

# Grover Lowdermilk, "A Ramshackle Order of Architecture"

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**"He was built on a loose ramshackle order of architecture. His physical being never achieved correlation."  
- John B. Sheridan, *The Sporting News*, September 1924**

Enough said, [Grover Cleveland Lowdermilk](#) was the kind of player of which legends are made.

In 1907, Lowdermilk, then a strong-armed 22-year-old pitcher named after a former United States President and in his first year of professional baseball, sets a single-season strikeout record that has stood the test of time.

Fresh off the campus of [Mississippi College](#), Lowdermilk strikes out 465 batters, setting the minor league single-season strikeout record for the 60-foot, 6-inch distance that had been in effect since 1892. He is 33-11 while toiling for the Mattoon Giants (45 games) and the Decatur Commodores (1 game) and in the process walks only 118 and allows only 190 hits in 397 innings.

A long-armed 6-foot-4, 190-pound hard-throwing right-hander, Lowdermilk plays nine years in the majors from 1909 to 1920 with six different clubs, including the St. Louis Cardinals, Chicago Cubs, St. Louis Browns, Detroit Tigers, Cleveland Indians and the Chicago White Sox.

In his 122-game major league career, Lowdermilk is 23-39 with a 3.58 ERA. Seventy-three appearances are starts, of which he completes 30, including three shutout efforts. In 590 1/3 innings, he strikes out 296 but walks 376 and hits 37 additional batters for good measure.

A member of the infamous 1919 Chicago "Black Sox" team, which threw the World Series that year to the Cincinnati Reds, Lowdermilk was not a part of that scandal. Eight of his teammates were barred for life from the game after the 1920 season by baseball's first commissioner, [Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis](#).

Lowdermilk's greatest asset was his fast curve ball - a pitch of legend. His ability to hook the ball while throwing it with speed, was the primary reason he managed to stay in the major leagues, all of the while frustrating one manager after another. Following his playing days, it was said that Lowdermilk had only one weakness in his early years in the minors, one which he had to solve before moving in the majors. He had "rabbit ears." A bench jockey could ruin his concentration and make him so wild he couldn't find the plate by chanting, "Poor old Grover, he can't get it over. Poor old Grover."



**"No one knew how much speed Lowdermilk ever had. He never really threw as hard a ball as he could because of his lack of control. He knew he was wild and feared that if he put everything on the ball that he was capable of, he might kill some batter. So, he was content to throw a half-speed ball." - Muddy Ruel**

## Minor League Single-Season Strikeouts

Name, Club	Year	W-L	Total
Grover Lowdermilk, Decatur, Mattoon	1907	33-11	465
Bill Kennedy, Rocky Mount Rocks	1946	28-3	456
Virgil Trucks, Andalusia Bulldogs	1938	25-6	418
Rube Vickers, Seattle Siwashes	1906	39-20	409
Yancey Ayers, Richmond Colts	1913	29-8	390
Eddie Albrecht, Pine Bluff Cardinals	1949	29-12	389
Vean Gregg, Portland Beavers	1910	32-18	376
Bob Schultz, Fulton Bulldogs	1946	19-10	361
Larry Jackson, Fresno Cardinals	1952	28-4	351
Bob Upton, Jacksonville Jax	1950	25-16	346

Source: *Minor League Journal*, Vol. 2, Number 1  
Records for 60'6" distance

A native of [Sandborn, Indiana](#), he experiences far more success at the minor league level with 182 career wins in 12 seasons. In addition to his 33 wins with Mattoon in 1907, he pockets 25 victories with the Springfield Senators in 1910, another 25 triumphs with the Columbus Senators in 1917 and 20 with the Louisville Colonels in 1913.

His lack of control isn't as prevalent in the minors where he strikes out 2,041 while walking 1,310, in 2,699 innings.

Four times he leads a league in strikeouts. In 1917, he sets the American Association's single-season strikeout mark with 250.

## Grover Lowdermilk [2 of 13]:

A "tall and talented" Grover Lowdermilk and his brother Louis, a left-handed pitcher, start playing on local sandlot teams in central Illinois in 1905. The older Lowdermilk stars for the Arthur (Ill.) Giants for two seasons and in July of his second year with the Giants, he signs with the Decatur Commodores for the upcoming 1907 season.

**LAUDERMILK'S  
SPEED GREAT,  
CONTROL POOR**

Lowdermilk begins his 16-year pro career with a brief one-game stint with Decatur before being demoted down two levels to the D-level Mattoon Giants of the Eastern Illinois League and it's with Mattoon that the angular one makes his mark.

In 48 appearances with the eventual champion Giants, Lowdermilk is 33-10 with a 0.93 ERA and sets the modern era strikeout record with 465 (458 with Mattoon and seven with Decatur). In 44 appearances in the short-lived Eastern Illinois League, he has 42 complete games and allows only 179 hits in 388 innings.

In addition, he leads the league in shutouts with 14, including five in a row from July 14 to July 26, where over a 45-inning span he strikes out 66 and allows only 13 hits. On 10 other occasions, he allows only one run and eight times two runs.

Earlier, his arrival in Decatur that spring is delayed somewhat when he informs the team that he has a chance to be an assistant baseball coach at little Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, and that he won't be available until after the school's graduation in May. The Commodores, with an abundance of pitching, agree to his request for a late arrival.

Arriving in Clinton in February, Lowdermilk enrolls as a student and under the tutelage of head coach and former major leaguer [Ace Stewart](#), becomes the school's star pitcher. Stewart, who played professionally for 20 years, including one season with the National League's Chicago Colts in 1895, opines that Lowdermilk could be better than [Jeff Clarke](#), who starred at the school the year before and is now with the Cotton States League's Vicksburg Hill Billies.

## Grover Lowdermilk Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	GP	INN	HIT	BB	SO	ERA	
1906	Arthur (Ill.) Giants	--	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1907	Mississippi College	--	College	6-3	9	84.0	35	34	105	--	
<b>1907</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>2 Leagues</b>	<b>D-B</b>	<b>33-11</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>397.0</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>--</b>	
	Decatur Commodores	Three-I	B	0-1	1	9.0	11	2	7	--	
	Mattoon Giants	Eastern Illinois	D	33-10	44	388.0	179	116	458	0.93	
1908	Decatur Commodores	Three-I	B	13-10	32	217.0	131	124	183	--	
1909	Decatur Commodores	Three-I	B	5-4	10	78.0	41	42	48	--	
1909	St. Louis Cardinals	NATIONAL	MLB	0-2	7	29.0	28	30	14	6.21	
1910	Springfield Senators	Three-I	B	25-9-1	45	334.0	211	141	209	--	
1911	St. Louis Cardinals	NATIONAL	MLB	0-1	11	33.1	37	33	15	7.29	
1912	Louisville Colonels	American Association	AA	17-16	43	270.2	229	141	155	--	
1912	Chicago Cubs	NATIONAL	MLB	0-1	2	13.0	17	14	8	9.69	
1913	Louisville Colonels	American Association	AA	20-14	51	304.1	235	137	197	--	
1914	Louisville Colonels	American Association	AA	18-16	42	284.0	224	159	254	2.85	
<b>1915</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>AMERICAN</b>	<b>MLB</b>	<b>13-18</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>250.1</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>3.24</b>	
	St. Louis Browns	AMERICAN	MLB	9-17	38	222.1	183	133	130	3.12	
	Detroit Tigers	AMERICAN	MLB	4-1	7	28.0	17	24	18	4.18	
<b>1916</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>AMERICAN</b>	<b>MLB</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3.14</b>	
	Detroit Tigers	AMERICAN	MLB	0-0	1	0.1	0	3	0	0.00	
	Cleveland Indians	AMERICAN	MLB	1-5	10	51.1	52	45	28	3.16	
1916	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast	AA	1-4	7	37.2	26	25	18	3.82	
1917	Columbus Senators	American Association	AA	25-14	50	355.0	254	128	250	1.70	
1917	St. Louis Browns	AMERICAN	MLB	2-1	3	19.0	16	4	9	1.42	
1918	St. Louis Browns	AMERICAN	MLB	2-6	13	80.0	74	38	25	3.15	
<b>1919</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>AMERICAN</b>	<b>MLB</b>	<b>5-5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>108.2</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2.57</b>	
	St. Louis Browns	AMERICAN	MLB	0-0	7	12.0	6	4	6	0.75	
	Chicago White Sox	AMERICAN	MLB	5-5	20	96.2	95	43	43	2.79	
1920	Chicago White Sox	AMERICAN	MLB	0-0	3	5.1	9	5	0	6.75	
1920	Minneapolis Millers	American Association	AA	14-12	31	223.0	337	151	119	2.99	
1921	Minneapolis Millers	American Association	AA	11-9	25	166.0	149	117	128	4.17	
1922	Columbus Senators	American Association	AA	0-2	7	32.0	29	27	15	--	
1922	Pontiac (Ill.) Giants	Central Illinois	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1923	Hornell (N.Y.) Independents	--	Ind	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1923	Centralia (Ill.) Indians	--	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1923	Canton (Ill.) Railroaders	Midwest	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1924	Canton (Ill.) Industrials	Midwest	SPro	10-2	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1925	Odin (Ill.) Independents	--	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
1926	Racine (Wisc.) Eskimos	Wisconsin-Illinois	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	
<b>Major League Totals</b>				<b>9 Seasons</b>	<b>23-39</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>590.1</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>3.58</b>
<b>Minor League Totals</b>				<b>12 Seasons</b>	<b>182-121</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>2699.2</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>2041</b>	<b>--</b>

**ML Debut: July 3, 1909, at Robison Field, St. Louis:** relieved Johnny Lush in the third inning and pitched two and 1/3 innings, allowing three runs on two hits, four walks and one strikeout in a 13-7 loss to Cincinnati.

**ML Finale: May 12, 1920, at Polo Grounds V, New York:** relieved Lefty Williams in the sixth inning and allows three runs in one inning pitched on three hits and two walks in a 14-8 loss to the New York Yankees.

1908 - Led Eastern Illinois League in victories (33), strikeouts (458) & innings pitched (388).

1910 - Tied for lead in Three-I League in innings pitched (334).

1913 - Led American Association in strikeouts (197).

1914 - Led American Association in walks (159) strikeouts (254).

1917 - Led American Association in strikeouts (250) & ERA (1.70) and ties for first in wins (25).

1920 - Led American Association in walks (151).

**BEWARE, STRONG  
BATTERS, BEWARE**

## Grover Lowdermilk [3 of 13]:

While at Mississippi College and during a March 8 practice game with the Jackson Senators of the Cotton States League, Lowdermilk allows only three hits and strikes out 13 in a 5-2 win. In his nine-game college career, he is 6-3, with two of the defeats coming in a double-header where he strikes out 26 while allowing only three hits. In the three losses, he has 36 strikeouts. He later claims that the inability of his college catcher to hold on to the ball was the cause of the three setbacks.

### Professional Debut

May 22, 1907

Rock Island Islanders at Decatur Commodores  
League Park, Decatur, Illinois

Decatur	A.	R.	H.	P.	A.	E.
Jeffries, rf	2	0	0	0	0	0
Schreiber, rf	2	0	1	0	0	0
Moore, ss	1	0	1	7	3	1
Tennant, 1b	5	0	0	8	0	0
Wagner, lf	3	1	0	1	0	0
Partell, 3b	4	1	2	1	2	1
Prout, 2b	4	1	2	0	3	0
Krebs, cf	4	0	1	1	0	0
Forsell, c	3	0	0	9	3	0
Lowdermilk, p	1	0	0	0	1	1
*Berry	1	0	1	0	0	0
* Batted for Lowdermilk in ninth.						
Total	27	3	10	27	12	2

Rock Island	A.	R.	H.	P.	A.	E.
Swain, rf	5	0	2	2	1	0
Murphy, lf	5	2	3	7	0	0
McLeary, 1b and c	2	2	1	0	0	0
Vandine, 3b	4	2	1	1	1	0
Wanner, 2b	5	1	1	1	1	0
Eng, c	2	0	1	2	0	0
Lundin, 1b	2	1	0	3	0	1
Borge, ss	4	2	2	1	2	1
Dorves, cf	4	2	0	1	0	0
Neal, p	4	0	0	0	3	0
Total	28	12	11	27	8	2

Score by innings:  
Decatur ..... 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 1-- 3  
Rock Island .... 1 0 0 0 0 7 0 2 0--12

Hits by innings:  
Decatur ..... 0 1 2 1 1 0 0 4--10  
Rock Island .... 1 0 0 0 5 0 3 0--11

Two base hits--Prout 2, Murphy 1.  
Double plays--Neal to Vandine to Lundin, Swain to Lundin.  
Left on bases--Decatur 8, Rock Island 2.  
Struck out--By Lowdermilk 7, by Neal 8.  
Bases on balls--Off Lowdermilk 2, off Neal 2.  
Wild pitches--Lowdermilk 2.

In a highly-anticipated debut, a 22-year-old Grover "Lowdermilk" begins his professional career against the Rock Island Islanders before 800 at League Park. In his only appearance for the Commodores in 1907, Lowdermilk strikes out seven but allows 10 runs on 11 hits and a pair of walks.

### LAUDERMILK TO MATTOON

Grover Lowdermilk left this morning for Mattoon where he will make an effort to set the Eastern Illinois league on fire. He leaves Decatur with the feeling that he did not get fair treatment. He says his defeat by Rock Island was because the Decatur team did not have a catcher that could hold him. The local people take an entirely different view of the matter. He also said that if he had a catcher that could hold him that all he wanted to win a game was an infield, for none of the hits would get beyond that space. It should be said, however, in favor of the man that he has the making of a good pitcher if he will quit his bragging and play ball.

Finally reporting to Decatur on May 18, Lowdermilk's Three-I League debut is delayed a couple of days after his uniform is stolen from the hotel where he is staying. On May 22, he finally makes his long-awaited debut against the Rock Island Islanders, allowing 11 hits, two walks, two wild pitches and an error in a 12-3 loss. After the game, a frustrated Lowdermilk blames catcher William Powell for the loss and hints that he might return to the Arthur Giants. Instead, the following day, the "Decatur Discard" reluctantly agrees to report to Mattoon Giants of the Eastern Illinois (D) League.

Mattoon is mired in last place with a 4-9 mark and in the middle of a controversy when the disgruntled one makes his first Giants' appearance on May 26. Mattoon manager Charley O'Day had spent the day before denying reports that his players "engaged in a hilarious drunk," three days prior. Lowdermilk turns in a strong performance for the Giants, yielding only five hits in a 1-0 loss to the Charleston Broom Corn Cutters.

In his first three starts for Mattoon, he is 1-2 allowing a mere three runs on 18 hits in 26 innings. Despite his success in the early going, his wildness is causing concern among league hitters as he has hit three hitters and causing serious injuries, including a broken arm and a concussion that left a Taylorsville player unconscious for 17 hours.

On June 4, Lowdermilk one-hits visiting Pana, striking out 12 and hits his first career home run off Edward Craig in a 13-0 whitewashing of the Coal Miners. Three days later, he starts in right field and hits his second home run, a grand slam in a 13-1 win over Shelbyville. Despite his team-leading six wins and three shutouts, a report out of Mattoon says that Lowdermilk may be released because of his tendency to cause trouble among his teammates.

On June 22, against the newly-formed Paris Colts, Lowdermilk has a no-hitter with two outs in the ninth inning when right-fielder Brown misplaces a fly ball for a double by Henry Eldred. On July 24, Lowdermilk strikes out 13 and allows only two hits in a 3-0 win over Paris.

Despite the team's winning ways, 35-14 (.714) since acquiring Lowdermilk, Mattoon is short of players and signs Grover's younger brother Louis on July 25. Louis makes his Giants' debut a day later starting in right field and going 1-for-4 with a run scored. Louis is released on July 30 and his contract is returned to the Arthur Giants.

## Mississippi College



Mississippi College, the oldest institution of higher learning in the Magnolia State, was chartered by the State Legislature as Hampstead Academy in 1826. Situated on five acres near Mount Salus in Central Mississippi, it is renamed Mississippi College in 1830. In December 1831, it makes history as the first college in the nation to grant a degree to a woman. During the Civil War a large group of students, three faculty members, a trustee, and townspeople in Clinton organized the Mississippi College Rifles. Leaving in April 1861, the Rifles take part in a series of battles, primarily in northern Virginia. What remained of the unit was with the Army of Northern Virginia and General Lee during the surrender at Appomattox Court House. Of the original 104 men who enlisted in the Rifles, only eight return. The unit's battle flag was brought back to campus and was preserved in the old chapel building. The school colors in 1907 were grey blue and gold.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1907 Decatur Commodores

**Grover Lowdermilk [4 of 13]:**



Grover Lowdermilk  
1907 Mattoon Giants

On August 10, Lowdermilk does himself one better than usual, pitching both ends of a Saturday doubleheader with Shelbyville, allowing only one hit in 18 innings. In the 1-0 opener, he allows a lone single before turning right around and pitching his first career no-hitter in the 5-1 second game.

On the same afternoon, Mattoon is so "crippled" with injured players that the team's Board of Directors meets and issues a statement praising the team's performance, but at the same time warns that any player leaving the team henceforth will be blacklisted.

On August 15, Lowdermilk comes to within one out of his second no-hitter when Charleston's [Jack Bartley](#) beats out a dribbler in front of home plate for a controversial base hit. Nonplussed, Lowdermilk ends the game with his 13th strikeout in a 5-0 victory.

On September 5, we have a Lowdermilk vs. Lowdermilk match up in Shelbyville - Grover for Mattoon versus brother Louis for Shelbyville. The older Lowdermilk wins out in spite of the fact that he was hit harder than his brother. Coupled with Charleston's loss to Taylorville, the Giants increase their lead to two games in the race for the pennant.

**Laudermilk Against Laudermilk.**  
At Shelbyville in the Eastern Illinois league yesterday Grover Laudermilk for Mattoon was pitted against his brother. The Mattoon twirler is the one who belongs to the Decatur club and he won out in spite of the fact that he was hit harder than his brother. Charleston lost to Taylorville again and now Mattoon has a lead of two games in the race for the pennant.

**Laudermilk a Trouble Maker.**  
Report comes from Mattoon to the effect that Grover Laudermilk may be released from the team because of a disposition to cause trouble among the players. Grover is doubtless afflicted with a big case of swelled head and considers himself far too good for the Eastern Illinois League.

In the season's final game, Lowdermilk pitches a 10-inning 3-3 tie with visiting Charleston before a franchise record of 2,500 in attendance at League Park. With six strikeouts, he finishes the season with a professional baseball record of 465, with 458 coming in 44 games with Mattoon.

Following an off-season where he finds employment back in the [Odin mines](#) and then elopes in early February with "one of the handsomest girls in town," Lowdermilk has some contractual issues to be worked through before he is able to take the field in 1908.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1908 Decatur Commodores

On February 2 (two days before he gets married), the directors of the Eastern Illinois League pass a resolution deciding to "stand by" Mattoon in its action in attempting to hold Lowdermilk to his contract with the Giants. The matter will probably be taken up by the national commission.

It is later determined that Lowdermilk is among several Mattoon players to be made free agents because the team failed to pay them their complete salaries the year before. Lowdermilk however, maintains that he intends on moving to Mattoon with his bride and opening the season with the Giants. However, come spring training he reports to Decatur, 10 pounds underweight.

He opens the 1908 season on May 9, with a 10-1 complete game victory over Rock Island, striking out five, walking two and going 1-for-4 with a double. On May 28, he strikes out 14 and allows last-place Clinton only three hits, but loses 1-0. He finishes the season 13-10 with four shutouts and leads the Three-I League in both strikeouts (183) and walks (124). He finishes second to Rock Island's 15-game winner [Christy Wilson](#) among league pitchers in hit batters with 25. Wilson plunked 33.

**Lowdermilk No-Hitter**

August 14, 1908  
Peoria Distillers at Decatur Commodores  
League Park, Decatur, Illinois

PEORIA—		AB.	R.	H.	P.O.A.	E.
Raymond, ss	.....	2	1	0	1	0
Leewe, 2b	.....	2	0	0	2	0
Swalm, lf	.....	2	0	0	1	0
Rehn, 1b	.....	4	0	0	12	0
Donnelly, cf	.....	4	0	0	1	0
Bewer, 3b	.....	2	0	0	1	0
Wolfe, rf	.....	2	0	0	1	0
Orendorff, c	.....	2	0	0	4	0
Myers, p	.....	2	1	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	.....	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>
DECATUR—		AB.	R.	H.	P.O.A.	E.
Crozier, cf	.....	4	1	1	2	0
Moore, 2b	.....	4	1	1	0	1
Wagner, lf	.....	2	1	1	4	0
Campbell, rf	.....	4	1	1	1	0
Tennant, 1b	.....	4	0	1	5	0
Frost, ss	.....	1	1	0	1	1
Barkwell, 3b	.....	2	1	1	1	0
Boucher, c	.....	1	0	0	10	0
Lowdermilk, p	.....	2	0	1	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	.....	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>
Peoria	.....	0	0	0	0	0
Decatur	.....	0	0	0	2	0
Two base hits—Barkwell, Campbell, Tennant.						
Sacrifice hits—Swalm, Frost.						
Bases on balls—Off Myers, 5; off Lowdermilk, 2.						
Hit by pitcher—Leewe, Bewer.						
Struck out—By Myers, 1; by Lowdermilk, 5.						
Double play—Donnelly to Orendorff.						
Stolen bases—Crozier, Moore, Wagner, Frost, Barkwell.						
Left on bases—Peoria, 3; Decatur, 4.						

Returning to the mound following a week layoff because of a sore arm, Lowdermilk pitches his first no-hitter at the professional level, defeating the visiting Peoria Distillers 6-2. Lowdermilk strikes out nine, walks two and drives in two runs with a fifth-inning single.

**LAUDERMILK ELOPES**

**"Lanky" Follows Lead of Big Chief Williams.**

Mattoon, Feb. 5.—"Lanky" Lowdermilk, the elongated pitcher who broke all records in the Eastern Illinois league last season, followed Big Chief Williams' lead last week by eloping with a fair Odin damsel according to a message which comes from the coal mining town.

"Lanky" since the close of the ball season, has been employed in digging coal at Odin. It appears that he had enough time above the ground to make love, as he is said to have eloped to Indiana with one of the handsomest girls in the town.

## Grover Lowdermilk [5 of 13]:

After a tumultuous 1908 season where Lowdermilk admits that he and manager [George Reed](#) were not on the same page, he says that his arm is coming along just fine and that he can do better than he did last year and tells the Commodores that he is ready to sign for next season. "I've got more sense than I had last year." In the off-season, Decatur fields several offers for Lowdermilk's services, but declines to trade their talented but erratic hurler.

Following back-to-back three-hitters, Lowdermilk is 5-4 in 10 appearance when on June 11, 1909, he, shortstop [Billy Barkwell](#) and pitcher [Thomas Cowell](#) are sold to the St. Louis Cardinals for \$2,500. Lowdermilk leaves for St. Louis immediately while Barkwell and Cowell are to report at the end of the Three-I season. Lowdermilk is bought by the Cardinals despite never having pitched in front of a team scout. Before Decatur's game on June 11, he throws a few "warm ones" on the sidelines with Cardinals' manager [Roger Bresnahan](#), who says, "He's got a world of speed. His curve break faster than any I ever caught. I can teach him control and make a second Matthewson out of him."



Grover Lowdermilk  
1909 Decatur Commodores

### Major League Debut

July 3, 1909

Cincinnati Reds at St. Louis Cardinals  
Robison Field, St. Louis, Missouri

CINCINNATI				ST. LOUIS					
AB	H	O	A	AB	H	O	A		
Bescher, 1	5	2	3	0	6	Byrne, 1	3	2	1
Pask't, 1	6	2	6	0	0	Ellis, 1	3	2	1
Egan, 1	4	2	2	3	1	Phelps, 4	4	2	2
Hobbs, 1	3	2	2	0	0	Konety, 1	4	2	0
Mitch'l, 1	6	2	2	0	0	Evans, 1	4	2	0
Downey, 3	3	2	2	0	0	Duffy, 3	3	2	1
McLean, 5	3	2	2	0	0	Hull, 1	3	2	1
Mow'ry, 3	3	2	2	1	6	Charles, 2	4	2	2
Gasper, 1	2	2	2	0	0	Lush, 1	0	0	0
Dubuc, 1	2	2	2	1	0	Laud, 1	2	0	0
						Mar'ou, 1	1	0	0
						Shaw, 1	0	0	0

\*Batted for Harmon in ninth.

Innings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cincinnati	1	3	3	1	2	0	0	3	0-12
St. Louis	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4-

Runs—Bescher, Paskert, Egan, Hobbs, Downey 2, McLean 3, Mowrey 2, Caspar, Dubuc—11; Byrne 2, Phelps 2, Konety, Charles, Shaw 2. Two-base hits—Hobbs, Mowrey, Charles. Three-base hit—Byrne. Sacrifice hits—Mowrey, Egan. Double play—Hull and Charles and Konety. Stolen bases—Bescher, Downey, Wulchey. Lowdermilk. Bases on balls—Off pitch—Lowdermilk. 4; off Dubuc, 4; struck out—By Lush, 1; by Gaspar, 1; by Dubuc, 1; by Lowdermilk, 1; by Harmon, 2. Hits—Off Lush, 7 in 2-3 innings; off Lowdermilk, 2 in 2-3 innings; off Gaspar, 3 in 2 innings; off Dubuc, 3 in 6 innings; off Harmon, 5 in 4 innings. Left on base—St. Louis, 16; Cincinnati, 9.

Lowdermilk makes his major league debut in the second game of a doubleheader with the Cincinnati Reds where the Cardinals show their support with 11 errors. Relieving starter Johnny Lush with two outs in the third inning, he pitches two and 1/3 innings, allowing three runs on four walks, two hits and a wild pitch while striking out one. Lowdermilk walked the last four batters he faces in the fifth inning. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat describes his entry into the game:

"Instead of a ball game being in progress after Lush had been knocked off the slab in the second game, one would have thought some comical vaudeville stunt was being staged to have heard the crowd laugh when Lowdermilk was called forth by Eadie Phelps. The tall, thin boy went on duty after three runs had been scored in the third, with two down. Without the usual warming up practice, Lowdermilk went to the mound and fanned Bescher on three thrown balls. After this feat had been accomplished Lowdermilk chased out behind the stands and tossed a few over to Jack Bliss."

"He's got a world of speed. His curve breaks faster than any I ever caught. I can teach him control and make a second Matthewson out of him." - Roger Bresnahan

Upon his arrival in St. Louis, Bresnahan tells the "second Matthewson" that he is to be used to pitch against the Cardinal regulars in morning practice games. The Cardinals' manager says that he has been needing a man to do this work for some time as he does not want to use one of his regulars.

The Cardinal players immediately dub Lowdermilk "Buttermilk." To make room for him on the roster, the Red Birds sell 27-year-old [Forrest Moore](#) (1-5, 5.04) to the Boston Doves for the minimum waiver price of \$1,500.

Lowdermilk makes his major league debut on July 3, 1909, in unusual style. In the second game of a doubleheader with the Cincinnati Reds, he enters the game in relief of starter [Johnny Lush](#) and without even a warm up pitch strikes out [Bob Bescher](#) on three pitches. He pitches two and 1/3 innings, allowing three runs - two earned - on four walks, two hits and a wild pitch while striking out one in a 13-7 loss.

"His withdrawal brought into action the funniest looking pitcher ever seen in the big leagues, who was promptly christened Buttermilk by the fans. This fellow sure did land a touch of comedy to the situation, which had begun to be tragic for the Cardinals. Buttermilk is 7 feet 5 inches in height, with or without stockings, towering over Long Larry like a telephone pole over a toothpick. He is about 8 inches in the thickest part. When he pitched he performed evolutions that will get him a job on the stage as a contortionist in the cold winter months. Buttermilk's first act when he went into the box was to retire the side by striking out Bescher on three pitched balls."

- Cincinnati Enquirer, July 4, 1909

When St. Louis leaves for a three-week, 22-game Eastern road trip on August 16, Lowdermilk is left at home, to work out on his own. On September 22, in his first appearance in over a month, he is handed the starting assignment against the New York Giants and legendary Hall of Famer [Christy Mathewson](#). Being handed an early 3-0 lead, "Lank" is unable to finish the third inning and Cardinal catcher Ed Phelps "nearing exhaustion" from leaping for Lowdermilk's errant pitches. The Giants' batters are afraid to approach the plate for "health reasons," he walks four in a row and is relieved by team ace [Fred Beebe](#).

### BAND LEAVES FUNERAL WHERE UNDERTAKERS ARE NONUNION

Went to Home as Tribute of Respect, Musicians Depart After Discovery.

A band of 15 union musicians which marched to 2302A Botanical avenue to play at the funeral of Nathan S. Frankel, dancing master, refused to take part in the funeral ceremonies and returned to the Aschenbroedel Club, 233 Pine street, because a nonunion undertaking firm, Hauck & Schmitt, was in charge.

The band was instructed by the Musicians' Union to attend the funeral as a tribute to Mr. Frankel, who was a dancing teacher for many years and popular with union musicians. But the withdrawal of the band was approved by the officers of the union.

"We were all sorry it happened," said Owen Miller, president of the union Wednesday, "but there was no other way out of it."

## Grover Lowdermilk [6 of 13]:

In seven appearances for the seventh-place Cardinals in 1909, he is 0-2, with a 6.21 ERA, with 30 walks and 14 strikeouts in 29 innings.

On October 1, he strikes out 10, but walks seven in the first of his 30 major league complete games, a 6-5 loss to Cincinnati.

**"Laudermilk polished the Cardinal bench during the season of 1909 until it was too hard to sit on. His forte is fooling the batsmen. When the batter is looking for a low one inside, he will throw it over the grand stand. His record for 1909 was 13-3 (13 pay days and 3 squares a day). In 1909, he made the spring training trip but at the beginning of the regular season he was returned to his former boss for further seasoning, when he proceeded to show the "duke" up by winning the pennant for his team."  
- Quad-City Times, September 1909**

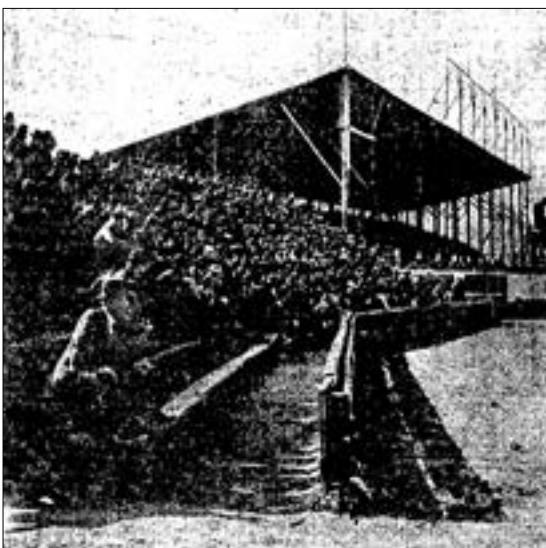
On January 16, a second Lowdermilk joins the Three-I League when Louis Lowdermilk, on the recommendation of Cleveland catcher [Bob Higgins](#) signs with the Peoria Chiefs. All of the reports say that the younger Lowdermilk has all of the speed of his older brother, but with "a lot better noodle."



**"In sacrifice hits, Ruby of Springfield perished 50 times."**

So says the summary of the Three-I League in 1908. The youngest of 17 children (he outlives them all), [Jesse Loring Ruby](#) is an eight-year veteran of the league from 1902 to 1909. In his final season, the Carthage, Indiana, outfielder/pitcher is a teammate of Grover Lowdermilk while playing with the Decatur Commodores. He plays two years (1901-1902) of baseball at Purdue University where is the junior class president in 1902, the athletic editor of student newspaper, the Purdue Exponent and the team's star left-handed throwing third baseman. Elected captain of the Boilermaker nine for 1902, Ruby leaves the team on December 16, 1901, saying that the University has "discouraged his every effort" to bring baseball talent to the school. Saying that not being able to have a pitcher or catcher, he can do nothing in the making of the team. "Easily the best baseball player the school ever had," Ruby receives offers to attend other schools as well as professional offers. One day later he signs with the Davenport River Rats. In late January, Ruby changes his mind and rejoins the college team for his junior season, saying that he will join the River Rats after classes are done. Graduating from Purdue in the spring of 1903, Ruby migrates to Ithaca, New York, and enrolls at Cornell University where he majors in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics. Following his playing days, he lives in Centerville, Indiana, where he is a rural mail carrier from 1914 to 1945 and a farmer before passing away on October 12, 1969, at the age of 89.

**"There is one twirler on the Cardinal staff who has come in for more jesting perhaps than any player who ever attempted to break into a major league - Laudermilk. It may be somewhat surprising to the fans, but I think he would win as many games as any other twirler the team if he could control his shoots. He has oceans of speed and a jump ball that is a corker. Add to this his strenuous efforts to make good; he is trying all the time to please everyone, and what more could be asked of a mere boy."  
- Roger Bresnahan, 1909**



### **Elmwood Park, Springfield, Illinois**

The 1910 season opener on May 4, between the Springfield Senators and the Peoria Distillers is also a battle of the Lowdermilks before 2,000 fans. Grover Lowdermilk and Dick Toner combined on a eight-hitter in a 12-4 win while younger brother Louis relieves Peoria starter Joe Cook in the Senators' nine-run seventh inning and allows three runs, on three hits in one-third of an inning.

Following several strong spring training showings, it appears that Lowdermilk will make the Cardinals' 1910 opening day roster. Meanwhile over in Peoria on April 11, the younger Lowdermilk, is hit for 13 safeties, three of which were for extra bases, by a team of Chicago White Sox players. The White Sox are in such a hurry to get home to Chicago they were willing to sacrifice anything save base hits in order to hasten the proceedings and catch their train. They accomplished this by playing the game in 1:20 and flagging their train at the ball park entrance.

On April 20, Bresnahan finally gives up his Lowdermilk experiment and sends him to Springfield of the Three-I (B) League. Bresnahan says he has "shadow wildness."

One month later, on May 15, Peoria sends Louis to the Ottumwa (Iowa) Packers of the Central (D) Association. But the young lefty is hesitant to report to the Packers and eventually is sent to the Freeport (Ill.) Pretzels of the Northern (D) Association.

In his first appearance of the 1910 season on May 5, Grover shuts out Peoria 3-0 on one infield hit by 18-year-old Fred Smith. Two weeks later, a "sulking" Lowdermilk is removed in the eighth inning of a 5-2 loss to Waterloo. Twice in June (12th & 25th), Lowdermilk proves to being the Senators' workhorse, twice pitching, and winning both games of a doubleheader. On June 12, he beats Peoria 3-2 and 8-6 while two weeks later, on June 25, when he turns in back-to-back shutouts, allowing only three hits, in both ends of a double-

## Grover Lowdermilk [7 of 13]:

header with visiting Bloomington. The white washings are his third and fourth shutouts of the month, of which one was a tie with Rock Island. Lowdermilk celebrates the Fourth of July by completing his third doubleheader sweep with a 9-5 and 4-1 complete game wins over Peoria.

On August 19, Lowdermilk wins his own game hitting a two-run home run in the eighth giving the Senators a 5-4 win over Peoria.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1911 St. Louis Cardinals

Just minutes before the August 22 sale deadline, "the telephone poll" is one of five Springfield players sold to major league teams when he is purchased for a second-straight year by the St. Louis Cardinals for \$1,500. Five days later, still with Springfield, he walks 11, but allows only three hits in a 8-2 win over Waterloo.

Late in September, Lowdermilk says he will not report to the Cardinals next spring, saying that he was not treated fairly by manager Bresnahan. In October when the league's final statistics for the 1910 season are released, Lowdermilk leads the league in wins (25) and is second to Rock Island's 18-game winner Pug Cavet in strikeouts (209) and walks (141).

Lowdermilk is still under contract with Springfield at \$150 per month when he is ordered to report to St. Louis for spring training. Cardinals' manager Roger Bresnahan continues to believe in Lowdermilk's long arm:

### Mud and a Game Lost by a Hole



On September 14, 1911, in Lowdermilk's final appearance with the Decatur Commodores, he loses to visiting Dubuque 3-2, in a game played in the rain and mud and decided by a "freak" home run by Dub's third baseman **Dow Vandine** (left). In the ninth in-

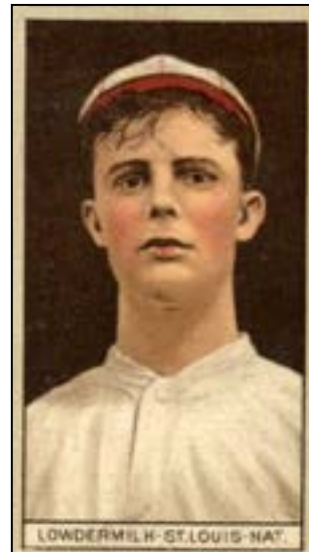
ning, Vandine hits a hard drive just inside the first sack. Sam Foster is stuck in the mud and can't get to it and the ball goes spitting and splattering along the right foul line, with Danny Jenkins floundering in pursuit. Just as he gets to the ball it goes straight through a hole in the fence. Six inches beyond it stops and lays there gleaming before Jenkins' nose. He gets down on his hands and knees and began to dig under the fence like a terrier in a rat hole for the ball, while Fred Moore made a vain effort to scale the wet fence to get it from the outside. In the meantime Vandine is chugging along through the mud toward home. Jenkins manages to get his fingers on the ball and draw it inside, but Vandine has already crossed the plate.

**"When Lauder gets control, he will make Christy Mathewson, Jack Combs and those other top pitchers look like class Z exhibits."**

On March 25, Lowdermilk is listed as one of ten pitchers on the 1911 Cardinals' opening day roster. Six days later, Bresnahan brings Grover's younger brother Louis to St. Louis as part of a 12-man pitching staff.

Louis makes his major league debut on April 23, pitching a scoreless ninth inning, with a hit allowed and a strikeout, in a 7-0 loss to the Chicago Cubs. The following day, Grover pitches three scoreless innings in a 6-5 win over Pittsburgh. On May 4, Grover has one of his worst outings, yielding eight runs on six walks and four hits, including a grand slam home run by Hall of Famer **Honus Wagner** in a 17-1 loss to Pittsburgh.

Louis appears in only three of the Cardinals' first 53 games when on June 17, he and fellow pitcher **Roy Golden** are suspended and fined \$100 by Bresnahan for not being in shape to pitch. Grover is not involved in the suspension as earlier reported, and is considered one of the hardest workers in the local camp as there is not a day that he is not working on his



Louis Lowdermilk's 1912 T207 card is regarded as the key to that highly sought-after baseball card set and is one of the great rarities in the hobby. One of three major rarities in the set (along with cards of Irving Lewis and Ward Miller), this Lowdermilk card has long been one of the most desired and elusive cards. The Lowdermilk card is considered rare because it was distributed by two tobacco companies - Broadleaf or Cycle - that didn't sell as well because most people during that period smoked Recruit. A grade 3 Lowdermilk card sold for \$2,880 in August of 2020. The younger brother by two years, Louis pitches two years (1911-1912) with the Cardinals, who apparently were attempting the corner market on Lowdermilks. He was 4-5 with a 3.38 ERA, in 20 career games. Unlike his older brother, Louis served two years as a private in the Army during World War I, returning home in February 1919. A 20-game winner for the Fort Wayne Champs in 1913, Lowdermilk was also 15-6 for the South Bend Benders in 1914.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1911 St. Louis Cardinals



## Grover Lowdermilk [9 of 13]:



Grover Lowdermilk  
1912 Chicago Cubs

On July 26, Grover yields three hits and three walks in a 2-1 complete game win at Indianapolis. A day later the *St. Louis Star and Times* opines that he will soon be returning to the Cardinals. On July 29, the Lowdermilk brothers are reunited once again, in Louisville, not St. Louis. The younger Louis makes his Colonel debut in relief against St. Paul on August 11.

[Frank Chance's](#) Chicago Cubs are 68-36 and five games behind front-running New York on August 14, when they purchase Grover (17-16 and league-leading 155 strikeouts) and [Fred Toney](#) (11-10). The twin acquisitions don't help the blue-capped Bruins as they go 23-23 over their final 46 games. Toney is 1-2 with a 5.25 ERA while Lowdermilk is 0-1 with a 9.29 ERA in two treks to the mound.

On September 28, 31 days after his first Cub appearance where he worked six innings in relief against Brooklyn, Lowdermilk makes his second Cub appearance as the starting pitcher against the Cincinnati Reds. In a game shortened to seven innings by a steady rain, Lowdermilk reverts to his old habits walking 11 and allowing 10 hits in a 12-1 setback. And just for good measure, he has an

error, a wild pitch and a balk. While Grover is being batted around in the West Side Grounds, Louis is on the move again when he leaves Louisville on his own accord and signs with the [Wallace Hogan](#) and the Vernon Tigers of the Pacific Coast (AA) League. The Colonels put "up a kick," with his West Coast signing.

On December 15, Lowdermilk's stay in the Windy City is short when the Cubs send him packing to Cincinnati as part of an eight-player trade that features Hall of Famer [Joe Tinker](#) leaving Chicago for Cincinnati. As soon as the trade is completed, it's reported that neither Lowdermilk or catcher [Harry Chapman](#) will be invited to Cincinnati's spring training in 1913.

## LAUDERMILK GOES TO CHICAGO CUBS

CHICAGO, Aug. 14.—In an effort to strengthen his pitching staff in a final dash for the National League pennant, Manager Chance of the Chicago club tonight purchased Pitchers Fred Toney and Grover Lowdermilk from the Louisville club. A crowd of several hundred persons cheered the National League baseball team when it arrived tonight from Boston to begin a three game series with the New York club tomorrow.

### *New Invention Likely To Be Adopted In Schools To Make Puny Boys Real Athletes*



TWO BOYS OF THE SAME AGE, 15 YEARS, 6 MONTHS

In 1913, Lowdermilk returns to Louisville for a second-straight, when the Colonels send veteran pitcher "Three Fingered" [Mordecai Brown](#) to the Cubs for "Lank" Lowdermilk, in early January. Concluding that desperate measures are necessary if "Lank" is to gain control of his pitches, the Louisville management signs his own private catcher, a coal miner from his hometown of Odin, named Jasper Weaver. Weaver is later released and sent down the ladder to Decatur.

On May 18, Minneapolis left fielder [Frank Delahanty](#) and Lowdermilk have an "exchange." There has been bad blood between the two, with Delahanty saying that Lowdermilk has attempted to bean him on several occasions. In the first inning, Delahanty, after being hit on the wrist, charges the mound, bat in hand and hits Lowdermilk's "anatomy" several times before the players are separated. The incident is later dropped as the umpires say that Delahanty's actions "did not amount to anything."

Lowdermilk spends the next two years with the Double-A Colonels. Noted as the team's mound "workhorse" and one of the franchise's most popular players, he is 20-14 with 304 innings pitched in 1913, and 18-16 with 284 innings toiled the following season. In 588 innings over two years, Lowdermilk allows only 459 hits, but still struggles with his control, walking 296.



Laudermilk Sending up His  
Snake Curve

## Grover Lowdermilk [10 of 13]:

In 1914, he leads the American Association in strikeouts for a second-straight season with 254, the second-highest single season total in league history - Charles "Heine" Berger had 264 for Columbus in 1906. At the end of the season he is one of seven pitchers named to the league's unofficial all-star team as selected by 26 baseball experts.

The final two months of the season prove hectic for Lowdermilk, when on August 13, [Branch Rickey's](#) St. Louis Browns outbid every other major league club to acquire his services and those of catcher [Hank Severeid](#). The Browns pay in the range of \$20,000 for the duo and Rickey also agrees to turn over three players in return to Louisville. At the time of the transaction, Lowdermilk is allowing two hits less per nine innings than any other pitcher in the American Association while Severeid is hitting .324. It's reported that the two players have already signed contracts with the Browns and will report to the team on September 15.

BANKS ON LOWDERMILK  
RICKEY IS OPTIMISTIC  
HAS FAITH IN SCOUTS

However, on September 4, C.C. Madison of the Federal League's Kansas City Packers announces that his team has purchased Lowdermilk and Severeid for \$20,000. Madison admits that the duo has signed contracts with the Browns, but says that the American League club no longer possesses the documents, and that the two players are free agents. After receiving blank contracts (their story), Lowdermilk and Severeid sign with the Packers for the same amount but with added bonuses of several thousand dollars for the players. The confusion is later cleared up when the two say they were merely "considering the offer".

Lowdermilk's season comes to an unexpected end on September 17, when he is sent home by manager [Jack Hayden](#) for "extreme wildness." It was also hinted that the "tall boy" wasn't interested in pitching after his sale to the Browns and this led to his disgraceful dismissal by Hayden.

### Too Old to Learn New Tricks



Detroit's Hughey Jennings is depending on Grover Lowdermilk to pull his club out of the championship fire he is flying in the face of Old Man Probability. Grover's great weakness is lack of control. When he swings his tremendous arm through

the winding up arc, Grover's eye is not on the plate. Nor yet is it on the batter. It is not until just before the moment of delivery that Grover's optics focus on the few square inches of space through which his fast ball must cleave if he is to come through as per instructions from his boss. Experts in pitching think, this is the fault that has kept Grover from being one of the greatest mound men of all time.

The natural query is, "Why doesn't he reform his system?" And the only reply is that he can't. Grover is no spring chicken. He has been through the mill several years and is practically hopeless. [Branch Rickey](#) (above) was asked, recently about Grover. Branch sold Lowdermilk for \$4,000 late last season to the Tigers. This is what he thought of the lanky one:

"Grover is institutionalized. I think he has passed the time, when he can be instructed. He is hard working and conscientious, but he just can't change his old tricks. His pitching habits are permanently formed. I had this in mind when I let Lowdermilk go. What usefulness he had was waning, not coming. Furthermore, it was more or less a case of a choice between him and Koob. I saw a chance to develop Koob, none for Grover. For that reason I will be genuinely surprised if Jennings is able to improve Grover. think his wildness is habitual. He may be useful to a heavy hitting club like Detroit, but that he will never overcome his chief fault I find it hard to believe." - April 22, 1916

Responding to his first really consistent workload at the major league level, a 30-year-old Lowdermilk responds with a 13-18 mark and a respectable 3.24 ERA in 1915, splitting time between the St. Louis Browns (9-17) and Detroit Tigers (4-1).

In 45 games overall, including 34 starts, he strikes out 148 (6th in the AL) and walks 157 (2nd) in 250 1/3 innings (12th). Fourteen of his 18 losses are by two runs or less, including seven by a lone tally.

On June 23, Lowdermilk relieves starter [Bill James](#) at the start of the eighth inning and pulls a stunt that garners national attention. While fielding a ground ball with two runners on base, Lowdermilk turns a somersault allowing the runner from third to score. And while he sits on the ground holding the ball, [Ty Cobb](#) scores all of the way from second base in a 4-2 Tiger win.

Yet, on September 6, the Detroit Tigers, three games behind front-running Boston, purchase Lowdermilk, who goes 4-1 for the Bengals with a 4.18 ERA.

Only three games into the 1916 season, Lowdermilk's stay in Detroit comes to an abrupt end on April 14 when team president [Frank Navin](#) ask for waivers on the erratic one day after a brief appearance against the Chicago White Sox where he walks the first three batters he faces on 12 pitches. H.W. Lanigan, a noted sports historian referred to Lowdermilk as "The Wild Man of the Major Leagues."



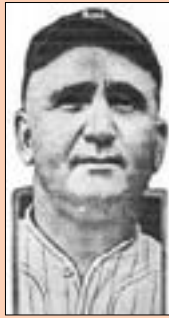
Grover Lowdermilk  
1915 St. Louis Browns



Grover Lowdermilk  
1916 Detroit Tigers

## Grover Lowdermilk [11 of 13]:

Within 24 hours, Cleveland's [Lee Fohl](#) (right) claims the 31-year-old for his Indians. In his first five appearances with the Tribe, he walks 31 in 24 innings. An optimistic Fohl thinks part of Lowdermilk's wildness is caused by bad eyesight and too short of a stride on the mound. On June 8, the Indians ask for waivers on Lowdermilk and catcher [Tom Daly](#). However, Fohl isn't anxious to see Lowdermilk go to another American League club, and pulls his name off of the waiver list. Four days later, Lowdermilk is claimed by the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League, but he refuses to be turned over to the Beavers and wants to be declared a free agent.



## Fohl tells Lowdermilk to get glasses and increase stride



Some pitchers need only a change of pace to make them wizards. Grover Cleveland Lowdermilk, the human slat, doesn't require a change of pace to round out his repertoire; he needs a change of stride. Whether he lingers longer in the major leagues hinges upon his ability to stretch from an 18-inch to a three-foot stride in delivery in his future slug assignments for the Cleveland Indians. Lee Fohl, master of the Indians, is grooming the 6-foot-6-inch flinger whom Pat Moran, Jimmy Archer, Oscar Stanage, Sam Agnew, Branch Rickey and Billy Sullivan have called unteachable. Fohl says Grover can be converted into a wonder pitcher if Grover ever attains control. Every one else in the major leagues agrees with Fohl.

After much discussion, on June 25, a proposed Lowdermilk trade with Portland in exchange for first baseman [Louis Guisto](#) is called off as Lowdermilk once again declines to go out west. Eventually the Indians tire of his antics and release him for good on August 2. Following his release, Lowdermilk changes his mind and decides to report to Portland, making his Beaver debut on August 12, issuing five walks in a 5-3 loss to the Vernon Tigers. Three weeks later a disgusted Lowdermilk says he is through with baseball, packs his trunk and leaves for his home in Illinois. In seven appearances with the Beavers, he was 1-4 with a 3.82 ERA.



With the advent of the new year in 1917, Lowdermilk is on the move again when Cleveland sends pitcher [Fred Beebe](#) (left) to Portland for the rights of the pitcher they released four months earlier. The Indians then send the disgruntled one to Columbus for infielder [Joe Leonard](#). Reunited with former teammate and manager Joe Tinker, he leads the American Association in ERA (1.70), shutouts (7), strikeouts (250) and ties with Louisville's [Dixie Davis](#) for the lead in wins with 25. He also finishes second in innings pitched (355) and walks (128), but at only a 3.2 rate per nine innings.

On August 18, the St. Louis Browns trade pitchers [Earl Hamilton](#), [James Park](#), outfielder [Fin Yardley](#) and catcher [Grover Hartley](#) to Columbus for Lowdermilk, outfielder [Ray Demmitt](#), shortstop [Wally Gerber](#) and cash considerations. In his first start with the Browns on September 22, Lowdermilk pitches his third career major league shutout, a four-hit 7-0 decision without a walk against the New York Yankees.

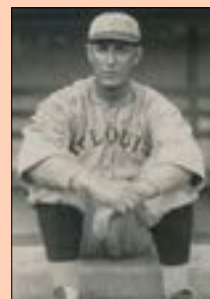
**ST. LOUIS TEAM  
MAKES A DEAL  
FOR 3 STARS**

Lowdermilk, Demmitt and Gerber Go To American League  
In Exchange for Hamilton, Park, Hartley.

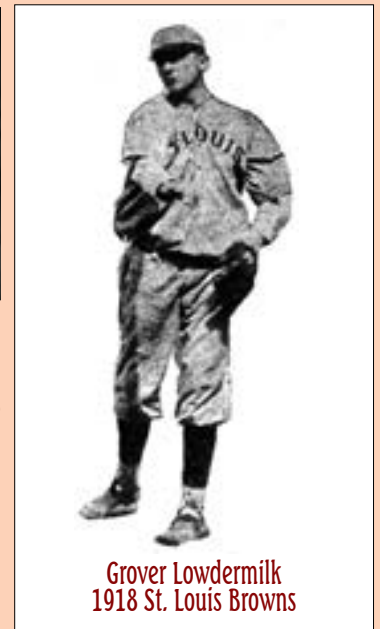


Grover Lowdermilk  
1917 Columbus Senators

Always a little different in his training methods, Lowdermilk is now given complete freedom by Browns' manager [Fielder Jones](#) (right) in the spring of 1918. An optimistic Jones predicts that his right-hander will win 20 games this season. Following an eight-inning stint in a 3-2 loss to Cleveland on June 25, Lowdermilk has a 2.88 ERA in 12 games when first a lame elbow and then a stomach ailment sidelines him, except for one two-inning stint on July 30, for the remainder of the season.



Lowdermilk begins the 1919 campaign with the St. Louis Browns and has a 0.75 ERA in seven relief appearances when the Chicago White Sox purchase Lowdermilk's contract from the Browns on May 17. The Pale Hose assign him locker No. 13 in hopes of improving his luck.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1918 St. Louis Browns

## Grover Lowdermilk [12 of 13]:

### LOWDERMILK QUILTS SOX; TELLS GLEASON HE CAN'T WIN GAMES FOR CHICAGO

Lowdermilk moves into Chicago's starting rotation early on, but following an 11-1 loss to Washington on July 16, the angular one quits the team, telling manager [Kid Gleason](#) that he was leaving because he was unable to win games for the team.

His retirement lasts all of eight days.

Lowdermilk finishes the season 5-5 with the White Sox with a 2.79 ERA in 20 appearances, and for the first time in his career, he is on a pennant-winning team. The White Sox go 88-52 and finish 3 1/2 games ahead of Cleveland and an upcoming World Series date with the Cincinnati Reds.

In Game One, White Sox starting pitcher [Ed Cicotte](#) is knocked out in a five-run fourth inning. Lowdermilk is summoned in from the bullpen in the eighth inning and allows one run on an RBI triple to pitcher [Dutch Ruether](#).

He also walks a man and hits another in a surprising 9-1 loss. It will be Lowdermilk's lone World Series appearance.

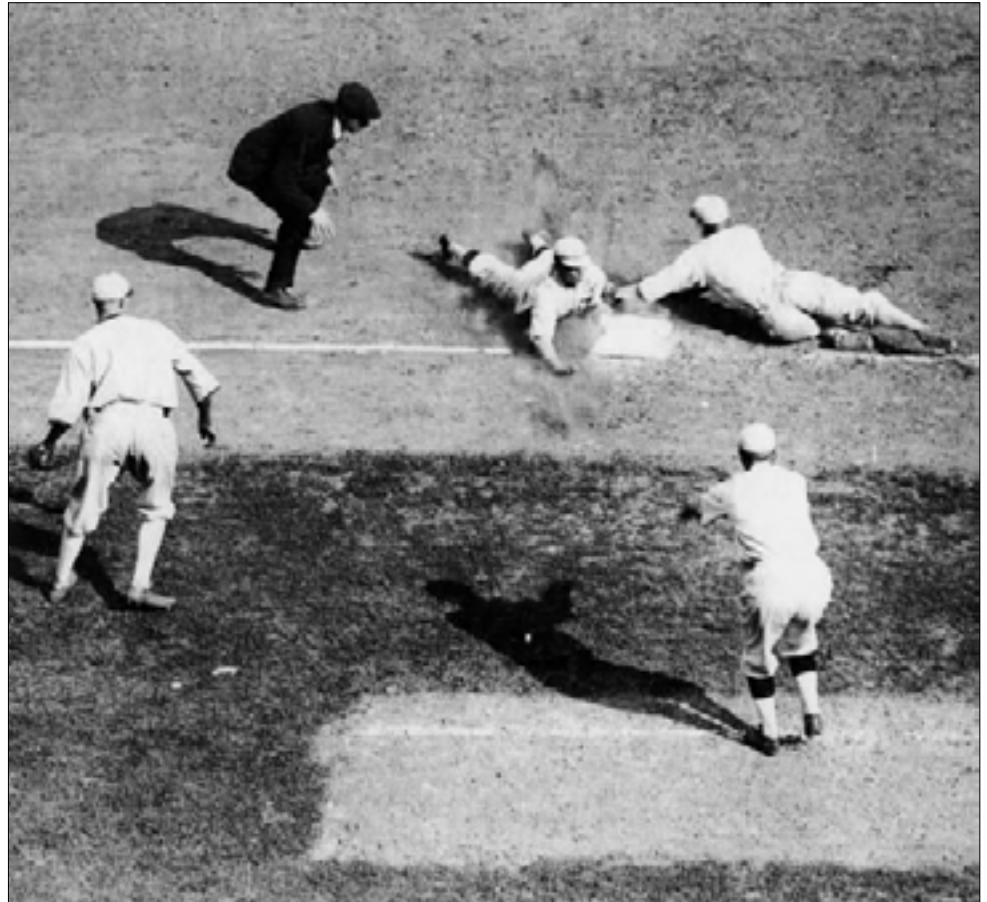
Two years later Cicotte and seven other White Sox players are found to have conspired to throw the World Series to the underdog Reds. All eight players are banned for life from baseball.

In late February it's reported that a "toothless" Lowdermilk is expected to be sold to the Minneapolis Millers if he can clear major league waivers. However, Chicago's Gleason changes his mind and keeps the 35-year-old on the roster. A story circulates that this past winter Lowdermilk had all of his teeth removed because he had a hunch the roots of his molars reached down into his arm. He now

reports that there isn't the "the slightest kink" in his throwing motion.

Lowdermilk is eager for the 1920 season to begin. "I never was in better shape than this spring, and I have control now," he said. "If the Kid would just put me in there I'd show 'em something. A fellow can't keep his arm in shape by sticking to the bench."

Seldom used in the season's early going, Lowdermilk makes his 122nd and final major league appearance on May 12, in a 14-8 loss to the



Cincinnati's Heinie Groh slides into third ahead of Buck Weaver's tag during the 1919 World Series opener. Pitcher Grover Lowdermilk (left) backs up the play.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1919 St. Louis Browns



Grover Lowdermilk  
1919 Chicago White Sox



Grover Lowdermilk  
1919 Chicago White Sox

## Grover Lowdermilk [13 of 13]:

New York Yankees. Reportedly, the White Sox had earlier refused an offer by Joe Tinker of the American Association's Columbus Senators to purchase Lowdermilk for \$5,000.

Lowdermilk's extended major league career comes to a ignominious end when he is sent home from Boston on May 20 for negotiating with an industrial team in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. After turning down a "flattering offer" from the Lebanon team, he signs with Minneapolis on May 22, and the following day later pitches a three-hit complete game win over Indianapolis.

Not everything is peaches and cream for Lowdermilk in his time with the Millers. When he arrives for a series in Kansas City, after a brief vacation at his home in Odin, he finds that no one has taken care for his baseball equipment, which is still be back in Louisville for all that anyone knows. Without his uniform, glove and shoes, he doesn't dress out for game one of the series.

After again threatening a number of times to quit the team, an unhappy Lowdermilk actually does on August 24, following a "sad exhibition" on the mound in the ninth inning against Toledo. Relieving [Ed Hovlik](#), he walks two men, hits another, makes a wild pitch and twice falls down trying to field bunts. In addition, he allows two hits as the Mud Hens tally four runs in a 9-7 come from behind win. Saying he is done playing for Minneapolis, Lowdermilk is suspended and placed on the reserve list for next season. His departure leaves the team with only four pitchers. Reconsidering, he later asks for a second chance and rejoins the team 10 days later and finishes out the season.

On May 6, 1921, Lowdermilk no-hits St. Paul for 8 1/3 innings but nine walks and a hit batter enable the Saints to rally for a 5-3 win in 10 innings. His season with the Millers is interrupted in late July when he and teammate Bill James are called to Chicago to testify at the trial of the indicted White Sox players for the alleged "throwing" of the 1919 World Series. Both pitchers were used sparingly in the Series by the White Sox. Following a 11-9 season, Lowdermilk is one of 11 players dealt to the Columbus Senators in a multi-team trade on December 14, in exchange for pitcher [Dave Danforth](#), who ends up with the St. Louis Browns. Columbus fans, who have been in a "comatose condition for a period bordering on six years" are revived somewhat by the announcement of the arrival of the new players.

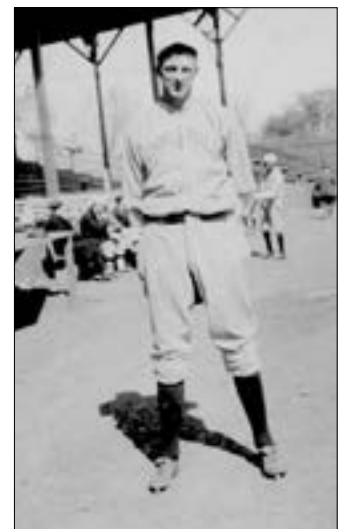
Making his first start in more than a month, Lowdermilk gives up five runs in two innings to Louisville and decides once again to "quit baseball forever." He is placed on the familiar suspended list and returns home. In early July, he signs with the semipro Pontiac (Ill.) Giants to pitch all of their "important games." One of those important games comes against the Chicago Giants on July 24, where he allows eight hits, including two home runs, in a 5-3 loss.

A year after leaving the game, Lowdermilk is barred from organized baseball when he signs with the "outlaw" Hornell (N.Y.) Independents. Former Pittsburgh Pirate [Jake Pitler](#) (1917-1918), is the player-manager of the team which claims to have won the independent championship of the country the year before. Once again, Lowdermilk, the team's highest-salaried player, is not satisfied with conditions in Hornell and along with [Duke Reilley](#) (Cleveland 1909), leaves the team on June 15. His primary complaint is that he can not stand the trips in automobiles to the various towns.

Moving over to the Canton (Ill.) Industrials in time for the 1924 season, Lowdermilk, despite a 10-2 mark, is released for failing to get his arm into shape and a team effort to lower salaries. On May 17, 1926, pitching for the Racine Eskimos, a 41-year-old Lowdermilk is given a one-way train ticket back to Racine after failing to last two innings in a 10-9 loss to the Kenosha Twin Sixes.



Grover Lowdermilk  
1920 Minneapolis Millers



Grover Lowdermilk  
1921 Minneapolis Millers



### Better Late Than Never

On May 10, 1941, nearly 18 years after being barred from organized baseball for playing for the "outlaw" Hornell (N.Y.) Independents, Grover Lowdermilk is among a "large" list of reinstated players issued recently by Minor League President William G. Bramham. Other former big leaguers reinstated include Jean Dale, Jack Leary, Hal Janvrin, Erskine Mayer, and Al Wickland. A lawyer from Durham, Bramham is the

third President of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the parent organization of minor league baseball. He serves from 1932 through 1946.

Eventually, Grover and his wife, Nora, return to their hometown of Odin, Illinois, where he finds employment in the local coal mines. Lowdermilk passes away on March 31, 1968 at the age of 83. Louis dies seven years later on December 27, 1975, in Centralia, Illinois.

## Lowdermilk Is Dead At Age 83

ODIN, ILL. (AP) — Former major league baseball pitcher Grover Lowdermilk, 83, died in Odin Sunday.

Lowdermilk pitched for the St. Louis Cardinals, the St. Louis Browns, the Cleveland Indians and the 1919 Chicago White Sox.