



MADDEN, CARRIGAN, DONAHUE—THREE GAME CATCHERS

## Tales From the Southland

By Albert H. C. Mitchell

Illustration from Photograph

READING the sporting pages of the newspapers in the early spring, one is struck by the great amount of space devoted to the training of the big league baseball clubs in the South. And if one follows the articles closely the idea is apt to be created that the Southern training trip of a big ball club is one round of pleasure. It has been my lot to have taken many of these spring trips, and I recall that as I am about to leave Boston, not a few friends say to me: "Going South with the team, eh? Pretty soft for you. I wish my boss would send me South for six weeks and pay my expenses. You're a lucky dog."

As a matter of fact, however, the spring trip is a good deal of a grind. A week of it is very enjoyable, but after that I for one would swap jobs with anybody in Boston. I suppose for a man

who is taking his first trip, things are very pleasant all the way, but not so with the old-timer.

It has to be done, however. The newspapers spend a lot of money on baseball. It costs the Boston papers close to \$6,000 to report the Red Sox trip, and perhaps half that sum to cover the trip of the Boston Nationals, as the latter team does not make so long or so extended a tour as the Boston Americans.

The Red Sox trip this year began with three weeks' work at Hot Springs. Then followed nine days at Memphis, four at Nashville, three at Cincinnati and then came exhibition games at Indianapolis, Dayton, Columbus, Wheeling and Wilkesbarre, the squad being scheduled to wind up at Philadelphia, where the opening championship game was scheduled for April 12.

This article was written at Memphis where the Red Sox team practiced from March 20 to March 28. There had been three weeks, lacking two days, spent at Hot Springs. It was originally planned to put in four weeks at the Springs, but the astute Manager Lake foresaw that his players would become utterly tired of the resort by that time, so he wisely arranged for a change of scene. Ball-players are a queer lot, and it is a wise man indeed who knows how to manage them. Lake is a veteran at the game. He has been through the mill as a player, as a captain, as a manager and as an owner of a ball club. He dropped into his present position as manager of the Boston Americans most unexpectedly last summer, and he bids fair to make good beyond all expectations.

In the squad that gathered at Hot Springs early in March, Lake found he had only two or three players that could be called veterans. Most of the crowd were youngsters in age and in experience. It required careful handling to keep these youths from breaking the traces at Hot Springs. The town was "wide open"; a dozen gambling clubs were doing a land-office business, and there were temptations for husky young ball-players on every hand. But it must be said that the Red Sox squad went through the mill in fine shape. About the only drinking the boys did was to absorb vast quantities of the various mineral waters for which Hot Springs is, among other things, famous. And about the only gambling the boys did was to try to beat the slot machines for cigars.

Ball-players are wise these days. Twenty years ago it would have been foolhardy to send a team down to Hot Springs to train. They would have lost their clothes in the gambling-houses and have had a general good old time.

This particular team of Red Sox found it vastly more entertaining to go horse-back riding, to have their pictures taken in all sorts of novel poses, to watch for a few minutes the high play of the wealthy visitors at the Springs and to engage in harmless games of cards in their hotel lobby. But with all that going on there, the players were heartily glad when the order came to pull up stakes and move on to Memphis. In this big Southern

city on the banks of the Mississippi, the players really enjoyed themselves. Manager Lake cut the practice down to one session daily, the work taking place in the morning, the players having the rest of the day to themselves. There was plenty to do. A trip up the river and back could be made in four hours, there was fishing on the inland lakes near Memphis, there were enough theatres to suit all tastes, and at night the principal street of the city was illuminated in a way to rival Broadway.

Above all, the players had worked all the soreness out of their bodies, and were feeling as frisky as colts in a ten-acre lot. Their practice was hard and fast, and it is safe to say that no team in the country was in better condition than the Red Sox men were in Memphis.

So it came to pass that all he had to do was to keep his eye peeled all the time to see that his effervescent young men did not overstep the bounds in their off hours, and at night dream of winning the American League pennant.

"Tales from the Southland" is the title of this article. I have an apology to make to the readers of the BASEBALL MAGAZINE. "Tales of the Southland" should include a very long account of the way mails are delayed in this neck of the woods. There happened to be a check mailed to me from Boston, and it was not received until two weeks after it left that city. I had promised the editor of the BASEBALL MAGAZINE to write an article for him, but his letter, telling me of the subject on which he wished me to write, was delayed longer than the check was, and the result is that I have hardly time to catch the return mail with this brief summary of the Red Sox training trip.

The results of this trip so convince me that no teams in the American League have anything on the Red Sox, provided their pitchers make good as they should do. The boys are a mighty well-behaved lot. The dead wood will be cut out before the team reaches Boston, and there will remain only the fast, young, fighting material of which pennant-winning teams are made.

The personalities of the players may be left for a future article. A better lot of young men never went South for practice.