

## Finding Aid to the John Burgeson Papers, 1947-2012

### Summary Information

**Title:** John Burgeson papers

**Creator:** John Burgeson (primary)

**ID:** 112.7212

**Date:** 1947-2012 (inclusive); 1960-1963 (bulk)

**Extent:** 0.25 linear feet (physical); 314 MB (digital)

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English.

**Abstract:** The John Burgeson papers are a compilation of computer printouts of game simulations, notes, correspondence, and an essay related to Burgeson's baseball-simulation game, "BBC Program." The bulk of the materials are from between late 1960 and 1963. Digital files are also part of this collection.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Custodial History:** The John Burgeson papers were donated to The Strong in December 2012 as a gift of John W. ("Burgy") Burgeson. The papers, along with a DVD containing various digital files, were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 112.7212 and received from Burgeson in one box.

**Preferred citation for publication:** John Burgeson papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

**Processed by:** Julia Novakovic, June 2014

### Controlled Access Terms

#### Personal Names

- Burgeson, John
- Burgeson, Paul
- Cordic, Rege

#### Corporate Names

- International Business Machines Corporation

**Subjects**

- Baseball--Computer games.
- Baseball--Computer simulation--Software.
- Computer baseball games
- Fantasy baseball (Game)
- Games--software
- IBM 1620 (Computer)
- IBM 1620 (Computer)--Programming
- Simulation games

**Biographical Note**

John Burgeson (1931- ) is a former IBM engineer who created the first baseball computer simulation program in 1961.

Burgeson grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, where he and his brother often played baseball-simulation board games while supporting the Cleveland Indians. He received his BS in Physics from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Burgeson soon earned his MS, also in Physics, from Florida State University. In 1955, he began work as a civil service physicist for the United States government, researching military machinery. Two years later, he began what would turn out to be a 35-year career at International Business Machines Corporation (better known as IBM) in Akron, Ohio. In 1960, Burgeson, programming on the IBM 1620, invented a baseball game simulator. This simulation used true statistics from historical players to mock up a nine-inning baseball game, resulting in computer-generated play-by-play text with a final score. John collaborated with his brother, Paul, on the development of the game.

Burgeson's baseball simulator game, or "BBC Program," ended up in the IBM 1620's software library as the only game among a batch of data processing programs. The BBC Program picked up some publicity in the early 1960s via newspaper articles and a radio show feature hosted by Rege Cordic of KDKA Pittsburgh. The IBM 1620 scientific computer ceased production by 1970; since only about 2,000 units had ever been manufactured, the BBC Program faded into obscurity. Burgeson reminded the world of the simulation program nearly 50 years after its invention when he appended text and images from his computer simulation game into a Wikipedia entry on fantasy baseball.

Burgeson retired from IBM in 1992 and worked as an independent market research consultant for two more years. He and his wife now reside in Texas. Burgeson's interests include baseball, cars, religion, and his large family.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The John Burgeson papers contain materials generated by and referring to the development of his baseball simulation computer game, "BBC Program." Document types include computer printouts of simulations (with annotations), correspondence, publicity materials, and a narrative essay. A series of digital files is also part of this collection; within the digital materials are scanned photographs, audio recordings, video clips, text documents, and compressed program files. Additional scope and content information for each series can be found in the "Contents List" section of this finding aid.

The John Burgeson papers are arranged into five series. The physical materials are housed in one archival document box. Digital files comprise one series, located on the internal network of The Strong.

**System of Arrangement**

- Series I: BBC Program code and selected simulations, 1960-1962
- Series II: Correspondence, 1961-1963
- Series III: Publicity, 1962-1963
- Series IV: Baseball computer games essay, 1990
- Series V: Digital files, 1947-2012

## Contents List

### Series I: BBC Program code and selected simulations, 1960-1962

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains various printouts of baseball game simulations run by Burgeson. Also included here is the abstract and program description of “The Baseball Demonstrator” presented to IBM in September 1961. (Additional simulations can be found in Series V: Digital files.)

#### Box 1

- Folder 1 The BBC Program 1620 code, December 1960 [?]
- Folder 2 BBC - 73rd simulation, July 23, 1961
- Folder 3 BBC - 53rd simulation, November 22, 1961
- Folder 4 BBC - 51st simulation, n.d.
- Folder 5 BBC - 86th simulation, n.d.
- Folder 6 “BBC VIK - The Baseball Demonstrator,” Jack Burgeson, IBM Akron, and Paul R. Burgeson, Ens. - US Navy, September 1961, Code 11.0 [IBM 1620 Program Library Abstract, 1961]

### Series II: Correspondence, 1961-1963

**Scope and Content Note:** Within this series are letters indicating interest in using the BBC Program on a radio show with Rege Cordic of KDKA Pittsburgh, as well as the BBC Program’s inclusion in/exclusion from the IBM 1620 software library.

#### Box 1

- Folder 7 Correspondence about BBC Program simulations, 1961-1963 [J. Burgeson, R. Cordic, A. Cella, B. Luckin, F. Marks, D. Newton]

### Series III: Publicity, 1962-1963

**Scope and Content Note:** This series includes newspaper articles from 1962 and 1963 touting baseball simulation on the IBM 1620. (Additional later publicity can also be found in Series V: Digital files.)

#### Box 1

- Folder 8 News articles on John Burgeson, 1962-1963

### Series IV: Baseball computer games essay, 1990

**Scope and Content Note:** This series houses a personal narrative written by Burgeson on his affinity for the Cleveland Indians, beginning in 1946, covering his development of the BBC Program, and reviews of other baseball simulation software.

#### Box 1

- Folder 9 Essay on baseball computer games, John Burgeson, February 14, 1990

**Series V: Digital files, 1947-2012**

**Scope and Content Note:** These digital files from Burgeson include scanned photographs, audio recordings, video clips, text documents, and compressed program files. The file names, upon transfer to the internal network of The Strong, remain as originally titled by Burgeson. Some files may include the approximate date within the file name (such as with some photos or audio), or within the document text. Two folders contain HTML or MHTML documents, which are saved versions of web pages and can still be accessed using web browsers. References made in Burgeson's 1990 essay on baseball computer games to simulation programs may be located in the "Compressed folders" path.

**Box 1**

Folder 10 DVD of BBC Files from John Burgeson, December 2012

Digital files are also accessible on the internal network of The Strong.

- Folder: Audio files [all .mp3 files, can be played on Windows Media Player]
  - 1953 Indians broadcast
  - 1956 Baseball humor
  - 1961 - 1620 Cordic baseball (con)
  - 1961 Cordic baseball
  - 1962 01 glove oil
  - 1963 Old Timers #1
  - 1963 Old Timers #2
  - 1963 Old Timers #3
  - 1963 Old Timers #4
  - 1963 Old Timers #5
  - 1963 Old Timers Baseball Game
  - 1998 Harry Carey
  - 2004 Intro to the baseball game disk
  - 2004 Tribe Chapter 1
  - I am the greatest
  
- Folder: Compressed folders [compressed files; unknown programs required to run]
  - RADIO BASEBALL COMPUTER GAME
  - SIMBASE
  - XBASE
  
- Folder: HTML documents [all .html files, can be opened using Google Chrome or similar]
  - astory
  - baseball and religion
  - BASEVAR
  - BASEVARc
  - bb
  - bb1
  - bb2

- bb3
  - bb4
  - bb5
  - bb6
  - bb7
  - bb8
  - bb9
  - bb10
  - bbc
  - Climate
  - cyyoung
  - DEPRESS
  - EMPLOYEE
  - GAME2
  - gerhig
  - hometeam
  - jwbstory
  - masks
  - oldphil
  - percom
  - THEBEST
  - thefirst
  - THEGAME
  - thelast
  - tribe
- Folder: Images [all .jpg files unless otherwise indicated]
    - 1620 picture from Kalb article
    - 1947 contract (\$80K) for Bob Feller
    - 1948 Tribe wins parade in Cleveland
    - 1957--IBM 704--tracked Sputnik at the Vanguard Center, Washington
    - 1957 10 -- Tracking sputnik on the IBM 704
    - 1960 baseball
    - 1960 JWB in the news
    - 1961 -- mel hutfilz, dr. paul davis, and john burgeson with 1620
    - 1961--the IBM\_1620\_Model\_1
    - 1961 07 19 John Burgeson, IBM, and Tom Daum, Westinghouse
    - 1961 07 23 BBC game number 73
    - 1961 07 23 BBC game number 73-001
    - 1961 07 23 BBC game number 73-002
    - 1961 07 23 BBC game number 73-003
    - 1961 08 18 bbc game
    - 1961 08 18 bbc game-001
    - 1961 08 18 bbc game-002
    - 1961 08 18 bbc game-003
    - 1961 09 02 bbc documentation

- 1961 09 02 bbc documentation-001
- 1961 09 02 bbc documentation-002
- 1961 09 02 bbc documentation-003
- 1961 09 11 1620 BB Simulation, page 1 of 4-000
- 1961 09 11 1620 BB Simulation, page 1 of 4-001
- 1961 09 11 1620 BB Simulation, page 1 of 4-002
- 1961 09 11 1620 BB Simulation, page 1 of 4-003
- 1961 09 18 letter to cordic
- 1961 11 21 letter to paul about the radio project
- 1961 11 21 letter to paul about the radio project-001
- 1961 11 21 letter to paul about the radio project-002
- 1961 11 21 letter to paul about the radio project-003
- 1961 bbc article
- 1961 BBC0002
- 1961 BBC0003
- 1961 BBC0004
- 1961 John at the 1620
- 1961 letter from Rege Cordic baseball
- 1961 letters from rege cordic about the bbc program
- 1961 letters from rege cordic about the bbc program-001
- 1961 letters from rege cordic about the bbc program-002
- 1961 letters from rege cordic about the bbc program-003
- 1961 original bbc abstract
- 1961 radio baseball - cordic0002
- 1961 radio baseball - cordic0003
- 1961 radio baseball - cordic0003-001
- 1962 1620 baseball article-001
- 1962 article -- John Burgeson & the 1620
- 1963 01 08 bbc game-000
- 1963 01 08 bbc game-001
- 1963 article on the bbc
- 1963 article on the bbc-001
- 1963 more-0001
- 1964 - mvspe meeting notice
- 1964 -- article on the BBC
- 1965 - Paul's ordination
- 1968 portable teletype [.png file]
- 1971 birth of the IBM PC-001
- 1972 07 22 commendation letter from ibm mgmt
- 1975 -- JWB was part of a 4 person task force which came up with this idea
- 1977 John's IBM office
- 1985 John's IBM office-001
- 1997 The Burg is Back
- 2004 Article on Carol - 1
- 2004 Article on Carol - 2
- 2009 Feller at cooperstown

- 2010 01 Baseball puzzle-002
- 19480005-001
- 19720003
- 19780004
- 19790001
- 19800001
- 19890004
- 19950001
- 19980004
- 19980005
- 20010001
- 20080003
- 20080005
- a bbc game played in 1961
- a bbc game played in 1961-001
- a bbc game played in 1961-002
- article on John in IBM magazine #1
- article on John in IBM magazine #2
- baseball and Charlie Brown
- baseball chair
- baseball evolution
- baseball marbleboard used in the 1950s by Jack and Paul
- baseball
- boudreau
- Burgy, Spode, and Reun, 1954
- Cleveland HOF
- computer- 1890.gif
- Dagwood
- feller and dimaggio
- feller vs dimaggio --1946
- feller
- FellerMuseum2
- Goodyear 101 library machine -- designed by jwb
- HITLERCA
- IBM ID, 1957
- INDIANS certificate
- INDIANS [.bmp file]
- john's card
- jokes0001
- jokes0002
- misc -- 0010
- peanuts baseball end
- SNOWBASE
- TRIBE LOGO
- Zelda



- Folder: MHTML documents [all .mhtml files, can be opened using Internet Explorer]
  - Afflictor\_com - “John Earned A Bit of Credit for An Idea Lost in a Filing Cabinet for 50 Years”
  - BBTF’s Newsblog Discussion Grantland Kalb The Lost Founder of Baseball Video Games
  - Burgeson Game Review Guide
  - Chronology of baseball video games - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
  - Don Daglow - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
  - Fantasy baseball - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
  - Game Simulations Answer Baseball What-Ifs - NYTimes\_com
  - Gmail - Baseball game in the news (ours)! - jwburgeson@gmail\_com
  - IBM 1620 - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
  - John Burgeson - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
  - John Burgeson on the variability of baseball statistics Ask Rotoman
  - John Burgeson on the variability of baseball statistics SABR
  - John Burgeson Writes About Baseball, Cleveland Indians Style - THE BROWNS BOARD\_php
  - John Burgeson, an IBM 1620, and the start of baseball video games - Grantland
  - John Burgeson, an IMB computer, and the start of baseball video games - Grantland
  - More Fun with Fantasy Baseball
  - The Region of Fantasy Baseball
  - Tribe Game Vault 4-16-40\_Bob Feller Opening Day No-No The Cleveland Fan
  
- Folder: Movie files [all can be opened using Windows Media Player]
  - Ballgirl [00:00:38]
  - Baseballvideo [00:002:01]
  - COPPER~1 [00:02:48]
  
- Folder: PDFs [all .pdf files]
  - 1620 BBC documentation
  - 1620\_baseball
  - 1961 BBC game
  - 1963 BBC game
  - BBC
  - georgesisler\_1920
  - JWB’s 1620 baseball simulator
  - location of 1963 game
  - Pitchers with Two Appearances in One Game
  
- Folder: Spreadsheets
  - BA Variance - 2 (saved as Excel)\_062414 [.xlsx file]
  - BA Variance - 2 [XLR file]
  - BA Variance (saved to Excel)\_062414 [.xlsx file]
  - ba variance [XLR file]

- Folder: Text documents [all .txt docs, can be opened using Notepad]
  - 1962 08 04 BBC game
  - 1977 BBC baseball game
  - 1998 version of my 1990 article on baseball computer games
  - 2004 Intro to the baseball game disk
  - 2007 12 Bugle essay -- on baseball
  - 2008 01 Bugle essay -- baseball 1
  - 2008 02 Bugle essay -- baseball 2
  - 2008 03 Bugle essay -- baseball 3
  - 2008 04 Bugle essay -- baseball 4
  - 2008 05 Bugle essay -- baseball 5
  - 2008 06 Bugle essay -- baseball 6
  - 2008 07 Bugle essay -- baseball 7
  - 2008 08 Bugle essay -- baseball 8
  - 2008 09 Bugle essay -- baseball 9
  - 2008 10 Bugle essay -- baseball 10
  - 2009 -- Bugle essay -- baseball
  - 2009 --- Bugle essay -- baseball
  - 2009 ---- Bugle essay -- baseball
  - 2009 -- Bugle essay -- Did Gore err
  - 2009 02 Bugle essay -- baseball
  - 2009 05 Bugle essay -- baseball
  - 2009 08 Bugle essay -- baseball
  - bb notes
  - bbc73
  - Bill, 5-24-04
  - CLEVELAN
  - CYYOUNG
  - GAME1
  - GAME2
  - GAME4
  - GAME5
  - GAME6
  - GAME7
  - hometeam
  - JCASEY
  - JWB Work history through 1985 and beyond
  - JWBBIO
  - letter on the BBC 4-7-11
  - My essay on baseball computer games, 1990
  - My Percom article published in BYTE magazine in 1987
  - NetShrine - Baseball Statistic Glossary
  - PITCHERS
  - puzzle1
  - puzzle2
  - radio baseball GAME3

- Review of Oliver Holmes by both J and C
  - THEBEST
  - THEGAME (2)
  - THEGAME
  - TRIBE
  - TRIBE02
  - TRIBE03
  - TRIBE04
  - TRIBE05
- Folder: Word documents [all .doc files, unless otherwise noted, can be opened in Microsoft Word]
    - 2bmdir
    - 1961 bbc game
    - 1963 bbc game
    - 1990 my article on baseball [.rtf file]
    - 2005 Pine Tar Review
    - 2009 01 Bugle essay - 3 puzzles [.rtf file]
    - Baseball Puzzle #23 [.rtf file]
    - BASEVAR2
    - bbc documentation
    - Bill and Paul, July 2003
    - Bill, 9-1-2003
    - Bill, July 2003
    - billpaul1954
    - billpaul1955
    - billpaul1956S ws 1
    - billpaul1956S ws 2
    - billpaul1956S ws 3
    - billpaul1956S ws 4
    - billpaul1956S ws 5
    - billpaul1956S
    - early BBC documentation
    - Feller's last game - alt universe
    - jb and cb aug 2011
    - letter to bill, Oct 2004
    - link to BBC on wilki [.rtf file]
    - Paul, May 2003
    - The Inherent Variability of Baseball
    - ww2 baseball
    - xtn