



# THE CHRONICLE

BASE BALL PLAYER'S

WINTER 2018

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION

## President's Corner

Brrr!!! A Winter chill has settled in on the Midwest vintage base ball clubs. It is the time of year for most of them to go into hibernation. There are only a few Midwest base ball clubs that dare to play in December.

Travel to the far south, and west and you will find vintage base ball clubs starting their seasons. The VBBC of Central Florida, the Prescott Champions of Arizona, and the new formed four club Central Valley Vintage Base Ball organization in Davis, California, near Sacramento, are all playing base ball.

I want to encourage all of our member clubs to send representatives to this year's VBBA Conference in Branson, Missouri, April 5, 6, and 7. For \$50 you get a full lineup of workshops, the banquet, keynote Phil Dixon, and more. The Clarion Hotel is offering rooms beginning at \$77 per night. Fly into Branson on Frontier Airlines or Via Air, or nearby Springfield via Allegiant Airlines for as low as \$79 one way. And, of course, you get the great entertainment venues that are part of the Branson experience. Go to the VBBA website and click on the VBBA 2019 Conference link: <http://vbba.org> I hope to see you there.

The Vintage Base Ball Association continues to move forward with a list of new features and programs.

The VBBA has recently gotten commitments from seven vendors to offer our member clubs a **15% discount** on their products. The merchant code for VBBA members is **vbba1996**.

They include:

**Phoenix Bats:** [www.phoenixbats.com](http://www.phoenixbats.com)

**Stockbridge Sewing Works:**

[www.stockbridgesewingworks.com](http://www.stockbridgesewingworks.com)

**K&P Weaver, LLC:** <http://www.baseballamericaspastime.com/>

**19cbaseball:** <http://www.19cbaseball.com/>

**James Country Mercantile:** [www.jamescountry.com](http://www.jamescountry.com)

**Smacker Bats:** <http://www.smackerbats.com>

**Cooperstown Bats:** [www.cooperstownbat.com](http://www.cooperstownbat.com)

## VBBA Executive Board and Trustees

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## Get Connected with the VBBA



[www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org)



<https://www.facebook.com/vintagebaseballassociation#>



[twitter.com/VBBA19c](https://twitter.com/VBBA19c)



[www.instagram.com/vbba\\_19c/](https://www.instagram.com/vbba_19c/)

## President's Corner Continued

In an effort to grow the vintage base ball community, the VBBA has developed a New Club Recruiting Program. We are asking our member clubs to reach out to historical societies in their region and offer to them the opportunity to sponsor a vintage base ball club. The major selling point is that vintage base ball can be a cost-effective way to bring attention to their site at a reasonable cost. The email packet created by VBBA Trustee, Evette Griffore Jacobson, includes: a letter to your club manager, a club proposal letter, a bullet list of the aims of the proposal, a page detailing the potential club(s) uniform, and a list of what the club is asking of the historical society. We will email this packet to your club's contact person.

In addition, we have been reaching out to several potential vintage base ball clubs in Florida, Kentucky and Texas. VBBA Trustee Mike "Ace" Adrian has been working with the Arizona Territories Vintage Base Ball League encouraging their teams to join the VBBA and enhance their historical accuracy.

Finally, the VBBA is in the process of updating the VBBA website Club Directory. As of October 15, we had eighty-six, member clubs and counting.

Happy Holidays to All and Wonderful New Year!

Gary Schiappacasse  
President, VBBA



**Photo Credit: Dick Perez**

<https://dickperez.com/category/19th-century-baseball/>

**From our Historian**

## VBBA Vendor Spotlight



### 19c Base Ball

**"Get the ball that started it all!"**

Contact Eric Miklich at:

Via Telephone: 631-796-5200

Via e-mail: [info@19cbaseball.com](mailto:info@19cbaseball.com)

Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code **vbba1996** to get your **15% discount!**



### Smacker Bats

Proprietor Brian Carter states, "We pride ourselves on our bats being ALL handmade... not CNC machine created. If a vintage Ballist wants to be true to the time period of play – we are the company to use. ALL of our bats are handmade by craftsmen (Carter, himself) behind a lathe... shaping, sanding, staining/painting and striping the bats just like the originals back in the 1800's". With a quick turnaround between 1-2 weeks, these bats are ALL AMERICAN, with ALL American tools and materials.

"We believe in quality of quantity", states Carter. Their pricing is competitive as well. "We love the history of the base ball bat, which bleeds into our passion for making them".

Simply put.... "WE are obsessed with base ball bats!"

Contact Brian at [smacker@comcast.net](mailto:smacker@comcast.net)

Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code **vbba1996** to get your **15% discount!**

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Field Exam

11- What year did the rules first require Home Base to be 12 inches x 12 inches?

12- According to the 1868 rules, where was Home Base required to be placed?

13 – Beginning with which years rules was a “Batter’s Area” required to be marked on the playing field, what were its dimensions and its relationship to Home Base?

14 – Which yearly rules first specified that Home base was required to be placed entirely in foul ground and how was it positioned on the field?

15 – According to which years of rules Home Base required to be placed entirely in fair ground and how was it positioned on the field?

16 – What year did the rules first require the Batter’s Box to be 6’ x 4’ and six inches from Home Base?

17 – Beginning with which year did the rules specify that First Base, Second Base and Third Bases to be 12 inches x 12 inches and how were the bases to be placed on the playing field?

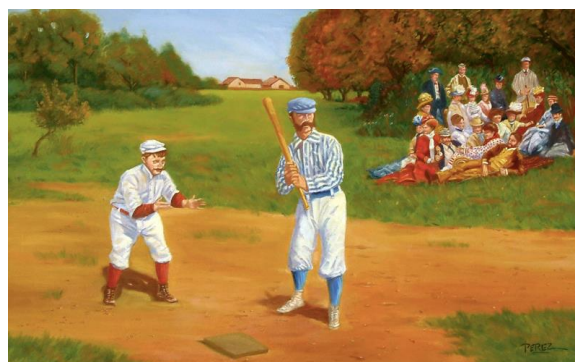
18 – Which year did the rules specify that the dimensions of the bases changed to 15 inches x 15 inches and how were the bases required to be placed on the playing field?

19 – According to which set of rules were First and Third Bases required to be entirely in fair ground and how were they placed on the playing field?

20 – How many Pitcher’s Lines were required to be marked on the playing field, what were their lengths, how many Pitcher’s Points were placed and where were they placed according to the NABBP rules for 1857?

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Field Exam Answers

1. 30 paces. Probably closer to 75.25 feet between all bases.
2. 1857 National Association of Base Ball Players
3. Technically these items were not listed in the 38 playing rules but mentioned in the section following the playing rules which described the game and its preparation in more detail. 1860 NABBP; Placed 100 feet behind First and Third Base, 6-8 feet in height and in line with an imaginary line from intersecting its base and home base. Used as an aid for the umpire in determining a fair or foul ball.
4. 1861 NAABP; from Home Base to the First and Third Base corners, thirty yards.
5. 1874 National Association of Professional Base Ball Players.
6. 1877 National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs. In 1880, the 15-foot line was known as the Coacher’s Line and the 50-foot line was known as the Player’s Line.
7. 1878 NLPBBC
8. Circular but no specs were listed. It is accepted that it was either 9 inches or 12 inches in diameter. (28.26 inches or 37.68 inches in circumference.)
9. Centered on the mark where the First and Third Base foul ball lines met. All bases were to be placed “on the four corners of a square.”
10. 1870 NABBP



Picture Credit: Dick Perez

<https://dickperez.com/category/19th-century-baseball/>



## The VBBA Logo Contest

Won by C. W. Ayers, Jr.  
of the Fulton Mules

by John Wells

For the past year we have been running a contest to design a logo for the VBBA with a custom bat as the prize. At the annual meeting this year in McCutchenville, Ohio, the delegates assembled on Sunday recognized that the entry at the right submitted by Chuck Ayers of Akron, Ohio was their choice as the "best of show". So Charlie Trudeau, bat maker to Vintage Base Ball, will fire up his lathe and cut a bat to the specification of Mr. Ayers and his efforts

The other entries are also pictured here. But here the tale takes a strange twist. The Captain of the Mules, one Ed Shuman, tardy with his entry to the contest – none-the-less, cornered the chair of the Publications Committee at the meeting to plead his case. And his case was a good one and when presented to the floor following lunch, was adopted as the logo idea.

Mr. Shuman's idea is to have a logo with two base ball players in it. One, a 19<sup>th</sup> century pitcher, and the other a twentieth century catcher. The advantages:

- The art may be very simple in rendering to assure it looks good in large and small sizes.
- It contains the idea of vintage base ball without centering on any one era.

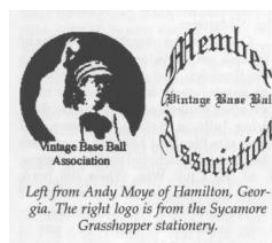
So it was moved, seconded and passed that Mr. Shuman should chair the committee to prepare the actual art work for this logo. The finished work should be available in the April issue of this publication.

Note who gets the bat. The gentleman who was on time! Note who gets to do the work. The man with a good idea, and a day late.



Article from *Early Innings Illustrated*,  
March 1998

Historical Society



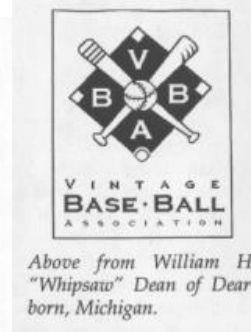
Left from Andy Moye of Hamilton, Georgia. The right logo is from the Sycamore Grasshopper stationery.



From the Great Black Swamp Frogs.



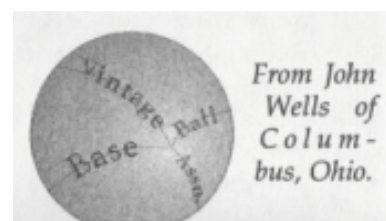
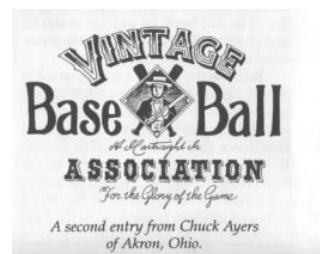
Sent in by Shane Gault of Akron, Ohio.



Above from William H. "Whipsaw" Dean of Dearborn, Michigan.



A group of 4 logos submitted by Mark Mitchell of Spring Valley, California.



From John Wells of Columbus, Ohio.

Base Ball Poetry



# Marketing Packet

**By: Evette Griffore Jacobson,  
VBBA Trustee**

In an effort to expand community support for new VBBA clubs, I am working on a marketing packet that can be presented to historical societies to get them excited and motivated to have a vintage base ball club. If you are a Captain of an existing VBBA club and currently work with a historical society and have some positive feedback to share about the experience, and would like your club to be featured in the marketing packet, please submit a brief explanation of how the partnership has been a great thing for your club.

All responses that I receive will be placed in a drawing to receive a historically accurate, hand-made Civil War era "Club Captain" cockade, in the colors of your club. The drawing will be held on February 15, 2018, on the VBBA Facebook page.

Captains, if you can also include a comment from your partnering historical society about the benefits of working with a vintage base ball club, that would also be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Evette Griffore Jacobson, VBBA Trustee



**Captain's Cockade Measuring 5" x 6"**



**Come join the VBBA Board of Trustees and the Branson Boomers Base Ball Club, as we celebrate our 2019 VBBA Conference in Branson, Missouri, from April 5-7, 2019**

On hot days, we played a game called "500" or home run derby, to avoid running the bases. The kids ruined good T-Shirts by writing names and numbers

## ***SANDLOT MEMORIES***

By: John "Radio" Russell "Moonglow" Ghrist  
Chicago Salmon Base Ball Club, Pitcher

I grew up in Hammond, Indiana and later South Holland, Illinois where there were always sandlot ball games going on. The kids all watched the ball games on TV and imitated their favorite players. Many times, I would see the boys working their wrists like Ernie Banks did. Years later, I would get the opportunity to interview him and still treasure his autographed picture. It was always an interesting sight to see our reflections in the sunlight on the ground watching ourselves wave baseball bats around.

Most of these games took place in vacant lots and not in city parks. In Hammond, a lot known as the "foolish forest" was where our games were played. I never really knew where the name came from. It could have been named after something on TV. It was on Sheffield Avenue. So, like in the Chicago Cubs games, all home runs went out onto Sheffield Avenue. I remember that my father, World War II Veteran Glenn H. Ghrist Junior, and a bunch of other dads cleaned up the property so we could play there and even played against the kids in the first game. Bags of flour were poured on the field for baselines. Burlap bags containing dead grass were used as bases. Our bats all had screwed together handles from being broken too many times. Our gloves were all worn out and each baseball usually was wrapped in a bunch of black electrical tape. It was true sandlot baseball.

Behind the field, was an alley and a yard belonging to an elderly lady who hated us. She moved faster than a rookie shortstop to snatch up any balls hit into her yard..." You kids!" she screamed and would take the ball into her house never to be seen again. I imagine that over the years, she had a large collection of our baseballs. We would then gather up all the empty pop bottles we could find to buy another ball and the games resumed. Incidentally, former Chicago Cubs and Detroit Tiger pitcher Bob Anderson was a 1953 graduate of Hammond High School.

The games in South Holland, Illinois where I later moved were a bit more organized. The guys would come down the street and just tap their bats on the sidewalk, and those in the neighborhood knew right away that a game was being formed at the vacant lot at the end of Evans Avenue.

The league gave me a transistor radio for my efforts. Larry Kelderhouse and Mike Gorniak were also early announcers. One-night Andy, the Clown, who was a mascot for the Chicago White Sox showed up at the game and I gave him the microphone and he shouted so loud in it that the whole town heard him. I used to read the weather, news and ball scores after the game over the PA. One night, some

many of them. Their only records are in old box scores or any printed rosters. Many early teams started and folded quickly and whose histories are buried in old newspapers.

Today, all of us vintage players take up the roles of these baseball pioneers. Except for those with softball winning only attitudes, the game is a pure demonstration of how the game was originally played

kid sprayed me in the face with mace and I could not see the rest of the night. I remember stumbling around and not getting any help from people. I went on to volunteer at the Babe Ruth League after that where the press box was above the refreshment stand and away from the people.

I moved away years later and lost track of old friends. I continued to play softball in various park-recreation leagues and senior over 50 softball leagues in Elgin, Illinois. There were good teams and very bad ones. One year, we won all of our games. The last game one of the seasons was one of the strangest games that I was ever in and I was the last to get in on unkind joke that was being pulled on the other team. We were already over 25 runs ahead. My fielders were needlessly diving for balls and missing them on purpose. I buried my face in my glove as I just kept throwing easy pitches for other team to hit just to get the game over. The guys on my team let them have about ten runs and when it was finally over, the losing team wanted us to pose in a large photo. They wanted a picture with the team that they had scored ten runs against.

I was also on a church league team that once won a tournament with seven players. I still wonder if our trophy is still in an awards case at what used to be an old Nazarene Church in Elgin? If it is, the current congregation has no idea how it got there.

As I have gotten older, I once attended a vintage game at the Elgin Historical Society and saw the Chicago Salmon again at a pickup game in Rockford. In Rockford, a batted ball was hit into a tree with the bases loaded. All the runners ran and scored and finally the defense climbed up on a branch to try to shake the ball down. It finally came down, and then bounced away from all the fielders and all four runs counted.

The Salmon also pulled off a rare triple play in a game at Hobart, Indiana. I was the pitcher and Gary, "The Professor", was the catcher. There were no outs and the bases were loaded. We were ahead by one run. The batter hit the ball back to me which I caught on one bounce for the first out. The runner from third tried to score and I threw the ball home and Gary chased the runner back to third and he tagged him out as well as another runner who was running from second. The end result-a triple play.

They happen very rarely in professional baseball.

There is a lot more to vintage base ball. It reminds us of a time of barnstorming. Unknown players who were only known by their first or last or nicknames moved from team to team, and very little is known about



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