

# THE INSIDE GAME

NOVEMBER 2023

BY MENTHAL



# The INSIDE GAME

The Official Journal of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

VOL. XXIII, NO. 4: "LET'S GET THIS LUMPY LICORICE-STAINED BALL ROLLING!" NOVEMBER 2023

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This painting by M.L. Blumenthal, captioned "Come On! HOME!!," appeared on the cover of the July 27, 1912 issue of Collier's Weekly.

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN: CHICAGO'S OTHER "BIG ED"

by John McMurray

Ed Reulbach is remembered principally for three things: for his five-year run of pitching success for the Chicago Cubs between 1905 and 1909; for his then unprecedented one-hit game in the 1906 World Series; and for shutting out the Brooklyn Superbas in both games of a doubleheader during the 1908 pennant race. His successes invite recollection of this Deadball Era figure whose career shone exceptionally bright during the period's first decade.<sup>1</sup>

Described by David L. Porter in the *Biographical Dictionary of American Sports* as both "a superlative pitcher" and as "brainy," Reulbach was among the elite pitchers of his day, with strong statistical parallels to Pittsburgh's Sam Leever.<sup>2</sup> Both Reulbach and Leever pitched for thirteen seasons in the National League, each led the league in won-loss percentage three times, and both won roughly two-thirds of their respective pitching decisions. Yet Reulbach's peak was undeniably higher, with Ed's ERA being under 2.00 in four of his first five seasons and Reulbach's three straight seasons of leading the league in winning percentage has been equaled in baseball history by only one other pitcher: Lefty Grove.<sup>3</sup>

Surely, as Cappy Gagnon recounts so deftly in *Deadball Stars of the National League*, Reulbach's relative lack of renown stems from being perpetually overshadowed. Reulbach likely ranked second or third on a Cubs pitching staff led by Mordecai Brown which also included Orval Overall (himself a similar pitcher to Reulbach), Jack Pfeister, and Carl Lundgren. Reulbach's remarkable achievements aside — such as a 20-inning complete game victory against Philadelphia in 1905 — Reulbach

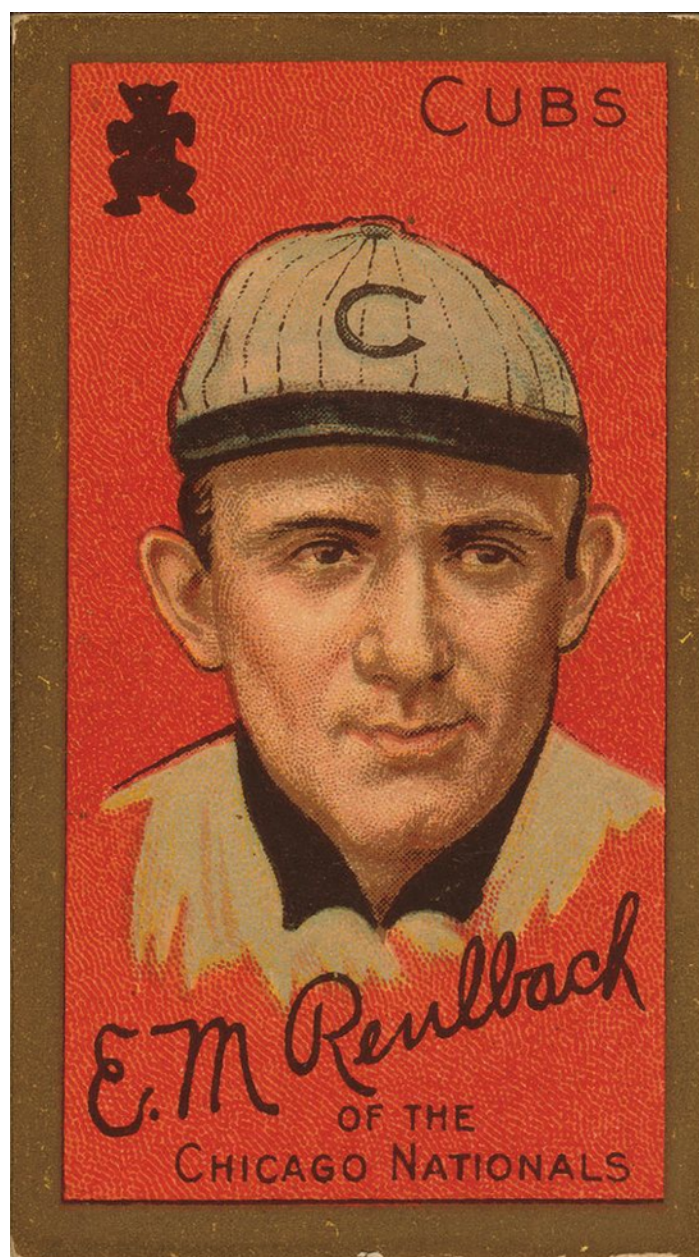
was never the best pitcher in the city of Chicago during his own career, firmly landing third behind Brown and Ed Walsh of the crosstown White Sox. Adding some insult to injury, Reulbach was, as Gagnon notes, not even the best “Big Ed” in his own city, losing out on that distinction too to Walsh (even if both were roughly 6’1”).<sup>4</sup>

Is there another elite performance more often forgotten than Reulbach’s World Series one-hitter in 1906? With the Cubs having lost Game 1 to the upstart White Sox, Reulbach’s top-level effort in Game 2 came at a time when the Cubs needed it most. Though Reulbach did yield an unearned run in that game — on account of his own wild pitch and a Joe Tinker error — the right-hander gave up only one hit, a seventh-inning single to center by Jiggs Donahue. Reulbach’s six walks aside, it was surely one of the greatest World Series games pitched during the Deadball Era. Reulbach also squeezed home a run in support of his own victory.

Still, when Monte Pearson of the New York Yankees pitched a two-hit complete game in Game 2 of the 1939 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds, Reulbach’s World Series one-hitter came under review. At issue was the first play of the fourth inning of that game in 1906, where Fielder Jones reached on a two-base error by Johnny Evers. A book edited by George L. Moreland

titled *Balldom*, according to a 1939 published piece, noted that “every Chicago paper” the next day “showed that two hits were charged against the husky Chicago hurler.” *Tribune* sportswriter I.E. Sanborn apparently said that “Jones hit an ugly bouncer between first and second that went for a double.” If true, Pearson would have equaled Reulbach’s feat for a low-hit World Series game.<sup>5</sup>

A 1961 obituary of Reulbach written by Fred Lieb noted the controversy, saying that the *Chicago Tribune* credited the White Sox with two hits in Game 2, but the official score compiled by A.J. Flanner of *The Sporting News* and Francis Richter of *Sporting Life* gave the White Sox only



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one hit, a single by Jiggs Donahue.”<sup>6</sup> Most accounts cite Sanborn as the primary source of the discrepancy. Evers, responding to a query from sportswriter Mike Gaven years later, noted: “Ball hit to me by Fielder Jones was very bad fumble by me, and it was charged as an error. Remember it very distinctly, like all youngsters remember their first important game.”<sup>7</sup> At the time, the National Commission ruled it to be a one-hitter and so it has remained. This tempest in a teapot more than three decades later may have chipped away a bit at the distinctiveness of Reulbach’s achievement.

Reulbach’s two shutouts in a doubleheader could not have come at a better — or, from the perspective of recognizing Reulbach’s achievement, more vexing — time. In close competition with both the New York Giants and the Pittsburgh Pirates for the pennant, the Cubs knew they needed to win both games to remain in close contention and turned to Reulbach, who often dominated the hapless Superbas. In the first game, according to Bill Gottlieb in a 1942 article in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Brooklyn starter Kaiser Wilhem “never had a chance against the superlative pitching of his opponent” in a 5-0 Cubs victory during which Reulbach retired the last fifteen batters consecutively.<sup>8</sup> As Lee Allen noted in a 1968 article, with the first game taking only 1:40, Reulbach then talked Frank Chance into letting him pitch the second game, which itself took only 1:15.<sup>9</sup>

The second contest, against Jimmy Pastorius, then with a 3-19 record, pitching for Brooklyn, was tighter. Upon the conclusion of the second game — a 3-0 Cubs win — Reulbach had pitched thirty consecutive scoreless innings. But Reulbach’s unmatched achievement was dulled by its timing since it came only three days after the Merkle game, the central event of the 1908 season. Reulbach’s singular moment has, in some sense, been lost to posterity in the wildest pennant race in baseball history. In Cait Murphy’s *Crazy ’08*, an authoritative history of that season, Reulbach’s doubleheader shutout is summarized on less than a single page.

Like Hippo Vaughn, Jack Coombs, and Deacon Phillippe, Reulbach is respected but not well known. He has been, fairly or unfairly, lumped into the group of workmanlike starting pitchers integral to team success but

never considered consistently dominant. Though known as a practical joker at Notre Dame, his opacity on a personal level derives some too from playing under three assumed names before reaching the major leagues. It no doubt hurts Reulbach’s cause that he never pitched more than 300 innings in a season during a time when it was relatively common to do so. Except for a 20-win season for the Newark Peppers of the Federal League in 1915, Reulbach’s final eight professional seasons were, at best, good and never great.

Ed spoke of the competition of his era in a 1944 interview with sportswriter Al Laney:

*I have not seen a baseball game since 1922,” said Reulbach, “so I am not qualified to speak of the present day. But I love to talk about the old days. Distance probably gives them a value in our minds that they don’t have. But they seem like wonderful days now. I wonder if the team spirit is as great these days. I doubt it.*

*The team was everything then. We didn’t bother so much about our individual averages, but if anybody smiled in the clubhouse after we were beaten, he was likely to get a stool draped around his neck. We hated those Giants, and we were ready to fight them on the field and off. The fans hated, too, in those days. We weren’t always safe on the streets of New York, and neither were the Giants in Chicago.*<sup>10</sup>

In an interview with the *New York Journal-American* in 1946, Reulbach, like many pitchers of his day, admitted to throwing a mud ball:

*Beat National League clubs with it for years, and they never caught me throwing it,” said Reulbach. “I would load the glove with saliva before the previous pitch, which I would waste. Then when the ball landed in my glove it was soaking wet. Then all I had to do was drop the ball in the dry dirt and I had my mud ball.*

*You talk about experiments. That’s the trouble with pitchers today. They don’t experiment enough. Every few days I took home a couple of balls and bounced them on the sidewalk. Every batch of balls was different. One week they would be lively, and the next shipment would be dead. I pitched accordingly.*<sup>11</sup>



A recurring theme in articles about Reulbach's career is that he was overshadowed, whether it be by the star power of his pitching contemporaries, the timing of his two shutouts in a doubleheader, and even by the timing of his own death, as Reulbach died within hours of Ty Cobb. More so, the issue appears to be that that Reulbach's career was ascendant for a relatively brief period and that fans do not have as much of a window into Reulbach the person as they do for many of his contemporaries. Reulbach's career is a testament to quiet efficiency and occasional transcendence. While Reulbach has not been elected to the Hall of Fame, the history of the first decade of the Deadball Era cannot be written without him mentioned as a central figure. That, in and of itself, is good enough.

#### ENDNOTES

1. With thanks to the Giamatti Research Center at the National Baseball Hall of Fame for providing article clippings cited in this article.
2. Porter, David L. ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Sports*. Undated clipping from Reulbach's player file at the Baseball Hall of Fame.
3. Statistics in this article are courtesy of baseball-reference.com.
4. Simon, Tom, ed. *Deadball Stars of the National League* (Society for American Baseball Research: 2004), pp. 111-112.
5. "A Lighter Topic." Unattributed clipping from Reulbach's Hall of Fame file dated October 13, 1939.
6. Lieb, Fred, "Ed Reulbach, Star Twirler of Early Cubs Champs, Dead," *The Sporting News*, July 26, 1961, p. 36.
7. "Evers Settles Dispute." Unattributed clipping from Reulbach's Hall of Fame file dated October 12, 1939.
8. Gottlieb, Bill, "Ed Reulbach's Double Shutout in 1908 Still Stands as Record," *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 29, 1942.
9. Allen, Lee, "How Many Shutouts in '08?" *The Sporting News*, September 14, 1968, p. 6.
10. Laney, Al, "Ed Reulbach in There Pitching, Helping to Shut Out Axis at 61," *New York Herald-Tribune*, January 16, 1944. No page number given.
11. Gaven, Michael, "Modern Pitchers Lack Initiative Says Reulbach on Visit to Frick," *New York Journal-American*, January 25, 1946, p. 20.

#### WANTS NO TIME WASTED

A few days ago President Harry C. Pulliam, of the National League, sent out a letter of instructions to all the team managers, in which he stated that it was his aim to eliminate everything but real up-to-date baseball from contests on the diamond. He said that there were numerous moments wasted during the progress of the game, and that this delay could be done away with, and the action accentuated, if the managers would give him their co-operation along lines which he proceeded to outline.

He asked that the teams lose no time between the half-innings, when one side was coming from, and the other going to the field. Sometimes the outfielders are slow about reaching the bench, and thus a minute is lost. It is not much in itself, but moments count up when this time is lost between each inning. President Pulliam also requested that the managers have the player who follows the batsman ready to step to the plate the moment the batsman is retired or reaches first base. He pointed out that this could not be done by the man sitting on the bench until the man ahead of him has finished his turn at bat, and suggested that the managers have the groundkeepers mark out a certain section on the line from the home plate to the bench, where the waiting batsman might stand until called to the plate.

These things seem trivial in themselves, and no doubt more than one manager grinned when he read President Pulliam's letter. It was full of practical common sense, nevertheless, and the ideas contained in it should be carried out to the letter, for whatever tends to hasten the action of the game is a good thing for the sport. The fans do not like delays, even of short duration, and they will surely thank President Pulliam for what he is trying to accomplish in their behalf.

*Pittsburg Press, April 26, 1908*

Outfielder Moran, of the Brooklyn National league team, is seriously ill of blood poisoning, the result of a spike wound sustained last week in the series with Philadelphia. His condition is said to be very serious and it is feared that amputation of the leg may be necessary.

*Washington Herald, July 3, 1912*

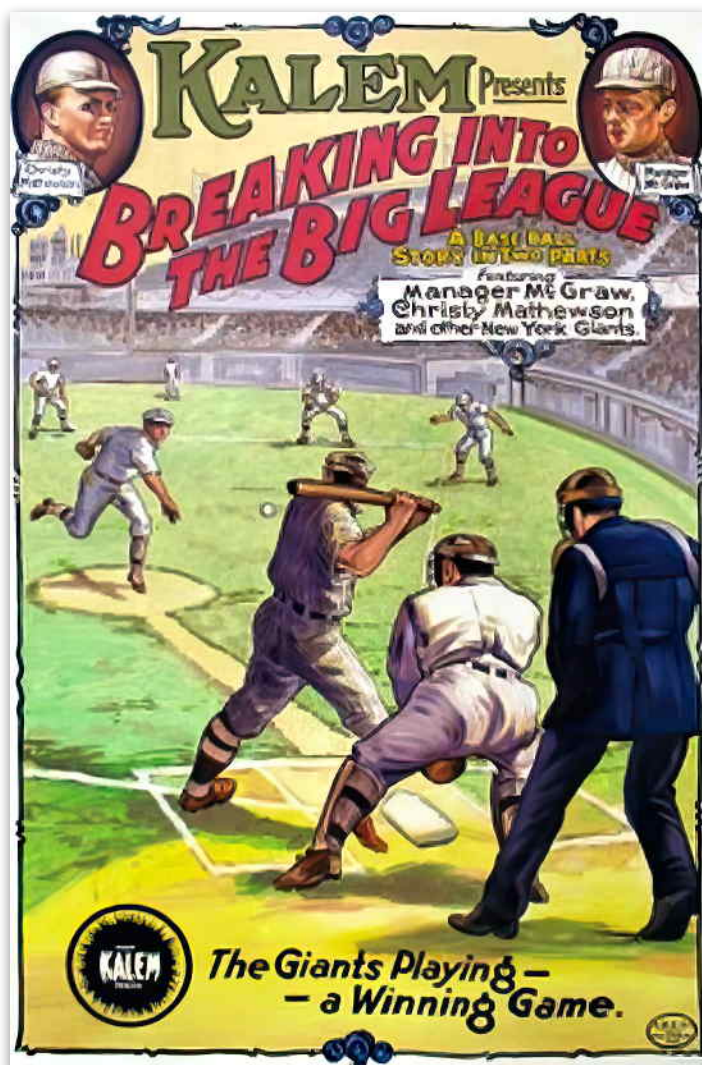
## LOST (AND FOUND) BASEBALL: THE DEADBALL ERA ON THE SILVER SCREEN

by Rob Edelman

A gloomy fact of film history is that more than half the movies made during the silent film era (pre-1927) are lost — vanished into the mists with the passing generations.

One of the culprits is the evolution of film technology. For decades, prints and master materials of films were generated on nitrocellulose film stock, which deteriorates over time. Across the years, archivists have recovered “lost” films in rotting film cans that were hidden away under piles of boxes in grandma’s attic or deep in the bowels of motion picture studio storage facilities. When a can was pried open — if it could be pried open — all that remained was its contents in various stages of corrosion. The chemically deteriorating celluloid may have become sticky, or even solidified into a mass, or was coated in varying amounts of nitrate dust. Some images still could be seen and identified while those on other frames simply had dissolved.

Beyond the issues relating to the longevity of film stock, another practical reality of motion pictures comes into play here. One can view a film as a reflection of history or a mirror of the era and culture that produced it. One can also view a film as a work of art. However, an unavoidable fact of the film *industry* is that a moving image (whether it was made by a major Hollywood studio, a poverty-row studio, an independent outfit, or a producer of newsreels) is a product, no different from an automobile churned out in Detroit or a keg of beer from Milwaukee. Unless they are home movies shot by amateur camerapersons or non-narrative films, moving images are made strictly for commercial purposes, to be marketed to the public with the expectation that they will turn a profit. Furthermore, in the pre-television/pre-VHS/pre-DVD era, a film that had completed its theatrical play was the equivalent of yesterday’s newspaper. Simply put, it was old news. Beyond the reissue of a popular hit, there were no existing venues in which films could be repackaged and resold. So, they often



KALEM 1912

were discarded — tossed into a dumpster along with last night’s stale fish and rotting vegetables.

Some enterprising souls — for example, the powers who worked for Walt Disney — realized that, even theatrically, a film did not have to be the equivalent of *Gone with the Wind* to be recycled every few years and marketed to new audiences. This was logical, particularly regarding the children’s films produced by Disney. Every few years, a fresh generation of kids was ripe for introduction to Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Snow White. As a result, before it became stylish (not to mention profitable), Disney took extra-special care to preserve its product.

That studio was not the first to grasp the concept of re-marketing its product. In 1925, Eastman Kodak established the Kodascope Library, which rented 16mm ver-





RIGHT OFF THE BAT, 1915; MIKE DONLIN

sions of popular films to institutions and private collectors for noncommercial screenings. Kodascope features generally were edited down to between four and five reels (with one full reel lasting approximately eleven minutes) and were sepia or amber-tinted, while short films usually were unedited. While in business, the Kodascope Library marketed more than seven hundred films. Many exist to this day and are coveted by film collectors.

But such was not the case for the Deadball Era. As a result, an immeasurable number of moving images from that era exist only in faded memory.

To be sure, a handful of baseball-related feature-length films were produced before 1920. Those that are considered “lost” include *Right Off the Bat* (1915, Arrow), starring Mike Donlin; *Somewhere in Georgia* (1916, Sun-

beam), featuring Ty Cobb; and *Casey at the Bat* (1916, Triangle), with DeWolf Hopper — not to be confused with a 1922 DeForest Phonofilm which utilizes the sound-on-film technology developed by Theodore Case and features a hammy Hopper reciting the poem that earned him immortality. Of the early non-baseball films in which ballplayer-turned-actor Donlin appeared, prints exist only for *Raffles*, the *Amateur Cracksman* (1917, States Rights); copies of *Jack Spurllock*, *Prodigal* (1918, Fox), *Brave and Bold* (1918, Fox), and *The Unchastened Woman* (1918, Rialto De Luxe-George Kleine System) all have vanished.

Other missing features peripherally deal with ballplayers and ballgames. The titles listed under the headings “Baseball” and “Baseball players” in the subject index of *The American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States: Feature Films, 1911–1920* are: *The Grandee’s Ring* (1915, Interstate); *Little Sunset* (1915, Bosworth-Paramount), which, at four reels, straddles the line between short and feature and includes in its cast “members of the Pacific Coast League’s Venice team”; *The Stolen Voice* (1915, William A. Brady); *The Varmint* (1917, Morosco-Paramount); *The Final Close-Up* (1919, Famous Players-Lasky); *Better Times* (1919, Brentwood); *The Greater Victory* (1919, B.P.O.E.-Arrow); and *Muggsy* (1919, Triangle). Feature-length documentaries whose status is classified as “unknown” include *The Giants-White Sox World Tour* (1914, Eclectic Film Co.), a six-reel record of the New York Giants-Chicago White Sox 1913–1914 trip around the world, which includes moving images of John McGraw, Christy Mathewson, Charles Comiskey, Germany Schaefer, Hans Lobert, and others; and *The Baseball Revue of 1917* (1917, States Rights), five reels in length, which features footage of a couple dozen ballplayers from Grover Cleveland Alexander and Home Run Baker to Ed Walsh, Smoky Joe Wood, and Heinie Zimmerman.

Meanwhile, prints of varying lengths and quality exist for such Dead ball era baseball features as *The Pinch Hitter* (1917, Triangle) and *The Busher* (1919, Famous Players-Lasky), both starring Charles Ray; *One Touch of Nature* (1917, Edison), featuring John Drew Bennett and John McGraw. *Headin’ Home* (1920, Yankee Photo Corp./States Rights), Babe Ruth’s famous narrative fic-

tional film, was made just a few months after the Dead-ball era ended. *The Pinch Hitter* is one of the few baseball titles marketed by the Kodascope Library. But it is an abridged version. According to the *American Film Institute Catalog*, the film runs 4,768 feet. In the third edition of the *Descriptive Catalogue of Kodascope Library Motion Pictures*, published in 1928, the film is listed as being “3960 feet standard length — on 4 reels.”

Of the one- and two-reelers produced prior to 1920 that are labeled as “missing,” some of the more fascinating feature big-name big leaguers. Such a list begins with two films starring Rube Waddell: *Rube Waddell and the Champions Playing Ball with the Boston Team* (1902, Lubin) and *Game of Base Ball* (1903, Lubin). Other titles include *Hal Chase’s Home Run* (1911, Kalem); *The Baseball Bug* (1911, Thanhouser), featuring Chief Bender, Jack Coombs, Cy Morgan, and Rube Oldring; *Baseball’s Peerless Leader* (1913, Pathé), with Frank Chance; *Breaking Into the Big League* (1913, Kalem), featuring Christy Mathewson and John McGraw; *The Universal Boy* (1914, Independent Motion Picture Company), also



CASEY STENGEL IN THE BASEBALL REVUE OF 1917

with McGraw; and *Home Run Baker’s Double* (1914, Kalem). One unusual title is *Baseball: An Analysis of Motion* (1919, Educational), described on the Silent Era website as “a slow-motion study of baseball players.” The titles of quite a few others begin with the word “baseball”: *The Baseball Fan* (1908, Essanay); *Baseball, That’s All!* (1910, Méliès); *The Baseball Star from Bingville* (1911, Essanay); *Baseball and Bloomers* (1911, Thanhouser); *The Baseball Umpire* (1913, Majestic); *Baseball, A Grand Old Game* (1914, Biograph); *Baseball and Trouble* (1914, Lubin); *The Baseball Fans of Fanville* (1914, Universal); and *Baseball at Mudville* (1917, Selig Polyscope). The status of all the films in the Universal-produced “Baseball Bill” comedy series remains unknown; the films starred Billy Mason and first were released in 1916. Other missing titles include everything from *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* (1910, Essanay); *Slide, Kelly, Slide* (1910, Essanay); and *Spit-Ball Sadie* (1915, Pathé), also known as *Lonesome Luke Becomes a Pitcher*; to *The Fable of the Kid Who Shifted His Ideals to Golf and Finally Became a Baseball Fan and Took the Only Known Cure* (1916, Essanay).

Savvy baseball historians may list their most sought-after “lost” films — or, for that matter, images that likely never even were recorded. One is Tim Wiles, former Director of Research at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, co-author of *Baseball’s Greatest Hit: The Story of “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,”* and die-hard Chicago Cubs fan. While researching his book, Wiles learned



ED WALSH IN THE BASEBALL REVUE OF 1917



of the existence of the 1910 *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*, which was made by G.M. “Broncho Billy” Anderson, one of the movies’ first cowboy heroes, and tells of a baseball nut who manages to forget his wife at the ballpark. According to Wiles,

*While the film does not survive, there was a review of it in one of the early film publications – Moving Picture World. We ran the review as an illustration [in] the book. Also ... we report that Anderson filmed part of a 1908 White Sox-Highlanders game at Chicago’s South Side park. Would love to see that, but beyond that, according to David Kiehn’s book on Broncho Billy, Anderson also signed a contract, presumably with the NL and AL, to film the World Series for 1908, ’09, and ’10. How would you like to watch the Cubs’ last World Series in 1908, Cobb’s Tigers, Wagner’s Pirates, and Connie Mack’s A’s play in the World Series? I sure would. To my knowledge, none of that footage survives.*

Meanwhile, a relatively small number of pre-1920 baseball shorts and film oddities are known to exist – some in their entirety, others in fragments. Included here are one- and two-reelers and footage shot for early newsreels or by individuals with home movie cameras. Most of the baseball footage housed in the UCLA Film & Television Archive is post-1920 – and post-silent film era. Early moving images in this collection include shots of “Mr. and Mrs. Babe Ruth handing out shoes to children,” found on a 20-minute Hearst newsreel dated 1919–1920.

A small number of baseball-related shorts – including *His Last Game* (1909, Independent Motion Picture Company) and *Homerun Hawkins* (circa 1920) – are listed in the *Catalog of Holdings: The American Film Institute Collection and the United Artists Collection at The Library of Congress*. One of the clips found in the “American Memory” section of the Library’s website is the earliest known baseball footage: *The Ball Game* (1898, Edison), which runs scant seconds and consists of an amateur team from Newark, New Jersey, battling a rival nine. One of the more intriguing extant baseball-related films is *The Selig-Tribune, No. 21* (1916, Selig Polyscope), a one-reel newsreel that includes footage of



ZACK WHEAT IN *THE BASEBALL REVUE OF 1917*

members of the Chicago Cubs. Meanwhile, *Casey at the Bat* (1899, Edison) – also known as *Casey at the Bat* or *The Fate of a “Rotten” Umpire* – along with *How the Office Boy Saw the Ball Game* (1906, Edison); *His Last Game*; *The Ball Player and the Bandit* (1912, Broncho); *Hearts and Diamonds* (1914, Vitagraph); and an undated one-minute “Kinogram” featuring Babe Ruth are among the baseball shorts selected by film historian Jessica Rosner and included in *Reel Baseball: Baseball Films from the Silent Era, 1899–1926*, a DVD released by Kino International in 2007.

A representative sample of existing early baseball footage may be found in *Baseball* (1994), Ken Burns’ high-profile documentary. The section that covers 1900–1910 includes snippets of everything from small-town nines



1906 SUNDAY AMERICAN CHRISTY MATHEWSON FLIP BOOK

and bloomer-clad girls playing ball in fields and young boys doing the same on urban streets to major events and personalities. Unsurprisingly, the *Baseball* segment spotlighting 1910–1920 includes even more footage: male and female factory workers manufacturing baseballs and sewing gloves; players exercising, warming up, and batting; masses of fans populating stands and walking across ballfields; and athletes in baseball jerseys mingling with men in military uniforms during World War I. The Philadelphia Athletics are seen taking batting practice and there is the façade of the newly opened Comiskey Park as well as footage of some of the era’s top names: Grover Cleveland Alexander; Ban Johnson; Connie Mack’s famed \$100,000 Infield (Stuffy McInnis, Eddie Collins, Jack Barry, Home Run Baker); and Ty Cobb warming up, at bat, sliding — and on horseback. The 1919 Black Sox scandal is well represented, with a bit of in-game World Series footage and shots of players warming up, fans in the stands, and images of some of its key figures (Eddie Cicotte, Shoeless Joe Jackson, Buck Weaver, Kenesaw Mountain Landis).

In the closing credits of each section of *Baseball*, “news-reel sources” are cited. They range from the Library of Congress, the Oregon Historical Society, the University of South Carolina News Film Library, and the UCLA Film & Television Archive to commercial and other private sources such as John E. Allen and Streamline

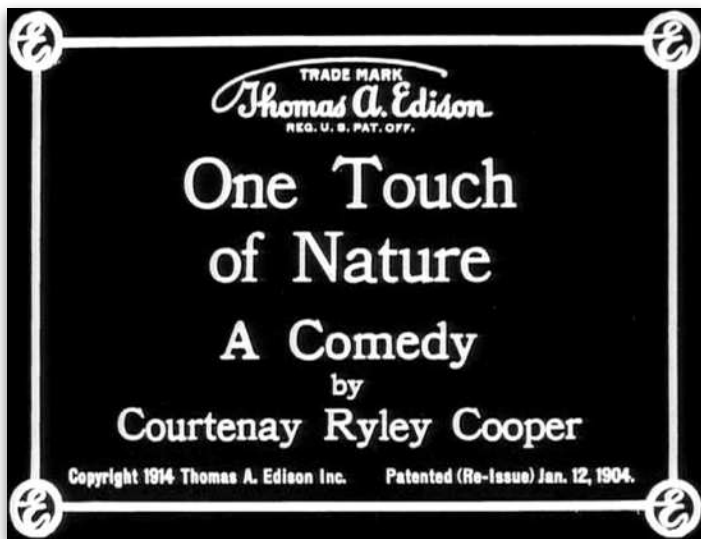
Archives. The small amount of extant pre-1920 footage is further underscored upon perusing the Allen web site. Of the 458 records found under “baseball” on the site’s search engine, a handful are dated 1920 or earlier. They include 56 seconds of footage of the 1913 opening of Ebbets Field; several seconds’ worth of a couple of small-town ball games (1912, 1918); and Ty Cobb hunting (1918) and with his family (1920). A smattering of additional images may be uncovered while searching the Internet. For example, among the clip titles found on YouTube are: *Walter Johnson Pitching Footage* (running one minute, 29 seconds); *Christy Mathewson Pitching Footage* (24 seconds); *3 Finger Brown Pitching* (40 seconds); *Pete Alexander Pitching Footage* (46 seconds); *John McGraw and Christy Mathewson* (one minute, 13 seconds); *Ty Cobb Footage* (one minute, 34 seconds); *1905 New York Giants* (23 seconds); *1909 World Series Footage* (26 seconds); *1910 World Series Footage* (43 seconds); and *1919 World Series Footage* (three minutes, eight seconds).

Quite a bit of this footage may be found in *Baseball*. Nevertheless, the majority of images from this era included in the documentary are still photos given a sense of movement by Burns’s slowly zooming in on subjects of interest and panning from one subject to another. For example, the 1912 World Series, pitting the New York Giants against the Boston Red Sox, is recalled in detail via words and stills. But there are no moving images. Such is also the case with the 1916 World Series between the Bosox and Brooklyn Superbas.

Early extant baseball footage also may be found in other films. One example is *We Believe* (2009, No Small Plans Productions), a Chicago Cubs documentary. According to John Scheinfeld, the film’s director,

*When making We Believe, we found two sequences of actual game footage shot in 1909 involving the Chicago Cubs. The first, running approximately two minutes, was shot in Pittsburgh with the Cubs in town to take on the Pirates. The second, longer sequence, running approximately four minutes, was shot at the West Side Grounds on September 16, 1909. Cubs vs. New York Giants. It was the day President Taft visited Chicago and he and his entourage are seen in the stands. Then*





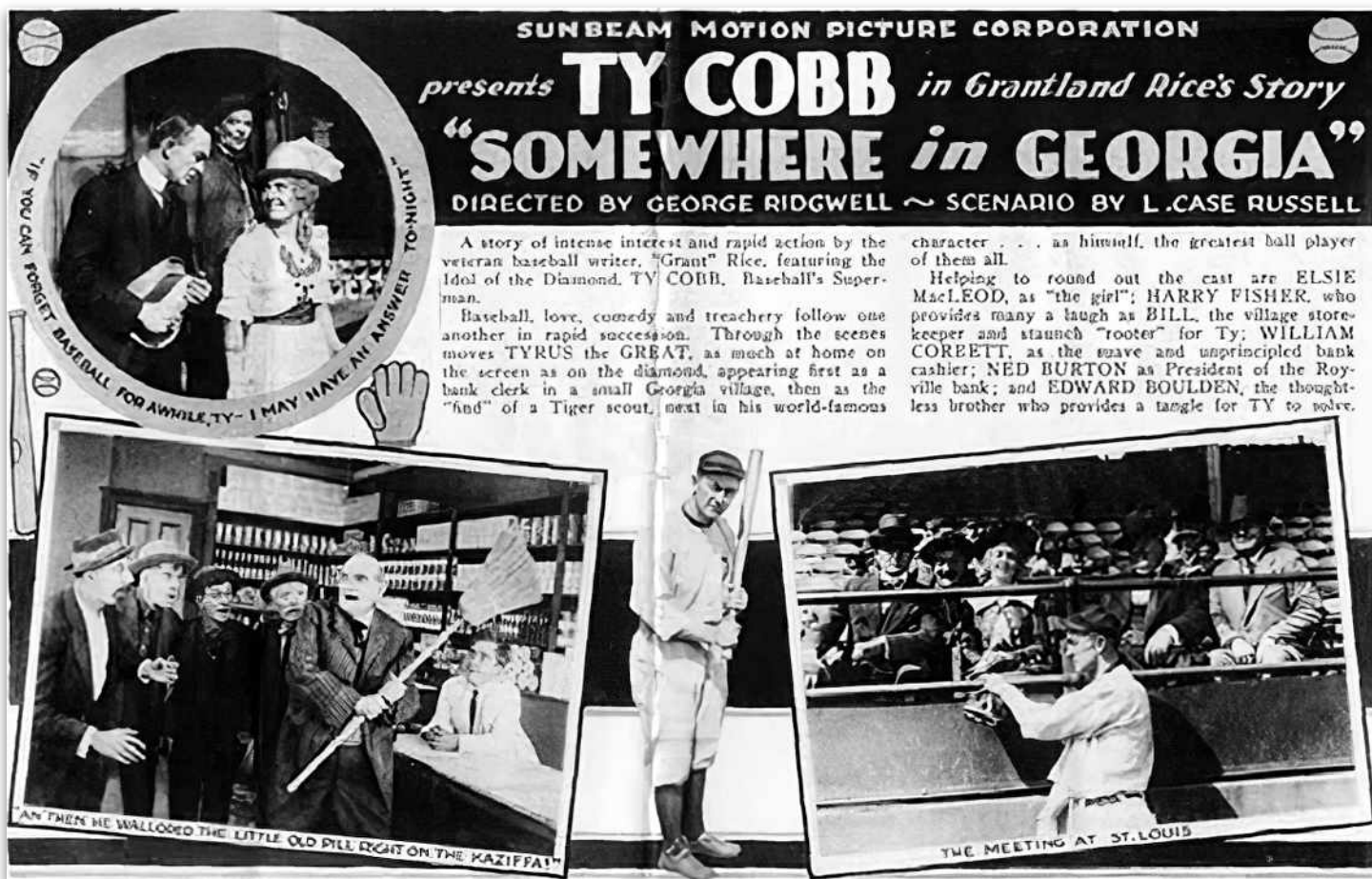
ONE TOUCH OF NATURE, 1914

the camera cuts to another angle from behind home plate facing the first base line. There are several pans of the Chicago Tribune marquee on the outfield walls. Then, most interestingly, the camera was moved on top of the grandstand, shooting down at the home plate-to-first baseline. We found the footage ... the Library of

Congress. It was a bit of a happy accident as we were looking for one thing and came across this footage spliced at the end of a reel of raw film. I don't know anything about the Pittsburgh footage, but we learned that a local Chicago film studio shot much of President Taft's visit to the city, including his going to the ball park.... It's pretty spectacular and we felt fortunate to have found it.

Happily, a number of Deadball era baseball films have been restored. Of the era's features that exist, perhaps the most intriguing is *One Touch of Nature* — if only because it features John McGraw. For years, researchers could view a complete print of this title in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. An 18-minute excerpt is on the *Reel Baseball* DVD, along with a 55-minute version of *The Busher*, and the previously mentioned short subjects and baseball film fragments.

If such films as *Right Off the Bat*, *Somewhere in Georgia*, and *The Pinch Hitter* remake remain “lost,” one-sheet



TY COBB, SOMEWHERE IN GEORGIA

posters, insert posters, lobby cards, stills, press materials, and other production items are extant — and often are found in auction catalogs and special collections in libraries and archives. One example: In August 2002, Hunt Auctions offered what it described as a “rare 1915 Mike Donlin ‘Right Off The Bat’ movie poster.” The 28-by-42-inch piece was a “color lithographic poster featuring Donlin standing alongside [a] woman under [a] tree with foliage in [the] background. Retains beautiful original color with only light original vertical and horizontal folds backed on linen. Titling at bottom includes mention of the other star of the film, John J. McGraw....” The estimated price for the poster was \$3,500-\$4,500. The sale price was \$5,000.

*Somewhere in Georgia* was the first and only production of the Sunbeam Motion Picture Corporation and was distributed on a state’s rights basis. In its June 2009 catalog, Lelands.com listed what it labeled “a never seen before item that will probably never [be] seen again.” Up for bidding was a lot consisting of two Sunbeam Motion Picture Corporation stock certificates (dated 1916 and 1917); a Sunbeam brochure; several letters, one of which described the selling of screening rights to the film in New England; and a set of eight double-sided 8-by-10 inch *Somewhere in Georgia* lobby cards. Seven featured Ty Cobb. Lelands offered the entire lot for a \$10,000 reserve.

A smattering of materials related to the early one- and two-reelers also exist — and occasionally, their origins are cloaked in mystery. For example, in 2004, Robert Edward Auctions sold a set of five lobby cards from *Spring Fever*, a Honus Wagner short that the auction house reported as being released in 1919. Wagner appears in three of the five; on them, he is identified as “Hans Wagner.” “Film-graphs” is cited as the film’s releasing company; however, it should be noted that the company name is an addition, a photographed overlay. The cards were part of the Hall of Famer’s estate and were put up for auction by his granddaughter, Leslie Blair Wagner.

To be sure, *Spring Fever* is a curio — and not just because it features Wagner in a rare screen appearance. As described in the auction catalog,

*In Spring Fever Honus Wagner teaches a young boy the skill of batting. Incredibly, the young boy in the*



HONUS WAGNER IN SPRING FEVER

*film was Moses Horowitz [sic], who later became very well known as Moe Howard, of the Three Stooges. The cast of Spring Fever also included Moe’s brother, Shemp Howard. Now really, we must pause for a moment, to contemplate the fact that the great Honus Wagner actually starred in a movie with two future members of the Three Stooges, long before this comedy team’s formal debut.*

The opening bid for the set was \$500. The sale price: \$1,495. (Moe’s and Shemp’s birth name was in fact Horowitz, rather than Horowitz; meanwhile, Shemp later appeared opposite Dizzy and Paul Dean in *Dizzy & Daffy* [1934, Warner Bros.], a two-reel comedy in which he plays a half-blind hurler who quips, “The only Dean I ever heard of is Gunga.”)

The whereabouts of any existing print of *Spring Fever*, the actual year in which it was made, and the possibility that it originally was released under a different title remain unanswered questions — as is the breadth of Wagner’s screen career. Apparently, late in life — he passed away in 1975, at age 77 — Moe Howard claimed to have appeared with Wagner in twelve short films. All supposedly were made in the early 1920s, a “fact” that is casually noted in a number of Three Stooges histories. “Besides stage work,” according to *The Three Stooges Scrapbook*, authored by Jeff and Greg Lenburg and Moe’s daughter, Joan Howard Maurer, “Moe also appeared in 12 two-reel shorts with baseball great Hans Wagner.” However, as noted on a post on the Three Stooges.net Forum, made by “Be A





CHARLES RAY, THE BUSER

Stooge” on November 4, 2005, “In the early ’90s at one of the Philadelphia [Three Stooges] Conventions, Joan Howard told me she did not know where the Lenburgs got that information; as co-author, it did not come from her, and she was not aware of anything in her father’s papers that may have sourced the information.” Then in *The Three Stooges, Amalgamated Morons to American Icons: An Illustrated History*, Michael Fleming reported that a “series of twelve two-reel silent sports comedies

[were] filmed outside Pittsburgh. The result: it’s a good thing Wagner could hit a curveball. He won five batting titles for Pittsburgh but was not Oscar material. ‘I think,’ said Moe, ‘that perhaps they made banjo picks out of the [films].’” No detailed production information is cited in either book, or no record of their existence is found in the standard film history sources. (For the record, Wagner in fact copped *eight* batting crowns.)

The Wagner/Three Stooges connection remains an enigma to Three Stooges experts. “It has been written in the past that Moe and Shemp starred with Honus Wagner in the *Spring Fever* short, and that Moe starred with him in 12 shorts,” explained Wil Huddleston of C3 Entertainment, which owns The Three Stooges brand and sponsors the team’s official website. “As to which ones, I am not sure. Unfortunately, I do not have any way of confirming this because we do not have those shorts available to us.”

Regarding *Spring Fever*, other sources — for example, the first edition of *Total Baseball* and Arthur D. Hittner’s *Honus Wagner: The Life of Baseball’s “Flying Dutchman”* — report that Wagner made the film in 1909 for Vitagraph Studios. According to *Total Baseball*, “the movie showed Honus Wagner teaching a little boy the art of batting.” Hittner noted that the film “featured the famous ballplayer delivering batting tips to a young boy, played by Moses Horwitz.” Lending this credence is the fact that Horwitz/Howard was born in 1897; by 1919, he no longer was a “little” or “young” boy. Furthermore, the Vitagraph studio was located in Brooklyn — and the Horwitz brothers were born and raised in Brooklyn.

As listed in *The American Film Institute Catalog, Film Beginnings, 1893–1910*, Vitagraph released over 175 short films in 1909. None is titled *Spring Fever*, and most are long lost. So perhaps the *Spring Fever* lobby cards are connected to the film’s retitling for re-release. Adding to the confusion is another 1919 short with the same title, this one a Harold Lloyd comedy. But the existence of the lobby cards is proof positive that Wagner did appear in a movie that at one time was marketed under the title *Spring Fever*. If the *Spring Fever* lobby cards and other original artworks are too pricey for those wishing to collect baseball film memorabilia, inexpensive reproductions

(particularly of lobby cards and posters) are available from a range of venues. An additional source for vintage images is the display advertising found in newspaper archives.

Such ads do not just appear in “big city” papers. A head-to-toe shot of Charles Ray, garbed in a baseball uniform, dominates the display ads for *The Busher* printed in the *Sandusky (Ohio) Star Journal* and *Sandusky Register* in late August and early September 1919. A non-baseball-oriented ad featuring a headshot of Ray, toplineing *The Pinch Hitter*, appears in the June 27, 1920, *Fort Wayne (Indiana) Journal-Gazette*; at this juncture, Ray was a major film star, and such an image was deemed sufficient to attract ticket buyers. Simple, no-frills ads for *Right Off the Bat*, *Somewhere in Georgia*, and *One Touch of Nature* respectively appear in the January 22, 1916, issue of the *Janesville (Wisconsin) Daily Gazette*, the September 16, 1917, *Lowell (Massachusetts) Sun*, and the January 2, 1918, *Freeport (Illinois) Journal-Standard*. Similar ads for *The Busher* appear in the June 29, 1919, *Lowell Sun* and August 27, 1920, *Charleston (Virginia) Daily Mail*.

While such visuals may fascinate collectors, fans, and historians, the question remains: Will material from *Right Off the Bat* or *Somewhere in Georgia*, and the missing shorter films ever be unearthed? One never can tell.

For one thing, prints or even negatives may be languishing in foreign film archives. In 2008, a cache of eight American newsreels, trailers, promotional films, and documentaries was uncovered in Australia’s National Film and Sound Archives. One was *Screen Snapshots* (1925, Columbia), one in a series of documentary short subjects produced between 1924 and 1958, in which film stars are pictured playing baseball. The following year, while vacationing in New Zealand, Brian Meacham, now film archivist at Yale, visited the country’s film archive and inadvertently came upon dozens of long-lost U.S.-made features, short films, and trailers dating from 1898 to the 1920s. The highlights included *Upstream*, a 1927 feature directed by John Ford; *Maytime*, a 1923 Clara Bow drama; and the earliest surviving film directed by and starring Mabel Normand. The films, some of them shrunk or in varying degrees of decay, are set to be preserved and eventually screened.

Not surprisingly, Babe Ruth was one of the most frequently photographed sports heroes of his era. Moving images of the Bambino on the ballfield, waving his bat as he waits for a pitch and then smashing dingers and waddling around the bases abound in Ken Burns’ *Baseball*. So are shots of him chopping wood, kibitzing with kids, playing with his young daughter and some puppies, and standing on a window ledge while autographing baseballs and tossing them to the masses below. There even is footage of a pre-1920 Ruth, in his pre-New York days. One of the most endearing (culled from John E. Allen) dates from 1919 and features the Babe, in a Red Sox uniform, playfully emerging from behind a door and joking with a woman.

Despite the unearthing of these gems, what remains lost is unimaginable and incalculable. Granted, one can easily compile a list of all early baseball-related films and newsreels and determine which are missing. But it would not be possible to verify all the baseball-related footage, taken by amateur cinematographers, of everything from major and minor league teams and games to regional semi-pro nines to youngsters pitching and catching in schoolyards.

Other similar discoveries will invariably be made in the future. One never knows if — or when — fragments or complete prints of *Right Off the Bat* or *Somewhere in Georgia* might be discovered resting unobtrusively in a corner in an archive in Europe, South America, or Australia, or covered in decades’ worth of nitrate dust in grandma’s attic.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PLAYBILL

Deadball images of players and teams are now widely available on the internet. For material covering the entire era, we recommend three films which can be found online or purchased: *Reel Baseball: Baseball Films from the Silent Era, 1899–1926*, a DVD released by Kino International in 2007; *Baseball*, the acclaimed PBS Series by Ken Burns (accompanied by music from the period);

and *The Glory of their Times – Special Edition*, a video version of the classic Lawrence Ritter book of the same name (written, produced and directed by Bud Greenspan and masterfully narrated by Alexander Scourby).

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4G0nbtLLeQ&t=659s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4G0nbtLLeQ&t=659s)

Feature films mentioned by Rob Edelman in his article include:

*The Ball Game:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBIQcwtjJWk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBIQcwtjJWk)

*The Ball Player and the Bandit:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2HAond3Jhg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2HAond3Jhg)

*The Baseball Revue of 1917: (World Series Game 1)*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGF\\_QqK38KE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGF_QqK38KE)

*Casey at the Bat or The Fate of a “Rotten” Umpire:*

■ [video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8  
&p=Casey+at+the+Bat+or+The+Fate+of+a+%E2%80%9CRotten%E2%80%9D+Umpire  
&type=E211US105G0#id=1&vid=78d5df7b576d758b220616adcc4704f9&action=click](http://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=Casey+at+the+Bat+or+The+Fate+of+a+%E2%80%9CRotten%E2%80%9D+Umpire&type=E211US105G0#id=1&vid=78d5df7b576d758b220616adcc4704f9&action=click)

*Headin’ Home:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiLpFsDfp8M&t=35s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiLpFsDfp8M&t=35s)

*Hearts and Diamonds:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tJZPUv0uwQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tJZPUv0uwQ)

*His Last Game:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxOXp\\_7Bu0E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxOXp_7Bu0E)

*How the Office Boy Saw the Ball Game:*

■ [archive.org/details/silent-how-the-office-boy-saw-the-ball-game](http://archive.org/details/silent-how-the-office-boy-saw-the-ball-game)

*One Touch of Nature:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMc2sOOTHqY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMc2sOOTHqY)

*The Selig-Tribune, №2:*

■ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBSeBtwoSQg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBSeBtwoSQg)

## PITCHING TO COBB

by John Zinn

Few pitchers in the Deadball Era, and perhaps any era, faced a greater challenge than that of George Bausewine at the end of the 1911 season. After laboring all year for a New Jersey semi-pro team, the 22-year-old hurler closed out his season against one of the game's greatest hitters, the immortal Ty Cobb. To make the task even more daunting, Bausewine faced Cobb at his best. Only twenty-five himself, the Detroit star won the 1911 American League batting title with a .419 average. And if that wasn't enough, the Georgia Peach also led the league in seven other offensive categories including runs, hits, doubles, triples, and runs-batted-in. Some of this was likely due to a livelier ball, but the numbers are still very impressive.<sup>1</sup> To no one's surprise Cobb received the Chalmers Award as the American League's Most Valuable Player.

While Bausewine had his hands full with Cobb, he didn't lack fan support for the game in Washington Borough, New Jersey. Exactly why Cobb brought his team of "All-Stars" to the small community in the northwestern part of the state, some 60-70 miles from Philadelphia and New York City, isn't clear. Washington was reportedly an important railroad junction so the relatively convenience may have been a factor.<sup>2</sup> According to the local *Washington Star*, there was a lot of competition for the honor of visiting Washington that day. Other possibilities were the seventh place Brooklyn Dodgers or the New York Giants who had just recently lost the World Series to the Philadelphia Athletics.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly not a Giant fan, the *Star* writer claimed Cobb's team was preferred over New York because "Washington doesn't care to take on any losers."<sup>4</sup> Regardless of their preferences, the local squad was playing mostly for honor or glory since Cobb's team was to receive 75% of the gate receipts, but no less than \$250.<sup>5</sup> "All-Stars" was a very generous description of the visitors, most of whom were border-line major leaguers, mixed with an assortment of semi-pro players. One player of note was Germany Schaefer, a longtime friend of Cobb who was renowned for his on-the-field, circus like antics.<sup>6</sup> Also of interest was Paul Krichell, not due to his playing ability,



GEORGE BAUSEWINE IN 1915

but because of his future 37-year scouting career for the New York Yankees, highlighted by signing Lou Gehrig.<sup>7</sup>

In 1909 and 1910, Bausewine pitched, with some success, for Charlotte in the Carolina League, but by 1911, he was back in New Jersey pitching for the Washington semi-pro team.<sup>8</sup> If he needed added incentive for the matchup against Cobb, he received it when he was offered "the best hat in the Bryant store," if he struck out Cobb.<sup>9</sup> No small task since the Detroit star had only fanned 42 times in almost 600 at bats. Bausewine was not, however, intimidated by the Georgia Peach. According to Bruce Johnson in *Covered Wooden Grandstands*, Cobb encountered Bausewine in Washington's Hotel Windsor prior to the game. With his characteristic in-your-face style, Cobb allegedly told Bausewine he had played against better pitchers. Not in the least un-





TY COBB ABOUT 1913

nerved, the local pitcher supposedly retorted “I’ve struck out much better men than you.”<sup>10</sup> Strong words indeed.

Predictably, the game generated a lot of local interest including the first request ever to purchase reserved seats in advance.<sup>11</sup> In addition to a crowd of 1500, a band from a neighboring community supported Bausewine and his teammates.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps trying to intimidate the locals, Cobb, and his team “entered so grandly in a barouche.”<sup>13</sup> “Grandly” or not, the entrance was the highpoint of Cobb’s day. In the top of the first, he swung and missed twice before taking a called third strike. Not only did Bausewine earn the new hat at the earliest possible opportunity, but he also had the memory of a lifetime. Nothing was said about it in the *Star*, but one must admire the courage of umpire McTeague, who called Cobb out on strikes and lived to tell about it. Continuing the gamesmanship, Bausewine offered “to let Mr. Bryant have the hat back” since the

strikeout was so easy.<sup>14</sup> Cobb didn’t do much better in his remaining at bats, managing only a walk.<sup>15</sup>

The “All-Stars” led 2-1 going to the bottom of the ninth, but Cobb’s second error of the game at first, put the tying run on base. He didn’t stay there long, scoring on a triple from the creatively named “Good Night” Slavin. McNabb of the home team followed with his third hit of the game, driving in the winning run although the *Star* claimed Slavin was about to steal home.<sup>16</sup> Not only did the local fans get to see the great Cobb and a home team win, but they also enjoyed Schaefer’s act. According to the *Star*, the antics of “one of the funniest men in baseball,” provided “the real life of the game.” Unfortunately, no details were given, but Schaefer’s usual repertoire included the hidden ball trick, tight rope walking the foul line and using two bats as oars to “row” across the field.<sup>17</sup> No wonder, the fans reportedly “yelled themselves into a delirium of excitement.”<sup>18</sup>

*[Bausewine] retorted “I’ve struck out much better men than you.”*

Although the *Star* claimed Cobb looked like “a corn cob with the kernels cleanly shelled,” the paper credited him with being “good natured” and taking “it all in good humor.”<sup>19</sup> Perhaps, despite his reported pregame comments to Bausewine, the great player was more interested in giving the fans what they wanted to see. He and his players may have taken some solace from their share of gate receipts which at about \$338 exceeded the minimum guarantee.<sup>20</sup> It would be fascinating to know how much money Cobb kept and how much he shared with his teammates.

Also in the crowd was the “assistant manager” of the Giants, who asked if the National League champions could come and play the Washington team the following Saturday “even though the frost is on the pumpkin now.”<sup>21</sup> The local team mulled over the offer until they learned that the day after the game in Washington, the Giants, minus only two regulars, lost to these selfsame “All-Stars.” This gave the Washington team one final triumph as their captain turned down the Giants because “it’s the [world champion] Athletics for us or nothing.”<sup>22</sup> As much as Bausewine (and we) might have

hoped, his performance against Cobb didn't lead to a shot at the majors. Instead, he became a mainstay on the New Jersey semi-pro circuit, still at it more than 20 years later at the age of fifty-five.<sup>23</sup> But no matter how many games Bausewine pitched, none compared to the day he struck out the one and only Ty Cobb.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Charles Leerhsen, *Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty*, (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 248.
2. [www.washingtonbid.org/things-to-do](http://www.washingtonbid.org/things-to-do) (history heading).
3. "Look Who's Here, the Great Ty Cobb," *Washington Star*, October 26, 1911.
4. "Look Who's Here."
5. "Look Who's Here."
6. [sabr.org/bioproj/person/germany-schaefer](http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/germany-schaefer).
7. [sabr.org/bioproj/person/paul-krichell](http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/paul-krichell).
8. "Things Are Coming to George Bausewine Now," *Newark Star Eagle*, August 17, 1909, 11, "Tigers To Play Five Games in Three Day's With Jack Dunn's Orioles," *Newark Star Eagle*, June 10, 1910, 17.
9. "Look Who's Here."
10. Bruce Johnson, "When the Pros Came to Town," *Covered Wooden Grandstands: A Collection of Stories by New Jersey's Best Sports Writers Past and Present*, (Bruce Johnson and Friends, 2012), 39.
11. "Look Who's Here."
12. "Ty's Plainfielders Lose at Washington," (Plainfield, New Jersey) *Courier-News*, October 30, 1911, 9, "Look Who's Here."

#### **CURB DOBBS AND ELBERFELD**

##### **MANAGERS MUST NOT APPEAR ON FIELD IN UNIFORM UNLESS CLASSED AS ACTIVE PLAYERS**

A ruling has been sent out by President Martin of the Southern league that hereafter managers of teams must not appear in uniform on the field unless they class themselves as active players included inside the player limit. The ruling will bar John Dobbs of the New Orleans team from the lines and also Kid Elberfeld of the Little Rock team unless they include themselves as players on their respective clubs.

*Chicago Eagle, June 14, 1919*



GERMANY SCHAEFER EARLIER IN THE 1911 SEASON

13. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming," *Washington Star*, November 2, 1911.
14. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
15. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
16. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
17. [sabr.org/bioproj/person/germany-schaefer](http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/germany-schaefer), "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
18. "Ty's Plainfielders Lose at Washington."
19. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
20. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
21. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming."
22. "How Lucky That Winter is Coming," "Giants Meet Defeat," *New York Times*, October 30, 1911, 12.
23. "'Bink' Bausewine Still Going Strong," *Montclair Times*, September 1, 1933, 12.

#### **ALLOWS ONE HIT IN A DOUBLE HEADER**

PETERSBURG, VA.—Pitcher Hedgepath established a world's record here Wednesday when he pitched both games of a double-header against Richmond and was hit safely but once in the 18 consecutive innings. He was not scored against, only gave three bases on balls—one in the first game and two in the second—and did not hit a batsman.

Hedgepath was sold to the Washington Americans several weeks ago. Ayers, who opposed Hedgepath in the first encounter, also belongs to Washington. He had won 13 consecutive games for Richmond up to Wednesday's defeat.

*South Bend News-Times, August 14, 1913*



## THE NAVASOTA TARANTULA

by David Nemec

Virgil Lee Garvin befuddled the public with his behavior and baseball pundits with his pitching.

Born in Navasota, Texas, on New Year's Day in 1874, he was normally warm-hearted and jolly, full of Southern quips. But when the gangly 6'4" and 170-pound bean-pole righthander was in his cups, he became the game's Mr. Hyde. Nicknamed the "Navasota Tarantula" by an unknown Texas-Southern League teammate, Garvin was continually embroiled in knife and gun episodes while under the influence. Soon after jumping from the National League Chicago Orphans to the American League Milwaukee entry in 1901, he emptied his revolver on James Harrison, an African American Milwaukee bootblack, because his shoes hadn't been shined to his liking, and later, after his arrest, he maintained that he was just upholding the "Texas tradition." Fortunately, Harrison was unharmed, so Garvin sustained no more than a \$50 fine and was able to start the first game of a Brewers doubleheader two days later.

The following August, he was back in Chicago with the AL White Stockings after the Brewers folded, and their franchise was moved to St. Louis. While Garvin was drinking early one hot afternoon in a west side Chicago saloon, he asked bartender Lawrence Flanigan for a loan. When Flanigan, a friend, demurred, Garvin pulled a gun. Police officer Dennis Fitzgerald was summoned and tried to get Garvin to surrender the weapon. Instead, Garvin struck Fitzgerald with it and then held it to his temple. After the officer fell to the floor in terror, Flanigan grabbed at the gun, missed, and was shot in the shoulder. Garvin fled the bar with Fitzgerald in pursuit and escaped on a passing streetcar. When both his victims proved to be only slightly wounded, he was merely assessed a \$100 fine plus costs, the maximum for disorderly conduct. The White Stockings nonetheless released him to Brooklyn even though he was in the midst of his best season.

But for Garvin, his best brought only an 11-11 log and the lone year that he did not finish with a losing record. In addition to being the most explosive pitcher of his time, he was also unequivocally the most star-crossed.



NED GARVIN

Bill James dubbed Garvin "the tough luck pitcher of the decade (1900-1910), if not the hard luck pitcher of all time." Among all hurlers in major league history with a sub-.400 career winning percentage in a minimum of 1,000 innings — Garvin's WP was .374 — his 2.72 career ERA, which calculates to be a career ERA of 124+, heads the luckless list by a comfortable margin. Such paradoxical statistics, even in the Deadball era, are all but unfathomable.

*Bill James dubbed Garvin "the tough luck pitcher of the decade ..., if not the hard luck pitcher of all time."*

In 1910, subsequent to Garvin's death, in reminiscing about him, Chicago writer Hugh Fullerton credited Garvin rather than Christy Mathewson with originating the famed "fadeaway" pitch and said he gripped the ball with his middle finger overlapping his index finger and then threw sidearm, giving the ball a backward pull as it left his hand so that it started as a fastball but hesitated as it neared batter and then broke in on a right-handed batter like a lefty's curve. Other sources mention that as early as 1897 Garvin had a unique pitch in the Atlantic League that was called a "break off ball" and, according to writer Harry Merrill, was "more pronounced than the

one possessed by any other chap whose work I have watched.” If Garvin had a weakness other than his behavioral issues and his lousy hitting — a meek .280 OPS in over five hundred plate appearances — it was that he lacked stamina late in close games because he was so elongated, he had “to stand twice in one place to make a shadow.” Said to be greatest pitcher in the majors for six innings, he probably would be a Cy Young candidate in today’s game when six innings often constitute a “quality” start.

Garvin first shot into the public eye in 1895 with the Sherman Orphans when he was labeled the fastest pitcher in the Texas-Southern League. His major league debut with the Phillies the following year on July 13 at Chicago was an immediate harbinger for the remainder of his career when he became the lone pitcher in MLB history to hurl a complete game and receive a four-homer barrage in his support from a teammate (Ed Delahanty) but nonetheless contrive to lose, 9-8 to Chicago’s Bill Terry, to the dismay of his chronically irascible catcher that day, Jack Clements. A month later, after making only one more appearance, that in relief, Garvin was farmed by the Phils to the Philadelphia Athletics in the Atlantic League. In 1898, now with Reading, Pennsylvania, of the Atlantic League, Garvin went 29-19 and gained a friend in umpire Jack Brennan when he came to Brennan’s rescue during a mass attack by several other Reading players. Brennan, no shrinking violet himself, later remembered Garvin as a particularly rugged operator who threatened an owner once with a revolver when his pay was \$10 short and would also snatch money from his team’s gate receipts box when he thought he had it coming to him.

By 1899, in his second season as the Reading Coal Heavers’ ace, Garvin was known throughout the Atlantic League as “Bullet Proof Ned,” according to the May 6<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Sporting News*. Sold to Chicago in July, he debuted with the NL team that had beaten him by one run in his first MLB appearance three years earlier with a one-run 7-6 loss to Pittsburgh. Garvin’s string of one-run defeats soon reached epic proportions, but Washington owner J. Earle Wagner nonetheless predicted that soon he “would rank in the Rusie class” and umpire Tom Lynch judged that he had the best stuff in

the league. Garvin proved them right, in a sense. At the close of 1900, his second season with Chicago, he had compiled the best ERA of any NL hurler in four hundred or more innings during that two-year span (2.61), yet he had only a 19-31 composite record to show for it.

### ... Garvin was known throughout the Atlantic League as “Bullet Proof Ned”

That winter Garvin made his leap to Milwaukee but not before being charged in a Chicago court with the complaint of a semipro player named Matt Daley for putting a beer glass on Daley’s face after knocking him down and then stomping on it, causing the glass to leave a permanent circular imprint on Daley’s countenance. In his defense, Garvin said Daley had been casting aspersions on his Texas birthplace. Garvin was absolved, perhaps because he called as character witnesses several fellow students at the Chicago College of Dentistry where he had begun taking classes for fear that his “frail body” wouldn’t hold up much longer as a pitcher.

When Garvin went just 7-20 in 1901 with the Brewers in the AL’s fledgling season as a major league, *The Sporting News*, finally beginning to recognize that something weird seemed to happen whenever he pitched, remarked: “He didn’t win games and it is hard to account for his failure. All that can be said is Garvin was Jona-hed.”

After being released late the next season by Charlie Comiskey following his saloon debacle with Flanigan and Fitzgerald, the Navasota native remained incident free for a stretch after joining Brooklyn, but it brought no change in his luck. In the spring of 1904, Garvin fiercely held out when Brooklyn manager Ned Hanlon tried to pay him according to his winning percentage rather than the quality of his starts and did not report until May 18. He then made twenty-two starts and had a 1.68 ERA as of September 9 but was released when he was just 5-15. Snatched immediately by the New York Highlanders, in hot contention with Boston for the AL pennant, Garvin started against Washington as soon as he arrived in New York but left in a pique after giving up just one run in eight innings, and the game predictably was lost 3-2 to the last place Senators in 10 frames. A shaky start six days later, on September 16,



1904, at New York, in which he went only four innings in a 4-2 loss to Boston's Cy Young marked both the end of his MLB career and the end of arguably the most ill-fated pitching season in MLB history. Among all qualifiers who have fashioned a season ERA below 2.00, Garvin owns the record for the lowest winning percentage for his composite work with Brooklyn and New York in 1904 when his 1.72 ERA produced an execrable .238 winning percentage (5-16).

Late that October, Garvin was in Plainfield, New Jersey, to sue the Plainfield Athletic Club for not paying him because he had lost too many close games on the stellar AC semipro circuit after the club had signed him the previous month following his release from New York. Who could blame him for slugging an insurance salesman at a Plainfield hotel who preferred reading the paper to listening to his litany of grievances?

Garvin settled matters by paying the man \$50 and then went west with his wife without ever collecting his salary from the Plainfield AC. He had barely finished sitting for a team picture with the 1905 Portland entry in the Pacific Coast League when the National Commission ordered him to report to Little Rock, claiming his negotiations with the Arkansas club over the winter had amounted to more than the flirtation he deemed them to be. Garvin eventually contrived to stay in the west and was last active with Butte, Montana, in the 1907 Northwestern League. He returned home weakened and tired to his family in Texas after a team-leading 20-14 season but remained there only until the following spring before heading to the retirement home of his parents in Fresno, California, for his health. Garvin died on June 16, 1908, of consumption in Fresno County Hospital scarcely two weeks after his arrival from Texas. The source of his nickname "Ned" is unknown, but for years there was strong temptation to speculate that a mistake may have been made and then repeatedly perpetuated in the early baseball encyclopedias when his name immediately followed Ned Garver's. Garvin's gravesite tombstone, in Fresno's Mountain View Cemetery, establishes that he was known as Ned, though, as we say, the source, like his wretched support when on the mound, remains a mystery.

*Author's Note: Garvin's biography is an expanded version of one that appeared in David Nemec's Major League Baseball Profiles: 1871-1900 (Lincoln, Nebraska: Bison Books, 2011) vol. 1.*

*In assembling this biography, I made extensive use of Sporting Life and The Sporting News, plus assorted baseball-related items and box scores in the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, and Boston Globe for details of Garvin's life and professional baseball career. Most but not all his major and minor-league statistics came from [www.baseball-reference.com](http://www.baseball-reference.com). Garvin's 1898 minor league stats, for one, are not yet found there.*

### **HIT BY FOUL BALL; IS AWARDED \$3,500**

#### **KANSAS CITY BLUES LOSE IN SUIT FILED BY LAWYER FOR DAMAGES**

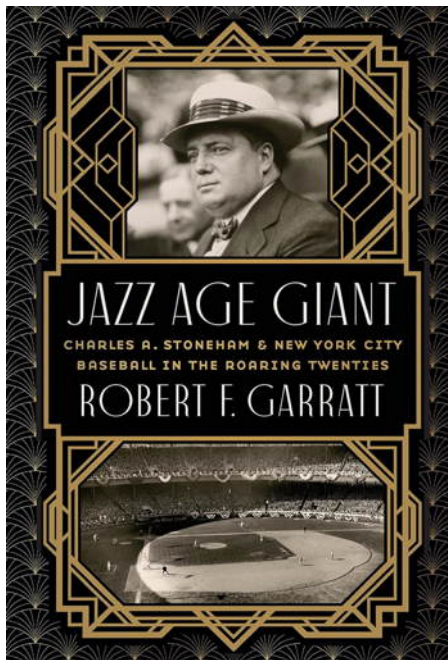
KANSAS CITY—"If the Kansas City Blues had kept their eyes on the ball with the same accuracy that they contend Edling should have exercised, they would have attained a higher place in the race for the pennant," said the Kansas City court of appeals Monday in an opinion awarding Chas. A. Edling, a lawyer, \$3,500 for being hit on the nose by a foul ball. Edling was watching a game here in 1911 when a foul ball came through the wire fence and broke his nose. The club contended that Edling ought to have seen the ball coming.

*(Dubuque) Telegraph-Herald, June 2, 1914*

### **VERDICT RETURNED IN FAVOR OF SAINT LOUIS BASEBALL CLUB**

ST. LOUIS—A verdict in favor of the St. Louis American league baseball club was rendered here today in the suit of James C. Peach against the company for \$15,000 damages. Peach alleged that at a game August 9 last he was led from his seat by an usher who charged him with having taken a baseball which was knocked into the stand.

*Grand Forks Herald, February 21, 1917*



**JAZZ AGE GIANT:  
CHARLES A. STONEHAM AND  
NEW YORK CITY BASEBALL  
IN THE ROARING TWENTIES**

by **Robert F. Garratt**

2023, *University of Nebraska Press*

[ISBN 978-1-4962-2371-5. 264 pp.]

\$29.95 USD. Hardcover]

reviewed by **Sharon Hamilton**

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A few years ago, I served as the project manager for a web project with SABR on the transition from the Deadball Era to the Lively Ball Era. Near the end of the project, just as we were about to go live, the SABR web designer for the project, Jacob Pomrenke, asked me if I could write a short contextual introduction to the 1920s, to situate the significant developments in baseball the website would describe. I found myself turning naturally to the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, writing: “With Tales of the Jazz Age, American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald named the decade he later described as “the greatest, gaudiest spree in history.”

It makes sense for anyone wanting to capture the character of the 1920’s to turn to Fitzgerald for insights. He was one of the most perceptive observers of the time. In

that respect, it is not that surprising to see Fitzgerald’s novel *The Great Gatsby* used as a significant framing device in Robert F. Garratt’s baseball biography *Jazz Age Giant: Charles A. Stoneham & New York City Baseball in the Roaring Twenties*. In this book about the owner of the New York Giants baseball club from 1919 to 1936, Garratt turns to *Gatsby* not only for Fitzgerald’s first-hand insights on the era but also to help him solve a challenging problem.

Charles Stoneham was a major figure in New York baseball. Under his ownership the Giants baseball club was a championship team, especially at the beginning of his tenure when they won four consecutive National League pennants (1921-24) and two World Series titles. They won the World Series again in 1933, near the end of Stoneham’s time as owner. One might think that such an important person in baseball history would have been the subject of a biography before now, yet Garratt’s is the first. Why is that? This situation relates to the problem Garratt uses Fitzgerald’s fiction to solve.

As Garratt explains, Stoneham intentionally kept out of the media and stayed much more silent than might be expected of a prominent New Yorker. The reason for such guardedness relates to significant levels of subterfuge in his business and personal life. It is telling that almost all the direct quotations from Stoneham in this book come from statements he made in court, during trials related to his business dealings.

**VIRTUAL BOOK TALK**

Please join us for our next Deadball Era Book Talk virtual meeting on Tuesday, December 5 at 8:00 p.m. EST. Our guest will be SABR author Ronald T. Waldo, a historian and author who has written ten books about baseball history, with many devoted to examining the Deadball Era and the 1920s. All five of his books on the Deadball Era received nominations for the Larry Ritter Book Award; *Deadball Trailblazers: Single-Season Records of the Modern Era* was a finalist for the 2023 award. Ron’s latest book is the recently released *Days of Reckoning: Players Punching Their Ticket Out of Pittsburgh during the Barney Dreyfuss Era*.



At the beginning of his book Garratt uses this quotation from *Gatsby* to set the tone: “And I was with him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.” How he will use this perspective to help uncover what he can of a life almost completely shrouded in mystery becomes clearer when Garratt explains some pages later, “My portrait of Charles A. Stoneham stresses how place and moment are crucial to character and, conversely, how an individual contributes to the shaping of the spirit of his time. It is a narrative that looks at an epic in American history from outside in and inside out.” Where he lacks documentation for events in Stoneham’s life, Garratt turns to *Gatsby* for insights to help him conjecture how someone in that place and time would most likely have acted. As Garratt convincingly argues, this approach has validity both because Fitzgerald was such a careful recorder of the 1920s and because he was an observer of Stoneham himself.

As a means of trying to understand the life of a man who so carefully tried to stay beneath the radar, in each chapter of his biography Garratt explores parallels between Stoneham and Fitzgerald’s fictional character of Jay Gatsby as a means of illuminating what Stoneham may have been like and how he must have seemed to his contemporaries. Garratt observes, for example, that like Gatsby, Charley Stoneham came out of nowhere—a mystery man who became “one of the biggest names in 1919 New York City sports.” Stoneham possessed, too, a Gatsbyesque history that defied easy pinning down. For instance, after Stoneham’s death a journalist, quoted by Garratt, commented that while Stoneham’s name often appeared in print, he was rarely visible on the streets or among fans, and was “an unseen power in baseball.” Garratt’s creative approach to solving his book’s core problem helps provide insights where, otherwise, there might not be much to say.

In this respect Garratt certainly achieves what he is attempting to do. He details, for example, how Stoneham engaged in murky investments, like the fictional Gatsby, and that Stoneham appears to have had a kind of paternal relationship (as is the situation in the novel with Gatsby and his mentor Dan Cody) with his business

partner Edward Fuller who, Garratt notes, was one of Fitzgerald’s Long Island neighbors.

Garratt’s turning to Fitzgerald for insights into Stoneham is appropriate for the ways in which it permits him to engage in reasonable speculation and because Fitzgerald followed events in Jazz Age New York and specifically in baseball. Fitzgerald enjoyed baseball. In what is likely an autobiographical moment in his first novel *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920, Fitzgerald depicts his hero wondering about who the better pitcher is: Mordecai Brown or Christy Mathewson.

Garratt’s strategy of using Fitzgerald’s novel as a means of speculating about gaps in his biographical evidence is a bold move. While unconventional, this approach is ultimately justified by Fitzgerald’s intimate—almost documentary-like—understanding of Jazz Age culture and by his interest in baseball, which he encoded deeply into the texture of *Gatsby*, including in his famous reference to the throwing of the 1919 World Series and how by doing so gamblers had played “with the faith of fifty million people.”

Garratt’s use of *Gatsby* as a lens through which to view Stoneham’s shadowy life proves an effective means through which to engage in reasonable speculation. Stylistically, this approach also adds to the book’s narrative impact. The chapter comparing Gatsby and Stoneham’s funeral services, for instance, is powerful. The use of prose from Fitzgerald’s fiction as a framing device adds to the pathos of Garratt’s depiction of Stoneham’s final rites, which were as unpopulated in real life as Gatsby’s were in the novel.

### **CALL FOR PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED DEADBALL ERA BOOK REVIEWS**

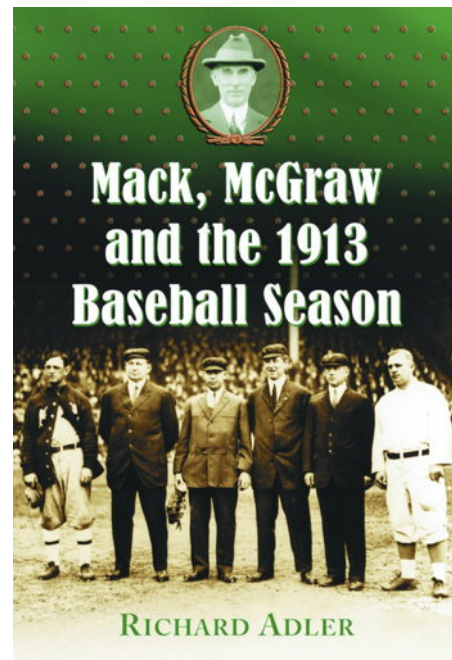
Do you have a favorite Deadball Era book? Or perhaps one that you just found intriguing and would like to write about? With fewer and fewer new books being published with Deadball Era content, we have decided to occasionally publish reviews of books that were published before 2011. If there is a previously published work that you would like to review, please let book review editor Dan Levitt know. We should be able to include it in a forthcoming newsletter.

Garratt also makes effective use of the motif of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's fiction. As Bill Lamb explains in his biographical essay on Stoneham for SABR: "In terms of moral character, Charles A. Stoneham—shady stock speculator, ethically challenged businessman, criminal court defendant, serial philanderer, and quasi-bigamist—was easily the worst person ever associated with Giants ownership." For both Gatsby and Stoneham, overlaying these questionable personal elements, though, is the yearning for—and achieving—of a dream. In purely baseball terms, Lamb explains that five National League pennants and three World Series titles in a 16-season span made the Charles Stoneham years "the most successful in New York Giants history."

To sum up the similarities between the lives of these two great dreamers—one fictional and one real—Garratt turns to a central idea from Fitzgerald's novel as described by Maureen Corrigan in her book *So We Read On*. Whatever Stoneham's moral fallibilities, Garratt (like Fitzgerald's narrator Nick) suggests that, on balance, the baseball magnate achieved a kind of ineffable victory.

During his management of the Giants Stoneham, like Gatsby, attempted—and in many ways succeeded—in capturing "a lost vision of happiness." While given the scarcity of evidence concerning Stoneham's life, it is not really possible for Garratt to add to what is already known about the man, and has been previously written about by other baseball historians, what he does do, and does very well, is to bring Stoneham to life within the texture of his time—an age during which Deadball Era baseball underwent a dramatic transition into something very different.

*Sharon Hamilton writes about Jazz Age authors and the baseball players who inspired them. She has written for SABR about two pitchers loved by F. Scott Fitzgerald and was a guest for a podcast on "Hemingway and Baseball." She also served as project manager for the SABR Century Project, to which she contributed an article on Ernest Hemingway and the Black Sox Trial.*



## MACK, MCGRAW AND THE 1913 BASEBALL SEASON

by **Richard Adler**

2008, McFarland

[ISBN: 978-0786436750. 317 pp.]

\$29.95 USD. Softcover]

reviewed by **Bob Whelan**

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Connie Mack and John McGraw are among the greatest of major league baseball managers. Their teams were dominant in their respective leagues during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Mack's A's and McGraw's Giants met in three World Series. The Giants won the 1905 series, 4-1, with the great Christy Mathewson pitching three shutouts. The Athletics won the 1911 World Series, 4-1, with Frank Baker hitting two home runs that gave him his famous nickname. Their third World Series meeting was in 1913. It is that season, and that World Series, which provides the subject of Richard Adler's solid book.

Richard Adler was well-qualified to write on this subject. (Adler passed away in 2017). Adler's day job was Professor of Microbiology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. In addition to this book, Adler published a book on baseball at the University of Michigan and authored

several articles for SABR publications. His *Mack and McGraw* book divides nicely into three main parts.

The first two chapters provide an excellent summary of the first twelve years of the twentieth century for both franchises. Chapter One, "The Tall Tactician" covers Mack and the A's. Mr. Mack won his first pennant in 1902, and he took the A's to their first World Series in 1905. The real success of the A's began in 1910. First, the A's opened a new steel and concrete ballpark, Shibe Park. With the "\$100,000 infield" of Stuffey McInnis, Eddie Collins, Jack Barry and Baker, and pitching stalwarts such as Ed Plank, Chief Bender and Jack Coombs, the 1910 A's went 102-48. They followed their pennant by defeating the Chicago Cubs, 4-1, with Coombs winning three games in the World Series. The A's repeated their victory in 1911. A 101-50 record won the pennant, and they beat McGraw's Giants in six in the World Series.

Chapter Two, "The Old Oriole" follows McGraw and the Giants from 1901-1912. The Giants won their first pennant in 1904. McGraw and Giants owner John Brush refused to play in the World Series. Their feud with AL president Ban Johnson included resentment over the competition from the new New York AL franchise. The 1905 season was a complete success, as noted above. In 1906, the Giants won ninety-six games but finished twenty games behind the Cubs. McGraw's teams were usually contenders; the 1908 loss to the Cubs was particularly bitter, after the infamous "Merkle boner" game. The Giants won pennants in 1911 and 1912 and lost both World Series. The seven-game loss to the Red Sox in 1912 was another difficult defeat, remembered for the "Snodgrass muff" that gave the win to the Sox. The 1911 team was notable for setting the stolen bases record of 347 steals in a season.

The next two chapters detail the day-by-day course of the 1913 season for both squads. The A's started strong and were never really in danger. By Memorial Day, they had a 28-10 record, and a five ½ game lead. On the Fourth of July, the A's lead was nine ½ games. While they lost a bit of the lead, no other team made a serious run at them. During the season, Mack brought along young pitchers, including "Bullet" Joe Bush, Herb Pennock

and Bob Shawkey. The A's finished 96-57, 6 ½ games ahead of Washington. The Giants' pennant path was also relatively smooth. The Phillies got off to a hot start, and the Giants were five games back in early June. With an eight-game win streak, the Giants passed the Phils, and had a three ½ game lead by the Fourth of July. After 19 wins in twenty games, the Giants had a record of 54-24 and a 7 ½ game lead over Philadelphia by late July. The Giants finished the season 101-51, 12 ½ games ahead of the second place Phillies.

The five subsequent chapters describe the five World Series games. In the drizzle at the Polo Grounds and with a home run from Baker, the A's took Game 1, 6-4. On another damp day in Philadelphia, the Giants won Game 2, 3-0, in ten innings behind Christy Mathewson. The A's won Game 3 handily, 8-2, as Bush earned the complete game victory. In Game 4 at Shibe Park, the A's took a big lead, but the Giants rallied. Chief Bender held on and pitched a complete game as the A's won, 6-5. On another dark day in New York, the A's closed out the Giants, 3-1, with Ed Plank on the mound. An excellent epilogue tells us, in brief, what became of the players on both teams.

Overall, Professor Adler did an excellent job of research. Adler's newspaper research was extensive. The book is written clearly and is easy to follow. Anyone interested in the Deadball Era, the teams, or the managers will enjoy reading it.

*Bob Whelan is a SABR member living in Dallas. He is retired as a professor of public administration, and he has written two game accounts for the SABR Games Project.*

#### **PUBLISHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As always, copies of the books reviewed in this issue were generously supplied to us by their publishers. *Mack, McGraw And The 1913 Baseball Season* comes from McFarland and can be ordered by email at [mcfarlandbooks.com/product/mack-mcgraw-and-the-1913-baseball-season](mailto:mcfarlandbooks.com/product/mack-mcgraw-and-the-1913-baseball-season). The University of Nebraska Press published *Jazz Age Giant*, which can be ordered at [www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496235589](http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496235589). Your patronage of these publishers is appreciated.



## GAMES/BioPROJECT

The Bio Project has been active since *The Inside Game* last appeared, adding articles on the following players and managers: Bill Shipke, Pug Cavet, Carl Holling, George Boehler, Joe Cantillon, Bill Davidson, Fred Downer, Cy Ferry, Elmer Ponder, Dan Woodman, and Duff Cooley. In a separate article Scott M. Johnson has profiled the shootout between Bill Davidson, later a deputy sheriff, vs. the Barker-Karpis Gang in Fairbury, Nebraska on April 4, 1933. Meanwhile, the Games Project has posted accounts of eight Deadball Era games, including the first no-hitter at Fenway Park by George Davis on September 9, 1914, Christy Mathewson's 300<sup>th</sup> career win against Brooklyn on July 5, 1912, the beginning of Jack Chesbro's 14 game win streak on May 24, 1904, and the game between the Athletics and Senators on October 2, 1909, when Philadelphia beat Walter Johnson to give Jack Kull his only major league win. Please give them a look if you have not yet done so. The editors of *The Inside Game* are always interested in encouraging new authors and note that many first try their hand writing for these valuable projects.

## 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:

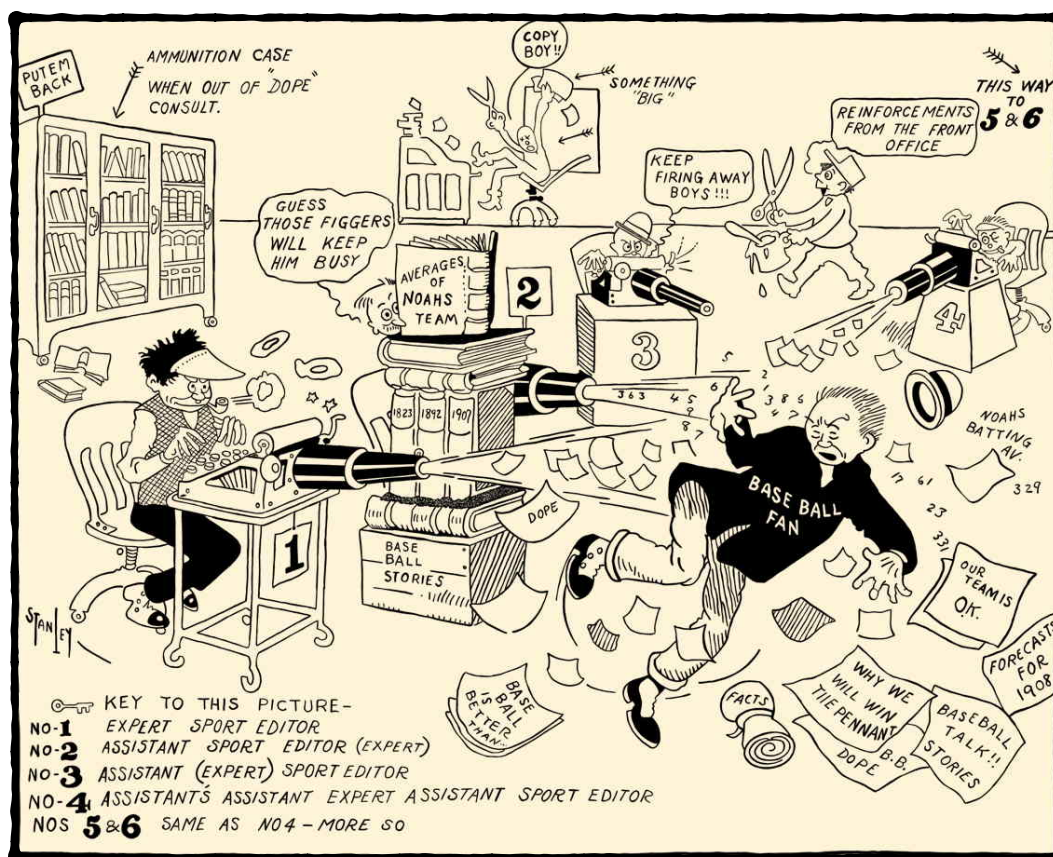
James W. Campbell  
Jason Hallmark  
Richard O'Connor

Brian D. Marshall  
Jacob Sayward  
Jason P. Scheller

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.



Frank Leet  
Toledo News-Bee,  
January 15, 1908



by Lee W. Stanley

Albuquerque Citizen, February 17, 1908