Finding a Sixpack

It’s been a busy month for Richard Malatzky. He’s made a few trips to the New Jersey Archives as well as doing a little research in Philadelphia and found 6 of our missing players. Richard found George Ewell, John Cuff, William Hoover, John Kelty, John Riddle, and Charles Reipschlager. I can’t ever remember a month where someone tracked down 6 guys. No question that this earns Richard the Find of the Month award.

Frank Griffith

Frank Griffith pitched for Chicago in 1892 and Cleveland in 1894. We knew he died in 1908 but we didn’t know where or when. Bill Simpson located his death date and place in the General Register of the Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity as Griffith was a member of that fraternity at Northwestern. In fact, he graduated in 1895 after his major league career was ended.

New Member

Please welcome Scott Horstmeier to the committee. Scott’s address is 108 Rosetta Court, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246 and his code number will be H9.

Earl Johnson

Jamie Selko sends along this story of Earl Johnson’s WWII experience. There was an incident in which the Waffen SS killed 100 American soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge. They were machine-gunned to death with their hands tied behind their backs. Earl Johnson was the leader of the patrol that found the bodies in the snow.

Enlisting as a private, he ended up a first lieutenant. He won two bronze stars with V (valor) device and the Silver Star. He landed in Normandy on D-Day and fought from the hedgerows of Normandy through the bulge to the Elbe, where his unit sat and waited for the Russians.

Big Families

Last month I mentioned Elmo Plaskett being one of 16 children. We have found a couple of players who came from larger families. George Harper was one of 20 and Willie Horton was one of 21. Among current players, Bill Swift is one of 15. Thanks to Scott Flatow, Pete Cava, and Bill Weiss for providing this information.

Birthday List

The following nonagenarians are celebrating birthdays in March and April. Make sure you send a card.

| March 12 | Robert Barr  | 91 |
| March 13 | Harry Kimberlin  | 90 |
| March 22 | Edward Cole  | 90 |
| March 29 | William Strickland  | 91 |
| April 9  | Howard Groskiss  | 93 |
| April 17 | Claude Passeau  | 90 |
| April 17 | Robert Stevens  | 92 |

Elmer Knetzer

Here is an interesting Mystery of the Month from Dick Thompson. Dick just finished working up the 1909 New England League pitching stats. Elmer Knetzer had a won lost record of 9-20 and despite that was bought by the Brooklyn Dodgers at the end of the season. This was Knetzer’s first year in pro ball after playing as a semi-pro in the Pittsburgh area from 1905-08. He then went on to a 68-69 record in the majors. In addition to
what you see in the encyclopedias, he was 8-12 for Pittsburgh in the Federal League in 1913 and 6-6 for Columbus in the AA. At that point he was listed on the Columbus ineligible list.

Current accepted birth date is 7/22/1885 in Carrick, Pa. So he turned 24 his first pro year and turned 32 his last year in 1917. Seems to fit. Now the odd part.

In 1927, after a nine year unexplained absence, when Ray Nemec thinks he was pitching semipro ball in Pennsylvania, Knetzer made a comeback in pro ball and won 17 games in the Mid-Atlantic League. If we believe his listed age, he would have turned 42 during the season. Now, old Elmer continued to pitch in the New York-Penn and Mid-Atlantic Leagues through 1933. His win totals from 1927-1933 were 17, 17, 17, 15, 16, 12, and 7. He was released by Springfield on April 15, 1934. He would have won his last game at age 48.

Now this is not unheard of. Jack Quinn, George Bennett, Huyt Wilhelm, etc., etc. But it does seem odd. Dick found two TSN articles that confirms this is all the same guy. Ray Nemec confirms it also. Now Ray says, and he did not tell Dick his source, that Knetzer listed his birth year as 1888 when he made his 1927 comeback. Course he could have shaved a few years off.
# The Scoreboard

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Charlie Dexter played all over the field as a professional athlete. His personal life was equally erratic. Dexter played for semi-professional teams in Evansville before attending Sewanee (Tenn.) University in 1894. In 1895, he returned to Evansville, this time as a member of the city’s Southern League team. The following year he joined Louisville of the National League.

Dexter spent three more seasons with Louisville. The Chicago Cubs purchased his contract in January 1900 after the NL expelled the Louisville franchise. In July 1902 the Cubs traded him to Boston. Dexter’s 1903 campaign with the Beaneaters was his last in the majors. That December, he was in a Chicago theater when a fire broke out. Dexter and another ballplayer, Frank Houseman, were credited with saving hundreds of lives when they burst open a locked exit door.

Dexter purchased his own release from Boston before the 1904 season and returned to Louisville (American Association) as the Colonel’s third baseman and team captain. In 1905 he moved from Louisville to Des Moines (Western) in mid-season. In early October Dexter was out carousing when he got into an argument with Harry Bateman, an old friend who played for Milwaukee (American Association.) Dexter, who was known for his hot temper, stabbed Bateman in the chest and seriously wounded him. Dexter was arrested, but Bateman refused to press charges.

During his eight-year big league tenure, Dexter caught, played all four infield positions and the outfield. His best year was 1898, when he batted .314 and stole 44 bases. Dexter’s baseball career ended after the 1909 season. He worked in the restaurant business and later in sales. In June 1934 Dexter traveled from his home in Des Moines to visit relatives in St. Louis. On the return trip he stopped in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Using a false name, Dexter checked into a hotel room where he shot and killed himself.
New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:
None

New Information Received:

1942 Adkins, John Dewey
D: Dec 26 1998
Santa Monica, California

1884 Baldwin, Charles Busted
B: Oramel, New York

1942 Calvert, Paul Leo Emile
D: Feb 1 1999
Sherbrooke, Quebec

1884 Cuff, John J.
Name: John Patrick Cuff
B: Union City, New Jersey
D: Dec 5 1916
Hoboken, New Jersey

1912 Cutshaw, George William
B: Jul 29 1886

1952 Dunn, James William
D: Jan 6 1999
Gadsden, Alabama

1884 Dunn, Stephen B.
D: Jan 11 1999
BL

1951 Dyck, James Robert
D: Jan 11 1999
Cheney, Washington

1938 Errickson, Richard Merriwell
B: Mar 5 1912
Name: George W. Ewell
B: Feb 1851
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
D: Oct 20 1910
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1871 Ewell, George

1941 Fischer, Reuben Walter
D: Jul 16 1997
Green Bay, Wisconsin

1938 Georgy, Oscar John
D: Jan 15 1999
New Orleans, Louisiana

1937 Gill, George Lloyd
D: Feb 21 1999
Jackson, Mississippi

1940 Gorsica, John Joseph Perry
D: Dec 16 1998
Charlottesville, North Carolina

1946 Graham, John Bernard
D: Dec 30 1998
Los Alamitos, California

1892 Griffith, Frank Wesley
D: Dec 8 1908
Waterman, Illinois

1884 Hoover, William J.
Name: William James Hoover
B: Apr 12 1863
D: Apr 16 1924
Jersey City, New Jersey

1911 Kelhier, Maurice Michael
Debut: Sep 10 1911

1890 Kelty, John James
B: Mar 10 1871
D: Apr 13 1929
Jersey City, New Jersey

1944 King, Clyde Edward
B: May 23 1924
Name: Pierre Lamers

1902 Lamer, Pierre

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1874 Miller, Thomas P.  
1952 Mizell, Wilmer David

1973 Parker, David Gene  
1995 Perez, Eduardo  
1922 Reichle, Richard Wendell  
1883 Reipschläger, Charles W.

1889 Riddle, John H.

1934 Sington, Frederic William

1884 Smith, Ed

1884 Smith, John Francis  
1875 Trenwith, George

1935 Vance, Joseph Albert  
1951 Zauchin, Norbert Henry

B: 1850  
D: Feb 21 1999  
Kerrville, Texas

B: Grenada, Mississippi  
Name: Eduardo Rafael Perez  
D: Richmond Heights, Missouri  
B: Feb 1854  
D: Mar 16 1910  
Atlantic City, New Jersey

D: May 5 1931  
Camden, New Jersey

D: Aug 20 1998  
Birmingham, Alabama

New player with Baltimore (UA) in 1884  
Debut: Apr 18 1884  
Debut: Aug 14 1884  
B: 1851  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

D: San Antonio, Texas  
D: Jan 31 1999  
Birmingham, Alabama