



# The Wood Pile



Newsletter of the Smoky Joe Wood Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research

Volume I Issue 3

Summer 2016

## Leading Off: A Message from the Chapter President



Greetings, fellow SABR-ites!

Many exciting things have happened since the last edition of the Wood Pile. Please see the annual chapter report (page 2) for some of the highlights. I wish to emphasize our successful chapter trip to Yankee Stadium on June 24, which included Old Timers day. We were able to negotiate for discounted tickets & for Yankee hats for all. Looking ahead, we can try to get to more games before

the summer ends. Let's make this happen! We should consider a late summer luncheon, more chapter breakfasts & we are already planning for our general meeting in October.

We have highlighted how the Sandlock project put us on the map & when folks are back from the SABR convention in Miami, then we should consider other projects & ways for us to collaborate. New members are always welcome & we have a good group, with an active & collaborative leadership. Please let us know what you would like our chapter to do, so that we can continue to be strong & involved.

I would like to see our chapter commemorate players who played in CT. For example, Lou Gehrig played for Hartford in the early 1920's, as did Warren Spahn in the 1940's. Also, more could be done with the West Haven Yankees, as Rusty Torres, Charlie Spikes & others played there in the 1970's. In addition, we could we do more with Roger Connor, from Waterbury, especially with some of our chapter 19th century experts? Working on Managers from CT could be fruitful, as well.

See you at the next event!

Sincerely,  
Steve Krevisky  
Chapter President

## Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Chapter Events

October 21 or 28 (TBD): General Chapter Meeting  
Quinnipiac University

*Watch for emails from Steve Krevisky for details on our chapter plans.*

### Upcoming National Events

March 9 to 11, 2017  
SABR Analytics Conference  
Phoenix, AZ

Spring 2017  
19<sup>th</sup> Century BB Conference  
Cooperstown, NY

Summer 2017  
Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Conference

June 28 to July 2, 2017  
SABR National Convention  
New York, NY

*More information at [sabr.org/events](http://sabr.org/events)*

## New Chapter Members

Welcome to new members (since January 2016):

Todd Dzen, Hartford	Robert Papetti, Glastonbury
Evan Halpine-Berger, Windham	Sharon Robinson, Stamford
Mike James, Lyme	John Spinato, Hamden
Gary LaBrec, Manchester	Weston Ulbrich, North Haven
Brendan Lambert, Colchester	

## Baseball Trivia

Look for gray shaded sections throughout this issue for the newsletter's baseball trivia.

The trivia questions are numbered & the answers to all of the questions can be found at the back of this newsletter.

## On the Web

Society for American Baseball Research: [sabr.org](http://sabr.org)  
Smoky Joe Wood Chapter: [smokyjoewood.com](http://smokyjoewood.com)

## Smoky Joe Wood Chapter Officers

Stephen Krevisky (President): [skrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu](mailto:skrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu)  
Alan Cohen (Vice President/Treasurer): [adc0317@comcast.net](mailto:adc0317@comcast.net)  
Stan Dziurgot (Membership Director): [stanyank5@yahoo.com](mailto:stanyank5@yahoo.com)  
Karl Cicitto (Communications Director): [kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net)

Members are welcome to submit articles, book reviews or other information that might be interesting to other chapter members. Please send information to Karl Cicitto at [kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net).

## Annual Report of the Connecticut SABR Smoky Joe Wood Chapter

*(Editor's Note: All local SABR Chapters are asked to provide an annual report every June. You can read the many reports submitted at: [sabr.org/content/annual-reports](http://sabr.org/content/annual-reports)).*

Our chapter again had a busy & successful year. 10 of our members attended the SABR convention in Chicago last year. We now have a chapter newsletter, entitled The Wood Pile. Several of our members contributed to this fine publication. Karl Cicitto edits it & Stan Osowiecki does the design. We did a book project, commemorating the life & career of Connecticut native Mike Sandlock. Alan Cohen & Karl Cicitto spearheaded this effort. Some of our members met with Sandlock & his family. He was the oldest living US major league player & he recently passed, after reaching 100 years old!

Middlesex Community College, in Middletown, Connecticut, home of Steve Krevisky, hosted a chapter meeting in the fall & national SABR day in January. We enjoyed the Hall of Fame discussion & the resulting give & take. We enjoyed a holiday luncheon at a restaurant in Middletown, organized by Stan Dziurgot. Our February general meeting at Quinnipiac featured a good presentation by Larry Levine on Jews in baseball & a player panel, which included Ken Mackenzie & Ron D'Orio.

We have regular chapter breakfasts, which are informal & trips to the New Britain Rock Cats (now the Hartford Yard Goats)

games. Our members do research, write books (Paul Hensler & Bill Ryczek) & give presentations at state-wide & regional events. Alan Cohen & Steve Krevisky gave poster presentations at the Chicago convention last year. Our officers were also part of discussions at the Chapter Leaders meeting on how to improve things within the chapters.

We have increased our communication efforts, as Stan works with new members, Alan is our Treasurer & Karl communicates through Facebook & our website. Steve sends out e-mail blasts through the SABR website. We have book sales at our meetings & Alan writes a number of biographies. We had a group trip to Yankee Stadium for Old-Timers Day.

We have good participation in our various activities & our events are open to the public, as well as to members of other chapters. We have a good leadership team & we expect to continue our development! We are also pleased that Marjorie Adam, a descendant of Doc Adams, is pushing for him to get into the Hall of Fame!

Report submitted by Chapter President Steve Krevisky, Treasurer Alan Cohen, Communications Director Karl Cicitto & Membership Director Stan Dziurgot on behalf of our members!

## The Hall of Fame Case for Harland Clift

By Peter Seidel

Among the many lively discussions at the February 27 Chapter Meeting held at Quinnipiac University, perhaps the most enlightening discussion concerned the career of third baseman Harland Clift.

Clift played much of his career in relative anonymity from 1934 – 1943 for the St. Louis Browns, a terrible team that finished no higher than sixth place & twice finished over 50 games out of first place, all prior to 1942. The Browns averaged slightly over 150,000 in seasonal attendance during this period (league average was over 540,000).

Clift is considered to be the first modern third baseman. Previously third base was like any other infield position where defense was the top priority. In 1937, Clift hit 29 homers setting the home run record for third basemen & then broke it in 1938 with 34. His record would stand for 15 years. By 1942 Clift's production began to decline sharply. He was traded to the Washington Senators during the 1943 season & his big league career came to an end in 1945 at the age of 32.

Although Clift's career was brief, he was the template for the modern third baseman. Is that enough to be considered for the Hall of Fame? There are solid arguments for & against. I'd like to use an argument that has gained much attention recently to determine Hall of Fame worthiness. It involves WAR7 & JAWS.

WAR is an acronym for Wins Above Replacement, a formula used to measure how much impact a player had on his team for a season vs a replacement player or a Triple A call up. A WAR of zero or less means a player had no impact & can be replaced by anyone, 0 to 2 is a backup player, 2 to 5 is a starting player,



5 to 8 is an All-Star and 8+ is an MVP. WAR is a cumulative stat over the course of a career.

The concept of JAWS (Jaffe WAR Score system) was developed by Sports Illustrated writer Jay Jaffe to determine a player's Hall of Fame worthiness. JAWS is an average of the Career WAR and WAR7. WAR7 takes the best seven seasons of a player's career & compares them with those of Hall of Fame players at the same position. The average Hall of Fame third baseman (there are 13) has a 67.5 career WAR; 42.7 WAR7; 55.1 JAWS. Clift's career numbers are 39.1 career WAR; 32.5 WAR7; 35.8 JAWS. While the Clift's numbers are below average, his career WAR number is low due to his short career. While Clift's numbers are also low, they are higher than four Hall of Fame third basemen; Deacon White, George Kell, Pie Traynor & Freddie Lindstrom.

What those four players have in common is that their careers, for the most part, predated Clift's with the exception of the three year overlap (1934-1936) between Clift & Lindstrom & four years between Traynor & Clift. There are three other third basemen whose careers predate Clift's that are in the Hall of Fame; John McGraw, Jimmy Collins & "Home Run" Baker who have higher career numbers. The top seven third basemen are all modern players whose careers post date Clift.

Clift's career .831 OPS ranks him 20<sup>th</sup> among third basemen & ahead of modern Hall of Fame third basemen Ron Santo & Paul Molitor.

So what do you think? Are Harland Clift's lifetime numbers & historical significance enough to overcome his brief & somewhat anonymous career & get him into the Hall of Fame?

## Working on SABR's Future: Q & A with Marisa Elliot

By Karl Cicitto

*Marisa Elliot became a member of the SABR national team in January. It's fair to say that she aims to help build SABR's future & carry forward its legacy.*



### **Congratulations on your position as Manager of Chapter/ Partner Relations. What do you hope to accomplish this year?**

One of my biggest goals is to build relationships with all of the local chapters. Without trust & communication my role won't help anybody. I'm consistently talking to the chapters, reaching out, seeing where everyone is succeeding & what areas need attention, building my knowledge; these are my biggest goals. I want to mentor our chapters that struggle with participation & help build the membership around each one. In the process, I plan to open up the communication between chapters so that they share ideas, too.

### **What activities seem to be "boilerplate" across all chapters?**

Monthly meet-ups, whether it's casual gatherings or organized presentations. Members like to stay involved throughout the month. Game-of-the-month events during the baseball season are huge, especially with our Colorado chapter. Events utilizing books are another. SABR, as you know, publishes a lot of books. We have chapters that leverage baseball books even if they are not SABR materials. Having a book club event, whether it is monthly or weekly is frequently done & each chapter does it a little differently. You can have a meeting & just talk about the book. Or you can have the author attend in person or by conference call. There are many options with books. It is one of the approaches that I really favor. So, baseball games, book clubs & monthly lunches – those are pretty standard across all our SABR chapters.

### **The Smoky Joe Wood Chapter had 40 attend a Yankee game on June 12. We felt good about that.**

It's fun to go to a game. I sometimes feel that a new member can feel a bit intimidated at their first SABR meeting when they see a lot of statistics, analytics & information. But at a game you are there to watch baseball. Everyone in this organization loves baseball. That's why they join. A game attracts a crowd because it is such an easy environment in which to spend time. Game events definitely grow the camaraderie within a chapter.

### **What have you seen that you think is really innovative at a local level?**

A lot of chapters are not just focusing on "now". They are looking at the future by trying to get youth involved. Focusing on the present is great, but bringing in the younger generation will help determine the SABR membership in 20 years & those are the people who will carry forward the SABR Legacy. I would like all the chapters to try to do this. This is something I am going to update in our best practices manual. This

involves reaching out to schools, partnering with Little Leagues & volunteering. These are the types of things that I see getting a lot of traction lately. I worked for the San Francisco Giants in their youth program. Making the youth connection resonates with me personally.

### **What do you think the mix is among all the chapters between being very active, steadily active & not very active - on a percentage basis - & what drives the activity level?**

This is a tricky question. Comparing all the chapters by numbers & percentages is difficult because each one is unique. As you know we have chapters with large & small memberships. Some are located in MLB cities, some are a state away from a MLB city. It also depends on how you define "active". Some chapters consider a monthly meeting to be active. Some consider a seasonal meeting to be. Chapters follow their local traditions. Based on the trends I see, 80% of our chapters are very active.

Unfortunately there are chapters that struggle to hold a monthly or seasonal meeting. That's something that I am here to help with. In some cases geography is the challenge with members very spread out. But that's a problem for which technology has some answers & we're going to focus on that.

Overall, it's the members & the leaders that determine how active the chapter is. I look at the SABR chapters as SABR houses & we currently have houses in over 70 locations. We can't really build our foundations without building our membership & local leaders. If our current members aren't really engaged a chapter can reach a plateau. They can hit a wall. Monthly meetings can become less frequent. Morale can start to come down. But as long as there is a strong corps of members & leaders that are really dedicated & interested in what SABR does at the chapter level they will be our driving force.

### **Has any chapter found a strategic way to build membership?**

Fanfests are usually our biggest attraction. Obviously they are held at a place that draws our target demographic. Not every chapter has access to a team so that's where social media comes into play. It's all about getting the word out. If people don't know about SABR then they are not going to join.

Part of my role includes growing our student program. It's important to have our local chapters become involved with the schools in our communities. SABR is a great resource for our schools so we want to team up with high schools & colleges. School Partnerships will probably attract more people than we can imagine.

*Continued on Page 4 (Elliot)*





## Elliot (continued from Page 3)

### ***In Connecticut, we have several minor league teams & at least one of them holds a Fan Fest.***

Minor League teams are great. They offer an important connection to the local community. Besides attending a minor league game, a chapter can have a day at the ball park. Ask the team to provide a speaker before the game. Start your meeting an hour before game time. It's great. You could hear from the GM, or even a player from the home & visiting team followed by a stadium tour. It's almost easier to get that set up with a minor league team than with a major league team. If you guys ever need help with that let me know & I can help determine what works best for your outing.

### ***What can be done at the local level to gain a higher profile for SABR?***

That ties into a lot of the answers I've already given you. It comes down to utilizing all the resources you've been given. Use your teams, your schools, your social media to get the word out. Like they say, birds of a feather flock together. So, attract baseball fans. They will come.

### ***Baltimore is a new chapter – how has that gone?***

Great. Bruce Brown & his team have hit the ground running. They have kept their social media going constantly. They're getting their members involved. They had about 50 members at their first meeting & are planning an annual major league & minor league meeting. Bruce went at this with a game plan & from what I have seen they are achieving everything.

### ***I am going to have to start following Baltimore on Facebook & seeing what these guys do.***

They are really good at putting out their event invites. They share a lot of links. They keep everyone involved even if they are not SABR members. They let people know what the chapter is doing.

### ***Where else (geographically) might SABR consider establishing a chapter?***

In a perfect world SABR would be represented in all 50 states. The next steps for growth are up to our SABR members in the local areas. We have to have local members who are willing to run the local get togethers. A new chapter that we recently added was Rickwood Field in Alabama. They contacted me earlier this year. We got everyone involved. It took less than 2 weeks to get it established.

### ***Can you elaborate on what it is like to prepare for the National Convention?***

It's been eye opening for me. As you know it's my first convention. Deb leads most of the staff that is involved. She puts on the event. So we go with the flow and try to give Deb what she needs. A lot of it is obviously communicating with everyone, fitting all the bits and pieces together. Laying out the schedule is something I know that Deb works at really hard. But it is definitely a team effort. We are all excited. Every day we do a countdown. Every day we are a day closer to the convention.

## Beyond the Game by Don Harrison



"Beyond the Game," the White Plains, N.Y., cable TV show hosted by John Vorperian, became the latest venue to celebrate the eventful 100-year life of Mike Sandlock. I was privileged to represent SABR's Smoky Joe Wood Chapter for the show's June 7 taping. Vorperian, an attorney & SABR member, proved an engaging host.

Sandlock, the Old Greenwich-born catcher-infielder, had the distinction of being Major League Baseball's oldest living player when he died at his home in Cos Cob on April 4. The majority of his 16 seasons were spent in the minor leagues, but he spent all or portions of five summers in the National League – Boston Braves, Brooklyn Dodgers & Pittsburgh Pirates.

In March, Connecticut's Smoky Joe Wood Chapter published Sandlock's biography, "100: The 100-Year Journey of a Baseball Journeyman: Mike Sandlock." I had the pleasure of writing Mike's biography. Karl Cicitto, who conceived & spearheaded the project, served as lead editor. More than a dozen SABR members - notably Associate Editors Bill Nowlin & Len Levin - contributed.

We had hoped to present Sandlock the book at his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration last October 17, held at one of his favorite haunts, the Innis Arden Golf Club in Old Greenwich. Production delays prevented that from happening, though, but several of us were there to share in the moment & give the old ballplayer a bound copy of the finished manuscript. Just two weeks prior to his death, on March 19, we presented Mike the actual book. He graciously autographed more than two dozen copies for us.

I'd spent time with Sandlock on three occasions during my tenure as founding editor of the weekly "Greenwich Citizen," the first time in the summer of 2003 when I spent the better part of an afternoon with him at his former home in Old Greenwich. That meeting resulted in an in-depth sports feature for the Citizen's July 18 issue.

When we launched the paper in September of 2002, the baseball historian side of me was determined to produce stories about all five Greenwich natives who reached the major leagues. We made it happen. Our first sports editor, Mike Cardillo, traveled to Brooklyn to interview former second baseman Tim Teufel, then serving as manager of the Class-A Brooklyn Cyclones. I conducted a telephone interview with Pete Castiglione, the former Pirate infielder who had moved to Tampa & met face-to-face with Zeke Bella, the outfielder who played briefly with the Yankees and spent the 1959 season with the Kansas City A's. The tragedy of the missing bridegroom, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances on July 5, 2005 during his honeymoon cruise aboard a Royal Caribbean liner, led to our fifth subject: George Smith, namesake & great grandfather of the presumed murdered bridegroom. Smith pitched in the National League (1916-23) with the Dodgers, Giants, Reds & Phillies. I dedicated a column to him, although I was unable to connect with the Smith family.

**Don Harrison** is the author of "Connecticut Baseball: The Best of the Nutmeg State," published by The History Press in 2008 & now updated & in a third printing. He joined SABR in 2008.

## 2016 Hall of Fame Induction Weekend

Photos and Article by Stan Osowiecki

At 6:00 am on Saturday, July 23, 2016, seven hundred Mets fans arrived at Citi Field & packed onto thirteen buses for a journey upstate to Cooperstown, New York for the 2016 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony activities. The group, known as "The 7 Line Army", is an energetic gathering of Mets fans that regularly pack the Big Apple seats in Citi Field and "invade" multiple stadiums per year across the country. Known for their enthusiasm & vocal nature (typically family friendly), they create an atmosphere more similar to that of a soccer crowd, as Mets outfielder Curtis Granderson recently said on a Fox Sports feature on the group (Link to: [Fox Sports Feature](#)).

Arriving around 10:00 am at the Brewery Ommegang in Cooperstown, the 7 Line Army set up their tents & headed into the village for the Saturday activities. Throughout Main Street there were merchants of every type selling memorabilia & clothing celebrating the two newest inductees of the Hall of Fame, Mike Piazza & Ken Griffey, Jr. Also being offered was ballpark food & the opportunity to purchase autographs from Hall of Fame members such as Goose Gossage, Tommy Lasorda & Andre Dawson. In addition, there were opportunities to buy signatures from Pete Rose, Steve Garvey & many of the members of the 1986 Mets, including Jesse Orosco, Howard Johnson & Lenny Dykstra.

Not having been to Hall of Fame weekend in the past, I noticed that many people had set up their chairs hours before to reserve spots for the Hall of Fame parade that evening and I was lucky enough to get a front row seat. The parade started at 6:00 pm and featured 46 Hall of Famers including Whitey Ford, Juan Marichal, Johnny Bench, Mike Schmidt, George Brett, Carlton Fisk, Cal Ripken, Jr., a crowd favorite Pedro Martinez and, of course, Piazza & Griffey, Jr. The crowd for the parade was huge with some merchants saying that the weekend was their busiest in years. While there was the expected crowd of Mets fans, there was also a huge contingent wearing Mariners #24 shirts, many from Washington state.



After an evening of music & camping at the brewery, the 7 Line Army invaded the Clark Sports Center for the Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Spread out among the estimated crowd of 50,000 baseball fans were thirteen "31" signs from the 7 Line Army to cheer on the induction of Mike Piazza & Ken Griffey, Jr. into the Hall.

Piazza was the first to speak & went through a timeline of his career thanking many of the people who encouraged him and helped him along the way. Fighting back tears many times, Piazza thanked the fans for their support through the years, especially Mets fans. One of the biggest cheers of the day was Piazza's thanking of the first responders from September 11, 2001. Piazza closed out his speech by thanking his family for their love & support, especially his father whom he recognized as being so critical to him becoming a professional baseball player.

Prior to Ken Griffey, Jr.'s speech, a video featuring former Mariners' Manager Lou Pinella described Griffey, Jr.'s career. Pinella told one funny story about how he made a wager for a couple of steaks one time with Junior. Pinella won the bet & when he came into his office a few days later, there was a cow waiting for him along with a smiling Griffey, Jr. Just like Piazza, Junior fought back his emotions throughout his speech & thanked those who gave him support, especially since he arrived in the Major League at such a young age. He noted that one of the highlights of his career was the opportunity not only to play on the same team with his father, but also to become the first father & son to hit back-to-back home runs in one game.

After the ceremony the 7 Line Army boarded our buses for the trip home. With thousands fans heading in the same direction out of town, it took nearly two hours to reach the town border & with Sunday evening summer traffic almost 6 hours to get back to Citi Field. While it was a long trip, it was a fun & exciting opportunity to see two greats inducted into the Hall of Fame.

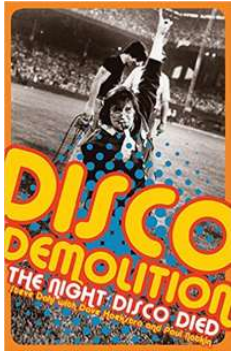
SABR Baseball Biographies for [Ken Griffey, Jr.](#) or [Mike Piazza](#) (written by Stan Osowiecki) are available in the SABR Baseball Biography Project.





## Upcoming Baseball Book Releases

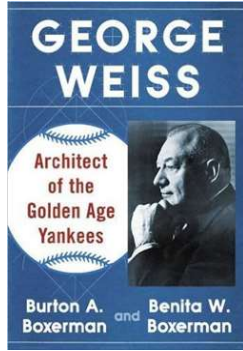
Compiled By Karl Cicitto (Source: amazon.com)



### **Disco Demolition: The Night Disco Died**

(Aug. 16, 2016) by Steve Dahl & Dave Hoekstra

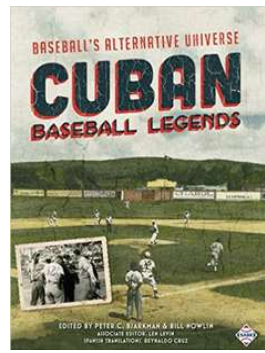
In the late 1970s, disco dominated radio airwaves, much to the dismay of rock music fans. To boost attendance at Comiskey Park, the White Sox & Chicago DJ legend Steve Dahl collaborated to host Disco Demolition on July 12, 1979. Admission to the park was ninety-eight cents & a disco record. Records were destroyed on the field between games, declaring absolutely how rock fans felt about disco. Attendance exceeded fifty thousand, far beyond anyone's estimations & when fans stormed the field for the demolition, chaos ensued. Police cleared the field, Comiskey Park was evacuated & the second game was cancelled—for the first time in MLB history.



### **George Weiss: Architect of the Golden Age Yankees**

(Aug. 30, 2016) by Burton A. Boxerman & Benita W. Boxerman

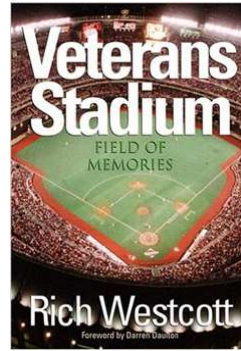
The New York Yankees were the strongest team in the major leagues from 1948-1960, capturing the American League Pennant 10 times & winning seven World Championships. Ask the average baseball fan who made the Yankees so dominant & most will mention players such as Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Whitey Ford, or Mickey Mantle. Some may insist that manager Casey Stengel was the key. But sports pundits at the time & respected sports historians today consider the real genius behind the Yankees' success their general manager, a portly, often taciturn & very shy man named George Martin Weiss.



### **Cuban Baseball Legends: Baseball's Alternative Universe**

(Jul. 12, 2016) by Peter Bjarkman, et al

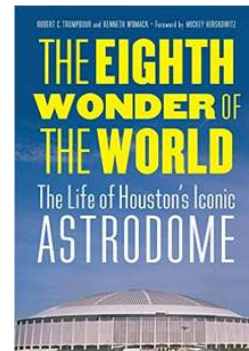
Minnie Minoso. Martin Dihigo. Luis Tiant Sr. & Jr. "El Duque" Orlando & Livan Hernandez. These are only a few of the leading lights profiled in this SABR BioProject book. The 47 individuals profiled here represent only a small handful of the legions of memorable & sometimes even legendary figures produced over nearly a century & a half by an island nation where the bat-and-ball sport known as baseball is more than a national pastime, it is the national passion. The book presents 47 biographies in all, plus essays on Cuban baseball. Some of those profiled in this book include: Aquino Abreu by Peter C. Bjarkman, Santos Amaro by Rory Costello, Bert (Dagoberto) Campaneris by Rich Schabowski, José Cardenal by Ray Birch, Mike (Miguel) Cuéllar by Adam Ulrey, Mike (Ramón) Herrera by Bill Nowlin, Minnie (Orestes) Miñoso by Mark Stewart, Tony (Tani) Pérez by Phil Cola, Cookie (Octavio) Rojas by Peter M. Gordon, Luis Tiant Jr. by Mark Armour & many more.



### **Veterans Stadium: Field of Memories**

(Oct. 2, 2016) by Rich Westcott

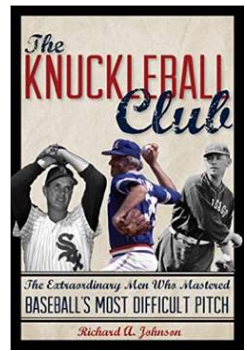
In its thirty three years, Veterans Stadium was the most important sports venue in Philadelphia. It was the home of the Phillies, the Eagles, seventeen Army-Navy games, Temple football, plus such short lived teams as the Atoms, Fury & Stars. The Vet was also the site of countless nonsporting activities too. Hailed as a technological wonder when built in 1971 & considered a relic when demolished in 2004, The Vet was where the city's greatest memories were created. Rich Westcott takes readers on a ride through the triumphs & heartbreaks that took place at the Vet, from the 1980 Phillies World Series win, to the 1980 Eagles NFC ride to the Super Bowl, to immortal college football tournaments.



### **The Eighth Wonder of the World**

(Sept. 1, 2016) by Robert C. Trumpbour & Kenneth Womack

When it opened in 1965, the Houston Astrodome, nicknamed the Eighth Wonder of the World, captured the attention of an entire nation, bringing pride to the city & enhancing its reputation nationwide. It was a Texas-sized vision of the future, an unthinkable feat of engineering with premium luxury suites, theater-style seating, & the first animated scoreboard. Yet there were memorable problems such as outfielders' inability to see fly balls & failed attempts to grow natural grass—which ultimately led to the development of AstroTurf. *The Eighth Wonder of the World* tears back the facade & details the Astrodome's role in transforming Houston as a city while also chronicling the building's pivotal fifty years in existence & the ongoing debate about its preservation.



### **The Knuckleball Club**

(Jun. 9, 2016) by Richard A. Johnson

The knuckleball—so difficult to hit but also difficult to control & catch—has been a part of major league baseball since the early 1900s & continues to be used to this day. This book provides an informal history of the wildest, weirdest, most mesmerizing pitch of all time. Beginning with an examination of the invention of the knuckleball, Johnson then briefly touches upon the science & psychology of the pitch before profiling the game's great knuckleballers. This book shares the unique stories of Hoyt Wilhelm, Phil Niekro, Jim Bouton, Tom Candiotti, Tim Wakefield, R.A. Dickey & many others. Also featured are the best knuckleball catchers, from Bob Uecker & Doug Mirabelli to Rick Ferrell & Paul Richards. *The Knuckleball Club* is the first book to provide a comprehensive survey of the pitch & the players who used it, offering a deep understanding of how the knuckleball has fit into the fabric of the game over the past one hundred years.

## Bill MacLeod: Winner of 23 Straight Games

By Alan Cohen

The name Bill MacLeod is not known to most baseball fans. His major league career consisted of two short relief stints with the Red Sox at the end of the 1962 season. Indeed, when I spoke with him, I was worried that the batteries on my recorder would wear out. He remarked that it wouldn't take us that long to go through his big league career which lasted less than two innings. Some time, & a couple of battery changes later, I knew that there was far more to this guy than a small line in the Baseball Register.

He had first taken to the mound at Fenway as a 17 year-old high school junior & for one season in the minor leagues he put together a record that was as enviable as it was unlikely.

It all began for Bill in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he was born in May 1942. Little league was in its infancy at the time, but Bill excelled in Little League and went on to star at Gloucester High School.

In 1959, after completing his junior year Bill tried out for the annual Hearst Classic. He was among the 202 survivors of the initial tryouts (he tried out at Medford, Massachusetts) who worked out at Fens Stadium on July 28. The next stop for half the 52 survivors was the first semi-final game at Nashua, New Hampshire on August 4. Bill pitched four innings that day yielding but two hits & striking out seven. On two occasions, he struck out the side. But like many a pitcher before & since, he prided himself on his hitting & doubled & scored in his only at-bat. Off his showing, he was selected to play at Fenway Park on August 8. But that day belonged to Wilbur Wood & Bob Guindon. MacLeod pitched two hitless innings but was not chosen to go to New York for the Hearst National game.

He received a \$12,000 bonus to sign with the Red Sox in 1960, fresh out of high school. He had been scouted by Jumpin Joe Dugan & while being courted by the Red Sox was invited to come by with his friends, pitch batting practice & generally enjoy himself. He was given the option of beginning his minor league career in Waterloo in 1960 or starting his minor league season in the Carolina League the following season. He opted to stay at home in 1960 & in 1961, he went 15-8 at Winston-Salem in the Class-B Carolina League, switching from throwing overhand to delivering his pitches via a sidearm delivery which was at times closer to submarine style. He led the league in wins, strikeouts (208) & ERA (2.31) & was named Topps' Player of the Month in August. He was selected for the league's All-Star team & was voted the league's rookie of the year.

He was invited to his first spring training in 1962 & his early time in Florida was documented with a certain bit of admiration by John Gilooly of the Boston Record-American in February 1962 before MacLeod had thrown his first spring training pitch. The raves continued into March as MacLeod took to the mound at the Scottsdale, Arizona training facility. MacLeod did well enough in spring training to be assigned to Triple-A Seattle in the Pacific Coast League. An 8-6 season got him a September call-up to the Red Sox.



When he arrived in Boston, manager Pinky Higgins asked him if he was ready. MacLeod who had suffered an injury during the season was not about to say "No." He made his major league debut on September 13, 1962, pitching to one batter in a 14-6 loss at Detroit. The game was getting out of hand when he came in with two outs in the bottom of the fourth inning after the Tigers had taken an 8-0 lead. He retired the only batter he faced, Billy Bruton, on a ground ball & was removed for a pinch hitter. In his next & final appearance on September 22, he entered the game with the score tied 3-3 in the bottom of the 11th inning at Washington. In his first inning of work, he struck out two batters & worked out of a jam. When the Sox failed to score in the top of the 12<sup>th</sup> he returned to the mound. After getting the first batter, he yielded three consecutive hits that gave Washington the win. He had a 0-1 record with an ERA of 5.40 to show for his one & two-thirds innings major league career.

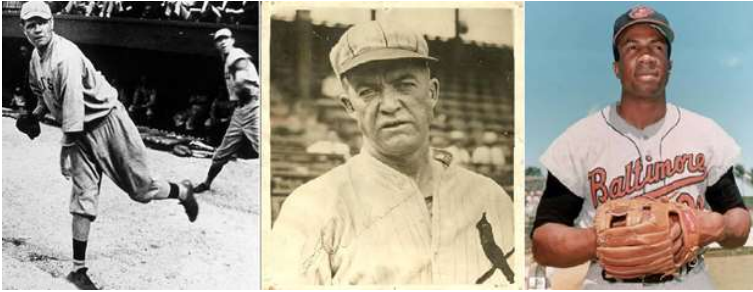
He went back to the minor leagues where he pitched through 1967. In one unforgettable & unbelievable stretch he won 23 consecutive games, breaking the record of 17-in-a-row set by Tommy Fine of Scranton in 1946. MacLeod's streak began in 1964, when he won his last four games with Reading & continued into 1965, when he set a single season Eastern League record for consecutive wins & pitching winning percentage, going 18-0 with Pittsfield. After spending the 1966 season in the Pacific Coast League, he returned to Pittsfield in the Eastern League in 1967 & secured number 23, pitching three innings in relief against Williamsport.

Bill, despite some health reversals, has always maintained his sense of humor. Early in his career, he tended to hit batters. In his first season at Winston Salem, he not only led the league in wins, strikeouts & ERA, but his 34 hit batsmen put him in the lead in that category as well. From 1961 through 1965, he was in double figures in hit batsmen each season. In 1965, in the midst of his super season, he quipped, "I led professional baseball in hit batsmen for three years. But after the first season, that's all I led in." He continued, "I wasn't really that wild. I just used to hit people too much. Now, I'm throwing strikes."



## Famous Baseball Events in Years Ending in Six

By Steve Krevisky



Let's take a look back at some of the fascinating baseball events which occurred in years ending in 6. We begin with 1906, which marks the only time that there was an all-Chicago World Series. The "Hitless Wonders," or the Chicago White Sox, who won 93 & lost 58, faced off against the powerful Chicago Cubs, who won an amazing 116, as compared to only 36 losses. You would have expected the Cubs, who were at the beginning of a dynasty, to win easily, behind Three Finger Brown. However, the Chisox pulled the upset, winning the series in 6 games, as both teams batted under .200.

We now move to 1916, where the Red Sox were coming off their World Series win against the Phillies the year before. Someone named Babe Ruth led the pitching staff, as the Sox were able to repeat for the only time in their history! They defeated the Brooklyn Dodgers, led by 25 game winner Jeff Pfeffer, in 5 games. Ruth went the distance in Game 2, as the Sox won 2-1 in 14 innings. A fella named Casey Stengel helped lead the Brooklyn to the pennant. The NY Giants won 26 in a row, but still failed to win the pennant!

By 1926, the game had moved into the live ball era, with more power, as opposed to the Dead Ball era, which ended around 1920. Babe Ruth was well established on the Yankees, although he had a rough 1925. In 1926, the beginning of the Yankees' Murderer's Row dynasty was getting going, as Lou Gehrig, Bob Meusel, Earle Combs & Tony Lazzeri were now regulars & Herb Pennock paced the pitchers with 23 wins. Over in the Senior Circuit, the St. Louis Cardinals won their first 20<sup>th</sup> century pennant, placed by Rogers Hornsby & Jim Bottomley. Flint Rhem paced the staff with 20 wins. The Cards won the series in 7 games, with game 7 being dramatic. The Redbirds were leading, 3 to 2, in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. The Yanks had the bases loaded & rookie Tony Lazzeri at the plate. Player-manager Rogers Hornsby relieved Jesse Haines with aging Grover Cleveland Alexander. In a dramatic spot, he whiffed Tony & the Cards escaped trouble. The game ended in a bizarre way, as Babe Ruth was thrown out trying to steal 2nd, so the Cards were the champs.

By 1936, the Yankees had only won 1 pennant since 1929, as the Jimmie Foxx/Al Simmons/Mickey Cochrane/Lefty Grove A's won three straight pennants from 1929 to 1931 & the Tigers had just won 2 straight pennants in '34 & '35. However, rookie Joe DiMaggio arrived in 1936 & the Yanks were back on top, with 5 different Yanks driving in 100+ runs. 6 Yankee pitchers won in double figures.

Over in the NL, the Giants won the pennant, paced by Carl Hubbell & Mel Ott. The Yanks won the Series in 6 games, with Lefty Gomez winning 2 games. Casey Stengel was now managing the Brooklyn Dodgers, but they limped home in 7<sup>th</sup> place. Van Lingle Mungo was one of the more colorful characters on the team. Slugger Jimmie Foxx enjoyed a banner year with the Sox & Rogers Hornsby was managing the 7<sup>th</sup> place St. Louis Browns.

1946 saw the return of many stars from WW2, along with the Mexican League trying to lure many ML players down south. The Red Sox were back, winning the Junior Circuit flag rather easily, paced by Ted Williams, Johnny Pesky, Dom DiMaggio & Bobby Doerr. Pesky led the league in hits, while Teddy Ballgame scored 142 runs & walked 156 times! Boo Ferriss was a 25 game winner. The Cardinals took the NL honors, but only after defeating the Dodgers in a 2 game playoff. This was their 4<sup>th</sup> pennant in 5 years, & Stan the Man Musial led the way, batting .365 & Slaughter, Schoendienst & Marion were big contributors. Howie Pollett paced the hurlers with 21 wins. Hank Greenberg & Hal Newhouser had big years for the defending champion Tigers, while Bob Feller was in fine form for the Tribe. The Senators' Mickey Vernon won the batting title & led the AL in doubles. Jackie Robinson played for the Montreal Royals & the Cardinals won a dramatic series in 7 games.

Mickey Mantle fully arrived in 1956, winning the MVP, Triple Crown & the Yanks won the pennant. The Dodgers won yet another flag, their 6<sup>th</sup> in 10 years in the Robinson era. Larsen pitched his perfect game in the 5<sup>th</sup> game of the Series, but the Yanks couldn't win until game 7, getting payback for 1955, when Brooklyn won its only 20<sup>th</sup> century World Series. Don Newcombe won 27 games, winning NL MVP & Cy Young award.

1966 marked Frank Robinson's Triple Crown with the Orioles, this coming after he had been traded from the Reds. The O's swept the Series from the Dodgers, in Koufax's last year. Clemente took the NL MVP & Marichal was superb. The Yankees finished in the cellar, which pleased many people.

In 1976, the Yanks were back & won a dramatic pennant, on Chris Chambliss's 9<sup>th</sup> inning HR in the 5<sup>th</sup> game of the ALCS, against KC. Unfortunately for them, the Red Machine swept them in the Series. Cincy is the last NL team to win back to back titles.

In 1986, people remember the Buckner gaffe, but there was more to this series than that & Bill was unfairly vilified. The Mets survived a tough NLCS vs. Houston, winning Game 6 in 16 innings. Jeter took over Shortstop for the '96 Yanks, who started the next dynasty, coming back from 2-0 down vs. the Braves. Who can forget Boggs riding on a horse, after the Yanks won? 2006 marked the Cards winning the series over a young Tigers team, a World Series matchup which had occurred in 1934 & 1968. What will 2016 bring?



## Quigley Stadium Home to Many Teams

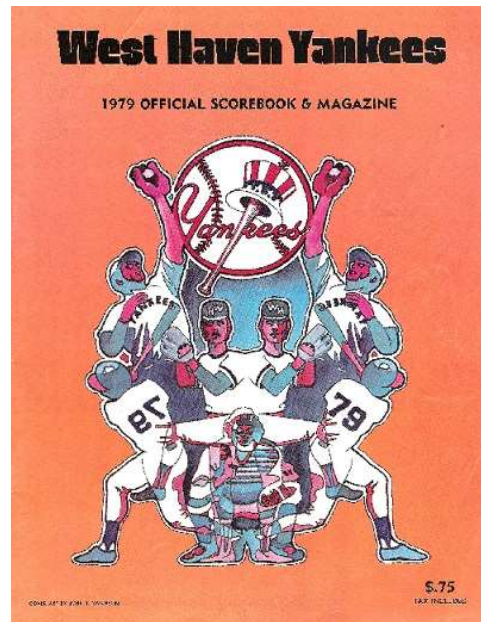
By Stan Dziurgot

At the SABR National Convention in Atlanta in 2010, I approached former Braves Manager Bobby Cox & asked him about his time managing in West Haven. He only managed the Yankees AA farm team for one season in 1972 but they won the Eastern League Championship that year. I mentioned Doc Medich & Charlie Spikes & his response was don't forget about Otto Velez. The stadium on 362 Front Avenue in West Haven could hardly be looked at as a minor league stadium today. It did house the Yankees AA farm team in the Eastern League from 1972 – 1979. Other managers in that period included Doc Edwards & Stump Merrill. Some of the players who passed through for the Yankees besides Medich, Spikes & Velez were Scott McGregor, Damaso Garcia, Willie Upshaw, Ron Davis, Dave Righetti, Willie McGee, Ron Guidry, LaMarr Hoyt, Joe Lefebvre & Buck Showalter.

Besides 1972, the team won championships in 1976, 1977 & 1979. The Yankees had moved their AA farm team to West Haven from Manchester, New Hampshire before the 1972 season. They would leave after 1979 & move the franchise to Nashville, Tennessee. The Seattle Mariners were supposed to move their farm team to West Haven in 1980 but because the lighting system & the club house needed updating, they never played there & moved the franchise to Lynn, Massachusetts. Instead, the Oakland Athletics located their AA franchise at old Quigley from 1980 to 1982 & were initially known as the Whitecaps.

Quigley Stadium was built in 1947 for the West Haven Sailors, a semi-pro team of the West Haven Twilight League. The Sailors had begun play in 1933 at West Haven's Painter Park & then moved to Donovan Field which was situated next door to the Savin Rock Amusement Park. After World War II, owner Maurice Quigley wanted a field with lights so he built Exhibition Stadium in 1947. The name was later changed to Quigley Stadium. In 1948 & 1949, Willie Mays would play three games there as a member of the Birmingham Black Barons. The stadium was sold to the City of West Haven in 1951. Another highlight of the stadium was when the Yankee franchise had a Mickey Mantle Day in July of 1972.

After the 1982 season, the Oakland A's left & minor league baseball would never return to Quigley Stadium. The wooden



*The program cover pictured was for a game between the West Haven Yankees & Bristol Red Sox. Bristol players in the program include Rich Gedman, Bruce Hurst & Wade Boggs. The West Haven Yankees pitching coach was Hoyt Wilhelm. In the program, Buck Showalter (West Haven) was referred to as "Nate", & manager Stump Merrill was referred to as Showalter. In a "Covering The Team" feature there is a picture of our own Don Harrison, then with Waterbury Republican, some 37 years ago.*

grandstand was deemed unsafe & destroyed in 1987. They were replaced by metal bleachers. Today the stadium is used for the West Haven Twilight League and the Notre Dame of West Haven High School baseball team. The stadium had a capacity of about four thousand people. Driving by it today it's hard to imagine it being a minor league stadium, especially when compared to the stadiums of today.

### Minor Moves

- When the A's left West Haven in 1982, they moved the franchise to Albany, New York. In the 1990's, the Yankees AA franchise would move to Albany & then ironically shift back to Connecticut, this time to Dodd Stadium in Norwich.
- In 2002, the AA Bombers left the Nutmeg State again, this time for Trenton, New Jersey, where they remain today.
- In 1972, the Yankees moved their Manchester, New Hampshire franchise to West Haven. In 2004, the Eastern League Ravens left the New Haven area for Manchester.

## Trivia Puzzlers: 1956 Yankees

By Ken Paulsen

60 years ago Don Larsen pitched a perfect game in the World Series, Mickey Mantle won the Triple Crown & Casey Stengel was known to use any pitcher in any situation, not caring about a pitcher's usual role. He used 10 different starting pitchers & 10 different pitchers had at least one save. What else do you know of that team?

1. Which lefthanded pitcher led the staff with a 19-6 record and 2.47 ERA?
2. What righthanded pitcher who also pitched for the Tigers & Angels led the bullpen with 11 saves?
3. Mantle batted .366 with 52 Homers & 130 RBI. Who was 2<sup>nd</sup> on the club with 30 homers & 105 RBI?
4. Batting .311, 2<sup>nd</sup> on the club, while playing 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & mostly shortstop was this former Rookie of the Year. Name him.
5. The home team won the first six games of the 1956 World Series. The Yankees won game 7 at Ebbetts Field, a 9-0 shutout behind this 18 game winner. Name him.

## Meeting Munson

By Paul Hensler

After joining the Boston school system in 1967 as a teacher, my Aunt Irene caught the spirit of adventure & abandoned her career as an educator to cast her lot with Pan American World Airways. She became a stewardess in early 1970 & was given route assignments to western Europe, Rio & San Juan. An occupational hazard at this time affecting many airlines were the unfortunate diversions of flights to Havana, the nefarious deeds of hijackers. In an attempt to curb air crime in the pre-TSA era, the federal government provided protection on select flights through the employment of sky marshals, who were armed, plain-clothes agents authorized to use force to thwart criminal action. One such marshal who made the acquaintance of my aunt was Duane Munson, brother of 1970 American League Rookie-of-the-Year Thurman Munson.

In the spring of 1971 & with my April school vacation about to arrive, my aunt offered me the chance to visit her in Manhattan for a few days. As if I needed any enticement to hop a Naugatuck-to-New York train, she mentioned having several dates with Duane & offered the strong possibility of being able to attend the Yankees' home opener as well as game 2 of the home stand. So it was that I joined her & Duane on April 13 when the Bombers hosted the Billy Martin-led Tigers. Arriving too late to see Thurman receive his Rookie Award, we nonetheless were seated in the family section behind first base at the old Stadium, the wife of Yankee starter Stan Bahnsen right in front of us. The throng of nearly 35,000 was treated to a 5-2 New York victory, but before we repaired to the players' waiting lounge in the hope that the Yankee catcher would join us for dinner, my curiosity got the better of me as I noticed a slow but steady stream of autograph seekers beseeching a gentleman several rows in front of our box seats. With game program & pencil in hand, I approached the celebrity, who politely placed his "George Plimpton" on the scorecard page.

A bit later in the lounge, that same page became a collector's prize when I requested & received signatures from all who emerged from the Yankee clubhouse. Meanwhile the status of the missing Thurman remained a question, & alas, he was not available for dinner or even a cameo appearance that day. But try again we would after the next day's contest, another Yankee win – Fritz Peterson got the better of Mickey Lolich – played before exactly 23,000 fewer fans. My quarry of autographs was a mere handful, but this time the catcher accompanied us for a post-game dinner, just in time before my intended return trip home from Grand Central Terminal.

Irene, Duane, Thurman & I ran a small gauntlet of fans from the lounge exit to the players' parking lot where Duane had parked his Mustang. Still star-struck, I was in awe when Thurman & I climbed into the cramped back seats for the ride to dinner, yet I had to contain my enthusiasm when he reached into his jacket pocket, produced a can of beer & offered some to me. I quickly declined for fear of besmirching my presumed youthful innocence, but the impulse to imbibe was overwhelming given the fact that my aunt was fully aware that her father – my grandfather – had long ago started me on a life-long love of beer by offering me swigs from his bottles of Rheingold & Schaefer. Counselling temperance for the sake of being legal, I've regretted not sharing that brew with a future MVP of the American League.



The dinner we soon shared was a letdown because Thurman was interested in topics other than baseball & I felt like the fourteen-year-old observer that I truly was. Nothing was memorable for me about the occasion, & now riding in the rain, our quartet headed for Midtown & an appointment with Penn Central for my return home. But one last piece of business was transacted before I extricated myself from the back of the car.

That day's sports section of *The New York Times* featured a column about Thurman Munson & he accommodated my request for his signature on my copy of it. Although I was in the nascent stages of my California Angel fandom, my first encounter with a major league ballplayer was special, even if I did decline to participate in happy hour.

## Trivia Puzzlers: 1916 Red Sox

by Ken Paulsen

100 years ago Boston's American League franchise won their 4<sup>th</sup> (& 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive) World Series. How much do you know of that club?

1. Which left-handed pitcher led the club in wins with 23?
2. During the 1915-1916 offseason the Red Sox traded their Hall-of-Fame centerfielder. In April 1916 they purchased a centerfielder from the Browns who hit .266 with 11 triples. Name him.
3. The Sox had 2 New England natives in the infield. Meriden's Jack Barry played the most games at second. Name the Vermont native who manned third base & led the team in batting average at .308?
4. The Red Sox defeated the Brooklyn Robins 4-1 in the Series. Which pitcher was the games 1 & 5 winner. (He would pitch an imperfect perfect game the following season.)
5. Despite trading away a Hall-of Fame outfielder, the leader in runs scored with 80 was the rightfielder who would also be inducted at Cooperstown. Name him

Answers on Page 21



## Frank Observations

By Michael Frank

### Little League

Little League is very much a part of today's suburban living, & to a certain extent in the city. Most leagues are well run; most managers are competent and careful. The excitement for those who make the summer all-star team is palpable. Leagues bring communities together; they provide an outlet for those who don't have boys of Little League age to work with them.

Little League started in 1938 in Williamsport, Pa. because Carl Stotz said the "big kids" were usurping the fields. Many programs started across the country, but Williamsport's ate up all the others.

In recent years, there have been challenges from travel team programs. So where do we stand? In 1938, teenagers & their younger brothers were out playing ball all day, sometimes on makeshift fields. Now more polished fields sit idle unless something is scheduled, games & practices taking about 2 hours. Kids don't play baseball anymore unless someone called Mister is telling them what to do. It's a major change over the last two generations.

Everybody's dinner is disrupted for games. Instead of the natural after school hours, games are played in the early evening when the men are available. Less involved parents feel pressure to go when they may have other things to do.

Kids used to grow up by arguing about a play & coming to a fair conclusion on their own. Now the Mister's handle all that.



### About Mantle

It says it right here – in 1956, 60 years ago, Mickey Mantle of the Yankees won the Triple Crown with a .353 average, 52 home runs & 130 RBI's. He also led the AL in runs scored & slugging average. He topped it off with 3 home runs in the World Series against the Brooks, which of course the Yankees won. This was despite leg problems from some years before.

Mantle's Wins Above Replacement that year was 12.0, the highest for anybody since 1947. Only Babe Ruth topped it. Second with 8.0 was a pitcher, Early Wynn. He got points for his base running & playing center field. The AL batted .260 against his .353; the AL's OPS was .735 versus his 1.169.

Willie Mays is said to be the greatest living ballplayer. Mantle's rookie card, in the same series as Mays's, goes for twice as much.

Mantle was a favorite of women. Teresa Brewer's silly song "I love Mickey" was a big hit.

When I was a boy in New York City in 1956, when some (not too many) still rooted for the Dodgers or Giants, Mantle was the focus of how we felt about the Yankees. And in my case it was negative, because Mantle's skills were usually beating my Indians, New England's "Ted Sox" & other teams.

It was only after I grew up that I learned how he was a big boozier, a clown on the trains, unfaithful to his wife, even unfaithful to his mistress & an often absent father. You can see this in Jim Bouton's "Ball Four" & Jane Levy's "The Last Boy".

Before he died at 63, after living much longer than he expected, he told the kids "Don't be like me. Take care of yourselves".

### Trivia Puzzlers: 1906 Cubs

by Ken Paulsen

We also have at least one Cubs fan in this chapter, so... 110 years ago the 1906 Cubs won 116 games & lost only 36.

1. The pitching leader went 26-6 with a 1.04 ERA. Name this Hall-of-Famer.
2. Everyone remembers the shortstop, 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman & 1<sup>st</sup> baseman because they fit into a lament by New York sportswriter Franklin P Adams. But the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman led the 1906 Cubs with a .327 average and 83 RBIs. Name this forgotten man.
3. Which Cubs pitcher, a 19 game winner, pitched a 1-hitter in Game 3 of the World Series against the cross town rival White Sox?
4. The Cubs left fielder batted .262 in the regular season but went 0-21 in the World Series. Name this somewhat obscure player.
5. The 1906 Cubs right fielder, in only his 2<sup>nd</sup> full season, batted .281 with 7 home runs, 13 triples. Five years later he would win the Chalmers Award as the National League Most Valuable Player. Name him.

Answers on Page 21



## Book Review: God Almighty Hissself

By Paul Hensler

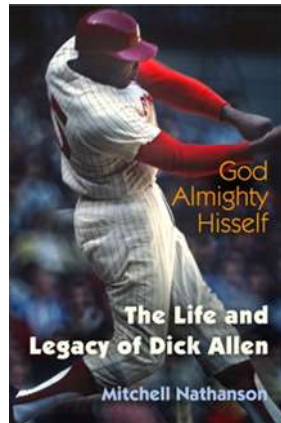
Mitchell Nathanson. *God Almighty Hissself: The Life and Legacy of Dick Allen*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. pp. 408. Cloth, \$34.95.

In speaking of the Soviet Union in 1939, Winston Churchill drew notice for his description of that country as “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” Twenty-five years hence, when Dick Allen completed his first full season with the Philadelphia Phillies, the same phrase could have been applied to the 1964 National League Rookie of the Year. In his latest book, Villanova law professor Mitchell Nathanson examines the life of a slugger whose “sin was to be black & independent” (116).

Growing up in the far reaches of western Pennsylvania, Allen & his family were less exposed to the ills of racism than a lot of mid-century America, the town of Wampum being “a generally warm, inviting community” (23). But when the Phillies signed Allen out of high school in 1960, the franchise had already demonstrated a great reluctance to embrace the diverse rosters of the post-Jackie Robinson era & when the introverted Allen was sent to the racially hostile milieu of several minor league cities – notably the southern locales of Tampa & Little Rock – the trauma was a shock to his senses. Escaping to the seemingly safer haven of Philadelphia through dint of his talent – his production of .289/33/97 with the Arkansas Travelers earned him a promotion in late 1963 – Allen soon found himself stationed at the hot corner, which constituted another position change forced on him, to say nothing of his immersion into the maelstrom of the infamous Phillies’ collapse in the 1964 NL pennant race.

The early cordiality bestowed upon the nattily attired Allen by fans in Philadelphia began to quickly erode despite his impressive batting statistics. Nathanson observes that in the wake of a race riot in the city just as the Phillies were about to ignominiously fold, “Dick Allen, through the color of his skin & the way he spoke his mind, had become the symbolic face that unleashed white anxiety” (68). That decrepit Connie Mack Stadium was in a black neighborhood affected by the disturbance poisoned the mix further. Thus, the stage was set for the unfortunate arrival of the boo birds who poured out their vitriol on the team, with particular attention given to Allen.

Allen’s situation was complicated by his argument that his salary should be immediately commensurate with his current production, & that earning raises based on his service time was not a rational approach to contract negotiations. “Seniority don’t drive in runs” became his mantra come bargaining time & as Allen proved his value as one of the game’s top hitters, he rapidly advanced on the salary scale. The increasingly large paychecks also informed Allen’s judgment when he realized that “money could buy power, money could buy freedom,” thereby justifying his ability to withstand the inconvenience of management’s fines for his tardiness in showing up at the ballpark or simply going AWOL (112). His actions were



those of an individualist & Allen believed that as long as he suited up in time to do his job when the game began, that was the correct method of preparation & when the game was over, his time was again his own & he owed nothing more to the team. This iconoclasm grated heavily in a baseball world hidebound by tradition & the mores of the clubhouse & as the catcalls persisted, Allen retreated to the refuge of his equestrian avocation & the social realm of the stadium groundskeepers.

Finally granted release from Philadelphia via an October 1969 trade to the Cardinals – for Curt Flood, of all people – Allen thereafter embarked on a journey to St. Louis & Los Angeles, where he also found those environs not to his liking. When he arrived in Chicago in 1972, he was paired with White Sox manager Chuck Tanner, also a product of western Pennsylvania who was amenable to letting Allen march to his own drummer. The results were impressive, as Allen contended for the Triple Crown & easily won Most Valuable Player honors in the American League. Tanner & general manager Roland Hemond appeared to have understood “that if they had any hope of reaching the athlete[,] they had to reach the individual within” (249).

Not surprisingly, however, Sox management soon found that they could not placate Allen, who in spite of the brightness of his shining star still felt exploited by ownership & by the game in general. By the end of 1974, the streak of freedom which Allen refused to cede curdled his relationship with the White Sox, who then sold his rights to the Atlanta Braves. Allen balked at donning a Brave uniform because his brother Hank did not have a good experience playing with that organization & Dick was reluctant to be “managed” by skipper Clyde King (278). In the era prior to free agency, Allen had few options other than to play in Atlanta or not at all.

But the last chance he had to avoid shutting down his career & play more or less on his own terms came from John Ogden, who was at this time a special assignment scout for the Phillies. Ogden was the scout who signed Allen to his first contract & was still esteemed by Allen. A deal was brokered for Allen’s return to Philadelphia & he went home to a stunning hero’s welcome. Nathanson observes, “So many folks in Philadelphia desperately wanted a mulligan for what went on between them & Dick between 1963 & 1969,” & with the team now in a new stadium & owned by Robert Carpenter’s more racially sensitive son, Ruly, Allen’s encore was nothing short of miraculous as the home crowd showered him with adulation (292).

However, an unfortunate pattern re-emerged by 1976, when Allen was injured & again went missing. Even the Phillies’ NL East clinching game, which earned the club its first championship since 1950, was marred by the infamous Broom Closet Incident, a gathering of most of the team’s black players – along with Mike Schmidt – to celebrate winning the pennant apart from the rest of the players who were making merry in the clubhouse. Determining that the Phillies’ racial problems never truly went away, Allen again

*Continued on Page 18*

## Book Review: McGraw and the 1911 New York Giants

By Larry Levine

Maury Klein. *Stealing Games*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2016. pp. 400. Cloth, \$28.

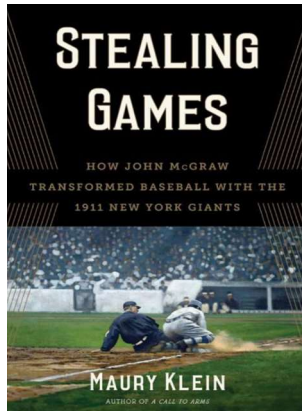
First, full disclosure: My father, who was born in 1899, was as rabid a fan of the turn of the century New York Giants as one can imagine. John McGraw was considered close to a God & Christy Mathewson was his disciple. As a child, I was regaled by tales of Snodgrass, Myers, Devore, Merkle, Crandall, Doyle & so many others.

Pop's stories were the basis of virtually all our communications. He was a shy, not very talkative type but when he began to relate his experiences at the Polo Grounds, his whole person beamed with absolute delight & so did I. I was, therefore, fully & totally predisposed to loving this book, *Stealing Games: How John McGraw Transformed Baseball With the 1911 New York Giants* by Maury Klein. I had hoped that it might stimulate my memories of those precious moments listening to the excited narratives from my first hero. It did, in fact, accomplish some of that but when I finished the read, I found that although I *liked* the book, I did *not* love it.

Baseball books which review the events of any team in a given year can be tedious & a bit boring. One can tire easily when reading of the day in & day out exploits of that club (the scores, the batting stars, the miscues made by some obscure infielder, the travails of the pitching staff, the new additions to the roster, the slumps, the injuries, etc.). There are many archival sources one could consult for these data if sufficiently interested. This volume *does* suffer from these ills but compensates somewhat by providing a compendium of some wonderful sidebars, which represent the book's greatest value.

The book's title makes little sense. Yes, the Giants won the National League pennant but they fell to Connie Mack's Athletics in six games in the ensuing World Series, hardly the stuff of transformative seasons. Yes, the Giants *still* hold the team record for stolen bases which they set in 1911. At one point, they stole 62 bases in 26 games, a remarkable accomplishment. But transformative? The likes of Cobb, Billy Hamilton & Honus Wagner were already known for running wild on the bases. If Klein meant to imply that the 1911 Giants' game was transformative in that it further emphasized the importance of the running game, how transformative could that have been when only a few short years later the game was *truly* transformed by one George Herman Ruth. Then, too, consider the fact that the 1911 Giants' pitching staff led the NL in Earned Run Average, in complete games, in strikeouts & in fewest walks. Further, they were team leaders in batting average as well. Just how important were all those stolen bases, after all?

Again, the redeeming virtue of Klein's book is his attempt to relate the activities in the game to concurrent important societal events & his description of some of the characters who populated the time. For example, when Stan Robison, owner of the St. Louis Cardinals



died in 1911, he left controlling interest in the team to his niece, Helene Robison Britton. It was universally expected that she would put her shares on the market but Ms. Britton confounded everyone by declaring her intention to not only own the team but also to run it, thereby becoming the first female owner of a major league team who was not merely a figurehead. The back story to these ground breaking events, however, might be considered even more interesting. It seems that Chicago businessman, Charles Weeghman was pressing Ms. Britton to sell the Cardinals to him. Imagine for a moment what consequences to the shape of Organized Baseball might have occurred had this sale been made: The Federal League might not have ever been formed (Weeghman was its driving force); the salary structure of the major leagues would, therefore, not have been so distorted as to cause teams to sell off their star players; Kenesaw Landis would not have become known to the magnates of the day (he gained their appreciation by sitting on the lawsuit filed by the Baltimore Terrapins, the victim of the settlement following the Federal League's demise); he likely, therefore, would not have become the first Commissioner; Joe Jackson & the others might not have been banished; Bill Veeck might have organized the first major league team featuring stars of the Negro Leagues in 1942; Jack Dunn might not have had to sell Babe Ruth to the Red Sox in order to survive the war with the Federal League - he might have waited several years before selling him to Connie Mack as he did with Lefty Grove - Imagine!

1911 witnessed the debut of the great Grover Cleveland Alexander & what a rookie year he had. Twenty-eight wins & only thirteen losses with a fourth place Phillies club. What's more remarkable was his success in Baker Bowl, the band box which was his home field in Philadelphia, where it was a mere 300 feet to the power alley in right-center. When the Phillies ran into a streak of awful seasons beginning in 1918, some creative rascals surreptitiously added to the Lifebuoy Soap sign on the outfield wall so that it now read, "The Phillies use Lifebuoy Soap - & they still stink!" 1911, of course, was only the beginning for Ol' Pete; he went on to earn 373 wins in his Hall of Fame career.

Alexander entered as Bugs Raymond left. McGraw acquired Arthur Lawrence Raymond from St. Louis where his addiction to alcohol was no longer tolerated. McGraw used every technique he could imagine to curb Raymond's tragic propensity. The reclamation project seemed to work when Raymond, possessor of what was regarded as one of the most effective spitballs in all of baseball, went 18 - 12 with a 2.47 ERA in 1910. But, alas, it was not to last. In 1911, McGraw finally lost his patience with the colorful but troubled Raymond when after being told to warm up in the bullpen with a new baseball, he left the Polo Grounds to visit a neighborhood bar & traded the ball for some drinks. Raymond died a year later from injuries suffered in a drunken brawl.

Klein does a good job describing the fire which gutted the Polo Grounds early in 1911, forcing them to share Hilltop Park with the New York Highlanders (not to be called the Yankees until 1913)

*Continued on Page 17*

## The Passion of Baseball, the '69 Royals & the Commissioner's Office

By Karl Cicitto



CT SABR member Bob Wirz is best known as the PR Director for two former Commissioners of Baseball. His career arc is rich. Bob has been a journalist, a Baseball Hall of Fame voter, a football, basketball & baseball broadcaster, a sports TV show host, a minor league & major league PR Manager, the owner of a Sports PR & Marketing firm & a family man blessed with a dear wife, four children & five grandchildren.

Bob's memoir, *The Passion of Baseball*, is scheduled to be published in October. I had the opportunity to do a Q & A with Bob on July 1, 2016.

***When you began writing at *The Daily Nebraskan* in college, what did you discover about yourself & your relationship with writing and Sports in general?***

Oh my goodness. (Laughs.) I don't know, Karl. My whole motivation from age 8, as this book attempts to explain, was to be involved in baseball in some way. So, I developed into a sports fanatic, like many others. Most of my motivation in getting my education & various jobs was aimed at getting myself into the game of baseball. I know that's not a direct answer to your question but it's the best one I can give.

***I asked because of your collegiate journalism experience. Perhaps writing for the college paper was your first opportunity to attend a game & write the story.***

Well, that probably is true. The first serious times for me covering events & writing features would have been when I was at the University (of Nebraska). I don't think I'd count the 5 cents or 10 cents per column inch (laughing) that I got in high school when writing for a local weekly. I consider both the writing opportunities at *The Nebraskan* & the radio broadcast work I did at the University as being all geared to getting some experience & figure out where I fit into the baseball world. I knew I couldn't hit the curveball.

***Nebraska ended Oklahoma's 74 game winning streak in 1959. Where were you when Ron Meade intercepted a Sooner pass in the end zone to end it?***

Right. (Laughs.) Your research is remarkable. I don't remember the details of the game but I remember exactly where I was. I was working part time at *The Lincoln Journal*. When Nebraska had home football games *The Journal* published a 4 page Extra wrapped on pink paper, believe it or not, that would be available on the streets virtually as people walked just blocks from Memorial Stadium back to downtown after the game. As a part timer & low man on the totem pole, I was on a head set for that game listening to the radio broadcast & writing a running summary. I did this for the Oklahoma game while my

boss & Sports Editor, Dick Becker, was in the press box writing a one paragraph lead. Our first edition story was Becker's lead followed by my running summary. I'll probably reproduce a copy of that game story in the book. That was my little part of that historic event.

***You had some big names on that Nebraska team that went to the NFL. Mick Tinglehoff, Ron McDole & Pat Fischer. Friends of yours?***

Pat Fischer came from a family of football players, his older brother Cletus also played at Nebraska. Pat was, I think, the best of the 3 or 4 brothers. Cletus became an assistant coach at Nebraska.

***What made you want to work in the professional baseball industry when you were young?***

I grew up in the little town of Halsey, NE; it had a population sign showing 141 people. We didn't have television at that time. I got a lot of sports on radio. I just fell in love with baseball. I never wavered from the fact that I wanted to work in the game in some way. The title of the book is "The Passion of Baseball". The story is familiar & has been described various ways including: From the cornfields of Nebraska to the skyscrapers of NYC. A guy comes from a small town & manages to have some kind of a decent career in the game. I romance a lot in the book about this & it is all factual. I hope that people will find the side trips to be interesting. This journey all started really by listening to games, imagining what it would be like.

***Was there a certain radio broadcaster that you followed?***

Harry Caray, if anybody. In later days many people identify him with the Cubs but he was the Cardinals number 1 guy in those days. I listened to Harry & the Cards on KMOX Radio, "The voice of St Louis", as they identified themselves then & probably still do today; a 50,000 watt powerhouse. If we didn't have thunderstorms you could get the night games on KMOX. Cardinal day games were on other stations, one in particular was in St. Joseph, Mo. So I became a Cardinal fan because I could get their games more than any others. There was also the Mutual Game of the Day. And we'd get a lot of Cub games because they played exclusively in the afternoon. But if there was anyone I admired & followed it was Harry.

***You were a Stan Musial fan?***

Oh, of course. I saw my first MLB game on August 16, 1949 in Wrigley Field, Cardinals vs. Cubs. We were on a trip to see my aunt near Cleveland. Six of us traveled by car. I don't think we had air conditioning. My Mom & Dad, my sister & my aunt & Uncle drove from Nebraska to Cleveland, with a side trip to Niagara Falls.

Although Cleveland was the main destination, we managed to see a Ladies Day game, which were very popular events in those days at Wrigley. Musial was 2 for 2 with 2 walks, the Cards losing the game late. The reason I remember the date

*Continued on Page 15*





## The Passion of Baseball, the '69 Royals & the Commissioner's Office *(continued from Page 14)*

clearly was it was one year to the day that Babe Ruth died & the Cubs did a moment of silence to recognize his passing. It was a nearly full house & we had gotten there very early. In those days you could stay late after the game & we did. I could virtually touch some of the Cardinals as they came out of their dressing room. My uncle was approached by a number of people for autographs because he resembled the Umpire Frank Dascoli. What a red letter day that was for me to finally see my first major league baseball game. We went on & saw 2 games in Cleveland - one against the Yankees & one against Washington. I saw Bob Feller hit his first home run after returning from the War. I saw Satchell Paige pitch. The game versus the Yankees was on Gene Woodling Night. I still have the programs. The covers of those programs will be featured in the book, too, because of what they mean to me.

### ***When hosting your sports shows on KHAS-TV you spent time with Cassius Clay.***

Right. I worked at KHAS Radio & KHAS-TV. They were owned by the same man, the former secretary of the Interior, Fred Seaton. I was the Sports Director at the TV station. We got a call one day that Cassius & his entourage - they had a big bus - had stopped at a truck stop in Hastings, NE, so we got our film crew with our only remote camera & went out there before they left Hastings. I approached Cassius & asked for an interview & he was very obliging. I have video tape of that interview & a picture that will be in the book. He was on his way to Denver for some training before fighting Sonny Liston. He recited some of his poetry that he was well known for at that time. "If he gives me Jive, he'll go in Five", something like that. It was a great thrill & great memory. I also got to interview Arnold Palmer & Gary Player. In those days they played a lot of exhibitions to make extra money. It was before Pro-Ams were played. Their exhibition was in Lincoln. I've got that interview on tape, too, with me sitting in between these two famous guys asking very naive questions (laughing), proving my greenness at that point. I'd like to think I had a little sophistication then but that interview would challenge that assertion.

### ***You were the PR Director for the expansion KC Royals in 1969. What was it like to help bring MLB back to that city?***

Selfishly, first of all, it was wonderful being in the major leagues after coveting that for so long. We knew there was a great opportunity in Kansas City because of the hijinks with which Finley treated the fans & his subsequent move to Oakland just as the team was becoming good. The A's never had a .500 season in 13 years in KC. We knew we had an opportunity & we knew we had to build from the ground up. Because of all the success my Cardinals had enjoyed, people drove through KC to get to St Louis to see the Cardinals.

We had to work at building a fan base. In our preseason campaign we would always have a caravan that would for two weeks visit towns in MO, KS, NE, IA, OK to build interest.

Sometimes Ewing Kauffman's jet was available to us to go to Tulsa or Springfield, MO & into towns that were clearly in Cardinal territory.

By the time I left to go to the Commissioner's office we had not achieved great success in KC. We had achieved relative success for an expansion team, finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the division at least once. That was before the Royals got good for the first time. At that point, we kind of thought great success was coming. George Brett came up in 1973, which was the 5<sup>th</sup> of my 6 years with the Royals. Brett was very green & I was wondering what the scouts saw in the guy because he had a hard time. Brett really struggled from both a hitting & fielding standpoint. He was up & down in 1973 & in KC full time in 74.

1973 was when Royals Stadium opened. It was fortunate for me to participate in the opening & marketing of a new stadium & to help win over the fans. The very first game there was against Texas on a 39 degree night.

In those early years especially before Royals Stadium opened the Royals still had trouble drawing. Tampa Bay's present attendance looks good compared to what we drew. But everything is relative. Other teams struggled in those years, too, including the White Sox, the A's & Red Sox. I remember going to Fenway at the time & it was far from sold out. But I have wonderful memories from the opportunities during my time in KC. Being with the team helped put me on the map with the media. I connected with the big time columnists & all.

I later learned it is much more fun to be with a team than to work for the Commissioner. It's the difference between having a team to cheer for & cheering for attendance figures, umpires & that the World Series will go 7 games.

That's how it was when you worked in the Commissioner's Office. You really felt that separation when the Commissioner had a dispute with one team & the local media usually sided with that team & opposed the Commissioner. Those were challenging times.

### ***Bob, I want to throw some names at you and get your fast reactions.***

Ok.

#### ***John Scheurholz***

An exceptional talent. A good friend. He & I started together in KC, although he had had some previous time with the Orioles. We were roughly the same age. There were a lot of jokes about us being the young guys in the office. You had a feeling from the start that John was going to go someplace in the game. A very good talent & very hard working, which is what it takes.

#### ***Joe Gordon***

Joe was a wonderful human being & a lot of fun to be around. I don't know how his managing skills are rated overall, maybe



## The Passion of Baseball, the '69 Royals & the Commissioner's Office *(continued from Page 15)*

not nearly as good as his playing skills, but he was there that first year in Kansas City & was lots of fun. Trader Vics, a popular restaurant chain at that time, offered a certain dark rum that Joe liked. I remember going to Trader Vics with Joe on a road trip to Oakland. I also recall the day when Joe & Ted Williams, who was managing Washington, had a long, animated discussion before a game in Fort Myers. They talked about hitting & commanded the attention of everyone within earshot.

### **Bob Lemon**

Great guy. He became a great personal friend. I could tell you a lot of stories about Lem. I'll tell you a quick one. He managed the Royals before his off & on time with the Yankees. After the 1978 playoff game won with the Bucky Dent homer, I needed to fly to Kansas City for ALCS Game 1 the next night. I had to get to KC more for advance planning on the World Series than to attend the ALCS. I had gone to Fenway with Bowie Kuhn. We were able to watch the game without much distraction or work interruptions. But it wasn't easy to find a flight from Boston to KC. The Yankees graciously invited me onto their charter. This was not something I really wanted to do because they'd be celebrating & I was unknown to everyone but Lemon, Lou Piniella & few others. Still, they encouraged me to fly with them & I accepted a seat in the back row. Well, about halfway to KC, Lem found out I was on board & insisted that I sit with him in first class & I did so for the rest of the trip. He had maybe had a cup of tea or two by that time. He was a great human being.

### **Is this your first book, Bob?**

My first real book, yes. I previously put out a number of media guides in Kansas City & a number of different types of publications when I was in the Commissioner's Office. Much later when I was writing my Independent Baseball Insider column I would publish a yearly compilation of the columns with stats & various other things. But that was in a spiral binder. So this is my first book that is truly a book.

### **Do you agree with Mark Twain who said, "I don't like to write, but I like having written."?**

(Laughs), Yes, I think that's probably pretty well said. But I do enjoy it, too. I don't know if you know this but for 12 years I wrote that Independent Baseball column, weekly in-season & occasionally in the off-season. I did it because I could see there was a void. There were great stories to tell. There are great stories everywhere in sports. Every manager & every athlete has one. I have given a lot of thought about taking the evergreen stories from those columns & putting them into a book.

To answer your question about Mark Twain's quote, I really enjoy a lot of the writing & I enjoy the research. I don't write that quickly I suppose because I'm a detail oriented person. I wrote this current book over a number of years. There were times when I worked on it a lot & other times when I put it

aside to work with clients or on my column. But I really do enjoy writing when it's about a topic I am comfortable with & I like to think I have some flair.

With the columns, I tried to build the back story. Daniel Nava gave me a great story opportunity because of the way he went from obscurity - before even entering Independent Baseball - to the day he hit that grand slam in his first ever MLB at bat for the Red Sox. There are just so many good stories.

### **How will people be able to purchase a copy of your book?**

In October, they will be able to buy one on-line at [www.wirzandassociates.com](http://www.wirzandassociates.com) or through my blog, [www.indybaseballchatter.com](http://www.indybaseballchatter.com). It will also be available in e-book & print format on Amazon & the Barnes & Nobles of the world.

### **Is there an overarching message in your book, Bob?**

I think the reader could walk away thinking, boy, this guy really did have a passion for baseball. I know that I've been fortunate to be able to follow what was just a dream. It wasn't all a bed of roses. The industry didn't pay well in those days, especially in public relations. But I got a lot of satisfaction from doing it.

One of my editors thinks this book could be utilized to teach Sports Management & Sports Journalism courses because of the path my career took. I didn't have a road map to success. I figured it out as I progressed. And I kept notes over those years that captured my ideas about potential clients & projects I could attempt to land if I ever started my own PR business, which I did when I left MLB. My narrative could be something of a tutorial for students studying in these fields.

Here's another thing: People have told me those who often have success with a book are those who have a real passion for their topic. We'll see if that helps with my book.

### **Bob, you probably know that there are a number of SABR members who teach courses grounded in baseball. Maybe there are some SABR connections who could help.**

Karl, there is no question that as I get closer to October I know I have to do a lot of the PR & Marketing of the book myself. I'm going to be reaching out to people in SABR. I'd love to be able to speak about the book at SABR meetings in CT & the region.

### **You have 5 grandchildren. Is there a future broadcaster or journalist among them?**

Could be. They range in age from 10 to 16. My oldest grandson, Matthew Wirz, is a very good baseball player. We have talked about a career in sports whether it is coaching or in the media. I wouldn't rule it out. I'd love it if one of them could do it. I have 3 grandsons & 2 granddaughters & they're all very bright people. We'll see what they decide to do.

## Book Review: McGraw and the 1911 New York Giants *(continued from Page 13)*

for a good portion of the year. John T. Brush rebuilt the park as a concrete & steel stadium, only the fourth such facility in the National League (Forbes Field in Pittsburgh in 1909 was the first). The author places this fire, which providentially caused no injuries, in the context of the terrible fires which terrified New Yorkers in 1911 (the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire resulted in the deaths of over 200 young women workers that same year) & led to the successful pioneering efforts of Al Smith & Robert Wagner to craft legislation promoting workplace safety.

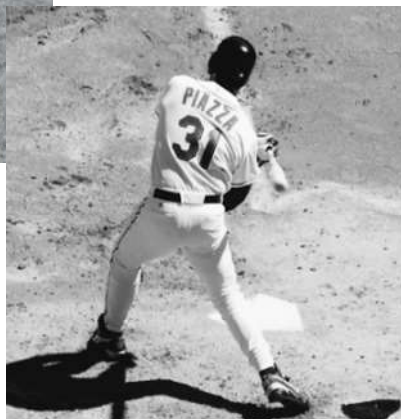
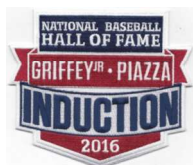
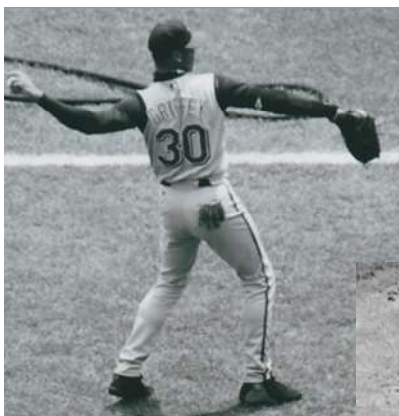
Klein's telling of the Charles "Victory" Faust story demonstrates how the world of political correctness did not exist in 1911. Faust was an obviously mentally unbalanced young man who was treated shabbily by McGraw & the entire roster. He appeared early in the 1911 season dressed in a dark suit & a derby hat & reported to McGraw that he had seen a fortune-teller who told him that if he would join the Giants & pitch for them that they would win the pennant. Rather than referring the young man for counseling, the Giants ran him around the bases, made him slide into 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & home (in his suit) & laughingly watched him warm up with a bizarre windmill windup. Remarkably, McGraw kept him with the club as a good luck mascot. Every day, Faust would perform his sliding & warmup routine for the entertainment of the fans. Faust, of course, did not consider it entertainment; he sincerely believed he would be called upon to pitch. Of course, the Giants did win the pennant that year & the next & the next after that, all with Charles Victory Faust on the club. He was cut in 1914, the Giants apparently tiring of the charade &, of course, though they led the league on July 4<sup>th</sup>, they were overtaken by the Braves. Poor Charley ultimately was institutionalized in Psychiatric facilities & died a sad death shortly after his "career" ended. One wonders whether he was better off being demeaned as a mascot (although he seemed never to be aware of how he was perceived) rather than living the mundane life from

which he emerged on that fateful 1911 day.

Finally, a tale of persistence, patience & confidence in one's ability to detect talent. Rube Marquard was signed by McGraw in 1908 for the then record price of \$11,000 & was immediately dubbed, the "\$11,000 beauty" but after less than mediocre seasons in 1909 & 1910, he became known as, the "\$11,000 lemon". Without his resurgence in 1911, however, there would never have been a pennant at the Polo Grounds. Rube went 24 – 7, with 237 strikeouts to lead the league. The moral: have the courage of your convictions. Red Sox fans understand that they called for Dustin Pedroia's demotion a bit too soon & are now finding their disdain for Jackie Bradley, Jr. mistaken. Patience is indeed a virtue.

Enough has been written about John McGraw & Christy Mathewson to fill an entire floor of the Library of Congress. The skipper overcame a dismal and tragic childhood & other obstacles to become recognized as one of the greats in the entire history of the game. A benevolent despot, he was hated by some (Edd Roush), adored by others (Larry Doyle). A master of the "scientific" approach to baseball (derived from his time with the 1890s Baltimore Orioles), he nevertheless adapted to the profound changes in the game following the onset of the era of the slugger.

Mathewson was the real-life embodiment of Jack Armstrong, the "All-American Boy". His rugged good looks, his erudition (one of the relatively few college players & his immense talent made him the poster boy for the early game. Without his performance, 26 – 13, a league-leading 1.99 ERA & McGraw's leadership, Maury Klein would have to look elsewhere for his story. As it is, while his effort is somewhat flawed (too much play by play accounts of games) it will occupy a space in my baseball library even if not on the top shelf.



Photos by Stan Osowiecki

### Trivia Puzzlers: 1986 Mets

by Ken Paulsen

30 years ago the Mets lost games 1 & 2 of the World Series at home but won games 6 & 7 at Shea.

1. The Mets won a franchise record 108 games. 6 pitchers had double figures in wins (including one reliever). Who led the staff with 18 wins?
2. The club leader in home runs had 27. Who was he?
3. The RBI leader had 105. Name him.
4. Which Mets reliever pitched 5 innings of 1 hit ball in Game 6 of the National Championship Series which the Mets won 7-6 in 16 innings?
5. Who was the Red Sox pitcher when Mookie Wilson's ground ball scored the winning run in Game 6 of the World Series?

Answers on Page 21.



## Book Review: God Almighty Hissself *(continued from Page 12)*

is disillusioned & becomes a member of the first free agent class of 1977. Oakland & its outlandish owner, Charlie Finley, now partner with Allen for the aged player's swan song, the once-mighty Athletics now grasping at straws in the wake of the departures of Bando, Campaneris, Rudi, et al. The ignominious end came in July when Allen walked away from the Athletics & upon his return the following spring, he discovers that his playing days were truly over because the Oakland first base job had been given to an untested rookie, Dave Revering. After some coaching stints – with team rules bent to accommodate Allen – the saga closed on one of the more colorful baseball characters of the later twentieth century.

The author has done a fine job in weaving together a multitude of newspaper articles – mostly from the Philadelphia press but also from other papers & magazines – with interviews he conducted with important people in Allen's life. Alas, Nathanson struck out in his attempts to speak to his book's subject, but as he pointed out, Allen could change any story to fit his mood on any given day & such capriciousness leads not only to confusion but unreliability of the source. Perhaps that's the way Allen wanted to keep people, especially the press, at arm's length & it serves Nathanson & his readers better to at least be aware of this element of doubt.

There is a compelling irony to this story that's hidden in plain sight. Allen had a passion for race horses, yet an unbroken equine can hold little value. When corralled & tamed, however, a mustang can be transformed from a wild animal & into a powerful useful horse & in a manner of speaking, this analogy applies to Allen as well. Allen understood the control he needed to exercise over his horses to make them effective, just as the system of baseball – ownership, contracts & the reserve clause – brought players to heel in order to meet management's expectations in making them effective. That Allen rebelled against the forces intended to keep him in line underscores the freedom to roam that he held dear & always sought to maintain on his terms.

Two areas of concern, minor in nature, appear in the text. Wordsmiths will cringe a bit at the over-usage of "things," as in "things will get better" or "things didn't improve," & for historians the narrative may actually be focused too narrowly on Allen. To be sure, his prickly relationship with reporters, his unannounced disappearances & his powerful bat are all rightfully part of the story of this complex man. Nathanson observes that Allen was analogous to Malcom X, but also in the context of the turbulent 1960s & 1970s, other noteworthy personalities – Muhammad Ali, jazz musician Miles Davis & Duane Thomas of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys – put their stamp on the world of sports & entertainment while exhibiting their own brand of dynamism or defiance, depending on one's point of view. Adding these figures to the cast of characters who may have influenced Allen or otherwise supported his behavior would have given added texture to the book & provided depth to the reader's appreciation for the contemporaneous black experience. But these peccadilloes do not detract from a superb volume that shines a bright light on one of the most fearsome hitters of his era. Whether Nathanson's work will help garner Allen the twelve votes needed to get him into the Hall of Fame in 2018 remains to be seen.

## See a Vintage Base Ball Game



Enjoy some barehanded, 1861 rules Base Ball this August & September.

The Thames BBC schedule for August/September (all times TBA):

- Sat Aug 6 Woodstock Hilltoppers @ Woodstock, CT
- Sat Aug 20 Wethersfield Red Onion @ Fort Trumbull
- Sat Aug 27 Bristol Blues BBC @ Bristol, RI or South Dartmouth, RI
- Sun Sep 25 Bristol Blues BBC @ Concordia Boatyard in South Dartmouth, RI

Thames home games are at Fort Trumbull State Park in New London.

More info at: [www.thamesbbc.org/schedule/2016-season/](http://www.thamesbbc.org/schedule/2016-season/)

Schedule information for the Lisbon Tunnelman, another vintage team in CT, can be found at:

<http://www.lymetavernersbaseball.org/2016-schedule/>

All dates are tentative. Before attending, confirm the date & game time with Michael Dreimiller ([mcd@dreimiller.com](mailto:mcd@dreimiller.com)) or Jim Wyman ([jnwyman10@aol.com](mailto:jnwyman10@aol.com)).



## Tales from the Dodgers Dugout

By Stanley Rothman

(Editor's Note: Dr. Stan blogs at <http://apps.sandlotstats.com/blog/>. His most recent post is about the changing role of the manager. Here, his subject is a book by Carl Erskine & how it relates to past posts.)

I previously posted about the book, *What I Learned from Jackie Robinson*, written by the great Dodger pitcher Carl Erskine. If you have not read that posting I know you will be inspired by how he used what he learned from Jackie Robinson to raise his son Jimmy who was born with Down's syndrome. This essay will look at a second book written by Erskine titled, *Tales from the Dodger Dugout*.

Carl Erskine pitched for the Brooklyn Dodgers & the L.A. Dodgers from 1948 until 1959. He was a pitching mainstay on Dodger teams that won six National League Pennants & the 1955 World Series. Some of his notable teammates included Pee Wee Reese, Jackie Robinson, Carl Furillo, Gil Hodges, Duke Snider, Roy Campanella, Clem Labine, Billy Cox, Joe Black & Don Newcombe. Roger Khan immortalized the Dodgers of the 50s with his 1972 book, *The Boys of Summer*. In this book Khan tracks the history of the Dodgers up until they won their first World Series in 1955. The early 50s was a time in New York when there were three teams, the Yankees, New York Giants & Brooklyn Dodgers. Each team had a great centerfielder, Mantle for the Yankees, Mays for the Giants & Snider for the Dodgers. The big question was: Who was the best centerfielder in New York? Of course, being a diehard Yankee fan, you know what my answer was.

I have chosen facts from Carl's book that are related to my past blog postings. I wrote a blog posting about Dale Long, the left-handed power hitting first baseman for the Pirates in the 1950s. The reason for my blog about Dale Long was his grandson, also named Dale Long, was a student in one of my biostatistics classes at Quinnipiac University. Dale Long was also featured in my book, *Sandlot Stats: Learning Statistics with Baseball*, because of his record setting 8 consecutive games with a home run. Later, this record was tied by Don Mattingly & Ken Griffey Jr. However, what I did not know was that it was Carl who gave up the 8<sup>th</sup> home run in game number 8. In writing a blog about the Dodgers & Giants moving to Los Angeles in 1957 I failed to mention that it was Carl who pitched & won the opening day game in front of 78,000 fans in Los Angeles on April 18, 1958, the first game for the Dodgers as the L.A. Dodgers. The Dodgers defeated the San Francisco Giants 6-5 and Carl pitched 8 innings giving up 4 earned runs.

Still in another blog posting I wrote about, "The Shot Heard Around the World," the Bobby Thomson 1951 playoff home run that gave the New York Giants the 1951 NL pennant. The Giants won playoff game 1. The Dodgers won playoff game 2. In the deciding third playoff game with Bobby Thomson at the plate representing the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning, Dodger manager Charlie Dressen called the bullpen coach where



Pictured are Snider, DiMaggio, Mays and Mantle walking in from centerfield on July 16, 1977, at Shea Stadium on Old-Timers Day.

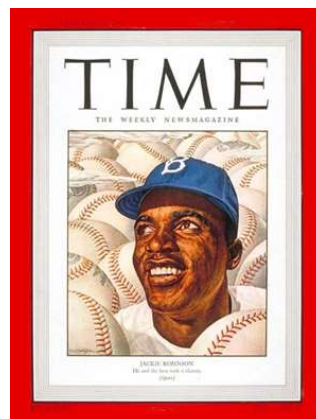
Ralph Branca & Carl Erskine were both warming up. The bullpen coach said they are both ready but Erskine is bouncing his curveball. Dressen chose to bring Branca in to face Thomson. On Branca's second pitch Thomson delivered a three-run home run to win the game & the pennant for the Giants. Whenever Carl was asked what his best pitch was he said, "The curveball I bounced in the Polo Grounds bullpen."

In his book there is a picture of Carl with Bob Feller, Sandy Koufax & Bob Gibson. These four pitchers totaled 10 no-hitters (Koufax 4, Feller 3, Carl 2 & Gibson 1). Carl writes, "The only distinction I can claim that the other three cannot - I'm not in the Hall of Fame."

Carl's 1956 no-hitter was the first nationally televised no-hitter. He also set the record for most strike outs (14) in a World Series game in 1953. This record was later broken by Koufax & then by Gibson at 17.

## Jackie Robinson Trivia

by Ken Paulsen



In less than 8 months we will celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robinson's Dodger debut. Here is a dash of trivia in honor of Jack Roosevelt Robinson.

1. Jackie hit .314 at Ebbets Field. He also hit 77 of his 137 career homers there. What visiting park did he do best in?

2. With a minimum of 40 at bats, what pitcher did he have the best batting average against?

3. What Hall of Famer gave up the most hits & home runs to Jackie?

4. Jackie played in 6 World Series, 38 games, in only 2 Stadiums. Where did he have a higher average?

5. Jackie played first base in 1947, but moved to second base when Gil Hodges came up in 1948. What happened to Eddie Stanky, the Dodgers second baseman of 1947?

Answers on Page 21



## Opportunity Knocks for Writing Projects

Compiled by Karl Cicitto

*SABR has published dozens of books and thousands of biographies and will continue to add to the canon of baseball history through the efforts of SABR members. Writing opportunities are abundant. First Timers are welcome. Here is some information on 5 writing projects and how to become involved.*

### Team Ownership Histories Project

The SABR Baseball Biography Project and the SABR Business of Baseball Committee are teaming up to create a collection of the ownership histories of major league franchises. As they are completed, the histories will appear in the Business of Baseball newsletter and be posted permanently in a separate section on the BioProject web-site. If you are interested in doing a team's history, please contact Andy McCue at [agmccue44@earthlink.net](mailto:agmccue44@earthlink.net).

### Baseball Biography Project

The lofty goal is to write a high-quality journal-length biography of every player who ever played in the major leagues. 3,800 biographies have been written by 500+ SABR members as of July 29, 2016. Your subject can be anyone who ever played in the major leagues & has been retired for at least 5 years, or any manager, executive, umpire, scout, or broadcaster. In fact, we welcome your ideas for any subject who impacted the history of the game — someone from the Negro Leagues, the minor leagues, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, and even Japan.

Web-site: [sabr.org/bioproject](http://sabr.org/bioproject)

Things you should know: [sabr.org/content/bioproject-resources](http://sabr.org/content/bioproject-resources)

Request an assignment: Lyle Spatz at [bioassign@sabr.org](mailto:bioassign@sabr.org)

### SABR Games Project

The SABR Baseball Games Project is a new initiative to research and write articles on major-league and Negro League regular, postseason and All-Star Games. These game accounts will complement Retrosheet and Baseball-Reference box scores as well as BioProject essays on the players involved. All games, regardless of their historical significance, are eligible to be written up.

Web-site: [sabr.org/gamesproject](http://sabr.org/gamesproject)

Things you should know: [sabr.org/content/sabr-games-project](http://sabr.org/content/sabr-games-project)

Request an assignment: Bruce Slutsky at [bruce@bruce Slutsky.com](mailto:bruce@bruce Slutsky.com)

### SABR Baseball Ballparks Project

We love ballparks and feel that each one deserves its own biography. Ballparks have a life of their own. Your job, as the ballpark's biographer, is to cover that life in detail, from birth to death.

Web-site: [sabr.org/bioproj/parks](http://sabr.org/bioproj/parks)

Request an assignment: Scott Ferkovich at [scottferk@gmail.com](mailto:scottferk@gmail.com)

### SABR Book Projects

Biographers are needed for several books. Status of assignment availabilities changes daily. Please contact Bill Nowlin ([bnowlin@rounder.com](mailto:bnowlin@rounder.com)) to confirm availability and request an assignment.



## Major League Players with Connecticut Connections (2016 Regular Season through August 01, 2016)

Player	Team	Conn. Connection	POS	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SAC	GIDP	AVG	OBP	SLG
Ahmed, Nick	ARZ	UConn	SS	90	284	26	62	9	1	4	20	15	58	5	9	0.218	0.265	0.299
Campbell, Eric	NYM	Norwich	3B	30	63	7	10	1	0	1	5	8	23	1	1	0.159	0.270	0.222
Davis, Rajai	CLE	New London	OF	88	313	51	80	15	2	9	35	25	76	3	6	0.256	0.317	0.403
Springer, George	HOU	New Britain	OF	105	418	74	109	16	3	22	60	57	109	0	9	0.261	0.359	0.471

Player	Team	Conn. Connection	POS	G	W	L	ERA	CG	SHO	SV	HLD	IP	H	ER	R	HR	BB	SO
Barnes, Matt	BOS	Bethel	P	39	3	3	3.12	0	0	0	7	49.0	42	17	19	5	20	47
Breslow, Craig	TEX	Trumbull	P	15	0	2	4.50	0	0	0	2	14.0	21	7	9	1	4	7
Dean, Pat	MIN	Waterbury	P	8	1	3	5.54	0	0	0	0	39.0	48	24	24	6	15	28
Hahn, Jesse	OAK	Groton	P	8	2	4	5.53	0	0	0	0	42.1	50	26	27	6	16	21
Harvey, Matt	NYM	Mystic	P	17	4	10	4.86	0	0	0	0	92.2	111	50	55	8	25	76
Hughes, Jared	PGH	Stamford	P	39	0	1	3.06	0	0	0	4	35.1	41	12	13	3	14	17
Leone, Dominic	ARZ	Norwich	P	12	0	0	7.50	0	0	0	0	12.0	23	10	11	4	6	9
Oberg, Scott	COL	Uconn	P	15	0	0	3.38	0	0	0	1	18.2	17	7	7	2	6	11





## Answers to Trivia Questions

### 1956 Yankees (from Page 9)

1. Whitey Ford was the ace of the staff.
2. Tom Morgan relieved in 41 games with a 6-7 record & a 4.16 ERA. He was "farmed" to the Kansas City A's in a 13 player trade after the 1956 season.
3. Yogi Berra
4. Gil McDougald
5. Johnny Kucks made his only start in Game 7. After going to the bullpen 9 times in Games 1 & 2, Casey did not use another reliever the rest of the Series.

### 1916 Red Sox (from Page 10)

1. Babe Ruth went 23-12 with a 1.75 ERA. He also tied for the club lead with 3 home runs. In Game 2 of the World Series he pitched 13 scoreless innings in a 2-1 14 inning win.
2. Tillie Walker played center field for the Sox in 1916-1917 as part of a 13 year career, attempting to fill the shoes of the disgruntled then traded Tris Speaker.
3. The Vermont SABR chapter is co-named for Sox third baseman Larry Gardner, who played parts of 10 seasons in Boston.
4. Ernie Shore started game 1 despite only being 4<sup>th</sup> on the team in wins with a 16-10 record.
5. Harry Hooper who batted .281 in 17 seasons with the Red Sox & White Sox was selected to the Hall of fame in 1971.

### 1906 Cubs (from Page 11)

1. Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown led the Cubs in wins with an ERA even better than Bob Gibson's 1.12 of 1968. Brown didn't fare as well against the "hitless wonders", going 1-2 with a 3.66 ERA in the Series.
2. There's an old trivia book entitled "Who was Harry Steinfeldt?"
3. Ed Reulbach gave up only a single to the White Sox's Jiggs Donahue. Chicago (A) scored an unearned run in the 5<sup>th</sup> but the Cubs won 7-1.
4. Jimmy Sheckard batted .274 in a 17 year big league career but couldn't buy a post-season hit in 1906. He had 5 hits in each of the Cubs next 3 World Series appearances.
5. Frank Schulte

### 1986 Mets (from Page 17)

1. Bob Ojeda won 18, Doc Gooden 17, Sid Fernandez 16 & Ron Darling 15 with reliever Roger McDowell having 14 wins.
2. Darryl Strawberry led the Mets with 27 home runs but did not receive a single vote for MVP.
3. Gary Carter, whose 24 homers were second on the team led the club in RBI's & finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the MVP voting behind Houston's Glenn Davis & the winner, Mike Schmidt.
4. Roger McDowell faced the minimum 15 batters in 5 scoreless innings. The only baserunner, Kevin Bass, was caught stealing.
5. Bob Stanley relieved the beleaguered Calvin Schiraldi with Boston still up 5-4. It was his wild pitch that allowed Kevin Mitchell to score the tying run & move Ray Knight to second, where he was able to score on Wilson's ground ball.

## Jackie Robinson Trivia (from Page 19)

1. Jackie batted .342 & had 18 home runs, the most in any visiting park in 102 games in Forbes Field, Pittsburgh
2. Jackie batted .500 (22-44 with 10 walks & only 2 strikeouts) against St Louis Cardinal lefthander Al Brazle. Brazle had a career record of 97-64 from 1943-1954.
3. Robin Roberts of the Phillies pitched against Jackie the most, & allowed the most hits (45 in 160 at bats) & home runs (9 of Roberts' 505). But Jackie's average of .281 against Roberts was 30 points below his career .311.
4. In 6 World Series with the Dodgers, the opponent was always the Yankees. He didn't do well at all at Yankee Stadium, just .206. His average at Ebbets Field in World Series games was .257. But he did steal home in the Bronx. Yogi didn't have the benefit of instant replay.
5. In 1947 Jackie started 151 games at first base with Stanky playing 146 at second. In March 1948 Stanky was traded to the Boston Braves for Bama Rowell & \$100,000. Stanky ended up going to the World Series with the Braves in 1948. The Dodgers finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7½ games back. Hodges played catcher (33 starts) & first base (96 starts). He batted .249 & his 11 home runs were 3<sup>rd</sup> on the team behind Gene Hermanski & Robinson. Jackie batted .296 & played some first base (22 starts), as did Preston Ward (37 starts) but was mostly at second (114 starts) with Eddie Miksis playing most of the rest.

## THE WOOD PILE

Newsletter of the Smoky Joe Wood Chapter  
of the Society for American Baseball Research



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