



# Early Innings Illustrated

Vol. 2 No. 4

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

July, 1998



## VBBA Plays Two at SABR And Another at 3Com Park

On Thursday June 25, representatives of many VBBA clubs played two matches at the SABR convention in San Francisco. The first match was between the Great Black Swamp Frogs (fortified by Ohio Village Muffins and Columbus Capitals) and a Picked Nine of players from VBBA clubs and SABR. The tally sheet listed the following striking order for the game in Washington Park:

### Frogs (scored 25 aces)

Ben Stough  
Boyd Montgomery  
Craig Stough  
Brad James  
John Husman, Captain  
Don Andersen (Muffins)  
Charlie Trudeau (Capitals)  
Mike Smith  
Jim Tootle, (Capitals)

### Picked Nine #1 (made 10 aces)

D. Stone/Tom Schieber  
David Nemec  
Jim Freeman  
Tony Austin  
Mark Rucker, Captain  
(SABR Rattlers)  
Greg Rhodes, Captain  
(Shamrocks)/Atkins/D. Paulson  
Darryl Brock/Bob Schaefer  
Kevin Lehr (Capitals)/Schaefer  
Atkinson/Stone/Dave Paulson

The second match was between a Picked Nine featuring six Quicksteps from Minneapolis against a group of convention attendees (the Antagonists). The striking orders and aces scored were

### Picked Nine (14 aces in)

Rich Arpi, (Quicksteps)  
Mark Rucker (SABR Rattlers)  
Jim Wyman, (Quicksteps)  
Dan Levitt, (Quicksteps)  
Bob Tholkes, Captain,  
(Quicksteps)  
Don Andersen (Muffins)  
Max Fish

### Antagonists (8 aces scored)

Kenny Funk  
Kanya Honoki  
Gregory Funk  
Jonathan Scherer  
Muggs Scherer  
Matthew Pruden  
Ed Oswald  
Karl

## Vintage B.B. Kits

### Available from the Secretary

Mr. Brett Andrews, secretary of the VBBA, is now accepting applications for information regarding forming vintage clubs, sources of historic information, and related affairs. Messrs. John Wells and Doug Smith had been providing this service.

Original copies of relevant information have been forward to Brett who has obtained copies for distribution. If you need information or wish to direct inquiries from new clubs or media outlets, address requests to

Mr. Brett Andrews  
5500 Corkhill Drive  
Dayton, OH 45424

(937) 237-1131  
brettandrews@  
worldnet.att.net

Requests received at the VBBA post office box, received by Doug Smith at the Ohio Historical Society or received by John Wells at this newsletter, will be forwarded to Brett for his attention.

We thank Mr. Andrews for taking over this task.

## VBBA Clubs

The following are the paid up members of the Vintage Base Association as of June 13, 1998:

1922 Giants Baseball Club  
19th Century League  
Akron Black Stockings  
Berrien Co. Cranberry  
Boggers  
Broomfield Swans  
Clodbusters Base Ball Club  
Columbus Capitals  
Colorado Vintage Base Ball  
Association  
Deep River Grinders  
Hardin County History  
Museums  
Fulton Mules Vintage  
Base Ball  
Great Black Swamp Frogs  
Hoover Sweepers  
Kent Base Ball Club  
Lah-De-Dah Base Ball Club  
Lake County Pirates  
Lorain County Buckeyes  
Ludington Mariners  
Middletown Mansfields  
Muffin & Diamonds  
New Jersey Barristers  
& Newark Eureka  
Old Time Base Ball Program  
Preble Aces

## Symposium On Oklahoma Baseball

### At Redlands College

by William W. Gorden, Jr.

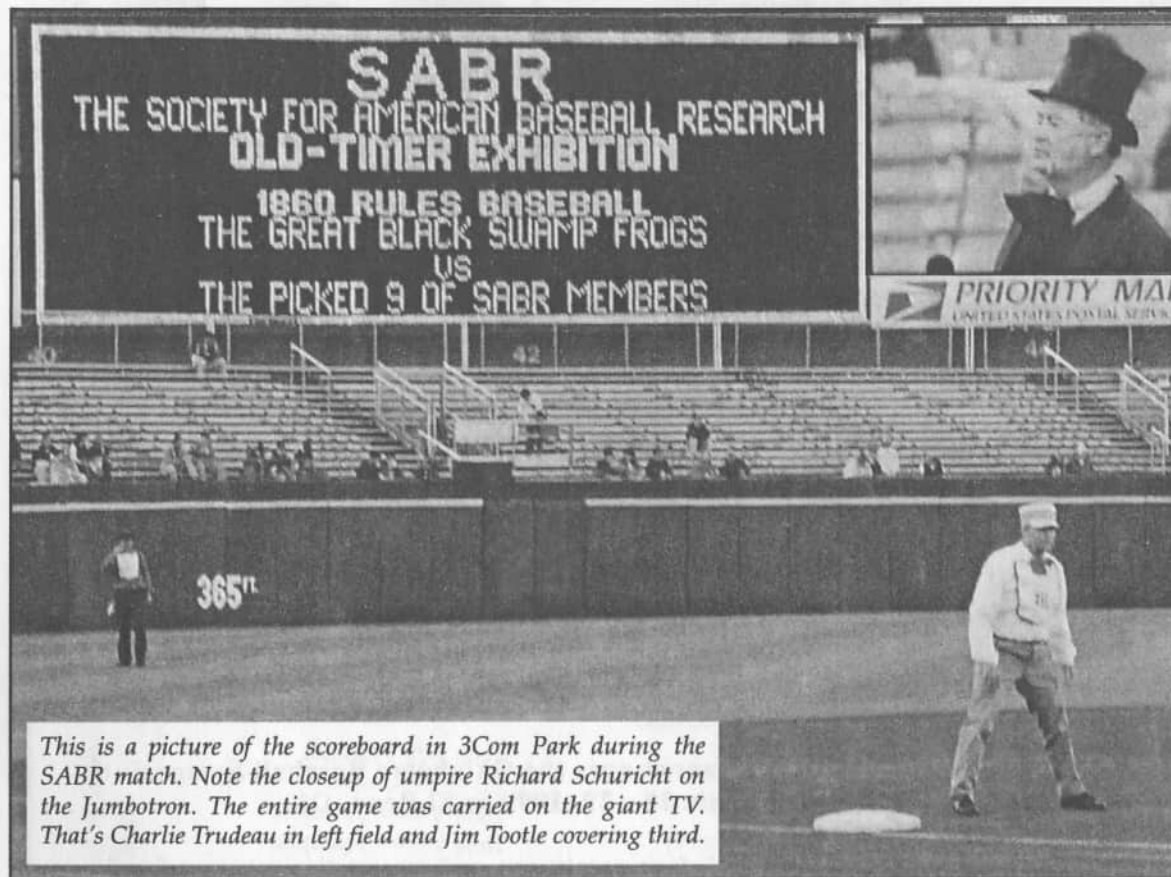
On page 2 is a Call for Papers to a Symposium on Oklahoma Baseball, January 28-29, 1999. In association with the presentation of those papers, we intend to present as many current or former players, managers, reporters, or just plain "baseball people" as we can on related panels. The idea for the project was first suggested by Verne Rhule, now the pitching coach at Houston. I discussed it with Tom Sturdivant (formerly of the Yankees and Athletics), and he thought it was an idea worth pursuing. We are using a format that Hofstra University used on the hundredth anniversary of Babe Ruth. We intend to include a book sale, a dinner, an art show, side trips to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, and a few surprises. Our timing

Scott McClellan  
John Husman (Frogs)  
Howard Luloff, (Quicksteps)

Chip Atkison, (SABR Rattlers)  
Bill Stone  
Greg Rhodes, Captain (Shamrocks)

"SABR" continues on page 12

At the bottom of the page is a photograph by Barbie Tootle of the participants in the SABR match in San Francisco on June 25.



*This is a picture of the scoreboard in 3Com Park during the SABR match. Note the closeup of umpire Richard Schuricht on the Jumbotron. The entire game was carried on the giant TV. That's Charlie Trudeau in left field and Jim Tootle covering third.*

Rock Springs Ground  
Squirrels  
Roosters  
Salt City Base Ball Club  
Sharon Woods Shamrocks  
Summit Merinos  
Sycamore Grasshoppers  
Westville Craftsmen &  
Biscuits  
Woodstock Actives

### Subscription Notice

Please look at the mailing label on page 12. If it contains the notice

#### LAST ISSUE Please renew subscription

use the subscription form below your address to renew. Individual subscriptions are \$10.00. Members of VBBA teams may resubscribe for \$5.00.

Team dues are \$50.00 for full membership and \$35.00 for Associate membership.

to to and those currently employed in baseball to attend.

Right now, what we need are paper proposals on the subject. If you or someone you know can contribute a paper, please do so by the deadline in the Call. There are plenty of subjects, and we encourage creativity.

Please call me or fax or E-mail, all numbers appearing in the Call. Part of the excitement in a project like this is meeting new baseball people and sharing stories, making connections. Good luck and pass this along to as many as you think can contribute.

The official Call for Papers appears on page 2. Please refer to it for more details.



## Send in Your Archival Materials

by Mark Heppner

This is a request for VBBA Members to submit to me any archival materials pertaining to their clubs, in particular, box scores for the season. I have received only a little so far.

Please send to  
Mark "Capt'n" Heppner  
Akron Black Stockings Base  
Ball Club  
714 North Portage Path  
Akron, OH 44303-1399

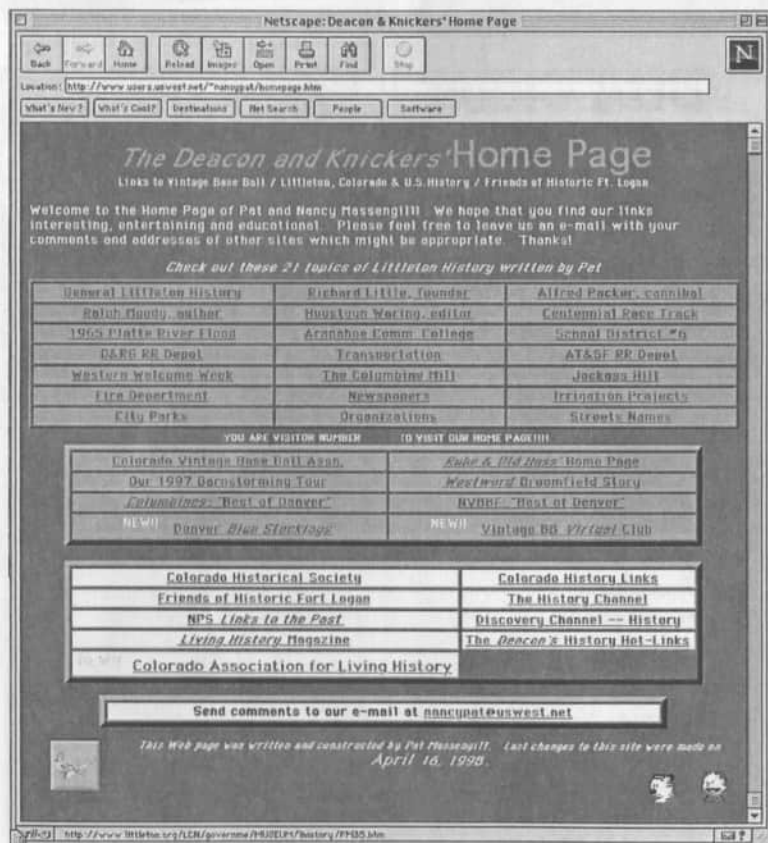
330-836-3424 (home phone)  
mheppner@akron.infi.net  
(for e-mail)



## Pat Massengill Opens New Web Sites

The ole Deacon has opened a number of new web locations which should be of interest to vintage ballists. Start at his home page and explore around. It is worth the time. Start at

<http://www.users.uswest.net/~nancypat/homepage.htm>  
and plan an evening's worth of adventure.



## New Web Site For Baseball Open

by Ron McCulloch

Mr. Baseball is an exciting new web site that celebrates the his-

## Treasurer's Report Vintage Base Ball Association

April 1998

Balance Forward 55.00

### Receipts

4/6/98	Bruce M. Johnstone	1998 Full Member	\$ 50.00
4/6/98	John A. Kachmarik		10.00
4/6/98	Olmstead Co. Hist. Soc.	1998 Assoc. Member	35.00
4/6/98	Middlesex Co. Hist. Soc.	1998 Assoc. Member	35.00
4/6/98	Nat. Vintage BB Festival	1998 Assoc. Member	35.00
4/6/98	Preble Co. Hist. Soc.	1998 Assoc. Member	35.00
4/6/98	Debra J. Brown	Ell Subscription	5.00
4/15/98	Lorain Co. Buckeyes	1998 Full Member	50.00
4/20/98	Star Bank Transfer Balance		2,768.88
4/27/98	Timothy McCracken		10.00
4/27/98	Pinellas Co.		10.00
4/27/98	Robert M. Moran	Ell Subscription	5.00
4/27/98	The Hoover Company	Ell Subscription	5.00
4/27/98	Robert Radcliffe	1998 Assoc. Member	35.00
			\$ 3,088.88

### Disbursements

4/15/98	John R. Husman	Reimburse & postage	\$ 160.81
4/20/98	Sycamore Grasshoppers	Convention Expense	450.00
			\$ -610.81
			\$ 2,533.07

Ending Balance

Submitted by

John Husman, Treasurer

*John R. Husman*



story of the great game of baseball. Mr. Baseball is dedicated to Alexander Cartwright, Jr. who in the City of New York in 1845, along with members of his Knickerbocker Base Ball Club, virtually invented the modern game of baseball.

The location on the web is

<http://www.mrbaseball.com>

My partner in this venture is Alexander Cartwright IV who is the great, great grandson of Cartwright, Jr.

Mr. Baseball will take you on a tour through the entire 150 year history of this great game of ours. We'll explore such things as:

- How the game really originated (we'll debunk the myth that the game was "invented" by Abner Doubleday)

"Mr. Baseball" continues on page 12



## Makes Progress in Design

At the VBBA meeting in February this year a concept for the design of the VBBA logo was set forth. Since that time the brothers Shuman; Ed, Andy, and Thomas, have progressed along towards the final art work. Presented below is an approach towards the final design.

Remarks and suggestions are solicited by e-mail to

[drushu@aol.com](mailto:drushu@aol.com)

or by mail to:

Ed Shuman

103 Tuscarawas St.

Canal Fulton, OH 44614



## Symposium on Oklahoma Baseball at Redlands College

from page 1

### Oklahoma Baseball Symposium

January 28 - 29, 1999

CALL FOR PAPERS

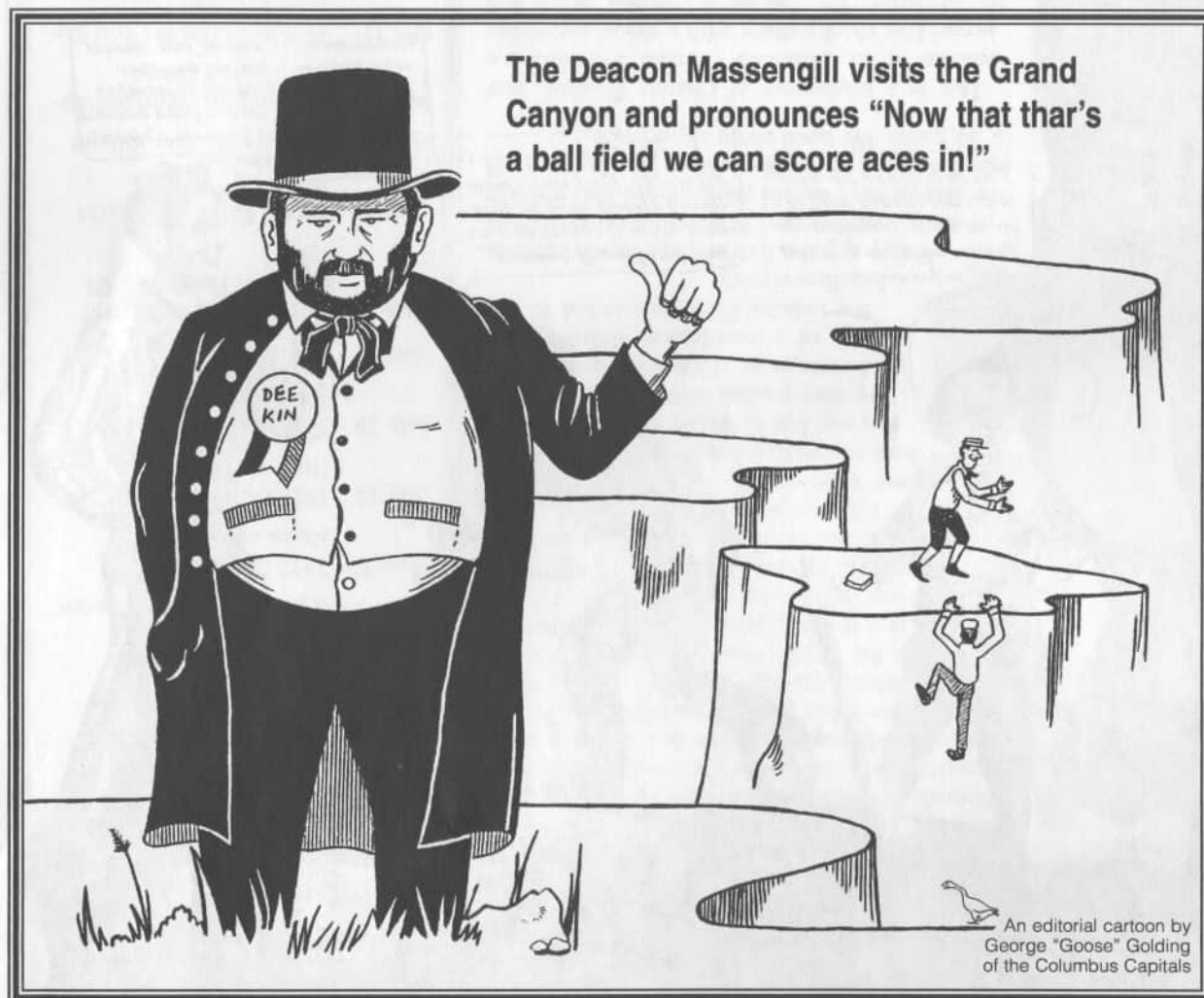
**Redlands Community College announces the Oklahoma Baseball Symposium scheduled for Jan. 28 - 29, 1999 in El Reno, OK**

Presenters will be grouped into panels for presentations, each presentation not exceeding 30 minutes. Papers should focus on any of the various aspects of baseball as it relates to Oklahoma's rich baseball tradition, including, but not limited to: Oklahomans in the major leagues; Oklahomans in the Negro leagues; Oklahoma minor or Negro league teams; players who spent a significant period of time in Oklahoma minor leagues; players with significant contributions at Oklahoma colleges & universities; teams, leagues and characters in Oklahoma baseball; and players retired in Oklahoma. From *The Wild Hoss of the Osage*, to the Waners, to Mantle, Mercer, Bench and Joe Carter, the tradition is deep and the area of inquiry wide.

**Proposal deadline is June 26, 1998.** All information must be typewritten and must not exceed two pages in length.

**To submit proposals or for additional information, contact:** William Gorden, RCC, 1300 S. Country Club Road, El Reno, OK 73036-5304; (405) 262-2552, ext. 2304; fax: (405) 422-1200; e-mail: [gordenb@redlands.cc.ok.us](mailto:gordenb@redlands.cc.ok.us).

**IMPORTANT:** All presenters must register for the symposium and pay the appropriate registration fee and will be responsible for all costs associated with attending this meeting.



This is the first in a new series of editorial cartoons that will be appearing in Early Innings Illustrated. They are drawn by George Golding, the "Goose" of the Ohio Village

Muffins and Columbus Capitals. They are intended to poke some fun at ourselves and see that we don't take it all too seriously.

## The Base-Ball Of Today.

From Harper's Weekly; September 10, 1887

This is an age of detail. If certain things have not laws sufficient for our taste, we give them a few more by way of providing them with a respectably scientific appearance. This tendency has touched our sports. Foot-ball is afflicted with the dropsy of science. It used to be a game; now it is a business. As for base-ball, it is the supreme victim of codification.

Certain persons, whom some call conservatists and others old fogies, remember the days of their youth with vain regret. They remember when a boy could master the rules of base-ball in ten minutes, and thenceforth know as much as the gravest umpire of them all. They have watched the process of the years, adding here a little and there a little, till the written code of the ball field has grown into a bulky legal text book, with articles, sections, rules, exceptions, notes, corollaries, and what not. They have seen the game develop from a simple, manly exercise to a complicated science, to which men, in order to attain proficiency, must devote a lifetime of study. They have seen it transformed from a sport into a profession, with large faculties of salaried professors engaged in illustrating the science, while the world sits in the amphitheater, delirious with applause, erudite in the theory of the game, but hopeless of attaining expertness in its practice.

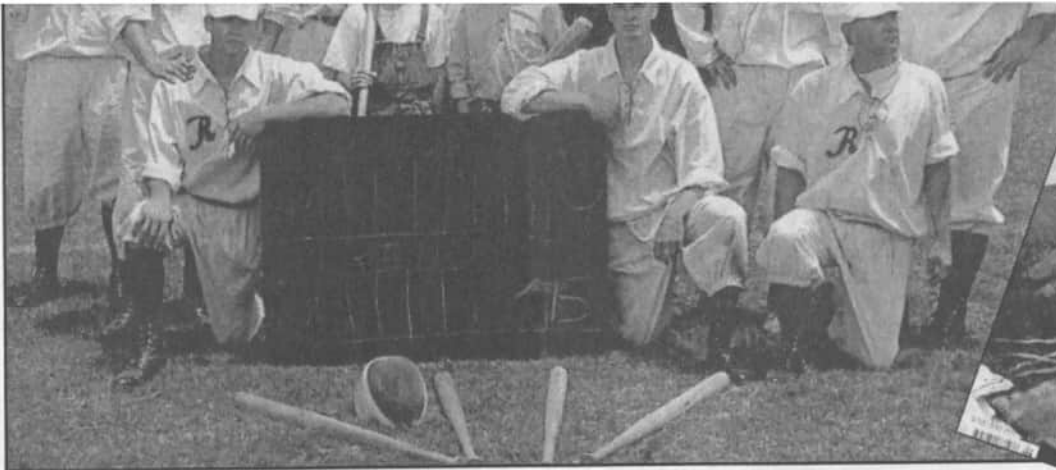
These same conservatists, who have studied the science of base-ball, and who still find much in it to stir their blood to youthful enthusiasm, believe that they have seen the game growing even beyond the limits of the professors, or rather within them. Centralization has set in, and the sport has narrowed down to a contest between the batter on the one hand and the pitcher and catcher, yelped the "battery," on the other. The battery is the assailing force; the striker is the garrison. Whether the battery shall be able to hammer down all his defenses and send him skulking before he can make one blow for life and liberty, or he shall repel the fierce assault with a base hit, and sally forth to capture a run, is now the whole problem to be solved in the war of the ball field.

The advent of underhand throwing, in company with the decade of the seventies is responsible for the wide changes in ball-playing. The pitcher pitched no more. Instead of delivering the ball with a straight swing of the arm from the shoulder, he introduced a certain crook of the elbow and twist of the wrist, which enabled him to drive the ball with



## Vintage Base Ball Comes to Oklahoma

from Oklahoma Today



## TAKE ME OUT TO THE (VINTAGE) BALL GAME

THE CROWD IS RESTLESS AS IT awaits the arrival of the home team. Seated on hay bales or sprawled on the ground, spectators make wagers on the outcome of the game, and all heads turn at the sound of men's singing signaling the arrival of the Fort Reno team in a horse-drawn wagon. Their challengers? The Dolly Varden team from Fort Dodge, Kansas. On the field the umpire, clad in tails and a top hat and puffing a cigar, explains the rules. He asks if the teams have decided who will bat first. Dolly Varden takes the field. The players wear no gloves, pads, or batting helmets (such amenities have yet to be invented).

The batter calls for a low ball, and the pecker winds up and sends an underhanded pitch that goes high. The umpire calls the first of nine balls required for a walk. As the game progresses, deputies enter the field and hand the umpire money, which he accepts; he then looks the other way as a runner steals third

*Baseball a la 1878 (that's Gorden on the back row, second from left; the umpire is in the top hat).*

By 1878 the rule was in some dispute, so Gorden's reenactment game begins with an animated argument about the one-bounce rule.

It was also a rule in 1878 that a ball hit into the crowd remained a live ball until a spectator threw it back. Such audience participation makes it is easy for fans to get caught up in the 1878 fantasy world.

Not that the illusion was easy to create. Hundreds of hours went into assembling the team and rounding up the resources to outfit it. Gorden found his experience with political campaigns came in handy. "Once you've tried to raise money and get people to vote for you, the rest of it's easy," he admitted. "It's essentially the same thing. I hate to raise money. That was the hardest part, day after day going around and trying to get people to give money. You tell the same story day after day—here's what we're doing, here's what we're going to do, and here's why we're doing it—and after twenty, thirty, forty, fifty days, it's a go."

Gorden stuck with the project for community involvement, to bring history home, and because it was fun. He made the bags for the bases himself out

of canvas from straw donated by the Redlands agriculture program. Canadian Valley Vo-Tech turned the custom-made bats. The teams themselves are comprised of people Gorden knew at the college and other friends involved in baseball. "I had a friend come from Bentonville, Arkansas, and one of the big environmental lawyers from Phillips Petroleum came down just to play the game. The interesting thing to me about this is that we got a good mix for both teams in all three of the games we've done. Young people, middle-aged people, and older people who participated in the reenactment all came back and told me that they enjoyed it and they wanted to do it again. It would be difficult, I think, to find anything that's done in America today in which young, old, and middle-aged people volunteer, for no money, to go and spend three or four hours of their time doing what really is hard work, and then at the end of it say that they'd like to do it again sometime for free."

—Kelly S. Rupp

*Gorden's vintage ball teams will play June 29 at Cottonwood Flats in Guthrie. For more information, call (405) 282-1889.*

greater speed. The catcher discovered that his hands, tough as he thought them, would not stand the hammering. He got a pair of gloves, and cut the fingers off. Then the pitcher threw faster, and the catcher had to have his gloves padded. Then came Mr. Cummings's discovery of the fact that the ball he threw swerved to the left of a direct line of flight, and Mr. Cummings's immediate discovery of the manner of producing this desirable effect. Mr. Cummings astonished professionals; and Mr. Joseph McElroy Mann, of the Princeton University nine, having learned the trick from him, did the same for the amateurs. Then ensued an era of striking out and spectators saw game after game in which the scores were 3 to 0, 2 to 1, and 1 to 0.

The pundits began to amend the laws. Hitherto the umpire had called balls and strikes pretty much as he pleased. Now they compelled him to call them according to rule. The pitcher acquired another curve, and threw more rapidly than ever. And so it went. The batter learned to hit the pitching. Then the pundits gave the pitcher more liberty. Now he can throw a ball in any manner, so long as he keeps his feet on the ground. What has been the result of this? In the course of the season just coming to an end a large proportion of the games have been won by such scores as 11 to 2, 10 to 3, 5 to 1. This seems to indicate that the game has finally come to be nothing but a struggle between the pitcher and the batter. Catchers now are compelled to wear heavy gloves, masks for their faces, and pads for their bodies to protect them from the terrific pounding of the modern pitching. The pitchers throw out and in curves, rising balls, down shoots, and half a dozen bewildering combinations of these. The pitching has grown constantly in advance of the batting, and now the man at the home plate must have four strikes, destroying the old arithmetical beauty of the game, with its three balls, three strikes, three

*"The Base-Ball of Today"*  
continues on page 12



# First Base Ball Cartoon

## What We Can Learn

### From Period Art Work

by John Wells

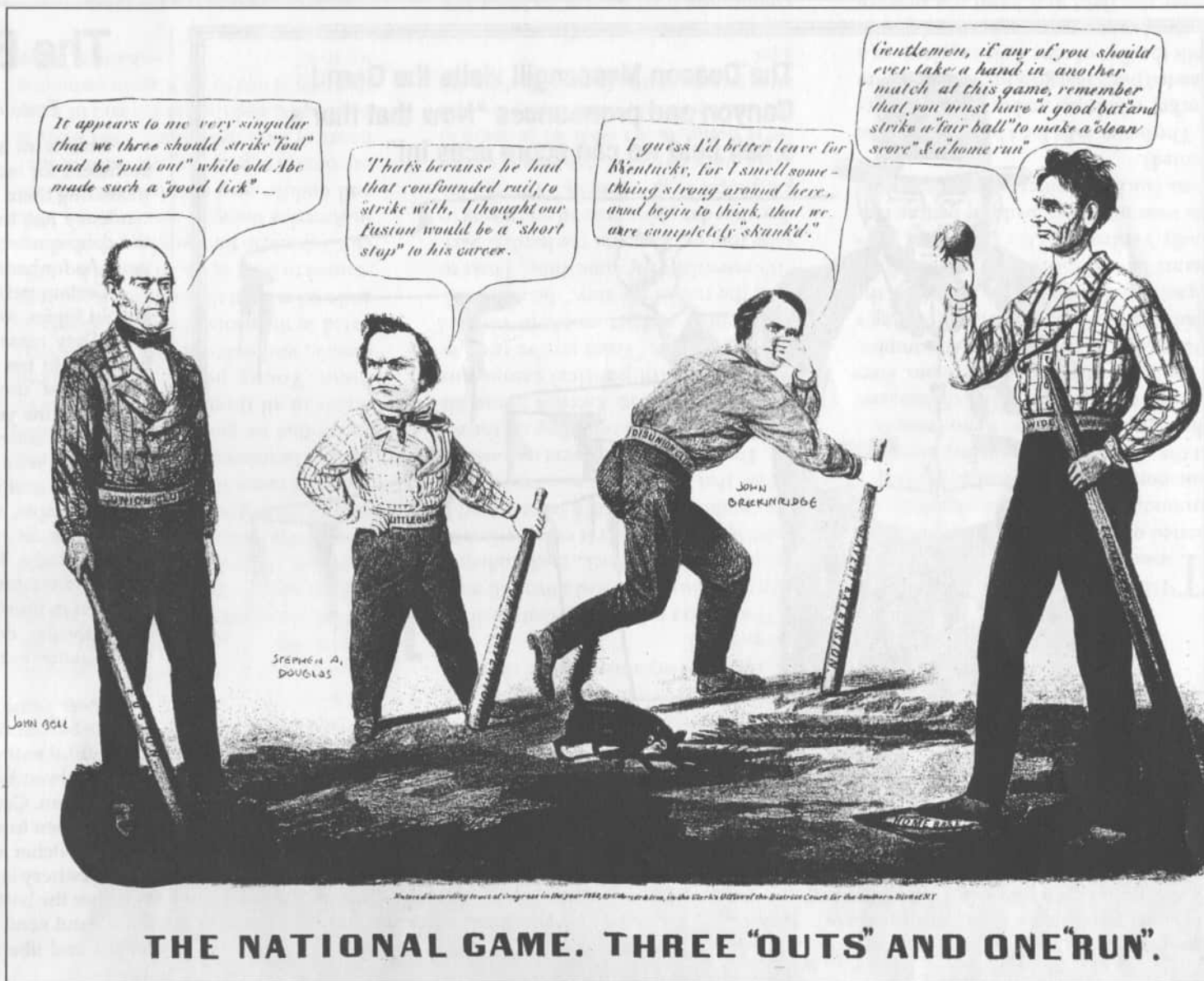
To the right appears a reproduction of a Currier & Ives cartoon with a copyright of 1860. It lampoons Lincoln's victory in elections over his three opponents using a baseball metaphor. This cartoon is thought to be the first use of baseball terms to describe a political event.

From a political standpoint it is amusing in and of itself. The three opponents have little nice to say about Abe Lincoln and his contest with them.

## What's in It for Base Ball Re-Creation

But looking further at the drawing reveals some interesting items:

- Note that the belts contain lettering, much like the leather belts many teams wear with their team's name emblazoned on them.
- All the pants are straight legged, no knickers here.
- Bats are only slightly tapered with large knobs at the end.
- Jackets are boldly printed, not plain in pattern.
- No hats are worn by anyone
- Mr. J. Breckinridge appears to have some sort of cleats or very rough soles on his shoes.
- Abe is standing on "home plate", not home base.
- Mr. S. A. Douglas is wearing a tie much like the one many vintage teams make from a length of cloth.
- But Mr. Lincoln is without a tie and has his shirt opened at the neck.
- The shirt being worn by Mr. I. Breckinridge is



## A Fly Game As an Experiment In Mid-Nineteenth Century Rules by John Wells

On Saturday May 9 a club from Columbus, Ohio played its first match in 130 years. Originally formed in 1866 along with a flurry of other clubs just after the Civil War, the original Columbus Capitals were made up of the community's young upper middle class, many destined to change their city during political and business careers.

The new Columbus Capitals was formed from many Ohio Village Muffins that yearned for a "real" history, a different uniform, the ability to play in more than just one time period, and a strict adherence to the word of history.

Organization proceeded over the winter months and it was deemed appropriate that the first match should be with the founding fathers, the Muffins.

the run cut typical of the ones most vintage players wear.

- No shields are worn by any of the "players".

Now let's look at the language being used and see what we could draw out for use during our matches.

- From Mr. J. Bell's talk
 

Δ strike foul	Not do well
Δ be put out	Fail at a task
Δ good lick	Do a good job
- From Mr. S. A. Douglas' spiel
 

Δ to strike with	Take action
Δ be a fusion	To join together
Δ be a short stop	Bring an end to
- From the J. Breckinridge comments:
 

Δ completely skunked	Beaten badly
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- From President Lincoln's retort:
 

Δ take a hand in	Participate in
Δ to make a home run	*
- From the subtitle:
 

Δ winning the ball	Winning match
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\* Note the use of "home run" in an item of 1860. It is worth noting the use of the term at this early date instead of "four bagger".

## Language We Can Use

Now that you get the idea of what can be drawn from an old political cartoon, let's change and add some words and get phrases to use during a match.

The umpire is a foul strike at his job.  
 The right fielder is a put out at his job.  
 That was a good lick they put on us.  
 We need to strike up an acquaintance with that young lady.  
 Our team shall be a fusion against our adversaries.  
 We must short stop this hitting directly.  
 I believe we shall be skunked without a good lick this next round at bat.  
 I believe I shall try for a fair ball with Miss Nightwine.  
 Sir, that will be called a foul ball since the lady is now Mrs. Hatcher.

I will leave the interpretation of the opossum to your imagination. If it were a skunk, watch out for the raised tail.

So on a day whose weather osculated from clear skies to snows and back again several times, the Capitals and Muffins, both in sparkling new uniforms, met to test their mettle.

It was decided early that this should be a fly game to test such rules within the friendly atmosphere of longtime friends on the green grass of Muffin Meadow. Careful checks against rules and interpretations by Richard Schuricht and Greg Rhodes and additional research on local customs by Charles Trudeau and myself proceeded.

First on the agenda was to define just what "the fly game" meant in Columbus, Ohio during 1866, the first year of base ball in that capital city of Ohio. After reading rules and newspaper accounts of the day, it was decided that "fly game" probably meant that balls in fair territory had to be caught in the air to be an out. Balls caught on the fly or bound in foul territory would be outs. Thus the behind could continue to embarrass strikers with his skills behind them and fielders could haul in long fouls on the fly or bound for men dead.

Rules of the period support this interpretation. There was a period of about two years when fouls had to be caught on the fly for an out. But that was changed back to the bound again in 1867. Our best guess is that the change back reflected clubs not following the strict fly rule during matches.

So what happened at the match?

Not much really changed. The Capitals practiced catching flies and not rushing bounds that could get away and allow extra bases to be gained. The Muffins chose not to institute any special practice for the fly match. The results were about the same. A couple of runs could be accounted to balls not being out on a bound but mostly things were like a regular "new" rules match. The score was 15-4 in favor of the Muffins, a tally not much different than what we have seen with the "new" rules.

Strategy was not much different than with the bound. It is still better to strike the ball on the ground and take away fly catches. But most strikers remain infected with the "Babe Ruth syndrome" and put emphasis on long hit fly balls which mostly yield fly caught outs. Under the "old" rules, fielders would lay back and go for the bound catch. Now they step up and make the fly catch. On the tallysheet, nothing looks much different except you put down an "F" instead of a "D" when you rack-up the out.

There were errors in strategy made by both teams that could have meant more scoring due to the fly rules. But largely they passed without being taken advantage of. Certainly errors and lack of a convincing ability to hit the ball by the Capitals led to the Muffins victory.

But to say the fly rule had much effect is to dally in unsupported speculation. So, based on this game, I would recommend that vintage teams looking to try the new rules, also make it a fly game. We need more experience.

*This is a photograph of Charles Trudeau, first baseman of the Columbus Capitals. The shirt is a period blue check pattern with a shield containing the red letter "C". The bib is outlined in red and blue. The hat is a "newsboys" hat, typical of that time. The pants are solid blue cotton with button fly.*



## CAPITAL AGENDA

- May 17 Frogs at Sylvania
- May 17 Muffins - Sesquicentennial Celebration at Waynesfield
- A bus trip with the Muffins •
- June 6 Grinders at Deep River Park
- June 7 Salmon at Mount Prospect, IL
- June 14 Hannah Neil Match  
Ladies and gentlemen to play together
- June 20 1922 Giants by 1922 Rules at Marysville
- July 12 1922 Giants by 1860 Rules in Columbus
- July 25 Shamrocks @ Sharon Woods
- Aug 2 Orville, Ohio.
- Aug 8 St. Stephen the Martyr Summer Festival, 5:00 P.M.
- Aug 23 Forest Citys @ Chagrin Falls
- Aug 30 Muffins @ Ohio Village
- Sept 20 Westerville Freewill Baptist Church Picnic
- Oct 11 Fulton Mules @ Chili Festival in Canal Fulton



## Beal and Bat

### Baseball and Bloomers

#### The Vintage Girls of Summer

by Eileen Beal

It was high noon.

Umpire Robin Hewitt, in a prim straw bonnet and a two-piece, drop-shoulder paisley print dress with a demurely bustled skirt that would have done credit to Queen Victoria, stepped up to the home plate: "Striker to the line," she called out.

The crowd, and eclectic mix of costumed re-enactors and t-shirt-and-blue-jeaned visitors, sitting in the bleachers overlooking Muffin Meadow, shouted huzzahs and cheers as the day's most anticipated game — a match between the Ohio Historical Society's Diamond Ladies, the favored nine, and Carriage Hill Farm's Lady Clodbusters — began.

The Diamond Ladies' captain, Dianna Frias, her long brown hair caught back in a huge, black floppy bow and her body shrouded in baggy bloomers and a long blue tunic caught at the waist with a black sash, strode to the home plate. She had a look of determination upon her face and a hand-turned oak bat slung over her shoulder. Her teammates, some dressed as she was and others garbed in the full-skirted gowns

team's esprit d' corps and raison d'être when she said: "When we play, we aren't playing to win, we are playing to educate, to show people baseball history and how it used to be played."

"To do that," explained Dianna, who is a medical secretary in the 20th Century, "a big part of every game is interacting with the spectators, explaining how and why things are done, letting them try out equipment."

"They love the squishy, hand-sewn leather balls and hefting the hand-turned bats," she added.

### Yes, Women Played Base Ball (when it was spelled as two words)

The Diamond Ladies team — which boasts a couple of teenagers and a 68 year old-grandmother — started in 1994. It is a spin-off of the Ohio Village Muffins Base Ball Team, which was started by Ohio Historical Society staff and volunteers in 1981 and is the oldest vintage baseball team in the U. S.

The Diamonds (as team members call themselves) are a heavily researched team. They are modeled after historically documented teams that played at several of the forward-thinking women's colleges — Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, etc. — that were founded after the Civil War.

"From our research, especially from diary en-

tries, which include sketches of women in highnecked, long-sleeved dresses, we know that these upper and middle-



Eileen Beal at the Ohio Cup, bat in hand.

## An Account of the First Game of Intercollegiate Baseball Played on July 1, 1859 between Amherst and Williams, at Pittsfield

*Editor's Note: The following was submitted by Rob Burg. He found the article in a small book in the Library of Michigan in Lansing entitled When Baseball Was King in Frankfort, Michigan by Peter S. Sandman (1980).*

It is no secret that nineteenth-century college students, even the most devout, sometimes indulged in dreams when what they were supposed to be doing was paying attention to compulsory prayers. Whether intercollegiate baseball was the product of one of those dreams will probably always remain a mystery, but the chances are good that it was. For it is known that one morning in the spring of 1859 in Johnson Chapel at Amherst College, right after morning prayers, James F. Claflin of the senior class proposed at a college meeting that Amherst challenge Williams to "a game of ball".

Although neither at Amherst nor at Williams was there an organized team, Claflin's suggestion met with an enthusiastic response from his college mates. At both colleges during the fall of 1858 the juniors and sophomores had stimulated a lively interest in interclass ball, played according to rules which had long regulated New England village baseball. For generations, in early May, college students had experienced a sense of escape from such annoyances as winter, dormitories, classrooms, and college faculties. Now baseball promised to institutionalize that escape. The challenge was duly transmitted to

There it kindled appropriate enthusiasm. Organized athletics had been commanding increasingly serious attention at Williams. The third gymnasium to be built since 1851 was then nearing completion. Nor for long would the college authorities be permitted to describe the Williams athletic "program" as they did in the Catalogue for 1859: "The Horticultural and Landscape Gardening Association" affords healthy and tasteful exercise during the summer months." Of course Williams would play ball with Amherst!

By June 8 delegates from both student bodies were meeting at Chester Factories, a small village on the Agawam River in Hampden County. The Williams representatives carried with them a singular counter-challenge which, after the event, permitted an inspired contemporary headline writer to exclaim:

**Williams and Amherst  
Base Ball and Chess!  
Muscle and Mind!**

At Amherst news of the proposed chess match inspired the sardonic observation: "This is like the man who when challenged to race horses said, 'I will race horses if you will let your dog fight my dog.'" Be that as it may, the student representatives were able to come to terms. The Connecticut Valley boys took exception to the Williams suggestion that the game be played at Pittsfield, in southern Berkshire County, a mere twenty miles from Williamstown but all of ninety from Amherst. But apparently neither group could resist the generous offer which put at their disposal the field of the Pittsfield Base Ball Club and the rooms of the Pittsfield Chess Club.

The Pittsfield Base Ball Club was like many others organized in the 1840's and 1850's — associations of amateurs, of gentlemen, who found in baseball the kind of recreation which their succes-

lawn, and wide-brimmed straw hats that most ladies wore in the 1860's when they played baseball, shouted encouragement.

At Dianna's nod, the hurler, in butter-yellow knickers, a short, matching tunic cinched at the waist with a chocolate brown sash, and a floppy yellow porkpie hat, crossed one leg in front of the other. Then she drew back her arm and pitched the mushy, hand-stitched leather ball in an underhanded arc that dropped it neatly into the striker's zone.

Dianna swung, and connected with the ball. Tossing her bat at the umpire's feet, she sprinted toward first base.

"Go! Go! Go!" yelled visitors.

"Leg it! Leg it! Leg it!" shouted team mates and costumed cranks.

Dianna legged it mightily, but to no avail. The cloud chaser she had sent sailing into left field was snagged by the barehanded third base tender.

"The striker is dead," intoned the umpire just as Dianna reached first base. "Next striker to the line."

"Thunderation," muttered Dianna as she headed back toward the bench. "What a muff."

## Bustles? Dead Strikers? Muffs?

Welcome to women's baseball as it was played circa 1866, and as it is still played today by a growing number of women who have been bitten by the vintage baseball bug.

"Finding women who want to play baseball is easy," explained Dianna in an interview under one of the apple trees that shaded Muffin Meadow where the Diamond Ladies, and three other old-time women's teams, played exhibition games last August during the Ohio Historical Society's Vintage Base Ball Festival. "Finding women who want to put on a costume and play by the rules of the 1860s isn't."

Dianna's team, the Diamond Ladies, is what is called a historical re-enactment team. She summed up the

cross women played baseball. And, she added, "that they didn't tell their parents."

Why the zipped lips about baseball? "They might have been pulled out of college," explained Dianna. "Their parents wanted them to exercise, but they were supposed to use dumbbells or Indian clubs, or," she added with a chuckle, "their knitting needles."

Another reason for zipped lips is cited by sociologist Gai Ingham Berlag in her [delightful] book, *Women in Baseball: The Forgotten History*: When modern baseball began, around 1845, it was a genteel, upper-class men's club sport. By the late 1860's and early '70's, however, it had spread to the masses and become rough, vulgar and plebeian.

## Dressing for the Diamond

The Diamond Ladies' long-sleeved, high-necked, and historically accurate uniforms were designed and sewn by the wife of a Muffin's team member: "They are based on bathing costumes of the 1860's, and a picture of a Vassar team — the Resolutes — that we found."

"Our only concession to modern times is our shoes. We have to wear athletic shoes — one woman even wears spiked shoes — for safety."

A uniform, she added, has its plusses and minuses: "It's much better than a dress out on the field, but it's still hot, and I've been fined a couple of times by the umpire for showing a little too much ank[le]. . . err limb with the bloomers."

## The Diamonds Set A Shining Example

The Diamonds are the inspiration for all the other ladies' vintage baseball teams in the U.S., including the newest one, the Colorado Columbines.

"We had the Diamonds come out and play a team that we put together for an exhibition game in 1995," explained Columbine Captain Nancy "Nickers"

Massengill of Denver, Colorado. "It was so much fun that we discussed setting up our own team. Finally some of us — mostly women who were cranks [historical re-enactors] with the Colorado Vintage Base Ball Association — went to the state board and said 'We want a women's team.'"

"We have 14 women on the team, but we aren't like the Diamonds," she added.

"We don't have uniforms, we play in clothes of the 1870's," she explained, as she smoothed the material of her paisley hooped skirt. "And our rules are the rules they played by in Colorado in the 1870's, when things were opening up."

"And," she added a bit wistfully, "we aren't connected with a history museum or historical society."

The Denver-based Columbines, and their brother teams — the Denver Blue Stockings, Central City Stars, Denver Pacifics, Trinidad Vampires — do play at a historical site, however: on the grounds of Fort Logan, an 1880's cavalry post near Denver that is maintained by the State of Colorado's mental health system.

"The grounds at the fort are not manicured," she explained. "We play

around the cactus and yucca, and we take a lot of hops in our hoops. And we keep an eye out for rattlesnakes."

Joanna Shearer, the program coordinator for the Lake County Park Authority in Hobart, Indiana; manager of the Deep River Grinders, the park's vintage base ball team; and treasurer of the newly formed [1996] Vintage Base Ball Association, was introduced to vintage baseball six years ago, when she brought a scratch team to play at the annual festival.

"We were beaten so badly," she admits, "that I almost had tears in my eyes, but I went home a convert. We soon formed a real vintage team."

Shearer predicts a boom in both women's and men's vintage baseball teams within the next three years. That's because of vintage baseball's three "F" factors: It is something the whole family can participate in. It's fun, whether you are on the sidelines rooting or out on the field playing ground squirrel. And, most important of all, it's a way to live a fantasy.

*Lady Diamond Captain Dianna Frias talks with author Eileen Beal about the lady's game in the Colonel Crawford Inn's garden during the Ohio Cup Festival.*





## Summary of Fines and Penalties from the Bylaws of the Knickerbocker B.B.Club of N.Y.

### 1848

1. Profane or improper language on the field.  
6 1/4 cents
2. Disputing the decision of an umpire.  
12 1/2 cents
3. Expression of opinion before call. (unless asked by umpire).  
12 1/2 cents
4. Refusing obedience to captain.  
50 cents
5. Pay penalties to umpire.
6. Absent four consecutive playing days.  
50 cents
7. Leaving meeting without permission.  
\$1.00
8. Not answering roll after exercise. Subject to consequent penalties.
9. Late for meeting.  
12 1/2 cents  
Absent from meeting  
50 cents
10. Refusing to pay dues or fines. May be suspended or expelled.

### 1854

1. Profane or improper language on the field.  
6 1/4 cents
2. Disputing the decision of an umpire.  
12 1/2 cents
3. Expression of opinion before call. (unless asked by umpire).  
12 1/2 cents
4. Refusing obedience to captain.  
50 cents
5. Pay penalties to umpire.
6. Absent four consecutive playing days.  
50 cents  
*Added that if absent eight consecutive days may be erased from roll.*
7. Leaving meeting without permission.  
\$1.00
8. Not answering roll after exercise. Subject to consequent penalties.
9. Late for meeting.  
12 1/2 cents  
Absent from meeting  
50 cents
10. Refusing to pay dues or fines. May be suspended or expelled.

### 1857

1. Late for meeting.  
12 1/2 cents  
Absent from meeting  
50 cents  
*absent only (OK to be late?)*
2. Leaving meeting without permission.  
\$1.00
3. Officer absent from Board meeting.  
50 cents
4. Not permitted to play without uniform.
5. Must play or umpire to be marked present.
6. Profane or improper language on the field.  
10 cents
7. Disputing the decision of an umpire.  
25 cents
8. Expression of opinion before call. (unless asked by umpire).  
25 cents
9. Refusing obedience to captain.  
50 cents
10. Pay penalties to captain.
11. Neglect of duties by captain.  
\$1.00
12. Not answering roll after exercise. Subject to consequent penalties.
13. Absent four consecutive playing days.  
50 cents
14. If absent eight consecutive days may be erased from roll.
15. Neglect of duty by officer.  
\$1.00

Compiled by  
John R. Husman

## Request for Information

The following subjects will be explored in the next issue of *Early Innings Illustrated*. If you can furnish any information on these subjects or would care to undertake the assembly of an article on the subject matter, please contact John Wells at 614-261-0454 or e-mail to [johncwells@compuserve.com](mailto:johncwells@compuserve.com).

### • How to Make Period Base Balls.

*This project is being undertaken because the price and availability of balls has become a real problem for most vintage teams.*

### • Vendors of Period Equipment, Uniforms, & Costumes.

*This is an invitation to any companys or individuals to show off their goods.*

### • Club Histories.

*We wish to document more of the clubs who have chosen to revive the name and history of a local club as part of their re-enacting.*

## Hoover Sweepers Base Ball Club

*Editor's note: The following are excerpts from the letter to team members prior to the Sweepers' first practice of 1998.*

Huzzah to the Sweepers. Last year's record of 14-4 was just part of many accomplishments. It was great fun and every player and his family enjoyed it. We have less playing dates this year and a couple less games.

Under the guidance of our new director, Ron Mapp, Kim and I have met with Ron three times to "gear up" for 1998.

**Hoover Sweepers**



## First Intercollegiate Game

from page 5

sors would seek in tennis and golf. Baseball belonged to them, to their imitators among the mill and factory workers, and to the collegians until 1869, when, in Cincinnati, the first professional team, the "Red Stockings," was organized. In its origins organized baseball was a gentleman's game, and the Amherst and Williams delegates who met at Chester Factories knew that they were creating ball clubs which belonged without question in that constellation of student organizations which served the needs and developed the traits of true gentlemen — Greek letter fraternities, gymnasiums, and singing groups.

The delegates faced no other problem as difficult as the choice of location. It was agreed that the baseball game would take place on Friday, July 1, and that the chess match would follow on the next day (one reason that they could not occur simultaneously was that Claflin of Amherst, promoter of the game, was carrying two sports that season — baseball and chess.) Like their contemporaries in other New England colleges and academies, the Williams and Amherst boys had not yet been reached by changes occurring in the game in New York, where efforts to create a more orderly game had led to the adoption of so-called New York rules that are the foundations of the modern game. In the playgrounds and school yards of New England a form of ball known locally as round or Massachusetts ball and elsewhere as town ball still held sway. The rules agreed upon for the game at Pittsfield were the Massachusetts rules.

The following account of the baseball game appeared in a special edition of the Adams Transcript that was undated but that surely appeared as soon as possible after the momentous events in Pittsfield on July 1 and 2, 1859. The editorial mention of Morphy as the "lion of the day" refers to Paul Charles Morphy,

a Louisiana lawyer who after a brilliant campaign in Europe was recognized as chess champion of the world. The *Transcript* extra edition also provided complete coverage of the chess match, won by Amherst, on July 2.

{The same human passions — ambition, rivalry, combativeness, love of applause, and determination to excel — can be witnessed among players of athletic or intellectual games as among politicians in an exciting, or even among Emperors in the bloody field of war. Boys are men in miniature, and often display as much energy and sagacity in accomplishing their ends as men do: and it is quite as sensible to "crow" over being the smartest ball-player or chess-player as the smartest demagogue or wholesale throat-cutter. Morphy is the lion of the day as much as any General in our army. We think the College boys' struggle deserves a full report: and therefore lay it before our readers.}

### WILLIAMS COLLEGE DESERTED.

Pittsfield. July 1, 1859

Four passenger-cars full of students came down this morning. One of them told me he thought there wouldn't be five left at Williamstown. The number of students who came was about 150. The North Adams Base Ball Club is well represented by 12 or 15 of its members.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO PARTIES

The Amherst Ball-players' Headquarters are at the U. S. Hotel; Williams' at the Berkshire House. The Chess-players are guests of the Pittsfield Chess Club. There are 17 students from Amherst — 2 or 3 more may come today. The Amherst boys labor under the disadvantage of having the sympathies of a large majority of the crowd with the Williams boys on the start. The players from either college are *not* organized

clubs, but were chosen by ballot to represent the respective colleges in the game. Those from Williams, as a party, are younger and have evidently received less muscular training than their rivals; but physically they are a well-formed party.

### BALLS, BATS, BADGES, GROUND, ETC.

Each party finds its own ball. The ball used by the Amherst party is small, soft, and with but very little elasticity. A hard throw upon the floor will raise it scarcely more than one foot. This ball was manufactured by Henry Hibbard of North Brookfield, Mass. The bats are of various sizes, to suit the different players. The Amherst players are designated by a blue badge fastened to the shirt bosom; Williams players by a belt with "Williams" in plain letters on the back.

The game is played on the "Town Lot," east of the Young Ladies' Institute, — a very well-selected ground for the contest.

### RULES ADOPTED FOR THE GAME

The game commenced at 11 o'clock A.M., the Amherst side having the first innings. The game played is a slight modification of the Massachusetts Game," and the side which first makes 65 tallies wins. The innings are limited by the rule "One out, all out."

### LADIES WATCH THE CONTEST

A short time before the play some young ladies came out on the roof of the Young Ladies' Institute piazza and waved a "star spangled banner!" which courtesy was returned by the students with three hearty cheers, the waving of hats, etc. A large crowd of spectators, including many ladies, assembled to witness the game. A large four-horse wagon, filled with Institute young ladies, came upon the ground just as the play commenced.



Ron Walker was our representative at the annual Vintage Base Ball meeting near Tiffin, held on Sunday, February 22. The various franchises are attempting to create greater uniformity, but left it up to the individual clubs to set up a few guidelines. Our home rules for 1998 will include:

1. Stealing is allowed but the base runner may lead off the base with only ONE stride.
2. Base runners attempting to steal may not start toward a base until the ball has reached the plate.
3. The shortstop (or rover) must play inside the baseline.
4. Bases may be less than 90 feet apart.

### 1998 Schedule

Sat. May 9	Canal Fulton Mules Away 2:00
Sat. May 16	Columbus Muffins* Home 1:00
Sun. June 14	Akron Big Ditch Boys Home 2:00
Sun. June 28	Lake County Pirates* Away 1:00 (in Wycliffe)
Sun. July 12	Akron Black Stockings Away 2:00
Sun. July 19	Dover Red Legs Home 2:00
Sun. Aug. 9	Carriage Hill Clodbusters* Away 1:00
Sun. Aug. 23	Dover Red Legs* Away 2:00 (at Fort Laurens)
Sun. Sept. 6	Akron Big Ditch Boys Away 2:00
Sun. Sept. 20	Canal Fulton Mules Home 2:00
Sun. Sept. 27	Akron Black Stockings Home 2:00

\* doubleheader

# New Jersey Teams Form

The following article appeared in the *New Jersey Sunday Star-Ledger* of April 26, 1996. Two teams have formed in the garden state. They are called the New Jersey Barristers & the Newark Eureka. Contact them through

Robert Radcliffe  
220 S Harrison St  
East Orange, NJ 07018  
973-676-0312

PAGE 26 SECTION ONE

THE SUNDAY STAR-LEDGER

APRIL 26, 1998

## We're talkin' 1860s base ball - 2 words

By Peter Genovese

STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Kid Speed danced around at second base and Trotter took a step off first as Peachy stepped to the plate, wielding a wooden bat as thick as a bedpost.

Peachy smacked a one-hopper to the third baseman, who stepped on third, forcing Speed, and threw to first, the throw beating Peachy to the bag for the double play.

"Striker is dead, runner at third is safe," umpire Al Dieckmann announced on the Bloomfield diamond.

An argument ensued, but Dieckmann knew the rules. The rules, that is, of 1860s base ball — it was two words back then — when home plate was made of iron or steel, fly balls could be caught on one bounce, and gloves were illegal.

"Strange rules," observed Tony Naturale of Little Falls, watching the odd-looking game unfold at Brookdale Park in Bloomfield yesterday.

It was the Brooklyn Atlantics, who were all from

PLEASE SEE **BASE BALL**, PAGE 26



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL SYNIEWSKI

Jim "Trotter" Dragonetti tries to catch a pop-up playing shortstop in an 1860s-style game of ball in Bloomfield. Players did not wear gloves back then.



Umpire Al "Old Dutch" Dieckmann, dressed in period costume, gets a side view as the pitch comes in.

## Base ball

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

Long Island, against the New Jersey Barristers, who were mostly from Long Island, and if that is confusing, you should have seen the game, a recreation of an 1866 ball game featuring the Atlantics, one of the growing number of vintage ball teams springing up in such places as Akron, Ohio; Hobart, Indiana; and Hempstead,

by 1866, including baseball as we know it today. The game was evolving, with rule changes every year — every game, it seemed. Fans were known as cranks. Batters were called strikers; pitchers, hurlers. Runs were aces. A striker was not out but "dead."

"Top of the shoes to the hat," Dieckmann said, describing the strike zone. "Games went very quickly back then. Guys ran out to their positions. First guy up that inning grabbed a bat. There were no warmup pitches."

kept his stogie lodged firmly in his mouth.

The strange rules made yesterday's game a lot more interesting than today's four-hour snorefests. Batted balls were outs if caught on one bounce, whether in the infield or outfield. If a ball hit first in fair territory and then rolled foul, it remained in play as a "fair foul." Under 1866 rules, outfielders could chase balls over the fence, and, in fact, can play on the other side of the fence.

And leave the gloves home, because in 1860s base ball, even the





N.Y.

And New Jersey, if Bob Radcliffe has anything to do with it. Radcliffe, an East Orange attorney, organized the vintage ballgame both as a AIDS education benefit for the East Orange General Hospital Foundation Softball Tournament and as an attempt to attract homegrown players for a Garden State-based vintage ballclub.

"You said two outs," Barrister shortstop George "Wild Horse" Ferchland admonished Dieckmann at one point.

"I said two, then changed it to one," the umpire replied. "I don't have a counter." He smiled. "They weren't invented yet."

Lots of things weren't invented

Belleville Mayor Mario Drozdz sends one in while chewing his trusty stogie. Below, the teams gather for a picture.

black tophat and a dark blue knee-length coat, looked like the bad guy in a Sergio Leone western. The players, meanwhile, wore 1860s uniform replicas, the Atlantics in beige cotton shirts with burgundy piping and white puffy caps; the Barristers in blue shirts with raffish-looking blue caps that made them look like sailors.

Pitching for the Barristers was cigar-smoking Belleville Mayor Mario Drozdz, who kept the high-scoring Atlantics down for most of the game and, like Naturale and the other Jersey players, didn't always understand what was going on. At one point, Drozdz dove for a lazy foul ball down the first base line, ending up sprawled on the grass minus the ball — but

played porenanded.

"You see the guy with the glove," whispered one Atlantics player, pointing to a teammate with a weightlifter's glove on his hand. "Pay no attention to that. He broke his finger. We let him get away with it."

In the 1860s, batters could take advantage of something called "balking the catcher," where they could step back and hit the ball, often smacking the catcher in the noggin in the process. "Balking the catcher" was outlawed in 1867, according to Dieckmann.

"This is a lot of fun," said Tom "Kid Speed" Heinlein, who like the other Atlantics, plays with a nickname. "These guys are not only my teammates but my best friends."



## 1998 Schedule for the

### Fulton Mules Vintage Base Ball Club

Home	May 9	Sat North Canton Hoover Sweepers
Away	May 17	Sun Lake County Pirates
Away	May 30	Sat Ohio Village Muffin Tournament
Home	June 7	Sun Sycamore Grasshoppers
Away	June 14	Sun Akron Cup - Stan Hywet
	June 20	Sat Buckeyes
Away	July 5	Sun Austintown Historical Society
Home	July 11	Sat Black Stockings - Canal Days
Away	July 19	Sun Carriage Hill Tournament
Away	July 26	Sun La-De-Dah's Greenfield Village
Away	Aug 15	Sat Strongsville Mustangs
Home	Aug 23	Sun Lake County Pirates
Away	Aug 30	Sun Sycamore Grasshoppers (Picnic)
Away	Sept 5 & 6	Sat & Sun Ohio Cup - Ohio Village
Home	Sept 12 or 13	Carriage Hill Clodbusters
Away	Sept 19	Sat Tiffin Tournament
Away	Sept 20	Sun North
Home	Oct 11	Columbus Capitals at the Chili Festival in Canal Fulton



## The Oceanic Base Ball Club

### Base Ball Returns to Mystic

by Andrew W. German

*In the winter of 1993, Mr. Andrew W. German wrote an article that appeared in The Log of Mystic Seaport on the Oceanic Base Ball Club. It was hoped that Mystic Seaport would be able to support a team and play a regular schedule that coming year. But the lack of a suitable area to play at the Mystic site and the wish not to play off site and send patrons away from the museum have prevented the formation of a team.*

*But the article contains a great deal of useful information including many quotes with terms and descriptions of play during the mid-1860's. More on that after you read this interesting article.*

Do you root for the Red Sox, a team that has kept Boston guessing since 1901? Or perhaps you follow the New York Yankees, a club with 90 years of tradition; or maybe it's the Mets, with just 30 seasons behind them. Perhaps you think the Cincinnati Red Stockings started it all back in 1869. Even if you don't follow them, you probably at least recognize these teams by name, but how about the Mystic Oceanics?

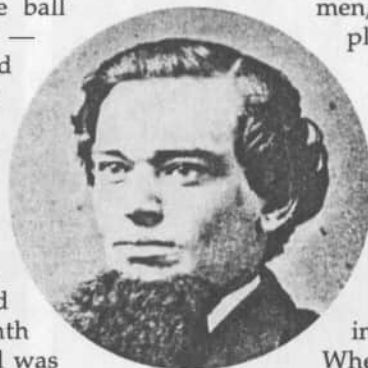
We did not know much about the Oceanics either until the Ohio Village Museum in Columbus, Ohio, challenged the Seaport's Edward Baker, Supervisor of Shore-side Industries, to field a team

orado to the East Coast. After accepting the challenge and taking for ourselves the name of Mystic's 1860's team, we discovered just how strong were the links that bound two Oceanic teams over a distance of 125 years.

Ball games — stoolball, then cricket, then various forms of a game that has been called base ball since the 1700's — have been played in England since the 1300's and were brought to America by the colonists. A popular game through the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, base ball was

revised according to the rules of the British game "rounders" in the 1830's. Alexander Cartwright, who played the game with a group of New York businessmen, codified the rules in 1845, introducing the idea of tagging a runner out with a held ball rather than throwing the ball at him. Cartwright's New York Knickerbockers played in the first organized base ball match at Elysian Fields — near the New York Yacht Club building that is now at Mystic Seaport — in Hoboken, New Jersey, on 19 June 1845. These clubs — both base ball and yachting — represented the increasing leisure time among wealthy urban dwellers and the new acceptability of organized recreational pursuits.<sup>1</sup>

after the war. In Mystic Bridge, on the Stonington side of the Mystic River, a group of men "desirous of securing to themselves a pleasant and healthy exercise, as well as an agreeable entertainment for the public," established the Oceanic Base Ball Club about the first of March, 1866. As first constituted, the club included 29



Ship designer John Forsyth (1836-1912), a Mystic native and first president of the Oceanics. He played first base in 1866.

men, and additional players joined in the ensuing months. Like any proper social club, the group elected officers and a board of directors, then sought a meeting place.

When it leased a suite in the Exchange Building, at the east end of the draw-bridge, the club assured the community that the rooms would be "fitted up in a style suited to the refined taste of the Honorable Board of Directors, and furnished with the best periodicals and most approved publications of the day". In other words, their club room would be a library, "not, as is too often the case, a place for loafing and lounging, drinking and carousing, where the ear of the modest and conscientious passer by is not shocked by anathemas and blasphemy". They soon added a piano, "which the members consider an indispensable piece of furniture to refined society".<sup>2</sup>

By mid-April the Oceanics had obtained the use of a field

brother Amos, a decorator and shoe salesman, either caught or played first base — a position sometimes taken by grocer and ship designer John Forsyth, 30 — while second base was covered by shipbuilder Amos Grinnell, 49, or Isaac R. Gavit, 30, a saloonkeeper. Shortstop S. A. Groves, 39, was a manager at Mystic's new Oceanic Woolen Mill and apparently lived in Greenmanville. Also from Greenmanville came pitcher James H. Carter, 29, a ship carpenter at the Greenman yard who in 1860 boarded with David Langworthy in a house now owned by the Seaport. The outfield combined ship carpenter Hugh Barr, 22, who boarded with a sailmaker on Holmes Street and probably worked in the Mallory shipyard (on the site of the Seaport's preservation shipyard); ship carpenter Charles L. Grinnell, 25; and lumber dealer Charles Cottrell, 24.<sup>5</sup>

Many of the Oceanics' opponents were also well-established men. In particular, the Uncas Base Ball Club of Norwich included lawyer and former Civil War General Edward Harland, Colonel John E. Ward, Judge Holbrook, and Doctor Abbott. Of similar standing was New London's Pequot Club, which the editor of the *Mystic Pioneer* judged to be, "a fine club, composed of young men rather above the average in respect to intelligence and refinement".<sup>6</sup>

Baseball — as played by the Oceanics and as revived by the Ohio Village Muffins — was a decorous and genteel sport. Although they were accustomed to six day work-

and the game was high scoring and unpredictable. The rules followed by the Oceanics allowed base stealing, but this is not permitted in the 1858 rules revived by the Ohio Village Muffins.

The Oceanics began playing during a transitional period, as base ball shifted from a "healthful and invigorating exercise" and amusement for club members to a spectator sport with commercial overtones. Even as the Oceanics paid their own way to Norwich or New London to play before crowds who paid nothing to watch, teams in New York and elsewhere were playing before large crowds of paying "cranks" (fans). As these amateur teams drew ever stronger community support, winning — rather than playing well — became ever more important. A few "amateur" teams had even begun paying their star players. But this was not yet the case in Connecticut, where both players and spectators were expected to observe strict codes of behavior. Winning was important, but so was the quality of play. Spectators and opponents alike applauded excellent defensive plays, and the teams formally and sincerely cheered each other and the officials at the end of the game. As proper gentlemen's clubs, the teams hosted one another, making a base ball match both an athletic contest and a social event. It was not until the Cincinnati Red Stockings of 1869, with a full roster of paid players, and the 1871 National Association of Professional Base Ball Players — superseded by the National League

team to play the Ohio Village Muffins according to the 1858 base ball rules. Ohio Village, which is the outdoor component of the Ohio Historical Society, revived the mid-nineteenth century version of the game in 1981 as a way to interpret nineteenth-century life. Baseball is so well known to us today that we can use it to comprehend differences between our attitudes and those of residents of the nineteenth century by demonstrating how they played the game. Through the efforts of the Ohio Village Muffins, enthusiasm for period base ball has spread from Col-

*The Oceanic's field was a level riverside meadow on Murphy Point, just south of the railroad near the Mystic depot. In this slightly later composite panorama, looking west from Reynold's Hill at the end of Washington Street toward the railway bridge, the field is in the center distance, with the rail fence running across center field amid the stone wall parallel to it and further to the left.*

through the 1850's, New York was home to many clubs, some of which represented occupational groups, such as Brooklyn's Eckford club, made up of ship carpenters and named in honor of shipbuilder Henry Eckford. In 1858, as the number of American base ball clubs grew, spreading beyond New York, the National Association of Base Ball Players was formed to rule the game as an amateur sport. Cartwright's rules became known as the New York Rules and quickly superseded other versions of the game, such as the more primitive town ball and related Massachusetts Rules. Base ball became especially popular during the Civil War as a way for soldiers in camp to pass the time, and they brought their passion for the game home when they returned from war. By 1866, Currier & Ives could depict base ball as "The American National Game".

Like almost any town of consequence, Mystic was swept by base ball enthusiasm

practiced on Thursday afternoons. Although some later opponents complained that the field was poor, "being flanked by a river on one side and a stone wall on the other, while a rail fence obstructs the centre field", others praised the field as the third best in the state, behind Bridgeport's and Waterbury's.<sup>3</sup>

The Oceanics first put their field to the test on Thursday, 21 June, when the Pequot Base Ball Club of New London came to play. In a three-hour game, the Oceanics were outclassed in fielding but out hit the Pequots to win the game 42 to 27.<sup>4</sup>

As played by the Oceanics, base ball was a game for gentlemen, not boys. Although referred to as "boys", a number of the players were prominent mechanics and professionals, many of them over the age of 30. Sparmaker John Batty was 55, but that did not stop him from playing third base, a position he traded off with ship-carver John Colby, 33. Colby's

the players and spectators were able to devote an afternoon during the week — generally Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday — to base ball. During the matches, the hurler (pitcher) delivered the ball underhand where the striker (batter) requested it. The umpire stood along the first baseline, and he did not call balls or strikes — only three clean misses constituted a strikeout. There were no automatic home runs; if a ball went over a fence or into the bushes the fielders retrieved it as quickly as they could while the striker ran as far as he dared. Fielders wore no gloves; the ball, which was softer than today's softball, was caught barehanded, and a ball caught on one bounce — either fair or foul — was an out. One-bounce fair ball outs were eliminated by a rule change in 1864, but it was some time before all clubs adopted this rule; fielders did not begin to wear gloves until the 1870's. Barehanded catches meant that "muffs" (errors) were common

the sport took on the professional nature by which we know it today.<sup>7</sup>

The Oceanics first faced the Uncas club on Tuesday, 17 July 1866, when they took the train to Norwich. The Uncas team treated them as their guests at the Wauregan Hotel, then they all headed for Williams Park, where 500 spectators awaited the 2:10 match. Despite home runs by Groves and Cottrell, the Oceanics quickly fell behind, losing third baseman John Colby with a strained arm and losing the game 75 to 36. "At the close of the game the clubs cheered each other, the umpire and the scorers, and then proceeded to the hotel, where, after supper, the Uncas team escorted their guests to the [steamboat] A. C. Williams by which they returned to Mystic".<sup>8</sup>

A classic contest occurred on Tuesday, 14 August 1866, when the Uncas club took the

*"The Oceanics"*  
continues on page 9





## The Oceanics

from page 8

A. C. Williams to Mystic, arriving at 12:15 P.M.

*They were at once received by the Oceanics and escorted to their club room in Exchange Building where they partook of a lunch.*

*The game was commenced at two o'clock precisely, the Uncas boys going to the bat first and scored six, but the Oceanics scored the most in each inning, except the last, and won the game by 51 to 33...Amos Colby, first baseman, led the score on the Oceanic side making nine runs and but one out....There were fewer accidents and injuries received than is usual on such occasions but one being disabled; Dr. Abbott of the Uncas nine sprained his ankle and was relieved by Judge S. T. Holbrook in the eighth inning....Home runs were made by Groves, Grant and, Carter of the Oceanics....Several flies were caught which elicited considerable applause from the spectators.*

*After the game the Oceanics gave a dinner to the Uncas club and all the Norwichians present, at the Hoxie House, at which speeches were made by Messrs. Groves and [Benjamin] Mallory of the Oceanics and Whittaker, Murphy and others of the Uncas club. At about half past seven the Uncas boys embarked on board the A. C. Williams, amid the cheers of the crowd upon the wharf, and started home, having enjoyed a good days sport and were apparently well pleased with the treatment received.<sup>9</sup>*

On Wednesday, 5 September, the Oceanics chartered the steamer *Ella* to carry them to New London for a second match with the Pequots club. The Mystic Cornet Band accompanied the team, "making the excursion pleasant and enlivening". "They were met on the

which will allow them to receive the decisions of an impartial Umpire in a manner becoming gentlemen".

"The most applauded play of the whole game was made by J. Colby, of the Oceanics, on third base, beautifully holding a red hot ball from the bat of D. Marsh". Colby moved over to relieve Carter as pitcher in the eighth inning, holding down the score, and S. A. Groves hit two of the game's three clean home runs. After three hours and 45 minutes, the Oceanics won by a score of 53 to 40.

The game demonstrated what had already become apparent in New York: base ball's rapid transformation from an exercise for the players to an amusement for the spectators. When partisan cranks could control a game to this degree, admission fees and professional players were not far behind. The editor of the *Mystic Pioneer* gave special credit to shipcarver James Campbell, vice president of the Oceanic club, "for the arrangements for keeping order on the grounds and having the applause fairly bestowed" — to players, umpire, scorers, and even the reporters — as befit the amateur spirit of the game.<sup>11</sup>

On 10 November the Oceanics traveled back to Norwich to play the Chester club, both teams fielding several substitutes for the match, which featured many wild throws. "The first baseman of the Oceanics [John Forsyth] played well, and generally stopped balls that did not require him to climb into a tree to reach," remarked the editor of

*King home. The Oceanics were now but one ahead, and the crowd grew more and more excited, when Blackman went in, knocking a sky scraper to right field, sent home Smith and took himself to third, whence he stole home between pitcher and catcher, sending the Chesters one ahead, and as Gale and Potter got out on the home base, it was a handsome thing to do handsomely done.<sup>12</sup>*

This 38 to 37 loss ended the Oceanics' season, while the Pequots and Uncas clubs played on the next weekend to capture the Champion Bat of New London County in a game won handily by the Pequots, 44 to 20, causing the *Norwich Bulletin* to note, "it is rarely that a club is met with composed of men so evidently built for players, and they are now reaping the reward of persistent and thorough practice during a few months past."<sup>13</sup>

By 1867 the number of American base ball clubs was approaching 1,000, and Connecticut had at least 20 clubs, which were governed by the Connecticut Base Ball Players Association. The Oceanics started off the season by hosting the new Pawcatuck club from Westerly on Saturday, 4 May. Unused to "swift pitching", the Pawcatucks were defeated 86 to 27. Thereafter, Oceanics' games were rarely mentioned in the local newspaper. Perhaps the team kept in shape by playing some of the local competition, which included the Mystic Actives, the Mystic Bridge Baltics, the Old Mystic Gazelles, and the Noank Live Oaks.

*Later in 1867, the Oceanics*

by hiring the game's first entirely professional roster for the 1869 season. This marked the undisguised beginning of professional base ball.

The Brooklyn Independents were not among the best clubs in New York, but they were good enough to propose an expedition into eastern Connecticut to play the best of the local clubs. The Independents were expected to come up on Thanksgiving Day 1867 to play the New London Pequots in the morning and the Oceanics in the afternoon, but the matches never came off, partly because of the wet weather that day.<sup>14</sup>

The *Mystic Pioneer* reported only one Oceanics match in 1868, when the club traveled to Day's Park, Stonington, to take on the Westerly Emmetts. About 600 Westerly fans came out hoping to see their team upset the Oceanics. But with far better fielding and strong hitting, the Oceanics won the eight-inning game 48 to 22 in two hours and 50 minutes.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Mystic Actives continued to play base ball into the 1870's, no further Oceanics matches were reported after 1868, suggesting that the club quietly disbanded after three active years. Only five of the original Oceanics were still playing in 1868, and it is likely that the Oceanics' ship carpenters, having passed through a slow period in the shipyards since 1866, were now fully occupied with the 15 Spanish gunboats and several other large vessels launched at Mystic in 1869. Yet, we do know that shipcarvers Camp-

mile trek to Columbus, only to be beaten handily by a powerful and experienced Ohio Village Muffin team, made up of museum volunteers. The 32 to 4 score belied some strong Oceanic defensive work, especially by right fielder Steve Freitas who, in the tradition of John Colby of the original Oceanics, spent the summer working in the Seaport's shipcarver's shop. Robert Gaudette of housekeeping drove in or scored all of our runs.

Despite our defeat, we have learned through research and practical experience that base ball as it was once played is a colorful and exciting event that reveals much about nineteenth-century values. So don't be surprised if the Mystic Seaport Oceanics take the field again. It's "a handsome thing to do handsomely done".

*Editor's Note: Space did not permit the references to be printed. Write VBBA at P. O. BOX 14105, Columbus, OH 43214 for a copy.*

## Quicksteps

### Base Ball Team

#### Match Schedule Season of 1998

Saturday, May 16 vs. opponent (to be announced), Murphys Village, Shakopee, MN.

Sunday, May 17 vs St. Paul Saints Base Ball Club, Murphys Village, Shakopee, MN.

Sunday, June 14 vs. opponent TRA Star Spangled Cele-



conveyed them to Williams' Park in wagons," reported the New London *Daily Star*. The field at Williams Park was sloping and soft, making play difficult, but "there was a large assemblage of ladies and gentlemen looking on,...and when a good run or a fine catch was made, the audience enthusiastically cheered." After 3 1/2 hours, the Pequots, who came from behind in the eighth inning, won 53 to 50. The clubs then proceeded to the home of Henry P. Haven, the prominent New London whaling agent, maritime entrepreneur, and former New London mayor, whose son Thomas was president of the Pequot club. There, "after supper the ball was presented by Captain Groves, of the Oceanics, to Captain Marsh, of the Pequots. The speech of Captain Groves, as well as the reply of Captain Marsh, were appropriate to the occasion". When the Oceanics departed on the *Ella* at 7:30, "the Pequots gave them rousing cheers as they left the wharf".<sup>10</sup>

On Saturday, 22 September, the Oceanics and Pequots squared off to settle their series at the field on Poquonnock Plain in Groton. "There was a large number of single and double turn outs and the fair sex were well represented on the occasion," noted the *Daily Star*. "The Mystic Club came up in teams [wagons] and most of the New Londoners came in the 1:15 train". The Oceanics won the toss and chose last ups. After three innings the Pequots protested the umpire, Benjamin Mallory, and the Oceanics accepted a member of the Chester club as substitute. Although he was chosen by their club, the New London crowd soon began to hiss and insult the new umpire, causing the editor of the *Mystic Pioneer* note, "it appears that they have not yet arrived at that point of Base Ball civilization

the New London *Daily Star*. According to the *Norwich Bulletin*:

*The last innings was very exciting. When the Oceanics went to bat their score stood 25 to 33, when they left it, it stood 37 to 33, and as it had been agreed to close the game on the 8th innings, on account of approaching darkness, the excitement was intense when the Chesters went to bat, with four to make a tie, and five to win. Gilbert knocked a skyer, well caught by H. Grinnell on the second base; Backus made two bases on his bat, stole the third and made his home on a pass ball. Parish knocked a short ball but made his first on a muff [error] of the short stop; stole the next two and made his run on King's batting, the latter reaching the second on muffin throws. Smith hit a teller to centre field and made his second bringing*

expected to participate in an increasingly common feature of base ball: the visit of a touring club. Some of the better clubs from such base ball centers as New York, Philadelphia, and Washington had started to tour the hinterlands, challenging local teams and spreading enthusiasm for the game. The nation's growing railroad and steamboat network made such expeditions easy to undertake, but this was also the final step in base ball's metamorphosis into a professional sport, one that could support teams on the road and could provide the quality of competition that cranks would pay to watch. When the Cincinnati Red Stockings were defeated in 1868 by a touring club that included several paid players the team sought to reclaim its reputation

and Colby, two of the club's most spirited members, had not lost their love for base ball. When they carved the figurehead for the ship *Frolic*, built at the George Greenman & Company shipyard (on the present site of the Seaport) in 1869, they incorporated the base ball theme. The figurehead was "a lady with a bat in one hand, in the act of striking a ball which she holds in the other, enjoying a frolic. It is very appropriate," noted the editor of the *Mystic Pioneer*.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it symbolized the maritime connections the Mystic Oceanics brought to base ball in the 1860's.

And what of the 1993 Mystic Seaport Oceanics? Led by Captain Baker, 10 of us, with our tallykeeper, crank, and photographer, made the 750-

bration, Dakota village, Farmington, MN.

Saturday, July 25 vs. St. Croix of Stillwater, Lumberjack Days, Old Athletic Grounds, Stillwater, MN, 2:00.

Saturday, August 8 vs. picked nine, Plymouth History Fest, Plymouth, MN.

Monday, August 10, evening, vs. picked nine, Fridley Historical Society, Fridley, MN, 7:00.

Saturday, August 22, vs. St. Croix of Stillwater and Rochester Roosters, First Annual Olmstead County Historical Society Historic Base Ball Tournament, History Center Grounds, Rochester, MN.

Saturday, Sept. 19 vs. picked nine, Eagan History Fest, Eagan, MN.



The Quicksteps Base Ball Team of Columbia Heights, Minnesota

# The Ferguson Ball

## A Catalogue with history

The following are excerpts from Jay R. Ferguson publications which may be of interest to clubs who did not receive his catalogue this spring or may not be aware of his products for historic base ball.

"Back in 1986, I began making base balls. I was a graduate student in Cooperstown when a vintage base ball team was forming. They knew of my background as a shoemaker in a living history museum and asked me to provide historically accurate balls since they could find no one who was producing them. The Baseball Hall of Fame archives had all the background information I needed to make my first vintage ball.

"I take pride in the work that goes into these balls as I imagine myself to be the first person in over 125 years to match the requirements specified in rules from the 1850's and 1860's. I take pride in knowing that eleven years after I made my first vintage base ball, they are still the best available.

"Ferguson Base Balls are manufactured according to carefully researched historical specifications. Only natural rubber and 100% wool yarn are hand wound for the centers. High quality cowhide covers are hand stitched.

# Baseball Card Ideas

by John Wells

The top graphic in each group is a design from the nineteenth century showing ideas, details, and giving a feel of the art of that time. The bottom drawing offers Barbie Tootle's (the Muffins photographer of choice) suggestions for an adaptation and contains a different style of photograph that might be used.

Various combinations of styles and techniques may be used to obtain a finished card design for a club nine.

## Design Number 1 (bottom left)

Adapted from the cover of an 1888 folding score-card used by Cincinnati. The "gingerbread" design is typical of the period. The card design incorporates the distinctive Muffin hat, a bat, and ball. The banner carries the name of the club, with the sponsor's name below.

The frame allows for a "drop in" photo. The name, including nickname, is boxed in the upper left.

This design will reproduce well in black and white or sepia-toned brown and white.

## Design Number 2 (bottom left)

Adapted from an 1875 Chicago Champions banner that included Spalding. The

banner carries the name of the club. The diamond shape allows for an oval "drop in" photo. The sponsor's name is on the "wood" motif, with caps, bats, and a ball completing the decoration. The player's name is boxed below.

## Design Idea #1



This will reproduce well in black and white or sepia-toned brown and white.

## Design Number 3 (bottom right)

Adapted from a National and American League card issued by Fine Cut Chew in Detroit.

The team name is on the banner, with the M reminiscent

## Design Idea #2



of the uniform shield.

The bats, ball, and hat display Muffin equipment. The player's name is boxed below the sponsor's name. This will reproduce in black and white or sepia and white.

## Design Idea #3





The following is from a letter included with the 1997-98 catalogue sheet:

January 1, 1998

Dear Vintage Base Ball enthusiasts,

Due to continuing price increases for materials, it is with regret that I must raise my prices for base balls. I am also unable to continue discounts for teams and other bulk orders.

Vintage base ball teams, please note, the 1998 price list does not include a listing for match balls. However, I am still making them at the regulation ball's price. You will need to note the special order on the order form.

I apologize for any inconvenience these price changes may cause. I also want to thank my loyal customers for their support over the years.

Best wishes for the new season,

*Jay R. Ferguson*

Jay R. Ferguson  
Ferguson Ball Co.  
P.O. Box 2384  
Louisville, KY 40201

Reproduced at the right is the Ferguson catalogue and price schedule:

### Our most popular base balls in russet leather will age to a golden brown patina



#### New York Rules, 1858

(Hamilton Base Ball Club)

Weight 6-6 1/4 oz., Circumference 10" to 10 1/4"  
One-piece cover, \$55.00

The first and largest regulation base ball was the forerunner of today's familiar white ball.



#### Massachusetts Rules "Town Ball", 1858

(Massachusetts Association of Base Ball Players)

Weight 2 to 2 1/4 oz., Circumference 6 1/2" to 8 1/2"  
One-piece cover, \$40.00

This is a relatively soft base ball made to be thrown at the runner to get him out. Technically these base balls can be tiny but with the Ferguson version you can count on getting a ball that is at least 8" in circumference.



#### National Association, 1860

Weight 5 1/4 to 6 oz. Circumference 9 1/4" to 10"  
One-piece cover, \$50.00

These are based on the first nationally recognized regulation balls. It is distinguishable from the New York Rules ball by a slight reduction in size and weight.

### White leather balls hand-wound, hand-stitched



#### National Association, 1861

(National Association of Base Ball Players)

Weight 5 1/2 to 5 3/4 oz., Circumference 9 1/2" to 9 3/4"  
One-piece cover, \$50.00

The earliest known ball in white leather made it easier for the hitter to see the ball. Note the distinctive stitching pattern.



#### National Association, 1866

(National Association of Base Ball Players)

Weight 5 1/2 to 5 3/4 oz., Circumference 9 1/2" to 9 3/4"  
One-piece cover, \$50.00

Same size as the earlier white model above but with the hint of the curved, figure eight pattern of the later version.



#### National League, 1876

(National League)

Weight 5 to 5 1/4 oz., Circumference 9" to 9 1/4"  
Two-piece cover, \$50.00

Patterned the same as modern base balls for greater durability, less trauma to the stitching.



### Ferguson Ball Company 1997-98 Season Order Form

Please complete the information below and return with your payment to Ferguson Ball Company, P.O. Box 2384, Louisville KY 40201.

No credit cards accepted.

Or call to place your order (502) 895-3167. Call after 7 p.m. (EST) for a better chance to talk to J.R. directly.

Person ordering ball: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Night (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Team Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name on check (if different from contact): \_\_\_\_\_

Mail ball to this address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Order Information

Please send the following reproduction base balls and rule booklets:

Type of ball	Quantity	Price	Sub-Total
New York Rules 1858	_____ x	\$55.00	= _____
Mass. Rules "Town Ball"	_____ x	\$40.00	= _____
National Association, 1860	_____ x	\$50.00	= _____
National Association, 1861	_____ x	\$50.00	= _____
National Association, 1866	_____ x	\$50.00	= _____
National League, 1876	_____ x	\$50.00	= _____
Mass. Rules booklet	_____ x	\$5.00	= _____
N.Y. Rules Booklet	_____ x	\$5.00	= _____

Shipping and handling:

Add \$3.00 for each order up to \$150.

Add \$5.00 for each order over \$150.

(U.S. Postal Service mail)

Shipping and handling \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ORDER \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Because every Ferguson Base Ball is made individually by hand, production isn't a speedy process. You can expect delivery to take at least 8 weeks. To ensure you have the balls when needed, please indicate—  
Date by which you need the ball(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Not deliverable in less than eight weeks except by special arrangement. For special requests, call 502-895-3167 after 7 P.M. EST. If there will be a problem getting your order to you by the date specified, you will be contacted at the night phone number you have provided above.



## Where Base Ball Cards Started And What They Were Like in the 1860's

Edited by John "Tally" Wells

*Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the book *Base Ball Cartes* by Mark Rucker who may be contacted at 137 Circular Street in Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. His book is published by Haymaker Press. I urge all interested vintage base ball players to seek a copy of this book if they are interested in historically correct cards of the period.*

Among the most wonderful coincidences in modern times were the invention of photography and the advent of the game of baseball. Both beginnings are placed in the year 1839, though baseball as we know it was not under way until 1845. Many forms of the game predate the establishment of the "New York" style of play, which, all myths aside, was propagated in New York and Brooklyn. The New York game was essentially the same as ours.

Despite the pictorial opportunities from the first pitch, very few images from before 1860 have been found. A daguerreotype, a few ambrotypes, and some salt prints, all early photographic processes, have turned up. But it was with the mass marketing of photographs through the introduction of the Carte-de-Visite (CdV) that baseball images appeared in significant numbers. A CdV is a paper photoprint glued to a card mount,

approximately 2 1/2" x 4". They appeared in the late 1850's in France, England, and the U.S., but came to be known by the French phrase, which translates "visiting card." CdV's were issued in greatest numbers between the years 1861 and 1879.

By 1860 James Creighton, pitcher for the Excelsiors of Brooklyn, was the hero of the baseball world, as "cartomania" was sweeping the country. Though still a novelty, the CdV was catching on fast. The tintype had yet to go into mass distribution, so the CdV was the handy and inexpensive mode of sharing pictures. It was the perfect size for give-away use by individuals, organizations, and businesses alike. Most photographs were posed in a studio, but outdoor shots involving baseball do surface occasionally. A photographer's imprint on the face or verso of a carte can be the best clue for commencing an identification search. The city listed should lead to the correct general location for the team or player, though pictures were taken in other towns where games or other events were planned. Or, a photographer could have traveled with his equipment, set up in another vicinity altogether, while still using his home town address. This is the case for a number of the CdV's in this book.

The first baseball CdV found to date is an unprepossessing shot of a youth in uniform from about 1863. There were earlier examples, but these have not survived. The 1863 carte is unusual because during the Civil War organized baseball went into a dormant phase, with many able-bodied young men involved in the conflict. Although the number of teams decreased dramatically, the game played

Included in this book are some slightly larger than CdV size advertising cards, all of which, excepting photo number one, feature ball teams. Issued by sporting goods companies, clothiers, and others, these were promotional products. They were strictly commercial and manufactured in quantity. No matter the reason for their creation, all inclusions in this book could be called cards. And though a far cry from our modern varieties, they are the first baseball cards.

Below we have reproduced three early cards showing how photographers posed base ball players for their *carte de visites*. If you are planning cards in your team's future, here are some ideas to get you started.



Here are presented two photographs that represent the way early CdV ball players were posed. The "ego" of present day professional players had yet to appear so photographs not featuring close-ups of faces were most often seen.



## Reproduction CdV's

### Used by VBBA Teams

Below are pictured two CdV card fronts made for VBBA teams. The top one was created for the Muffins when they went to Colorado. The card under was made for the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels. The cards are passed out to visitors at matches.



**MIKE Choo Choo NIGHTWINE**  
Third Baseman of the Muffins Base Ball Club

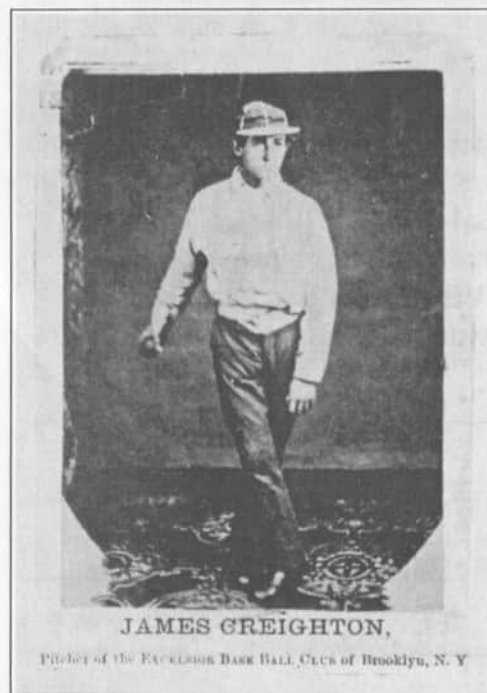




Lige Colburn  
circa 1863. Photographer: P.K. Clark,  
Elkhart Indiana. Probably the earliest  
CdV in the book Base Ball Cartes. Note  
the primitive pantalooned uniform.

## James Creighton

circa 1863. Photographer: unknown.  
In the late 1850's and early 1860's James  
Creighton was a baseball phenomenon. He



On it was during the war that the  
Southerners were taught the sport by  
Northern prisoners, or by their cap-  
tors in the North. By 1865, with the  
war over, an explosion of baseball ac-  
tivity occurred above and below the  
Mason-Dixon line. And with it came  
an outpouring of CdV's.

Baseball cartes depicted individ-  
ual players, groups, entire teams,  
game scenes, and accoutrements.  
These CdV's were not usually made  
for commercial purposes, but as pic-  
tures for family and friends. Images of  
famous people, historical sites, or local  
landscapes were produced for sale,  
but with baseball subjects the poten-  
tial for profit was very low. A baseball  
CdV might appear as just one more  
available selection in a photograph-  
er's catalog.

single-handedly transformed the game as  
the first pitcher to deliver fastballs with a  
wrist snap. From all accounts, he was over-  
powering. He played only for hometown  
Brooklyn teams, starting with the Young  
America Base Ball Club, followed by  
the Niagaras in 1858. One year later  
he moved to the Star B.B.C., landing  
finally on the Excelsiors, the city's  
strongest nine. No pitcher had been  
the focus of a ball team until  
Creighton's wizardry took the Excel-  
siors to the national championship in  
1860 and 1861. In addition to his  
pitching prowess, Creighton was a  
great hitter. He remains the only play-  
er ever to complete a season without  
being put out. The exposure received  
from the Excelsiors' tours made him a  
country-wide hero. He became the  
game's first martyr when he died belt-  
ing a home run in 1862, at twenty-one  
years of age. Though not technically a  
CdV, this is the oldest item of its kind.  
As Peck & Snyder Sporting Goods  
Company's first known issue, this was  
a memorial to Creighton. The verso  
contains a printed biography and tes-  
timonial to his stature in the baseball  
fraternity.



Below is reproduced a card with a typical pho-  
tographic style of the period. Action shots were  
before a backdrop showing the whole body.  
Outside shots were sometimes used, too.



**Kevin Ivy Killer Wilmot**  
Player of the Ground Squirrels Base Ball Club

## The First Base Ball Cards

by Tracy Martin

Were there base ball cards of non-pro-  
fessional teams in the 1860's? The answer  
is yes! The first base ball card was of the  
Atlantic Nine from Peck & Snyder dated  
1868. Many believe the first card was of the  
Red Stockings in 1869. However, the 1868  
card from Peck & Snyder was discovered.  
Peck & Snyder was one of the foremost  
suppliers of athletic equipment at the time  
when base ball was gaining popularity.

There are a number of tin types pro-  
duced in the 1850's, but few cards until the  
1880's. Sporting Life produced a set of  
Comic Cards Illustrated. By the late 1800's,  
tobacco companies discovered that cards  
inserted in cigarette packages increased  
sales. These cards proliferated. One of the  
foremost cigarette makers was Allen &  
Ginter of Richmond, Virginia. In 1884, Gin-  
ter introduced a small box to hold ten to  
twenty cigarettes and inserted a picture  
card in each box.

You often hear of "Old Judge Cards"  
from 1886-1890. There were actually more  
than 25 sets of cards issued between 1868  
and 1899. Many rare, one-of-a-kind cards,  
sheet, and photos exist in the collections of  
the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of  
Congress, and in private collections.



## The Base-Ball of Today

from page 3

out, three times three on a side, and three times three innings. If the pitcher is in fine form, the batters cannot hit him, and the spectators see inning after inning resulting in blanks. When some slashing fellow penetrates the secrets of the pitcher's curves, and hammers the ball for three bases or a home run, how the crowd cheers! And if the pitcher is not in good form, and is hit all over the field, how the crowd jeers him! It is the pitcher—always the pitcher. The fielders have little to do compared with what they did ten years ago. The game is all played between the pitcher's box and the catcher's mask.

The law-makers of the base-ball world have this thing now to consider: whether the public will not shortly grow tired of seeing this pitching and catching game. There are abundant evidences now that the spectators take delight in long, hard hits. They enjoy seeing the base men and fielders put the men out. They would rather see a game in which each side makes a dozen base hits, and the men are thrown out on the bases or caught out by the fielders, than a match in which the score is 2 to 1, and the pitchers glorify themselves with records of ten men struck out and two or three single hits. And if there is one thing more than another of which spectators are becoming heartily sick, it is seeing men go to first on balls. They want to see the ball hit, and the game won on positive, not negative, points of play.

What are the powers that be going to do about this in their deliberations in the course of the coming winter? It is undeniable that they see the present faults of the game; but how are they to avoid them? They may go on refining the pitching and batting rules, but it seems possible that the final result will be this: the pitchers have about reached the limits of their powers. No more curves or shoots are possible. In a season or two all the good batters will have mastered the tactics of the pitchers. What use will all the curves and shoots be then? Will it not be found advisable to go back to the old straight delivery, and depend upon the base men and fielders to put men out? And will not that system produce a game that will be far more interesting to the spectators, and consequently more profitable to the professional clubs? And will it not also produce a game more nearly within the powers of the average amateur, thus making base-ball even more generally popular as a sport than it is now? It looks so. At any rate it would be worth while for the League and Association officers to consider this matter with care.

## SABR from page 1

### Officials for both Matches were

"Honest" Jim Apel, Umpire (Frogs)  
Richard "Always Right" Schuricht, Umpire (Muffins)  
John "Tally" Wells, Scorer (Capitals)

Picked Nine players not belonging to a club were loaned a uniform shirt, pants and cap by the Historic Base Ball Association of Long Island, New York. Bats and balls were furnished by the Frogs.

There were spectators in period costumes from the Great Black Swamp Frogs, the Ohio Village Muffins, the Columbus Capitals and several other teams.

## Vintage Match at 3Com Park

Thanks to the efforts of Barry Mednick and other SABR members, vintage base ball was played at Candlestick Park as a part of the convention. Two vintage squads took the field prior to the Giants-Rangers game from about 6:45 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. on Friday, June 26. A little more than one inning was played with full coverage by the Jumbotron television system and much reaction by a very enthusiastic crowd.

Participants were from Thursday's matches who are members of regular vintage clubs plus some others. An exact record was not kept so that all the time was devoted to playing. Scheduled players included the following:

### Frogs

John Husman, Captain  
Brad James  
Boyd Montgomery  
Mike Smith  
Craig Stough  
Ben Stough  
Charlie Trudeau  
Jim Tootle  
Don Anderson

### Picked Nine

Mark Rucker, Captain  
Greg Rhodes, Captain  
Jim Freeman  
Kevin Lehr  
Bob Tholkes  
Rich Arpi  
Fred Buckland  
Howard Luloff  
Dan Levitt  
Jim Wyman  
Chip Atkison

Officials for the match were Jim Apel, Announcer; Richard Schuricht, Umpire; and John Wells, Scorer. Our ladies and other spectators joined the teams on the field in costume. And we were all pleasantly surprised how many people spoke with us after the demonstration and asked questions.

After the demonstration, we all shivered in the San Francisco Bay cold and wind to watch the Ranger/Giants game.

## Mr. Baseball

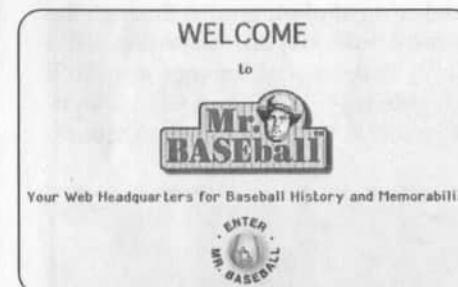
from page 2

- Who the first professionals were
- How the first leagues were formed
- The Negro Leagues
- Who the first superstars were
- The Black Sox scandal of 1919
- Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig
- The great Yankee Dynasty of the 1920's and 30's

Mr. Baseball is more than history. It will feature a forum where you'll be able to discuss all kinds of baseball issues (of both the past and present eras) with various baseball celebrities and sportswriters as well as fellow baseball fans!

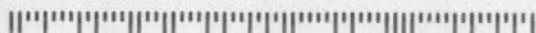
Plus, you'll be able to tour the largest private baseball memorabilia collection in the world. And, in our stadium store called the Concession Stand, you'll be able to buy all types of baseball memorabilia.

The history of the game will come alive in our screening room! Here you'll be able to keep up with the latest Major League scores and standing in our links area, as well as visit some of the most interesting baseball pages on the web — all personally recommended by Mr. Baseball!



The home page of the Mr. Baseball web site located at

<http://www.mrbaseball.com>



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