

George Bowen Case (1872-1955)

Co-Founder White & Case Law Firm

Yale Baseball Legend Invented Squeeze Bunt



Yale Personified

George B. Case - Class of 1894

The count was 2 and 0 on George Case, Yale's redoubtable shortstop and senior captain. With one out, Thomas Arbutnot was on third base, William Murphy was on second. It was Saturday, June 16, 1894. Yale was playing Princeton for the Ivy League Championship at Eastern Park, a neutral field in Brownsville, Brooklyn which at the time was home of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

As he surveyed the taut scene, Case casually dusted off his left elbow - a predetermined signal to his teammates. The infield was drawn in on the grass to cut off a run. The baserunners took big leads. As Jake Altman, the Princeton pitcher began his windup, both baserunners took off at top speed. George Case laid down a perfect bunt and was easily thrown out at first base by Altman - as both runners scampered home to seal the victory. It was a beautifully executed

double-suicide **squeeze bunt** marking the first time in baseball history that the squeeze bunt was used in a regulation game, college or professional. Ever since, Yale's George Case has been acknowledged as the 'inventor' of the squeeze bunt; and June 16, 2019 will mark the *quasiquicentennial* (125th) anniversary that sports milestone. One of the most exciting plays in baseball, the squeeze play is still used today, though less frequently due to the advent of advanced sabermetrics.

In those halcyon baseball days, Yale was a perennial powerhouse often playing and defeating professional teams like the Boston Beaneaters and the Brooklyn Bridegrooms. Just the year before, Case's Bulldogs won college baseball's first national championship, beating Amherst 9-0 at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.



Yale Bulldogs 1894 Championship Baseball Team

Captain George Case, 2nd row center

George Bowen Case was born in Kansas City, Missouri on June 9, 1872, the son of Ermine Case, Jr., a prominent lawyer and businessman with Connecticut roots. Ermine Case, Sr. was born in Hartford in 1779 and lived in Barkhamsted, CT (where his father Oliver Case died in 1836) before emigrating to Columbus, OH. For business reasons, Ermine, Jr. moved to Kansas City where he died suddenly at the age of 44 when George B. Case was only 14. In 1942

George B. donated picturesque **Case Park** which sits on a bluff in Kansas City overlooking the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, to the public in memory of his father.

George Case migrated back east to attend Phillips Academy in Andover, MA where, as a member of the Class of 1890, he was a keen student and outstanding athlete. That Fall he matriculated at Yale where he epitomized everything Yale stood for in those heady 'boola boola' days of yore, excelling in the classroom and starring on the baseball diamond. Soft-spoken and personable, he was a popular member of several elite university clubs, including Skull & Bones.

George Case's second born son, **George Bowen Case, Jr.**, (his first born son, also named George, died when he was three days old) followed in his father's footsteps to Andover, class of 1922. A promising student/athlete, George, Jr. died tragically at the age of 16 on November 21, 1921 from peritonitis after an emergency appendectomy. In 1922, his father donated \$80,000 for the construction of an indoor athletic facility in memory of his departed son. Case Memorial Field House, known as the 'Case Cage' was a state-of-the art glass-domed, dirt-floored facility where Andover athletes could practice baseball and other sports during inclement weather; and where special events such as graduations and ceremonial dinners were held for many years. Although it was designed by well-known architect Guy Lowell, best known for his 1907 design of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and designer of several academic buildings at Harvard and Brown, the Case Cage after 96 memorable years is now slated for demolition to make way for a modern sports complex.



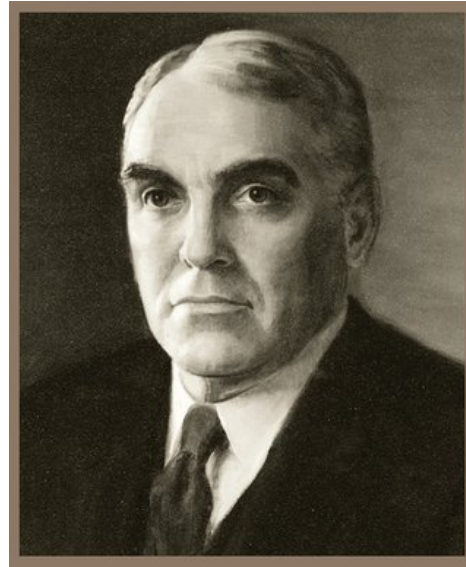
**Case Memorial Field House
Phillips Andover Academy - 1923**



George Bowen Case, Jr. (1905-1921)



J. DuPratt White



George B. Case

White & Case - Attorneys at Law

It was a propitious evening in the life of young George Case that spring Sunday in 1897. Just out of Columbia Law School, 25-year old Case was invited to a dinner party at the home of **Dumont Clarke**, president of the American Exchange National Bank in New York. Turn of the century Sunday soirées at the Clarkes, were sumptuous, coveted affairs bringing together titans of the banking and business worlds. At that fateful 1897 Clarke gathering Case was introduced to Dumont Clarke's daughter Mary, whom he married the following year; and met fellow attorney, **J. DuPratt White** with whom, at Mary Clarke's suggestion, he would form the law firm of **White & Case**. Significantly, also attending that party was **Henry 'Harry' Pomeroy Davison**, a prominent Wall Street financier and *de facto* head of **J.P. Morgan & Co.**, who would be instrumental in the success of the soon to be incorporated White & Case law firm.

On May 1, 1901, White and Case opened their first office at 31 Nassau St. a few blocks north of the New York Stock Exchange. Each contributed \$250 to their firm's initial capitalization and agreed to divide all expenses and profits equally. Their mutual trust was so absolute, they did not bother signing a partnership agreement for fourteen years.

Harry Davison proved to be a potent facilitator and mentor for the fledgling law firm, hiring White & Case to represent J.P. Morgan in a series of important, highly-profitable banking ventures - in particular the incorporation of Bankers Trust in 1903. Davison's brilliant Bankers Trust brainchild was creating a trust company for other large banking institutions: a 'bankers bank'. White & Case organized all the complex legal work required to establish Bankers Trust as a premier banking institution, initiating a business relationship between the two companies that lasted almost 100 years. For several years, George B. Case was **J. Pierpont Morgan's** personal attorney.



Harry Davison (1867-1922)

Later on Davison retained White & Case to administer all the legal work associated with J.P. Morgan's purchasing war materials on behalf of the British and French governments for World War I. This lucrative legal deal entailed the writing of contracts with nearly 1000 U.S. arms manufacturers involving over \$3 billion in sales. {Interesting to note that Case's contemporary and fellow Norfolk summer resident, **Helen Hartley Jenkins**, (previously profiled in this series) derived much of her wealth from her family's ownership of the Remington Arms, Co. which made a fortune selling munitions during WWI. Jenkins and Case were charter members of the Norfolk Country Club in 1912 and likely knew each other well}.

An adventurous enterprise that began with the ambitions of two hard-working, well-connected young attorneys 118 years ago, has evolved into one of the most prestigious law firms in the world. Today, White & Case has high-profile offices in 44 international cities, with over 2000 attorneys (500 partners) and nearly \$2 billion in annual revenues.

The Country Squire

Several of Norfolk's 'summer people' of the early 1900s, including George Case, hailed from Englewood, NJ just 10 miles from Manhattan across the Hudson River. Lured to a remote village in northwest Connecticut by their friend, Dr. Frederic Dennis, professor at Columbia University, (who wrote a book about growing up on the Village Green), these summer residents were enticed by Norfolk's rustic beauty and Adirondack-like hunting and fishing habitats. Already an original 1912 member of the Norfolk Country Club, Case started to acquire large tracts of land on Sunset Ridge and on the hillsides stretching all the way down to and across the Blackberry River, where he bought and tore down (as did Helen Hartley Jenkins) several abandoned, unsightly factory buildings.

In 1915, Case purchased one of Norfolk's oldest houses, the **1762 George Aiken, Jr. House** and hundreds of acres of hilly land, which became **Sunset Ridge Farm** and is now owned by NCC member **Justin Vagliano**. Case hired famed Washington, CT architect **Ehrick Rossiter**, (who designed Yale's **Music Shed** and the tower on Haystack Mountain; and remodeled **Whitehouse**, adding the beautiful oval music room) to turn the modest, colonial Aiken farmhouse into a fitting domicile for a gentleman farmer. Rossiter added three outside 'wings', two open air verandas, and an imposing Arts and Crafts double decker front porch. In the process, many precious 18th century structural and aesthetic period details of the farmhouse, which had gone out of style at the time, were unfortunately removed.



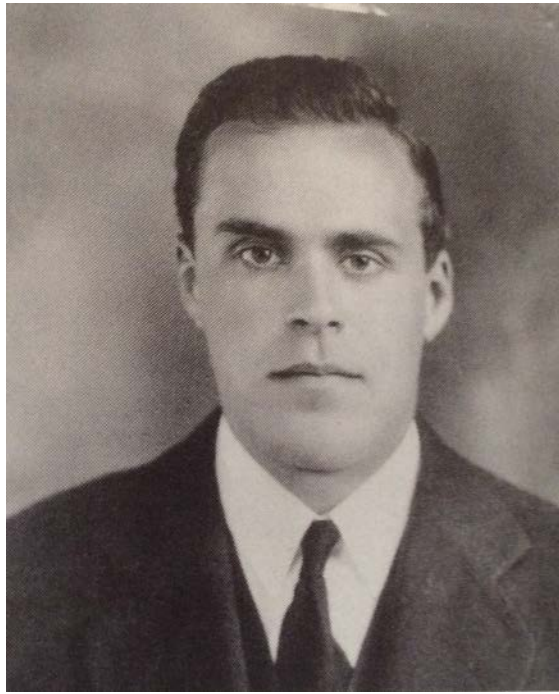
Henry Aiken, Jr. House, Sunset Ridge - 1762

Ever the sportsman, Case built a baseball field on his adjacent property (now owned by NCC members **Hope Dana** and **John Perkins**) and started a baseball league for boys 11-14 from Norfolk and nearby towns. Case coached two teams himself, the *Spiders* and the *Crickets*, and was known as a stern taskmaster. At the end of the season Case awarded winning team members small, commemorative gold baseballs. With Haystack Mountain as a backdrop, locals sat on stone walls to cheer the young ballplayers and Yale's football team would use the open fields for pre-season practice, but neighbors complained about the noise. Sympathizing with his neighbors, Case laid out a new baseball field and grandstand on 'The Flats', land he owned at the corner of Mountain Road and Westside, the site of Norfolk's Fairgrounds where horse racing and county fairs were held for many years.

Behind his house, Case constructed a charming, vernacular indoor wooden squash court with a stone fireplace and observation deck which is still stands. Just outside the squash court was a tennis court and down the hill towards the Blackberry River was the first in-ground swimming pool built in Connecticut. All this was part of the elaborate country estate Case envisioned on his sprawling property, which grew to include a rough-hewn guest house he called 'The Chalet',

stables for the horses he bred and two rustic cabins in the woods with beautiful views overlooking Canaan Valley.

An accomplished golfer, Case played frequently at the Norfolk Downs and later at the Norfolk Country Club after the course opened in 1928. He passed his love for the game on to his son Robert, who holds the distinction of winning the NCC's first club championship in 1930 at the age of 18. Robert became a lawyer at his father's firm White & Case, and was on his way to a successful law career, when he died in 1944 at age 32 from complications of hemophilia. Robert's son, NCC member, **George Sumner Case**, was just a toddler when his young father passed away.



Robert Dumont Case (1912-1944) - NCC's First Golf Club Champion

George Case's decades-long predilection for Norfolk embodied an imagined bucolic ideal. In the summer of 1913 he rented a cottage on the south shore of Tobey Pond from fellow NCC member **Michael Pupin** for \$250; in 1923 he bought property on Doolittle Lake with **Frederic Walcott** and **Starling Childs**. Case eventually owned a large parcel of land on Doolittle where he built a rugged camp and was one of the founders of the Doolittle Lake Company.

A talented amateur artist, Case specialized in romanticized etchings. Two of his works were featured in the 1935 **Varnishing Day Art Show** at the Norfolk Country Club (previously covered here), beside the paintings of several well-known professional artists of that era. Below is one of his etchings which might well be a nostalgic, imaginary rendering of his house on Sunset Ridge before he renovated and expanded it.



Pastoral Norfolk Scene - George B. Case Etching, 1930s

Case retired from White & Case in the late 1930s. Always an active Yale alumnus, Case spent his remaining years in Norfolk and Englewood, NJ playing golf and immersing himself in his artwork and other leisurely pursuits. He died in Englewood in 1955 at the age of 83, still owner of his house and farm on Sunset Ridge and his camp on Doolittle Lake. Indicative of how highly he regarded his adopted Norfolk home, was his decision to be buried in Norfolk's Center Cemetery alongside his wife, his daughter Mary and his three sons.

Michael Cummings Kelly, Club Historian
May 19, 2019