

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. 9, No. 4: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY, LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" NOV 2009

WANTED: NEW INSIDE GAME EDITOR

By **John McMurray**
deadball@sabr.org

One of the most distinctive features of the Deadball Era Committee is this very newsletter. Since the Deadball Era Committee was founded in 2000, *The Inside Game* has provided some of the best research, book reviews, and original writing of any SABR Committee newsletter. Given the breadth of its readership and the many positive comments that I have received about it, I believe that our newsletter has done much to keep the spirit of the Deadball Era alive. The style and substance of our newsletter has stemmed directly from Charles Crawley, who has grown and developed our newsletter since taking over as Editor in September 2003.

After more than six years, however, Charles has decided to step aside from his Editor position. Charles has combined the eye of a keen editor with the passion and dedication of someone who loves what he does, and our Committee has benefited from the results. His work as Editor has involved precision, deadlines, coordination, and a blend of literary talents, and Charles has done it all seamlessly. Put in a less formal way, Charles

Continued on page 3.

THE TY COBB SHOW

by **Norm Coleman**
(normcoleman36@hotmail.com and www.tycobb.360.com)

People are always asking me why of the over 10,000 men who played Major League baseball, and of the over 250 men who are in the Hall of Fame, I chose Ty Cobb.

Why Ty Cobb? As a youngster growing up in Brooklyn, wanting to be a ballplayer, having a vivid imagination, I was always the best player on the Dodgers and like many children, perhaps even you dear reader, I was always the hitter up in the bottom of the 9th inning, with two out, two men on and my Dodgers trailing by 5-3. Of course I hit a three run homer helping my team to victory. In my imagination, I was always the best general, president or king.

As an adult, I pictured myself as the best photographer after becoming a professional. I didn't achieve that goal, but I did become an award-winning photographer.

Continued on page 8.

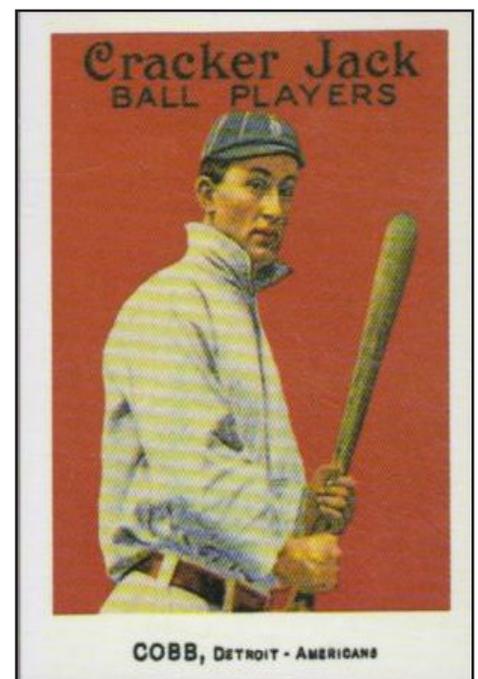
What's Inside...

1901 Milwaukee Brewer Team Monument, by David Stalker

Chicago Dog, by Charles Crawley

Book reviews:

- *The Sizzler*, reviewed by Tony Bunting
- *The Arrival of the American League*, reviewed by Norman Macht
- *August "Garry" Herrmann*, reviewed by Dave Anderson
- *American Association Almanac*, reviewed by Harry Rothgerber



1901 MILWAUKEE BREWER TEAM MONUMENT

by **David Stalker** (attheballyard@yahoo.com)

The 1901 Milwaukee Brewers became the first team recognized in a monument series remembering the Deadball Era. The monument was unveiled at Miller Park on June 23, 2009 by Rick Schlesinger the Brewers executive V.P. of business operations and myself, David Stalker.

Leading off the dedication ceremony Schlesinger spoke about the importance of remembering baseball history. He stated, "In baseball in particular, we feel that recognizing the past is a crucial part of our franchise and a crucial part that we don't want to forget." Baseball is the best sport when it comes to connecting history through different generations.

I followed by speaking about the American League forming in Milwaukee in 1900, and the 1901 Brewers being part of the A.L. inaugural season. "I wanted this piece of Milwaukee baseball history put in stone, so its story would be told forever."

I mentioned the five Wisconsin natives that were a part of that team, and talked about the monument series. Thanks were given to the Brewers for their efforts in helping me preserve baseball history, and to all those that made the monument possible.

Those that contributed to the monument were invited to join Schlesinger and myself for proper acknowledgement. The group consisted of, Dale and Jeff Wetzel (father and son Brewer season ticket holders since the teams move from Seattle) Dan Wackman (grandson of 1901 Brewer Bert "Pete" Hustung) and acknowledged but unable to attend Jim Kluge (grandson of former player Wattie "Roscoe" Holm).

Among those attending the ceremony were family

members of the 1901 Brewer player Bert "Pete" Hustung. They traveled from California, Texas, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Hustung Family also attended a ceremony and unveiling two days prior, in Mayville, Wisconsin. This was honoring player Pete Hustung on his own monument, at the Limestone School and Museum.

In this Deadball Monument Series the 1901 Milwaukee Brewers join players, Fred Merkle, Davy Jones, Billy Sullivan, Addie Joss, Pete "Red" Kleinow, Charley Faust, Bob Groom, Pete Hustung, Bill Killefer, Wade Killefer, and coming soon Ward Miller and Pink Hawley.

The 1901 Brewer monument is two sided. One side tells about the formation of the American League and the 1901 Milwaukee Brewers. The reverse side lists all the members of the team and those that donated towards the memorial.

The monument reads:

"IN HONOR OF THE 1901 MILWAUKEE BREWERS OF THE AMERICAN LEAGUE

In 1900, the American League was born in a Milwaukee hotel named the Republican House. The following year, during the 1901 inaugural season, the Milwaukee Brewers were one of eight teams to participate in Major League Baseball's "Junior Circuit." The Brewers played their home games at Lloyd Street Grounds, which was located on the city's north side (Lloyd St. & 16th St.). Player / Manager Hugh Duffy batted .302 that season and was later inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Wid Conroy was the team captain, Bill Reidy led the pitching staff with 16 victories, and John Anderson paced the team with a .330 batting average.

Five Wisconsin natives were members of that Brewers team, including Ed Bruyette of Manawa, Davy Jones of Cambria and George McBride of

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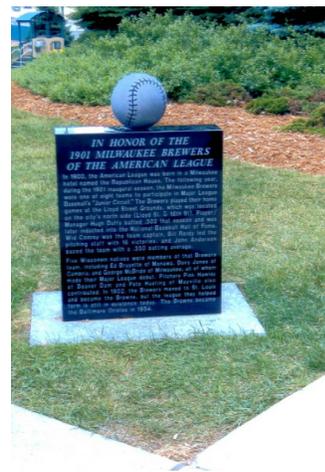
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The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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Brewers, continued from page 3.

Milwaukee, all of whom made their Major League debut. Pitchers Pink Hawley of Beaver Dam and Pete Husting of Mayville also contributed. In 1902, the Brewers moved to St. Louis and became the Browns, but the league they helped form is still in existence today. The Browns became the Baltimore Orioles in 1954.”

Team members listed on reverse side:

MILWAUKEE BREWERS 1901 BASEBALL TEAM

John Anderson	Lou Gertenrich
George Bone	Billy Gilbert
Ed Bruyette	Bill Hallman
Jimmy Burke	Pink Hawley
John Butler	George Hogriever
Joe Conner	Pete Husting
Wid Conroy	Davy Jones
Jiggs Donahue	Tom Leahy
Pete Dowling	Bill Maloney
Hugh Duffy	George McBride
Bill Friel	Bill Reidy
Ned Garvin	Tully Sparks
Phil Geier	Irv Waldron

For those interested in adding a player, team or ballpark to this series, or financially contributing towards this series, please do contact me. ♦



Rick Schlesinger and Dave Stalker at Brewers' Monument Dedication.

Boiling Out

March 4–7, 2010

The Arlington Hotel

Hot Springs, Arkansas

Contact RJ Lesch for details:

rjlesch_usa@yahoo.com

Editor Wanted, continued from page 1.

has made a challenging job look easy, and he has prospered in it. In so doing, he has left his mark and raised the standards of expectations of all of us involved with the newsletter. We are all better off on this Committee for having had Charles Crawley serve as the Editor of *The Inside Game* for so long.

With Charles' departure after this issue, I now invite those who would be interested in editing the newsletter to come forward. The key qualifications include a desire to shape *The Inside Game* as we move ahead, as well as a keen eye for style and content. While prior editorial experience is welcome, it is not a prerequisite. We also want to involve as much of the Committee in the newsletter as possible. Finally, possessing an eye for topics that might become future stories would also be helpful.

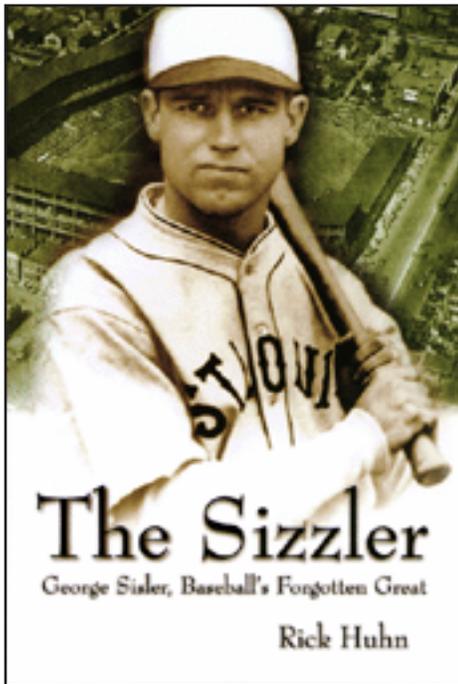
Of course, no newsletter is created in a vacuum—several people review each article. We already have an Assistant Editor in Mark Dugo, and a Database/Manager Distributor in Dan Desrochers. In other words, anyone interested in serving as Editor will step into a position with support and a system in place.

The Inside Game is filled with book reviews. Indeed, about ten new books are published on the Deadball Era each year, and these reviews provide a great service to our Committee members. If you would like to be involved on as smaller scale as a Book Review Editor or to write reviews, please let me know.

If you would like to serve as Editor of *The Inside Game*, please contact me directly along with a short statement of interest. We would like to have a new Editor in place by January 1, 2010 if not before. We will consider applicants on a rolling basis, so please be in touch as early as possible.

Even though Charles' departure is a great loss to the newsletter, he will be available to provide guidance to the new Editor. I believe that the Editor position offers a great deal of creativity: you will be able to assign stories and book reviews in a way that can tell the story of the Deadball Era as you see fit. I think it is quite an exciting opportunity.

We all invite your input about *The Inside Game* going forward, and I am eager to hear from Deadball Era Committee members who want to carry on the legacy of our newsletter. Most of all, I would thank Charles Crawley for his six years of dedicated service to the Committee and for all that he has done to make *The Inside Game* a premier newsletter. ♦



THE SIZZLER: GEORGE SISLER, BASEBALL'S FORGOTTEN GREAT

BY RICK HUHN

2004. Columbia: University of Missouri Press [ISBN: 0-8262-1555-6, 322 pages, \$29.95, hardcover.]

Reviewed by **Tony Bunting**
(AnthonyBunting@aol.com)

When Ichiro Suzuki broke the major-league single-season record for base hits in 2004, his feat briefly shook the dust off of the illustrious career of the man whose mark he eclipsed—George Harold Sisler. A Hall of Famer for the St. Louis Browns whose career straddled the Deadball and Lively Ball Eras, Sisler was perhaps the greatest first baseman who ever lived until a slugger named Lou Gehrig arrived quickly on his heels. Shortly after Suzuki waged his assault on the 84 year-old hits mark, a biography appeared on Sisler entitled *The Sizzler: George Sisler, Baseball's Forgotten Great*.

In the book, SABR member and first-time biographer Rick Huhn attempts to bring to life the legendary ballplayer and explain why he has been largely overlooked in the annals of the game.

Huhn furnishes the pertinent facts and figures of Sisler's baseball career. He traces the Ohio native's rise from a left-handed pitching phenom in the Akron area (think colossal strike out totals), to his All-America days at Michigan under the tutelage of Branch Rickey, to his spectacular prime years with the Browns, through his decline as a player and subsequent stints as a major-league scout and hitting instructor.

Along the way, we learn some interesting things about the man who twice hit .400 in a season, possessed a 41-game hitting streak, and posted a lifetime mark of .340. The reader discovers that in 1911 Sisler attended his first major-league contest, the star-studded Addie Joss benefit, an occasion that whetted the 18 year-old's appetite for the big time; that Sisler felt a mixture of excitement and regret in out-dueling his hero Walter Johnson, before moving permanently to first base; and that despite a normally calm and gentlemanly demeanor, he punched out a mouthy teammate on one occasion and slugged an umpire on another.

Such colorful and illuminating stories, however, are few and far between in *The Sizzler*. Great swaths of the narrative consist of a cold blend of reconstituted game accounts, statistics, and season summaries, leaving us with surprisingly little information on Sisler himself. The author relies too heavily on the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to chronicle the ballplayer's years with the Browns, instead of integrating a variety of other sources to provide a sharp, lively, comprehensive look at the

man during his playing days. A paucity of insightful anecdotes, observations of contemporaries, and quotes from the subject himself leave Sisler lacking depth and dimension. Other than occasional mentions of barnstorming trips and business ventures, "Gorgeous George," as he was nicknamed, seemingly ceases to exist between October and the beginning of spring training the next year. For a man of this stature, such gaps are perplexing, especially when considering that Huhn had the cooperation of Sisler's family to help fill in some of these blanks.

More rigorous editing and proofreading would have benefited the book, too. Huhn does a fine job of supplying the details of Sisler's contractual tête-à-tête with the National Commission, an important episode that eventually landed the collegian with the Browns instead of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and eroded baseball's three-man ruling body. Yet the effort is undermined by the repeated misspelling of chairman Garry Herrmann's name (it's spelled *Hermann* in the book). Twice the Philadelphia Athletics are called the Phillies. Also, the photo captions are wafer-thin on information (could that be Cy Young standing beside a teenage Sisler on page 103—a meeting alluded to early in the book?).

The biography contains some strong points. One of the most interesting segments is Huhn's discussion of Sisler's vision-impairing sinus condition that cost him the 1923 season and hastened his slide as a ballplayer. We learn of Sisler's conversion to Christian Science during this time, his wraith-like haunting of the upper deck at Sportsman's Park in the summer of '23, and his son's

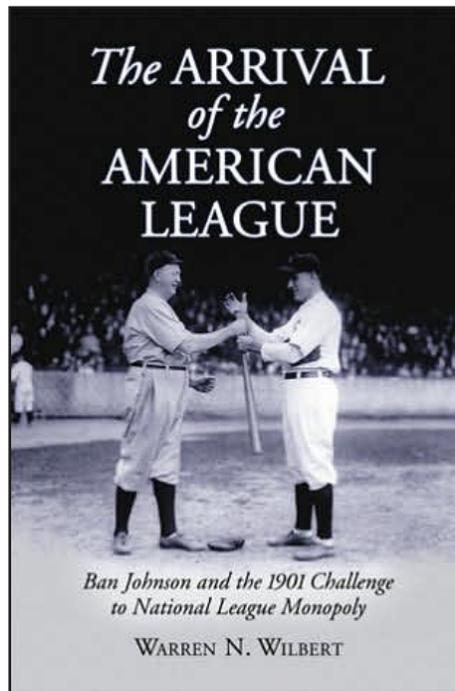
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poignant story of how the superstar would draw the shades at home in the evenings and sit in the dark to reduce the strain on his eyes. Likewise, Huhn does solid work relating Sisler's post-playing years, when he was reunited with Rickey as a scout and hitting instructor for the Brooklyn Dodgers and Pittsburgh Pirates, fostering the batting rise of Hall-of-Famers like Jackie Robinson, Duke Snider, and Roberto Clemente.

As the title of his book states, Huhn views Sisler as a "forgotten great." Such assertions overshoot the mark. Is Sisler any less remembered today than a number of other standouts who bridged the Deadball and Lively Ball Eras, men like Pete Alexander, Rogers Hornsby, or Tris Speaker? Slightly, perhaps—but not enough to cast Sisler into the realm of the forgotten. Huhn correctly surmises that Sisler's legend is hindered by his failure to reach the World Series. But his argument that the modest first baseman's fame suffers markedly in comparison to Ty Cobb's or Babe Ruth's because his portfolio fails to contain the juicy scandals or sensational acts of the two superstars is unconvincing. Had Sisler collected 4,189 hits or swatted 714 home runs he undoubtedly would be remembered as vividly as Cobb or Ruth, peccadilloes or no.

For the basic facts and record of George Sisler's playing years and subsequent career as a coach and scout, one is encouraged to read *The Sizzler*. A more richly detailed, expertly crafted, and comprehensive examination of the St. Louis hero's life remains to be written. ♦



THE ARRIVAL OF THE AMERICAN LEAGUE

BY WARREN N. WILBERT

Reviewed by **Norman Macht**
(nlm@grandecom.net)

2007. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company. [ISBN: 978-0786430130. 240 pages. \$29.95, paperback.]

The best thing about this 215-page paperback overview of the American League's inaugural season of 1901 is the photos — 70 of them. Many are of the usual suspects: Connie Mack, Ban Johnson, Charles Comiskey. But there are others of more obscure figures who had noteworthy achievements that year, people whose pictures you rarely find in baseball books of wider scope.

The worst thing about this book is the words. Some are just plain misused, given meanings they never had. Some are locked together in sentences as long as a Southern Pacific freight train.

Some are exhausted from hashing, then rehashing the same events or data. Some are forced to jump around in time so abruptly they give the reader mental whiplash. And some are condemned to convey stuff that just isn't so.

Now some of this can be ascribed to McFarland's notorious lack of editing support for its authors. A good copy editor is a safety net, catching a writer's grammatical errors, chronological U-turns, redundancies, and inconsistencies that have nothing to do with baseball. The editor would ask why, in chapter five dealing with the pennant race, it begins with Memorial Day action, in which Eddie Plank wins his third game, and 12 pages later Plank is picking up his first win. The next paragraph jumps ahead to a 1951 fiftieth anniversary event, then vaults ahead to 2001 and the aftermath of 9/11, then doubles back to May 1, 1901.

A baseball-savvy fact checker would have caught such goofs as the Brewers "with a 2 and 7 record, seven games behind the pace-setting Detroit Tigers, with their 7 and 2 mark." Or "Jim" Bresnahan catching for Baltimore.

Other mistakes were so easily avoidable that they lead me to conclude the author did no fact-checking of his own, and no research other than reading the Proquest-available newspapers of the time (which are extensively quoted) and some or all of the 68 books, 6 articles, and 30 websites listed in the bibliography. The supply of misinformation out there is enormous.

The most basic research would have revealed that Chicago's 280 stolen bases in 1901 were not "a record that seems safe for the ages," having been topped fourteen times since then; that Detroit

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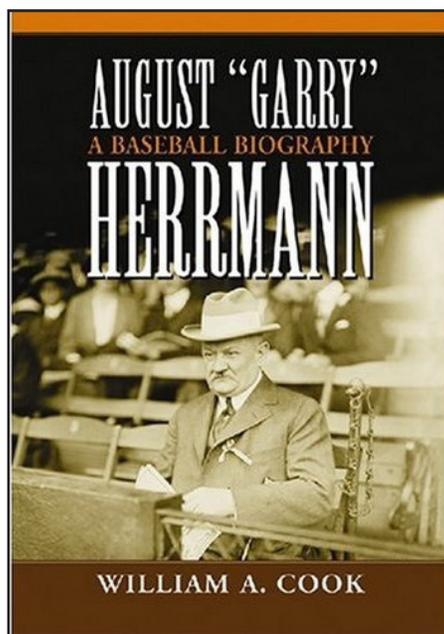
*Arrival of AL,
continued from page 5.*

scored 10 runs, not 9, in the ninth inning of their opener to win 14-13; that Charles Comiskey was not the son of “Polish immigrants.”

Small things? Maybe. But to me they’re indicative of a lack of dedication to accuracy, and an approach to research that figures, “If I read it in a book, it must be so. I’ll cite my source in an endnote,” as if that’s a seal of verity.

And the results of that attitude show up in the big stuff, too. Ben Shibe did not own a piece of the Phillies when he invested in the A’s, nor did he insist that the American League use Reach baseballs as a condition of his investment. A. J. Reach never owned a share of the Athletics. The 1902 Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in the Lajoie case was not a death knell to the NL owners that “turned the tide of the war.” Just the opposite, as Wilbert quotes C. Paul Rogers III’s analysis of the decision, it was “a seeming victory for the National League.” And the Athletics didn’t deal Lajoie off to Cleveland.

There’s more. If you want to know how much more, read the book. ♦



**AUGUST “GARRY”
HERRMANN:
A BASEBALL
BIOGRAPHY
BY WILLIAM A. COOK**

2007. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company. www.mcfarlandpub.com, 1-800-253-2187 [ISBN: 978-0786430734. 303 pages. \$35.00, softcover.]

Reviewed by **David W. Anderson**
(danderson64@comcast.net)

This is an enthusiastic biography that captures the spirit of Garry Herrmann in terms of his baseball and political life. Basically, he used politics and sportsmanship in the early years of baseball to make an indelible mark on the game.

When the opportunity to buy the Cincinnati Reds from John Brush came about because Brush wanted to own the Giants, Herrmann, Cox and the Fleischmann brothers recognized “...the purchase of the Reds was as much about securing the political position of the machine with the voters as it was about winning the pennant.”

When you read this book, you need to understand that it is as much about baseball as it is about politics in the Progressive Era in Cincinnati. So it is about the Taft family and their dislike of the Cincinnati machine. Despite their unpopularity with the Tafts, Cox, Herrmann and the Fleischmann brothers had successful political careers.

If you asked anyone about how the World Series began you may get an answer that Ban Johnson may have had something to do with it. But it was really Garry Herrmann that arranged the peace that has lasted.

He felt the war between the American and National Leagues

was harmful to the future of Major League Baseball and peace meant the Reds would be able to launch a business opportunity. As a member of the National Commission that included Johnson and National League President Harry Pulliam, Herrmann was able to negotiate and reach success. He reached the peace because he kept it on track and as John E. Bruce said, “He has been eminently fair, and from a judicial point of view his decisions rank as models.” Bruce said that in 1908, after being Secretary of the Commission for five years with Herrmann.

While many profiles of Herrmann discuss his like of beer and sausage he was more than that. He loved literature and possessed “...an extraordinary memory and cultivated his knowledge of the liberal arts with self teaching methods, such as reading the classics and all that was considered to be the finest literature of that time.”

While the National Commission ran the game, Herrmann did not rest on his laurels. He actively wanted to see baseball played under the lights, believing that it would increase the fan base. By 1909 baseball had moved ahead of horse racing and boxing in terms of fan interest, and night baseball would be a great achievement.

In 1908 Herrmann recruited investors and the next year temporary lights were installed at the Palace of the Fans and a game was played on June 18th between the Cincinnati Elks and Newport Elks. Cincinnati won 8 to 5 and while the lights weren’t perfect, the way was paved for the use of lights by the Kansas City Monarchs and on May 24th, 1935, the first night game was played in Cincinnati. The setting was the same, but

Continued on page 7.

Continued from page 6.

the name was changed to Crosley Field.

As the years rolled on the National Commission's role in the game became more complicated and as a result more owners became uncertain of the Commission's future. In 1918 unrest over the players' share of the World Series led National Commission member John Heydler to state, "From then on, we felt a one-man commissioner was essential for the important post-war era of the game."

One of the primary reasons for troubles in baseball was gambling. Everyone could recognize the problem, but no one did anything about it, starting with John McGraw, who bet \$400 on his club in the 1905 World Series. Nothing was done, despite the story in the *New York Times*. At the time "gambling was still viewed by major league baseball as an occupational hazard."

There were other places where gambling as baseball's "Achilles Heel" became a running sore. Take the attempted bribery of Bill Klem and James Johnstone during the deciding game of the 1908 National League playoff between the Cubs and Giants. I have written about this in *More than Merkle*, and in a special edition of *The Inside Game* issued September 23, 2008. The bottom line was the matter was handed to New York Giants owner John Brush and he got his team off the hook and sacrificed Dr. Joseph Creamer and his reputation.

By 1910 the Commission's days were numbered but it took another decade to end it, for Herrmann the tasks of being a commissioner had outgrown his ability to provide due diligence in each matter. Charges of throwing games by Hal Chase proved that no one had the guts to take on this charge. It is no

doubt in my mind that the 1919 Black Sox Scandal was the result of the inability of the National Commission to do anything with gambling.

There were a couple of problems with this book. First of all, Andy Coakley, who was purchased by the Cubs in August, won two games in the closing days of the season. This performance played a key role in the Cubs winning the pennant. Secondly Franklin P. Adams wrote "Baseball's Sad Lexicon" in 1910, not 1908. When I was writing *More than Merkle*, I saw a mention of this poem being written in 1908. I thought wow, but checked other sources and saw it was indeed 1910.

These complaints are minor, compared to what Cook has done in writing a wonderful book that sets us straight on Herrmann's view of the National Commission and life as the Reds owner. Herrmann left the Reds ownership on October 10, 1927 and died in May of 1931.

If you want to learn more about the progressive era and early baseball, get this book. Herrmann had to be a wonderful guy. I would have liked to have met him. 'Gasfreundshaft' was the way he lived his life embracing fraternal brothers, political associates and major league colleagues. But in the end, the National Commission died and from the book, Cook says, "...all traces of Garry Herrmann's contribution to major league baseball slowly and steadily faded into history, and it seems that his legacy as a sportsman, civic leader and politician were buried along with his remains."◆

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ALMANAC (VOL. 7, No. 3)

Reviewed by **Harry Rothgerber**
(caohrothgerber@hotmail.com)

The name "American Association" triggers countless memories as one of America's premier baseball leagues. From its inception in the 19th Century as the second Major League through the demise of its final version in 1997, the Association's history has been chronicled by many outstanding researchers and writers. Rex Hamann continues this worthy tradition in his quarterly baseball history journal trumpeting the *minor league* Association from 1902 to 1952.

Hamann, an active SABR member and former teacher, was inspired by a trip to the grave of Association legend Nick Cullop and started publishing the Almanac in 2001; it is now in its 7th volume, and each one shows the loving attention of its author. An example is the recent edition (Vol. 7, No.3) in which Hamann delves into the early history of the Louisville Colonels, a long time Association member.

And what a storied account he relates of the reincarnation of the Colonels under George "White Wings" Tebeau, that franchise's first owner and president, in baseball-mad Louisville! Beginning with their inaugural season under player-manager "Derby Day" Bill Clymer, author Hamann includes painstakingly researched charts showing each Colonels complete active roster. This data grew out of what he refers to as the Louisville Roster Revision

Continued on page 8.

***American Association Almanac,
continued from page 7.***

Project, an effort to validate all players who actually appeared in a Louisville lineup and to develop accurate performance records for them. These roster listings contain a comprehensive personal profile of each player, including height, weight, birthday, birthplace, position(s) played and movement between teams. It is an invaluable reference source.

Serious researchers will take pleasure in Hamann's discussion of the methodology of his process, especially his lengthy comments on the veracity of box scores. He freely discusses the difference between *his* research findings and the published records. Hamann is not reluctant to criticize the work of prior researchers and writers when he believes that they "fumbled" the facts. The author's graphics include charts describing Batting Average Discrepancies, Roster Revision Comparisons, Comparison of Game Starts and Complete Games and Performance Analysis of Starting Pitchers.

But Hamann's work is more than just that of a scholarly statistician. In addition to his discussion of annual roster revisions, Hamann's stimulating prose sets forth an effective summary of each Louisville season's action. These overviews analyze the "ups and downs" of each season, along with interesting vignettes of individual players. It is as an historian that Hamann really shines.

Relying heavily on local newspaper accounts of the Colonels' games, Hamann makes each season come alive with insightful analysis of managers, players, ballparks (especially Louisville's Eclipse Park), pennant races and minor league shenanigans galore. (An earlier edition of the Almanac, titled *The Louisville Colonels: A Brief History of Kentucky's Premier Baseball Club* (Vol. 3, No. 2) provides the perfect complement to place this new five-year history of the club in perspective.) If Hamann's purpose is to honor the memory of the Association's players, then he has succeeded admirably.

In summary, the American Association Almanac is highly recommended.

(More information about Hamann's online presence can be found at www.aaalmanac.com or either of his two blog sites, www.almanacpark.blogspot.com or www.theoldaa.wordpress.com. A limited selection of his American Association grave photos can be viewed at www.lostengraving.deviantart.com/gallery.) ◆

***Norm Coleman/Ty Cobb, continued
from page 1.***

I made my stage debut with a local theater in town and had a small role in "Inherit the Wind" and was bitten by the theater bug.

I loved being on stage and I had just started reading a book about Ty Cobb.

The book was *Ty Cobb* by Charles C. Alexander. After quickly devouring this marvelous book about Cobb, I was in love with this "complex character" (attributed to Dan Holmes-Hall of Fame) and I immediately saw the possibility of a one-man show. I was impressed by the Mark Twain show performed by Hal Holbrook and used that show as my model.

I also read: *Peach* by Richard Bak, *Ty Cobb Safe at Home* by Don Rhodes, *Ty Cobb: My Life in Baseball*, by Al Stump, *Cobb: A Biography* by Al Stump, *Busting 'Em* by Ty Cobb, edited William R. Cobb, *Ty and the Babe* by Tom Stanton, and *Cobb* by Wesley Fricks.

Other books leading to my interest include those on Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth, Ted Williams and even actor Joe E. Brown, a big Ty Cobb fan. I read any book that mentioned Ty Cobb.

I was a member of SABR many years ago. I contacted the office in Cleveland, saying I was interested in doing a stage show about Mr. Cobb. The gentlemen I spoke with, Mr. John Zajc suggested I become a member. There was much material in the SABR library he said and he would put me in touch with seven or eight Cobb experts. I joined and he did.

Dan Holmes at the Hall of Fame was encouraging as was William Burgess of Mt. View, California. Bill and I had several lunches and he gave me some interesting aspects of Cobb. He also encouraged me to take it to the stage.

However, it was Wesley Fricks of Tampa Bay, Florida, who became my mentor and coach. Wesley is the world's foremost authority on things Cobb and the man who helped create the Ty Cobb Museum in Royston, Georgia. He ultimately got me into the 10th anniversary celebration of the Cobb Museum in July 2008.

After several emails, and a phone conversation that lasted almost two hours, Wesley said, "You and I are on the same page," meaning it was not my intention to rehash and repeat all the negative stuff of the "Georgia Peach" but to show the other side of the man.

***Norm Coleman/Ty Cobb, continued on
page 9.***

***Norm Coleman/Ty Cobb, continued
from page 8.***

Maria Walls, executive-secretary to Ron Myers, complex director at the Tigertown Complex in Lakeland, Florida suggested I tell stories about Mr Cobb, how he became the great ballplayer and wealthy man, and that is what I have done.

My goal from the start was take the older generation down memory lane and to introduce Cobb to a younger generation.

It was never my intention to “re-educate” the diehard baseball historians or folks who long ago made up their mind about Cobb. Nothing I could say or do would ever change the minds of anyone who is closed-minded or set in their thinking.

My goal was to entertain my audience as well as inform. My first director told me if I was going to take on this project, make it “entertaining, humorous, historical and informative.”

In the early stages of the show, “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” was played and I entered the stage. Later, I added other pieces of music to give the audience (as well as me) a break. Now, there are 20 pieces of music between various scenes. This is a multimedia show opening with video of Cobb, photographs, and music.

I have performed the show for audiences that often consisted of more women than men and the comments I often hear are, “I am not a baseball fan, but the show was entertaining.”

Several high school students told me, “I learned more about American history from the show than in school.”

I wish to thank my many friends from Deadball for their help, advice and encouragement.

A good friend of mine in Half Moon Bay, Auri Nagger, was emcee at a local family restaurant and sports bar. Auri was a big San Francisco Giants fan. He encouraged me to do some of my material at the open mic night that took place every Thursday evening.

The performers were all singers. I didn't think it was a good idea but with Auri's encouragement and after rehearsing my material, I gave the audience 10 minutes of Cobb. It was my first public performance and the audience loved it. It was November 2006 and I continued trying out a different 10-minute piece every Thursday evening until April 2007.

On January 4th, 2007, I performed at the Rotary Club in Pacifica, California.

Steve Wright, the local governor of 16 Rotary Clubs in the area in an E mail to all 16 clubs saying, “I have heard 1000's of speakers during my career with

Rotary, Coleman is in the top 10-you have to get him for your club.”

I performed for over 16 other Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs in addition to over 60 independent retirement homes to enthusiastic senior citizens.

I contacted Mr. David Dombrowski, CEO, President and General Manager of the Detroit Tigers. He encouraged me in a charming letter. One year later, mid-March 2008, I brought the show to Lakeland, Florida. Ron Myers, complex director said, “I knocked his socks off, I was Cobb.”

In mid-July, I participated in the weeklong celebration in Royston, Georgia of the 10th anniversary of the Cobb museum. The audience consisted of over 250 people, many Cobb and Chitwood (the mother's side) relatives. After receiving the key to the City from Mayor William C. (Bill) Stewart, many family members told me, “you brought great-grandpa to life.”

On November 5th, I performed at the President Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan at a show called “Born to Play Ball” sponsored by the Hall of Fame. The show celebrated the life of the 50 greatest players that ever played.

Mr. Jim Kratsas, deputy director of the Museum asked me to sign the guest book, but, before signing, I should look at the signatures in the book. Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Dick Cheney. I was in pretty good company.

As an adult, I became an award-winning photographer. I am thankful for by the grace of God, I have my health, still active imagination and made my dream come true. My passion for the man comes through. My goals are to bring the show to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY and Atlanta next year at the SABR convention and of course, New York and Detroit.

I am 73 and having the time of my life. I believe I was born to play Mr. Cobb and it is an honor to be able to do so.◆

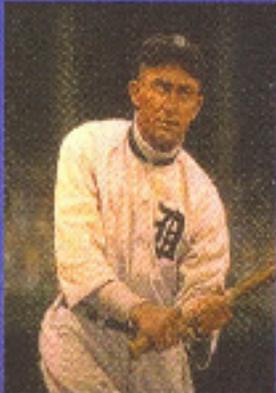
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CHICAGO DOG

By **Charles Crawley**
(crcrawley@yahoo.com)

To all those who have contributed feature articles, I say: thank you! You made the front page of this newsletter exciting and put the hot dog in the bun. No one can look at us and say, "Where's the beef?"

To all those who have contributed columns, I say: thank you! You have made it your job to write something every time an issue came out. You are the buns holding the wiener.

To all those who have contributed book reviews, I say: thank you! You not only received a free book, but you got to read it and write about it. You are the condiments on this hot dog, making it distinctive.

To all those who edited and distributed this newsletter, I say: thank you! You made it possible that our dear readers could hold this document in our hands, or look at it upon our screens. You are the pepper that makes this dog bite.

And to all those who read this newsletter, I say: thank you. You are the reason for our existence, as much as the fan in the stands is for baseball. You are the wrapper that keeps this hot dog together.

I just hope the next guy or gal that comes along enjoys this game as much as I have. Now I've got to go. Somebody forgot the celery salt! ♦

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

In my recent review of Norman Macht's *Connie Mack and the Early Years of Baseball*, I referred to the Hall of Fame manager as "Cornelius Alexander McGuillicuddy." Although baseball references refer to Mr. Mack in that fashion, according to Mr. Macht's exhaustive research, the Alexander did not appear on Mr. Mack's birth certificate, and was added at some point later in his life. Also, I referred to Philadelphia Athletics owner Ben Shibe as Charles, and would like to set the record straight that it is indeed Ben. ♦

Doug Skipper

RESERVE YOUR ROOM FOR BOILING OUT!

By **RJ Lesch** (rjlesch_usa@yahoo.com)

You can reserve a room at the historic Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for "Boiling Out," that celebration of Deadball-Era spring training, scheduled for March 4-7, 2010. To do so, call the Arlington at 1-800-643-1502. Be sure to request the "Society for American Baseball Research" group rate. To get an idea of the rooms available, see their website (<http://www.arlingtonhotel.com>).

Of course, you don't have to book a room at the Arlington in order to attend the conference, but if you haven't stayed there before, it's a delight. (Those of you bringing non-baseball-fan spouses might want to consider the amenities!)

If you would like to give a research presentation, or have other ideas for activities for this event, please let me know. So far, we have two definites and a maybe, so there's plenty of room on the schedule. ♦