

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XI, NO. 3: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY, LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" JULY 2011

THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by **John McMurray**

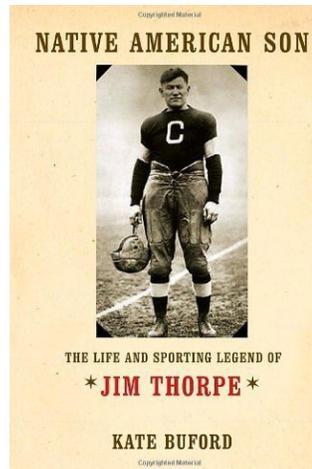
Please mark your calendars for the annual Deadball Era Committee meeting, which will take place at 11 AM on Thursday, July 7 in the Pacific Room of the Long Beach Hilton. Our Committee roster has grown since last year's meeting to about 600 members, which keeps the DEC as the largest of all of SABR's research committees.

The Committee continues to move forward. Our new committee-wide project, which will tell the story of Deadball Era World Series primarily through photographs, is progressing and project co-chairs Tom Simon and Steve Steinberg will provide an update about the project at the meeting in Long Beach. Also, the committee leadership is reviewing the input we received from committee members from our recent online survey, and an announcement about an additional DEC project will be coming shortly.

DEC members remain active in other spheres. Deadball Era player biographies continue to be added regularly to the BioProject, and anyone who is interested in writing

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RITTER AWARD WINNER



**NATIVE AMERICAN SON:
THE LIFE AND SPORTING
LEGEND OF JIM THORPE**

BY KATE BUFORD

*2010. New York: Knopf
[ISBN: 978-0-7864-4545-7
496 pp. \$35 USD. Hardcover]*

Introduction by
Gabriel Schechter

Reviewed by
John McMurray

The Jim Thorpe story is arguably the saddest in sports history, and it is told with particular poignancy in Kate Buford's *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe* (Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher), the winner of the 2011 Larry Ritter Award. Though other athletes' lives were more tragic because they were struck down fatally in their prime (Lou Gehrig, Ernie Davis, Steve Prefontaine and Len Bias, to name a few), the

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What's Inside...

Washington's American League Park II

by Ron Selter

The Great Red Sox Spring Training Tour of 1911

reviewed by William F. Ross

Early Black Baseball in Minnesota:

***The St. Paul Gophers, Minneapolis Keystones
and Other Barnstorming Teams of the
Deadball Era***

reviewed by Wes Singletary

AMERICAN LEAGUE PARK II WASHINGTON, DC: 1904-10

BY RON SELTER

The second ballpark used by the AL in Washington was called League Park or American League Park. As this was the second AL ballpark in Washington, it has been designated American League Park II in various ballpark books. The site of American League Park II was previously used for a major league park by the NL Washington Senators during the 1892-1899 seasons. In those years, there was another ballpark at that location called Boundary Park or otherwise known as National Park.

American League Park II was a wooden ballpark located in downtown Washington D.C. near the corner of Seventh St. and Florida Ave., NW.⁽¹⁾ In the first configuration of this ballpark, home plate and the grandstand were located near the northwest corner of the park site with the left field foul line intersecting the northern perimeter fence. There was an in-play clubhouse in right field and a modest sized scoreboard in left. The all-wooden seating facilities consisted of (1) a single deck grandstand which ran from first base

to about halfway between home and third base, (2) a covered third base pavilion that ran from the end of the grandstand to about 50 feet beyond the infield down the left field line and (3) uncovered bleachers that ran from the first base end of the grandstand to nearly the right field corner. There was no permanent seating in the outfield. The stands were quickly built in early 1904 because the grandstand at American League Park I had been disassembled and moved to American League Park II. This rebuilding of the grandstand took place only two weeks before Opening Day.⁽²⁾ The rushed nature of the building of American League Park II can be determined by the fact that the opening of the gates to fans on Opening Day (April 14, 1904) was delayed while workers completed the ramp leading from the main gate to the grandstand.⁽³⁾ The planned capacity of the park in 1904 was reported to be about 7,000. A big game during the 1905 season (May 6, 1905) drew 9,300. Opening Day paid attendance from 1906 to 1910 ranged from 10,000 to 12,962. These Opening Day crowds included numerous standees in the outfield, along the foul lines and during at least one year in temporary bleachers. Judging from the attendance data for these games the 1906-10 seating capacity was estimated to have been about 9,000.

Like many of its wooden contemporaries, American League Park II burned down. The fire

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INSIDE GAME
The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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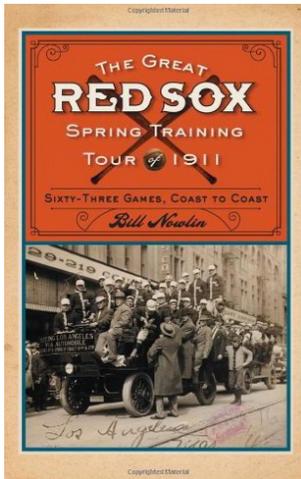
NEW DEADBALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

*Michael Jaffe
Timothy Odzer
William Peebles
Jim Troisi*

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 RUNNER-UP



**THE GREAT
RED SOX
SPRING TRAINING
TOUR OF 1911
BY BILL NOWLIN**

2010. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland and Company
[ISBN 978-0-7864-6124-0.
204 pages. \$29.95 USD,
Paperback]

Reviewed by
William F. Ross

During most of the Deadball Era, the Boston Red Sox took spring training in Hot Springs, Arkansas. One year, however, they did things differently. In 1911, at a time when few teams travelled as far west as Texas to train, the Sox went all the way to the west coast to begin their training in Redondo Beach, California. Looking at a listing of spring training sites and seeing that the Sox spent 1911 in California, however, would tell very little of the tale. After little more than a week in

camp, the team split into two groups and played a total of sixty-three exhibition games across the United States (and the Arizona Territory) on the way back east.

Following an introduction, *The Great Red Sox Spring Training Tour of 1911* begins with an overview of the offseason immediately prior to the trip, setting the scene for the action to follow. Activities in training camp are described, as are preparations for the exhibition games. After a short training camp, the team was split into two squads, one made up mostly of the “regulars,” the other predominately made up of rookies (“yannigans” or “colts”). Nowlin then follows the two teams as they play games up the California coast and then eastward; they would not see each other for the next month until the two units crossed paths again in Chicago. Games, travel schedules and personnel changes are described in a diary format as the squads made their way across the country. Nowlin concludes the narrative with informative biographical sketches of each of the players involved in the trip. Included as appendices is a list of the games played, with results, and the train schedule followed by the teams.

If there is one thing that Bill Nowlin knows it is the Red Sox. A Boston native, he is the author, coauthor or editor of over 30 books on the team

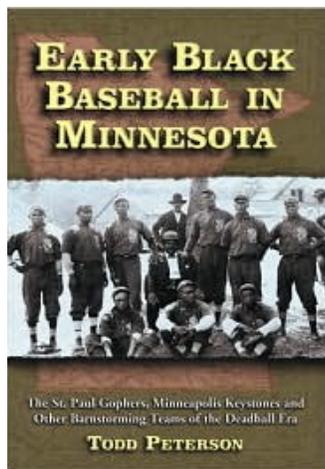
and its rich history. He also regularly writes for the publications *Diehard* (a Red Sox fan magazine) and *Red Sox Magazine*. Through the publication of a number of books that focus on specific years in Red Sox history he has developed connections in the SABR community and helped to spur BioProject writings.

Nowlin is a writer who regularly presents well-researched material and *The Great Red Sox Spring Training Tour of 1911* is no exception. Starting from a foundation of solid research he presents the facts in an accessible writing style, avoiding convoluted or overly dramatic prose. Relying primarily on contemporary newspaper accounts, he provides an engaging account of the tour.

It should be noted that what the Red Sox did in the spring of 1911 was unusual but not unique. The White Sox had trained on the west coast the three previous years (and once in Mexico); in a way, the Red Sox were following in Chicago’s footsteps. Splitting a team into two squads was not uncommon either; the New York Yankees, to take one example, did that in 1912, scheduling exhibition games for their regulars and rookies along the Atlantic coast as the team headed home from a southern training camp. The difference is really one of

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RITTER RUNNER-UP



**EARLY BLACK BASEBALL
IN MINNESOTA: THE ST.
PAUL GOPHERS,
MINNEAPOLIS
KEYSTONES AND OTHER
BARNSTORMING TEAMS
OF THE DEADBALL ERA
BY TODD PETERSON**

2010. Jefferson, NC:
McFarland and Company
[ISBN 978-0-7864-3816-7.
313 pages. \$39.95 USD,
Softcover]

Reviewed by
Wes Singletary

Perhaps the most effective path to researching black baseball prior to Jackie Robinson and desegregation is an approach that focuses first on the various teams and organizations, with the biographies of individuals comprising portions therein. It is a fact that a paucity of archival resources makes producing works on individual black baseball stars

much more difficult yet, when taken with team histories and other socio-economic factors, primary resources are more widely available and well-researched analyses can be produced. Such is the case with this book. Tim Peterson, a visual artist, teacher and Minnesota baseball zealot, goes beyond the pale of expected research in gleaning the information necessary for this exceptionally detailed play-by-play of the black game's early years in the hinterlands, and in particular, the story of two teams: the St. Paul Gophers and the Minneapolis Keystones.

First, the research. Who knew there were so many daily and weekly local newspapers covering baseball on the northern plains? The Aberdeen (SD) *Daily American*, the Quincy (IL) *Whig*, the Albert Lea (MN) *Evening Tribune*, the Renville (MN) *Star Farmer*, the Fort Dodge (KS) *Messenger* and many, many others, some obscure, some not, black and white, were ransacked by Peterson in bringing the game to life as it existed in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is difficult to imagine that the author could have more thoroughly researched the subject given the sources available.

Peterson demonstrates that black baseball in Minnesota was viewed, at least by outsiders, as minor leagues for the faraway professional black clubs in Chicago, Philadelphia or New York.

This was in spite of the fact that the St. Paul Gophers beat Chicago's powerful Leland Giants in 1909 for blackball's western championship. Outstanding baseball players such as Dicta Johnson, Dick Wallace, Willis Jones and "Big" Bill Gatewood all passed through St. Paul or Minneapolis at one time or other during their careers. Others like John "Steel-Arm" Taylor and "Candy Jim" Taylor, of the famous South Carolina baseball clan, did the same prior to their time in Indianapolis with the ABCs, where they joined their famous brothers, C. I. and Ben. Peterson also examines the early careers of such iconic black performers as Bud Fowler, Walter Ball, and Moses Fleetwood Walker, each of whom played white professional baseball prior to segregation, yet ultimately found their way to the Twin Cities. He returns late in the text to discuss Roy Campanella, the great Brooklyn Dodger receiver, who desegregated the American Association as a player in St. Paul. In between, Peterson carries the reader through a colorful barnstorming era of obscure circuits, teams and players that worked hard and found a home in Minnesota.

One such player was "Topeka" Jack Johnson, a shortstop with the Keystones who Peterson portrays as not being above earning a buck on the

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RITTER WINNER

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very fact that Thorpe lived out a full life-span while being denied his greatest glory turned his existence into a heartbreaking, ongoing ordeal.

Even though baseball plays a relatively minor role in the Thorpe story, Buford's book, the first comprehensive (and consequently long overdue) biography of the most dominant athlete of any era, tells us much about what it was like to be an athlete and aspiring major leaguer during the Deadball Era. With a fine eye for detail and a diligence about putting all events in their most enlightening historical context, Buford illuminates the factors in Thorpe's upbringing and athletic training which prevented him from becoming a baseball star. For instance, it was his quick mastery of several decathlon events he had not attempted before the 1912 Olympics (such as the javelin) which fostered his self-delusion (and John McGraw's wishful thinking) that he would have similarly swift success in learning the nuances of baseball. When he took up the javelin just a few months before heading for Stockholm, he didn't even know he could take a running start. Why couldn't he apply that superior learning curve to handling the curveball? Ask Michael Jordan, who has supplanted Thorpe on most "all-time greatest athlete" lists but who fared more poorly in baseball's low minor leagues than Thorpe did in the majors.

Buford treats every aspect of Thorpe's life and careers with thoroughness and discernment—the hypocrisies of government policies about Indians, the sham of his "education" at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the shameful actions of the AAU and his Carlisle mentor, Glenn "Pop" Warner, in selling him out during the Olympics scandal, his valiant efforts to prolong his football career, the long decline after he could no longer compete, his drinking and family problems, and the agonizing attempts to get his Olympic medals restored, a battle which was not won until after his death. Events conspired against him, as did the people in authority who turned against him, but Buford

also traces the chaotic childhood and the "Indian policies" which formed a character ill-equipped to handle both fame and adversity. The glory is there, too, the celebration of everything that made him great, but the story remains a fascinating train wreck that could have been avoided.

**--Gabriel Schechter, Chair
Larry Ritter Award Committee, 2011**



by John McMurray

In *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe*, author Kate Buford provides the most comprehensive treatment to date of the rise and fall of one of the singular figures in American sports history. What makes Buford's contribution distinctive is in the level of detail that she provides. Whether offering a vivid description of young Thorpe's formative years in Oklahoma or portraying his work in Hollywood in the 1930's, Buford's attention to detail makes for gripping reading.

The most notable contribution of the book, however, is its recounting of the sporting exploits of the man whom Buford calls "the central figure

at the dawn of American and international popular sports.” Though the book is only partially focused on baseball, Buford’s description of many Deadball Era events is well done.

Buford’s section on Thorpe’s time in baseball—aptly titled “The Professional”—provides perspective on several prominent figures of the period. For instance, Buford describes how Thorpe, as he entered the major leagues, looked up to both Chief Bender and Chief Meyers because of their similar ethnic backgrounds. Bender, Buford implies, was reserved and restrained when dealing with taunts about his own Indian heritage, whereas Chief Meyers was more open about the challenges that he faced, being what he called “a stranger in a strange land.”

Thorpe’s interaction with manager John McGraw receives significant attention. Buford describes how resistant Thorpe became to McGraw’s oversight, claiming indignantly: “What kind of league is this where the manager can tell you what kind of bat to use?” McGraw seemed particularly hard on Thorpe because of Thorpe’s reputation as the “world’s greatest athlete.” Again, Buford’s research stands out, as she recounts how Thorpe once dangled Al Schacht by his heels outside a fourteenth-story hotel room window and how McGraw blew up at Thorpe after Thorpe’s roughhousing with Jeff Tesreau left the pitcher with a sore shoulder. These smaller details enrich the story.

Buford succeeds in her clear writing as well as in treating Thorpe himself objectively. She demonstrates how Thorpe often created many of his own troubles. Still, the narrative is not designed to build up a sense of anticipation, and events sometimes feel like they are being recounted from a distance rather than from the perspective of Thorpe himself. Part of that limitation may stem from a lack of self-reflection by the subject. As Buford says in the prologue, “Jim Thorpe was not a complicated man. What happened to him was.”

Buford’s meticulous coverage of Thorpe’s later life, leading up to his being found dead in his trailer, is also excellent reading. As his early-century accomplishments re-enter the public consciousness in his later life, Buford recounts how Ted Williams expressed admiration for Thorpe for once hitting a triple off Grover Cleveland Alexander with “that old dead ball.” The lengthy, often frustrating struggle to get his Olympic medals restored, which even involved some help from Branch Rickey, is particularly well done.

Buford cites sportswriter Grantland Rice several times in the book and notes that Rice, along with Kyle Chrichton, helped to “perpetuate Jim’s standing as a giant among sports legends.” Thorpe’s role as a sports hero, however, is not a centerpiece of the book. Since Thorpe was from an era where sports heroes played such a prominent role, it would have been edifying to get more of Buford’s perspective on Thorpe’s place as an heroic figure, particularly in contrast to Christy Mathewson, his Giants teammate. Of course, no book can be all things to all people, and Buford’s work focuses more on the struggles that Thorpe faced in maintaining his Native American identity and in battling a host of personal challenges.

By any standard, Kate Buford’s *Native American Son* is an impressive work. Even though the text itself is almost 400 pages in length, the book is a pleasure to read and the many vintage photographs complement the storyline. Buford has gone beyond other related works on Thorpe’s life to offer a thorough view of this sporting legend.



magnitude. Not only did the Red Sox cover more territory than a team normally would (some 8,000 miles), the squads played a combined sixty-three games during their trip, compared to the more typical twenty-three played by the aforementioned New York nines in 1912.

This Ritter Award finalist has an appeal for readers looking to learn more about the Deadball Era. Those readers who are students of Red Sox history will find this an invaluable volume. In addition, those with an interest in spring training will be rewarded with an inside look at the practice as it stood during the Deadball Era. While the Red Sox exhibition schedule was unusual, comparisons from contemporary newspaper accounts presented in the book between the tour and how things *should* have been done shed light on standard training practices of the day. Having researched spring training myself (“Spring Training in Georgia: The Yannigans Are Coming!”, *The National Pastime*, 2010), I can personally attest to the dearth of quality printed material on this time period. With *The Great Red Sox Spring Training Tour of 1911* Bill Nowlin has added to our knowledge of the Red Sox, and has produced a book that deservedly takes its place on a very short shelf of excellent spring training tomes.

diamond or in the squared circle. Following the 1908 season, “Topeka” Jack (no relation to the noted boxer of the same name), frustrated at not being able to bring off a promised barnstorming tour against the St. Paul Gophers and the loss of an implied gate, signed instead to fight a proposed 15-round match against Walter Whitehead, a fighter from Duluth, and one whom Johnson had successfully sparred with earlier in the season until the match grew testy. In this bout, however, Johnson, who outweighed his opponent by ten pounds, was knocked out following 11 rounds of fast paced action. “Wherever the money was,” a blackball legend once chimed, and for Johnson, on that day, it was on his back.

With anecdotes such as this, Peterson ably reconstructs the development of a cross-cultural community, one in which baseball played a key role. While the narrative, succinct with strong prose, does understandably crawl in spots, the book is well-researched, and provides a wonderful look at a portion of baseball history that had been neglected. It also provides an excellent analysis of a community’s evolving courtship and ultimate love affair with the game. Serious baseball fans will appreciate it.

Publishers’ contacts for books reviewed in this issue:

Knopf

1745 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

McFarland

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

Photo credits:

Page 5 - LC-DIG-ggbain-11966

Page 6 - LC-DIG-ggbain-14466

Page 9 - LC-USZ62-88346 (left half of photo)

LC-USZ62-88347 (right half of photo)

Page 11 -Google Images

Page 13 -(Umpires)-LC-DIG-ggbain-20096

Page 13 -(Bay)-SDN-001787, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum

AMERICAN LEAGUE PARK

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occurred on March 17, 1911 and destroyed all of the stands in the park except for the large set of first base bleachers. In addition, the fire destroyed Freedman's Hospital, which had been located behind the northern perimeter fence. The only things in the ballpark that survived the fire were the outfield fences and the first base bleachers. A brand new ballpark was built on the site of American League Park II. The new ballpark (later to be called Griffith Stadium) was quickly built and the partially completed ballpark opened on April 12, 1911.

The Basis of the Park's Configuration and Dimensions

Dimensional data for this ballpark is virtually non-existent. The only relevant information for this park in the book *Green Cathedrals* (1992 edition) consists of the duration of the Nationals' occupancy of the park, April 14, 1904-October 6, 1910.

The basis for the initial configuration of American League Park II was a 1904 Sanborn fire insurance map of that area of Washington D.C.⁽⁴⁾ This Sanborn map, apparently from early 1904, showed the boundaries of the park site and surrounding streets but, unfortunately, none of the stands. The park site was not a rectangle but a trapezoid with the parallel sides on the east and west. The park site was unusual in that there were no streets on three of the four sides. Only 5th St., on the east, made up one of the boundaries of the park site. The north side was bounded by the Howard University Medical School and Freedman's Hospital, the west side by Maryland House and the south side by a number of houses which fronted an alley that ran behind Spruce St. (later U St.). The alignment of the playing field in the first configuration was determined from a photo of the ballpark on May 6, 1905 (photo from the Library of Congress).⁽⁵⁾ The Sanborn map and the 1905 ballpark photo were used to develop a ballpark diagram. Home plate was estimated to

be located near the northwest corner of the park site with the left field foul line intersecting the northern perimeter fence at about 160 degrees. The majority of the outfield fence was an interior fence that was parallel to 5th St. and located 90 feet in front of the 5th St. perimeter fence. This section of the outfield fence (clearly visible in the Library of Congress photo of May 6, 1905) ran from the intersection with the north side perimeter fence (which made up the section of the left field fence nearest to the left field line) to about right-center field. From here a short diagonal section of the right field fence is believed to have run until intersecting with the south side perimeter fence. The final section of the outfield fence was the perimeter fence on the south. This section ran from the junction of right field diagonally to the right field line. From the Sanborn map, it was clear that the right field foul line intersected the right field fence at far more than 90 degrees.

The second configuration of American League Park II is known to have been done sometime after the 1905 season. An undated photo of the ballpark in *Baseball Memories 1900-1909* shows a multi-angular outfield fence.⁽⁶⁾ In addition, the left field line intersected the north side perimeter fence at a much less oblique angle than in the 1905 photo. This means that the field had to have been re-aligned to allow for a decent depth left field, home plate had to have been moved towards the south. Home plate, in the second configuration of American League Park II, was located towards the western boundary of the park and roughly halfway between the north and south perimeter fences. This second configuration is known to have been utilized during the 1910 season, but could have been in place as early as 1906. A review of all Opening Day game accounts at American League Park II failed to find any information about the reconfiguration of the field. It was assumed that the second configuration of this ballpark was in use for the 1906-10 seasons.

This photo in *Baseball Memories, 1900-1909* shows the same outfield fences and background billboards as are visible in the photo of the 1911

Opening Day of Griffith Stadium. The location of the stands was based on this photo. The center field fence ran from the junction with the left field fence (five degrees off the left field line) and was 90 feet inside of and parallel to 5th St. From the right field end of the center field fence, there was a short section of diagonal fence which connected to the right field fence. A revised ballpark diagram was developed based on the *Baseball Memories* photo and the 1904 Sanborn map. The home run data was used to cross-check the estimated dimensions, and no necessary adjustments were identified. The only over-the fence home runs (on the fly) in seven seasons at this ballpark were four to left field and one to right field. Given the dimensions of the ballpark, all five of these home runs were most likely very close to the foul lines. All in all, the estimated dimensions for American league Park II contain a moderate to large amount of uncertainty.

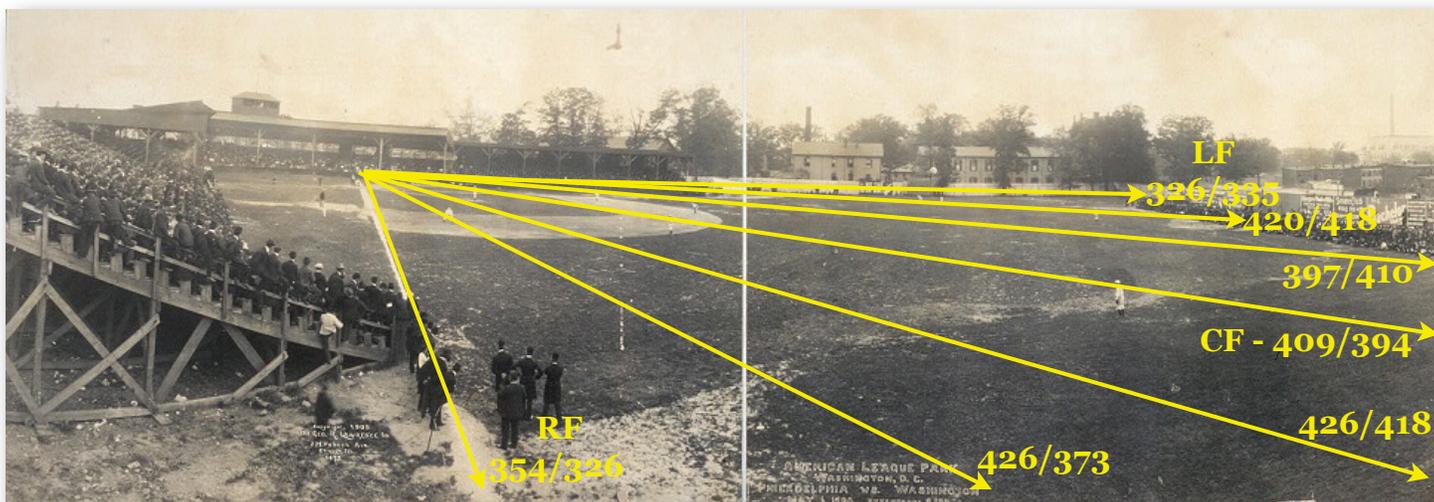


Photo of May 6, 1905 game vs. Philadelphia

Dimensions and fence heights (generally 10 feet all the way around, though center field may have been as high as 16 feet after the 1906 re-configuration) are all estimates from park diagram. Number to the left of the slash represents the 1904-05 distance while the number to the right represents the 1906 re-configuration.

Capacity: 7,000 (1904), 9,000 (1905-10, est.)

Park Size-Composite Average Outfield Distance: 408 (1904-05), 394 (1906-10)

Park Site Area: 6.1 acres

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

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

American League Park II was a not great offensive park. The park's run factor was 96, or four percent below average, while the home run park factor was 50 (See Batting Park Factors in the fourth table below). What led to this modest home run park factor? A review of the home run data led to some interesting discoveries. Home runs of all types amounted to only nine per season. Excluding the 18 bounce home runs, there were only five over the fence (OTF) home runs in seven seasons (four to left field and one to right). In the park's seven year history, no one ever hit a ball over the center field fence. The majority of the 18 bounce home runs were hit into foul territory via either the third base pavilion or into the first base bleachers. The home run data for this ballpark showed a high

proportion of inside-the-park home runs (IPHRs) suggesting the park was spacious and the average outfield distances greater than the typical AL ballpark. Like many other ballparks in the first decade of the Deadball Era, the proportion of IPHRs (most to left and center field) was high, amounting to 63% of the total home runs hit in the history of the ballpark.

Despite the park's run factor of 96, the batting average park factor was 100. The on-base park factor was 99, and slugging was 97. Despite the generous dimensions from left-center to right-center, the ball park posted a below-average triples park factor of 83. The reason the park had a batting average park factor of 100 while also having a lesser run factor of 96 was due to the low park factors for triples, home runs and walks. Home run data for the park and batting park factors are shown below in four tables:

Home Runs by Type at American League Park II:

Years	Total	OTF	Bounce	IP
1904-10	63	23	18	40

OTF: Over The Fence (Includes Bounce)

Bounce: Bounce Home Runs

IP: Inside-the-Park

OTF Home Runs by Field at American League Park II (Excluding Bounce):

Years	Total	LF	CF	RF
1904-10	5	4	0	1

Inside-the-Park Home Runs by Field at American League Park II:

Years	Total	LF	LC	CF	RC	RF	Unknown
1904-10	40	16	3	4	2	7	8

Batting Park Factors at American League Park II:

Years	BA	OBP	SLG	2B*	3B*	HR*	BB**
1904-10	100	99	97	103	83	50	94

* Per AB

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

Notes:

- 1 Washington *Post*, March 24, 1904
- 2 "Tearing Down the Stands," Washington *Post*, March 31, 1904
- 3 "Senators Lose First," Washington *Post*, April 15, 1904
- 4 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Washington 1904-10, Volume 4, Sheet 325
- 5 Library of Congress, Panoramic Photographs Collection (LC-USZ62-88346 & LC-USZ62-88347)
- 6 Okkonen, Marc, *Baseball Memories, 1900-1909*, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1992, p.78

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

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original player biographies for this initiative may contact me directly. The next "Boiling Out," in recognition of spring training rituals from a century ago, is scheduled for next year.

During the past year, with Mark Dugo's assistance, the DEC also initiated a re-printing of the t-shirts and hats with our committee logo, which proved to be very popular. In fact, the shirts and hats came out so well that we are strongly considering a second printing.

The arrival of the convention gives us a chance to offer thanks to the many people who make the Committee work behind the scenes. Trey Strecker, our Committee Vice Chair, has provided invaluable support and thoughtful judgment since assuming this position more than a year ago. Mark Ruckhaus, who had a steep learning curve when he took over as editor of *The Inside Game*, has turned the production of our newsletter into a well-oiled machine. The newsletter remains one of the most eagerly-anticipated highly-praised newsletters in SABR.

A special thanks also goes out to Gabriel Schechter, who has chaired the Ritter Award subcommittee for the past several years, culminating in this year's winning book, *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe*, by Kate Buford. Gabe is stepping down as Ritter Award subcommittee chair following SABR41, and I and all members of the Deadball Era Committee are grateful for his dedication, knowledge, thoughtfulness, and good humor. He will be succeeded by Dr. Gail Rowe, whose breadth of experience in scholarly research will allow him to make an easy transition. Gail, of course, has been instrumental in compiling the top-quality book reviews which we aim to publish in each issue of *The Inside Game*.

Going forward, there are several areas of Deadball Era research which could use exploration, perhaps by a small cluster of

members of the DEC. Some members have expressed enthusiasm for researching "characters" of the Deadball Era, perhaps as a complement to the two *Deadball Stars* books that our committee previously published. Putting together an archive of video and audio from the period would also be a very worthwhile initiative. Let me know if you are potentially interested in contributing to either effort.

More generally, please contact me at deadball@sabr.org with project ideas or suggestions for committee work. Of course, we all welcome your involvement. Thanks for your efforts in making this past year a very productive one for the Deadball Era Committee.



***The Mets' Jason Bay.
What's he doing here?
See page 13 for more.***

THE LAST WORD

by **Mark Ruckhaus**
Editor, *The Inside Game*

Being a high school varsity level umpire in New Jersey, I might be one of the few people who go to a ballpark to watch the men in blue (OK, sometimes black).

On the final evening of my recent golf trip with the boys to Myrtle Beach (OK, old men, as we've been doing it for over 20 years and, at 52, I'm the baby of the bunch), it was my idea to take in a Myrtle Beach Pelicans' game--the high-A affiliate of the Texas Rangers.

We walked up to the ticket window 45 minutes before game time and got four together four rows behind the plate. And for \$12, no less! Ain't life grand!

After walking around the ballpark a bit and chowing down, we settled into our seats. My first observation? Two-man umpiring crew, just like in high school. My first thought? The umpires are just as hungry to get to "the show" as the people they're officiating and they'll be working their rear ends off, first, because it's a two-man crew and, second, because, like the scouts in the stands with their radar guns, someone may be watching them too.

National anthem time. Also time for my second observation. And that's that the umpires appeared to be a product of Harry Wendelstedt's umpiring school in Florida. How did I think I knew that? Well, when I worked for the Newark Bears back in 2009 (official scorer and even did play-by-play for the team's Internet broadcasts for the final six weeks of the season), I spent a fair amount of time talking to the umps. One in particular was Mike Mazzarisi, who went through Wendelstedt's school and who might still be umpiring in the league as well as doing college ball. He told me that they even teach you how to stand for the anthem: heels together with the feet out at a slight angle, just like I saw at the game.

And this two-man crew was crisp and got all the calls correct, even one which might have been

errantly called "interference" by some on a grounder where the firstbaseman backed into the runner after failing to make a play. Note: Once a fielder has had a chance at a ball, there's no more interference. The base ump made a crisp safe call to indicate that there was no interference.

Needless to say, I took some mental notes to use when I put the blue shirt and gray slacks on.

That brings me to another observation and source of wonder. This is a Deadball Era newsletter and, as we all should know, many games, especially in the 19-aughts, were officiated by just one man.

This past high school season, due to a scheduling snafu, I had the luck(?) of calling a JV game by myself. Eastern Christian at Manchester, two schools separated by a few blocks. Going over the lineups and ground rules, I mentioned to the coaches that this was like the Mayor's Trophy game--harkening back to the '60s and '70s when the Mets and Yankees played an in-season exhibition game. I might as well have been talking German as neither coach, both younger than I, knew what I was talking about. I guess I am old, something my college age kids, bless their hearts, never cease to remind me of.

I mentioned to the coaches that some of the calls could be made on the "honor" system. If, for instance, I made an "out" call on a stolen base attempt and the runner said he wasn't tagged, I'd ask the player covering if he, indeed, made the play, hoping his sense of honesty would trump his desire to get a call his team really didn't deserve. But that never came into play as it was a crisply-played 3-2 EC win with all the calls being fairly straightforward.

But it made me appreciate the hard work guys like Klem, Connolly, Emslie and O'Day did day in and day out. After all, today's major league umps work in four-man crews and work the plate maybe 40 times a season

while the Deadball Era guys were doing it by themselves 150 times a season--and with no "honor" system and with players and fans getting on them when the situations presented themselves with umpires occasionally getting bottles thrown at them, not to mention the occasional physical confrontation, many times initiated by players.



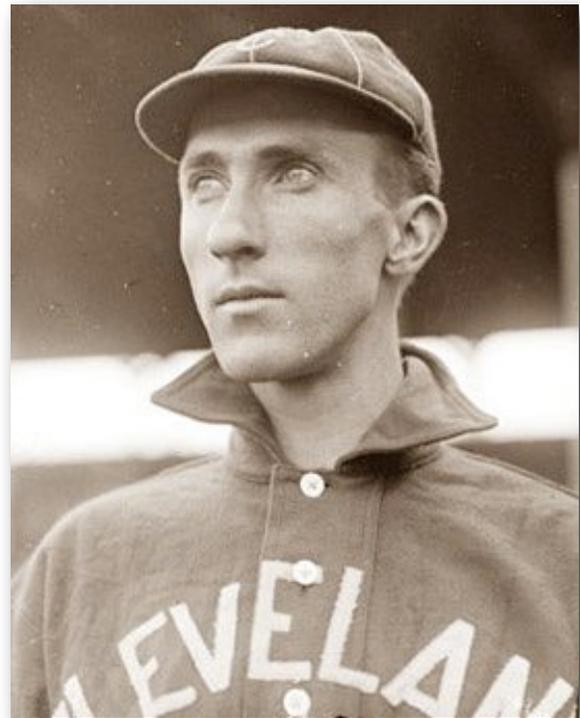
Four gentlemen who called more than a few games by themselves. Starting second from left: Cy Rigler, Bill Klem (with mask), Silk O'Loughlin and Billy Evans at Baker Bowl, likely taken prior to game one of the 1915 World Series. The fellow with the megaphone is identified only as "Smith."

Occasionally I do younger kids' games by myself. I enjoy working with them and teaching them (and sometimes their coaches) the rules and to let them know that the umpire is not someone to fear (or get on the wrong side of) but someone who is generally approachable and wants to see a good game in the same way they do. Needless to say, it's easier to cover a 46'x60' or 50'x70' field by myself rather than the 60'x90' field I covered at Manchester that day. And, on a hot late afternoon or evening, I can wring the sweat out of almost all my clothes thanks to all the gear I'm wearing.

Then I think about the Deadball Era umpires who worked in an era without even an air-conditioned hotel room to go back to and get some sort of relief and who covered the entire field while wearing a jacket and a tie and appreciate their talents that much more.

And then I think about how lucky I am to do something I enjoy and to have done something--a one-man game on a full-sized field--that few people get to do and that some very talented men did in the era of baseball which I enjoy the most.

Finally, I think how lucky I am that, when the game is done, I can hop into my air-conditioned car.



What's Jason Bay doing on page 11? Well, he bears just a bit more than a passing resemblance to one of the fastest players of the Deadball Era and the only other man named Bay ever to play major league ball, Harry Bay.