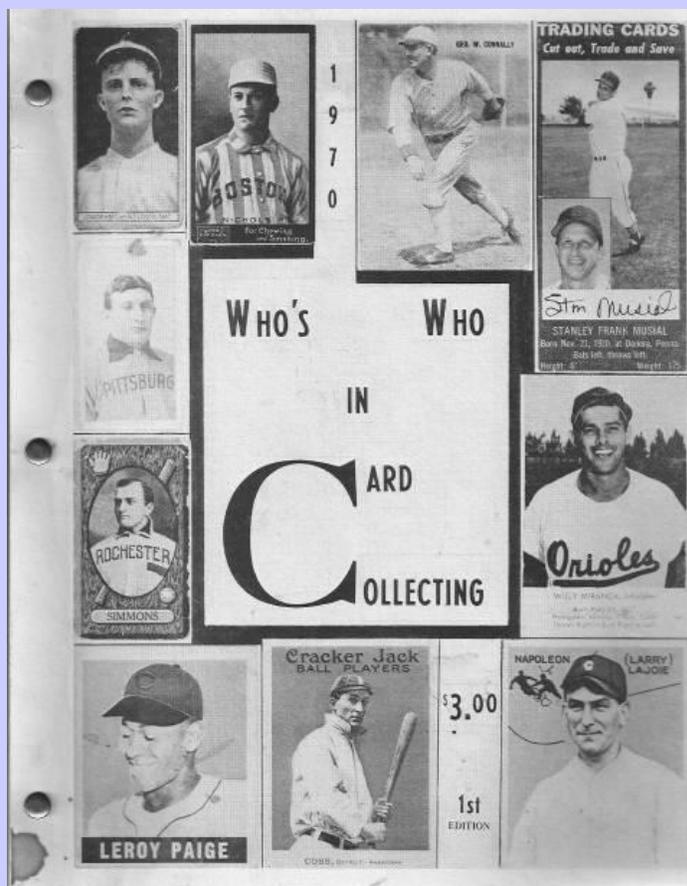


Hobby History

Who's Who in Card Collecting (1936 to 1971) and the Card Collectors Hall of Fame Idea

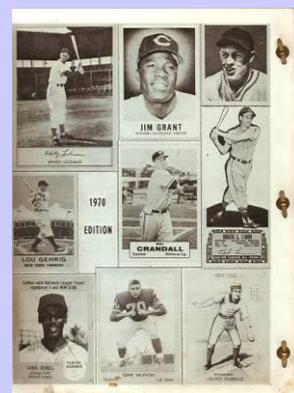
By
George Vrechek

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...before there were Star Wars cards, the Internet, eBay, card stores, or card shows, collectors had to find each other through Facebook pages. No, that wasn't how they did it either. They used the U.S. Postal Service and hobby publications to find out who else in the galaxy was collecting cardboard.



Burdick's Bulletin

In previous *SCD* articles, I have described how lonesome, twenty-year-old card collector Lionel Carter hunted around in 1938 until he found collector Harry Lilien who led him to the “father of card collecting,” Jefferson Burdick of Syracuse, New York. Burdick started his bi-monthly *Card Collectors Bulletin (CCB)* in 1936. In the very first issue he effectively started the first “Who’s Who” in card collecting by listing all (15) of his subscribers and their collecting interests. Collectors were hungry to find others who had similar interests and who might compliment their own needs with available duplicates. Baseball card collector Carter circled the names of promising subscribers on his copies of the *CCB* and went about writing to each of them. Burdick continued to list new subscribers though 1938 when the subscription list appears to have been all of 34 people. Some of the subscribers in those years whose names continued to show up in *CCB* were Carter, John D. Wagner, Ray Walker, Don Van Brakle, P.M. Nagle, Harry Lilien, Paul Ritchie, Edwards Lancaster, and A.O. Philipp.



Wantlists Didn't Get Very Far

In June 1938 (*CCB* issue #6), Burdick offered to distribute wantlists of subscribers along with the next *CCB* issue. Apparently Burdick assumed that anyone with a wantlist would send him enough copies to cover each of the *CCB* subscribers and Burdick would mail them out along

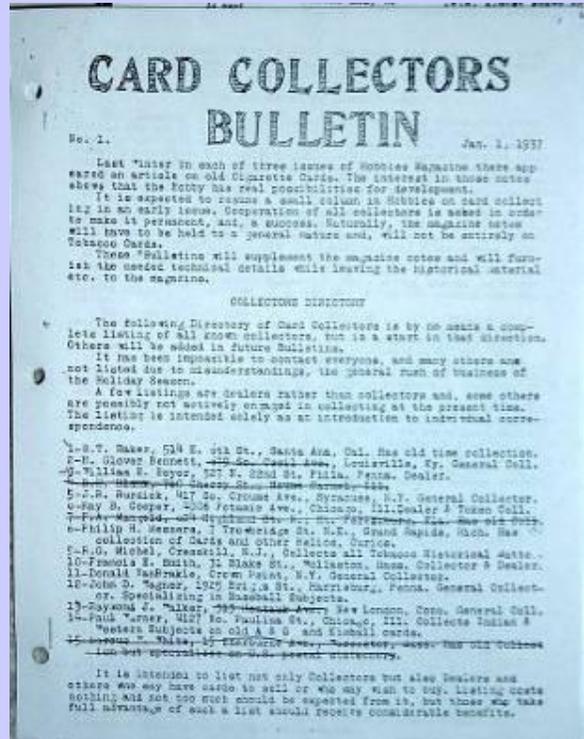
with the bulletin. Subscribers erroneously assumed instead that they could send Burdick one wantlist and that he would handle the pricey duplication for the rest of the 33-person collecting world. Burdick didn't have any handy copy machine around, nor did anyone else in the world. In any event, not many wantlists got distributed with the next 1938 issue and the "nice idea" fell by the wayside. A "Who's Who" or collector directory would have been handy for subscribers, but the CCB was pretty much a one-man Burdick show in those days.

First CCB was dated 1/1/1937

1946 American Card Catalog

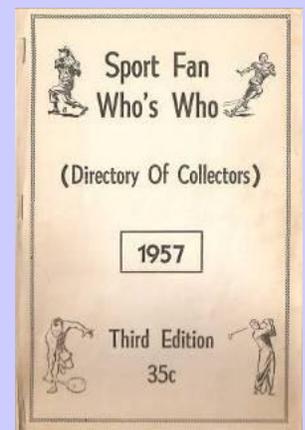
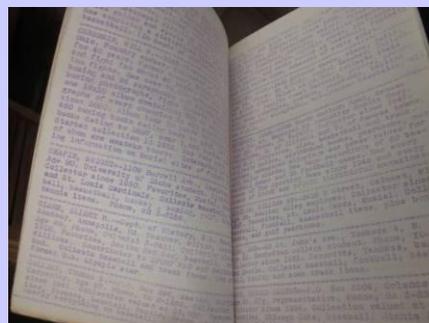
Burdick's 1946 *American Card Catalog* (ACC) was nicely typeset and bound in a soft cover. It sold for 75 cents, described all known card issues in 129 pages, and included another 15 pages for advertising. Collectors Burdick, Carter, Nagle, Paul Masser, Wirt Gammon, Steve Vanco, Dr. Lawrence Kurzrok, Walt Corson, Jake Wise, John D. Wagner, Edward Golden, and Don Van Brakle described cards they were seeking. Those more interested in dealing like Charles Bray, Samuel Tanenbaum, Stanley Barvitsky, and John Goudie listed the type of cards they had for sale. The forty-three advertisers were from all over the country. Within ten years, Burdick's CCB had reached a wide audience and found its way to many of the serious collectors of the day. His (unpublished) subscription list was the "Who's Who" of its day.

ACCs of 1946, 1953, and 1960



Bob Jaspersen Publishes a Directory for the Sports Collector

Hobby pioneer Bob Jaspersen started his hobby publication, *Sport Fan*, in 1951. Burdick's CCB covered all card issues; Jaspersen addressed the sports card collector. In 1955 he issued the first *Sport Fan Who's Who Directory of Collectors*. I obtained his mimeographed annual editions through 1959. I counted 47 collectors in the 1955 directory, 55 collectors in 1956, and 61 collectors in 1957. Their ages, addresses, occupations, and collecting interests were listed based on whatever information collectors desired to share. Bob wrote that he had the names of another 100 collectors on file who had not responded to his request for information. This list must have included Jefferson Burdick whose name is missing from the booklet,



although it was described as a “directory for sports collectors,” and Burdick would have described himself as a “general collector.” The 1957 booklet was available for “35 cents in stamps, check, or coin to the publisher.”

Bob and his son Mike Jaspersen

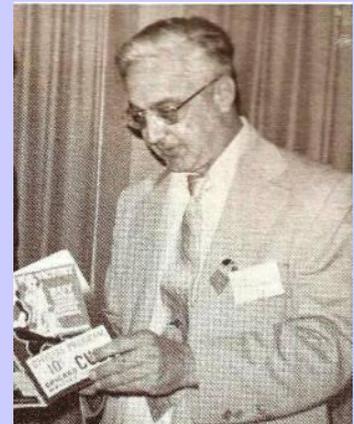


Golden nuggets in the directories included the following:

- ❑ Lt. Mel Bailey, only sports collector north of the Artic Circle, does an Army 15-minute sports show every night
- ❑ Chemical engineer Charles “Buck” Barker collector of baseball cards since 1922, writer for *Sport Fan*, *Card Collectors Bulletin*, and *The Sports Hobbyist*. Also collects postcards of Latin America and Spain
- ❑ Jules Bues, personal friend of Babe Ruth
- ❑ Lionel Carter, age same as Jack Benny’s (39), collects baseball cards, favorite sport baseball, football, basketball, hockey - depending on the season
- ❑ Dwight Chapin, 18, student at University of Idaho collector since 1950 and roots for the St. Louis Cardinals
- ❑ Walt Corson, 58, in storm window business, started his collection in 1909, second largest card collection in the United States (second to Burdick’s), served as scout for Phillies and Cleveland. Value of collection is placed at \$30,000.
- ❑ Wirt Gammon, 51, sports columnist *Chattanooga Times* since 1932
- ❑ Adco Sports Book Exchange owned and operated by Goodwin and Esther Goldfaden. Goodwin born November 25, 1914, (and still going strong in 2011). Regarded as largest firm dealing with sports items
- ❑ Fred Imhof, 56, general foreman and sports writer in San Jose and conducts radio sports shows. Owner of the largest sports library in the world, insured for \$40,000
- ❑ Bob Jaspersen, 36, newspaperman and *Sport Fan* publisher
- ❑ Frank Jock, Kezar Falls, Maine, has small cottage housing one of the better collections of sports items in the country, collects many things too numerous to list
- ❑ Preston Orem, attorney, has over 60,000 cards mounted in 125 albums
- ❑ Elwood Scharf, 37, collects baseball cards and photos
- ❑ Jack Smalling, 16, student, collector since 1949
- ❑ John Sullivan, 27, scorecards, rosters, guides, and yearbooks, figures collection worth \$320.



Goodie and Esther Goldfaden 1974



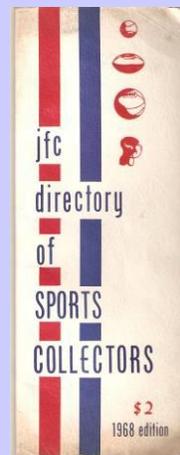
John Sullivan 1973

The last edition of Jaspersen's "Who's Who" that I have is from 1959 listing 95 collectors. Veteran collector Ray Medeiros has a cover for a 1960-1 edition but with nothing else and thinks that 1959 may have been the last year for Jaspersen's directory.

jfc 1967 Directory

John F. Cummings of Merrifield, Virginia, published an unusual-sized 4 inch by 10.5 inch directory in 1967. I have Cumming's 1968 edition owned by Goodie Goldfaden. The booklet includes 161 names and it cost \$2 to be listed. Many of those appearing in Jaspersen's "Who's Who" are listed in Cumming's directory plus there were some new names:

- prominent photographer George Brace, with thousands of baseball photos for sale (no kidding)
- George Husby of Sturgeon Bay selling mid 50s baseball cards for 4 cents each
- Irv Lerner with over 50,000 cards to trade in gum and regional issues
- Stanley McClure with 200 complete sets and 27,000 cards (27,000 cards might not sound like much in light of the mammoth number of cards issued in recent years, but if you had every major sports card issue between 1933 and 1967, you'd probably have about 16,000 cards.)
- Bob Solon, always interested in current regionals
- Bob Thing, collect anything listed in the *American Card Catalog*
- Goodie Goldfaden was the most prominent of the few advertisers with a two page center section ad – visit our store when in Hollywood.



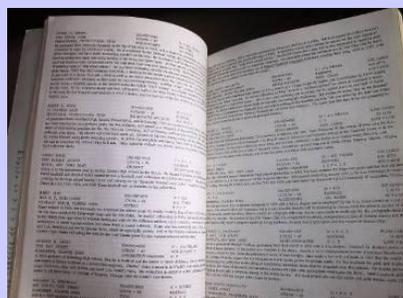
Bob Solon 2005

There were likely other efforts to list collectors or establish national collecting clubs by the few hobby publishers and dealers in the late 50s and 60s. Publishers Charles Brooks, Mike Bondarenko, Charles Bray, Dan Dischley, and George Martin and dealers Woody Gelman and Gordon B. Taylor would have likely made some efforts along these lines. Taylor would feature a collector each month in the "Who's Who" section of his *Card Comments* magazine.

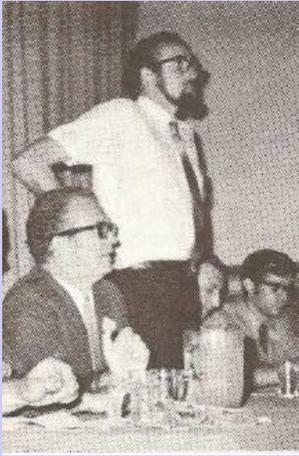
Irv Lerner 1973 and 2009

Irv Lerner's Who's Who

Irv Lerner got into collecting first as a kid in the late 1940s and then as a young adult in the late 1950s when he came across ads by Larry Fritsch and Bill White in a Cubs Scout publication. Lerner contacted fellow Pennsylvania resident Bill White and began a sports collecting association with Bill that has continued for more than 50 years. Lerner made up for lost time by trying to pick up everything he could. Like Lionel Carter (but few others at the time) he was interested in mint condition, well-centered cards. He contacted many of the leading names in the hobby and was pleased by the warm



reception and assistance he received from Carter, Buck Barker, Charles Bray, and Bob Jaspersen. Although he had nothing to trade Lionel Carter, Carter sent Lerner the rare #68 card in the 1959 Ted Williams Fleer set. In later years they would send each other 50 mint cards at a time. They would pick out any upgrades they could find and return the rest.

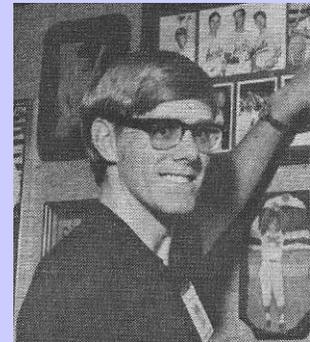


Richard Reuss standing and Ernie Harwell 1973

In 1970 and 1971 Irv published a book called *Who's Who in Card Collecting (Who's Who)* with the assistance of Bob Jaspersen and Richard Reuss. I called 74-year-old Irv Lerner to get the story behind the publication. Irv confirmed the feeling that collectors at the time had trouble connecting. He thought it would be useful to have a book that would list collectors, their interests, and their ages to give each other an idea of possible trading candidates. Irv recalled "There weren't any shows where people could get together and find cards. Everything was through the mail and you didn't know who you were dealing with. There was no info at the time." Irv was a teenager when Jaspersen's first directory came out and was probably initially unaware that Jaspersen had

been through all this before. Newspaper copy editor Jaspersen had moved from St. Paul to Rosemont, Pennsylvania, and was only about 25 miles away from Lerner in Philadelphia. Lerner and Jaspersen got together to work on the project. Lerner handled the bulk of the work on the directory. Richard Reuss was a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University at the time and active in the early Detroit collector activities. Reuss helped edit the biographical material. Other people Lerner contacted in connection with the directory were George Martin, Charles Bray, Bruce Yeko, Frank Nagy, Buck Barker, Lionel Carter, Wirt Gammon, Dan Busby, Don McPherson, and Jim Nowell.

Jim Nowell 1974



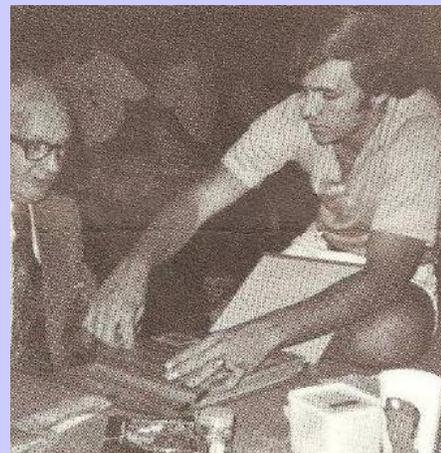
Responses to Questionnaire

Collectors' addresses were supplied by Jaspersen, Martin, Yeko and others. Questionnaires were mailed asking collectors for their phone numbers, date of birth/age, occupations, collecting interests, number of cards in their collections, number of complete sets, and approximate value of their collections. (No one apparently was too worried about card burglars.) An incredible 388 collectors responded; most were sports card collectors but there were postcard collectors as well who listed sizeable collections. Responses came from people in 46 states, Canada, England and Belgium.

Ages

The oldest person responding was 82-year-old postcard collector William Crandall of Waterford, New York. The youngest was 11-year-old Keith Olbermann of Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. The future political commentator and writer already had 11,988 cards including tobacco cards and took the time to count them all apparently. Keith is still an avid collector and contributing writer to

Stan McClure and Bill Mastro 1973

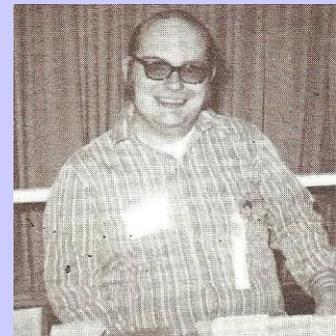


SCD. It is hard today to ask people for their ages, but at the time it was felt to be useful to help understand the experience level of a potential trader. In reality youngsters like Olbermann and 17-year-old Bill Mastro would probably have had a more current idea of card values than veterans like Buck Barker or John Wagner who were used to sending back a few stamps to one another if a trade wasn't "even."

I found it interesting to group some of the prominent collectors by their ages.

- Collectors born in the decade starting in 1900: Baum, Gammon, Golden, Kenworthy, Kurzrok, McClure
- 1910 to 1919: Barker, Brace, Carter, Goldfaden, Vanco
- 1920s: Blazina, Esch, Hess, Jaspersen, Nagy, Rolfe, Scharf, Solon
- 1930s Bailey, Dobbins, Fritsch, Lerner, Loughman, Martin, Medeiros, Menchine, Miller, Reid, Ricker, Temanson, Toerpe, Villard, Witte
- 1940s Alley, Aronstein, Dischley, Egan, England, Haber, Husby, McConnell, Mitchell, Newman, Nowell, Reuss, Smalling, Smith, Steinbach, Thing, Yeko, Zak
- 1950s (the youngsters) Broder, Greenholt, Mastro, McKie, Olbermann

Undoubtedly, there were collectors at the time who had not found their way onto hobby mailing lists (like this writer) or who decided not to respond, however based on my review of the listings, it seems that Lerner's effort resulted in responses from the majority of serious U.S. sports card collectors at the time.



Don Steinbach 1973

More Veteran Collectors Appearing in 1970 and 1971

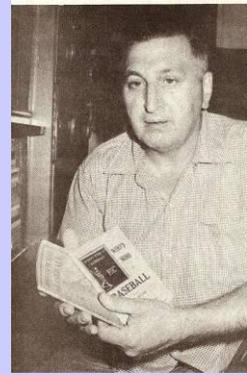
Confirming my feelings that card collectors keep at it forever, it seemed that the only old-time collectors missing from Lerner's book were those who had died. Everyone who was around and had been active in the 30s and 40s was still chasing the cardboard. Lerner's publication was issued in 1970 and updated and reissued in 1971. Names and bios in the book that I hadn't noticed in earlier directories included the following:

- Edward Golden, 68, started collecting in 1910 and has been an active collector since. Ed remembers best his first purchase of a large lot of cards in 1931 from a non-collector.
- Harry Kenworthy, 67, retired California high school teacher, first started collecting in 1910, prized sets are T205, T206, and T207, lacking only Plank and Wagner, also collects selected trade cards, silks, pins, leathers, flannel. (Carter remembered Kenworthy showing up in Chicago with a big station wagon filled with boxes and barrels of loose cards that he picked up through his summer travels and purchases.)
- Fred Baum, 65, subscribed to the CCB in 1937, worked with Burdick at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with the mounting of his collection during the last two years prior to Jeff's death. Along with Preston Orem, Lionel Carter, and others, Fred was instrumental in starting the fund-raising drive for a memorial plaque in memory of Burdick to be placed in the museum print department

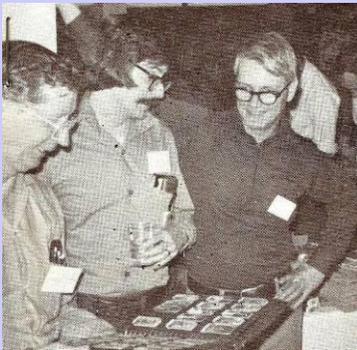
Ed Golden 1945



- Frank Nagy, 47, mechanic, started collecting in 1947 when he graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, has complete T206 and E120 sets. Favorite memories concerns buying the vast collection of the late Walt Corson, which bankrupted the family's life savings, strained his marriage, and contributed to Frank's card collection as one of the largest in the country
- Harold Esch, 48, began his collection in 1933 and prizes his Allen & Ginter Series I set, T206 minus Wagner and Plank, and T205 Gold borders missing only 3 cards
- Ray Hess, 50, collector since 1945. Ray's introduction to card collecting came after he saw Lionel Carter's name listed in *Grandstand Manager*, but the two did not come face to face with each other until 1970 at the West Coast Sports Collectors Convention...his top hobby thrill meeting veteran collectors. (I talked with 90-year-old Ray Hess a few months back in connection with Ray Medeiros and postcards.)
- Bill Loughman, 38, airline pilot collects books, cards, stadium postcards, baseball history, and magazine clippings. Bill is still busy compiling significant quantities of sports sections and historical publications.
- Gar Miller, 31, editor, hobby writer, fond memories finding about 300 1948 Bowman cards at a junk shop years ago and buying \$100 worth of baseball cards from the 1930s. Gar is still at it now, selling some 3 million cards in his collection.



Nagy, 1973



Lionel Carter, Rich Egan, and Gar Miller 1973

The Collectors Hall of Fame

In addition to the 70-page collector listings and 35 pages of classified ads, *Who's Who* included one other significant feature – The Card Collectors Hall of Fame. The first of Lerner's *Who's Who* publications came out in 1970 and included a description of the Card Collectors Hall of Fame, the election process, and biographies of its members. Managing Editor Irv Lerner and associate editors Bob Jaspersen and Richard Reuss reported as follows: “In order to inform the general card-collecting public of people who have helped make card-collecting the hobby it is today, we are establishing the Card Collectors Hall of Fame. In doing so we honor the people, who through their efforts and their unselfish giving of their time, have laid the groundwork to help advance the hobby of card-collecting.”

The First Group of Honorees

Irv Lerner was 33 when this was written. I asked the now 74-year-old hobby veteran collector and dealer what was the background on the hall of fame idea. Irv said that “they didn't want to just honor dealers or necessarily those with the biggest collections, but those who had helped the hobby by such things as writing or research.” By the manner in which the editors eventually

established the selection process, the hall of fame would also have encouraged people to continue their listing in the \$3 directory each year to be eligible to help select honorees. Irv called a number of people who had helped on the directory and asked them who they thought should be honored in a hall of fame. He visited Charles Bray in East Bangor, Pennsylvania, several times. Looking back at the people Irv contacted, they would constitute a pretty good hall of fame class themselves. People providing input included Jaspersen, Carter, Barker, Wagner, Fritsch, McClure, Gammon, White, Nagy, Haber, Solon, Yeko, Medeiros, and Scharf. Carter, Barker, and Bray wrote most of the biographies of the eventual honorees according to Lerner. The names that seemed to be mentioned repeatedly were Jefferson Burdick, who was listed as the one and only inductee in 1969, and then the following 1970 inductees: Walt Corson, Charles Bray, Preston Orem, E.C. Wharton-Tigar, and Edwin Payne.

The Second (and Last) Class

Following the 1970 issue, Lerner put together a 1971 version of *Who's Who* with updated information and additional collector names. The editors thought about the Card Collectors Hall of Fame members and concluded that they should include Lionel Carter, Buck Barker, and John D. Wagner. Carter and Barker had helped write the bios for the people honored the previous year. It was a little cumbersome to ask them to write about themselves. Lerner first told Carter that Buck Barker was going to be put into the Card Collectors Hall of Fame and asked if he would write a biography for Barker. He never told Carter that he was also going to be honored. Lerner then talked to Barker and told him that Carter was going to be honored, asked him to keep it quiet, and asked Barker to write a story about Carter. Both men wrote stories about the other and didn't realize they were being inducted as well. It all worked out fine.

Hall of Fame Members

SCD has featured many of the hall of fame members in previous articles. I have written several articles on Jefferson Burdick, Lionel Carter, and Buck Barker. I have mentioned Charles Bray and the other *American Card Catalog* associate editors Preston Orem and Edwin Payne in articles. Prior articles can be found either on the *SCD* website or archived at <http://oldbaseball.com/library.html>.

I hope to continue researching and writing about some of the other hobby pioneers mentioned in this article. (Stephen Wong's 2005 *Smithsonian Baseball, Inside the World's Finest Private Collections* is a must read for those interested in current, fantastic collections and their collectors. Undoubtedly some of the collections featured in Wong's book came by way of hobby pioneers.) Any "war stories" from *SCD* readers about hobby pioneers would be appreciated. Let's take a look at a few of the highlights from the biographies for the nine people honored in Lerner's publication.

Jeff Burdick 1952

Jefferson Burdick, Syracuse, New York, 1900-1963

"Jeff Burdick stands alone among those connected in any way to the hobby of card-collecting....stricken with painful arthritis in the 1930s...J.R. Burdick was quiet, unassuming, a man whose honesty and integrity could not be questioned...he stood not to gain from his efforts and did not...gave his collection to the Metropolitan Museum... There will never be an equal to J.R. Burdick in our hobby as a man, as a collector, as an editor, as a writer, as a publisher, as an organizer." (Lionel Carter)
Others who knew Burdick well and wrote lengthy tributes back in 1963



included Woody Gelman, Buck Barker, Fred Baum, John Wagner, Fannie Troyer, and Hyatt Mayor, print department curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Burdick donated his 306,353-card collection to the museum.

Walter Corson, Glen Moore, Pennsylvania, 1900-1966

“Not only one of the first known card collectors, but also had one of the largest collections numbering over 300,000 cards, including 616 different complete sets...wrote numerous articles...worked on the *American Card Catalog* and checklists...also collected postcards and published *Better Post Card Collector*...collected sports guides and books...the only professional baseball player in our hobby playing first base in the minor leagues for eight years...went to spring training with Ruth and Gehrig...continued in baseball as a scout...suffering from terminal cancer he sold his collection to Frank Nagy.” Irv Lerner remembers hearing from Nagy how his car broke down on the way home under the weight of the collection.



Charles Bray, East Bangor, Pennsylvania 1899-1987

“Real estate and insurance agency owner...took over as publisher of the *Card Collectors Bulletin* from Burdick in 1949...associate editor of the *American Card Catalog*...continued auctions...sold his 200,000 card collection to Wharton-Tigar in 1965.” He continued the *CCB* until almost 1987.

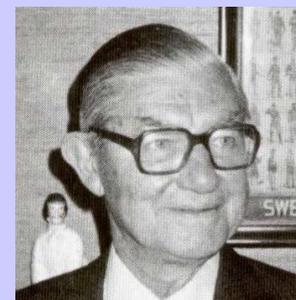
Charles Bray 1952

Preston Orem, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1894 - 1971

“Lawyer, writer, C.P.A., publisher, hobbyist, and baseball researcher burst into the card-collecting hobby like a rocket in 1956...collected as a youth...soon amassed 75,000 cards...fascinated with the Old Judge cards which led to an interesting search into baseball history...began selling his collection in 1961...devoted energies to gathering and writing about baseball history...published *Baseball (1845-1881) from Newspaper Accounts*.” There were additional volumes published to cover the history each year though 1891. The book is still selling on eBay today, although it didn’t fly off the shelves when first published. The book was self-published and “xeroxed” (photocopied on a Xerox machine). From the copy I inspected, it appears Orem signed his name to each chapter of each book by hand. Some of the hobby pioneers including Burdick were surprised at how quickly Orem spent his money and got in and out of card collecting, the earliest of the high rollers. It didn’t seem to me that he really met the criteria (see below) for inclusion in this group.

E.C. Wharton-Tigar, London, England, 1913-1995

“Research editor of the *Cartophilic Notes and News* and chairman of the Cartophilic Society of Great Britain... authorities in the field of card collecting regard his collection as probably the greatest accumulation of insert cards in the world ... world traveler.” *Wikipedia* lists some juicier information on the exciting collector stating that he “was a decorated World War II spy, saboteur and prominent mining executive and was



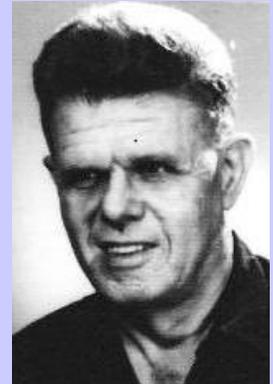
also recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records* for amassing over two million cigarette cards - the world's largest collection, now bequeathed to the British Museum...He planned and carried out a daring act of sabotage by destroying, whilst working undercover, a cliffside house in Tangier, Morocco, from which Germans had been using infrared equipment to track vessels passing through the Strait of Gibraltar and had been providing information to German submarines." Wharton-Tigar's name appears in various early hobby publications; he visited the U.S. and bought other collections including Bray's. He had the money to fly wherever he needed to go, and, if you had money and were willing to spend it, you could apparently wind up with millions of cards back then.

Mr. Payne, Salem, Oregon, 1895-1961

Mr. Payne was a post office employee and postcard collector. He wrote handbooks on postcards and contributed to the *American Card Catalog (ACC)* – which probably had more listings for postcards than sport cards. There were many postcard collectors in the *Who's Who in Card Collecting* directory. Although the publication didn't say sports card collecting, there were 18 baseball cards, one football card, and no postcards on its cover. Lerner acknowledged that he didn't know Payne and relied on comments from others. Based on my research, Mr. Payne's listing was a bit goofed up. The directory states his name was Robert J. Payne, but that was his son's name. The Payne that worked on the ACC was Edwin Robert Payne. His obituary mentioned "that he was nationally known as a specialist in envelopes of frontier days. He was also a collector of historical documents and was the author of an index of post offices of Oregon." Including Payne in this group seems like a painful stretch to me. If they were going to include Payne because he was an associate editor of the 1960 ACC, why didn't they also include associate editor Woody Gelman (1915-1978)?

Charles "Buck" Barker, St. Louis, Missouri, 1911-1982

"Recognized as the top authority on card issues, Buck is pushing closely on the heels of the late Jeff Burdick for the honor of having done the most for the hobby...his many articles to almost all of our hobby magazines are always informative, interesting, and imbued with that special Barker sense of humor that is so much a part of the man. One of the big thrills of being a card collector is being visited by Buck Barker. The ready wit and the quick smile of the man are infectious. He'll talk baseball and cards to you all night."
(Lionel Carter)



Buck Barker 1960s

(George) Lionel Carter, Evanston, Illinois, 1918-2008

"Over the years his name has become synonymous with honesty, fair play, and integrity...he has given of his time unselfishly to promoting the hobby he loves and assisting his fellow hobbyists. Today his articles are still unearthing some long since issued, long ago forgotten, and often never seen issues."
(Buck Barker)

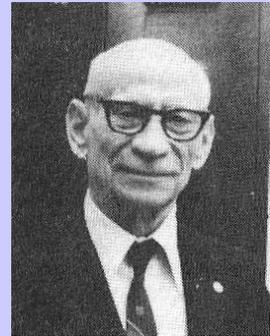
Lionel Carter 2005



John D. Wagner, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1899-1985?

"One of the great old timers of card collecting...started collecting in 1909...army career man...Burdick visited him in 1936..not unusual for a

collector to receive a Christmas card from him containing some long-sought after item.” Wagner sent Burdick one of his extra T206 Honus Wagner cards for free, but Burdick eventually got Wagner to cash his \$25 check for payment in return. Burdick donated the card along with the rest of his collection to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wagner also sent Lionel Carter a large box of old tobacco cards in 1945 gratis to thank Carter for serving in WWII combat. Carter thanked Wagner but sent the cards back, and then traded with him for many of those same cards over the next several years.



John D. Wagner early 1980s

Future Selection Process

Lerner thought that the nine collectors honored in the first two issues were appropriate, but that it would be important to have objective criteria for electing new members in the future. Lerner reported in the *Who's Who* on the ground rules established for selecting hall of fame members. The process was impressively elaborate with a 20-25 person selection committee voted by collectors listed in the directory serving a two-year term, polling of collectors listed in the book, criteria for selection, etc. Active collectors were to be in the hobby for at least 20 years to be considered. “Inactive” candidates could have been active only 10 years but would need to be pretty much dead to get in. I asked Irv how the formal process worked out. He said they never used it. Irv started to promote a third directory in early 1973. By the end of 1973 however, Irv felt that times had changed. When he started the idea in 1969 there were almost no gatherings of collectors or shows. By 1973 fledgling events had popped up in California, Detroit, New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. Gatherings were moving out of living rooms and into hotel ballrooms. Collectors were finding one another near the cardboard at these early shows. “Stuff was coming out of closets,” according to Lerner. The marketability of a stand-alone directory of collectors seemed less viable. It also couldn't have been too much of a money-maker for the hours needed to put it together. The Card Collectors Hall of Fame didn't exactly close its doors but it went into a little hiatus – of at least 40 years and counting. Collector directories have appeared in subsequent publications like Bert Sugar's *The Sports Collectors Bible* from the 1970s and *SCD* has featured collector listings periodically. There are probably other recent directory efforts out there as well, but the Card Collectors Hall of Fame has not been continued.

Goodie Goldfaden 2010

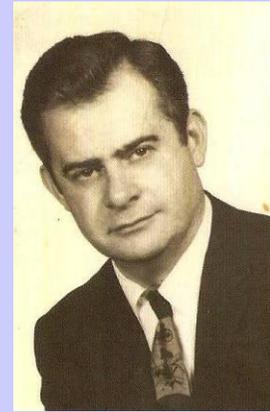
Who Would Have Been Next?

What if Lerner had been deluged with directory subscribers and the Card Collectors Hall of Fame continued the next year? For starters, Irv would have had to find someone with considerable free time to poll the subscribers, elect a committee, take nominations, debate their merits, obtain biographies, and maintain confidentiality. Assuming someone did all that, who would have been likely candidates for the next group of honorees? Carter was the youngest of those previously honored at 52. I think a 1973 or 1974 vote would have focused on those who had been serious collectors and contributors for the longest time. Collectors like Fritsch, Medeiros, Dobbins, and Lerner might have been too young for initial consideration. Names that would have likely come up among the then active hobbyists would be Frank Nagy, Bob Solon, Ray Hess, Howard Esch, Steve Vanco, Goodie Goldfaden, Dr. Lawrence Kurzrok, Fred Baum, Woody Gelman, Harry Kenworthy, Wirt Gammon, Edward



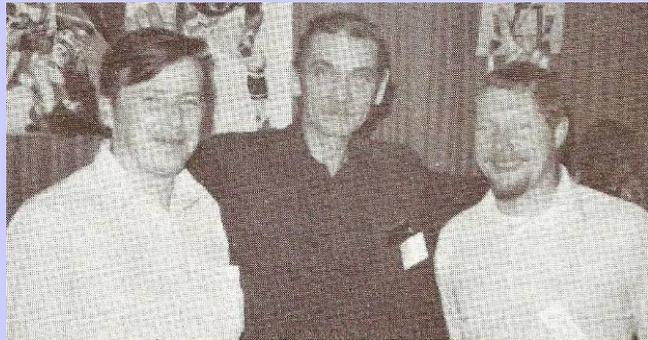
Golden, and Detroit Tigers announcer Ernie Harwell who didn't subscribe to any directory but was an active collector.

Woody Gelman



There would be a little controversy with a few of the names. I guess people like Goodie Goldfaden and Woody Gelman weren't really "collectors" but they seem like hall of famers to me anyway. An obvious choice from my vantage point would have been Bob Jaspersen who had been plugging away with a hobby publication starting in 1951 and who always seemed involved in promoting the hobby. Ray Medeiros added that "Bob didn't beat his own drum. He had been pushing for a national collectors' convention since 1954."

Hobby Editors -Dan Dischley, Bob Jaspersen, Charles Brooks 1973



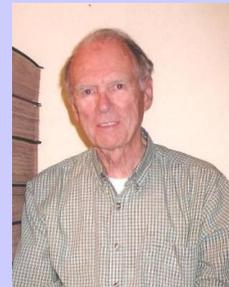
Inactive or Deceased Collectors

Inactive or deceased collectors would have needed some supporters to nominate them. Lionel Carter would have supported a nomination for Howard Leheup who had been winding down his collection. Leheup died in 1975 and Carter wrote the

following tribute: "Howard E. "Slim" Leheup, 74 "Howard had his own ideas of fairness, honesty and courtesy for in any deal with Howard, he always insisted that you get the better of the transaction...I don't know when I first began writing to Howard as the earliest correspondence in my file is 1953, but I would guess it was back in the days before WWII. He only had cards from 2 sets left by 1973 518 of the T206s and 150 Murad College Seals. Leheup was 6'5" perhaps, huge hands, a sense of humor and friendly smile."

Ray Medeiros 2008

Veteran collector Ray Medeiros would have supported a nomination for John Seifert of Youngstown, Ohio, publisher of the *Sports Exchange Trading Post* which brought sports cards and collectibles into the light back in the late 1940s.



Frank Jock Award

Frank Jock 1950s

Frank Jock had been collecting since the early 1900s. He died in 1968 leaving 1,500 pounds of hobby material. Bob Jaspersen and Ray Medeiros were good friends of Jock's. After Jock's death, collectors were honored for a time with receiving the annual Frank Jock Collector Award through Jaspersen's *Sport Fan* publication. Jaspersen asked readers to nominate individuals they thought deserving for doing "something during the past year that made the hobby better." The recipients of the award covered three of Lerner's Card Collectors Hall of Fame members plus other likely candidates. The Frank Jock Collector Award winners were as follows: 1974 Don Schlaff, 1975 Frank Nagy, 1976 Buck Barker, 1977 Ray Medeiros, 1978 Wirt Gammon, 1979 Lionel Carter, and 1980 Charles Bray.



The award was dropped in mid-stream when Bob died in 1982. Recipients received a plaque. Other nominees for the award over the years included, among others, *SCD* founder John Stommen (a perennial runner-up), Mike Bondarenko, Irv Lerner, Dave Meiners, Dick Millerd, Gavin Riley, Dan Even, George Martin, George Miller, Jim Beckett, Mel Bailey, Bob Solon, Frank and Vivian Barning, Dan Jaskula, and Lloyd Toerpe.

Final Thoughts

The Baseball Hall of Fame was probably more about promoting tourism in Cooperstown than just honoring baseball players. Hall of fames of schools and other organizations honor their supporters, AND raise funds. The Card Collectors Hall of Fame wouldn't have too much of an economic reason for being, if it were restarted today. The good news though is that there would be many candidates by now to honor. Card collecting has been advanced by many people mentioned in this article and many others who have helped more recently or with less visibility. They are all Hall of Famers in my book.

George Vrechek is a freelance contributor to Sports Collectors Digest and can be contacted with any information to share on hobby pioneers at vrechek@ameritech.net. Thanks to Irv Lerner and Ray Medeiros for their assistance.

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