Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

October 1993 (93–4)

Comments from a Co-Chair

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Richard Orodenker (P.O. Box 173, Wyncote, PA 19095-0173) is working on adding several sportswriters and baseball authors to the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. He is looking for people to write biographical pieces of several hundred words about figures such as Dan Daniel, Hugh Fullerton, and John R. Tunis. His list is actually much more extensive, so please contact him if you have some interest. There is a fee, but it's so modest Richard says you will probably consider whatever work you do as a labor of love.

Now, on to the Baseball Online Project. By now, all of you should have seen the massive ad for the project in the Oct. 1993 issue of *The SABR Bulletin*. We hope this high-profile plea will generate the large number of volunteers we need to get this project up to full speed. Those of you who have been working on this project have already received your updated copies of the volunteers' manual. Ted Hathaway (5645 Fremont Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55419) and I have been working steadily to revise the manual (which now runs to 80 pages including appendices) since the 1993 SABR national convention in San Diego.

Jim Johnston (SABR Computerization Committee) is helping us to convert large amounts of data into the IBM format on which we have settled. Joe Murphy has produced a major amount of work covering books published between 1973 and 1984. Ted has been pulling citations off various existing sources.

On the periodicals side, Ted is organizing old and new volunteers to get going on runs of such publications as *Sports Illustrated, The Sporting News, Sport, USA Today Baseball Weekly,* and *Baseball America*. If you are interested, please contact Ted.

On the books side, as soon as I get the final conversions from Jim, we will have a base list of about 11,000 books. While extensive, I am sure that books are still missing from this list. In addition, the great majority of these 11,000 entries are not complete. Again, anyone interested in volunteering on this side of the project should contact me.

We will contact other SABR committees to set up liaison and begin to work with them on portions of Baseball Online which are connected with the work of the specific committees.

Last year, you will remember from my previous hectoring notes, that we were concentrating on creating a bibliography of 1991 publications to impress the SABR board with the online project. As the size of the notice in the October SABR newsletter indicates, we were able to make some impression. But the completion of the test phase also allows us to discard the chronological limits that that test imposed.

Practically, that means that we can match our interests better with your needs. If, for example, you are a huge fan of Bill James, Roger Kahn, or Roger Angell, we can put you to work on their writings. If you have an undying interest in the Rochester Red Wings, we can put you to work on that team. Basically, we are no longer restricted by time or topic and we should be able to match up with whatever research you are doing.

For those of you interested in doing something, but can't figure out what it is, we need people to check with local libraries and local historical societies. We need people to track down obscure books.

But mostly, we need people willing to sit down with a month or a year of a publication and catalog it. And that can lead to some interesting research or merely some fun. Remember the summer you were 13 and your favorite team won the pennant? Why don't you read and catalog that year's worth of *The Sporting News*? It would be a fun bit of nostalgia and could well wind up as an article for *Baseball Research Journal* or *The National Pastime*, or at least a presentation at a SABR regional meeting.

Please don't be restricted by the kinds of suggestions you see here or read in the SABR newsletter. If you are doing some kind of baseball research, we can tie it in with this project. And remember, you can aid this project simply by filling out a form every time you read a baseball book or article, something I presume everyone on this committee does all the time. Just copy the form out of *The SABR Bulletin* and get going. You don't need the manual for a few forms.

Again, if anyone has any questions or ideas, both Ted and I are happy to hear from you.

Comments from the Other Co-Chair

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Putnam Series Indexing Project. To date indexes have been completed for *The Brooklyn Dodgers* (Rick Johnson), *The Boston Braves* and *The Detroit Tigers* (Bob Bailey), *The Cleveland Indians* (Bob Boynton), and *The Boston Red Sox* (Jack Carlson). Pending are indexes for *Connie Mack* (Boynton), *The Pittsburgh Pirates* (Carlson), *The Cincinnati Reds* (Bill Hugo), *The Philadelphia Phillies* (Howard Pollack), and *The New York Giants* and *McGraw of the Giants* (Terry Smith). Boynton also has indexed *Veeck ... as in Wreck* and *The Boys of Summer*. Copies of the indexes already prepared are available through the SABR Research Library administered by Len Levin. Have we more volunteers? If so, please contact me.

Index to *Baseball Register* Project. Steve Milman and Tom Schott have expressed interest in participating, but the principal aid so far has come from outside the Bibliography Committee. Rick Benner and Pete Palmer have provided major legwork in compiling lists by categories and by annual issues (as discussed in my July 1993 newsletter comments); and Ed Walton has alerted me to certain special issues—a "Special Servicemen's Edition" in 1945 and an "All-Star Edition, 1944" (obviously for a Chicago market). If you know of other specials, please give me the salient details. And, if you wish to be involved in any aspect of the project, I will be most glad to hear from you. There is a mountain of legwork ahead, and I much desire your agreements or disagreements about the project concepts, management, and ultimate form. One minor disappointment concerning my July comments: only Jack Lang noted and called my attention to my spelling of Cavarretta as Cavaretta!

Two Losses. Sadly I note the demise of two worthwhile commercial ventures. *The SportsBook File*, the bimonthly which, each issue, profiled 20 sports books (mainly baseball) competently and informatively, ceased with number 13 (July–Aug. 1993). Also, The Diamond Baseball Book Club, begun in late 1991 to sell new baseball books at attractive discounts, went out of business in September. Financial failure overtook these enterprises because of insufficient volumes of subscribers and customers.

Indexing Non-Periodical SABR Publications

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In the future, I'd like to include an index with many of our non-periodical SABR publications. I wonder if members of the Bibliography Committee would be interested in working with me on this idea? It would mean establishing a longer lead time on certain projects, so that one or more indexers would have time to do their work. I think members would appreciate such indexes, and I'd certainly expect to give prominent credit to those who put in the work. Please contact me.

A Bibliographic Reference Service for SABR Members

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SABR has just introduced an Electronic Card Catalogue (ECC) to complement the Baseball Online Project. Designed as a research tool rather than a formal bibliographic database, ECC will help SABR researchers locate hard-to-find books and unique materials in other members' personal libraries. ECC begins life with more than 5000 entries, including the contents of all SABR publications and the SABR research library, and a list of all Oral History Committee interview tapes, searchable by author, title, or subject keyword. SABR Executive Director Morris Eckhouse will administer ECC and respond to researchers' queries.

But ECC will be only as useful as members' participation allows it to be. If you are willing to photocopy or answer questions about items in your baseball library—especially if you have a large or distinctive collection or extensive unpublished resources—please send a list of your holdings (author and title are the only essentials, though publication data and a few brief keywords would be helpful) to me. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about ECC.

We *Could* Find the Holy Grail!

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Yes, SABR ought to be able to locate baseball's long-lost treasure troves. Who, what, where, when, and—above all—how you well may inquire. The "who" is *you*. If it's not to be SABR, then who? Let it begin with us!

The "what" is a cornucopia of missing records for which we now have leads. For instance, the long-sought Marcellus Ledgers of the National Association (1871–1875) have been tracked from the Philadelphia area to Southern California. There, they became subsumed into the 1924–1967 files of the late Tommy Thompson, coauthor (with Hy Turkin) of the first ongoingly successful encyclopedia of baseball.

Thence, the trail wends to Connecticut, where Thompson's widow (now in a retirement home) sold the files to Lee Allen, then historian of baseball's Hall of Fame. Unbeknownst to all, with them journeyed the Marcellus Ledgers! Unfortunately, in 1969, while still in his 50s, Allen died of a heart attack. His widow (in Florida), in turn, donated his materials—which amounted to more than 5 *tons* worth—to a fledgling Florida university.

Flashing forward to 1982, SABR author Jim Riley, visiting the university, was requested—only at departure—to examine a *roomful* of uncataloged baseball material! When he attempted to investigate subsequently, the library had relocated, personnel had shuffled, and some materials had been donated to at least one other Florida university. Shades of the last scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Now, as a result of only a mere squib in this committee's newsletter, I was contacted by Bill Brown of the Univ. of Miami library. He advised that his library is developing a world-class center for sport research and he is especially interested in baseball! Furthermore, records have now been unearthed of the Allen donations and the archivist, after a lengthy telephone conversation with me, is now personally contacting the university's founders to follow the paper trail!

This illustrates the potential of SABR, but there is *much* more. For example, the late Corwin (Wally) Wallace, retired Army band leader, bartender, and collector of cigar wrappers and wives, was also a sabermetrician, 1923–1971. He not only developed the "Wallace system" (as reported by AP) but also even donated *large* trophies—photos available—to the annual winners in major league baseball! Wallace died in Southern California, was buried in Oregon, has a son in New Jersey, and a stepdaughter in the Army, but where is his widow with his 43 years' worth of files?

Similarly, the patented "Berry system" produced by the late Alfred P. Berry of Massachusetts and Florida was reported annually by Jimmy Powers. His artist brother Dwight was in Massachusetts and New York but may now be in Europe—might we locate 20 years' worth of his files?

Dear to my heart is the Charles Mercurio, Sr. pitch-by-pitch "radio baseball scoring" which he began about 1942 (before Allan Roth!) and continued into the 50s in the St. Louis area, corresponding with Harray Caray and furnishing copies to ballplayers after games. His granddaughter is in the New Orleans area, with nephews and nieces in Maryland and Missouri and a Passionist Father at a monastery in Chicago! Retrosheet would utilize his data well.

Paul Nemeyer of the Cleveland area, who distributed affidavits representing his system, had correctly predicted the outcome of more than 71% of the Indians' games in 1952. Could someone in SABR assist in locating him?

The late George R. Engel of Southern California had an analogous method, which he tendered to Vin Scully in 1961. I have clues but would appreciate assistance, especially in the Sacramento area, where the son of the late Ted Oliver (author in 1944 and 1947 of *Kings of the Mound* and originator of "wins-above-team") also resides.

Again in Southern California, Ronald H. Lewis was editor of Baseball-for-Fans Publications at least so recently as 1987. Does anyone know how to locate him?

How about William J. Kenney of the Schenectady (N.Y.) area, who originated the "batter's valuability percentage" in 1954? Is there anyone out there who has a connection to him?

What about the late G.E. Righter, formerly of the Erie Railroad in the Buffalo area, whose name was mentioned in the most recent publication of the SABR Records Committee? Is he well-enough known for his heirs to be contacted?

By the same token, Earle Moss, founder of the *Baseball Blue Book* in 1909 in the Ft. Wayne (Ind.) area, retained many of his files when he retired in 1960. Who might be acquainted with him?

Who knows of Robert Kalich, author of *The Baseball Rating Handbook* (1969)? Who knows of Joseph Bruno, author of *Baseball's Golden Dozen* (1976)?

All of the above are the "what" and the "where". The "when" is NOW!

The "how" is through some good, old-fashioned legwork! With the assistance of five of his faithful friends, I preserved and conserved nearly 200 boxes of Allan Roth's lifework in sabermetrics. This required pure and simple dedication. The same was true in re-

trieving most of Earnshaw Cook's lifework from the Baltimore area. But more remains to be accomplished. Will someone please step up to the plate?

I persuaded Chuck Mullen, developer of the "clutch rating system" in the 1950s, to attend the 1993 SABR national convention in San Diego. He now proposes to institute a national network of interested sabermetricians. If anyone who is truly dedicated would write—or, even better, phone or fax me—there are plenty of leads and plenty to do!

Book Reviews

COMING APART AT THE SEAMS: How Baseball Owners, Players, & Television Executives Have Led Our National Pastime to the Brink of Disaster
Jack Sands and Peter Gammons. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1993. 266p. $24

THE DIAMOND REVOLUTION: The Prospects for Baseball after the Collapse of Its Ruling Class.
Neil J. Sullivan. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. 232p. $19.95

BASEBALL AND BILLIONS: A Probing Look Inside the Big Business of Our National Pastime
Andrew Zimbalist. New York: Basic Books, 1992. 270p. $20

PLAY BALL: The Life and Troubled Times of Major League Baseball.
John Feinstein. New York: Villard Books, 1993. 425p. $22.50

Review by **Robert M. Boynton** (Del Mar, Calif.)

From an examination of attendance figures, memorabilia sales, and broadcast revenues, one could argue that major league baseball has never been more popular than it is right now. Yet a pall hangs over the game, a feeling of foreboding not attributable to Chicken Little. Indeed, the subtitles of two of these books suggest that apocalypse is right around the corner. For Sands & Gammons, the entire game is on "the brink of disaster". For Sullivan, it is the owners who are about to suffer their just desserts. Although Zimbalist is less of a doomsayer, in the very first paragraph of his introduction he quotes Fay Vincent, who at the time was still Commissioner, as saying: "Baseball is poised for catastrophe and it might not be far off"—a prescient bit of language when applied to its author!

Sands & Gammons (respectively a lawyer and a well-known baseball analyst) have produced a lively book that is more fun to read than the others, but which includes nary a scrap of documentation. By contrast, Zimbalist (an economics professor) has written what could be a doctoral dissertation with its 40 pages of notes, a dozen pages of references, and a 16-page index. This may appeal to an emeritus prof like myself, but it could quite possibly bore others, and of course he does focus heavily on economic issues. Sullivan also teaches (he is an associate professor of public administration), but he was written a couple of other baseball books and I doubt that this one, in contrast to Zimbalist's, will earn him substantial brownie points at school. The rigor of Sullivan's treatment occupies a nicely balanced position between the others, and his book might be the best one to have if you are having only one. On the other hand, if you buy the other two, Sullivan's is perhaps the one you could best do without.

As would be expected from examining their titles, reading all three of these books will generate a substantial amount of that feeling of "deja vu all over again", about which the Great Yogi spoke. To document this objectivity, it may be noted that all three indexes include the names Einhorn, Fehr, Flood, Gardella, Giamatti, Kuhn, Landis, Messersmith, Miller, O'Malley, Ueberroth, Veeck, and Vincent—and this list is by no means exhaustive.

The books deal with the long history of exploitation of players by owners, the unwillingness of either the Supreme Court or Congress to intervene to alter baseball's unique exemption from antitrust regulation, the seemingly endless battles among the owners, the few instances where the threat of a new major league has suddenly boosted players' salaries, the circumstances that finally led to franchise shifts after 50 years of stability, and Marvin Miller's remarkable success in developing a powerful players union when previous efforts had fallen flat. Also covered are problems related to the reserve clause, television, free agency, collusion, arbitration, strikes, salary escalation, lockouts, gambling, and racial discrimination. The essentially nonexistent bargaining position of the minor leaguers, who constitute the vast majority of professionals who play the game, is also discussed.

There is substantial agreement among the authors concerning what should be done to avoid catastrophe. Baseball needs a commissioner, but he must represent the views of both owners and players. In the old days—when baseball still had a commissioner—protecting the "best interests of baseball" was supposedly his most important responsibility. Most of the time, however (especially since Landis), it is only the interests of the owners (who, after all, hire and fire the commissioners) that have been represented. Sullivan illustrates this by suggesting that, in Bowie Kuhn's autobiographical *Hardball*, his real meaning becomes clear only when one substitutes "best interests of the owners" for "best interests of baseball".

The arbitatration system, which has been largely responsible for irresponsible salary escalation, also encourages selfish play and should be replaced by expanded free agency. Expansion of major league franchises is also very desirable and will not, it is argued, reduce the quality of play below an acceptable level. Sullivan, who encourages slow growth and the triumph of tradition over innovation, nevertheless says the majors should expand to 32 teams at once. Zimbalist believes, paradoxical as it may seem, that major league expansion would be salutary for the minor leagues as well. Sands & Gammons caution that expansion must be controlled jointly by players and owners, and they predict (or at least hope) that eventually there will be a real World Series, one that includes Japan and other nations.

The adversarial relationship that has long existed between management and labor is no longer working to the real advantage of either—not even for some of the high-salaried stars who no longer seem to enjoy playing the game. Procedures should be worked out to provide balanced representation of owners and players, with all of the financial cards face up on the table. For this to work, the owners must display a much more unified front than now, and agree about the desirability of increased revenue sharing to give the small-market franchises a fair shake.

Sands & Gammons propose an arrangement that seems to me to be in everyone's best interest. Establish a new corporation, they say, headed by a Chief Executive Officer chosen by a board of directors that includes representation of owners and players. The Commissioner, to be hired by the board, would have two specific tasks: 1) serve as a public spokesman and 2) be the final arbiter on issues related to the integrity of the game. The Commissioner should avoid financial issues and neither he nor the CEO should be involved in collective bargaining.

There are two other relevant books not being reviewed here which nevertheless deserve mention. For a thorough "history of baseball's labor wars" (his subtitle), Lee Lowenfish's *The Imperfect Diamond* (Da Capo Press) is superb. First published in 1980, sixty-five of its 300 pages update it to 1991. James E. Miller won the 1989 Macmillan–SABR Research Award for *The Baseball Business: Pursuing Pennants and Profits in Baltimore*, published in 1990 by the Univ. of North Carolina Press. Miller's book is a very well-docuemtned history; Lowenfish provides only four-and-a-half pages of bibliographical notes. The usual cast of characters turns up in both books. By concentrating on a single franchise, Miller illustrates by example the complexities involved in running a major

league ball club, with room left over for a refreshing amount of what will not be found in the other books, namely descriptions of the game itself—players, managers, and the contests they won and lost as participants in a successful franchise located in a market of limited size.

Other than major league baseball, it is difficult to identify a private industry whose organizational, financial, and personnel decisions are of sufficient general interest to warrant the publication of so many books like these. There is perhaps a parallel here between a general interest in government, whose operations affect everyone, and our concern with the quality of baseball's administration, which equally affects those millions of us who are addicted to baseball. Unfortunately, the analogy breaks down because our baseball habit is so strong that we fans have conclusively shown an inability to vote with our feet. Nevertheless, we don't deserve such atrocities as the cancellation of spring training, World Series games played exclusively at night, phony playoffs, and a July without baseball.

Review by **Leverett T. (Terry) Smith, Jr.** (Rocky Mount, N.C.)

I originally bought *Coming Apart at the Seams* because Peter Gammons' name was on it, but it's hard to tell what part he had in composing it. My guess is that the ideas and organization are Sands' and that Gammons' job was to put them into acceptable English. Sands is identified on the dust jacket as "a sports lawyer" who has represented athletes from all major team sports for 20 years, especially "major league baseball players from before and since the creation of free agency in 1976". This means that he's intimately involved in the events he's describing and not capable of objectivity. I found the book fascinating, but I don't know if it's the whole story or the true story. I'm inclined to be suspicious of the book's conclusions.

As the title and subtitle indicate, Sands finds the current situation in Organized Baseball potentially disastrous. And the situation is current. Sands' first acknowledgment is that "if the manuscript of this book had been turned in when it was due much of the most recent events that are shaping baseball's future would not have been reported" (p. 18). Sands finds all the major powers in baseball at odds with one another: players, owners, Commissioner, television executives. Their opposing positions are stressed. "For years the [players] union leadership has steered players away from some agents and toward others who are more adversarial" (p. 50). (I wonder if Sands himself is in the former group?) Donald Fehr (director of the Major League Players Association) "has been aptly described as a pit bull. He has a scrubbed, evangelical approach that turns the slightest owner–player issue into a breach of the Constitution" (p. 51). Sands actually is rather even-handed in handing out this sort of treatment. The various commissioners get the worst of it. Sands identifies a disease he calls "commissioneritis" which he deems detrimental to baseball. All the recent commissioners have had it.

For Sands, the problem isn't just that the major parties in the baseball business have an adversarial relationship. Among the players, Sands sees three separate groups with potentially conflicting interests (p. 148). Likewise, the club owners fall into three "market classifications" and have disparate interests based on which kind of market they find themsevles in (p. 106). In addition, the television networks are determined to reduce their financial commitment to baseball. And the role of the commissioner, according to Sands, is outmoded. The consequence of all this: *coming apart at the seams*.

Sands has a solution. The "hero" in his book, which seems to feature all villains, is the National Basketball Association (NBA). Listen (p. 92 & 230): "While the NBA was dramatically expanding its game internationally, promoting its superstars to an adoring public, and selling its sport as the game of the 1990s, baseball's image was going in the opposite direction. Fans had become fed up with the constant labor disputes, escalating salaries, and off-field antics of stars such as Darryl Strawberry, Dwight Gooden, Wade Boggs, and Roger Clemens." Sands' prescription for baseball is inferable from this passage: be like the NBA.

In addition to the above points, Sands thinks that the NBA has structured the commissioner's office correctly and that the players and owners in Organized Baseball need to work together to share the profits the sport brings as they do in pro basketball. Sound sensible? Maybe. Here are some of Sands' other ideas:

a) Arbitration must go. I gather this is what he means by arguing for a "true open market" for player salaries (p. 218).

b) The older stadia must go. Sands is appalled that major league teams still play in Tiger Stadium, Wrigley Field, or Fenway Park. The stadium must now be an "entertainment palace" (p. 241).

c) The current method of determining participants in the World Series must go. Sands devises a method of involving more teams in the playoffs (and thus helps both ballpark attendance and increases television revenue) which continues to honor the teams with the best records in each league (p. 225).

It seems clear that Organized Baseball is in a period of agonizing change. That it is a sport that seems to bring out the traditionalist in all of us makes change particularly excruciating. Sands' recommendations seem a bit radical to me; baseball needs to find more ways to honor its past as it undergoes necessary change. I find the last section of the book—depicting a visit to the ballpark in the near future—particularly chilling. The suggestion (and it's not a new one) is that the game itself isn't enough to interest folk any more. Further, it suggests that professional baseball is no longer a "people's game" but another version of upscale America, where computers and charge cards bring everything to one's fingertips, and by the seventh inning it is time to go home.

Zimbalist's *Baseball and Billions* is not an easy book for the noneconomist to read. There are many graphs and charts of considerable importance, but I finally had to skip them. Two appendices proved almost impossible for this layman to follow. But the body of the book is written clearly in English.

Zimbalist identifies and discusses in considerable detail five problem areas in major league baseball today: 1) labor relations; 2) revenue inequality among the teams; 3) relations with the minor leagues; 4) relations with the host cities; and 5) the future of television and radio broadcasting. He also issues a caveat at the beginning of the book: "the [baseball] industry is run like covert operations at the CIA" (p. x). Zimbalist has done his best to assemble correct facts and figures, "but if there is an occasional inaccuracy, take your complaint to Fay Vincent" (p. xi). Alas, too late for that! Zimbalist does commend the Major League Players Association as being "very open and helpful to me" (p. xi).

Is there a crisis in the business of baseball? Zimbalist doesn't seem to think so. He concludes his introduction by saying that "commercialism, greed, and poor management do threaten the game, but solutions are within easy grasp" (p. xviii). At some points in the book he ridicules the notion of a crisis saying, for instance, that as an economist, he finds that the owners' "perennial cry of evaporating profits and imminent catastrophe in the presence of rapidly growing revenues and escalating franchise values is hard to take seriously" (p. 47). Later in the book he asserts that "dire economic predictions are as much a part of baseball tradition as the seventh-inning stretch. The economics of baseball in the 1990s is indeed in flux, but there is no natural catastrophe in the path" (p. 168). Are the cries of crisis simply a part of baseball's normal way of doing business?

Zimbalist thinks so, but he still has plenty to worry about, and extensive reforms to suggest in the structure of the business. "As long as baseball remains a self-regulating industry," he writes, "its solutions must be found internally, and the people who must forge them are the captains of industry, baseball's owners, and their hired gun, the commissioner" (p. 30). This he doesn't want to happen, and here is the scenario he fears will occur (p. 168):

"With the prospective stagnation or diminution of national media revenues, the tendency toward siphoning baseball telecasting to cable and eventually to pay-per-view will be reinforced. The

growing importance of local media revenues will aggravate the existing inequalities across teams, and, in an effort to avoid greater revenue sharing, the big-city owners will lead a new assault against the players union, the cities, the minor leagues, and the fans."

Sounds pretty catastrophic after all, doesn't it? As a consequence, Zimbalist's reforms are pretty sweeping: immediate and considerable expansion, eventually to as many as 42 major league teams, the abrogation of baseball's antitrust exemption, and formation of a federal sports commission. I find myself hoping all this isn't necessary, but if the economics of the game are as Zimbalist describes them here, it may be.

Feinstein's *Play Ball* is a different sort of book than its title first suggests. Picking it up, I expected another journalistic survey of the various recent lunacies of baseball's administrators, owners, players, agents, and lawyers coupled with an urgent desire that the game on the field go on (play ball!) and that all the adversaries agree to cooperate (play ball!). It is about these things, but it manages to handle them deftly and unobtrusively within an absorbing account of the 1992 baseball season. If Feinstein begins by saying that "it has become increasingly difficult to turn on the television or go to the ballpark and enjoy the simple pleasure of the national pastime" (p. xv), his book demonstrates a more complex pleasure—how to enjoy the game and understand the business over the course of a single season.

Feinstein begins the book with an account of the last game of the 1992 World Series and ends it with an account of the nonannouncement of Barry Bonds' signing with the Giants in December. He concludes (p. 394): "Baseball is a big, brawling, often ugly business. The antipathy many fans now feel toward the people in the game is more than justified." Of the Bonds fiasco, he writes (p. 423):

"The game's best player had been humiliated in public at what should have been his grandest moment. The owner of the Giants, who had been *forced* by his fellow owners to undersell his team by $15 million, was now being told they might not allow him to make a deal *they* had arranged because the owners-to-be had pulled a fast one on them by giving Bonds so much money. Nothing defined the chaos that was baseball quite so well."

And on the last page of the book, a concluding generalization:

"These are the most difficult times baseball has ever faced. Once upon a time, only bad teams were broken up. Now, championship teams split up—routinely. Dave Winfield was a hero in Toronto in October; he will play in Minneapolis in April. A year ago, it was just the opposite; Jack Morris, the hero of Minneapolis in '91, migrating to Toronto in '92."

Almost in spite of generalizations such as these, *Play Ball* remains a good book about the 1992 major league baseball season. Feinstein the reporter accomplishes this through a long series of interviews, from the Commissioner himself to David Raymond, the Phillie Phanatic. All levels of the game are covered—executive, managerial, player, umpire, broadcaster—and the results are orchestrated in a chronological narrative of the 1992 season. The battle between the owners and the Commissioner—"the confrontation that likely will define baseball in the 90s" (p. 145)—is juxtaposed with the four divisional races. Feinstein is particularly moved by the fate of the Oakland Athletics and the character of its manager, Tony LaRussa, but he covers all four races and has something to say about even the unsuccessful teams. There is a chapter on the current state of umpiring, and even the activities of the general managers of the National League's two 1993 expansion teams get a chapter.

There is the story of the season, and there are the attitudes and opinions, both of the subjects and of the author. I enjoyed particularly Carlton Fisk on Deion Sanders: "If you've got the kind of physical talent he has, why waste it on being an idiot?" (p. 15). Or Mike Flanagan on getting out of a slump: "You have to try *easier*" (p. 123). Feinstein thinks Tim McCarver is "the best analyst in the history of the sport" (p. 118). In the battle between the Commissioner and the owners, he is clearly on the side of the Commissioner. He deplores the breakup for reasons of economics of teams in Pittsburgh (p. 7) and San Diego (p. 352), but sees hope in the way the Cleveland Indians have dealt with their young players (p. 90 & 375). Occasionally, he's just wrong, as when he imagines the Atlanta Braves to have acquired Otis Nixon from Toronto (p. 99).

Some may find in 1993 that they remember the 1992 season too well to find *Play Ball* enjoyable. I think for all of us *Play Ball* will be more and more fun to return to as the 1992 season itself recedes. Like Roger Angell's narratives, or G.H. Fleming's recreations of specific seasons through newspaper stories, in future years *Play Ball* will help us remember or evoke for us what we were too young to have experienced ourselves.

Play Ball has no index; someone ought to make one.

THE TOUGHEST JOB IN BASEBALL: What Managers Do, How They Do It, and Why It Gives Them Ulcers
Peter Pascarelli. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. 252p. $21

Review by **Ron Kaplan** (Upper Montclair, N.J.)

If baseball is the favorite American pastime, second guessing managers must come a close second. How many of us want to throw our beers at the TV, infuriated with the manager's latest strategic blunder? *We* would have changed the pitcher before the batter jacked out that grand slam. *We* would have sent up the lefty pinch hitter earlier in the game or replaced our no-range first baseman in the later innings.

If every possible occurrence could be programmed into a computer, you wouldn't need someone to make the decisions. Just plug in the variables and have the machine spit out the result.

But as Pascarelli shows us in *The Toughest Job in Baseball*, there's much more to it than that. His wonderful analysis focuses on Jim Leyland in his stewardship of the Pittsburgh Pirates during the 1992 season. Leading a team is not just about winning or losing, contrary to Vince Lombardi's and Leo Durocher's credo. Depending on whom you ask, a manager has to be part drill sergeant, part teacher, part father figure. Even at the major league level, where you would think the players should know the fundamentals, the manager and his coaches are constantly reminding everyone of what has to be done.

Pascarelli, who has written for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Sporting News*, brings us into Leyland's office, to share a smoke or a beer, to lament over missed opportunities or regale in well-earned victories. We feel the stress that the merest lapse can bring to the outcome of the game. We're exasperated by the part of the job where you have to tell grown men to act like adults. (Of course, there are those who believe athletes never grow up, but that's another story.)

The author points out that Leyland himself was a mediocre professional athlete who realized early on that he wanted to stay in the game after his playing days. Like many players of his caliber, Leyland sat on the bench and observed and questioned until he reached the point where he was ready to set out on his own and he paid his dues in the minors before being given the shot.

The course of a season—adding on a month for spring training and, if lucky, a few extra weeks of anxiety-filled postseason—with all its strange hours, nagging injuries, misplaced hopes, and being away from family and friends can take its toll on a weak man. But Leyland seems here a paragon, even during his team's last-place finish in his first year at the helm. His manner and style are not perfect; he makes mistakes and accepts their consequences. Pascarelli portrays Leyland as a person anyone would want for a friend: loyal, forthright, intelligent, but not above a practical joke or two.

The author offers other managers for contrast: Leyland's good friend, A's skipper Tony LaRussa, with his deep thought processes and lawyer's training; Napoleonic Earl Weaver of the Baltimore Orioles of the 70s; colorful, name-dropping Dodger Blue Tommy Lasorda. Each has used his own philosophy to lead his team to success over the past 25 years or so.

Each decade has had its own style of players with their special

sets of problems. The advent of free agency may well have created a new monster. The days of a player spending his entire career with one team are almost gone. The relationship between Leyland and Barry Bonds is portrayed with a special poignancy. To categorize it as father–son may sound cliched, but nevertheless Bonds seemed to look to the Pirates' leader in just that way. The fact that Pittsburgh would be unable to meet his salary demands makes the 1992 season all the more bittersweet, like a high school senior leaving his favorite teacher as he moves on.

It is fascinating to get into the mind of a good manager, to see how he has to treat 25 (or more) individual players, keeping everyone alert, ready to perform. Just as interesting is how a manager must deal with the front office, which has its own agenda, such as reducing the payroll, or how Leyland argued against both the release of a veteran pitcher and his replacement, an untested rookie who would get little work. Not just the game on the field, but administrative games as well are part of a manager's purview.

As entertaining as this book is, though, I may have to disagree with Pascarelli. "The toughest job in baseball" might not be managing; it may well be that of the fan who has to sit back and watch talentless players led by unimaginative field generals. And there are very few of the likes of Jim Leyland.

BASEBALL: A History of America's Game
Benjamin G. Rader. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 231p. $24.95

Review by **Leverett T. (Terry) Smith, Jr.** (Rocky Mount, N.C.)

This is a much needed book, a brief history of the game that summarizes and synthesizes the work of the past 40 years by historians both inside and outside the academy. I am sure that the Univ. of Illinois is hoping that it will become the college text in basebsll history courses. At the same time it is lucidly enough written to interest the general reader. It's an essential book, I think, for us SABRites, mainly because it gives the game on the field a context. Here's what Rader says he's up to (p. xv–xvi):

"I attempt in this book to re-create a broader story [than that of the game on the field], one that identifies critical continuities and changes in the way the game was played and examines the creation and demise of team dynasties, the organization of baseball, the ethos of the game, and baseball's relationship to American society. This book might also be described as a history of baseball's culture, meaning thereby the story of continuity and change in the game's rules, organizations, habits, customs, skills and interactions with the larger society."

This is ambitious, especially for a brief work, but Rader manages the job remarkably well. He distributes the space of the book rather evenly, devoting approximately one-half to baseball before 1920, one-half to baseball since. On the other hand, the book—like most other books titled *Baseball*—is really about Organized Baseball, and finally about Major League Baseball. Once the major leagues are established, the negro leagues and minor leagues are mentioned for the most part only when their histories touch the major leagues. Other manifestations of baseball receive scant notice.

Though it's written, of necessity, at a very high level of generalization, I've found remarkably few errors of fact in *Baseball*. Dean A. Sullivan of the SABR Nineteenth Century Committee lists some in his review in that committee's Winter 1993 newsletter. In the latter part of the book, I noticed only that in recounting the treatment of players returning from the Mexican League, Rader manages to imply that Vern Stephens was "not permitted to return to organized baseball until 1949" (p. 187).

Rader's discussion of the game on the field may disappoint SABRites. It takes up a relatively small portion of the book, and most of us will find the material more happily presented in Bill James' *Historical Baseball Abstract*. It's value here lies in the context Rader gives it, the development of baseball as an economic, social, and cultural entity in America. It is also possible to question Rader's understanding of the development of the game on the field. For instance, he maintains (p. 162):

"That the game in the 1940s and 1950s was played essentially as it had been since the hitting revolution of the 1920s partially disguised a decided trend toward more one-dimensional offenses ... Players hit fewer triples, doubles, and singles; they sacrificed less and executed fewer hit-and-run plays than in the past. ... For a time, it seemed that the art of the stolen base was dead."

Obviously, there is truth in these assertions; Rader provides tables. But the exciting thing about these years lay in the ways the game was changing. Branch Rickey's signing of Jackie Robinson changed the game on the field. Robinson's presence beginning in 1947, both the Brooklyn Dodger teams and then Leo Durocher's New York Giants of the early 1950s with the emergence of Willie Howard Mays, the baserunning exploits of Minnie Minoso, Chico Carrasquel, and then Luis Aparicio in Chicago: all these announced the arrival of a new kind of game which owed considerable to black and Caribbean baseball.

Rader is aware that such a change has occurred. He writes later in this book of "a new kind of game" after 1969, which "featured raw power, dazzling speed, and specialized pitching" (p. 209). I'm not sure why he waits so long to acknowledge this because it deserves more attention than he gives it, especially when he notes that, in addition to losing "black fan support", the percentage of black or racially mixed players in baseball declined in the 1980s in relation to those of other team sports (p. 214). I wonder what this means for the future of the game on the field?

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