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*The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball
Team Tours the Mainland, 1912-1916* by Joel S. Franks
(review)

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NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture, Volume 21, Number 2,
Spring 2013, pp. 177-179 (Review)

Published by University of Nebraska Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/nin.2013.0015>



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have often wondered how these two women felt about being prevented from playing baseball because of their gender,” Dorothy Seymour Mills says in her “Note on Sources” (259), and she wrote this novel to explore that wonder.

Drawing Card is incident-packed, written in a utilitarian style that tells more than it shows. Every scene is fully explained and worked into the overall rhetorical purpose of the novel. All the characters sound exactly the same, speaking in decorous, full sentences that reveal much background information and give a clear account of their actions and motives (even their deceptions are carefully explained and clear, at least to the reader). Copious research is on display: this is a book where you trust the baseball details (given the author’s considerable ethos as a sport historian) and also trust the descriptions of places as far-flung as Ohio and Sicily, in the present, recent past, and deep past.

And as the book’s cover foreshadows, the novel’s incidents are nicely unrestrained, often sinister in a way that borders on black comedy. To quote that cover (so that I’m not spoiling the plot very much), “Annie plots her revenge—murder. A deft blend of sports history and thriller, *Drawing Card* demonstrates the danger of a woman scorned, especially one with a mean curve ball.” Annie Cardello is believable as the “Drawing Card” of the title, pitching local baseball in Cleveland, exemplifying her Sicilian roots. And she’s at least consistent, in a far-fetched way, when she turns avenging angel. This is a woman whose answer to a mildly disappointing marriage is a quickie divorce, Italian style. One is prepared for her to wreak havoc on Organized Baseball.

The accumulation of incidents, time frames, characters, and allusions in *Drawing Card* may bewilder some readers. It’s not a book for those with ruminative tastes or Proustian attention spans. But as a contribution to the re-imagination of the twentieth century from once-elided perspectives, the novel has something to offer readers who like their fiction brisk, lucid, and vividly imaginary.



Joel S. Franks. *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball Team Tours the Mainland, 1912–1916*. Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2012. 254 pp. Paper, \$29.95.

John Harney

Barnstorming has an intriguing history beyond the borders of the American mainland, particularly across the Pacific Ocean. Babe Ruth and his fellow All-

Stars' 1934 visit to Japan is the most prominent example of American players bringing the sometimes chaotic world of early twentieth-century exhibition baseball to East Asia, but it was by no means the only one. Herbert Harrison Hunter led a significantly less stellar roster of players to games in Japan and Taiwan over a decade earlier in 1920, but that particular experiment collapsed amid acrimony between the athletes involved over money. In both cases, the exclusively Caucasian American ballplayers made sure to entertain, regardless of the conditions; antics in the outfield were a staple of these performances, and Ruth's decision to play first base during a rain-soaked game while holding an umbrella immediately became an iconic image.

Exhibition baseball in East Asia did not remain the province of American visitors alone. Japanese university teams in particular showed a tremendous appetite for travelling abroad to find opponents, from Taiwan and Korea to California and Chicago. These tours, ostensibly undertaken to engender positive relations between Japan and its colonies as well as between Japan and the United States, in practice played directly into the complex politics of Japan's changing relations with the world as its own political and military ambitions evolved in the decades leading up to World War II. Race played no small part in such politics and not only cast a shadow over the visits of Japanese teams to the campuses of Stanford University and the University of Chicago, but also further complicated Hawaii's path to statehood, as Joel S. Franks ably demonstrates. In *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball Team Tours the Mainland, 1912–1916*, Franks examines the dubious politics of race in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century and the complicated path for Hawaiians to truly inclusive American citizenship, while delivering unto the reader a fascinating narrative of a truly unique baseball team.

The Travelers, a barnstorming outfit from Hawaii that typically played upwards of one hundred games a season on their visits to the American mainland each year between 1912 and 1916, featured an increasingly multiethnic lineup that took on college and semiprofessional teams across the country. Presented to American audiences as an "all-Chinese" team, the Hawaiians acquitted themselves rather well on the field as their efficacy in advancing Hawaii's profile on the mainland came under scrutiny at home in Honolulu. In fact, the book is a particular source of fun for the reader when the author returns to Honolulu to offer some context on the racially infused criticisms of American papers, with Hawaiian journalists utterly bemused by the prevalence on the American mainland of the idea that the athletes represented the fictional "Chinese University of Hawaii." This particular ruse arose from the foundations of the team in Honolulu's Chinese community and American interest in the Chinese mainland's recent emergence from centuries of dynas-

tic rule following the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912. Franks's account highlights the vast chasm between conceptions of racial identity on the American mainland and the notably multiethnic composition of Hawaiian society, though by no means free of racially infused conflict itself. The athletes themselves sought to actively manage the racial politics of the time, skirting around the ethnicity of the Travelers' first non-Chinese participants, going as far as to pass off the team's first Caucasian athletes as Chinese in 1916. Interestingly, mainland journalists appear to have agreed to perpetuate the myth that the visiting athletes represented Chinese interests rather than those of fellow Americans.

Franks has succeeded in producing a valuable scholarly contribution to the fields of American history, Asian American history, and baseball history, but his book will also appeal to a wider audience. The narrative is characterized by exhaustive reports on individual game results from various locations across America. Such accounts will delight readers accustomed to leafing through box scores of both current and historical games and eager for more information on the history of the American pastime. The newspaper articles come thick and fast, and herein lies the heart of Franks's research: a thorough investigation of the Travelers' journeys through the forty-eight contiguous states as recorded by newspaper after newspaper from the *Oakland Tribune* to the *Brooklyn Eagle*. To have pored through so many of these accounts and arranged them into a cohesive narrative is to be highly commended and, as this reviewer can attest, is by no means a straightforward task.

This narrative approach is complemented by the author's consistent efforts to contextualize each game with reports from local newspapers that often reflect the open racism of early twentieth-century America. Honolulu was by no means a bastion of racial integration, with the Chinese community so frustrated by the dilution of the Travelers' ethnic composition that they supported the creation of a new barnstorming outfit to travel west into East Asia as the Travelers returned east to the American mainland. However, the city still succeeded in producing a team that, by 1916, contained players with claims to Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, and native Hawaiian ethnic origins. This barnstorming outfit was a world apart from an American baseball community still decades away from breaking down the color barrier.

