

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

FALL 2015

SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

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

Committee Contacts

Chairman– Peter Mancuso
6970 Ely Road
New Hope, PA 18938
peterplus4@earthlink.net

Editor/VC– Bob Bailey
10223 SW 49th Lane
Gainesville, FL 32608
bobbailey@cox.net

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Inside this issue:

<i>Odds & Ends of 19th Century No-Hitters</i>	6-7
<i>Champions Before There Were Leagues</i>	8
<i>Winter Meeting Book Editor’s Note</i>	9
<i>Grave Marker Update</i>	9
<i>News & Notes</i>	10-11
<i>Richmond, VA Cigarette Ad</i>	12

The Reserve Clause and the Failure of the Free Market

by Richard Hershberger

The salaries baseball players want nowadays,” said a prominent manager the other day, “are simply preposterous. It’s an outrage, the prices we have to pay for talent.” This is all very well from the managers’ standpoint. If the players had anything to say on the subject, he would be equally justified in remarking: “I know my salary is a big one, but So-and-So makes big money and can afford to pay it. He only

engages me because he wants me. If he couldn’t make money off of me he wouldn’t engage me, and if I could make him pay me a hundred a week more I’d do it.” The relations of managers and player are admirably regulated under the laws of demand and supply. In an era of large returns large expenditures are the just rule. The man whose profits are handsome can afford to pay those who help him earn them hand-

somely, and he ought to do it. It is the fault of those whom he has to pay if he does not pay enough, and it is as unjust of him to blame his employee for setting a high price upon himself as it would be in the employee to blame him for taking in all the money he could at the gate. When the profits of the business decline, salaries will go down of their own accord. As long as there is enough amuse-

(Continued on page 2)

CHAIRMAN’S CORNER by Peter Mancuso

The Frederick Ivor-Campbell 19th Century Base Ball Conference is closer than you think. Yes, “The Fred” remains a springtime tradition in Cooperstown, this coming **April 15 & 16, 2016** at the Baseball Hall of Fame. Other deadlines and activation dates, however, have been moved forward, including this early

announcement of some of Fred VIII’s highlights, starting with our 2016 Luncheon Keynote Speaker, the irrepressible Bill Humber.

Also joining the 2016 program as Special Presenter will be David Nemecek who will fill the better part of an hour with several of his fascinating 19th century re-

search findings. We are also promising a “never-a-dull-moment” Member Spotlight Interview of Eric Miklich by our seasoned tongue-in-cheek interviewer, Tom Simon.

John Thorn has promised to provide and moderate another provocative Panel Discussion that

(Continued on page 5)

The Reserve Clause and the Failure of the Free Market (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

ment money afloat to keep the baseball field as full of attractions as it is, good players will be scarce and dear. For the sake of all hands we trust they will be scarce and dear for many years to come.’ (The Sporting Life July 15, 1883)

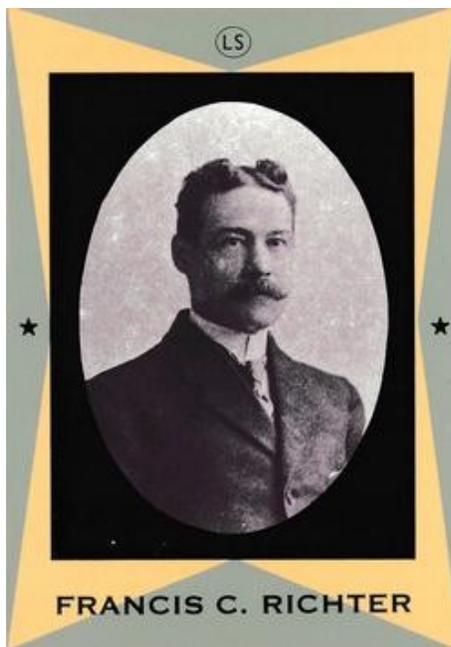
The argument quoted here is commonly heard to this day. It is dead wrong, in both obvious and non-obvious ways. The writer probably was Francis Richter, the editor of *The Sporting Life* and a major figure in baseball journalism well into the 20th century.

Richter was a fine sports writer. There was a fashion for baseball histories in the 1910s. His *History and Records of Baseball* from 1914 is the best of the lot. Richter was not, however, competent in economics. This leads to the obvious problem with his analysis. He confuses supply and demand with the idea that a more profitable business pays, or ought to pay, its employees more than a less profitable business. The argument that it does is only indirectly connected with supply and demand, and the argument that it ought to is a moral rather than an economic argument.

This is largely uninteresting: an Econ 101 mistake. My topic here is the more interesting, and controversial, underlying fallacy: that the free market principle of supply and demand can possibly work in a professional team sport.

First a review of the basics. How is price of a widget determined? The supply-and-demand side is simply that higher supply and/or

lower demand will lower the price, while lower supply and/or higher demand will raise it. Next we look at each side. On the supply side, if the price of a widget is so low that a widget manufacturer cannot make a profit, some manu-



Francis Richter, Economist

facturers will drop out of the business, thereby lowering the supply, until the price rises to a profitable level. Or, if the price of the widget is so high that manufacturers enjoy a windfall, widget production will be increased and the price will come down. On the demand side, if the price is high then some widget users will find an alternative to widgets or simply do without, lowering the demand and therefore the price. If the price is low, then they will buy more, increasing demand and raising the price. These natural adjustments are Adam Smith’s “invisible hand.” This is much over-

simplified, of course, but it is an elegant system, and often even works, albeit more messily, in real life.

Now let’s apply this to labor. Suppose you wanted to put a bathroom in your basement, and had the good sense not to try to do the plumbing yourself. How do you choose a plumber? Maybe you know a guy, and go with him, but for our hypothetical let’s suppose you don’t. The important criteria are (1) can he do the job right (as contrasted with the innumerable wrong ways it could be done) and (2) price. So you do your research (ask for recommendations, check Angie’s list, etc.) to compile a list of guys who can do the job right, and then call around for prices. The invisible hand does its magic: if your area is over-supplied with plumbers this will drive their prices down, and some will leave; if under-supplied, their prices will go up until more plumbers are attracted to set up shop. If there is a lot of construction going on, the price for a plumber will go up and you might decide to wait on the basement job. When the construction market tanks, that will be a good time to hire a plumber cheaply.

This doesn’t work in professional team sports. There are two reasons: owner incentives are complicated and inconsistent; and that labor market model using plumbers contains simplifying assumptions that are invalid for professional sports.

What is the owner of a team trying to accomplish? Roughly

(Continued on page 3)

The Reserve Clause and the Failure of the Free Market (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

speaking, there are two goals: to make money and to win championships. At first glance, these goals complement one another. A winning team will attract more fans, and therefore bring in more revenue, which can be used to hire even better players. This is true so far as it goes, but revenue and profit are different things.

Under some circumstances, an owner who cares only about profit and is indifferent to winning can do better fielding a horrible team than a good one. Good players can be sold for cash, bringing immediate revenue. Most leagues have at least partial revenue sharing (e.g. splitting gate receipts between the visiting and the home clubs), ensuring a baseline of revenue no matter how bad the team is. Reduce your expenditures below that baseline, and you have guaranteed profits. This is why in 1915 the Athletics went from perennial powerhouse to perennial cellar dweller. Connie Mack switched business models. Then in 1977 the Athletics did the same thing again, this time with Charlie Finley the culprit. The most egregious example comes from football, where the pre-Carson Palmer Cincinnati Bengals suckered the city into a truly astonishingly bad (or good, depending on your perspective) contract, with the city guaranteeing ticket sales. The ownership at that point responded rationally to the incentives, and maximized profits by not wasting money on such frivolities as fielding a competitive team.

More common is the owner who cares about championships more

than profits. For all that baseball has been culturally prominent since before the Civil War, as a business it has always been relatively small time. Thus the potential for the rich owner who regards the team as a hobby. Making money simply isn't the point. This phenomenon goes as far back as 1884, when St. Louis millionaire Henry Lucas was so eager to own a pennant-winning major league club that, upon finding himself excluded from the existing leagues, he founded and bankrolled a league of his own. (OK, that is an oversimplification of the Union Association. There was more going on than just Lucas buying a vanity project. But that was a big part of what happened.)

Owners who can take the team payroll out of their petty cash box are the extreme case. More typical are owners who want both to win and to turn a profit, with varying levels of optimism, caution, and common sense.

Next we come to the simplifying assumption in the plumber scenario. When you are looking for a plumber, the candidates fall into two categories: guys who you are reasonably confident will do the job right, and guys you aren't confident will do the job right. Within the first category, it isn't really meaningful to rank which plumber is better. What does that even mean? A more esthetically pleasing pipe joint? Perhaps it would mean a more durable joint, but how would you know, and is this likely to be an issue within the time span you care about? In practice, everyone within the group is

pretty much interchangeable, so you make your selection based on other factors such as price and availability.

This is far from the case with athletes. There are, at any given time, thirty major league starting shortstops (to arbitrarily pick a position). No one would consider the best starting shortstop in MLB and the worst to be interchangeable. The best is far more valuable. Baseball has since the Civil War used statistical analysis to measure playing ability. While earlier statistics seem primitive in light of modern sabermetrics, they were persuasive at the time. At any time, there was a very small number of guys who could plausibly claim to be the best shortstop anywhere, and could market their services accordingly. Even a financially sensible owner might see his rival sign the best shortstop, and conclude that he had better go out and get the best second baseman.

Put in terms of supply and demand, the demand always outstrips the supply. A few clubs don't care about winning, and are content with signing a minimally competent shortstop as cheaply as possible. Most clubs want the best shortstop they can get, and a few of these clubs are willing to spend with wild abandon to accomplish this. On the supply side, plenty of guys are minimally competent, so they can be had cheaply. But the supply of the best shortstops is tiny: as small as one. Thus in an unregulated free market governed only by supply and demand, the price of top talent will always rise.

(Continued on page 4)

The Reserve Clause and the Failure of the Free Market (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

The price of second-tier talent will follow, and third-tier behind that. The only mechanism to halt the constant inflation is club bankruptcy and the entire system collapsing.

Enter the reserve clause, which was destined to be baseball's chief mechanism for suppressing player salaries. This is the subtext to Richter's editorial. The reserve system had been instituted after the 1879 season, as the "five-men rule" with each club reserving five players. The discussion in 1883 was its expansion to eleven players. 1879. This is significant. This was the depth of the depression following the Panic of 1873. Professional baseball had been under financial stress since 1875. By 1879 it was in severe decline. The nadir would be 1880, bottoming out at only ten fully professional clubs in the nation. (By way of comparison, in 1877 there had been between forty and fifty.)

If player salaries were regulated by supply and demand, they would have been dropping to new lows in 1879. There was a glut of professional ballplayers desperate to be signed. Things were so bad that many had to resort to honest work instead, not that there was much of that available. Yet at the same time, club salaries kept rising. At a special meeting of the National League held August 9, 1878, "the most important question discussed was the salaries of players for next year. It called forth five hours' discussion, but was finally dropped, no action being taken." All that came out of those five hours was that "the

league declines to continue business on the same basis as this season, and announces to players that in 1879 the aggregate salaries paid by each club must not exceed the sum which the experience of this year indicated that each club would be likely to earn." (New York Tribune August 13, 1878) In other words; nothing but vague intentions. All those unemployed ballplayers didn't result in lower salaries because they weren't the talent pool the National League was recruiting from. The League hired the best players, at least as a first approximation, and League clubs competed against one another for those players.

The next year some evil genius figured it out: "At the recent meeting of the League it was agreed, for the sake of securing good players at small salaries, that five men in each nine should not be negotiated with by other League teams." (New York Clipper October 25, 1879)

There are two strategies that have been successfully employed by sports leagues to keep salaries down: a reserve system, and a salary cap. The salary cap is the more intuitive, but it can be difficult to implement. Individual clubs have a strong incentive to cheat: to find some surreptitious way to sweeten the offer to a top player. Nineteenth century attempts at imposing salary caps tended to be dead letters from the start. Salary caps work today in major sports leagues because the dollar amounts are too large to slip under the table. You can't put ten million dollars in an unmarked envelope and pass it when no one is looking. Any serious attempt at cheating at today's numbers would

amount to a money laundering racket, which could result in unwelcome attention. But under nineteenth century conditions a salary cap was unenforceable.

The reserve system works because there is no way to cheat surreptitiously. Any cheating will be out in the open. The way it initially worked was that the National League clubs made a gentlemen's agreement. Each could designate five players they wanted to keep for the following year, and the other clubs agreed not to sign any of those five. This was expanded a few years later to eleven per team. Clubs typically carried around thirteen or fourteen players total, so in reality at eleven men all but the marginal players were reserved.

How is this legal, you ask? Isn't this a conspiracy in restraint of trade? Of course it is. And while this was before the Sherman Antitrust Act, there was an ample body of common law on the subject. The startling fact is that Organized Baseball is built atop a foundation of unenforceable contracts, extortion, and what in other contexts would be criminal conspiracy. Why this came about and how it was sustained is a topic for another day. In the meantime, you have to just go with it, and not assume that legal norms apply.

The reserve system was durable. It expanded to accommodate the growth of baseball into a hierarchy of leagues, forced to cooperate, however grudgingly. It survived intact for nearly a century. Not until 1975 was it significantly modified, after Major League

The Reserve Clause and the Failure of the Free Market (cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

Baseball in a moment of inattention agreed to collective bargaining and arbitration, without quite thinking it through.

Notice that I wrote that the reserve system was “modified.” The usual narrative is that the reserve system was abolished, bringing on the free agency era. The usual narrative is bollocks. The reserve system remains integral to organized baseball. The modification is that a player’s reserved status is no longer perpetual. In the old version, a player was locked in from the day

he signed his first contract to the day he retired. In the modified version he is reserved for a set number of years, after which he becomes a free agent. If, in the old version, the player was a well-paid slave, in the new version he is a well-paid indentured servant.

Organized baseball could not function without the reserve, or something like it. Even as the Yankees and the Dodgers spend like sailors on shore leave, other clubs can build on a core of younger players still under reserve. Yes, you can buy your way

into the playoffs, but that is not the only way to get there. This prevents the system from entering into an inflationary death spiral.

So it is that I am reluctantly forced to concede that the owners have a point. The free market, *contra* Francis Richter, isn’t up to the task.

Editor’s Note: Article first posted to Ordinary Times at <http://ordinary-gentlemen.com/blog/2015/07/02/the-reserve-clause-and-the-failure-of-the-free-market/>

Chairman’s Corner (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

will make full use of three 19th-century baseball experts while giving our attendees full access to the discussion at hand (topic and panel members TBA).

Then, there is the food and cheer and all those warm discussions that accompany our dinners, lunches and coffee breaks. Yes, there will be both a morning and afternoon coffee break on Friday and Saturday in the Giamatti Center’s research room adjacent to our conference venue, the HOF’s Bullpen Theater. Naturally, as in the past early arrivals will most likely flock to their traditional informal gatherings and meals on Thursday afternoon and evening. After Friday’s 9:AM Coffee and Check-in at the HOF and 10:AM Conference start there will be an ample unstructured lunch break to sample Main Street and/or the HOF before the confer-

ence resumes for the afternoon. Friday evening’s optional Welcoming Dinner is a sit-down affair offering three pre-order entrees at Templeton Hall (around the corner from the HOF). Saturday the feast of knowledge, food and good cheer continues with morning coffee service, a hot buffet luncheon (included with conference registration), afternoon coffee-service / book signing and finally our optional Post Conference Gathering-“Cookout Buffet” in the historic Otesaga Hotel.

In between the Special Presentation, Member Spotlight Interview, Panel Discussion, Luncheon Keynote Address, four coffee breaks, a book signing, two dinners, one luncheon and one lunch on your own there will be 10 twenty-five-minute Research Presentations on any topic of 19th century baseball. In order to make the entire con-

tent of the 2016 Fred available by our usual January 1st registration launch, we have moved the **Research Presentation proposal abstract deadline up to October 30th 2105**. Please, see our **final call for Research Presentation abstracts in this newsletter for submission details**.

Even if your team is not in it, please, have a great Post Season and I hope to see many of you in Cooperstown in April.

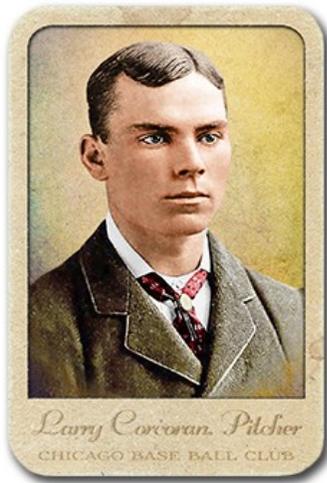
Peter Mancuso

...because baseball history is not only baseball history.

Odds & Ends of Nineteenth Century No-Hitters

by Ed Heckenfluss

During the 19th century no-hitters were not celebrated events. Newspaper accounts would note, even highlight when a pitcher yielded no hits during a game but there were not lists of pitchers who had achieved this rarity or even comments beyond one or two days after the game that a no-hitter had occurred. Even the term “no-hitter”



Larry Corcoran

didn't make its first recorded appearance until the 20th century. This article will take a quick look at the odds and ends of 19th century no-hitters.

There were 43 recognized no-hitters from 1876 to 1900. George Bradley of St. Louis tossed the first in the National League against Hartford in 1876. Cincinnati's Noodles Hahn had the last one in 1900 when he blanked the Phillies.

Larry Corcoran of Chicago had the most no-hitters in the period with three. Pud Galvin of Buffalo, Adonis Terry of Brooklyn and Ted

Breitenstein of St. Louis and Cincinnati each had a pair. Breitenstein's first no-hitter against the Louisville Colonels on the last day of the 1891 season was his first big league start. About a year later Bumpus Jones matched this feat with Cincinnati.

August, with ten total no-hitters during the period edged July with nine for the most in any month. Not surprisingly the short-scheduled month of April trailed the pack with two. Although April was not the kindest month to pitchers seeking a no-hitter, April 22, 1890 was the best day during the century to get a no-no. That is the only day when two 19th century no-hitters were thrown. Breitenstein recorded his second no-hitter for Cincinnati against Pittsburgh and Jay Hughes of Baltimore silenced the Brooklyn bats that day. This oddity was repeated on June 29, 1990 when Dave Stewart and Fernando Valenzuela also had no-hitters on the same day.

The best year for no-hitters was 1884. It didn't hurt that there were three leagues operating during the season. The American Association recorded four no-hit games while the National League and the Union Association each had two. Eight pitchers held their opponents hitless that season with Larry Corcoran recording his third no-hitter and Pud Galvin his second. One catcher, Rudy Kemmler, caught a pair of no-hitters that season for Columbus of the American association. Co-

lumbus pitcher Ed Morris turned the trick against Pittsburgh while Frank Mountain did it versus Washington.

The first no-hitter at the new pitching distance of fifty feet is credited to Tony Mullane of Louisville on September 11, 1882. The first at the 60 feet, six inch distance goes to Baltimore's Bill



Ted Breitenstein

Hawke on August 16, 1893. Hawke's game was caught by Wilbert Robinson. It was Uncle Robbie's second no-hitter caught but still left him behind the 19th century leader Silver Flint who caught three. Actually Flint caught two and shared another. On August 19, 1880 Flint started what ended up being Larry Corcoran's first no-hitter. He left the game and was replaced by King Kelly.

During the 1800s the city of Philadelphia treated fans to eight no-hitters, the most in any city.

(Continued on page 7)

Odds & Ends of Nineteenth Century No-Hitters (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

They won six and dropped two. The NL Phillies went 2-2 losing to Hugh Daily (1883) and Noodles Hahn (1900) but cheering Charlie Ferguson (1885) and Red Donahue (1898). The American Association Athletics when 4-0 in no-hitters. Al Atkinson tossed a pair (1884 & 1886) and Ed Seward (1888) and



Pud Galvin

Gus Weyhing (1888) had one each. Brooklyn also participated in eight no-hitters but split 4-4.

A not uncommon trivia question among ballpark fans was which of the classic parks (built from roughly 1910 to 1923) never hosted a no-hitter. The answer was Forbes Field in Pittsburgh. The tradition of not having much to cheer for in no-hitters got a serious start in the 19th century. During the period Pittsburgh participated in six no-hitters and lost them all. In their first no-hit loss to Louisville's Guy Hecker

in 1882 they became the first team to lose a no-hitter while scoring a run. They gave Philadelphia's Al Atkinson his first of two no-nos in 1884 and four days later went hitless against Columbus' Ed Morris. In 1886 Baltimore's Matt Kilroy kept the futility streak going and in 1892 they were the victim of Bumpus Jones no-hitter in his first major league appearance. They closed out the run in 1898 when Cincinnati's Ted Breitenstein collected his second career no-hitter.

In addition to the 43 recognized no-hitters of the 19th century there were 14 unrecognized no-hitters. MLB rules require a pitcher to go nine innings to record a no-hitter. From 1884 to 1894 there were 14 games where a pitcher surrendered no-hits but the game ended before nine innings were completed. Games were ended for a variety of reasons including darkness, rain, and the need for a team to catch a train for their next game. Hank Gastright (1890), Charlie Geggus (1884) and Silver King (1890) each went eight innings with their no-hitters. George Van Haltren, better known as an outfielder later in his career came close to adding to Pittsburgh's woes when he tossed a six-inning no-hitter for Chicago in 1888. A list of these unrecognized no-hitters is below:

NL:

Oct 1, 1884– Charlie Getzien, Detroit v. Phil, 6 innings.

Oct 7, 1885– Dupee Shaw, Prov v. Buff, 5 innings.

June 21 1888– George Van Haltren, Chicago v. Pitt, 6 innings.

July 27, 1888– Ed Crane, NY v. Wash, 7 innings.

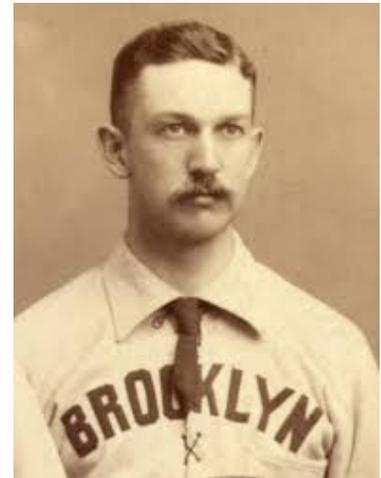
Oct 15, 1892– Jack Stivetts, Bos v. Wash, 5 innings.

Sep 23, 1893– Icebox Chamberlain, Cincy v. Bost., 7 innings.

June 2, 1894– Ed Stein, Bkn v. Chicago, 6 innings.

AA:

May 6, 1884– Larry McKeon,



Adonis Terry

Indy v. Cincy, 6 innings.

July 29, 1889– Matt Kilroy, Balt. V. St. Louis, 7 innings.

Sep 23, 1890– George Nichol, St. Louis v. Phil, 7 innings.

Oct 12, 1890– Hank Gastright, Columbus v. Toledo, 8 innings.

UA:

Aug 21, 1884– Charlie Geggus, Wash. V. Wilmington, 8 innings.

Oct 5, 1884– Charlie Sweeney, (2 innings) & Henry Boyle (3 innings), St. Louis v. St. Paul, 5 innings.

PL:

June 21, 1890– Silver King, Chicago v. Bkn, 8 innings.

The Champions Before There Were Leagues

Before the National Association opened shop in 1871 the national champion was awarded by common consent, public consensus, or sportswriter vanity.

Committee member Eric Miklich has made his own selections for the best team in the country for the years 1851 to 1869 on his website www.19cbaseball.com.

Here are his picks from 1851 to 1859.

1851: Knickerbocker Club. While few games were reported, the Knickerbockers twice defeated their main rivals, the Washington Club of New York.



1852: Knickerbocker Club. The Washington Club morphed into the Poster for the Eagle Base Ball Club of New York

Gothams of New York and again lost a pair of contests to the Knickerbockers.

1853: Knickerbocker Club. The Gothams were still the main rival to the venerable Knickerbockers

and again lost a pair of contests. One was played at Elysian Fields in New Jersey and the other at Red

beat the Eagles two out of three and split a pair of games with a rising Atlantic Club of Brooklyn.



The members, standing, left to right, are T. G. Van Cott, pitcher; William Burns, catcher; J. McCosker, third base; O. Teed, shortstop; Phil Sheridan, left field; R. H. Cudlip, second base; Vall, first base; Winslow, center field; Charles Comerford, right field. The men seated, left to right, are William H. Van Cott, president; G. Van Cott, umpire; H. M. Platt, game keeper.

Newspaper Photo of 1855 Gotham Club

House Grounds in Manhattan.

1854: Eagle Club of New York. A new club the Eagles twice defeated the Knickerbockers in Hoboken while the Knicks posted a 1-3-1 losing record for the season. The Gothams posted a 1-1-1 record.

1855: Knickerbocker Club. The Knicks rebounded with a 3-1 record. Although the Gothams went 4-1 the two clubs split their matches and the Knickerbockers allowed fewer runs.

1856– Gotham Club. Baseball fever hit New York with over twenty teams taking the field. The Gothams has a 4-1 record and split their games with the second best club, the Eagles allowing fewer runs.

1857: Gotham Club. The Gothams had a 4-2 record in the year of the First Base Ball Convention. They

1858: Atlantic Club of Brooklyn. The Atlantics were the only major undefeated club going 7-0 with five victories over higher class clubs. The Empire Club was 8-1-1 with their only loss being by one run to the Mutuels. They also had a tie with a so-so Knickerbocker Club.

1859: Atlantic Club of Brooklyn. The Atlantics went 11-1 among the top five clubs in the area. They were Excelsior of Brooklyn, Eckford Club of Brooklyn, Star Club of Brooklyn and the Eagle Club of New York. The Atlantics only loss was to the Eckford Club but they beat these Brooklyn rivals in two other contests.

For Eric's picks for the 1860-1869 period, go to <http://www.19cbaseball.com/champions-2.html>.

From the Winter Meeting Book Project Editors

The 19th Century Winter Meetings book project is a two volume series designed to capture the chronological development of the game through the extrapolation and interpretation of significant meetings that informed each season. As Editor-in-Chief of Volume 1 (1857-1875), I'm looking for season chapters that focus on the rules development, player conduct, organization, player status, first "championships", and the like. Of note, we would like to not only capture what took place at the meetings, but perhaps discuss important points that were missed that should have been addressed (with vigilance to ensure we are not misrepresent-

ing the era).

At this time, authors are writing a chapter on their particular chosen season. Authors must follow the SABR Style Guide <http://sabr.org/about/sabr-style-guide>, in creating a chapter that is approximately 5,000 words (which is a flexible target). I'm asking for initial chapter drafts to be submitted by March 31st, 2016 in order for a content edit, revision as necessary, proofread edit, copy edit, and final approval. We are hoping to wrap up the project in the summer of 2016.

I have a great team of writers and editors so far, but we absolutely need help. The following

seasons are still available: 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1866, 1868, 1869, 1872, 1873, 1874. We have a generous group of scholarly members willing to assist and share expertise with you. If you are new to SABR, a long-time supporter, or anywhere in between, I would love to work with you and find a place that best employs your talent, passion, and expertise. If you are interested at all in being an author, co-author, editor, or otherwise a volunteer on this project, please contact me at dr.jhodes@hotmail.com.

Thanks, Jeremy Hodges

From the Grave Marker Committee

First and foremost, if you have already donated or have set-up an automatic monthly donation to the 19th Century Grave Marker Project, THANK YOU!

If you have not already made a donation, or if you are considering a sustaining monthly donation now would be an excellent time to do so as we are nearing the financial goal for our first grave marker dedication, the resting place of Baseball Pioneer **James Whyte Davis (1826-1899)** a member of the old New York Knickerbockers for 30 years (1850-1880).

In 1893 Davis wrote to Edward B Talcott, then principle owner of the NY Giants (NL) requesting him to organize a subscription of ten cents from every baseball player for the placement of a marker on his

grave. Davis died in 1899 and was interred in Brooklyn's Green Wood Cemetery; his grave remains unmarked to this day.

In his letter to Talcott, Davis requested that the following be inscribed on his grave marker: "Wrapped in the Original Flag – Of the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of N.Y. – Here lies the body of James Whyte Davis, A member for thirty years, He was not 'Too Late,' Reaching the 'Home Plate'".

Our **19cBB Grave Marker Project Committee** will be dedicating a "home plate shaped" grave marker with the above inscription on **James Whyte Davis'** grave, in the near future, date TBA.

To help the committee accom-

plish this end, please, make a tax deductible donation.

Online: go to the SABR website, www.sabr.org, sign-in, click on "About SABR", click on "Members Home", scroll down to "Donate Box", click on first green bar "Campaign/Fund Information" and select "Different Fund", Open drop box and select "19th Century Grave Marker Project" then complete caption boxes including amount to donate or, By mail: Make check payable to "SABR" and write on check's Memo Line "19th Century Baseball Grave Marker Project" and mail to: SABR – Cronkite School, ASU; 555 N. Central Ave., #416; Phoenix, AZ 85004

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

News & Notes

-All SABR members are invited and encouraged to submit a Research Presentation Proposal Abstract of 200-500 words for a 20-25 minute presentation on any topic of 19th century baseball (please, include title and contact information) for the April 15 & 16, 2016 "Fred".

THE NEW DEADLINE for Research Presentation Proposal Abstracts is **October 31, 2015**.

Proposals must be part of an email or in the form of a Word or PDF document attached to an email sent to my email address no later than the new deadline. My email address remains: peter-plus4@earthlink.net.

Two points worth considering. If you have submitted a presentation proposal in the past and it was not selected in a given year is no reason for you to not resubmit the same proposal, there is a different set of abstract jurors each year. Also, if you are working on a Nineteenth Century Committee project such as Overlooked Legends or "Baseball's 19th Century 'Winter Meetings'" books, you may wish to consider using that same research for a Research Presentation at "The Fred". There are ten Research Presentation time slots for the 2016 Fred.

This new timeline will allow people whose Research Presentations having been accepted (before the end of November) to acknowledge their intentions to present their research at the following April's "Fred" in time for the winter issue of our newsletter. This in turn provides SABR members interested in registering for "The Fred" a much earlier look at the complete pro-

gram before deciding to attend or not. I look forward to receiving proposals from all hoping to present at the April 15 & 16, 2016 "Fred" by or before October 31, 2015. Please, include your name and contact information. Your identity will be removed before your abstract is submitted to the Research Presentation selection jurors.

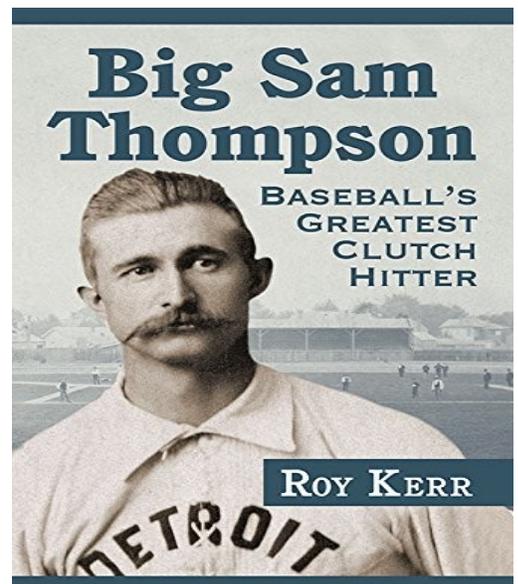
-Mark Armour of the BioProject Committee has announced a new category of essays the Project is developing. Similar to the Games project, The Biography Project and the Business of Baseball Committee are teaming up to create a collection of the ownership histories of major league franchises. As they are completed, the histories will appear in the Business of Baseball newsletter and be posted permanently in a separate section on the BioProject website. If you are interested in doing a team's history, or part of a team's history, such as the St. Louis Browns years of the current Baltimore franchise, please contact Andy McCue, agmccue44@earthlink.net, who will be coordinating the project. The Dodgers are done, and writers have claimed the Yankees, Red Sox, Cubs and Indians. But that means 25 other teams are available.

The histories should be as comprehensive as possible, covering the changes in ownership, the price paid, the makeup of partnerships, the division of responsibilities among the partners, the reasoning of both the buyers and the sellers, and economically significant events within the era of each ownership group. There is no need to talk about events on

the field unless they have a direct impact on the bottom line or a change in ownership. It is likely that arguments with cities over stadiums and threatened (or actual) re-locations will play a role in the essays. The histories should be long enough to tell the story, but should be as tight as possible. There is no set word limit. The essays should include endnotes on sources. Heavy detail, such as the holdings of minor partners, might well be left to those endnotes.

Research guidance will be available if needed. Over the long run, it will be necessary to keep updating these essays and the original researchers will be given first opportunity to do those updates.

-Committee member Roy Kerr has had his biography of Sam Thompson released by McFarland. The book, "Big Sam Thompson: Baseball's Greatest Clutch Hitter" covers the 19th Century



career of Thompson with Detroit and Philadelphia. The link is: <http://www.amazon.com/Big-Sam-Thompson-Baseballs-Greatest/dp/0786497084>.

-Last month's story on Eastern Park in Brooklyn brought a note from Lyle

News & Notes (cont.)

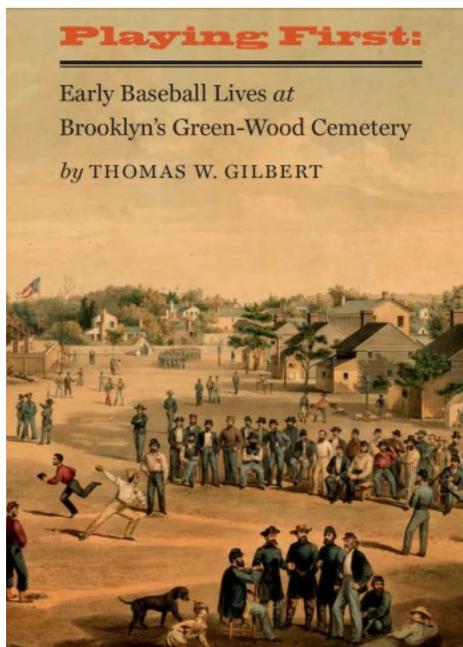
Spatz, long-time chairman of SABR's Records Committee and former resident of the neighborhood. He notes that the reference to Van Sinderen Street should read Van Sinderen Avenue.

-SABR member Gary Kaschak sends a note of his activities with the Hoy For the Hall Committee, a group advocating Dummy Hoy's inclusion in the Hall of Fame. Contact Gary at gkaschak@comcast.net for more information.

-Deb Shattuck passes along notes on the Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection at Johns Hopkins University. She has turned up such baseball musical classics as "The Baseball Fever" (1867), "Union Baseball Club March" (1867), "Husky Hans" (dedicated to Honus Wagner in 1904) and "Catch It On the Fly (1867)." Toe-tappers every one. The address is <http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>

-Join Thomas W. Gilbert, baseball historian and author, to celebrate his newly published book *Playing First: Early Baseball Lives at Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery*. The event will be held September 26, 2015 from 1:00PM to 3:00PM at Green-Wood Cemetery. Gilbert is an expert in baseball's 19th-century New York City and Brooklyn origins, and Green-Wood's history there is unmatched – an astounding number of early baseball innovators and players are interred at the cemetery. *Playing First* is the culmination of Gilbert's extensive research into the little known professional, political, and military lives of these baseball pioneers. In

Green-Wood's Historic Chapel, Gilbert will reveal many fascinat-



ing stories included in his newly published book, including the truth about what actually killed famed baseball martyr James Creighton, and how a feud between baseball and cricket in early America changed Creighton's legacy forever. After the talk, Gilbert will sign books before leading a trolley tour of baseball pioneers with Green-Wood Historian Jeff Richman.

-This summer Connie Mack (Philadelphia) Chapter Co-Chair, Dick Rosen and I met at Drexel University in Philadelphia with a University official in anticipation of our 2016 **Philadelphia 19th Century Baseball Interdisciplinary Symposium**. The meeting was both productive and promising. The space and services that Drexel can provide are very attractive and highly functional, includ-

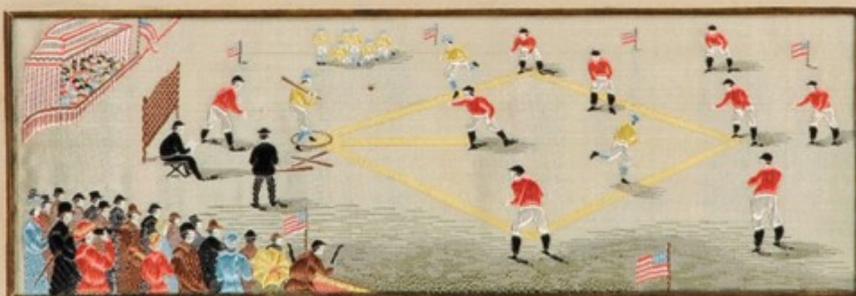
ing nearby lodging for those desiring to make it a weekend visit.

We requested, Saturday, November 12, 2016 as our preferred choice and the following Saturday, November 19th as our second choice, both after the World Series and before Thanksgiving. We will be moving forward with Drexel to work out final details and costs in the months ahead and will know sometime in this coming January exactly which date will be reserved for us. Dick Rosen and I met again this September, along with Seamus Kearney, Dick's fellow Co-Chair to begin brainstorming program possibilities. Stay tuned.
Peter Mancuso

-The SABR Convention for 2016 will be held in Miami from July 27 to July 31. In case you missed the announcement of two weeks ago: The Miami Marlins' home-stand that week includes games against the St. Louis Cardinals and Philadelphia Phillies. Marlins Park, which opened in 2012 on the site of the historic Orange Bowl, is a state-of-the-art retractable roof facility offering a stunning visual experience for fans, including spectacular views of downtown Miami, the famous "Red Grooms" home-run sculpture in left-center field, two 450-gallon fish tanks behind home plate, The Cleveland, and the unique Bobblehead Museum. Naturally, our annual Nineteenth Century Committee's business meeting will take place during SABR 46.

Beware of worthless imitations.

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