

Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

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Comments from a Co-Chair

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Baseball Records Update 1993

Compiled by the SABR Baseball Records Committee under the editorship of Lyle Spatz, *Baseball Records Update 1993* surely rates among the finest and most appropriate research products that SABR has yet produced. Lyle and cohorts certainly merit loud kudos for a job expertly done by dedicated searchers, painstaking care, and tireless pursuit. While the main consequence of the update is intended to be correction of statistics in new issues of baseball encyclopedias and record compendiums, the other great plus of the update is making public all these changes and their supporting details. Habitually, albeit for practical reasons, the encyclopedias, etc. do not alert readers to changes they make in individual player or team numbers. What could be more precisely in line with SABR's thrust than discovering and highlighting adjustments which improve the accuracy and completeness of the records? In the introduction, Lyle states "this is the first in a series". We trust the Baseball Records Committee and SABR will see to it that additional updates will follow.

Grandstand Baseball Annuals, 1985-1993

I'm perpetually amazed at the wealth of quality content continuously generated by Joe Wayman in his self-published, hard-to-put-down, modestly priced annuals, subtitled: "Fun Stats for Grandstand Fans". *Grandstand Baseball Annuals (GBA)* started with 48 pages but quickly enlarged to a page range of 112 to 154. While its material centers mainly on statistics (corrections, supplemental tables, evaluations, methods), also present as well are history, biography, literature reviews, SABR-related items, and a vast miscellany of subjects too diverse to catalog here. At first Joe wrote the entire text, but soon, without diminishing his own sizable input, he included work of other respected SABR researchers. Two frequent contributors have been Jim Weigand and Frank Williams, so perhaps it became a natural development that in addition to his regular GBAs, Joe would issue *GBA Specials*—#1 (James J. Weigand Issue, 1991) and #2 (Frank J. Williams Issue, 1992)—containing selected research pieces by Jim and Frank. This year Joe expects to publish *GBA Special #3* (National League Pitching W-L Records, 1890-1899) and indicates he is "considering taking a *GBA* publishing leave of absence" to complete the National League 19th-century W-L pitching records of 1876-1889.

Proper Surnames of Latin Americans

The Chicago Manual of Style states that customarily Latin American men's proper surnames are composed of both their fathers' and their mothers' family names, in that order, sometimes joined by "y" (and). Baseball reference books treat such names in different forms, however. Note the following example (but, for our purpose

here, ignore the different spellings of Tony Pena's middle name):

- 1) Antonio Francesco Pena y Padilla (*Macmillan Baseball Encyclopedia*)
- 2) Antonio Francisco Pena (Padilla) (*Total Baseball, Who's Who in Baseball*, and *Baseball Register* up to 1991)
- 3) Antonio Francisco Padilla Pena (*Baseball Register* 1992, 1993, and 1994)

I guess the first is correct; the second is certainly understandable and probably acceptable; and the third is not acceptable and can cause confusion. My interest in this stems from involvement in the *Baseball Register* 1940-1994 index project. Space limitations likely preclude using mothers' surnames in the index but I intend to identify all subject men's full proper names before determining how the names will appear in index columns. My problem with Latin American names is ignorance of the rules. Curiosity also prompts me to ask if different Latin American countries have different naming customs and whether these players actually care how their names are stated when supposed to be in full form. I am aware sometimes that personal preference overrides normal precedent as in the case of the Alou tribe, whom we list under Alou instead of Rojas y Alou or Rojas Alou or Rojas (Alou). Perhaps someone on the Latin America Committee or the Biographical Research Committee could straighten out my understanding in this matter??

Putnam Series Books Indexing Project

Two more indexes accomplished! Terry Smith has prepared and submitted "preliminary" (people names only) indexes to *The New York Giants* (1952) and *McGraw of the Giants* (1944), both authored by Frank Graham. The list of completions lengthens, but a majority of the series remains to be done. If interested in preparing an index (Putnam series or other notable baseball books), please let me know so we can avoid duplications of effort.

Comments from a Co-Chair

Andy McCue

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SABR-24 national convention approaches and I hope to see as many of you as possible in Arlington, Texas. Since the time for the Bibliography Committee meeting hasn't been set, you'll have to wait until you pick up your convention program to get that information.

Ted Hathaway and I will be there to talk about Baseball Online. I think we will be able to report a great deal of progress. We know the database is beyond 20,000 items. We are working both on adding items and on improving those we already have.

As an example, as I write this, the books side of the database has 11,852 entries, but only 1118 have been cataloged fully. Another 772 have at least been examined. This is a vast improvement over last year at the national convention, when we presented to the SABR Board of Directors a database of just less than 5000 items, with fewer than 500 books.

We continue to gain more volunteers and can always use more. We most appreciate those people who can devote themselves to a month of *The Sporting News* or a year of *Sports Illustrated*, but commitment doesn't have to loom anywhere near that large. If you are going to read *USA Today Baseball Weekly* anyway, you could catalog it as well. In addition, if, in the course of your general reading, you come across the odd article in an academic journal or *Newsweek* or *Fortune* that should be included, you could catalog that. Also, as members of this committee, you are presumably not merely interested in baseball books, but actually read them. It takes only a few minutes to complete a bibliography entry form when you are done with a book or article—and you have helped the project.

I would also emphasize that despite its name and Ted's and my constant use of terms such as "field", "database", and "entries", it is perfectly possible to do immense good for this project without knowing anything about computers. The vast majority of our volunteers work on paper forms and so can you.

Other committee work hasn't been proceeding as rapidly as it might. While Frank Phelps is working away at the *Baseball Register* indexing project, he's getting little help from the rest of the committee. And, equally important in my mind, we've added nothing to the list of index-less baseball books, for which some members have created indexes. I think this is particularly important for the Putnam team histories, a basic source for researchers, yet difficult to use because they lack indexes.

I'd also like to encourage more members to join Terry Smith and Bob Boynton in producing book reviews for this newsletter. These add a more critical element to our appreciation of the books.

Letters

Racism

I wish to comment on Terry Smith's review of *Baseball in the Afternoon* in the Feb. 1994 issue of the committee newsletter.

Smith devotes one paragraph to a story in the book about the lynching of a black man. As the story is presented, baseball was to blame for the incident. Yet, the only connection was that a teenage baseball player, acting as a bystander, observed part of the mob action.

The only justification for mentioning this story in the review would be as a criticism of the book. However, I did not get the impression that this was the intent of the reviewer.

In recent years, more and more people have been criticizing baseball for holding Negroes back. Yet, baseball just mirrored American society in general. In fact, baseball has a better record on integration than most sports.

Bob McConnell

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Baseball Annuals

Every spring, the bookstores are filled with baseball annuals, be they books or magazines. I do not have the time nor the money to buy every one to see which is the best, so I end up buying the same ones every year—though, I wonder if I could have bought something better.

I wish the Bibliography Committee newsletter would review them all so that I could make a wiser decision as to what to buy. This, however, would be a huge project in itself. A much more modest project would be a simple survey. The questions could be: 1) what annual baseball books do you buy?; 2) what annual baseball magazines do you buy?; 3) what are your favorites?; and 4) what are the ones you regret buying? Or something like that.

I would even volunteer as the surveyor. People could send me the answers to these questions, and I could compile a very short report for the SABR convention or a future newsletter. I think this would be a valuable and interesting survey. It could even be expanded to ask what have the members been reading lately, what they liked, and what they did not like.

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Reply from Frank Phelps: With respect to attention to the commercial annuals, from *The Sporting News* volumes to the most recently started ones, I suppose the membership of the Bibliography Committee is representative of the entire SABR membership. I urge all of you to respond to John and answer his questions. The

final results of his poll should be a matter of interest to the overall Society.

Book Reviews

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

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THE MUSEUM OF CLEAR IDEAS: NEW POEMS

Donald Hall. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1993.

Hall is an established poet and critic, "one of our foremost men of letters", and we're told that this collection of poems is his "most advanced work". About half the book is devoted to a series of poems, "The Museum of Clear Ideas", which, according to the dust jacket, "imitates, but does not translate, the first book of the *Odes* of Horace". The book begins with "Another Elegy", a "comic, pathetic portrait of a (fictional) contemporary poet". Sounds like pretty intimidating stuff. My advice is not to be intimidated, to consider Horace to be Horace Stoneham or Horace Clark (Hall actually dons the persona of a Disney character, Horace Horsecollar), and get this book for your library. It's got a dark green dust jacket and the figure of home plate on the cover. Very pretty. There's also a nine-part poem called "Baseball" and three "Extra Innings". These comprise about a third of the book.

In "Baseball", the game may contribute more to the form of the poem than to its content. The dust jacket tells us that the poem "occupies nine innings, each inning composed of nine stanzas, each stanza composed of nine lines, each line composed of nine syllables". The poem is addressed to German modernist collagist Kurt Schwitters, and Hall's own method is that of collage:

*The madness method
of "Baseball" gathers bits and pieces
of ordinary things—like bleacher
ticket stubs, used Astroturf, Fenway
Frank wrappers, yearbooks, and memory—
to paste them onto the bonkers grid
of the page.*

Baseball as subject is one element in this collage. The playful nature of the poem is unmistakable in this quotation.

"Extra Innings" is a different kind of poem, concerned with endings, cancer, death. Baseball acts as a counter to this:

*Routine was paradise—walking the dog,
newspaper, coffee, love, rye toast, work, grape
juice, the Yankees beaten three straight, Cleveland
coming to town for four, a big series.*

The book ends, however, with what must seem, for the Red Sox fan at least, the best ending of all. These are the last lines of "The Twelfth Inning":

*We gather yellow days
inning by inning with care to appear careless,
thinking again how Carlton Fisk ended Game Six
in the twelfth inning with a poke over the wall.*

Much of the routine of Hall's poem, including baseball, is the subject of a prose narrative, *Life Work*, published in 1993 by Beacon Press.

BASEBALL IN 1889: PLAYERS vs. OWNERS

Daniel M. Pearson. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993. 234p.

An old ornamental dish hangs on the wall of my study. Around its edge are the words "New York Baseball Club" and "The Pen-nant Winners 1889". In the center of the dish are circled likenesses of 19 Giants players; in the very center is their manager, James J. Mutrie, top hat and all. I'm not sure where the dish came from, but

having grown up a New York Giants fan I've always been happy to have it, though never very curious about it. But Pearson's book made me curious about it and partially satisfied that curiosity. In spite of some structural and stylistic limitations, the book is useful and rewarding, particularly for a New York Giants fan.

Baseball in 1889 is the work of an academic historian. Pearson lets us know what he's up to right away (p.1):

"My original intent was to highlight the players in their year of planning revolt from 'the system', to describe their working environment, and to provide some perspective on the relationship of their revolt to the labor unrest of the period. Early on, I also thought that the tight pennant races in both major leagues could serve as a natural framework and let the players, most of them of working class origin, speak with their feet."

A few pages later Pearson adds that he hopes the book will "provide, through this study of a specific year in baseball, some insight into the sporting aspect of working class culture in the late 1880s" (p.4).

Pearson is not entirely successful in achieving any of this. He gives us much information on his two goals (to reveal the players' working environment and to tell the story of the 1889 pennant races), but it doesn't cohere very well. The descriptions of the players' culture and the pennant races remain separate, at least in my mind. But both stories are fascinating, nevertheless.

We learn most about the four contending teams in the two pennant races: the New York Giants and Boston Beaneaters in the National League and the Brooklyn Bridegrooms and St. Louis Browns in the American Association. The Browns were certainly the most bizarre organization of the time, with owner Chris von der Ahe running the show. Pearson devotes considerable space to the owner-player relations, which included seven Browns players holding out in the spring and extraordinary accusations concerning the play of third baseman Arlie Latham during the season. Pearson also includes a not-very-pretty portrait of the young Charles Comiskey, manager of the Browns. The Browns finished second to the Bridegrooms, a less colorful but more proficient team. Charles Byrne, the Brooklyn owner, is the focus of Pearson's treatment. Involved in a year-long battle with St. Louis on and off the field, Byrne became outraged by the American Association's treatment of his team and eventually moved it to the National League. Pearson also includes an account of a crucial early-September series between Brooklyn and St. Louis in which the Bridegrooms initially were awarded two games for forfeit, though the league eventually reassigned one of the victories to St. Louis. Tempers were high, Comiskey's perhaps the highest of all.

In the National League, the Beaneaters were led by Michael (King) Kelly, though throughout the season there were questions about his leadership. The last word on the Boston team seems to have been that, because of excessive drinking on the road, the players were frequently "in no condition to play ball" (p.155).

In 1889 the Giants were baseball's best team (they won the National League pennant and beat the Bridegrooms in a championship series) and they were at the center of the players' revolt that eventuated in the Players' League of 1890. I was happiest learning about the Giants of 1889, not only about the players, but about their owner, John B. Day. Pearson speaks of "his generous treatment" of the players (in contrast to that of the other owners): "large salaries, the best hotels, and first-class travel on the road" (p.181). There are wonderful moments, too, when manager Mutrie comes alive, as in this remembrance from Giants pitcher Mickey Welch (p.93):

"He stirred up interest. He'd stand on the steps at the park with his high hat and fancy Prince Albert coat and as the crowd came in or went out he'd be shaking his cane and shoutin' 'We are The People!' He'd stand up in the hacks in other cities and shout it as we drove to the ball parks with the rooters for the other team hootin' at us."

Mutrie's own conclusion about the 1889 pennant race went this way (p.156): "The Bostons are good players, but we are the people."

There are many other things in Pearson's book. Though the formation of the Players' League seems beyond his focus, there is a good chapter setting the formation of the Brotherhood in the context of the organization of labor in the late 19th century. He also keeps a focus on the problems of pervasive gambling in baseball and the offering of incentives to players on other teams. A final chapter fills out the biographies of many of the leading figures of the 1889 season. I still don't know who made the plate that hangs on my study wall, but thanks to his book, I know a lot more about those pictured on it.

One last quibble about the book: I mentioned earlier that Pearson's style seemed a limitation. As an academic historian he assumes an interest on the part of his readers. His writing is often nondescript. Compounding this is the fact that the book is edited unevenly. Here, in the first two sentences of the last paragraph of the book (p.216), is a single example: "Many of the problems that have plagued the game since were featured in 1889. It was the a fulcrum on which baseball turned through 1919." I puzzled a bit about "the a fulcrum", and then began to wonder what is the antecedent of "it" in the second sentence. Surely confusions such as these should have been clarified before publication.

There are 22 photographs of players, managers, and teams, and appendices give various statistics for 1889. There is a brief list of "Works Consulted", but no index.

O Holy Cow! The Selected Verse of Phil Rizzuto

Edited by Tom Peyer and Hart Seely. Published by The Ecco Press, Hopewell, N.J., 1993. 107 pages; paper. \$8.95

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

Every ballclub has a team of announcers who fit loosely into the following categories: the *play-by-play man*, who informs the viewer of the situations on the field as they unfold; the *color man*, the analyst who describes the subtleties of the game, the meaning behind the strategies, offering instant criticism ("I don't know *what* he was thinking on that play"); and the *former ballplayer*, who informs the modern-day viewer of how very different the game was when he took the field, as well as provides other anecdotal nostalgia ("That reminds me of a situation back in 1947 when Sibby Sisti ..."). Sometimes there are additional people, and usually the crew switches off to carry you along for the next three innings.

Every team has its colorful character who can't seem to get the words out of his mouth quickly enough to keep pace with his brain or make them express exactly what he means. But is there anyone who compares with Phil Rizzuto, "The Scooter", the ex-Yankee shortstop, perennial Hall of Fame candidate, and 30-year veteran of the Yanks broadcast booth?

Peyer and Seely, who have compiled some of his gems for *The Village Voice*, have put together a collection of Rizzuto's finer moments. Known for his admonishment of dumb ballplayers, fans, and broadcasting partners as "huckleberries", Rizzuto is legendary for his rambling reminiscences, birthday wishes, and other tangential musings. These "poems" are excerpted from descriptions of games, which are listed along with the particular situations at the moment of his inspirations. Some of them might make the reader wonder of The Scooter might not be ready for the padded cell rather than the broadcast booth. Offered as evidence, chosen totally at random:

They're having more snow

Out in Colorado

Which is not in Montana.

But it is not far from Montana.

Some of the selections are somewhat more poignant, such as "Poem No. 61", which recounts Roger Maris' historic moment, and

"Prayer for the Captain", which followed Thurman Munson's tragic death in 1979. The titles given to these verses are good setups, which nudge the reader toward the punch line..

The 94 poems reflect Rizzuto's ability to change trains of thought with frightening speed and scramble to try to get back on the track. It's easy for one who has seen him in action on TV to say, "Yup, yup, that's exactly it." But those out of the loop can still get a sense of The Scooter.

After *O Holy Cow!*, will it be long before other broadcast poets produce their own anthologies, one day to take their place alongside Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Shelley? In the words and spirit of the Bronx Bard:

*A little disconcerting,
Smelling that pizza,
And trying
To do a ball game.*

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

O Holy Cow! is a serious work. Roy Blount, Jr. notes in his introduction that the poems have the same qualities as Rizzuto's fielding did: quickness and range.

*And so does his mind scoot,
As did that of
William Carlos Williams.*

Blount's mention of Williams suggests a modern poetic tradition into which these poems fall, one which discovers poems in ordinary life and ordinary speech, the poem being an occasion of raising the ordinary to a state of grace. It is worthwhile wondering who is the author of these poems. Rizzuto said the words; the editors document the occasion of each poem. But it is Peyer and Seely who recognized in Rizzuto's words the presence of a poem, wrote it down, arranged it on the page, and gave it a title.

I listened to Rizzuto announce Yankee games on the radio in the early 1960s and noticed then two tendencies. He had a propensity for zany accuracy, as in "There's a ground ball over the pitcher's head." On the other hand, he had a tendency to forget to report events at crucial moments, as in "There's a ground ball to the short-stop. Holy cow!", followed by excited crowd noises and no explanation from the announcer. The last poem, appropriately called "Apodosis", makes for a good example:

*Fly ball right field
It's gonna drop in.
No it's not gonna drop in,
Happy 46th wedding anniversary
Thomas and Mary Anne Clearwater.
That's it.
The last three, six, nine, twelve Yankees
Went down in order.
So that's it.
The game is over.*

The editors give information about the occasion for this and all the other poems: the date, the teams, the place, the game situation, and often, but not always, the final score of the game. Sometimes they specify that Rizzuto is announcing over WPIX-TV. Perhaps those not specified are radio broadcasts.

In any event, the book is lots of fun to read.

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