

Llewellyn Legg: The Last of the “Unknowns”

The Untold Story of a Nineteenth-Century Journeyman Baseball Player/Railroader

By Anthony Bush

*“Llewellyn Legg is the full name of Toledo’s latest lion. Great Scott!
What talent he should possess to offset the affliction of that name.”*
— Jackson (Michigan) Citizen, August 7, 1888

Several years ago, I wrote local sports history articles for Zenith City Online, a Duluth-area history website. My initial piece was about the 1886 Duluth baseball team, the first professional team in the city’s history.

I always wanted to dive deeper into that pennant-winning season to get to know the players’ life stories and follow the season on a day-by-day basis to learn when and why roster transactions occurred. I pecked away at it over the years and finally spent a good amount of time on it this winter.

Baseball-reference.com (BB-R) is my go-to source for baseball reference. The site lists the roster for the 1886 Duluth team. Before my research this winter, the list showed “unknown” for birth date and location, death date and location, and burial site for players Michael Cody, Andy Dillon, Llewellyn Legg, Joseph Masram, Lynn Mills, and Duluth’s own George Nettleton. I found all but one. After I submitted my sources to BB-R, only Legg remained “unknown.”

Since I had more time at home this spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided to track down the elusive Legg. Regardless of the accessibility of information on him, I inadvertently saved the best for last. Legg’s story is as outrageous as any Wild West myth—a traveling ball player/railroad man

with two murders and a sensational divorce case. And it is frustratingly sad—it presents the harsh reality of racism, dependency, and the lonely death of a destitute man.

I present these findings with a healthy amount of certainty but without the proverbial smoking gun that connects all the various records to the ball player named Llewellyn M. Legg.

To the best of my knowledge, his first appearance in the historical record is as “Luallen Legg” in the 1860 Census. He was four years old and living in Fannin County, Georgia, with his father, James P. Legg, 24, a farm hand, his mother, Martha A. Legg, 27, a home keeper from North Carolina, and an 11-month-old sister, Emily. James P. Legg was white. Martha, Luallen, and Emily are labeled in cursive writing as what I decipher as “Ind” for Indian, yet the choices on the form are white, black, and mulatto. James P. Legg’s father, Joseph Laten Legg, known as Laten, was a pioneer settler of northern Georgia. Laten Legg’s father, uncles, and grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War. The Legg family’s American roots go back to the earliest days of English colonization in Massachusetts.

Martha’s roots on this continent, of course, run much deeper. My best guess with my limited genealogy sleuthing skills is that Martha was the daughter of Elijah Sourjohn

and Celia Ann Carter. Some sources list her heritage as Cherokee, another says Catawba.

James P. Legg died in 1860. He and his 11-year-old sister, Mary Ann Legg, died on the same day from what is believed to be accidental poisoning when they drank contaminated or spoiled milk.

Martha married James R. Orton in 1861, but he died while fighting in the Civil War. In the 1870 Census, Martha A. Totten, a seamstress, and "Lewellyn L. Legg," 12, are listed as living in Lexington, Kentucky, with 37-year-old carpenter Benjamin Totten, a white man. Emily is not listed with them. Martha is listed as Indian. Lewellyn is labeled "M" for mulatto.

A Llewellyn M. Legg married Maggie J. Milton in Indiana in 1877.

A "Sullivan Legg," a 24-year-old white man, is in the 1880 Census. He resided in Mansfield, Ohio, with his wife, Maggie, 26, and their 11-year-old son, Charles. "Sullivan Legg" was born in Georgia, as were his parents. The Leggs housed a boarder, a 19-year-old peddler born in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) named Henry Starr.

The first mention that I could find of a baseball-playing Legg was for a semi-pro team in Lexington in 1884. BB-R lists two Organized Baseball clubs on Legg's resume before he joined Duluth, both in Ohio: Springfield in 1884 and Dayton in 1885. Legg played for the semi-pro Chicago Blues in the early months of 1886. The Blues took a spring trip to Atlanta and Chattanooga and followed it up with games in Wisconsin.

On May 15, 1886, the Oshkosh *Northwestern* printed a story from the *Louisville Journal*: "Legg, the Indian catcher of the Chicago Blues, wore his hair 15 inches long in 1884, and frequently rattled the batters by taking off his cap and letting his hair fall over his shoulders. The batter always turned his head out of curiosity and looked at the catcher, while the pitcher

would throw the ball and the umpire call[ed] a strike.' Legg is the man who signed with the Duluths while manager [Billy] Harrington was negotiating to bring the Blues to this city."

The St. Paul *Globe* profiled the Duluth

Name	DoB	Birthplace
Mark Baldwin	Oct 29, 1863	Pittsburgh, PA, US
George Bignell	Jul 18, 1858	Taunton, MA, US
Michael Cody	May 3, 1863	Hyner, PA, US
Andy Dillon	1866	CA
Orlando Fitzsimmons	Jan 5, 1866	Reading, MI, US
Frank Jones	Aug 25, 1858	Princeton, IL, US
Henry Jones	Jul 27, 1860	McKeesport, PA, US
Llewellyn Legg	Unknown	
Tim Manning	Dec 3, 1853	Henley-on-Thames, Oxford
Joseph Masram	1863	OH, US
George McMillan	Sep 1, 1863	ON, CA
Lynn Mills	Feb, 1862	Whitewater, WI, US
George Nettleton	Feb 12, 1861	Ashtabula, OH, US
Billy Reid	May 17, 1857	London, ON, CA
Billy Rourke	Aug 7, 1864	Columbus, OH, US
Bill Traffley	Dec 21, 1859	Staten Island, NY, US
Dick Van Zant	Nov, 1864	Richmond, IN, US
Arthur Watson	Jun 17, 1864	Hillsboro, NH, US

The 1886 Duluth roster on Baseball-Reference.com

players in October of 1886, in recognition of their Northwestern League championship. "L. M. Legg, Dayton, O., 27 years old, catcher and shortstop, weighs 160 pounds and is 5 feet, 7 inches high. Last season he played with the Sandusky, O., [probably Springfield] team and early this season went starring with Harrington's Chicago Blues," the *Globe* reported.

Legg played in all but two of Duluth's 76 games. He led the league with 95 hits, and he hit a team-leading seven home runs. He was the only Duluth catcher who could adequately handle wild fastball-throwing pitcher Mark Baldwin (Baldwin won 25 games and amassed 342 strikeouts in his only season for Duluth. His 368 strikeouts at the major-league level in 1889 has been surpassed just three times since, by Sandy

Koufax, Nolan Ryan, and Randy Johnson).

Legg spent the offseason in Duluth but did not return to the team. Supposedly



St. Paul Globe, Oct. 10, 1886
Image: Newspapers.com

concerned with whether Duluth would have a team in 1887—it did—Legg signed with league-rival Oshkosh and moved his family there in January 1887.

On January 30, 1887, the *Indianapolis Journal*

kicked at Legg: “Real Indians are taking to base-ball. Legg, the catcher of the Oshkosh club, is a redskin by birth.” The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* chimed in on February 6 with, “The Oshkosh club has a live Indian for a catcher. His name is Legg, and at the close of a game when his club has been victorious, he emits a genuine war-whoop.” The *Nashville Daily American* ran the “war-whoop” blurb on February 9, and the *Burlington (Vermont) Clipper* repeated the “redskin” remark on February 10.

The deal with Oshkosh was not without controversy, as St. Paul, also in the league, claimed it had signed Legg first. The league ruled in favor of the capital city’s club. The irony of the situation is that the only photograph of Legg that I have come across so far is for Oshkosh, a team for which he never played. (The photo is in the Oshkosh Public Museum’s collection.)

Legg played for St. Paul; La Crosse; Leavenworth, Kansas; Kansas City (with Hall of Famer Kid Nichols); and Danville, Illinois, in 1887.

Legg spent the winter of 1887-88



“L. M. Legg,
Oshkosh Base Ball Club,”

Image: Oshkosh Public Museum,
Oshkosh.pastperfectonline.com

in Danville, but he joined the Decatur, Illinois, team on May 8, 1888. Mike Hurley, Decatur’s player/manager, left the team for his home in Texas at month’s end. The June 1 edition of the *Decatur Herald and Review* reported that Legg was the new team captain. The same newspaper claimed, “Legg is captain of the Decatur, and a ‘right good captain, too,’” on June 9. Lastly, on June 13, it said, “Legg is an earnest player and never gives up so long as there is a ghost of a chance.”

The Decatur team disbanded the following day. Legg returned to play for Danville, but that club folded on July 6. He was playing for Toledo by the end of July.

One of his Decatur players, who also went to Danville after Decatur’s demise, was Jerry Harrington. Considered the best player in the league that year, Harrington went on to play for Cincinnati and Louisville in the National League.

Cincinnati Manager Charles Comiskey kicked Harrington off the Reds in 1892. “Up until this season Jerry Harrington was a sober, gentlemanly ball-player. Of late he has the air, swagger and appetite of a barroom bum. Jerry is a popular fellow and his friends are at a loss to know what has come over the big fellow. He must have lost his mental balance to carry on as he has,” the Cincinnati *Enquirer* opined on May 12, 1892. The *Herald and Review* reported the next day, upon his dismissal from the Reds, that, “Harrington ... has made a reputation of one of the greatest catchers in the country. Jerry is one of those men who can’t stand prosperity and he has lately indulged extensively in liquor.” The suspension came after one too many instances of drunkenness.

In 1897, when Louis Sockalexis became the first known American Indian—and the first minority—to play in the National League, a story told by Harrington about Legg circulated around the country.

The Wilkes-Barre *Record* ran the story on January 6, 1898:

SOCKALEXIS'S RIVAL.

Rats-in-the-Garret the First Indian Professional.

THE POTATO TRICK AS INTRODUCED BY THE REDSKIN OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL--THE THIRD BASEMAN WASN'T LOOKING ...

The almost national reputation gained from the ball field by "Poor Lo" Sockalexix, the Maine Indian, who played with Cleveland a considerable portion of last season, was somewhat surprising. Of that time it was generally supposed he was the first professional ball player that had represented the Indians in any league, and Warwhoop Buckheart, who was given a trial by Dan Shannon at Rochester last spring, the second Indian to break into the professional ranks. Jerry Harrington, formerly a Cincinnati catcher, tells of the achievements and antics of the first Indian professional, although he was no match for Sockalexix from an intellectual or social point of view:

"Sockalexix," said Harrington recently, "is not the only Indian who has played the game for the coin. Back in 1888 I took charge of the Decatur (Ill.) team for a few days while the regular manager, Mike Hurley, who was a close friend of mine, was away in the South attending to some business.

"That Decatur team was the funniest aggregation I ever saw. There were about four men on the team who were ball players, and the rest of the bunch were the worst excuses for professional ball tossers I ever saw

in my life. I used to wonder how they had the gall to draw their pay. One of the team, a second baseman, was a full-blooded Indian, who hailed from somewhere up in Dakota. He gave his name as Henry Legg, but the boys called him Rats-in-the-Garret, and I didn't blame them a bit, for of all the crazy ball players I ever saw he was the daffiest. He did crazier things than Tacky Tom Parrott ever dreamed of doing, and he didn't know anything about playing ball, anyhow. I don't know where Hurley got hold of him, but there he was. I guess Mike kept him to keep the rest of the boys in good humor.

"Well, one day we went over to Lafayette, Ind., to play a game there with the local team, and on the way over I noticed that Mr. Rats-in-the-Garret was holding an active and evidently important conversation with a big Dutchman named Lotz that Mike had playing first base for him. Lotz was pretty near as tacky as the Indian, and after I had watched them whispering down in one end of the car by themselves for about an hour, I became curious to find out what was up. After a while Rats came over to me and asked me if he might go in and catch in the game next day. After thinking the matter over I consented, for, you see, I was stuck to find out what Mr. Indian and the Dutchman had framed up.

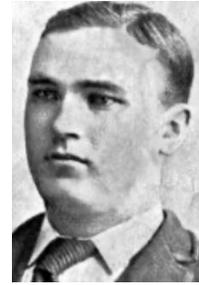
"Next day we started in to play the Lafayette team with Rats-in-the-Garret catching and Lotz at first and myself in right field. The Hoosier team started in right off the reel to trim us, and by the time the sixth inning came around the score was something like 11 to 3 against us.

"One of the Hoosiers was at first base and nobody was out, when I

noticed Rats digging at the back pocket in his pants and I wondered what he was trying to do. The next minute he got the ball from the pitcher and he turned and apparently threw it ten feet over Lotz's head in what I supposed was an attempt to catch the Hoosier runner off his base. The ball, or what I thought was the ball, came sailing out along the foul line and I chased it for all I was worth, while the Lafayette man tore around the bases. Then is when Rats-in-the-Garret and his fine work came in, but unfortunately for him the finish was a bad one. Our third baseman was standing on his base watching me chasing what everybody supposed was the ball, and just about the time I reached it and discovered it was a potato, Rats turned loose the real ball, which he had switched for the potato, and down it went toward third with Rusie speed and in plenty of time to catch the runner if the third baseman had been looking. But he wasn't. He was watching me chase the potato out in right and the ball hit him in the eye and knocked him flat on his back and then caromed off into the crowd, while the Hoosier runner cantered on home. The game came pretty near breaking up there and then, for it was all we could do to make the third baseman stop trying to slug the Indian.

"Oh, he was a pippen, that Indian! I don't know whatever became of him, but I never heard of him after that. I guess he quit ball playing. But his little scheme might have worked all right at that if he and the Dutchman had only taken the third baseman into their confidence."

Harrington met a bad end. A man named Tom Merritt went to a saloon to get a bucket of beer on April 1, 1913, in Keokuk, Iowa. Harrington, a patron, hit Merritt in the ribs, insulted him, and threatened to kill him. Merritt got his bucket and left the bar.



*Jerry Harrington
Image: Baseball-
Reference.com*

Harrington followed him outside to continue his harassment. Merritt, in retaliation, swung the bucket and hit Harrington, leaving a bloody gash on his face. Harrington fell from the blow and cracked his skull on the sidewalk. He died from the concussion on April 16. Merritt, who was black, was not held responsible for the death.

For the record, Benjamin Lotz played for Danville in 1888, not Decatur. And Legg batted .336 that year, fifth best in the league.

The *St. Paul Globe* noted on January 27, 1889, that Legg was wintering in Toledo. He investigated bringing the Decatur club back but there was not enough interest from potential financial backers. The *Herald and Review* reported on January 18 that he had signed with the Springfield, Illinois, club. Springfield released him in early April after he tried to start a club in Hot Springs, Arkansas, while under its contract.

Base Ball
DULUTH
 vs.
Milwaukee
TODAY,
One Armed Daly

The phenomenal one armed pitcher, who has proved such a puzzler to all clubs, will be in the box for the visitors.

Baldwin and Legg,

The old reliables for the home team. NO MORE FOOLISHNESS. Great games from now out.

Game Called at 3:30.

Go early and secure seats

An ad in the Duluth News-Tribune during the 1886 season.
 Image: Genealogybank.com

Springs that year. Denver and Leadville were the other two clubs in the unsuccessful league. Denver folded on June 2, followed by Pueblo on July 22 and Aspen on July 29.

The Seattle *Daily Intelligencer* acknowledged new Seattle catchers Benjamin Snyder and Legg for their abilities on April 28, 1890, noting that Legg had played for Pueblo the previous year. Legg's tenure with Seattle was cut short after he injured his leg when he collided with fellow outfielder Delphis Dextraze in a home game against Tacoma on May 30. Placed on Seattle's sick list, he joined the semi-pro club in South Bend, Washington, once he recovered. The team included nine other professional ball players, most of whom had

He signed with Pueblo, Colorado, later in April. He ended up playing for three of the five teams in the startup Colorado State League in 1889. The June 5 edition of the Chicago *Inter Ocean* shows L. M. Legg being released by Pueblo and signed by Aspen. BB-R also shows that he played for Colorado

been with Seattle. South Bend manager E. C. Belding, a saloon owner, disbanded the club in early September without paying the players the balance of their earnings. Legg claimed to be owed \$25, around the same amount as the other players.

Seattle released him in February of 1891. He played for La Grande, Oregon, in the Pacific Interstate League in 1891. He also played for a semi-pro club in Albina, Oregon, a town that consolidated with Portland that same year. The nickname "Daddy" first appeared for him in the Pacific Northwest.

Legg played 14 games for Memphis in 1892, the same number of games he played for Seattle in 1890. He substituted for the no-show umpire in the Southern Association game between Memphis and host Chattanooga on June 20. He was out of Organized Baseball for two years after his stint with Memphis.

In 1893, he played semi-pro ball for Moberly and Huntsville, Missouri, before he found himself in a predicament in Dalton, Missouri, that fall.

Twenty-two-year-old Dalton Marshal William McNabb "seem[ed] to prefer 'licking' characters who misbehave to arresting them," according to the *Chariton Courier* of Keytesville, Missouri, when it told of McNabb getting into fisticuffs with a belligerent pool player at his establishment on August 31, 1893. McNabb's modus operandi led to fatal consequences on the evening of September 17, 1893.

Legg, while working as a brakeman for the Wabash Railroad, had taken a train from Moberly to a site near Dalton with conductor W. J. Buchanan to go fishing. The men stopped in Dalton to eat dinner before catching a train for home. Upon their approach to a restaurant, a child ran up to Legg and playfully tried to prevent him from entering and then blocked the door. Legg held the boy's arm and moved him to the

side, but when he reached for the door the boy fell off the sidewalk and began to cry.

This roused the nearby McNabb, for the child, Earl McNabb, was his nephew. McNabb asked Legg why he pushed the boy. "I beg your pardon, I didn't knock him off the walk," said Legg. McNabb insisted that Legg had been malicious and said that he would see him later. McNabb then left for the pool hall to retrieve his loaded cane—a weapon with an iron or steel rod inserted into a leather sheath—and returned toward the restaurant.

Legg and Buchanan ordered their meals and commenced to walk on the street until their food was ready. They met McNabb. McNabb again asked why Legg had pushed the child and said they would settle the matter immediately. Words were exchanged. Buchanan stepped between the men, pleading that McNabb "not to be too fast" in his judgment. "But McNabb's pugnacious tendency could not be allayed, and, striking over Buchanan, he dealt Legg a blow on the head with the cane, felling him to his knees, and inflicting a wound on his right temple," according to the *Chariton Courier* of September 22, 1893.

Legg then drew his pistol. His first shot hit Buchanan in the ear. McNabb moved in on Legg. A second shot missed. McNabb thrust Legg off the sidewalk. Legg got to his feet and fired into McNabb's chest. McNabb staggered a few paces and fell into a grocery store door, dead.

Legg and Buchanan fled, running to the railroad in the dusky light.

Back in Moberly, when word came that the prosecutor would consent to bail, Legg turned himself in. Moberly's mayor, police judge, and chief of police, along with Buchanan, donated the \$3,000 for Legg's release. The grand jury dismissed the murder charge on grounds of self-defense.

"Legg has lived in Moberly for the past year. He is married and is about 35 years of age

but has no children. He is a professional ball player but has been braking for Conductor Buchanan for the past several months," the *Courier* explained.

The Macon (Missouri) *Times* had a slightly different take on the events, reported on September 27. It stated that Buchanan and Legg were under the influence of alcohol when in Dalton, that the men were leaving the restaurant when the boy got in Legg's way at the door, and, although acknowledging that Buchanan said that Legg apologized, noted that other bystanders said Legg "treated the boy roughly and cursed at him." It also stated that, "Legg lived in Moberly. He came there one year ago from Portland, Oregon. It is said that his father was an Indian and his mother a French woman. The railroad men say he was very peaceable usually, but exceedingly desperate when aroused."

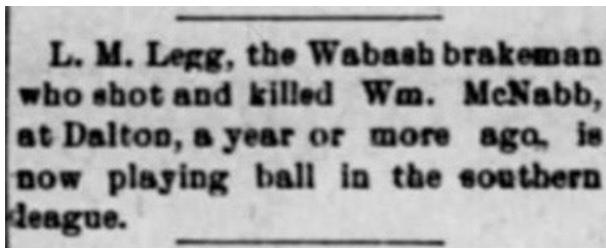
Regarding Legg's baseball playing in 1894, "L. M. Legg, Mat. Linsey and John Callahan assisted the Macon Picadories in the ball games against St. Louis Wednesday and Thursday," appeared in the *Times* on July 13. And, a Legg played catcher for the Katy (Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad) team against the post office team in Denison, Texas, on September 29, 1894.

Legg attended a meeting in Dallas on October 27, 1894, that established the Texas-Southern League. He represented the cities of Denison and Sherman, which "[came] to the front with a very strong backing and secur[ed] a franchise," according to the *Galveston Daily News* of October 28.

The *Daily News* reported on December 3 that, "L. M. Legg, a famous backstop in his day and an excellent player even yet, is already in charge at Denison and engaging his men." By March 1895 Denison had backed out, but Sherman stayed in.

In March, Legg protested when W. B. Douglass "jumped" Sherman to join the St. Joseph, Missouri, club. (William Bingham

Douglass, a future major-league player, returned to Sherman. He earned the nickname "Klondike" after feigning to quit baseball to strike it rich in the gold rush of 1898.) Another contract issue arose in April; this time Legg was accused of signing Harry Swearingen of Sedalia, Missouri, when Swearingen had already signed with league-rival Houston.



Chariton Courier, Keytesville, Missouri, June 7, 1895
Image: Newspapers.com

By April 30, Sherman had a 3-8 record with Legg as player/manager. He signed a third baseman named Lucas, released by league-rival Fort Worth the day before, and a pitcher from Indiana named J. J. Cox that evening. The next day, the Galveston *Daily News* reported that Legg was to report to Dallas to meet for a consultation with club president Eppstein. The newspaper stated that Lee Jacobs would take over team management in Legg's absence, and it had good word that Frank Ryan, "one of the leading horsemen and athletic patrons in this state," would be named the new Sherman manager. Ryan did take over. On May 23, the *Daily News* stated that Legg "has returned to his old love and is once more switching for the Katy."

He played semi-pro ball in Longview, Texas, before and after a brief tenure with Shreveport, also in the Texas-Southern League, that July. Shreveport was the last stop in Legg's professional baseball career.

The Sedalia *Democrat* reported on September 4, 1895, that Legg had expressed interest in starting a professional team in Sedalia.

Legg visited Duluth in 1901. He claimed to have been playing ball in Montreal but came

back to Minnesota because he thought the area was ripe for a new professional league. (Legg was not far off the mark. Duluth joined the Northern League in 1903 after 12 years without Organized Baseball.)

As of this writing, I am unable to determine exact information on Legg's wife. However, a Mrs. L. M. Legg was severely injured in Denison on March 20, 1897. A strong wind caused a sign above a grocery store to come loose and land on her head. She was knocked unconscious and received several lacerations, according to the Austin *American-Statesman* of March 21.

A Llewellyn M. Legg appeared twice in the news in Oregon in 1904. The age and occupation of this Legg matches that of the former ball player.

First, he married 21-year-old Lillie A. Schaefer on February 18. Legg, nearing age 50 and a fireman for the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company, and his new bride settled in Pleasant Valley, a small town about 13 miles outside of Baker City.

The couple made headlines just days into their marriage. Initial reports said that Legg had been out on an errand and returned for the dinner that Mrs. Legg had prepared. He said that his tea tasted bad. Mrs. Legg added more sugar to it. He complained about the amount of sugar and instead of drinking it he mixed it with milk and fed it to their dog. The dog died within several minutes. Legg asked if she had intended for him to drink the tea. Mrs. Legg took the rest of the tea, pretended to drink it but then threw it away. Legg became ill from the amount he had sipped, and Mrs. Legg fainted. A doctor was summoned and found that Mrs. Legg had not been poisoned, but that the dog's death was consistent with that of strychnine poisoning. Both Leggs were on their feet the next day, and "the public is in the dark as to what will be done," stated the Walla Walla *Evening Statesman* on February 26.

An account of the events that appeared in the *Missoulian* of Missoula, Montana, also on February 26, differed slightly. This story stated that Mrs. Legg “drank some of the tea and went outside, where she went into convulsions. Legg called the neighbors and they gave her warm salt water, causing her to vomit and, thus ridding herself of the poison, she got better.”

The *Oregonian*, a newspaper from Portland, reported that Legg brought his wife back to her parents in Baker City on February 27. He did not accuse her of a crime, but it was noted that he had a \$6,000 life insurance policy. “Mrs. Legg had previously referred to poison before the episode and had asked if he would poison her,” stated the San Francisco *Examiner* on February 28.

According to Portland’s *Oregon Daily Journal* of March 21, Mrs. Legg sued for divorce, “... and turns the tables by charging that he threatened to poison and otherwise kill her. He even charged her with being a ‘dumb brute.’ She might have stood all the rest, but to be accused of being dumb was too much.”

The *Capital Journal* of Salem, Oregon, ran the awesome headline “Leggs Will Be Parted” on April 21 in anticipation of the unusual case. More details about the divorce were revealed in the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* of June 5. It stated that the insurance policy was not in favor of the wife, thus discrediting Legg’s accusation. A counter charge said that Legg attempted to poison her “... when he found she did not own a band of cattle reputed to belong to her.”

Legg’s second newsworthy event of 1904 occurred on the night of June 2, in Baker City. He became abusive of Laura Lahey, a restaurant proprietor. Her fiancé, Rutherford B. “Jack” Halstead, a local saloon owner, came to her defense. A quarrel ensued. Halstead threw Legg out of the restaurant and followed him on the sidewalk. Legg turned and fired his revolver into Halstead’s

chest. Halstead ran 50 yards, staggered, and fell dead.

On June 3, the *East Oregonian* of Pendleton, Oregon, claimed that Legg was

LEGG AFTER LEAGUE

OLD-TIME CATCHER ONCE MORE IN DULUTH.

Believes That the Conditions Are Ripe for Good Baseball in Duluth and Vicinity, and Will Endeavor To Do What Others Have Failed To Do, Get the Various Towns Interested.

Duluth News-Tribune, May 7, 1901

Image: Genealogybank.com

drunk. It also described him as “a habitual drinker, and of morose, jealous disposition that has gotten him into trouble heretofore,” before describing the events of the poisoning episode. The newspaper reported that, “Legg was immediately put under arrest, jailed and heavily guarded. There is unbounded excitement, with a possibility of violence, as Halstead was a very popular man, while his slayer is not well liked.”

However, the next day’s *Morning Astorian* from Astoria, Oregon, fleshed out the details under the headline, “He Had to Shoot.” The newspaper stated that evidence showed that he could be charged with no more than manslaughter in Halstead’s death. Legg said that the couple assaulted him, and that Halstead broke a ketchup bottle over Legg’s head. His clothes were spattered with ketchup and he had a cut on his face and on the back of his head. Eyewitnesses stated that Halstead followed Legg down the sidewalk a fair distance before he was shot.



The Capital Journal, Salem, Oregon, April 21, 1904
Image: Newspapers.com

Legg was held without bail but was released on July 1 when the grand jury discharged the case on the grounds of self-defense. He was in La Grande for the Fourth of July celebration.

In 1914, an L. M. Legg was sentenced to 20 days in jail in Fresno, California, when he pleaded guilty to cutting a storefront window. There is no way of telling if this was the ball player.

On April 17, 1925, a Lewis M. Legg who had lived in Oregon since 1890 was admitted to the Multnomah County Poor Farm in Portland, Oregon, due to an amputated leg. He was 57 years old, a widower, and an engineer. He was born in Georgia to James P. Legg and Mary John. He listed his friend, George Fuller of Seattle as his only contact (a cursory search revealed a train engineer with that name living in Seattle).

He died at the poor farm on September 10, 1926. Holman and Son's is listed for disposition of remains. I emailed Holman's Funeral Service and Zoe Barton replied to confirm that Holman's did care for Mr. Legg. The file did not contain an obituary, but it did state that the body was entrusted to the University of Oregon Medical School.

Postscript

Another sensational episode emerged in my research. It is probably not our L. M. Legg, but it is just too odd to not share. A man named Hugh F. Sweeney of Wilmington, Delaware, came forward with a story in 1914. He was 65 years old and the former fire chief. He had a long career in local politics. His political rivals dug up some dirt on him—he had served six months of hard labor for a manslaughter charge back in 1872. He then told a secret he'd been hiding for 42 years: He took the rap for killing a man in a fight because he knew he would get a lighter sentence than his friend whom he claimed had actually done the crime. His friend's name was Lewis Legg, a local railroad man. Sweeney felt comfortable in spilling the beans because he said that Legg was dead. Legg was not dead; reporters found him living in Wilmington and he denied the accusation.