

## **George “Tubber” White Collection**

Cambridge Historical Commission  
831 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**Dates** 1912-1920s

**Extent** 1 half record box

**Access** Collection is available for research; CHC rules of use apply.

Processing and finding aid completed by Megan Schwenke, September 2012

### **Provenance and Collection Description**

The George “Tubber” White collection was donated to the Commission in October of 2007 by David Grant of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Grant found the materials on Summer Street in Somerville a year prior to donation.

This collection includes hockey, football, and baseball team photographs featuring George “Tubber” White during his time at Rindge Technical School and Exeter Academy. White's athletic exploits at Rindge are also captured in 20 scrapbook pages of newspaper clippings, where he is referred to as George White and “Tubber” White interchangeably. The collection also includes eleven photo postcard featuring members of the North Cambridge semi-professional baseball team, of which White was a member in the 1920s.

### **Biographical Note**

George “Tubber” White (1895-1977) was one of eight children born to William A. White and Mrs. White of Cambridge. He was raised in Cambridge, and was a celebrated local sports star. He attended Rindge Technical School from 1911 until 1915, where he acted as captain for the baseball, football, and hockey teams, and in 1913 was a 1<sup>st</sup> team Boston American All-Scholastic Football Selection. White entered Exeter Academy in the fall of 1915, and was the captain of the hockey team there as well, while also playing on the football and baseball teams. He served in the Navy from 1916 to 1918, and enrolled in Boston College after his discharge in 1918, where

he played on the varsity football team. In 1919 he began Tufts Dental School, and captained the baseball team. White participated in athletics outside of scholastics as well: in the 1920s he played on the North Cambridge semi-professional baseball team that was known for drawing huge numbers of spectators to their Russell Field games that sometimes outnumbered the crowds recorded at Fenway Park.

After graduating from Tufts in 1923, White went on to practice dentistry for over 40 years in North Cambridge, and served as the dentist for the Cambridge School Department during that time as well. He and his wife Marguerite had one daughter, Alice. White served as President of the Rindge Tech Alumni in 1932, and was named Rindge Tech Man of the Year in 1971. He also was a member of both the North Cambridge Council Knights of Columbus and the American Legion Post 27 of Cambridge.

### **Historical Sketch**

Semi-professional baseball in New England has a long history, beginning with the formation of the New England League in 1886. The NEL's minor league teams played throughout the New England region on and off up until 1949. During a period of disbandment for the NEL in 1919, "Twilight Leagues" were formed across Massachusetts to meet the demand for baseball.

Twilight League games began at 6pm on weekdays and were also held on Sunday afternoons; the Sunday games were permissible by law because the players were considered amateurs.

The Boston Twilight League formed in 1922, and was comprised of eight teams, four from Boston (Dorchester, Forest Hills, Roxbury, and South Boston) and four from the surrounding suburbs (Malden, Reading, Somerville, and North Cambridge). The North Cambridge team, formerly the North Cambridge Knights of Columbus team, managed by city councillor Dan Leahy, was part of the league for the 1922, 1923, and 1924 seasons. The team drew crowds by the ten thousands to their weekly games at Russell Field, in part because the local professional teams, the Red Sox and the Braves, were prohibited by law from playing games on Sundays. A Sabbatarian group called the Lord's Day League noted these crowds however, and argued that the North Cambridge team was violating the spirit of the law that allowed amateur baseball on

Sundays by taking up voluntary collections during games, as it was no secret that the proceeds of these collections often ended up in the pockets of the players. Eventually the District Attorney decreed that no further money could be taken, and despite several creative efforts by Leahy to keep the collection going inconspicuously, the North Cambridge team had to drop out of the league, as the weekday profit for games was too low to cover the revenue that was now lost on Sundays. Sunday baseball remained a hotly debated issue; it was eventually legalized in 1928 with the revitalization of the New England League, but by that time the North Cambridge team had been disbanded.

### **Related Resources**

See also the Cambridge Historical Commission biography file on George “Tubber” White.

See also the Cambridge Historical Commission Social History file and Club file on “Baseball”

See also the panoramic photo that hangs in the Commission; its caption reads: “North Cambridge K. of C. vs. Salem at Russell Field, Cambridge, Sept. 18, 1921. Attendance: 30,000. Largest crowd ever attending semi-pro game in the U.S.”

For more information on the The New England Baseball League, see Bevis, Charlie. *The New England League: A Baseball History, 1885–1949*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008.

### **Scope and Content**

#### Series I: PHOTOGRAPHS (1916, undated)

This series is composed of five sports team photos featuring the Rindge Tech baseball team and the Exeter Academy football, hockey, and baseball teams. George “Tubber” White is featured in each of them. All of the photos except for one of the Exeter football team images are undated; see the biographical note above for the years during which White attended each school for approximate dates.

This series also includes eleven picture postcards of members of the North Cambridge baseball team in uniform. Three are captioned with the names of the player and their position, which include “McCrehan—Pitcher”, “Haley—Infielder”, and “O'Connor--1<sup>st</sup> base”. These photos are undated, but were most likely taken sometime during the 1920s. White is not among the players in the photos.

#### Series II: SCRAPBOOK (1912-1923)

This series consists of 20 scrapbook pages with clippings from The Boston Globe, The Boston Herald, The Cambridge Chronicle, and other local newspapers detailing the athletic accomplishments of White, mostly while he was a student at Rindge Tech. Many of the articles contain cartoons, and several include photos. The folder contains black and white photocopies of the original scrapbook pages, which have been discarded.

#### **Folder List**

##### Series I: PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Team Photographs
2. North Cambridge Team Photographs

##### Series II: SCRAPBOOK

3. Scrapbook Pages

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