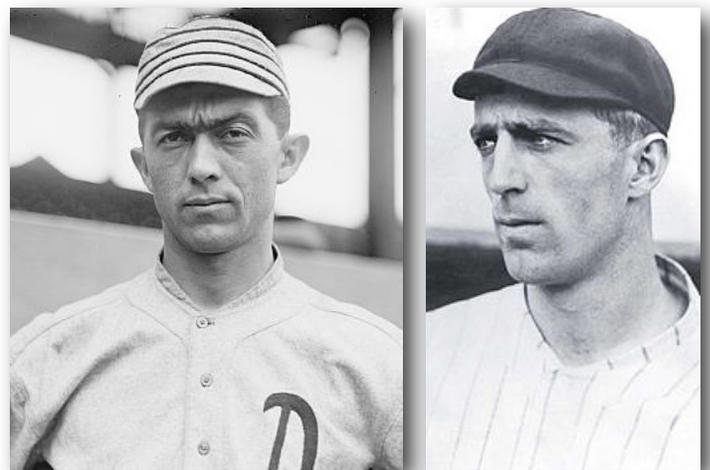
"When Eddie Murphy saw Merkle field Baker's grounder Saturday, instead of dashing to certain death at the plate, the little right fielder came to

a dead stop half-way home. The first baseman was surprised. He had set himself for the throw home, but when he saw Murphy stop, he decided to make the play on Baker.

"Frank had already sped past him on the first base line and Merkle prepared to throw the ball to Doyle, covering first. Just as he was about to throw, Murphy took him by surprise by scooting home. Merkle then made a hurried throw to McLean, but Eddie easily beat the ball. A sacrifice fly later scored Oldring from third, whereas, if Murphy had been nailed at the plate, no one would have scored. The fly would have been the third out.

"But all the base ball scientists declare that the heady inside work of the Athletics was responsible for the score rather than the folly of Merkle. Murphy simply outwitted him—for it was his wits along that enabled him to score.

"But the Broadway sports have singled out Merkle for their victim. They want satisfaction for the loss of their money, and it looks as if they hope to get it by the release of the first baseman. They started the clamor Saturday night, and apparently they won't be contented unless McGraw lets go the man who has always done so well for the Giants during the regular season and yet has been guilty of unfortunate breaks at critical times in the championship series."



Frank Baker Fred Merkle
Brainy or bonehead?

LEAGUE PARK III CLEVELAND: 1901-1909

BY RON SELTER

There were four ballparks in Cleveland named League Park.

The first was used by the National League Cleveland Blues from 1879-1884. This park was located at Silby (later Carnegie) Ave., Kennard (later East 46th) St., Cedar Ave. and E. 49th St.

The second was used by the American Association Cleveland Spiders for two seasons, 1887-1888, and the NL Cleveland Spiders 1889-1890. This second park was at a different location (bordered by East 35th St., East 39th St., Euclid Ave. and Payne Ave.).

League Park III was at a third location (located east of downtown in a more residential area bordered by Dunham (later E. 66th) St., East 70th St., Linwood Ave. and Lexington Ave.).⁽¹⁾ This park was used from 1891-1909 and was the home of both the Temple Cup-winning Spiders in 1895 as well the debacle of 1899 and was the first Cleveland ballpark used by the American League team, alternately known as the Blues, Bronchos and Naps, starting in 1900.

League Park IV was built of steel and concrete on the site of the previous park between the 1909 and 1910 seasons and was used by the Indians (Naps until 1914) until mid-season 1932, and again for most home games from 1934 to 1946. It never hosted a night game.

At League Park III, home plate and the grandstand were located in the northwest corner of the site. Dimensional data for this ballpark in *Green Cathedrals* are limited to RF (290) and the height of the RF fence (20 feet).

The park, on its inauguration as an American League field in 1901, consisted of a covered wooden grandstand in several sections from well beyond first base to well beyond third base. In addition, small bleachers were located far down the foul lines. In 1901-02, there were no seats in the fair portion of the outfield. The seating

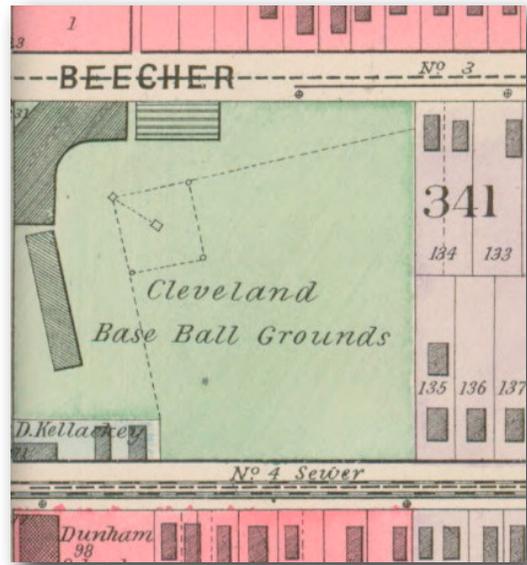
capacity of the park in 1901 was about 9,000. For most of its existence (1891-1904), the ballpark's dimensions were constrained by the inability of the club to purchase several houses and a saloon on Lexington Ave., in what would have been the right field corner. Except for this aspect, the park site for 1891-1904 was rectangular. Because of the saloon property, the playing field was angled such that the right field line just hit the corner of the saloon property. As a result, there was a diagonal section of fence and screen that ran from the foul pole to the Lexington Ave. perimeter fence. An extension of the right field line intersected the perimeter fence at 102 degrees, and the left field foul line therefore had to intersect the left field fence at 78 degrees. The fences met in the center field corner (to the right of dead center) at a right angle. One curious feature of the ballpark was the existence, starting with the 1903 season, of an enclosed pathway—dubbed “The Subway”—located behind the left field fence that provided access to the right field bleachers from the third base side.⁽²⁾

Late in the 1904 season, the ballclub managed to acquire the properties along Lexington Ave. and the ballpark could then be expanded. This acquisition meant the park site was now actually a rectangle. The additional space in right field was used to extend the first base bleachers to the Lexington Ave perimeter fence. In addition, the field was reoriented towards right with the left field line now meeting the fence at 85 degrees and the right field line now intersecting the fence at 95 degrees. Before the 1908, season the capacity of the ballpark was increased by adding a new set of bleachers behind the fence in left field while the bleacher section at the center field end of the right field bleachers was removed. Otherwise, the right field bleachers would have blocked the view from the new bleachers in left field. Finally, after the 1908 season, all of the remaining right field bleachers were removed.

The Basis of the Park's Configurations and Dimensions

The knowledge of the park's original configuration and dimensions was based on

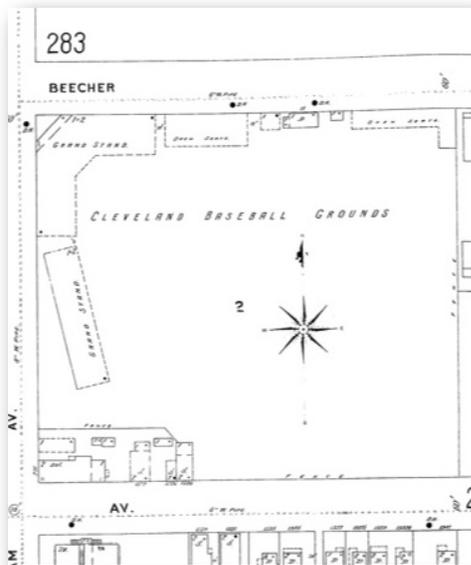
three principal sources: (1) an 1892 Cleveland Ward Map, (2) a 1896 Sanborn fire insurance map, and (3) the ballpark diagram from *Baseball Memories 1900-1909*.⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾ The 1892 Ward Map showed the park site, the stands, the foul lines and the baselines. The map also showed the right field line terminating at the corner of the saloon property. The baselines and foul lines determined the location of home plate and the backstop distance (75 feet). This information was used to plot the location of home plate and the foul lines on the 1896 Sanborn map.⁽⁴⁾ The Sanborn map was used as the basis of the park diagram as it showed additional stands built after 1892. All of the other ballpark dimensions were derived from this diagram. The resulting left field dimension was 353, dead center was 409 and right field was 248. The deepest point in the ballpark was the centerfield corner (445) and was about halfway between dead center and right-center. It was 304 in right field to the junction of the diagonal fence and the perimeter Lexington Ave fence. The definitive evidence regarding the existence of the diagonal fence section in right field was found as a result of research into home runs hit at League Park III. In the game of September 29, 1904, Napoleon Lajoie hit a home run to right. The game account in the *Boston Globe* described the home run as being hit over the screen, the ball dropping over the inside fence.⁽⁶⁾



1896 Sanborn Map

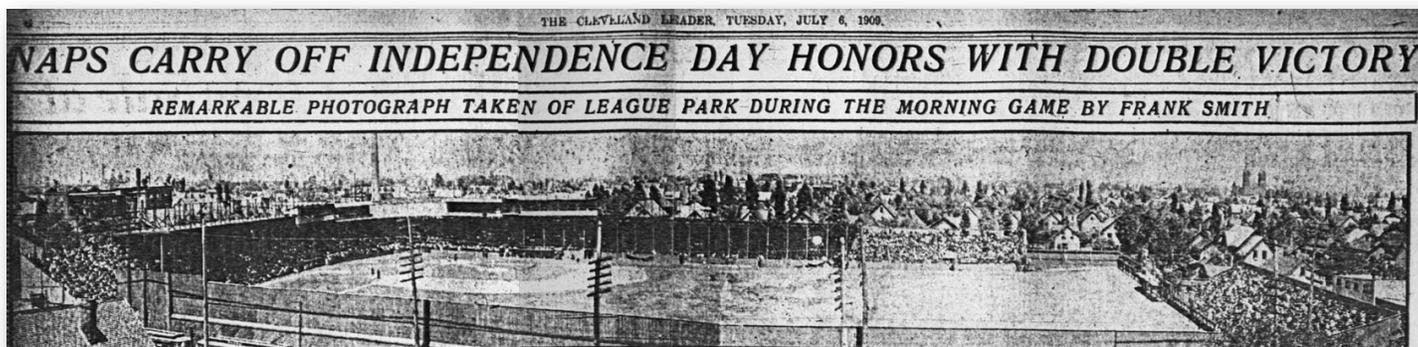
The first configuration change was before the 1903 season. Capacity was increased with the building of bleachers in right field in front of the twenty-foot high wall. These bleachers were located in right field and extended from the center field corner to within about 50 feet of the right field foul line and whose depth was estimated to have been 25-30 feet, reduced the straightaway right field distance from 323 to 286. The seating capacity of the park was again increased after the 1904 season when the saloon and houses along Lexington Ave. were acquired and added to the park site. This addition to the park site amounted to 10,000 square feet. At this time, the playing field was rotated seven degrees towards right field and the first base stands were extended to the Lexington Ave. fence.

Before the 1908 season, the park's capacity was again increased by the construction of an additional set of wooden bleachers behind the left field fence. The addition of these new bleachers increased the area of the park site by about 4,500 square feet. These bleachers, as shown in the 1909 photo from the *Cleveland Leader*, extended from about straightaway left field all the way to the center field corner.⁽⁷⁾ Early in the 1908 season, a game account in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* referred to an inside-the-park home run to center field by



1892 Ward Map

Charlie Hickman as the first Cleveland home run on the enlarged grounds.⁽⁸⁾ This meant that the center field portion of the right field bleachers had been removed--most likely to unblock the sight lines from the new center field bleachers. Additional evidence for the removal of the old center field bleachers is that inside-the-park home runs to center increased from 1.8 per season (1903-07) to six in 1908. The main portion of the right field bleachers remained in use for another season (1908) after which they were removed as shown by the 1909 photo in the *Leader*.⁽⁷⁾ Park data and dimensions for League Park III are shown below:



July 4, 1909 Cleveland Leader photo of League Park III

Dimensions (From Park Diagram)

Years	LF	SLF	LC	CF*	RC	SRF	RF
1901-02	353	347	362	409	390	323	248
1903-04	353	347	362	409	352	286	248
1905-07	356	364	390	400	315	308	290
1908	356	364	390	450	315	308	290
1909	356	364	390	450	348	308	290

* Deepest point was the CF corner 455 (1901-02), 439 (1903-07), 455 (1908-09)

Average Outfield Distances

Years	LF	CF	RF
1901-02	351	402	322
1903-04	351	390	303
1905-07	369	385	301
1908	369	388	301
1909	369	396	312

Fence Heights (From *Green Cathedrals* and Estimated from Photos)

Years	LF	CF	RF
1901-02	10	10-20	20
1903-07	10	10-20	6-20
1908	10	6-20	6-20
1909	10	10-20	20

Capacity: 9,000 (1901), 11,200 (1903-04 Est.); 11,600 (1905-07 Est.); 12,600 (1908 Est.); 11,600; (1909, Est.)

Park Size-Composite Average Outfield

Distance: 358 (1901-02); 348 (1903-04); 352 (1905-07); 353 (1908), 363 (1909)

Park Site Area: 3.9 acres (1901-04), 4.2 acres, (1905-07), 4.3 acres (1908-09)

Deadball Era Run Factor: 96 (Rank: AL 14)

The Impact of the Park's Configurations and Dimensions on Batting

For the 1901-02 seasons, League Park III was the second smallest AL ballpark. Despite this small size, the batting park factors were unexceptional. In fact, they're downright average (see table of League Park III Batting Park Factors below). The only park factor over 100 (favoring hitters) was for doubles. In 1901, the Blues (or Bluebirds, they were called both) set an unbreakable record: Fewest home runs at home--NONE! Apparently that was not entirely due to the ballpark as the visitors hit twelve that season. With those numbers in mind, one may conclude that, unlike today's ballparks, League Park's original configuration was not designed to suit the home team's sluggers. In the next season, things turned out a lot better for the team, now called either the Blues or the Bronchos, as the team hit 15 home runs to the visitors' five in 60 home games at while, at the same time, compiling a .310 home batting average (the highest in the AL).⁽⁹⁾

The reconfiguration of the park for the 1903 season significantly reduced the size of right field. However, this change appears to have virtually no impact on batting except for home runs. The League Park batting park factors for 1901-02 vs. 1903-07 were virtually unchanged

except for a small increase in doubles and a small decrease in triples (see table below). It is interesting to note that the short right field fence at League Park in 1903 resulted in only six over the fence home runs in that direction while, in that same season, the short left field fence at Washington's American League Park was the scene of 30 balls hit over the wall. It would appear that the American League in general and the Cleveland team in particular did not have many power-hitting left-handed batters, though it should be noted that right-handed hitters had slightly less than double the plate appearances of lefties that year. In the six seasons (1903-08) with the bleachers in place, there were, on average, only five over-the-fence home runs to right field per season. In the same six seasons in this configuration, the park was a very average hitter's park--slightly above average for doubles and slightly below for triples and home runs. The removal of the right field bleachers before the 1909 season had a negligible impact on batting except for triples and home runs, the triples park factor increasing by 35 per cent. Home runs fell from 15 in 1908 to only three in 1909, while the park's home run park factor dropped from 81 to 20. Unlike many Deadball Era ballparks, League Park III was not conducive to inside-the-park home runs as shown by the home run data below. The installation of the right field bleachers for the 1903 season led to a drop in inside-the-park home runs from 5.5 per season for 1901-02 to 1.8 per season for the next five seasons. During the five seasons (1903-07) with the right field-center bleachers in place, inside-the-park home runs accounted for just 13% of the total home runs hit at League Park III. In the 1908 season, with the removal of the centerfield portion of the bleachers in right field, inside-the-park home runs accounted for 60% of total home runs at the park. In 1909, after the removal of the remaining right field bleachers, all three home runs hit that season were inside-the-park. The home run data and batting park factors are shown below in three tables:

Home Runs by Type at League Park III

Years	Total	OTF	Bounce	IP
1901-02	32	21	0	11
1903-07	71	62	4	9
1908	15	6	0	9
1909	3	0	0	3

Bounce: Bounce Home Runs

IP: Inside-the-Park-Home Runs

OTF: Over-The-Fence (Includes Bounce)

OTF Home Runs by Field at League Park III (Excluding Bounce)

Years	Total	LF	CF	RF	Unknown
1901-02	21	13	1	3	4
1903-07	58	29	4	24	1
1908	6	0	0	6	0
1909	0				

Batting Park Factors at League Park III

Years	BA	OBP	SLG	2B*	3B*	HR*	BB**
1901-02	100	99	100	118	83	82	91
1903-07	100	99	99	106	90	69	92
1908	103	101	102	111	84	81	94
1909	102	100	102	112	113	20	88

* Per AB

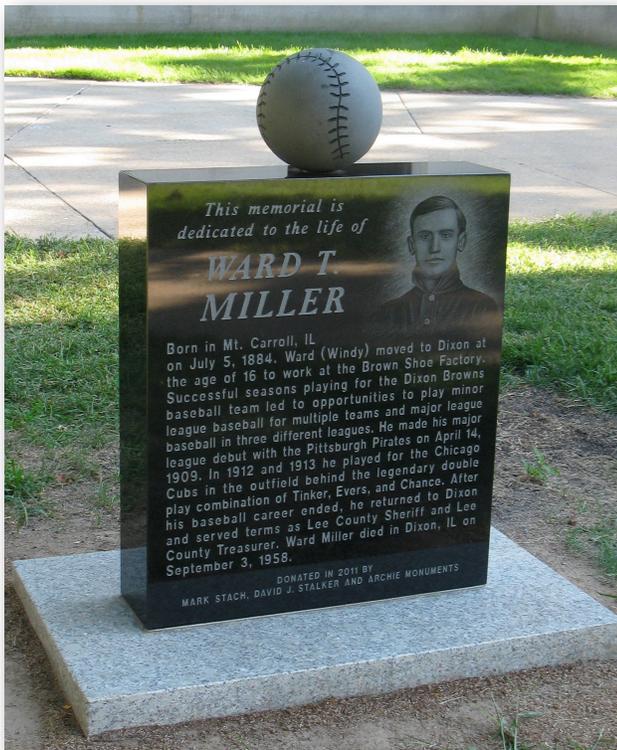
** Per Total Plate Appearance (AB+BB+HP)

- 1 Lowry, Philip J., *Green Cathedrals*, New York, NY, Walker Publishing Co., 2006, pp. 69-71
- 2 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 16, 1905
- 3 Cleveland Ward Map 1892
- 4 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map, Cleveland 1896, Sheet 292
- 5 Okkonen, Marc, *Baseball Memories 1900-1909*, New York, NY, Sterling Publishing Co., 1992, p. 49
- 6 *Boston Globe*, September 30, 1904
- 7 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 6, 1909
- 8 *Cleveland Leader*, June 5, 1908
- 9 Excluding five home games played at neutral sites

WARD MILLER MONUMENT

BY DAVID STALKER

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, this past August 21, on the grounds of the Lee County Courthouse in Dixon, Illinois a monument dedication was held for former resident and baseball player Ward Miller.



Dixon resident, local baseball historian and SABR member, Mark Stach, addressed the crowd wearing a Chicago Cubs replica jersey, very similar to the one Miller wore in 1912. Mark began by thanking all those who made the monument and dedication possible. He let the good-sized crowd know that the monument was part of The Deadball Era Memorial Series and Miller was the eleventh player honored thus far. This is the second player monument in this series in the state of Illinois, joining Bob Groom, located at Whitey Herzog Field in Belleville.

Stach continued telling the story of Miller's ties with Dixon, starting with playing for the Dixon Browns during his youth, his minor and major league career and post-playing career. Returning to Dixon, Miller was the Lee County Sheriff,

Chief Deputy Sheriff, County Treasurer and Chief of Police--Dixon State School, as stated in the dedication bulletin.

Dixon has always had a large Cubs' fan base, which was evident with the colors sprinkled throughout the crowd. In fact, a beautiful bouquet of flowers in the team's colors of red, white and blue was set on a stand next to the monument. Placed inside the flowers was a Cubs pennant. "The city would have been incredibly excited rooting for their Cubbies while their hometown hero was playing for them," noted Stach.

As stated on the monument, Miller played with Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers and Frank Chance. To everyone's interest, Stach told the crowd that Miller brought the Cubs to play a local team in Dixon after the conclusion of the 1912 season. This is most likely the last time the famed infield trio ever teamed together as Chance and Tinker moved on in 1913--Chance being waived and joining the New York Yankees while Tinker was traded to the Cincinnati Reds.

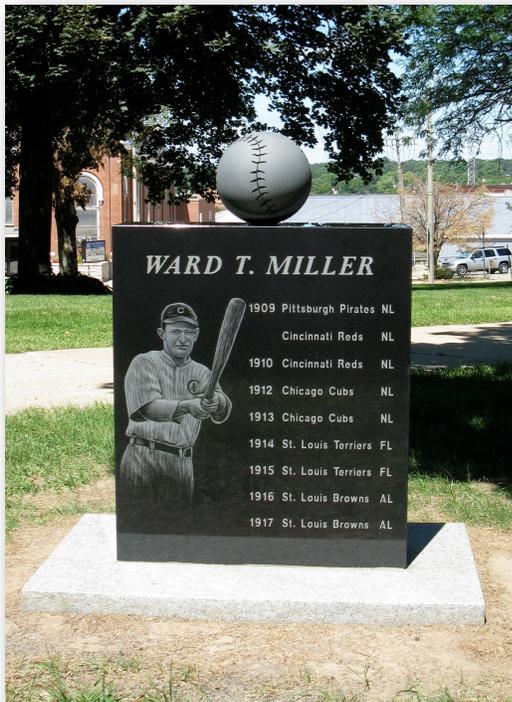
Stach talked about his growing interest in Miller, which led to his close friendship with Ward's daughter, whom he referred to as Mrs. Roundy. She passed away in 2010, just months short of turning 100 and one year short of witnessing the monument and dedication.

The baseball collection that Mrs. Roundy received from her father was on display in the courthouse for public viewing before and after the dedication. Not having any children, she passed this down to Stach, and it is very evident that she made the right choice. There are no plans for it to ever leave Dixon.

The collection included many photos including photos of teams that Ward played for before and during his major league career. Also displayed were portraits of Miller, baseball cards, postcards, replica jerseys and Miller's sheriff memorabilia, which included his badge worn during duty in Dixon.

One of those photos was used for the portrait on the front of the memorial, and the image of the rare T207 baseball card was used on the back.

The monument is now the first one in The Deadball Era Memorial Series that utilized both sides for the same player.



My thanks go out to Mark Stach, the Lee County Courthouse and the folks of Dixon who made this a very special day. I would also thank Archie Monuments and artist Linda Boettcher of Watertown, Wisconsin, as they help this series continue to grow.



Ward Miller, center, with Jimmy Lavender (l) and Charlie Smith at the Polo Grounds, 1913.

BLUNDERS

continued from page 1

John Anderson, a first baseman-left fielder who played 14 years in the Major Leagues, made his name an adjective by trying to steal an occupied base on September 24, 1903, as highlighted in the October 2011 issue of *The Inside Game*. While Anderson was known to have occasional mental lapses, it might surprise you to learn that Ty Cobb, perhaps the cleverest base-runner of all time, did the same thing at least twice.

Both incidents occurred against the Nationals in Washington, and in each case Cobb was on second with Donie Bush on third. The first was on June 9, 1913. The game was scoreless in the top of the first with two outs when Cobb took off. When he saw Bush standing at third, he managed to scramble back to second, beating confused catcher John Henry's throw. The Tigers went on to score three unearned runs in the inning and won the game 6-4.

A couple of years later, on September 27, 1915, Cobb was at it again. It happened in the third inning. Detroit trailed 4-0 heading into the top of the inning and rallied for three runs, which might have been more, except that with one out and the bases loaded, Cobb pulled his boner. This time, catcher Eddie Ainsmith was alert enough to nail Cobb trying to get back to the keystone sack. The play was close enough that Cobb was ejected for arguing the call. Regardless, the Tigers came back to win the game 7-5.



REEL TO REEL *continued from page 2*

O'Brien is a former sportscaster who worked for WTHR-Channel 13 in Indianapolis. He has written sports-related books, including *Mark May's Tales from the Washington Redskins* and *MizzouRah! Memorable Moments in Missouri Tiger Football History*.

But "Rube" is his first foray into screen-writing.

The fascination for Waddell came to O'Brien in 1994, when he was in Pittsburgh for baseball's All-Star Game. In the program was a short bio on Waddell, who hailed from the small western Pennsylvania town of Bradford.

As a baseball fan growing up, O'Brien had heard of Waddell, who once held the record for strikeouts in a season.

"I had always been fascinated by this major-league baseball pitcher who would chase fire wagons and lead parades. And I wanted to do a screenplay after having worked in TV and written and directed documentaries," he said.

Like any good character, Waddell is multifaceted and deeply layered.

If he played now, Waddell would be diagnosed with a mental disability. His attention span was short, and his ability to process information was infamously simplistic, O'Brien said.

That led him to do things such as play pickup games with area children when he was supposed to be getting ready for a game or walking on stage at a theater, interrupting the show with prop guns.

He was a big kid

Max Silberman, a historian with the Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society, said Waddell's favorite activities were pretending to be a robot in store windows and fishing, and he was known to leave the ballpark if a circus came down the street.

"Rube said over and over he just wanted to play. He was a big kid," O'Brien said.

But on the baseball field, Waddell was talented enough to overcome his disability.

He pitched for five teams between 1897 and 1910, but his best-known stint was with the Philadelphia Athletics.

At the time, he was the biggest draw in baseball. Waddell was one of the first athletes to be featured in a major advertising campaign, when he proclaimed that "More than once, Coca-Cola has pulled me through a tight game."

Multiple newspapers reported in his obituary that he helped save the fledgling American League.

"In terms of putting people in their seats, he was bigger than Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, because not only was he a great pitcher but he had this quirky, eccentric behavior as well," O'Brien said.



Waddell with Christy Mathewson

O'Brien built his screenplay around Waddell's years in Philadelphia, focusing on the relationship Waddell had with legendary coach Connie Mack.

Mack reportedly was the only person who could control the wild pitcher and tolerated his eccentricities because of his talent and his character. He called Waddell "the best-hearted man" on the team.

“Dad thought he was the best pitcher he ever had and enjoyed him so much,” said Ruth Mack Clark, Connie Mack’s daughter.

Clark never had the opportunity to meet Waddell but recalled her father telling stories about the pitcher’s antics. Sometimes Waddell would disappear for two or three days at a time during a season, then returning bearing a line of fresh fish he had recently caught.

“He was so full of life. We used to laugh about him,” Clark said.

O’Brien wrote the screenplay to encompass the baseball action that Waddell was a part of, but not to hang the story entirely on it.

Bringing man to life

Some of the most intense and interesting moments happen in the areas around the game. One of his teammates is knocked unconscious by a ball to the head, and it’s Waddell who carries him to the hospital, saving his life.

After a 20-inning marathon win against legendary Cy Young, Waddell went to an area bar and negotiated free drinks by giving the bartenders the ball he used in the victory.

The audience only realizes Waddell’s ruse after his catcher mutters that it’s the sixth time that’s worked that evening.

“This is a story of a guy who was mentally challenged who succeeded because he had people around him who wanted to help. It just happens to be that he’s a baseball player,” he said.

O’Brien tried to capture the way Waddell affected the people around him, not just the craziness that seemed to follow him.

O’Brien immersed himself in his research, reading baseball histories and biographies of great Philadelphia Athletics figures, including Mack. He visited many of the places that Waddell lived and played in — Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Columbus, Ohio.

Looking through pages of newspapers on microfilm, he uncovered the depths of Waddell’s

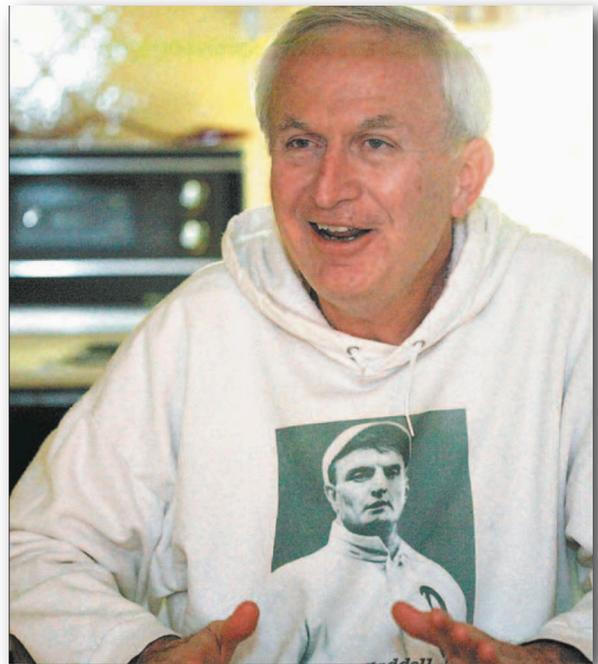
life. His colorful nature made him an almost daily feature in the papers.

He met with Clark to discuss the project, to learn more about the coach. In his time working with her, he received her blessing to move forward.

“Dad would love for Rube’s story to be told,” Clark said. “I had heard so many stories about Rube, and all of the things he’d done, so I was happy to hear he was doing it.”

Over the years, O’Brien developed the voices of the characters, tweaking scenes and adding a love interest for Waddell’s loyal catcher and friend, Osee Schrecongost.

A newspaper reporter character who helps drive the action is based on several different sportswriters who lived at the time.



***Dan O’Brien
wearing his subject matter.***

‘I’m not giving up’

With a product that he feels is worthy of the big screen, O’Brien has run into a bigger challenge than writing ever would — getting it made.

“It is frustrating. I’m not going to say this is the next ‘Lord of the Rings,’ but it is a good story, and I think people would enjoy it,” he said.

At times, O'Brien has come close. He's been in contact with Ryan Hurst, an actor who he met through the Heartland Film Festival, to star in the movie. Various filmmaking contacts have gotten it to producers in Hollywood, though nothing firm has come back.

Rob Harris, a Hollywood publicist for such movies as "Black Swan," "Revolutionary Road" and "Gladiator," as well as a friend of O'Brien's, is helping push it into production.

"Like any good movie, 'Rube' has heart. An audience has to want to take the ride, the story of Rube Waddell is one that conveys a range of emotion and humor that carries the audience on a satisfying journey," Harris said.

O'Brien has submitted "Rube" to a series of screenwriting contests. He finished in the top eight at the L.A. All Sports Film Festival this year and is waiting to hear his results in the 2011 Philadelphia Screenplay Fest.

Criticism of the screenplay has ranged from the reluctance to do a movie set in the early 1900s to movement away from baseball films to concerns that Waddell's character doesn't change over the course of the movie.

Many of the comments O'Brien has received have said the story doesn't have enough action.

"It's not edgy,' they keep saying. I'm so sick of that word," he said.

So far, O'Brien remains in screenwriter limbo. He has a finished product but no way to see it made into a film.

"There's no way to not get discouraged, but I'm not giving it up. You just have to keep going with it," he said.

[Editor's note: Since this article was published last December, Dan's screenplay placed first in the "Drama" category at the Screenplayfest.com competition. Congratulations!]



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN *continued from page 1*

Registration for SABR42: As you likely are aware, SABR's annual convention will be held from June 27 to July 1 in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the Marriott City Center with the DEC annual meeting tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 28, from 4:30-5:30 PM. If you have items to discuss at the DEC annual meeting, please contact me directly at deadball@sabr.org. Convention registration may be completed online at convention.sabr.org, and it is worthwhile to reserve your hotel room early.

World Series project in progress: The DEC's project to chronicle each of the World Series of the Deadball Era primarily through photographs has a place on the SABR website at <http://sabr.org/content/deadball-era-committee-world-series-book-project>. A sample chapter is posted on that site, as is a list of individual chapter editors. Steve Steinberg is serving as photo editor for this initiative and Tom Simon is text editor.

Seeking contributors for history of the Winter Meetings: SABR's Business of Baseball Committee is seeking the involvement of members of the Deadball Era Committee as they work to prepare a history of baseball's winter meetings. The winter meetings played an especially large role during the Deadball Era, and many years will be especially interesting to research.

Steve Weingarden of the Business of Baseball Committee notes that chapter authors are needed for winter meetings in 1903, 1904, 1907-1913 and 1916-1918. There may also be opportunities to contribute in other years, depending on current progress. This project is intended to provide the reader with the details of each year's winter meetings, including an in-depth history of player transactions and business decisions. It is particularly apt since there does not currently exist a comprehensive history of baseball's winter meetings.

Volunteer authors who contribute would receive an author byline as well as a short personal biography in the final product. Each chapter would likely be between 1,000 and 2,000 words. If you would like to take on one or more chapters for this book, please contact either Steve or me.

Newsletter download difficulties resolved: In response to the difficulties that several DEC members encountered in downloading a .pdf copy of this newsletter via SABRNation on the SABR site, Jacob Pomrenke at the SABR office announced that it is no longer necessary to provide login information in order to download *The Inside Game*. The download process should now be quite easy, requiring the clicking of a single link.

Past issues of *The Inside Game* are also now available without using a password at <http://sabr.org/research/deadball-era-research-committee-newsletters>. No longer requiring a password has the added benefit of allowing our research and book reviews to reach a wider audience outside of SABR.

Deadball Era player biographies: Several new biographies of lesser-known players from the Deadball Era Committee have been added to the Bioproject at bioproj.sabr.org, including Emil Huhn and George Van Haltren (who just made it into the Deadball Era, finishing his career in 1903). Biographies are not even limited to former players: a 'biography' of Hilltop Park by Bill Lamb was also recently released.

DEC T-Shirts and Hats: Given the popularity of the Deadball Era Committee t-shirts and hats that we offered in 2010, we would place a second order with our vendor if there is enough interest to meet our minimum order requirements. Mark Dugo has been on top of this process and would be glad to hear of your interest at claydad@aol.com. Although a price has not yet been set, it is likely that t-shirts would cost approximately \$15 and hats would be roughly \$10.

Deadball Stars book signing: With more than eighty authors who contributed to the books

Deadball Stars of the National League and *Deadball Stars of the American League*, it can be a challenge to compile a complete collection of author signatures. Building upon the group book signing in St. Louis, I would like to hear from authors who might be available to sign copies of the book at SABR42. Extra copies of both books can be purchased online in the SABR store.

The opening of Fenway Park remains the most memorable happening of the early baseball season one hundred years ago. Yet the month of April 1912 also saw the opening of Navin Field in Detroit and the beginning of Rube Marquard's nineteen-game winning streak. Rather than being cast aside as ancient history, the Deadball Era remains very much in the consciousness of contemporary baseball fans. As we enter this rich anniversary year, I invite you to be involved with the work of the committee.

Photo Credits

Wagner-Cobb
LC-USZ62-28936

Ward Miller (monument)
David Stalker

Ward Miller (with Cubs)
LC-DIG-ggbain-13529

Frank Baker
LC-DIG-hec-04682

Fred Merkle
Google Images

Dan O'Brien
Daily Journal

Waddell-Mathewson
The Glory of Their Times *booklet which accompanied the CD set of Lawrence Ritter interviews, 1964-66.*
Reproduced on BaseballFever.com

FENWAY 1912 *continued from page 3*

actors from the narrative, including the park itself. The story of Fenway, the Red Sox, and league operations in 1912 as presented by Mr. Stout gives us some real insights into the business of baseball during the Deadball Era, making this volume valuable even beyond its focus on the park itself.

Today, Fenway Park stands as the oldest major league ball park still in use. Like George Washington's apocryphal hatchet (the head has only been swapped out twice, the handle three times, otherwise it's the same hatchet), Fenway today bears little in common with the park of a hundred years ago. Other than the main brick façade, nothing physical really remains to connect the current facility to the one built by the Taylors. Over the years renovations have been carried out with no particular reference to the original plans, and perhaps it says something that when McLaughlin died in 1966 it was not commented upon that he had designed Fenway.

And yet...and yet the park endures as something historic, a place "owned" by the fans, a ball park that somehow, in some fashion, endures. It's not named for a person or for a corporation—it's named for a neighborhood. There is nothing else like it and we should not expect that there ever will be. Nor should we expect another book on the park's first year as well researched and written as Glenn Stout's volume.

CLARKE *continued from page 5*

Des Moines *News*, which employed Clarke as a carrier and on whose teams he played baseball, or the Des Moines *Leader*, which thoroughly covered the local baseball scene, both of which are available on microfilm. Despite the major role Ed Barrow played in Clarke's early career

and the discovery of Honus Wagner, there is no indication that either Barrow's autobiography or Daniel Levitt's recent biography of him were utilized. Finally, there is no indication that the author talked to or corresponded with surviving members of Clarke's family or others who might have encountered him during his lifetime.

THE RIGHT TIME *continued from page 4*

That being said, *The Right Time* is an extremely detailed look at an era of segregated African American baseball (1900-1920) that has heretofore received limited and/or very sketchy coverage. Singletary stuffs his narrative with numerous game accounts that tend to reveal just what kind of player John Henry Lloyd was.

The biographer also does not ignore the social backdrop of those troubled times. The brutal 1917 killing of black landlord Walter Robinson in Lloyd's hometown of Jacksonville is one of several chilling accounts of racial violence interspersed throughout the book. For the most part, Singletary's prose is clear and economical, and he turns more than a few nice phrases: After describing how a hurricane disrupted the Cuban Winter League in 1925 before pounding Florida as well, the writer notes how "Lloyd, keeping his powder dry, batted .387 in 163 at bats" the following season.

Many rarely or never before seen photographs also greatly enhance the work as does Kadir Nelson's stunningly beautiful portrait of the celebrated infielder that graces the cover. In terms of baseball information and specifics, *The Right Time* outshines other recent Negro League biographies such as Larry Tye's *Satchel*, and is a worthy companion to Adrian Burgos' new history about Lloyd contemporary Alex Pompez: *Cuban Star*. Winding up at 226 pages, *The Right Time* is a fairly quick read and a welcome addition to any serious baseball fan's library.

Publishers' contacts for books reviewed in this issue:

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
222 Berkeley St.
Boston, MA 02116
(617-351-5000)

McFarland
Box 611
Jefferson, NC 28640
(336-246-4460)

THE LAST WORD

by Mark Ruckhaus

I'm not sure whether or not this is my last issue.

That's not to say I don't enjoy the editing and haven't been satisfied with the look of the issue. And I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all who have contributed and am most gracious for the many positive comments about our little publication.

But there are a couple things that are frustrating me--to the point where it may be time to go.

I'll start with the issue that's easiest to explain.

Since SABR's move to Arizona, our circulation--judged by downloads--is down by nearly two-thirds. I understand that there have been website issues which are in the process of being rectified, if they haven't already, and so I'll wait until the returns are in from this issue before I'm truly frustrated. Yes, I enjoy the editing. But, if no one (relatively speaking, of course) is reading, then it's like the old conundrum: "If *The Inside Game* fell in the forest..." You can fill in the rest.

The other issue is a bit more touchy.

The "R" in SABR stands for "research." And, in my opinion, that "R" is sadly lacking.

Yes, there's plenty of research out there done by SABR members. And there's some that's readily accessible on the website and in books. But there's a lot more that is neither accessible nor available as there's no digital database for the numerous small articles done by what I'd call the "rank and file" of this organization and which could be readily shared with others looking for something mundane such as Yankees Hall of Famers or as esoteric as baseball in Little Rock in the nineteenth century. There are two downloadable lists of hard copy articles available for a fee. But one is dated 1996 and the other 2010, though recently updated. I'm certain that there's plenty of stuff, even pre-2010, which isn't on the list. This is 2012; we can do better.

There's a sub-text to the previous. And that is, to me, SABR is cliquish. Likely, it's not on purpose,

but there appear, to me, to be two distinct groups within our organization when it comes to researching and publishing. The first are the "stars," those who have contracts from major publishers and who sometimes appear on TV as experts. And they are. And what they've earned is well-deserved.

But there are many who bust their horns for little or no recognition and for little more than the satisfaction of finding new information and sharing it with others. In book form, they're published by places like McFarland and University of Nebraska Press, places which specialize in short print runs, little publicity and where no writer is neither going to get rich nor get much notoriety in this lifetime. In shorter article form, those articles are either gathering dust in a local public library or, more likely, exist in digital form on the writers' computers, something easily transferrable to the SABR database for such articles, if only it existed. Would you like to learn more about baseball in Buffalo a hundred years ago? You'll likely have to shuffle off there, hope that the Buffalo Public Library system has that type of online resource or try and hunt down the person who wrote about it.

Cliques happen in all walks of life--rich/poor, management/labor, cool kids/geeks and likely a thousand others. But, until something--like a database--gets created where that previously inaccessible but very valuable work can share even a small part of the stage with the widely published and read, SABR will likely be a clique of stars and relative nobodies. Outside of SABR, I'd say, "That's life." Inside of SABR, that shouldn't be, as the sum of what we do should be for the benefit of at least all of us in our organization and certainly for the sport of baseball. And it's our duty to do everything possible to make that happen. And, in my opinion, we could be doing much better.

