

Joltin' Joe's Myth

MARC ONIGMAN
Department of Physical Education
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

*"His real name is Bolinsky but then, that would sound as good as Boley to a baseball fan:"
Sportswriter stereotyping revisited.*

Despite the fact that baseball historians and other chroniclers of the American national pastime have recognized that the game's ranks have been populated by a number of men from ethnic backgrounds other than white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, little has been written about the reactions of members of the sportswriting profession to foreign-born and second generation ballplayers. In order to begin to alleviate this longstanding error of omission, foreign-born and second generation ballplayers were identified and their files, located at the National Baseball Library in Cooperstown were examined to determine what reactions there were from their contemporaries in the sportswriting business.

Though the files are far from complete, they did yield data of two types: Comments on the players' names, per se, and stereotypical comments having to do with individual ethnic group membership. An example of the first category, aside from the quotation in the title of the paper, follows: Mike Cvangros was "... called Mike for short, to get away from his tongue-twisting last name." An example of the second type of categorization would be Dan Daniel's comment about Joe Glenn, a Polish catcher who had changed his name from Guzensky: "It is not the impression of the writer that Glenn will ever develop into a real [sic] great catcher. He hasn't sufficient speed afoot and it may be that around the slag piles on the wrong side of the tracks Joe's schooling was neglected..."



Litterateur Dick Keller sans cowboy hat