

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

Spring 2008

Society for American Baseball Research

Nineteenth Century Notes is a publication of the Nineteenth Century Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research

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Happy Birthday to...Us

Committee Member and, along with Mark Rucker, founding member of this committee, John Thorn notes that 2008 marks the 25th year of the 19th Century Committee. Established in 1983 the Committee had 28 members. About half are still members. The original 28 were: Bill Akin, Lefty Blasco, Joseph Costa, Bob Davids, Paul Doherty, Harold Dellinger, Bruce Erricson, Jonathan Frankel, Dennis Goldstein, Walter Handelman, Dan Hotaling, John Husman, Fred

Ivor-Campbell, Lewis Lipset, Jack Little, William Loughman, Jerry Malloy, John O’Malley, Joe Overfield, John Pardon, Frank Phelps, Bob Richardson, Dick Schrader, Eric Simonson, James Smith, John Thorn, and Phil Von Borres. Thanks guys.

Two other anniversaries were also noted. Joanne Hulbert reports that on May 13, 1858 the Massachusetts Association of Base Ball Players established the rules to the Massachusetts Game. David Block notes that on March 20, 1908 the infamous Mills Report

was released to the public and linked Ab-



ner Doubleday forever with baseball.

We have previously reported on obscure 19th Century players. This month we feature two essays on an obscure Hall of Famer, Sam Thompson. The first is written by Thompson descendant Don Thompson and the other is from Jerry Casway.

Samuel Luther Thompson by Don Thompson

One afternoon in the Spring of 1974 while I was driving home from teaching, I heard on WIBC, an Indian-

apolis station, that a great-uncle of mine, Samuel Luther Thompson, had been elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. I pulled off the

freeway and called my father, who had just finished a conversation with Bowie Kuhn who invited Dad to accept the award on behalf of Uncle Sam on August

Thompson by Thompson (cont)

(Continued from page 1)

10, 1974 since Dad was the last surviving Thompson male to know Sam. Sam and his wife had no children so there are no direct descendants of Sam. Finally, I knew that this relative was indeed the superstar of the 1880s and 1890s.

Later, that summer we attended the ceremonies for the induction of the six players. The ceremonies came at a difficult time for our country which two days before had experienced a President resigning in disgrace. James Bottomley, Jocko Conlon; Cool Papa Bell; Whitey Ford; and Mickey Mantle and Sam were inducted that special day. It was a great honor to be able to meet all the former players and spend time with heroes from our youthful days. We enjoyed the stories told on the veranda of the Otsego Hotel in Cooperstown by Casey Stengel and Satchel Paige. Sam had no direct descendants but there were thirty-two relatives in attendance. Sam would have liked it, we are sure.

As kids, my brother and I had heard stories about this ballplayer in our family who had played for Detroit and Philadelphia but we had never researched his career and as kids so often do, we just let it pass. As we played ball ourselves, our dad would sometimes say, "That's probably how Sam would have played". Dad never really pushed us too hard in athletics although he too had been a good ballplayer until a broken

neck in college ended his career and had coached high school baseball and basketball around the State of Indiana. My brother and I did go on to earn varsity letters at Butler University in tennis.

When Dad was born in 1907, Sam was retired from professional finishing the 1906 season with the Detroit Tigers so my father never was able to see Sam actually play a game. However, Sam and his wife, Ida, would return to his hometown of Danville, Indiana, every fall and spring to visit family and friends and do some hunting and fishing with his youngest brother, my grandfather, William. Dad would be included on the hunting and fishing trips so came to know Sam pretty well in his later life. One of the mysteries of Sam is whether he was a right or left hand thrower. He, of course, batted left, but no one knows for sure what arm he used. Dad said that Sam fished and hunted like a right-hander and that there are no known lefties in our family so we can only assume that he was a right-hander.

My grandfather was a baker and had one of the first motor vehicles in Hendricks County. Grandpa used to deliver the bread and when Dad was old enough, age 10, to drive, he said that became his job. One time Sam was visiting his family and wanted to go with dad on his runs. After the last run to the village of Maplewood, Sam encouraged Dad to drive fast and



Dad proceeded to put the truck in a cornfield. Grandpa wasn't too happy about that, and Sam supposedly took the blame for encouraging him to drive fast.

Sam's election to the Hall probably had a bit of fate involved. We had aunt, a sister of our mother, living in Danville. One day she was in the town's offices and a lady said that she had received a letter asking about a baseball player from Danville. She asked my aunt if she knew anyone and she said her brother-in-law had such a relative. Dad was contacted by Vincent Myers of New Jersey. In the days before SABR, Mr. Myers had been doing research on Sam and wanted to find out more about him and taken the chance to find someone in Danville. He just couldn't understand how Sam had been left out of the Hall for so long since his statistics were so much better than most of the players in the Hall. His letter arrived at the same time our aunt

(Continued from page 2)

did or maybe no contact would never have been made. From those conversations between my father and Mr. Myers, the Veterans' Committee must have been convinced that Sam indeed was worthy of this high honor.

Sam was born in 1860 to Jesse and Rebecca McPheeters Thompson. He was the fifth child of eleven in his family. Nine children survived and including five brothers. Sam's father joined the 63rd Indiana Volunteers in April, 1861, and for four years was with the Union Armies across the South. Jesse was discharged from the Union Army in April 1865, in Guilford County Courthouse in North Carolina. A twist of irony is that Jess was born in Guilford County Courthouse in 1828 and came to Indiana with his parents. Another twist of fate was that Rebecca's grandfather, John McPheeters fought in the Revolutionary War battle there. After the war, Jesse and along with other veterans brought baseball to Danville.

Eventually there were four town ball teams in Danville and Sam and his brothers played for the Danville Browns. Some games attracted over 1,000 people about twice the town's size. With three brothers playing, they made up the nucleus of the team. In one article, it was stated that the Thompson brothers were as good with their fists and their bats. Sam was not the star of the team but his brother, Cyrus, according to a scout was the one they were interested in signing.

However, when they found out that Cy was 28, they lost interest in him. The scout was told that Sam could hit the ball harder than anyone else so the scout wanted to see him play. Sam, a carpenter by trade, was working on a new roof and wouldn't play unless he was paid the \$2.50 he was getting for a the roof. The scout agreed and no one is sure if the roof was ever finished.

From Danville, Sam, at the age of 25, was signed to a contract with Evansville in the Western League, but that team folded at the end of the year and Sam was signed by the Indianapolis Hoosiers for the 1885 season. About half way through the season, the Hoosiers folded along with the rest of the Western League, and Detroit took eight of the players. However, before they could sign, the Detroit owner placed the players on a steamship in Lake Huron and wouldn't let the ship land until the time had passed before any other team could sign them. On June 26, 1885, the seasick players embarked in Detroit and were under contract with the Wolverines. Once again, the Wolverines weren't as interested in Sam as much as some of the other players.

When Sam made his first appearance in a Detroit uniform, they didn't have one that would fit him. He was a large man for that day, being 6' 3" and weighing 215 lbs. His first at bat he nearly decapitated the second baseman with a line drive and as he was rounding first he split his pants wide open and made it to

second. The fans were hysterical and Sam as well thought it was pretty funny. From that time on, Sam was a favorite of the baseball fans of Detroit until the day he died. Probably no player in Detroit had gained so much fame as he did.

One of the reasons that Sam is so obscure to the general baseball fan is that during these 17 years he was never thrown out of game, never suspended by his team or league, and was never involved in a fight which was quite unusual for players of that vintage. His size probably discouraged any challenges from the players. Charlie Bennett, a catcher for Detroit said this about Sam at Sam's funeral: "While we think of Sam as a wonderful player, don't ever forget other things about Sam. He was a wonderful friend. No one ever quarreled with Sam. No one ever knew him, with all his strength, to be rough or brutal. He was always even-tempered, sober, and plain".

One of Sam's greatest seasons was the 1887 when he lead the National League with 545 at-bats, 203 hits, 23 triples, 166 RBIs (the all-time record at that time), .372 batting average, and .571 slugging average. Sam lead his team to defeat the St. Louis team in the 1887 World Series by a 10 - 5 margin. Sam was chosen the MVP of that series.

In 1888, Ernest Thayer published his poem, *Casey at the Bat*, and although Casey was never identified our family be-

(Continued from page 3)

believes the model must have been Sam. Who else to model a player like Casey? Sam's records would be fresh in Thayer's mind Sam was a Christian man. He struck out only 226 times during his career. Sam was the leading RBI producer in the National League with 166 RBIs so whom would the fans want to bat in a clutch situation. He generally didn't let his fans down. Our family agrees with George Canton of the *Detroit Free Press* who on July 9, 1972 published a critique of the poem supposedly proving that Sam had to be the Casey the poet was using. Many times Mike Kelly and Cap Anson have been mentioned as the Casey, but Sam's physique and records just outshine any other player of that time.

Another great year Sam had was in 1894 with the Philadelphia Phillies. That year he was part of the only outfield in major league history to have all three players bat .400 or more. Sam hit .407; Ed Delahanty hit .407; Billy Hamilton hit .404. That is only one of two entire outfields who became Hall of Famers and Sam played in the other one too. In the 1894 year Sam also lead the league in fielding with .977. Sam is credited with the first player to perfect throwing the ball to the base on a bounce. That year Sam also set a record that never has been surpassed by setting an all time runs per game average of 1.42, and he missed one month of the season due to surgery on his hand. His 141 RBIs still rank in the top 100 of major league history.

Sam came back in 1895 and led the league in extra base hits 84, total bases 352, home runs 18 and runs per game of 1.39. His last two years were injury-riddled and retired from baseball in 1898.

Sam started his major league career when he was already 25 years old and by the age of 38, he was finished as a player. We sometimes wonder if that scout had come to Danville about seven years earlier, what kind of numbers he would have been able to accomplish.

After baseball, Sam became a fairly wealthy man in Detroit in those exciting times in that city. Sam became a US. Marshal and worked with US Judge Arthur J. Tuttle of the Detroit federal courts.

One of Sam's former teammates, Charlie Bennett, lost his legs in a train accident and for the rest of Sam's life, Sam and Ida looked after Charlie and his wife to make sure they were taken care of. For many years it was customary to have the Mayor throw out the first pitch and Charlie would catch it. Sam would act as the umpire for the occasions so he could keep Charlie balanced. Later Detroit's field was named Bennett Field. Sam and Charlie also became active participants in Billy Sunday's evangelical movement in America. The Thompsons and Bennetts walked the "sawdust trail" many times when Billy was preaching in the area.

Sam passed away in November 1922 while working a polling

place. He was 62 at the time of death and his funeral was held in Detroit. The city of Detroit came to a halt for Sam's funeral. In a *Detroit News* article on November 11, 1922 it states: "They were holding a funeral service for Sam Thompson in that little cottage and the 'boys' had come to pay tribute. They were middle-aged and past most of those men who waited outside or helped to crowd the little rooms. A federal judge nodded to a millionaire manufacturer, a banker borrowed a light from a famous corporation attorney, and a merchant prince whispered with an alderman, while in the cottage doorway a priest and a Methodist minister smiled on each other and talked about the brotherhood of man. There were men who could scrawl a signature for a fortune and men whose pockets sagged with nothingness for the poor and as well as the rich were there to say goodbye." Detroit stopped while Sam's casket was carried to Elmwood Cemetery on Detroit's east side. Elmwood Cemetery is typical of Sam's life since he chose the first cemetery in Michigan that allowed all races and religions to be buried together.

Sam's descendants in 2003 decided to add a monument to Sam's and Ida's marker. A representative of Elmwood approached our family with a request. When Sam and Ida had bought their stones and they had on them were their names and dates. The superintendent of the cemetery said that Sam's grave was requested more than any others in there and its a cemetery

that has 26 Union generals buried in it along with many politicians and other famous Detroiters. In the summer of 2003 we dedicated a new monument that gives Sam's records and allows

and never really created publicity for himself.

In 2005, the State of Indiana dedicated a historical monument to Sam Thompson in his hometown of Danville. He is the first baseball player to be honored with a marker in the State. In trying to find a place to set the monument, the superintendent of Danville Community Schools was approached to allow the state to place it near the high school varsity baseball diamond. The superintendent was adamant against allowing the State to do this. The district refused to honor their most famous native son. Our family and many Danville officials were stunned that an educated person could deny this request and didn't want everyone who came to a high school baseball game to see that one of their own had made the most elusive group in baseball. Our family approved it to be placed next to the Little League park so all the youngsters would get to see it every time they played there.

Sam seems to be the Rodney Dangerfield of baseball. He just doesn't get the respect that he should have coming. Ken Burns failed to mention him during his history of baseball while mentioning many obscure players. During the latest home run chase, Sam is never mentioned for holding the record before Babe Ruth came along with 128 homeruns all in the National League. Sometimes Roger Conners is said to have the lead if one counts his years in Troy, NY. Most of Sam's homeruns were not over walls but had to "legged out". Sam is never mentioned with the "greats" of the 19th Century but is one of the first truly superstars of baseball.

Here is a man who:

1. Still holds the record for most RBIs per game played in the major leagues at .923 ahead of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.
2. First man to garner 200 hits in a season which he did three times.
3. Still is ranked about the top 100 players of all-time in most hitting categories including RBIs, average, slugging percentage, on base percentage, triples, fewest strikeouts in a career.
4. Is the only man to play in two entire Hall of Fame outfielders.
5. Is one of a few players of the 19th Century who never was suspended, ejected or fined by his team or league.

Sam is still mostly forgotten but our family continues to try and make, as many people as possible know about his achievements. Organizations like SABR have been instrumental making



Family-place Monument at Grave of Sam Thompson.
Photo courtesy of Stew Thornley

Once Sam was named for induction our family began to become more interested in his achievements. With organizations like SABR and the use of the Internet, tracking his accomplishments have become easier. Once we were active in trying to find out more about Sam, we still are amazed that Sam is never mentioned among the stars of that period. Its as though he never played. In Ken Burns' series on Baseball, Sam is never mentioned although many obscure players are. Our feeling is that Sam was just too nice a fellow

Just a couple weeks ago, I was having breakfast in a small diner in Kirkwood, MO just outside of St. Louis. Two men were talking baseball and I joined in. One happened to be the nephew of Charlie Grimm and the other a nephew of Buddy Blattner, Dizzy Dean's old partner. These guys had been around baseball all their lives but when I mentioned Sam, they had no idea what I was talking about. If Sam were not in the Hall, all of his records would be totally obscure.

YEARS	GAMES	AV	BAV	RUNS	HITS	STOLEN BASES
15	1407	60.05	1283	1959	227	

DOUBLES	TRIPLES	HOMERS	RBIS	AVERAGE	SLUGGING AVERAGE
340	160	129	1295	.331	.505

HOW ABOUT “BIG SAM” THOMPSON?

by Jerrold Casway, Ph.D.

Samuel Luther Thompson was elected to baseball’s Hall of Fame in 1974, but few followers of the national pastime would recognize his name today. His selection actually was twenty-five years over due, an omission attributed to the fact that “big Sam” died in 1922 and his unassuming manner rarely drew attention to himself. Never an assertive leader, Thompson was satisfied to let his on-field performances motivate and be a standard for his teammates. He spent fourteen years as a full-time National Leaguer, four years with the champion Detroit Wolverines and ten seasons with the under-achieving Philadelphia Phillies. It is also likely his reserve nature allowed him to be overshadowed by more popular teammates such as Dan Brouthers, Ed Delahanty and Napoleon Lajoie. However, Thompson’s seasonal contributions and career statistics confirm his accomplishments and greatness.

Comparing nineteenth-century ballplayers to players of later eras is like equating peaches to nectarines. They are closely related, but they represent different genre. The game Sam Thompson played had different rules, crude equipment and awkwardly laid-out playing fields. Each factor make cross-generational comparisons difficult. Some researchers accommodate for this by using adjusted

figures to compensate for different playing circumstances. Others try to resolve this issue by relying on eye-witness testimony that spanned different eras. But no one alive ever saw Thompson play and no film records exist of his performances. He played in an age that many consider the “dark ages” of the national pastime. To fairly appreciate his



greatness, researchers can only compare Sam with his peers, players who competed under similar conditions.

According to surviving newspaper and sport journal accounts, Sam Thompson was an outstanding and graceful outfielder, who spent most of his career playing the difficult sun- right field position at Huntingdon

Park grounds in North Philadelphia. Despite career-threatening arm problems in 1888, Thompson had a strong and accurate throwing arm. Often he caught ricochets off the short-distanced [245, later 310 feet down the line] fence/wall in Philadelphia and threw out aggressive base runners at an impressive rate. In his rookie season [1885] in Detroit, Sam had twenty-four assists, finishing third in the League. Discounting three seasons when he was hurt and did not play much, Thompson averaged 24.8 assists a year. He is ranked seventh on the all-time outfield assist per game list at 0.21, but many of the players ahead of him held infield positions. On two occasions [1891 and 1895] Sam had over thirty assists in Philadelphia’s right field.

In spite of Sam’s defensive skills, he was mainly remembered as one of the premier power hitters of the dead-ball nineteenth-century era. When he retired in 1898, [his last two years limited by a bad back] he was ranked second behind Roger Connor in home runs [136 to 127]. For the record, Connor played five more years than Thompson. Neither did any nineteenth-century slugger average more home runs per season than “Big Sam.” He is only one of five players before 1899 to hit twenty or more home runs in a year. Only Ned Williamson and his three Chicago White Stock-

Thompson by Casway (cont.)

ings teammates in 1884 with a home park left field fence less than 200 feet from home surpassed Thompson's twenty round-trippers in 1889. Sam also led the National League in home runs twice [1889 and 1895] and is ranked first in home run percentage for the 1876-1892 period with a 2.12 average. Connors is fourth with 1.77, Brouthers is fifth at 1.58 and Williamson is eleventh at 1.41.

Thompson's greatest batting feats were in run production. Excluding 1888, when his arm went lame, Sam, during his prime decade, averaged 119.4 RBI's per season. In 1887 and 1895, his major home run seasons, Thompson knocked in 166 and 165 runners. On the all-time RBI list Sam is tied for first-place with Lou Gehrig and Hank Greenberg at .92 RBI's per game. Thompson also holds the first three places for RBI's per game per season - 1.42 [1894], 1.39 [1895] and 1.31 [1897]. During "Big" Sam's peak years he stroked 56.5 extra base hits per season and averaged 109 runs created per year in 514.5 at-bats. Among nineteenth-century players only Dan Brouthers [.519] has a higher lifetime slugging average than "Big Sam." Thompson, at .505, is tied for second with Ed Delahanty..

Thompson also has the tenth highest lifetime batting average [.331] for a nineteenth-century player. He batted .400 once in 1894 and led the National League in 1887 with a .372 average. In his last healthy Detroit

season [1887], Thompson led the league in batting, RBI's [166], runs created [127], slugging [.571], at-bats [545], hits [203], total bases [311] and triples [23]. These feats were accomplished when the pitching distance was fifty-five feet six inches from home plate. Like Delahanty, Thompson benefited when five more feet were added to the pitching distance. His 1894-95 statistics demonstrated this prowess. Nevertheless, Sam's numbers dominate the comparisons with his National League peers. Overall, Sam enjoyed eight seasons with 100 plus RBI's and three times batted 200 hits or more. These figures are impressive for a player known as a power-swinging slugger.

Many of Thompson's deeds may not conform with the statistical standards of later eras, but if we continue to contrast Sam's numbers with his contemporaries his dominance stands out. His lifetime batting average is .055 higher than his peers [.276] and his on-base percentage of .384, is .041 better than his rivals. His slugging [.505] is .128 higher than all nineteenth-century National League batters.

If asked to identify comparable modern day players with Sam Thompson, Joe DiMaggio and Vladimir Guerrero come to mind. Both men brought to their respective eras the same style and preeminence as their nineteenth-century prototype, Sam Thompson. The pity is that we cannot put them together and appreciate their enormous tal-

Research Request

Phil Lowry (plowry1176@aol.com) is trying to locate all marathons games lasting 5 or more hours, or 20 or more innings, or ending after 1 AM. He has found seven 19th century games that fit. Those seven are below: He's also interested in Massachusetts Rules games lasting 20 or more innings.

24 innings – South End Grounds (I), Boston, MA – 5/11/1877 – Manchester Professionals 0 Harvard College Crimson 0 in 3:30
21 innings – Girard Field, Philadelphia, PA - 6/29/1878 – Yeager 10 Girard College High School Orphans 7 in 4:00.

22 innings – 11th St.Grounds, Tacoma, WA – 5/16/1891 – Pacific Northwest League – Tacoma Daisies 6 Seattle Blues 5.
25 innings – North Dakota State Militia Training Grounds, Devils Lake, ND – 7/18/1891 – Red River Valley League – Grand Forks Black Stockings 0 Fargo Red Stockings 0.

20 innings – League Park (I), Cincinnati, OH – 6/30/1892 – National League – Colts 7 Reds 7.

20 innings – Sportsman's Park (III), St. Louis, MO – 4/10/1898 – Western League

at National League spring training exhibition – St. Louis Browns 12 Milwaukee Brewers 11.

21 innings – Lake View Park, Peoria, IL - 6/26/1898 – Western Association – Peoria Blackbirds 8 St. Joseph Saints 4.

Chairman's Corner

By Peter Mancuso

As promised in the winter issue of *Nineteenth Century Notes* our editor has included in this spring issue the final portion (Interests and Projects) of the members' survey conducted in the fall. In all, 110 members of the 152 members who replied to the survey provided enough information to be included on the list. Since I have had the luxury to peruse the list I have come to realize how powerful it is. At first glance, it may seem somewhat daunting, due to my attempt to include all respondents and their replies within the relatively limited space of this newsletter. However, if you are patient you will find that from Astifan to Zocco our members cover nearly the complete spectrum of baseball research – 19th-century and beyond. By using the SABR web site most respondent's e-mail can be located. Also, to include

as much as I could, I took the liberty of abbreviating Interests as "Intrs:" and Projects as "Projs:" I also used some other abbreviations within the body of many lines that should be apparent. This listing may put any one of us in touch with just the right person to further our own research or, in the spirit of SABR, to allow any one of us to add to someone else's efforts.

Finally, I hope as many of you as possible will make your way to SABR 38 in Cleveland, Ohio this June and that those who do attend will make their way to Thursday's 12:30 PM 19th Century Committee meeting. In preparing for the meeting please send any item to me for the agenda. Although, time is limited and precious (about 50 minutes in total) I do wish to afford as many members as possible the opportunity to inject their ideas before and during the meeting. Those ideas then be-

come the issues that committee members can take from the meeting and might transform into individual or group projects. Two topics that are planned to be discussed are the prospect of holding a Nineteenth Century national baseball conference and the prospect of developing an annual selection process to recognize 19th-century baseball people still worthy of induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Both of these topics received vigorous responses in our fall survey.

Please, feel free to contact me with your thoughts and ideas and, particularly, if you wish to work on our 19C national conference or our 19C overlooked baseball persons project. I can be reached via the information on the first page. May the game we love overcome its' cheaters and those in positions of responsibility who looked the other way.

19th Century Committee Member Interests and Projects- Please excuse the small font

Priscilla Astifan - Intrs: all topics. Projs: amateur & pro Rochester, NY 1858-1890 & early development
 William 'Chip' Atkinson - Intrs: Rules & Prac.
 Bob Bailey - Intrs: Lvill. Projs: burial sites
 Mike Bass - Intrs: all topics.
 James Battenfield - Intrs: 19c BB uniforms.
 Projs: Presentation on uniform & equip. hist.
 Parker J. Bena - Intrs: Bios, BB & Civ War, NA, AA & AL 1900. Projs: Bio Daryl Patterson, C. Flood.
 Jay Berman - Intrs: 19c West Coast US & Canada B & W. Projs: Why HOF Buck O'Neil, Jim Kaat.
 Marky Billson - Intrs: Pittsburgh
 Cliff Blau - Intrs: Leag & team hist, stats, player

bios. Projs: Play Transacts, team capt, rules.
 Lawrence W. Boes - Intrs: Mets, Goths, Excel, Atl, Grnwd Cem, Bklyn-Qns grds. Projs: Chas Reipschlager.
 Richard Bozzone - Intrs: Player Bios
 Howard Burman - Intrs: NY Knicks. Projs: Knicks Book
 Patrick Carpentier - Intrs: Montreal, Orgns Que, E/Int'l '95-96. Projs: quebecia.com, hist E/Int'l.
 Nels Case - Intrs: stats-players career rec-maj & minors. Projs: field by pos/yr %, typ rec pos/yr.
 Jeffrey C. Cranston - Intrs: NA player bios & stats. Projs: Union Association hist & stats
 Frank Cunliff - Intrs: Pittsburgh teams. Other leagues, World Series & Temple Cup.
 Richard D'Ambrisi - Intrs: Evol game 19c for

public aud. Projs: BB data base 1858-1920.
 Richard Dempsey - Intrs: Ball Parks.
 Bruce Dorskind - Intrs: UA, PL, World Series, Banning of Negroes.
 Glenn Drinkwater - Intrs: recreating the pre-pro game. Projs: VBBA President.
 Mike Dugan - Intrs: All topics incl. memorabilia.
 Chas Faber - Intrs: Plyer Car Recs & bios. Projs: Auth Baseball Pioneers, next bk: new ratings.
 Bill Felber - Projs: "A Game of Brawl" pub 2007, working on history of ownership/mgt.
 Marc Fink - Intrs: PL 1890. Projs: Rearch on PL
 Jan Finkel - Intrs: Player bios, records & stats. Projs: Bioproject Editor Coordinator.
 Jeremy Fliss - Intrs: 1880s equipment & play techniques. Projs: Research - catching 1884-90.

19th Century Committee Member Interests and Projects (cont.)

- Jonathan Frankel – Intrs: Late 19c stats-bat SOs. Projs: bat SOs '99 compl, '98&00 not, '94-00 WL Det.
- Harry Funk – Intrs: Plyr bios, team hists, other 19c MLs. Projs: 1890 Pitts Compl, 1884 Milw UA in prog.
- Tom Gilbert – Intrs: Amat Bklyn, Color Line, Dodgers, early parks. Projs: catg all amat parks Bklyn & Qns.
- John Gilmore – Intrs: Player bios, team histories.
- Gary Goldberg-O'Maxfield – Intrs: Col, Amat, wic,outlw & mls. Projs: Wic Brist CT, A. Irwin, Orator O'Rke.
- Peter Gordon – Intrs: Player info., team histories.
- Karl Green – Intrs: Southern minors, player movement majors & minors.
- Robert J. Gregory – Intrs: Player bios post career & non major teams '70s & 80s. Projs: Pre 1871 Ft Wayne.
- Jerry Grillo – Intrs: The roaring 19c game, bios, 19c black players after the color line.
- Klee Ray Habler – Intrs: Stats, player career records and biographical information.
- Tim Hannan – Intrs: 1890 Rochester AA team, 19c Rochester professional teams & ballparks.
- Paul Healy – Intrs: Old ballparks. Projs: New England League and its ballparks and history.
- Brock Helander – Intrs: Cities w/ 19c MLB but not 20c MLB. Projs: Essay 30 Game Losers, Cities 19c MLB.
- Ron Henry – Intrs: Player career records & bio info. Projs: Compl stat profile-several plyrs onhis website.
- Paul Herbert – Intrs: 1880s, Gus Weyhing, Toledo
- J. Thom. Hetrick – Intrs: Von der Ahe bio & '99 Cleve "Misfits" Projs: Publ. Pocol Press- hist. BB fiction.
- Beth Hose – Intrs: Pre-pro gm & erly devel, plyrs & tm hists. Projs: Cur exh Crick-Lon-'10 HOF & Cr Mus.
- Dan Hotaling – Intrs: '69 Redstkngs-bat trophy, Antioch 9, Sockalexix, Dblidy myth, colorline, drink-gamb.
- Paul Hunkele – Intrs: Pre-pro gm. Projs: Pre '70 rostrs, bx scrs, bio Buttercup Dickerson, plyrs-tms 58-82.
- Lou Hunsinger Jr. – Projs: Hist. of minor league baseball in Williamsport, PA 1877-2000.
- Gordon Hylton – Intrs: Legal & bus. hist, cult. role BB. Projs: Legal History of 19th-century baseball.
- Fred Ivor-Campbell – Intrs: Game '40-60, Prov Grays '78-85, Chadwick, Radbourne. Projs: Knicks artls-bk.
- Kevin Johnson – Intrs: Ballparks, stats, team hists. Projs: Ballparks, salaries, player retentions
- Steve Johnson – Intrs: Biographical. Projs: "Helped a little on 'Women in Baseball' book."
- Bill Keefe – Intrs: History of players and teams; updating stats, records, etc.
- Jim Kinnach – Intrs: Pre-professional.
- Rich Klein – Intrs: Stats, histories, bios and career records.
- Rob Knies – Intrs: AA, UA, NA.
- Robert F. Kreidler – Lg & team hists, pre-pro bpks. Projs: Process of NY game to nat. game.
- Bill Lamb – Life/career of George Davis. Projs: Cover story Geo Davis for TNP '97, revising 1910 Davis yr.
- Larry Lester – Intrs: Player career rec. & bios. Projs: Seeking info. Cuban X Giants and Cuban Giants.
- Ira Levinton – Intrs: Player career & season records. Potential candidates for Hall of Fame.
- Ted Lukacs – Intrs: ml blprks, overlooked plyers. Projs: ml blpks 1883-pres, Sanborn Ins-Maps.
- Angus Macfarlane – Intrs: all origins & early SanFran bb. Projs: Earliest player in SF & forgotten parks.
- Sean MacNair – Intrs: League & team histories, stats. Projs: 1890s line-ups compilation in progress.
- Peter Mancuso – Intrs: Orgns, Bios Staten Is. Projs: Bios: Sharrotts, Tuck Turner, Esterbrook,Dana X. Marshall – Intrs: Ballparks.
- Bob Mayer – Intrs: NYS ams & semi-pros, Neg. tms & plyr, recs, equip. Projs: NY Asylum bb, Hudson Val.
- Larry McCray – Instr: Pre-professional game. Projs: Origins Committee.
- William McMahan – Intrs: Chi tm pitch rec, Chi v Pitt. Projs: Chi pitch & opponents (v Pitt) accuracy.
- Eric Miklich – Intrs: Rules and styles of play. Projs: www.19cbaseball.com, 1874 World bb Tour.
- Ray Miller – Intrs: League & team hists, blpks, origins. Projs: Bioproject- Southend Grnds Bost.
- Dorothy Mills – Intrs: pre-pro game. Projs: Working on historical novel- 1920s female player.
- Tony Morante – Intrs: Develp of game from early 19c. Projs: The New York Game.
- Scott Morgan – Intrs:Civil War/bb novel-Aleck Pearsall, research era. Projs:1861 bb Comput gm.
- Peter Morris – Intrs: All bb topics in era. Projs: Several book proj. in progress.
- David Neft – Intrs: Statistics and bio. Infor.
- Rod Nelson – Intrs: Encyclop data-bio, stats; pict & scout hist. Projs:Civil War Vets, ml data base & pks.
- David Nemeč – Intrs: All Topics. Projs: 19cBB Books-Encyc., AA, Gr. Amer. BB Team Book.
- Thomas Nestor – Intrs: All Topics.
- Monica Nucciarone – Intrs: Biographical. Projs: Bio – Alexander Joy Cartwright.
- Graham Nye – Intrs: New Eng teams-Providence, Worcester, Hartford, Boston.
- Martin O'Cathian – Intrs: BB in Eng, Scot & Ire-1890s, 19c Irish plyrs. Projs: Hist Preston No End bb club.
- John O'Malley – Intrs: 19c-2b+3b allowed would give TBA. Projs: Game by Game for Tim Keefe.
- Roger Orloff – Intrs: League & team Histories, ballparks, pre-professional game .
- Marty Paine – Intrs: bios, Balt., sm towns, develp. Projs: Compl Umps in AA, working on 1867 season.
- Dennis Pajot – Intrs: Milw bb, bb fraud, blpks. Projs: 19c Milw, Dalrymple '86 WS, Milw 19c blpks.
- John F. Pardon – Intrs: Team & player histories, ballparks, historic sites.
- Gary Passamonte – Intrs: pre-pro, player bios & stats.
- Mark Pattison – Intrs: Det Wolverines, Negro ball/Page Fence Giants, Statistical Improvements.
- Greg Perkins – Intrs:Pro-indy tms-'70s. Projs:Crick, twn ball, bb -Encyc No..Ky, pre CW twn ball.
- Paul Proia – Intrs: ml & semi-pro west PA. Projs: Compl. "Just A Big Kid: Life & Times Rube Waddell."
- Tim Prosser – Intrs: Pre-NL plyrs 7 gms '58-75, bios same. Projs: future-bios of forgotten NLers.
- Daniel Ross – Intrs: Lg & tm hists, coll bb, sprd of gm, soc-eco. Projs: Western League history.
- Bob Schaefer – Intrs: bios, equip evol, blpks. Projs:bios- Wiman, R. Barnes, equip design, 19c Mets.
- Ken Schlapp – Intrs: Stats, blpks, pre-pro gm. Projs: NY Gothams for vintage bb team.
- Ed Shuman – Intrs: rules, uniform, style play, equip. Projs: would like to exhibit '82 gm-Spald uniforms.
- Andy Singer – Intrs: National Assoc 1871-75, underhand era.
- Jill Singleton – Intrs: 19cbb Pacific Slope, 2nd move plyrs west, ACs. Projs: Frank Chance full bio-CA bios.
- Richard Smiley – Intrs:Old Chi blpks, & Chi pro-tm hists. Projs:Book proj- hist Pro-Chi, Hulbert.
- Cary Smith – Intrs: Pics, T. Mullane, Comiskey St Pauls Sts. Projs: Index player pics, incl. 19c.
- Mark Sommers – Intrs: Life of Lipman Pike. Projs: Presents on Jewish players & org.
- Jerry Sudduth – Intrs: MLB Cin, L'vll, Indy, Col OH blpks, twnbll-KY. Projs: Thesis-1960s Redsoowner.
- Mickey Tangel – Intrs: Poetry & music. Projs: Lip Pike Presentation, Yaz & Chuck as Sox roommates.
- Robert Traina – Intrs: Career recs, bio info. Projs: Influ HOF on Hoy's role regard ump hand signals.
- Keith H. Thompson – Intrs: Det NL '81-88, Sam Thompson. Projs: Sam Thompson's throw arm, not left.
- John Thorn – Intrs: Pre-1871, origins, wicket, protoball. Projs: Pre-1871 rosters, continue origins stdy.
- Jeff Turner – Intrs: Research on 19c bb clubs, players, rules & records.
- Alain Usereau – Intrs: All aspects of game. Projs: Data base of brawls, teammate scuffles – all.
- Patrick Walsh – Projs: Top 25 players of 26 franchises.
- Charless 'New't' Weaver – Intrs: Player biographical information, statistics, career records.
- Joe Williams – Intrs: Indivd overlooked by HOF, pre-pro plyr recs. Projs: HOF potent list, CT bb hist.
- John Zinn – Intrs: Bklyn Dodgers, Billy Hamilton, blpks. Projs: Hamilton bioproj, Dodg '84-99,Ebbets.
- Tom Zocco – Intrs: league and team histories.

Research Request: Pioneer Project

Several Committee members have embarked on an ambitious project to expand our knowledge of the pre-1870 period. Below is an extended description of the Pioneer Project that aims to produce pre-1870 club histories and expanded biographical studies of the players of the era. The leaders of the project are Richard Malatzky, Peter Morris and John Thorn. They are looking for collaboration among the 19th Century Committee and the Origins Committee to gather data and produce a book-length publication. Read on:

“It has long frustrated me,” wrote John Thorn when we first began discussing this project, “that there’s a painstakingly researched entry in the encyclopedias for every man who played one game in the major leagues after 1870 but nobody knows or cares about what happened to the greatest players of the 1860s.” It is just as difficult to find even the most basic information about many of the key pioneer baseball clubs. It is to remedy those omissions that John, Richard Malatzky and I have started what we call “The Pioneer Project.” Our goal is to create a readable reference source that will stimulate more research on this fascinating era and that will place names and faces on the game’s earliest players. We are now looking for volunteers who will increase the scope of this project; if you’re interested, please read these questions and answers to learn more and contact Peter

Morris at moxbib@comcast.net if you might be able to help.

The Pioneer Project: Baseball’s Earliest Clubs and Players

What is the scope? The intention is to include about one hundred clubs that were formed during the amateur era of baseball (before 1869). About half of those are ones we’ve already selected on the basis of their being so historically important that they have to have an entry. A disproportionate number of these clubs are ones from big Eastern cities such as the Knickerbockers and Mutuals of New York, Eckfords and Excelsiors of Brooklyn, Athletics and Olympics of Philadelphia, Tri-Mountains of Boston, Nationals of Washington, etc., but there are also a few from other parts of the country such as St. Louis and San Francisco. The remaining clubs will be chosen primarily on the basis of a contributor having enough knowledge and the willingness to write an entry about them. Basically, what we are looking for is entries that expand our understanding of such key questions as what factors led early ballplayers to take up the game, what things club members had in common, how baseball spread throughout the country and to new regions, what made the club successful (or unsuccessful), where they played, the role they played in their communities, how amateur clubs were affected by the coming of professionalism and competitive-

ness, and how long they lasted. *How will you decide whether a club is worthy of an entry?* This is a somewhat subjective decision of course, but the biggest thing is whether enough information about the club is available to write an entry that provides insight into that club’s history and the lives of men who belonged to it. If, for example, you know that the first club in a particular town was formed in 1860 and you have a box score and the surnames of the nine players, but little else, then we would mention that club in the introduction to that region but it would not warrant its own entry. But if you subsequently find a reminiscence by one of the players or a retrospective article in a local newspaper that provides details and when and why the club formed, and that identifies most of the players, then that club would become a good candidate for inclusion. And we have already collected information on many clubs, which may complement what you know and make for an excellent article. So if you have any interest in a particular club or in the early history of baseball in a particular town or region, please contact us and we’ll discuss it further.

Have other books covered this? No. There are obviously a number of overviews of early baseball, as well as histories of early baseball in a number of regions. But the only book remotely along these lines was Charles Peverelly’s 1866 book and there

Research Requests (cont.)

is obviously a need to update that.

In what format will this project appear? We intend to publish this as a book. The publisher is still to be determined.

Will contributors be compensated? We will make sure that all contributors receive a free copy of the book once published. Due to the limited market, it is very unlikely that any cash compensation will be possible.

What happens if more than one person expresses interest in the same club? We'll start by seeing if they are interested in combining their efforts. If we have to select, preference will be given to volunteers who are closer to completing their research on that club and to those who have ready access to primary source material.

What resources do I need? Availability of resources varies so much from region to region that there's not much value in trying to generalize. Access to newspapers from that area is the most important thing, but this too varies greatly and more newspapers become available on-line. It is also a big advantage to live in the area and be able to visit the local public library and historical society, which often have key resources. But if you're interested in doing an entry, let us know and we may be able to point you to additional resources.

What should appear in the narrative history? What should appear in a concise, readable history of the club are answers to as many as possible of such key questions as: When did the club start playing baseball? Were they one of the first clubs in the region to play by the New York rules and if so why? What made this club tick? Did it exist as a social club as well as a baseball club? What did its members have in common and what made belonging to it special to them? What customs and rituals did they share? Were they successful on the diamond? Did winning or losing seem to matter to them? When and where did they practice? Were practice times designed to allow working-men to participate? Where were their match games played? Who attended their match games? What role they did the club play in its community? How was this club affected by the coming of professionalism and competitiveness? After it ended, how did members reflect back on this club?

Naturally, it won't always be possible to find answers to all of these questions. And of course the entries should be based upon reliable sources only – if you don't know the answer to a particular question, just leave it out.

What should be the length of the narrative history? This is going to vary greatly based on how much material is available, and

we will encourage contributors to focus primarily on including content if it gives us a better picture of that club's history, and omitting it if it doesn't. As a rule, however, entries should be a minimum of 500 words and not more than 7,500 words (except in the case of a few very important clubs).

What about footnotes and sources? All sources need to be acknowledged in a list of sources, as do the sources of direct quotations and specific borrowings in footnotes.

How can I possibly identify the players? *All the local newspaper gave were their surnames.* This is by far the trickiest part of this project. Nineteenth-century newspaper accounts indeed had the maddening habit of usually referring to players only by their surnames. The result is that it is impossible to identify many players. And we are definitely going to engage in guesswork; if we are anything less than virtually certain of a player's identity, we will consider him unidentified. There are entire clubs that will have to be excluded from this project because only the players' surnames are known and, as a result, we know very little about the club and its players. But in most cases, with enough digging, it is possible to identify many of the players on prominent clubs. Contemporary newspapers would occasionally mention players' first names, and retrospective accounts were

Research Request (Cont.)

much better about doing so. There were also little clues about players' identities in newspaper coverage – details about their occupation or about family members, for example, which make it possible to identify them. We have already begun the massive work needed to identify early players. Richard Malatzky will be in charge of this part of the project, and he will work with the contributors of entries to identify players and gather information for biographical sketches.

How long should the biographical sketches be and what should they include? This again will vary greatly; William Howard Taft or Harry Wright warrants a much longer entry than the typical player. In general, a sketch

should be brief and include only key information like birth and death information, profession, whether they moved often or stayed in one place, when they got married, whether they served in the Civil War. Also be on the look-out for things that club members have in common, such as profession, social status, living in a particular neighborhood, ethnic background, when the family immigrated to the U.S., etc. If it is possible to obtain an obituary, key details about their life after baseball may also warrant inclusion. you'll find something interesting and relevant. But in general, the sketches should be short summaries of their lives.

What if I want to work on a club that continued after 1868?

Should I include their history after that? By all means.

What is the deadline for completing an entry? We would like to have all entries by April 1, 2009. We strongly encourage volunteers to submit a draft by October 1, 2008, which will give us the chance to give more feedback and help move the project along to completion.

I have collected some information on a club, but don't think it would be enough for an entry. Do you still want to hear from me? Yes! Your material may well be something that we can use in the introduction to the entry for that region, and it's even possible that someone else has collected enough material on that club for an entry.