

The Base Ball Player's

Autumn Chronicle

2003

A Quarterly Publication of the Vintage Base Ball Association

Mark Your Calendar:

Date Set for 2004 VBBA Convention

*Hosted by Mumford, New
York museum near Rochester*

The Silver Base
Ball Park
League of Gen-
esee Country
Village and
Museum is
pleased to be
the host site of
the Ninth



Where History Lives

Annual Vintage Base Ball Association
Convention on March 26, 27, and 28,
2004. A "must attend" for any vintage
ballist, the convention provides unique
networking and educational opportunities
for clubs at all stages in their develop-
ment. Program details and registration
information will be available at the VBBA
website (www.vbba.org) as the date nears.
If you have any immediate questions

regarding the conven-
tion, please don't hes-
itate to contact VBBA
trustee Ryan Brecker
(Ryan_Brecker@urmc.rochester.edu)
or the museum's
Senior Director of Pro-
grams Connie Bodner
(CBodner@gcv.org).
We look forward to
seeing you in March!



Membership Committee Chair "Capt'n"
Mark Heppner at the 2003 Ohio Cup.

Membership Committee Report

*Dear friends and
fellow ballist,*

Although snow may be falling (for some of us), it is never too early to be thinking about base ball. The Vintage Base Ball Association is active more than ever and we are continually attempting to make the organization more serviceable to and supportive of all our members' efforts. I personally wish to thank all of you for your past involvement and interest in the VBBA. This organization is only in existence because of all of us playing vintage ball and the goals are quite simple: to disseminate and spread the gospel of vintage base ball as well as to foster fellowship and share ideas. In this vein, I think the VBBA has been extremely successful.

Personally, I have been honored to be part of this organization for the past 8 years. However, I see many areas of improvement and areas that I think our membership can strengthen and assist in. I beg you to continue your support of the VBBA through your memberships and through your active participation (discussion groups, usage of the website, submission of news-

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V I N T A G E
B A S E • B A L L
A S S O C I A T I O N

REGULAR FEATURES

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Special Features:

"An Old Fashioned Glove Story" part one

"Required insurance coverage puts clubs on notice"

"Play for pay?"

President's Report

Vintage Base Ball has just completed a very active year. There are more clubs than ever before playing Vintage Base Ball, there are more tournaments and festivals being played than ever before, and our members are making more research available than ever before. This is an exciting time to be a part of the Vintage Base Ball Association.

Success cannot be sustained without your club. Whether a long time club with established traditions or a new club looking for ways to get started, you are encouraged to continue membership in the VBBA. If you have not received a renewal packet, please contact us. You need only read further to find out the importance of sustained membership.

First and foremost has been revival of the newsletter. We hope you have enjoyed it and look forward to future editions. Next, we have shared resources on topics such as insurance to allow your club to play at its chosen venue. In the future, look for information on grant writing. These are just a few ways we strive to support your club and add value to membership. The VBBA is committed to making membership meaningful for all clubs, and we welcome your suggestions. You can add value to your membership by attending the 9th Annual VBBA Convention, March 26-28, 2004, at Genesee Country Village, Rochester, New York, home to Silver Park, a recreated 19th

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Education and Interpretation Committee Report

by Deano Thilgen, committee chair

Rochester, New York is credited as the place where ice base ball was invented back around 1860 and after the Civil War it had grown enough in popularity to be written up in the New York journals on a regular basis. Those fellows we emulate didn't stop thinking about base ball even when the snow blew, so why should we? The winter months are an important time in vintage base ball to prepare for the coming summer season.

The first article in this issue's committee column comes from a museum conference and reviews an issue of public programming that relates to vintage base ball. Second, we have an update on SABR's rules and practices project. Then we take a look at two vintage base ball resources have recently gone online, a discussion group and a tourism feature.

"From the museum's point of view: Working with open air museums"

Recently I attended the Midwest Open Air Museums Coordinating Council (MOMCC) fall conference in St. Charles, Illinois. A fair percentage of VBBA members have ties to members of MOMCC and its national counterpart, ALHFAM. A couple years ago I made the VBBA an institutional member of MOMCC by upgrading my own

membership, with goals to improve communications and develop stronger relationships with the living history programs at member institutions. One of the sessions at this conference, "Managing Reenactors at Special Events," was of special interest to me because nearly all VBBA members either invite or are invited to special events. Here are some points expressed at this session, led by representatives from Living History Farms, Apple River Fort State Historic Site and Carriage Hill MetroPark. Curiously, vintage base ball was never mentioned during the session, even though two of the three panelists represent sites with historic base ball programs. However, the points discussed in the session do apply to the activity of vintage base ball.

- Open air museums exist to educate the public.
- Many museums have refocused their missions to include specific living history standards and expectations.
- Sometimes this mission is not clearly expressed to visiting reenactors, performers, artisans and interpreters and this misalignment has resulted in ruined events.
- Special events cannot always be accomplished with paid professional interpreters alone. Volunteers are often necessary to pull it off.
- Quality control measures are a necessity when inviting visiting interpreters, reenactors,



An Education and Interpretation Committee project inspired bat maker Lefty Trudeau to create this "New York Model" from an illustration in the 1875 Snyder catalogue that is posted on the VBBA website. vbba.org/ed-interp/1875snydercatalogue.html

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
WITNESS A GRAND
BASEBALL
MATCH ON THE
FOURTH OF JULY
GIVE A SHOOT!
Walnut Hill Iowa
 Handset in Wood Type at the Advocate Office.

Living History Farms, Urbandale, Iowa, is an example of a large open-air museum that is careful about inviting guest performers. They don't invite Civil War reenactors, but they do invite base ball clubs that can interpret an 1875 game of ball at their fictional village called Walnut Hill. Rick Finch is Living History Farms' director of historical interpretation and served on the session panel at the MOMCC conference. (Photo by Deano Thilgen.)

dealt with a visitor who showed up in a military uniform completely wrong for a Civil War encampment event. This visitor did eventually remove his costume.

• There is politics in reenacting. It can be difficult to invite groups that

do not like one another. At a particular Civil War event, one group refused to set up camp next to another and left the grounds, leaving the museum staff in a lurch.

etc. Shop around to find the right people. Interview potential guest interpreters, reenactors, etc. Find out if they are able to deliver reliable content.

- "Accurate" does not have a universal meaning. What's "accurate" to one is not to another.
- Understand the difference between reenacting and living history. Reenacting is almost always a personal hobby and some reenactors are uncomfortable in front of the public.
- Watch out for people who show up in "funny clothes." These can be both invited and uninvited people who are wearing inappropriate clothing for the event, and this will confuse visitors. Develop a plan for handling them, which may be as simple as having them wear a sticker which identifies them as a paid visitor. You can also politely and firmly ask them to leave, or ask them to remove their inappropriate clothing. A great example was an incident at Ohio Village where the staff

- Many museums have had problems with reenacting groups, but other groups can be troublesome, too.
- Clearly express the goals of the event. If you don't want your visiting sutlers or artisans selling goods, make that clear up front. An example of a group of artisans whose main purpose for showing up at the museum's special event was to sell their wares, not teach the public about their objects, which was the goal of the event. The museum also needed to observe local sales and tax collection ordinances and few of the vendors were prepared with proper licenses, etc. It was a very sticky situation.
- Don't assume the reenactors you are inviting know what you expect. Artisans may be

more familiar with the setting of an art fair, not a museum. Civil War reenactors may be more familiar with a battle reenactment where they interact with each other, not a museum event where less-informed visitors are asking questions.

- Don't assume a "commander" of a reenacting group is the best contact person. Find the person who will pass along information to each participant in the group.
- Consider the use of special tags to identify guest interpreters. Greenfield Village is an example of a site that does this.

I took the liberty to extrapolate the points from the session and drafted a set of points for vintage base ball groups. I then sent this to the three panelists at the MOMCC convention for their input. Here's what we came up with:

- Don't expect your local open air museum to invite you to play baseball there. Their living history programming may not be a good fit with your program's base ball interpretation.
- If you want to create a good relationship with a museum, understand their needs and educational goals.
- In terms of accuracy, your club and the museum may emphasize different things. Most museums place an

emphasis on the accuracy of the uniform, equipment and field arrangement above the game rules, whereas most vintage clubs focus on the rules and interpretation of the play on the field over the look and feel of the interpretation.

- If the museum does not give you a list of expectations or a performance agreement prior to the event, request it. Once you get a plan in writing, share it with everyone in the group. Not every museum is looking for a full-blown game, just an interactive program with children.
- If you are playing the museum's home club, also request their rules and interpretations in advance. Several museums have modified period rules by adding local customs.
- Respect the museum's requests to hide or eliminate modern-looking items from public areas. Anachronisms may not be so bad at a city park's modern diamond, but in an historic setting, they stand out.
- If you want to be invited back, follow the above.

The MOMCC is planning to hold a mini-workshop about historic baseball interpretations at its

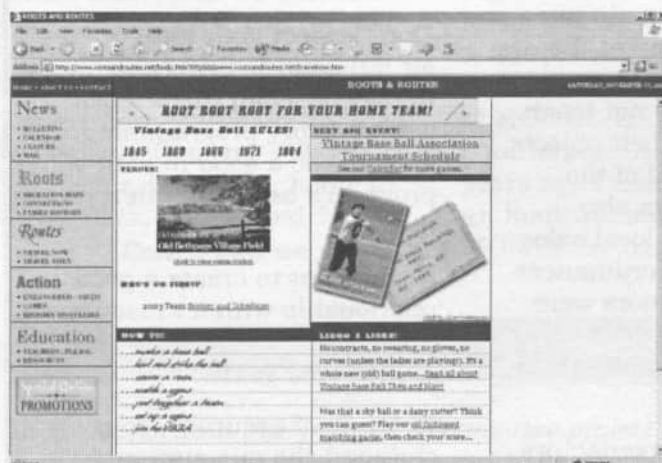
spring conference. Tentatively titled, "STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE: Museums and the Interpretation of Historic Baseball," the preliminary plan is to hold it over two consecutive 90-minute sessions the morning of Saturday, March 20. It is part of the regular three-day MOMCC conference schedule, this time hosted by Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana, northeast of Indianapolis. This is the draft session description: Historic bat and ball games have become common programs at historic sites and museums. But, how historically accurate are these programs? How can visitors become engaged participants vs. passive game spectators? How can baseball serve as a catalyst for interpreting other aspects of life in 19th century America? And, last but not least, how does one go about creating a historic base ball program for your site or museum?

- Session One Topics - Brief overview of the National Game's impact on 19th century American life, Researching the 19th century baseball history of your community and/or region, Brief survey of baseball material culture, 1860-1886, Recreating the world of 19th century baseball (program resources)

- Session Two Topics - Historic baseball as interpretive programming, Forming museum-based clubs and/or working with vintage base ball clubs, The role of the umpire, Engaging visitors, Authenticity vs. safety All VBBA members are encouraged to take part. For more information about the conference, check the MOMCC website: <http://www.momcc.org/Conferences.htm> More details about this mini-workshop will be made available at <http://vbba.org/ed-interp> as they become available.

SABR 19th Century Committee Rules and Practices project

The VBBA Education and Interpretation committee monitors the research and discussions of the SABR 19th Century Committee. A collaborative effort between the two groups is SABR's 19th Century Committee's Rules and Practices project. Chair Chip Atkison writes, "The Rules and Practices project is designed to track the evolution of baseball rules and the documented practices of those rules. The project is interested in the dialogue that shows how and why rules changed in the 19th century."



rootsandroutes.net is featuring vintage base ball.



1860 vintage base ball discussion group can be visited at: groups.yahoo.com/groups/1860vintagebaseball/

The plan is to publish a document outlining baseball's evolution. 19th century experts such as John Thorn and Frederick Ivor-Campbell are offering citations and opinions on the committee's Yahoo group. Without a doubt, the main beneficiaries of this project will be VBBA members. I will provide updates as the work progresses.

Knickerbockers win the first annual National Silver Ball Tournament

The Knickerbockers of the Silver Base Ball Park League at Genesee Country Village and Museum won the First Annual National Silver Ball Tournament in a thrilling, ten-inning victory over the Rochester (MI) Grangers. In a tight final match, the Knickerbockers apparently sealed the victory with a double play in the bottom of the ninth, but consistent with the gentlemanly nature of vintage ballists, the Knickerbocker second baseman admitted to missing the tag, allowing the Grangers to pull into a 3-3 tie. The Knickerbockers tallied two quick aces in the top half of the tenth inning and held the Grangers off in the bottom of the tenth to preserve the 5-3 victory.

The championship game culminated a weekend full of vintage base ball, featuring twelve teams from five different states and Canada in twenty-five well-played matches. All matches were staffed with a tally keeper and announcer in addition to an umpire. Spectator attendance for the weekend exceeded four thousand. Highlights of the weekend included a Friday night at Frontier Field with an all you can eat buffet and onfield introductions of the vintage teams in attendance prior to the AAA Rochester Red Wings game against the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Red Barons as well as a Saturday Evening Ban-



Accepting the annual Henry Chadwick Award on behalf of the Rochester Grangers of Rochester Hills, Michigan is Paul "Coot" Hunkele. At right, representing the Ohio Village Muffins and Diamonds is Chip Moore. Named for the Father of Baseball, it is given by The Ohio Village Muffins/Diamonds Program for outstanding service to vintage base ball. This year's award was presented at the Muffins/Diamonds annual Program Dinner held November 1.

quet for vintage ballists and their families featuring Alexander Joy Cartwright IV, the great-great-grandson of the man the Baseball Hall of Fame calls the father of modern base ball. All vintage ballists also received a monogrammed canvas bag filled with trinkets celebrating the tournament.

The final results of the tournament are as follows:

Knickerbockers BBC of the SBBP League*, NY	4-0-0
Grangers BBC of Rochester, MI	4-0-0
Spiders BBC of Webster, NY	3-1-0
Actives BBC of Woodstock, Ontario	3-1-0
Neshanocks BBC of Flemington, NJ	2-1-1
Live Oak BBC of the SBBP League, NY	2-2-0
Atlantic BBC of New York	1-2-1
Rochesters BBC of the SBBP League, NY	1-2-1
Red Stockings BBC of Cincinnati, OH	1-3-0
Gothams BBC of New York, NY	1-3-0
Excelsiors BBC of the SBBP League, NY	0-3-1
Grays BBC of Providence, RI	0-4-0

* Silver Base Ball Park League

The Silver Base Ball Park League of Genesee Country Village and Museum would like to thank all our base ball program volunteers and the vintage ballists that partook in the First Annual National Silver Ball Tournament for making the weekend such an overwhelming success.

Vintage base ball at Lumberjack Days

The sixth annual vintage Base Ball matches at Stillwater, Minnesota's Lumberjack Days festival took place on Saturday July 26th at the old Athletic Field on the South Hill.

The hot and sticky day created a close contest in the first match game between the St. Croix Base Ball Club and the Quicksteps. Winning the coin toss, the Quicksteps sent the St. Croixs to bat first. The Quickstep defense shut down the St. Croixs then scored two aces in their half the inning to take an early lead. The St. Croixs, the reigning vintage base ball champions of Minnesota, tied the score in the second with Dan "Basher" Cagley and newcomer Patrick "Greenhorn" Pfundstein tallying the aces.

The Quicksteps took another two run lead in the third, but the St. Croix's scored once in the fourth and again in the fifth to tie the score. Neither club scored again until the eighth inning when the St. Croixs scored five aces and were led by a three base hit by Brian "Fireball" Bucknell. Both clubs added an ace in the ninth, the final score being the St. Croix's 10 and the Quicksteps 6.

The second match of the afternoon featured the St. Croixs against the Afton Red Sock. After a presentation of "Casey at the Bat" performed by Mr. David Grabitske, the Afton Club won the coin toss and sent the St. Croix's to bat.

The St. Croixs, who found their hitting stride at the end of the first match, continued their hot hitting by sending twelve men to the bat - scoring eight



Casey presenter David Grabitske is the St. Croix BBC's throng interpreter and is also president of the Living History Society of Minnesota

aces which included another new player to the club, Quentin "Rock" Wittrock. The Red Socks answered with one tally in their half of the first, but that is all they would muster against St. Croix's pitcher Don "Pieso" Hammer. After nine innings, the St. Croixs won the match by the score of 18 to 1.

*Reported by
Brent "Skinny" Peterson*

Rochester Grangers play ball at Historic Fort Mackinac July 19, 2003

Mackinac Island, Mich.—The Old Fort Ball Field on Historic Fort Mackinac grounds was the site for a delightful ball game featuring the Fort Mackinac Never Sweats and the Rochester Grangers. The island team has recently formed and invited the downstate boys for an evening of base ball to learn the more recent rules of the 1860s. The field itself was spectacular, having been used continuously for our national pastime for some 150 years. Sitting atop the fabled island, it was indeed

a lovely venue for a fine evening of sportsmanship.

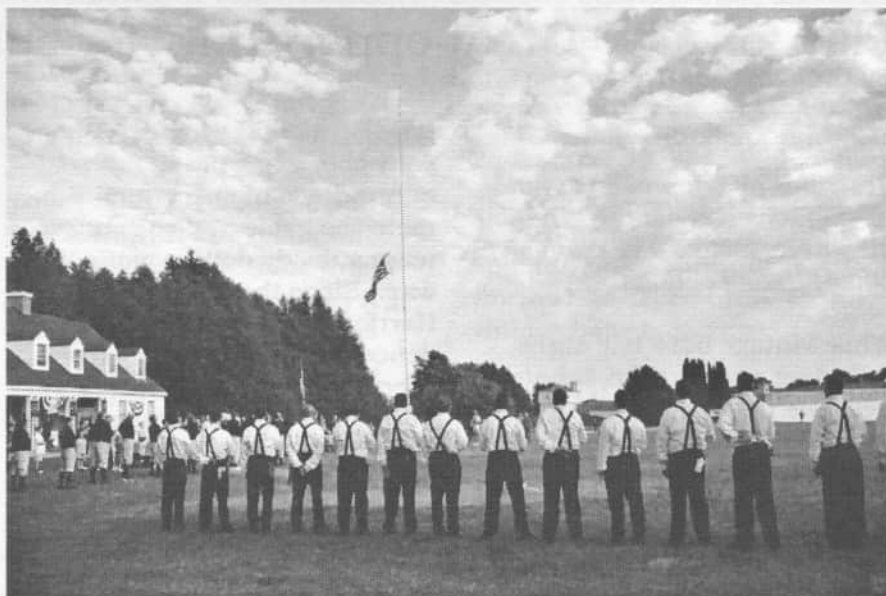
Captained by Phil "Pops" Porter, the Never Sweats club looked far better than its two practices would have otherwise suggested. The Never Sweats roster included some incredible ball-players, including standouts from the University of Michigan ball team. The honorary co-captain of the nine was Bill "Ashley" Freehan, formerly of the Detroit Tigers Baseball Club. Another fine player was Ken Hayward, who still owns several career University of Michigan records. One other special player was Dr. William Anderson, base ball historian and collector, and Director of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries for the great state of Michigan.

The more experienced and game-ready Grangers struck first and immediately took to the base paths after a lead-off single by the fleet-footed Bob "Roadblock" Grace. A few strikers later, the Grangers' Anthony "Goodfella" Prasatek tallied the first ace of the evening. The Grangers held a 3-0 lead for most of the match, and finally broke out of their hitting woes by scoring five more times in the final inning.

The Never Sweats played very well defensively; in particular, "Pops" Porter brought the crowd to its feet with a sterling snag on a wicked one-hopper off the hard wood of one frustrated Granger. Offensively, the rookie club struck well and even loaded the bases twice late in the match. With loaded sacks and two hands dead, a long fly was hit to the right field scout. The game could have been broken open, but the sure-handed Paul "Coot" Hunkele snared the ball just before it hit the fort grounds.

Mr. Freehan, the Gold Glove catcher and World Series champion, was frustrated by the sure hands of the Granger infielders, and uttered the line of the evening, "I need to find a league I can hit in!" His gentlemanly conduct abounded before, during, and after the match. The Grangers welcome Mr. Freehan to join their club as honorary captain any time he is in the area.

The cranks were plentiful—in the hundreds—and very vocally supportive of their home-town heroes. The match was momentarily halted for the introduction of one particular fan—none other than Michigan's Honorable Governor, Jennifer Granholm. Although she wore the black and white colors of the Grangers, she certainly had to appreciate the efforts of her local island charges. Granholm and all of the island residents are hoping that this match will be the first of many over the coming years. Perhaps a rematch is in order!



The Grangers ready themselves to play at Fort Mackinac.

The game's umpire was John "Cowpie" Soma, formerly of the Grangers. The tally keepers were Linda Hunkele and Debbie Remer.

As is customary, the two nines and their families socialized both before and after the match. Friendships were kindled and challenges were made. This

game called base ball, played by men for exercise and enjoyment, serves a great purpose unequalled by most other activities. The Grangers and their minions are happy to spread this magic around the region—"for the love of the game!"

Reported by Bradley "Streetcar" Pfeifer

Hoover Sweepers *Annual gathering completes the season*



Capt. Cross of the Hoover Sweepers poses with his favorite "crank" - his granddaughter!

It was a gratifying evening at Lolli's in Canton on October 17th at the annual banquet. Center operations coordinator Ann Haines commended the "Boys from New Berlin" for their integrity and sportsmanship which demonstrates their love of the game - all characteristic of vintage base ball.

Kudos to the club for completing the season with 10 wins - losses were of a lower number, 8 in all. Club members were pleased to receive a 2003 club photo and a Hoover baseball. Mgr. Walker and Capt. Cross were ecstatic to be presented vintage ball mitts with Hoover baseballs as special tokens of gratitude for their devoted efforts through the past season.

In lieu of an awards program, Mgr. Walker and Capt. Cross drew names for attendance prizes. Winners were: Mrs. "Rube" (Cindy) Kolb, a Cleveland Indians coffee mug; "Babe" Vander, a Boyd's Bear ball glove collectable; Mrs. "Doc" (Kim) Zonfa, a Boyd's Bear collectable ball player figurine.

Mgr. Walker and Capt. Cross have agreed to continue with their leadership roles next season.

Submitted by Ann Haines.

Play for pay? Great opportunity for subsidizing clubs

By Greg Martin, Hartford Senators

Editor's note: This article describes one approach to fundraising which is not preferred by all. Future issues will examine other funding options.

While vintage base ball clubs, including my Hartford Senators, welcome the opportunity to play wherever invited, another approach to consider is "play for pay". This is not about requesting being paid to participate in a club sponsored tournament or scheduled game at another club's home field. It is about marketing your club, at a nominal fee, to enhance a town festival or special event and creating an opportunity to subsidize club costs.

Vintage base ball is a proven attraction, attendance enhancement and spectator favorite. Many games or tournaments have attracted hundreds and even thousands to watch on a weekend afternoon. When was the last time you saw 100 people turnout to watch a local softball game? It is this very attraction that makes our game unique, special and open to creative marketing to help subsidize expenses for your club.

Town festivals are constantly seeking new ways and approaches to increase attendance or enhance their event. The festival fireworks display company gets paid. So do the clowns, musicians and vendors. So why not vintage base ball? As much as we'd like to play this wonderful game wherever invited, don't lose sight that vintage base ball is a special attraction that should not be undervalued and can be marketed, even if only once or twice a season.

It's also a great way to get your club exposure in front of hundreds of spectators, promote the game and earn a few team subsidy dollars along the way. Since the 2002 season, the Hartford Senators and the Providence Grays have each earned special appearance fees ranging from \$150 - \$250 per game. In '04, the Senators and three other clubs will be paid \$300 each as part of a Massachusetts town's 350th anniversary celebration to include vintage base ball. Two other New England town anniversary celebrations have also expressed interest in a similar arrangement.

These fees collected have been used for everything from equipment purchase, to post-game activities, overnight road game hotel room subsidy, or a season ending club party. It's a nice token reward appreciated by the players.

If you don't think \$1,000 toward operating a non-sponsored club comes in handy, just ask your Captain about how much fun it

is collecting checks from players or seeking a sponsor.

Some approaches to consider: Before setting your club schedule, it may be worth making calls now to larger-scale area annual festivals and offer vintage base ball as an added attraction and attendance enhancement. Negotiate a nominal fee for each participating club. You may be surprised by their enthusiasm and willing acceptance. You can also offer to get involved with ball field site selection and field preparation consulting or assistance.

Remember, you can always play for free on any given Saturday or you can "play for pay" in front of hundreds and earn a few club subsidy dollars. And isn't that a real Huzzah!

Greg Martin is founder of the Hartford Senators, an 1880s style ball club, operates Vintage Base Ball Factory, a 19th century base ball sporting goods company, and director of the Hartford Vintage Base Ball Invitational.

Required insurance coverage puts clubs on notice

by Paul Salomone, Captain, Elizabeth Resolutes Base Ball Club

For the last two years I have been speaking with John Freyer about my belief in the necessity of vintage base ball teams obtaining accident insurance for the protection of their players. Inquiries into the matter only proved that the cost would be prohibitive enough to make the acquisition of an insurance certificate seem impossible. However, this past February I was informed by Union County New Jersey, where the Elizabeth Resolutes play our home games, that all organized teams, whether members of a league or operating independently, must have an insurance policy with a minimum of one-million dollars liability coverage in order to be able to use county facilities. I became worried that we may lose our home field of three years, Echo Lake Park in Mountainside,

NJ. Union County's Parks and Recreation Dept. referred me to a well known sports insurance company that covers many of the softball leagues in the area. That company quoted me a minimum premium of six-hundred dollars a year, which is before they review the team situation and figure out what else they can squeeze you for. The situation looked bleak. I decided to do an Internet search and under the heading "sports insurance" found Sadler Sports Insurance at www.sadlersports.com.

Sadler Insurance writes policies for adult and children's sports teams. The insurance is sponsored by Sportsplex Operators and Developers Association (SODA). The premium for an adult men's base ball team is \$134.00 per year. The policy offers one-hundred-thousand dollars medical and two-million dollars liability coverage, far exceeding Union County's requirements. Most insurance companies do not offer a policy with only liability coverage. SODA puts each insured team into a pool so as to be able to offer such a low premium. Because of this, each team must procure their insurance separately.

Group rates for leagues or associations are not available. However, insurance for tournaments is available. Upon making some telephone inquiries to both Sadler and SODA, I was able to verify all the information I had found on the website with the help of courteous and knowledgeable staff members. I informed the captains of the Flemington Neshanock and Rahway Union Base Ball Clubs of my find. All three New Jersey clubs now carry the insurance. Upon making payment either through credit card or money order Sadler issued the insurance certificates via e-mail after

about seven business days. Having the policy also enables us to play on the grounds of any historical society or minor league ballpark. The cost of the policy is less than ten dollars per man with our roster of sixteen. The reason for Union County's requirement was it's own protection of course, as

An old fashioned glove story:

A review of early glove use, part one

by David Arcidiacano

Invariably every media account of a vintage base ball game prominently features the fact that fielders play barehanded. Undoubtedly catching balls barehanded is unique, difficult, and manly, but is it historically accurate?

It's interesting that in a sport in which the most minute rule interpretation is thoroughly researched and debated, something as fundamental and outwardly visible as gloves has been subject to a more laissez faire attitude. The use of gloves appear to be dismissed largely based on a cursory review of the history which typically includes only isolated reports of use by catcher Doug Allison in 1870, St. Louis first-baseman Charlie Waitt in 1875 and Al Spalding with his black first baseman's glove in 1877.

Although tracing the glove's advancement can be difficult, it appears that 1895 is the end date at which time gloves were virtually universal in the National League. Cincinnati second baseman Bid McPhee was regarded as the last barehanded player until he started wearing a glove in 1895. (*Brooklyn Eagle* 6/18/95) Also that season, the National League first legislated glove sizes after several years of position players

they must be named (at no extra cost) as second insured. But we now have at least some medical coverage, and don't have to worry about the cracked head of a crank, as long as it was caused by an accident. In my opinion, this insurance is a worthwhile expenditure for any vintage base ball club.

abusing the lack of a rule and wearing huge mitts. The new regulation stated; "The catcher and first baseman are permitted to wear a glove or mitt of any size, shape or weight. All other players are restricted to the use of a glove or mitt weighing not over ten ounces and measuring in circumference around the palm of the hand not over fourteen inches." (1895 *Spalding Guide*)

This article attempts to work backward from 1895 to fill the gaps between Allison and McPhee and understand the evolution of glove use. Although I was surprised by the number of references identified in just five weeks of research, this is by no means an exhaustive inventory. For every glove reference listed here, there are probably 50 others waiting to be discovered, buried in the profuse and often tedious newspaper coverage of the nineteenth century.

Surprisingly, the existence of baseball gloves has been mentioned as early as 1860. On April 26, 1887, the *National Daily Base Ball Gazette* reported, "The first catcher to wear gloves in catching behind the bat was old Delavarge of the Victory club of Troy, in 1860." This referred to Ben Delavarge who was named by several publications in the 1880's as being the first to wear gloves.

Also in 1860, a baseball poem honoring the Mercantile Club of Philadelphia has a stanza referring to the club's first baseman which reads:

His favorite position is on the first base,
And he stands like a statue, always right about
face,
With his hands in a pair of thick gloves all
encased,
Which never miss holding the ball once embraced.

Gloves in 1860 might be shocking enough, but wait, they may have been used even earlier. In his book *Glove Affair* (Triumph Books 2003), Noah Liberman says, "There's correspondence that suggests gloves were used in the Massachusetts game decades earlier (than 1875), but this was an all-amateur form of baseball, in which some experimentation might not be surprising." No primary source is provided, but a tantalizing reference nonetheless.

Another great early reference which documents gloves in the Midwest was unearthed by Pete Morris and reported in his book *Baseball Fever - Early Baseball in Michigan*. From the *Detroit Free Press*, 1867: "We have noticed in all the matches played thus far that the use of gloves by the players was to some degree a customary practice, which, we think, cannot be too highly condemned, and are of the opinion that the Custers would have shown a better score, if there had been less buckskin on their hands. (Morris p. 164 & 165)

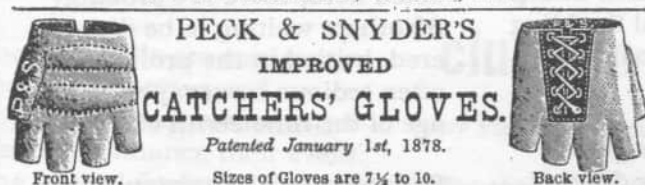
Following is a chronological list of glove references segregated by position. Some of these are from secondary sources, in the case of Dela-

vargue mentioned above, a newspaper article written more than 20 years after the fact. The next step in validating such citations would be to track them back to a primary source. For Delavarge that would mean examining the 1860 Troy newspapers for any mention of him wearing gloves.

Catcher

- 1869** Doug Allison and Nat Hicks claimed to have worn gloves. (*Black Guards and Red Stockings* - Ryczek 1992 p. 16)
- 1870** "[Cincinnati Red Stocking's catcher Doug] Allison caught today in a pair of buckskin mittens to protect his hands" (*Cincinnati Commercial* June 29, 1870)
- 1871** Fergy Malone of the Philadelphia Athletics wore a pair of light gloves. (Ryczek p. 16 from Henry Chadwick Scrapbooks)
- 1872** "The catcher will find it advantageous when facing swift pitching to wear tough leather gloves with the fingers cut off near the joint and they will prevent him having his hands split and puffed up." (*DeWitt Guide* 1872-1876)
- 1873** (date estimated) Interview with Cap Anson about the history of catching equipment. Asked when catcher's started wearing masks, he replied, "Oh, after the gloves. The hurt was worse on the hands, and so they were looked after first. I remember catching often and never thinking of a mask." (*Brooklyn Eagle* 9/12/96) The exact date of the mask's invention has been pegged anywhere from 1873 to 1877.
- 1874** In describing a practice game in which noted fastballer Cherokee Fisher pitched, "Scarcely a base-hit had been made off Fisher's rippers. "Cherokee" going in to intimidate the field side with his speed. [Catcher Scott] Hastings faced the music well for a few innings, and then gave Tommy Barlow a chance. Tom put on his gloves and took them in quite naturally." (*New York Clipper* 4/18/74)
- 1875** "[The pitcher] has to face the hottest balls sent from the bat; for this reason he ought to wear abdominal pads, and gloves covering the palms of his hands and the lower part of his fingers...stout hand gloves will prevent a hot ball from splitting the hand while admitting of the free grasp of the ball by the uncovered fingers. In fact the gloves we refer to should be used alike by catchers, first-basemen and pitchers. (*New York Clipper* 1/2/75)

OUT AND INDOOR GAMES, NOVELTIES, ETC.



Front view. Sizes of Gloves are 7½ to 10. Back view.

These Gloves are made to lace up the back of the hand with elastic so as not to confine the hand in any way, and are made in sizes the same as a kid glove, the leather that these Gloves are made of is soft and pliable to the hand and cannot be made hard with water or perspiration.

No. A are made of Indian tanned Buckskin, with half fingers and palm of hand full padded, trimmed with red leather binding and elastic lace. Price per pair \$2 00

No. B are made of Reindeer skin, with half fingers and palm of hand full padded, trimmed with blue leather binding and elastic lace. Price per pair 1 50

No. C are made of soft fine tan leather, half fingers, padded palm white binding and elastic. Price per pair 1 00

No. D are made of soft tan color leather, same pattern as above but palm not padded. Price per pair 0 75

Gloves sold commercially in the 1879 Peck & Snyder catalogue, New York.

From the Collections of The Henry Ford.

Continued in next issue.

Date Set for Second Annual National Silver Ball Tournament

The Second Annual National Silver Ball Tournament is scheduled to take place at Genesee Country Village and Museum on July 30, 31, and August 1, 2004. It once again promises to be the tournament you want on your schedule. For more information, please contact the director of the Silver Base Ball Park League, Connie Bodner, at cbodner@gcv.org.

Calling All Vintage Base Ball Enthusiasts

You are invited to participate in the Vintage Base Ball Festival and Tournament in Rochester, Minnesota on Sat. and Sun. July 10 and 11, 2004. It will be at Schmitt Field on the grounds of the Olmsted County History Center and hosted by the Roosters Vintage Base Ball team.

There will be matches played under both a timed festival format and a tournament for the Silver Ball. At least two fields will be set up for play. Also on the grounds will be concessions, the historical museum, a silent auction, games of chance including a dunk tank, and more to provide as much fun and entertainment as possible. Vendors are welcome - wooden bats will be of special interest.

On Friday evening there will be a hospitality room with refreshments at the Headquarters Hotel so people can relax and get acquainted. Matches will be played Saturday and Sunday at the History Center. The additional activities will be available both days. On Saturday evening there will be a banquet for all participants.

The Best Western Soldiers Field Tower & Suites is the Headquarters Hotel. They have all

the amenities - pools, game room, restaurant, free continental breakfast with hot waffles, gift shop and small grocery store, free shuttles to take guests out to the field or elsewhere in town. A block of rooms has been reserved for this festival/tournament at the special rate of \$72 regular rooms and \$77 suites. The cut-off date is three weeks prior to the event - after that the rate still applies if you say you are with Roosters Vintage Base Ball Festival & Tournament but only if there are rooms available. They will also give you that rate for additional nights if you ask.

There is a National AAU Girls Basketball Tournament in town that weekend so rooms will fill up fast - especially the suites. 1 800 366-2067

The Microtel Inn & Suites will offer a limited number of rooms at \$42 queen bed, \$52 two queen beds and \$54 suite. Rooms are nice and clean, continental breakfast is available in the morning. Call 1-800-245-9535 to book. Cut-off date is three weeks prior to the event.

More information and links to Rochester Convention and Visitors Bureau and the hotels for virtual tours are on the web site www.olmstedhistory.com



2004 Old Bethpage festival set

This season the Old Bethpage Village Restoration will be holding the Seventh Annual Old Time Base Ball Festival at Old Bethpage, New York on Long Island. The dates of the festival are August 7-8. The festival is just that, a celebration of vintage base ball where teams play for the sheer enjoyment of the game and get to experience many different years and the rules involved. It is not a tournament. Teams can play as many or as few games as they wish and may request a particular year their club wishes to play. Individual players are more than welcome to attend and will be placed on teams if they wish. Their are many opportunities for individual players and teams to experience a year that they do not normally have the opportunity to experience. All games are played at the 19th century village setting of beautiful Old Bethpage Village Restoration. Space for this event is limited, so please confirm your attendance as soon as possible. One of the many highlights for the weekend is a players picnic held Saturday evening. New this season, depending on attendance, will be discounted hotel rooms at a local hotel. If the dates of the festival are not convenient to your schedule feel free to inquire as to other dates that your team may come to Long Island and play one of the local clubs. These would need to be arranged on or before March 1, 2004. I look forward to hearing from you soon and have a great off-season. Contact Tom Fesolowich for more information. mymutuals@aol.com

Monitor the vbba.org website for additional festivals and tournaments.



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PRESIDENT, cont'd

century base ballpark. New products, new ideas and new scheduling opportunities are sure to present themselves as you socialize with clubs from across the country. Make it a priority to send at least one representative. Few leave disappointed, and all leave ready to get out and play ball.

Our organization exists as member clubs, yet it would not be possible without individual effort. Special thanks go to John Freyer (formerly Hobart, IN, Deep River Grinders) for his work as Newsletter Editor and Communications Chairman, and also, Trustee Lee Slider (Rock Springs, IL, Ground Squirrels) for his work spreading vintage base ball in the Midwest. Interested volunteers are needed to sustain these individual efforts. This year all officer positions are up for reelection, as well as two trustee positions. Nominations may be submitted to <drushu@aol.com> with information regarding the

candidate and the position of interest.

Thank you all for being a part of Vintage Base Ball. Let's build upon our achievements this year to make next year an even greater success.

For the Glory of the Game of Base Ball!

Andrew Shuman,
President

MEMBERSHIP, cont'd

letter articles, convention workshops, etc.).

So, what is that I ask? First, please continue your membership and encourage other clubs and individuals you come into contact to do the same. Second, submit, on a regular basis, updates regarding your clubs and your club mem-

bers. Let us know what you are doing and what successes (and failures) you have met. What new research have you uncovered? We are always looking for more articles for the newsletter! Lastly, please plan on attending the 9th Annual VBBA Convention set to take place from March 26-28, 2004 at Genesee Country Village and Museum in New York. This is one of the major benefits of VBBA membership and something that, quite frankly, you should not miss.

If you have any ideas of increasing membership participation or enhancement of membership benefits, please feel free to contact me at mheppner@stanhywet.org. I welcome all suggestions and offer of assistance.

I look forward to seeing many of you in 2004 and wish you the best of luck in your upcoming season. Good luck and let's continue to play for the glory of the game.

Mark "Capt'n" Heppner Chair,
Membership Committee