

The Base Ball Player's

SUMMER Chronicle

2003

A Quarterly Publication of the Vintage Base Ball Association

Meet the 2003 VBBA Officers, Trustees and Committee Chairs

Andrew Shuman
VBBA President
Ohio Village Muffins
(Columbus, OH)

In the next year as President, I hope to improve communications with member clubs. I would also like to hear from members regarding their needs and ways we can assist in the development of their clubs.

Don Andersen
VBBA Secretary
Ohio Village Muffins

I hope to collect and keep an accurate record of all "Official" VBBA communications and carry on all duties assigned the Secretary as found in the revised bylaws.

I was also appointed as the VBBA archivist a few years back and would like to track down the records of past Historians. I was the first Historian and have a thick book with all of the Charter Clubs submissions from that year plus the Original constitution and by-laws.



Andy Shuman at the VBBA convention.

So by copy of this I am asking all past Historians to collect their data and send it to me.

Rich Blasick
VBBA Treasurer
Akron Black Stockings
(Akron, OH)

Work with the membership committee to enhance information provided on the website regarding how to become a member and the benefits of membership.

Effectively communicate with member and prospective member clubs and individuals regarding the VBBA.

Dean "Deano" Thilgen
chair of Education and Interpretation committee, VBBA historian and co-webmaster
St. Croix and Quicksteps clubs
(Minnesota)

My goals fulfill the mission of the VBBA, to preserve, perpetuate, and

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VINTAGE
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Review of *Wooden Bats & Dusty Hands*
2003 VBBA convention photo spread

OFFICERS, cont'd

promote the game of base ball as it was played during its formative years in the mid-nineteenth century and other historic eras.

Ryan Brecker
VBBA Trustee

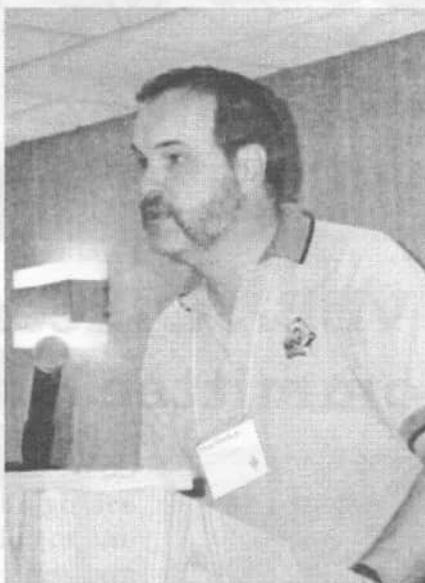
Excelsiors of the Silver Park Base Ball League at Genesee Country Village (New York)

In the next year as a Trustee, I hope to contribute lessons we've learned with our base ball program as well as learning from the experience of others.

Paul Hunkele
Trustee

Upton Base Ball Club of Sterling / Rochester Grangers (Michigan)

What you hope to accomplish: Get us communicating and understanding why we interpret the game differently.



Paul "Coot" Hunkele

Encourage clubs to consider new information pertaining to historical accuracy that the VBBA provides.

Paul Salomone
Trustee

Elizabeth Resolutes (New Jersey)

I'd like to help expand the

VBBA in this area by finding people interested in forming the historically factual clubs that played in Jersey City, Newark, Irvington, and New Brunswick, NJ. Also I think it's imperative we in the VBBA find someone to form the Philadelphia Athletics and Boston Red Stockings.

Mark J. Heppner
Chair, Membership Committee

Akron Black Stockings Base Ball Club

Akron Lady Locks Base Ball Club

My goal in the upcoming years is to see the Membership Committee become a viable branch of the VBBA and truly represent its member clubs and individuals. It will be critical to survey members to establish goals and timelines as well as the desires of VBBA membership.

Rochester Grangers Report: **Celebration of Our National Pastime**

July 3, 2003

Rochester, Mich.—The Rochester Grangers played host to their nearby rivals, the Sterling Heights Uptons, on Thursday, July 3, 2003, at Borden Park in Rochester Hills.

This match took place before a large celebration in honor of our young country's birthday. Many of the folks arrived early to witness a fine exhibition of this new game of base ball.

The rookie cranks saw striking and fielding at its finest as demonstrated by both nines. In fact, aces were tallied in most every stanza, thereby providing ample exercise to the men. In the very first turn at the plate, the Uptons loaded the bases and shouted joyfully as their captain, Paul "Coot" Hunkele, tallied the first ace of the match. Their fine striking continued into the second

Continued on next page...

Melrose Pondfeilders Report:

Gentlemen,

This year's tournament over Independence Day weekend has come and gone, and not without excitement, controversy, sportsmanship, and questionable behavior. In short, it was the tournament that we have come to expect.

The hearty souls who made the trip for the Pondfeilders and endured the Hartford heat and humidity were:

Continued on next page...

PONDFEILDERS, cont'd

Brian Bird, Andy Cunningham, Paul Cunningham, Mike Fowle, Dave Gonsalves, Rob Harlow, Matt Moore, Chuck Person, Jim Regan, Tom Regan, Joe Sanders, and Brian Sheehy.

Deep thanks are due to those who came to cheer us on: Jackie Bird, the Harlow Family, Mike Fowle's girlfriend Kerry, Leea Regan, Val Regan, and Carrie Weatherbee.

SCORES/COMMENTS -

please note that this tournament imposes time limits on the games, thus the shortened number of innings.

Friday, Game 1 - A rematch of last year's tournament final: Melrose vs. Flemington Neshanock of NJ. In six innings, we won 12-6. The hurler's quick-pitches and other trickery did not unnerve us.

Friday, Game 2 - Melrose vs. Providence Grays. Fatigue got the better of us in this match. We hit well, but had trouble defending effectively at times. The loss, a bitter one to a league rival, cost us a berth in the tourney final. Tally in eight innings: 15-14.

Saturday, Game 1 - Melrose vs. Webster Spiders of upstate NY. The Bishop laid down the law where water consumption was concerned. He wanted no dehydration this day! This field had a very shallow left field (about 200 ft). It was sometimes hard

to avoid it, even when you wanted to. The score seesawed back and forth, but Melrose won 18-17 on a ground rule double by Birdie with runners at second and third.

Saturday, Game 2 - Melrose vs. Excelsior BBC of Rochester, NY. Our opponents were gentlemen of the first order. We won 19-6.

Sunday's Tournament Final was played between the Providence Grays and the Middletown Mansfields (who visit us on the 27th), both New England League teams. The score was tied at the end of eight 11-11. Middletown batted in the top half of the inning and tallied 6. Providence, in their half, could muster only 3. Final 17-14.

NOTE: I was told by a number of opponents, cranks (fans), and umpires that our club carries a reputation of integrity and gentlemanly play, as well as being a tough team to beat. Opposing teams ENJOY playing against us, even when they lose. This, to me, was worth more than another tournament championship. It was a great weekend of ball. Thank you to all of you. It is not possible without your contribution.

Jim Regan
Melrose Pondfeilders

Editor resigns

John Freyer has resigned as Communications Committee chair and newsletter editor. His many contributions to

GRANGERS, cont'd

inning, when "Moonhouse" Chaffin clapped a beauty of a two-bagger, bringing all cranks to their feet.

The Grangers also struck well, and matched the Uptons' effort ace for ace before finally taking the lead late in the game. The final tally, as recorded by scorekeeper Mrs. Hunkele, was 15 aces for the hometown Grangers, and six for the visiting Uptons. The Grangers have come out on top in six of their first seven ball games.

Many new cranks were evident, asking questions such as, "How far apart are the bases?," "How many innings do you play?," and "Why is a one-bound catch an out?" Both clubs interacted with the fans plentifully and answered all of their queries, either in words or actions on the field of play.

This reporter's faithful readers are cordially invited to all the upcoming Granger matches at the old Van Hoosen dairy farm.

Reported by Bradley "Streetcar" Pfeifer

this newsletter are greatly appreciated. Prospective articles are temporarily being collected by Deano Thilgen. deano@vbba.org

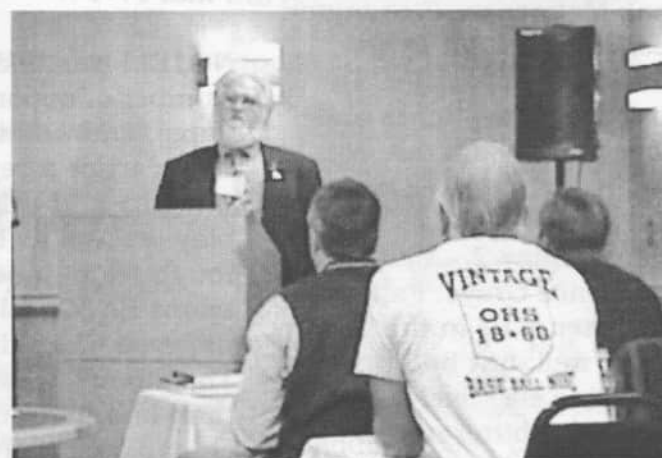


Meadow Brook Hall

2003 VBBA Convention

Rochester, Michigan

Photos by Bradley Pfeifer and Deano Thilgen



Above left, keynote speaker Bill Anderson; above right, Dr. Carl Osthoff; at table above, l-r, Connie Bodner, Paul Waldecker, Paul Zelenak, Bob Grace and Ryan Brecker. Shoes from the Silver Park Base Ball League at Genesee Country Village; one of the convention organizers, Patrick McKay; David Lee Poremba; at right, Mark Heppner; far right, Peter Morris.



Counter-clockwise, starting at left: a group photo at Meadow Brook Hall; Akron Black Stockings Rich Blasick, Mark Hepner and Shane Gault; From Columbus, Don Andersen, Andy Shuman, Joel Ambruster and Marilyn Andersen; 19th century culture and society expert, par excellence, Glenna Jo Christen; Deano Thilgen from Minnesota.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU IN
UPSTATE NEW YORK,
MARCH 2004 FOR
VBBA 9!**

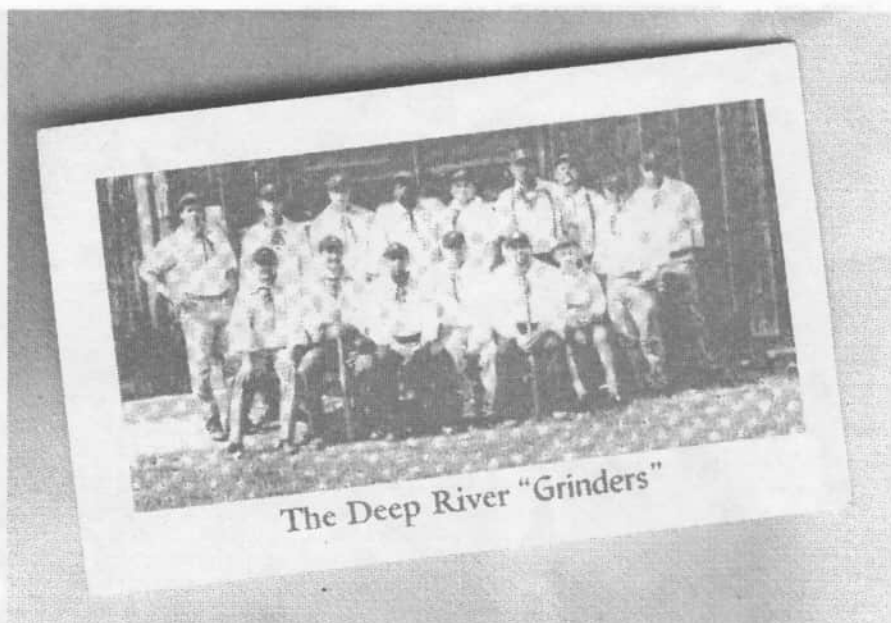


Everything I needed to know about vintage base ball I learned from the Grinders

by Bob "Droopy Drawers" Sampson,
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels VBBC

A few years ago, an author and eventually untold numbers of commencement speakers made hay off the topic of "Everything You Need to Know You Learned in Kindergarten" or variations on the idea. The lure was simple—a few basic rules are all you need for success in life and human relationships. What's good for life is good for vintage base ball, where the Deep River Grinders of Indiana provide a pretty good template.

Now for starters, the title and the subject matter should in no way be taken as a criticism or slight of other vintage base ball programs, including the Ohio Muffins who introduced my Rock Springs Ground Squirrels to the game and continue to be the program all of us strive to emulate. Surely, the case I'm making could easily be made for any number of team nines who bare their hands to a screaming daisy cutter. It is just that for a number of years, the Grinders and the Ground Squirrels were the only offi-



Founded in 1991, the Grinders is a VBBA charter member and play home matches under the 1858 rules. The photo published on their club card was taken by Doughboy Ott.

cial clubs in Indiana and Illinois, respectively, and played each other all the time. And the more I've come to know about the vintage game in the past 12 years, see the standards it strives for and the challenges to those standards, the more I've come to admire the good-natured, blue-shirted gentlemen from Lake County.

So, what's special about the Grinders? I vividly recall the first time the Grinders came to BeautifulTroboughField. For some reason, we had the usual post-game meal before the game. We laid out quite a feast for the Grinders, who impressed me as pretty hefty guys. Great, I recall thinking; we'll load these guys up with food and run circles around them during the game. About the only running during the game was the Grinders circling the bases on the

way to ringing the tally bell. To put it bluntly, we got clobbered—and not for the last time. Yet it was and is great fun to play them because they are friendly and their enthusiasm for the game is infectious.

A couple of times over the years, we've managed to squeak by them for one-run victories and this July won at Grinder Field for the first time. I guess I sort of took for granted the fact that no matter the score, the Grinders were still the Grinders—smiling and easygoing. Last season, a couple of very different experiences for the Grinders really convinced me that they were not only good guys and opponents but part of a program that all of us could try to copy.

Last August, the Grinders showed up a player short for

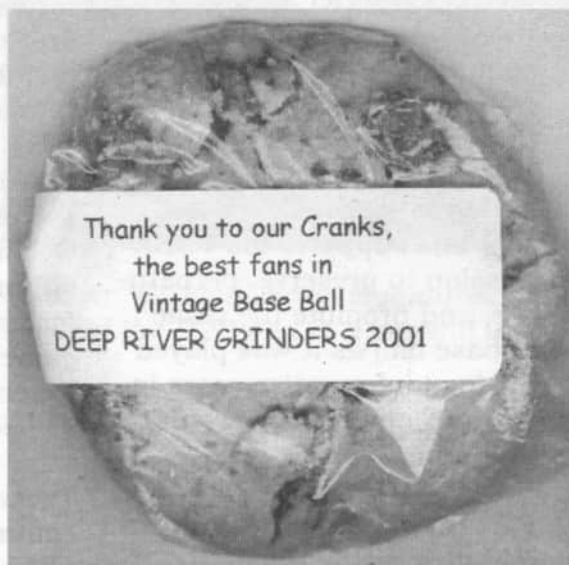
the Apple Dumpling Tournament sponsored by the Mackville Mudcats. The Grinders ended up "drafting" a retired Ground Squirrel, Clarence "Mad Dog" Landers, from the sidelines and lost their opening game to the Muffins. That was the last game they lost all day. Putting together determination, stamina, luck, and, most importantly, a "go-for-it" mentality, they roared through back-to-back games to win the tourney. I've never seen anything like it on a vintage base ball field and don't expect to again.

A month later, the Grinders came south again for the Stephen A. Douglas Cup at Decatur. This time they had a full complement of players. The result, however, was very different. As most of us who have played the vintage game know, some days you and your teammates just don't have it. The hits don't fall in, the ball spins off the fingers, and the tally bell becomes a stranger. When it was over, the Grinders, who had won it all in 2000 and finished second in 2001, lost two of three games.

But here's the amazing thing. If you stood on the sidelines and did not look at the scoreboard, you'd have thought the Grinders were sweeping the field. They were as loose, as laughing, as gentlemanly, as fun to be around as they were in Atwood. In

other words, win or lose, the Grinders were having a good time—and because they were everyone around them was, too.

Isn't that what vintage base ball is all about? We open up a window on our past for spectators and open up friendships for ourselves. As "Honest" Harold Longbons said last September, "You know, if you weren't keeping score, you'd think the Grind-



In typical Grinders style, the players hand out cookies at the final home game of the season.

ers were the champions, not the team that lost all two games. Wouldn't it be great if people could say the same about the Ground Squirrels or any other vintage team in the same situation?"

Some days the daisy cutters are going to be bound outs and the line drives just long outs. The game is still the game and we should remember to treasure it. If you want trash talk and cutthroat

competition and fights with the umpire, there are plenty of slow-pitch softball leagues around. If you want a game played for the "glory of the game," try vintage base ball. And, if you have any questions, see the Grinders. In the meantime, try these simple rules gleaned from watching the Grinders:

—Play for fun and have fun when you play. While it is always more fun to win it can also be fun and rewarding to simply be on the field and sharing the game with fellow players and the "throng" on the sidelines.

—Always treat opponents the way you like to be treated. If you have a big lead on the tally board, don't run it up or try to show the other team up. If you are on the short end of a lopsided game, give credit to your opponent's strengths and good play rather than moaning about the hit you didn't make or the ball you didn't field.

—Smile and laugh. Demonstrate to other players and the throng how much you enjoy the game and the fellowship of the sport. Shrug off that foul tick that retired you with a smile rather than throwing a bat. Chuckle at your own shortcomings in the field or on the base paths and try to do better next time.

Continued on next page...

GRINDERS, cont'd

—Remember it's only a game. No one is getting fired or stood up against a wall and shot. If you are tempted to play as if that was so, chill. Take a deep breath and remember your life and worth are not defined by what happens on a vintage base ball field.

—Cheer your opponents. A good play is a good play, no matter the color of the shirt or what logo the author of it is wearing.

—Kid the umpire, but always remember the line between good-natured disputing and arguing. Joke about fines, not about calls. Accept decisions with grace and give the honest answer when asked to call a play. The Grinders did just this in a game with the Ground Squirrels, giving up what would have been the tying run.

—If you build a program the right way, the throng will arrive. The Grinders attract spectators. At a recent match with the Ground Squirrels at Grinder Field, the throng consisted of about 300 people. People watching other people having fun end up enjoying themselves, too, and come back for more.

—Plant a seed. Always remember to conduct yourself and play the game so that those watching might say to themselves, "Gee, that looks like fun. I think I'd like to play."

Education and Interpretation Committee

A report by Deano Thilgen, committee chair

Some of you know this already, but I will repeat it in print. I consider every VBBA member to be on this committee. Anyone can submit original primary source material that would be of interest to other VBBA members for posting on the committee's section on the website. That is this committee's primary function, to provide resources to enhance and grow vintage base ball, and this supports the VBBA mission 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.

Part of this committee work includes typing original materials into a word processing program and/or proofing and correcting text that has been scanned using OCR software. If you think this sounds interesting, let me know.

This committee focuses its work on guide books and other supportive texts, illustrations and photographs. We work closely with the SABR 19th Century Committee and its rules subcommittee and we do not need to duplicate their work. SABR members focus a lot of their research on teams, players, stats, ball-parks, specific events, etc.

This is helpful to VBBA members, but we are also interested in the reproduction of the balls, bats, uniforms, umpire clothing, scorekeeper's books, catcher's equipment, scoreboards, etc. Most members wish to create the look and feel of a 19th century base ball game. A wood water bucket, a period folding table and chair, and equipment boxes are a concern to many in the VBBA. We also research period baseball terms and phrases. These are curiosities to most SABR members and so it falls more into our arena.

This committee also creates the photo galleries on the website, and anyone can submit scanned photos to me for posting. We want to see games from all over North America in the 2003 gallery, so keep sending them in.

Two recent additions to the committee are pages from an 1875 sporting goods catalog and extracts from a Minnesota farmer's diary from 1867-1872, which provides evidence of rural games that never made it into the town newspaper.

There's much more to mention, but the best way to monitor this committee's work is to visit our section on the website: <http://vbba.org/ed-interp/>

E-mail me if you have something to share or time to give to the Education and Interpretation Committee. deano@vbba.org

Review of **Wooden Bats & Dusty Hands: The Grays**

Most of the vintage base ball in Minnesota emulates the good-natured cross-town rivalry of the games that were played here in 1860. True competitive baseball did not come around in this part of the country until the fall of 1867 when the state tournament was established. So most of us here look at later eras of vintage base ball with some curiosity. This is why Benjamin C. Collier's student production, *Wooden Bats & Dusty Hands: The Grays*, is such an excitement. Here is my first opportunity to see 1884 base-ball in action.

This 2002 production was Collier's honors thesis for Brown University in Providence. It is difficult for me to separate Collier's work from the Grays performance. It is a brief story of the world champion 1884 Providence Grays and the group of young men who are inspired by their legacy. (I watched the DVD version. I am told the VHS version contains a different edit.)

Old-school documentaries are heavy on the interviews, lots of talking heads. Collier succeeds by sparing the viewer from this droll. Vintage base ball, the activity that puts baseball rules of



Catcher "Gilligan" Faria is featured on the cover of the DVD and in a bashful interview.

the past back into action, is not about talking heads. The main discovery of *Wooden Bats* is that these young, talented ball players respect the game and its history, as much if not more than other vintage base ball clubs I have seen. These guys love the game. It is pretty clear they enjoy showing off their swollen hands after a gloveless game of 1884 rules ball.

What surprised me the most by *Wooden Bats* is the period film clips. Collier's jammed in lots of them, many more than I expected in a student production. I really liked the clip of the House of David players after the closing credits, with one guy flub-

bing a behind the back ball trick. But would most who see that know its significance? Sadly, these clips are mostly just filler, no explanation or interpretation is given. Alexander Scourby? Oh, please.

Collier's own work is the best part of this DVD. The shots of the modern Grays at work is what this film is all about, not a crowd shot from a 1940s ballgame. He uses some genuine creativity in his camera work. I really like the handshake bit, something a vintage player would understand the best. There are some awe-

some plays that should be stopped and played back in slow motion.

Should *Wooden Bats* be watched? Absolutely, without a doubt. Every vintage base ball player should watch this film, because I suspect the Grays have something to teach other vintage clubs, no matter what the era. (The wooden bucket is aces.)

Reviewed by Deano Thilgen

Available from the Vintage Base Ball Factory, DVD and VHS, \$19.95
<http://www.vbbf.com/html/productspage2.html>



The Rock Springs Ground Squirrels visited St. Louis June 8 to help inaugurate the new home field of the Perfectos. 1860 rules base ball games at Historic Lafayette Park has been embraced by the neighborhood association, and plans to improve the field for vintage base ball push forward. Photo by Deano.

Known Vintage Base Ball Teams

This list was created by John Freyer and was copied in early 2003. Please see <http://www.vbba.org/ed-interp/knownVBBteams.html> for future updates.

Canada

Ontario

Woodstock, Ontario Actives #
London Tecumsehs

United States

Colorado

Colorado Vintage Base Ball Assoc.
Broomfield Sweepers #
Littleton Rough and Readies
Central City Stars
Colorado Territorial All Stars

Connecticut

Middletown Mansfields *
Mystic Oceanics *
Hartford Dark Blues
Hartford Senators
Homestead Grays

Florida

Dunedin Railers *
Largo Crackers *
Nielsen Monitors #
Medicine Men

Georgia

Westville Craftsmen & Biscuits #

Iowa

Walnut Hill Bluestockings

Illinois

Mackville Mudcats #
Chicago Salmon
Rock Springs Ground Squirrels

Elk Grove Bucks
Creston Regulators
Midway Village Marauders

Indiana

Deep River Grinders *
Indianapolis Freetowns
Door Village Prairie Dogs
Bonneyville Millers
White River BBC
Indianapolis Blues

Kentucky

Shaker Village Bully Boys

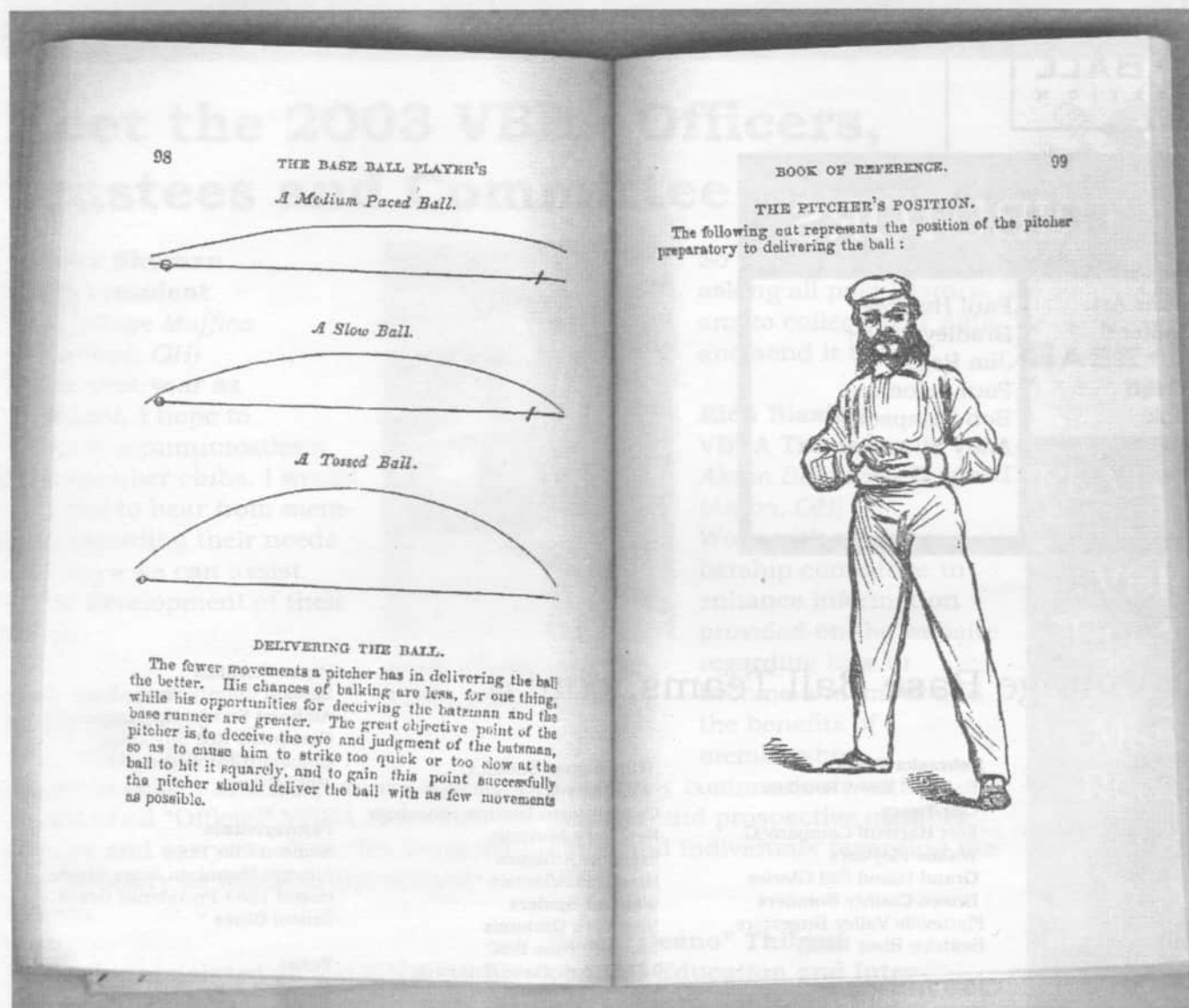
Massachusetts

Melrose Pondfeilders
Danvers Essex BBC

Continued on last page...

Rare 1867 Haney's guide reprinted

Serves as primary guide at Greenfield Village tournament



Considered one of the rare books of baseball, the 1867 Haney's *Base Ball Book of Reference* by Henry Chadwick, is a gem for vintage base ball. Seven years after Chadwick first published the *Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player*, Haney's proves that the game truly was scientific by 1867. In comparison, the 1867 *Beadle's* remains very similar to the original edition.

The 1860 *Beadle's* is 40 pages in length. The 1867 Haney's adds over 100 pages to that number.

It should be noted that the 1867 *Haney's* is actually the second edition, the first having been published in July the previous year.

We have the folks at The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Mich-

igan, to thank for this reprint. They obtained a pristine original that was advertised on the Internet, and then approached Applewood Books to have it reproduced. Their American-WebBooks division released it. To obtain it directly from the Greenfield Village Store, where it is on sale, call (313) 982-6100 ext. 2770. It is \$12.95 plus \$6.00 shipping. ISBN 1-55709-595-7



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BASE • BALL
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Known Vintage Base Ball Teams, cont'd

Michigan

Berrien County Cranberry bog-
gers *
Greenfield Village Lah De Dahs *

Kent Base Ball Club *
Ludington Mariners *
Salt City Base Ball Club *
Rochester Grangers *
House of David Echoes
Upton BBC of Sterling
Northville Eclipse
Plymouth Lone Stars

Minnesota

Saint Croix Base Ball Club *
Quicksteps Base Ball Club #
Roosters BBC *
Winona Lumber Barons +
Afton Red Stockings

Mississippi

Historic
Jefferson College

Missouri

Washington Eagles
St. Louis Perfectos
Hannibal Nationals

Nebraska VBBA

Railroad Town Rowdies
Ord Tigers
Fort Hartsuff Company C
Wahoo Ployboys
Grand Island Old Glories
Brown County Bombers
Platteville Valley Bugeaters
Beatrice River Bats

New Jersey

Elizabeth Resolutes *
Flemington Neshanock #
Rahway Unions

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 Seminolds
Mineola Washingtons

Huntington Suffolks
Westbury Base Ball Club
Cooperstown Leather Stockings
New York Mutuals
Freeport Athletics
Brooklyn Atlantics *
Webster Spiders
New York Gothams
Roxbury Nine BBC
1876 Silver Base Ball Park
League
New York Knickerbockers
New York Excelsiors
Rockester Live Oaks
Rochester BBC

Ohio

Akron Black Stockings * Akron
Lady Locks # Summit Merinos
Lorain County Buckeyes *
Forest Citys Base Ball Club *
Canal Fulton Mules * Hoover
Sweepers *
Ohio Village Muffins *
Columbus Capitals *
Preble Aces #
Lake County Pirages *
Carriage Hill Clodbusters *
Sycamore Grasshoppers *
Great Black Swamp Frogs *
West Central Ohio BBC *

Piqua Sterlings
Loudon County Stars
Amherst Sandstone Masons *
Cincinnati Red Stockings *
Cincinnati Buckeyes
1922 Giants

Pennsylvania

Addison Pike Boys
Altoona Mountain Stars Rhode
Island 1884 Providence Grays
Bristol Blues *

Texas

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

Washington

Ft. Vancouver Occidentals

West Virginia

City of Nitro

Wisconsin

Heritage Hill Base Ball Program

Wyoming

Laramie Lawmen

* Full Member,
Associate Member,
+ Inactive