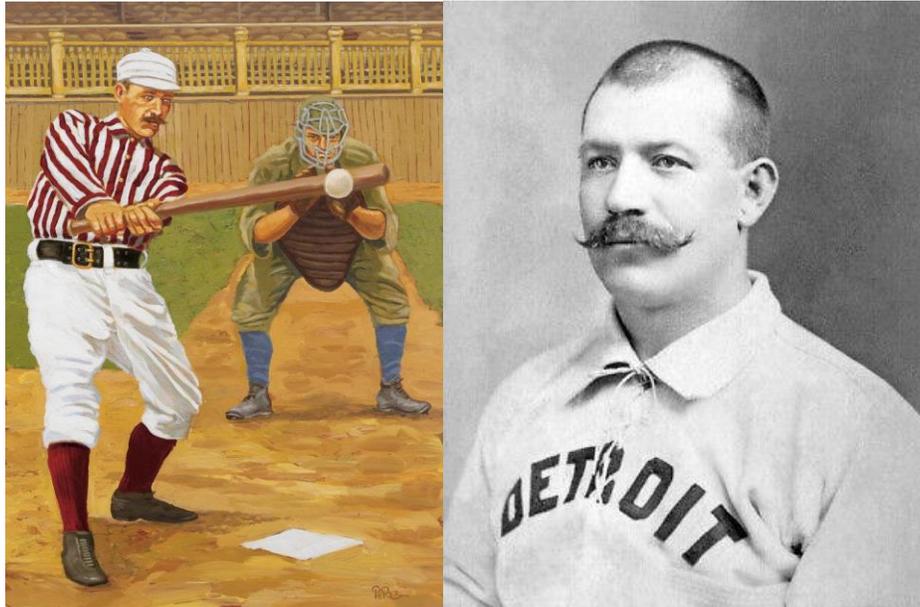


**Happy Birthday to Dan Brouthers - The Sage of Wappingers Falls
May 9, 2022**



Mother's Day took center stage on Sunday and rightly so, but there was another event yesterday that was of particular interest to me.

Baseball Hall of Fame member and Wappingers Falls, NY native Dennis Joseph (Dan) Brouthers was born 164 years ago on May 8, 1858.

Dan and his family (which included four siblings) moved to the Village from the tiny hamlet of nearby Sylvan Lake and East Fishkill when he was a teenager. They lived on West Main Street and it was here where Dan first made a name for himself in baseball.

Before becoming a professional, Dan worked at the Sweet-Orr factory, which was the first company in the U.S. to produce denim overalls. He joined the semi-pro Wappingers Falls Actives baseball team, and instead of uniforms, team members wore overalls supplied by the Sweet-Orr company.

Roy Kerr's wonderful book - - Big Dan Brouthers, Baseball's First Great Slugger - perfectly tells the story of the talented 6'2", 200-lb. first baseman who started working with his father for \$10 a week (60 hours) at Sweet-Orr and who would later own a saloon in town and serve on the Village Board of Trustees.

Dan compiled an impressive .342 batting average in 1,676 games in his 19 major league seasons (1879-1896 and 1904) starting with the Troy (NY) Trojans at age 21 before stepping to the plate for the final time at the age of 46 with the New York Giants. (He didn't play in the big leagues from 1897 to 1903.)

The Wappingers Falls Terror did a lot of traveling on trains back then wearing uniforms for 10 teams, including the Buffalo Bisons, Detroit Wolverines, Boston Beaneaters, Boston Reds, Brooklyn Grooms, Baltimore Orioles, Louisville Colonels, and Philadelphia Phillies.

In 1999 the Society for American Baseball Research ranked Dan as the sixth-greatest player of the 19th century behind Cap Anson, King Kelly, Cy Young, Ed Delahanty, and Buck Ewing.

Along the way, Dan won five batting titles and a World Championship with the Wolverines in 1887. He was inducted into the Baseball HOF in Cooperstown, NY by the Old Timers Committee in 1945.

Dan's batting average is tied for eighth all-time (with fellow HOF members Babe Ruth and Harry Heilmann) on the MLB Career List compiled by ESPN. The pride of Wappingers Falls, NY died on Aug. 2, 1932, at the age of 74 at his daughter's home in East Orange, NJ. His final resting place is at St. Mary's Cemetery in the Village where he once organized a team for his parish church and paid for the restoration of the field where he began his career with the Actives many years before.

On April 27, I was in town for a luncheon and stopped by Dan and his wife's grave to pay my respects and talk baseball for a minute. Dan and Mary Ellen had five children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Many of Dan's relatives still live in Wappingers Falls today.

The Village honors its hometown celebrity with a beautiful monument at the corner of Mill and Main Streets, just a short distance from where Dan picked up his first paycheck at Sweet-Orr.

Information from Roy Kerr's book – Big Dan Brouters Baseball First Great Slugger – was used in this article. --- Ken Cerino

