

# The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee



VOL. XXI, NO. 4: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" NOVEMBER 2021

## A DEADBALL ERA BALLPARK CONVERSATION WITH RON SELTER

by John McMurray

Longtime DEC member and periodic newsletter contributor Ron Selter is Co-Chairman of SABR's Ballpark Research Committee and a recognized authority on historic baseball grounds. His interest in Deadball Era ballparks grew out of months-long exchanges about Philadelphia's Baker Bowl some 15 years ago. Recently, Ron and I exchanged emails on the subject of Deadball Era parks. Same have been formulated into the Q & A set forth below.

*Question by John: The Deadball Era, particularly in its first decade, was distinguished by a strategic kind of baseball. To what degree did the ballparks, as opposed to the ball itself, play into teams' decisions to adopt that style of play?*

Ron: In general, the ballparks had little impact on the style of play at the macro level. The cork center ball did have an impact. The effect of quirky major league ballparks was at the tactical level. Case in point: the Polo Grounds had such short left field and right field lines, teams



Ron Selter

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played their left fielder and right fielder off the lines towards left-center and right-center. A result was the Polo Grounds was a below average park for triples despite generous dimensions in left-center, center field, and right field.

LC: 446 feet – 1901-1910;  
433 feet – 1911-1919.

RC: 450 feet – 1901-1908;  
404 feet – 1909-1910;  
443 feet – 1911-1919.

The Polo Grounds IV (1890-1911) ballpark factor for triples was 82 for 1901-1908 and 89 for 1909-1910. The home run park factors were 172 and 135 for the same time periods. For Polo Grounds V (1911-1963), the American League triples park factor was 73 for 1913-1919 and for 1911-1919 in the NL the triples park factor was 77.

*Question: We hear often about ballparks during the Deadball Era having inconsistent field conditions which made fielding even more difficult. To what degree did teams pay attention to maintaining a standardized, playable field, or were the field conditions simply a function*

*of a lack of modern maintenance machinery and techniques?*

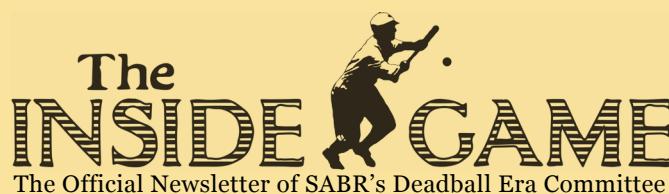
Ron: Ballparks in the Deadball Era required large real estate parcels and were often built on sub-prime real estate, often low-lying. Exposition Park in Pittsburgh experienced flooding from adjacent rivers on many occasions. One result of poor playing field conditions was the building of mounds to facilitate drainage in the area of the pitching rubber. The first such mound was installed in Pittsburgh in the first decade of the Twentieth Century.

*Question: Please discuss some of the ballparks which you find to be most distinctive from that period and what you find to be most unique about them. If you'd like to offer your choice for "best" or "worst" contemporary park, please do.*

Ron: Polo Grounds: With the left field and right field fences parallel, whenever home plate was moved towards center field or back towards the backstop, the left field and right field dimensions never changed. In 1922, when the second deck was extended from the grandstand into fair left field, it overhung the lower deck by 22 feet. Measured along the left field line the overhang was 31 feet. This meant most long fly balls hit to left field went into the upper deck for home runs. Very few home runs were hit into the left field lower deck because of the overhang. A famous exception was the pennant-winning home run by Bobby Thomson in 1951. [Note this configuration of the Polo Grounds was after the Deadball Era.]

The other three parks of interest (all in Boston) were Braves Field, Fenway Park, and Huntington Avenue Baseball Grounds. The Huntington Avenue Baseball Grounds was a park with huge dimensions except in right field (320 feet). Center field was never 630, as was once a listed dimension. The actual center field distance was 530 feet, which was the largest centerfield dimension in MLB history.

Fenway Park: The famous Green Monster did not come into being until the 1934 season when the park was remodeled. Before that, the left field fence was 25-feet high and sat atop a six-feet high slope known as Duffy's Cliff. A legend has



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the story of Red Sox outfielder Smead Jolley once had a base hit go through his legs twice, first as the ball rolled up the slope and then as it rolled back down. One footnote about the left field dimension at the base of the Green Monster. For many years, the left field dimension was listed and marked on the wall as 315 feet. When measured, it was found to be 305 feet to the sign in the left field corner. It is now marked 310, which is closer but still wrong. In the Baseball Blue Books for 1931-1933, the deepest center field corner was listed as 593. The actual distance was 490 feet.

**Braves Field:** The park with the largest outfield dimension of any major league ballpark. From when it opened in 1915 through 1927, the right-center field corner was 542 feet. This point was at the back left corner of the right field bleachers (known as the Jury Box). With the installation of an interior fence for the 1928 season, this point became out-of-play.

*Question: One of the more charming aspects of Deadball Era ballparks is that they were not uniform and teams had particular home-field advantages. Were those innovations (such as the centerfield area in the Polo Grounds) made with competitive advantages in mind, and why has the trend of making ballparks with unique dimensions diminished with time into a more standardized product?*

Ron: In the Deadball Era, there were many parks that were constrained as to their dimensions, e.g., Ebbets Field, because of the surrounding urban street patterns. Note these ballparks were built without the benefit of eminent domain-forced property sales (such as used to facilitate the building of Dodger Stadium in the late 1950s). Generally, in Northeast and Midwest cities, the north-to-south block distances were greater than the east-to-west distances. With most parks having home plate in the southwest corner, the left-field dimensions were greater than the right field dimensions (e.g., Ebbets Field, and the Baker Bowl). This explains why when outfield seating was added to expand capacity the stands were built in left field not right field (Ebbets Field, Baker Bowl)

In the years after the Deadball Era, ballpark sites became larger (e.g., Yankee Stadium) as the growing popularity of baseball and attendance led to park sites with stands that were unconstrained in size. Braves Field in 1915 was a forerunner of this trend. Compare the original dimensions of Fenway Park and Braves Field. Fenway's left field then and now is limited by Lansdowne Street. Later, post-Deadball Era ballparks were often built by cities using eminent domain and could be as large as the team owners wanted.

*Question: In photos of the first modern World Series in 1903, anyone can see that the dugouts of the time were cramped and not particularly comfortable. To what degree did the dugout itself evolve during the Deadball Era, and what was the impetus for changes to it?*

Ron: Dugouts in the early Deadball years were crude, sometimes at ground level (e.g., Columbia Park in Philadelphia). As the new classic ballparks were built, dugouts were improved.

*Question: Please cite some examples where the ballpark itself made a difference in the outcomes of particular games, especially in the World Series, during the Deadball Era.*

Ron: The best example is the 1915 World Series, when the National League Phillies added temporary stands in center field and right-center in front of the outfield walls. The final 1915 World Series game played in the Baker Bowl on October 15 was decided by a home run hit by Harry Hooper of the Red Sox into these temporary stands.

*Question: Name your favorite Deadball Era ballpark and tell us something about it.*

Ron: Ebbets Field, 1913-1919. Ebbets Field was most affected by the surrounding street pattern. The grounds covered 5.7 acres – smaller than the average Deadball Era ballpark site. When the ballpark opened in April 1913, the right field line, limited by Bedford Avenue, was only 301 feet, while left field, bounded by Montgomery Street, was a distant 419. Center field was 507 feet. These outfield dimensions changed when home plate was moved prior to the 1914 season to cre-

ate more foul territory in left field. This altered the ballpark dimensions for the 1914-1919 seasons to LF: 410; CF: 496; RF 300. The unique outfield walls in Ebbets Field were 20 feet high in both LF and CF and 19 feet in RF and right-center. All of the walls were canted about 9.5 feet off the ground and vertical above that point.

*Question: Did the wildly asymmetrical dimensions affect home runs?*

Ron: In the seven Deadball Era seasons played at Ebbets Field, there were 49 over-the-fence (OTF) homers; one to left field; zero to center, and 48 to right field. The one OTF homer to left came in

a September 1919 game and was hit into temporary LF bleachers. In the seven Deadball seasons, there were also seven bounce home runs. Two of these were quite unusual. Both were ground balls hit to right field that hit the angled lower half of the RF wall and then skipped over for a home run.

*Note: Ron's original research was the basis for correcting the existing published information on Ebbets Field's dimensions and configurations. The original plans were used to establish the original 1913 configuration and actual dimensions.*



**Ebbets Field, 1913**

## RUCKER GINN: TWO-GAME DEADBALL ERA MAJOR LEAGUER

by Bill Lamb

A star outfielder at the University of Georgia and reputedly the cousin of Ty Cobb, Rucker Ginn received a two-game tryout with the 1914 Cleveland Naps. Farmed out for seasoning, Ginn proceeded to lead the Eastern Association in batting. Yet by the following June, his professional playing days were behind him. Over the ensuing 15 years, Ginn pursued useful vocations as a teacher, soldier, small businessman, and civic leader. Then in 1931, tragedy struck. Within a four-month period, both Rucker and his wife died prematurely, orphaning their two young children. The story of Ginn's short baseball career and sadly abbreviated life follows.

Tinsley Rucker Ginn was born on September 26, 1891 in Royston, Georgia, a small mercantile center located in the northeastern hills of the state. He was one of ten children<sup>1</sup> born to prosperous merchant and chicken breeder Stephen Alexander Ginn (1858-1910)<sup>2</sup> and his wife Martha Ellen (nee Carlton, 1860-1915), both Georgia natives whose area forbearers stretched back for generations. Among the Royston friends of the Ginns were the family of William H. Cobb, the county superintendent of schools and the father of baseball immortal Ty Cobb.

Oldest Ginn son Clifford was a teammate of Ty on the Royston Rompers and other local nines, and the beau of Eunice Chitwood, the kid sister of Ty's mother Amanda and a member of the Cobb household. In August 1905, father Stephen Ginn posted the bond that allowed Amanda Chitwood Cobb to be released from custody pending the disposition of the manslaughter charge that arose from her fatal shooting of husband William.<sup>3</sup> At trial, Amanda was acquitted, and in 1908 the two clans became related by marriage when Eunice became Mrs. Clifford Ginn. When Ty got married later the same year, Cliff was the only member of the extended family in attendance at the ceremony in Augusta.<sup>4</sup>

Known as Rucker,<sup>5</sup> our subject was educated locally through graduation from Royston High School. During his youth, Rucker followed his older brothers onto local sandlots and developed into an outstanding amateur baseball player. Eventually 5-foot-9/180 pounds, the lefty batting, righty throwing youngster was a near carbon copy of his slightly smaller brother Starks, two years his elder. Although Ty had left town to begin his storied professional career by 1904, it seems probable that the younger Ginn brothers played recreational or summer baseball with/against Paul Cobb (Ty's brother, born 1889), prior to Paul leaving Royston to embark upon his own lengthy career in high-minor league ball.

Following high school, Rucker Ginn matriculated to the University of Georgia, 30 miles south in Athens. As a freshman, he made varsity and began the 1911 season as the Bulldogs catcher.<sup>6</sup> Soon thereafter, he joined Starks in the outfield. With Rucker in left and Starks in right, a Georgia newspaper described the swift-footed Ginn brothers as "moveable tarbuckets waiting for flies and things."<sup>7</sup> Coach Frank Anderson put their offensive skills to good use as well, customarily batting the spray-hitting siblings at the top of the batting order. A split of a mid-May Atlanta-Athens series with archrival Georgia Tech finalized the Bulldogs season record at 15-3 (.833), and allowed Georgia to claim the unofficial title of champions of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Near season end, legendary Georgia Tech football/baseball coach John Heisman was torn between selecting his own Carl Sloan and freshman Rucker for the final outfield spot on his Southern college all-star team, noting "both men are batting well over .300, both are excellent outfielders, and both are fast."<sup>8</sup> But Heisman gave Sloan the nod on the basis of experience, a superior throwing arm, and the lefty-batting Ginn's trouble hitting southpaw pitching.<sup>9</sup>

Upon his university graduation in June 1911, Starks Ginn entered the professional ranks, signing with the Bristol (Virginia) Boosters of the Class D Appalachian League. Reportedly hitting over .300, he was thereafter purchased by the

Roanoke Tigers of the Class C Virginia League.<sup>10</sup> There, Starks batted .288 in 46 games and was picked for second team all-Virginia League at season end.<sup>11</sup> But he advanced no further, his career having stalled, and following demotion to the Class D Georgia-Alabama League in 1916, Starks Flaver Ginn, Sr. (1889-1970) abandoned the game to enter business in the Royston area. Meanwhile, Rucker Ginn carried on at the University of Georgia. In 1912, he paced the Bulldogs to yet another winning season but was left off the regional all-star squad selected by his own coach. According to Georgia mentor Frank Anderson, "Rucker Ginn is by far the fastest man in the S.I.A.A. in getting down to first and is a blue streak on the bases [but] he is hardly strong enough with the bat to win a place" on the all-star team.<sup>12</sup> Washington Senators club boss Clark Griffith evidently held a higher opinion of Ginn, reportedly trying to sign Rucker during the 1912 season but being rebuffed.<sup>13</sup>

That September, there was surprising news that "Rucker Ginn, star left fielder in baseball, will be back as a candidate for a place on the Red and Black eleven. He is gritty, nervy and speedy."<sup>14</sup> But if Ginn actually saw game action for the Georgia football team in Fall 1912, it escaped mention in discoverable reportage. A December feature in an Atlanta newspaper noted only Rucker's incumbency on the university baseball team.<sup>15</sup> In Spring 1913, his bat came to life, earning him a place on the Heisman all-star team. An Alabama newspaper observed that "Ginn has threatened to be an all southern player for the past three years and this year he has fairly earned a place for himself in the hall of fame. He has always been a startling good fielder and his baserunning was equal to the best. This year it is even better ... Heretofore his hitting has been too light, but now he is slamming them out at over the .300 mark."<sup>16</sup> As reward for his sterling 1913 performance, Rucker was also elected captain of next season's Georgia team.<sup>17</sup>

Under the direction of a new coach, former New York Giants shortstop Joe Bean, Georgia captured another unofficial S.I.A.A. crown in 1914. And that June, four-year Bulldog stalwart T.



*University of Georgia, c. 1913*

Rucker Ginn was awarded his Bachelor of Science degree. Privately advised by family friend Ty Cobb – Cobb telegrammed Ginn's father about how Rucker should approach major league baseball opportunities<sup>18</sup> – Ginn signed with the Cleveland Naps shortly after graduation.<sup>19</sup> In certain press bulletins it was reported, erroneously, that Ty Cobb and Rucker Ginn were cousins.<sup>20</sup> They were not. As noted above, the Cobb and Ginn families were long friendly and ultimately connected by the 1908 marriage of Ty's Aunt Eu-nice and Rucker's older brother Cliff.

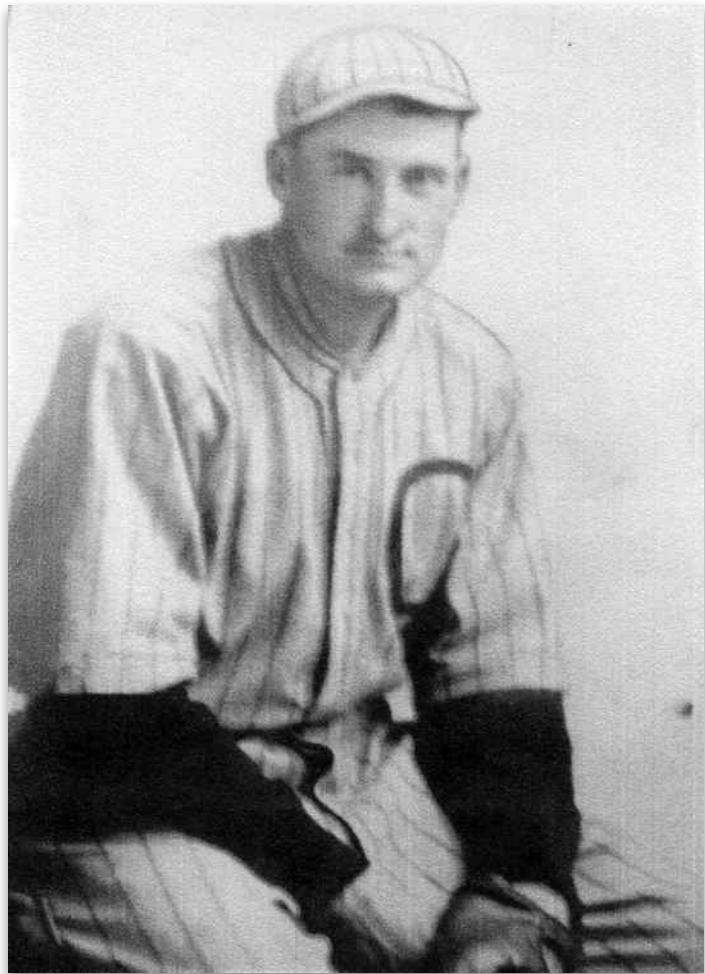
By late June, Ginn had arrived in Cleveland and was first observed taking in game action seated in the League Park grandstands alongside injured Naps outfielder-manager Joe Birmingham.<sup>21</sup> The newcomer made his major league debut in the first game of a June 27 home double-

header against the St. Louis Browns. With Cleveland ahead by ten runs and skipper Birmingham looking to rest some of his starters for the second contest, Rucker was dispatched to center field to spell Nemo Leibold in the sixth inning. His one and only big leagues at-bat came two frames later against right-hander George Baumgardner. Without a play-by-play account of the game available, we have only the box score to tell us that Ginn put the ball in play but was retired by the Browns. Meanwhile out in center, Rucker was entirely a spectator as not a single fielding chance came his way.<sup>22</sup>

Three days later, Ginn made his second and final major league game appearance in another match against St. Louis. After Birmingham removed himself for a sixth inning pinch-hitter, he sent Ginn out to take his place in right field. This time he did not make a plate appearance and, as during his debut, Ginn got no opportunity to demonstrate his defensive prowess as the Browns again sent him no fielding chances.<sup>23</sup> In the ensuing weeks, Ginn was occasionally seen on the Cleveland coaching lines but saw no further game action. Then in late July, he was optioned to the Waterbury (Connecticut) Frolickers of the Class B Eastern Association.<sup>24</sup> Only 22 years old, Rucker Ginn's days as a major leaguer had reached their end.

Ginn got off to a sluggish offensive start with his new club, the newspaper of an Association rival commenting that Ginn "hasn't been able to demonstrate much batting ability as yet."<sup>25</sup> But he thereafter found his batting eye and "with a sprint worthy of Ty Cobb at his best, Ginn of Waterbury worked to the top of the batting list in the closing days. In nine games he hit at a .571 pace and gained .67 points" on his average. He finished the season with a .331 BA.<sup>26</sup> Although Ginn appeared in only 42 games, Springfield sportswriter Sid Challenger, the official statistician of the Eastern Association, declared Ginn the EA batting champion,<sup>27</sup> a designation generally accepted by circuit news outlets.<sup>28</sup>

Over the winter, the Eastern Association dissolved, making its players free agents. Notwithstanding recognition as EA batting champ,



*Cleveland Naps, 1914*

Rucker had difficulty securing new employment. A report that he had been signed by the Aberdeen (Washington) Black Cats of the Class B Northwestern League proved unfounded.<sup>29</sup> A Ty Cobb wire to the Topeka (Kansas) Jayhawks of the Class A Western League on Ginn's behalf also failed to land him a job offer.<sup>30</sup> With the 1915 season already underway, Ginn finally received a chance with the Charleston (South Carolina) Sea Gulls of the Class C South Atlantic League.<sup>31</sup> His time in Charleston, however, would be brief.

Given the right field job, Ginn was rusty with the bat, beginning his Charleston tenure 0-for-14 in his first four starts. He broke into the base hit column with a single and double in a 1-0 Sea Gulls win over Columbus on May 24, and "was a sensation" with three hits and "some lofty fly ball [outs] of threatening mien" in a doubleheader split with Macon four days later.<sup>32</sup> But after a ten-game audition, Ginn's batting average lan-

guished at .143 (5-for-35) and he was given his release by Charleston.<sup>33</sup> Still only 23, the professional baseball career of Rucker Ginn was over. In future years, his ballplaying was confined to an occasional University of Georgia alumni game.

Ginn returned to Georgia and obtained a teaching position in rural Blakely. Thereafter in 1916, he was elected to a mathematics instructor's chair at Georgia Military College in Milledgeville.<sup>34</sup> In September 1917, Rucker took a bride, marrying 20-year-old Mary Frances Davis. About the same time, he accepted a commission in the US Army but spent the entirety of World War I stationed states-side. Lt. Ginn was mustered out shortly after hostilities ended in November 1918 but remained a member of the Army Reserve for the rest of his life, eventually attaining the rank of major.

The Ginns began their family in 1922 but, sadly, first-born son Charles did not survive infancy. Daughter Martha Ellen (born 1924) and son Tinsley Rucker, Jr. (1926) followed. In time, the family relocated to the Atlanta suburb of Covington where Rucker became proprietor of a Ford dealership. He also became "active in all [Covington] civic affairs" and was elected president of the local Kiwanis Club in 1930.<sup>35</sup> Life was good until tragedy suddenly befell the family the following year. In Spring 1931, wife Frances was stricken with agranulocytosis, a rare blood disorder usually precipitated by an adverse reaction to medication. Only 34, she died on April 14.<sup>36</sup> Four months later, Rucker was afflicted with an anal fistula that resulted in sepsis. He also came down with streptococcal cellulitis.<sup>37</sup> Hospitalized at Baptist Hospital in Atlanta, he died there on the evening of August 30, 1931. Tinsley Rucker Ginn was 39, and left behind two young children.<sup>38</sup> Following funeral services at First Baptist Church in Covington, his remains were transported home to Royston and interred besides those of his wife in Rose Hill Cemetery.



***Georgia Military College, c. 1917***

#### NOTES

1. The other Ginn children were Clifford (born 1882), Maude (1883), Candler (1887), Starks (1889), Dee Jannah (1895), Anna Belle (1897), Stephen, Jr. (1899), and Tally (1903). An unidentified daughter born in 1885 did not survive infancy.
2. The Ginn Chicken, a "toothsome but feisty bird," was a local staple. See Charles Leerhsen, *Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 34.
3. Leerhsen, 93. Amanda Cobb's bond was fixed at \$7,000. After she had shot her husband, Amanda dispatched Clifford Ginn to get a doctor. See "Mrs. Cobb Gives Bond," *Bamberg (South Carolina) News*, August 17, 1905: 4; "Wife Who Shot Husband Held for Manslaughter," *Pensacola (Florida) News*, August 11, 1905: 1.



***Robert Edgren 1913***

4. Leerhsen, 193. See also, Charles C. Alexander, *Ty Cobb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 69.
5. Although Baseball-Reference lists him as *Tinsley* Ginn, the only discovered newsprint use of our subject's first name appears in his 1931 *Atlanta Constitution* obituary. To family, friends, and the sports press of his time, he was *Rucker* Ginn, the name that is employed herein.
6. In Athens on March 22, 1911, Rucker caught all nine innings of a 9-3 spring exhibition game loss in to the American League New York Highlanders.
7. "Tech and Georgia Play Game Today," *Augusta (Georgia) Chronicle*, May 4, 1911: 4.
8. "Coach Heisman Selects His All-Southern Nine," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1911: 7. See also, "All-Southern Team as Chosen by Heisman," *Birmingham (Alabama) Age-Herald*, May 21, 1911: 15.
9. "Coach Heisman Selects," above.
10. As reported in "The Virginia League," *Sporting Life*, July 29, 1911: 22. Baseball-Reference has Bristol's otherwise unidentified "Ginn" batting .273 in 29 games.
11. Per "The Virginia League," *Sporting Life*, August 26, 1911: 23.
12. F.B. Anderson, "Coach Anderson of Georgia Picks All-Southern Team," *Chattanooga (Tennessee) News*, May 28, 1912: 12. For his outfield, Anderson selected Sid Holland (Alabama), Lou Hardage (Vanderbilt), and Ginn teammate Bob McWhorter (Georgia).
13. As subsequently reported in "Baseball Notes," *Boston Globe*, June 8, 1914: 7; "Sporting Notes," *Barre (Vermont) Times*, June 19, 1914: 3; and elsewhere.
14. Per "Georgia Ready – Gets Pleasant Surprise," *Tampa Tribune*, September 18, 1912: 6.
15. See "Georgia Baseball Prospects Are Far from Bright," *Atlanta Georgian*, December 5, 1912: 7.
16. "Heisman Gives Alabama Two Men on All-Southern," *Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News*, May 20, 1913: 4.
17. See "Ginn Made Captain," *Augusta Chronicle*, May 29, 1913: 9; "Ginn Heads Georgia," *Tampa Tribune*, May 29, 1913: 16.
18. According to 1971 correspondence of son T. Rucker Ginn contained in the Rucker Ginn file at the Giamatti Research Center, Cooperstown.
19. As reported in "Signs with Cleveland," *Augusta Chronicle*, June 4, 1914: 4, which described Ginn as "a safe hitter, a wonderfully successful base-runner, and a fine fielder with a good arm."
20. See e.g., "New Player for Cleveland," *Sporting Life*, June 13, 1914: 2; "What's in a Name?" (Bisbee) *Arizona Orb*, June 21, 1914: 7. Rucker was actually a member of a preceding generation – even though he was five years younger than Ty.
21. Per Edwards, "Features," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, June 22, 1914: 9.
22. The game ended 16-4 in Cleveland's favor.
23. St. Louis won, 5-0.
24. See "Cleveland Chat," *Sporting Life*, July 25, 1914: 6.
25. *Springfield (Massachusetts) Union*, August 6, 1914: 14.
26. "Final Figures by Sid Challenger," *Springfield Union*, September 15, 1914: 12.
27. Same as above.
28. See e.g., "In the Field of Sports," *Barre Times*, September 16, 1914: 3. Today, Waterbury teammate Elmer Smith (.332) is the recognized Eastern Association batting leader for 1914. See *The Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff, eds. (Durham, North Carolina: Baseball America, Inc., 3d ed. 2007), 252.
29. See "Rucker Ginn in Athens," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 26, 1915: 11.
30. The Cobb wire to Topeka was reported in the *Wichita (Kansas) Eagle*, April 3, 1915: 7. Ty's younger brother Paul Cobb had just spent a productive four seasons (1910-1913) with the Western League club in Lincoln, Nebraska.
31. See "Star Outfielder for Local Team," *Charleston (South Carolina) Evening Post*, May 20, 1915: 2.
32. Per the *Charleston Evening Post*, May 28, 1915: 2.
33. As reported in "In the World of Sports," *Charleston Evening Post*, May 30, 1915: 2.
34. See "Fall Term at GMC Will Begin September 12," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 27, 1916: 8.
35. Per the Ginn obituary published in the *Atlanta Constitution*, September 1, 1931.
36. Per the Georgia death certificate for Frances Ginn, accessed via Ancestry.com.
37. Per the Georgia death certificate contained in the Rucker Ginn file at the Giamatti Research Center.
38. Daughter Martha and son Tinsley were raised by Rucker's younger brother Stephen and his wife Lois.



Frank Leet  
Spokane Press,  
June 23, 1909

# TEAM SNAPSHOT: 1908 Oakland Commuters

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

"Sacramento fans are being entertained this afternoon at Oak Park by an alleged baseball team from Oakland and the score this afternoon will likely be runs for the Sacramento boys and doughnuts for the visitors. The Oaks will also eat doughnuts tomorrow afternoon."

-Sacramento Bee

Poor Walt McMemory.

And who exactly is Walt McMemory? From 1905 to 1908, McMemory is the manager of the Oakland Commuters of the "outlaw" California State League, a circuit not in the National Association and that the Spalding Baseball Guide calls "one of the most formidable outlaw baseball organizations in existence".

In his four seasons at the helm of the luckless Bay-area Commuters, the unfortunate, but likeable McMemory is 24-145, resulting in a 14 percent winning percentage, or a 86 percent losing percentage, or an average of six wins a year. And those totals include the imminently forgettable 1908 campaign.

Oakland opens 1908 with a 28-game losing streak and they finish on the short end of their last 20 games. In between those book-end losing steaks, the Commuters are 4-23, which adds up to a 4-71 mark and a 56-game deficit to league champion Stockton.

Not surprisingly, the Commuters are no-hit by Stockton's Doc Moskiman on opening day and at 0-1, it's the closest they will be to .500 all season long.

Esola Is Sentenced to Five Years in Folsom



Frank Esola, San Jose  
Santa Cruz, Fresno, Oakland

On June 14, 1913, four months after receiving a \$1,400 Studebaker and \$500 in cash for winning the San Francisco Chronicle's Popularity Contest, San Francisco Detective Frank "Big Chief" Esola, a 16-year veteran of the department, is convicted by a Grand Jury for conspiracy with a \$300,000 bungo ring and is given a five-year sentence at Folsom Prison. Signed by Oakland from an independent team in Santa Rosa, Esola debuts with the Commuters on July 25 and will eventually play with four California State League teams in 1908.



Tom Feeney, Oakland, San Jose

A senior and teammate of Tom Fitzsimmons at St. Mary's college, Feeney had already played two seasons of pro ball with San Jose and Seattle, when he signs with the Commuters on June 24. Feeney debuts with Oakland one day later, starting at second base as the Commuters snap their 28-game losing streak with a 4-3 win over Santa Cruz. He hits .286 in four games before leaving the team. He later joins San Jose and finishes the season with a .153 batting average (17-for 111) with 10 steals. Following the season he graduates from St. Mary's with a degree in civil engineering.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters Game by Game Results

	Opponent	W/L	Score	Record	Pitcher of Decision	
March 28	at Stockton	L	0-7	0-1	Van	0-1
March 29	at Stockton	L	2-5	0-2	Doane	0-1
April 4	at Sacramento	L	0-18	0-3	Doane	0-2
April 5	at Sacramento	L	1-13	0-4	Van	0-2
April 11	Fresno	L	2-4	0-5	Waterbury	0-1
April 12	Fresno	L	0-8	0-6	Doane	0-3
April 18	San Francisco	L	0-2	0-7	Waterbury	0-2
April 19	San Francisco	L	0-2	0-8	Symons	0-1
April 25	at San Jose	L	0-2	0-9	Streib	0-1
April 26	at San Jose	L	2-3	0-10	Symons	0-2
May 2	at Santa Cruz	L	6-9	0-11	Waterbury	0-3
May 3	at Santa Cruz	L	5-12	0-12	Goldy	0-1
May 9	at San Francisco	L	3-5	0-13	Seaton	0-1
May 10	at San Francisco	L	3-4	0-14	Streib	0-2
May 16	at Santa Cruz	L	2-3	0-15	Goldy	0-2
May 17	at Santa Cruz	L	2-5	0-16	Waterbury	0-4
May 23	at San Jose	L	1-5	0-17	Goldy	0-3
May 24	at San Jose	L	2-7	0-18	Jenkins	0-1
May 30	at Alameda (7)	L	0-6	0-19	Goldy	0-4
May 30	at Alameda	L	0-4	0-20	Peterson	0-1
May 31	at Alameda	L	3-4	0-21	Waterbury	0-5
June 6	at Stockton	L	0-5	0-22	Goldy	0-5
June 7	at Stockton	L	1-6	0-23	Waterbury	0-6
June 13	Alameda	L	1-2	0-24	Goldy	0-6
June 14	Alameda	L	0-1	0-25	Waterbury	0-7
June 20	at Sacramento	L	2-5	0-26	Waterbury	0-8
June 21	at Sacramento	L	3-10	0-27	Goldy	0-7
June 24	at Santa Cruz	L	1-3	0-28	Goldy	0-8
June 25	at Santa Cruz	W	4-3	1-28	Waterbury	1-8
June 26	at Santa Cruz	L	6-7	1-29	Goldy	0-9
June 27	at Santa Cruz	L	0-15	1-30	Waterbury	1-9
June 28	at Santa Cruz	L	7-9	1-31	Mosher	0-1
July 4	at San Jose	L	0-18	1-32	Sheperd	0-1
July 5	at San Jose	L	2-5	1-33	Goldy	0-10
July 5	at San Jose (15)	L	1-2	1-34	Goldy	0-11
July 6	at San Jose	L	0-5	1-35	Waterbury	1-10
July 11	Fresno (11)	W	4-3	2-35	Goldy	1-11
July 12	Fresno	L	4-5	2-36	Seaton	0-2
July 18	at Stockton	L	2-3	2-37	Seaton	0-3
July 19	at Stockton	L	2-6	2-38	Goldy, M.	0-6
July 25	San Francisco	L	2-3	2-39	Seaton	0-4
July 26	San Francisco	W	13-8	3-39	Goldy, H.	2-7
August 1	Fresno	L	2-9	3-40	Seaton	0-5
August 2	Fresno	L	0-9	3-41	Conway	0-1
August 8	at Sacramento	L	0-5	3-42	Goldy, H.	2-8
August 9	at Sacramento	L	1-6	3-43	Skaggs	0-1
August 15	at Alameda	L	7-8	3-44	Goldy, H.	2-9
August 16	at Alameda	L	6-7	3-45	Skaggs	0-2
August 19	at Santa Cruz	L	5-10	3-46	Goldy, H.	2-10
August 20	at Santa Cruz	L	3-5	3-47	Skaggs	0-3
August 21	at Santa Cruz	L	3-4	3-48	Schimpff	0-1
August 22	at Santa Cruz	L	2-14	3-49	Conway	0-2
August 23	at Santa Cruz	L	2-8	3-50	Skaggs	0-4
August 30	San Francisco	L	0-6	3-51	Skaggs	0-5
August 30	San Francisco	W	2-1	4-51	Gaffney	1-0

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [2 of 10]:

A total of 77 players will don Oakland flannels that summer, including 24 who will take at least one turn on the mound.

The Commuters' roster includes four players who will eventually make it to the major leagues, and three players whose major league careers are in the rear view mirror.

In addition, the team employs a San Francisco police detective who the next spring will be playing on the Folsom Prison nine after being found guilty of racketeering.

One of a handful of players to play the entire season with Oakland, Henry Goldy is the ace of the staff with a 2-13 mark and a team-high 13 complete games. Prior to his signing with the Commuters, the "little fellow" is a popular player/manager of the Clarion semipro team. His brother, M.C., spends the summer taking turns playing for both Oakland and the Imperials of San Francisco.

Throughout the course of the season, McMemory is forced to cull the ranks of California's vaunted amateur and semipro leagues to fill out his roster as players, frustrated with the mounting losses (and their own lackluster accomplishments) leave the team left and right, often immediately following yet another loss.

Yet in all of this chaos, McMemory deserves some credit for maintaining a modicum of organization and purpose, evidenced in the fact that the Commuters don't forfeit a single game until the final weekend of the season when they fail to show up for a double-header in Stockton.



**Tom Fitzsimmons, Oakland**

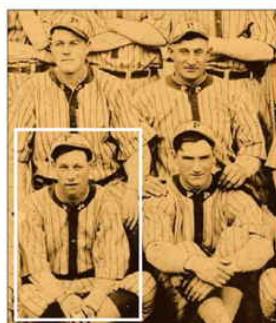
Despite leaving the Commuters for several weeks during the season, Fitzsimmons will tie for the team lead in doubles with five. After hitting .316 for Butte in 1916, Fitzsimmons, who was with Detroit during spring training three years earlier, is drafted by Brooklyn but refuses to sign the contract tendered him and is placed on the suspended list. Reinstated, he begins the 1917 season with Spokane, but when that league folds he enlists in the US Army. Upon his return from France, he goes straight to Brooklyn and makes his major league debut on June 12, 1919.



**Ham Iburg, Oakland**

On October 25, Iburg, the "Fredericksburg Brewery Boy," makes his only California State League appearance against Stockton. The 34-year-old right-hander and his repertoire of "floaters" allows only six hits and strikes out four in a 3-0 loss to the eventual champions. It is said that Iburg throws a pitch so slow that the batter can read the trade mark on the baseball. In his lone major league season, Iburg is 11-18 with 20 complete games for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1902. Following the end of the season, Iburg signs with the hometown San Francisco Seals.

1908 Oakland Commuters Game by Game Results						
Sept	Opponent	W/L	Score	Record	Pitcher of Decision	
5	at Fresno	L	1-10	4-52	Goldy, H.	2-11
6	at Fresno	L	0-8	4-53	Skaggs	0-6
9	at San Jose	L	0-8	4-54	Conway	0-3
	at San Jose	L	0-5	4-55	Goldy, H.	2-12
12	at Stockton	L	0-8	4-56	O'Neill	0-1
13	at Stockton	L	5-11	4-57	Conway	0-4
19	at Sacramento	L	0-5	4-58	O'Neill	0-2
20	at Sacramento	L	0-7	4-59	Conway	0-5
26	at San Jose	L	3-13	4-60	O'Neill	0-3
<b>October</b>						
3	at Santa Cruz	L	0-8	4-61	O'Neill	0-4
4	at Santa Cruz	L	2-13	4-62	Hughes	0-1
11	at Alameda	L	7-9	4-63	O'Neill	0-5
	at Alameda	L	1-4	4-64	O'Neill	0-6
17	at Fresno	L	0-10	4-65	Goldy, H.	2-13
18	at Fresno	L	1-9	4-66	Miller	0-1
24	Sacramento	L	2-8	4-67	O'Neill	0-7
25	Sacramento	L	0-3	4-68	Iberg	0-1
31	at Alameda	L	1-4	4-69	Miller	0-2
<b>November</b>						
14	at Stockton	(forfeit)	L	0-9	4-70	--
	at Stockton	(forfeit)	L	0-9	4-71	--



**Eddie Mensor, Oakland**

Mensor (highlighted) is pictured above as a rookie with the 1912 Pittsburgh Pirates. The fellow behind Mensor's left shoulder should be recognizable as well. Nicknamed the "Midget," the 5-foot-6 Oregon native begins his pro career in 1908, hitting .229 in eight games with the Oakland Commuters. In 1911, he hits .287 with 42 steals for Portland of the Northwestern League when the Pirates pay the Pippins \$3,000 for his services. An infielder in the minors, Mensor is moved to the outfield by the Pirates' manager Fred Clarke. In his three major league seasons, Mensor hits .221 with one home run and six RBIs.



**Roscoe Miller, Oakland, Fresno**

A 15-game winner playing most of the season with Fresno, Miller is 0-2 in two starts with the Commuters. A 39-game winner in four major league seasons (1901-1904) with Detroit, the New York Giants and Pittsburgh, the "Parson" wins a career-best 23 games with the Tigers in 1901. The following July he jumps to the National League's New York Giants. His stay in the major leagues is brief and his fall well documented. The hard-throwing right-hander dies on April 18, 1913 from Tuberculosis at the age of 36.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [3 of 10]:

Over the course of the season they are shutout 25 times in 73 games, including six times in their first nine games. Twice they have four-game scoreless streaks. In games decided by two runs or less, Oakland is 3-23.

In contests designated as road games (they share Alameda's home grounds for a portion of the season), the Commuters are 1-58. Road Warriors they are not.

They fail to win a game in March (0-2), April (0-8), May (0-11), September (0-9), October (0-9) and November (0-2). Their best month is July when they are 2-8.

The California State League, despite the abundance of talent, albeit some of it "on the lamb" from major league baseball, has some quirks to it.

The league schedule, released in late January, has Alameda playing 51 home games and Sacramento 47, while **Oakland is slated to be a host only 14 times**. When the season comes to an end on November 22, Santa Cruz will have played 106 games, while no



**Frank Waterbury, Oakland**

A veteran pitcher who suffers from a chronic knee injury, Waterbury is 1-10 for the Commuters with 80 innings pitched and eight complete games. An Oakland policeman, the pitcher/outfielder hits .212 with one home run.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters Pitching Statistics

Pitching	GP	GS	CG	(W-L)	INN	R	H	SO	W
Goldy, Henry.....	17	14	13	(2-13)	122	103	153	31	52
Waterbury.....	11	9	8	(1-10)	80	44	66	25	25
O'Neill.....	7	7	6	(0-7)	53	55	61	20	29
Conway, Con.....	7	6	3	(0-6)	36.2	44	48	10	26
Skaggs.....	6	6	6	(0-6)	49	40	56	37	16
Goldy, M.C.....	5	5	3	(0-3)	48	32	55	13	17
Seaton.....	5	5	4	(0-5)	37.2	19	39	20	21
Doane.....	3	3	3	(0-3)	24	31	31	8	11
Streib.....	3	2	1	(0-3)	18	9	15	3	6
Miller, Roscoe.....	2	2	2	(0-2)	16	14	21	5	10
Van.....	2	2	2	(0-2)	16	20	19	3	11
Symons.....	2	2	2	(0-2)	15	5	16	4	3
Schwartz, Lou.....	2	0	0	(0-0)	5	7	4	0	5
Brennan.....	1	1	1	(0-1)	8	7	7	3	6
Iberg, Jack "Ham".....	1	1	1	(0-1)	8	3	6	4	1
Mosher.....	1	1	1	(0-1)	8	9	10	4	1
Schimpf, Artie.....	1	1	1	(0-1)	8	4	9	4	4
Sheperd.....	1	1	1	(0-1)	8	18	19	0	3
Gaffney.....	1	1	1	(1-0)	7	1	4	8	2
Jenkins.....	1	0	0	(0-1)	5	7	6	1	2
Bliss.....	1	0	0	(0-0)	3	0	2	0	1
Hughes.....	1	0	0	(0-1)	3	8	5	2	6
Reilly.....	1	0	0	(0-0)	3	5	8	0	0
Zamloch.....	1	0	0	(0-0)	1	2	5	0	3
Team Totals	83	69	59	(4-69)	582.1	487	665	205	261

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

**Runs** - Runs are total runs allowed. Most box scores also listed earned runs, but for team totals only, not individuals.

**Goldy** - Henry and M.C. Goldy, both play for Oakland during the 1908 season. Early season box scores did not always distinguish between the two. However, game stories and mid-week note packages, both in previews and summaries, usually list which Goldy did what during the games. Luckily, my W-L totals match those issued by the league at the end of the season.

**Loaners** - Down to eight available players on June 28, Oakland is loaned two players - Pat Mosher and Frank Arellanes - by Santa Cruz prior to that day's game.

\*Loaned from Santa Cruz June 28

## 1908 Oakland Commuters Hitting Statistics

Hitting	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	SB	SLUG	Avg
Broquison.....	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	.640	.640
Brown.....	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	1.000	.667
Houghton.....	13	3	8	1	1	0	0	.846	.615
Shea, Jimmy.....	24	3	10	2	0	0	0	.500	.417
Brennan.....	12	1	5	2	1	0	1	.833	.417
Burke.....	11	0	4	0	0	0	0	.364	.364
Iberg, Jack "Ham".....	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	.333	.333
Lambert.....	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	.333	.333
Mosher, Pat*.....	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	1.333	.333
Thornton.....	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	.333	.333
Zamloch, Carl.....	30	6	10	1	0	1	1	.466	.300
Esola, Frank.....	31	2	9	1	2	0	0	.451	.290
Feehey, Tom.....	14	3	4	0	0	0	0	.286	.286
Warner.....	7	1	2	0	0	0	0	.286	.286
Ralston.....	19	1	5	0	0	0	0	.263	.263
Warren.....	55	5	14	0	0	0	16	.255	.255
Cobb, Paul.....	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	.250	.250
Morgan.....	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	.250	.250
Schimpf, Art.....	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	.250	.250
Volquardson.....	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	.250	.250
Fitzsimmons, Tom.....	107	9	25	5	1	0	7	.299	.238
Mensor, Eddie.....	35	5	8	0	0	0	4	.229	.229
Doane.....	9	0	2	0	0	0	0	.222	.222
Walhour, Dave.....	138	6	30	5	1	1	3	.290	.217
Waterbury, Frank.....	118	9	25	4	0	1	2	.271	.212
Hughes.....	48	3	10	1	0	0	2	.229	.208
Conway, Con, "Swag".....	116	8	24	5	0	2	1	.302	.207
Smith, Hugh.....	44	0	9	0	1	0	0	.250	.205
Waters.....	15	1	3	2	0	0	0	.333	.200
Westphal.....	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	.200	.200
Bliss, Chris.....	214	16	41	4	1	0	13	.220	.192
Heister, Al.....	153	13	29	2	0	1	3	.222	.190
Barnes.....	11	1	2	1	0	0	0	.273	.182
O'Neill.....	29	1	5	0	0	0	0	.172	.172
Moran.....	47	2	8	1	1	0	0	.234	.170
Brackett.....	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	.167	.167
Peralta.....	37	1	6	1	0	0	0	.189	.162
Perkins.....	31	3	5	1	0	0	1	.194	.161
Hearne.....	19	0	3	1	0	0	1	.211	.158
Brarens, George.....	39	1	6	1	0	0	1	.180	.154
Schwartz, Lou.....	235	9	36	5	0	0	5	.174	.153
Hamish.....	14	0	2	0	0	0	0	.143	.143
Knight.....	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	.286	.143
Symons.....	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	.143	.143
Ward.....	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	.143	.143
Reilly, Josh.....	112	6	16	3	0	1	4	.205	.142
Gorman.....	29	1	4	0	0	0	1	.137	.137
Ballagh.....	15	0	2	0	0	0	1	.133	.133
Van.....	15	1	2	0	0	0	0	.133	.133
Goldy, Henry.....	95	2	12	1	0	0	2	.137	.126
Husk.....	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	.125	.125
Wulzen, Richard.....	97	6	10	1	0	0	2	.113	.103
Moriarty.....	30	3	3	0	0	0	0	.100	.100
Rodgers, Chester.....	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	.091	.091
Seaton.....	12	1	1	0	0	0	0	.083	.083
Goldy, M.C.....	61	5	5	0	0	0	1	.082	.082
Skaggs.....	20	0	1	0	0	0	0	.050	.050
McCaffery.....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Gaffney.....	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Riesser.....	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Hurd.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Jenkins.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
McCabe.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
McFede.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Smith, Carl.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Arellanas, Frank*.....	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Hebrons.....	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Merriman, William.....	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Nichols.....	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Sheperd.....	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Miller, Roscoe.....	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Richardson.....	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Causley.....	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Peterson.....	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Sweeney.....	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Streib, Tom.....	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Williams.....	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
Team Totals	2340	145	428	53	9	8	72	.227	.182

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [4 of 10]:

one else plays more than 79. Fresno is the only team reported to show a profit.

### OAKLAND COMMUTERS CHRONOLOGY

January 1

Officials of the Fresno franchise put up \$2,400 for team managers Spider Baum and Cliff Blankenship to start a haberdashery in the city.

## OAKLAND TEAM MAY BE SUED

### STATE LEAGUE BUNCH ALLEGED TO HAVE GONE ON DRUNK-EN ORGY IN FRESNO

### Take Santa Fe Train by Storm Driving Many From Car—Road Threatens a Suit

Santa Fe officials are highly indignant over alleged misconduct on the part of the Oakland baseball team at the local depot on Labor Day night upon its return to Oakland says the Fresno Herald, and if they carry out their threats, the entire state league team, twelve in number, will be brought back to Fresno to answer to charges of drunkenness and disturbing the peace.

Persons at the depot on the night of the departures of the "Oaks" describe the scenes as some of the most disgraceful ever witnessed in the city. According to the special agent of the Santa Fe, who was at the depot at the time, the members of the team were "paralyzed" when they came from town. No sooner had they reached the station, it is said, than they began to use such foul language that self respecting persons were obliged to decamp to quieter spots.

Not satisfied with using vulgar language, the players, say the Santa Fe men, went to the sleeper on the siding and commenced playing havoc with the car and its occupants. A large number of passengers, claim the company officials here, were forced to leave their berths because of the actions of the men who took complete possession.

It is also said that several of the players were so intoxicated that they could scarcely get into the car. After the players had finished with the passengers, they are said to have turned to the old colored porter and forcibly ejected him from the car. He was a man about 73 years of age.

All the players are known and the officials of the Santa Fe this afternoon are seriously discussing some action.

## 1908 California State League - Final Standings

President: Frank Herman

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB	Manager
Stockton Millers	62	17	.785	--	Cy Moreing
San Jose Prune Pickers	58	17	.773	2.0	Emil Mayer/A. Jarman
Sacramento Senators	55	20	.733	5.0	Bill Curtin
Fresno Tigers	47	31	.603	14.5	Spider Baum
Santa Cruz Sand Crabs	60	46	.566	15.5	H.R. Bradford/W. Keating
Alameda Encinalis	24	50	.324	35.5	Lou Schroeder/Fred Lange
San Francisco	9	67	.118	51.5	Phil Knell
Oakland Commuters	4	71	.053	56.0	Walt McMemory

April 23 - November 22

February 8  
Every contract

jumper in the California State League will have a chunk of his salary held back on him till the end of the season by his manager ... the object of doing this is that the held-out salary will act as a bond of good faith that the player won't flop back to the league from which he jumped from ... should he do so, the money is to be forfeited.

February 15

Fresno is not able to practice until shower baths are installed in the club house and hot water is available.

March 12

Uniforms have been selected by most of the teams ... Fresno's outfit will be white and red, Stockton's green and white, Santa Cruz maroon and green, San Jose white and orange and blue, San Francisco light brown, Alameda light gray and Sacramento gray ... Fresno, Alameda and San Jose will have new ball parks.



**Josh Reilly, Oakland**

San Francisco native Josh Reilly makes his major league debut with the Chicago Colts on May 2, 1896. Filling in at shortstop for Bill Dahlen (who had a toothache), Reilly is 1-for-6 at the plate and commits three errors. He redeems himself in the fifth inning starting a triple play in a 15-8 win over the St. Louis Browns. After hitting .216 in nine games with a double and two steals, he contracts typhoid fever and is forced to return home to San Francisco. On July 17, 1908, a discouraged 40-year-old Reilly retires after 22 seasons. A week later he signs with the Santa Rosa team of the Tri-County League.



**Artie Schimpf, Oakland**

Fresno, Santa Cruz Another Oakland native, Schimpf plays for three different California State League teams in 1908. A infielder-outfielder-pitcher, Schimpf appears in only two games with the Commuters (0-1), but overall he hits .226 with 26 stolen bases while compiling a 6-5 mark on the mound. On August 28, 1919, pitching for Barrel House of the Standard Oil Athletic Association league, a 33-year-old Schimpf pitches a no-hitter against the Richmond Engineers. He begins his pro career as an 18-year-old with Fresno of the California State League in 1905.



**Lou Schwartz, Oakland**

A veteran of the Oakland Oaks of the PCL and the Eastern and Southern leagues, Lou Schwartz is one of many California State League players banned by the National Commission for jumping a signed Oaks' contract. A good-fielding, light-hitting shortstop, Schwartz will play two years in the California State League (1908-1909) before spending several summers in California's independent leagues.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [5 of 10]:

March 16

Stockton manager Cy Moreing wires Pittsburgh Hall of Famer Honus Wagner to come to this city and play for the local Millers ... Moreing offers the future Hall of Famer a poultry ranch and a nice baseball salary on the side.

March 18

The National Baseball Commission fines up to ten players \$100 for jumping their contacts and signing with teams in outlaw leagues.

March 19

San Francisco is considering Frank "Ping" Bodie as their opening day starter on the mound ... Bodie jumps to the Northwest League in early May.

March 27

On the eve of their respective season openers, Oakland and San Francisco are, according to the Stockton Daily Evening Record, perceived to be "mere weaklings," of the California State League.

### March 28 - Opening Day

Oakland is no-hit in its season opener, an 8-0 loss to the defending league champion Stockton Millers ... Stockton's Doc Moskiman strikes out seven and doesn't walk a batter in the win ... Van goes the route for the Commuters, allowing only seven hits while striking out two and walking four.



**Tom Seaton, Oakland**

Pitching for the Point Richmond (Calif.) amateur team, Seaton signs with the Commuters in early April and continues to pitch for both teams, often on consecutive days. In five starts for Oakland, the 20-year-old right-hander is 0-5 with 21 walks in 37 2/3 innings. A noted contract jumper during his career, Seaton will finish 92-65 in six major league seasons, including a 27-12 mark in 1913 with the Philadelphia Phillies.



**Carl Zamloch, Oakland**

Another baseball nomad so prevalent in California at the turn of the century, Zamloch hits .333, with 10 hits in 30 at bats, with a double and a home run in an abbreviated appearance for the Commuters. By 1911, the 6-foot-1, 176-pound right-hander has converted to pitching full time and in 1912, pitching for Missoula, he leads the Union Association in wins with 33. In 1913, Zamloch makes the Detroit Tigers' opening day roster but because of a bad case of grippe does not make his major league debut until May 7. He is 1-6 with a 2.45 ERA in 17 appearances for the Bengals.

Former Brooklyn pitcher Elmer Stricklett limits Santa Cruz to three hits in San Jose's 5-0 win ... Sacramento's Jimmy Whalen strikes out seven en route to a nine-hit complete game win in a 5-1 win over San Francisco ... Fresno opens with a 2-0 win over Alameda on a six-hit whitewashing by Rosco Miller.

FRESNO'S BASEBALL TEAM FROM THEIR LATEST PHOTOGRAPH.



Top Row—Kanney, Matt, Baum, Hartman, Espe, M. in., Bottom Row—Wade, Blanks, Sch. Thomas, Moore, Adams, Ginn.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [6 of 10]:

April 1

The Alameda Daily Argus opines that all eight teams in the California State "show speed and appear to be quite evenly matched." ... San Jose owner Amy Meyer, despite his team opening the season 2-0, has been going after Pacific Coast League players with abandon.

April 2

McKune and Johnson desert Santa Cruz.

April 4

Oakland collects only three singles and drops to 0-3 with an 18-0 shellacking from Sacramento in game that takes only 90 minutes to play.

In Alameda, an automobile parade through the streets of Alameda and Oakland ends with the Alameda manager being arrested for advertising without a permit.

April 5

Sacramento pounds Oakland 13-1 in a game highlighted by the antics of Commuters' right fielder Dave Walthour, who after misjudging a flyball, he refuses to go after it, allowing three runs to score.

April 11

Oakland drops to 0-5 with a 4-2 loss to visiting Fresno ... Jim Corbett, a one-time

**June 25, 1908**  
**Oakland Commuters at Santa Cruz Sand Crabs**

**OAKLAND**

	AB	R	BH	SB	PO	A	E
Feeoney, 2b.....	5	0	1	0	3	3	1
Heister, lf.....	5	2	3	0	2	1	0
Walthour, rf.....	1b 3	1	1	0	8	0	0
Waterbury, p.....	1	2	0	0	0	2	0
Burke, c.....	4	0	2	0	0	2	0
Reilly, 3b.....	4	0	0	0	0	2	0
Schwartz, ss.....	4	0	0	0	3	2	1
Wulzen, 1b.....	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Smith, cf.....	4	0	0	0	3	0	0
Hanush, rf.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals.....	36	4	9	0	*26	10	*2

\*Garry out for bunting third strike.

**SANTA CRUZ**

	AB	R	BH	SB	PO	A	E
Shinn, 2b.....	4	0	2	0	0	3	0
Schimpff, 1b.....	2	0	0	0	9	0	0
Collins, lf.....	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Devereaux, 3b.....	3	1	1	2	1	2	0
Waters, ss.....	4	0	1	0	5	0	0
Garry, cf.....	4	0	0	0	2	0	0
T. Hoag, rf.....	3	0	0	1	3	0	0
O. Hoag, c.....	3	1	1	0	7	1	0
Loucks, p.....	4	1	1	0	0	2	0
Totals.....	30	3	8	4	27	8	2

**RUNS AND HITS BY INNINGS**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Oakland ....	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Base hits....	0	1	4	0	2	0	1	1	9
Santa Cruz....	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Base hits....	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6

**Two-base hits—**Walthour, Shinn, Waterbury, O. Hoag, Waters. Home run—Devereaux. Sacrifice hit—Schimpff (2). Struck out—By Loucks, 7; by Waterbury, 4. Base on balls—Off Waterbury, 6. Hit by pitched ball—Wulzen, Shinn. First base on errors—Oakland, 2; Santa Cruz, 2. Earned runs—Oakland, 2; Santa Cruz, 2. Left on bases—Oakland, 7; Santa Cruz, 10. Time of game—1:45. Umpire—Moore.

After 28-straight losses to open the season, Oakland finally wins a game. Behind Waterbury's six-hitter the Commuters fall one game short of tying the existing record of 29 set by Louisville of the American Association in 1889.

## Basket-ball Game a No-Score Affair

The Sacred Heart College basket-ball team played a no-score practice game with the five from the Columbia Park Boys' Club in the gymnasium of the latter on Friday night. This was the first game the collegians have played with an outside aggregation, all previous contests being confined to inter-class games, and the Sacred Heart players are greatly encouraged over the showing made against the Columbia Park team, as the boys from the Mission are experienced at the indoor game. Coach Nill claims that the possibilities of the college team are most favorable and is arranging a series of games with the various high schools. Wing for the Columbia team was the sensation of the game, making many attempts at goal. The Sacred Heart boys showed their knowledge of the game by clever passing and accurate throwing, in which French, Murphy and Tracey share the honors. The two teams will meet again on Friday evening.

April 21

Alameda baseball fans are protesting over the league schedule, which they claim does not give their team sufficient home games ... for the two opening games, the Alameda fans attended to the number of 5,000 and 2,000 ... the Alameda fans have asked the State League authorities to revise the schedule and give the team that represents that city more games at home.

May 10

Oakland drops a 4-3 decision at San Francisco to open the season 0-14, tying the league record.

May 16

It's reported that both Oakland (0-14) and San Francisco (4-10) will be dropped from league membership, if not soon, certainly at the end of the season.

June 14

Alameda portsider Slats Nelson pitches a no-hitter and homers in a 1-0 win over the visiting Commuters ... Nelson strikes out seven and walks nine in handing Oakland its 25th-straight loss to open the season ... Nelson's fifth-inning home run hit right before the right field fence and rolled into a water hole.

June 24

Oakland signs Tom Feeney after Fitzsimmons leaves the team.

July 1

Catcher Bliss is forced to leave the game against Santa Cruz with an injury ... the Sand Crabs' Graham loans outfielder Brown to the Commuters as Oakland is down to eight players and would face a fine for not having enough players.

## 1908 Oakland Commuters [7 of 10]:

July 2

San Francisco's game at Santa Cruz is forfeited to San Francisco when the San Crab players refuse to take the field in protest of not having been paid ... it's estimated that the Santa Cruz ownership is \$1,400 in arrears ... manager William Keating resigns and is replaced by Orlando Stevens.

July 3

Frank "Big Chief" Esola, the former Seal catcher, has been ordered to join the Oakland state league team in company with pitcher Pierce of Santa Cruz. It is hoped that these two men will help the tailenders win a game now and then.

July 17

Forty-year-old second baseman Josh Reilly is hitting .142 when retires from the game ... citing the team's poor performance, the 40-year-old is replaced as team captain by Lou Schwartz.

ALAMEDA, November 1.—The announced State League double-header between Alameda and Oakland did not materialize at Recreation Park this morning. Secretary Calder of the Alameda park and baseball corporation figured that the Oakland club would not even draw flies to the park and the games were called off.

July 26

Oakland totals season highs in runs (13) and hits (15) in a 13-8 win over visiting San Francisco.

## OAKS HERE TO DROP PAIR OF GAMES

Bill Curtin's players and Sacramento fans are being entertained this afternoon at Oak Park by an alleged baseball team from Oakland, known as the Oakland State League Team, and the score this afternoon will likely be runs for the Sacramento boys and doughnuts for the visitors. The Oaks will also eat doughnuts tomorrow afternoon.

August 22

Oakland pulls off a triple play in a 14-2 loss at Santa Cruz ... Swag Conway started on the hill but was relieved by Zamlock, who was making his mound debut... Zamlock "posed on the mound like a gladiator of the old school," and allowed four runs on five hits and three walks in one inning before being relieved by Captain Schwartz, who was "far from an enigma, but before he concludes to poise as a twirler he should go into secret consultation with an oculist to improve his range of vision.

August 30

Skaggs strikes out a team season-high 15 in a 6-0 loss to San Francisco.

October 3

Another ex-Oakland pitcher comes back to haunt the Commuters as Big "Pal" Mosher, a Santa Cruz amateur, allows only eight hits in Santa Cruz's 8-0 shutout win.

November 14

Oakland closes out the season forfeiting a doubleheader to Stockton.

Readers will recall the re-print of a Deadball-related article from Brian Morrison's terrific Diamondsinthedusk.com website in the July 2020 newsletter. In the current piece, Brian profiles the 1908 Oakland Commuters of the California State League, a club that managed to post an even worse won-loss record than the dreadful Worcester Boosters sketched in our last issue. I had disqualified Oakland on the flimsy ground that the Commuters played in an outlaw league. But the god-awfulness of the Oakland Commuters deserves recognition. So, many thanks to Brian for letting us reproduce the article here.

As many readers doubtless know, Diamondsinthedusk provides a treasure trove of fascinating but little-known info about baseball's past, much if it involving Deadball Era actors and events. If you have not yet given DintheD a look, a real treat awaits you.

Bill Lamb, Editor

## THE CY FILE: BYE-BYE CY – CY YOUNG'S LAST GAME

by Richard “Dixie” Tourangeau

If you have read enough biographies you know that some authors have a tendency to dilute, disregard, or dismiss some of their subject's worst life events. In Denton True “Cy” Young's case all of his biographers seem to have that philosophy in common when writing, or not, about his final game in the majors. Since it didn't come out well for the old diamond warrior, for the most part biographers have begrudgingly reported only the slightest details. All these authors seem intent on saving him from the long-forgotten embarrassment and eagerly wanted to move on to his retirement years.

Young has had five biographers. Three of them wrote what were promoted as “young adult books” and the other two were more mature in scope and style. To those accounts you can add our BioProject issuance and an ancient SABR article that focused on Cy's entire 1911 season. Problem is that these incomplete narratives mean readers miss out on a noteworthy historical event considering it was Cy's final appearance after 22 years, though its finality was unknown to anyone at the time. Young's lengthy body of work demands better closing coverage and the trivia involved is worth a more detailed description. This game should not get a hazy “fade to black” ending.

Leading off the biog fest is Ralph H. Romig's 1964 *Cy Young, Baseball's Legendary Giant* (Dorrance). The book zig-zags in and out of fictional/real situations and the final game is not mentioned at all. Romig was an adolescent Ohio neighbor of sorts to Young and has many nice stories about Cy off the field, but the many mistakes in the book make a knowledgeable fan uneasy. Of Cy's first Cleveland game in August 1890, he has the wrong score.

Famed SABR biographer Norman Macht is next up in 1992 (Chelsea House) for the publisher's Baseball Legends series. Errors are rare except for the same one committed by Romig regarding

the game between Cy and Grover Pete Alexander in 1911. Rookie Alexander won it 1-0 (throwing a one-hitter in Boston) in nine innings, not 12 as both authors write. Of Cy's last game Macht wrote, “On October 6, Young held Brooklyn in check for six innings but gave up seven runs and eight hits in the seventh inning. Unable to get that elusive last out, he finally tossed the ball to a relief pitcher young enough to be his son.” The reliever was rookie Orville Weaver. Actually the score was 3-3 entering the bottom of the seventh at Brooklyn's Washington Park. Cy got one out but then the Superbas made eight straight hits and scored eight runs, not seven. Cy left still needing two more outs in the frame.

Professor Reed Browning was next to the typewriter (or computer) with *Cy Young, A Baseball Life* (UMass) in 2000. Browning's adult book is looked upon as the bench mark for Cy info, but it has faults and errors. He makes some cogent points about the ending of Young's 1911 campaign but fails to elaborate on anything specific as the curtain falls. His brief summation: “As the season wound down, Young lost his edge. His last three decisions were all defeats, and in his final appearance of the year – it was, in fact, the last game of his major league career – he was relieved in the seventh inning in Brooklyn after being pummeled for eight consecutive base hits.” Certainly not much in Browning's minutiae dumpster for trivia buffs.

There are two Cy cleanup biographers because both books came out in pandemic 2020. One is Lew Freedman's *Cy Young, The Baseball Life and Career* (McFarland); the other Scott Longert's *Cy Young, An American Baseball Hero* (Ohio University Press). Freedman left his readers with very little when Cy's career ended abruptly. The last game, even the last few games are not mentioned at all. Freedman writes, “The 511th and last win of Young's baseball career was recorded on September 22, 1911. Boston defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates, 1-0, and yes, the Cyclone pitched a complete game shutout. He lost a few more games to complete the season ...” That's it? A cloudy conclusion for sure.

Longert is not overly descriptive either. After mentioning the Pirate shutout, he ends Cy's 22 campaigns with, "He made his last start on October 6 in Brooklyn. With one out in the seventh inning the Brooklyn batters gave Cy a real beating with eight straight hits. He was taken out of the game for another pitcher, one of the few times that happened in his career. Boston lost the ball game by a bad score of 13-3. That was not how Cy wanted the year to end, but he accepted the one-sided loss and began thinking about 1912."

The late, great Paul Doherty of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, was one of SABR's earliest and most respected researchers, and its first self-taught expert on forfeited games. It was an honor to chauffeur Paul to many SABR meetings during our friendship. For the Spring 1979 *Baseball Research Journal* he typed out the aptly titled, "Cy Young's Final Fling," about the 1911 season with AL Cleveland (3-4) and NL Boston (4-5). Paul detailed several games down Cy's stretch run but couldn't escape the rip current that others would find themselves in later on. There was nearly zilch about the last game. Summing up, Doherty wrote: "He was to make only one more hit as a batter and that came in his next, and last, major league game. It was played in Brooklyn October 6, 1911, and was a sad ending for the great all-time hurler. Cy was clobbered in this game. He was left in until the Dodgers had scored 11 runs, seven crossing the plate in the seventh inning." Paul was the first to make the seven-run mistake.

SABRites Bill Nowlin and Dave Southwick combined their fine research talents to ensconce Cy Young into the forever BioProject orbit in January 2012. Of course, Cy's massive resume automatically gets more space than most players and where to draw the info/anecdote line is a tough decision, even on the seemingly endless internet. The BioProject ending to his 1911 season is thus, "He was quickly picked up by the Boston Rustlers of the National League, who wanted him, according to one writer, 'just to draw the crowd.' Young started 11 games for Boston down the stretch, going 4-5 with a 3.71 ERA. Despite much speculation that he would retire, Young attempted to hang on with the Rustlers



**Boston Braves, 1911**

(later the Braves) for the 1912 season." Yes, the final game is avoided completely.

So it was left to the Games Project to get the salvage job done, to tell fans in detail about Cy Young's ill-fated baseball swan song. Picking up the research resin was SABR member and retired North Dakota judge Thomas E. Merrick. He authored a solid and eloquent piece describing almost all that is necessary to know about the game and the cruel seventh inning. Tom tapped out, "In the seventh the Superbas broke the tie and secured the win by pushing eight runs across on eight consecutive hits. Young got Stark to pop out before the Superbas started a batting fusillade. (Otto) Miller tripled, Zach Wheat, batting for (pitcher Eddie) Dent, singled home the tiebreaking run. Three singles followed in succession, then a double, another single, a stolen base, and a double by Bob Coulson. Coulson stole third base and scored on (Bill) Rariden's bad

throw, making it 11-3. Young tossed his glove in frustration as he exited the game. Brooklyn's fans showed their appreciation of the grand old man of baseball by applauding and cheering him as he walked to the bench."

All well and good. The *Brooklyn Standard Union* made the "fan appreciation" point by highlighting it with a special thick column border sidebar, "Fans show human side when Cy is batted out of the box" alongside of its game story.

Merrick's piece is a very creditable effort by any standard, but there are some aspects missing, likely due to word count limitations for Games Project essays. As Merrick properly pointed out Cy beat the Superbas and Bill Schardt, a month before in the same ballpark, 2-1. But half the Brooklyn lineup was different in October. Going into the seventh, Young had allowed only three hits, two in the third inning when Brooklyn scored three times (a walk, error and sacrifice aided the rally).

In what proved to be the last inning of his career, Young faced the entire Brooklyn lineup, getting only one out and giving up eight hits (eight runs). After Miller's triple, pinch-hitter Wheat singled (RBI) for Dent, breaking the 3-3 tie and essentially winning the game. Dent had singled (RBI) in the third inning as part of that rally, as did Monroe "Dolly" Stark (RBI) who made the one out in the seventh (popped to second). So everyone in the lineup got at least one hit off Cy that final day. It was Dent's only hit of the season and his only career RBI. There is a slight discrepancy in various box scores about the eight straight Superbas hits. Some texts (hometown *Brooklyn Eagle*) have three singles (Wheat, Jake Daubert, and Jud Daley) followed by three doubles (John Hummel, Bert Tooley, and Coulson), while others report that Tooley singled and stole second between doubles. Bert is given two doubles in some box totals and he made only two hits. So, the mystery lingers of what really happened.

For whatever reason, Merrick made no connection of the fact that Elliott Dent (born Baltimore, 1887) beat Denton "Dent" Young, Cy's name to hometown friends his whole life. What are the

odds of that first/last name collision in this milestone contest? Until Red Sox infielder Sam Dente came along in 1947 no one else surnamed Dent ever played in the majors. Winner "Eddie" was 4-5/.46 lifetime (75 innings), basically in two tiny partial seasons worth of action. Loser Cy often hurled that amount monthly for two decades. (See e.g., August 1892, 8-1-1, 81 innings.) Coincidentally, Cy ended his short NL Boston stint with a 4-5 mark.

The most glaring omission however, by all the above historical sources, is the fact that of his uncanny 7,350-plus innings thrown, this final one was Young's worst – ever. In this outing baseball's quirky gods were very unkind to Ohio's Denton True, because they saved his absolute worst inning for last. Proving this is simple, just check each of the 82 games (of his 906 appearances) in which Cy allowed eight or more runs. In the 1890s he allowed seven runs in an inning four times (1894 twice, 1897, 1898). In the 1900s he never allowed eight until October 6, when Coulson's swing brought home the seventh run, followed by a steal of third and the errant throw that sent Coulson home with the eighth tally. Newspaper accounts were not explicit, but circumstances indicate that Cy departed after Coulson scored. Orlie Weaver then came on and got Stark and Miller to ground out ending the inning.

Cup-of-coffee right fielder Robert Jackson Coulson played a full season only in 1911, 146 games, .234. He was from the village of Courtney, Pennsylvania, and then Donora (yes Stan Musial's hometown). He had one four-hit game (in 197 played) but will always be remembered as the "last" in many of Cy's pitching columns. Coulson was "sort of" the last batter. He certainly got the last hit (double); plated the last RBI (scored Tooley); may have stolen the last base (despite a seven-run lead), and did score the last run charged to Cy. The details of exactly how that run scored differ in contemporaneous newspaper game accounts.

The next day, the *Boston Globe* reported that Coulson stole third and came home on catcher Bill Rariden's errant throw. With that, Cy had

had enough and walked to the bench. But as he had to have been facing next-man-up Stark for that steal attempt to have occurred, Dolly was necessarily Cy's last batter faced – even though the Stark at-bat was not completed by Cy, but by reliever Orville Weaver.

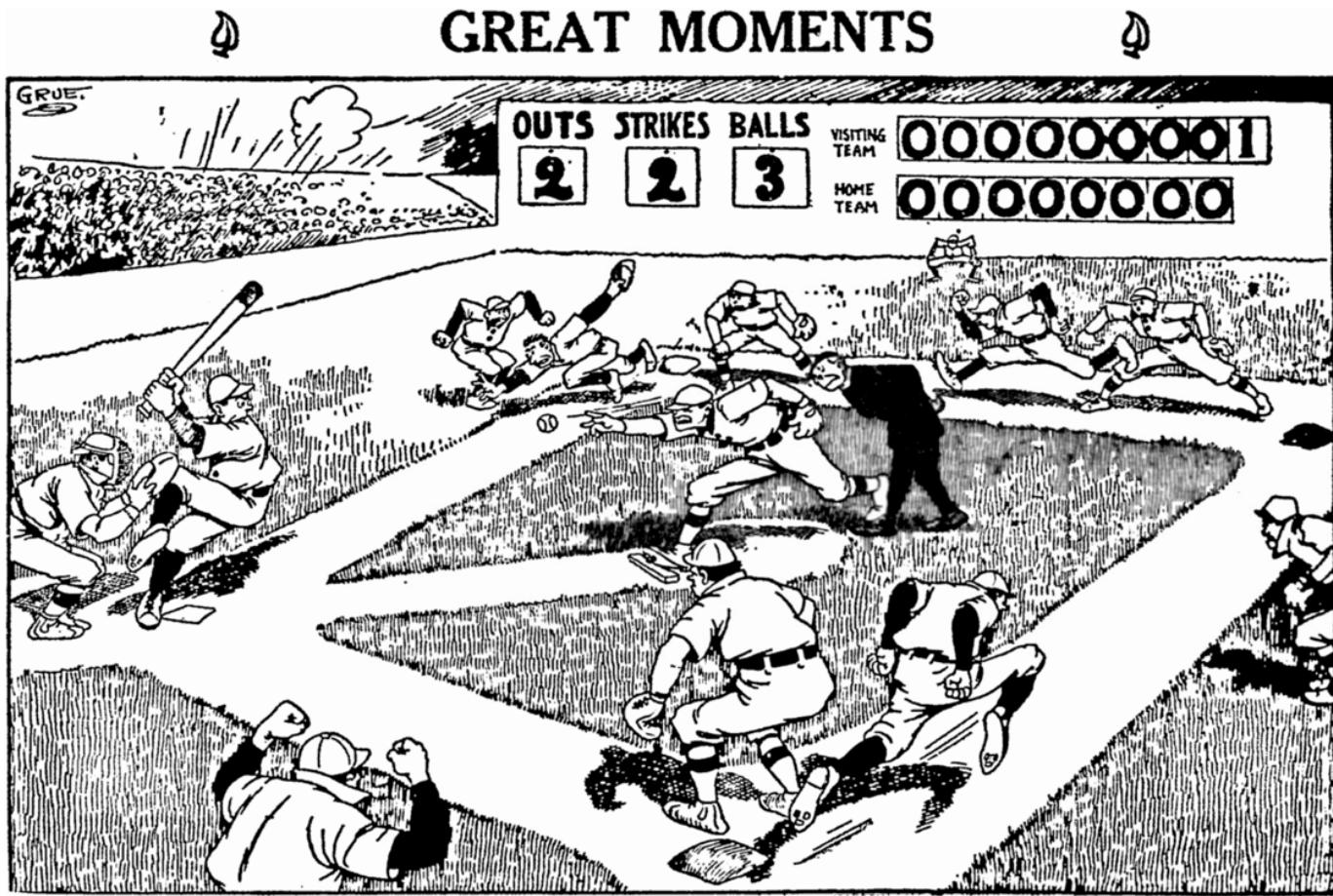
A conflict arises from the game accounts of the *Brooklyn Standard Union* and *Brooklyn Eagle*, as well as that of the *Boston Herald*, all of which insinuated that Young left the game immediately after the Coulson double and that Weaver was pitching to Stark when Coulson stole third and came home on Raiden's bad throw. No matter. Whichever scenario is accurate, Young was accountable for Coulson and his run is the eighth-run properly charged to Cy Young in the final inning of his career.

In case you are wondering about Young's final strikeout, we'll never know. Just as with his first in 1890, no newspaper text is forthcoming with any clues but box score totals indicate it was either pitcher Dent, Stark, or rookie Texan Hub

Northen who played fewer career games [164 games, .272 BA] than even Coulson, and was the Superbas leadoff man that day.

Two last bits of irony attach to the finish of Cy's magnificent career because Coulson tied for the NL whiff lead (78) with Cincinnati's Bob Bescher, and the last base hits off Cy were made by the worst and fourth-worst hitters in baseball (of those with enough ABs to qualify for that dubious distinction). Tooley hit .206 and Coulson .234.

**NOTE:** This analysis of Cy Young's last appearance could not have been accomplished without the great player charts and specific game information provided by Retrosheet. Also crucial to many aspects are Cy's yearly ICI sheets from the Hall of Fame Library (Cassidy Lent). Newspapers.com and Genealogybank.com newspapers provided game stories. As listed above, all information is taken verbatim from the biographies noted above.



Johnny Gruelle, Pittsburgh Press, May 1, 1910

## HOW BASEBALL CREATED AMERICANS

by Norman Macht

The Pale of Settlement was created by Russia in 1791, and lasted until after World War I. It was settled – primarily and forcibly – by Jews who, except for certain intellectuals, were confined to residing within an area of Eastern Europe that went from the Black Sea to the North Sea, and at various times included much of western Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus. (Borders frequently shifted as a result of military forays; it was possible for a family to live in a few different countries during three generations without ever moving.)

Most of the Pale Jews were poor; prospects were bleak. They were not allowed to settle in agricultural areas, so mostly became merchants and peddlers. Education opportunities were severely limited and at times forbidden. Jews were fair game for pogroms: raids by neighbors, soldiers, or police that usually included physical beatings, with homes plundered of what little they had, be it a dried-up cow, wash basins, firewood, whatever. More of a blood sport than a treasure hunt, pogrom deprivations spawned a sardonic proverb: To them that have shall be given. To them that have not, even that which they have not shall be taken away.

Young Jewish men never went out in the street without carrying a big stick to protect themselves. They were subject to sudden conscription into the Tsar's army at any time. To avoid that fate, some men had all their teeth pulled. Others became lame by shooting off their toes. Between 1881 and 1914 an estimated two million Jews escaped The Pale, most of them to America. Abraham Chozen was one of them.

Chozen lived in a Ukrainian town then known as Kamaliski (town names changed with the tides of war), in the northwestern corner of The Pale, abutting Poland. He had no formal education, having worked curing animal skins in a tannery since he was eight years old. Now in his early twenties, he had a wife, Ida, probably through an arranged marriage (she was the youngest of three Plattman daughters) and two small children, Morris and

Ann. Chozen also had a friend, a former co-worker who had escaped to America. In 1902 Abe received a letter from this friend, offering to sponsor his acceptance in America and promising a job in a tannery in New York City. Using some savings and possibly a dowry from his arranged marriage, Abe told his wife he would go, get situated, save some money, and send for them as soon as he could. Two of Abe's co-workers, brothers Abe and Charlie Dubinsky, decided to go with him.

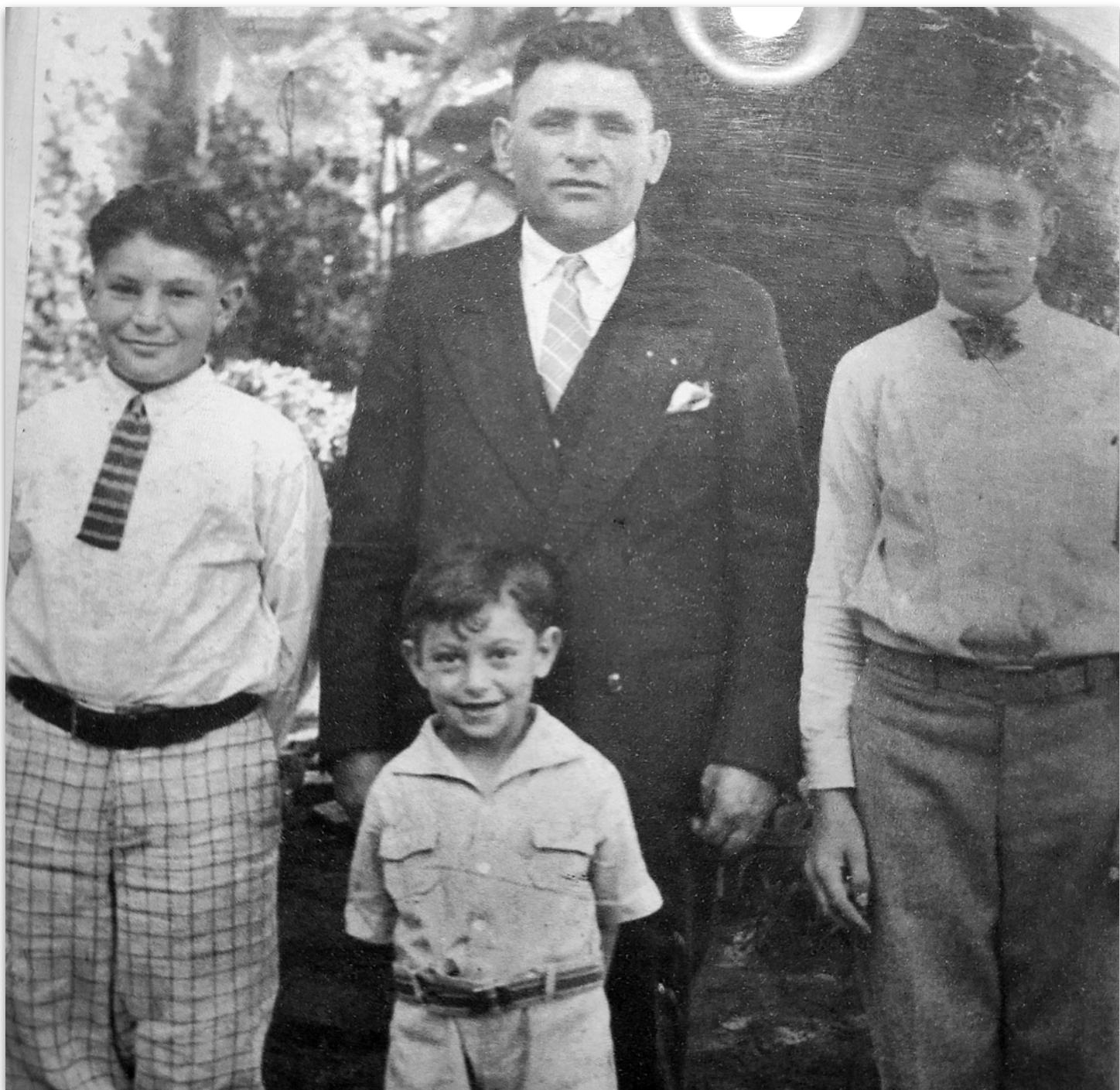
The Bug (Buh) River ran through Chozen's town and into Poland. Abe and his friends built a raft and rode down the river across Poland as far as they could then walked and hitched rides on wagons until they reached the North Sea at Bremen. From there they sailed to Liverpool and boarded a ship to America. The men arrived in New York during the summer of 1902. The Dubinsky brothers went on to Minnesota, where they may have had family. Undaunted by the crowded streets and tall buildings, Abe Chozen fell in love with America. The streets were crowded, but there were no Tsar's soldiers; nobody carried big sticks to protect themselves.

Rather than seek the cocoon of fellow Ukrainians, Chozen was determined to become thoroughly American. He had landed in the big pot and he couldn't wait to melt into it. But he spoke no English. So Abe went to places where men gathered to talk: saloons and street corners and labor halls. He heard a lot of animated talk of giants and baseball games and something or somebody called McGraw. Chozen didn't know what it meant, but he heard the words so often that he knew it must be something important. Abe was uneducated, but he had a quick mind and an ear for language and a hunger to learn.

Abe Chozen had arrived in New York at about the same time that John McGraw had quit as manager of the American League Baltimore Orioles and jumped to the National League New York Giants. During the 1890s, McGraw's Orioles had been baseball's most exciting team, while the eighth-place Giants had been floundering near the bottom of the NL for the past five years. Within three years, the Giants would rise to become pennant winners, then world champions.

Chozen's new world was baseball crazy. Fifty years before social commentator Jacques Barzun wrote his celebrated commentary, Abe Chozen realized that to fulfill his dream of becoming a real American, he had better learn baseball. He studied the lingo, the rules, the strategies, went to see the Giants play at the Polo Grounds, and studied the batters and the fielders. A hundred years later his son

Bob would say, "Pa knew more about the way the game should be played than managers today." Abraham Chozen became a lifelong baseball fan and student of the game, the father and grandfather of minor league ballplayers (one of whom – Harry Chozen – made the major leagues for a single game in 1937) and the patriarch of generations of avid baseball fans.



***Abraham Chozen, flanked by future ball playing sons Harry (left), Meyer (Mike, right), and Bobby (front), about 1928***

# **Baseball and the House of David**



**The Legendary Barnstorming Teams, 1915–1956**

**P.J. DRAGSETH** Foreword by Brian Ziebart

## **BASEBALL AND THE HOUSE OF DAVID: THE LEGENDARY BARNSTORMING TEAMS, 1915–1956**

**By P.J. Dragseth**

*2021, McFarland  
[ISBN: 978-1476670119. 230 pp. \$39.95 USD. Softcover]*

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What started as a religious commune in Benton Harbor, Michigan, eventually led to a successful barnstorming baseball team known across the country. In *Baseball and the House of David: The Legendary Barnstorming Teams, 1915–1956*, author P.J. Dragseth provides a detailed history of the House of David, from its origins as a commune whose male residents weren't allowed to shave or cut their hair, to the traveling baseball

team that was a product of the community. What started as a local team comprised primarily of the commune's members soon grew into a traveling team that included outsiders and even a few major league players. Dragseth takes the reader on a journey that explores not only the team's success and popular appeal but the larger social implications of the group.

The book is structured chronologically, with the first chapter focusing primarily on the founding of the Israelite House of David and the individuals involved in that venture. Benjamin and Mary Purnell originally broke from a church and commune of which they were members and sought to form their own colony. While the origins of their group were tied to Fostoria, Ohio, they soon reestablished the commune in Benton Harbor in 1903. Their organization grew quickly and drew people from around the country and even Australia, where the Purnells travelled around the time of the group's move to Benton Harbor.

Dragseth outlines the formation of the team, which stemmed from Benjamin's advocacy of healthy exercise, and his view of baseball as "a very scientific sport." He was also cognizant of the fact that a traveling baseball team could be another source of revenue for the commune, as well as a way to proselytize to others about his community's beliefs. The team started by playing factory teams and later in some

pickup games across the region. As the team's abilities improved, so did their attendance – they started to charge admission to fans attending their games. By 1915, the first uniformed House of David team took the field, and as their profits increased, so did the territory the team would cover.

By the team's heyday in the 1920s, they were playing a number of their barnstorming matchups in major league ball-parks and drawing crowds north of 10,000 fans on many occasions. After the death of Benjamin Purnell toward the end of the decade, there was a schism in the commune that saw half break away with his widow, Mary. For a time, this led to two different baseball teams that had somewhat similar names (Original House of David and Israelite City of David). With these two teams and a handful of imposters, it could become confusing keeping the various groups straight. To add to the confusion, the City of David team that played in the *Denver Post* Tournament in 1932 and 1934 was typically referred to as the House of David.

The book is thoroughly researched and contains an impressive amount of material. Dragseth tracks the team through newspapers published across the country and manages to successfully reconstruct most of their barnstorming seasons. She worked with the House of David Commune Archives in order to obtain ma-

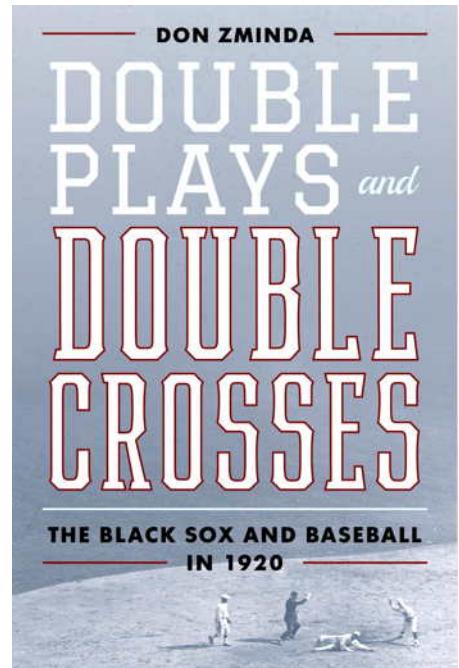
terials, specifically a treasure trove of pictures. It is one thing to read about the team's long hair and beards and see them referred to as the "Bearded Beauties," but it is another thing entirely to see the pictures of these men in uniform and on the baseball diamond.

There are not a lot of negatives to be discussed with *Baseball and the House of David*, but one critique is that the organizational structure could be improved. While the chronological approach is ultimately successful, the book would benefit from some thematic organization within that structure. In particular, the chapter that focuses on the team throughout the 1920s at times almost reads as stream of consciousness. It goes from barnstorming match to barnstorming match, then addresses an off-the-field issue like the assault charges against Benjamin Purnell, then back to covering various baseball matchups. There are issues

that could receive additional information or context, like the House of David's participation in the *Denver Post* Tournament. The House of David took the field with a mixed-race team in the first half of the 1930s and barnstormed against Negro League teams. While this is all documented in the book, one was left wanting a bit more context and analysis with these groundbreaking issues.

Overall, these issues do not detract from what is a meticulously researched and thorough account of the House of David's time as a popular barnstorming team. It would just allow the book to be a bit more engaging and easier to follow.

*Stephanie Liscio is a board member of Cleveland's SABR chapter, and is also a member of the Deadball Era Committee. She is manager of prospect research at Hiram College and is a long suffering Cleveland baseball fan.*



## DOUBLE PLAYS AND DOUBLE CROSSES: THE BLACK SOX AND BASEBALL IN 1920

By Don Zminda

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Joseph Hamilton, who failed to report to the Yankees last year because of a broken leg, was restored to good standing yesterday by the National Baseball Commission.

*New York Tribune, March 24, 1912*

The hottest baseball topic of historical import in 2019 was the 100-year anniversary of the 1919 World Series. A century later the events of October 1919 continue to fascinate both baseball fans and the public in general not because of great hitting, pitching, or fielding but rather what ensued thereafter when eight Chicago White Sox players were charged with conspiring with gamblers to throw the Series to the eventual champion Cincinnati Reds.

Throughout the years a lot has been written about what became popularly known as the “Black Sox Scandal.” Some of it was accurate, a good deal not. For many years significant unanswered questions remained and myths flourished. During the past 20 years through the efforts of SABR’s Black Sox Scandal Research Committee and others a more accurate picture of the scandal has emerged. Nonetheless some important facets remained essentially untouched.

Much was written about the eight players who were eventually banned from baseball, the so-called “Black Sox,” much less about the play of the seven of them that returned to the team before the ban and played throughout most of 1920. In recent times several Black Sox experts addressed that subject, writing excellent articles about it. Yet there existed no full-length treatment of what remained a significant gap in achieving a better understanding of the scandal. That deficiency has now been admirably addressed by Don Zminda in his well-researched and equally well-written book about the returning seven Black Sox players and their 1920 season.

Reading much like an historical whodunnit Zminda begins the tale by taking his readers back to 1917, a season of world championship glory for the White Sox franchise. Many of the players on that club remained through 1920. And despite those 1917 heroics, seeds of discontent and gambling

conspiracy were already in play and building. This becomes even more apparent as Zminda documents the 1919 season and the post-season conspiracy, along the way examining the eight Black Sox conspirators, the gamblers, and key members of the club not involved in the planning or execution of the conspiracy. He does so quite accurately, one of the first authors utilizing much of the anti-myth material developed by the SABR Black Sox Committee. As a result, he starts with a clean slate when he places the 1920 White Sox season under his microscope in order to determine whether the returning Black Sox players continued to throw baseball games as the season progressed.

In dissecting the 1920 season Zminda focuses on those games he deems suspicious by virtue of his extensive study of newspaper reports of the day, as well as those games deemed questionable by Black Sox experts who have also studied them. He deals an even hand, sometimes disagreeing with pundits who argued certain games were thrown, while at other times casting suspicion on games or plays where none previously existed. It is likely we will never know for certain whether the remaining Black Sox players together or separately played not to win in 1920. Zminda could have easily skirted the issue, allowing readers to reach their own conclusions. Not to learn what Zminda’s investigation led him

to conclude would have been a disappointment. Thankfully, he points out which games he believes were fixed, raises the specter of blackmail, and provides his thoughts on levels of guilt and the degree of complicity, if any, on the part of team owner Charles Comiskey. All of this is done at a brisk pace, no laborious game descriptions here. The author makes his points and moves on.

By book’s end the reader will undoubtedly have a better understanding of a conspiracy which likely did not, as so often portrayed, end in 1919 but continued through 1920 until a grand jury was convened, the dam cracked, and indictments handed down leading to suspension of the remaining seven Black Sox players. In unraveling the mysteries of the 1920 White Sox baseball club Zminda has written a book which can proudly take its place among those books which have greatly enhanced our knowledge of a watershed baseball event now over 100 years old that never seems to show its age.

*Rick Huhn is an original member of the Black Sox Scandal Research Committee. He serves as a co-chairman of the Hank Gowdy (Columbus, Ohio) Chapter of SABR and is the author of three excellent Deadball Era books.*



Bisbee (Arizona) Daily Review,  
November 25, 1920

## THE SCANLAN BROTHERS

by Bill Lamb

In February 1910, a nationally published wire service story declared: "The Scanlan family is almost equal to the Delehanty (sic) tribe in turning out ball players. At present there are four Scanlan brothers playing baseball."<sup>1</sup> Apart from proximity in numbers – there were six Delahanty brothers who played in Organized Baseball<sup>2</sup> – the clans had other things in common: Irish Catholic immigrant parents; chronic press misspelling of their surnames; and, with certain of the brothers in both families, antagonistic relations with club management. A November 2014 newsletter profile of Willie Delahanty provided readers with a look at the Delahanty brothers. This piece presents the story of their now-forgotten Deadball Era counterparts: Doc, Frank, Ray, and Ambrose Scanlan.

The Scanlan saga begins in Syracuse, New York, with prosperous merchant Dennis Scanlan (1851-1916) and his wife Bridget (nee Ryan, 1858-1919), both natives of Ireland brought to America as toddlers. In time, the couple met, married, and started a family which ultimately included ten children. Oldest son John (born 1879) left school after completing the eighth grade and spent most of his working life as a city fireman. But his four younger brothers all attended Syracuse High School and then went to college, as did the four of the Scanlan sisters, highly unusual for the time. In the case of Frank and Ambrose, however, furthering their education seems merely to have provided cover for developing their athletic skills. Both were left-handed pitchers who aspired to be professionals. But the star ballplayer of the family was unmistakably Doc, or Billy as he was called early in his career.

**THE PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF BILLY SCANLAN:** Born March 7, 1881, William Dennis Scanlan was educated in local parochial and public schools through high school graduation. All the while, hometown Syracuse was a hotbed of sandlot, amateur, and professional baseball and had briefly been the home of major league clubs in



**William Dennis "Doc" Scanlan**

the National League (1879) and American Association (1890). Like other athletically gifted youth, Billy gravitated toward the diamond and soon developed into a first-rate right-handed hurler, pitching for local amateur and church league clubs. Although not of imposing size – eventually 5-foot-8, 165 pounds – Scanlan started out as a power pitcher, relying on a high fastball as his out pitch.

A serious student but a restless one, he spent his first two collegiate years (1898-1900) downstate at Manhattan College. He then transferred to nearby Fordham University for his junior year (1900-1901), before spending the summer pitching for the Ogdensburg club of the unclassified professional Northern New York League. There, Scanlan attracted attention by throwing a one-hitter with 11 strikeouts at the NL pennant-bound Pittsburgh Pirates, winning the July exhibition contest, 3-1.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter, Billy returned home, earning his A.B. degree from Syracuse

University in June 1902.<sup>4</sup> At all three schools where he was an undergraduate, Scanlan pitched and occasionally played the outfield, as well.

Following his college graduation, Scanlan returned to the Northern New York League, pitching for a club in Canandaigua. He entered Organized Baseball in July 1902, signing with the Ilion Typewriters of the Class B New York State League.<sup>5</sup> There, he teamed with future New York Giants stalwart Red Ames and helped pitch Ilion to a third-place (59-47, .557) finish in NYS League final standings. Scanlan returned to Ilion for the 1903 season and remained there until claimed by the Pittsburgh Pirates, his 1901 exhibition game victim, in the September minor league player draft.<sup>6</sup>

Billy Scanlan made his major league debut on September 24, 1903 in a home game against the New York Giants. His opposite number was former Ilion pitching mate Ames. In a complete-game effort, Scanlan held the Giants to five hits was undone by six walks, a harbinger of the control problems that would plague Scanlan in future. A four-run Giants uprising in the ninth inning saddled the youngster with a misleading 7-2 defeat. After the game, press reviews decried the wildness of the rookie pitchers – Ames walked six batters himself – but were generally positive. “Scanlon was beaten but not disgraced,” observed the *Pittsburg Press*, establishing precedent for the career-long misspelling of the pitcher’s surname.<sup>7</sup> “For he pitched magnificent ball, aside from his wildness, allowing the hard-hitting Giants but two hits in [the first] eight innings.” Both he and Ames, who struck out seven, “used their heads well, and many batters fanned the air.”<sup>8</sup> Also favorably impressed was the *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette* which dismissed the Scanlan control problems as first game nerves, regretting that the Pirates had not secured him in time for playing eligibility in the upcoming World Series.<sup>9</sup> While the Pirates were being upset in the first modern Fall Classic by the Boston Pilgrims of the upstart American League, Scanlan began preparation for his ultimate profession, enrolling in the Long Island College of Medicine.

After an offseason Pittsburgh-Ilion dustup over payment for Scanlan was resolved,<sup>10</sup> he was back in Pirates livery for the 1904 season. But Scanlan pitched poorly, going 1-3 in four outings, while walking 20 in only 22 innings pitched. In late June, he drew his unconditional release.<sup>11</sup> Back home in upstate New York, Billy spent the next six weeks playing for the Plattsburgh club in the unrecognized Hudson River League.<sup>12</sup> By early August, however, he was back in the National League, signed by Brooklyn Superbas field manager/club co-owner Ned Hanlon.<sup>13</sup> There, he regained form. In 13 appearances, he posted a 6-6 record with three shutouts for a lousy 56-97-1 (.366) Brooklyn team. Over 104 innings, Scanlan reduced his walks total to 40 while striking out a like number of enemy batsmen and registering an excellent 2.16 ERA.

Scanlan established himself as a bona fide major leaguer in 1905, ending his season with an iron-man feat: complete-game doubleheader victories over the St. Louis Cardinals, 3-0 and 7-2. Working for a hapless Brooklyn club that otherwise went 34-92 (.270), he posted a winning 14-12 (.538) record, leading the staff in victories, ERA (2.92), strikeouts (135), as well as walks (104) in 249 2/3 innings pitched. During the offseason, simmering ill-will between Scanlan and Superbas management, present since the year before when Scanlan felt himself shortchanged in dealings with Hanlon,<sup>14</sup> became public, with both Scanlan and club president Charles Ebbets disputing each other’s representations regarding the pitcher’s salary.<sup>15</sup> After a brief holdout, Scanlan agreed to terms for the 1906 season. But his resentment endured, and by late May Billy had commenced taking the first of the examinations needed for licensure by state medical authorities.<sup>16</sup>

Over the short term, however, the would-be physician concentrated on baseball. Pitching for another substandard 66-86-1 (.434) edition of the Superbas, Scanlan went 18-13 (.581), posting the staff’s only winning record. In addition to a career-best in wins, Scanlan also set personal top marks for complete games (28), innings pitched

(288), and shutouts (6). On the negative side, his 127 walks issued was also a career high.

That winter, Scanlan resumed his medical school studies and intimated that he might not play ball in 1907.<sup>17</sup> Eventually, he agreed to return to the Superbas, but would not attend spring training. Instead, he remained in New York so that he could graduate from medical school on May 1.<sup>18</sup> Doc Scanlan made his season debut on May 24, notching a complete game victory over the Philadelphia Phillies, 6-3. But the year proved a difficult one for him, both on the field and off. The medico-pitcher was dogged by health problems that eventually required a mid-season layoff with recuperation time at home in Syracuse. Logging only 107 innings in 19 appearances, Scanlan posted a disappointing 6-8 record. Far worse was on the horizon.

After the season, young Dr. Scanlon began an internship at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. But by early December, the new physician was

himself a hospital patient. On the evening of December 5, 1907, he underwent an emergency appendectomy, high risk surgery at the time. "Close Call from Death for Pitcher Dr. Billy Scanlan" was the headline of the *Brooklyn Citizen's* account of the successful surgery.<sup>19</sup> The patient recovered slowly and remained hospital-bound until mid-January. "For a time I thought myself I would never pull through, but I was fortunate in having the best of care, and I owe a great deal to Dr. Albers, surgeon of the hospital," Scanlan said upon his discharge from care.<sup>20</sup> Two months later, Scanlan was still recuperating, and it was "much to be doubted that he will undertake the arduous work of pitching this season."<sup>21</sup> In time, Dr. Scanlan recovered sufficiently to resume his hospital internship, but he did not throw a single pitch for the Brooklyn Superbas during the 1908 season.<sup>22</sup>

**ENTER RAY, FRANK, AND AMBROSE SCANLAN:** While Billy Scanlan was establishing himself as a major league pitcher, his younger brothers were beginning to attract notice at a venue far removed from Brooklyn: the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. The best all-around athlete in the family was Raymond



**Young Dr. Scanlan**

*Brooklyn Eagle, March 1, 1909*



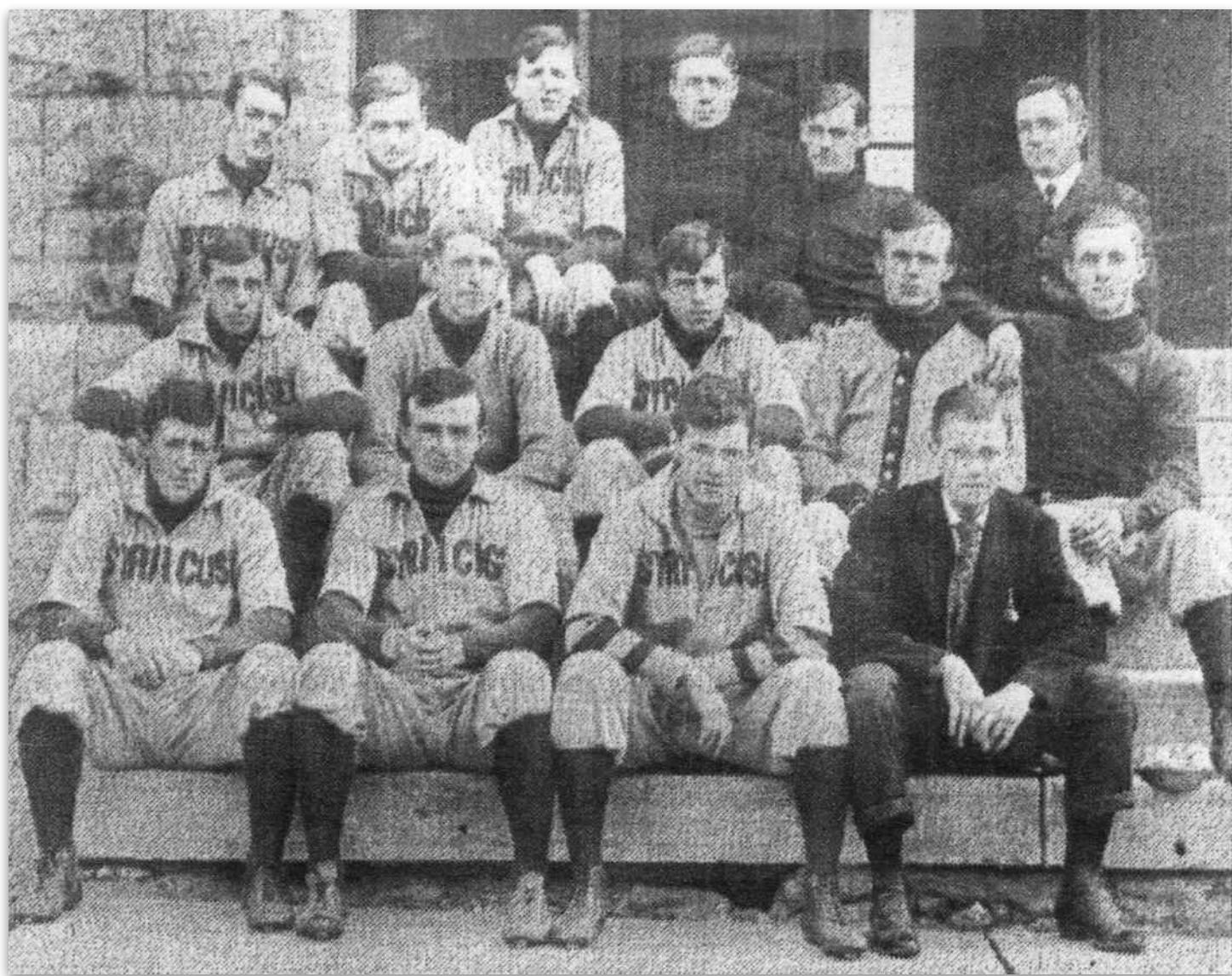
**Ray Scanlan, Notre Dame**

*New Orleans Item, December 27, 1908*

Joseph Scanlan, born in Syracuse on November 31, 1886. Following graduation from Syracuse High, Ray matriculated to Notre Dame in Fall 1905. Although he played some football while in South Bend – a fumble-causing Scanlan tackle was a key play in Notre Dame's October 1906 victory over Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State) – Ray's forte were basketball and baseball. By January 1907, younger brother Frank Aloysius Scanlan, born April 28, 1890, had somehow found his way to campus, as well. How a 16-year-old dropout with a two-years-older brother (Ambrose) still in Syracuse High School managed to enroll in Notre Dame is a mystery.<sup>23</sup> But Frank was good-sized (6'1½"/175 lbs.) and a talented left-handed pitcher even as a teenager.

And the historical record inarguably places him in South Bend trying out for the Notre Dame baseball team in January 1907.<sup>24</sup>

Preseason workouts were not far along when calamity struck. Attempting to steal home during a simulated game staged indoors, Ray fractured his leg just above the ankle.<sup>25</sup> He would be sidelined for the season. A day after Ray's injury, "Scanlon, brother of the catcher and candidate for pitcher," led his side to victory in an intrasquad game.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile back in Syracuse, brother Ambrose James Scanlan (born May 25, 1888) was getting ready for his senior season at Syracuse High.<sup>27</sup> Ambrose was a tall left-handed pitcher like his younger brother Frank, but



*1906 Syracuse High Baseball Team: Ambrose Scanlan, front row on left; Ray Scanlan, middle row, fourth from left; Frank Scanlan, top row third from left*

nowhere near as talented. And his final high school campaign was a disappointment, earmarked by losses to the Cornell freshmen<sup>28</sup> and archrival Cascadilla High.<sup>29</sup>

Used sparingly in the early going, Frank made a splash as the campaign wore on. On May 23, 1907, he held the University of Illinois to four hits but lost on a ninth inning squeeze bunt, 1-0.<sup>30</sup> Six days later, “‘Dreamy’ Scanlon, the smiling young southpaw of [Notre Dame’s] western championship team,” no-hit small college powerhouse St. Viator, striking out 13.<sup>31</sup> Frank finished his first year in South Bend with a three-hit shutout of Beloit,<sup>32</sup> bringing the Notre Dame season to a close with a gaudy 21-2 (.913) record.

His fractured leg healed, Ray Scanlan returned to the hardwood as starting guard and captain for an outstanding Notre Dame basketball team during the winter of 1907-1908.<sup>33</sup> At season end, his teammates reelected him captain of the next year’s hoops squad.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the Notre Dame baseball team was engaged in indoor pre-season workouts. Given his showing of the previous year, Frank’s place on the team was assured, and Ray was counted on as first-string receiver. But also vying for a spot on the varsity pitching staff was newly-arrived Ambrose Scanlan.<sup>35</sup> Tabbed to start an intrasquad game against the ND second team, “pitcher Ambrose Scanlon was easy pickings” for the scrubs who trimmed the regulars, 12-4.<sup>36</sup> But off the field Ambrose found some success in forensics as a member of the Notre Dame debate team.<sup>37</sup>

Behind the pitching of Frank Scanlan and future Detroit Tigers mainstay Jean Dubuc, Notre Dame again dominated the opposition, posting a dazzling 20-1 (.952) record in 1908. But after the season, a squawk was made about the eligibility of Dubuc and batterymate Ray Scanlan, accused of playing in the semipro Chicago City League under assumed names.<sup>38</sup> A cursory inquiry subsequently cleared the two, but this would not prove the only time that a Scanlan brother was suspected of playing pro ball under an alias. Indeed, Frank spent that summer pitching for the Allentown (Pennsylvania) club in the outlaw minor Atlantic League under the name “Strauss.”<sup>39</sup>



**Frank Scanlan, Notre Dame**

The ensuing winter, Ray captained another juggernaut Notre Dame basketball team, but only after surviving an investigation of the claim that he had spent the preceding summer playing baseball in the Atlantic League under the name “Stroud.”<sup>40</sup> Elsewhere indoors, the ND baseball club began workouts with Ambrose Scanlan again competing for a spot on the pitching staff and “showing up well” in early mound efforts.<sup>41</sup> But he apparently did not make the final cut, as May saw Ambrose pitching for a dormitory team in campus intramural competition.<sup>42</sup> But maybe the varsity could have used him, as Frank was plagued with back troubles and Notre Dame “slumped” to a 13-5 (.722) record that spring.

In June 1909, Ray Scanlan graduated from Notre Dame with a B.S. degree in chemistry and left campus. Brothers Frank (whose classroom attendance may have been illusory) and Ambrose also abandoned South Bend. That summer, all three brothers took a stab at playing professional baseball, with varying degrees of success. Under the name “Wilson,” Ray signed with the Providence Clamdiggers of the Class A Eastern League, but saw little action. In nine games, he batted a meager (3-for-24) .125. Meanwhile,

Frank reassumed the “Strauss” alias and returned to the Allentown club of the Atlantic League. His work there was first-rate and earned him an August purchase by the Philadelphia Phillies. Ambrose, however, failed to impress during an audition with the Troy Trojans of the Class B New York State League.<sup>43</sup>

**THE RETURN OF DOC SCANLAN:** After sitting out the 1908 season, Billy Scanlan, now more often called Doc, contemplated a return to the Superbas. He had completed his internship at Kings County Hospital while recuperating, and in January 1909 he accepted the position of house surgeon at the hospital. But that winter Scanlan also announced that he “will accept the [contract] offer Ebbets made to him” for the coming baseball season.<sup>44</sup> Still, Scanlan remained a handful for club management. He agreed to sign – provided Ebbets allowed him to attend to his hospital duties through February, and then vacation at home in Syracuse. Only thereafter was the doctor willing to report to spring training in Florida.<sup>45</sup> Desperate for pitching, the club owner capitulated to Scanlan’s demands.

Upon his return, Doc was no longer the power pitcher he had been before his hospitalization. Now he frequently changed speeds and had added a spitball to his repertoire.<sup>46</sup> Once the season commenced, Scanlan was used judiciously, making only 19 mound appearances. But as before, he was much better – 8-7 (.533), with a 2.93 ERA in 141 1/3 innings – than the 55-98 (.359) Brooklyn club that he toiled for. After his season’s work was done, he effected a change in his domestic situation. On November 15, 1910, Dr. William D. Scanlan married Utica school teacher Helen Tanner. Upon their return from a honeymoon in Florida, the newlyweds took up residence in Brooklyn where Scanlan was beginning to establish a private medical practice.

Doc Scanlan struggled at times during the 1910 season but finished strong, winning five of his final six pitching decisions to finish the season with a 9-11 (.450) log and a 2.61 ERA in 217 1/3 innings. As per usual, these modest numbers were above the Brooklyn club norms: 64-90



***Doc Scanlan, Brooklyn Superbas***

(.416) with a 3.07 staff ERA. The following spring, Scanlan was a contract hold-out, spending the spring in upstate New York coaching the Cornell University pitchers.<sup>47</sup> Soon thereafter, it was reported that Scanlan might be traded.<sup>48</sup> In the end, Doc remained Brooklyn property but he and the club did not come to terms until after the regular season had started. Scanlan made his belated 1911 debut on May 18, notching a 2-1 win over the Cincinnati Reds. Five days later, he beat Pittsburgh, 4-3. Then, the “Scanlon jinx”<sup>49</sup> descended.

Over almost the next three months, Scanlan went winless, dropping ten-straight decisions. A ten-inning, 6-5 victory over Chicago on August 24 finally snapped the Scanlan losing skein, and raised his season record to 3-10. He followed that long-awaited victory with an inning of scoreless relief in a 4-2 Brooklyn loss to Boston on September 1. On that date, the Superbas had more than 30 games left on the schedule. But Doc Scanlan would not see action in any of them. Then unbeknownst to all concerned, his time as a major league pitcher had expired.

The event which finalized the end of Doc Scanlan's days in Organized Baseball was his off-season trade to the Philadelphia Phillies. Brooklyn received young right-hander Eddie Stack in return.<sup>50</sup> Although now approaching age 31, Scanlan still wanted to pitch. But with family responsibilities that now included a new-born son and professional responsibilities to patients, he was unwilling to uproot himself from Brooklyn. In addition, Scanlan was again aggrieved by his treatment by club boss Ebbets – a dispute about withheld 1911 salary was the sore spot this time.<sup>51</sup> Doc therefore refused to sign the contracts tendered to him by the Phillies, choosing instead to remain home in Brooklyn and to spend his Sunday afternoons pitching for the semipro Ridgewoods of nearby Queens.<sup>52</sup>

**THE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS OF THE YOUNGER SCANLAN BROTHERS:** On August 8, 1909, Frank Scanlan made his major league debut, coming on in relief of Phillies starter Earl Moore to pitch the bottom of the eighth against the St. Louis Cardinals with Philadelphia trailing, 3-0. The rookie promptly struck out the side. He also pitched well in five follow-up relief outings, but, curiously, saw no further action after a September 1 stint against the Cincinnati Reds. In six appearances overall, he registered no decisions but posted an excellent 1.64 ERA in 11 innings pitched. Before the year was out, the Phillies re-signed Frank for the 1910 season.<sup>53</sup>

Older brothers Ray and Ambrose did not fare as well. The latter's career in pro ball replicated his tenure at Notre Dame: brief and ineffectual. Ambrose was dismissed after tryouts with Troy (1909) and the Worcester Busters of the Class B New England League (1910). Given a final chance by another NEL club, the last-place Haverhill (Massachusetts) Hustlers, Scanlan proved a bust, removed before getting out of the first inning in a one-sided loss to Lynn in early June 1910.<sup>54</sup> Ambrose then returned home to Syracuse where he soon embarked upon the career in insurance that he would pursue for the remainder of his life.

As previously noted, Ray Scanlan saw little action with Providence during the 1909 season,



***Ray Scanlan, Providence 1909***

and spent the offseason as a high school football and basketball coach in upstate New York.<sup>55</sup> Notwithstanding disinclination to play Ray the previous season, Providence retained him for 1910.<sup>56</sup> But in the early going, he again saw little action, and in late-June Providence "loaned" Scanlan to the Worcester Busters.<sup>57</sup> Regrettably for Ray, he made a poor first impression with his new club, as his three throwing errors cost Worcester a one-run loss in his Busters' debut.<sup>58</sup> Scanlan remained in the Worcester lineup for another month before he was returned to Providence and released.<sup>59</sup>

Based upon the reported recommendation of New York Giants manager John McGraw, Ray was signed during the off-season by the Denver

Grizzlies of the Class A Western League.<sup>60</sup> He received a fair amount of early season playing time and while his “work shows promise ... it was not quite up to the standard which [Denver club] President McGill requires.”<sup>61</sup> He was given his unconditional release in mid-May. Ray subsequently returned to familiar territory, hooking on as a utility man with the South Bend (Indiana) Bux of the Class B Central League.<sup>62</sup> He finished the 1911 campaign as second-string catcher with the circuit’s Grand Rapids (Michigan) club.<sup>63</sup> At season end, Ray abandoned the game to assume the position of superintendent of a steel works plant in Gary, Indiana.<sup>64</sup> Several years later, he married Margaret Louise Dixon, a reporter for the *New York Evening World*.

Frank Scanlan arrived at the 1910 Phillies spring camp with a sore arm, and his fortunes rapidly declined from there. He was optioned to the Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Barons of the New York State League in late May,<sup>65</sup> but his salary wing did not respond there either. In early July, Frank was unconditionally released at his own request.<sup>66</sup> He finished the summer pitching the odd game in the semipro Chicago City League.<sup>67</sup>

Scanlan’s downward baseball spiral continued the following year. His 1911 campaign included brief stops in the Class A Southern Association (Atlanta) and Class B South Atlantic League (Macon, Georgia) before he settled in with the Anderson (South Carolina) Electricians of the Class D Carolina League. The following year found Frank outside Organized Baseball, working and pitching semipro ball in Escanaba, Michigan, where he met his future wife, high school teacher Mae McGuire. He returned to the minors in 1913, signed by the Appleton (Wisconsin) Papermakers of the Class C Wisconsin-Illinois League.<sup>68</sup> Frank spent most of the season, however, with a league rival, the Green Bay Bays. There, he demonstrated the recovery of his arm by throwing 259 innings. But with only an 11-13 (.458) record for a winning (69-57, .548) Green Bay club, Frank was no longer a major league prospect.

He returned to Green Bay in 1914 where a 15-7 record earned him a late-season audition with



Quad City (Davenport, Iowa) Times, September 23, 1915

**Frank Scanlan, 1915 pre-wedding photo**

the Louisville Colonels of the Class AA American Association. The following year, Scanlan was demoted to Class B ball, sold by Louisville early in the season to the Davenport (Iowa) Blue Sox of the Three-I League.<sup>69</sup> There, he contributed to a near pennant-winning Blue Sox campaign, going 16-4 (.800) and leading circuit hurlers in winning percentage.<sup>70</sup> In 1916, Frank toiled for another Three-I League club, the Rock Island (Illinois) Islanders, going 13-15 (.464) for a sixth-place (57-76, .429) finisher.<sup>71</sup> The youngest Scanlan brother completed his pro career in 1917, going 10-8 with a 1.78 ERA for the Dubuque (Iowa) Dubs-Charles City (Iowa) Tractorites of the Class D Central Association.<sup>72</sup>

**POSTSCRIPT:** All four ballplaying Scanlan brothers led productive lives after leaving the game. Bachelor Ambrose remained in hometown Syracuse, and held an executive position with the Prudential Insurance Company at the time of his premature death in June 1934. Ray spent most of his working life as a chemical engineer before a late-life career switch to the insurance field. He

died in December 1947. Dr. Billy Scanlan practiced medicine in Brooklyn for more than 40 years. At the time of his passing in May 1949, he had three sons who had followed him into the medical profession. The other was a career military officer. Frank worked a variety of jobs before settling in Brooklyn and working as a housing inspector for the City of New York. In a player questionnaire completed a decade before his demise in April 1969, Frank responded to the question: If you had it all to do over, would you play professional baseball? His answer: With great pleasure.<sup>73</sup> He then wrote in the margin: "Ambrose, Ray, Doc, Frank – First family to follow the Delahanty brothers [four brothers]."

*The writer is indebted to librarian Dan Smith, Local History/Genealogy Department, Onondaga County Public Library, for information and material on the Scanlan brothers' time at Syracuse High School.*

## NOTES

1. See e.g., "Scanlan vs. Delehanty," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 21, 1910: 10; "Scanlan Family Rivals the Dels," *Fort Worth Record*, February 20, 1910: 12; "Famous Scanlon Family," *Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) Patriot*, February 18, 1910: 10. The misspelled family surname in the *Harrisburg Patriot* headline is representative of the error that pervaded contemporaneous press coverage of the Scanlan brothers.
2. Future Hall of Famer Ed Delahanty was the most notable. The other Delahantys were Jimmy, Joe, Frank, Tom, and career minor leaguer Willie.
3. Per "Northern New York League," *Burlington (Vermont) Free Press*, July 9, 1901: 2.
4. Per the on-line Syracuse University alumni directory, Class of 1902.
5. As reported in "The National Game," *Abbeville (South Carolina) Press & Banner*, July 16, 1902: 3; "Condensed Dispatches," *Salina (Kansas) Union*, July 26, 1902: 5; and elsewhere.
6. As noted in the *Dallas Morning News*, September 23, 1903: 10, and *Worcester Spy*, September 22, 1903: 2.
7. Per "Youngsters Batted Hard," *Pittsburg Press*, September 25, 1903: 18.
8. Same as above.
9. See "Giants' Twirler Won the Test," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, September 25, 1903: 9.
10. See "Players Eager for the Spring," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, February 14, 1904: 19; "Locke Coming to See Scanlon," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, January 11, 1904: 3.
11. "Pitcher William D. Scanlon Is Released by Pittsburgh Club," *Pittsburg Post*, June 23, 1904: 8; "Baseball Notes," *Pittsburg Press*, June 23, 1904: 12.
12. See the *Binghamton (New York) Press*, August 4, 1904: 10.
13. Per "Scanlon Signs with Brooklyn," *Pittsburg Post*, August 3, 1904: 6. See also, *Burlington Free Press*, August 6, 1904: 3.
14. For the 1905 salary dispute details, see "Brooklyn Fan the Real Scout," *Brooklyn Citizen*, February 17, 1907: 5.
15. Compare "Scanlon Well Treated by Brooklyn Club; Salary Increased \$600, Says Pres. Ebbets," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 7, 1906: 11, with "Pitcher Scanlon Refuses to Sign at Salary Offered by Brooklyn Club," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 5, 1906: 6.
16. As reported in the *Brooklyn Standard Union*, May 27, 1906: 6.
17. See "Pat Donovan a Past Master with the Dope," *Brooklyn Citizen*, December 24, 1906: 5.
18. Per "Scanlon Sticks to Medicine," *Brooklyn Citizen*, February 13, 1907: 5. See also, "Scanlon to Join the Superbas," *Brooklyn Times*, May 13, 1907: 5, and "Brooklyn or Nothing for Pitcher Doc Scanlon," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 25, 1907: 24.
19. *Brooklyn Citizen*, December 9, 1907: 3.
20. "Scanlon Leaves for His Home; Will Sojourn in the South," *Brooklyn Standard Union*, January 15, 1908: 4.
21. See "Superbas and Reds Ready for Contest," *Brooklyn Times*, March 24, 1908: 8.
22. By August, however, Scanlon was well enough to pitch a Sunday game for Gramercy, a Brooklyn semipro nine, as reported in the *Brooklyn Standard Union*, August 6, 1908: 6.
23. The suspicion that Frank Scanlon was born several years before his recognized April 18, 1890 birth date is refuted by contemporaneously created government records, particularly the 1900 US Census.
24. See "Schedule 25 Games," *South Bend (Indiana) Tribune*, January 26, 1907: 3.
25. As reported in "Raymond Scanlon's Leg Fractured," *Boston Journal*, February 8, 1907: 9; "Scanlon's Brother Hurt," *Brooklyn Citizen*, 8, 1907: 5. In keeping with reportage on older brother Billy, newspapers almost invariably misspelled Ray Scanlon's surname.

26. Per "Illness in Squads," *South Bend Tribune*, February 9, 1907: 3.
27. See "Meeting for High School," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, February 5, 1907 3.
28. Reported in "Errors Beat S.H.S. Team," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, May 2, 1907: 12, which noted that "Scanlon also pitched a good game, but errors defeated him." Even in their hometown, the Scanlon brothers' surname was frequently misspelled in local newsprint.
29. Per "S.H.S. Loses to Cascadilla," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, May 18, 1907: 14, which commented that "Scanlon seemed out of form."
30. See "Illini Squeeze Win," *South Bend Tribune*, May 24, 1907: 3.
31. "No Hit Off Scanlon," *South Bend Tribune*, May 29, 1907: 3.
32. See "Beloit Shut Out," *South Bend Tribune*, June 1, 1907: 3.
33. See "Notre Dame Five Made Up of All-Round Athletes," *Detroit Times*, February 1, 1908: 2.
34. As reported in "To Lead Notre Dame Five," (Hammond, Indiana) *Lake County Times*, June 9, 1908: 4. See also, *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 25, 1908: 22.
35. Per "To Select Players," *South Bend Tribune*, April 8, 1908: 12. The three Scanlon brothers had played together on the Syracuse High nine of 1905, the school newsletter describing Frank and Ambrose as "two of the best twirlers that we have had in many years while Ray Scanlan was a great mainstay to the team behind the bat." *The S.H.S. Recorder*, September 28, 1906.
36. "Second Team Beats Varsity," *South Bend Tribune*, April 14, 1908: 9.
37. Per "Debaters Preparing," *South Bend Tribune*, February 17, 1908: 4.
38. As reported in "Notre Dame Bd. to Probe Semi-Pro Story," *Lake County Times*, June 10, 1908: 4; "Probe College Ringers," *Rockford (Illinois) Republic*, June 10, 1908: 9. See also, Robert A. Kaspar, "Denies Charges Against Players," *South Bend Tribune*, February 18, 1909: 10.
39. Per game accounts/box scores published in Allentown newspapers during the summers of 1908 and 1909, with the identity of Frank Scanlon confirmed as Strauss in "Allentown Player with Phillies," *Allentown (Pennsylvania) Morning Call*, August 18, 1909: 4.
40. See "Notre Dame Has State's Support," *South Bend Tribune*, February 22, 1909: 8; "College Men Pros," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 18, 1909: 13.
41. Per "Notre Dame Nine Active," (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, March 22, 1909: 5. See also, "Coach Curtis Weeds Out Varsity Squad," *South Bend Tribune*, January 19, 1909: 9.
42. See "Corby Downs Faculty," *South Bend Tribune*, May 5, 1909: 13: "Ambrose Scanlon did the twirling for Bronson" in a 4-1 conquest of Sorin.
43. See "Doc Scanlon Now Has 3 Brothers Playing League Baseball," *Brooklyn Citizen*, February 2, 1910: 4.
44. Per "Doc' Scanlon Will Pitch for Brooklyn," *Newark Evening Star*, December 9, 1908: 8.
45. See "Scanlon Going South," *Brooklyn Times*, February 17, 1909: 5.
46. Per the *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 2, 1909: 2.
47. As reported in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 12, 1911: 37.
48. See "Scanlon May Be Traded," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 26, 1911: 18.
49. A term coined by *Brooklyn Eagle* sportswriter Thomas S. Rice during the 1911 season.
50. See "Brooklyn Gets Eddie Stack in Trade for Doc Scanlon," *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 15, 1911: 22: Stack Traded for Scanlon," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 15, 1911: 12.
51. Per F.C. Richter, "Quaker Quips," *Sporting Life*, February 3, 1912: 5. See also, "Baseball Dope of the Big Leagues," *Paterson (New Jersey) Evening News*, January 26, 1912: 20. The Scanlon file at the GRC contains a letter dated February 20, 1911 in which Doc complains about Ebbets to National Commission chairman Garry Herrmann.
52. The New York blue laws that prohibited the playing of professional baseball on the Sabbath were largely ignored in Queens. In the end, Ebbets "sent the Philadelphia club a check for \$1,500" to complete the aborted Scanlan-for-Stack trade. See "Ebbets Not Opposing Scanlon," *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 28, 1912: 10.
53. As reported in "Baseball Notes," *Lake County Times*, November 27, 1909: 4; "Sporting Notes," *Grand Forks (North Dakota) Evening Times*, December 2, 1909: 9; and elsewhere.
54. See "Lynn 11, Haverhill 3," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, June 8, 1910: 17.
55. See "Engaged Scanlon as Basketball Coach," *Watertown (New York) Times*, November 16, 1909: 9; "Gouverneur Secures Coach," *Watertown Times*, October 26, 1909: 5.
56. See "Wilson' Signs Contract," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, January 20, 1910: 15.
57. "Manager Collins Loans Scanlon to Worcester," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, June 24, 1910: 18.

58. See "Haverhill 4, Worcester 3," *Boston Herald*, June 25, 1910: 4.
59. Per "Timely Gossip from Many Diamonds," *Providence Evening Bulletin*, August 9, 1910: 14.
60. According to the *Denver Post*, December 25, 1910: 15. See also, *Topeka (Kansas) State Journal*, December 27, 1910: 3.
61. Per "Ray Scanlon Released," (Denver) *Rocky Mountain News*, May 16, 1911: 10.
62. "Some Short Sport," *Evansville (Indiana) Courier*, June 7, 1911: 7.
63. *Rocky Mountain News*, August 11, 1911: 8. Grand Rapids assumed the South Bend schedule in early July.
64. Per "Ray Scanlon in Denver," March 18, 1912: 9.
65. See "Scanlon Given to Wilkes-Barre," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 26, 1910: 10; "Contracts and Releases," *Richmond Dispatch*, May 25, 1910: 5.
66. Per "Scanlon Let Out," *Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Times*, July 2, 1910: 9; "Phillies Get Option on Humphries; Scanlon Asked to Be Let Out," *Scranton (Pennsylvania) Times*, July 1, 1910: 15.
67. As noted in the *Chicago Daily News*, July 15, 1910: 2.
68. As reported in "Baseball Notes," *Appleton (Wisconsin) Post-Crescent*, February 19, 1913: 8.
69. See "Scanlon Released," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 23, 1915: 39; "Pitcher Scanlon Draws Release," *Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch*, May 22, 1915: 19.
70. Per *The Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff, eds. (Durham, North Carolina: Baseball America, Inc., 3d ed. 2007), 258. Davenport (76-52, .594) finished the season an eyelash behind the Moline (Illinois) Plowboys (75-51, .595) in final Triple-I League standings.
71. Per Three-I League stats published in the *Rock Island (Illinois) Argus*, September 23, 1916: 10, and *Moline (Illinois) Dispatch*, September 23, 1916: 9.
72. Per 1917 Central Association stats published in the *1918 Spalding Official Baseball Guide*.
73. 1960 Frank Scanlan player questionnaire on file at the GRC

McGraw has announced that players on his team sipping of the foaming hops will be fined \$25. This is the first season the Giant pilot has taken a stand of this sort.

*Amarillo Daily News*, April 16, 1913

## FREE CIGARS FOR BALLPLAYERS

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.—"Branch" Rickey isn't going to have the lead on Miller Huggins. The information reached here this morning that "Branch" is supplying cigars to all of the Brownies to get them to quit the cigarette habit. Huggins does not favor the paper pills, either, and announced that cigars would be placed on the hotel desk for all the Cardinals.

*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 8, 1914



Like stealing home with  
the winning run—they *satisfy!*



Player on third. Pitcher winding up. With a burst of speed, the runner crashes across the plate, safe by an eyelash—it certainly *does satisfy!* Which is exactly what Chesterfields do for your smoking—they *satisfy*.

But, more than that, they're *MILD*, too!

It is really a wonderful thing for smokers to get this entirely new cigarette enjoyment—a cigarette that *satisfies*, yet is *mild*!

The reason no cigarette, except Chesterfields, can give it to you is because no cigarette maker can copy the *Chesterfield blend*!

Try Chesterfields—today!

*Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.*

# Chesterfield

## CIGARETTES

*They SATISFY!*  
—and yet they're *MILD*

*Americus (Georgia) Times-Recorder*, July 24, 1916

## THE INSIDE GAME: THE YEAR 2021 IN REVIEW

As in years past, we conclude this year's run of *The Inside Game* with a summary of what has been published during 2021. Although the lingering pandemic required the cancellation of events like the SABR convention and other in-person gatherings, the newsletter rebounded from last year's doldrums and approached getting back to the pre-COVID 19 output norm. First and foremost, we were able to keep our commitment to publish at least four issues annually. Contained in the 135 pages of those issues were 14 original Deadball Era-related research articles; 17 book reviews; miscellaneous news items; and vintage cartoons and other ephemera curated by newsletter design editor Bob Harris. At the risk of sounding self-congratulatory, we continue to take pride in the quality and breadth of *The Inside Game*'s content.

Among this year's newsletter features was Doug Skipper's informative commentary on the 2021 winner of the Larry Ritter Award: *War Fever: Boston, Baseball and America in the Shadow of the Great War* by Randy Roberts and Johnny Smith (Basic Books, New York). The current issue contains DEC Chairman John McMurray's enlightening conversation with Ballparks Research Committee co-chairman and longtime DEC member Ron Selter on Deadball Era playing grounds. John also provided readers with installments of The Chairman's Column. The research articles, as interesting in content as they were diverse in subject, came from veteran newsletter contributors Dixie Tourangeau, Paul Williams, Tom Simon, Mike Lackey, Brian Morrison, and the newsletter editor. Joining their ranks but no stranger to DEC members was eminent baseball historian Norman Macht whose essay on baseball's effect on the American immigrant appears in this issue. The February 2022 issue will contain another piece by Norman, but contributors need not be authors of his stature. All that is required to be a newsletter contributor is interest in the Deadball Era and a willingness to write. Don't worry about prior

writing experience or the lack thereof. Newsletter staff stands ready to provide as much (or as little) assistance as aspiring contributors may desire. Those interested in writing something for the newsletter are cordially invited to contact the editor at wflamb12@yahoo.com.

Under the oversight of Book Review Section Editor Dan Levitt, 17 book reviews appeared on newsletter pages this year. As was the case with article authors, reviewers Ben Klein, Todd Peterson, Mark Pattison, David Lee Poremba, Paul Browne, Brian Flaspohler, David Shiner, Andrew Milner, Tom Flynn, Alec Rogers, Bob Komoroski, Scott Longert, Stew Thornley, David Fleitz, Barbara Mantegani, Stephanie Liscio, and Rick Huhn have all lent their talents previously to the newsletter. Still, we can use reinforcements. So, DEC members wishing to join our cadre of newsletter book reviewers are invited to contact Dan Levitt via danrl@global.net.

A grateful newsletter editor appreciates the contributions of all those mentioned above. I also want to thank staff colleagues Bob Harris, Mark Dugo, Dan Levitt, and John McMurray for another year of cordial collaboration and unstinting effort in getting out this year's newsletter issues. The year 2022 will mark our tenth year working together and I look forward to many more thereafter. Finally, thanks as always to newsletter readers for your interest and support of *The Inside Game*. We will get back together with you next February. Till then, stay safe and best wishes.

Bill Lamb, Editor  
*The Inside Game*



## GAMES/BIOPROJECT

Since the last newsletter appeared, the Games Project has been busy, publishing accounts of 25 games of particular interest to Deadballers. Included are recaps of games from the 1903 and 1912 World Series by Bill Nowlin; Deadball Era no-hit game writeups by Gregory H. Wolf, Russ Walsh, and Thomas E. Merrick; and an account of a 1916 pitching matchup between Walter Johnson and Babe Ruth by Kevin Larkin. Meanwhile, the Bio-Project published profiles of Lew Drill, Gene Woodburn, Ed Burns, Bugs Resigl, Harry Fanwell, Eddie Higgins, Del Howard, Rudy Kling, Eddie Stack, Joe Koukalik, Bert Daniels, and Federal League Park in Indianapolis. We suggest that you check these out if you have not already done so.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As usual, I enjoyed the August issue of *The Inside Game*. Mike Lackey's article about Fred Odwell reminded me of another Deadball Era power hitter. Mike informed the reader that Odwell failed to hit another homer after leading the NL with nine (9) in 1905. This reminded me about the exploits of David Brain. In his bio (quite a few years ago), I wrote that the Englishman led both leagues in home runs with 10 in 1907. From 1904 through 1907, he was one of baseball's premier sluggers. Brain's 26 homers during this period ranks second only to Harry Lumley's 34. In 1908, he became a holdout and the Boston Doves sold him to Cincinnati who proceeded to sell him to the New York Giants. In a combined 72 at-bats that year, Brain's batting average was a paltry .125 and his major league career was over. Later in life, he became a licensed chiropractor and remains the answer to the following trivia question: Who is the only player to win a season's home run crown in either the American or National League (since 1893) and never have another extra-base hit the rest of his major league career.

Dennis Auger

## 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:

Courtney Baker	Bill Ouzer
Stephen Copley	Laura Purcell
Brett Greenleaf	Paul Sallee
Bruce S. McClure	Marty E. Sullivan
Joel Medvidovich	Dennis VanLangen
Scott A. Melesky	Tom Wilmowski

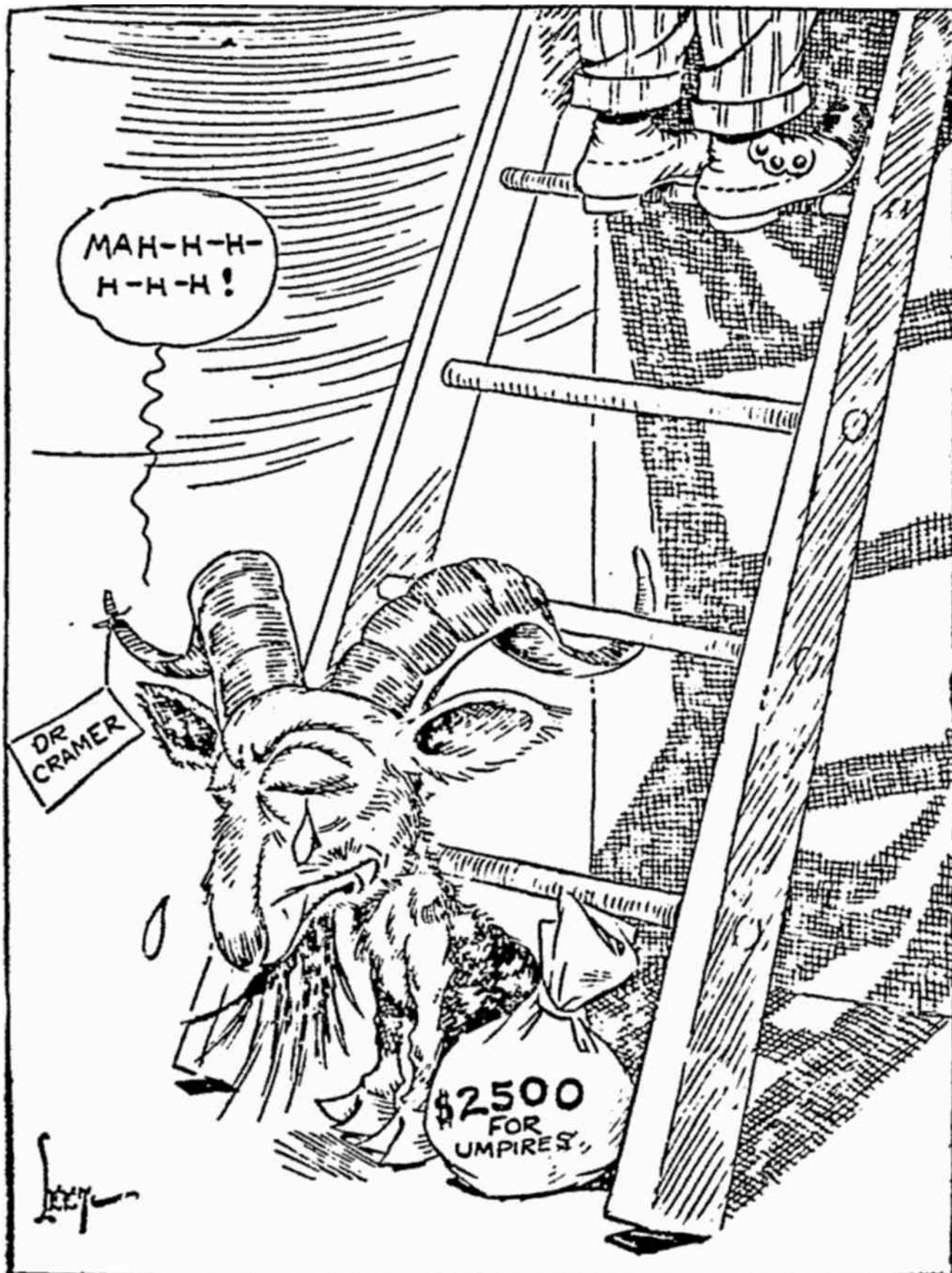
We look forward to their active participation in committee endeavors. These new committee members, as well as our newsletter contributors, can be contacted via the SABR directory.

## FIND JOKERS IN "BUSH" RULE

### MANAGER WOLVERTON FINDS LOOPHOLE TO CARRY PITCHERS OLDHAM AND ERICKSON, FORMER TIGERS

The clubs in the Coast league are already having a merry time, finding jokers in the "four-busher" rule, writes a San Francisco critic. Harry Wolverton, for example, has it doped out that he can qualify several of his old timers even under the rule. The rule provides that there shall be 14 players on each club, and that in addition thereto the club shall be privileged to carry four men who have not had one full season's experience in Class AA or major leagues. Now it seems there is a joker in this, too. When the managers met with the directors in San Francisco the question was asked as to whether half a season in Class AA and the other half in a major league would disqualify a man. Then and there it was settled that the rule meant one full paying year, either in Class AA or majors. So there you are. And it makes Erickson and Oldham of Wolverton's Seals both eligible, for they were with Detroit last season until they came to the Seals, and haven't a full year in either league to their credit.

*Chicago Eagle*, April 14, 1917



Frank Leet, Pittsburg Press, May 4, 1909

WHO IS THE MAN HIGHER UP PROTECTED BY BRUSH'S STUBBORN SILENCE?