

THE CHRONICLE

BASE BALL PLAYER'S

WINTER 2019

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENTS CORNER

Brrrr!

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

Stockbridge Sewing Works:
www.stockbridgesewingworks.com

K&P Weaver, LLC:
www.baseballamericaspas-time.com/

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

James Country Mercantile:
www.jamescountry.com

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

Cooperstown Bats:
www.cooperstownbat.com

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THE BASE BALL
PLAYER'S CHRONICLE
LAYOUT BY
KIDGARCIA.COM

Get Connected with the VBBA

www.vbba.org

www.facebook.com/vintagebaseballassociation

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PHOTO CREDIT: DICK PEREZ

dickperez.com/category/19th-century-baseball/

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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

have emailed 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 a Wonderful New Year!

Gary Schiappacasse
PRESIDENT,
VBBA

VBBA VENDOR SPOTLIGHT



"Get the ball that started it all!"

Contact Eric Miklich at:

Via Telephone: **631-796-5200**

Via e-mail: **info@19cbaseball.com**

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

FROM OUR HISTORIAN

19TH 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?

Answers to this Quiz will be provided in our Next Issue



PHOTO CREDIT: DICK PEREZ

dickperez.com/category/19th-century-baseball/

19TH CENTURY FIELD EXAM ANSWERS

ANSWERS TO THE SUMMER BASE BALL PLAYERS CHRONICLE QUIZ

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



VBBA VENDOR SPOTLIGHT



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

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

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE VBBA LOGO CONTEST

WON BY C. W. AYERS, JR. OF THE FULTON MULES

Makes Progress in Design

At the VBBA meeting in February this year a concept for the design of the VBBA logo was set forth. Since that time the brothers Shuman, Ed, Andy, and Thomas, have progressed along towards the final art work. Presented below is an approach towards the final design.

Remarks and suggestions are solicited by e-mail to

drushu@aol.com
or by mail to:
Ed Shuman
103 Tuscarawas St.
Canal Fulton, OH 44614



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 19th 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.



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.



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



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



A second entry from Chuck Ayers of Akron, Ohio.



From John Wells of Columbus, Ohio.

Come join the VBBA Board of Trustees and the
Branson Boomers Base Ball Club, as we celebrate our

2019 VBBA CONFERENCE

BRANSON, MISSOURI.

VBBA CONFERENCE LINEUP

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Phil Dixon

Highly regarded as one of America's
foremost experts on baseball history.

DURING ACTUAL MATCH PLAY:

UMPIRING:

Corky Gaskell

PITCHING: **Eric Miklich**

FOOD: **Ellie Carlson**

PREPARING TO PRESENT VINTAGE

MATCHES: CLOTHING:

Dell from James Country Mercantile

SIDELINE INTERPRETATION:

Doug Ernst

SETTING UP A TEAM:

Dennis Wiegmann

21st Century:

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS AND HISTORY CENTERS:

Doug Ernst

DOING RESEARCH ABOUT YOUR AREA AND TEAM:

Bob Tholkes and Rich Arpi

BRANSON BASEBALL – PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES OF THE 1930'S AND 1940'S:

Local Historians



APRIL 5-7, 2019

SANDLOT MEMORIES

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 autograph 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.

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 on them with crayons. For all those years, I wore number 16, to remind me that when I was that age, I was probably the best that I would ever be. I could bat both right and left handed. On some days, we would even switch gloves... I found that even though I was a right hander, I could play a decent first base with a left-handed glove. We played in the vacant lots until we put out too many windows in adjacent homes.

Although I liked playing ball, the chances of making teams were difficult when I was a kid. The local Little League teams were composed of sons and relatives of the manager and coaches. Their end of the year picnic resembled a family reunion. The rest of us got T-shirts instead of real uniforms and played in Saturday morning minor league games in roughed out diamonds in the park and not at the big field. One day, we went over and challenged a Little League

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**BY: JOHN "RADIO"
RUSSELL "MOONGLOW"
GHRIST CHICAGO
SALMON BASE BALL
CLUB, PITCHER**



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team and beat the pants off of them. At the same time, I developed an interest in being the public address announcer for the Little League and Babe Ruth Leagues. My folks always knew where I was. All they had to do was step outside and they could hear me at the park. At a Little League banquet one year, I met Chicago Cubs great Billy Williams.

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 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.

As I got older, the opportunities to play ball seemed to be restricted. I played church

softball for many years. My position was second base. When the next season started, there was already a kid out there who handled the position very well. I went to the dugout thinking my career was done. The coach came up to me and told me..."we have a new position for you." He put the ball into my glove and said "you're our new pitcher, don't walk anybody, we'll do the rest." The church team won many games for several seasons playing in Harvey, Illinois, the birthplace of another major league player and hall of famer Lou Boudreau. I just laid the ball in there and my teammates gobbled up everything the opposition hit and they also hit the cover off the ball.

One night, after one of our guys hit a softball out of sight, the opposing catcher picked up the cracked bat and it was quickly learned that it was not a regulation softball bat, but a hardball bat that had been sanded off and painted. No wonder my guys were such good hitters. I used my own bat.

I think our team was kicked out of the league after that. I played one season of American Legion Ball in Thornton, Illinois and played outfield for them. I had a nickname back then "Twiggy" because I was skinny. Some fans posted a sign on the backstop that read "We Want Twiggy."

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 with them. 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

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SANDLOT MEMORIES CONTINUED

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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 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 with basically the same field dimensions and attempts by officials to keep the game clean. It is supposed to be a defensive game and I get upset with opposing hurlers who throw junk instead of hittable pitches. The crowds want to see runs and great catches and not strikeouts.

And today, one of the saddest things is to drive by a park on a sunny afternoon and see the fields empty and void of even a pickup game. The kids sit in air conditioned houses playing with worthless video contraptions and we wonder today about childhood obesity?

When I was a kid, we played ball all day and until night fall. If we were fortunate, we got to go to a major league game. Players back then readily gave autographs and signed our baseballs. Now the adults have ruined this by turning autographs into their own person business. Today, I do worry about skin cancer and cake on the sun block before games.

My memories of sandlot ball, include being the announcer at the Little League and Babe Ruth League games, and one

year even broadcasting on radio the Senior League World Series in Gary, Indiana, and coaching several teams of youth baseball which included my family are important parts of my past. At the Little League picnic each year, it became a ritual to throw me, the coach into the swimming pool with my clothes on.

At the end of another season, I retrieved the ball that one of my players hit and brought it to his house and gave it to his mother. The boy had gotten only one hit all season and it won the game for us. His mother did not know what to do with the game ball. I have started my own book of baseball memories and need to finish it sometime. It will be my 20th local history book.

At age 69, I'm still pitching in an over 50 softball league in Elgin, Illinois and playing when I can for the Chicago Salmon. Baseball has been an important part of my past and the memories will never be forgotten.

At age 69, I'm still pitching in an over 50 softball league in Elgin, Illinois and playing when I can for the Chicago Salmon.

It is ironic that Babe Ruth and I have the same birthday, February 6, but I was never a good hitter as the "sultan of swat" was.

Baseball has been an important part of my past and the many memories will never be forgotten.

BASE BALL POETRY

By: Dan "Dizzy" Zamudio



CHICAGO SALMON
BASE BALL CLUB

COMEBACK

*After 40 years
I'm back in Right Field,
Ten.*

NO MITT!

*Natural reaction
reaches for
rocket!*

*Finger tips
retract.*

**WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAYS
TO ENHANCE OUR NEWSLETTER.**

WE WANT YOU



Do you have any stories or historical information that you would like to share with us?

Do you want to ask us any questions about the VBBA or the rules of the 19th Century?

If so, contact Dennis 'Pops' Wiegmann at dennispopswiegmann@yahoo.com and he can help.

**We would love
to hear from you.**



HISTORICAL SOCIETY 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"