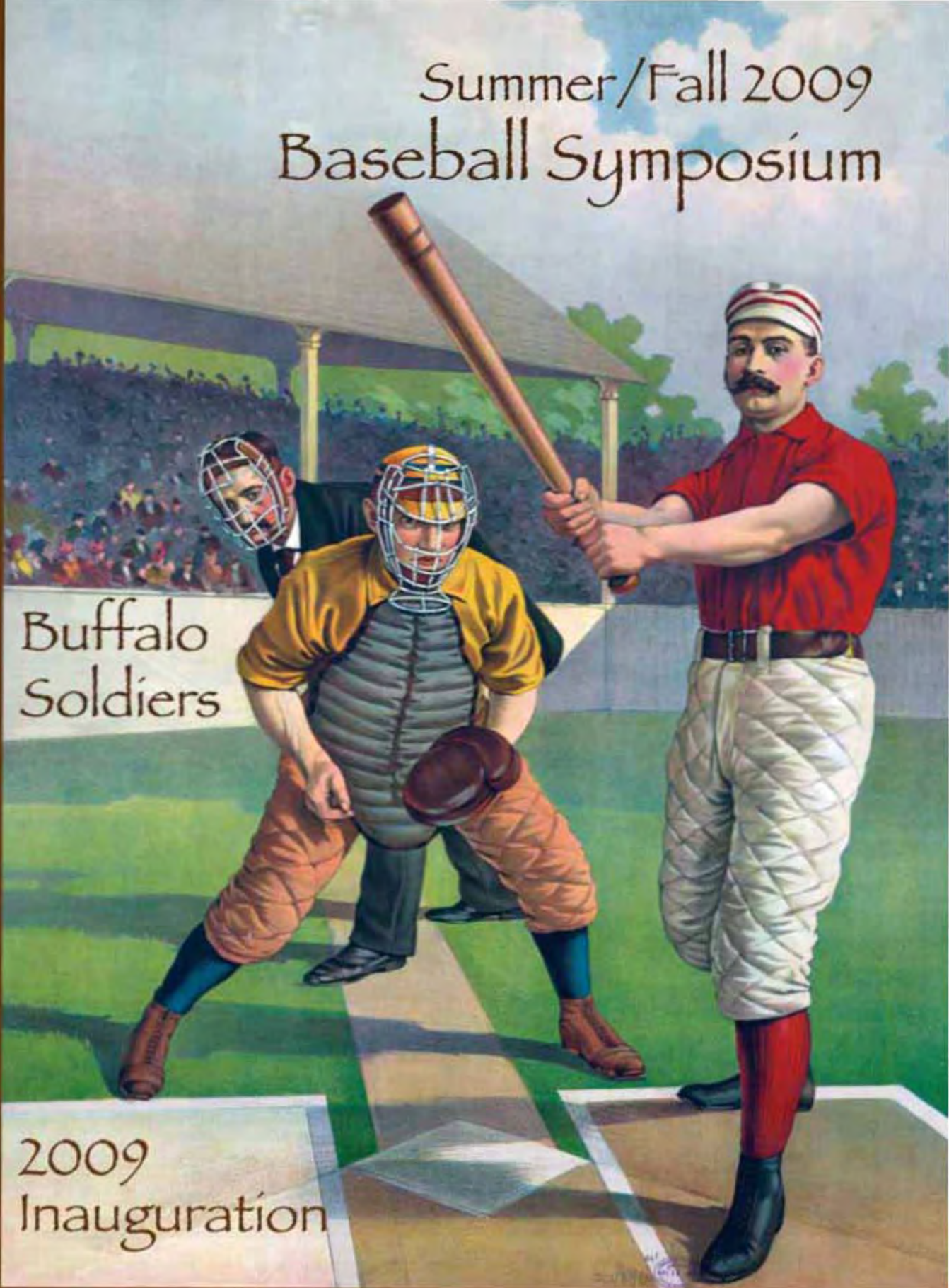


Summer/Fall 2009
Baseball Symposium



Buffalo
Soldiers

2009
Inauguration

American Folklife Center
The Library of Congress





FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER



BASEBALL SYMPOSIUM.



2 Read about AFC's fascinating symposium, *Baseball Americana*, featuring Hall-of-Famer Ernie Banks!

BUFFALO SOLDIERS



11 VHP's Experiencing War series features the 92nd Infantry, an African American Division that served in Italy during World War II.

INAUGURATION 2009



15 In the weeks surrounding the inauguration of the nation's first African American president, AFC collected sermons and orations relating to the historic occasion.

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The American Folklife Center was created in 1976 by the U.S. Congress to "preserve and present American folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, publication, and training. The Center incorporates the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world.

Folklife Center News publishes articles on the programs and activities of the American Folklife Center, as well as other articles on traditional expressive culture. It is available free of charge from the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540-4610.

Folklife Center News does not publish announcements from other institutions or reviews of books from publishers other than the Library of Congress. Readers who would like to comment on Center activities or newsletter articles may address their remarks to the editor.

ONLINE INFORMATION RESOURCES: The American Folklife Center's Website provides full texts of many AFC publications, information about AFC projects, multimedia presentations of selected collections, links to Web resources on ethnography, and announcements of upcoming events. The address for the home page is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>. An index of the site's contents is available at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/az-index.html>.

The Website for The Veterans History Project provides an overview of the project, an online "kit" for participants recording oral histories of veterans, and a brief presentation of some examples of video- and audio-recordings of veterans' stories. The address is <http://www.loc.gov/vets>.

The Folklife Information Service is a cooperative announcement program of the American Folklore Society and the American Folklife Center. It is available only on the American Folklore Society's server: www.afsnet.org. The service provides timely information on the field of folklore and folklife, including training and professional opportunities, and news items of national interest.

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Stephen D. Winick, *Editor*
David A. Taylor, *Editorial Advisor*
Morgan E. Greene & Stanley Bandong
Designers

Cover: *Full Sheet Base Ball Poster no. 281*, a chromolithograph copyrighted in 1895 by the Calvert Litho. Co., Detroit, Michigan. This and the other items from Library collections throughout the "Baseball Americana" article are featured in *Baseball Americana*, a book published by Harper Collins and featuring treasures from the Library.

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American Folklife Center:

- Tel: 202 707-5510
- Fax: 202 707-2076
- E-mail: folklife@loc.gov
- www.loc.gov/folklife

Folklife and the National Pastime: AFC's Baseball Americana symposium.

By Stephen Winick

On October 2 and 3, 2009, the American Folklife Center, together with colleagues in the Publishing Office and the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, produced a symposium, a film screening, and an exhibition of archival treasures, all on the compelling topic of baseball. *Baseball Americana* was a unique celebration of our national pastime, with highlights that included presentations by Hall-of-Fame player Ernie Banks, all-star pitcher, broadcaster and manager Larry Dierker, and Negro Leagues pitcher Mamie "Peanut" Johnson. Rather than concentrating solely on Major League play, the symposium also covered several other perspectives on the game, including those of groundskeepers, organists, and bat manufacturers, as well as folklorists, language experts, and culinary historians. The result

was a wide-ranging and enjoyable examination of both baseball itself and the culture surrounding the game.

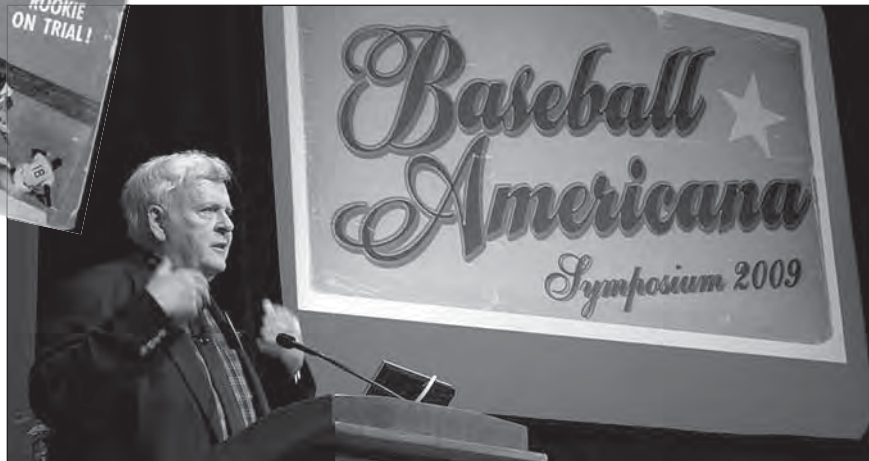
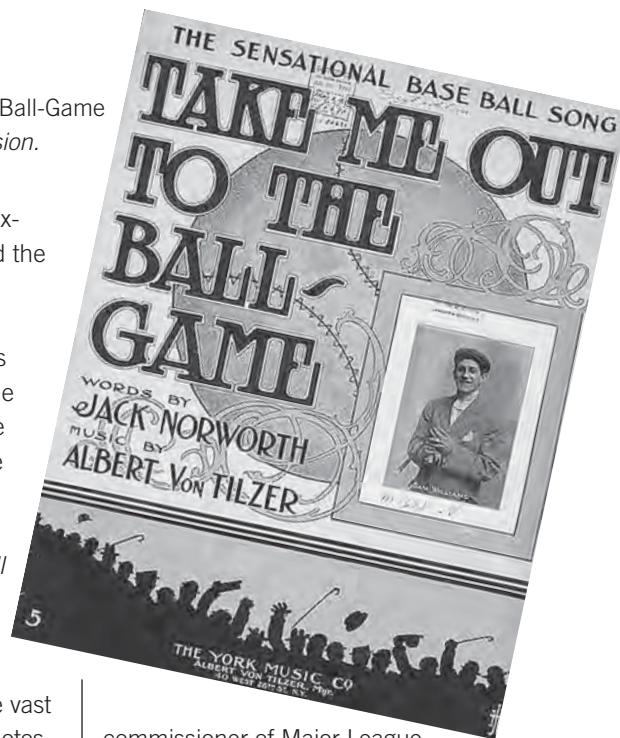
The idea for a symposium about baseball has its roots in the Library's unparalleled collections. Indeed, the Library's baseball collections are the largest in the world, and by the time of the symposium, their richness had already led to the creation of a beautifully illustrated book, *Baseball Americana: Treasures from the Library of Congress*, which was published by HarperCollins on September 29, 2009. In addition to the vast variety of baseball-related prints, photos, manuscripts and music held throughout the Library and featured in the book, AFC had its own collection to celebrate: the

Center recently acquired a collection of videotaped oral history interviews with former professional players and managers, organized and conducted by a former

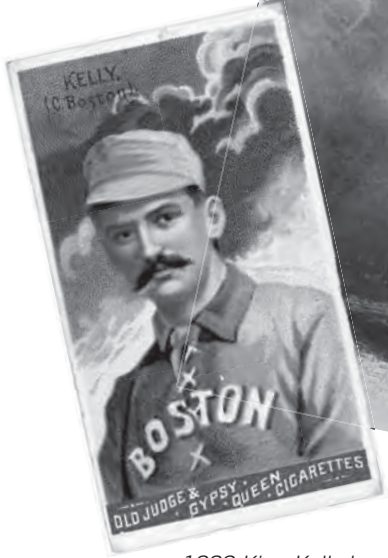
commissioner of Major League Baseball, Fay Vincent. The symposium celebrated both of these milestones in the Library's relationship with baseball.

Baseball Americana began on Friday, October 2, at 2:00 p.m., with an exhibition of baseball-related treasures from the Library's collections. Coordinated by AFC reference specialist Todd Harvey, the exhibition featured curators from seven curatorial divisions within the Library. Highlights included the first baseball

Take Me Out to the Ball-Game from LC Music Division.



Spalding Base Ball Guide from LC General Collections. Jackie Robinson comic book from LC Serial and Government Publications Division, reproduction number: LC-USZC4-6144. Photo of Paul Dickson.



1888 King Kelly baseball card (LC-DIG-bbc-0554f), 1913 Myrtle Rowe photo (LC-DIG-ggbain-04721) and 1860 Political Cartoon (LC-DIG-ppmsca-09311) from LC Prints and Photographs Division (LC P&P).



image printed in America (1787), the earliest known dated baseball card (1865), and the original 1908 sheet music for "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," which came to the Library when it was submitted for U.S. copyright. Other items included vintage photographs, early editions of *Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide*, and manuscripts from the Branch Rickey collection, which includes correspondence, speeches and writings, scouting reports, and other items relating



L-r: New York Yankees organist Ed Alstrom, Chicago Cubs Hall-of-Famer Ernie Banks, and AFC's Thea Austen and David Taylor, singing "Thanks for the Memories."

Photo by Stephen Winick.

to Rickey's career as a Major League Baseball manager and executive.

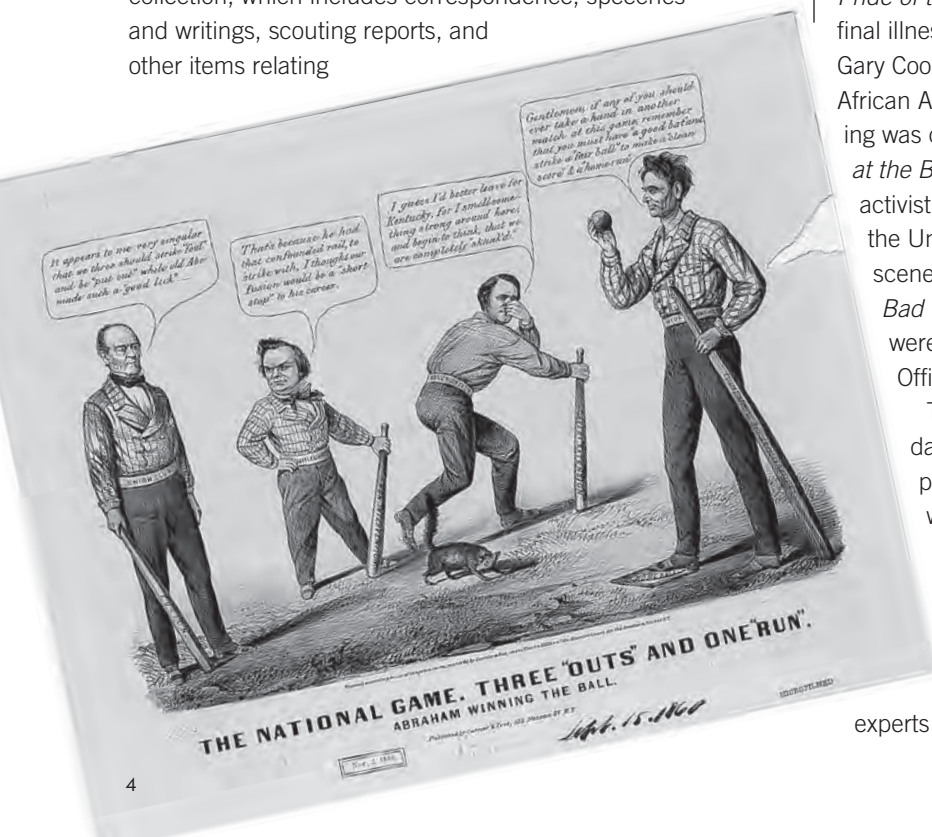
During the exhibition, interested members of the public circulated among tables staffed by Library of Congress curators, who were on hand to answer questions about the treasures on display. Meanwhile, Frank Ceresi, one of the editors of the *Baseball Americana* book, and a leading expert on the appraisal of sports memorabilia for museums and auction houses, staffed another table, where members of the public brought

in their own baseball treasures to be appraised. At 3:00 p.m., Ceresi gave a fascinating presentation on baseball artifacts, memorabilia and collectibles.

From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on October 2, the baseball programming moved to the Madison Building's Mumford Room, where the audience was treated to a film screening featuring scenes from notable

baseball films. Comedic scenes included Harold Lloyd's classic turn as a cab driver taking Babe Ruth to Yankee Stadium in *Speedy*, as well as Leslie Nielsen's outrageous umpiring in *The Naked Gun*. More serious clips included scenes from *Pride of the Yankees*, a retelling of the inspiring life and tragic final illness of Lou Gehrig, in which Gehrig was portrayed by Gary Cooper, and *The Jackie Robinson Story*, in which the first African American Major-Leaguer played himself. The screening was capped by a recent comedic "mockumentary," *Gandhi at the Bat*, which purported to show the non-violent Indian activist pinch-hitting for the Yankees during a secret trip to the United States in 1933. The clips, which also included scenes from *Eight Men Out*, *Bang the Drum Slowly*, *The Bad News Bears*, *The Natural*, and other baseball classics, were chosen by Susan Reyburn of the Library's Publishing Office.

The symposium itself, which ran all day on Saturday, October 3, examined baseball from a number of perspectives, particularly the viewpoints of people who experience the game at home (via TV, radio and newspapers), in the stands (as spectators, vendors and musicians), and on the field (as players and coaches). Speakers included former players, others who make their living through the game (including a stadium organist and a head groundskeeper), and experts on baseball cuisine, the language of baseball, and



baseball memorabilia.

The symposium began at 9:00 a.m., with a stirring rendition of the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," sung by the Washington, D.C. a cappella singing group Reverb. AFC Director Peggy Bulger then offered opening remarks, in which she quickly outlined the folk cultural aspects of baseball, mentioning a range of traditions, from proverbial expressions involving the game to adaptations such as stickball. Following Bulger's introduction, AFC Head of Research and Programs David Taylor introduced the symposium's own adaptation of a baseball tradition, the throwing out of the first pitch. In this case, two-time National League all-star pitcher Larry Dierker threw the pitch to Hayden Boshart, a youth who plays in the Capitol Hill Babe Ruth League. Dierker then signed the ball as a keepsake for the young man.

The first pitch was immediately followed by the symposium's keynote speaker, Paul Dickson, the author of many books on baseball. Dickson's keynote address focused on the language of baseball, but

also on the importance of the Library of Congress to baseball research. Dickson, who lives in the Washington suburbs, has used the Library to research all his baseball books, which include *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary*, *The Secret Language of Baseball*, and *The Joy of Keeping Score*. He praised the staff of the Main Reading Room, stating that any baseball book earns an automatic demerit if Dave Kelly, or another member of the Library's reference staff, is not mentioned in the acknowledgements.

Dickson's latest book is a biography of Bill Veeck, who owned several baseball teams in the 1940s and 1950s (notably the Chicago White Sox), and who helped to integrate baseball by hiring African American players. Dickson described his research for the book across the Library's divisions. In the Rare Book Division, Dickson discovered that the "whites-only" status quo in Major League Baseball up until the 1940s was not only an "unwritten rule," as most people think; Dickson found Players' Association manuals that indicate that at one time a formal vote was taken to exclude black players. The Manuscript Division's Branch Rickey Papers and Jackie Robinson Papers helped set the tone for the issues involved in the sport's integration. "There's nothing like reading some of the hate mail that came to Jackie Robinson to make you angry," he said. "But also, there's a letter from four white Baptist ministers, saying 'this should have happened a long time ago.'" In the Recorded Sound Division, he found fifty five-minute broadcasts by Veeck, which not only revealed anecdotes he had never heard before

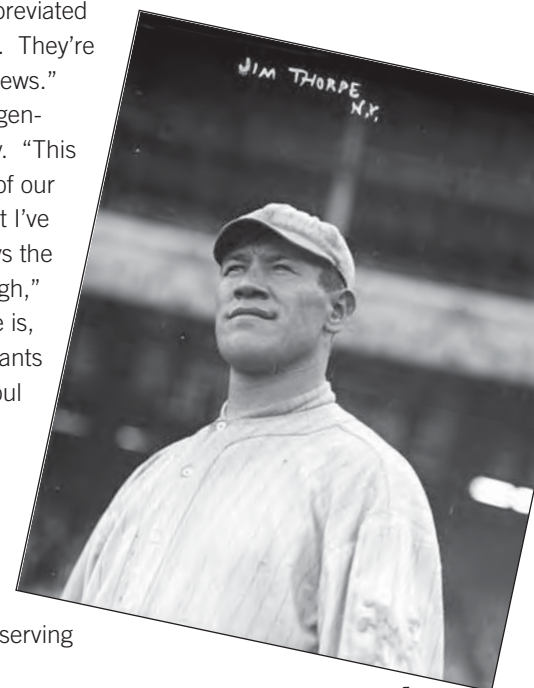
involving Casey Stengel and other baseball greats, but introduced him to Veeck's unusual, Victorian manner of speech. In the Prints and Photographs reading room, he discovered that the Library of Congress has "more pictures of Bill Veeck by a factor of ten than any other U.S. institution." The *Look* Magazine collection alone contains 1,200 photos of Veeck, he said. Finally, Dickson mentioned the American Folklife Center's Fay Vincent Oral History Collection, reminding the audience, "They're not the little abbreviated ones you got in the book. They're the full three-hour interviews."

Dickson finished with general praise for the Library. "This Library retains so much of our heritage. No matter what I've done in my life, it's always the Library that comes through," he said. "My bottom line is, for anybody who really wants to get to the heart and soul of baseball, which we're told is the heart and soul of America, [the Library of Congress] is hallowed ground for writers, for researchers. It's a phenomenal place that's preserving



Top-bottom: 1915 Philadelphia poster (LC-DIG-ppmsca-18450), 1952 Satchel Paige photo (LC-DIG-ppmsca-18778) and 1887 Chris Van Der Ahe Baseball Card (LC-DIG-bbc-0062f); LC P&P. Photo of (l-r) folklorist Russell Frank, Retired LC curator Harry Katz, and journalist Claire Smith. 1913 Jim Thorpe photo (LC-DIG-ggbain-14466): LC P&P.

Photo by Megan Heisband.



Lobby card from *The Jackie Robinson Story*
(LC-USZC4-6146): LC P&P.



audio, video, photos, and paper, and we should thank our stars for it.”

After Dickson’s keynote address, the symposium’s first regular panel convened, to discuss baseball from the perspective of people at home. Folklorist Russell Frank began the session by talking about adaptations of baseball played by American children, including streetball, wallball, and stickball. He generalized this to a discussion of what he called “folk baseball.” “Folk baseball,” he explained, “bears the same relationship to organized baseball that other forms of folk culture bear to pop and elite culture.” He explained some of the rules of folk baseball games, their material culture (including homemade versions of bats, balls, and uniforms) and some of the unusual verbal folklore that developed around these games. “Ghosties,” for example, is the name given to imaginary pinch-runners who fill out a team with too few players, while “Car, car, C-A-R” is a common chant warning streetball players of an approaching vehicle.

Frank’s presentation was followed by a talk by Harry Katz, former Head Curator in the Library’s Prints and Photographs Division. Katz is an expert on his former division’s baseball collections, and one of the editors of *Baseball Americana*. He led the audience on a slideshow tour of the fascinating collections in Prints and Photographs, including early lithographs, advertisements, tobacco labels, photographs, artworks, and (of course) baseball cards. Katz also ventured into the Music Division’s collections to display rare sheet music covers. Among the most fascinating images he found were of women such as Myrtle Row playing on predominantly male teams, and men such as Smoky Joe Wood putting on wigs and playing on women’s teams, during the first decade of the twentieth century. He emphasized the history of baseball and of printing, and explained that the advent of chromolithograph printing was responsible for “elevating the game to a fine-art level, and making [that art] available to people at a low cost.”

Following Katz’s presentation, the award-winning baseball broadcaster Claire Smith was interviewed by AFC folklorist David Taylor. As both a woman in a predominantly male field, and an African American in a predominantly white field, Smith has been a pioneer of sports broadcasting and an inspiration to countless fans and budding journalists. She traced her love of both African American sports heroes and media to her mother’s upbringing in Jamaica. Her mother followed African American culture avidly on the radio, she explained, as did many people in Jamaica at the time. “The pot of gold at the end of their rainbow often landed at the feet of the icons of black America,” she said. Smith grew up following her favorite teams (especially the Brooklyn Dodgers) across the radio dial, and when it came time to choose a career, her father encouraged her to pursue a life in baseball.

Smith’s first Major League story was about fans’ reactions to Pete Rose breaking Stan Musial’s National League hitting record, and made it onto the front page of the Philadelphia *Bulletin* in August 1981. Shortly thereafter, she was among the first female beat writers to enter Major League clubhouses, which caused some alarm and resentment among players. In 1984, an incident in which she was physically pushed out of a Major League clubhouse by angry players caused the commissioner of Baseball, Peter Ueberroth, to intervene and open Major League clubhouses to female writers by executive fiat. Smith also remembers many individual players coming to her defense with letters and personal communications in the aftermath of the incident, emphasizing

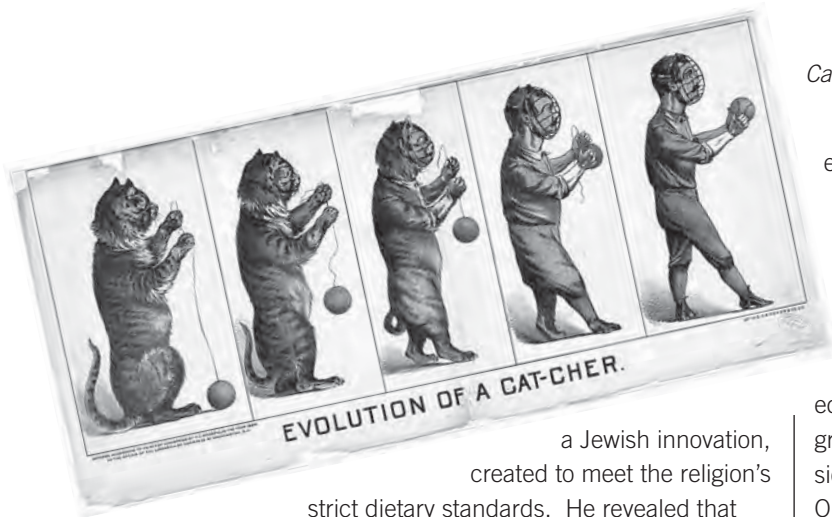


Ernie Banks demonstrates his swing at the symposium.

Photo by Stephen Wreck

that the players who resisted her presence were in the minority. Smith also spoke about the generation of black ballplayers who played in the Negro Leagues, before the integration of Major League Baseball. The lesson she takes from them is not to be bitter about any of the barriers she faced because, she said, “They love this country. They lived through apartheid, and they’re not bitter.”

After a break for lunch, the afternoon portion of the symposium convened, with a panel about fans enjoying baseball in the stands. The first speaker was culinary historian Bruce Kraig, Professor Emeritus in History and Humanities at Roosevelt University in Chicago, founding President of both the Culinary Historians of Chicago and the Chicago Food and Foodways Roundtable, and a convener of the Greater Midwest Foodways Alliance. Kraig spoke about that iconic baseball food, the hot dog. As Kraig explained, sausages have been street food since the days of the Roman Empire. Kraig pointed out that the first American hot dogs were descended mostly from German sausages, but that the modern all-beef hot dog is



Cartoon (LC-DIG-ppmsca-18772) from LC P&P.

a Jewish innovation, created to meet the religion's strict dietary standards. He revealed that the name "hot dog" was not coined by Harry M. Stevens, as is popularly thought, but that the term emerged in the late 19th century, and that the sausages came to be associated with sporting events by 1906, when cartoonist Thomas Aloysius

"TAD" Dorgan drew a cartoon of hot dogs at a bicycle race. He discussed the importance of German-born team owner Chris von der Ahe (1851-1913), who bought the St. Louis Browns so their games could serve as a venue for selling beer and sausages, and thus popularized hot dogs at St. Louis ball games. Kraig then outlined the factors that made hot dogs such an appropriate food for American baseball fans: they are meat, and Americans have a meat-based diet; they are self-contained, and thus portable and convenient for eating without a table or a plate; and they are cheap, and therefore accessible to all baseball fans, not only the wealthy ones. "It's a democratic food," he concluded. "Meat is graded by class, and only the rich could afford the best cuts. But here at the ballpark, we're all eating the same thing."

Kraig's presentation was followed by another interview: AFC



(L-r) Jack Hillerich, manufacturer of the "Louisville Slugger" bat; former Negro Leagues pitcher Mammie "Peanut" Johnson; All-Star pitcher, manager, and broadcaster Larry Dierker; and the Library's Susan Reyburn.

editor Stephen Winick interviewed Ed Alstrom, the weekend organist for the New York Yankees. Alstrom, a well-known New York musician who is equally comfortable playing classical organ, church music, or cabaret songs, and who has performed with Bette Midler, Lou Rawls, and Odetta, got his job with the Yankees in 2004. Using a Hammond B-3 organ that the Library rented for the occasion, he re-enacted his Yankee Stadium audition, at which his predecessor, the great organist Eddie Layton, made him play, in rapid succession, the opening bars of "New York, New York," "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," "Happy Birthday," "The Star-Spangled Banner," and "O Canada." "That was pretty much the entire audition," he remembered. "The whole thing took about five minutes!"

Even so, Alstrom explained, the job of a stadium organist is more than those few tunes. There are about a dozen tunes or riffs that an organist must be ready to play at appropriate moments during the game, from the cavalry charge to the Mexican hat dance...these signal particular reactions from the fans, such as the cry, "Charge!," and contribute a lot to the ballgame's festive atmosphere. During the Yankees' at-bats, Alstrom is responsible for playing a riff while the batter is out of the batter's box between pitches, but he must immediately go silent once the hitter is back in position. For this, he has to know his team's batting style very well. "Some guys, like Derek Jeter, are forever futzing with the Velcro [on their gloves]," he said. "Melky Cabrera steps out of the box, and gets right back in, so you can't go into a long riff. You've got to gauge it on the players, and you've got to watch and make sure," he explained. Winick also asked



Members of an African American men's baseball team, possibly in Danbury, Connecticut, ca. 1880. LC P&P LC-DIG-ppmsca-11502.



Associate Librarian for Library Services Deanna Marcum (l.) examines materials with Robin Rausch of the Library's Music Division.

about the tendency toward recorded music at ballgames, from at-bat songs for each hitter to special songs for closing pitchers. Alstrom described the special dances done at Yankee Stadium to Rednex's 1994 dance-pop recording of "Cotton-Eyed Joe," and The Village People's 1978 classic "YMCA," explaining, "the fans love it." "For my part, I'd like to be playing more," Alstrom said, "but I understand that [recorded music] is a necessary part of the game right now. They're trying to draw in a younger audience, and the organ, understandably but sadly to me, sounds old-fashioned to new ears."

Alstrom was followed by a repeat appearance by Paul Dickson, who spoke about two major topics: scorekeeping on baseball scorecards, and signs and signals in baseball; he has published a book on each topic. On scorekeeping, he explained that annotations on scorecards were a hieroglyphic language developed in the days before tapes and film, which was important particularly in the fields of baseball writing, announcing, and broadcasting. A good scorer could take his scorecard and recreate the whole game in play-by-play commentary. With a stack of scorecards from the year, a baseball announcer or radio broadcaster could add color commentary about what a given player had done in the third inning of a game two months ago. Scorecards allowed one journalist to attend a game and transmit the scorecard information by telegraph to a newspaper office, where another journalist could write the game summary; in the days before phones and laptops, this was the most timely way to report on baseball. In general, he explained, scorekeeping has allowed many people to become deeply involved in baseball, even if they could not play themselves. "It's part of the thrill. You're in control of the game. It's your game when you start doing that scorekeeping."

Dickson then turned his attention to signs and symbols, explaining that in a closely fought ballgame, there might be as many as a thousand hand and body gestures shared among the manager, coaches, and players—especially the catcher. Some of these signs carry instructions, some carry useful information, and still others are decoys that either mean nothing or are intended to deceive sign-stealers. Sign-stealing, the art

of intercepting and acting upon the opposing team's signs, has therefore had an important place in the history of baseball. "It's part of this world of which the fans are only vaguely aware," he said. "There are many ballets going on out there, many of them carried on through signs."

After a brief break, during which Ed Alstrom played the organ, Susan Reyburn of the Library's Publishing Office convened the next panel, which offered a peek at the many aspects of life on the field, from the field itself, to the equipment, and on to the game. Reyburn interviewed each of the participants in turn, beginning with Jack Hillerich, Chairman of the Board of Hillerich & Bradsby, the company that makes the world-famous "Louisville Slugger" baseball bat. Hillerich recounted anecdotes about the Louisville Slugger and the many players who have used customized versions of the bat over the years. New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra, for example, always held the bat with the label brand in the wrong place, which resulted in his hitting the ball on the flat of the grain, and breaking many more bats than other hitters. The company therefore began making Berra's bats with the label brand on the opposite side. This caused him to hold the bat correctly, so that he was hitting on the edge of the grain, which ended his broken-bat problem.



A cappella singing group Reverb at the symposium.

Hillerich also revealed that many Major League players change the specifications of their custom bats throughout the year, slightly adjusting their length and weight. Because of this, Hillerich & Bradsby supplies bats to players in batches of about a dozen at a time. Finally, he revealed trends in the world

of professional batting; for example, almost all Major League bats were made of ash wood until recently; Barry Bonds began ordering maple bats, and because of his success, about half of all Major League players now use maple.

Reyburn then turned to Murray Cook, a veteran baseball groundskeeper, and one of the most respected names in the world of sports-field management. Cook explained the basics of ballfields, from those elements that are standard (the height of the pitcher's mound, the distances between bases, etc.), to those that vary from field to field (the shape of the grass cut-outs, the types of grass, the degree of moisture in the ground, the method of mowing the grass, etc.), any of which may affect play. He acknowledged that it is possible to manipulate those variable features to create a home-field advantage, but suggested that such manipulation was rarer than many fans think. He continued by showing slides of various stadiums he has worked on and recounting stories of their construction. One of the most interesting involved the Athens Olympics in 2004, during which he oversaw the construction of the baseball fields: the area where the stadium was built had been frequently bombed

during World War II, and six undetonated bombs were exposed and removed during the construction of the ballparks. During his work on the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Cook was impressed by how the Chinese construction companies were able to build the stadium efficiently and quickly, using less technology, but more manpower, than would have been used in the west. "I'd say, 'you're never going to build this today,' and at the end of the day, it'd be there," he marveled.

The next to be interviewed was Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, who was one of three women who played professionally in the otherwise all-male Negro Leagues. A starting pitcher for the Indianapolis Clowns, Johnson had first tried to get a job on a women's team. Although officially open to all races, she soon found out that the women's teams were in fact all-white. As she told the story, she and a friend went to try out, only to be completely ignored by everyone at the tryouts. "You wanted to say something, but you're being ignored in such a manner that you don't think you'd better," she remembered. "It's like going in a grocery store, and nobody wants to wait on you, so you don't ask for anything." Still, Johnson explained, she is happy she never got that job. "I'd be just another lady who played baseball," she said, "but now I'm the only lady that ever pitched in the black major leagues, and I'm the only lady that ever played major league baseball as a pitcher. So I'm very proud that they ignored me." Johnson recounted other moments from her career, including getting advice from Satchel Paige, Henry Aaron, and other greats of the Major Leagues. She also discussed the realities of life in segregated America. "I learned about segregation, and a lot about ignorance, because that's what [segregation] is. I met a lot of really ignorant people who could be very hurtful. But that didn't bother me



Top inset: Baseball Americana co-editor Frank Ceresi appraises a signed baseball for Library visitors. Top: Historian Bruce Kraig speaks while Baseball expert Paul Dickson, AFC's Stephen Winick, and Yankees organist Ed Alstrom look on.

one way or another, because I was there to do a job."

Reyburn then interviewed Larry Dierker, a two-time All-Star pitcher who went on to a long career in broadcasting, and also took on the job of managing the Houston Astros for five years. Dierker, too, recounted the highlights of an eventful baseball career. He famously pitched his first Major League game for the Houston Colt .45s on his eighteenth birthday. Since they were playing against the Giants, a team that was then in contention for the National League pennant, it was unusual for Houston to allow a rookie to start. (Typically, as a matter of etiquette, non-contenders use their most experienced pitchers for games against contenders, in order not to give any of the contenders an unfair advantage in the pennant race.) In the interview, Dierker modestly suggested that the choice to start him was more a gimmick than a vote of confidence in his ability. "They brought out a birthday cake with eighteen candles, and I had to blow that out before the game, so they were playing it for all the publicity they could get," he said. "Here's a team that's forty games out, in last place, and they're thinking, 'we've got an

eighteen-year-old kid! We might get ten thousand people in here if we pitch him!" As expected given the team's standings at the time, Dierker lost the game, but he acquitted himself well, striking out Willie Mays (looking) in his first inning. Dierker also reflected on a fourteen-year career that included All-Star appearances in 1969 and 1971, and a late-career highlight: in 1976, two months before his thirtieth birthday, and about a year from retirement, he pitched a no-hitter against the Montreal Expos.

Dierker also discussed his



To close the symposium, participants (l-r) Bruce Kraig, Paul Dickson, Murray Cook, Larry Dierker, Ernie Banks, Russell Frank, Claire Smith, and David Taylor sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

managing career for the Astros (the .45s changed their name to the Astros in Dierker's second year with the team), which lasted five years and garnered him the National League Manager of the Year honors in 1998. After the Astros moved to a new ballpark in 2000, the pitchers had a hard time adapting to the new, easier home run environment. "We had a nightmare season," Dierker remembered. "Throughout August and September, it was, 'so, do you think you're going to get fired today? When do you think you're going to get fired?' After I was dismissed after the 2001 season, for losing in the first round of the playoffs, it hurt my feelings, because we'd won the division four out of five years. But after about two weeks, I kind of went, 'hmmm, this feels pretty good!'" Dierker has enjoyed his retirement ever since.

Following another selection of organ music played by Ed Alstrom, AFC folklorist David Taylor interviewed the symposium's most distinguished guest, former Chicago Cub Ernie Banks, who is a two-time National League Most Valuable Player, an eleven-time All-Star, a member of the exclusive Five Hundred Home Run club, and a Baseball Hall of Fame inductee. Banks charmed the audience from the beginning of the session, by saying in response to their applause, "As the cow said to the farmer one day, thank you for your warm hands." During the interview, Banks discussed such key moments in his life as his first game with the Kansas City Monarchs, a Negro Leagues team; his first game in the Majors with the Chicago Cubs ("we got beat 16-3," he remembered); and his coining of his famous motto, "Let's Play Two!" Banks provided expert commentary on hitting, fielding, and other aspects of the game, including current players.

Banks also explained his own philosophy of baseball, which included the observation that "baseball ameliorates the classic polarization between the self-motivated individual and the collective ideology. When you're at bat in baseball, you have to be a self-motivated individual. Nobody can help you hit the ball

when you're in the batter's box. You have to do it. So you're one, against nine people in the field. Then when you go in the field, you're nine against one. Many countries in the world don't realize that you can be a self-motivated individual and still be part of a team. That's what baseball has meant to me, and I've really enjoyed it."

Another important part of Banks's philosophy is, "you don't have to win to win." He means by this, that many of the joys baseball brought him, whether the friendships he made or the education he was able to give his children, did not depend on how many games he won. As an example, he cited a time when he and fellow hall-of-famer Stan Musial addressed a club for at-risk boys on the west side of Chicago. After their presentation, one of the boys commented that he had never seen a black man and a white man working together for a common goal. Demonstrating that people of both races could be friends and coworkers was a highlight of his career, and he considers it a "win," for himself, for Musial, and for the sport they both love.

After the interview, Taylor presented Banks with the Library's Living Legend Award, on behalf of James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress. All of the day's speakers then returned to the stage for a sing-along of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," in the original version presented to the Library for copyright in 1908. It was a fitting finale for a day of Baseball presentations.

In addition to the prepared statements and onstage interviews, the symposium included insightful questions from the audience (most of whom were staunch baseball fans), and detailed answers from the speakers. All of these questions and answers, along with the rest of the symposium, are being preserved and made available by the Library. All of the sessions were videotaped, and the recordings will be added to the Library's permanent collections. In addition, streaming webcasts of the symposium have been added to the Library's website, where baseball fans all over the world can see and hear them. To access the webcasts, along with other information about the symposium, please visit <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/Symposia/Baseball/>.

Editor's Note: The Baseball Americana symposium was organized by a committee of Library staff members, including Theadocia Austen, Todd Harvey, Ann Hoog, Michael Taft, David Taylor, and Stephen Winick of the American Folklife Center; Ralph Eubanks, Susan Reyburn, and Peggy Wagner of the Publishing Office; and David Kelly of the Humanities and Social Sciences Division. ○



Symposium participants and LC staff members pose in the Library's courtyard. (L-r): Harry Katz, Paul Dickson, Claire Smith, Jack Hillerich, Ed Alstrom, Russell Frank, Bruce Kraig, Stephen Winick, Thea Austen, Larry Dierker, Susan Reyburn, Maxine Alstrom, Murray Cook, Mary Bucknum, Peggy Bulger, David Kelly, and Philip Michel.

Photo by Megan Hillbrand.



Roscoe Tyson Spann (front row, left), with a group of trainees at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

VHP Online Collection Highlights WWII “Buffalo Soldiers”

By Stephen Winick

The Veterans History Project is pleased to announce *Buffalo Soldiers: The 92nd in Italy*, an online presentation featuring firsthand recollections of soldiers from the 92nd Infantry Division. The 92nd Division, an African American unit that served during World War II, was nicknamed the “Buffalo Soldiers,” after the famous African American cavalry regiments of the nineteenth century. The 92nd was activated in 1942, and sent to Europe in 1944, remaining there until after VE day in May 1945. The division distinguished itself on the battlefields of Italy, and many historians credit its soldiers’ valiant service as one element that encouraged President Truman to begin desegregating the armed forces in 1948. The VHP presentation provides an up-close look at the experiences of nine of the division’s soldiers through video and audio interviews, written firsthand narratives, journals, official documents, and photographs.

The veterans’ stories frequently begin with accounts of combat train-



Spann and an unidentified woman.

ing. Members of the 92nd spent a good deal of this training at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, an extremely isolated base that afforded access to both mountainous terrain and flat, unbroken desert, for a variety of training exercises. Several of the stories reveal a widespread belief about Fort Huachuca: that it was chosen for its isolated location because whites were afraid of the implications of arming black men in America. “The theory was that there was no place in the United States of America that believed that you could have 20,000 black men with

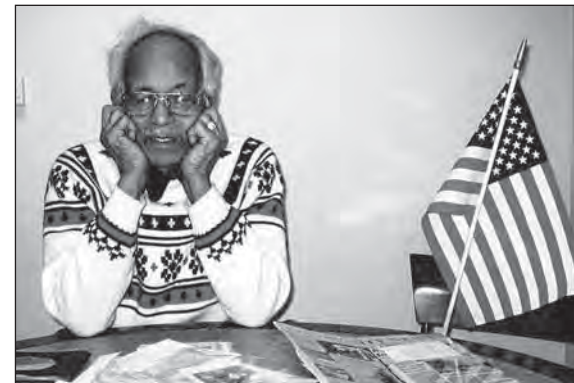
guns,” recalled veteran Robert Madison. “Huachuca, Arizona, was so far out in no place, that that’s why we went to Fort Huachuca.”

Roscoe Tyson Spann was a company commander at Fort Huachuca, and was in charge of training both the 92nd (“Buffalo Soldiers”) and 93rd (“Blue Helmets”) divisions. He provided many recollections of Huachuca, pointing out, for example, that the Army took great care to ensure that no black officer ever encountered a white enlisted man, fearing that insubordination would ensue and be bad for morale. Spann spent most of his time with small groups of black soldiers, training them in both mountain and desert warfare. “Once a month, we had to do a forced march,” he remembered, “and attack the town of Tombstone. We’d leave at 5:30 in the morning, under cover of darkness, with sack lunches, and walk twenty-six miles in a forced march.” After eleven hours of marching, they would arrive in Tombstone and stage a mock attack. It was hard, Spann stated, but resulted in commendations and a few hours of special treatment, including an evening in town. “We spent the night,” he remembered, “and they would truck us back to the camp.”

As a trainer, Spann spent his whole military career in the U.S., and never went overseas with his men. “After they completed their training, we sent them overseas. I never saw them again,” he remembered. “I often wondered what happened to my men that I spent all that time with!”

For anyone else who may wonder about Buffalo Soldiers’ experiences overseas, such stories are well represented in the online presentation. One example

Spann in 2005.





Sergeant Dial (l) and A. William Perry in 1944.



Retired General Barry McCaffrey and Perry, ca. 2007

sion and rebellious behavior among the troops.

Italy, however, was a different story. Perry remembered it as the first place in his service career where he felt welcomed by any of the senior officers. He particularly mentioned General Mark W. Clark, who commanded the Fifth Army. Clark gave an on-the-spot promotion to

Lieutenant Charles Gandy, who was a company commander and would certainly have been a captain if he were white: “Clark

is the story of A. William Perry, who had been in the Army for only ten days when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was shipped from his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio, to Alabama, the first of his many postings in the racially divided South. In the North, Perry hadn’t encountered the kind of systemic discrimination he experienced in Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Even at Ft. Huachuca, Perry recalled racial ten-

turned to his aide, who was a captain, and took his captain’s bars off his collar, and pinned them on Gandy. So we said, ‘Oh, man, this guy’s going to be all right!’” Other veterans in the online presentation recount their own versions of this memorable episode.

Perry remembers occupied Italy as a place where residents were overwhelmingly friendly to American soldiers, whether white or black. “I felt safer in

Italy than I did in Alabama,” he said. Perry also remembers vivid details of life in a combat unit, including the weight of the items he had to carry, the difficulty of facing well-placed and strategically defended enemy positions, and the challenge of fighting German units that were hiding in landmark buildings, like the Tower of Pisa, which were off-limits to Allied firepower.

Robert Madison’s narrative is equally rich in personal details. An architecture student at Howard University when the war began, Madison was a member of ROTC, which enabled him to serve in the Army as an officer. His rank didn’t shield him from experiencing discrimination, however; even among officers, the Army was segregated. “We did have officers of the rank of second lieutenant and first lieutenant who were black,” he remembered. “All the officers above that were



Robert Madison, photographed in Italy, ca. 1943.

white. Even though we were officers, there was a black mess hall for officers who were black, and a white mess hall for officers who were white, and never the twain should meet. I guess we realized that was the way it was in America, and

accepted it for what it was.”

Madison explained that most black soldiers were hopeful that change would come. “We really believed sincerely that we were going to make our mark in this war, and be able to claim our rights when we returned to the States.” To that end, Madison and his fellow soldiers applied themselves to the task at hand: liberating Italy from Nazi occupation.

In September 1943, Italy surrendered and joined the fight against Germany. However, German soldiers seized much of the Italian army’s weaponry, rescued Mussolini from arrest, and established a puppet state in the north of Italy. When the Buffalo Soldiers arrived in 1944, there were still many German soldiers, as well as fascist-aligned Italians, who opposed the Allied troops throughout the country. Madison described the Ameri-



German prisoner in civilian clothes, captured by members of the 92nd Division in Lucca, Italy, ca. September 1944. National Archives 208-AA-305A-2

can troops' wariness of any Italians who seemed "too friendly," and who might be fascist agents. On the other hand, he shared warm recollections of the outpourings of gratitude and generosity that the African American soldiers received from ordinary Italians during their deployment, and spoke with pride of the recognition his division received in 1995, when the residents of Sommocolonia, in northern Italy, raised a monument to the memory of the 92nd.

The 92nd accomplished a great deal in Italy. In December, 1944, they participated in a major battle against four Italian Fascist battalions and three German battalions. They also took part in the final push against the "Gothic Line," the Germans' last major line of defense along the summits of the Apennines; this led to the collapse of German forces in Italy, in April 1945. Apart from these actions, they were primarily involved in patrolling Allied-controlled territory and keeping both German and Italian Fascist activities to a minimum.

In the VHP online presentation, Elvyn Davidson provides vivid recollections of the 92nd in combat. During the drive to the Gothic Line, he recalled, his men came up against troops led by officers of the German SS. "These guys were really for business," he remembered. We were just hitting them with mortar fire and artillery fire and they just kept



At desk, front to rear: Sgts. James Shellman, Gilbert A. Terry, John W. Phoenix, Curtis A. Richardson, and Leslie B. Wood. In front of desk, front to rear: T/Sgt. Gordon A. Scott, M/ Sgt. Walter C. Jackson, Sgt. David D. Jones, and WO Carlyle M. Tucker in Italy, September 22, 1943. US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-181588.

on coming.... We dug in and the British came to reinforce us." The standoff was only broken when a team of Nepalese Gurkhas, who were soldiers in the British Army, stole silently through the area at night, killing the Germans, in their foxholes, with knives. The Gurkhas went through the American line as well, but they spared the American troops,

whom they identified by feeling for their dog tags. "In the middle of the night, I felt this hand," Davidson remembered. "Then I thought, oh crap! He's gonna kill me! Then this guy, he found my dog tags and he turned around and looked at me and grinned."

Davidson's unit pushed against the Germans until the end, and they saw the grisly aftermath of the war. "We were just sort of mopping up, and we got to Genoa and we got to go to the square, the piazza where Mussolini and his mistress were hanging in the square," he remembered. "We got to see that. I had a picture of it, but I've lost it over the years' time."

Although the combat experiences of the 92nd were similar to those of white American soldiers, there were some differences as well. The U.S. Army and the other allied forces tended to group their segregated minority and colonial units together. For example, the 92nd was closely associated with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an Asian American unit mostly composed of Japanese Americans. "They were our brother unit," Davidson said. "We went on line with them on our right flank. They were



Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, commanding the 92nd in Italy, inspects his troops during a decoration ceremony, March 1945. National Archives 208-AA-47Y-1



Lt. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater, inspects Honor Guard of MPs during his tour of the Fifth Army front at the 92nd Division Sector, January 4, 1945. US Army Signal Corps 111-SC-380271.

fearless fighters...and going in concert with them, watching them work, was just remarkable. They were excellent and well-trained combat troops. We never had to worry about our flank." When they associated with troops from other Allied nations, those men were often colonials or minorities, as well, so that soldiers of the 92nd met Black Africans, Moroccans, Algerians, Indians, Gurkhas, and Arab and Jewish Palestinians; these were forces that many white soldiers never encountered.

Despite their success in Italy, many Buffalo Soldiers returned to face racism at home. This is also a significant topic of several of the interviews. Madison, for example, recounted his return to Cleveland and his attempt to enter Western Reserve University to continue his studies in architecture. In a meeting with the dean of the School of Architecture, he was told that not only would a black student lack the intelligence to keep up with his white classmates, he would be unemployable as an architect due to his race. Therefore, the university would be wasting a place to admit him. "I went home, and I got angry," Madison said. "I put on my military uniform, I put on my bars on my shoulder, my battle ribbons on my chest, and my purple heart, and asked for a meeting with the dean of admissions, not the dean of architecture."

In his meeting with the dean of admis-

sions, he made a compelling impression. "Look," he said. "I spent these past two years of my life fighting to make this world free for democracy. My blood is over there on the soil of Italy. I want to enter this school, so don't tell me that I can't enter the School of Architecture!" Madison eventually attended not only Western Reserve but also Harvard Graduate School of Design,

where Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius advocated for him in the admissions

office. He ultimately opened the first minority-owned architecture firm in Ohio.

Madison's experiences of racism after the war, sadly, were typical. But in the years immediately following World War II, President Truman began the process of desegregating the armed forces, and the country began its long march toward equality and civil rights.

African American divisions like the 92nd are a thing of the past. They are, however, an important part of our history, and these stories are among the treasures of the VHP collection, and of the AFC archive.

Buffalo Soldiers: The 92nd in Italy is an installment of the *Experiencing War* series, which currently contains twenty-four web presentations highlighting a fascinating cross-section of veterans' stories. They can be explored on the VHP website, at <http://www.loc.gov/vets>. ○



92nd Division troops enter the Galleria Giuseppe Garibaldi in the newly liberated city of Genoa, Italy, April 27, 1945. US Army Signal Corps 11-SC-337144

Inauguration 2009

Sermons & Orations Project

By Nancy Groce and Megan Halsband

On January 20, 2009, the United States inaugurated Barack Obama, the country's first African American president. To mark this historic moment, the American Folklife Center instituted the *Inauguration 2009 Sermons & Orations Project*, a nationwide effort to collect audio and video recordings of sermons, speeches, and orations that commented on the significance of Obama's inauguration.

With the cooperation of press and media organizations and religious networks throughout the country, AFC asked religious congregations and secular organizations to document sermons and orations delivered during Inauguration Week 2009 and donate them to the Library of Congress. Specifically, AFC requested audio recordings, video recordings, and/or written texts of sermons and secular speeches that commented on the 2009 inauguration, and that were delivered between Friday, January 16 and Sunday, January 25, 2009. AFC also asked for photos and printed programs from the gatherings during which the sermons and orations were delivered and documented. Acceptable formats, suggestions for how to make high-quality recordings, a Participant Release Form and an Information Form requesting additional details about when and where the material was gathered were downloadable from the AFC website. Anticipating that not all interested organizations might have access to the Internet, a contact phone number was included in AFC's press announcements, and hard copies of the instructions and the required forms were mailed to interested parties upon request.

Inauguration 2009 generated considerable interest throughout the nation. By the submissions deadline, we received more than three hundred submissions from forty states. Submissions came

from churches, mosques, synagogues, humanist groups, and secular organizations. They range from giant super-churches to tiny secular organizations to academic institutions. The first submission came from a mosque in Missoula, Montana; the one-hundredth submission documents a poetry reading held in Oakhurst, California to celebrate the new administration. Overseas submissions were sent from Kenya and Brazil, and more have been promised. Many submissions arrived with enthusiastic comments about being proud to assist the Library in documenting a historic event. In addition to a heartfelt thank-you letter from Center director Peggy Bulger, AFC sent each participating organization a formal certificate acknowledging their assistance in helping us document this important moment in American history. A follow-up radio interview about the project aired in April on *Interfaith Voices*, a public radio program that airs on 66 stations across the United States, including nationally on XM Satellite Radio.

After being processed by AFC's archivists, the *Inauguration 2009 Sermons & Orations Project* collection will be preserved at the American Folklife Center and made available to scholars, students and the general public. The collection will become one of many oral history and spoken-word collections at the Center that preserve Americans' accounts of, and reactions to, important cultural events. Over many decades, the American Folklife Center has documented everyday citizens' reactions to major historic events in our collective American experience. For example, AFC's archive includes man-on-the-street interviews recorded the day



President Barack Obama's inaugural address.

Photo by Spc. Daniel J. Herrera, US Army

after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, interviews with Americans across the nation in the weeks following the tragedy of September 11, 2001, interviews with former slaves about the experiences of slavery and emancipation, and personal-experience stories of Americans who served the nation in wartime. These voices of ordinary Americans responding to extraordinary events serve as valuable research collections for scholars of American history and culture.

For more information on the *Inauguration 2009 Sermons & Orations Project*, please visit the Center's website: www.loc.gov/folklife/inaugural/ ○



Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts (l.) administers the Oath of Office to President Obama.

Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNealey, US Navy



AFC Processing Technician Megan Halsband houses materials from the collection

Photo by David Taylor



Tamatha Graves (center) and two friends examine a submission made by Graves's church

Photo by Megan Halsband



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Mike Seeger (center) plays the fiddle on the stage of the Coolidge Auditorium with his Sister, Peggy, and his half-brother, Pete, on March 16, 2007. The concerts associated with the AFC's Seeger symposium were the last performances of the three siblings together. Mike Seeger passed away in August, 2009; a full obituary will appear in the next issue of Folklife Center News.

Photo by Robert Corwin.