



Early Innings Illustrated

Vol. 2 No. 3

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

March, 1998



Annual Gathering In McCutchenville, Ohio Is Third for the VBBA

by John Wells

The member clubs of the Vintage Base Ball Association met together with interested base ball people over the week-end of February 21-22 in McCutchenville, Ohio, to transact the business of the association, attend seminars on the subject of base ball, celebrate the year past with a banquet, and share the good fellowship of the game with all.

Our hosts were the Grasshoppers and Katydid's of Sycamore, Ohio, a most pleasant rural community about 12 miles south of Tiffin and 25 miles east of Findlay. The meetings were held at the McCutchenville Community Center located on State Route 53 as Fred Malone, leader of the Sycamore group, felt the converted 19th century church was

VBBA Elections Results Tabulated

The results of the 1998 election of officers is as follows:

President - **Kevin Lehr**
(elected last year)
Vice-President - **Greg Rhodes**
(President elect)
Secretary - **Brett Andrews**
Treasurer - **John Husman**
Historian - **Mark Heppner**
Trustee - **Al Dieckmann**

38 ballots were submitted by the deadline. Only 28 were from qualified clubs who were both full members and had paid their 1998 dues. But it should be noted that the election results would not have changed even if all 38 ballots had been counted. There were no write-in votes in the election.

The election was conducted by John Wells at the direction of President Doug Smith.

Beadle's Dime

Colorado Passes the Torch

by John Wells

All teams should note that Pat Massengill of the Colorado Vintage Base Ball Association has resigned as Commissioner and from the Board of the CVB-BA. All official correspondence should be directed to
Mr. Mike Piccolo
124 Amanda Pines Drive
Parker, CO 80134
303-805-9351

Pat will continue with the Colorado group as a ballist, umpire and crank and even have some time for projects that never seemed to get enough attention. Note one on page 6 and his new website described below.

We wish Pat and Nancy well and look forward to our next meeting.



Publicity Kit Given to Clubs Attending the VBBA Annual Meeting

by John C. Wells

A sample press kit that a club should have ready at each match to give to members of the media was presented to club leaders at the VBBA meeting in McCutchenville in February.

We must always remember that what we do will seem strange, even novel, to a reporter's eyes from this century. Background material is required so that a story they write comes out correctly. You can *not* depend on verbal information being handled correctly. You can always talk much faster than a reporter can write it all down. So it is very important to give them written material that covers what you are doing.

It is also important that the material be locally oriented. The local slant is what the reporter is seeking. So cover the local club as part of your kit including both a story and pic-

Dues Notice To ALL Vintage Clubs

This will serve as public notice that dues for all clubs wishing to be members of the Vintage Base Ball Association are due and owing.

Please note that subscriptions to the newsletter are handled separately and a bill will be sent when it is due to current subscribers.

A list of paid-up clubs, as of March 8, 1998 appears below.

Full Member Clubs

Played 6 matches in 1997
in a suitable uniform

19th Century League
in Bethpage
Akron Black Stockings
Berrien Co. Cranberry
Boggers
Clodbusters Base Ball Club
Colorado Vintage Base Ball
Association
Deep River Grinders
Fulton Mules Vintage
Base Ball Club
Great Black Swamp Frogs
Hoover Sweepers
Kent Base Ball Club

more appropriate to the gathering than those available in Sycamore itself.

A full report by the Secretary, Brett Andrews, will be forthcoming in the next issue but until then, here are some highlights of the two day meeting.

Saturday February 21, 1998

Delegates began to assemble by 10:30 A.M. in McCutchenville with fresh coffee and donuts all around during registration. Opening ceremonies included a Civil War color guard presenting the flag followed at 11:30 by opening remarks given by Kim Mohr who talked about the formation of the Mohawk Historical Society and other items of local interest.

Then Tricia Vallentine presented the history of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League which played the game from 1942 through 1954. This presentation proved so interesting that it will be printed in detail in the next newsletter. Miss Vallentine has done a lot of research on the subject of women in baseball and in a spirited question and answer session after the history lesson, proved she will be a good source of data for ladies wanting to play base ball in eras earlier than 1942. She has records of women who tried out for men's teams in the 19th century and has done research on early women in base ball.

Next Bill Hoffert, historian and a collector of Indian artifacts, shared his collection of points with many pointers on how not to get taken for a ride

"Annual Meeting"
continues on page 2

Base-Ball Player In a New Annotated Format

by John Wells

Last year the Rules Committee presented us with a better picture of 1860's base ball than we ever had. At the heart of our new knowledge is a small orange covered booklet called *Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player: A compendium of the Game* by Henry Chadwick.

The Publication's Committee first considered republishing the booklet. But there were some shortcomings. The original publication is over 130 years old and used technology that resulted in hard to read text on cheap paper. Over the years it has gotten more difficult to read as generations of reproduction have further deteriorated the quality of the type.

There is also the need to annotate the advice given as period language is often not easily understood. And there is the need to highlight customs, equipment, ground rules, and this sort of thing to re-create a game today.

So it has been decided to publish each page of the book as it was then, except the type will be reset to make readability better than the original. Then down the other side, annotations by the Rules Committee, umpires, and historians will explain, as best we can, not just what it all means but how to use the information to re-create

"Beadle's Dime"
continues on page 2



The "Deacon" of the Colorado Territories, Pat Massengill, gives a good look at a striker during the Ohio Cup while acting as an umpire.

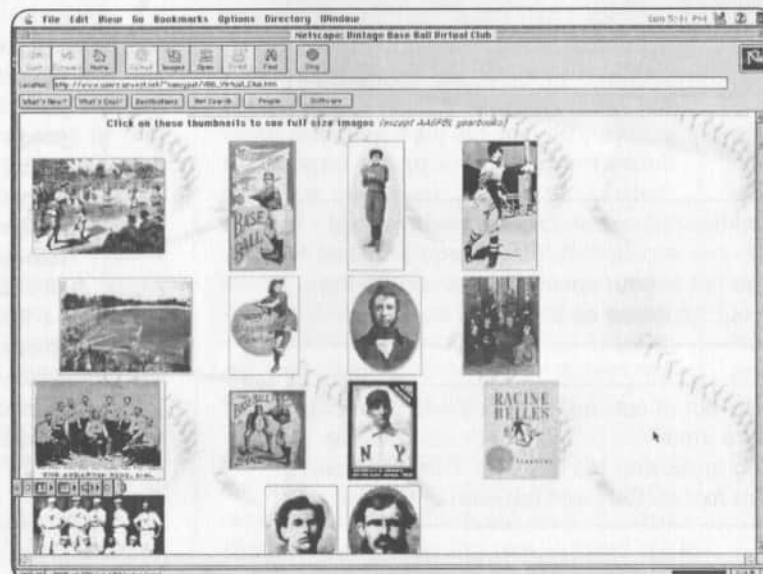
Photograph from the Ohio Historical Society.

tures showing uniforms and action shots.

Be sure to include a local contact that an editor or reporter can reach for further details...or sometimes to setup a follow-up story or interview.

The back of any photograph should have a caption for the picture to explain what it is showing with identification of any people and the location of the shot.

"Publicity Kit"
continues on page 2



Vintage Base Ball Virtual Club is at the following Web URL:
http://www.users.uswest.net/~nancypat/VBB_Virtual_Club.htm

Lake County Pirates
Ludington Mariners
Muffin & Diamonds Base
Ball Clubs
Old Time Base Ball Program
at Bethpage
Rock Springs Ground
Squirrels
Sharon Woods Shamrocks
Summit Merinos
Sycamore Grasshoppers and
Katydids

Associate Members

Broomfield Swans
Columbus Capitals
Camarillo, California form-
ing team
Middletown Mansfields
Quicksteps Base Ball Club
Roosters
Westville Craftsmen &
Biscuits
Woodstock Actives

Web Page

By Patrick "Deacon"
Massengill

I just published a new web page called the "Vintage Base Ball Virtual Club", a directory for all VBB people and organizations with "virtual" addresses — e-mail and/or home pages. I got the idea from a Civil War re-enacting web page (the "Virtual Regiment") and thought it could help keep base ball hobbyists connected, too.

Check it out when you get a chance and let me know what you think. If you have bookmarked either of our previous pages, you can go there and link.

Annual Meeting

from page 1

when collecting arrow heads and related items.

After a break, a fine style show was presented by Stitches and Time of ladies clothes through the period our teams represent.

Then Jim Tootle spoke about the founding and history of the Cooperstown Hall of Fame and the Doubleday myth. Much good information was available here and Mr. Tootle has promised to write it down for presentation this year in this newsletter.

Last on the seminar schedule was John Husman who spoke about the "Gentleman's" game. Many clues were presented to both bolster and debunk the way the game was played in its early years. I concluded that the Knickerbockers and contemporary teams were, indeed, gentlemen. But the infection of competition was already loose and beginning to appear on tally sheets and other records. They wanted to win, too.

The Dinner and Talk

Saturday evening the VBBA delegates reassembled at the Steer Barn in Upper Sandusky for a social hour followed by dinner. Prime Rib and Pickerel were served to an appreciative crowd. After the meal, several short speeches were given by Doug Smith, the 1997 President; John Husman, past president; and Kevin Lehr, our president for 1998.

VBBA Business Meeting Sunday February 22, 1998

The meeting began with Greg Rhodes of the Sharon Woods Shamrocks proposing Cincinnati as the 1999 site of VBBA annual meeting. Sharon Woods Village, just north of the city, would be the location and a trip was suggested to

the place where the 1869 Red Stockings played, now on the grounds of Union Station. The Shamrocks offer was accepted by the group to meet next year in the Queen City.

The Rules Committee then opened a discussion of stealing, sliding and the number of aces scored per game in the 1860's versus today's re-created matches. It was suggested that the difference in scoring was probably due to inexperienced defense playing by 1860's players (many muffs are recorded in most games), 19th century hitters striking for hits and not for the long ball, and modern pitchers not throwing the ball over the plate to allow for good hitting. Other suggestions included the fact that our predecessors were younger men and probably better athletes, that allowing more than 9 to bat means weaker hitters at the home plate for modern teams; and a *big factor*, that the modern short stop plays in an outfield position beyond the base line where a period player stayed within a triangle formed by second base, third base, and the pitching point. It was agreed generally that it was better for spectators to have action and high scoring as in days gone by than today's low scoring matches.

There was no treasurer's report as Joanna Shearer was not able to be at the meeting. A report will be made available by the President within a month.

The Publications Committee requested that clubs be more timely with newsletter material and articles so that *Early Innings Illustrated* could be on time.

A proposal was made to publish the *Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player* with annotations on how to play the 1860's game. The Rules Committee agreed to assist as did others and the proposal passed.

Each team was asked to provide an e-mail address to speed communications. Charles Trudeau is working on this project.

It was proposed to setup a VBBA

Website with links to all known clubs, organizations, and museums with baseball materials. This passed.

A discussion followed to establish a supervisory historian position to collect the articles that have been published and the team records submitted to the VBBA in one place for safe keeping.

Then followed a discussion on the VBBA relationship with SABR. It was agreed that the Louisville match was good for both organizations. John Husman spoke about the June 25, 1998 match scheduled for the SABR convention in San Francisco. The Great Black Swamp Frogs are to play a picked nine. We will have the field for 4 hours so a second match is possible.

The Publications Committee passed out samples of a press kit. It was recommended that each club prepare such a kit for use at matches when reporters come and ask questions. Contents and preparation of the kit were discussed and detailed.

Just before lunch by the ladies of the Grasshoppers, a discussion was held on a logo for the VBBA and samples of the submissions to the newsletter were distributed. After lunch, the discussion continued with two results.

1) The design #11 by Mr. Chuck Ayers of the Fulton Mules was chosen to win the custom made bat.

2) Ed Shuman was appointed to finish the design on an idea he had but did not submit to the contest. See more details in the logo article on page 4.

The talk about the supervisory historian position was revisited. It was decided to create the position of archivist and setup archives in one location to keep materials submitted to the historian, the newsletter, and others. Don Andersen of the Muffins was appointed to begin this work.

A vote was held to reimburse the host club for expenses of the VBBA Annual Meeting of up to \$500. This passed.

A general resolution to support the Negro Hall of Fame was passed and it was asked that all VBBA members contribute to its support.

The meeting ended at a very early 1:25 P.M. and it is wondered why, given the pleasant day, a base ball match did not ensue. But it didn't.

Publicity Kit

from page 1

Be sure a schedule of future matches is enclosed that includes teams to be played, locations, and time of the start of the match. Directions to locations is also helpful.

You should include in the kit the flyers you pass out at matches including those from supporting museums or organizations, posters, and related materials. But refrain from presenting photocopies from previous publicity. You may be proud of this material but it just makes the reporter's task more difficult because of the amount of material that must be sifted through and may actually inhibit coverage if the reporter thinks that everything has already been said by another.

If your club was not able to attend the annual meeting, please write *Early Innings Illustrated* for a copy of the publicity kit at P. O. Box 14105, Columbus, OH 43214.

Beadle's Dime

from page 1

ate accurate examples of the 1860's game.

Here is reproduced a sample page from the forthcoming edition that will be available from the VBBA and it is hoped from gift shops at period base ball sites, perhaps SABR, and related locations. Expected cost will be about \$10.00 for the booklet.

The Rules of the Vintage Base Association require that members be active clubs playing vintage base ball in any period. At least six matches must have been played in the previous year to be eligible for full membership. Clubs who have played less than six games may apply for associate membership. Dues are \$50.00 per year for full membership and \$35.00 for associate membership.

Individuals may join for \$10.00. The newsletter, *Early Innings Illustrated* comes with any membership. Additional copies may be purchased by team members of clubs belonging to the association for \$5.00 per member per year.

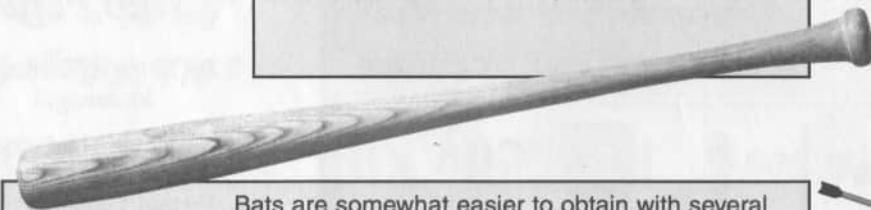
Each member club has two representatives with voting privileges at the annual meeting. Delegates are appointed by their clubs.



One of the greatest challenges in vintage base ball is obtaining historically accurate balls. There is one source but it is expensive, about \$55.00 for an 1860's, New York Rules ball.

Many clubs are experimenting with making their own balls, both for cost reasons and to tailor the ball to fit local playing conditions such as a small field within an historic site. Softer and sometimes smaller balls are used.

Safety baseballs are sometimes covered with leather to simulate a period ball, too.



Bats are somewhat easier to obtain with several companies making period bats in oak, hickory, poplar, as well as ash. Most will custom make the bat to your specifications and for the period of the team. Cost is about the same as a modern bat.

Bases are usually made out of canvas and filled with sawdust. Sand is very heavy. Be sure there are provisions to nail them to the field to prevent slipping or moving out of place. They are usually larger than one square foot so they can be seen in tall grass.

dition, character, and standing of such club, and report the same to the annual meeting, together with the said application, and their written opinion thereon; and a ballot shall thereupon be had at such meeting upon the admission of such club, when, if two-thirds of the members present vote in favor thereof, such club shall be declared duly entitled to representation in this Association. Any informality or irregularity in the form of substance of the application, may be waived by a two-third vote of the members present at the annual meeting.

SECTION 3. No Club shall be represented in this Association by any delegate under twenty-one years of age; nor shall any club be so represented until its delegates have signed the constitution and paid the fee hereafter designated. (The fees are five dollars initiation fee, and five dollars annual dues.) It is also requisite that delegates have certificates of their election, signed by the President and Secretary of the club they represent.

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GAME OF BASE BALL,

ADOPTED BY THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BASE-BALL PLAYERS,
Held in New York, March 14, 1860.

SEC. 1. The ball must weigh not less than five and three-fourths, nor more than six ounces avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine and three-fourths, nor more than ten inches in circumference. It must be composed of india-rubber and yarn, and covered with leather, and, in all match games, shall be furnished by the challenging club, and become the property of the winning club, as a trophy of victory.

SEC. 2. The bat must be round, and must not exceed two and a half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made of wood, and may be of any length to suit the striker.

SEC. 3. The bases must be four in number, placed at equal distances from each other, and securely fastened upon the four corners of a square, whose sides are respectively thirty yards. They must be so constructed as to be distinctly seen by the umpire, and must cover a space equal to one square

Play for a Kingdom

A Book Review by James Tootle

Book author is Thomas Dyja
416 pp. New York:

Harcourt, Brace & Company

Set in Virginia in the spring of 1864, *Play for a Kingdom* is a well-written, thoroughly researched, and highly readable Civil War novel with an original and captivating theme. The book provides an accurate portrayal of the daily life of individual infantryman in the context of the momentous clashes of Union and Confederate armies at Spotsylvania and The Wilderness.

Central to the narrative is a series of base ball games between soldiers from 14th Brooklyn and the 12th Alabama, who mysteriously and repeatedly meet each other while assigned to picket duty during lulls in battle. This base ball theme sets *Play for a Kingdom* apart from other accounts, fictional and non-fictional, of the Civil War. While the book would be of interest to any student of the American Civil War, the matches between nines of war-weary veterans in tattered blue and gray uniforms give this splendid book its unique character and capture the attention of those interested in vintage base ball.

Because the author has succeeded in providing a hauntingly realistic depiction of the horrors of war, some readers will find portions of the book difficult to experience (but also difficult to forget). The reader is transported to the battlefield where best friends are suddenly cut down in bloody combat by Minie balls and artillery fragments, to the field



"Gentleman" Jim Tootle is a behind for the Ohio Village Muffins and in his other life is Dr. James Tootle, Assistant Dean and College Secretary of the College of the Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University.

hospital where overworked doctors of questionable credentials treat horrendous wounds by primitive means, and to the midnight burial detail where shattered and decaying bodies are interred in mass graves.

Everyday camp life is also described in great detail as we learn how the soldiers of a typical Union unit pitched their tents, prepared their food, and tried their best to find a dry place to sleep in the pervading dampness of the piney woods. Living out in the open for weeks at a time in rain, chill, and beating sun, the troops faced a daily grind of uniform mending, equipment repair, and mosquito avoidance, while trying to maintain some semblance of personal cleanliness and self respect.

The author seems to want his readers to experience both the terror and the tedium of the soldier's life so that we can also understand and appreciate the positive psychological value of the base ball games when they occur sporadically throughout the book. Surrounded by disease, death, and the painful memories of fallen comrades, the main characters of the novel try to stay alive for a few more days until the term of their en-

listment expires and they will be released from service to return to Brooklyn. The ball games are seen by the combatants as a welcome respite from the dangers and carnage of the conflict swirling around them.

All the sporting activity during the matches is not the peaceful play it appears to be, however. It gradually comes to light that the meetings of the two units are not the result of coincidence, but have been orchestrated for military purposes.

The ball game scenes in the book show that the author has studied his history and possesses a good understanding of the terminology, rules, and customs of 1860's base ball. Unskilled players are referred to as "muffins". Soldiers sitting around the campfire argue the relative merits of the Excelsiors and the Eckfords, popular Brooklyn clubs of the day, and discuss the untimely passing of the great player Jimmy Creighton. Before play begins, the participants decide if they will catch the ball on the bound for an out or if they will play the "fly game", which was gaining popularity among the better clubs back home. During a game there is a description of a hitter who lacks self confidence thinking, "he had to admit that he wasn't a Leggett when it came to the bat," a ref-

erence to J. B. Leggett, prominent catcher for the Excelsiors and a leading striker of that era.

Members of the vintage base ball community may have some questions for Mr. Dyja regarding possible rule-related inconsistencies. Mention is made of called strikes and balls, but no umpire is identified to call these pitches. It could

be argued that the services of an umpire might be especially in demand to resolve differences between players who have been shooting at each other earlier in the day. Also, there is no mention of any outs on foul ticks, a rather common play at that time. Since the author has demonstrated his knowledge of the game elsewhere, perhaps he has omitted some of the 1860s rules in order to simplify game action for the modern reader.

On a more fundamental note, it might have been enlightening had the author provided, in a preface or postscript, some mention as to whether he had uncovered any evidence of Union and Confederate soldiers actually playing matches during the war. We know games occurred between units of the same army and among prisoners in camps, but are left to wonder about North-South matches.

Throughout the book, it is the game of base ball that provides the setting for the principal characters to display their courage, honor, and humanity. Vintage



Vintage Afternoon'

Game Takes a Page Out of Baseball History

by Jason Wetzel
Canton Repository Correspondent

The umpire clearly stated the rules before the Ohio Village Muffins and Akron Big Ditch Boys: no swearing, no sliding and be polite.

The season's final vintage baseball game revealed more than 150 years worth of changes in the sport.

Underhand pitches disappeared, hurlers became pitchers and the names changed.

Before Sunday's game in Zoar Village Park, Muffins' Manager Doug "Birdhouse" Smith explained the origins of his team's leather Muffin belts and red embroidered "M's" on all players' chests.

"We tried to emulate the New York City Knickerbockers Club. It was formed in 1845, and was the first club with written rules. Most were volunteer firemen and that's where the red came from," Smith said.

Smith is a staff member with the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus which is also the team's home.

He said that Muffins is an old base ball term. "Muffins were players with enthusiasm who gave all their best, but really weren't that good. We get a lot of kidding by the other teams," Smith said.

The Muffins topped the Big Ditch Boys, 6-5, however; using the old-style baseball bats made by Charles "Lefty" Trudeau.

Working on a wood lathe for the last two years, Trudeau started making the oak, willow, and hickory bats out of necessity.

"The bats were about 42 inches then, and made out of different woods



In Zoar, Ohio the Ohio Village Muffins hosted the Akron Big Ditch Boys in an 1860's style ball game. Duane "Hook" Koons, a striker for the Muffins, takes a swing at the brown leather ball, which never does reach Big Ditch catcher Carl Lucas. The old-time ball game, replete with fans in period garb, was part of the village's annual October festival.

Photograph by Bob Rossiter/The Canton Repository

in different shapes. Today, there's only the standard white ash version," Trudeau said while holding his thick-barreled "potato smasher".

Both teams fielded balls from the "potato smasher" and "double knob" without mitts, catching bare handed the peach-sized, rubber center, leather balls.

Some, like Muffin first baseman Don "Big Bat" Andersen have suffered minor injuries playing vintage style. Andersen dislocated a finger twice in his 10 seasons with the team.

"Out on the field, he just popped it in place, and said it didn't hurt," his wife, Marilyn, said.

Did she believe him?

"Of course not. When he got home, that's when he said something," she said.

Like "Big Bat", the team encourages

all players to take a nickname before one is given to them,

"Birdhouse" slammed into one. Big Ditch Boys' Carl "Lemonade" Lucas never brings it, and Muffin second baseman John "Scrapiron" Francis earned his the hard way.

"I've taken too many balls in the head," Francis said, while showing off a scar on his cheek.

But even the jokes and heckling remained polite between teams.

"Sir, you can vote in the next election if you wait any longer on the hurl, sir," Ditch Boys shortstop said to an over patient Muffin batter during the sixth inning.

But at game's end, each team offered whiskey and "cee-gars," before politely cheering each other with the season's last "hip-hip-huzza".

members of the 14th Brooklyn: one who keeps a wooden bat in his bedroll and his friend who carries a base ball in his pack. While the war-related portions of the book are powerful and vivid, the base ball passages are especially eloquent and give the author the opportunity to invoke the timeless mystique of the game. One of the members of the 14th Brooklyn, far from home, shares the following thoughts as he gazes upon a clearing in the woods just large and level enough for a game:

As Lyman looked across the field, he could picture only one thing—the Excelsiors' grounds on Court Street with its same expanse of clean grass and exact limits. A ball field was a world within a world, too, he thought, with its own rules related in some ways to the rules of life, but a world that offered immediate rewards and penalties. No one had to tell a ballplayer he was doing well or not; if he performed well and played as a



Thomas Dyja
Author

gentleman, the fruits were evident. As Lyman saw it, there was only one thing to do on a spring afternoon on a grassy field and it was a very ordinary thing; what any man would do on a field like this with his friends. He dug into his knapsack and took out his base ball. There was consolation in a game of catch. (p. 77)

Mr. Dyja has penned a dramatic and suspenseful novel rich in detail. His characters represent the wide variety of ethnicity, occupations, standards, and values one might realistically encounter in a "typical" army unit. Most of all, *Play for a Kingdom* provides an authentic look back at the game's early days in the context of the Civil War. It is no surprise that it is the game of base ball that brings out the best in the participants and represents the most humane and civil aspect of that war.

The VBBA Logo Contest

**Won by C. W. Ayers, Jr.
of the Fulton Mules**

by John Wells

For the past year we have been running a contest to design a logo for the VBBA with a custom bat as the prize. At the annual meeting this year in McCutchenville, Ohio the delegates assembled on Sunday recognized that the entry at the right submitted by Chuck Ayers of Akron, Ohio was their choice as the "best of show". So Charlie Trudeau, bat maker to Vintage Base Ball, will fire up his lathe and cut a bat to the specification of Mr. Ayers for his efforts.



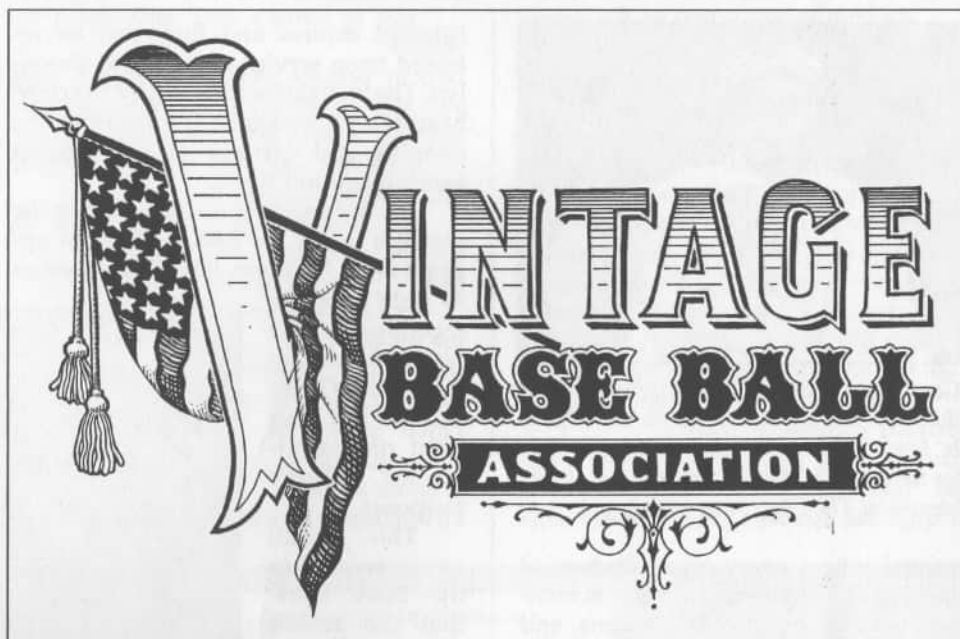
Founded 1971

Sample of a good logo.

The other entries are also pictured here. But here the tale takes a strange twist. The captain of the Mules, one Ed Shuman, tardy with his entry to the contest — none-the-less cornered the chair of the Publications Committee at the meeting to plead his case. And his case was a good one and when presented to the floor following lunch, was adopted as the logo idea.

Mr. Shuman's idea is to have a logo with two base ball players in it. One, a 19th century pitcher, and the other a twentieth century catcher. The advantages:

- The art may be very simple in rendering to assure it looks good in large and small sizes.

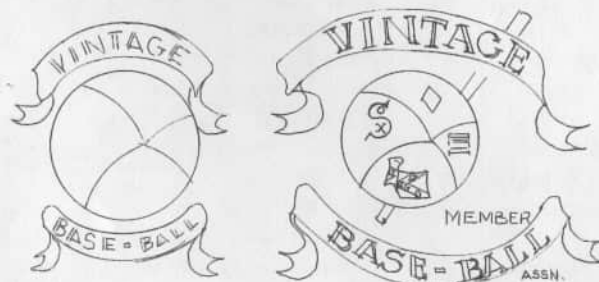


- It contains the idea of vintage base ball without centering on any one era.

So it was moved, seconded, and passed that Mr. Shuman should chair the committee to prepare the actual art work for this logo. The finished work

should be available in the April issue of this publication.

Note who gets the bat. The gentleman who was on time! Note who gets to do the work. The man with a good idea, and a day late.



A group of 4 logos submitted by Mark Mitchell of Spring Valley, California.



Above from William H. "Whipsaw" Dean of Dearborn, Michigan.



From John Wells of Columbus, Ohio.



From the Great Black Swamp Frogs.



Sent in by Shane Gault of Akron, Ohio.



Left from Andy Moyer of Hamilton, Georgia. The right logo is from the Sycamore Grasshopper stationery.



A second entry from Chuck Ayers of Akron, Ohio.

Turn Back the Clock

From the Chicago Sun-Times, August 13, 1997

by Carol Slezak

"Wet!" the gentleman from the Great Black Swamp Frogs Base Ball Team of Sylvania, Ohio, called while the rock was in the air.

Alas, the rock fell to the ground spittle-side down. The Frogs' adversaries, the Chicago Salmon Base Ball Team of Mount Prospect Park District, elected to take the playground first. So began the ball game, played under 1860 rules, Saturday at the Methodist Campground in Des Plaines.

There would be no scratching, spitting, swearing, consumption of alcohol, chewing of tobacco or wagering during the ball game. The players were to forgo commenting on the umpire's judgment, too. Indeed, the umpire could levy fines, on the spot, for ungentlemanly conduct.

About 28 clubs from across the country belong to the Vintage Base Ball Association in Columbus, Ohio. They play as a tribute to a simpler era, and they play for fun. The Frogs have a 25-game schedule this year. The recently spawned Salmon played their first game Saturday.

And so the gloveless Salmon nine ran out to the grass field, tugging at their white caps. The first, second and third basemen stood on their respective bases. The Salmon looked fetching in their black trousers and long-sleeved white shirts with white bibs that bore a salmon-colored "S".

About 200 spectators cheered, "Huzzah! Huzzah!" as the Frogs' first striker stood on a line drawn through the center of home base. His slender, knob-handled bat was made with wood taken from a banister.

The Salmon pitcher lobbed the hard ball underhanded over the center of

home base. Made of India rubber and yarn and covered with leather, the ball was small enough to sit comfortably in the palm of a gentleman's hand.

The striker let the pitch pass, and the behind—who wore neither glove nor other protective equipment—tossed it 45 feet back to the pitcher's point.

Umpire Meister Scheidel, who sported a nifty vest, bow tie and big straw hat, said not a word. He could not call a ball, and he could call a strike only after warning a striker who repeatedly let good pitches pass.



It's 1860 again as the Chicago Salmon play the Great Black Swamp Frogs. Baseball was never so pure — or so different.

Photo by Brian Jackson/Chicago Sun/Times

"If someone struck out, we'd all laugh," Frogs president and pitcher Pops Husman said. "The purpose of the pitcher is to let the striker hit."

The next pitch came in, and the striker swung hard. A loud "crack" sounded, and the ball took flight.

Well-struck, well-struck!" the Frogs cheered.

The striker easily made the 90 feet to first base, taking care not to overrun the bag. He tugged at his suspenders, adjusted his green wool cap and proudly stuck his chest out, calling attention to the beautiful gold buttons and black "F" adorning his shirt.

The next several Frogs strikers hit the ball hard. A particularly wicked shot smacked the third baseman's fingers before bouncing into left field. The Frogs scored five aces that inning, with each runner bringing the tally down (striking a metal triangle) after he legged it home. The Salmon were in a big hole.

"My boys will come back," Salmon manager Boss Lady O'Rourke said.

The gentleman's black-and-white plaid hoop skirt moved to and fro as she hustled cups of juice to her gentlemen.

"Oh, heart-breaking!" Boss Lady yelled when a Salmon striker got caught in a rundown between third and home for the third player dead of the inning.

In the bottom of the third the Salmon finally tallied. The Calm struck a home run, scoring Mars Man Fuller and The Man Schoene-man ahead of himself.

"Leg it! Leg it!" the spectators cheered as the men ran.

Three times the triangle sounded as the Salmon scored three aces. And by the time the Salmon had three hands lost in the third, the scorers counted the tally as 9-8 Frogs.

A few raindrops tentatively fell. Hmm. How long does a gentleman stand in the rain?

"Common sense will prevail," Boss Lady said.

Huzzah! The raindrops stopped.

Both nines went scoreless in the fourth inning as the adversaries made many stellar defensive efforts. Although

players dislike the one bounce rule, they took advantage of it several times, catching a struck ball on one bounce for an out. Once, the umpire appealed to the spectators for help in making a call.

The Salmon lost one hand when a foul ball was returned to the Frogs pitcher, who then threw the ball to second base before the Salmon runner made it back to second. The Salmon runner did not slide back to second. Even though all the Salmon players (besides Shoeless Buck) wore cleats, sliding was ungentlemanly.

In the fifth, the umpire called a Frog's striker safe at second base, but the Frog said, "No. sir, I was out."

Next, a struck ball hit the ground once, midway to the pitcher's point, then bounded off the field of play.

"Fair ball!" the umpire called.

He was correct, for the ball hit the ground first in fair territory. A Frogs runner, believed to be Biscuit McCarty but possibly Steamboat Backus, scored on the play. The Frogs scored eight in the fifth and the Salmon two, making the score 17-10, Frogs.

Before the start of the sixth, Salmon coach Moonlight Fahey joined Frogs' field captain Amazin' Mazzi at home base. A soldier told them the field was needed for a speech by a politician. Only one more inning could be played.

"We think it's too bad because base ball is a timeless game," a disappointed Husman said. "We always play nine complete innings, even when the home team is ahead."

In the sixth, the Frogs scored one ace and the Salmon three. The final tally was Frogs 18, Salmon, 13.

The Frogs tipped their caps to the Salmon nine with the cheer, "Hip, hip, huzzah! Hip, hip, huzzah! Hip, hip, huzzah!" The Salmon returned the kindness to the Frogs.

The Salmon said they were eager to play more adversaries, and the Frogs prepared to travel to Iowa for their next game.

Their destination?

The Field of Dreams.



Muffin Umpire Richard Schuricht poses with Mr. Sayama who has donned a Muffin uniform and later played in several matches during the festival held August 30 and 31 of last year.



Under the "Grandstand" covering, Diamond umpire Robin Hewitt shows Mrs. Sayama around at the 1997 Ohio Cup. Note that our Japanese visitor is wearing a period outfit while visiting with her new 1860's American friends.



22

From the Towpath

by Andrew "Mule" Shuman

A lot of ink has been given to the players, uniforms, equipment, and standard rules, but what about the fields we play on? Base ball could not be played without a field. Nor would any game be as memorable without the subtleties of each field. Fans and players alike remember balls striking off the "Green Monster" at Fenway Park or bounding into the ivy along Wrigley Field's walls, outfielders running up the sloped grass of Schibe Park in Philadelphia, and the scenes of Earl Weaver's tomato plants at Memorial Stadium in Baltimore and the "Big Beer" at Milwaukee's County Stadium. There are players among us who could tell us of their fond memories of



Andrew Shuman
Ohio Village Muffin

attending games at Crosley Field in Cincinnati and Ebbetts Field in Brooklyn. We even have a description of America's first "field of dreams", Elysian Fields:

"A mile and a half from the ferry, up the Jersey shore of the Hudson River, along a road that skirted the river on one side and was hugged by trees and thickets on the other. (The road) brought one suddenly to an opening in the forest primeval. This one spot was a level, grass covered plain, some 200 yards across, and as deep. (It was) surrounded upon three sides by the typical eastern undergrowth & woods, and on the east by the Hudson River. It was a perfect greensward almost year round. Nature must have foreseen the needs of baseball, and designed the place especially for that purpose."¹

While nature has not always been so kind to our present day fields of vintage baseball, we each represent a piece of this "paradise". Eaton has its thickets, Spiegel Grove in Fremont has its forests, Stan Hywett Hall in Akron boasts of its grass-covered plains, and the fields of Canal Fulton are bordered by the Ohio Erie Canal.

These fields are unlike the fields of today where owners search for tax breaks and brag, "If we build it they will



Circa 1897 Japanese boys

come". Fans come to these fields to be close to the game and entertained by our skillful play and gentlemanly behavior. Whole towns turn out to see us play. In Sycamore, fans come out in droves to sit along the banks of their hillside cemetery to watch these games. Many are dying to be there next to their beloved Grasshoppers and Katyids.

We have played our games on prairie grass (Denver), crab grass, plastic grass (Three Rivers and Cooper Stadiums), no grass (modern softball diamonds). From the Statehouse lawn to the slopes of Mad River Mountain, all we need is ninety feet square and enough room to chase those "cloud bursters."

When our playing days are over, it will be these fields we remember, not the specifications of a bat or whether our foot goes on or behind a line. George Wright recalled of Elysian Field, "It was here I spent most of my boyhood days. Oh, that I were a boy again!"² Let us remember each week as we step onto these little pieces of heaven that we are given a chance to be boys once again, and it is for the glory of the game of baseball that we play.

Footnotes: (1) Recollections of William Shepard, an early playmate of George Wright; *The First Boys of Summer*; Greg Rhodes & John Erardi; Road West Publishing Co.; Cincinnati, OH; page 7.

Why Don't WE

Score 89 Aces?

By Patrick "Deacon" Massengill

The items on Page 10 of the August, 1997 issue of *Early Innings Illustrated*, "An Interesting Game of Ball on the Commons" and "As It Applies to Re-creating Base Ball Matches Today" were very interesting and a fine example of what our Vintage Base Ball Association should be doing in.

However, it is also an example of how easy it is to draw sweeping and perhaps, incorrect conclusions when analysis is based on a single example. It brings to mind the case of the absolutely documentable photograph of a Confederate soldier wearing leopard-skin pants. Can we thus conclude that all Confederate soldiers wore the same, or a few, or even two?

For the moment, however, I will restrain my comments to the issue of how many aces or runs (both terms were in use in 1860), practitioners of vintage base ball score in their re-created matches. At last year's VBBA meeting this issue was one of concern to the Rules Committee, which was unable at that time to offer a solution.

Mr. Wells, in his analysis of the 1858 match in Boston, offers the opinion that "the defense of the early teams was not nearly as good as today's players." In my opinion, this is but one of numerous reasons, and not nearly the most important. For your consideration, I follow with "The Deacon's Top Seven Reasons Why We Don't Score Like We Should" (sorry, I couldn't stretch it to ten):

#7 ... THE BOUND RULE: In 1860, the National Association allowed using the "fly rule" by mutual consent of both clubs in a match. Evidence suggests that during the early 1860's, many of the bet-

mittee. Easier yet, have one of your players who is 5' 8" tall (the average height back then) take a normal step and measure it. A pace was not a "yard". The term yard was also in general usage and it measured 36 inches. Doing the math, 42 paces equals 105 feet, compared to today's diagonal measurement of 127' 3". Follow with the geometry, and the base paths should be 29.7 (make it an even 30) paces, or 75 feet. Yes, the distance was codified in 1858 at 30 yards, but you will have to decide which is more important — 15 feet or more aces?

#4 ... WE LACK THEIR STRIKING SKILL: My belief is that pure striking talent among re-enactors is not up to the standards set by our role models. As a sort of "we are not 19th century people, part II", few people today have jobs that require physical strength and rapid hand-eye coordination on a six days per week basis. Additionally, most of us were brought up in that swing for the fence mentality that is difficult to overcome and is absolutely the wrong strategy for 1860's rules. Too many fine batters in the modern game just cannot hit bug-bruisers in vintage ball. Additionally, almost no one today is proficient at the fair-foul hit, a mainstay of early line-ups, and a devastating tool for scoring more aces.

#3 ... THE DEFENSE HAS IMPROVED: Mr. Wells is undoubtedly right in pointing out that most players today grew up on the game, unlike those players from Boston, and especially Portland, who only just got started. But it goes far beyond just being better judges of the course of the ball. More important is the strategy that we also acquired growing up. While few clubs today allow re-positioning defenders according to the game situation and strikers' tendencies, we still know what to do once the ball is hit. The most serious transgression is "backing up" the play. All evidence I have seen indicates that Harry Wright pioneered the practice and that few clubs, if any, before the '60

The Frogs Go West



Top Photograph: While the Frogs were visiting the Bluestockings, they took time to see the Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa and pose here on the playing field where the movie was made.

Middle Photograph: And of course, the mandated saunter from the cornfield was not ignored by the Sylvania, Ohio team as testified in this photograph...or are those just corn bores in disguise?

Above: The Great Black Swamp Frogs visiting from Sylvania, Ohio and Iowa's Walnut Hill Bluestockings pose August 10, 1997 at a match at the Iowa Living History Farms in Urbandale, Iowa.

wasn't reached until 1865, when the rule was reversed to allow the "bound rule" only by mutual consent. I, personally, feel that the "bound rule" is what gives vintage base ball much of its spectator appeal, and would never recommend switching to the "fly rule" — but it is undoubtedly a factor contributing to lower scores.

#6 ... OUR BASE-RUNNING RULES: Students of the early game will know that there were never any rules prohibiting leading off, nor advancing (what we call stealing). However, prevailing evidence strongly suggests that the style of the day was to limit attempts to advance to the event of a muff by the hurler or behind or during "pick-off" attempts. The recent VBBA recommendations are a very good start in this direction, but as published in the same issue, do not address advancing during a "pick-off" attempt, which I feel is a vital point. If your club wants to score more aces, open it up to the base-running rules that were actually in use.

#5 ... WE ARE NOT 19TH CENTURY PEOPLE: Let's admit it! The vast majority of re-enactors, be they base ball or Civil War, are, how can I be PC here, more longevity — and gravitationally — challenged than the people we portray. Older and less fit equals slower base runners, thus fewer aces scored. On the other hand, defense is more a factor of reflexes and experience than speed and for most of us the reflexes haven't gone ... yet.

In the meantime, short of telling all your (thirtysomething plus) old fogies to quit and recruiting a bunch of teenagers, try shortening the base paths to score more aces. Seventy-five feet is an historically defensible distance, as that was what the Knickerbockers prescribed in 1845. Their rule was "42 paces" from home to second and first to third. A "pace" in 1845, and throughout the 19th century, was always measured as 30 inches. Check any military manual from the period. Check Chapter One of *Total Baseball*, the bible of the Rules Com-

Red Stockings put it to general use — as with numerous other defensive (and offensive) strategies that are second nature to us today. Want to score more aces? Prohibit "backing up" on defense and purposely throw to the wrong base and mis-field a few daisy-cutters and sky-scrappers.

#2 ... WE WAIT FOR THE RIGHT PITCH: From my observations, today's strikers are way too picky in their portrayal of 1860's ballists. As the Boston story tells, fewer than two pitches per striker were thrown. This is, again, just one match, but the supporting evidence is almost universal. I would argue, however, that this was definitely not the result of superb hurling. Again, we are caught in that modern mentality that says we should only swing at pitches over the plate and across the chest. There was no strike zone then, never had been. To recreate the game properly strikers should swing at everything reachable, not just the perfect (and seldom thrown) pitch.

This also brings to mind the calling of balls and strikes. My understanding is that few vintage clubs today call strikes, even though such a practice was generally in use for years and was actually codified in 1858. Likewise, the calling of balls was codified in 1863, which gives ample justification for doing so if you "play" in 1860. [Note: Rule changes, such as that with the "fly rule", didn't just suddenly appear overnight; they were voted in once a majority of clubs were already practicing them, often-times after years of trial.]

To us in Colorado, who have experience both ways, the advantages of calling the pitches, in terms of match time and flow of the game, far outweigh the "uniqueness" of not doing so. In 1994, I umpired a match at the Ohio Cup, restricted from calling the pitches, where a hurler tossed 37 pitches in an inning, 34 of which were unhittable, by any standards. In Colorado, that would translate into three aces scored and the bases loaded, or more likely, a new hurler after

the last consecutive match in the same match, a striker on the other club watched nine very hittable pitches go by before finally swinging, for the fence, of course, at a perfect pitch. Out here, that would have equaled two strikeouts, with the third striker up.

Finally, for those who already call strikes or may experiment with it next year, instruct your umpires to not be so generous to the strikers. Umpires, too, can get caught up in the "modern strike zone" mentality. The rule stated that the pitch should be delivered "to the bat", not necessarily over the plate and not necessarily across the chest. The only determination was whether pitches were "fair" or not — in the eyes of the umpire. Does this mean that any pitch which passes within the reach of the bat, without having bounded first, and without the striker having to contort his body to hit it, is "fair"? Maybe. It often is for us. Try it. You'll find that happy compromise, the same way they did back then.

#1 ... OUR FIELDS ARE TOO NICE: Our recent barnstorming tour pointed out one very revealing fact regarding Eastern teams and scoring — nearly everyone plays on a surface as manicured and nearly as flat as a pool table. We used our rules, we played about as average as we normally play, yet the scoring, discounting the match in the rain and mud at Canal Fulton, was about a third of what we experience in the West. The difference, without a doubt, was the playing surfaces.

Take the published match between the Tri-Mountain and Portland clubs. Research will show that Boston Commons in 1858 was not at all like most of the ball-fields used today. They didn't have lawn mowers! The Commons is not a level flood plain, and certainly all the little bumps and gullies typical to any natural area had not been evened out. Chances are there were one or more trees in play, maybe a few bushes and rock outcrops. Ask any of the Muffins who visited our home field in Denver in 1995. We pull out the cactus and yucca

rocks that occasionally surface off to the side. But otherwise it is natural grass, growing in clumps amid the washer-board dirt. Ask a Muffin to describe a "Fort Logan Hop" and you'll have a better understanding why they scored more aces back then.

Without exception, the playing venues we encountered on our Eastern tour were beautiful settings, and no one in their right mind would suggest abandoning such fields. But if you want to be more historically correct and score more aces, quit cutting the grass, or at least let it grow out to about 6 or more inches, then cut down the base paths with a scythe, the way they might have. Don't pull the bushes, or trim the tree branches. Let your field get a little rough around the edges. Heck, let it get extremely rough around the edges. With as little leisure time that ballists had in 1860, you can rest assured they used it playing ball, not landscaping.

Is it important to score the way they did? It depends on whether you value the historical integrity of your public presentations. Are you trying as best you can to depict the game the way it was actually played and stress being "outcome-based", or are you inadvertently trying to prove how much better ball players we are today? Regular scores in the single digits are not historically accurate, period — regular scores above twenty are! [Note: Please refer to the scores of Knickerbocker matches published in the March issue of *Early Innings*. Their average combined score for the period 1858-66 was a whopping 66 aces per match.] On top of all that, you can believe that your club scoring 33 aces in a vintage match is a whole lot more fun than scoring three.

We are not them, and never will be no matter how much research and first person interpretation we do. That's the limitation of the hobby — much like the majority of Civil War re-enactors don't have chronic dysentery, eat "real" Civil

"Score 89 Aces"
continues on page 11

Results of the 1997 Ohio Cup

Vintage Base Ball Festival

by Doug "Birdhouse" Smith

Saturday, August 30

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Deep River Grinders | 5 |
| Sharon Woods Shamrocks | 4 |
| Colorado VBBA | 3 |
| Ohio Village Muffins O Squad | 1 |
| Lorain County Buckeyes | 7 |
| Rock Springs Ground Squirrels | 4 |
| Lah De Dahs | 2 |
| Great Black Swamp Frogs | 1 |
| ABBC Copperstown | 1 |
| Akron Black Stockings | 0 |
| Great Black Swamp Frogs | 11 |
| Colorado VBBA | 4 |
| Deep River Grinders | 4 |
| ABBC Cooperstown | 0 |
| Lah De Dahs | 9 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 4 |
| Ohio Village Muffins O Squad | 6 |
| Rock Springs Ground Squirrels | 1 |
| Akron Black Stockings | 11 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 11 |
| ABBC Cooperstown | 6 |
| Sharon Woods Shamrocks | 2 |
| Ohio Village Muffins O Squad | 5 |
| Deep River Grinders | 2 |
| Lorain County Buckeyes | 7 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 3 |
| Lah De Dahs | 12 |
| Rock Springs Ground Squirrels | 4 |
| Great Black Swamp Frogs | 5 |

Sunday, August 31

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Colorado VBBA | 4 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 1 |
| Fulton Mules | 2 |
| Rock Springs Ground Squirrels | 1 |
| ABBC Cooperstown | 3 |
| Lake County Pirates | 1 |

Ladies Match:

| | |
|--|----|
| Reps. Carriage Hill Farm Lady Clodbusters and Sycamore Katydids | 6 |
| Reps. Colorado Columbines, Ohio Village Diamonds and Sycamore Katydids | 3 |
| Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters | 5 |
| Colorado VBBA | 2 |
| ABBC Cooperstown | 3 |
| Sycamore Grasshoppers | 1 |
| Deep River Grinders | 6 |
| Lake County Pirates | 3 |
| Fulton Mules | 5 |
| Newtowne Barnstormers | 2 |
| Ohio Village Muffins O Squad | 5 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 4 |
| Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters | 4 |
| Lah De Dahs | 3 |
| Deep River Grinders | 14 |
| Fulton Mules | 6 |
| Rock Springs Ground Squirrels | 11 |
| Ohio Village Muffins V Squad | 9 |
| Lah De Dahs | 5 |
| Lake County Pirates | 2 |
| Newtowne Barnstormers | 3 |
| Ohio Village Muffins O Squad | 2 |

Ladies Match:

| | |
|---|---|
| Reps. Carriage Hill Farm Lady Clodbusters and Sycamore Katydids | 9 |
| Reps. Colorado Columbines, Ohio Village Diamonds and Sycamore | |

All-Stars Prevail

Through Strategy, Headwork

by William H. Dean

Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan on August 23, 1997. Bright sunshine and blue skies met the spectators as they spread their blankets on the hillside overlooking the Activities Field.

Today's diversion was a match of Knickerbocker ball between the Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs and the Colorado Territorial All-Stars, the latter nine in the midst of a cross-country marathon of base ball that has sharpened their skills of strategy, if not their hitting and fielding abilities, which remain unremarkable.

After both sides engaged in routine hitting practice, and before the teams were introduced to the crowd, the outstanding play of the game occurred. Now, it is rare, if not impossible, for the most memorable display of skill to occur before the first striker has found the line, but the All-Stars are far ahead of the home team in this regard. The usually alert Lah-De-Dahs were caught flat of foot and gape-mouthed.

With athletic nimbleness normally reserved for the foxes that live beyond the Cotswold cottage, the All-Stars deftly side-stepped the standard field rules of the Village, rules suitable enough for the men from Akron and Fulton and Sycamore, and imposed changes to their own liking. A stunning gambit! Full marks to the boys from Denver.

Their most exciting piece of work was the introduction of a poorly constructed townball as their sphere of choice — a brilliant piece of headwork considering that neither side used it

Park Laboratory for dissection, and was discovered to contain a strange combination of chicken feathers, buttercups, and a lovely silk handkerchief. It has since been destroyed to avoid additional embarrassment to all involved.

The ensuing game was forgettable but for a fourbagger socked over the train tracks by the All-Star's shortstop — full huzzas for that effort, and a pre-game serenade by the All-Stars to their faithful followers. The match itself consisted of a series of muffs and overthrows by the Lah-De-Dahs. Their leathery hands, toughened from a summer of hardball at sea level, were no match for their delicate-fingered opponents in handling the wind-blown whisper-ball. And speaking of whispers, a rumor that the Colorado fielders practice with butterfly nets proved to be completely unreliable.

By the end of the game, the hillside had emptied but for a pocket of visiting cranks. The Lah-De-Dah supporters, accustomed to a little danger mixed with their sport, had wandered off in search of a more lively spectacle. A few were seen sitting on the Village Green, watching children play "crack the whip", cheering the sack races and throwing popcorn to the chickadees.

The Lah-De-Dahs, known for hard play and hard playing off the field at the tavern, ring the tally bell at their home field in Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan.



Lorain County Buckeyes
 Colorado VBBA
 Akron Black Stockings
 1922 Denver Bears
 1922 Giants

1
 5
 4
 6
 4

Katydids
 Colorado VBBA
 Sycamore Grasshoppers
 Carriage Hill Farm Clodbusters
 Sycamore Grasshoppers

2
 7
 5
 6
 4

while warming up. The visitors were rightfully proud.

Later, the ball was dispatched to the Menlo



Left: These are the ladies from four different period teams who played in two matches at the Ohio Cup Festival as vintage base ball catches on with the distaff set. It started with the Lady Diamonds three years ago and now we can count five ladies teams in the field as the 1998 season begins.

Note the interested lady scribe at the lower right. She is freelance writer Eileen J. Beal who attended the Ohio Cup to write about period base ball for several magazines. We will have more about her and her work in the next newsletter.

Right: This photograph says it all. It's the next generation of vintage base ball warming up.

Below: An Ohio Cup match is in full swing as the throng watches intently the players on Muffin Meadow at the Ohio Historical Society's Ohio Village in Columbus, Ohio. This year's Ohio Cup will be held on September 5th and 6th.





The Roosters

INAUGURAL SEASON

Rochester and the National Pastime

from the 1997 *Souvenir Program* of the Roosters Inaugural Season

Rochester was only thirteen years old when H. E. Horton and M. A. Ozmun organized a meeting for the purpose of forming a club to play the Scientific National Base Ball game. Elder & Sons was the location, and during the course of the evening a constitution and by-laws were drafted, submitted, and approved. Officers were elected and thirteen gentlemen became charter members of the North Star Base Ball Club.

The popularity of base ball continued to increase, and by the end of the century was flourishing. Early clubs in Rochester and the area were the Stars, Gopher State Club, Gophers, White Caps, Farmers, and Minnehahas. They played matches against nines such as the Winona Clippers, Mankato Red Jackets, and the Red Caps & Saxons from St. Paul.

Indoor base ball also had its fans. The March 20, 1897 *Rochester Post* and the March 25, 1897 *Olmsted County Democrat* included many details about the match between the Winona Normals and the Stewartville team at Rochester's Library Hall. Admission to the two games was 25 cents and drew 75 specta-

Roosters Form In Rochester, Minnesota

by Ed Merrell, Executive Director
Olmsted County Historical Society

I want to let you know that we did form a vintage base ball team here at the Olmsted County Historical Society. Under the able and very energetic leadership of one of our Board members, Mary Jane Schmitt, the Roosters played four games in 1997.

The inaugural season saw three matches played at home and one road game. The opening game was against the gentlemen representing the local media. The Roosters lost but the wealth of bragging publicity received was well worth a little humble pie. The team also lost their next road and home games, but finished out the season with a home field victory over the Quicksteps.

Mary Jane has a fine group of players and a few cranks plus a great bunch of seamstresses and all round assistants. They even ran a concession stand at the September Three Rivers Rendezvous to make money for kicking off 1998.

The Roosters are a great group of Historical Society supporters in addition to being enthusiastic ball players, cranks, and helpers.

Plans for 1998 are in the making!

Thank you's and huzzas to the Muffins for all the help as we organized our team.

Vintage Base Ball Comes to Brookville

by Bill Schneider

I wanted to share with Vintage Base Ball Association members a bit of base ball history that was recently re-created in my hometown of Brookville Indiana. The response from the town has led me to believe they may be approachable for joining our association.

In researching my family history several years ago, I ran across a reference to the formation of the first base ball club in Brookville in 1867. I was able to locate newspaper articles on the club formation and reports of the first matches for the remainder of that year. In my mind it was a treasure and I created a short history of that first year. This history has been used in local youth baseball programs and I have enclosed a copy for your reference.

The chairperson of the Historical Society asked me to prepare a presentation on early base ball in the county, which I presented in April. I covered the known history of that 1867 club, its members and matches. I also was able to elicit photos and news clippings from the early 1900's, which included local history, the first professional player from the county, and the personal connection that Pie Traynor had with Brookville. The community continues to have an excellent baseball tradition. I had a blast putting the story together and the reaction was very positive. I challenged the community to re-create that first club match in celebration of the 130th anniversary of its formation.

The local Chamber of Commerce, the Brookville Kiwanis Club, and the Historical Society joined forces to put on quite an event centered around this re-

creation, all using local talent. They acquired a Ferguson "New York" ball and two bats by Jim "Tomahawk" Wilson of the Clodbusters, specially made for the event. I served as umpire to enforce the 1858 rules and had the assistance of Constable Terry Lewis to handle any scoundrels. I've included a copy of the local newspaper that summarized the activities...it was a hoot!

When publicity for the match went out, it referenced an 1867 match with Connersville — a club in the neighboring town that defeated them 62 to 22. The Connersville Chamber of Commerce challenged Brookville to a rematch. The fever seems to be contagious.

Brookville may be primed to join the Vintage Base Ball Association. I approached several folks in the community about forming a vintage club and re-creating other matches and there seemed to be enough interest. Brookville is within 45 minutes of the Laurels and Shamrocks and about an hour from our Clodbusters. They would be a great addition to our area and have talent and skills to give any club an challenging match. By the way, Brookville has restored their 1922 grandstand at the baseball field...it may be the perfect location to re-create vintage games from that era. I remain committed to helping in any way if they decide to join the association.

No Girls Allowed — Susan Moster (far left) and Cheryl Kaiser plead to no avail to the umpire Bill Schneider (wearing derby). The ladies just wanted to play in the gentlemen's sport. Schneider said, "that women would want the vote next". Listening to the action are Constable Terry Lewis and the coaches, Kevin Priessman (a hat with a "T") and Brandon Chessor.

Photo by John Estridge of Brookville American.



The hall had been prepared for the game by removing the pictures, boarding up the windows in the east end, and marking out a diamond on the polished dancing floor. First base could be easily over ran through the door into the next room, but third base had a projecting chimney in line with it. In the last inning, Fred Demro of Stewartville ran into the sharp edge, and "quite a little blood flowed, but the wound was not serious". The championship of Southern Minnesota was at stake, but Winona prevailed 15 to 6 and 9 to 5.

During the early years of the 20th century many teams flourished in the area. The Rochester Aces played in an independent professional league in the 1920's and at one time had a participant of the infamous Black Sox scandal of

Post-Bulletin writer Pat Ruff, center, enjoys a sip from a ladle Saturday while taking a break from the 1860's styled baseball game played at the Olmsted Historical Society. At far left is Post-Bulletin writer Jon Valander. They played on the Rochester Media Muffins, who prevailed 3 to 2 in a match July 12, 1997 against the newly formed Roosters.



1919 on the roster.

The Rochester Royals date back to 1921 and until the 1950's were a part of the Southern Minny League, a semi-pro league that was said to have the fastest pitchers and was close to Triple A Ball. At one time there were eleven former major leaguers on the Royals. Games with Austin or Winona would draw as many as 5,000 people. The Southern Minny was disbanded as a semi-pro league in the late 1950's and is now an amateur league.

Today we still have great baseball to watch, from the Southern Minny League Royals, Northwoods League Honkers, American Legion sponsored A's and Patriots, to the VFW and youth teams in Rochester and the surrounding towns.

We hope you enjoy watching the Roosters and find your trip back to 1860's base ball both educational and entertaining. For more information on local baseball history, visit the Olmsted County History Center Library and read all about it!

Photograph by Jodi M. O'Shaugnessy
The Post-Bulletin



The Origins of Brookville Base Ball

by Bill Schneider

For many, many years, since the first recorded game in 1846, the cry, "play ball", signaled the start of the great American pastime...Base Ball. First played in pastures, fields and sandlots, the game has progressed and has been played countless times. The sport has basically remained the same, since the beginning, with the rules and terms changing somewhat over time as it became more competitive and less the "gentleman's game" than it was back then.

Typical baseball "matches", in those early days, were played between neighboring communities. Base Ball was considered a gentlemen's sport and its popularity became widespread by the blending of men involved in America's Civil War. It was quickly becoming America's sport. Base Ball took formal root in Brookville, Indiana on 19 August 1867 when a club was formed, named the "Fearless Base Ball Club of Brookville." This event was reported in the *Franklin Democrat* on 23 August 1867:

Base Ball.

We understand that the mania for Base Ball has finally reached Brookville, and broke out on Monday night last, in the formation of a Club. The organization is not quite complete, but will be so in a few days, when we will give particulars.

Helping in the formation of the Brookville Club was a Mr. John Bracken who had been with the Greensburg Lightning Club. Enough interest was generated to form two teams of nine players, called the "1st Nine" and "2d Nine." The first game played in Brookville was between these two teams, but the actual date was not recorded. The box score was reported in the next edition of the *Franklin Democrat*, on 30 August 1867.

Base Ball Game

Played between the 1st and 2d Nines of the Brookville Base Ball Club, the latter being led by Captain John Bracken, of the Lightning Club of Greensburg. Three innings played when game was called:

"Brookville Base Ball" continues on page 9

The national pastime's past time – the 19th century, to be precise – is being celebrated by a group of reverent traditionalists in New York

By Kevin Paul Dupont
GLOBE STAFF

BETHPAGE, N.Y. – They are working men, but at the same time ballplayers and actors. Kid Speed is one of them, along with Old Dutch, Rubberband, and Peach Fuzz.

The umpire wears a black bowler, a gold watch fob, and a minister's white collar. Everyone calls him "Rev," just as they would have *back then*, and no one argues with the Rev's decisions, be they balls, strikes, or otherwise.

Women can play, too, but in keeping with the spirit and fact of 19th century baseball, female hardball wannabes must assume a man's name before they pull on the vintage uniform and take the field.

"OK, for instance, let's say someone named Judy wanted to play," said Al "Old Dutch" Dieckmann, second baseman for the Hicksville Ozone. "We'd just call her Judd, that's all, and she could play. Honestly, we're cheating a little bit there, because it never happened, of course. Women didn't play baseball back then."

In truth, there are few compromises and little revisionism when it comes to history and all things baseball here at Old Bethpage Village Restoration – Long Island's version of Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Over

League Baseball became serious about repeatedly shooting itself in the foot with labor strife, old-time baseball has developed into a staple and a thriving attraction here in Nassau County.

Today there are some 300 players who spend many of their Saturdays and most of their Sundays during the summer dressed up as 19th-century baseball players, recreating the infancy of the national pastime before crowds that sometimes number 2,000. The program's 10 teams play all games – 58 this season – on Hewlett Field, a

splendid 19th-century replica, with the outfield ringed by a split-post-and-rail fence, the Wyeth-like tableau completed by a red barn that stands majestically in the tall grass beyond right-center field.

In an era when baseball does everything to kill itself, the game here has been brought back to life, splendidly, almost cinematically. It is truly hardball heaven.

...

The ball is handmade. Fielders wear no gloves. There are no basepaths, save for the scars of earth that are cut into the green grass around home plate and the bases. To come down the dirt road from the village's main visitor center and wander unknowingly upon a game is to



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS
JOHN BOHIN

Al "Old Dutch" Dieckmann, manager of the Hicksville Ozone, watches the action unfold during a game with Westbury (above); the Westbury pitcher, Cliff "Buck" Archer, lets one rip as umpire Gary Monti waits to make the call (left).



The Origins of Brookville Base Ball

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| 1st Nine. | | | 2d Nine. | | |
|-------------------|---|----|----------------------|---|----|
| | Q | R. | | Q | R. |
| Grydea, C. and C. | 1 | 4 | Bracken, C. and C. | 0 | 4 |
| Quick, 2d B. | 0 | 4 | Pursel, 3d B. | 3 | 1 |
| Wiley, P. | 0 | 4 | Palmer, 2d B. | 1 | 2 |
| Jones, 3d B. | 0 | 4 | Haymond, C.F. | 2 | 2 |
| Bracken, 1st B. | 2 | 2 | Remy, 1st B. | 1 | 1 |
| Hooper, R.F. | 1 | 4 | Murdock, S.S. | 1 | 1 |
| Smith, L.F. | 1 | 3 | Swift, P. | 0 | 2 |
| King, C. F. | 0 | 3 | Vanlandingham, L. F. | 1 | 1 |
| Love, S.S. | 4 | 0 | Fudge, R.F. | 0 | 2 |
| | 9 | 28 | | 9 | 16 |

Home Runs — Wiley 1, Quick 1

Balk Called — Swift 1

Umpire — R. H. Swift

NOTE: The "important" player statistics were the number of runs he scored and the number of times he made an out. All positions are listed by the current names and the term "C. and C." stands for captain and catcher.

"Base Ball Fever" was apparently contagious as the sport was one of the opening day events at the annual Fair. The newspaper again heralded the new sporting event as a team from Harrison, Ohio was Brookville's first visiting foe. The *Franklin Democrat*, 13 September 1867, reports:

Base Ball at the Fair.

On the first day of the Fair at 2 o'clock P.M., a match game of Base Ball, between the Harrison and Brookville Clubs, will be played. Excitement is running high as to who will be the winner. Both are sanguine of success, and some good playing may be anticipated.

This gala event was scheduled for 17 September (Tuesday), but due to leadtime for printing the newspaper, the results did not make the deadline for the 20 September 1867 edition. Some flavor of pregame events were chronicled:

Base Ball

The Lone Star Club of Harrison, arriving on the 10:30 train on Tuesday, accompanied by the Cornet Band of that place. They stop at the Fudge House and are the guests of the Brookville Base Ball Club. The contest came off between the two clubs at 2 o'clock, but we go to press before the game is decided. We shall notice next week fully.

Great hoopla accompanied the arrival of the visiting nine and their band. I am not sure if the Fudge House was a local establishment or if the home of one of the Brookville club members. For some reason the editor did not "notice" that game the next week. One should draw their own conclusions. Regardless of that outcome, the Fearless Base Ball Club did not hesitate to challenge other teams.

The rules at that time were evolving, but included some of the following conditions. Typically, gloves were not available yet and subsequently if a player caught the ball on a bound, the striker was declared out or "dead". This "first bound" rule also applied to foul ticks as well. A striker could request the location of the pitch and the pitcher (or hurler) was expected to pitch the ball to that location, since he was a gen-

tleman. The bases were set apart by 30 paces or 90 feet and the pitcher's line was located only 45 feet from home plate — a circular metal disk painted white. If the ball became lodged in a tree and had not touched the ground, a fielder could pluck the ball from the tree and the striker would be declared "dead." The single umpire did not call individual balls or strikes, but could caution the striker who let several "good" pitches go by...he would also caution the pitcher for not placing the ball where requested by the striker. Since "gentlemen" did not curse, swear, spit, sweat, or act unruly, the umpire could fine players, normally twenty-five cents, for such behavior...and often did. A tally keeper would keep score and each player scoring an "ace" or run must check with the tally keeper for the run to count. Many times a bell, at the tally keeper's table, would be rung by the player to celebrate the "ace".

The next foe for the Fearless Club was the Metamora Club, with the game played one week later at Metamora. Comparing the box score from the 30 August article to the following box score indicates that the original two teams merged to form one, truly Fearless Club. The final score, after five innings, was 59-39...a Fearless victory. The *Franklin Democrat*, 27 September 1867, reports:

Match Game of Base Ball

Played at Metamora, Sept. 24 1867, between the Fearless Base Ball Club of Brookville, and Metamora Club of Metamora:

| Fearless. | | | Metamora. | | |
|-----------------|----|----|-----------------|----|----|
| | Q | R. | | Q | R. |
| Bracken, 1st B. | 3 | 6 | Bryant, C. | 2 | 4 |
| Quick, C. | 1 | 8 | Hahn, P. | 2 | 4 |
| Wiley, P. | 0 | 9 | Swift 1st B. | 0 | 6 |
| Shepperd, 2d B. | 1 | 8 | Wiggins, 2d B. | 1 | 4 |
| Smith, L.F. | 0 | 7 | Kidney, 3d B. | 5 | 2 |
| Palmer, R.F. | 1 | 6 | Wiggans, R.F. | 0 | 7 |
| Hooper, S.S. | 3 | 5 | Whitelock, L.F. | 1 | 4 |
| Haymond, C.F. | 4 | 4 | Maguire, C.F. | 2 | 5 |
| Jartard, 3d B. | 2 | 6 | Swift, S.S. | 2 | 3 |
| Totals | 15 | 59 | | 15 | 39 |

| Fearless. | | Metamora. | |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Flys Caught, 5 | | Flys Caught, 3 | |
| Fouls Caught, 3 | | Fouls Caught, 9 | |
| Home Runs, 6 | | Home Runs, 1 | |

Scorers — Wm. McCleery and George Kimble.

Umpire — Otho Hurly

Time — Two hours and twenty minutes.

Team statistics were added to this box score to record the defensive prowess of each team. Within the week, a rematch was played in Brookville with a much different result over the same five innings. The *Franklin Democrat*, 4 October 1867, reports:

Match Game of Base Ball,

A splendid match game of Base Ball, between the Metamora Club, of Metamora, and the Fearless Club, of this place, came off on the grounds of the Fearless Club, on Saturday afternoon last, and resulted in a tie game. Five innings were played, in which the boys, on both sides, did some splendid batting and catching. T. C. SHEPPERD, of the Brookville "Brookville Base Ball" continues on page 10

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THE BOSTON GLOBE • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1997

A vintage look at pastime's past time

"Boston Globe Article"
continued from page 9

feel a sensory fastball buzz under the chin.

"Now *this* is a baseball field," said Ken Balcom, the village's site director, leading a visitor to the field last weekend, "the way it's supposed to be."

While big league baseball makes ready for its World Series, Old Bethpage will have its championship this weekend. The 1866 League, its defining trait the pitcher's underhand delivery, will have a semifinal game tomorrow at 1:30 p.m., with the Hempstead Eureka facing the Brooklyn Atlantic. The winner will face Mineola for the title Sunday at 11 a.m. The 1887 League, with overhand pitching, five balls and four strikes per batter its distinguishing characteristics, will bring Westbury and Bellmore together Sunday at 2 p.m. If you've got a baseball-loving bone left in your body, or even only a marginal interest in US sports history, the century-plus step back in time takes about four hours by car from Boston (Exit 48 off the Long Island Expressway).

Kid Speed — real name Tom Heinlein — is worth the drive. Heinlein, a 27-year-old toolmaker from Selden, N.Y., hits leadoff and plays center field for the Bellmore Seminoles. It takes all of an inning or two of watching Heinlein race down the basepaths and sprint across the outfield to realize he is the league's undisputed MVP.

"Do you you hear it?" said the Rev (real name Gary Monti), catching a spectator's attention as Heinlein made his way to the plate last weekend. The Rev lowered his voice as Kid Speed moved into the batter's box. "Hear how quiet it is? The crowd's anticipating Kid Speed's coming to the plate. Big player. Something could happen."

Heinlein is a happening even when he hits a routine popup. He is all hustle, tenacious and unrelenting, be it at bat or in the field. A Pete Rose comparison would be insulting, and not to Rose. Of the 300 vintage players in the program, Heinlein is generally accepted as the One to Watch.

"People seem to enjoy it," said Heinlein, asked about his style. "They like to see you leg out a triple, or maybe get in a pickle for 30 seconds and then get out of it. They like that ... speed and a good defensive play. But at the same time, they've got modern minds — they like to see someone poke one over the fence, and when it happens, they cheer like crazy."

Kid Speed is hitting about .450 in the 1887 League. He also suits up, usually for the Mineola Washington, in the 1866 League, where he figures he hit around .800 this year. The '66 League essentially acts as a feeder for the '87 League, with players introduced to the vintage game, 1866 style, ascending to the big league. In short, '66 plays Pawtucket to '87's Boston.

Three years ago, while visiting Old Bethpage Village as a spectator, Heinlein wandered into the general store.



Nick DeGregorio of Bellmore executes an old-fashioned head-first slide during a 19th-century replica game against Glen Head last Sunday at Old Bethpage Village Restoration.

"It's like a family here," said Heinlein. "I play in a lot of leagues, softball and baseball, easily 100 games a summer, and the program here doesn't have any of the politics you find in other leagues. No one's ever thrown out of a game. Arguments will flare up, but guys put a cap on it right away, because we're here for the fans. Yeah, we want to win, but we're just part of the show."

Exhibition games

Old Dutch Dieckmann, 51, has been with the Bethpage vintage program since 1994. Along with playing second base for the Ozone, Dieckmann is team captain, president of the 1866 League, president of the Historical Base Ball Association of Long Island, and historian for the nationwide Vintage Base Ball Association. On weekdays, he is a systems analyst consultant.

"But I'd rather make a living doing this," said Old Dutch, gesturing toward the ballfield.

Dieckmann grew up in Cincinnati, and the Reds of

Kluszewski at first.

"Heck, you'd always see Kluszewski on the street; he was everywhere," recalled Dieckmann. "You'd go to a game and it was like going down to the park to root for a bunch of your friends. Nowadays, the way guys change teams, it's like you're rooting for a shirt. The thought of Ted Kluszewski playing for anyone other than the Cincinnati Reds was inconceivable."

That love of the past and tradition, in part, is what drove Dieckmann here to the old-time game. He can't remember the last big league game he attended or watched on television. The hours he devotes to the game now are spent reading about the stars of the mid- and late 1800s, helping to shape Bethpage's Old-Time Base Ball Program and pulling on the Ozone uniform for nine innings on a Saturday or Sunday.

"You know, baseball is the only thing in the world that I totally understand," mused Dieckmann. "I find myself sometimes looking around between pitches and it's like I'm 10 years old again ... the grass, the looks on the players' faces, the thrill of making a good play, a

achusetts, one of the leading pioneers of the game as it evolved from rounders in the mid-1800s, as fertile ground for vintage leagues to take hold. (For information on starting a league, contact Dieckmann at 516-868-8313 or write him at 1762 Rockville Drive, Baldwin, N.Y., 11510.) Smith believes there are no organized vintage clubs in the Bay State.

"This is the ultimate in my eyes," said Dan "Peach Fuzz" Salmon, a Bellmore pitcher who has taken on the history of pitching as his area of expertise in the program. "It really is special to read, say, a paragraph in your research and then come here and try to bring to life what was happening in 1887."

Some of that history gets played out on an ongoing basis on George Ferchland's living room couch in Franklin Square, N.Y. The 36-year-old Ferchland, who repairs medical equipment for a living, handcrafts all the balls used in the Bethpage league. Each ball has a rubber core and is wrapped first by two grades of yarn, coarse and fine, before the leather cover is stitched in place.

"Ever since I was 8 years old, I've been taking apart baseballs, footballs, softballs," said Ferchland, a Bellmore shortstop, outfielder, and sometime pitcher. "When I started making these, it took about 4½ hours, but I've got that down to under 3½ now. I do it right in the living room. I tell my wife, 'Hey, I can take it all out in the garage.' But usually, I just do it while I'm watching TV."

Rarely, said Ferchland, does his TV get tuned to a baseball game.

"I got fed up with all the crying and stuff," he said. "I know some of 'em are super-talented, but you get sick and tired of hearing, 'Oh, \$20 million's not enough.' I believe quite a few are playing just for their wallet and not for their heart."

The vintage game, said Ferchland, is for those still passionate about baseball.

"It's hard to describe how great this is," he said. "You're playing with friends, but it's still competitive, and then you've got people watching you, too. It's just so relaxed, so much fun. How can I say it? The atmosphere is like 'Little House on the Prairie.'"

When one of Ferchland's balls, which sell for \$35-\$40 apiece, goes into foul territory or gets hit over the fence, play is suspended until it is found. Typically, three or four players join the hunt. Fans join in sometimes. One game. One ball. Just like the old days.

Mike "Mickey the Lip" Tangel, team captain and first baseman for the Huntington Suffolk, took on the task of researching player nicknames a couple of years back. The players refer to each other by their nicknames, just about all of which have been adopted from 19th-century game accounts researched by Mickey the Lip.

Former Red Sox second baseman Chuck Schilling, who will turn 60 this month, patrols second base for the Huntington Suffolk. He didn't suit up last weekend.

spotted one of the league's handmade baseballs in a display case, and began asking questions. The following spring, he was in center field.

game. Roy McMillan at shortstop. Johnny Temple at second base. Frank Robinson in left. And of course, Ted

Welcome Massachusetts Ballists

by Doug Smith

The following message was sent through Al Dieckmann to the new teams forming in Massachusetts.

On behalf of the Vintage Base Ball Association I would like to thank you for your interest in this game. It is exciting news that the splendid article in the Boston Globe on the Old Time Base Ball Program at Bethpage Village has sparked a great deal of interest in the forming of new clubs. Al Dieckmann has given me the chance to send this greeting to you.

The VBBA was formed in February, 1996. Our purpose as stated in the mission statement, is 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."

The spreading of the game in the most accurate manner is fundamental to those who wish to share the joy that this game has given them. Currently there are about thirty-five formed clubs playing games throughout our country. So far as we know these states are represented by clubs: Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York and Ohio. During 1997 we have heard from many new individuals, museums and historic sites. In the coming year there are strong possibilities new clubs will be operating in Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia. It seems very likely that Massachusetts is joining this group!

You have an excellent contact in Al Dieckmann. Al has understood for quite some time the importance of accuracy in depicting this game. I am sure Al will provide you with much information. If the VBBA can assist your efforts in any way please do not hesitate to contact me.

The Origins of Brookville Base Ball

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club, acted in the capacity of umpire, and so far as we have learned, his decisions were perfectly satisfactory. This is the second trial of skill in the great national game, between these clubs, and we understand neither side being satisfied, a third game will be played at some day not far distant. Due notice will be given of the time and place.

Results of the third game were not found in any 1867 edition of the newspaper, perhaps the third game against the Metamora Club was played the next year. The final mention of Fearless Base Ball in 1867 reported in the *Franklin Democrat* was a box score summarizing a game with a Connersville club. The Fearless Nine traveled to Connersville to compete with the Spartan Club. The *Franklin Democrat*, 11 October 1867, reports:

Base Ball Game

A home and home game of Base Ball was played at Connersville, Ind., on Saturday, 5th inst., between the Spartan Club of Connersville, and the Fearless Club of Brookville. Nine innings played when the game was called:

still there. As the games are played, visitors generally meander behind the backstop or stroll down foul territory to watch along the baselines. Mothers come with strollers, fathers with sons, boyfriends with girlfriends. In most cases, spectators stay for an inning or two, then move along to the other 19th-century sights and exhibits dotting the rest of the village's 18 acres. Some come back for another look. Most everyone is tickled by the Rev's attire, and a collective "Ouch!" is heard when a line drive gets knocked down by a bare hand.

"Some people come and watch all nine innings, but if they stay and watch for 10 minutes, that's success for us," said Balcom, mindful that the village is now in its high season, also hosting the Long Island Fair, an event that dates back to the 1840s. "Baseball's an important part of the show here for us - and we take it seriously, as do the players and administrators - but it's not the whole show. It's a history lesson."

...

Spreading the word

According to Dieckmann, Bethpage is the oldest vintage baseball program in the country. Doug Smith, president of the Vintage Base Ball Association, estimates there are 30 teams nationwide, with upwards of 1,000 players. Dieckmann predicts more programs will sprout up around the US and he views Mass-

Schilling is not the oldest player. A nat museum goes w 65-year-old George "The Admiral" Stockerl, an ex-Navy man who also plays for the Suffolks. The youngest is Josh "Junior" Oshinsky, an 18-year-old pitcher from Baldwin. Josh and his dad, 46-year-old Jim "Bones" Oshinsky, both play for Hicksville.

"When he was growing up, I was going to Josh's games all the time, sometimes seven games a week," said the elder Oshinsky, a psychologist in Baldwin. "It got to the point that I couldn't watch anymore without playing. About four years ago, I brought him here to the fair - when the finals were on - and I saw them playing this old-time game and I said, 'Hey, I can do this.' The next year, I was playing."

Oshinsky and son packed up their old-time equipment on Sunday, denied a trip to the 1887 championship game by Bellmore. Josh went back to Easton, Pa., where he attends Lafayette College. His father went back to seeing patients. Next spring, they'll be teammates again.

"You're trying to have a good, competitive game," said Bones Oshinsky, pulling on his jacket at Hewlett Field as another season ended. "You're not out here trying to be Albert Belle. I don't know what's happening to baseball. The strike year was horrible, and there were no good guys in it. Now they're talking about a major realignment. That's just so incredibly stupid."

"But you know, I guess the game will survive all of it. It always has."

Spartan.

| | R. | Q |
|------------------|----|----|
| Leach, C. and P. | 7 | 3 |
| Griffin, C. | 6 | 4 |
| Rawls, 1st B. | 7 | 3 |
| Griffin, 2d B. | 6 | 5 |
| Roehl, 3d B. | 8 | 2 |
| McIntosh, C.F. | 9 | 0 |
| Edwards, L.F. | 7 | 3 |
| Ferris, R.F. | 6 | 3 |
| Beck, S.S. | 6 | 4 |
| Totals | 62 | 27 |

Spartan.

Flys Caught, 7
Fouls Caught, 6
Home Runs, Leach, 1

Umpire — W. Darry [?]
Scorers — Spartan, S.W. Beck
Fearless, Wm. McCleery

Note: In further research on the club members, many had served in the Civil War and were most likely first exposed to the game of Base Ball then. The core members of the first club appeared to be judges, lawyers and businessmen from the town.

The fine tradition of Base Ball in Brookville had begun and has not waned throughout the years. To this day, the commitment to excellence in baseball continues to be high, as evidenced in the strong youth, high school and local recreational programs.

Fearless.

| | R. | Q |
|----------------------|----|----|
| Wiley, C. and P. | 5 | 1 |
| Haymond, C.F. | 2 | 3 |
| Smith, L.F. | 2 | 3 |
| Palmer, S.S. | 2 | 5 |
| Quick, C. | 3 | 2 |
| King, 2d B. | 2 | 3 |
| Vanland'gham, 1st B. | 2 | 4 |
| Shepperd, 3d B. | 3 | 3 |
| Shafer, R.F. | 1 | 3 |
| Totals | 22 | 27 |

Fearless.

Flys Caught, 7
Fouls Caught, 10

The First Reported Baseball Games between New York City-area Clubs (1845)

Source: New York *Morning News*,
October 22 & 25, 1845

The earliest known published citations of baseball games played in the New York area appeared in 1845. On September 11, the New York *Morning News* reported that "the Iowa Indians had a game of ball play at Hoboken, yesterday," and on October 21, the New York *Herald* noted that "the New York Base Ball Club will play a match of base ball against the Brooklyn Club, to-morrow afternoon, at 2 o'clock, at the Elysian Fields, Hoboken." The following two accounts describe this match and a return match played in Brooklyn. It is clear that "the time-honored game of Base" was already popular, since the *Morning News* remarked that "two more Base Clubs are already formed."

Several features of these games distinguish them from modern baseball. First, the games ended when a club scored twenty-one or more "aces," or runs, after both clubs had completed the same number of innings. Second, each club fielded only eight players as team size had not yet been standardized. Third, following each game the victorious club honored its opponents at a banquet, a common ritual in the antebellum era.

[October 22, 1845] Base Ball Match

A friendly match of the time-honored game of Base was played yesterday at the Elysian Fields, Hoboken, between

to twenty-four aces. The Brooklyn players then took their fourth, against hopeless odds, but with undiminished spirits. They were, however, forced to yield with a score of four only, and the New Yorkers were declared winners with a spare three and a flush of twenty. The fielding of the Brooklyn players was, for the most part, beautiful, but they were evidently not so well practiced in the game as their opponents.

The following abstract shows the aggregate of the four innings:

NEW YORK BALLCLUB

| Runs | | Hands out | Runs | | Hands out |
|---------|---|-----------|-------|----|-----------|
| Davis | 5 | | Case | 2 | 2 |
| Tucker | 2 | 3 | Vail | 3 | 1 |
| Miller | 4 | 1 | Kline | 2 | 3 |
| Winslow | 4 | 2 | | 24 | 12 |
| Murphy | 2 | | | | |

BROOKLYN PLAYERS

| Runs | | Hands out | Runs | | Hands out |
|---------|---|-----------|--------|---|-----------|
| Hunt | | 2 | Sharp | | 1 |
| Gilmore | 1 | 2 | Whaley | 1 | 1 |
| Hardy | 1 | 2 | Ayres | | 1 |
| Forman | 1 | 2 | | 4 | 12 |
| Hine | | 1 | | | |

At the conclusion of the match, both parties sat down to a dinner prepared by McCarty in his best style; and the good feeling and hilarity that prevailed, showed that the Brooklyn players, though defeated, were not disheartened. A return match will be played on Friday next, commencing at 1 o'clock P.M., on the grounds of the Brooklyn Star Club, Myrtle avenue. Those who would witness genuine sport, should improve the opportunity.

[October 25, 1845]

BASE BALL—The return match between the New York Base Ball Club and the Brooklyn players, came off yesterday afternoon on the ground of the Brooklyn Star Club, Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn. The Brooklyn boys, though

Source of Shoes For Period Feet

Finding suitable footwear to wear with period outfits has always been a problem for re-creators. Base ballists generally favor some type of cleated shoe that usually must be blackened with paint or permanent marker to cover the white or colored decorations. Most clubs have felt that it was necessary to have sure footing in trade for a period look for safety reasons.

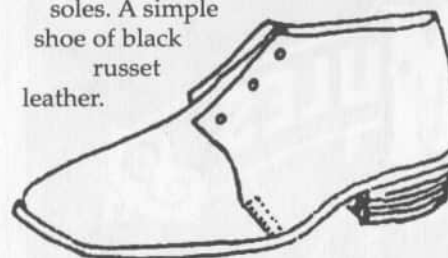
But those gentlemen who umpire, tally, or interpret want a real period looking shoe. Here is one source:

Missouri Boot & Shoe Company
951 Burr Crossing Road
Neosho, MO 64850
417-451-6100

A sample of their wares is here presented.

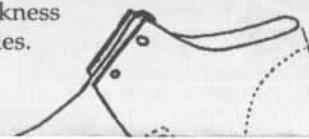
CV60

1860's civilian low cut brogan with three lace holes. Single layer pegged soles. A simple shoe of black russet leather.



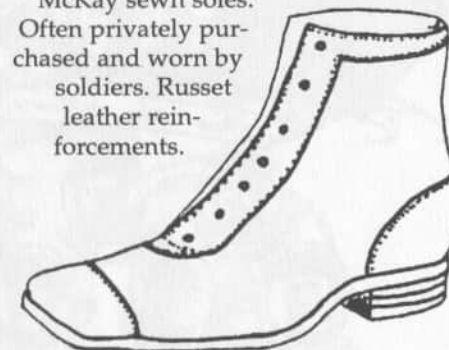
LQB

Low quarter brogan, two lace holes, crescent heel counter, riveted at stress point. Uppers of black waxed flesh leather. Two piece seamed rear. Single thickness pegged soles.



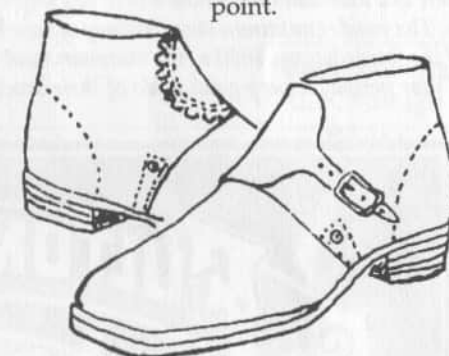
SS1

White canvas sports shoe of 1860's. McKay sewn soles. Often privately purchased and worn by soldiers. Russet leather reinforcements.



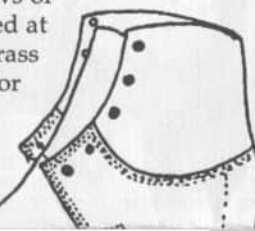
BBR

One buckle brogan with pegged half-double soles. Waxed flesh leather uppers, black. Crescent shaped heel counter, riveted at stress point.



DON

The Donelson boot is made from black waxed flesh leather. External heel counters. Half-double soles attached with two rows of pegs. Riveted at stress points. Brass eyelets! Great for miners and workman 1860-1870.



eight members of the New York Ball Club and the same number of players from Brooklyn. A cold wind from the North made the day somewhat unpleasant for the spectators, yet a large number, among whom we noticed several ladies, assembled to witness the sport. Play was called at 3 o'clock, P.M. Umpires—Messrs. Johnson, Wheaton and Chase. The toss was won by the Brooklyn players, who decided in favor of giving their antagonists the first innings, and accordingly Hunt took up the bat, and the game commenced. The match was for the first twenty-one aces—three out, all out. Hunt made a single ace, but before another was added to the score, three of the New Yorkers went out in rapid succession, and the bats were yielded to Brooklyn. Many of the Brooklyn players were eminent cricketers, but the severe tactics of the N. Y. Club proved too effective, and they soon resigned their innings to their opponents, not scoring one.

New York now took her second chance, and the score began slowly to tell. During this innings, four aces were made off a single hit, but by the arbitrary nature of the game, a single mistake sometimes proving fatally irretrievable, they were soon driven to the field again. The second innings of the Brooklyn players proved alike disastrous, and the close of the third still left them, all their tickets blank. On the fourth innings the New York Club made up their score

sufficient practice yet, to cope with their more skillful antagonists in this game, and as a consequence, have again been defeated. Give them, however, a little more drill, and their sure and agile fielding, even now, will eventually tell in their favor. Two more Base Clubs are already formed in our sister city, and the coming season may witness some extra sport. The liberal and gentlemanly bearing of the losing party is highly commendable, and on this, if on no other account, they certainly deserve ultimate success.

After the match was concluded, a bounteous supper was provided at Sharp's, during the consideration of which, the utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed.

The following is a correct record of the score.—Umpires, Messrs. Johnson, Wheaton and Van Nostrand.

| NEW YORK BALL CLUB | | | BROOKLYN | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------|----------|--------------|------------|
| | Hands out | Runs | | Hands out | Runs |
| Davis | 2 | 4 | Hunt | 1 | 3 |
| Murphy | 0 | 6 | Haines | 2 | 2 |
| Vail | 2 | 4 | Gilmore | 3 | 2 |
| Kline | 1 | 4 | Hardy | 1 | 2 |
| Miller | 2 | 5 | Sharp | 2 | 2 |
| Case | 2 | 4 | Meyers | 0 | 3 |
| Tucker | 2 | 4 | Whaley | 2 | 2 |
| Winslow | <u>1</u> | <u>6</u> | Forman | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> * |
| | 12 | 37 | | 12 | 19 |

*Error in original; should be 3

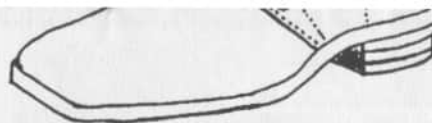
Score 89 Aces

from page 6

War food and exhibit fear (and the prudent behavior that causes) facing what they know are blanks. And because we are not them, we can never truly play the game the way they did. The best we can hope for is to present a reasonable interpretation based on the best evidence available, but also, and this is very important, tempered by common sense in both historic and modern terms. The written word from history, such as a

rule book or drill manual, and especially what comes from a newspaper, can never be taken at face value — it is only a piece of the puzzle. Any historian worth their salt will tell you this. It is our responsibility then, to make prudent compromises that meet the needs of the public and that best display the essence of the game we choose to re-create. I will simply argue that the rule book should never be the final arbiter of how we interpret the game.

Are you trying as best you can to depict the game the way it was actually?



Thee Way to Celebrate Thanksgiving

By David Patch and Vanessa Winans
Toledo Blade Staff Writer

Football games and turkey dinners make up a traditional Thanksgiving, but don't tell that to the Great Black Swamp Frogs Base Ball Club — they'll show you otherwise.

Friday November 28th, the club revived a bit of old-time baseball history at Sylvania's Veterans Memorial Field.

A dozen players from the seven-year-old club paid tribute to the New York Knickerbockers, an 1840's era gentleman's ballclub, with a three inning intrasquad tilt blessed by fair skies and

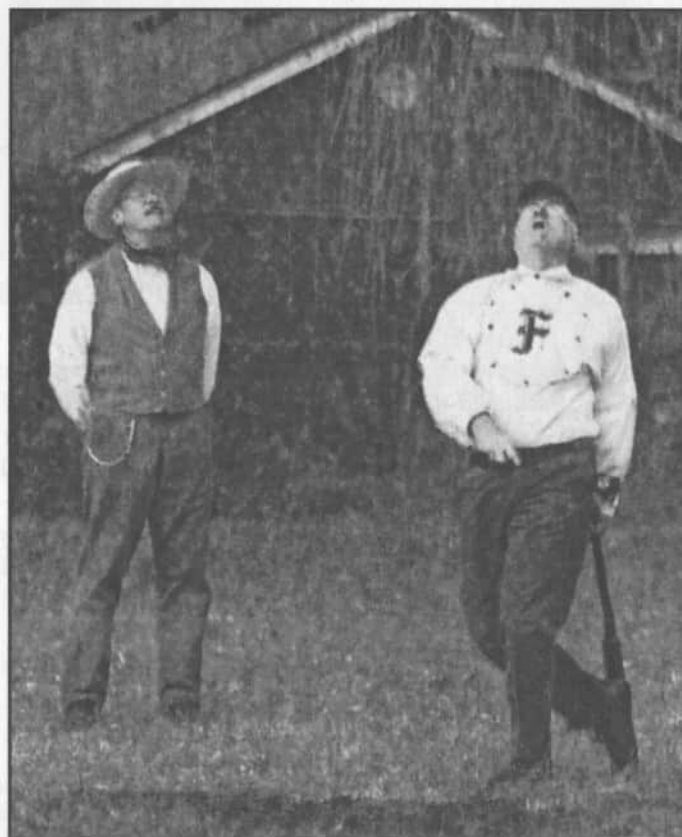
un-Novemberish mild temperatures.

"I love the game, and we're trying to make it as historically accurate as possible," said Kevin Kimmet after smacking a two-run homer with an old-style oaken bat. The pitchers tossed underhand and fielders caught fly balls barehand — or, as allowed by the rules of the day, on one bounce.

The original New York club used to finish its season with an intrasquad game on Thanksgiving.

The Great Black Swamp Frogs players were like countless others yesterday throughout northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan who spent at least part of their day in activities that had nothing to do with eating turkey or sitting around the TV. Forget about the Macy's parade — these folks took to the great outdoors.

"We couldn't have had a better day," said Frogs' club president John Husman.

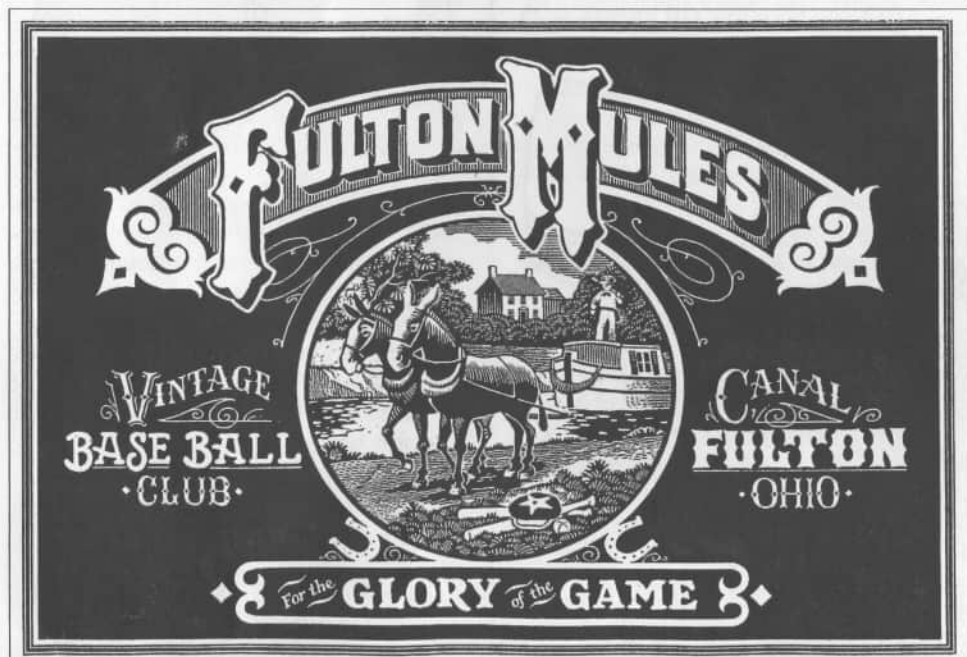


Umpire "Honest" Jim Apel watches a high fly ball with batter Mike "Silver" Smith during a Thanksgiving Day scrimmage game among the Great Black Swamp Frogs.

Toledo Blade Photograph
by Lori King



Here is a nice example of how a club has improved its brochure given to those attending matches. The inside contains a short history of base ball and a tally sheet to follow the game. The back of the folder has an 1860's rule summary and a list of words and phrases used during the Civil War period. A very good re-do of their brochure.



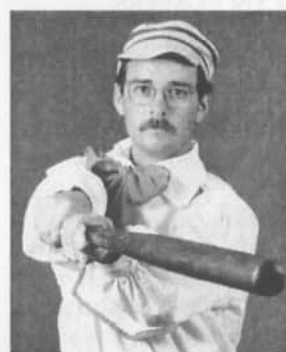
The Lament of The Carriage Drover

by Charles "Lefty" Trudeau

One day last year I spent 2 1/2 hours driving to a game with the Lake County Pirates, and 2 1/2 hours driving home, which normally wouldn't bother me except that I didn't even play very well. The good part, or is it the bad part, is that nobody could really complain about me since they weren't doing any better.

Oh well, onward to next weekend and our contest with the Frogs at Ned Skeldon Stadium. I'll still be on the road for 5 hours again but this time I'll play like Creighton, at least until I wake up.

P.S. The match with the Frogs before the adoring throng at the home of the



Charles Trudeau

Mud Hens was rained out after we played a delightful top hat match involving Frogs, Muffins, and others for six innings. A large thundermaker appeared overhead and the grounds crew shooed us away to lay out a tarp. A huge wind appeared and sailed the tarp over the Mud Hen dugout and many of our team members and cranks. The tarp ended up half way into the box seats. Muffins and Frogs assisted the crew in retrieving the errant cover and placed it back in its proper place. Proving once again that vintage players have a place on well groomed, green fields: as paper weights.

The reward for our efforts was eating fruit in the seats under the press box while the rain washed out the match.

In Memory Robert T. Burgas

by John Husman

The Frogs are grieved to have lost friend and club member Robert T. Burgas, 1951-1997. Bob died October 12 after a long, valiant, and painful duel with cancer. Bob joined us after his disease was thought to be in remission as our short stop. When he became unable to play he was our scorer and finally, when not able to join us on the field any longer, compiled a complete statistical history of the Frogs and their players.

The Frogs will miss him, but not forget him.

If I Never Get Back

by Pat Massengill

I recently exchanged a number of e-mails with Darryl Brock, author of the 1990 novel *If I Never Get Back*, and I thought the membership might be interested in the latest scoop on a possible movie. I know the topic comes up occasionally around here, and I bet elsewhere, so I thought I'd get it from the horse's mouth.

First, the book has been "optioned" for movies/TV since soon after publication. While nothing concrete has happened for years, the yearly option kept being renewed. It does appear, however, that there is some recent activity. Evidently a screenplay has been ordered written (not by Brock) by a top Hollywood producer. Brock has also heard that Keanu Reeves is interested in the Sam Fowler character.

By the way, Mr. Brock is well aware of vintage base ball and has attended at least one match.

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