



# THE CHRONICLE

BASE BALL PLAYER'S  
SUMMER 2022  
QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION

VBBA PRESIDENT'S CORNER SUMMER 2022

# Summer 2022

Vintage base ball has returned to a level of activity that is close to where it was prior to COVID. The major vintage base ball summer festivals are back to full strength. The 2022 Michigan Vintage Base Ball Festival, St. Louis Cup, The Great Gettysburg National 19th Century Base Ball Festival & Tournament, Capitol Trophy Tournament hosted by the Canton, Michigan Cornshuckers, and Tennessee Vintage Base Ball Association's Nashville Classic have successfully occurred.

The Doc Adams Old Time Base Ball Festival is back August 6-7. The invitational Ohio Cup Vintage Base Ball Festival is happening at Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio, September 3-4. The new Hamtramck Hussars Base Ball Club has a full schedule of August home games in the beautifully restored Hamtramck Stadium.

Plans have been made for the Colorado Vintage Base Ball Associations Best of The West 30th Anniversary Celebration: A Congress of Ballists at 9,708 feet above sea level on June 23rd, 24th, & 25th 2023 at the historic Gold Bowl in Victor Colorado.

Contact: [commissioner.cvbba@gmail.org](mailto:commissioner.cvbba@gmail.org) to sign up your vintage base ball club.

The Awkwards Vintage Base Ball Club of Central



Florida, Fort Meyers Vagabonds, and newly formed Bradenton Shamrocks BBC vintage base ball clubs open their season this October in Florida. Consider traveling south this winter with your ball club.

The 2023 Vintage Base Ball Conference goes live once again in Dayton, Ohio, March 31 to April 2 with the help of the Earl McDaniels and his club the Eastwood Iron Horses, and the other Dayton vintage base ball clubs. It will be held at the Radisson Hotel Convention Center. Plans are being started to hold the All Comers matches at Dayton's Carillon Historical Park.

Mike Ace Adrian's Somonauk, Illinois memorial ball game and celebration was attended by more than seventy-five friends and family. Ellie Boss Lady Carlson of the Chicago Salmon birthday celebration at Grinder Field, home of the Deep River Grinder's was attended by her family and friends.

A host of new vintage base ball clubs have joined the VBBA. Binghamton Crickets Vintage Base Ball Club of New York, Delhi Polecats, Little Falls Alerts, Brownstown Volunteers Vintage Base Ball Club, Hillsdale People, Wyandotte Stars BBC, Bradenton Shamrocks, and Pluggy's Town BBC.

It is great to be back to getting to play the game that we love.

## For the Love of the Game!

GARY THE PROFESSOR SCHIAPPACASSE

PRESIDENT, VBBA



# VBBA 2023 CONFERENCE

## DAYTON – MARCH 31 – APRIL 2, 2023



### **Radisson Hotel Dayton Convention Center**

Reservations are open! The room rate for any room is \$119. Get your reservation in before March 1, 2023. Guests are able to call 937-660-5857 and identify themselves with the “Vintage Base Ball Association” for the group rate.

The top things to do in Dayton near our 2023 VBBA Conference hotel: Radisson Hotel Dayton Convention Center

### **Dayton Convention Center:**

As Ohio’s first synergy center, this premier event facility in downtown Dayton was founded on innovation. [www.daytonconventioncenter.com](http://www.daytonconventioncenter.com)

### **America’s Packard Museum:**

features more Packard automobiles than any other collection in the world. [www.americaspackardmuseum.org](http://www.americaspackardmuseum.org)

**Oregon District:** Walk this historic downtown district full of stunning late-Victorian architecture. Galleries, boutiques, coffee shops, and restaurants abound, and the area hosts live events as well. [www.oregondistrict.org/](http://www.oregondistrict.org/)

### **National Museum of the US Air Force:**

Boasting more than 360 airplanes. [www.nationalmuseum.af.mil](http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil)

### **Carillon Historical Park:**

65 acres of history: Explore 30 historic buildings, ride the Carousel of Dayton Innovation, and visit Carillon Brewing Company. [www.daytonhistory.org](http://www.daytonhistory.org)

### **Cox Arboretum MetroPark:**

Discover Dayton’s outdoorsy side at this 189-acre park, which features nature trails, a tree tower, a butterfly house, and a children’s maze. [www.metroparks.org/places-to-go/cox-arboretum/](http://www.metroparks.org/places-to-go/cox-arboretum/)

**Dayton Art Institute:** Housed in an iconic historic building, this 27,000-piece collection includes Monet paintings, Chihuly glass sculptures, and ancient ceramics from the Mediterranean region. [www.daytonartinstitute.org](http://www.daytonartinstitute.org)

**Boonshoft Museum of Discovery:** Zoo, Planetarium, Children’s museum & science & technology center. <https://boonshoft.org/>

## WWW.VBBA.ORG



## VBBA Executive board and trustees

**Gary Schiappacasse**  
**PRESIDENT**

**Evette**  
**Griffore-Jacobson**  
**VICE PRESIDENT**

**Bill Helm**  
**SECRETARY**

**Paul Zeledon**  
**TREASURER**

**Bob Sampson**  
**HISTORIAN**

**Ed Shuman**  
**TRUSTEE**

**Dustyn Dubuque**  
**TRUSTEE**

**Collin Miller**  
**TRUSTEE**

**Bill Pollifrone**  
**TRUSTEE**

**Tony Wicker**  
**TRUSTEE**

**Blaise Lamphier**  
**TRUSTEE**



THE BASE BALL  
PLAYER'S CHRONICLE  
LAYOUT BY  
**KIDGARCIA.COM**



REMEMBER AS YOUR CLUB PLANS FOR THE FUTURE THAT THE VBBA IN ADDITION TO LIABILITY INSURANCE, OFFERS ITS MEMBER BALL CLUBS UP TO A 15% DISCOUNT ON SEVEN VENDOR'S PRODUCTS. THE MERCHANT CODE FOR VBBA MEMBERS IS VBBA1996. THEY INCLUDE:

**15% Discount**  
**Phoenix Bats:**  
[www.phoenixbats.com](http://www.phoenixbats.com)

**Stockbridge Sewing Works:**  
[www.stockbridgesewingworks.com](http://www.stockbridgesewingworks.com)

**K&P Weaver, LLC:**  
[www.baseballamericaspastime.com](http://www.baseballamericaspastime.com)

**19cbaseball:**  
[www.19cbaseball.com](http://www.19cbaseball.com)

**James Country Mercantile:**  
[www.jamescountry.com](http://www.jamescountry.com)

**Smacker Bats:**  
[www.smackerbats.com](http://www.smackerbats.com)

**Cooperstown Bats:**  
[www.cooperstownbats.com](http://www.cooperstownbats.com)

**James Country Mercantile:**  
[www.jamescountry.com](http://www.jamescountry.com)

**10% Discount**  
**K&P Weaver, LLC:**  
[www.baseballamericaspastime.com](http://www.baseballamericaspastime.com)

**GET CONNECTED WITH THE VBBA**  
**[www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org)**

**[www.facebook.com/  
vintagebaseballassociation](http://www.facebook.com/vintagebaseballassociation)**

**[twitter.com/VBBA19C](https://twitter.com/VBBA19C)**

**[www.instagram.com/  
Vintage\\_Base\\_Ball\\_Assoc](https://www.instagram.com/Vintage_Base_Ball_Assoc)**



## STARTING A VINTAGE BASE BALL TEAM

# From the ground up

BY BILL HELM

FOUNDER OF THE WHATCOM ACES AND FORMER CAPTAIN OF THE FORT VERDE EXCELSIORS // VBBA SECRETARY

In my more than eight years as a vintage base ballist, I have captained one team and have founded another.

In 2013, I played my first vintage base ball game. The 1860-era Fort Verde Excelsiors played a special town event that April. The park manager invited me out to play. The uniforms were wool, the ball was significantly softer than a big-league ball, we all caught the ball with our hands and if we caught it on one bounce, well, batter out! It was awesome.

After playing about 100 vintage baseball games in eight years, my wife and I moved 1,700 miles northwest to the Pacific Northwest. As my wife and I made plans to leave the desert behind and settle into a new community, one of the many things we talked about was the vintage game, and what would it take to start a team (actually a group of teams) from scratch.

In 2006, Alexander Joy Cartwright IV announced similar plans for bringing vintage baseball to Washington. Online records seem to show nothing newer than 2008 on his efforts.

Now here in the PNW, my wife and I are less than 20 miles south of the U.S./Canada border and about 90 miles north of Seattle. We also have

a name for our new 1860-era team: the Whatcom Aces. I named the team after Mike 'Ace' Adrian, a dear friend who passed away in December 2021.

The Aces have had four practices, but anyone in the PNW knows how weather can put a damper on team turnout. So we continue to get the word out and we continue to schedule practices and scrimmages with the intent of growing the vintage base ball movement up here.

The best turnout we have had at a vintage base ball practice is 10 people. Of course we need at least twice that if we're going to scrimmage. So far we have had batting and fielding practice, and taught folks how to catch the ball with their hands. Once we get enough people out, we will emphasize the finer details of the game, how the rules evolved from the 1860 game to today. Until then, we continue to use social media and the local newspaper to get the word out to the masses. Of course everyone I meet it seems I tell about the vintage game.

I imagine once things really get started my only real problem will be keeping them coming.

The following are stories from other VBBA members and the efforts they underwent to start their own teams and to keep their teams active:

**Bud Bowersock of the Fort Verde Excelsiors shows how he catches a ball. (PHOTO BY BILL HELM)**







## Rock Spring Ground Squirrels ILLINOIS

BOB SAMPSON // TEAM CO-FOUNDER  
VBBA HISTORIAN

You might say I was one of the founders. The main guy was Lee Slider, then a cultural interpreter for the Macon County Conservation District which was in effect a park district.

I can share experiences, largely from the Ground Squirrels club (launched in 1992) and a few others I've observed. For the first few years, 1992-1994, our practices were largely just trying to get used to catching a ball bare-handed, becoming familiar with the rules, etc.

Once we started playing regular vintage teams in 1994 — and there was only one in our area and that a three-hour plus one-way drive away — it took us about a year to realize we needed to work to present a respectable presence on the field.

We eventually instituted a two-a-week practice routine — Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, the latter on days we didn't have a game. The evening practice resulted in some of the less committed players leaving the team, in part because they lived an hour or more away from Decatur. But we hung on — and slowly got better, especially on defense.

I think too many people think practice consists of batting practice — a pretty dull thing for all except the batter. On the other hand, by focusing on defense or when enough players were on hand playing games, we got more respectable. We didn't start winning right away but we lost with less embarrassment and gave our fan base something to appreciate.

As part of a living history site, we did not have problems with the uniforms. Those were taken care of by the District. We had a seamstress make shirts based on photographs of the old Knicks, we found a supply of hats at a nearby Amish settlement, we found a source of blue jeans without contrasting stitching and that was it. But what about teams without sponsorship?

I like the example of the early St. Louis Unions who had players simply wear white Oxford-type shirts with dark pants or blue jeans until they could get up the funds to purchase accurate clothing. In fact, the GS have encouraged start-up teams over the years to adopt the white-shirt standard.

The first two years, 1992-93, players wore a mix of clothing. Those, like me, affiliated with the living history program, could round up a period shirt and sometimes even pants, from the program.

Other players, especially our softball players, wore whatever, even shorts. We became an official team in 1994 when we got the uniforms. We always wore them after that. A few years later, again through the District, we had a set of shirts made for visiting teams who lacked uniforms. We've continued to use those shirts, more today as an extra uniform shirt for two-day events or (when we had a lot of players) for a muffin squad to play in multi-team events.

Once we had the uniforms (but there is no reason you'd have to have them) we started playing at local festivals against pick-up teams. We'd also play grounds like the local TV station, the Farm Bureau or other groups. Especially at the festivals, we raised our profile. We'd also pick up potential players.

In Decatur, there was an active program of youth baseball and for a number of years we played the youth coaches. Those were always great games and sometimes picked up players. Most players, however, came by word of mouth.

We also have a weekly newspaper in Decatur that, after the local daily ignored us, would carry regular reports (and still does) about our games, usually giving us a lot of space with pictures. I wrote nearly all of these stories and am always surprised by the number of people who see these and comment to me about them.

So these are some rough, random thoughts about how my club, the Ground Squirrels started. We were the first team in Illinois. The Chicago Salmon came along in 1996 and then slowly the game spread into the St. Louis area. But it was not until nearly the mid-2000s that we had enough teams within driving distance to fill a schedule with vintage teams. Until that point, we did a lot of barnstorming at local festivals, etc. These, by the way, earned us cash as the team was paid an appearance fee.

Most teams do it without a sponsoring organization — that includes all the St. Louis teams, Danville, Springfield, and others here in Illinois.





(COURTESY PHOTO)

**In a 2019 vintage base ball game, Tim Carl, Guy Chilleli and Bill Helm of the Fort Verde Excelsiors wait for their turn at bat.**



**Gary Schiappacasse**  
VBBA PRESIDENT

#### **Chicago Salmon – Illinois**

Although I did not start the Chicago Salmon I did work on recruiting new players and managing our preseason practice.

I ran the practice like I would with my son's team when he was in grade school. Everyone took turns batting, initially I was the pitcher. The next portion of the practice I used Peggy Move Up. All of the players rotated their positions playing infield, and when we had enough players, the outfield. Some of the players at the practice came wearing the Chicago Salmon t-shirt.

Learning how to play by 1858 or 1860 rules happened during our regular season games. Until the last few years, I scheduled 25 or more dates.

I positioned the players at the games based on the skills they showed me at the practice and during the games. As for recruiting, we used our website and flyers as well as inviting the interested fans, especially when either team was short a player to play the game. All were welcome.



**Dave Marli**  
TEAM CAPTAIN

#### **Phoenix Senators – Arizona**

We keep our practices very informal. T-shirts and shorts, no vintage anything except equipment and rules. We even allow our pitcher to use a modern glove during BP, just makes things easier. Basically, keep everything during practice as easy for the player as possible.

For recruiting (or any other public) event, definitely wear uniforms. We're not sticklers as to vintage customs. We'll usually explain the various customs as situations arise, but again, we keep things light. We concentrate more on teaching the rules rather than the customs. The rules are usually difficult enough, so we don't want to overwhelm the newbies and scare them off.

So I'd start with the rules, and once your team has a good grasp of those, then start introducing the customs. Something like, "OK guys, we have a few games under our belt now and we're understanding the rules, but to be a true vintage base ball club, we need to follow some vintage customs as well. Here's what other clubs around the country do ..." That sort of thing.



**Tony "Lightning" Wicker**  
TEAM FOUNDER

VBBA Midwest Southwestern Region Trustee

#### **St. Louis Brown Stockings – Missouri**

When I started the St. Louis Brown Stockings, we held practices at our home field which was all grass. We would go over the basics of the rules and then just did batting practice but worked on fielding while we did batting practice. Mostly it was to help players get used to hitting the ball with a wooden bat and the 45-foot distance from the rubber to the plate.

The players on the field would work on trying to either catch the ball or get the ball on one bound by seeing how the ground played. At each game, we would always remind players about certain rules that may apply to the game. Most of Missouri plays 1860 rules but many clubs in Illinois plays 1858 so educating the players before each game does help.

We never wore vintage attire to practices so they wouldn't get ripped or torn in any way. All our practices were informal based on how many players showed up. If we had enough to make close to two teams, then we just did a practice game. I never cared about winning or losing but treating my whole club as a family. I think that is why after 12 years we are one of the few teams in the metro St. Louis Area to be able to hold onto a full team of players at all of our games, whereas many other teams are struggling with players to attend games. We try to get at least one new person each year.



The background of the page features three baseballs, slightly out of focus, arranged in a triangular pattern. The top two are light-colored with visible stitching, and the bottom one is darker.

# HOW ABOUT WE JUST HAVE FUN?

BY BOB SAMPSON, VBBA HISTORIAN

Aside from the greater New York area or a few other large cities, determining just how good individual players were presents a challenge for students of the 1860 era.

Without detailed, regular coverage and box scores, an adjective like good is simply subjective. So, if you embark on a quest to determine the best players in your area during the time your club recreates, be warned — the measurements we use today may not apply.

For instance, without regular box scores, how does one compute a true batting average for a player? You may find some games with the requisite statistics but others with merely a line or two listing the score. And objectively judging a pitcher is also a challenge as in the 1860s, outside the East Coast, most pitchers were expected to simply get the ball to a point where the batter could hit it.

There are intimations that even in Illinois between 1865 and 1870 (the high point of the early club era), some pitchers were varying speeds to confound batters. But just what they were doing and how remains unclear.

Of course, someone like Albert Spalding of Rockford's Forest City Club gained early fame as a pitcher by defeating the powerful Washington Nationals Club during its western tour in 1867. We also know that Spalding went on to play professionally so one can safely assume he was good. But what about his contemporary, Patrick Keenan of the Bloomington Base Ball Club, like Spalding lured to Chicago in 1867 with a job consisting of low-energy duties in a store and great

attention to winning base ball games?

We know that Keenan was good enough to be recruited by the Chicago Excelsiors but why — a fast pitch, a slow pitch, a curve? — remains a mystery.

According to one account written in the early 20th century, a precursor of Babe Ruth took the field for the Pana Excelsiors Club. Located about 25-30 miles south of the Illinois capital in Springfield, Pana's club had a successful — and short — history, losing only one game. Its star was an immigrant from Ireland who had served in the Union Army during the Civil War, J.C. McQuigg.

We have only a brief mention of a home run McQuigg hit in a game at Vandalia, supposedly hit so far that he was able to rest on third base before proceeding home. Fields at this time usually lacked fences, so one imagines the ball just kept rolling and rolling and rolling.

Decades later, a Pana writer would refer to McQuigg as the Babe Ruth of his times. But the number of home runs he struck or his batting average or much else about his playing remains lost.

We are missing the point. In small towns and cities, these clubs were largely playing among themselves and with other clubs for fun. Base ball was an activity, not a profession. Then, as now, only a tiny percentage had superior skills.

Perhaps those of us in vintage base ball might emulate those early players. Don't worry about batting averages, pitching prowess, or even who won or lost. How about we just have fun?

# LOOKING BACK: A Gentle Man's Look at Base Ball

GENTLEMAN JIM TOOTLE • ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE JANUARY 2006 MUFFIN TIN

“And your record, sir?”  
“What was your record?”  
I was asked this question  
by a friend a few days  
ago when I commented  
that the vintage base  
ball season had ended  
with our annual banquet  
and a final club match  
on the first weekend  
of November. It was a  
reasonable question and  
he was undoubtedly  
surprised that I had no  
ready answer.

Since I had not given much thought to won-lost records as the season rolled on, I could only reply that the Muffins typically play about 50 games a year and usually win about two-thirds or three-fourths of them.

Thinking back on it, I am certain that if asked the same question, probably no other member of our vintage base ball program could have answered it either.

Muffins, Diamonds and Capitals play to win. But we do not measure success at the end of a season solely in terms of the team's won-lost record. Make no mistake — vintage players in our program, like all ball players, enjoy coming out on the winning side and give it their all during a match to try to make that happen.

Strikers concentrate on hitting the pitch hard and are ready to take an extra base should the defense bobble the ball. When hitting a ground ball or pop-fly, strikers run hard to first base. Likewise, fielders often put forth unbelievable efforts in going after balls on defense and spectators are usually treated to several spectacular diving catches during the course of a game.

There is no lack of effort or desire in a vintage match. Yet, players have come to know that there is more to playing the game of base ball than winning. Honorable play and high standards of good sportsmanship enter into the mix and influence everything we do.

Although a bit fuzzy regarding our record of games won and lost for the past

season, I clearly recall the details of two plays which illustrate what vintage base ball is all about.

The first occurred in July at Schiller Park at the conclusion of a match with the Cincinnati Red Stockings.

As the two clubs lined up for the “closing ceremonies” in which the score is announced and three cheers are exchanged, one of the Red Stocking players stepped forward and asked if he could say a few words. He commented that during the course of the match, one of the Muffins, Mr. Frank Thompson as it was revealed, had demonstrated an act of uncommon sportsmanship that deserved recognition.

The Cincinnati, who had been playing third base, explained that during the course of the game Mr. Thompson had rounded third on a hit to the outfield by a teammate and could have easily scored an ace for the Muffins. Mr. Thompson, however, missed the base.

The eyes of the single umpire and all the players and spectators were following the ball as the outfield ran it down and threw it back to the infield. Third base was virtually invisible in the tall grass and no one was much paying attention to whether Mr. Thompson had stepped on the canvas bag on the way home. No one, that is, except Mr. Thompson (and, as it turned out, the Red Stockings third baseman).

Knowing he had missed the base and that his run would be tainted, Mr. Thompson stopped on his dash for home



and returned to third, where he would wait for another opportunity to score (legitimately) on a hit by a subsequent batter. Opponents, teammates, and spectators had all missed the play when it happened, but all were impressed by Mr. Thompson's fine sense of honesty and fair play.

The second incident occurred the following day under the shade of the giant trees that ring the home field of the Spiegel Grove Squires at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio.

The occasion was a double-header, fearing the Capitals-Squires match followed by a Muffins-Squires match. Mr. Joel Armbruster, who plays on both the Muffins and Capitals, hit a ground ball and hustled down the line toward first base. The Squires' infielder made the play on Mr. Armbruster's daisy cutter and threw to first, with the ball arriving as Mr. Armbruster reached the base. The first baseman juggled the ball for an instant just as Mr. Armbruster's foot came down on the bag, further complicating the umpire's task of making the correct call on this extremely close play. This observer happened to be chatting with some spectators in the vicinity of first base at the time and although I had a good view of the play, I could not be sure if the ball or the runner had reached the base first. The umpire also could not tell for sure and in the custom of the gentlemanly era we portray, looked to the players involved for assistance in making the correct call. Was the runner safe or out? No one knew for sure—except Mr. Armbruster, who looked toward the umpire, shook his head to indicate that he had not beaten the throw, left the base without further discussion, and jogged back to the Muffins' bench. To the surprise of the spectators, Mr. Armbruster had called himself out.

It is worth noting that both of these exemplary displays of good sportsmanship took place in close games in which the outcome was in doubt.

The Muffins scored a narrow victory by a run or two in the match with the Red Stockings and the Squires took the match at Spiegel Grove by the margin of a single tally. Both matches were close, well-played affairs where the issue was in doubt right down to the last inning.

Yet, while everyone was playing hard to win, sportsmanship prevailed on these occasions, just as it did on many other days throughout the season. Now, months later, we recall these examples of good sportsmanship more than the final score of the matches.

To put the actions of Mr. Thompson and Mr. Armbruster in perspective, we need only go back to the 7th inning of the second game of the World Series in October past.

With two on and two out and Houston leading Chicago, 4-2, an inside pitch from Mr. Wheeler, a hurler for the Texas nine, was judged by the umpire, Mr. Nelson, to have nicked the arm of Mr. Dye, the White Stockings' striker. According to modern rules, Mr. Dye was awarded first base.

The problem was that the ball actually nicked Mr. Dye's bat, not his arm and should have been ruled a foul ball.

Tintypes clearly showed that the ball had hit the bat. After the game, Mr. Dye admitted that he knew the ball had struck his bat, not his arm.

According to an article by senior writer Ken Rosenthal on the Fox Sports, "The umpire told me to go to first base, so I went to first base," Dye said. "I didn't argue with him. It was a big break for us."

It certainly was. With the bases now loaded, Mr. Konerko struck a home run, putting the Chicagos ahead 6-4. The White Stockings eventually won the game and went on to win the series.

Mr. Dye's actions were in keeping with the norms of the modern game. Acting as if he had been hit by the ball, he started for first base, and the umpire, unsure as to what had happened, fell for the ruse. Mr. Dye's behavior was representative of what would be expected from any modern professional player.

But it was not what we would expect from our teammates and opponents in a vintage game where the standards of honesty and sportsmanship are higher.

These recent incidents from vintage base ball and professional baseball call to mind the memorable verse penned by legendary sportswriter Grantland Rice long ago:

"For when the One Great Scores comes  
To mark against your name,  
He marks — not that you won or lost —  
but how you played the game."

"What was our record?" In terms of games won and lost, I am not sure. But we can all take great satisfaction in the fact that we have consistently placed a higher priority on performing admirably than on winning and losing games.

Measured by Mr. Rice's timeless reminder about the importance of good sportsmanship, my sense is that the members of our fine program "won" every time they took the field.



# What have we learned about the vintage game?

BY BOB SAMPSON, VBBA HISTORIAN

Each year, thousands of people across the United States play base ball based on rules first adopted in the 19th century. Calling the game vintage base ball, the players use equipment, uniforms, rules and customs of the game's formative years.

In 2011, James Tootle wrote the book *Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime*. On the back cover, the book is considered a “lore-laden how-to” for playing the game and to properly present the early game to the public, covering “everything from historically accurate equipment and etiquette to the rules of play.”

Tootle, who was present as a founding member at the VBBA's organizational meetings in 1995-96, recently answered questions for us in a Q&A format. The following is the Q&A with Tootle about what he has learned since writing *Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime*.

## **What first inspired you to learn about 19th Century base ball?**

My involvement in vintage base ball is the result of the fortuitous convergence of two factors in the spring of 1991 — reading *If I Never Get Back*, the masterful historical novel on the legendary 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings by Darryl Brock, and seeing an ad in the newspaper indicating that the Ohio Historical Society was looking for players for its vintage base ball team, the Ohio Village Muffins.

Since I have always had a special interest in baseball and since my academic background is in American history, it was a natural fit for me since I enjoyed both playing the game and researching its early history.

As I'm sure is the case for many in the vintage base ball community, my involvement with the Muffins has been a life-changing event which has led to 30 years of incredible opportunities, experiences, travel, friendships, and memories.

## **What have you learned since your book was published that differs from what you knew about the game?**

When I was working on the book from 2002-2011, I was not sufficiently aware of the role played by Daniel “Doc” Adams in the early history of the game. While I knew his name as one of the original Knickerbockers, the more recent research had not yet come to light regarding the significance of his many contributions.

The publicity surrounding the discovery and sale of his handwritten *Laws of Base Ball* (for \$3.26 million in 2016) brought his name to the attention of historians and the vintage base ball community.

We have also learned about the importance of Dr. Adams through the campaign of his great-granddaughter, the late Marjorie Adams, to promote his election to the Hall of Fame.

John Thorn, official historian of MLB, has also put his full support behind the need for greater recognition of Doc Adams.



## **Have you learned anything different about the game's rules and customs?**

Since I had 20 years' experience reading and thinking about rules and customs leading up to publication, areas of controversy were well-known, and I tried to respectfully address them in the book.

It is always interesting to read the various newspaper clippings and similar primary sources that various researchers have found and posted on the internet. These posts of game accounts and box scores sometimes show variations in rules and customs. This is to be expected given the slow and irregular communication between various parts of the country in that era.

## **How should this added knowledge influence how we play/portray the vintage game?**

One principle that I tried to follow throughout the book was definitely not to say all clubs must adopt the same rule interpretations and do things a certain way.

In both home matches with visiting clubs and through travels to a number of other venues, (some in other states), my approach was to observe various styles of play, identify best practices, and learn how the game could be played under different rule interpretations.

In areas where programs have had differences of opinion on such matters as swift versus slow pitching, unrestricted stealing versus advancing only on a passed ball, sliding, etc., my goal was to present all sides of the issue at hand and let program leaders weigh the pros and cons in making their decisions. There are successful programs that operate under different customs and interpretations.

When deciding what rule interpretations and customs to adopt, it is important for program leaders to consider all the consequences and outcomes.

While we all value presenting the game as authentically as possible, we also need to consider other factors including the safety of players and spectators, liability issues, length and pace of the game, financial considerations, recruitment and retention of players, maintaining spectator interest and engagement, and how the vintage team fits the overall goals and operating philosophy of the sponsoring organization (which often calls for discussions with museum professionals who have responsibility for the program).

Whatever new research discoveries are made, we still need to make careful decisions about adopting any new practices which would slow the pace or increase the overall length of the games.

To keep spectators interested and involved, the game needs to move along at a brisk pace, perhaps no more than about three pitches for the batter to put the ball in play. As Henry Chadwick reminded us throughout his writings, defensive plays are a beautiful

part of the game, while long turns at bat (10-12 or more pitches per batter) make the game "tedious" for the spectators.

We also need to carefully determine if any new research would lead to practices that increase the possibility of injury to anyone. Although *Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime* contains several passages about injury and liability (see *Safety First*, page 97; and *Safety Dictates Accommodation*, pages 341-342), my experience over the past 10 years has made me increasingly aware that liability issues are of paramount importance to sponsoring organizations and deserve greater attention.

Intentional fair/foul hitting is especially troubling. Although the practice might be authentic until 1877, the act of intentionally striking a ball sharply into the crowd sitting along the third or first base line would be hard to defend on grounds of historical authenticity if an injury would occur.

Even if a program has insurance for an accidental injury, would an insurance company cover a situation where a player intentionally hits a ball into the crowd and the ball strikes someone, especially a defenseless person in wheelchair or a toddler in a stroller?

MLB has recently taken significant steps to protect spectators from being struck by installing protective screens.

The American Association of Museums directs its members to "make it safe to visit your museum — or to work there." Players often do not think of liability issues but need to be reminded that whether it is a cooking demonstration, a horse and buggy ride, or a base ball game, no museum visitor should ever get hurt.

We need to continually examine all of our rules and customs, old or new, for opportunities to reduce and prevent the possibility of injury to players and spectators.

For more on safety, see *Lessons from the Civil War Community and Finding a Balance*, pages 342-345 of *Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime*.

## **Do you have any other baseball history books planned?**

I am currently working on an interesting project in the so-called dead ball era. I am writing a biography of Hank Gowdy, who is from my hometown of Columbus, Ohio.

As the catcher on the 1914 Miracle Braves, Gowdy led his team to victory in the World Series. In 1917, he became the first major league player to volunteer for military service in WW I and volunteered again at age 52 soon after Pearl Harbor — the only major leaguer to serve in both World Wars.

Before *Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime* (McFarland, 2011), my first book was *Baseball in Columbus*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2003).



### **James Tootle's involvement with the VBBA:**

An informal meeting of team captains and program leaders of interested clubs was held at the Ohio Cup at Ohio Village in September 1995. There was general agreement among the founding clubs at that time, facilitated by Doug Smith and other club leaders, that John Husman, Captain of the Sylvania Great Black Swamp Frogs, would be slated to become the first elected president of the VBBA.

(Sylvania is a suburb of Toledo and that area of NW Ohio was known in pioneer days as "The Great Black Swamp").

At that gathering at the Ohio Cup in September 1995, John Husman asked me to write the VBBA mission statement and to serve as chair of the Constitution Committee. Over the next several months, with input from others, I drafted these two documents.

The mission statement and the constitution were then presented, discussed, and adopted (with some minor changes) at the first formal organizational meeting of the VBBA in February 1996 in a classroom at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus. Once the Constitution was adopted and the officer positions were created, the representatives proceeded with the election of the officers, the formation of various committees, and other business.

At this February 1996 meeting where the VBBA was created, my role was to be one of the two official voting representatives of the Ohio Village Muffin program (each club had two voting representatives) and to present the Mission Statement and Constitution for adoption. I did not seek a position on the Board.

It was generally agreed to limit representation on the board so as to spread out the leadership positions among the various clubs. My teammate and a long-time member of the Muffins, Don Andersen, was slated for the Historian position and representatives from other clubs were slated for the other major offices.

As we have usually had a Muffin or two interested in serving on the board through the years, I have not been a candidate or served as Board member. I have, however, remained active by attending many of the annual conferences over the years and have given presentations on several occasions.

### **James Tootle's vintage base ball playing career:**

I started attending indoor training sessions and outdoor practices with Muffins in spring 1991.

My story of getting started with the Muffins is on pages 4-5 in the introduction of Vintage Base Ball: Recapturing the National Pastime.

At one of the early practices, the old returning players and the new players who, like me, had answered the ad in the paper, were divided into two teams for a practice game. Although I had usually been a middle infielder through junior high, high school, and traveling teams, I noticed the catcher's spot was vacant so I volunteered to fill in there.

Since the catcher position in vintage base ball is somewhat like an infielder behind the plate, I had a great time playing catcher that day and continued at catcher as my primary position with the Muffins from then on. As catcher, I quickly found you are in the game on every pitch and you need to be extra alert to be ready to grab a foul tick on the fly or the bound for an out.

Catcher became my favorite position, but I have always been glad to play anywhere in the field and bat anywhere in the striking order as needed.

I continue to be active with the Muffins 30 years after my first season. I continued to play fairly regularly until about five years ago when I began gradually transitioning from player to scorer and interpreter.

Anytime we had nine other players available, I would step back and let the younger players get the playing time, while I kept score or interacted with the spectators and explained what was happening on the field.



# FAMILY, ONE BIG FAMILY

BY BILL HELM • WHATCOM ACES • VBBA SECRETARY

**A**fter a two-year COVID-19 hiatus, the Douglas Dutchers vintage base ball club is back on the field this year.

However, Helen DeGeatano, the team's founder and a longtime VBBA member, has remained active with her love of the same game her late-son Brett shared with her.

For the 2022 VBBA conference, DeGeatano paid the Dodworth Saxhorn Band to perform at the conference's all-comers games at Greenfield Village, Michigan.

"I didn't do this for recognition," she said. "I did it because it was a great thing to do and to show people they could continue playing vintage base ball. That's why I hired the band to play at our conference and dedicated it to Brett. I sometimes feel he looks down to our team."

A baseball player as a young man, Bretton James Freed was first injured in a serious car accident in 1987, then in a second accident in 2004.

"Later on that evening Brett went to a better world where he's whole now and playing base ball," DeGeatano said. "That's how I picture him. Playing up there, a perfect day of base ball, playing ball with my husband. Sparky Anderson is the manager and Ernie Harwell is broadcasting. That's how I picture my son."

For DeGeatano, vintage base ball is a family. "One big family."

"Very much of a family like my club is a family," DeGeatano said. "My club likes to win but we play for the historic value."

In 2002, DeGeatano and her son saw the Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs team play a game. A year later, she started the Douglas Dutchers.

The Douglas Dutchers Base Ball club was formed to provide historic value to the Douglas and Saugatuck communities. It was established to promote historical education for the community through the participation in an 1860 vintage setting. It has promoted increased interest in - not only, sporting events of that era and the beginnings of baseball in America - but, a general knowledge of other aspects of that era. Although the Dutchers play 1860-era ball, the team was fashioned after a local club that first played in 1905.

The team plays at Beery Field, which is significant in its own right, as sporting events have taken place on Beery Field as far back as 1860. The field has also received a WPA (Works Progress Administration) grant in 1935 under the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration. The grant was obtained to rebuild the ball field as a recreational and educational site to be used for and by the community.

Learn more about the Douglas Dutchers at [douglasdutchers.org](http://douglasdutchers.org).

— Additional information provided by Douglas Dutchers website.



## The Dodworth Saxhorn Band



Bringing America's Musical Past to Life

The Dodworth Saxhorn Band (DSB), based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is living history, with musicians performing on authentic brass and percussion instruments made in the 1800s. Their performances delight audiences with authentic interpretations of middle-19th Century American music for 21st Century appreciation.

# Courtesy Runner Usage & Practices

BY BOB SAMPSON, VBBA HISTORIAN

Efforts to discover usages of a “substitute” or “courtesy” runner in base ball as played in the 1850s and 1860s and in “modern” vintage base ball proved more complicated than first thought. While the “Rules and Interpretations” on the VBBA website for the years 1858 and 1867 include information on the topic, it does not appear to be a “rule,” but an interpretation.

The leading expert on early base ball, Peter Morris, has the clearest explanation of it in “A Game of Inches” and this is one of two sources I cite.

**1. The history of the “courtesy” or “substitute” runner in baseball is confusing. Until 1873, it is more a practice or custom than a rule. A good source is Peter Morris’ “A Game of Inches,” p. 214, Section 6.2.6**

“Courtesy runners were an occasional feature of early baseball. When a batter was hurting but not incapacitated, one of his teammates—generally one who was already in the game—would act as a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner stood behind the batter and did his running, but the batter did not have to leave the game. For example, an 1867 article noted, ‘George [Wright] waited for a good length ball, and away he sent it ‘over the hills and far away,’ easily securing his second, or rather [Eb] Smith did it for him, George being a rather too lame for active running.’” (The Ball Player’s Chronicle, July 25, 1867).

Like so many of the customs of the gentleman’s era of baseball, this practice did not survive the transition to a more competitive environment. The intention of the rule was to make things easier for an ailing player, but clubs began using courtesy runners in other to have a swifter base runner or to get a running start.”

Morris continues for three more paragraphs on their efforts, ending with the banning of courtesy runners in 1950. Morris’ discussion is helpful for teams playing post-1870 rules who are using or contemplating using courtesy runners.

The second source is “Haney’s Base Ball book of Reference” by Henry Chadwick for 1867. In addition to rules, Chadwick includes discussions of their meaning and interpretations. Under “Regulations of Matches” in Section 31, covering rules for substituting players during a game, he writes:

**2. “No player can be changed, viz: one player of the club not in the nine substituted for another who is in, unless for just cause, such as [italics added] positive inability to play by reason of illness or serious injury. Mutual consent cannot permit one player to be substituted for another, except for the causes indicated.”**

Use in Modern Vintage Base Ball for Teams Interpreting 1845-1870 period

Discussions among selected clubs also reveal that within courtesy runner guidelines there are variations. Most involve two things: who can be a courtesy runner and the exact position on the field the runner should take as

the striker bats. Both Morris’ discussion and input from modern vintage players indicate that the practice developed NOT to gain a competitive edge but to allow a player who could still swing a bat and field to remain in the game.

How a substitute or courtesy runner may be used and where the player should stand if substituting for a player batting vary widely. Some clubs require the batter to reach first base safely before replacement; other clubs allow the runner to stand in the vicinity of the batter and run at contact for the base.

## Potential Problems in Use of Substitute/Courtesy Runner

The practice can lead to misunderstandings and potentially even abuses noted by Morris above. Certain guidelines could prevent disputes and hard feelings.

My recommendations are below:

### Recommendations

#### The Board recommends the following:

1. Clubs should decide their own policy on use of the substitute/courtesy runner.
2. On both home and neutral fields, captains should concur before the game if the use of a courtesy runner is allowed and, if so, whether the batter will be required to make first base or if the substitute runner can make the run to first and, if so, what side of the plate and what distance will she or he occupy.
3. The Board recommends that clubs consider sharing, even printing, a list of local ground rules and customs, including use of courtesy runners.
4. Clubs who wish to use their version of the practice (or not allow it) should make their policy clear to opponents, especially those from outside that club’s immediate area.





# Long and winding roads

MIKE' DRIFTER' GRIFFIN DISCOVERS A LOVE FOR VINTAGE BASE BALL

**Summit Station Signalmen**  
**Members of the Summit Station Signalmen,**  
**front row left to right:**

Matt 'Sticks' McClure, team Captain Michael 'Drifter' Griffin, Jed 'Jester' Willard. Back row left to right: Kyle 'Dutch' Strum, Nick 'Savage' Savage, Goug 'Boomerang' Burgett, Dan 'Deuce' Higby, Sven 'Viking' Gosnel. Not pictured, Kevin 'Whiskey' Smith, Mark 'Kracken' Anderson, Ben 'Jammin' Bartlett, John 'Smoky' Johnson, Christian 'Dudester' Blackburn, Bob 'Wolfman' Jack Wolf.



# PART I OF A TWO PART-STORY

BY MIKE 'DRIFTER' GRIFFIN

## What a rewarding chore it has been to form a new vintage base ball team.

Almost. We're almost there. We're at the make or break stage. Let's back up about 25 years, however, to the first time I ever saw a vintage game.

I lived in a tiny town with a rather large Midwest Apple Dumpling Festival, at which, the Saint Louis Perfectos were taking on the Mackville Mudcats and one Chatter Box, unbeknownst to me, was in attendance I later discovered.

I heard there would be an old-time base ball game just north of my home in a farm lot and I took my little boy up to watch. Fast forward to 2019 and my fine lady and I raising her grandson who is quite popular with the young ladies in his class.

My wife, Valerie "The Babe" Griffin, and I took Jaden and his friend Lila to a Cards game in St. Louis. On our way down, the ever-quiet and bashful Lila asked if I would take her by the Arch. She is a Cards fan but had never been to the Lou.

"Sure sweetie, whatever you want," I told her.

We parked at the Queen and rode the Metro across the river to give the full approach affect to the Lou. It was perfect. As we approached the Arch grounds, I could see quite an ado. There were all these guys playing base ball in old fashioned uniforms and the damn fools didn't have any gloves on.

As we approached the field to watch, one of the players, "Chatter Box," whom I now know how he received that nomenclature, started talking to us about vintage base ball. I was literally hooked from that very moment and vowed I would one day return to that field and play under the Arch. I can think of no finer a setting to play Vintage Base Ball.

So, to the vintage community and the great friends I've made the past three years, blame "Chatter Box." After that weekend, I went home and two weeks later I was back in the Lou at the Saint Louis Cup playing for the Vermillion Voles.

I started in right field that weekend but ended up playing third due to an injury and from that moment on I developed a very reluctant reputation as a hockey goalie third baseman, and I have the bruises and broken fingers to prove it.

Those fellow warriors who play the left side know where I'm coming from. For practice, just walk out into oncoming rush hour traffic and stop cars with your body. It was at this tournament I was anointed with my first vintage nickname "Rail Splitter"

because I work for a railroad.

Our last game that day was with the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels, and they had a very first-time player like me who was one of my high school teachers back in the '80s. Paul Carlton, who was also a professional fast pitch softball player, was on the field that day and we had a nice reunion. That weekend I developed a passion for the vintage game as a lifelong lover of America's past time that was, unfortunately, later mistaken.

Late that season, during the Uncle Joe Cannon Tournament in Danville, I ended up playing third base for the short Saint Louis Brown Stockings. Those two games turned out to be a factor later in my travels. I finished out the season with the Voles by doing games at third base during a tournament in French Lick Indiana where I caught the eye of Rooster with the Belleville Stags. I'm not going to lie; I took a brutal beating at that tournament, but Rooster asked if I would play third for them day two because they were short.

It was so cool playing for the Midwest famous Stags. I, thanks to the knowledge of Rooster, was informed I had tied a major league record when I made my third unassisted put out at third base. Thus, I was exposed to the art of sharing players and more St. Louis-area teams

Also, the end of that season I asked the Voles to do a promo tournament in Urbana, IL to help me promote a new area team. I invited the now-defunct Vandalia Old Capitols and the Lemont Quarrymen. Had I known at the time what that promo would lead to I never would've done it. But things have a way of working out.

I had discussed with the now new team captain of the Voles how we would work this new team out being so close to them. We agreed that we would coordinate schedules and share players for road games as needed. It seemed the logical approach to a new team and an established team struggling for road players.

Sadly, someone took something I said out of context when I was asked if another team in the same area would hurt the Voles by their Champaign players quitting the Voles and joining my Champaign-Urbana Twins.

I'll admit I wasn't very solid in my answer at the time when I said, "I don't want to take players from another team, but these guys are grown adults making their own decisions. I won't tell them no."

My new rule now is you cannot be playing for another team. That, unfortunately, has led to some bad blood that prevented the Voles from scheduling any games with us for the 2022 season. Lesson learned.

They're a solid vintage crew, a long time in this league, among the greatest. It's a damn shame we got off on the wrong foot and will never play this great game together being only 45 minutes apart. Some folks take this real serious and personal and I'm ok with that. Moving on.

In 2020, COVID hit and killed most of the season or all the season depending on where you lived. I started playing ball in May, but it was Golden Age Route 66 baseball

in Normal, IL with Brian "Twinkletoes" Thede. I dressed as Robert Leroy "Satchel" Paige and played Field of Dreams baseball where I got to live out my dream of pitching a major league baseball game.

I got so into that I now play game two as Mickey Mantle in my vintage New York Yankees uniform.

2020 wasn't a total bust on the vintage scene. I played

in Bloomington, IL a lot for visiting teams and made several new contacts. Late season I hooked up with "Lightning" of the Saint Louis Brown Stockings again and became somewhat of a traveling road player for them. This is where I went from "Rail Splitter" to "Drifter." It was a conversation between "Twinkletoes" and I where he said, "You're just some old tramp drifter forever in search of a pickup game." It stuck.

I'm a restless sort forever in search of "something," of which, I know not. I'm chasing a dream, an ideal, a thought, a memory. I love baseball plain and simple. My greatest childhood memories, much to the chagrin of my friends in Chicago, are of listening to Jack Buck and Mike Shannon on the radio broadcasting Cards games.

I would travel until the end of time to learn all there is to know about the history of baseball but most of all a time where color was not a factor. To go back and play this





game before an established color barrier is essential to my education of this game and plays a huge role in my recruiting potential players.

That said, and due to my falling out with the Voles, I decided to tie myself down to no team and play for whomever needed a road guy. I was going to expose myself to the unedited true nature of vintage base ball. I was going to observe then write about my observations through the “Drifter Travel Logs.” When I write I tend to be brutally honest with no filters, but rest assured it will be wholly unbiased.

Through my travels I’ve witnessed what I call the two sides of vintage base ball. Simply put, you can be competitive or you can play vintage base ball. The future of this league, in my humble opinion, rests solely in the entertainment factor. We can make this competitive like any other sport (we’re not a sport) or you can do a combination of historical accuracy and entertaining interaction with the viewing public.

Let’s face it, history is dry and boring. But we can change that. As much as I would love to dive into this I am getting off topic. I traveled this league and quickly learned which teams were more in tune with my goals and unfortunately developed a do not play list. That unofficial list is sadly very real.

The historically accurate and/or entertaining teams do not wish to play the competitive teams. I agree.

As for my team, if you’re going to be competitive and place emphasis on winning, then go join a local rec league and play softball. Yes, winning games is nice, but we don’t have to win them all, win them at any cost, or deliberately blow a team out.

A Springfield Long Nine said it best, “Don’t play to win, play to get invited back.” Hip hip hurrah not huzzah. I know this is going to upset some teams, but I’m being honest here. These are my personal observations based on speaking with fans or simply listening in on fan conversations.

There is a very thin line between being competitive and being aggressive and a canyon between those two and being entertaining. We must try to remember we are not there for ourselves, solely. There are complete strangers watching this and, more importantly, listening to this for the very first time. We would all do well to remember this.

So, late 2020 I made trips south and hung out with Lou area teams in Belleville and north to Bloomington IL where COVID restrictions weren’t as tight.

I added Lafayette Square to my bucket list of fields to play on after watching a YouTube video of a practice that I was invited to but did not attend. No big deal, just another stunning setting for vintage ball. Also, by this time I’d heard so much about the Deep River Grinders field in Hobart, IN it began to haunt my wandering soul and was added to the bucket list by default. It was Bloomington where I had my first encounter playing alongside the wildly entertaining Springfield Long Nine and later that year, they invited me to play for them in Hobart. I walked across that bridge with a huge smile on my face. Bucket list item, check.

I would go as Drifter to Bloomington to for the Chickens but always ended up playing for visitors who were short. I got to meet more people that way. It was also there I played for and opposed the Chicago Salmon. I was just getting started in my travels.

The farthest I played, thanks to “Rooster” for name dropping me, was Milwaukee, WI for the Menomonie Blue Caps.

\*That was then this is now. I traveled 8 hours to Menomonie to play for the Brown Stockings in 2021.\*

Anyway, I was called on Thursday and played on Saturday. I could get used to this. By the middle of the 2020 season, I noticed I was becoming a fixture in the area. I would show up to play for one team and players on the opposing team would call me out by name, The Drifter.

I was quick to notice there was a camaraderie, not just in the vintage world, but among specific Midwest teams and even among select players. It went beyond simple understanding or even the word camaraderie. These guys were genuine friends. There exists a core group, a lot of team captains I’ve noticed, of dedicated individuals who share a very tight and personal bond. There’s no need to name drop. Everyone already knows who they are. That’s my point. I hoped one day I would be welcomed into that fold. What an honor that would be. With the Good Will Match at Lafayette Square complete, winter is coming. That’s right, bucket list item, check. I played for various teams and met Craig Smith of the Murphysboro Clarkes. We hit it off immediately. He’s one of those core dudes I was talking about. I can’t wait for 2021.

**(THE VBBA WILL PUBLISH PART II IN THE FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER)**

## VBBA NEW MEMBER TEAM: Hillsdale People

The VBBA is now publishing short profiles of new member teams. Our first is of the Hillsdale People, run out of Michigan by Grant More. The Hillsdale People will play their home games at the site of the Will Carleton Poorhouse.

The Hillsdale People will play 1858 rules . Also involved in the 21st century Town Ball movement, More said he chose 1858 rules because “all townball teams, wherever they are located, will be mostly adhering to the 1858 rule set because townball is 80% the 1858 Dedham, Massachusetts rules, but it’s also 20% elements of cricket, stoolball, town ball (2 words), and old cat, and 5% original ideas (the application of the Fibonacci sequence/Golden ratio for our field).”

More played five organized seasons of vintage base ball at University High School in Fresno, California from 2012-2017. The Hillsdale People played their first game on Saturday, May 28 against the Detroit BBC.

Still working to assemble a full team, More said the Hillsdale People are “made up of whoever is available in my area.”

More can be reached by email at [gmore17@georgefox.edu](mailto:gmore17@georgefox.edu).

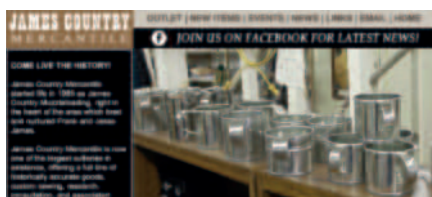
# VBBA vendor spotlight



## COOPERSTOWN BAT COMPANY

Since 1981, Cooperstown Bat Company has specialized in game bats for play, custom personalized engravings and autographed bats. Their pro model bats are available for players of all levels from the beginner through to the Major Leagues. Cooperstown bat is being used in several MLB organizations, American Legion, Babe Ruth, travel team, and high school players.

Cooperstown Bat Company also makes various vintage base ball bats, including acorn, knobless, bottle bat and split grip (double knob). You can see their bats being turned at the company's factory location in Hartwick, just 15 minutes from Cooperstown. Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code vbba1996 to get your 15% discount. Visit [cooperstownbat.com](http://cooperstownbat.com) for more information.



## JAMES COUNTRY MERCANTILE

James Country Mercantile started life in 1985 as James Country Muzzleloading, right in the heart of the area which bred and nurtured Frank and Jesse James. James Country Mercantile is now one of the largest sutleries in existence, offering a full line of historically accurate goods, custom sewing, research, consultation, and associated services. Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code vbba1996 to get your 15% discount. Visit [jamescountry.com](http://jamescountry.com) for more information.



## K&P WEAVER

Since 1994, K & P Weaver, LLC features reproductions of historic vintage base ball uniforms of the 19th Century and early-20th Century, equipment and more. K & P uniforms, clothing and accessories can be found across the ballfields of America to historical landmarks and museums such as the

National Baseball Hall of Fame, Smithsonian Institution, MLB All-Star FanFest, and they've been seen in the HBO Documentaries "The Curse of the Bambino," "Hitler's Pawn," and films such as "Dummy Hoy" and "Cop Out."

Member Code vbba1996 to get your 10% discount due to rising material costs for the purchase of team shirts, and knickers and trousers. Visit [baseballamericaspastime.com](http://baseballamericaspastime.com) for more information.



## STOCKBRIDGE SEWING WORKS

Stockbridge Sewing Works has all of your 19th century needs for hats and other sewing projects. Contact Norma Hildebrand to discuss hats, banners, and any other items she may be able to make for you. No head too big or too small. Fit and quality guaranteed. Hand crafted one at a time in the USA.

Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code vbba1996 to get your 15% discount. Visit [stockbridgesewingworks.com](http://stockbridgesewingworks.com) for more information.



## PHOENIX BAT COMPANY

Phoenix Bat Company has been crafting wood bats outside of Columbus, Ohio since 1996. Phoenix Bats starts by purchasing only pro-grade wood to deliver a quality bat to you and pros alike. Their bats are only made from American top-grade woods like rock maple, yellow birch and northern white ash. History and Background of Phoenix Bat Co. Founder and former owner Lefty Trudeau started playing 19th Century baseball for the Ohio Historical Society in 1991. In 1996, he was restoring old houses for a living and had a small wood shop. "The Historical Society knew my shop included an old lathe and they asked if I could make some bats typical of the 1860s," Trudeau recalled. "I agreed. Little did I expect how much I would have to learn or how much fun I would have. Not only did my team like the bats but the teams we were playing started asking me to make bats for them as well."

Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code vbba1996 to get your 15% discount. Visit [phoenixbats.com/vintage-bats](http://phoenixbats.com/vintage-bats) for more information.



## 19TH CENTURY BASE BALL

19th Century Base Ball If you want to get the ball that started it all, then you want 19th Century Base Ball. Call Eric Miklich at 631-796-5200 or e-mail [info@19cbaseball.com](mailto:info@19cbaseball.com).

Said Ron Swoboda, star of the 1969 New York Mets, 19cBaseball.com is "truly a one-of-a-kind resource for in-depth information related to the history of our great sport. I encourage all baseball enthusiasts to visit the site to learn more about how the game really began. Don't forget when ordering to use your VBBA Member Code vbba1996 to get your 15% discount. Visit [19cbaseball.com](http://19cbaseball.com) for more information.



## USA SMACKER BATS

USA Smacker Bats makes all its bats by hand, not by machine.

"If a vintage ballist wants to be true to the time period of play, we are the company to use," proprietor Brian Carter says.

Smacker Bats are handmade by craftsmen (including Carter) behind a lathe ... shaping, sanding, staining/ painting and striping the bats just like the originals back in the 1800s. With a quick turnaround between 1-2 weeks, these bats are all American, with all American tools and materials.

"We believe in quality of quantity," Carter says. Their pricing is competitive as well.

