

A Man, a Dog, a Baseball Team

Barbara Gregorich, author of Women at Play: The Story of Women in Baseball (Harcourt), which won the SABR-Macmillan Award for best baseball research, has written a book about a little-known subject: Cleveland major leaguer Jack Graney and his bull terrier Larry, the team's official mascot from 1912-1917. Jack and Larry: Jack Graney and Larry, the Cleveland Baseball Dog, is for ages 10 - Adult, and the year 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of Larry joining the Cleveland team.

As leadoff batter for the Cleveland American League team (now known as the Indians), Graney's life was full of firsts, particularly first hit and first run scored in a game or a season. He was the first batter to face a new Red Sox pitcher named George Herman Ruth — and the first batter to collect a hit off the soon-to-be-famous Bambino.

Graney was also the first, and only, major leaguer to own a dog that was his team's mascot. That dog was Larry, a bull terrier won on a bet.

Larry not only entertained baseball fans in American League stadiums, he helped build team identity and spirit. Newspapers reported on Larry's antics, including his historic meeting with President Woodrow Wilson . . . as well as his banishment from Griffith Stadium, where his mighty howl upset and distracted Senators batters.

All that Jack Graney and Larry did to help forge a team that could win the pennant and World Series culminated in 1920 when, despite the heart-rending loss of shortstop Ray Chapman (killed by a pitch hurled by Carl Mays), the Indians went on to victory.

In 1922 Jack Graney retired from baseball. But another big first lay in wait: in 1932 he became the first major leaguer to turn sports-broadcaster, a job he performed to the delight of Cleveland fans young and old. Today the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame bestows the Jack Graney Award on a member of the media who has greatly contributed to baseball, and on August 11, 2012, Jack Graney will be inducted into the Cleveland Indians Distinguished Hall of Fame.

JACK AND LARRY: JACK GRANNEY AND LARRY, THE CLEVELAND BASEBALL DOG

by Barbara Gregorich

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nonfiction, 100 pages

Ages 10 - Adult

Price: \$12 softcover

ISBN: 978-1467958011

Pub Date: January 15, 2012

Availability: All Bookstores and Vendors