

John Joseph McGraw (1873-1934)

John McGraw was born in Truxton to Irish immigrant parents. He was the second oldest of nine children and his childhood became very difficult after the death of his mother, older half-sister and three younger siblings in 1883 of a contagious fever. He ran away from his abusive father in 1885 and was raised by a neighbor, Mary Goddard.

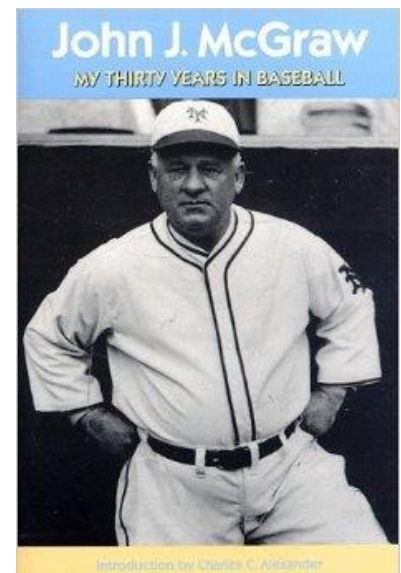
He developed his passion for baseball at a young age, playing on his school team and then joining the “Truxton Grays” when he was 16. McGraw played on teams in Olean and Wellsville, New York; Gainesville, Florida and Cedar Rapids, Iowa in rapid succession in 1890-1891, greatly improving his fielding skills along the way.

McGraw received his call to join the Baltimore Orioles in 1891, while he was still 18. He played baseball for the Baltimore Orioles through 1899, while also becoming the manager in 1899. He continued playing for several more years, moving to the St. Louis Cardinals (1900), back to the Orioles (1901-1902), then to the New York Giants during the 1902 season. He became a player-manager for the NY Giants in 1902 and served as the Giants Manager from 1907 to 1932.



He was so successful because he always played to win. By learning the rules thoroughly, he was able to develop “strategy and guile” both as a player and manager. He developed more opportunities to steal bases, tire pitchers and generally harass the opposing team, forcing errors or poor decisions. He was one of the first to develop the “hit and run” and use of relief pictures to “save games.” His teams usually led in base stealing. Baseball, like most sports, is mental as well as physical, and McGraw was a master of all aspects of it.

McGraw was an excellent player and contributed to the Orioles winning three consecutive pennants in 1894, 1895, and 1896. However, he was an outstanding manager! He had a gift for both evaluating and developing talent. Under his leadership, the Giants won ten pennants and three World Series, and he was the first manager to win four consecutive pennants (1921-1924). His last game as a manager was for the National League team in the first All-Star game in 1933. He died less than a year later.



1. Baseball Hall of Fame webpage, <http://baseballhall.org/hof/mcgraw-john>, accessed 4/13/2016
2. Note from Donald McCall, Truxton historian.



McGraw retired in 1932 with 2,763 victories. He remains high on the all-time list of Major League Baseball managers with the most wins, ranking 3rd after Connie Mack and Tony LaRussa respectively. The Giants posted just one losing record in his 26 full seasons at the helm. *"In playing or managing, the game of ball is only fun for me when I'm out in front and winning,"* said McGraw. In 1937, he became a member of the Hall of Fame's second induction class."¹



McGraw's journey was completed a few years after he died. In 1938, the NY Giants played the Truxton Giants in an exhibition game in Truxton. The money raised funded the John J. McGraw park and memorial in Truxton.²

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2. Note from Donald McCall, Truxton historian.