

## Society for American Baseball Research

### BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

July 2002 (02-3)

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## Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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For those of you who were not at the SABR-32 convention in Boston, I'm sorry. You missed one of our best. More than 700 folks showed up. The energy level was very high and many new people were attracted to the organization.

For the first time I can remember, I looked around the Bibliography Committee meeting and saw numerous faces I didn't recognize. Eleven of the 27 people who filled out the sign-up sheet weren't members of the Committee and I hope to get several committed to help with our work.

Another 125 or so attended the demonstration of the The Baseball Index (TBI) project conducted by Ted Hathaway and myself, and I hope some of them will get involved. I'll leave most of the TBI news to Ted, but I can't tell you how many compliments the Committee and its volunteers received for this work. I passed around a list of e-mail messages Ted and I had received in the weeks after the debut, and they were universally complimentary and richly deserved. For example, from Glenn LeDoux: "The Online TBI kicks ass. Thanks for everything. You rock." And this from Steve Steinberg: "I want to congratulate the Bibliography Committee and the many people who brought this huge project to fruition. It quite simply is one of the very best research tools around. It opens doors that a researcher would often never know existed. Here's a salute to the efforts involved!" TBI joins Retrosheet as one of the two great research resources involving SABR members and made available to the public.

Our other projects continue well: a) *Current Baseball Publications*, edited by Rich Arpi and accompanying this newsletter; b) indexes to important baseball books published without them; and c) making our earlier Research Guides more available (I am still hoping to find someone with expertise in scanners and OCR software to help us digitize some of these guides).

One decision I did make was that we will be converting the newsletter to electronic distribution as much as possible. This is to reduce costs to help with SABR's financial restrictions and simply to keep up with the changing world. Those of you who do not have e-mail addresses, or do have them and simply want to continue receiving hard copies, will get the printed version.

This edition of the newsletter will be produced solely in printed form. The October 2002 newsletter will be produced both ways. After learning from any mistakes made in October, and giving people who want the hard copy a chance to respond, we will switch over to primarily electronic distribution for the January 2003 newsletter.

My annual report on the Committee's activities is printed elsewhere in this newsletter. Please think about getting even more involved in our projects. And proselytize for TBI.

## The Baseball Index (TBI) Annual Report for 2002

Ted Hathaway

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Before I present the annual report for **The Baseball Index (TBI)**, I'd like to acknowledge our volunteers from the past three months. Brad Sullivan continued his work on *The Sporting News*, indexing 2036 articles from 1963, 1968, and 1969 issues. Brad indexed 173 articles from *Time* (1985-1995) and 264 articles from *Broadcasting* (1950-1953). He also manfully tackled 50 articles from *Playboy* (1979-1988), including one pictorial (Marla Collins, former Cubs bat girl)! Bob Timmermann has begun work on *The National Sports Daily*, indexing 97 articles from the 1990 issues. Joe Murphy has continued his work on *Baseball Magazine*, using original issues generously loaned by Bernie Esser. Terry Sloope and I have been keying in Joe's indexing sheets and, frankly, we have not kept pace.

Bill Ivimey was inspired by our plea for volunteers when the TBI Web site was launched and has already attacked issues of *Baseball Digest* from 1950, 1955, and 1957-1959, indexing 203 articles. Carey Butlein has continued his work on *New York Mets Inside Pitch*, indexing 18 articles from 2001 issues. We're very grateful for the work of the TBI volunteers. It's easy to contribute to The Baseball Index! You can index books and magazine articles online at:

<http://www.rationalpastimes.com/dataentry.html>

Try something fairly simple, like a few magazine articles, and see how you like it. Try working with magazines to which you currently subscribe, or perhaps a book you've just finished reading. Please give the online forms a try and contact us if you have any questions or concerns. As always, you can also index using paper forms or computer software. Please contact me if you'd like to help out.

The Baseball Index is an index to baseball literature available on the World Wide Web (<http://www.baseballindex.org>). It is an ongoing project of the Bibliography Committee to catalog the entirety of baseball literature, from the earliest reference to the present day. This encompasses books, magazine articles, programs, pamphlets, films, recordings, songs, cartoons, or anything else that may be of interest to the baseball fan or researcher.

### Status of the Database

- The TBI database is currently divided into three parts reflecting the three principal types of information sources: Books, Book Sections (or chapters), and Articles.
- TBI has grown during the past eight years to 179,002 cataloged records, comprising more than 141,000 articles, 19,000 book sections, and 19,000 books.
- In terms of sheer *coverage* of existing book titles, the **Books** section of the database is nearest to completion of all three data-

"Baseball is a game played by idiots for morons." (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

bases. We estimate that more than 80% of all books ever published on baseball are now contained in this database. Surveys of universal bibliographic databases such as WorldCat and OCLC support this estimate. About 46% of the books cataloged for this database have been recorded in full detail. It should be noted that the majority of the remaining 54% consists of media guides, yearbooks, and instructionals.

- The **Book Sections** database has grown steadily over time and will likely continue to do so. In addition to containing parts of baseball works, there are also a host of sports and nonsports publications that contain significant sections on baseball; many of these have been cataloged already.
- The **Articles** section is far and away the largest part of the database and will continue to grow as many periodicals remain to be indexed. A list of the significant periodicals covered in The Baseball Index is given below.

### History of TBI

The project was first proposed by Ted Hathaway to the Bibliography Committee in April 1990, then to the SABR membership at the 1990 convention in Cleveland. A subcommittee was formed within the Bibliography Committee to study the project, and the following two years were spent on the creation of a cataloging manual and a list of terms (thesaurus) used to identify the main topics of each item to be cataloged. This was accomplished by the 1992 SABR convention in St. Louis. It was then proposed that the project would attempt a "test" cataloging of a year's worth of publications (both books and periodicals) to improve the effectiveness of the cataloging manual, measure the usefulness of the database, and determine the Committee's ability to successfully attract volunteers to work on the project.

In the following months, several SABR members volunteered to catalog 5000 books and magazine articles. The cataloging manual and thesaurus were significantly improved and the database itself was first demonstrated to the SABR Board and the Bibliography Committee membership at the 1993 SABR convention in San Diego. The Board then sanctioned "Baseball Online" (as it was then called) as an official SABR project, and approved the use of SABR funds for photocopying and mailing expenses and the use of two pages in the Oct. 1993 *SABR Bulletin* to attract additional volunteers to work on the project. This advertisement garnered dozens of responses from SABR members. Many additional responses were elicited through ads over the Internet and in baseball and sports publications; e.g., *Baseball America* ran a brief article describing the project. By the time of the 1994 SABR convention in Arlington, Tex., the size of the database had increased fivefold to more than 24,000 records.

At the 1994 convention, the project directors made presentations to SABR committees and appeals to individual members describing the nature and status of the project, and explaining how members may participate in its development. Two years later, to reflect more distinctively and accurately the nature and purpose of the database, the name of the project was changed to "Research in Baseball Index" or "RBI".

We also decided to explore ways of making the database available for member and public use. To that end, a research service was set up and advertised first on the World Wide Web in Nov. 1996, and then again in the Jan. 1997 *SABR Bulletin*. This service provided searching of the RBI database through an intermediary, along with a modest fee for obtaining information from the database. Until the database became directly searchable over the Web in June 2002, the research service received more than 3000 requests, with nearly 400 paying customers, resulting in receipts to SABR of more than \$8700.

In Jan. 1998, a CD-ROM recordable drive was purchased and after making numerous corrections and updates to the database, RBI was deemed ready for distribution by Spring 1998. Owing to a conflict with the Reviving Baseball in the Inner Cities (RBI) program spon-

sored by Major League Baseball, the name of the project was changed one again, to "The Baseball Index" or "TBI" in June 2000.

Also in June 2000, TBI project directors met with James Robinson (Idea Logical Co.) to discuss the possibility of mounting TBI on Idea Logical's Baseball Online Library on the popular CBS Sportline Web site. The SABR Board approved this venture in Sept. 2000. Sadly, Sportline did not see fit to bring this effort to fruition, to no fault of the Idea Logical Co. Despite this disappointment, Robinson was able to extract data from the TBI database and attach it as bibliographies to the thousands of player biographies on the Baseball Online Library Web site. SABR and TBI are amply credited for these data and the site has brought much attention to the database. We are grateful for this free promotion of the database and appreciate Robinson's work.

In Jan. 2001, the SABR Board approved that TBI revenues be targeted to the improvement of the database. The Daniel M. Levine Co. (DMLCo.) was hired to develop TBI, not only effecting improvement in the database itself, but creating a means to make it usable over the Web. To this end, Andy McCue and Hathaway appealed for funding directly to members attending the Bibliography Committee meeting at the 2001 SABR convention in Milwaukee. Several members responded, donating generously to this effort: Skip McAfee, Fred and Alma Ivor-Campbell, Steve Milman, Bernie Esser, Dick Miller, and Terry Sloope. During the next several months, McCue and Hathaway worked with Levine and Mary Hansen (DMLCo.) to develop a Web-based interface for TBI. The Web site was launched in June 2002: <http://www.baseballindex.org>.

### Volunteers

The Baseball Index has always been a volunteer effort. Only its directors have received some compensation, and that in the form of reimbursement for office expenses, namely mailing and photocopying. TBI's directors have always sought volunteer catalogers for the project. Many members and nonmembers have contributed to the project, although the great majority of the work has been accomplished by fewer than ten persons, including the project directors (see list below). If you are interested in working on the TBI project, please contact me.

### TBI Trends

If we assume that The Baseball Index continues to grow in the same manner as before, we will see the following patterns develop:

The *Books* database will continue to grow slowly as new titles are added each year and various older titles are found and added. More significantly, a steadily increasing number of existing records will be improved as more books are completely cataloged. Better access to the content of books will be the result and the usefulness of this database will increase.

The *Book Sections* database will continue to grow, but perhaps at a slower pace. This database was set up to address biographical and team history compilations, certain kinds of anthologies and collections, and the many books that contain sections on baseball along with other subjects. The number of these kinds of sources is more finite than other kinds of baseball books. Furthermore, most of the current records in this database are fully cataloged. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect an eventual "completion" of this database (excepting newly published titles). It will likely also remain the smallest of the three databases.

The *Articles* database represents the Labors of Hercules for this project. The number for *The Sporting News* (44,984 records) illustrates this. Based on this number, we estimate that *TSN* alone might result in a quarter of a million cataloged records. However, what has been done with *TSN* is significant, and much work has been done toward the completion of many other publications.

In the past year, we have continued work on major publications such as *The Sporting News*, *Baseball Magazine*, *USA Today Baseball*

*Weekly, Sports Illustrated, Baseball Digest, and Sport.* These represent the bulk of our contributions. We have also continued our work on "nonsport" publications and now we believe we have completed coverage of the major of such publications from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the coming year, we will turn our efforts to developing a means to administer the TBI database directly on the Web. This will allow us to correct easily existing records and add new records. We will also market the database to non-SABR users, such as media contacts, sports organizations, educational institutions, and the general public.

#### Significant Periodicals Indexed, with Years and Number of Records

Advertising Age (1958-1997): 326  
 American Boy (1900-1927): 461  
 American Legion Magazines (1919-1964): 295  
 American Magazine (1906-1956): 93  
 Athletic Journal (1922-1987): 952  
 Baseball America (1991): 885  
 Baseball Analyst (1982-1989): 220  
 Baseball Australia (1992-1994): 145  
 Baseball Cards (1990-1992): 73  
 Baseball Digest (1954, 1965, 1972-1993): 4817  
 Baseball Magazine (1908-1917, 1929-1935, 1939, 1942, 1944, 1946): 4529  
 Bay Sports Review (1991-1997): 71  
 Black Sports (1971-1978): 258  
 Bleacher Creature (1993-1994): 35  
 Boston Baseball (1995-1996): 298  
 Boys' Life (1971-1998): 261  
 Brit Ball (1994-1995): 30  
 Broadcasting (1931-1950): 659  
 Brooklyn Daily Eagle (1859-1860): 121  
 Business Week (1938-1970): 52  
 Christian Science Monitor (1997-2000): 107  
 Collier's (1898-1956): 1285  
 Country Gentleman (1923-1941): 56  
 Diamond Duds (1991-1994): 100  
 Diehard (1994): 8  
 Dodgers Dugout (1996-1998): 387  
 Dugout (1994): 10  
 Ebony (1946-1996): 275  
 Editor & Publisher (1944-1997): 166  
 Esquire (1934-1999): 220  
 Fantasy Baseball (1990-1994): 373  
 Forest and Stream (1873-1879): 225  
 Hardball (1997): 24  
 Harper's Weekly (1859-1916): 257  
 Harvard Graduates Magazine (1892-1918): 65  
 Inside Sports (1991-1998): 452  
 International Baseball Rundown (1992-1999): 969  
 Japan Weekly Chronicle (1928-1940): 195  
 Jet (1951-1956): 744  
 Journal of Sport History (1974-1997): 98  
 Leslie's Weekly (1885-1922): 1214  
 Liberty (1924-1947): 242  
 Life (1938-1969): 372  
 Literary Digest (1896-1937): 261  
 Look (1937-1970): 316  
 Los Angeles Dodgers Magazine and Scorecard (1991): 38  
 Low and Inside (1994): 14  
 Minneapolis Review of Baseball (1981-1990): 542  
 Minnesota Alumni Publications, Univ. of (1902-1999): 209  
 Minnesota Motorist (1963-1976): 39  
 Minnesota Sports Fan (1972-1973): 45  
 New York Clipper (1856-1860): 698  
 New York Times (1875-2000 various): 3354  
 New York Times Magazine (1947-1969): 15  
 New Yorker (1925-1969): 84

Newsweek (1933-1962): 1120  
 NINE (1992-2000): 430  
 Oldtime Baseball News (1989-1998): 651  
 Orioles Gazette (1992-1994): 512  
 Outing (1886-1921): 262  
 Outlook/Outlook and Independent (1911-1932): 39  
 Pacific Coast League Potpourri (1987-2000 various): 92  
 Pittsburgh Courier (1923): 65  
 Popular Mechanics (1909-1956): 95  
 Porter's Spirit of the Times: *see* Spirit of the Times  
 Reds Report (1993-1994): 339  
 Research Quarterly (1950-1977): 23  
 Ron Shandler's Baseball Forecaster (1994-1997): 44  
 S.A. Baseball Digest (1993): 23  
 St. Nicholas (1882-1939): 99  
 Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum Association (1984-1995): 72  
 Saturday Evening Post (1922-1967): 464  
 Scholastic Coach (1932-1997): 1117  
 Schureck Baseball Report (1993-1994): 66  
 Spirit of the Times (1856-1873 various): 3141  
 Spitball (1988, 1995): 40  
 Sport (1950, 1954-1956, 1958-1959, 1962-1968, 1972-1996): 4460  
 Sporting News, The (1886, 1916, 1921, 1960-1963, 1968-1971, 1977-1986, 1989): 44,984  
 Sports Collectors Digest (1991, 1997-2000): 552  
 Sports Heritage (1987-1988): 32  
 Sports History (1987-1990): 72  
 Sports Illustrated (1954-1987, 1989-1993, 1997-1999): 6778  
 Sports, Inc. (1988-1989): 315  
 Stars and Stripes (1918-1919, 1942-1945, 1953): 1301  
 Thinking Pitcher (1993): 26  
 Time (1923-1981): 1232  
 Tip Top Weekly (1905-1912): 83  
 Twins Magazine (1991-1992, 1996): 50  
 USA Today (newspaper) (1996): 613  
 USA Today Baseball Weekly (1991-2001): 26,415  
 Vintage & Classic Baseball Collector (1995-1998): 127  
 Wall Street Journal (1955-1998): 1263  
 Wilkes' Spirit of the Times: *see* Spirit of the Times  
 Youth's Companion (1881-1929): 444

#### TBI Volunteers of Note, with Number of Records Cataloged

58,444	Brad Sullivan
35,680	Tim Cashion
33,130	Ted Hathaway
9,151	Andy McCue
5,750	Bernie Esser
4,976	Joe Murphy
4,068	Terry Sloope
2,230	Terry Smith
1,407	Bob Boynton
1,094	Steve Milman
999	John McMurray
842	Bob Timmermann
622	Ray Lisi
612	Skip McAfee
601	David Marasco
499	Ron Replogle
481	Steve Roney
449	Ron Kaplan

"Is baseball a scientific game? It certainly is not. It probably never will be. In fact, if it became fully analyzed, it would probably destroy itself."

(Vannevar Bush, *Science is Not Enough*, Wm. Morrow, 1967; p.110)

## Bibliography Committee Annual Report for 2002

**Andy McCue**  
Committee Chair

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On May 27, after a dozen years of effort, the Bibliography Committee proudly announced the availability of its core project—The Baseball Index (TBI)—on the World Wide Web. The address is: [www.baseballindex.org](http://www.baseballindex.org).

TBI contains references to more than 179,000 books, book sections, articles, art works, sound recordings, and other items. The researcher may search it for references to a player, umpire, owner, or executive. It may be searched for terms, such as "Baker Bowl" or "Cotton States League" or "umpire baiting" or "changeups". More than 2000 separate terms are included as well as the names of leagues, teams, stadiums, and baseball groups. The first 50 citations are available at no cost. If your search turns up more than 50 responses, SABR members receive a discount on the already low prices.

TBI is the culmination of a 12-year effort initiated by Ted Hathaway in 1990. Then Bibliography Committee chair Frank Phelps appointed Andy McCue to work with Ted and the two have piloted the project ever since, with organizational help from Tim Cashion and Terry Sloope. The bulk of the work on the project has been done by volunteers, with prominent contributions from Brad Sullivan, Bernie Esser, Joe Murphy, Steve Milman, Tim Cashion, Terry Sloope, Terry Smith, Bob Boynton, John McMurray, Bob Timmermann, Ray Lisi, Skip McAfee, David Marasco, Ron Replogle, Steve Roney, and Ron Kaplan.

A year ago, when it became clear the project was ready to move to the Web, the following volunteers made the monetary contributions that allowed us to take the first steps: Skip McAfee, Fred and Alma Ivor-Campbell, Steve Milman, Dick Miller, Bernie Esser, and Terry Sloope. Daniel Levine and his crew at DMLCo. did the Web design job at a reduced rate.

A series of SABR boards, beginning in 1993, has provided funds for mailing, copying, some equipment, and space in the newsletter, convention programs, and membership directories to advertise the project.

The Bibliography Committee was founded in 1983 by Frank Phelps and seeks to discover, organize, and provide information about books and other research materials that might be of interest to SABR members and other baseball researchers. The Committee currently has 62 members working on a variety of projects in addition to TBI.

Two long-time Committee members continued to produce its two longest-running projects. Committee vice-chair Skip McAfee has edited the Committee's newsletter since 1988 and continues to make improvements. Book reviews from Terry Smith and other members highlight the newsletter. Reviews that appear in the Committee's newsletter are mounted at <http://sabrbib.home.mindspring.com>.

Rich Arpi started his 15<sup>th</sup> year of researching and editing *Current Baseball Publications (CBP)*, the quarterly listing of new baseball books and periodicals, which the Committee has produced since 1986. *CBP* has been mounted on SABR's Web page to make it more accessible to all SABR members. It is available, along with Committee newsletters, at [www.sabr.org/cbp.shtml](http://www.sabr.org/cbp.shtml).

The Committee's project to provide indexes to important baseball books published without them continued successfully. Skip McAfee produced an indexing guide to promote uniform practices throughout our indexes. Committee members produced indexes for eight books this year, bringing our total to 73. Southern Illinois University Press continued its program to republish the Putnam team histories with

indexes provided by Committee members: the Dodgers (index by Rick Johnson), the Giants (index by Terry Smith), and the Yankees (index by Bob McConnell) were republished this year, and the Red Sox and the Pirates (both indexed by Jack Carlson) are scheduled for 2003. The University of Nebraska Press republished Michael Seidel's *Streak* (1988) with an index by Skip McAfee. All these indexes are available through Len Levin's SABR Research Library.

Jim Lannen began working on turning the Committee's older series of Research Guides into electronic form. We hope to make more of the guides available on SABR's Web site in the future.

## The Reach of the Web

**Ted Hathaway**  
BRSP, May 2, 2002

I've mentioned in the past on SABR-L that SABR's partnership with the University of Nebraska Press has brought the content of our two regular publications—*The Baseball Research Journal* and *The National Pastime*—to the World Wide Web. The Gale Group (the largest publisher of reference and information resources in the world) provides access, through its InfoTrac database, to all of the articles in these two publications over the past two years (it also provides access to another obscure, but important baseball publication, *NINE*).

This is really major, folks. InfoTrac is used by thousands of libraries around the country who, in turn, provide remote access to their many patrons. For example, in Minnesota, through the MnLINK system, anyone with a library card and a Web connection can access InfoTrac and, hence, SABR publications. Don't have a Web connection or a library card? You can still view these articles at any library. There are five million people in Minnesota. Wisconsin has a similar system. Many other states do as well.

In other words, the potential audience here for the writings of SABR members is in the millions. At the Minneapolis Public Library we have groups of high school kids doing research all the time. We ask them where they go to get the information they need for their school work: the answer is overwhelmingly the Internet. If we want our research to reach young people, this is our best hope of reaching them.

If we, as an organization, are to matter at all—beyond being a peripheral organization of hard-core fanatics—then exploiting a medium with such broad potential for PUBLIC access as the Web is imperative. I think we are lucky that the Univ. of Nebraska has offered us this kind of access to our published work (which includes, by the way, Cliff Kachline's major article on the Hack Wilson RBI). I believe we must continue to utilize this broad-reaching medium to remain relevant and useful.

The audience here is the general public. For too much of its existence, the audience for SABR publications has been SABR members, and SABR members only. Currently, SABR's *The Baseball Index* is searchable on the Web for anyone. Significant amounts of data are freely available to anyone. ANYONE—not just SABR members. Any new large-scale Society project, such as Mark Armour's Baseball BioProject, should be done with public access in mind. For an organization like SABR, the Web is the only realistic medium we can use.

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"I've gotten so disgusted with baseball, I don't follow it anymore. ... The commercialization is beyond anything that was ever thought of, the overvaluing, really, of the game itself. ... Other things are similarly commercialized and out of proportion. But for baseball, which is so intimately connected with the nation's spirit and tradition it's a disaster."

(Jacques Barzun, *Baltimore Sun*, April 4, 1993)

## Book Reviews

**Leverett T. (Terry) Smith**

North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

**THIS SIDE OF COOPERSTOWN; an Oral History of Major League Baseball in the 1950s**

Larry Moffi. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1996. 262p.

**THE WHIZ KIDS AND THE 1950 PENNANT**

Robin Roberts and C. Paul Rogers, III. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1996.

**MEMORIES OF A BALLPLAYER: Bill Werber and Baseball in the 1930s**

Bill Werber and C. Paul Rogers, III. Cleveland: SABR, 2001. 250p. \$14.95

The books by Moffi and Roberts are both published by university presses. The Roberts and Werber volumes both involve Rogers as co-author. All three are indexed, and *The Whiz Kids* has a bibliography. All three feature many photographs. And all three fall into the category of baseball oral history, welcome reading for SABRites.

Moffi sets his book in the tradition begun by Lawrence Ritter's *The Glory of Their Times* (1966). "I kept Ritter's methods in mind," he says (p.xviii), "as I edited the transcriptions of these interviews: namely, I omitted my own questions and comments as well as inevitable repetitions and irrelevant asides." The book contains interviews with 17 players: Marty Marion, Virgil Trucks, Frank Thomas, Gene Woodling, Carl Erskine, Dave Philley, Vic Power, Del Crandall, Mel Parnell, Alex Grammas, Andy Carey, Roy Sievers, Vern Law, Bob Cerv, Cal McLish, Milt Bolling, and Tito Francona. Moffi wants the stories, not of the big stars, but of "the other guys," the "blue-collar, hard-working, reliable players who were there day after day after day" (p.xii).

Moffi's introduction acknowledges the changes in the game and the business during the 1950s and asserts "that the game was better than it has been ever since" (p.xiv). He concludes the book with a personal memoir of Roger Maris (p.253): "This book is really for Roger Maris and for all the wonderful players who, like him, are no longer among us to tell their stories."

The players themselves are the real stars of this book. There are moments that are just plain marvelous, as when Cerv comments on rooming with Mickey Mantle and Maris (p.198): "... just like rooming with anybody else. After games, you go home. Although Mantle, sometimes, didn't always go home." Philley has a good deal to say about batting strategies and believes (p.82) the Giants were stealing signs from the center-field clubhouse during the 1954 World Series. Parnell comments on the relation of train travel and baseball knowledge.

The subject of race arises in various ways. Moffi was able to interview only one black (Power), but many of the other players talk about race. Power himself talks about the New York Yankees. There is much discussion about Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella. It may well be the McLish doesn't know he's talking about race when he says (p.214), asserting the superiority of National League play in the 1950s: "I thought the difference was that the National League had more guys that could run, throw, field, hit and hit with power. The American League had a lot of guys that could hit the ball with power—Killebrew, Jim Bob Lemon, Roy Sievers—but they weren't complete ballplayers like Clemente and Robinson and Mays and Aaron."

Money surfaces as a topic in many interesting ways. Marion asserts (p.11) "we played for money" and praises (p.5) owner Bill Veeck, who "didn't believe in underpaying you, if he could afford it". Trucks speaks of his early earnings in considerable detail and talks of the financial importance of barnstorming and the possibility that

barnstorming was killed by television (p.17, 27). Law mentions the necessity of working a second job during the off-season (p.187). Erskine is most eloquent on the subject in response to the question "Don't you wish you were playing today, with all the big money?" (p.66): "I love to make money. ... I'm glad the players today are getting a big piece of the big pie. It'd be a shame if they didn't. We got our share in the '50s, and we're beholden to the guys that got such a small piece before us." On a lighter note, Francona tells this brief story of his son Terry, who managed the world's richest minor leaguer, Michael Jordan (p.248): "Terry fined him fifty dollars one game because he flew his own jet."

Rogers is to *The Whiz Kids* and *Memories of a Ballplayer* as Moffi is to *This Side of Cooperstown*. Both recorded and edited oral histories. At least I think so. Roberts speaks most of *The Whiz Kids* (many other interviews are quoted in the book) but I suspect Rogers did some of the actual research and writing. *The Whiz Kids* is an ambitious book, and Roberts' story is only a part of the larger one of the Philadelphia Phillies franchise. Werber's *Memories* is simpler, and his voice comes through more clearly.

Maybe for this reason I found *Memories of a Ballplayer* to be the more immediately satisfying of the two books. Werber is articulate and conveys a good sense of the game as practiced in the 1930s and early 1940s. The book has many wonderful anecdotes, including this account of Werber's first at-bat (p.7-8): "The opposing pitcher was George Blacholder ... His first pitch was a fastball down the pipe that I took. Umpire Brick Owens bellowed STEE-RIIKE so loud and so close to my ear that it scared the wits out of me. Blacholder next threw a slider over the outside part of the plate. I wanted to swing, but my brain was not connecting with my hands and arms, so I took it for strike two. Brownie catcher Rick Farrell had Blacholder waste one outside at that juncture, thinking a rookie like me would go fishing and strike out on a bad pitch. I would have, too, but I could not move. I just stood there as another waste pitch sailed low and outside. Then, for some inexplicable reason, Blacholder lost his control and threw two more balls. I stumbled down to first with a walk. If any of the last four pitches had crossed the plate, I would have stuck out without lifting the bat off my shoulder." There are many other reminiscences. Werber's account of his years with the pennant-winning Cincinnati Reds is of particular interest.

Werber makes many intriguing judgments about prominent baseball personalities. Here he is on Dizzy Dean (p.119): "He had a crackling curve ball to go with a smoking fastball, and the savvy born of a hard life." Werber's portrait of Johnny Vander Meer (p.184, 186-187) also underlines the poverty of the 1930s. He didn't like Casey Stengel: "not a teacher, but a faultfinder and a crabby old bore" (p.134); or Al Simmons: "he had a swelled head" (p.192). On the other hand, he admired Bucky Harris: "smart as a briar" (p.136).

Werber's career major and minor league statistics are printed at the end of the narrative. And in an afterword, Werber describes his relationship with Rogers (p.237): "Throughout he has been my collaborator, organizing and adding some here and there and subtracting where called for."

Roberts also speaks of "writing this book with Paul" in *The Whiz Kids*, and Rogers says that Roberts "had no interest in writing an autobiography" but liked the idea of "a book on the Whiz Kids" (p.347, 370). As a consequence, we get a more complex narrative in *The Whiz Kids* than we do in *Memories of a Ballplayer*. There is a detailed account of the Phillies pennant-winning 1950 season. In addition, we learn a great deal about his own career from Roberts, we get a good deal of Philadelphia Phillies history in accounting for the development of the 1950 team, and we get more insights into baseball history in the years between World War II and major league expansion. There are also 40 pages of photographs, and in addition to talking with Roberts, Rogers interviewed 31 other people associated with the 1950 Phillies. Excerpts from these interviews appear throughout the book.

The interviews provide some of the best moments in the book. Richie Ashburn recounts "the only time I saw [Sal] Maglie laugh" on

the ball field (p.103), Eddie Sawyer wondering about umpire George Barr's eyesight (p.187), and various Phillies' commenting negatively on Leo Durocher's character (p.186-187). The stories of Russ (The Mad Monk) Meyer are worth the book.

*The Whiz Kids* allows us glimpses into the major themes of the game between World War II and the expansion years. We learn something more of New York Yankees dominance, because many of the men who were responsible for the 1950 Phillies came from the Yankees organization.

However, it is the issue of race that takes center stage. Ashburn traces the club's decline after 1950 to the fact that the Phillies were "slow to change" on the issue of race. Roberts (p.47) also devotes a chapter to "the year Jackie Robinson broke the game's color barrier and the Phillies unhappily played a key role in that watershed event." It's part of the team's history, which Roberts describes as "dismal", at least until the Carpenters bought the club in 1943. The city had for years "been plagued ... by bad baseball teams" (p.8). Of his own career, he has many interesting things to say, especially the pennant-winning Oct. 1 game against the Dodgers, described by Roberts in an early chapter, then at the end of the book by Rogers using excerpts from various interviews. There's a chapter on Roberts' relationship with Cy Perkins and his discovery off "those proper mechanics that ... allowed me to throw harder easier" (p.72). Among much else, there's the story of Roberts' satisfaction at earning (because of bonuses) more than he'd thought to ask for in 1950, after holding out (p.204). Roberts was too good a player to be interviewed by Moffi; we are lucky that Rogers was also on the job.

The book has five appendices: brief biographies of 43 Whiz Kids; a box score of the pennant-winning game; statistics of the 1950 Phillies; National League standings, month by month, in 1950; and a game-by-game summary of the Phillies season. There's an afterword by Rogers, a selected bibliography, and a useful index. Altogether an excellent model, should one want to focus on a single season of a single team.

## Book Review

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### LINE DRIVES; 100 Contemporary Baseball Poems

Brooke Horvath and Tim Wiles, eds. Carbondale (Ill.): Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2002. 208p. (Writing Baseball Series) \$16

Good travel literature is about the person, not the locale; otherwise, travel books would sound like textbooks. Good baseball poetry is similar, in that baseball is not really the subject, but rather the person who's remembering the game, or experiencing the game, or applying a lesson learned from the game. Poems that are about the game itself have value in a historical or archival sense only; for a baseball poem to have poetic value, it focuses on the poet. Familiar-face Elinor Nauen (editor of *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend: Women Writers on Baseball*, 1994) notes in her introduction the weakness of most baseball poetry (p.xvi):

"Now, I love baseball and I love poetry, but I often don't love baseball poems. Too many are too full of too much cheap nostalgia, where the poet thinks that by mentioning some old-time player or famous homer, he's done the work of creating an emotion or connection. Baseball somehow makes poets unafraid to speak of love, but too often it blossoms as sentimentality."

Too often a baseball poem relates, second by excruciating second, little Sammy Smith's diving catch in the Little League finals. A baseball poem might also impose an experience on us with a baseball "epiphany" attached (a poem about divorced parents getting back together, titled "Extra Innings", for example).

Horvath and Wiles, however, took great pains to exclude poems that performed these jobs, and they got it mostly right; seldom does sentimentality rear its ugly head. The 100 poems that make up this anthology are mostly concerned with *sharing* rather than *relating*, which is a crucial distinction in baseball poetry, often meaning the difference between a diary entry and a poem that readers can find value in.

There are many fine and rather expected moments of writers relating their childhood memories of baseball: playing catch with Dad in the yard, going to Wrigley, watching Hank Aaron hit a home run. There are also some more ambitious uses of baseball to tell an unexpected story (and this is the real strength of this anthology). Michael Waters' poem "Singles" opens with (p.54): "I don't know anyone more lonely / than the woman listening / to the late news, memorizing / baseball scores for coffee break." In this sense, the woman uses baseball to feel accepted and wanted, as the conversation around the office involves something that she must work at committing to memory. Here baseball is presented as a crutch, employed by someone who is socially challenged. She takes joy in it, but not the joy we are used to getting from the game.

There are many poems which are a pleasure to read because of their sheer wit and zaniness. For example, "Pearly Babe" (p.170):

"When Babe Ruth died & went to heaven, he was a rookie all over again. ...

"In less time than it takes to circle the bases of a quark, he made the starting lineup, & as of this writing he's been a superstar—I think it's Betelgeuse—for 22 eternities. Now & then he hits one out of the dark, but whether it's a single, double, triple, or Big Bang is hard to say: up there (or is it in?) they don't keep stats."

Babe Ruth in the cosmos? The Big Bang likened to a heavenly home run? Babe Ruth becoming a star no matter what league he plays in? This poem pays obvious homage to Ruth, but in a playful and surprising way. It makes use of nothing historical or factual, yet we see the reverence that so many have written about. Absent from this poem are all the stock and mythologized stories involving Ruth, such as the called home run or the supposed home run that never left the infield. It is as if the author (Mikhail Horowitz) has said, "Oh yeah? You want myth? You want hyperbole? Ruth is even a star in heaven."

The response to a poem is all too often "I don't get it", but what's not to get in this?: "Although I have no memory / of my career in the majors / my name appears / in the *Baseball Encyclopedia*. / Lifetime average: .241. / Now that you know this dream / you know everything about me." [Larry Zirlin, "Last Baseball Dream of the Season", p.182.] It's everything you need to know about me, as well.

Baseball fiction remains (and will always remain, frankly) the preferred literary genre among casual readers. But baseball poems are more conducive to the game. It's possible to read about 90 of these poems in between innings, or during a commercial break while the relief pitcher throws his warmup tosses. It's possible to read entire sections of *Line Drives* during a rain delay. One cannot always say the same thing about baseball fiction. Baseball poetry is more intimate, and offers us snippets of joy, or hilarity, or heartbreak. Poems are often accused of being puzzles, and it's nice to see that in *Line Drives* the poems are more concerned with being clever and meaningful; they are capable of speaking to a larger community of people than literary poetry, yet are still poems in every sense of the word.

"Knowin' all about baseball is just about as profitable as bein' a good whittler."

(Frank McKinney Hubbard, *Abe Martin's The Best of Kin Hubbard*, edited by David S. Hawes, 1984)