

# The Base Ball Player's Chronicle

SUMMER  
2000

ISSUE 1  
VOLUME 3

A Quarterly Publication of the Vintage Base Ball Association

## The Ohio Cup by Birdhouse Smith

The 9<sup>th</sup> Ohio Cup Vintage Base Ball Festival was held at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio on September 2 and 3, 2000. The Ohio Village Muffins/Diamonds Program hosted the event. Three playing areas were used: Muffin Meadow in Ohio Village (an 1860s village at OHS) and two fields that were created in an open area at the entrance to the Ohio Historical Society.

The growth of the Ohio Cup reflects the growth of the playing of vintage base ball! From the five clubs that attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Ohio Cup in 1992 the field has steadily increased in size. The ninth edition of what is the largest gathering of Vintage Base Ball clubs on the planet featured nineteen clubs playing matches on the Saturday

and Sunday of Labor Day weekend. Three ladie's clubs and sixteen gentlemen's clubs took part. Five states were represented in the field. Ohio provided thirteen clubs, Michigan three, and Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania one club each. Also, three Minnesota clubs sent individuals who

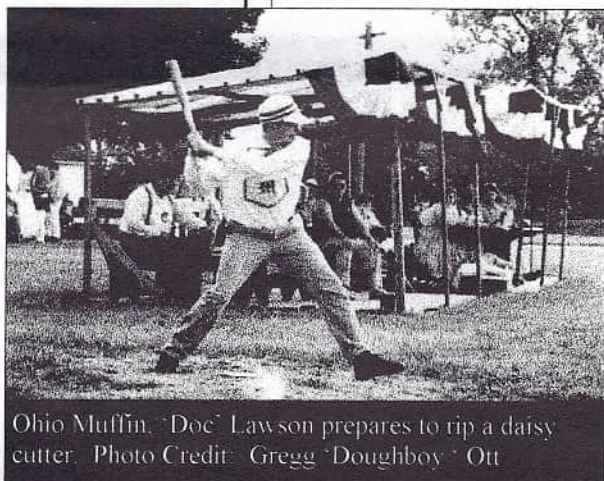
helped greatly by serving as scorekeepers, playing with other clubs, and showing their support!

For the last seven years the Ohio Cup has not recognized a champion. The last team to win the event was the now defunct Kentucky Pioneers in 1993. Since then the focus has been on showcasing as many clubs as possible. A

priority is to give clubs a number of short matches with the opportunity to play clubs they do not usually have a chance to play. Again this year matches were limited to

fifty minutes and started on the hour. Play began at 9 AM on Saturday and 10 PM on Sunday. The last matches began at 3 PM each day.

As I believe in the saying "baseball  
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Ohio Muffin, "Doc" Lawson prepares to tip a daisy cutter. Photo Credit: Gregg "Doughboy" Ott



### FEATURES

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In This Issue: History of Minnesota Vintage Base Ball  
Results of the Ohio Cup Tournament  
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## Teams Wanted for Mutuals National Barnstorming Tour

Next season is the 125th anniversary of the National League. The Mutual Base Ball Club of New York is currently planning a barnstorming tour of the 8 original National League cities. The Mutuals were one of the original 8 clubs to join the National League in 1876, the others being the Philadelphia Athletics, Boston Red Stockings,

Hartford Dark Blues, Louisville Grays, Cincinnati Red Stockings, Chicago White Stockings, and the St. Louis Brown Stockings. We are looking for a club from each location as well as a field to play on, preferably something close to where the original site in 1876 was or a historic village in the area. Each club would represent one of the

original 8 clubs. We are looking to undertake this tour the week of June 30 – July 9. We are also looking to make this a fundraiser for a national charity so sponsors and donations from each area will be necessary. For further details contact me, Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich at (516) 752 2040, or e-mail me at [mailto:NYMutuals@aol.com](mailto:mailto:NYMutuals@aol.com)

### CAPT'N'S CORNER

by "Capt'n Mark Heppner President VBBA

This column represents an e-mail that President Mark Heppner rifles off to prospective teams. I think it sums up what people need to know when starting a team. -jf

Thank you very much for your inquiry and I hope that the VBBA can be of assistance to you and your "search" in starting a new club. There is always room for more!

First off, I would encourage you, if you haven't already, to look in detail at the Vintage Base Ball Association website ([www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org)). There is some great information about starting a club, supplies and equipment, existing clubs, etc. Some of the initial things to think about are:

1. Club - based on a historical club, fictitious club, what era to recreate, your audience, etc. Will it be a rural club or a more city-type of club?

2. Funding - it will cost a little to

#### START A TEAM FOR THE GLORY OF THE GAME

get up and running (uniforms, equipment, props, programs, etc.). Many clubs are associated with historical sites or similar organizations that offer financial assistance. Others have gotten business backing.

3. Players and Personnel - you need people! Not only, in my mind, do you need skilled ballists but also those with a love of history and baseball. It is a hard balance. You also need support staff - umpires, tallykeepers, etc., etc.

4. You need a place to play. Something historical is great but a cow pasture works just as well.

5. You need to think about ordering and obtaining equipment and supplies as well. Again, it is a cost issue.

6. Rules. Different eras lend different rules. Different localities lend different customs. There are many other things to think about but this might get you going. If you are not already a VBBA member, I would strongly suggest joining as the newsletter, website and networking is invaluable.

## Do you enjoy the Newsletter ? Join the VBBA

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION needs your support. The cost to continue printing this newsletter comes from membership fees.

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION exists to try to educate fans about the origins of America's Game.

The VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION is trying to expand the sports' focus, by using tools like the Newsletter

and the VBBA Website ([www.vbba.com](http://www.vbba.com)) to further communicate the "Glory of the Game."

Individual Membership costs only \$10 per year, which includes four issues of the Base Ball Player's Player Chronicle. Even if you play for a team, join as an individual and help support our cause.

Just starting a team? Become an Associate member: it's only \$35 per

year.

Have an established team? Become a Full Member and help us push the VBBA to the next level. Full Member ship is only \$50 per year.

Make checks or money orders out to the Vintage Base Ball Association. Mail to the Treasurer of the VBBA: John Husman 5911 Jeffrey Lane, Sylva, OH 43560

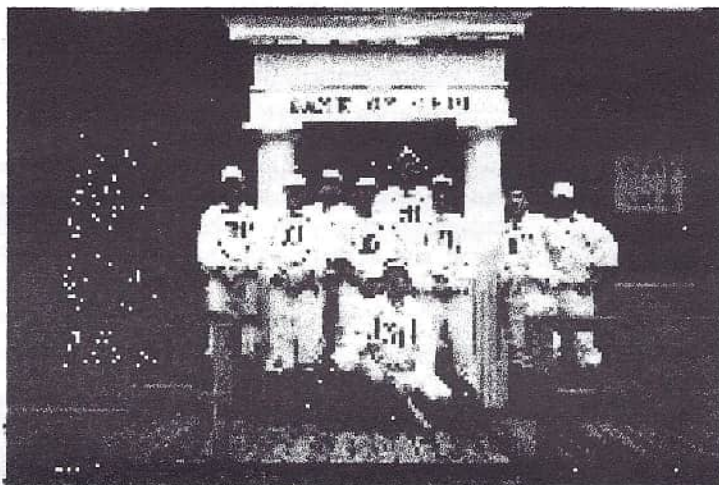
## A Celebration of Old Time Base Ball

By Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich

It was a vintage base ballist's dream. An authentic 19th century setting, vintage base ball clubs from around the country, and two vintage games going on at the same time representing different eras. This was the scene at Old Bethpage Village Restoration in New York this past August, as clubs from Ohio, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York came to celebrate vintage base ball the way it was played over 120 years ago. Ballists representing the Carriage Hill Clodbusters, Columbus Capitals, Ohio Village Muffins, Sycamore Grasshoppers, Providence Grays, Elizabeth (NJ) Resolutes, New York Mutuals, Hempstead Eureka's, Mystic (CT) Oceanics, Brooklyn Atlantics, Glen Head Zig Zags, Huntington Suffolks, Mineola Washingtons, Bellmore Seminoles, and the Hicksville Ozones were present.

The first day of events saw opening ceremonies honoring John "Blue Streak" Morrison for his twenty continuous years as a vintage base ballist at Old Bethpage Village Restoration. John captains the Mineola Washingtons one of the first two teams to play vintage base ball back in 1980, the other being the Hempstead Eureka's. The festival opened with these two squads facing off in the first match of the weekend. The feeling for the week-

end was not one of who won or lost, although the competitive fires did exist, it was more a time of discovery and celebration for every-



one. Some clubs participated in matches from eras which never had the opportunity to recreate. A crank could walk from field to field and see the evolution of the game right before their eyes, from the underhanded games of the 1860's and early 70's to the fast overhand pitching games of the 1880's. One thing was in common to all games and that was the spirit of the players and the bond that linked them all together. Many a friendship was renewed and many more still were established.

Midday saw the players gathering for the skill contests, accuracy throw, distance throw, and speed

around the bases contest. The bragging rights for the year were on the line and the competition was stiff.

The distance throw saw the battle come down to the last throw of the competition with George "Wildhorse" Ferchland (Hicksville Ozones) leading, Scott "Plowboy" Treon (Clodbusters) hurled his sphere five feet past Ferchland to take home long distance honors. Next was the accuracy throw in which contestants had to hurl the ball from behind home plate towards a box resting on second base. Don "Big Bat" Anderson (Muffins) managed to strike the box twice on the fly to take home the honor of accuracy champion. Finally came the speed contest in which contestants were timed around the bases. Tom "Kid Speed" Heinlein glided around the base path overcoming a slip at first to take home the honor of fastest around the bases for the third straight year.

Matches resumed with a Rounders game taking place in which all cranks were invited to participate. The first day ended with a picked

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## Writers, Photographers and Correspondents Needed

Have an interesting story? Know someone with a cool job outside of baseball? Do you take really good pictures at Base Ball games? Well my friend, we need you.

The Base Ball Player's Chronicle is

looking to expand its information base. We are looking for the following stories to include in our next issue: General Baseball History, Team History, Current Players' Profiles, Travelogues, photographs and anything else pertaining

to Vintage Base Ball. Don't be shy about submitting an article. This is definitely not the Reader's Digest.

To submit, send to John Freyer at fryorama@aol.com or fax to (708) 499-6181.

## THE ETERNAL QUESTION by Bob Schaefer

With the astronomical numbers of home runs being jacked over the fence this season, and the attribution of this result, at least in part, to an excessively lively ball, I thought the following column from the New York Clipper, dated July 9, 1870, might be of some interest:

### "THE DEAD BALL QUESTION - A Change is Needed

"We are glad to note the fact that Boston and Philadelphia papers are beginning to realize the fact that a change in composition of the ball used is necessary to the full development of the beauties of the game and requisite for the removal of what is to be a dangerous evil, as well as an obstacle to the attractiveness of base ball contests....."

"Unfortunately the majority of spectators of a ball match are ignorant of what constitutes scientific batting, and consequently they applaud only the long, heavy hits for home runs, and, as players look to the applause of the multitude for the reward of their play, of course they strive to

do which elicits it the most, and hence the eager desire for big "hits," "corkers" to the outfield, and long hit balls, which country paper's reporters comment on as "splendid batting". Now the fact is there is not the least degree of true batting skill in home run hits; if there were we should never see such hits made by "muffin" nines.....

"Some blame the ball makers for manufacturing such [lively] balls, but they are not in fault, as it is their business to supply the market demand, and, as that has hitherto been for lively bounding balls, of course that style of ball is made. What is wanted, is first a change in the public estimate of batting skill, and then, when crowds are found laughing at and ridiculing muffin home run hits and appreciating the really skillful style of first base hits only, the players will soon be found repudiating the muffin batting....."

"As we said before, it lays chiefly with the public to put a stop to the use of the lively ball games, by ceasing to patronize the matches of

clubs who use them. It is to their interest to do so, for they thereby will put a stop to the miserable displays [of home run hitting] such as mark nearly every elastic ball game."

Henry Chadwick penned this article, and he continued to rail against "muffin home run hitting" consistently throughout his entire career.

Chadwick was perhaps the first advocate of "scientific" hitting, and ridiculed long ball hitting. He repeated the main theme of this article, practically word-for-word, right into the 20th century. As far as I know, he never won over any converts, either in the grandstands, or from the ranks of the players.

Can't you just see the crowd breaking out in laughter in response to one of Big Mac's blasts? Would a few snickers in the bleachers stop Sammy Sosa from going for the downs? Even in his own time, Chadwick was completely out of touch with reality regarding dingers.

## OLD TIME BASEBALL (CONTINUED) by Big Bat Fesolowich

nine game in which teams were mixed with players from several different teams playing as one.

Feel free to make  
copies and pass  
out at your  
matches.

We won't get mad

Sunday picked up where Saturday left off. Matches started at the early hour of 10 am, seeing many a bleary-eyed player make their way to the fields ignoring their aches and pains obtained from the day before. "I wouldn't trade this for anything", commented Tom "Squid" Jordan, assistant captain of the New York Mutuels. "Seeing players you haven't seen for a year and getting to play against them, discussing rules, and in some cases getting to play with them is special to me", continued Jordan. "The fans are what make this special for me", stated Barry "Magnet" Aguado, also of the Mutuels. "They are always asking

questions and are very enthusiastic about what we are doing here", he said. The weekend saw many fans make the trip to Old Bethpage, some even joining in themselves. The weekend ended in a cricket match in which the fans were allowed to participate. Chris "Cricket" Rohan ran the match instructing all on the rules and strategies of the game. "Many cricket players in the 19th century left the game for base ball eventually making base ball the national pastime", commented Rohan. The weekend was one of friendship, competition and most of all celebration. Long live vintage base ball.

## Team profile/ The Huntington Suffolks by Tom Stoll, VBBA Historian

The Huntington Suffolks were a powerful town team that played in Suffolk County, Long Island, New York in the late 1800's. When a group of 28 local school district teachers were forming their vintage base ball team in April 1996, they borrowed the name for themselves.

The Middle Country Teacher Association sponsors the Suffolks, which is made up entirely of teachers. The association provides uniforms which consist of red flannel shirts emblazoned with white S's, dark navy trousers, white hats w/ horizontal red stripes, and red belts and socks.

The Suffolks play in a nineteenth century league, mostly by the rules of 1866, at Old Bethpage Village Restoration on a cow pasture re-designed as a base ball field. Also, teams from Ohio, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Michigan have traveled to Long Island to play the Huntington Club in one of their 17 home games per year. Additionally, the Suffolks travel to six or seven away games per year. They have played in matches all around Long Island- many of them charity events that raise money for children with debilitating diseases.

All players on the Huntington club have authentic nicknames from the

book "Baseball Nicknames" by James K. Shippe, Jr. Captain, Mickey "The Lip" Tangel was named for his natural talent of harassing umpires and opponents, Frank "Shakespeare" Van Zant is an author and baseball poet, and Brian "Woody" Biscari received his nickname after one particularly misplaced low tag.

For more information about the Huntington Suffolks, contact Mickey "The Lip" Tangel at :

theLip@aol.com

or (631) 584-5706.

## Deep River Grinders Sweep First Douglas Cup Field by Droopy Drawers Sampson

DECATUR, IL--Powered by an explosive offense that totaled 42 runs in three games, the Deep River Grinders claimed the first Stephen A. Douglas Cup Vintage Base Ball Tourney held Sept. 23 at Rock Springs. The host Ground Squirrels were second with a 2-1

mark.

The newest vintage team in Illinois, the Mackville Mudcats of Atwood, finished the day 1-2 and the Kent Base Ball Club of Grand Rapids, MI, was 0-3. The Kents, however, played in the day's closest contests, losing 6-4 to the Grinders, 9-7

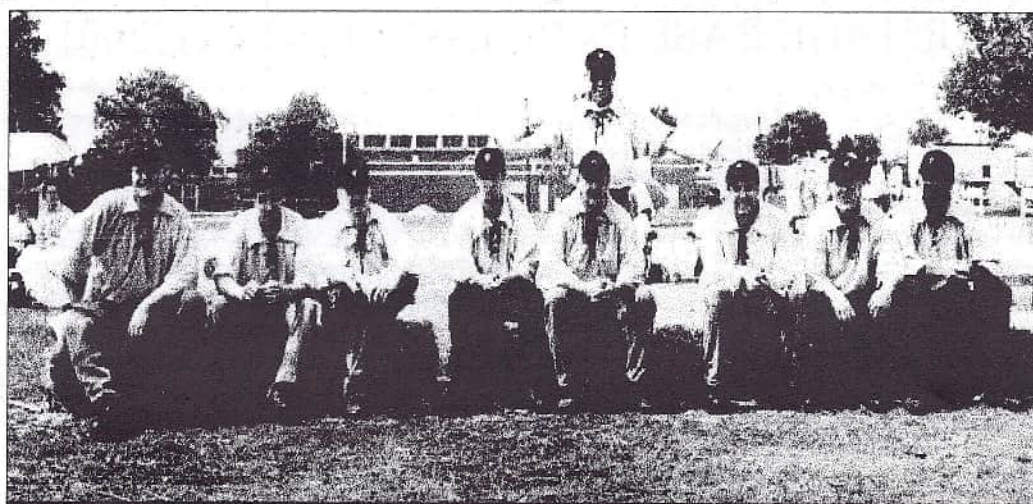
to the Ground Squirrels, and 3-2 to the Mudcats.

Only the Kent club was able to slow the Grinders' offense which clobbered the Ground Squirrels 20-3 and devoured the Mudcats, 16-0. The Ground Squirrels defeated the Mudcats 22-11 in the day's final contest.

Forecasts of thunderstorms and rain put Douglas Cup organizers on edge much of the day, however, save for a light drizzle around noon, the day was cool and breezy--ideal for the vintage game.

The Douglas Cup marked the end of the Ground Squirrels' 2000 season as the club finished with an 11-12 mark.

*The Deep River Grinders  
hammered out 42 runs in the  
three game set.*



The Deep River Grinders, in more somber times, at the Ohio Cup. Photo: Gregg Ott

## A Granger's Letter Home

Gentlemen,

Huzzah,,,,,, a million times , Huzzah...!

Resplendent in victory, our modest buckboard seemed to float northward. The once deep and ill placed

ruts that had caused our horses so much grief on the south-bound journey seemingly fueled our trip home with great comfort and ease. The olde English R&G , still heaving on my chest , beamed with

pride, indeed , it seemed to light my way home. " 5-0" (five aught), I grinned sheepishly, " what a fine showing from our club". The road rolled west, the humid Ohio battlefield caught my periphery. Again, I visualized each expert play....the speed, the power, the purity of the effort. Suddenly my heart grew heavy, the grin faded. I realized my southern

sojourn was over and the trip north was a culmination of sorts.

The Granger season is over! At once I realized, " it is not the sound of leather meeting the bat, or even the familiar ringing of the tally

bell", its the camaraderie, it's my fellow

Granger !!"  
In the midst of a vermilion wash sunset, the entire season flashed through my once acute memory.

Each time I

remembered not the strike or the catch or even the occasional pop-out.....but rather, what was said amongst team-mates, the cajoling, the ever present encouragement..... A team, in its truest sense!

The creaking of the wagon recaptured my wandering thoughts,,  
"COME HAW NOW MERLIN,,  
GET YUP NOW !" I clambered. It became increasingly harder to grasp

the reins,, " I feel like I'm wearing boxing gloves", I mumbled.

In my autumn years, somewhere in my travels, I suspect I'll end up 'round these parts of Ohio again. Most likely I'll grab myself a bar stool, ask the keep for a cool ale, and listen in on the local conversation, as I do from time to time. Chances are they'll be talkin' about that great storm that swept in from the north....."you remember it was that hot Labor Day in 2000", quipped the barkeep. " Cooled this part of Ohio down right quick.... yup....sure did "

THANK YOU GENTLEMEN,, I very much look forward to next year!!!!!! FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME,,,,,,HIP HIP, HUZ-ZAH,,,,,,HIP HIP, HUZ-ZAH,,,,,,HIP HIP, HUZZAH ..... Slappy.....

Footnote: This was sent to me via e-mail. I thought it reflected the enthusiasm and passion of the Vintage Game. The text is beautifully written to refit the era of the 1860's. I don't know who Slappy is, but I'm sure he'll be surprised when he sees this in the newsletter.-jf



The Rochester Hills, MI Grangers at the Ohio Cup. Photo: Gregg Ott

## HARTFORD VINTAGE BASE BALL INVITATIONAL 2001

In cooperation with the City of Hartford, the Greater Hartford Convention & Visitors Bureau and the VBBA, an elaborate annual Vintage Base Ball Invitational is being coordinated for the summer of 2001 in Connecticut's Capitol City, one of the oldest Victorian cities in the country. It is the intent of all involved to develop this tournament into one of the most prestigious and heavily attended in the country.

With an official announcement date

and details soon to follow, preliminary interest level inquiries from clubs to participate in this exciting, breakthrough tournament is requested.

Tentative details of this tournament include:

TOTAL TEAMS: 20 - 24

DATE: July 5, 6, 7, 8

FORMAT: Double elimination

ERA FORMAT:

1870's Rules Bracket

1880's Rules Bracket

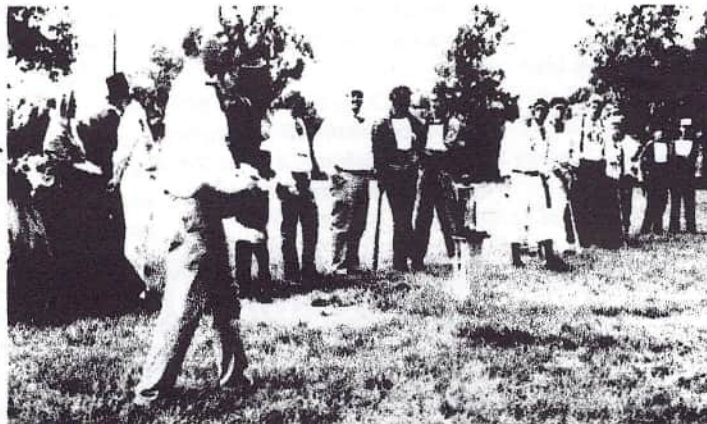
JULY 5: Celebrity Game vs. Assorted Vintage Players (team attendance not mandatory) Evening Reception Banquet (free) for sponsors, players & families, media and local officials in historic Bushnell Park or aboard Connecticut River Mark Twain Cruise Boat

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## Ohio Cup by Doug "Birdhouse" Smith (Continued)

fans are addicts and their opiate is the statistic", I offer some figures on the matches played. A total of thirty-nine matches were played over the two days. These produced a total of three hundred forty-three runs scored. Though there was only one scoreless match, there were ten shutouts. Three games ended in a tie. The most aces scored by one club in a match was seventeen. As the total number of innings played in the fifty minute matches was two hundred and eleven, the average match lasted five innings. In terms of the longest match, one lasted eight innings.

No matches between clubs were cancelled because of rain. However a late Saturday afternoon storm did stop the All Clubs Match after two innings were played. This storm also brought notable logistical achievements by the host program's volunteers. Saturday's potluck could not be held outside. Hurried alternate plans were made. In short order tables were carried from outside into a section of Ohio Village's Hotel. The food was transported and arrayed upon the tables. While the large throng of diners was rather cramped and ate in shifts, the meal came off in



The fine orator Birdhouse Smith welcomes everyone to the Ohio Cup by belting out instructions to the cranks and players. Photo: Greg Ott

truly remarkable fashion! The period dance, traditionally held on Muffin Meadow, was moved into the Town Hall and the joyous dancers seemed to be little effected. The rain on Saturday night also brought about a new challenge on Sunday morning. The two playing areas outside of Ohio Village were too muddy and too wet to be played upon. Early Sunday morning Muffins threw themselves into a realignment of these fields. Bases were moved to grassy areas at the opposite end of the open field. Straw bales were broken open and straw was thrown over puddles of water. By energetic teamwork the two fields near 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue were ready to be used by the ten o'clock starting time.

As is the custom, buttons noting this edition of the Ohio

Cup were given to all participating club members. The Phoenix Sports Manufacturing Company generously donated three prizes that were awarded in a raffle. These were a Ross Barnes style bat, a period cane, and a wooden locomotive and accompanying cars. The best Ohio Cup program yet was available for participants and visitors.

From this writer's viewpoint the 9<sup>th</sup> Ohio Cup Vintage Base Ball Festival was quite a success. The clubs that took part seemed to enjoy themselves. We learned more about the game we play. We got to know one another better. Spectators were given a glimpse as to how base ball was played in 1860. I think that the reason that this event is a success each year is that those taking part understand that the best reason to play this game is as "The Lafayette of Vintage Base Ball" Ed Shuman of the Fulton Mules continually reminds us, "for the glory of the game!"

For match results, go to Pages 9 and 10.

## Call For Nominations For 2001 Officers

The VBBA election process, per constitution and bylaws, calls for annual elections to be completed and dues paid by December 1. Elections are to be facilitated by the Nominating Committee consisting of the President Elect (Jeff Ballmer), the President (Mark Heppner), and chaired by the Past President. Since our office of Past President is vacant, President Heppner has appointed John Husman to fill this position.

For reference, officers for 2000 are:

President.....Mark Heppner,  
Akron Black Stockings  
Vice-President...Jeff Ballmer, The  
Great Black Swamp Frogs  
Past President....Vacant  
Secretary.....Andy Shuman,  
Ohio Village Muffins  
Historian.....Tom Stoll,  
Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs  
Treasurer.....John R. Husman,  
The Great Black Swamp Frogs  
Trustee (2003)...Ron Walker, Hoover Sweepers  
Trustee (2002)...Ed Shuman, Fulton Mules

Trustee (2001)...Al Dieckmann,  
Brooklyn Atlantics

Our vacancy for past president is because Mark Heppner agreed to step up early at the request of then President Greg Rhodes.

### Ballots and Dues are due by December 1st

We are to elect each year a vice president (will step up to president for 2002), a trustee for a three year term, as well as a treasurer, a secretary, and an historian for one year terms.

Please return nominations to: John R. Husman, 5911 Jeffrey Lane, Sylvania OH 43560-3618. Mr. Husman will also accept nominations by phone (419/882-3438) or e-mail (john.husman@sylvania.sev.org).

When nominating a person for an

office, please keep these VBBA constitutional guidelines in mind:

The person elected to the office of vice-president for 2001 will be the president-elect. He/she will become president of the VBBA in 2002. A club may not have more than two of its members serve as officers. If a club is currently represented with a VBBA officer, only one other member from that club may serve in 2001.

Present officers are eligible for re-election and may succeed themselves in their present roles or serve in new offices.

Note: Mr. Andy Shuman has indicated that he would accept nomination for the office of Secretary. Messrs. Stoll and Husman have indicated that they will not accept nomination for office.

Nominations will be accepted through October 20, 2000. Based on nominations ballots will be mailed to full member clubs about November 1, 2000. Ballots accompanied by dues payment will be due by December 1, 2000.

## Membership Rules by John Husman, Treasurer VBBA

From our constitution:

### Article I: Membership

(1) In order to qualify for membership in the Association, a base ball club must meet all of the following criteria:

(a) It must be a formally organized club of at least nine members.

(b) It must agree to support and embrace the mission statement of the Association.

(c) it must present itself on the



field of play in a set of appropriate uniforms authentic to the mid-nineteenth century period or other historic era being portrayed

(d) It must have played a schedule of a minimum of six matches in the season prior to joining the Association and during each season of membership

(2) Clubs not meeting the above criteria or individuals may apply for associate membership in the Association. Associate members will pay dues to cover the cost of communications, publications, and other expenses related to participating in the organization, but will not be eligible to vote or to have members elected as officers of the association.

## A Brief History of Vintage Base Ball in Minnesota by Deano Thilgen

Winona, Minnesota is an old Mississippi River town, originally situated on an island. Mark Twain in "Life on the Mississippi", he calls this stretch of the river "The Thousand Islands". When you gaze out over the wide expanse of water and drive down the city's thoroughfares it is not difficult to pick out pieces of the city's remnants of old river bridges, a monument to the steamboats that once crowded the riverfront and a classic 1888 railroad depot with a lively waiting room and ticket agency, the last of its kind in Minnesota. Superb examples of stained glass and exceptional architecture for a city its size has kept Winona in the tourism guides. This is a place that has recognized that some things from the past are worth keeping.

In its ongoing effort to promote Winona's heritage of sawmills and

paddle wheelers, the Winona County Historical Society held its 25th annual Victorian Fair this September. It was during the 1993 fair that vintage base ball first came ashore in Minnesota.

When the idea to invite the Ohio Village Muffins to the Victorian Fair came about, the man to form a local club nine was Al Smith. For the last 24 years Smith has been the manager of the Winona Chiefs, a club in the Mississippi Valley League. Being an avid baseball man, Smith had heard of the recreation base ball being played in Ohio and was eager to bring the old game to Winona. The Lumber Barons club became the first vintage club in Minnesota. The new local nine and the visiting Ohio club played each other both Saturday and Sunday that fall 1993 weekend. On Saturday the cranks numbered

around 1000. It rained the second day, but the interest still brought out about 500 locals. Vintage base ball in Minnesota got a momentous start.

Independent of what was happening in Winona, Minnesota, Bob Tholkes was forming a club in the Twin Cities, upriver. Tholkes was inspired by a video taken of a SABR base ball re-creation in New York state. He approached the local Halsey Hall chapter of SABR with the idea. Although there was no money, the idea for The Quicksteps was well-received. Member Rich 'Aces' Arpi stepped forward with some breaking news: He had been a member of a club called the Ohio Village Muffins in the late 80s and was pictured in an April 27, 1987 *Sports Illustrated* article. Through

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## OHIP CUP Results (Continued From Page 7)

### 9th Ohio Cup Results Saturday, September 2, 2000

Cincinnati Red Stockings 8  
Columbus Capitals 3

Ohio Village Muffins V 12  
Piqua Sterlings 2

Ohio Village Muffins O 9  
Deep River Grinders 7

Great Black Swamp Frogs 17  
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 2

Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs 7  
Addison Pike Stars 6

Rochester Grangers 9  
Fulton Mules 3

Ohio Village Muffins V 14  
Deep River Grinders 5

Kent Base Ball Club 5  
Columbus Capitals 0

Rochester Grangers 10  
Cincinnati Red Stockings 0

Kent Base Ball Club 6  
Fulton Mules 1

Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs 10  
Ohio Village Muffins O 0

Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 9  
Piqua Sterlings 3

Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs 5  
Deep River Grinders 2

Great Black Swamp Frogs 6  
Addison Pike Stars 4

Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 4  
Cincinnati Red Stockings 0

Rochester Grangers 2  
Ohio Village Muffins O 1

Deep River Grinders 3  
Columbus Capitals 0

Great Black Swamp Frogs 6  
Fulton Mules 1

Addison Pike Stars 9  
Piqua Sterlings 1

Kent Base Ball Club 10  
Ohio Village Muffins 4

Fulton Mules 3  
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 0

### Sunday, September 3, 2000

Ohio Village Lady Diamonds 2  
Carriage Hill Lady Clodbusters 1  
CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## History of Minnesota Vintage Base Ball (Continued from Page 9)

Arpi, the fledgling Minnesota club found assistance from the Muffins program.

The first Quicksteps matches of 1994 were regularly scheduled at Murphy's Landing living history village in Shakopee, Minnesota, and a special exhibition was played prior to a Minneapolis Loons game versus Loons players. Quoting the club's web page, from that one close loss against professional opponents, "the Quicksteps were undefeated in their inaugural season. "The Quicksteps was the first VBB club in Minnesota to schedule matches around the region against local picked nines and nationally at SABR conventions and the annual Ohio Cup. About eight of the original Quicksteps are still active in the club.

Quicksteps founder Bob Tholkes was an ambitious promoter during the early years of the club, sending inquiries to many of the historical groups in the state. Members of the Olmsted Historical Society knew of Winona's success with the Lumber Barons and had been contacted by Tholkes. An invitation was sent to Columbus, and a set of matches was arranged for Saturday, June 24, 1995 at the society's Rochester Minnesota history center. The Ohio Village Muffins played the

local class B amateur team, the Rochester Royals, and the Murphy's Landing Quicksteps. This day inspired leaders of OCHS to field its own vintage club and Mary Jane Schmitt went to work to make the Roosters club a reality.

The Roosters base ball club began to educate the citizenry of southeastern Minnesota on the finer points of vintage base ball in 1997, building a reputation as an entertaining event. Mary Jane writes, "Players were first recruited from the Senior Baseball League and interest generated by public notices in newspaper and word of mouth. The one thing all seemed to have in common was the reaction that vintage base ball sounded like fun."

Brent "Skinny" Peterson has researched local baseball history and has published a number of articles about clubs, players and matches in the area. He had been a national SABR member for a number of years when he joined the local Halsey Hall chapter. At about the same time he began to work for the Washington County Historical Society in Stillwater,

Minnesota. Tholkes, in his search for competitors, saw potential in Brent's enthusiasm and connections to the county society. A formal challenge to meet on the diamond came in December 1997, and combined with Brent's desire to form a club The St. Croix Base Ball Club was re-born. The original St. Croixs played from 1867 to about 1877.

Keith Uhlig is a former newspaper editor and columnist. He is also a valued member of the St. Croix Base Ball Club. In a July 1998 column entitled, "Bringing an Old Game Back to Life", he recounts the very first match of the St. Croixs. He begins, that he had to go back 130 years to find a game I am good at. The problem was, the St. Croixs were not good at all. The Quicksteps sizzled in a 21-2 trouncing that first time out. After that bitter pill, the St. Croix club continued to lose. The first win for the St. Croix club in 130 years came on May 16, 1999, the second of a season opening double-header at Murphy's Landing. After a three-year hiatus, Al Smith and his Lumber Barons are back this year to play at the Winona Victorian Fair.

## OHIO CUP

Continued from Page 9  
Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters 8  
Kent Base Ball Club 0

Ohio Village Muffins O 5  
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 3

Deep River Grinders 8  
Sycamore Grasshoppers 5

Akron Black Stockings 10  
Addison Pike Stars 0

Lorain County Buckeyes 3  
Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters 2

Ohio Village Lady Diamonds 7  
Akron Lady Locks 1

Rochester Grangers 8  
Ohio Village Muffins V 5

Kent Base Ball Club 4  
Sycamore Grasshoppers 4

Akron Black Stockings 6  
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels 4

Deep River Grinders 6  
Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters 4

Kent Base Ball Club 0  
Ohio Village Muffins O 0

Rochester Grangers 9  
Lorain County Buckeyes 0

Ohio Village Muffins V 6  
Akron Black Stockings 3

Carriage Hill Lady Clodbusters 4  
Akron Lady Locks 1

Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters 3  
Ohio Village Muffins V 2

Ohio Village Muffins O 3  
Addison Pike Stars 1

Lorain County Buckeyes 3  
Sycamore Grasshoppers 3

## Ground Squirrels and Bats Maintain First Name Relationship by Droopy Drawers Sampson

Colorful nicknames are an institution in the game of vintage base ball and the characters they describe are often favorites of fellow players and cranks. One vintage team, however, has gone beyond this and assigns names to several hunks of lumber that reside in its bat box..

The Rock Springs Ground Squirrels of Decatur, Illinois, began naming their bats in the team's first year of play 1994. Starting the season with three bats turned by a team member, the team nine was down to two when, during the second inning of the first game, Clarence "Mad Dog" Landers shattered one.

Of the two remaining bats, one was long and heavy; the other, short and light. The short bat became known as "Mr. Stubb" and the other bat was "The Club." Although "Mr.

Stubb" went the way of all wood years ago, "The Club" has lived on in several reincarnations.

In terms of weight, though, it is probably exceeded by a Lefty Trudeau-made bat purchased by Larry "Root Hog" Crisler. Given Crisler's nickname, the new war club became "The Snout." In that spirit, Crisler wood burned a hog's snout into the end of the bat's barrel. The porcine bat became legendary when during a pickup game against a team in Bethany, Illinois, it felled a striker. The Ground Squirrels cautioned the Bethany player about the bat when he approached home plate with it. Ignoring the warning, the Bethany striker took a full roundhouse swing, missed, and kept on going, pulled by the bat's weight and ending his chance resting on his posterior in the dust.

Some say the Ground Squirrels must name their bats just to keep track of all the bats owned by Crisler, who soon abandoned "The Snout" to pursue hits in other bats.

While "The Snout" is limited in use to a few big hitters like Landers or the foolhardy, another bat won the allegiance of several Ground Squirrels. A reddish, thin-handled bat from Cooperstown was known as "Wonderboy," ala "The Natural." Its tapered handle made it ideal for whipping balls down the right and left field lines or for choppy, hit-em-where-they-ain't daisy cutters. Understandably, it was a black day at Trobaugh Field, home of the Ground Squirrels, when Wonderboy" suffered a fatal crack. There have been several attempts to recreate "Wonderboy" and countless trees have sacrificed themselves in the cause which, sad to say, has proved unsuccessful to date.

## Hartford Tournament 2001 (Continued from Page 6)

**JULY 6:** Tournament (schedule to be based on team arrival commitments) (Noon – 6pm)

**JULY 7:** Tournament (11am – 6pm) (9pm Connecticut River Fireworks Festival)

**JULY 8:** Semi-finals & Championship Games (11 am – 2pm)

**BALLFIELD SITES:** Bushnell Park – Downtown Hartford (nation's oldest publicly designed park)  
Trinity College – Hartford (Victorian styled College campus founded in 1800's)  
Elizabeth Park – Hartford (nation's oldest public Rose Garden)

**Games will be scheduled at each ball field with championship games played in Bushnell Park**

**BALLFIELD DESIGN:** Each ball field will be immaculately designed as a 19th century field including manual scoreboard, outfield wood snow fence or picket fence, dirt path infield, backstop and spectator stands

**PRIZES:** Cash & Trophy to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place clubs for each bracket

**ACCOMODATIONS:** 50% off rooms in Downtown Hartford exclusive hotels including Hilton and Crowne Plaza

- Free weekend parking passes for cars and vans  
- Free shuttle service to and from

each ball field

- Discounted dining program available at several downtown restaurants

Interested teams are requested to respond in writing and should include overview information such as roster size, color team photograph showing uniform (if available), years of club existence, previously participating tournaments, record by year, etc.

Information should be sent to:  
Hartford Base Ball Nine, Inc.  
c/o Greg Martin  
100 Wells Street, Suite 320  
Hartford, CT 06103  
Or e-mailed to:  
ebbetsmartin@home.com  
Voicemail: 1-800-730-8119



VINTAGE  
BASE BALL  
ASSOCIATION

Vintage Base Ball Association  
Communications Committee  
John Freyer  
9209 S. Central  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

## CONTRIBUTORS

"Stinky" Freyer  
"Capt'n" Heppner  
"Doc" Lawson  
"Foots" Walker  
"Deano" Thilgen  
"Big Bat" Fesolowich  
Bob Schaefer  
John Husman  
"Droopy Drawers"  
Sampson

"Birdhouse" Smith  
Tom Stoll  
Gregg "Doughboy"  
Ott  
Allison "Tomboy"  
Caveglia Barash  
Slappy the Granger  
Greg Martin  
Cover Header Art:  
"Foots" Walker

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## Known Vintage Base Ball Teams

Arkansas  
Fayetteville Roysters

California  
Pacifica BBC

Canada  
Woodstock, Ontario Actives #

Colorado  
Broomfield Sweepers #  
Broomfield Swans  
Littleton Rough and Readies  
Colorado Vintage Base Ball Assoc. \*  
Denver Pacifics  
Central City Stars  
Colorado Territorial All Stars  
Colorado Lady Columbines  
Denver Blue Stockings  
Mastodon Mine Minstrels

Connecticut  
Middletown Mansfields \*  
Mystic Oceanics \*  
New Haven Elm Citys  
Hartford Dark Blues

Florida  
Dunedin Railers \*  
Largo Crackers \*  
Tampa BBC

Georgia  
Westville Craftsmen & Biscuits #

Iowa  
Ghost Ballplayers  
Walnut Hill Blue Stockings

Illinois  
Mackville Mudcats#  
Chicago Salmon  
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels \*  
Chicago Knights

Indiana  
Deep River Grinders \*  
Indianapolis Freetowns  
Door Village Prairie Dogs  
Elkhart County Prairie Rattlers  
Conner Prairie BBC#

Michigan  
Berrien County Cranberry Boppers \*  
Greenfield Village Lah De Dahs \*  
Kent Base Ball Club \*  
Ludington Mariners \*  
Salt City Base Ball Club \*  
Rochester Grangers \*

Minnesota Vintage Base Ball Assoc.  
Saint Croix Base Ball Club \*  
Quicksteps Base Ball Club #  
Roosters BBC \*  
Winona Lumber Barons

Nebraska Vintage Base Ball Assoc.  
Railroad Town Roadies #  
Ord Tigers  
Fort Hartstuff Company C

Platteville Valley Bugeaters

New Jersey  
Elizabeth Resolutes #

New Mexico  
Albuquerque Telegraphers #  
Ft. Bayard Centennial Assoc.  
Ft. Seldon Leasburg Boys

New York  
Old Bethpage Program\*  
Brooklyn Excelsiors  
Cold Spring Spiders  
Glen Head Zig Zags  
Hempstead Eureka's  
Hicksville Ozones  
Rockville Centre Observers  
Sea Cliff Idlewilds  
Bellmore Seminoles  
Mineola Washingtons  
Huntington Suffolks  
Westbury Base Ball Club  
Cooperstown Leather Stockings  
New York Mutuals #  
Freeport Athletics  
Brooklyn Atlantics \*  
Syracuse Stars

Ohio  
Akron Black Stockings \*  
Summit Merinos\*  
Lorain County Buckeyes \*  
Aurora Base Ball Club  
Forest Citys Base Ball Club \*  
Canal Fulton Mules \*  
Hoover Sweepers \*  
Sharon Woods Shamrocks \*  
Ohio Village Muffins \*  
Columbus Capitals \*  
Preble Aces \*

1922 Giants \*  
Lake County Pirates \*  
Middletown Laurels  
Carriage Hill Clodbusters \*  
Pember Villains  
Newtown Barnstormers  
Sycamore Grasshoppers \*  
Great Black Swamp Frogs \*  
Piqua Sterlings#  
Canal Dover Red Legs  
Big Ditch Boys

Rhode Island  
1884 Providence Grays  
Bristol Blues

Texas  
Ft. Davis Base Ball Club  
Ft. Bliss Cannonballs #  
Ft. Concho Base Ball club

Utah  
Salt Lake City Base Ball Club #

Virginia  
Charlottesville Ragga Muffins

West Virginia  
Parkersburg Base Ball Club

Wyoming  
Laramie Lawmen

## Looking for Teams

If you know of a team not on this list,  
please pass along any information to:  
John Freyer e-mail: Fryorama@aol.com

\* Indicates member of VBBA

# Indicates associate member