



THE INSIDE GAME

AUGUST 2023

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Journal of SABR's Deadball Era Committee



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ON THE INSIDE:

<i>How the 1910 Athletics Got Babe Ruth Suspended (Sort of)</i> by Chris Betsch	this page
<i>Cannon Receives Ritter Award</i> by Doug Skipper	page 12
<i>It's the Same Old Baseball</i>	page 13
<i>Ote Johnson</i> by Bill Lamb	page 16
<i>The 1917 Pittsburgh Pirates: Up Close and Personal</i> by Brian Morrison	page 24
<i>From Honolulu to Brooklyn</i> reviewed by Ben Klein	page 25
<i>Tris Speaker</i> reviewed by Vince Guerrieri	page 26
<i>St. Louis Baseball History</i> reviewed by Allison R. Levin	page 28

HOW THE 1910 ATHLETICS GOT BABE RUTH SUSPENDED (SORT OF)

by Chris Betsch

When Babe Ruth was suspended for the first four weeks of the 1922 season, it was considered an early showing of power by baseball commissioner Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Postseason barnstorming by players who had just played in the World Series was not allowed in 1921. Still, Ruth and teammates Bob Meusel and Bill Piercy did just that following their loss to the New York Giants in that year's Fall Classic, warranting suspensions from the commissioner. The rule had been created more than a decade earlier, but by 1921 most people didn't even know why it was in use. So why was the policy put into effect in the first place? An unsuccessful trip by the Athletics to Cuba in 1910 was not the sole reason that rules against World Series teams barnstorming were



About the Cover:

The drawing by Raymond Crawford Ewer appeared in the October 3, 1914 issue of *Puck*, comparing Americans' interest in baseball versus news of the war in Europe.

VIRTUAL BOOK TALK

We had our third Deadball Era Committee Book Talk virtual meeting Monday, August 28, 2023. Our guest was Steve Steinberg, a baseball historian of the early twentieth century. He has authored several award-winning books with Lyle Spatz, including *1921*, which won the Seymour Medal, *The Colonel and Hug*, and their latest collaboration, *Comeback Pitchers: The Remarkable Careers of Howard Ehmke and Jack Quinn*. Steve's *Urban Shocker* biography was awarded the 2018 SABR Baseball Research Award. He also edited *The World Series in the Deadball Era*, a joint effort of SABR's Deadball Era Committee. Steve has published dozens of other baseball articles, many in SABR journals.

Our Book Talk can be found online at youtu.be/-alceEMTl2w.

created, but it was a turning point in how the previous ruling body of the major leagues, the National Commission, viewed the practice.

EARLY BARNSTORMING TRIPS

For as long as there had been professional baseball players, there had been exhibition barnstorming tours. Many owners weren't necessarily against their players going on tour to make some extra money after the end of the regular season, but some didn't exactly support the practice either. They feared their players might get injured in the additional games or be out of condition by the upcoming spring training. Others thought their players were compensated fairly and didn't see why they wanted to play against lower teams for what was sometimes a small amount of money. But players were free to travel to wherever they could find a game. Some more supportive owners even traveled with their teams on the tours or at least allowed them to represent the club in their own uniforms.

The National Commission was formed as part of the National Agreement in 1903 that ended the war between the National and American Leagues; the group included the presidents of both leagues and an elected chairman, and it ruled on all baseball matters across both major leagues as well as all minor leagues that were

part of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues (Organized Baseball). American League president Bancroft Johnson was the most imposing member of the team and was customarily at the forefront of the decisions being made by the commission. The first rules in baseball that dealt with barnstorming were created by the National Commission not to protect owners' assets or restrict players' incomes but rather to punish "out-law" teams that did not join the National Association.

For as long as there had been professional baseball players, there had been exhibition barnstorming tours

Before the commission was even formed the island nation of Cuba was already becoming a popular location for exhibition games. Frank Bancroft, a manager, and promoter in the early days of professional baseball, arranged one of the earliest trips by a team to Cuba. Visiting American teams were usually semi-pro squads that included a smattering of major league players, like Bancroft's Hop Bitters team, or minor league clubs. Negro league teams also played there in the winters, as they were much more welcome there than they were in many parts of their homeland. Major league teams had also tried to set up trips to Cuba over the previous seasons, but the plans usually fell apart for one reason or another (one reason being strained U.S. relations with Cuba at the time of U.S. occupation). But in October 1908, as the business manager for Cincinnati, Bancroft successfully brought the Reds to Cuba. He collaborated with Cuban baseball manager and businessman Eugenio Jimenez to arrange for the Reds to play a series of games that would include games with the nation's top two teams: the Blues of Habana and the Reds of Almenares. After closing out a fifth-place finish in the National League, a partial Reds squad of eleven players traveled south for the exhibition series. The Reds knew the Cubans had talented players, but they were confident they would win most of the games. Cincinnati was quickly educated on how good the Cuban players were, including their dark-skinned players, and none more than Jose Mendez, who didn't allow a run over twenty-five innings. The Cuban legend tossed a one-hitter against the Reds (Miller Huggins finally scraped a hit in

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the ninth inning), and the Reds went 4-7 against the Cuban teams during the visit. Following the series, it was noted that Mendez's color "... is the only thing that keeps him from being a star in one of the major leagues."¹

Despite the losing record for the Reds, it was a successful trip financially and for the players' leisure. But some were not happy with the results of the Reds' trip, especially with how they lost to teams that included dark-skinned players. Cincinnati Reds President Garry Herrmann, who happened also to be the neutral third elected member of the National Commission, was attributed with saying after the series that the Reds would no longer travel to Cuba. "I find that the Reds are playing certain men in Cuba against whom there is an unwritten law in the big leagues."² However, Herrmann and the Reds were still impressed enough with the talent in Cuba that they later signed two natives that were light-skinned enough that they could be accepted in the States: infielder Raphael Almeida and outfielder Armando Marsans.

THE WORLD CHAMPIONS GET EMBARRASSED IN CUBA

Following the end of the 1909 season, Jiminez arranged for a visit from the American League champion Detroit Tigers that would begin following the World Series, which the Tigers lost to Pittsburgh. After the Reds tour, American writers had warned other teams that they would need to bring their full arsenal if they wanted to succeed in Cuba. Still, Detroit stars Ty Cobb and Sam Crawford skipped the trip, as did manager Hughie Jennings (and Donie Bush would leave after a few games). The remnants of the Tigers put up a shoddy performance against the Havana and Almendares teams, losing eight out of twelve games. Almendares pitcher Eustaquio Pedroso bettered Mendez's performance from a year earlier and tossed an eleven-inning no-hitter against Detroit. After initially asking the Tigers to extend their visit for four additional games, Cuba instead cut the visit short and ended the series, citing lackadaisical play on the part of the Tigers, who no longer "...put up an article of baseball good enough to make it interesting for the Cuban players."³ The Tigers had a substitute man-



THE 1908 CINCINNATI REDS PICTURED IN CUBA WITH BUSINESS MANAGER FRANK BANCROFT

ager in place in Matty McIntyre, the team was immersed with replacement players, and most players were likely enjoying their time at a tropical destination before heading home for the rest of the winter. But no matter, the runner-up for the so-called championship of the world came back to the states in a battered state. Before the trip, Americans considered Cuban players to be fast and have strong arms but thought that the Cubans "... still lack finish and knowledge of the finer points."⁴ But as the *Calumet News* of Calumet, Michigan, reported after the trip, "The truth struck home that Cuba is indeed on the baseball map."⁵

During the 1910 baseball winter meetings that followed in January, both leagues added a clause to standard major league player contracts stating that players should not play in exhibition games after the season unless they received approval from the club owners. Clause 9 of the player contracts also specified that players must refrain from participating in other winter sports such as football, basketball, indoor baseball, or other sports, without first getting permission from owners. Not all owners took issue with players continuing with baseball after the close of the major league season, but some frowned upon their players taking part in other sports over the winter and getting hurt, thus the other sports were added to the clause. Players were frustrated with owners attempting to limit their earning opportunities after the season, but as Ban Johnson pointed out to *Sporting Life* in January 1910, the clause did not completely rule out barnstorming, it merely helped ensure that owners were made aware of intended trips and had a voice in the matter.⁶

New contract clause or not, the Tigers wished for a rematch with the Cuban teams in 1910, and after failing to reach the World Series for a fourth straight year, they worked up a trip to return there in October. There may have been concern over the Tigers losing again, but Detroit owner Frank Navin approved the trip.⁷ This time Cobb and Crawford were present, and the team found some payback, winning seven of the twelve games played (with one tie). Cobb came later when Cuba increased their offer to have him make the trip, and only after Navin heeded part of Clause 9 of the standard player contracts and prohibited Cobb from taking part in an

auto race with Nap Rucker.⁸ The Tigers redeemed themselves, but the Cubans were focused on another opponent looming ahead — the newly crowned winners of the World Series, Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics.

... some [owners] frowned upon their
players taking part in other sports
over the winter ...

Eugenio Jiminez and Frank Bancroft teamed up again, this time to give the Cubans the ultimate opponent, the winner of the title of world's champions of baseball. Many people in baseball opposed the A's going to Cuba and risking another embarrassment. Jiminez and his partners made a substantial offer of \$7,000 to the Athletics,⁹ and business manager John Shibe not only gave his approval but also joined on the trip. The National Commission had become wary of postseason trips after the failures of the Reds and Tigers the previous two falls. In the winter of 1910, however, the commission devoted their collective attention to promoter D.A. Fletcher and his perceived threat to create a new third major league, which distracted them from Detroit's return trip to Cuba. The commission was so preoccupied that they were unaware of Bancroft's planned trip for the Athletics until the arrangements were made. Or the commission turned a blind eye to the trips to players might be appeased after hearing that some had received contract offers from Fletcher and might join on with his supposed start-up league.¹⁰ Ban Johnson later said that if he had known of the trip earlier, he would have tried to stop it versus risk the Athletics bringing shame upon American baseball. In the eyes of many people, which is just what happened.

Like the Tigers in 1909, the Athletics would take on the Cubans without their manager and some of their top players. Connie Mack and Eddie Collins were both newlyweds and skipped the trip, then Frank Baker and Rube Oldring also dropped out of it. After playing a series with the Tigers, the patchwork Philadelphia squad lost six out of the ten games against the Cubans, three each to Havana and Almendares. The A's wrapped up the series in embarrassing fashion, getting swept in a doubleheader with one loss apiece to both teams (Eddie

Plank and Chief Bender each came out on the losing end of a game). Philadelphia's top position player during the series was Claud Derrick, a utility player that appeared in only two games during the season but was on the trip roster to replace Collins. The Athletics could use any of the same excuses that were attributed to Cincinnati and Detroit: star players skipping the trip, participating players being worn down from a long season, and some players undoubtedly were more interested in the sights and nightlife of Cuba than they were in playing ballgames. Many fans discounted the results of the series, figuring that the trip was another example of a team that disguised a vacation as a baseball trip and that the Athletics had "... burlesqued the national game rather than to endeavor to play up to their standard."¹¹ But in the eyes of many reporters, and especially in the minds of the National Commission, the so-called "world's champions" had sullied the reputation of major league baseball.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION'S WAR AGAINST BARNSTORMING

The National Commission planned its annual meeting for January 1911, and barnstorming was sure to be one of the main discussion topics. Speaking on behalf of the commission, Johnson felt that "To have a band of champions troop off to other countries out of condition, and play opposing teams in the highest stage of perfect condition, and perchance suffer defeats, cheapens baseball ...".¹² Garry Herrmann had helped found the championship series between the two major leagues, so he especially could be expected to take offense at a title team appearing to be vulnerable. To no one's surprise, the commission passed a rule specifying that the World Series winning team would be required to disband immediately following the series, and no players from the team would be allowed to participate in exhibition games for the remainder of that year. What was surprising was that the rule was more lenient than what was expected; many writers had guessed that postseason exhibition games might be banned altogether. Other teams, including the World Series loser, could still participate in exhibition games, provided that "the full teams ... be put in the field and that all exhibition games be played ... with the spirit of regular champi-



AMONG BABE RUTH'S MANY POSTSEASON TOURS OVER THE YEARS WAS A TRIP TO CUBA IN 1920 WITH JOHN MCGRAW'S NEW YORK GIANTS

onship [regular season] games".¹³ The rule even raised fears of players throwing the series since they might make more money on fall barnstorming tours than what World Series-winning shares might bring them. The wording of the rules did not refer to foreign trips, but it was a safe bet that the commission specifically had trips to Cuba in mind with the rule. As the Cincinnati Enquirer flatly stated, the commission concluded that "... it does baseball no good to have a patched-up team going around a tropical island being beaten with great regularity by a lot of colored clubs"¹⁴

A repeat series with the champions of the major leagues would no longer be possible in 1911, so Jiminez and the Cubans instead looked to line up a matchup with the loser of the World Series between the Athletics and the New York Giants. After the Athletics defeated the New York Giants in six games, Bancroft and Jiminez set up arrangements for the New York team to make the journey. The Giants took the new exhibition rule to heart and came to Cuba to reclaim the United States' reputation as the superior baseball country. Whereas the Tigers and Athletics of previous seasons were short by

several key players, the Giants arrived with a squad that included much of the core of their team. Regular players Fred Merkle, Chief Myers, and Rube Marquard stayed behind. Most of the other regular Giants made the trip, however, including Art Fletcher, Larry Doyle, and most notably, the world-famous Christy Mathewson. Many of the players brought their wives along with them on the excursion, but Giants Manager John McGraw let the team know ahead of time that he expected them to remain in playing condition during the trip, with the intent not to repeat the failures of the Tigers and Athletics and instead “... show the islanders that baseball is faster” in the states.¹⁵ The Giants began their Cuban series on November 26 and played twelve games through December 18. They came out on top in the series and took nine out of the twelve games, outscoring the Cuban teams by twenty-five runs.

The Giants’ series victory in 1911 was followed by a much more successful return visit to Cuba by the Athletics in 1912, when they won nine out of the eleven games played. The Dodgers also had a victorious trip in 1913, winning ten out of fifteen games, and the worries over major league teams playing in Cuba seemed to have subsided. But the National Commission still fretted over major league teams appearing inferior against other teams outside the majors. There was still the lingering fear of players getting hurt, and columnists didn’t mind pointing out how much money major leaguers made and asking why they needed more (some things never change). In the November 8, 1913, edition of *Sporting Life* magazine, editors lambasted major league players that were “...playing for, with, or against every Tom, Dick, and Harry, and accepting ‘chicken feed’ for their services.”¹⁶ They called out the Brooklyn club for playing a local city-league team in a game where only 15 cents admission was charged. That same article also called out Walter Johnson for playing a game against the Mohawk Giants, a colored team. The notion wasn’t explicitly mentioned but with Herrmann still a member of the National Commission it could be presumed that the group still held an overall aversion to major leaguers playing against — and losing to — teams with dark-skinned players, either in Cuba or the states. But the commission didn’t take much action, especially if team

management still approved the games. Chief Bender and other Athletics were reported to have played exhibition games with semi-pro teams and colored teams following their victory in the 1913 World Series, with seemingly no consequence except the promise of the commission to take more radical measures.¹⁷

the National Commission still fretted over major league teams appearing inferior against other teams outside the majors.

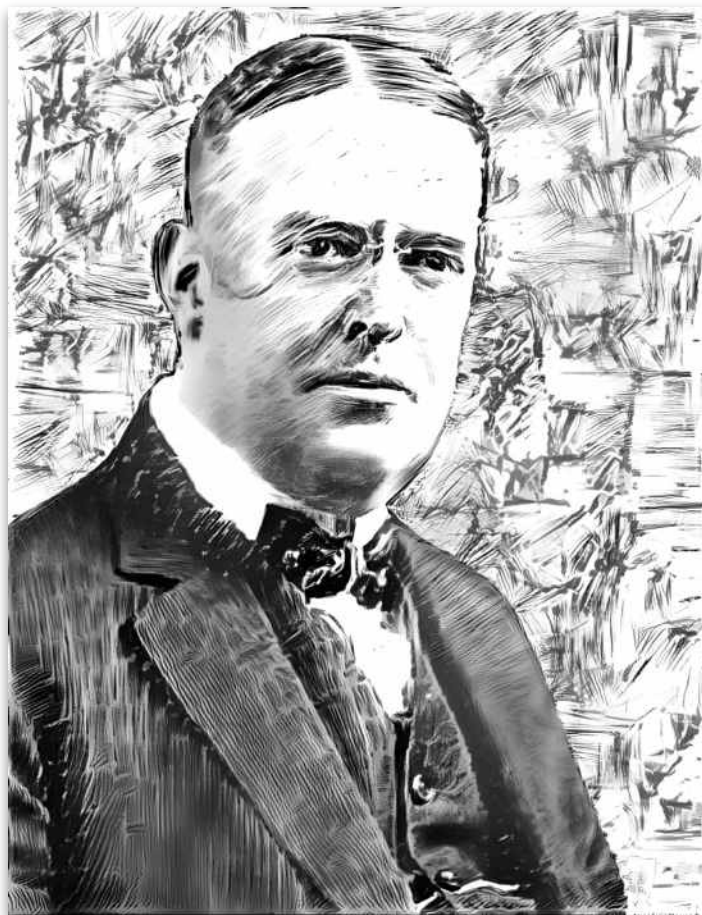
Promoter and former player Bill Lange planned a trip to California in the fall of 1915 for the Pacific-Panama Exposition in San Francisco for the two teams that had just met in the World Series: the Boston Red Sox and Philadelphia Phillies. The trip went against the regulations of World Series conduct, but it was approved by Ban Johnson and the commission with the thought that it could promote major league baseball on the west coast. The tour ended up falling apart before it could get started. The Red Sox claimed that the Phillies canceled the series due to a scheduling conflict with a celebration set up in Philadelphia. But there were also reports that the offers made to the players were not enough to entice them to take part in the tour, and some of them were more interested in joining in an all-star tour set up by Frank Bancroft.¹⁸ Bancroft had redirected his promotional efforts away from working with entire teams and was instead putting together traveling teams of various major leaguers to play each other.

In an effort to wrangle control of barnstorming after the collapse of the Red Sox-Phillies tour, the National Commission sent out notices to teams in March 1916 saying that “... the Commission will impose adequate penalties on all major league players, who, after the promulgation of this notice, may engage in games not conducted by their respective clubs.”¹⁹ The players mostly ignored the rule since they considered the end of the regular season to be the end of their contractual obligation to the clubs. Tours still went on that fall as if teams and promoters “... had forgotten or never knew that they were prohibited”²⁰

BABE RUTH FIRST RUNS AFOUL OF BARNSTORMING RULES

Following their victory over the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1916 World Series, several members of the World Champion Red Sox squad signed on to take part in an exhibition game in New Haven, Connecticut. The team played as the Red Sox against the New Haven Colonials, who had picked up Ty Cobb for the game. The commission was aware of plans for the game and warned Boston not to play. Red Sox owner Joseph Lannin tried to stop the game at first but allowed it after being made aware of all the preparations made in New Haven²¹ (a conflicting report later quoted Lannin as saying he was unaware of the game). This combined defiance of the 1910 contract exhibition clause, the World Series rules of conduct, and the 1916 barnstorming notification was too egregious for the National Commission to ignore. The participating Boston players were fined \$100 each by the league and had their World Series emblems withheld. Cobb was also fined \$50 for taking part in the game. Among the Boston players penalized was their young star Babe Ruth, who had pitched in the contest.

The Red Sox decision opened the door for an inundation of barnstorming fines. While punishments were handed down to the Red Sox players, the commission also fined as many as forty other players who had taken part in the various barnstorming tours after the season. Dave Fultz, a former player and now head of the Player's Fraternity, fought against punishment for the players. He argued that players' contracts ran out as soon as the season ended, and thus, players should not be held liable for postseason exhibition games. A news article from October pointed out that Fultz had previously agreed to the standard player contract and its exhibition game clause so that as long as a player was held in reserve by a team they should not be allowed to play the exhibition games.²² The same article stated that the owners had handed over decisions on player barnstorming trips to the National Commission earlier in the year, referencing the notice in March. The Red Sox players, including Ruth, still had to pay fines for their exhibition game that followed their appearance in the World Series (Cobb's fine was also upheld).



BAN JOHNSON LED EFFORTS TO PROHIBIT MAJOR LEAGUE WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS FROM BARNSTORMING FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE ATHLETICS IN CUBA

The 1916 exhibition game was still fresh on the minds of Johnson and the commission when during the 1917 World Series they learned that the American League champion Chicago White Sox had accepted an offer to play a post-series game against a team from Upland, Pennsylvania, in the Delaware County League, an outlaw league outside the National Association. Likewise, there was mention of some members of the National League champion New York Giants playing exhibition games after the series, including a possible return trip to Cuba. On October 16, the day after the 1917 World Series concluded, the National Commission changed what was now Rule 9 of the world series conduct rules so that players from both participating teams were prohibited from playing in postseason games. To ensure the rule was followed, \$1,000 of the World Series shares for players from both teams would be withheld until January 1 with the promise to pay the players after that date, along with 6% interest added, as long as they did

not partake in any games.²³ After the series concluded, players for both the White Sox and Giants played a benefit game for soldiers at Camp Mills in Long Island, NY, but following that game, they petitioned the members of the commission to pay off their entire World Series winnings, and in exchange, the players pledged to not play in any more exhibition games. The National Commission complied and paid the players, but a form of the policy on withholding portions of series shares stayed in place over the next few years. The commission hoped this rule would deal once and for all with the issue of world champions playing in exhibition games. Still, Amos Strunk, Joe Bush, and Wally Schang from the Red Sox were each fined for playing in games following Boston's appearance in the 1918 World Series (none of the players were with Boston in 1916). World Series competitors would still try to skirt the barnstorming rules in 1919 and 1920, but by then, the commission had moved on to a more pressing matter — the 1919 Black Sox episode.

BABE GETS SUSPENDED AND NO ONE IS SURE WHY

Federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis was named the first commissioner in 1920, specifically to deal with the matter of the scandal, and he came to be the major leagues' power. The National Commission dissolved following the appointment of Landis, but he held to the rules they established, including the rules around World Series contenders not playing in postseason barnstorming games. After the 1921 season concluded with the Giants topping Babe Ruth's Yankees in the World Series, Ruth was to begin a tour that would feature other Yankees, including Carl Mays, Wally Schang, Bill Piercy, and Bob Meusel. Ruth was no stranger to barnstorming; he regularly took part in off-season tournaments where he could capitalize on his immense fame. Besides the New Haven game in 1916, he also went on a popular exhibition tour in 1920 that famously included a trip to Cuba. But a rule is a rule, and before the series, Landis penned a memo to members of both the Giants and Yankees teams to remind them of the regulation forbid-



THE PARTIAL PHILADELPHIA ATHLETICS SQUAD AT ALMENDARES PARK IN CUBA IN 1910

ding them from playing in any exhibition games. Mays and Schang backed out of the tour, but Ruth, Meusel, and Piercy headed to Buffalo to play a game there on October 16. In December, it was announced that Ruth would be suspended until May 20 and fined his world series share of \$3,362. Meusel and Piercy were handed the same punishment (Piercy was dealt to Boston during the offseason). Many thought the sentence to be steep, since Ruth was single-handedly responsible for bringing major league baseball out of the dark cloud of the Black Sox scandal. It was considered justified by Landis, however, since Ruth was already aware of the barnstorming rule following his fine in 1916 and showed no apprehension about breaking it again. The suspensions didn't have much impact on the standings, as the Yankees were in first place when Ruth and Meusel returned, but Ruth came up four homers short in his bid to win a fifth straight home run title.

By the time Landis' ruling was handed down, the original intent of the barnstorming rules, namely, to marginalize outlaw leagues and block Cuban trips, had already been all but forgotten. An occasional writer correctly cited the original purpose of the rules when writing about Ruth's suspension, but the regulations were now widely regarded as a way for other players to have a chance to earn money after the series rather than have World Series players double up on earnings after the season. And when Lee Allen later wrote his book *"100 Years of Baseball"*, he recalled that the rule was "... designed to prohibit the players from exploiting themselves in the tank towns, risking injury on poorly equipped fields."²⁴ But no matter the rule's origin, most writers, baseball figures, and fans agreed that it had become antiquated. The illustriousness of Ruth also highlighted an aspect of barnstorming that the National Commission had lost sight of, that the offseason games gave many people outside of major cities an opportunity to see him and other players that they usually could only read about in newspapers.

Landis may not have liked the idea that Ruth was becoming more prominent than baseball itself, but with the stain of the Black Sox still on the game, Major League baseball could use all the positivity it could get.

Ruth had made a point of this when asked to comment on his suspension, and maybe a bit surprisingly, Landis agreed.²⁵ In August 1922, the World Series code of conduct was amended so that players taking part in a World Series could play in postseason exhibition games after the season, provided they had obtained the written consent of their club management. The new rule also specified that no more than three members of a World Series team could play together in the same barnstorming game.²⁶ The revised standards meant all players could barnstorm while also still incorporating the idea of not letting entire teams go on the road under the title of the "World Champions" of major league baseball, only to get beat by teams of semi-pros or small-town amateurs.

Among his many accomplishments in baseball, Babe Ruth could also count that he could undo the regulations that were put in as a reaction to the Philadelphia Athletics' failed trip to Cuba in 1910. The resulting rule changes helped set the stage for an era of popular exhibition all-star tours that would let fans all over the country see stars spanning from Ruth and Lou Gehrig through to Dizzy Dean and Bob Feller.

WINTER BALL IS DOOMED

CINCINNATI—Chairman Garry Herrmann of the Nation Commission will leave for Chicago tomorrow to meet representatives of the various semi-professional teams with a view of determining what action is to be taken with regard to contract jumpers.

"These independent Chicago teams are now the only paying baseball organizations where disgruntled players can find refuge," said Herrmann, adding that negotiations were now be carried on which will make "outlawry" among players impossible.

The new national agreement contracts, calling for twelve months' control over players, will be ready for distribution by the commission within a few days. They prohibit players playing baseball, football, basketball or any other dangerous sport during their off-season without the consent of the club holding title to the player involved.

Spokane Press, January 9, 1910

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SABR Bio of Garry Herrmann, by John Saccoman.

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FOUR-CLUB BASEBALL LEAGUE PLANNED FOR CUBA BY BALL STARS

A four-club baseball league, to play ball in Cuba for two months before the opening of the training season, has been started in Havana, with Hans Lobert, Mike Gonzales and Armando Marsans in charge of three of the teams.

A number of American players who have been spending the winter in Cuba have been recruited, and expect to achieve a double purpose of getting in shape and making a little money before the 1917 season opens here.

Seattle Star, January 29, 1917

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CANNON RECEIVES RITTER AWARD DURING LIVELY DEADBALL COMMITTEE MEETING

by Doug Skipper

Jason Cannon received the 2023 Larry Ritter Award during a well-attended Deadball Era Committee (DEC) meeting July 6 at the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) annual convention in Chicago. SABR Treasurer and Deadball Committee Book Editor Dan Levitt introduced the meeting and delivered prepared remarks on *The Inside Game* written by newsletter editor Don Jensen. The meeting also featured two a well-received presentations, one on Fred Tenney by Mark Sternman and one by Rob Fitts on his coauthored SABR Research Award Winning book, *Nichibei Yakyu: US Tours of Japan*.

Levitt presented the Ritter award to Cannon, author of *Charlie Murphy: The Iconoclastic Showman Behind the Chicago Cubs* (Nebraska, 2022), a meticulously re-

searched and splendidly written biography of the mercurial magnate who constructed the Cubs dynasty in the early years of the 20th Century. The award is bestowed annually to the author of the best book about baseball between 1901 and 1919 published during the previous calendar year. The winner's work must demonstrate original research or analysis, a fresh perspective, compelling thesis, impressive insight, accuracy, and clear, graceful prose.

"The chance to receive this award meant a lot to me, especially considering the ceremony took place in the city where Murphy piloted the Cubs through the most successful stretch in team history," Cannon said after the meeting. "The ballclub won four pennants and two World Series championships under his stewardship. I want to express a very heartfelt thank you to the Deadball Era Committee for bestowing the award on this project. My lasting hope is that Murphy's entertaining story will be introduced to new readers interested in learning about one of the most unique characters in baseball history."



photo by Dixie Tourangeau

JASON CANNON AND DAN LEVITT

IT'S THE SAME OLD BASEBALL: THIRTY-THREE YEARS HAVEN'T CHANGED IT AT ALL, IN ITS ESSENTIALS AT LEAST

*This essay is by Sidney Farrar, captain,
in the 1880s, of the Philadelphia Phillies.*

From Vanity Fair, September 1914.

If you and I were at the Polo Grounds this afternoon, and the Giants were playing Chicago, and Matty was having one of his best days, I know what you would say to me.

You would say, "Mr. Farrar, are these players as good as the men who played baseball 25 years ago?"

I suppose I have heard that question a thousand times. Generally it comes in the second inning, and never later than the fourth. I am used to it — and I know what you younger men expect me to say.

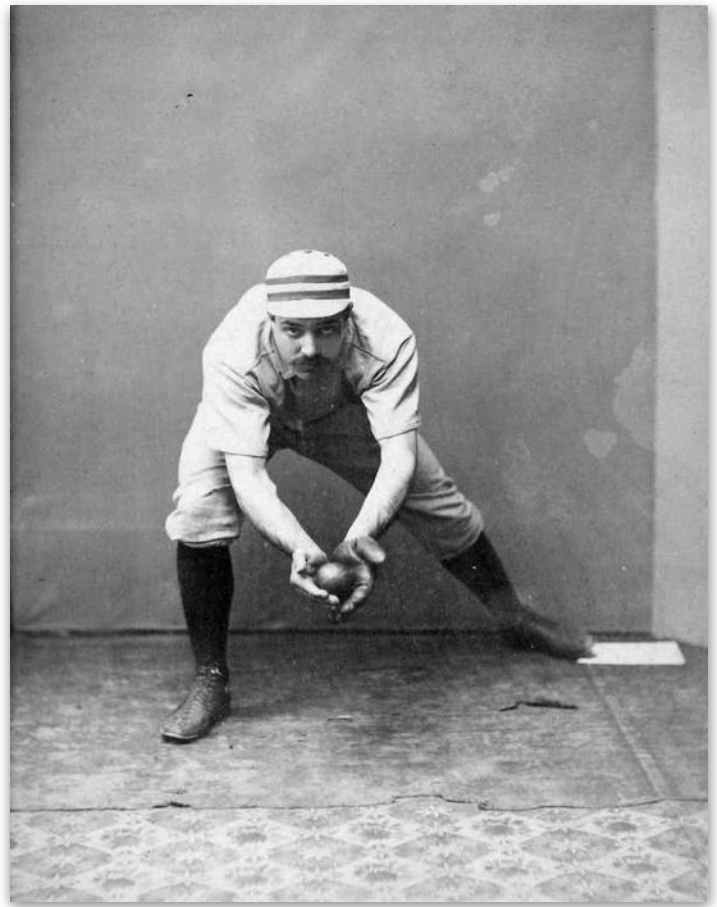
You expect me to light a cigar, and look wise, and tell you that Mathewson can't hold a candle to Radbourne; that Billy Sunday was a faster man on the bases than Cobb; that Mike Kelly had more baseball brains under his cap than Eddie Collins or Tris Speaker.

If I say this, you are sure to look pleased and nod your head and make me feel I have done just what we old-time players are expected to do.

But today I am going to give you a surprise. I am going to tell you what no retired player ever told you before. I am going to say that the players of today are better than they used to be.

Take Christy Mathewson — the best of them all, especially when you remember that he has been a star for fourteen years. There is nobody among the old-timers whom I would put in Mathewson's class. However, it would be a pity to forget [Charlie] Ferguson, who was on the old Philadelphia team with me for five years, and who not only pitched as well as any man ever did, but was a fine batter and runner. For these reasons I would put Ferguson ahead of even Walter Johnson, and only second to Mathewson himself.

Baseball is much faster than it used to be. The gloves have done that. How would a catcher look to you who stood right up under the bat, without mask, pads or



SID FERRAR, CA, 1887

glove, and took the swiftest pitched balls barehanded? All catchers did that on the third strike, in the old days; but on the first two strikes the catcher laid back. Gloves have helped the fielding, too. They make it possible for a smart infield to cut off many balls that would have gone for hits in the old days. In the outfield, however, the best players of today are not at all surer on fly balls than the men of my time used to be.

You hear a great deal about "inside baseball" — generally from some fan who has been reading the newspapers, and thinks the game is full of new plays invented by wise managers. He sees Jennings, Griffith or Chance out in the coaching box. Pretty soon the hit-and-run play, or the double steal, is tried.

"Aha!" says the fan. "Did you get that signal? That play was inside baseball — you wouldn't have seen it, back in the old days."

When I hear this, I wish Tim Keefe, or Buck Ewing could come back in uniform and take a seat on the

bench. Do you think Keefe didn't know about the "squeeze" play, and didn't have [a] change of pace? Or do you think Ewing wasn't just as good at breaking up the hit and run as the catchers of today? Ask any man who has seen Denny, Williamson, Comiskey, Kelly and stars of that order — ask how they compared in "inside" ability with the players of today.

I read the other day that Wagner, the Pittsburg "old man," has just made his 3,000th base hit in the major league. Remembering as I do when Wagner first broke into baseball (and it does not seem so long ago, though it is 18 years), I can't help being reminded of the flight of time. Here is a man regarded by everyone as a wonderful veteran — a grandfather playing with the boys — and yet Wagner was playing catch in the back lots when I went to bat for the last time, nearly 25 years ago. But, as I have said, baseball is still baseball — the same old game, with the same pleasure for the spectators, and the same zest and satisfaction for the man who is lucky enough to follow it as a profession.

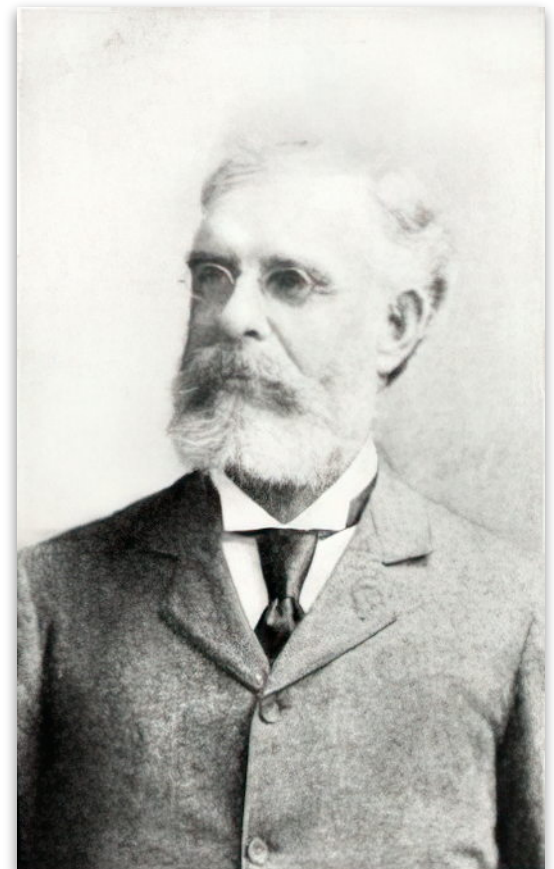
... do you think Ewing wasn't just as good at breaking up the hit and run as the catchers of today?

Perhaps baseball would not be a profession today — perhaps it might never have developed from rounders and cricket, had it not been for Harry Wright. The son of an Englishman, Mr. Wright played baseball in the early '60s, and organized the Cincinnati Red Stockings which he managed, alternately pitching and playing center field. When the men put on their uniforms, the Cincinnati folk were tepid for a time, but the club won every game it played in 1868, [1869] arousing great enthusiasm. Ladies went to the game (Mr. Wright having invented the idea of a Ladies' Day each week). Songs were written about the Red Stockings, One of them starts:

"As to the Park we go / The Ladies want to know / Who are those lovely men / With the scarlet stockings on?"



HONUS WAGNER (TOP, THIRD FROM LEFT) WITH PATERSON, 1896



HARRY WRIGHT

About 1874 Mr. Wright took a team to England, and played several games of cricket before large crowds — beating the English at their own game. After that he went to Philadelphia, first managing the Boston and Providence ball teams. He died in 1895.

In the West Laurel Hill Cemetery there is a fine bronze figure of Harry Wright. He is shown, as he watched many a game, anxious to win yet self-possessed, never belittling the opposing team and always giving the other club credit for good play. He knew how to lose as well as how to win.

In every city which his clubs visited Harry Wright was liked and respected by everyone, from the fan in the bleachers to the Senator from Washington who had played with him in Cincinnati, and who said to him, "I am proud to call myself one of your boys!" He well deserves his title, "The Father of Baseball."

It was undoubtedly due to him and to his changing and modifying the game of rounders that baseball is what it is today.

After a man's baseball days are over, what? Well, there is John K. Tener, who stepped from the ball field into politics, advanced to the Governor's chair in Pennsylvania,

YANKEE PITCHERS WORK TOO SLOWLY

CHICAGO—Ban Johnson has slapped Chief Stallings on the wrist. The call-down came late last night in the form of a letter in which the American League mogul served notice on the Yankee leader that his pitchers were working too slow.

It was really an order to Stallings to ginger up his twirlers to shorten the games. The Yankees have recently figured in several drawn out games which was chiefly due to the pitchers, Joe Lake and King Brockett being the flagrant offenders.

Both slab artists have earned reputations as lazy slab artists this season. Stallings had little to say on the rejoinder from Johnson, except to say that his pill shooters worked as fast as any in the League. He admitted that some of the games were strung out, but this he said was due to bad timing on the part of the scorers when the games started later than the official time.

Pittsburg Press, May 27, 1909

and has now gone back again to baseball as President of the National League.

There is John M. Ward, always a brilliant player and a great star on the Providence and New York teams. He is a successful lawyer, and he has also gone back to baseball in his later years — this time as one of the men who planned the new Federal League and are now establishing it in public favor. The process will take time, of course, but if the Federals [text missing] room for them, and every lover of the national game will wish them success.

Then there is Billy Sunday. You know all about him and the wonderful success he has had in his calling. There is Dave Fultz, who was one of the best players twenty years ago, and is now prominently identified with baseball as President of the Players' Fraternity.

I suppose, take it all in all, that a man never forgets his first love. Those of the old time players who can, in some way, keep on with baseball seem always to do so. The path may lead to the ownership of some club or to the presidency of a league. But, wherever it leads, there are always plenty of old players anxious to follow; and if we cannot take part in an active way, at least we never let our interest die.

Down in the box seats at all the games you will see white-haired men who follow the game quietly, yet never miss a play. Maybe you will wonder whether these fat and elderly brokers and lawyers and business men really understand and appreciate the game. Sometimes, when you have said something about the plays or the players, one of these old fellows will smile a little in his sleeve. Don't be offended — he is probably one of the old-fashioned players who were lining out the ball when you were in your crib. Treat his opinions with respect, because there is always the chance that he is one of the people who made baseball what it is today.

Reprinted from Our Game, November 16, 2020:

ourgame.mlblogs.com/its-the-same-old-baseball-7cf313d9f5de.

The original article can be found in the September 1914 number of Vanity Fair:

books.google.com/books?id=3LA-AQAAMAAJ&pg=RA8-PA65.

OTE JOHNSON

by Bill Lamb

Looking back more than a century after his passing, long-forgotten Deadballer Ote Johnson presents a study in contradiction. A multi-tool player, Johnson possessed the talent required for an extended major league career. Yet his record book entry is confined to the 1911 season with the New York Highlanders.¹ The reason perhaps? Every playing asset displayed by Johnson appeared to be offset by a corresponding deficiency. Examples abound.

A switch-hitting shortstop, Johnson demonstrated long-ball power sufficient to be a minor league leader in home runs. At the same time, he hit for a low average and struck out frequently by era standards. Ditto on defense. At one point or other during his 13-year professional career, Johnson's natural athleticism placed him at every position on the diamond. But he was a sub-standard defensive player at most of them. A powerful throwing arm prompted periodic use of Johnson as a pitcher, but arm miseries hampered his lone season in the big leagues. Sober and hardworking with an outgoing personality, Ote was a favorite of teammates, club management, baseball fans, and the sporting press. Notwithstanding that, he sabotaged his first major league audition by feuding with Highlanders field leader George Stallings. Even Johnson's demise reeked of contradiction. Physically fit and brimming with good health, he died young, an off-season hunting accident bringing the life of Ote Johnson to an end at age 32. His story follows.

Otis L. Johnson was born on November 5, 1883, in Fowler, Indiana, a small town situated near the Illinois border. He was the younger of two sons² born to New Jersey native George Edward Johnson (1854-1917) and his Indiana-born wife Viola (nee Cory, 1861-1931), both church-going Methodists. When Ote (as he was called) was still a boy, the Johnson family relocated across the state to Muncie, a commercial and industrial hub located fifty miles northwest of Indianapolis. There, father G. Edward secured long term employment as a factory night watchman. The extent of Ote's schooling is unknown but by the time of the 1900 US Census, the teenager was working in the same handle-making plant



OTE JOHNSON.
PORTLAND BEAVERS, 1909

that employed his father. Johnson was also beginning to attract attention as a baseball prospect playing with Muncie area sandlot, amateur, and semipro nines.³

In January 1903, Ote took a bride, marrying a 16-year-old local girl named Edith (maiden name unknown). In time, the couple had two children, Mabel Elizabeth (born 1904) and William Otis (1908). Several months after his marriage, Johnson entered the ranks of professional baseball, signing with the Dallas Giants of the then-Class D Texas League.⁴ A sturdily-built 5-foot-9/185 pounder who swung from the heels, he promptly established what would become a career-long hitting pattern, posting a low (.216) batting average coupled with long ball power (12 homers, third-highest among circuit batters). Primarily an erratic fielding shortstop (.880 FA),⁵ the strongarmed Johnson also pitched the odd exhibition game for Dallas.

With the Texas League elevated to Class C for the 1904 season, Johnson returned to Dallas for his sophomore

campaign. In one hundred games, he upped both his batting (.260) and fielding (.899) percentages,⁶ while the smacking of a team-leading ten dingers earned him the nickname *Home Run*. When the Texas League season abruptly ended in mid-August, the cash-strapped Dallas club sold Johnson to the Little Rock Travelers of the Class B Southern League.⁷ Installed as the everyday shortstop, he got by with the bat (.232 BA) and glove (.913 FA) in 20 games and was retained by Little Rock for the coming season.

Playing for last-place Little Rock clubs for the next two years, Johnson's career stalled. During that period, he alternated between short, third base, and the outfield and batted so poorly that he was deemed more of a pitching prospect (2-6 in 12 games) by 1906.⁸ Johnson began the following campaign in the Class C South Atlantic League, pitching for the Charleston Sea Gulls. But two early season homers prompted his shift to first base. By mid-season, Ote was the club's regular shortstop. In 121 games, he batted a solid .263 with twelve home runs in the soft-hitting loop,⁹ while chipping in a 5-3 log on the mound for the league champion (75-46, .620) Sea Gulls.

In late August, Charleston sold the contract of "the premier long-distance hitter of the circuit" to the Portland Beavers of the Class A Pacific Coast League.¹⁰ Used almost exclusively at shortstop, Johnson fielded tolerably (.932 FA) but batted only .215 in 41 games for his new club. Still, that was good enough for the last-place (72-114, .388) Beavers to bring Johnson back for another season.

Both the Portland Beavers and Ote Johnson made giant strides in 1908. Over a grueling seven-month schedule, Portland improved to 95-90-2 (.514), good for second place in the four-club PCL. Much of the improvement was attributable to the versatile Johnson who hit the ball hard — a .281 BA with team leadership in homers (10), extra-base hits (61), slugging average (.430), and total bases (282). He also saw defensive action all over the diamond. In the opinion of Beavers pitcher Jesse Garrett, "Ote Johnson was the best of the players in the PCL. His regular position is third base, but he played every position in the infield and pitched and caught



Morning Oregonian, September 5, 1909

several games. He is hitting them in terrific fashion and covers a lot of ground.”¹¹ The local press concurred, declaring that “Johnson was the star all-around player of the league.”¹² Such acclaim, however, was not enough to get Ote chosen during the late-season draft of minor league players by big league clubs. Portland was, therefore, delighted to have him back in 1909.

[In 1904] the smacking of a team-leading ten dingers earned him the nickname Home Run.

Portland and Johnson continued to progress in the new year. The Beavers improved to 122-87 (.583), good for second place in a PCL expanded to six clubs. Playing in 205 of his club's 209 regular season games, Johnson was a standout. He paced the circuit with thirteen home runs and finished second in the league batting race with a .293 average. Ote was also the Portland club leader in runs (108), base hits (195), doubles (41), slugging average (.432), and total bases (287). Overall, Johnson was “one of the most dangerous batsmen” in the Pacific Coast League.¹³ His defense at the hot corner, however, was shaky; Johnson's 57 errors were tops among PCL third basemen for the 1909 season. Yet while “not a great star in the fielding line,” Johnson was “a steady, conscientious player and possesses one of the best throwing arms of any infielder in the league,” observed the *Morning*

Oregonian.¹⁴ He was also “one of the most popular players on the team.”¹⁵

Johnson’s performance did not go unnoticed by major league ball clubs, and in mid-August the New York Highlanders acquired his contract for a reported \$4,000.¹⁶ Like other minor league talent being stockpiled by New York club boss Frank Farrell, Johnson was instructed to complete his minor league campaign and thereafter report for spring training with the Highlanders in 1910. In the interim, Ote returned home to Muncie where he earned \$6-\$7 per day as a glass blower at a fruit jar plant.¹⁷

Johnson showed well in spring camp and was expected to supplant light-hitting Jimmy Austin as the New York third baseman. Enthused Highlanders manager George Stallings informed onlookers that he thought that “Johnson will make a great name for himself this season.”¹⁸ Ote made the Highlanders’ Opening Day roster, but inexplicably saw no game action during the season’s first week. It was then revealed that “trouble arose between him and the manager [Stallings] shortly after the opening of the season and rapidly developed into an open fight.”¹⁹ The cause of the friction was not publicly disclosed but before he ever saw action in a regular season major league game, Johnson was banished to the Jersey City Skeeters of the Class A Eastern League.²⁰ The Highlanders retained an option on Johnson’s services, but the normally affable ballplayer was bitter about his treatment, declaring that he “will quit playing baseball before he will work under present New York management.”²¹

Johnson’s performance in Jersey City livery was so poor as to render moot his return to New York anytime soon. By mid-June, a .186 batting average had him relegated to the Jersey City bench.²² His bat revived when restored to the Skeeters lineup, his average up to .223 at season end. And he showed power. Johnson’s 35 extra-base hits included a team leading nine home runs while his slugging average (.364) was second-best. Meanwhile in New York events were turning in Johnson’s favor. A tumultuous public row led to the ouster of nemesis Stallings as Highlanders manager, with slick-fielding first baseman Hal Chase installed as his late-season replace-



NEW YORK HIGHLANDERS, 1911

ment.²³ Over the winter, new skipper Chase revealed that he intended to shift incumbent Highlander shortstop Jack Knight to second base and try out the exiled Johnson at shortstop.²⁴ Eastern League President Ed Barrow voiced his approval of the plan, stating that “Otis Johnson will make good with the Highlanders. He can field as well as anybody and is a terrible hitter in the pinch. With men on bases Johnson has a world of confidence in himself and is a terror to pitchers.”²⁵ For his part, Johnson was thrilled to have another chance in New York under a different manager. “I said I would be back in the big leagues if I had to sneak over here in my nightshirt,” joked Ote. “Now, I am back and just watch them get me out of the league.”²⁶

In his second Highlanders spring camp, Johnson started slowly. But his bat heated up in time for him to again make the club’s regular season roster. On April 12, 1911,

Ote Johnson made his major league debut as the New York shortstop in an Opening Day match against the defending world champion Philadelphia A's at Shibe Park. Behind the three-hit pitching of Hippo Vaughn, the Highlanders won, 2-1, with Ote scoring the decisive run in the top of the eighth. Otherwise, Johnson's performance (0-for-2 at the plate, and an error in six chances at short) was forgettable. He broke into the hit column the following day with a single (and a walk) off A's right-hander Jack Coombs in a 3-1 New York victory.

From there, Johnson's stick faltered, with a report by New York sportswriter Bozeman Bulger pointedly commenting that the "new Highlander player [was] not batting hard enough to keep himself warm."²⁷ Two games after striking out in all three of his at-bats, *Home Run* Johnson clubbed his first major league four-bagger, a two-run shot off right-hander Charlie Smith in a 4-3 Highlanders win in Boston. But soon thereafter Ote was bedeviled by off-the-field problems. In mid-May, he left the club for several days to visit his ailing mother in Muncie.²⁸ Shortly after returning to the club, Johnson was back in Indiana instituting divorce proceedings against his wife.²⁹ Edith Johnson had deserted her husband and taken up with another man.³⁰

Ote's play picked up in May with previously critical Bozeman Bulger singing his praises. "Ote Johnson has done some wonderful fielding and throwing at short. He has also shown himself a wonder at reaching base via the four-ball route," wrote Bulger in early June. But Johnson's "hitting has not been as heavy as was expected," and the return of Knight to shortstop was predicted by the scribe.³¹ Shortly thereafter, manager Chase made the switch, moving Knight over from second base and installing Earle Gardner at the keystone.³² Johnson's prospects for regaining his position were then jeopardized by the need to return to Indiana for proceedings on his divorce suit. When Edith Johnson failed to appear, Ote was granted the sought-after decree and awarded custody of his two children, as well.³³

Upon his return to New York, Johnson was sidelined for a month by throwing arm miseries.³⁴ He made an emergency appearance in a mid-July game in Cleveland — Ote was left behind on a road trip and had to "answer



ROCHESTER HUSTLERS, 1912

an S.O.S" in order to fill in at second base.³⁵ But he was "still having a great deal of trouble with a bad arm ... [and] it gives him a great deal of pain to throw the ball across the diamond."³⁶ Bad wing notwithstanding, Johnson had a productive burst the following week, registering a quartet of two-hit games that included home runs on July 25 and 26. Immediately thereafter, an 0-for-15 skid returned Ote to the bench, and from there on he saw only sparing action until season close.

In all, Johnson made seventy-one game appearances for the 1911 New York Highlanders. His (49-for-209) .234 batting average was well below the club norm (.272), but his on-base (.363) and slugging (.378) percentages were modestly above average. Expected to supply the long ball, Johnson had been a disappointment, with only

three homers counted among his eighteen extra-base hits. He had also been less than sterling on defense, posting sub-standard figures at short (.907 FA in forty-seven games), second (.897 FA in fifteen games), and third base (.909 FA in three games).³⁷

After guiding his club to a sixth-place finish, manager Chase was relieved of command, and Johnson did not fit into the plans of incoming skipper Harry Wolverton. Over the winter, his contract was sold to the Rochester Hustlers of the Class AA International League.³⁸ At age 28, Ote Johnson's major league days were now behind him.

Once again, Johnson was unhappy with his treatment by New York, asserting that "he should have at least been given the opportunity of accompanying the Highlanders this year on the spring training trip."³⁹ Still, Johnson resolved that he would be "going back to the big show" as soon as he fulfilled his one-year contract with Rochester.⁴⁰ But before embarking on that campaign, Ote had another announcement to make: his engagement to 22-year-old burlesque dancer Violette Dusette.⁴¹ On May 21, 1912, the couple tied the knot in the rectory of St. Luke Episcopal Church in Rochester at noon, and then departed for the Hustlers ballpark. With his new bride watching from the stands, Ote slashed a tenth-inning double to deliver Rochester a 4-3 victory over Baltimore.⁴²

Johnson went on to post facially solid numbers for his new club, (.264 BA/.411 SLG) with a club-leading 52 extra-base hits. But his 44 errors were worst among International League second basemen,⁴³ and the locals were plainly dissatisfied with Johnson's performance. At season end the leading Rochester newspaper took aim at Ote's \$2,750 salary, sneering "that salary would be all right for a player able to deliver the goods, but Johnson didn't show much better than \$250 a month quality."⁴⁴ Club management evidently felt the same way, selling Johnson's contract to the Binghamton Bingos of the Class B New York State League that November.⁴⁵

Johnson feasted on lower-level minor league pitching. In 136 games, he posted a career-best .323 batting average. He also fielded well at both shortstop (.951 FA in 100 games) and second base (.956 in 34 games).⁴⁶ Ote even



BINGHAMTON BINGOS, 1913

did a little late-season pitching and catching for Binghamton.⁴⁷ Duly impressed, the St. Paul Apostles of the Class AA American Association scooped up Johnson in the post-season minor league player draft.⁴⁸ But his stay in St. Paul was relatively brief. After 45 games, Johnson was back in the New York State League, sold to the Elmira Pioneers.⁴⁹ And as before, he enjoyed Class B pitching, smashing a circuit-leading thirteen home runs⁵⁰ in only ninety-four games. He also played a capable shortstop (.958 FA) for the pennant-winning (90-48, .652) Pioneers. Elmira therefor reserved him for the next season.⁵¹

Although only thirty-one and coming off a productive minor league season, Ote Johnson was no longer a ma-

jor league prospect. But with his young family gathered about him and gainfully employed by a shoe manufacturing plant in the off-season, Johnson seemed happily settled in western tier New York. He returned to Elmira in 1915 and posted stats that bore many career hallmarks: Deadball Era-high home run (14), walk (80), and strikeout (74) totals,⁵² with mediocre defense (.928 FA in 126 games) at shortstop. Once again at season end, the ball club promptly reserved him for the oncoming year.⁵³

On November 9, 1915, Johnson and several friends spent the day rabbit hunting near Oswego.⁵⁴ At around three that afternoon, one of the parties winged a fox. In pursuit of the wounded animal, Johnson stumbled and fell, accidentally discharging both barrels of his shotgun into his abdomen. Bleeding profusely, he was driven at breakneck speed to a nearby hospital. Despite being in considerable pain, Ote maintained his sense of humor during the trip. "Oliver," he informed the driver, "it's better that one should die than for you to kill all of us to save me."⁵⁵ Johnson survived the harrowing ride, but his massive internal injuries proved irreparable. Otis L. "Ote" Johnson died at Johnson City Hospital shortly after 4:00 pm.⁵⁶ Only four days before, he had celebrated his 32nd birthday.

News of Johnson's passing stunned area residents. One recalled that Ote "was always willing to do a favor for a friend, always even-tempered and withal a 'hale fellow well met.'"⁵⁷ Following a funeral service concelebrated by Episcopal and Methodist clergymen, the deceased was laid to rest in Floral Park Cemetery, Johnson City. Survivors included second wife Violette, children Mabel and Billy, his parents, and brother Bill Johnson.

ENDNOTES

1. By 1911, the more headline-friendly *Yanks* or *Yankees* had largely supplanted *Highlanders* as the unofficial nickname of the American League Base Ball Club of Greater New York. But in the writer's view, a certain clarity is achieved by using *Highlanders* for the club during its tenure at Hilltop Park (1903-1912) and reserving *Yankees* for thereafter.
2. Ote's only sibling was older brother William, born in 1876.
3. Johnson also garnered press notice as a running back/kicker for Muncie's semipro football team. See e.g., "Football Material for Muncie's City Team," *Muncie (Indiana) Morning Star*, September 6, 1902: 2.
4. See "Dallas vs. Paris," *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1903: 4. Johnson was signed on the recommendation of Dallas catcher Claude Berry, a fellow Muncie resident.
5. Per the 1904 *Reach Official American League Guide*, 268.
6. Per the 1905 *Reach Official American League Guide*, 272.
7. As reported in "Near End of Season," *Dallas Morning News*, August 14, 1904: 11. The Southern League became a Class A circuit in 1905.
8. A late-season doubleheader that Johnson pitched against Atlanta included a two-hit shutout deemed "one of the greatest games ever seen on the Little Rock diamond," according to a *Little Rock Daily News* commentary reprinted in the *Muncie (Indiana) Evening Press*, September 16, 1905: 6.
9. Sea Gulls teammate Tom Raftery handily won the league batting title with an unspectacular .301 mark, while the champion Charleston club posted a meager .217 average as a team.
10. See "Gossip of the Diamond," (Portland) *Sunday Oregonian*, September 8, 1907: 37; "Signs Two Cracks," *Morning Oregonian*, August 21, 1907: 7. The purchase price was \$500.
11. "Garrett Is Back from Coast," *Dallas Morning News*, November 7, 1908: 11.
12. "Ote Johnson Is Star Performer," *Morning Oregonian*, November 21, 1908: 7.
13. P.J. Petrain, "Two Players Sold," *Morning Oregonian*, August 7, 1909: 7.
14. Same as above.
15. Same as above.
16. As reported in "Yankee Manager Unearths a Find," *Washington (D.C.) Times*, August 15, 1909: 12; "Ote Johnson Will Go to the New York Americans," *San Luis Obispo (California) Telegram*, August 11, 1909: 6; and elsewhere.
17. Per "Ote Johnson Now in the Limelight," *Muncie Evening Press*, February 5, 1910: 8.
18. Per a wire service article "Otis Johnson, Third Sacker, From Whom Great Things Are Expected," published in various New Jersey dailies. See e.g., (Bridgewater) *Courier-News*, April 4, 1910: 5; *Perth Amboy Evening News*, April 1, 1910: 9; *Trenton Evening Times*, April 1, 1910: 8.

19. Per "Johnson Not with Yanks," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 2, 1910: 3.
20. See "American Leaguers in Fight," *Courier-News*, May 11, 1910: 9; "Otis Johnson in Jersey City Uniform," (Jersey City) *Jersey Journal*, April 28, 1910: 3.
21. Per "Johnson Sent Back to Jersey City, N.J., Team," *Muncie Morning Star*, May 10, 1910: 8. In another outburst, Johnson stated that if recalled by New York "he hoped that [Stallings] would be dead," adding that he "would take nothing from the manager but the money to pay the fine for whipping him." See "Johnson Not With Yanks," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 2, 1910: 3.
22. Per "Chummie's Column," (Portland) *Oregon Journal*, June 18, 1910: 10.
23. Stallings had publicly questioned the integrity of Chase's play, much to the displeasure of American League President Ban Johnson, then an ardent supporter of the flashy first baseman. Under backstage pressure from Johnson, New York club boss Frank Farrell subsequently discharged Stallings and gave the manager's post to Chase.
24. See "Ote Johnson Will Join 'Comebacks,'" *Oregon Journal*, December 9, 1910: 17; "Shift Knight to Second," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 8, 1910: 11; "Trenton Team at Willard Park," *Paterson* (New Jersey) *News*, December 3, 1910: 6.
25. "President Barrow Says 'Ote' Johnson Sure to Make Good," *Oregon Journal*, January 29, 1911: 34.
26. "Pulling for Ote Johnson," *Charleston* (South Carolina) *Evening Post*, February 2, 1911: 3.
27. See "Otis Johnson Will Have to Improve with Stick to Keep Job at Shortstop," *New York Evening World*, April 19, 1911: 14.
28. As reported in "Ote Johnson Is Home to Visit Sick Mother," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 14, 1911: 10. Viola Johnson recovered her health in due course and long outlived her son.
29. Per "Ball Player Asks Divorce," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 22, 1911: 8.
30. The 1910 US Census places Edith Johnson and children under the roof of one Hale Silver in Salt Lake City.
31. Bozeman Bulger, "Highlanders Bank on Gardner to Brace Up Oft-Changed Infield," *New York Evening World*, June 6, 1911: 16.
32. As reported by F.A. Perner, "Former Coasters Batting Over .300 Mark," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 18, 1911: 57: "Ote Johnson has been benched for weak hitting."
33. Per "Ote Gets Divorce," *Cincinnati Post*, June 23, 1911: 9; "Court Record," *Muncie Evening Press*, June 22, 1911: 11.
34. See J. Ed Grillo, "Pertinent Comment on Happenings in Sportdom," *Washington Evening Star*, June 23, 1911: 15. See also, "Sporting Writer Praises Johnson," *Muncie Evening Press*, July 25, 1911: 3, quoting the commendation of Johnson by sportswriter Mark Roth in a recent *New York Globe* column.
35. Per "Krapp to Pitch for Cleveland Today," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 18, 1911: 7.
36. "A Few Short Ones," *Albuquerque* (New Mexico) *Morning Journal*, July 20, 1911: 4.
37. Johnson's fielding numbers were markedly inferior to those posted by Earle Garner at second base (.959 FA in 101 games) and Roy Hartzell at third (.936 in 122 games), but no worse than the below par figures of replacement shortstop Jack Knight (.907 FA in 80 games).
38. As reported in "Bumpus Jones Sold to Ganzel for \$2,500," *Jersey Journal*, December 13, 1911: 9; "Wolverton Will Stick to Chase," *Morning Oregonian*, December 11, 1911: 10; and elsewhere.
39. "Otis Johnson Should Prove Tower of Strength to the 1912 Hustlers," (Rochester) *Democrat and Chronicle*, February 14, 1912: 10.
40. Same as above.
41. See "Ote Johnson Will Wed Apache Dancer," *Jersey Journal*, April 5, 1912: 9; "Vaudeville Star to Marry Otis Johnson," *Democrat and Chronicle*, April 3, 1912: 21. The two had met the previous summer when both were performing in Chicago.
42. See "Rochester 4, Baltimore 3," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, May 21, 1912: 16. See also, "Otis Johnson Weds an Eastern Actress," *Muncie Morning Star*, May 23, 1912: 8; "Otis Johnson, of Muncie, Wins Game for Rochester of International League in Tenth Inning on His Wedding Day," *Muncie Evening Press*, May 22, 1912: 7.
43. Tied for IL worst, per stats from the 1913 *Reach Official American League Guide*, 237.
44. *Democrat and Chronicle*, October 20, 1912: 34.
45. As reported in "Ote Johnson Toboggans to the N.Y. State League," *Jersey Journal*, November 9, 1912: 11; "Bingos Strengthening Club," *Watertown* (New York) *Times*, November 7, 1912: 6; and elsewhere.

46. Per the 1914 *Reach Official American League Guide*, 283-284.
47. Johnson alternated ably between both positions during a 9-7 loss to Elmira on September 14.
48. As noted in the *Buffalo Evening News*, October 9, 1913: 18.
49. Per "Otis Johnson Joins Elmira," *Elmira* (New York) *Star-Gazette*, June 9, 1914: 8; "International League Clubs Show Up Big Leaguers," *Newark Evening Star*, June 6, 1914: 16. The Johnson purchase price was "nearly \$1,000."
50. Per the *Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff, eds. (Durham, North Carolina: Baseball America, 3d ed., 2007), 252.
51. Per the *Wilkes-Barre* (Pennsylvania) *Times-Leader*, October 19, 1914: 15.
52. Per NYS League stats published in the *Elmira Star-Gazette*, September 8, 1915: 8. The league season ended five days thereafter. See also, the 1916 *Reach Official American League Guide*, 248, 252.
53. See "Sixteen Men are Reserved for the Colonels," *Elmira Star-Gazette*, October 25, 1915: 8.
54. The events attending the fatal hunting trip were recounted in the national, local, and sporting press. See e.g., "Rabbit Hunt Fatal to Otis Johnson, Ball Player," *Indianapolis Star*, November 10, 1915: 11; "Johnson Succumbs to Gun Wound Sustained Hunting Near Oswego," *Elmira Star-Gazette*, November 10, 1915: 20;

"Victim of Accident," *Sporting Life*, November 27, 1915: 16.

55. "Johnson Dies of Injuries," *Berkshire Evening Eagle* (Pittsfield, Massachusetts), November 11, 1915: 14. See also, "Details of Tragic Death of Former Muncie Ball Player," *Muncie Evening Press*, November 17, 1915: 6.

56. The Johnson death certificate lists shock as a contributing factor to his demise.

57. "Details of Tragic Death," above.

COMMISSION QUEERS THE ANTI-FARMING RULE

CINCINNATI—The National Baseball Commission today ruled that a clause in the constitution of a minor league prohibiting the acceptance by one of its clubs of a player under an optional agreement is in conflict with the revised national agreement and, therefore, null and void.

A minor league club may, however, for business reasons, decline to enter into an optional agreement with a major league club or a minor league club of higher classification, but its privilege to do so cannot be restricted or nullified by legislation of its league.

The ruling was made by the commission on requests from the president of the Connecticut State League and several other minor league executives.

(Pittsburgh) *Gazette Times*, September 12, 1912



Puck Magazine, August 8, 1908

THE 1917 PITTSBURGH PIRATES: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

by Brian Morrison

It all started with a simple research query about a little-known pitcher named Joe Coffindaffer. That query led me to the April 1, 1917, edition of the Pittsburgh Post, where centered atop page 19 of the Sunday edition was the most unique baseball roster that I've ever come across.

The 1917 pre-season roster of the Pittsburgh Pirates contained the usual information — Name, Age, Residence, Height, Weight and Position. In addition, it carried what some rosters in later years carried — Years in the Major Leagues and where they Played the Year Before.

But what makes this roster so unique, and yes, highly informational, are the extra items of personal information. It mentions a players' politics — yes politics, can you imagine that today? It also notes the players' religions (again, very doubtful today). Interestingly, the roster is not alphabetical. It's not ordered by age, it's close to being by position, but not exactly. It lists three semipro players and one who played independent ball in 1916.

The roster doesn't prove to be beneficial to the hapless Pirates, who go through three managers, including Czech-born Hugo Bezdek, a member of the Hall of Fame — the College Football Hall of Fame — en route to a 51-103-3 record and the franchise's first last-place finish since 1891. Bezdek, the only man to be both an MLB manager and an NFL head coach, assumed the reins of the Corsairs from Honus Wagner, who had replaced Jimmy Callahan. An All-America fullback at the University of Chicago under Amos Alonzo Stagg, Bezdek is also the only coach to ever lead three different teams to the Rose Bowl — Oregon (1917), Mare Island Marines (1918) and Penn State (1923).

HERE'S ALL YOU WANT TO									
Name	Age	Residence	Social Condition	Hght.	Wght.	Trade or Occupation	Politics		
James J. Callahan	43	Chicago, Ill.	Married	6.01	190	Manager	Independent		
Albert L. Mamaux	23	Pittsburgh	Single	6.00	170	Clerk	Independent		
A. Wilbur Cooper	25	Pittsburgh	Married	6.00	170	Athlete	Republican		
William J. Evans	22	Burlington, N. C.	Single	6.00 1/2	175	Student	Independent		
Burleigh A. Grimes	23	Clean Lake, Wis.	Married	5.10	185	Foreman	Independent		
William Wagner	23	Waterloo, Ia.	Married	6.00	185	Boiler Mkr.	Democrat		
William C. Fischer	24	Brighampton, N. Y.	Married	6.00	174	Coml. Tvlr.	Independent		
Walter Schmidt	29	Hughson, Cal.	Married	5.06	156	Farmer	Independent		
Carson Bigbee	21	Eugene, Ore.	Single	5.09 1/2	157	Farmer	Independent		
Warren Adams	22	Kensington, Md.	Single	6.00	162	Grain Deal.	Democrat		
Charles J. Ward	22	St. Louis, Mo.	Single	6.11	170	Athlete	Democrat		
Alexander G. McCarthy	27	Fruitland, Md.	Married	5.08	156	Farmer	Republican		
James E. McAuley	23	Wichita, Kan.	Married	5.10	170	Athlete	Independent		
Helie Warner	23	Ipsw, Tex.	Single	5.11	170	Ranchman	Independent		
William Gleason	23	Holyoke, Mass.	Single	5.07	158	Clerk	Democrat		
H. Douglas Baird	25	St. Charles, Mo.	Single	5.10	158	Clerk	Democrat		
William M. Batsch	22	Mingo Jet., O.	Single	5.10 1/2	166	Student	Republican		
Frank Schulte	34	Chicago, Ill.	Married	5.09 1/2	175	Athlete	Democrat		
Lee King	22	Fairmont, W. Va.	Single	5.10	170	Farmer	Democrat		
William W. Hinchman	32	South Williamsport	Married	6.00	190	Athlete	Independent		
Alfred E. Ellis	21	Harmony, Minn.	Married	5.11 1/2	175	Teacher	Democrat		
Max Carey	27	St. Louis	Married	5.11 1/2	170	Salesman	Republican		
Jesse H. Altenburg	21	Dedding, Mich.	Single	5.09	158	Student	None		
Frank L. Miller	26	Allegan, Mich.	Married	5.06	158	Athlete	Republican		
Elmer Jacobs	21	Salem, Mo.	Married	5.11	200	Athlete	Independent		
Benjamin C. Shaw	21	Paducah, Ky.	Single	5.02	170	Student	Democrat		
M. G. Milligan	23	Gainesville, Va.	Single	5.11 1/2	168	Painter	Republican		
Harold Carlson	22	Rockford, Ill.	Single	6.00	180	Farmer	Independent		
William J. Schmitt	21	Elmont, Mo.	Married	5.04	175	Farmer	Independent		
Charles J. Anderson	21	Trion, Ga.	Single	5.06	145	Student	Independent		
R. W. McClelland	23	Dennison, O.	Married	5.07 1/2	155	Machineist	Republican		
Guy Dunlap	20	St. Louis, Mo.	Single	5.06	165	Plasterer	Independent		
James L. Travers	24	Roxbury, Mass.	Single	5.11	175	Athlete	Democrat		
Leo Dolan	22	Lockport, N. Y.	Single	5.11	170	Farmer	Democrat		
Alfred Snyder	26	Buffalo, N. Y.	Single	5.10 1/2	175	Tile Setter	Independent		

NOTE—The last six players have been released.



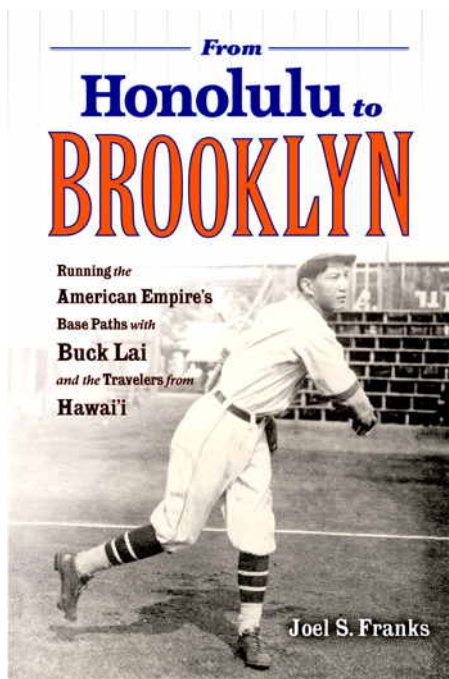
Callahan
San Francisco Call,
September 2, 1901



Robert Edgren
New York World,
April 17, 1912

KNOW ABOUT THE BUCCANEERS

Name	Religion	First Played	Year	League	Position	Yrs. in Majors	Pittsburgh Secured From
James J. Callahan	Catholic	Pepperell, Mass.	1893	Semi-Pro	Manager	16	Los Angeles
Albert L. Mamaux	Catholic	Wilkinsburg	1912	Co. League	Pitcher	2	Huntington
A. Wilbur Cooper	Methodist	Marion, O.	1911	Ohio State	Pitcher	4	Columbus
William J. Evans		Pittsburgh	1916	National	Pitcher	0	Morgantown
Burleigh A. Grimes	Baptist	Ottumwa, Ia.	1915	Cent. Assn.	Pitcher	0	Birmingham
William Wagner	Catholic	Waterloo, Ia.	1913	Cent. Assn.	Catcher	0	Waterloo
William C. Fischer	Catholic	Fall River	1910	New Eng.	Catcher	2	Chicago
Walter Schmidt		Ft. Smith, Ark.	1907	O. & K.	Catcher	1	San Francisco
Carson Bigbee		Tacoma	1916	Northwest'n	Outfielder	0	Tacoma
Warren Adams	Episcopal	Ludington, Mich.	1913	Michigan S.	First Base	0	Brooklyn
Charles J. Ward	Catholic	Aberdeen, Wash.	1915	Northwest'n	Infielder	0	Portland
Alexander G. McCarthy	Catholic	South Bend	1910	Central	Infielder	6	South Bend
James E. McAuley		Waterloo	1912	Cent. Assn.	Infielder	2	Waterloo
Helie Warner		Jackson	1912	S. Michigan	Infielder	2	Lexington
William Gleason	Catholic	Holyoke	1913	Connecticut	Infielder	0	Lynn
H. Douglas Baird	Presbyterian	Springfield	1912	Three-I	Infielder	2	Springfield
William M. Batsch	Methodist	Pittsburgh	1916	National	Outfield	0	P. Collegians
Frank Schulte		Syracuse, N. Y.	1902	N. Y. State	Outfield	12	Chicago
Lee King		Wheeling	1916	Central	Outfield	0	Wheeling
William W. Hinchman		Semi-Pro	1905	Independent	Outfield	2	Columbus
Alfred E. Ellis		Waco	1915	Northern	Outfield	0	Fargo
Max Carey	Lutheran	South Bend	1909	Central	Outfield	6	South Bend
Jesse H. Altenburg	Protestant	Ludington	1914	Michigan S.	Outfield	0	Ludington
Frank L. Miller	United Brethren	Waterloo	1912	Copper	Pitcher	1	Montreal
Elmer Jacobs		Burlington, Ia.	1908	Cent. Assn.	Pitcher	2	Philadelphia
Benjamin C. Shaw		Clarksville, Tenn.	1915	Kitty	Catcher	0	New York
M. G. Milligan		Portsmouth	1916	Virginia	Pitcher	0	Portsmouth
Joseph E. Coffindaffer	Protestant	Charleston	1914	Ohio State	Pitcher	0	Independent
Harold Carlson		Rockford	1914	Wis. Ills.	Pitcher	0	Rockford
William J. Schmitt	Catholic	St. Louis	1915	Semi-Pro	Infielder	0	St. James
Charles J. Anderson		Waycross	1913	Ga. State	Infielder	0	Charlotte
R. W. McClelland	Presbyterian	St. Joseph	1913	Western	Infielder	0	Dennison
Guy Dunlap		St. Louis	1909	City	Infielder	0	Semi-Pro
James L. Travers	Catholic	Lewiston	1914	N. England	Pitcher	0	Semi-Pro
Leo Dolan		Lockport	1914	Semi-Pro	Pitcher	0	Lockport
Alfred Snyder	Catholic	Buffalo Int.	1915	International	Catcher	0	Semi-Pro



FROM HONOLULU TO BROOKLYN: RUNNING THE AMERICAN EMPIRE'S BASE PATHS WITH BUCK LAI AND THE TRAVELERS FROM HAWAII

by Joel S. Franks

2022, Rutgers University Press
[ISBN: 978-1978829251. 256 pp.
\$34.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by Ben Klein

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Westward expansion is a central theme in the history of the United States and its national pastime. From the Louisiana Purchase to the Dodgers and Giants packing their bags for California, the directional arc of American and baseball history is understood to be decidedly from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Even if challenged to think of baseball's engagement with the Pacific World in the first half of the twentieth century, the instinct may be to continue to trace a westward vector. As an example, the American League's 1934 Japan Tour, a barnstorming led by Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, may come to mind. What is less likely to come to mind is the story of those travelling against the prevailing current by embarking on an eastward journey from the Pacific to the mainland United States.

Author Joel S. Franks challenges this notion by telling the story of Buck Lai, a Chinese Hawaiian, who was the centerpiece of several barnstorming teams, known as the Travelers, which set out from Hawaii for the mainland in the years before World War I. *From Honolulu to Brooklyn* does more than recount the odyssey of the Travelers from Hawaii. It places their tours in context by providing an illuminating account of the social, political, and economic dynamics underway in Hawaii as it convulsively transformed from an independent kingdom to a U.S. state with a special hold on the American imagination.

The book succeeds in dispelling the notion that the complex history of Hawaii can be simply or easily distilled. More specifically, it succeeds in highlighting some of the pressures borne by the Travelers. Initially an all-Chinese delegation, Buck Lai and his teammates embarked on a journey for the United States at a time of social and legal hostility towards Asian people. Almost all of Buck Lai's time in America, whether as a member of the Travelers, a standout on independent clubs along the East Coast, or as a prospect of John McGraw's New York Giants, was experienced under the clouds of the Chinese Exclusion Act and generalized hysteria over "Yellow Peril."

Although the book is rich with Buck Lai and the Travelers' encounters with pivotal baseball figures, including Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige, and Ty Cobb, a more significant contribution of the book is how it portrays baseball as a means for marginalized people to connect with the broader culture. The book draws on sociologist Elijah Anderson's concept of the "cosmopolitan canopy" as a lens for understanding how baseball facilitated Buck Lai and the Travelers' engagement with mainstream American culture. At the same time, the book importantly concedes the limitations of this concept by pointing out that even as Asian, Latin, and Native American players were afforded narrow opportunities to participate at the highest levels of the national pastime, Black Americans were entirely denied such opportunities for decades.

Furthermore, even though the Travelers were allowed to share the diamond with white teams, they encountered

malicious racism, as well as less ill-intentioned stereotyping, at every turn. The Travelers were often pressured into highlighting their exotic “otherness” for the sake of drawing fans to the ballpark during their tours, which often involved indulging in ridiculous stereotypes. But Buck Lai and his teammates were also eager to use the spotlight of the diamond to emphasize that they were full American citizens, with Buck Lai often pointing out that he was as American as any white mainlander. This crucial aspect of the Travelers’ identity extended not only to their mastery of the American game, but to their civic and military service, which included one of the Travelers, Apau Kau, making the ultimate sacrifice in France during World War I.

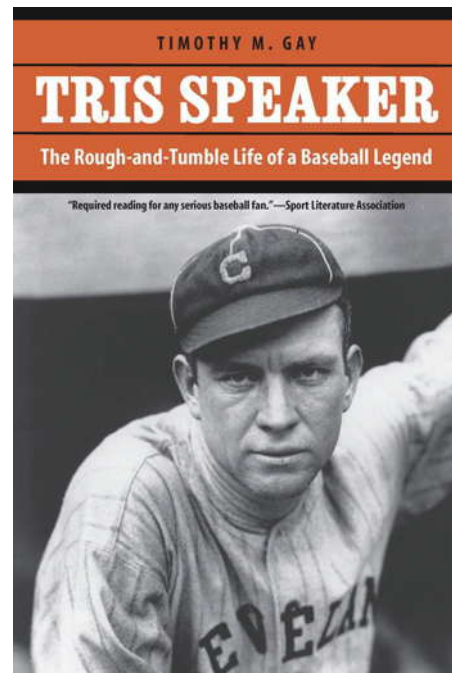
As with all American institutions, baseball’s march towards greater inclusivity is slow and filled with obstacles. It is well known that this is not a new concept, but *From Honolulu to Brooklyn* is a valuable addition to the discussion by introducing an overlooked group of brave and enterprising individuals pushing eastward from the Pacific, encountering obstacles, but making their mark on American and baseball culture and history. As our history continues to unfold, the book demonstrates that substantial social progress has been made since Buck Lai and the Travelers embarked on their inaugural barnstorming tour. This progress has resulted in a situation in which the game’s greatest star hails from across the Pacific, and in which his arrival has been occasioned by an adulation that overwhelms any racist hostility. *From Honolulu to Brooklyn* tells the story of this trail being first blazed by Buck Lai and the Travelers.

Ben Klein is a SABR member who has contributed to works on the 1970 Orioles, 1965 Twins, and Griffith Stadium. Ben has served on the Larry Ritter Award and Ron Gabriel Award subcommittees. He lives in Rockville, Maryland.

STOP BETTING ON BASEBALL GAMES

EAST LIVERPOOL, OHIO—Characterizing the selling of baseball pools as “cheap gambling,” the police authorities have ordered the practice discontinued, and threaten arrests for violations. Baseball pools were operated on a large scale here.

Spokane Daily Chronicle, June 2, 1911



TRIS SPEAKER: THE ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE LIFE OF A BASEBALL LEGEND

by Timothy M. Gay

2023, University of Nebraska Press
[ISBN: 978-1-4962-3474-2. 346 pp.
\$21.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by Vince Guerrieri
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It seems incongruous to suggest that an inductee of the Baseball Hall of Fame when it opened its doors in 1939 is underrated, but that’s the central conceit of Timothy M. Gay’s biography of Tris Speaker.

Gay, who’s written about pre-integration baseball barnstorming as well as books about World War II, makes a compelling case in *Tris Speaker: The Rough-and-Tumble Life of a Baseball Legend*. Even today, nearing a century after his 22-year career concluded, the Texas native nicknamed the Gray Eagle is the career leader in doubles, as well as double plays started as an outfielder, and remains in the top ten for a variety of offensive categories. (His 3,514 career hits are still fifth all-time.) He was the first Indians manager to win a World Series—during a trying year that saw the only player fatality from an on-field injury. Earlier, Speaker starred as the center-fielder for the Red Sox, where Harry Hooper and Duffy

Lewis flanked him. Gay contends the trio, dubbed the “Golden Outfield,” was as good, if not better, than the Cubs celebrated infield of Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers, and Frank Chance—but Franklin P. Adams never waxed poetic about them. Outside of Boston, Cleveland, and his native Texas, however, he’s fallen into relative obscurity compared to peers like Shoeless Joe Jackson, Ty Cobb, and Babe Ruth (Cobb and Ruth were both briefly teammates of Speaker’s, at the end and beginning of their careers, respectively).

Gay’s book, initially published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2005 but reissued this year, provides a compelling narrative of Speaker’s hardscrabble origins, the fighting instinct that never fully abated in his playing career, and his successes on the field. After two world championships with Boston, in his first full season as player-manager for Cleveland, Speaker led the team to a World Series victory. (League Park remains open to the public, at the same dimensions it was when it was used by the Indians, and the expanse of green in outfield gives credence to Gay’s proclamation of Speaker’s fielding prowess.)

The book is peopled with interesting minor characters, like Speaker’s friends Smoky Joe Wood and the doomed Ray Chapman; Ty Cobb, his rival and one-time teammate; and Ban Johnson, the Svengali of the American League. The book also succeeds in painting a portrait of early twentieth century Boston, a city where the old Brahmins clashed with newly arrived Catholics from Ireland and Italy. Speaker took his place with the Protestant old guard, and the book has no problems talking about Speaker’s faults, avoiding the hagiography trap so many biographies can fall into.

Gay lays bare Speaker’s enmities and the gambling scandal that temporarily banished him from baseball after his playing days were over. It also doesn’t shy away from Speaker’s Confederate sympathies and rumored membership in the Ku Klux Klan. Speaker’s anti-Catholic sentiments were demonstrated in a fight with Catholic teammates on the day of Chapman’s funeral, at St. John’s Cathedral in downtown Cleveland. The book also notes his if not repudiation, then at least his outgrowing of some of his prejudices. (His wife was Irish

Catholic, and Speaker became a tutor for Larry Doby, the first Black ballplayer in the American League, and a fan of Willie Mays.)

Gay also highlights Speaker’s post-playing career as a businessman, including a brief and disastrous foray into a professional softball league, and a public figure. (He served as the director of the Cleveland Boxing Commission, a role held a generation earlier by one of Speaker’s baseball contemporaries, umpire Billy Evans.)

The book is a reissue but doesn’t appear to have been updated. The book calls Rough Carrigan the only Red Sox manager to win two World Series—true in 2005, but the mark was equaled in 2007 by Terry Francona. Additionally, a story recounted of Ty Cobb stabbing a fan in Cleveland has been since challenged by Charles Leerhsen’s biography of the Georgia Peach.

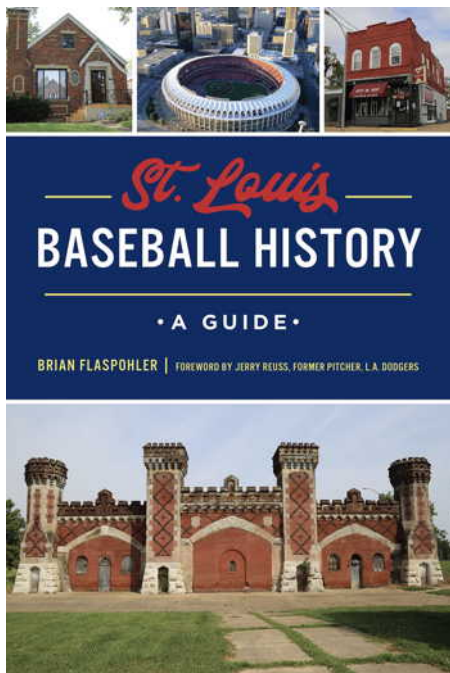
The book’s main flaw—and it’s a relatively minor one—is in its sourcing. The book includes a lot of statements such as “must have” or “probably” happened. The suppositions are legitimate, but there seems to be more speculation on the part of the author than there probably should be—particularly in allegations that Speaker’s rough-and-tumble times included gambling and game-fixing. Again, none of these scenarios Gay includes are particularly outlandish, and there’s no reason to believe he’s playing fast and loose with the facts; the book appears to be well-researched with a variety of contemporary sources and more recent interviews, but it would have benefited from better footnotes.

Overall, this is a well-paced, well-moving narrative that tells a gripping story about a player who remains one of the best of alltime—and maybe a little less underrated now.

Vince Guerrieri is a SABR member and Indians fan from Youngstown, Ohio (hometowns of Jimmy McAleer, Bonesetter Reese and Billy Evans). He’s a journalist and author who’s written for POLITICO, Smithsonian, Ohio Magazine and Popular Mechanics, among others.



Robert Edgren
New York World,
June 20, 1912



ST. LOUIS BASEBALL HISTORY: A GUIDE

by **Brian Flaspohler**

2022, *The History Press*

[ISBN: 978-1467151245. 221 pp. 23.99 USD. Paperback]

reviewed by **Allison R. Levin**

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"Meet me at the Musial Statute" are words commonly heard at any Cardinals baseball game. To a local, those simple words are more than a place to meet. For the St. Louisan, it represents an understanding of one of the thousands of baseball landmarks throughout the city and surrounding areas. In his book *St. Louis Baseball History: A Guide*, Flaspohler walks the reader through St. Louis baseball sites from 1860 to the present; he includes everything from the popular to the known to the relatively unknown. Looking at the book, it is reasonable that the first question an average reader will ask is, "Why focus on St. Louis?" In addition to being a local, Flaspohler reminds us that St. Louis has a rich baseball history, having been home to five major league franchises, three Negro league teams considered major League by MLB, and two teams from the National Association. That rich history makes the book enjoyable to fans of the game, whether from St. Louis or not.

The book is organized by periods: 1860-1899; 1900-1926; 1927-1947; 1948-1974; and 1975-present.

Within each section, Flaspohler presents the reader with a location followed by a short story. The book explores current and former sites of ballparks, player and owner homes, famous hotels, players' hangouts, gravestones, and much more. Want to read about Yogi Berra's childhood? There is a section on his childhood home that provides that information. Are you interested in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League? Read about Erma Bergmann, a local who played in the league, in the section about her gravesite. Through the topics covered, most readers will learn something they didn't know before reading the book.

While it is fun for somebody in St. Louis to learn about and possibly find the landmarks covered, that is not the book's real charm. The stories themselves make the book an endearing and fun read. Each chapter represents one of the periods, and those chapters contain subsections, each made up of a landmark and followed by 2-3 pages that tell the story of the location. While these pages give context to the site, they also provide insight into St. Louis baseball and baseball at the time. For example, under the heading "Battle Between the Colored Socks," we are reminded that on May 4, 1875, "the Brown Stockings met the Red Stockings for the first professional league game in St. Louis". The subsection continues to recap the game and put it into context re-

PUBLISHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As always, we would like to thank the publishers of the books reviewed in this issue for their generous support. *From Honolulu to Brooklyn Running the American Empire's Base Paths with Buck Lai and the Travelers from Hawai'i*, is published by Rutgers University Press. Readers interested can order the book at (✉ www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/from-honolulu-to-brooklyn/9781978829251). *Tris Speaker: The Rough-And-Tumble Life Of A Baseball Legend* can be obtained from the University of Nebraska Press (✉ www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496234742). The History Press publishes *St. Louis Baseball History: A Guide*. It can be purchased at Abe Books (✉ www.abebooks.com/9781467151245/Louis-Baseball-History-Guide-Sports-1467151246/plp). Your patronage is appreciated.

garding what was going on in baseball at the time before telling the reader what happened to the field and how to find the location if you want to visit. Each landmark is presented similarly, so even if the reader is unaware of or has no desire to seek it out, they can still learn from the prose. As much as possible, by organizing the subsections in chronological order, it is easy to read the book and leave with a detailed history of baseball in St. Louis starting in 1860.

The excellent Deadball section (1901-1919) provides an interesting background and appropriately establishes the period; however, one should not go into the book expecting a lot of information on the era. Making up 20% of the book, Deadball is not the focus. Instead, the reader should approach the book as a detailed account of baseball in St. Louis. From that perspective, the approach of telling the stories of St. Louis baseball through the lens of landmarks is unique and provides stories and context all in one place. The added touch of providing addresses for all the landmarks and suggested tour routes adds to the novelty and makes it a one-of-a-kind book.

While it might seem like *St. Louis Baseball History: A Guide* is geared towards the St. Louis native, this well-written book is the perfect choice for anyone seeking more information on the vibrant history of baseball in St. Louis or who enjoys exploring how baseball evolves and changes in one location over almost 165 years.

Allison Levin is the President of the Bob Broeg SABR chapter and a member of the SABR Board of Directors. She is a Professor of Sports Communication at Webster University in St. Louis, MO and is a lifelong St. Louis Cardinals fan.

UMPIRES HANDED \$500 FOR SERIES

Before Saturday's Pittsburgh-Detroit game the national commission took up the demand of the umpires officiating in the series for more pay and turned it down cold, though making a slight advance on last year's salaries. The umpires have been getting \$400 and all their expenses for working in the world's series. This year they put in a bid for a share each equal to that the players received. The commission increased their stipend to \$500 for the seven games.

Toledo News-Bee, October 18, 1909

GAMES/BIOPROJECT

The Games Project has been active since *The Inside Game* last appeared, adding a treasure trove of articles about the Deadball Philadelphia Athletics that will delight any fan of the Mackmen. Topics include the opening of Shibe Park on April 12, 1909, Chief Bender's no-hitter there a year later, and many other exploits of Coombs, Collins, Baker, and Plank. Also posted is the story of Yankee pitcher Bob Shawkey's 20th win of the season against the Athletics, his former team, at Shibe on September 27, 1919 (he fanned 15, a Yankee record for 59 years). Other new game entries profile the home park of the A's cross-town rivals, the Phillies' Baker Bowl, Cy Young's 500th career victory on July 29, 1910, and Smokey Joe Wood's no-hitter against the Browns on July 29, 1910. Meanwhile, the BioProject posted profiles of Arthur Queisser, Jack Fee, Rick Vowinkel, Lloyd Christenbury, Carl Druhot, Herb McQuaid, John O'Brien, Charlie Eakle, William Richardson, and Carl Ray. As always, we urge you to give these games and bios a look.

NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Inside Game is pleased to welcome to the committee the following SABR members who have expressed interest in the Deadball Era:

William Branson
Andrew Harner
Allyson Lehere

Seth Moland-Kovash
Neal Poloncarz
Robert Whelan

We look forward to their active participation in committee endeavors. These new committee members, as well as our newsletter contributors, can be contacted via the SABR directory.

Baseball speculation is increasing. At one cigar store betting booth there is a play of nearly \$1,000 daily, with seldom a bet of more than \$5, which, aside from attesting to the interest in baseball, also goes to show the average American citizen is a gambler, and if it can't be racing it will be something else.

Chicago Tribune, August 23, 1908

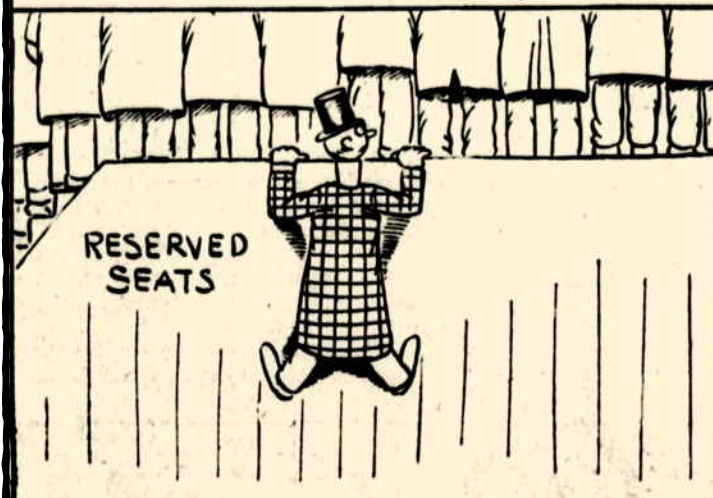
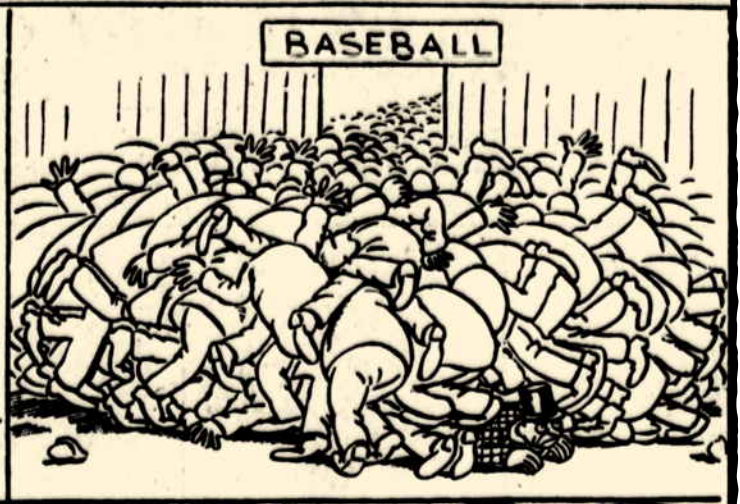
Can You Beat It?



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By Maurice Ketten



by Maurice Ketten

(New York) World, April 13, 1912