Catching A Fish

For the second month in a row, Bob Richardson captures the *Find of the Month* award for his excellent job of nailing Charles Fisher of the 1884 Chicago and Kansas City Unions. Bob began his search with notes from both Harold Dellinger and Joe Simonic that Fisher was from Lynn, Massachusetts and had played with St. Joseph, Missouri in 1886 before being sent home to Newburyport, Massachusetts to recover from malaria. The papers reported the return of the player, but called him Charley Fish. Bob also found a Fish playing sporadically around Lynn as early as 1877.

Bob began tracking the only Charley Fish that fit and found two marriage records for him. The second marriage in 1894 showed his name as Charles G. Fisher. Bob couldn’t find him in the 1900 Massachusetts census, so showing the acute perception that marks the members of this committee, he decided to check for him in Alaska. There he was, listed as Charles G. Fisher, born 1852 in Massachusetts, occupation gold miner. Bob wrote for the death certificate and received word that Fisher died February 18, 1917 in Eagle, Alaska. (For those who don’t know where Eagle is, it’s a few miles north of Chicken.)

Now the only thing to do was prove that the Charles Fisher who died in Alaska was the ballplayer. The New England papers referred to the St. Joseph player as Charley Fish and Fish was never active locally while Fisher was playing in the Midwest. Then Bob found Fish playing in the Eastern New England League in 1885 and found a note that Charles G. Fish had signed and was 32 years old. Everything fits together. Great work on a tough guy!

New Members

We have 2 new members. Their addresses and code numbers are:

Charles "Newt" Weaver  
2 South Baltimore Avenue  
Ocean City, Maryland 21842 (W5)

Daniel Mumford  
12620 Sheffield Road  
Ocean City, Maryland 21842 (M5)

By the way, due to several inquiries I have had, I will print a complete list of committee members and code numbers in the January newsletter.

The Smith Brothers

While loading my 1994 data into my computer, I noticed that the 1994 Baltimore Orioles had 4 players named Smith (Lee, Mike, Dwight, and Lonnie). Does anyone know of any other team that had at least 4 players who shared the same last name?

Oh Pa, That Song Makes Me Cry

I also noticed that the Oakland Athletics had two pitchers, John Briscoe and Ron Darling. Does anyone know who Briscoe Darling is? Fans of Andy Griffith would know in a second.

What a Ham

David Arcidiacono has done some research on the man we list as Homer (Ham) Allen. It’s possible that we have his first name wrong. The May 16 1871 Hartford Post reported that Edward A. Allen had joined the Mansfields from the Marlboro Fairmounts. Later in the year, articles referred to him as Ham Allen. (Did you realize that if we got Ham Allen, Turkey Mike Donlin, Eddie Bacon, Jackie Mayo, and Sweetbreads...
To further complicate things the 1871 Middletown city directory lists a Frank E. Allen, whose occupation was listed as "base ballist." David feels that Homer was a nickname given to Allen because in the 1870 season he was the first batter to hit a fair ball over the outfield fence at the Mansfields' new park. It looks as if either Frank or Edward was Allen's first name and Ham and Homer were nicknames bestowed on him. Anyone have any more information?

Birthday List

There are four nonagenarians celebrating birthdays in January. Be sure to send a card.

- January 6     Robert Barnes     93
- January 12    Joe Hauser       96
- January 27    Milt Gaston      99
- January 29    Ray Hayworth      91

Irritated About Burke

We list Joseph A Burke as playing with St. Louis (AA) in 1890 and Cincinnati (AA) in 1891. Neither his birthdate nor death date is known. Joe Simenic and Pete Cava both sent me information on Burke and thus Burke becomes our December Mystery of the Month.

On September 26, 1890 Philadelphia and St. Louis played a doubleheader in St. Louis. A player named Burke played third base in both games for St. Louis. Sporting Life made no mention of his first name nor where he came from.

On July 23, 1891, St. Louis and Cincinnati played a game in Cincinnati. Sporting Life said, "Joe Burke, an amateur, played second base for Cincinnati." The January 21, 1899 Sporting Life carried an item that "the latest addition to the Syracuse team is third baseman Joe Burke, late of Mansfield." There was also a Joe Burke playing in the Texas League from 1903-07.

On July 17, 1893, the captain of the Muncie team, Joseph E. Burke, was struck by a pitched ball and broke his spine. He died of this injury on August 27. In his obituary carried in one of the Muncie papers it states, "During the existence of the Indiana State League a few years ago, he as a member of Muncie's club, during which time he married a Muncie lady. (He married Mary Baker on March 11, 1890.) After the season was over, he resided in this city until the next season when he played with several
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"He gave his life to save that of a friend." The opening line of the second paragraph of The Daily Record of Morristown, New Jersey, July 22, 1929 summed up the heroic death of Rupert Mills. The first paragraph stated, "Rupert F. Mills, well known to Morristonians for his activities in collegiate, sporting, military, and political circles, was drowned at Lake Hopatcong on Saturday afternoon."

Death came to Mills while he and former state assemblyman Louis Freeman were boating in a canoe. The craft capsized. Mills asked Freeman, a non-swimmer, to grab the canoe paddle and he dragged him approximately 100 feet to shore. As rescuers pulled Freeman out of the water, Mills sank in fifteen feet of water. It took an additional thirty minutes to locate his body and pull him from the water. He died of a suspected heart attack.

At the time of his death he was running as the Republican candidate for sheriff of Essex County. According to clippings located by Gerry Tomlinson, Mills' election was regarded as a certainty. Mills' military funeral was attended by a huge contingent of his friends and admirers. Mills had been a cavalry captain. His death shocked his many friends, including Knute Rockne, who attended the funeral. Mills had served as an eastern scout for the Irish. He also hosted the Notre Dame football team on its visits to New York to play the Army.

Mills was a four sport star at Baringer high school. Winning the state high jump title, he received pro baseball offers, but was convinced to take an athletic scholarship to Notre Dame after talking with Notre Dame grad Cy Williams at a big league game in New York. Rupe later duplicated his four sport mastery at Notre Dame, becoming only the second man in school history to earn four monograms in a single year. He was the starting basketball center for three years, leading the team to records of 13-2, 11-5, and 15-2. (The first four sport star at Notre Dame, Dutch Bergman, also played in the majors.) Mills played first and second base for the Irish, hitting .394 in 1914.

After graduation, Rupe signed with the Newark Federal League team. Randy Linthurst points out that Mills "was the only Jersey boy on the Newark team." At the beginning of the following season Mills became part of a comic labor relations situation. As Al Kermisch pointed out in the 1986 Baseball Research Journal, Mills single-handedly kept the Federal League alive in 1916.

The league had succumbed to tremendous financial losses after two years of bucking the two traditional major leagues. Mills had a contract and a law degree, so he decided he would not accept the small settlement he was offered to forget the second year of his contract with the Newfeds. For the first two months of the 1916 "season", Mills went to the Newark Federal League park each morning, worked out, took a lunch break, and then called it a day at the supper hour. The Newark News humorously covered Rupe's Newfeds workouts in a May 6 story, "'Yes, I've played ten games since the season started and won them all,' said Rupe Mills the Peps first baseman yesterday just after he reached the bench after scoring from second on his own single to left field."

Finally in June, Mills negotiated a settlement with Harry Sinclair and signed a Detroit Tigers contract and an agreement to play with Harrisburg, where he hit .256 in 70 games. Rupe moved up to Denver in the Western League in 1917 and had a strong year. He hit .285, slugged .417, and led the league in games played (149), 2-baggers (37), assists (75), and fielding percentage (.987). Mills was well-positioned to move up to the majors for 1918, but World War I intervened. Mills enlisted at Anniston, Alabama.

Mills saw service in France as a lieutenant with the 11th field artillery division. In August, 1918, John McGraw took a team to France to play a team of Army stars coached by Johnny Evers. Rupe was selected to play for the Army stars along with Dots Miller and Hank Gowdy.

The obituary notices for Mills were befitting a national leader. One correspondent related, "An inspiration to other young men. Even as his tall handsome figure lifted itself above any crowd, so did Rupe Mills' personality impress any group of which he was a member. His manliness, friendliness, and charm of manner had carried him far. He was an ideal for youth."
New Monthly Data

Questionnaires Received:
None

New Information Received:

1884 Butler, Frank Edward
1873 Campbell, Hugh F.
1911 Conwell, Edward James
1926 Cullop, Henry Nicholas
1884 Fisher, Charles J.

1844 Garbark, Nathaniel Michael
1944 Gladu, Roland Edouard
1871 Ham, Ralph A.
1940 Johnson, Earl Douglas
1905 LeRoy, Louis Paul
1944 McGhee, William Mac
1884 McKeever, James
1941 Meers, Russell Harlan
1882 Merrill, Edward Mason
1924 Miller, Jacob Walter
1884 Murphy, Frank J.

1884 O'Donnell,
1884 Oxley, Harry Havelock
1994 Park, Chan Ho
1942 Reynolds, Allie Pierce
1933 Robello, Thomas Vardasco
1951 Sacka, Frank
1929 Scarritt, Russell Mallory

Height: 5-06  Weight: 140  (R1)
B: 1850  (M4)
Ireland
D: Chicago, Illinois  (T1)
Real name: Heinrich Nicholas Kolop  (T3)
Name: Charles G. Fisher  (R1)
Real name: Charles G. Fish
B: Mar 10 1852
Boxford, Massachusetts
D: Feb 18 1917
Eagle, Alaska
TR Height: 5-08  Weight: 143  (H1)
D: Aug 31 1994
Charlotte, North Carolina

D: Jul 26 1994
Montreal, Quebec
Eliminate 1872 Middletown record.
Record belongs to Ham Allen.
D: Dec 3 1994  (W2)
Seattle, Washington
B: Omro, Wisconsin  (T1)
D: Mar 10 1984  (H1)

Height: 5-10  Weight: 170  (R1)
D: Nov 16 1994  (H4)
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
B: Maysville, Kentucky  (B6)
Name: Walter Miller  (T3)
Name: Francis J. Murphy  (R1)
B: 1863

Height: 5-06  Weight: 145  (D2)
Name: John O'Donnell
Height: 5-11  Weight: 163  (R1)
B: Kongju, South Korea  (H1)
D: Dec 26 1994  (C1)
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
D: Dec 25 1994  (C1)
Fort Worth, Texas
D: Dec 7 1994  (S9)
Dearborn, Michigan
Name: Stephen Russell Mallory Scarritt  (H1)
D: Dec 4 1994
Pensacola, Florida

Bio Report 5

December 1994
1960 Smith, Charles William
1929 Stroner, James M.

1891 Taylor, John Budd
1944 Treadway, Thadford Leon

1994 Vanegmond, Timothy Layne
1958 Vargas, Roberto Enrique
1880 Weidman, George Edward
1948 Wellman, Robert Joseph

1884 Wilson, George Archibald
1924 Winters, Clarence John
1914 Zeiser, Matthew J.

D: Nov 29 1994
    Reno, Nevada
Name: James Melvin Stroner
B: May 29 1901
D: Dec 6 1975
    Tarboro, North Carolina

D: May 26 1994
    Atlanta, Georgia
Name: Timothy Layne VanEgmond
Name: Roberto Enrique Vargas (Velez)
Name: George Edward Wiedman
D: Dec 20 1994
    Covington, Kentucky
Height: 5-08  Weight: 175
TR
D: Chicago, Illinois