



THE INSIDE GAME

FEBRUARY 2023

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Journal of SABR's Deadball Era Committee



VOL. XXIII, NO. 1: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" FEBRUARY 2023

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As the new editor of *The Inside Game*, it is with great pleasure I present the February 2023 issue of our journal. It is the product not only of a talented group of authors, but a small, equally gifted editorial team – Bob Harris, Dan Levitt, and Mark Dugo – dedicated to providing Deadball devotees with all they can devour about the players, games, seasons, and more from our favorite era.

I am fortunate to follow in the editorial footsteps of my good friend, the distinguished baseball historian Bill Lamb. We will continue Lamb-esque traditions such as highlighting obscure but noteworthy Deadball Era players and, above all Bill's dedication to excellence. I cannot promise the lawyerlike precision he brought to the endnotes but will try. In any transition of this sort, however, there are inevitably changes. In upcoming issues, we will try to broaden our focus to include the role of the game in American society. I also would like to pay more attention to the minor leagues of the era. And the game outside the Northeast, In addition, we have made changes in the presentation. The team has worked hard to have the layout of *The Inside Game* give a better flavor of the era. I hope you like the new graphics. We also will put greater reliance on multimedia, and this emphasis has already borne fruit. On February 15, Dan Levitt began the SABR Deadball Era Book Talk series, where Dan will host prominent authors and discuss their work.

In the end, of course, the success of *The Inside Game* depends on you. Your comments and suggestions are most welcome, as are your article contributions. The latter was one of Bill Lamb's most frequent refrains, and it will be mine.

Don Jensen



About the Cover:

This drawing by J.C. Leyendecker appeared on the cover of the April 14, 1917 issue of *Collier's Weekly*.

WHY THE BLACK SOX ALMOST GOT AWAY WITH IT

by Timothy G. Newman

“Sleepy” Bill Burns pitched for five major league teams between 1908 and 1912, but he is best remembered for his involvement in the notorious Black Sox scandal. During his testimony in 1921 at the criminal trial of players from the 1919 Chicago White Sox, Burns said that he had been in New York City in September of 1919 selling oil leases. While staying at the same hotel, Eddie Cicotte and Chick Gandil asked him for \$100,000 in return for intentionally losing the upcoming World Series.¹ This request probably led to the exposure of the scheme.

Burns Was Perceived As a Prosperous Oil Man

The White Sox veterans had known Burns for years.² He was a sharp dresser and seemed financially well off. In 1910, Burns lost a \$1,250 diamond ring but did not seem too upset.³ During the summer of 1919, newspapers tracked Burns’ route across the country, usually noting his affluence. He was first spotted in St. Louis by a Cleveland newspaper in July:

Big Bill Burns ... breezed into the Indians’ hotel this morning, looking decidedly prosperous. Six months

ago, he purchased an option on a farm in the [R]anger section of Texas for \$500 and two weeks later sold it for \$16,000. He since has doubled that Louis [sic: lease?] to sell to an oil company for \$60,000, expecting to close the deal tomorrow.⁴

The Sporting News, with its national distribution, expounded that Burns:

[S]eems to have waked up since he got out of baseball. Bill, big as ever, was in St. Louis this past week closing a deal that shows he is either wide awake or mighty lucky ... Here is his story: Bill happened to be awake one day and snapped up an oil lease for \$500. Two weeks later he sold it for \$16,000, and with part of the coin bought more leases. These also were good prospects, and he was asked to visit St. Louis to negotiate for their transfer. He was offered \$60,000 for his holdings and as Bill sat lazily in front of his hotel, renewing acquaintances with ball players, he remarked nonchalantly that he “expected to make the deal in the morning, provided I don’t oversleep myself.”⁵

At least two more papers, in Minneapolis and Binghamton, New York, picked up the *Sporting News* version of the story.⁶

While staying at the same hotel, Eddie Cicotte and Chick Gandil asked [Burns] for \$100,000 in return for intentionally losing the upcoming World Series.

In mid-July, the former Reds pitcher advertised that he was selling oil leases during a two-week return to Cincinnati.⁷

While in Cincinnati, Burns threw batting practice: “[N]oodles’ Hahn and Bill Burns, famous southpaws of a decade ago, and both formerly with the Reds are in Cincinnati and are voluntarily working out with the Reds in batting practice. They still have enough stuff to keep the best batters guessing.”⁸

Burns Attracted Many Major League Players

The Sporting News described Burns as a “princely fellow” during his time in the east, noting that he sought out ballplayers and used cash from oil investments to buy



**The
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them lavish meals as they traveled on the train.⁹ In July 1919, Burns closed the sale of an oil lease with Henry (Heinie) Zimmerman, Lew McCarty, and Jean Dubuc of the New York Giants.¹⁰

By the beginning of August, newspapers reported that oil had been found on Bill's "farm down in Texas," and that he now had money enough to buy a major league ball club.¹¹ Around this time Burns boarded a train in Chicago and headed east with the Cubs.¹² It was shortly after this trip that Bill Killefer signed a deal to hold an oil lease in trust for he and Burns, along with Cubs players Fred Merkle and Speed Martin and their manager Fred Mitchell.¹³

The Sporting News described Burns as a "princely fellow" ...

The press reported this deal in the spring of 1920 when the players pulled a prank on Mitchell:

For a time today it looked as if the Cubs might be bereft not only of several stars but of their manager as well, all on account of an oil well. Last summer when the Cub party encountered Bill Burns, the veteran pitcher, in New York, several of them were induced to take a flier in an oil lease at San Saba, Tex. Mitchell, Merkle, Killefer, and Martin put in \$300 apiece along with a similar stake by Promoter Burns.

During the morning practice a messenger brought a telegram to Killefer saying that oil had been struck a few miles from their tract and that an offer of \$65,000 had been made for their joint lease, earning \$17,500 per each for the five holders in return for their \$300 investment. Merkle immediately threw off his glove and declared himself out of baseball.

Killefer was of the same mind, but Manager Mitchell asserted he thought they ought to stick through the season, as he intended to, and finally talked them into it, with the proviso that they chip in and send a representative to Texas to look after their interests.

There is likely to be an explosion and some difficulty in capping the flow of nonbiblical language when the other partners in the lease discover that Killefer

OIL LEASES

BILL BURNS

FORMER RED PITCHER, IS IN TOWN.

He wants to interest Cincinnati-ans in the buying of oil leases and royalties located in the **TEXAS OIL FIELDS**. Wonderful opportunities for those who care to invest. The leases are located in the **RANGER OIL FIELDS**, in the central part of Texas.

Burns can be seen at Room 609, HAVLIN HOTEL. He will be in Cincinnati two weeks.

Cincinnati Enquirer, July 12, 1919

wrote the telegram to himself and paid the messenger boy \$1 to take it out to the ballpark.¹⁴

A few days later, the *San Francisco Chronicle* retold the story with Burns replaced by his fellow Texan, Cubs pitcher Jim Vaughn:

Manager Mitchell was the victim of a joke today [March 11] that gave the Cubs a big laugh. Last summer the pilot, along with Vaughn, Merkle, Martin and Killefer purchased an oil lease off *Biff* [sic] Burns ... for about \$2000 ... The players framed the following telegram and had it delivered by a messenger: "Have hit large well half-mile from our lease. Have offer of \$65,000 for same but advise holding. Wire me what you boys decide. Must know at once." **BILL BURNS.**

The message was delivered during practice. Mitchell fell heavily, forgot about the training, and called his associates in the venture together. They feigned surprise and much delight at the good news. Mitchell seemed ready to call off work for the day to figure out how to spend his share of the \$65,000, when a foul ball struck him on the shins and woke him up.¹⁵

Burns was famously in Cincinnati when the World Series opened on October 1, 1919. Umpire Billy Evans, working his fifth Fall Classic, remembered shortly after that that Burns carried himself well:

At the recent world series at Cincinnati, I bumped into Pitcher Bill Burns, who twirled for several American League clubs and also in the American association. Burns had a lot of stuff, and had he taken the game seriously, he might have been a star, but nothing troubled Bill. He took things as they came. Within the last year or so, Burns, who has big oil holdings in the south, is said to have struck it rich. He looked like a million dollars when I saw him in Cincinnati, and they do say the buying of a ball club by Bill would be a mere matter of form as far as the financial consideration is concerned.¹⁶

About this time, Burns was also finalizing an oil lease sale to future Hall of Famer Max Carey and his Pittsburgh teammates Walter Schmidt, Babe Adams, and Earl Hamilton.¹⁷

In Reality Burns Was a “Traveling Salesman”

The White Sox had spent spring training in 1919 in Mineral Wells, in the heart of the Texas oil country and about 130 miles from Burns’ hometown.¹⁸ Many White Sox players bought oil stocks,¹⁹ and the team even considered playing in nearby Ranger “where the oil gushes.”²⁰ At least one of the players, outfielder Joe Jackson, in September 1919 was considering an investment with a partner in Mineral Wells, which presumably involved oil either directly or indirectly.²¹

However, there was never oil in San Saba County, on Burns’ ranch or otherwise. He was just selling leases owned by G.A. Walters, a prominent attorney, and San Saba County judge (executive) for over fifty years.²² To be fair, Burns was not defrauding anyone, at least no more so than many other speculative promoters. San Saba county was littered with oil leases, including many by major oil companies.²³

When Gandil and Cicotte approached him at the Ansonia hotel in New York City, the reality was that Burns did not have \$100,000. This forced him to ask the players to wait while he sought a financial backer in Mont-

real.²⁴ Ultimately ex-boxing champion Abe Attell misled Burns and his cohort Billy Maharg into thinking that the best-known underworld financier in the country, Arnold Rothstein, had changed his mind and would back the scheme.

About this time, Burns was also finalizing an oil lease sale to future Hall of Famer Max Carey and his Pittsburgh teammates Walter Schmidt, Babe Adams, and Earl Hamilton.

While there were immediate reports that the White Sox had thrown the 1919 World Series,²⁵ no one established anything definitive, and regular season play began again in 1920. In mid-July, White Sox manager William (Kid) Gleason saw Attell in New York City and phoned *Chicago Tribune* reporter James Crusinberry to come to the restaurant where they were drinking.²⁶ Attell repeated the story of Burns’ and Maharg’s attempt to interest Rothstein.²⁷ Crusinberry later called this the break that blew the case wide open.²⁸

Two months later, a Cook County, Illinois grand jury began investigating the suspicious World Series. Gleason and Crusinberry were immediately summoned to testify. Gleason was traveling with the team, but on Wednesday, September 22, Crusinberry gave what Black Sox expert Bill Lamb called easily the most significant testimony presented at the hearing’s initial session.²⁹

On Friday, September 24, 1920, the grand jury announced its intention to subpoena Burns, Attell, and Rothstein. This was a front-page story across the country.³⁰ By Sunday, September 26, newspapers, including those in Maharg’s hometown of Philadelphia, carried the story that Gleason would testify the next Tuesday.³¹ The United Press reported that the investigation would widen to gamblers in several cities on Monday.³²

A reporter for the *Philadelphia North American* named Walter Schlichter, who had once managed Maharg as a young boxer,³³ probably saw the wire reports. In any event, Schlichter met with Maharg and informed the *North American*’s baseball writer James Isaminger.³⁴

That evening, September 27, Maharg gave the famous interview that laid out the details of the fix.

Maharg said that he had been double-crossed by Attell and wanted the truth to come out. Isaminger put the story on the telegraph wire around 9 pm that night, giving the Chicago papers time to dispatch reporters to interview Cicotte.³⁵ Newspapers across the country published the interview the following day,³⁶ Cicotte confessed before noon, and the grand jury voted to charge the eight Sox players before the day was over.³⁷ They never played another major league game.

This result ends a straight line that started with Cicotte and Gandil's misunderstanding of Burns' wealth. Burns was forced to involve Attell, who broke the silence of those directly involved in the fix. That quickly led to the exposure of the whole scandal. If Bill Burns had been as well off as the players believed, the Black Sox might have gotten away with it.

ENDNOTES

1. William F. Lamb, *Black Sox in the Courtroom: The Grand Jury, Criminal Trial, and Civil Proceedings* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland 2013), 48 and sources cited therein.
2. Burns had been teammates with Gandil on the 1910 White Sox, and testified that he had met Cicotte, Joe Jackson, Claude Williams, Oscar (Happy) Felsch, George (Buck) Weaver, and Charles (Swede) Risberg during his playing days. Deposition of William Burns taken October 5, 1922, pertaining to the civil lawsuit filed by Felsch, Jackson, and Risberg against the White Sox. These records are in private possession, but are abstracted by Gene Carney in his Notes from the Shadows of Cooperstown blog #388 February 7, 2007 archived at sabr.org/research/article/gene-carney-black-sox-notes-index.
3. "Bill Burns a Queer Chap; Indifferent to Heavy Loss", *Cincinnati Post*, March 8, 1911, 6.
4. "Tribe Off for Home", *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 9, 1919 (datelined July 8).
5. "Baseball By-Plays", *The Sporting News*, July 17, 1919, 4.
6. "Burns Grows Wealthy," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, July 22, 1919, 14; "Baseball Yarns," *Binghamton* (New York) *Press*, August 1, 1919, 22.
7. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 12, 1919, 6. This advertisement says that the leases are near Ranger, which is much closer to Mineral Wells and decidedly not San Saba County.
8. "Retired Stars Helping Reds", *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 7, 1919, 18. See also "Baseball Gossip", *Pittsburgh Press*, August 9, 1919, 12.
9. "Phelon's Pullman Pastimes", *The Sporting News*, January 8, 1920, 7.
10. Assignment dated July 24, 1919, recorded in San Saba, Texas.
11. *Brooklyn Eagle* (note 8); "Former Reds Helping Moran in Flag Fight", (Franklin, Pennsylvania) *News-Herald*, August 12, 1919, 3.
12. *Chicago Daily News*, August 11, 1919: "Bill Burns, formerly a White Sox pitcher, will be on the train with the Cubs to-night when it pulls out of the LaSalle Street station. Burns has been living in Santa Rita, N.M., for several years and is making a trip through the east."
13. Assignment dated August 30, 1919, recorded in San Saba, Texas.
14. "Two Cub Youths are Placed on Disability List", *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1920, 17. In reality ownership did not pass out of the trust until later. Assignment dated May 8, 1920, recorded in San Saba, Texas.
15. "Mitchell Has Dream of Wealth, But He Wakes Up", *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 1920, 12.
16. Billy Evans, "Baseball on the Inside", *Moline* (Illinois) *Dispatch*, February 10, 1920, 12.
17. Assignment dated October 20, 1919, to Max George Carnarius, Walter J. Schmidt, Charles B. Adams, Earl Hamilton, and Burns recorded in San Saba, Texas.
18. Burns was raised in San Saba, Texas on what might more accurately be described as a ranch, although his family did raise a variety of crops. *Cropping Systems for the Black Lands of Texas* (US Department of Agriculture, 1911), 10-11; "Cropping Systems for the Black Lands", *Dallas Morning News*, January 12, 1912, 9.
19. "Training Camp Notes", *The Sporting News*, April 17, 1919, 8.
20. "Faber Coaxes Some Steam on the Ball, Elating Kid Gleason", *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 1919, 20.
21. *Chicago Evening American*, September 19, 1919.
22. Alma Ward Hamrick, *The Call of the San Saba: A History of San Saba County* (San Felipe Press, 1969), 105-6.
23. "Big Oil Lease Is Made Near San Saba", *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, July 31, 1919, 13: "big oil operators have their

eyes on” San Saba County; *San Antonio Light*, October 5, 1919, 47: “Practically the entire [San Saba] county has been leased, most of the acreage being held by the big companies.”

24. Arnold (Chick) Gandil as told to Melvin Durslag, “This Is My Story of the Black Sox Series,” *Sports Illustrated*, September 17, 1956, 62, 65. Gandil’s story is self-serving and demonstrably inaccurate on many details, but on this point there seems no reason for doubt.
25. See for example “High Lights and Shadows in all Spheres of Sport”, *New York Sun*, October 11, 1919, 19, naming Cicotte as one of five White Sox to have taken a \$100,000 bribe to throw the series.
26. Donald Elder, *Ring Lardner: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday 1956), 160-61; Gene Carney, *Burying the Black Sox: How Baseball’s Cover-Up of the 1919 World Series Almost Succeed* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2006), 104, n37, citing the *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1920.
27. “Grand Jury Inquiry Climaxed by Proof that Comiskey was Told”, *The Sporting News*, November 4, 1920, 3, 7; Deposition of Charles A. Comiskey, taken March 24, 1923 (note 2); Crusinberry’s own account is in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, February 18, 1933, 13.
28. James Crusinberry, “A Newsmen’s Greatest Story,” *Sports Illustrated* September 17, 1956.
29. Lamb, 39. Assistant State’s Attorney Hartley Replogle said that Crusinberry and Sox fan Sam Pass “started the ball a rolling.” This quotation and a summary of Crusinberry’s testimony were provided by United News correspondent James Killigan in the (Pittsfield, Massachusetts) *Berkshire Evening Eagle*, October 30, 1920, 12. Crusinberry’s account is in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, February 19, 1933, 26.
30. *Washington (DC) Times* September 25, 1920; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 25, 1920. See also *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1920; *Syracuse Herald*, September 24, 1920.
31. “Ray Schalk Will Tell Jury What He Knows of Series”, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 26, 1920, 18.
32. See for example “Commy’ Scores Big Ban”, *Pittsburgh Press*, September 27, 1920, 28.

33. Phil Williams biography of Schlichter at sabr.org/bioproj/person/walter-schlichter/, particularly note 88. See also Schlichter’s obituary in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 16, 1944, 27.
34. “J.C. Isaminger Dies at Age 65”, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 18, 1946, 22.
35. According to Crusinberry’s later account in the *Washington (DC) Evening Star*, February 20, 1933, 13. This timing also allowed White Sox owner Charles Comiskey’s offer of a reward to Maharg to be published on the morning of September 28, 1920.
36. James A. Isaminger, “Gamblers Promised White Sox \$100,000 to Lose,” *Philadelphia North American*, September 28, 1920, reprinted in *Baseball Digest*, October-November 1959, 9-13.
37. Lamb, 49-50.

**STRIKE IS THREATENED
BY BOSTON AMERICANS**

**REPORTED COLLINS’ MEN WILL NOT
PLAY PITTSBURGH UNLESS THEY
GET DIVISION OF RECEIPTS**

BOSTON—Boston baseball enthusiasts have heard that certain members of Collins’ American league team have struck and there is every prospect that the series arranged after so much difficulty with the Pittsburgh club will have to be abandoned.

According to the story going the rounds Boston players whose contracts expire with the end of the American league playing season are determined, it is said, to ask for more than has been offered them. It is said that the management of the club has refused to listen to the demands of the men.

In the agreement between Presidents Killilea and Dreyfuss, the winning club is to receive 75 per cent of net receipts. It is said that President Dreyfuss has offered his men 50 per cent of the money received by the club, to be divided between the players regardless of the expiration of contracts and the Boston players want the same.

Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette, September 23, 1903

MEET HEADSTRONG HARRY LORD, BATES' LORD OF THE BASEBALL DIAMOND

He is the best Bates baseball player ever, but even basic facts about Harry Lord's time at Bates are shrouded in mystery.

by **Bob Muldoon**

He is perhaps the best baseball player in Bates history, yet Harry Lord, Class of 1908, is little-known today, his campus years shrouded in mystery and misinformation.

How good a ballplayer was he? As captain of the Boston Red Sox in 1909, he hit .315, good for fourth in the American League behind future Hall of Famers Ty Cobb (who admired Lord's vim and vigor), Eddie Collins, and Napoleon Lajoie.

As captain of the 1911 Chicago White Sox, he did even better, batting .321. "Lord is acknowledged to be the best third baseman in the circuit," wrote *The English News* of Indiana.

Lord's story is one of headstrong decisions, Dickensian twists ... and loyalty to his team tested by his love for a woman.

Yet even basic facts about Lord's time at Bates are often wrongly stated. Wikipedia states Lord "graduated in 1908 and pitched for the baseball team." *The Bates Student* in 2014 says much the same. Accounts from his era make similar claims. But he neither pitched, nor graduated.

The truth is complicated. Lord's story is one of headstrong decisions, Dickensian twists – such as playing for and against Bates in a single season – and loyalty to his team tested by his love for a woman.

Lord was born in 1882 in Kezar Falls, a village in the southwest Maine town of Porter. He attended Bridgton Academy, captaining the baseball team that won a tournament at Bates in spring 1904. That September, along with Bridgton teammate George W. French, also from



HARRY LORD, SHOWN WITH THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX AT HILLTOP PARK, N.Y., CIRCA 1912. HILLTOP PARK WAS HOME OF THE NEW YORK YANKEES FROM 1903 TO 1912, WHEN THEY WERE KNOWN AS THE "HIGHLANDERS." (GEORGE GRANTHAM BAIN COLLECTION / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION)

Kezar Falls, Lord entered Bates as a 22-year-old first-year student.

By tradition, the first big campus event each fall was the freshman-sophomore baseball game. With bragging rights at stake and accompanied by what *The Bates Student* called the "usual spectacular and noisy demonstration," the first years won, 9-3.

Lord led off for the first years and French batted cleanup. Classmate C.W. Messenger of Bangor – who would also become a major leaguer – batted fifth. Each had one hit in five at-bats. "The freshmen have some promising material," *The Bates Student* observed.

From there, the talented first-year trio turned to football. On Sept. 24, the season opened on Garcelon Field with a 6-0 win over New Hampshire State. On a team of thirty, Messenger subbed in at right halfback. Lord and French did not play.

Holy Cross was next. Coming off an 8-2 season, "Holy Cross ranks with Harvard and Yale and is the strongest team that ever came to Maine," *The Lewiston Daily Sun* front page declared.

The Crusaders also featured a Maine connection and future Major Leaguer, first-year halfback Bill Carrigan, a Lewiston native who would play ten seasons for the Red Sox and manage two teams to World Series championships.

But Bates, with 159-pound Lord and 148-pound Messenger starting in the backfield, outrushed heavily favored Holy Cross 125 to 95 yards – but with a costly miscue.

"Had it not been for a fumble by Bates...touchdown undoubtedly would have been scored," *The Boston Globe* reported. Messenger was the culprit. The final score was 0-0.

Next up was Harvard, coming off a 9-3 season, including a 23-0 rout of Bates. After Messenger's fumble, head coach Royce Purinton, Class of 1900, shifted him to left end, making Lord the workhorse in an era when the forward pass was not yet legal.

In a downpour at Soldiers Field, Bates took the opening kickoff and drove for four first downs before Lord fumbled. But Bates held and drove again. "The whole Bates team was with Lord who was pulled along for six yards," the *Globe* wrote.

Eventually, Harvard prevailed 11-0 (at the time, touchdowns and extra points were five and one points, respectively). But Bates, whose heaviest man weighed 188 pounds, earned respect. "Harvard had a heavier line and backs and yet Bates was able to gain at will through Harvard's line," the *Boston Herald* wrote.



CREATED BY GEORGE FRENCH, HARRY LORD'S FRIEND AND BATES COLLEGE CLASSMATE, THIS POSTCARD DEPICTS LORD'S BIRTHPLACE IN KEZAR FALLS; HIS CAPTAINCY OF THE BRIDGTON ACADEMY TEAM PRIOR TO ENROLLING AT BATES; AND HIS CAPTAINCY OF THE BOSTON TEAM. THOUGH THE CARD REFERS TO BOSTON AS THE "AMERICANS," IT HAD ALREADY BECOME THE RED SOX BY THE TIME OF LORD'S 1910 CAPTAINCY.

Bates reeled off shutout wins against Maine (6-0) and the Pine Tree Athletic Association (40-0), before the much-anticipated Colby game. Special trains to Waterville accommodated the big crowds.

Bates won 23-0, highlighted by two Lord touchdown runs, including one of eighty yards. “Lord had the longest TD run in the game, carrying the ball through the Colby line, hurdling her secondary...then a magnificent run of 80 yards, followed closely but hopelessly by Capt. Pugsley,” the *Daily Sun* rhapsodized.

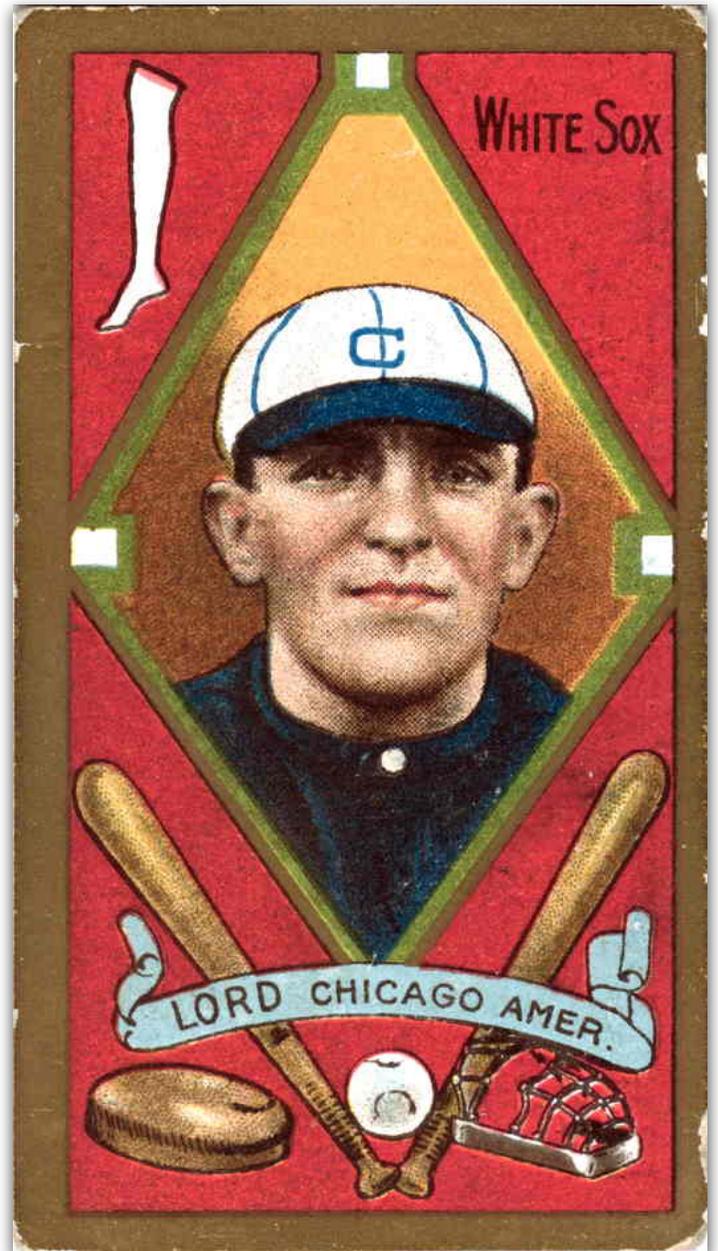
“Bates Whales 'Em,” blared the *Daily Sun*'s front page, though a subhead noted that the game was marred by fisticuffs: “Slugging Used Freely by Both Sides.” Indeed, penalties for slugging – which back then often referred to hitting an opponent *during* a play, as a dirty way of blocking– were flagged throughout. Lord was ejected late in the game, with French replacing him. Messenger topped off the rout with three extra-point kicks and a fake kickoff recovered by Bates.

The season finale at Bowdoin, with the Maine State Championship at stake, attracted 3,500 fans. Both teams were 2-0 in state play, and spectators ringed the field. Bates took a 6-0 lead, with Messenger kicking the extra point.

But Bowdoin came back with two touchdowns and led 12-6. With nine minutes left, according to the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Messenger shifted from end to half-back, replacing Lord, who left the game. On a crucial third down, with two yards to go for a first down, Messenger was stopped at midfield, resulting in a punt. Bates would have one more possession but could not move the ball. With the win, triumphant Bowdoin players were carried off the field on the shoulders of fans.

Why did Messenger replace Lord on that crucial third-down play, late in the game? Lord had rushed well all season, and Messenger had been relegated to end. The answer comes in a 1913 *Boston Post* story that recalls Lord's playing days. The game is not identified, but likely was the Bates-Bowdoin tilt.

“During one of those fierce clashes that always take place between Maine colleges in the struggle for football supremacy, Harry, one of Bates' halfbacks, had his leg



HARRY LORD'S BASEBALL CARD FROM THE T205 SERIES ISSUED BY THE AMERICAN TOBACCO CO. IN 1911 WHEN

LORD WAS WITH THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX.

(BENJAMIN K. EDWARDS COLLECTION / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION)

broken as a result of a savage, flying tackle. This may have been one big reason he never figured as a candidate for honors on the track (team).”

Bates ended 5-3-1. With such a talented first-year class, the team's future seemed bright.

That winter, the physical prowess of Messenger, French, and Lord was confirmed during strength workouts. “Some of the strongest men...are to be found in this

year's entering class," the *Student* noted. The top-20 list had Messenger at No. 1, French No. 3, and Lord No. 4.

That spring, with the three first-years in the lineup, Bates opened its 1905 baseball season at Garcelon on April 25, walloping Hebron Academy 12-4. Lord, leading off and playing third base, hit a home run and drove in two runs. Messenger, in center field, added three RBIs and two stolen bases. French, in right field, batted ninth.

"Cupid was accompanied by a young lady whose eyes soon made Harry lose sight of the benefits of a four-year's course and the crying needs of Bates' athletic prestige."

"Assured that Bates will be represented by a winning team this season. All are in good condition, and the new material is fast," the *Daily Sun* noted.

But then something unexpected happened: C.W. Messenger vanished from campus, never to appear again in a Bates uniform. The team stumbled along without him, and by the time Bates faced Maine on Garcelon Field on May 20, the team had just two wins against five losses.

Then, something unexpected happened again. After the game, another loss for Bates, "Cupid met Harry on the campus after the [Maine] game," as *The Boston Post* reported in a 1913 story. "Cupid was accompanied by a young lady whose eyes soon made Harry lose sight of the benefits of a four-year's course and the crying needs of Bates' athletic prestige."

Whether it was the lure of new love or for another reason, Lord, like Messenger a few weeks before, went AWOL. On Memorial Day, Lord missed the game vs. Bowdoin, and Bates lost 11-5 at home. Without Lord the infield was in shambles. "Bates scored more errors than Bowdoin did runs," the *Globe* wrote.

On June 7, Lord finally reappeared on a Maine baseball diamond — but now he was playing *against* Bates and *for* Portland of the Pine Tree Athletic Association, which was paying him \$25 per week. With Bates again making key errors, Portland won 3-1.



SCRAPPY, TOUGH, AND FAST — AND WITH A PUGNACIOUS PROFILE — HARRY LORD WAS THE PROTOTYPICAL THIRD BASEMAN, SEEN HERE WITH THE BOSTON RED SOX IN THIS UNDATED PHOTOGRAPH.

Without Messenger and now minus Lord, Bates continued to stumble, finishing at 3-13, its worst record in 21 years (though one of the wins was a dazzling 1-0 victory in eleven innings over Colby and its ace hurler, future major leaguer Jack Coombs).

Lord's new love was 17-year-old Hazel Hannaford of Cape Elizabeth. As the *Post* reported, the Bates "undergraduate body wrathfully bewailed the desertion of the star." And while accounts vary, the couple were likely married by October 1905.

After marrying, Lord tried to settle down, securing a job as a collector in Boston — but he was apparently not happy with the work part of his life. On Christmas Eve 1905, returning by boat to Portland, he happened upon Purinton, his Bates football coach, and vented his frustrations. "Why don't you try your hand at professional baseball?" suggested Purinton.

Through Purinton's connections, Lord hooked up with the New Bedford Whalers, an entry in the New England League. He later joined the Worcester Busters, where he batted .280 and led them to a flag.

Lord's breakout year was 1909.

In September 1907, then with the Providence Grays of the Eastern League, Lord belted a triple during an exhibition game against the major league Boston Americans, who brought Lord up for the last ten games of the season.

In 1908, the Americans changed their name to the Red Sox, and Lord was a member. Barely a month into the season, "Lord had electrified the entire American League," the *Post* wrote.

The Red Sox were dubbed the "Speed Boys," with Lord the fastest. Lord hit .259 with 145 hits, including fifteen doubles, six triples, two homers, and twenty-three stolen bases, but the Sox finished fourteen and a half games behind Detroit.

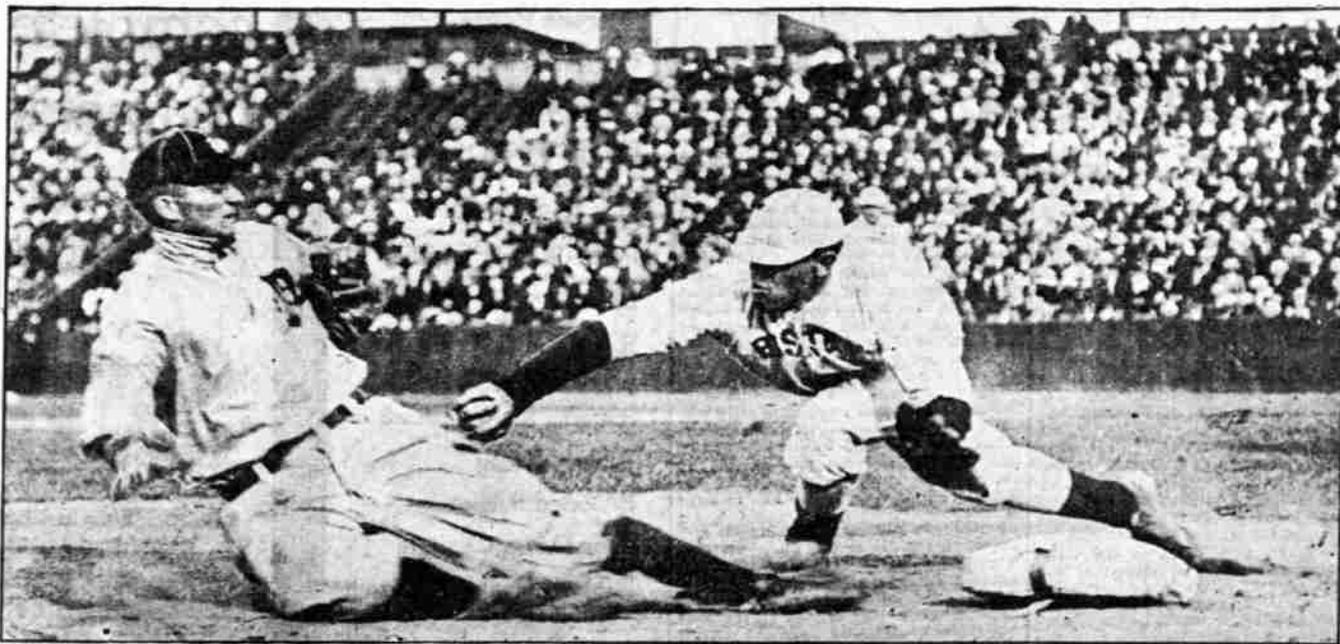
Lord's breakout year was 1909. With Tris Speaker joining the Sox, Lord became captain and batted .315, fourth in the AL, scoring eighty-nine runs and stealing thirty-six bases. On April 21, he stole home in a triple steal against Philadelphia. Still, the Sox finished nine and a half games behind Ty Cobb's Tigers.

The following year, on July 10 while facing the Washington Senators, Lord was struck on the left hand by a Walter Johnson fastball, breaking a finger. Despite team objections, he left to recuperate in Maine and was benched after his return.

A Cleveland paper wrote Lord was "money mad." Former teammate Cy Young egged him on: "You're being given a raw deal, Harry." Lord demanded a trade and got dealt to the Chicago White Sox on Aug. 9, hitting .297 over the last forty-four games of the 1910 season.

In 1911, as Chicago captain, Lord had perhaps his best season as a major leaguer, hitting .321 with 180 hits, 103 runs scored, and forty-three stolen bases. Noting his college experience, *The English News* called Lord "brainy."

HARRY LORD GETTING COBB AT THIRD BASE, ON HIS ATTEMPTED STEAL IN THE EIGHTH



A BOSTON GLOBE PHOTO AND HEADLINE FROM JUNE 4, 1909, EXPLAINS IT ALL: THIRD BASEMAN HARRY LORD OF THE BOSTON RED SOX TAGS TY COBB ON AN ATTEMPTED STEAL OF THIRD. THE TIGERS WON THE GAME 5-3 EN ROUTE TO THE PENNANT. IT IS SAID THAT THE TWO BECAME FRIENDS, EACH ADMIRING THE OTHER'S FEISTY STYLE.

In Chicago, Lord rejoined his old Bates backfield mate, Charles Walter Messenger. After pulling his vanishing act at Bates in 1905, Messenger had reappeared with Chicago in 1909, and by then was known as “Bobby.” The *Chicago Tribune*, discovering that the two were “old college chums [who] played together on the football team,” noted that “each says the other was a star player.”

And how fast were Lord and Messenger? In 1911, the latter would win a 100-yard dash, in 11 seconds, against the fastest American League players during a field-day event at White Sox Park and was later dubbed “the fastest pair of legs this side of the Mason-Dixon line” with Birmingham of the Class A Southern Association.

The former, during an exhibition game in 1910 that included skill contests, was timed from home to first in 3.4 seconds while bunting—nearly a second faster than today’s major leaguers. A 1909 *Boston Globe* story refers to Lord’s speed when describing his dash “nearly to the home plate” to catch a foul popup in 1909.

“Joe Jackson and Buck Weaver and the others would have listened to me,” Lord said. “I could have stopped it if I’d had to punch the ringleader in the nose.”

In his time with Chicago, Lord also settled a score, homering twice off Walter Johnson, the fireballer who had broken Lord’s finger and precipitated his Boston departure. (Johnson is statistically among the most difficult pitchers to homer off in baseball history.)

But Lord’s headstrong – and perhaps hardheaded, too – way of doing things, seen at Bates and in Boston, surfaced again. In 1914, he clashed with White Sox owner Charles Comiskey over salary and with manager Nixey Callahan over signals. After 21 games, the 32-year-old demanded, and got, his release.

Out of baseball, he had free time. In June, the *Student* wrote that “Harry Lord of the Chicago White Sox” would appear in the first ever Alumni Parade at Reunion.

Over the next three years, Lord served as player-manager with Buffalo Blues of the “outlaw” Federal League. He



BATTING LEFT-HANDED ALLOWED HARRY LORD, SEEN HERE WITH THE CHICAGO WHITE SOX, TO MAKE THE MOST OF HIS BLAZING SPEED.

(HARRIS & EWING / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION)

also played for Lowell, Mass., in the New England League, for Gardiner, Maine, in a semi-pro league, and for Portland of the Eastern League.

In 1918, Lord intersected with Bates again. With Purinton serving in France during World War I with the YMCA, Lord stepped in as baseball coach. “Harry Lord Arrives!” the *Daily Sun* declared on April 22. He coached Bates to a 44 record in a war-shortened season.

As for C.W. “Bobby” Messenger, despite a 17-year pro career in which he was dubbed “the human flash of speed,” he played only 54 games in the majors. The rest were spread over fifteen teams, in twelve states, at all levels. Messenger was a baseball nomad. After retiring, he returned to Maine, became an elected Sheriff, and solved murders splashed across the front pages of the *New York Times*. He died in 1951, age 67, in Bath, Maine.

As for their classmate George French, he actually graduated from Bates. French served as the official Maine state photographer from 1936 to 1955, winning more than 200 awards, including a medal from the Photo-

graphic Salon in Tokyo. All his prints and negatives reside today in the Maine State Archives.

French died in 1970, age 87, having said that “I hope to leave a monument to a life devoted to picturing the beautiful side of the great outdoors.”

➤ Out of professional baseball after nine years, Harry Lord finally did settle down, entering the grocery and coal businesses in Portland. He became a Mason, joined the Rotary Club, coached at South Portland High School, and served on the South Portland school board and in the Maine House of Representatives as a Republican.

In 1948, Lord died at age 66 and was buried in Kezar Falls. Lord’s wife, Hazel, survived him and herself went on to serve three terms in the Maine Legislature. She died in 1974. Also surviving were a son, Harry Jr., and daughter Corrine, Bates Class of 1927.

In 2018, after the death of Lord’s grandson, a team photograph of Lord, Cobb, Johnson, Speaker, and others,

taken at an unofficial 1910 all-star game at American League Park in Washington, went to auction. It showed an American League All-Star team that played five games against the AL Champ Philadelphia Athletics just before the World Series. The vintage photo, arguably of the ➤ “first ever” All-Star game, sold for \$6,063.

In photographs, Lord’s jutting jaw is prominent, a physical signal of a competitive nature that marked his career – regardless of Lord’s team. In his later years, the old White Sox captain expressed a regret born of a competitor, that he was not there to stop his Sox from throwing the infamous 1919 World Series.

“Joe Jackson and Buck Weaver and the others would have listened to me,” Lord said. “I could have stopped it if I’d had to punch the ringleader in the nose.”

This story was originally published in Bates Magazine in October 2020.

➤ www.bates.edu/news/2020/10/20/meet-headstrong-harry-lord-bates-lord-of-the-baseball-diamond



THIS TEAM PHOTO FROM AN UNOFFICIAL ALL-STAR GAME HELD PRIOR TO THE 1910 WORLD SERIES SHOWS HARRY LORD IN THE FRONT ROW, THIRD FROM RIGHT. TY COBB, WHO ADMIRERD LORD’S COMPETITIVE SPIRIT, IS FRONT ROW, FAR LEFT. WALTER JOHNSON, WHO BROKE LORD’S FINGER EARLIER THAT YEAR, IS STANDING, THIRD FROM RIGHT. TRIS SPEAKER IS STANDING, CENTER.

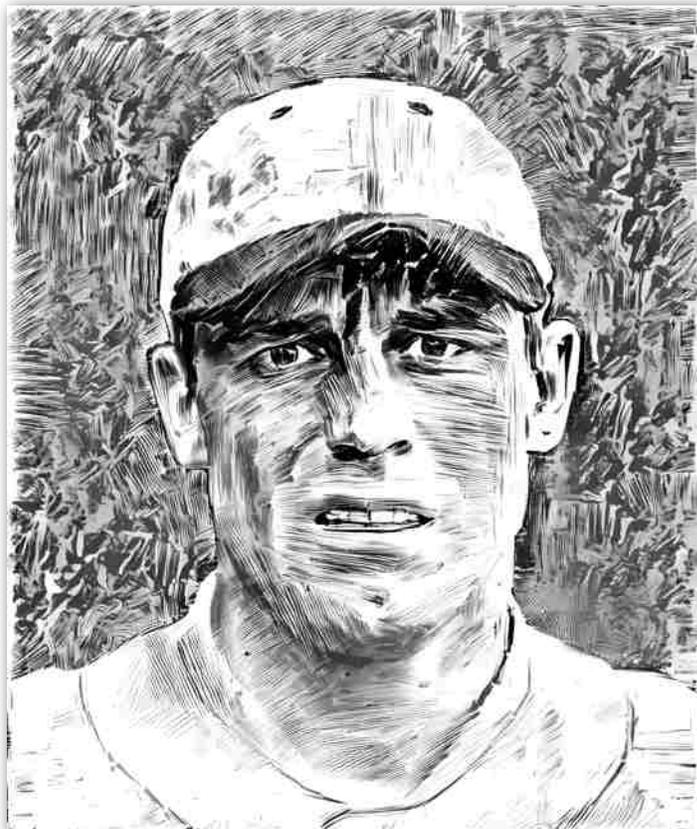
“TOO MODEST” – REVISITING GEORGE SISLER’S GREATEST DAY IN BASEBALL

by John Zinn

My enduring fascination with baseball history in general, and the Deadball Era in particular, began in the mid-1950s when I was about ten years old. Like most of my peers, I devoted every possible minute to playing baseball, watching baseball on television, and even listening to it on the radio – sometimes the only option at that time. Unlike most of my boyhood friends, however, I also read anything I could get my hands on about the game. Fortunately, my father was a teacher, so his access to the school library ensured a regular stream of baseball books. Although I’ve pretty much forgotten the names of the books I devoured over 60 years ago, there’s one I’ve never forgotten and never will forget – *My Greatest Day in Baseball*, by John P. Carmichael and published in 1945.¹ While the term wasn’t in use at the time, the book was a collection of oral histories that initially appeared in the *Chicago Daily News*.

The player memories I read in the mid-1950s were drawn from the first half of the 20th century, but those from the Dead Ball Era caught the eye of this ten-year-old ... and the intricacies of “inside baseball” were so intriguing I was hooked for life.

My Greatest Day anticipated, and in large measure has been replaced by, Lawrence Ritter’s classic, *The Glory of Their Times*.² Although the stories in Carmichael’s earlier work were much shorter than Ritter’s, Carmichael has the advantage of including the memories of legendary greats like Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb, who were dead by the time Ritter began his quest to preserve baseball’s past. Interestingly, when the series began in the *Chicago Daily News* on January 23, 1943, it was limited to the memories of the paper’s sportswriters. However, the demand for more was so great the paper reached out to the players themselves and the series continued for several years.³ The player memories I read in the mid-1950s were drawn from the first half of the 20th



GEORGE SISLER

century, but those from the Dead Ball Era caught the eye of this ten-year-old. Stories of overflow crowds watching from roped-off sections of the outfield, morning-afternoon doubleheaders played on an unfamiliar holiday called Decoration Day, and the intricacies of “inside baseball” were so intriguing I was hooked for life.

There have been multiple editions of *My Greatest Day*, and the specific version I read back in the 1950s has long since faded from my memory. For this article, I’m working with the 1945 edition, which has 47 total stories, 17 from the Deadball Era. With one notable exception, the players from the early twentieth century recalled pennant races, the World Series, historic achievements or controversies, especially the famous Merkle game in 1908. The exception is that of George Sisler. His story stands out because although he was one of the game’s greatest hitters and fielders, Sisler chose a game of no real significance that he pitched during his rookie season. While Sisler’s achievements are no secret to readers of this journal, it’s worth emphasizing he had

a .340 lifetime batting average and twice hit over .400. For many years, he held the record for hits in a season (257) and the longest hitting streak in American League history (41 games).

With so many possibilities, why choose a game from a short-lived and not especially distinguished aspect of his career? The August 29, 1915, game was so important to Sisler because he pitched against and defeated his boyhood idol, Walter Johnson.

This article will revisit George Sisler's account of his greatest day in baseball by comparing his version to contemporary newspaper accounts and the historical record. The comparison and especially the differences, some of which are significant, will give a better sense of Sisler as a man and a player.

The first interesting difference is that Sisler didn't mention that the August 29 game was not the first time he pitched against Johnson. Less than a month earlier, on August 2, the two faced off in a game that was pretty much over when Sisler gave up three runs in the first inning. It's possible Sisler was concerned his claim in the Carmichael book of being so nervous he couldn't sleep the night before the August 29 game would have been less credible if readers knew he had recently pitched against Johnson.⁴ Considering Sisler's high regard for Johnson, however, it's more likely he thought mentioning a prior loss could have given the game an aspect of revenge, something Sisler wanted to avoid with his boyhood idol.

The August 29, 1915, game was so important to Sisler because he pitched against and defeated his boyhood idol, Walter Johnson.

Had Sisler wanted to embellish his anxiety about the game, he could have described the runup to the duel but, for some reason, chose not to do so. According to Sisler, almost a week before the game, *St. Louis Star* sportswriter Billy Murphy claimed Sisler would pitch against Johnson, which was news to both Sisler and his manager, Branch Rickey.⁵ Murphy did indeed write an article about the matchup, but it appeared the day before the game and was devoted to excoriating Johnson



WALTER JOHNSON – PERHAPS THE REAL HERO OF GEORGE SISLER'S GREATEST DAY IN BASEBALL

for reneging on a commitment to sign with the upstart Federal League.⁶

Regardless of the validity of Murphy's animosity towards the great Washington pitcher, the fierce competition between the Federal League St. Louis Terriers and the city's National and American League franchises for the St. Louis baseball market was the reason for pitting the rookie and the veteran against each other. In order to build attendance for the August 29 game, Washington manager Clark Griffith reportedly agreed to the Browns request to hold Johnson back a day so he could pitch against the Sisler, the St. Louis phenom.⁷ In response, the Federal League club moved up a single game scheduled for Monday to play a doubleheader directly opposite the American League game.⁸ In the end, the attraction of a twin bill and lower ticket prices prevailed as the

Terriers drew a crowd reported as 9,000 or 11,000, while 6,000 made their way to Sportsman's Park.⁹ This stage managing of the matchup put more pressure on Sisler and gave him more reason to be nervous, but he failed to mention it.

In the end, the Johnson-Sisler matchup proved to be a pitchers' duel worthy of the advance, if somewhat contrived, billing. Washington scored once in the top of the first, aided by a St. Louis error, while the Browns tallied twice in the bottom of the second when Washington returned the favor. The three unearned runs proved to be all the scoring. The two pitchers were so dominant Sisler needed only nine pitches to retire the side in the fourth and fifth innings combined, while Johnson set down St. Louis on a mere three pitches in the sixth.¹⁰ Although there isn't much difference between Sisler's account and those in the contemporary media, he made some interesting omissions. After the Browns scored twice in the second, they had runners on first and third, with only one out and Sisler himself at the plate. The St. Louis rookie failed to come through, striking out as Johnson escaped a threat that could have put the game out of reach.¹¹ Considering striking out in that situation was to Johnson's credit at Sisler's expense, it's a little surprising he failed to mention it. More in keeping with Sisler's modest approach is his omission of how he shrugged off a line drive that hit him in the shins at the top of the seventh. Reportedly the crowd feared the sound of "ball and bone" meant his leg was broken, but Sisler shrugged it off and just kept on pitching.¹²

In the end, the attraction of a twin bill and lower ticket prices prevailed as the Terriers drew a crowd reported as 9,000 or 11,000, while 6,000 made their way to Sportsman's Park.

Also interesting is a play late in the game that not only Sisler, but also the St. Louis sportswriters omitted. In the top of the eighth, with the St. Louis rookie trying to hold on to his slim one-run lead, Washington had pinch-runner Horace Milan on first base with one out. A bunt put Milan, playing in his first major league game, on second base in scoring position. What escaped



DEL PRATT'S USE OF A TRICK PLAY HELPED PRESERVE SISLER'S GREATEST DAY IN BASEBALL

Milan's notice ~ and, with far less excuse, that of Manager Clark Griffith, who was coaching at first ~ was that St. Louis second baseman Del Pratt hid the ball under his right arm. While Sisler moved "around the hill in pretense of being ready to pitch," Griffith ordered the unsuspecting Milan to move further off second base. Meanwhile, "Step by step [Pratt] walked away from the bag, and then ... ran and took a dive" to tag out the unsuspecting Milan. Needless to say, the "fans gave Griff and Moran the laugh."¹³

Exactly why the local media and Sisler failed to mention this classic piece of Deadball Era trickery isn't clear. Far more important, however, is why a player of Sisler's stature not only picked this game as his greatest day in baseball, but also how he told the story. Sisler is supposed to be the story's focal point, but over one-third of the paragraphs are about Walter Johnson. In fact, the

story opens with three paragraphs about the “Big Train” and closes with two more about the Hall of Fame pitcher. While it’s probably fair to say that most of the memories in *My Greatest Day* aren’t of the bragging variety, they understandably feature players recalling something they did well. The closest Sisler gets to saying something positive about himself is admitting, he “got by all right” in the second inning.¹⁴ Such self-effacement may also explain Sisler’s failure to mention the hot shot off his shins, his part in the eighth inning trick play, and needing only nine pitches to retire six batters. Indeed, what is more surprising is his failure to mention being struck out by his idol in the second inning.

Sisler’s modest approach to his greatest day in baseball would have been no surprise to those who knew him. Responding to Detroit Manager Hughie Jennings’ warning early in Sisler’s career, that too much publicity would hurt him, the *Akron Beacon Journal* (where Sisler played high school baseball) retorted, “It may even be said that George is too modest.”¹⁵ Echoing that sentiment was Branch Rickey, Sisler’s first manager and mentor who knew something about baseball players’ egos. Praising Sisler’s innate modesty, Rickey noted “he meticulously observes all the proprieties of self-effacement in speech and action.”¹⁶ According to Sisler’s biographer, Rick Huhn, “if forced to talk about the sport, his focus was on his teammates, never himself.”¹⁷

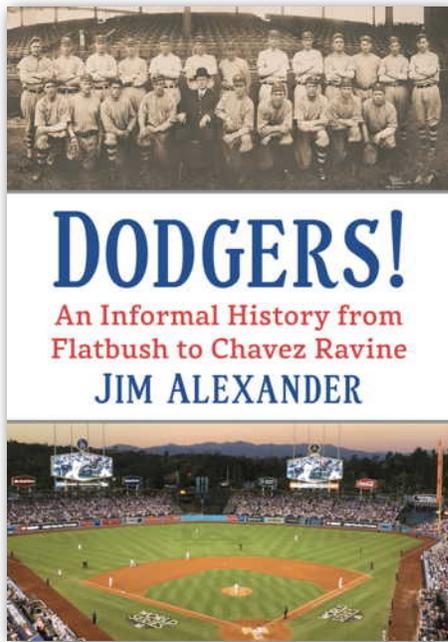
Given the chance to choose his greatest day in baseball, Sisler wasn’t going to miss the opportunity to talk about his idol, Walter Johnson. Sisler’s approach to baseball and life was clearly an example for his contemporaries. By taking the same approach to his most treasured baseball memory, George Sisler enabled his example to be remembered by everyone who reads his story, now and forever.

ENDNOTES

1. *My Greatest Day in Baseball*, (New York, New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1945).
2. Lawrence S. Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times: The Story Of The Early Days Of Baseball Told By The Men Who Played It*, (New York, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966).
3. Lloyd Lewis “My Greatest Day in Baseball,” *Chicago Daily News*, January 23, 1943, 18, February 10, 1943, 2.
4. *My Greatest Day*, 160.
5. *My Greatest Day*, 160.
6. Billy Murphy, “Pitching Stars’ Conflict Sunday At Sportsman’s Park Will Be A Feast For The Gods,” *St. Louis Star*,” August 28, 1915, 8, Daniel R. Levitt, *The Battle that Forged Modern Baseball: The Federal League Challenge and Its Legacy*, (Lanham Maryland, Ivan R. Dee, 2012), 172-76.
7. J. Ed Grillo, “Great Support Aids Harper To Win Contest In St. Louis,” (Washington) *Evening Star*, August 28, 1915, 8, J. B. Sheridan, “Lowdermilk Allows 1 Clean Bingle; Senators Capture Game at That,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, August 28, 1915, 6.
8. “Sisler vs. Johnson and a Double Bill Are Rival Attractions Today,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 29, 1915, 23.
9. The Sportsman’s Park attendance came from www.retrosheet.org while the differing Federal League totals are from J.V. Linck, “Feds with Cut Rates Score Over Brownies,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, August 30, 1915, 6 and “Notes About Nationals and Browns,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 1915, 8.
10. “Notes About Nationals and Browns,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 1915, 8.
11. Stanley T. Milliken, “Griffmen Fall For Hidden Ball Trick; Kills Rally and Chance to Win Game,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 1915, 8.
12. William J. O’Connor, “Sisler, Reported Cost Cost \$10,000, Has Easily Earned It,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 30, 1915, 12.
13. Milliken, *Washington Post*, August 30, 1915, 8.
14. *My Greatest Day*, 161.
15. “Publicity Won’t Spoil Sisler,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, May 30, 1913, 8.
16. Quoted in Rick Huhn, *The Sizzler: George Sisler, Baseball’s Forgotten Great*, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2004), LOC 950.
17. Huhn, LOC 2351.

The offer of an automobile to the best batter in the American and National leagues has caused many of the husky athletes to rub the dust out of their eyes and hit a clip they haven’t done for some seasons.

Toledo News-Bee, May 5, 1910



DODGERS!: AN INFORMAL HISTORY FROM FLATBUSH TO CHAVEZ RAVINE

by **Jim Alexander**

2022, McFarland

[ISBN: 978-1476688060. 412 pp.]

\$49.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Thomas J. Holmes**

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Author Jim Alexander takes the reader on a 32-chapter journey through the history of the Dodgers. Alexander begins by reliving one of baseball's most iconic moments, Kirk Gibson's home run off of Dennis Eckersley in game one of the 1988 World Series. The first chapter covers that historic at-bat and the events leading up to it. You can hear Vin Scully's voice in your head as he, and only he, can paint the picture with words. You feel as if you are sitting right next to him.

The second chapter brings readers back to the beginning of Dodgers baseball, or should I say Atlantics baseball. The following chapters flow through the history of the franchise stopping at significant turning points. The story begins with the origins of the franchise in the American Association in 1884, recounting anecdotes around the franchise's various names. Alexander spices the book up with short biographies of key players such

as Zach Wheat, Pee Wee Reese, and of course Jackie Robinson.

The book encompasses the entire history of the Dodger franchise. Finances and the move to Los Angeles is covered in great depth, as is, for example, Tommy Lasorda's passion and fire for the game, Fernandomania, and the rise and fall of talent on the field and the front office. All topics are analyzed and explained clearly enough for non-baseball fans to understand. In Alexander's telling, it all leads back to the 1988 World Series. Until then, the 1955 world series championship was the glory moment for Dodger fans. Nevertheless, Alexander continues with the story past the 1988 heroics, including the painful moments of losing star catcher Mike Piazza and the sale of the team. Money problems and mismanagement brought dark days, but a resurgence of the team's fortunes behind Clayton Kershaw and others brought back October baseball to The Ravine.

As a baseball fan, I found this book to be a very interesting read. It covered an intimate and personal moment within the franchise's history with the Gibson home run. I knew of it. I saw the video highlight multiple times, but I never truly understood its impact. After reading the first chapter, I was energized to read on. I found the details of the franchise's origin in Brooklyn to be fascinating. With its long story arc, starting from the very beginning of the Dodgers existence, this book a good read for anyone wanting a solid overview of the team and its history.

In Chapter 28, Alexander describes the 2017 World Series in an interesting manner. The Series outcome is

VIRTUAL BOOK TALK

On February 15, SABR's Deadball Era Committee hosted its first Book Talk virtual meeting. The guest was Rick Huhn, author of *Eddie Collins: A Baseball Biography*; *The Chalmers Race: Ty Cobb, Napoleon Lajoie, and the Controversial 1910 Batting Title That Became a National Obsession*; and *The Sizzler: George Sisler, Baseball's Forgotten Great*.

The recording can be viewed at ✉ www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSVpqlPbWgE.

analyzed in three parts. He begins the chapter from the Dodgers point of view. The Dodgers lost the Series. October heartbreak occurred once again. Alexander questions coach Dave Roberts's tactics. Statistics are reviewed. What could Roberts have done better? Then the sign-stealing scandal broke. Alexander dissects the advantages the Astros could have achieved under a sign-stealing operation. In the end, Alexander takes a unique and unpopular approach to defend the Astros and demonstrate that they did not steal signs.

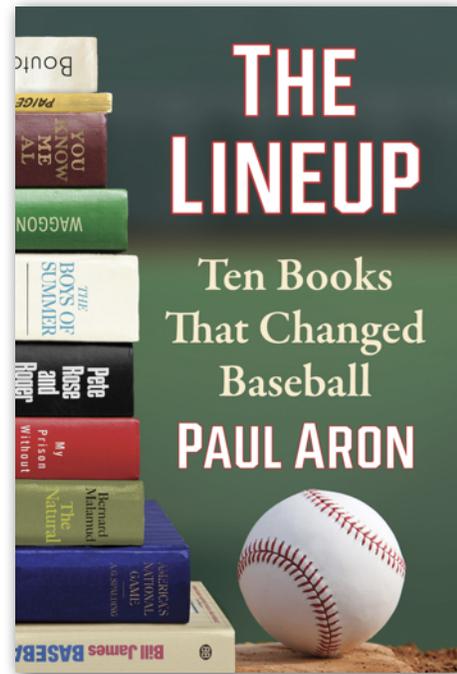
The Deadball Era did not get much attention. It was principally briefly discussed during the condensed biographies of Zack Wheat and Dazzy Vance (who began his career in the Deadball Era). It was isolated to one chapter.

The readability for non-baseball fans is there. Statistics are used but are easily explained. Readers are brought along on the story and back stories are added for clarification. Certain aspects and details are carried from one chapter to create a coherent, enjoyable narrative.

This book answers many questions. Why was New York lucky enough to have three teams at one time? Why did they move to Los Angeles? Why did it take 32 years to win another championship? I truly feel that this book answered these questions. In addition, Alexander's research was extensive. Alexander was a writer for multiple publications and covered the Dodgers for many years. He had the luxury of face-to-face meetings and being an eyewitness to many of the more recent stories told in his book.



George McManus 1902



THE LINEUP: TEN BOOKS THAT CHANGED BASEBALL

by Paul Aron

2022, McFarland

[ISBN: 978-1476688305. 237 pp.]

\$29.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by Stephen Bratkovich

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If I could only read one baseball book, what would it be? Aren't all baseball books, just about "baseball?" Is there a book that on a special occasion, I should consider buying for the baseball fan in my life? These questions, and many others, are grappled with in Paul Aron's book, *The Lineup: Ten Books that Changed Baseball*.

Baseball fans, young and old, all have their own lineup of important books. However, Aron states on page one of the preface that, "I make no claim that these [10] are the *best* baseball books ever written." *The Lineup* is a book about influence rather than quality of the books selected.

What are the ten books? And how did they change the game and make waves in American society? The back cover of the book is a good summary of a portion of the contents.

Aron states: “Satchel Paige’s *Pitchin’ Man* informed the dialog of integration. Ring Lardner’s *You Know Me Al* changed the way Americans viewed their baseball heroes and influenced Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Bill James’s *Baseball Abstract* transformed the way managers – including those in fields other than baseball – analyzed numbers. Pete Rose’s *My Story* and *My Prison Without Bars* exposed and deepened a cultural divide that paved the way for Donald Trump.”

Other books in Aron’s top-ten include A.G. Spalding’s *America’s National Game*, Bernard Malamud’s *The Natural*, Jim Bouton’s *Ball Four*, Roger Kahn’s *The Boys of Summer*, and Glen Waggoner’s *Rotisserie League Baseball*.

Two of Aron’s books – *Pitchin’ Man* and *The Boys of Summer* – are highlighted in this review to demonstrate how Aron approached the daunting task of selecting, in his words, “...ten books that changed America.”

Pitchin’ Man: Satchel Paige’s Own Story from 1948 made Aron’s top-ten list but books by/about Jackie Robinson did not. Why is this, baseball fans will rightly ask? In *The Lineup* the author acknowledges that Robinson, “...is almost universally recognized for having not only integrated baseball but for having paved the way for integrating America.” However, Aron argues, *Pitchin’ Man*, best captured this moment in our country’s history. Stated another way, *Jackie Robinson: My Own Story*, also from 1948, was not as important as Paige’s *Pitchin’ Man*, according to the author. “Jackie opened the door,’ said Minnie Minoso, a Negro leaguer who joined Paige on the Cleveland Indians in 1949, but ‘it was Satchel who inserted the key.’”

Indeed, Paige played in the Negro leagues many years before reaching the white major leagues, and his book, per Aron, better captured the flavor of growing up in a predominately white America. Also, Paige barnstormed against white major leaguers. His pitching forced sportswriters, fans, and officials to acknowledge that Black players belonged in the white majors.

In the 1940s, there were numerous profiles on Paige in *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Life*, plus numer-

ous newspaper stories, all calling for big league teams to give him a shot. Plus, the publicity on Paige made it difficult to ignore the talent of other Negro League stars.

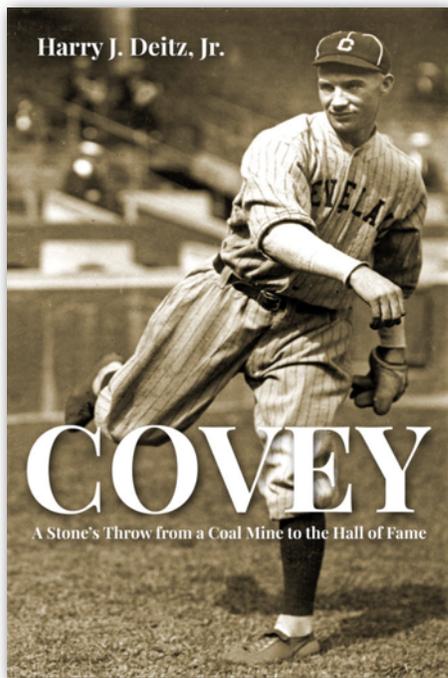
The Boys of Summer by Roger Kahn, published in 1972, is roughly divided into two sections: reminisces about growing up in Brooklyn and discussions with Dodgers players more than a decade after they’d retired. Aron devotes most of his discussion to the former.

The Lineup relates Kahn’s (and many others) dismay, trauma, and sense of betrayal, with the Dodgers move to L.A. To say the Dodgers were an integral part of Brooklyn is a vast understatement. The Brooklyn of many residents’ memory is one where immigrants were proud of striving to make it in America, proud of their caring-for-one-another neighborhoods, and proud of their team. In an era before players were millionaires, many lived next door to their fans. Aron describes other books that focus on Brooklyn’s decline, but contends, “no book could match the eloquence and influence of *The Boys of Summer*.”

Furthermore, Aron considers the importance of Kahn’s exploration of his difficult relationship with his father. “Kahn was not the first to write about fathers and sons (and sometimes daughters) and baseball,” Aron wrote “...but he surely inspired others to pick up on the theme.”

Aron identifies *Fathers Playing Catch with Sons* and *Baseball Fathers, Baseball Sons* as two other examples of this theme. This style of writing-reviewing and highlighting similarities and differences with other books—is evident in the other chapters. *The Lineup* not only reviews the ten most influential baseball books but compares them with other works.

Don’t worry, though, if you believe ten baseball books can’t possibly capture “the most influential” works of writers. *The Lineup*, also devotes 61 pages to 50 “Other Influential Books.” *The Lineup* is a quick and easy read of 229 pages, including chapter notes, bibliography, and index. I highly recommend the book to all SABR members.



COVEY: A STONE'S THROW FROM A COAL MINE TO THE HALL OF FAME

by **Harry J. Deitz, Jr.**

2022, Sunbury Press

[ISBN: 978-1620060810. 206 pp.]

\$19.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Rich Arpi**

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I always enjoy reading biographies of lesser known Hall of Famers, and the recent biography of Stanley Coveleski by Harry J. Deitz, Jr. is no exception. The complete title of the book is *Covey: A Stone's Throw from a Coal Mine to the Hall of Fame*, further subtitled: "The life story of Stan Coveleski, who escaped the Pennsylvania coal mines and became a Hall-of-Fame baseball pitcher." Although the title is almost as long as the book itself, this book was an enjoyable read. The author, a retired newspaper editor, and like Covey a native of Shamokin, PA, has done a masterful job of documenting the life and career (1912-1928) of this pitcher who spanned the Deadball and Liveball Eras and was often referred to as the "Silent Pole."

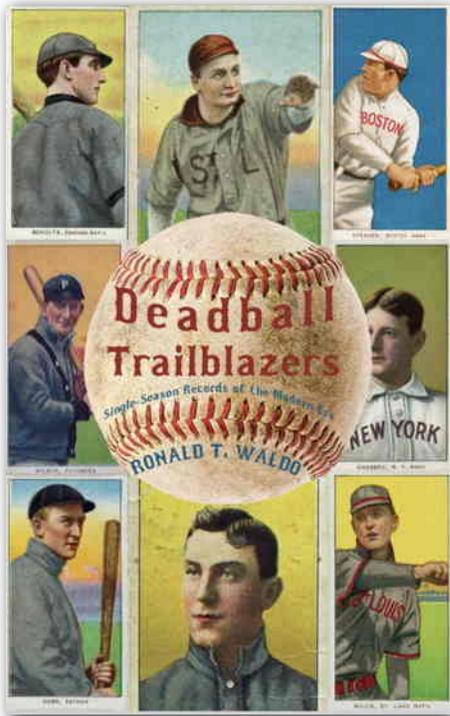
This book of 206 pages from cover to cover contains almost 40 pages of endnotes, career stats, afterword,

statement on sources, acknowledgements, and timeline. Deitz also includes a listing of all his 450 major league games and box scores from his first major league game, a 19-inning game in 1918 against the Yankees, and his World Series games from 1920 and 1925. *Covey* also contains many never before published photographs and a listing of about 20 immediate family members.

The nine chapters go well beyond the oft-told tales of Covey learning his spectacular control by throwing rocks at tin cans as a youngster and a simple recounting of his minor and major league career and his life after retirement in South Bend, Indiana. In one of the most notable parts of the book, found in the last chapter, Dietz presents quotes from Covey, fellow ball players, and writers about the normally taciturn hurler. He seems to have found everything written about Covey, including reminiscences of many relatives, mainly of him as an older man. Lack of an index, however, might irritate some readers.

Although Larry Ritter had a chapter on Covey in his ground-breaking, *The Glory of Their Times*, and Eugene Murdock has an oral history interview with Covey in his oral history book, this is the first full length bio of Covey other than his SABR Bio Project article written by Dan Levitt. Covey, one of several spitball pitchers grandfathered in to use his spitball after the pitch was banned, had 215 wins in 14 seasons with a .620 winning percentage. Also, his five 20-win seasons and three wins in the 1920 World Series deserve more recognition than they have received to date.

Dietz has helped spread the word about Covey to the baseball world with this valuable biography. After all, how many men marry sisters? Covey's first wife, Mary, died in 1920, the same year as his teammate Ray Chapman, and her younger sister, Frances, took care of their two young boys (aged 4 years and 8 months at the time of their mother's death) during the summers immediately after Mary's death. Stan and Frances eventually married in 1924, and as Covey said, "might as well keep it in the family." Somehow my brain keeps replaying Mel Allen's signature saying, "How about that."



DEADBALL TRAILBLAZERS

by **Ronald T. Waldo**

2022, Sunbury Press

[ISBN: 978-1620068991. 317 pp.]

\$19.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Dave Lande**

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The modern era of baseball, as commonly defined today, began in 1900. It was during the two decades at the start of the twentieth century, the Deadball Era (1901-1919), that many individual modern records were established, especially in the notable year of 1912. The majority of these records were of the positive variety, but some were of a more adverse nature.

Ronald T. Waldo, a Pittsburgh author and historian with a focus on the Deadball Era, has written *Deadball Trailblazers*, a book devoted to 12 of the individual modern records set during the Deadball Era and the players who set these records. But as much as the book is about the players and the records they set, it's also about the era, one in which modern baseball first took form.

In his book, Waldo describes these 12 records in chronological order in 12 chapters starting in 1901 and

ending in 1916. Two records were set in 1904 and three were established in 1912. Some of them have since been broken and some are likely to never be broken.

One of the strengths of the book is that as a result of the 12 records Waldo has selected, the players who set these records include seven Hall of Famers, three others not in the Hall of Fame but who had notable careers, and two players who had brief and relatively anonymous tenures in the majors. Waldo starts each chapter with a biography of the player, his path through the minor leagues (sometimes short and sometimes quite long), and his major league career up to the year in which the record was set.

It's this variety of baseball players, their backgrounds, and their baseball careers that make the book all the more interesting. Some had to overcome parental objections to pursue a baseball career (including more than one Hall-of-Famer), some had issues with alcohol abuse, some pursued an off-season career in vaudeville, one had a firefighting avocation, and it seems as if every player at one time or another had a salary dispute with his team. It's this diversity of achievements and hurdles that add to the richness of the player biographies.

The portions of each chapter devoted to the seasons in which records were set is where Waldo faces the challenge of keeping the reader engaged in the stories. Waldo does this by not simply reciting the season in which the record was set in drone-like fashion but by telling the story of the team as it goes through the season, including the record-setting player, his teammates, and his manager. With his writing style, Waldo effectively weaves all of these into an interesting season-long story and absorbing narrative.

The most compelling of the 12 record-setting stories is that of Rube Marquard, who set the record of 19 consecutive wins in 1912. As Waldo states in this chapter, "For one Deadball Era pitcher, the path to fame was a dreadfully rough trip, which genuinely challenged his spirit and grit." Waldo is quite effective as he relates the pressure Marquard was under as he continued his season-long streak to 19 consecutive victories.

The greatest challenge to the reader of *Deadball Trailblazers* is getting through the three chapters devoted to

the negative records: most errors in a season, most losses for a pitcher in a season, and most consecutive losses for a pitcher in a season. Although reading through these three chapters is not for the faint of heart or the casual baseball fan, Waldo does an excellent job in showing how these seasons came to be and how the teams they played for had no realistic options but to utilize these players as they did.

Ironically, the pitcher who set the record for the most loses in a season, Vic Willis, was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1995 by the Veteran's Committee. The two players who set records for most errors in a season (John Gochnaur) and most consecutive losses by a pitcher (Jack Nabors) both had brief three-year major league careers.

Although the focus of the book is on the 12 records and the players who set them, another strength of the book is to serve as an anecdotal history of the Deadball Era. While the book is not presented as a comprehensive history of the era, stories about the individuals, issues, and idiosyncrasies of the time abound in each chapter.

Numerous times, players were honored before, during, or after games with clothes, flowers, bags of tobacco, a gold watch, or some other item. Games were shortened so teams could catch a train to the next city. Fly balls

that bounced over an outfield fence were home runs. Teams were forbidden from tinkering with a baseball (such as putting tabasco juice or disinfectant on a baseball) to discourage an opposing pitcher from throwing a spit ball. Frank Chance was beamed 38 times in his career. Frank Schulte broke about 50 bats each season. When Fenway Park opened in 1912, one Boston sportswriter complained about the ballpark's immense size.

Adding flavor to the book, Waldo includes slang and nomenclature used during the Deadball Era such as bingles (base hits); the willow, stick, or cudgel (baseball bat); the bump (the pitcher's mound); the pill (baseball); taking the collar (going hitless in a game); dub (bum); and slab artist (pitcher).

At the conclusion of each chapter, Waldo cites cases whereby subsequent research has adjusted some of the record-breaking statistics as well as cases whereby inclusion of Negro League statistics has resulted in new record-holders. He has done exhaustive research for this marvelous book, backed by 52 pages of endnotes and an eight-page bibliography, including books, newspapers, magazines, and websites. Overall, this is a fun book for any enthusiast of the Deadball Era or baseball records in general.

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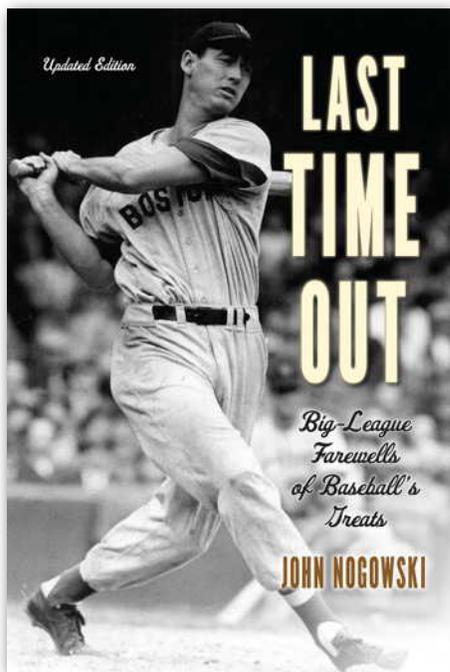
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Pittsburg Press, April 14, 1909



LAST TIME OUT: BIG-LEAGUE FAREWELLS OF BASEBALL'S GREATS

by John Nogowski

2022, Lyons Press

[ISBN: 978-1493066537. 328 pp.]

\$22.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Bill Felber**

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The first and most important thing to say about *Last Time Out* is that its author, John Nogowski, is an excellent writer. That's important because although his chosen topic—the final appearances of the game's greats — can be a bit of a downer, Nogowski keeps the narrative entertaining and intelligent. That 'downer' hurdle shouldn't be ignored. Let's face it, this is a book focusing on the final swings or pitches of fading stars. With only a few exceptions, if those final appearances were triumphant or uplifting, the fading stars wouldn't be fading stars.

In essence, then, this is a book about heroes adapting to feet of clay. All the more reason for the writing to be fresh, lively and evocative...which it is from start to finish.

The 2022 version of *Last Time Out* is an update of a work Nogowski originally wrote two decades ago. For

those familiar with the original, then, the reviewer's most important task is to examine the new material, of which there is quite a bit. Among relatively recently retired players whose swan songs Nogowski documents are Roger Clemens, Barry Bonds, David Ortiz, Chipper Jones, Derek Jeter, and Mariano Rivera.

From a writing standpoint, however, both the most challenging and enjoyable final at bat Nogowski documents wasn't a final at bat at all, but a debut. It belonged to Nogowski's own son, John Nogowski Jr., during the 2020 Covid-shortened season.

A Cardinal farmhand, Nogowski got the call one August day when the Cardinals — who as you may recall were one of the most stricken teams in baseball that season—needed a first baseman for a doubleheader on Chicago's South Side. With his parents limited by quarantine to watching the game from their home, young Nogowski lined a one-hopper that second Danny Mendick made the play on. Three innings later, Nogowski Jr. picked up his first base hit. His dad's retelling of that entire played-in-isolation afternoon is laden with the graphic and emotional detail only a parent would think to retain.

The challenge of writing an interesting book about a theme as repetitive as our heroes' final failures — for with the rare exception of Ted Williams that's generally what occurs — is what makes Nogowski's writing skill so vital to the success of the book. After all, Babe Ruth grounded weakly to first, Pete Rose whiffed, Carl Yastrzemski popped out, Mark McGwire was lifted for a pinch hitter, and ...well, you get the idea.

The book is not without a few flaws, the most curious of which lies in Nogowski's retelling of the final at bat of legendary Pirate hero Roberto Clemente. As everybody recalls, Clemente's swan song was a ringing double to the wall in left-center on the final day of the 1972 regular season, for his 3,000th base hit. Except that was merely Clemente's final regular season at bat. Clemente's actual final at bat, less heroic in its nature but nonetheless real, came two weeks later in the fifth game of that fall's NLCS series with the Cincinnati Reds. It was a one-out intentional base on balls issued by Reds reliever Tom Hall in the top of the eighth at Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium. One inning later, the Reds pushed

across two runs to claim a 4-3 walk-off win and move to the World Series, which they would lose to the Oakland Athletics in seven games.

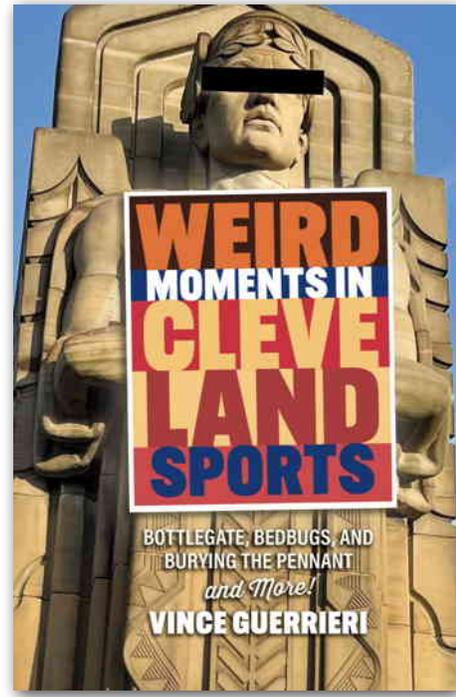
Given how many post-season final at bats he highlights in the book—Jackie Robinson in 1956, Sandy Koufax in 1966, Joe DiMaggio in 1951, David Ortiz’s in 2016—the switch in format concerning Clemente is either a deliberate decision made to enable Nogowski to retell the Clemente story for a new generation of fans or a case of an author getting so wrapped up in the Clemente narrative that he momentarily forgot his premise.

On a few occasions, Nogowski falls so in love with his sources that he literally adopts them. His penchant for quoting author Roger Angell at considerable length qualifies in that respect. Nogowski’s essay on the final pitching effort of Tom Seaver—retiring Toronto’s Tony Fernandez for Boston in September of 1986—is punctuated at one point by a more than 500-word quote from an Angell essay. A particular favorite of Nogowski, Angell is also quoted at length in Nogowski’s essays on Ted Williams and Carl Yastrzemski.

This book will not appeal to those looking for a saber-metric analysis. There are no new formulae here, no new methodology about how the game should be played, no profound discoveries. That’s not Nogowski’s thing. What is his thing is story-telling. For readers interested in quality story-telling, even if the stories involve the generally sad fadeouts of our heroes, this is an enjoyable, fast-paced book.

PUBLISHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As always, we would like to thank the publishers of the books reviewed in this issue for their generous support. *Dodgers!* and *The Lineup* are published by McFarland & Company, a longstanding and generous benefactor of this magazine. Readers interested can order the book by email (✉ info@mcfarlandpub.com), or telephone (800-253-2187). *Covey* and *Deadball Trailblazers* can be obtained from Sunbury Press (✉ www.sunburypress.com). *Last Time Out* comes to you from Lyons Press (✉ www.lyonspress.com), Gray and Company publishes *Weird Moments in Cleveland Sports* (✉ www.grayco.com/retailers-terms-sale). Your patronage is appreciated.



WEIRD MOMENTS IN CLEVELAND SPORTS: BOTTLEGATE, BEDBUGS, AND BURYING THE PENNANT

by **Vince Guerrieri**

2022, Gray & Company

[ISBN: 978-1598511239. 208 pp.]

\$16.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Stephanie Liscio**

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Every city that hosts professional sports can cite odd occurrences with the hometown teams throughout their history. Maybe it’s a player that does something bizarre on or off the field, or a one-of-a-kind fluke play that alters a team’s trajectory. The type of stories that become legend, passed down from fan to fan over time. However, there is one city that has so many of these weird incidents, across their professional teams, that it is enough to constitute an entire book. In *Weird Moments in Cleveland Sports: Bottlegate, Bedbugs, and Burying the Pennant* author Vince Guerrieri compiled a multitude of these unusual tales, so many that they had to be grouped into various categories like “on-field absurdity,” “athletes behaving badly,” “adventures in sports ownership,” and “front office follies.”

The various incidents range in time from the late nineteenth century up until the twenty-first century. Even though the Cleveland Guardians (formerly the Indians) are the oldest professional franchise (still in existence) in the city, their weird occurrences are seemingly dwarfed by a much younger franchise—the NFL’s Cleveland Browns. The earliest strange tale involves the baseball predecessor to the Guardians, the Spiders. Contained in the “adventures in ownership” section, it focuses on one of the worst teams in professional baseball history, the 1899 Spiders. Owner Frank Robison purchased a second team in St. Louis and moved the most talented players out of Cleveland and to his other roster. The “misfits” left behind in Cleveland finished the season with a 20-134 record, good for just a .129 winning percentage.

Another older baseball tale, but this time with the Indians, came in the “strange injuries” section of the book. In 1919 pitcher Ray Caldwell was injured in a lightning strike at League Park, an event the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* described as taking place with “as much noise as the backfiring of a thousand autos or the explosion of a dozen shells from a battery of big berthas.” Even though the strike left Caldwell unconscious on the pitching mound, after he regained consciousness (it took about five minutes) he asked for the ball and completed the game. A more modern injury in that section came when Indians reliever and September call-up Kyle Denney was actually shot while traveling on the team bus in Kansas City in 2004. While it’s bizarre enough that a stray bullet would randomly strike a Major League player on a team bus, Denney escaped more serious injury because he was wearing go-go boots. That day happened to be the infamous rookie hazing, where rookie players dressed up in various costumes. Denney was dressed as a USC cheerleader (chosen because they were ahead of his alma mater, the University of Oklahoma, in rankings at the time) and the bullet miraculously became lodged in the boot of his costume.

One of the events referenced in the book’s title, the burying of the pennant, took place at Cleveland Municipal Stadium in 1949 following the now-Guardians’ last World Series title in 1948. Owner Bill Veeck decided to create a spectacle when the team was officially eliminat-

ed from contention and created a mock funeral that would represent the death of the team’s chances for back-to-back world titles. The 1948 championship pennant was placed in a casket, and it was carried in a funeral procession beyond the outfield wall. Once there, it was buried in a small ceremony. The “larceny” chapter includes the now-infamous story of pitcher Jason Grimsley stealing back Albert Belle’s corked bat. During a 1994 game the umpires confiscated Belle’s bat under suspicion it had been altered; it was taken to the umpires’ locker room for safe keeping. Grimsley decided that he could solve this problem himself—by climbing through the ceilings to the locker room and switching Belle’s bat with a non-corked bat. The story didn’t become public at the time, but several years later Grimsley shared it with the world.

The book is a lot of fun to read, with short, punchy anecdotes about the various weird Cleveland sports events; it seems to fly by as you move through the bizarre and often hilarious tales. Some of the more modern ones serve as an (often grim) reminder to Cleveland sports fans, and probably a more amusing reminder to people not invested in these teams. The one critique is that some of the stories seem almost too short; you were left wanting to read more about some of these strange incidents. Perhaps that’s not a bad thing though. If the worst thing you could say about a book is that you were disappointed that it ended, it says something about how much you enjoyed the journey.

CHESBRO FOR STAGE

FATHER OF THE SALIVA SHOOT WOULD BE AN ACTOR

ATLANTA—An offer of \$500 a week to go on stage has just been received by Chesbro, the crack pitcher of the New York Americans. The offer comes from the manager of a New York roof garden, who thinks Chesbro will be a great hero the coming season.

Chesbro is wanted to do a monologue, and he says he can get off one that will make him as conspicuous behind the footlights as on the diamond.

The Minneapolis Journal, April 3, 1905

2023 LARRY RITTER AWARD NOMINEES

by Doug Skipper

More than a century after it ended, baseball's Deadball Era lives on in the words of seven authors nominated for the 2023 Larry Ritter Award of the Society of American Baseball Research (SABR).

The award is bestowed annually by the SABR Deadball Era Committee (DEC) to the author of the best book about baseball between 1901 and 1919 published during the previous calendar year. The winner's work must demonstrate original research or analysis, a fresh perspective, a compelling thesis, impressive insight, accuracy, and clear, graceful prose.

The seven nominated books that will be considered this year include biographies of three Deadball Era players and a controversial and colorful franchise owner, an academic review of the mainland tours and lives of Asian players from Hawaii, an analysis of the era's record setting seasons, and a work of historical baseball fiction. The nominees:

Alesia, Tom. *Beauty at Short: Dave Bancroft, the Most Unlikely Hall of Famer and His Wild Times in Baseball's First Century* (Grissom Press, 2022);

Cannon, Jason. *Charlie Murphy: The Iconoclastic Showman behind the Chicago Cubs* (University of Nebraska Press, 2022);

Deitz, Harry J., Jr. *Covey: A Stone's Throw from a Coal Mine to the Hall of Fame* (Sunbury Press, 2022);

Franks, Joel. *From Honolulu to Brooklyn: Running the American Empire's Base Paths with Buck Lai and the Travelers from Hawai'i* (Rutgers University Press, 2022);

Manheim, J.B. *The GameKeepers: Whitewash, Blackmail, and Baseball's Darkest Secrets* (The Cooperstown Trilogy)," (Summer Game Books, 2022);

Sullivan, Tom. *Baseball's Sherlock Holmes: The Biography of Danny Murphy of the Philadelphia Athletics* (independently published, 2022);

Waldo, Ronald T. *Deadball Trailblazers: Single-Season Records of the Modern Era* (Sunbury Press, 2022).

The winner of the award will be selected by the Larry Ritter Book Award Committee, chaired by Doug Skipper, along with members Mark Dugo, Ben Klein, Craig Lammers, Mark Pattison, Andrew Milner, Don Jensen, and DEC Chairman John McMurray. Finalists for the 2023 Larry Ritter Award will be announced in April, and the winner will be named in the May, 2023 issue of *The Inside Game*, the official newsletter of SABR's Deadball Committee. The award has been conferred each year since 2002 and is presented at the DEC meeting at SABR's annual convention. In 2023 the convention will be held in Chicago in July.

The award honors Lawrence Ritter, the author of the classic, *The Glory of Their Times*. (Macmillan, 1966). In the 1960's, Ritter interviewed numerous Deadball Era players about their experiences and memories, and the resulting book is considered to be one of the best and most enlightening about baseball in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

Gettysburg Eddie Plank: A Pitcher's Journey to the Hall of Fame (McFarland, 2021), Dave Heller's interesting and illuminating biography of the 326-win Hall of Fame pitcher whose legend had dimmed with time, was the winner of the 2022 Larry Ritter Award.

PROTECTION FOR THE BALL PLAYERS

Minor leagues are going under in several parts of the country for lack of patronage to carry them beyond Labor Day. Only the smaller circuits are in this fix. Several of them are petitioning the national commission for permission to reserve their players for next season. This despite the rule which makes all players free agents until their salaries are paid in full, according to contract. Minor league owners argue that it would be severe punishment for them to lose claim on their players because they decline to pay further deficit by playing out their schedules. This is all right from the club owners' viewpoint. But what protection does this arrangement give the player against the loss of salary which he sustains? And the player needs more protection from losses than does the magnate.

Chicago Tribune, September 6, 1908

GAMES/BIOPROJECT

Since *The Inside Game* last appeared, the Games Project has been active. Recently published games accounts have included the exploits of pitcher Rube Waddell, Christy Mathewson, and Mordecai Brown as well as Honus Wagner's game-winning hit in the 19th inning of a game on July 31, 1912, Elmer Flick's three triples on July 6, 1902, Sherry McGee assaulting an umpire on July 10, 191, and the shortest game in major league history: the 51 outs in 51 minutes the Giants and Phillies recorded on September 28, 1919. Meanwhile, the Bio-Project posted profiles of Doll Derr, Pete Kilduff, and Dobie Moore. As always, we urge you to give these games and bios a look.

NEW DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

Juliette Barasch
Doug Brown
James Dimond
Les Masterson
Matthew McArthur

Richard F. Nicholson
Nick Pomazak
Trae Roberts
Jake Schmidt
Terry Small

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.

CORRECTION

The image of the New York Highlanders on page 21 of Volume XXII, No. 4 of *The Inside Game* was of the 1903 team, not the 1905 team. A photo of the latter club in spring training is below.



1905 NEW YORK HIGHLANDERS



(New York) Evening World, June 3, 1920



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(Richmond, Virginia) Times-Dispatch, May 31, 1913