

# Beating the Bushes



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## A Son's Treasured Baseball

by Bob Brady

**D**avid Johnson recently sent to the Boston Braves Historical Association (BBHA) a photocopy of his cherished red and blue stitched GoldSmith Official 97 League baseball. Manufactured by sporting goods purveyor P. GoldSmith Sons, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, the horsehide spheroid was marketed as complying "in every respect with the specifications of organized Professional Baseball." The "97" reflected the initial production year and use of the ball back in 1897. The company boasted that its baseball was "guaranteed for 18 innings" of play.

David's ball was used in 1938 in a Class C Middle Atlantic League game on July 22. He knows this since it had been passed along to him from his late father, **Art "Lefty" Johnson**, who'd hurled for the Boston Bees/Braves in 1940-42. It came from the southpaw's first professional win. Lefty had achieved the feat as a member of the Erie Sailors, a Boston Bees affiliate. Facing the Brooklyn Dodgers'-linked Dayton Ducks at their ballpark, he emerged victorious, holding the home team to two runs and five hits while his teammates scored three times. On the mound, **Art Johnson** struck out six of the Ducks to seal his inaugural triumph. 54-year-old Dayton owner/manager **Howard Elbert "Ducky" Holmes** received the "heave ho" during that contest for striking umpire **Charles Whittle** in the face. Holmes had had a nine game big league career as a catcher with St. Louis Cardinals back in 1906. The league followed up with a 120 scheduled playing days suspension whose enforcement would carry over into the following season.

**Art Johnson** had been a highly talented schoolboy athlete at Winchester (MA) High School. He once struck out 18 batters in a 7-0 shutout over Lexington (MA) High School. While still a junior, Johnson had the opportunity to pitch batting practice to the Bees at the "Beehive," the ballpark formerly known as Braves Field before the team nickname was changed. Sufficiently impressed by his performance, the ball club surreptitiously signed Johnson to a Hartford Bees farm club contract while still a

high school junior in order to preserve his amateur eligibility for his senior year.

Some accounts indicate that the 18-year-old Johnson directly reported to the Sailors shortly after his June graduation and baseball-reference.com seems to reflect such in its on-line career statistical record of his. However, *The Sporting News* Baseball Player Contract Card Collection revealed to us that Johnson stopped first at Hartford, Connecticut to spend some time with the Bees' Class A affiliate. This recently digitized collection had been maintained by "baseball's bible," and recorded on index cards the professional history of major and minor league ball-players as derived from the information published in its famed weekly periodical.

Since the BBHA had been the beneficiary of a massive compilation of photocopied microfilm sports section files of the *Hartford Courant* newspaper, courtesy of **Mike Keough**, an Association founder, we engaged in further research on this matter. The June 24, 1938 edition of the *Courant* confirmed that Johnson was one of two players sent by the parent to join the local ball club on that date. On July 12, the newspaper reported that Johnson "left last night for the Bees' farm team at Erie." He had not been used in a contest during his brief Connecticut stint.

This productive bit of research encouraged us to delve further into Johnson's Erie days. In 14 games with the Sailors, he would win one more game while also assessed with six losses. Johnson might have encountered a future Boston teammate in his first win. The Dayton Ducks' regular second baseman was **Carvel "Bama" Rowell**, a 1940-41 Bees/Braves teammate. Johnson's other Eastern League triumph came against the Springfield Indians, a Cleveland Tribe farm team. In the second game of a doubleheader, he defeated the Indians, 5-2, in a complete game seven-inning affair. The teenaged southpaw struck out seven, walked two and gave up six hits. One of those safeties was a double, struck by Springfield right fielder **Phil Masi**. Masi had backstopped the opener. Johnson and Masi would become batterymates in the Hub. The opponent's nightcap backstop was 17-year-old **Jim Hegan**, fresh out of Lynn (MA) High School, and who may have crossed paths with Lefty during their high school

days. Hegan would go on to a 17 year major league career featuring five All Star selections and two World Series appearances, including Cleveland's 1948 Fall Classic championship over the Braves. He had a lengthy post-playing big league career as a coach. His son, Mike, was a first baseman/outfielder over the course of 12 seasons in the majors. In retirement, the son would pursue a career in broadcasting.

Despite a somewhat mediocre debut, Johnson, at age 19, began the 1939 season in Class A back in Hartford. No statistics for his time there were posted on baseball-reference.com. This is likely because full season minor league records often wouldn't include players who failed to perform in a minimum number of games. Once again, we were able to fill another void in Johnson's record, courtesy of the Keough compilation. Lefty had donned the Hartford uniform from April 29 to July 18. Fortunately, the Hartford Courant published the weekly aggregated official Eastern League stats as of July 19 in its July 23 offering. We now know that the columns left blank in the record books for that half of his '39 season in Hartford should register Johnson's 11 game appearances, representing 30 innings and an 0-4 performance. He allowed 42 hits, struck out 16 while walking 13. Hopefully, the information that we've accumulated eventually will make its way into Johnson's official career register.

Johnson returned to Hartford in 1940 and led the mound staff with a 17-11, 3.19 ERA record. He drew comparisons in the press to **Carl Hubbell** and attracted the attention of several big league teams contemplating transacting his acquisition. According to the infamous Boston sports scribe, **Dave "The Colonel" Egan**, the Bees were rumored to have turned down a \$30,000 cash offer (equivalent to over \$650,000 in 2023 dollars) from the Yankees. Johnson was rewarded with a late season call up to Boston. At age 20, he made his major league debut on September 22 at the Polo Grounds. He made his appearance in a sixth inning relief stint during the second game of a doubleheader against the Giants. Johnson received his first starting assignment on September 28, also against the Giants in New York and was tagged with his first big league loss in an 11-1 thrashing at the hands of the Gotham nine.

With **Casey Stengel's** 1941 Braves crew, Johnson was the club's leading southpaw starter. His 7-15 overall tally was not a true reflection of his performance. With a weak hitting ball club (e.g., its leading home run hitter **Max West** swatted only 12 circuit clouts), many of his losses were by just one or two runs and he achieved a respect-

able 3.53 ERA under the circumstances. A rotator cuff injury incurred during spring training of 1942 limited his mound time to just four games.

Johnson served in the Navy during WWII and was a Purple Heart recipient. While on a light aircraft carrier situated off of Iwo Jima in 1945, he suffered a significant knee injury from fragments received from a Japanese kamikaze aircraft that crashed into the ship's deck. The damages to his arm and knee effectively ended his baseball career.

**Art Johnson** renewed his ties with his Bees and Braves days by being instrumental in the establishment of the BBHA. Lefty was a beloved regular honored guest at annual reunions. There, he would reminisce with his Hartford Bees teammates and frequent reunion attendees, super sub **Sibby Sisti** and outfielder **Ralph McLeod**. Johnson regaled attendees with his tale of his misjudgment of a rookie left hander's future. He recalled sitting in the Braves dugout in 1942 alongside skipper Stengel as both observed a 20-year-old freshman southpaw by the name of **Warren Spahn** pitch batting practice. The Tribe manager turned to Johnson and asked for his opinion on the potential of youngster appearing on the mound. Unimpressed by what he saw, Johnson opined, "He looks good, but I don't think he'll make it. He's too skinny and he's not fast enough." Despite that evaluation, Spahn went on to a pretty good Hall of Fame career! Johnson related that story to the Cooperstown inductee when Spahn attended a BBHA reunion.



A memorable baseball highlight for Johnson happened on Saturday August 30, 1997 at a ballgame that was part of the kick-off series of regular season interleague play. The Atlanta Braves had traveled to Fenway Park to play the Red Sox. Johnson was among a large contingent of returning Boston Braves assembled in a line between home plate and first base. Each returnee was introduced to the crowd of 32,865 over the public address system. He'd also had an opportunity to sit and chat with Atlanta Tribe manager and future Hall of Famer, **Bobby Cox** in the visitors' dugout during batting and fielding practice. As his ballplayers returned to enter the clubhouse, Cox called upon them to sign a baseball in Johnson's possession, informing his minions that "without guys like him, you wouldn't be here." To top off the day, he also witnessed his former team drub the Bosox, 15-2.

**Art Johnson** passed away on April 27, 2008 at age 88. We thank **David Johnson** for sharing such a cherished memento and to stimulate us to delve further into his father's life and career.

[Excerpted from the Boston Braves Historical Association's newsletter, Volume 30, Issue 1 (2024)]

## Dysfunction junction between Olean and St. Louis

by Joe Marren

**A**s the cliché goes, you can choose your friends but not your family. To stretch that strained metaphor almost to the breaking point, baseball minor league clubs can't be too picky about their parent teams. Sometimes the choice is based on geography, sometimes team chemistry, sometimes development philosophy, but money is always in the equation.

An example of all that is the ol' Olean Oilers of the Class D PONY League from 1939-56. When the PONY League began play in 1939 it had six teams scattered across New York (Batavia Clippers, Jamestown Jaguars, Niagara Falls Rainbows, Olean Oilers), Pennsylvania (Bradford Bees), and Ontario, Canada (Hamilton Red Wings). Batavia was unaffiliated from 1939-41. In that inaugural season Jamestown was affiliated with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Niagara Falls with the Cleveland Indians, Olean with the Brooklyn Dodgers, Bradford with the Boston Braves, and Hamilton with the St. Louis Cardinals.

In 1939 the Oilers won the regular season with a 65-38 record and then beat the Red Wings, 4 games to 2, to win the championship series. Same story in '40 as Olean finished the season 65-39 and topped Batavia, 4 games to 2, to repeat as league champs. So it would seem the family ties between Brooklyn and Olean were solid and tight, right?

Umm, no. Somehow dysfunction set in during the rest of the 1940s as Olean was usually near the bottom of the standings both in the won-lost record and its attendance. In 1948, Olean's last year with Brooklyn, the Oilers fell to 60-66, seventh in what was then an eight-team league and seventh in attendance with 41,363 fans in the stands.

The woeful St. Louis Browns (59-94 in 1948 and 53-101 in '49) was the parent team in 1949 and the Oilers shared in the misery when they finished last in the won-lost column at 39-86 (40½ games behind the Bradford Blue Wings) and in attendance (40,264). The change wasn't because of geography, Olean is 346 miles from Brooklyn and more than twice that (745 miles) from St. Louis. So money played a role: The Browns had 20 minor league affiliates in 1948, 18 in 1949, and then 11 in 1950. Brooklyn shrank at a slower pace with 26 minor league teams in '48, 25 in '49, and 24 in '50. And while the Browns sank lower in the American League won-loss standings from 1948-50, finishing sixth, seventh and seventh in the eight-team AL, the Dodgers were rising in the National League, going from third to first to second in that same time frame. That was reflected in attendance as the Browns were usually last from 1948-50 (their best year in that time period was 1948 with 335,564) and the Dodgers

were among the leaders, topping the NL in 1949 with 1.6 million.

As Olean searched for a parent club in 1949 Browns' execs assured Oilers' administrators that all was rosy with the organization and that their farm system would benefit Olean:

William O. DeWitt, president of the Browns, ... assured the local group that the Browns would send in the best possible material.

He pointed out that the success of the parent Browns in future years depended on the ball players developed in the minor league clubs of the organization.

He said the Browns had spent \$150,000 on a scouting program last year and had the same amount budgeted for this season.

He told of the Browns training camp in Pine Bluff, Ark., and explained that ... Olean was assured of good talent.

Charles DeWitt, vice president of the Browns, told of the wide interest the Browns maintained in their farm system and explained how closely the operations of minor league teams were watched.

Nice words, but they were also hollow, empty words since the Oilers finished last in the PONY League standings and also in attendance after the 1949 season. Just about six months later in early August the Olean directors and stockholders knew they needed to find another parent club because the ties to St. Louis "aided no one but the Browns."

Low attendance at Olean's Bradner Stadium meant the club lost between \$8,000 and \$9,500 in 1949. The Browns were expected to pinch pennies and cut down their Class C and D affiliates from six teams to three. The six D teams were Olean, the Ada Herefords (69-70) of the Sooner State League, Mayfield Clothiers (38-86) of the Kitty League, Pittsburg (Kansas) Browns (39-85) of the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League, Redding Browns (63-64) in the Far West League, and the Wausau Lumberjacks (54-69) in the Wisconsin State League. In fact, though, the Browns kept four teams in 1950: Ada had the most success finishing first in the league (96-41) but losing in the playoffs. St. Louis dropped Wausau (finishing last at 33-88) in the Wisconsin State League but added the Appleton Papermakers (58-66). Redding also did well in the Far West League, going 86-54 and winning the league title. Settled into mediocrity was Pittsburg (71-52 and 9½ games out of first place).

By October the exact amount Olean had lost in 1949 was announced to be \$9,492.82 and the board of directors said the club would have to attract about 60,000 fans in 1950 to balance the books. The club drew 40,264 fans in '49, so that means it would need about 19,700 more fans in the stands in 1950. According to the Census Bureau,



the population of the City of Olean in 1950 was 19,754. But that's just the city and doesn't include the surrounding towns and villages that the ball club could potentially get to go to home games.

However, everyone knew a winning team would draw people to Bradner Stadium, and for that dependable support from a cooperative major league partner was a must. So the 218 stockholders of the Olean Community Baseball Club Inc., looked to the Browns again. But the Browns weren't interested and the Oilers faced the 1950 season as an unaffiliated team. Doom and gloom were on just about every Olean baseball fan's lips. Well, almost everyone. Team Business Manager Mark Hammond was apparently a "glass half full" guy:

We'll surprise a lot of the people who think we won't get anywhere in the PONY without a major league connection. I'm no betting man but I'm almost sure we'll be a pennant contender and finish in the first four.

Hammond should have put a bet down because the Oilers finished second in 1950 with a 71-54 record, 10½ games behind the Hornell Dodgers and then beat the Dodgers' farm team 4 games to 3 to win the league title. (A bit of karma there, perhaps?) The Oilers were the first unaffiliated team to win the PONY League championship. They were also unaffiliated in 1951 and finished first (79-48) but lost the championship series to Hornell 4 games to 3. (Apparently karma doesn't play favorites.)

As a bit of dénouement, in 1961 the Olean Red Sox beat the Batavia Pirates in the league's championship series. It was Olean's last title and in 1962 the team folded.

Olean had several major league partners, but the two mentioned here, the Dodgers and Browns, also had major changes in store. The Dodgers went west, leaving Brooklyn for Los Angeles before the 1958 season and the Browns moved east to Baltimore and became the Orioles by the 1954 season.

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## **The catcher who became a world-famous elephant trainer**

***Roman Schmitt left baseball and Marion ultimately to follow in his father Hugo's footsteps.***

**by Chad Osborne**

**B**ruised shins. Broken digits. Busted knees. There's a reason they call catcher's equipment the tools of ignorance.

Roman Schmitt likely wished he had some sort of tools – ignorant or otherwise – protecting his body the day an Asian bull elephant charged him, goring his leg, threatening not only his livelihood, but his life. Roman spent five months in the hospital. He had 19 operations – there were bone, artery and skin grafts – and doctors worried they'd have to amputate his broken leg.

But, seven months out from the accident, he was back at work, with a slight limp, once again in the middle of elephants stomping and circling and about. "Every profession has its dangers," Roman told a newspaper reporter. "I have respect for them, but not fear."

His occupations over the 15 years prior to the accident had often placed him in the path of hard-charging land mammals, whether it be a 6,000-pound elephant with piercing tusks or a 240-pound nostrils-flaring ballplayer charging down the third base line.

## **Before elephants and rhinos, there was baseball**

Roman Peter Schmitt caught the eye of New York Mets scouts when he was smacking baseballs around the ballpark as a member of the Riverview High School Rams in Sarasota, Florida in the late 60s and into 1970.

As a senior, Roman led all his teammates with a .455 batting average. With his quick bat, he hit .342 as a sophomore, playing catcher and first base, and .364 as a junior.

"Roman is the best all-around catcher I've ever coached," his high school skipper Clyde Steen said. "No lad ever wanted to play ball more than Roman."

Following his high school graduation, the 18-year old was set to take his talents about a half an hour south of his home at 318 Howell Place in Sarasota to Manatee Junior College on a full scholarship.

That all changed, however, when the New York Mets, World Series champs in '69, selected the slender 5-10, 170-pound catcher in the 16th round, No. 383 overall, in the June 1970 Major League Baseball draft. Roman was considered by coaches and scouts to be one of the best young catchers in Florida.

"It's all I ever wanted to do," he said. "My parents want me to go to school, but they also want me to play pro baseball."

Roman's mother, Jenny, smiled as she stood behind her son when he signed the contract with New York scout Birdie Tebbetts sitting to his left in a light suit. His father, Hugo, voiced his approval on the phone from Nashville, Tennessee, where he was on the road with Ringling Brothers Circus.

Becoming a professional ballplayer meant Roman had to forgo his college scholarship, but as Tebbets explained, the catcher received “a satisfactory bonus.”

Tebbets assigned his new catcher to play his first season in Marion, but first he was to report immediately to the New York Mets’ training campus in St. Petersburg, Florida, for 10 days of workouts.

Tebbets, a former big-league catcher and manager before hooking on with the Mets as a scout and sometimes rookie league skipper, had his eyes on Roman for a while. “I’m proud to say I’m the scout that signed Roman Schmitt,” claimed Tebbets, who had managed the Marion Mets in 1967. “He is a fine boy – a good boy – and he wants to play baseball more than anything else. I think the boy can go as far as he wants in this game.”

After a couple of weeks in camp, Roman and his teammates arrived in Marion on June 21, 1970, a Sunday afternoon, just days before the Mets opened the Appalachian League season on a Tuesday night in Bluefield. Terry Christman had been appointed the team’s skipper with director of player development Whitey Herzog visiting Marion to lend his assistance and expertise for the first couple of weeks.

Former big-leaguer hurler Chuck Estrada, who played one year with the Mets, but spent most of his career with the Baltimore Orioles, was to serve as pitching coach, and former New York Yankees infielder and 1964 All-Star Jerry Lumpe was the team’s hitting coach.

The Mets’ 1969 sixth-round draft choice, right-handed pitcher Randy Reynolds, also arrived in Marion along with four players – Gary Betts, Mike Kowalski, Danny Murphy and John Tregilgus – who were a part of the 1969 Marion team that finished second, just a half game out of first place, in the Appy League with 37-32 record.

But as much as Marion fans hoped to see their team win the 1970 title – and keep an eye out for the next big-league star – the Marion squad never could capture the

magic.

Not even close.

The Mets finished the season with a dreadful 22-37 record, settling at the bottom of the seven-team league.

“We are all tired from holding up the entire Appalachian League,” Marion Baseball President Bob Garnett joked near the end of the ‘70 season. “In my judgment, Terry Christman did well with the material he had to work with.”

Roman Schmitt didn’t contribute much to the team’s efforts, at least not with his bat. The kid from Sarasota hit just .134 and struck out 38 times in 37 games for Marion.

There was one particular bright spot for Marion, however, in which Roman played a major role.



*Roman and Toomai*

batted in. Chipping in, too, were Steve Warden, who grew up and played high school ball just across the Virginia-Tennessee border at Sullivan East High School, and Joe Ostrosser, who was just two weeks away from being named the Mets’ MVP. Both had two run home runs to give the Mets a 12-0 win over the Kingsport Royals.

As Pugh’s catcher, Roman played a significant role in Pugh’s commanding performance, one in which the pitcher struck out seven Royals and allowed only three base runners in the seven-inning victory in game one of a doubleheader.

The Mets 1970 season ended in late August, and so did Roman’s time in the Southwest Virginia town. Shortly thereafter, he joined the National Guard, “perhaps to avoid being drafted to the Vietnam War,” his son Ryan

He was on the receiving end, you might say, when on August 11, 1970, righty Randy Pugh of Calistoga, California, pitched the first ever no-hitter in Marion Mets history. Roman was Pugh’s catcher that night.

Roman had one of his best games at the plate for Marion that night, going 2-for-4 with a couple of runs scored and two runs

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Schmitt said in a phone conversation in May 2023.

Despite his down year at the plate in Marion, the New York Mets saw Roman Schmitt's potential. The following summer, in 1971, the New York organization invited him back, this time a little closer to home and one rung up the minor league ladder from the Marion Mets.

"Would like you to report to the Pompano Beach (Florida) Baseball Club immediately on August 1st or shortly thereafter," New York Mets minor league Director Joe McDonald wrote to Private Roman P. Schmitt on July 15, 1971. "The club will be playing Miami at Miami on August 1, 2 and 3."

Roman made it to Pompano Beach, but played only one game for the single A Mets team there. He had one hit, scored a run and knocked home another.

After that game, his baseball career came to an end. He returned home heartbroken.

### **The family business**

Hugo Schmitt hurried through snow and ice along the streets of Hamburg, his labored breath crystalizing in the bitter cold night air while commanding a small herd of five elephants - Icky, Karnaudi, Minjak, Mutu and Sabu – to their safety aboard a train headed for Sweden. Among all the objects falling from the sky, snow was the least of his worries.

As sirens blared through the night sky one November night in 1944, Allied forces flying overhead dropped bomb after bomb, obliterating parts of the German city.

Moments after Hugo's brave and heroic escape, the circus house roof burst into flames.

A few years later, the Swedish government confiscated and planned to sell Hugo's beloved elephants, their "spoils of the war," newspapers there reported. Hugo was devastated. The Billboard, in its March 8, 1947, ran a three-paragraph article with the headline: "Unhappy elephant trainer releases five bulls on street."

"They were trying to separate his animals during the war, and he [Hugo] told them 'No, you can't separate them, they'll die,' said Hugo's granddaughter and Roman Schmitt's daughter Megan Marovich. "So, he turned a herd of bull elephants loose on his town."

The elephants ran wild, "breaking lampposts and terrorizing citizens," The Billboard reported. Police, unable to corral the animals, eventually convinced Hugo to reign them in.

He did.

"The state is making a grave mistake in selling them,"

Hugo said with tears in his eyes. "They have been trained together and love each other. If they are parted, they will die."

Better news for Hugo and the elephants arrived soon, though, in the form of John Ringling North, who journeyed to Sweden to purchase the elephants on the condition that Hugo move to the United States to train the animals along with the 38 already owned by Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

For years, Hugo Schmitt made a living as a renowned circus elephant trainer. In 1953, President Eisenhower called Ringling to request the best elephant trainer in the world to be part of his inauguration festivities. Ringling, of course, sent Hugo.

"The elephant is the Republican party symbol, after all," the trainer said.

Hugo worked with Ringling until 1971, training animals and performing shows that included a wide variety of acts that captivated audiences. He once trained a zebra to stand on the back of a reclining elephant and, speaking a combination of English and German, he instructed a South American llama to leap over an elephant's back. He once boosted Marilyn Monroe onto the back of a painted pink elephant during one of his performances at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

"He had a voice that came through and they loved him," Hugo's wife, Jenny Schmitt, once explained to a newspaper reporter. "They respected him – and they have to – otherwise you're gone."

Hugo's 25-year career with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, nearly came to an abrupt ending from the tusks of one of his beloved creatures. Once, a female elephant charged Hugo and violently tossed him into a truck. He suffered a punctured lung, broken ribs and a snapped collarbone.

It seems the lure of show business and roaring crowds – far bigger and more boisterous than those in Marion – topped any trepidations his son Roman may have had about transitioning from baseball and into his father's profession.

Soon after his release from the New York Mets organization and a brief stint in the military, Roman began training with Hugo, learning the ropes of elephant training with the traveling circus. It didn't take long for Roman to get his own gigs.

The catcher-turned-animal trainer dazzled audiences with spectacular performances. Some nights, circus goers might see a tiger hitching a ride on an elephant's back. They might also see Roman's black rhino, Kenya, working tusk-in-tusk with an Asian elephant named Birka.

With wife, Jean, by his side, or standing atop elephants,

Roman worked at Circus World near Orlando, Florida, and started the theme park's elephant breeding program. Years later, he did the same at Busch Gardens animal theme park in Tampa, Florida.

"It was really cool when we were kids," Marovich recalled. "My uncle [Eddie Schmitt] lived behind us, and he had the tigers, and my dad and my mom had the elephants. We felt we were so mistreated as kids because we couldn't have friends over because it was such a liability. But we had the animals there, and it was really interesting."

Roman's success nearly never happened. A little more than a decade into his new profession, an elephant bull named Toomai gored his leg as the two walked out of a barn into the pasture to prepare for one of their daily shows at Circus World around 8 a.m. on a Thursday on April 14, 1983.

As blood poured from his broken leg, Roman limped out of the pasture and fell to the ground, bumping his head. "A freak accident," is how Roman later described the near-fatal attack from an overzealous pachyderm. Circus World spokesman Frank Langley said the same.

"If the elephant had attacked him, I guarantee you he

wouldn't be with us today," Langley said as Roman lay in Winter Haven Hospital the next day, after surgery that, the circus spokesman said, involved tying together "arteries and veins and tissues."

One of his legs "was very messed up," Ryan Schmitt, Roman's son, told me on the phone. "There was a cavernous indentation that went up the entirety of the inside of his leg. There was a huge valley in his leg."

Ryan, who was born to Roman and Jean in 1991, does not remember much about his father. He remembers the scar – "It was weird," he said, but most of the knowledge of his father's circus life comes from handed-down stories and research that he and his sister, Megan, assembled into a scrapbook.

Roman Schmitt died in May 2001 of liver failure, Ryan said, at age 49. His legacy in the circus far exceeded his baseball exploits in Marion and elsewhere. One of his Marion Mets teammates remembers Roman fondly. On the diamond, "he was a good catcher, and a good pull hitter," said Steve Warden, the infielder from Bluff City, Tennessee.

"But also, he was a really nice guy, and a good teammate."

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## A Year Without Joy: The 1907 Honolulu League

by John Iachetta

**T**he Honolulu Athletic Club Reds had utterly dominated the Honolulu Baseball League in 1906. They won the first half of the season with a record of 7-1, and the second half with a record of 7-3. Their success was fueled by pitcher Barney Joy, who was the league's best pitcher and best batter that year by a mile. At the plate, he led the league in batting average (.438 - 63 points higher than anyone else), in hits (32), doubles (5), and triples (7). On the mound, he led the league in wins and winning percentage with a 13-4 record, strikeouts with 159, and runs allowed per nine innings with 3.11 - the pitcher's triple crown.

He was a wonder.

But in 1907 Joy signed to pitch for the San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast League. The Seals gained a starter, but the Honolulu Athletic Club lost its star. (It could have been worse; the Seals were also going to sign En Sue, star third baseman for the Honolulu Athletic Club and star sprinter for the Chinese Athletic Club, but ended up passing on him when they decided they had too many unexperienced players on their roster.)

With Joy gone, the H.A.C. changed its name to the St. Louis College Alumni team, as a number of them had gone to St. Louis School, a Roman Catholic prep school in Honolulu founded in 1846 that still exists today. (Alumni notable in sports include recent major leaguers Benny Agbayani, Chad Santos, Brandon League, Rico Garcia, Jordan Yamamoto, Ka'ai Tom, and star quarterback Tua Tagovailoa.)

The H.A.C. had lost its star and changed its name, but around the league even greater changes were taking place. The 1906 league had been a five-team affair, with the H.A.C. Reds, the Punahou Colts, the Maile Ilima Zebras, the Oahus, and the Kamehamehas.

The Oahus, who had finished second overall in 1906 with a record of 10-7, sold their franchise to the Diamond Head Athletic Club for \$500. The Diamond Head Athletic Club was described by the *Honolulu Advertiser* as "one of the largest purely athletic associations in the city." It was best established in soccer, football, track and swimming, but its baseball team had won the championship of the Winter League in 1906. (The Winter League was only for players who had not played in the Honolulu League; its goal was to give younger/more inexperienced players a chance to play.)

The Diamond Head team seemed to have a fair chance at glory - and profit - in the Honolulu League.



The *Advertiser* reported on January 25 that:

"It was stated that figuring on last season's gate receipts the Diamond Heads might safely count on \$350 a year as their share of the season's profits. The expenses of running a team for the season will be about \$200, which will leave a net profit of \$150. The franchise has six years to run, so that investment looks, at this distance, to be a good one."

Notice the low expense figure for running a team. In the same article, the Chairman of the Diamond Head Athletic Club exhorted his club to "do all they could to keep the game clean from the taint of professionalism." No pesky player payroll needed in the Honolulu League.

On April 12 the Honolulu League decided to buy back Maile Ilima's franchise for \$500 so they could have a four team league. There had been rumors of replacing Maile Ilima with either the Honolulu Rapid Transit Co.'s team, the Ding Dings, or the Tenth Infantry team, but nothing came of it. After three months of wrangling, from January to April, the league line-up was finally decided: St. Louis, Punahou, Kamehameha, and Diamond Head.

St. Louis, Punahou, and Kamehameha were all prep-school alumni teams. St. Louis was founded in 1846 (see above), Punahou was founded in 1841, and Kamehameha was founded in 1887. All still exist today. (Kolten Wong, former St. Louis Cardinal second baseman, went to Kamehameha.)

The alumni teams were not exclusively for alumni, but their cores were made of alumni. As an athletic club, Diamond Head was the odd man out.

The schedule was drawn up by mid-April. Double-headers would be played every Saturday from May 11 to August 17, for an eighteen-game season. Bert Bowers would umpire all the games, C.L. Cutting would keep



PAUL ISENBERG.

score, and the league president would miss all of it.

The league president was Daniel Paul Rice Isenberg, known as Paul Jr., the son of a German businessman who had owned sugarcane plantations in Hawaii. Paul Isenberg attempted to resign at the league meeting in early March because he would be on a trip to Europe for several months of the season, but Charlie Falk, St. Louis manager, proposed a resolution keeping him as president, and it was passed.

Why, I cannot hope to fathom.

Isenberg did indeed leave for Europe April 23, "for a visit of several months", and the season started without him on May 11. The teams would be playing for the Senior League cup, "a handsome trophy presented to the Honolulu Baseball League by E.O. Hall & Son."

The *Honolulu Advertiser* wrote on May 11:

"The lemno man lies in waiting in the grandstand's graceful shade, the fat policemen are guarding the gentlemen in the press box, the peanuts are crisp and salty.

"All is ready.

"Play ball!"

(Lemmo was a type of lemonade, conceived of and sold by G.A.E. Miller, a Honolulu entrepreneur/street-preacher.)

Opening day went well. "The band was there, the girls were there, in fact everybody seemed to be there." In the first game, St. Louis beat Kamehameha 7-1 as Paul Burns, St. Louis' replacement for Barney Joy, threw a 1-hitter and didn't walk a single batter. (Dick Reuter, Burns' mound opponent, hit a single in the third for the only hit. ) Burns was just a rookie, but had good speed and



control.

The Punahous beat the Diamond Heads 5-1 in the second game, looking like a championship team. Five-ninths of their line-up came from just two families.

Of the five Desha brothers who played baseball, Punahou had Eddie, Dave, and Jack in their opening day lineup. (George, who had hit .307 for Punahou the last year, played in Hilo in 1907. W. Desha would play two games for Punahou later in the year.) The Deshas were speedsters: pitcher-third baseman Eddie Desha stole ten bases in 1906 and 12 in 1907, shortstop Jack Desha stole 16 bases in 1906 and 11 in 1907 (while hitting below .160 both years), and George had stolen 14 bases in 1906. There were a lot of stolen bases in the Honolulu League, but stealing more than 10 in a season was still very good.

Of the Desha brothers, Eddie was the controversial one, at least in May 1907. After the first game, Diamond Head manager Eddie Fernandez submitted a protest, complaining that Desha had violated the rule against players signing contracts with two teams. There was no doubt that Desha had signed contracts with both Diamond Head and Punahou before the season; the trouble was figuring out *when* he had signed with Diamond Head.

The rule banning players signing with two different teams was only passed on April 17, 1907. If Desha had signed his contract with Diamond Head before April 17, signing with Punahou after changing his mind would be fine (it was reasoned.) It would have been easy to figure out when Desha signed the contract - except that the Diamond Head contract had no date on it. Desha claimed he signed with Diamond Head before April 17, before he changed his mind and signed with Punahou - Eddie Fernandez claimed Desha signed after. The question was which one was telling the truth.

The league's response to the protest was... silence. A majority of the trustees were abroad, and a decision could not be made. As things turned out, they would wait a *long* time for a response from the league.

Did the Honolulu League higher-ups have their act together or what?

But back to Honolulu League families...There were five Williams brothers, and none of them would hit a lick in 1907. Punahou had Alfred as their shortstop, and Johnnie as a pitcher/infielder; they hit .143 and .136 respectively. Johnnie would later become the first Hawaiian to reach the majors, losing two games for the Detroit Tigers in 1914, but on opening day 1907 he was just a seventeen-year-old. He still managed to three-hit the Diamond Heads, and collect three hits himself. (He would only get five more hits the rest of the season, in 13 games.)

Meanwhile, St. Louis had Jimmy Williams at second base (.205), William Williams in rightfield for three games (.182), and Diamond Head had Harry Williams in left field for one game. (He went 0-for-4.) In 174 at-bats, the Williamses combined for zero extra base hits.

To be fair, the Honolulu League was a serious pitcher's league in 1907: the league as a whole batted .204 with a slugging percentage of .257. But it was definitely not a good year for Williamses.

St. Louis got off to a hot start, winning their first three games. On May 18, they beat Punahou 6-4, and on May 25 they beat Diamond Head 7-2. Burns pitched a gem against Diamond Head, striking out 10 and allowing three hits. One spectator said the Diamond Heads were "worse than the Mailes." Harsh words, yes, but not undeserved. They were 0-3, and had collected a total of 13 hits and five runs. Bill Chillingworth had pitched all of their games, and was adequate, but certainly no match for St. Louis.

En Sue, St. Louis' "doughty little Chinese" third baseman, led off the game with the first home run of the season, entitling him to the \$5 suit from E.O. Hall & Son given to home run hitters.

The Punahou Colts, meanwhile, were 2-1, and were acting as if they were trying to corner the market on pitchers. Not only did they have Johnnie Williams and Eddie Desha; on May 18 they added Bill Hampton, who the previous season, pitching for Oahu, had won eight games, lost seven, allowed a scanty 3.24 runs per nine innings (just .13 behind Barney Joy), walked just 23 batters in 128 innings, and led the league in shutouts with three. He was "the headiest pitcher in Hawaii," according to the *Advertiser*, June 3. Of the four pitchers who had pitched over 20 innings in 1906 and were still in the league, the Punahous now had three of them. (Dick Reuter was the only exception.)

The *Honolulu Advertiser* thought this was hardly cricket. "It is to be hoped that [Punahou's] efforts to secure a leadpipe cinch on the pennant will be frustrated. This sort of thing is not looked on with favor by fair-minded adherents of the game." (1907-5-18, p.5) Whether the *Advertiser's* prayers were answered shall be seen.

Besides giving the Punahous three solid pitchers while they only played once a week, the signing of Bill Hampton also helped wreck a league in Wailuku. Before the Punahous grabbed him, Hampton had been playing infield for the Kahuluis of the league in Wailuku, Maui. Hampton's departure to Honolulu, along with an injury to Kahuluis' pitcher, the frustration of playing their hearts out but not receiving any benefit from it, and the players having to pay \$15 to get to and from Wailuku, was a factor in the Kahuluis withdrawing from the league. And after they withdrew, the league fell apart.

But look at it on the bright side: "The churchgoers will hail the dissolution with especial delight, for there will be no more hideous noises heard at Wells' Park between the hours of two and four in the afternoon on Sunday." And the churchgoers were very serious about preserving the silence of Sunday.

For the game of April 28, in which Hampton played at second and the Kahulis trounced the Waikapus 14-2, there was a large crowd but no cheering. There had been "a letter addressed to the association asking that all noise be stopped." The crowd was dutiful, but the hush sounded more like a funeral than a ball game.

St. Louis finally lost Thursday, May 30, in spectacular fashion, to the Kamehamehas. The Saints scored three runs in the first inning and four in the third to take a sudden 7-0 lead. But then they fell apart. "The Saints began to make errors and they were wonders at it after they started." The Kams scored four in the fourth, and in the fifth inning Andy Bushnell came in from left field to replace Paul Burns. Joe Fernandez went out in left, and immediately "misjudged a fly which [Nani] Lemon stretched into a three-bagger and which also brought [H.] Sheldon home." En Sue made a poor throw on a grounder, scoring Lemon, and suddenly the Kams were just down by one.

The Kams finally tied the game at seven-all in the seventh on two singles, a stolen base, and a groundout. Then in the ninth H. Sheldon made second on an error by Lo On, St. Louis right fielder, got to third on a fly to right, and scored on a passed ball by George Bruns.

St. Louis was not invincible after all.

The same day, Punahou beat Diamond Head 4-3, as Johnnie Williams allowed just four hits. St. Louis and Punahou were now tied at 3-1 in the standings.

On June 1, after four unsuccessful attempts, Diamond Head finally won its first game. Eddie Fernandez, manager and shortstop of the Jewels, stole four bases, made three hits, and scored three runs, while left fielder Darcy stole four, hit two, and scored two as the Jewels beat Kamehameha 9-3.

After just one home run had been hit the first four doubleheaders of the season, three were made in the Diamond Head-Kamehameha game alone. Bill Vannatta hit one; R. Leslie, Diamond Head first baseman, hit one; and Jones, Kamehameha catcher, hit one.

Of the four homers that had been hit all year, qualifying their creators for free \$5 suits from E.O. Hall & Son, Bill Chillingworth had allowed three of them. He was really doing his part to bolster his opponents' wardrobes.

In the second game of the doubleheader, Andy Bushnell started his first game for St. Louis, and shutout the Puna-

hou Colts on four hits. It was the first shutout of the season.

On June 8, Kamehameha beat Punahou 4-0. Reuter scattered seven hits and struck out 10, while Bill Hampton gave up ten hits.

In the second game, St. Louis beat the Diamond Heads in a tight game. The Saints were down 4-3 in the bottom of the eighth when, with Bill Chillingworth on the mound for Diamond Head, shortstop Evers led off with a single, and then Williams hit a grounder to first baseman Leslie, who fumbled it, making it first and third. Williams stole second and then "Akoni" Louis drove them both in with a single to put the Saints ahead 5-4, the final score. The game left St. Louis 5-1, and Diamond Head 1-5.

Diamond Head would not lose again until July 6.

On June 11, a Tuesday game, St. Louis beat Kamehameha in a loose 11-7 game as the Kams made nine errors, and the Diamond Heads beat Johnnie Williams and Punahou 7-3, collecting 14 hits.

Hannah and Ringland, Punahou's right fielder and catcher, respectively, played their last game with Punahou on June 11. They were both members of the Tenth Infantry, which was being transferred to Alaska.

Ringland had put up the second highest batting average in the league in 1906, with a mark of .380 for Oahu. He had fallen off in hitting in 1907, with a .250 average in seven games, but was still good. Hannah had been three-for-sixteen, but had played errorless ball in right.

Ringland was replaced as Punahou catcher on June 15 by Charlie B. Lyman, of Oahu College. [Note: The Wikipedia page for Punahou School says that it was known as Oahu College until 1934. If that is true, then the Punahou of 1907 might have been a different school from the current Punahou, because it seems to me looking at newspapers of the time that Punahou School and Oahu College were different institutions. This is all rather confusing...]

Lyman had been playing in Hilo earlier in the year. In May there was voting for the most popular player in Hilo, and as of May 16, Lyman was 1st with 32 votes - 14 more than any one else.

Lyman was well-regarded as a catcher in his time with Punahou. The *Evening Bulletin* declared on June 24 that: "Lyman's throwing in the first game was the best that has been seen all season... he [is] a tower of strength to the team." He had thrown out three runners in that first game. Lyman could also contribute offensively, hitting an excellent .261 with six stolen bases in five games, but after June 29 he returned to Hilo and was gone for the rest of the season.

(Continued on page 11)

Major Van Vliet, also of the Tenth Infantry, played his last game at second base for the Diamond Heads on June 15. "A good many of the army people, beside scores of his friends and well wishers, were there to see him play." Van Vliet was rather ancient for a ball player, and hit just .118 in nine games, but he could still "cover ground... like a youngster."

The Diamond Heads won Major Van Vliet's last game 7-1 against Reuter and the Kams, pounding out nine hits and stealing seven bases.

The *Advertiser* wrote on June 22:

"The departure of Major Van Vliet and Lieut. Hannah is much regretted; these men have aided materially in giving us good clean sportsmanlike ball. They have accepted defeat or victory with the same grace and the moral effect of their gentlemanly demeanor will not be lost."

In the second game of June 15, Punahou vs. St. Louis, there were three Desha brothers and four Williams brothers on the field. "When Williams as pitcher... threw the ball to Williams' first-base, to put out Williams' base-runner, it was a little confusing to the stranger."

But the Desha is mightier than the Williams. The three Deshas on the Punahou combined to score six runs as the Punahous smacked Evers, St. Louis shortstop pressed into mound duty, for twelve runs.

Before the game of June 22, a certain Mr. Whitney filled the baseball field's holes and rolled it flat, hopefully making it a pristine altar conducive to pristine fielding.

It worked. The smallest crowd of the season was in attendance, according to the *Evening Bulletin*, but they saw two great games.

In the St. Louis-Diamond Head game, not a single error was made by either team. Just as remarkable as the fielding was the score: Diamond Head 3, St. Louis 1. Earlier in the year, St. Louis had been 5-1 and Diamond Head 1-5, but now the Saints had lost two straight games and the

Jewels had won three straight.

It had been feared for a time that the Diamond Heads would be just as bad in 1907 as the Maile Ilimas had been in 1906. It took a while, but the Diamond Heads didn't give up, and made themselves into a decent team. As the *Advertiser* wrote on June 15, when the Diamond Heads were still just 2-5: "The Diamond Heads are playing all the time and though they have not a star team, by keeping everlastingly at it, they have developed into a factor in the game. What an improvement over the old Mailes."



RINGLAND, THE PUNAHOU'S RELIABLE CATCHER.

Bill Hampton of the Punahou beat Lota of the Kamehamehas 5-2, in another well-played game with just six total errors, and with that, the first series was finished.

The final standings of the first series:

St. Louis,	6-3
Punahou,	5-4
Diamond Head,	4-5
Kamehameha,	3-6

St. Louis, Punahou, and Diamond Head all seemed positioned for the second half. The Saints, though shaky near the end, were the winners of the first series. Punahou was solid throughout the first half, and the Diamond Heads had finished very strong. Only Kamehameha seemed as if they might be hopeless.

When their ace, Dick Reuter, was pitching well, the Kams could win, and Reuter did have some moments of glory in the first half: On May 18 he struck out 14 Diamond Head batters, and he shutout Punahou with 10 strikeouts and just one walk on June 8. But he'd had even more bad games, giving up 7 runs on opening day to St. Louis, 9 to Punahou on May 25, 9 to Diamond Head on June 1, and 11 to St. Louis on June 11. He just didn't seem consistent enough to base a team's hope on, and the Kams had no good replacement for him.

Saturday, June 29, opened the second series, and each game was a shocker.



In the first game, Kamehameha absolutely demolished St. Louis 9-0. Reuter struck out nine, walked one, and gave up just four hits to a silent Saint lineup. With regular St. Louis pitcher Paul Burns at third base the whole game, the Kams pounded Andy Bushnell, St. Louis pitcher, for fourteen hits.

Not what you would have expected from looking at the first half standings.

Kuhina, Kamehameha first baseman, hit the fifth home run of the season off Andy Bushnell. "He drove a liner within about thirty feet of the left-field fence, and on the first bounce the ball was out of the grounds." I guess the Honolulu League didn't have ground-rule doubles.

Three regulars were missing from the St. Louis lineup. Lo On and En Sue had gone to Hilo. Lo On would be back by the July 6 game and En Sue would be back by July 20. Lo On was mediocre, but En Sue was one of the top power hitters and base runners of the league, and they would dearly miss him.

The third missing was Evers, their star shortstop.

Evers was known for his fielding.

The *Advertiser* wrote on 6-08 that: "Evers is the star at short; he has the pick-up and throw of a professional." And he was a solid hitter. He had hit .255 in 1906. But on June 30 the *Advertiser* reported he would never appear in a St. Louis uniform again. "He demanded a certain sum of money before being willing to go into the game and was asked to turn in his suit. Capt. Gleason and Manager Charlie Falk are to be congratulated on the stand they took. If Evers thinks that he can hold up any of the teams he should be taught differently."

But the desire to win turned out to be greater than the desire for amateurism. Evers was back at short the next game.

In the second game of June 29, Robert "Clown" Leslie of Diamond Head no-hit Punahou. Leslie had been dominant in his prior two outings - he

gave up just one hit in six scoreless innings of relief on June 15, and gave up three hits and one run against St. Louis the previous week. His control was a little iffy - he walked five in both of those prior outings, and he walked four and hit a batter in his no-hitter - but that didn't matter too much if nobody could hit him.

In the three games from June 15 to June 29, Leslie had allowed four hits and one run in 24 innings. He also walked fourteen, but a good fastball covereth up a multitude of sins.

Hampton also pitched a great game in his defeat at the hands of Leslie- the score of the game was 2-0. Hampton struck out eleven and didn't walk a single batter - in contrast to Leslie, who "only" struck out seven, and had walked four batters. Tough luck for Hampton.

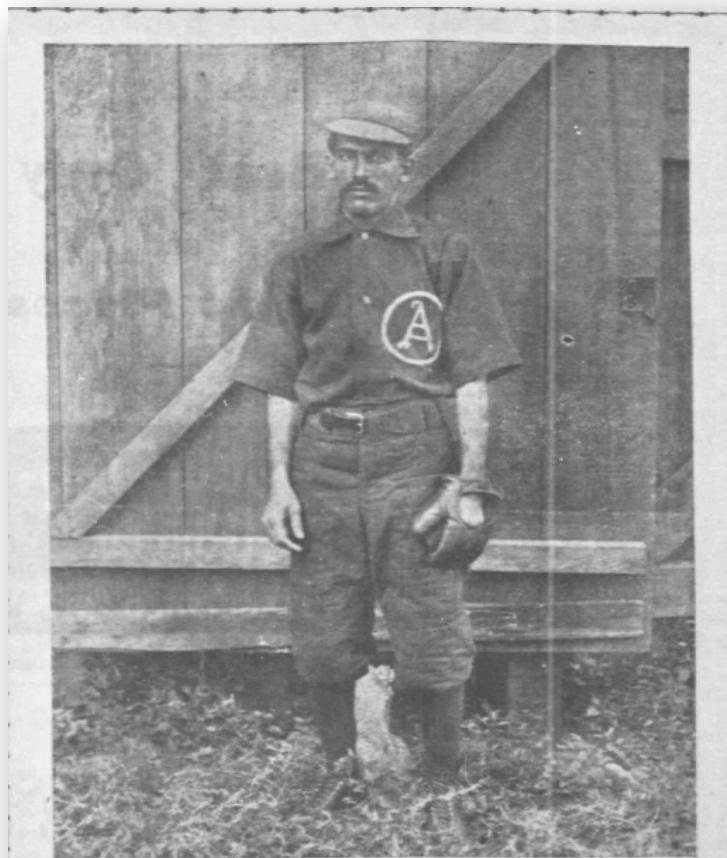
Diamond Head catcher Sam Davis scored the only two runs of the game with a triple off Hampton in the first inning. After the game, "a certain Senator, who belongs to the Diamond Heads," gave Davis \$10 for his hit. He had wanted to give Davis \$20, but Davis refused.

Random note: The Honolulu Rapid Transit Co. giveth and the Honolulu Rapid Transit Co. taketh away. The *Advertiser* noted on June 29 that the Rapid Transit Co. was now providing free rides to Honolulu League players to and from their games. But I'm not

sure that was enough to make things right for Kamehameha. They had lost their third baseman, Fern, because "he is employed on the day shift for the Rapid Transit Co. and cannot get off." Fern was just 3-for-25 in his six games with the Kams in 1907, but two of his three hits went for extra bases, and he was a solid fielder.

Before the Fourth of July doubleheader, it was announced that Paul Burns, St. Louis' star pitcher, had quit. No explanation was given.

Now St. Louis had just one pitcher to rely all their hopes upon: Andy Bushnell, who the Kams had trounced for nine runs and fourteen hits the previous Saturday, and



EVERS, THE STAR SHORTSTOP OF ST. LOUIS ATHLETIC CLUB.

who had given up six runs in his start before that. Bushnell had had some good moments too - he also shutout Punahou on four hits, June 1 - but having him as your only pitcher, with no fallbacks, was not ideal.

The Diamond Heads won the first game of July Fourth, beating the Kams 6-5. Robert Leslie allowed twelve hits to the Kams, as opposed to no hits in his previous start, but still managed to win. The *Advertiser* noted that "Leslie fields his position better than any pitcher in the league. He is certainly making good."

The Diamond Heads had now won five straight games, and six of their last seven. Their only loss in that stretch had been by one run, a 5-4 defeat at the hands of St. Louis. Their 2-0 record was first in the second series, one game ahead of St. Louis. The *Advertiser* opined that "it is dollars to doughnuts [the Diamond Heads] win the second series."

St. Louis won their game 3-2 against the Puns in a rather silly fashion. All three runs they scored came in the third inning due to two "inexcusable" errors made by Lowrey, the Puns' second baseman. Those were the only two errors made by Punahou all game.

Bushnell pitched well. He struck out eight, walked two, and gave up seven hits, while his defense played well behind him, making but a single error.

Evers was back in the lineup like nothing had happened. He went 0-for-3 and made an error, but scored a run.

Bateman, who caught a great game by Bill Hampton for Punahou, was the catcher and captain of the Twentieth Infantry team, as such being a kind of successor to the soldier-catcher Ringland. He was a good fielder but no batter; he led off but went 0-for-4, and did not appear in another game.

In the seventh inning, Punahou left fielder Dave Desha hit a foul ball into the grandstand which broke the nose of a Chinese fan.

In the first game of July 6 Kamehameha beat Punahou 11-5. Bill Hampton was demolished; he gave up 11 hits, walked five, and gave up a homer in the eighth to Bill Vannatta, who hit the ball over the center fielder's head and had scored before the right fielder could throw home. It was his second homer of the year, and the sixth in the league altogether.

Reuter was hard to hit - he gave up just three hits - but also surrendered six walks, contributing to the Puns' five runs.

Attention was also given to Kamaiopili, who made his debut for the Kams in the game, hitting ninth and playing

center field. In the second inning, in which the Kams scored eight runs, he laid down what was considered to be "the prettiest bunt of the season," a single that brought in a run. It was to be his only hit in 14 at-bats that year, though throughout it all he was honored as a beautiful bunter.

The Punahous had now lost three straight, after having finished just one game behind St. Louis in the first half.

In the second game, St. Louis beat the Diamond Heads 9-0 as Clown Leslie was found for ten hits. His opponent, Bushnell, threw his second shutout of the season. St. Louis was now tied with Diamond Head in the standings at 2-1.

From June 15 to June 29, Leslie had given up four hits in twenty-four innings. In the two games since then, he had given up twenty-two hits in seventeen innings.

Punahou was likewise falling fast, but there was hope. Returning to Hawaii on a steamer from the mainland was Alfred Castle, a Punahou alumni who had pitched for Harvard. He was 6'0", 150 lb., and a fine pitcher in the Ivy League. His greatest athletic moment at Harvard came on June 6, 1906, in a game against Brown University. He threw a no-hitter, walked no one, made the only two hits of the game himself, and scored the only run. (Harvard made four errors, so it wasn't a perfect game.)

Castle graduated from Harvard in 1906, and finally returned to Hawaii just in time for the doubleheader of July 13. Maybe he could set things right for Punahou.

The first game of July 13 was a tight pitcher's duel between Andy Bushnell and Dick Reuter. St. Louis scored two runs on four hits and the Kamehamehas scored one run on five hits as Bushnell won his third straight game.

Al Castle was set against Leslie and the Diamond Heads (now that's a good band name) in the second game. The Jewels scored five runs off Castle in the first inning, and that was the game. Castle was highly mediocre, and the Punahou defense was no better. The Diamond Heads scored ten runs on eight hits, four walks, and six errors. The *Advertiser* was sympathetic to Castle, saying that "it was not fair to be expected that so soon after a sea voyage Castle would be up to his own standard, though after the first inning he held things down."

The first game of the July 20 doubleheader "was so poor that the crowd was hardly satisfied." The Diamond Heads beat the Kams 7-4 on just four hits; the Kams made seven errors and the Diamond Heads made six.

Nani Lemon hit a homer, a "beauty," off Leslie in an abortive ninth inning Kam rally. He was also called out by the *Advertiser* for "the way in which he loafes before going

to bat. Several times yesterday he delayed the game by his inattention."

The first game may have been a poor one, but the second game "made up for everything that was lacking in the first contest." St. Louis fought the Punahou twelve innings before finally coming out on top, 6-5.

Eddie Desha had quite the game. He hit a double in the fifth and a homer in the seventh. He started the game for Punahou, the first game he'd pitched all year, and went six innings before he switched places with third baseman Bill Hampton with the score tied at 5-5. All five runs St. Louis scored had been unearned.

Bushnell and Bill Hampton traded zeroes until the twelfth when Bushnell won his own game. He got on first by a fielder's choice, stole second and third, and scored on a passed ball.

The *Advertiser* commented the next week that "Bushnell and Soares make an ideal battery. They are working together in fine shape and for two youngsters have a fine baseball future ahead of them."

Neither Bushnell nor Soares had been much of a factor in the first half - Bushnell played more outfielder than pitcher, and Soares was on the Coast until June 22 - but they became absolutely essential to St. Louis in the second half.

Soares was not much of a hitter - though he had led the league in home runs with two in 1906, he hit only .141, and would hit only .111 in 1907 - but he was an excellent fielder, by the far best defensive catcher in the league, going by statistics. In 1907 he made but one error and allowed but one passed ball in ten games, and made 21 assists.

The *Advertiser* was in awe of Evers - all rancor over his money demands was gone. "Evers, the shortstop of the St. Louis team made a catch in the seventh inning off Hampton's bat, that was a wonder. Running backwards at full speed he jumped into the air and caught a ball that there

are few major league men could have handled." [somebody needed an editor] The next week the *Advertiser* called Evers the league's "bright particular star at short."

For the third straight week, the Diamond Heads and St. Louis were tied for first place - now at 4-1. Kamehameha was third at 2-3, and Punahou was languishing in last at 0-5.



LUIZ SOARES.

There was no baseball on Saturday, July 27. Percy Lishman had died. He was a long-time player, and very popular. He had been traveling on the steamship the *Siberia* from Honolulu to San Francisco in April. Soon after the ship had left Honolulu he fell on the deck of ship, and afterwards seem a bit "crazed." Just a day into the voyage he cut his throat in a suicide attempt, but survived "due to the prompt action of surgeons on board the ship." "After his wound had been treated he repeatedly threatened to kill himself, and said he would never be landed alive in San Francisco." He was kept under close watch for the rest of the voyage. "When the steamer arrived [in San Francisco, April 28], Lishman was considered out of danger and his chance for recovery good. No reason was found for the suicidal act, except that he must have become temporarily insane." (*The San Francisco Call and Post*, 1907-4-29, p.1)

It was believed he had made a full recovery. He traveled on to New York, and met a number of his Honolulu friends there. He seemed to be in good spirits, and in July decided he would return to Hawaii together with them. "Lishman had already bought his

railroad ticket via the Canadian Pacific, however, and the others were returning by a different route, so he came alone across the continent." He killed himself in Vancouver. He was just 31.

And do you know what caused him to fall on the deck of the *Siberia* in the first place, starting the whole tragic series of events? It was a rope stretched "between the Caucasian steerage and that assigned to men of other races."



He was running in the dark and tripped on it; it was supposed to be kept waist-high, but had sagged during the night. The story is like a symbol of the tragedy and insanity of segregation. It's just a shame that Lishman had to act it out. (*Los Angeles Times*, 1907-5-05)

Life goes on after tragedy, if fitfully, and the next Saturday there was baseball again.

There was a large enthusiastic crowd on August 3. "The bleachers, and in fact the whole grandstand, was overflowing with advice to the players and opinions of the game."

Kamehameha defied the odds, beating St. Louis 6-4 in the first game. It was Bushnell's first loss since Paul Burns quit the team. Kamehameha third baseman Lota hit a homer off Bushnell in the sixth inning. It was the ninth and last home run of the season.

Kamaioipili started in left field for Kamehameha and the crowd cheered for him loudly, remembering his brilliant bunt of July 6. It was his first game since then. The *Advertiser* summed him up so: "He is a youngster whose chief recommendation is that he is a willing performer." A charitable description.

Evers starred in the field again, making "a beautiful running catch bringing down a high fly with his left hand." The second game was tied 5-5 until the tenth inning, when the Punahous scored three runs. Bill Hampton was the star of the game. Eddie Desha started, but switched places with Bill Hampton at third for the second straight game, this time after just three innings. Punahou was down 5-1 at the time.

But Punahou started chipping away, scoring three runs in the sixth, one in the eighth, and the three in the tenth, Hampton pitched six scoreless one-hit innings, and the Puns had finally won their first game of the second series. David Desha starred at the plate, hitting a pair of doubles.

The Diamond Heads and St. Louis had both lost, so they were still tied for first, but Kamehameha was now just a game behind them. The pennant race was wide-open.

August 10 turned out to be the day of Bill Hampton... for all the wrong reasons.

The *Advertiser* led off the sports section thusly:

"The Punahous lost, but Hampton lost his temper. A disastrous defeat in which however there was no discredit, was made discreditable by an outbreak on the part of Hampton, which absolutely appalled the spectators, so

that for an instant there was absolute silence, and then a storm of hisses and exclamations of disapproval, as the crowd realized what had been done, and burst out in indignant resentment at the display of such spirit."

The incident that called down wrath from above occurred in the sixth inning. Punahou was losing 5-0 to St. Louis. Bill Hampton came to the plate with two outs in the first half of the sixth and "a good deal of talking" coming from the crowd. He struck out. As he was trudging back to the dugout, his bat still clenched in his hands, he stopped in front of the grandstand and angrily asked "who was making the remarks he resented." No answer.

Hampton returned to the dugout and came out to the pitcher's mound to face St. Louis. "Instantly there was a renewal of talk across the field, the expression 'kill it' being used several times. Gleason was at bat, in position, waiting for the ball to be pitched, when suddenly Hampton threw the ball with violent energy in the direction of the crowd at the rail in the carriage paddock right at the makai\* end of the grandstand. The ball passed over the heads of the crowd but not very much over their heads, if indeed active dodging was not the only thing that saved somebody from being hit."

\*Makai means "sea-ward."

The crowd did not react well to this, as you might imagine. The St. Louis team was not particularly pleased, either, and "it looked for a time as though there would be trouble between the rival teams. There was a good deal of discussion, and some heat developed."

When the Chief of Detectives asked Hampton whether he threw the ball intentionally, he replied: "What if I did? I have a right to throw the ball anywhere I please in the field." Okay...

Hampton probably wished he was back in Maui, where at least the crowds were quiet.

The *Advertiser* reported that "It was generally understood that Hampton's anger and the ball he threw were directed at Jimmie Thompson, who was coaching from his position just behind the benches."

Jimmy Thompson's rooting had drawn attention before; the *Advertiser* wrote on June 9 that: "The coaching of Jimmy Thompson, from the Clerk of the Supreme Court's office, was refreshing. He should keep it up." He did, and *look what happened*.

But a fight was averted, everyone settled down enough to continue, and St. Louis beat Punahou 8-0.

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Everything else in the game was overshadowed by the maelstrom of indignation, but Bushnell pitched a beautiful game. He struck out nine and held the Puns to three hits in his third shutout of the year.

In the other game, Kamehameha beat Diamond Head 12-5. Every Kam batter scored a run - the top three in the lineup, Lemon, Miller, and Jones, each scored two, and the rest scored one each. Leslie had been humiliated again. The Diamond Heads made seven errors, so it wasn't all Leslie's fault, but he certainly didn't pitch well. Reuter struck out 10 and gave up just five hits to the Jewels.

St. Louis was now alone in first place, at 5-2. Diamond Head and Kamehameha were tied for second at 4-3.

Alfred Castle started for Punahou against Kamehameha in a "fizzle" of a first game on August 17. He was a disaster. In six innings, he was subjected to six walks, six runs, and one unceremonious yanking from the box. The fans were not appreciative.

"Castle did not seem to be half as much put out at walking men as the crowd was in watching it done... At times there was some little rooting and at all times the remarks from the bleachers were emphatically sarcastic, so much so that Castle wanted to make a date 'after the game' with one fan whose comments made the Varsity twirler 'feel sick.'"

The *Advertiser* noted next week that "It is doubtful if A.L. Castle will be seen in the box for the Puns again, unless he shows a desire to take part in practise when the other players do." I guess the Harvard star thought he was above "practise."

He was replaced by Johnny Williams, who pitched three scoreless innings and struck out five, but the damage was done. (Johnny, the future major leaguer, had not pitched in over two months, and I have no idea why. He pitched fine in the early part of the season - surely they could have used him during their long losing streak?)

The final score was Kamehameha 6, Punahou 2. Dick Reuter was "in fine form", striking out 11, and giving up but two hits and one walk.

Lota, Kam third baseman, had a good game, going 1-for-3 with a run scored, a stolen base, and flawless play in the field, but the *Advertiser* did not approve of his fashion, declaring that he "ought to be presented with a cap. The big, floppy felt hat he wears is neither pretty nor suitable."

ble."

The second game was a great one. Leslie blanked St. Louis almost to the end - the Diamond Heads had a 2-0 lead going into the top of the ninth. If they won, St. Louis, Diamond Head, and Kamehameha would all be bunched together at 5-3 in a three-way tie for first. Then - Akoni Louis led off with a single. Lo On sacrificed him to 2nd and Bruns singled him to third and then stole second himself - men on second and third, one out. Paddy Gleason hit an easy fly to center, but Olmos and Jonah, in center and left, "both did the after you Gaston stunt," and the ball fell to

Louis scored, Bruns made third, and Gleason made first, and stole second shortly after. Louis Soares sacrificed Bruns home and Gleason to third, and suddenly the score was tied at two. Clown Leslie unleashed a "wild, low pitch" that blew by Diamond Head catcher Sam Davis, Gleason scored, and St. Louis was up 3-2. Bushnell set down the Jewels easily in the bottom of the ninth, and St. Louis maintained their sole possession of first place. The Diamond Heads, two games behind St. Louis with but one game left to play, were mathematically eliminated from the pennant. All their hard work and steady improvement had come to naught. But the Kams still had a chance - if they won on August 24 and St. Louis lost, both would be tied at 6-3.

There was a good crowd at the final doubleheader. Both games were rematches of the previous week: Kam-Pun in the first game, and Diamond Head-St. Louis in the second.

Johnny Williams started for Punahou, as he should have for the last two months, and Kamehameha managed just four hits off him. Punahou was up 4-0 after two innings and never looked back. Final score: Punahou 7, Kamehameha 2. At least the Puns went out with a bang.

The second game, between St. Louis and Diamond Head, was meaningless, as St. Louis had already clinched the pennant, and a bit of a farce. St. Louis won 17-8. It was Diamond Head's fourth straight loss. St. Louis made seven errors, and Diamond Head made twelve. When St. Louis and Diamond Head played on June 22, neither team made a single error. The game fattened some batting averages, and that was all. (Though Bushnell's pitching stats took a hit from the game, his hitting stats were bolstered: batting from the cleanup spot, he went two-for-four, doubled, and scored four runs.) Bill Hampton was lent to Diamond Head to catch, as Sam Davis, the regular catcher for the Jewels, was absent. In that way "Hamp" managed to play eighteen games in an eighteen game season while missing a game.

The *Advertiser* praised Bert Bower, the league's umpire,

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saying he officiated in a "manner which has satisfied both players and spectators. He is one of the best men with an indicator who could be found in the United States."

The final standings for the second series:

St. Louis,	7-2
Kamehameha,	5-4
Diamond Head,	4-5
Punahou,	2-7

Final standings for the season:

W	L	RS	RA	Manager	Captain
13	5	103	73	St. Louis Charlie Falk	Pat Gleason
8	10	93	95	Kamehameha John Wise	Bill Vannatta
8	10	83	93	Diamond Head Eddie Fernandez	
7	11	73	91	Punahou	Eddie Desha

As St. Louis won both series, no play-off was needed to determine the championship. St. Louis was clearly the best team in Hawaii, even in a year without Joy.

Stretch your mind back to the very beginning of the season - do you remember when Diamond Head protested Eddie Desha playing for Punahou? Well, more than three months later, after the season was *already finished*, the league finally responded. Throughout the *entire season*, a majority of the league's trustees had been abroad. *Finally*, on August 28, three of the five trustees were present (President Paul Isenberg and Charles Chillingworth were *still* gone) and the league held a meeting to address the Desha case, among other issues. They ruled that Eddie Desha's signing with Diamond Head and notification to them that he had decided against playing for them all occurred before April 17, so it was fine that he had played for Punahou all season.

I have a hard time finding words to express my disbelief that a league would have a majority of its trustees absent through the entire season. Maybe they should have had trustees who *actually made the league their priority*. Is that really such a crazy idea?

Anyhow... Eddie Desha turned out to be the top player for Punahou, so their determination to field him in the face of a protest held in suspension was wise. He led the league in hits (20), doubles (7), slugging percentage (.500), and total bases (32). He finished second in batting average only to Eddie Fernandez, the manager of Diamond Head, who had protested against Eddie Desha playing with Punahou.

Eddie Fernandez had a case for the league's most valuable player: he was a shortstop, though not a great one,

and led the league in batting average (.328), runs scored (21), and stolen bases (21).

Nani Lemon, Kamehameha outfielder noted for his small size, loafing before at-bats, and plate discipline, was third in batting average, .283, and second in slugging percentage, .441.

En Sue, St. Louis third baseman, hit .237, which sounds bad, especially as he hit .375 in 1906, but was still well above the league average of .204. He hit three doubles and three triples to tie Nani Lemon in slugging percentage.

Andy Bushnell tied for the league lead in runs scored, with 21, despite hitting .194 without power or stolen bases. I don't get it.

The top ten batters:

.394,	Johnny Aylett,	cf,	St. Louis,	13	for	33	(did not qualify for batting title)
.328,	Eddie Fernandez,	ss,	Diamond Head,				
.313,	Eddie Desha,	3b-p,	Punahou,	20	for	64	
.283,	Nani Lemon,	lf,	Kamehameha,	17	for	60	
.283,	Jones,	catcher,	Kamehameha,	15	for	53	
.273,	Darcy,	2b-lf,	Diamond Head,	15	for	55	
.270,	Bill Hampton,	p-3b-c,	Punahou,	17	for	63	
.254,	George Bruns,	c-lf,	St. Louis,	17	for	67	
.242,	Miller,	ss,	Kamehameha,	16	for	66	
.239,	Bill Vannatta,	2b,	Kamehameha,	16	for	67	

Evers, St. Louis shortstop, led the league with four triples and and five sacrifice hits, and was the best fielding shortstop by FAR.

Here's my list of Gold Glovers, based on stats and reputation:

	G	PO	A	E	DP	FLD	PB	League
fielding at position:								
C St. Louis * Louis Soares	10	64	21	1	1	.988	1	.974
(with average of .67 PB/ G)								
1b St. Louis * Pat Gleason	15	135	1	5	6	.965		.952
2b St. Louis * Jimmy Williams	11	15	19	1	1	.971		.919
SS St. Louis * Evers	15	40	43	8	3	.912		.851
3b Diamond * Eddie Desha						8	14	9 4
o .852 .805 (No particularly good choice)								
LF Diamond * Jonah	11	16	1	2	0	.895		.880
CF St. Louis * Johnny Aylett	10	16	1	0	0	1.000		.893
RF St. Louis * Akoni Louis	14	19	2	2	0	.913		.851
P Punahou * Bill Hampton	9	12	41	0	3	1.000		.965

It's easy to see that much of St. Louis' success came from their fielding. The *Advertiser* noted on June 15 that "All tales to the contrary, notwithstanding, the secret of the St.



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Louis success is team work. They play together better than any of the other teams. This is just contrary to what has generally been accepted, but it is true just the same." You can see it in their stats. They turned 13 double plays in eighteen games, five more than any other team, and their .931 fielding percentage was rivaled only by Punahou's .925.

One thing confuses me terribly about the fielding stats I imperfectly compiled: The league fielding average was .918, far below the 1907 MLB average of .958, but the average for pitchers in the Honolulu League was .965, well above the 1907 MLB average of .948. I assume the difference lies somewhere in the scoring methods, but I have no idea what the difference is.

The top pitcher was easily Andy Bushnell, who was 10-3, allowed 3.59 runs per nine innings, and threw three shut-outs. Paul Burns, the primary pitcher for St. Louis in the first half, was 3-1 with a 3.65 RA/9, and led the league with a WHIP of 0.83 - he allowed but 12 walks and 25 hits in 44.1 innings. Much of the success of the St. Louis pitchers, of course, must be credited to the excellent defense behind them.

Dick Reuter, Kamehameha, was the workhorse of the league, leading in losses (8), strikeouts (112), innings (131), starts and games pitched (15), hits (95), runs (74), and complete games (15). He had a very good season; his mediocre RA of 5.08 and win-loss of 7-8 were fueled by the Kams' terrible fielding: their fielding percentage was .902, ten points worse than any other team, and twenty-nine points worse than St. Louis.

Early in the season people were worrying that Punahou was conniving their way to the pennant by hoarding pitchers - they need not have worried. Eddie Desha was terrible, and Bill Hampton was mediocre (3-7, 4.69 RA). Johnny Williams was very good, with a 3-2 record and league-leading 3.56 RA, but was used too infrequently to save Punahou's season.

Bill Chillingworth was the primary Diamond Head pitcher until June 15 - after that, he pitched one inning for the rest of the year. He was okay, with a 2-4 record, 39 strikeouts against 11 walks in 48 innings, and a 4.69 RA, but then Robert Leslie got hot and Chillingworth was forgotten. Leslie was ineffective for most of the second half, and finished with a 5.11 RA, worse than Chillingworth. He led the league in walks (54 - 17 more than anyone else) and wild pitches (10 - six more than anyone else) in just 104 innings. Through it all he was held in high regard - for some reason people couldn't grasp that despite the no-hitter and speedy fastball, he was not actually a good

pitcher.

If you would like to see the complete stats I compiled for the 1907 Honolulu League, here they are: <https://1drv.ms/x/s!Ako34EwWdHgA5xOmsL7qOa6g4Wt3?e=7SY2rL>

I will warn you: the pitching stats are slightly off in a couple places (I need to fix that), and the fielding stats don't add up perfectly, so there must be a few small mistakes somewhere. I'm just not sure where.

And in case you care as much about finances as I do, here are the financial stats:

MEMO NET RECEIPTS (GATE MONEY, BASEBALL LEAGUE SEASON, 1907.		
May 11, 1907	.....	\$ 206.15
" 18 "	.....	155.75
" 25 "	.....	127.75
" 30 "	.....	135.50
June 1 "	.....	158.75
" 8 "	.....	104.25
" 11 "	.....	215.50
" 15 "	.....	126.75
" 22 "	.....	119.75
" 29 "	.....	93.00
July 4 "	.....	167.75
" 6 "	.....	111.00
" 13 "	.....	163.25
" 20 "	.....	114.25
Aug. 3 "	.....	106.75
" 10 "	.....	131.50
" 17 "	.....	92.25
" 24 "	.....	116.25
		\$2446.15
MEMO RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS BY THE TRUSTEES OF THE HONOLULU BASEBALL LEAGUE FROM APRIL 30, 1907, TO AUGUST 28, 1907.		
Net gate money as per memo.		\$2446.15
Net receipts from advertising and refreshment privileges..		107.75
		\$2553.90

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The treasurer of the league, H.M. Whitney, presented the financial statement of the league for the 1907 season at the meeting of August 30. The Trustee's total gross receipts were \$2,553.90, and its expenditures were \$2,407.94, "leaving a balance in the treasury of \$145.96."

Gate receipts were detailed from every game of the year. I think it's fascinating to be able to compare attendance at the various games.

As tickets cost 25 or 50 cents, paid attendance never reached 1,000, and was usually far lower. The crowds for the Honolulu League were dwarfed by those of the Riverside League, which played in Honolulu on Sundays and charged nothing for attendance. I'll write something about the Riverside League in the future.

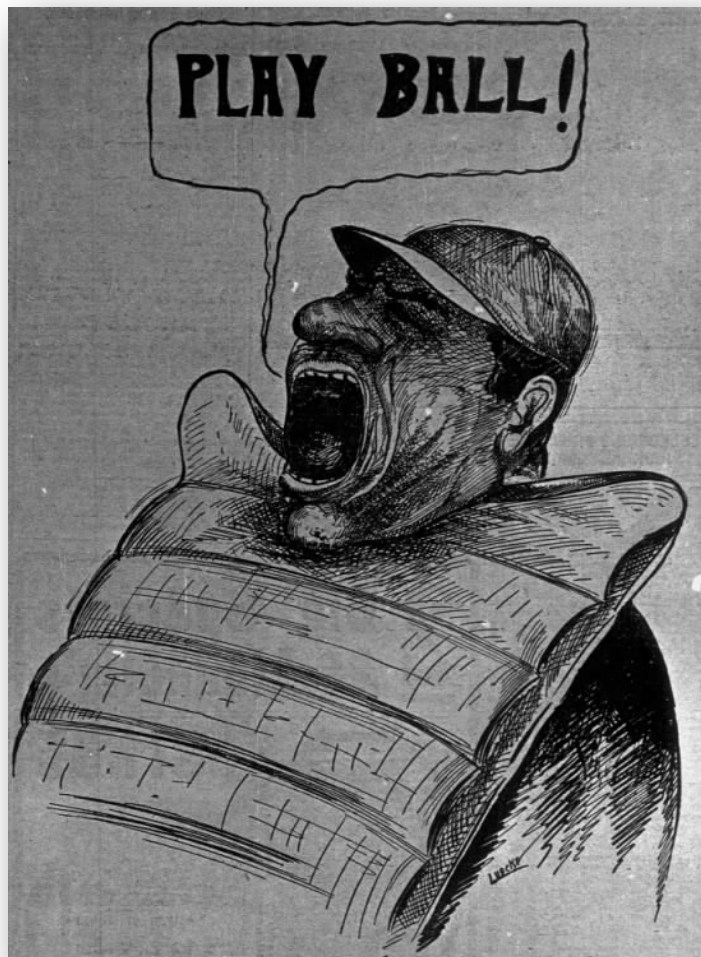
The trustees' "disbursements":

DISBURSEMENTS.		
Rents . . . . .	178.00	
Caretaker . . . . .	150.00	
Lucas' bill, repairs..	95.25	
Taxes . . . . .	25.00	
Insurance . . . . .	80.00	
Paid League in full.	1550.00	
Water . . . . .	34.25	
Interest . . . . .	3.68	
Rolling grounds . . . .	15.00	
New hose, etc. . . . .	22.50	
Sundry bills . . . . .	64.13	
		\$2217.81
Bal. owing Bishop & Co., May 1, '07..	190.13	2407.94
Bal. on deposit with Bishop & Co., Aug. 28, '07.....		\$ 145.96

(All these figures were printed in the *Evening Bulletin*, 1907-8-30, p.11)

I believe the "paid league in full" item refers to the share of the money distributed among the teams.

Thus ended the 1907 Honolulu League, with \$145.96 in the league treasury and St. Louis as king.



*Sioux City Journal Apr 17, 1914*

*(Newport News, VA) Daily Press, Apr 27, 1950*