

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee



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

AUGUST 2022

DEADBALL AT SABR 50

After a three-year hiatus, the Deadball Era Committee will hold its annual meeting during SABR 50 at the Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor in Baltimore, August 17-21. The one-hour get-together will begin at 12 noon on Friday, August 19 in Constellation A/B Ballroom and be hosted by committee chairman John McMurray.

A highlight of the meeting will be the formal presentation of this year's Larry Ritter Award to Dave Heller, the author of *Gettysburg Eddie Plank: A Pitcher's Journey to the Hall of Fame* (McFarland). The winning work sheds much needed light on the life and career of the underappreciated left-hander, the staff anchor of Connie Mack's championship teams of the Deadball Era. Also speaking during the meeting will be incoming newsletter editor Don Jensen. He will assume the post in February 2023 and will discuss his plans for *The Inside Game* during the meeting. In addition, Don will provide a presentation on concessions trailblazer Harry Stevens. Other committee business will be attended to, as needed.

Elsewhere on the convention agenda are presentations bound to be of interest to Deadballers. These include *Bambino, Schambino! The 1918 American League Pennant Race and the Curse of the Three-Penny Mayor* by Tim



Herlich (9:30 am, Friday, August 19/Constellation A/B Ballroom); *Salaries, Skinflints and Scandals: The Cost of the Black Sox Scandal* by Mike Haupert (1:00 pm, Friday, August 19/Constellation A/B Ballroom); Russ Walsh's *The Klein Chocolate Company Baseball Team's Remarkable 1919 Season* (3:00 pm Friday, August 19/Constellation C Ballroom); and *Going Downtown with the Golden Sombrero* (1891-2021) by Herm Krabbenhoft (9:30 am, Saturday, August 20/Constellation A/B Ballroom). With this lineup and more, a good time is likely in store for all Deadball-minded convention attendees.

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DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

by John Zinn

My interest in the Deadball Era began over 60 years ago when I first read Johnny Evers and Mordecai Brown's memories of the Merkle game and its replay in John Carmichael's *My Greatest Day in Baseball*. The drama of that legendary 1908 National League pennant race somehow led me to believe the entire period was full of close pennant races. Many years later, it was more than a little surprising to realize that with one exception, 1908 was the only really close National League race of the Deadball Era. In fact, some races were almost obscenely one-sided such as 1906 when John McGraw's Giants finished 40 games over .500, but 20 games behind first place Chicago. The one exception was 1916, a race which, while it lacked last day of the season drama, had four teams in contention until the season's last week. So intense was the National League race, the contemporary media called it:

“The Apoplexy-Breeding National League Pennant Race” — *New York Times*

“The nerve shattering strife for the baseball supremacy of the National League” — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

“The most maddening baseball melee in history” — *Boston Herald*

The closeness of the “maddening melee” challenged players to give everything they had. There is no better illustration of how they responded to that challenge than the six times starting pitchers took the mound trying to win both ends of a doubleheader. If that was not enough, it happened twice not only by the same team, the Philadelphia Phillies, but also within just four days. On September 20, the Phillies who trailed first place Brooklyn by two games, hosted Pittsburgh for a doubleheader at Baker Bowl. On the mound for the home team was right-handed pitcher Al Demaree, opposed by Wilbur Cooper of the Pirates. The two matched zeros until the Phillies erupted for seven runs in the bottom of the sixth allowing Demaree to coast to a shutout victory.



Al Demaree apparently had help in his first game shutout of the Pirates - Philadelphia Press - September 21, 1916

The **INSIDE GAME**

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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sabr.org/research/deadball-era-research-committee-newsletters



Al Demaree

Perhaps remembering how, just two weeks earlier, his team was beaten twice on the same day by the Giants' Pol Perritt, Phils manager Pat Moran wasted no time accepting Demaree's offer to start the second contest.

Demaree got a big hand when he took the mound, but it appeared his attempt to complete a very different kind of twin killing would be short-lived. The Philadelphia right-hander gave up three hits, but escaped without allowing any runs thanks to overly aggressive Pittsburgh baserunning that saw two runners thrown out, one at the plate. Having escaped that threat unscathed, the Phils quickly got on the scoreboard, with two runs in the bottom of the inning. Pittsburgh got its first run of the day off Demaree in the third, but still trailed 2-1 as the game went to the top of the ninth. The Pirates were not about to go quietly, however, and put runners on first and second with only one out. Moran had his ace

FIRST GAME.										
PHILLIES.										
	ab.	r.	bh.	tb.	sh.	sb.	po.	a.	e.	
Paskert, cf.	4	1	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	
Bancroft, ss.	5	1	2	3	—	—	—	3	1	
Stock, 3b.	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Whitted, lf.	4	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Cravath, rf.	3	1	2	2	—	—	—	1	—	
Lederus, 1b.	4	1	1	1	—	—	—	11	—	
Niehoff, 2b.	4	1	1	1	—	—	—	9	5	
Burns, c.	3	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	1	
Demaree, p.	4	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	
Totals	35	7	11	14	—	—	27	14	1	
PITTSBURGH.										
	ab.	r.	bh.	tb.	sh.	sb.	po.	a.	e.	
Warner, 3b.	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	2	
Bigbee, 2b.	3	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	2	
Carey, cf.	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	
Altenberg, cf.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Hinchman, lf.	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	
Hinz, 1f.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
J. Wagner, 1b.	4	—	1	1	—	—	—	8	—	
Schulte, rf.	3	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	
Smith, ss.	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	
Fischer, c.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	2	
W. Wagner, c.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	
Cooper, p.	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Harmon, p.	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	
Totals	30	—	6	6	1	—	24	8	2	
Phillies—										
Runs	—	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	x—7
Base hits	—	1	1	0	0	0	6	1	2	x—11
Pittsburgh—										
Runs	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0—0
Base hits	—	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	6
Hits—Off Cooper, 7 in 5 2-3 innings, 26 at bat; off Warner, 4 in 2 1-3 innings, 9 at bat. Runs earned—Phillies, 3. Two-base hits—Bancroft, Niehoff, Burns. Left on bases—Phillies, 8; Pittsburgh, 7. Struck out—By Demaree, none; by Cooper, 4. Double plays—J. Wagner, unassisted; Niehoff to Bancroft to Lederus. First base on errors—Pittsburgh, 1; Phillies, 2. First base on called balls—Off Demaree, 3; off Cooper, 3. Missed grounders and fumbles—Bancroft, Warner, Bigbee. Umpires—Eason and Rigler. Time—1:46.										
SECOND GAME.										
	ab.	r.	bh.	tb.	sh.	sb.	po.	a.	e.	
Paskert, cf.	4	1	1	1	—	—	—	2	1	
Bancroft, ss.	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	
Stock, 3b.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	
Whitted, lf.	4	1	1	2	—	—	1	—	1	
Cravath, rf.	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	
Lederus, 1b.	5	—	2	2	—	—	1	9	1	
Niehoff, 2b.	4	—	1	2	—	—	—	2	—	
Burns, c.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	
Demaree, p.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Totals	30	3	5	7	—	3	27	13	—	
PITTSBURGH.										
	ab.	r.	bh.	tb.	sh.	sb.	po.	a.	e.	
Bigbee, 2b.	4	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	6	
Carey, cf.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	
Hinchman, lf.	4	—	2	2	—	—	—	1	—	
J. Wagner, 1b.	4	—	2	2	—	—	—	10	—	
Baird, 3b.	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	
Schulte, rf.	3	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	
Smith, ss.	3	—	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	
Johnson, 1b.	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
McCarthy, 3b.	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Fanner, ss.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Fischer, c.	3	—	1	2	—	—	7	—	1	
Mamaux, p.	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	
**W. Wagner	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Totals	32	2	9	10	—	2	*28	9	1	
** Batted for McCarthy in ninth and singled.										
* Two out when winning run scored.										
Phillies—Runs	—	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1—3	
Base hits	—	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1—3
Pittsburgh—Runs	—	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1—2
Base hits	—	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	0
Runs earned—Phillies, 2; Pittsburgh, 2. Two-base hits—Whitted, Niehoff, Fischer. Left on bases—Phillies, 5; Pittsburgh, 5. Struck out—By Demaree, 4; by Mamaux, 6. Double plays—Smith to J. Wagner; Stock to Niehoff to Lederus. First base on called balls—Off Demaree, 2; off Mamaux, 4. Wild pitch—Mamaux. Wild throw—Fischer. Umpires—Rigler and Eason. Time—1:50.										

Philadelphia Inquirer - September 21, 1916

Grover Cleveland Alexander warming up, but elected to stay with Demaree who struck out pinch-hitter Doc Johnston.

Demaree needed only one more out, but to make matters even more challenging, the two runners pulled off a double steal, putting the tying and go-ahead runs in scoring position. Pinch-hitter Billy Wagner, proved equally uncooperative, singling in the tying run. It could have been worse, but Demaree was again saved by his defense when center fielder Dode Paskert cut down the runner on second trying to score. In the bottom of the inning, unfortunately for Philadelphia, George Whitted's hit "refused to bound" into the bleachers for what, under the rules of the day, would have been a game-winning home run. Instead Whitted was at second, but not for long, as he quickly stole third. A few batters later with the two out and the bases loaded, Pirate pitcher Al Mamaux reportedly tried to intimidate pinch-hitter Claude Cooper by dusting him off. If so, seldom was a poor strategy, executed even more poorly. The pitch went all the way to the backstop and Whitted scored the winning run. In spite of having just pitched two complete games, Demaree had enough energy left to outrun his adoring fans to the center field clubhouse where team owner William Baker was waiting with a \$100 check.

Demaree's twin killing also helped the Phillies pick up a half-game on the Dodgers, but by the time Philadelphia hosted Cincinnati for another doubleheader just three days later, Brooklyn had a $2\frac{1}{2}$ game lead. Fortunately for the Phils, they had their ace, Grover Cleveland Alexander on the mound for the first game. Already a 29-game winner, Alexander got off to a rough start when three Reds hits and a Dave Bancroft error gave Cincinnati an early 1-0 lead. Things threatened to get worse two innings later, but Alexander was bailed out by Milt Stock's "sensational one-hand stop" with the bases loaded. The game began to turn in the home team's favor in the bottom of the inning when the Phillies tied the score without the benefit of a hit. Philadelphia broke things open in the sixth, thanks to Bert Niehoff's three-run home run when this time the ball did bounce



Grover Cleveland Alexander

into the bleachers. Alexander made it stand up for a 7-3 victory.

Considering Demaree's feat of just a few days earlier, there were probably few in the crowd who were surprised when Alexander began warming up for the second game. The fans greeted him with "thunderous applause which grew to a roar" as he took the mound. Although the Reds continued to get hits against the Phils right-hander, instead of growing tired, Alexander became "absolutely invincible." He allowed just three hits over the last three innings and only one base runner reached third in the entire game. The Phils offense produced four runs and at game's end, Alexander had not only his 31st victory, but his 15th shutout. Alexander was not as quick to the clubhouse as Demaree so the fans carried him the last 30 yards on their shoulders where owner Baker was waiting with the now obligatory \$100 check. Alexander wasted little time in the second game which lasted only one hour and seven minutes. Incredibly the two games were

Cincinnati			Philadelphia		
Name.	ab	r	h	p	a
Smith,if....	4	1	3	2	0
Groh,2b....	4	0	2	2	2
Roush,cf....	4	0	1	4	0
Chase,1b....	4	1	2	16	0
Griffith,rf....	4	1	1	1	0
McK'nie,3b	4	0	1	3	2
Kopf,ss....	4	0	2	0	2
Huhn,c....	3	0	0	2	1
Schulz,p....	2	0	0	0	3
Moseley,p..	0	0	0	0	6
*Twombly....	1	0	0	0	0
Wingo....	1	0	0	0	0
Fisher....	1	0	0	0	0
Totals....	36	3	12	24	11
Totals....	27	7	7	27	16

*Batted for Schulz in eighth inning.

†Batted for Huhn in ninth inning.

‡Batted for Moseley in ninth inning.

Cincinnati 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2-3
 Philadelphia 0 0 1 1 0 3 0 2 .-7
 Errors—Bancroft, Niehoff. Two-base hits—Griffith, Cravath. Three-base hits—Smith, Luderus. Home run—Niehoff. Stolen bases—Bancroft, Stock. Sacrifice hit—Bancroft. Sacrifice fly—Stock. Double play—McKechnie, Groh and Chase; Niehoff, Bancroft and Luderus, 2. Left on bases—Cincinnati, 6; Philadelphia, 4. First base on error—Cincinnati, 1. Bases on balls—Off Schulz, 5. Hits and earned runs—Off Schulz, 5 and 5 in 7 innings; off Moseley, 2 and 2 in one inning; off Alexander, 12 and 2 in 9 innings. Hit by pitcher—By Schulz (Paskert). Struck out—By Schulz, 1; by Alexander, 3. Umpires—Messrs. Klem and Emslie. Time—1 hour 33 minutes.

SECOND GAME

Cincinnati			Philadelphia		
Name.	ab	r	h	p	a
Smith,if....	3	0	0	1	1
Groh,2b....	4	0	0	4	2
Roush,cf....	4	0	2	6	0
Chase,1b....	4	0	1	8	0
Griffith,rf....	4	0	2	1	1
Kopf,ss....	3	0	0	0	6
Wingo,c....	3	0	1	4	1
Toney,p....	2	0	0	0	0
Moseley,p..	0	0	0	0	0
*Twombly....	1	0	0	0	0
Totals....	32	6	8	24	11
Totals....	30	4	9	27	15

*Batted for Toney in eighth inning.

Cincinnati 6 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0-0
 Philadelphia 0 0 0 0 1 2 1 0 .-4

Errors—None. Two-base hits—Stock, Whitted, Niehoff. Stolen base—Smith. Double play—Bancroft, Niehoff and Luderus. Left on bases—Cincinnati, 6; Philadelphia, 2. Bases on balls—Off Alexander 1. Hits and earned runs—Off Toney, 9 and 3 in 7 innings; off Moseley, 0 and 0 in 1 inning. Struck out—By Toney, 2; by Alexander, 4. Wild pitch—Toney. Passed ball—Wingo. Umpires—Messrs. Klem and Emslie. Time—1 hour 7 minutes.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle - September 24, 1916

played in only two hours and forty-five minutes, giving the fans not only plenty of time to get home for dinner, but to celebrate over a few beers at their local tavern.

How did Demaree and Alexander each pitch two complete games on the same day? Unfortunately box scores from that era don't give as much statistical detail as today, but Alexander threw only 78 pitches in the second game. The future Hall of Famer struck out four batters and walked just one which kept the pitch count down. That certainly helped, but a more likely explanation is pitchers didn't throw as hard on every pitch as they do today. In an era of few home runs, one bad pitch was unlikely to do that much damage so a pitcher could pick his spots as to when to throw hard. Dodger pitcher Leon Cadore may have alluded to this a few days after his 1920, 26-inning marathon performance when he said the toughest part was having to concentrate for so long because one pitch could lose the game. That may suggest that such focus was not the norm.

Regardless of how they did it, Demaree and Alexander's feats are no less impressive, especially amidst the tension of a close pennant race. But in the end, their extraordinary performances weren't enough. A week after Alexander's doubleheader wins, he took the mound for the second game of another twin bill at Ebbets Field. By

CAN HE HURDLE IT?

BY JIM NASIUM



Despite Demaree and Alexander's efforts, cartoonist Jim Nasium's (Edgar Forrest Wolfe) dream of a pennant for the Phils did not come true.

Philadelphia Inquirer - September 24, 1916

winning the first game, Philadelphia had moved into first place by one-half game and with their ace on the mound, everything seemed to be in the Phillies favor. Baseball, however, doesn't always work that way. The Dodgers, led by Casey Stengel's unlikely home run onto Bedford Avenue, won easily and the Phillies stay in first

place lasted only a few hours. It wasn't over, but the Dodgers kept winning and the Phils couldn't keep pace. Even though Philadelphia didn't win the pennant, they could still take satisfaction from knowing they had given everything they had as did all the contending teams in this less well known, but very dramatic pennant race.

FRANK ISBELL'S REVENGE

by Dixie Tourangeau

William Frank Isbell's baseball career crossed that of Cy Young early and much too often, from Isbell's perspective. According to Retrosheet's reliable though slightly incomplete matchup stats, Isbell was Young's longest suffering patsy. Frank was the "poster boy" for being an average player in the first decade of the 20th century. He batted .251 while the new American League throng posted a cumulative .252 for that period.

A native of Delevan, a western New York village 40 miles south of Buffalo, Isbell played for the Chicago White Sox his entire AL life of 1,074 games (1901-1909). He was a very adequate utility man, mostly covering first base (600+ games) and second (350+). His best seasons were 1905 (.296) and '06 (.279), the heralded South Side of Chicago "Hitless Wonders" campaigns that placed him in the 1906 World Series where he made his only stellar mark upon the game. By October 13 he was 1-for-16, but in Game Five he stroked four doubles off crosstown Cubs aces Ed Reulbach, Jack Pfiester, and Orval Overall accounting for five runs in the White Sox shocking 8-6 upset. The next day he was 3-for-5, helping his Pale Hosers win the Series finale, 8-3. His four two-baggers remain the only time any batter has ever accomplished that feat in Series annals and his seven hits in consecutive games is also a milestone.

But Isbell's dealings with Boston flinger Young took a different route. It was in 1898 that they first met during Isbell's season of 28 games with Tom Burns's National League Chicago Orphans. Toiling as both a pitcher and position player [.351, 6-2] the previous season in the Western League for Charlie Comiskey's St. Paul Saints, he



Frank Isbell

was promoted to begin the 1898 season with the parent club. Isbell won his first hurling assignment on May 2, beating Louisville in relief of starter Walt Thornton, 13-7.

On May 11, Isbell got a second six-inning relief call, this time against veteran Cleveland Spiders star Cy Young who won the game 7-5. Weeks passed and on July 4, they met again, this time with Isbell starting the afternoon of the holiday doubleheader and edging Cy, 4-3. On July 23, Cy turned the tables in Cleveland winning 4-2 for his 17th victory. In their three head-to-head encounters, Isbell was 3-for-10 off the 1890s' iconic arm. In all, Frank pitched in 13 games [4-7] and hit .233 for Chicago before being sent back in mid-August.

That hitting prowess did not later translate to the spanking new American League when Isbell returned to major league status in 1901; however,

it did linger for three more Cy-pitched games. Young was 11-3 through June, on his way to a fantastic, league supreme triple-crown effort of 33-10/1.62 ERA/158 K. For the first three games he faced Young, Frank was 4-for-11 with a home run. Then his good fortune evaporated.

Isbell finished 1901 going 1-for-14 off Young, and for the next three seasons managed a combined 11-for-61 (.180). Adding on 1901 and the first game of 1902 his totals stood at 16-for-89 (.180) for their AL confrontations. In 1901, Chicago, under player-manager Clark Griffith (24-7, .303), hoisted the first AL flag, while durable first-sacker Frank contributed .257 while playing in all 137 games. He topped the rookie circuit with 52 steals. Nixey Callahan took the South Side helm in 1903 and then star Fielder Jones assumed the top White Sox field post in early 1904. Meanwhile in Boston, from great success for four years for Ohio's Cyclone gem, 1905 marked the end as the Boston Americans tumbled from their lofty pennant perch to fourth before plunging to the AL cellar in 1906. Cy was connected to the collapse going 18-19 and then 13-21, tied for the most AL losses.

Simultaneously, the resurgent White Sox were emerging into the pennant fray, third in 1904 (89 wins), a close second in 1905 (92) and winners in 1906 (93). Isbell led his ChiTown Sox in both 1905 and 1906, hitting .296 and .279, while his famous "Hitless Wonders" club struggled mightily, batting a collective .237 and .230 (last) at the dish. Isbell had played in this situation before in 1900, when he was with the reorganized and renamed eight-team minor American League (formerly the Western League) Chicago White Sox. They edged out Milwaukee for the pennant despite having the lowest team batting average (.257). Frank played in 109 of 137 games, giving all positions a try except catcher while hitting .248. He was going to catch the last game of the season but got sick.

Frank's fortunes against Cy also suddenly changed. Age 38 in August 1905, Young had thrown more than 5,500 innings and had mastered most AL swingers for four years. Isbell took advantage of Young's more frequent off days, a

little payback for his own ineptness in those previous seasons. A seven-game revenge streak began that was astounding considering what had transpired before it. In those seven games extending to August 1906, Isbell was 9-for-21 (.429) off Cy's tosses. But that wasn't the whole saga. Cy lost six of those games, four being almost assured shutouts that basically went down the drain because of one batter: Frank Isbell.

On August 26, 1905, Guy "Doc" White beat Young 2-1, both runs scoring on Isbell's single in the sixth. Then the unthinkable happened on September 27 in Boston: Young did not make it through the first inning. So abrupt a dismissal had not occurred in 16 seasons. He got only one out as Isbell contributed a single/run to the chasing of Cy in a 15-1 loss (Young was charged with only the first four runs).

But Isbell had unknowingly contributed something else, dooming Young to his first losing season. That 2-1 loss to White was the final straw in what we, a century later, can see as Cy's most exasperating season (18-19/1.82, third in AL). It was the tenth 1905 game in which Young lost a low-scoring, one-run game (three to each of the top two clubs – Philly and Detroit, and two more to Chicago, plus a 1-1, 10-inning draw). A tiny reversal of fortune or normal run support would have boosted Young to another 20-game win year. Young's Boston bat-mates shortchanged him for six months, supplying fewer than three runs per outing, the least for any Sox hurler. In those particular 11 games, Boston scored 14 runs, while Cy allowed 25. After being the dominant pitching force for the AL's first four campaigns, winning the most individual games for the team that won the most total games, suddenly Young was adrift in the stormy uncharted waters of mediocrity.

The playful baseball gods were at it again on May 24, 1906 when Cy was benched in the first inning after only one out. Again, it was Chicago that got four quick tallies, led by Isbell's RBI-triple/run. Consecutive early ousters of Cy by the same club and both at his Huntington Avenue lair was incomprehensible. Boston rallied that day but lost, 7-5. These were the only two games in which

Young did not complete the first inning of a start in his 22 seasons.

Isbell's revival was not quite complete. Two days later, Young regained some confidence by beating Chicago, 4-2, but Frank had two safeties (run), one being part of a two-out, four-single rally in the ninth that frustrated a Young shutout effort. In Chicago on June 20, Isbell's RBI-smash to shortstop (E-6) scratched another Young whitewash well in progress in the eighth inning, as Cy lost 2-1 on a field mired in muck. Isbell kept his terrorizing bat intact to July 11, plating two RBI in the eighth frame at Huntington, giving Nick Altrock his fourth win over Young, 2-1. Finally, on August 2 at Chicago's South Side Park III, Isbell's "Chicago" busting skein ended but not with a whimper. White again benefitted as Frank took care of Cy in the first inning with a two-RBI single and later scored himself for a 3-0 victory. What a year it had been!

As quickly as the magic came, it disappeared. Isbell continued to face Young through the 1909 season going 6-for-48 (.125) over 13 more games. Frank's last gasp was choking off one last shutout attempt on July 20, 1908, when a rejuvenated Cy won 8-1 at Huntington. Of course it was Isbell whose single knocked in the lone White Sox score in the first frame. Altogether in the 20th century only a handful of players faced Young as often as Isbell (31-for-158, .196) but all hit above .200 (Sam Crawford, Fielder Jones, Bobby Wallace, and Jimmie Williams). Allowing the centuries to overlap, another half-dozen swatters faced Cy enough times to make the list including the two best, Nap Lajoie and Billy Hamilton (both hit .388.)

A case can be made that the worst batter versus Young was journeyman flychaser Oliver Pickering (1896-1908, .271, 886 games). He was 7-for-17, .412, off Cy before becoming his teammate in 1897. But in the next century, he tanked badly hitting just 15-for-102 off Young in 28 games. Ollie's best achievement was leading the rally on Opening Day 1903 (second game of a Boston doubleheader), as Cy no-hit the Philly A's for six innings. Pickering was 2-for-4, triple/3 RBIs/run, to take a 7-6 lead and win 10-7 for Al-



Cy Young

bert "Chief" Bender, who relieved starter Eddie Plank trailing 6-0. Pickering also hit one of only three game leadoff home runs off Cy, coming on Bunker Hill Day in Boston in 1902. It led to a 4-3 win for Cleveland rookie and future Young rival Addie Joss. The victory margin was Bill Bradley's solo clout in the ninth.

A near-perfect microscopic ending to the decade-long Isbell-Young battle came in June 1909. There was background swan-song music for both Frank and Cy, though Cy hung on for two more age-shortened seasons. On June 20, Isbell's first of two hits set up the first run against Cleveland Napper Young in a 4-0 Big Ed Walsh shutout. Only a fine defensive play prevented Frank from getting credit for an RBI while Big Ed allowed just one Naps hit. Four days later, host Cy beat rookie "Death Valley" Jim Scott, 8-1, giving up three hits and Scott's RBI. Isbell suffered through his last annoyingly monotonous 0-for-4 opposite his career nemesis. Forty-eight hours later, Isbell resaddled his hit horse and smacked

three behind Walsh in a 2-0 win over Joss. Frank scored both tallies, this time personally ruining someone else's "Chicago" dream.

Isbell had a decade of problems with two other future Hall of Famers, Eddie Plank and George "Rube" Waddell, Connie Mack's toxic lefty duo. Minus short spurts in 1907 and '08 (11-for-22, 7 runs), lefty-swinging Isbell hit only .141 off "Gettysburg Eddie." But included is his heroic effort on September 20, 1908 when he (2-for-3, HBP) reached on an error in the ninth, stole second, and scored the winning and only run for Frank Smith's 1-0 no-hitter over Plank. Isbell craftily outraced a peg home on an infield grounder. Rube also kept Frank well in check. Subtract four (9-for-18) of their 34 games and Isbell batted the same putrid .141. Even worse was that era K-master Waddell fanned Isbell 28 times, including seven straight (1903) while Plank logged 23 Isbell whiffs.

It would be very unfair to ignore Isbell's positive matchups. The best pitchers he hit well were Addie Joss (.261, 92 ABs) and Harry Howell (.263, 80 ABs). Combined against the two Bills, Carrick and Bernhard, plus the other Cy (Falkenberg), he hit .375/112 ABs/7 Ks.

Barely a smidge of what you have read here is contained in any of the five Cy Young biographies or in his SABR BioProject profile. Nor is anything included in Isbell's SABR biography. Isbell and Pickering get no mention despite their noteworthy place in Young's career.

The anecdotes about these players could not have been unearthed and dissected without the extreme help of Retrosheet's brilliant various catalogs of information and selected ICI sheets of each player from the Hall of Fame Library (Cassidy Lent). Statistical calculations were made by the author from these original findings in addition to game-by-game confirmation research done through newspapers.com.



Bisbee (Arizona) Daily Review,
November 25, 1920

WESTERN LEAGUE SCHEME

DOES AWAY WITH VISITING TEAMS' CLUB-HOUSE TO STAMP OUT FRATERNIZING BY BALL PLAYERS

The threatened strike of members of the Baseball Players Fraternity has evoked discussion of voluminous proportions handled from almost every imaginable angle. However, it has remained for a minor league circuit to take up the cudgel in defense of the club owners in a manner somewhat more radical than anything previously announced. The Western League has taken the lead in measures which are intended to stamp out the fraternizing spirit in the ranks of players.

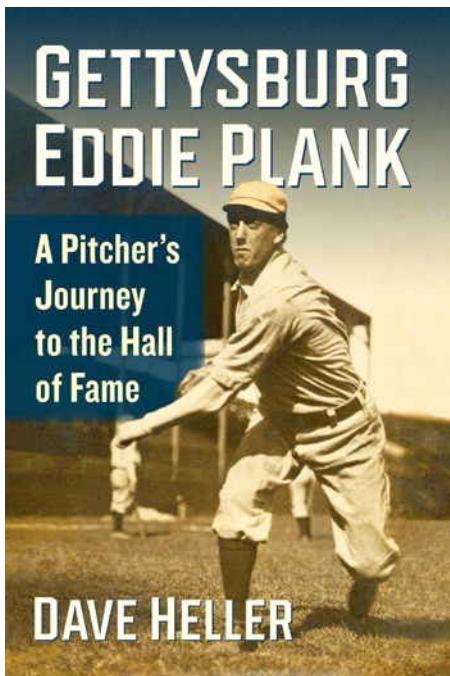
Listen to this little plan. At a meeting of the league in Omaha the league decided to discontinue the policy of providing the visiting teams with a club house. It also was moved that visiting teams be forbidden to appear on the field more than 50 minutes before game time. The idea, of course, is that these measures will prevent the players of different clubs from becoming chummy and confidential, thereby leading to a closer alliance among themselves.

The purpose in view may be all right, but the plan is little short of ridiculous. It very frequently happens that a player of one club will be traded to another in the same league. Should he form a close friendship with a member of his old club is it very likely that anything will keep the two from getting together and exchanging confidences when the two clubs play?

Pittsburg Press, January 18, 1917

Umpire Charles Rigler has asked the National League directors to help him collect \$2,200 he claims is due him from the Philadelphia club for signing Pitcher Rixey. He says he was promised \$2,500 and paid \$300.

Pittsburg Press, December 10, 1912



GETTYSBURG EDDIE PLANK: A PITCHER'S JOURNEY TO THE HALL OF FAME

By **Dave Heller**

2021, McFarland
[ISBN: 978-1476684543. 249
pp. \$39.95 USD. Softcover]

Reviewed by
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In 1916 Eddie Plank became only the fifth player in his forties to pitch in major league baseball. Other than Cy Young, the others made only token appearances. That year, Plank started 26 games, completing 17 of them, and appeared an additional eleven times in relief. He fashioned a winning record and an above-average season on the mound, then followed it up with another solid, though injury-shortened 1917, before hanging up his spikes.

His Hall of Fame career featured 326 wins, 410 complete games, 69 shutouts, four World Series, and posthumous election to the Hall of Fame in 1946. And yet, little is really known about him. Heller's biography is only the second one to chronicle Plank's life, following the first by just five years. For that reason alone, Heller is to be commended for his efforts. We don't know enough about Eddie Plank, one of the greatest left-handers in MLB history, and this volume helps to fill that void.

Heller does an admirable job of gathering information about Eddie Plank's career, which was mostly spent anchoring the pitching staff of the Philadelphia Athletics. Plank joined the A's in 1901, as they were in their ascendancy. In his 14 years with the team, they finished in the first division 12 times, winning five pennants and three world titles. And Plank was a major part of that success.

Heller spares few details in his chronicling of what seems like every one of Plank's 529 starts. He takes us through Plank's career in a methodical season-by-season review of his accomplishments, occasional on-field struggles, and pitching highlights. The format is a bit formulaic, and on the journey we learn little about Eddie Plank himself, but Heller manages to keep things interesting by tossing in some fascinating tidbits along the way. Plank apparently did his own laundry while on the road and joined teammates

to sleep in the grandstand at Sportsman's Park to escape the hot and humid team hotel in St. Louis. During his first season with the team, the A's embarked on an incredible 31-day road trip. And in 1911, there were only 618,727 automobiles registered in the United States, and one of them belonged to Eddie Plank. His interest in cars would eventually provide him with his retirement occupation.

But the most fascinating details expose the vast differences between the game today and the dawning of the twentieth century. It's not so much the obvious differences, like Plank's 37 complete games in 1904 (compare that to the 50 complete games thrown in all of MLB in 2021), which didn't even lead the league that year. Who could imagine an umpire reacting today the way that Joe O'Brien did after a harrowing exhibition game in Cuba: "I don't mind being hit with pop bottles . . . even beaned with a bat, but when it comes to the point where you are lynched if you give a close decision . . ." And how many players today, like Plank, complain after a particularly exhausting game that they are so tired they can barely make the walk back to the hotel?

We find out that some things have not changed over the past century. The concern with the pace of the game, for example. Early in his career, Plank was chided for pitching slowly, when a reporter complained that "there will be few games in which he takes part finished in-

side of two hours.” The issue persisted throughout his career. Late in his career, an umpire accused him of taking too much time to pitch. Plank defended himself, explaining “look here, I am nearly 40 years old . . . I have to husband all my strength to go nine innings and I cannot hurry.” The typical Eddie Plank game that year lasted between two and a quarter and two and a half hours. The following year, *The Sporting News* wondered how MLB could reduce the ever-growing length of games, bemoaning the fact that games lasting less than two hours were no longer the norm. *Chicago Tribune* columnist I.E. Sanborn suggested the problem was spitball pitchers, who added ten minutes to the game in their efforts to moisten the orb. The book is filled with wonderful tidbits like these.

What it is not filled with is detail about Plank’s life off the diamond. We don’t get to truly know Plank until after his retirement, and since that lasted less than a decade before his untimely death at the age of 50, we aren’t left with much. Those last two chapters, which discuss Plank’s retirement and legacy, are the best. They move along at a nice pace, unencumbered by the reporting of game results, and touch on a variety of topics ranging from his home life to business dealings, and a brief synopsis of the struggle to get him elected to the Hall of Fame.

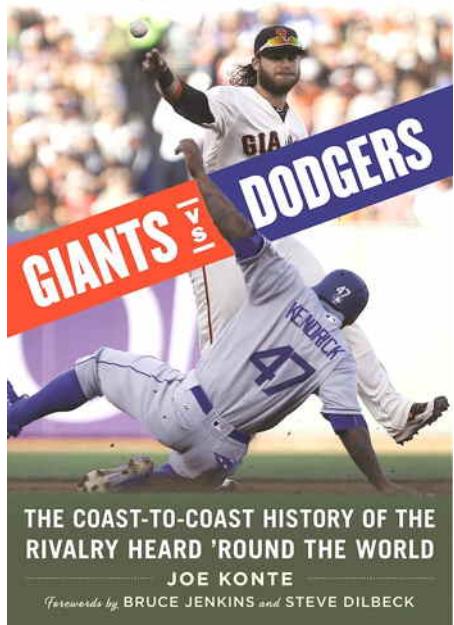
The story of Plank’s career is interesting, but the footnotes are only marginally useful. They are generally only used for di-

rect quotes (almost always taken from newspapers), and not to indicate the source of information, such as salaries, game day attendance figures, or financial details. For example, Heller writes that Plank wanted an increase in his 1913 salary of \$5,000 for 1914, but eventually signed for the same salary. According to the contract cards available at the Hall of Fame Library in Cooperstown, Plank earned \$4,000 both years. What is most frustrating about this is that there is no way of knowing where the information came from. Another frustration is that the book has too many typos, misspelled words, and grammatical and punctuation errors.

Heller’s strongest contribution to the Plank lexicon is his thorough reading of the newspapers. This allowed him to chase down and expose rumors about Plank, such as the source of the “Farmer” moniker, who really “discovered” the phenom, the development of his famous “crossfire pitch, and to disprove the oft-repeated story about Plank and Christy Mathewson facing off against one another in college. After reading *Gettysburg Eddie*, his personal life still remains cloudy. But when it comes to his on-field performance, Heller leaves no stone unturned.

Mike Haupert is Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. He is co-chair of SABR’s Business of Baseball Committee and a 2020 recipient of SABR’s Cartwright Award.

“The go-to source for everything Giants and Dodgers.” —John Shea, *San Francisco Chronicle*



GIANTS VS. DODGERS: THE COAST-TO-COAST HISTORY OF THE RIVALRY HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

By Joe Konte

*Sports Publishing, 2017
[ISBN: 978-1-68358-045-4.
384 pp. \$17.99 USD. Softcover]*

Reviewed by
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The Giants-Dodgers rivalry has lasted longer than the Hundred Years War and has extended across the North American continent in four cities. There are other great baseball rivalries: Yankees-Red Sox and Cardinals-Cubs come to mind. The Giants and Dodgers are in a special category. Their competition has often resulted in violence, both among players on the field and fans off the field. Fifty years after his last

visit to Ebbets Field as a player, all-time great Willie Mays said, “I was scared to play in Brooklyn.”

Joe Konte is well-qualified to write about the rivalry. He is news editor of the *Marin Independent Journal*, a San Francisco area newspaper. He is a lifelong fan, and he has done extensive research in baseball and newspaper archives. Konte is not the first to tackle this subject. Andrew Goldblatt gave us a very good history in his book, *The Giants and the Dodgers*. Goldblatt’s book was published in 2003. One of Konte’s virtues is that he brings us through the 2016 season.

The book is divided into six parts. Five are broken into chronological segments: the history in New York and Brooklyn, the early West Coast years (1958-1969), 1970-1989, 1990-2009, and 2010-2016. Part Six is a delightful miscellany, featuring interesting aspects of the rivalry. A useful appendix provides year-by-year results for the two teams from 1890-2016, including head-to-head play.

Part one covers the East Coast era, concentrating on the modern National League from 1900-1957. The Deadball Era gets very short shrift. The Giants were the dominant team from 1900-1939, with thirteen pennants and four World Series championships. The Dodgers won two pennants, in 1916 and 1920. The Dodgers were the better team for much of the 1941-1957 timespan,

winning seven pennants and one World Series. The Giants won the 1951 flag on Bobby Thomson’s famed home run and were world champs in 1954 but also struggled through a number of mediocre seasons.

The early West Coast years (1958-1969) are the subject of part two. The Dodgers won four pennants and three World Series in the Koufax-Drysdale era. The Giants won only one pennant, in 1962. The rivalry was not as uneven as those numbers suggest, however. As Konte points out, “From 1964 to 1966, the Giants won 278 games, six more than the Dodgers, and yet had only a fourth place and two second place finishes to show for it, while the Dodgers won two pennants” (and a World Series).

Part three covers the 1970s and 1980s. The Dodgers were clearly the better team in that era, with five pennants and two world championships. The Giants finally made it back to the World Series in 1989, when they encountered the Oakland A’s and an earthquake. Part four, on the years from 1990-2009, is best forgotten by fans of both squads. The Giants won one pennant in 2002; the Dodgers did not win any in those twenty seasons. In part five (2009-2016), Konte reviews the three Giants’ World Series victories. The situation of the 1960s was reversed. The Giants and Dodgers had approximately the same cumulative record from 2010-2014,

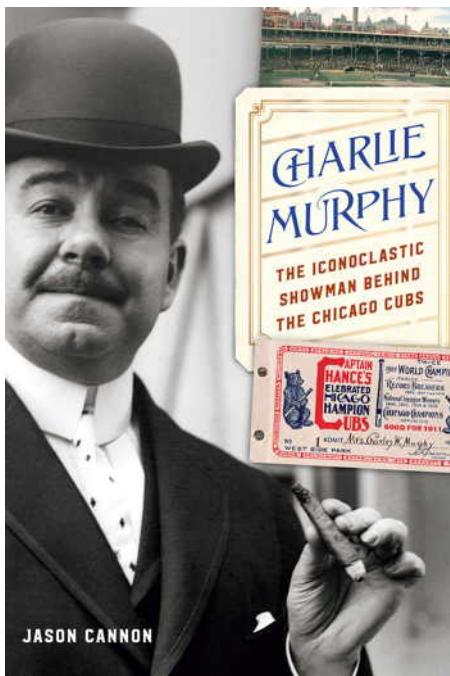
but San Francisco was able to win two championships as a wild card team. Part six includes brief chapters on the managers, men who played for both teams, and Konte’s selection of a “Dream Team” from the rivalry.

I have a couple of quibbles with the book. First, from the perspective of readers of this newsletter, the Deadball Era gets very little attention. The roots of the modern rivalry are surely found in the John McGraw-Wilbert Robinson split after the 1912 season. In contrast to six pages on the Deadball Era, the 2016 season receives more than thirty pages of coverage. Second, while it’s obvious that Konte has done extensive research, there is no documentation or bibliography for future researchers. These reservations aside, this is a good, solid baseball book. Most fans will find it of interest, Giants and Dodgers fans especially so.

Bob Whelan is a SABR member living in Dallas. He is retired as a professor of public administration, and has written two game accounts for the SABR Games Project.



*Gene Ahern,
Milwaukee Journal,
November 25, 1918*



CHARLIE MURPHY: THE ICONOCLASTIC SHOWMAN BEHIND THE CHICAGO CUBS

By Jason Cannon

2022, University of Nebraska
Press

[ISBN: 9781496228635, 400
pp, \$36.95 USD, Hardcover]

Reviewed by
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Charlie Murphy's tenure as Chicago Cubs owner was not appreciably lengthy – he purchased the team in 1906 only to sell it seven years later. Murphy's *Sporting News* obituary sniffed that "(h)e did not build up the Cubs; the team was there, lacking the assistance of a competent third baseman," which the paper credited him with acquiring. In fact, he did much more. Once Murphy had put the finishing

touches on the Cubs, the first dynasty of the Deadball Era had begun.

The 1906-10 Cubs would win four National League pennants in five years. They set a major league record with a 116-36 mark in 1906, and in the one year during that span when they didn't make the World Series (1909), they still won 104 games. Moreover, while the Giants had Christy Mathewson, the Pirates had Honus Wagner, and the Tigers had Ty Cobb, Murphy created this dynasty *without* an inner-circle Hall of Famer on the roster. How Murphy accomplished this – and the circumstances surrounding his unceremonious departure from the game – is the focus of Jason Cannon's new biography.

Murphy got his start in baseball as a sportswriter and editor at newspapers in the Cincinnati area. After Cincinnati club owner John T. Brush bought the New York Giants, Murphy accompanied him east as the team's public relations executive. Midway through the 1905 season, he learned the

Cubs were up for sale and engineered a deal to purchase them with the help of Charles Phelps Taft, half-brother of the future president. "Murphy went from writing about the Reds in Cincinnati to promoting the Giants in New York to working in Chicago's front office in six months," Cannon observed.

With the Cubs, a charter member of the National League that had not won a pennant since 1886, Murphy traded for third sacker Harry Steinfeldt to team with celebrated infielders Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers, and Frank Chance. He also added pitchers Orval Overall and Jack Pfiester and outfielder Jimmy Sheckard. Ex-PR man Murphy also wasn't above playing the occasional mind game; Cannon describes how Murphy had the team display a blanket reading "Chicago Champions 1906" – after the Cubs beat the White Sox in a preseason city series – at the Polo Grounds against the defending league champion Giants.

When the Cubs played in their third straight World Series in

PUBLISHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As always, copies of the books reviewed in this issue were generously supplied to us by their publishers. *Gettysburg Eddie Plank* comes from McFarland and can be ordered by telephone (800-253-2187) or email (info@mcfarlandpub.com). *Giants vs Dodgers* was put out by Sports Publishing and can be ordered on-line from Amazon and other book retailers. The University of Nebraska Press published the biography *Charles Murphy* which can be ordered by telephoning 800-848-6224 or emailing orders@longleafservices.org. Your patronage of these publishers is appreciated.

1908, attendance at the Chicago games was down while scalpers sold a suspiciously high number of marked-up tickets. Murphy's feigned ignorance satisfied few. "The ticket scandal marred the high-water mark in Cubs' franchise history," writes Cannon. "It spoiled Murphy's relationships with the players and fans to a degree from which he never fully recovered."

The Giants return to National League dominance in 1911 hastened Murphy's baseball demise. He impulsively fired beloved popular manager Frank Chance, baselessly accused the St. Louis Cardinals of throwing games to the Giants, and pressured Phillies President Horace Fogel into publicly accusing the umpires of favoring the Giants. He later rashly

jettisoned manager Johnny Evers during a contract dispute. With the Federal League battle looming in early 1914, Charles Taft bought out Murphy's stock under pressure from the other NL owners and AL President Ban Johnson. At 46, Murphy was through in Chicago.

Murphy's most prominent post-Cubs project was building a theater in his hometown of Wilmington, Ohio, and Cannon tells the unexpectedly compelling story of its design and construction. The Murphy Theater, with a proscenium arch three feet higher than the Green Monster at Fenway Park, opened in 1918 and, a century later, still stands.

Cannon's exuberance occasionally doesn't pay off. We are told, for example, that when

Murphy purchased the Baker Bowl in Philadelphia in 1909, he announced he would begin hosting circuses there after Phillies games as a way to increase revenue. However, Cannon never follows up on this tantalizing proposal — did it come to pass, or not? Quibbles aside, his biography is thoroughly researched, relying not only on voluminous Chicago newspaper archives but on National League meeting minutes from the Hall of Fame library. Charles Murphy himself may never wind up in Cooperstown, but Jason Cannon has given him his due.

Andrew Milner joined SABR in 1984 and has contributed to Baseball's Biggest Blowout Games and SABR's forthcoming book on Shibe Park. He lives in suburban Philadelphia.

A DOGGONE DANGEROUS GIRL -:- -:- By Wheelan



Pittsburgh Daily Post, June 23, 1916

Ed Wheelan

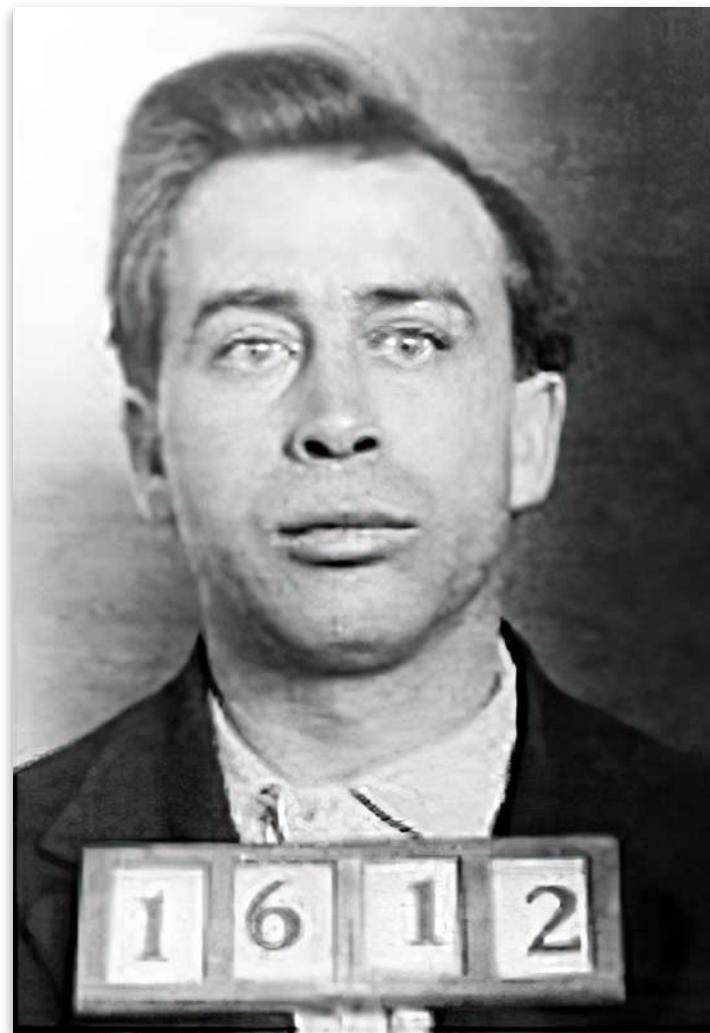
FROM ALLENTOWN TO ETERNITY: THE SAGA OF CONDEMNED DEADBALL ERA PRISON BALLPLAYER JOE SENG

by Bill Lamb

For a brief moment in July 1911, the attention of followers of the national pastime was diverted to a remote outpost in the American West: Rawlins, Wyoming. Within the confines of the state penitentiary there, a baseball team composed entirely of inmates defeated a well-regarded amateur nine in a contest that – if only for its novelty – generated nationwide press interest. The feature of the game highlighted in coverage by the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, *Providence Evening Bulletin*, and *Washington Post* was a pair of home runs blasted over the high prison wall by right fielder Joe Seng, a convicted murderer awaiting a date with the hangman.

The Wyoming State Penitentiary All-Stars won three more locally-played games before the penitentiary warden disbanded the team, channeling the institution's extracurricular activity into an inmate education program instead. There would be no encore performances for the penitentiary nine. Nor would the team's slugging outfielder ever play again. In May 1912, the gallows trapdoor sprung open and Seng took the swift plunge into eternity.

All of this may sound familiar to Deadball Era baseball cognoscenti. A highly-fictionalized account of the saga by pulp westerns author and aspiring screenwriter Chris Enss, *Playing for Time: The Death Row All-Stars* (Arcadia, 2004), was a SABR membership perk some 17 years ago. A decade after the Enss book was published, a somewhat less fanciful collaborative treatment of the subject by Hollywood film executive Howard Kazanjian and Enss was released, *The Death Row All Stars: A Story of Baseball, Corruption, and Murder* (TwoDot Press, 2014).¹ The newer work focused on the plight of the condemned Seng, employing vintage Wyoming reportage, family lore passed down to descendants, and anecdotal info to craft a sympathetic portrait of



Joe Seng, Wyoming State Penitentiary

the murderer. While a considerable improvement over its predecessor, the collaboration's narrative remained unreliable, dubious in various parts, palpably false in others. To the extent that credible evidence permits, the narrative below endeavors to set the record straight on Joe Seng.

BACKGROUND: Joseph Seng was born on April 12, 1882 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a small industrial city located about 50 miles northwest of Philadelphia. He was the second of twelve children born to German immigrant Anthony Seng (1850-1931) and his Pennsylvania-born wife Anna (nee Sippel, 1862-1935). The Seng family were mill workers and devoutly Catholic, a daughter becoming a Franciscan nun. Young Joe attended school through the eighth grade,² and then entered the local work force as textile mill

hand.³ He remained under his parents' roof until at least 1901,⁴ but sometime thereafter relocated to New York.⁵ There, Kazanjian and Enss maintain, Seng may have worked as a railroad detective. Whatever the case, he headed West in 1908.⁶

Like many of his generation, Joe played baseball in his youth, reputedly "having a natural aptitude for the game."⁷ Despite being an undersized 5'5"/152 pounds,⁸ the right-handed Seng started out at the physically punishing position of catcher.⁹ He may also have played some shortstop. There is no evidence, however, that he did so for any club faster than sandlot or local amateur nines. And presumably by the time that he departed New York at age 26, any ballplaying aspirations that Seng may once have harbored were well behind him.

By the time of the 1910 US Census, Seng was employed as a watchman by the Union Pacific Railroad in hardscrabble Evanston, Wyoming, site of the railway's locomotive maintenance, repair, and storage facility. The main building pa-

trolled by Seng was the roundhouse, a large, roofed but open-air semicircular building that sat adjacent to railroad yard tracks. After work, Seng and coworkers could avail themselves of the saloons, gambling houses, brothels, and other amusements of the rugged sagebrush settlement. There were also the remnants of a baseball diamond adjacent to the Union Pacific roundhouse.¹⁰ But whether Seng or anyone else at the time actually played ball on the grounds is unknown. Interesting but of no deep import, Seng had acquired some distinctive body adornment – a pair of showy tattoos and two noticeable scars of undetermined origin¹¹ – by the time that he reached Evanston, or shortly thereafter. More telling, to the extent that the often historically unreliable Enss book can be believed, Seng had lived a reckless life prior to arriving in Wyoming, "committing felonies that ranged from drunk and disorderly conduct to robbery."¹²

THE SLAYING OF WILLIAM LLOYD: Seng's workplace responsibilities included safeguarding rail-



The crime scene: Undated aerial view of the Union Pacific roundhouse in Evanston

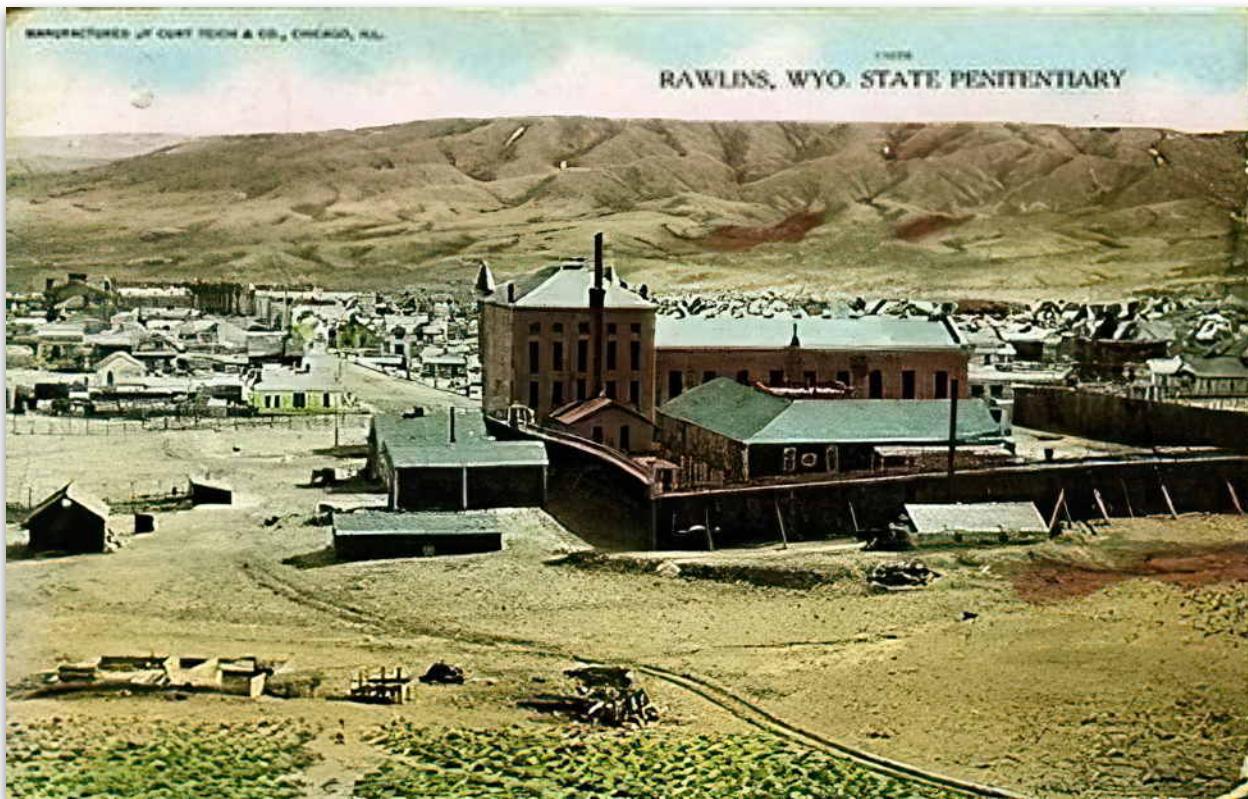
road property and keeping tramps and other undesirables off the grounds. His work supervisor was William Lloyd, a young Union Pacific territorial detective originally from Davenport, Iowa. In the beginning the two men appeared to get along, and may even have socialized on occasion. But in early August 1910, Lloyd fired Seng from his job. Various reasons for the dismissal have been alleged, with Seng's drinking, over-rough handling of trespassers, and an alleged affair with Lloyd's wife among them. Whatever the basis for Seng's termination, three days later Lloyd was shot dead by his ex-supervisee.

Because no transcript of the ensuing trial exists, a reconstruction of events attending the shooting of William Lloyd must rely upon available newspaper accounts of suspect accuracy. And as in virtually all matters involving human, and hence fallible, eyewitness testimony, recollection of the shooting by those who had observed it was not uniform. That said, the following consensus of events emerged.

Early on the evening of August 4, 1910, Lloyd escorted his 24-year-old wife Alta along the rail-

road tracks in Evanston, headed for a private railroad car waiting for them at the roundhouse. On the way, they encountered the recently-discharged Seng. Hard words were briefly exchanged between Lloyd and Seng. Then, the Lloyds passed on. According to on-scene observers, Seng thereupon pulled out a revolver and fired at Lloyd. As his wife screamed, the railroad detective fell to the ground. Seng promptly approached his prostrate victim, and pumped two more shots into him from close range. Brandishing his weapon at bystanders, Seng exclaiming according to some, "I beat him to it." Lloyd's own revolver lay on the ground near or beneath his body. Seng then ordered that sheriff deputies be summoned. He remained calmly at the scene until their arrival and surrendered peacefully.¹³ Subsequently, Seng was charged with the first degree murder of William Lloyd, and held in custody until trial in April 1911.

TRIAL, CONVICTION, AND SENTENCE: The quick and unceremonious dispatch of murderers, cattle rustlers, bushwackers, and other desperadoes is a staple of Western lore. And during its



Wyoming State Penitentiary at Rawlins, 1907

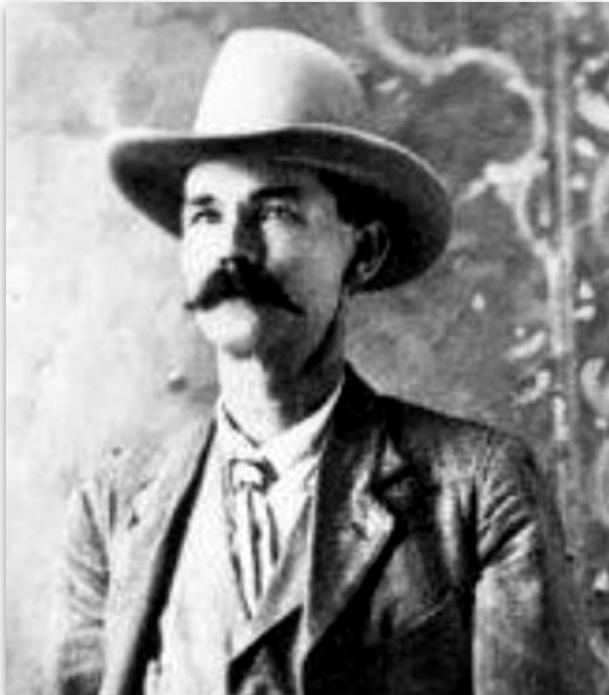
time as a territory, sparsely-populated Wyoming dispensed its share of frontier justice, the lynching of an unsavory killer named George Parrott whose skin was then tanned into a pair of shoes being a grisly illustration. But once admitted to statehood in 1890, Wyoming was not a particularly execution-happy place. To the contrary, death sentences were only occasionally handed down. In fact, Wyoming had not conducted an execution since the hanging of celebrated lawman-turned-hired assassin Tom Horn in November 1903.

Amendments to Wyoming's criminal statutes in 1909 foretold some change in the punishment that would henceforward be meted out to convicted murderers. A death sentence was now mandated upon conviction for first degree murder, usually defined as a willful, deliberate, and premeditated taking of the life of another person without legal justification.¹⁴ Those condemned, however, were not entirely without recourse. Convictions could be appealed to the Wyoming Supreme Court. If the appeal was unsuccessful, the clemency power to pardon murderers or to commute their sentences remained invested in the governor. Similar authority also reposed in the Wyoming Board of Pardons. But rejection of

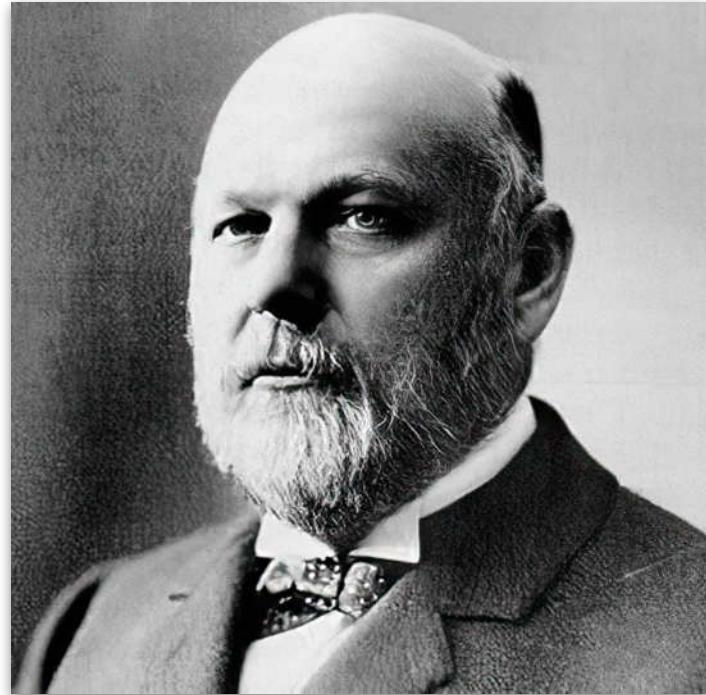
a petition for clemency was not appealable. If turned down by the governor or the board, the convict was doomed, with the place of execution specified as the state penitentiary in Rawlins.

In early April 1911, the trial of Joe Seng commenced in the third judicial circuit court in Evanston before Judge David H. Craig, an experienced jurist and former prosecutor, and a jury of 12 local men. Representing the accused was defense attorney Robert S. Spence who interposed a claim of self-defense on Seng's behalf. Approximately a dozen witnesses appeared against Seng, with one H.R. McGee seriously undermining the self-defense claim with testimony that Lloyd's gun had not been drawn. Rather, it had fallen out of Lloyd's coat pocket as he fell to the ground after being shot.¹⁵ Whether or not Seng himself testified during the trial is unknown but unlikely, as testimony by the accused went unmentioned in available news accounts of the proceedings.¹⁶

Following summations by opposing counsel and the court's instruction on the applicable law, the jury retired to deliberate at 5:00 p.m. on April 10. Less than two hours later, a verdict of guilty of first degree murder was returned. After a defense motion for a new trial was denied, Judge Craig



Warden Felix Alston



Governor Joseph M. Carey

imposed the mandatory sentence of death, with execution set for August 22.¹⁷ Immediately thereafter, the court entered an order suspending the execution pending the disposition of a planned Seng appeal. That stay of execution would remain in force until a new judicial term commenced on September 1, or until the entry of a superseding order by the state supreme court.¹⁸ In the meantime, Seng was remanded to the Wyoming State Penitentiary in Rawlins to await his fate.

THE WYOMING STATE PENITENTIARY ALL STARS: Opened in 1891, the state penitentiary at Rawlins was the cramped cell, high-walled fortress typical of late 19th century penal institutions. For those confined there, the day was long and intermittently dangerous, the food terrible, and work hard and relentless in the prison broom-making workshop, a concession granted

to Otto Gramm, an influential factory owner and Wyoming Republican Party insider. Recently elected progressive Republican-turned-Democrat Governor Joseph M. Carey had made administration of the Wyoming prison system a prominent issue during his campaign. Once in office, Carey engineered institutional reforms that included the ouster of the Gramm concession at Rawlins and the installation of capable Big Horn County Sheriff Felix Alston as new warden of the penitentiary there.

Alston was a proponent of prison reform and a forward thinker. He was also an avid baseball fan. Intramural baseball had been used as a prisoner morale and discipline measure since the mid-1880s.¹⁹ Having inmates devote their free time and energy to playing the game among themselves in outdoors exercise areas had been



1911 WSP All Stars in prison garb.

Joe Seng (with mustache and holding catcher's mitt, front row, second from left). Playing manager George Saban, back row, fourth from left. The child team mascot seated front row center is Warden Alston's six-year-old son, Felix, Jr.

adopted with generally favorable results in various institutions nationwide.²⁰ But Alston had something else in mind: the selection of an inmate nine consisting of the best ballplayers in the 500-plus population at Rawlins which would then be matched against opposition from the outside. Placed in charge of recruiting and managing the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars was convicted murderer George Saban, a one-time Big Horn County cattle rancher and a former neighbor of Warden Alston.²¹

Saban took the assignment seriously, in part because he was competitive man by nature. More important, Saban – given regular leave to visit downtown Rawlins business establishments, saloons, and gaming places accompanied by a penitentiary guard – was intent on making book on the games that he hoped to schedule for the prison squad against local baseball teams. To stimulate betting interest in penitentiary nine contests,²² Saban needed his club to be first-rate. To that end, the large and tough-minded ex-cattleman practiced his team hard, drilling his players daily on the penitentiary's makeshift dia-



1911 game action at Rawlins penitentiary

mond and brooking no excuse for lackadaisical or poor play by his chosen aggregation of convicted rapists, armed robbers, burglars, and con artists.²³

Before game-playing against outsiders commenced, Saban spotted a new prospect, recently-arrived Joe Seng. Happily for them both, Chief Justice Cyrus Beard of the Wyoming Supreme Court had continued Seng's stay of execution indefinitely while the appeal of his murder convic-



1911 WSP All Stars. For reasons unknown, Joe Seng and another player are missing.

tion was under consideration.²⁴ In the interim, Seng, a mostly placid, low-key personality, worked in the prison medical unit and otherwise stayed close to penitentiary guards as a precautionary measure. A feared Mexican psychopath named Lorenzo Paseo, later killed in a penitentiary escape attempt, had taken a dislike to Seng and was itching to do him harm. Seng also dodged death when a heavy sandbox dropped from a second-story housing unit by another deranged inmate narrowly missed his head.²⁵ After being selected for the penitentiary ball club, Seng found refuge from the perils of prison life for a few hours each afternoon on the prison diamond.

A century later, just how good a ballplayer Joe Seng was is difficult to assess. In the hyperbole that pervades her book, Chris Enss describes Seng as the “Wild West’s version of Shoeless Joe Jackson” and as “a switch-hitter who could play as well in the infield as in the outfield.”²⁶ More insight into Seng’s abilities is likely drawn from how manager Saban played him, stationing Seng in the less-demanding defensive position of right field and batting him sixth in the lineup.²⁷ But Seng was unquestionably the star of the July 18, 1911 home opener for the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars. The game was played within the confines of the institution before Warden Alford, penitentiary officials, and a small contingent of inmates seated in bleachers erected along the third base line. Other inmates cheered on the home side from vantage points situated inside the prison housing section. Security was provided from atop the penitentiary walls by armed centurions perched in a guardhouse located behind home plate. The opposition: the junior club of the Wyoming Supply Company, a collection of teenage and young adult ballplayers that had established a first-rate reputation playing other Rawlins-area amateur teams. Going in, the Supply Company juniors were the betting line favorites.²⁸ The youngsters, however, proved no match for the older inmate nine.

After a scoreless first three innings, the All Stars broke the seal with a four-run fourth. From there, the rout was on. The offensive highlight of the 11-1 triumph of the convicts was a grand slam

homer lifted over the penitentiary wall by Joe Seng, a shot that garnered the attention of the national press and one of two round-trippers that Seng hit that afternoon.²⁹ Other noteworthy features of the afternoon were the sportsman-like behavior of the inmate nine and the courtesies extended to the visiting ball club and the handful of its supporters admitted onto the penitentiary grounds, the game-day decorum being much approved by the *Carbon County Journal*, a hometown Rawlins newspaper.³⁰

On August 4, the Juniors returned to the penitentiary for a rematch, but the final outcome was the same – an 11-1 pasting by the convicts. Joe Seng reportedly went 4-for-4 at the plate and played an errorless right field for the victorious All Stars.³¹ Undiscouraged, the Juniors came back for more a week later. And more is exactly what the youngsters received. Behind the 15-strikeout pitching of convicted rapist Tom Cameron, the All Stars cruised to an 11-4 victory. Back in right field and again batting sixth, Joe Seng chipped in a two-for-five effort at the plate, and scored two runs. But with few opposition batsmen able to put Cameron’s fastball in play, Seng saw no action on defense.³²

Undaunted by their earlier setbacks, the young Supply Company nine – reputedly a loser only once when matched against opposition other than the penitentiary stars – took another shot at the convict club on August 27. And this time the game was played on the Juniors’ home turf, Overland Park in downtown Rawlins. Shackled and loaded onto a bus for the short trip to the field, the convict club, outfitted sharply in dark-colored baseball uniforms with white trim and WSP embossed across their jersey fronts,³³ entered grounds filled to overflowing with spectators. Little detail about game play is available, with the *Rawlins Republican* confining its commentary to “there are a few classy players among the prisoners” and that “they all understand the game.” The Juniors, however, “did not play up to their usual standards” and hence dropped a 15-10 decision to the penitentiary team.³⁴

Upon their return to the institution, the players turned in their equipment and uniforms and

awaited the scheduling of their next game. But unbeknownst to them, the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars had passed into history. The convict nine would never take the field again. Despite its success on the diamond, prisoner baseball – and the open illegal gambling that it fostered – had not been a hit with everyone, particularly Governor Carey. Once informed of Carey's displeasure, Warden Alford prudently redirected inmate leisure time toward other pursuits, most notably a newly-formulated institutional education program. For the foreseeable future, no more baseball would be played by those confined at Rawlins.³⁵

THE EXECUTION OF JOE SENG: After the abbreviated baseball season, Joe Seng spent the remainder of 1911 in confinement at Rawlins. The following spring, however, the events which brought his life to an end gathered pace. On May 3, 1912, the Wyoming Supreme Court unani-

mously affirmed Seng's first degree murder conviction and the death sentence imposed upon him.³⁶ Seng's execution was now set for May 24. Family and friends thereupon commenced a feverish campaign for clemency, the only recourse available if Seng's life was to be spared.

As the execution date drew near, telegrams pleading for mercy for the condemned man from his mother Anna and nun sister Mary were dispatched to Governor Carey.³⁷ Younger brother Frank Seng sent Carey an overwrought letter, declaring that Joe's execution would be the death of their mother.³⁸ Also presented to the governor was a petition for commutation of the Seng death sentence to life imprisonment circulated by a Rawlins clergyman, Father Joseph Conrath, and signed by more than 300 local citizens.³⁹ Almost simultaneously, Reverend Peter Masson, the pastor of Seng's hometown Sacred Heart of Jesus parish, weighed in from Allentown on behalf of



***Seng headstone, Wyoming State Penitentiary Cemetery
Rawlins, Wyoming***

the convict's "poor mother and family."⁴⁰ All to no avail. Governor Carey was unmoved, curtly informing the petitioners that their concerns had been conveyed to the Board of Pardons, but also telling them not to get their hopes up. "From the information that we have of the crime and the circumstances attending it, I do not see how you can hold out any hope for him," the governor advised Father Conrath.⁴¹ The board proved no more sympathetic than Carey, and the Seng clemency application was denied on May 22.⁴²

As the officially-approved gallows – a Rube Goldberg-type contraption that used gradual water pressure to trigger the springing of the trapdoor⁴³ – was being assembled in the penitentiary yard, Joe Seng spent his final night with a priest from Cheyenne and a local newspaper editor. According to a next-day story in the *Wyoming Tribune*, Seng complained about the testimony of witnesses at his trial and the performance of his legal counsel. "If I'd had a fair and impartial trial, and a lawyer who understood his business, I would never have been convicted of murder in the first degree," the condemned prisoner reportedly asserted.⁴⁴ Thereafter, Seng wrote letters to be delivered to family after his death.

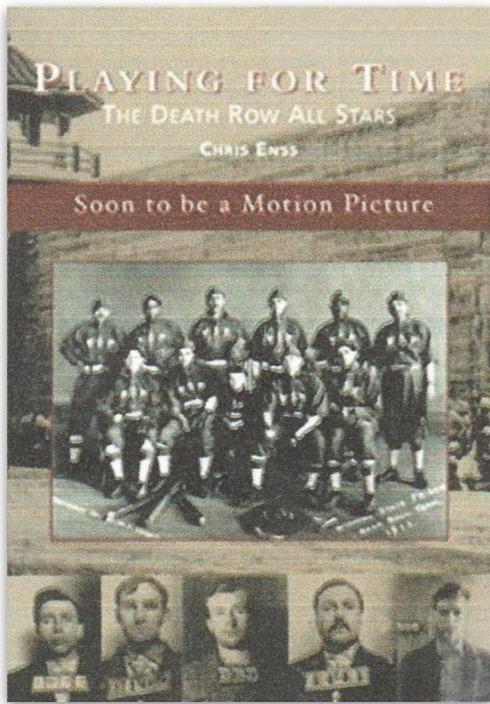
By all accounts, Seng died bravely. Removed from his cell at 2:30 a.m., Seng walked quickly and unaided to the place of his execution, accompanied by his spiritual advisor Father Marcus Long, Warden Alford, and penitentiary guards. The *Denver Post* described, perhaps somewhat too floridly, the final moments of Joe Seng's life thusly: "The condemned man ascended the stairs of the gallows as unconcerned as though he were entering a church. His step was firm and his eye clear. Greatly in contrast to the nervousness and blanched cheeks of those about him, he was calm and his cheeks bore the rosy tint of excitement. He apparently was anxious to have the affair over with, for he assisted the guards in adjusting the straps about his legs and arms, carrying on a conversation with them while he thanked his keepers. Asked if he had anything to say, 'Nothing,' [Seng] said smilingly, 'except to express my deep appreciation for the

many kindnesses shown me during my incarceration.'"⁴⁵

Once a black hood was placed over Seng's head and the noose fitted around his neck, Warden Alford read aloud the death sentence decree and Father Long offered a brief prayer. Seng then "bade everyone a cheerful good-bye"⁴⁶ and stepped onto the trapdoor platform. Once the trap sprung, a terminal cruelty awaited. The gallows counterweight had not been properly calculated; the plunge though the trapdoor did not snap Seng's neck and inflict the desired near-instantaneous death. Instead, he dangled at the end of the rope until he strangled. Almost ten minutes elapsed before Seng was cut down and pronounced dead.⁴⁷ His remains were then interred in the penitentiary cemetery. Even more than a century later the crudely-lettered tombstone that marks the grave of Joseph Seng remains legible.⁴⁸

AFTERMATH: The day after her son's execution, the seemingly hard-hearted Governor Carey conveyed his condolences to Anna Seng. "I feel very sorry for you," Carey assured her. He then explained that Joe had received the benefit of a fair trial, conscientious appellate review of his conviction, and objective consideration of the clemency pleas made on his behalf. But "the Board of Pardons did not recommend his case as one deserving clemency in any way. I wish that I could have found justification, or even an excuse to avoid the verdict. I could not." The governor's missive concluded: "The greatest sorrow has come to you, and with all my heart I regret that it had to be. It will be my desire and my hope that time in a measure may assuage your grief, and the grief of others to whom Joseph Seng was related by ties of blood and affection."⁴⁹

Her son's hanging was not the death of Anna Seng predicted by his brother Frank. She and her husband lived into the 1930s, and are interred in the Sacred Heart of Jesus parish cemetery. In time, a number of the Sengs' children joined them there.⁵⁰ Back in Wyoming, none of his former WSP teammates suffered Joe Seng's fate. To the contrary, by November 1913 they were all free men, their sentences either served out,



Playing for Time



Chris Enss

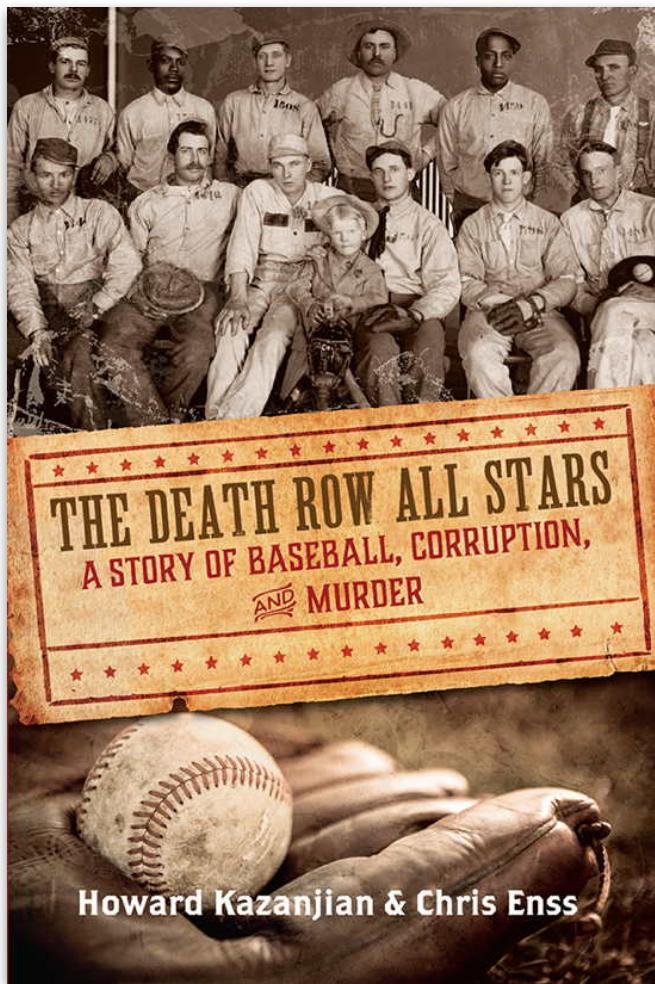
commuted, or vitiated by release on parole.⁵¹ Except for playing manager George Saban. With years still left to be served on his lengthy murder sentence, Saban resorted to self-help to obtain his freedom. On December 17, 1913, he absconded from an outside-the-penitentiary-grounds work detail and disappeared. Thereafter, attempts to recapture Saban proved futile, leaving his ultimate fate unknown to this day.

Joseph M. Carey was a one-term governor, leaving office in 1914. Four years later, his son Robert D. Carey was elected, making the Careys the only father-son duo to serve as Wyoming governor. The elder Carey died from the residual effects of a stroke in February 1924. He was 79. Reform-minded penitentiary warden Felix Alston remained at his post in Rawlins, contending with institutional volatility, inmate escape attempts, and political intrusion until March 1919. He later settled into farming life in Tulare, California, and died at age 87 in 1956.⁵² The final actor in our drama, young widow Alta Yoemans Lloyd, recovered from her grief and soon remarried, taking an Idaho farmer named Edward H. Smith as her second husband. In time, the Smiths relocated to Bayard, Nebraska, where Alta died in 1975 at age 89. With her passing,

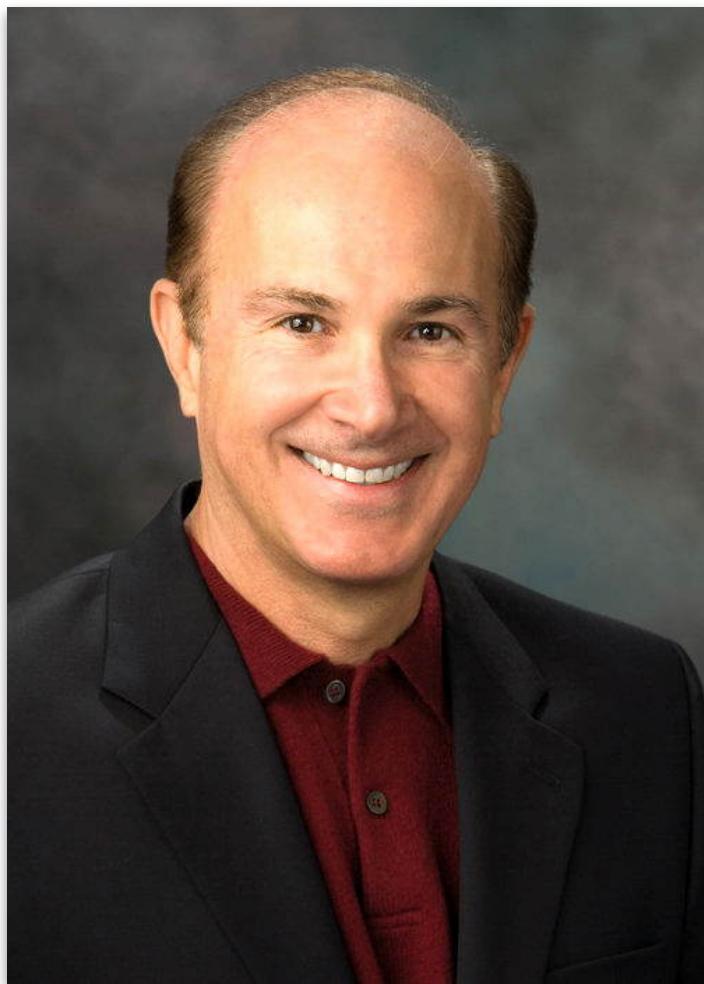
those with living memory of Joe Seng departed the scene.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN JOE SENG AND THE WYOMING PENITENTIARY ALL STARS: Renewed interest in the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars is due almost entirely to Chris Enss, an author of tales of the Old West and aspiring screenwriter. Enss happened upon the story of a Wyoming inmate baseball club while pursuing research on unappreciated heroines of the frontier era, a frequent theme of her work.⁵³ Enss' 2004 book *Playing for Time: The Death Row All Stars* generated the first significant attention paid to the long-gone penitentiary ballplayers since their team had been disbanded almost a century earlier. The book, a slim paperback of 128 pages, is something of a curiosity, as only ten pages of the text are devoted exclusively to narrative. The rest reproduces vintage photographs, court documents, and western memorabilia, while the final 17 pages are saved for excerpts of the screenplay that Enss hoped to sell.

The photographs, even those of doubtful authenticity, are fascinating, while the court documents, telegrams, and letters speak for themselves and are invaluable to any reconstruction of events,



The Death Row All Stars



Howard Kazanjian

particularly those involving the ill-destined Joe Seng. The Enss narrative, however, is something else. Had the book enjoyed the benefit of an editor with at least rudimentary knowledge of Deadball Era baseball, readers would have been spared such wince-producing passages like “Christy Mathewson, the Philadelphia A’s star pitcher, had sat out the World Series in 1905 ... [after] he had hurt his shoulder romping around with teammates aboard a train.”⁵⁴ Nor, presumably, would the Enss book have proffered a relatively familiar photo of a 1906 game at Hilltop Park between the Chicago White Sox and New York Highlanders as one depicting the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars playing in Cheyenne.⁵⁵

For any Deadball-literate consumer, these kind of errata are easily ignored, doing no more than providing notice that the author is not a baseball scholar. The book’s much larger shortcoming,

however, is one which most readers, being strangers to Wyoming frontier history, have small chance of recognizing: author Enss’ failure to present a scrupulously factual account of her subject. When the book first came out, the historical liberties taken by Enss escaped the baseball press, but not reviewers knowledgeable about the Old West. Regarding the unreliability of its content, one authoritative Wyoming historical site observed, “Charitably, the book can best be described as containing numerous errors.”⁵⁶ Less charitably, another critic dismissed the Enss work as one of “fiction.”⁵⁷

The criticism, sadly, is not unwarranted. Even with only ten pages of actual text, misrepresentation of fact abounds. For example, the rogues gallery of villains presented as those who played on the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars depicts only one inmate who actually did so – Joe Seng. Elsewhere, Enss states that “five of Seng’s

teammates followed him to the gallows and five more met their fates in the gas chamber.” Untrue, not one of them did.⁵⁸ Remember, the All Stars roster was not confined to death row prisoners. To the contrary, there was only one bona fide WSP player awaiting execution, namely, Joe Seng. But perhaps the book’s most head-shaking assertion is its charge against reform-minded warden Felix Alston. After an early summer All Stars practice, Alston supposedly “announced to the inmates that as long as the team won each challenge he would arrange for their stays of execution. Anyone not playing their best would be removed from the team and his execution expedited.” This is arrant nonsense, preposterous even if the All Stars roster had been populated with inmates awaiting execution. As a matter of law, Warden Alston was powerless when it came to affecting judicially-decreed death sentences. Executions dates set for his condemned inmates could only be altered by order of the Wyoming Supreme Court.

Regarding the number of games played by the WSP All Stars, Enss book has the team going 39-6 over the 1911-1912 seasons.⁵⁹ In fact, the All Stars played four games total, all against the Wyoming Supply Company Juniors in 1911. The claim that “it is estimated that more than \$132,000 in bets exchanged hands in the county”⁶⁰ due to gambling on WSP games is far-fetched. Estimated by whom? Although commonplace, sports betting was illegal in 1911 Wyoming; no documentary evidence of the purported WSP-connected gambling action is proffered, and no source authority for her claim is provided by Enss – because there is none. Likewise, Enss has amateur and semipro baseball clubs traveling hundreds of miles to play the convicts. The only WSP All Stars opposition, however, came from a homegrown Rawlins nine. The book’s misstatements hardly end there, but to continue the catalogue of its factual errors and fanciful invention serves no useful purpose. Suffice it to say that it is revealing that when Enss collaborated with a coauthor on a second look at the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars, virtually none of her prior work’s content was reused.

If the Enss book was largely fictional in character, her 2014 collaboration with Hollywood film executive Howard Kazanjian yielded a product more in the “based on a true story” category. In *The Death Row All Stars: A Story of Baseball, Corruption, and Murder*, Kazanjian and, to her credit, Enss jettisoned the outlandish assertions of the earlier Enss treatment and presented a far more sober, grounded-in-fact account of the penitentiary ball club and its condemned right fielder. While sympathetic to Joe Seng, the book’s account of his life and the slaying of William Lloyd is straightforward and mostly credible. Citing, and sometimes quoting, contemporaneously-published Wyoming newspaper game accounts, Kazanjian and Enss expend commendable effort into recreating the four contests actually played by the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars, handicapped only by the skimpy nature of the vintage game reportage and their own shaky grasp of baseball.⁶¹

Nevertheless, the reader of *The Death Row All Stars* should not lose sight of the fact that the overriding objective of its authors was not memorializing baseball history or publishing American West scholarship. Rather, it was crafting a commercially-viable Hollywood screenplay.⁶² Needing to inject a romantic angle into their script, Kazanjian and Enss devise an illicit love affair between Joe Seng and Alta Lloyd, his victim’s wife. According to a distant relative, the authors report, Alta bore Seng’s love child after her husband’s murder, but the infant died of pneumonia in October 1912. Two days later, a despondent Alta committed suicide, and now she, Joe, and the baby are buried alongside one another in the parish graveyard in Allentown.⁶³ Undoing the impact of this mournful tale are the inconvenient fact that Joe Seng was buried in Wyoming, and that Alta Lloyd lived to be 89 and now rests next to second husband Edward Smith in a cemetery in Bayard, Nebraska.⁶⁴

Another serious flaw in the Kazanjian-Enss account is its retention of a plot device contrived for the first book: motivation of the penitentiary players via the threat to have their sentences carried out. Again, only one Wyoming State Peni-

tentiary All Star – Joe Seng – was facing a death sentence, and neither Warden Alston nor inmate player-manager Saban, the designated menace this time, posed any immediate threat to Seng. His execution had been stayed indefinitely by the July 17, 1911 order of Chief Justice Beard. And given that appellate tribunals like the Wyoming Supreme Court do not decide cases during the summer, Seng was safe from the hangman for the remainder of the WSP season and likely months beyond.

As with the Enss book, little is gained by further dissection of *The Death Row All Stars* and its historical faux pas. That the book is a substantial improvement over its predecessor is faint praise. Regrettably, the Kazanjian-Enss collaboration represents more of a missed opportunity, a fumbled chance to relate faithfully a compelling twilight Old West story that needed no author embellishment.

A FINAL THOUGHT ON JOE SENG: Truth be told, Joe Seng appears to have been an unremarkable character. Little of the verifiable data about his life distinguish him from other rough-hewn Wyoming working men of his time – except for the singular events that brought his existence to its end. But if Seng himself is not particularly interesting, his final years, complete with a capital murder conviction, prison baseball playing while awaiting execution, and a gallantly-faced death, are gripping. In the final analysis, therefore, Howard Kazanjian and Chris Enss are not wrong. In capable hands, the Allentown to eternity saga of Joe Seng might make a helluva Hollywood movie. But a faithful-to-the-facts documentary would doubtless be more satisfying to Deadball Era baseball fans and students of American West history.

ENDNOTES

1. The Enss book was reviewed by John McMurray in the March 2005 issue of *The Inside Game*, while Bob Wirz critiqued the Kazanjian-Enss collaboration in the February 2015 newsletter.
2. As noted in Seng's Wyoming prison records.
3. Per the 1900 US Census.
4. Per the 1901 Allentown city directory. Care must be taken to distinguish our subject from Joseph Henry Seng (probably a cousin, born 1883) and Joseph Andrew Seng (no relation, born 1884), both of whom also appear in Allentown directories.
5. According to Howard Kazanjian and Chris Enss, *The Death Row All Stars: A Story of Baseball, Corruption and Murder* (Guilford, Connecticut: TwoDot Press, 2014), 24. New York state marriage records indicate that a Joseph V. Seng and Annie Moran were married in Manhattan on July 25, 1900, but the groom is not likely our subject. Nor is our man the Joseph V. Seng (1882-1909) buried in Allentown.
6. Kazanjian and Enss, 24.
7. Kazanjian and Enss, 25, quoting from a journal written by the Seng family priest, Father Peter Masson of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania.
8. Per Description of Convict, Wyoming State Penitentiary, reproduced in Chris Enss, *Playing for Time: The Death Row All Stars* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 60. As history, the Enss book is largely a work of fiction. But it provides a treasure trove of photos, prison records, and legal documents of interest that will be cited herein.
9. Page 64 of the Enss book contains a photo of dubious authenticity which purports to show Joe Seng catching as a youngster in Allentown. A 1911 team photo of the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars, however, unmistakably shows Seng holding a catcher's mitt.
10. Kazanjian and Enss, 29.
11. Per Description of Convict, above. One Seng tattoo displayed an American eagle, shield, and script on his left forearm. A butterfly, a four-aces poker hand, and a pair of dice were tattooed on his right forearm. The Seng scars were located above the left wrist and on the right knee.
12. Enss, 58.
13. The above summary of the fatal shooting of William Lloyd was extracted from contemporaneous reportage published in Denver, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island, Illinois, as well as from local Wyoming newspaper reportage quoted in Kazanjian and Enss.
14. Not all killings are unlawful. Deaths arising from military combat, legitimate self-defense, and defense of an innocent third party are not criminal in nature. Nor are all unlawful killings necessarily first degree murder. Fatal incidents having some mitigating factor (heat of passion; recklessness; diminished capacity; misadventure; drunkenness, etc.) are often prosecuted as non-capital degrees of murder or as the lesser offense of manslaughter.

15. Kazanjian and Enss, 35, citing the (*Evanston Wyoming Press*, April 8, 1911). After trial, Alta Lloyd offered the same account about her husband's gun falling out of his coat pocket after he was shot, but whether she testified in court is unclear from the available record.
16. The right to remain silent at trial was Seng's privilege under the Fifth Amendment.
17. As recounted in "Will Pay Penalty on Scaffold," *Montpelier (Idaho) Examiner*, April 14, 1911: 3; and "First Degree Murder Is Verdict of Jury," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1911: 4, both of which noted the mandatory nature of Seng's death sentence. See also, "Hangs for Murder of Davenport Man," (*Davenport, Iowa Quad City Times*, April 20, 1911: 7).
18. Order Suspending Execution of Sentence, entered April 13, 1911, reproduced at Enss, 79.
19. Baseball is believed to have been played by Union Army prisoners during the Civil War. The employment of baseball in peacetime prison settings has been traced to the Concord (Massachusetts) Reformatory in 1886.
20. The eight-team prison inmate baseball league run at the federal penitentiary in Atlanta would become a noteworthy and well-publicized example. See "Hot Baseball Behind Bars," *New York Times*, June 2, 1913: 2.
21. Saban had been convicted of non-capital murder and sentenced to a 24-year prison term for his part in the killing of three sheepherders in April 1909.
22. Like any bookmaker, Saban would take his percentage regardless of which team won. But unless he had a competitive team in penitentiary uniform, Saban would be unable to stimulate much betting action for the games.
23. Before the arrival of Seng, the only killers on the penitentiary nine were playing manager/reserve Saban himself and shortstop Joseph Guzzardo, convicted of manslaughter.
24. As reported in the (*Denver Rocky Mountain News*, July 20, 1911: 5. See also, "Little Wyoming Items," *Natrona County (Wyoming) Times*, August 9, 1911: 2. Chief Justice Beard's order was entered on July 17, 1911 and is reproduced at Enss, 82-83.
25. For more on these incidents, see Kazanjian and Enss, 84-85.
26. Enss, 58.
27. Preceding Seng in the penitentiary batting order were shortstop Guzzardo; center fielder Sid Potter (forgery); third baseman John Crottie (grand larceny); left fielder Earl Stone (burglary), and first baseman Eugene Rowan (burglary/rape). Inter-
- estingly, the fact that Rowan and catcher James Powell (burglary/rape) were black seems to have been a non-issue.
28. According to Kazanjian and Enss, 73.
29. See e.g., "Condemned Man Wins Ball Game," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, July 24, 1911: 1; "Convicts Cheer Murderer Making 2 Home Run Hits," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, July 24, 1911: 15; "Slayer Scores Home Runs," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1911: 1.
30. See Kazanjian and Enss, 50-52, re-printing at length the commentary of the *Carbon County (Rawlins, Wyoming) Journal*, July 20, 1911.
31. Kazanjian and Enss, 68, citing the reportage of the *Laramie (Wyoming) Boomerang*, August 5, 1911.
32. Per the box score published in the *Carbon County Journal*, August 18, 1911.
33. A team photo of the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars in uniform is published in the Enss book, as well in as the ensuing the Kazanjian-Enss collaboration (which misidentifies shortstop Joe Guzzardo as Joe Seng). For reasons unknown, Seng and a second WSP player are missing from the uniformed team photo, now easily found via the internet. A mustachioed Joe Seng, however, is seated in the front row of the All Stars in their prison work garb photo featured on the cover of the Kazanjian-Enss paperback. This team photo, too, is readily located on the internet. The child mascot seated front row center in both WSP team photos is the warden's six-year-old son, Felix Alston, Jr.
34. As quoted in Kazanjian and Enss, 79.
35. While gambling was prohibited by law in Wyoming, gambling in local saloons and gaming dens was openly conducted and notorious. The flagrant disregard of anti-gambling laws had been an issue raised during the 1910 gubernatorial election race, and newly-installed Governor Carey had been wary from the start about the baseball program instituted at the Rawlins penitentiary by Alford. Once Carey got wind of widespread betting on inmate games, the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars were doomed.
36. See Wyoming Supreme Court Order, entered May 3, 1912 at Enss, 87.
37. The telegrams are reproduced at Enss, 55 (Anna Seng), and 106 (Sr. M. Bonaventura Seng).
38. Enss, 90. Enclosed with Frank Seng's letter was a photo of his mother Anna Seng holding an infant grandchild. See Enss, 88.
39. Enss, 96-99.
40. Enss, 107.

41. Letter of Governor Carey to Father Conrath, dated May 16, 1912, reproduced at Enss, 105.
42. As reported in "Reprieve Denied to Seng; To Be Hanged Friday," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 23, 1912: 12.
43. Rather than having the hangman simply flip the switch on the gallows trapdoor, the execution process used at the Rawlins penitentiary began "when the condemned man steps upon the trap his weight will remove a plug from a pail of water that acts as a counterbalance and when the pail is emptied the trap will be sprung." See "Seng To Hang May 24th," (Casper, Wyoming) *Natrona County Tribune*, May 29, 1912: 8. Known as the Julien Gallows, photos of same can be viewed at Enss, 95, and Kazanjian and Enss, 114.
44. According to Kazanjian and Enss, 113, citing the *Wyoming Tribune*, May 24, 1912. With the trial record sketchy at best, it is difficult to assess the validity of Seng's grievances. But in the writer's experience as a career state/county prosecutor, the fatal shooting of a man walking down the street with his wife on his arm does not provide the backdrop for a compelling self-defense claim.
45. "Hurries Own Hanging and Aids Guards," *Denver Post*, May 24, 1912: 1.
46. Same as above.
47. As was widely reported. See e.g., "Springs Own Death Trap," *Augusta (Kansas) Gazette*, May 24, 1912: 1; "Murderer Springs Own Death Trap," *El Paso (Texas) Herald*, May 24, 1912: 1: "Seng Springs Trap of Gallows That Puts End to Life," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 25, 1912: 9.
48. Available for viewing via the Find-A-Grave website. Adjacent to the Seng headstone is that of convicted murderer Oscar White, hanged October 20, 1916.
49. Letter of Governor Joseph M. Carey to Mrs. Anthony Seng, dated May 25, 1912 at Enss, 108.
50. The identity of the remains buried beneath a grave marker inscribed "Joseph V. Seng, 1882-1909" at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cemetery in Allentown is unknown to the writer. But see endnote 5, above.
51. Per Kazanjian and Enss, 118-119.
52. Son Felix V. Alston, Jr., the one-time child mascot of the Wyoming State Penitentiary All Stars, died in Tulare in October 1960.
53. Per Enss herself in the Introduction to *Playing for Time*.
54. Enss, 44. Memo to Chris Enss: The sidelined Philadelphia hurler was the eccentric Rube Waddell. New York Giants immortal Christy Mathew-
- son posted no fewer than three shutout victories in the 1905 World Series.
55. Enss, 45.
56. *Wyoming Tales and Trails*, viewable at <http://wyomingtalesandtrails.com/rawlins2a.html>.
57. Ibid, referring to an unidentified book review. Another reviewer posting on Amazon wrote: "This is not a history book. It is a fiction interwoven with incorrectly used facts."
58. Not only were none of the inmates whose mug shots were showcased by Enss a WSP team member, none of them were executed either. Google "List of People Executed in Wyoming." The gas chamber, by the way, was not used in Wyoming until August 1937.
59. Aside from the exercise of a creative imagination, the only likely explanation for the Enss' misapprehension of the number of games that the penitentiary team actually played and her vivid accounts of contests played against illusory opposition is confabulation by a novice baseball author of games played by the WSP All Stars and those played by the local amateur club, the fast Rawlins city nine.
60. Enss, 44.
61. Having the ball thrown around the outfield to Seng after every putout is one telltale sign that neither Kazanjian nor Enss has played or seen much baseball. The authors' embrace of the Alexander Cartwright myth also undermines their book's authority.
62. Howard Kazanjian, producer of the blockbuster films *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Return of the Jedi*, had supplied a book cover blurb for Chris Enss' 2004 book *Playing for Time*, marketed with a "Soon to be a Motion Picture" endorsement under the title. Subsequently, Kazanjian collaborated with Enss on bios of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and the young John Wayne.
63. Per Kazanjian and Enss, 124-125.
64. The adjoining headstones for Ed and Alta Smith are viewable on the Find-A-Grave website.

When players who were with the Worcester New England League team read they had been reserved by the club for next year they united in a protest to Secretary Farrell, setting up the claim that, not having been paid their salaries, they are free agents. They seem to have the case decided about right.

(Washington) Evening Star, November 27, 1915

GAMES/BIOPROJECT

Fittingly given the locale of SABR 50, new entries published by the Games Project include contests played by the 1901-1902 Baltimore Orioles from Kevin Larkin, Chad Osborne, Chris Corrigan, and Bill Nowlin. Other newly published game accounts range from the first intercollegiate Army-Navy baseball game of 1901 (Mike Huber) to a 1918 pitchers' duel between Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson (Larkin). Meanwhile, the BioProject has recently run profiles of Deadballers Jack Hickey, George Barclay, Fritz Maisel, Steel Arm Johnny Taylor, Polly McLarry, George Maisel, Chick Brandom, Doc Lavan, and Frank Bowerman. Please give these a look if you have not yet done so.

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

After a decade at the helm, newsletter editor Bill Lamb will be stepping down at year end. Beginning with the February 2023 issue, Don Jensen will take over as editor. More on Don, a longtime DEC member and currently editor of the scholarly journal *Base Ball: New Research on the Early Game*, as well as discussion of his plans for the newsletter will appear in the November issue. For now, suffice it to say that the newsletter is in good hands and welcome aboard, Don!

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:

Chris Betsch Andy Flaherty
Evan Cerne-Iannone Tyler Griffin
Bruno Egloff

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.

*Eddie Collins
Drinks*

Coca-Cola

—considers it the premier, all-round wholesome thirst-quencher for athletes... This comes well from one of whom Comiskey said, after paying \$50,000 for him—"I secured him for the White Sox fans because I believe he will prove that he is the greatest exponent of quick thinking and the brainiest player in the game."

Demand the genuine and
avoid disappointment

THE COCA-COLA CO.
ATLANTA, GA.



(Keokuk, Iowa) Daily Gate City, June 4, 1915

OWNERS HOLD UPPER HAND

By H. C. Hamilton. NEW YORK— An organized effort on the part of major league ball players to make capital out of the fact that they were "unconditionally released" last fall apparently is being made. [...]

All players were given unconditional releases by the club owners through an agreement. It was discovered in this manner only could the clubs escape the obligation of paying a full season's salary to the men. It was agreed and understood fully that title to each player was to remain where it was before the government decided to stop baseball. The reserve clause takes care of that in full.

The club owners hold the whip hand. [...]

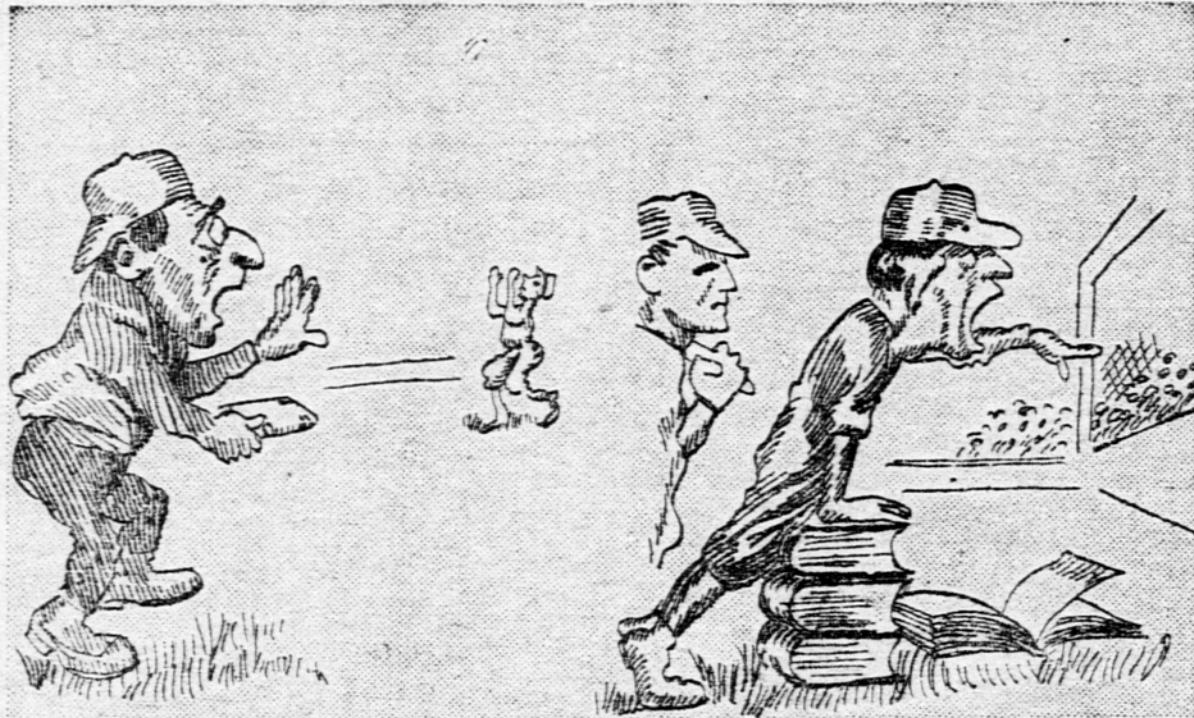
Pittsburg Press, December 30, 1918

TOO MANY RULES IN MODERN BASEBALL.



Player—Say, Moike, what's th' rule about hitting an umpire?

Disgusted Player—I can't find nothin' in these rules but whereas-en' clauses—en' sections. I'm going back to prairie ball.



Umpire—Hi, leave that ball up in the air till I sees this here rule on catchin' it.

Captain (to spectators)—Gentlemen, this game's got to be delayed till we look up rule No. 1367265.

—Chicago News.