

Meet Edna--She's Casey's Charming Helpmate

By NANCY OSGOOD

In the St. Petersburg Times

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.

A woman who goes to bat for her husband—that's the wife of baseball's Hall of Famer Casey Stengel.

Charming Edna Stengel talks more readily about her colorful husband than herself.

Casey's "fairness to everyone," is a quality Mrs. Stengel most admires in her mate of 41 years. Another is his devotion to children. Childless themselves, both have taken tremendous interest in her nieces and nephews. "Casey has been wonderful to them. All the children in our family love him. Even the babies crawl over to 'Uncle Casey.'"

The tall (5-6), slender (130 pounds), hazel-eyed Edna Stengel—beloved in the sports world as "a great girl"—is as soft-spoken as her Casey can be strident in tone.

She laughed a little as she noted, "He's not a man to hide either his good or bad points. If he has anything to say, he shouts it out. I'd like it done in a quieter way. . . . Sometimes I'm embarrassed when he gives the press a sharp answer. But later, he always admits he knows 'they have a job to do, too.'"

They Met at Polo Grounds

The former Edna Lawson, born in Menominee, Mich., but reared in Glendale, Calif., met her future husband by prearrangement of baseball friends who invited her to visit them in New York. She and Casey were introduced at New York's Polo Grounds, August 23, 1923—the day Casey hit two home runs for the Giants.

"I guess Casey just made up his mind he was going to marry me; because, although we saw very little of each other the year between, we were married August 12, 1924, in Belleville, Ill. Casey then was with the Boston Braves. The very next day he was playing center field against the St. Louis Cardinals."

Mrs. Stengel recalled that her brother, the late General Lawrence Lawson, had fostered the romance by having her visit him—and, incidentally, Casey—in New York.

Her family, including an older sister and another brother, were somewhat opposed to her marrying into baseball. She said, "In fact, they consented only when I had gained Casey's promise to finish in dentistry. But when he retired as a player, he went into management and that was the end of dentistry."

Baseball was an unfamiliar world to Casey's bride. She knew nothing of the game. Her attitude was in-



'HE'S NOT A MAN to hide either his good or his bad points,' says Edna Stengel of her famous husband, shown during a Mets' exhibition game in St. Petersburg, Fla.

different. As a case in point, Mrs. Stengel related a humorous incident which occurred while they were honeymooning in Europe.

"Casey was playing in a pantomime game for the King and Queen of England. I was seated in a box next to the Queen Mother, with Mrs.

John McGraw. During the game, I remarked that the man on first base was the funniest-looking player I'd ever seen. Who was it but Casey. I hadn't recognized my own husband."

Actually, business is Mrs. Stengel's forte. Her father, a pioneer in

Glendale real estate, built that city's first four-story building. Before her marriage, Edna managed large Los Angeles apartment houses in connection with the family business.

When her brother, Jack Lawson, established Glendale's Valley National Bank eight years ago, she

Casey Will Carry a Check For 6 Months, Edna Says

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Here's what Edna Stengel had to say about her husband's financial habits:

"He doesn't even know how much money he has in the bank. He'll carry a check in his pocket six months. When he writes one, I have to write and tell them to honor it whether there are funds to cover it or not.

"When he needs money, he just says, 'If you're going to the bank, Edna, cash me a check.'"

sold more stock in it than any other individual and, against her husband's wishes, bought considerable stock herself.

"Casey barked and barked about the bank," she said. "Yet he's been made a director and I never have."

The tremendously successful bank already has two branches.

Casey's grinning comment about the wife who handles all their finances except his own stocks: "As a girl, Edna worked all night in motion pictures for \$2.50. And she still has that same \$2.50."

Second only to her business ability is Edna's political know-how. She helped her brother, Jack, win the Glendale mayoralty which preceded his banking career. She'd be working for her gubernatorial candidate now, if it weren't that "Casey's spoiled and wants me with him."

Edna Answers Fan Mail

She answers his very considerable fan mail, goes where he goes and has driven for him since he broke his hip last year. Because they're constantly on the go, Mrs. Stengel joins no clubs and has given up playing bridge. For recreation, she knits.

Ever since their marriage, the Stengels have lived in the 14-room showplace built for them by her parents, the John Lawsons. The house—kept up so well it still contains most of the original French furniture—has six upstairs rooms, a swimming pool, tennis court and sunhouse. The extensive grounds are enhanced by formal gardens and an orchard whose trees bear fruit of a dozen varieties.

Mrs. Stengel loves pretty clothes and has a great many. Her beautiful furs include a full-length mink coat, a capelet and jacket of sable and a chinchilla stole. Her favorite jewelry is set with diamonds—a World Series watch, given her when Casey received a handsome diamond ring for leading the New York Yankees to five straight pennants and five world championships (1949 through 1953)—a bracelet centered with a huge square-cut diamond—and her engagement diamond since reset to match the diamond wedding band which replaced its stolen original.

Trip to Honolulu

The Stengels left St. Petersburg, April 1, for a two-week business and pleasure sojourn in Honolulu. They will return to California in time for Casey to help dedicate the Los Angeles Angels' new park in Anaheim. He'll throw out the first ball on April 11.

Admiration, tolerance and solicitude intermingle as Edna Stengel says of her colorful mate, "He makes things happen—steals attention—wherever he goes. He opens his big mouth and yak, yak, yaks—seldom with repetition. . . . He still suffers pain from his hip. I take his own chair and cushion to the home games. He does feed himself, though," she said with a laugh.

Then she added: "His time is my time. It's too late to change that now. It's been a full life and I probably wouldn't change it if I could."

Grote Grabs No.1 Met Backstop Job

By BARNEY KREMENKO

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.

Strange as it may seem, the Mets are going into the 1966 season without a catcher. Well, there were six in camp, but as of the final week of training, Wes Westrum, an old catcher himself, didn't know who is going to do his backstopping.

When the Mets first arrived here in late February, Greg Goossen, a 20-year-old blond rookie who was drafted from the Dodgers last year, was rated No. 1.

Greg was to be given every chance to be the club's regular receiver, mainly because of his potential with the bat. He is still a pretty good swinger, but appears to have missed the boat—temporarily, at least—in his technique with the glove.

Berra Does Tutoring

Yogi Berra has worked with the kid, also Sheriff Robinson, also Manager Westrum himself. But the coaching hasn't taken.

"He doesn't apply himself," Westrum moaned. "You tell him things, but apparently he doesn't concen-

Thief Gets Small Change In Raiding Met Lockers

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — A thief got into the Mets' locker room at Ft. Myers during a March 24 game with the Pirates and literally was short-changed. All he could find in the way of money was the change the players had left in their pockets. They had put their bills away in a safe.

One other item disappeared—coach Sheriff Robinson's shirt. Apparently it was the same size as the robber's.

trate. Maybe when he is more mature, it will be different. Right now, his mind seems to wander.

"For example, there was a game we played with the Yankees in Ft. Lauderdale. They beat us, 5-4, on a double steal. I asked Goossen how come he let them get away with the double steal and what do you think he said 'I fell asleep,' he answered.

"What I want in a catcher, most of

all, is a take-charge guy, someone who controls the game. To do that, you have to be alert at all times."

Goossen, a .305 hitter for the Auburn farm club in the New York-Penn League last year, was brought up by the Mets last September and caught the full final month.

He's Losing Ground

"I thought he did well then and that's what is so disappointing," Westrum pointed out.

"Instead of improving, he has gone back."

The others who reported to Huggins-Stengel Field for spring tuning-up were Chris Cannizzaro and John Stephenson, hold-overs; Jerry Grote, acquired over the winter from the Houston Astros, and a pair of non-roster men who had seen previous service with the Mets, Choo Choo Coleman and Bob (Hawk) Taylor.

As camp days were ending, Grote held a slight lead.

"He isn't much with the bat," Westrum conceded, "but if you'll notice, we play our best when he's in there. He keeps the other fellows



Greg Goossen

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