

## BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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### Comments from the Chair

**Andy McCue**

*Riverside, CA*

In recent days, I have received two requests for help indexing baseball books. Dr. Susan Dellinger, granddaughter of Edd Roush, sent along a copy of her book, *Red Legs and Black Sox: Edd Roush and the Untold Story of the 1919 World Series*. I can provide the book to anyone interested in doing an index, which will be included in Len Levin's Baseball Research Library and perhaps serve as an index if there are future editions.

Also, Rody Johnson has completed a book entitled *The Rise and Fall of Dodgertown* which will be published by the University Press of Florida early next year. If you're interested in doing an index for this book, or for Dellinger's, please drop me a note. We've been pretty slow about creating indexes lately and it would be good to get this project going again. Andrea Kellner contacted me for a project earlier this year and she is working on an index for Quincy Trouppe's autobiography.

These are the kinds of books that really deserve indexing, as they are full of useful information that can often be hard to dig out without an index. This is one of the reasons that I, like many of you, was disappointed in the index for *Deadball Stars of the American League*. Unlike *NL Stars...*, this one did have an index, in fact one that covered both books, but it looks like it was done by a computer program rather than a human being.

#### ***St. Louis Committee Meeting***

I hope all of you, or at least many of you, will be attending the annual convention in St. Louis this year, from July 26-29. Our committee meeting will be Saturday, July 28 at 9 a.m. In addition, on Thursday at 10:30 a.m., there will be a feature designed to introduce first-time convention goers and the otherwise curious to what SABR committees are all about. I am going to be there with TBI set up on my laptop to give demonstrations. If anyone would like to join me and discuss the committee's work with passersby, I'd be happy to have you.

#### ***Frank Phelps Lives!***

Our founding chair may be devoting his efforts to tennis research these days, but his work is still benefiting researchers. Rod Nelson, SABR's Research Services

Manager, recently scanned and posted a listing of TSN obituaries Frank compiled from 1933 through 1991 ([www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,2146,5,0](http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,2146,5,0)). Several people volunteered to put them into electronic format and we have been working to get them into The Baseball Index. Mike Grahek and Phil Bergen are already working on their second batches of obituaries while Glenn Morosco and Bill Nowlin are contributing as well. This should be a great addition to TBI while also making Frank's work that much more accessible.

Unfortunately, TBI isn't generating enough other volunteers to keep it growing at the rate we would like. Francie Pyne from the San Francisco Bay Area checked in and she's working on some Giants—related material, but there haven't been any other new volunteers in a year. TBI is our core project, the definition of what we exist for, and more people ought to be working on it. I'll be making a strong effort at the convention to generate more volunteers, but I hope to hear from some of you as well.

#### ***Other Items***

Rod Nelson has also posted a link to WorldCat, the successor to the Library of Congress' OCLC electronic book index: [www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,1919,5,0](http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,1919,5,0). WorldCat seeks to bring together electronically a list of all the holdings of major libraries. I haven't worked with WorldCat too much, but I always found OCLC useful.

Committee member Bob Timmermann, a professional librarian, adds this cautionary note: "This is a great boon to researchers, but I would strongly advise that after finding a library that holds the material listed in WorldCat, that you double check the catalog of that particular library to make sure that the item you are looking for is still there.

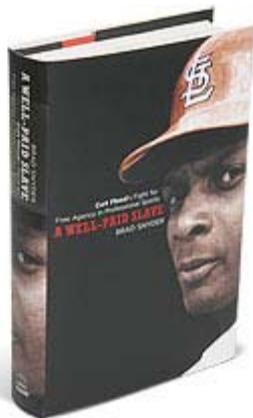
There are a number of ways a book can be listed in WorldCat and not actually be at the library you want to visit. Many individual library catalogs are integrated into this catalog, so most of the time, you can just click on the hyperlink for the library involved, but some aren't.

You are usually in good shape with monographs, but periodicals are often trickier to pin down."

Thanks, and see you in St. Louis.

## Reviews and Features

***A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood's Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports*** by Brad Snyder. New York: Viking Press, 2006. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. ISBN 067003794X. \$25.95. 472 pages.



I found Rich Arpi's list of baseball books published in 2006 unusually intimidating. It's, what, forty-two pages long? And I'd read maybe a dozen of the books listed.

Among that dozen, however, have been some extraordinarily good ones. For instance, I've read Peter Morris's encyclopedic, two-volume *A Game of Inches*. Then there's Joshua Prager's epic *The Darkening Green*. Either would be a worthy

prizewinner.

Brad Snyder's *A Well-Paid Slave* is another of that quality. He's admirably prepared to examine his chosen subject, having earlier published the excellent *Beyond the Shadow of the Senators*, and, as a trained lawyer, he's knowledgeable about how the court system works.

All three of these books give evidence of comprehensive research. Snyder's has some seventy-eight pages of notes. His bibliography (twenty pages) lists twenty-three manuscript collections, fourteen public documents, sixty-five newspapers, and some one hundred fifty-seven interviews (I may have lost count) as well as the usual books and articles. All this impedimenta is kept in the background; the text itself is very readable, and the story itself is a compelling one.

As might be expected from the book's title, there's not a whole lot about the game on the field in Snyder's book. He does cover thoroughly Flood's comeback with the Washington Senators, brief as it proved to be. The portrait of Washington manager Ted Williams is especially vivid. In addition, there is a good deal of material quoted from Snyder's interviews with former ballplayers, though many of these concern the players' association or are concerned with trial testimony. I was struck by the portrait of Howard Cosell, who befriended Flood and "stood by him even after the furor over his lawsuit had subsided" (315), and who "saw Flood as continuing the fight for social change begun by [Jackie] Robinson and [Mohammed] Ali" (103).

It's not the sport but the business of baseball that's the subject here, the "Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports." Snyder gives a clear and detailed account of the legal history of the reserve clause featuring a blow-by-blow description of Curt Flood's suit against major league baseball's journey through the courts to the Supreme Court. According to Snyder, the idea for the suit was first suggested to Flood by his advisors Marian Jorgenson and Allan Zeman (12, 15). Marvin Miller did his best to dissuade Flood, but he finally received the financial backing of the Players As-

sociation and a celebrity lawyer, Arthur Goldberg, to argue his case.

The journey of the case through the courts takes up much of the text. Snyder is highly critical of almost all the principal actors. What Flood hoped for was "a full trial about the legality of the reserve clause" (145). He hoped that his case would be chosen to be heard by the Supreme Court (223). Both these hopes were achieved, but all sorts of unhappiness occurred along the way, culminating in the Supreme Court's decision against Flood. For instance, Snyder shows Irwin Ben Cooper, who presided over the first phase of Flood's suit, "a prisoner of the game's establishment. And the two Supreme Court precedents in baseball's favor did not give him much room to prove otherwise" (189).

Neither the Supreme Court justices nor Arthur Goldberg's participation fare much better than Cooper in Snyder's eyes. After a close examination of all the documents connected to the case, he concludes that the court "could not even announce its decision properly" (307). Goldberg, too, is treated critically. Having joined the race for governor of New York, he's generally unprepared to present Flood's case. Snyder concludes that "Goldberg . . . was unfamiliar with the facts and was neither a great nor even a good oral advocate at this point in his legal career" (273). Snyder later characterizes Goldberg's oral argument before the Supreme Court as "awful" (307).

On the other hand, Jay Topkis's involvement in the case is consistently praised, and Snyder has praise for Major League baseball's defense, saying at one point, that they "responded just as they should have," a rarity in a sequence of events in which few did respond rationally. Snyder, though, clearly finds the arguments of Flood the more persuasive. He concludes, not only that Flood should be credited "with starting the fight for free agency in baseball," but also the "free agency . . . has been good for baseball" (349). This partisanship, to this reader's mind, never disturbs the clarity of his account of the legal maneuverings of the Flood case. And the book is about more than the fight for free agency. It's also, and more fundamentally, about Curt Flood. Snyder rejects the notion that Flood was merely a front man for the Major League Players Association and finds the sources of this fight in Flood's life itself. At the very end of the book's "Acknowledgements," he thanks Flood, continuing "I never had the chance to meet Curt or even speak to him on the phone, but my admiration for him runs deep. His guts and courage made me want to write this book. I hope I have done his story justice" (358).

Snyder tells the story of Flood's life from his youth in Oakland to his death from cancer in 1997. He certainly doesn't idealize Flood. Throughout the book, the reader is constantly reminded that Flood is an alcoholic and a womanizer. In addition, he is not just a bad businessman but an unethical one, selling portraits as his own that he did not point. On at least two occasions, Snyder calls Flood's life "a mess" (190, 321). During spring training with the Senators, "Flood holed himself up in [his] room at the Surf Rider Motel and drank vodka all night until he passed out" (214). Clearly, not the best way to get into shape.

Snyder does discover an idealist Flood. He begins by pointing out that Flood was "not like most ballplayers." This

difference had two dimensions, a ‘quiet, artistic side’ and a commitment to the “battle against injustice,” both of which contribute to Flood’s determination to pursue his “fight for free agency in professional sports” (3). Though it turned out to be of dubious legal value, his association of his situation with that of African American history provided the impetus for a struggle from which he could expect no material reward. As he told Howard Cosell, “A well-paid slave . . . is nonetheless a slave” (104). This identification with a struggle for freedom served Flood when he found few other supports. “Flood carried on King’s fight for economic freedom, a fight that affected future generations of black athletes” (116). Snyder concludes that Flood began a fight that was “about an idea more basic in our society than free agency in baseball – it was about the freedom to choose where to work” (350).

Finally, Flood’s “quiet, artistic side,” his willingness to engage in “constant self-education,” enabled him to understand a legal defeat as a spiritual victory. “That segregation and discrimination turned Flood against the establishment. It turned him into a fighter. And despite losing the biggest battle of his life, he kept fighting – even if it kept him out of baseball” (335). Snyder concludes: “From his legal defeat, Flood emerged with a spiritual victory. ‘I have never felt I gave up too much,’ he said. ‘All the things that I got from it, they’re intangibles. They’re all inside of me. Yes, I sacrificed a lot – the money, maybe even the Hall of Fame – and you weigh that against all the things that are really and truly important that are deep inside you, and I think I succeeded” (338). As Snyder says, Flood “died a proud and happy man” (346). Snyder’s book is as remarkable as its subject.

**Leverett T. (Terry) Smith**

*North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC*



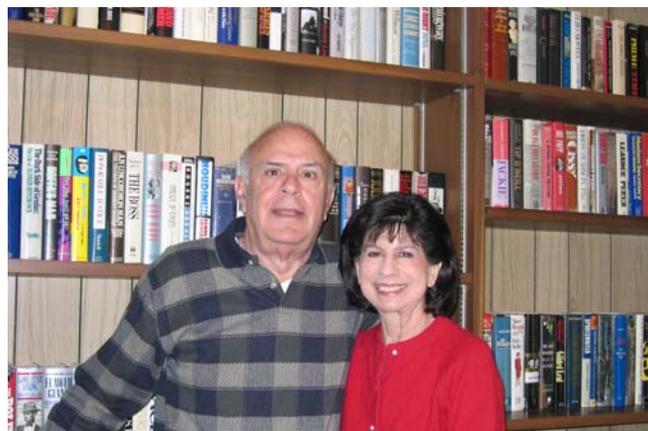
## **Author Profile:**

### ***Burton and Benita Boxerman***

by Ron Kaplan

There have been a handful of books about Jews and baseball over the years. Mostly anecdotal in nature, they have served to fuel the conception that the Jewish involvement in professional sports is practically negligible.

Burton and Benita Boxerman hope to disprove that notion in their scholarly treatment, *Jews and Baseball Volume 1: Entering the American Mainstream, 1871-1948*.



“What we’ve tried to do is not only give profiles of prominent and not-so-prominent athletes in the game, but how the Jewish community and baseball developed together, particularly in these years, and how baseball helped the Jewish community become part of the American culture” said Benita Boxerman in a telephone interview.

The original idea was to produce a single volume, ending with Hank Greenberg’s retirement, but the publisher asked for additional material since 1948. Rather than delay the release to make one larger book, the husband and wife team decided on writing the additional volume.

*Jews and Baseball* is their second book, following *Ebbets to Veeck to Busch: Eight Owners Who Shaped Baseball*, released in 2003. It would seem they work well together.

“No problems,” said Burton. “We dicker over who left the filing cabinet open, but we don’t seem to have many major disagreements over the book,” Benita said.

Burton, 73, who holds a PhD in history and political science, does the research, while Benita, 67, handles the writing and editing. “We used a lot more Internet research than with our first book,” she said. Her husband agreed, “It’s much easier to go on-line than to read microfilm.”

Burton and Benita are both SABR members and credit the Jewish Major Leaguers baseball card set, created by Martin Abramowitz, for identifying the players.

Following their copious research, Benita said she had “not appreciated the stature of [Hank Greenberg] as a player and role model to the Jewish community . . . he was pivotal to the way the Jewish player was treated since then.”

Burton, whom Benita called the “baseball guru” in the family, said he was surprised to learn that Washington Senators owner Clark Griffith and New York Giants manager John McGraw were more welcoming towards Jewish players than had been generally reported.

The Boxermans are hard at work on the next volume, which should take another two years and which will bring their readers up to date on the century-plus association of Jews and baseball.

\* \* \*

## ***Jews and Baseball, Volume 1: Entering the American Mainstream, 1871-1948***

by Burton A. Boxerman and Benita W. Boxerman. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, 2007, 232 pages, \$32.95

While there have been other books about Jewish baseball ballplayers, none packs as much of a scholarly punch as this new title presented by Burton and Benita Boxerman.

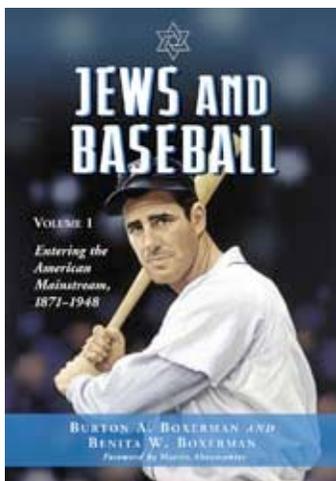
Every player considered Jewish as defined by the Jewish Major Leaguers baseball card set is accounted for, regardless of his on-field accomplishment, but the authors have done a substantial service by documenting the contributions of those behind the scenes. Sportswriters like Jacob Morse, Dan Daniel, and Shirley Povich offered their observations and insight in a time before 24-hour sports on cable television made reading almost obsolete. Without the foresight of Louis Heilbroner and Al and Walter Elias — “the keepers of the stats” responsible for compiling and disseminating all those figures like AB, BA, and ERA” — what would fans pore over during their morning coffee?

Owners such as Andrew Freedman, Barney Dreyfuss, Emil Fuchs, and Sidney Weil, among others, also receive recognition for their achievements, as does Albert “Dolly” Stark, one of the game’s most innovative umpires.

The baseball highlights in *Jews and Baseball* are secondary to the *Yiddishkeit*, the family backgrounds and the players’ relationship with Judaism before and after their careers. Some had to deal with anti-Semitism; a few changed their names to hide their identities from family members and possible antagonists alike. Others were more fortunate, almost defiant, in presenting their Judaism.

Non-sports fans might overlook this book, but *Jews and Baseball* belongs next to any other study about the Jewish-American experience.

(A version of this article and review appeared in the *New Jersey Jewish News*, April 12, 2007.)



## **The Nostalgic Charm of *Baseball Digest***

*The Best of Baseball Digest*, John Kuenster (Ivan R. Dee, 2006)

*Baseball Digest* has been a staple since 1942. Each month, stories from around the country have found their way into the compact publication.

Nowadays, of course, the concept and presentation seem as anachronistic as single-admission doubleheaders.

The articles within, by necessity, must be of a relatively timeless, rather than timely, nature, meant to be savored for their historical and cultural properties, rather than used to catch up on the latest news.

I wonder what demographic constitutes the readership of *Baseball Digest*? Most of the stories are written in an “old-fashioned” mien, as opposed to the features that appear within the pages of *Sports Illustrated* and, more recently, *ESPN, The Magazine*.

*BD* traditionally ran their “rookie ratings” in the March issue. I still have the 1969 issue, which features Dusty Baker, Bill Russell, Amos Otis, Larry Bowa, Al Oliver, Graig Nettles, Bobby Mercer, and Rollie

Fingers, as well as dozens of players you probably never heard of; a two-year subscription, plus four free issues, was \$7 back then. Similarly, the April issue was the prize, featuring the “opening day special,” with rosters and other statistical information. Of course, that was in the pre-Internet/sports cable days where such data is up-to-the-minute.

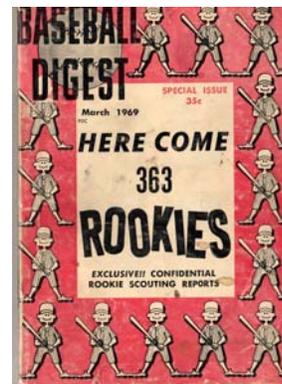
Each issue offers a group of standard features. My favorites over the years have been the letters to the editor. A writer will often inquire about a particular game he might have seen fifty years prior, giving the skimpiest of details and asking for more information. Other will inquire about certain records, or merely voice a complaint of omission. Other regular features include an examination and examples of interpretation of a particular baseball rule, and the often-humbling ten-question quiz.

There’s something charming, leisurely about thumbing through an issue. Same for *The Best of Baseball Digest*. John Kuenster, the publication’s editor for more than 30 years, compiled this collection which more than lives up to the hype of such a lofty title. Within these 450 pages, he offers a smattering of the greatest baseball writers in history, including Red Smith, Heywood Broun, Arthur Daley, Jimmy Cannon, Leonard Koppett, Roger Kahn, Jim Murray, Mike Royko, and dozens more.

*BD* was also the launch point of oral history, predating books such as *The Glory of Their Times* by presenting “as told to” tales from such personalities as Stan Musial, Casey Stengel, Don Larsen, and George Sisler, as well as dozens of profiles on layers recent and more distant.

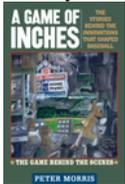
The range of topics is also spellbinding: “Stealing Home is Not for the Faint of Heart,” “First Base: The Game’s Social Hub,” “Here’s the Quickest Way to Be Ejected from a Game,” and “The Persuasive Healing Powers of Baseball Trivia.” Each piece includes the year of publication.

**Ron Kaplan**  
Montclair, NJ



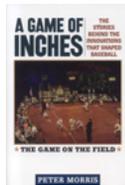
## Peter Morris' *Game of Inches* Wins Seymour Medal

The Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) announced that the multi-volume *Game of Inches: The Stories Behind the Innovations That Shaped Baseball* (Ivan R. Dee) by Peter Morris was selected to receive this year's Seymour Medal, which honors the best book of baseball history or biography from the preceding year.



Morris will receive the medal at the Ninth Annual Seymour Conference, which will be held at the Baseball Heritage Museum in Cleveland on April 27-29 and is sponsored by the Cleveland Indians.

*Game of Inches* was selected from one of five finalists for the Seymour Medal Award. The judging remarks about the multi-volume work included: "The scope of these books evokes the spirit of the Seymour's books...comprehensive, well researched, exhaustive."



The remaining finalists included (in alphabetical order by author):

- *When to Stop The Cheering?: The Black Press, the Black Community, and the Integration of Professional Baseball* by Brian Carroll (Routledge)
- *The Origins and History of The All American Girls Professional Baseball League* by Merrie Fidler (McFarland & Co.)
- *Spalding's World Tour: The Epic Adventure that Took Baseball Around the Globe — And Made It America's Game* by Mark Lamster (Public Affairs)

• *A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood's Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports* by Brad Snyder (Viking)

Members of the Seymour Medal judging committee were Richard Johnson (chair), Jon Daniels and Ron Kaplan.

John Thorn will deliver the keynote speech at the conference, which is in its ninth year. Thorn is the author of countless articles on baseball history and has written, co-written, and edited more than two dozen books, including *The Hidden Game of Baseball*, *Total Baseball*, and *The Armchair Book of Baseball*. He was founding editor of SABR's *The National Pastime* and founding publisher of Total Sports Publishing in 1998. Currently, he is editor of *BASE BALL: A Journal of the Early Game*, a new McFarland & Co. scholarly semiannual launching in Spring 2007, and serves as curatorial consultant to the Museum of the City of New York for an upcoming baseball exhibit.

The Seymour Medal, named in honor of Dr. Harold Seymour and Dorothy Jane Mills (formerly Seymour), is awarded to the book judged the best work of baseball history or biography in the preceding year. The Seymour Medal Conference, held annually, attempts to continue the promotion of baseball scholarship begun by its namesakes, and to celebrate fine baseball writing in all forms.

## Baseball Book News

### Book Blogs and Review Sites

\* **Ron Kaplan**, editor of the SABR Bibliography Committee Newsletter, continues to host a blog on the literature of baseball at [Baseballbookshelf.mblogs.com](http://Baseballbookshelf.mblogs.com), a collection of reviews, industry news, and author interviews. Among the recent entries is a look at how daily newspapers in major markets presented baseball previews sections for Opening Day.

### Author Sites

*These days, more and more authors turn to the Internet as a means of publicizing their projects, either within dedicated Web sites or blogs. Many offer sample chapters, as well as audio and video sources and links for further exploration. Among the recent entries:*

Web sites touting books of an historical nature make for attractive presentations. Some of the more well-done include **Cait Murphy's** [www.crazy08.com](http://www.crazy08.com), **Mark Lamster's** site for *Spalding's World Tour* ([www.Marklamster.com](http://www.Marklamster.com)), and **Jonathan Eig's** presentation of *Opening Day: The Story of Jackie Robinson's First Season* ([www.JonathanEig.com](http://www.JonathanEig.com))

### Other author Web sites include:

- [www.sabernomics.com](http://www.sabernomics.com), by J.C. Bradbury, author of *The Baseball Economist*
- [www.mikestadler.com](http://www.mikestadler.com), by Mike Stadler, author of *The Psychology of Baseball*
- [www.zachhample.com](http://www.zachhample.com), by Zack Hample, author of *Watching Baseball Smarter: A Professional Fan's Guide for Beginners, Semi-experts, and Deeply Serious Geeks*

*(Authors wishing to have their Internet presences listed in the newsletter are invited to send the URL to Ron Kaplan at [Ronk23@aol.com](mailto:Ronk23@aol.com).)*

### Web Resources

Queen College in Kingston, Ontario, offers a bibliography to Jewish baseball novels: [www.queensu.ca/jewishstudies/baseballbib.html](http://www.queensu.ca/jewishstudies/baseballbib.html).

Issues of *Baseball Digest* dating back to April, 2000 are available at no charge at [AccessMyLibrary.com](http://AccessMyLibrary.com)