

Fred Clarke's First Pair of Baseball Shoes

Kindly Act of An Old-time Player

RICHARD (DAD) PHELAN, old-time ball player and second baseman who prides himself with the reputation of having played the middle cushion for years without the aid of a glove, held a fanning bee recently for some old friends and fans who solicited his opinion as to the result of the world's series. Phelan explained, so far as he had read, why the Pirates won, but, in doing so, revealed a tale regarding Fred Clarke, manager of the Pittsburg club.

Prefacing his remarks by granting those who made up the party liberty to verify the story from Fred Clarke, Phelan delivered his spiel of the grassed diamond to an attentive audience.

"It was back in '88," said Phelan, "when I first ran across Clarke. I was with the Des Moines club that year and we won the Western League pennant. Clarke was only a kid and was playing with an amateur team called the 'Stars.' We had an off day and Clarke had just been chased from the clubhouse by several old players when I met him.

"What is the matter, little fellow," I asked.

"Oh, nothing," replied Clarke. "I only wanted to see if I could get a pair of old baseball shoes from some of the players. But instead, they chased me off the grounds."

"I took a kindly feeling to the boy," continued Phelan, "and brought him back to the park and gave him a pair of shoes. From that moment until Clarke began to make a name for himself in baseball we didn't meet again until 1894.

"It was in the Southern League that Clarke and I renewed our acquaintance. He sprinted across the field one day and grasped my hand, shouting 'Hello Dick.' I could not place Clarke for several minutes, but on mention of the Des Moines incident my memory was refreshed.

"Clarke and I held a long conversation and he told me what clubs he had been with. At that time McCloskey, now manager of the Milwaukee American Association club, had Clarke under contract to the Montgomery club.

"Clarke and I remained fast friends until he finally left this part of the country. I did not run across Fred again until two years ago in Brooklyn, and, knowing the Pittsburg club was in town, went down to the hotel to see him. Fred welcomed me with open arms and after introducing me to the men, began to spiel of the time I gave him the first pair of ball shoes that he ever wore. Clarke not only told the tale there, but he repeated it hundreds of times to friends throughout the National League circuit."

A Putout Record

Fred Clarke last season established a record for outfielders that has never been surpassed in the big leagues. In a game between Cincinnati and Pittsburg he had ten putouts in the outfield. Only twice, as far as known, has Manager Fred's performance been excelled in any kind of a league. September 10, 1896, Dick Harley, playing centerfield for the Springfield (Mass.) club, came through with eleven putouts. August 17, 1897, Slagle, playing with Grand Rapids, chalked up an even dozen putouts.