Rex Smith Found

Bob Bailey is leaving Louisville in a blaze of glory by winning the January Find of the Month award for nailing Rex Smith, who pitched one game for the Philadelphia Athletics on July 11, 1886. This player has always been listed as Reginald Smith and Bob determined that at some point in time, Rex Smith was misread as Reg Smith, and hence the difference in first names.

While researching something else, Bob came across an article in the 11/13/1887 Louisville Courier-Journal that Louisville had signed pitcher Rex Smith for 1888. It listed several minor league teams that Smith had pitched for and noted that he lived at 1924 Grayson in Louisville. Bob went to the 1888 city directory, looked at that address and found Henry Schmidt with the occupation “baseball.” (Don’t you love that term?)

Going back through the 1887 Louisville papers, Bob found several references to Rex Smith, a local pitcher, including his time with Jersey City just before he pitched with the Athletics. Rex was pulled from the stands to pitch that 1886 game. Bob located his death in the city mortuary records. Smiths are difficult to u-ack down and Bob did great work in nailing this one.

Nonagenarian Trivia

Bob Davids sent along a couple of notes on two of our nonagenarians. Morris “Red” Badgro, who recently celebrated his 92nd birthday, is the longest lived athlete of those who played both major league baseball and major league football. He surpassed George Halas who lived to be 88. Badgro played outfield for the St. Louis Browns in 1929-30 and end for 3 NFL teams from 1927-36.

Milt Gaston, who turned 99 on January 27, should surpass Dummy Hoy this year as the 10-year major leaguer to live the longest. Gaston is also the last survivor of the 33 different hurlers who tossed up home run balls to Babe Ruth in 1927. Gaston surrendered four of them.

A Famous High School

In last month’s biography of Rupert Mills, I misspelled the name of Barringer High School. Mills is actually the third most renowned baseball personality to graduate from the school. Moe Berg graduated from there as well as our own Bob McConnell.

A Correction?

The February 3, 1944 edition of The Sporting News contains an obituary of Jack Warner and says that he died January 21, 1944. We list his death as December 21, 1943. Can someone check New York City papers and obtain the correct date?

Hall of Fame Question

This really doesn’t have anything to do with biographical research, but I had a question relating to the recent Hall of Fame voting. I was somewhat surprised to see Curt Flood still receiving votes. In looking back over the voting, it appears that Flood did not show up on the ballot until 1985. Since he retired in 1971, his first year to be eligible should have been 1977. Why did he not appear until 1985?

Also Minnie Minoso is still on the ballot. He made token appearances in 1976 and 1980 after retiring originally in 1964. However, he apparently did not appear on the ballot from 1970-75. What is the story here? Anybody know?

Still Searching

Bob Bailey has spent the last several years
tracking missing ballplayers in the Louisville area. Despite tireless research, he began to run out of leads. So he moved to Birmingham, Alabama to search for players in that area. Birmingham didn’t have as many ballplayers to look for as Louisville, so Bob has now moved to Philadelphia, where there are many players still among the missing. What some people won’t do to feed that biographical research bug.

I Wish I Were In Dixie

What do Stonewall Jackson Beach, William Butler, Robert Lee Caruthers, Charles Ferguson EL. Ford, Alexander Bennett Sanders, Ed Tate, and Steve Took have in common? If the names of the Civil War generals didn’t tip you off, all these players were born in The Confederate States of America. Thanks to Jamie Seiko for passing this along.

Is 5 The Record?

Last month, I asked if anyone knew of a team with more than 4 players with the same last name such as the 4 Smiths on the 1994 Orioles. According to Jamie Seiko, the 1994 Pawtucket Red Sox had 5 players named Rodriguez (Carlos, Frank, Ruben, Steve, and Tony.)

Birthday List

There are no nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in February, but Robert Cremins turns 89 on February 15.

A Ballplayer or Not?

This could be the Find of the Month, but right now it is the Mystery of the Month. Tom Hufford recently sent me the death certificate for one George J. Popplein. Popplein died March 31, 1901 in Baltimore. The only problem is that Popplein is not on my database as a major league player. The ThompsonTurkin encyclopedia lists Popplein as playing one game in the outfield for the infamous 1873 Baltimore Marylands. The Marylands only played 5 games (losing them all) so Popplein shouldn’t be too hard to veri~ if he is a major leaguer. Can someone check on this and let me know if Popplein did play in a game, and if so, his debut thte9

Bio Report 2 January 1995
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Total Completion         |       |       | 92.2053|
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New Monthly Data

Questionnaire Received:
None

New Information Received:

1934 Bejma, Aloysius Frank  
D: Jan 3 1995  
South Bend, Indiana

1889 Carl, Frederick E  
B: Sep 8  
Baltimore, Maryland

1943 Clay, Dam Elmer  
ID: Aug 28, 1994  
Victoria, California

1884 Conley, Edward J.  
Height: 5-08 Weight: 142  
(R1)

1891 Doran, John F.  
Height: 5-04 Weight: .160  
(T1)

1903 DeMontreville, Leon  
B: Sep 23 1875  
Washington County, Minnesota

1953 Elston, Donald Ray  
D: Jan 2 1995  
Evanston, Illinois

1944 Gladu, Roland Edouard  
B: May 10 1911  
(W1)

1935 Gumbert, Harry Edward  
D: Jan 4 1995  
Wimberley, Texas

1943 Haefner, Milton Arnold  
D: Jan 3 1995  
New Athens, Illinois

1880 Haley, Fred  
Name: Frederick Haley  
(H4)

1901 Lawson, Robert Baker  
B: Jun 18 1853  
(T1)

1935 Mueller, Ray Coleman  
D: Jun 29 1994  
Lower Paxton Township, Pennsylvania

1884 Munce, John Lewis  
Height: 5-08.5 Weight: 160  
(R1)

1902 Ritter, Lewis Elmer  
B: Liverpool, Pennsylvania  
(T1)

1949 Rogovin, Saul Walter  
D: Jan 23 1995  
New York New York

1945 Rudolph, Ernest William  
B: Feb 13 1909  
(H1)

1953 Shepard, Jack Leroy  
B: May 13 1931  
(H1)

D: Dec 31 1994  
(C1)

1896 Smith, Harvey Fetterhoff  
B: Union Deposit, Pennsylvania  
(T1)

1886 Smith, Reginald  
Name: Rex Smith  
(B6)

Real name: Henry W. Schmidt

D: Jun 21 1895  
Louisville, Kentucky

1952 Thomas, Keith Marshall  
B: Apr 27 1923  
(X2)

D: Jan 7 1995  
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

1948 Wellman, Robert Joseph  
D: Villa Hills, Kentucky  
(H1)

1884 Wilson, George Archibald  
Name: George Archer Wilson  
(H1)

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