



The Wood Pile



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

Volume 2 Issue 2

Winter 2021

Leading Off: A Message from the Chapter President



Greetings, fellow SABR-ites! Happy New Year! Although we have not been able to meet in person, we have had a few good webinars! I enjoyed asking trivia questions, along with Tom Zocco, on December 17. There were some good, challenging questions, and Marc Wise won the trivia contest!

We will participate in national SABR Day on Saturday, January 30, and are planning for another webinar in mid-February.

Very soon, we will hear about who was voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame by the Baseball Writers. Will your fave get elected? Last year's induction ceremony was canceled, due to the COVID, but we will see if there is an in-person induction this summer, covering the classes of 2020 and 2021.

Our own Tom Zocco was happy that his Dodgers won the 2020 Series. Will there be a "normal" season in 2021? Can the Dodgers repeat? And who will emerge as winners of the Hot Stove League? The Mets fans in our chapter should be happy so far, as they got Francisco Lindor and Carlos Carrasco, without giving up that much. What will the Yanks and Sox do?

2020 also saw the passing of many great players from the 60's and 70's, including Seaver, Brock, Gibson, Morgan, Ford and Kaline. On the other hand, Eddie Robinson turned 100!

Let's hope for better things in baseball in 2021, including in-person gatherings, an in-person SABR convention in Baltimore, and hearing more from our chapter authors!

- Steve Krevisky

New Chapter Members

Welcome to new members (since July 15, 2020):

Bob Gerencser, Cheshire	Alex Raybin, Greenwich
Stephen Iovanna, New Haven	Alexis Voulgaris, Old Greenwich
Robert Krzys, New Hartford	Angela Whitford, Norwalk
Chris O'Connor, Norwalk	Marc Wise, Vernon
Jack Perun, Woodbury	

Upcoming Events

Chapter Events

February 18, 2021

Virtual Chapter Meeting

Additional chapter activities are being discussed. Activities include Zoom gatherings and in-person meetings once they are allowed to happen.

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

www.smokyoewood.com/events

National Events

January 31, 2021

Virtual SABR Day Event featuring Baseball Hall of Fame president Tim Lincecum and MLB Network's Bob Costas.

March 11-14, 2021

SABR Virtual Analytics Conference

More information at sabr.org/events

Editor's Note

Thinking back to putting together the Winter 2020 issue of the Wood Pile, none of us could have imagined how drastically our lives and those around the world were about to be impacted...including for the game we all love so much.

In February, we were all having the hopeful discussions of how our teams would perform, who would become the World Series Champions and what special moments we would experience at the ballpark. By March, the question was more of how would we all stay safe and would our "heroes" even be able to play this year. It turns out that with all of those questions we found new heroes...the healthcare workers, first responders and front line workers who protected us and provided us what we needed.

We could not have imagined at this time last year that we would have been watching baseball from Taiwan and other locations early in the morning to get our baseball fix until our teams were finally able to come back to the field to play in front of cardboard cutouts.

During the past year, we have all experienced losses in many different ways. Let's give hope that 2021 will allow for us to get back to a sense of normalcy, be able to be around the ones we love, and to get back to sitting in the sun at the ballpark.

- Stan O.

On the Web

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Smoky Joe Wood Chapter: smokyoewood.com

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Members are welcome to submit articles, book reviews or other information that might be interesting to other chapter members. Please send information to Stan Osowiecki at osowiecki@sbcglobal.net.

Dinner on the Diamond

By Sabrina Osowiecki

Every year, fans of baseball teams across the country look forward to the pleasures of attending a game in support of their favorite team. They fantasize about the scents of enticing snacks, the occasional rumble of the stadium's foundation as fans cheer, and the excitement of being the lucky fan to take home a baseball they caught. For many, baseball games are a bonding experience with family and friends and a day to forget their worries (unless their team loses). But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this vision of visiting the stadium was deemed unsafe, leaving many fans devastated. A silent stadium of cardboard cutouts was the only way to symbolize the fans' love of baseball, but cutouts don't add up to the perfect day at the stadium many baseball fans wistfully anticipate all year.

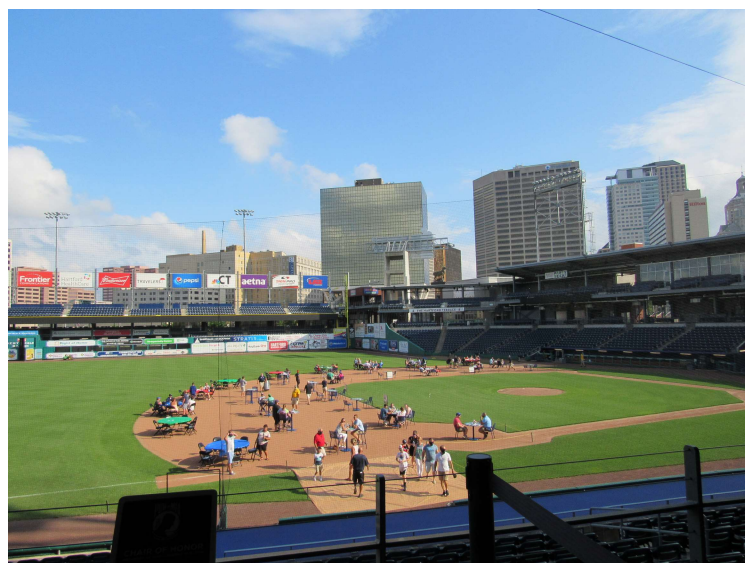
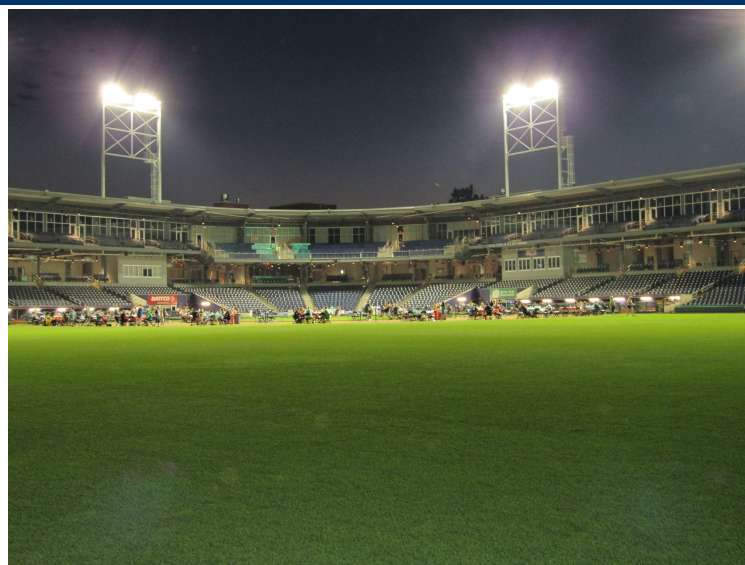
In Hartford, Connecticut, there was a compromise. The Yard Goats (Double A affiliates of the Colorado Rockies) hosted an event on weekends between July and September called "Dinner on the Diamond". The innovative proposition included socially distanced seating in the infield and an easy way to book tickets and order meals online. Fans were allowed to walk around the field and many kids and adults enjoyed playing catch in the outfield. The team's two mascots, Chompers and Chew Chew, even made appearances.

"Dinner on the Diamond" was very much enjoyed by many Yard Goat fans as it provided a more tangible link to baseball that many baseball enthusiasts had not gotten since the previous season. It was a great way for fans to include their involvement in baseball and enjoy themselves. And while this year and baseball season have been different, "Dinner on the Diamond" was a unique new baseball experience to enjoy.

Baseball Conjectures & Speculations by Ezra Count

Answer these questions to the best of your imagination.

1. Name the 9 wonders of the baseball world, past and/or present.
2. What are the best ballparks in Connecticut?
3. Who are the best pitching and hitting coaches in baseball history?
4. What should a course in baseball appreciation include?
5. What baseball skills are purely innate or virtually impossible to teach?
6. True or False: Baseball should expand and strengthen the minor league farm system.
7. How would baseball have developed if:
 - (a) Babe Ruth had never played?
 - (b) If the Yankees had not built dynasties?
8. Who are the most underrated and overrated players from baseball's past?



Pictures by Sabrina Osowiecki

Boney Blake and Ken Smith

By George Pawlusch

Minor league baseball in Danbury, CT ended in 1914 but for two Hat City residents, their experiences on that final team served as a springboard to their future successes.

Pictured in the official 1914 Danbury team photo are a pair of Danbury High School products - Ken Smith, who was the 12-year-old bat boy for the Hatters, and Boney Blake, considered one of the finest athletes to come out of that city. Smith would later enjoy a 38-year career as a New York sportswriter and become the director of the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown.

Smith's idol as a teenager was John "Boney" Blake, who was a standout pitcher and outfielder for Danbury High School. After graduating high school in 1911, Blake received a scholarship to Niagara University where was a four-year starter on the baseball and basketball teams.

During the summers of 1913 and 1914, Blake returned home to Danbury and played for the Hatters under the alias of "Blakey". Although illegal, it was a common practice during that era for college athletes to skirt the college rules. Blake was one of the Hatter's top players batting .305 in 54 games in 1913 and .286 with 29 stolen bases in 64 games in 1914.

Following graduation from Niagara, Blake reached the International League and joined Jersey City for 54 games, batting .252 in 1915. He moved to Bridgeport of the Eastern League in 1916 and hit .247.

When the United States entered the Great War in 1917, Blake enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a sergeant in the medical corp. He returned to Niagara after the conflict and was hired as the head basketball coach. Over a five-year period, from 1919 to 1923, Blake led Niagara to an 86-15 record that included a 27-4 log in the 1921-22 campaign. Baseball remained in his blood and during his 1920, 1921 and 1922 summer breaks at Niagara he returned to the minor leagues and batted 313, .270, and .304 respectively, playing for Hamilton and Port Huron-Sarnia clubs in the Michigan-Ontario League.

At the end of the 1923 academic year, Blake accepted a teaching and assistant basketball coaching job at St. John's University. He continued there until 1941 and then returned to Niagara University to teach army cadets during World War Two. After the war, Blake took a job as an accountant for a construction company, retiring in 1960. Blake was inducted into the first class of the Niagara University Basketball Hall of Fame in 1963.

Smith, who was nine years younger, kept in touch with Blake throughout his life. When Blake died in 1974, Smith was quoted as saying that Blake "to me was the best baseball player up to that time that Danbury produced, and was truly a brilliant man."

Smith's own professional career reads like a fairy tale. Baseball was always his primary love. During his time at Danbury High School, Smith, who was small in stature, served as the manager of the baseball team and was editor of the school newspaper. Upon graduating from high school in 1920, Smith began his newspaper career as a copy boy for the *New York Evening Mail*. His time there was short as he soon left the paper to enroll at Trinity College in Hartford. During his college undergraduate years, Smith found work at the *Hartford Courant* as a state news reporter and sportswriter, covering Eastern League baseball.

His first full-time job after Trinity was with the *New York Graphic* where he worked for non-other than Ed Sullivan, the TV Ed Sullivan, who was the Graphic's sports editor. After seven years there, he joined the *New York Mirror* where he continued as the baseball and football writer from 1932, up to the closing of the paper in 1963. Smith was regarded by many as one of the great sports writers in the country, in the same league as the legendary Grantland Rice.

Smith spent 38 years as a beat reporter, covering the Brooklyn Dodgers, New York Giants, New York Yankees and the New York football Giants. During that time, he also served as secretary of the Baseball Writers of America (BBWA) from 1939 to 1957. As BBWA secretary, he was in charge of elections for the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. In 1947, he wrote a book on the "Baseball Hall of Fame" which has gone through many editions.

With the demise of the *New York Mirror*, Smith was a popular choice to continue his career at Baseball Hall of Fame. He served as director for the most of his time there before retiring in 1979. During his professional career Smith became close to many past and future Hall of Fame inductees. He was one of the few writers who knew Babe Ruth so well that the all-time great called him by his first name. Babe was not great on remembering names and called dignitaries and others "kid," but always addressed Smith as "Ken" when they crossed paths.

Smith enjoyed 12 years in retirement, living in Cooperstown until his death in 1991.



Boney Blake



Ken Smith

A Fortnight in Hartford, Connecticut in June 1921

By Alan Cohen

On June 3, 1921, the following headline appeared in the *Hartford Times*: "Lefty Gahrig (sic), New Clouter, To Be in Local Lineup To-Day Against Pittsfield." The article beneath mentioned a home run that he had hit at Cubs Park (now known as Wrigley Field) as a high school player in 1920. That home run, a grand slam, had cemented the win as his Commerce High School defeated Chicago's Lane High School, 12-6, for the National Schoolboy Championship.

Hartford manager Arthur Irwin was quick to inform the local media that his new first baseman would be playing under an assumed name.

"Lou Lewis, Arthur Irwin's latest discovery, was planted on the initial sack. The youngster, who is only eighteen years old, appeared to be a bit nervous. After he gets accustomed to surroundings, he may develop. They seldom fail to make the grade with Irwin teaching the ways of baseball." – *Hartford Courant*, June 4, 1921

Hartford had a new ballpark in 1921, Clarkin Field (renamed Bulkeley Stadium in 1928), and, for a fortnight in June, a new first baseman.

In Gehrig's first game on June 3, in a matter of seconds, he went from goat to hero. In the seventh inning, his inability to make a play on a slow roller by Pittsfield pitcher Al Pierotti wound up giving the visitors runners at first and second with one out. On the next play, Lou redeemed himself, digging a throw out of the dirt to complete an inning-ending 1-5-3 double-play. In Hartford's half of the inning, he sacrificed the tying run, Heinie Scheer, to second base. Hartford took a 2-1 lead in the stanza, and they held on to win by that score.

On June 4, Hartford was matched up against Waterbury. Batting fifth in the order, Gehrig's first at-bat of the game came when he led off the second inning. He tripled on the first ball that he saw and came around to score his team's second run of the game on a single by Phil Neher. Hartford went on to win, 5-3.

Gehrig's first RBI came a day later as the Senators traveled to Albany and won, 10-2. Gehrig's second inning single scored Fred Bailey with the game's first run, and Hartford piled it on thereafter. In a sidebar in the following day's *Hartford Courant* it referred to him as "Lewis, the 18-years old youngster who is being touted as a 'Babe' Ruth."

On June 8, in a 10-6 win over Pittsfield, Gehrig had his third multiple-hit game with Hartford and his first double of the season. The double slammed up against the "B" in the "Buick" sign. Apparently, had Gehrig hit the "U" in the sign, he would have gotten a car. An affidavit signed by a youngster with a good view of the fence (from a tree just outside the fence), verified that Gehrig's shot slammed into the B. He was going for his third hit of the game when, as described in the *Hartford Courant*, "he slammed a terrific drive traveled at a mile-a-minute clip into (right fielder Bill) McCrory's gloved hand. It was the hardest hit ball of the game." With five wins in Gehrig's first six games with the Senators, Hartford climbed into first place.

On June 10, Hartford lost in 13 innings to Bridgeport, 4-2. Gehrig, in the ninth inning, had hit a ball that bounced off the pitcher, putting runners on first and second with one out in the tie game. Shortly thereafter, Gehrig was picked off first base, ending the rally.

The following day was another disappointment as Hartford lost to New Haven, 8-3. Gehrig's muff of a throw in the sixth inning allowed New Haven to score the first of three runs in that inning.

On June 14, the team picture was published in the *Hartford Times*. Seated in front of manager Irwin, was young Lou Gehrig. A fifth-inning RBI triple on June 14 brought his average to .262, as Hartford defeated Springfield, 9-1. He had not started the game but came in as a replacement in the fourth inning when outfielder Brick Kane was injured, and first baseman Harry Hesse was moved to left field.

On June 15, Gehrig went 1-for-4 in a 9-2 loss at Springfield. His only hit was a first-inning liner off the first baseman's shin that rolled across the infield allowing Hesse to score from third base.

When Hartford took the field against New Haven on June 17, Lou Lewis was no longer with the team. Columbia coach [Andy Coakley](#) had discovered that his player was in Hartford and spirited him back to New York.

His average with the Senators was .261 (12-for-46), with a double, two triples, and four RBIs.

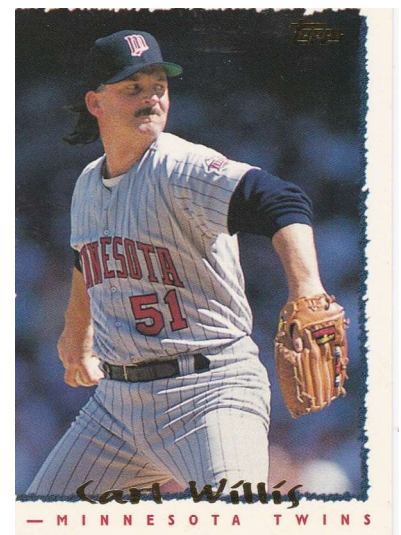
The departure of "Lou Lewis" was mentioned neither in the *Hartford Courant* nor the *Hartford Times*.

Frank Observations

By Michael Frank

Cleveland Indians pitching coach Carl Willis churned out his fifth Cy Young winner this season. If you studied your state history, you'd know Cleveland is part of Connecticut's Western Reserve.

- Willis has turned 60, is married with 3 kids, and went to UNC Wilmington.
- He had a pedestrian 9 year pitching career, mostly with the Twins, and wound up 22-126 lifetime.
- He was on the 1991 World Champs and pitched in 4 games of that World Series.
- The first Cy Young winner he coached was C.C. Sabathia who went 19-7 for the Indians in 2007.
- A season later, Cliff Lee led the AL with 22 wins (22-3) to coast to the award.
- By 2010, he was with Seattle where Felix Hernandez was an easy choice with a 2.27 ERA.
- Most have forgotten that in 2016, Mets second liner Rick Porcello was 22-4 with the Red Sox's.
- In 2020, back with Cleveland, Shane Bieber won the pitching triple crown (8-1, 1.63 ERA, 122 K's in 77.1 innings).
- They used to say winning teams followed Joe Morgan around. Cy Young winners follow Carl Willis.





Root, Root, Root for the Local Baseball Team

By Stan Dziurgot

How do people become fans of certain teams in sports? I'm sure being a fan of a certain player has something to do with it. Before the internet, having access to a team plus how good the team was also was a factor. I have always thought that unless they moved from another part of the country, unlike other sports, baseball fans usually root for the local team.

Pro football is a perfect example; many people who in the 1960's are still to this day Green Bay Packers fans. If you grew up in the 1970's, America's team, the Dallas Cowboys, became popular even if you lived nowhere near Dallas. The same for the Pittsburgh Steelers who won 4 Super Bowls in the 1970's and the 1980's with Joe Montana and the San Francisco 49ers. It is important to note that the New York Giants went 18 seasons from 1964 – 1981 without making it to the post season.

The NFL has a blackout rule that said that home games could not be televised to the home city even if it was sold out. NY Giants' fans would actually come from New York across the border into Connecticut to watch the game at a place that was televising the game. They would always sellout and had a waiting list for season tickets. The Giants were televised in New England and had many fans there. Even when the New England Patriots came into being, many fans in New England still rooted for the Giants thinking that the AFL was a minor league. I know many people who root for the baseball Red Sox and simultaneously the football Giants. That rule has been changed so more home games can be televised if the game is close to a sell out. When I started following baseball it was during the Maris/Mantle home run race year of 1961. The Red Sox weren't televised in Connecticut at that time; it wasn't until 1967 that they became contenders.

It was between 1958 – 1961 when there was only one choice if you were rooting for a New York team. There was no National League team in the area until the Mets came into being the next year in 1962. So with only one team on television and radio in the area the Yankees became my team. They were the only game in town plus a winning team. The fact that someone would give my father The New York Post to bring home helped me follow the team. 1961 was the second of five years in a row that they went to the World Series. 1965 – 1975 would test a fan's allegiance when they never made it.

My first trip to Yankee Stadium was in 1962. I found out when I was older that my father had been a Brooklyn Dodgers fan who was disappointed so many times when the BUMS played the Yankees into the World Series. He could have brought me to the Polo Grounds to watch the Mets in their first season of play. The Polo Grounds were home to the Dodgers' biggest rival, the Giants, so I'm not sure which one would have been worse. For him if the Dodgers were still in Brooklyn I'm sure it would have gone to Ebbets Field.

The first game I remember Manny's Baseball Land and the elevated train rumbling above River Avenue in the Bronx. My father knew someone who's company had season tickets so our seats were in the lower deck behind the Yankee dugout. The

green grass looked endless with a huge crowd in attendance at the triple decker stadium. Looking it up years later on baseballreference.com there were only 10,000 in attendance.

In the game, Whitey Ford and the Yankees beat Bennie Daniels and the Washington Senators 8-3 I asked my father why a Washington player got a huge ovation, somewhat mixed, when he came to bat. The player was Jimmy Piersall. I found out later of his personal issues but also thought that some of the cheers my father had been because he's from Waterbury, Connecticut. The game was on a Tuesday night and when leaving the stadium just after 10:00 pm. I was surprised to see people already selling the Wednesday New York Daily News (they called it the Night Owl edition) on the street. I was reminded of this later on an episode of the Twilight Zone when a man could buy the next day's paper and the trouble it caused him.

Quotable Baseball: The Game & Its Legends by Jim Mizera

He (Shoeless Joe Jackson) was the finest natural hitter in the history of the game.
- Ty Cobb

I copied (Shoeless Joe) Jackson's style because I thought he was the greatest hitter I had ever seen, the greatest natural hitter I ever saw. He's the guy who made me a hitter.
- Babe Ruth

[Ruth] could experiment at the plate. He didn't have to get a piece of the ball. He didn't have to protect the plate the way a regular batter was expected to. No one cares much if the pitcher strikes out or looks bad at bat, so Ruth could take that big swing.
- Ty Cobb, "Ty Cobb: A Terrible Beauty", Charles Leerhsen

Where do you want to pitch him [Willie McCovey]? Upper deck or lower deck?"
- Casey Stengel speaking to pitcher Roger Craig

He's [Willie Stargell] such a big strong guy he should love that porch. He's got power enough to hit home runs in any park, including Yellowstone.
- Sparky Anderson, 07/13/1971 All-Star Game interview

As a rule, I'm reluctant to express admiration for hitters, but I make an exception for Frank Robinson.
- Bob Gibson

I was awed, He [Bob Gibson] doesn't remind me of anybody. He's all by himself.
- Detroit Tigers 2B Dick McAuliffe after 1968 World Series game 1

I don't care what the situation was, how high the stakes were - the bases could be loaded and the pennant riding on every pitch, it never bothered Whitey [Ford]. He pitched his game. Cool. Craft. Nerves of steel.
- Mickey Mantle

Book Talk: Tinkers to Evers to Freud

By Karl Cicitto

One Google search of the term “Baseball Psychologist” yields 8 million results, displaying info for psychologists and authors that sharpen cognitive skills to complement the physical talents of ballplayers.

Things have really changed in 70 years.

In late 1949, the St. Louis Browns invited a Manhattan psychologist, David Tracy, to bring his skills in hypnotization and auto suggestion to Spring Training in 1950. He may or may not have been the first ever mental skills coach in the major leagues, as he claimed. Still, Dr. Tracy did bring the concepts of relaxation and positive expectations into the modern era of professional baseball. In his book, *The Psychologist at Bat* (Sterling, 1951), he tells how he approached stress factors and treatment, naming players and outcomes.

Unfortunately for Tracy, we are talking about the feeble Browns here. The psychologist was over matched when it came to actually improving team performance. With his mentoring, the Browns only improved their win total from 53 (in 1949) to 58 (in 1950). They finished 7th both years.

Tracy was a devout Baseball fan. In June 1949, the UP's Claire Cox authored a story in which Tracy claimed he could help the Browns with auto suggestion and hypnosis. “Nothing else can save them now so they might as well let me try.”¹ Tracy soon accepted an invitation from Browns owner Charles DeWitt to work in spring training in Burbank, CA. in 1950.

The hiring was newsworthy. Several headlines read, “Tinkers to Evers to Freud”.² Other publications referred to Tracy as a “Whammy Man”.³

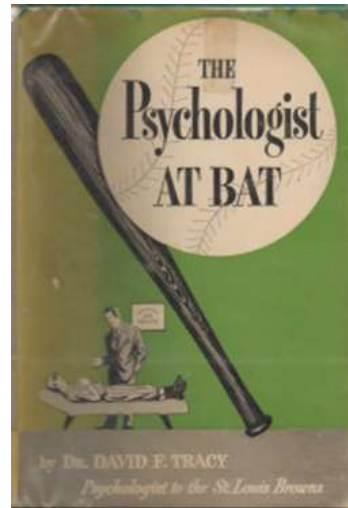
Once in camp, the veteran players initially resisted Tracy. The Doctor made progress by sitting in on a poker game with the players. He established some legitimacy by hypnotizing Owen Friend at the poker table for all to see. In time, he trained the players to be more relaxed and self-confident by teaching them to hypnotize themselves, each other, and their wives.

De Witt concluded that the rookies played better in spring training as a result of Tracy's work. He invited the Doctor to stay with the team after they left California for the first month of the 1950 season.

On the way to St. Louis, they stopped in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas, giving Tracy a chance to check out the Browns' Rookie Academy. A busher could pay \$50 to receive 6 weeks of training there. The kids that demonstrated talent were shipped to a Browns minor league affiliate. The Doctor worked with the rookies there and felt he came to quickly understand them.

In Tracy's mind, rookies most feared reporters -- and for good reason. A story that creates high expectations creates stress. This was the case with the Dodger's over-touted youngster Eddie Miksis about whom Branch Rickey said, “Miksis will Fix Us.”. Miksis played 14 years, ending with a .236 career BA and negative career WAR.

Clint Hartung was another example, according to Tracy, “A



potential great was ruined by overenthusiastic writers.” Hartung, a pitcher, finished his career with a 29- 29 W-L record and a 5.02 ERA.

Rookies also fear managers, writes Tracy. They yell and criticize, they don't encourage. They insert rookies into pressure situations before they have succeeded in normal ones. They do all this when in fact “the man who needs to be hypnotized most frequently is the Manager.”

Sometimes sophomores can't stand up to the pressure created by fabulous rookie seasons, wrote Tracy. Roy Sievers was a failed sophomore. He hit .306 with 16 homers while winning the 1949 ROY with the Browns. He pushed Tracy away in Burbank and again as he batted poorly when the 1950 season began. Sievers fell from a .306 BA & 16 HR in 1949 to .238 & 10 in 1950. He struggled two more years before realizing his very substantial potential.

Tracy blames Sievers for hurting himself, but he also blames the Browns for contributing to the demise of their young players by habitually selling/trading their veterans to pay the rent. They “psychologically bankrupted the team.” The 1950 infield of Arft, Friend, DeMars, Somers, Upton & Thomas had no veterans to advise and stabilize, to relieve the pressure and fear.

Fear of Crowds is another challenge. “The crowd's very presence...its raucous voice...creates a pressure that inexperienced and even veteran players feel much more than they or their manager or the sports writers realize.” Roy Stockton and Ted Williams were two who could not block it out, according to Tracy.

Tracy believed, “The lower leagues are full of men with this fear complex as the root of their troubles. When fear strikes it reduces natural ability by 50%.”

Tracy does at times seem to inflate his effectiveness.

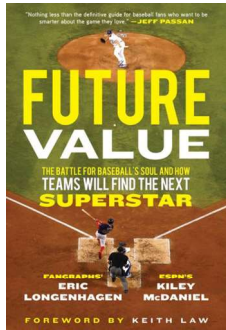
He wrote, “I hypnotized the Browns out of their fear of crowds. Late in the 1950 season, I was pleased to see the Browns knock both the Tigers and the Indians out of the exciting pennant race by beating them unmercifully when the chips were down in the final series...” Tracy was very much inaccurate on these claims.

Dr. Tracy's hyperbole wasn't limited to baseball. He also claimed to have taken the New York Rangers from a 0-13-0 start to an 18-23-20 conclusion. The season most similar to that unsubstantiated claim was 1943-44, when the Rangers started 0-14-1 and concluded at 6-39-5.

“Baseball Psychologist” continued on Page 11

New and Upcoming Baseball Book Releases

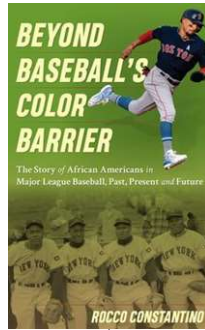
Compiled By Stan Osowiecki (Source: bn.com)



Future Value

(June 01, 2021) by Eric Logenhagen and Kiley McDaniel

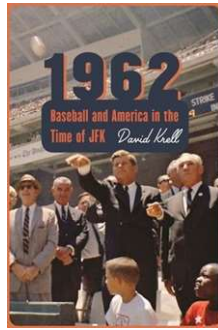
Future Value is a thorough dive into baseball's changing world of talent acquisition and development, a world with its own language, methods, metrics, and madness. From rural high schools to elite amateur showcases, from the back fields of spring training to major league draft rooms, Eric Logenhagen and Kiley McDaniel break down the key systems and techniques used to assess talent. It's a process that has moved beyond the quintessential stopwatches and radar guns to include statistical models, countless measurable indicators, and a broader international reach.



Beyond Baseball's Color Barrier

(May 12, 2021) by Rocco Constantino

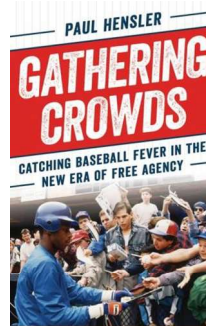
A fascinating history celebrating Black players in Major League Baseball from the 1800s through today, with special insight into what the future may hold. In *Beyond Baseball's Color Barrier: The Story of African Americans in Major League Baseball, Past, Present, and Future*, Rocco Constantino chronicles the history of generations of ballplayers, showing how African Americans have influenced baseball from the 1800s to the present. He details how the color line was drawn, efforts made to erode it, and the progress towards Jackie Robinson's debut—including a pre-integration survey in which players unanimously promoted integration years before it actually happened. Personal accounts and colorful stories trace the exponential growth of diversity in the sport since integration, from a boom in participation in the 1970s to peak participation in the early 1990s, but also reveal the current downward trend in the number of African American players to percentages not seen since the 1960s.



1962: Baseball and America in the Time of JFK

(May 01, 2021) by David Krall

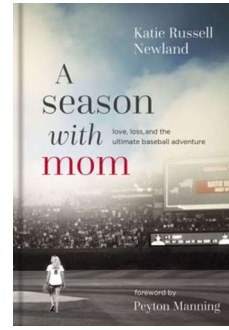
In the watershed year of 1962, events and people came together to reshape baseball like never before. The season saw the arrival of the New York Mets and Houston Colt .45s, five no-hitters, a rare National League playoff between the Giants and the Dodgers, and a thrilling seven-game World Series where the Yankees, led by Mickey Mantle, won their twentieth title, beating the San Francisco Giants, led by Willie Mays. Beyond baseball, 1962 was also a momentous year in American history: Mary Early became the first Black graduate of the University of Georgia, First Lady Jackie Kennedy revealed the secrets of the White House in a television special, John Glenn became the first astronaut to orbit Earth, and JFK stared down Russia during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



Gathering Crowds

(April 14, 2021) by Paul Hensler

Gathering Crowds details how baseball grew and evolved from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Trepidation that without the reserve clause only wealthy teams would succeed diminished when small-market clubs in Minnesota, Kansas City, and Boston found their way to pennants and World Series titles. The proliferation of games broadcast on cable and satellite systems seemed to create a thirst for more baseball rather than discourage fans from going to the ballpark. And as fans clicked the turnstiles and purchased more and more team-licensed products, the national pastime proved it could survive and thrive even as other professional sports leagues vied for the public's attention. By the end of the 1980s, baseball had positioned itself to progress into the future stronger and more popular than ever.



A Season With Mom

(April 06, 2021) by Katie Russell Newland

At age thirteen, Katie Russell attended her first Chicago Cubs game. While dining at Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse in the Windy City, her mom planted the seed of a big dream: to visit all the Major League Baseball (MLB) parks. Fast-forward years later, join Katie as she travels more than 30,000 miles to all thirty MLB parks in a single season. Along with black-and-white photographs, Katie shares letters written to her mom, who died of cancer before the two of them could go on the adventure of a lifetime together. During the journey, Katie reflects on her life, her relationship with her mom, and America's favorite pastime. *A Season with Mom* reminds readers that in life, as in baseball, sometimes you strike out, but sometimes you hit home runs.



Tokyo Junkie

(April 20, 2021) by Robert Whiting

Tokyo Junkie is a memoir that plays out over the dramatic 60-year growth of the megacity Tokyo, once a dark, fetid backwater and now the most populous, sophisticated, and safe urban capital in the world. Follow author Robert Whiting (*The Chrysanthemum and the Bat*, *You Gotta Have Wa*, *Tokyo Underworld*) as he watches Tokyo transform during the 1964 Olympics, rubs shoulders with the Yakuza and comes face to face with the city's dark underbelly, interviews Japan's baseball elite after publishing his first best-selling book on the subject, and learns how politics and sports collide to produce a cultural landscape unlike any other, even as a new Olympics is postponed and the COVID virus ravages the nation.

Garry Hancock: Blocked by the Stars

By Karl Ciccitto

Some batters excel in the minor leagues but hit like Mario Mendoza in the majors. Sometimes the problem is a lack of at bats. You can't get your rhythm if you ride the pine. One example of this is Garry Hancock, a four tool outfielder with Boston in the 1970's.

Hancock played ball at Hillsborough College (FL) and for Bobby Richardson at the University of South Carolina. He was drafted five times by the Rangers, Indians and Angels between June 1972 and January 1976. He batted .351 with the Gamecocks in 1975, when Richardson's nine went to the College World Series final.¹

Hancock signed with Cleveland and spent 1976 with single-A San Jose, where he hit .308 with 5 home runs, 77 RBI and 56 runs. He led the California league with 20 outfield assists. Hancock spent 1977 with two teams, batting a combined .296 with 10 home runs in Jersey City (AA) and Toledo (AAA). In December, he was traded to Boston.

At Spring Training in 1978, Pawtucket Red Sox Manager [Joe Morgan](#) was surprised with his skills. "Hancock can do four things – hit for average, run, field and throw and you sure as hell don't see a lot of players do that."² Earning an outfield job with the 1978 Red Sox would be difficult because Jim Rice and Fred Lynn were established and Dwight Evans was beginning to star.

Assigned to AAA, Hancock showed power with Pawtucket. On April 25, he homered in a 7-6 win. On May 27, he smashed another home run. A headline in *The Sporting News* called him "Hammerin Hancock" after belting a grand slam against Richmond on June 18 and raising his average to .298. When Hancock was called up to the Boston on July 14 he was batting .303 with 8 home runs, 44 RBIs, and 41 runs scored in 310 at-bats, plus 11 outfield assists.

The timing of Hancock's promotion was like being piped aboard the *Titanic* shortly before it reached the ice bergs of the North Atlantic. He witnessed a collapse that ripped the guts out of New England. Without retelling the tale of the Boston Massacre and Bucky Dent game, it suffices to say that Hancock watched the ordeal while playing infrequently. He batted .225 with no home runs and four RBIs.

Hancock spent 1979 with Pawtucket, batting .325 and winning the International League batting crown. He hit 15 home runs with 58 RBI and 61 runs, plus 15 outfield assists. He hit safely in 50 of 58 games which compelled *The Sporting News* to call him a model of consistency.³

Despite his superb year, he was assigned to Pawtucket for the third straight season in 1980. Evans, Lynn and Rice were still in place, as were a few seasoned backups. He was demoted with eight other players, one being Sam Bowen, who led the International League in home runs the prior year with 28 and tied for the RBI crown with 75.⁴ Another was Dave Stapleton, who batted .486 in spring training and was the International League's co-MVP in 1979.⁵ He asked, "What must I do to make this club?"⁶

After injuries struck the Red Sox Hancock was called up on June 22. Don Zimmer rarely played him. Then in late August, Lynn and Yaz suffered major injuries. Hancock suddenly had steady work and found his rhythm. The press summed it up: "In 1980, when given a chance to play regularly for 74 at-bats in September, he hit .338 with four homers and 15 RBIs (to finish at .287), batted .372 with men on base and .370 with runners in scoring position. He is an above-average outfielder with above average speed and a good arm."⁷



In 1981, Hancock made the Red Sox out of spring training after batting .343⁸ but was used very little by the new manager, Ralph Houk. Hancock posted a .156 batting average in the shortened strike year. He suspected he was the only Red Sox position player in history to be on the club for an entire season and not get a hit at Fenway Park.⁹

Sent down to Pawtucket again in 1982, Hancock produced a .294 batting average with 21 home runs, 71 RBIs, and 20 outfield assists. He was called to Boston after the season ended and used mostly as a pinch-hitter. He went 0-for-14.

On December 6, 1982, Hancock was traded to Oakland with Carney Lansford and Jerry King for Tony Armas and Jeff Newman.¹⁰ After six years in the minor leagues and one with Boston, Hancock entered his age 29 season and he was frustrated. He said if he couldn't cut it with the A's he would retire.¹¹

But Hancock earned more playing time with the '83 A's than ever before. He batted .273 with eight home runs, 30 RBIs and 29 runs scored in 256 at-bats. He batted .500 as a pinch-hitter, .300 as a D.H., and was second toughest to strike out in the American League behind only Mickey Hatcher.¹² He said, "I never doubted my ability to hit the ball. I only doubted other people giving me a chance to hit."¹³

1983 was the zenith of his constrained career. It ended after the 1984 campaign when he played for Oakland and AAA-Tacoma. He batted .217 in 60 at-bats for the A's.

Retiring at season's end, he said he would not tolerate another demotion after nine years in professional ball."¹⁴

But he did make his pitching debut in that final season. On June 25, losing 16-0 to the Royals, Hancock retired Steve Balboni, Leon Roberts, Don Slaught, and Greg Pryor, earning a perfect 0.00 lifetime ERA.¹⁵

Royals reliever Dan Quisenberry quipped, "With his confidence and his ability, there's no reason he shouldn't win the Cy Young Award within the next two years...He knows it. The people around the league know it. It's just a matter of his pitching up to his potential."¹⁶

Garry Hancock passed at the age of 61 on October 10, 2015. No mention of baseball was made in his obituary.¹⁷ His footstone has two photographs; one of which is the image of his 1982 Topps baseball card with Hancock in his Red Sox home whites."¹⁸

The author made use of statistics on baseball-reference.com and in back issues of The Sporting News.

"Hancock" continued on Page 11

Chapter Member Profile: Bill Ryczek

By George Pawlusch

Despite a demanding full-time day job, Chapter member Bill Ryczek proves that writing a book can be done, as he just finished work on his tenth book entitled “Dr. Strangelove,” that will publish later this year. The book chronicles the life of renown baseball power-hitter Dick Stuart, from the 1960s, who gained equal attention for his inept fielding skills at first-base and his proclivity to strikeout often between producing booming home runs.



However, he takes special pride for his most recent book “The Sixties in the News,” published last year by McFarland. Its completion satisfies Ryczek’s long-time ambition to write about something other than sports. He questioned himself whether he could do it. “I’m not a trained historian, writer or economist,” he says. The book’s content came from materials he collected while researching his sports books.

Until the internet came along in the early 2000s, researchers collected much of their material from personal interviews or poring through micro-film at libraries. “In the days before internet, I’d find interesting articles in the *Hartford Courant* or the *Bridgeport Post* that had nothing to do with sports,” Ryczek shares. Over the years from 1959 to 1973, he accumulated a vast number of non-sports articles and filed them away without any thoughts of ever using them.

Ryczek’s idea for his aspirational book came when he decided to pull out his non-sports research and grouping them into chapters to show how America changed in the 1960s. Without using the actual articles in the book, he researched their background and found out what happened to these people later in life.

The book includes chapters on subjects like how marriages changed among women; one on crime that addressed skyjacking, which was prevalent then; and sex, drugs and rock and roll. McFarland told me that I had to include Viet Nam and student unrest. I wondered what I could write about Viet Nam that David Halberstam and Robert McNamara hadn’t already written but being a good soldier, I added those topics to the book.”

“The most interesting part of the book are the unique stories,” he says. “One chapter includes a story about coed Victoria Bowles, a topless dancer who performed as Vicky Drake, and ran for president of the Stanford University student body and almost won.” I wrote about the background of the story and what happened to her afterwards. I came across information about her campaign manager Forrest Church, who turned out to be the son of former Idaho Senator Frank Church. Forrest later became a well-known Unitarian minister and theologian.”

Ryczek’s first book “Blackguards and Red Stockings,” published in 1992, traces the beginnings of baseball’s first professional league, the National Association, that operated from 1871 to 1875. He wrote about the loose alliance of mostly hard drinking, undisciplined players, and driven, sometimes by irascible owners.

Ryczek explained that he chose the topic because “It was the first major sports league, and nobody had written about it.” His initial plan was to pursue the project when he retired. However, in 1981 at age 28 he went through some major surgery and was confined at home for six weeks. Instead of waiting for retirement he got out the *Baseball Encyclopedia* and put the project in motion. It would take 11 years all together before McFarland finally published “Blackguards and Red Stockings” in 1992,

In between his first book and his current “Sixties in the News,” and upcoming “Dr. Strangelove,” Ryczek has completed seven books. They include “When Johnny Came Running Home, (1998),” about baseball in the post-civil war era; “Crash of the Titans (2000),” recalls the early years of the New York Titans and the AFL; “The Yankees in the Early 1960s, (2007);” “The Amazing Mets (2007);” “Baseballs First Inning (2009),” the history of the national pastime through the Civil War; “Connecticut Gridiron,” (2014), about minor league football in Connecticut during the 1960s and 1970s; and “Baseball on the Brink (2017),” that discusses the crisis of baseball in 1968.

How Ryczek decides on projects varies. “Each idea came to me differently,” he explains. “Blackguards and Red Stockings’ first came to mind when I was in my 20s. The ‘Titans’ resulted from reading an article about Alex Kroll in *Sports Illustrated*. I didn’t actually write the book until 25 years later. The book about minor league football resulted from being an avid Hartford Knights fan as a kid. I was a big rooter of both the Yankees and Mets while I was growing up in the 1960s.”

Ryczek, a financial professional, admits that he wouldn’t be able to write books without being fully employed as the founder and owner of Colebrook Financial Company, LLC, a Middletown firm that specializes in timeshare financing. “This allows me to write anything that I want,” he says. “People, who are writing for a living, have to write stuff they are not interested in just to pay the bills.”

While participating in a 19th Century Conference in Cooperstown, Ryczek was asked how he organizes his writing as a part-time writer “A part of it is discipline, and to like what you are doing” he offers. “It’s relaxing and I don’t work under a deadline. I never sold a book before I finished it.”

His discipline with his free time has become his habit. “Other than watching sports, I don’t watch a lot of TV and when I do, I’m writing anyway. I pretty much do something every day, night and weekend. I don’t want to have to write if I don’t want to. At this point in my life, I work because I want to. My entire life is optionable. And when that’s true it’s more enjoyable.”

Ryczek values his association with SABR and the Smoky Joe Wood chapter. “It gives me a social life,” he says. “I found that so many people I met through SABR are not just connections but good friends. It is a nice and interesting group of people who have similar interests. You can talk about things and not just baseball but life in general. To find people with like interests is always thrilling.”

Ryczek, 67, lives in Wallingford with his wife Susan, who is a retired librarian. The Ryczeks have two grown children, Michael, an artist who lives in Massachusetts, and Anne, a recruiter for a manufacturer in Ft. Lauderdale. His academic credentials include a BS from the University of Connecticut, MS from Penn State University plus a year studying at the University of Bridgeport Law School.

Just a Game?

By David Wilk

My father, Max Wilk was not a baseball fan as far back as I can remember. He never would play baseball with me at home because he said, he had hurt his shoulder during World War II and could not throw a ball - I think he was injured in a training accident. According to him, he had a Purple Heart for this injury. I suspect he was a bit embarrassed by that, since he spent most of his four years in the Army Air Force in Burbank, California as a member of the Motion Picture Unit, where his commanding officer was Captain Ronald Reagan. Apparently they spent much of their time making training films to teach soldiers how to withstand questioning if captured and how to survive if marooned on a Pacific island. Being in uniform and single during WWII in Los Angeles and being connected to the Hollywood movie community through his father's job working for Warner Brothers meant that my father was romantically active during the war, despite being short, Jewish, overweight and wearing glasses. He dated some young Hollywood starlets, including, as I discovered much later, the absolutely beautiful and mysterious Frances Farmer.

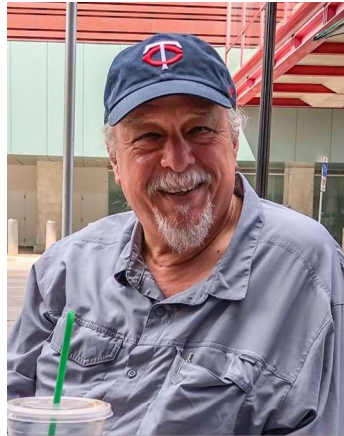
Max also worked as an advance man for the Army's big Irving Berlin production called *THIS IS THE ARMY*. Working on that show he met Alfred Palca, whom he later introduced to his sister Doris, and who then became his brother in law.

Anyway, when I was a kid, I played baseball by myself at home, bouncing a tennis ball off the side of the house or the roof, and also off an early version of the throw-back devices that still exists widely but was fairly novel in the fifties. I can't remember the brand name, but it was a flexible net on a metal frame, that would bounce the ball you threw back to you, assuming, of course that your throw was in any way accurate. You could also use it to throw yourself grounders and little pop flies.

And like so many kids of the fifties and early sixties, I played baseball frequently in pickup games with neighborhood kids, and memorably with my then best friend, Tony Grafton, now a brilliant Princeton professor. We played hundreds of made-up games with just the two of us as the home team and visitors in his large backyard field. I played catcher and second base for a few relatively unsuccessful seasons of Little League, in summer camp, and even a two-week stint at Little League camp in Williamsport, Pennsylvania where I found out early on that I was not going to become a major league player, the secret close-held dream of my youth up to that time.

My parents never came to any of my Little League games, which was not unusual in that era. Parents rarely witnessed their children's sports activities. Though now that I think of it, I am pretty sure my mother, at least, did show up for school plays, and that was definitely embarrassing for me, maybe less so for her.

It was not my father who took me to my first Major League Baseball game, that was left to my mother's father, Dr. Irvin Balensweig. What is strange about that is that Grampa Bally,



as he was known to us, also did not care for baseball, nor did he care for children of any kind, especially, or so it seemed to us, his grandchildren. In 1957, when I was six years old, Grampa Bally took me to see the Yankees play at the old Yankee Stadium. I vividly remember that day, riding the subway (the IRT line it was called then), with wicker seats and real leather straps hanging from the upper railings of each train car.

I don't remember walking from the subway to the stadium, but I will never

forget my first view of a major league baseball field, as it was ahead and below as we entered the stands. It was then and remains today a central moment in my personal memory book. I doubt our seats were very good, but I did not care or notice. My grandfather smoked a cigar while I stood on my seat to watch Mickey Mantle, Moose Skowron, Yogi Berra, Whitey Ford, Bobby Richardson, Gil McDougald, Tony Kubek and Enos Slaughter, that team of now memorable players. They were all there below me on the field, in living color. Who they played is lost to time and did not matter then or now. I was immediately hooked on watching baseball played, and remain so to this day.

I was prompted me to think about this recently in looking through a box of my father's old papers that somehow missed going to his archive at the Beinecke Library at Yale. I chanced upon a single white envelope, maybe 5 x 8. It was sealed, and completely unmarked. I opened the flap carefully and looked inside to find a single perhaps three inch square piece of paper, on which are written the names Bill Terry and Horace Stoneham, each in what appears to be their own handwriting, and below the notation, NY Giants, May 21, 1954 in my father's recognizable hand.

This is completely mystifying. As I noted earlier, my father was not a baseball fan. I looked up that date in the Baseball Reference website, and it turns out that the Giants played the Phillies that day, but in Philadelphia. How did Max meet Bill Terry, former player, and Horace Stoneham, the owner, of the team? And why? Where?

I know that he had collected autographs as a small child, as I have his autograph book. But he was an adult man in 1954, 34 years old, a working television writer, father of two small children. He was not someone who in my lifetime ever went to a baseball game or willingly watched baseball, football, golf or any other sort of sporting event on television. He never expressed interest in the Giants, the Dodgers or the Yankees, and only went with me once or maybe twice in 1962 or 1963, as I recall, to a Mets game. When we lived in Los Angeles, the two years when I was in fifth and sixth grades, I remember going to see the Dodgers at the over-sized Coliseum, and also the first-year Angels at the former minor league stadium known as Wrigley Field, and it is possible he took me to one of those games, but I have no clear memory that he did, and tend to think it was either a cousin or a friend's parent who did take me. It's difficult to imagine my father taking me to a ball game, even in the beautiful light of Southern California.

"Just a Game" continued on Page 11

Thank You Dad

by Stan Osowiecki

This past October, my Dad passed away suddenly. My Dad was the person who gave to me my passion for baseball. I can remember going to minor league games with him each summer, the times we would travel down to Shea Stadium, especially for fireworks night, countless hours watching games and collecting baseball cards together. But what I remember most are all of the Mets games we went to after I graduated from college. The rides to and from Shea and sitting in the stands with him weren't just discussions of who deserves to go into the Hall of Fame next or how a certain player would always beat up the Mets, but they were a time for a father and son to bond and to become more...close friends.

Putting this issue of the Wood Pile has been especially difficult for me as my Dad can no longer be the first person to get the completed issue as he had since its inception.

Dad...thank you for everything you did for me and taught me. I miss you and will miss our games together.
Love, Stan



Quotable Baseball: The Game & Its Legends by Jim Mizera

Blessed with the best mechanics of his day, [Tom] Seaver developed a pitching style that left his right knee in the dirt and opposing hitters in the dust.
- sportswriter Stewart Wolpin, BaseballLibrary.com

Everybody in the park knows he's [Lou Brock] going to run and he makes it anyway.
- Larry Bowa

Joe Morgan was quite simply the best baseball player I played against or saw.
- Johnny Bench

Hancock (continued from Page 8)

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1. Rudy Jones, "Richardson Feels Gamecocks Have Bright Future," *Greenville News*, June 16, 1975: 15.
2. Peter Gammons, "This Could Be Orioles Year...", *Boston Globe*, March 26, 1978: 78.
3. International League, *The Sporting News*, September 15, 1979: 31
4. UPI, "Red Sox Trim Nine From Roster," *Bennington Banner*, April 3, 1980: 15.
5. Frank Harraway, "Class AAA Previews," *The Sporting News*, April 26, 1980: 36.
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7. Gammons, "Hancock Hoping For Spot," *Boston Globe*, March 12, 1981: 60.
8. "Sox Get Ready To Play Numbers Game."
9. Gammons, "It's MVP Time and this vote goes to...", *Boston Globe*, October 1, 1981: 78.
10. Gammons, "Red Sox trade Lansford to A's," *Boston Globe*, December 7, 1982: 71.
11. Glen Schwarz, "Who's on first?," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 1, 1983: 41.
12. "A's Roster," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 1, 1984: 34.
13. Schwarz, "Hancock proves he belongs in lineup...", *San Francisco Examiner*, July 30, 1983: 31
14. Chuck Mulling, "Gee aren't you...Garry Hancock?," *Tampa Tribune*, August 15, 1987: 24.
15. Kit Stier, "Morgan passes Hornsby mark....," *The Sporting News*, July 9, 1984: 30.
16. Gammons, "Pitching inflates Twins...", *The Sporting News*, July 16, 1984: 42.
17. Obituary of Ronald Garry Hancock, *Tampa Bay Times*, October 14, 2013: 17.
18. Photo 4 of 4, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/153994330/garry-hancock>, accessed November 25, 2020.

Baseball Psychologist (continued from Page 6)

In any case, Tracy felt he had the answers and recommended that a cluster of three people actually manage a baseball team: A manager, a bench coach, and a team psychologist.

Although that trio may not form the design we see today, there are mental skills coaches throughout the professional game, working to help players embrace the unknown, advising on everything from meditation to goal setting to managing anxiety."⁴

David Tracy played an interesting part in the development of such coaching specialists.

Notes

1. Claire Cox, "Hypnotist Would Make Pennant-Winner...Out of Browns", *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 28, 1949, 10.
2. Allen Kline, "Speaking of Sports", *The Daily Republican*, June 6, 1950, 2.
3. Al Wolf, "Whammy Man Comes to Town", *L.A. Times*, March 1, 1950, 56.
4. Emma Baccellieri, "MLB's Mental Health Coaches...", *Sports Illustrated*, June 4, 2020, accessed on-line.

Just a Game (continued from Page 10)

I will never know the story behind this little square of paper or why it was put into an envelope, sealed in 1954 and then forgotten and not seen for 65 years. I don't even think I need to try to understand or create a story to explain it. I prefer to hold the mysterious autographs in my hand and simply try to visualize that day, and what Bill Terry, who was then no longer active in baseball and owned a Buick dealership in Florida, was doing in New York and what my father was doing with Bill Terry and Horace Stoneham.

Terry was a great player who had a lifetime batting average of .341 and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1954. Maybe he was in New York in connection with that event. In those days, baseball team owners were not rich fat-cats like today's owners, and running the Giants was Horace Stoneham's actual job and only source of income. New York was a smaller town in those days, and my father and his father knew a lot of people through their work in show business, so maybe someone introduced them at a lunch or a dinner. Or maybe there was a discussion about a television show or a play. Damn Giants?

This is a mystery that will simply never be resolved. It's one of many mysteries about my parent's lives I will never be able to unravel. How did my father hurt his shoulder? Where was that medal? And why did he never mention Bill Terry to me anyway? Is this a conundrum children never recognize until it's too late, that their parents' stories really are more interesting than we could ever know? And now as a parent, I have to wonder what my kids will want to know about me when it is too late for them to ask. We can never share it all and have no idea what will be important for them to know.

But at least they will never have to wonder what baseball has meant to me.



Opportunity Knocks for Writing Projects

Compiled by Stan Osowiecki

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 (amccue@sabr.org), who is coordinating the project.

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. Nearly 5,400 biographies have been written by 500+ SABR members as of January 15, 2020. Your subject can be anyone who ever played in the major leagues and 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

Things you should know: sabr.org/content/bioproject-resources

Request an assignment: 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

Things you should know: sabr.org/content/sabr-games-project

Request an assignment: Bruce Slutsky at bruce@bruceslutsky.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

Request an assignment: James Forr at jff110@hotmail.com

SABR Book Projects

Biographers are needed for several books. Status of assignment availabilities changes daily. Please contact Bill Nowlin (bnowlin@rounder.com) to request an assignment.

THE WOOD PILE

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



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Members are welcome to submit articles, book reviews or other information that might be interesting to other chapter members. Please send information to Stan Osowiecki at osowiecki@sbcglobal.net.