

= Joe Borden =

Joseph Emley Borden , aka Joe Josephs , (May 9 , 1854 ? October 14 , 1929) , nicknamed " Josephus the Phenomenal " , was a starting pitcher in professional baseball for two seasons . Born in Jacobstown in North Hanover Township , New Jersey , he was playing for a Philadelphia amateur team when he was discovered by the Philadelphia White Stockings of the National Association (NA) in 1875 . The White Stockings needed a replacement for a recently released pitcher , and were awaiting the arrival of a replacement . During his short , seven @-@ game stint with the team , he posted a 2 ? 4 win ? loss record , both victories recorded as shutouts . On July 28 of that season , he threw the first no @-@ hitter in professional baseball history .

When the NA folded after the 1875 season , Borden signed a three @-@ year contract with the Boston Red Caps . On April 22 , 1876 , Borden and the Red Caps were victorious in the first National League (NL) game ever played . Later that season , on May 23 , he pitched a shutout , which some historians claim was the first no @-@ hitter in Major League Baseball . Known for having an eccentric personality , he played under different surnames , such as Josephs and Nedrob , so as to disguise his involvement in baseball ; his prominent family would have disapproved had they known . After he was released from the Red Caps as a player during the first season of his contract , he worked for a short period of time as their groundskeeper until he and the owner agreed to a buyout of the remainder of his contract . Little is known about his post @-@ baseball life , and it has been claimed that he died as early as 1889 , in the Johnstown Flood , but his official death date is recognized as occurring in 1929 when he was 75 years of age .

= = Career = =

Joseph Emley Borden was born on May 9 , 1854 in Jacobstown in North Hanover Township , New Jersey into a wealthy family . It is claimed that his family would have been embarrassed that their son was playing baseball for money , and would have disapproved . To hide his playing career , he assumed several various last names , such as Josephs and Nedrob , which is Borden spelled backwards .

= = = 1875 season = = =

The Philadelphia White Stockings , of the NA , had recently dismissed pitcher Cherokee Fisher in July 1875 due to his clashing with team captain , Mike McGeary , and were in need of a replacement . The White Stockings signed George Zettlein , but there was a delay in his arrival . The team then signed Borden , who was a local Philadelphia amateur player , as a replacement until Zettlein arrived . His first appearance in a game for the White Stockings was on July 24 , an 11 ? 4 loss to the Dick McBride and the Philadelphia Athletics .

In his next start , on July 28 against the Chicago White Stockings , he pitched the first recorded no @-@ hitter in professional baseball history . Borden lost the next three games he started before defeating the St. Louis Brown Stockings , and future Hall of Fame pitcher Pud Galvin , 16 ? 0 on August 9 . By this time , Zettlein had settled in as their regular pitcher , and Borden was no longer needed . During his time with the White Stockings , he pitched in seven games , all of which he started and completed . He finished the season with a 2 ? 4 win ? loss record , two shutouts , a 1 @.@ 50 earned run average in 66 innings pitched .

= = = 1876 season = = =

After the 1875 season concluded , the league , and subsequently the Philadelphia White Stockings , folded , allowing the NL to form , becoming the first " Major " league . Before the season , Borden signed a three @-@ year contract worth \$ 2000 a season (\$ 44 @,@ 440 current dollar adjustment) with the Boston Red Caps of the NL . The club had high expectations that he could adequately replace Albert Spalding who had recently departed for the Chicago White Stockings . Sportswriters

were in agreement with the club and dubbed him " Josephus the Phenomenal " . Hall of Fame baseball writer Henry Chadwick described Borden 's pitching style as having speed , but with little strategy . In addition to his swiftly moving fastball , he also delivered a curveball that moved down and away from right @-@ handed batters ; both pitches he delivered from a low arm angle . His Red Caps played the Philadelphia Athletics in the first game in NL history on April 22 ; the only game of the day due to rain cancelling the rest of the league 's schedule . The Red Caps defeated the Athletics with two runs in the ninth inning , and a final score of 6 ? 5 at Athletic Park , with Borden pitching the complete game for the victory .

On May 23 , Borden pitched a two @-@ hit 8 ? 0 shutout victory against the Cincinnati Reds . Various historians claim that this performance was , instead , the first no @-@ hitter thrown in the NL , thus the first in major league history . According to Lee Allen , baseball historian and writer , the scorecard shows that Borden gave up two bases on balls , which were counted as hits in the final score . The official scorekeeper for the game was O. P. Caylor , a writer for The Cincinnati Enquirer , who believed , unlike his contemporaries , that bases on balls should be scored as hits . Bases on balls were only officially counted as hits for the 1887 season . The Boston Daily Globe reported on the game the following day , and noted that Reds had had two clean one @-@ base hits during the game . Furthermore , on June 6 , the New York Clipper did not report an occurrence of a no @-@ hitter in their summary of the game , though the box score did have differing stats in other categories than what the Daily Globe had reported . Consequently , the first official no @-@ hitter in Major League history was pitched by George Bradley , of the St. Louis Brown Stockings on July 15 , 1876 .

Two days after his near no @-@ hitter , on May 25 , Borden and the Red Caps faced the Reds again ; this time against Cherokee Fisher , resulting in a scoreless game through nine innings . The Red Caps scored four runs in tenth inning for a 4 ? 0 victory . Unfortunately for Borden , his pitching effectiveness declined rapidly after this , and at one point he reportedly lost his temper during a game in response to his own ineffectiveness , admonishing his teammates , even the well @-@ liked and good @-@ natured future Hall of famer George Wright . Due to his erratic pitching and behavior , he was released from the team by August . In 29 games pitched during the 1876 season , he started 24 , completed 16 and recorded two shutouts . Additionally , he had an 11 ? 12 win ? loss record , a 2 @. @ 89 earned run average in 218 ? innings pitched , and led the league in allowing 51 bases on balls .

= = Post @-@ baseball career = =

Though the Red Caps had released him as a player , he was still under contract , so they had him work in various other capacities , such as a ticket @-@ taker and groundskeeper . Eventually , team owner Nicholas Apollonio agreed to pay Borden approximately three @-@ quarters of the two remaining years of his contract , and released him from the team . Borden reportedly found work stitching baseballs in Philadelphia . Little is known of Borden 's life after baseball , and it has been alleged that he died in May 1889 during the Johnstown Flood , the same disaster that had stranded the entire Louisville Colonels team . Official records show that he died in Yeadon , Pennsylvania at the age of 75 , and is interred at Oaklands Cemetery in West Chester , Pennsylvania .