Quarterly Newsletter of the
Brooks Robinson - George Kell Chapter of
the Society for American Baseball Research

Volume 1, Number 2                 July 2006

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Manager's Memo

Hello, baseball fans!

It’s hard to believe that we are past the All-Star break already and the World Series is right around the corner!

Enclosed in the second edition of our newsletter are details of some up coming events we are planning. If anyone has ideas for future meetings, speakers, or presentations, please let me know.

---- Madison McEntire

Editor’s Note

We are thrilled to include two special items in this issue. The first is a biography of George Kell, one of the two Arkansas Hall of Fame third baseman after whom our chapter is named. It is written by Kell's long-time friend, Jim Rasco. Please take the time to read this delightful biography of a wonderful player and man.

We are also indebted to Richard Smiley for allowing us to reprint his summary of "Boiling Out 2006" which originally appeared in the Dead Ball Committee's newsletter.
Upcoming Events

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<td>August 19, 2006</td>
<td>Memphis, Tennessee</td>
<td>Our next meeting will start at 1:00 p.m. at AutoZone Park, Memphis and will include the Redbirds game against Round Rock. Cost will be in the $15 to $20 range as it was last year and will include the game and dinner. You may pay at the meeting but please RSVP Madison at <a href="mailto:madcris@sbcglobal.net">madcris@sbcglobal.net</a> by August 10 to let him know you will be there. Our guest speaker will be former major-leaguer Bill Selby. Presentations are welcome --- please contact Madison to let him know.</td>
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<td>October 7, 2006</td>
<td>Fort Smith, Arkansas</td>
<td>Forth Smith SABR member Jim Sanders has invited us to Fort Smith to learn about Andrews Field and take a tour of the old park. Andrews Field was built in 1920 and is one of the five oldest parks still in use today. At one time it served as the home to several minor league teams and currently hosts local softball teams. It is scheduled for demolition early next spring, so don’t miss this opportunity to get a look at this historic site before it is gone forever. The exact details of the meeting are still being worked out but the plan is to meet for lunch and a presentation before touring the old ballyard. If you need recommendations on a place to stay, contact Jim at <a href="mailto:hellobaseballfans@aol.com">hellobaseballfans@aol.com</a>.</td>
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Trivia Column

"Correct thinkers think that baseball trivia is an oxymoron: nothing about baseball is trivial."

-- George Will (April 8, 1990)

Questions of the day -----  

1. Which Hall of Famer is the only player to end a game with an inside-the-park grand slam?

2. Who is the only player since 1920 to win a home run crown but not have a 100-RBI season at any time during his career?

For answers, look at the bottom of page 8.
George Kell was born in Swifton, Arkansas on August 23, 1922 and has lived there for the past 84 years. After graduation from Swifton High (where in 1937-1938 his 11th grade English teacher was Margaret Terry – later Rasco) George attended Arkansas State for one year. During the summer of 1940 Kell joined the nearby Newport team in the four-team Class D Northeast Arkansas League. After an outstanding season in 1941, the Dodgers picked up his contract and assigned him their Durham N.C. farm club. However his weak knees showed up and the Dodgers released him before the 1942 season started. Tempted to give up baseball and get a job, Kell was able to hook up with Lancaster, PA, a member of the Class B Interstate League for the 1942 season. Kell turned 21 during the 1943 season and had a remarkable year. He hit .396 (the highest average in organized baseball) to win the Louisville Slugger Trophy, a full-sized sterling silver bat, presented annually to the top hitter in the minors. He also had the most hits (220); scored the most runs (120); and had the most triples (23) in organized baseball. Connie Mack’s A’s had a working agreement with Lancaster and purchased Kell for $20,000 at the end of the playoffs. Kell joined the A’s and made his major league debut against the Browns on the final day of the regular season, September 28, 1943. In George’s first major league at-bat, he sliced a triple down the right field line to drive in the first run of the game.

Kell earned $3,000 for the 1944 season as the A’s regular third baseman. George hit .268 and was selected as the unofficial “rookie of the year”. For 1945, Kell received a salary of $5,000 and at the end of the season he came in third in the voting among third basemen for the major league All-Star team selected annually by the Baseball Writers Association of America for The Sporting News. Only National Leaguers Whitey Kurowski and Stan Hack received more votes than Kell. Charles Faber’s Baseball Ratings (retroactive) ranked Kell as the all-star third baseman of the American League. Kell led AL third basemen in fielding, put outs and assists and was awarded the “GOLD GLOVE” by three different selectors (retroactive).

On May 18, 1946, Kell joined the Detroit Tigers and his career really took off. For the next decade he was the premier third baseman in the major leagues. At the conclusion of the 1946 season, Kell ranked fourth in the AL with a .322 batting average and was voted the outstanding third baseman in the majors by the Baseball Writers. Again, he led the AL in all fielding stats and repeated as the unanimous winner of the (retroactive) GOLD GLOVE.

In 1947 the fans were awarded the right to select the All-Star teams in a nationwide poll. Kell was the voted to start at third base for the AL and was selected to be the lead-off man. Kell’s final batting average of .320 was 5th in the league and he was 7th with 93 RBI’s. He ranked 2nd in hits, singles and clutch-hitting and was 8th in voting for Most Valuable Player in the league. Again the Baseball Writers picked Kell as the outstanding third baseman in the majors and he was awarded his third (retroactive) GOLD GLOVE.

In 1948, Kell was hitting .330 at the All-Star break and was the fans choice to start at third base for the AL. Again, Kell was to be the lead-off man for the AL, but a sprained ankle kept him on the bench as the AL rolled to victory in St. Louis. Earlier in the season Vic Raschi had broken
Kell’s wrist with a fast ball and then in August a bad hop on a line drive off Joe DiMaggio’s bat broke Kell’s jaw and ended his season. Though Kell missed 40% of the season due to injuries, he finished a close second to (National Leaguer) Bob Elliott (45 votes to 40 votes) in the Associated Press poll as the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues. The United Press picked AL and NL All-Star teams for the first time. Kell was voted (by a large margin) as the outstanding third baseman in the AL and he came in 16th in voting for MVP.

In July of 1949, Kell was leading the AL with a .353 average when the fans chose him to start in the All-Star game. The AL won again with Kell reaching base all four times he appeared at the plate. He reached first on an error, had two singles and drew a walk. He stole a base, scored twice and his pinch-runner scored a third run. For the season, Kell won the AL batting title (and a second sterling silver Louisville Slugger Bat Trophy) with a final average of .343; which was the highest in either league. Kell was second in the AL in doubles and fourth in triples. He ranked in the top ten in twelve other categories, including on-base percentage and slugging average. He was 8th in voting for MVP and a unanimous choice as the top third baseman in the majors by the Writers, the AP and Baseball Magazine. The United Press and several other sources picked post-season AL All-Star teams and Kell was the unanimous choice. Dell Magazine ranked Kell and Floyd Baker as the best defensive third basemen in the majors and the magazine ranked Ted Williams, Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial, Jackie Robinson and Kell as the top five hitters in the majors.

For the 1950 season Kell became the highest paid infielder in the league as the Tigers raised his salary from $27,500 to $45,000. In July, Kell received the most votes of any player in either league in the nationwide All-Star poll (conducted by 290 newspapers and radio stations) receiving 1,132,954 votes. Jackie Robinson was runner-up with 1,061,522 votes. Kell was leading the AL with a .372 average and chosen to bat third in the All-Star game. He played the entire 14 innings of the All-Star game and drove in two of the three AL runs. For the entire season, he played in all 157 games; was runner-up in hitting with a .340 average; and led the league with 56 doubles (no major league player has hit that many doubles since); 218 hits; 125 runs created; and 641 at-bats. He was second in the league with 70 extra base hits; 148 singles; and 36 at-bats per strikeout. He was third in the league by reaching base 285 times and with 16 sacrifice hits. He was 4th in the league with 310 total bases and with 207 runs produced. He scored 114 runs to rank fifth and his “on-base-percentage” plus “slugging average” of .886 was ninth in AL. He had a career high 101 RBI’s and became one of the few players in major league history to drive in more than 100 runs with fewer than ten home runs. On June 2, 1950 Kell hit for the cycle. Kell made only 9 errors in 157 games and led the league in fielding for the third time. Dell Magazine ranked Kell as the best defensive third baseman in the majors. George was 4th in voting for MVP and was named to all of the post-season All-Star teams. His selection as the outstanding third baseman in the majors by the Writers was his fourth time to receive this honor. For the first time LOOK magazine polled major league broadcasters and telecasters and named AL and NL all-star teams and a major league team. Needless to say, Kell was voted the outstanding 3B in both the AL and the majors by LOOK magazine. Dell magazine listed Musial, Williams, DiMaggio and Kell as the top four hitters in the majors.

In 1951, Kell was voted to start in the annual All-Star game (in his home park in Detroit) and hit a home run for the AL off of New York Giant hurler Sal Maglie. His final .319 batting average
was third in the AL and he led the league with 36 doubles, 191 hits and 150 singles. He was the second toughest batter to strike out and was in the top ten in six other categories, including a career high ten stolen bases. He was voted as the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues by the Writers (for the fifth time); by the Associated Press and by LOOK magazine. For the first time, SPORT magazine named a major league all-star team and Kell was selected as the third baseman. The United Press named its annual AL all-star team and Kell received 22 of the 24 votes. He was awarded another retroactive GOLD GLOVE and picked as the outstanding defensive third baseman by Dell magazine.

On June 3, 1952, the Red Sox obtained Kell in a nine-player trade. At the All-Star break, Kell was hitting .326 and again named to the All-Star team. But six days before the game, Kell injured his right leg crashing into the stands at Yankee Stadium and had to withdraw from the team. For the season his .311 batting average tied Mickey Mantle for third best in the AL. At the end of the year, Kell was voted the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues by the Baseball Writers for The Sporting News (for the sixth time); and by LOOK magazine. In the AP poll, Kell was runner-up to Al Rosen. LOOK magazine and Dell magazine named Kell to their American League All-Star teams. Dell also named Kell as the best fielding third baseman in the AL.

At the end of April of 1953, Kell was the leading hitter in the majors with a .457 batting average. In May, leading the majors at .415, Kell had to drop out of the lineup with a bad back. At the All-Star break, Kell was still leading the league in hitting, but continued to suffer from the back injury and was limited to a pinch-hitting role in the All-Star game. For the season, Kell was 2nd in doubles with 41; 4th with 55 extra base hits; 7th in hitting with a .307 average; 8th with a .483 slugging average and his combined on-base percentage plus slugging average ranked tenth. Kell had twelve home runs and led the league in fielding for the fifth time. Kell was third in the voting for third base on the AP major league All-Star team behind Al Rosen and Eddie Mathews.

On May 23, 1954, Paul Richards (White Sox) gave the Red Sox his third baseman and $100,000 to acquire Kell. The entire White Sox infield (Fain, Fox, Kell and Carrasquel) was named to the mid-season All-Star team. However, Kell and Fain were injured and had to withdraw from the team. For the season, injuries limited Kell to 56 games at 3B, 32 at 1B and 2 in the outfield. His “Clutch Hitting Index” rating of 166 was higher than official league leader Ray Boone’s 143. But, due to a severe knee injury, Kell did not have enough times at bat to be recognized as the league leader. George’s .276 batting average was the first time he hit under .300 since 1945.

Kell had an operation on his knee during the winter of 1954-1955 and decided not to retire. In 1955, an unusual set of circumstances kept Kell from being the AL third baseman in the annual All-Star game. The fans gave Kell 1,528,166 votes, but a late surge from the Kansas City Star and from a newspaper in Quincy, Illinois (the hometown of Kansas City third baseman Jim Finigan) gave Finigan 1,659,278 votes and the starting position. As was the custom at the time, Cleveland manager Al Lopez (whose Indians had won the 1954 AL pennant) was allowed to pick the remainder of the 1955 AL squad. Though the Indians had no players voted to start, Lopez picked six of his Indians to fill out the remainder of the AL team. One of his choices was third baseman Al Rosen (who was hitting only .233 and had received over 500,000 fewer votes
from the fans than Kell). For the season, injuries limited Kell to 128 games (including 105 at 3B). He led the league with a “Clutch Hitting Index” of 148 and his .312 batting average was third in the AL. He ranked 4th in on-base percentage and led the league in fielding for the sixth time. Kell was third in voting for third base on the AP major league All-Star team (behind Eddie Mathews and Ray Boone). He was selected to the post-season AL All-Star team by the Chicago Daily News and was second in the annual all-star voting by the United Press.

Paul Richards was now managing the Orioles and on May 21, 1956 he worked out a trade to receive Kell from the White Sox. Kell was voted to start at 3B for the AL in the 1956 All-Star game. He played the entire game and got one hit. Injuries limited George to 123 games (including 115 at 3B), but he hit nine home runs and led the league in fielding for the seventh time. At he end of the season LOOK magazine (based on its annual poll of broadcasters and telecasters) named Kell as the outstanding third baseman in the AL. Kell was runner-up to Cardinal Ken Boyer in the voting for third base on the AP major league All-Star team (behind Eddie Mathews and Ray Boone). He was selected to the post-season AL All-Star team by the Chicago Daily News and was second in the annual all-star voting by the United Press.

In Kell’s final season, 1957, injuries limited him to 99 games (including 80 at 3B) with the Orioles. Kell was voted to start at 3B for the AL in the annual All-Star game. (I was fifteen years old and my dad and I rode a train to St. Louis to see the All-Star game. I still have our tickets stubs, my scored program, an AL pennant, plenty of autographs and a 16mm sound-color film of the game. The AL scored 3 runs in the top of the ninth and needed each run as the NL rallied for 3 in the bottom of the ninth to cut the final margin to 6-5 for the AL.) This was the seventh time Kell was voted by the fans to start at 3B for the AL. (1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1956, 1957) (He was the runner-up in the voting for the games of 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955.) This was Kell’s sixth time to actually start the game. (Though George was elected to start in 1948, he was unable to play due to injury.)

At the time of his retirement, no other third baseman in major league history had started as many All-Star games as George Kell!!!

For his final season, Kell hit .297 and had 9 home runs in only 310 at bats. He struck out only 16 times during the season. George had the highest fielding percentage among AL third basemen – but was able to play in only 80 games at 3B, so he was not recognized as the official league leader. George Kell played his final major league game on September 14, 1957.

POST-SEASON ALL-STAR SELECTIONS:

At the conclusion of each season, The Sporting News conducted a poll among members of the Baseball Writers’ Association of America to name an All-Star Major League Team. George Kell was selected as the outstanding third baseman in the majors six times (1946, 1947, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952). At the time of his retirement, Kell was one of only two third basemen in major league history who had been honored more than three times during his career. The other was Pie Traynor of the Pittsburgh Pirates who was named seven times (1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1931, 1932, 1933).
SOME OF GEORGE KELL’S OTHER AWARDS:

1964 – Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame
1969 – Michigan Sports Hall of Fame
1969 – Named as the third baseman on the all-time Detroit Tigers team
2003 – Awarded “Doctor of Humane Letters” by Lyon College, Batesville, Arkansas

ALL-DECADE SELECTIONS:

Decade of the 1940’s

In 1990, Street & Smith Baseball Magazine named all-decade Major League All-Star Teams for the previous fifty years. George Kell was named the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues for the “Decade of the 1940’s”.

Decade of the 1950’s

The decade of the 1950’s has been called “The Best Ten Years of Baseball”. During 1960, Ben Olan (Sportswriter for the Associated Press and head of the Baseball Statistics Bureau of the Associated Press) conducted a poll of approximately 200 sportswriters and sports editors of the country’s leading newspapers to determine the Major League All-Star Team for the “Decade of the 1950’s”. In voting, the selectors indicated first, second, and third choices for each position. These choices were then tabulated, with 3 points awarded for first place, 2 points for second place, and 1 point for third place. The results yielded the All-Star Team of the Decade. To quote Mr. Olan, “George Kell clinched the berth at third base with 410 points, but not before he was given a run by Eddie Mathews, who piled up 386 points. Al Rosen followed with 146 points”.

OPINIONS OF GEORGE KELL

In his book (published in 1998) – George Kell states that Ted Williams was the best hitter he ever saw. He mentions Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays and Joe DiMaggio as the three best all-around players. He listed Bob Feller as the toughest pitcher he ever faced. He felt next toughest pitcher was probably Bob Lemon.

It is now July of 2006 and Fred Worth asked me to write a biography of George Kell for our SABR newsletter. In addition to the biography, Fred requested that I contact George and ask him a couple of questions. To get it exactly right, I will list the questions and then George’s answers.

Question – Who was the best player you ever played against?

“Jim – Mickey Mantle was the best – A full five tool player – I played against him for seven straight years – And got to know him at All-Star games – My National League friends make a good case for Willie Mays – I saw him only in All-Star games – I would take them both.”
Question – Who was the best player you ever saw?

“Again Mantle and Mays – There was nothing they could not do – I’m proud I played in this era – Only eight clubs in both leagues – Competition was fierce.”

Question – What do you think about baseball and its current problems?

“Well – that’s tough – We are going through a tough period – With the steroid problem – But baseball will survive and be better. The Commissioner’s Office is taking a hard stand – The players union has been slow – too slow for too long – but now they seem to be responding – And finally the players themselves are beginning to speak up – these players have the most at stake – I’m encouraged by the cooperation of all these people – finally. Baseball is setting attendance records – It is the great American game and will come out of this much better.”

Trivia Answers

2. Bill Melton (33 homers for the 1971 White Sox)

Research News

Grave Hunting

Fred Worth's baseball grave trip to Kansas and Missouri (see below for details) turned up some corrections to previous believed reports. The three most significant involved locations of cemeteries. Luther Haden "Dummy" Taylor was believed to be in Baldwin City Cemetery in Baldwin City, Kansas. It turns out that he is in Prairie City Cemetery in Baldwin City. John Peters was believed to be in Memorial Park Cemetery, Kansas City, Missouri. That cemetery exists, but he is actually in Memorial Park Cemetery in Kansas City, Kansas. Finally, Carroll Elmer "Deacon" Jones was believed to be in LeRoy Cemetery, Oskaloosa, Kansas. There is a LeRoy Cemetery in Kansas but it is nowhere near Oskaloosa. Instead, thanks to a suggestion from necrologist Bill Lee, Fred searched near Oskaloosa, Missouri and found Jones in LeRoy Cemetery, near that Oskaloosa.

Fred also finally finished a quest that had been getting frustrating for him. He found Lee Rogers. Sources said Rogers was buried in Roselawn Cemetery in Little Rock. The only source that disagreed was Roselawn Cemetery. Thanks to some help from Dan Holmes at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, Fred was able to contact Jay Rogers, Lee's son. Lee Rogers is in Calvary Cemetery, right across the street from Roselawn.

See below for a picture of the grave.
See if you can guess whose grave this is.

For the answer, and a picture of the other side, go to page 10.

**Member News**

**Madison McEntire**’s baseball trivia book *Big League Trivia* is now available. Rather than using a simple question-and-answer format, the material in *Big League Trivia* is presented in sentence form – varying in length from a single line to an entire paragraph – to give more detailed information on various items from major league baseball. The items covered in Big League Trivia span from the beginning of the modern baseball era in 1900 through the 2005 season and include everything from the most famous moments in baseball history to unusual coincidences and quirky statistical oddities that only baseball can produce. For ordering information, see www.big-league-trivia.blogspot.com.

**Fred Worth** recently received a Faculty Research Grant from Henderson State University to fund a grave hunting trip to Kansas and Missouri. He and his wife, Beth, traveled through many small towns in both states, as well as spending a couple of days in Kansas City. They traveled to
more than 50 cemeteries and found more than 90 player graves. Included in the player grave visits were Hall of Famers Satchel Paige, Bullet Joe Rogan, Hilton Smith, Zack Wheat, and Kid Nichols, who are all in Kansas City MO. Other notable grave sites visited were Connie Johnson (Leavenworth KS), Murry Dickson (Leavenworth KS), Bob Grim (Kansas City KS), Darrell Porter (Kansas City MO), Ewing Kauffman (Kansas City MO), Mort Cooper (Independence MO), Dan Quisenberry (Kansas City MO), Ken Boyer (Purcell MO) and Gabby Street (Joplin MO). They also visited Humboldt, Kansas, birthplace of Hall of Famer Walter Johnson and Negro League star George Sweat. See "Research News" above for a couple of other notes from this trip.

Books

Instead of a review this month, we have an interview. Chapter member Terry Turner interviewed fellow chapter member Mike Dugan about Mike's hobby of book collecting. Here is that interview.

TT: Mike, at what age did you realize baseball books could be fun?

MD: I read some of the juvenile novels in grade school and junior high but did not get hooked until later.

TT: What early book grabbed your interest?

MD: Bios, history. In 1976 I had purchased some of the T205 and T206 baseball cards at the first card show I had ever attended. A little later I heard about Lawrence Ritter's THE GLORY OF THEIR TIMES which is considered by almost everyone as the best baseball
TT: Did you start collecting in your teen years or later?

MD: I started at about age 22. A few cards at first then the books. I never got into the card craze of the 80's but did buy a lot of the older stuff which led me to baseball books.

TT: Did you do baseball book reports in school?

MD: No I did most of them on tennis topics, I was a big tennis player and played in college. Back in the old days in Arkansas you were required to do a freshman theme or take sophomore English. I did mine on the growth of the pro tennis tour through 1972.

TT: Any favorite authors you have followed into your adult years?

MD: I wish Ritter had done more but I do like Donald Honig though many of his are picture laden. Charles Alexander of Ohio University has done the best bios and recently Reed Browning.

TT: Your library seems to represent all teams and leagues. Are you pretty liberal in what you collect?

MD: Yes! Everything, at least my wife feels that way. I do try to but anything I can afford. I really like the small issue books, like some guy who writes a small softcover on the 1933 Chillicothe Paints. That is where SABR has been such a help. I joined in the 80's but was able to buy a fellow's newsletters back to the first year. I took each one and looked through for ads or mentions of such books. They have been great. Many authors were thrilled someone cared.

TT: Often times readers become writers. Have you had any desire to write books?

MD: Yes but I am not too good at such endeavors. I would like to do a small book on the Hot Springs Bathers of the Cotton States League and perhaps one on the league itself. As an older Dad I have very little free research time until my daughter reaches college. Of course I'm in no hurry for her to reach that point.

TT: If your library were on fire, what three books would you save and what three would you toss in the fire?

MD: I would probably grab an arm full of the classic Putnam team histories and of course Don Duren's new book on spring training in Hot Springs. I could never willingly throw any book, baseball or otherwise, in the fire!

TT: What is the one great baseball book that has not been written?

MD: The one on the Bathers of course!
TT: What recent book would you suggest to the Robinson-Kell Chapter to read?

MD: Terry, I would suggest that they build a library. The great set of Putnam team histories would form a foundation. The great news there is that Southern Illinois University Press is reprinting these at a very reasonable price. Just google SIU Press and it will lead you to the books. I would also suggest the three volumes baseball histories by Voight and/or Seymour as a nice base. These are easily obtainable through the ABE.books website at good prices.

A Hot Time in Hot Springs: Report on Boiling Out III
By Richard Smiley
richard_a_smiley@hotmail.com

The third edition of the Deadball Era Committee’s biennial excursions to Hot Springs, held from March 24 to March 26, was a smashing success highlighted by fine weather, good camaraderie, a record turnout, and surprise guests. In total, seventeen SABR members from the Deadball Era Committee, the Spring Training Committee, and the local Robinson-Kell Chapter made it to at least part of the festivities … by far the largest turnout at any of these events. The conference informally began on Thursday evening in the lobby of the Arlington Hotel where a small group of us sat for drinks and conversation while calling over newly arrived guests wearing baseball hats to join in. Sure enough, the new arrivals always turned out to be attendees. Once we had accounted for all of the Thursday arrivals, we trooped over to a fine German restaurant and made plans for Boiling Out IV in 2008. That year, we hope to participate in Hot Springs’ “World’s Shortest St. Patrick Day Parade” by dressing as numerous Babe Ruths (Babe in the orphanage, Babe with Baltimore, Babe with Boston, etc.). A line of marching Babe Ruths would surely help promote our efforts to bring to light the history of Hot Springs as a spring training site. (Oh yeah, I forgot the mention the superb beer we had at the German restaurant … but maybe you already guessed that!)

Bright and early on Friday morning, Madison McEntire and R.J. Lesch drove up to Little Rock where they were interviewed on the local CBS affiliate’s morning show. They both did a fine job in promoting Boiling Out III and Madison got to plug his newly published book.

Upon their return, the conference formally began when Beth Worth (accompanied by Glenda Aldridge on piano) sang some of the popular tunes from the Deadball Era leading to a rousing rendition of “Take Me Out to The Ball Game.” I kicked off the presentation portion by reading excerpts from Chicago Tribune’s fine coverage of the Chicago Colts 1897 spring training experience in Hot Springs which highlighted the team’s training routine. Terry Turner introduced us to a prime mover in Arkansas baseball history, Judge Williams Marmaduke Kavanaugh, who was the first President of the Arkansas Travelers and later the President of the Southern Association.

After a leisurely lunch break we returned to hear about Dave Anderson’s extensive research into
umpires of the early Deadball Era. In addition to collecting biographical information, Dave has catalogued the games called by each umpire. Dave gave us a unique insight into the life of a Deadball umpire. Fred Worth followed up with a visual show of some of grave sites he has had the opportunity to visit around the country with a particular emphasis on graves in Arkansas. He shared lively stories surrounding some of the visits to the markers.

In the late afternoon we ventured out into a pleasant sunny spring day to enjoy a tour of the old ballpark sites in Hot Springs. Local historian and baseball enthusiast Don Duren expertly led us to the sites where ballpark games of yesteryear were held. We first dropped by the Whittington Park site, now a parking lot, where the Pittsburgh Pirates held their spring training for years and years. The site abuts the side of a mountain where crumbling remnants of the stone grandstand structure still remain. From Whittington Park, we crossed the street in the direction of the alligator farm and climbed up a small hill to enter Fogel Field. The site remains as an open field, but Don Duren shared his memories of playing high school football games on it. Built for the Phillies in 1912, Fogel Field hosted a number of Deadball Era clubs.

After leaving Fogel Field, we drove over to the grounds of the court house where we took in the sights and sounds of the courtyard—the location of which was once the property of the Chicago White Stockings. This site was first used by the White Stockings upon their coming down to train in 1886 and is therefore the location of the first spring training conducted in Hot Springs.

Our tour finished with a trip to the Hot Springs Jaycee complex. Numerous diamonds still in use by many enthusiastic kids dot the landscape of the park; the featured diamond, Jaycee Park, still sports a full regiment of grandstands and bleachers. Jaycee Park was used by the Hot Springs Bathers minor league club in the 1940s. Among the little league diamonds is the location of what once was Majestic Park, where the powerhouse Boston Red Sox of the mid-teens did their training. Their spirit lives on with the boys and girls who currently use the space.

Upon our return to the Arlington, a book signing was held featuring the titles from the conference attendees. Dave Anderson brought with paperback copies of his book about the fantastic 1908 season: More Than Merkle. Madison McEntire signed his just published Big League Trivia: Facts, Figures, Oddities, and Coincidences from Our National Pastime. Terry Turner had copies of his Arcadia volume: Baseball in Little Rock. Don Duren presented Boiling Out at the Springs, a book containing detailed history and unique photos about spring training at Hot Springs. And hardcover copies of Deadball Stars of the National League, for which some of the attendees contributed bios, were also available. Quite an impressive collection!

The evening was capped off with groups of attendees partaking in the Arlington’s fine seafood buffet and the commencement of the Deadball Dice Baseball tournament with six teams doing battle.

Those who made it to the Saturday morning presentations were provided with a special treat. Steve Krevisky’ presentation on Lon Warneke (“The Arkansas Hummingbird”) was attended by Lon’s son and daughter! Mike Duggan can be credited for the siblings’ appearance. Steve gave a great overview of Lon’s career and showed that he was among the best pitchers in the National League in the 1930’s. The offspring shared stories and impressions about their father and other
ballplayers and baseball figures they had met and took numerous questions. Carl Larsen had the difficult task of following up the Warneke children, but he did so successfully with his humorous and heartfelt presentation “Four Forgotten White Elephants: Lave, Socks, Doc and Gettysburg Eddie,” which highlighted the careers of Lave Cross, Socks Seybold, Doc Powers, and Eddie Plank.

After the presentations finished and Fred Worth handed out questions for trivia contest (eventually won by Rich Klein), the group split. Some of the attendees stayed around the hotel for rest and relaxation while a slightly larger number (myself included) went on a road trip to Arkadelphia to catch live baseball. Specifically, we drove to Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) to see the Tigers battle the Central Arkansas Bears in a doubleheader on Rab Rodgers Field in almost ideal weather. While working on Fred’s trivia questions, we watched the two teams split the doubleheader. A very questionable out call at home plate in Game 2 got us all out of our seats and yelling at the umpire … fine preparation for the baseball season ahead!

Before returning to Hot Springs, we crossed the highway that splits OBU from Henderson State University to get a look at Henderson’s “natural bleachers.” Their baseball diamond is sunk into the bottom of a hill from which excellent overhead views of the whole field are easily obtained. Upon returning to Hot Springs we congregated at the home of Mike Dugan where a fine barbeque was held. Lon Warneke’s son dropped by to share some priceless photos with us from his dad’s collection and Mike allowed us a peak at his ample collection of baseball books. As the evening came to a close, R. J. Lesch regaled us with the final presentation of the conference in Mike’s living room. R. J. has looked into the question “When and where was the first spring training?” and made his pitch that it should be the Chicago White Stockings 1871 trip to New Orleans. The presentation initiated some lively conversation around the issue of what the standards should be to qualify as a spring training trip.

The whole event concluded back at the Arlington later that night with Madison McEntire defending his Dice Baseball title and everyone saying their goodbyes until 2008.

Fogel Field: This park was built for the Phillies in 1912 and was used by them and other clubs in that decade. This long distance group shot was taken from what would have been centerfield, looking toward the left-field corner (where the rest of the clan is gathered).

Photo courtesy of Richard Smiley.
Research Help Request

This request comes from SABR member Phil Lowry.

Dear Members of the Arkansas-Tennessee Chapter of SABR:

During the past four decades, I have located the following games in Arkansas and Tennessee which have lasted 20 or more innings. But I am absolutely positive that I have missed some, and I am hoping you can notify me of any omissions that you find on the list. THANK YOU very much.

Phil Lowry
plowry1176@aol.com

ARKANSAS TEAMS


TENNESSEE TEAMS


21 innings – Carson Center Field, Evansville, Indiana - 3/7/1999 – University of Memphis Tigers 4 University of Evansville Purple Aces 4 in 5:00 – 205 fans, 75 fans at end – finished at 4:00 PM.