



A Word from the Chair Committee Update, Convention News, and Welcome Back, Nineteenth Century Notes’.

by John Husman

The newsletter is a vital link to our committee members, and we have been without one for too long. For several years, former editor Fred Ivor-Campbell compiled a reference-quality newsletter. Fred retired from his post a couple of years ago, and we miss his editing and writing skills. But finally, we have a new plan of publication and Nineteenth Century Notes will again be appearing in our mailboxes (and/or our computers, depending on the wishes of the committee).

Greg Rhodes has agreed to compile our newsletter. He is a long-time member of SABR and this committee and is a past president of the Vintage Base Ball Association, and a veteran player and umpire of the vintage game. Some of you may know him as co-author of four books on the Cincinnati Reds, including a 1994 book on the Red Stockings of 1869-70, called "The First Boys of Summer"

Greg promises shorter, but more frequent issues of Nineteenth Century Notes, published on a scheduled basis. He welcomes input from all members. Please let him know of your concerns, suggestions and questions. Let him know what you would like to see in our newsletter. Most of all, feed him material that he can use in future issues.

A word about projects. Projects, large or small are the essence of our committee. They can be as small as one person who publishes his research results in our newsletter or as large as dozens of committee members collaborating to publish a book. Our committee had done plenty of both, and can do more. Project subjects are limitless. If you have an idea for one, please let me know. We have two ongoing projects at present; the "American Association (1882-1891) History Project" directed by Jonathan Dunkle, and the "Nineteenth Century Rules and Practices Project" directed by Chip Atkison. Please see their report elsewhere in this issue- Projects are a great way to multiply individual efforts. Consider starting one or joining in on one already underway.

I plan to solicit ideas for the future direction of our committee at our convention meeting. I'll report on that in our next issue.

This year's convention is at Milwaukee July 11-15. The Nineteenth Century Committee meeting will be Thursday, July 12 from 8:00-9:00 am. If you would like to speak at the meeting just let John Husman about your topic and the time needed. If you will not be attending, but have an agenda item; let John know that as well. A vintage base ball match will be held Sunday, July 15 at 10 am., and may be of interest to our members. Please see Jim Tootle's article within these pages for details.

Nineteenth Century Committee Mission and Goals

by John Husman

As an introduction to the committee for those new members and as a reminder for our veteran members, let me review the purpose of the committee as it was established by SABR. I have followed that with several committee functions and research goals.

Mission

To disseminate knowledge of nineteenth century baseball within the committee, to SABR, and to the baseball public generally.

Committee Functions

- 1) Encourage and assist members' Individual research
- 2) Organize and carry out committee research projects
- 3) Hold an annual meeting at the SABR convention
- 4) Publish a committee newsletter
- 5) Work with the Vintage Base ball Association in researching the rules and practices of baseball's early decades
- 6) (PROPOSED) Develop and maintain a committee web site
- 7) (PROPOSED) Publish a committee research journal
- 8) (PROPOSED) Publish/promote the publication of neglected works on nineteenth century baseball
- 9) (PROPOSED) Sponsor and organize special meetings/events

Research Goals

- 1) To uncover, collect, digitize and catalog the published and unpublished documents of baseball through 1900
- 2) To compile and perfect nineteenth century baseball statistics
- 3) To uncover and trace origins, development and history of baseball through 1900
- 4) To assess the social significance of baseball in the nineteenth century
- 5) To compile the biographies of nineteenth century baseball figures
- 6) To compile and maintain a bibliography of nineteenth century baseball --

HELP WANTED ITEM:

Philip Gawthrop asks, "Do you know of any studies on the effects on arms using under-handed vs. over-handed pitching styles." Respond to pgawthrop@nba.doc.gov

BOOK REVIEWS

(Book Reviews are always welcome. Please consider reviewing any recently published book of interest to this committee and forwarding it to me—Ed.)

EARLY DREAMS by David Nemeč. Baseball Press Books (P.O. Box 92493, San Diego, CA 92192-2493). 1998. 174 pp., comb bound. \$17.95

Reviewed by Leverett T. Smith, Jr.

The publishers of *EARLY DREAMS* call David Nemeč's novel "momentous" and refer to it as "one of the great works of baseball fiction." Those statements, though, don't tell us much about the book. It's an ambitious first novel students of nineteenth century baseball will love because it's written by a prominent historian of the nineteenth century game and because he takes special pains to integrate his story with the history of the game. The story is set in 1884, for Nemeč, "the most wonderful and exciting [baseball] season ever." The central character in the novel, Earl "Ducker" Draves finds himself at one time or another in two of the three competing major leagues. He plays a few games for the Cincinnati Red Stockings of the American Association, gets much of his playing time with the Cincinnati Outlaw Reds of the Union Association, and plays second base in the last game of the championship series between Providence and the New York Mets. This allows the author to depict the struggles of a young man to understand himself and the urban world of major league baseball in 1884.

"Ducker" Draves is a fictional character, but he is based on the records of actual ballplayers and is closely involved in the actual events of the 1884 season. All of his colleagues in the book are true figures. One dimension of the book is a series of sketches—brief essays, really—of prominent baseball personalities. I counted nineteen, beginning with Charlie Jones and ending with "Hoss" Radbourn. They take up perhaps a quarter of the book. Though this reader enjoyed each of them, they do interrupt the story line of the novel. I wish the book read more as if it were fiction. These actual ballplayers also act and speak as fictional characters, an honorable literary convention, and one practiced by Ring Lardner in *YOU KNOW ME AL*, a literary ancestor of *EARLY DREAMS* in more than this way.

Draves, like Lardner's bushy Jack Keefe, is a recruit, a young man from the country making his way in the urban world of major league baseball, though 30 years before Keefe's journey. He's better educated—a better writer and speller—than Keefe, but he has some of the same problems and a similar way of dealing (or not dealing) with them. Drinking, gambling, women, and sex present themselves as problems to Draves as they would to Keefe. Race—something "solved" by segregation in Lardner's time—was an additional problem for Draves. Another difference is the tone of Nemeč's novel; it is much more serious in tone than Lardner's. We laugh at Jack Keefe. But in the very first scene of *EARLY DREAMS*, O.P. Caylor concludes, on hearing about Draves's youth, "Tragedy everywhere you turned here" (3). After his experience with the Red Stockings, Draves speaks of "something spoiled in me" (50), later of "my own moral disintegration" (132), and finally asks his roommate Max McQuery, "don't you ever have a similar feeling, that you're doomed no matter what you do?" (107). *EARLY DREAMS* sounds a more somber note.

What saves the doomed Draves is his feeling for the game of baseball, an early dream he appears never to give up. Performing as a baseball player, he concludes, "I'm where I'm meant to be."

Sam, I learned something wondrous this afternoon. I learned that base ball stands above suspicion and betrayal, and, yes, even above winning. Out there on the diamond in field today, with the warming sun above my head and the dirt baked hard beneath my feet, I felt like a king in his castle. I felt like a king Sam, because I realized that during every game I play I am a king. Win, lose or draw I'm doing what I love most among men who love it too and in front of people who are there to canonize us as the heroes they can no longer dream of becoming in their own harsh and careworn walks of life.
(152)

As happy as this sounds, there is more to the novel.

The "Sam" in the above quotation is a second fictional character. Draves's uncle whose own baseball career was cut short when he lost one of his legs in a railroad accident. As Jack Keefe was always writing to his friend Al, so Draves is in correspondence with his uncle (Nemeč shows considerable restraint in never identifying him as "Uncle Sam"). Though Draves continues to hope he will, Sam never comes to see him play and in fact seems to withdraw more and more from Draves himself as the story progresses.

The most demanding aspect of Nemeč's novel is his employment of multiple narrative voices. One is that of Earl Draves as he corresponds with his Uncle Sam (there are some 34 letters). Another is that of Draves as he confides to his diary (we have some 24 entries). A third is the historian's voice that gives the publisher cause to say the book "reads as if it were non-fiction." Finally, there is an omniscient narrator, an all-knowing voice that reports events as if from above. Why all these narrators? Nemeč acknowledges "the many other baseball historians and friends who were kind enough to help me find the best way to tell Earl Draves' story," suggesting that this was a central problem in composing the novel. The multiple narrative voices enable Nemeč to tell us more about Draves and Draves's world that Draves can tell us himself. *YOU KNOW ME AL* is limited by Jack Keefe's perspective. In *EARLY DREAMS*, the reader learns things Earl Draves will not and cannot tell himself. For instance, we learn from the omniscient narrator that the actual game "above suspicion and betrayal" was actually a fixed game, and Draves himself never learns this. He remains an innocent. The last pages of *EARLY DREAMS*—a letter from Earl to his uncle, followed by a portrait of Hoss Radbourn collaborated on by the omniscient narrator and the historian—sum this up brilliantly. Draves gives his uncle an entirely different account of his contract talk with the Outlaw Reds for 1895 than the reader has received from the omniscient narrator. The letter as a whole is conciliatory; Sam has either been silent or critical of Draves's behavior through much of the correspondence, and Draves closes by withdrawing his suggestion that Sam's disabling accident might have been alcohol-related.

That suggestion—that Sam himself might have succumbed to the temptations of drink—had been made by another of the few fictional characters in the book, Draves's sometime intended who called herself, among other names, Constance Voss. She is at once an image of urban sinfulness and, like Draves himself, a victim of the city's wiles. She is finally abandoned by Draves, but they share the same dream of urban celebrity. Draves reports to Sam that Constance has had to give up "her dream of becoming someone"

(136). Baseball has enabled Draves to hold on to that dream. Sitting with Radbourn in a saloon after the third game with Providence, Draves reflects that "the great pitcher made you feel as if you too must be someone while you were around him" (167).

Yet the last scene of the book makes it dear that the dream is a false one. Draves sees Radbourn as a heroic personage, an ideal with which to replace his Uncle Sam. But the book finally emphasizes Radbourn's difficult life and early death. Draves attends his burial in February 1897, on a windy, snowy day, not the best weather for baseball, where Draves was "meant to be."

The book is quite handsomely if inexpensively produced, 8 1/2 x 11 pages, comb-bound. It has many typographical errors, a fact that has caused the author to compose an "Errata in EARLY DREAMS" page in which he lists some (but by no means all) of the errors and complains about editorial changes made without his permission. All this is unfortunate, because the novel is very much worth reading and the publishing enterprise itself a worthy one.

MIDDLETOWN'S SEASON IN THE SUN: THE STORY OF CONNECTICUT'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAM, By David Arcidiacono. [1999.] ix+169 pages. Paper. \$12. Published by the author and available from Mr. Arcidiacono (203)-386-5357 or DArcidiacono@Sikorsky.com

Reviewed by Frederic Ivor-Campbell

One of the most neglected areas of baseball research is the history of defunct ball clubs. Only Donald Dewey and Nicholas Acocella in their valuable *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAMS* (1993) give proportionate attention to the many defunct major league clubs, but even they omit coverage of the first league, the National Association. Book-length histories of defunct clubs are even rarer. I hope David Arcidiacono's history of the Mansfield Club of Middletown, Connecticut, will spur new research and writing in this rich field.

MIDDLETOWN'S SEASON IN THE SUN establishes a helpful model for others who might be inspired to write the history clearly teams. It is solidly and extensively researched: Arcidiacono seems to have consulted every Middletown and Hanford newspaper reference to the club, and he consulted papers in nineteen other cities as well. In addition, he searched the annual guides and sporting weeklies, the U. S. census of 1870 and just about every book that might provide information on his topic. Understandably, Arcidiacono focuses his main attention on the Mansfields' one truncated major league season, but he doesn't neglect its earlier history. He gives us the entire history of the club, from its founding in 1866 as a factory team by 16-year-old Ben Douglas Jr., a son of the factory owner. Originally named the Douglas Club, it soon became the Mansfields in honor of Civil War general and Middletown native Joseph Mansfield, who was killed at Antietam. After an inauspicious 50-1 loss to a club from New Britain in its inaugural game, the Mansfields defeated the same club in its second game, and in time fielded one of Connecticut's leading teams. Full of confidence, the heretofore amateur Mansfields entered the race for the National Association pennant in 1872, but finding themselves desperately overmatched by the league's professionally experienced teams, the club folded after only 24 championship games.

MIDDLETOWN'S SEASON IN THE SUN is not only solidly researched, but also well organized, engagingly written, nicely illustrated with period photos, and extensively documented. Another pair of editorial eyes prior to publication might have caught the occasional incorrect word choices and mispunctuation, but over all the book is very well edited—I noticed only one outright typographical error. Although the dates of the Mansfields' games are listed in appendices, one wishes at times that more dates had been included in the text itself to help orient the reader. Ben Douglas's baseball career continued after the Mansfields' demise, and I'm pleased that Arcidiacono added a brief chapter to tell us the sad story of his experience organizing the club that became the Providence Grays.

There are five welcome appendices, listing Mansfield game results and rosters, and, for the 1872 team, box scores of all the championship games (except a few for which researchers have come up empty-handed) and player career stats.

One may question the author's need to debunk yet again the Doubleday story in his opening-chapter survey of early baseball history, and a few of his interpretations—like his insistence that the NA was an association of players, not clubs—seem to rely on outdated scholarship. But on the Mansfields Arcidiacono is the authority, and one we can trust. Everyone curious about an era in which an amateur club could, simply by paying a \$10 fee, leap into the arena with the pros to contest for the baseball championship should read this book. Ditto for everyone interested in researching and writing the history of a forgotten or neglected ball club.

Report on the 19th Century Rules and Practices Project by Chip Atkison

The 19th Century Rules and Practices Project has transposed the 1860 thru 1864 Beadle's and these are available electronically from me upon request. They're in separate MSWord files and are easily transfer to any Windows application. The 1860 is complete but the later ones have no statistical records yet.

I also have this question: The 1845 Knickerbocker rule #19 states: "A runner cannot be put out in making one base, when a balk is made by the pitcher."

What does the purpose of this rule appear to be? Does anyone have any specific documentation of balks being committed from 1845 thru 1849 when the next "tweaking" of the rules occurs? If a pitcher is balking, doesn't that mean a baserunner is posing the threat of advancing regardless of what the batter is doing? Does anyone have and can share proof for or against this notion?

Finally, I would like to explore the idea of compiling a research data bank index for 19th century research that has already been completed or is in process. Essentially, this would involve a list of members and their research projects or areas of expertise. Does something like this already exist?

If you have any interest in finding out more about the 19th Century Rules and Practices Project, please contact me at sabrchip@aol.com.

**[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/19cBB:](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/19cBB)
19th Century Internet Discussion Group**

Paul Wendt has agreed to open an Internet discussion group devoted to the 19th century committee projects and issues. This should become a very efficient and fast way to post research inquiries, report on research results, and contact the subscribers as a whole for announcements, etc.

To subscribe, send an email to: **19cBB-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**. The email address for messages that will be distributed automatically to all subscribers is **19cBB@yahoogroups.com**.

Every Yahoo group has homepage. Our "Home" is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/19cBB>. Home is available to anyone with a web browser; it is not restricted to subscribers.

Unlike SABR-L, 19cBB is unmoderated. That is, any subscriber can send email to every subscriber via the group address; each item is automatically redistributed to every subscriber without human intervention. In contrast, SABR-L is moderated; each submission is forwarded to a human moderator for approval. However, Paul will serve as "owner" of the list per Yahoo regulations and will handle administrative decisions regarding the size.

Report on the American Association Project

by Jon Dunkle

Thanks to a handful of researchers, the American Association project continues to move closer to having the research phase completed. We still need help, however, and welcome those with an interest in being part of this ambitious committee project. In particular, we are in need of researchers to research newspapers for the Philadelphia entry as minimal research has been done on that team.

We also could use help for the following cities: Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Kansas City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Washington.

Here is an update on research activities.

Irv Goldfarb is nearing completion of the 884 Brooklyn Grays season.

Denis Repp has completed the 1882 Pittsburgh season.

David Ball has single handedly covered the Columbus seasons of the American Association. He is nearly done the 1889 season, the last remaining season for that team.

John Husman has about completed the remaining research for the Toledo team.

In addition, Irv Goldfarb has found a couple of instances where bases on balls are treated as errors. Examples in the newspapers:

"...with the exception of the bases given on called balls there were but few errors." and "Of the four errors made three are charged to Henderson (the pitcher) on bases given on balls.." Was this standard scoring practice? When did this come into effect and when did it disappear?

Irv also found this and was sent home, as was Wilson who had reached first on three balls..." This was the 1884 season. Were three ball walks the norm then?

To assist on the American Association project or if you have answers to the issues raised by Irv Goldfarb, please e-mail me at deldunk@yahoo.com or call at (302)369-1562.

Vintage Base Ball Report

by Jim Tootle

The 2001 vintage base ball game at the Milwaukee convention will be held on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. Those wishing to play are cordially invited to

contact me regarding details and arrangements (see the "Directory" below for contact details). Uniforms will be provided.

The vintage game has become a regular attraction of the annual SABR conference and involves players from several teams representing many states. This participation reflects the growing popularity of vintage base ball.

There are approximately 100 vintage teams known to be playing in North America this season. Most teams present the game as it was played around the Civil War era, when it was gaining popularity and developing into the national pastime. The names and locations of all the clubs who belong to the Vintage Base Ball Association can be found on the organization's website at www.vbba.org. The website also contains the text of nineteenth-century playing rules, sources for obtaining vintage uniforms and equipment, information on how to start a team, and links to the websites of the member clubs.

Teams that recreate the 1860s game wear uniforms based on illustrations and newspaper accounts from the period. Matches are played with wooden bats and handmade leather balls. No gloves are worn since the first gloves did not come into use until around 1875.

Vintage programs continue to increase public awareness regarding the history of the game. Over the past decade vintage base ball has received media coverage in *Sports Illustrated*, *Life*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Smithsonian*, *Inside Sport*, *Midwest Living*, and various airline magazines and auto club publications. Newspapers and television stations often do feature stories on local teams.

Participants find vintage base ball fun to play. Historical societies and community festivals welcome vintage games as a lively and enjoyable entertainment activity for families, gentlemanly decorum and good sportsmanship, which were a big part of the early game, characterize the behavior of the players and spectators, if you would like more information about starting a vintage club, please visit the website, or contact me personally.

**Nineteenth Century Committee
Directory of Chairs and Project Directors**

JOHN R. HUSMAN, Chair. 5911 Jeffrey Lane, Sylvania OH 43560-2318; (419) 882-3438 or jhusman@buckeye-express.com

FREDERICK IVOR-CAMPBELL, Associate Chair, Publications

JAMES R. TOOTLE, Associate Chair, Vintage Base Ball (614-885-2063 or jtootle@columbus.rr.com)

GREG RHODES, Compiler, Nineteenth Century Notes (1908 Dexter Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45206; roadwest@fuse.net; Fax: 513-861-6151; Phone: 513-861-4648)

PAUL WENDT, Electronic Coordinator (pgw@world.std.com)

JONATHAN M. DUNKLE, Director, American Association (1882-1891) History Project (deldunk~yahoo.com)

WILLIAM R. "CHIP" ATKISON, Director, Nineteenth Century Rules and Practices Project (Sabrchip@aol.com)