



# The Masonic Philatelist

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SEPTEMBER 2000

NO. 3

## Legends of Baseball



CLASSIC  
COLLECTION



JACKIE ROBINSON



DUKE SNIDER



CHRISTY MATHEWSON



CY YOUNG



GEORGE SISLER

33  
x 20  
\$6.60



HANK WILLIAMS



MICKY COCHRANE



CAL RIPKEN



WALTER JOHNSON



ROBERTO CLEMENT



LEFTY GROVE



TIM LINCUM



CY YOUNG



JIMMIE FOXX



PIE TRAYNOR



WALTER PIDGION



HONUS WAGNER



WILLIE MAYS



DIZZY DEAN



TOM SEAVER

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2000

PLATE  
POSITION  
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# The Masonic Philatelist

VOL. 56

No. 3

September 2000

Dr. Allan Boudreau  
Editor & Publisher

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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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The Masonic Stamp Club of New York was organized in 1934 for the purpose of encouraging research and study in Masonic Philately, and to establish bonds of good fellowship among Masons who are stamp collectors. The need for the organization has proved itself through the years with its ever-increasing membership and the formation of other Masonic stamp clubs in the United States.

The Editor invites all members to submit items of information and articles on the subject of Masonic Philately. Typewritten copy and/or camera ready items will result in the best possible presentation of your material if it is selected for use.



## TYRUS RAYMOND "THE GEORGIAN PEACH" COBB (1886 - 1961)

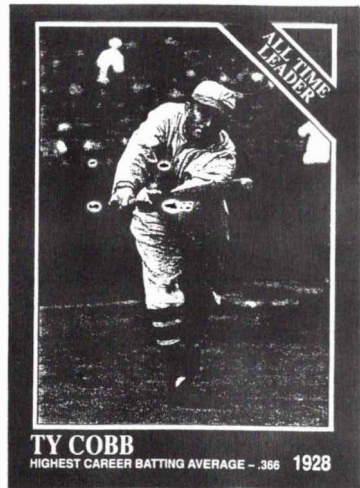
by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

**B**orn at Narrow Banks County, Georgia, Tyrus Raymond Cobb was the son of a noted Georgian educator and Senator, William Herschel Cobb. Tyrus grew up in Royston, Georgia. He was constantly under the heavy dominance of his father who urged the boy to become a doctor or a lawyer. Tyrus, of course, preferred baseball over his studies. Whenever possible he played town ball, an old form of baseball. In this game, each team can have any number of players. Also, a base runner is out if an opposing player hits him with a thrown ball. Winning against these odds required superior batting and running abilities. The young Tyrus excelled in both.

At the age of 17, a minor league team signed Cobb but released him after only two games. He then played one season in a semi-professional capacity for an independent team. He returned to his original minor league team the following year (1905). In August of that same year, the Detroit Tigers offered him a contract and he became a major league player at the age of 18.

Cobb's stern and distant father disapproved of his son's career choice and gave him the cruel and cold instructions, "Don't come home a failure." The following year, the boy's mother accidentally killed her husband (Tyrus' father) with a



shotgun. Somehow, his father's last words now became an obsession rather than a challenge to Tyrus. The words are partially responsible for Cobb's fanatical desire to win at any cost. The rest of the credit goes to the ridicule and criticism Cobb received from senior Detroit Tigers players when he was a rookie. In 1908 Cobb married Charlotte Marion Lombard. The couple had five children.

When Cobb retired from the game in 1928, he had set the major league record for the highest lifetime batting average (15 or more years). In addition, his records included most years leading the league in batting average, hits, and runs, and most times for five or more hits in a game. Further, he holds the American League record for most hits, singles, triples, and stolen bases, and most years with 200 or more hits. He also played in more games and scored more runs than any other major league player. Moreover, he is noted for hitting three home runs in the same game! Finally, Cobb has the unusual distinction of having the best batting average at age 40.

Cobb received his nickname from a sportswriter. However, in retrospect, a better nickname may have been "The Thief." Cobb's ability to steal bases was amazing and it was his main attribute in the eyes of baseball historians. In one season (1915) he stole 96 bases. Of the total bases he stole (892), thirty-five (35) of these were home bases!

Cobb played his life as hard as he played baseball. He was very short tempered and was known as one of the meanest competitors in the game. Rumor has it that he sharpened his spikes to intimidate (and actually use on) opposing players. While he denies this allegation, he did have many brawls on and off the field with other players. This action serves to confirm his severe hostile nature.

During one game in 1912, he actually jumped into the stands and beat-up a spectator who had been cursing him. With Cobb, enough was enough -- he did not give much thought to the consequences of his actions. He was suspended without a hearing. The rest of the team then went out on strike (the first strike in baseball) in sympathy for their hot-tempered team mate. A game scheduled for the next day (Detroit Tigers Vs Philadelphia Athletics) was played by anyone the Tigers' manager could find. This alternative was taken rather than pay a \$5,000 fine for a "no-show." The game was a catastrophe, 24-2 for the other side (Athletics). The strike ended with the club fining each striking player \$100. Cobb himself got a \$50 fine plus a ten day suspension.

More trouble, however, soon erupted. Cobb spoke his mind to the newspaper about how the opposing team (Athletics) had "laid it on" with their ill-gotten win. When the Tigers again played in Philadelphia, enraged Athletics fans hurled strong verbal abuses at the Tigers team members. As a result, the mayor ordered heavy police reinforcements for the scheduled games.

During World War I, Cobb joined the U.S. Army. He served in the Chemical Warfare Division and he achieved the rank of Captain. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Cobb did not miss a baseball playing season during the war.

In 1926 Cobb and Tris Speaker were accused of helping to throw a game back in 1919. The allegations made before the American League president, Ban Johnson, compelled him to force both players to quit baseball. However, a later investigation by the baseball commissioner, Judge Landis, exonerated both players and they were reinstated in baseball.

In his personal life, Cobb was a shrewd businessman. He made very wise investments that included stocks in Coca-Cola and General Motors. He was a millionaire long before he retired from baseball. Cobb was divorced from his first wife in 1947. He married Frances Fairburn Cass in 1949. He again divorced in 1955.

Cobb retired from baseball in 1928. Eight years later (1936) he became the first player named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. In the voting, he beat out Babe Ruth by seven votes.

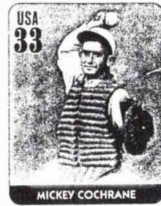
In his latter years, Cobb practiced philanthropy. He created the Cobb Educational Foundation for needy Georgian college students. He also gave \$100,000 for a new hospital in his hometown of Royston, Georgia.

Cobb spent the last years of his life in loneliness and despair. Ravaged by cancer, he fought off the disease with drugs and alcohol. He had alienated himself from his children and had few close friends. He became exceedingly critical of modern baseball and the professional players.

Cobb died in an Atlanta hospital at age 74. On his bed table he left one million dollars in negotiable securities covered with a pistol. Hospital authorities attributed his death to prostate cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Cobb's Masonic record shows that he became a member of Royston Lodge No. 426 (Now No. 52), Georgia, at the age of 21. He was elected honorary life member of City of Straights Lodge No. 452, Detroit in May 1921. He joined the Moslem Shrine Temple, Detroit in 1912.

**NOTE:** This article is the first in a series on Hall of Fame baseball players who were Freemasons. Eleven (11) of the twenty (20) players featured on the new series of U.S. stamps (July 2000) were Freemasons.



## GORDON STANLEY "MICKEY" COCHRANE (1903 - 1962)

by  
Christopher L. Murphy, BF

A born athlete, Gordon Cochrane was the son of an Irish immigrant. At the time of the boy's birth at Bridgeport, Massachusetts his father was a laborer who later became part owner of a local movie theater.

Gordon graduated from Bridgewater High School and then entered Boston University in 1921. Here he excelled in athletics winning ten varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball and hockey. He was even on the university's boxing team. In a football game against Brown University, Cochrane drop-kicked a record forty-eight yard field goal.

Also known as "Black Mike," Gordon Cochrane was both a refined person and a born leader. In 1923, he started playing baseball in the minor league, using the name Frank King to protect his amateur status. In 1924 the Philadelphia Athletics purchased his contract and Cochrane started his major league career the following season. Two years later he married Mary Bohr. In time, the couple had three children.

Cochrane became a main factor in his team winning three straight pennants (1929-1931). He led the American League catchers in double plays in two separate years. He also had the best batting average for a catcher. In one game he hit three home runs. Finally, he was unusually fast for a catcher, making 64 stolen bases in his career. He played in 5 World Series events, taking part in 31 games.



The Detroit Tigers purchased Cochrane in 1934. He became player-manager and the Tigers proceeded to win two pennants. He led the Tigers to their first World Series victory (1935). About one-half way through the following season he suffered a nervous breakdown. He recovered enough to play the next season (1937). However, while at bat in a game against the Yankees, a wild pitch by Irving Hadley hit him in the head. The hit fractured his skull in three places and for a while his life was in danger. This injury ended his career as an active baseball player.

In World War II, Cochrane joined the United States Navy. The Navy commissioned him a lieutenant and assigned him to the physical education branch. His lieutenant commander was Gene Tunney, the noted boxer. Cochrane saw duty in the South Pacific. Also, at one point he managed the Great Lakes Naval Training Station baseball team. Upon his discharge in 1945, Cochrane had attained the rank himself of lieutenant commander. His son, Gordon Stanley Jr., was killed in the war serving in the Netherlands.

For a time after the war, Cochrane worked as a representative for a trucking line. Later, he became a partner in a dude ranch at Nye, Montana. Also, he tried his hand in an automobile dealership at Billings, Montana. Now, at about age 52, he went back to baseball. He carried on in various management and executive positions with baseball clubs until his death at Lake Forest, Illinois in 1962.

Cochrane was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1947. The American Board of Baseball named Cochrane and another player, Bill Dickey, best catchers of the half century. Another member of the Hall of Fame, Mickey Mantle, was named after Mickey Cochrane (Mantle Sr.'s favorite player).

Brother Cochrane was a member of Fellowship Lodge, Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Also, he was a member of the Al Bedoo Shrine Temple, Billings, Montana.





## EDWARD TROWBRIDGE "COCKY" COLLINS

(1887 - 1951)

by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

An only child, Edward Collins was born to John Collins and his second wife, Mary, at Millertown, New York. The elder Collins was a railway freight agent. While Edward was very young, the family moved to Tarrytown, New York. Here, the boy attended Irving School (a private school). His athletic abilities were so good that the school named a trophy in his honor. He graduated from Irving and went on to Columbia University.

At Columbia, Collins was a star football player and baseball player. News of his talents reached Connie Mack, manager of the Philadelphia Athletics, who then sought to sign the young player. Mack contracted Collins (1906) under the pseudonym of Sullivan to protect the boy's non-professional collegiate standing. Collins played professionally for one year under his pseudonym. This ruse may have continued to work, however, Collins had played earlier in a semi-professional capacity in New England. The collegiate sports board found out about this engagement and disqualified him from collegiate sports. Nevertheless, Columbia did not want to lose Collins' valuable experience and advice. The university officials, therefore, appointed him baseball coach. Collins graduated from Columbia with a Bachelor of Arts Degree.

Collins started his major league baseball career in 1906 at the age of 19. He spent part of one season (1907) in the minor league. He then carried on in the major league for a total of twenty-five years. By 1910 he had become a national baseball star. He was a major factor in helping his team win four American League pennants and three World Series titles between 1910 and 1914. His loyalty to Connie Mack





never failed. It was Mack who introduced the young star to Mabel Harriet Doan, whom Collins married in 1910. The couple had two sons. One son, Eddie T. Junior, followed his father and also joined Connie Mack as both a baseball player and an administrator.

Collins holds several second baseman major league records. These records include most games played, most putouts, most assists and most chances accepted. He holds the American League record for most years of service and most stolen bases in a game. He led the league in stolen bases in four separate years.

Collins earned his nickname, "Cocky," because of his keen understanding of the game and his total confidence in himself. Historians consider him the greatest second baseman in baseball history. The second base position lends itself to injuries. However, Collins never missed a game, save military service in the United States Marines in 1918.

Collins was with the White Sox in 1919 -- the year of the worst scandal in baseball history. In that year, eight White Sox players were indicted for conspiring to lose the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds. Collins was not among the corrupted players.

Collins retired from active baseball in 1930 at the age of 43. He carried on with the sport as a coach and eventually he held executive positions. His wife died in 1945 and two years later he married Emily Jane Mann Hall.

A chronic heart condition forced Collins to retire in 1950. He died the following year in Boston, Massachusetts at 64 year of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1939. Brother Collins was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 466, Tarrytown, New York. He received his degrees in 1911 at the age of 22.





## JAMES EMORY "THE BEAST" FOXX (1907 - 1967)

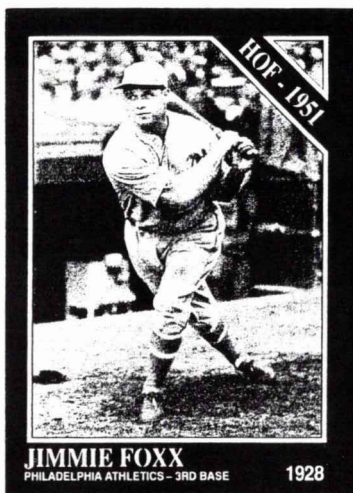
by  
Christopher L. Murphy, BF

James Foxx was born in the farming community of Sudlersville, Maryland. He had a wholesome upbringing on a farm. After primary school, he attended Sudlersville High School and played baseball for his high school team. He also played semiprofessional baseball for other teams. In 1924 Frank "Home Run" Baker, then player-manager for a minor league team, discovered Foxx. Baker contracted this lad who could pitch, play first, second or third as well as catch and hit. The Philadelphia Athletics bought Foxx's contract the following year (1925).

A good-natured person, Foxx's healthy and rigorous upbringing gave him an excellent physique. His size and strength brought about his nickname, "The Beast." With his extraordinary upper-body strength, he soon became noted for the remarkable length of his home runs. His highlight hit was a smash into the furthest corner of the third deck at Yankee Stadium. Legend says this blast had enough power to break a seat. In Chicago's Comiskey Park, Foxx hit a ball over the stands and cleared the street on the other side. Several accounts show that he hit with such force that the ball lost its shape.

In all, Foxx hit 534 home runs in 2,317 major league games. He holds the major league record for the most consecutive years with 30 or more home runs. He led the American league in home runs in 1932, 1933 and 1939. He played in 3 World Series events, taking part in 18 games.

Foxx was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1951. Brother Foxx was a member of George W. Bartram Lodge, No. 298, Media, Pennsylvania.





## ROGERS "RAJAH" HORNSBY (1896 - 1963)

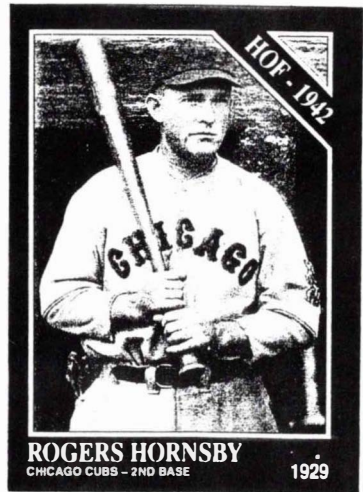
by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

Rogers Hornsby came into the world in the town of Winters, Texas. His father, a rancher, died when Rogers was two years old. The family then moved to Austin, and a short time later, to Fort Worth, when Rogers was five. In his boyhood, he became a star sandlot baseball player. When he was fifteen, he played semiprofessional ball in Dallas. He signed a major league contract with the St. Louis Cardinals at age 18.

Unfortunately, Hornsby did so poorly in the beginning that team officials put him on the release list. An offhanded remark by a scout on Hornsby's enthusiasm saved the scrawny Texan. At that time, Hornsby's nickname was "Pep." The scout confirmed that the name was certainly appropriate. This assertion was enough to keep Hornsby on. However, his manager thought he was too slight. The manager commented that he may have to farm-out the boy until he puts on some more weight and muscle. Hornsby took the comment very seriously and spent the next winter bulking up. He pitched hay, lugged milk cans and loaded-up on steak and cream on his uncle's farm. With another twenty-six pounds, Hornsby succeeded in filling out his five-foot, eleven-inch frame.

Hornsby was very hard on other people and on himself. Described as blunt, argumentative, dictatorial and moody, the man never drank (not even coffee), smoked, read or went to movies. His reason for living such a clean life was to protect his batting eye. He may have had a point because he became the greatest right hand hitter the game has ever known. In fact, Rogers claimed that his eyesight was so



keen he could see the ball at the point of impact with the bat. In field play, however, he had an unusual problem. He had difficulty keeping his balance when running backwards and looking up to catch pop flies.

Hornsby's only vice was gambling. He liked to play the horses, but unfortunately had difficulty "seeing the play" in that game. At one point in his career, his impulsive gambling measured in his club's decision to fire him as team manager.

His personal relationships were also stormy. His first wife, Sarah, divorced him in 1923. The couple had one son. The following year, Rogers married Jeanette Pennington Hine. He also had one son in this marriage which again ended in divorce. In 1957, at age 61, he married Marjorie Bernice Frederick.

At bat, Hornsby terrorized pitchers. This tactic paid off giving him a trip to first base more than half the times he came to the plate. Many of his hits, however, gave him the whole journey. He led the National League in home runs in 1922 and again in 1925. He also holds the league distinction for most home runs hit by a second baseman. Further, he holds the league record for highest batting average for a lifetime of 15 or more years. At second base he was also spectacular, leading the National League second basemen in double plays in 1922 and 1929. In World Series events, Hornsby played in 2 championships, taking part in 12 games.

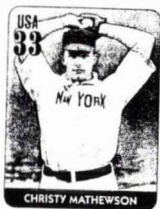
A sportswriter gave him the nickname "Rajah," calculating, cold and commanding as an Oriental potentate. When an interviewer once asked Hornsby why he never played golf, Hornsby replied: "When I hit a ball, I want somebody else to chase it."

A fast ball hit to the head seriously injured Hornsby in April 1930. He suffered a concussion but fully recovered. Unfortunately, he also broke his leg that same year. He was, therefore, sidelined for most of the 1930 season.

Many people claim that Hornsby was his own most enthusiastic fan. His own words, as follows, lend a little insight into this thought: *Baseball is the best. But it's like everything else, I guess, some players for you, some against you. I'm a tough guy, a gambler on horses, a slave driver and, in general, a disgrace to the game. I wish I knew why I only wanted to win.*

After retiring from active play in 1942, Hornsby carried on in managing, coaching and scouting positions until 1962. In his latter years, he became cantankerous and unreasonable. When he became eligible for Social Security payments, he refused to take the money. He was as strongly against Social Security as he was against endorsement payments for liquor and tobacco products.

Hornsby died at Chicago, Illinois in 1963 at 67 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1942. Brother Hornsby was a member of Beacon Lodge, No. 3, St. Louis, Missouri. He was a Royal Arch Mason and a Knight Templar.



## CHRISTOPHER "BIG SIX" MATHEWSON (1880 - 1925)

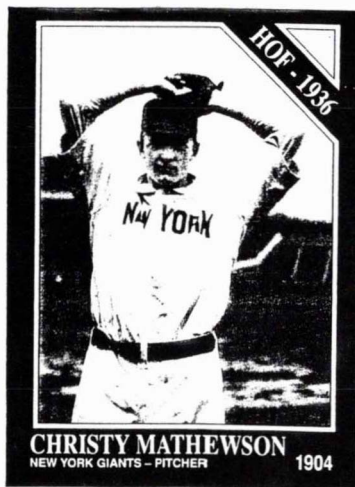
by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

The early days of baseball gave rise to several players who achieved legendary status. Among these players we find Christopher Mathewson. He was born in Factoryville, Pennsylvania and carried all the qualities of an Eastern gentleman. He was handsome, clean-cut, clean living and intelligent. After preparatory school, he attended Bucknell University (1898) on a scholarship. He was president of his class, sung in a glee club and belonged to a literary society. In sports, he excelled in basketball, baseball and football. Baseball scouts quickly noticed his outstanding pitching abilities. As a result, Mathewson began his professional baseball career in the minor league in 1899 before graduating. A short time later, he married Jan Stoughton and the couple had one child, Christopher Jr.

The New York Giants bought Mathewson's contract midseason in 1900. However, the Giants turned him back to the minor league. Almost immediately, he was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds. The Reds then traded him back to the Giants. Mathewson's team mates on the Giants gave him the nickname "Big Six," York's famous fire engine.

In time, Mathewson co-developed an unusual pitch which he called a *fadeaway*. This pitch, which later became generally known as the *screwball*, was his specialty. His greatest moment in baseball came in the 1905 World Series. In that series, he pitched a record three shutouts in the Giants' victory over the Philadelphia Athletics. Mathewson holds the National League record for most years winning 20 and 30 or

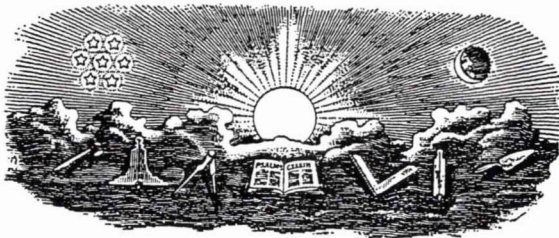


more games. He also has the league record for most games won in a season. He shares the record for the most victories in a lifetime. He played in 4 World Series events, taking part in 11 games.

Quickly becoming a public hero, Mathewson elevated the image of professional baseball players by his clean living and gentlemanly manner. At one point in his career a ghostwriter, John Wheeler, wrote two juvenile books under Mathewson's name. The books were entitled *Pitching in a Pinch* and *Pitcher Pollock*. Also, author Lester Chadwick used Mathewson as the character model for his *Baseball Joe*, the hero in a series of juvenile sports books.

During his years as a player, Mathewson refused to play on a Sunday. This decision was the result of a promise he made to his mother. Records show that he never touched a ball on a Sunday. However, after he was traded back to the Cincinnati Reds (1916) and managed that team, police arrested him in 1918 for allowing a Sunday game. The game, which was between the Giants and the Reds, was contended to be a benefit game for the war effort. The police dropped the charge and one year later Sunday baseball was officially allowed in New York.

Mathewson joined the U.S. Army (Chemical Warfare Division) during World War I and was sent overseas (1918). While in France, he underwent a chemical warfare training exercise. An error in the exercise process caused eight men to die. Many other men, including Mathewson, suffered from a severe dose of poison gas. When back in the United States, Mathewson was afflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis as a result of the gas incident. He therefore had to spend much of his time at a tuberculosis sanitarium in Saranac Lake, New York. He continued in baseball, however, by coaching and managing until his untimely death in 1925 at the age of 45. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936. His plaque in the Hall of Fame reads, *Matty Was Master of Them All*. Brother Mathewson was a member of Architect Lodge No. 519, New York City.





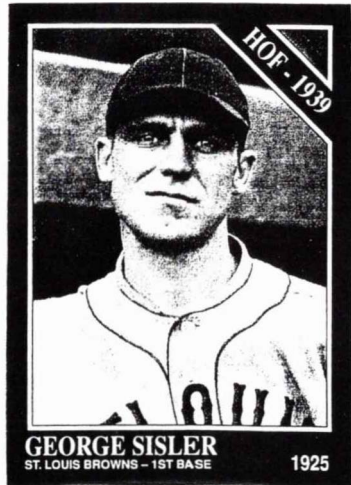
## GEORGE HAROLD "GORGEOUS GEORGE" SISLER (1893 - 1973)

by  
Christopher L. Murphy, BF

A native of Manchester, Ohio, George Sisler excelled at baseball as a youth in school sports. A major league scout discovered him and contracted him in 1912. However, Sisler was underage (18) and he signed the contract without parental consent. He did not receive any money, nor did he play any games. He continued his education and graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in mechanical engineering.

During this time, a serious issue emerged when the team that signed Sisler sold his contract to another team. Questions were debated on both the legalities of the original contract and on the contract sale. A court battle soon raged over the issues. It took four years of arguments to settle the questions. Finally, the National Baseball Commission ruled that the original contract was invalid, thereby making Sisler a free agent.

Signing with the St. Louis Browns in 1915, Sisler was originally tried out as a pitcher. However, his team manager later decided that his new player's skills would be best utilized on first base. This position had long been a Browns weak spot. The match was perfect. Sisler went on to share an American League record for the most years leading his league in first base assists. Also, for two consecutive years he led his league's first basemen in double plays. At bat, Sisler set a major league record for most hits in a season. Further, he led the American League in stolen bases in four separate years. In 1916, Sisler married Kathleen Holznable and the couple had three sons and one daughter.



During 1920, Sisler's performance was particularly outstanding. In that season, he played 154 games (every inning) making 49 doubles, 18 triples and 19 home runs. In 1923, severe sinusitis caused him to miss the entire season. His optic nerves became infected and for a time he had double vision. The following year he returned to the game as a player-manager. Although still a superior player, Sisler was not his former self.

Sisler left the major league in 1931 and joined a minor league team as player-manager for one season. After retirement from active play in 1932, he became a scout at different times for several teams. He was also a batting instructor for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Moreover, he ran a printing company in St. Louis, Missouri and later opened a sporting goods store.

Sisler did not drink or smoke. He was much admired for his exemplary life-style. One of his fans was the noted comedian, W.C. Fields. Once during his career, Sisler had dinner with Fields. When the player refused a drink which Fields was pouring, the comedian responded, "Even the perfect ball player isn't perfect in everything."

Sisler died at St. Louis, Missouri in 1973 at 89 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1939. Brother Sisler was a member of Rose Hill Lodge No. 550, Creve Coeur, Missouri. W.C. Fields was a member of E. Coppee Mitchell Lodge No. 605, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



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## TRISTRAM "SPOKE" or "GRAY EAGLE" SPEAKER

(1888 - 1958)

by

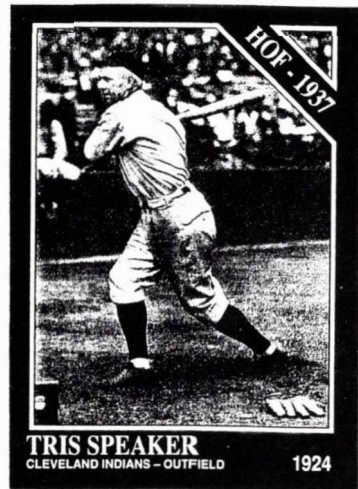
Christopher L. Murphy, BF

It is possible Tris Speaker was the first outfielder to test the direction of the wind by throwing grass in the air. He also used observation to predetermine where a ball would go after it was hit. When the batter reached a certain point in his swing, Speaker gauged both the ball power and direction, thereby getting a jump on the catch.

Speaker was born and raised in Hubbard City, Texas. After primary school, he enrolled in Fort Worth Polytechnic Institute. Throughout his school years, he excelled in sports. During the summer months he worked as a telegraph linesman and cow puncher. One summer, he broke his collar bone and right hand while taming broncos. Thus, he had to train himself to throw and bat left-handed. At the Polytechnic Institute, he played on the school's football team. In one game he seriously injured his left arm to the point where doctors considered amputation. However, by his own perseverance Speaker overcame the injury.

Speaker pursued a baseball career and accepted a minor league contract in 1906. In 1907 the Boston Red Sox bought Speaker's contract. The Red Sox left him in the minor league until late next season. He then began his major league career. Speaker learned much about baseball from Cy Young. When Young was in the autumn of his baseball career, he befriended the new player. Young schooled Speaker in the ways of the game, giving him the benefit of many years experience.

Speaker received one of his nicknames, Gray Eagle, because of his prematurely gray hair and his swift and precise glide when he was in pursuit of a fly ball. In one



game, however, he misjudged his flight and crashed into the surrounding concrete wall as he made the catch. The impact left him unconscious for several minutes, but he never let go of the ball.

Between 1907 and 1919, Speaker was the only player other than Ty Cobb to win an American League batting championship. He claimed his single title in 1916. He was player-manager of the Cleveland Indians in 1920 when this team won its first world championship. After the triumphant end of the game, Speaker climbed into the stands to hug his mother. He was very close to his mother and she was very devoted to him. She once consulted a lawyer to prevent sale of her son for \$750 which she claimed was, "like slavery."

Speaker holds or shares several lifetime baseball records. His major league records include most doubles hit, most assists and most double plays by an outfielder. His American League record includes most chances accepted by an outfielder. He shares the major league record for most outfielder unassisted double plays. Speaker played in 3 World Series events, taking part in 20 games.

Speaker enjoyed the fringe benefits associated with baseball. In 1912, he was given an automobile (value \$1,950) for what was then the equivalent of the Most Valuable Player Award. Also, he was given a sterling silver bat by an admiring Boston jeweler. Further, he received a few \$50 prizes for hitting the Bull Durham sign at two different stadiums. He endorsed Boston garters and, in lasting memory, a straw hat was named in his honor.

At one point in his career, he played with a vengeance. While in a slump with the Boston Red Sox, his team owner proposed that Speaker's salary be cut because of his falling batting average. Infuriated, Speaker would not sign the contract. His owners (Red Sox) therefore traded him to the Cleveland Indians in 1916. He became player-manager of this team in 1919. It was the Red Sox salary issue that drove Speaker to pilot the Indians to the World Series title in 1920.

In 1926 an allegation was made that Speaker, Ty Cobb and another player, had conspired to fix a 1919 game. In that game, Speaker had made two triples and a single. This record did not support the allegation and along with other evidence resulted in a full dismissal.

Speaker left the major league in 1929 and became a player-manager for a minor league team. Throughout his entire life, Speaker stayed with baseball. Although he retired from active play in 1930, he carried on in other capacities. At one point in the 1930's, he became a successful baseball radio announcer.

Speaker died at Whitney, Texas in 1958 at 70 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937. His plaque is inscribed, *Greatest Centerfielder of His Day*. Brother Speaker was a member of Hubbard City Lodge No. 530, Hubbard City, Texas.



## HAROLD JOSEPH "PIE" TRAYNOR

(1899 - 1972)

by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

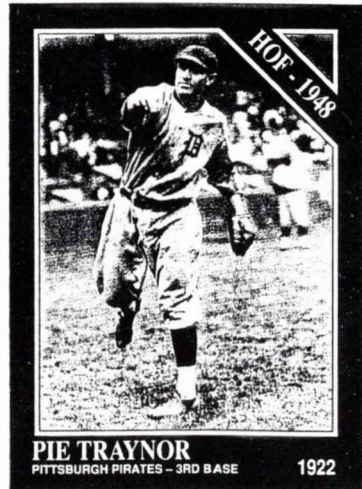
**H**arold Traynor was one of eight children born to an Irish printer and his wife in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Harold attended school until the age of 12 and then he got a job as an office boy. When World War I broke out, he tried to enlist but the army rejected him because he was too young. He found a job as a freight car checker and filled his spare time playing baseball.

Traynor's unusual nickname, "Pie," had an equally unusual source. One day his father looked at his grimy, scruffy little boy who had just come in from play. Dirt, skin, clothing and hair had melded into one mass. His father shook his head and remarked, "You look like pied type,"

printed type on a page). However, it is also true that young Harold loved pie, the ingredients for which he made certain were always on his mother's shopping list.

An excellent baseball player in his early years, Traynor sought a baseball career. A minor league team signed him as a shortstop in 1920. During his first season, the Pittsburgh Pirates purchased his contract. After he played 17 games for the Pirates, he was assigned to a minor league team. He started playing for the Pirates permanently late in the 1921 season.

Traynor was a very genial and articulate man who had many friends. He liked people and he liked to talk and listen. By his own admission, he says he learned more about baseball in morning hotel lobby bull sessions than on the field. Traynor



holds or shares several baseball records. His lifetime National League record includes most putouts for a third baseman. Also, he led the National League in third base putout seven times. Further, he led his league in third basemen double plays for four consecutive years. Finally, he shares the league record for most years leading the league in putouts by a third baseman. Traynor played in two World Series events, taking part in 11 games. In 1931, he married Eva Helmer. The couple did not have any children

In 1933, Traynor went into a partnership with John "Honus" Wagner. The two players opened a sporting goods store in downtown Pittsburgh. The venture lasted until 1951. Traynor became player-manager for the Pirates in 1934. During that year he suffered an injury that more or less ended his active playing. While trying to score, Traynor slid home and reached out (and back) with his right arm to touch the base. The catcher landed full weight on his arm. Traynor played hardly more than one season after this incident.

When he retired from active baseball, Traynor continued as the Pirates' manager for two more years. In 1940, he moved to Cincinnati. Here he got a job for a few months selling cars, although he did not drive. In that same year, he became a part-time scout and instructor for the Pirates. In 1944, he became a sports commentator for a radio station. He left radio in 1966 but carried on as a Pirates scout.

Traynor died at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1972 at 73 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1948. Brother Traynor was a member of John Abbot Lodge, Somerville, Massachusetts.





## JOHN PETER "HONUS" or "HANS" WAGNER

(1874 - 1955)

by

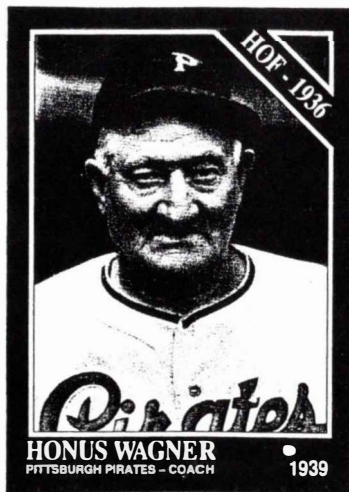
Christopher L. Murphy, BF

Some baseball historians claim that John Wagner was the best all-around player in the game. He was both colorful and lovable. His nickname "Honus" was a corruption of his Christian German name, Johannes. He also had another nickname, "The Flying Dutchman." However, this name was inappropriate because his parents were German, not Dutch.

Born in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, Wagner was one of nine children. He worked in a coal mine at age 12 and earned seventy cents for every ton of coal he loaded. His total income amounted to about \$3.50 a week. Wagner played baseball throughout his youth. He went on to study to be a barber but his mother hoped he would become a Lutheran minister. His brother recommended him to a minor league baseball manager and Honus signed a contract for \$35.00 month.

One of the contract provisions stated that the player must buy his own uniform, shoes and glove. By the time Honus was ready to play, he had \$3.00 left out of his first month's pay. After two years in the minor league, the Louisville Colonels bought his contract (1897) thereby commencing his major league career. He joined the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1899 and remained with this team until his retirement.

Wagner was a very gentle and bashful man. Physically, he was barrel-chested, bowlegged and awkward. There was a popular myth that he could tie his shoe laces without bending over. In addition, baseball fans said he walked like a crab, played like an octopus and hit like the devil. Wagner always had time for friends. He helped rookies, was bright and cheerful and never acted the star.



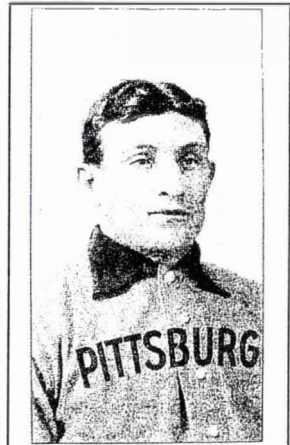
Wagner holds the National League records for the most years leading the league in batting average and most triples in a lifetime. Further, he led the league in stolen bases five times. Wagner most often played short stop. When he went for the ball, his big hands would scoop up dirt, ball and anything else on the ground. The throw-out would result in the first baseman getting showered with debris. Wagner played in two World Series events, taking part in 15 games.

Popular with his team mates, opponents and fans of all persuasions, Wagner was also very honorable. He refused to let a cigarette company use his picture on baseball cards. He did not want children to be encouraged to smoke. One cigarette company made and distributed cards before getting Wagner's permission. Wagner made them recall the cards but the company could not get them all back. These cards are now the most valuable baseball cards.

Wagner refused to capitalize on his fame in any way. He had many offers (vaudeville, clothing stores, newspapers) but rejected them all. He was just not that kind of person. The only endorsement he allowed was his signature on bats produced by Hillerich and Bradsby of Louisville (1905). Ironically, historians believe this testimonial is the first advertisement by an athlete.

In 1916, Wagner married Bessie Baine Smith and the couple had two daughters. He retired from active play after the next season. He went on to coach baseball and basketball at what is now Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He also served as sergeant-at-arms for the Pennsylvania Legislature. In 1933, he entered a partnership with Harold "Pie" Traynor in a sporting goods store in downtown Pittsburgh. At the same time, he became a coach for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He carried on with both ventures until 1951.

Wagner died at Carnegie, Pennsylvania in 1955 at 81 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936. Brother Wagner was a member of Centennial Lodge No. 544, Carnegie, Pennsylvania.



WAGNER, PITTSBURG

**The \$451,000  
Baseball Card**

Pittsburgh Pirate Hall of Fame shortstop Honus Wagner is remembered by youngsters today principally for the staggering value of his 1910 American Tobacco Company "T-206" baseball card.

In May 1991, Los Angeles Kings NHL hockey team owner Bruce McNall and hockey star Wayne Gretzky purchased one of the 20 or so known Wagner cards at auction for \$451,000.



## DENTON TRUE "CY" YOUNG (1867 - 1955)

by

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

A career in baseball did not measure in Denton Young's plans in his early years. He was born in the farming community of Gilmore, Ohio, the son of McKenzie Young and his wife Nancy. Denton himself became a farmer. In his early years, he traveled once outside his home state but soon returned to a waiting lady friend, Robba Miller, whom he had known in his childhood.

He played sandlot baseball and was particularly good at pitching. This skill he developed by his interest in throwing rocks and other objects. He was obsessed with throwing and once asserted, "All us Youngs could throw."

In 1889, Young played third base for a county baseball team. The following year, he traveled to Canton, Ohio to try out for a minor league team. The team gave him a contract which started his professional career. He played exceptionally well for his new team. By the end of the season, a major league team, the Cleveland Spiders, had bought his contract.

Young pitched for this team and astounded his new manager by winning his first four games. By the end of the next season, Young was a fully established pitcher with a highly promising future. The following year he married his childhood sweetheart. The couple did not have any children.

Young never had a sore pitching arm, though he seldom gave his arm any rest. At the end of the season, he would go home to his Ohio farm. He would do farm chores all winter and show up fresh and eager for baseball the next spring. His special pitches were his overhand curve, sidearm curve and his "tobacco ball." On



the mound, he did not spend very much time warming up. He said his arm had just so many throws in it and there was no use wasting them.

His nickname "Cy" has two origination stories, both being somewhat related. First, his pitching was like a cyclone. Second, he once repeatedly threw a baseball at a fence until it looked like a cyclone had hit it. Whatever the case, he certainly lived up to his name. His skill earned him the major league record for most victories in a lifetime and most consecutive hitless innings pitched. Also, he led his league in strikeouts in two separate years. Young played in one World Series event, taking part in four games.

Like some other players of his time, Young would not play baseball on Sunday. For the one game he did play, he used scripture to justify his action. In this instance, his manager, Pat Tebeau, was in a real fix for a Sunday pitcher. Young referred to a Bible passage which states that if your neighbor's ox or ass shall fall into a pit on Sunday, you shall assist him. Young stated that he did not know a bigger jackass than Tebeau and the man was in an awful hole.

Young retired from baseball in 1912 and went back to farming. After his wife died, he moved to the farm of his good friend (and Masonic Brother) John Benedum in Newcomerstown, Ohio. The town dedicated a park and a museum to Young. His bronze image adorns the park.

Young died at Peoli, Ohio in 1955 at 88 years of age. He was named to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937. Also, major league officials established the Cy Young Award which is given annually to the best pitcher in each major league.

Brother Young was a member of Mystic Tie Lodge No. 194, Uhrichsville, Ohio. He was also a Royal Arch Mason, Knight Templar, A.A.S.R. Mason and a Shriner. He was buried wearing his Masonic apron.

