

Volume 1

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Say It Ain't So, Joe

Lead: In the annals of baseball few figures are as pitiful as Shoeless Joe Jackson.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Joseph Jefferson Jackson was born in Brandon Mills, South Carolina before the turn of the century. His family was a large and very poor. Receiving no formal education began work in the local textile mill at the age of 13. He began to play baseball and soon caught the attention of Philadelphia Manager

Connie Mack who overcame the boy's shyness and started him with the Athletics in 1908.

Jackson was one of those rare people - a natural athlete. In 1300 games he made over 1700 hits and though he never won a batting title he regularly finished in the top five. His performance on the field was spectacular, the rest of his life was a mess. Fans and other players could throw him off balance by reminding him of his humble origins. When Mack tried to get him a teacher to help him learn to read, Joe refused.

After a troubled pair of seasons in Philadelphia, he spent six good ones in Cleveland. Sold to Chicago in 1915 he

came under the hard, tight rule of Charles A. Comiskey. When he patriotically took a shipyard job during World War I, Comiskey criticized him. This hurt Joe almost as much as the low pay.

Jackson problem was that strong personalities could influence him. When the offer came to cheat in the 1919 World Series he went agreed to it but then hit .375 in the series. The gamblers didn't get much for their \$5,000. Barred from baseball for life, Joe returned to South Carolina and died there in 1951.

After the grand jury hearing, when Joe and his fellow "Black Sox" conspirators were leaving the

courthouse, a boy is said to have called out, "Say it ain't so, Joe." He denied hearing the boy but that couldn't take away the hurt because it was so.

"A Moment in Time" is produced at the University of Richmond. This is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Asinof, Eliot. *Eight Men Out*. New York, NY: H. Holt, 1987.

Gropman, Donald. *Say It Ain't So, Joe!* Boston, MA, 1979.

Luhrs, Victor. *The Great Baseball Mystery*. New York, NY: 1966.

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