

# The Base Ball Player's

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## ELYSIANS FIELD TO FORT WAYNE BY WILLIAM RYCZEK

The journey to Fort Wayne began, according to romantic legend, in the heart of Leatherstocking country, Cooperstown, New York. General Abner Doubleday, baseball's supposed inventor, was more reliably reported to have sighted the first union cannon at Fort Sumter. His claim to military legend is much stronger than his hold on baseball immortality, which is based upon the recollections-60 years after the fact-of an aged, somewhat senile acquaintance of Doubleday's named Abner Graves and the presence of a moldy, dilapidated baseball in Grave's possession. Any credence the tale might have is tarnished by the revelation that at the time Doubleday was supposed to have been on his hands and knees laying out the diamond, he was not even in Cooperstown, but was a cadet at West Point. Further, none of Doubleday's acquaintances ever remember hearing the general utter a single word about the sport he had "invented". Although a prolific writer following his retirement from the military, Double day committed nary a word on baseball.

It is possible that Grave's comments were not entirely the senile ramblings of an old man. He may have well seen Doubleday explaining the game to a group of youngsters and believed that the general was inventing it. In any case, his testimony was not something upon which to base definitive historical conclusions.

All of above was conveniently ignored by the Mills

Commission established by A.G. Spalding which, in 1908, declared that there was no doubt that Doubleday had invented the national pastime.

Substantive research has placed the origins of the modern game in metropolitan New York at the husky hands of Alexander Cartwright. During the 1840's Cartwright's band of businessmen and artisans met during their leisure hours, divided into teams and played a congenial match or two purely for the physical and social

benefits. By 1842, they were gathering at what is now Madison Square at 27th Street and 4th Avenue, and by 1845 had moved uptown to Murray Hill. The enterprising Cartwright suggested they form an organization, which took shape as

the Knickerbocker Club. The Knicks were a social club first and foremost, and remained so - an anachronism in their later years- until their dissolution in 1882.

The Knickerbockers were a team of many firsts. Most important was the first set of standardized rules, devised by Cartwright himself. CONTINUED PAGE 7



The 1869 Maple Leaf Club of Guelph, Ontario



VINTAGE  
BASE BALL  
ASSOCIATION

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## CAPT'N'S CORNER

by "Capt'n Mark Heppner President VBBA

This will most likely be my last letter to the VBBA membership as President. What does one say as parting words? Well, sit back and I will share one person's account of an very exciting organization.

Not long ago I was "strong-armed" (not really!) in agreeing to be the President of the VBBA. I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to learn more about the Association, it's members and to make some kind of positive contribution to what, I felt, was a worthwhile organization. At that time, the VBBA was certainly on shaky ground as only a few dedicated people were keeping it afloat. Oh sure, we had members but what else did the VBBA offer? Yup, we also had an annual convention put on by gracious host sites. But, that my friends, is where most of it ended.

I am proud to say that as we get the 2001 base ball season underway, the VBBA is once again positioned to move forward and make a serious impact on vintage base ball throughout the nation. The VBBA now has a regular membership newsletter. We have an annual convention that each year gets better and better. We have a growing membership base. We have a fantastic website, distribution

list and message board. We have more dedicated individuals wanting to help out. Also, the planning of several projects for the near future have been initiated. We are working diligently to gain incorporation and non-profit status for the Association. We are in the midst of re-writing our bylaws and the constitution to better reflect an organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are restructuring the committees to make them more proactive and to gain the interest of our membership. We are working on ideas for a VBBA brochure. We have looked into compiling detailed chronological rules to make available to our membership. And, as always, we are striving to better communicate to our member-

Three cheers for  
the Capt'n!  
Huzzah!  
Huzzah!  
Huzzah!

ship and cultivate new clubs and individuals. Of course, I personally did little to accomplish all of this. It was due more to the dedication of many that made this success occur.

2001 will be a busy year; there is no doubt. We must keep the momentum going. Therefore, I must stress that the board of trustees and committee chairs can not accomplish the many necessary tasks alone. Mr. Ballmer, the incoming President, will need everyone's support and assistance. Won't you please consider how your club or you personally can assist the VBBA in 2001? I charge you to re-read the mission statement of the VBBA and make an effort to assist it in becoming a reality.

*The mission and purpose of the Vintage Base Ball Association shall be to preserve, perpetuate, and promote the game of base ball as it was played during its formative years in the mid-nineteenth century and other historic eras.*

Kind regards and many thanks for the opportunity,

Mark "Capt'n" Heppner  
President, VBBA

**Editor's Note: You'll be missed, Capt'n- Stinky**

## 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, Sylvania, OH 43560

## Ball Reproductions By Deano Thilgen

Need a reproduction bat for vintage base ball? No problem. Go online and order the model of your choice in ash, oak, walnut or cherry wood. Custom specifications, engraving and stripes are extra. Need a reproduction ball for vintage base ball? The choices are considerably slimmer.

Sure, two-piece "figure 8" modern baseballs in many styles are plentiful and reasonably priced, but finding the perfect one-piece leather covered ball made to period specifications is proving to be a challenge for many vintage base ball clubs. How do you make a vintage ball that meets the original specs, doesn't fall apart after a few innings of play, keeps its shape and firmness, is still soft enough to minimize injuries and doesn't bounce wildly?

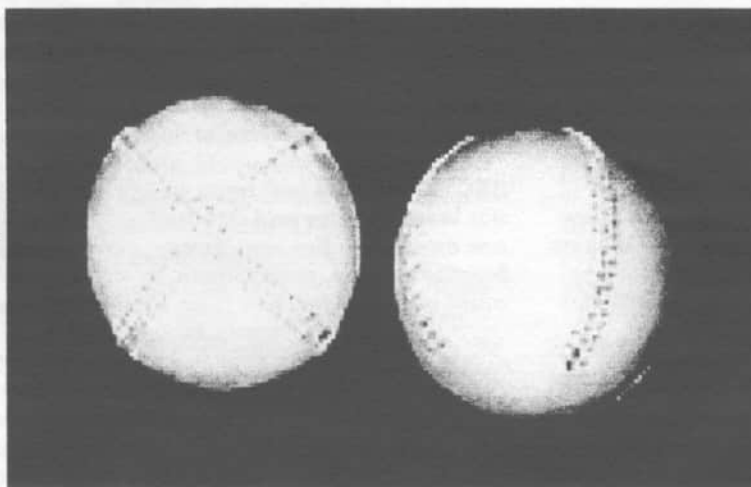
Early on in the Ohio Village Muffins program they found that replica leather balls could not take a beating. In the mid-'80s the Muffins used a foam IncrediBall with a cloth cover and raised red seams—hardly authentic. This safety ball took "erratic and incomprehensible bounces." Even though experimental leather covered balls were being made in the late '80s, the IncrediBall remained the match ball of the Muffins until 1992. They did make the switch to hand sewn leather balls made

by J. R. Ferguson [Was this the so-called "Louisville" ball? ] but it, the reproduction ball they like the best, is no longer being

Ferguson ball was that it wasn't signed by the commissioner of the league! Amazingly, we were able to play with the

same ball for our first 2 seasons!"

Two well-known vendors do carry reproduction balls for Massachusetts rules Town Ball and 1860s New York rules ball, Phoenix Bat and K&P Weaver. Cooperstown Bat Co. no longer stocks rag center vintage base



**The Lefty Trudeau, Phoenix Bat Company Ball**

made. Muffin Doc Lawson writes, "There's still nothing like a Ferguson." The few Ferguson balls the club has left are treated with great respect.

Kevin Faria of the 1884 Providence Grays also laments the end of the Ferguson company. His club has not been able to find a completely suitable 1884 spec. ball since the demise of the Ferguson company. He writes, "The company was going out of business just as the Grays were forming and we bought the last of the 1876 National League balls (1876 NL balls had the same specs as the 1884 NL balls). The only drawback to the

balls--at least no longer listed on their web site.

K&P Weaver describes their three handsewn models this way: "Our early leather base balls weigh between 4 and 5 ounces, have a rag center, wrapped with yarn and handsewn in dark brown leather, with the exception of the tournament ball which has a hard rubber center and tan in color." The brown balls measure 9 inches and 10 inches in circumference.

A number of clubs like the 10-inch brown ball from the Weavers because it is soft (almost  
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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.



## Ball Reproductions (Continued) by Deano Thilgen

spongy) and easy on the hands (and other body parts, too). Just ask nine-year-old "Lincoln" Thein, the mascot on the St. Croix club. She was minding her own business at a practice last spring when she was hit in the head with a Weaver ball. She was shaken up, but came out of the experience unscathed.

A problem with the Weaver balls are that they are too light to meet the 1860 game specs, which call for the ball to weigh between 5.75 and 6 ounces. Later 1860s specs do allow a 5 ounce ball, however. The Weaver tournament ball does have the necessary rubber core, but the rag center in the brown balls is too soft for purists of the game. Some clubs do not like a dark brown ball because it can be hard to see.

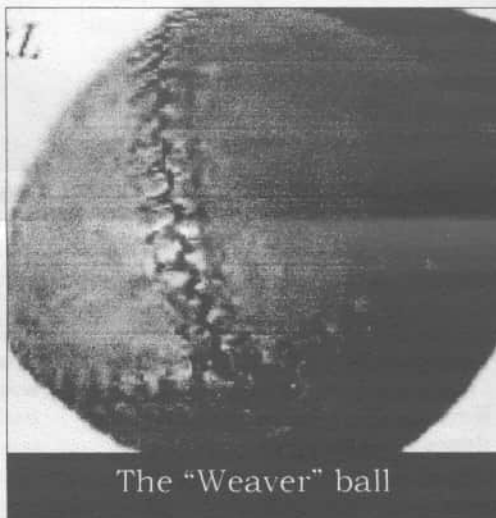
"Lefty" Trudeau's Phoenix Bat carries two imported balls, a firm brown ball and a softer white ball. The latter ball is popular with Ohio, Michigan and Illinois vintage clubs, but it is known to bounce wildly. Both of the Phoenix balls are designed to meet 1860 specifications.

Section 1 of the March 14, 1860 Rules and Regulations as adopted by the National Association of Base-Ball Players reads as follows: Sec. 1 The ball must weigh not less than five and three-fourths, nor more than six ounces avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine and three-fourths, nor more

than ten inches in circumference. It must be composed of India-rubber and yarn, and covered with leather, and, in all match games, shall be furnished by the challenging club, and become the property of the winning club, as a trophy of victory.

The National Association rule regarding balls as adopted on December 12, 1866 reads:

SECTION 1. The ball must weigh not less than five and one-half, nor more than five and three-fourths ounces, avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine



The "Weaver" ball

and one-half, nor more than nine, and three-fourths inches in circumference. It must be composed of India-rubber and yarn, and covered with leather, and, in all match games, shall be furnished by the challenging club, and become property of the winning club as a trophy of victory.

In 1872, the approved ball in the National Association was changed to the modern size, weighing 5 to 5.5 ounces with a circumference between 9 and 9.5 inches. Research done by the Providence Grays club has found that "figure 8" stitching appeared on base balls as early as 1872. A cork center was adopted by the

National League in 1910. A problem I need to clarify; the Grays write: "The original Grays played in the National League so the specifications of the balls that they used are readily available. The ball was between 9-9.25 inches in circumference and between 5-5.25 ounces. It was made with white leather and white stitching and had the same "figure 8" stitching as modern baseballs." The Muffins manual says that the modern ball specs were adopted by the National Association in 1872; did the National League have a different spec at first?

There are several things to keep in mind when studying these base ball specifications. Avoirdupois is the traditional European system of weight measurement, which is 16 ounces equals one pound and one ounce equals 16 drams. The French word means "goods of weight." In 1959 the avoirdupois pound equivalent in the metric system was defined as 0.45359237 kilogram.

India rubber is also known as natural rubber, although the India rubber tree (*ficus elastica*) produces an inferior form of latex than other tapped trees in Asia and South America. The latex sap, if left to dry, produces a rubber film which can be shaped. However, the process of vulcanization was discovered in 1839 by inventor Charles Goodyear. It is not clear if the core of 1860 base balls would have been vulcanized rubber, a compound of natural rubber, white lead and sulphur which is heated and becomes a more durable form over purely natural rubber. Since the rules specify India rubber, the traditional form, they may have been rejecting vulcanized rubber. Tanning animal hides with chromium salts to create leather had not yet occurred in 1860. There

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

We won't get mad

## Reprint: Early Historical Article on Baseball Thanks Deano

Baseball, the American game of ball. It may have been developed from the English game of "Rounders" to which, however, it bears little similarity. The game first took shape in New England and in the vicinity of New York and Philadelphia. The Knickerbocker Club of New York, considered the parent ball club of the United States, was formed in 1845. Crowds of New Yorkers used to cross by the huge ferries to Hoboken to attend games between the Knickerbockers and rival organizations.

During the Civil War baseball was a favorite form of amusement in camp. On the breaking up of the army, returning soldiers carried the game to every town and hamlet, and baseball seemed to spring up spontaneously everywhere. From 1865 onward it has been recognized as a national game. Rivalry between amateur clubs led to the employment of salaried players. Then came the organization of clubs into circles, in which each club goes around the circuit playing a series of games its associate clubs. The National League, formed in 1876,

now includes Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, and New York. The American League, a rival organization dating from a reorganization in 1900, includes Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Washington. The American Association is made up of St. Paul, Louisville, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Columbus, Minneapolis, and Toledo. The Western League embraces Des Moines, Sioux City, Omaha, Topeka, Wichita, Lincoln, Denver, and Pueblo. There are many other leagues as the Eastern, Central, Northern, Pacific, Southern. Indeed it is safe to say there are more ball clubs today than there are post offices. The expenses of the large clubs are met by gate receipts. The Federal League made up of the cities of Brooklyn, Chicago, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Baltimore, Kansas City, Buffalo and Indianapolis, was a considerable figure in baseball in 1914 and 1915, but was disbanded after two seasons.

The various leagues are brought into conformity by the National Association of Leagues, under whose rules all games of prominence are now played.

There is no better outdoor game for boys, and none more calculated to give strength, health, and activity, and none which furnishes more enjoyment to spectators.

Indoor baseball is a form of baseball arranged originally for gymnasiums, but played frequently in the open air. The ball is larger than is used in the ordinary game, measuring usually about seventeen inches in circumference. The bat is smaller than the common bat and differs slightly in shape. The rules of the game are formulated by the National Indoor Baseball Association.

SOURCE: The Standard Reference Work for the Home, School, and Library. Volume 1. Harold M. Stanford, B. S., Chief Editor of Revised Editions. Standard Education Society: Minneapolis and Chicago. 1921.

## Vintage Sports Days in London, Ontario, July 20-22

The city has invited all of last year's base ball teams back for another exciting two day tournament. Teams that participated in 2000 include: **The Akron Black Stockings from Ohio, The New York Mutuals of New York State, The Woodstock Actives from Woodstock Ontario, The Brooklyn Atlantics of New York, The Forest City's B.B.C. The Columbus Capitols from Ohio, the Ohio All Stars and the Colorado Territorial All Stars.** We are hoping

for 12 - 16 teams this year.

Games are to be played in London at Labatt Park, Pioneer Village and Springbank Park. Other game venues include Woodstock and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in St. Mary's. The event will begin on Friday July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001 with the Opening Ceremonies at Labatt Park with games and socials to follow. Refreshment booths will be opened on Saturday prior to, during and after games as well as an evening social event with music will be held at the

Market Square. This evening event will be open to all participants, families, sponsors and the general public.

Vintage Sports Days 2001 is shaping up to be another blockbuster event for the city of London.

For information regarding accommodations, and or complete travel packages please contact CSTT Sports Management International's Head Office in London, Ontario - CANADA at 1-800-304-6346.

## COLLECTING THE BASEBALL CARTE DE VISITE BY David Rudd

The following article about the miniature version of the cabinet card is reprinted from COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO EARLY BASEBALL PHOTOGRAPHS

**DEFINITION:** a photographic print measuring about 2-1/2" by 3-1/2" pasted to a mount measuring about 2-1/2" by 4." Most cartes de visite used albumen prints, though other prints, including the gelatin-silver print, were used later on.

**DURATION:** 1855-1905

**POPULAR YEARS:** 1860-1875

**OVERVIEW:**

Cartes de visite, often nicknamed cartes or CDVs, were introduced into popular production by the Frenchman Andre-Adolphe-Eugene Disdere. Disdere had devised a rotating camera that could produce eight

individual pictures on one negative. After printing on albumen paper, the images were cut apart and glued to card-sized mounts.



1868 Carte de Visite  
of Ross Barnes

Carte de visite is French for 'visiting card,' as this was a popular use of these small picture cards. A woman might pass out a carte, with her picture on it, to the friends, relatives and associates she visited. In the United States, cartes became popular at the beginning of the Civil War. They were used for many purposes, including as i.d. cards for

soldiers and as family portraits. Cartes of popular subjects, such as romantic locations or famous persons, were made commercially and could be bought at local stores. Queen Victoria and Abraham Lincoln were popular subjects.

Collecting cartes and putting them into specially made albums was a popular hobby, and many of these albums exist today.

Cartes depicting baseball subjects vary in styles and subject. They depict both famous and long forgotten players. For a period it was fashionable to have a family baby or young boy pose with a small bat and/or ball. The cartes come in many photographic and mount styles. Some images are straightforward and plain, while others are use visually appealing composites-design (see 'composite photographs' in this chapter). The mounts can come in various colors and designs. Most cartes de visite have the photographer's stamp or embossment on front and/or back.

**DATING THE CARTE DE VISITE** Along with the subject, a dating tool is the style of the carte, as this changed over time. The following describes the general trends. Exceptions to these trends will be found.

Albumen prints were regularly used until about 1895. Pre-Civil War cartes usually had the albumen print on the back.  
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## Vintage Base Ball Rules Spark Interest by Ray "Never Wrong" Grish

When Kevin Hickey, public works director of Thornton Township of northeastern Illinois was commissioned to create a summertime sporting event for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their incorporation, he went to a modern source, the World Wide Web, and found the Vintage Base Ball Association at [www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org). Several dot coms and clicks later he was in touch with Ray "Never Wrong" Grish the club umpire for The Chicago Salmon by way of the Ohio Village Muffins.

In 1858 this communication would have taken weeks if not months.

Kevin's plan was to have a tournament played by teams assembled from township employees, area law enforcement and apparently frequenters of local roadhouses, using Vintage Rules. He ordered lumber and balls from "Lefty" Trudeau at the Phoenix Bat Company and downloaded a set of rules from the Ohio Village Muffins website. After going over the necessary qualifica-

tions and details with "Never Wrong", the tournament was set for Saturday, July 1, 2000 at 11:00 AM.

As it appeared that there might be up to three matches being contested at any given time, "Never Wrong" enlisted the trusty aid of his son, Kevin "Jumbo Shrimp" Grish, a strapping lad, having reached his eleventh year and an experienced ballist well versed in the Rules. Each game would be attended by an experienced referee and a rookie  
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## Elysian Fields to Fort Wayne (Continued) by Bill Ryczek

The Knicks also wore the first uniforms, including blue woolen pantaloons, white flannel shirts, and natty straw boaters which proved less than functional under game conditions. They played the first game between rival clubs, losing to the New York Club by the embarrassing score of 23-1 on June 19, 1846.

After that debacle at the Elysian Fields in nearby Hoboken, the team returned to intramural competition for several years before gathering the courage to return to the field in 1851. They made amends for their previous showing with a victory over the Washington Club of New York.

During the 1850's, clubs began to organize and multiply in the New York area. While some, such as the Eckfords of Brooklyn, were made up of working men, the overwhelming majority were for gentlemen and white collar workers only. Professional players, of course, were not allowed.

In 1833 the Olympics of Philadelphia organized to play town ball, an undeveloped form of the game popular in New England. Twenty-one years later, an unimaginative group of Bostonians organized the Olympic Club of Boston. The New Englanders played the game a bit differently from their New York cousins, allowing the pitcher to fire a small, light ball with an overhand motion. New York hurlers (using a heavier ball) were restricted to an underhand toss. In Boston, a runner was declared out if struck with a ball. This provision was mercifully eliminated from the rules wherein the New England and New York version were merged.



Williamsport BBC circa 1868  
Photo Credit: Transcendental Graphics

By 1857 there were enough teams to warrant the formation of the National Association of Base Ball Players and the establishment of the first official code of rules. From 16 clubs in the first year, membership grew to 25 in 1858, 24 of which were based in New York or Brooklyn and one from Brunswick, New Jersey, a mere 30 miles from New York. Colleges and universities were also taking an active part in the new game. On July 1, 1859, The first recorded intercollegiate match took place at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, as Amherst College defeated Williams 66-32.

The growth in the number of teams provided the impetus for a new phenomenon, the tour. The first such journey was undertaken by the Excelsiors of Brooklyn, featuring legendary pitcher James Creighton, who toured upstate New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore in 1860 and returned home undefeated. While Creighton's contribution to the game of baseball was immense, his career was fleeting. He was the first closet professional and revolutionized the art of pitching with the fast underhand throw, which quickly replaced the lobbed "pitch". In October 1862, his bladder ruptured while hitting a home run for

the Excelsiors. Carried to his home, he died a few days later at the age of 21.

The tours of the Excelsiors and others aided in the growth of the game's popularity, bringing big-time baseball to many remote outposts. Further growth was engendered by the Civil War, which proved to be a blessing in disguise. Although

President Lincoln's army plucked many a player from local teams, the army proved to be the ultimate melting pot. Small town lads who had never heard of baseball met city slickers who showed them how to fashion a bat out of a broom handle and how to use it. The newfangled American game helped both Union and Confederate campaigners ease the drudgery of camp life. Bored prisoners often taught the game to their captors. A military game on Christmas Day 1862 at Hilton Head, South Carolina, was reportedly watched by 40,000 spectators. A. G. Mills and Nick Young, both future National League presidents, played baseball as Union Army recruiters. The Civil War period also marked the final decline of cricket as an American pastime.

Blackguards and Red Stockings is available from Colebrook Press at 56 Algonquin Drive, Wallingford, CT 06492; Phone: 203-741-0721. Total Price

(including shipping and handling) is \$27.95. When Johnny Came Sliding Home can be obtained from McFarland & Co. at 1-800-253-2187 for \$35 plus shipping and handling. Both books are also available at Amazon.com.

## Coot Got a Question

Stinky,

This early tag-up scenario is a fun rule. I only have the rules from the 3/14/60 and the 12/12/66 conventions and the Beadle's from the same years. I've printed out the evolution of the rules from Total Baseball, Geocities, CBS Sportline and a few others but I can't find when this particular rule evolved.

The 1867 rules, Sec 20, reads like this; when talking about runners on base when the ball is popped up: "(runners), when balls are so caught (without having touched the ground) may run their bases immediately AFTER the ball has been SETTLED in the hands of the player catch-

ing it."

My understanding is what started happening, and could make for good theatre in our recreations, is that the able fielder when fielding a deeply flying ball with runners on the sacks in tallying position would neither allow it to settle in his hands NOR let it hit the ground. He would allow the flying ball to rebound up off his hands and run towards the infield with the ball dancing off his hands like a hot potato ( risky but perhaps worthwhile) to hold the runners on their sacks. When he arrived at the infield he would then hold (settle in his hands) the ball to secure the out on the striker. Any runners that had left their

sacks before he allowed the ball to settle in his hands upon arriving at the infield would be doubled off for leaving early. This later made it necessary at a later convention to change the rule's wording from "settle in his hands" to "touched".

My question was/is, when did this rule change take place and are our umpires aware that some cagey old outfielders ( such as myself ) find this rule very interesting?

Paul "Coot" Hunkele

Coot- I think you're on to something there. According to the rules of the day, that would be a legal play, though it would take some doing to hone that skill.

-Stinky

## Whipsaw's Fielding Tips by Bill "Whipsaw" Dean

Don't be afraid to HOLD THE BALL if the play is in doubt. Ad-libbing and quick thinking can make for great plays. Most of the time, though, we ad-lib ourselves into deep trouble. The two scenarios that seem to occur at least three times per game:

### Scenario I.

- A. Infielder boots grounder.
- B. Infielder, acting with only the best intentions for his team, attempts to make amends by hustling a late and/or off-balance throw to 1st/2nd/3rdbase.
- C. Ball sails high/wide/both.
- D. Runners advance.
- E. Runners advance some more.
- F. ...still advancing....
- G. Cows come home.

### Scenario II.

Outfielder (we'll call him "Whipsaw" for the purpose of this illustration) attacks a struck ball driven up the alley. Upon approaching the bound-

ing missile, our hero sneaks a peek at striker (A) who is rounding first, and runner (B) who has left second and is bearing down on third.

This glance at the runners, although brief, is enough to cause a misjudgment Of the velocity (v), and the relative position (x, y, and z) of the ball (b1), by the fielder, allowing the ball (b1), to skip through his hands (h1 and h2), and collide directly with his manhood (b2 and b3), causing him to see stars (\*, \*, and \*\*\*).

Temporarily stupefied by this turn of events, the poor scout locates (b1) behind him, and, remembering where runners (A) and (B) were located when he took his fateful glance, turns and heaves the ball blindly toward the infield. By this time, of course, the runners (A) and (B) have merrily advanced two bases each, and the only chance of catching runner (A) at the plate is forfeited as the ball, (b1), sails over the cut-off man's outstretched hands (h3 and h4),

bounces smartly off of a big tree (T1) and rolls swiftly into the most irretrievable location known, beneath the hoop skirt (HS1) of a visiting crank (C1). Huzzah!

Note: These scenarios are by no means mutually exclusive - in fact, They seem to exhibit a sort of "clumping" phenomenon; occurring and recurring during the same inning, to the same player, or sometimes even on the same play.

The point, of course, is that it's easy (and more fun?) to attempt to play beyond our ability level, but we create a lot of opportunities for the other side when we do. We do our best to "make up" for a mis-play, when discretion is usually called for.

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



## Ball Reproductions by Deano Thilgen (Continued)

were only two tanning processes in use then, and both are ancient: tanning with vegetable tannin (tannic acid) and tanning with fish oil.

With such a limited base ball selection commercially, a number of ballists have taken it upon themselves to create the perfect vintage base ball. Ed Shuman of the Canal Fulton Mules demonstrated his basic reproduction ball technique at the 2000 VBBA annual meeting. With his permission, those instructions are reproduced here.

### Making a reproduction base ball

#### Parts:

ball of yarn approx 3.25 inch dia  
rubber ball approx. 3.75 inch circum. or 1.25 in dia  
4 pieces of waxed string approx 28.5 inch long  
2 blunt tipped tapestry needles with large eye approx. 1.875 inch long  
6.875 in. sq. piece raw leather, cut into a 4-pointed petal pattern

1. Begin by rewinding ball of yarn around rubber ball. As you wind try to keep tension on the yarn by pulling as you wrap. When finished, the ball should be approx. 9 3/4" circumference. (You may or may not use all the yarn provided depending on how tight you wrap.)
2. Punch holes in leather cover using the pattern provided. Use small finish nail & hammer to do this. (You may want to make a copy of the pattern to use another time, or to punch directly through.)
3. Thread needle as shown in illustration. Attach (1) needle in each end of thread, you will be using the needles to stitch at the same time. (Put end through needle) (Separate thread and pull needle & end through)
4. Begin at bottom of ball &

stitch (2) panels together just as you would lace a shoe. (To make leather more workable wet, don't soak the cover on inside. Trim excess to about 1/8" from knot. Stitch opposite side together so when finished you have two completed halves. (Stitch pattern) (Place year into completed halves to finish)



Lemon Peel Ball 1850s Massachusetts Town Ball, with lemon peel-like leather.  
Photo credit: Transcendental Graphics

5. To finish it may be easier to stitch the last two seams at the same time. Make a few stitches on one side then switch to the other and repeat until you get to the top.
6. At this point you will need to pull the stitches fairly tight use caution not to tear leather. Once at the end of both seams tie off the (4) threads and tuck ends back inside.

A core of rubber bands is one of the techniques adopted by Akron Black Stocking's Rich Blasick. The following is taken from a web site about giant megaballs" of rubber bands (<http://web.mouser.org/megaball/faq.html>): "To form a rubber band core with nothing but rubber bands, you must first take a medium or large sized band and roll it in your hands until it is tangled up, then wrap a small rubber band

around it a few times. This should hold the inner rubber band together long enough to wrap a few more rubber bands onto the proto-ball. After about ten rubber bands, the ball will begin to hold its spherical shape." Blasick has also experimented with different kinds of yarn and different wrapping techniques.

The Providence Grays are making balls out of other balls. Describing their original technique after the Ferguson balls became unavailable, Faria writes, "We took the cover off of Little League balls and restitched them with white laces. Although it was cheaper to make these base balls, they were nowhere near the quality of the Ferguson ball. They had the same feel, but they didn't travel off the bat as well."

Bob Sampson of the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels club writes that their club maintains their balls. "To extend the life of practice balls, one of our players--Hal "Toad" Warrick--has become a bit of a ball maker himself, rewrapping balls whose covers have unraveled. To date, these recycled balls are proving good for practice."

It may be that a one-piece leather cover could be put over an inexpensive modern ball and become a good ball for vintage matches. (Wouldn't it be just the thing if a modern "IncrediBall" could be so modified?) Maybe finding the right kind of rubber core, or the right kind of leather is the secret. The challenge is out there for the ballist who wants to experiment. Just be sure to let us know when you discover "the perfect ball."

## Vintage Base Ball Rules Spark Interest (Continued) by Ray Grish

gleaned from the local city payroll. At the appointed hour they met with the volunteer umpires, "Fast" Eddie Fligiel and Ed "Wrong Way" Corrigan for a quick training session. Being avid baseball fans, these rookie umpires relished in their new position of power over the players. However the brutal humidity, cloudless sky and 90-degree heat were to prove to be factors affecting the cranks, players and officials that day.

Opening festivities included a ceremonial pitch by Frank "Super Zuc" Zuccarelli, the Township Supervisor. The venerable "Never Wrong" and his assistant "Jumbo Shrimp" gave a quick overview of the rules to the teams and spectators at which time the first fine of the day was levied against the SCCP first baseman for a reference to the "stupidity" of the rules. It was the first of several assessed to the gentleman that day, but it made for great theater.

Bats of wood and vintage balls were distributed to each team.

The first match had the South Suburban College Police meeting the Village of Homewood Nine. "Fast Eddie" and "Jumbo Shrimp" presided over the match under the watchful eye of "Never Wrong" until another match was started at noon. The stands were full with cranks and other tournament participants eager to decipher these new "rules". From the first it was obvious the Homewood Nine had the experience and athletic ability to compete, however the team from SSC quickly used the rules regarding bounded balls and short struck fair balls to their advantage. The SSCP team included a complement of women who made a great showing both at the plate and at the hurler's line. The final score had SCCP winning by a dozen runs after seven innings.

The team representing the City of

Harvey met the nine from the Lansing Police Department. The teams unfortunately were ill matched with the L.P.D. fielding nine players of exceptional athletic talent while the Harveyites exhibited tremendous spirit. Alas even with the animated enthusiasm of the Harvey behind, a plentiful woman she was, they found themselves out matched. The highlight of the game however



The "Grove" at the Methodist Campground, where the Grinders play the Chicago Salmon every year. Yes, that is ol' Stinky ready to wallop one. Photo Credit: Gregg Ott

was the antics of the Harvey left scout who apparently had forgotten to cinch his trousers appropriately, and, upon running down a long struck ball, met the ground face first with his ankles entangled and his underdrawers exposed. Although Harvey was able to tally several aces, the final score had them losing by 20 or more. The failure of another scheduled team to show for their next match also gave the Lansing P.D. a chance to refresh themselves prior to the final match of the tournament.

The third match of the day came at 1:00 PM when the scalawags and ne'er-do-wells from an inn located in the town of Harvey known as Jacks or Better Bar, a place of ill repute it was said, met with the South Suburban College

Police. The contingent from Jacks was comprised of ladies and gentlemen obviously hap-hazardly conscripted without thought to athletic prowess or speed but more for ability to appear at the ball field at the appointed hour given the lateness of the prior evening's pre-match festivities. Mr. Hickey played with the Jacks. Again, the SCCP was more than the Jacks could handle, that even with a fifth inning rally of nine aces could not make up the deficit. Alas, by this time of day, the temperature and humidity had reduced the crowds in the stands to an extent that the final tally was announced by "Jumbo Shrimp" to a group that consisted of a mother and her toddler children, rooting for the defeated Jacks.

The final match of the day convened at 3:00 PM and had the Lansing P.D. meeting the well spent South Suburban College Police. This Match of Titans was rampant with great feats of athleticism; including balls apexing the 320 foot left field fence, a sliding one handed catch of a foul ball by the lass assigned to third base and several arguments as the rookie umpires, disagreed on several rulings. Fortunately the spirit of the game prevailed as did the fresher Lansing P.D. as the heat, humidity and two hard fought, previous games found the SCCP unable to come back from an early deficit.

In all, the day's competition was rife with laughter, the spirit of competition and punctuated with occasional acts of athletic heroics. The players all voiced their agreement that this should be an annual event, perhaps to be played not in the heat of summer, but played none the less. It is venues and competitions such as this that will see the future of Vintage Base Ball and bring us into this new millennium, or should we say, bring us back into the last century.

## Collecting the Carte de Visite (Continued) by David Rudd

men print pasted to a thin, plain white or cream colored mount with square corners. For most of the 1860s, the style was similar except that there was usually one or two gold or red lines imprinted around the border. After 1863 some cards were imprinted with a representation of an oval picture frame into which the picture was pasted.

Starting in 1870 a thicker mount was used, and, after 1871, corners were rounded. In 1873 many different colored mounts were introduced. By 1875 beveled edges trimmed with gilt were sometimes used. By 1880, the card stock was thick and sturdy, and rich dark colors were common. The back of these cards contained the photographer's logo, incorporated into an elaborate printed design. In 1890, cards were again made thicker and often had scalloped or fancy edges. Starting in the 1890s the gelatin-silver prints replaced the albumen print.

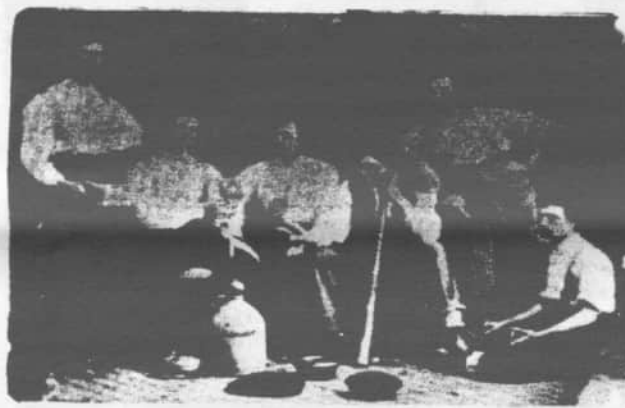
COLLECTING THE  
BASEBALL CARTE DE  
VISITE

Cartes are highly collectable and scarcer than cabinet cards. Premium examples, such as those depicting early stars or pioneer teams, can fetch thousands in major auctions. Common examples, such as those depicting a turn of the century amateurs in typical poses, are affordable even in strong condition. All other things even, a carte will be cheaper than the larger cabinet card, as the cabinet is deemed more visually pleasing.

Cartes before 1880 are scarce, and before 1870 even scarcer. There is much less interest in cartes from near the turn of the

century. The image quality (clarity, aesthetics) is important, as is the 'character' of the subject itself. Early or unusual uniforms and equipment is desirable. A player holding a rare style bat or ball is desirable. An unusually pleasing mount and photographic design, such as a spectacular composite photograph or an attractively colored mount, will be in high demand. Condition is always an essential factor in price.

The famed Peck and Snyder Trade Cards, popularly regarded as the first baseball cards, were



1868 Independents of Mansfield, Ohio. Notice the jug of hooch and stogies being chomped on.

Photo Credit: Transcendental Graphics

cartes de visite with albumen prints. From about 1868-71 Peck & Snyder, a New York baseball equipment manufacturer, issued these cards picturing prominent cards. The card backs usually contain a Peck & Snyder ad, though examples can be found with other or no advertising. These were the first 'mass-produced' baseball cards meant for commercial purposes. The most famous Peck and Snyder card pictures the legendary 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, widely regarded as the first entirely professional team.

EXAMPLES OF PRICES (Unless otherwise noted, all cartes listed

below have albumen prints)

1905 boy with bat (gelatin-silver developing out), Vg \$20

1890: studio pose of two teenagers in vintage uniform, equipment. VgEx: \$90

1870s Three players in bib uniforms Ex, quality image \$670

1868 Early star Ross Barnes, grade ExMt \$2,000

1873 Boston Team Composite, featuring numerous early Hall of Famers Vg \$2,300

1867 Harvard Team Ex with writing \$3,000

1869 Peck & Snyder Cincinnati Red Stockings Trade Card, Near Mint \$20,000

## Editor's Note:

David Rudd runs a website called the Cycleback Press. It is at [www.cycleback.com](http://www.cycleback.com). The site is home to many rare cards and other nostalgic items. David also runs auctions from the site and produces a monthly newsletter. The

book that this article was reprinted from is also available for purchase from the site-jf

If you produce a team newsletter, please send a copy to Stinky at the address on the back cover. Thanks.





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www.  
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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  
Hartford Senators

### Florida

Dunedin Railers \*  
Largo Crackers \*  
Tampa Tarpons  
Braidentown Breakers

### 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 Boggess \*  
Greenfield Village Lah De Dahs \*  
Kent Base Ball Club \*  
Ludington Mariners \*  
Salt City Base Ball Club \*  
Rochester Grangers \*

### Minnesota

Saint Croix Base Ball Club \*  
Quicksteps Base Ball Club #  
Roosters BBC \*  
Winona Lumber Barons  
Barnesville BBC

### Missouri

Washington BBC

### Nebraska Vintage Base Ball Assoc.

Railroad Town Roadies #  
Ord Tigers

Fort Hartstuff Company C  
Platteville Valley Bugeaters  
Beatrice River Bats  
Wahoo Plowboys

### New Jersey

Elizabeth Resolutes #  
Flemington Neshanock

### 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 Eurekas  
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 Athletics \*  
Roxbury Nine BBC

### 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  
Sandstone Masons

### Rhode Island

1884 Providence Grays  
Bristol Blues

### Texas

Ft. Davis Base Ball Club  
Ft. Bliss Cannonballs #  
Ft. Concho Base Ball club  
Sam Rayburn Museum

### Utah

Salt Lake City Base Ball Club #

### Virginia

Charlottesville Ragga Muffins

### West Virginia

Parkersburg Base Ball Club

### Wisconsin

Heritage Hill Base Ball Program

### Wyoming

Laramie Lawmen