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Editor: Skip McAfee, 5633 Coltsfoot Court, Columbia, MD 21045-2424 * 410-730-5847 * xerxes7@earthlink.net

Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

4025 Beechwood Place, Riverside, CA 92506

951-787-4954 (home); agmccue44@earthlink.net (e-mail)

We had a very successful convention in Toronto with about 25 people attending our Committee meeting. I reviewed our progress for the past year.

Our main need is a renewed group of volunteers for **The Baseball Index (TBI)** (www.baseballindex.org). This is our core project, providing a searchable bibliography of baseball research materials for SABR members & other researchers.

Since Ted Hathaway energized this project 15 years ago, we have made enormous progress, thanks to the donations of time, and money, by many members. Bernie Esser, Steve Milman, Brad Sullivan, Fred and Alma Ivor-Campbell, Joe Murphy, Terry Sloope, and Tim Cashion have their positive fingerprints all over this project.

However, this is a small group of volunteers compared to the enormous possibilities of what we could, and should, be doing. So, I'd like more of you to come forward. Data entry can be done on-line or on paper and we have a manual to help you get going. You'll get your reward at every convention and regional meeting when you hear research using TBI being discussed.

McFarland could use some indexing help with the next projected volume in their Historical Baseball Library series. The book will be Michael (King) Kelly's *"Play Ball": Stories of the Ball Field* (1888), plus some other writings by or about baseball's first superstar. As standard, McFarland will provide you with two copies of the reprint as well as give credit to you, the Committee, and SABR at the beginning of the index. If you're interested, please contact me quickly.

Just before the convention, I got a wonderful letter from Frank Phelps, our founding Committee chair. Frank is going strong. Unfortunately for baseball research, he is concentrating on tennis research, where he's the leader in the field. He recently published a tennis bibliography and is working on other projects. Frank is still at 253 Bernard Dr., King of Prussia, PA 19406-1756 for those interested in corresponding with him.

Hope you had a good summer. Enjoy the playoffs.

"The only thing we can be certain of is that good pitching beats good hitting all the time. Except when it doesn't."

Richard C. Crepeau, *Sport and Society for Arete*, Oct. 17, 2005

WANTED: COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

This issue of the SABR Bibliography Committee newsletter is my last one as editor. After 68 issues, beginning in Dec. 1988, I want to relinquish the position so that another Committee member can assume the joys of putting together this quarterly publication. Those interested in serving as editor should contact the Committee Chair: Andy McCue, 4025 Beechwood Place, Riverside, CA 92506; phone 951-787-4954; agmccue44@earthlink.net (e-mail)

Skip McAfee

Book Reviews

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

COOPERSTOWN TO DYERSVILLE: A Geography of Baseball Nostalgia

Charles Fruehling Springwood. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996. Notes, bibliography, index. 217p. ISBN 0-8133-2668-0

This title suggested a particularly splendid topic: a look at two places where the meanings of baseball get institutionalized. Nevertheless, I put off reading this book for nearly nine years since it was published. It's not a long book, but it's an intimidating-looking one for the general reader. As it turned out, I was fascinated, and anyone interested in the meanings people attach to baseball will be too.

But I was also right to be intimidated. On the copyright page occurs the phrase "Institutional Structures of Feeling", suggesting this book is one of a series having this focus. Springwood is an academic who is convinced of the necessity to "theorize" everything. Thus he reduces his audience to other theorists, and the rest of us are left puzzled by such statements as the following: 1) at one point he describes himself (p.113) as "positioned within the context of critical cultural theory and committed to deciphering the conservative cultural logic of the two baseball nostalgia sites"; and 2) at another point he asserts (p.161), discussing notions of the family, that "for Deleuze and Guattari, the nuclear family is disarticulated from the sphere of material production under the regime of capitalism, but as the 'original' oedipal struc-

ture of desire it becomes the primary site from which to 'reterritorialize' production".

It's easy to make fun of this kind of writing, but it's best to remember, too, that it's aimed, not at us "general readers" (Springwood might even reject this concept), but at a small group of other professionals in an academic field. In this case the academic field is anthropology; Springwood is an ethnologist. The book's first chapter described the shape of his project (p.24): "The practice of anthropology, or more precisely, its defining methodology, ethnography, has historically been characterized by going *into the field*." This is what has saved the book for this general reader. "The point is," Springwood says elsewhere (p.16), "to refocus on what people are actually doing and how they are doing it and to emphasize that these everyday activities are at the center of history and structural change." Springwood conducts many interviews, and he himself becomes part of the places he studies. He says (p.3): "This project is about baseball. It is more specifically about how these two sites ... and their visitors approach baseball." He demonstrates (p.20) "how these baseball sites are produced, engaged, and experienced in the context of nostalgia, in a manner that distances the political complexity and plurality of the world ... a conservative, consumption-inspired longing for an imagined past".

Springwood's second chapter focuses on how baseball "has served as a terrain for the discursive struggle over the meanings of pastoral and urban metaphors" (p.30). He looks at the work of the Mills Commission, but also at the baseball fiction of Mark Harris and W.P. Kinsella and at the urban stadium movement to show how baseball's rural (and urban) origin is understood. The third chapter—by far the book's longest—looks closely at Cooperstown itself through several visits Springwood made to the town. His accounts of his visits are especially accessible to the general reader. He reports many conversations he had with other visitors about the Hall and its meaning. There's a fascinating section about the Hall's handling of race. Springwood also talks about his own participation in the Leatherstocking Baseball Club, including an account of Reggie Jackson's participation in one of their games. He looks at the business of Will Arlt, a Cooperstown baseball entrepreneur. There's an account of the 1993 induction weekend, Jackson being the principal inductee.

In chapter four, Springwood turns to Dyersville (the Iowa ballfield built for the film, *Field of Dreams*), where he finds "the same cultural themes" treated "in radically different ways" (p.111). Springwood finds (p.114) "a common reason people cite for coming to the field concerns how the film's narrative, which deals with generation gaps, personal redemption, and making peace with one's parents, speaks to their own life situations". Most interesting are the responses of Jim Bohn (a grieving father who lost his son in an airplane crash), Terry Rush (an evangelical preacher), and Ron Eberhard (a business seminarian). He also looks at the activities of the two owners (Don Lansing and Al Ameskamp) of the "field of dreams". He finds that the site is associated with family values, hard work, and rural life, and also with the idea of redemption. These ideas are always interesting, even though the language in which they are reported is often difficult for the general reader.

In chapter five, Springwood develops some of the themes he's discovered, animating both sites, that is "an agrarian symbolic field through which discourses of history, nation, and a gendered family order are figured" (p.145-146). Much of the chapter is spent discussing "a particular concept of the family" (p.153). In this concept, Springwood finds "an emergent masculinity that, in tandem with family values, conservatism ostensibly embraces emotionality and emphasized relationships" (p.164). This is a far cry from the usual male macho image. For this reader, the high point of the chapter was a brief discussion of race in *Field of Dreams*. Springwood's conclusion is that the movie "effects a utopian erasure of racial difference and neutralization of the legacy of racism in U.S. history and life" (p.151). Throughout the book, Springwood's analyses of the sites' treatment of race are of special interest.

There is a brief concluding chapter followed by another chapter analyzing alternative views of the meaning of baseball, "a travel writing collection by John Krich [*El Béisbol*, 1989] and ... a boldly provocative feminist critique of baseball, in filmic form [*A Spy in the House That Ruth Built*, 1989], by Vanalyne Green" (p.174). Though it was a hard book for this reader—no anthropologist or theorist—*Cooperstown to Dyersville* contains lots of interesting information about what these two sites—and baseball in general—mean to us.

PURE BASEBALL: Pitch by Pitch for the Advanced Fan

Keith Hernandez and Mike Bryan. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1994. Index. 259p. ISBN 0-06-017-090-5

I've delayed reading this one, mainly intimidated by that talk about "the advanced fan". Would I prove advanced enough? I didn't know. Today, 11 years after its publication, much of Hernandez' book is common knowledge. Even so, there remain plenty of reasons to read the book, or to reread it. My suspicion is that many of us will already have read it.

For those who haven't, what Hernandez does is watch two major league baseball games played during the 1993 season and comment on each, if not exactly pitch-by-pitch, then practically so. From the National League, he chooses a Braves-Phillies game; from the American League, a Tigers-Yankees game. This reader enjoyed renewing acquaintance with the 1993 Braves, Phillies, Tigers, and Yankees fans may have the same kind of fun reading the book. Its title says what it is: *pure baseball*. No talk about baseball politics or about the game's place in the country's economics or culture. The focus is on how the game itself is played.

For Hernandez, "this battle of wits and balance of talent between the pitcher and the hitter is baseball" (p.vii). "The best way to delve deeper into a ball game ... is to analyze the decision making and the execution of the pitcher and the hitter on each individual pitch and then to watch and analyze the resulting play with this understanding" (p.viii). An important corollary (p.160): "If the heart of baseball is the contest of wills and talent between the pitcher and the hitter, you need both good pitching and good hitting to make a good ball game." Hernandez muses about Lou Whitaker

batting against Jimmy Key, about the richness of that encounter: "the matchup will be full of memories for both of them" (p.154).

Hernandez has lots to say about the craft of pitching. Here are some of the high points for this reader. Occasionally, the insight comes with such great succinctness that the idea seems commonplace, as in the following: "if you can get the batter concerned inside, you can get him out outside". Then there's this paradox: "most good hitters hate to face ... unknown pitchers, who can give you more trouble than Randy Johnson and Juan Guzman do" (p.155). There's also lots of talk about the importance of relief pitching, "one of the most challenging parts of the manager's job" (p.110). He doesn't forget to remind us of Whitey Herzog's feeling that he was only as good a manager as his use of his bullpen allowed (p.111).

On the batter's side, Hernandez talks about the importance of staying positive. After Pete Smith catches John Kruk looking at a curve ball "on the outside edge at the knees," Hernandez imagines the following (p.70): "Kruk just salutes and walks away. Great pitch, Pete! But John is also saying to himself, 'Do that again with the bases loaded, I dare you ...' Because if that pitch misses a fraction to the outside, it's a ball and a walk; a little to the inside, it's right over the plate, sitting pretty. These pep talks help the hitter stay in a positive mode as he heads back to the dugout, stick in hand."

Hernandez makes a sensible distinction between "looking" and "guessing" in the batter's box (p.117): "All veteran hitters look for certain pitches or for a certain zone—inside or outside—or both in certain situations." To do this, batters must be able to take a strike and have the discipline to do so. On the other hand, "if the hitter tried pure *guessing* very often, he'd be looking for another job because guessing, unlike looking, is all-or-nothing, and good hitters rarely guess at the plate" (p.118). Oddly, Hernandez follows this with two examples of successful guessing (p.118-119).

Reading this book 11 years after its publication, I constantly thought it sounded a great deal like the announcers on Fox and ESPN. Could it have influenced TV announcers? Hernandez is interested in the virtues of watching the game on TV. Right at the start, he says that most of us "now follow baseball mainly on television, and it seemed advisable to take this fact into account in writing this book" (p.ix). TV viewers benefit in being able to identify pitches more easily than fans in the stands. Speaking of Danny Jackson's two fastballs, Hernandez says (p.10): "Watching on television, you could pick up the difference easily. Sitting here in the stands, it's tougher to see, no doubt about it." Later, he points out that signals between pitcher and catcher are better seen on TV, a function of the center-field camera angle. Here is Hernandez' description (p.186): "With the count 2-2, Leyritz flashes the sign—'1'—and taps his left thigh, indicating location outside. Kamieniecki waits, and a split-second later Leyritz flashes the '1' again and taps his right thigh. This is the location Kamieniecki wants—inside—and only on television can you know how it came about."

Hernandez tells a wonderful story illustrating his liking of "the older, asymmetrical parks that affect the strategies of the game" (p.191). In the 1986 World Series, Mets scouts

had noticed "a more subtle effect of the [Green Monster]" (p.191). Red Sox runners routinely took second assuming the left fielder would throw to the cutoff man to hold the baserunner at third. During the Series a quick throw by the left fielder to second retired the batter and scotched a Red Sox rally.

At the conclusion of the book, Hernandez reminds us (p.227) that "... baseball is a game of small differences and details that come into clearer focus with careful scrutiny and are missed otherwise. I've tried to prove that the more you know, the more you enjoy." This review mentions just a few of the many "differences and details" that Hernandez discusses. It's hard not to feel more advanced a watcher after reading *Pure Baseball*.

Bill Hickman

7 Columbia Court, Rockville, MD 20850

A PORTRAIT OF BASEBALL PHOTOGRAPHY

Marshall Fogel, Khyber Oser, and Henry Yee. Mastronet Web site. "Vintage Guides", vol. 2. paperback. 347p. \$25

"Vintage Guides" are publications designed to help collectors of various kinds of memorabilia. The page quality is remarkably good, and the book is chock full of glossy black-and-white photos. The individual pictures are mostly of Hall of Famers, but there are some unusual shots of them. There are also some nice old team photos and old ballpark photos. The address for the Mastronet Web site follows: <http://books.mastronet.com/photoguide.htm>

The book gives an overview of the history of baseball photography, starting in the 19th century. It points out some basic things to look for in viewing a photo that one might want to purchase, such as whether it is a wire photo, what kind of stamping is on its back, and whether there are any editorial markings. Many examples of stamping are pictured in the book. There is a large chapter on the various news photo services that have existed over the years. The book also covers other photo genres, such as magazine, amateur, and team press photos.

There's a helpful section of the book devoted to the "great photographers" of baseball. There is at least one paragraph covering each of the following: Joseph Hall, Carl Horner, Charles Conlon, George Grantham Bain, Louis Van Oeyen, George Lawrence, Paul Thompson, Burke-Atwell, George Burke & George Brace, George Dorrill, Malcolm Emmons, William C. Greene, William Jacobellis, Neil Leifer, Osvaldo Salas, Herbie Scharfman, Bernie Stein, Ozzie Sweet, Don Wingfield, and George Woodruff. Several of these gentlemen are pictured in this book. I was surprised to see that Walter Iooss was missing from the list of "greats."

Two appendixes are also of use. One gives explanations of various photographic processes. The other contains a glossary of terms. Two photos in the book were rather unexpected for a baseball book. One was of Muhammad Ali showing him standing in the boxing ring over a fallen Sonny Liston. The other was an official White House photo of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.