

*The Sporting News Archives. The Sporting News*, 1212 N. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63 166. Steven P. Gietschier, Director of Historical Records (314) 997-7111.

*The Sporting News (TSN)* archives is an unconventional resource for sport historians: a business archives containing no corporate records but instead an extensive collection of materials touching upon virtually every modern sporting activity. Established in 1986 as part of a modernization program begun after the

Times Mirror Corporation purchased the company in 1977, the archives was designed and organized by the current Director of Historical Records, Steven P. Gietschier. Created to preserve records and serve as a reference library for *TSN* staffers but open by appointment to qualified researchers, the archival holdings reflect the publication profile of America's most comprehensive and authoritative sports periodical. Launched as a general sports weekly on March 17, 1886, by Alfred Henry Spink, *TSN* twenty years later to the month became an exclusively baseball newspaper commonly called "The Bible of Baseball." In late 1942 the paper commenced seasonal coverage of other sports and steadily expanded to the current year-round coverage of all major sports. However, baseball remains the sport of emphasis with basketball, football, and hockey also receiving feature billing. The bulk of the *TSN* archives, then, consists of baseball material with information on other sports, especially the other three major team sports, proportional to editorial emphasis at given times.

What specifically comprises this unique sports archives? Most conspicuous is the compact-shelved library of more than 6,000 volumes covering all sports but emphasizing baseball; included are all basic reference works as well as complete sets of *TSN* publications (the annual guides and registers for the four major team sports as well as yearbooks and special volumes). Also available are sundry items on microfilm including *The Sporting News*; the company's monthly trade journal, *The Sporting Goods Dealer*; nineteenth and early twentieth century sport newspapers; annual statistics prepared for the American and National leagues; and the Albert G. Spalding Papers held by the New York Public Library. There is a small corpus of manuscript material, most notably correspondence between Ty Cobb and Taylor Spink; uncatalogued company records remain in warehouse storage.

The three most valuable parts of the collection are located outside the archives room. First are the biographical and subject files contained in more than 150 file drawers—*TSN* clippings and tearsheets predominate, but there is also miscellany ranging from articles from other newspapers to news releases and postcards. Second is the extensive photograph morgue containing several hundred thousand images, most of which are owned by *TSN*, and featuring the prized Charles Martin Conlon collection of some 5,000 glass plate negatives, mostly of baseball players from 1905 to 1935. Finally, a unique resource is a file of 3 x 5 cards detailing the contract history of virtually everyone who signed to play professional football.

Despite holdings on all modern sports, the *TSN* archives is primarily of utility to baseball historians. And because most of the material save for the clippings files, player contract cards, and photo morgue are readily available elsewhere, it should be regarded as a supplementary instead of a primary research facility. Researchers should make inquiries and appointments well in advance of visitation as the archival room is small and services are limited; only the archivist is available to assist researchers, there is one microfilm reader-printer, and all photoduplication must be done by the staff. A "research-for-pay" option is available to scholars with specific, limited research needs. The

archives, located within the *TSN* plant proper, is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays except for holidays. For further information about the creation and content of the archives, see Steven P. Gietschier, "Leading Off: The First years of *The Sporting News* Archives," *Provenance*, 7:1 (Spring 1989), 41-52.

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