



HISTORY MADE PERSONAL

Herb Pennock Baseball

By Gene Pisasale



In the entryway of the Christian Sanderson Museum, a baseball sits in a case on a small wooden pedestal, red and blue stitching wrapped around some famous names of the Boys of Summer. The pedestal reads “Some of the autographs on this include: Connie Mack, Herb Pennock, Rube Walburg, Jimmy Foxx, Bing Miller.” Herb Pennock’s signature is the largest. Above Jimmy Foxx’s name is scrawled “**June 12, 1939- 100th Anniversary of Baseball.**” The ball was given to Chris Sanderson by Harry Scheidter of Chadds Ford on that date to commemorate the Centennial of the sport.

Herb Pennock was born February 10, 1894 in Kennett Square and went straight from high school to play for the Philadelphia Athletics. A Southpaw, he got his game in 1914, going 11-4 with a 2.79 ERA for the World Series-bound Athletics, who later lost to the Boston Braves. In 1915 he was traded to the Red Sox by Athletics manager Connie Mack. As with legendary slugger Ted Williams in the 1940’s, Pennock left baseball to enter the military in 1918 and missed the season- one which brought the World Series title to his Red Sox team. Pennock’s breakout year came in 1919, when he went 16-8 with a 2.71 ERA in 219 innings, the first time he topped 200 innings in a season. After a tough year in 1922 when he went 10-17, he was traded to the Yankees.

It was the best thing that could have happened to him. Pennock had his finest performance in New York. In 1924, he was 21-9 with a 2.83 ERA, striking out a career high 101 batters. His pinnacle year came in 1926, when he won 23 games. Pennock led the American League in innings pitched in 1925 (277), shutouts in 1928 (5) and helped win the Pennant in 1913 and 1926. He was part of seven World Series winning teams between 1913 and 1932.

James Emory (“Jimmy”) Foxx- nicknamed “The Beast”- was a major leaguer from 1925-45, playing with two of Pennock’s former teams- the Athletics and the Red Sox. Foxx was one of the original “power hitters”, amassing 534 home runs, 2,646 hits and 1,922 RBI’s during his career. He was the second player (after Babe Ruth) to reach 500 home runs and held the record for the youngest to reach that plateau for 68 years. Foxx was a 9-time All Star, played in two World Series and was three-time MVP of the American League.

Pennock retired in 1934, became a coach and farm system director for the Red Sox, then later general manager of the Phillies from 1944-48. In his last year with Philadelphia, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, dying just weeks before he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Jimmy Foxx made it to Cooperstown a few years later, inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1951 on the very first ballot.

The autographs from yesteryear on this baseball tell a story... about how these boys gave the game their best so many Summers ago... and left behind signatures to remind us. Something else is printed proudly on this ball, still sharp after more than 70 years- “**Made in the U.S.A. - The Sign of Quality.**” These men were proud to play America’s sport- and we’re grateful to them.

The Christian C. Sanderson Museum - A Man's Life, A Nation's History. An eclectic array of art, military memorabilia, presidential artifacts, local history and collectibles. History like you've never seen it before! Open March through November, Saturday and Sunday, 12pm to 4pm. Visit us at 1755 Creek Road (old Route 100), Chadds Ford, just north of Route 1, or at www.sandersonmuseum.org. Also open by appointment, call 610-388-6545. For information on the author of this article, visit www.GenePisasale.com.