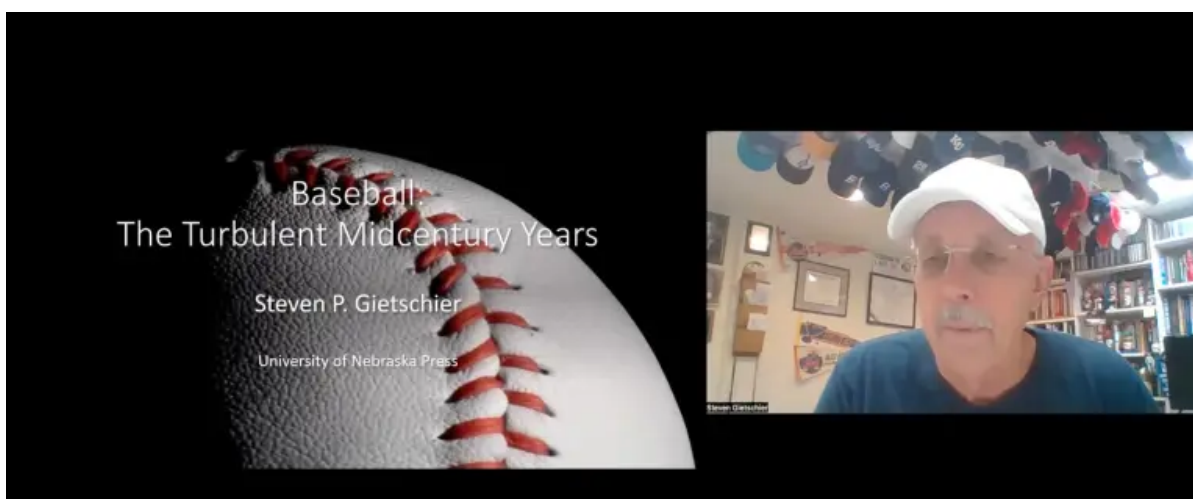


Society for American Baseball Research, Rogers Hornsby Chapter

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August meeting focuses on upheaval during 20th century baseball



August 2023 Newsletter

By Gilbert D. Martinez

Eleven chapter members and guests joined an award-winning author on Zoom on Saturday to discuss baseball in the mid-20th century.

Steven Gietschier, author of “Baseball: The Turbulent Midcentury Years,” shared how he was inspired by the work of Dr. Harold Seymour and Dorothy Seymour Mills, including their three-volume history of the early days of baseball: “Baseball: The Early Years,” “Baseball: The Golden Age” and “Baseball: The People’s Game.”

“I asked Dorothy what she would think if someone picked up the ball where she and her late husband had laid it down and wrote a solid narrative and analytical history of the game since 1930,” Gietschier said. “Without hesitation, she said this was a good idea. She heartily approved.”

He looked for others who might be interested in taking on this project, but everyone turned him down. However, he was told over and over again, “Steve, you should do it.”

Gietschier, who presented at SABR 51 in Chicago last month and won the Henry Chadwick Award, saw an opportunity to write about the next phase of baseball in the context of history, politics, economics and other broader themes from the Great Depression to post-World War II. He focuses on baseball owners, executives and players to tell the story of baseball.

As a longtime archivist and archival consultant for The Sporting News, Gietschier had access to lots of resources, including the notes and notecards created by Seymour and Seymour Mills.

He also shared baseball owners were initially against broadcasting games in the early days of radio for fear that it would decrease attendance. The same fear arose during the widespread adoption of televisions. He noted that a similar dilemma is playing out today with regional sports networks, cable, streaming and blackouts.

You can watch Gietschier’s presentation and Q&A session at this link on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/7ghgjOdtLDI>

You can learn more and purchase his new book on the University of Nebraska Press website:

<https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496235374/>



Upcoming Meeting Schedule

As the baseball season continues during the dog days of summer, the chapter has plans to attend a minor league game in San Antonio in September and a World Series watch party in October.



Please save **Sunday, Sept. 17**, for next month's meeting. At 1 p.m., the San Antonio Missions, the Double-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres, will host the Springfield Cardinals at Nelson W. Wolff Municipal Stadium. We'll share details in early September about where the group plans to sit and how you can purchase tickets.

In October, chapter member and Predictatron showrunner Jim Baker will continue a long tradition to host a watch party for a World Series game. Mark your calendar for the evening of **Saturday, Oct. 28**, for World Series Game 2 (teams to be determined). Regardless of the competing teams, the group has a fun time jointly watching the World Series with great food, commentary and insight.

Also, we have set **Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024**, as the date for the 18th Annual Bill Gilbert Winter Meeting at Texas State University in San Marcos. Winter meeting coordinator Jerry Miller is working on the schedule. If you are interested in making a presentation about baseball, please contact Jerry.

Research Spotlight

Two chapter members – Mike Lassman and Monte Cely – are working on contributions to the Spring Training Anthology, edited by David Krell, chair of SABR's Spring Training Committee. Lassman is focusing his essay on spring training in San Antonio while Cely is expanding earlier research about spring training in Marlin, Texas.

Baseball Memories Program

Monte Cely reported volunteers continue to work with AGE of Central Texas and Kerrville VA Medical Center to help Alzheimer's patients, family and caregivers. AGE is also opening a new facility in South Austin and efforts are being made to bring a program to San Antonio. Anyone interested in helping out should reach out to Monte Cely. More information about the program can be found on the information page: <https://www.sabrhornsby.org/about-basebalz/>

Jan's Excellent Ballpark Tour

Jan Larson reported that with his visit to Truist Park in Atlanta earlier this season, he has now attended a game at all 30 of the current ballparks. This brings his overall MLB ballpark total to 59. He's planning a presentation about his ballpark journey at the winter meeting in January.

Caribbean Series in Miami

Monte Cely, a veteran of past Caribbean classics, shared that the Caribbean Series (Serie del Caribe) is coming to loanDepot Park, home of the Miami Marlins in February. The series, which features teams from the Caribbean Professional Baseball Confederation (Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Mexico, and one representative each from Panama and Colombia), puts on 25 ballgames in nine days (Feb. 1 to 9).

Meiji Jingu Stadium in Tokyo





I shared that I was able to attend a Tokyo Yakult Swallows game at Meiji Jingu Stadium in Tokyo in June. It's renowned for being one of the few remaining active stadiums where Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and other Major League ballplayers participated in a baseball tour in 1934. This tour and its immense popularity gave birth to Nippon Professional Baseball. However, there are plans to demolish the stadium and the surrounding area in the face of intense local and international opposition.



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