

## A Small Window on Baseball History Found in Copyright Deposits

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When the Detroit Tigers played the Chicago Cubs in the 1907 World Series, fans of both teams came out in force. “Detroit carried off premier honors for enthusiasm” in the match that took place on December 11, 1907, reported the *New York Times*. “Purchasers of admissions tickets began streaming out toward Bennet Park [the home field of the Tigers] before 7 o’clock. Two hours later, there were four long lines waiting for the ticket windows to open.” Chicago supporters seemed hardly less passionate. Fans from Blue Island, “a distant suburb of Chicago,” sent 40 carrier pigeons to the ballpark and turned some loose after each inning to carry home news of their team’s progress. Unfortunately for the Tigers, their fans’ enthusiasm wasn’t enough: the Tigers were “vanquished in their own lair,” according to the *Times*, and they subsequently lost the series to the Cubs.

The photograph shown here, titled *Detroit Tigers 1907*, was found last summer amid uncataloged elements of the Copyright Office’s historical deposits by student researchers participating in the Library’s 2007 Junior Fellows Summer Intern Program. Noted members of the team include Hall of Famers Hughie Jennings, Ty Cobb, and Sam Crawford.

Louis Van Oeyen, who took the photograph, was also known for his talent. According to Stephen Wong, author of *Smithsonian Baseball: Inside the World’s Finest Private Collections*, Van Oeyen was among the most prominent early-20th-century baseball photographers. As a staff photographer in Cleveland, “Van Oeyen (1865–1946) shot portraiture, politics, disaster, crime, scandal, and sports with consummate skill,” writes Wong. “Van Oeyen’s favorite subject, however, was baseball, and he was named the official photographer of the American League in 1908.” Van Oeyen applied to register his 1907 Tigers photo with the Copyright Office on September 21, 1907, enclosing copies of it along with a money order for 50 cents to cover the registration fee.

In a 2007 report, retired staff member Frank Evina, former supervisor of the interns assigned to the Copyright Office, speculates about why some historical copyright deposits remain uncataloged in the Office’s files. He cites a November 3, 1900, memorandum from Register of Copyrights Thorvald Solberg to the Librarian of Congress referring to a recent decision to exclude “a certain class of copyright deposits” from transfer to the Library’s collections.

“Heretofore,” the memo reads, “there have been a number of articles not considered desirable accessions in any one department and of such articles both copies have been left in the Copyright Office files.” ©

*In the center row are players Germany Schaefer (second from left), Ty Cobb (to Schaefer’s left), and Hughie Jennings, who is seated to Cobb’s left. The other players are unidentified.*



PHOTO BY LOUIS VAN OEYEN