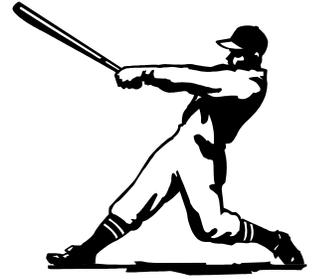




Baseball Lives



Volume II

Issue Two

Winter 2006-2007

19th Century Players
Available for Bios.

Doug Allison
 Mark Baldwin
 Frank Bancroft
 Martin Bergen
 Tommy Bond
 Asa Brainard
 Charley Buffington
 Morgan Bulkeley
 Jack Burdock
 Doc Bushong
 Bob Caruthers
 O. P. Caylor
 John Clapp
 Cannonball Crane
 Lave Cross
 Abner Dalrymple
 Jerry Denny
 Tommy Dowd
 Silver Flint
 Jim Fogarty
 Bud Fowler
 Frank Grant
 Paul Hines
 Pete Hotaling
 Tim Keefe
 Mike (King) Kelly
 Billy Lange
 Joe Leggett
 Tom Loftus
 Henry Lucas
 Denny Mack
 Tom McCarthy
 George (Jumbo)
 McGinnis
 John Morrill
 Tony Mullane
 Charlie Pabor
 Fred Pfeffer
 Blondie Purcell
 Joseph Quest
 Kid Nichols

Words from Mark Armour

We recently began a co-ordinated project with the Ballparks Committee to host the "biographies" of ballparks. One of my dreams for the Biography Project five years ago was that it someday be part of a larger coordinated "SABR Baseball Library." I have not succeeded in getting any interest in such an idea so I will instead begin the process of growing our project. The first step in this process is to add Ballparks.



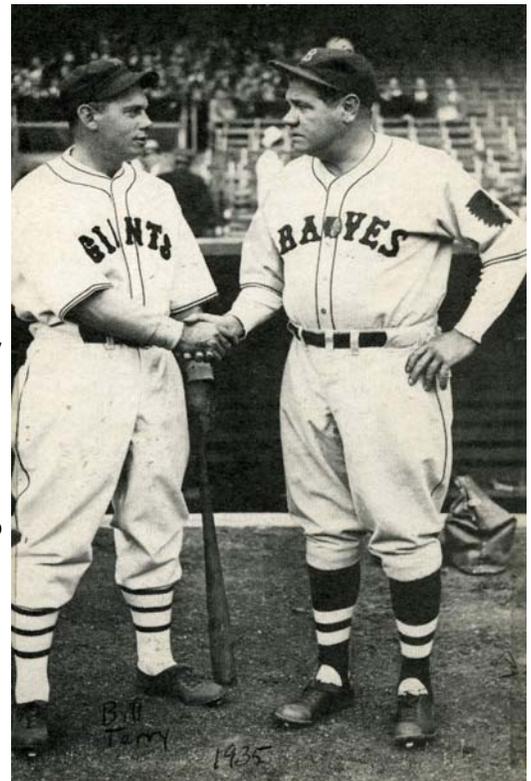
As expected, there has been a lot of interest. As with players, the particular ballparks people are drawn to are varied and fascinating. Someone will likely do an article on the Polo Grounds at some point--and condensing that story down to a manageable size will be its own sort of challenge. But I also heard from people who want to research an old minor league park or a ballpark from the 19th century. Like our biographies, the stories will make a big contribution to baseball research.

Changing gears ... I recently published a modified version of my biography of Deacon Phillippe. After its publication in "Deadball Stars of the National League," and its subsequent posting on our web site, I was contacted by a descendant who told me about an entire family of Phillippes of which I had not been aware. He had separated from his wife and three kids and taken up with a new woman, who was his "wife" in all of the stories written about him late in life and beyond. The satisfying thing is that our project allows me to "get it right." Whether it's an error, an omission, or just a new angle that can be presented, our project allows researchers to update the story and get it right, or at least more right. We have had many fine biographies made finer by updates like this.

... We have had a big autumn for biographies, with 70 bios getting posted since Labor Day. My expectation for this winter had been that I would be posting the 140 biographies from the AL Deadball Book. However, the year-long delay in its publication means that our project won't get those bios until 2008 sometime. So, I am hoping that all of you will be sending in great work to fill this gap.

I wish all of you and your families a wonderful holiday season.

Mark



Peter Morris Biographies

Bennett, Eddie
Clarke, Harry Corson
Coughlin, Dennis
Dean, Dory
Grampp, Henry
Gray, William
Greenig, John
Gunkle, Fred
Johns, Corwin
Jones, Henry Monroe
Joy, Barney
Kinloch, Walt
Kolb, Eddie
Letcher, Tom
Loderick, Dan
Meisel, Christian
Miller, Bert
Nicol, George
Oran, Tom
Phelan, Louis
Pike, Israel
Price, Jim
Purtell, Patrick
Reilly, Josh
Rudolph, Andy
Shane, Mary
Smoot, Homer
Stage, Billy
Sweeney, Bill
Thornton, Jack
Tugerson, Jim
Waltz, Billy
Watkins, Harvey
Wright, Joe

Peter Morris - BioProject Author

I was asked to describe my research, how I go about selecting subjects for the BioProject and then go about putting the sketches together. My method is unusual enough that it may be of limited use to others, but I will do my best to summarize it.

Much of my research has involved the challenge of trying to solve mysteries that puzzle and intrigue me. I've done a lot of work for the SABR Biographical Committee in trying to track down some of the elusive players who are (or were) listed in the encyclopedias as being deceased. I've also done a lot of research for Paul Dickson's Baseball Dictionary in trying to identify the origins of baseball terms.

In the course of trying to find the answer to specific questions such as these, I've gained a lot of insight into some neglected corners of baseball history and this had led me to write several books. My first book, *Baseball Fever* (2003: University of Michigan), was an effort to chronicle how baseball first arrived in Michigan and how it caught on. My second book, the two-volume *A Game of Inches* (2006: Ivan R. Dee), is an exhaustive look at baseball firsts that not only covers when an innovation was introduced to baseball but also why it came then and what response it met. My next book, *Level Playing Fields* (2007: University of Nebraska), is about two pioneer groundskeepers whose fascinating story I stumbled upon while looking for a ballplayer listed in the encyclopedias as deceased. Each of these books, then, is closely tied to my research interests, as are the pieces I've written for the BioProject.

So how do I convert research finds into pieces for the BioProject? Well, I run across a lot of different players during these various pursuits and amass quite a bit of information on many of them. So that gives me the opportunity to be selective and I take full advantage.

The first question I ask myself is whether there is something about this figure that would make his or her story potentially intriguing to someone who wasn't especially a baseball fan. If I was attending a party and launched into the story of my subject's life, is it at least possible that I could do so without clearing the room? If I start by saying I've been researching the life of so-and-so, who was arguably the greatest second baseman to play in St. Louis between Fred Dunlap and Red Schoendienst, and who twice led the National League in doubles and once had the second best on-base percentage in the major leagues, then it is safe to say that most people would soon find an excuse to refill their drinks. But I'd have a better chance if I mentioned that I'm writing something

about Mary Shane, the first woman to regularly broadcast for a major league team, or Harry Corson Clarke, an actor who was forced into action in a major league game and threw out two greedy base runners on a team fighting for the pennant, or of Lou Phelan, a man who knew nothing about baseball but was named manager of St. Louis because team owner Chris Von der Ahe was romantically involved with his sister-in-law. Each of these brief summaries has the potential to make anyone, whether a baseball fan or not, put off getting another drink and instead ask a follow-up question: Did Mary Shane encounter prejudice and how did she respond? How did Clarke get in that position? How did Phelan handle the responsibility? Or, best of all: what happened next?

Another way to express this idea is: can I express the nub of the story I hope to tell about this person in 25 words or less that will impel people to ask such follow-up questions? A player may have been a standout, even a Hall of Famer, and yet not obviously lend himself to this formulation. On the other hand, a player such as John Greenig who failed miserably in a series of stints in professional baseball is easily rendered in these terms: how does a Civil War veteran make his major league debut in 1888? In fact, his very ineptitude makes the question a still better one: how does a Civil War veteran without much athletic ability reach the major leagues in 1888? Now there's a question that makes people's ears perk up and take notice.

Of course saying that the nub of the story can be reduced to 25 words is not the same as saying that I hope that there is much more to my subject's life and that it will emerge as I do my research. But in case it doesn't, I want to know already that there will still be an intriguing story to tell.

Once I decide that a potential subject led a life well suited to trying to tell, the next question is: am I the right person to try to tell it? To do this, I generally start at the end of the person's life - preferably with a good obituary - and work backward. I focus on where this person lived and played baseball and compare those to my resources. If the player spent most of his career and/or life in Philadelphia, then I generally rule him out immediately, as I have no ready access to any newspaper from that city and the entire state of Pennsylvania makes life difficult for researchers. I look far more favorably on subjects with Michigan backgrounds, since I live there and know its resources inside and out. The Michigan State University library has good runs of such out-of-state newspapers as the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, San Francisco Examiner and the New

York Sun, so players who spent considerable time in these cities can be easily researched. The historical societies of Ohio and Indiana are in driving distance, so I'll consider players with connections in this state. When the schedule for the MSU volleyball team comes out I carefully compare the dates and times of road matches to the hours of nearby libraries with good collections of microfilm and always find a strong correlation. (Oddly, though, whenever I thank the coach for keeping this in mind, she denies having taken this into account.)

The Internet is especially important in this process. If I'm considering working on a specific player, I'll always type his name into a few on-line searches with digitized and see what pops up. ProQuest will, alas, soon be removed from this list, but I also subscribe to newspaperarchive.com and paperofrecord.com and find them very useful. There are also an increasing number of free websites. The one for the Brooklyn Eagle is by far the most extensive, but there are also decent collections for such states as Colorado, Utah and Missouri. All of these sites are searchable in theory at least, although with some, most notably paperofrecord.com, OCR problems mean that the results can be very disappointing. (The most comprehensive list can be found at: <http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/internet/archives.html>). This list includes many recent newspapers; for a shorter list of historical newspapers, see the Wikipedia entry for "List of online newspaper archives.")

Of course I also try to find out what else has been written on my subject. SABR's Baseball Index is especially useful in this regard. Most of my subjects are so obscure that few people have ever heard of them, let alone tried to write on

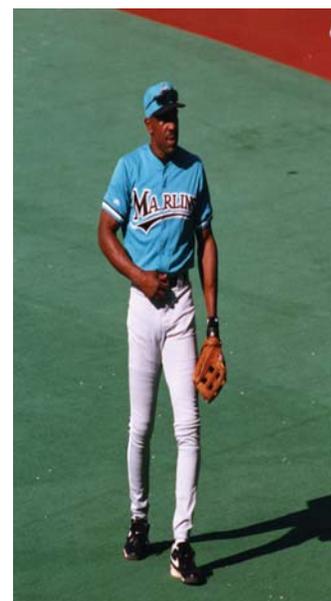
them. But occasionally I am surprised.

Once I've gone through those two steps, the next part is to actually do the research, which is the fun part and about which there is not much to say. I just try to pursue every lead as thoroughly as possible and take as complete notes of everything I find as possible, always bearing in mind the nub that initially attracted me to this subject.

The final stage is to actually turn the research into a finished product. Once again I try to bear in mind the nub and will usually focus the piece around this idea. But I don't feel bound to that if something more interesting emerged during my research. As I write it up, my goal is to keep in the background. Since I'm almost always writing about a subject I've never seen play, I try as much as possible to let those who did tell the person's story in their own words. There's always an impulse to put things in your own words, but I try to resist that when there's a good contemporary account. Length is probably the most difficult issue; there's always a dilemma between telling the person's story in detail and focusing on the most important points. So that's a judgment call that varies from one subject to the next. If I found an anecdote that I find telling or informative, then I will go out of my way to include it. But I try to keep a player's statistics to a minimum in the narrative; the reader if desired, in particular, can easily find major league statistics. And a long summary of whether the player went 2-for-4 on this date or 0-for-5 on this date should be avoided.

But I generally find that if I did a good job of selecting a subject well suited for me to profile, that the research and writing follow naturally.

Peter



Andre Dawson

H.O.F. 2002

At least he should have been.

Andre Dawson finished his career with:

- ◆ 438 Home Runs
- ◆ 1591 RBIs
- ◆ 314 Stolen Bases
- ◆ 1000+ Extra Base Hits
- ◆ 8 Gold Gloves
- ◆ 1977 NL Rookie of the Year
- ◆ 1980's Player of the Decade
- ◆ 1987 Most Valuable Player
- ◆ 8-time All Star

Ryne Sandberg says Dawson "did it the right way—the natural way.

Andre Dawson deserves the Hall of Fame

More 19th Century Players Available for Bios

Danny Richardson
 Jack Rowe
 Jimmy Ryan
 Dupee Shaw
 Joe Start
 Cub Stricker
 Ezra Sutton
 Mike Tiernan
 Tommy Tucker
 Jim Tyng
 George Van Haltren
 Chris Von der Ahe
 Harry Von der Horst
 Moses Fleetwood Walker
 Curt Welch
 Solomon White
 Will White
 Walt Wilmot
 George Wright

From the Editor

Welcome! I hope you will find this newsletter as interesting as I have putting it together. In addition to the normal messages from Mark Armour and Jan Finkel, we have added what will become a regular column from new Bio Vice-Chairman Trey Strecker. Trey will concentrate on 19th century biographies. With this in mind, he has included sixty names of players that await an author. For a full list of available players you can—well—you can read Trey's message.

We also have the good fortune to meet and learn some of the secrets of Biographer Peter Morris. If you have a few minutes, or a few hours, to spare, there is no better way than to relax and enjoy one of Peter Morris's 34 completed biographies.

What we don't have, unfortunately, is input, messages, articles, questions, etc. from other members. **Help!** We need you to make this your newsletter — *Mike*



News From the Editor In Chief

"Statisticians"—that's the word Bob Davids coined to describe who we are and what we do in SABR. Broadly speaking, we deal in the statistics and history of baseball, and everything that the two categories imply. Metaphorically, we may think of them as science and art.

With that in mind, think about Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, and Hank Aaron. Or Lou Gehrig and Ted Williams. Perhaps Carlton Fisk and Gary Carter. If your interest is pitchers, consider Christy Mathewson and Grover Cleveland Alexander. Maybe Bob Gibson and Juan Marichal. How about Don Drysdale and Milt Pappas? Even a large group like Rube Waddell, Jack Chesbro, Jesse Tannehill, Deacon Phillippe, Ed Walsh, Babe Adams, and Sam Leever? Fine players all, many of them in the Hall of Fame and deservedly so.

Take any of these groupings and look them up in *Total Baseball*, the *ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia*, or on any of the myriad sites online. You'll find that many of their career numbers are very close (Mays, Mantle, and Aaron's batting and slugging numbers; the same numbers for Gehrig and Williams; Mathewson and Alexander's wins; Drysdale and Pappas' won-lost totals; and so on). If you go strictly by the numbers, you'll find it hard to tell them apart, especially that bunch of pitchers (none of whom any of us in SABR has ever seen) who worked so effectively in the first decade or so of the last century. Science doesn't quite do the job for us.

Yet every one of them left his special mark on the game and elsewhere. This is where the BioProject comes in.

It's the job of a biographer to show the uniqueness of his or her subject. Yes, the science—in our case the stats—is important, but it tells us only a part of who that player was. As of today, somewhere between 16,000 and 17,000 men have played in the majors. That's not including the Negro leagues, the minors, women's baseball, and what have you. At the BioProject we want to know the person behind the numbers in *Total Baseball* or *Baseball-Reference.com*. Maybe it's Pete Rose, who among his other achievements played in more games and got more hits than anyone else. Maybe it's Moonlight Graham, who played one inning in 1905 and didn't field a ball or come to bat but became a doctor and a focal figure in a first-rate novel and movie. More likely, it's someone between those extremes. Everybody who's played the game has left his mark. Make no mistake about it—biography is an art.

In the last week or so, I've had several phone conversations with a wise man I haven't seen in many years. He's a retired radiation oncologist who said he practiced medicine as an art. His premise is deceptively simple: "Science knows more, but art knows better."

Ultimately, I think, it goes back to Bob Davids' wonderful word, "statisticians." I wasn't fortunate enough to know Bob Davids well, but he struck me as a man who got things right the first time. He certainly did when he called us "statisticians," and we should wear the label with pride.

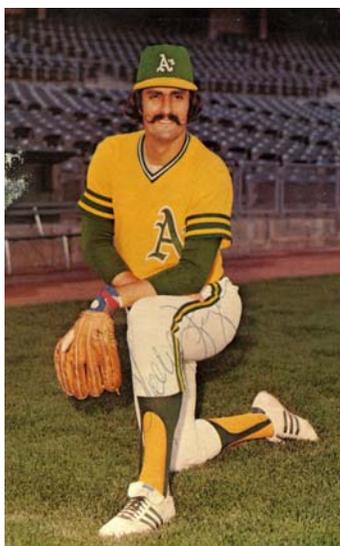
Jan Finkel

Help! Help!

This page will be dedicated to material written by our SABR BioProject members

ARE YOU NEXT?

Help make this Your Newsletter



Research Can Be Fun! Many of my best research "finds" have come from sources that are readily available, but seldom considered, for research. I am a baseball memorabilia collector. When I decided to research Grover Hartley I began looking for material from several reputable autograph dealers, auctions, and even Ebay. As a result, I have learned many things that I did not find in ProQuest, or any other of the traditional research source I have read. For instance, I found an autographed baseball signed by Hartley on July 2, 1928.—his 40th birthday. It lists every team, including amateur "town-team" teams he played for between 1906 and 1928. It also indicates that he traded this baseball for "five fried chicken and fries plates." On Ebay I found a letter from Hartley on Lima Baseball Club stationery accusing the Lima Club's President, who was also Hartley's partner, with withholding (cont.)

Words from Trey Strecker

Hello. I am pleased to announce the beginning of the BioProject's new 19th-century Initiative. We are launching this initiative in an organized effort to promote interest in this era of baseball history and to create new quality biographies of 19th-century figures for the BioProject website. I invite you to consider writing for us.

To introduce myself: My name is Trey Strecker, and I'm an assistant professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where I teach English and sport studies. I have edited two anthologies of early baseball fiction—*Dead Balls and Double Curves* and Charles Van Loan's *Collected Baseball Stories*—and I serve as the book review editor for *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History & Culture*. Unaccustomed to a baseball season that stretches into October, I'm finally beginning to recover from the World Series and my disappointment that my Bengals couldn't bring home the bling.

My role on the committee will be to coordinate the 19th-century Initiative and, through regular interaction with BioProject authors, to assist writers as they research and write their bios, deliver completed bios to the editors, and get them published. While the BioProject has already published many exceptional biographies of 19th-century ballplayers, we have identified over 230 unclaimed subjects in need of biographies. We want your participation. A list of several available 19th-century subjects appears in this newsletter; for a more extensive list, please visit: <http://tstrecker.iweb.bsu.edu/19cBios.htm>. If you are interested in writing a bio for one of these men or if you have any questions about the initiative, please email me at tstrecker@bsu.edu

Trey Strecker



.Research Can be Fun (cont.) \$1300

from two exhibition games with Sachel Payge's (sic) Club. Having found this letter, I then discovered, again on Ebay, a Report of *Players on "Under Control" List as of "Cut-Down" Date 1950* for the Lima Baseball Club. From this list, I was able to find, and interview, two former Lima baseball players who played for Grover Hartley. I knew that Hartley ended up in Daytona Beach, but didn't know why or when. The players I talked with didn't know where he went after he left Lima.

I later found a GPC from Hartley with the notation *Bus. Mgr. Daytona Beach Fla, Baseball Club*. I continue to look for more Hartley material. Another example is Frank Mills. A while back, I purchased two Frank Mills contracts. Sometime after 1914 he was banned from baseball. I have a 1922 letter to Mills from the Commissioners office rejecting his appeal to be re-instated. Frank Mills played four major league games. He was one of many banned from baseball by Commissioner Landis for playing with "ineligible" players. Recently I saw a major autograph dealer was offering a 1927 letter written in hand to Mills by Commissioner Landis. (I couldn't afford the letter, but the dealer was kind enough to email me a scanned copy.) In the letter Landis again refused to lift Mills lifetime ban. Mills then typed a note on the letter saying this letter from Judge Landis was as a result of an appeal hearing in Cincinnati. He gives the name of the Judge and of all those present at the hearing. Mills wrote: "The appeal had to do with re-instatement of Mills to good standing in Professional baseball. The reinstatement came in 1934." The typed note was signed Frank L. Mills. These documents—all from autograph dealers probably tell more about Frank Mills life with baseball than any newspaper research will ever find. **Mike Cooney**

"This isn't life or death. We're like those surfer dudes out on the ocean. When you get up on a good wave, you ride it out as long as you can."

Barry Bonds

"I mean, it's unheard of for somebody to hit 70 home runs. I'm slightly in awe of myself."

Mark McGwire

"The great majority of bats are supplied to Major League batters by Rawlings, Louisville Slugger Hoosier, and in the case of Mark McGwire, the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory"

Tim McCarver

From "The Quotable Baseball Fanatic" by Louis D. Rubin

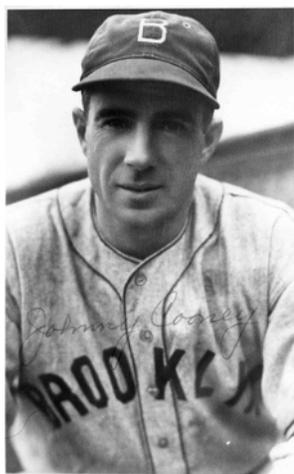
SABR BioProject
Committee



*Baseball Lives
with
Baseball Lives*

Bioproject.sabr.org

SABR Biography Project



The Baseball Biography Project (TBBP) is an ongoing effort to produce comprehensive biographical articles on every person who ever played or managed in the major leagues, as well as any other person who touched baseball in a significant way. The project is run by the BioProject Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research. (SABR)

Mark Armour—Director
markjane@comcast.net

Trey Strecker—Vice Chairman
tstrecker@bsu.edu

Jan Finkel - Editor in Chief
jfinkel@mindspring.com

Lyle Spatz - Assignment Editor
spatzl@bellsouth.net

Tom Ruane - Egroup Owner
truane@vnet.ibm.com

Warren Corbett—Contacts Co-ordinator

wpcorbett@hotmail.com

Mike Cooney - Newsletter Editor
mwc2002@hotmail.com