

The INSIDE GAME

The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

Volume 4, Number 4: "Let's get this lumpy, licorice-stained ball rolling!" Nov. 2004

From the Chairman

by **David Jones**
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When I haven't been busy writing and editing for the *Deadball Stars of the American League*, recently my interest in the Deadball Era has been focused on Clarence Euell.

Who is Clarence Euell, you ask? No, he never played major league baseball, not during the Deadball or any other era. He never played in the minor leagues, either, and I have no evidence that he played for any semipro clubs. Indeed, I don't even know if Euell had any interest in baseball, or had even heard of the sport. Yet his story is one of the most fascinating, but completely forgotten, stories of the Deadball Era. Euell, a 30-year-old black waiter who worked in an Indianapolis hotel, was shot and killed by a former major leaguer named Dan Shay in May, 1917. Shay was then managing the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association.

Shay killed Euell after the manager objected to the amount of sugar Euell had given him for his coffee. After Shay complained about not having enough sugar, Euell pointed to the bowl of sugar at Shay's table and said, "You've got sugar." But Shay was not satisfied, so Euell angrily picked up two more bowls of sugar and set them down at Shay's table. Offended by Euell's insolence, Shay muttered "Smarty," and then said something else, something that no one except Clarence Euell heard. At this unknown remark, Euell turned around and said, "Mister, I don't like that remark you just made to me."

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Garry, Edd, Jim and SABR 34

by **R. J. Lesch**
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The last night of the convention, we sat in a German beer garden in an older part of Cincinnati. The place had been there since the 1860s. Tom Simon, David Jones, Lance Richbourg and I had just taken a cab here, and had gone past Garry Herrmann's old home along the way. I should say, we went past the site where Herrmann's home had been. It was now the site of a nondescript office building, the sort of place you'd put three CPAs and a dental clinic. We consoled ourselves with a couple of beers, sitting in a place where, we supposed, Garry and Ban might have once feasted on sauerbraten and apfelkuchen, and reflected on the weekend that was winding down.

As deadball went, I felt the high point of SABR 34 was Peter Morris's talk about Russell Ford's emery ball. Morris brought Ford (and his less adept imitator, Cy Falkenberg) to life for a packed house. We fans of the slippery elm were also treated to duelling presentations on the 1906-10 Cubs and the career of Miller Huggins. (I opted for Huggins, and was not disappointed, but might have to get the videotape of the Cubs presentation from the SABR office.)

Two of the DEC's own, Paul Sallee and Dr. Susan Dellinger, appeared in the Ballplayer Relatives panel and talked about their relatives, Slim Sallee and Edd Roush. The panel also featured the widow of Ted Kluszewski, one of my favorites even though I never saw him play, so it was a triple delight.

In the DEC annual meeting, we bid a fond adieu to "Peerless Leader" Simon and a welcome to "Tall Tactician" Jones, the new DEC chair. Following this,

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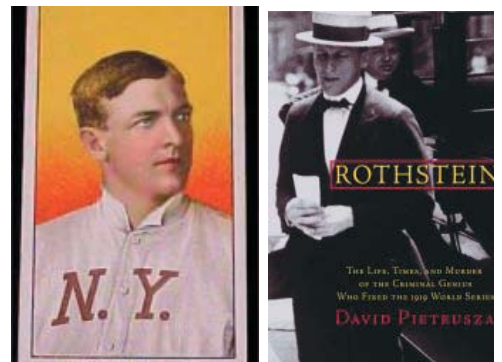
What's Inside...

Book reviews:

Two new books reviewed by John McMurray explore the continuing fascination with Big Six

Say it ain't so: Rothstein gets his due, by former TIG editor Bill Lamberty

The greatest baseball photographer ever? Jeff Sackmann looks at the new paperback version of Conlin's photographs



Matty and the Big Bankroll ...

see book reviews inside.

From the Chairman, continued from page 1.

Shay responded, "What do you mean, you don't like that remark?" Euell walked away. A moment later, Shay called Euell back to the table, declared "I will now show you what I meant by that remark," and pulled out his pistol and shot Euell in the stomach. The waiter died from the gunshot wound later that evening. In November, Shay was acquitted of murder charges, after an Indianapolis jury ruled that the manager had acted in self-defense.

The tragic meeting of Euell and Shay, and Shay's subsequent acquittal, offers us a microcosm of the growing racial tensions infesting Northern cities during the height of the Great Migration. Euell was the oldest son of Kentucky born slaves who migrated into Indianapolis after the end of the Civil War. Growing up on Indiana Avenue, one of the city's main thoroughfares and a place where blacks and whites lived in close proximity to one another, Euell experienced white racism first-hand. As a teenager, he was arrested and thrown in jail for "loitering with a white woman." Despite having received an education, the only jobs available to him in the city were those that served whites, as he did as a hotel café waiter.

Shay was born 80 miles east, in Springfield, Ohio, one day after the controversial 1876 Presidential Election, which would bring Republican Rutherford B. Hayes to the White House and end Southern Reconstruction. During Shay's childhood, Springfield was a hotbed of racial turmoil, as the city experienced an influx of African-Americans, migrating North to escape the harsh treatment they received in the South. Blacks found little justice in Springfield. When Shay was nine years old, the school board voted to integrate the city's public schools, but many parents responded by pulling their children out of school. In the 1890s and early 1900s, Springfield experienced several deadly race riots, as white mobs lynched blacks and set fire to black homes and communities.

By then, however, Shay was on to bigger and better things. After working as a horse jockey in St. Louis, Shay played for several minor league clubs. His first major league appearance came in 1901, when he played 19 games for the Cleveland Indians. Three years later, he was back in the big

leagues, playing for the St. Louis Cardinals. He stuck with the Cardinals through 1905, but towards the end of that season damaged his pinky finger so badly that it had to be amputated. After that, Shay tried a brief comeback with the New York Giants in 1907, but he could only manage a .190 batting average before drawing his release. He stayed in the game, though, managing the Kansas City Blues from 1909 to 1910, and again from 1915 to 1916. In between those stints, Shay suffered personal tragedy when his wife was killed in a car accident. After the 1916 season, he accepted the Milwaukee managing job, and it was this assignment that brought him to Indianapolis on the May road trip that led to his deadly encounter with Clarence Euell.

When news of the shooting first reached Milwaukee, the Brewers owner initially offered his unconditional support to his manager. But one week later, as the gravity of the charges against Shay became clear, Milwaukee quietly released him. The baseball fraternity did support Shay, however. Joe Tinker, then managing in the American Association, organized a legal relief fund for Shay. Tinker was able to collect enough money from Shay's colleagues to bankroll a powerhouse defense team, which included a former Indianapolis mayor. Over the course of the two week trial, the defense successfully portrayed Euell as the aggressor, despite consistent testimony from eye-witnesses that the waiter had done nothing to warrant the attack. Nonetheless, the defense asserted, without evidence, that Euell was "a giant in strength that was employed because his ferocious strength and ability to fight allowed him to quell disturbances between other colored employees of the café." It was irrational black masculinity, the defense maintained, that caused Euell to strike out at Shay, and led the manager to defend himself.

After his acquittal, Shay thanked the jury, saying "I felt any fair-minded man would look at the case in the same light the jury did. I want to thank the jury publicly for their verdict; the judge, for his many courtesies extended; my attorneys, who so diligently defended my position, and the people in general, the people of Indianapolis, who understand the situation. Of course it was in some respects an unusual case, but now I am glad it is all over." Shay added that he looked forward to the day when he would manage again.

That day never came. After his acquittal, Shay worked occasionally as a scout, then moved to Kansas City, where he found employment in City Hall. Set free by a jury of his peers but still imprisoned by the torments of his past, Dan Shay ended his life with a single gunshot to the head on December 1, 1927, in Kansas City's Majestic Hotel. He left no suicide note.

I discovered the story of Clarence Euell's death quite by accident. While doing research on the 1917 World Series, I noticed a small mention of the incident in the Reach Guide, and this led me to seek out other sources. Thus far I have made two trips out to Indianapolis to learn more, and my research is still ongoing. To my amazement, this story, excepting one small newspaper article that appeared a few

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The Official Newsletter of SABR's Deadball Era Committee

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From the Chairman, continued from page 2.

years ago, had been almost completely forgotten. None of the Indiana historians I contacted had ever heard of it, and the tale is completely absent from the secondary literature. At the time, the Shay trial was covered extensively by several newspapers, and received some national attention, but with World War I raging in Europe, it quickly dropped from the radar screen after the verdict.

During my last trip to Indianapolis, I located the cemetery where Clarence Euell was buried. Excitedly, I drove up to the Cemetery office in order to find the precise location of his grave. But when I pulled my car up to the plot of ground where Euell was buried, I discovered that it was a common grave, where hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indianapolis' black citizens, whose families were too poor to afford a headstone or an individual grave, had been buried together.

It has been more than 85 years since Clarence Euell was killed by Dan Shay, and Euell remains an anonymous figure. Even though Shay was just a mediocre major leaguer, the fame of his profession has imparted to his life a substantial body of published material, there to be discovered by the diligent researcher. By contrast, the 30 years of Clarence Euell's life left behind only a vague impression of what type of man he might have been: the soulless figures found in city indexes and census forms have been my only guide as I have tried to reconstruct his life.

As I have worked on the *Deadball Stars* series, I have often thought that our work as a committee has been important in bringing back to life some of the forgotten figures of baseball's greatest era. I still believe this is true. But even as I discover interesting new things about the Dode Paskerts, the Jack Barrys, and the Happy Felsches of the world, as I learn much about the love and loss, triumph and tragedy, and family and friendship that made their lives meaningful, I can't help but think about Clarence Euell and that mass grave in Indianapolis, where the dead lie undifferentiated from one another, their earthly remains unmarked by even the simplest of stones. ♦

Beer Garden, continued from page 1.

about fifteen of us lined up to sign copies of "Deadball Stars of the National League," mostly for each other. Dr. Susan delighted us by showing the stickpin presented to her grandfather after the Reds won the 1919 World Series

(the tradition of giving rings to the winners started later). Several of us gawked like children at this wonderful relic.

Ed Walsh, Eddie Collins, and Joe Jackson made appearances in the hotel lobby Friday, as the Great American Fantasy League presented the all-time Chicago White Sox and the all-time New York Yankees. I managed my White Sox to a 5-1 victory over Whitey Ford and the Yankees, although my role as manager was pretty much giving the ball to Walsh (in a make-believe sense) and sitting on the bench. The dice-and-cardboard Browns/Orioles edged the Senators/Twins the next day, 7-6, in extra innings. Ty Waterman, founder of this league, is seeking managers for the National League edition, which will be a while in starting, but it will be interesting when it does.

The Great American Ballpark is an attractive park. I enjoyed the statues out front of Kluzewski and Ernie Lombardi, two of my favorites. In the upper deck of the ballpark we enjoyed the beauty of the Ohio River Valley on one side, and had a great view of Jim Edmonds's stunning over-the-fence catch in center field. It's pleasant to see a new ballpark in person, instead of through the narrow focus of television. I get a tingle walking past old ballpark sites

where Larry Doyle and Red Ames once played.

But the best part of a SABR convention is not the ballgame, nor the research presentations, nor the booksellers' booths, nor any of the other activities. Nice as those are, and as gratifying as it is to see all the hard work people do bear fruit, the SABR conventions would be great if all



Ban, RJ, Tom, and Garry:
Hoisting a beer to the National Commission

we did was assemble and talk baseball in the hotel lobby. It is a delight to see folks in the flesh.

The DEC book took four-plus years to produce and involved the combined efforts of dozens of people, and yet, amazingly, many of us interacted only through email, the telephone, and the U.S. Mail. Such a project would have been much more difficult a mere 15 years ago, without email and the web, and I'm grateful for those tools. Yet how nice it is to meet, to shake flesh-and-blood hands, to handle solid paper copies of our beautiful book, and to lay plans for the next volume.

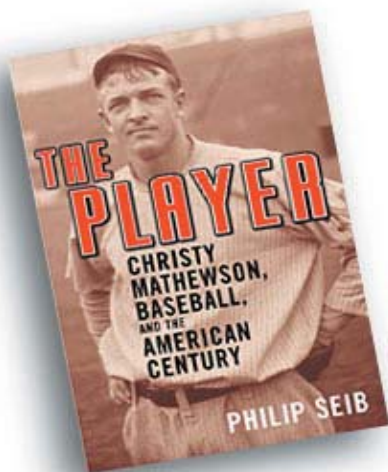
And it's nice to sit in a beer garden eighty years after the time of Garry Herrmann and Ban Johnson and hoist a beer in their memory. Or, in fact, to sit in a new ballpark and hoist a beer to the stars of today and tomorrow. ♦

The Player: Christy Mathewson, Baseball, and the American Century, by Philip Seib.

New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2004. [ISBN: 1568-583-184] 198 pages. \$24, hardcover.

Reviewed by **John McMurray**
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In *The Player: Christy Mathewson, Baseball, and the American Century*, author Philip Seib focuses on Hall of Famer Christy Mathewson's impact both on baseball and on contemporary American society. "Understanding [Mathewson] and the game he played," says Seib in the Preface, "will take anyone a long way toward understanding America."



Seib has taken on a very ambitious task in the book: not only does he discuss Mathewson's on-field successes, but he also devotes considerable attention to how Mathewson represented the best in contemporary values. For one, the author illustrates how Mathewson fit President Theodore Roosevelt's model of a sports hero by possessing a strong sense of sportsmanship that complemented his athletic prowess. More than that, Seib also claims that Mathewson "epitomized the maturation of American character." In the book, Mathewson's honest, gentlemanly, and almost pure persona is held up as a shining example against the backdrop of Billy Sunday's

focus on Christian values and public decency; in the context of Woodrow Wilson's emphasis on principled morality; and as a symbol of enduring innocence in an increasingly uncertain postwar America.

Seib's portrayal of Mathewson in the book is almost uniformly positive. The author calls Mathewson "the quintessential new American hero, skilled and successful, ready to lead." Though criticisms of Mathewson in the book are scarce, Seib does include a comment from Jane Mathewson, Christy's wife, indicating that Matty "never tried to pass as a paragon of virtue."

The book is a very entertaining read, and it makes a unique contribution to the literature by considering Mathewson primarily in a social context. Because Seib presents the historical background in such depth, however, there are many pages where Mathewson is not the primary focus. Also, some of Mathewson's major on-field accomplishments are not discussed at length. Mathewson's 1901 no-hitter, for instance, is given only brief mention, and his unprecedented three-shutout performance in the 1905 World Series is presented only in a four-paragraph overview. The accounts of Mathewson's proximity to the 1908 Merkle incident and of his role in suspecting foul play as an observer of the 1919 World Series are explored in greater detail and would be of interest to members of the Deadball Committee.

There are many interesting anecdotes in the book that give insight into Mathewson's personal style. From relating how Mathewson developed a board game called 'Big Six' to discussing Matty's hobby of identifying wildflowers, Seib provides many lesser-known details about his subject.

The book also pays particular attention to Matty's exposure to poison gas and to the time he later spent at the tuberculosis treatment center at Saranac Lake, New York. Mathewson's courage and resilience after contracting tuberculosis are central to the latter portion of the book. In a chapter ironically titled "Fading Away," Mathewson achieves a different kind of heroic stature in part

by using his celebrity to draw attention to those suffering from this disease. The author concludes by saying that "in victory Mathewson was admirable. In defeat, he was magnificent."

It is very difficult to cover Mathewson's entire playing career and to give a detailed accounting of all major contemporary social and political influences in a book that is less than 200 pages in length. To that end, Seib has done an exceptional job, though some aspects of Mathewson's early career (such as being traded for Amos Rusie) could be explored further. For anyone seeking a book examining Christy Mathewson's role as a sports hero that is accessible to all readers, *The Player* comes highly recommended. ♦

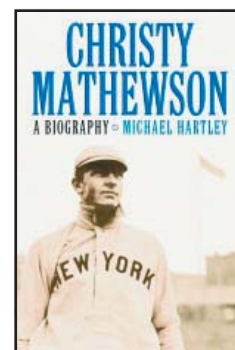
Christy Mathewson: A Biography, by Michael Hartley.

Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2004. [ISBN: 0786-416-53X] 207 pages. \$28.50, softcover. Order at (800) 253-2187.

Reviewed by **John McMurray**
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Christy Mathewson: A Biography by Michael Hartley is an exceptionally well-researched book that is distinguished by its attention to detail. Unlike Philip Seib's *The Player* which presents Mathewson primarily in a social context, Hartley's book focuses on Matty's personal life and playing career. The book is an excellent resource for researchers who seek a comprehensive portrayal of Mathewson's on-field accomplishments.

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Christy, continued from page 5.

Hartley's meticulous research allows him to provide insight on a broad range of topics surrounding Mathewson's life. From a discussion of potential derivations of Mathewson's "Big Six" nickname to an explanation of Matty's reasons for attending Bucknell University to an analysis of how Mathewson became suspicious that the 1919 World Series was not on the level, Hartley does a fine job of addressing many commonly-discussed questions surrounding Mathewson's career.

At the same time, the book is quite valuable in offering many lesser known anecdotes about Matty. For instance, Hartley discusses how Pittsburgh Pirate fans teased Mathewson for the "high-pitched tenor of his voice"; how Mathewson had a fondness for elderberry jam; and how Mathewson was a "clotheshorse with suits described as a year or two ahead of convention." Hartley also notes, interestingly, that Mathewson as manager of the Cincinnati Reds conducted spring training differently than his former manager John McGraw did, by de-emphasizing running for its own sake. The many anecdotes and personal reflections that Hartley includes offer an excellent complement to the storyline.

As in Philip Seib's biography, relatively little attention is devoted to Mathewson's personal flaws in the text. While Hartley briefly notes in the book's Preface that Matty's teammates "sometimes found [Mathewson] stand-offish, even conceited"; that Mathewson "liked money"; and that contemporary autograph seekers approached Matty "at their peril," these topics could have been explored in greater depth in the text.

Hartley's book offers an excellent survey history of the New York Giants of the period. Art Devlin, Mike Donlin, Larry Doyle, and John McGraw, among others, receive a great deal of attention. The one downside to such an approach is that Hartley occasionally spends considerable time focusing on subjects other than Christy Mathewson. Still, the book does well in providing a picture of Mathewson as he related to his teammates and to

manager John McGraw.

Hartley's biography is particularly strong in examining Matty's military involvement, his exposure to poison gas, and his illness to follow. In the final two chapters of the book, Hartley provides an excellent window into Mathewson's character as Matty serves his country and later battles a fatal illness.

Christy Mathewson: A Biography is, in the truest sense, an excellent baseball book. Rather than making Mathewson's role as a sports hero the primary focus, Michael Hartley instead chooses, as he puts it, "to let [Mathewson's] life speak for itself." This biography of Christy Mathewson is a strong effort and comes well-recommended. ♦

Rothstein: The Life, Times, and Murder of the Criminal Genius Who Fixed the 1919 World Series, by David Pietrusza

San Francisco: Avalon Publishing Group, 2003. [ISBN: 0786-712-503] 485 pages. \$27, hardcover.

Reviewed by **Bill Lamberty**
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The life story of Arnold Rothstein is enriching and illuminating, not because of what it is, but because of what it is not.

David Pietrusza's *Rothstein* gets closer to the matter of unraveling the mystery of the Black Sox Scandal than any previous attempt, yet it is not by any serious measure a baseball book. It gives us a breathtaking look at the twilight of Victorian America, an age we remember as rigid and moralistic yet which Pietrusza paints as one in which vice and corruption froths at society's core. *Rothstein* is a biography, but reaches far beyond the limitations of one man's life story to portray how the decisions and actions of one individual shaped the story of a city and an age.

The brilliance of this book is that, like its subject, it is not bound by convention. While Rothstein will live

in baseball history as the man who toyed with the faith of so many by engineering a fix of the 1919 World Series, that is only one chapter of this book, and one episode in the subject's life. Rothstein's fingerprints emerge on so many of his day's events, from boxing matches and horse races to elections and trials. Pietrusza shows us a man who did not drink alcohol but who gained great wealth from trading in it, who we can deduce found sports folly but gaming highly profitable, who did not necessarily aspire to the upper echelon of society but understood how to move in, and gain wealth from, those circles.

Rothstein's life, his rise from the streets of Brooklyn to high society to his murder in a seedy Manhattan hotel room, is not only traced, but is interwoven in the context of the society that could spawn such a figure. The book is enthralling to Deadball Era fans not because it leaps at chances to draw baseball figures into the story, but because it doesn't have to. Prominent baseball figures such as Judge Emil Fuchs, Horace Stoneham, Charles Weeghman, and John McGraw move in and out of Rothstein's life in a way that bring us to a fuller understanding of time and place. The intricate nature of Rothstein's relationships with such figures gives us a glimpse into the role baseball played in early 20th century America.

The life of Arnold Rothstein was remarkable for many reasons, and his story as told by Pietrusza alternates between breathtaking, exhilarating, and maddening. But the book is well-researched and brilliantly crafted. Pietrusza, who works in the state of New York Governor's office, has navigated public records and privately cultivated resources like few others could. The result is a work that paints a vivid picture of a little understood man and a gone-but-not-forgotten time. ♦

Baseball's Golden Age: The Photographs of Charles M. Conlon, by Neal & Constance McCabe

New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003.
[ISBN: 0810-991-195] 198 pages.
\$19.95, softcover.

Reviewed by **Jeff Sackmann**
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If Charles M. Conlon were alive today, he'd be a SABR member. Or, perhaps more accurately, if SABR were around in the teens, Conlon would've been one of us.

One of the many things I learned from *Baseball's Golden Age: The Photographs of Charles M. Conlon*, by Neal and Constance McCabe, was that several thousand of his original negatives were destroyed. Conlon didn't have the space for them at his house, so he personally discarded them. It's painful to read something like that in the introduction—even more so to re-read it after examining 200 pages worth of Conlon photos.

If one considers the destroyed negatives as well as the existing ones, the body of Conlon's work is the sort of thing that SABR would devote a committee and decades of effort to assemble. He photographed every player, every year. He shot batting practice, warm-ups, and notable people in the crowd. He captured images of exciting plays during the game, positioning himself a few feet from the foul line so as not to miss them. He took pictures of pitch grips and batting stances.

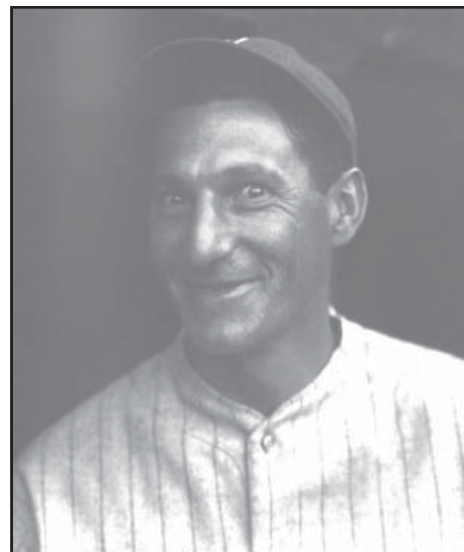
It's the sort of thing that makes you wish *Baseball's Golden Age* were volume one, with about 100 more books to follow.

As it is, the book—originally published in 1993—is a tremendous sampling of Conlon's photography. Much to my surprise, though, its greatest contribution is biographical. In their introduction, the McCabes provide a short but fairly thorough sketch of the man's life, along with notes on his anonymity. Few ballplayers remember him and his work is very frequently uncredited.

It's worth citing a few of the breathtaking tidbits they unearthed. When Conlon witnessed the scene that became his famous photo of Cobb sliding in under the attempted tag of Jimmy Austin, he thought he didn't shoot it; he was worried about his "close friend" Austin, who appeared to be hurt. But he changed plates anyway, just in case. Later, he found the image. "There was Cobb stealing third. In my excitement, I had snapped it, by instinct."

Another? In 1911, Conlon found himself at dinner with Mathewson, Bresnahan, and Hooks Wiltse. Matty—"Conlon's first and favorite subject"—talked about "fellow players in a frank way." Bresnahan questioned the wisdom of doing so in Conlon's presence. Matty said, "Roger, Charley can be trusted—always." Conlon: "I got one of the biggest kicks of my life out of that remark."

The minutia in these books makes them special. The details in the photos—a 1909 scoreboard in the background, a black armband on Zack Wheat's jersey commemorating the death of Charles Ebbets, the bruises on



Al Schacht, 1928
Washington Senators,
from *Baseball's Golden Age*

a banged-up player before the image was doctored for a baseball card—are some of the most exciting morsels in the book. But perhaps I'm worrying too much about the details, pro or con. *Baseball's Golden Age* is simply a tremendous collection of photographs taken by a great American artist."♦

