

Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

July 1993 (93-3)

A Co-Chair's Comments

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About 25 people attended the annual business meeting of the Bibliography Committee, held June 26 during the 1993 SABR national convention in San Diego. I presided as senior co-chair Frank Phelps was unable to attend.

The first order of business was the newsletter. Skip McAfee agreed to resume editorship if someone else could do the photocopying and mailing. SABR Executive Director Morris Eckhouse has graciously volunteered the SABR central office in Cleveland to handle these chores. Thank you, Morris. For future newsletters, please send all submissions, suggestions, reviews, notes, letters, and what-have-you to Skip (5533 Colts Foot Court, Columbia, MD 21045).

Rick Johnson reported that the Errata Project appeared to be in terminal limbo: there haven't been any fresh submissions in the past year. The Errata Project was set up to identify and catalog errors of fact (due to careless, faulty, or zero copy-cat research) in established baseball research sources. Those of you with items that should be included are urged to contact Rick (3852 Howard Ave., #1, Los Alamitos, CA 90720). As noted by Frank Phelps, "endorsement of no such faults in books from members who have deep interest and expertise in the subjects covered by authors are equally welcome".

The plan to create indexes for critical baseball books that don't have them continued to make progress. In fact, during the convention, Jack Carlson turned in his index to Fred Lieb's *The Boston Red Sox* (1947) from the Putnam team histories series. That joins the team histories indexes prepared by Carlson (Boston Braves), Bob Boynton (Cleveland Indians), Bob Bailey (Detroit Tigers), and Rick Johnson (Brooklyn Dodgers). Pending are indexes for the Giants (Terry Smith), Phillies (Howard Pollack), Pirates (Carlson), and Reds (Bill Hugo). In addition, Boynton has indexed *Veeck ... as in Wreck* and *The Boys of Summer*. There are more than a dozen books in the Putnam series that still need indexes as well as innumerable other baseball books. The task is time-consuming and, at times, tedious, but very satisfying in the end. There is no "how to" model to give to potential indexers, but there are excellent sections on indexing in *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster's Standard American Style Manual*. Boynton said he did his index by buying a beat-up reading copy and actually highlighting the terms as he read. If anyone develops a digest of basics and suggestions to follow for indexing the likes of the Putnam team histories and biographies, Frank Phelps (259 Bernard Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1756) would be grateful to receive a copy for distribution to our indexers.

We also discussed the project to create an updated index to the *Baseball Registers* published by The Sporting News. See Frank Phelps' comments in the following article.

We took a minute to honor Joe Murphy, a Committee member who this year completed updating the index to SABR publications

first done by Phil Bergen in 1987. Joe's work has been turned over to Morris Eckhouse and SABR Publications Director Mark Alvarez, who will decide how to make the index publicly available. Joe said that he also kept a full name and photo index for himself. This is even more detailed than the SABR index. Anyone interested in a particular player can contact Joe (2441 Delevan Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95404), who is willing to provide a list of all references in SABR-published materials.

Also honored, although in absentia, was Rich Arpi, who continues to do a solid job turning out *Current Baseball Publications* (CBP), the quarterly listing of published baseball materials, sent to members of the Committee with the newsletter. Rich's annual compilations had been appearing in *Baseball History* until that publication folded. A somewhat truncated list appeared in the first issue of *The Cooperstown Review* this spring and this publication will be continued. In addition, at the meeting, Ted Hathaway suggested that the Committee find a way to make CBP more available, especially to libraries through databases. Peter Bjarkman suggested that the Committee correct and update earlier issues of CBP, especially by soliciting copies of works from SABR authors. It was suggested that this effort could best be handled through Baseball Online.

David Stephan raised the question whether it is the Committee's role to pursue archival materials (such as Lee Allen's papers). David eventually agreed to approach the SABR Board about a separate committee to do that work, but he also said he will be writing the Bibliography Committee a detailed letter seeking volunteers to help him.

The latter half of the meeting was devoted to Baseball Online (see next page). The meeting was especially pleasant for me personally in that several West Coast members of the Committee who had not attended previous SABR conventions were present. I hope others who haven't savored a national convention will make an effort to join us in Texas next year.

New Project: Index to *Baseball Registers* 1940-1993 (or 1994)

Frank V. Phelps

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Volunteers from the Bibliography Committee are sought for this project; later, the invitation to participate will be extended to all SABR members. *The Sporting News* (TSN) index for 1973 listed, in a single alphabetical sequence, the names of 4442 active players, managers, coaches, umpires, and "former stars" and the years of the editions in which their records appeared. Jack Lang (Secretary of the Baseball Writers Association of America) suggested that SABR prepare an up-to-date index and TSN rendered its approval. Possessing all 54 editions, I familiarized myself with the task's essentials by indexing completely all surnames beginning A through E and separate A-Z lists for other than contemporary players, totaling, in round numbers, 210 managers, 650 coaches, 160 umpires, and 540 former stars and Hall of Famers.

The number of names increased periodically from exactly 400 in 1940 to about 1370 in 1993 because of expansion and subsequent decision to include everyone who played in the majors during the preceeding season. Managers and active players (the latter at first separated between "players" and "pitchers") have appeared in all editions. Other categories appeared later: coaches (1940-1981), umpires (1943-1958, 1964, 1969-1979), former stars and Hall of Famers (1940-1958, 1965-1968), major leaguers in military service (1945), rookies (since 1964), and just-retired veteran players and newly enshrined HOFers (in recent years). Through the 1994 edition, I estimate about 11,000 subject names (all categories) and

55,000 entries. Obviously, our compilation will finish on a computer but I expect much can be accomplished first by volunteers working either manually or on computer. Also obviously, the most likely early volunteers are those having access to runs of consecutive editions of the *Baseball Register* or all of them. Below are some observations and opinions on procedure generated by my preliminary exposure, all subject, of course, to your ideas and counter-suggestions, which are much desired.

Use complete full names on initial compilations: surname, first name, middle name(s), any widely used nickname—e.g., *Crawford, Henry Charles (Shag)*. Leave to later the decision of how much of the name to put into the final index. Follow this practice consistently, even when it seems unnecessary—e.g., *Herzog, Dorrel Norman Elvert (Whitey)*. Too many subject persons have similar names and initials to do otherwise. Occasionally, names change or enlarge between editions, in which case we must determine the full, correct name and use it uniformly. Also, the same or different identity determinations depend on examination of persons' records in different editions, sometimes producing unanticipated answers. Latin surnames may cause problems: has the subject's surname been confused with his mother's and has it been alphabetized correctly? Do you agree with the basic approach suggested here?

The final form: one overall list or separate lists by categories? The 1973 TSN index presented a single alphabetized list without identifying the categories involved—e.g., *Cavaretta, Philip 40 thru 53-61-62-63*. I would reveal categories by either of two alternatives, preferably the second: A) one list using code letters to designate other than active player inclusions (M, C, U, F for managers, coaches, umpires, and former stars, respectively), thus changing the Cavaretta entry to *Cavaretta, Philip [note spelling correction] Joseph 40-51 M52-53 C61 M62 C63 C78*; or B) separate listing for each category, with cross-reference codes appended, by which the separate detail entries for Cavaretta would be *40-51 M, C*, as coach *61 63 78 P, M*, and as manager *52-53 62 P, C*. Note that both alternatives differ from the 1973 index by substituting a dash for "thru" to mean inclusive years and a single space in lieu of a dash to indicate other years. The B version adds overall length to the index but I favor it because it provides shorter, less cluttered entry lines. Which do you like better or do you have a more suitable idea to share?

Mistakes and omissions do occur in spots in the 1973 TSN index and the indexes at the ends of the earlier editions. While these are useful checking tools, we should build from scratch. I prefer that each piece of indexing be done separately by three compilers, then be compared. Even when compiling is done carefully with deliberation and apparent constant concentration, mistakes and omissions happen because of interruptions, stuck-together pages, inadvertent skipping of similar names, fleet-second inattention, and just plain goofs. I know! I expect someone could redo the A-E work I did and find me at fault in numerous particulars. After I finished the former stars list, I compared it with Bob McConnell's list in *SABR Research Guide #3* and discovered each of us had left out a half-dozen entries the other had included. Do you agree with the need for triple checking?

Steps in compiling. I see two different approaches to making the compilations, usable concurrently, and applicable whether the final form is A or B (see above) and whether done by computer, typewriter, or legibly by hand: 1) do as I did for A thru E on a run of consecutive editions, handling only a letter or subdivisions of a letter at a time (I can explain my method more fully, on request); or 2) take a single edition at a time and using the name form recommended above to make alphabetized lists by category in book order. Several of these for each of the 54 (or 55) annuals would be ideal material for an overall semifinal computer run before deciding how much of each full name is practical and appropriate to settle on. Do you have questions or suggestions about these or other possible procedural steps?

If you are volunteering, please do so to me and feel free to give me the benefit of your thoughts, suggestions, and criticisms. Being

computer-ignorant, I defer to Andy McCue and others with that type of knowledge and experience. To borrow an expression from another personal favorite sport, "ladies and gentlemen, the ball is in your court". I trust I may expect a barrage of swiftly paced, deep topspin returns to my baseline!

Baseball Online Project

Andy McCue

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In a presentation to the SABR Board during the national convention in San Diego, Ted Hathaway and I described the Baseball Online Project, including the accomplishments of project volunteers in the past year and the kind of support we'd like from the Board. In addition, we took a computer to the meetings of the Board and of the Bibliography Committee so that people could actually see how the database looked and that useful searches could be performed on it. The report is repeated here and what we are doing in the wake of each request is included in brackets.

What is Baseball Online?

Baseball Online is an electronic database of English-language materials that would be of interest to the baseball researcher—whether reporter, scholar, or average fan. In its final form it will contain all books, articles, monographs, dissertations, and audio and video recordings about baseball. While the database is kept in electronic form, most volunteers so far have chosen to fill out paper forms, and that information has been typed into a computer.

What we have accomplished

We have spent the year since the 1992 SABR national Convention in St. Louis attempting to establish the viability of the Baseball Online project. There were two concerns: 1) the effectiveness of the written materials we had created to help volunteers to add entries to the database; and 2) whether we could interest enough volunteers to make the project feasible. The proof would be our ability to create a research database of materials published in 1991.

We have had good success, although not quite what we had hoped for. We set out to catalog all books published during 1991 and to catalog all issues of *The Sporting News*, *Baseball America*, *Inside Sport*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Baseball Digest*, *USA Today Baseball Weekly*, *Minneapolis Review of Baseball*, *Spitball*, *Sports Collectors Digest*, and *Sport* published during 1991.

We were able to identify 431 books, monographs, pamphlets, and one-time magazines published during 1991; we found 416 of these and fully cataloged 402 (93%). In addition, we cataloged more than 700 sections of these publications, creating more than 1150 separate citations.

For periodicals, we succeeded in fully cataloging *Inside Sport*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Baseball Digest*, and *Sport*, about two-thirds of *Sports Collectors Digest*, about half of *USA Today Baseball Weekly* and *Baseball America*, and about one-third of *The Sporting News*. We understand more of these have been cataloged, but the information has not yet been forwarded to us. In addition, we found about 400 citations of baseball-related material in non-baseball publications, which we had not planned on including. (Post-convention note: some additional material had indeed been forwarded to us, although it is not included in these figures.)

The result is a database of 4533 citations. This is 50% larger than Grobani's *Guide to Baseball Literature* (1975) and barely 10% smaller than *The Baseball File* (1992) published by the Sport Information Resource Centre, Gloucester, Ont. And, although cov-

ering only one year, it is about one-sixth the size of the combined Myron Smith comprehensive bibliographies, which cover more than 100 years.

The materials prepared for the volunteers worked well enough. Ted and I will spend some time streamlining the forms; but this is essentially fine-tuning.

This effort has been accomplished with rather minimal official support. The volunteers have come almost entirely from within the Bibliography Committee, which has steadily promoted the project in its newsletter. About \$100 of Committee funds have been spent on photocopying. With a greater push in *The SABR Bulletin*, by committee chairs through their newsletters, and some additional funds, more could be accomplished. Which leads us to ...

What we'd like

1) Strong promotion of the project in *The SABR Bulletin*. We'd like to take a full page to reproduce the bibliographic form and another page to explain the project and call for volunteers. [Space will be made available in *The SABR Bulletin* and in *Baseball Research Journal* to solicit volunteers. Ted Hathaway and I need to work out the details with the SABR central office and the SABR Publications Director.]

2) A request/order from the SABR Board to all SABR committee chairs that they appoint a liaison to the Baseball Online Project. Each liaison would be asked to a) help design the parts of the database related to that committee's interest, b) identify sources of materials, and c) find volunteers within the committee to catalog that material. In addition, committee chairs would be asked to provide a small amount of space in their newsletters to describe the project and its relationship to that committee's interest and to solicit volunteers. [We will write a letter to Mark Rucker, the Board's liaison to committee chairs, to start this process. Several committee chairs have expressed an interest in coordinating this work with us.]

3) \$500 in discretionary funds above the normal budget of the Bibliography Committee. We anticipate that most of this money will be spent on photocopying the manual; but it might also be used for postage, floppy disks, or other needed materials. [SABR Executive Director Morris Eckhouse indicated that we should simply add \$500 to our existing request for Bibliography Committee funds.]

4) Computer help. There seems to be three major possible avenues for such help: a) ask Borland, the makers of Paradox, the commercial database program Ted and I have been using, to donate a copy of the program which we would be free to copy as needed; b) provide additional money to buy copies of Paradox; or c) ask the SABR Computerization Committee to make the Baseball Online Project a high priority, with the goal of having some proprietary software which could be used for data entry and sorting, preferably on both Macintosh and IBM-compatible machines. In addition, we have a great deal of data currently in a format that we have not been able to convert to Paradox. We could use the expertise of the Computerization Committee in translating these disks to usable formats. [Jim Johnston, chair of the Computerization Committee, took one of our data disks and promised to see what he could do about conversion. David Gamble of the committee offered to help on some aspects. We hope that Jim or someone else from the Computerization Committee can provide the rest. Also, we will write a letter for Morris to send to Paradox asking for a donation.]

For the long-term, we would ask the Board to authorize Morris to organize an attempt to get grant money from a foundation to hire a full-time person to work on the Baseball Online Project. We envision this person to have computer skills, some library training, and a strong interest in baseball. This person would handle a range of tasks: data entry, finding copies of materials to be cataloged, coordinating the work of volunteers, and cataloging. [We were asked to write a letter to Morris to set this process in motion.]

Now that the convention is over, Ted and I will concentrate on updating materials for the next couple of months. However, we can

still use more volunteers. And now that we are not focused solely on 1991, we can tailor areas of cataloging to suit your interests. If you're a Reds fan, you could do all the team publications and the books about the team. If you're a minor league fan, you could do a particular league or era. If you're a movie fan, you could start on all the films and videos. If you access to a major research library (such as the Library of Congress, the Baseball Hall of Fame, or the New York Public Library), we can find infinite numbers of things for you to do. If you tell Ted or me your interests, I'm sure we can find something within the church of Baseball Online for you to do. In addition, we can always use people just interested in the project as a whole.

If you are interested in periodicals, contact Ted Hathaway (5645 Fremont Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55419). If your interest is in books (including yearbooks, media guides, spring training magazines, and other once-a-year publications), contact me. If you don't fit neatly into either of these categories (you're the Reds fan mentioned above), get hold of either one of us.

Book Reviews

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith, Jr.
Rocky Mount, N.C.

RING AROUND THE BASES: THE COMPLETE BASEBALL STORIES OF RING LARDNER

Ring Lardner. Edited & introduced by Matthew J. Bruccoli. Foreword by Ring Lardner, Jr. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1992. 609p. \$35

Here's a monumental book that promises much: all of Lardner's baseball stories between two covers. There are 33 of them here. All of *You Know Me Al* (six stories), all of *Lose with a Smile* (six stories), and 21 other stories, many of them collected here for the first time. The stories are arranged in chronological order of their magazine appearance, with the exception that all the Jack Keefe stories are grouped together at the beginning of the book. All in all, the book is a great feast for those who love to read baseball fiction. In addition, Bruccoli includes the music and lyrics of "Gee, It's a Wonderful Game" written by Lardner and Doc White, the early Lardner essay "The Cost of Baseball", the 12 syndicated columns Lardner wrote about the 1919 World Series, and ten pages of photographs of the period. Even at 35 bucks, the book is a bargain.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to quibble with the editor. Bruccoli's introduction seems inappropriate for such a collection. Because he is interested in "Ring Lardner's 'permanent stature' — AKA 'his position in the canon of American literature'", Bruccoli finds himself asserting that "*Ring Around the Bases* presents an incomplete and therefore distorted view of Lardner's fiction" (p. xi). Surely this is a curious way to introduce a group of stories. Why have they been collected together then? There is, of course, at least one reason, but Bruccoli never addresses it. The reader needs to know what sense there is in collecting all Lardner's baseball fiction. Bruccoli does notice that of the baseball stories, only two were written in the 1920s (actually three, if one counts the play *The Bull Pen*, as Bruccoli does; in all, 23 stories were written between 1910 and 1920 and seven in the thirties), but he doesn't account for this odd configuration except to assert that they present a distorted view of his fiction. Might Lardner have outgrown baseball as a subject matter? If so, why did he return to it?

I wonder also what Bruccoli means when he refers in the introduction to "Lardner's 130 short stories, 46 of which are baseball stories" (p. xi). If there are 46, why are only 33 included in a book subtitled *The Complete Baseball Stories of Ring Lardner*? I can only guess at the answer to this question. I went back to the list of Lardner's published writings printed at the end of Donald Elder's 1957 biography *Ring Lardner* and also looked at the "Partial Check

List of the Writings of Ring Lardner Chronologically Arranged" in Howard W. Webb, Jr.'s 1953 dissertation on Lardner (I don't have a copy of Bruccoli and Richard Layman's 1976 *Ring Lardner: A Descriptive Bibliography*); and all of Lardner's baseball stories seem to be here. (There may be one missing: I have a note to myself that "The Courtship of T. Dorgan", a 1919 story, is a baseball story, but not a copy of the story itself. Bruccoli omits it.) I don't think the number is a misprint, either; I wonder if it refers to the number of both stories and other magazine articles Lardner wrote on the subject of baseball. If it does, we are faced with the question of why the other 13 pieces are excluded.

After all, Bruccoli does include some of Lardner's nonfiction work on baseball. Why? Bruccoli doesn't say, though there is a hint that he included "The Cost of Baseball" because of the recent astonishing rise in player salaries. This seems an insufficient reason when so much of Lardner's baseball nonfiction has not been reprinted in book form. As a matter of fact, "The Cost of Baseball" is included in *Some Champions* (1976), edited by Bruccoli and Layman, which also reprints some of Lardner's other nonfiction baseball pieces. There are others, particularly four early works in *American Magazine*—on Ty Cobb, Christy Mathewson, the 1914 Braves, and Lardner's all-time all stars—which are much more important in understanding Lardner and baseball and which have never been reprinted. This book might have been a suitable occasion for reprinting those.

Even so, we have a lot to thank Bruccoli for: in addition to *Ring Around the Bases*, *Some Champions*, and the Lardner bibliography mentioned above, he had something to do with the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Bruccoli Clark Harvest paperback edition of *Ring Lardner's You Know Me Al*, comic-strip adventures of Jack Keefe published in 1979. Lardner wrote the continuity for these between 1922 and 1925, which may account in part for his disinclination to use baseball material in his other writing during these years. The publication of *Ring Around the Bases* brings us a lot closer to having all of Lardner's magazine writing about baseball, but we are not quite there yet.

BASEBALL I GAVE YOU ALL THE BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE

Richard Grossinger and Lisa Conrad, eds. 5th ed. Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books, 1992. \$12.95

Grossinger has been making anthologies of writing about baseball since the early 1970s; even so, I was startled to see him designate this one the fifth edition of *Baseball I Gave You All the Best Years of My Life*. He explains in the preface that this fifth edition was preceded by three earlier editions under the same title edited by himself and Kevin Kerrane (I have a 1977 edition designated *10* 24 and a 1978 edition designated "second edition"; Grossinger says there was a third that also "dropped pieces and added new ones", but I haven't seen it). I'm not sure why that makes this one the fifth edition. Meanwhile, there are several other related anthologies.

The first was *10: Baseball Issue #10* (1971), which contains what I've heard said is Stephen King's first appearance in print, a poem about the Brooklyn Dodgers. Grossinger describes the Doubleday *Baseball Diamonds* (1980) as "essentially an abridged version of *Baseball I Gave ...* with a couple of new pieces". Then there are two other anthologies: *The Temple of Baseball* (North Atlantic Books, 1985) and *The Dreamlife of Johnny Baseball* (North Atlantic Books, 1987). Finally (almost) there is the anthology *Into the Temple of Baseball*, edited by Grossinger and Kerrane and published by Celestial Arts in 1990. This is material "reconsidered and reedited" from all the previous anthologies. The fifth edition of *Baseball I Gave ...*, Grossinger says, reprints material that got left out of *Into the Temple of Baseball* and adds new material. Now do you see why it's designated the "fifth edition"? If you do, you're way ahead of me.

I see I've forgotten (as does Grossinger in his preface) to mention that several additional pieces on baseball appear in *10* 16:

Earth Geography Booklet #4: Anima Mundi. I'm going through all this because I think Grossinger's anthologies are essential stuff for those of us interested in baseball literature. This is not the mainstream of baseball writing, as anthologized by Charles Einstein or John Thorn, but writing characterized by "quirkiness" of one sort or another. Perhaps it's best characterized as the response to baseball of the 1960s. All the new perspectives on life in America which got such public notice in the 1960s are in these anthologies turned on baseball, and the results are often stunning. I recommend particularly an essay by Grossinger himself, new to this edition of *Baseball I Gave ...*, called "Baseball Variants III". In it he's able to communicate an extraordinary feeling for baseball, analyze what baseball has become in contemporary America, and make a considered cultural criticism not just of baseball but of America itself. Heady stuff. It's best read if you begin prepared to believe *anything* you read, at least for a moment.

Grossinger cites two reviews on the book's back cover, which may help you decide if these books are for you. Art Spander in *The Sporting News* says "this book contains fact and fiction and material so far out it must have been written on Mars". And Joel Oppenheimer in *The Village Voice* says "this is a wonderful huge anthology filled with everything from the mythic to the particular, the outrageous to the sublime". It's all true!

My copy of the book contains a special discount card offering some of the earlier anthologies at greatly reduced prices. Make sure yours does, too; Grossinger's anthologies are worth collecting.

New Members of the Bibliography Committee

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