



Early Innings Illustrated

Vol. 1 No. 1

The Journal of the Vintage Base Ball Association
and Chronicle of Historic Baseball Re-Creation

July, 1996



A First Look

*By the VBBA
President*

by John R. Husman

These pages represent the culmination of considerable thought and work done by a number of people over several years. Our association is formed and we have a newsletter! But what we have done is only a beginning and pales when compared to what we will do.

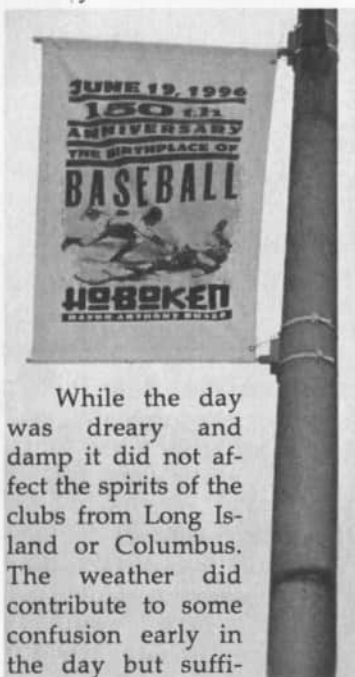
The work of carrying out our mission statement has already begun. Greg Rhodes of the Shamrocks has accepted the appointment to chair our Rules and Customs Committee. He has formed a core committee whose initial work is presented elsewhere on these pages. John Wells of the Muffins, likewise, has agreed to serve us as editor of this publication. In reality, he will be publisher and anything else necessary to get the job done as well. Both these gentlemen are extremely capable and we are fortunate to have them working for us. They need and de-

June 19, 1846

Match at Hoboken

Re-Created

by Richard Schuricht



While the day was dreary and damp it did not affect the spirits of the clubs from Long Island or Columbus. The weather did contribute to some confusion early in the day but sufficient gentlemen were present to enable the playing of a short practice match on an athletic field at the Stephens Institute. This was a spirited exercise during which the players from both squads got to know each other a little

The Denver "Deacon" Has a New Job

by Pat Massengill

Several weeks ago, a fairly incredible set of events transpired with the end result being that I was hired by the Colorado Historical Society to be the Acting Director at Fort Vasquez Museum in Platteville (halfway between Brighton and Greeley). In the amount of time it took to drive to RTD and then to Englewood, I stopped being both a bus driver and a warehouse man.

I am enclosing a brochure (I have to get rid of 35,000 of these before I get new *correct* ones), so I won't bore you with all the details, but I invite and hope everyone gets a chance to come up and see my new "toy". (A photograph from the brochure is reproduced below.)

As the museum is open seven days a week through Labor Day, I have already and will probably miss some more base ball matches. I have a seasonal employee who can cover some of those times for me, but not all.

Someone asked, "Is this your dream job?" Probably not, but I can see it from here!

Ohio Cup

To Mark Fifth Year

*Saturday Evening
Soirée for All Attending*

by Doug Smith

The Ohio Cup Vintage Base Ball Festival will celebrate its fifth year in 1996. It is hosted by the Ohio Historical Society and the Ohio Village Muffins. It will be held on Saturday, Aug. 31 and Sunday, September 1 in Columbus.

This is the nation's largest gathering of vintage teams. The festival this year will be a Vintage Base Ball Association event. All clubs associated with the VBBA have been invited. Because Ohio Village is set in the 1860s only matches pertaining to the general rules of this period will be played there. However it may be possible to give demonstrations of later styles of the game on OHS grounds outside of the village.

The Muffins will treat their guests to a 19th century soirée:

"The Ohio Cup"
continues on page 2

VBBA Rules Committee

Goals and

Recommendations

For the 1996 Season

by the Rules Committee

Greg Rhodes, Chair

John Husman

Fred Ivor-Campbell

Richard Schuricht

Chip Atkison

1. The purpose of the Rules Committee is to advise the member clubs regarding the rules and customs of baseball in the period in which they play. The second task of the committee is to serve as a research arm of the Association, and we will be happy to research any questions you have concerning rules or customs. In time, we will develop a research library of rules, game stories, and other accounts of the early game of baseball which can be copied and made available to the clubs.

2. The recommendations of

serve our total support.

These two efforts alone could make our association a successful one, but there is more to do and we need people to step forward to do it. I ask all members to consider for themselves or suggest other persons to lead our Sideline Interpreter Committee, Public Relations Committee or to serve on any of our committees.

Already our association has experienced modest growth. Please welcome a forming team representing The Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island, Nebraska and individuals Fred Ivor-Campbell and Patri Pugliese as members. The Grand Islands (no name yet) plan a full program this year according to organizer Kay Cynova. Fred chairs the Society for American Baseball Research's 19th Century Committee and has joined the VBBA Rules and Customs Committee. Patri plays with the Commonwealth Comets Townball Club using the Massachusetts Association of Base Ball Players rules of Dedham, Massachusetts, May 13 1858. Please encourage other interested individuals and teams to join with us.

In closing, I'd remind all clubs of their responsibilities as outlined in our first three by-laws; pay your dues, acquaint all your members with the VBBA mission statement and furnish match reports to the Historian, Don Andersen.

Summer is here! Play ball!



John R. Husman
VBBA President

better.

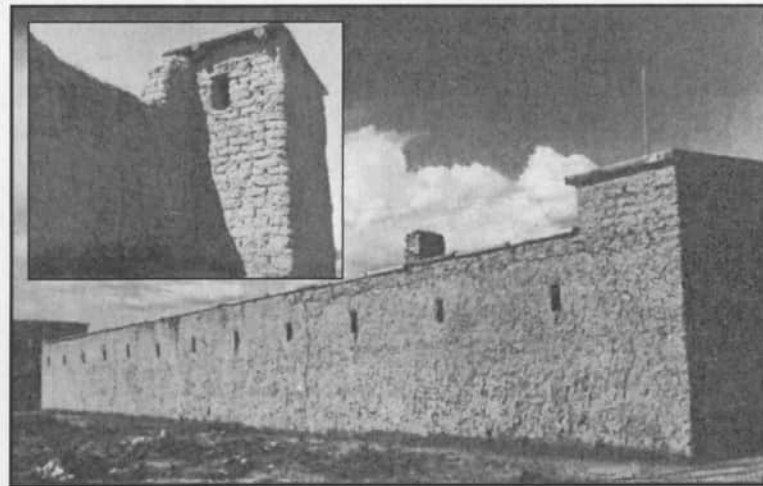
As was tradition following the practice, all participants gathered at the local inn to mingle with dignitaries who had come to celebrate the historic day. It was, indeed, a pleasant interlude with fine food, drink and comradeship in abundance. Many of the loveliest ladies of the community, in all their finery, graced us with their presence

At the conclusion of the afternoon's festivities a goodly number of those present, including the two clubs, gathered on Washington Street for a parade to the match grounds. When we arrived a large and enthusiastic crowd was already gathering. The two team captains, Don "Big Bat" Andersen, and Al Dieckmann, along with the Umpire Richard "Always Right" Schuricht, discussed and agreed to the rules under which the match would be played. Because of the parameters of the field a number of ground rules were agreed to

"Hoboken Match"
continues on page 2



It rained most of the day including the afternoon practice session but the parade went forward with a



Fort Vasquez is a reconstruction of an adobe fur trading post built about 1835 by mountain men Louis Vasquez and Andrew Sublette. It was used in the Indian fur trade and had rooms for living, animals, storage and trading. The fort was sold in 1841 and abandoned a year later. The current building was reconstructed as a WPA project in the 1920s. A visitor's center was added in 1964. The site is now owned by the Colorado Historical Society.

Photographs by Barbie Tootle

Looking for Arizona

by Barbie Tootle

On May 18 I was in Phoenix and turned on an early morning local news show which, to my great surprise, included an interview with a vintage base ball player. The fellow was wearing a shirt similar to the Muffins with a large Gothic on it and wore a striped hat. They were just concluding the interview but I figured out he was a member of the Excelsiors club.

I found out that he was promoting a game that day at the Fort Verde Days Festival. I was told that the team was made up of reinactors from across Arizona. The contact is:

Nora Graf
Fort Verde State Park
Camp Verde, AZ 86322
520-567-3275

I don't know if the VBBA has had any contact from Arizona, but I thought it was worth a few calls. Certainly the uniform was quite nice, suggesting that they play more than an occasional game.

The Rules Committee reflect findings reached by the committee after consulting appropriate historic resources and experts in the field. However, they remain recommendations. We recognize that the game did not evolve with precision and that many local variations in rules and customs existed, and member clubs retain the right to interpret these recommendations in light of their own particular historic customs.

However, these local or regional customs, especially when they deviate significantly from the recognized rules, must be based on research, and clubs should be prepared to substantiate their own rulings.

"Rules Committee"
continues on page 2

New VBBA Members

Kay Cynova
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer

3133 W. Highway 34
Grand Island, NE 68801
308-385-5316 (w)
308-381-0336 (h)

Frederick Ivor-Campbell
21 Martin Street
Warren, RI 02885
401-245-2548

Patri J. Pugliese
39 Capen Street
Medford, MA 02155
617-965-2000 (w)
617-396-2870 (h)

A Reminder...

A few clubs have not yet remitted dues to Treasurer Joanna Shearer. Please do so immediately to maintain your good standing.

Ohio Cup

from page 1

a picnic, dance, and social gathering with live period music and a dance master to teach the dances of the Civil War era. Bring your ladies Saturday evening. You need not be in period dress.

In its first two years the Ohio Cup was held in tournament style. Nine inning matches led to a champion being awarded a trophy. In 1992 with a six team field, an Ohio Village Muffin squad was the overall winner. In 1993 eight teams took part and the Kentucky Pioneers were the champions.

The festival format was first used in 1994. Competition was thereby downplayed. The goal was to let the growth of the game, as evidenced by the number of teams involved, be the focal point. Matches started as near the top of the hour as possible and lasted about fifty minutes. On each day the first match began at 9:00 A.M. and the last at 5:00 P.M. In 1994 ten teams took part in the Ohio Cup. In 1995 the total was thirteen.

The Ohio Cup presents an excellent opportunity for members of various teams to meet and become familiar with

one another. This is also a good chance to share ideas and information within our Association. It is planned to have a general VBBA meeting on each day of the festival this year.

The growth of vintage base ball is paralleled by the growth of the Ohio Cup. It is, of course, appropriate that the meadow in Ohio Village should be the site for such a yearly gathering for it was here that vintage base ball was first played in 1981.

Here is a listing of the clubs who have taken part in the Ohio Cup:

Canal Fulton Mules	95.
Carriage Hill Clodbusters	93, 94, 95.
Colorado Vintage B.B. Assn.	94.
Deep River Grinders	93, 94, 95.
Forest City	94, 95.
Great Black Swamp Frogs	92, 93, 94, 95.
Kent Base Ball Club	92.
Kentucky Pioneers	92, 93, 94.
Middletown Laurels	93, 95.
National City Bank 45'ers	95.
O.D.O.T. Highwaymen	94.
Ohio Village Lady Diamonds	94, 95.
Ohio Village Muffins	92, 93, 94, 95.
Quicksteps Base Ball Club	95.
Sharon Woods Shamrocks	92, 93, 95.
Sycamore Grasshoppers	95.

Newspaper Notes

From the Decatur Republican

August 22, 1867

The following illustrates aptly the mania for base ball playing which is so prevalent in our midst.

"What is the matter with your finger?"

"Struck with a ball and drove up, but it is a noble game," was the reply.

"Precisely — and your thumb is useless is it not?"



"A ball struck it. No better game to improve a man's physical condition — strengthens one's sinews."

You walk lame; that foot, isn't it?"

"No. It's the — the — the — well, a bat flew out of a player's hand and it hit my kneecap. He had the innings."

"One of your front teeth is gone?"

"Knocked out by a ball — an accident."

Your right hand and your nose have been peeled! How's that?"

"Slipped down at a second base — only a mere scratch."

Rules Committee

from page 1

3. The Rules Committee makes the following recommendations for 1996:

• **Official Rules:** Those clubs playing by the Knickerbocker rules of 1845 or by the rules of the late 1850s should use the rules as printed in the baseball record book, *Total Baseball*. The rules of the Muffins of Ohio Village, based on Ohio rules of the late 1850s, are nearly identical to the official rules of 1857.

• **Base Running:** Clubs playing by the 1857 rules should adopt the custom of base runners not being allowed to overrun first base. A runner could not overrun first base without risking being put out until 1871. Thus, runners could be put out (tagged out) if they overran first base.

Safety concerns may mitigate against the widespread adoption of this rule by member clubs. Nonetheless, the rules committee believes that players can adjust their running skills to this rule simply by slowing down before approaching the base.

This rule should be discussed by the umpire, captains and players prior to each game and a decision made so that all are in agreement.

Base running in the late 1850s was most likely done station to station, without wide turns out of the base paths. Players slowed down as they approached each base, and if they did elect to run on, they likely made nearly a 90 degree turn rather than take a wide turn on the run. Again, this custom should be discussed by the teams prior to the game so that all are in agreement.

• **Batting Styles:** Close reading of section 17 of the 1857 rules as printed in *Total Baseball*, reveals a subtle but significant change in the way most of us should stand while batting. Section 17 requires the striker to "stand *on* a line drawn through the center of the home base, not exceeding in length three feet thereof..." (emphasis added). However,

the mid-19th century.

• **Batting Order:** Here is a rule that many of us may overlook. In section 17 the rule states: "...after the first inning is played, the turn commences with the player who stands on the list next to the one who lost the third hand." In other words, the leadoff batter in an inning is the player who bats after the player making the last out, not after the player up at bat last. If batter #4 forces batter #3 at second base for the final out of the inning, batter #4 will leadoff the next inning, not batter #5.

• **Marking the Field:** For those clubs playing on fields that are not already laid out, the Rules Committee suggests that one of two methods be used to lay out the bases. Further, we suggest that this be accomplished just prior to the start of the game so that the audience may see how this was performed in the mid-19th century.

In a 1993 article, Fred Ivor-Campbell, the chair of SABR's 19th Century Committee, reported that the Knickerbockers laid out their diamond by marching off 42 paces, beginning from home to second, then coming back half way, and marching off 21 paces to each side for the location of first and third bases. He suggests the following: "After seeing down the home base, begin pacing with two teammates, one on each side of you. Step off 42 paces and set down second base, while your mates make right and left turns at 21 paces and step off the remaining 21 to first and third. This way the diamond can be measured and the bases set in less than one minute. Ease, simplicity and a near-perfect square."

This will result in a distance of roughly 85 to 90 feet between bases.

This method is based on the original 1845 rules. Of course, clubs would not have to do this if they were playing on a regular field with the location of the bases marked; however, in many instances, clubs today, as they did then, play on unmarked fields.

ken."

"That finger joint?"

Hoboken Match

from page 1

which all felt would enhance the crowd's opportunity to enjoy the match.

The stone toss was won by Captain Dieckmann and the Suffolks elected to be out first. Each side had ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities to strike and field the ball. One practice which was allowed for this match was advancing on a past ball by the behind. While the Suffolks were much used to this practice most advances (which actually were few because of superior behind play) were made by the Muffins. Sliding was also permitted and the Suffolks inspired many cheers from the crowd with their wild and daring antics.

One exciting incident for the crowd occurred when the Muffins put three hands down on one play. All bases were full for the Suffolks when a ball was hit sharply to right field. The ball was caught on one bound — one hand down — the ball was then fired to second base

"Glory in it, sir. It is the healthiest game in the world, sir."

and the runner from first, who felt he could advance, was tagged out — two hands down — now the runner on third base felt he could score on the action and broke for the home base. An alert second baseman threw a dart to the behind — three hands down!

As we were playing within a fixed time limit, play continued until fireworks began exploding over the mighty Hudson River. The match was called with the telegraph board reflecting a score of 9 Aces to 8 Aces in favor of the Suffolks. However, upon further discussion between the tallykeeper and the umpire, a more accurate conclusion was drawn. The clubs had actually completed ten full innings! Thus the first match ended after nine with the tally at 7 aces to 5 in favor of the Muffins. The second match, albeit abbreviated, ended after one inning with a final tally of 1 ace for the Muffins and 4 aces for the Suffolks. Perhaps someday soon these two fine clubs will be able to meet and play a third and deciding match.

rectory, the first ever such "compendium of the game," an elaboration of this rule states, "The striker should keep *one foot on this line...*(emphasis added).

It appears then that batters should stand with both feet or one foot on the line, not straddling the line. (See an article on this subject by Fred Ivor-Campbell in this issue.)

The Rules Committee urges clubs to experiment with this style of batting. The Rules Committee also urges batters to choke up on the bat and to spread the hands apart a few inches as is seen in nearly all photographs and illustrations of this period. *Further, and perhaps most importantly, at least one foot, if not both, should be pointing towards the pitcher as is seen in nearly every illustration or photo of the time.*

The adoption of these customs would likely reduce the power of the hitters and may be difficult for most of us to accept. We will have to unlearn a batting style that we have seen and practiced since we first took up the game. However, the Rules Committee urges the clubs to experiment with these styles, and move towards general acceptance of what was the prevailing style of

was thus the predominant method used in the mid-1850s? We don't know, but it is an elegant and simple method based on the rules of 1845, and could be presented to the audience as a method that could have been used.

• **Terms:** For those clubs playing the 1857 rules and using the terms "hurler" and "cranks", the Rules Committee urges that both be dropped. There is no evidence known to the committee that indicates that either term was used in the mid-19th century. In the rules and accounts of the period, the pitcher is never referred to as the "hurler", but most often just as the "pitcher".

"Crank" was a term for fans that gained popularity in the 1880s. It does not appear in the any of the game stories or accounts of the mid-1850s or 1860s. The crowd was called the "spectators", the "audience", the "throng". Crank was generally used in the 1880s and 1890s, then replaced by "bugs" about the turn of the century and then replaced by "fans" in the early 20th century.

Finally, the rule committee seeks your input and recommendations concerning the placement of fielders when the ball is pitched. Many teams play rules that require the third baseman, second baseman, and first baseman to have one foot on their respective base when the ball is pitched. There is nothing in the rules that stipulates this. The illustrations of the time suggest, however, that these fielders did stand very close to their bases if not touching them.

The committee would also like to substantiate the custom of the rule that many clubs use which places the center fielder directly behind second base, and the other two outfielders half way between the center fielder and the foul lines. Again, there is nothing in the rules that stipulates this.

Please send all correspondence to

Greg Rhodes
1908 Dexter Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45206
Phone: 513-861-4648
Fax is 513-861-61 51

Photograph by Barbie Tootle



The Ohio Historical Society's 1860s team was invited to New Jersey to recreate the 1846 match between the Knickerbockers and the New York Nine — said to be the first base ball game on record. While the story is more truthful than the Abner Doubleday tale, it too suffers from historical inaccuracy since the Knickerbockers had played by these rules before.

Treasurer's Report As of June 1, 1996

by Joanna Shearer, VBBA Treasurer

Income:

<i>Organizational Dues</i>	\$ 240.00
\$10.00 Each: Muffins, Frogs, Grinders, Kents, Mariners, Ground Squirrels, Shamrocks, Sabr Rattlers, Black Stockings, Clodbusters, Forest Citys, Sweepers, Laurels, Merinos, Quicksteps, Salt City, Grasshoppers, 1922 Giants, Telegraphers, CO VBBA, Lile Anderson, Fulton Mules, Haymakers, Pirates)	
<i>1996 Full Membership Dues</i>	750.00
\$50.00 Each: Muffins, Frogs, Grinders, Kents, Mariners, Ground Squirrels, Shamrocks, Forest Citys, Laurels, Salt City, Grasshoppers, 1922 Giants, CO VBBA, Fulton Mules, Pirates)	
<i>1996 Associate Membership Dues</i>	105.00
\$35.00 Each: Black Stockings, Telegraphers, Stuhr Museum	
<i>1996 Individual Membership Dues</i>	40.00
\$10.00 Each: Quicksteps, Lile Anderson (Ethereals), Commonwealth Comets, Frederick C. Ivor-Campbell, Jr.	
Total Income	\$1,135.00

Expenses:

<i>John Husman</i>	
Phone, copies, postage, envelopes, labels	\$ 114.10
<i>John Husman</i>	
Envelopes, copies, postage	89.92
<i>John Husman</i>	
Phone	38.26
<i>Pat Massengill</i>	
Phone, copies, postage, envelopes, stamps	10.80
<i>Pat Massengill</i>	
Phone, copies, postage, envelopes, labels	36.00
<i>John Husman</i>	
Postage, phone, supplies	62.24
Total Expenses	\$ 351.32

Some Thoughts On the Striker's Position circa 1860

by Fred Ivor-Campbell

"The striker must stand on a line..."

Section 17 of the 1860 rules appears to forbid the striker from straddling the line, but does this mean he must await the pitch with both feet on the line? There are a couple of passages in Henry Chadwick's commentary in the 1860 *Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player* that make me think the intent of the rule was to require the striker to stand with only one foot on the line.

Look at Chadwick's instructions on batting, especially the sentence that concludes p. 19 and runs over to the top of p.20: "Let the left foot be placed on the line indicated as the striker's position, and then every ball that comes perpendicularly from the bat to the ground will be a foul ball; but should you stand back of the line, it will not." This is a rather confusing sentence, but one thing seems clear enough: that Chad instructs the striker to place only one foot on the line. (He is no doubt thinking of right-handed batsmen when he instructs them to put the left foot on the line.)

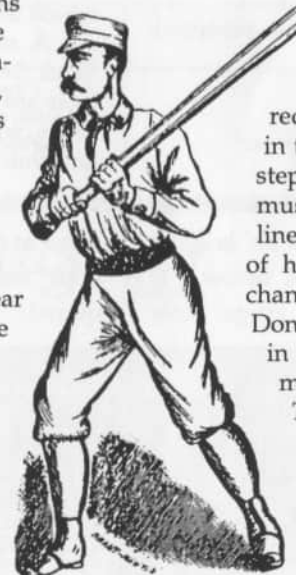
We can better understand the context of Chadwick's instructions when they are read in conjunction with his instructions to umpires on pp. 28-29: "The Umpire should...require the batsman to stand on a line...Should the striker fail to do so, and in consequence, the ball, when struck, fall behind the base, the Umpire should consider it a

the practice of at least some batsmen to stand behind the striker's line, and Chadwick wants to bring them up to the line and penalize them if they don't obey the rule. If they follow the rule and put a foot on the line, then any balls hit straight down won't be called fair (although, strictly speaking, they have landed fair), which would force the man to run, but will be called foul. But if the striker insists on standing back of the line, then any balls hit down *will* be called fair, as they would have been (strictly speaking) had he been standing on the line.

In any case, it seems that Chadwick requires only one foot on the line and that the problem he addresses is that some batsmen stand entirely behind it.

One question that does not seem to be addressed is that of moving off the line while swinging at the ball. It was not until 1867 (according to Bingham and Heitz, in *Total Baseball*, 5th ed., p.2430), that the rule was changed to require that the batter "when in the act of striking, shall not step forward or backward but must stand on the three-foot line drawn through the center of home base. "The rule was changed again the next year (as Don Andersen has pointed out in his discussion of the batsman's position in *The Muffin Tin*, April 1996, p.3), to require the striker to "stand astride" the line.

The only pictorial evidence from this era that I know of is a *Harp-er's Weekly* woodcut depicting an 1859 game in Hoboken. In this picture, the striker seems clearly to be standing with at most one foot on the line, and the other either ahead of it or behind it (the bases are not clearly drawn).



fair ball, as, had Section 17 of the rules been strictly adhered to, the same ball would have been legitimated a fair one."

Here is how I understand what Chadwick is saying. Apparently it was

however intriguing the idea of striking with both feet on the line, the evidence suggests that this was neither practiced nor required by the rules.

History through Graphics What We Can Learn from Pictures

by John Wells, Editor of The Muffin Tin
and Graphics Arts Professional



were recorded.

- The baserunner at first has his hat in his hand, not on his head.
- No gloves are being worn.

Some Other Items of Note

- The field has worn or marked areas for the base paths and from the pitcher to the behind.
- The area for the umpire is well worn, indicating many matches have already been played here.
- Most of the throng is in the outfield not beside the baselines. This is probably a holdover from cricket (also played at the Elysian Fields) where the field is a circle with the batsmen and bowler at the center).
- The entire bench is looking at the well dressed spectators near the home plate even though the pitcher is delivering the ball, not at their fellow players on the field.
- There are no ladies in the vicinity of home plate (perhaps so they will not hear any inappropriate language).
- There is at least one bald player, indicating that "older" men played the game, too.

Dates of period graphics are always suspect. The publication date helps but many drawings of the time might be ten years old before appearing. We must also recognize that an artist records what "he sees in his mind". A canvas is not a photograph. It is composed to be pleasing to the eye, not historically correct. This print was drawn in black and white and colored by many others so various prints have different colors, too.

Still, there is much valuable information to be gained in more than a quick glance. Look at more than the caption the next time you are reading.

About the clothing of the day

- Shields were worn on the uniform blouses.
- The shields were rounded at the edges.
- The shields were trimmed with a color edging.
- No initial or logo appears on them.
- Some players are wearing braces over their blouses.
- The hats were of a pill box design.
- There are many styles of hats apparent from top hats to straw hats.
- No one is wearing knickers.
- Most spectators are wearing coats but one is only in a vest.

About the rules

- There is no striking line through home plate.
- Pitching is underhand.
- Both base runners have taken lead-offs.
- The basemen are on their bases.
- The outfielders are in the center position.
- Many fielders are in the "ready" position (wide stance, hands on knees).
- The striker is using a "spread" grip.
- The striker is "crowding" the plate.
- There is only one umpire.
- No tally table or tallykeeper is visible although we know most matches

Graphics (photographs, drawings, paintings, sketches, and such) are a fine source of data when you are documenting facts from a period of our history. They often contain information considered so common at the time that it often does not appear in print because *everybody knows that*. But after a while we don't know that and the data can be lost, data that we could use to better re-create the era we are representing.

Reproduced here is a famous Currier & Ives lithograph issued in 1866. Although the match being depicted is still much speculated, it is probably a game at Elysian Fields after the Civil War.

What can be learned from this lithograph? Much!

And starting at the end of July, we will have our own Bulletin Board Service available 24 hours a day for transferring e-mail, files,

