
THE

National Pastime

A REVIEW OF BASEBALL HISTORY

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ON THE COVER: *Class is in session at the Royals' Baseball Academy* (photo courtesy National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, NY).

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A Note from the Editor

This 24th issue of *The National Pastime* offers a wide-ranging selection of articles befitting the broad range of interests of the readers. There is something for everyone.

Richard Puerzer's cover essay on the baseball academy created by the Royals in the early '70s leads off the issue. Jim Vitti on the Cubs and Steve Steinberg on the George Bain collection are two fine pictorial celebrations. There are a pair of Dodger memories: Lyle Spatz's account of the 1950 pennant race in which the Dodgers almost pulled off a stunning comeback, and Bob Mayer's interview with Danny McDevitt, who pitched the last game at Ebbets Field.

Randy Brown sheds new light on the role of William Wheaton in the early development of baseball. John Thorn remarks, "This is an outstanding and important story. The 'find'—the stories in the *San Francisco Examiner* of 1887 and 1888—is sensational, and the conclusions drawn from the evidence are well informed and reasonable." Dixie Tourangeau writes about 1894 in Boston, and Bob Tholkes recalls the National League's 60th anniversary celebration in 1936. I particularly liked David Skinner's account of the outstanding Cuban pitcher José Mendez and his dominance of the Cincinnati Reds.

Two essays focus on Ivy League baseball. Jay Thomas covers all the bases and lists more than 200 players from the eight schools who appeared in the big leagues. Charlie Bevis first wrote about Wally Snell for Mark Armour's laudable BioProject. Snell briefly played for the Red Sox, then coached and taught at Brown University, his alma mater. He is the only major leaguer to have a mushroom named after him: all in all, a fun guy.

There are several essays on tragedies and the frailties of the human condition that I think will stay with every reader. In what is a rarity, Tom Simon profiles a SABR member, the remarkable Guy Waterman, whose biography was published by Riverhead Books last year. In another moving essay, Larry Gerlach writes on umpire Cal Drummond and his death on the diamond. There is Bill Nowlin's grievous account of a high school pitcher in Iowa in the 1940s who, within one school year, killed two opposing players with thrown balls. Finally, Doug Pappas has written on an American League of just seven teams—in 1947. Tragically, Doug died of heat prostration in Big Bend National Park just as this issue of TNP was going to press.

Jim Charlton
May 2004

The Kansas City Royals' Baseball Academy

by Richard J. Puerzer

The mythical set of traditionalist methods governing the management of baseball both on and off the field—known as “The Book”—has bound how the game has been played for essentially its entire history. Innovation regarding such issues as the training for, strategic approaches to, statistical analysis of, and the general knowledge of baseball has come in fits and starts over the history of the game. One such pioneering venture in the overall approach to the management of baseball, especially with regard to the development and training of players, was the Kansas City Royals’ Baseball Academy. The Baseball Academy was an effort to engineer baseball success, primarily through the application of science, technology, and improved training.

The Kansas City Royals’ Baseball Academy, established in 1970, was the brainchild of Royals owner Ewing Marion Kauffman. Kauffman, a self-made multimillionaire, had established the pharmaceutical giant Marion Labs prior to his purchase of the Royals. Kauffman attempted to bring his entrepreneurial spirit to baseball ownership through the establishment of the Baseball Academy. The goal of the Academy was the betterment of the Royals through the development and training of its students/players. The unique approach of the Academy was that these students were not among the traditional population from which baseball players were normally chosen. Subsequently, creating these potential major leaguers would expand

the pool of quality players available to the Royals. Likewise, the methods employed at the Academy for fostering the development of these players were anything but by “the Book.”

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KANSAS CITY ROYALS

The Kansas City Royals entered the American League in 1969 as an expansion team. Prior to 1969, Kansas City had been home to many major and minor league teams, including the Packers of the Federal League, the Blues of the American Association, the Monarchs of the Negro Leagues, and the A’s of the American League. Ewing Kauffman was awarded the Kansas City franchise after the departure of the A’s, owned by the contentious Charlie O. Finley, for Oakland, California, following the 1967 season. Upon learning that he was awarded the franchise, Kauffman immediately established a relationship with the city of Kansas City. This was the opposite of Finley’s style. He made a public vow to the city that in his lifetime the team would not move from Kansas City.¹ Also, he stated that he would provide the financial support necessary to field a winning baseball team and that he would hire knowledgeable baseball people to run the club.

Kauffman was true to his word in his hiring practices, seeking out experienced and perspicacious baseball men. Soon after he was awarded the franchise, Kauffman hired Cedric Tallis as executive vice president and general manager. Tallis, a veteran baseball executive, had spent the previous seven years with the California Angels. Recognizing the need to immediately plan for the expansion draft and develop a minor

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league system, Tallis in turn hired Charlie Metro as his director of personnel. Metro was a consummate baseball man, playing on both the major league (for the Detroit Tigers and Philadelphia A's) and minor league level from 1937 to 1953. Metro had also managed in both the majors (for the Chicago Cubs) and minors from 1947 to 1966. He had been working as a scout for the Cincinnati Reds when he was offered the job with the Royals. Metro had previously worked as a minor league manager under Tallis, and the two men had a great deal of respect for each other. Metro would later state that Tallis was one of the best judges of baseball talent he had worked with in his long career in the game.² Tallis then hired Lou Gorman as the director of player development. Gorman had been working as director of minor league clubs for the Baltimore Orioles. All three men would play prominent roles in the formation and decline of the Baseball Academy.

THE MANAGEMENT APPROACH OF EWING KAUFFMAN

When Ewing Kauffman first considered ownership of a major league baseball team, he was intrigued with the opportunity to employ the management principles he had successfully utilized in the pharmaceutical industry. He had earned a reputation not only as innovative but also as compassionate in his leadership.

Kauffman began in the pharmaceutical industry with an investment of \$5,000 in 1950, and by 1989, when he sold his controlling interest in Marion Laboratories, his company reported annual sales exceeding one billion dollars. His business philosophy can be distilled down to three principles: treat others as you want to be treated, share life's rewards with those who make them possible, and give back to society.³ In keeping with his philosophy, Kauffman pursued a multitude of philanthropic ventures including funding the mass teaching of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the creation of a resource to positively encourage entrepreneurship in the United States. It was this management vision, translated to ownership of a baseball team, which brought about the quick and lasting success of the Kansas City Royals.

There are many and various examples of Kauffman's business approach in the management of the Royals. Shortly after acquiring the team, Kauffman announced that he was including profit sharing in the benefit package for Royals' non-player person-

nel.⁴ Kauffman's goal in instituting profit sharing was twofold, to attract excellent employees and to motivate those employees to work toward the success of the franchise. Kauffman also did not shy away from spending money in order to hire talented coaches and managers in the farm system, recognizing that these men were necessary to train and develop the nascent Royals players. Kauffman saw to it that, despite the cost, the Royals' minor league system featured more managers and coaches than any other team, with the idea that players would receive more personalized training than other teams' players.⁵ Kauffman also worked to establish an open relationship with his players, sharing with them the finances of the Royals and offering them counsel regarding their personal finances and careers.⁶ Kauffman would not admit to altruism, however, stressing that improvement in the performance of his team would also improve the team's, and thus his, financial performance.

Kauffman's entrepreneurial approach was most evident in the idea behind the Baseball Academy. After reflecting on the traditional methods of player development, Kauffman was disheartened by the extremely slow process of scouting, acquiring, developing, and finally promoting players to the major league level.⁷ Likewise, he was disenchanted with the conservative nature and the resistance to change found in the baseball establishment. The business environment of baseball was opposite to the environment to which he was accustomed, where without innovation and improvement, companies failed. Specifically, Kauffman was chagrined with how baseball was virtually ignorant of how technology might improve training methods and innovative ideas might improve the game in general. So, employing his entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen, Kauffman sponsored the creation of the Kansas City Royals' Baseball Academy in an effort to create baseball players and to learn more about how to best play the game of baseball.

PREVIOUS EFFORTS SIMILAR TO THE ACADEMY

Although the Royals' Baseball Academy was without question an innovative undertaking, it was certainly not the first organized attempt to improve the training of players or to gain a better understanding of what brings about success in the game of baseball. Although nothing came of it, John Heydler, president of the

National League in the 1920s, suggested that major league baseball should begin and sponsor a "baseball school."⁸ Branch Rickey introduced several innovations for the training of players during his long and prosperous career in baseball management. Rickey utilized such teaching tools as sliding pits, batting tees, and the increased use of batting cages and pitching machines in an effort to teach, with greater efficiency and effectiveness, the fundamentals of baseball play.⁹ The Royals' Baseball Academy utilized these methods as well as a multitude of other scientific endeavors toward the training of the game.

Another significant attempt to improve the training of players was undertaken by the Chicago Cubs in the late 1930s. In 1938, the Cubs hired Coleman R. Griffith, then known as the father of sports psychology in America, as a consultant to the team. In his two-year tenure with the Cubs, Griffith pursued many new methods for the analysis of the game in an attempt to build a scientific training program for the team. With the Cubs in the 1930s as with the Royals under Ewing Kauffman, it was an innovative and business-minded owner, Philip K. Wrigley, who sought to improve his team through untraditional means. While working with the Cubs, Griffith used such techniques as filming players, recommending improved regimes, the documentation of player progress through charts and diagrams, and changes in batting and pitching practice in order to make the practice sessions more closely resemble game conditions. Griffith suffered through acrimonious relationships with the two Cub managers he was to work with, Charlie Grimm and Gabby Hartnett, and had much of his work undermined by these men. In the end, although he produced some 400 pages of reports, including documentation on the use of methods and measures later used throughout baseball, including at the Baseball Academy, his work for the Cubs was essentially for naught.¹⁰

The St. Louis Browns employed another psychologist, David F. Tracy, in 1950. Tracy took an entirely psychological approach to improving player performance, working with players through relaxation techniques, autosuggestion, and hypnosis throughout spring training. Although Tracy was apparently well received by both the Browns' players and management, he was fired on May 31 with the Browns (8-25) in last place.¹¹

Other efforts have been undertaken to improve player skills outside the regular spring to fall cycle of baseball development and play. In 1950, Casey Stengel,

then manager of the New York Yankees, utilized a post-season camp in an effort to expedite the development of players. Mickey Mantle, Gil McDougald, and future Baseball Academy director Syd Thrift took part in the camp.¹² It was effective in refining the talents of many players and fostering their transition to the major leagues. However, unlike the target group of the Royals' Baseball Academy, all of the players taking part were already professional ballplayers.

Another effort with the aim of studying the science of the game was the "Research Program for Baseball," a project underwritten by Philadelphia Phillies owner Bob Carpenter and carried out by professors from the University of Delaware and scientists from DuPont between 1963 and 1972.¹³ They studied of the intricacies of hitting, measuring bat velocity, bat acceleration, and total force. Research into player vision, and its impact on hitting as well as pitching and fielding, was also done. The project did advance the understanding of the science of the game, but was generally scoffed at by the baseball establishment, including scouts who perhaps were not eager to allow science to subjugate their expert opinion.

THE CREATION OF THE ACADEMY

After acquiring the Royals, Kauffman determined that the four traditional ways of acquiring players—the free agent draft, the minor league draft, trades with other teams, and the purchase of players from other teams—would not allow the Royals to quickly become a winning team.¹⁴ Kauffman therefore sought an untraditional method for gaining good players. This search evolved into the idea of a Baseball Academy, a school which could teach how best to play baseball. The basis for the Baseball Academy was to create players who were not already signed as a part of the baseball establishment. It was Kauffman's idea that an athlete did not necessarily have to play baseball all his life in order to be a good baseball player.

This notion of turning a good athlete into a good baseball player may have been influenced by the performance of Lou Piniella. Piniella, who won the American League Rookie of the Year award in 1969 for the Royals, was more renowned for his basketball talent than his baseball talent in high school, even skipping a year of playing baseball.¹⁵ Essentially, Kauffman believed that given the proper raw materials, such as



Jim Lemon demonstrates bunting to Academy students.

athletes who had not been scouted by the baseball establishment, and the proper training and teaching techniques, the Baseball Academy could create baseball players.

In order to ascertain the physical and mental abilities necessary to excel at baseball, Kauffman hired Dr. Raymond Reilly, a research psychologist with previous experience at NASA and the Office of Naval Research.¹⁶ Approximately 150 players, mainly from within the Royals organization, were tested in order to help establish the requisite abilities to be a professional baseball player. The vision, psychomotor responses, and psychological makeup of the players were tested.¹⁷ The four attributes determined to be necessary for any potential player were excellent running speed, exceptional eyesight, fast reflexes, and superb body balance. Likewise, Reilly believed that the potential players should have specific personality traits, such as the need for success and achievement. He also determined that players should be of above average intelligence with a good memory for facts and figures.¹⁸ These requirements, summarized in advertising tryouts for

the Academy, were the only requisites for consideration: "An applicant must (a) have completed his high school eligibility, (b) be less than 20, (c) be able to run 60 yards in 6.9 seconds in baseball shoes (the average of major leaguers is somewhat above 7.0), and (d) be neither enrolled in a four-year college nor have been drafted by a major league team."¹⁹

Essentially what the Academy's scouts were looking for were good athletes who had never concentrated on playing baseball in the past. Kauffman was correct in assuming that these athletes existed, for among the applicants were: a New Mexico high school state wrestling champion, a Missouri high school sprint champion, a collegiate pole vaulter, an excellent bowler and weight lifter, and a former high school quarterback who had set his school's record in the javelin throw.²⁰

The construction of the Academy began in early 1970 with Lou Piniella, turning the first shovel of dirt.²¹ The Academy was located in Sarasota, Florida, enabling the team created at the Academy to play in the Florida Instructional League, and for the Royals to use the facilities year-round.²² The 121-acre cam-

pus featured five baseball diamonds, four of which to be used for training and instruction and one with a grandstand and lights for full-scale games. All five of the fields were built to the precise dimensions of the future Royals stadium that was to be opened in Kansas City before the 1972 season.²³ The campus also featured a 50-room dormitory for players, offices, lecture halls, laboratories, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. The cost of construction was reported to be \$1.5 million, with an additional \$500,000 to be spent on establishing the Academy in its first year.²⁴

Syd Thrift, who had originally been hired as the Royals' supervisor of scouting for the eastern U.S., was named as the director of the Academy. Thrift had formerly pitched in the New York Yankee minor league system, and was later a scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Thrift hired Steve Korcheck to be the Academy's coordinator of instruction. Korcheck had most recently worked as a baseball coach for George Washington University, and previously had been an itinerant catcher for the Washington Senators, appearing in 58 games throughout the 1954, 1955, 1958, and 1959 seasons. Carlton "Buzzy" Keller, a former baseball coach at Texas Lutheran, was hired and eventually became manager of the Academy team in the Gulf Coast League. In addition, several other former major league players were hired as instructors in the Academy, including: Detroit Tiger first baseman and Cincinnati Reds manager Johnny Neun, Washington Senator player and manager Jim Lemon, Boston Red Sox pitcher Chuck Stobbs, former Senators pitcher Bill Fischer, Royals first year manager and Yankee and Cleveland Indian second baseman Joe Gordon, and Yankee right fielder Tommy Henrich.

Several part-time or full-time members of the Academy staff were hired despite having no baseball experience. George Bourette, who was a high school football coach in Missouri for 26 years, worked with the players on losing or gaining weight while increasing strength through exercise.²⁵ Mickey Cobb would serve as athletic trainer at the Academy and would later go on to work as the trainer for the Royals' major league team. Bill Easton, the track coach at the University of Kansas, and Wes Santee, formerly an Olympian on the U.S. track team and who was once known as America's greatest miler, were hired to work with the players on their base running.²⁶ The aforementioned Dr. Ray Reilly was actively involved in the physiological and psychological testing of players. Two ophthalmolo-

gists, Bill Harrison, who played college baseball at California-Berkeley, and Bill Lee, were involved in the testing and improvement of vision.²⁷ In retrospect, this cadre of professionals constituted the first concerted effort to measure, evaluate, and improve both baseball players and the way that baseball is played.

THE SCIENCE AND TRAINING USED AT THE ACADEMY

Players were selected for the Academy based on their performance at tryout camps held throughout the United States. It was envisioned that 50 players would be selected from the several thousand who would take part in the tryouts. The first of these camps was held in Kansas City on June 4-6, 1970.²⁸ In the first year, 128 tryout camps were held for 7,682 candidates. From these candidates, 43 athletes hailing from 23 different states were culled.²⁹ The only player of notoriety going into this first class was Orestes Minoso Arrietta, stepson of former Negro Leaguer and Chicago White Sox outfielder Minnie Minoso. Although Arrietta would never reach the major leagues, three future major leaguers were among the first class: Bruce Miller, a light-hitting infielder who would appear in 196 games for the San Francisco Giants between 1973 and 1976; Ron Washington, another infielder who played for five different teams including a six-year stint with the Minnesota Twins; and Frank White, the star pupil of the Academy who would go on to an outstanding career with the Royals. Another member of the first-year class was Hal Baird. Baird would never make the majors, but he became the head baseball coach at Auburn University, where he would coach such future baseball luminaries as Bo Jackson, Frank Thomas, Tim Hudson, and Gregg Olson.³⁰

Players were to train and study baseball at the Academy for a minimum of ten months. All of the players selected to the Academy were paid a modest monthly salary, beginning at \$100 to \$200 a month in the first year and increasing to \$500 a month in the second year. They received free room, three diet-planned meals a day, uniforms, health and life insurance, and a round-trip plane ticket home for the Christmas holidays. In keeping with Kauffman's belief that an educated individual made a good baseball player and that all of the players should have education to fall back on should their baseball career not work out, each player was required to attend classes three morn-

ings a week at nearby Manatee Junior College.³¹

On the mornings that players did not attend junior college classes, they received classroom instruction on baseball at the Academy. Every afternoon they played baseball. In their time at the Academy, the players were to play approximately 150 games, first in exhibitions against collegiate and professional teams and later in the Gulf Coast League.

Much of the baseball training that the players were put through differed greatly from the standard practices of the time. For example, in the average minor league camp a hitter might spend but a few minutes in the batting cage for batting practice. At the Academy, players were given 30 minutes a day for batting practice, against both live pitching and a pitching machine.³² Another unique training method was the use of pitching machines for fielding practice. Because the pitching machine could create a uniform velocity and bounce, it could be used to test the reactions and dexterity of infielders. Likewise, it could repetitively drill infielders for work on their lateral range and foot-work. These drills were supplemented with machines that could produce non-uniform ground balls, more similar to those caused by a bat hitting a ball.³³

Foot speed, especially on the base paths, was a priority at the Academy. Several approaches were taken to improving the base-running performance of players. Wes Santee was charged with setting up a running and conditioning program for the improvement of running form. Base-stealing ability, seen as one of the most important abilities, was addressed and improved through the development of the timed, measured lead. One aspect of this approach was the timing of an opposing pitcher's delivery and pickoff throw. It was determined that an average runner could take a 12-foot lead off first base, with faster runners taking slightly bigger leads. Likewise, a lead of 27 feet could usually be safely taken from second base. With this knowledge, players were instructed precisely how far they could venture off base. This knowledge also improved performance in that it instilled confidence in the players. The now ubiquitous approach of using stopwatches on the ball field was quite novel for its time. Given that the time required for a catcher to receive a pitch and get a throw to second base was timed, base runners could determine the likelihood of a steal based on specific battery combinations. Players were thus instructed not only how to steal bases, but also when to steal bases. Players were also trained in the proper use

of the delayed steal, using a large lead and the element of surprise, and the double steal.³⁴ This training proved fruitful, as Academy teams would lead their league in steals in each year of its existence. These base-stealing and base-running techniques would have a great impact on the running game in the major leagues in the 1970s and '80s. The Royals, and many other teams and players influenced by the Royals, would be quite proficient in stealing bases in this period. For example, Tom Treblehorn, who familiarized himself with the Academy approach to base stealing, passed his knowledge on to Rickey Henderson while managing Henderson in the minor leagues.³⁵

Reilly, Harrison, and Lee worked with the players on many aspects of improving their mental approach to the game. One technique that they employed was enabling the players to "center their concentration," that is, to have the players center in on one aspect of instruction until it becomes second nature. Through this approach, players were not bogged down by the many hitting or pitching instructions they often attempted to follow simultaneously, and were able to focus much more clearly on the task at hand.³⁶ Another technique for the improvement of performance was "visualization," the ability to readily obtain mental pictures and use these visual images for the enrichment of performance. It was believed that visualization would improve the mental approach of players and subsequently improve their physical performance through the reduction of stress and the improvement of timing and balance.³⁷ George Brett was one of the first major league players to utilize visualization and became a strong proponent of the approach, claiming that it helped him to concentrate and to break out of patterns of bad performance.³⁸

Several innovative physical training methods were utilized at the Academy. Under the direction of trainer Mickey Cobb, they were the first team to employ a mandatory stretching program. They were also the first team to utilize exercises performed in a swimming pool as a part of rehabilitation programs for a multitude of injuries. Cobb and strength and conditioning coach George Bourette developed innovative resistance training methods that used rubber bands and rubber chains. Methods for the use of these resistance tools were designed for the improvement of strength and for the prevention of injuries to players.³⁹

Another prescient topic on which the players were lectured was the abuse of drugs and alcohol

and its effects on both athletic ability and physical well-being.⁴⁰ It is ironic that this topic was addressed at such a relatively early time by the Royals, a team which would be plagued by drug problems a decade later, exemplified by the convictions and suspensions of Willie Wilson, Willie Mays Aikens, Vida Blue, and Jerry Martin.⁴¹

The result of all of these innovative training methods was not a “eureka moment” for any of the players or personnel at the Academy. Instead, the success of the teams and players came as a result of the screening of players, the traditional and innovative training methods, and the months and months of practice and games. The results of this work did culminate in reaching the goal of the Academy: the transformation of capable athletes into gifted baseball players.

THE ACADEMY EXPERIENCES OF FRANK WHITE

Among the first players selected to the first class of the Academy was Frank White. He would be the first Academy graduate to make it to the major leagues and played second base for the Royals for 18 seasons, be named to five AL All-Star teams, earn eight Gold Gloves, and be regarded as one of the greatest defensive second basemen in the history of baseball.

Frank White grew up in Kansas City, living but 10 blocks from old Municipal Stadium, and attended Lincoln High School, located right across the street from the stadium. He did not play high school baseball because baseball was not a sport at his high school. However, he did play in Ban Johnson and Casey Stengel leagues throughout his youth.⁴² He believes that he was never scouted because in the late 1960s, scouts, who were predominantly white, avoided scouting in inner-city areas.⁴³ He learned of the tryout for the Academy from his coach, who encouraged him to attend. White was reluctant to go to the tryout, but was pushed by his wife, and was given the day off at his job at a local sheet metal company. His performance at the tryout earned him a place in the Academy's initial class. Reflecting on the idea behind the Academy, he believed that it was “the wisdom of Mr. Kauffman to bring instructors to the players” which made the Academy a successful venture. For Frank White, it created a life in baseball.

White does not romanticize his time at the Academy, recalling it as being like a boot camp, with



Kansas City Royal Academy students.

6:00 A.M. wake-up calls, classes, near-constant practice sessions, and a curfew. As none of the players had cars, they would all ride into town each Wednesday night on the team bus for their precious little leisure time. He remembers not having much to do but practice and play baseball, so practice he did. Although he recollects feeling as something of “a guinea pig in a grand baseball experiment,” he also remembers the many new and great ideas that were explored and the approach that stayed with him throughout his baseball career. He feels that the strong point of the Academy was the teaching of fundamentals, and that it was the concentrated Academy approach that turned him into a major league baseball player in a few short years. White recalls the Academy as “a great, great experience.” In many ways Frank White embodied Kauffman’s idea of the Academy: that an excellent and intelligent athlete can be molded and transformed into a quick, resourceful, exceptional baseball player.

Frank White was promoted to the Royals in June 1973, just three years after joining the Academy. He recalls learning that Royals’ manager Jack McKeon wanted to bring him up to the major league team, but that the move was met with resistance from within the Royals organization. White believes that many within the organization did not want to see him succeed in the majors because they wanted to prove to Kauffman that there was no merit in the Academy idea, and that it should be closed. Despite these initial misgivings, Royals management would soon discover that in Frank White they had one of the primary components of a championship baseball team. He became one of the best defensive infielders in the history of the game,

and made an impact especially on how second basemen can play on artificial turf. He also became a good hitter, as evidenced by his hitting in the cleanup spot during the 1985 World Series. Bill James describes Frank White's career as interchangeable with that of Bill Mazeroski, who, primarily on the strength of his defensive prowess, was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2001.⁴⁴

THE PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMY TEAMS

The first Academy team began play in the Gulf Coast League in the 1971 season against rookie clubs of the Pittsburgh Pirates, St. Louis Cardinals, Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox, Cincinnati Reds, and Minnesota Twins. Skeptics wondered if the team would be able to compete against baseball talent discovered in the traditional manner, that is, recognized for their ability to play baseball as opposed to pure athletic ability. To their surprise, the Academy team ran away with the Gulf Coast League championship.⁴⁵

The Academy team finished first with a record of 40-13, for a .755 winning percentage, while leading the league in both team batting average, at .257, and team ERA, at 2.07.⁴⁶ One outstanding statistic of this team was that they stole 103 bases, 48 more than the next closest team, while they were caught stealing only 16 times. Clearly the team coalesced in the months of training prior to league play. This success brought many, including Kauffman and Thrift, to extrapolate the success of the team into the future and wonder as to their potential on the major league level.⁴⁷ Fifteen members of the first-year class were promoted into the upper levels of the Royals farm system.⁴⁸

Despite the great success of that first season, the role of the Academy began to be downgraded, signaling the discomfort many within the Royals organization felt with regards to the Academy idea. Evidence of this is also seen in the move of Syd Thrift from director of the Academy to his former position of eastern scouting supervisor. Lou Gorman, already director of the scouting staff and the Royals' minor league operations, would also assume the duty of supervising the Academy. Likewise, the second Academy class was limited to 20 players, with the restriction that only 17- to 19-year-old players could be selected. Also, existing players from within the Royals farm system would be assigned to the Academy for two months' time

after their regular season to provide them with the Academy's intensive instruction.⁴⁹

The performance of the second class of the Academy was still excellent, achieving a record of 41-22 for a winning percentage of .651, and finishing in a tie atop the Gulf Coast League for 1972. The team again led the league in batting average at .257 and stole an astounding 161 bases. They also pitched well, posting a team ERA of 2.81, good for second in the league. Rodney Scott, who would later enjoy a substantial major league career, was perhaps the most outstanding player on this team.

The third class of the Academy would fare well neither on the field nor in the collective mind of the Royals front office. On the field, the Royals finished with a record of 27-28, hitting but .224 as a team and posting a 3.87 team ERA, both near the bottom of the league in 1973. They still led the league in stolen bases with 96, exceeding the next closest team by 21 steals. The 1973 season marked the final season played solely by Academy players, as the Academy was closed following the season.

THE CLOSING AND LEGACY OF THE ACADEMY

In early 1973, three years after the opening of the Academy, Ewing Kauffman was asked to reflect on its success. To this point, the Academy had cost Kauffman \$1.5 million for construction and \$700,000 per year in operating expenses, a rather large investment for both that time and the baseball industry. Although the Academy had graduated several players into the Royals farm system, it had yet to create a sure-fire major league player, let alone a superstar. The Academy was also having trouble finding qualified students, as evinced by the decline in the size of its class from 43 in 1971, to 26 in 1972, to but 14 in 1973. Also, almost all of the students selected did have considerable baseball experience, dispelling the theory that a great many gifted athletes with little baseball experience would have the desire to attend the Academy. Still, the training and instruction at the Academy were highly regarded. Kauffman still saw promise in the Academy, stating that it would remain active for at least another five years.⁵⁰ However, a little over a year later, in May 1974, the Academy was closed.

It was with a heavy heart that Kauffman closed the Academy. He was quick to point out the Academy

DOUG BIRD ON THE BASEBALL ACADEMY

My first spring training with Kansas City was in Daytona. We stayed in barracks out by the speedway. Must have been a thousand guys there. I thought there's no way I'm going to stand out here. The next year was when they started the baseball academy for younger players.

I thought the academy was a great idea. They took good athletes who didn't have much baseball experience and taught them the correct way to play the game. They had people testing our eye-hand coordination, trying to figure out why we could do things that other people couldn't do. It seemed like a good idea, but it didn't last.

They had some Europeans come in and photograph me and Steve Busby. They were track specialists really—pole vaulters, javelin throwers, etc. I thought this was a great idea too. They didn't speak hardly any English.

They translated the film they took of you into stress points so they could tell where your stress points were from toes to fingertips. They had a way of determining how much stress you were putting on each point, excessive stress on your shoulder, elbow, knees, hips, ankles, whatever. They filmed us pitching against the Yankees in New York. We had a meeting afterwards, our pitching coach Galen Cisco sat in, and he told me later on they described Busby and me exactly.

I was a tall, skinny guy with a big delivery, fluid motion. That's how I had to pitch. Steve was a stocky guy, power pitcher, big hard curveball, and these guys knew nothing about baseball. But they described exactly what kind of pitchers we were from the films. They told them that I would have no problem; the angles of my delivery were where they should be. But Steve Busby they predicted would have trouble with his elbow and shoulder. I didn't see anything wrong with his delivery, but they said the stress he was putting on those points was excessive and it would be just a matter of time before he had problems. They were right.

They told the Royals they could go look at a high school kid the same way that the team was thinking of drafting and diagnose him in the same way. Maybe save them from wasting a lot of bonus money, by avoiding kids who had a high risk of getting hurt unless they changed something. Galen Cisco and I thought it was a great idea, but nothing came of it after that. Maybe because they'd have to wait a few years to see how it turned out.

—From an interview with Norman Macht

did get results, as Frank White was now with the big league team. But he acknowledged that for the costs involved, there should have been a bigger impact.⁵¹ The staff and facilities were downsized, with accelerated instructional camps still held at the Academy site for several months of the year. In 1979, the Royals abandoned the Academy complex and it was donated to the Kansas City YMCA.⁵²

At the time, it was generally reported that the Academy was closed primarily for financial reasons. In retrospect, however, it is easy to see that the Academy received little support from much of the management of the Royals, notably general manager Cedric Tallis

and head of player development Lou Gorman. Instead of being seen as an integral part of the Royals' player-development system, it was seen as competition, utilizing resources, especially financial, which could have been used in the traditional player-development programs. Because of this attitude of Royals management, the Academy may not have been given any more time to allow its potential to come to fruition. Syd Thrift, a believer in the Academy, resigned out of frustration in 1972, seeing that the Academy was receiving support from no one else in management but Kauffman.⁵³ Charlie Metro blames the failings of the Academy on Syd Thrift, noting that Thrift ignored almost all of

the advice Metro had to offer on the recognition of talent and the training of players.⁵⁴ Likewise Metro's opinion of the Academy, that it was "something of a disaster" and full of "crazy instruction," is indicative of both the contentiousness surrounding the Academy and the outlook of the career baseball men running the Royals at the time.⁵⁵ Despite acquiescing to his baseball people and closing the Academy, Kauffman remained frustrated by the inertia he found in baseball with regard to any new ideas. He later stated that he believed that the Royals would have been better off keeping the Academy alive.⁵⁶

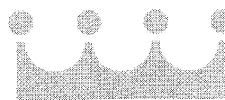
Eventually, 14 graduates of the Academy were called up to the major leagues. The most successful of the group were: the aforementioned Frank White, who is currently working in management for the Royals; U. L. Washington, who played in the major leagues for ten years, primarily at shortstop with the Royals; Rodney Scott, a second baseman who played seven years in the majors, enjoying his best years with the Montreal Expos; and Ron Washington, who played 12 years in the majors, mainly with the Minnesota Twins, and who has served as a coach for many years following his playing career. Given that the 14 Academy alumni who made it to the majors would probably not have had any career in baseball without the existence of the Academy, its impact is readily apparent.

Even today, the Academy has had a lasting impact on many of those who were a part of the endeavor. Frank White states that he continues to use what he learned at the Academy in his teaching of players, and that "the Academy experience made an indelible impression on his approach to the game."⁵⁷ Steve Boros stated that "a day doesn't go by where I don't use the things I learned at the Academy."⁵⁸ Likewise, Syd Thrift called the Academy "the most stimulating baseball

experience I have ever been a part of."⁵⁹

In looking back at the Kansas City Royals' Baseball Academy, it must be seen as a genuinely innovative endeavor that challenged the hidebound methods of the baseball establishment. There is no question that the science employed at the Academy, the use of technology such as radar guns, video technology, strength and conditioning equipment, and even stopwatches quickly made their way into ubiquity among all major league teams. Likewise, many of the training methods were soon found throughout organized baseball after their employment at the Academy. However, as was found at the Academy, it is very hard to transform an athlete into a baseball player. The adage that the hardest thing to do in all of sports, to hit a baseball was again proven true at the Academy. All of the Academy graduates who enjoyed time in the major leagues were at best fair hitters.

The Academy was innovative and did represent the cutting edge in both the study of the science of baseball and the pedagogy of baseball. It was this approach which brought about its successes, including bringing several players who would more than likely *never played* any professional baseball to the major leagues, and advancing the scientific approach to physical and mental training for playing baseball. However, it was this innovative approach which led to the downfall of the Academy by creating fear in the minds of traditional hidebound baseball men who, as Bill James sarcastically put it "didn't want to be associated with any commie pinko radical ideas."⁶⁰ Clearly Ewing Kauffman's vision of the Baseball Academy, one of bringing science and an innovative business approach to the game, has made an under-recognized yet important impact on modern baseball.



Notes

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2. Charlie Metro with Tom Altherr. *Safe by a Mile* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 226.
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5. Joe McGuff, "Royals to Place a Coach With Every Farm Team." *The Sporting News*, February 21, 1970, n.p.
6. Joe McGuff, "Royals Offer Players \$\$\$ Counsel." *The Sporting News*, July 11, 1970, n.p.
7. Morgan, 251.
8. Bill James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 504.
9. Murray Polner. *Branch Rickey: A Biography* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), 134.
10. For a description of Griffith's work with the Cubs, see: Christopher Green. "Psychology Strikes Out: Coleman Griffith and the Chicago Cubs." *History of Psychology* 6 no. 3 (2003): 267-283.
11. For a description of Tracy's work with the Browns and its impact on baseball, see: Alan Kornspan and Mary MacCracken. "The Use of Psychology in Professional Baseball." *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*, 11, No. 2 (2003), 36-43.
12. Brad Wilson. "College Courses Part of Royal Academy Program," June 13, 1970, with incomplete citation from Kansas City Royals File, National Baseball Hall of Fame.
13. Kevin Kerrane. *Dollar Sign on the Muscle: The World of Baseball Scouting* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999 reprint of the 1984 edition), 153-156.
14. Morgan, 252.
15. Lou Piniella and Maury Allen. *Sweet Lou* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1986), 34-42.
16. Morgan, 253.
17. Syd Thrift and Barry Shapiro. *The Game According to Syd: The Theories and Teachings of Baseball's Leading Innovator* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 27.
18. Morgan, 253-254.
19. "SUAB Branch of Baseball: KC Academy," June 16, 1972, with incomplete citation from Kansas City Royals File, National Baseball Hall of Fame.
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21. Joe McGuff. "Work Starting on Royals' Academy," *The Sporting News*, February 7, 1970, n.p.
22. The exact location of the Academy was 6700 Clark Road in Sarasota, Florida, on State Highway 72, six miles east of its junction with U.S. 41.
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24. Joe McGuff. "Royals Will Build Florida Academy; Cost Is \$3 Million." *The Sporting News*, September 27, 1969, n.p.
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30. Information on the coaching career of Hal Baird at Auburn can be found at www.auburn.edu/athletics/base/baird.html.
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39. *Ibid*, 31-32. Also see Joe McGuff. "Royals Adopting Mod Look in Training Camp Techniques." *The Sporting News*, March 24, 1973, 44.
40. Thrift and Shapiro, 32.
41. Morgan, 278.
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46. All statistics related to the performance of the Academy teams in the Gulf Coast League were found in the 1972, 1973, and 1974 *Official Baseball Guides*, (St. Louis, MO: The Sporting News).
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48. "Royals Promote Grads," May 13, 1972, with incomplete citation from Kansas City Royals File, National Baseball Hall of Fame.
49. Joe McGuff. "Royals Extending Academy Plan to Farmhands." *The Sporting News*, August 5, 1972, n.p.
50. Joe McGuff. "Kaycee Academy Grooms Rejects, But Cost Is High." *The Sporting News*, April 21, 1973, 17.
51. Sid Bordman. "Royals Close Their Academy," May 18, 1974, with incomplete citation from Kansas City Royals File, National Baseball Hall of Fame.
52. "Owner of Royals Donates Baseball Complex to 'Y,'" December 23, 1979, with incomplete citation from Kansas City Royals File, National Baseball Hall of Fame.
53. Thrift and Shapiro, 33.
54. Charlie Metro, phone interview with Richard J. Puerzer, June 19, 2003.
55. Metro with Altherr, 331.
56. Morgan, 260.
57. White interview.
58. Thrift and Shapiro, 34.
59. *Ibid*, 25.
60. Michael Lewis. *Moneyball* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

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leaguer, paid him the ultimate umpire's accolade: "He did one of the best umpiring jobs I've ever seen. He didn't miss a single pitch on me."¹⁴ Obituaries appropriately did not mention the irony of his death: that 52-year-old Cal Drummond died a matter of hours on the same day that he was to realize his dream of rejoining his American League crew.¹⁵

The Cal Drummond story is important aside from his tragic death and its place in the annals of baseball necrology. It is also the inspirational story of one man's personal commitment to the umpiring profession and determination to return to the major leagues after a life-threatening injury. It is likewise instructive in that the press, by ignoring the human-interest tale of an umpire who suffered a severe head injury and lay unconscious in the hospital, reflected the long-standing attitude of the public toward those who make playing the game possible.

Notes

1. *The Sporting News*, July 30, 1952.
2. *The Sporting News*, August 14, 1957.
2. *The Sporting News*, May 16, 1970.
3. *Baltimore Evening Sun* and *Baltimore News America*, June 11, 1969; *Baltimore Evening Sun*, June 16, 1969. The *Washington Post* also failed to mention the incident or hospitalization. Veteran umpire Johnny Stevens replaced Drummond, although *The Sporting News* continued to list Drummond on the crew through June 16. Thanks to Joey Beretta for this information.
4. If the incident occurred in the later innings, Angel and Oriole score sheets indicate that the pitchers and catchers involved were either Pedro Borbon and Ken Tatum, pitchers, and Jim Hicks, catcher for the Angels or pitcher Marcelino Lopez and catcher Andy Etchebarren for the Orioles.
5. Norman Macht to Larry Gerlach, September 5, 1995.
6. *Baltimore Evening Sun*, June 16, 1969. This notice was the first piece in the Baltimore press about Drummond's condition.
7. Greenwood, SC *Index-Journal*, June 21, July 1 and 12, August 5, 1969; *Baltimore Evening Sun*, July 1, 1969.
8. Greenville, SC *News*, May 4, 1970.
9. *Index-Journal*, April 18 and 21, 1970.
10. *Des Moines Register*, May 2, 1970.
11. *Des Moines Register*, May 3, 1970.
12. *Des Moines Register*, May 4, 1970.
13. *Des Moines Register*, May 3 and 4, 1970.
14. The best obituaries are in the *Journal-Index*, May 4, 1970; the *Greenville News*, May 4, 1970; and *The Sporting News*, May 16, 1970.
15. At the time of Drummond's hospitalization, the press gave widespread coverage to Jesus Alou's fractured jaw, Denny McLain's hospitalization for "nausea and a headache," Gates Brown's "respiratory infection," Wes Parker's appendectomy, and Reggie Smith's pulled shoulder muscle.

ORLANDO CEPEDA was much better known as a hitter than as a runner. There were three plays in August 1974 that illustrate this point. Playing for the Royals, Cepeda had the following adventures. First, on August 10 in the third inning against the Brewers, Cepeda batted with the bases loaded and no one out. He doubled to left field, scoring the runners from third and second. The runner on first was out at the plate, left field to shortstop to catcher, and Cepeda was nailed while trying for third, catcher to third baseman. Therefore, he had a double, two RBI and hit into a double play!

The second great play is on August 24 at Milwaukee in the 9th inning. With runners on first and second and one out, Orlando doubled again, scoring both runners, but was once again out trying to stretch, the play going left field to shortstop to catcher to third base.

The last play of the trilogy came on August 31 against the Orioles. In the 6th, Cepeda was on second and George Brett was on first with two out. Fred Patek was the batter and he received credit for an infield single on a ground ball to shortstop. However, Cepeda was thrown out at the plate, shortstop to catcher, trying to score from second on this hit. It appears that Cepeda spent the month running the bases like a Baby Bull in a china shop.

-DAVID SMITH

Havana and Key West

José Méndez and the Great Scoreless Streak of 1908

by David Skinner

In the fall of 1908, the Cincinnati Reds traveled to Cuba, making one of the earliest visits to the island by a major league team. Their trip was a mixture of success and failure. A total of 38,407 fans paid \$19,365.60 to watch the 13 games at Havana's Almendares Park between November 12 and December 8. Primarily facing Almendares and Habana, the "eternal rivals" of the Cuban League, the Reds managed just a .500 record (6-6-1). They were able to dominate the Habana Reds, but won only a solitary victory in five games with the Almendares Blues, and were defeated in a game against the Brooklyn Royal Giants, a black team from the States. Their ineffectiveness against the Blues was due in part to the skill of the brilliant young pitching star, José Méndez. The rookie pitched two shutouts against Cincinnati, bracketing a seven-inning scoreless relief effort, and followed these with two shutouts against Key West. The first game against the Reds was a one-hitter, and the final one against the Florida team was a no-hitter. His string of scoreless innings was finally snapped at 45 by Habana in a Cuban League contest.

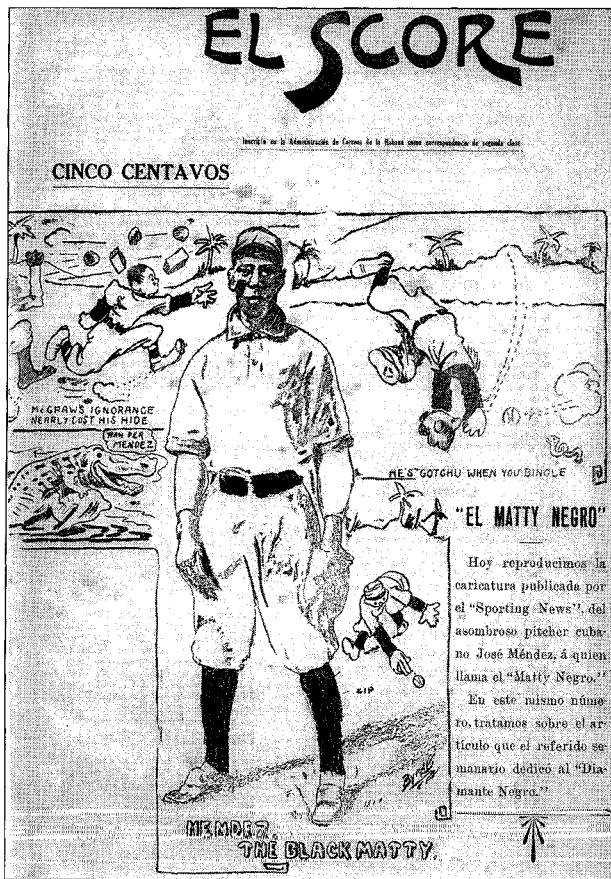
Born in Cárdenas, Matanzas, on March 19, 1887, José de la Caridad Méndez Báez had burst upon the Cuban League in 1908 with one of the greatest debuts of any pitcher in baseball history. Discovered by pitching great Carlos (Bebé) Royer the previous year, he had been a slick-fielding shortstop with a great arm who doubled as a reliever for Remedios in Las Villas province. During his rookie campaign for Almendares he was unbeatable, going 9-0 in 15 appearances. A 5'8", 160-pound right hander, he featured a sharp curve and a fastball with movement. Méndez baffled Cuban hitters with a deceptively easy motion that belied the speed and rotation of his deliveries. The young man who would be known as "El Diamante Negro," the

Black Diamond, became one of Cuba's greatest pitchers over the course of an injury-interrupted career. In the weeks leading up to a 1908-09 season in which he led the league in most pitching categories, the Cincinnati Reds would discover the sort of talent that Cuba could produce. Méndez would enjoy two periods of success in the U.S., playing for teams owned by J. L. Wilkinson, first with the Des Moines-based barnstorming All Nations club in the early to mid-teens, and as player-manager for the Kansas City Monarchs of the early to mid-twenties. The Reds never had to worry about facing him in the States since, as a black man, Méndez was barred from the majors.

The Cuban League was founded in 1878, two years after the birth of the National League in the U.S. After the odious article 98 of the league statutes, which banned men of color from the island's top circuit, was abrogated in 1900, blacks rose quickly to a position of prominence in Cuban baseball, one which they hold to this day. Not until 47 years later was the National League integrated, although a number of blacks did play professionally in the U.S. in the 19th century. Some players of racially mixed descent had played in Cuba before 1900 as well.

1908 was a watershed year for the baseball relationship between Cuba and the United States. That season New Britain of the Class B Connecticut League signed three Cubans. Two of them, Rafael Almeida and Armando Marsans, would become the first Cuban players in the modern major leagues when they joined the Cincinnati Reds in 1911. The third, Luis (Mulo) Padrón, who had played the two previous seasons in the U.S. minors and would star for the Class D Long Branch Cubans in 1913-14, was considered too dark-skinned to play in the big leagues. Almeida and Marsans were lighter-completed, but race baiting and allegations of mixed blood dogged them in the States despite protestations by the Reds of their pure

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Caucasian ancestry. Some researchers have contended that they should be considered to have integrated the modern major leagues long before Jackie Robinson, and that only their foreign origin enabled them to play in lily-white organized baseball.

Frank Bancroft, the business manager of the Cincinnati Reds and field manager of the squad that traveled to Cuba in 1908, was the seminal figure in Cuba-U.S. baseball relations. He had also been the manager of the first North American ball club to visit the island. In 1879 Bancroft was manager of the Worcester Ruby Legs, a team that despite finishing fourth in the minor league National Association was said to be the best team in professional baseball outside the National League as a result of having defeated a number of NL clubs in exhibition games. In the off-season of Worcester's minor to major league transformation, the touring squad's mound corps was augmented by future Hall of Famers Tim Keefe (New Bedford NA) and John Montgomery Ward (Providence NL), who joined a staff that also included Curry Foley (Boston NL) and Worcester's Tricky Nichols. A Cuban source describes the Americans with their "picturesque beards and ridiculous shirts" as only

playing a few games and returning disillusioned to North America "after roaming the streets of Havana for several weeks." Another source indicates that the Cuban people, in only the second year of league play in their country, were unwilling to pay to see exhibition games. Reportedly the Cubans were able to score only one run, that by Carlos de Zaldo, the first Cuban to practice the art of bunting, who had gotten aboard via his specialty.

Cuba in 1908 was under military occupation by the United States. As today under the Communist regime, there was at this time much resentment toward the U.S. government, and likewise much incentive to defeat the American imperialists in the only venue that offered that possibility, the baseball diamond.

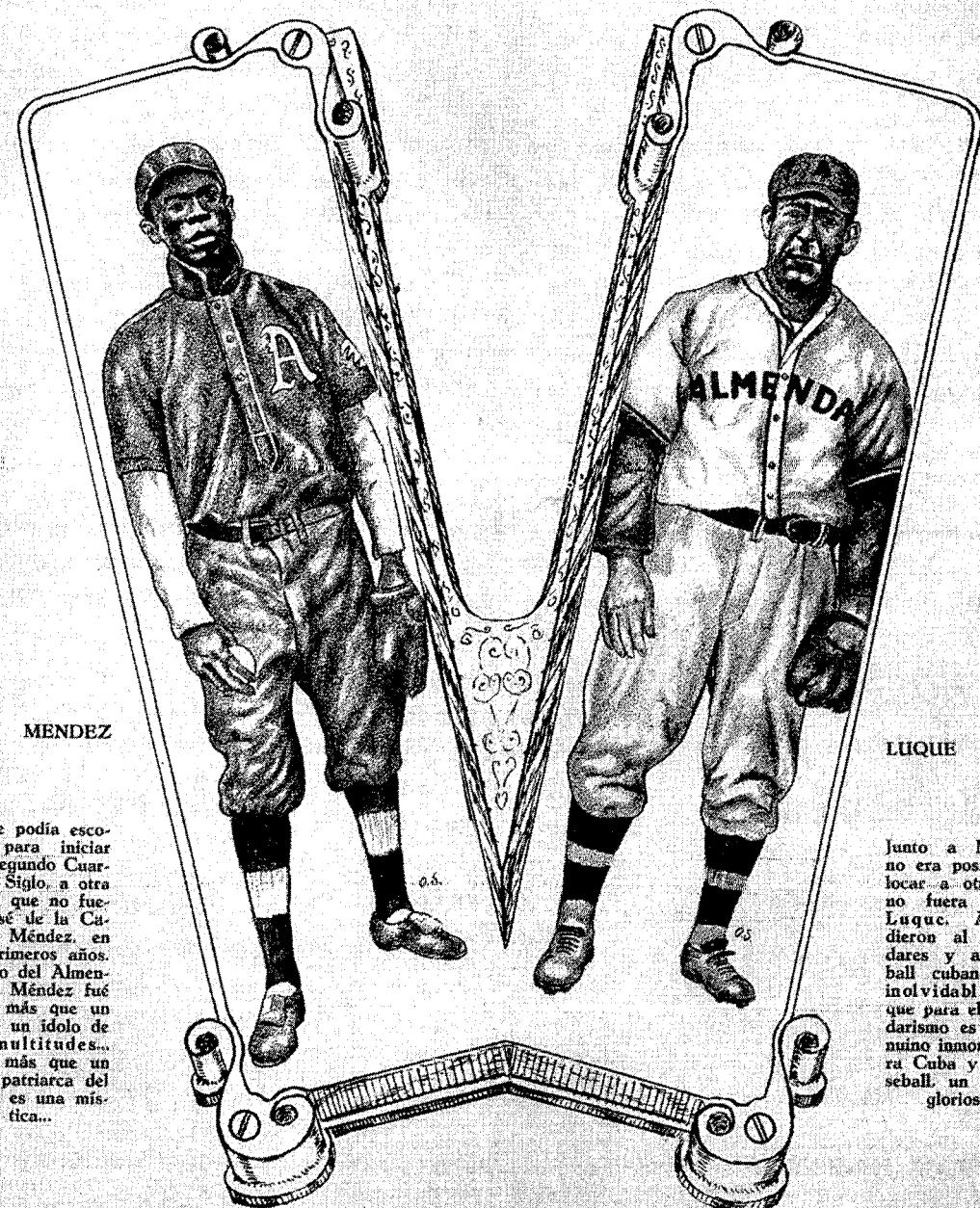
African American teams, U.S. minor league clubs, and various aggregations that included a number of big leaguers had traveled to the island occasionally before the 1895-98 War of Independence and frequently thereafter, beginning the fall tradition of the "American Season," but the idea of seeing (and hopefully beating) an actual big-league team was especially appealing to the baseball-mad Cubans. Both the champion Brooklyn Superbas and the last-place New York Giants traveled

SEGUNDO CUARTO DE SIGLO

1901 - 1925

Abordar el tema del mejor pitcher cubano de todas las épocas, es como encender una chispa en la hoguera del debate y la polé-

en prolongadas e infecundas discusiones, para tratar de dilucidar opiniones al respecto. Sin embargo, son ya muchos los años que han transcurrido y



MENDEZ

LUQUE

No se podía escoger, para iniciar este segundo Cuarto de Siglo, a otra figura que no fuera José de la Cariñad Méndez en sus primeros años. Dentro del Almendares, Méndez fué ayer, más que un héroe, un ídolo de las multitudes... Hoy, más que un viejo patriarca del juego, es una mística...

Junto a Méndez, no era posible colocar a otro que no fuera Adolfo Luque. Ambos dieron al Almendares y al béisbol cubano, días inolvidables. Luque para el almendarismo es un genuino inmortal para Cuba y su béisbol, un símbolo glorioso...

mica. Para unos, las hazañas de Méndez, no tienen parangón en los anales del pasatiempo. Otros por el contrario, aseguran que en suelo cubano no ha surgido un lanzador superior a Adolfo Luque. Los críticos se han enfrascado en más de una oportunidad,

la añeja controversia, se hace cada día más enigmática. Parece que está destinada, a reposar eternamente en las páginas de la historia del béisbol cubano, como si se tratara de una incógnita exótica, embrujada y maldecida, para la cual nada ni nadie ha po-

to Cuba after the 1900 season, and all Cuban League opponents were soundly defeated. The Detroit Tigers had been set to visit Cuba in 1907, but the December tour was canceled at the last minute. Frank Bancroft brought to Havana a Cincinnati team that had finished fifth in the NL in 1908 under first baseman-manager John Ganzel, and would finish fourth under Clark Griffith in 1909. Seven of the eight position players on Bancroft's squad were the regular starters at their positions in 1908, 1909, or both.

The first baseman was Dick Hoblitzel, who had been purchased as a 19-year-old for \$1,000 the previous summer and hit .254 in 32 games for the Reds. He would go on to hit .308 in 1909 and have a solid big-league career. Miller Huggins held down second base, a position he had played regularly for Cincinnati since 1904 but would lose the following season. He would make it to the Hall of Fame as a result of managing the great New York Yankee teams in the 1920s.

Shortstop Rudy Hulswitt was the 1908 regular. Hans Lobert played third base, coming off a solid season in which he hit .293 and was one behind league leader Honus Wagner with 18 triples. He was the regular at his position for the Reds from 1907 to 1910. Only two outfielders made the trip. Both were regulars, Mike Mitchell from 1907 through 1912, and John Kane in 1908 only, though he was the Reds' utility man in 1907. Larry McLean, a hard drinker who frequently ran afoul of the rules, the law, and opposition players, played for Cincinnati from 1906 to 1912, most years as the number one catcher, including 1909, when he would hit .256.

The remaining outfield position was shared by backup catcher Bunny Pearce and whatever pitcher wasn't starting. The three pitchers on the traveling team were rookie Jean Dubuc, who started nine games in 1908 at age 19, 17-game winner Bob Spade, and starter Bill Campbell.

Almendares, recently nicknamed Alacranes (Scorpions) by pitcher Angel D'Meza during his tenure with the club (1903, 1905-07), was a charter member of the Cuban League. Under Dr. Juan L. Sánchez, their first-year manager who would win three titles in four seasons, the Blues had taken the championship by five games over Habana in 1908 with a 37-8, .822 record, the best percentage in league history for a season of over 20 games. In the season that began on December 20, Habana won the 1908-09 crown by a game over the Blues. The lineup Almendares presented against the

Reds included Regino (Mamelo) García 1B, Marsans 2B and OF, Armando (Chino) Cabañas 2B, Alfredo (Pájaro) Cabrera SS, Almeida 3B, and outfielders Heliodoro (Jabuco) Hidalgo, Rogelio Valdés, Juan Violá, and José Muñoz. Gervasio (Strike) González was the catcher, and the pitchers included Mendez (9-0 in '08, 15-6 in '08-09), Royer (8-2, 1-0), Muñoz (13-1, 5-3), and Andrés Ortega (6-4, 6-4). All players except Ortega were future members of the Cuban Baseball Hall of Fame. The team, characteristically for its time, was built around pitching rather than hitting. The great Mamelo was returning to the club where he had won the middle two of his four consecutive batting titles (1904-07), and made the conversion from catcher to first in deference to Strike, who was considered the best defensive catcher of the era, and called by some the greatest Cuban receiver of all time.

The American Season in Cuba started auspiciously enough for Cincinnati on November 12, as Spade beat Padron and Habana, 3-1. Then they ran into José Méndez and the Almendares buzzsaw. Méndez hurled a masterpiece on November 15, shutting out the Reds, 1-0, holding them hitless until the ninth. After Jabuco made a spectacular grab of a line drive off the bat of Kane to open the frame, the little righty was finally reached for a scratch single by Huggins. With Lobert at bat, Huggins stole second, but he died there when Hans popped out and Mitchell fanned to end the game. Méndez struck out nine (include the side in the second), walked two, and hit a batter. Dubuc was also sharp for Cincinnati, giving up six hits and striking out six with no bases on balls.

After the game, stunned Reds players were asked about Méndez. All were complimentary. Huggins said he had "something marvelous," Lobert said he threw some pitches the third sacker "really never could see", and Mitchell and Hoblitzel were likewise appreciative. Bancroft gave the clichéd manager response to a great black player: "If that pitcher Méndez was white, I'm sure that it wouldn't take him many months to be one of the stars of the National League." Bancroft said he would value Mendez at \$20,000 if he could whitewash him, apparently considering him less valuable than did John McGraw, who once reportedly said the battery of Méndez and Strike González would be worth "more than \$100,000" if he could paint them with lime.

Méndez fanned seven Reds, walked a man, and allowed two hits and no runs in seven innings in relief of Royer on November 29. The 3-2 defeat was the only

one suffered by the Blues at the hands of the National Leaguers, with the victory going to Campbell. Dubuc was again the victim as Méndez bade adios to the visitors from Cincinnati with a five-hit, eight-strikeout performance on December 3, allowing no walks but hitting a batter in a 3-0 whitewash. His string of scoreless innings was now 25. Having overwhelmed the major leaguers with a 4-1 series record, José and his teammates turned their attentions to their neighbors from Key West.

The island city of Key West (Cayo Hueso to Cubans)

is considered to be the southernmost point in the "continental" United States, although it is closer to Havana (90 miles) than it is to the U.S. mainland (100 miles). Before its railroad link to the outside world was completed in 1912, the city was more closely connected to Cuba, via regular steamship service, than it was to other American cities. The population had a large Cuban component, many drawn there to work in the cigar industry, and Hispanic culture was an important element in the city's makeup. When Miami was barely a dot on the map, Key West was Florida's third largest

Havana, November 15, 1908

CINCINNATI	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Kane, cf	3	0	0	1	0	0
Huggins, 2b	4	0	1	1	4	0
Lobert, 3b	4	0	0	3	1	0
Mitchell, lf	4	0	0	1	0	0
Hoblitzel, 1b	3	0	0	7	0	0
McLean, c	3	0	0	7	2	0
Hulswitt, ss	3	0	0	3	2	1
Spade, rf	2	0	0	1	0	0
Dubuc, p	2	0	0	0	4	0
TOTALS	28	0	1	24	13	1

ALMENDARES	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Marsans, rf	3	1	1	0	0	0
Valdés, lf	2	0	1	0	0	0
González, c	3	0	2	9	1	0
García, 1b	3	0	0	11	0	0
Almecida, 3b	3	0	0	0	2	0
Hidalgo, cf	3	0	1	2	0	1
Cabrera, ss	3	0	1	2	2	1
Cabañas, 2b	3	0	0	2	3	0
Méndez, p	3	0	1	1	6	0
TOTALS	26	1	6	27	14	2

CINCINNATI	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	-	0
ALMENDARES	1 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 x	-	1

SB: Huggins. Caught Stealing: Huggins.
 SH: Marsans, Váldez. RBI González.
 LOB: Cincinnati 4, Almendares 3.
 DP: Hulswitt, Huggins, and Hoblitzel.
 Méndez, Cabrera and García.
 Earned Runs: Almendares 1
 BB: Dubuc 0. Mendez 2 (Spade, Dubuc).
 K: Dubuc 6 (García, Hidalgo, Cabañas 2,
 Méndez 2). Méndez 9 (Kane 2, Mitchell 2,
 Hoblitzel, McLean, Huggins, Spade, Dubuc).
 HBP: Mendez (Kane).

Time: 1:45. Attendance: 12,000.

Umpire: William Setley.

Official Scorer: Antonio Conejo.

Key West, December 17, 1908

ALMENDARES	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Marsans, 2b	5	2	3	1	2	0
Almeida, 3b	5	2	2	0	0	0
González, c	2	1	1	12	0	0
García, 1b	4	1	1	7	1	0
Hidalgo, cf	5	1	0	3	0	0
Violá, lf	5	0	1	3	0	0
Cabrera, ss	5	0	1	0	2	0
Muñoz, rf	5	0	1	0	1	0
Méndez, p	4	2	2	1	2	1
TOTALS	40	9	12	27	8	1

KEY WEST	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Tomás, lf	4	0	0	1	0	0
Cheek, c	4	0	0	8	0	0
Noyes, 3b	3	0	0	0	1	1
Cuthbert, 2b	3	0	0	1	1	1
Griffith, rf	3	0	0	1	0	0
C. Rodríguez, cf	3	0	0	3	0	0
E. Rodríguez, ss	3	0	0	1	2	1
Healey, 1b	3	0	0	12	0	1
Hagerman, p	3	0	0	0	4	1
TOTALS	29	0	0	27	8	5

ALMENDARES	0 0 4	0 0 0	0 0 5	-	9
KEY WEST	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	-	0

2B: González, García, Violá

SB: Marsans, Almeida

K: Méndez 12, Hagerman 8

BB: Méndez 0, Hagerman 3

HBP: Méndez

city, with 17,114 people recorded by the 1900 census, behind Jacksonville and just edged out by Pensacola, but ahead of Tampa.

Key West was the oldest city in South Florida, incorporated in 1828. Baseball had long been popular there, as it was in Cuba. In 1887, five clubs competed for the first city championship: Cuba, Fe, Esperanza, Habana, and the one club which featured American players, the Key West Grays, with Fe winning the initial pennant. A ballpark was leased to cigar manufacturer Edward H. Gato at the end of Duval Street, adjacent to the beach along the Atlantic Ocean. The Gato Baseball Park continued to serve as Key West's home field well into the 20th century, and would be the site of games played against Almendares in 1908.

The agreement with the Key West team manager W. A. Wilder was for a series of games between Key West and Almendares, and for the Florida team to play at least three games in Havana versus the Blues. The Key West club, with both Anglo and Hispanic players on the squad, would travel to Havana on Friday night the 11th to play three games with Almendares, returning to Key West for three more games. With the Cuban League season starting on Sunday, December 20, the Alacranes would need to return home before then. Almendares was guaranteed \$500 for the Florida contests against a percentage of the gate. Key West was reported to be "in good trim and . . . ready for a good game with a first-class nine."

Key West in fact played three games with Cuban League opponents in Havana, but only one was against Almendares. The Floridians, augmented as they were by outside professionals, won the Saturday game, 3-0, over Fe and beat Habana, 2-1, on Monday. The winning pitcher in both contests was a big 6'2" right-hander from Kansas named Zerah Zequiel (Rip) Hagerman. At 20, a year younger than José Méndez, Hagerman was half a foot taller and 40 pounds heavier. Key West came up against Almendares and Méndez on Sunday, December 13, and must have wished that Cuba had blue laws like in the States, as they were shut out 3-0. José struck out 11, walked none, and hit a pair of batters.

Both teams sailed for Key West, and on Wednesday the Cuban squad was a 4-0 victor. The Thursday game featured the aces for each team, Hagerman and Méndez. It was no contest. Rip was ripped for nine runs, all unearned, four in the third and five in the ninth. Key West committed five errors for the game.

Méndez struck out 12, walked none, and hit a batter. The only other man to reach base for the Florida club did so on an error by Méndez. The little guy had soundly beaten the big guy, and in the process pitched a no-hit, no-run masterpiece, running his scoreless string to 43 innings with the 9-0 victory.

Large crowds attended each game. These were historic contests, reportedly the first integrated games to be played in the South. Key West won the finale on Friday, 4-3, finishing with an impressive 3-3 mark against Cuban League squads, playing .500 ball like their big-league counterparts from Cincinnati. But like the Reds, they found Méndez to be unbeatable and could not score on him. The Key West fans had mostly supported the visitors, but some of them boiled over during the Friday victory throwing bottles and stones at black Almendares players, and the mayor took to the field to harass black relief pitcher Joseito Muñoz. It seems that they took out their frustrations over the Méndez no-hitter on his black teammates.

The streak was finally ended at 45 scoreless innings by the Habana Reds, in the third stanza of a Christmas Eve Cuban League contest. After Méndez threw two shutout frames, he ended up on the losing side of a 4-0 decision to Chico González. The 45-inning scoreless streak equaled the then major league record, shared by Doc White and Cy Young, later broken successively by Jack Coombs, Walter Johnson, Don Drysdale, and Orel Hershiser, who set the current mark of 59 in 1989. Although Méndez did his deed, except for the final two innings, in exhibition contests, it was certainly against high-level competition. In the 45 innings stretching from November 15 to December 24, he gave up only 15 hits, struck out 49 and walked three, while hitting five batters. In an era when pitchers asserted their rights to the inside of the plate, we can be assured that the last number was not due to wildness.

Frank Bancroft had one more fling as a manager. In 1910, at the age of 64, he brought Connie Mack's world champion Philadelphia Athletics to Cuba for a series of games against Habana and Almendares in December. The trip, which followed on the heels of a visit by the Tigers, was a failure at the gate and on the field. Both Tigers trips were economic successes, with over 127,000 fans paying over \$68,000 in the two series. The A's managed to draw only 22,634 for 10 dates, with a gate of \$11,611.90, as they went 4-6. Although they lacked only Eddie Collins and Frank (Home Run) Baker from the World Series-winning

club, they lost three of five to each of the Cuban League rivals. Coombs won his three decisions, but Eddie Plank went 0-3, with two of the losses to Méndez, and Chief Bender was 1-3.

Rip Hagerman impressed the Habana management so much with his exhibition victory that he was signed by the Reds for the 1908-09 season. On the fast track to the majors, he tied Méndez for the best record, 15-6, .714, in his only Cuban League season. He made it to the big leagues in 1909, where he had little success, going 19-33 over four seasons with the Chicago Cubs and Cleveland Indians. He settled in New Mexico, where he died in 1930 at the age of 41. Key West finally made it into organized baseball, with franchises in the Class B Florida International League (1952-53) and Class A Florida State League (1969-76).

José Méndez went on to a sterling career as a pitcher, interrupted for several seasons due to a sore arm. He particularly shone in the American Season, winning celebrated 10-inning victories defeating Hall of Famers Plank, Bender, and Smokey Joe Williams, and pitching a no-hitter against the Birmingham Barons in 1913. John McGraw called him “sort of Walter Johnson and Grover Alexander rolled into one.” Méndez dropped out of the rotation in 1914, but hung around as a position player in both the U.S. and Cuba. He was a fine fielder as a shortstop, also playing outfield, but was a weak hitter. He pitched sporadically after that with some success, and as a manager led the Monarchs into the first two Negro League World Series against Hilldale, winning the first one in 1924 while going 2-0 in four games as a pitcher. His Cuban League record was 76-28, and his .731 is the highest career winning percentage. But from 1914 until his retirement in 1927 he would win only 14 games. He died in Havana on October 31, 1928, of bronchopneumonia. The Black Diamond, like his opponent in the no-hitter in Key West 20 years earlier, was only 41 years old at the time of his death.

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Willard Brown, A Forgotten Ballplayer

He Hit a Milestone Home Run

by Walt Wilson

It didn't take Jackie Robinson much time after joining the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 to become the first African American player to hit a NL home run. In the fourth game he played that year, on April 18, Jackie connected for a solo shot into the upper deck at the Polo Grounds off lefty Dave Koslo of the New York Giants. The blow came in the top of the third inning and gave the Dodgers a brief 2-1 lead. The game ended as a lopsided win for the Giants, 10-4, as they came up with six round-trippers, including two each by Bobby Thomson and Bill Rigney.

Most baseball fans would have little trouble in naming Jackie as the first of his race to hit a NL home run, but most would give the wrong answer for the AL. I assumed it was Larry Doby until I actually looked it up. Doby appeared in 29 games with the Cleveland Indians in 1947, mostly as a pinch-hitter, and he failed to connect for a home run.

The distinction of being the first African American to hit an AL homer belongs to a man who is barely remembered today. The blow had several other distinctive features: it was a pinch-hit home run; it was a game-winning hit; it was an inside-the-park home run; and it came off a future Hall of Fame pitcher.

On July 17, 1947, the last-place Browns took a cue from the Indians, who had signed Doby in early July. The Browns signed two players from the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League. The two men were Hank Thompson and Willard "Will" Brown. The 21-year-old Thompson made his debut in St. Louis that same night, playing second base in a game against the Athletics, lost by the Browns, 16-2. Hank went 0-for-4. Brown, who was 32 years old, made his first appearance two days later as an outfielder in a game against the Boston Red Sox. Boston pitcher Earl Johnson tossed a

three-hit shutout, winning, 1-0. Brown went 0-for-3. Neither Brown nor Thompson did enough hitting to stick with the Browns beyond that season, but Hank joined the Giants in 1949 and was an important cog on both their 1951 and 1954 pennant-winning teams.

Brown was inserted into the starting lineup in right field, and soon had some memorable moments. On July 23, for example, he came up with four singles and had three RBI at Yankee Stadium as the lowly Browns clobbered the mighty Yanks, 8-2. Then on July 25 he pounded out two doubles in a game against the Red Sox at Fenway Park. But by August 10 his batting average had dipped below .200, and he was riding the bench.

Brown's biggest moment finally came in the second game of a twi-night doubleheader at St. Louis on August 13. The Browns had lost to the Detroit Tigers in the first game, 7-1, and were trailing by a 5-4 score in the last of the eighth inning of the second game, before a typically slim crowd of 3,002. With a man on base, St. Louis manager "Muddy" Ruel sent left-handed batter Joe Schultz to pinch-hit against reliever Hal White, whereupon Tiger skipper Steve O'Neill countered by calling on his ace southpaw Hal Newhouser to replace White. Ruel then called Schultz back to the dugout and sent the right-handed Brown to hit.

Brown came through with a long drive that carried well over center fielder "Hoot" Evers' head; the ball rolled to the extreme corner of right-center field, and before it could be retrieved and fired back to the infield and to home plate, Brown had raced around the bases for a big home run, the first ever hit by an African American in the history of the American League. The homer made the score 6-5, Browns, and that was the final score.

Willard Brown was never recalled to a major league park to be honored for his accomplishment. It's too late now, for Willard Brown passed away on August 8, 1996, at the age of 81.

WALT WILSON is supposed to be a retired office manager, but he has been struggling with baseball research for over 30 years, and seems to be working harder than when he was "at work."

Baseball's (Almost) Greatest Comeback Ever

by Lyle Spatz

When baseball people talk about teams coming from way back to win a pennant, three such clubs always head the list: the 1914 Boston Braves, the 1951 New York Giants, and the 1978 New York Yankees. All their stories are familiar, but one not so well remembered is the comeback of the 1950 Brooklyn Dodgers. The reason it is not so well remembered is obvious. It fell short. Had it not, I believe it would rank as the greatest comeback ever.

Let's briefly review the three that do rank as the greatest. In 1914, after losing a July 4 doubleheader to Brooklyn, the Braves were in last place, 15 games behind the first-place Giants. They took the lead for good on September 8 and won the pennant by 10½ games.

As late as August 11, the 1951 Giants trailed the Dodgers by 13 games. Over the next seven weeks New York won 37 of their final 44 games to finish the season tied with the Dodgers, requiring a three-game playoff.

At the end of play on July 19, 1978, the Yankees were in fourth place in the American League East, 14 games behind the Red Sox. The Yanks eventually caught and passed Boston, but then fell back into a tie to force a one-game playoff.

Dramatic home runs by Bobby Thomson and Bucky Dent allowed the Giants to win the National League pennant in 1951 and the Yankees to capture the American League East title in 1978. But just how memorable would the comebacks of the '51 Giants and '78 Yanks have been had those teams not ultimately made it to the World Series? Most likely they would sit with the '50 Dodgers in the "great try but no cigar" category.

Now about those '50 Dodgers. On September 18, they dropped a 9-7 decision to the lowly Cubs, on Ron

Northeys grand slam home run off Dan Bankhead. The defeat was the Dodgers' fourth straight, and it left them all but dead in the pennant race. Not only were they in third place, they trailed first-place Philadelphia by nine full games. By overtaking Boston, a game and a half ahead of them, they had a reasonable chance to finish second. Of course, they had an even better chance to finish fourth, as their lead over the fourth-place Giants was just half a game.

But while a second-, third-, or fourth-place finish were all in play, Brooklyn's chances of catching Philadelphia were minuscule. At 76-61, the Dodgers had just 17 games remaining; the Phillies, at 87-54, had 13 left. Making up nine games in that short a time seemed an impossibility.

Philadelphia newspapers were already talking about the Phillies' first World Series appearance in 35 years, while those in New York were focused on the close race in the American League. On that same date, September 18, the Yankees led both the Red Sox and the Tigers by a mere half game. Meanwhile, the major baseball news out of Brooklyn was the announcement that Branch Rickey, general manager of the Dodgers since 1942, was leaving to take a similar position with Pittsburgh.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	87	54	.617	--
BOSTON	78	60	.565	7½
BROOKLYN	76	61	.554	9
NEW YORK	77	63	.550	9½

LYLE SPATZ, who grew up a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, and so has many options to choose from, still considers October 1, 1950 the most frustrating day of his baseball life.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Brooklyn won both ends of a doubleheader from the Pittsburgh Pirates, 14-3 and 3-2, getting complete games from Don Newcombe and Erv Palica. Duke Snider had two home runs, a double, and five runs batted in to help Newcombe log his 18th win in the opener. The Duke, celebrating his 24th birthday, was also one of the heroes of the nightcap, throwing out the potential tying run at the plate in the ninth inning. Only 2,637 fans were at Ebbets Field to see the Dodgers' sweep.

At Philadelphia, journeyman Frank Hiller of the Cubs shut out Philadelphia, 1-0. Robin Roberts, in his second attempt to reach his 20th victory, was the loser. Boston moved 6½ games behind the Phillies with an 8-7 win over St. Louis. The Giants had the day off.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	87	55	.612	--
BOSTON	79	60	.568	6½
BROOKLYN	78	61	.561	7½
NEW YORK	77	63	.550	9

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Gil Hodges' grand slam home run was the big blow in Carl Erskine's complete game 7-2 win over the Pirates. Pittsburgh's two runs came in the first inning, the result of National League home run leader Ralph Kiner's 46th of the season. Brooklyn bounced back with four runs in the home first, when Hodges' second grand slam of the season, off Pittsburgh's Bill MacDonald, scored Eddie Miksis, Pee Wee Reese, and Carl Furillo ahead of him.

The older members of the press thought the crowd of 1,011, on this chilly, dismal day, might have been a record low for Ebbets Field. Although the Dodgers were now tied for second, it was obvious that very few fans in Brooklyn thought their team was still in a pennant race.

Nor was there any notion in Philadelphia that a "race" might be developing. The Phillies downed the Cubs, 9-6, with their sensational reliever Jim Konstanty picking up the win. At Boston, Cardinals rookie Cloyd Boyer registered his first big league shutout, edging Vern Bickford and the Braves, 1-0. The loss dropped the Braves into a second-place tie with Brooklyn, 7 ½

games behind Philadelphia. At the Polo Grounds, the Reds won both ends of a doubleheader behind Ewell Blackwell and Ken Raffensberger, pushing the Giants to the brink of elimination.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	88	55	.615	--
BOSTON	79	61	.564	7½
BROOKLYN	79	61	.564	7½
NEW YORK	77	65	.542	10½

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Despite committing five errors, the Dodgers completed a four-game sweep of Pittsburgh with a 10-8 victory. The win raised their final season record against the Pirates to 19-3 and assured Pittsburgh's first last-place finish since 1919. Evidently not believing that his team had a chance to overtake Philadelphia, Dodger manager Burt Shotton chose this game for Brooklyn-born pitcher Jim Romano to make his big-league debut. Romano, who did not survive the first inning, was followed by Dan Bankhead, Ralph Branca, and Erv Palica, with Palica getting the win. With Philadelphia idle, the Dodgers cut the Phillies' lead to a still formidable seven games.

Warren Spahn's 5-0 shutout of St. Louis allowed the Braves also to pick up half a game on Philadelphia and remain tied with the Dodgers for second. But when Cincinnati again beat the Giants, stopping Sal Maglie's 11-game winning streak, they dropped New York 11 games behind the Phillies. With both teams having 11 games remaining, the best the Giants could now do was finish the season in a tie with the Phillies.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	88	55	.615	--
BOSTON	80	61	.567	7
BROOKLYN	80	61	.567	7
NEW YORK	77	66	.538	11

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

No games were scheduled. For the final week of the season, the four remaining teams in contention, all of whom were in the East, would be playing each other.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

At Philadelphia, Don Newcombe edged Robin Roberts, 3-2, to move Brooklyn into sole possession of second place, but still six games behind the Phillies. Gil Hodges's 30th home run of the season, in the second inning, accounted for all the Dodgers runs. After Jackie Robinson and Carl Furillo had opened the inning with singles, manager Burt Shotton ordered Hodges to sacrifice them along. Hodges failed twice to get down a bunt before hitting his home run.

At Boston, the Giants defeated the Braves, 4-3, in ten innings, dropping them to third place. Larry Jansen of the Giants and Johnny Sain each went the distance. By winning, the Giants maintained their mathematical chance of finishing the season in a tie.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	88	56	.611	--
BROOKLYN	81	61	.570	6
BOSTON	80	62	.563	7
NEW YORK	78	66	.541	10

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

The Dodgers concluded their two-game series in Philadelphia with an 11-0 blasting of the suddenly reeling Phillies. Ery Palica was a one-man show, pitching a two-hitter and slugging a grand slam home run, the first four-bagger of his career. The blow came off rookie Bubba Church, who was making his first appearance since being hit in the face nine days earlier by a line drive off the bat of Cincinnati's Ted Kluszewski. Palica had a no-hitter until Andy Seminick singled leading off the eighth inning. Del Ennis got Philadelphia's other hit, a double with two out in the ninth inning. The jittery Phillies committed five errors: two each by catcher Seminick and first baseman Eddie Waitkus, and one by third baseman Willie Jones.

Philadelphia's lead over Brooklyn had now shrunk to five games. Still, with only nine games to play (the Dodgers had 11), and a four game edge in the loss column, it seemed only a complete collapse could keep them from the World Series.

Jim Hearn, picked up in midseason from St. Louis,

defeated Boston, 12-4, to move the Giants within two games of the third-place Braves.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	88	57	.606	--
BROOKLYN	82	61	.573	5
BOSTON	80	63	.559	7
NEW YORK	79	66	.544	9

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Brooklyn's 3-2 win in the afternoon portion of their day-night doubleheader with the Giants eliminated Durocher's team from the race. Preacher Roe went all the way for the Dodgers to win his 19th game (19-11). He took a shutout into the ninth inning, but a triple by Eddie Stanky, a single by Whitey Lockman, a wild pitch, and a single by Hank Thompson produced two runs. Pee Wee Reese's fourth-inning two-run homer off Sheldon Jones was the big blow for Brooklyn.

The Giants rebounded to win the night game, 4-3, sparked by a three-run outburst against starter Carl Erskine and reliever Don Newcombe in the eighth. The Dodgers rallied to load the bases in the bottom of the eighth, but a very questionable call by plate umpire

Frank Dascoli prevented them from scoring. With Tommy Brown at bat, one of relief pitcher Dave Koslo's pitches bounced in front of the plate and apparently hit Brown. However, Dascoli ruled that it hit Brown's bat. Giants catcher Wes Westrum fielded the ball, stepped on the plate and threw to first for a double play. The Dodgers argued loud and long, but the decision stood. By beating Brooklyn for the fourth time this season without a loss, Giants starter Sal Maglie raised his overall season's record to 17-4.

The Phillies also split their doubleheader, winning the opener at Boston but dropping the nightcap. Veteran lefty Ken Heintzelman, making his first start in nearly two months, defeated 21-game winner Warren Spahn in the opener, 12-4. Jim Konstanty, Philadelphia's ace reliever, was the loser in the second game, 5-3, but tied the major league record for most relief appearances in a season with his 70th. With both Brooklyn and Philadelphia splitting their doubleheaders, the Dodgers remained five games behind, but they now had two fewer games to make up the deficit.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	89	58	.605	--
BROOKLYN	83	62	.572	5
BOSTON	81	64	.558	7

PREVIOUS: Duke Snider, Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Pee Wee Reese, and Gil Hodges. Along with the absent Carl Furillo, they made up Brooklyn's fearsome mid-century offense.

RIGHT: Don Newcombe with catcher Roy Campanella. Big Newk pitched his heart out down the stretch, but fell short in the end.



NATE PARKS, PHOTOFEST, LITTLEFIELD, COOPERSTOWN, NY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Gil Hodges's 31st home run of the season, a three-run blast off Larry Jansen, highlighted a five-run first inning as the Dodgers defeated the Giants, 8-4. Ralph Branca, with ninth-inning relief help from Dan Bankhead, picked up just his seventh win of the season. A paltry crowd of 4,427 was on hand to witness the season's final meeting between the two teams.

Despite Jim Konstanty's second consecutive poor outing, the Phillies rallied to beat Boston, 8-7, eliminating the Braves from the race. The relief appearance by Konstanty was his 71st of the season, breaking the record established by the Giants' Ace Adams in 1943.

With five days left in the season, the Dodgers trailed by five games. They had eight games left: three consecutive doubleheaders (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) at home with Boston, and single games at home with Philadelphia Saturday and Sunday to close the season.

Philadelphia had six games left: doubleheaders at New York Wednesday and Thursday, an off day Friday, and the two weekend games at Brooklyn.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	90	58	.608	--
BROOKLYN	84	62	.575	5

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

With Joe Louis trying to win back his heavyweight crown from current champion Ezzard Charles at Yankee Stadium, New York sports fans could be excused for their indifference to the doubleheaders taking place at the city's two National League parks. The Dodgers were still alive, but barely, as reflected by the meager crowd of 8,447 that showed up at Ebbets Field for their doubleheader with Boston. Brooklyn won the first game, 9-6, but a late-inning comeback in game two fell short. The split allowed the Dodgers to pick a full game on the faltering Phillies, who dropped both ends of their doubleheader to the Giants.

Brooklyn had won the first game coming from behind against Warren Spahn, with Gil Hodges's seventh-inning three-run homer off Bob Hogue being the big blow. Dan Bankhead, in relief of Don Newcombe, got the win despite allowing the Braves to take the lead in the top of the seventh. Johnny Sain started game

two against Erv Palica, who had won three straight, but was pitching on two days' rest. Palica matched Sain for five scoreless innings before surrendering a grand slam to third baseman Bob Elliott in the sixth. The Dodgers got two back in the eighth and were threatening to score more. They had Duke Snider at first and Pee Wee Reese at third with nobody out and Jackie Robinson at the plate. As Roscoe McGowen wrote in the next day's *New York Times*, "For a few fleeting moments late yesterday, it looked as if the National League pennant pursuit had become a race."

Robinson lashed a two-strike pitch on a line, seemingly headed toward right field, but first baseman Earl Torgeson grabbed it and stepped on first for a rally-killing double play. Sain then retired Carl Furillo for the third out. Brooklyn had renewed hope, when Sain strained a muscle on his first pitch of the ninth inning to Hodges. Braves manager Billy Southworth relieved Sain with Bob Hogue, despite Hogue having surrendered Hodges' game-winning home run in the opener. This time Hogue retired Hodges and the two batters that followed, Roy Campanella and Billy Cox, to preserve Sain's 20th win.

A crowd of 10,004 at the Polo Grounds saw Alvin Dark's single off Jim Konstanty score Monte Irvin to give the Giants a 10-inning 8-7 win in the opener. Konstanty was in his third inning of relief, having been brought in by manager Eddie Sawyer after the Phillies scored five eighth-inning runs to tie the game. Irvin had left fielder Del Ennis's throw beaten, but with Andy Seminick blocking the plate, he was forced to crash into the Phillies catcher to score. Seminick was knocked unconscious for several minutes and had to be assisted from the field. The Giants drove Robin Roberts out after four innings, making it the Philadelphia ace's fourth consecutive failure to notch his 20th win.

In the second game, Bobby Thomson's first-inning inside-the-park grand slam off Bubba Church powered the Giants to a 5-0 win. Jim Hearn pitched the shut-out, his ninth career win against the Phillies without a loss. The victory was Hearn's 11th against only three losses since the Giants got him on waivers from the Cardinals in July.

Even with the double loss, the Phillies had reduced their magic number to two. That of course meant that any combination of Philadelphia wins and Brooklyn losses totaling two would clinch the Phillies' first pennant in 35 years. With four games remaining for them

and six for the Dodgers, the championship that everyone had conceded to them weeks ago now seemed a certainty.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	90	60	.600	--
BROOKLYN	85	63	.574	4

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

For the second consecutive day, the Dodgers split their doubleheader with Boston, winning game one, 6-5, and losing game two, 8-4. Again they had failed to take full advantage of another Giants sweep of the Phillies. Brooklyn's loss in the second game cut Philadelphia's magic number to one and assured the Phillies of at least a tie for the pennant. For the Dodgers to achieve that tie, they would have to win all four of their remaining games, the next day's doubleheader with the Braves (while the Phillies were idle) and then the final two home games of the season against the Phillies in Brooklyn. Possible but unlikely.

Just as they did the day before, the Dodgers came from behind with a seventh-inning rally to win the opener, only to again fall short in the nightcap. Brooklyn was trailing, 3-2, in that first game when they used four singles to score four runs and take a 6-3 lead. Sid Gordon, who had knocked in all three Boston runs off starter Carl Erskine, knocked in their final two off Dan Bankhead.

In game two, Joe Hatten, making his first start in more than a month, left after five innings with the Dodgers trailing, 3-2. After Erskine, the first game starter, held Boston in the top of the sixth, Campanella's double drove in the tying run in the bottom of the inning. But the Braves came back to score three in the seventh against Ralph Branca, highlighted by Gordon's triple and a home run by catcher Del Crandall.

Meanwhile, the Giants won both games over the Phillies by identical scores of 3-1. Sal Maglie outdueled Ken Heintzelman, both of whom were pitching on two days' rest, in the opener, thanks to two home runs by Bobby Thomson. Robin Roberts, who had started the opener the day before, started game two today. Roberts pitched well, but in bad luck, and Eddie Waitkus' first-inning home run was the only run the Phillies would get against the Giants' Sheldon Jones.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	90	62	.592	--
BROOKLYN	86	64	.573	3

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

They had to come from behind in both games to do it, but this time the Dodgers won both ends of their doubleheader with the Braves. Their 7-5 and 7-6 victories made a second consecutive pennant, which had seemed impossible only a few days ago, now not only very possible, but something that they had complete control over. For the Dodgers, and for their fans, there would be no more scoreboard watching. Winning the two remaining games against Philadelphia would result in the National League race ending in a tie and necessitate a three-game playoff between the two teams. Even as Brooklyn was engineering their sweep, league president Ford Frick was announcing that he would toss a coin tomorrow to determine the sites of that playoff series.

Playing before another sparse crowd of 5,843, the Dodgers looked all but finished for the season in the opener. They were trailing Max Surkont, 5-2, with two out in the home eighth and Carl Furillo on first base. But with elimination just four outs away, Brooklyn fought back. After Billy Cox doubled and Cal Abrams walked, Pee Wee Reese hit an easy grounder to first baseman Torgeson. It was a routine play, one that should have ended the inning, but Torgeson bobbled it, allowing Reese to reach safely. Gene Hermanski then lined a two-run single to center, tying the game and finishing Surkont.

In came rubber-armed Bob Hogue, who got Duke Snider to hit another routine ground ball, this one to second baseman Gene Mauch. Fortune once again favored the Brooklyns, as Mauch fumbled the ball to keep the inning alive. A single by Jackie Robinson put Brooklyn ahead and another one by Furillo padded the lead.

The Braves did not go quietly, putting the tying runs aboard against Mal Mallette with one out in the ninth. Manager Shotton was now using his ace, Don Newcombe, as both a starter and a reliever. Newcombe came in and threw one pitch to Bob Elliott, who grounded it to Cox for a game-ending double play. Dan Bankhead, who relieved starter Preacher Roe, was the winner.

Shotton had been using all his pitchers in a double role, leaving him with rookie Chris Van Cuyk as his best choice to pitch the second game. Nevertheless, he left himself open to criticism by choosing the little-used Van Cuyk to oppose 19-game winner Vern Bickford. The young left hander had made only three starts since coming up in July from the Double A Fort Worth Cats of the Texas League.

As if to prove the critics correct, Van Cuyk was largely ineffective, leaving with nobody out in the third inning and the Dodgers trailing, 4-1. Jim Romano, another rookie, followed, allowing two runs in his four innings. Nonetheless, the Dodgers rallied from deficits of 4-1, and 6-3, before Robinson's long home run off Bickford broke a 6-6 tie and won it for them in the seventh. Carl Erskine pitched the final three scoreless frames to get the win.

Some members of the Phillies watched the games on television or listened on the radio from their rooms at the Commodore Hotel in Manhattan, but others chose to watch in person. Among them was Russ Meyer, the volatile Phils pitcher, who was so frustrated at seeing the Dodgers mount their comebacks that he punched a photographer who was snapping his picture.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	90	62	.592	--
BROOKLYN	88	64	.578	2

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Erv Palica's 13th win of the season, a complete game 7-3 victory over the Phillies, brought the Dodgers to within one game of completing their miracle comeback. After four scoreless innings, the Dodgers took a 4-0 lead in the fifth, with a single by Cal Abrams and a long triple by Pee Wee Reese driving in the first two runs. Reese's triple finished starter Bob Miller, and brought Jim Konstanty to the mound for the 74th time that season. Phillies manager Eddie Sawyer wanted to prevent Reese from scoring, and so the early call for Konstanty. However, the strategy failed when Duke Snider wallop Konstanty's second pitch over the right-field screen.

Philadelphia came back with three in the sixth, the big blow being a triple by Dick Sisler. Had he played it cautiously, Snider could have held it to a single, but he tried for the shoestring catch and the ball got past

him. It was the only inning in which the Phillies scored against Palica, thanks in part to Snider. The Duke atoned for his "misplay" with a sensational leaping catch of a drive hit by Willie Jones in the ninth. Roy Campanella's three-run home run off Konstanty in the eighth took the pressure off Palica, while sending the crowd of 23,879 into a frenzy of delight.

All that remained for Brooklyn to tie Philadelphia and force the second playoff in National League history was a win on Sunday. In the first one, four years earlier, the Dodgers had lost two straight to St. Louis. This one would begin Monday at Ebbets Field, with game two—and three if needed—at Shibe Park in Philadelphia. Shortly after the game ended, construction crews began working on the additional press box to hold all the reporters who would be coming for the playoffs and, Brooklynites hoped, the World Series.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	90	63	.588	--
BROOKLYN	89	64	.581	1

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

Ebbets Field's largest crowd of the season at 35,073 came out ready to celebrate the greatest comeback in baseball history. The Dodgers came agonizingly close, but it didn't happen. In the last of the ninth, Cal Abrams, carrying the potential winning run, was thrown out at the plate by Phillies center fielder Richie Ashburn. Then in the tenth, Dick Sisler hit a three-run blast off Don Newcombe that gave Robin Roberts his long-delayed 20th win and the Phillies their first pennant since 1915.

	W	L	PCT.	GB
PHILADELPHIA	91	63	.590	--
BROOKLYN	89	65	.577	2

Thinking back on this exciting two-week period, I am struck by several thoughts. Foremost among them is how exciting those 14 days were and how crushing to a young fan was the loss in that last game. Bobby Thomson's home run was a year away, and while that blast induced stunned silence, Sisler's brought a tear.

Second, I am reminded of what a truly wonderful game this is. The Giants and the Dodgers had long

hated each other, and Leo Durocher's move from Brooklyn to the Polo Grounds 26 months earlier had only exacerbated the friction between the two teams. The Giants did have some incentive, a third-place finish, but surely Leo was not wishing for his successor to lead the Dodgers into another World Series. Yet, in the true tradition of the game, he and his Giants gave it everything they had. Their four straight wins over the Phillies in that last week allowed the Dodgers to stay

alive, and, incidentally, allowed the Giants to move past Boston into third place.

But most of all, I mourn for the exciting pure pennant races we once knew, the ones without "wild cards." Win and you go to the World Series; lose and it's "Wait Till Next Year." So despite the disappointing finish, these last games were baseball excitement at its best, and I miss it.



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY COOPERSTOWN, NY

THE PHILIES greet Dick Sisler after his home run rescued them from potential eternal ignominy.

George Grantham Bain

Pioneer of News Photography

by Steve L. Steinberg

George Grantham Bain, born in St. Louis in 1865, established one of the nation's first news photo agencies, the Bain News Service, in 1898. He was a visionary who saw the potential of coupling photographs with words in newspapers and magazines. He focused on both people and events, from politics to sports, from disasters to celebrations. A significant number of his early 20th-century images survive to this day, housed in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress (LOC), in Washington, D.C.

Bain graduated from St. Louis University in 1883 with a law degree. While studying chemistry there, he learned the basics of photography, including developing prints on a windowsill with direct sunlight. After graduating, he joined the staff of St. Louis' *Globe-Democrat* as a reporter and moved over to the *Post-Dispatch* a year later. The paper soon sent the young man to Washington, D.C., as its bureau correspondent.

A few years later, Bain became the Washington manager of United Press Association, which syndicated articles to newspapers across the country. He would take his camera with him on interviews of public figures and would send close-up photos of his subjects to accompany his stories. He got a positive response from his participating newspaper editors.

Ohio congressman William McKinley befriended Bain, and when he became president in 1897, he gave the young journalist access to the White House to take photographs, a novel concept. In 1898 Bain founded the Montauk Photo Concern in New York City, where he applied the concept of syndication that he learned at UPA. One of his first hires was Frances Benjamin Johnston, one of the first notable female

Steve L. Steinberg's book, Baseball in St. Louis: 1901-1925, will be published by Arcadia later this year. He recently completed a book on Yankee manager Miller Huggins. The Genius of Hug and is finishing his book on spitball pitcher Urban Shocker, Shocker: Discovering a Silent Hero of Baseball's Golden Age.

photographers. One of his early successes was images Johnston sent him of Admiral Dewey on his battleship after his victory in the Spanish-American War.

Bain's timing was impeccable. Not only was a creative idea taking shape in his mind, but also the halftone process was now available to newspapers, replacing the line drawings of the past. He began to collect and catalogue a library of photos of significant events and people. For \$30-60 a month, a paper would get eight photos a day from Bain. The subscribing papers also had to supply him with images of their locale's key people and events. Hence, his collection of images grew quickly, and by 1905 he had amassed one million images. Then, in January 1908, a spectacular fire wiped out his entire inventory. The Parker Building fire left three firemen dead and caused \$5,000,000 in damages (*New York Times*, January 11, 1908).

George Bain was back at work the very next day, determined to rebuild his company. He began hiring and training young men as photographers rather than hiring studio photographers, whom he felt were unable to work quickly and capture newsworthy events.

The demand for news photos continued to grow, and rival companies like Paul Thompson (who started as a New York City reporter for the *Sun*) and Harris and Ewing (in Washington, D.C.) sprang up. By the early 1920s, large newspapers set up their own photo agencies, including Wide World Photos, International News Photos, and Pacific and Atlantic Photos.

Bain was one of the pioneers of syndication, and he realized that sports images, especially baseball, were newsworthy and had a large potential demand. His surviving images are concentrated on the second decade of the 20th century. It is, in many ways, as remarkable a baseball collection as the *Chicago Daily News* images of the Chicago Historical Society.

The Library of Congress acquired photographs of the Bain News Service in 1948. A small portion of the

collection has been available online, primarily photos that have copy negatives.

www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html brings one to the LOC's Prints and Photographs Online Catalog. Clicking on "Search the Catalog" brings up a list and description of more than 50 collections, including a group of more than 2,000 old baseball cards and a sampling of the Bain Collection. The LOC has more than 40,000 Bain glass plate negatives and 50,000 Bain prints.

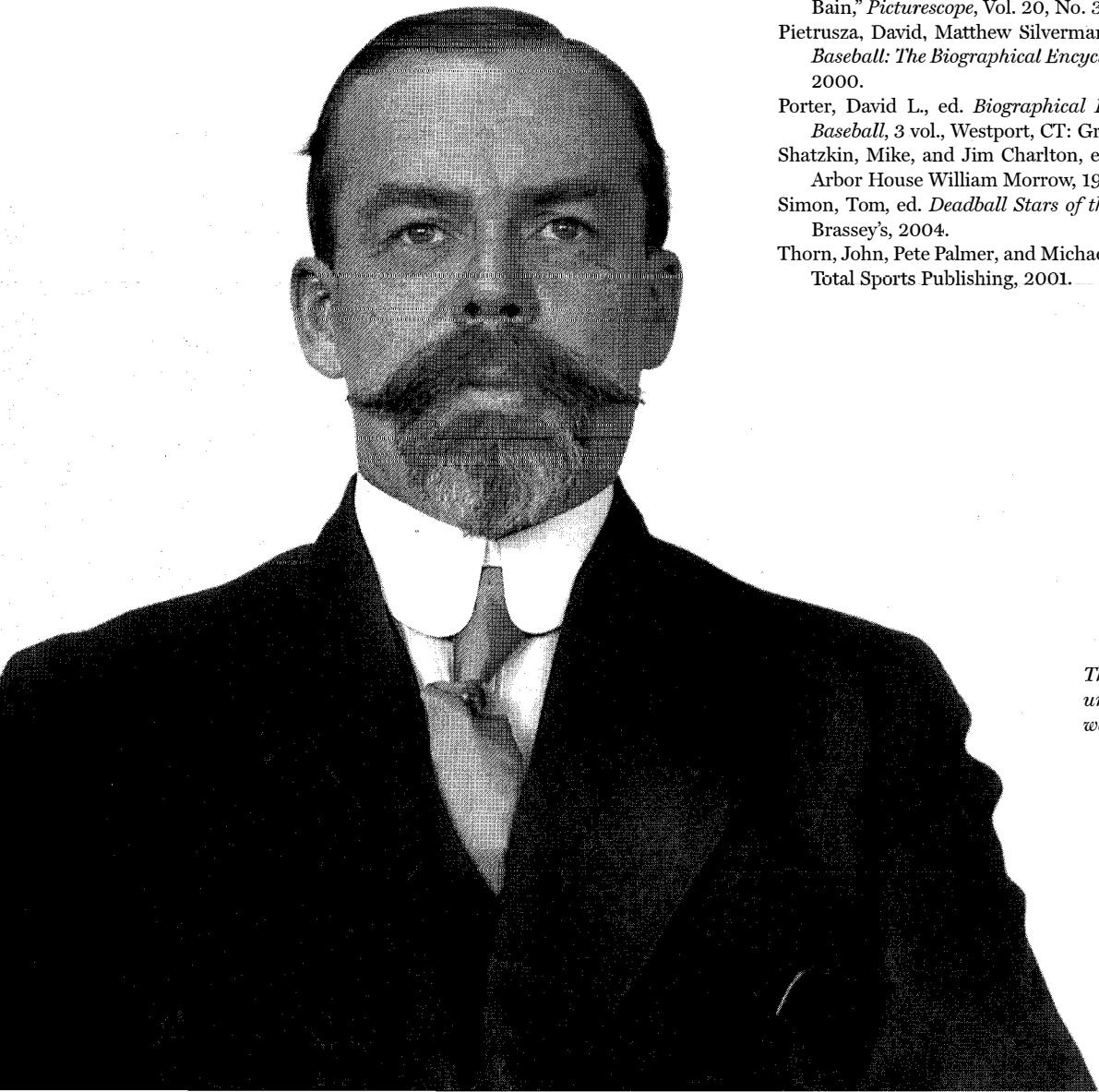
Most of the photographs in this article are part of a group of a few hundred Bain baseball prints at the LOC. They were represented by one index card in the card subject file, under "Baseball." Some had negatives; most did not. Now that negatives have been made of the images in this article (the only way prints could be made), they will be added to the Web site. There has been no access to the unprinted Bain negatives up until now. That is about to change.

The Library of Congress has received funding to digitize all the George Bain glass negatives and make them available online. The process started in spring 2004 and will take about two years. It has not yet been determined if the images will be brought online gradually or all at once, when the scanning is completed.

The 50,000 prints (with no negatives) are not part of this project. They are spread out in a number of places, not all of which have been processed for public use. For example, some are in lots, such as the group of a few hundred baseball images. Others are in the biographical files. However, the letters H-Z still have not been processed, and only the letters A-G are available to the public.

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This photograph of George Bain is undated, and it is not known if it was a self-portrait.

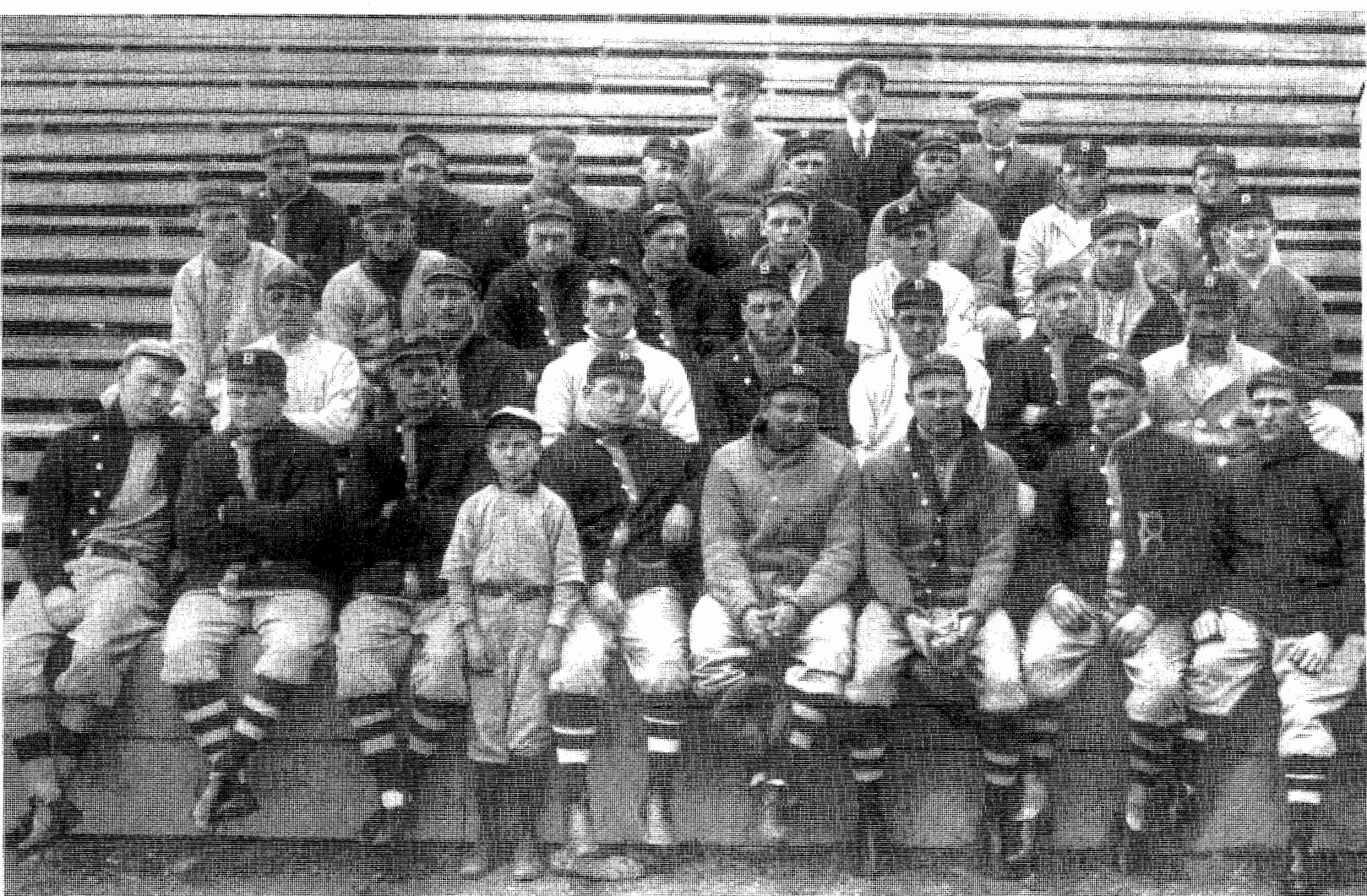


FRED CLARKE was one of the game's greatest player-managers, winning more than 1,600 games in 19 seasons and hitting .312 in his career. He led the Pirates to four pennants in the first decade of the 20th century.

MIKE DONLIN, June 1911,
was brilliant on the field and
frequently in trouble off it,
because of his heavy drinking,
temper, and violent behavior.
He was honored here with
massive floral displays when
he returned to baseball and
the New York Giants after his
vaudeville career.



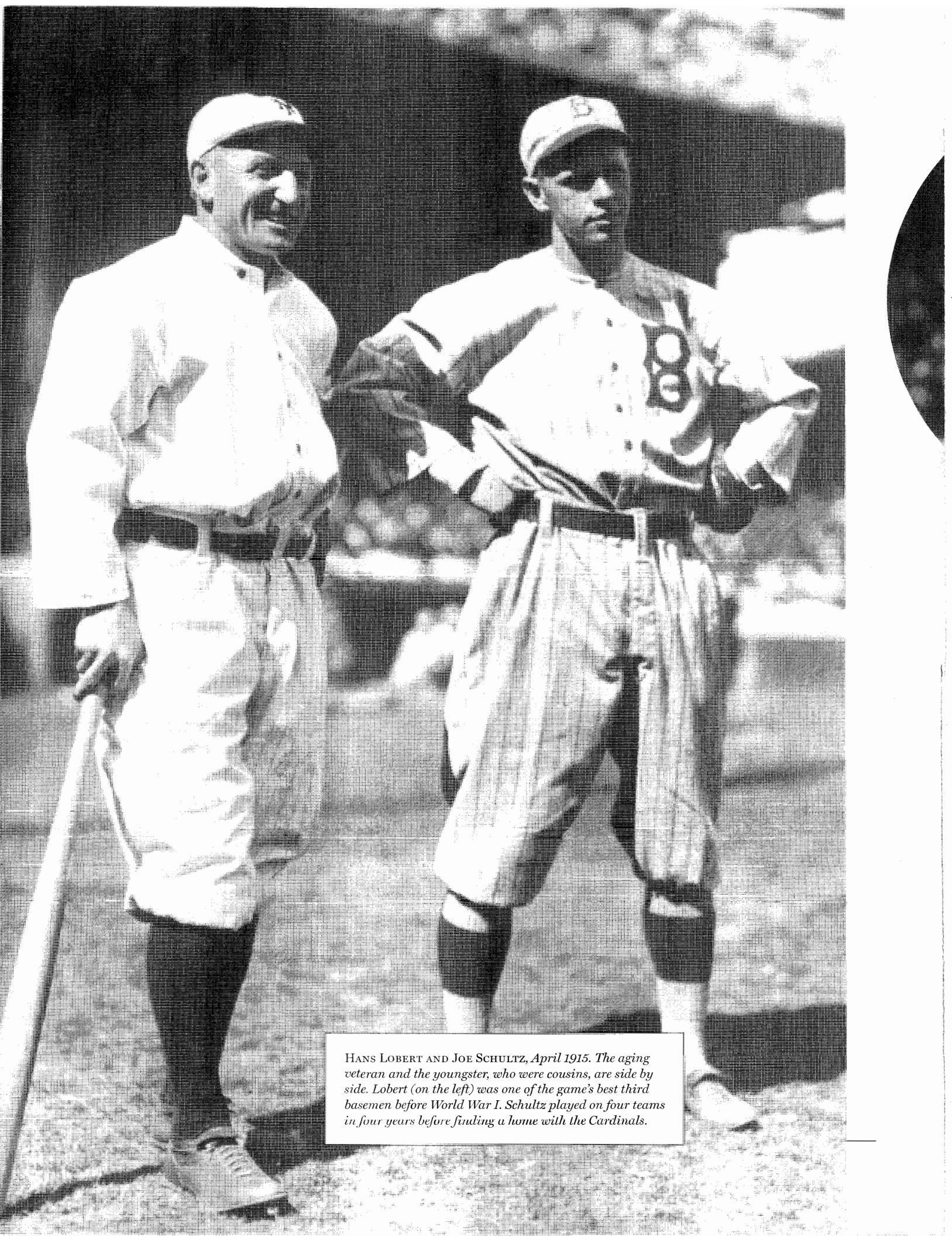
BROOKLYN DODGERS at Hot Springs, Arkansas, March 1912. Youngster Zack Wheat (front row, second from right) and Jake Daubert (full back row, far right), and coach Willie Keeler (full back row, fourth from left), are seen here.



KID ELBERFELD, shown here in 1914, his last year in the bigs. He was a fierce competitor and a notorious umpire-baiter who was often ejected from games.

EDDIE CICOTTE AND CLARENCE "PANTS" ROWLAND, c. 1915-17. Cicotte (on the left) mastered enough deceptive pitches—from the knuckleball to his mysterious shine ball—to blossom into one of the game's best pitchers. Rowland was the White Sox manager from 1915 to 1918.





HANS LOBERT AND JOE SCHULTZ, April 1915. The aging veteran and the youngster, who were cousins, are side by side. Lobert (on the left) was one of the game's best third basemen before World War I. Schultz played on four teams in four years before finding a home with the Cardinals.



RAY KEATING was a spitball pitcher for the New York Americans in the 'teens. He is shown here circa 1913-1914.

PAT MORAN, 1908, is best remembered as the manager who led two teams (the 1915 Phils and the 1919 Reds) to the pennant in his first year at the helm. As a player, he was an intelligent catcher who backed up Johnny Kling on the great Cub teams of 1906-08.





JOHNNY EVER AND EDDIE PLANK *shaking hands.*

The Forgotten Games of Eddie Plank

by Dave Gulden

The inaccuracies and lack of information concerning the early games of Gettysburg's Eddie Plank, the first lefthander to win 300 games in the major leagues, is surprising considering his prominence.

Did Plank never play a game of pre-college baseball as various websites and publications, including the National Baseball Hall of Fame, attest? Did Plank pitch against Bucknell University's Christy Mathewson in several college games, as has been written? The truth is that Plank most certainly did play baseball before entering the preparatory academy of Gettysburg College. Sometimes he pitched in front of crowds that numbered in the thousands. And Plank and Mathewson never faced each other in college. In fact, they did not even attend Gettysburg Academy and Bucknell at the same time.

Most accounts of Plank, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1946, deal mainly with his career in the big leagues from 1901 to 1917, when he posted 326 wins, including 69 shutouts. Little, if anything, has been written about the games Plank played before he reached the major leagues. These are what I call the "forgotten games" of Eddie Plank.

1896 GAMES WITH GOOD INTENT

In *They Played the Game*, written in 1944, Harry Grayson states, "Eddie Plank had never played baseball when Frank Foreman, an old pitcher coaching Gettysburg College, asked him to try out for the varsity." But Plank played baseball long before pitching for the college team. Accounts from *The Star and Sentinel*, a Gettysburg weekly, indicate that Plank was a member of the Good Intent team in 1896.

DAVE GULDEN is a York, Pa., author, local historian and publisher of Old York Times. He was an usher for the York White Roses minor league team in 1967.

This is substantiated in the 1917 *Spectrum*, the college yearbook, which reports "Edward S. Plank, Gettysburg College's most famous product, began pitching baseball at the age of 20 on the 'Good Intent' nine of Adams County. After two years' service on this team he played for McSherrystown; and in 1899 and 1900 'Eddie' starred on the Gettysburg town team."

"Good Intent was a one-room school that Plank attended a few miles north of Gettysburg. There were probably 75 or more in the county. Almost every one had its own name. Its name doesn't mean anything special," said Dr. Charles Glatfelter, a member of the Adams County Historical Society. The former school, now a residence, still stands on Good Intent Road opposite the stony lane leading to Plank's childhood home, where he was born on August 31, 1875.

Game accounts of Plank and Good Intent sometimes appeared in the 1896 papers. The team played the freshman class of Gettysburg College on May 16, winning 14-0. On June 6, they defeated Fairfield, 17-4, and Idaville fell 10-6 the next Saturday. A team of players from York Springs, New Oxford, and Dillsburg went down next in what was called an exciting game. Listed under the *Star and Sentinel's* "Local Miscellany," a great game was assured when Good Intent would meet the Gettysburg town team on August 18. Plank's team won the contest, 2-1.

Plank's team suffered a rare 4-1 loss in an August 22 meeting with Arendtsville. In six innings, Plank struck out seven, walked two, had two passed balls, and hit one batter.

Robert K. Majors, manager of the Good Intent team, was later credited with developing Plank. When Plank died of a stroke on February 24, 1926, Majors, a childhood friend, served as a pallbearer.

Although Plank continued to play baseball in 1897 and 1898, newspaper accounts of the games are rare. The *Weekly Gettysburgian* issue of May 4, 1898,

reports on an April 30 Gettysburg College's 6-4 victory over the town team, for which Plank pitched. The box score is the earliest found so far of a game in which Plank participated. He struck out six, walked two, and stole two bases. It matches a very brief *Star and Sentinel* account, which refers to the town team as "a picked nine."

THE GETTYSBURG BASEBALL CLUB OF 1899

Gettysburg College ended its 1899 season in early June. By June 13, the *Star and Sentinel*, reported, "The Gettysburg Base Ball Team has secured permission from the College for the use of Nixon Field this summer."

Members of the town team were: Harry Sheely at first; Preston Tate, catcher; Guy Griffith, second; Eddie Plank, pitcher; Albert Minnich, right field; C. K. Gilbert, pitcher and center field; W. F. Dill, third; Albert Holtzworth, left field; Fred and Ed McCammon and Robbin Wolf "in the field."

Dill, a former Good Intent teammate of Plank's, had completed his first year as coach of the Gettysburg College team. There had been high hopes for a good season with Dill, a Harvard man. But the *Gettysburgian* expressed the need for a new coach, citing the lack of respect for Dill.

"Gettysburg Base Ball was victorious in their first game last Saturday on the Nixon Field. The score was Gettysburg 10, Carlisle 1. A feature of the game was the fine batting of the home team and also the work of the home battery, Plank and Wolf," wrote the *Compiler*, another town weekly. The club beat cross-county rival McSherrystown, 15-6, on June 28, and Plank was already drawing accolades in news accounts.

"Plank, on the other hand, proved an enigma to McSherrystown's heavy hitters, striking out 19 and allowing but few scattered hits. Plank is improving in form and promises to be a sure winner. The features of the game were Plank's pitching and the heavy hitting of the Gettysburg team," reported one game account.

In early July 1899, the *Hanover Record* wrote of Plank, "Though speedy, he was steady, and had no difficulty in locating the plate. Plank has not pitched more than half a dozen games in his life and is an Adams County rustic. The reporter learned that he unloaded two huge wagon loads of hay in the morning, and it surely did not seem to affect his arm,

for from appearances he could have pitched another nine innings. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that a Harrisburg team has made overtures to get Plank but he prefers to stay in Adams County and pitch hay."

July 4 was a bad day at Nixon Field for the Paxtang team from the Harrisburg area. They lost the first of two games, 17-0. In the afternoon, with Plank pitching, the score was 13-0. On July 18, 1899, the *Star and Sentinel* wrote of the previous week's game with McSherrystown, "It was a pitcher's battle and lasted through 10 innings. Plank, the pitcher for the home team, perplexed the visitors with his speedy delivery." Plank had 17 strikeouts and walked two in the 4-3 Gettysburg win.

Plank made several little-known appearances in York in 1899, 1900, and 1901. He performed at least four times there, with Gettysburg, once with the Philadelphia Athletics, and at least two local games after his 1901 rookie season ended.

"Saturday next the Gettysburg baseball club, with the mighty Plank, will be here to play a game with the (York) Athletics. Plank is the pitcher who with ease strikes out from 18 to 22 men in a single game. He is said to be a wonder," the *Gazette* wrote on July 20, 1899.

He pitched in York for the first time on July 23, 1899, against York's Athletics, the 1898 city champions. The 23-year-old Plank showed what a wonder he was as he struck out 16 batters, had only one fly ball to the outfield, and limited the York Athletics to three hits. Gettysburg added salt to the wounds by getting 11 hits and 10 runs in the last inning for a 16-0 win. The headline read "A Mighty Baseball Pitcher."

"The newspapers in this vicinity, as well as those in some of the large cities, have of late been telling stories of young Plank's remarkable pitching abilities and the manner in which he disposed of the hard-hitting Athletics in the game yesterday is positive proof that the people and the newspapers who speak of him as being mighty did not go wrong in their assertions," the *Gazette* reported.

Late in the 1899 town team season the McSherrystown team was in the fourth games of its six-game, season-long series with Gettysburg to see who was the best in the county.

"Both clubs were reinforced with professional pitchers, Gettysburg having secured (Frank) Foreman, formerly of the Pittsburgh National League team," wrote the *Star and Sentinel*.



Team photo with Eddie Plank in the middle.

Foreman would return in the spring as Gettysburg College's new baseball coach, replacing W. F. Dill. He would also be Plank's teammate on the town team.

When the 1899 college season ended, there was no longer any possibility of Plank and Mathewson facing each other while playing for Gettysburg and Bucknell. Plank didn't play for Gettysburg College until the 1900 season. By then Mathewson had dropped out of Bucknell and was playing for a team in Norfolk of the Virginia League, according to *Matty: An American Hero* by Ray Robinson. Mathewson joined the New York Giants in July 1900.

Any publication that alludes to college matchups of Plank and Christy Mathewson fails to mention exactly when and where they took place. A properly researched story would long ago have raised doubts as to their having even happened. The *New York Herald* reported on October 12, 1913, after Plank's 3-1 win in the fifth game of the World Series with the Giants, "Mathewson and Plank first dueled in college. Mathewson won 3-0 in the first-match-up and Plank later won 3-0."

On the 13th, Philadelphia's *Evening Bulletin* reported, "Mathewson and Plank first met when Bucknell played Gettysburg in 1900 and Mathewson beat Plank 3-0."

The supposed college matchups of the famous pitchers have grown to be legendary due to the repetitious claims of various sources.

A 1926 "Special to The Gazette and Daily" account from Gettysburg upon Plank's death states, "Matty was at Bucknell when Eddie was at Gettysburg. They pitched in two baseball contests in the spring of 1901 and later figured in three sensational World's Series and in each they opposed one another on the mound at least once."

An International News Service release dated February 22, 1926, reports, "At Gettysburg, Plank figured in two mighty pitching struggles against the late Christy Mathewson, who was then Bucknell's twirling hero. And oddly enough on several occasions later, Plank then a member of the Philadelphia Athletics, and Mathewson, of the New York Giants, participated

in never-to-be-forgotten duels that are considered baseball classics."

A review of the *Blue and Orange*, Bucknell's student newspaper, as well as the *Weekly Gettysburgian*, shows no mention of Plank playing varsity or prep games against Mathewson in 1897, 1898, or 1899.

A check of the records shows Gettysburg did defeat Bucknell and Mathewson, 12-7, on April 21, 1899, but Henry C. Roehner was on the mound for Gettysburg, not Plank.

Gettysburg and Bucknell were scheduled to play the last game of the season in mid-June, but no account has been found in either college newspaper or the Lewisburg or Gettysburg newspapers. Classes were nearly over and coverage focused on graduation.

THE GETTYSBURG COLLEGE GAMES OF 1900

It has often been misstated that Plank graduated from Gettysburg College. In fact, he never attended the college. He was instead a student at the Gettysburg Academy, a prep school under the auspices of Gettysburg College. The rules at the time permitted individuals who did not attend Gettysburg College to play for the team.

A 1998 letter from Gettysburg College to SABR member Barry Sparks, a York, PA, sportswriter, says, "Contrary to the information at the National

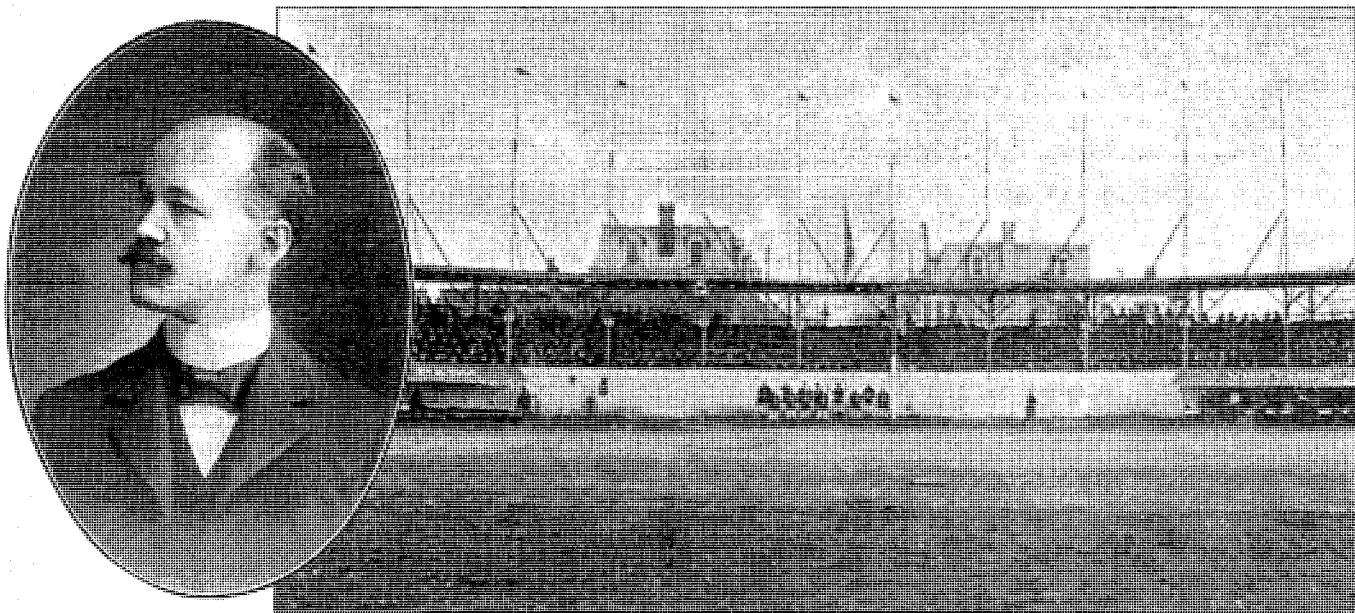
Baseball Hall of Fame, Eddie was never a student at Gettysburg College. He was a rather over-age student at the Gettysburg Academy—a prep school under the auspices of Gettysburg College. And he did play for the Gettysburg team for parts of two seasons. "It seems that rules on who could play were rather lax in 1900," wrote David Hedrick, then Special Collections Librarian. "The Academy records containing Plank's grades indicate he was at best an indifferent student."

Prep school classes were held in Stevens Hall, aiming "to present to the public an Academy under the control of college authorities," according to the college catalog.

Plank was one of 82 students in the Academy. The college had 192 students, according to catalog accounts. The 1901 Spectrum lists Plank as a member of the Preparatory Department Class of 1904 as a "Middler."

The *Weekly Gettysburgian* is the source for the 1900 accounts of Eddie Plank's games as a Gettysburg Academy student and member of the college team. He played in 10 of the 12 games, winning five and losing three.

In March the *Weekly Gettysburgian* reported, "Those who are developing rapidly are Plank, the star pitcher of Gettysburg's town team of last season; Ketterman, who pitched on last year's college team; Floto, Speer, Bingamin and Bikle. It is believed from this list of men some good twirlers will be developed."



MANAGER GEORGE HECKERT AND PENN PARK, from the Knight's Templar Book of 1904.

Plank pitched in the season-opening 14-8 win at Lancaster's Franklin and Marshall College on April 7. He had 11 strikeouts, four walks, two hits, including a double, a wild pitch, and struck one batter. He gave up only three hits.

Plank took a loss on the 6-5 home opener with Syracuse on April 10. "Plank pitched his usual steady game and with proper support would have won out easily. At critical stages he showed especial coolness, repeatedly retiring the side with men on bases," wrote the *Gettysburgian*. He struck out seven, walked two, and had one hit, driving in two runs.

A road trip in May found the team playing Susquehanna University, Bucknell, and State College. The game at Susquehanna was shortened to five innings when Gettysburg objected to the officiating of the umpire. Gettysburg took a 1-0 loss. Plank had two strikeouts and a walk.

Plank started against State College, got hit on his pitching elbow, and played right field for the rest of the game. He had six strikeouts and two walks in the 13-1 loss.

The game with Bucknell was another loss for Gettysburg. Plank and Mathewson did not face each other; the game was started by pitcher Ketterman and completed by Gladfelter.

Plank took the mound against Susquehanna a few days later on May 5 and led the team to a 16-7 win. He had four strikeouts, one walk and a stolen base. The game at Dickinson College in Carlisle a week later was cut short by rain after the first half of the second inning. Plank faced nine batters, retired six, three on strikeouts. There were no hits or runs scored.

Bucknell's nine fell to Plank's team, 5-4, on June 1. Pritchard started for Bucknell and surrendered 10 hits while failing to strike out any. "Perhaps the largest factor in winning the game was Plank's pitching. He had the men from Bucknell entirely at his mercy. It was one of those hot days that limbers up Eddie's arm and the results were disastrous to 13 of the visitors who failed to find the ball," wrote the *Gettysburgian*.

Plank took an unusual beating in the last game of his 1900 Gettysburg campus season against the Carlisle Indians. He had eight strikeouts, one wild pitch and gave up 13 hits. Gettysburg finished the season with a 5-5 record. Plank figured in eight of the 10 games, posting a 5-3 mark.

THE 1900 TOWN TEAM GAMES

The Gettysburg Base Ball Club played at least 13 games in the summer of 1900. A September 5 *Star and Sentinel* article shows the town team with a 9-4 record, along with a tie. Gettysburg played York's Penn Park team three times in 1900. Plank played in two of the games. A third game, won by Gettysburg, has yet to be found. *The Gazette* of July 13 tells of the previous day's game.

"An interesting game of baseball was played between the Penn Park Club of this city and Gettysburg team at Gettysburg yesterday afternoon. The latter won by a score of 5 to 2. Gettysburg was greatly strengthened by the addition of a shortstop and catcher of Baltimore, and pitcher Plank and first baseman Shelley of McSherrystown team. Plank had 16 strikeouts and opposing pitcher Hilbert had 12."

Another Plank performance took place on July 21, in front of nearly 3,000 fans at York's Penn Park field: "The most noticeable feature of the game was the enormous crowd that it drew. Between 2,500 and 3,000 formed a large circle around the ball field and braved the sun's incredibly hot rays for nearly two hours. They were all baseball admirers too, for such cheering and hooting at various stages in the game has never before been heard at a local baseball game," the *Gazette* wrote. York won the game 6-3 in what the *Gazette* headline called "One of The Greatest Amateur Games Ever Seen in York."

"Gettysburg played a brilliant game in the field but was weak at the bat. Pitcher Plank, who last season established quite a name for himself as a twirler, pitched a credible game. But for two costly errors, the only ones made by Gettysburg, he would have held the score down to four runs. He gave no bases on balls and struck out 11 local batsmen," wrote the *Gazette*.

1901 GETTYSBURG COLLEGE GAMES

The 1901 baseball season for some smaller college teams started off a bit differently than previous years. Gettysburg and other teams north of the Mason-Dixon line took on southern teams for the first time. The bullpen was reinforced with the addition of another major leaguer to be, George Winter. He had signed on with the town team at the end of the previous season. Like Plank, Winter would be called to the

big leagues in a few weeks. "Last season he (Winter) pitched for the Myerstown All Collegiates and later for Manheim, winning 38 out of 45 games," wrote the *Gettysburgian*.

The two would play opposite each other in the major leagues several times by summer's end. In an August 14 game, Winter, pitching for the Boston Red Sox, knocked Plank out of the game with "a fast in-shoot," according to a game account.

Plank came on in relief against Episcopal High School of Alexandria, Virginia, on April 4. It was the first of five out-of-state games. He struck out 14, had three hits, walked two, and stole a base. The game was stopped after six innings, with the Virginia team accepting an 18-4 defeat.

Randolph-Macon, of Ashland, pounded Winter for 11 hits the next day. He held them to one hit for the first six innings. Plank covered right field. The 14-6 loss was Gettysburg's first out-of-state baseball defeat. William and Mary lost 8-1 when they faced Plank a few days later. He struck out nine, walked none, and rapped three hits. Lancaster's Franklin and Marshall fell victim to Gettysburg, 4-0, as Winter struck out 15. Plank was again in right field.

"Strength in every department is evident, the fielding and batting percentages both standing very high. Along the pitching line, perhaps greater strength was never seen. Plank, the reliable southpaw of last year, and Winter a new man, have already showed

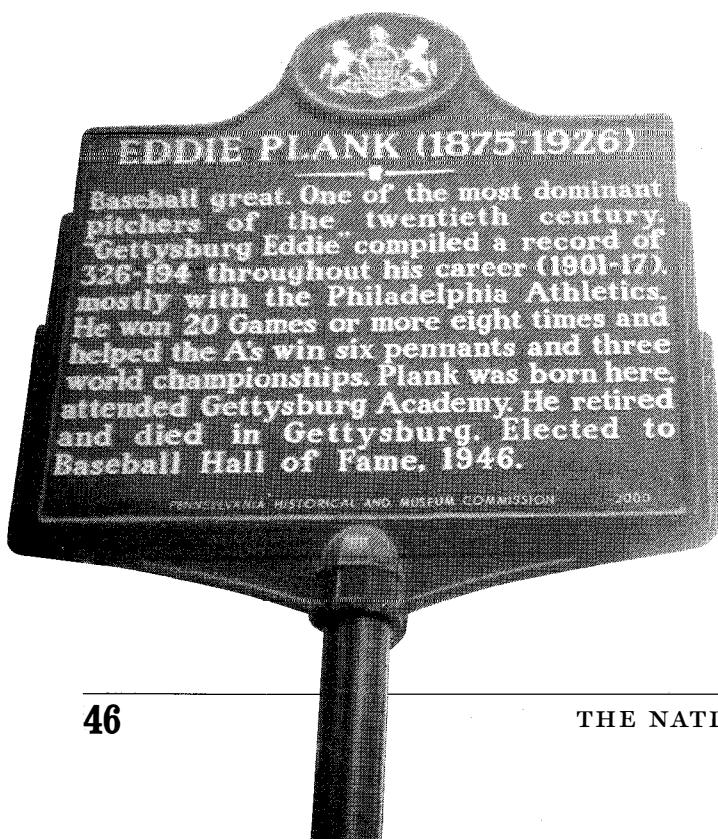
remarkable ability and seemed almost unhittable," wrote the April 24 *Gettysburgian*.

Villa-Nova ruined Gettysburg's first home game of the season, 7-3. Plank had nine strikeouts and stole a base. It was reported to be the toughest game of the season.

Dickinson College fell 9-1 on Nixon Field in a May 1 game. Plank was again playing the field as Winter pitched.

Plank took the mound on May 3, against Bucknell, and struck out seven while allowing five hits in a 4-1 victory. Hess started for Bucknell and struck out four en route to the loss. Plank played in right field in the next day's 11-6 loss to State College. The Carlisle Indian School team faced Gettysburg twice in early May. Plank took the mound in the 9-3 win on May 8 in which "the principal feature of which was Eddie Plank and his seemingly exhaustless supply of curves and speedy balls. Sixteen of the warriors fell victims to strikeouts and but one scratch hit was made, which came in the ninth inning and which scored two runs," the college paper reported.

The second meeting with the Carlisle Indians on May 11 was a 10-inning 5-5 tie that ended when the visitors had to catch the train home to Carlisle. Plank was again in right field while Winter pitched. On the field with the Carlisle Indian School team was Charles "Chief" Bender, a future teammate of Plank's. It has been written that he and Plank engaged in a 15-inning battle, though like the Mathewson story, no evidence shows it ever happened.



DEBUT WITH THE ATHLETICS

In early May, Plank received a request from Athletics manager Connie Mack to come to Baltimore and pitch a trial game. Mack relayed the request through Dr. Musselman, a Gettysburg druggist who had tipped off Mack about Plank, according to an article in the February 25, 1926, *Philadelphia Inquirer*. On Monday, May 13, 1901, Plank made his major league debut for the Athletics, pitching several innings of a game in Baltimore. The A's lost 14-5. Plank then returned to pitch one last game for Gettysburg.

Plank's last game for the college team prior to his signing with Connie Mack was against Dickinson College on May 15. He struck out 10, walked two, and gave up only three hits in the 4-2 win.

"It was the final game for the veteran Eddie Plank prior to his signing with the American League and he acquitted himself nobly," wrote the *Gettysburgian*. Plank finished his final college season with a 5-1 record. In addition, he batted .340 and compiled a .920 field average.

The *Gettysburgian* reported, "Eddie Plank received a royal send-off Friday morning by the large assemblage of students gathered at the Western Maryland depot to wish him success upon his departure for his new field of labor. "In his first [complete] game with the Athletics last Saturday he won the game from Washington allowing six hits and having five strikeouts."

A *Philadelphia Record* story gave a more detailed account of Plank's first complete major league game, played on May 18, 1901. "Plank, the new college pitcher for the Athletics, was in the box today and the losing streak of his mates was broken. He had everything that was needed and kept steaming them over in the most approved style until the last man was out. For his first game he showed remarkable coolness. It looks as though he would do."

Plank returned to York on October 1, 1901, with the Athletics as they faced Penn Park. Nearly 2,500 saw Plank and his teammates win 15-4. Pitching for McSherrystown eight days later, Plank defeated Penn Park again, allowing just three hits while striking out 15 and walking four. A second game was canceled due to the poor gate receipts.

Plank was scheduled to pitch against Columbia on October 12, but no account of the game has been found. If it was played, it would be the last forgotten game of Eddie Plank.

Sources

These games have been resurrected using the facilities of The York County Heritage Trust, York's Martin Memorial Library, Adams County Historical Society, Musselman Library of Gettysburg College and Barstrand Library of Bucknell University.

Publications used include the *Weekly Gettysburgian* (1897-1901) *Blue and Orange* (1897-1901), *Bucknell Mirror*, *Star and Sentinel*, *Compiler*, *Gazette*, *York Daily*, *Gazette and Daily*, *York Dispatch*, *Hanover Record*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, *Philadelphia Ledger*, *New York Herald* and *New York Times*.



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

“Vintage” Vintage Baseball

Re-creations Marked Celebration of NL's 60th Anniversary in 1936

by Bob Tholkes

The history of vintage baseball acquired an interesting footnote when Columbus, Ohio, SABR member Cindy Thomson, in the course of chronicling the career of Chicago Cubs' Deadball Era ace pitcher Mordecai (Three-Finger) Brown, found a note in the *Chicago American* that Brown and other old-timers had attended a celebration at Wrigley Field that featured a re-creation of baseball “as it was played in 1876.” The exhibition took place at Wrigley Field on Saturday, August 22, 1936, more than 40 years before two historical villages, Bethpage Village of Long Island, New York, and Ohio Village of Columbus, Ohio, inaugurated regularly scheduled vintage matches.

The occasion was the 60th anniversary of the founding of the National League, which the *Chicago Tribune* hailed (inaccurately) as “The Start of Baseball.” Chicago’s, the *American* noted, was one of two franchises which had existed continuously for those 60 years, and the Cubs, the National League, and the Chicago Park District cooperated on staging the celebration. Officials mentioned were National League publicity director Bill Brandt, Charley Drake of the Cubs, and park district baseball director Jack Sheehan.

Further research revealed more. According to the 1937 *Spalding Official Base Ball Guide*, all eight National League teams hosted celebrations between June 24 (Boston) and September 10 (Brooklyn) which included two- or three-inning re-creations of 1876 play before regularly scheduled games. Brandt was in general charge. A.G. Spalding & Co., using its tailoring archives, provided authentic reproduction uniforms with padded pants and “double breasted blouses,” that is, shirts fronted by button-on shields bearing the legend “1876.” No protective gear was used “in accordance with the 1876 rules.” The *Boston Evening Transcript*

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added that reproduction bats and balls were specially made for the occasion (presumably by Spalding), and that both were substantially lighter than their modern counterparts.

The *Spalding Guide* noted that the 60th anniversary exhibitions were different: instead of oldsters trying to play the modern game, as at old-timers’ games, young, modern players were trained to illustrate old-time rules “with speed and agility.” Old-timers were invited as honored guests to pre-game luncheons and to attend the festivities.

The project was a success. Attendance at the events, held on weekday afternoons (except in Cincinnati, where it was held before a night game), averaged 12,000, led by Cincinnati’s 18,000.

The anniversary celebration in Chicago was typically elaborate. “Two score” old-timers, according to the *Daily News*, and baseball dignitaries headed by Commissioner Kennesaw Mountain Landis, Cubs’ president Philip Wrigley (who gave a welcoming speech), and league presidents Ford Frick and Will Harridge gathered for a luncheon at the Congress Hotel and then proceeded to Wrigley Field. At the park, a parade, complete with a marching band and featuring “old time equipages” got the festivities under way. The equipages bore costumed fans, notably “Buffalo Bill, Gen. U. S. Grant, and the Sultan of Turkey,” who, according to the *Tribune*, had attended a game in Chicago while touring the country in 1876. Then the old-timers, including players “of nineteenth century vintage” and several from the Deadball Era, were introduced to the crowd. Finally, Three-Fingered Brown (who was born in 1876) said a few words and cut a huge cake, from which, according to the *Tribune*, “sprang the 1876 athletes in the full glory of mustachios and padded uniforms,” after which the re-creators took the field. One team represented the 1876 Chicagoans and the other the 1876 Cincinnati Reds, apparently because the first

National League game in Chicago, on May 10, 1876, was against Cincinnati. The event probably was timed for a date when the Reds were also the opposition in the "real" game. The fact that the 1876 Chicago team was called the White Stockings was known, but is not mentioned, presumably because it was a National League event. The Chicago players were said to be playing the roles of their 1876 counterparts, according to fielding position.

Considerable effort had gone into making the play realistic. The players, according to the *American*, had been practicing for a week under the tutelage of Sheehan (who also served as umpire) to become familiar with the "old fashioned quirks" of the 1876 rules, such as underhand pitching, the "striker" demanding a low or high pitch, and foul flies caught on the first bounce retiring the striker. There are further notes: no gloves, masks, or chest protectors; uniforms with neckties and "stiff-bosomed shirts;" and padding on the front of the pants "because all the sliding was head first." The players sported beards, mustachios, and/or luxuriant sideburns. Whether all that hair was real or acquired is not stated. An unnamed *Tribune* correspondent attended the last practice session and was impressed: "the players...showed that they had mastered the knack of catching line drives and fast throws with their bare hands." The players were also said to have studied photos of the players "with a view of staging the most faithful reproduction possible."

Post-match coverage was light, only the *Tribune* providing a review (it was played on a Saturday, and the *American* and the *Daily News* did not have Sunday editions). The *Tribune* pronounced the anniversary celebration "a grand success. The old time game was played and explained in a revealing manner." The score? Chicago 3, Cincinnati 1.

Newspaper coverage in other cities and further comments in the *Spalding Guide* add other notes of interest. Surviving 1876 players were involved in two cities. Deacon White, the sole remaining 1876 White Stocking, was reportedly too ill to even attend the Chicago exhibition, but in Boston the players were coached by Tommy Bond and future Hall of Famer George Wright. In Philadelphia Chick Fulmer participated in an unstated capacity, and Pittsburgh, not a league member in 1876, involved "survivors of the old Alleghenies." In New York, the Giants hosted a reported 10,000 school and sandlot youths, from whose ranks the teams were chosen. New York's parade,

headed by an actor playing President Ulysses S. Grant (who later caused some consternation by forgetting to stand for the national anthem at the park) wound from the site of the original Polo Grounds in Manhattan to a finish at Coogan's Bluff. Park Department amateurs formed the teams in most places; in Philadelphia and St. Louis they were picked from police and fire department teams. Mishaps apparently were few, but memorable. A Cub observing Boston's parade reported that a parade participant perched shakily atop a high-wheeled 1880s "boneshaker" yelled, "I don't know how to get off this thing!" as he passed the Cubs' dugout. Shortly after, he crashed, which, the unnamed Cub observed, "immediately resolved his problem."

St. Louis' version of the celebration perhaps had the most departures from the usual. It was staged for two days, and the Cardinals added an old-timers' game pitting members of the 1926 world champions against the 1936 team. Bill Brandt served as umpire. Finally, the *St. Louis Evening Dispatch* reported that the last batter in the last inning was thrown out, and then "ran around the bases, 'shooting' the infielders as he ran . . . he slid into home plate and was called out, and 'shot' the umpire as the game ended."

The umpire also was involved in scripted incidents inserted into the exhibitions to illustrate rule differences and increase interest. He would decide a close play on the bases in favor of the visitors, and a dispute would begin. Finally, as an 1876 rule allowed, he would get the opinion of the spectators. In St. Louis, and presumably everywhere else, he was told he was wrong, and the decision was reversed. Another scripted interruption found a player suffering an injury, whereupon a costumed "doctor" would be summoned to decide whether the afflicted man was sufficiently injured to require a substitute, which in 1876 were otherwise forbidden until the fifth inning.

The re-creations also recalled another long-forgotten 1876 rule. In the cases of New York and St. Louis, the re-creation teams played with 10 fielders on a side. According to the *New York Post*, the extra position was called "right shortstop." Tommy Bond, in an interview with the *Boston Evening Transcript*, explained why the Boston exhibition would not use the extra man:

"We found the tenth man was really in the way. Both Mr. Wright and myself have been opposed to using 10-man teams (for the re-creation) as it gives a wrong impression."

The *Evening Transcript* quoted Wright as saying that the tenth man was abandoned in 1876 almost as soon as the season started, and that the Bostons, whose season started later than the rest of the league, never used a tenth man, as it had been dropped by the time they started play. Bond thought, however, that the Atlantics had played “two or three games” in this fashion.

Only newspaper accounts describing the re-creations are known to survive, making it difficult to assess the effort made to achieve historical accuracy. Given the rudimentary state of baseball research at the time and the re-creations’ dual purposes of instruction and entertainment, perfection was not to be expected. Gloves for the catcher and first baseman were prohibited, though they were in use at the time, including those sold by the Chicagoans’ pitcher, budding entrepreneur Al Spalding. The *American* described an 1876 National League umpire as “an imposing figure of a man” in a tall silk hat and carrying a cane, “not a league official but a prominent citizen of high repute in the community selected by the managers on the morning of the game.” This paragon, again according the *American*, “rendered his decisions from a chair located near home plate and frequently appealed to the spectators for their opinion on a decision which the players protested.” Interesting, but again inexplicable except as entertainment value. Umpires were chosen well in advance by the home team from a list submitted by the visitors. They were not likely to be locals, of high repute or otherwise. For instance, the umpire for the game re-created in Chicago between the White Stockings and Cincinnati was a Mr. M. Walsh, of Louisville.

In its article publicizing the event, the *Daily News* reproduced without attribution a print showing action in “a game between two Philadelphia teams in the gloveless days of 1873,” with an inset box of commentary entitled “Old Time Baseball.” The commentary showed a detailed knowledge of 1870s play. Unfortunately, it and an accompanying brief article are also unattributed and so probably not the work of a *Daily News* staffer (publicity director Brandt, perhaps?). Whoever the writer, he was also of a sardonic turn of mind. For example: “Note the umpire in his official plug hat, sitting where an umpire was supposed to sit, too far off to see well, but near enough to catch foul tips in his sideburns”; and “The artist wrongs the pitcher (shown delivering the ball at shoulder height), who in that day could never bring his hand above his belt.” These comments are near enough, except that the pitching rules

for 1876 mandated only a perpendicular arm motion during which the hand passed below the hip.

Use of the tenth man also deserves some scrutiny. Tommy Bond’s remark that the Atlantics used a tenth man is suspect. The Atlantics, a famous Brooklyn team of the 1860s that also played in the NL’s professional predecessor, the National Association, did not field a team in the National League in 1876. The Mutual Base Ball Club of Brooklyn, also veterans of the National Association, did, as the New York Mutuals. George Wright, in addition, seems incorrect about the Bostons’ late start: they played in the season’s first match, in Philadelphia on April 22, 1876.

All this doesn’t mean that Bond was mistaken about the rule itself. Publicity director Brandt seems to have been otherwise faithful to the printed rules, for on-the-field matters at least. Examination of the 1876 *Spalding Guide*, which includes the rules, shows that the number of fielders is not specified, though only nine appear on the field diagram, and teams are sometimes referred to as “nines.”

The effort to re-create the 1876 game accurately seems overall to have been substantial. It seems clear at least that the league made no organized effort to use the only advantage that 1930s researchers’ had over their vintage baseball and SABR descendants: the availability of surviving players such as Wright, Bond, and Fulmer. Some anomalies may have been beyond the control of any central planning. The *New York World Telegram*, for example, printed a nice photo of umpire Jack White giving the as-yet-uninvented safe sign to a runner sliding headfirst into the plate, and in St. Louis the “team owner” who was added for the Cardinals impersonated Chris von der Ahe, the famous “der poss Präsident” of the Browns of the 1880s and 1890s.

Were these the first vintage baseball re-creations? Old-timer games go back to the 1870s, but their focal point was the players. Were there other exhibitions at earlier events? According to a recent discovery by John Thorn, a re-creation may have taken place as part of the festivities honoring Harry Wright in 1896. Pending further research, the 1936 National League exhibitions remain the first which were intended primarily to entertain and instruct the public by presenting the rules and customs of baseball’s past.

How Baseball Began

by Randall Brown

The Giants played their first games in San Francisco on Thanksgiving, 1887. The arrival of the New York club (with added attraction Mike Kelly) was big news, especially in the *Examiner*. True to his pledge “to keep the public fully acquainted with all the phases and variations of the national game, wherever played,” editor and publisher W. R. Hearst provided many columns on baseball that week. There were inning-by-inning accounts, interviews with stars like Tim Keefe and John Ward, a feature on the superstitions of ballplayers, and on Sunday, November 27, an “interesting history” entitled “How Baseball Began—A Member of the Gotham Club of Fifty Years Ago Tells About It.”¹

The narrator, identified only as “an old pioneer, formerly a well-known lawyer and politician, now living in Oakland, had been present at the creation of the game, not only as a player, but as an organizer of the first baseball clubs.” As the following excerpts show, he told a different tale than those we know.

In the thirties, I lived at the corner of Rutgers Street and East Broadway in New York. I was admitted to the bar in '36 and was very fond of physical exercise. In fact we all were in those days, and we sought it wherever it could be found. Myself and intimates, young merchants, lawyers, and physicians found cricket too slow and lazy a game. Three-cornered cat was a boy's game, and did well enough for slight youngsters, but it was a dangerous game for powerful men, because the ball was made of a hard rubber center, tightly wrapped with yarn, and in the hands of a strong-armed man it was a terrible

missile, and sometimes had fatal results when it came in contact with a delicate part of the player's anatomy.

We had to have a good outdoor game, and the games then in vogue didn't suit us, we decided to remodel three-cornered cat and make a new game. We first organized what was called the Gotham Base Ball Club. This was the first ball organization in the United States, and it was completed in 1837. Among the members were Dr. John Miller, a popular physician of the day, John Murphy, a well-known hotel-keeper, and James Lee, President of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

The first step we took in making baseball was to abolish the rule of throwing the ball at the runner and ordered that it should be thrown to the baseman instead, who had to touch the runner before he reached the base. During the regime of three-cornered cat there were no regular bases, but only such permanent objects as a bedded boulder or an old stump, and often the diamond looked strangely like an irregular polygon. We laid out the ground at Madison square in the form of an accurate diamond, with home-plate and sand bags for bases. You must remember that what is now called Madison square, opposite the Fifth Avenue Hotel, in the thirties was out in the country, far from the city limits. We had no short-stop and often played with only six or seven men on a side. The scorer kept the game in a book we had made for that purpose, and it was he who decided all disputed points. The modern umpire and his tribulations were unknown to us.

We played for fun and health, and won every time. The pitcher really pitched the ball and underhand throwing was forbidden. Moreover he pitched the ball so that the batsman could strike it and give some work to the fielders. The men outside

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the diamond always placed themselves where they could do the most good and take part in the game.

After the Gotham club had been in existence a few months, it was found necessary to reduce the rules of the new game to writing. This work fell to my hands, and the code I then formulated is substantially that in use today. We abandoned the old rule of putting out on the first bound and confined it to fly catching. The Gothams played a game with the Star Cricket Club of Brooklyn and beat the Englishmen out of sight, of course. That and the return were the only matches ever played by the first baseball club.

The new game quickly became very popular with New Yorkers, and the numbers of clubs soon swelled beyond the fastidious notions of some of us, and we decided to withdraw and found a new organization, which we called the Knickerbocker. For a playground we chose the Elysian fields of Hoboken, just across the Hudson river. And those fields were truly Elysian in those days. There was a broad firm greensward, fringed with fine shady trees, where we could recline during intervals, when waiting for a strike, and take a refreshing rest.

We played no exhibition or match games, but often our families would come over and look on with much enjoyment. Then we used to have dinner in the middle of the day, and twice a week we would spend the whole afternoon in ball play. We were all mature men and in business, but we didn't have too much of it as they do nowadays. There was none of that hurry and worry so characteristic of the present New York. We enjoyed life and didn't wear out so fast. In the old game when a man struck out, those of his side who happened to be on the bases had to come in and lose that chance of making a run. We changed that and made the rule which now holds good.²

On September 11, 1888, William R. Wheaton died in Oakland. He had come to California from New York City in 1849. After trying his luck in the gold fields, Wheaton had returned to his original profession—attorney-at-law—in the boomtown of San Francisco. A member of the Vigilance Committee, he became involved in the new Republican party, winning a seat in the legislature. His time was divided between public office and private practice for many years. President Hayes appointed him to the post of U.S. Registrar of

Deeds, which he held for over a decade. Although the obituaries failed to mention it, Wheaton had been one of the five originators of the Knickerbocker Ball Club and had served as its first vice president. He also headed the committee that drafted the rules for the organization and was the first umpire of record. This "old pioneer" had been unusually well qualified to discuss early baseball.³

Wheaton's testimony offers three assertions that challenge accepted history. First, that the original diamond with bags and home plate was laid out in Madison Square, "across from the Fifth Avenue Hotel," in 1837. Second, that the Knickerbocker club adopted an earlier set of rules, with some changes. Finally, that the credit for the first match games belong to an earlier club, referred to in an interview as the Gothams, but also known as the New York club.

Circumstances support the surprisingly early date given by the lawyer. In 1837, the pasture bounded by the Bloomingdale Road (later Broadway) and the old Boston Post road, in front of the wall enclosing the House of Refuge, was open for play. Within three years it would be off-limits, and the orderly grid of the developing city replaced the old crossroad. Fifth Avenue and then 23rd Street were carved out, and the colonial era highway was closed down. The destruction of the House of Refuge in a spectacular fire freed up its grounds, which were incorporated along with the ball field into a new Madison Square Park. The designation subjected the original diamond to an ordinance passed in May 1839 banning ball playing in public places. It is possible that Mayor Varian, who lived across the street, had Wheaton and his fun-loving intimates in mind when he backed the measure.⁴

Although Whcaton only mentions three of his contemporaries, the names are significant. Colonel James Lee played many games with the Knickerbockers in the late 1840s, having been elected an honorary member. In 1888, John Ward was told by a former player that Lee had played "the same game" as a boy "more than sixty years ago." Hotel keeper Murphy was in the lineup for the New York Club in the famous match with the Knickerbockers on June 19, 1846.⁵

In October 1845, both Miller and Murphy played for the New Yorks in two matches with the Brooklyn Club. Wheaton served as the umpire in both games, the first to be reported in the New York newspapers. Although he refers to the Star Cricket Club and the Gothams, it is apparent that these are the matches he credits to

"the first baseball club." The Union Star Cricket Club in Brooklyn was the site of the second game, and several of the Brooklyn players had appeared with its Cricket eleven. It seems likely that the "Gotham" and "New York" designations apply to different versions of the same club. Perhaps the "New York" name was adopted when the club moved to Elysian Fields, home of the New York Cricket Club. Wheaton may have accepted the claim of the Gothams of the 1850s that they were the successors of the New Yorks. In fact, several members of those later nines, including Miller, were veterans of the old club.⁶

By the spring of 1840, a way around the interference of City Hall was found. The St. George Cricket Club rented private grounds behind an old farmhouse turned tavern on 31st Street and Broadway. In the early '40s a town ball club arranged to hold its games on a vacant plot across from the Harlem Railroad depot on 27th and Fourth. Apparently, the baseball club found a similar solution, across Broadway from its original location. Comerford, shortstop of the Gothams during the 1850s, told Henry Chadwick that he first saw baseball "played on the grounds of the old New York Baseball Club in the forties on the block bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenues and 23rd and 24th Streets, a district at the time much given over to fields." This site was the spacious backyard of Corporal Thompson's Madison cottage, a road house popular with the sporting crowd. Was this the same Thompson who played for the New Yorks in the 1846 match?⁷

Despite press coverage and some gambling interest, the English game of cricket struggled to gain acceptance among New Yorkers. The St. George Club was exclusive, limiting its membership to those of British background. Late in 1843, a new organization, calling itself the New York Cricket Club, was formed to rival the "Dragonslayers." Led by the editors of the popular journal *Spirit of the Times*, the New York club welcomed all comers, and backed their welcome with reasonable dues. With open land becoming scarce within the city, the cricketers accepted an offer from the Stevens family of Hoboken to play at the Elysian Fields. It is unclear whether the baseball club made a separate deal, but the New Yorks celebrated their second anniversary in New Jersey in November 1845. Wheaton, Miller, and Murphy were in the field that day and attended the gala that followed.⁸

In April 1845, the Harlem Railroad depot burned to the ground. The field between 26th and 27th was



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

Fathers of baseball: Wheaton stands at upper left, next to Alexander Cartwright. Duncan Curry sits at left, next to Lucius (Doc) Adams. Standing at right is Henry T. Anthony, photographic pioneer.

occupied by the replacement building (which would later become the original Madison Square Garden). The town ball club moved uptown to a filled-in pond near the railroad cut through Murray Hill. According to Duncan Curry, first president of the Knickerbockers, it was here that Alexander Cartwright (or possibly Mr. Wadsworth), showed up with instructions for the game of baseball. Not long after, a committee of five—Curry, Cartwright, William Tucker, Ebenezer Dupignac, and Wheaton—was established to organize to a new club.⁹

Curry's account does not mention the New York Club, probably because he came from a different group. His successor as club president, Lucius "Doc" Adams, admitted that "some of the younger members of the New York club got together to form the Knickerbocker club." Like Cartwright, he dismissed the older club as lacking "organization," but Wheaton's use of "fastidious" suggests that it might not have been exclusive or gentlemanly enough for the tastes of his fellow founders. It is striking that the original by-laws and rules of the Knickerbockers start with the privileges and duties of membership. The 14 rules of baseball take second place.¹⁰

His involvement in drafting the Knickerbocker rules as well as those of the previous club supports Wheaton's claim that "the code I formulated is substantially that in use today." He mentions the key innovations of the diamond, the rule against throwing the ball at runners, the idea of pitching to the batter as opposed to throwing. Other common elements emerge from the description of the New York/Brooklyn match. The New Yorks "played for the first 21 aces—three out all out." Neither the New Yorks nor the Knickerbockers positioned a man at shortstop—Adams would develop

the position several years later. One critical difference did exist between the two sets of rules—the New York game insisted on fly catches, while the Knickerbockers allowed outs on one bounce.¹¹

When the Knickerbocker Club met for exercise on October 6, 1845, Wheaton was selected as umpire, recording the game with fluid penmanship. As noted in the game book, he played frequently that fall, scoring more often than he was out. It seems that he took an active role in promoting the new game, maintaining ties with his old friends in the New York Club. Although a Knickerbocker member, he agreed to be one of the three umpires in the New York–Brooklyn series. The first match, at Elysian Fields, started slowly, but the New Yorks surged ahead in the second inning, helped by a grand slam by Davis. Trailing 24-0 in the fourth, the Brooklyns pushed across four runs in their final inning. The following morning, in its first try at baseball reporting, the *New York Herald* commented on the very closely contested at this well-known and old-fashioned game,” crediting Brooklyn as the victor. A retraction followed the next day.

Although the Brooklyns vowed “to return the compliment with compound interest,” the result of the contest at the Union Star Grounds was only somewhat less one-sided. Miller scored five times and Murphy six, as the New Yorkers ran away with a 37-9 victory. A game of single-wicket cricket followed.¹²

The remainder of the season was marked by fraternization between the cricket clubs (not the St. George), the New York Baseball club, and some Knickerbockers. Wheaton played cricket with the Union Stars and baseball with the New York club at their anniversary gala. He was present on November 18 for the final Knickerbocker meeting and for the opening match of the second season in April 1846. At that point Wheaton’s name disappears from the Knickerbocker game book. He was not present that June when the New Yorks spanked the new club by a score of 23-1.¹³

It is tempting to look for hard feelings in Wheaton’s absence from the club he helped found. His name is not one of those listed fondly by Cartwright, and neither Curry nor Adams give him any credit in their accounts. Did the fastidiousness of his fellows extend to his attempts to form ties between cricketers and baseball players? Was newspaper notice of the game distasteful to the gentlemanly Knickerbockers? There would be no more reports until the emergence of the Gothams in the early 1850s.

Other, less dramatic explanations may suffice. The lawyer’s presence may have been called for in court. As a member of the 7th Regiment, Wheaton might have been mobilized for the Mexican War. He did not entirely disappear from the sporting columns, however. In 1847 he participated in cricket matches with the Union Star club and, the following year, joined the New York cricket club at the Elysian Fields. “Before the new game was made,” he admitted, “we all played cricket, and I was so proficient as to win a prize bat and ball with a score of 60 in a match cricket game in New York in 1848, the year before I came to this coast But I never liked cricket as well as our game.”¹⁴

Wheaton closed his account by contrasting his old pastime with what he had witnessed at a local match.

When I saw the game between the Unions and the Bohemians the other day, I said to myself—If some of my old playmates who have been dead forty years could arise and see this game they would declare it was the same old game we used to play in the Elysian fields, with the exception of the short-stop, the umpire, and such slight variations as the swift underhand throw, the masked catcher, and the uniforms of the players. We started out to make a game simply for safe and healthy recreation. Now it seems, baseball is played for money, and has become a regular business.

Notes

1. *San Francisco Examiner*, November 20-27, 1888.
2. *San Francisco Examiner*, November 27, 1887.
3. Obituary in the *Oakland Tribune*, September 13, 1888. Wheaton Biographical file, California Society of Pioneers. A. Spink, *The National Game*.
4. Kenneth Dunshee, *As You Pass By*. Charles Haswell, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, NYC By Laws and Ordinances, May 8, 1839.
5. J.M. Ward, *Baseball—How to Become a Ball Player*. Knickerbocker Game Book, June 19, 1846.
6. *New York Morning News*, October 22, 1845. *New York Herald*, October 25 & November 11, 1845. Knickerbocker Game Book.
7. Henry Chadwick scrapbooks.
8. *The Spirit of the Times*, May 1844. *New York Herald*, November 11, 1845.
9. *New York Herald*, April, 1845. Duncan Curry interview in Spink’s *The National Game*.
10. D.L. Adams interview in *The Sporting News*, February 1895. Original draft of Knickerbocker By-Laws & Rules in Henderson’s *Ball, Bat & Bishop*.
11. Knickerbocker By-Laws & Rules, *New York Morning News*, October 22, 1845.
12. *New York Herald*, October 22-25, 1845.
13. Ibid.
14. Wheaton Biographical file, California Society of Pioneers. *The Spirit of the Times*, 1847, 1848.

American Song, America's Game

by Matthew G. Doublestein

Today's popular music industry is primarily concerned with record sales. The Billboard charts grade the popular appeal of a record album from week to week. Before the 1880s, however, the thrust of music production was to promote the sale of sheet music. This motivation fostered the growth of the American song publisher, beginning in the 1880s. These publishing companies grew up in and around a New York street nicknamed Tin Pan Alley. The publishers published songs about popular topics, and in this period of American history few things were as popular as the game of baseball. Baseball's place in American culture and specifically in Tin Pan Alley song is worth understanding, especially if one desires to learn about the game's influence on the arts.¹

Professional musicians and other artists have been involved in baseball since early in its history. John Philip Sousa's team played his trombonist's (Arthur Pryor) team in Paris on July 4, 1900.² Jazz musicians had close ties to Negro League teams. Count Basie said of the Kansas City Monarchs, "We went to see them play during the day, and they came to hear us at night." In New Orleans, Louis Armstrong financially supported black ballplayers on a semi-professional team. Tommy Dorsey, Cab Calloway, and Harry James all fielded softball teams made up of band members to play charity games, sometimes at major league parks. Theatrical producer Harry Frazee owned the Red Sox from 1917 to 1923. Contrary to myth, his sale of Babe Ruth to the Yankees in 1920 was not to finance his production of *No, No Nanette*. The musical debuted in 1925—five years after the sale—and by that time Frazee was gone from Boston. Crooner Bing Crosby was part owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and Al Jolson owned shares in

the St. Louis Cardinals. Bob Hope became part owner of the Cleveland Indians in the 1950s. In 1951 he guest-starred on *I Love Lucy* in an episode about his attendance at a Yankees–Indians game in New York. Gene Autry founded the Los Angeles/California/Anaheim Angels in 1960 and owned the team until he sold it to the Walt Disney Company in 1996.

Athletes, writers, singers and other celebrities also played a role in marketing Tin Pan Alley songs. They would pose for a cover photograph or lend an autograph in hopes of encouraging more sales. Ty Cobb's picture appeared on the cover of William Brede's 1912 song "King of Clubs," which was dedicated to Cobb's American League batting championships of 1909, 1910, and 1911. Babe Ruth's picture and autograph appeared on the cover of Irving Berlin's "Along Came Ruth." Lou Gehrig appeared on the cover of Charles Rosoff and Eddie Cherkose's "A Cowboy's Life." Cupid even got into the act, appearing at bat on the cover of "Base Ball Game of Love" by Edith Barbier and Arthur Longbrake.

The movies, in their infant stages in the early 20th century, reflected this cultural emphasis on the sport. Movies like *Baseball and Bloomers* (1911), *Baseball* (1913), *The Baseball Fan* (1914), 'Tis the Ball (1932), and *Negro Leagues Baseball* (1946) all demonstrated the influence of baseball. Authors such as Ring Lardner and Eliot Asinof wrote newspaper columns and novels about the sport. Salvador Dali painted test cells for a segment of the 1940 release of *Fantasia* about baseball as a metaphor for American life.³

Works such as "Ball Club March" (Thomas Baldwin, 1888), "American League March" (composer unknown, 1901), and "Three Strikes Two-Step" (A.W. Bauer, 1902) portrayed the game through the medium of the wind band. Baseball even inspired operatic composition in Paul Eaton's *Angela: or the Umpire's Revenge* (1888) and William Schuman's *The Mighty Casey*

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(1954). Baseball influenced nearly every branch of the arts, including Tin Pan Alley song.

Tin Pan Alley was a nickname given to the publishers located on West 28th Street in New York between Broadway and Sixth Avenue. Composer Monroe H. Rosenfeld is credited with originating the phrase. Publishers such as Willis Woodward and the Harry Von Tilzer Music Co. had their offices in a number of buildings along West 28th. One particularly notable building was the Brill Building (which still stands), one of the original Tin Pan Alley publishing houses. Eventually this term was extended to publishers in New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Publishers such as Joseph W. Stern and Co., M. Witmark and Sons, and Shapiro, Bernstein and Co. (which is still in the publishing business) worked to promote the sale of their sheet music.

Irving Berlin wrote the music for a number of baseball songs including "Along Came Ruth" (1929) and "Jake! Jake! The Yiddisher Ball Player" (1913). "Jake" (lyrics by Blanche Merrill) demonstrates the tendency of these songs to reflect American culture. A term like "Yiddisher," and the patronizing attitude toward the player in the song, might be understood as racial slurs in contemporary times. In 1913 this was acceptable language and subject matter, as evidenced by Berlin, a Jew, composing music for a song that used such terminology:

VERSE 1:

*What's the score? Six to four! What do you think of that?
Don't blame me if I holler, I bet a half a dollar on the game,
And I've got a right to be sore.
Please remove your hat, Who's that at the bat?
Did you say it's Jakey Rosenstein? Fine!
On his hand he's got sand, Look at him at the plate,
Maybe you don't think that boy is great, Wait!*

CHORUS:

*Jake, now don't you miss it, Jake, Go on and kiss it,
Give it a knock and don't you fake,
Go on and give it a smack, crack!
That's a la-la-pa-loo-sa! Run, you son of a gun,
What's that I hear the people shout? You're out!
Jake, I lose my half a dollar, poison you should swallow;
Jake, Jake, you're a regular fake.*

VERSE 2:

*Hear them howl, It's a foul! What do you think of that?
Why, he was only fakin', Now he'll bring home the bacon,
Oi! that boy, He's certainly there with the bat.
It's not over yet, I would like to bet,
Only if you bet with me you must trust,
Jake, don't stall, hit the ball, Play with it like a toy.
Make a half a dollar's worth of joy, Oi!*

A focus on Jake's Jewish heritage is demonstrated by Jake's obviously Semitic last name, Rosenstein, along with the Yiddish expression "oi" in the second verse. This is also reflected in performance practice. D'Anna Fortunato sang "Jake! Jake! The Yiddisher Ball Player" in a stereotypically Yiddish accent for the 1994 compact disc *Hurrah for the National Game*. Merrill's lyrics even irreverently allude to Jewish kosher laws in the second verse, "Now he'll bring home the bacon." These Jewish elements are evident in the song, but the text primarily concerns a half-dollar bet on a baseball game, representing a baseball culture before the ugly stain of the Black Sox scandal.⁴

Moses "Moe" Jaffe also wrote a number of Tin Pan Alley-era baseball songs. Jaffe formed his band Jaffe's Collegians while attending the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and on April 4, 1925, the band recorded its headliner song "Collegiate."⁵ The song sold more than a million copies of sheet music. At one point in his Tin Pan Alley career, Jaffe had an office in the heart of the publishing community at 1619 Broadway. His prolific baseball song compositions included the following (all from 1938) "There's Gold in Them There Phils," "The White Sox are Coming Home," "The St. Louis Browns," "Watch the Senators," "Here Come the Yanks," and "Batter Up: A Theme Song for Every Team in the Big-Time Circuit." He also composed songs about the Pittsburgh Pirates, Brooklyn Dodgers, and Chicago Cubs.

The baseball songs of Harry Von Tilzer included "The Baseball Glide" (1911) and "Batter Up Uncle Sam is at the Plate" (1918). Perhaps his most significant contribution to baseball in American song was as a publisher of his brother's compositions. Albert Von Tilzer's contributions to the repertoire of baseball songs were "Back to the Bleachers for Mine" (1910), "Did He Run?" (1909), "I Want to Go to the Ballgame" (1913), and the most popular baseball song of all time: "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (1908), which was published by his brother's company. Surprisingly, neither Tilzer nor Jack Norworth who wrote the words to "Take Me" had ever seen a baseball game before they wrote the song. The section that is most popular today is the chorus of the original song; the verse is about Norworth's girlfriend Katie:

*Katie Casey was baseball mad,
Had the fever and had it bad;
Just to root for the hometown crew,
Ev'ry sou,⁶ Katie blew.
On a Saturday, her young beau,
Called to see if she'd like to go,
To see a show but Miss Kate said, "No,
I'll tell you what you can do:*

*Take me out to the ballgame,
Take me out to the crowd,
Buy me some peanuts and cracker jack,
I don't care if I never get back,
Let me root, root, root, for the home team,
If they don't win it's a shame.
For it's one, two, three strikes, you're out,
At the old ball game.*

These lyrics were composed while Norworth took a half-hour ride on the New York City subway. He was inspired by an advertising sign promoting baseball at the Polo Grounds, the ballpark where the New York Giants played. When Norworth premiered the song during his vaudeville act at Brooklyn's Amphion Theater, the audience did not receive it well. Norworth discarded the piece in the trunk of his car. Three months later, while performing at Hammerstein's Victoria Theater, Norworth was amazed to learn that a number of performers had added "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" to their acts. His song had flopped in its first performance, but was now a vaudeville hit. Eventually the song made its way into the ballpark, although the reasons for its popularity over other baseball songs composed the same year are not quite clear. George M. Cohan's "Take Your Girl to the Ball Game" was very similar to Norworth and Tilzer's hit, yet it never reached the same popularity. "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" remains the most popular baseball song of all time.

Tin Pan Alley song was about American life. In it we hear baseball's influence on late 19th- and early 20th-century American culture. The national pastime was certainly national in its scope and was so represented in popular song. In this genre we see baseball's depiction in the arts in general and music in particular. Tin Pan Alley's use of the sport teaches us about America's cultural emphasis on baseball in this time period.

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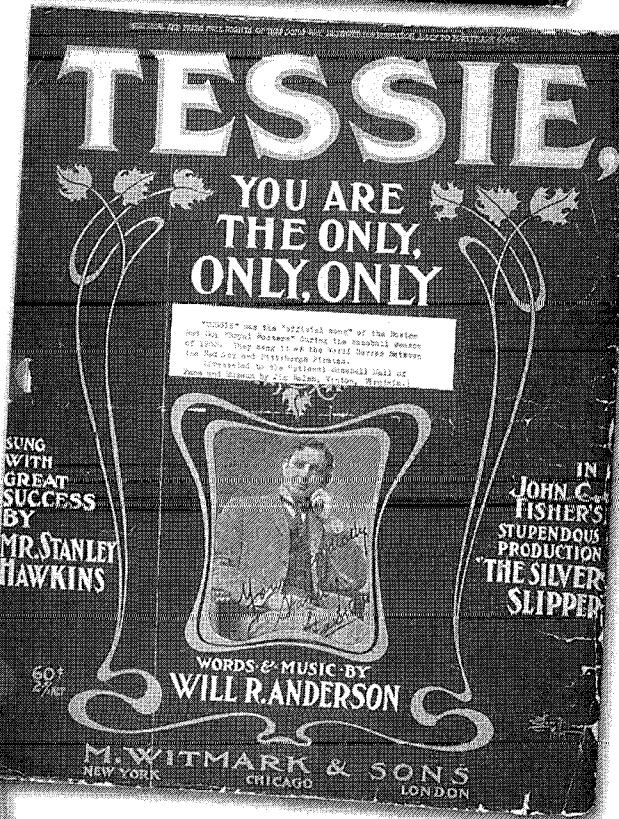
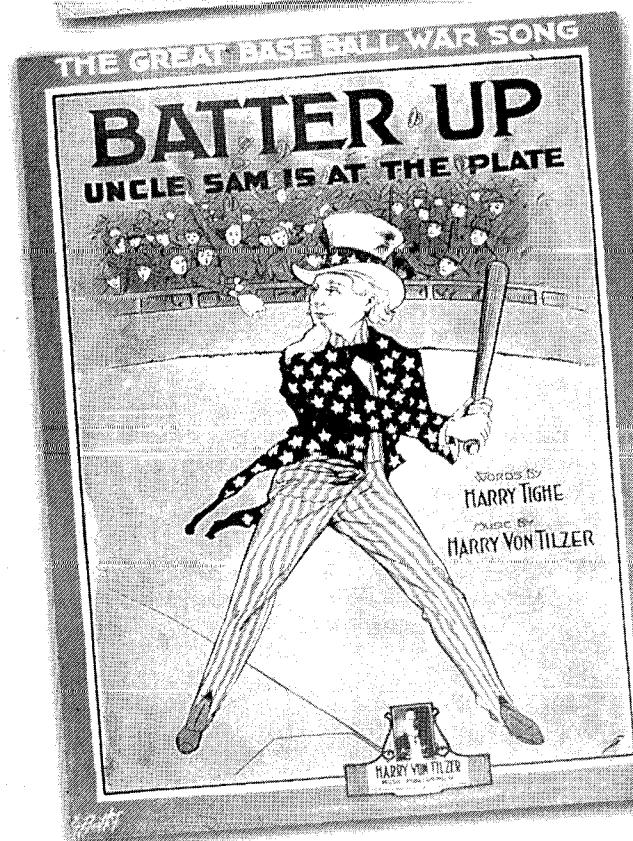
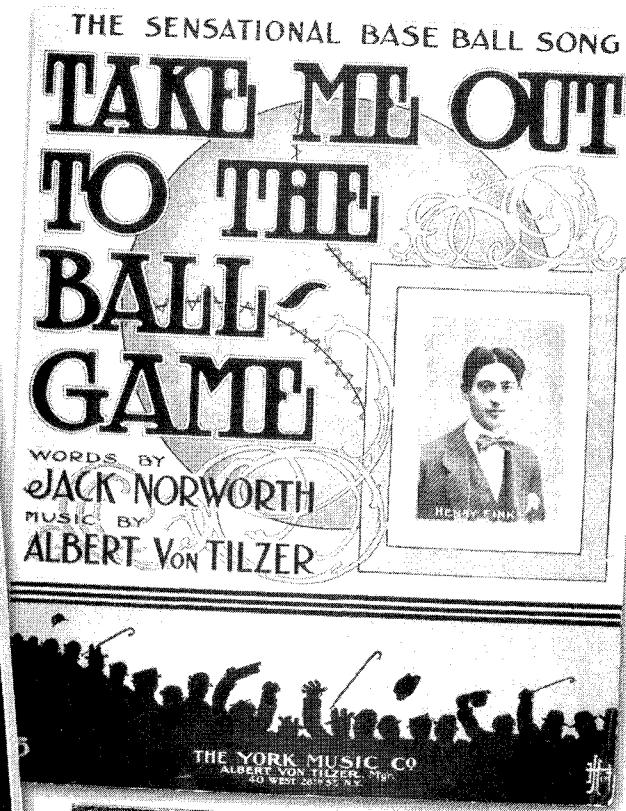
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Notes

1. The National Art Museum of Sport on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) holds a number of paintings and sculptures that demonstrate the influence of baseball on the visual arts.
2. *The Literary Digest* erroneously reported this as the first baseball game in Paris, but the Around-the-World Tour of 1889 made a one-game stop there well before Sousa.
3. Two of the sketches are presented in Bette Midler's introduction to the Shostakovich *Piano Concerto No.2, Op. 102* in *Fantasia 2000*.
4. For more cultural analysis of the Black Sox scandal, see *Saying It's So: A Cultural History of the Black Sox Scandal* by Daniel Nathan (University of Illinois Press, 2003).
5. This recording was historic, as it was the first recording to use an electric microphone rather than a recording horn.
6. A *sou* was a small unit of French currency.



From the Ivy League to the Big Leagues

by Jay Thomas

Professional baseball at the turn of the century was hardly a gentleman's game. Fights between players and among fans, and abusive language and behavior toward umpires and base coaches were as much a part of the game as stolen bases. And baseball players, to be sure, were hardly regarded as well-mannered or highly cultured. Because it was an era of such rowdyism, Christy Mathewson is remembered as much for his gentility and intelligence as he is for his 373 pitching victories, so not all professional players were uneducated, boorish, and Philistine. In fact, a good number of big leaguers were high-achieving academics with degrees from the most distinguished and storied American colleges.

The Ivy League, strangely enough, was a literary invention—not the colleges themselves, of course, but rather the concept of a confederation of post-secondary institutions of the highest academic standards offering an array of intercollegiate sports while maintaining academic rigor and integrity. In 1933, *New York Herald Tribune* writer Stanley Woodward referred to this alignment of institutions (Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Brown, Penn, and, until 1945, Army) as the Ivy Colleges, and two years later, Alan Gould of the Associated Press coined the term "Ivy League" to describe the schools.

Ivy League baseball is only twenty years younger than the Alexander Cartwright version of the game, and because its presence in collegiate baseball has been overshadowed in recent decades by such powerhouses as Florida State, Louisiana State, and USC, few baseball fans appreciate the history, tradition, and contributions of Ivy League baseball and its long roster of major league baseball players. Early in the 20th century, the level of play among the Ivys was so highly regarded that major league teams would arrange

practice games against Ivy schools (to this point, such exhibitions, as today, were not without risk, as evidenced by the season-ending injury to Hans Lobert in a game against Yale). And it was not uncommon for an Ivy League baseball player to leave the college ranks and find himself in the major leagues a season or two later, such as Harvard's Walter Clarkson, who made his big league debut one year after his 1903 college graduation. Harvard, on the strength of such players as Clarkson and William Clarence Matthews, posted a winning percentage of .806 from 1902 through 1905 and was arguably the best college baseball team in the country for much of the decade.

Not surprisingly, the long tradition of American intercollegiate athletics originated with two Ivy League institutions—a crew race between Harvard and Yale (won by Harvard) in 1852. A decade later, baseball became part of the menu of intercollegiate sports available to men attending Harvard: a small group of Harvard freshman began practicing baseball in the fall of 1862 and played its first intercollegiate match in June 1863. By the time Harvard played its first officially recognized baseball game against Williams College in 1865, the same year that Yale posted its first baseball score, Princeton had chartered its own baseball team and had begun play in 1864, with its first game also against Williams.

The Ivy League as a formal intercollegiate athletic body came into existence in 1945 when the "Ivy Group Agreement" was signed by the presidents of eight colleges. The Ivy Group Agreement created formal oversight of athletic administration at the schools, established explicit and common standards of athletic eligibility criteria for need-based financial aid (Ivy League schools offer no athletic scholarships), and, ultimately, intended to preserve the historically high standards of academic performance among student athletes. For 10 years, however, the Ivy Group

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Agreement applied only to football, but in 1954, the agreement was redrafted to subsume all intercollegiate sports. In 1992, the Ivy League became an official NCAA baseball conference with two divisions of four teams, the Rolfe Division, comprising Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, and Yale, and the Gehrig Division, which includes Columbia, Cornell, Penn, and Princeton.

It would be difficult to identify every major league ballplayer who attended an Ivy League school; indeed, in researching this article, it became apparent that some athletes attended an Ivy after their playing days had ended; others attended for only a year or less before pursuing a baseball career or transferring to another school; and a few earned graduate or professional degrees and never set foot on an Ivy League baseball field. Thus, the purpose of this article is to highlight some of the most significant Ivy League baseball players to have made an impact on the sport and an array of others whose connection to baseball has had a noticeable influence on the game.

COLUMBIA (21 players): Although Columbia produced relatively few collegiate athletes who would play major league baseball, most recently Frank Seminara and Gene Larkin (classes of 1989 and 1984, respectively), three of those 21 made significant contributions to the game. Columbia's first big leaguer of note was also one of the formative figures in the sport and in the earliest labor movements among professional baseball players: 47-game winner, Hall of Fame member, and Columbia law school graduate John Montgomery Ward. According to Lee Lowenfish, Ward was a true baseball renaissance man: he entered college in his early teens, played several positions, contributed to scholarly journals, and studied and practiced law as his playing days waned. As a player, Ward was an early practitioner of the curveball and threw one of baseball's first recorded perfect games. Ward and Ned Hanlon, Hall of Fame player, manager, and originator of baseball's platoon system, formed the Brotherhood of Professional Players and successfully, although temporarily, challenged the owners' reserve clause. Ward would become a field manager and executive (including an unsuccessful bid for president of the National League), but in both roles his interests were in equitable treatment of players. Ward retired from baseball to a successful law practice.

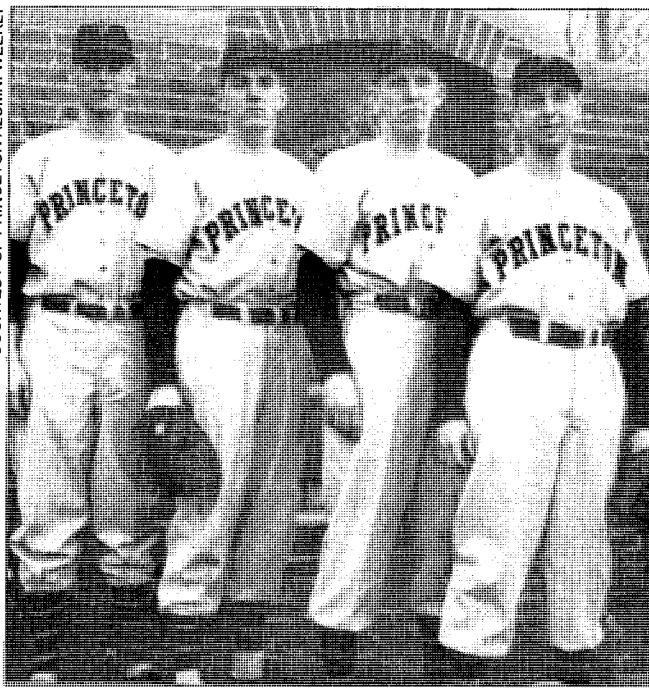
Columbia's other two future Hall of Famers would leave college with unusual footnotes to their college

careers. Eddie Collins (class of 1907) and Lou Gehrig both jeopardized their college careers by forays into professional baseball while still enrolled in college. Collins adopted the pseudonym "Sullivan" to play professionally before completing college. His double life in baseball was exposed, and he was barred from playing his senior year, although he completed his degree and acted as the team's coach. Gehrig, a powerful hitter and also a promising pitcher (he still holds Columbia's single-game strikeout record—17), played 12 professional games for Hartford as "Lou Lewis" before being brought to the school's attention. Unlike Collins, Gehrig claimed ignorance of the consequences of such an act, and he was able to successfully plead his case and was reinstated on Columbia's roster. Gehrig had been recruited to Columbia as a football player, and played less than two full seasons on Columbia's baseball team.

In an unrelated but nevertheless important distinction, Columbia hosted Princeton on May 17, 1939, in the first televised baseball game. The game, announced by Bill Stern, was won by Princeton, 2-1.

PRINCETON (22 players): Like Columbia, Princeton has sent few players to the major leagues, and none since Bob Tufts (class of 1977). Since Leonidas Lee spent 1877 with St. Louis to become Princeton's first alumnus to play in the majors, none has distinguished himself as a player in professional baseball. Indeed, only Dave Sisler played more than a few seasons with any one club. But Princeton can lay claim to perhaps the most enigmatic baseball cult figure—15-year major league catcher, linguist, raconteur, and spy Moe Berg (class of 1923).

Berg, a college shortstop, parlayed marginal major league talent (a career .243 hitter with six home runs) into a 15-year career as a backup catcher with five clubs. Early on in his career, however, Berg viewed baseball as a means to an end and found himself deliberating between a baseball career and a career in law. He reconciled the dilemma by studying law at Columbia during the off-season. Berg, of course, is remembered for his facility with language: he studied seven languages at Princeton and never lost his deep appreciation for language and culture. Biographer Nicholas Dawidoff suggests that his reputation as a linguist has been somewhat embellished, as Berg was likely not fluent in all the languages he undertook, but it makes for good baseball lore, as does "Sheriff"



THE FOUR STARTERS on the 1951 Princeton team. (L to R) Dave Sisler, Harry Brightman, Frank Reichel and Ray Chirurgi. Sisler compiled an ERA of 0.99 in 1951.

Davis's famous retort to sportswriter Shirley Povich that, although Berg knew seven languages, "He can't hit in any of them."

Hall of Fame outfielder Harry Hooper, owner of an engineering degree himself, coached Princeton during the 1931-32 seasons, and Princeton's current head baseball coach, though not an Ivy Leaguer, is former major league catcher Scott Bradley.

DARTMOUTH (29 players): At the time of this writing, of the eight Ivy League schools, Dartmouth currently has sent the most graduates listed on major league rosters—Mike Remlinger, Mark Johnson, Brad Ausmus, and Bobby Jones. In fact, Dartmouth, since Leon Viau (class of 1888) became the school's earliest graduate to play major league baseball, has sent more players to the big leagues except Brown and Penn. With the exception of the 1940s, Dartmouth has graduated at least one player per decade into the major leagues since Viau in 1888, but in spite of its long roster of major leaguers, Dartmouth's legacy to baseball may likely be in the executive ranks rather than on the field. Some of baseball's more luminous executives have earned degrees from Dartmouth, including current Executive Vice President of Baseball Operations Sandy Alderson (Dartmouth class of 1969 and Harvard Law class of 1976); former National

League president Charles S. "Chub" Feeney (class of 1943); former Minnesota Twins' owner Clark Griffith; and former major league pitcher and Montreal Expos general manager Jim Beattie (class of 1976).

Perhaps the most enduring name in Dartmouth baseball history is that of Robert "Red" Rolfe. After graduating from Dartmouth (class of 1931) Rolfe played (all 10 years with the Yankees) and managed in the major leagues, and following his professional baseball career, returned to his alma mater and spent a lengthy tenure as the school's athletic director. The Dartmouth home playing field and one of the Ivy League's two baseball divisions are named after the distinguished player and administrator.

YALE (26 players): The relationship between Yale and professional baseball has a lengthy history with many noteworthy stories, and like Dartmouth, the relationship between Yale and the major leagues extends well beyond the field. For example, the captain of the 1973 Bulldog baseball team distinguished himself in a sport other than baseball—Chicago Bears head coach Dick Jauron, who played professional football for the Detroit Lions before becoming an NFL coach. Erstwhile Boston Red Sox owner Tom Yawkey graduated from Yale, inherited a family fortune, purchased the Boston franchise for \$1.5 million in 1933, and promptly hired prep-school friend and fellow Ivy Leaguer Eddie Collins as his general manager. Eddie Collins Jr. graduated from Yale (class of 1939), and he played for the Philadelphia Athletics beginning the same year—coincidentally the year that his father was elected into the Hall of Fame.

Twenty-six Yale graduates would eventually play major league baseball, from George Knight, who played a single season in 1875 with New Haven of the National Association, to Ron Darling (class of 1983). Darling, of course, had a lengthy and distinguished career in the majors, including the memorable 1986 New York Mets' World Series, but he was also part of one of the most famous pitching duels in college baseball history, an 11-inning NCAA playoff game against Frank Viola of St. John's University. Darling pitched 11 innings of no-hit baseball, but lost the game in the twelfth inning. Another Yale pitcher of distinction made a much more immediate impact at the major league level, although his career spanned only five years, compared to Darling's 12: in 1934, several weeks removed from the Yale campus, Johnny Broaca

allowed only one hit, a third-inning single to Sammy West in a victory over the St. Louis Browns, his first victory in a 12-win rookie season.

Three of Yale's head baseball coaches have also played major league baseball: Ken McKenzie, Joe Wood, and current coach John Stuper. Wood was Yale's head coach for over twenty years, and Wood's son graduated from Yale in 1941 and pitched for the 1944 Boston Red Sox, the same team for which his father had played. Boston's Yale connection was revived in the off-season prior to the 2003 season, when the Red Sox hired 28-year-old Yale graduate Theo Epstein to serve as the team's general manager, the youngest in major league history.

BROWN (39 players): Brown holds a curious distinction: from Asa Stratton (class of 1878) to Ambrose "Amby" Murray (class of 1936), Brown records no fewer than 39 big leaguers, including Buttermilk Dowd (class of 1883), Daff Gammons (class of 1898, and also a Harvard attendee), Pepper Clark (class of 1901), and Bump Hadley (class of 1928). Despite its lengthy roster of big leaguers, however, not a single graduate between Ambrose Murray in 1936 and Bill Almon (class of 1974 and an All-Ivy third baseman who hit .366 his senior year), went on to the majors. Bump Hadley's career extended into the 1940s, but it began 10 years before Murray's 1936 debut.

HARVARD (28 players): A Hall of Famer, lifetime .328 hitter, holder of a single-season average of .438, and the winner of baseball's first triple crown was also the head coach of the Harvard baseball squad in 1918-1919. Hugh Duffy himself was not an Ivy League graduate, but he is in some ways emblematic of the high standards of achievement and performance that have defined Harvard academics and athletics since that first crew race with Yale in 1852.

George Davis was a spitballing pitcher for the Braves and the Yankees and was also a law student at Harvard. Remarkably, however, Davis played major league baseball *while* he was enrolled in law school. His playing career is otherwise noteworthy because he threw a no-hitter in September 1914. Two years later, he had left baseball and was practicing law.

Like Duffy, "The Pitching Professor," Ted Lewis, was not an Ivy League graduate; he was a former major league player who came to Harvard as a coach and then left coaching to become a full-time academic.

Lewis attended Williams College and compiled a respectable record as a pitcher for Boston over six seasons. In the off-season he attended classes and also coached Harvard's squad in 1897-1901. When he left baseball, he taught at Columbia, and he would eventually become the president of the University of New Hampshire for ten years. The Pitching Professor, while at the University of New Hampshire, would on occasion have Robert Frost to his house, and the two would play catch in Lewis's backyard.

As a Harvard undergraduate, Ulysses "Tony" Lupien (class of 1939), on occasion found himself working out with the big-league Boston Red Sox, and, according to his own account in Peter Golenbock's *Fenway*, would sometimes be asked by Jimmy Foxx to take Foxx's place in a pre-game practice. Lupien would eventually graduate to play for the Red Sox as a major league first baseman and batted .268 over parts of six seasons with three teams. Lupien, however, is probably best remembered for the suit he filed against his employer (the Philadelphia Phillies) over their violation of the provision of the GI Bill, stating that returning servicemen should be offered their jobs back for one year after service. Lupien later coached baseball at Dartmouth and collaborated with Lee Lowenfish on *The Imperfect Diamond*, a study of the history of baseball's reserve clause and labor relations.

Two quite poignant and unfortunately rarely recounted stories emerge from the Harvard baseball tradition. Edward "Harvard Eddie" Grant (class of 1906) was an 11-year veteran infielder of three National League teams who was killed in action in the Argonne Forest on October 5, 1918. He was honored on May 30, 1921, with a permanent memorial in front of the clubhouse wall of the Polo Grounds. Grant's obituary in the New York Times on October 22, 1918, reads, "Grant retired from baseball in 1913, and, until America entered the war, practiced law. . . . He is the first of the major league ball players to give his life for his country."

Although his professional career only included a single season in the outlaw Northern League, William Clarence Matthews (class of 1905) clearly deserves mention as one of the most significant figures in Harvard baseball history. More than 40 years before Jackie Robinson's major league debut, Matthews, an African American from Alabama, played four stellar years of college baseball at Harvard, despite boycotts, threats, and objections from opposing teams. He hit

Yale coach Smoky Joe Wood and Dartmouth coach Jeff Tesreau. The two pitchers faced each other three times in the 1912 World Series between the New York Giants and the Boston Red Sox. For the Series, Wood was 3-1, while Tesreau was 1-2.

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.400 his senior year, and there were some, including big-league manager Fred Tenney, who believed that he might indeed leave college for a big-league career. Though he never played in the major leagues, he eventually earned a law degree, provided legal counsel to Marcus Garvey, and was appointed to a post in the Justice Department for his active contribution to the Calvin Coolidge presidential campaign. But his position on integration of baseball was clear: "I think it is an outrage that colored men are discriminated against in the big leagues. . . . As a Harvard man, I shall devote my life to bettering the condition of the black man, and especially to secure his admittance into organized baseball."

Harvard also graduated a philosophy major who would later inextricably link baseball and literature—"Casey at the Bat" author Ernest Lawrence Thayer (class of 1888). Finally, Harvard has the distinction of playing the first baseball game at Fenway Park. On April 9, 1912, the Red Sox defeated Harvard 2-0, more than a week before the Red Sox defeated the New York Highlanders in the first professional game at Fenway on April 20.

PENN (60 players): It could be argued that Penn is a school for runners, although among Ivy League institutions, Penn currently has the second most players listed on major league rosters. The University of Pennsylvania, of course, is most famous for the Penn Relays. But what about baseball? To look at the university's athletic hall of fame roster, one would suspect that baseball might be an intramural sport. Indeed among the first year's inductees to the school's hall of fame, there were more fencers and squash players than professional baseball players. Penn graduates, however, include two current major leaguers: outfielder Doug Glanville (class of 1992) and Mark DeRosa (class of 1997) and number 60 erstwhile collegiates on all-time major league rosters.

The University of Pennsylvania Athletic Hall of Fame lists Don "Red" Kellett as "one of the greatest all-around athletes in Penn history, [and winner of] nine varsity letters at Pennsylvania, three each in football, basketball and baseball, during the early 1930s." As a professional, however, Kellett played only the 1934 season with the Boston Red Sox, where the erstwhile Ivy League star batted .000, with five strikeouts in nine career at-bats. Lack of big-league success notwithstanding, the Kellett Class of 1915

Award is presented to ". . . that member of the senior class who most closely approaches the ideal University of Pennsylvania student-athlete." A contemporary of Kellett at Penn, Henry Kozloff turned down an offer from the Red Sox to pursue a career in medicine.

As with other Ivy League schools, Penn staged exhibition games with the big-league club in Philadelphia in the years surrounding the turn of the 20th century, and in 1894, because of a fire that destroyed the Huntington Street Grounds, the two teams briefly shared the university's ball field, the first time major league baseball was hosted on a university field, according to David Rich. The 1894 Quaker team was on a par with the Harvard teams a decade later. Indeed, four of the Penn squad would have at least a taste of major league competition, including Roy Thomas, who parlayed a .585 batting average his final season at Penn into a 13-year Major League career. And as Harvard contributed to America's literary tradition through E. L. Thayer, Penn's Zane Gray, a dentistry major on the same 1894 team, would distinguish himself not only as a writer of fiction of the American west but also as a writer of notable baseball short stories: "The Shortstop" (1909), "The Young Pitcher" (1911), and "The Red Headed Outfield and other Stories" (1915).

Howard "Zip" Long is still the Penn record holder for wins in a single season with 12 (he also holds second place in the record book with a season of 11 wins) and consecutive victories with 16. Long is a member of Penn's All-Time Baseball squad, and also served as the school's assistant baseball coach following his collegiate career. The university Web site notes a brief stint with John McGraw's New York Giants, but no baseball reference lists Long as having either an official at-bat or inning pitched as in the majors.

CORNELL (12 players): As my research began, neither baseball histories nor official athletic Web sites nor correspondence with athletic alumni personnel at the university yielded a significant number of players whose careers took them from Ithaca, NY, to the big leagues. There are currently a few minor leaguers with Cornell degrees, as noted in various baseball publications, and the Cornell athletic alumni office pointed me to a few who played minor league baseball in the past. A conversation with a friend and former Cornell catcher had me following the trail of a former Big Red infielder who, my friend believed, had had a cup of coffee with the White Sox in the 1970s, but as with Penn's

Howard Long, the trail ended with a review of baseball registers and encyclopedias. In the end, Cornell trails the Ivys with a dozen major league players, managers, and executives.

An article by Joe Falls, however, yielded an interesting story of an Ivy Leaguer turned Baseball Hall of Fame inductee. Hughie Jennings, according to Falls, paid his tuition to Cornell by coaching Big Red baseball. Jennings, who played and managed in the majors (including consecutive pennants in 1907-09), is perhaps remembered best for his "Eee-Yah" shout from his infield coaching position, but Falls points out that his affability and amateur but innovative brand of sports psychology distinguished him as a player and manager. Indeed, he is remembered as one of the few players to befriend Ty Cobb, and it was Cobb who replaced Jennings as manager in Detroit when alcohol and disinterest in the game overcame Jennings. But as a scholar, Jennings is one of a select group of players to pass the bar exam – done while he was still active in baseball.

* * *

Records compiled for this short history yielded a roster of nearly 250 Ivy League students who either graduated to play major league baseball or returned to school during or following their playing days. There are certainly more who would have been much more difficult to account for—those who left college before graduation, those who transferred to or from an Ivy, those who earned post-graduate and those who drifted in and out of various colleges. And certainly today's minor league rosters reflect broad representation from the Ivy League; in fact, *Baseball America* devoted several columns in a recent issue to current Ivy League players in the minors. What became evident in this study—especially through several interviews with players—was that many of these athletes indeed see baseball as a profession, albeit a profession rich with history and deeply symbolic, but also that for many of them, baseball was not the circumstance which would define the rest of their lives.

Following this article is a list of the 237 names identified in my research. Players who were found to have attended two Ivy League schools were counted twice. Thus, the list comprises 221 different players, but they are listed among the rosters of both schools attended (e.g., Moe Berg will be found in both Princeton's and

Columbia's rosters.)

The search began with correspondence with representatives of the Ivy League schools' athletic departments. Several schools responded with extensive lists dating back to the 1870s; other schools responded that nobody had compiled a comprehensive list and could only provide a few names with which to begin. And Princeton provided in its athletic Web site a rich history with names, dates, and anecdotes. By the time the article reached completion, however, the Ivy League's official athletic Web site (www.ivyleaguesports.com) had compiled its own comprehensive Web site of Ivy League athletes in all major sports who would later play professionally. The task, then, became to compare my roster with theirs, and in the end, the lists were nearly identical, except that I had identified several players who were, in one source or another, listed as having big league experience but for whom I could find no official record. Thus, both lists report 237 Ivy Leaguers who became major leaguers.

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Wally Snell

by Charlie Bevis

Walter Henry Snell was a baseball player turned scientist. Following his brief six-game stint in major league baseball as a reserve catcher for the 1913 Boston Red Sox, Snell earned a Ph.D. degree in botany and went on to a distinguished career as a college professor and athletic coach at Brown University.

Snell was born on May 19, 1889, in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts, the first of five children of Alton and Clara (Leach) Snell. He played football, basketball, and baseball at Brockton High School, graduating in 1907. Snell then attended Phillips Andover Academy for two years, graduating in 1909, before enrolling at Brown University.

At Brown, Snell was both a scholar and an athlete. He was a Phi Beta Kappa in academics and was a catcher for four years on the varsity baseball team under coach Harry Pattee. In his senior year, Snell was captain of the team. Because of his baseball exploits at Brown, Snell received an offer to play professional baseball with the Philadelphia Athletics and was said to have received a \$500 advance from Connie Mack.

On June 18, 1913, Brown awarded Snell a bachelor's degree. Commencement Day was a bittersweet occasion for Snell, though, since he broke his thumb in the first inning of the traditional varsity-alumni baseball game that day. "Snell was badly injured in attempting to catch a foul tip, the ball striking the thumb on his right hand, tearing the flesh badly and causing a double dislocation," the *Providence Journal* reported the next day. "It is stated that the injury will keep him out of the game the balance of the summer, and will prevent his playing with the Philadelphia Americans, to whom he was scheduled to report on July 1."

CHARLIE BEVIS writes baseball history from his home in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. He is the author of *Sunday Baseball: The Major Leagues' Struggle to Play Baseball on the Lord's Day, 1876-1934* and *Mickey Cochrane: The Life of a Baseball Hall of Fame Catcher*.

Philadelphia sent the injured Snell to the Boston Red Sox. Because his broken thumb hadn't healed properly, Snell was sidelined for several weeks. The thumb would remain twisted and stiff through the rest of his life. On August 1, he made his first major league appearance, as a pinch-hitter in the third inning of Boston's game with Cleveland at Fenway Park.

"Walter Snell, the Brown University captain of last year, made his major league debut, hitting for [Dutch] Leonard, and cracked out a single to center field," the *Boston Herald* reported the next day. The first-hit-in-his-first-at-bat feat seemed to be a fond remembrance for Snell. His single off Indian pitcher Nick Cullop was recalled in newspaper profiles and also chronicled more than 65 years later in Snell's obituary, embellished with an additional detail that the hit went past second baseman Napoleon Lajoie, a future Hall of Fame player.

Snell pinch-hit three more times within the next four days. In an August 2 doubleheader, Snell batted in both games but failed to make a hit. Then on August 5, he pinch-hit in the ninth inning and singled off St. Louis hurler Carl Weilman.

After his 2-for-4 exploits as a pinch-hitter, Snell carried his .500 batting average for seven more weeks before he appeared in another regulation game. Snell was just one of five catchers the Red Sox used during the 1913 season. He did play a few innings at catcher for the Red Sox in an August 27 exhibition game with Syracuse of the New York State League, where he went 0-for-2 at the plate.

On September 27, Snell played catcher in a regulation game for the first time with the Red Sox, against the Philadelphia Athletics, the team he had expected to join following his graduation from Brown. Snell caught pitcher Ray Collins that day in a 5-3 Red Sox victory, while going 0-for-4 at the plate and committing one error in five chances accepted.

In Boston's season finale on October 4, Snell caught a second game. He went 1-for-4 in the team's 10-9 loss to the Washington Senators, in a game the *Boston Post* headlined "Red Sox Lose in Farcical Windup." Washington's star pitcher Walter Johnson played center field in the game, while Washington used eight pitchers in the game (a league record until 1949), including 43-year-old Washington manager Clark Griffith, appearing in his only game that year.

In his six-game major league career, Snell compiled a .250 batting average with his 3-for-12 performance. Older editions of baseball encyclopedias inaccurately indicate a more stellar short-term performance, 3-for-8 for a .375 average, failing to include his participation in the September 27 game.

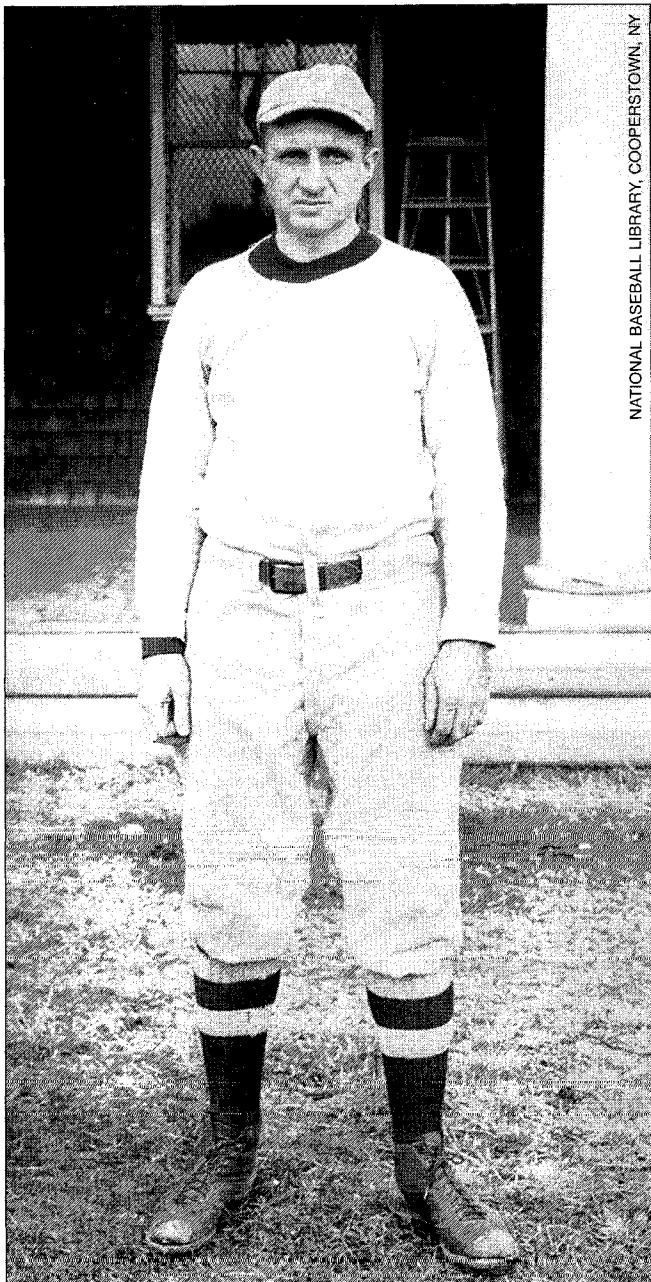
Following his three months of service with the Red Sox, Snell began graduate school studies at Brown in the fall of 1913, becoming more interested in plants as a graduate student rather than the animals he had studied for his biology degree as an undergraduate. That October he also married Adelaide Elva Scott, who gave birth to three sons over the next eight years.

Snell continued to play some minor league baseball while studying for his master's degree. During the summers of 1914 and 1915, he played with Toronto and Rochester of the International League and Manchester in the New England League (where he switched from catcher to first baseman). Snell then retired as an active baseball player.

After he received his master's degree from Brown in the spring of 1915, Snell began to pursue his doctoral studies in 1916 at the University of Wisconsin. During the summers he was a forest pathologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He completed work for his Ph.D. in 1920, including a thesis "Studies of certain fungi of economic importance in the decay of building timbers, with special reference to the factors which favor their development and dissemination."

In 1920, Snell became a botany professor at Brown University, commencing a 39-year career in academia. During the summers he worked in the Adirondack Mountains for the New York State Conservation Commission, studying white pine blister rust.

Snell also returned to the athletic field at Brown. His coaching career lasted from 1921 to 1939, including stints of five years as varsity baseball coach from 1922 to 1926 and four years as freshman baseball coach from 1936 to 1939. He also was an assistant football coach from 1921 to 1939. He resigned his coaching duties in

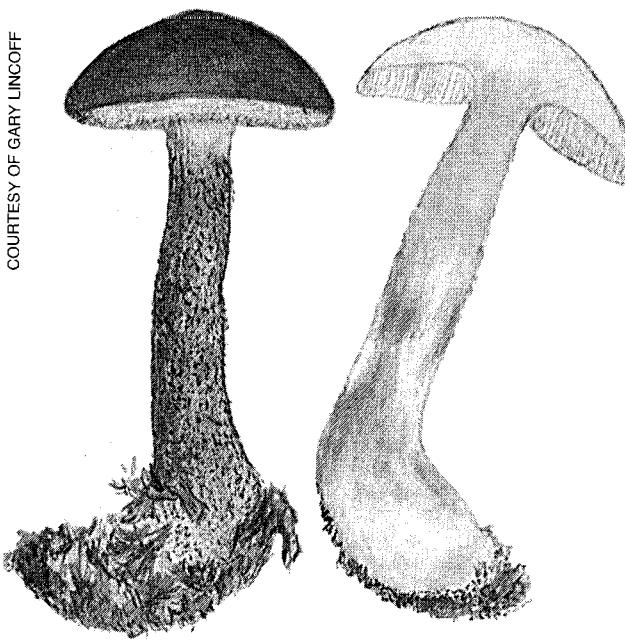


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1940 to devote more time to his scientific research.

"The manifold duties of his vocation and his avocation can't spare the time that it takes on the playing fields to coach," the *Providence Journal* remarked in the summer of 1939. "And yet, he'll tell you that 35 years of dividing his day between classroom and laboratory and the playing fields has provided the spark that keeps him going."

During World War II, Snell served as athletic director at Brown from 1943 to 1946, to guide Brown's athletics during tough times when Brown's A.D. had entered the military.



*"Wally Snell was a superb watercolorist of mushrooms, and he wrote many articles about them. His most enduring work is *The Boleti of Northeastern North America*, which he wrote with his future wife, Esther A. Dick, and illustrated with his watercolors. That book was published by Cramer (in Europe) in 1970. It is still available and in use today. Walter Snell discovered a number of new mushrooms, which he described and named. He also has at least one mushroom named after him: *Leccinum snellii*."*

Gary Lincoff, author of *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*.

"Schedules, transportation, and supplies were all hard to get," Snell remembered in an unidentified newspaper article contained in his Brown University alumni file. "One year we had six baseball bats, and we had to go around to the drugstores and hardware stores to get them. The only way we could get baseballs was through George Weiss of the Yankees, whom I know. Those were rough years."

Snell was a thorough and precise person who had high standards for both himself and his students. Despite a gruff exterior, Snell was always willing to help students reach their potential. His perfectionism was a good trait for a scientist studying arcane subject matter to find new discoveries.

When Dr. Snell retired as a professor in 1959, he had written numerous professional papers on research in his field, published in scientific journals such as *Mycologia* and *Phytopathology*. His research delved into four areas: (1) forest tree diseases, especially white pine blister rust, (2) decay in building timbers

and toxicity of creosotes to wood-destroying fungi, (3) language of mycology, and (4) taxonomy of boletes and hydnoms (types of mushrooms and fungi).

Upon his retirement, the *Providence Evening Bulletin* on June 4 published a cartoon on its sports page depicting Snell, pipe in mouth, and his athletic contributions. "Prof. Walter Snell, one of Brown's most beloved and famous sons, is retiring," the text of the cartoon read. Commenting on a smaller drawing of Snell next to a large pile of wooden matches, the cartoonist Frank Lanning wrote, "For a man who has spent his life protecting forests, he has burned a lot of lumber lighting that pipe."

Snell, who had tirelessly worked six days a week, may have retired from teaching, but he never left the Brown campus. In retirement, he apologetically admitted that he worked only four days a week in the summer. The culmination of his scientific work was the publication of *The Boleti of Northeastern North America*, a book written with his long-time assistant Esther Dick and published in 1970. The book included 400 of Snell's watercolor paintings.

After his wife, Adelaide, died in 1975, Snell married Ms. Dick. He died at age 91 in Providence, Rhode Island, on July 23, 1980.

Summing up Snell's life quite succinctly in a 1983 biographical essay in the scientific publication *Mycologia*, David J. McLaughlin wrote, "Walter Henry Snell, or Wally as he was usually called, was an unusual combination of scientist, athlete, mycological artist and glossarist who might not have pursued a career in science except for an accident in his last undergraduate baseball game."

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Remembering the Congress Street Grounds

Boston's Ball Yard of Champions from Rebel Origin to Final Clutch Swing

by Richard "Dixie" Tourangeau

Just south across the Fort Point Channel, a half-mile walk from Boston's present-day bustling South Station train/bus terminal, was the location of the early 1890s Congress Street Baseball Grounds. This now unmarked turf is virtually unknown to most fans in comparison to Beantown's other "cathedrals," Fenway Park, Braves Field, the Huntington Avenue Grounds and even the Walpole Street/South End Grounds, currently posing as a Northeastern University ground-level parking lot. But Congress Street possesses its own legitimate credentials for stardom, despite its few halcyon days.

Today's slightly decayed Congress Street Bridge remains one entrance to a commercial section of South Boston where, beyond the Children's Museum and Boston Fire Museum (an 1890s fire station), the sprawling Thomson Financial Services Company now stands, more than a hundred years after the Congress Street Grounds passed into obscurity. Boston Wharf Company (founded by shipowners in 1836) still owns much of the land, as it did in 1890, when Boston's Players League (PL) franchise leased a few acres from president Charles Theodore Russell and his son, progressive-thinking treasurer Joseph Ballister Russell. Searching for new types of revenue, J.B. probably felt the ballpark would lure hundreds of businessmen to BWC's side of the channel and some would become new customers of BWC's normal commercial operation. Located diagonally across from the A Street intersection with Congress, the land parcel was adjacent to the busy New York & New England railroad yard. On most current maps, Thomson Place (changed from Pittsburgh Street in 1998) and Stillings Street bookend the old diamond's layout. Fielders faced Congress Street with their backs toward Northern Avenue. When the Brotherhood (PL)

DIXIE TOURANGEAU lives three miles from Congress Street and, before becoming obsessed with the park, had planned to write only about Bobby Lowe's four-homerun feat.

season opened, the club had a big, fancy grandstand that challenged the benchmark grandeur of the NL's famed South End Grounds' double-decked, witch-hat turreted structure (built 1888) some two miles inland.

According to the *Boston Globe* of December 28, 1889, contractor Timothy Manning had a gang of 50 men out in mild winter weather spreading loam and filling holes in the outfield. Home plate to center field then measured 500 feet, the *Globe* stated, and star slugger Harry Stovey, who came out to see the work in progress, was already contemplating a large number of "inside-the-park" home runs because of the spacious pasture he saw.

CREATING THE REBEL HOUSE

Boston Wharf Company architect Morton Deaveraux Safford designed the grand pavilion, which was to be 210 feet long, and just over 60 feet wide with a double-deck seating capacity of 4,000. Yes, it was double-decked. Pen and ink artist renderings accompanying a short *Globe* story on February 23, 1890, divulged several blueprint tidbits, such as sizable dressing rooms for players, men's and ladies' rest rooms, press accommodations with telephone and telegraph, extended roofs to protect patrons from rain and sun, comfortable seating in both levels, and four wide entrances. The players' quarters were not completed until late May, when they were touted as "beautiful, with plenty of room and light," according to the *Boston Herald*. There were large closets for each player and a "Brotherhood"-inscribed Marvin safe for valuables.

Highlighting its main grandstand, Congress Street had two 25-square-foot towers, rising some 75 feet above the ground, atop which signal flags were to "guide" patrons on stormy days. From those lofty open balconies there was a stellar panoramic view of

Boston Harbor, the shoreline of which was closer to the park than anyone would think possible seeing today's topography. There were boxes in the upper tier, just cozy enough for private parties. Plans also called for drenching the entire structure in "lively colors and with a fence put up with an eye for architectural beauty." Two wings of "bleaching boards" were to seat 7,000 more Boston cranks while the center-field stands held an additional 5,000 (total capacity 16,000).

Intricate descriptions and more drawings in the *Herald* on the morning of the PL's opening game are evidence to contradict the long-accepted theory that the South End pavilion was the only double-decked stadium ever built in Boston. Confirming Congress Street's similar two-tier design was the *Herald*'s simple illustration of Congress's less ornate rectangular pavilion (minus its towers) on April 20 (page two). It accompanied the lengthy opening-game story and was used as a visual aid to differentiate the paper's PL coverage from its NL's. On page four the Beaneaters' opener was detailed, complete with a South End grandstand sketch atop a bank of headlines.

Architect Safford certainly benefitted from having close at hand a working example of mid-1880s ballpark grandstand genius, John Jerome Deery. Philly-based Deery designed that city's heralded edifice at the Huntingdon Grounds (pre-Baker Bowl site) in 1887, corrected a few layout flaws when he created Boston's magnificent South End pavilion in 1888, and planned

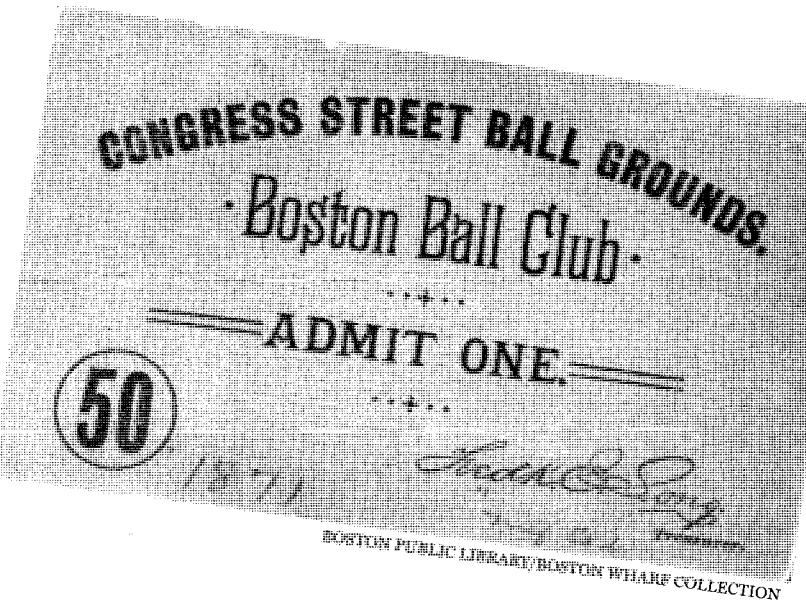
Season pass #1871 for the 1890 Players League Reds, apparently belonged to famed later Royal Rooter, Mike "Nuf'Ced" McGreevey. Michael T. was not yet in the booze business at the Third Base Saloon, and he was a mere clerk with a baseball passion. The #1 season pass was presented to "General" Arthur Dixwell "in appreciation for the good work he has done for the cause." The players were said to have no better friend, stated the Boston Herald.

New York's Polo Grounds (Manhattan Field) in 1889. Deery also drew up plans for Cap Anson's new Chicago park (1889), but major defections to the PL ruined Cap's economic standing, so the project was cancelled. Upon their respective openings, the Philadelphia and Boston parks drew much acclaim and each was declared the "finest ballpark in the land." Thanks to Deery's boldness, ornate baseball grandstands/pavilions became a craze. Safford had a great model, but he also had to incorporate some original ideas because of the location (lowland peninsula) and peculiar shape (railroad track boundaries) of the South Boston acreage. The *Herald* claimed that retired shortstop Arthur Irwin provided Morty with several player perspectives, while club secretary James A. Hart suggested the private entrances to the ball field from team dressing areas. A small detail for fans was that extra room was provided for carriages to roll right up to the ticket offices.

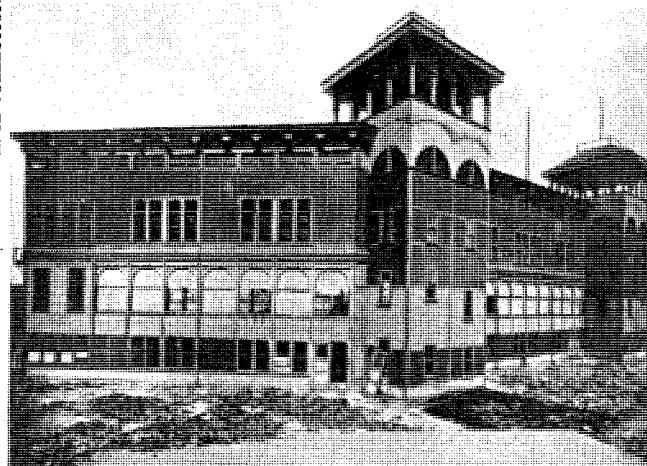
Congress's home plate to center-field fence lengths were downsized to 385 feet but final exact dimensions are hard to pinpoint, since it was claimed the South End Grounds plate to flagpole distance was an unlikely 300 feet. Manning, who had been keeping the Dartmouth Street/Union Grounds in usable shape for years, was proud of his Congress field work of laying three inches of coal cinders, rolling them down hard, and covering that with three inches of rich loam for a beautifully level, sodded diamond. Even in the raw chill of March, fans were looking forward to the "cooling breezes from the ocean that would soothe them on warm summer days."

Rewind to November 1889. The infant Brotherhood's Boston franchise stockholders (president Charles Porter and treasurer Fred Long) seemed set on securing their ball ground space along Huntington Avenue, opposite the South End's existing NL yard. Esteemed acting new league secretary and October "championship series" star John Montgomery Ward of the winning

New York Giants (from which he then jumped), visited the Hub for a property appraisal. Joined by local financial backers/ex-players "Honest" John Morrill, 1870s Red Stocking icon George Wright, Arthur and John Irwin, plus superfan-trust fund child Arthur "Hi Hi" Dixwell, the group at first agreed on the site that would be claimed by the upstart American League club a dozen seasons later. At some point however, plain curiosity lured them to Congress Street before their trek was over. Everyone liked its greater roominess,



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Only known photograph of the under-construction, double-decked Congress Street Grounds pavilion. Original photo by Frank E. Porter.

and the ever business-conscious Ward pointed out that the main post office was only a ten-minute walk away. This made Congress Street an excellent location from which to entice downtown merchants to an afternoon diversion.

A *Globe* writer tagging along on the tour claimed the rebel league's real estate posse then began to question why Huntington Avenue was chosen without much debate when the harborside area seemed a better choice. On November 13, the *Herald* implied Ward's tour afterthoughts nixed the first, seemingly done deal. "Opinion now seems to favor the Congress Street Grounds for the new ball nine that has been formed here. They are so large that a hit past a fielder will mean a home run," proclaimed its "Foul Tips" tidbit column. With three hellbent leagues constantly maneuvering and squabbling, city newspapers carried some kind of baseball news almost every winter day, yet there was silence on which spot was officially chosen until the work crew was noticed after Christmas.

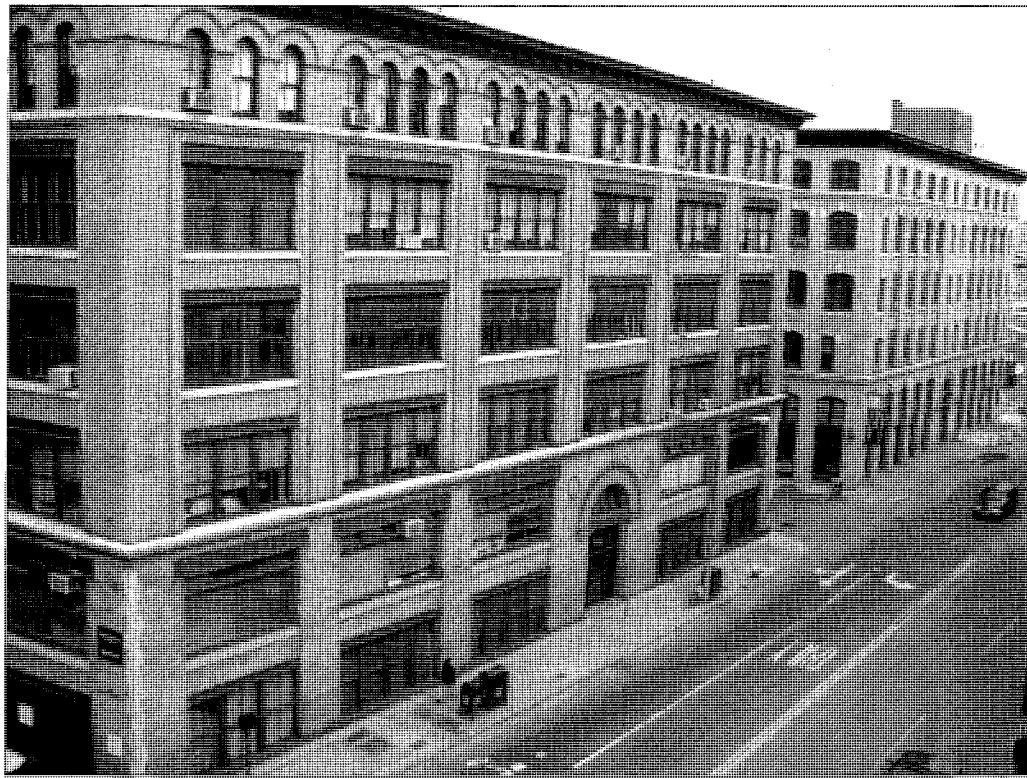
Field contractor Manning won several friendly bets, as he had the diamond ready on time for April's opening game. Art Irwin spent the final day helping Manning coordinate the completion details. Management was ready to greet and take care of up to 20,000 fans at the first Boston Brotherhood game. A special train from Providence, Rhode Island, was chartered with more than 200 fans paying a \$1.50 round trip fare, and Reeves' band was to play a medley of tunes including a "Brotherhood March" and "Slide Kelly Slide" for pre-game entertainment. One innovation at Congress Street was that a gong was to be struck announcing the

beginning of the last inning. Ward's business intuition about attracting merchants to games was right on target, as there was a some kind of crowd conveyance, termed a "barge" by the newsprint wordsmiths, that took ball fans from the Water Street-Spring Lane-Devonshire Street intersection to the Grounds. Sixty years beforehand, this area was original shoreline, hence "barge." By 1890 there were four banks, four news offices, common businesses, and the central post office located within a two-minute walk of this ball game transit stop.

THE FIRST CHAMPION TENANTS

Called the Reds under player-manager Mike "King" Kelly, the PL Bostons won the one-year league's sole pennant, beating out Brooklyn behind the bats of Kelly (.326), Hardie Richardson (.326/13 HR/146 RBI), Dan Brouthers (.330) and Stovey (.297/12 HR/142 runs, 97 SB). Stovey was already a bona fide slugger who led the NL in triples and home runs in 1880 as a rookie with Worcester and topped the AA (with Philadelphia) three times in home runs, including 1889. Harry's December daydream came true. As the second batter to face Brooklyn's George Van Haltren on April 19, Stovey smashed the park's inaugural round-tripper in the season opener, a 3-2 win for fellow Philadelphian Matt Kilroy. A crowd of more than 10,000 paying customers was on hand, including dozens of the city's political and business bigwigs. Hundreds of more fans who couldn't afford a 50-cent ticket climbed atop railroad boxcars just beyond the outfield fences. Within a week the boxcar-viewing heights were blocked by management. Stovey hit 9 of his 12 circuit clouts at the Congress confines, while Richardson whacked 10 of his 13 there. The Hub duo finished second and third to PL New York slugger Roger Conner's 14. Boston's PL champs were 48-21 at Congress Street, 33-27 on the road.

With the Brotherhood a memory by 1891, the "Reds" name attached itself to Beantown's first ever entry in the American Association, in what proved to be that circuit's swan song tenth season. Congress Street became their ball yard, and Bay State, 3B Charles "Duke" Farrell achieved "legend" status there. Duke's 12 home runs (7 at home) and 110 RBI topped the AA as the Reds took the pennant. Highlights included Brouthers' league-best .350, Hugh Duffy's .336 (second, also had 110 RBI), and speedster Tom Brown's 177



Photograph of current 368 and 374 Congress Street shows two commercial buildings (built 1901 and 1903) where the pavilion was. (Vantage point courtesy of Boston Building Consultants atop 355 Congress Street.)

runs, 106 SBs and 21 triples greatly aiding the cause. The Reds hit 52 round-trippers (37 at Congress) while at the South End Grounds, NL Boston launched 34 of their 53 home runs, including circuit king Stovey's 8 of 16 for the champion Beaneaters. The AA Reds were 51-17 monsters at Congress Street and a solid 42-25 away.

In 1892 the Beaneaters became the olde town'e's only baseball team, and Congress Street was left to host amateur city teams and diverse events. In July 1893 the twice-relocated New England League "Reds" called it home. But by August even they chose to play their remaining games all on the road because home attendance was sorely lacking. Disrepair tarnished the former championship field as the 1894 NL season began at the well-kept, profitable South End Grounds. In mid-May, however, fate gave Congress Street one last fling at greatness.

When the 1894 season commenced, Boston was the three-time defending NL champion. The Beaneaters retained great bats, hands, and arms and were solid contenders for a fourth straight title. Captain/3B Billy Nash, SS Herman Long, 2B Bobby Lowe, and

1B Tommy "Foghorn" Tucker made up an extremely talented infield while the heralded "Heavenly Twins," Bostonian Tom McCarthy and Rhode Island star Hugh Duffy, patrolled the pasturc with local rookie save Jimmy Bannon. Charlie "Kid" Nichols and "Happy Jack" Stivets were the main mound horses while vet flingers Tom Lovett (30 Brooklyn wins in 1890) and Harry Staley(averaged 21 wins for five previous seasons) filled out the hurling core. Poor Charlie Bennett had been the NL's best defensive catcher during Boston's reign, but both his legs were amputated (at different lengths) after a horribly unlucky January accident in Wellsville, Kansas. Bennett slipped while trying to reboard a moving Sante Fe train after speaking with a friend. Veteran Charley Ganzel, who came to Boston in 1889 from Detroit with Bennett (also Richardson and Brouthers) in what would have been a "blockbuster" deal in any era, had almost equally shared backstop duties with Bennett and hit much better over the five-year span. He was the most used of three semi-regulars who would perform behind the bat for Boston in 1894. John Ryan and lefty-throwing rookie Fred Tenney (from Brown University) were the other two.

That season the NL was again twelve teams strong. On May 14, manager Ned Hanlon's Baltimore Orioles arrived in the South End to begin a three-game series. Oriole ace John "Sadie" McMahon gave up a home run to Duffy but easily whipped Nichols (34 wins in 1893), 16-5.

In the third inning the following afternoon a dangerous commotion occurred in the 25-cent wooden bleacher section in right field. After a few minutes some harmless smoke turned into a raging fire and spectators began to scramble to safety. Right fielder Bannon tried but could not stamp out the initial flames. Ganzel reportedly saved a large team picture from the office, and quick-thinking *Globe* baseball scribe Tim Murnane grabbed a group of historic baseball photos (of every Boston team) from the players' room before escaping the spreading blaze. Rebuilt in 1888 from the "improved" plans of Philadelphia's Huntingdon/Broad Street yard for about \$65,000, the proud South End Grounds became a smoldering ruin in just over an hour. The fire didn't doom just the ballpark. "Fierce blowing winds" swept it through twenty acres of adjacent city streets. The disaster left nearly 2,000 persons homeless and destroyed nearly 200 buildings. Boston's fire department was later criticized, as it was claimed that not a single spray of water touched the baseball stands during the conflagration. By sheer luck and some heroism, no one was killed.

The Beaneaters were among the instant homeless, but quickly turned to the Congress Street yard. Without much field preparation, the clubs squared off on May 16 as 2,000 excited fans showed up for the first major league game near the harbor since 1891. Lovett faced the aging "Apollo of the Box," Tony Mullane in his swan song season. Boston scratched out a thrill-packed 10-8 victory, ending only when the sprinting McCarthy snagged a ball heading for the left-field fence. Congress Street had regained a pulse.

It was determined that the ball yard needed some sprucing up, so the next series with invading Philadelphia was rescheduled as away games. Manager Frank Selee's squad left town for the weekend. South End groundskeeping superintendent (and ticket taker) "Colonel" John Haggerty planned to have Congress Street in major league shape by the team's return, which included putting seats back in the abandoned grandstand.

Down in Philadelphia, Nichols beat Kid Carsey, 4-3, behind Duffy and Nash (two hits, two runs) on

May 17. Lave Cross (three hits, three runs) won the next game for Philly as Jack Taylor nipped Stivets, 5-4. On May 19, some 9,000 fans packed Philly's Huntingdon Grounds to see George Haddock defeat Staley, 8-7, in another thriller. Haddock had been 34-11 for the AA champ Reds in 1891. Because of this schedule change, Philadelphia manager Arthur Irwin was the only NL pilot who was denied a chance to play at Congress Street one last time. It was ironic since he was the shortstop on the champ PL squad, managed the AA champ Reds, and even helped the groundskeeper to finish the infield just a day prior to the 1890 opening.

RESUSCITATION COMPLETE

Boston returned to the improved South Boston digs in fifth place. Selee's Beaneaters were in a slump, hitting just .244 and plainly not playing championship ball. On May 21, a cold Monday, New York came calling with the league's best two pitchers, Amos Rusie and Jouett Meekin. Nichols was brilliant in besting rookie Huyler Westervelt, 3-0, as Duffy scored twice on two hits. The next day Lovett edged Giant ace (1894 Triple Crown pitching winner) Rusie, 3-2, as Bannon homered off the "Hoosier Thunderbolt," Jimmy's first major league blast. The Lovett-Rusie matchup was easily the lowest-scoring contest of Boston's May-June tenancy at their new home. New York took the final game, 12-3, as Stivets was shelled. "Dirty Jack" Doyle homered while old Congress star Farrell (1891 AA) and left fielder Eddie Burke each had three hits for the visitors.

After a day off, Washington came to town and Nichols whipped them 10-2 as Long and Lowe reached the left-field fence. Duffy made two errors and four singles while McCarthy pulled off his famed "trapped ball" trick for a double play. Boston then won 10-8 and 18-12, as Bannon had consecutive four-hit games and Lowe banged out his second Congress Street home run. Next came Cincinnati, but the Ohioans got a stay of execution when wet grounds forced a May 30 Decoration Day doubleheader.

Splendid spring weather greeted holiday spectators as Tom Parrott took the mound for Cincy. It was on this day that Bobby Lowe experienced his worst day of the year and best day ever within eight hours. He was 0 for 6 in the morning's 13-10 win by Lovett. Lowe and Parrott were the only players not to hit safely. Duffy homered and a nine-run eighth-inning rally torched

the Ohio River's "Queen City" bunch.

After the fans had their lunch, veteran right hander Elton Chamberlain battled Nichols. "Ice Box" was in his final meaningful season, having amassed almost 150 wins in eight years. After a good April start, grand curveballer Chamberlain, who also tossed from the port side on occasion, was struggling. Elton was laid off without pay on May 10, then lost a tough 10-inning, 4-3 game to St. Louis upon his return.

Leadoff batter Lowe made the game's first out, but in the third inning he whacked two home runs off Chamberlain in Boston's second nine-run uprising that day. Bobby belted two more as the slaughter progressed, becoming the first major leaguer to smash four home runs in a game. He also punched a late-inning single for 17 total bases and had seven RBI in the 20-11 Beaneater rout before 6,050 frenzied fans. Lowe's total base performance was not bettered until 1954, when franchise descendant Milwaukee's Joe Adcock hit four home runs and a double at Ebbets Field. Lowe collected \$160 from the joyous coin-tossing crowd. Bobby batted safely in 17 of the next 18 Congress Street games (.435) and then 19 of 20 road contests (.443), spurring his career-best .346 final mark with an 1894 NL-high of 613 at-bats.

Cleveland arrived in Boston on June 1, only a win out of first place. Cy Young gave up 20 hits, but Stivets and Nichols allowed even more runs in a 22-8 thrashing. John Clarkson, then lost to Nichols, 11-10, on a ninth-inning burst of five tallies. Pittsburgh, enjoying a nice record itself, was the next visitor. After splitting two games, the Pirates smashed a single-game record of seven home runs off two amateur hurlers who were being given a tryout by Selee while his regular staffers took a needed day off. Bostonian natives Henry Lampe and Tom Smith lost an embarrassing game, 27-11, as CF Jake Stenzel and 2B Lou Bierbauer each swatted two, while C Connie Mack (a central Massachusetts native), 3B Denny Lyons, and sub LF Frank "Archer" Scheibeck clouted one home run apiece. Those were Mack's and Scheibeck's only blasts of the season. Lampe and Smith were soon released, though they both pitched in 1895 for other teams. Each later became a Hub policeman. St. Louis took the brunt of Boston's awakening from the Pittsburgh debacle. Boston swept them in three games as Lowe drilled three more over his favorite fence.

Legendary Adrian "Cap" Anson and his Chicago Colts then took their turn. They lost 15-14 and 12-9 before winning a 6-2 game. Chicago belted nine home

runs in the series, as "Bad Bill" Dahlen and rookie Charlie Irwin each sent four balls deep.

In mid-June the *Globe* reported that owners Arthur Soden, William Conant, and James Billings were refused a building permit for new stands at the cleared South End site. Outspoken building inspector John Stanhope Damrell, a city firefighter for 35 years and the fire chief hero during Boston's Great Fire of 1872, prohibited them from constructing anything of major size in wood. A permit was then requested and granted for a brick structure to be 43 feet tall, about half the size of the famed double-decked original. Boldly, it was also announced that the "new" South End Grounds would be ready for use when the team returned on July 20 from a month-long road trip.

Lowly Louisville arrived in Boston and showed why they were the worst of the NL's 12 squads. Boston took 9-6, 15-10, and 16-10 victories. Lowe launched two more over the fence, and a Brown University phenom, left-handed catcher Fred Tenney, made his NL debut. He got his first hit and scored his first run before breaking a finger in the fifth inning of the third game on June 16. Tenney stayed in Boston for 17 years and became a local icon, soon taking Tucker's place at the initial sack.

In contrast to the poor Colonels, Hanlon's cocky first-place Orioles were next on the schedule. It was appropriate they played the final Congress Street games, since they were the "fire" game opposition that prompted the harbor park's revival. Boston greeted its newly established rivals with a 16-run bombardment in the first inning, leading to a 24-7 stomping behind Stivets, who contributed four hits himself, including his only Congress home run. Despite Lowe's four hits (another home run) the Beancatters lost the afternoon contest, 9-7, as Nichols closed his Congress Street record at 8-1. "Kid" was the only Beaneater with a good number of at-bats not to smash one out of his temporary home. Baltimore won the next day 13-8, as winning pitcher Bill Hawke hit a game-winning home run, offsetting Beaneater Duffy's two round-trippers.

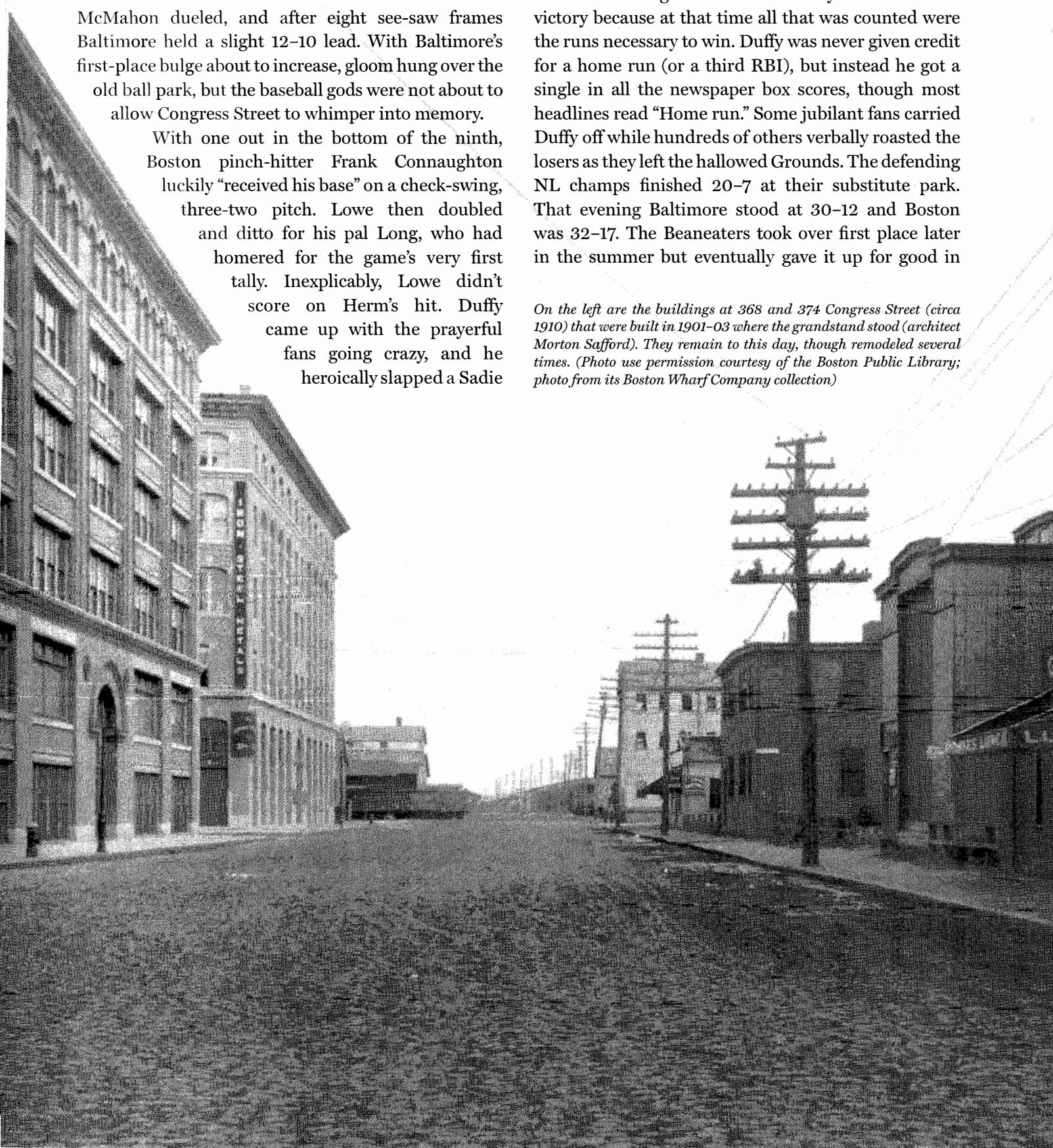
HISTORIC HEROIC LAST UPS

On the last day of spring, June 20, about 2,100 cranks witnessed the last major league game at the Congress Street Grounds. Stivets and Oriole slab master McMahon dueled, and after eight see-saw frames Baltimore held a slight 12-10 lead. With Baltimore's first-place bulge about to increase, gloom hung over the old ball park, but the baseball gods were not about to allow Congress Street to whimper into memory.

With one out in the bottom of the ninth, Boston pinch-hitter Frank Connaughton luckily "received his base" on a check-swing, three-two pitch. Lowe then doubled and ditto for his pal Long, who had homered for the game's very first tally. Inexplicably, Lowe didn't score on Herm's hit. Duffy came up with the prayerful fans going crazy, and he heroically slapped a Sadie

fling over the left-field fence for the comeback win, a tremendous final-swing victory that ended big-league baseball at Congress Street. Officially it was a 13-12 victory because at that time all that was counted were the runs necessary to win. Duffy was never given credit for a home run (or a third RBI), but instead he got a single in all the newspaper box scores, though most headlines read "Home run." Some jubilant fans carried Duffy off while hundreds of others verbally roasted the losers as they left the hallowed Grounds. The defending NL champs finished 20-7 at their substitute park. That evening Baltimore stood at 30-12 and Boston was 32-17. The Beaneaters took over first place later in the summer but eventually gave it up for good in

On the left are the buildings at 368 and 374 Congress Street (circa 1910) that were built in 1901-03 where the grandstand stood (architect Morton Safford). They remain to this day, though remodeled several times. (Photo used permission courtesy of the Boston Public Library; photo from its Boston Wharf Company collection)



September as Baltimore secured its first pennant due to a long winning streak.

Newspapers in both cities enjoyed relentlessly accusing each other's teams of "dirty play" and being "devoid of sportsmanship" as the pennant race looked more and more like an eventual Boston-Baltimore standoff. The *Baltimore Sun* went a step further on the morning of the last Congress Street game, printing an incendiary comment in its "Diamond Flashes" column placed next to the box score of the Orioles' 13-8 win. It claimed Boston's long ballers were home run frauds.

The great number of home runs which are daily made in Boston might induce some to believe that the Boston players are terrific batters and that the visiting clubs also get their eyes upon the ball when playing at the Congress Street Grounds better than they do anywhere else. The home runs, however, except those made to centre and right field, would be easy outs on any other grounds in the country. The left field fence in Boston is so short that any long fly to left field sails over it. The 'drives,' which the Boston papers are fond of speaking of when the ball is hit by a Boston player, are fly balls that would not fall within forty feet of the left field fence at Union Park [Baltimore]. The centre and right field fences are as far away as they are on almost any of the League grounds and the ball is very seldom hit over them.

In interviews decades later about his feat, Bobby Lowe maintained, "All four drives were well over the left field fence and did not vary more than 20 feet either way. The game was played on the Congress Street Grounds and not on the small South End field." What he meant exactly is unclear. Lowe played at the South End Grounds almost his whole career in what he implied was a smaller park and never approached his Congress Street mark of 12 home runs in 21 games.

THEORIES ON THE HOMER FEST

About the only thing different from 1890 to 1894 was the mound-to-plate pitching distance, which increased from 50 feet to 60-plus in 1893. Though Congress Street was a good place to smack a home run in 1890-91, it was a long ball valhalla in its phoenix month of glory in 1894. Forty-three balls, most soaring over that left-field

fence, came off Boston bats, and those were equalled by the opposition, all coming in just 27 games. That's three blasts per game. Round-trippers in the rest of the NL games were hit at a .71 clip per contest. From a different stat angle, 14% of the home runs in 1894 were hit in 3% of the games (those at Congress Street).

In 1884 Anson's Chicago White Stockings poked 142 home runs over their very short fences, led by Ned Williamson's record 27. Chicago's Lakefront Park's right field has been documented at less than 200 feet from the batter, and its left-field barrier was not much farther. Because of the ludicrous number of home runs hit in Chicago, in 1885 new fence distance rules were invoked by the NL, and Chicago moved to its own Congress Street Grounds (also called West Side) for six years. Boston's 1894 Congress Street stint was just time enough to help them to become the only other 19th-century team to eclipse 100 home runs (103). It was not until Babe Ruth's 1920 Yankee season that the century mark was next topped.

Boston's harborside sluggers were: Lowe 12, Duffy 7 (not counting his last swing), McCarthy 6, Long and Bannon 5, Nash 2, Tucker, Ganzel, Ryan, Stivets, Lovett, and Staley one each (43). Stivets whacked six on the road to lead the club. During Congress Street's short lifetime Hardie Richardson belted 16 home runs there, Duffy had 14 (one as a visitor), and Lowe was third with his (12) three-week assault.

These Beaneater hurlers gave up the 43 blasts in 1894: Nichols 15, Lovett 10, Stivets 7, Lampe 5, Staley 4, and Smith 2. Minus the swatting carnage al. cozy Congress Street, the core staff was tapped for 44 other home runs, 26 at the South End and 18 away during the rest of the season. Addison Gumbert pitched for Boston's PL team in 1890 and gave up 14 of his 18 gopher balls at Congress Street. Then as a Pirate hurler, he allowed two more to Tommy McCarthy on June 5, 1894, giving him the Grounds record with 16.

According to city archives, Congress Street's grandstand remained on the tax rolls until 1896. Fire insurance maps of the late 1890s show no buildings on the Grounds area. By 1903 two large commercial structures, at least one designed by Morton Safford (1901), were built by BWC where Boston's most successful ball yard once stood. They remain today.

Guy Waterman, Baseball Fan

by Tom Simon

I just finished reading Chip Brown's *Good Morning Midnight: Life and Death in the Wild* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2003), a book about SABR member Guy Waterman. That's right, one of our fellow SABR members has received the same treatment that Charles Alexander gave Ty Cobb, Robert Creamer gave Babe Ruth, and Henry Thomas gave Walter Johnson. If I were writing for an audience of mountain climbers or environmentalists, many of you would have heard of Guy Waterman. But because he was not as well known in baseball research circles beyond the borders of Vermont, some background is in order.

The son of a Yale physics professor, Guy van Vorst Waterman was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on May 1, 1932. He attended high school and college in Washington, D.C., after his father was appointed head of the National Science Foundation. In the 1950s Guy worked as a Capitol Hill speechwriter for Republican Party leaders such as Prescott Bush and Richard Nixon, moonlighting as a jazz pianist in Washington nightclubs. While working in New York City for General Electric in the 1960s, he discovered climbing on weekend expeditions to the Shawangunk Mountains. In 1973 Guy and his second wife, Laura, moved to East Corinth, Vermont, where they lived for 27 years without electricity or running water, growing their own food and writing five books together about climbing and wilderness issues. Despite a lifetime of accomplishment, Guy achieved perhaps his greatest notoriety for the way he died: on February 6, 2000, after leaving notes for many of his friends, he said good-bye to Laura, drove to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, climbed to the summit of Mount Lafayette, made himself as comfortable as possible, and waited for the killer cold to claim him.

TOM SIMON, founder and former president of Vermont's Gardner-Waterman Chapter of SABR, is a lawyer who lives in Burlington and currently serves as chairman of SABR's Deadball Era Committee.

But I'm not writing to tell you about Guy's exploits as a mountain climber, discuss his life with Laura as a homesteader, or debate the morality of his suicide. If you're interested in those subjects, I recommend that you read *Good Morning Midnight* or Laura Waterman's soon-to-be-published memoirs. What I want to tell you about is Guy Waterman, baseball fan.

I remember the first time I ever laid eyes on him—a strange little man (he stood 5'6" and weighed 135 lbs.) with a white beard and a tam-o'-shanter, standing shyly off to the side at the first-ever meeting of our Vermont SABR chapter. The meeting took place at Fort Ethan Allen, a 19th-century fort where Buffalo Soldiers had trained before heading out west to fight Indians. Saint Michael's College had taken over some of the old barracks, and one of them contained the classrooms and studio of Professor Lance Richbourg, the noted baseball artist and son of the Boston Braves right fielder of the late 1920s.

Here's how Guy described that first meeting years later when he wrote about it in the Chapter's history:

Shortly after noon on a gray December 4, 1993, 18 Vermonters wandered uncertainly up the wide wooden stairs and through a dimly lit corridor to a second-floor working art studio across the street from Vermont's educational television station in Colchester. Most had never been there before, and few of the 18 had ever met each other. Along the walls of the studio, giant oil canvases depicted Enos Slaughter beating Pesky's throw to the plate, the unmistakable swings of Mantle, DiMaggio, and the Babe, and other baseball action scenes. An improvised throng of folding chairs, stools, and overturned boxes formed a circle in the middle of the cavernous room.

The 18 people (and one diffident dog) milled about, exchanged introductions, tentative smiles, fragments of exploratory conversation, and peered

intently at the paintings when they couldn't think of what next to say—a kind of desultory batting practice preceding the main event. They came from scattered towns across the Green Mountain state, from Norwich on the Connecticut River to Burlington on Lake Champlain in the west. Ages spread from a rangy high school student to a white-bearded retiree. Three were women. One was a former major leaguer: Tony Lupien, who took Jimmie Foxx's place on the 1943 Red Sox ("I didn't take Foxx's *place*," he demurred), and later played full seasons for the White Sox and Phillies.

Finally at 1:29 P.M., a youthful attorney from downtown Burlington cleared his throat and welcomed the assembled to the first meeting of Vermont's own chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research. Thus began the odyssey of what has become the Larry Gardner Chapter of SABR, establishing the focal point for Vermont's most knowledgeable and enthusiastic baseball researchers, writers, media men, and just plain fans. What began with 18 strangers on a cold December day now provides a vibrant network of research exchange, good times, and growing friendships.

A couple of days after that meeting I received the first of dozens of letters that I would receive from Guy over the next six years. Through our correspondence, and through seeing him several times a year at Larry Gardner Chapter events, I learned that he'd gotten his start as a serious baseball fan during the summer of 1943, when he attended an amazing 53 of the 77 home games played by the Boston Braves. Living in Cambridge because his father was working at M.I.T. as part of the war effort, Guy and his friends strolled along the Charles River, across the bridge, and down Commonwealth Avenue to Braves Field. "My lasting impression is of big (much bigger when you're only 11) near-empty stands, not much crowd noise, and of course no organ, mascot, exploding scoreboard, or commercial messages," Guy wrote in "A Brave New World: The Summer of 1943" (*Nine*, Vol. 7, No. 1). "Baseball in a quieter, gentler era."

Over the years Waterman followed baseball less closely as he devoted his time to the responsibilities of school, marriage, fatherhood, and earning a living. After 1963 whatever free time he had was spent mountain climbing, which became his all-consuming passion. Only after quitting his nine-to-five job and moving

to his Vermont homestead in 1973 did Waterman again find time for baseball. He began writing up little studies and sending them to friends, finally mustering up the courage in 1975 to submit one entitled "Stable Lineups Are a Major League Rarity" to *Baseball Digest*. "For months I heard nothing," Waterman wrote.

Then one day I picked up the mail at the post office, noticing that a new issue of *Baseball Digest* had arrived, and also an unobtrusive envelope bearing a return address of Century Publishing Company somewhere in the Midwest. I almost threw away this letter unopened, but didn't: it came home with that day's stack of mail.

I put *Baseball Digest* on my reading shelf without looking at the contents, and then began reading through the mail with Laura. When I opened the unobtrusive envelope, there was a check for \$75.00. We puzzled over this awhile. Then a light dawned and I rushed for my new copy of *Baseball Digest*—and there was my piece, published at full length and with marvelous photos added.

My first published baseball writing! I told Laura at the time that I had written for United States Senators and corporation presidents, even three U.S. presidents; but nothing gave me so much pride and satisfaction than to have a piece published in *Baseball Digest*.

For Waterman baseball research became a means of escaping the many demons that haunted him (among other things, he felt responsible for the death of his second son, Johnny, a world-class mountain climber who died in what many believe was a "suicide climb" on Denali in 1981—a huge oversimplification, but sufficient for this article). "These baseball studies have been a constant pleasure of my life for the last 25 years," Guy wrote shortly before taking his own life in 2000. "Baseball has been, for me, a world apart, a sanctuary where I constantly found excitement and interest unalloyed by petty negatives. When the petty negatives began to loom larger in the game, as they have in the last 10 or 20 years, I simply looked the other way, and gradually lost interest in much of current baseball, with its strikes and bickering over millions, its crowd-drawing gimmicks and between-inning distractions, and all the other baubles and bangles of the entertainment business."

In addition to his preference for that "quieter,

gentler era," Waterman had formed other long-lasting predilections during that influential summer of '43. "That's the summer, incidentally, when I developed a lifelong love of pitchers' duels," he wrote in *Nine*. "With the Braves' good pitching and meager batting attack, we saw many low-scoring face-offs." His favorite player was Whitey Wietelmann, the Braves' good-field, no-hit shortstop; decades later he dubbed a remote body of water high up in the White Mountains "Lake Wietelmann," and even wrote the old ballplayer to inform him that he had a pond named after him.

Around 1994—serendipitously coinciding with the founding of our SABR chapter in Vermont — Guy and Laura gave up writing about mountains. They'd already given up climbing; Laura had a problematic knee and their equipment was getting old and needed replacing. "We have had a good quarter century together in the steep places; now for another good quarter century together on the less exacting terrain of our own 27 acres and the limitless horizons of the mind," a 62-year-old Guy wrote to a friend. In that same letter he mentioned that his chief pursuit would be baseball research, to which he would devote greater interest and intensity than ever before.

For a man who counted the number of pints of Ben & Jerry's ice cream he and Laura consumed, the number of gallons of sap produced in the spring by each maple tree in their extensive sugarbush, and each and every blueberry plucked from their garden (a record 43,000 in 1998), Waterman took naturally to the statistical side of baseball, though, as he noted in one of his author's descriptions, he was limited to "computing baseball stats with pencil and grade school math." In 1996 he wrote "Isolated Anemia," which was published the following year in *BRJ* 26. "This study reflected my own status as a little guy who never could put much punch into my at-bats," Guy wrote. "I grew tired of seeing so many measures of offense that rewarded home runs, RBI, and other units associated with big heavy-hitting sluggers. I wanted to come up with some unit of measure that would show a list of all-time leaders dominated by little singles-hitters who drew walks, stole bases, played *my* kind of baseball."

The following year Waterman wrote "The Greater Glory of Doubles and Triples" (see *BRJ* 28). "This article was my attempt to honor the hitters of doubles and triples, so little acclaimed in comparison with the extravagant adulation lavished on McGwire and Sosa," he wrote three years later. "When the whole country

rhapsodized over the explosion of home runs in the 1998 and 1999 seasons, it underlined for me how much my taste in baseball diverged from most people's. I can understand the sudden surge of electricity when a batter connects for a long homer. But for my taste,



Guy Waterman (on ladder) and the author (in window) constructing a camp at Waterman's homestead in East Corinth, Vermont.

such an event generates nowhere near the sustained excitement of a double or triple, especially with men on base and uncertain outcomes as the play unfolds.”

When he required more than what he could find in his well-worn copy of *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, the nearby Dartmouth College library, or his own extensive collection of baseball books (oral histories were his favorite), Guy went to Cooperstown to perform research at the National Baseball Library. To avoid the summer crowds he usually went during the “shoulder seasons,” invariably staying in the same lean-to at Glimmerglass State Park despite nighttime temperatures that occasionally dipped below freezing. Sometimes Guy’s stay in Cooperstown coincided with a Larry Gardner Chapter excursion. On one such occasion I asked one of our members, Francis Joseph O’Boyle, what he was planning to research. “Oh, nothing in particular,” he said. “I just want to follow Guy around and watch how he goes about doing things.”

Despite an age difference of more than three decades between us, Guy and Laura Waterman became two of my and my wife’s closest friends. Carolyn and I made annual visits to the Watermans’ homestead during sugaring season, helping collect the buckets of sap that they boiled down to make maple syrup. As we traversed from tree to tree, Guy and I played a game that he’d played by himself during his many solo adventures in the White Mountains. The goal was to form as strong a lineup as possible, using only non-Hall of Famers, by naming players whose last names started with successive letters of the alphabet – but the trick was that they had to bat in that spot in the order and fill out all nine positions. “Ashburn, center field,” Guy would say (before the great Phillies leadoff man was inducted into the Hall in 1995). “Baerga, second base,” I would respond, and so on until we’d filled out our lineup. Then I’d say, “Bescher, left field,” beginning the process all over, but starting with B.

Naturally Guy liked the “inside baseball” approach of the Deadball Era, which was something that we had in common, so I could hardly wait to share with him a dice baseball game I’d invented to replay the 1912 American League season. Perhaps because he’d spent his early years in Washington, or because they were a team built on pitching and defense, or because he just favored teams with stable lineups, Guy loved the 1912 Washington Senators. His favorite of all the articles he’d written was “The Upstart Senators of 1912-1915: Baseball’s Original Cinderellas” (*TNP* 13), and he’d

even tinkered with the idea of writing an entire book on the rise and fall of that team. Above his desk Guy hung a postcard of the cover of Henry Thomas’s *Walter Johnson: Baseball’s Big Train*, along with a stalk of wheat I’d picked from Johnson’s birthplace when I’d visited Kansas with Thomas after the 1996 SABR convention.

In January 1999, with our wives away on a trip to Australia together, I spent a long weekend with Guy. We started our dice baseball activities shortly after sunrise. To get us in the mood, Guy played ragtime on the 1912 Steinway piano that took up an inordinate amount of space in his small cabin. Each game started with a hurried version of the national anthem, and seventh-inning stretches were filled with a rousing rendition of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.” When we exchanged the dice after each half-inning, I was amazed at the roughness of Guy’s calloused hands, especially in comparison to my own. He was out in the woods swinging an ax all day, while I was sitting in my law office, pushing papers.

During a break in the action, Guy took me out to the sugarbush to show me the sugar maples he’d named after each of the 1912-15 Senators. “Which one is Gandil?” I asked. With thoughts of the Black Sox scandal firmly in place, I relieved myself on the corrupt ballplayer’s namesake tree. As we made our way back to the cabin, Guy told me about a baseball simulation that he’d invented. He’d never told anyone about it, not even Laura, and I could tell by his hesitation that he felt uneasy even letting me in on the secret. Guy told me that for more than a decade he’d had a game going on in his head for almost all of his waking hours; intermittently he’d stop to update the box score on one of the many index cards he carried in his breast pocket. The reason he’d never told Laura about the game, he said, was that he didn’t want her to think that she didn’t have his undivided attention. Using all-decade teams, starting in the 1880s, Guy had played 154-game schedules for each major league team, one season for each decade; he was currently up to the 1930s. “What are you going to do when you work your way up to the present?” I asked. “Oh, I’ll never live that long,” he said.

Guy had touched on the subject of his own mortality one afternoon the previous fall. We were walking in the woods, just the two of us, playing the alphabetical lineup game, when he said, “Don’t be surprised someday if you hear that I’ve walked off into the woods, never

to return." I knew exactly what he was talking about, but I figured that day was far off into the future. What I didn't know is that six years earlier, on the day after his 60th birthday, Guy had written:

Before sixty, to end one's life may be viewed as destructive or a failure to face and solve problems. But after sixty, may a decision to conclude life simply be a sensible option to take? The trick is to get thoroughly in mind that life holds no further interest, that physical ailments are beginning to accumulate to the point of being a significant detriment to enjoying life; and that the pain of unavoidable conflicts and suppressed hostilities will persist from now on, so that there is less pain to leaving life than holding on to it. Oddly, the chief attraction to remaining on Earth for me now is curiosity to do more baseball research and writing, and to continue with the elaborate fantasy baseball that has occupied my leisure hours for so many years now. Otherwise, I'm prepared to accept sixty years as a sufficient lifetime.

Fortunately, I thought to ask Guy for an explanation of how his "elaborate fantasy baseball" worked on that day in January 1999 when he first told me about it. Instead of using dice to generate random numbers and trigger the action, Guy's game used letters from lines in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. (With his eyes closed Guy could recite the first eight books of the epic poem—more than six hours of memorized poetry!) He gave me a specific example. Let's say the batter is Goose Goslin, he said, and we're up to the line: *Worse; of worse deeds, worse sufferings must ensue.*

The line ends in the letter "e," which is a ground ball to the right side, Guy explained, because Goslin is a left-handed hitter. Next you had to count back three letters to the letter "n" to see if the second baseman fields the ball; in this case a fielder with good range, like Charlie Gehringer, would get to it, but a lesser second baseman would let the ball go into right field for a base hit. Then you had to count back three more letters to "s" to see if Gehringer throws Goslin out at first base, or, if the ball had gone into right field, to determine how far any base runners would advance. Guy went on to give several more examples to demonstrate how he'd incorporated all the myriad facets of baseball.

"You've got to be kidding me!" I exclaimed. He assured me he wasn't, and when we got back to the

cabin he removed a group of baseball books from a shelf to reveal his hidden stash of thousands of index cards, each containing a handwritten box score on both front and back. Then from behind some towels he pulled out a folder of statistics covering the entire history of baseball from the 1880s to the 1930s. Someday, I thought, I've got to sit down with Guy and write down exactly how this game is played.

That day never came.

During the winter of 1999-2000 I was putting the finishing touches on *Green Mountain Boys of Summer: Vermonters in the Major Leagues, 1882-1993*, a Larry Gardner Chapter project to which Guy and more than 20 other SABR members contributed. I had no idea at the time that Guy had already decided that he was going to end his life that winter, and that toward the end the only thing preventing him from doing so was his promise to me to prepare an index for the book.

I saw Guy Waterman for the last time on January 22, 2000. Whenever we parted company, Guy customarily pulled out one of the index cards from his breast pocket and announced when we'd next be getting together, but on this day he said nothing. Guy finished the index on February 5. The next day he set out for Mount Lafayette.

I learned of Guy's death on February 12, just in time to dedicate *Green Mountain Boys of Summer* to his memory. A service took place at the East Corinth Congregational Church on February 17, and Laura asked me to give a reading. I selected an excerpt from a Bart Giamatti's essay, "The Green Fields of the Mind":

"It breaks your heart. It is designed to break your heart. The game begins in the spring, when everything else begins again, and it blossoms in the summer, filling the afternoons and evenings, and then as soon as the chill rains come, it stops and leaves you to face the fall alone. You count on it, rely on it to buffer the passage of time, to keep the memory of sunshine and high skies alive, and then just when the days are all twilight, when you need it most, it stops. Today, a Sunday of rain and broken branches and leaf-clogged drains and slick streets, it stopped, and summer was gone."

After the funeral Laura gave me a binder containing all of Guy's articles on baseball. Tucked in the inside pocket was a note from Guy: "Thanks for founding the Larry Gardner Chapter. It meant a lot to me."

Danny McDevitt: Ebbets Field Finale

by Bob Mayer

In the parlance of 1950s baseball, he was a smallish southpaw. But in Danny McDevitt's own words, he was "just a dumb left hander."

McDevitt, the former Dodger, now 71, was never one to gild a lily. Nor does he put a spin on things these days. Asked what it meant to him to pitch the last game ever played at historic Ebbets Field, he answered simply. "When you're twenty-four, that stuff doesn't mean much."

Early on, McDevitt was a hard-throwing strikeout pitcher with poor control. In 1952, with Greenwood of the Cotton States League, he fanned 246 in 199 innings but, typically, led the league with 171 walks.

A number of mediocre seasons later, along with a stretch in the Army, Danny landed at Triple-A St. Paul in 1957. He recorded fewer strikeouts and fewer walks and seemed to find a groove. And the Dodgers' rotation was hit with a rash of sore arms.

Max Macon, Danny's manager, told him to pack for Brooklyn. McDevitt would join the storied Boys of Summer. Was he awed? Intimidated? "I remember getting there the first day, and here would be Pee Wee Reese and Duke Snider and all these guys I'd been growing up with on the radio," he said. "But that wears off pretty quickly. I was apprehensive, but I don't recall ever being scared." Besides, he added, 'The Boys of Summer' were really 'The Grandfathers of Summer' by then."

McDevitt was reminded that Koufax was also with the Dodgers when he arrived. "Yes, Sandy was there," he said, "but he hadn't become Koufax yet." He debuted in Cincinnati on June 17 and beat the Reds, 7-2, striking out 11. "I won my first game," he said, "but also got my first sore arm because we had some rain delays and I pulled something and still kept on pitching. And I pitched the rest of my career with a sore arm."

BOB MAYER writes about baseball's Golden Age . . . when ballplayers left their gloves on the field and their jewelry in the clubhouse.

McDevitt kept it to himself. He knew he'd been called up because of sore arms and didn't want to go back. He started out 6-1. "I guess they decided 'this kid's for real,'" he said, "so Eddie Roebuck and Don Bessent took me out to a place in Cincinnati . . . and the rest was history" (Danny explained later about his "history").

McDevitt stalled after his sixth win, losing his next three decisions. Then came September 24 and it was his turn to pitch. Not Drysdale's, or Newcombe's, and neither Podres nor Craig nor the ineffective Koufax got the call.

In the final game at Ebbets Field, McDevitt took the ball from manager Walter Alston, and then he shut down the Pirates on five hits to win, 2-0. The Great Clemente got one of those hits, as did Mazeroski and Dick Groat. The box score reveals the sad fact that only 6,702 people showed up.

It also shows Clemente playing center field, Gil Hodges playing most of the game at third base before moving to first, and Pee Wee as a defensive replacement for him at third. Shortstop Don Zimmer had two of the five Brooklyn hits. Alston had Sandy Koufax and Sal Maglie warm up in the bullpen, but they were never needed as McDevitt (7-1) struck out nine.

McDevitt doesn't recall any hoopla about the impending wrecking ball. "I don't remember anyone making a big deal after the game," he said. "I was making \$7,500, the minimum, and all I was trying to do was leave a good taste in their mouth for next year."

About the move to the West Coast, McDevitt said the veteran ballplayers occasionally talked about it. "But," he added, "I never thought it was gonna be, you know, how could you work your butt off to get to Brooklyn, and end up somewhere else."

The box score also reveals a curiosity: five umpires. Augie Donatelli, Vic Delmore, Vinnie Smith, Jocko Conlan and Ed Sudol. Sudol's debut paralleled McDevitt's, and like Danny, the umpire spent the early

spring of '57 in the minors. Larry R. Gerlach's book, *The Men in Blue: Conversations With Umpires*, tells the story of the "The Fifth Umpire." When crew chief Dusty Boggess sustained a heart attack in late June, Sudol was called up from the International League to replace him for the Dodgers-Cubs series at Wrigley Field. In the second game of a Sunday doubleheader, Sudol was behind the plate. Brooklyn's pitcher was Danny McDevitt.

Sudol told Gerlach that the only problem he had that day occurred when McDevitt, up by one run with runners on base, tried to quick-pitch one of the Cubs. Sudol called a balk, allowing the tying run to score. McDevitt and the Dodgers eventually got the win.

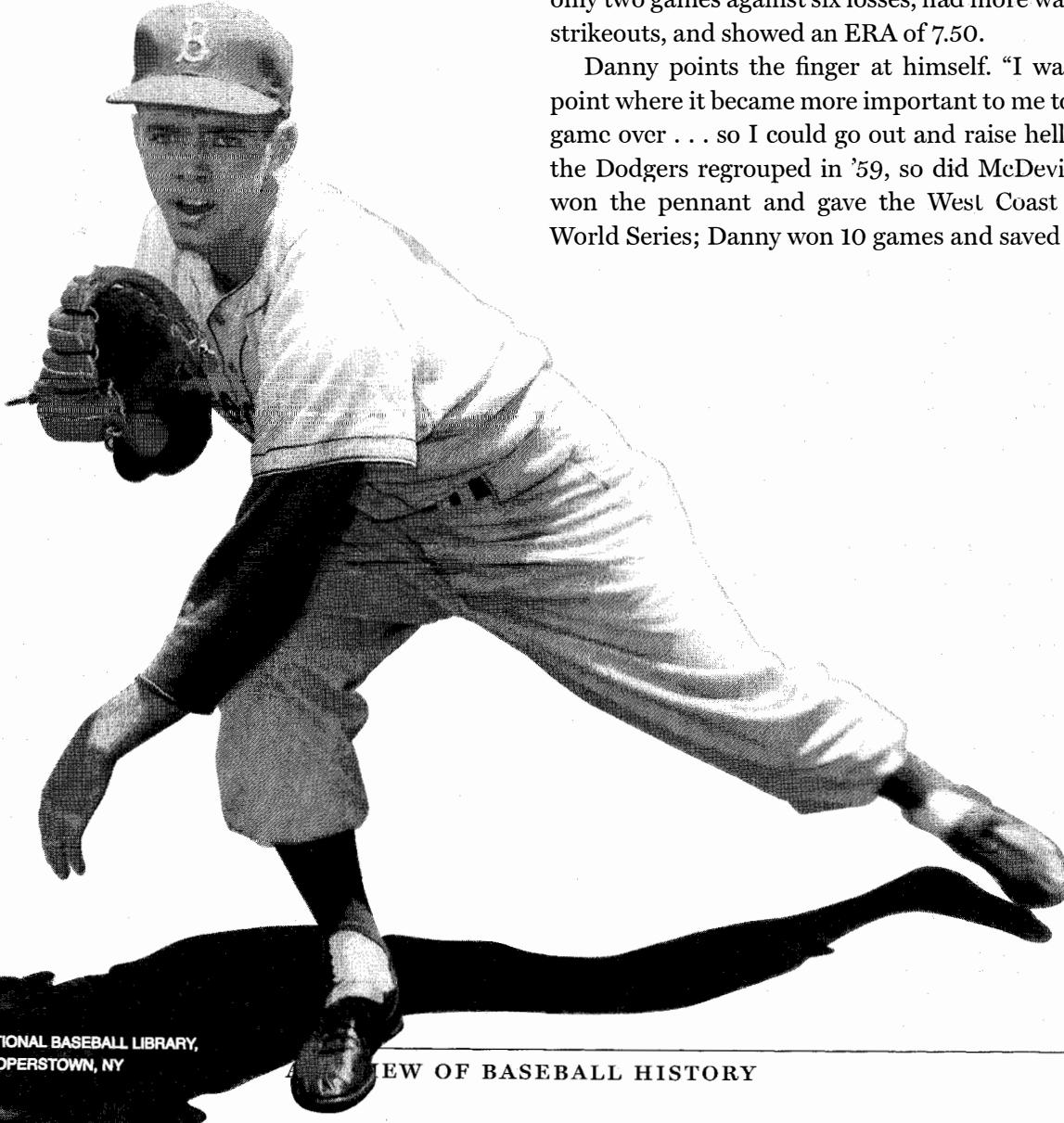
The league liked Sudol's work, and when Boggess returned in late August, Ed stayed on to work the foul lines. He became known as the "Fifth Umpire" and would become part of the legacy that was Ebbets Field.

In 1958, Brooklyn became Los Angeles, and McDevitt went west with the Dodgers. He had seven wins in the bank, he had exceptional stuff and the future looked bright. But he was a young man whose thoughts turned more to parties than the pitching mound.

Back in Brooklyn, the McDevitts had rented a house in Bay Ridge, an insular, family-friendly neighborhood that attracted most of his Dodger teammates. But Los Angeles was a celebrity town, and the Hollywood types descended on the newly arrived ball club.

"The first year out there," he recalled, "there were a lot of distractions because there would be Danny Kaye or Bing Crosby or Lauren Bacall in the clubhouse." Still, the agenda remained baseball, and while the ball club tumbled to a seventh-place finish, McDevitt fell even further. He and Roger Craig both suffered sore arms and began the year at St. Paul. Danny won nine games for the Saints before returning to the Dodgers, but won only two games against six losses, had more walks than strikeouts, and showed an ERA of 7.50.

Danny points the finger at himself. "I was at the point where it became more important to me to get the game over . . . so I could go out and raise hell." When the Dodgers regrouped in '59, so did McDevitt. They won the pennant and gave the West Coast its first World Series; Danny won 10 games and saved another



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four. His earned run average shrank to 3.97, and his strikeouts more than doubled the number he walked. He started 22 games and relieved in 17 more.

"I liked relieving," he said. "I think I understand [John] Smoltz when he talks about being 'up' for something every night." He also liked pitching against lefties. "You know," he said, "I didn't think a lefty should ever hit me—and they rarely did." But Alston thought otherwise, and despite McDevitt's impressive season, he never got called in against the White Sox in the World Series.

"Alston never liked my lifestyle," he said. "He knew I liked to drink and he was a very religious man. And we had Larry Sherry." McDevitt's final appearance that year came in the last week of the season in San Francisco. "They called me in to face Willie McCovey with the bases loaded. I struck him out."

He'd never win another game for the Dodgers. In 1960, pitching mainly out of the bullpen, McDevitt appeared in only 24 games, losing four. He had more walks than strikeouts, and Danny continued to live the fast life.

The final act played out in three cities in two years. He was with the Yankees, Twins, and Kansas City A's, winning a total of two games. "I was pretty well washed up by then. Too much partying," he said. In Minnesota, he roomed with Billy Martin. "They put two bad guys together," he said. "They figured 'don't spoil two rooms, spoil one.'"

McDevitt enjoys talking about a few of the greats he shared a ball field with. On playing with Pee Wee Reese: "He was the ball club's leader, no question about that." About Roy Campanella, he said "I was always surprised how good he was because he looked like a fat man, but he moved around like a small man. He would call me 'Little Lefty' and Koufax 'Big Lefty.' That was before he became Sandy Koufax."

On facing Willie Mays: "Willie went nine for nine against me, but I don't think any of them were home runs." (Note on pitchers' selective memory: Mays hit two. Only Frank Robinson, with three, hit more off McDevitt.)

On pitching to Stan Musial: "I walked him the first time I saw him in '57, and I picked him off first base. The next time up he got on again, and when I stretched and looked over at him, he took one step off the base and just started laughing. But I never had any problem getting him out."

On pitching with Koufax: "In 1959, the year we won the pennant, Sandy and I pitched a doubleheader against Milwaukee. He struck out 16 in the first game [actually, he struck out seven] then I pitched a two-hit shutout in the second game. [Hank Aaron got the only hits] We became good friends and when I got my pilot's license, Sandy would go up with me. One afternoon during spring training in 1960, we rented a plane and I buzzed Holman Stadium. Back at the base, they told me Buzzy Bavasi was looking for me. I found him and he said, 'I've got no problem with you flying planes, but don't ever take Koufax up with you again.' I guess they knew what they had with him."

After his last pitch, McDevitt stayed in baseball because "that was all I knew." He got into umpiring in the Florida State League, where he was teamed with Ron Luciano.

The next year he went up to the International League. "They talked about taking me to the big leagues my third year," he said. "But I realized that at that level all the umpires had 'cut stomachs'—ulcers—from the stress, and I didn't want to wake up every day with that. So I went home to Greenwood."

One day he ran into Vinegar Bend Mizell, the former pitcher and ex-congressman who was then the assistant secretary of Commerce. McDevitt remembers the late Mizell. "He got me into government work, the nicest guy you'd ever want to meet." Danny eventually directed antipoverty programs in Mississippi and Alabama before settling in Conyers, Georgia.

He doesn't watch many ball games, but he admits to enjoying Greg Maddux. "I think I threw some like he does. But, of course, not nearly as well." He speaks in a soft, semi-Southern accent. "I wasted a pretty good career with too much nightlife. And that was basically my problem."

The Black Press and the Collapse of the Negro League in 1930

by David Hopkins

Black America at the end of the 1920s was a very different place than it had been just a few years earlier. The Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban centers of the North, which had initially been motivated mainly by employment opportunities in the wake of conscription of primarily white young men for World War I, had become more and more a quest for relief from the relentless racism of the South of the time. Even though the North was hardly a paradise in terms of race relations, it was widely viewed as having more opportunities for African Americans than the South, and not just economically.

Although the established black communities of Northern cities were initially alarmed by the arrival of rural Southerners, fearing that lack of education, country manners and superstitions, and other cultural differences would reinforce white prejudices and make their own positions weaker, the arrival of the Southern African Americans created most of what we now know as Black American Culture. Certainly the Great Migration did result in increased racial tensions in the North, but it also created greater interest on the part of mainstream white America in the minority culture that grew from it.¹

The Northern black press was put in a difficult position. As representatives of the established, more or less bourgeois black communities, they had as part of their mission the education and training of the new arrivals in "correct" Northern manners. Part of this mission was their basic alignment with conservative African American leaders like Booker T. Washington, who urged patience and effort as the method best suited for gaining eventual recognition in mainstream society. As such, the black press was full of stories of "successful" assimilation by African Americans, as well

as emphasis on groups, both social and educational, that derived their patterns of organization and affiliation from similar white groups. This program of "uplift" obviously separated the black newspapers, in many ways, from the real concerns of their readers, many of whom are likely to have found more appeal in "New Negro" movements that more radically demanded immediate equal treatment (or even more radically, economic separation from the mainstream). The black press at that time continually struggled to balance the needs of honest reporting with the need to support African American advancement into mainstream American society.²

As America in the 1920s began to drift toward the series of economic calamities that became the Great Depression, black America suffered disproportionately. Declines in agricultural incomes increased pressure on small farmers to move to the cities. Decline in industrial investment meant a lack of new job openings to absorb those workers. Since much of the urban black workforce was unskilled, they were likely to be the first fired due to any cuts in production. Clearly, the personal effects of the Great Depression were felt in African American homes before the actual events of 1929 and 1930 made them more widespread.³

The decline of individual prospects for African Americans is reflected in the fate of Negro League baseball in the late 1920s. The Negro National League, founded in 1920, had gradually declined to the point that in 1927, only its Detroit, Kansas City, and St. Louis franchises seemed viable.⁴ In June 1928, the Eastern Colored League's five-and-a-half-year existence ended in collapse, with several franchises having failed and with declines in attendance for all teams.

From the ashes of the Eastern Colored League, the American Negro Baseball League was formed in January 1929, made up of the surviving ECL teams with the addition of the popular Homestead Grays.

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While this league's first year was more successful overall than the final year of the ECL in that most teams played most or all of their scheduled games, attendance did not significantly recover. That same year the Negro National League was forced to shrink from eight to six teams. The number of games played by each team varied greatly, so much so that the meaning and purpose of league play was largely lost.

The collapse of the American Negro League in February 1930 confirmed the weakness of organized play. The Negro National League would not make it through the 1931 season before it, too, gave up the ghost. Attempts to form minor leagues, the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League and the Kentucky-Tennessee League, failed. While some of the popular barnstorming teams continued to draw crowds and do good business, organized baseball was at rock bottom. Apart from barnstorming, other means taken for the survival of professional baseball included winter ball in Cuba and California and tours of the Far East.

There may have been enough economically viable teams to form a truly national league, but differences and feuding between the Negro National League teams and their Eastern counterparts, as well as the difficulties and costs of travel and accommodations, made this solution impracticable. With all of this bad news for baseball, then, how was the disastrous 1930 baseball year reported in the sports pages of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, America's largest-circulation African American newspaper?

The *Courier* was published weekly and carried throughout the country by railroad workers, mainly Pullman porters who supplemented their income by distributing the paper. As a weekly, the content is more like what we are likely to associate with news magazines rather than newspapers—timely coverage of events was simply impossible. The role of the *Courier*, therefore, was more to comment on the news, and to provide coverage of news of interest to African Americans that was ignored by the mainstream press. Editorial policy was always unequivocally in favor of the complete integration of African Americans into mainstream American society, economy, and politics. Support for African American endeavor was also unequivocal (sometimes ironic, as for example, its support for the "successful" Hollywood career of Stepin Fetchit). It was extremely difficult for *Courier* reporters to deal seriously with failure in the black community, so the tension between the hoped-for dignity and

success and the disappointing reality of 1930s Negro League baseball informs all of the reporting.

The year begins with pessimistic reports about the ANL's impending collapse. On February 1, Jim (Andy) Taylor, manager of the Memphis Red Sox (Negro National League team), delineated the difficulties facing the teams in an article titled, "Future of League Baseball Doubtful, Say Cooperation, Fair Play and Publicity Needed." Emphasizing the business of baseball, Taylor argued that lack of funds was creating a situation where weaker teams were forced to play too many away games, creating an unbalanced schedule. Looking at the standings for the 1929 season, his own club played only 63 league games, while the more popular St. Louis Stars played 92. Lack of unified schedules meant that published standings had little meaning, which discouraged fans. The main problem he saw though, was that the newspapers did a poor job of covering the season. Game results, "correct standing, batting and fielding averages" were seldom reported, even though the black newspapers "are widely read by our fans." Unfortunately, the *Courier* continued to have this problem all season.

Rollo Wilson, the dean of African American sports columnists, in his Sports Shots column of March 1 ("Another Baseball League") reported the collapse of the American Negro League. In keeping with the paper's central philosophy, Wilson emphasized the need for continuity and gradual development. "Thousands of dollars can be made out of baseball if the men can be uncovered who will take a sporting chance." If the teams and the leagues were organized as businesses, there was more than enough talent to fill them, but if the organization didn't appear, young players wouldn't be inclined to pursue baseball and many current players would be forced "to show their skill in lines other than baseball and will be lost to the game forever." He finished by reporting that the surviving teams would be able to pick up all-star-caliber players from the collapsed teams, ensuring that baseball will still be worth watching.

William G. Nunn's "Sport Talks" column of March 22 picks up this theme when discussing the 1930 edition of the Homestead Grays. "This year, with the disbanding of the league, [manager Cum] Posey found it possible to get plenty of good material. He has refused to pay these real fancy salaries, as have other managers. No use, he contends, to keep high-salaried men, when you can get others to take their places at

reduced prices." With four future Hall of Famers, the Grays continued to be a strong team, and with their strength, they were able to be a viable business concern by barnstorming, with no league support.

Responding to all of the criticism about the collapse of the Eastern league, the March 29 *Courier* reported NNL commissioner W. C. Hueston's impassioned defense of his league, particularly its financial soundness ("Our Baseball Players Rank as High as Any Others"). He pointed to success by Negro League teams in games against "all star" squads of major league players. He also complains about poor attendance, but emphasized that "There is only one thing left for me to do and that is to say, 'Play Ball.' This I will do on the 26th day of April 1930."

Once play began, the *Courier*'s coverage was spotty at best. Some weeks there were several box scores from around the country; some weeks there were none. With no league in the East, there were no standings to report, but even the NNL standings were often not reported.

At the end of April, the collapse of the formerly stable Hilldale Club of Philadelphia was reported, only to be followed by reports of Biz Mackey's return to Hilldale two weeks later. Nowhere was the discrepancy explained.⁵ (Much later in the summer was a report on August 9 that Hilldale had played its first away game of the season!)

The *Courier*, being a Pittsburgh-based newspaper, of course continued to support the success of the Homestead Grays, with reports even of games against semi-pro teams. As of June 7, their record, as reported faithfully by Cum Posey, was 46-3-1. The cheerleading for the star team couldn't make up for the overall lack of meaningful baseball news, and Rollo Wilson said as much on June 21. "Teams suffer at the gate from the lack of strong opponents. Your true baseball bug never wants to see a lop-sided game. He wants his favorite to win, but he craves stirring opposition along the nine-inning route." Clearly 46-3-1 against weak teams was neither interesting nor impressive for a team with Homestead's talent.

The next week there was news that New York's Lincoln Giants were now 42-7. Obviously, all Eastern fans wanted to see a showdown between them and the Homestead Grays, now reported by Posey to be 60-5-1. (Even with possible discrepancy in the dates of the reports, it is clear that the Grays were playing about two games a day!) However, Posey writes that

the Grays couldn't receive a large enough guarantee from promoters in the East and would thus not play in New York or Baltimore, instead turning their attention to the Midwest. By this time the Grays had followed the lead of the Kansas City Monarchs and begun night play under lights. As several columnists reported poor attendance at games on any day other than Sunday, this was seen as a chance to change the teams' fortunes.

On July 5, the first black game utilizing Yankee Stadium was reportedly arranged as a benefit by the Sleeping Car Porters Union, featuring Lincoln and Baltimore. Rollo Wilson said he hoped that Lincoln would be able to use Yankee stadium regularly in the future. The next week, the game was reported to have been a great success, with 15,000-18,000 in attendance. Much later in the fall, though, when Lincoln was denied use of Yankee Stadium, it became clear that there was much bad behavior among the fans at the game, particularly drinking and fighting, which made the Yankees organization disinclined to offer the stadium again. Once again, the need to be supportive of the effort made Wilson and his colleagues unable to discuss the unfortunate reality of the result. In other places they didn't hesitate to mention the manners of the fans, but with a matter of real pride on the line, the use of Yankee Stadium, they couldn't discuss it at this time. (On the other hand, perhaps it wasn't really a problem and the Yankees management was merely seizing a minor incident and using it as an excuse for something they wanted to avoid.)

On the 26th, in his "Ches Sez" column, Chester L. Washington, sports editor of the *Courier*, led the cheers for night baseball. Good attendance and "the long, sizzling hits, the brilliant, difficult catches, the bullet-like, accurate throws and the brainy brand of baseball set lots of bugs' tongues a-wagging" about a possible showdown series between the Grays and Forbes Field's "other" team, the Pittsburgh Pirates. He concluded that the Monarchs, the Grays, and possibly the Lincoln Giants represented the very best in baseball.

Praise for the high quality of the above three teams continued throughout August, but on the 23rd, there was troubling news that President Hueston, commissioner of the NNL, had moved to Washington to take up an appointment to a judgeship. While worried that it might signal trouble in the NNL, Rollo Wilson took the optimist's position that from Washington, Hueston would be closer to the eastern teams and maybe able to work out a truly national

league for the future. (Of course, nothing like that occurred.) Indeed, it was reported on September 13 that the NNL was looking for a new commissioner.

As the season wound down, the absolute confusion in black baseball was typified by the *Courier* of September 20. News reports of a victory by the St. Louis Stars over the Detroit Stars in the opening game of the "Negro world series" appeared on the same page as a report in Wilson's column about a series between the Lincoln Giants and the Homestead Grays for "sundown baseball honors. This is the world's championship tussle of Negro baseball and hardly anyone can deny it."

He went on, "I have no interest in the matter other than hoping that the fans will attend in numbers befitting the importance of the series; that there will be no undue wrangling and that the players and managers will conduct themselves as gentlemen at all times." This emphasis may seem strange since he had consistently supported and praised sportsmanship, but apparently this was becoming harder and harder for Wilson to continue.

"The thing I want most of all is for the spirit of sportsmanship to be glorified by these young athletes. They are to participate in a baseball 'classic' and I want them to be worthy representatives of their group during every minute of every game. If everyone plays fair the better team will win, the fans will be satisfied and there will be no nasty aftermath of criticism from the jackals who glory in dishing the dirt." This dirt, however, did not appear in any direct way in the pages of the *Courier*, where optimism and support were the rule and criticism the exception. The intensity of this plea underscored the seriousness of the problems only hinted at in other columns and reports, that the season was characterized as much by fighting and complaining (on and off the field) as by the play of future Hall of Famers.

When the series finished, with Homestead the winners, Wilson continued the pessimistic tone in his column of October 10. "As usual, when Negro teams meet in combat there is an alibi for every defeat. To hear both sides tell it, the umps stole all of the games." Wilson himself placed the blame for defeats on "heavy bats, dumb judgement, and dumb base running," quite a contrast with the earlier praise of "brainy" baseball often heard in the same pages. He also noted, "Reports reached me that there was dissension and constant wrangling on the [Lincoln] bench." The series involved

several problems in promotion, and many people who helped to bring it about were not apparently paid for their work. Although Wilson wasn't clear on his role in the promotion of the series, he said that he lost money, time and "so-called friends" over it. The shocking ending to his report:

"As far as your fat columnist is concerned, if the Grays and the Lincoln Giants never play again, that will be soon enough for him."

From our perspective, it is difficult to be too critical of anyone involved in Negro League (and independent) baseball in 1930. The social and economic problems of America were so huge as to be almost incomprehensible to us. They were merely trying to make a living in a difficult way at a difficult time. The reporting of that year of baseball also shows deep conflicts in the African American media over its twin missions of uplift, raising the level of African Americans, and support, insisting on respect for what had already been achieved.

That winter the Cuban Winter League would fail and the Negro National League itself would go on to collapse in the middle of its 1931 season, bringing to an end the first era of baseball organized by and for African Americans. It is truly amazing that from these ashes a much more successful league was born, and such great players had more chances to show their abilities.

Notes

1. Page Smith. *Redeeming the Time, A People's History of the 1920s and the New Deal* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 212.
2. Donn Rogosin. *Invisible Men* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 87-89
3. Neil Lanctot. *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing: The Hilldale Club* (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 1994), 142.
4. Lanctot, 152.
5. See *Fair Dealing* for details.

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The Philadelphia Negro World Championship Series of 1903-04

by Bob Bailey

Philadelphia has been a two-team baseball town for almost 100 baseball seasons, not all of them consecutive. In 63 of those seasons a World Series was contested. In the 19th century, when the Athletics of the American Association shared the city with the Phillies of the National League, there was never a one-city World Series hosted in Philadelphia. In the 20th century, when the modern-day Phillies and A's vied for the hearts of the local fans, it is painfully imbedded in their memories that a subway series was never held on the banks of the Delaware River.

But before Connie Mack's A's became the gold standard of Philadelphia baseball there was another brief golden age of Philadelphia dominance in a corner of the baseball world that did include a pair of inter-city championship series. In 1903 and 1904 two Philadelphia teams, the Philadelphia Giants and the Cuban X-Giants, squared off for the "Colored Baseball Championship."

There were no Negro Leagues at the turn of the century, and all teams operated as independent entities. Team management would arrange games with whoever would play and wherever a payday could be reasonably expected. Black teams played each other and such white teams as they could schedule. But without a league structure there were no hard-and-fast rules about naming a champion. As the season came to a close there would be newspaper speculation and team bragging before a team or two would emerge as the class of the season. These teams would then try to schedule a game or a series to settle matters. In general, from the late 1890s through the 1910s it was not unusual to have regional champions named in the two areas where the better black teams played. In the East teams from the New York-Philadelphia areas generally

dominated, and in the West a Chicago representative was often tapped as the best. Occasionally the East would meet the West, but it was often difficult to overcome financial obstacles and personal antipathies between some of the teams.

In the early 1900s one of those dominant teams was the Cuban X-Giants. The X-Giants had a lengthy history prior to landing in Philadelphia. Their story begins with the founding of the Cuban Giants, the first salaried black team in the country. Sol White's *History of Colored Base Ball* (published in 1907) states that Frank P. Thompson organized the team from the staff of the Argyle Hotel in Babylon, NY, in 1885. Another version published in 1887 in the *New York Age* stated that Thompson formed the team in 1885 as the Keystone Athletics of Philadelphia. This squad was engaged to play at the Argyle Hotel and late in the summer merged with two other black teams to create the Cuban Giants. By 1897, after establishing themselves as the class of the black ball teams, the Giants called Philadelphia home and continued to be a strong contender among black teams. A group of players split from the Cuban Giants to form the Cuban X-Giants in 1897 and quickly became a powerful contender in the battle for the championship.

A brief note on team names and player movement might be in order. Many black teams included the term "Giants" in their name. Whether this stemmed from the adoption of that nickname by the New York National League team of the era or in recognition of the Cuban Giants is lost in the haze of unrecorded or poorly recorded history. But the annals of black baseball are replete with Royal Giants, American Giants, Elite Giants and here, X-Giants and Philadelphia Giants. It is easy to get lost in this land of the giants. This problem is compounded when players moved from one Giant team to another or when an older Giant parent spawned a new team and that team incorporated the

BOB BAILEY was a Little League, Babe Ruth League and sandlot player of marginal abilities. Today he lives with his family and his exaggerated memories in Newtown, PA.

term into their name. As seen above the Cuban Giants begat the Cuban X-Giants. Later the Cuban X-Giants would beget the Philadelphia Giants.

While kings of the Philadelphia hill, the X-Giants had some formidable competition from the newly formed Philadelphia Giants in 1902. Organized by black ball veteran Sol White and *Philadelphia Evening Item* sportswriter Walter "Slick" Schlichter as a co-op team, they switched to salaried players in 1903. The two teams squabbled over everything for two seasons and neither team faced the other, although each was touted by observers as the top black team in the country. As the 1903 campaign was ending, the teams, probably realizing the potential gate for a series of games, arranged a series for the "colored championship of the world." This was originally scheduled as a 10-game event, but only six games were played. The championship series moved around the map, as many similar series did. The black community of Philadelphia (and elsewhere) did not have the disposable income to support a string of games in their city, so the teams scheduled to open in their home city and then hit the road for Brooklyn; Trenton and Camden, New Jersey; Wilmington, Delaware; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Three veterans were the heart of the Philadelphia Giants order. Manager White, the team's shortstop, was in his 17th professional season, which began with the Pittsburgh Keystones in 1887. Second baseman Frank Grant, a top-notch fielder and solid hitter, was one of the star players in black baseball for many years. At first base was the speedy Bill Monroe, who came to the Philadelphia Giants with White from the X-Giants in 1902. One of the top hitters among black players in the first decade of the century, he was later part of the championship Chicago American Giants teams from 1911 to 1914. The Philadelphia Giants were a veteran team with only three players having fewer than eight seasons of professional experience.

The Cuban X-Giants, while smarting from the player defections to the Philadelphia Giants in 1902, were also a veteran squad except at the pitching slot. The ace was the redoubtable Andrew "Rube" Foster, who dominated the black game for many seasons with a devastating screwball to go with a good fastball and a cunning approach to the game. In his second professional season, Rube was recruited off the roster of Frank Leland's Chicago Unions. Such records as exist suggest he won more than 50 games in each

of his first two seasons. The other pitcher was lefty Dan McClellan. A rookie in 1903, he tossed a perfect game against York of the Tri-State League. He was considered a notch below Foster as a pitcher, but still one of the best during the first decade of the 1900s.

The first game of the series was played September 12 at Columbia Park in Philadelphia, home of Connie Mack's A's, before a crowd of 3,887. Foster started for the X-Giants and William Bell pitched for the Philadelphia Giants also known as the Phillies in the local papers. Bell got behind early when Foster doubled home William Jackson in the second and Clarence Williams singled in an unearned run in the third. The X-Giants made it 3-0 in the sixth on Foster's second RBI of the game. While Rube was leading the offense he also shut out the Phillies for the first seven innings. In the eighth the future founder of the Negro National League surrendered two runs on two hits, but the X-Giants pushed over another unearned run in the ninth to make the final score 4-2. Foster was the winner with a six-hitter.

The teams moved on to Brooklyn for the next two games, meeting for a doubleheader at Ridgewood Park the following day. The morning game matched McClellan of the X-Giants against the Phillies Harry Buckner, one of the elite pitchers in black baseball for 22 seasons. He began his career in 1896 playing in the Midwest and came East in 1903 to join the Philadelphia Giants. In this game Buckner was battered for 15 hits in an 8-1 loss that put the X-Giants up two games to none. Robert Jordan and Grant "Home Run" Johnson each collected four hits for the winners. In the afternoon contest the Phillies broke through with a 5-2 win. Bell bested McClellan, who was attempting to win both ends of the doubleheader.

The caravan moved back south to the Y.M.C.A. Athletic Grounds in Trenton for game four. Foster was back on the mound for the X-Giants and pitched a three-hitter. But this time Charles "Kid" Carter gave him a good run pitching for the Phillies. Each team scored a run in the second inning. But the Phillies kicked the ball around enough to commit nine errors and allow the X-Giants to take a 3-1 win and a three to one lead in games.

The next day the teams took a short train ride to Camden for game five. Carter and McClellan were the opposing pitchers, and Carter was the game's star. He tossed a five-hit shutout. Two errors by the X-Giants allowed Sol White to score in the fifth, and three hits

wrapped around Clarence Williams' second error of the game produced two more runs. The 3-0 margin was all Carter needed to bring the Phillies to within a game of the X-Giants.

Two days of rain halted the teams' attempt to play in Wilmington, and game six was played at Island Park Grounds in Harrisburg. The respective aces faced each other as Foster and Bell were the starters. It was not a pretty afternoon for the Phillies. The X-Giants banged out 16 hits against a pair of Phillies pitchers and coasted to a 12-3 win. Bell was battered for seven runs on eight hits in five innings of work while Carter was only marginally better, yielding a like number of hits but only five runs. Foster had a 6-0 lead before surrendering a pair of runs in the fourth and took advantage of the eight errors and seven unearned runs the Phillies handed him.

The teams decided to call it quits after the Harrisburg game, and the X-Giants reigned supreme for the 1903 season with a four games to two series win.

Phillies manager White spent the winter considering his options as he tried to figure a way to beat the X-Giants in 1904. He needed better pitching, someone like Foster on the X-Giants. He needed a second baseman to replace the departed Frank Grant, someone like Charlie Grant on the X-Giants. He needed another good-hitting outfielder, someone like "Jap" Payne on the X-Giants. Since written player contracts were either nonexistent or unenforceable White simply raided the Cuban X-Giants and signed Foster, Grant, Payne, and catcher George "Chappie" Johnson. It is reported that McClellan also played for the Phillies in 1904, but by the post-season he was safely back on the X-Giant roster.

These actions surely shored up the Phillies, but it didn't do much for their hometown rivals. Scrambling to restock their roster, the X-Giants signed former Phillies outfielder Pat Patterson and pitcher Harry Buckner. They also picked up some new blood in the persons of pitchers Walter Ball and James Smith.

As the season progressed, the various roster moves notwithstanding, the two Philadelphia squads were again the top teams in black baseball. The team owners put aside their animosity toward each other to schedule a best-of-three "championship series" in Atlantic City, a popular summer vacation destination on the New Jersey coast.

Game one was played on September 1 before 4,000 spectators at Inlet Park on the north end of

Atlantic City, overlooking Absecon Inlet. Foster, now in the flannels of the Phillies, faced his teammate of a season earlier, Dan McClellan. It is one of the storied games in black baseball history. The future Hall of Fame member won an 8-4 victory and in the process struck out 18 opponents. There is precious little press coverage beyond box scores and a paragraph or two of commentary. Rube gave up an early lead, allowing a run in the bottom of the first. But five Cuban X-Giant errors opened the door for the Phillies to pour across a total of six runs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth innings. Foster continued to be nicked for solo runs in the fourth, fifth, and seventh innings, but continued to dominate on the mound and at the plate. Foster rapped out three hits, including a triple.

In the second game of the series it was the X-Giants' turn to trot out a former Phillies pitcher to face his old team. Harry Buckner started for the X-Giants, and veteran Chicago-area pitcher Will Horn started for the Phillies. Both pitchers turned in a complete game. Horn fashioned a five-hitter and yielded one earned run. Buckner tossed a four-hitter and likewise allowed one earned run. Things were pretty even if not for the pair of errors by Monroe at shortstop that permitted two additional X-Giants' runs to score. Thus the X-Giants recorded a 3-1 victory and forced a third and deciding game.

Another large crowd estimated at over 5,000 squeezed into Inlet Park for the final game. Former teammates Foster and McClellan opposed each other again. It was a wild and raucous game. The fans were animated in the stands, but not as animated as X-Giants catcher Clarence Williams. The X-Giants took the early lead with two runs in the third. The Phillies tied things with single runs in the fourth and fifth. It was the fifth-inning run that first exercised Williams. Clarence was a veteran player who was a member of the original Cuban Giants in 1885 and was part of the original Philadelphia Giants that Sol White founded in 1902 before jumping to the crosstown X-Giants. In the fifth inning the Phillies' run scored on a close play at the plate in which Williams felt he had tagged out the runner. The umpire, Mr. Adams, thought otherwise. It took a platoon of police officers to separate Williams from the umpire. Later in the game Williams grounded an infield single by steamrolling over his former manager, first baseman White. Williams moved on to second as White picked himself up and retrieved the ball. Sol then approached Williams and offered

the Texas center fielder, then struck out. In the third, dealing with the bottom of the Texas order, Witt was nearly untouchable—Tom Dunbar, in the second year of his three-year career (lifetime B.A.: .231), struck out, as did the catcher Donnie Scott, in the second year of a four-year career (lifetime B.A.: .217). The shortstop Curtis Wilkerson, in the second year of a career that would last him a good 11 years (lifetime BA: .245), tapped to short.

In the Rangers fourth, with the game still scoreless, Mickey Rivers was out on one pitch—a grounder to first, Witt covering. Tolleson then grounded to short, and Ward, getting decent wood on the ball, skied out to Mike Brown in right.

In the fifth, Texas nearly broke through against Witt. Larry Parrish hit a slow chopper toward third. DeCinces—a better hitter than a fielder—nonetheless made the bare-handed play to get Parrish at first. Pete O'Brien grounded weakly to second baseman Wilfong for out number two. Then George Wright battled through seven pitches, fouling off three two-strike pitches before striking out, Witt's fifth K through five.

The sixth inning brought the bottom of the Texas order to Witt's cutting table, and again he diced them up. Dunbar looked at two strikes, then grounded out to second. Donnie Scott, who had been the number two pick in the 1979 draft but was now playing his way out of baseball, struck out; and Curtis Wilkerson did what he did last time: grounded out. Witt was 18 for 18 at this point. But Charlie Hough was working on a brilliant three-hit shutout.

The Angels finally eked out a run in the seventh. DeCinces, who would finish the year with 20 home runs and 82 RBI, singled to lead off. Then a Hough knuckler got away from catcher Scott for a passed ball. With DeCinces at second, McNamara gave Brian Downing the green light on a 3-0 delivery, and Downing managed to ground the ball to the right side, to Tolleson, allowing DeCinces to advance to third with one out. Reggie Jackson then hit a grounder down to first baseman O'Brien. With the infield in, the play was at the plate, but DeCinces got such a good jump that he beat the throw. The run, because of the passed ball, was unearned. When Mike Brown doubled, Jackson appeared to have scored, but a fan came on the field in an attempt to get the ball that Brown had hit, and ump Greg Kosc sent Jackson back to third. When he tried to score, as DeCinces had, on a ground ball, he was nailed at the plate. Hough walked Schofield to load the bases,

but avoided further damage. But Witt now had a lead.

In the Rangers seventh, it was Mick "The Quick" Rivers, again going down on strikes. Kosc punched him out on a close pitch. Rivers looked annoyed as he dragged back to the bench for what turned out to be the last time. It was final at-bat of his 15-year career. Wayne Tolleson then came close to breaking the string. Witt fell behind 3-0, missing with three straight fast balls. With Tolleson taking all the way, Witt stayed focused, and got two good fastballs over to run the count full for the second time during the day. Tolleson then hit the 3-2 pitch to second. That brought up Gary Ward—a hitter Witt was careful of all day ("I wanted to keep the ball away from him"). For the third straight time, Ward made an out to the opposite field—grounding to second.

In the eighth, McNamara made a defensive change—a risky venture for a manager during a perfect game. Bobby Grich, in the 15th year of what might be a Hall of Fame career, replaced Daryl Sconiers at first. It all seemed academic for an instant when Larry Parrish, the cleanup hitter and the 22nd batter of the day for Texas, rifled the first pitch from Witt to right field. "I thought it was out of here," Parrish would say later. "The way his breaking ball was working, I knew I had to take it to right and lay off the inside fastball." But Mike Brown was able to move back to the warning track and haul it in. By now the crowd knew what they were seeing. Witt bore down and got Pete O'Brien and George Wright looking. One inning to go.

This game that meant so little seemed suddenly to have meaning. But to guys like Charlie Hough, the game wasn't about someone else's possible perfection. Hough was losing 1-0 and he wasn't giving up. He was no Mickey Rivers—Hough would play 10 more years. He got the first two batters in the top of the ninth, but Mike Brown, having himself an excellent day, got this third hit, a single, to add to his double and triple and his fine running catch in the bottom of the eighth. With Brown on first and two down, Angels manager John McNamara wanted to get Witt another run. He wasn't counting on perfection any more than Charlie Hough was. So Mac sent Gary Pettis, his speedy regular center fielder, in to run for Brown. Of course, Pettis would stay in as a defensive replacement for the bottom of the ninth, but in the top of the ninth, with two down in a 1-0 game, he was in there to steal second; or so Hough thought. He threw over four straight times, trying to keep Pettis close, or nail him. The first pitch, to Bob

Boone, was a pitchout, and Pettis was running, but not far—he was caught stealing. And on to the bottom of the ninth.

McNamara moved Fred Lynn to right, Pettis went to center, and Derrel Thomas replaced the muscle-bound Brian Downing in right field. Due up to face Witt was that lowly bottom of the order—Dunbar, Scott, Wilkerson. But after Dunbar struck out on three pitches, Texas manager Doug Rader went to his thin bench for some pinch-hitters. Left-handed hitting outfielder Bob Jones stepped in to hit for the catcher, Scott. Jones, whose career in baseball would never involve regular playing time, put up little resistance against Witt, taking a called strike and then grounding out to second. A man named Marv Foley was sent up as Witt's last victim of the day. Another journeyman on a bad team, Foley was about to register his 419th—and last—career at-bat. But he would not register his 95th hit. Witt must have sensed that here was a man whose bête noir was the curveball. Witt sent forth four consecutive curves—called strike, ball low and away, outside ball two, and then the one that resulted in yet another grounder to the busy-as-can-be Wilfong at second, who flawlessly handled his eighth grounder of the day, and threw to Grich at first for the final out.

The small crowd saluted Witt as his teammates rushed the mound. Witt's wife, Lisa, standing in a front-row box at the corner of the Angel dugout, was in tears. Witt walked over to her and they embraced. "Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy," she said.

Witt said after the game that he was aware of what he had going as early as the fourth inning, "but up until the seventh, I just wanted to win. After that, I wanted everything." He credited Mike Brown with a great catch on Larry Parrish's eighth-inning drive. Bob Boone said Witt's performance was no surprise to him: "I think he's the premier pitcher in the league. When he's on, they're not going to hit him. His only hurdle is consistency and concentration."

The Rangers were less than gracious. They blamed home plate ump Greg Kosc for his wide strike zone. Manager Doug Rader blamed the glare. "No one could see the son of a bitch." Mickey Rivers: "I'm not taking anything away from the pitchers, but for four or five innings, we were only trying to get it over."

Witt, now retired and living in Southern California, was happy to talk on the phone about his big day: "The perfect game at the end of the year was simply something that fell into place. I had had a good year

up to that point, but getting 15 wins was my goal that day. It was a springboard game and a springboard season for the rest of my career. My stuff that day was definitely a little better than usual. The fastball was a little faster and my curveball was a bit sharper. Most of all, though, my control that day was right on. I went with everything Bob Boone called with the exception of one pitch in about the fourth inning. That pitch was hit pretty hard, and it was the last pitch I shook off for the rest of the day."

The following year, 1985, solidified Witt's credentials, when he went 15-9. He was showing more consistency under manager Gene Mauch, and the team, with 90 wins, finished only one game out of first. The organization looked forward to 1986. It would be Witt's sixth year in the majors and he would soon be eligible or free agency. He could finally be headed for a good payday. He didn't know quite how much he would need it.

In the same week that new commissioner Peter Ueberroth got to hand down his suspensions and fines for admitted drug users, as revealed in the Curtis Strong trial in Pittsburgh, a California equities firm run by a former sports agent named Harry Stein that went bankrupt. Seventy athletes—many of them former Oakland Raiders (Stein was once Dave Casper's agent) had invested with Stein, only to see all their savings vanish. Former Raiders Pete Banaszak, Rod Martin, and Matt Millen lost everything, as did golf great Kathy Whitworth and NBA star Phil Smith. But the biggest loser, reported to be in the half-million dollar range, was Mike Witt. "Most everything I've got is with them," he said at the time. "It knocked me back about four years as far as my future goes."

Witt turned in a fantastic year in 1986. He went 18-10, pitched three shutouts, threw 14 complete games, had an ERA well under 3.00, and struck out 208 batters in 269 innings. He was on the All-Star team. That year there were no pennant races to speak off. The Mets, behind Doc Gooden, Darryl Strawberry, and Keith Hernandez, won their division by more than 20 games, the Astros won the West by 10. In the AL, a dominant Roger Clemens, and great years from Wade Boggs and Jim Rice, sealed the division crown for Boston in the East; in the West, it was all Angels, led by Mike Witt, along with Grich, Pettis, and rookie first baseman Wally Joyner, who hit .290.

In the NLCS, the Mets would squeak by the red-hot Astros, four games to two, clinching it with a 16-inning

sixth-game victory that is ranked among the greatest post-season games of all time. Boston and the Angels would tangle in a series that would spell heartbreak for Mauch and his team, but only defer the heartbreak for the Red Sox.

Witt would get to challenge the 24-4, 24-year-old Roger Clemens in game one, and come away the victor, pitching a five-hitter, winning 8-1. In game four, Clemens entered the ninth with a 3-0 lead, but he and Calvin Schiraldi managed to hand the game to California (Schiraldi hit a batter with the bases loaded), and the Angels took a three games to one lead. Mauch gave the ball to Witt for game five at home to wrap up the series. And Witt pitched well, taking a 5-2 lead into the ninth. The Angels were only three outs away from the World Series. But Don Baylor hit a two-run shot off Witt to cut the lead to 5-4. Mauch allowed Witt to pitch to the next hitter, righty Dwight Evans. Evans popped out for the second out, but then Mauch made his move. He took Witt out and brought in the long, narrow lefty Gary Lucas to pitch to the left-handed hitting catcher, Rich Gedman, who had worn Witt out already with a homer, double, and a single. "I'd seen enough of Gedman against Witt," Mauch would say later. "We needed one out and I thought my best shot was with Lucas." Lucas plunked Gedman with his first pitch. Mauch then brought in Donnie Moore, a great reliever the year before (31 saves, club MVP) but now a man in so much discomfort that he had taken a cortisone shot to the rib cage the night before. Teammate Doug DeCinces later expressed his disbelief that Mauch would give Moore the ball under those conditions. Still, Moore and the Angels needed only one out. Dave Henderson was the hitter, a gap-toothed, powerfully built, slashing-type ballplayer who had come to Boston in a late-season trade but had hit under .200, and who stood to be the goat in the game, having dropped Bobby Grich's fly ball—over the wall—for a home run in the seventh. But Moore served up a fat forkball on a two-strike pitch, and Henderson drilled it over the left-field wall to give Boston a 6-5 lead. The Angels valiantly battled back for a run in the bottom of the ninth to tie it, but Henderson, in the 11th, with Donnie Moore still in there pitching, hit a sacrifice fly for the winning run. Boston would win the next two games behind Oil Can Boyd and Clemens. The Angels wouldn't see post-season play until 2002. Witt would later say of Gene Mauch's taking him out with a one-run lead and one out to go in game five, "He

made the right move."

Witt played his first year in the bigs in 1981 for the minimum salary, about \$32,000. He worked under one-year contracts through the next three seasons, with his salary rising to just over \$200,000 in 1984, when his rights to salary arbitration kicked in, at which point he and his agent were able to negotiate a three-year deal worth \$1.7 million (with incentives, it was worth about \$2.5 million). In 1987, with expectations now high for the Angels after their disastrous collapse the previous October, Witt was in his final year. He had already been nearly wiped by the Harry Stein bankruptcy. A good year would put him in good stead for his first shot at free agency.

Witt gave it his all; he won 16 and was an All-Star once again, but the Angels fell apart, finishing in last place, a full 22 games behind a team that only won 85. Despite Witt's more than respectable win total, there were some foreboding signs amidst his numbers: he had four fewer complete games than the year before, and no shutouts; while pitching 22 innings less than the year before, he gave up 34 more hits, 12 more home runs, nine more walks, and struck out 16 fewer batters. His ERA jumped from 2.84 to 4.01. He started to hit what one observer called "the six-inning wall." The peaceable, laid-back Witt earned the nickname the Earl of Surl for being touchy with the press. But he was soon to have more to resent than snippy reporters.

Ueberroth's recommended assault on free agency was beginning to take its toll. In 1985, Kirk Gibson attracted no offers at all, after a great year and a great World Series. He resigned with Detroit. In 1986, Tim Raines got no offers and sat out spring training, unwilling to sign with the Expos; Andre Dawson, similarly abandoned, approached Dallas Green of the Cubs. Wanting to play anywhere but on Montreal's cement-hard artificial turf, Dawson figured, why not Wrigley Field? He offered to sign a blank contract. The Cubs tossed him \$500,000 and Dawson turned in an MVP year. Free agent Bob Horner, who'd hit 54 homers in two years for Atlanta and was only 29 years old, was so disgusted with the market he went to Japan to play. Witt received no expressions of interest from other clubs and decided to stay at home. He got a two-year deal from Buzzie Bavasi for \$3.2 million. Two-time All-Star, ace of the staff, a man who'd thrown a perfect game, beaten Roger Clemens in a playoff opener, struck out 16 Mariners in a game, at the peak of his career, his prime, at 27 years old, and he could

not find any job security beyond two years. Witt was not happy:

"I got three offers for the same exact amount of money over the exact same period of time: \$2.8 million for two years. Angels, Athletics, Yankees. Autry, Haas, Steinbrenner. No more, no less. I was not aware of the significance of the sameness of the offers. So, all things being equal, I stayed in my hometown."

Unfortunately for Mike Witt, his best years were behind him. In 1988, his performance continued to trend downward. Although he started 34 games, and pitched one out shy of 250 full innings, his effectiveness seemed to be fleeting, and his ERA rose to 4.15, his record falling to 13-16. The Angels finished 29 games out of first, sending Gene Mauch into permanent retirement. The next year, with Cookie Rojas at the helm, was even worse for Witt, as he won only nine games and his ERA edged up toward five. In the off-season, he signed a one-year contract extension, for \$1.3 million, but with the team's addition of pitchers Mark Langston and Mike Smithson to a staff that already had Chuck Finley, Kirk McCaskill and Bert Blyleven, Witt was becoming expendable.

In 1990, Witt found himself in the bullpen. In May he was traded to the Yankees for Dave Winfield. But it was a new start for Witt, the more so when

an arbitrator investigating the collusive behavior of ownership, granted Witt "new-look" status, meaning that, despite the fact that he was under contract, he could shop his services to the highest bidder (in the end, nearly 100 players were given such status, and baseball owners were fined a whopping \$280 million for their trouble). By this time Witt, trailing an ailing arm, worked a deal with his new club, the Yankees. George Steinbrenner gave him a three-year deal worth \$8 million.

Finally, Mike Witt got his payday. Sadly, his career was virtually over, his arm shot. For their eight million dollars the Yankees would get three wins in three years from Mike Witt. On May 22, 1993, at Fenway Park, Witt would go five wobbly innings but get the win—his last win ever—over Roger Clemens.

Baseball gave as much as it took from Mike Witt—it gave a young man a good deal of money; he met his wife through the game; it badgered him at times, out-maneuvered him at times, sometimes illegally. Baseball managed to take credit from him for deeds accomplished; an equities guru made a half a million disappear. A teammate, Donnie Moore, in despair over losing a game that Witt had all but won, committed suicide. But no one—not even the commissioner of baseball—can ever take Witt's name from the record books as one of the few men who were perfect enough for one perfect game.

◎

THE SACRIFICE FLY is a fairly mundane statistical category to most fans. However, it is interesting to note that those who make the rules have found it a lively topic, as shown by the many incarnations the rule has had. Before 1908 there had to be one out and a runner had to score for a batter to receive credit for a sacrifice fly. From 1908 to 1925 a sacrifice fly could be awarded when there was either zero or one out, but there had to be a runner scoring. In 1920 the official scorer was instructed in reporting these events to make no distinction between sacrifice flies and sacrifice bunts. From 1926 to 1930 a sacrifice fly was awarded for any runner advance, not just when a runner scored. In 1931 sacrifice flies were abolished as an official category. In 1939 the rule was reinstated for one year with the pre-1926 definition (runner must score). In 1940 sacrifice flies were once again abolished. In 1954 sacrifice flies were resurrected once again with the requirement that they be reported separately from sacrifice bunts. There was minor fiddling with the rule in 1957, 1958, 1975, and 1984, but the basic criteria of what a sacrifice fly is and whether it should be reported separately have not changed since 1954.

—DAVID SMITH

The Cubs on Catalina

Three Decades of Unique Memories

by Jim Vitti



The Chicago Cubs in 1929—surrounded by mountains and palm trees, rather than the Friendly Confines, on Catalina Island.

A future president of the United States getting caught up in a barroom brawl. A kid standing out in a canyon for hours, all by himself, holding a burlap sack—waiting for a nonexistent animal to run towards him. A young man pulling up trees with his bare hands. What possibly could all this mean?

Why, it's the Chicago Cubs, hard at work during spring training on Catalina Island, of course!

The Chicago Cubs trained on William Wrigley's private isle—just off the coast of Southern California—from 1921 to 1951. Which might get you to wondering: what exactly *did* they do while they were out on an island in the Pacific blue?

Plenty of baseball, of course—but plenty of antics, pranks, and merriment too. After all, they were strapping young men, far from home, largely unsupervised, and it was—for the most part—the roaring '20s and the glitzy heyday of the island's glamour years, the '30s.

"My first spring training ever was on Catalina," smiles former Cub Bob Kelly. "It's a long way back down to earth from there!"

Johnny Klippstein felt the same way: "You'd wake up in the morning and think, 'This must be a dream, being out here on an island.'"

In fact, the lure of Catalina actually extended Billy Rogell's career. After being traded from Detroit to the Cubs, "I was ready to quit in 1939—but my wife wanted to go to Catalina!" Even when camp ended and Billy hit the road, his family decided to stay behind. "After I left, Mum—I called her Mum—she spent a month there. We took our two boys out.

"Mother always had a twinkle in her eye when she talked about that place," says Charlie Owen (Mickey's son).

The team escaped the wind chills of Chicago Februaries to take the Santa Fe to Los Angeles. Occasionally, one would get left behind during a whistle-stop; manager Johnny Evers misplaced his son in New Mexico one time. Once everybody made it safely to Los Angeles, they would hop either the S.S. *Avalon* or the S.S. *Catalina* for the ride over—except the last few seasons, when they flew, and 1942, when they took water taxis because of wartime fears.

They trained in French Lick, Indiana, from 1943 to 1945, and practiced in a barn to avoid the snow. "It was so cold," Phil Cavarretta recalls, "even the horse droppings were frozen."

JIM VITTI is the author of *The Cubs on Catalina*. It's available online and in bookstores.

A long way down from Catalina, indeed.

While on the Island, they would use the country club as their locker room—still used as the duffer dressing quarters today. Sometimes the team would stay at the Atwater Hotel or Las Casitas, both still in use in the tiny town of Avalon, but usually it was Catalina's long-gone grand resort at Descanso Cove.

"We stayed at the Hotel St. Catherine," Della Root Arnold (Charlie's daughter) recalls. "It was beautiful. They had a great big lobby with oriental rugs and big, soft furniture. They had a jewelry store and a little curio shop. The dining room was all glass, overlooking the ocean. Off to the left, they had this little room where the guests could play pool.

"The island itself hasn't changed much, but it's sad to see where the St. Catherine was—it was such a beautiful hotel. It was a time that will never happen again."

After a few weeks they would head Overtown (the term the locals use for the mainland) for some exhibition games at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles, then back on the train for the return trip to Chicago.

They were in L.A. in 1933 when the Long Beach Earthquake hit, staying in the downtown Biltmore, which swayed seven feet. They were about to continue their exhibition series against the New York Giants, which had started on the island. The Giants had come over in 1932, too, bringing a bevy of stars like Bill Terry, Mel Ott, Carl Hubbell, and manager John J. McGraw to play on Catalina.

Islanders usually tossed a big parade for the Cubs when they arrived at the Steamer Pier. The costumes and music confused a rookie or two, though. "Say, Mr. Grimm. I thought we were going to Catalina Island. Isn't this place Mexico?" teenage pitcher Johnny Hutchings asked his manager in 1936.

Rookies were often sent in search of the nonexistent bowling alleys belowdeck during the channel crossing, but the greatest prank of all time took place right on the island in the late '20s.

Roy Hansen appeared to the veterans that he'd just fallen off a turnip truck, so he was the ideal candidate for a snipe hunt. (The snipe is closely related to the jackalope, a creature which looks like a rabbit with antlers but has never been seen by human eyes, either.) The rules of play: Two of the older ballplayers hand Roy a burlap bag and position him at the bottom of a Catalina canyon. The snipe hunt goes best when two people chase 'em into the gully from opposite walls of the mountains—so the rookie is in the perfect spot to



TOP: Bill Lee (right) supervises as rookie Ken Weaver rows across Avalon Bay in 1936. Johnny Hutchings and Gene Lillard kibitz for good measure.

MIDDLE: Pitcher Clay Bryant falls victim to the ol' exploding golf ball trick on the Catalina course.

BOTTOM: In 1934, Grover Cleveland Alexander was still tossing batting practice on the Island—at the age of 47. He's flanked by manager Charlie Grimm and backstop Gabby Hartnett.

catch a few of the confused beasts in his sack.

Young Roy waited . . . and waited. Hours later, he trudged back to the hotel after sunset, where he found the entire Cub team waiting for him in the lobby, falling over with laughter. From that moment on, Roy Hansen became known as Snipe Hansen.

The boys found other ways to amuse themselves. Kiki Cuyler and trainer Andy Lotshaw often won dancing contests at the casino, for instance, and they occasionally invited big band members to suit up and work out with the team.

Movie stars were aplenty. One of the Cubs, pitcher Clay Bryant, dated starlet Grace Bradley on Catalina. She made more than 50 films, and married William Boyd—otherwise known as Hopalong Cassidy. She's in her eighties now, still teaching exercise classes at a retirement center Overtown. "Catalina was a great place—very alive, things going on, people had their boats," she says. "There were beautiful little places there; it was a great little getaway."

Phil Cavarretta was playing ping-pong in the hotel basement in 1936 when Betty Grable marched over and grabbed his paddle. "I can beat you," she boasted. With his manhood on the line in front of all his mates, young Cavy had to give it everything he had—but he managed to prevail.

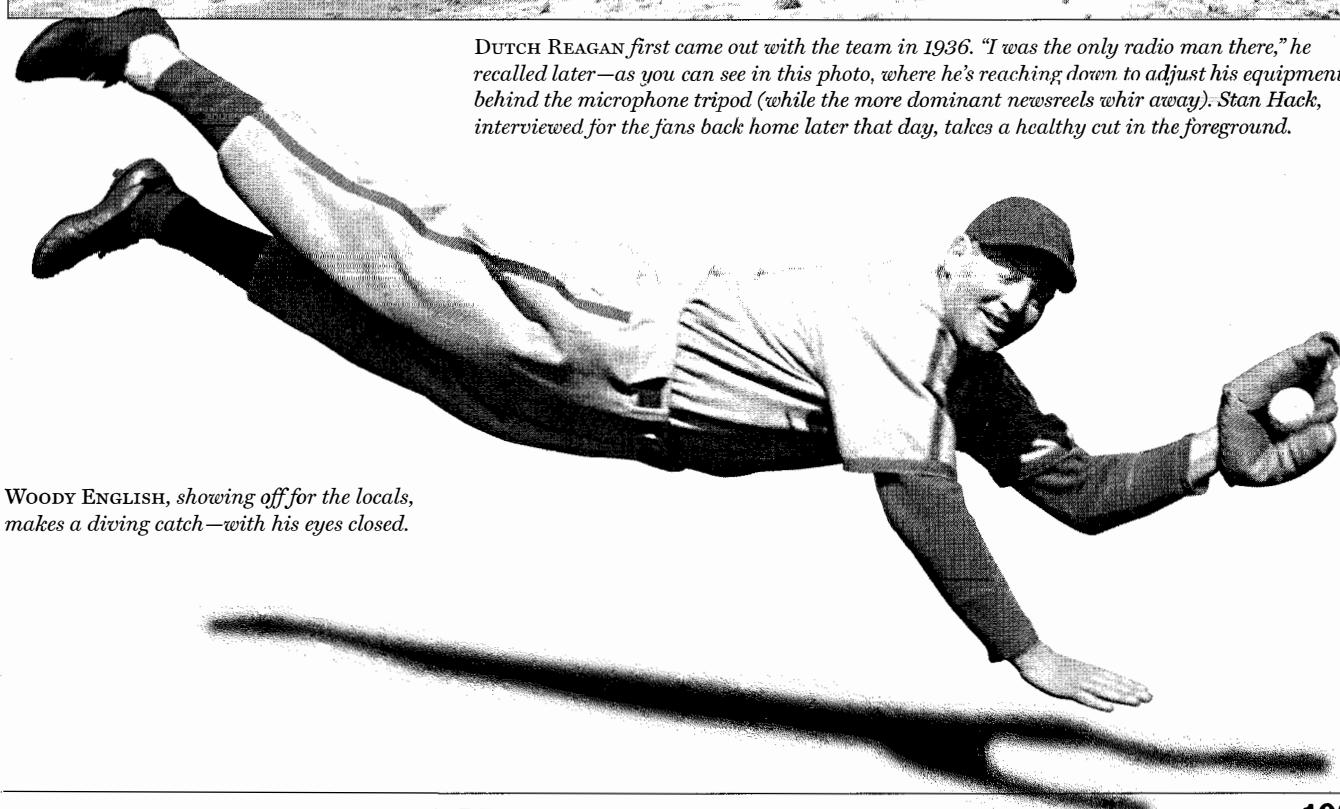
Marilyn Monroe even lived on Catalina for a while, when she was a teenage bride. "She was a good ball fan, she came to the park," remembers Hub Kittle from the days when the island's semipro team played in the summertime, after the major league squad headed back to Chicago.

Chuck Connors played for the '51 Cubs on Catalina—before he became a star. "Chuck Connors owes me money," protests Avalon native Marcelino Saucedo. "They'd come to our games, and say they'd give us a quarter for each hit we got," Marse says. "But if we'd go something like three-for-four, and try to get 75 cents after the game, they wouldn't pay us—Connors would say something like, 'Nah, bloopers don't count. We meant line drives!'"

Dutch Reagan was a young radio announcer for the Cubs in the '30s. He came over with the team in 1936 and 1937—before he hopped over to Hollywood for a screen test and changed careers. The grizzled, grumpy old newspapermen didn't approve of the newfangled medium—or its announcers—so they didn't exactly treat young Dutch well. One night things boiled over at an Avalon watering hole. "Jimmy the Cork" Corco-



DUTCH REAGAN first came out with the team in 1936. "I was the only radio man there," he recalled later—as you can see in this photo, where he's reaching down to adjust his equipment behind the microphone tripod (while the more dominant newsreels whir away). Stan Hack, interviewed for the fans back home later that day, takes a healthy cut in the foreground.



WOODY ENGLISH, showing off for the locals, makes a diving catch—with his eyes closed.

ran, a Chicago reporter, took a swing at Reagan. Reagan ducked, and the punch landed solidly into the large girth of Ed Burns, another sportswriter. Dutch avoided any damage to his face, so his screen test a few days later could proceed without incident.

Dutch, of course, did change careers (not to mention the name he answered to) and became a movie star. He decided to become governor of Catalina (and the rest of California) later on, then leader of the free world. He currently resides Overtown with his wife, Nancy.

All these extracurricular antics should not suggest that the Cubs did not work hard here. They practiced enough to get to the World Series several times while training in Avalon (1929, 1932, 1935, and 1938). They brought several managers over—like Rogers Hornsby, Charlie Grimm, Frankie Frisch, and Roy Johnson (whose lifetime managerial record is 0-1). Actually, they didn't really have to bring Roy—also known as Hard Rock—because the longtime Cub coach lived on Catalina for several years. Their ballpark, by the way, was called Wrigley Field—just like the one in Chicago, and also the one in Los Angeles.

As time went by, a few locals managed to earn a tryout with the team. Conrad Lopez impressed Grimm enough that the Cubbies gave him a contract in 1948. Conrad was assigned to Bisbee (in Arizona), where he hit with such authority that he was promoted to Visalia. Alas, he got sick and then went off to Korea . . . and never went back to baseball.

Barber Lolo Saldaña had a tryout that same afternoon, but didn't fare as well. Grimm watched Lolo win the city golf championship; impressed with the teen's athleticism and ability to perform under pressure, Jolly Cholly approached Lolo. "Grimm says, 'I like what I see. I'm having a tryout for a young man this afternoon. I understand you play baseball, too.' I told him, 'I'm not that caliber.' He says, 'That's okay, I like your style.' So I go out, and he hit me about six balls. He hit 'em hard! I was just a kid, and I was so nervous—three or four went right under my legs, and I bobbed the others. Eddie Waitkus was over on first base, and the ones I bobbed I managed to throw to him, after I bobbed 'em two or three times. I was still all shook up from the tournament—it was nervous time. Well, he came over and patted me on the back and said, 'Kid, I'll see ya next year.' But when they did come back, the Cubs had fired him and Frankie Frisch was the manager."

Locals would lead the ballplayers in hunts for genuine animals, too—like wild boar, goats, quail, and fish. Roy Smalley even stayed over one winter, helping out with ranch duties, like skinning a dead bison that had gotten caught in a fence. A lot of the players golfed every spare minute, and Hack Miller used to uproot trees around the Island. He'd also been known to lift pianos and cars (this was in the '20s—before the golf carts which currently clog the isle's streetlight-free avenues became so abundant).

Some of the players didn't follow the team back to Chicago. The Wrigleys also owned the Los Angeles Angels of the old Pacific Coast League, and players who needed more seasoning would often be assigned there, to pursue the crosstown rivalry against the Hollywood Stars. The baseball division also sponsored the Catalina Cubs, the semipro team that squared off against a variety of other clubs in the '30s and '40s.

Yet it all came crashing to an end in 1952, after the Cubs announced they would be training in Mesa, Arizona. Baseball was changing, and the need for exhibition opponents—and revenues—was becoming more and more important. No one knew it would be permanent, since the shift during the war was so recent, and the Cubs had often spent part of their training time in Los Angeles, anyway.

But it was permanent. The Cubs never came back, and it doesn't seem possible now that they ever will.

In all, 19 Cubs who trained in Avalon are in the Hall of Fame—greats like Grover Cleveland Alexander (later portrayed by Reagan in the 1952 film, *The Winning Team*), Dizzy Dean, Hack Wilson (who hit 56 home runs in 1930), and plenty more. About 45 of the players who trained here—51 years or more in the past—are still alive.

The little grandstand, like the St. Catherine, is gone now—but its foundation is still visible next to the field, which is still used for a variety of sports. The country club walls and menus are filled with old Cub photos, and the museum displays a fabulous exhibit of Cub memories. And plenty of islanders—kids at the time, and now sporting a little gray—will always treasure the memories with a smile.

Old-Timer's Day

by Tom Knight

One of the earliest old-timers games actually played was held in dear old Brooklyn in 1940. There had been occasional gatherings of former ballplayers in earlier decades, including one the year before when the members of the Yankees Murderers Row of the late 1920s took part in the ceremonies for "Lou Gehrig Day" at Yankee Stadium on July 4, 1939. But they did not suit up and play a game.

Larry MacPhail, the Brooklyn general manager, was very promotion-minded, and it was on his watch that this old-timers game was played on a Sunday afternoon of September 22, 1940. The teams were comprised of players from the 1916 and 1920 National League pennant winners and players from the 1930s. They would play three innings between games of the Dodgers' scheduled doubleheader with the Philadelphia Phillies. I was fortunate to be among the crowd of 18,672 fans at Ebbets Field that afternoon. I got a big kick out of seeing these players—many of whom played before I was born!

The men from the pennant-winning teams were the Robins, and the players from the 1930s were the Dodgers, with some definite overlap between the two squads. The starting pitcher was Hall of Famer Dazzy Vance ((1922-32, 1935), who took the mound amidst thunderous cheers. Backing him up was another Hall of Famer, Brooklyn native Waite Hoyt (1937-38), along with Ownie Carroll (1933-34).

Taking a bow was 70-year-old Bill Dahlen, who played shortstop for Brooklyn from 1899 to 1903. He was the only veteran there from the 1899 and 1900 Brooklyn teams that won the pennant. Bill came back to manage Brooklyn from 1910 to 1913, the first season in Ebbets Field. Late in his life Dahlen was a ticket seller at Yankee Stadium.

Burleigh Grimes and Casey Stengel, two all-time Dodger greats, could not be on hand that day, as they were managing and had baseball business elsewhere. Grimes, who had piloted the Dodgers in 1937-38, was in Grand Rapids (MISL), while Stengel was the skipper of the Boston Braves.

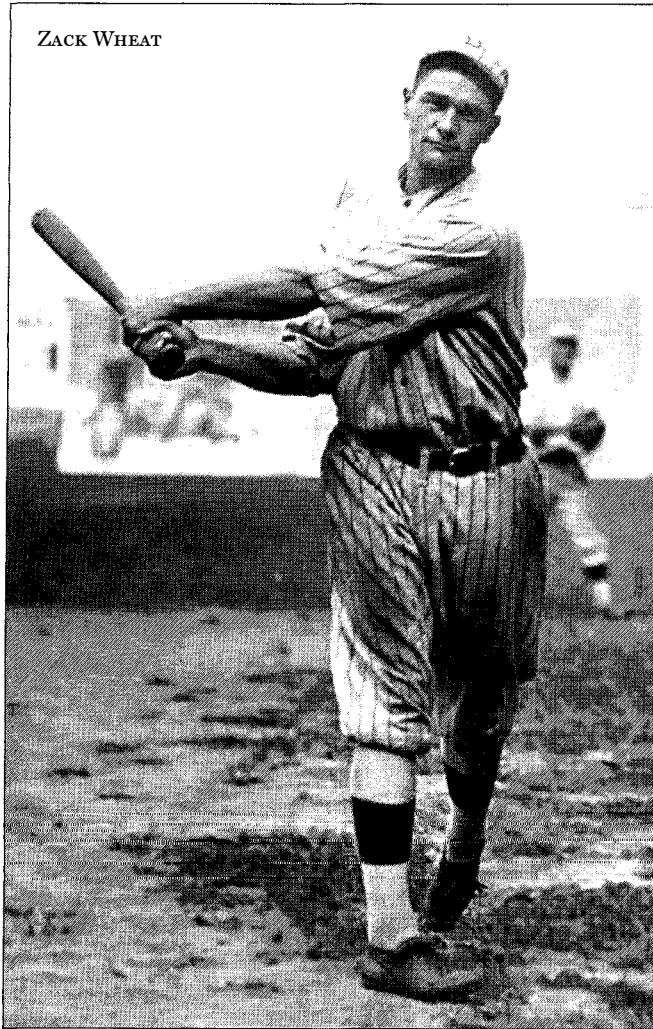
The roar from the crowd when Zack Wheat came to the plate shook the ballpark. He was a legend and the most popular Brooklyn player ever. The future Hall of Famer roamed left field at Washington Park and Ebbets Field for 18 years. After 14 years away from Brooklyn, Zack did not disappoint, lining a sharp single to right field. The crowd went nuts!

The youngsters prevailed in the contest. After three innings the score was Dodgers, 6, Robins, 3. But everyone was happy and the fans loved every minute of it. To top it off, the second-place Dodgers beat the last-place Phillies in both ends of the doubleheader, winning 10-2 and 5-2 to maintain their lead over St. Louis, winners of two in Chicago. The Reds had already clinched the pennant.

The old-timers who played that late September afternoon are long gone now, but the memories linger on.

TOM KNIGHT was appointed Brooklyn's official baseball historian by then borough president Sam Leone in 1976.

ZACK WHEAT



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY

For the Robins:

HY MYERS	1909-22	Leading off and playing shortstop. Myers was an outfielder who hit a home run off Babe Ruth in the 1916 World Series.
JIMMY JOHNSTON	1916-25	Third base
TOMMY GRIFFITH	1919-25	Right field
ZACK WHEAT	1909-26	Left field. The great fielder was the only player to win a batting championship without hitting a homer.
TIM JORDAN	1906-10	First base. Jordan was twice the NL home run king while playing in Washington Park. He had 12 homers in 1906 and again in 1908.
CHUCK WARD	1918-22	Center field
GUS GETZ	1914-16	Second base
OTTO MILLER	1910-22	Catcher. Miller was a coach until Grimes took over from Stengel in 1937. Otto wore the Brooklyn uniform longer than any other as a player and coach. Ernie Krueger (1918-21) took over the catching after the first inning.

The pitchers were left hander Sherry Smith (1915-22), Rube Marquard (1915-20), and Al Mammox (1916-23).

For the Dodgers:

JOE STRIPP	1932-37	Shortstop. Jersey Joe hit .300 six times as a regular.
FRESCO THOMPSON	1931-32	Second base. Thompson played only two seasons in Brooklyn, but he later made his mark as a Dodgers executive. Shortly before his death he was named the Dodgers vice president and general manager.
LITTLE BERNIE NEIS	1920-24	Center field
DEL BISSONETTE	1928-33	First base. Del hit .320 in 1928 and .336 in 1930, driving in over 100 runs in each season. He set a Dodgers rookie record for homers with 25 in '28. A limerick at the time went: <i>The Dodgers have Del Bissonette No meal has he ever missed yet. The question that rises Is one that surprises: Who paid for all Del Bissonette?</i>
RUBE BRESSLER	1928-31	Left field
RED SHERIDAN	1918, 1920	Right field. Red's major league career consisted of just five games, all with the Dodgers—but he was a Brooklyn native.
HANK DEBERRY	1922-30	Catcher
VAL PICINICH	1929-32	Catcher. The veteran of 18 years shared the catching duties.

Baseball and Death in Iowa

by Bill Nowlin

SECOND BOY KILLED BY SAME PITCHER." Datelined Wyoming, Iowa, a 1949 news story told the tale of hometown high school senior Clifford Dirks, who had killed two fellow ballplayers within one school year in eastern Iowa.

A Carl Mays pitch killed Ray Chapman in August 1920—the only major league ballplayer killed during a game, though each year accidental deaths occur at lower levels in various sports. To have killed two different ballplayers was not just tragedy; it was catastrophic. Clifford Dirks might have been traumatized for life.

Norman Latare was the first boy to die. It occurred on Tuesday, September 21, 1948, a rainy, overcast day. He played for the Oxford Junction Pirates, the high school team in a town with a population around 700. Norman drove over to Wyoming; he was the Pirates' left fielder. "This has been a baseball community for years," notes his brother Merlin Latare. "Norman ate that stuff up. He was a baseball nut. He lived and ate and slept baseball."

Norman came to baseball late, never playing ball until the eighth grade. The Latare family lived on a 280-acre farm north of town. Jens and Frieda Latare had three boys and one girl, and they farmed, growing corn, oats, and hay. The farm also raised milk cows, stock cows, with some chickens and hogs. "We never had no ball out there in the country," says Merlin. Norman got the baseball bug, though, and had just started his senior year. He was about 5'10" and 140 pounds, and would turn 17 on October 24. The class picture was going to be taken in a couple of weeks, and they'd dropped his new suit off at the dry cleaners.

As the game progressed, Latare had already made one of only three hits off Wyoming pitcher Cliff Dirks.

BILL NOWLIN stumbled on this story while researching Mr. Red Sox, the recent biography of Johnny Pesky, and enjoyed a half-week in eastern Iowa visiting the families and researching this piece.

"Late in the game," the *Oxford Mirror* wrote, "Norman came to bat again. The field was muddy and it was getting dark. As Dirks delivered the ball he slipped on the muddy ground. Norman slipped as he tried to dodge, and the ball struck his left temple."

No one realized how serious the injury was. Don Dusanek was shortstop for the Wyoming Eagles. "It wasn't a hard pitch," he recalls. "His foot slipped off the rubber while he was in the motion and it just kind of lobbed into home plate. The kid froze. It hit him in the temple, but did not knock him down. He didn't even stagger. But their coach did take him out."

After the game, Norman drove himself home and ate supper with the family. He told them he had gotten hit. After the meal he said, "You know, I've got a headache. I'm going to bed." The next day, he stayed home from school. It was a concussion, the doctor told Norman's mother, but he'd be all right. On Thursday morning, Frieda Latare could tell her son wasn't right, but by the time the doctor returned, it was too late.

Dusanek recalls, "Cliff went down to see him Thursday morning before school, and as he was driving into the yard, they were carrying him out. He had died during the night."

Sadly, the family had to retrieve Norman's suit from the cleaners. "He was supposed to get it that Thursday," remembers Merlin. "So we went down to get it and put him in a casket instead of getting his class picture taken. It really shook up my folks, especially my mother. She took shock treatment. I guess she thought about it until the day she died. She never did get over it, really."

None of the local newspapers reported the final score of the Wyoming–Oxford Junction game. No one interviewed even recalls which team won the game, though Fred Fifield remembers the bases were loaded at the time and that he scored when Norman was hit. Norman Latare got a run batted in on his final at-bat.

Glen Rhoads was a Lisbon boy fatally struck during a home game on May 3, 1949. Cliff Dirks was on the mound for the visitors. Glen's father, Lee Rhoads, and his wife, Sara, had come to Iowa from the Dakotas. Lee was originally a butter maker for Blue Valley Creamery, but had turned to farming just a few years earlier.

Glen was just finishing up his senior year at Lisbon High School, and was second baseman for the Lisbon Lions and for American Legion Post 109.

Glen's sister Mary was at the game that day, as were both of their parents. It was just 10 days before Glen was going to graduate from high school. He had, as usual, ridden his bicycle to school that morning. Glen had been interested in baseball since sixth grade. Like Norman Latare, Glen was also almost consumed with the love of baseball. "We bought him a glove," recalls Glen's 102-year-old father Lee Rhoads, who still lives in Lisbon. "He'd bring home balls the school would throw away. He'd be throwing that ball around for an hour. He'd forget about milking. He lived baseball." Lee himself had played a little ball in his youth. Whenever Glen played, his father made it to the games—every single one.

A couple of scouts had reportedly given Glen a look, one from the Indians and one from the White Sox. He was small, 5'6" or 5'7", and slight at 130, 140 pounds. As Glen took a lead off second base, Dirks turned and fired a pickoff to the bag. "The ball hit him at the base of the brain," Mary remembers. The Rhoadses took him in their car to Dr. Gardner. "They thought he just had a concussion and they took him home. He talked afterward, but once he got in the house and lay down he never offered to get up again. He never was unconscious, though."

No one seems to recall how Glen earned second base. As with the game with Oxford Junction, no one recalls who won the game. Don Unash, a Lisbon teammate, can still recall the sickening sound of the ball striking Glen, though. "It was just like a 'pop.' I can remember a pop or a splat, like he almost hit a watermelon or something."

Wyoming's shortstop Dusanek explained how the play developed. "We had kind of a special pickoff play. Almost a pitchout, just a little bit outside, and the catcher would fire the ball back to the pitcher real quick. As soon as Cliff pitched the ball, he'd throw the ball back to Cliff. I broke to the bag and Cliff whirled to throw.

"It hit him right at the base of the skull. He took

maybe two steps and went down. I immediately hollered over to the Lisbon bench to get a doctor there. It had knocked him out, but he was laying on his back with his head resting on second base. That's the way he fell! It's all so weird. [As a base runner, Glen was safe at second.] They drove right onto the field with a car and got out some smelling salts and brought him to. He was coherent."

After returning home around five or six in the evening, Glen lay down. Around 10, Glen hollered that he was having trouble breathing. The doctor rushed over in his car, and they decided to take Glen to the hospital, driving with Sara up front and Lee in back with his son. Mary says, "On Mount Vernon Road there was a grocery store right there and a big street-light, and as they got to that streetlight—my dad was holding him—fluid started coming out of his ears and nose. Dad didn't say anything at all until they got to the hospital."

Over 350 people attended Glen's funeral, including the players and coaches from both Wyoming and Oxford Junction. May 8 was Mother's Day. Glen's bicycle was retrieved and sits in Mary Martin's basement in Lisbon to this day. Mary raised two sons who played ball and still attends Lisbon ball games today.

What was remarkable, though, was that there was virtually no follow-up in the local papers, nor in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. Life carried on. Had a high school pitcher killed two boys within the course of one academic year in 2004, instead of 1949, the media would have swarmed the streets of Wyoming.

No one seems to have even thought about hiring a lawyer, and there wasn't a lawyer in town in any event. Credit is due the parents of all three families, and to the communities in which they lived, that events did not escalate and become adversarial. No doubt young Dirks was spared serious psychological harm.

At Glen's funeral, Don Dusanek recalls, Sara Rhoads approached Cliff and told him, "We don't want you to blame yourself. The last thing that Glen said was, 'Don't blame Cliff. It was an accident.'" It helped immensely that Mrs. Rhoads was so generous and understanding; the Rhoads and Dirks families traded Christmas cards for years.

The *Mount Vernon Hawkeye-Record* featured a single-column account headlined "Lisbon Senior Fatally Hurt in Ball Game." It provided details, and then in the seventh paragraph commented, "Sympathy also goes to the pitcher Clifford Dirks." The story noted

that Glen Rhoads had remained conscious for hours after the impact of the ball on the back of his head, and told his parents, "It was just an accident and he had no feeling against the pitcher." Mr. and Mrs. Rhoads wrote young Dirks "telling him what Glen said and that they are sure Glen would want him to finish his senior year and would not want this accident to bother him."

Glen's mother, Sara, went well beyond the call of ritual forgiveness. She understood the damage that Dirks could suffer, and did not want the tragedies to ruin yet another life. Two years later, when yet another boy was killed in an area ball game, Mrs. Rhoads wrote a long letter to the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. "Seems we live in a day and age when someone or something must be to BLAME for everything," she wrote. "If we're going to have our kids take part in athletic contests, well, things happen sometimes and we have to take the consequences. When Glen was killed, did we blame the Dirks boy? No. Did we blame the coach? No. Did we blame Glen for not turning to see the ball coming? No." She said the feeling had been high in Lisbon against the Dirks boy, and her minister had urged her to put something in the local papers at the time. She understood how the grieving parents of this new boy killed felt, but "God alone gives life and God alone takes it away." She then cited three Biblical verses.

Clifford Dirks came from a poor family. "My dad used to farm in Olin. He went through the Depression and lost his farm. When he was 49, he had a heart attack in the potato patch. He didn't do too much after that." Cliff worked all through high school at a grocery store and service station—the very station he came to own—stocking shelves. It was his pitching that won him a full scholarship to Upper Iowa University.

Cliff was 6'3" when he graduated from Wyoming High School. A right-handed pitcher, at 160-165 pounds, he attracted some attention from legendary Chicago Cubs scout Cy Slapnicka.

While he was playing high school ball for Wyoming during the fall, one pitch went astray. "It was muddy

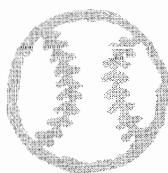
enough we shouldn't have played," Dirks reiterated. Cliff knew Norman Latare from playing ball, and after the accident, his mother sat Cliff down. She and two of Cliff's sisters talked him through a difficult time. There was no minister or other counsel involved. It was handled in the family.

"I know I won two games after that. One was a 10-0 shutout and the other one was a 10-2 game against Olin. I played shortstop and first base, anywhere they needed me. I kept playing, but I didn't pitch after that. I tried to, but I just didn't have any confidence in throwing."

Dirks played town ball. "We played 30 to 50 games a summer. I played until I was 28, 29, and our team folded up. Then we started playing fast pitch softball. I did that for a few years until a tree fell on me while we were cutting down trees."

Did Cliff ever suffer from nightmares? Not really. Not in terms of nightmares and anguish. "I realized all the time that it was an accident." Did he ever have the feeling that this was really unfair to him and that this was a heavy burden he'd had to bear? "I woke up a few times, but not with nightmares or anything like that." Take the support from friends and family, add the extraordinary empathy shown by Sara Rhoads, then season with a sense of acceptance of things that is deeply rooted in the people of these eastern Iowa communities. With no media onslaught and no litigation, Cliff realizes that he was indeed fortunate the twin incidents did not mar him for life.

It was never something the communities dwelt on. Lisbon folks raised some money—with a baseball game as part of the fund-raising—for a memorial to Glen in the school. Oxford Junction also has a memorial in their high school. People got on with their lives. And it wasn't something that Cliff Dirks suffered from. It was never a subject of ongoing conversation. "I don't even know if my kids know," Cliff explained. "This is a small town. Real small. I don't think it's ever been brought up."



White Sox Suspended from the American League?

by Doug Pappas

In the fall of 1947, the Chicago White Sox's signing of an obscure 17-year-old high school pitcher triggered a dispute that briefly led to the club's suspension from active participation in the American League. The resolution of this dispute left the commissioner with considerable authority to interpret organized baseball's governing rules.

The pitcher at the center of the dispute was George Zoeterman, a 5'11", 172-pound left-handed starter for Chicago Christian High School, a Lutheran school. Zoeterman had pitched two no-hitters in 1946 and two more in 1947. Scouts from 14 of the 16 major league clubs expressed interest in Zoeterman before he accepted a \$2,000 bonus from the Chicago White Sox on September 6, 1947.¹

On September 9, AL president Will Harridge approved the White Sox's signing of Zoeterman to a 1948 contract. Six days later, Harridge approved a separate contract which allowed Zoeterman to pitch batting practice for the White Sox during their final eastern trip of the 1947 season.² But on September 26 Commissioner Happy Chandler ruled that Zoeterman had been signed illegally. He voided Zoeterman's contract and fined the White Sox \$500.

Chandler cited Major League Rule 3(i) and Major-Minor League Rule 3(i), which provided: "No student of a high school which is a member of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations [NFSHSAA] shall be signed to a professional baseball contract until the day following his graduation, or, if he has left school, until the day following the graduation of his class." Contracts signed in violation of this rule were void, with the offending team permanently prohibited from signing the player.³

DOUG PAPPAS was a lawyer in New York, chaired SABR's Business of Baseball Committee, and was very active in the organization's affairs. Doug died on May 20th while hiking in Big Bend National Park in Texas. He will be missed by his many friends in baseball and SABR.

This rule came as no surprise to the White Sox. Their general manager, Leslie O'Connor, had served as Judge Landis's personal secretary throughout his tenure as commissioner. In fact, he had *drafted* Rule 3(i). O'Connor knew that even though Zoeterman would not graduate high school until January 1948, his high school was not a member of the National Federation of High School Athletic Association. Accordingly, he took the position that Zoeterman was not covered by Rule 3(i) and could be signed before his class had graduated.

O'Connor also knew that Commissioner Chandler had twice issued bulletins "interpreting" Rule 3(i) to apply to all high schools in the U.S. or Canada, an "interpretation" that amounted to rewriting the rule to remove the reference to the NFSHSAA. O'Connor explained that the rule had been deliberately drafted to cover only NFSHSAA schools, as a way of encouraging schools to join the association, and insisted that the commissioner could not simply read the restriction out of the rule by executive order.

Accordingly, O'Connor reacted defiantly to news of the fine: "The commissioner has acted illegally on a half dozen different counts in voiding this contract. I haven't the slightest intention of paying the fine, and I'm going to fight the case in every way I can."⁴

Commissioner Chandler wasted little time in responding. On October 29, 1947, he issued the following directive:

"[T]he Commissioner suspends as of 24 September [later clarified to mean October 24] the benefits of all major league rules to the Chicago American League club until his directive of 26 September is complied with and deprives the Chicago American League club and its general manager, Leslie O'Connor, from representation at any and all meetings under the major league agreement until further notice."⁵

Chandler acted pursuant to Article I, Section 3

of the Major League Agreement adopted in 1945. This section allowed the commissioner to suspend or remove any employee of a major league club for "conduct detrimental to baseball," and to punish any club engaging in such conduct with "temporary deprivation of representation in joint meetings held under this agreement."⁶ His secretary Walter Mulbry, stated that the difference between the O'Connor-White Sox suspension and the 1947 suspension of Leo Durocher as manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers was that in the case of the former "no action on the part of the commissioner is necessary to reinstate them." The suspension would be lifted as soon as the White Sox paid the \$500 fine.

But the White Sox were in no mood to pay the fine. The club responded with a statement of its own: "The commissioner in voiding our contract with this player and in fining the club, violated his own rules of procedure, the baseball rule under which he purports to act and various other provisions of the major and major-minor league agreement and rules and also the law of the land. He is attempting to coerce Mr. O'Connor in submission to his illegal acts. We will resist such coercion to the fullest extent."⁷

The next day Mulbry defended Chandler's interpretation of the rule, asserting that "[i]t plainly was the intent of the club owners" to protect the eligibility of all high school players, not just those from NFSHSAA schools.⁸ O'Connor, who had written the rule, begged to differ. He declared that when the White Sox signed Zoeterman, "we did so with the avowed intention of violating the commissioner's directive bulletins. The commissioner has no right to change a rule that is so plainly written as to be understandable to anyone who can read."⁹

AL president Will Harridge called a special owners' meeting for October 31 to "consider" Chandler's action. While the owners caucused, the White Sox prepared to sue Chandler in Cincinnati, where the commissioner kept his office, to enjoin enforcement of the sanction. White Sox publicity director Ward Stevens insisted that O'Connor had Chandler "in a vise and there's nothing he can do about it. The club can't lose, if the case gets to court, no matter what the other American League officials did at Cleveland today."¹⁰

In fact, the remaining clubs backed Chandler against O'Connor. Washington Senators owner Clark Griffith explained, "O'Connor was in the wrong. He knew the rule because he was advised of it twice by bulletins



"HAPPY" CHANDLER

from the commissioner's office and again personally by the commissioner."¹¹ Although O'Connor insisted the owners agreed with him but had simply replaced him on the major league Executive Council to prevent the league from losing a vote,¹² Bill Veeck disputed his account. "I will say flatly that six of the seven clubs were strongly opposed to O'Connor's moves and he was told that in no uncertain words. He received little or no support in that meeting."¹³

In a front-page article in the November 12, 1947 *Sporting News*, publisher Taylor Spink wrote that most attorneys he spoke to believed that O'Connor was legally correct. However, Spink insisted, Chandler had the better of the ethical argument because it was a mistake for high school players to pass up college to sign professional contracts. An unnamed club official pointed out that Chandler's interpretation had closed a loophole in the rule: otherwise a club that wished to sign a player before his high school class had graduated could encourage him to transfer from a school that belonged to the NFSHSAA to one that didn't, then could sign him as soon as the transfer became effective.¹⁴

Whatever the merits of the White Sox's legal position, though, the club was backing away from O'Connor's defiance. Suspension from major league affairs was too severe a sanction for Charles Comiskey to risk. He told the *Minneapolis Tribune* that the White Sox would pay the fine before the draft meeting to be held on November 10. While Comiskey wanted O'Connor to remain with the club, he made clear that "if he wishes to carry through with his projected court fight against the fine, he will have to proceed alone."¹⁵

O'Connor didn't. In fact, he posed for photos with Chandler when he arrived to represent the White Sox at the November 10 draft meeting.¹⁶ Over his objection, Chandler had established the principle that he could, in effect, rewrite the major league rules through interpretation. Whether or not such a policy would stand up in court, the owners of this era were reluctant to stand up to the commissioner's authority.

Zoeterman, the ultimate cause of the dispute, wasn't harmed by its resolution. The White Sox allowed him to keep the \$1,500 bonus he had been paid,¹⁷ and when he graduated from high school on January 30, 1948, 10 clubs were waiting at his doorstep. After three days of negotiations, he signed with the hometown Cubs, receiving a reported \$10,000 bonus.¹⁸ The Cubs assigned him to their Decatur affiliate in the Class B Three-I League.

Unfortunately for Zoeterman, his signing was the highlight of his professional career. He was driven from the mound in the third inning of his pro debut, a game Decatur went on to lose to Quincy by a score of 18-2. Zoeterman was undeterred: "Every time you get shelled you learn something. I threw only five curve balls in three innings. I was just trying to blow that ball past 'em. But I ain't making excuses, that's for sure. Those guys can hit."¹⁹

At least they could hit Zoeterman, who finished the 1948 season with the highest ERA of any Three-I League pitcher who threw at least 45 innings. Zoeterman posted a 3-5 record and 6.37 ERA, surrendering 87 runs (75 earned) in 106 innings. He walked 107, struck out 61, and threw 10 wild pitches.²⁰ Zoeterman bounced around the minors for a few years before leaving baseball.

Ironically, another violation of this rule by the White Sox cost them a far more accomplished pitcher. In early 1948 the Sox were fined \$500 for improperly signing pitcher Bob Buhl on August 30, 1946, apparently believing that he had graduated from high school when he still had one year to go.²¹ Buhl, who had gone 19-5 with the White Sox's Class D farm club in Madisonville, Kentucky, went on to win 166 games in a 15-year major league career.

Notes

1. *The Sporting News*. November 5, 1947.
2. *New York Times*. October 31, 1947.
3. *The Sporting News*. November 5, 1947.
4. *The Sporting News*. November 5, 1947.
5. *The Sporting News*. November 5, 1947.
6. 1945 Major League Agreement, reprinted in *Official Baseball 1945*, 219-221.
7. *New York Times*. October 30, 1947.
8. *The Sporting News*. November 5, 1947.
9. *New York Times*. November 2, 1947.
10. *New York Times*. November 1, 1947.
11. *Washington Post*. November 1, 1947.
12. *New York Times*. November 2, 1947.
13. *New York Times*. November 4, 1947.
14. *The Sporting News*. November 12, 1947.
15. *New York Times*. November 4, 1947.
16. *New York Times*. November 11, 1947.
17. *Los Angeles Times*. November 26, 1947.
18. *The Sporting News*. September 1, 1948.
19. *The Sporting News*. May 12, 1948.
20. 1949 *Sporting News Baseball Guide*.
21. *The Sporting News*. March 3, 1948.

BASEBALL RECORD BOOKS keep track of pitchers who retire the side with three strikeouts on nine pitches. On July 18, 1964 (second game), the Cubs had an amazing inning with a reverse efficiency of pitches. They scored 5 runs against the Dodgers in the second inning, sent nine batters to the plate and saw a collective total of 10 pitches (there was one swinging strike).

-DAVID SMITH

Babe Ruth at Sing Sing Prison

The Story of the 620-foot Home Run

by Robert Gold

The longest home run of Babe Ruth's incredible hitting career was not struck at any major league ballpark. According to news accounts of the time, in the late summer of 1929, the "Sultan of Swat," slugged a ball 620 feet over the wall of Sing Sing Prison. The *New York Times* called it "the longest non-stop flight of any object or person leaving Sing Sing" over the walls for the past fifty years.

Long home runs were not unusual for the incomparable slugger, who hit a total of 714 home runs in the major leagues. During his 22 years in baseball (1914 to 1935), which included five seasons as a pitcher, George Herman Ruth set distance records in every ballpark where he played. During the season of 1921, Babe Ruth hit at least one 500-foot home run in all eight parks of the American League. No player has ever equaled such a feat, and as William Jenkinson said in his article, "Long Distance Home Runs," the Babe "set objective standards of performance that have never been surpassed."

In 1914, at the age of 19, Ruth was scouted and then signed to a contract by the minor league Baltimore Orioles. The youngster became the Orioles' new "Babe," and the name "Babe Ruth" stuck with him the rest of his life. An effective left-handed pitcher, Ruth was sold to the Boston Red Sox six months later.

With the Red Sox, Babe Ruth became a remarkable hitter as well as a pitcher. In the five years he pitched for Boston, Ruth won 92 games and lost 44; he also won three World Series games without a loss. He hit 49 home runs in that same period while a starting pitcher for the Red Sox.

In 1920, the New York Yankees bought Babe Ruth for \$100,000 and a loan of \$350,000, an exceptional sum of money for a player at that time. The purchase would prove to be worth every dollar.

ROBERT GOLD is a longtime SABR member. This is his first article for The National Pastime. He lives in Jacksonville, Florida.

From 1921 to 1932, Babe Ruth led the Yankees to seven American League pennants and six World Series victories. Yankee Stadium, constructed in that decade, would be called "the house that Ruth built." Ruth also would become what many sportswriters consider to be the greatest ballplayer ever to play the game.

On September 6, 1929, only seven weeks before the historic stock market crash, Babe Ruth and the New York Yankees drove from New York City to Ossining to play baseball at Sing Sing Prison. Situated on a hill above the Hudson River, the state penitentiary was named after the nearby village of Sing Sing (named Ossining in 1901) and the Sint-Sinck Indians. A caravan of cars took the team north on the road that ran along the Hudson River.

Unlike the thousands of convicted criminals who went "up the river" to serve time in Sing Sing, the Yankees spent less than a day at the century-old state prison. Actually, they stayed only five hours inside the "grim gray walls," arriving at noon and driving away well before dusk at 5:00 in the afternoon.

All the Yankees drove up to the prison with the exception of Leo Durocher, Tony Lazzeri, Bob Meusel, Gene Robertson, and some of the team's pitchers. In the '20s, well before the major leaguers earned millions in salary, they played exhibition games on their days off for extra money. The absence of Tony Lazzeri was the only major disappointment of the day; after the Babe, the Yankee second baseman was the most popular player in the prison. The regulars who did drive up to Ossining included Benny Bengough, Earle Combs, Cedric Durst, Lou Gehrig, Mark Koenig, Ben Paschal, and even the brash young rookie, Lyn "Broadway" Lary. My brother recalls Lary's bold signature as the largest on his baseball.

After parking their automobiles in front of the prison, the Yankee players, one by one, passed through the main gate into the administration building. They were

then escorted by blue-uniformed guards through a massive iron gate and into Sing Sing itself. Still escorted by guards, the ballplayers walked to the warden's house, where lunch was served.

The house of Warden Lewis E. Lawes was located in the upper portion of the prison along with the administration building and a new cell block. Below the New York Central Railroad tracks which bisected Sing Sing, the lower portion of the prison contained the old cell block, the death house, workshops, and baseball field. The warden's home had a porch, where the players relaxed after eating.

In front of the porch, a colorful talking parrot was caged in the warden's flower garden, and when asked by a player, "Polly want a cracker?" the bird replied, "Polly want a safe cracker."

After lunch, the players accompanied the guards on a tour of the penitentiary, proceeding through a series of iron-barred doors that led them outside to the prison yard and down to the death house and gloomy old cell block built in 1825. Walking in the lower portion of the prison, the Yankees got their first look of the ball field where the game would be played.

The prison population, anxiously waiting to see the Bambino, first viewed the big slugger during his tour of Sing Sing. As the Yankees walked along with their guides, the inmates watched Ruth from every vantage point in the prison—from cell block corners and corridors, from the doors and windows of the institution's workshops, from Sing Sing's spacious prison yard, and even from the bleak-looking death house. Greeted everywhere he went, the smiling Babe responded with a wave of his big hand and his well-known "Hello, kid." The sightseeing tour ended with a walk back up the hill to the new dormitory with its front cells overlooking the Hudson River.

"Dressed to the nines," as the saying went in the '20s, Babe Ruth entered Sing Sing Prison wearing white golf togs. The big barrel-chested man (6' 2", 215 pounds) wore a white shirt with a black tie, white knickers with black plaits, black stockings, and black and white shoes. No matter the sight he must have made, the inmates adored the big guy and for weeks had talked about his expected visit to Sing Sing.

A reporter from *Baseball Magazine* described the convicts as "choked with joy" and "intoxicated with delight" at the visit of the New York Yankees with Babe Ruth in their lineup. And as the Babe, smiling broadly, sauntered through Sing Sing, he could hear

the inmates shouting one to another, "There he is. That's him in the white knickers." Their excitement was understandable since Babe Ruth was the baseball idol of America. Although unstated and unofficial, it was "Babe Ruth Day" at Sing Sing Prison.

Several of the New York City sportswriters accompanying the Yankees on their trip to Ossining described the day's events. Ford Frick, sportswriter of the *New York Journal*, joined the team on the tour and wrote a detailed account of Ruth's antics.

The Babe, ever the big kid and showman even at age 34, stole a piece of gingerbread from the prison mess hall, wrote his signature on the cell wall of a sick inmate, and sat a moment in Sing Sing's infamous electric chair. Sitting quietly in the "Chair" apparently sobered even the irrepressible Ruth for "a good half hour." The experience was a "gruesome reminder" of the reality of prison life and death.

Emerging from the death house, Babe Ruth met a blind inmate and guided him to the door of his cell block. "That was a nice old chap," Ruth said, "I wonder what he did? Stole something, I suppose. He's too gentle to do any rough stuff."

Ruth then was told by a guard that the blind old inmate had murdered his wife and had until only recently been awaiting execution in the death house. Because of his loss of sight, the convict's sentence to the Chair had been commuted to life imprisonment. The startled Ruth could only say, "Gosh."

The Yankees then went to the dressing rooms and donned their pinstriped home uniforms. The men joked as they dressed, and one of the pitchers observed, "These fellows aren't so badly off, all home games and they don't have to worry about base hits." When the Yankees had dressed, they walked out onto the huge recreation field to play a game against a picked inmate team known as the Mutual Welfare League Team.

The Mutual Welfare League, established at Sing Sing in 1914 by Warden Thomas Mott Osborne, was an inmate organization that permitted prisoners, under prison supervision, to manage the mess hall and recreation, including athletics. Six years later, when Lewis Lawes became warden, he allowed the league to continue its activities. In his famous books, *Life and Death in Sing Sing* (1929) and *Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing* (1932), Lawes asserted that the activities of the Mutual Welfare League improved the morale of the inmates, helped them develop a sense of community, and provided "training in social adaptation

and adjustment." Most important for the day-to-day operation of the prison, he claimed the existence of the League was "conducive to good discipline."

A league committee took charge of prison sports programs and administered baseball, which was financed from commissary sales and a 25¢ visitors admission charge to the games. Some of the equipment and uniforms were donated by the New York Giants, who visited Sing Sing and played exhibition games in 1924, 1927, 1929, and 1933.

The arrival of the Yankees at the ballpark was heralded by an inmate cheerleader with a megaphone, who led the 1,500 prisoners in cheers welcoming the major leaguers. They cheered, clapped, and whistled when Ruth and the Yankees ran out onto the field. Almost 90% of the prison population was in the grandstands watching the game along with Warden Lawes, who sat in a box behind home plate. Several hundred people from the village of Ossining saw the baseball game from afar from a hill overlooking the prison.

My father, Harry N. Gold, was also present at Sing Sing that day. Nearing the end of a five-year sentence for armed robbery (1924-1930), he may have been a ballplayer on the Mutual Welfare League Team. An

undated and unidentified picture of the team, at that time, shows a man who looks like my dad when he was in his twenties. Whether or not he played on the MWL team, my brother, Merton, a young boy when Dad was in Sing Sing, had an autographed Yankee baseball from 1929. It was inscribed in large bold print "To Mert" with all the visiting players' signatures on it.

As soon as Babe Ruth, with the big number three on his back, and the other New York Yankees walked onto Lawes Field they were surrounded by prisoners seeking autographs. "I didn't know there were that many of you here," said Babe Ruth, after signing 50 or 60 balls. He stood mopping the perspiration from his brow. A sportswriter for the *New York Journal* observed whimsically that the Babe signed his name "until he was lame in both arms."

The Yankees autographed balls for 20 minutes before they could even begin practice. Clusters of convicts stood around the ballplayers patiently waiting for their autographs. They signed brand-new white baseballs, since the Sing Sing inmates insisted on using old ones during the game.

Even after the game began, the Yankees, especially the Babe, continued to autograph baseballs all after-

1914 photograph of the prison ballpark looking toward the Hudson River



noon—between innings and even amid play on the bases. The Bambino autographed one ball for a prison player on his way around second base after slugging a long home run, and another for the inmate umpire after hitting him on the head with a half-swing foul ball. It was the Babe Ruth Circus, and everyone at Sing Sing wanted his autograph.

The ball game was played on the prison's bare "skin" diamond, lacking the rich green grass routinely planted and maintained at Yankee Stadium. With the farthest wall 320 feet from home plate in center field, Lawes Field was smaller than most major league ballparks, but the high stone walls more than made up for lack of outfield depth. In fact, the prison ballpark was comparable to many of the minor league fields where the players often spent several seasons before moving up to the big leagues.

The game began under gray, cloudy skies, and a mist persisted over the field all afternoon. Ruth played first base for seven innings and then pitched in the last two innings. Ever a showman and comedian, the Babe clowned about in both positions. According to Frick, "He clowned, kidded, made speeches, wise-cracked and laughed himself right into the hearts of all the men in the place."

With his big, bellowing voice, Ruth could be heard bantering with the prisoners as the game proceeded. Asking them the time, he replied to their answer with the wisecrack, "What difference does it make to you?" He then mischievously asked the inmates in the stands if they would stay to see a doubleheader, knowing only one game was allowed that day.

The prisoners replied to Ruth with "rapid-fire wise-cracks." Even before the team took the field, during the sightseeing tour, a convict kidded him, "The Yanks will lose today, Babe. We have a real burglar to umpire." The comments continued, and with Ruth at the plate, another inmate shouted, "Hit one over the center-field wall and I'll go get it." When Lyn Lary, who batted before Ruth in the lineup, came up to bat late in the game (after Babe Ruth had already hit three home runs), an inmate player yelled to his pitcher, "Pass him, Red, and get to the weak spot."

Still talking loudly and teasing the convicts, Ruth took the mound to pitch in the eighth inning. Frank Graham, sportswriter for the *New York Sun*, described the banter.

"Can you hit a hook?" Ruth asked the first MWL ballplayer he faced. The man nodded and hit the

curveball far into left field, but foul. "He can," Babe observed. "I'll try him on a fast one." His next pitch was smacked solidly into center field for a single, and Ruth said ruefully, "I should have pitched him a knuckler."

In the ninth inning, the inmate catcher hit one of Ruth's pitches for a home run. The ball carried over the left-field wall and the Bambino bellowed, "Hey, are you eligible to sign a contract?"

"He's got one now," yelled an inmate from the stands. "He's a ten-year man, Babe!"

Two of the three runs scored by the MWL players in the game came off of Ruth's pitching. A single and a triple in the eighth produced one run and the home run in the ninth a second. Not that it mattered to any of the Bambino's fans in the stands, because it was not his pitching that brought out 1,500 inmates and several hundred townspeople to watch the ball game. It was Ruth's hitting and he did not disappoint them.

At the plate in batting practice, Babe Ruth hit a ball high over the right-field wall. Only Bill Terry of the New York Giants had hit one that far, once in 1924. The Babe repeated the feat twice more during the ball game, in the third and fifth innings. He also drove a double through the infield in his first time at bat. At the end of the game, one inmate was heard saying, "It's a good thing we caught Ruth in a slump."

Babe Ruth hit his legendary home run in the second inning. It was the first and most impressive of the three consecutive homers he slammed over the prison wall. The ball soared over the center-field wall, 40 feet high and 320 feet from home plate, past the prison watchtower, and over the heads of the cheering guards, who "deserted their machine-guns" to follow its trajectory, continued over the New York Central Railroad's tracks, and landed high on a bluff below the prison's new administration building.

Baseball Magazine's Clifford Bloodgood described the scene in the imaginative language of the times: "The Babe swung. The horsehide whistled out through the air. It overcame the greatest obstacle in Sing Sing [the forty-foot wall] and escaped triumphant.

"The blow will be remembered as long as any of those who saw it live. Ruth frolicked around the bases grinning and was greeted with another barrage of hand pumping. He was mightier even than these misguided souls dreamed he could be."

Though the ball's landing site was never accurately measured, spectators estimated it struck the ground about 80 feet below the administration building. Since

the building was located 700 feet from the Hudson River, near the ballpark's home plate, Ruth's home run was considered to be 620 feet in length.

But the actual distance the Babe's home run ball traveled is disputed. Most accounts relate the reputed 620 feet it was hit, but admit the distance was never measured. In the prison history, *Then, Now And Tomorrow: The History of Sing Sing* (1991), Robert Matuszewski writes, "Babe belted one out of the Prison 'Park' . . . The shot was said to be 620 feet, it has never been measured to this day." Brant L. Kehn, the former first deputy superintendent of the old prison, reported a similar account in a "Historical Perspective of Baseball at Sing Sing," but, in a conversation two years ago, told me he doubted the distance. With a laugh, Kehn said, "Ruth's home run gets longer and longer as the years go by."

An aerial photograph of the prison, taken in the '20s, settles the argument. The photograph shows the entire site of the facility, including the ballpark built beside the Hudson River. Home plate was indeed set in the ground near the river, but at least 100 feet inland. Babe Ruth's long home run therefore could not have traveled more than 520 feet, a distance not uncommon for one of the slugger's great hits.

The bat that Babe Ruth used to hit his home run was still at Sing Sing as recently as the late '60s. The New York Mets saw it during a visit to the state prison in 1967, two years before the "miracle" season. Yogi Berra, Tom Seaver, and Ron Swoboda were among the Mets who "went up the river" to visit Sing Sing.

Awed accounts of Babe Ruth's hitting and long home run at Sing Sing appeared in a number of New York newspapers. Don Skene, sportswriter of the *Herald Tribune* said, "he slammed three balls o'er the prison walls for miles and miles." The *New York Times*, similarly impressed and more effusive about Ruth's home run, said, "His third [second] inning drive, which traversed the long diagonal of the rectangle [Lawes Field was rectangular in shape] before making its getaway past the centre field guardhouse, was jotted down by prison statisticians as the longest non-stop flight by an object or person leaving Sing Sing by that route for the past handful of decades." Another newspaper reporter stated the home run "matched any he has made in all his career."

As the Babe rounded first base after hitting his tremendous home run, the MWL first baseman grasped his hand and said, "Gee, I wish I was riding out of here

on that one." The prisoner had 10 years left on a 25-year sentence in Sing Sing.

The game ended, to nobody's surprise, with an overwhelming win for the Yankees, 17-3. The Sing Sing scoreboard, manned by two inmates, showed only 15 runs for the visitors from New York City, but the official box score kept by another trustee had the accurate run totals. The sportswriter for the *New York Herald Tribune* suggested that the scorers may have been put in Sing Sing for "illegal mathematical operations on the outside."

The ball game no sooner ended than the Babe was surrounded by prisoners. He had to elbow his way through the throng of men to join the other Yankee players, who were being guided by guards to their dressing room.

"Good-bye, boys, and good luck," the waving Babe Ruth yelled as the inmates in the stands lined up to march to their cells.

"Good-bye, Babe," replied Red Conklin, the experienced prison pitcher and "lifer" from New York City. Speaking for the inmates, Conklin shouted, "Come again any time. We're always at home."

Babe Ruth waved and, 15 minutes later, he roared away from Ossining at the wheel of his big motor car. The memorable day of baseball at Sing Sing Prison, with Babe Ruth, the New York Yankees, and the 620-foot home run, was over.



Subsequent players, including Al Weis, David Cone, and Derek Jeter, have all been mistaken to be Jewish at one time or another. In reality, the most recent Jewish player on a New York team was Elliott Maddox. He retired as a member of the New York Mets in 1980.

Baseball and baseball cards have been an integral segment of the American Jewish experience. Fans and collectors have formed their own Sanhedrins arguing which players should be recognized as Jewish and which should not. One collector, Martin Abramowitz, went so far as to publish his own card set. As attitudes toward American Jewish issues have changed among Gentile and Jew alike, these social trends have mirrored those in baseball. Several centuries henceforth, anthropologists will be faced with the difficulty in analyzing the significance of the Jewish collection. Why did so many households contain these cards? Why were they stored in protective plastic sheets? Why were these collections revered? It must have been a religion.

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