Collection number
BA MSS 76
BL-2524.76 – BL-2527.76

Title
Ted Kennedy Collection

Inclusive Dates
1878 – 1907

Abstract
A collection of drawings, instructional pamphlets, and advertisements for lessons all created by Ted Kennedy.

Preferred Citation
Ted Kennedy Collection, BA MSS 76, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY.

Access
By appointment during regular business hours, email research@baseballhall.org.

Processing Information
This collection was arranged and processed by Claudette Scrafford in 2009.

This collection was sent to NEDCC for cleaning and conservation. One archival box of documents was not treated. The two scrapbooks with handwritten baseball instructions and drawings are encapsulated.

Separation
Photographs have been separated to the Photo Archives.

Provenance
This collection was recommended to the Hall of Fame by Harry Schneider, a Missouri state athletic commissioner and scout for the Baltimore Orioles, to Ken Smith, then director of the Hall of Fame. This collection was owned by Kennedy’s grandson Dick Metzger. Dick Metzger is quoted as saying, “Except for that sore arm and a premature death, he might have made the handsome senator from Massachusetts the “other” Ted Kennedy.”

Biography
Ted Kennedy was born in Henry County Illinois on February 7, 1865. Ted learned the carpenter's trade from his father, but he soon shared the passion for baseball prevalent in Peoria. The city had one of the country's top independent teams, and attracted notice with a 1-0 win over the Boston Red Stockings. Jack Rowe, Bill Gleason and Tom Loftus were among Peoria's standouts, but the star of the team was pitcher Charles Radbourn. The thirteen-year-old Kennedy served as bat boy and water boy for that team. Kennedy later
remembered Radbourn as being one of the first to master the overhand curve ball. In addition to his duties with the team, Kennedy was eager to learn the art of pitching. During his teenage years, Kennedy recalled himself as being "very light for a pitcher, as I was growing, being only able to pitch five or six innings. I was rated a good third corner and could stick some in those days."

Kennedy’s first game was June 12, 1885 and his final game was September 23, 1886.

1885 Chicago White Stockings  National League
1886 Philadelphia Athletics  American Association
1886 Louisville Colonels  American Association

On the mound, Kennedy dominated most competition. He later remembered striking out 277 batters in 18 starts, while *Sporting Life* in the November 12, 1884 issue credited him with accomplishing the feat in 17 games.

While playing with the Athletics, Kennedy missed significant time due to his shoulder injury. He returned briefly from the injury, but was left at home when the Athletics went on an extended road trip, and was soon released. Kennedy received an opportunity with Louisville, also of the American Association. Temporarily replacing Toad Ramsey, Kennedy made four starts between September 16 and 23, all losses. One loss was to his former team and the other three were against New York. He finished the season 5-19 with a 4.66 earned run average. His major league career was over.

After retiring as a player, Kennedy became a sporting goods manufacturer. He specialized in gloves and catcher's mitts and initially based his factory in Chicago. In 1893, he even found time to serve for one game as a major league umpire, September 3, Chicago was hosting Baltimore. Soon after, Kennedy sold his patents to the A.G. Spalding Company and returned to his hometown of Peoria. Kennedy later said "Here I experimented on new ideas of improved mitts, which I began manufacturing." He also operated a baseball school, specializing in teaching young players how to throw the curve ball. He became a vegetarian and as his obituary later said "held that the training ideas of the baseball teams in the country were wrong. He had a theory he could take a team trained along his own ideas, with a meat diet absent and turn out a nine which would capture a championship."

Shortly after 1900, the Kennedy’s moved to St. Louis and Ted became a furrier in addition to operating his baseball school. He continued to be an innovator. The Peoria *Star* remembered that "he invented the use of a ball light in weight and so marked as to give the handling for the various curves and breaks in order to make the learning of the latter easier."

He also invented an early pitching machine. The Washington *Post* reported that he was going to help manager Jimmy McAlleer "make better batters" of the 1904 St. Louis Browns. The plan didn't work. The Browns team batting average for 1904 declined from the 1903 figure. Though Kennedy had theories on how to improve the game, he also believed the old players were better. He said of deadball era pitchers: "Take the pitching
of today and put old 1885 Chicago, Buffalo, and New York teams against it, and they would turn the infield into a hospital, and many of the games would have to be postponed and played the next day, as they would be unable to get the real old sluggers out." Even the innovation of the spitball was nothing new to Kennedy. "What they call the spit ball has moss four feet thick on it. The old thumb drop ball has found a new name. Bobby Mathews the grandest little man of the box used it."

Apparently the baseball and fur businesses were successful. By the summer of 1907, rumors were circulating that Kennedy was part of a group attempting to purchase the St. Louis Cardinals.

Unfortunately, none of that would come to pass. In late July 1907, Ted's father died in St. Louis after a fall down an elevator shaft. Three months later, Ted Kennedy would be also be dead. The account in The Peoria Star said, "Kennedy's death came as a surprise, as he retired Sunday night (October 27) apparently in the best of health. Members of Kennedy's family were awakened at 3 o'clock Monday morning to find him in such serious condition that a physician was hurriedly called, but he died before the latter arrived." The coroner's inquest attributed death to fatty degeneration of the heart. Kennedy was buried on October 30 at St. Louis' Calvary Cemetery. He was 42.

Source: www.bioproj.sabr.org

An article published in The Sporting News, July 24, 1976 written by Bob Broeg, claims Kennedy was helping install what was described as the first electric burglar alarm in St. Louis, when he touched a live wire and suffered a severe shock and died a day later. Kennedy’s wife was so bitter over his death she locked up all his baseball gloves, advertising, and correspondence in a trunk for years.

Content List

Box 1
F1   Library of Congress deposit certificates, correspondence
F2   Playing instructions, drawings
F3   Index to lessons by position
F4   Playing instructions, drawings
F5   Instructions
F6   Glove pattern, each piece cut out

Folders
1   “Road to Success” 1906 brochure   BL-2526.76
2   “Learn to Play Professional Base Ball by Mail”   BL-2524.76
3   “Kennedy’s Career as a Player” 1878 – 1907 article
   “Instruction to Pitchers” article
4   Letterheads, envelopes
5   Instructions, lessons
6   Flyers for course through mail order, typed manuscript
Lesson 6 from Correspondence Schools of Natural & Scientific Base Ball Instructions

“Kennedy’s Career as a Ball Player” manuscript

Advertisement, envelope, price lists

Lessons 1 – 5 from Correspondence Schools of Natural & Scientific Base Ball Instructions

Brochures – mitts & gloves  BL-2525.76
Patent postcards  1906 – 1907
Advertisement - glove
“How to order glove by mail”

President Roosevelt’s opinion on athletic training

Booklet – “Book of Glove-Mitts” color images

Lessons, drawings

Advertisements

Drawings

Index to lessons

Lessons

Lessons – handwritten & typed

Lessons

Lessons

Lessons

Lessons, drawings

Folder

1 Untreated documents

Folder

1 Encapsulated images

- lessons 1,3,4,5,7,8

- glove pattern