

# The Inside Game

*"Let's get this lumpy, licorice-stained ball rolling!"*

Vol. 3, No. 2

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

April '03

From the Chairman

## Shoeless in Savannah

by Tom Simon

In November I accompanied my wife to Savannah, Georgia, where she was attending a seminar. With snow already starting to accumulate in Vermont, I couldn't pass up an opportunity to lounge in shirtsleeves under giant oaks drooped in Spanish moss.

Whenever I travel, my thoughts inevitably turn to the baseball history of whatever locale I'm visiting. Having just read David Fleitz's wonderful book *Shoeless*, this time I thought about Joe Jackson, who first discovered Savannah's charms during 1909 spring training as a member of the Philadelphia Athletics.

When the A's went north, Jackson stayed in Savannah and led the Sally League in hitting with a .358 average. Even after he reached the majors, he and his wife, Katie, continued to make their offseason home in this southern city where they felt comfortable and had experienced success. Eventually Joe operated a pool hall there and, when Organized Baseball was no longer an option, a dry-cleaning business.

Which of these beautiful antebellum mansions belonged to the Jacksons? Would there be one of those ubiquitous historical markers in the front yard, explaining the significance of the personages who once lived there?

Having left my copy of *Shoeless* at home, I started my quest in the local history room of the Savannah Public Library. Though every article ever published on Savannah baseball history cites the fact that Jackson played for the Savannah Pathfinders in 1909, none mentions his subsequent connection to the city.

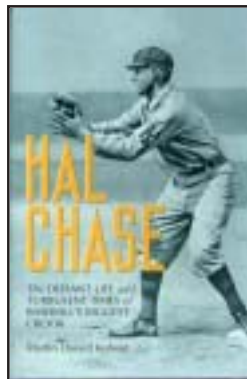
Next I went to the Georgia Historical Society, overlooking the former site of the Bolton Street Park where Jackson ripped his signature blue darters in 1909. Overcoming my initial surprise that in his time — and for many decades thereafter — the Savannah City Directory was divided into separate "White" and "Colored" departments, I discovered that Joseph Jackson and his wife, Katie, first appeared in the 1926 edition, residing in an apartment at 143 Abercorn, just around the corner from their Savannah Valet Service at 119 Drayton. *Shoeless, cont. on page 4*

Chase Bio Beats Out Strong Field

## Kohout Wins First Ritter Award

In October a DEC subcommittee announced the first-ever winner of the Larry Ritter Award, honoring the best book published in 2001

on a Deadball Era-related subject. The subcommittee, which was chaired by Paul Rogers and included Al Blumkin, Scott Flatow, David Shiner, Tom Simon, and Dick Thompson, selected Martin Kohout's *Hal Chase: The Defiant Life and Turbulent Times of Baseball's Biggest Crook* (McFarland). The following is TIG's interview with Kohout, who is also a member of the DEC.



**TIG:** How does it feel to win the first-ever Larry Ritter Award? **MK:** It feels absolutely wonderful, and it was a complete surprise. I mean, it was such a long struggle for me just to produce the book in the first place, in a sense anything else is just gravy. But it is immensely humbling to find my name linked with Dr. Ritter's in any fashion. I'm not sure that this committee, or even SABR itself, would exist without him. I have to tell you, though, that my home e-mail conked out shortly before the award was announced on October 4, and I didn't know anything about it until several weeks later, when by pure chance I stumbled across the announcement on the SABR Web site. Apparently Paul Rogers,

the chair of the award committee, had sent me an e-mail telling me I'd won, but I never received it. Of course I contacted him immediately to thank him and apologize for not responding sooner, and he admitted that he'd been puzzled that he never heard back from me. He must have thought I was just too blasé to answer, which I can assure you was not the case! Anyway, my next thought was, "Oh, I need to tell the folks at McFarland about this, so they can add it to the book's Web page." And of course when I went to their Web site, I discovered that they already had. So I was probably the last person on the planet to find out that I'd won.

**TIG:** What is your background? Is this your first book? **MK:** Yes, it is my first book, though I've written a few articles as well. I have a B.A. in English lit from Williams College and an M.A. in American studies from the University of Texas at Austin. I've worked as a writer and editor for various organizations pretty much my whole adult life, currently for the Texas State Historical Association here in Austin, but I have no particular background in baseball, other than having attended kindergarten in San Francisco with Willie Mays's son Michael.

**TIG:** What drew you to Hal Chase as a subject? **MK:** Well, he's sort of irresistible, isn't he? The wonderful Bob Hoie, who did a lot of research on Chase before I came along, told me that Chase reminded him of Paul Newman's character in *The Sting* — in other

*cont. on page 3*

### What's Inside...

Page 2

#### AL Biography Collection

Announcing assignments for Volume Two: The American League

Page 2

#### Hal Chase: The Defiant Life and Turbulent Times of Baseball's Biggest Crook

David Shiner reviews Martin Kohout's Ritter Award-winning biography

### Plus...

Deadball Committee Dope, happenings in the committee, **Page 3**



Deadball Poetry, *A pair of Deadball Era poems*, **Page 4**

Jack Barry, poetry in motion **page 4**

# Assignments for Volume 2 of the DEC's Bio Project

Nick Altrock, Ch, WAS ..... Peter Gordon  
 John Anderson, OF, WAS ..... John Stahl  
 Jimmy Austin, 3B, STL ..... Paul Rogers  
 Frank Baker, 3B, PHI ..... Marty Payne  
 Jimmy Barrett, OF, DET ..... Paul Wendt  
 Ed Barrow, Mgr, BOS ..... Dan Levitt  
 Jack Barry, SS, PHI ..... Norman Macht  
 Harry Bay, OF, CLE ..... John Simpson  
 Chief Bender, P, PHI ..... Ralph Berger  
 Bill Bradley, 3B, CLE Steve Constantelos  
 Jesse Burkett, OF, STL ..... David Jones  
 George Burns, 1B, DET ..... Eric Sallee  
 Donie Bush, SS, DET ..... Jim Moyes  
 Ray Caldwell, P, NY ..... Steve Steinberg  
 Nixey Callahan, P, CHI ..... Dave Larson  
 Bill Carrigan, C, BOS ..... Mark Armour  
 Ray Chapman, SS, CLE ..... Don Jensen  
 Hal Chase, 1B, NY ..... Martin Kohout  
 Jack Chesbro, P, NY . Wayne McElreavy  
 Ed Cicotte, P, CHI ..... Jim Sandoval  
 Ty Cobb, OF, DET ..... Dan Ginsburg  
 Eddie Collins, 2B, PHI Paul Mittermeyer  
 Jimmy Collins, 3B, BOS .. Mark Armour  
 Ray Collins, P, BOS ..... Tom Simon  
 Charles Comiskey, Exec, CHI . R. Smiley  
 Tom Connolly, UMP ..... Dave Anderson  
 Wid Conroy, 3B, NY ..... Sam Bernstein  
 Jack Coombs, P, PHI ..... Paul Rogers  
 Harry Coveleski, P, DET John Heiselman  
 Stan Coveleski, P, CLE ..... Dan Levitt  
 Sam Crawford, OF, DET Lamberty/Stecker  
 Birdie Cree, OF, NY ..... Paul Sallee  
 Lou Criger, C, BOS ..... Steve Krah  
 Hooks Dauss, P, DET ..... Bill Bishop  
 George Davis, SS, CHI ..... Trey Stecker  
 Harry Davis, 1B, PHI ..... Jim Troisi  
 Ed Delahanty, OF, WAS John Saccoman  
 Jim Delahanty, IF, DET . John Saccoman  
 Bill Dinneen, P, BOS ..... Mike Civille  
 Bill Donovan, P, DET .... Brian Marshall  
 Patsy Dougherty, OF, CHI Dave Larson  
 Kid Elberfeld, SS, NY ..... Bill Bishop  
 Billy Evans, UMP ..... Dave Anderson  
 Red Faber, P, CHI ..... Jan Finkel  
 Cy Falkenberg, P, CLE ..... Eric Enders  
 Happy Felsch, OF, CHI ..... Jim Nitz  
 Hobe Ferris, 2B, BOS ..... Dennis Auger  
 Billy Evans, UMP ..... Dave Anderson

Red Faber, P, CHI ..... Jan Finkel  
 Cy Falkenberg, P, CLE ..... Eric Enders  
 Happy Felsch, OF, CHI ..... Jim Nitz  
 Hobe Ferris, 2B, BOS ..... Dennis Auger  
 Ray Fisher, P, NY ..... Tom Simon  
 Elmer Flick, OF, CLE ..... Angelo Louisa  
 Russ Ford, P, NY ..... Jon Dunkle  
 Buck Freeman, OF, BOS ..... Eric Enders  
 Chick Gandil, 1B, WAS ... Dan Ginsburg  
 Larry Gardner, 3B, BOS ..... Tom Simon  
 Jack Graney, OF, CLE ..... Adam Ulrey  
 Danny Green, OF, CHI ..... David Jones  
 Vean Gregg, P, COE ..... Eric Sallee  
 Clark Griffith, M, WAS Lenny Jacobson  
 Bob Groom, P, WAS ..... Brian Marshall  
 Topsy Hartsel, OF, PHI ..... Jim Troisi  
 Charlie Hemphill, OF, STL .. Paul Wendt  
 Charlie Hickman, OF, CLE John Husman  
 Harry Hooper, OF, BOS ..... Paul Zingg  
 Harry Howell, P, STL ..... Eric Sallee  
 Long Tom Hughes, P, WAS .... John Stahl  
 Frank Isbell, IF, CHI ..... Trey Stecker  
 Joe Jackson, OF, CLE ..... David Fleitz  
 Hughie Jennings, M, DET ... Paul Rogers  
 Ban Johnson, PRES ..... Stuart Schimler  
 Walter Johnson, P, WAS ... Mike Attiyeh  
 Davey Jones, OF, DET ..... Dave Stalker  
 Fielder Jones, OF, CHI .... Paul Andresen  
 Addie Joss, P, CLE ..... Alex Semchuck  
 Willie Keeler, OF, NY ..... Bob Schaefer  
 Ed Killian, P, DET ..... Jim Troisi  
 Nap Lajoie, 2B, CLE ..... Bob Schaefer  
 Dutch Leonard, P, BOS ..... David Jones  
 Duffy Lewis, OF, BOS .... Mark Armour  
 Connie Mack, M, PHI ..... Irv Goldfarb  
 Carl Mays, P, BOS ..... Allan Wood  
 Jimmy McAleer, M, STL ... David Fleitz  
 George McBride, SS, WAS .. Rex Haman  
 Stuffie McInnis, 1B, PHI ..... Paul Rogers  
 Matty McIntyre, OF, DET . L. Jacobson  
 Clyde Milan, OF, WAS ..... Tom Lee  
 Earl Moore, P, CLE ..... Paul Sallee  
 George Moriarty, IF, DET ... Eric Enders  
 George Mullin, P, DET ..... Jim Troisi  
 Danny Murphy, 2B, PHI . Zack Triscuit  
 Frank Navin, EXE, DET Mark Okkonen

Rube Oldring, OF, PHI ... Paul Reiferson  
 Silk O'Loughlin, UMP ... Dave Anderson  
 Steve O'Neill, C, CLE ..... Adam Ulrey  
 Al Orth, P, NY ..... Mike Civille  
 Fred Parent, SS, BOS .... Dan Desrochers  
 Roger Peckinpaugh, SS, NYPeter Gordon  
 Wally Pipp, 1B, NY ..... Lyle Spatz  
 Eddie Plank, P, PHI ..... Jan Finkel  
 Jack Powell, P, STL ..... David Fleitz  
 Del Pratt, 2B, STL ..... Steve Steinberg  
 Branch Rickey, C, STL ..... Irv Goldfarb  
 Swede Risberg, SS, CHI ... Dan Ginsburg  
 Braggo Roth, OF, CLE ..... Adam Ulrey  
 Reb Russell, P, CHI ..... Richard Smiley  
 Babe Ruth, P, BOS ..... Allan Wood  
 Germany Schaefer, 2B, DET Bob Schaefer  
 Ray Schalk, C, CHI ..... Irv Goldfarb  
 Wally Schang, C, PHI ..... Joe Williams  
 Ossie Schreckengost, C, PHIDan O'Brien  
 Jim Scott, P, CHI ..... John Bennett  
 Socks Seybold, OF, PHI Norman Macht  
 Ben Shibe, EXEC, PHI .. Stuart Schimler  
 Burt Shotton, OF, STL ..... Joan Thomas  
 George Sisler, 1B, STL ..... Bill Lamberty  
 Frank Smith, P, CHI ..... Dave Larseon  
 Charles Somers, EX LEA ..... Fred Schul  
 Tris Speaker, OF, BOS ..... Don Jensen  
 Jake Stahl, 1B, BOS ..... John Stahl  
 Oscar Stanage, C, DET ..... Jim Moyes  
 George Stone, OF, STL ..... Jeff Smith  
 George Stovall, 1B, CLE S. Constantelos  
 Amos Strunk, OF, PHI . Tommy Carrella  
 Billy Sullivan, C, CHI ..... Trey Strecker  
 Jesse Tannehill, P, BOS ..... Jon Dunkle  
 Terry Turner, IF, CLE ..... Scott Turner  
 Bobby Veach, OF, DET ..... Bill Bishop  
 Rube Waddell, P, PHI ..... Dan O'Brien  
 Tilly Walker, OF, PHI ..... Tom Lee  
 Bobby Wallace, SS, STL ..... Scott Schul  
 Ed Walsh, P, CHI ..... Stuart Schimler  
 Buck Weaver, SS, CHI ..... Allan Wood  
 Doc White, P, CHI ..... John Bennett  
 Jimmy Williams, 2B, NY D. Tourangeau  
 Lefty Williams, P, CHI ..... Jon Dunkle  
 Joe Wood, P, BOS ..... Mike Foster  
 Cy Young, P, BOS ..... David Southwick

Martin Donnell Kohout. **Hal Chase: The Defiant Life and Times of Baseball's Biggest Crook.** Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2001, 347 pp., \$29.95, paper.

## by David Shiner

As a boy growing up in Chicago, the late James T. Farrell of *Studs Lonigan* fame was a diehard White Sox fan. In *A Baseball Diary* he recalls watching one of his idols, Hal Chase, cavort around first base for the Sox in 1913. He compares Chase to Joe DiMaggio in sheer grace on the field. Farrell recalls his "shock" a few years later, when he learned that Prince Hal had been banned from baseball in the scandals that surfaced in 1920.

Although Farrell's homage to Chase is just over a page long, Martin Kohout quotes from it in his new book on three separate

occasions. That's typical of the detail that went into the preparation of this volume, on which Kohout labored for more than a decade. Nearly everything that has been written about Chase, whether fact or fiction, figures in this well-written and exhaustively-researched tome.

Chase was a remarkable character. One of the most eagerly-anticipated arrivals in the majors nearly a century ago, he burst on the major league scene to the sorts of accolades usually reserved for superstars in their prime. He was revered by many, as Kohout's frequent references to bouquets and loving cups and Hal Chase Days during the early

*cont. on page 4*

**The Inside Game**  
**The Official Newsletter of**  
**SABR's Deadball Era Committee**

**Committee Chair**  
 Tom Simon [tpsimon@aol.com](mailto:tpsimon@aol.com)

**Vice-Chair**  
 Bill Lamberty [blamberty@msubobcats.com](mailto:blamberty@msubobcats.com)

**Volume 3, Issue 2**  
 Designed and produced by Bill Lamberty  
 Printed at MSU Printing Services, Bozeman.

All submissions to The Inside Game should be sent electronically, either as text of an e-mail message or in Microsoft Word, to [blamberty@msubobcats.com](mailto:blamberty@msubobcats.com).

## Kohout Interview, cont.

words, a charming con man. I think everyone is drawn to that sort of character. Frankly, I was surprised that no one else had managed to produce a book about him before mine. I'm really not sure, though, how I first decided to write about him. I guess I knew vaguely that he was an early major league star from my native Bay Area, but I think I really got interested in him at the time of the Pete Rose scandal. I honestly can't remember now, but I suspect I must have read something comparing Rose to other shady figures from baseball's past, and for some reason decided, "Hmmm, this Chase guy sounds interesting." Whoever wrote that article, if there actually was one, certainly deserves a share of the credit for my book. I wish I could remember!

**TIG:** How long did it take you to complete this book, and how did you go about your research? **MK:** I wrote the book on spec, as they say, meaning I made no attempt to find a publisher until *after* I'd put in all the work researching and writing it, which anyone will tell you is exactly the wrong way to go about it. I was lucky that McFarland was willing to take a chance on it, because I had no real track record. I have several friends who are *real* writers, and they refuse to write on spec, because writing is how they earn their living and they literally can't afford to spend a lot of time on a project unless they're sure someone's actually going to pay them for it. Of course, the good thing about doing it the way I did, as a sort of side project, is that I could take my time. And, as my wife will tell you, I took full advantage of that! I think I started working on the book in 1989, and it was finally published in 2001, which means that on average I produced only about a half a page of text per week, which is pretty miserable. Of course, I did a lot of research before I ever started writing, and there were long periods during those twelve years when I was doing other things, like trying to earn a living, but still.... As for research, we were living in Washington, D.C., when I started, and I spent many, many hours at the Library of Congress scrolling through what must have been miles of microfilm: *The Sporting News*, *Sporting Life*, magazines, newspapers from all over the country. I probably did permanent damage to my eyes. Aside from the hours at the microfilm reader, probably the best thing I did during my research was to put an author's query in the New York *Times* Sunday book review section—you know, one of those "seeking information on..." notices that they use to fill up columns. I got some wonderful responses from that, from people who actually knew Hal Chase and remembered him well. I got to interview his first wife's niece, who knew him when she was a little girl, because her granddaughter saw that thing in the *Times*. And I also heard from Tom Carwile, a gentleman in Virginia with a phenomenal collection of Yankee photos. He very graciously provided many of the illustrations for the book, including the one on the cover, and I think he had a lot to do with whatever success it has enjoyed. I also racked up some frequent-flyer miles. I went to Cooperstown, of course. Every baseball fan should go to Cooperstown, whether or not he or she is actually researching a book. I visited the archives at Santa Clara, where Chase went to college, and I spent some time at the public libraries in San Jose and Tucson.

**TIG:** What was the most surprising thing you learned about Chase during your research? **MK:** Wow, that's a tough one. I don't know that it qualifies as a surprise exactly, but the thing that affected me the most was finding a letter in his file in Cooperstown from someone in Metairie, Louisiana, asking Lee Allen for a picture of Chase. Apparently this person had been told that Chase was his illegitimate father, and had never had any contact with him. I don't know what happened to him; the letter was written in 1966, and I couldn't track him down. I still think about that a lot. I don't know if he ever got his picture; I like to think he did. I also had an interesting experience while I was researching Chase's career in semipro ball in Arizona in the 1920s. I was running the microfilm of the Douglas *Daily Dispatch* for 1926 when the evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson suddenly popped up on the front page. She turned up

in Douglas in late June, claiming to have been kidnapped and held prisoner in the Mexican desert. It was huge news nationally. Of course, it came out later that she'd concocted the whole story to cover up an affair. There's no record of her actually having met Chase while she was in Douglas, but I like to imagine she did. In many ways, they seem to have been a lot alike. And what were the odds of two such disreputable characters appearing in Douglas, Arizona, at the same time?

**TIG:** What has been the most rewarding thing about this project from your perspective? **MK:** Besides the millions of dollars in royalties, you mean? Just kidding.... Honestly, I think the most rewarding and astonishing thing for me has been how many people were willing to share stories and information, and go way out of their way to do so. I think I'm a lot less inclined to be cynical about the human race than I used to be. There are a lot of really generous folks out there, and a lot of them are SABR members.

**TIG:** Have you learned anything interesting about Chase since the book was published? **MK:** Much to my surprise, I haven't. Naturally, now that it's behind me, I haven't been looking for stuff on him with quite the same dedication, but my biggest fear is still that someone will write or call and say, "You dummy! You got this whole aspect of the story wrong!" It hasn't happened yet, but I'm still keeping my fingers crossed.

**TIG:** I understand that Chase's descendants deny his crookedness. Have you received feedback from them since the book was published? **MK:** No, I haven't. I'm sure that they would strongly disagree with my conclusions, because I do believe he was guilty of pretty much everything he was accused of. And you know, that really bothered me, because I met his son and two of his grandsons, and they were very nice to me. I wish I could have come to a different conclusion. I will say that the evidence against him is almost completely circumstantial, but my attitude is there couldn't possibly be that much smoke without some fire. One of the effects of my taking so long to write the book is that Chase's son, who was already quite elderly when I met him, died before it was published. And in a way I'm glad that he did, because I know it would have disappointed him. All I can say is, even though I think Prince Hal was a crook, I really tried to portray him as a charming, fun-loving character. To paraphrase what I wrote in the book: if you had to choose one player from that era to win a game for you, you'd probably choose Cobb or any number of others ahead of Chase. But if you had to choose one player from that era to spend a night on the town with, I think Chase might be at the top of the list.

**TIG:** What's your next project? **MK:** At the moment, my next project is surviving our upcoming move into a new house. Beyond that, I don't know. I've kicked around several ideas over the last couple of years, but none has stuck with me the way Prince Hal did.

## Deadball Committee Dope

### 2002 NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Larry Ritter Award subcommittee is currently seeking nominations for its 2002 award, honoring the best book on a Deadball Era-related subject published in 2002. The winner will be announced this summer at the DEC meeting at the SABR convention in Denver. Send nominations to Paul Rogers at [crogers@mail.smu.edu](mailto:crogers@mail.smu.edu).

### T-SHIRT SALE A SUCCESS

Chairman Tom Simon informs us that he is now sold out of DEC tee-shirts, which featured the DEC's "bunting Benny Kauff" logo on the front and a snappy Ed Walsh quote and signature on the back. Simon sold more than 100 shirts with profits totaling \$651. The money will be used to purchase plaques for Ritter Award winners for 2001, 2002, and many years to come.

# Deadball Poetry

"From Barry to Collins to McInnis"

by Jim Nasium

Philadelphia *Inquirer* readers knew writer/cartoonist Edgar Wolfe by the name "Jim Nasium." From 1907 to 1922 he covered the Athletics and Phillies and illustrated his stories and verses with player caricatures. This send-up of Franklin P. Adams's famous verse appeared in the *Inquirer* on October 11, 1911, before the Athletics met the Giants in the World's Series.

There's an echo that rings in my ears today,  
Of a tale often told without reason.  
A song that's been sung in the same old way  
In the out of town papers all season:  
"We had chances to score and would have won the day,  
But the breaks of the game were ag'in us,  
And the next man hit into a fast double play  
From Barry to Collins to McInnis."

And we'll hear it some more, that oft-told tale  
Of the "luck in the breaks," not the science,  
So before it comes off just get down your "kale"  
On our champs to clean up the Giants.  
Then their papers will tell "'twas the breaks of the  
fray;"

It won't be the merit that's in us.  
They'll speak of "hard luck," hitting into a play  
From Barry to Collins to McInnis.

I can read it all now, the tale of their woes,  
The excuses and wails that are in it,  
How 'the Giants kept slamming the ball on the nose,'  
And 'the Athletics were lucky to win it.'  
When we stop their base running we won't get the praise,  
It won't be the merit that's in us,  
'Twill be their "hard luck" hitting into those plays  
From Barry to Collins to McInnis.

L'ENVOI (Whatever that means)  
On that last Great Day in the game of life,  
When the final inning is o'er,  
When we've closed up the bat bag and ceased its strife  
To meet on that Beautiful Shore,  
Then I'll not be surprised to hear Saint Peter say  
That the "breaks of the game" are ag'in us  
And all the crowns have been grabbed in the same  
old way,  
From Barry to Collins to McInnis.

*Shoeless, cont. from page 1*

The 1927 edition had them residing at 1411 E. 39<sup>th</sup>, which was described as "under construction." There they remained through the 1932 edition, by which time they had permanently relocated to their native Greenville, South Carolina.

After a decade as one of baseball's biggest stars, what kind of house did Joe Jackson build with the savings from his baseball career, the \$5,000 he took from gamblers during the 1919 World Series, his earnings from business ventures, and the proceeds from the settlement of his 1924 lawsuit?

Located in a neighborhood you wouldn't walk through at night, the house at 1411 E. 39<sup>th</sup> is a tiny bungalow with a sign on the door for a seamstress who does alterations. About the only thing to recommend it is its proximity to Grayson Stadium, current home of the Sally League's Savannah Sand Gnats. It was built in 1941 on the former site of Municipal Stadium, which had been built in 1926.

I often hear my fellow baseball fans decry the gargantuan salaries of modern stars. Having seen Joe Jackson's modest home in Savannah, I will no longer join them.

*Review, cont. from page 2*

stages of his career attests.

But that affection was hardly universal. Almost from the beginning, there was something not quite right about Chase. He would fail to catch a throw at a critical moment, or miss a sign, or be accused of undermining his manager. Whenever whispers of such events reached the ears of the public the young star would protest his innocence, usually to the satisfaction of said public. Yet the whispers continued. Over time they increased in frequency and volume, ultimately gutting his career.

Most knowledgeable baseball fans believe that Chase's dishonesty cost him a spot in the Hall of Fame. Kohout concurs with that view. While sabermetricians have concluded that Chase's numbers are no better than those of good-but-not-great contemporaries like Jake Daubert and Ed Konetchy, that would have been irrelevant to the baseball men who watched him play the game. Most of them considered Chase the greatest first baseman of all time. His brilliance on the field made him a legend in his own time, and for many years afterward.

The overall caliber of Chase's play re-

mained creditable to the end of his playing days, so his major league career probably would have lasted longer than its actual 15 years had he been honest. "Of course, had Chase been honest, he would not have been Chase," Kohout asserts. "He would have been some other, considerably less interesting person." Well put, and undoubtedly true. That, however, hardly justifies Kohout's conviction that we should "acknowledge him as the most complex, and thus the most compellingly human, character in the history of the grand old game." Unless corrupting one's profession in ways that adversely affected a large number of people is a prerequisite for being "complex" and "compellingly human," I can think of at least ten baseball notables whom I would nominate for that honor ahead of Hal Chase.

Kohout's contention that Chase's transgressions hurt no one other than Chase himself and "those who had bet illegally on the other team" is even further off the mark. And his subsequent claim that Chase should not have been singled out for "special opprobrium" stands in stark opposition to the subtitle and much of the rest of the book.

In general, though, Kohout is not prone

to making controversial statements. In fact, while his attention to detail is commendable, the lack of any overarching sense of his subject's culpability is frustrating. Kohout regularly mentions Chase's role in games his team lost without offering any assessment concerning whether he was deliberately playing to lose. Given that no one alive can testify firsthand on that matter, a certain reluctance to engage in speculation is understandable. However, Kohout's approach only serves to deepen the unsolvable mystery about what Chase did or didn't do.

Had Baseball acted on allegations against Chase during his career, it's possible that there would have been no Black Sox scandal and no need for many of the other proscriptions of the Kenesaw Mountain Landis era, or even for Landis himself. Baseball paid a steep price for its lack of urgency. So did Chase, who spent most of his post-playing days as a destitute alcoholic. "What an object lesson in square shooting," wrote sportswriter Bill Corum about Chase when the one-time Prince was 50 and a ramshackle shadow of his former self, "because nothing made a bum out of Hal Chase but Chase himself."

## The Fan's Lament

What have become  
Of those memorable days  
When bases were stolen,  
When fast infield plays  
Made baseball a game  
To be watched with suspense,  
When rarely they socked  
The pill over the fence.

Where is the art  
Of the clever squeeze play,  
And sacrifice hits  
In the old-fashioned way?  
Once they beat bunts out  
When base hits were few;  
Now they must double  
And score at least two.

Gone are the days  
When four runs were good,  
Gone are the days  
Of the hot pitching feud;  
They all swat the ball now,  
The fans shout for more,  
The runs in one game  
Make a good football score.

The fence busters thrill  
The big crowds of today,  
And outfielders chase  
The long drives they display;  
But I hear the shouting  
And walk sadly on,  
For I know that the days  
Of real baseball are gone.

This poem is from Ralph Lin Weber's *The Toledo Baseball Guide of the Mud Hens* (Toledo, Ohio: Baseball Research Bureau, 1944). Information on the author would be appreciated.