

Casey at the Bat

by Ernest Lawrence Thayer

and

Dorlan's Home Walk

by Arthur Guiterman

A Doubleheader Poetry Study Guide

by Margaret Whisnant



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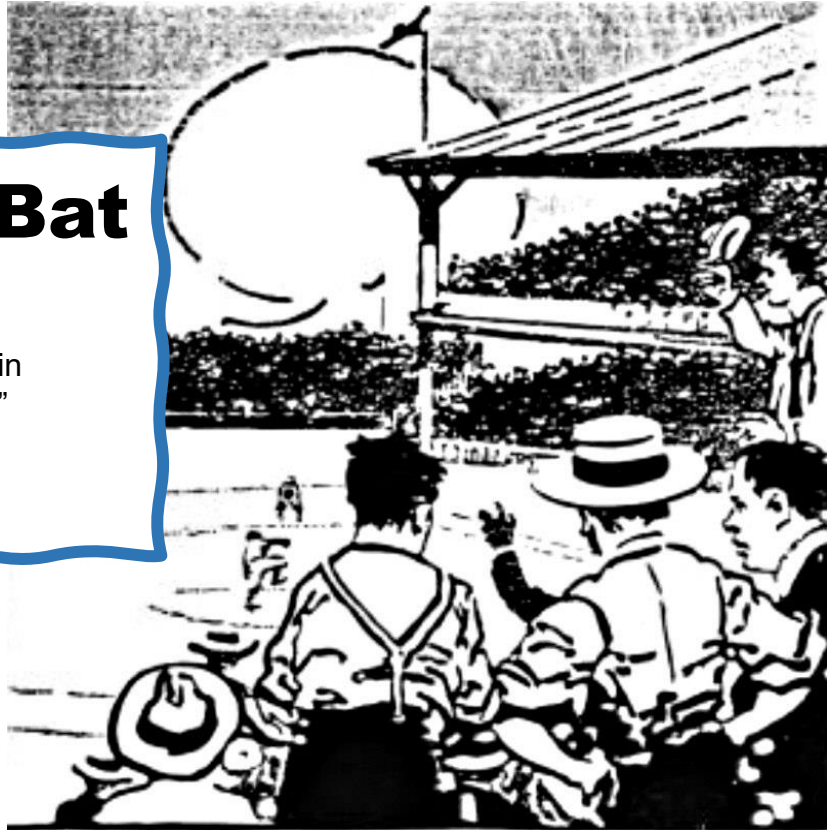
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Casey at the Bat

by Ernest Lawrence Thayer

Original version first published in
"The San Francisco Examiner"

June 3, 1888



The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
The score stood four to two with just an inning left to play;
And so, when Cooney died at first, and Burrows did
the same,
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought, if only Casey could but get a whack; at that
They'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
And the former was a pudding, and the latter was a fake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single to the wonderment of all,
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;
And when the dust had lifted, and they saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe on second and Flynn a-hugging third.



Dictionary Digs

Directions: Dig into your favorite dictionary to find answers to the following questions about challenging words from **Casey at the Bat**. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

_____ 1. Which word *best* completes the following sentence?

The baseball _____ a few inches away from the baseman’s glove.

- (A) muffled (B) rebounded (C) bounded (D) awed

_____ 2. A *synonym* for **awed** is

- (A) amazed. (B) confused. (C) contributed. (D) analyzed.

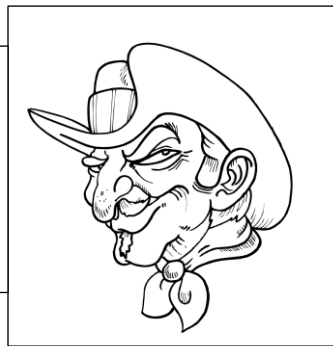
_____ 3. Which of the following cartoons *best* illustrates the meaning of **scornful**?

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)



_____ 4. An *antonym* of **haughty** is

- (A) snobbish. (B) disinterested. (C) stuck-up. (D) humble.

_____ 5. The word **muffled** can be used to describe

- (A) a photo. (B) a sound. (C) a time of day. (D) a facial expression.

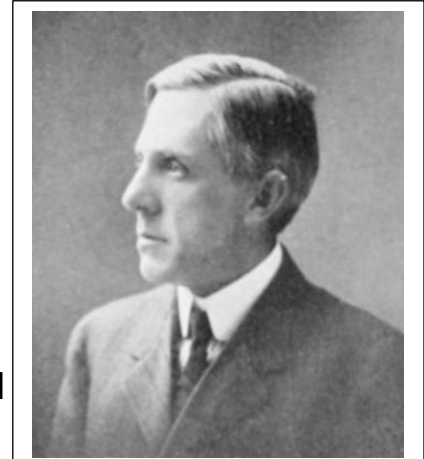
25 items in full product

Ernest Lawrence Thayer

1863-1940

by Margaret Whisnant

Ernest Lawrence Thayer was born August 14, 1863, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the son of a wealthy mill owner. It was expected that he would go into the family business, but while he was attending Harvard University, he developed an interest in humor. He edited and wrote articles for the Harvard Lampoon, the university's long-running humor magazine. His friend, William Randolph Hearst, was its editor.



Ernest Lawrence Thayer
C. 1910

Lawrence also became a baseball fan while a student at Harvard, and he played on a team with a group of classmates. He graduated with honors with a degree in philosophy in 1885.

In the meantime, his friend William Hearst, having been expelled from Harvard for throwing wild parties and organizing practical jokes, had moved back to California in 1887 to take over his father's newspaper, "The San Francisco Examiner." He asked Thayer to write a humor column for the paper. Faced with a choice of working for his school chum in San Francisco or managing the family business in Massachusetts, Thayer packed his bags and headed west.

Author Biography 4 full pages including study questions.

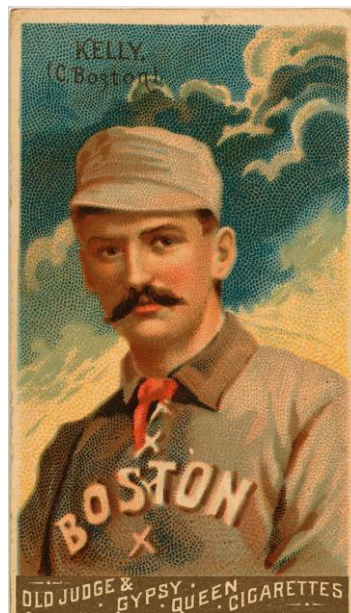
Who Was the Real Casey?

Ernest Thayer was often asked who had inspired the character of Casey. Thayer always answered that his boastful hero was totally fictional, a combination of people he had met during his lifetime. He consistently denied that his poem was about any particular baseball hero of the day.

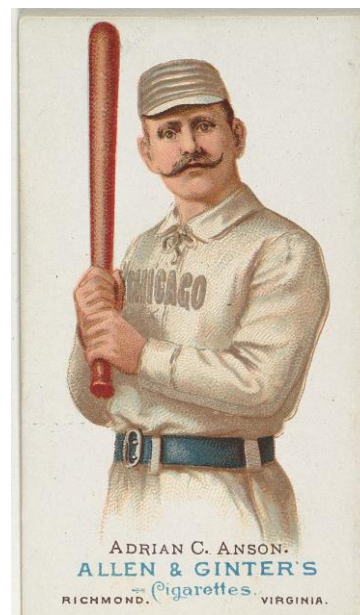
Still, the fact remained that “Casey at the Bat” was the first significant piece of American literature to recognize the American obsession with organized sports and its heroes. It poked fun at what was becoming America’s favorite pastime. In spite of Thayer’s denial, many baseball enthusiasts had two names in mind.

A catcher/outfielder named Mike “King” Kelly, in the public’s opinion, was the most likely role model for Casey. Thayer had seen him play during his days as the baseball reporter for “The San Francisco Examiner.” Adrian “Cap” Anson, a first baseman, was another possibility.

Do some research and write short biographies of Mike “King” Kelly and Adrian “Cap” Anson. Conclude your biographical sketches by stating your opinion. Do you think either or both of these characters could have influenced Thayer when he wrote “Casey at the Bat”?



Mike “King” Kelly
Outfielder/Catcher Boston Beaneaters 1888
American League



Adrian “Cap” Anson
First Baseman Chicago White Stockings 1887
National League

Note: Player cards have been popular since the early days of professional baseball. The images above are reproductions of those issued for Mike “King” Kelly and Adrian “Cap” Anson. Take note that the cards were sponsored by cigarette companies! This was long before the dangers of smoking had been documented and made public. In 1888, people didn’t have a problem with tobacco companies sponsoring athletes.

Dorlan's Home Walk

by Arthur Guiterman
First Published C. 1910



The ninth; last half; the score was tied,
The Hour was big with Fate,
For Neal had fanned and Kling had flied
When Dorlan toed the plate.



And every rooter drew a breath
And rose from where he sat,
For Weal or Woe, or Life or Death
Now hung on Dorlan's bat.

The Pitcher scowled; the Pitcher flung
An inshoot, swift and queer;
But Dorlan whirled his wagon-tongue
And smote the leathern sphere.

He smote the ball with might and main,
He drove it long and low,
And firstward like a railway train
He sped to beat the throw.



He reached first base with time to spare
(The throw went high and wide),
But what a tumult rent the air
When " Safe! " the Umpire cried.



" What! " shrieked the Pitcher, lean and tall,
" What! " roared the Catcher stout,
" Wha-at! " yelled the Basemen one and all,
" Ye're off! the man is out! "

The Shortstop swore, the Catcher pled,
They waved their arms around.
The Umpire shook his bullet-head
And sternly held his ground,

“Dorlan’s Home Walk” Challenge Questions

Directions: Write answers to the following questions in the blanks provided.

- _____ 1. The author wrote that Neal had *fanned* and Kling had *flied*. What did Neal and Kling do?
- (A) Neal cooled off and Kling left for a few minutes.
 - (B) Neal bunted and Kling struck out.
 - (C) Neal struck out and Kling hit a fly ball that was caught.
 - (D) Neal was out at first and Kling was tagged out at second.

2. Based on the information given in the second stanza, is Dorlan, like Casey, the team’s star player? Explain your answer.

- _____ 3. *And firstward like a railway train* is an example of
(A) a simile. (B) a metaphor. (C) personification. (D) a hyperbole.

4. Write the two lines that prove the umpire’s call was correct.

Ten questions in full file.

