

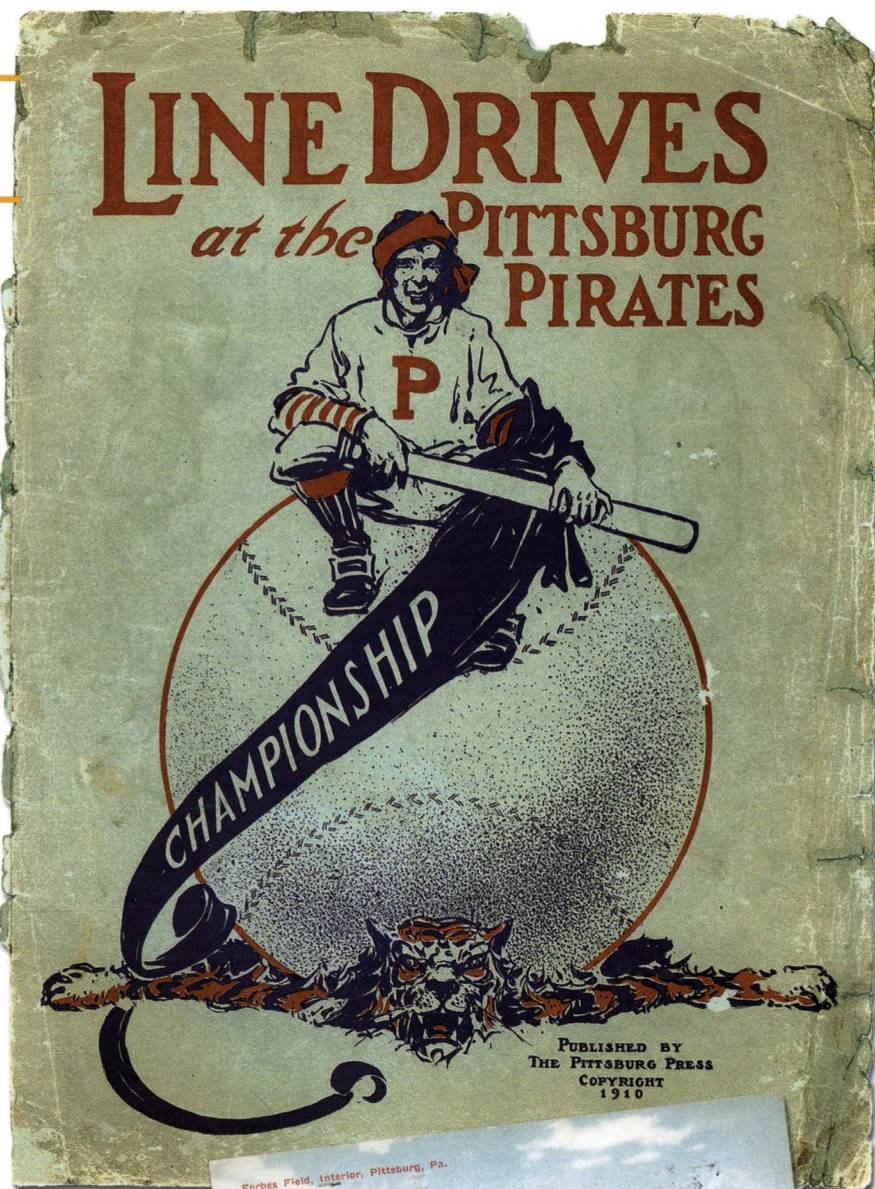
# Fun with

By Richard Peterson

After their devastating loss in 1903 to the Boston Americans in what would later become known as baseball's first World Series, the Pittsburgh (then with no "h") Pirates had to wait until their World Series victory against the Detroit Tigers in 1909 to redeem themselves with the city's fans and writers.

When the Pirates won the seventh and deciding game in Detroit on October 16, Mayor William A. Magee proclaimed Monday, October 18, as a public holiday to celebrate the city's first World Championship. The highlight of the celebration was a grand parade that snaked from the Fort Pitt Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh to Forbes Field in Schenley Park. At Forbes Field, a massive crowd cheered each one of its baseball heroes, but its greatest ovation went to rookie pitcher Babe Adams, winner of three games against Detroit, including an 8-0 shut-out in the seventh game.

The celebration was gratifying for Pirates owner Barney Dreyfuss and the great Honus Wagner. Dreyfuss had been ridiculed for building Forbes Field — dubbed "Dreyfuss's folly" by his critics — but now he stood on the victory platform at his new baseball palace, just months after the ballpark had opened that June. Wagner was vilified in the press for having a "yellow streak" after his poor performance in the 1903 World Series, but he had clearly



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The Pirates had a new ball park, Forbes Field, to celebrate their first World Series Championship in 1909.



outplayed Ty Cobb in the 1909 World Series and was now praised as the greatest player of his era.

In the spring of 1910, in anticipation of another World Series Championship, *The Pittsburg Press* announced a contest to find the title for a “valuable souvenir” that it intended to publish in honor of the Pirates. When the 30-page booklet appeared, it was called *Line Drives at the Pittsburg Pirates* because “it is itself a line drive, like every one of the cartoons in it, to the flagpole of popularity.” In a brief preface to the publication, the editors of the *Press* described *Line Drives* as “a collection of sketches, specially drawn by THE PRESS’ staff of artists, showing every member of the Pittsburg Pirates, the World’s Champion Baseball Team, in a characteristic attitude. Not only the members of the club when it won the world’s emblem in the fall of 1909, but all the new members since signed and enrolled for the season of 1910, are included.”

Each cartoon was drawn around a photograph which gave “baseball lovers a speaking likeness of every player.” The editors also added several lines of playful verse at the bottom of each cartoon and filled out the book with the 1910 playing schedule “and other baseball information of interest to every lover of the national pastime,” including box scores for the 1909 World Series.

**L**ine Drives at the Pittsburg Pirates contains 22 cartoon sketches; 18 are of players from the 1909 season, but three key members of that team were not included:

Bill Abstein was the Pirates everyday first baseman in 1909, but he played so poorly in the World Series – committing five errors and batting .231 – that he was sold by Barney Dreyfuss a few months after the Series was over.

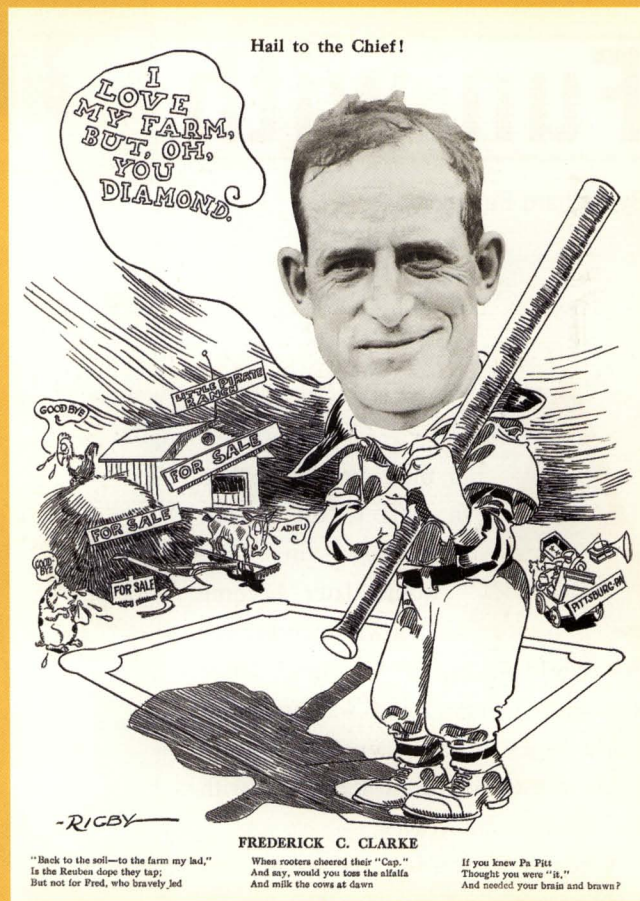
Veteran pitcher Vic Willis won 22 games for the Pirates in 1909, but he lost the sixth game of the World Series and, amidst rumors of a drinking problem, was sold to the St. Louis Cardinals in January.

**Top: Hail to the Chief! – Frederick C. Clarke**

**Below: Champion of Champions – John H. Wagner**

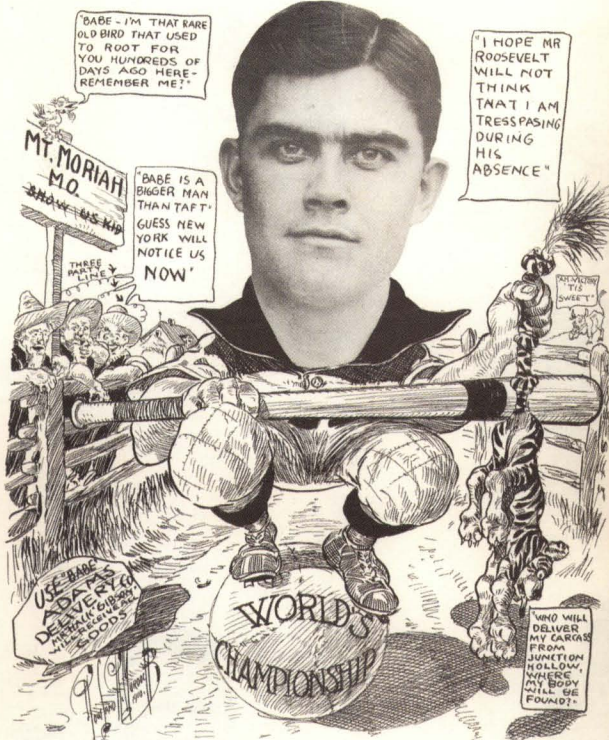
**Page 27 top: The Tiger Tamer – Charles B. Adams**

**Page 27 below: The Kentucky Rosebud – S. Howard Camnitz**





### The Tiger Tamer



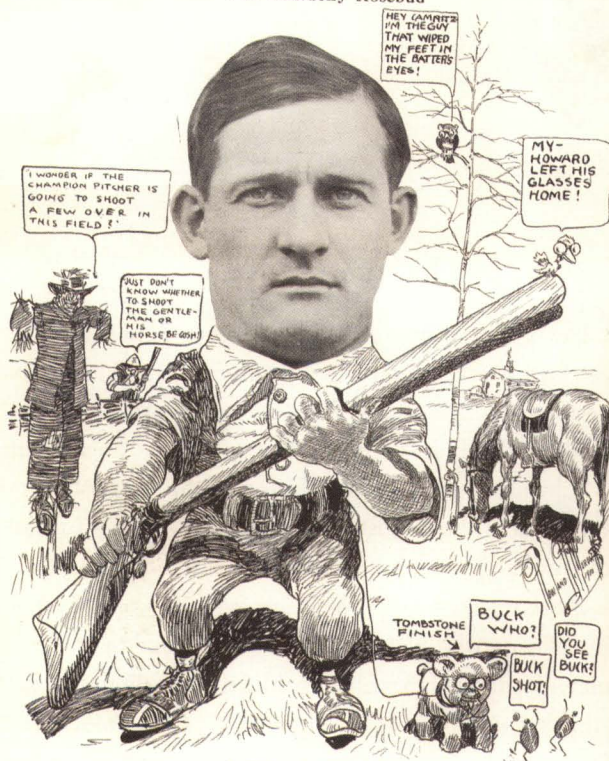
Three cheers and a "Tiger" for Charlie Who comes from old Missouri. He isn't much on talk and parley. But pitches just like fury.

CHARLES B. ADAMS

He twisted off the Tiger's tail And made him shed his stripes. With him this year we cannot fail. And pennant odds are "pipes."

When he is through He'll make a few Proud bottom look like Reshen Glas.

### The Kentucky Rosebud



No fenshit in the Blue Grass state (Kentuck)-to Camnitz don't Could ever shoot as tarual straight

S. HOWARD CAMNITZ

As Howard slings the sphere! Or twiples he is now the champ'. The kid of the town.

He'll strike four in the batters' camp And puzzle every player's lamp. To nail Pittsburg's renown.

Jack "Jap" Barbeau started the season at third base, allowing long-time third baseman Tommy Leach to move back to center field where he had played in 1907. But the 5' 4-1/2" Barbeau, after hitting only .220 and committing 29 errors, was traded in August to the Cardinals for Bobby Byrne, who quickly became a favorite of Pirate fans.

A few of the 18 players portrayed to represent the 1909 season were seldom used by manager Fred Clarke, like third-string catcher Paddy O'Connor and part-time pitcher Sam Frock.

Of the four remaining sketches, Wilkinsburg native Bill McKechnie, who appeared in three games in 1907, did not even play for the Pirates in 1908 or '09. McKechnie did play for the Pirates in 1910, but would not distinguish himself until he led the team to a World Championship in 1925 as the Pirates' manager (the team's first since 1909). The final three prints incorporate new Pirate signings, 10 in all (though Chick Brandom pitched in 13 games for the Pirates in 1909, and Harry Camnitz, brother of ace pitcher Howie Camnitz, pitched in one also). The other eight ballplayers failed to distinguish themselves in their professional careers, and two have no major league record at all.

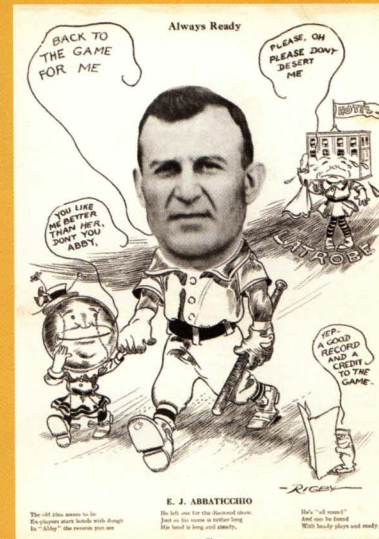
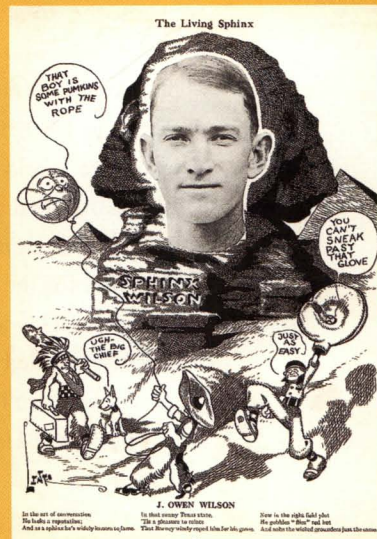
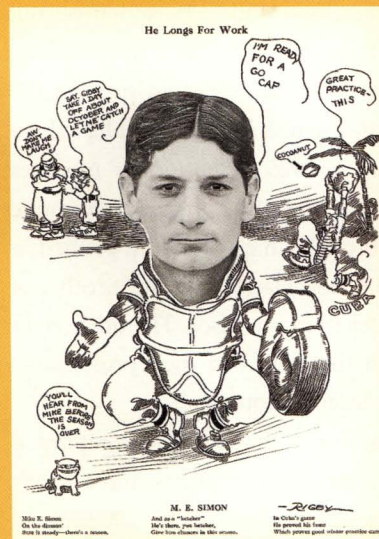
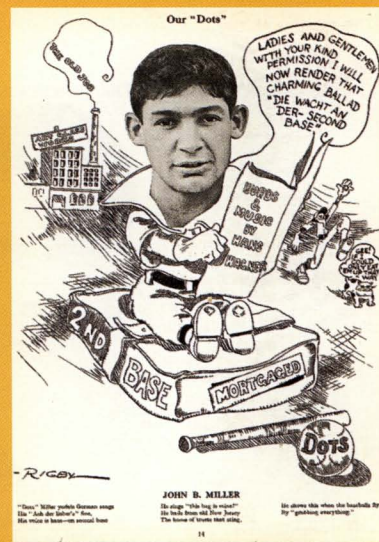
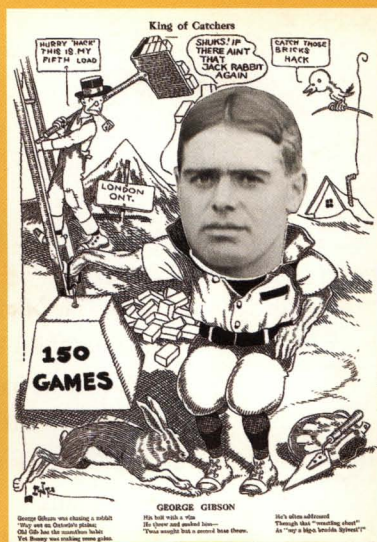
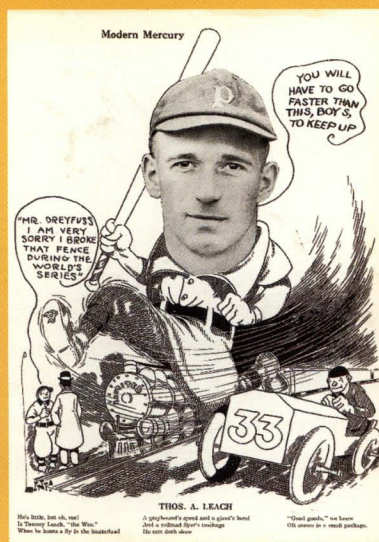
The core of *Line Drives* is made up of the 16 cartoons, reprinted here in reduced size, for the seven Pirate regulars, three utility players, and six pitchers who were the keys to the 1909 World Championship. Five of the Pirates – Fred Clarke, Honus Wagner, Tommy Leach, Sam Leever, and Deacon Phillippe – had also played in the 1903 World Series. Other veterans on the team included pitchers Howie Camnitz, a 25-game winner in 1909; Lefty Leifield, a 19-game winner; and catcher George Gibson, who set two major league records in 1909 for most games caught and most consecutive games caught in one season.

There were also four first-year players on the 1909 team. Besides World Series hero Babe Adams, the Pirates had second baseman Dots Miller, who had replaced veteran Eddie Abbaticchio in the starting line-up, back-up catcher Mike Simon, and pitch-hitter Ham Hyatt, all playing in their rookie seasons. Owen Wilson, the regular right-fielder, was in only his second year in the major leagues, while third baseman Bobby Byrne and pitcher Nick Maddox, who won 13 games in 1909, were in their third season.

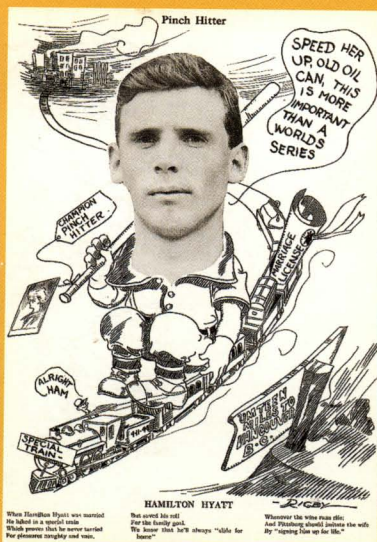
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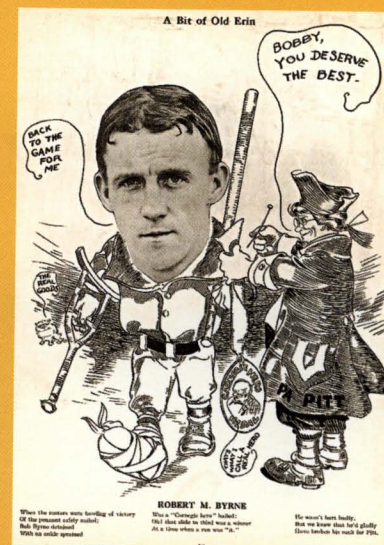




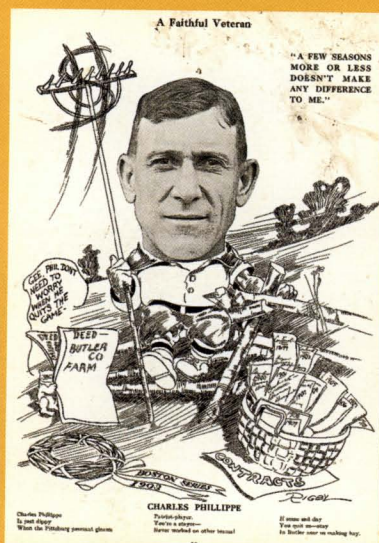
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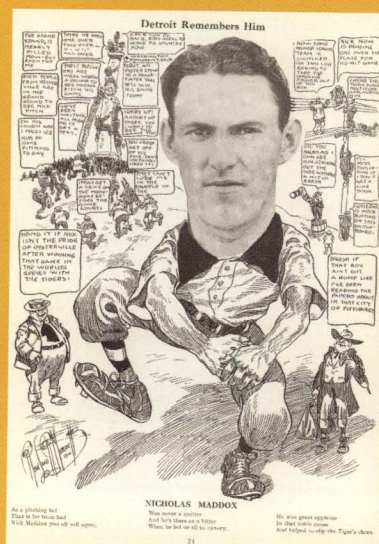
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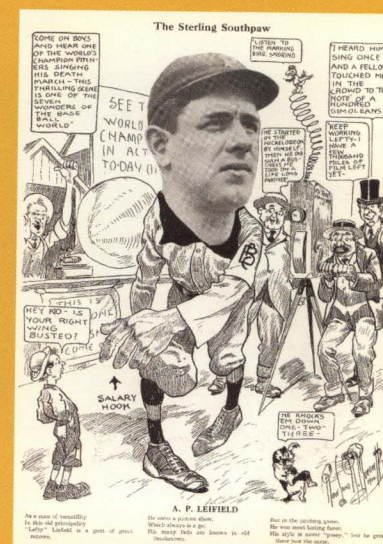
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Western Pennsylvania, at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, and one appearing recently on eBay. With this reprinting of some of the pages, Pirate fans once again have the opportunity to "gaze with pleasure" on the heroes of Pittsburgh's first World Champions. 🌟

Richard "Pete" Peterson is the editor of *The Pirates Reader* (University of Pittsburgh Press) and the author of *Extra Innings: Writing on Baseball* (University of Illinois Press). He is professor emeritus of English at Southern Illinois University, and editor of the *Writing Baseball* series from SIU Press.

**Top row left to right:**  
**Modern Mercury – Thos. A. Leach**  
**King of Catchers – George Gibson**  
**Our "Dots" – John B. Miller**  
**Pinch Hitter – Hamilton Hyatt**  
**The Old Master – Samuel Leever**  
**A Bit of Old Erin – Robert M. Byrne**

**Bottom row left to right:**  
**He Longs for Work – M.E. Simon**  
**The Living Sphinx – J. Owen Wilson**  
**Always Ready – E.J. Abbaticchio**  
**A Faithful Veteran – Charles Phillippe**  
**Detroit Remembers Him – Nicholas Maddox**  
**The Sterling Southpaw – A.P. Leifield**