

# Boston Braves Historical Association

## Newsletter

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[www.boston-braves.com](http://www.boston-braves.com)

### VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1

#### 140 Years Old

Those of you familiar with downtown Boston may have stayed, dined or just walked by the Hub's famed Omni Parker House without realizing its historic ties to the Tribe. In fact, if we were to construct a historic path for the Braves, similar to the Freedom Trail, it would commence at the hotel's 60 School Street location. A landmark since 1855, the Parker House served as the meeting place for the organization of the Boston Red Stockings on January 20, 1871. Capitalized by the munificent sum of \$15,000, the club arose from the ashes of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, baseball's first professional team. The popularity of amateur baseball in the Boston area had prompted a group of local businessmen to band together to establish a team here. Opportunity knocked when the Cincinnati club disbanded, making its players available. Led by **Ivers W. Adams**, who would assume the position of president, Boston secured the services of the Red Stockings' **Harry Wright** to populate its new club with Ohio refugees. Wright did his job well, constructing a team from scratch that finished in second place in the National Association. From 1872 to 1875, the Boston franchise claimed the league's top spot. The club became a charter member of the National League upon its formation in 1876.

As we've mentioned in past newsletters (see our Spring 2009 issue), our "fantasy" historic trail would have several stops before arriving at the hallowed grounds of what was once Braves Field and is now part of the Boston University campus. The Parker House isn't the only new suggested added point of interest to our tour. Before journeying on to Gaffney Street/Harry Agganis Way to our Field of Dreams, we might pause at the spot in Kenmore Square where Tribe manager **Casey Stengel** was hit by an automobile on a rainy night in April of 1943, hospitalizing the skipper with a severely broken leg. To some sportswriters, Casey's time away from the bench was a welcomed relief from his futile leadership of a bedraggled team. As **Dave Egan** of the *Boston Record* put it, "The man who did the most for baseball in Boston in 1943 was the motorist who ran Stengel down two days before the opening game and kept him away from the Braves for two months."

Happy 140th birthday to the Braves, America's oldest continuously operated professional sports franchise! Boston had them for a majority of those years. Atlanta still has a long way to go to catch up to us!

### Over The Years

135 years ago, the Red Stockings participated in the first game in National League history. At Philadelphia, Boston defeated the Athletics, 6-5, coming from behind to score two runs in the ninth inning. Fifty years later, the Braves would defeat the Cubs at the Wigwam as part of the Senior Circuit's Golden Jubilee celebration on May 8. As we noted in our Spring 2010 edition and expanded upon in the Special Membership newsletter, the Tribe reunited the 1914 Miracle Braves as part of its tribute to the league's 75th anniversary. Sixty years have passed since that June 2, 1951 event.

We still have some among our membership who can draw upon personal recollections of other significant happenings during the '51 campaign. It was a tumultuous season for the declining Braves. The Pirates' **Cliff Chambers** no-hit them on May 6. **Billy Southworth** wrapped up his Hall of Fame managerial career, resigning after a shutout loss at the hands of the Cubs at Wrigley Field on June 19. Fan favorite **Tommy Holmes** succeeded Southworth at the Braves' helm the following day but struggled until he too departed in failure during the course of the following season. The team participated in a broadcast experiment on August 11 when its game against the Dodgers was the first to be televised in color. Winning 8-1, the Boston Braves became baseball's first color TV victors. Many were shocked and saddened by the departure of **Johnny Sain** to the Yankees on August 30. Five years earlier, Big John had become the Tribe's first 20-game winner since **Lou Fette** and **Jim Turner** both performed that feat in 1937. In 1946, while Sain was reaching that mark, distinguished WWII veteran **Warren Spahn** won the first of his 363 career victories 65 years ago on July 14 against the Pirates. The cash received from New York in the Sain deal helped keep the club financially stable and **Lou Burdette**, who was included in the transaction, would blossom as Spahn's mound-mate, but in Milwaukee instead of Boston. On a positive note, Braves fans (including the 487,475 that passed through the Wigwam's turnstiles) had something to cheer about sixty years ago. Rhode Island rookie lefty **Chet Nichols, Jr.** captured the National League ERA title with an average of 2.88 and finished second to **Willie Mays** in Rookie of the Year balloting. Spahnie performed up to expectations, winning 22 games and leading the circuit in complete games, shutouts and strikeouts. "**Jet**" **Jethroe** held on to his base-stealing crown for a second consecutive season. **Sid Gordon's** 29 homers and 109 RBI helped ease the sting of seeing **Al Dark** and **Eddie Stanky**, other participants in that infamous 1949 swap, lead the Giants to a first place finish.

Baseball under the lights predominates the National Pastime today. Nighttime games came to

Boston first at Braves Field sixty-five years ago on May 11, 1946. The then novelty drew a crowd of 35,945 to the Wigwam, the largest gathering there in 35 years. Donning the garishly shiny sateen uniforms, thought to better reflect under artificial lighting, the Braves took on the Giants and lost 5-1.

Another Braves Field "Boston first" occurred 75 years ago. The first All Star game to be hosted in the Hub took place on July 7, 1936. It was also a National League historic "first"- its initial Summer Classic triumph over the Junior Circuit. Two notable ironies occurred on that date. The smallest crowd ever assembled for an All Star game witnessed the contest. Due to erroneous reports of an advance sell-out, locals did not turn out for day-of-the-game tickets. Attendance was recorded at 25,556 with some 15,000 seats available and unsold. Secondly, despite hosting the event, the Braves did not have a single player in the lineup that day. Tribe manager **Bill McKechnie** was selected as a coach and **Wally Berger** patiently sat in the dugout waiting NL skipper Charlie Grimm's call that never came. Braves Field was graced by such baseball immortals as **Luke Appling, Charlie Gehringer, Lou Gehrig, Earl Averill, Rick Ferrell, Bill Dickey, Goose Goslin, Jimmie Foxx, Joe Medwick, Mel Ott, Leo Durocher, Dizzy Dean and Carl Hubbell**. Rookie **Joltin' Joe DiMaggio** made his All Star debut in right field. Braves fans witnessed the play of three members of the rival Red Sox but could take solace in the fact that AL starter and Bosox ace **Lefty Grove** took the loss.

We all recall **Tommy Holmes** capturing the modern National League hit streak title in 1945 with his 37-game streak. Few, however, can name the Boston Brave that possessed the club record for 34 years before Holmes. One hundred years ago, infielder **Bill Sweeney** put together a 31-game hitting streak during the 1911 season. He bettered **Hugh Duffy's** club mark of 26 established in 1894. Sweeney was said to have been using the heaviest bat in the majors when he accomplished his feat. The next season, Sweeney batted .344, drove in 100 runs and posted a .416 on base average while serving as team captain. Ever versatile, he performed as a Braves regular at three different infield positions during his six years in Boston. Another of his claims to fame was to have been traded to the Cubs in February of 1914 for **Johnny Evers**, who would play a key role with the Miracle Braves.

### **An Open Letter to Milwaukee Fans**

In the March 20, 1953 edition of the *Boston Globe*, sportswriter **Harold Kaese** composed a letter from a "Boston baseball fan to a Milwaukee fan, on the day the latter takes possession of an old Yankee institution." What follows is Kaese's message to the Tribe's new supporters. As you will see, while he may be somewhat bitter and off the mark with a number of his remarks, Kaese forewarned them of their future in his last paragraph.

"Dear Sudsy:

Welcome to the big leagues. May your party for the Braves be a smashing success; may they reward you by retiring the last batter in every game.

You are rolling out a red carpet for the Braves today, a lovely gesture towards a bunch of callus-toed

ballplaying mercenaries. I hope you do not feel like burying them in that same red carpet come August.

The Braves may be a big league team, but big or little, as Gertrude Stein might have said, a loser is a loser. If you think finishing seventh with the Braves is more thrilling than finishing first with the Brewers, you are someday going to be surprised.

Your wild joy submerges my grief over losing the Braves, but there is one thing I want to know: Can you take it?

If the Braves lose their first three games and eight of their first 10, never reach .500, drop 13 games in arrears on Memorial Day, lose 13 straight to the Dodgers, are eliminated from the race August 31, and lose 10 games in succession, as they did last season, will you still be joyous?

Or will you feel like rolling out a red carpet studded with spikes and glowing with red hot coals for them in October?

I hope you are not put to such a trial by torture, and doubt that you will be this season. The Braves look like an improved team, probably a stronger team than the Red Sox you were kind enough to leave us. *[Editor's Note: the Braves finished in second while the Red Sox ended up in fourth in '53.]*

As a big leaguer, you will have to pay higher prices, but there are compensations. You will see the best in baseball, and you will be able to stage a real big league baseball dinner next Winter.

Ford Frick may visit you and preach solemnly about the right of the American boy to take a baseball bat to bed with him. And you can give Awards. Do you need any Awards by the way? We have some extra ones now.

You have had the Braves 1952 attendance of 281,000 thrown at you so much in recent weeks, you must think Boston fans a lot of cold-blooded, tight-fisted, hard-hearted ingrates.

We have been misrepresented. We have turned out 14,000 strong for basket ball and hockey games in recent weeks. We will turn out 14,000 strong for a lightweight title fight between Tommy Collins and Jimmy Carter with a \$20 top.

We demand nothing except quality. Are you any different, Sudsy old boy?

Do you know that since the war five teams drew fewer fans than the Braves (6,500,000)? Phillies (6,250,000), Washington (5,540,000), Cincinnati (4,880,000), Athletics (4,700,000), Browns (2,500,000).

Do you know that since the war Boston supported two teams better than did Chicago, Philadelphia and St. Louis?

Do you think, Sudsy old boy, that Milwaukee will soon equal the attendances Boston gave the Braves in five consecutive years 1946-51 -- 969,000, 1,277,000, 1,455,000, 1,081,000 and 944,000? *[Editor's Note: Attendance in Milwaukee from 1953-57 -- 1,826,000, 2,131,000, 2,006,000, 2,046,000 and 2,215,000.]*

Don't make fun of Boston. Wait until you have a taste of big league decrepitude when it is not subsidized by your city government or your big business.

Meanwhile, good luck. Treat our team well. Treat it better than we did. It lasted only through 82 consecutive seasons in Boston.

But if anyone at tonight's dinner refers to the Braves as a 'sacred trust,' you may snicker. The Braves were not sacred in Boston. They won't be sacred in Milwaukee. Only as sacred as the money in your pants pocket, Sudsy old boy."

### "Doc"

**Walter Paul "Doc" Gautreau** ranks as one of Holy Cross College's greatest baseball players. While attending that Worcester, MA institution of higher learning, Gautreau played every inning on a Crusaders team that won 92 of 101 games under its coach, **Jack Barry**, formerly of the Philadelphia Athletics' "\$100,000 Infield" fame. Possessing a fiery competitive spirit, he won all-America honors in each of his four collegiate seasons and led all college batters with a .428 average in 1925. Doc was inducted into the Holy Cross Athletics Hall of Fame in 1981.

Despite his diminutive stature of barely 5'4" and a weight of around 129 pounds, Doc went straight to the majors upon graduation, breaking in with **Connie Mack's** Athletics in 1925. Mack chose to waive Gautreau after only four games to open up roster space for the recent acquisition of hurler **Jack Quinn** from the Red Sox. The Braves put in a claim, paid Mack \$1,500 and acquired him on July 1. Doc maintained a spot on the Braves roster as a second baseman through 1928.

After his playing days, Gautreau dedicated the remainder of his life to the National Pastime as a manager and longtime scout. He died at age 69 in 1970 while serving as the Rocky Mountain representative of the Major League Scouting Bureau. We are most fortunate to have Doc's daughter, **Marjorie Gautreau Allen**, as a BBHA member. She has kindly and generously entrusted us with the family's collection of materials on her father's career. Delving into thick folders that include copies of scrapbook pages meticulously compiled by Doc's brother Albert, we will share with you some highlights of one of baseball's unsung contributors.

### *The Life and Times of Doc Gautreau*

#### *The Debut*

Walter Gautreau was born on July 26, 1901 in Cambridge, MA. His parents, Henri and Bibienne Gautreau, came to the United States from Sorel, Quebec, Canada after having lived earlier in New Brunswick. The Gautreau brood consisted of Walter, three other brothers and a sister. His first words as a child were in French and he would communicate with his parents in that tongue through adulthood. His French-Canadian heritage would later play an important role in his baseball career.

In his youth, Gautreau once quit public school to toil in a local bakery. Fortuitously, he met a fellow baseball enthusiast, **Harold "Pie" Traynor**, from

neighboring Somerville. Doc and Pie worked out together and the latter encouraged his friend to return to school. Years later, Doc would reminisce with his lifelong pal, "Gee Pie, do you [recall] the day we sat in that baker's wagon over in Cambridge and dreamed about the big leagues? Do you remember that we said we'd both reach the majors some day?"

Given his pugnaciousness, Doc picked up the nickname "Punk," along the way to becoming a three-letter athlete at Cambridge High and Latin School. In 1921, his high school ball club won 22 consecutive games and is still regarded as one of New England's greatest schoolboy teams. The all-scholastic catcher would further refine his baseball skills during summer breaks by participating in the North Cambridge Twilight League. The origin of his "Doc" nickname is a bit murky. It was once reported that when it had come time to have a portrait taken for an article on high schoolers chosen for the all-scholastic nine, the writer of the piece felt that Gautreau's "Punk" moniker would be an inappropriate title to include as part of the photo's caption. The reporter was partial to "Doc" for an undisclosed reason and suggested it as a substitution. Gautreau was cajoled into making the change and the new nickname would stick with him throughout his entire baseball career.

Doc's play caught the attention of Jack Barry, who invited him to Holy Cross to try out for his 1922 squad. Barry's only opening was at third base and although Gautreau had focused on backstopping in high school, he possessed the versatility to perform at any position. So successful was the transformation that Doc was selected to the All Collegiate team at the hot corner. Shifted to second base after his freshman year, Gautreau remained there for the rest of his college career and so excelled at that post that he caught the eye of several big league clubs. A good word from coach Barry to his former skipper, Connie Mack, resulted in Gautreau's big league dream coming true in Philadelphia with the Athletics shortly after receiving his Holy Cross diploma.

His stay in the City of Brotherly Love was painfully brief. Doc went hitless in four games. An impatient and frustrated Connie Mack called him into his office after a game and delivered what had to be a devastating evaluation, "Young man, you never will be a ball player. You are too small. You haven't the right knack in hitting. I think I am doing you a big favor in telling you this now. There is no sense in joshing you and making you waste a lot of valuable time. I would send you to Portland in the Coast League, but I know that you couldn't hit even there, so I am going to send you home." In order to unconditionally release Gautreau, Mack first had to place the little second baseman on waivers and give other clubs the opportunity to pick up his contract. Instead of leaving town with his head hung low, Doc hopped a train to the Hub for a new chance with the Braves as **Judge Fuchs** claimed him off the waiver list. The Braves had their eye on Gautreau while he was at Holy Cross but were unable to offset coach Barry's Athletics' influence. This turn of events proved fortunate for Gautreau as he capitalized upon the opportunity and secured a four season spot on his hometown team's major league roster.

Upon his arrival at the Allston Wigwam, Gautreau was deployed at second base, forming a slick keystone combination with playing manager and future

Hall of Famer **Dave Bancroft**. According to Doc, Bancroft took him under his wing and the duo formed sort of a mutual admiration society. With the slick fielding second baseman at his side, "Banny" led the league's shortstops in fielding and directed the club from a basement finish the previous season up to fifth place. The Tribe manager said of Gautreau, "He covers more ground than a thunder shower and makes his plays like lightning." Despite concerns about the rookie's ability to hit big league pitching, Bancroft predicted that Doc "will be another **Eddie Collins** in two more years."

According to Gautreau, during his first season, "Dave kept up a running fire of comment and instruction during the ball game. He'd apparently be paying no special attention to me -- so far as the fans could tell -- yet he'd be talking all the time, telling me how fast the batter was, where he usually hit, what sort of a baserunner he was and how his batting would go with the sort of pitching we were getting at the time."

National League umpire **Charley Rigler** observed that Gautreau's acquisition "made" the Boston Braves. Said the arbiter, "his alertness, intelligence and pepper have made the team completely over. For the first time since Bancroft came to Boston he has a man beside him who can play his kind of ball. You can see what effect this has had on the rest of the team, particularly the pitchers."

Rigler's opinion was shared by others. In the flowery language seen in sports pages of that era, Gautreau's debut was hailed. "[I]n the few short weeks that he has been a Brave [he] has already made his mark. He has done all the things that made **Link Lowe** and **Fred Pfeffer** and Lajoie and **Eddie Collins** and Evers, yes and Maranville, too, names to read about, names to conjure with, as wonder-workers do; names to remember....The Maranvilles and Gautreaus of this world, such small, wonderful prize packages, are few and far between. They are seldom heard of outside of fairy tales. But when their tiny, fiery light does flash across the heavens, the planets and the red fixed stars turn pale."

Doc had his own take on his stature. "I think it an advantage to be small at second base. A quick start is what tells and a little man can get under way much sooner than a big fellow. Besides, he's closer to the ground and can scoop up the low ones better. No doubt once in a while a hot drive will go over my head that I might reach if I were six feet tall, but against the few drives of this kind that I would lose, I think I can get a much larger number of slow grounders that I can scoop up now but might miss if I were taller."

The rookie's diminutive size once led to a humorous incident in the Braves clubhouse. Attendant "**Jitney**" **Goss** was at his usual post at the room's entrance when Doc came along to join his teammates in pre-game preparations. When he approached the door, Goss did not recognize him and inquired loudly, "Where do you think you're going?" Gautreau responded that he was headed to the dressing room. The clubhouse gatekeeper bellowed, "Like Hell you are." Fortunately someone set Goss straight, saying "That's Doc Gautreau." "It is?" Goss responded incredulously. "I thought he was one of the kids who sells peanuts."

Improved team play and Doc's local fan base helped bolster Braves Field attendance, increasing from 117,478 in 1924 to 313,528 in 1925. Despite his novice status, Gautreau had his own "day" during the season and he was presented with a Velie sedan by his Cambridge followers who packed the Wigwam. Doc was also given a box of chocolates "with the hope that it would sweeten up his batting average." Even ex-manager Mack wished him well. "I'm glad the Braves are making such good use of Gautreau; and glad, too, that he is to be given a 'Day.'" In his acceptance speech, Doc proclaimed "I never wanted to be anything else but a big league ball player. That's why I played ball every chance I could get. Well, I'm that today." His inaugural campaign consisted of 72 games and a batting average of .255. He even drew two votes in the Senior Circuit's Most Valuable Player balloting.

Gautreau's size often received play in the press of the day. One cartoon portrayed a fan in the stands mistaking him for a mascot and then upon viewing Doc's performance on the field, gasping in amazement, "Gosh! - If the mascot kin play like that -- these Braves must be World's Champs." Another featured his portrait with the header "The Biggest Bean in Beantown." When stories were written, terms like "midget," "pee wee," "pepper box," "half pint," "runt" and "pygmy" tended to find their way into the text. Press photographers of the day seized upon the opportunity to compare and contrast Doc's size with larger teammates. A favorite pairing for these snapshot artists was of Gautreau and 6'3" outfielder **Ed Brown**. Under the caption "Long and Short of It," "Big Ed" and Doc posed side by side with the former resting his elbow on the latter's head. In another portrait, "The Doc is Up in Arms," Brown lifted Gautreau off the ground and cradled him in his arms.

#### *"Sophomore and Junior" Years*

The magic that seemed to be present in 1925 disappeared the following season. The Braves dropped to seventh place but Gautreau increased his playing time (79 games) and batting average (.267). His principal competition came from **Andy High** who split his time between the hot corner and second base.

In 1926, Doc was a participant in a legendary play that was the genesis of the famous joke: "The Dodgers have three men on base! Oh, yeh? Which base?" The Braves were in Brooklyn on Sunday, August 15 playing the first game of a doubleheader. In the seventh inning of a 1-1 game with the bases loaded and one out, **Babe Herman** slammed a drive into right field. The runner on third scored but pitcher **Dazzy Vance** on second hesitated until he was sure that the ball would not be caught. Vance was a slow runner by nature and was plodding to third with teammate **Chick Fewster** breathing down his neck, followed by Herman running with his head down. The third base coach yelled for Herman to go back but Vance, who had rounded third, thought that the instruction was directed at him and returned to the hot corner, meeting Fewster on the bag. Herman arrived shortly thereafter. Fewster, believing that he was out, left for the dugout. Braves third baseman **Eddie Taylor** tagged everyone he could reach. Gautreau took the ball out of Taylor's hands and chased down Fewster for a just-in-case tag. Umpire **Beans Reardon** ruled Fewster tagged out and Herman out for passing a leading runner. Brooklyn manager **Wilbert Robinson** remarked, "That's the first time those guys got together on anything all season."

Writer **John Lardner** reported that “Floyd ‘Caves’ Herman did not triple into a triple play, but he doubled into a double play, which is the next best thing.” For years, Herman would moan that everyone had overlooked the fact that despite the boner, he’d driven in the game-winning run.

The Braves were mired in seventh place in 1927 and while Doc appeared in a career-high 87 games, both his at bats (236 vs. 266) and batting average declined (.246). More ominously, he played fewer games at second (57) than either of his two previous seasons with the Tribe. Two stronger hitters, **Eddie Moore** and **Doc Farrell** platooned there as well. The departure of manager and mentor Dave Bancroft after the season would not bode well either.

Gautreau remained an immensely popular player in the Hub and was referred to by one sportswriter as “the Tribe’s most colorful player since the days of **Rabbit Maranville**.” Another “day” was scheduled for him in 1927. He shared it with his Somerville, MA neighbor and Braves catcher, **Shanty Hogan** when the latter’s tribute had been prevented earlier in the season by rain. Gautreau and Hogan had been high school rivals and now were billed “The Might and Mite of the Braves’ Outfit.” The ceremony was set for September 3 in between games of a doubleheader against the Brooklyn Robins. In the first game, Doc thrilled those in attendance by tying a major league record when he stole home twice, a feat that would not be replicated until 1958. He also turned in several stellar plays in the field and accounted for three of the four tallies in the Braves’ 11-inning 4-3 triumph. The folks of Cambridge had placed a rush order to the factory in Moline, IL for a brand new 1928 Velie Special 60 Sedan and one had to be diverted from another order to satisfy the request. Doc was especially pleased with the gift, recalling that the Velie presented to him two years earlier gave him wonderful service, plenty of speed and no troubles. The previous day, Gautreau had received an even more memorable “gift,” as his wife Susan had given birth to their daughter, Marjorie. Hogan’s fans were generous as well, awarding the backstop a large loving cup along with a check for \$1,450.

#### *The Beginning Of The End*

During the winter, **Judge Fuchs** designated **Jack Slattery**, a former local college coach, to succeed Bancroft as Tribe manager and a couple of days after that appointment, on January 10, 1928, picked up future Hall of Fame second baseman **Rogers Hornsby** from the Giants. Hornsby would replace the outmatched Slattery at the Braves’ helm on May 23. Knowing his regular position was now lost, Doc headed to spring training early, taking along a brand new glove, in hopes getting a head start on a shift to the hot corner where he hadn’t played since his first year in college.

There appeared to be two schools of thought concerning Gautreau worthiness for a spot on the team. Doc’s loyalists were firmly convinced that he had been discriminated against because of his size and not given satisfactory playing time to prove himself. Others felt that a player as “green” as Gautreau would have been sent to the minors the day after he joined the Braves from Philadelphia if he hadn’t been such a good gate attraction for the poorly drawing club.

Responding to allegations of a below average arm for the third base position, Gautreau challenged that belief. “There are plenty of fellows in the major leagues who have held down jobs for a long, long time whose baseball propelling powers do not approximate mine.... As the present day saying goes relative to fielding your position at third base, you either get ‘em or you don’t.” However, this perception and the lack of pop in his bat led the Tribe to acquire third baseman **Les Bell** from the Cardinals in late March. The club’s lack of confidence in Gautreau was also reflected in earlier rumors that a swap had been under consideration with the Cubs wherein he and hurler **Joe Genewich** would depart for the Windy City with pitcher **Hal Carlson** and infielder **Fred Maguire** heading east. Despite newspaper headlines proclaiming it a near certainty, the transaction never took place. Gautreau was destined to spend most of his time this season at second base but with the Providence Grays of the Eastern League and not the Tribe. With the Rhode Islanders, Doc was the league’s All Star second baseman and batted .335. In Boston, however, he only saw action in 23 big league games and would have been unaware that his September 29 appearance in the line-up would turn out to be his major league swan song.

#### *Off To Canada*

As Gautreau was making plans to drive his wife and daughter south to the Braves’ spring training camp in St. Petersburg, FL, the ballclub was engaged in talks with the International League Montreal Royals about a deal. No longer in the Braves plans, Gautreau was expendable and attractive to the Royals given his ethnic background and fluency in French. He was on the road when the transaction was consummated on February 13, 1929. The outright sale deposited some \$10,000 into the Braves’ coffers. The move was not a surprise to Gautreau. The deal had been agreed upon earlier but a public announcement was delayed because of a difficulty in communications with the Montreal club. Braves owner Judge Fuchs had invited Doc to use the team’s Florida facility until the Royals opened their camp in Daytona Beach.

Montreal had rejoined the International League in 1928 and believed that Gautreau would be a gate attraction for the large French-speaking populace in the area. Doc teamed up with another short-of-stature player, **Billy Urbanski**, to form a keystone dynamic duo. Urbanski would move up to the Braves in 1931 and perform at shortstop for several seasons.

Doc provided a solid return on Montreal’s investment. He held down the second base post for five seasons, including two years when he performed in over 160 games. Doc had the top International League fielding mark for second-sackers in 1930 (.979) and batted a robust .312 in 1932, the same year he took over the helm of the Royals during the season. Although he yearned for a return to the big leagues, he enjoyed his time in Canada. “That Montreal is a great city. I’m getting fan mail all the time and the letters are written in French. That’s the language of my youth and we speak it now at home. I’ll not try to tell you that the fans of Montreal know as much about baseball as do Boston fans. They don’t. Nevertheless the boys in Quebec like the game.” Doc also enjoyed the “working conditions.” “Playing ball in the International League is not so wearing as the big league variety. In fact, you find that you do not have to live on Pullmans as you do

in the big league. We only have a few night sleeper rides....The weather in Montreal shows none of those extra warm spells. Our games start at 4 o'clock and there's always a cool breeze around. They have a slick plant for the game up there."

Gautreau's first shot at managing came because of a combination of lackluster team play and the incumbent's deteriorating health, both of which had a bearing on the latter's abrupt resignation. His promotion resulted in him becoming the "smallest, lightest and youngest manager in Double A or major league baseball." More importantly for the team's ownership, Doc became the only French-Canadian skipper in organized baseball, the first since **Napoleon Lajoie** had directed the Toronto Maple Leafs to a pennant in 1917. The club finished with a 90-78 record but 19 games behind the league leader and out of the playoffs. The Royals performed poorly in 1933 and Gautreau was replaced as manager during the season. During the winter, he was traded to the American Association Kansas City Blues where he played in 42 games in 1934 before heading closer to home to end his active career with the Watertown Townies of the Northeastern League. He did so with a flourish, batting .388 for that Class B ball club.

From 1935 to 1939, Gautreau managed outside of organized baseball with the Saranac Lake Red Sox of the Northern League, a circuit comprised of town teams populated by locals, college students and former professionals. In 1940, he skippered the Sherbrooke Braves of the Quebec Provincial League. The circuit had only recently affiliated with organized baseball and was granted a Class B league charter. The six team league was unstable from the start. One club was forced to disband in July and Doc left Sherbrooke before it too ceased operations on August 1.

### *Moving On*

Gautreau continued his involvement in sports after leaving the organized baseball diamond. Settling in Bolton, MA, he worked at the Norton Company plant in Worcester, MA as an expeditor and managed the semi-pro Worcester Nortons of the New England League through 1946. The league achieved some notoriety because a number of its players, some of whom were members of the military assigned to area bases, used assumed names. Gautreau got caught up in a bit of this controversy when a Worcester newspaper revealed that three members of the Nortons employed false identities. An incensed Doc took strong exception to any negative remarks about his "boys." "All the boys were servicemen ... who could not use their right monikers in performing now because of government restrictions." Their alleged "crime" was "not as bad as the paper would lead us to believe." During this period, Gautreau also umpired high school and college baseball in the summer and officiated football and hockey during the winter. He conducted classes in baseball and golf for area youth as well.

After receiving many entreaties by local schools to formally join their athletic programs, Doc accepted the position of director of physical education at Hudson (MA) High School in September of 1944. He had frowned upon school jobs in the past out of a concern that such a position would interfere with his love of officiating sports. The Hudson job provided just

the right fit as the school played its contests under the lights on Fridays, leaving his Saturdays free.

Gautreau ran his teams using the same philosophy that he followed in the pro's, "Let the players know that you are behind them every second, showing keen interest in their performances on the field."

In assessing the youth of the day, Doc candidly prophesied "Someday ... every school in the nation will have to set up some kind of rigid athletic program. To my mind there is nothing more disgraceful than high school boys of 18 so out of condition that they waddle when they walk. It is a shame."

In light of his own college experiences and the challenges that he overcame to play professional baseball, Gautreau also bemoaned the state of the college game in the mid '40s. "Most of the youngsters I run into like to play the game and that's all. They are not willing to work hard in practice sessions trying to improve. They are not willing to spend a few years in the minor leagues learning how to play baseball properly. I can't understand why more youngsters won't sacrifice a little in order to become a star ball player."

### *Scouting*

Given his varied coaching and officiating roles, Gautreau was in an ideal position to identify youngsters with exceptional talent and pass word along to potentially interested parties. An opportunity arose to return to the Boston Braves in a full time scouting capacity and Doc had his name formally added to the front office roster in 1947. He worked under Chief Scout **Jack Zeller** and New England regional head **Jeff Jones** in covering six Northeastern states.

In addition to attending numerous collegiate and high school ball games, Gautreau was assigned many other tasks as a Braves scout. Using Braves Field as a base of operations when the club was out of town, Gautreau would conduct open tryout camps. These events rarely revealed talent worthy of signing. One time, after working out a group of 33 spectacularly untalented candidates, an appalled Doc remarked "These guys either came to steal the equipment or take a shower."

In the spring and summer months, Gautreau would be called upon to run baseball schools sponsored by the region's newspapers through the New England Association of Circulation Managers. Many of the programs restricted participants to high school graduates under 21 years of age. Assisted by part-time members of the scouting department who often were moonlighting from regular high school and college coaching positions, Doc met with groups of upwards of 70 young men at dusty local diamonds and put them through fundamental skills drills. The clinic's "faculty" would be attired in hand-me-down saten uniforms originally worn by Tribe major leaguers for night games during the 1946-48 seasons. The school would run up to four days and culminate in inter-squad games. At its conclusion, Gautreau and his band of scouts would select the best players to represent the respective publication in a multi-day tournament held later at the Wigwam.

There would be no off-season for scout Gautreau. He would attend Hot Stove gatherings,

showing World Series and Braves promotional films and share tales from his vast warehouse of National Pastime experiences. In the winter months of 1949, the Braves put together a "traveling baseball college" that ran from early January to just prior to the start of spring training. The six-man faculty, comprised of players **Earl Torgeson**, **Red Barrett**, **Ray Martin** as well as Gautreau and fellow scouts **Jeff Jones** (the "Dean") and **Fred Maguire**. Designed to give playing pointers to students and coaches, the "school teachers" conducted sessions at the University of Vermont, Bates College, Amherst College, Brown University, Harvard University, Exeter Academy and Wesleyan College. "Professor" Gautreau, recalling his own high school days, lectured on the fine art of catching.

Doc remained with the Boston Braves until their final days in the Hub. One sportswriter once remarked that "Gautreau has been around Braves Field so long he's afraid someone might mistake him for one of the grandstand pillars." Doc joined a number of colleagues, including assistant farm secretary **Roland Hemond** in the westward trek of the franchise to Milwaukee.

#### *Milwaukee and Points West*

Doc witnessed the golden years of the Braves in Milwaukee with a blossoming farm system that reflected scouting efforts commenced while in Boston and continued in Wisconsin. The majority of players on the Tribe's roster were home-grown. He explained the reasons for the club's track record, "We go everywhere. I just came back from upper Wisconsin. I've been to towns like Superior, Green Bay, New London, Eau Claire and Sheboygan...I looked at 1,200 kids."

The Tribe took advantage of Doc's expertise in directing popular regional instructional programs. Under the auspices of Braves' farm director **John Mullen** and his assistant, Roland Hemond, "Silver Sluggers" baseball schools were conducted under the sponsorship of 22 Wisconsin and Upper Michigan daily newspapers and drew large turnouts of players between 16 and 21 years of age. Credit was given to the team for not just running the program as a glorified tryout camp but rather as a clinic to provide solid instruction from Gautreau and other members of the Tribe's scouting department to the attendees. Similar to the Boston-based program, the best midwest teams faced each other with the title tilt played at Milwaukee's County Stadium.

Doc picked up an additional assignment along the way. Each spring, he undertook the responsibility of acting as the assistant director of the Braves' minor league spring training camp at the team's Waycross, GA complex. In addition to acting as the official camp host to a multitude of visitors, Doc was in charge of all playing equipment. He insisted that all items be of first class quality so that the prospects could display their talent under the best of conditions. One of his greatest challenges was to assure that bats and other borrowed articles were returned by the players after workouts and placed in their designated spots in the equipment locker. His reputation as a "pepper pot" would be evidenced should a lackadaisical player not follow Doc's rules. When his duties permitted, he would join general manager **John Quinn**, farm director **John Mullen** and training camp director **Hugh Wise** on the observation deck of a building to view and evaluate the hopefuls on the diamonds below.

In November of 1961, Gautreau joined the exodus of Braves' front office talent to the American League expansion Los Angeles Angels. **Fred Haney** took the general manager's post and invited Doc to join him. The two had become acquainted during their time in Boston during the late 1920's. Haney, similarly height challenged at 5'6", performed at third base for the neighboring Red Sox in 1926-27. In the City of the Angels, Doc was part of a "Boston Braves West Coast Alumni Association." **Roland Hemond** had become the Halos first farm and scouting director. Former Boston Braves batboy **Tom Ferguson** also left a Wisconsin Tribe position to serve as the Angels' equipment manager. Field manager **Bill Rigney** appointed "Mr. Team," **Bob Elliott**, to the Angels' inaugural coaching staff. A bit later, **Chuck Tanner** joined this group of Boston refugees when he commenced his managerial career in the Angels' farm system.

Gautreau served as a senior scout for Los Angeles through 1969. During his time there, he received recognition for his many years of toiling in anonymity as a scout. The Boston Baseball Writers Association recognized the contributions of scouts to baseball early on. At their annual dinner in 1967, Doc was one of the first in his profession to be honored. The scribes presented him with a new suitcase. Always ready with a wisecrack, Doc remarked to the gathering, "Thanks a lot. I get the hint. Get out of town." The gift had a bit of symbolism to it. It represented the full circle of Gautreau's professional career. At its very beginning, Doc was given a wardrobe trunk by his Holy Cross fans after he played his last collegiate game and headed off to Philadelphia. Although Doc had joked about his dinner award, the writers later learned the value that he'd placed on it. Pirates' scout **Chick Whalen**, a close friend, disclosed "You guys will never realize how much Doc appreciates the honor. He takes that suitcase with him wherever he goes."

A shake-up in the ranks of the now California Angels in 1969 had ominous overtones for Gautreau. Old pal Bill Rigney was dismissed as manager and Fred Haney had been "retired" to consultant status. Major League Baseball had also been on an economy drive and scouting had been targeted as an operation where expenses might be reduced through consolidation. The Central Scouting Bureau was created and its regional scouts produced prospect reports for several teams at a time. At 68 years of age, Gautreau saw no other option but to sign on.

The Bureau assigned Doc the Rocky Mountain area as his territory. As sportswriter **Larry Clafin** of Boston's *Record American* opined, "Montana and Utah seem to me like a hell of a place to send a tough little Frenchman from Cambridge." Gautreau died on August 23, 1970 in Salt Lake City, UT while on the job and, most likely, with his beloved suitcase.

Doc's final resting place is in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA.

#### **How A Braves Scout's Jersey Made It Into The Hall of Fame**

**Majorie Gautreau Allen's** kind donation of papers associated with her father's career not only provided us with insight into Doc Gautreau's contributions to the National Pastime but also allowed us to solve a mystery posed to us by **William Roeder**, a visitor to our website, [www.boston-braves.com](http://www.boston-braves.com).

We frequently receive email requests via our website from family members or friends seeking information about someone who may have been associated with the Boston Braves. In some instances, we're able to confirm that the individual played for the Braves or in their farm system or served the Tribe in some capacity. Other times, we must sadly inform the inquirer that a family legend is most likely apocryphal. Some of those stories seem to be based upon the exaggeration of an incident in the distant past, such as transforming attending an open tryout camp into time spent with the Braves in the majors! We've seen inaccuracies of this sort even make their way into obituaries or poorly researched articles.

Several months ago, Roeder, who grew up in Lexington, MA and now resides in North Carolina, sought our assistance in his five year quest to confirm that a family acquaintance, **Thomas E. Fitzgerald**, had once served as a Tribe scout. As Roeder explained to us, his pursuit arose from the fact that he was named after Tom Fitzgerald's brother, Bill, a very close friend of his grandfather. Having been exposed to the assertion in family conversations, he took on the challenge to gather up evidence to prove the claim.

In comparing notes with Roeder, we learned that Tom Fitzgerald had a brief professional baseball career. After graduating from MIT in 1925, he pitched in 24 games for the Portland Eskimos of the Class B New England League in 1926-27. His manager in 1927 was **Duffy Lewis**, a famed Red Sox outfielder whose fielding exploits at his left field post resulted in the naming of a pre-Green Monster hill at Fenway Park, "Duffy's Cliff." More importantly for this exercise, this link at least established a possible future connection to the Tribe. Lewis served as a Braves coach in 1932-36 and was the team's long-time traveling secretary. Roeder also had some indications that Fitzgerald remained active in baseball at the semi-pro level in the Bay State.

Fitzgerald went on to a 36-year career as an educator and coach in the Brookline (MA) school system, retiring in 1965. At the high school level, he taught mathematics (concentrating on algebra and geometry) and served as a baseball and football coach. Fitzgerald died at 78 in 1988. Roeder had learned that Fitzgerald's surviving brother had found and donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame a "Braves" jersey that his late sibling was thought to have worn as a scout. William Fitzgerald is now deceased and Roeder's source of Fitzgerald family history, William's widow, recently passed away.

Our initial research failed to turn up confirmation that Tom Fitzgerald was a member of the Boston Braves scouting department. Media guides from the mid-40's through to the last edition in the spring of 1953 did not contain a person by that name on the official scouting roster. Other sources did not reveal any clues. We informed Roeder of our research but asked that he obtain further information about the jersey donation. At that point we thought that the matter was concluded.

However, we were proven wrong by the coalescence of two discoveries. First, Roeder received confirmation from Cooperstown that William Fitzgerald had indeed been the donor of an authentic game worn Braves jersey. Secondly, we received the Gautreau files in the mail and within it, a yellowed, brittle

newspaper clipping that proved to be our "Rosetta Stone."

Roeder followed up the Hall's corroboration with a request for a more detailed description of the jersey. An individual at Baseball's Shrine provided Roeder with front and back images of the uniform top in its display case featuring artifacts relating to the introduction of night baseball. As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, the jersey was one of the specially designed "sateen" uniforms introduced by the Braves and the Dodgers to be worn under newly installed ballpark lighting. The reflective nature of the material was thought to improve visibility for the fans in the stands. The Braves lit up their home turf a year ahead of the neighboring denizens of Fenway and paraded around the Wigwam in the evening hours in these special togs starting in 1946.

The Gautreau files revealed that after the Braves had declared the sateen uniforms surplus by the end of the '40s, the club passed them on to scouts and minor league coaches. Gautreau and his associates were frequently photographed at tryout camps and clinics in these uniforms right up until the team departed for Milwaukee. It was in one of these pictures that Roeder's search was fulfilled. Standing beside Doc Gautreau in a matching sateen Boston Braves night uniform was Tom Fitzgerald. Described in the accompanying caption as "Tribal ivory hunters," the Braves scouts were at Buttonwood Park in New Bedford, MA conducting a "school" sponsored by the *New Bedford Standard-Times* and attended by a large group of boys. Other photos and materials in the Gautreau file revealed that it was standard practice for the Braves to augment their scouting staff with part-timers during the summer months to run this program throughout the New England states. These temporary employees were drawn from the coaching ranks of colleges and high schools. The Braves benefitted not only from the services provided by these individuals but also from the expectation that they would continue to serve as bird dogs upon returning to their regular jobs. Fitzgerald's appointment to the Braves post may have come about in this manner or through other links such as his earlier relationship with Duffy Lewis or that he may have crossed paths with Gautreau at the high school or college levels.

The newspaper clipping shows that Tom Fitzgerald was a large man. It, therefore, was not a surprise to learn that he had selected the discarded uniform of a player nicknamed "Big Bill." The Hall of Fame photo of the back of the uniform top showed its numeral to be "96." Today such a high number tends to either be issued to an eccentric big leaguer or given out in spring training to a player with little chance of making the opening day roster. However, in this case, the number was bestowed on pitcher **Bill Voiselle**, who hailed from Ninety-Six, SC. That association allowed the Tribe to secure permission from Commissioner **Happy Chandler** to issue what was then the highest number ever worn by a major leaguer.

While these unique jerseys now command a premium price in the sports memorabilia hobby, back then they were regarded as used goods of no real value, to be handed out to individuals low in the club's pecking order as scouts were during that era. There was little, if any, expectation for the tog's return and many were kept and later discarded. One of our members once recounted rescuing **Sibby Sisti's** night

uniform from the trunk of a car where it had been stored for use as a polishing rag (See our Spring 1996 newsletter)!

Now that a movement has commenced by **Roland Hemond** and others such as the Society for American Baseball Research to highlight the contributions of scouts to the National Pastime, perhaps it would be appropriate for the Hall of Fame to record in its annals that the uniform on display was worn by pitcher Bill Voiselle and scout Tom Fitzgerald!

Roeder is continuing his research on Tom Fitzgerald. He has another artifact of Fitzgerald's whose provenance he'd like to establish. It's a baseball bearing the signature of the Yankees' legendary "Murderer's Row" -- Ruth, Gehrig, et al. Roeder has been told two stories regarding its origins. In one, Fitzgerald faced the Yankees in an exhibition game and struck out the feared group, receiving the autographed ball as a trophy. The other explanation was that through the Fitzgerald family's ties with the McGillicuddys of western Massachusetts, the signed spheroid was obtained for him through the latter's famed member, **Connie Mack**.

If you have any information about Tom Fitzgerald that might help in William Roeder's ongoing probe, please contact the BBHA newsletter editor.

### In Memoriam

Since our last newsletter, our roster of former Boston Braves major leaguers has declined by five with the passings of **Steve Kuczek**, **George Estock**, **Roy Hartsfield**, **George Crowe** and **Norm Roy**. The list of living ex-Tribesmen now numbers 28.

#### *George Estock*

1951 Boston Braves right-hander **George Estock** died on November 7, 2010. He was 86. In his only big league season, Estock mainly performed out of the bullpen. In 37 games, he went 0-1 with an ERA of 4.33. Estock's one loss resulted from his only major league start. He had the unfortunate luck to be on the losing end of **Cliff Chambers'** no-hitter. During spring training of the following season, Estock threw batting practice to a youngster in camp for the first time. The kid hit him well even when the hurler reared back in earnest. Estock asked the prospect his name and the lad responded, "**Henry Aaron**."

While Estock lasted but a season in the majors, his professional career spanned 14 years. He won over 100 games in the minors, including a couple of 20-win seasons. Estock's 22 victories in 1945 is a Wilmington Blue Rocks club and Interstate League record. He was inducted into the Delaware Sports Hall of Fame in 1988. After baseball, Estock worked for the DuPont Company for 28 years. He remained involved with baseball, coaching youngsters from the Little League to high school levels. Member **Howard MacDonald** knew Estock and sent along a clipping that illustrated the ex-pitcher's coaching contributions. As a pitching mentor at Sebastian River (FL) High School, Estock, then in his 70s, was popular among the kids. One of his pupils, **Bryan Augenstein**, credited him with providing the encouragement not to give up his dream of playing in the majors. The right-hander debuted with

the Diamondbacks in 2009 and is currently on the Cardinals roster.

#### *Steve Kuczek*

**Steve Kuczek** passed away on November 21, 2010 at 85 years of age. His professional baseball career was brief, lasting only two seasons split between the majors and minors. He performed at shortstop for the Pawtucket Slaters in 1949 and received a late season promotion to Boston. On September 29 in what would be his only major league at bat, Kuczek stroked a pinch hit double off Dodger ace **Don Newcombe**. He ended his big league career with a perfect batting average of 1.000. Kuczek might not have had even that brief time in the spotlight had not **Connie Ryan** gotten the heave ho when he chose to challenge the plate umpire's decision to continue this second game of a doubleheader despite rain and darkness. Ryan appeared in the on deck circle wearing a rain slicker. Meanwhile, one of his teammates had built a small fire on the home dugout steps. Because Brooklyn was in a tight pennant race and had a substantial lead in the game, the umpire-in-charge overlooked the deplorable conditions at Braves Field in order to make the contest official. The Dodgers went on to capture the National League pennant by one game, making that decision all the more important.

The next season saw Kuczek assigned to the Braves Class A affiliate in Denver. Despite a .301 batting average and another September recall to the parent, he was notified that his contract had been transferred to Double-A Atlanta rather than to Triple-A Milwaukee. With growing family responsibilities and slim prospects of a big league career, the WWII veteran and Colgate University graduate voluntarily retired. Kuczek spent over thirty years as a radiation protection technician before retiring in 1985. A biography can be found at <http://bioproj.sabr.org/bioproj.cfm?a=v&v=l&bid=754&pid=7811>

#### *Roy Hartsfield*

It's especially sad to report the death of **Roy Hartsfield** at 85 years of age on January 15, 2011. He was a most gracious and popular guest at two of our BBHA reunions. At the podium, Roy regaled us with his baseball stories and anecdotes at our 2007 and 2008 gatherings. Fortunately, BBHA member **Saul Wisnia** captured these magical moments in his pieces for the Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 BBHA newsletters, which we urge you to reread.

Hartsfield spent his entire three season major league playing career (1950-52) with the Boston Braves as a second baseman. As he told us during an interview session at the 2007 reunion, his susceptibility to heatstroke prevented him from reaching his full potential and shortened his time in the big leagues. Hartsfield began his career in 1943 with the Atlanta Crackers and resumed it after a two year stint in the Navy. The Braves drafted him from the Dallas Eagles of the Texas League in 1948. After an impressive .317 season with Milwaukee where he led the circuit in hits and was named Rookie of the Year, Hartsfield was ready for the majors. Despite his health problems, he managed to play a grand total of 265 games for the Tribe and batted an overall respectable .273. As the Boston Braves sought to improve during the offseason following the dismal '52 campaign, a trade was struck

with the Dodgers. Hartsfield was sent to Brooklyn, along with \$50,000 for **Andy Pafko**. However, it was Milwaukee and not Boston that reaped the rewards of this deal.

Hartsfield spent several seasons in the Dodgers' farm system, eventually transitioning to managing. He returned to the majors as a coach for the Dodgers from 1969-72 and back to the Braves (now in Atlanta) in 1973 supporting skipper **Eddie Mathews**. After four seasons at the helm of the Pacific Coast League Hawaii Islanders and because of his skills with young players, Hartsfield was appointed the first manager of the expansion Toronto Blue Jays. As would be expected, building a competitive team from scratch was an unenviable task and he endured three 100+ loss campaigns.

Hartsfield retired to Ellijay, GA where he pursued his passion for golf. He was able to shoot his age into his eighties. Hartsfield's younger brother Bob, who predeceased him, also played professional baseball, spending nine seasons in the minors, principally in the Milwaukee Braves' chain. He went on to a 13 year managerial career in the low minors working for the Giants, Cubs and Astros.

Boston Braves teammate and renowned broadcaster **Ernie Johnson** called Hartsfield a "great competitor." Johnson remember a stretch where Hartsfield avoided treatment for a broken finger so as not to jeopardize his spot in the line-up. As Johnson summed up, he was "scrappy" and "played hard."

#### *George Crowe*

**George Crowe**, rookie first baseman on the 1952 Boston Braves, was 89 at the time of his death on January 18, 2010. He was one of the first of a number of former Negro Leaguers signed by the Tribe after Jackie Robinson's historic breaking of baseball's color barrier. **Effa Maney** of the Brooklyn Eagles recommended Crowe to Braves farm system head, **Harry Jenkins**. Crowe had spent a couple of seasons with the New York Black Yankees and New York Cubans.

Crowe achieved early fame on the basketball court. He was a three-time high school all-state selection, receiving the Indiana Mr. Basketball award in 1939. Crowe went on to play basketball and baseball at Indiana Central College. After military service, he moved to Los Angeles and hooked up with the professional Los Angeles Red Devils as a forward. The other forward on the team was none other than **Jackie Robinson**. Another future major leaguer, **Irv Noren** held down a guard position. After the quick demise of the Red Devils, Crowe split his time between the Negro League and the National Basketball League's Dayton Rens.

Crowe quickly blazed through the Braves farm system. Prevented by discrimination from an earlier start, he debuted at the late age of 28 with the Pawtucket Slaters in 1949. Crowe batted .350, led the New England League in RBI and was the circuit's All Star first sacker. Promoted to Hartford in 1950, he continued his torrid pace, topping the Eastern League in batting (.353), runs (122) and hits (185) while, again, securing a place at first base on the All Star squad. Elevated to Triple-A Milwaukee in '51, Crowe captured the American Association hit and RBI crowns, batted .

339, was the league's All Star first baseman and Rookie of the Year.

In Boston in 1952, Crowe would share first base with **Earl Torgeson**. He accompanied the Tribe to Milwaukee in 1953 but despite a .286 batting average, was sent to Toledo the following year where he displayed his batting prowess once again. Crowe earned a ticket back to the big leagues with a .334 batting average, 34 home runs and 128 RBI. After a productive season with Milwaukee, he was dealt to Cincinnati for **Bob "Hurricane" Hazle**. Crowe found his path blocked at stops with the Reds and Cardinals by such luminaries as **Ted Kluszewski** and **Stan Musial**. When Big Klu was sidelined by an injury in 1957, Crowe rose to the occasion and clubbed 31 homers. He was voted to the National League All Star team but ballot box stuffing by Cincinnati fans caused Commissioner Frick to remove him. Crowe made the squad in 1958. He would become a premier pinch hitter and at his retirement in 1961, held the major league record for pinch hit home runs at 14.

After baseball, Crowe spent time in the insurance industry and was briefly a high school teacher in New York City. He relocated to the Adirondacks and lived a quiet life there until five years ago when he moved to California to be closer to his family. Crowe resided in an assisted living facility since 2008 as the result of a series of strokes. Crowe's late brother Ray was a legendary high school basketball coach who was inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1968 and who played a small role in the movie, *Hoosiers*.

#### *Norm Roy*

Former 1950 Boston Braves pitcher **Norman Brooks Roy III** died on March 22, 2011. He was 82 years old. Roy received the nickname "Jumbo" at birth as he weighed over twelve pounds at the time of his delivery. He was one of the greatest athletes to have graduated from Waltham (MA) High School, starring in baseball, basketball and football. Roy pitched two no-hit games in high school but lost both, 1-0 and 2-0, respectively. Despite an athletic scholarship offer from Michigan State, Roy was signed by Braves' scout **Jeff Jones** upon graduation in 1947 for a reported bonus in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

The Braves immediately sent the right-hander to Pawtucket for seasoning and he performed well enough for a promotion to their Triple-A club in Milwaukee. Roy won a total of 21 games during his two seasons with the Brewers and was promoted to the parent club as a "can't miss" prospect for the 1950 campaign.

The 21-year-old rookie made his major league debut at Braves Field in the second game of a doubleheader against the Phillies on April 23, relieving ineffective starter **Johnny Antonelli** in the first inning and sticking around for six innings. Roy won his first big league start, a complete game five-hit 4-1 victory over Philadelphia at Shibe Park on April 30. Despite his early season performances, Roy did not quite live up to expectations and finished the year with a 4-3 record and a 5.13 ERA in 19 games. He struggled with his control, walking 39 while striking out 25. His eighth inning relief appearance on September 27 at Ebbets Field against the Dodgers in a losing cause would prove to be his last major league game.

Although Roy spent only one season in the majors, he was involved in a couple of historic events. He was a teammate of **Sam Jethroe's** as the latter broke the baseball color barrier in Boston. In addition, Roy gained a piece of record book immortality when he was one of four different Tribe hurlers to give up home runs to the Dodgers' **Gil Hodges** in an August 31 tilt at Ebbets Field that saw the Braves blown out by the Bums 19-3. Roy was the second of Hodges' victims. That group also included **Warren Spahn, Bob Hall and Johnny Antonelli**.

Roy's career effectively ended as the result of an injury sustained in a 1951 spring training game against the Red Sox. He hurt his shoulder attempting to score when he crashed into catcher **Buddy Rosar** at the plate. His right shoulder would never be the same. Roy only saw action in three minor league games over the 1951-52 seasons and thoughts of converting to the outfield were abandoned since he couldn't throw effectively from that position. However, Roy was around long enough to have a baseball card issued of him by the Bowman Gum Company in 1951. Some of us in the BBHA can recall opening a package of the company's small sized cards, popping the enclosed gum in our mouths and finding Roy's in-action colorful portrait on a #278 pasteboard. Many years later, we'd nostalgically search memorabilia show dealers tables to find a replacement for the original that our mothers had thrown out long ago.

Roy returned home after his time in professional baseball ended and was employed for over 38 years with Raytheon as a financial administrator. He was an avid golfer and an honored guest at many BBHA reunions.

#### Minor Leaguers

*Chuck Tanner*

**Chuck Tanner** passed away on February 11, 2011 after a long illness. He was 82. We were introduced to his irrepressible speaking style at our 15th reunion. Once he took the podium, it was hard to get him off. Tanner told one tale after another until he was diplomatically edged back to his seat. Our resident chronicler of BBHA reunions, **Saul Wisnia**, captured Tanner's remarks in the Fall 2006 BBHA newsletter.

Tanner was signed by the Boston Braves in 1946 and toiled as an outfielder in the club's farm system through 1952. He remained in the bushes when the team relocated to Milwaukee and was promoted to the big leagues in 1955. Tanner arrived with a flourish. On Opening Day, he was inserted into the line-up as a pinch-hitter for **Warren Spahn**. Tanner slugged the first pitch he ever saw in the majors out of the park, providing the game-winning margin. Despite this auspicious debut, he remained a back-up player with the Braves, Cubs, Indians and Angels over eight seasons.

Tanner was once the property of the other team in Boston. The Bosox acquired him from the Cubs in March of 1959 and dispatched him to their Triple-A club in Minneapolis. There he teamed up with other former Boston Braves chattel such as **Chet Nichols, Murray Wall and John Goryl**. A strong performance (.319 batting average) led not to a promotion to the Hub but a September sale to the Cleveland Indians.

Tanner commenced his managerial career in 1963 in the minor league system of the Los Angeles Angels, linking up with former Boston Braves official **Roland Hemond** who was the farm director. He spent eight years in the Halo's employ before getting his big break with the Chicago White Sox in 1970, reuniting with Hemond, now the general manager of the Chisox. During his time there, Tanner employed Boston Braves great **Johnny Sain** as his pitching coach. His stay in the Windy City included a *Sporting News* Manager of the Year award in 1972 and lasted until 1975. Tanner skippered **Charlie Finley's** Oakland Athletics the following season and was then "traded" to the Pirates for **Manny Sanguillen** and cash. His nine year stay in Pittsburgh was highlighted by a 1979 World Series championship by the famous "We Are Family" ball club that fought its way back after being down three games to one against the Orioles. Tanner "returned home" in 1986 to skipper the Atlanta Braves for over two seasons. Once again, Johnny Sain called upon to tutor his pitchers.

Tanner remained active in the National Pastime with a number of front office assignments, the last being as a senior advisor to Pirates general manager **Neal Huntington**. Two of his sons played professional baseball. **Bruce Tanner** pitched briefly for the White Sox in 1985 and spent seven seasons in the bushes. Later, he coached in the minors and joined the Pirates' staff from 2001-05. Lately Bruce has performed as a major league scout for the Tigers. His oldest brother, Mark, pitched four seasons in the minors, never rising above the Double-A level.

#### *Boston Braves Bush Leaguers*

Member **Len Levin** continues to provide us with invaluable information on Braves minor leaguers who have recently passed from the scene.

We note the passing on November 12, 2010 of **Andrew Poklemba** who broke into organized baseball in 1945 with the Braves' Eastern League Hartford Bees. He was 87 years of age at the time of his death. At Hartford, he split his time between first base and the outfield. His weak performance at the plate (.219) led to his release. Poklemba would play two more seasons in the low minors before concluding his career.

79-year-old **Carl Hrovatic** died on December 3, 2010. He spent four of his five minor league seasons in the Boston/Milwaukee Braves chain as an outfielder. As a member of the 1950 Bluefield Blue-Grays, Hrovatic batted .270 in 86 games and went 5-1 on the mound. Promoted to the Eau Claire Bears, he was hitting .290 in 41 games before being called into military service during the Korean Conflict. Hrovatic resumed his baseball career in 1954 and was assigned by the now Milwaukee Braves to the Lawton Braves of the Sooner State League. Playing under skipper and future Hall of Famer **Travis Jackson**, he hit a blazing average of .370, .001 behind the league leader and was named an All Star. Despite his performance, Hrovatic learned that the parent club was not interested in a contact hitting, right handed batting outfielder, instead desiring a performer with more home run production than the 10 circuit clouts he had produced in his 467 at bats. His next season, with the **Sibby Sisti**-led Quebec Braves, would be his last. Batting .263 with no home runs, Hrovatic decided that it was time to move on with his life and leave professional baseball.

91-year-old **Bob Fletcher** was a five-season minor leaguer who had a couple of brief stops with Braves affiliates. He passed away on December 20, 2010. In 1945, the second baseman appeared in 14 games for the Indianapolis Indians. That was followed by a three game stint with the Hartford Chiefs in 1946. Over the course of his time in the bushes, Fletcher achieved a lifetime batting average of .317. A WW II veteran with service in Italy, he was a recipient of the Silver Star.

Three of **John "Red" Walsh's** five minor league campaigns were spent as Boston Braves chattel. Walsh died on December 25, 2010 at age 84. The right-handed hurler twirled for the Leavenworth Braves, Evansville Braves and Ventura Braves from 1948-50. His battery-mate at Leavenworth and Evansville was **Del Crandall**. Also at Evansville, Walsh shared the mound with **Chet Nichols**. His most successful season was in 1950 when he went 19-5 at Ventura and was named to the All Star team. He later coached baseball at Santa Clara University.

**Ralph Schumey**, who died on January 16, 2011 at 81, was signed by the Boston Braves in 1948. The Connecticut native played in less than ten games for the High Point-Thomasville Hi-Toms of the North Carolina State League. The U.S. Air Force veteran served during the Korean Conflict. He continued to play baseball in Connecticut industrial leagues. Schumey spent 25 years at a teacher in the Vernon, CT school system.

86-year-old **Lynwood "Buddy" Boehm** passed away on March 15, 2011. After serving in the Navy, he signed with the Boston Braves and spent the 1948-49 seasons pitching for the Bluefield Blue-Grays of the Class D Appalachian League. Boehm finished with a 12-5 overall record. In '48, he played with future Hollywood actor **Larry Pennell (Elly May Clampett's** suitor in the TV series "Beverly Hillbillies") and in '49 was managed by former Boston Braves pitcher/coach **Ernie White**. Boehm was a long time Little League coach in Victoria, TX.

**Louis Zwirek** was 91 when he died on March 16, 2011. He made a very brief appearance with the 1941 Bridgeport Bees of the Class B Inter-State League before entering military service. The Bridgeport club that season was loaded with future Boston Braves on its roster: **Ducky Detweiler, John Dudra, Claude Wilborn, Bob Brady** and **Siggy "Chops" Broskie**. Zwirek went on to a long and distinguished career as a high school educator and athletic coach.

#### *Other Notable Passings*

**A. Arthur Giddon**, 101, died on November 24, 2010. He served as a Braves batboy during the 1921-22 campaigns. We included a piece on him and his memories of his time with the Tribe in our Summer 2009 newsletter. On April 25, 2009, Giddon celebrated his 100 birthday as an honorary batboy for the Red Sox at a game against the Yankees at Fenway Park.

**Walt Dropo**, a slugging first baseman for the Red Sox, Tigers, White Sox, Reds and Orioles, passed away on December 17, 2010. "Moose" was 87. In 1950, for the first and only time in Boston's baseball history, representatives of the the hometown American and National League franchises captured Rookie of the Year honors -- Dropo for the Red Sox and **Sam**

**Jethroe** for the Braves. Dropo was among the guests participating in the 1988 celebration of the 40th anniversary of the '48 National League champions. That event stimulated the formation of the BBHA and Dropo became a long-time friend of the Association, appearing at several of our reunions.

**Bob Feller's** demise on December 15, 2010 was an especially sad event for us as we recalled his joyous appearance at our 1998 reunion. He traded stories with his '48 Series opponents **Warren Spahn, Johnny Sain, Sibby Sisti** and **Tommy Holmes**. After viewing the Fall Classic film that included the infamous Masi "non-pick-off," Feller announced to all assembled, "I was defeated in Game 1 by Sain and [umpire] Stewart!"

Former Chicago Cub **Phil Cavarretta's** death on December 18, 2010 closed out a chapter of Boston Braves history. As a 19-year-old rookie, he took to the field on Sunday, May 12, 1935 for a game against the Boston Braves at the Wigwam. In the opposing line-up for the last time ever was **George Herman Ruth**. 75 years later, Cavarretta had held the distinction of being the last living player to play against the Bambino in an official contest. Cavaretta finished his playing career with the White Sox in 1954-55, providing him with the unique opportunity to have also been on the opposing side when **Mickey Mantle** took the field for the Yankees.

On February 14, 2011, **Andy Jurinko** passed away at 71. While he never played baseball beyond high school, Jurinko made important contributions to the history of the National Pastime and the Boston Braves. He was one of baseball's foremost artists with a specialty in portraying in meticulous detail the sport's Green Cathedrals. Boston Braves fans were fortunate that Jurinko chose the Wigwam for one of his panoramic masterpieces. That portrait pictures Braves Field on October 6, 1948 during Game 1 of the World Series. Frozen in time on the field is **Johnny Sain** pitching to **Larry Doby** in the first inning. Jurinko produced a limited edition set of hand numbered and signed lithographs of his original work that a several of us proudly hang on a wall in our homes.

Longtime BBHA member **Philip L. Pattison, Sr.** died on March 24, 2011. He was 84 years old. Pattison pitched for the legendary Boston Braves chief scout **Lucious "Jeff" Jones** when the latter was the baseball coach at Newton High School. The 1944 Newton team won the state baseball championship and produced six players that signed with major league clubs. Pattison inked a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers and briefly pitched for Trenton in the Class B Interstate League before and after WW II service in the Navy. A graduate of Northeastern University, Pattison had a long career as a civil engineer.

#### **The Harry Jenkins Ball Comes Home**

In our Summer 2009 edition of the BBHA newsletter, we told the story of how a multiple Boston Braves player autographed baseball that also bore the bold signature of farm system director **Harry Jenkins** made its way "Down Under." To briefly recap, like the Roeder tale that appeared earlier in this issue, we received a query at our website from a woman in Sydney, Australia about a signed ball that had been in her family's possession for quite some time. While American baseball has made some inroads in her part

of the world, it's still an alien sport to most Aussies and our writer sought our help in identifying the faded "John Hancock" on the horsehide that accompanied the Jenkins scrawl.

Jenkins had married an Australian woman sometime during the late '40s. His father-in-law was patient of our inquirer's grandfather, a urologist. Jenkins and her grandfather soon became acquainted through a mutual hobby interest in raising carnations and orchids. The ties were further strengthened when her mother became godmother to Jenkins' son. She was an avid autograph collector and received the ball from Jenkins to add to her collection. We were able to identify 12 signatures and dated the ball to the 1951 club.

This January, your editor embarked on his lifetime dream trip to Australia and New Zealand. When I reached my hotel in Sydney, I found a message waiting for me conveying an invitation to join the family for dinner. I can confirm that the stories about Australian hospitality are true. We shared a wonderful evening with family and friends. I presented them with the BBHA's latest publication, *A Pictorial Tour of Braves Field -- Then and Now*. In turn, they insisted that the Jenkins ball should return home with me and reside in the Association's collection. I pointed out that the ball's stay at its current residence might better serve to build a symbolic sports link between our countries now that Australia has a six team national circuit, the Australian Baseball League, that plays during their summer (and our winter, as seasons are reversed). In addition, the current version of the Braves in Atlanta employs an Australian pitcher, **Peter Moylan** of Attadale, Western Australia. Needless to say, I yielded to my hosts' desires and successfully transported the treasured baseball past customs officials in Australia, New Zealand and the United States back to its point of origin. In addition, we now can proudly proclaim that our membership base has been extended to another country as family members were issued BBHA membership cards!

### Sittin' In The Jury Box

We extend our congratulations and a hearty "well done" to **Roland Hemond** upon the announcement of his selection by the Hall of Fame as the second recipient of the **Buck O'Neil** Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes his "character, integrity, dignity, extraordinary efforts and positive impact" over a lengthy career in the National Pastime. It all began with the Boston Braves and extended to the Milwaukee Braves, Los Angeles/California Angels, Chicago White Sox, Baltimore Orioles and Arizona Diamondbacks. We were most privileged to have Roland attend our reunions. The award will be presented during induction weekend at Cooperstown in July.

This year, the Boston BBWAA presented the **Judge Emil Fuchs** Award for Long and Meritorious Service to Red Sox President and CEO **Larry Lucchino**. The honor has been bestowed by the Hub's baseball writers since 1959 under the sponsorship of the Fuchs family.

Our good friend and frequent BBHA reunion guest **Johnny Logan** will be honored at a banquet held on May 12, 2011 by the Milwaukee Braves Historical Association. Among those expected to attend are

**Frank Torre** and the widow of **Joe Adcock**. Torre and Adcock at one time were Logan's roommates and Boston Braves property.

The threat of a late December blizzard forced the NFL to reschedule to Tuesday a Sunday tilt between the Philadelphia Eagles and Minnesota Vikings. The last time the NFL played a Tuesday game occurred in September of 1946 when a deluge of rain caused the Boston Yanks to make a similar shift in order to play the New York Football Giants at Braves Field.

Boston Braves hurler **Max Surkont** might have been a Yankee had it not been for one awkward play when he was pitching for the Sacramento Solons in 1950, en route to an 18-13 record. **Joe Devine**, the Yanks chief western scout was sent by general manager **George Weiss** to evaluate the Rhode Islander for a potential immediate purchase. Although Surkont pitched well in a game observed by Devine, he booted his only fielding chance of the contest. The New York scout reported back to Weiss that Surkont was "too clumsy a fielder to wear a Yankee uniform." What he wasn't aware of was that the flawed fielding episode was the result of an accident and not indicative of the hurler's fielding abilities. Surkont had caught his spikes on the rubber. A few weeks later, the Solons sold him to the Braves where he went 5-2 during the remainder of the season. Surkont won in the double digits over the next two years and had the honor of securing the first victory in Milwaukee Braves history. His grandson Keith was drafted by the Athletics and spent four seasons in the minors.

**Midge Landry** reported that her late uncle **Albert "Skippy" Roberge**, 1941-42 and 1946 Boston Braves infielder, was honored by Lowell Catholic High School on November 6, 2010. In addition to Midge, **Gary Mastas** and Skippy's nephew, Roger, were in attendance at the tribute. The Roberge family received a medallion representing Skippy's induction into the Keith Academy Hall of Fame.

BBHA member **Jack Ricco** has a unique link to Boston Braves history. His grandfather immigrated from Italy and settled in New York to look for work. He later moved to Boston to participate in the construction of Braves Field as part of Gaffney's crew. Wonder if Jack's grandfather was captured on film in those panoramic photographs on the lobby wall at BU's Case Athletic Center that show the building of the Wigwam?

### The Last At Bat

We're happy to report that the "Braves Field Way" sign that borders the remains of the Wigwam survived the winter and continues to remind passers-by of what was once resident on the adjacent site. It was especially sad to note in the obituary section, the accelerating attrition of members of the Braves Family. While not unexpected given the advanced age of that population, it should serve to reinforce our collective pledge to vigorously work to preserve the memories of individuals associated with the Tribe, the team's history, its playing grounds and its fans. In addition to those noted in the newsletter, thanks are extended to all who've contributed thoughts and/or materials, including **John Ahokas**, **John Delmore**, **Don Vacchi** and **Bob Barry**. Your thoughts, comments and suggestions are always welcome. **Bob Brady, Editor, 25 McAndrew Road, Braintree, MA 02184-8245**