

# The INSIDE GAME



The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XIX, No. 1: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" FEBRUARY 2019



**Larry Ritter**  
(1922-2004)

## 2019 LARRY RITTER AWARD NOMINEES ANNOUNCED

by **Doug Skipper**

A very strong field of 13 books will be considered for the 2019 Larry Ritter Award. The award is granted annually by the Deadball Era Committee (DEC) of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) to the author of the best book about baseball between 1901 and 1919 published during the previous calendar year. The writer's work must demonstrate original research or analysis, a fresh perspective, compelling thesis, impressive insight, accuracy, and clear, graceful prose. The 13 books that have earned consideration for this year's award are:

*A Franchise on the Rise: The First Twenty Years of the New York Yankees*, by Dom Amore (Skyhorse Publishing);

*September 1918: War, Plague, and the World Series*, by Skip Desjardin (Regnery History)

*Game Faces: Early Baseball Cards from the Library of Congress*, by Peter Devereaux (Smithsonian Books);

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*Manager of the Giants: The Tactics, Temper and True Record of John McGraw*, by Lou Hernandez (McFarland);

*The 1914 Boston Braves: A Miracle in Beantown*, by Matthew Hock (independently published);

*The Days of Rube, Matty, Honus and Ty: Scenes from the Early Deadball Era, 1904-1907*, by Chuck Kimberly (McFarland);

*Gettysburg Eddie: The Story of Eddie Plank*, by Lawrence Knorr (Sunburry Press);

*Take Nothing for Granted in Baseball: The Harry Pulliam Story*, by Mark Peavy (Create Space);

*Tinker, Evers, Chance: The Chicago Cubs and the Dawn of Modern America*, by David Rapp (University of Chicago Press);

*Ty Cobb Unleashed: The Definitive Counter-Biography of the Chastened Racist*, by Howard W. Rosenberg (Tile Books);

*America's Game: A History of Major League Baseball through World War II*, by Bryan Soderholm-Difatte (Rowman and Littlefield);

*The World Series in the Deadball Era: A History in the Words and Pictures of the Writers and*

*Photographers*, edited by Steve Steinberg (SABR Books, St. Johann Press), and

*Charles Ebbets: The Man Behind the Dodgers and Brooklyn's Beloved Ballpark*, by John G. Zinn (McFarland).

Finalists for the Larry Ritter Award will be named in March, and the winner will be announced in April. The award will be presented during the Deadball Era Committee meeting at the SABR Convention in San Diego in late June. The winner will be selected by the Larry Ritter Award Committee, chaired by Doug Skipper, with members Mark Dugo, David Fleitz, Ben Klein, Craig Lammers, John McMurray, and Mark Pattison. The award has been presented every year since 2002 in honor of Larry Ritter, author of *The Glory of Their Times*. For more information, please visit: <https://sabr.org/about/larry-ritter-award>. The 2018 winner was Jim Leeke for his engaging and informative historical account of the impact of World War I on the world of baseball, *From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball During the Great War* (University of Nebraska Press).

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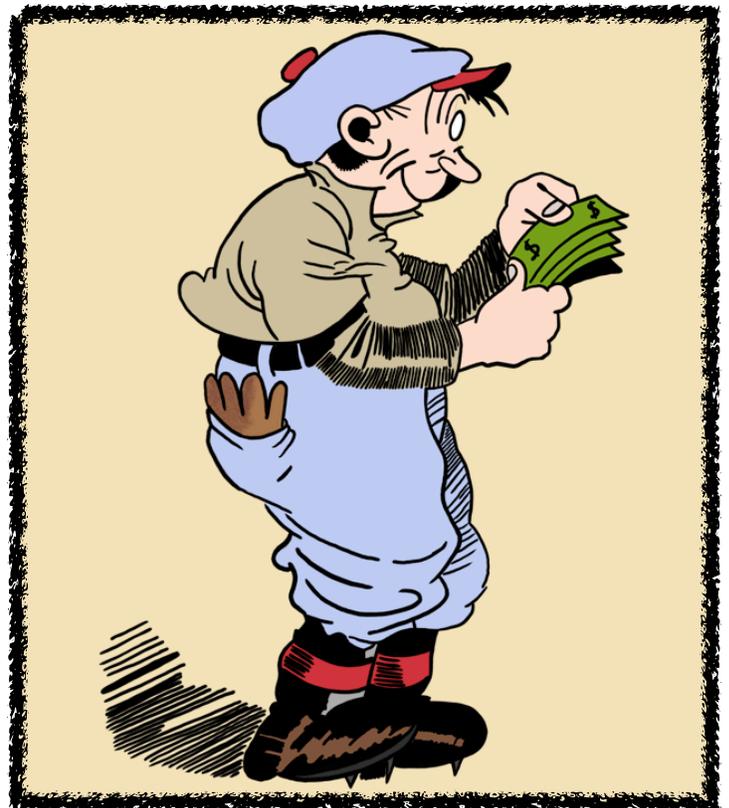
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Thornton Fisher *The (New York) Evening World*, September 12, 1918

## JOEY CONNOLLY/COASTER JOE CONNOLLY: STATISTICAL CORRECTIONS

by **Dennis Auger**

This article will address how the 1916 Minor League statistics for two ballplayers by the name of Joseph Connolly were erroneously attributed and tabulated in Baseball-Reference. Who were the ballplayers? Joey (Joseph Francis) Connolly, born on February 1, 1884 in North Smithfield, Rhode Island, played for Boston's National League entry from 1913-1916 and was a key contributor to the 1914 Miracle Braves. During his four-year major league career Joey hit .288 as an outfielder for Manager George Stallings. Joseph Henry Connolly, born on June 27, 1894 in San Francisco, was a member of four major league teams during the 1921-1924 seasons. "Coaster Joe" played in 80 games in all, compiling a .268 batting average as an outfielder.

In the 1916 "Register Batting" section of Joey Connolly's career statistics, Baseball-Reference lists him as having played 62 games for the Boston Braves and 32 games for the Tacoma Tigers. The latter club was a member of the Northwestern League and a "B" level classification. The only other 1916 minor league statistics listed for him are as follows: 106 at-bats, 26 base-hits, and a .245 batting average. My contention is that the star outfielder of the Miracle Braves never played for Tacoma and that these errant statistics need to be removed from his entry in Baseball-Reference. The rationale for this viewpoint will now be presented.

1. In Joseph Henry Connolly's SABR biography, prolific writer and eminent historian Bill Nowlin writes that "the first time he turns up playing professional baseball is in 1916, with the Tacoma Tigers in the Northwestern League after joining the team in late July." Nowlin cites the August 1, 1916 *Seattle Times* for this information and that "Coaster Joe's" statistics are not available for that season. According to my research, the unavailability is because they show up in Joey Connolly's record. Baseball-Reference does



**Joey Connolly**

identify the West Coast native as playing for Tacoma in 1917. The limited number of at-bats (106) for Joseph H. Connolly can be explained because he was a late addition to Tacoma's roster.

2. In Baseball-Reference's list of transactions for 1915 and 1916 there is no mention that Joey Connolly was traded, sold, or purchased by any major or minor league team.

3. The 1916 Boston Braves opened the season on April 12 and ended on October 5. Joey Connolly's first game with Boston was on April 18 and his last one was on October 5. The Rhode Islander participated in 62 games and his role became quite limited due to decreasing abilities. According to Baseball-Reference, Connolly's game involvement was distributed as follows: 4 in April, 9 in May, 12 in June, 6 in July, 18 in August, and 13 in September/October. His

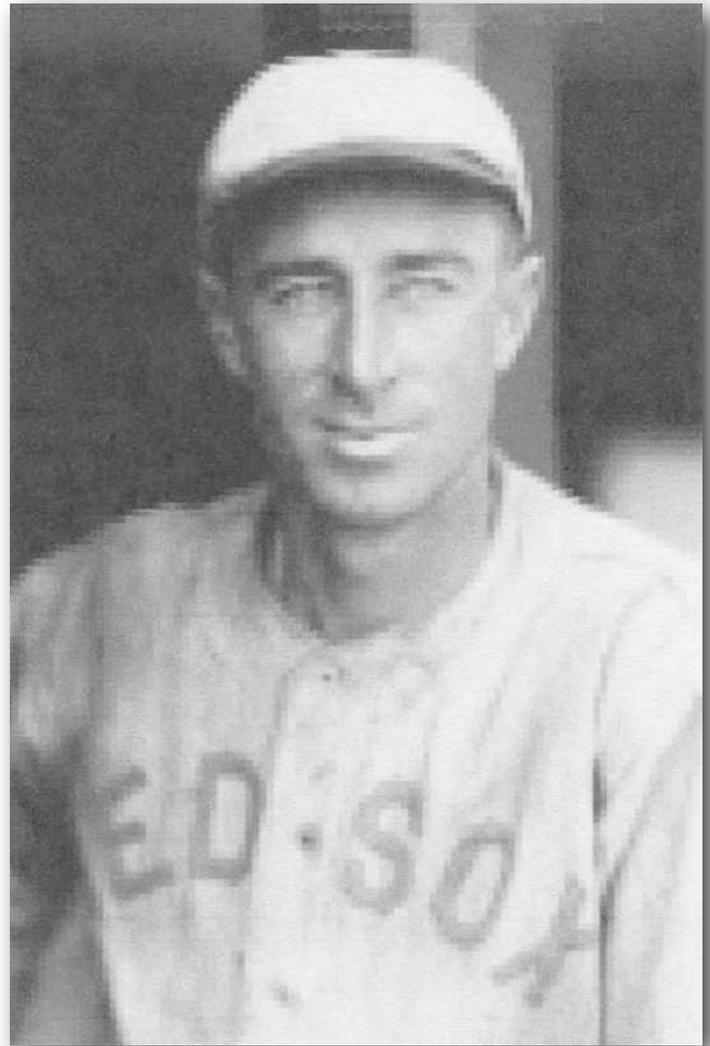
lengthiest stretch of sitting on the bench without playing was 12 days in July which included two days when no game occurred. Based on his playing time in Boston, the East Coast player could not have been a member of the West Coast Tacoma club unless he had the supernatural gift of bilocation.

4. On page 184 in *The Miracle Braves of 1914-1916* (McFarland, 2015), author Charles Alexander points out that Joey Connolly's Boston contract for 1917 included a 50% salary cut which he refused to sign. This confirms he was still with the team. The Braves then sold him to Indianapolis of the American Association but he retired to his farm and the transaction was not completed. At age 32, the Rhode Island native was ready to settle down, as evidenced by his marriage on October 25, 1916. If he was not willing to accept a demotion to an AA club in the Midwest, why would he have accepted one to a "B" team on the West Coast?

5. In researching and writing Joey Connolly's SABR biography, I had the privilege and opportunity to interview his two sons in 2001. Both were obviously knowledgeable about their father's baseball career, including his time in the minor leagues. Neither one ever mentioned that Connolly played in Tacoma. In addition, since he was a "local boy," I was able to access the Rhode Island dailies that followed him throughout his life both on and off the field. Once more, there was no reference to Tacoma. On a secondary note, I refer to Connolly as "Joey" because this was preferred by him, his family, friends, associates, and Rhode Island papers. More recent baseball literature has begun incorporating the moniker "Joey".

Based on the above my conclusion is simple: Joey Connolly did not play for Tacoma in 1916 and his minor league and combined professional totals as found in Baseball-Reference need to be corrected. The following are my proposed changes with the present Baseball-Reference statistics noted in parentheses:

The first correction in Joey Connolly's record begins with those found in both his "Standard Batting" and "Player Value—Batting" sections



***Coaster Joe Connolly***

(MLB record): 1914 Plate Appearances, 469 (468); 1915 Plate Appearances, 356 (358) and four-year totals, 1468 (1469). The errors were the result of not adding plate appearances correctly. The Baseball-Reference totals are correctly listed in his "Register Batting" section.

The minor league corrections are more extensive. In the "Register Batting" section, the 1916 Tacoma line needs to be deleted. That includes removing 32 games, 106 at-bats, 26 base-hits, and a .245 BA. The line "Minors" needs to read five (rather than six) seasons; 299 (331) games; 911 (1017) PA; 911 (1017) AB; and 277 (303) hits. "All Levels" are corrected to 711 (743) games; 2379 (2485) PA; 2152 (2258) AB; 635 (661) hits. The "B" Minor League revisions are as follows: four (not five) season totals are 156 (188) games; 409 (515) PA; 409 (515) AB; and 123 (149) hits.

In the “Register Fielding” section, the 1916 Tacoma reference needs to be removed. This affects the line “All Levels (4 seasons)” in that the OF number now should be listed as 366 (not 395, because it is reduced by 29 games since Joey Connolly did not play in Tacoma). The 1916 Tacoma line in the section “Teams Played For” should also to be deleted.

This brings me to Coaster Joe Connolly, and I propose adding the available 1916 Tacoma statistics of 32 games, 106 at-bats, 26 base-hits, and .245 BA to his “Register Batting” section. This requires amending his entry to: Minors nine (not eight) seasons; 715 (683) games; 2915 (2809) PA; 2915 (2809) AB; and 851 (825) hits. As for “All Levels,” this should be changed to 10 (9) seasons; 795 (763) games; 3113 (3007) PA; 3083 (2977) AB; and 896 (870) hits from the stats that are now listed. Consequently, the 29 OF games for the 1916 Tacoma Tigers can be added to Coaster Joe’s “Register Fielding” section (age 23). This will require changing “Minors” to eight (from seven) seasons, and 656 (627) games; “All Levels” to nine (from eight) seasons, and 711 (682) games. Lastly, the documentation will include the native Californian as playing for the 1916 Tacoma club in the “Team Played For” section (age 23).

Finally, the information for the 1916 Tacoma Tigers will need to be corrected. This includes attributing the “Team Batting” and “Team Roster” to the appropriate Connolly. I offer these corrections to Baseball-Reference for consideration and look forward to hearing from them.

The above provides follow-up on my bio of Joey Connolly published in *Deadball Stars of the National League*, Tom Simon, ed. (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey’s, Inc., 2004), and thereafter expanded for the BioProject. Even though I never met Joey Connolly, my conversations with the family and familiarity with the local newspapers convinces me that this is how he would have wanted it.

## EVOLUTION

When you were a busher and I was the same,  
Back in a Class D league,  
And side by side in the battle’s tide  
We fought through a year’s fatigue;  
Or hammered many a three-base hit,  
Or whirled to a double play,  
Our hearts were filled with the game that thrilled  
And beckoned us on our way.

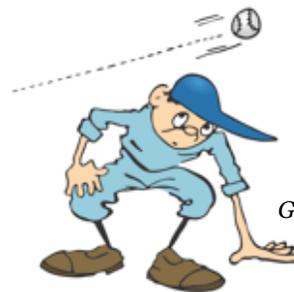
Careless we lived and careless we played,  
And careless at last we came  
To the blazing glow of the game’s big show  
And the glare and the flare of fame;  
And loud they cheered as we ruled the field,  
Young gods of a golden age,  
Who were born to dwell through a kingly spell  
And rule on the printed page.

And that seems a million years ago  
In a time we know not when;  
And here today, in the same old way,  
We toil in the Bush again,  
Our eyes are bright and our chests are thick,  
Our hair is sable as jet,  
Our years are few—our life is new—  
Our souls untried—and yet—

Our trail extends from the Ft. Wayne field  
To the sod of the Polo Grounds;  
We have heard the cheers of a thousand years  
That came as a dream rebounds;  
But our arms are gone and our legs are bad  
And here in the cast-off cleft,  
Pushed to the edge of the yawning ledge,  
What is the next shift left?

Grantland Rice

*The Pittsburgh Press, April 11, 1915*



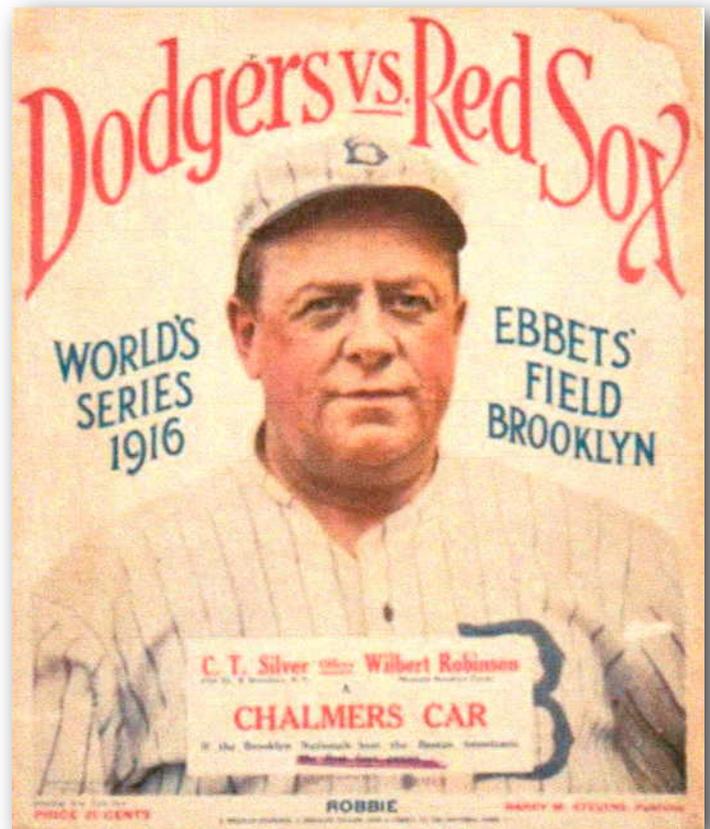
George McManus 1902

## OCTOBER 1916: THE WORLD SERIES COMES TO EBBETS FIELD

by John Zinn

When the modern World Series began in 1903 (or arguably 1905), a discerning Brooklyn fan could legitimately think that his or her beloved Dodgers (or Superbas) had missed the trolley car. A World Series was only possible if there was a second major league to compete with the National League, and the American League's success was at least partially because of its raids on National League club rosters – especially Brooklyn's. The City of Church's pennant-winning teams of 1899 and 1900 had been decimated by the war between the two leagues and the Dodgers' remaining talent was so limited, an appearance in the new Fall Classic was a distant dream. It is unlikely, however, that fans at the time had any idea how distant those dreams would prove to be. Peace with the American League was accompanied by a new order in the senior circuit where only three teams, the Pirates, Giants, and Cubs, would win the pennant for more than a decade. The other five clubs including Brooklyn had little more to compete for than fourth place and avoiding the second division.

Fortunately few things last forever and when change came, it did so with little warning in the middle of the 1914 season. On July 4, the Giants seemed well on the way to their fourth straight National League flag, with the hapless Boston Braves stuck once again in last place. In one of baseball's most dramatic, not to mention improbable, turnarounds, Boston went 68-19 over the remainder of the season to easily win the pennant. The Miracle Braves then proved their triumph was no fluke by sweeping Connie Mack's heavily-favored Philadelphia A's in the World Series. The door was now open to new pretenders to the league throne. And while it took some time, Brooklyn's turn came in 1916 when the club held off three challengers to win its first National League pennant since 1900 and earn its first appearance in the modern World Series. Fittingly, Brooklyn also had a new



ballpark (Ebbets Field) that would be an appropriate home for the Series with the defending champion and heavily-favored Boston Red Sox. Unfortunately, loyal Dodgers fans had to wait a little bit longer for their first World Series game since Brooklyn's late clinching of the NL pennant made it impossible to prepare the ballpark in time for the first two games. The Series openers were played in Boston

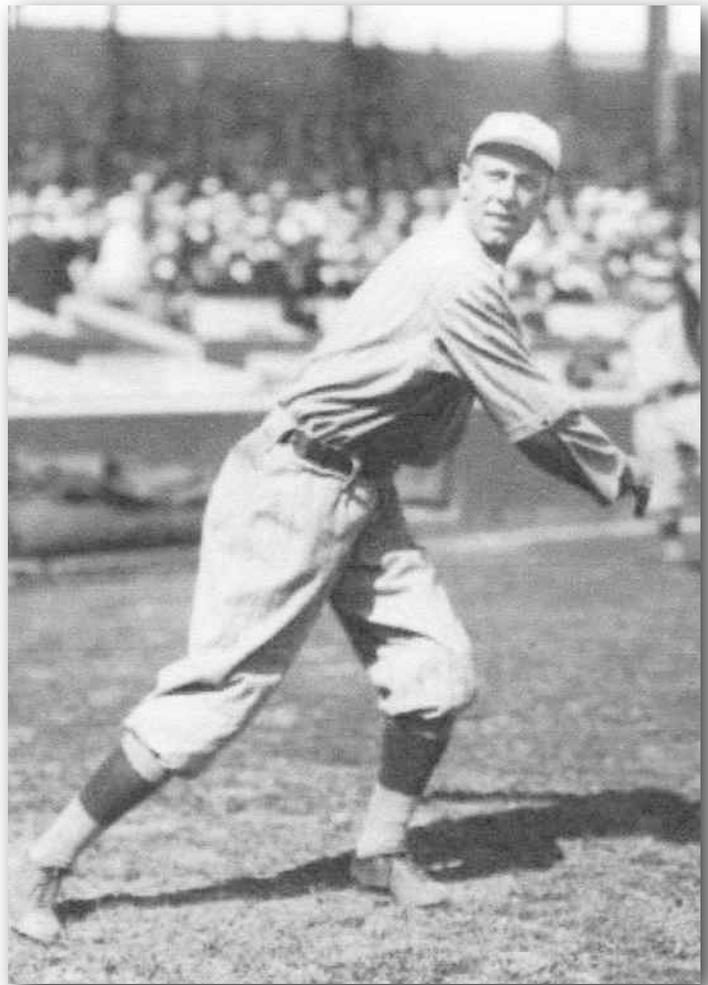
Equally regrettable, Brooklyn lost both contests in heart-breaking style, first when a last-ditch ninth-inning rally fell one run short, 6-5, and then via a 2-1, 14-inning loss to Babe Ruth in the second contest. But the Dodgers had proven to be a resilient bunch all season, so Brooklyn fans still had plenty of reason to come out and cheer their heroes. As loyal as the fans may have been to their team, however, there was also some real dissatisfaction directed toward club president Charles Ebbets. Reserved seats in the front rows of both decks at Ebbets Field had been priced at an unimaginable \$5, up from \$3 a year before. The result was a below-capacity crowd of about 21,000, with yawning gaps in the aforementioned sections demonstrating how

strongly the fans felt about the seat price gouge. Attendance also was not helped by temperatures below 50 degrees and strong winds from the northwest, conditions which made Ebbets Field “as cold as the inside of a refrigerator,” according to the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Notwithstanding that, when the Dodgers took the field, they were greeted by a loud cheer from their fans.

On the mound for Brooklyn was Jack Coombs, acquired by the Dodgers a few years earlier in what Tom Rice of the *Eagle* described as a baseball “speculation.” Not only was Coombs seemingly at the end of his career, he had also suffered through an illness that had put his very life in danger. The veteran pitcher had, however, more than justified Ebbets’ “speculation” by winning 25 games over two seasons, including a crucial 2-0 shutout win over the Giants in the last week of the 1916 pennant campaign. Coombs was also not likely to be overawed by the big stage, as he had a 4-0 lifetime record in the Fall Classic.

Coombs retired the first two Boston batters, but then allowed two singles before being bailed out by his right fielder, one Charles “Casey” Stengel, who threw out a Boston runner at third. The Dodgers then brought the home crowd to its feet by loading the bases against Boston starter Carl Mays with one out, only to see the Red Sox submariner escape without giving up a run. Mays was not so fortunate after that, as Brooklyn scored single runs in the second and third, and then seemed to put the game out of reach in the fifth inning when an Ivy Olson triple stretched the Brooklyn lead to 4-0. But the Red Sox had no intention of going quietly, scoring twice in the sixth before Coombs got out of the inning.

Brooklyn wasted a golden opportunity to get a run back when Jake Daubert hit one into the left field corner that Harry Hooper played poorly. Daubert should have had an inside-the-park home run, but was out at the plate due to a poor slide. In the top of the seventh, Coombs managed to get the first Boston batter, but Larry Gardner homered over the right field fence onto “Bedford Street” (*sic*) to cut the Dodgers lead to one. After already suffering two heart-breaking losses,



**Jack Coombs**

many Brooklyn fans had to feel that they were in for another disappointing finish, this time before their very eyes. Coombs, however, wisely knew that he was done, signaling for a relief pitcher. Manager Wilbert Robinson brought in 25-game winner Jeff Pfeffer. No manager ever made a better choice. Not only did the big right-hander get out of the inning, he retired all eight batters he faced without allowing a single base-runner. When Stengel caught the last out in right field, it set off a football-like celebration as the crowd poured onto the field.

As they left the park, Dodgers fans could have been forgiven for hoping that their heroes would tie up the Series on the morrow, as could Charles Ebbets for thinking that the victory and better weather would produce a larger crowd. All such hopes proved in vain, as even though the weather was perfect, the crowd was no larger than the day before. Brooklyn got off to a quick 2-0 lead, but



*Ebbets Field*

another Gardner home run helped Boston take a 6-2 win and a stranglehold on the Series. The Sox clinched the next day in Boston. All the same, the 21,000 in attendance at Game Three could claim not only had they seen a World Series game in person, a rarity at the time, but that they had seen the local club prevail. Ironically, the Dodgers would play their final World Series game at Ebbets Field 40 years later to the day. This time, the Dodgers lost the seventh game of the 1956 classic to the Yankees and, perhaps more ironically, their manager Casey Stengel. All told, Brooklyn played 28 World Series games at Ebbets Field, including both great (Lavagetto's 1947 hit) and horrible (Mickey Owen's 1941 dropped third strike) moments in club history. But there could be only one first game and those in attendance on October 10, 1916 got their money's worth – even if they forked over \$5 for the supposedly over-priced grandstand seats.

*This article first appeared last October in baseball historian and DEC member John Zinn's blog A Manly Pastime, and coincided with the Dodgers latest World Series defeat. John's full-length biography of Dodgers owner Charles Ebbets has just been published by McFarland, and should be of interest to newsletter readers. In the article above, as in the Ebbets bio, the team is referred to as the Dodgers (rather than the Robins) to maintain consistency with the book's usage and avoid confusion.*

"Bull" Durham, the pitcher who came to the Giants with Rube Marquard, is now a moving picture actor in California and is pitching for a team in the moving picture league out there. Durham's club is at the top of the league.

*The (Albuquerque) Evening Herald, June 15, 1914*

# ACCURATE RBI RECORDS FOR PLAYERS OF THE DEADBALL ERA: PART 16 — THE PLAYERS ON THE 1908 DETROIT TIGERS

by **Herm Krabbenhoft**

According to E.J. Lanigan (of the *New York Press*), in an article published in *The Sporting News* (February 11, 1909) entitled “1908 Run-Getters: Wagner Leader in National and Cobb in American for Second Succeeding Season,” Ty Cobb topped the Junior Circuit in runs batted in with a total of 101 — 86 on hits, eight on flies, and seven on infield outs.<sup>1</sup> However, according to D.S. Neft, who directed a research effort in the mid-1960s and presented his findings in *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (published by Macmillan in 1969), Cobb captured the AL RBI title with 108 ribbies.<sup>2</sup> So, whose 1908 RBI number for The Georgia Peach is correct — Lanigan’s 101 or Neft’s 108? Or, is neither number correct?

Because RBIs were not recorded officially prior to 1920, there are no *official* RBI records for the 1908 season. Thus, both Lanigan’s RBI numbers and Neft’s RBI numbers are *unofficial*. Nonetheless, Lanigan’s 101 RBIs for Cobb was used (a) in each edition of *The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball* (1951-1979), (b) in each edition of *Daguerreotypes of Great Stars of Baseball* (1951-1990), and (c) in each edition of the various baseball record books published by *The Sporting News* (1943-2004) (e.g., *Official Baseball Guide, One for the Book, Complete Baseball Record Book*).<sup>3-5</sup> Similarly, Neft’s 108 RBIs for Cobb was used (a) in each edition of *The Baseball Encyclopedia* (1969-1996), (b) in each edition of *The Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball* (1974-2007), (c) in each edition of *Total Baseball* (1989-2001), and (d) in each edition *The ESPN Baseball Encyclopedia* (2004-2008).<sup>6-9</sup> Neft’s 108 RBIs for Cobb is also currently used on several Internet sites, such as MLB.com (the official website of Major League Baseball), Baseball-Reference.com, and retrosheet.org.<sup>10</sup>

So, how many runs did Cobb actually bat in during the 1908 diamond campaign? The answer to that question is provided in this report.



## RESEARCH PROCEDURE

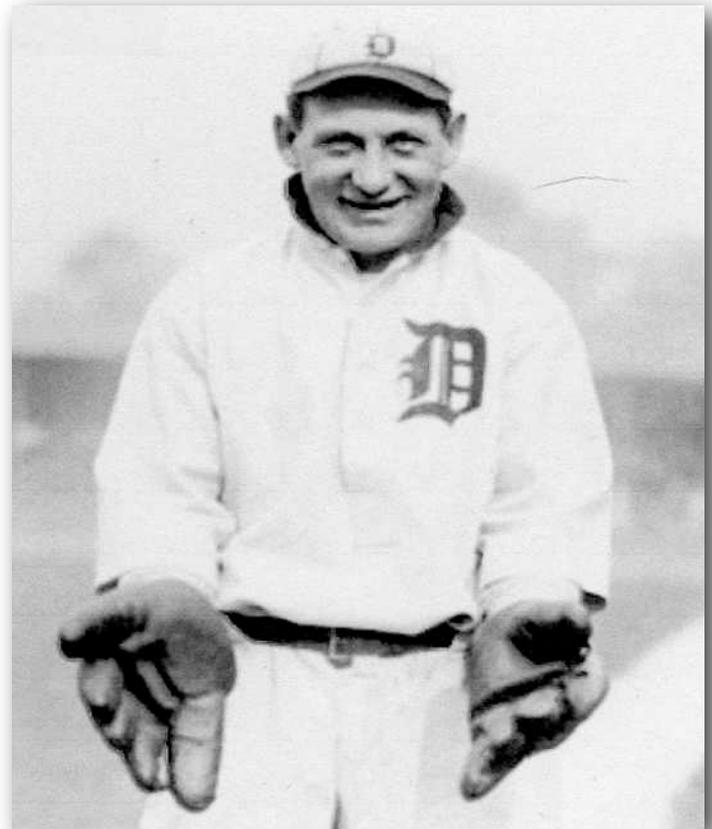
For the present investigation, I utilized the same rigorous *modus operandi* employed in my previous research efforts.<sup>11-26</sup> Thus, for each of the 647 runs scored by the Tigers in 1908, I sought to obtain three critical components: (a) the identity of the player who scored the run; (b) the details of the run-scoring event [e.g., a 2-RBI double, a balk, a 1-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 0-RBI grounder (batter safe on a fielding error), a 1-RBI bases-loaded walk, etc.]; and (c) the identity of the player who completed his plate appearance during the run-

scoring event (i.e., the player who could be credited with batting in the run). I followed the appropriate official scoring rules to credit or to not credit a player with an RBI — i.e., the official scoring rules used in 1931, which is when runs batted in were first officially defined.<sup>27</sup> I then provided the complete documentation that I assembled to Retrosheet's Tom Ruane and Dave Smith for their independent review, upon which we achieved 100% agreement and Retrosheet incorporated all of the runs-scored numbers and runs-batted-in numbers in its Box Score file (and derived Player Daily files) in its Fall-2018 release of updated information.<sup>28</sup> Appendix 1 (available on SABR.org) provides a tabulation of the critical "(a)-(b)-(c)" information for each of the 647 runs scored by the 1908 Tigers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the RBI numbers, according to my research, for each of the 24 players who participated in at least one game for the Detroit Tigers in the 1908 campaign. Also shown for comparison are the RBI numbers claimed by Lanigan and by Neft.

Inspection of Table 1 reveals that, according to my research, Ty Cobb achieved 107 runs batted in — six RBIs more than the 101 RBIs asserted by Lanigan and one RBI fewer than the 108 RBIs claimed by Neft. While I have assembled batter-by-batter play-by-play descriptions for each of the 647 runs the Tigers scored in 1908 (see Appendix 1 for a comprehensive summary for each of the 647 runs), no such game-by-game summaries are extant to support the full-season RBI numbers provided by Lanigan and by Neft. Thus, it is not possible to ascertain the specific games for which my RBI numbers differ with the RBI numbers of Lanigan and Neft. Because Lanigan did provide some information on the types of RBIs Cobb collected in 1908, one can get at least a glimpse of the differences between my RBI numbers and Lanigan's RBI numbers. Thus, in his *TSN* article, Lanigan stated that Cobb's 101 RBIs were distributed as follows — "86 runs batted in on hits; eight RBIs on flies; and seven on infield outs." According to my research, Cobb's 107 RBIs were the results of — 88 hits (46



*Germany Schaefer*

via singles, 15 via doubles, 21 via triples, and 6 via homers); nine sacrifice flies; nine infield outs (6 groundouts, 3 fielder's-choice-force-outs, and 0 safe-on-fielder's-choices); and one bases-loaded walk. It is pointed out that the six groundouts include one safe-on-error on which the runner scored from third base with less than two outs. In addition, as shown in Appendix 1, there were seven runners who scored as a consequence of at-bats by Cobb, although Cobb did not merit RBI credit for any of these runs. Table 2 summarizes the pertinent information for these runs; Appendix 2 provides the relevant descriptions from several newspaper game accounts for these runs. It is worthwhile to re-emphasize that Retrosheet has reviewed the evidence I assembled and concurred 100% with my conclusions for the RBI numbers and incorporated them on its website.

Considering now the other players on the Tigers 1908 roster, examination of Table 1 shows that my RBI numbers are different from Lanigan's RBI numbers for 17 of the 24 players (including Cobb). Thus, the agreement between Lanigan's

RBI numbers and my RBI numbers is only 29%. While most (11) of the differences are small (one or two RBIs), for four players the differences were five or more — Cobb (+6), Crawford (-5), Red Downs (+6), and Claude Rossman (+5). With regard to the comparison of my RBI numbers with Neft's RBI numbers, our RBI numbers differ for 16 players (including Cobb). Thus, the agreement between Neft's RBI numbers and my RBI numbers is just 33%. While most (12) of the differences are small (one or two RBIs), the largest is the plus-seven RBIs delta for Rossman. For the eleven players who would be considered regulars or principal secondary players (i.e., those players who participated in at least 50 games), Lanigan's RBI numbers are wrong compared to my RBI numbers for 91% of the players. Likewise, Neft's RBI numbers are wrong for 91% of the players.

As mentioned above, since the game-by-game RBI records generated by Lanigan and by Neft are no longer extant, it is not possible to ascertain the sources of the RBI deltas for most of the players. However, since a few players participated in only a few games and had only one or two RBIs, one can pinpoint the deltas for them. For instance, George Suggs played in only six games [April 21; May 31 (second game); June 18; July 13 (second game); July 17; and October 4] and had zero (0) RBIs according to my research, but two (2) RBIs according to Lanigan and one (1) RBI according to Neft. As shown in Appendix 3, according to the several batter-by-batter play-by-play descriptions given in the game accounts of various newspapers, Suggs did not, in actuality, accomplish any runs batted in. Thus, it is concluded that Lanigan's two RBIs and Neft's one RBI are not correct.

With reliable game-by-game numbers for both runs scored and runs batted in now available, one can accurately determine the longest consecutive game streaks for each of these statistics, as well as the combination of them, i.e., consecutive games runs produced — consecutive games with either scoring a run or batting in a run. Table 3 presents the longest such consecutive game streaks for each of the players on the 1908 Detroit Tigers.



***George Suggs***

Examination of Table 3 reveals that Ty Cobb and Germany Schaefer tied for the longest CGRUNS streak among the 1908 Tigers players — each assembled a 7-gamer. The Georgia Peach put together the longest CGRUNBI streak — an 8-gamer. And, Tyrus Raymond also fashioned the longest CGRP streak — a 9-gamer. For perspective, it is pointed out that the longest streaks among American League batsmen are, respectively: 18 (by Red Rolfe of the 1939 New York Yankees and Kenny Lofton of the 2000 Cleveland Indians); 14 (by Tris Speaker of the 1928 Philadelphia Athletics); and 33 (by Joe Cronin of the 1933 Washington Nationals).<sup>29-30</sup> For comparison, the corresponding records for players on the Detroit Tigers are, respectively: 16 (by Doc Cramer in 1944); 12 (by Mickey Cochrane in 1934 and by Rudy York in 1940); and 22 (by Billy Rogell in 1934).<sup>30-32</sup> For additional perspective, the analogous numbers

for players on the Detroit Tigers for the 1906, 1908-1919 seasons within the Deadball Era are, respectively: 12 (by Bobby Veach in 1916); 11 (by Sam Crawford in 1910); and 17 (by Bobby Veach in 1916).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The key research results reported in this article show that Ty Cobb actually led the American League in runs batted in during the 1908 season with 107, not 101 nor 108 RBIs as shown in the various baseball encyclopedias and on several baseball websites. Indeed, as shown in Table 1, the RBI numbers presently provided in these sources for most (about two-thirds) of the 24 players on the 1908 Detroit Tigers are erroneous. And with accurate runs-batted-in numbers in hand, it was ascertained that Cobb assembled the longest consecutive games streak for batting in (at least) one run — an eight-gamer.

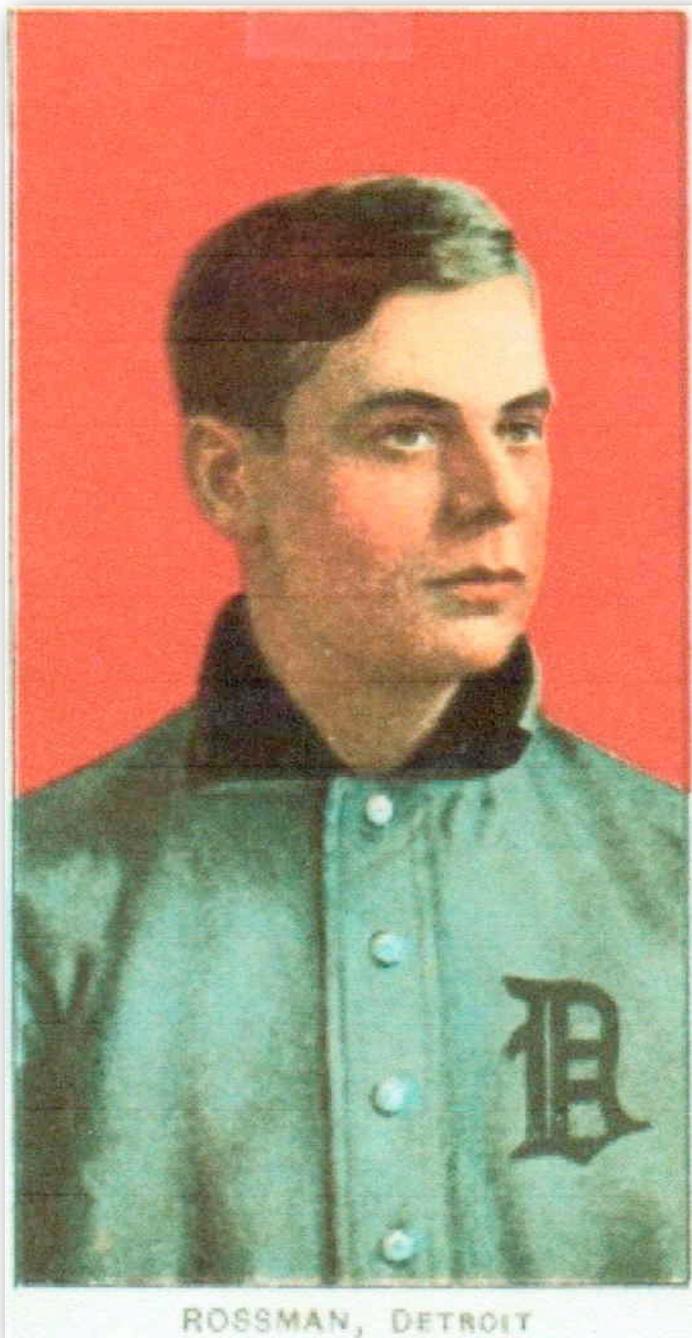
Looking ahead, the next team-season on my schedule for ascertaining accurate RBI numbers is the 1907 Detroit Tigers — in which Cobb led the AL in RBIs — 116 according to Lanigan, 119 according to Neft.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to gratefully thank Rock Hoffman, Ed Morton, and Dixie Tourangeau for providing me with scans or photocopies of the articles from various newspapers on some Detroit-Philadelphia and Detroit-Boston games which were critically important in my research. I should also like to thank Jonathan Frankel for valuable input and guidance for some of the Detroit-Philadelphia games. And I thank Retrosheet's Tom Ruane and Dave Smith for reviewing the evidence I assembled in support of the runs-batted-in numbers ascertained in my research and reported in this article.

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and when the run is forced over by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner. With less than two outs, if an error is made on a play on which a runner from third would ordinarily score, credit the batsman with a Run Batted In. [Rule 70, Section 13]

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Lee Stanley

Albuquerque Citizen, June 18, 1908

**TABLE 1. RUNS-BATTED-IN NUMBERS FOR PLAYERS ON THE 1908 DETROIT TIGERS**

Player (Games)	RBIs (Lanigan)	RBIs (Neft)	RBIs (This Work)	Player (Games)	RBIs (Lanigan)	RBIs (Neft)	RBIs (This Work)
Donie Bush (20)	5	4	<b>*4</b>	Charley O'Leary (65)	17	17	<b>*18*</b>
Ty Cobb (150)	101	108	<b>*107*</b>	Fred Payne (20)	2	2	2
Bill Coughlin (119)	23	23	<b>*25*</b>	Clay Perry (7)	0	0	0
Sam Crawford (152)	85	80	<b>*80</b>	Claude Rossman (138)	73	71	<b>*78*</b>
Bill Donovan (30)	4	2	<b>*5*</b>	Germany Schaefer (153)	53	52	<b>*50*</b>
Red Downs (84)	26	35	<b>*32*</b>	Boss Schmidt (122)	40	38	<b>*39*</b>
Davy Jones (56)	10	10	<b>*12*</b>	Ed Siever (11)	2	2	2
Red Killefer (28)	10	11	<b>*13*</b>	George Suggs (6)	2	1	<b>*0*</b>
Ed Killian (28)	7	6	<b>*6</b>	Ed Summers (40)	5	5	<b>*4*</b>
Herm Malloy (3)	1	1	1	Ira Thomas (40)	9	8	<b>9*</b>
Matty McIntyre (151)	32	28	<b>32*</b>	Ed Willett (30)	6	8	<b>*7*</b>
George Mullin (55)	8	8	<b>*9*</b>	George Winter (7)	0	0	0

NOTE: In the "RBIs (This Work)" column, an asterisk before the RBI number indicates that it is different from Lanigan's RBI number; an asterisk after the RBI number indicates that it is different from Neft's RBI number; if the RBI number is different from Lanigan's RBI and/or Neft's RBI number, the entry is shown in boldface.

**TABLE 2. RUNS SCORED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF COBB'S  
AT BATS — WITH NO RBI CREDITED TO COBB**

Game	OPP	Inning	Run-Scorer (starting base)	Run-Scoring Play with Cobb the Batter
4-21	STL	1	Crawford (2nd)	Safe on error by first baseman T. Jones (fumbled grounder)
4-29	CHI	1	Schaefer (2nd)	Infield single coupled with fielder's choice (i.e., second baseman Atz held the ball after runner advanced to and stopped at third base)
5-28	PHI*	7	McIntyre (3rd)	2-out safe-on-error by shortstop Nicholls (fumbled grounder)
6-07	BOS	1	Cobb (batter)	Infield single coupled with error by third baseman Lord (wild throw to first)
7-09	NY*	5	McIntyre (3rd)	0-out error by third baseman Moriarty (muffed flyball)
8-18	NY*	5	McIntyre (1st)	2-out error by right fielder McIlveen (muffed flyball)
9-06	STL*	6	Crawford (1st)	Infield single coupled with error by pitcher Waddell (wild throw to home)

An asterisk in the "OPP" column entry indicates that the game was played at the opponent's ballpark.

**TABLE 3. THE LONGEST CONSECUTIVE GAMES STREAKS FOR  
RUNS SCORED, RUNS BATTED IN, AND RUNS PRODUCED  
FOR PLAYERS ON THE 1908 DETROIT TIGERS**

Player (R; RBI)	CGRUNS	CGRUNBI	CGRP	Player (R; RBI)	CGRUNS	CGRUNBI	CGRP
Donie Bush (13; 4)	5	1	5	Charley O'Leary (21; 18)	6	3	6
Ty Cobb (88; 107)	7	8	9	Fred Payne (3; 2)	1	1	1
Bill Coughlin (32; 25)	4	2	5	Clay Perry (0; 0)	—	—	—
Sam Crawford (102; 80)	4	3	5	Claude Rossman (45; 78)	4	5	6
Bill Donovan (5; 5)	2	1	2	German Schaefer (98; 50)	7	3	8
Red Downs (28; 32)	6	4	6	Boss Schmidt (43; 39)	3	2	5
Davy Jones (18; 12)	2	3	6	Ed Siever (0; 2)	—	1	1
Red Killefer (9; 13)	2	2	6	George Suggs (1; 0)	1	—	1
Ed Killian (5; 6)	2	1	2	Ed Summers (6; 4)	1	1	1
Herm Malloy (0; 1)	—	1	1	Ira Thomas (8; 9)	1	1	3
Matty McIntyre (105; 32)	6	1	6	Ed Willett (4; 7)	2	1	2
George Mullin (13; 9)	2	1	2	George Winter (0; 0)	—	—	—

NOTE: "CGRUNS" gives the longest "Consecutive Games RUN Scored" streak; "CGRUNBI" gives the longest "Consecutive Games RUN Batted In" streak; "CGRP" gives the longest "Consecutive Games Run Produced" streak.

THE MEN AND MOMENTS THAT MADE THE

CINCINNATI REDS



CHAD DOTSON and CHRIS GARBER | FOREWORD BY MARTY BRENNAMAN

## THE BIG 50: THE MEN AND MOMENTS THAT MADE THE CINCINNATI REDS

By Chad Dotson and Chris Garber

2018, Triumph Books  
[ISBN: 978-1629375410, 368 pp, \$16.95 USD, Softcover]

Reviewed by

**Rich Arpi**

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This was an interesting and enjoyable book to read, but for Deadball Era aficionados there are only a couple pertinent entries, notably those about the 1919 World Series champions and the Fred Toney and Hippo Vaughn double no-hitter in 1917. Of course, this is not surprising given the lack of the Reds success during the period and the natural skewing of these types of books toward the modern day.

The authors picked 50 notable events, games, seasons, post-season series, and influential figures in the history of the Cincinnati Reds and wrote three to twelve pages on each selection. There seems to be no specific ranking or order of importance to the selections. The authors did not state that they thought their first selection, Game Six of 1975 World Series, was any more significant than their fiftieth selection, the 1972 World Series.

The book is filled with color photographs and contains a table of contents and a selected bibliography. A reader could pick and choose which chapters to read by perusing the table of contents, but I read the book from cover to cover and from selection one to 50. The first 15 or so selections took me only an hour to read and I finished the rest of the book in a few days and several more sittings. Events and persons from the Big Red Machine era of the 1970s and recent Reds history tend to dominate this book. In addition to the previously mentioned 1972 World Series and Game Six of the 1975 World Series, selections include the 1970 World Series, 1972 and 1973 NLCS, the 1975 Reds, the 1976 NLCS, and the 1976 World Series. Other selections feature Johnny Bench, Joe Morgan, Sparky Anderson, Pete Rose, and Bob Howsam. More recent Reds history is covered by selections on Homer Bailey, Aroldis Chapman, Johnny Cueto, Joey Votto, Eric Davis,

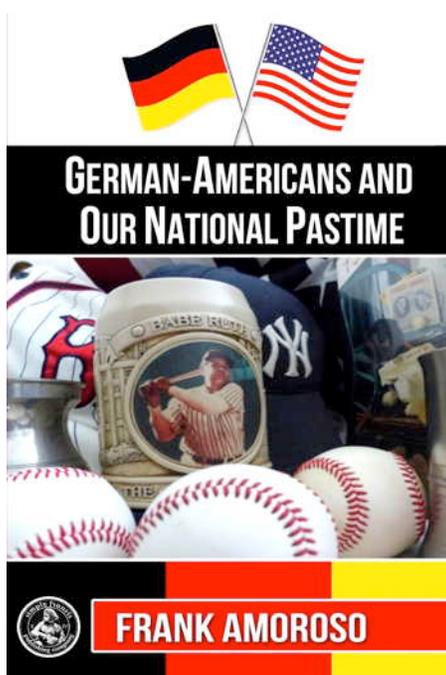
Barry Larkin, and Tom Browning's perfect game.

Other selections include the 1990 bullpen of Norm Charlton, Rob Dibble, and Randy Myers (The Nasty Boys), the 1990 World Series, the 1995 Reds, and the 2010 Central Division Champions. Additional selections include less well-known figures such as several generations of the Stowe (groundskeepers) and Schwab (clubhouse staff) families that have been an important part of Reds history, great games by Scooter Gennett, Art Shamsky (in 1966), Todd Frazier in the All-Star game home run derby, and Billy Bates (look him up). While there are selections on the 1961 Reds, the 1939 and 1940 Reds, some of the notable events from the more distant past, such as the 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings and the Fred Toney and Hippo Vaughn double no-hitter in 1917 merit only three pages each.

While it is nice to know that Johnny Vander Meer's parents were asked for their autographs after his second consecutive no-hitter, it would have been nicer to see something more on the Reds early history, like Bid McPhee or Cy Seymour. For a more wide-ranging overview — if less detailed for each of the many entries — I recommend *The Redleg Journal: Year by Year and Day by Day with the Cincinnati Reds since 1866* by Greg Rhodes and John Snyder. Still, *The Big 50* is a fun, well-written book for fans of the Cincinnati Reds. Just don't

expect too much from the Deadball Era or before.

*Rich Arpi is a reference librarian and archival cataloger for the Ramsey County Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has been a SABR member since 1982 and is an active member in Minnesota's Halsey Hall chapter, giving numerous presentations on Minnesota baseball over the years.*



## GERMAN-AMERICANS AND OUR NATIONAL PASTIME

By Frank Amoroso

2018, Triumph Books  
[ISBN: 978-1630620172, 76 pp, \$5.99 USD, Softcover]

Reviewed by  
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An increasing number of people are curious about their ancestry and with the new DNA testing kits it is effortless to learn the

## PUBLISHERS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The books reviewed in this issue were generously supplied to us by their publishers. *The Big 50: Cincinnati Reds*, *The Big 50: Boston Red Sox*, and *German-Americans and Our National Pastime* were published by Triumph Books and can be ordered by dialing 800-888-4741 or emailing: orders@jpgbook.com. *Babe Ruth and the Creation of the Celebrity Athlete* and *Tiger Stadium* come from McFarland and can be obtained by telephone: 800-253-2187 or email: info@mcfarlandpub.com. *Wee Willie Sherdel* was published by Friesen Press and can be ordered by calling 1-888-373-6793 or emailing bookstore-sales@friesenpress.com. *Wopper: Volume 1 – Pigtown* was published by Simply Francis Publishing Co. and can be ordered by telephone: 910-399-2508 or email: simplyfrancispublishing@gmail.com. Your patronage of these publishers is appreciated.

roots of one's ethnicity. I was also curious about my heritage and recently submitted my DNA. With the surname of Ginader, I was not surprised to learn that I am of German descent. Therefore, my interest was piqued when I discovered the book written by Frank Amoroso titled *German-Americans and Our National Pastime*, structured essentially as a handbook detailing important German-American personalities in professional baseball. The author does not conduct any genealogical research to determine ethnicity; rather, he relies on surnames as a guide. He apologizes up front for those who may have been erroneously excluded and includes his email address for readers to submit suggestions of any overlooked characters.

The inspiration for this book came while the author was conducting research for his fictional account of Babe Ruth's youth, entitled *Wopper*. Ruth, arguably the greatest personality in the game, sprung

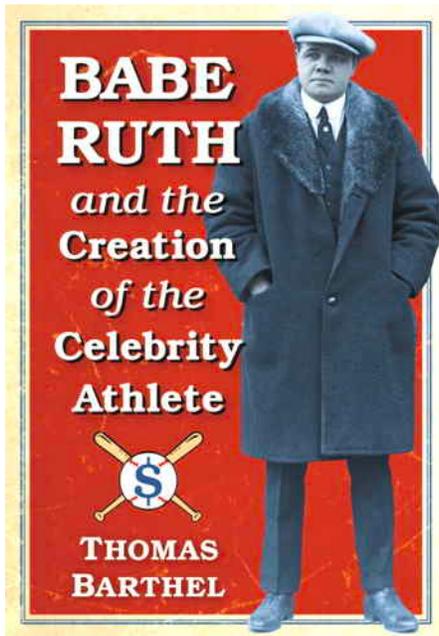
from German stock. The author discovered that many other prominent baseball individuals were also of German heritage. It is important to note that Jack Kaiser, Amoroso's German-American baseball coach from St. John's University, had a significant influence on the author. Because of this, the author chose to dedicate his book to Kaiser.

In the introduction, the author provides an overview of immigrant migration to the US. He writes about immigrant characteristics and specifically how German-Americans were successful because of their heritage. On baseball he notes that beer and hot dogs are staple cuisine at ballparks today and both items trace their introduction to German influence. After the introduction Amoroso writes about 52 personalities, subdivided into 11 sections. His creativity is evident in naming of the sections with titles like *The Greatest of All Time*, *German-American Ironmen*,

and *Clown Princes of Baseball*. The other sections are various groupings of off-field luminaries and players, with Deadball Era notables scattered throughout the sections. The reader will not find extensive detail on any of the personalities but rather a short biography and summary of accomplishments. I especially like the author's placement of images and quick response codes. I was interested enough in the QR codes to download the app on my phone and open the links. The codes link to classic baseball YouTube videos and other related websites. I thoroughly enjoyed this feature, as the book was not just prose but was also visually interactive.

There have been other books written about different ethnic groups and their influence in baseball, but Amoroso's book is valuable because it fills a gap about those with German ancestry. The engaging format has spurred me to read other books by this author as well as exploring other books on immigrant immersion in baseball. The use of images and quick response codes enhance the narrative and marks this short volume as one to have on your bookshelf for future reference.

*Stephen Ginader is a lifetime Phillies fan living in Minneapolis, and a member of SABR's Halsey Hall chapter and Deadball Era Committee. He is a happily retired logistics manager, married with two adult children.*



## **BABE RUTH AND THE CREATION OF THE CELEBRITY ATHLETE**

**By Thomas Barthel**

*2018, McFarland  
[ISBN: 978-1476665320, 286  
pp, \$35.00 USD, Softcover]*

Reviewed by  
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It is possible there is nobody in the past century that has had more written about them than Babe Ruth. Certainly no sports figure has had more ink spilled in their name. Part of that, no doubt, is because his career came in an era when there was no bigger pro sport than baseball, and the predominant medium for coverage of Babe Ruth was in newspapers and magazines, and radio and newsreels were in their infancy. Ruth's career, which ended in 1935, serves as a virtual line of demarcation in baseball history

for both the way the sport was played and consumed. Since his death in 1948, he has continued to be a topic for biographers and historians, examining not just his life, but his place in his time as well as the modern world.

Babe Ruth still resonates today, as Donald Trump named him as a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor the government can bestow on a private citizen. He's also fodder for three recent biographies: Jane Leavy's *The Big Fella*; Jerry Amernic's *Babe Ruth: A Superstar's Legacy*, and *Babe Ruth and the Creation of the Celebrity Athlete* by Thomas Barthel. All attempt, in some form, to detail Babe Ruth's rise as the first mass-marketed superstar, hawking everything from athletic supplies to underwear to breakfast cereal to life insurance!

Barthel is a college professor in New York and the author of multiple baseball books, writing biographies of Joe Medwick and Pepper Martin, as well as a couple books dealing with barnstorming. In a world where any major league game is seemingly at your fingertips, it is hard to imagine there was a time when barnstorming was the only opportunity for people outside of the northeast quadrant of the United States to see major league ballplayers. Barthel imparts not only this, but also how important it was to the players themselves, who in the days when the reserve clause was in full effect, relied

on barnstorming tours for extra money. In fact, Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis once suspended Ruth for barnstorming. Ruth's suspension was met with fan outcry, spurred on by the Christy Walsh syndicate. The book explores Ruth's relationship with Walsh, a journalist-turned-publicity agent who became Babe Ruth's business manager, handling endorsements and hiring ghostwriters for Ruth's syndicated column (as well as doing this for dozens of other professional athletes).

The book is not a typical biography of Ruth, but it provides enough biographical details that unless you are a diligent scholar of Ruth, you come away feeling you know him better than before you read the book. One salient detail: Walsh and Ruth's relationship was strictly transactional – on both ends. Barthel paints a portrait of Ruth as a lonely man, raised in an orphanage, who sought out wine, women, and song, was immensely gratified to be around children (even if his own record as a parent could be spotty), and loved the game of baseball, even if it didn't love him back.

Except for a brief time as a coach and gate attraction with the Dodgers in 1938, Babe Ruth's major league career ended with his stint with the Braves in 1935. Ruth was one of the highest-paid players in baseball, and his relationship with Walsh left him well-positioned, thanks to

barnstorming, endorsements, and some wise investments, to never have to work a day in his life after his baseball career. But he always felt disillusioned at being unable to manage. Barthel hints that this might be due in part to Ruth being more trouble than he was worth – and not just because of the oft-told tales (which only emerged after his death, thanks to the mythmaking of sportswriters) of his licentiousness and pursuit of good times.

Ruth had definite radical tendencies. He was willing to barnstorm against African-American players, and had no problems supporting nascent efforts at unionization. And that is really the major point of this book: Ruth is credited with saving the game of baseball in the wake of the Black Sox scandal of the 1919 World Series, but because of his own fame and fortune, the lords of baseball – who were more than willing to take their cut at the gate – were scared of him on

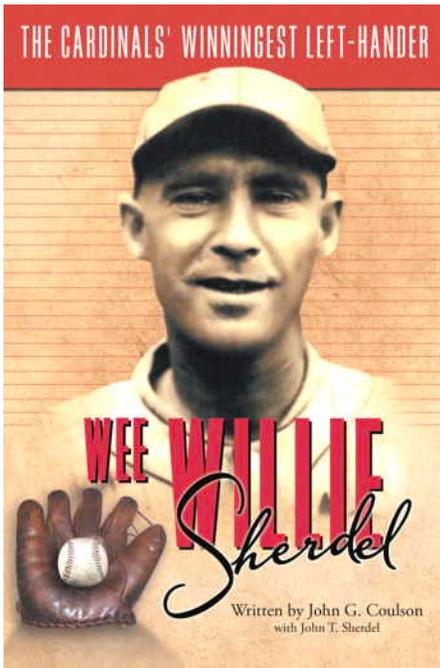
some level. And the things he did – ghostwriting columns, endorsements, personal appearances – have come to pass broadly in the game today.

The book ends with a discussion of sports memorabilia, and how Ruth helped give rise to that as well, always signing autographs (Barthel quotes Hall of Fame umpire Jocko Conlan, who said in Robert Creamer's Ruth biography that the Bambino virtually invented sports autograph collecting) and appearing on cards and other memorabilia. Ruth's draw in that respect continues to this day, selling not history, Barthel notes, but nostalgia.

*Vince Guerrieri is a SABR member and Indians fan from Youngstown, Ohio (hometown of Jimmy McAleer, Bonesetter Reese, and Billy Evans). He is a journalist and author who has written about Harry Stevens for Ohio Magazine and maple bats for Deadspin.*



*The (New York) Evening World, September 3, 1912*



## WEE WILLIE SHERDEL: THE CARDINALS' WINNINGEST LEFT-HANDER

By John G. Coulson with  
John T. Sherdel

2018, Friesen Press  
[ISBN:978-1525517440, 402  
pp, \$17.99 USD, Softcover]

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William Henry “Wee Willie” Sherdel was born, lived, and died in his home town of McSherrytown, Pennsylvania. In this biography, Pennsylvania author and baseball historian John G. Coulson takes up Sherdel’s case as one of baseball’s overlooked stars. The book is enhanced with photos and mementos provided by Sherdel’s grandson, John. Born in August 1896, Sherdel first made the major leagues with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1918.

From 1922 to 1928 “Wee Willie” won 109 games. His best year was in 1928 when he won 21 games with a 2.86 ERA in 249 innings pitched. The Cardinals won the World Series in 1926 and lost to the Yankees in 1928.

Willie’s tale is a story like many from the Deadball Era. As a youngster, he loved baseball and dreamt of being a major leaguer, and then he worked diligently to become one. He had help along the way from Eddie Plank, the Hall of Fame A’s pitcher who lived in nearby Gettysburg. After entering the preparatory department of Gettysburg College, Sherdel met Plank who taught the youngster to pitch with control and finesse. Willie learned from Eddie to throw five “fast ones” and then to mix his pitches by throwing a change-up or curve ball. Plank called control a “golden asset.” As he tells Sherdel’s story, author Coulson offers numerous insights into Willie’s maturation as a pitcher. He also provides historical context by describing current events at the start of each chapter.

Early in his career, Sherdel, after being discovered in Hagerstown, Pennsylvania, signed a minor league contract for \$40 per month. Sherdel’s break to the majors came in 1917 just prior to World War I. Branch Rickey saw Sherdel pitch while scouting another player. Rickey liked Sherdel’s “cross-fire” delivery and felt he could be a future star. For his unique delivery, Sherdel placed his foot at the far-left pitching

rubber and instead of stepping toward home plate, he would step toward first base and deliver the pitch across his body. Sherdel apparently didn’t get the moniker “Wee Willie” until the early 1920s when it was bestowed upon him by a sportswriter. Like another short statured player a couple of decades earlier — the great place hitter Wee Willie Keeler — the nickname stuck.

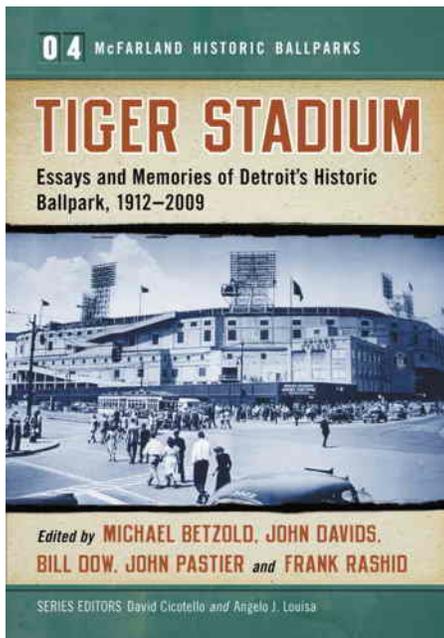
Coulson also highlights the emergence of the St. Louis Cardinals as a model organization. Branch Rickey was the manager and later the general manager who developed an elaborate farm system with the support of owner Sam Breadon. Players like Jim Bottomley and Ray Blades were among the first players that Rickey picked up as future stars.

The Sherdel biography offers insight into a great pitcher as he successfully moved from the Deadball Era into the high offense era of the 1920’s. As author of this book writes, Sherdel was a humble family man who loved baseball. He also was a fierce competitor. In the end, Wee Willie was a sportsman whose story is inspiring.

*Dave Jensen has been a SABR member since 2006 and is a member of the Deadball Era Committee.*



Pete Gurwit 1914



## TIGER STADIUM: ESSAYS AND MEMORIES OF DETROIT'S HISTORIC BALLPARK, 1912-2009

Edited by Michael Betzold,  
John Davids, Bill Dow, John  
Pastier, and Frank Rashid

2018, McFarland  
[ISBN: 978-0786464487, 290  
pp, \$39.95 USD, Softcover]

Reviewed by  
**Barb Mantegani**  
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*TIGER STADIUM: Essays and Memories of Detroit's Historic Ballpark, 1912-2009*, provides the reader with the history of the iconic ballpark from first pitch to last (and beyond), and is an extremely well-researched and thorough presentation of both the history of the park and the place of Tiger Stadium in the larger history of Detroit. In Part I: History and Background, the book takes the reader from the first moment professional

baseball was played on the corner of Michigan and Trumbull in 1896, before Detroit was awarded a franchise in the fledgling American League in 1900 and the structure ultimately known as Tiger Stadium was built, and tells the story of the development of both the game and the field where it was played. The presentation is enhanced with extraordinary drawings and photos that give the reader a sense of what baseball was like in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, both for the players and the fans. Whether one is a Detroit native with a long relationship with the Tigers or a relative novice to the subject, the early chapters of the book entertain with the story of the team, and highlights the men who built it, ran its operations, and ultimately owned it, particularly Frank Navin and Walter Briggs. And in telling their stories the book also chronicles the development and transformations of the structure that at various points bore the name of each owner and was ultimately known as Tiger Stadium.

As part of its comprehensive history, the authors also include the story of professional football at Briggs Stadium/Tiger Stadium. The Detroit Lions began play there in 1938 and spent their most successful seasons in the stadium — primarily the 1950s, when the Lions won three NFL championships. The team's tenure ended in 1974, when the

Lions decamped for Pontiac and the then state-of-the-art domed stadium built for owner William Ford.

In a somewhat long (but worth every page) chapter called "Longevity and Adaptability: Tiger Stadium's Evolution, Architecture, Functionality, Structure and Urban Context," author John Pastier (with drawings by John Davids) walks the reader through every aspect of the park, explaining each change and the context within which it was made, the surrounding neighborhood and its impact on the structure, and at various points compares Tiger Stadium to other stadia of similar vintage. This chapter alone makes reading the book a worthwhile effort, especially for those readers who might not have a deep knowledge of the team or its ballpark. In addition to the clear writing, the chapter has painstakingly complete footnotes that provide additional sources for going more in-depth on particular points made in the chapter.

In Part II: Memories, the book comes to life with the stories of players, coaches, stadium personnel, sportswriters, broadcasters, and fans, who share anecdotes of things that happened at the ballpark, in the stands, on the field, and in the neighborhood, with the love of both team and ballpark shining through every story. The stories are about particular games, both highlights (Game 5 of the 1984 World Series) and lowlights (the Lions game in 1971 when Lions receiver Chuck

Hughes had a fatal heart attack on the field), and about how various people with a connection to Detroit, the Tigers, or the neighborhood remember the ballpark. Todd Jones, the Tigers closer who threw the final pitch in the ballpark on September 27, 1999, wrote a beautiful piece about the final year in Tiger Stadium and what it meant to him, including what it was like to throw that final pitch.

Finally, a few words about my one problem with the book: the vehement, almost shrill, point of view the authors present regarding the events leading to the demise of Tiger Stadium. As a reader with little knowledge of the Tigers, having grown up following another team, I found the final four chapters of Part I to be extremely difficult to get through, and would recommend the reader save those chapters for last. This is not to in any way suggest that the perspective expressed by the authors is not valid, or that their descriptions of the events leading to the Tigers moving to Comerica Park are not accurate, but rather, that the intensity of the presentation leaves little room for someone coming to the book with a different (or no) point of view. And is a distraction from what is otherwise an incredible literary journey.

*Barb Mantegani is a SABR member from Washington, DC, a Red Sox fan by birth, a Tigers fan by marriage, and supports her baseball habit by advising companies on international tax issues.*



**THE BIG 50: BOSTON RED SOX: THE MEN AND MOMENTS THAT MADE THE BOSTON RED SOX**

**By Evan Drellich**

*2018, Triumph Books  
[ISBN: 978-1-62937-565-6,  
288 pp, \$16.95 USD,  
Softcover]*

Reviewed by  
**John W. Gregory**  
ashburyjohn@charter.net

Did you hear? The Boston Red Sox won the World Series this past October! So this book, even with its 2018 copyright, is already out of date. Not that the latest turn of events detracts from the interest of the material that it covers, but surely any future edition will contain new chapters to supplant a few of these 50 four-page entries on the history and lore of the Sox.

One of the chapters that will survive for any conceivable future edition discusses the

2004 team that finally broke the so-called Curse of the Bambino. For me, the chapter brings back memories of driving through Boston with my wife and children, on the very day when the Sox were about to face the Yankees in Game 4, down 3-0 and with their backs to the wall. We tuned in to WEEI radio for their call-in show, and I told my kids to soak it all up – the wailing and gnashing of teeth was delectable. Oh, it was “Bob Freaking Stanley” this, and “Bill Freaking Buckner” that, with “Bucky Freaking Dent” and other freaking personalities prominently mentioned, as caller after caller dredged up the ghosts of all the failures in the past. This is real Boston baseball, I announced to my kids. But that’s the past, and this book is good for linking that past to the sometimes cloying successful present.

In the acknowledgements, barely 30-year old Evan Drellich describes himself as a first-time author, but he is hardly inexperienced, as his resume includes work for the *Boston Herald*, WEEI Radio, and NBC Sports Boston, plus various on-line gigs. The book appears to be part of a series by this publisher, one of 11 (so far) for major league teams bearing the title “The Big 50,” plus similar entries in other sports. Oddly, neither the foreword by Kevin Youkilis nor any of the chapters in this book answered my initial question, the Big 50 “What”? The subtitle indicates Men, and also Moments, but

some of the chapters defy easy categorization between these two choices. Moreover the ordering of chapters is not chronological. Based on the arrangement they appear to be ranked by importance, but this is not made explicit.

One could characterize the book as a bathroom reader, but in that view it's a pretty good one – there is more to it than I initially expected, just judging by the time it took me to read it. Some of the topics are much too broad to be covered in four pages and so the author concentrates on some particular aspect, leaving the reader wanting more. For other chapters there are topics too small to deserve four pages and therefore related topics are combined. Neither of these is a bad choice by the author.

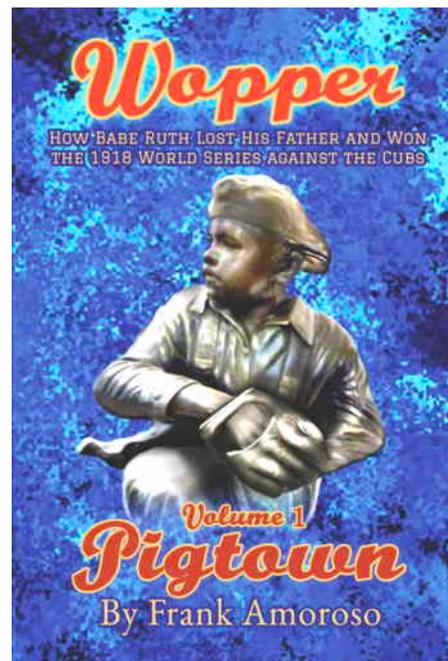
The emphasis, as I indicated, is weighted heavily toward recent history. For the purpose of this newsletter, there is precious little that pertains to the Deadball Era per se – chapter 43 devotes three paragraphs to Tris Speaker and four paragraphs to Cy Young, and then moves on to the relatively “modern” Jimmie Foxx and Lefty Grove. Chapters on Bobby Doerr, Johnny Pesky, and the 1946 World Series are more or less everything else that pertains to the time before the magic of 1967. It is a reasonably carefully researched book, including several references to SABR biographies. Information gleaned from interviews with about 20 luminaries make this

not merely an aggregation of others' published efforts.

Some chapters might have benefitted from an additional editing pass. Also, there are a few photos, but I would have liked more, perhaps one evocative shot per chapter. Those who are bothered by profanity should be aware that there are a few f-bombs and other vulgarities, although the chapter on Bucky Dent was oddly prim in that regard. I am nitpicking, though, and generally the book is well-written and engaging.

Taking into account these various quibbles, my suspicion is that this will not turn out to be the best book Drellich will ever write. He's still young and I expect that he will continue to hone his craft, perhaps on a project someday with a little more heft or focus. This offering is clearly intended more for profitability in the mass market, and not as a source authority that SABR authors would add to their research bookshelves. So, consider it a possible stocking-stuffer for that Red Sox fan on your holiday gift list – young ones will learn a lot, and older readers will enjoy reminiscing.

*John Gregory has been a SABR member since 1984, was a founding member of the Halsey Hall chapter in Minnesota, and helped launch the SABR-L mailing list. A retired software developer, he and his wife Mary currently live near Boston. He adores the atmosphere at Fenway while still secretly retaining his rooting interest in the Twins.*



**WOPPER: VOLUME 1 –  
PIGTOWN: HOW BABE  
RUTH LOST HIS FATHER  
AND WON THE 1918  
WORLD SERIES AGAINST  
THE CUBS**

**By Frank Amoroso**

*2017, Simply Francis  
Publishing Co.*

*[ISBN: 9781630620097, 161  
pp., \$10.99 US. Softcover]*

Reviewed by

**Dave Karpinski**

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*Wopper* is a trilogy focused on the life of Babe Ruth through the 1918 World Series. It is also a work of historical fiction, meaning that it represents a combination of investigation and imagination. The format works well in the hands of author Frank Amoroso who can both turn a phrase and tell a story. This review covers the first volume, *Pigtown*, which

takes the reader through George Herman (Jidgie) Ruth's chaotic childhood, his time at St. Mary's Industrial School for Orphans, Delinquents, Incurable and Wayward Boys, and right up to the signing of his first professional baseball contract. *Volume 2 – The Show* follows Babe Ruth's professional career and his "colorful" life as he rose quickly to the very peak of major-league stardom, while *Volume 3 – The Series* culminates in the 1918 World Series.

*Volume One* opens in 1902 in the Baltimore's Pigtown neighborhood – known for the herding of pigs through the neighborhood from the rail yards to the slaughter houses. Saloonkeeper's son Jidgie Ruth is a rambunctious seven-year-old who often finds himself running afoul of not just his parents' wishes, but also of neighbors, shopkeepers, teachers, truant officers, and even the police. In an early comment, his father notes "This one will be the death of me. He just turned seven and he already has more bad habits than me. He cusses, he smokes, he steals. The shopkeepers along Pratt and Lombard are always accusing him and his gang of hoodlums of pinching food. The worst is that he laughs at me when I take the strap to him."

Amoroso takes us through the family dysfunction and tragedy that shaped Ruth's early life and attitudes – eventually landing him as a ward of St. Mary's Industrial School, where he

comes under the positive tutelage of Xaverian Brother Mathias Boutilier, a giant of a man who is credited with having the single most profound impact on young Jidgie Ruth – both in terms of his growth into manhood and his development as a ballplayer. Amoroso takes the reader through Ruth's progress at St. Mary's as he develops a brief vocational passion (tailoring), a first romantic passion (Colina Petronilla), and a lifelong personal passion (baseball). There is plenty of action on and off the field as *Pigtown* takes us to 1914, when the 19-year-old Ruth signs his first professional contract with the Baltimore Orioles of the International League.

Good historical fiction brings context to the story line – lining up the personal events and the life of the main character with larger events shaping the times. In *Pigtown*, Amoroso weaves in such events as the "Great Baltimore Fire of 1904" that destroyed more than 1,500 buildings and the tensions and ethnic animosity leading toward World War I.

Amoroso adds to the book's sense of time and place along with its entertainment value by injecting the vernacular and even a bit of the writing style of the day into the text. He also provides a "Glossary of Early 20th Century Idioms and Baseball Slang" for readers. A few of interest: Box Artist = pitcher; Cudgel = bat; Knuckle Party = fist fight; and Candy Kid = a batter who drives in a run. I could go on, but the point

is, the language of the time lends to the authenticity of the tale.

One particular scene from *Pigtown* caught my attention. It seemed a foretelling of Ruth's called shot in the 1932 World Series. "The youngster suppressed a grin as he pointed with his broad right hand toward the pasture beyond the split log fence in right field. He stood there motionless in the left-handed batter's box, pointing until Flanagan (the opposing catcher) screamed at him, 'It's over for you ... [*Here I am omitting the ethnic and profane comments that followed.*]' As the lanky pitcher sighted in on the red-faced catcher, who had every vein in his neck bulging venomous purple, Leo (the pitcher) himself seethed with anger at the busher's brash antics. The angular right-hander whipped into his windup and unleashed a screamer right at Jidgie's cranium. As soon as the ball was hurled, Jidgie nimbly stepped back and swung his bat in tomahawk fashion at the menacing projectile. The collision of the bat with the ball produced a ringing crack and there was a faint smell of burnt wood from the friction of the bat striking the ball."

Ruth's blast, of course, cleared the fence and won the game. One other observation struck me: Just a couple days before reading that final sentence, I had come across an old *Sports Illustrated* article in which Ted Williams noted that five or six times in his career he hit a ball so hard and so perfectly that he

“smelled the wood of the bat burning.”

Overall, *Pigtown* promises that the trilogy will be an entertaining and easy read. Its one significant drawback – common to historical fiction – is that the reader must remain aware that the line between fact and fiction is blurred. For the purists, there is plenty of non-fiction about Babe Ruth’s life available. In fairness, Amoroso does provide a “caution” in the

forward: “The reader should know that prior to writing this book, I received a literary license to imagine, speculate and create scenarios that may or may not have occurred, but that are within the realm of possibility.”

To those who might shy away from the “fictional” aspect of Amoroso’s trilogy, I offer this quote from sportswriter and 1979 J.G. Taylor Spink Award winner Tommy Holmes: “I

stopped talking about Babe Ruth for the simple reason that I realized those who had never seen him didn’t believe me.”

*Dave Karpinski is a member of the Minnesota SABR chapter and lifelong baseball fan, who grew up on the Milwaukee Braves and now follows the Minnesota Twins. He is a retired communications director/executive speechwriter and operates the website BaseballRoundtable.com.*

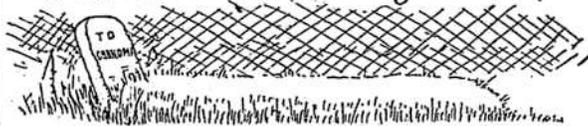
## LINES TO GRANNY

BY APPY



Grandma sits in her easy chair,  
With a kindly smile on her sweet old face;  
Soft is the sheen of her silvery hair,  
And she rocks and nods with gentle grace.  
Oh its little, I ween, does grandma wot  
Of the darksome secrets of stolen bags;  
Of biff or bingle, of whiff or swat,  
Or of madding races for pennant rags.

And I doubt me much if the dim old eyes  
Could follow the flight of an easy pop;  
Alike to her are the fouls and flies,  
And Greek to her are the shoot and drop.  
To her the squeeze or the hit-and-run  
Are quite the same as the ball and strike;  
Put-outs and errors are all as one  
And bunts and homers are just alike.  
And yet, could the dear old soul but know,  
She plays a part in the nation's game;  
A part that ever is tinged with woe,  
And her role each season is quite the same.  
For every year, though she knows it not,  
She is summoned to deeds of heroic sort,  
For alas and alack, it is grandma's lot  
To die for the sake of the grand old sport.



Full many a gallon of scalding tears  
Have welled from grandsons' pleading eyes;  
Full many a sob, through the passing years,  
Hath greeted her annual obsequies.  
And oft for her has the youthful head  
In anguish bowed as he craved his boon:  
"Excuse me, boss, but me grandma's dead,  
An' I wanta git off dis afternoon."  
Ah well, poor grandma may never surmise  
The fountain of undiluted joy  
That springs each year from her own demise  
In the artless breast of her loving boy.  
But in spite of that, I'm a bit afraid  
'Twould sadly shock the dear old dame,  
Could she but know the part she played  
In many a hard-fought baseball game.

G S APPLGARTH

The (Pittsburg) Gazette Times, January 28, 1912 (George S. Applegarth)

## RALPH CARROLL: DENTISTRY OVER DEADBALL

by **Bill Lamb**

Immediately following his graduation from Tufts College Dental School in June 1916, catcher Ralph Carroll joined the Philadelphia Athletics where his tenure was brief (10 games) and distinguished only by the fact that the club dropped every game that Carroll appeared in. Or perhaps that was not much of a distinction, as the hapless A's (36-117) managed to lose another 107 games entirely without him. Although he did not hit, Carroll flashed impressive defensive skills behind the plate and a strong, accurate throwing arm in his short time with Philadelphia. Club co-owner/manager Connie Mack was, therefore, reportedly disappointed when Carroll chose to leave the A's in early August, either due to exhaustion or to prepare for his dental licensing exams, news accounts varied. In any case, once he left the playing ranks, Carroll never came back, spending the remainder of his life briefly dabbling in high school and college coaching and decades thereafter in professional scouting, but mainly practicing dentistry for more than fifty years in his hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Ralph Arthur Carroll was born in Worcester on December 28, 1891. He was the only child known to have been born to tinsmith John B. Carroll (1848-1917), an Irish Catholic immigrant, and his Massachusetts-native wife Anna (nee McKenna, 1852-1940), a domestic servant. Young Ralph attended local schools through his graduation from Worcester Classical High School. Good-sized (eventually 6-foot-1, 170 lbs.) with a shock of flaming auburn hair, *Red* Carroll<sup>1</sup> was an outstanding schoolboy athlete, particularly on the baseball diamond. After high school, he took a post-graduate year at Worcester Academy, catching for an undefeated prep nine.<sup>2</sup> Carroll's ball playing aptitude did not go unnoticed, and Jesse Burkett, then winding down a Cooperstown-bound career as playing manager of the Worcester Boosters of the Class B Eastern League, was particularly anxious to sign

him. But Carroll opted for college instead, matriculating to Holy Cross.<sup>3</sup>

Although only a freshman academically, the righty batting and throwing 21-year-old quickly assumed first-string status with the Crusaders, who finished with a 14-13 log. That summer, Carroll came to the attention of Connie Mack, courtesy of T. Frank Hickey, a wealthy Massachusetts businessman and a long-time Mack friend. For the past several summers, Hickey had sponsored a summer baseball club in Shrewsbury that served as a sort of developmental squad for the Athletics. Hickey had already sent outfielder Bruno Haas to Mack for a tryout,<sup>4</sup> and more recruits were reportedly in the pipeline. "Ralph Carroll, a catcher on the Holy Cross team, is a possibility for graduating to the A's," reported the *Detroit Times*. "He has been growing fast as a backstop for Hickey's team and in another year might be ready for big league duty."<sup>5</sup> Carroll's advancement in baseball, however, would soon take a back seat to a newly-formed desire to enter the dental profession. To that end, he left Holy Cross and transferred to Tufts College in September 1913 in order to enroll in its dentistry school, forfeiting a year of collegiate athletic eligibility in the process.<sup>6</sup>

Although he went to Tufts primarily for educational purposes, the move also benefitted Carroll athletically, placing him under the tutelage of Jumbos baseball coach Jack Slattery, a former major league receiver.<sup>7</sup> Although he had been away from collegiate competition for a year, the Tufts transfer showed promise as soon as 1915 spring practice began. "Tufts will be well-fixed behind the plate," reported the *Boston Herald*. "'Red' Carroll, the former Holy Cross backstop, has shown the best form up to date. Under Coach Slattery, who was himself a catcher in the major leagues, Carroll should improve wonderfully."<sup>8</sup> The unidentified *Herald* reporter proved a seer, as Carroll had a standout junior season. He excelled behind the plate and batted a robust .386 (22-for-57) for a 17-2-1 Jumbos nine.<sup>9</sup> Tufts and Carroll encored that performance the following year. With seven regulars batting over .300, Tufts went a sparkling 20-2, the

second-best record registered by a Northeastern college in 1916.<sup>10</sup> Carroll did his part to ensure team success, again providing yeoman service behind the plate and batting a handsome (25-for-71) .353.<sup>11</sup>

While Red Carroll was performing his heroics at Tufts, the fortunes of Connie Mack's champion Philadelphia A's had begun a free-fall in American League standings. Diminishing gate receipts, player defections to the upstart Federal League, and grim financial prospects had prompted Mack to begin dismantling his juggernaut ball club after the A's had been upset by the Boston Braves in the 1914 World Series. The results were catastrophic. From the AL top spot, the Athletics plummeted all the way to the league cellar in 1915, posting a woeful 43-109 (.283) mark. And things did not improve for Mack's club in the early going of 1916. Entering June, the A's were again in last place and given little chance of climbing higher.<sup>12</sup> Desperate for a remedy, Mack resorted to a familiar strategy: the signing of amateur talent from the college ranks.

Unlike many other big leagues skippers, Mack was not averse to having college players on the A's. To the contrary, he prized the intelligence, better behavior, and locker room stability that educated ballplayers brought to his club, and A's rosters were always liberally dosed with them. Indeed, college men like Eddie Collins (Columbia), Eddie Plank (Gettysburg), Chief Bender (Carlisle), Jack Barry (Holy Cross), Eddie Murphy (Villanova), and Jack Coombs (Colby) had formed the core of Mack's recent championship teams.<sup>13</sup> And helpful given the financial straits that the A's were currently in, college players held another attraction. They could be acquired cheaply, available for signing without incurring the expense that attended obtaining talent via purchase or the minor league player draft. During the course of the 1916 season, Mack auditioned no fewer than nine new collegians. Red Carroll was one of them.

The terms under which Mack engaged Carroll are unclear.<sup>14</sup> But whatever the details, it was promptly announced that "Ralph Carroll, as classy as any of the college catchers in the East,"



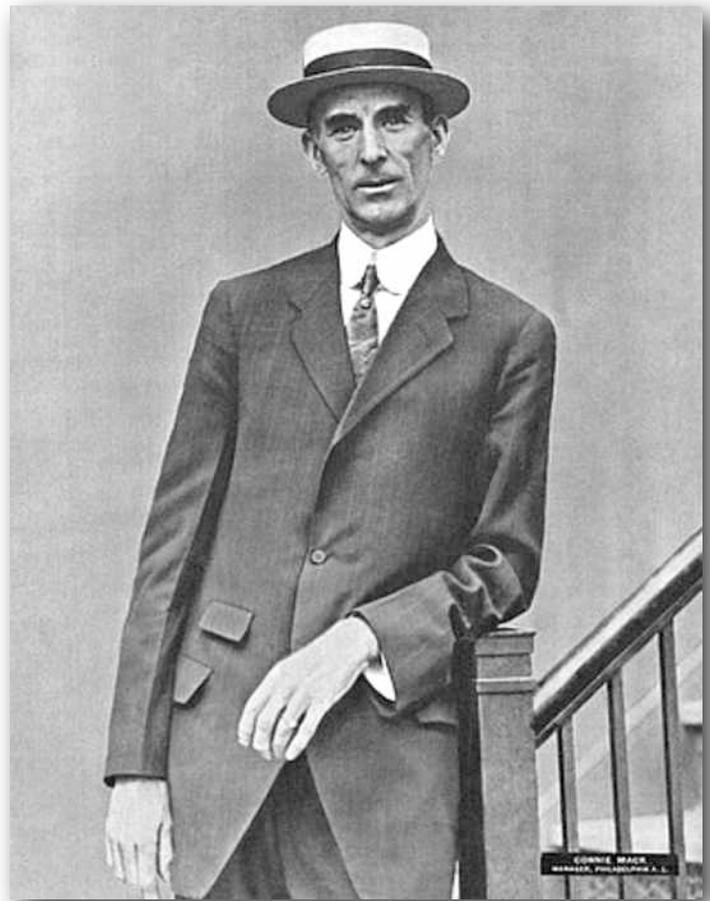
**1916: Tufts catcher Red Carroll**

would be given a tryout during an upcoming A's road trip.<sup>15</sup> On June 27, 1916, Mack paired his new receiver with right-hander Jing Johnson, another collegiate (Ursinus) signee yet to make his major league debut, and sent them out to face the defending World Series champion Boston Red Sox. Opposed by Sox ace lefty Babe Ruth, the A's got off smartly, scoring two quick first-inning runs and looking for more. With two outs, Ruth walked outfielder Jimmy Walsh to load the bases in order to face the A's novice catcher. As he strode to the plate, Carroll received "a fine reception" from Boston fans who appreciated his achievements at nearby Tufts.<sup>16</sup> He then took a called third strike, ending the A's rally. From that point on, Ruth clamped down, pitching scoreless ball for the remainder of the game. Meanwhile, Boston batsman began to find the range against Johnson, who was hit hard in an eventual 7-2 Athletics loss. By game's end, Carroll had struck out again, and gone hitless in four at-bats, overall. Yet despite his impotence with the bat, Carroll received good notices in the press, with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* informing readers that "his backstopping was fine," and that young Carroll had gunned down three would-be base stealers.<sup>17</sup>

For the next two weeks, Carroll remained on the bench as the floundering Athletics remained

entrenched in the AL cellar. Carroll's second game appearance came against the St. Louis Browns on July 13, when he was a late-inning replacement for starting catcher Billy Meyer. And again, he made a favorable impression on the local press. His two outfield fly-outs were well-hit, and he "handled himself well" defensively, reported the *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger*. Carroll "was right at ease behind the plate and showed a rifle arm" in throwing out a Brownie base-stealer.<sup>18</sup> Carroll's game performance two days later garnered little press notice, but later became fodder for an anecdote about the misadventures of the 1916 Philadelphia Athletics that pitching staff member Tom Sheehan (then on his way to a ghastly 1-16 record, and decades later San Francisco Giants manager) would regale listeners with for years. As Sheehan told it, "Remember [catcher] Val Picinich? He was 19, just breaking in. He hit .195. On other days, total strangers would catch. Once we were playing the Yankees at the Polo Grounds and I'm pitching. Picinich warms me up, but as soon as the first batter gets in, Val goes back to the bench and takes off the tools. Another guy comes out, a guy I've never seen. He comes to the mound and says, 'My name is Carroll. I'm the catcher. What are your signs?' I tell him not to confuse me and get the heck back there and catch. He stuck around for about a week and nobody ever saw him again."<sup>19</sup>

After he had caught Sheehan, Carroll continued to receive game assignments from manager Mack. The results were fairly uniform: Carroll was sound defensively but helpless with the bat. The A's, meanwhile, lost each of the seven games that he appeared in. The ex-collegian finally broke into the hit column on July 21, stroking a single off Cleveland left-hander Fritz Coumbe during a 7-2 loss to the Indians. Carroll's batting returned to form on July 25. He went hitless in an 8-3 loss to the St. Louis Browns. But his work behind the plate drew raves from the hometown press: "Catcher Carroll gave a good exhibition, showing an arm of steel and an inclination to mix it up with anyone who tried to push him away from the rubber," observed the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "He nipped such speed artists as Sisler



**1916: Connie Mack**

twice, Austin and Shotton who tried to pilfer the second sack. The throws to Lajoie were perfect, just knee high and on a line."<sup>20</sup> Carroll was also commended for fortitude in guarding the plate. Trying to score from second, the Browns' Del Pratt had "shot his spikes at the youngster, but Carroll was on the job. He blocked the plate and applied the ball without blinking an eye."<sup>21</sup>

Ralph Carroll's tenth and final major league game was an unhappy affair. Behind the plate for the second game of a July 26 doubleheader against St. Louis, the usually sure-handed receiver had trouble handling fireballer Joe Bush. Two passed ball by the young catcher (plus two walks by Bush, a wild pitch, a St. Louis base-hit, and two A's fielding miscues) put Philadelphia in a three-run hole before the Athletics had recorded an out in the second inning. A "peeved" Bush thereupon refused to continue pitching, forcing manager Mack to bring in reliever Red Lanning. Later, the temperamental Bush complained that Carroll

“could not hold his speed.”<sup>22</sup> The Athletics lost the contest, 5-1, the tenth-consecutive A’s defeat in games in which Carroll had played. The only consolation for the red-head was getting his second major league base-hit, a single off of winning pitcher Dave Davenport. After the game, Carroll reportedly informed Mack that “the professional game was not to his liking.”<sup>23</sup> As it turned out, he never appeared in another one.

By early August, Carroll had left the Athletics, a matter apparently of his own choosing.<sup>24</sup> Unlike his college opposition, Carroll had been unable to hit American League pitching, posting an abysmal .091 batting average, with one run scored and zero driven in. His defensive work, however, had been solid. His .942 fielding average was respectable for an inexperienced rookie, and he threw out 41% (13-of-32) would-be base stealers, while committing only three errors in 10 games played.<sup>25</sup> In short, if his hitting could be improved, Carroll had the makings of a major league catcher.

Like the terms of his engagement, the circumstances attending Carroll’s departure from the Athletics are unclear. Some reports indicated that he left the club to prepare for his dental licensing exams.<sup>26</sup> Others attribute his leaving to physical exhaustion.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps his tenure with the inept A’s and/or the disagreeable encounter with Bullet Joe Bush had soured Carroll on making baseball his profession. Or maybe Carroll had come to the conclusion that practicing dentistry would provide a better and more stable livelihood than professional baseball.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the case, his manager was sorry to see him go. Despite a feeble bat, Carroll had made “a good impression on Connie Mack,”<sup>29</sup> himself a weak-hitting, defensive-oriented catcher during his playing days.

Resting back home in Worcester, Carroll reportedly applied for a position as an Eastern League umpire.<sup>30</sup> By year’s end, however, he had been licensed to practice dentistry and found employment with the Forsythe Dental Infirmary for Children in Boston. Thereafter, he returned to Worcester to affiliate with a dentist with an



***Dr. Ralph Carroll  
1917 Baseball Coach  
Worcester Boys Trade High School***

established local practice. Connie Mack, still hoping to develop him into a big leagues catcher, tendered young Dr. Carroll a contract for the 1917 season. But Carroll, by now resolved on a career in dentistry, returned it unsigned.<sup>31</sup> Still, the game was not entirely out of his system. So when the baseball coach at Worcester Boys Trade High School was unexpectedly called away to National Guard duty that April, “Dr. Carroll, [who] had formerly played ball at Holy Cross, Tufts College, and the Philadelphia club of the American League” stepped into the breach. Coach Carroll “took hold of the squad and rounded it into a fast team, injecting it with fight and a never say die spirit.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1918, Carroll became the baseball coach at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he made “a specialty of battery work.”<sup>33</sup> He also coached

football at Worcester South High School.<sup>34</sup> But in time, Carroll gave up coaching to practice dentistry full-time, a decision likely influenced by his 1922 marriage to Worcester stenographer Isabella Goggin. The birth of the couple's only child, daughter Elicia in 1924, completed the Carroll family. Sometime later, Dr. Carroll returned to school to obtain an advanced degree from Washington University in St. Louis, and thereafter concentrated his office practice in orthodontics. He also was also on staff at St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester.

By middle age, Carroll had established a thriving professional practice. But he remained connected to the game of his youth. In 1940, he was elected president of the Worcester Retired Professional Baseball Players Association,<sup>35</sup> and emceed its annual winter banquet.<sup>36</sup> He also retained pride in his brief time as a big leaguer. Thus, when the *Boston Herald* mistakenly identified 1942 rookie Philadelphia Athletics catcher George Yankowski as the first collegiate player to appear in a major league game without having any minor league experience, a letter from "Dr. Ralph A. Carroll, Worcester" promptly set the newspaper's readers straight. He, not Yankowski, was the first such major leaguer.<sup>37</sup> In the mid-1950s, Doc Carroll<sup>38</sup> became New England regional scout for the Milwaukee Braves, a post that he filled for more than a decade. Returning home from the Braves' Waycross, Georgia rookie camp in 1964, Carroll, an avid amateur golfer, stopped in Virginia to visit with an old ballplayer-turned-golf pro friend. While there, he informed *The* (Petersburg) *Progress-Index* how radically baseball had changed from his own Deadball Era playing days. "The bunt is a lost art and the stolen base is fading out with it," said Carroll. Today, "most major league teams are going for the big, strong boy who can hit the long ball and supply the home run." Regarding outfield prospects, "the two main features are top speed and his arm, and [to] be as big as possible," he added.<sup>39</sup>

Dr. Carroll continued practicing dentistry in hometown Worcester into his early 80s, before

retiring. In August 1982, Isabella Carroll, his wife of 60 years, passed away.<sup>40</sup> By then, the elderly dentist was a resident of a local assisted care living facility. Early the following summer, he came down with pneumonia. Days later, he went into cardiac arrest and died at Worcester City Hospital on June 27, 1983.<sup>41</sup> He was 91. After a Funeral Mass was celebrated at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, his remains were interred in St. John's Cemetery, Worcester. In all, Dr. Ralph Arthur Carroll, while hardly a noteworthy major league ballplayer, had lived a long, interesting, and productive life – a destiny most would aspire to.

## SOURCES

Sources for the biographical information recited herein include the Ralph Carroll file maintained at the Giamatti Research Center, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, New York; United States Census data and Carroll family posts accessed via Ancestry.com, and certain of the newspaper articles cited below, particularly the obituary published in the *Worcester Telegram*, June 29, 1983. Unless otherwise noted, stats have been taken from Baseball-Reference and Retrosheet.

## ENDNOTES

1. Modern baseball reference works usually identified our subject as "Doc" Carroll, using a later-in-life nickname that never appeared in newsprint during Carroll's ball playing days. When reporting on Carroll's exploits in high school, college, and with the Philadelphia A's, Deadball Era newspapers invariably called him Ralph or Red Carroll.
2. Worcester Academy won 39-straight games over the 1912-1913-1914 seasons.
3. "Sporting News: Baseball at Holy Cross," *Springfield* (Massachusetts) *Republican*, January 1, 1913.
4. Haas had already played an exhibition game with Philadelphia and would later bat .056 in a 12-game audition for the Athletics in 1915.
5. "Rich Fan Provides Mack with Real Baseball Farm," *Detroit Times*, October 14, 1913.
6. Pursuant to the "one-year rule," Carroll was not able to play baseball during his first year as a transfer student at Tufts. See "Tufts Baseball Chimes Bright," *Boston Herald*, February 7, 1915.

7. A decade earlier, Slattery had spent four seasons as a backup big leagues catcher. He would subsequently go on to coach (1918-1919) and briefly manage (in 1928) the Boston Braves.
8. "Slattery's Fine Hand Apparent," *Boston Herald*, February 28, 1915.
9. As noted by the *Springfield Republican*, June 12, 1915, in "Leland Hits for .402." Carroll's .386 batting average was the third-highest among Northeastern collegiate players.
10. As reported in the *Springfield Republican*, June 26, 1916. Columbia's 18-1 record was tops, while Harvard (21-3) placed third among the 18 institutions catalogued.
11. Ibid.
12. A headline from a small North Dakota newspaper encapsulated the situation aptly. See "Connie Mack Has Hopeless Task: Athletics Look to Finish No Better than Eighth," (Langton) *Courier-Democrat*, June 1, 1916.
13. With these players, Mack's Philadelphia Athletics had captured American League pennants in 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1914, and won the World Series in all but the last of these campaigns. Among the lesser lights contributing to A's success had been a Tufts graduate, pitcher Doc Martin.
14. After Carroll had made his big leagues debut, it was reported that "Manager Mack said he had not talked business to Carroll, but it is understood that the Mackmen have a string on his services." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 28, 1916.
15. Per "American League Notes," *Sporting Life*, July 18, 1916.
16. See "Macks Again Have to Yield to Red Sox," *Boston Herald*, June 28, 1916.
17. Per "Couldn't Score After the First," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 28, 1916. See also, the *Bridgeport* (Connecticut) *Evening Times*, August 1, 1916: "Red Carroll, the Tufts catcher, made a fine impression, catching Johnson in fine style and nabbing three men who attempted to steal second."
18. "Fall of Athletics Has Not Injured Baseball Here, but Came at an Inopportune Time," *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger*, July 14, 1916.
19. As per Jack Orr, "The Worst Team of All," *The Second Fireside Book of Baseball*, Charles Einstein, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958), 174. Like all good raconteurs, Sheehan was not overly fussy about getting the facts of his yarns right. For the record, Carroll never appeared in a game against the Yankees. The only time that Carroll ever caught Sheehan was on July 15, a 4-1 loss to the Chicago White Sox at Shibe Park. By that date, Carroll had been a member of the Philadelphia A's for about two weeks.
20. "Larry Hit Them, But the Rest Couldn't," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 26, 1916.
21. Ibid.
22. As per a wire service account published in the *Erie* (Pennsylvania) *Times* and *Washington Herald*, July 27, 1916.
23. According to John G. Robertson and Andy Saunders, *As Bad As It Gets: Connie Mack's Pathetic Athletics of 1916* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2013), 100.
24. At the time, Wally Schang was injured and Billy Meyer was recovering from an emergency appendectomy, leaving the Athletics in dire need of able-bodied catchers.
25. Both Baseball-Reference and Retrosheet charge Carroll with five passed balls, but this total is inconsistent with Carroll's individual game logs, which memorialize only three.
26. See Chandler D. Richter, "Philadelphia Points," *Sporting Life*, July 22, 1916, which mistakenly has Carroll boning up for the Massachusetts bar exam, rather than his dental license test.
27. See e.g., "Around the Circuit," the *Springfield Republican*, September 1, 1916, which placed Carroll back home in Worcester "resting under doctor's orders." See also, *Sporting Life*, August 26, 1916.
28. In a late-life questionnaire submitted to the Hall of Fame library, Carroll expressed ambivalence about having given professional baseball a try, citing the "low salary [paid players] in those years."
29. "American League Notes," *Sporting Life*, July 22, 1916
30. According to the *Springfield Republican*, September 1, 1917.
31. See "Jess Burkett To Be Tutor to Red Sox Kids," *Boston Herald*, January 24, 1917.
32. *The Blue and Gray* (the 1917 Worcester Boys Trade High School yearbook), 93, accessible via Ancestry.com. Under Carroll, the team's record stood at 5-2 when the yearbook went to press.
33. As per the *WPI Tech News*, No. 25, April 2, 1918. See also, the 1918 *WPI Journal*, 325. Carroll's 1983 *Worcester Telegram* obituary states that he was also director of athletics at WPI, but this is incorrect. Percy (Doc) Carpenter served as AD at WPI from 1916 to 1952 (but Carroll might have filled an assistant's spot at some point during his brief association with the school). The writer is indebted to WPI Sports Information Director

Rusty Eggen and colleagues for this clarifying information..

34. As per the Carroll obituary published in the *Worcester Telegram*, June 29, 1983.
35. As reported in the *Fitchburg* (Massachusetts) *Sentinel*, January 12, 1940.
36. The 1942 affair hosted by Dr. Carroll featured such bygone baseball luminaries as Jesse Burkett, Jack Barry, Kitty Bransfield, and Bill Bergen. See the *Boston Herald*, February 27, 1942
37. See "It Happened Once," *Boston Herald*, August 18, 1942.
38. *Doc* was a later-in-life nickname that Carroll acquired from his dental patients. As previously noted, he had always been called *Ralph* or *Red* Carroll during his playing days.
39. Per "Scout Talks About Object of the Job," *The* (Petersburg, Virginia) *Progress-Index*, April 21, 1964.
40. The ultimate fate of daughter Elicia, an unmarried school teacher living with parents into the 1950s, was undiscovered by the writer.
41. As per the death certificate contained in the Ralph Carroll file at the Giamatti Research Center.

## 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:

<b>Gene Abercrombie</b>	<b>Matthew Leib</b>
<b>Kevin Arey</b>	<b>Matthew Lynch</b>
<b>Joel Barnhart</b>	<b>Laird MacGregor</b>
<b>Sam Bernstein</b>	<b>Jerry Manheim</b>
<b>Bob Beyerle</b>	<b>Tom Mank</b>
<b>Michael Boyd</b>	<b>Dave Marshall</b>
<b>Matthew Castelhana</b>	<b>Matthew Morgen</b>
<b>Wayne Coil</b>	<b>Tom Naylor</b>
<b>Robert Corsarie</b>	<b>John Power</b>
<b>Matthew Hock</b>	<b>Theresa Shirley</b>
<b>Jack Harris</b>	<b>Viki Short</b>
<b>William Humber</b>	<b>Kyle Swaney</b>
<b>Brian Keith</b>	<b>Jeff Willits</b>
<b>Steven Klitzner</b>	

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.

## GAMES/BIOPROJECT

The Games Project has recently posted three game accounts of interest to Deadballers: Addie Joss's 1908 perfect game by Joseph Wancho; Tris Speaker's 1912 cycle by Mike Huber, and an eight stolen bases game by the 1915 Washington Senators by Warren Corbett. Meanwhile, the BioProject stayed busy with entries for Byron Houck, Frank Jude, Elmer Bliss, Hanson Horsey, Billy Clingman, Candy Jim Taylor, George Grosart, Eddie Onslow, Bill Monroe, Jack Onslow, and the Philadelphia A's batterymates of 1901-1914. As always, we urge you to give these a look if you have not already done so.

## CHARLES EBBETS BIO PUBLISHED

New from McFarland is *Charles Ebbets: The Man Behind the Dodgers and Brooklyn's Beloved Ballpark* by baseball historian and newsletter contributor John G. Zinn. "A detailed look at a Dodgers owner who devoted 42 years of his life to Brooklyn baseball," says Bob Davids Award winner Lyle Spatz, "skillfully recounting how Ebbets helped guide the National League through three rival leagues and brought Sunday baseball to New York." To order the Ebbets bio, telephone 800-253-2187 or email: [info@mcfarlandpub.com](mailto:info@mcfarlandpub.com).

The Memphis Southern League club has been fined \$500 by President Cavanaugh (sic, Kavanaugh) for signing Irving Wilhelm to a non-reserve contract last season.

*The (Clarksburg, WV) Daily Telegram, May 29, 1908*

Several major league clubs are angling for Alfred Schachte, star pitcher of the Clemson college team. He is famous in southern college circles because he pitches with either hand.

*Iowa State Bystander, July 24, 1914*

## DEADBALL ERA COMMITTEE: MEMBER INTERESTS

**Dennis Auger**, contact [dennisauger@charter.net](mailto:dennisauger@charter.net). Interests — Chick Stahl; Joey Francis Connolly; religion in Deadball Era.

**Bill Bishop**, contact [billb28471@hotmail.com](mailto:billb28471@hotmail.com). Interests — Detroit Tigers; Ty Cobb; Deadball strategy; Black Sox.

**Mark Dugo**, contact [claydad96@aol.com](mailto:claydad96@aol.com). Interests — Deadball Era autographs; Christy Mathewson; Walter Johnson; Ty Cobb; Honus Wagner; Black Sox.

**Jan Finkel**, contact [jfinkel@mindspring.com](mailto:jfinkel@mindspring.com). Interests — Honus Wagner; pitchers in general; Pittsburgh Pirates; World Series.

**Bob Harris**, contact [bob@bumblebeagle.org](mailto:bob@bumblebeagle.org). Interests — labor relations; third leagues; non-OB leagues; unadopted rule changes; patents; ads; cartoons; songs; table games; Joe Harris.

**John Husman**, contact [jhusman@buckeye-express.com](mailto:jhusman@buckeye-express.com). Interests — Roger Bresnahan.

**Rick Huhn**, contact [rhuhn@earthlink.com](mailto:rhuhn@earthlink.com). Interests — Black Sox; Eddie Cicotte; Nap Lajoie; George Sisler; umpire Billy Evans; 1910 batting race; Chalmers Award; Cleveland Naps/Indians; Ban Johnson-Charles Comiskey feud.

**Don Jensen**, contact [donald.jensen@gmail.com](mailto:donald.jensen@gmail.com). Interests — New York Giants history; San Francisco Seals/Pacific Coast League; Sporting Life; concessions; Harry Stevens.

**Bill Lamb**, contact [wflamb12@yahoo.com](mailto:wflamb12@yahoo.com). Interests — George Davis; New York Giants club ownership; Black Sox.

**R. J. Lesch**, contact [rjlofiowa@gmail.com](mailto:rjlofiowa@gmail.com). Interests — baseball and vaudeville; Chicago White Sox; New York Giants; Western League, 1900-1958.

**Dan Levitt**, contact [danrl@attglobal.net](mailto:danrl@attglobal.net). Interests — Federal League; John McGraw; ownership and business issues; Dave Fultz and labor relations.

**Wayne McElreavy**, contact [wmcelreavy@gmail.com](mailto:wmcelreavy@gmail.com). Interests — Boston Red Sox; Lefty Tyler; Jack Chesbro.

**Chuck McGill**, contact [cmcgill.vt@gmail.com](mailto:cmcgill.vt@gmail.com). Interests — most anything minor leagues-related, especially no-hitters, triple plays, and cycles.

**Andrew Milner**, contact [ajmilner@comcast.net](mailto:ajmilner@comcast.net). Interests — newspaper coverage.

**Rod Nelson**, contact [rodericnelson@gmail.com](mailto:rodericnelson@gmail.com). Interests — Deadball Era scouts/signings.

**Dennis Pajot**, contact [denpajot@sbeglobal.net](mailto:denpajot@sbeglobal.net). Interests — Milwaukee Brewers of American

Association; Western League, 1902-1913; Western League players and club owners.

**Ron Selter**, contact [rselter@att.net](mailto:rselter@att.net). Interests — major league ballparks and homers.

**David Shiner**, contact [cunegonde@prodigy.net](mailto:cunegonde@prodigy.net). Interests — Johnny Evers; Deadball Era Chicago Cubs; Black Sox.

**Tom Simon**, contact [tps@mc-fitz.com](mailto:tps@mc-fitz.com). Interests — college baseball; Vermont's Northern League; Larry Gardner; Ray Collins; Ray Fisher; Dode Paskert; Dick Egan; tobacco cards; Ring Lardner, O'Connell-Dolan scandal.

**Doug Skipper**, contact [theskippers1@hotmail.com](mailto:theskippers1@hotmail.com). Interests — Connie Mack; John McGraw; Bill Donovan; Philadelphia Athletics; Boston Red Sox; Deadball Era ballparks.

**Richard Smiley**, contact [richard\\_a\\_smiley@hotmail.com](mailto:richard_a_smiley@hotmail.com). Interests — Chicago White Sox; ballparks; James Hart; semipro baseball.

**David Stalker**, contact [attheballyard@yahoo.com](mailto:attheballyard@yahoo.com). Interests — Chicago Cubs; World Series, particularly 1908; Illinois and Wisconsin players from the Deadball Era.

**Mark Sternman**, contact [marksternman@yahoo.com](mailto:marksternman@yahoo.com). Interests — Federal League; Miracle Boston Braves; Johnny Evers.

**Joe Williams**, contact [overlookedlegends@gmail.com](mailto:overlookedlegends@gmail.com). Interests — National Baseball Hall of Fame, Overlooked Legends.

**Michael Winland**, contact [mwinland@gmail.com](mailto:mwinland@gmail.com). Interests — Black Sox; 1919 Cincinnati Reds; Edd Roush.

If anything in the above listings omits or misidentifies a member interest, mistypes an email address, or is otherwise in need of correction, change, etc., kindly let me know via [wflamb12@yahoo.com](mailto:wflamb12@yahoo.com) so that the necessary revision can be included in the April newsletter. Members who neglected to submit a member interest listing for this issue are also invited to do so for the next newsletter. Thereafter, we will run a members interest page with listings for new committee members and updated information on interests, email addresses, and the like in the first newsletter issue of each calendar year. Thanks to those who submitted an entry and best wishes for 2019 to all.

Bill Lamb, Editor