

SAN DIEGO TED WILLIAMS SABR CHAPTER

February 2002 e-NEWS

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LEONARD ROBERT "BOB" DAVIDS (1926-2002) (courtesy of SABR web site)

Bob Davids, Special Events Coordinator for the Department of Energy, 1977-1981, and founder of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) in 1971, passed away in his sleep on the morning of February 10, 2002, in Washington, D.C.

Born on a farm near Kanawha, Iowa, March 19, 1926, he served in the Army Air Force, 1944-46, with overseas service on Okinawa. He received a bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri in 1949, a Masters of Arts in History from the same institution in 1951, and a PhD in International Relations from Georgetown University in 1961.

Dr. Davids began his Federal civilian service career in Washington with the Department of Defense in 1951. From 1952 to 1958 he was assistant editor and then editor of the *Navy Civil Engineer Corps Bulletin*. In that capacity he served in April 1953 as the Navy information officer for *Operation Hardtop*, a Navy Seebee experiment to snowpack an airfield runway on the icecap of Northern Greenland. (This snowpacking technique was used later in *Operation Deepfreeze* in the Antarctic). While in the Arctic, he journeyed with the Thule Air Base Commander and Danish Governor of North Greenland to an Eskimo village a few miles north of the Air Base to present a gift on behalf of the Navy Civil Engineer Corps to Ootah, who accompanied Civil Engineer Robert E. Peary, Matthew Henson, and three other Eskimos on the 1909 North Polar expedition. A pictorial interview was conducted. Ootah died two years later, the last survivor of the expedition.

Mr. Davids transferred to the Atomic Energy Commission in 1958 and served sequentially as a technical reports officer and a long-range planning officer. In 1964 he was on special assignment compiling Presidential documents on nuclear energy for the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. In late 1968 he received a Congressional Fellowship, spending the next year working in the offices of Sen. Mark Hatfield and Rep. Robert Taft, Jr., where he wrote speeches and helped prepare legislation. While working in Rep. Taft's office in July 1969, he traveled with the Ohio Congressman and North Carolina's Rep. Wilmer Mizell to Cincinnati, home of the 1869 Red Stockings, to participate in the ceremonies marking the 100th anniversary of professional baseball. Returning to AEC later in 1969, he prepared the Weekly Report to the White House. He also served as speech writer for AEC chairman Glenn T. Seaborg, and later, Dixie Lee Ray, who served until the agency was dissolved in January 1975.

Mr. Davids then joined one of the AEC successor agencies, the Energy Research and Development Administration, as Chief of the Special Projects Branch. In April-May 1977, he headed the U.S. secretariat at the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Conference in Salzburg, Austria. Later that year he became Special Events Coordinator for the newly-formed Department of Energy. This work involved setting up Government dedications of various energy facilities and demonstrations of energy conservation measures. When the Reagan administration took over in 1981, there were policy changes and Mr. Davids retired from Federal Service at age 55.

As a writer/historian, he had published many articles on Congressional history in *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill publication, between 1960 and 1975. Similarly, he wrote many byline articles on baseball for *The Sporting News*, published in Saint Louis, between 1951 and 1965. When the latter publication reduced its coverage of baseball to report more fully on other sports, he had no outlet for his statistical and historical articles.

In April 1971, he started a monthly newsletter called *Baseball Briefs*. Encouraged by the early response, he invited subscribers to an organization meeting in Cooperstown, New York, August 10, 1971. Sixteen baseball historians and fans came and adopted the constitution for the Society for American Baseball Research. What was expected to be a cozy research group with its own publications operated out of Davids' Northwest Washington home for ten years as he prepared and mailed *The SABR Bulletin* and *Baseball Research Journal*. Substantial growth took place and by 1986 there were more than 6,000 members around the world, annual conventions were attended by up to 600 members, and baseball book publishing flourished. The Bob Davids Award, the Society's highest honor, became an annual award in 1985, and the Baltimore-Washington Chapter was named for him in 1986.

Throughout this period Mr. Davids was actively involved in numerous community activities. He was commissioner of the Washington-area Church Fellowship Softball League from 1967 to 1987. He donated 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of blood to the Red Cross prior to heart bypass surgery in 1982. He prepared and served meals at Shepard's Table in Silver Spring 1988-2002. He was an active member of the Washington Christian Reformed Church, 1953-1969, and helped to organize its daughter church in Silver Spring in the latter year. There he served as a deacon and head usher, 1969-2002.

He married Yvonne Revier, a Pentagon administrative assistant, in 1953. They had one daughter, Roberta Davids-Hagen, of Cabin John, MD and two grandsons.

FEBRUARY REGIONAL MEETING RECAP

On February 2nd we held our chapter's annual Super Bowl Saturday regional meeting at the San Diego Hall of Champions. **Bill Swank**, author of the book "Echoes from Lane Field," started things off with a presentation covering the career of early 20th century home run leader Gavy Cravath who was born and raised in the Escondido area. A surprise highlight was the attendance of Cravath's granddaughter, Ginger McMillan. Ginger brought along with her a replica of her grandfather's plaque from the Phillies Hall of Fame.

Next up, Autumn (Durst) Keltner, daughter of major and minor league player and manager, Cedric Durst, provided a first hand summary of her father's career. Interesting were her personal memories of many ballplayers including Babe Ruth. She also displayed numerous photos, programs, correspondence and other memorabilia. Perhaps topping everything was Autumn's story about finding an old cigar box in her home with 35mm color slides that turned out to be of Ted Williams dating from a Lane Field December 1941 series in San Diego.

Our chapter was again fortunate to have **Andy McCue** give his annual review on the roster of new baseball books on the market. As usual, Andy saves many of us a lot of money on book purchases with his wise advice!

Bill Adams, former Padres executive and President of the Hall of Champions, gave members an update on the Hall's expansive new baseball exhibit due to be ready by April 15th.

Closing out the meeting, *Dan Boyle* was the winner of *Joe Naiman's* trivia quiz.

BOYNTON BASEBALL RESEARCH AWARD

Do you know of some high school students with an interest in baseball? Perhaps you have a high school student in your family?

A few weeks ago we mentioned that our Chapter has initiated a new award for baseball research for high school students. The announcements are out...pass the word around! Details are below, or contact A. Newton, wdsbaseball@yahoo.com, for further information.

The Boynton Baseball Research Award was established in honor of one of our Chapter's members and a researcher, Bob Boynton. The Award is to recognize academic research on the subject of baseball, accomplished by San Diego county high school students (9th through 12th grades). The award will be a cash honorarium and granted annually in two amounts for First prize (\$200) and Second prize (\$100).

The research may cover any topic on the subject of baseball using a wide variety of research methods, for example:

- ◆ *Biographical*, episodes in the life of a baseball person or player
- ◆ *Historical*, discussion of a time period of a baseball team/city/league
- ◆ *Game strategy*, theory or analysis of how the game is played
- ◆ *Statistical*, analysis of specific measures of players and/or team performance
- ◆ *Point of view*, discussing a theme or topic in baseball

The judging criteria for awarding First and Second prizes will be:

- ◆ factual accuracy
- ◆ adequate defense of idea(s) or statistic(s)
- ◆ contribution to the body of knowledge about baseball

It is suggested that a high school teacher or administrator supervise the research. The prize winners will be invited to present their research at a meeting of the San Diego Ted Williams Society for American Baseball Research chapter.

The academic research shall be completed and the report submitted to the Award Committee by [March 15, 2002](#). The report should be 1,500 to 3,000 words, excluding notes and bibliography. It must be submitted in hard copy, double-spaced in 12 point font on 8 1/2 X 11 plain white paper. The report should also be submitted on a 3.5 disk using MicroSoft Word.

**REMINDER: PCL REUNION COMING UP ON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD**

What: Pacific Coast League (PCL) Historical Society Annual Reunion
Where: San Diego Hall of Champions in Balboa Park
When: Saturday, February 23, 2002 -- 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Exhibits, fans, former players, family members of former players all will be on hand for this reunion. There also will be memorabilia for sale. At 12 noon there will be a luncheon led by SABR member and PCL Historical Society's President, Dick Beverage (the luncheon costs \$18...send a check payable to PCLHS, c/o 420 Robinson Circle, Placentia, CA 92870).

After lunch there will be several panels:

- one that will cover "The First Padres" from 1936 by several Ted Williams Chapter SABR members;
- another on playing in San Diego's Lane Field by former players; and
- a third about San Diego's Westgate Park by former sportswriters.

**SOME EXCERPTS FROM "THE SQUIBBER"
(courtesy of Davids Chapter e-newsletter)**

"The Squibber" is a bimonthly newsletter is produced by the Bob Davids Chapter of SABR, which serves members in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Check out the Chapter's website at: <http://www.sabrdc.org/>. Larry McCray, editor, graciously allowed us to use some of their material.

THE RIPKEN MUSEUM IN ABERDEEN -- WORTH A SHORT STOP?

The Ripken Museum can be found off Exit 85 of Interstate 95 near Aberdeen, about 40 miles north of Baltimore. [New construction on the West side of I-95, at milepost 85.3, is the new Ripken Stadium and Academy.]

A newspaper reporter once asked a clever rhetorical question about the compact museum - "Is it worth a short stop?" The answer is yes, especially if a young admirer of Cal is in the car with you. The museum is a well-signed five-minute drive from the I-95 off-ramp, the entrance fee is only \$3 for adults, and you won't spend a whole afternoon lingering there. The big catch is that you may find it closed, depending on the season; the volunteer-staffed Museum advises that you call ahead to 410-273-2525 to confirm when the doors are open.

The Museum is dedicated to the whole ball-playing Ripken clan [six of them played pretty serious hardball], not just to Cal. It occupies a part of a former bank building, and will eventually triple in size. For an online taste of what's there, visit Cal's official site at <http://cbs.sportsline.com/u/fans/celebrity/ripken/museum/tour.html>, or maybe go to the plainer official museum site at <http://www.ripkenmuseum.com/>. There's a good range of game-used artifacts on display, ranging from youth league uniforms to the game ball from the very dawning of The Streak to the lineup card for Cal Senior's first MLB game as manager of two sons.

While you're in Aberdeen, take five minutes to do two other things. First, glimpse the statue of Cal out on the nearby lawn, and ponder a moment why they immortalize an Iron Man in bronze. Then, walk a few steps up Howard Street to #18, where there is a tiny but charming exhibit devoted to Les German, another major leaguer from Aberdeen. German, a pitcher/3B, played with Washington's NL club in 1896-7, enduring a 2-20 record in 1896 but sporting a career BA of .260. He later turned up as a sharpshooter in Annie Oakley's tour. [Meanwhile, across the way there, grampa Ahrend Ripken -- a local lumber yard worker -- was launching a long streak of family baseball talent.]

[Note: A longer version of this Ripken Museum review, and the full set of 9 past "Around the Horn" reviews, is at <http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mccrayl/ATH.htm>.]

FROM THE SULTAN'S SHELF -- WITH DAVID VINCENT

Some longball results for the 2001 season, provided by the Sultan of Swat Stats [Woodbridge VA]:

Bonds Busts Ralph's Record . . . Ted's, Too -- Barry Bonds set a new single-season home run record in 2001 with 73. He hit 71 of them as the *left fielder*, breaking Ralph Kiner's 52-year old record of 54 in LF. (This year Luis Gonzalez hit 57 in LF to top Kiner as well.) Bonds also passed Ted Williams for the career lead in LF with 539; Teddy Ballgame hit 477 when tending the northern pasture.

Rocky's Slump Spares Ferrell's Mark -- Mike Hampton hit 7 homers as a *pitcher* this year, which is the second highest total for moundsmen; Wes Ferrell hit 9 in 1931 and 6 other pitchers have socked 7 through the years. Hampton's last homer came on August 9th.

Keystone Klobbers -- Bret Boone set a new AL home run mark for *second basemen* with 36, topping Joe Gordon's 1948 record of 32. Alex Rodriguez became the first *shortstop* to hit 50 homers as he slammed 52 in 2001, thus breaking Ernie Banks' record 47 in 1958.

Pinch Power -- Craig Wilson hit 7 *pinch* homers this year to tie Dave Hansen's record from 2000. Both David Dellucci and Erubiel Durazo hit 5 pinch homers for the Diamondbacks in 2001.

NOTE: Want to check your knowledge of the all-time leaders at each position? Take a look at <http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mccrayl/sultan.htm>

DOING BASEBALL RESEARCH AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - FROM DAVE KELLY [HYATTSVILLE]

[**Note:** The Library of Congress' Dave Kelly is well known to eminent baseball writers and researchers for his helpfulness and his fascination with all elements of the game of baseball. **Note 2:** The following squib is based on a very rich, helpful and complete document to be found at <http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mccrayl/LOC.htm> -- go there!]

Getting Started at the LOC

The Library of Congress is on Capitol Hill and comprises three buildings (Jefferson ["LJ"], Adams ["LA"], and Madison ["LM"]) connected by tunnels; initial access should be made at the front door of any of the buildings. The Library of Congress is a closed stack library. Except for reference materials on open shelves in the various reading rooms, material must be requested using call slips available in the individual reading rooms. The time it takes to deliver material that has been requested varies by reading room and collection.

Some reading rooms can retrieve materials in as little as 15 minutes; books and bound periodicals generally take from one to one and a half hours.

A Library-issued user card is required to request materials from the stacks. User cards are free and must be renewed every 2 years. They are issued by Reader Registration (Madison Building LM 140). A picture ID with current address is necessary to obtain a user card. Some reading rooms (Manuscript, Prints and Photographs) require additional registration. Additionally, some reading rooms (Main, Manuscript, Prints and Photographs, Rare Book) restrict materials that may be brought in. If this is a concern it may be advisable to contact the specific reading room before coming to the Library. More detailed information can be found in the publication Information for Researchers. A copy may be requested by or by email from hssref@loc.gov.

You will want to select from among the following reading rooms [Dave's full document shows the hours, and typical baseball holdings, for each: Ed.] Main Reading Room -- LJ 100, Microform Reading Room -- LJ 139B, Manuscript Reading Room -- LM 101, Prints and Photographs Reading Room -- LM 339, Newspaper and Current Periodicals Reading Room -- LM 133, Geography and Map Reading Room -- LM B01, Performing Arts Reading Room -- LM 113, Motion Picture and Broadcasting Reading Room -- LM 336.

The General Collections

The Library's book and bound periodical collections published after 1800 are referred to as the "general collections." Material in the general collections can be requested either in the Main Reading Room in the Jefferson Building or the Science, Technology and Business Reading Room on the 5th floor of the Adams Building. Almost all of the Library's baseball books have call numbers beginning with the letters GV and are shelved in the Adams Building. It is always much faster to request books in the building in which they are located, avoiding having them sent to a different building.

Indexes and Abstracts

The Library subscribes to numerous electronic indexes, although in many cases coverage is limited to the last twenty years. The Main Reading Room maintains paper copies of these indexes both retrospectively and for the years covered electronically. Unlike the computer catalog for book holdings, these indexes must be searched on-site. Since indexes are available commercially, they are also available at many public and academic libraries.

[Dave's longer paper here lists 12 of the most useful search indexes. Ed]

For Dave's six-page guide, *Baseball Research at the Library of Congress*, go to <http://members.bellatlantic.net/~mccrayl/LOC.htm>.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ALMANAC

Interested in the history of the American Association? Rex Hamann publishes a newsletter entitled "The American Association Almanac" at a rate of \$8.00 per year. The February 2002 issue deals with "Workhouse Catchers." If you want to subscribe contact Rex at:

14201 Crosstown Blvd.
Andover, MN 55304
763-862-8187
Pure457@aol.com

WALKIE-TALKIE FANNING BEES

We were contacted by Thomas Barthel who has written a book called *Walkie-Talkie Fanning Bees*. It tells the story of many patriotic Americans who happened to be baseball men during the Second World War. Asked to entertain in present and former combat areas all over the world, six groups comprising 26 players, managers, umpires and writers answered the call. (Six of the men would be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.) Answering the call meant risking death and terrible diseases, and travel from the Aleutians to New Guinea, but it gave the baseball men the chance to contribute to the war effort.

Barthel is scheduled to publish a book on Joe Medwick in the spring with Scarecrow Press and a book on Pepper Martin with McFarland. For more information and ordering details, go to the book's web site found at <http://us.geocities.com/tombart0/index.html>. Checks will be accepted (the cost is \$18 for first class shipping):

Tom Barthel
8 Canterbury Drive
Clinton, NY 13323

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