

# Originals.

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## THE MONTH IN 19cBB.

Members of the Origins Committee used the 19cBB yahoo group during the month of October to pursue a number of interests.

### INK-STAINED WRETCHES.

#### **Meet The Press.**

Craig Waff posted an 1885 Chadwick article listing the names of New York base ball reporters from the 1850s on. John Thorn posted a few additional names from his 2005 post on the subject.

### INQUIRIES.

#### **1786 "baste-ball"**

Frank Ceresi inquired if the long-known mention of playing baste-ball at Princeton in 1786 by John Rhea Smith is the earliest American mention of base ball? John Thorn posted earlier notes on whether baste-ball actually refers to base ball. Mark Aubrey sent a discussion from a 1914 volume of the history of athletics at the school, and sent a link for further reading in Smith's diary. David Block interpreted Mark's find as evidence that baste is a "corrupt" spelling of base. John Thorn agreed, and noted

that Smith's mention also indicates that a game known as base ball was played in America well before that date. Larry McCray summarized the occurrences of "Baste" in the Protoball chronology. John Thorn, under the title "**John Rhea Smith**" posted the location of two "baseball cards" of Smith, and Mark Aubrey a further Smith item. John Thorn added an 1862 mention of "baste" ball, from a Civil War diary, and under the titles "**A Modern Usage of Baste Ball**" and also "**Baste Ball as Rusticated Base Ball**", usages from the now late, unlamented 20<sup>th</sup> century. Frank Ceresi posted his thanks for the responses, and his conclusion that the 1786 usage he originally inquired about must refer indeed to a form of base ball. Fred Ivor-Campbell noted that the "t" sound in "Baste" may be an example of a linguistic usage of the time.

#### **Plugging Runners in New York Game Baseball.**

John Thorn supplied a Chadwick quote in support of his contention that other early nines, such as the Empires, may have continued to soak runners until as late as 1857, and requested comment. Craig Waff mentioned two Atlantics' games of 1855 in

which they apparently were not yet following the Knicks' rules. Richard Hershberger posted cavils concerning the use of the term "club" in Chadwick's note, and considered it unlikely that the old form survived in anything but informal play.

#### **Origin of the Brooklyn Atlantics.**

Craig Waff sent a summary of evidence supporting an earlier date of origin for the Atlantics, and asked for evidence supporting the characterization of the club as pioneers of a more aggressive style of play.

#### **"Three Times And Out".**

Per Richard Hershberger, this phrase was used in reference to cricket in an 1821 newspaper note. He asks for any explanatory ideas. John Thorn posted his opinion that it referred to wicket. Jack Little thought the writer simply ignorant.

#### **The Excelsiors' vs Live Oak**

Following up on Priscilla Astifan's comment that the Excelsiors had eased up on weaker clubs, Beth Hise posted an inquiry: does anyone know of an "odds" match, one where one side, assumed to be weaker, was allowed more fielders as a handicap? She cited two examples from 19<sup>th</sup> century

cricket tours and recalled reading of a 9-on-18 base ball match, but could not reference. Bob Tholkes sent a reminder that the September *Originals* had printed the box score of a 9 on 18 match in New York. Richard Hershberger and David Ball posted notes citing examples they had seen of such matches.

***The Bases: Rocks, Pegs, and Bags***

John Cappello inquired if base ball bases (as used "at the Elysian Fields in the 1840s" took any other form before taking the form of sand-bags. John Thorn posted a review of the evidence.

CURIOSITY.

***Interesting Use of Base Ball Argot...***

John Thorn posted an 1863 note using base ball argot to recruit soldiers for the Union. Mark Aubrey posted background info about the originators.

***Stool-ball without bats.***

Mark Aubrey found an 1830 reference to stool ball which mentioned that it was played without bats. John Thorn noted that all "primordial" games were originally played *sans* bats.

***Interesting Box Score from 1854.***

John Thorn reviewed an 1854 account of a Knicks vs. Empires match, and noted peculiarities in the format of the box score. He suggests tracing the various box score formats to be seen in the years up to 1871 as a worthwhile project. Crag Waff sent a

summary of boxes from the 1850s available in the Mears Collection. Richard Hershberger opined that John Thorn's example seemed a minor variation on the Knicks' usual format. John replied by listing all the variations to be found.

FOLLOW-UP.

***The Rules of Baste.***

Following up on the posts regarding baste, Hugh MacDougall posted an early nineteenth century description of the rules of play, with the caveat that all games described as baste should not be assumed to refer to base ball rather than prisoner's base, a point seconded by John Thorn, who thereafter posted a set of rules for prisoner's bars and prisoner's base, under the title ***Prisoners' (Prison) Base (Bars)***, and for bace, under the title ***Base/Bace***.

***Re: Long Bullets and Other Outdoor Games Banned in Wilmington, Delaware in 1751.***

Following up on the post by John Thorn in October, Kyle DeCicco-Carey posted a note that Salem, Mass., issued a similar ban in 1768.

DISCOVERIES.

***Thomas Leavy, the NY Fire Department, and the Palmy Days of Base-Ball.***

Craig Waff posted a history of Leavy, an 1850s player and umpire, discovered in an 1887 history of New York fire departments.

John Thorn posted a few additional items on Leavy, whose name may have been Levy.

***Ball Play at Hoboken, 1837.***

John Thorn posted a note indicating that Manhattan boys were playing at Hoboken by 1837, and also that they drank brandy on such occasions; the latter is likely old information.

***An Interesting Early Cricket Match.***

Richard Hershberger sent an account of a cricket match of 1747, noting its variations from the sport's elements as standardized later in the century. Beth Hise sent an elaboration on the development of the rules in that period, which included a mention of the scorer's sticks in use at the time, which triggered in John Thorn a particularly painful recollection, which he posted. Concerning the use of the terms "tally" and "score" in pre-1860 base ball, Fred Ivor-Campbell noted that both could have been expected to be in use, but that examples seem lacking, and requested any that are known. John Thorn posted a pair from the 1850s using "score", and Craig Waff posted others, but Tom Shieber agreed that the use of "tally" has not been documented in the pre-1860 period.

Richard Hershberger has seen "tally" used for the Massachusetts Game in the 1850s. John Thorn opined that "tally" is a usage of considerable antiquity, and essayed a foray into its etymology. In

support, Kyle DeCicco – Carey, under the title ***Harvard College, Tally with penknife and stick, 1781***, sent an example.

#### ***Playing Ball in 1830.***

John Thorn posted a fulsome article about an 1830 ball match in Gettysburg, PA, which mentions that an account was kept of the match.

#### ***The Excelsiors' Alleged Payment to Jim Creighton.***

Craig Waff posted the discovery of an 1860 note in an upstate New York newspaper alleging that the Excelsiors were paying Creighton. The previous earliest note dated from 1863. Tom Sheiber posted a note that the paper may have later printed a retraction. Priscilla Astifan commented on the 1860 visit of the Excelsiors to Rochester, NY, reporting a story that the Excelsiors had eased up against two Rochester clubs. Parker Bena noted a published source reporting that Creighton, among others, were paid. Craig Waff pointed out that in the absence of a contemporary citation, the source could not be regarded as reliable.

#### ***Conducting an Experiment: Cartwright's Invention.***

John Thorn notes that a search of Google News Archives for "Alexander Cartwright" comes up empty until 1919. John draws a conclusion which he leaves unstated. Richard Hershberger sent a concurring opinion and

asked if the "20<sup>th</sup> century Cartwright story" has been researched. John replied that a biography (which he recommended highly) of Cartwright being written by Monica Nucciarone will be out next spring. Fred Ivor-Campbell then posted a summary and conclusion about a *Sporting News* item in 1908, the first such reference of which Fred is aware.

#### SOURCES.

##### ***Beadle Guides.***

John Thorn offers to share his digitized Beadle Guides for 1860, 1861, 1862, and 1864.

##### ***Chadwick's Game of Base Ball, 1868.***

John Thorn posted a note that Chadwick's book, "the first real book on the game", has been digitized on Patrick Mondout's [baseballchronology.com](http://baseballchronology.com). Richard Hershberger sent comments on a couple of Chadwick's assertions in the book that credit was due him for particular improvements in how the game was played. In a follow-up under the title "***Ball Days, 1858***", John Thorn noted that *Game of Base Ball* reprints an 1858 song, "Ball Days", and also supplied the lyrics, which he will doubtless warble for us at the next Origins committee meeting. He later corrected the song's date to 1854.

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A THANK  
YOU.

Mike Ross of SABR UK has forwarded the following

note received from Handa Bray, the descendant of William, whose journal was featured in *Baseball Discovered*. She was the honored guest at SABR UK's Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Dear Mike,

This is just to say a **VERY BIG THANK YOU** to you and everyone at the SABR UK AGM for giving me such a very kind welcome, and making it such a magnificent and happy occasion.

I **loved** the film - I learned a lot - and the crowning joy for me was the sight of William Bray's journal and that famous "Base Ball" entry - and the fact that on that glorious Easter Monday William celebrated by playing the game with a group of friends who included "Miss Molly Flutter" - I couldn't have imagined a more delicious name - from now on I shall look at the portrait of my great-great-great-great-grandfather with entirely new eyes! I hope the film will be a tremendous success when it's launched in the U.S., and that a whole new generation of baseball players will appreciate its history. In my opinion, the fact that the game has historic links with both our countries is a symbol of all that's best that unites us. With loud cheers for Great Britain and the USA - and SABR UK - and all best wishes,  
Handa Bray

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# THIS MONTH IN BASE BALL.

*Cited in the* Protoball  
Chronology:

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*From the* Brooklyn Daily  
Eagle, October 1861:

ATLANTIC.	H.L.	R.
Smith, 3d b	2	6
Pearce, s s	3	6
Oliver, 2d b	3	5
P. O'Brien, 1 f	1	6
F. Seinsoth, c f	1	7
JoeOliver, r f	3	5
M. O'Brien, p	1	6
Boerum, c	2	6
Price, 1 <sup>st</sup> b	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	27	52