When Was Oscar Born?
*B. A. Ware, Ph.D.*

Oscar Joseph Dugey is buried at Oakland Cemetery. His marker gives his birth as 25 Oct 1888 and his death as 1 Jan 1966. Various other sources, however, give different dates. Read through these records. How would you determine his birth date? Which record would you trust?

**Census Records and Substitutes.** The 1900 census provides a person’s age, birth year and month. In the 1900 Anderson County, Texas census in the family of O. J. Dugey lists 10-year-old Oscar born in October 1889. This census was recorded on 7 June 1900. He was born in Texas, and his father was born in Louisiana, July 1858.

By 1910, Oscar is recorded as a ball player in Waco, Texas where he is a boarder at the Dumas Hotel with other ball players, artists, and salesmen. His age is not listed.

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Oscar doesn’t appear on a 1920 census, perhaps because he was moving around. According to newspaper accounts of his baseball career he may have been moving between Boston and Philadelphia.4 In March 1920, he was signed as a coach for the Boston Braves.5 He appears in two team photos in a collection of the Baseball Almanac, one with the Philadelphia Phillies 1916 and the other with the Boston Braves. His biography describes him and gives his birth date as 25 October 1894.6

Oscar’s mother, the widow of Oscar J. Dugey, is in the 1920 and the 1921 Dallas city directories.7 Her son Oscar is not recorded in either. A search on Ancestry.com in 1920 for all those who had “baseball” or “base ball” as part of their occupation located 200 people, but not Oscar Dugey. He is in the 1928, 1929, 1930 and 1931 Dallas city directories.

Oscar had retired from baseball by 1930 as reported on the 1930 Dallas County census where he is in the family of [Mrs] O J Dugey who is a 60-year-old widow. But he is recorded as her brother, age 36, which would make his birth year 1894. Perhaps it was his sister Virginia L. Dugey, who appears on the census as Mrs. Dugey’s daughter, who gave this information and stated that he was her brother. Still, Virginia may have confused the two birth dates of her brothers. On the 1900 census for the family, brother Frank is recorded as being born in 1894.5

**Newspapers.** “Oscar Dugey, 21, Today Is Luckiest Kid in Baseball….Oscar will attain his legal majority today, having been born in Palestine, Tex., Oct. 25, 1894.” Earlier that year a Brooklyn, New York, newspaper.

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New York newspaper reported that “Oscar Dugey will be 25 on October 25 next [i.e. 1890] He was born in Palestine, Tex.”

**Military Records.** On Oscar Joseph Dugey’s World War I draft registration, he recorded his birth date as 25 Oct 1889. At that time, he was living in Dallas, Texas and was employed as a baseball player for the “Phil National League Club.” The handwriting on the card does not appear to be a match to the signature.

![Handwritten card image]

In 1942 when Oscar filled out his World War II Draft Registration card, he was a 51-year-old painter and gave his birth date as October 25, 1890. The hand printed card was signed 27 Apr 1942.

![Hand printed card image]

**Vital Records.** Birth Records for Anderson county are in the FamilySearch catalog with a searchable “Index to current birth records A-K 1860-1990”, but there were no individuals listed with the surname Dugey, or whose father’s forename is Oscar or O J for the years 1888 to 1894.

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The actual records could not be searched at this time as they are only available on site in Anderson County, Texas courthouse in Palestine, Texas or via microfilm at the Family History Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mrs. Hubbard Marshall, who was Oscar’s sister Virginia, provided the information on Oscar’s death certificate in Dallas County, Texas, in 1966. Oscar’s birth date was given as 25 October 1888. He was listed as a retired painter and his parents were Mattie Bell Green and Oscar J. Dugey. He died at the Ambassador Hotel, Dallas. Virginia Lee Dugey married James Leedy Rose in 1930 and later married Herbert William Marshall, Jr. in 1936.12

According to the Social Security Death Index, Oscar Dugey was born 25 Oct 1886, died January 1966. His social security number is available; and it would be possible to order a SS-5 to confirm that the birth date in the index was transcribed correctly.13

Oscar DuGey
Graveside service for Oscar (Jake) DuGrey (sic), 77, of the Ambassador Hotel, a National League baseball player from 1913-20, will be held at Oakland Cemetery at 2:30 p.m. Sunday. Burial will follow.

Mr. DuGey, who died in a Dallas hospital Saturday, was an infielder with the old Boston Braves and the Philadelphia Phillies for six seasons. Before that he played with a Waco team in the Texas League from 1908-1013, playing 639 games. He set the all-time record for stolen bases for the Texas League.

In the early 1920s he was a coach for the Chicago Cubs, retiring from baseball in 1925.

Survivors: Three sisters, Mrs. Bowman Whited, Shreveport, La., Mrs. Mizzell Philips, Larchmont, N.Y., and Mrs. Herbert Marshall, Dallas, and a brother, Frank G. DuGey of Dallas.14

So... if you wanted to select one birth year for Oscar Joseph Dugey, born October 25\textsuperscript{th} in Palestine, Texas, which record would you choose? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Cemetery marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1900 census – Anderson County, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1930 census – Dallas County, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Newspaper – \textit{The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer} in 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Newspaper – \textit{Brooklyn Daily Eagle} in 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Baseball Almanac ca 1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>World War I Draft Registration in 1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>World War II Draft Registration in 1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Death certificate in 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Social Security Death Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Obituary in 1966</td>
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</tbody>
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\textit{Author’s Note}: When I started this research, I had no idea that this individual was a nationally known baseball player. Enter the “genealogy rabbit hole!” I became interested in him because I was researching individuals buried at Oakland Cemetery who had served in the military. We had incorrectly coded him as being in the military.

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