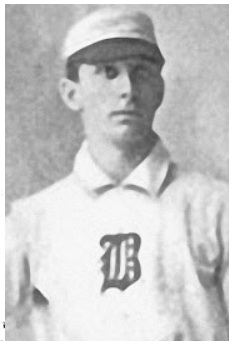
Ephs in Major League Baseball

The Nine Men Who Played for Williams College

And in "The Big Show"

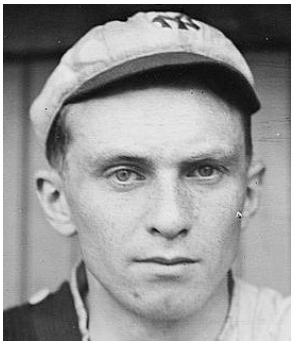
Artie Clarke


Ted Lewis

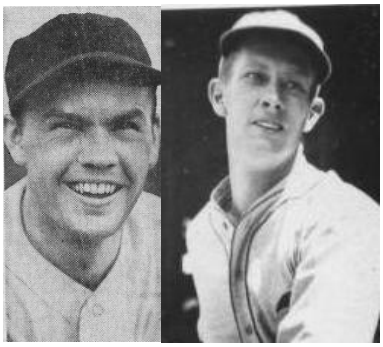

Henry Clarke


Jack Mills


Paul Otis


George Davis


Alex Burr


Mark Filley Charlie Perkins

Rory Costello '84

With a foreword by Fay Vincent '60
Former Commissioner of Major League Baseball

Foreword

Williams College, the small liberal arts college in northwestern Massachusetts, has not produced a major league baseball player since the early 1930s, when two young pitchers – Charlie Perkins and Mark Filley – had the proverbial cup of coffee in The Show. That college did send George Steinbrenner and me forward to non-playing (and, some would argue, non-productive) roles in our great game – but until now there had been no effort to consider the set of early players who made it even if briefly. Rory Costello has produced this delightful monograph telling the stories of the nine former Williams players who made it to the majors, and in doing so he shows us some fascinating aspects of those long gone days.

Not surprisingly, five of the nine players later became lawyers. Filley served as a family court judge in New York State, and Jack Mills – a star third baseman in college who later became a prominent Washington lawyer – is one of perhaps the only two former big-leaguers to have argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court. The other was an Amherst alumnus whom Mills had opposed in 1909 and 1910 in college, Larry McClure. Interestingly, four of the nine played in a four-year period, three for the old New York Highlanders, the predecessor to the Yankees. That was due in great measure to the influence of Charles "Doc" Barrett, who served as the trainer for both Williams and the New York team and who had scouted the college boys and advocated for them. He was responsible for the high point of Williams' success in the majors.

What Costello has done is to illuminate the allure of baseball at a time when it was at the zenith of popularity and when every good college player had aspirations of making it in the majors. And while baseball had its rough sides and not every player was a gentleman, these young men came to baseball after college and after they had been exposed to the nobility of education. They may have played only a few games or pitched to only a few batters – but they each made it, and Costello confirms their pride in what they had achieved. This is a fine sliver of history well presented and worth reading. I enjoyed myself.

Fay Vincent
New Canaan, CT
June 2011

Contents

Note: Henry Clarke, Alex Burr, and Charlie Perkins did not graduate from Williams.

Artie Clarke
The Gentlemanly Backstop

"So far as base ball goes
Clarke is the greatest idol Williams students have ever had."

***–The Sporting Life*, 1892**

This native of Providence, Rhode Island attended Brown University in his hometown. He was the third man in the majors from the Ivy League member. Clarke graduated from Williams in 1889, however, and became the Ephs' first big-leaguer.* The utilityman – his main position was catcher – played in 149 games for the New York Giants in 1890 and 1891. He got his chance amid the Players' League upheaval of 1890 but then pursued his true calling, the law.

Arthur Franklin Clarke was born on May 6, 1865. A 1902 book called *The "Clarke" Families of Rhode Island* is devoted to the clan's history in the state, though Artie's branch is not visible. Even so, his genealogy is known. His parents were Bradford A. – listed as superintendent of a woolen mill in the 1880 census – and Eliza Gould Clarke. As of 1880, Artie had two siblings: Clarence (born c. 1875) and Alice (born c. 1879). The previous census, from 1870, showed a two-year-old sister named Emma; one may infer that the little girl passed away young. That census also showed several other members of the Gould family in the household.

Clarke went to public schools in Providence; he then won a state scholarship to Brown.[1] A short sketch in the *New York Clipper* from April 1892 notes that he attended from 1884 through 1886, becoming the baseball team's catcher.[2] The Bruins played in the American College Association, which at that time comprised Amherst, Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale.[3] Each school faced the others twice.

The *Baseball Reference* website shows that Clarke played in the Eastern New England League in 1885. In July, the Biddeford, Maine club disbanded, and a new franchise called the Clamdiggers entered the league in Newburyport, Massachusetts.[4] Pending examination of box scores, we do not presently know whether Clarke played for one, the other, or both of these teams. It appears that he kept his amateur standing by playing under the name of "A. Franklin."

Artie transferred to Williams in 1887 and became a star in the Purple Valley. Williams won the Intercollegiate Baseball Association championship from 1887 through 1889, with Artie as catcher and captain the latter two years.[5] As "Father of Baseball" Henry Chadwick wrote in 1888, formation of and membership in the top college leagues of the Northeast fluctuated that decade. Harvard, Yale and Princeton formed their own league in 1887, leaving Williams, Amherst, Dartmouth and Brown as rivals.[6]

* The obituary of Charles E. "Pop" Mason (1853-1936), a player, manager, and owner of the 1870s and 1880s, stated that he pitched for the Williams team. However, this has not yet been otherwise documented.

In 1892, *The Sporting Life* wrote, "So far as base ball goes Clarke is the greatest idol Williams students have ever had. Most of those who knew him when he was in college have graduated, but still it would be a hard matter to find a Williams student who could not tell you all Clarke's base ball history. Those who saw the way he captained a team far inferior to those against him will never forget it. His last season here both Dartmouth and Amherst had teams that were stronger than Williams in every respect, and yet simply because the Williams team had a real captain the other teams were beaten without much difficulty."[7]

In those days, major leaguers would coach college ball in the offseason. Pitcher Dan Casey of the Philadelphia Quakers went up to Williams to join Clarke in training the 1888 squad.[8] Big-league teams would also put their "colts" (prospects) up against college opponents in the exhibition season. On April 6, 1888, Artie got to face his future employer, as Williams visited the Giants at the original Polo Grounds on 110th Street. The Ephs lost 21-7, though Clarke (playing shortstop) had two triples in five at-bats.[9]

Just two days before, the Williams nine had faced a different set of Giants – the famous African-American club, the Cuban Giants. At the East State Street Grounds in Trenton, New Jersey, the Ephs trounced the team that became Colored champions of 1888, 14-5 (even though Clarke, playing catcher and short, went 0-for-5).[10]

Clarke graduated with a B.A. in 1889. He then played in Troy, New York, about 30 miles west of Williamstown. Troy had organized an amateur league the previous winter, and it proved so popular and successful that the teams began to engage pros. Artie's team, the Citizens' Club, stuck to college players. At least four of his Williams teammates joined him, and the club also hoped to attract a Yalie named Amos Alonzo Stagg – who later became a great football coach but at that time was a pitcher.[11]

Meanwhile, a storm was brewing in the majors as John Montgomery Ward of the Giants formed his Players' League. The Giants' Hall of Fame catcher, Buck Ewing – an original Brotherhood founder – signed a contract to play in the new league on November 12. When an injunction against Ward was denied in January 1890, signaling temporary victory over the reserve clause, other players jumped en masse. The rest of manager Jim Mutrie's starting 1889 lineup defected, except for outfielder Mike Tiernan, and he lost the better part of his reserves too. The team brought in a raft of college players for review.

Buck Ewing's commitment to the Players' League wavered, but he did not jump back. The Giants had only one other man who caught for them in 1889: 33-year-old Pat Murphy. The opening was there for Clarke as he was selected for the team's Southern trip that spring, and he made the most of it. Mutrie called him "the 'find' of the year" and *The Sporting Life* gushed, "His work has been perfect. His catching and throwing to bases are superb, while he seems to have a tendency to knock the cover off the ball every time he goes to the bat. He handles the deliveries of all the pitchers with great skill and will make his mark this year without any trouble."[12]

As the season approached, the National League owners huddled over their problem. In late March, a rumor came true: They decided to fold the Indianapolis and Washington franchises and disperse their players. Hoosiers owner John T. Brush – who later that year became part-owner of the Giants – signed nine of his men to New York contracts with bonuses. They included Hall of Famers Amos Rusie and Jesse Burkett. Four other new starters arrived too: shortstop Jack Glasscock, second baseman Charley Bassett, third baseman Jerry Denny, and catcher Dick Buckley.[13]

Clarke still made the big club. He was now one of the "colts" facing college squads. On April 2, playing shortstop against Yale, he "made a good showing, both at bat and in the field," going 3 for 4 with three stolen bases. He also faced his alma mater twice. On April 3, 1890, in Williamstown, Williams gave New York a scare but lost 10-8. Clarke had a hit and a stolen base, but as the catcher, he committed two of the Giants' eight errors that nearly led to defeat. On April 12, in a return match at the Polo Grounds, Artie had a double and scored a run in four at-bats as the Giants won 12-3.

As the 1890 season developed, Clarke was the primary backup behind the plate (36 games) and in right field, spelling Burkett in 30 games. In fact, he was everywhere on the diamond except for first base and pitcher, playing 16 times at third base, 15 at second base, three in left field, once in center, and once at short. Artie even served as an umpire on August 2.

That May, W.I. Harris in *The Sporting Life* wrote, "Franklin Clarke, of the New York team, is justifying my opinion that he is the greatest find, outside of the box, of the season."[14] The *New York Times* also mentioned him several times that season. For example, on July 19, the paper noted, "Rusie and Clarke were the battery in both games. They did great work." Two weeks previously, "The Hoosier Thunderbolt" and Artie performed the same ironman feat, which was not unheard of in those days (that was the first of three straight seasons where Rusie pitched over 500 innings).

Clarke suffered the usual hazards of catching. In an August game at Boston, he "had a finger broken by a foul tip so that the bone protruded through the flesh."[15] He finished the season batting a mild .225, with no home runs and 49 RBIs. He showed good speed, though, with eight triples and 44 stolen bases. The *Clipper* sketch also noted that one of his strengths was a dead ball era specialty, sacrifice hitting.

Although Buck Ewing returned to the Giants in 1891, he played only 14 games. By some accounts, there was resentment toward his activity with the Brotherhood, but the main reason was that "he had hurt his arm making a snap throw on a raw spring day."[16] Dick Buckley remained the number-one catcher and Clarke continued to back him up. His utility role diminished greatly, though, as he played in just 48 games, down from 101 the previous year. He appeared in only five games at third and two in the outfield. His hitting also fell off to .190, and he stole only five bases – possibly he was injured.

The *New York Times* continued to single Artie out for praise on occasion. On June 9, the paper wrote, "Little Clarke astonished the spectators by his clever work behind the bat." A September 10 story said, "Little Clarke handled Rusie's curves in good style." Artie was in fact on the small side at 5'8" and 155 pounds, though muscular. Also of note that year: on June 25, Clarke married Adele Forbush of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Buck Ewing returned to full-time duty in 1892. He still caught sporadically that year, but the injury to his once exceptional arm forced him to move to first base. The Giants had signed a new starting catcher, Jack Boyle. That January, the team's new manager, Patrick Powers, said, "Jack uses his head more than Buckley, is a better batsman and can play the infield most acceptably. He will more than replace Buckley." The club was also reportedly seeking to obtain another catcher, Jocko Milligan (though they did not get him until the following year).[17]

In February 1892, as the Giants prepared for spring training in Richmond, Virginia, Artie met with Powers. "He wanted to know whether the club wants him or not, but Powers could give him no definite answer."[18] It is not likely that he went south, for clearly he was not in the team's plans. The next month, *The Sporting Life* wrote, "Manager Powers is now working industriously to get an experienced catcher, and will doubtless land one before many days. He has secured in Dan Murphy one of the best young-blood catchers in the country. Arthur Clarke will not be used."[19]

To show how much Clarke's stock had dropped, Powers said, "We are dickering with one of the best catchers in the league, and only want Murphy as an emergency man."[20] Powers' target was the famous Mike "King" Kelly, who had been dallying with the idea of coming to New York. The dissipated King was near the end of the line, but he still wanted $10,000, quite a sum in those days. Kelly went to Boston, though, and the Giants settled for Jocko Fields.

Clarke spent that spring coaching, first at Williams, where "his presence has done wonders in putting life in the players."[21] He also helped at Union College in Schenectady, New York, but then Troy in the Eastern League sought his services as team captain and playing manager. *The Sporting Life* wrote, "Efforts to sign Arthur Clarke, the gentlemanly back stop who played with the New York Giants the past two seasons, are being redoubled … Clarke's record last season was only fair, but, as the Troy management says, records are a delusion and a snare; it is the belief of all that the home team will make an excellent showing under his careful guidance."

The article continued, "The news was received with pleasure by the many friends of the popular catcher, and the daily papers commented favorably on it. Clarke … appeared much pleased with the news of his assignment, and said he would work his finger nails off in an endeavor to make Troy a winner." Also, "this will probably be his [Clarke's] last year on the green diamond."[22] This was no doubt a reference to Artie's pursuit of his J.D., which started at Columbia Law School in 1890.

In the middle of May, Troy signed a little catcher named Tommy Cahill, whom the Louisville Colonels did not retain after his one major-league season in 1891. Reportedly Cahill was to come on board as captain and manager – "This probably lets Arthur Clarke out," said *The Sporting Life*.[23] Accounts from later that season, however, show that Artie held the captaincy – for example, when he was again pressed into service as an umpire on August 19 when a regular ump was taken ill. "Captain Clarke umpired fairly."[24]

The Trojans finished third in the EL with a 62-57 record. Artie appeared in 86 games, again as a catcher-infielder-outfielder. He batted .254 without a homer (his RBI total is not available) and stole 25 bases. That was in fact his last pro season; Clarke continued his law studies, but at Boston University. He also coached Williams again in the spring of 1893. Troy sent him a contract in March, and despite the previous year's indications, he was expected to sign.[25] That did not happen; Clarke retired, as thought earlier.

Clarke was admitted to the Massachusetts bar on August 8, 1893. He entered practice in Boston with a distinguished attorney named Josiah H. Benton, Jr. After the addition of another partner in 1903, the firm became known as Benton, Clarke & Beal. Their offices were in the historic Ames Building in downtown Boston, the city's first skyscraper.

In 1894, Artie and Adele had a son named Edwin, who was known by his middle name of Thurston. Three years later they had a daughter named Frances. E. Thurston Clarke became a well-known investment counselor on Wall Street; his son Thurston B. Clarke is a noted historian.

Clarke lived in the Boston suburbs of Somerville and later Brookline. In his leisure time, he enjoyed golf. He belonged to the Woodland Golf Club in Auburndale, which also had Joseph P. Kennedy as a member. He was also secretary of the Boston Art Club and a member of the Abstract Art Club.

As of 1939, Clarke was listed as president of H.L. Nason & Co., a Boston underwriter of public utility securities.[26] That year, however, his reputation suffered amid alleged financial impropriety. Josiah Benton, who had served as president of the Trustees of the Boston Central Library, died in April 1917. Benton had named Clarke executor of his estate, which had bequeathed over $3,000,000 in trust to the library to acquire scholarly books and enlarge the facility. Arthur turned over the funds – but over $100,000 worth of items in his expense account were disallowed. When he failed to appear to answer a contempt of court charge, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Two additional petitions were filed against him in Suffolk Probate Court: one concerning his actions as executor of Henry L. Nason's estate and another concerning his alleged failure to file accounting for a $35,000 trust fund since 1912.[27]

Clarke was unable to make restoration to the library but settled the claim by paying $18,210 in cash. In August 1940, the library told the City Council that it planned no additional action against him because the terms of the settlement provided for further restitution if Clarke were to come into substantial funds exceeding his living expenses.[28] It seems likely that the Great Depression hit him hard.

Clarke retired from the bar that year. He died in Brookline on November 14, 1949. He was predeceased by Adele, and his brief obituary in the *Boston Globe* contained little other information.[29] He was buried in Brookline's Walnut Hills Cemetery.

Thanks to Thurston B. Clarke for his input on the Clarke family.

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Ted Lewis
The Pitching Professor

"A superb pitcher, with great curves and fine speed, both of which he used with rare judgment."

Ted Lewis was not just the finest ballplayer Williams ever produced – like Sir Thomas More, he was a man for all seasons. Educator, elocutionist, natural leader – Lewis embodied an array of talents but always retained a winning humility.

Horatio Alger could not have conjured up a life story like this, which has the power to make the most hardened cynic believe in ideals again. Edward Morgan Lewis was born on Christmas Day, 1872, in Machynlleth, Wales. His parents were John C. Lewis and Jane (Davies) L. Lewis. When the boy was eight years old, his family moved to Utica, New York, where they lived on the banks of the Erie Canal. Little Ted earned his first quarter delivering groceries for the local corner store (though he was docked if he broke a ketchup bottle) and scouted out other odd jobs, supplementing the immigrants' straitened budget.

It is an article of faith that Welshmen have wonderful voices and a love of poetry, and the Lewis family reinforced this tradition. The great American poet Robert Frost was a crony of Ted Lewis for 20 years – even into their sixties, they played "singles" baseball or softball in the back yard whenever they got together. Frost read from Tennyson and Whitman at his friend's memorial tribute, and his address showed the profound influence of culture on character:

> "He told me once – I was afraid that the story might not be left for me to tell – that he began his interest in poetry as he might have begun his interest in baseball – with the idea of victory – the 'Will to Win.'
>
> "He was at an Eisteddfod in Utica, an American-Welsh Eisteddfod, where the contest was in poetry, and a bard had been brought in from Wales to give judgment and to pick the winner; and the bard, after

> announcing the winner and making the compliments which judges make, said he wished the unknown victor would rise and make himself known and let himself be seen. (I believe the poems were read anonymously.) The little 'Ted' Lewis sitting there beside his father looked up and saw his father rise as the victor. So poetry to him was prowess from that time on, just as baseball was prowess, as running was prowess. And it was our common ground."

Lewis worked as a bundle boy in a department store and as a surveyor's helper, studying borrowed textbooks by lamplight. With the $50 in personal savings he managed to put aside, the youth entered Marietta College in Ohio, which gave him the opportunity to meet his tuition payments by working as a letter carrier, hotel clerk, and janitor.

In the fall of 1893, sophomore Ted Lewis transferred to Williams. He made a tremendous impression on his classmates, becoming president of the elite Gargoyle Society and winning the class cup in a walkover, receiving 32 votes while no one else got more than four. Ted's accomplishments on the mound were certainly a part of his status. In 1895, he won all eight games in the Triangular League (which then consisted of Williams, Amherst, and Dartmouth rather than Wesleyan), and he followed up with six more in his senior year.

Baseball was the most popular sport at the college in those days, and the *Williams Weekly* was full of manly exhortations to give full voice while cheering. The souvenir scorecard from the 1896 Commencement Game against Amherst is another charming curio, with Captain Ted's photo on the front cover and official yells (Osky-wow-wow, Skimmy-wow-wow, Jimmy-wow-wow, W–O–W) on the back.

Lewis faced some most intriguing opponents besides Yale and Harvard. These included the original black pro team, the Cuban Giants, whose trip to the Purple Valley bears further investigation. Another was Louis Sockalexis, then the star center fielder for Holy Cross. A year before his briefly spectacular run with Cleveland, the Penobscot Indian "played a phenomenal game, catching and batting balls, whenever and wherever he pleased."

During his college days, Ted also won the heart of hometown girl Margaret Hallie Williams with a move that would have left Sir Walter Raleigh in the dust. At a local game in Richfield Springs, New York, Ted had promised his friend that he would meet her at the grounds and usher her in. But Margaret arrived a little late, while Ted was facing the first batter. Yet when he spied his wife-to-be, he calmly dropped the ball, walked off the hill (making the captain think Lewis had gone "bughouse") and saw to his escort duties. The gallant then returned to a huge hand from the crowd.

Seeking money to further his studies, the graduate commenced his major-league career with the Boston Beaneaters. Frank Selee's club was the class of the National League in the 1890s, winning five pennants behind numerous Hall of Famers and near-greats. Lewis was a key part of the last two titles, especially in 1898, when he led the league in winning percentage at 26-8. He also appeared in three games in the 1897 Temple Cup series, winning one, losing one, and allowing Boston to claw back from an early blowout into a near win with a strong effort in long relief. In 1904, *Boston Globe* sportswriter and old-time player Tim Murnane remembered him as "a superb pitcher, with great curves and fine speed, both of which he used with rare judgment. He was a fine batsman for a pitcher and was a willing worker for his club."

The "good guy" Beaneaters had an ongoing battle with John McGraw's Baltimore Orioles, notorious for their ruffian tactics. "Parson" Lewis prefigured the fictional Yalie Galahad, Frank Merriwell, and McGraw's Mr. Clean with the Giants, Christy Mathewson. A leading example of his devotion to fair play came on August 24, 1901, when he helped rescue umpire Joe Cantillon from a mob of Boston fans who stormed the field. Tim Murnane stated, "It is doubtful if good, clean sport ever had a more earnest and successful practitioner then 'Ted' Lewis." Echoing these sentiments, a close friend from Williams named Damon Hall said:

"One might have supposed in those earlier days of professional baseball that a college graduate who did not drink, who refused to play Sunday ball, who said his prayers and read his Bible daily, who even asked his teammates to go to prayer meetings with him, would have been esteemed somewhat of a prig by the other members of the squad. Instead, they took him to their hearts."

Indeed, Ted had seriously considered entering the ministry but decided he could reach more young people through the classroom. While with Boston, he found time to coach the Harvard nine. After jumping to the new American League in 1901 and playing with the very first Red Sox team (then known as the Americans, among other early names), Lewis retired from baseball to devote his full energies to teaching. His lifetime record was 94-64, with an ERA of 3.53 and a batting average of .223.

The Professor had earned his masters from Williams in 1899, and from 1901 to 1903 he taught elocution at Columbia. His alma mater then lured him back to teach oratory for eight years, during which he also lectured at the Yale Divinity School. In 1910, the Welsh community of Berkshire County formed a society, acclaiming Lewis as president. For many years he would return to North Adams on St. David's Day, March 1, to address his leek-waving brethren. (The only other major leaguer born in Wales was Jimmy Austin, who was one of Lawrence Ritter's subjects in *The Glory of Their Times*.)

Also in 1910, Lewis ran for Congress as a Democrat in a staunch Republican district, and missed pulling off an upset by just 736 votes. He said, "It may be that I am starting in on this campaign in the ninth inning with the score 9 to 0 against me. But if the odds are against me I'll play the game out, for you never can tell what a score you may make in the ninth."

The next year, however, Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) in Amherst beckoned. Lewis soon proved how capable an administrator he was, being pressed into service as acting president in 1913-14 (when he made another unsuccessful bid for Congress, supported by pioneering muckraker Ray Stannard Baker). The dean of languages and literature again stepped into the breach in 1918-19 and 1924, finally accepting the position officially in 1926. It was through his efforts that the modest "Aggie" school was transformed into today's UMass. He felt uncomfortable with the political pressure there, however; there was an ongoing power struggle with the Massachusetts state authorities over funding and the authority of the Board of Trustees. Thus he moved to the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in 1927. But before he left, MAC surprised the outgoing "Prexy" by conferring upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Under the aegis of President Lewis, UNH established a graduate school and broadened its infrastructure considerably, building the first women's dorm. In Durham, Lewis received many of his famous friends, including Robert Frost. He had first met the then-unknown poet, a fellow MAC professor, in 1916 – and the Eisteddfod veteran delivered the first public reading of Frost's verse. Forty years later, by then a grand American institution, Frost wrote about the 1956 All-Star Game for *Sports Illustrated*, also reminiscing about his pitching lessons from Lewis.

The UNH archives also show how Lewis knew and corresponded with U.S. Presidents William Howard Taft (then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), Calvin Coolidge (as Vice President), Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. There are letters from other well-known individuals in this special collection, including another Chief Justice, Charles Evans Hughes; polar explorer Richard Byrd; heavyweight boxing champ Gene Tunney; and Philadelphia A's manager Connie Mack.

Ted Lewis passed away at midnight on May 23, 1936, at the age of 63. His health had begun to fail about two years before, but even though the beloved "Prexy" was suffering greatly from liver cancer, he summoned up his old athletic reserves to climb the stairs to his office. In February he underwent an operation, and he rallied enough to make an appearance at the Opening Day ballgame versus Bates – pitched and won by future major-leaguer Bill Weir. The students again took heart, but Lewis relapsed shortly thereafter. He was survived by his

widow Margaret; his two sons, Edward W. Lewis and John B. Lewis; and his daughter, Gwendolyn (Mrs. Samuel W. Hoitt).

Lewis was laid to rest in the Durham Community Cemetery on May 26, with former Boston teammate Fred Tenney serving as one of the pallbearers. In a memorial tribute before the entire student body and faculty that afternoon, Robert Frost read his friend's two favorite poems, Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Walt Whitman's "On the Beach at Night."

UNH sports teams still play today at the Lewis Fields, but this man's most fitting memorial might be the measured question he always posed to his colleagues: "Well … what can we do to better the situation?"

Quotes on Ted Lewis the Ballplayer

Compiled by UNH alumnus Rich Eldred
for his Lewis sketch in *Nineteenth Century Stars* (SABR 1988)
"Teddy Lewis will pitch good ball for the Boston Americans no matter how many others may croak."

— Wilbert Robinson

"When at concert pitch there are few better than Lewis."

— Tim Murnane, *The Boston Globe*

"Lewis was steady as a minister should be … Chicago's heaviest hitters went down before his speedy deliveries like corn stalks before a gale."

— Jake Morse, *The Boston Herald*

"Parson Lewis is closing his career in a blaze of glory."

— *The Boston Globe* after Lewis beat Nixey Callahan with a 2-hitter in his final game

Photo Credits

With Boston Beaneaters: Courtesy of Out of the Park Developments
(www.ootpdevelopments.com)
With MAC: Williams College Archives and Special Collections

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Henry Clarke
Two Splendid Summer Vacations

"Henry Clarke, whom Cleveland tried and alleged to find wanting, pitched the visitors off their feet."

The son of a successful Nebraska merchant, Henry Clarke was a well-educated young man who was athletic enough to play a little major-league baseball before the turn of the twentieth century. While on summer break from college and law school, he pitched six games and played three more in the outfield for the Cleveland Spiders (1897) and Chicago Orphans (1898). Clarke then returned to the Cornhusker State, where he was a prominent attorney, public servant, and businessman.

Henry Tefft Clarke Jr. was born in Bellevue, Nebraska. Sources differ as to his birthdate. The Clarke family genealogy says August 4, 1874, as seen in the 1902 book *The "Clarke" Families of Rhode Island*. His World War I draft registration lists August 4, 1875, as does *Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940*. Finally, his death certificate presents August 28, 1875. This last, which may have been a clerical error, is also the date currently published in baseball encyclopedias. But the 1880 census showed Henry to be four years old, which supports the Nebraska book and draft registration, giving credence overall to August 4,1875.

Clarke's father made a singular contribution to the development of Nebraska. Henry Sr., a native of Greenwich, New York, came to Bellevue in 1855 at the age of 21. This town, formerly a fur-trading post on the Missouri River, became the state's first permanent non-Native American settlement. Clarke Sr. foresaw the need for railroads. A classic self-made man, he then helped bring commerce and civilization to the frontier in numerous ways.

Henry Sr. was a steamboat agent, railroad surveyor, and builder of railways, roads, and bridges. He also operated a Pony Express that ran to the Black Hills of South Dakota. He was a general merchant with a specialty in hardware and mining supplies, later founding a drug company. Good relations with the Army – then fighting the Indians – helped his business greatly. Clarke *père* also became a farmer and rancher after receiving state land grants for his railroad efforts. He branched out into real estate and county investment securities.

In addition, Henry Clarke Sr. established post offices in the mining towns he served, founded the short-lived *Platte Valley Times* newspaper, helped incorporate the first electric utility in the region, and served in the territorial House of Representatives before Nebraska attained statehood in 1867. He built Bellevue's first schoolhouse and founded Bellevue College in 1882.

Amid all these accomplishments, he raised a large family. After Henry and Martha Fielding Clarke were married in September 1858, they had seven sons (Harry, John, Millard, William, Charles, and Maurice were the other boys) and a daughter named Gertrude. Henry was the second-youngest child, born when Martha was in her early forties.

As a small boy, Henry Jr. attended the district school in Bellevue. Starting in 1882, he went to the public schools in Omaha, just 12 miles north of Bellevue.[1] Although other information is lacking on his youth, baseball had taken hold in Nebraska starting in the late 1860s. Professional ball came to Omaha as early as 1879. After a brief second attempt in 1885, it returned from 1887 through 1892 – likely making an impression on young Henry, who graduated as his class valedictorian from Omaha High School in 1892.[2]

Henry traveled east to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. It was rather unusual in those days to go to college so far from home, but the Clarkes were clearly eager to provide their children with a top-flight education. Sister Gertrude, who was eight years older, studied under private tutors, went to the Sorbonne, and traveled in Europe and South America. She later became a noted benefactor of the Library of Congress – especially in the field of music, donating five Stradivarius violins.

Henry Clarke attended Williams from 1892 to 1894. He was a member of the Sigma Phi fraternity and the baseball team. In June 1893, he made his debut against Yale Law School. The *New York Times* wrote, "Williams had a new pitcher, Clarke '96, during the first half of the game. He did creditably but showed lack of experience."[3] Also on the pitching staff with him was Ted Lewis, the finest major-leaguer ever to play for the Ephmen, and later a noted educator (among his many talents). Though Lewis was an unquestioned star, Clarke developed. In 1897, *The Illustrated American* wrote, "He will be remembered by Eastern college men for good work in the box in his sophomore year. . .when he gave Lewis a close rub for the position of Varsity pitcher."[4]

Clarke transferred to the University of Chicago, which had been founded only a few years before, in 1890, by John D. Rockefeller. It is possible that Henry may have wished to be closer to home; in addition, his closest sibling Maurice was there. Henry was a member of the first full four-year class. He was very active on campus – the yearbooks featured him often in text and photos. Among other things, he played on the football team and was the president of the glee club. The pitcher also became captain of the baseball team, coached by Amos Alonzo Stagg. Though Stagg is far better known as a great American football innovator, he was a pitcher of note at Yale and led the Maroons on the diamond for their first 20 years too.

Clarke earned a Bachelor of Philosophy Degree in 1896 and followed that up with a Graduate in Pharmacy degree the next year. He also did post-graduate work in political science and public law.[5] The baseball team went 15-5, 19-11, and 17-4 with him as a member.

On May 20, 1897, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that "the clever University of Chicago twirler" had won a tryout with the Boston Beaneaters. The article in its entirety is worth reproducing. But the essence is that manager Frank Selee was impressed enough with the young hurler's repertoire – "good speed, an excellent change of pace, combined with curves that kept the Boston men guessing" – to state that he would join the club after the school year ended in June.[6] Selee liked college players. It is both tempting and reasonable to believe that old Williams teammate Ted Lewis, who had joined Boston the previous year, made his voice heard.

Yet Henry wound up not with the pennant-winning Beaneaters that June but the Cleveland Spiders. *Sporting Life* reported how Clarke made a deal with Cleveland's player-manager, Patsy Tebeau. "This lad was first tried in practice by Selee, and has since been dickering with Boston and Louisville. Tebeau came to town and Clarke, who seems anxious to play ball, hunted him up, Patsy finally agreeing to give him a chance, and to sign him on trust. Clarke's nerve probably dazed Patsy, for he refused to accept less than $300 a month, and got it."[7]

The negotiations got a little tangled, though. "A notice has been received from [Louisville] President [Harry] Pulliam saying Clark [*sic*] has accepted his offer of $300 a month, and cannot therefore sign with Cleveland. Clark says the telegram of acceptance was sent Mr. Pulliam by his (Clark) brother, and that he prefers to be an Indian."[8] It is interesting to note that this nickname for the Cleveland franchise was already gaining currency.

Cleveland needed pitching. The number-two starter after Young, Nig Cuppy, had fallen prey to overwork after averaging 329 innings during his first five seasons. Clarke became the youngest man on a squad that included Cy Young and another Hall of Famer, Bobby Wallace – as well as Louis Sockalexis, the

Penobscot Indian who enjoyed a briefly spectacular run that summer.

When he made his debut on June 26, Henry became only the second Nebraskan (after Charlie Abbey) to play in the majors. He faced the Chicago Colts in a road game at the West Side Grounds, the park that preceded Wrigley Field. Clarke lost 9-3, as he gave up a two-run homer to Bill Lange in the third inning and a solo shot to Bill Everitt in the fifth. *The Sporting News* stated, "Henry Clark [*sic*], the star twirler of the University of Chicago team, was given a trial by the Indians today. He pitched a creditable game."[9] *Sporting Life* added, "With ordinary support, he would have made a good showing. He was steady, had good control, was fast, and held the Colts down to eight hits."[10]

Three days later, he dropped another 9-3 decision to Pittsburgh. The comment in *The Sporting News* read, "Cleveland lost to-day's game in the fourth inning, when its new college pitcher, Clark [*sic*], was batted freely."[11] Then on July 5, the Pirates beat him again, 6-1, in the second game of a doubleheader.

On July 12, Henry came on in relief of Cy Young in a game that Boston was already winning. The final was 8-2, as Hall of Famer Jimmy Collins hit a two-run homer off Clarke in the fifth inning that Sockalexis misplayed – "miserable work," *The Sporting News* sniffed.[12] Just eight days before, the right fielder had suffered his notorious leg injury in a drunken jump from the second floor of a brothel. Ted Lewis did not pitch that day, but the Williams comrades quite likely exchanged greetings at Cleveland's League Park.

In July, Patsy Tebeau said that behind his veteran pitchers, the team had "a coming star like Henry Clarke to fall back upon when something easy comes along."[13] Clarke did not take the mound again until August 2, which would be his last appearance of the year. At Louisville's Eclipse Park, he lost a "dull and slowly played" 5-3 game to the Colonels; the big blow was a two-run homer by General Stafford. For the season, the right-hander pitched in five games, completing three of his four losing starts. His ERA was a shaky 6.16, as he allowed 32 hits, walked 12 men, and hit three more while striking out only three in 30 2/3 innings pitched.

In addition, Clarke appeared in two games in right field. He committed two errors both there and on the mound, so his fielding percentage was unsightly. However, Henry handled the bat well, with seven singles in 25 at-bats (.280) and three RBIs. After his first start, *Sporting Life* wrote, "At the bat he drove Tebeau into ecstasies. Two smashing hits through the outfield, a hard fly to short and a terrific liner which Bill Lange hauled down before it could develop into a clean home run – he can kill the leather."[14]

In late August, *Sporting Life* reported, "Henry Clarke, the Chicago College pitcher, recently released by Cleveland, has decided not to play next year, but will devote himself entirely to college study."[15] That fall, he entered the University of Michigan to study law. During the 1898 season, he was an assistant to the head baseball coach, Charles Watkins. Over the winter of 1897-98, the *Chicago Tribune* twice singled him out. "Chicago will be weakened in its pitching force by the loss of Henry Clarke, who was easily the star of the Western college diamond last season."[16] "The largest element in the success of the institution by the Midway was the phenomenal pitching of Henry Clarke. If victory can be accredited to any one man that man was Clarke last year."[17]

In the summer of 1898, he got another major-league trial with the Chicago Orphans (who became known as the Cubs in 1903). Another Hall of Famer, Clark Griffith, spearheaded the Chicago pitching staff. But "The Old Fox" injured his back against Boston on June 23, and was hobbled enough not to start for two weeks. Matt Kilroy, another starter, had an injured leg. Strapped for arms, as the Spiders were the year before, Chicago called for reinforcements. Said the *Chicago Tribune* on July 1:

"Manager [Tom] Burns yesterday had a long talk with Henry Clarke, the University of Chicago pitcher whom Cleveland gave a short trial last season. Clarke is to report for practice and go through the paces. . .If he proves satisfactory he will get a trial."[18]

Henry played one game in center field and turned in one respectable pitching effort, a complete-game 5-4 victory on July 5 at home over his old mates the Spiders. He walked five, hit a batter, and struck out just one while scattering eight hits. But only two of the runs he allowed were earned. In its terse write-up, *The Sporting News* said, "Cleveland could not hit Clark [*sic*] at the right time, while the

Orphans got their hits in bunches and stole bases at will."[19] The *Tribune* added, "It was a case of the stone which the builders rejected becoming the head of the corner, for Henry Clarke. . . whom Cleveland tried and alleged to find wanting, pitched the visitors off their feet and won in spite of funereal support by the broken team behind him."[20] Henry's fielders committed six errors yet turned three key double plays on his behalf.

So Clarke's major-league career ended on a positive note. His career won-lost record: 1-4, with an ERA of 5.22. Since he went 1-for-4 in his start, his total batting average was .276.

Once the disabled pitchers returned, Chicago did not retain Clarke. Near the end of July, *Sporting Life* wrote, "Burns didn't sign Henry Clarke because he thought he had pitchers to burn, but a winning pitcher ought not to be overlooked even with a dozen others on the staff. It goes without saying that a young pitcher who, pitching his first game at the head of a crippled club, can down Cleveland, as Clarke did, is of more than ordinary quality."[21]

Henry more likely still had his eye on academics, though. He returned to Michigan, where he coached the freshman football team.[22] He earned his LLB degree in 1899, while also serving as the interim head baseball coach that year. In February 1899, *The Michigan Alumnus* wrote: "Next to the presence of a lot of new players the question of having a good all round coach is important. There will be no doubt on that score this year as the management has hired Henry Clarke, the famous ex-Chicago pitcher, who for the past two years has been a student in the law department here and was last year assistant coach of the baseball team. Clarke has the entire confidence both of the players and the student body. He brings to the duties of his advanced position a knowledge of the game in all its departments, a long schooling on the best college teams, and a valuable experience in National League company. His aid to the battery candidates will be invaluable and as he was regarded as Chicago's crack batsman for two years his development of Michigan's comparatively weak stick work will be watched with interest."[23]

The Wolverines posted an overall record of 14-5, including 5-2 in conference play, dethroning Chicago as conference champion. During the 1899 season, Clarke also got into a few games. In April, he mopped up in a blowout loss to a professional team, Milwaukee of the Western League.[24] In May, he appeared in two matches against the Hamilton Club of Chicago.[25]

Rich Adler, author of *Baseball at the University of Michigan*, commented in 2007 on Henry's amateur standing: "The question of amateur/professional status at that time was rather nebulous. The University of Michigan was stricter than most, but even here it was not unusual for a pro or semi-pro player to return to school as a 'scholar/athlete.' One reason the Western Conference, the precursor to the Big Ten, was formed [in 1896] was to establish specific rules of eligibility. In Clarke's case, there was no conflict. He had already completed his eligibility when he signed with Cleveland."

Clarke was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1899 and the Nebraska bar in 1900, where he formed a law partnership in Omaha with Frank Crawford. He also served as a representative in the Nebraska legislature in 1905. In 1907, he sponsored the state's first child labor law, as well as a terminal tax law that placed railroad taxation on a fair basis.

In 1907, Henry left Crawford & Clarke to become a Nebraska railway commissioner, serving in this capacity through 1917. In fact, Clarke was one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit against an Illinois railroad that sought to charge more for its services in Nebraska than the rates fixed under state law. That case wound up going to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1908, where the defendant's petition for removal to Circuit Court was dismissed. Henry then joined the Omaha Grain Exchange, where he was attorney and traffic manager. From 1921 on, he managed his own affairs.

Henry Clarke married Grace Louise Allen on September 25, 1901. Grace was born in Central City, Colorado, in 1873. She was educated in Omaha and at the Lasell Female Seminary in Auburndale, Massachusetts, from which she graduated in 1895. The couple may have met while Clarke was at Williams. In 1898, she was named the fourth queen of Ak-Sar-Ben (Nebraska spelled backwards), an Omaha booster society. The family legend is that being queen of Ak-Sar-Ben meant being queen of the state fair – which appears true, since the group was founded to prevent Omaha from losing the fair to Lincoln.

Grace was a homemaker who also did various good works, including Community Chest, welfare programs, and (during World War I) women's war activities. She was a member of the Colonial Dames of America too. The Clarkes raised three sons: Allen Gordon, William Cleaveland, and Henry Tefft III.

Henry's grandson, A. Gordon Clarke Jr., contributes memories of the couple. "I first met [Grace] as a little boy around 1935 when we visited Omaha, where they lived at 3903 Dewey Avenue. Her mother was living or visiting with them, a spare, Victorian lady, dressed in black with a black choker around her neck.

"Sometime in the mid-1930s, Henry and Grace built a summer camp on Lake Koronis, outside of Paynesville, Minnesota. My family was then living in Winnetka, near Chicago, and we visited for several summers, the last being 1941. Henry was hard of hearing and a lover of classical music, the records for which he took with him from Omaha. He had speakers piped from the camp to a terrace overlooking the lake. After Sunday dinner, he would repair to the terrace with the volume turned way up to enjoy a mini-concert. Fishermen from all over anchored below to enjoy the music.

"I recall that, for a year or two, he had a Chesapeake Bay retriever named Jack who rode on the running board of the car when he was wet." Throughout his life, Henry Clarke enjoyed hunting and fishing, as well as travel.

"Gracie was a lovely woman, even in later life," notes Gordon Clarke. "I recall that she would sometimes drive off to town to attend a camp or revival meeting, much to the amusement of Henry, who seemed to dote on her every move."

Grace Allen Clarke passed away at the beginning of 1942. Widower Henry T. Clarke, Jr. survived her for another eight years. For roughly the last year of his life (perhaps because of Alzheimer's), he resided at the Emory John Brady Hospital in Colorado Springs, Colorado. "Brady's" was a spa-like psychiatric facility known widely for its caring family approach. Henry succumbed to heart disease on March 28, 1950 at the age of 74. Three days later, he was laid to rest in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Omaha, next to his beloved wife.

Thanks to the following descendants of Henry Clarke for their contributions to this biography: A. Gordon Clarke, Jr. '51 (grandson), and John and Charles Remmers (great-grandsons). Thanks also to SABR member Rich Adler; Terry Price, Executive Director & Treasurer, The Central High School Foundation, Omaha, Nebraska; Bill Thomas, Special Collections Staff, Pikes Peak Library District, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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Photo Credit

Nebraskans, 1854-1904 (*The Omaha Bee*, 1904)

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Abbott P. "Jack" Mills
Lajoie's Legs

"Not only the varsity baseball captain but also a high-grade scholar."

Nearly all of the nine Eph major-leaguers had brief baseball careers; these scholar-athletes emphasized academics over sports. The five men who became attorneys – Artie Clarke, Henry Clarke, George Davis, Mark Filley, and Abbott P. "Jack" Mills – all juggled law school and pro ball. Mills played in 13 games for the 1911 Cleveland Naps, as they were then known for their star player, Napoleon Lajoie. His position was third base, but he pinch-ran several times for the Hall of Famer and so was dubbed "Lajoie's Legs." Another teammate in Cleveland was Shoeless Joe Jackson, who later became infamous as one of the 1919 Black Sox. Mills played part of the 1912 season in the minors after his first year at Harvard Law. He then focused on his profession, becoming a prominent Washington lawyer for several decades. Mills and his old college opponent Larry McClure just might be the only former major-leaguers who argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Abbott Paige Mills was born on October 23, 1889 in South Williamstown, Massachusetts (just a few miles from where he later went to college). He was the third and last child of Charles A. and Clara Paige Mills. His older brother, Charles W. Mills, became a doctor who gained national renown for his efforts in understanding tuberculosis. He also had a sister named Ruth. After graduating from Smith College, she established Miss Mills' School for Girls in Pittsfield, the seat of Berkshire County. This school enjoyed years of popularity before it ceased to exist in 1930.[1]

Ruth was following a family tradition. Grandfather Benjamin F. Mills was the founder and proprietor of Greylock Institute, which for many years was one of the leading boys' preparatory schools in New England. The school, which admitted its first pupils in 1842, was based in South Williamstown. It also operated a farm, which sold its products locally and was available to the students for exercise and recreation. In 1878, Charles A. Mills, who had been a teacher at Greylock for several years, took charge of the farm.[2] Although the Institute graduated its last class in 1888, the previous year a group including Charles established a utility called the Greylock Institute Water Company, which supplied South Williamstown.[3]

From 1903 through 1907, Mills attended Pittsfield High School. He then went to Williams, where his course of studies included oratory, Greek culture, and English. Mills played varsity baseball for the Ephmen all four years. Over three decades later, he could still recall the rivalry with Amherst, writing to the *Williams Record* to mention the two no-hitters that Larry McClure of the Lord Jeffs pitched against Williams in 1909 and 1910.[4] (McClure made one brief appearance in left field for the New York Highlanders in July 1910.)

During the summer of 1910, Mills and many other college men also played ball in Richfield Springs, New York, a resort town about 100 miles west of Williamstown – and quite close to Cooperstown, home of the Baseball Hall of

Fame. In the 1890s, baseball became a summer attraction for the many tourists who were taking the waters at the spa. Ted Lewis, the only prominent major-leaguer Williams ever produced, played there at that time.

In August 1910, the *Richfield Springs Daily* described "a vaudeville show for the benefit of the baseball boys ... Abbot [*sic*] Paige Mills, the banjo soloist, will be one of the stars in the show. Mr. Mills has been the leader of the Williams College Banjo Club for the last two years and has been re-elected to the leadership for the coming year."[5] The Banjo Club was just one of many activities Mills pursued in college; another was the debate team. His classmates held him in high esteem – he was sophomore class president and a member of the elite Gargoyle Society. In December 1910, he was elected Class Day President. The *Boston Globe* wrote, "The highest electoral honor in the power of a senior class to bestow on one of its members is given to Abbott P. Mills of Pittsfield." A few days later, the *Globe* added, "The Williams College seniors selected not only the varsity baseball captain but also a high-grade scholar." [6]

Indeed, in June 1910, his teammates had unanimously elected Mills captain for his senior season, 1911.[7] He wore the mantle well, as he showed when he dramatically snatched a victory from Dartmouth at Weston Field in Williamstown on May 13. George Davis, who later pitched for the New York Highlanders and Boston Braves, had a bad day, and the Ephmen trailed, 5-1, in the eighth inning. They chipped away for two runs but were still down by two going into the bottom of the ninth. With two out and a man on first, Paul Otis – who played four games for the Highlanders in 1912 – singled. Mills then hit a game-ending three-run homer, his fourth hit in five at-bats that day. "As Captain Mills came over the home plate he was met by three hundred students, who perched him on their backs and paraded him about the field, shouting themselves hoarse in their great exultation."[8]

The Mills papers (now held at the Williams College Archives) show that several clubs were interested in him. In late June, though – after graduating Phi Beta Kappa – the third baseman joined Cleveland. *Sporting Life* wrote, "Of course, it does not necessarily follow that Mills will show sufficient class to beat [Terry] Turner out of his job, but it does mean that Mills will be given every chance to show his ability at the three-quarter station and if he does show class, what then?"[9]

The rookie made his debut on July 1 at Cleveland's League Park against the Chicago White Sox. He entered as a substitute for Bill Lindsay, a 30-year-old infielder from North Carolina who himself played only 19 games in the majors with Cleveland that year. On July 3, the Naps beat the St. Louis Browns, 4-3 in 10 innings. The *New York Times* wrote, "Mills, Captain of the Williams College team, who was given a trial at third base, made good, fielding brilliantly and making two hits, batting in Cleveland's first run."[10]

The lefty swinger went 5-for-17 (all singles) in 19 plate appearances (he also walked and was hit by a pitch). He appeared in the field in seven of his 13 games; as noted, one of his roles as a reserve was pinch runner. As *Sporting Life* wrote, "Lajoie, owing to his illness and lame back, carries with him an official pair of legs. These legs go by the name of Mills, and figure frequently in the box scores as running for the big Frenchman."[11]

In the fall of 1911, Mills went to law school – which clearly took priority over baseball. As *Sporting Life* reported in March 1912, "Roger [*sic*] Mills, former Williams College infielder, now attending Harvard, will join Toledo June 25."[12] He actually made it there earlier, playing third base on June 21. Manager Topsy Hartsel also tried him at first base. After a couple of months, though, Mills went to the Class A Southern Association. *Sporting Life* noted, "The college boy, who has been warming the Hen bench since June, has been sent to New Orleans, where he is expected to develop into quite a ballplayer, as he has the makin's."[13] In 22 games with the Pelicans, he went 15-for-70 (.214).

Mills returned to Harvard Law, winning the Samuel Phillips Prescott Fay scholarship in January 1913.[14] That June, *Sporting Life* reported that New Orleans had sold him to Waterbury in the Eastern Association. He was expected to report around June 28.[15] It does not appear, though, that he ever played for the Contenders. Instead, Mills finished law school in 1914. He remained an academic standout, becoming associate editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. From 1914 to 1917, he worked for the firm of Hurlburt, Jones, Cabot & Hall in Boston. During World War I, he served from 1917 to 1919 in the U.S. Army. He was part of the 304th Infantry, stationed in France, and earned the rank of captain.

After returning from the war, Mills worked in Washington, D.C., in 1920 as a member of the War Department Claims Board. He decided to stay in Washington, entering private practice in administrative and general law. He worked in the nation's capital for the rest of his life, living in the D.C. suburb of Chevy Chase, Maryland. In 1936, Mills established the firm of Underwood, Mills and Kilpatrick. In 1953, he helped to establish the firm of Mills, Partridge and Harding. Finally, from 1959 to 1969, he worked for the firm of Mills, Harding and Nairn. He officially retired from the practice of law in 1969.

On October 22, 1924, Mills married Augustina David Carr of Charlottesville, Virginia. They had three daughters: Benair (born 1925), Clara (born 1930), and Virginia (born 1935). In 1944, influenced by his youngest daughter, Mills took up a new sporting pursuit: figure skating. He eventually became proficient enough to win the "Veteran's Dance" competition at Lake Placid, New York. From 1953 to 1956, he served as second Vice President and Eastern Chairman of the U.S. Figure Skating Association (USFSA). After that, until 1959, he was the USFSA's Finance Chairman.

His alma mater also remained an important part of Mills's life. He remained aware of happenings at Williams through his service as Alumni Fund Chairman (1935-36), Trustee (1937-39), and President of the Society of Alumni (1939-40). Mills continued to serve his nation as well; in 1941, he worked for the U.S. War Department Amortization Board.

Abbott P. Mills died on June 4, 1973, in the Washington Hospital Center at the age of 83. The previous Sunday, he had suffered severe burns.[16] Mills was survived by Augustina and his three daughters. His remains were cremated.

In 1993, Mills's daughter, Benair Titus, donated her father's papers to Williams (she followed with additional materials in 2005). They document his career in college and pro baseball with programs, clippings, photos, and more. They also show his continued interest in the game over several decades, including correspondence regarding his service on the Williams All-Time teams. This man never lost his passion for baseball.

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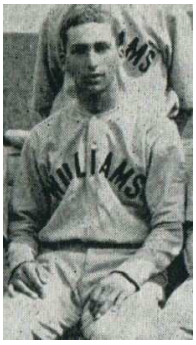
Paul "Bill" Otis
Headlines after 77 Years



**"I graduated from Williams,
and went right to the big leagues."**

Paul Franklin Otis appeared in a mere four games for the New York Highlanders in 1912 – but more than three-quarters of a century later, he made national news as the oldest living major leaguer. When he turned 100 on Christmas Eve, 1989, Otis became just the third centenarian among former big-leaguers.[1] One of the well-wishers who telephoned as he reached the century mark was the Commissioner of Baseball, Fay Vincent '60.[2] Another famous Williams alum, Yankees owner George Steinbrenner '52, sent a telegram.[3]

Not bad for a man who went just 1-for-17 (.059) with three walks in the majors – and whose nickname was something of a misnomer. When interviewed for his 100th birthday, Otis said, "I don't know why they called me Bill. I had a brother, Bill. Maybe they thought I was 'Wild Bill' Donovan."[4] He also said right around the same time, however, that he acquired the nickname at Williams.[5]

Otis was born in Scituate, Massachusetts, on the seacoast midway between Boston and Plymouth. His family's name had been prominent in the town since the 1660s. Paul was the third of four sons born to George and Carrie Otis. His older brothers George and Miller arrived four and two years before, and his younger brother Edwin came two years later. The 1900 census listed the elder George Otis's occupation as provision dealer. Carrie came from Maine.

When Otis went to Williams, he was a scholar-athlete in the school's tradition of liberal arts. Among other things, he was elected assistant manager of the *Williams Literary Monthly*, having won a competition for the place.[6] However, he joined the baseball team at its zenith in terms of producing major-league players. Infielder Jack Mills, Class of 1911, played 13 games for the Cleveland Naps in the two months after he graduated. Pitcher George "Iron" Davis, Class of 1913, made his debut with the Highlanders 12 days after Otis. For a couple of weeks or so, they were teammates in New York. Another pitcher, Alex Burr, joined the Highlanders in 1914. He played one inning in center field that April.

So there, in a span of four years, were four of the nine Ephs who made The Show. One important reason was trainer Charles "Doc" Barrett (*see separate chapter*). Another was Andy Coakley, a former major-league pitcher who coached the Williams nine from 1911 through 1913. Coakley, who would later coach Lou Gehrig at Columbia, played his last two games in the majors for the Highlanders in June 1911.

Otis attracted the Highlanders' attention during a strong senior season. In 1989, he recalled, "I hit over .400 and had a triple and home run one day against Harvard, and they approached me. I was 22 and I was flattered." He added, "We made a deal that I would be paid $350 a month. I graduated from Williams, and went right to the big leagues. Made my debut as a left fielder on July 4, 1912."[7]

Actually, the box score shows that Otis played center field and batted second that day, and the next two – which accounted for his entire big-league game experience. Independence Day 1912 featured a doubleheader at Griffith Stadium in Washington. The next day, the Senators came up to the Polo Grounds in New

York. The *New York Times* noted, "Otis, who comes from Williams College, made a rather difficult catch which saved trouble in the sixth inning." However, the Highlanders lost in 16 innings.

Otis also got his only hit in the majors on July 5. It came off Hall of Famer Walter Johnson, who had entered the game in relief in the fourth inning and pitched the last 12 2/3 frames for the Senators. "I remember it very distinctly," said Otis in 1989. "It was a drive over second base, a clean single to center field. Johnson could throw the ball right by you, he was so fast. But maybe he threw me an easy one, I don't know." Although Paul's memory was a little fuzzy about the stadium and the position he played, that was forgivable after the passage of 77 years.

Otis recalled, "The Yankees were in the process of rebuilding when I was there. The manager was a man named Harry Wolverton. They weren't even called the Yankees. They were the Highlanders." It is noteworthy, though, that while the team's name officially changed in 1913, the *New York Times* (to name the most prominent newspaper) had been calling them the Yankees for at least several years.

Otis continued, "Hal Chase was the first baseman and their star player."[8] Among other memories, he relished being invited to eat oysters with "Prince Hal."[9] Author Martin Donell Kohout (Williams '81), who began to write his biography of the notorious Chase after the Pete Rose gambling scandal broke in 1989, had the good fortune to consult with Paul Otis. The only other Highlander who was still alive at that time was Chet Hoff, who succeeded Otis as the oldest living major-leaguer – Otis had thought Hoff was dead.

In its issue of July 13, 1912 (the same one that showed the box scores of all four games Otis played for New York), *Sporting Life* wrote, "If [Otis] can now show sufficient ability [he] may be signed and farmed out for development." Three weeks later, the same paper reported that Otis had been sent to Wilkes-Barre in the New York State League. He got into at least a couple of games in late July. While playing there, though, Otis broke an ankle on a slide – the same ankle he had broken while playing at Williams.

In March 1913, *Sporting Life* noted that Otis was a candidate for the Barons outfield, calling him "an unknown quantity."[10] However, the outfielder never reported. "The Wilkes-Barre club asked me to come back after my ankle healed, but I wasn't inclined to," he said in 1989.[11] In May, *Sporting Life* mentioned briefly that the National Board of Arbitration of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues had disallowed an unspecified claim by Otis against the team.[12]

Otis went home to Scituate for a little while, then that fall, he moved to Duluth, Minnesota. His wife, Margaret, came from Minnesota (although the 1920 census noted that she did not know her exact place of birth). Paul took a job as credit manager for the *Duluth News-Tribune*, and then joined the Manley-McLennan insurance agency in that city. During World War I, Otis served as a private and later a corporal in the Minnesota State Guard.[13] His draft registration shows that he was able to remain on the home front because his wife was a dependent.

After his service was over, he returned to the insurance business. In addition to his work with Manley-McLennan – which eventually became part of insurance giant Marsh & McLennan – Paul served as vice president of the Insurance Federation of Minnesota.[14] In 1958, he started his own agency, retiring in 1967. Altogether, Otis worked in insurance for nearly 50 years. He and Margaret had just one child, a son named Paul Jr. (born 1918), who went into the same business as his father.

In 1983, Jim Ogle of the New York Yankees Alumni Association invited Otis to Yankee Stadium for the annual Old-Timers' Game. "I don't know how they found me," said Paul, "but they invited me to come to New York and I went."[15] Although film footage exists of the salute to Joe DiMaggio at Yankee Stadium that July 16, I have not been able to pick Otis out of the lineup of vets on the field. In his remarks, DiMaggio remembered, "When I first played here, they still had the wooden bleachers in right field." One wonders if The Yankee Clipper was aware that someone was on hand whose career predated The House that Ruth Built.

As of 1989, Otis was confined to a wheelchair most of the time at his place of residence, the Chris Jensen Nursing Home in Duluth. "I don't feel sick, but I can't stand up without holding onto something," he said. "I use a walker four or five times each day to exercise my legs, hoping they'll come back – but maybe they

won't." A mild stroke in the summer of 1988 had affected his speech slightly, as well as the dexterity in his right hand. He was still able to sign autographs, though, and he frequently received requests in the mail, which tickled him. "I don't ever recall being asked for my autograph when I played ball," he said.[16]

At his 100th birthday party, in addition to Paul Jr., were a granddaughter, three great-grandchildren, and six great-great-grandchildren, plus a few close friends and neighbors from the nursing home. [17] "Happy 100th Birthday to the Oldest Yankee" was the inscription on his birthday cake. The telegram from George Steinbrenner said, "Happy Birthday Paul. My warmest wishes for a happy and healthy new year. Hope you will follow the Yankees this year."[18] Fay Vincent reportedly was also going to follow up with a letter, and there is sound reason to believe that he did. In 1990, the Commissioner wrote to another big-leaguer who went to Williams, Mark Filley '33, celebrating their common bonds.

Paul Otis died nine days short of his 101st birthday. He was laid to rest in Duluth's Forest Hill Cemetery. Though this man's career was a far cry from the Baseball Hall of Fame, earlier that year, a memento of his made it to Cooperstown: The little Highlanders cap ("small enough for a young boy … the look is more beanie") that he wore back in 1912.[19]

Photo Credits

Williams College Archives and Special Collections

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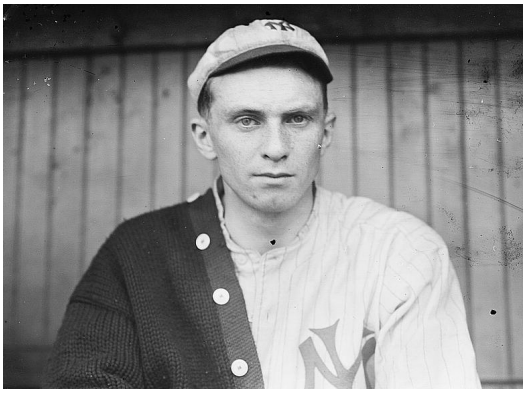
George "Iron" Davis
A Self-Made Athlete



"I have a young pitcher, whom I intend to use down the final stretch, who will open your eyes."

–George Stallings
Manager of the 1914 Boston Braves

George Davis was the secret weapon of the "Miracle Braves" pitching staff. Manager George Stallings had used the 24-year-old righty just three times during the first five months of the season, but when he turned Davis loose, the Harvard Law student responded with his career highlight: a no-hitter on September 9, 1914. During a barrage of doubleheaders down the stretch, he and other members of the supporting cast gave respite to Boston's hard-pressed frontline starters. The Big Three of Dick Rudolph, Bill James, and Lefty Tyler proceeded to pitch brilliantly in the World Series sweep of the Philadelphia Athletics.

Before going to law school, Davis starred at Williams. Amid his studies, he spent parts of four seasons in the majors from 1912 to 1915. His pro baseball career ended in 1916, and George then returned to his hometown, the Buffalo suburb of Lancaster, New York. There, for over four decades, he pursued a career in the law and enjoyed assorted intellectual interests.

George Allen Davis, Jr. was born on March 9, 1890. In many ways, his life echoed his father's. George A. Davis, Sr. (1858-1920) was a distinguished citizen. Born in Buffalo to British immigrants, he studied law as a young man while working as a picture-frame maker. The *Albany Law Journal* later wrote, "Slowly but continuously, from a briefless [sic] attorney, he attained, by conscientious and unremitting labor, a large and lucrative practice." He also became a legislator. From early in his career, he served as a member of the board of supervisors of Erie County. In 1885, Davis married Lillie Nina Grimes, the daughter of Judge William H. Grimes of Lancaster. He then settled in Lancaster, becoming town supervisor from 1888 through 1897.

In 1890, Davis *père* ran for Congress as a Republican but lost narrowly. From 1896 to 1910, he was a New York State senator, representing Erie County. He served on and chaired various committees, notably Canals and Judiciary. He also performed brilliantly as a defense attorney in a sensational 1898 murder case that was still being written about over a century later. As pictured in a number of Who's Who-type books, "Handsome George" was a 19th century *beau idéal*, with a leonine head and full mustache.

The Davises had one other surviving child besides George, a daughter named Gladys (another boy apparently died young). The wealthy family lived in a grand stone mansion, but Lillie did not see her children grow up. She passed away from tuberculosis on May 4, 1900, when George Jr. was only 10 years old.[1] Her husband obviously wanted to help others who suffered from this disease. Earlier that same year (and previously in 1898), the Senator introduced a bill that would establish the State Hospital for Incipient Tuberculosis in the Adirondack town of Ray Brook.

In his 1914 feature article on George Jr., noted sportswriter Hugh Fullerton stated, "Davis was not a strong youth. He was handicapped by

physical unfitness."[2] This was perhaps one reason why he went to St. John's Military Academy in Manlius, New York – but his father was a soldier. George Sr. enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 17 in 1875. He rose through the ranks, eventually becoming lieutenant colonel and commander of the 74th Regiment.

After graduating from St. John's, George Jr. went to Williams. Though he would eventually become vice president of his class, he got off to a rocky start academically. His class book would later say, "How George occupied himself his freshman year is more or less a mystery, and the class almost lost him." It turned out that the would-be athlete – who apparently had no experience in baseball before he came to the Purple Valley – had devoted himself to exercise.

Prefiguring the Charles Atlas ads, "Iron" transformed himself physically. As Ring Lardner wrote, "His strength was confined to his brains and he had the physique of an Oliver Twist … Almost unnoticed he worked long hours in the gymnasium and worked so hard that in a year his pals could scarcely believe he was the same boy."[3]

Hugh Fullerton wrote, "Instead of reporting to the baseball squad he went to work to develop himself. He never had played a game of baseball, and his knowledge was confined to theory. In the gymnasium he commenced working with a baseball, throwing at a padded surface and studying every ball he threw." The article also mentions "a kindred spirit who aspired to be a catcher." George's granddaughter, Suzan Kissee, heard many stories from her beloved "Poppy" as a young girl. She said, "This guy kept a one-inch thick raw steak inside his catcher's mitt to absorb the impact of the ball because Poppy broke his hand twice."[4]

Fullerton continued, "The coach discovered that there was a pitcher working in the gym who knew more about pitching than any of the regulars did, and Davis was allowed to join the squad and pitch. There were many things he did not know, but his theories worked out and he became a great college pitcher."[5]

Billy Lauder was the coach who received credit for developing Davis.[6] He oversaw the Williams nine from 1907 through 1910. Former big-leaguer Andy Coakley then succeeded him.

Already by 1911, opponents had respect for Davis. That June, the *Harvard Crimson* called him "a very strong pitcher."[7] Not long before, sportswriter Edward Bushnell had sniffed at the standard of college baseball that year, including the thin crop of hurlers, but said, "The best man of the lot appears to be Davis, of Williams, whose pitching was largely responsible for the defeat of Yale and Princeton, though not good enough to win from Cornell."[8]

After emerging as a star – and lifting his classroom performance to Phi Beta Kappa level – George became team captain for the 1912 season. He snapped Yale's 19-game winning streak with a two-hit shutout. On May 1, 1912, he beat Wesleyan 1-0, "pitching wonderful ball … Twenty of the home players were unable to solve the visiting pitcher's speed and curves and were retired on strikes."[9] Doc Barrett's lead gave the Highlanders the inside track on Davis, but many teams were interested in him. When he tossed another shutout against Princeton later that month, Highlanders owner Frank Farrell and scout Arthur Irwin, Ted Sullivan of the White Sox, and William Murray of the Pirates all observed him. "After the game Davis received some flattening *[sic?]* offers, but he asked time to consider them. He is anxious to finish the college season, as Williams has games with Yale and Harvard."[10]

Thanks to Doc Barrett, on June 27, the day after the school year finished, "Champ Davis, the clever pitcher of Williams"[11] signed with the Highlanders, as they were still known (it was their last season under that name before they became the Yankees). His salary was reported to be $5,000 – then the biggest ever for a pitcher coming out of college.[12] "Possessing great speed, curves, and control … he has been a sensation in the college baseball world and has helped Williams to defeat practically all of her rivals. He is considered the leading college pitcher, either east or west." [13]

Davis made his debut at Hilltop Park in the second game of a doubleheader on July 16. He pitched well but lost 3-1 to the St. Louis Browns. Two runs scored in the third inning because of Ed Sweeney's error at the plate. George's first victory came on August 27, as New York beat Cleveland 6-4.[14] It would be his only win against four losses in 10 games that season. After a rough outing against Philadelphia on September 5, he was sent down to the Jersey City Skeeters. That December, the *New York Sun* sniped, "George Davis is the

strongest man in Williams College … but we regret that he didn't put all that stuff on the ball when pitching for the Highlanders last summer."[15]

Several college publications show Davis as a member of the Williams Class of 1913. While certain other sources say that he graduated in 1912, a 1915 feature in *Baseball* magazine said, "He finished all his required work in the mid-winter semester [of 1913] so he was able to take the early training trip with the Yankees to Bermuda."[16] This included some workouts at Hamilton Cricket Field.[17]

He did not make the big club, though; he was sent to Jersey City once again. Manager Frank Chance "did not like Davis because he quit the training camp to get married."[18] Another article added that "Chance did not like the young man's spirit and said he did not take base ball seriously enough."[19]

Davis married Georgiana Jones. Suzy Kissee said, "Georgiana (called 'Kiddo' by everyone) was a practical joker and a suffragette. She was the first in her circle to raise her skirts above the ankle, and to be seen in public smoking, drinking, and driving a car. She was a voice for women's rights early in the century. Since her marriage was considered 'high profile' for the day, this took a lot of courage. He enjoyed it all."[20] George and Kiddo had four children: a son, George A. Davis III, and three daughters named Delancy, Eunice, and Deborah.

After returning from his honeymoon, George went to the minors, although he wasn't happy about it – he reportedly said that he had enough money not to need the sport. He went 10-16 for Jersey City, striking out 199 men in 208 innings, according to the 1914 *Reach Guide*. He was also quite wild, however, and so the Yankees sent him to another International League team, the Rochester Hustlers. Rochester had a working relationship with the Boston Braves.

On August 25, the Braves released Art Devlin (whose big-league career ended). They purchased Davis from Rochester before he even pitched once there. George Stallings, as an opposing manager with Buffalo in 1912, knew of the young pitcher and liked what he had seen. The new recruit appeared twice in relief for Boston, allowing four earned runs over eight innings without a decision.

Meanwhile, Davis had decided to enter Harvard Law School, albeit reluctantly. The late Buffalo baseball historian Joseph Overfield – an old friend of George's – wrote, "He had wanted to be a doctor, but his father had persuaded him to follow his own profession … Academia probably would have been a better choice."[21]

In 1914, Davis pitched with the Harvard Law team before joining the Braves. He did not get into a game for Boston until July 1, when he started and lost. Hugh Fullerton said, "All the time he was studying the system of pitching to big league batters and all the time Stallings was working with him to put a plus mark of ability behind his theory."[22]

Meanwhile, at the encouragement of Stallings, George had been developing a new weapon – the spitball. On August 19, the *Pittsburgh Press* reported, "Fred Mitchell, supervisor of pitchers, has had the chap in hand for about a month now and claims that at the present moment he is about the best spitball pitcher in the National League."[23]

Suzy Kissee recalled how George used the traditional method of loading up the spitter as a childhood lesson for her. "I became very familiar with his specialty after coming to the dinner table with gum in my mouth. I was 'treated' to a mouth full of slippery elm to chew! To this day, I'm not much of a gum chewer!"[24]

Stallings was leaking his secret. He had managed the Highlanders in 1909-10 and so the New York sportswriters knew him well. In mid-August, while Rudolph, James, and Tyler were sweeping the Giants, the manager said, "I have a young pitcher, whom I intend to use down the final stretch, who will open your eyes. He is just about ripe now to take his regular turn. You may remember him; he was with [Highlanders manager Harry] Wolverton on the hill two years ago. His name is George Davis."[25]

Another similar quote said, "I am going to take the blanket off another pitcher pretty soon who will some day be one of the sensations of the league. He is ready right now, and I am liable to start him any time. He has got more stuff than Bill James in the way of a spitter, and backs it with more speed than any man I have seen in years. His name is Davis. Watch him."[26]

The Braves had a September 9 doubleheader against the Phillies at their occasional home

that year, Fenway Park. After Boston lost 10-3 in the opener, Stallings chose his long-planned opportunity. Davis – who had appeared just twice more in relief since July 1 – started the second half of the twin bill. It turned out to be the only no-hitter pitched in the National League that year. The *New York Times* wrote, "NO-HIT GAME FOR YANKEE CAST-OFF; Young Davis Helps to Keep Braves in First Place by Beating Phillies."[27]

Hal Sheridan, for United Press, was an exponent of the era's mannered sports writing. Still, his description had a certain droll charm. "Stallings suddenly uncovered a masked battery in George Davis. This second line of artillery will be decorated today with the Iron Cross, the Legion of Honor or some such bit of bric-a-brac for completely silencing the guns of the enemy … Cocreham, Crutcher, and Strand all looked alike to the Phillies in the first game with the Braves, but when Davis unlimbered it was a different story. Davis permitted five of the Phillies to reach first base under a flag of truce with bases on balls, but at all other times had the range."[28]

Three of those walks came in the fifth inning, but Davis struck out Ed Burns, one of his four Ks for the day. He then escaped the jam by getting pinch-hitter Gavvy Cravath to hit into a double play.[29] He also survived two errors by Red Smith at third. George even added three hits of his own, as he was always quick to note. "It was luck," Davis later said in the *Baseball* story, "Luck." The article offered many other quotes in cultivated language from the avid reader.[30]

There are some unusual facts about this feat. Davis had the second-fewest career wins (seven) of any man with a no-hitter to his credit in the majors. Only Bobo Holloman, with three, had fewer. This no-hitter was also the first ever at Fenway, not to mention the only one there by an NL pitcher as of 2010.

After the game, owner Jim Gaffney sent a telegram to George Davis, Sr. It read, "CONGRATULATIONS GEORGE WON HIS GAME NO HIT NO RUN - J E GAFFNEY." It's quite possible that Gaffney, through his Tammany Hall connections, may have crossed paths with the Senator some years previously. "Handsome George" praised his son. "I knew it was in him. He's got the stuff and is always best under fire. It was good work and I'm proud of him."[31]

Following another relief appearance two days after the no-hitter, Stallings gave Davis four more starts down the stretch. He had declared confidence in his second string and could afford to use them as the Braves pulled away from the Giants – but it was also a matter of necessity. The team played no fewer than eight doubleheaders from September 23 onward, including four straight days from 9/23 through 9/26. Davis pitched creditably, beating Pittsburgh on September 19 and New York on October 1. He lost to Cincinnati on September 23 and at Brooklyn on October 6, the last day of the regular season.

Shortly after the World Series, George was back for his second year at Harvard Law. In early 1915, he showed again where his "Iron" nickname came from by setting a university record in the intercollegiate strength test. In those days, college athletes competed in a series of push-ups, pull-ups, dips, and other exercises, doing as many as they could in half an hour. The goal was to measure speed and endurance as well as pure strength. On February 12, Davis surpassed football star "Tack" Hardwick's mark of 1,381 points, notching 1,437.6. Then on February 24, he leapfrogged his own record with a score of 1,593.8. It was all done for the entertainment of a few friends, according to Ring Lardner.

Although Stallings had hoped to have Davis in spring training, he permitted the pitcher to remain in Cambridge.[32] Returning to the Braves in June 1915, Davis started nine times in 15 appearances. Again he posted a 3-3 won-lost record, while his ERA was 3.80.

The same held true the next season, as Davis returned his contract unsigned in February 1916. It was "understood that he will be tendered a contract which will permit him finishing his course at the Harvard law school before resuming baseball activities."[33] In late August, the Braves sent George to the Providence Grays on loan. His two outings with the Grays were his only pro action all season. Boston recalled him and infielder Joe Mathes on September 7, but he did not get into a game.[34]

In 1965, George's second wife, Grace, wrote a letter to Atlanta journalist Furman Bisher after she saw Bisher's article in the *Atlanta Constitution* about the Miracle Braves. She happened to be there visiting with her son and

his family. Among other things, she wrote, "Mr. George Stallings had some detractors, but George respected him for one thing especially. He never 'bawled out' a player in public. What he did privately was quite another matter."[35]

Davis signed with the Braves again in February 1917.[36] However, "he received his law degree at the age of 27 and simultaneously announced his retirement from professional baseball."[37] He then went into the Army, like his father, attaining the rank of captain in the infantry. George, who had taken fencing at Williams, specialized in teaching bayonet fighting.

Once World War I ended, Davis returned to Lancaster and joined his father's law firm. He later formed his own partnership. In 1923, he received this accolade: "George Allen Davis, Jr., by his record as a lawyer, is ably maintaining the professional prestige with which, for many years, the name has been associated in the minds of the citizens of Buffalo."[38]

However, as Joseph Overfield wrote, "In the Davis scheme of things, the law always seemed to be of secondary importance. In 1929, with egregiously bad timing, he gave up law to join a brokerage firm." The stock-market crash wiped out the bulk of the family's wealth.[39]

Davis served as a councilman-at-large in Buffalo from 1927 to 1933. George also became a candidate for mayor of Buffalo in 1933, although he lost in the Republican primary. Having returned to the law, George specialized in real estate.

Around this time, sad to relate, the Davises' daughter Deborah died as a tot of three years old. She came down with a severe strep throat, roughly a decade before penicillin became widely available. Suzy Kissee said, "At the time of her death, my grandmother hung her baby name beads (used to identify newborns back then) on the handle of her crypt and they are still there, undisturbed, today."[40]

In addition to his law degree, Davis did graduate study in philosophy and comparative religion at the University of Buffalo. This spurred a new passion: astronomy. He amassed a library of some 1,500 books on the subject. He founded the Buffalo Astronomical Society in 1930 and later became Honorary Curator of Astronomy at the Buffalo Museum of Science, where he taught classes for 30 years. "George Allen Davis, Jr., became so well known among the astronomically minded citizens of Buffalo that his name for a long time remained synonymous with astronomy to the thousands who attended his public nights in the Kellogg Observatory … He was noted for his varied interests and talents."[41]

Davis was an authority on astronomical history and especially on star names, contributing several articles to *Sky and Telescope* magazine.[42] Broad study of foreign languages aided him in this pursuit. "He fluently read and wrote Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic," Suzy Kissee said, "and he read Sanskrit. He learned these languages to help him in his passion." George picked up Arabic using two dictionaries and no tutor. He also owned volumes in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and his monographs showed familiarity with Chinese.

"Another fun fact about him," Suzy Kissee added, "is that he translated books from Latin to English for the library at Harvard when he attended there to help support himself. There is an old news clipping somewhere in the scrapbook that claims he worked on translations in the dugout during games and had to be told when it was his turn!"[43]

George's deep love of books was also visible in his work for libraries. In 1947, he became a trustee of the Erie County public library system. Seven years later, he was instrumental in the merger of Buffalo's public libraries with the county's. He continued to serve on the board and strongly supported the development of the Central Library.

On May 10, 1952, Georgiana "Kiddo" Davis passed away suddenly. Suzy Kissee said, "I deeply believe that my grandfather never recovered from her death. I have a picture of them taken nine days before she died, in which they look like a couple of high school sweeties. She kept him laughing. She was known as a practical joker. My mom told the story of her melting down chocolate Ex-Lax and including it in cookies to serve to guests she thought were arrogant!"[44] George did get married again, to Grace Ogilvie, who shared his interest in astronomy.

Davis stepped down as director of the Kellogg Observatory in 1959, after serving in that post since 1937. He retired from his law firm on New Year's Day 1961. "In an interview with the *Buffalo Courier-Express*, he said he planned to concentrate on his magnum opus, a two-

volume work on the origins and history of the constellations. 'I'll probably be working on it for the rest of my life,' he told the interviewer."[45]

That work would remain incomplete, however – George Davis passed away on June 4, 1961.[46] His obituaries did not mention that he ended his own life by hanging himself.

Joseph Overfield offered insight into his friend's highly complex personality. Davis was "an intensely proud man, almost to the point of arrogance … an impatient man who did not suffer fools lightly … [yet] he often exhibited great patience with young lawyers who came under his wing, and it is told he delighted in playing mentor to neighborhood youngsters." Overfield said that George's only substantial asset was his library, and guessed that "he could not face a future of impecunity."[47]

Suzy Kissee has offered her personal theory of what led to this decision.

"My mother [Delancy] was his favorite child and we moved to California in 1960. My dad was part of the new NASA space program and he was transferred here. My grandfather died less than six months after our move. I think having my mother move 3,000 miles away (she was a dead ringer for my grandmother) combined with the loss of my grandmother was too much for him to bear. They say there is a fine line between genius and insanity and I think he lost the line somewhere. It's a very sad story for such an accomplished man.

"Apparently it was very hushed up due to his status in his community, both social and professional … nobody wanted a scandal." The *Buffalo Evening News* only hinted at unusual circumstances, saying that Davis had been found in his basement. Indeed, the family only chose to reveal the truth many years later; they found it a relief to do so at last."[48]

Davis is buried in the family mausoleum at Lancaster Rural Cemetery, along with his parents, sister, wife Georgiana, and children Deborah and George III.

One may speculate about what George Davis might have achieved in baseball had he placed the sport over academics. There were certainly many lofty predictions. It's a moot point, though, because Davis himself said, "Reading is my favorite sport … there is nothing, not even baseball, that I like quite as well."[49] Yet even though his time in the majors was brief, this man left a small but lasting mark. His Hall of Fame teammate on the Miracle Braves, Johnny Evers, said it well. "He is a fine fellow, a man who has little to say on the club and is generally popular among the players. I was glad to see him get the great reputation which goes to the pitcher of a no-hit game."[50]

Grateful acknowledgment to Suzan Davis Packer Kissee and Mary Tucci Damiani, granddaughters of George Davis, for their personal memories and for furnishing articles from their grandmother's scrapbook. Thanks also to Alan Brownsten.

Photo Credit
Author's collection

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[14] Lanigan, Ernest J. "Davis Failure in American League." *Pittsburgh Press*, September 12, 1914: 9.
[15] "May Be Strong -- But Did Not Show It When Pitching for the Highlanders." *Sporting Life*, December 21, 1912: 14.
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[44] E-mail from Suzan Kissee to author, January 26, 2010.
[45] Overfield, op. cit.
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[49] "George Davis, the No-Hit Hero of the Braves": 30.
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Alex Burr
The Gentleman Volunteer

"One of the most promising ballplayers I have ever seen."

–Big Ed Walsh, Hall of Famer

Five major-leaguers died during World War I.[1] The first of these casualties, Eddie Grant, had the longest playing career and is also well remembered because he received a plaque in center field at the Polo Grounds. The shortest career on this list belonged to Alex Burr, a pitcher who played just one inning in center field for the New York Yankees on April 21, 1914. After just one professional season, Burr then went back to Williams. He left school again to enter the U.S. Army Air Service, and was killed in an airplane accident on October 12, 1918.

Alexander Thomson Burr was born on November 1, 1893, in Chicago. His father, Louis E. Burr, worked for a firm called Kimball Carriage, which moved from Portland, Maine, to Chicago in 1877 and turned to producing automobiles. In July 1892, Louis married Emily Thomson. The couple named their firstborn son for Emily's father, Alexander MacQueen Thomson, who emigrated from Scotland to the U.S. in 1854 and became a coffee and spice merchant.[2] The Burrs had one other child after Alex, a boy named Kimball. In 1905, Louis left Kimball Carriage (where he had been secretary, treasurer, and manager) and became the president of Woods Motor Vehicle Company of Chicago.[3] Electric and hybrid cars have become a hot item in recent years, but Woods Motor produced battery-driven vehicles from 1899 to 1916 and introduced a hybrid in 1915.

The Burrs must have been well to do, for they could afford two servants and to send their elder son east to prep school and college. Alex first spent a year at Hotchkiss School, but in the fall of 1911, he transferred to another academy in Connecticut, Choate. He made the football team in 1911, then played shortstop and pitched for the baseball team in the spring of 1912.

In November 1913, a nearby newspaper, the *Meriden Morning Record*, wrote a feature full of praise for "the pride of Choate School," looking ahead to the prospects for his collegiate career. The article said, "His record for 1912 was one to be proud of, but in 1913 his performances were even more spectacular." To summarize, as a senior Burr allowed no earned runs and only 32 hits in 11 games, with 185 strikeouts and just 18 walks. The *Morning Record* added, "He was the biggest man at Choate this year as its leading athlete."[4]

As former headmaster George St. John recalled in his 1959 memoir, *Forty Years at School*, Burr also founded St. Andrew's Society at Choate in 1913.[5] This was a nondenominational religious group; at the time, the school's chapel was called St. Andrew's (Burr probably enjoyed the coincidental link to his Scottish grandfather). Its members – who later included Adlai Stevenson and Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. – "contemplated the meaning of such concepts as sincerity, loyalty, and moral behavior."[6] The society also operated a camp for underprivileged boys from New York, which was staffed by Choate students. It lasted until 1965.

Of extra special interest in the *Morning Record* article was the endorsement of Hall of Fame pitcher Ed Walsh. Walsh, then playing with the Chicago White Sox, lived in Meriden during the

off-season. His friends there sent him word of Burr. In the summer after he finished at Choate, the prospect got to work out with the White Sox (they took care not to jeopardize his amateur standing). Big Ed Walsh said, "As he was under my personal supervision I know pretty well what he has and what he can do, and I do not hesitate to say that he is one of the most promising ballplayers I have ever seen. He is a big, strong boy with a fine arm and lots of stuff. He has, I think, as much speed as anyone I have ever seen. Best of all, he is young, a willing worker, and anxious to learn."[7]

By then Burr was a freshman at Williams; his choice of colleges may well have been influenced by his coach at Choate, Harry Blagbrough, a 1907 grad. A couple of months later, in January 1914, *Sporting Life* carried an item saying, "A.T. Burr, a phenomenal schoolboy pitcher, was also signed by the New York Americans … Burr is a right-hander, six feet two inches tall, and weighs 190 pounds."[8] In its next issue, *Sporting Life* followed up with a snippet saying, "'Doc' Barrett, trainer of the New Yorks, is sounding the praises of A.T. Burr, the Williams College pitcher he snared for [player-manager Frank] Chance under the very maws of Hughie Jennings and Connie Mack."[9] In addition to Philadelphia, reportedly the Chicago White Sox and Boston Red Sox were also bidding for the services of Burr, "who, it is said, has never lost a game."[10]

Barrett only ever saw Burr pitch in practice, including some fall games against upperclassmen. Burr never got into a college game.

It is also likely that Burr, as a Chicago native, fondly remembered Frank Chance from the first baseman's great days with the Cubs several years before. The *Providence Evening News* wrote, "He turned down offers from at least three major league clubs, to play under Chance's direction." That report added, "Arthur Irwin [another Yankees scout] says that Burr is one of the best natural pitchers he has ever seen, and predicts a brilliant future for him."[11]

Burr didn't rely on his fastball alone. "According to Charlie Barrett, Burr throws a natural curve on account of a bend in his right arm. This bend is not the result of a break, but is simply due to the fact that the young man's arm chose to grow in a curve rather than in a straight line. The drop, which most pitchers find difficulty in throwing, is easy for Burr. His team-mates have christened him 'The man with the bowlegged arm.'"[12]

The Yankees trained in Houston, Texas in the spring of 1914. Burr caught the team train in Memphis after riding down from Chicago. Even though a sprained ankle sidelined him for a while, the newcomer impressed Chance. In a March game, "under Chance's personal supervision, the Yannigans [rookies] roasted Houston [of the Texas League] to the tune of 9-4, with Burr, [Ray] Caldwell, and [Marty] McHale as chief undertakers."[13]

In late March, Chance announced that two rookies – Burr and Guy Cooper – had made his club. "I will keep Burr around, as I want to look him over more than I have," said The Peerless Leader.[14] He added, "I think both Burr and Cooper are good prospects. They may need some experience, but I think it would be a good idea to keep them around to see how things go in the big league. I like their style. Both have speed and seem to know more about pitching than the average hurler breaking into the big league."[15]

On April 19, the Yankees played an in-season exhibition game against the Newark Indians. Burr lost a 4-2 decision. Two days later, at the Polo Grounds, he made his only major-league appearance. The Washington Senators took a

2-0 lead into the ninth inning, but then the Yankees rallied. With one out, Jimmy Walsh walked and pinch-hitter Bill Reynolds singled. Center fielder Bill Holden then brought Walsh in with a single, and Chance inserted two pinch-runners, including himself – it was the Hall of Famer's last action as a player in the majors. New York got the tying run in, and with all the substitutions he had made, Chance had to put Burr in center to replace Holden. (Ed Walsh had noted that Burr could handle himself in the outfield and at bat.) The rookie did not field any chances, and then the Yankees won it in the bottom of the tenth before his turn in the batting order came up.

In late May, New London (Connecticut) in the Eastern Association acquired Burr, as he was sent out for several weeks with an eye toward rejoining the Yankees later in the season. Shortly thereafter, "Tom" – his nickname at Choate and beyond – returned to the prep school. It was Commencement Day, and there was an array of festivities, including a student-alumni baseball game. At first, he "stated to friends in town that he did not care to pitch Saturday's game but would be pleased to watch it. He may be persuaded to don a uniform for a few innings, however, as his many friends at the school and among the alumni will of course wish to watch him in action."[16] The coaxing worked, as the young pro got on the mound. "Burr toyed with the students, struck out the first nine batters to face him and knocked out a home run for good measure. There was another large crowd of townspeople on hand to watch the sport and especially to see Burr."[17]

Burr pitched in at least one game for New London, winning a 12-inning shutout on June 11. Despite walking four and hitting three more, he allowed just three hits.[18] It's not apparent today why he saw so little action for the Planters. On July 8, however, he got into a game as a guest at the Hotel Griswold, a summer resort in New London, coming on in relief after the employees' team had knocked out the guests' starter.[19]

After that, Burr was assigned to the Jersey City Skeeters of the International League. There he appeared in seven games, going 0-1 while allowing 10 runs in 19 innings pitched. He struck out nine but was quite wild, walking 20. When he walked six men and hit one in three innings in the second game of a doubleheader at Toronto, the *Toronto World* called him "wilder than the proverbial March hare." The man who relieved him that day was the great Cuban pitcher Adolfo "Dolf" Luque.[20]

A few days later, when Burr walked another six men against the Montreal Royals, the *Montreal Daily Mail* put it in these elaborate words: "The Pests passed out a pair of very mediocre pitchers, in the persons of Messrs. Bruck and Burr. Neither of these gentlemen were able to puzzle the local batsmen, and their extreme generosity in the matter of free tickets to first was of very great assistance to the local cause."[21]

A Chicago Historical Society publication reported that Burr was a student at Williams at the time of his enlistment. His draft registration also showed that he was working for the American Radiator Company, a forerunner of the well-known plumbing and fixtures company American Standard. His passport application called him a salesman. He entered the First Officers' Training Corps at Fort Sheridan, on the shore of Lake Michigan near Chicago, but he was discharged after a severe attack of double pneumonia.

Burr's passport application shows that he was slated to join the American Field Service, one of the units of "gentlemen volunteers" who drove ambulances. The AFS recruited heavily on college campuses, including Williams. Many of the young men had to learn to drive first, but given his father's background in the auto industry, Burr was prepared already. He went overseas first as a truck driver.

However, the U.S. Army Ambulance Service absorbed the AFS on August 30, 1917. There was already a strong connection between the AFS and both the French and U.S. Air Service. Burr wound up with the latter – then an army unit and the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force. He was a member of the 31st Aero Squadron. He went first to the American flying school at Issoudun in central France (where "Ace of Aces" Eddie Rickenbacker was the engineering officer). Gill Robb Wilson, who later founded the Civil Air Patrol, remembered Burr in his memoir. They and several other pilot cronies "developed a routine of frequently inviting one or the other of our French instructors for dinner at a farmhouse near the tiny French hamlet of Vouvray. The old couple who lived there would roast a half-dozen chickens, fry up a mess of potatoes and come up with truly vintage 'Vouvray, '84.'"[22]

Burr also still did a little pitching overseas. In a rundown of military games in 1918, the 1919 edition of *Spalding's Official Baseball Guide* showed that on June 23, he struck out 21 batters for the Aviation Instruction Center team, which handed another post team, St. Pierre de Corps, its first defeat.[23]

From Issoudun, many new pilots went to Cazaux, in the southwestern part of the country, near Bordeaux. There, amid the pine-covered wastelands of the Landes de Bussac, was a gunnery school called École de Tir Aérien, which supplied additional training to the flyboys in their Nieuport biplanes. Targets were towed across Lac de Cazaux, a 21-square-mile local lake.

Colonel Edgar S. Gorrell's *History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service, 1917-1919* noted, "Several fatal accidents marred the work at Cazaux ... the school was famous for its many narrow escapes." The next page revealed how Burr's life was cut short at the age of 24, just 30 days before the armistice that ended World War I. "On October 12th, 1918, occurred the worst accident in the life of the school at Cazaux, when pilots Burr and Kennedy collided at an altitude of 4500 feet while shooting on the sleeve target and fell into Cazaux lake at its deepest part, each with one wing fluttering down after. One fuselage was discovered, and twelve days later the body of Lieut. Burr came to the surface, but neither the machine nor the body of Lieut. Kennedy could be found, although every possible effort was made to locate it, from the air, in boats, and by diving."[24]

George St. John wrote, "When I had to tell Tom's brother Kim, Kim said, 'I won't believe it. That kind of thing doesn't happen to Tom!'"[25]

The *Chicago Tribune* article describing the accident was published before Burr's body was discovered. Various baseball reference sites focused on this article, and as a result, the idea persisted that he was never found. In fact, another report in the *Tribune* the following March described how the Red Cross responded to the pleas of Louis and Emily Burr, locating and decorating their son's gravesite. This article did not specify the location – but I believe it was a spot called Le Natus, between the town of Arcachon and Lac de Cazaux. Two small cemeteries were established there during the war. One held 940 men from Senegal, as well as 12 Russians. The other, American Expeditionary Forces Cemetery No. 29, was for Americans stationed at Cazaux who had died of the Spanish flu or in training exercises. The forested location tallies with the photo accompanying the March 1919 article.

During the years after the end of World War I, the American cemetery was deconsecrated. Some of the bodies exhumed – almost certainly including Burr's – were repatriated, while the rest were re-interred at the American military cemetery of Suresnes, outside of Paris.[26] Pending further investigation, the final resting place of Alex Burr remains unknown for now – but a marker at the Nécropole Nationale de la Teste de Buch still commemorates the 87 Americans who gave their lives at Cazaux during The Great War.[27]

Continued thanks to SABR member Bill Nowlin for additional research. Thanks also to Marion Bastien of Arcachon, France. Marion's blog, Du Côté du Teich (http://ducoteduteich2.wordpress.com/), has carried many entries about the area's unique World War I history.

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Photo Credits

Burr in Salvation Army hat: from his passport application

Burr in baseball uniform: Courtesy of Choate Rosemary Hall Archives

Burr in military uniform: Courtesy of Williams College Archives and Special Collections. *From Williams College in the World War* (Frederic Taylor Wood, Class of 1898, editor).

Notes

[1] In addition to Eddie Grant and Burr, the others were Robert "Bun" Troy (killed in action in France), Ralph Sharman (drowned during training in Alabama), and Larry Chappell (died of the Spanish flu).
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[22] Wilson, Gill Robb. *I Walked with Giants*. New York, NY: Vantage Press, 1968: 106.
[23] *Spalding's Official Baseball Guide for 1919*. New York, NY: American Sports Publishing Company: 247.
[24] *Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service, 1917-1919*. National Archives and records Service, General Services Administration: 75 (available online at http://www.footnote.com/document/21586732/). The accident report itself is available for purchase from the website of Aviation Archaeological Investigation & Research. The summary page for 1918 is at http://www.aviationarchaeology.com/src/1940sB4/1918.htm.
[25] St. John, Ibid., loc. cit.
[26] My check of the Suresnes database did not show Burr's name. Marion Bastien also confirmed this point with Patrick Boyer, co-author of the book *1914-18 : Le Bassin d'Arcachon*.
[27] In addition, in the Memorial House dormitory at Choate Rosemary Hall (dedicated May 30, 1921), the contents of the cornerstone and the painting in the first-floor common room honor Burr and his 15 fellow Choate alumni who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of their country.

Charles "Doc" Barrett
Trainer, Scout, Raconteur

"One of the most expert students of muscular anatomy in the country"

For over half a century, Charles "Doc" Barrett (1877-1954) was a trainer, first at Williams College and then at Columbia University. Although Barrett was involved with many sports, he formed a strong and distinctive connection with major league baseball. While at Williams, he did double duty as a scout for the New York Highlanders. He also trained the Highlanders from 1910 to 1914, by which time they had officially become known as the Yankees. It's no coincidence that four of the nine Ephmen who made it to the majors appeared during this period, and that three of them – Paul Otis, George Davis, and Alex Burr – played for New York. Barrett later scouted for the New York Giants and Philadelphia A's. He made at least one notable signing for Philadelphia, infielder Bill Barrett (no relation).[1]

After serving Williams from 1897 to 1921, Barrett spent the remainder of his life with Columbia. The Big Apple's sportswriters took to this genial, colorful, entertaining character. Upon Barrett's death, Irving Marsh of the *New York Herald-Tribune* paid an especially vivid tribute. Marsh called Doc "one of the last of a fast-vanishing breed of men who inhabited college athletics in the early part of the [20th] century. They were, in addition to being trainers and conditioners, morale men, men the athletes loved to have around because, as Barrett expressed it, they were ribbers as well as rubbers."[2]

Charles Edward Barrett was born in Worcester, Massachusetts. He played football and other sports as a lad.[3] In 1894, still a teenager, he embarked on his life's work. At first he devoted his efforts mainly to bicycle racers, although he also worked with football and basketball teams. In 1897, he drew broader attention. The Worcester High School crew, which he had trained and conditioned, won the national intermediate eight-oar championship in Philadelphia.[4]

Shortly thereafter, Barrett went to Williams. There is strong reason to believe that he connected with major league baseball through Hall of Fame pitcher Jack Chesbro. Chesbro was a native of North Adams, Massachusetts, just east of Williamstown. In January 1905, *Sporting Life* observed, "Chesbro takes excellent care of himself up in the winter in North Adams. He is a stickler for exercise."[5] Not only was Barrett right next door, he too had a connection to North Adams. In fact, in 1927, Columbia's alumni newsletter wrote that he was from there.

Sometime in the first decade of the 20th century, Barrett began scouting for the Highlanders, for whom Jack Chesbro pitched from 1903 through 1909. In August 1907, *Sporting Life* reported that he had signed Brown University's ace pitcher, Raymond Tift, for New York. Tift appeared in four games in the majors over the following month. (Doc Barrett is not to be confused with Charles Francis Barrett, who began his career as one of the game's most outstanding scouts a couple of years later.[6])

Another Williams player, catcher Clyde Waters, signed with the Highlanders in July 1907.[7] Although Waters never made it to the majors, he played in the minors through 1914. That spring, according to Barrett, Connie Mack, owner-manager of the Philadelphia Athletics,

was interested in a pitcher named Joseph Ford, the ace of the Ephs' staff.[8] Mack came from East Brookfield, Massachusetts, just a few miles west of Worcester. He liked college players and might have crossed paths with Barrett years before. Three Mackmen later coached baseball at Williams while Barrett was there: pitcher Andy Coakley (1911-13), catcher Ira Thomas (hired August 1916, resigned February 1921) and pitcher Jack Coombs (succeeded Thomas, went to Princeton in September 1924).

Williams re-engaged Barrett for another five-year term in 1908. His reputation had already spread through New England; the *Meriden* (Connecticut) *Daily Journal* wrote, "His success has been marked in many athletic contests when the condition of the Williams teams have [*sic*] carried them to victory.[9] In March 1905, the *Boston Globe* wrote, "The Williams College basket-ball team has just closed a remarkably successful season and now claims the national intercollegiate championship" with a record of 20-2.[10] The 1906-07 edition of *Spalding's Official Basket Ball Guide* carried a photo of Barrett and the Eph cagers.

Before long, sports fans in other regions would come to know his name even more widely. In the summer of 1910, with the permission of the Williams Athletic Council, Highlanders owner Frank Farrell hired Barrett to work with his team. Both the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Pittsburgh Press* carried a story describing Barrett as "one of the most expert students of muscular anatomy in the country ... the players and Mr. Farrell have become so impressed with the methods of Mr. Barrett that he will be kept with the team during the entire time of his vacation from his duties at Williams College. Mr. Barrett works on the same principles as the famous 'Bonesetter' Reese, of Youngstown, Ohio."[11] Reese, who was born in Wales in 1855, had learned the trade of "bonesetting" in his homeland. Welshmen used this term for treatment of muscle and tendon strains, not actually setting broken bones. Reese's practice – and Barrett's – resembled osteopathy.[12]

Almost straight away, *Sporting Life* began to carry items about how Doc had cured broken fingers, charley horses, and sore arms. In 1913, Frank Farrell said that Barrett was "in a class by himself." Manager Frank Chance added, "Barrett has more practical knowledge of how to cure sprained ankles and wrenched arms than anybody."[13] (The skipper, who suffered from lumbago, also benefited from special massage treatment.[14]) In addition, Barrett also oversaw nutrition, directing food shipments to the team's spring training site in Bermuda. "Pastry, ices, and similar dishes shall be tabooed."[15]

Indeed, that year the team wanted to have Barrett all to itself; *Sporting Life* reported in January that he would resign his place at Williams. An account several weeks later in the *Boston Evening Transcript* suggests that this was not the case, though. Doc received a silver cigarette case, inscribed, "Presented to 'Doc' Barrett by the students of Williams College in appreciation of his continued services and fidelity to Williams, which has helped so many teams to success."[16]

At the end of 1914, Frank Farrell and his co-owner, "Big Bill" Devery, sold the Yankees to Jacob Ruppert and Tillinghast L'Hommedieu Huston. The Colonels brought in their own people, and that extended to Barrett's level. In February 1915, the Yankees appointed a new trainer, Jimmy Duggan. Barrett returned to Williams, but after leaving the Yankees, he did some work for the New York Giants. He had wanted to sign another Williams star, outfielder Cyprian "Cy" Toolan of North Adams, in the spring of 1914. Giants manager John McGraw remained interested the following year; he "believed he could develop him [Toolan] into a valuable man for the Giants." In July 1915, though, Toolan chose to enter business instead of taking McGraw's trial offer.[17]

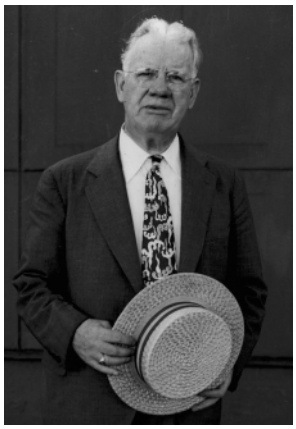
During World War I, Barrett also joined the U.S. Army Air Service, taking care of the American flyers. He earned the rank of lieutenant. This position came about thanks to the prominent football authority Walter Camp, who helped bring a large group of noted trainers to Rockwell Field in California.[18] Doc was also trainer of the Army and Navy Aviators Baseball Club.[19] One of the friends he made there was a young flyboy named Jimmy Doolittle, who became a famous general in World War II.[20]

Other colleges wanted to lure Barrett away, but as of August 1920, he was still with Williams. The *New York Times* noted that he was scouting for the Philadelphia A's in California that summer.[21] Less than a year later, though, the word came that Doc was leaving for Columbia.

That November, the Williams students burned him in effigy.[22]

Easily the most famous student-athlete Barrett worked on at Columbia was Lou Gehrig, who played football as well as baseball during his time there (1921-23). The Lions' baseball coach then, and for many years to come, was Andy Coakley. Coakley, a former pitcher at Holy Cross in Worcester, had left Williams for Columbia in 1914. One wonders just what happened behind the scenes with this old boys' network.

In addition, Barrett's name as a comic grew. In 1927, the Columbia alumni newsletter described him and an old buddy from North Adams, one "Shotsy" Shanahan, as "a weekly two-man vaudeville act." In 1943, Arthur Daley of the *New York Times* wrote, "For forty-six years Doc Barrett has been holding athletes together with a combination of adhesive tape and jocular remarks. He hands out both liberally, the Barrett flippancies predominating. Doc is a wag of the first water."[23]



Irv Marsh wrote that Barrett was a fully built man with face to match, who (as he aged) had a shock of startling white hair. "He was a character out of Charles Dickens or H.G. Wells, depending on how you looked at it. The tales he told – and they weren't all about himself either – had even his fellow trainers, and they are and were raconteurs all, open-mouthed. It was said often that he looked like the late W.C. Fields, and he reveled in that description, although when it was first applied he didn't think it so funny."[24]

Marsh also observed Barrett's old-school professional methods. "Doc hated such newfangled inventions as whirlpool baths, ultraviolet machines, etc. – he'd grow violent even when they were mentioned as possible methods of relieving injuries. And he'd also grow violent about rubdowns … 'Where do you think you are, Mac – in Hollywood?' But he did have great faith in a liniment of his own concoction, ingredients known only to him, which he shipped everywhere. He was especially proud of this snake oil and had no hesitation in telling anyone who'd listen – and you had to listen – of the vast number of great athletes he'd saved for action by application of his wonder oil."[25]

Charles "Doc" Barrett died at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital on July 7, 1954, after a long illness. His widow, Renna Barrett, and their daughter Ruth survived him. Along with his applied knowledge and humor, there was another key to his enduring success in athletics: despite his faith in his own methods, he was open-minded when it suited him. In 1925, at roughly the halfway mark in his career, Barrett told *Popular Science* magazine, "I've been at this for a whale of a long time and I don't ever think I knew it all. I'm always watching the other fellow, ready to steal his stuff if he's got anything better than I have."

Thanks to Pete McHugh, Assistant Director of Sports Information/Media Relations, Columbia University.

Doc Barrett on What Makes a Great Athlete

More quotes from "What Sport Can *You* Excel In?"

By Peter Vischer
Popular Science, December 1925

"My boy, athletic champions have to be bred. They're like horses. You can't take any boy in the world and make a real champion out of him. He has to get something from his father and he has to get something from his mother. I know, because I've trained lots of boys and seen them grow up and go away and I've seen their sons come back to me."

"But he must have more. He must have something here–(Doc Barrett tapped his forehead) – "and he must have something here" – (he tapped his heart). "And neither of them can be a chestnut."

"I am convinced that after 30 years' study of athletes, that athletics is 95 per cent mechanical. Your great baseball star, your football back who has been burning up the opposition, your hunky crew man, your slippery basketball forward, your tennis champion, your golf shark – it's the same with all of them. They have to keep at it until their work is 95 per cent mechanical."

Photo Credits

Spalding's Official Basket Ball Guide, 1906-07
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Mark Filley
Classicist with a Curveball

**"This youthful righthander
has displayed much promise and poise."**

He faced just three batters in his entire big-league career, but baseball was not the true calling of the Hon. Marcus Lucius Filley. Like his fellow Williams alum Henry Clarke (nine games in 1897-98), Filley was a strong college pitcher who had a whirl in the majors before entering the law and public service. He remained on the bench for 16 years as Family Court Judge in his hometown of Troy, New York.

Again like Clarke, Mark Filley came from a family of successful merchants.[1] His great-grandfather, also named Marcus Lucius Filley, moved to the village of Lansingburgh, New York (now part of Troy) in the 1830s. The Filleys were closely involved with an industry that was almost synonymous with Troy in the 19th century: stove manufacturing.

There were two more generations of M.L. Filleys before the future Washington Senator was born in Lansingburgh on February 28, 1912. Mark's grandfather was named Mark Lester Filley, and his uncle was also Mark L. Filley. This could well have influenced the spelling of the fourth Mark's nickname – he himself used a "k" rather than the "c"'from Marcus. Unlike today's baseball reference books, newspapers throughout his life all used a "k". But sometimes, as Filley's daughter Leith Colen observes, "it was a crapshoot – no rhyme or reason."

Mark was the second of five surviving children born to Frederick Child Filley and Jeanette "Jennie" Derrick Filley. His big sister, also named Jeanette, was two years older. After another two years came a sister called Freda (after a brother Frederick who died young). Following an eight-year gap, another sister named Helen arrived. Last was little brother Derrick, 12 years Mark's junior. Their father was a prominent Troy lawyer who served as District Attorney for Rensselaer County and also as a member of the New York State Assembly.

Young Mark attended schools in the Lansingburgh School District, graduating from Lansingburgh High. He then spent a postgraduate year at the Albany Academy for Boys. In 1930, he started college life, traveling roughly 30 miles east to Williamstown. His course of study was heavy on the classics, including Latin. Mark lettered in basketball but was not a first-string player – his best sport was clearly baseball.

After winning all three of his decisions for the freshman team, Filley was 20-6 in his three seasons on the varsity. "The Berkshire team's ace always has his sharp curve ready for emergencies," noted one story; another observed, "He pitches many knee balls that are close to the dirt." Mark was regarded as one of the top college pitchers in the Northeast and even in the entire nation, which was surprising for Williams by that time. He capped his college career in June 1933 with a commanding seven-hit shutout over archrival Amherst, posting 11 strikeouts. The 6-0 win gave the Ephs the Little Three crown over Amherst and Wesleyan for the second year in a row.

During the summers, Mark pitched for local teams in New York's capital district, including the Troy Emeralds, Cohoes Haskells, and the Albany Knights of Columbus squad. Among other opponents, in 1932 he faced the Mohawk Giants, a strong African-American semi-pro team managed by former Negro Leaguer William "Buck" Ewing, who had settled in Schenectady. That summer, he went 15-2 on the central New York circuit.

Filley's exploits on the mound attracted the attention of the St. Louis Cardinals and Philadelphia Athletics. But the presence of a top-level minor-league club close to home made a difference. After graduating from Williams in 1933, Filley was signed by Bill McCorry, manager of the Albany Senators – who told the young man it was not to his advantage to tie himself up with a big-league team. McCorry's letter signing Mark on June 24, 1933 contained the provision that the pitcher would receive 30% of any sale or draft price.

Despite their name, the Albany Senators were not officially affiliated with the major-league Senators in Washington. However, the International League club was owned by Joe Cambria, the Sicilian-born baseball man who was friendly with Washington owner Clark Griffith. Cambria, who ran a laundry business in Baltimore, became best known as a top scout for Griffith, signing many Cuban players in particular. In Albany, he eked out a slender profit through promotions – Mark Filley Day in Troy also featured a tennis match between women's stars Helen Wills Moody and Helen Jacobs – and continuous dealing. Albany had a revolving door in 1933, fielding some 53 players. The roster included numerous other future big-leaguers, including Stan Hack, Mike Kreevich, Babe Phelps, Ray Prim, Vito Tamulis, Gus Dugas, and Tommy Thompson.

When Cambria inquired about the prospect on Griffith's behalf, Bill McCorry said, "I'll find out just how good Filley is myself." Despite some hazing, the college boy held his own. Mark won 7 and lost 4 for a team that went 80-84 overall. His 3.31 ERA drew praise in the papers. He was impressive enough to remain as one of just four holdovers on the team's roster for the 1934 season.

In the winter of 1933-34, Filley was on the faculty of Burr and Burton Seminary in Vermont. He coached baseball and basketball while also teaching Latin, geometry, and algebra. But when spring training came around, Washington invited him to join the squad in Biloxi, Mississippi. They viewed him as "not so fast, perhaps, but one knowing what to do with the ball." Mark performed well, capped by five shutout innings against the Boston Braves on April 10. Player-manager Joe Cronin decided to keep the 22-year-old on his staff.[2] Washington paid Albany $5,000; Mark used his $1,500 share to buy an engagement ring for his girlfriend, Dorothy Leith McCracken of Schenectady, and a refrigerator for his mother.

The Sporting News commented on Filley's impressive spring. "This youthful righthander has displayed so much promise and poise that he was given the preference over Ed Chapman, the costly purchase from Rochester."[3] That article went on to state, however, that "Filley makes the tenth boxman on a squad that ultimately will number only nine, so Cronin has until May 15 to decide whether he, or some other member of the curving corps, is lopped off." The club made that decision on May 14:

"Catcher Elmer Klumpp and pitcher Mark Filley will be sent away and infielder Johnny Kerr will be transferred to a coaching role in order that the Nats may get down to a 23-player limit, which is necessary by midnight tomorrow. Klumpp will be returned to Chattanooga, but on 24-hour option, while Filley goes to Albany, Clark Griffith, Nat owner, stated last night."[4]

Just four days earlier, *The Sporting News* had observed that the Senators were overusing relievers Jack Russell and Bobby Burke, but also noted that "management is evidently dubious of the ability of youngsters such as Ed Linke and Mark Filley to do rescue chores."[5]

Mark's sole taste of big-league action came on April 19, 1934, against the Red Sox at Fenway Park. It was the second game of a doubleheader, and as Boston completed its sweep by winning 7-3, Filley gave up two hits and threw a wild pitch while retiring one batter. One run scored against him, leaving his lifetime ERA at 27.00. Mark and Charlie Perkins, who pitched for the Brooklyn Dodgers in April and May that year, remain the last two Williams Ephmen to appear in the majors.

Another side note from Filley's one game was that his batterymate, Moe Berg, went to Princeton with Williams baseball coach Charles Caldwell, Mark's mentor and close friend. Thus

Berg apparently also had a hand in bringing the young pitcher to Washington's attention. For a month, the brilliant, eccentric catcher had perhaps his one teammate who could approach him in intellect – not to mention converse in Latin.

Years later, Mark recalled that he almost had one more chance to appear with Washington. Either on April 28 or April 29, against Philadelphia, Joe Cronin waved him in to face slugger Jimmie Foxx with the bases loaded and nobody out. But the manager decided against it, and waved his rookie back.

As it transpired, the Senators had wanted Filley to report to Chattanooga after the cutdown – but he refused. It was Class A ball rather than Double-A, and he said he would quit Organized Baseball rather than accept the demotion. Plus, he was going to enter law school in Albany that October.

Following his return to Albany, Filley didn't see action for a couple of weeks and was then used in relief. He got more chances to start again, though, and finished at 4-3, 4.23. After the season, and before starting his law studies, he helped out a team engaged in a series to decide the semi-pro championship of Troy.[6] "He was a local hero," his daughter Leith notes. "The kids all used to gather on the doorstep."

Mark also returned to Williams in March 1935 to work out with the team while Charlie Caldwell was temporarily absent. He rejoined the Albany Senators in '35 and saw limited action (2-3, 4.91). One of his baseball thrills came on April 22 as Babe Ruth and the Boston Braves came to Albany's Hawkins Stadium for an exhibition game (which Ruth had done as a Yankee in 1931 and '34, and would do again as a Dodgers coach in 1938 and '39). The Babe's contract called for him to play just five innings, and Filley came on in relief in the top of the sixth. He said in later life, "Jokingly, I always claimed he was afraid to face me."

"He got a beautiful autographed ball from the Babe, right on the sweet spot," says Leith Colen. "Several years ago my sister and I looked at it and saw the ink had gotten faded, so we wrote over it! When we had it appraised, they could tell straight away. But it doesn't matter to us."

An injury that year reportedly cost Filley a chance to play for the New York Yankees – or at least for the Newark Bears. In 1961, he told the *Albany Times-Union* that he got a call from George Weiss, who then ran the Yankees' farm system. They were looking for pitching and had made a deal for him, but Weiss wanted to know what he was doing at home in Troy. Filley replied:

"Well, George, you'll find out sooner or later. I fielded a ground ball, threw underhand while off balance, and my elbow has been bothering me a bit, but I'll be ready to pitch in a couple of weeks." The next day he got a one-word telegram: 'Sorry.'

"But that was my father," says Leith. "He was the most honest individual I have ever known. There was not a fiber in him that would do things otherwise."

On November 25, 1935, Albany parted ways with Filley. Joe Cambria wrote, "Dear Mark – we have made a deal with Galveston of the Texas League, and you are now the property of that ball club. Your release notice is enclosed." From that cold-blooded beginning, Cambria sought to sell the young law student on the opportunity, but Mark was having none of it. Again he refused to report.

The Buccaneers had received four other players plus cash while giving up just one catcher in return. But they really wanted Filley. The Galveston papers noted that the Bucs made several efforts to coax Mark out of his voluntary retirement over the 1936 and 1937 seasons. The pitcher got one letter that appealed to him to help his teammates make the Dixie Series. Yet while he remained dedicated to the pursuit of his law degree, he did find time to coach the Albany Academy team, a position to which he was named in April 1936.[7]

Mark Filley never did return to pro ball after 1935. In 1937, a new incarnation of the Albany Senators (managed again by Bill McCorry, but in the Class A NY-Penn League) "tried to make a deal for him but did not succeed, and Filley continued to twirl for semi-pro teams in Troy and Poughkeepsie."[8] That same article, which focused on Mark's September 11 wedding to Dorothy McCracken, noted reports that he might join Galveston the following year. The franchise, which was bought out by Shreveport interests in 1938, sent him an offer for a paltry $150 a month that spring (down from $250 in prior years). The Sports finally gave up and released him in August 1938.

Filley had earned his LLB and passed the New York State bar exam in December 1937. He then entered practice in Troy, while still enjoying baseball on the side. As late as 1939, he won 25 semi-pro games, but his arm started to give out the following year.

"Even with Washington, he knew he wasn't cut out to be a full-time major-leaguer," his daughter Leith states. "He was a rather slender build [5'11-11½", 172 pounds] and it would have been tough for him to hold up physically. His brother Derrick says he didn't have the killer instinct. But he just loved his time in baseball – oh my God, he loved to talk about it. He told so many wonderful stories."

Alongside his law career, Filley served Troy as chairman of local government committees in the 1940s. After World War II ended, he became a fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers. "He adored Jackie Robinson and was so happy that he got his chance," Leith observes.

In 1954, he won election for the first time as Judge of the Children's Court (later renamed Family Court) in Rensselaer County. "He was one of the greatest speakers around," says Leith. "People loved hearing his baseball stories."

After being elected president of the Family Court Judge's Association of New York State, Mark Filley left the bench in 1971. "It took a toll on him," Leith remembers. "He'd have to throw fathers in jail on Friday night so they wouldn't drink up their paychecks. He carried a gun at times – there were threats on his life."

Filley then returned to his law practice, from which he retired in 1989. By that time, he had been a member of the New York State Bar Association for more than 50 years. Among other accomplishments, he served on the Board of Directors of the Troy Public Housing Authority and was active in the Knickerbocker Playground Association, the Troy YMCA and the Lansingburgh Boys Club. Mark was also a hearing officer for the New York State Retirement System from 1980 until his retirement.

Dorothy Filley boasted her own success. As a young woman, she was president of the Junior League of Troy, chairwoman of Volunteer Services of the Rensselaer County Red Cross program, and a founding member of the Rensselaer County Junior Museum. In her fifties, "Dot" earned a master's degree, and she went on to a new career with the arts, museums, and local history in central New York. She wrote a book about a distinctive slice of local history, entitled *Recapturing Wisdom's Valley: The Watervliet Shaker Heritage, 1775-1975.*

In 1989, the couple moved to Yarmouth, Maine, where Mark passed away at the age of 82 on January 20, 1995. "He had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in his early seventies but had been able to hold it at bay with medication for several years," says Leith Colen. "But then he broke his hip, and that was the beginning of the end. He lived for his last five years in the Brentwood Rehabilitation Center in Yarmouth. He still loved baseball, though. He hated that it had gotten to be a big business, but he would listen to two or three games at once."

In 1990, thanks to his daughter, Filley received a letter from Fay Vincent '60, then Commissioner of Major League Baseball. Said Vincent, who responded within days of the request:

"Each of us went to Williams; each of us is a lawyer; but most importantly, each of us loves baseball. You, however, could play the game. I salute you as a fellow Eph."

Filley is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Troy. He was survived by his wife (until 1998) and his two daughters Leith and Linda. But perhaps the best way to remember him comes from Leith. "When I read [Vincent's predecessor] Bart Giamatti's book, it was like listening to my father speak. They were gentlemen, scholars, classicists – my father could practically speak Latin – and they loved the game of baseball."

Thanks to Leith Filley Colen, daughter of Mark Filley, for her contributions – including a viewing of the scrapbook she assembled in her father's memory.

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Charlie Perkins
Loved the Diamond and the Links

"My greatest kick is blowing 'em past the Babe."

This redheaded lefty pitcher got into just 19 major-league games in 1930 and 1934. His record was an uninspiring 0-3, with a 7.50 ERA. Yet he was still influential. When Perkins was at his best for the Triple-A Buffalo Bisons in 1933, a 12-year-old boy named Warren Spahn was often in the stands and shagging balls in practice with the team. Warren's father, Ed Spahn, told him, "Now if you want to be a pitcher, watch every move Charlie Perkins makes."[1] Of course there was a lot more to his success, but Warren Spahn went on to win 363 games in the majors, tops all-time among southpaws.

As of 2011, Perkins was also the last man who went to Williams to play in The Show. He attended from 1924 through early 1926, but did not graduate. His last appearance in the majors came with the Brooklyn Dodgers on May 27, 1934. Manager Casey Stengel sent him down to finish the 1934 season in Buffalo, and in 1935, Perkins returned to semi-pro ball, where he had played before coming to the majors. He also worked as a golf pro, which became his occupation in later life too. He came back for a final seven games in the minors in 1937.

Charles Sullivan Perkins (who may also have had an additional middle name, Sebastian) was born in Ensley, Alabama, on September 9, 1905. His parents were James Monroe Perkins and Jennie Albro Sullivan. From the time Charlie was a small boy, though, he lived in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. He and his siblings were raised by their maternal aunt, Lulie Sullivan, and her husband, Herbert Winslow Collingwood. According to family tree information, Jennie Perkins allegedly died in Suffolk County, New York, about 1910. James M. Perkins was living in Birmingham, Alabama as of the 1910 census, and he died sometime between then and the 1920 census.

Herbert Collingwood was a fairly prominent man in his time. For many years until his death in 1927, he was editor of a magazine called *Rural New Yorker* ("The Business Farmer's Paper"). Collingwood was part of the audience for his practical publication; he raised apples, berries, and other fruits on his property, Hope Farm. In 1906, the *New York Times* wrote that the "ninety-acre farm near Woodcliff, N.J., fairly teems with choice apples of countless varieties."[2] Collingwood also wrote farming-oriented books, but as a younger man, he turned his hand to fiction as well.

The Collingwoods were kindly people. Their credo was "The homeless child and the childless farm should be brought together."[3] Although they had a daughter of their own, they took in neglected children, temporarily in some cases, or even adopting them, as the 1910 census shows. At that time, they had three Perkins children with them too, including Charlie, his older brother Thurston, and his older sister Louise. As of the 1920 census, Thurston and Louise had reached adulthood and moved away, but another older brother, James M. Perkins Jr., was there, along with Charlie's little sisters Cathleen and Ava.

The *Rural New Yorker* offices were actually in New York City. Each morning Collingwood rose early and walked two miles to the Woodcliff train station to start his 60-mile round-trip commute. Yet, as *The Forum* magazine wrote in 1916, "All the time that Mr. Collingwood can spare from his busy editorial life is spent on the farm with his protégés."[4] Thus the young Charlie Perkins grew up playing ball in a happy environment with a good instructor.

For "The Hope Farm Man" also loved baseball. In the early 1880s, Collingwood had spent two years in Starkville, Mississippi, aiding in the Reconstruction effort and writing for a farm journal there. Some 37 years later, he returned to deliver a college commencement address, as he recalled in one of his self-effacing columns, *Hope Farm Notes*. To his slight chagrin, Collingwood's legacy was neither "his soul-inspiring editorial work" nor his effort to "uplift the South." Rather, he "was remembered with affection because I played baseball with skill and taught that community how to pitch a curved ball!"[5] That collection also included a chapter called "The Baseball Game," devoted to Collingwood's account of the opening game of the 1911 World Series between the New York Giants and Philadelphia Athletics. The central theme was "the common language of baseball" and how it brought Americans from many different ethnic backgrounds together.[6]

James Perkins, Jr. went to Williams starting in 1920. Charlie followed in 1924 and pitched for the baseball team as a freshman in 1925.[7] Early in the spring of 1926, however, he left the college. It was a blow to the Ephmen, since he was regarded as the team's best remaining pitcher.[8]

Perkins turned pro, but he had to scuffle. According to a 1933 sketch in *The Sporting News*, he started in 1926 with Parksley (Virginia) of the Class D Eastern Shore League. He then pitched with Alexandria and Vicksburg of the Cotton States League (also Class D) in 1927. The following spring, he got a trial with the New Orleans Pelicans of the Class A Southern Association, but they released him before the season started. Later in 1928, he joined the Scottdale (Pennsylvania) Scotties of the Middle Atlantic League (Class C).[9]

Perkins went to spring training in 1929 with Albany of the Eastern League. The Senators sent him to Wilkes-Barre in the NY-Penn League, but the Barons returned him. In May, he joined Canton in the Central League.[10] He went 19-9 for the Terriers, with a 3.72 ERA. After that, though, he came back close to home. He joined the Paterson Silk Sox, a high-level semi-pro team based in Paterson, New Jersey (nicknamed Silk City). This club was also known as the Doherty Silk Sox for the mill that sponsored them. It sent a number of other men to the majors; perhaps the most notable was Milt Gaston, who signed with the Yankees in late 1923 and went on to pitch in 355 games over 11 seasons from 1924 to 1934.

On June 27, 1930, Philadelphia Athletics owner-manager Connie Mack released first baseman Jim Keesey to Jersey City of the International League. He decided to bring Perkins in from the Silk Sox. The Associated Press reported that according to Mack, the new man (no relation to veteran catcher Cy Perkins) was "quite a lefthander."

Over the remainder of the 1930 season, Perkins got into eight games for the A's, starting once for the American League champions. He got no decisions and posted a 6.46 ERA, fueled in part by the 15 walks he allowed in 23 2/3 innings pitched. In something of a surprise, he was on the Philadelphia roster for the World Series. Charlie was not needed to pitch, though, as the A's starters threw four complete games in the six-game victory over the St. Louis Cardinals. Possibly Mack kept him around as a red herring. The year before, The Tall Tactician had pulled a surprise by naming Howard Ehmke to open the World Series, and there was speculation that he might try it again. The *Brooklyn Eagle* wrote, "The Cards, for instance, are looking for something of the sort and wouldn't be taken unawares if Connie started his young Hoboken semi-pro, Charlie Perkins."[11]

In March 1931, the *Eagle* ran a short but colorful feature on Perkins, who enjoyed hunting alligators in Florida during his spring training leisure time. The lefty boasted, "My greatest kick is blowing 'em past the Babe. Ruth has made only one single in the five times he has faced me, and that other home run buster of the Yanks, Gehrig, hasn't made a hit of any kind and has struck out three times."

Among other things, the article also observed, "Perkins rivals Mickey Cochrane on the saxophone, and is the third best golfer on the Athletics … He does about everything with his right hand but pitch, even unto golf playing …

The claim made for him that he has a fastball that shoots off more sparks than Lefty Grove's fast one should be taken with the tongue in a cheek. But he has the self-confidence to make good."[12]

The Mackmen were at the height of their last cyclical peak, however, and they were loaded with pitching. There was something else, though, as Jimmy Dykes recalled in 1961. Dykes, by then the manager of the Cleveland Indians, was on that A's team. He thought the year was 1929, but he said, "Perkins … was kind of cocky. He liked to talk things up against the regulars. Well, Mr. Mack scheduled a squad game and named the kid to pitch against the regulars. It was quite a hitting team. Those hitters got together and decided to teach the kid a lesson. They did just that. You never saw so many line drives. Before Mr. Mack got the kid out of there, he was talking to himself. You could see the change in him. He was never the same. That squad game ruined him."[13]

Philadelphia released Perkins to Jersey City that April, and he spent roughly the next two and a half seasons there. The 1931 season was undistinguished (4-9, 3.55); a 1943 report said that he injured his arm.[14] Yet another story, however, states that Mack, "who had a great liking for Perkins," lost interest because illness was affecting the lefty's performance. "Perkins had his appendix removed and he was as good as new." That story also mentioned the tutelage of former Yankees star pitcher Bob Shawkey, Jersey's manager in 1931.[15] Yet Charlie's mouth got him in trouble again, as Montreal outfielder Johnny Conlan got in a fistfight with "the talkative Jersey City pitcher … Conlan is reported to have outpointed Perkins to such an extent he had to be carried from the field."[16]

In 1932, Charlie emerged as the club's leading winner with a 14-11 record, although 129 walks fueled a lofty 5.03 ERA. After one April game, the *Rochester Evening Journal* noted that his sidewheeling motion was effective against the Red Wings' lineup, which featured five lefty swingers.[17] That year the Brooklyn Dodgers operated the Skeeters with an option to buy the financially troubled club (which moved to Syracuse in 1934).

Perkins began the 1933 season with the Skeeters once more. He was one of the few fixtures in a roster that was in constant turnover – some 56 players (including 19 pitchers) went through "a parade of major league castoffs, players loaned by other teams in the league and 'just a lot of guys named Joe.'"[18] But then in July, he joined the parade as part of what newspapers labeled a "temporary trade." Jersey City sent him and third baseman Joe Brown to Buffalo in return for third baseman Gil English and an unnamed amount of cash.[19]

The deal helped Perkins and it helped the Bisons. Although he finished the season with a mediocre overall record of 12-13, 3.88 (with a league-leading 128 walks), he pitched far better down the stretch. Under manager Ray Schalk, the Bisons became the first team to finish below .500 and in fourth place – and then go on to win a championship. They got into the playoffs on the season's final day, as "the angular southpaw" beat Rochester for the second time in that series.[20] They went on to sweep Baltimore in three games in the first round. "The Herd" then beat Rochester in six games to take the Governor's Cup, in the first year that this award went to the IL champions. However, Buffalo lost to the American Association champs, Columbus, in the Little World Series.

Perkins was a big part of the postseason success too. He finished the elimination of Baltimore with a 3-0 shutout; "although occasionally wild, [he] pitched himself out of every clinch."[21] He also won Game Two and the clincher against Rochester, going all the way in both outings and allowing just three runs total. The *Rochester Evening Journal* wrote, "Charles Sullivan Sebastian Perkins, owned by the Brooklyn Dodgers and resident of New Jersey, near New York, lost his front teeth a few years back but the handicap didn't keep him from biting out Wings."[22] Against Columbus, Charlie lost Game Four, and the Bisons fell behind in the series, three games to one. He returned in Game Six with a win, though, which brought his record as a Bison to 11-3.[23] Columbus then won the finale.

The drawback of Buffalo's playoff run was that it prevented Perkins from getting back to the majors that year. On September 11, the *New York Times* wrote, "Charley Perkins, southpaw, scheduled to don a Dodger uniform yesterday, was held over by Buffalo for a day and will join the club at Pittsburgh."[24] (Note that newspapers spelled his name interchangeably, either –ie or –ey.)

The lefty eventually joined Brooklyn for spring training in Orlando, Florida, in 1934. That February, manager Max Carey named Perkins as one of the "big, hard throwers" he had coming up and hoped to see develop.[25] The very next day, as had been rumored, "Scoops" was out as Dodgers skipper and Casey Stengel was in. Brooklyn was a second-division club; as United Press wrote that April, "Stengel is desperately in need of pitchers, two good ones and southpaws if possible. Charles Perkins from Buffalo and Phil Page from Seattle are his only portsiders. Neither has shown starting ability yet."[26]

Perkins had actually pitched rather well against his old team, the Athletics, on April 1. In eight innings, he allowed six hits and just two earned runs. He made the big club to open the season and appeared in 11 games, starting twice. On May 2 at the Polo Grounds, he took a 4-3 lead into the bottom of the eighth inning, but weakened and put Bill Terry and Mel Ott on base. Van Lingle Mungo then gave up a three-run pinch-hit homer to Lefty O'Doul; Brooklyn wound up losing 6-5. In Charlie's other start, at Ebbets Field on May 18, he was gone after one-third of an inning, charged with four earned runs. Perkins got into just one more game after that, pitching an inning in relief. On May 31, Brooklyn sold him outright to Buffalo. There he did not recapture his previous year's form, going 6-8 with a 5.61 ERA.

March 1935 brought the news that the pitcher had decided to quit organized baseball, in favor of either a return to semi-pro ball or a foray into golf.[27] It turned out to be both. In May, the *Yonkers Herald Statesman* reported that Perkins was serving as assistant pro at the Blue Hill Golf club in the Rockland County town of Orangeburg. He also pitched for the Brooklyn Bushwicks in 1935. As the Associated Press described the club that October, "The Bushwicks, composed largely of big-league castoffs, averaged 17,000 fans a game last season and several times outdrew the Dodgers."

Perkins was the ace of the Bushwicks in 1935, winning 23 games and defeating opponents that included the New York Black Yankees. He returned to the team in 1936. The *New York Post* reported that April, "During the week days, Charley serves as assistant pro at the Riverdale Country Club and shoots morning and afternoon rounds each day. On Sundays, he packs his spikes and glove into a bag and drives down to Dexter Park, where he generally pitches the Bushwicks' opening game."[28] With him on that staff was a young lefty from Long Island University named Marius Russo, who later pitched several years for the Yankees. In one July doubleheader, they squared off against two excellent Negro Leaguers, Slim Jones and Webster McDonald of the Philadelphia Stars.[29] It's unclear what happened that Sunday, but Perkins got the better of Jones later that month, shutting the Stars out for seven innings and winning 3-2. He modestly noted, though, that he'd heard the hard-throwing (and hard-drinking) Stars ace had been dealing with arm trouble. Perkins said, "Heaven help the club that finds him fit!"[30]

Not long before, Perkins had "clearly overshadowed" another great Negro League pitcher, future Hall of Famer Leon Day (then just 19 years old).[31] However, a hernia finished his 1936 season in August.[32] At age 31, though, he decided to give organized ball another shot in 1937. In addition to golf, he had apparently been operating a restaurant, but nothing else has surfaced on this venture.[33]

He rejoined Buffalo, where Ray Schalk was still manager. On April 10, the *Rochester Evening Journal* wrote (apparently unaware of his play with the Bushwicks), "In his first start April 3 against the Boston Bees, after the two-year layoff, Perkins proved faster than ever and he should be a winner again."[34] It didn't work out that way: he won no games and lost three in seven appearances, split between Buffalo and Baltimore (which picked him up as a free agent in May).[35]

During World War II, Perkins sought to join the U.S. Army, but he was rejected because of his dentures. The Canadian Army accepted him, and he became a sergeant. He also gave baseball another shot with the Canadian Army team in the Vancouver Senior Baseball League. He made two starts, found his arm was gone, and swore he would never try again.[36]

At some point, Perkins came to the Salem, Oregon area, where he made his living by selling athletic equipment from a catalog, in particular knee braces for football players. In 1967, he became golf pro at the Salemtowne Golf and Country Club, a private course attached to a senior citizen community in Salem. Gary Schafer, retired grounds superintendent of Salemtowne, remembered those days in 2011. His father and he had been

hired to develop the property from fruit orchards. "We built the course in the later part of '67. I had met Charlie playing golf, and we offered him a position."

Noted literary editor Gary Fisketjon met Charlie as a teenager around then. He wrote twice about the instruction he received for the travel and leisure website Departures.com. Fisketjon recalled how Perkins told of playing golf and carousing with Babe Ruth and Walter Hagen, an all-time great golfer who also led a flashy, free-spending lifestyle. Fisketjon added, "His distinctly old-school instruction stayed with me … Under Charlie's tutelage I learned not only the game but also the knack of dealing with unknown elders, and he served as my *de facto* parent during junior tournaments. Even though we eventually fell out over my long hair and 'radical' politics, having a close relationship with someone who could both play and teach was invaluable."[37] In a curious twist, Fisketjon too wound up at Williams, graduating from there in 1976.

Gary Schafer said, "Charlie ran the pro shop at Salemtowne until we went into receivership around 1972. After we came out of that, I took over the position. Charlie's leg also went bad and he couldn't play. But his wife, Florence, was a pretty wealthy lady. Things were comfortable for him."

Charlie Perkins died on May 25, 1988. Survivors included Florence (the available evidence does not indicate that they had children). His brief obituary in the *Salem Statesman-Journal* said that he had been living there for 18 years; before that, he lived in two small towns about 15 miles to the southeast, Aumsville and Mill City. The obit also mentioned that he was still associated with Salemtowne.[38] He was cremated and his ashes were scattered over the Willamette Valley.

As Gary Schafer also observed, Perkins was much the same in later life as he was in his playing days. "He loved to gamble on the golf course. And he was always telling his stories – he had a lot of stories. I wish I could remember them all."

Thanks to Gary Fisketjon '76, Gary Schafer, and SABR member Annie Russell in Salem, Oregon, for their assistance.

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Afterword

It's been more than 75 years now since a member of the Purple has appeared in a major-league baseball game. An analysis of the program's history is not my intent here, but let's touch briefly on some of the men who made it to the pros – or who might have had the talent to go to the top.

George Brown '45: Quit Williams as a freshman in 1942 to sign with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Pitched in their system through 1951, after three seasons of military service (1942-45) during World War II. Promising prospect reached Triple-A for parts of the 1947-50 seasons.

Chuck Goodell '48: When he was appointed to fill Robert F. Kennedy's U.S. Senate seat in 1968, the *New York Times* called him "the best catcher they ever had on the Williams College baseball team." Turned down a pro offer to attend Yale Law School. Father of NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

George Ditmar '50: Older brother of Art Ditmar, who pitched in the majors from 1954 through 1962. Batterymate of Chuck Goodell also never turned pro.

Bob DePopolo '53: Catcher played Class A ball from 1956 through 1958 in the Philadelphia Phillies chain. Became a teacher, coach, and noted amateur golfer. The *Boston Globe* said DePopolo "pushed the envelope on golf fanaticism."

Tom Yankus '56: Pitched in the low minors in 1956 and 1958. Became a distinguished educator and dean at Choate. Coached the baseball team there for 52 years, retired, but joined Wesleyan University's staff in 2010. Also played, managed, and coached in the Cape Cod summer league.

Pete Eshelman '76: 23rd-round draft pick of the New York Yankees in 1976 spent one season in their system and then worked in their front office. Founded and developed two specialty sports insurance businesses and then turned to farming Wagyu beef.

Keith Surkont '99: Fourth-round draft pick of the Oakland A's, the first Eph to be drafted since Pete Eshelman. Pitched four years, reaching Double-A in his last season, 2002.

In addition to Fay Vincent and George Steinbrenner, the following Ephs have been visible in non-playing roles.

Bob Nutting '83: Became principal owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates in 2007.

Stephen Bronfman '86: Became a limited partner of the Montreal Expos in 1999 and hoped to keep the franchise (now the Washington Nationals) in his hometown.

Jim Duquette '88: Scout and baseball executive after starring as an outfielder at Williams. General manager of the New York Mets in 2004.

Hal Steinbrenner '91: Son of George Steinbrenner '52. Managing General Partner and Co-Chairperson of the Yankees.

Acknowledgments

In addition to those already thanked in the individual chapters of this story, I'd like to express my gratitude to the following people:

Fay Vincent '60, for his enthusiastic participation in this project;

Dr. Norman Hugo '55 and Bill Hugo '84, for helping to obtain Fay Vincent's input;

Amy Lovett, editor of the *Williams Alumni Review*, for additional review of the assembled stories, for encouraging my original story on Ted Lewis over a decade ago, and for helping this version find a home on the Williams website;

Linda Hall, archivist, Williams College Archives and Special Collections;

My colleagues in the Society for American Baseball Research, for their peer review of each biography (see http://bioproj.sabr.org);

My brother, Eric Costello, for additional research (especially on genealogy).

Rory S. Costello
July 2011

About the Author

Rory Costello '84 lives in Brooklyn, New York with his wife Noriko (who tolerates baseball) and 3-year-old son Kai (who loves it).