

NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY COMMITTEE
SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

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THANK YOU KNICKERBOCKERS! HAPPY BIRTHDAY BASEBALL!

By JOHN R. HUSMAN

Presented at SABR's twenty-fifth annual convention, Pittsburgh, June 17, 1995.

NOTHING HAPPENED IN COOPERSTOWN IN 1839. The myth that Abner Doubleday created baseball there and then appealed to Americans because it established American roots and a finite starting point for our National Pastime. The designers of the Doubleday/Cooperstown hoax had the theory correct but not the facts. Baseball is, in fact, an American game, and it does have a nativity date.

Bat and ball and running games have been played in this country since its very beginning. Called by many names, they varied from place to place and were, no doubt, English in origin. One of these games developed into what we call baseball. It had the opportunity to do so thanks to a group of New York City gentlemen who committed its rules to paper. Further, they kept faithful records of their play, and nurtured the game until it gained acceptance by others. They did not invent the game—no one did—but they defined a game which had evolved in America, one which they had been playing since at least 1842. In codifying baseball's first rules, the New York Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York established our game. And, if baseball needs a birth date, they established that, too. One hundred and fifty years ago, September 23, 1845, the club formally organized and adopted their rules of conduct and play for the baseball playground.

Baseball's first rules describe a game like no other. It is not rounders, cricket, one old cat or town ball. It is its own game—all American. Those first rules were basic and simple, but they set baseball apart from all other games.

Six of the original rules dealt with club administrative matters, while fourteen applied to actual play. Most still apply. The Knickerbockers established that there would be an umpire and captains, and specified their duties. They set their game upon a diamond with foul territory. They designated that there would be three outs per side, and three strikes for a strikeout, and they provided that the catcher must hold the ball on the third strike for the batter to be out. Batters were out if a struck ball were caught on the fly. The Knickerbockers determined that runners could be put out by being tagged by the ball in the hand of a fielder or by failing to reach a base before the ball was held there, and forbade runners from interfering with defenders. They specified a fixed batting rotation, and that teams would have an equal number of innings. They restricted a pitcher's motions and levied a penalty for balking. The field configurations and the methods of retiring base runners were major revisions particular to the Knickerbocker game. All the above guidelines remain integral to games played today.

To be sure, there were differences. A batted ball was

determined to be fair or foul by where it first hit the ground, and the striker was retired if the ball was caught on the first bound, fair or foul. Fielders played barehanded, and basemen played at their bases, creating a hole on either side of the infield. There was no shortstop.

Often the Knickerbockers—or at least one of their founders, Alexander Cartwright—are credited with standards that were not included in their first rules. The first rules did not call for nine-inning games; the winning club was the first to score 21 runs (also called "counts" or "aces"). The distance between bases was not specified to be 90 feet, but it was about that. The number of players to a side was not set at nine—the matter was not even addressed—but it was usually about that. Within a dozen years, though, these "three nines" would be included in the rules.

The original Knickerbocker rules were few and basic, but they formed what is still the core of the rule book.

The Knickerbockers played their first recorded game less than two weeks after adopting their formal rules—and the game was recorded. Documentation was important to the club. They not only kept records of their proceedings and club business, but made contemporaneous records of their play.

The Knickerbockers had prepared at this early date

printed scoring sheets. Doing so demonstrated that they had previous experience, and had carefully thought out the sheet's design. The original Knickerbocker sheet could be used today, and was unchanged by them until 1856.

Those first sheets listed the name of the club, and gave its location as New York. There were places for the umpire to sign and date the sheets. Columns were laid out for recording the names of players, hands out, runs, fines and remarks. In short, they recorded what mattered: who played, who made outs, and who scored.

Conduct on the field also mattered. This was an amateur club of gentlemen who played for recreational, social and health benefits. Ungentlemanly conduct of any kind was not only not condoned, but was punished by fines, paid in cash and on the spot. The most common infraction was swearing. Sometimes the recorder even listed the offending word, such as "damn," "hell" or "devil."

The club not only kept game records, but seasonal ones as well, compiling runs and outs totals for each player. Credit the Knickerbockers with establishing baseball's record keeping system.

The score sheets show that the Knickerbockers didn't do a very good job of following their own rules. This was a progressive lot that did a lot of experimenting. At times, they didn't seem to be happy with the length of their games. They tinkered with this by ignoring the 21 aces rule, running up much higher scores. Sometimes they would play two or even three consecutive games. They played many games with only two outs required to retire the side. Most importantly, they began toying with the "fly game," eliminating the one-bound out. This would later prove to be a major influence on the game's development.

A review of the score sheets reveals other developments. Occasionally the Knickerbockers played double-headers. They played at least one suspended game, completed four days after its start. The number of players for match games (games with other clubs) stabilized at nine and included a shortstop by 1855.

During the early years virtually all games were intra-club. There was no one else for the Knickerbockers to play.

There were some early teams that played Knickerbocker rules matches, but they were short lived. A team called the New York Base Ball Club played two matches in the fall of 1845 with a team from Brooklyn, probably a cricket bunch. The matches were covered by the press. The same New York team apparently played a match with the Knickerbockers in June, 1846, but then faded away. It was

left to the Knickerbockers to carry the game forward.

The Knickerbockers had difficulties in sustaining play through the 1850s. Playing 40 to 50 games each year required commitment on the part of many. Their season began early in April and continued through a traditional Thanksgiving Day closing. Play days were Mondays and Thursdays, beginning at 3 p.m. The leadership of Dr. Daniel Adams proved invaluable. He was the club's enthusiast, its driving and sustaining force. This innovator served on the rules committee and as club president many times.

The Washington Club (of New York) became baseball's second regularly organized club in 1850. The Washingtons and Knickerbockers began playing inter-club matches in 1851, beginning the competitive age. The Washingtons changed their name to Gothams in 1852, and were soon joined by the Eagle and Empire clubs, also of New York. Clubs from Brooklyn soon followed. The Knickerbockers began integrating players from other clubs into their games regularly.

A rules committee from the veteran club met with representatives of the Gothams and Eagles, and early in 1854 the three clubs adopted common rules, based entirely on the Knickerbocker rules, to govern inter-club play. This is the first known meeting of baseball clubs' representatives, and began the spread of Knickerbocker baseball.

By 1855, the several clubs were playing each other, and winning was fast becoming an important issue. Not only was winning key, but the margin of victory received note. Witness this entry in the Knickerbocker game book from the September 13, 1855, match, which they won 22-7: "Played a match with The Gotham Club at the Elysian Fields Hoboken occupying 1½ hours with 5 innings on each side beating them handsomely 15 runs. A glorious victory."

At the close of the 1856 season, competitive matches were being played between numerous clubs in both New York and Brooklyn. What the Knickerbockers had started was leaving them behind. Even though they were progressive and innovators of play, they held to their established gentlemanly ways. A new era of rapid growth had begun, one with an ever increasing priority of winning.

Let's remember the founders of the game for what they did. They formally established baseball's first rules. They developed, made and preserved records. And they sustained the sport through its formative years, passing on a game that would burst upon the entire nation. Thank you, Knickerbockers! Happy Birthday, Baseball!

BOOK REVIEWS

Strikeout: A Celebration of the Art of Pitching. WILLIAM CURRAN. Crown Publishers (201 E. 50th St, New York, NY 10022). 1995. Cloth. \$23.

Reviewed by JACK KAVANAGH.

Bill Curran has blown the readers away again, with an

examination of the third aspect of the trilogy which defines baseball. *Strikeout* deals with the pitching aspects of the game as insightfully and delightfully as *Mitts* did with fielding and *Big Sticks* covered the decades of Ruth, Gehrig, Cobb and Hornsby. To a nineteenth century fan, the book is both poignant and perceptive, tracing the

evolution of the pitcher's role. The first gentlemen to take the field simply wanted to swat a ball and expected someone to throw cream puff tosses. The ball was intended to "serve the bat." As the game grew beyond the confines of amateur clubs, Jim Creighton, for one, asserted a pitcher's right to speed up the changing of sides by striking out opponents.

There are few who write about baseball so delightfully that just reading their prose is a reward in itself. Curran never lets his whimsical side override his studious research, but delights in such assessments as the willingness of early umpires to accept abuse and assault. Curran says: "In a Hobbesian world a man may be persuaded to perform any task if the pay is right: defuse bombs, service high-tension wires, teach school." Masterful, deft shaping of sentences with a care for the craft that would be justified in a Yeats poem add to a reader's sheer fun with this book.

One hopes that Bill Curran will find the time, and it will be granted by a benign deity, to chronicle the nineteenth century in all its aspects. In *Strikeout* he touches fringes other than the world as described by the pitcher's mound, but it would be a wonderful canvas for his artistry to deal with the whole scope of "Baseball's Lost Century."

Do not miss this book. Buy it and/or beleaguer your local and school libraries to put it on their shelves. A bargain at \$23. Nicely illustrated with many nineteenth century photos from MARK RUCKER. The text marches resolutely into the twentieth century after the first 100 pages have lavished affection on baseball as it emerged in America. The forgotten century ends with Amos Rusie, Kid Nichols and Cy Young hurling cannonballs into posterity. The book is indexed, as all histories and worthy baseball books should be. The acknowledgements contain names familiar among SABR's Nineteenth Century Committee, and SABR is cited as a bench mark of approbation for quality and historical accuracy.

(Curran has just sent a first novel to his agent. Not about baseball, but a "coming of age" story of the now 74-year-old author's experiences on the home front in the years of World War II. It will succeed, we are confident, despite an absence of sex, obscenity and violence, except for that implied by WW II itself.)

Fleet Walker's Divided Heart. DAVID W. ZANG. University of Nebraska Press (PO Box 880484, Lincoln, NE 68588-0484). 1995. xviii+157 pages. Cloth. \$21.50.

Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball, with Other Documents on the Early Black Game 1886-1936. Compiled and introduced by JERRY MALLOY. University of Nebraska Press. 1995. lxxv+190 pages. Cloth. \$26.

Reviewed by FREDERICK IVOR-CAMPBELL.

The University of Nebraska Press continues its impressive commitment to nineteenth century baseball history with two books on the African-American experience, David W. Zang's new biography of Fleet Walker and a reprint of Sol White's 1907 "history of colored base ball."

Zang would not have written his biography of Fleet Walker had Walker not been a ballplayer, but *Fleet Walker's Divided Heart* is not so much a baseball biography as a study of the tensions of being an American Mulatto in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Zang's thesis is that what "confounded [Walker's] sense of wholeness, cursed him more deeply with each passing year, and eventually wore through to his soul was that Fleet Walker was unavoidably and irrevocably the product of both Negro and Caucasian blood." To complain that, considering the gaps in the data on Walker's life and thought, Zang's thesis is largely speculative seems petty in light of the skill with which he develops it, and the luminous portrait he paints of an intelligent, sensitive man trapped by his skin and ancestry between two races which early in his adult lifetime showed some hope of drawing together, but instead pulled away from each other, leaving him torn apart.

In 1864, when Walker was still a child, one David G. Croly coined the word *miscegenation* to designate what he hoped would be the road to America's future. "All that is needed to make us the finest race on earth," Croly wrote, "is to engraft upon our stock the Negro element which providence has placed by our side on this continent." Had Croly's vision taken hold, Fleet Walker might have been a forerunner rather than a footnote to the history of baseball, and might have channeled his energies more productively, and his intellect less quixotically. Instead, forced by the tenor of the times to view his heritage in narrowly racial terms, he wrote *Our Home Colony*, a proposal that all black Americans remove themselves to Africa—though he never seems seriously to have considered that path for himself.

While the relative paucity of details about Walker's life often forces Zang to speculate, it is nearly always responsible, sensitive speculation, informed by extensive research into the historical and sociological background of Walker's times, and scrupulously documented.

Perhaps the data was lacking to do so, but I wish Zang had done more with the activities and significance of Walker's and his wife's Masonic connection, especially in its interracial implications. And many baseball-oriented readers will wish Zang had attempted to explore Walker's baseball prowess in greater depth, in an effort to understand the high praise from fellow players like Tony Mullane, praise that doesn't seem supported by the statistical record.

If white hostility limited the nineteenth century participation of African-Americans in major league baseball to brief sojourns by Fleet Walker and his brother Weldy in 1884, it did little to quench their enthusiasm for the game. As black players were being squeezed off white teams in the latter nineteenth century they formed clubs of their own, some of which even played for a while in the predominantly white minor leagues. Sol White, an African-American player and manager whose career in professional baseball began in 1887, preserved the memory of these early teams and players in his quirky but historically important *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*, published in 1907. Copies of the guide had all but disappeared over the years, and the 1984

facsimile reprint is difficult to read and now rare itself. *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball* brings White's work back to ready availability in a form that vastly increases its attractiveness and usefulness.

The text of the original has been reset (and in places corrected), and the original illustrations enlarged. More important, compiler JERRY MALLOY has included fifteen additional items, including seven brief accounts from nineteenth century newspapers (including one in which Ned Williamson ascribes the invention of the feet-first slide to white players' determination to spike black second baseman Frank Grant), and BOB DAVIDS' helpful chronological list of nineteenth century black players in organized ball.

Malloy himself contributes a 52-page introduction, with additional illustrations and a text that equals White's in length. More than anything else, it is Malloy's introduction that sets this edition of White's work apart from the 1907 original, and makes it an essential addition to the libraries of all whose interests include black baseball of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Fix Is In: A History of Baseball Gambling and Game Fixing Scandals. By DANIEL E. GINSBURG. McFarland & Co., Publ. (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640). 1995. ix+317 pages. Cloth. \$27.50.

Reviewed by FREDERICK IVOR-CAMPBELL.

We all know quite a bit about the Black Sox scandal of 1919, and most of us who are involved with nineteenth century baseball know at least a little about the Louisville scandal of 1877. And while we know these were not the only baseball scandals, most of us tend to be somewhat hazy in our grasp of when and what the others were. Dan Ginsburg has come to our rescue with *The Fix Is In*, a

handy compendium of the game's major, minor, and even near- and non-scandals from 1865 to the present day. Most of the book deals with the major leagues, but three of Ginsburg's 16 chapters are devoted to pre-professional and minor league scandals. Importantly to readers of *NCN*, nearly a quarter of the book—71 pages—is devoted to the nineteenth century.

The Fix Is In is the product of wide research (the bibliography takes up more than three pages of small type) and careful thought, but it is not just for researchers. Entertaining as well as informative, Ginsburg's clear, brisk style and the biographical detail he provides for his subjects make this a good book to curl up with just for the fun of it.

Some of us are never content, of course. I'm pleased to have so many scandals covered, but I wish for even more detail than we are given on each one. Ginsburg recognizes the importance of the 1877 Louisville scandal and devotes a full chapter (more than 13 pages) to it, but I would have been happy to read more. For example, while Ginsburg quotes a letter Jim Devlin sent (written for him by someone else) pleading for reinstatement after his banishment from the game, there are two other letters I would also like to have seen included, especially the very moving one that the semi-literate Devlin wrote himself.

Happily, Ginsburg identifies his sources in chapter notes. Unhappily, he includes no page numbers. To be sure, some sources like Henry Chadwick's scrapbooks cannot be identified by page, but we could have been told which scrapbook to look in. There is a further problem in chapter 3, where the final five notes are all mixed up.

But if *The Fix Is In* doesn't satisfy our every desire, it does go a long way toward meeting the longstanding need for a detailed overview of the gambling scandals that have intermittently plagued baseball through most of its history.

VINTAGE BASEBALL

JOHN HUSMAN, Compiler

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NINETEENTH CENTURY BASE BALL is continuing another year into the twentieth century. The Civil War era version flourishes especially in the Midwest, 1870s in Colorado, town ball in the East and Michigan, and 1880s on Long Island. New teams appear and many existing ones are expanding the scope of their re-creations and schedules. Popularity and appeal are increasing: the vintage game was recently featured on the front page of the Sunday Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and on Paul Harvey's radio program. At SABR 25 in Pittsburgh there were six presentations made on the nineteenth century game, three of them by vintage players. There is a movement afoot in Ohio to form an "association" and a "rules committee." In keeping with the purposes of SABR, we have an opportunity to present, in a living way, fruits of research into how our game was played in the early days.

ROSTER OF CLUBS

Additions to the roster previously published:

AKRON MERINOS. Sponsored by the Summit County Historical Society, the Merinos' home games are played at Schneider Park in Akron, Ohio. (216) 535-1120

AURORA BASE BALL CLUB. Ken McCreight, 840 S. Parkview, Aurora, OH 44202. (216) 995-9781 (h); (216) 987-4182 (w)

CRANBERRY BOGGERS BASE BALL CLUB. Bob Myers, Berrien County Historical Association, 313 N. Case St., PO Box 261, Berrien Springs, MI 49103. (616) 471-1202

FULTON MULES. Ed Shuman, Canal Fulton Historical Society, 6230 Manchester Ave., Canal Fulton, OH 44614. (216) 854-3691

LAKE COUNTY PIRATES. Sponsored by the Lake County Historical Society, the Pirates' home games are

played at 8610 King Memorial Rd., Kirtland Hills, OH. (216) 255-8979

OLD BETHPAGE VILLAGE. Long Island, N.Y. Gary Monti, 251 School St., Westbury, NY 11590.

PEMBER VILLAINS. John Eaken, Pemberville Freedom Area Historical Society, PO Box 802, Pemberville, OH 43530. (419) 833-2772

VINTAGE SHOW

In what might be the first full match played by vintage clubs (there have been a number of cameo appearances) in a major league stadium, the Great Black Swamp Frogs Base Ball Club of Sylvania, Ohio, met the Ohio Village Muffins of Columbus, Ohio, at Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh, on June 18. The match was played by 1845 rules in celebration of the sesquicentennial anniversary of base ball's first written rules by the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York, September 23, 1845. The following account is provided by the match umpire:

A Pittsburgh Perspective

By RICHARD "ALWAYS RIGHT" SCHURICHT

The day was sunny and hot, even early in the morning. The site was a ball field located at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers. The Frogs and Muffins had been invited to play a match for the Pittsburgh cranks and to show them base ball as it was meant to be played. We were scheduled as the second match of the day, the first being between a local nine called the "Pirates" and a visiting nine, obviously clergymen, called the "Padres."

The Muffins and Frogs and a good contingent of assorted cranks entered the field to rousing cheers! The teams were introduced and a quick stone toss was held. The Muffins won and elected to be out first. This match used the rules of 1845, so a short stop was not used, and the first team to reach 21 aces with both teams having an equal time at the strike would win. The lack of a short stop presented a distinct advantage to the striker who could hit a daisy cutter, since the ball rolled or bounced quickly through the infield on this extremely well trimmed (yet somewhat strange) meadow.

The match progressed rapidly and, for the most part, was well played by both nines. There were many sky balls struck, and since the field was so smooth and without the usual obstructions such as trees, bushes, holes, etc., they were usually caught on the first bound, although I do recall a few bounding over the outfielders' heads and rolling to the fences. There were also many balls caught on the fly, with very few muffs when this was attempted. I also noted many fine plays by the infielders, and there were a number of runners put out between the bases as they tried to advance. Once again the play of the behinds was excellent. There were a number of difficult catches made on balls which bounded near the tally table or into the many cranks who were milling around the field.

As umpire of the day, I was required to levy a number

of fines on both the Muffins and Frogs. The violations included throwing hats, ungentlemanly conduct, an oath or two, and spitting!

Oh, by the way, I believe the final tally was 14 aces for the Frogs (who did hit the ball on the ground) and 4 aces for the Muffins (who didn't). Note: Match called after 11 innings by local management.

TEAM PROFILES

Old Bethpage Village

Gary Monti, co-commissioner of Old Time Base Ball at Old Bethpage, describes the program:

Old Time Base Ball was initiated at Old Bethpage Village in 1983 with two 1860s teams playing by the Knickerbocker rules. For the next eight seasons, the Hempstead Eureka and the Mineola Washingtons (re-creations of actual local Long Island teams), played approximately four games during the summer months.

In 1992, 1880s rules ball began at Old Bethpage. Two teams, the Wesburys and the Freeport Athletics, who are supported by their respective local historical societies, played a few games at Old Bethpage in addition to their schedule of community games. The success of 1880s rules base ball persuaded the Athletics and the Westburys to join the program at Old Bethpage.

By 1994, Old Time Base Ball at Old Bethpage had become very popular. Old Bethpage Village sponsored the formation of a new 1880s team, the Hicksville Ozones, the nineteenth century rivals of the Westburys. Twenty-two games of both rules styles were played during the 1994 season. The program proved to be very popular, drawing large numbers of visitors to the village.

This popularity led to the addition of more games (totaling 35) and a new 1880s team for 1995, the Bellmore Seminoles. What had begun as a purely demonstrational interpretative program had turned into something quite different: "a new sport."

Beginning with the introduction of 1880s ball to Old Bethpage, the program began to draw baseball players rather than historians and/or history and baseball buffs. These skilled players quickly adapted to the old rules and considerably raised the level of play. While the games have always been played in an authentic manner, they have now acquired a competitive edge and become a delight to play and to watch. Next season, Old Bethpage plans to add two more 1880s teams and further increase the number of games.

Cranberry Boggers

The Cranberry Boggers club was formed this year by Bob Myers, curator of the Berrien County (Michigan) Historical Association, to recreate local baseball traditions.

Men and women from around southwest Michigan play games according to the "gentlemen" base ball rules of the 1860s. They also wear period uniforms. The name "Cranberry Boggers" is from the cranberry bogs that were common in the area late in the nineteenth century.

Lah-De-Dah Base Ball Club

The La-De-Dahs represent the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village of Dearborn, Mich. Named for an 1880s Waterford, Michigan, team, the club plays 1858 New York rules as well as town ball by 1858 Dedham, Mass., rules. Their home venue is uniquely picturesque and historically complete and accurate.

Chagrin Falls Forest Citys

The present-day Forest City Base Ball Club was established in 1994. The team's home field is located at Hale Farm and Village in Bath, Ohio. Sponsored by Atlas Steel and the Chagrin Falls Historical Society, the Citys strive to educate and inform audiences through historically correct base ball exhibitions. With uniforms of the 1860s style, the

matches are governed by the rules of New York's Knickerbocker Club. The Forest Citys of today are modeled after the actual Forest City Base Ball Club of Cleveland, Ohio, organized in 1865.

TRY YOUR HAND AT TOWN BALL

TOM HEITZ, who heads the Leatherstocking Base Ball Club in Cooperstown, New York, invites all readers "to join the members of the club for weekly practices when visiting Cooperstown. Practices are held on Wednesday evenings at 6 PM at the Farmers' Museum Village Crossroads site from mid-April through mid-October, weather permitting." The Leatherstockings play the Massachusetts Game, also known as town ball.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Note: The committee chair maintains an up-to-date membership roster, available to committee members upon request.

NEW MEMBERS

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY COMMITTEE welcomes to membership:

DARRYL BROCK, 1565 Rose St., Berkeley, CA 94703

JACK CARLSON, 2904 Green Vista Dr., Fairborn, OH 45324

RALPH CHRISTIAN, P.O. Box 1721, Des Moines, IA 50306-1721

AL DIECKMANN, 1762 Rockville Dr., Baldwin, NY 11510

BRYAN DISALVATORE, 314 Evans, Missoula, MT 59801

MARC FINK, 2748 E. 9th St., Tucson, AZ 85716

THOMAS R. HEITZ, RD #1, Box 55 D, Fly Creek, NY 13337

JOHN MATTHEW IV, 167 Church St., Apt. 400, Toronto, ON M5B 1Y4, CANADA

BOYD MONTGOMERY, 5845 Mitchaw Rd., Sylvania, OH 43560

DOUG SMITH, 728 Bevis Rd., Columbus, OH 43202

NEW ADDRESSES

DAVID CREETH, 294 Jesse St., Sebastopol, CA 95472

CAPPY GAGNON, PO Box 509, Notre Dame, IN 46556

JIM MOORE, 1029-E Emerald St., San Diego, CA 92109

PETE PALMER, 396 Pine Cone Strand, Acton, MA 01718

GREG RHODES, 1908 Dexter Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45206

JOHN THORN, 26 Abeel St., Kingston, NY 12401

EXPANDED ZIP CODES

Several committee members use their 5+4 ZIP codes. Here is one not previously included in member listings:

JOHN SCHWARTZ, 166 Danforth St., Rochester, NY 14611-2142

A REQUEST

If you move, let NCN know. Address changes are not forwarded from SABR central to the research committees.

HELP WANTED

AL DIECKMANN (1762 Rockville Dr., Baldwin, NY 11510) wants to learn of any instance of a *woman playing baseball on a men's team* in the nineteenth century.

Randy Fisher (38 Highland Ave., Belmont Hills, PA 19004-1839) needs to know what outfield *Harry Stovey* played primarily.

More Nineteenth Century Stars needs *Jack Boyle's* minor league stats for 1900-1904. If you can help supply them, contact BOB TIEMANN at 4518 Wichita, St. Louis, MO 63110.

Nineteenth Century Notes seeks reviewers for (1) *Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat,"* (2) *The First Boys of Summer,* (3) *Former Major League Teams: An Encyclopedia,* (4) *Two-Eyed League,* and any other recent

books like *Banana Bats and Ding Dong Balls* that you feel give major attention to nineteenth century baseball. If you have read any of these books and would like to contribute one or more 500-word reviews, contact FRED IVOR-CAMPBELL, 21 Martin St., Warren, RI 02885.

Mike Patchen (1700 Knollwood Dr., Gillette, WY 82718) seeks information (including photos) on *William E. "Ed" Kennedy*, who played for Cincinnati (UA) in 1884 and, according to his obituary, died in a Cheyenne, Wyoming, theater in 1912 from a heart attack caused by the altitude. Patchen "would also like to find someone who has his autograph to add to my collection of Wyoming related players."

Jack Warren (Farm Road School, 574 RR #1, Wind-

sor, VT 05089) is looking for two major "chunks of information": (1) the total *number of runs allowed by each pitcher* in the major leagues since 1871. "Please note that I need the total runs allowed by each pitcher in his career rather than earned runs or runs allowed in a particular season." (2) the *primary outfield position* played by each major league outfielder since 1876. "All the books I find lump the three outfield positions together, but I'd like to know where each outfielder played most of his games."

MORE FOR THE RESEARCHER'S LIBRARY

(Additions to the book list begun in the July 1992 NCN)

CURRAN, WILLIAM. *Strikeout: A Celebration of the Art of Pitching*. 1995. (Reviewed in this issue.)

Early Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1825-1908. DEAN A. SULLIVAN, editor. 1995. (Reviewed in the Winter 1995 issue.)

GINSBURG, DANIEL E. *The Fix Is In: A History of Baseball Gambling and Game Fixing Scandals*. 1995. (Reviewed in this issue.)

NEMEC, DAVID. MARK RUCKER, picture editor. *The Beer and Whisky League*. 1995. This fine illustrated history of the American Association will be featured in an upcoming issue of NCN.

RHODES, GREG, and John Erardi. *The First Boys of Summer: The 1869-1870 Cincinnati Red Stockings, Baseball's First Professional Team*. 1994.

Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball. JERRY MALLOY, compiler. 1995. (Reviewed in this issue.)

Sports in North America: A Documentary History. Vol. 4. *Sports in War, Revival and Expansion, 1860-1880*. George B. Kirsch, editor. You should also badger your library to acquire Vol. 2, 1820-1840, which highlights American sport before the rise of baseball. (Reviewed in the Winter 1995 issue.)

Zang, David W. *Fleet Walker's Divided Heart*. 1995. (Reviewed in this issue.)

AMONG THE PERIODICALS

O'Grady, Michael A. "From Covehead to the Polo Grounds: The Story of Henry Havelock Oxley, Major Leaguer." *The Island Magazine* [2 Kent St., Charlotte-town, Prince Edward Island, Canada] No. 37 (Spring/Summer 1995), pp. 13-19. A model of fine research and writing. Perhaps O'Grady's brief biography of Henry Oxley could inspire similar efforts on behalf of other nineteenth century baseballers.

WILLIAMS, FRANK J. "The Boston Beaneaters, 1897 National League Champions." *Grandstand Baseball Annual 1995*, pp. 98-128. With his usual thoroughness, Williams takes us almost game by game through Boston's tight race with Baltimore, and follows up with several pages of

statistics.

Also in this issue of *GBA*: brief reflections on the Temple Cup Series by Williams and JOHN PHILLIPS.

DON'T MISS . . .

Gutman, Dan, *Banana Bats and Ding Dong Balls* (New York: Macmillan, 1995), 251 pp., paper, \$11.95. Fascinating baseball inventions through the years, many of them dating from the nineteenth century.

JOHNSON, LLOYD. *Baseball: A Pictorial Tribute* (Stamford, Ct.: Longmeadow Press, 1995), cloth, \$17.95. This handsome coffee table book includes 22 pages on the nineteenth century, mostly illustrations, nicely reproduced.

Jones, Donald D. *Former Major League Teams: An Encyclopedia*. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1995), 243 pp., cloth, \$35. Jones helpfully brings together considerable data on the defunct clubs, but the book would be much more useful if the club histories were longer and deeper.

LINTHURST, RANDOLPH. *Journal of Leo Smith: Story of a Nineteenth Century Shortstop* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1976), 55 pp., paper, \$3.75 (postpaid) from Randy Linthurst, 115 Cactus Flower Ln., Sun City Center, FL 33573. Linthurst traces the 1884 season through the eyes of the shortstop for the Trenton, N.J., club of the Eastern League. It's not new, but some copies of this well-researched, lively little book are still available.

MCMAHON, WILLIAM. *National League Team Stat Book*, looseleaf, \$5 from William McMahon, Department of Philosophy, Univ. of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-1903. For those interested in computer simulations, fantasy leagues, etc., McMahon has compiled data "for the leading players in the history of a franchise, based on their performance for that team," with normalized BAs and ERAs. While defunct clubs are not included, many nineteenth century players are represented: 16 for New York/San Francisco, e.g., and 25 for Boston/Milwaukee/Atlanta. (Team sheets can be ordered individually, and there is also an American League book.)

SCHMIDT, RAY. *Two-Eyed League: The Illinois-Iowa League of 1890-1892* (1995), 256 pp., paper, \$13.95 (postpaid) from Ray Schmidt, 13848 W. Rockbluff Way, Lockport, IL 60441. This history of "the true historical ancestor of the famous 3-I League" includes pictures, charts and statistics, plus "considerable information on nineteenth century minor league organizational activities and affairs."

WHEN WAS THE FIRST . . .? (Part 3)

PHOTOCOPY EVIDENCE of catcher Doug Allison's use of gloves in 1870 has been sent in by DARRYL BROCK. The Cincinnati *Commercial* of 29 June 1870, reporting on a game Cincinnati played against the Nationals in Washington on the 28th, commented: "Allison caught, to-day, in a pair

of buckskin mittens, to protect his hands." (Appropriately, the game was umpired by one Charles Glover. At the bat Allison contributed four hits, and scored three runs in the Red Stockings' 30-10 win over the Nationals.) Has anyone seen an earlier reference to Allison's use of gloves?

Brock suggests another "first" to pursue: the first use of "crank" (or "krank") to refer to spectators. "Through 1870," he writes, "and maybe through 1875-76, I find nothing other than 'spectator,' 'throng,' etc." In my own research of the mid-1880s, I see "crank" used in ways that make it seem like a very early use of the term. Was it in fact a term that did not come into use until the 1880s, rather than the 1850s or '60s as many of us have supposed?

While we're at it, we might as well hunt for the earliest printed use of "fan"—and "fanatic"—with reference to spectators (at any event, not just baseball).

Along these lines, PAUL WENDT makes a good point and suggestion: "Some 'firsts' are not intrinsically internal to baseball, and many of us will be interested to know where baseball followed other sports. So we should extend the collection to such events as the first: professional umpire/referee in any sport; preprinted scorecard in any sport; published news coverage of any sport; nickname in any team sport." Happy hunting!

Wendt also pushes the origin of "grand slam" way back: "*The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (1989) traces this from its first use in baseball (1940) to golf (Bobby Jones, 1930), to the undated origin 'first used in the game of contract bridge where it applies to the taking of all 13 tricks.'

"But the *OED* [*Oxford English Dictionary*] on 'slam' quotes *Hoyle's Games Improved* (1814, about 100 years before 'contract' or other bridge) regarding a trick-taking card game: 'The highest [declaration], called Grand Slam, is undertaking to get 13 tricks.'

JACK CARLSON, it turns out, has "been collecting team nicknames, including secondary names, for many years," and sends in a sampling of some early secondary nicknames. Some are simply abbreviated versions of the club name or primary nickname: "Whites" for the Chicago White Stockings, "Mutes" for Mutual (New York), "Reds" for Boston's Red Stockings (all from 1871). Others focus on the legs, as do many primary nicknames: "Blue Stockings" for Olympic (Washington, 1871), "Yellow Legs" (Lord Baltimore, 1872), "Green Stockings" (Mutual, 1872). Still others identify the club's home: "Trojans" (Troy Haymakers, 1872), "Jerseyemen" (Resolute of Elizabeth, N.J., 1873), "Nutmegs" (Hartford, 1875; Connecticut is the "Nutmeg State"). And sometimes the writers just get carried away: a *Boston Globe* writer in 1875 referred to Chicago's White Stockings as the "knights of the colorless hose."

I'm still searching for the earliest baseball club nickname, and so far Cincinnati's "Red Stockings" and the "Haymakers" of the Union club of Lansingburg (Troy) are the prime contenders. This line from *Our Boys and Girls* (a semimonthly magazine for youth), 19 October 1867 concerning a match in Philadelphia between the Athletics and

the Unions is the earliest reference I've seen to the Union nickname: "Another correspondent . . . says the Unions are commonly known as the 'hay-makers.'" Presumably this was not then a new nickname, but had been in use for a while. As for Cincinnati, they were wearing their red stockings for the first time (I believe) in the same 1867 season. But although Henry Chadwick, in reporting Cincinnati's July 1867 game with the touring Nationals of Washington, mentioned the club's distinctive stockings, he never in his long article used them as a club nickname. Was any Cincinnati calling their club the Red Stockings as early as 1867?

JIM MOORE sent in a chapter of his book *Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat"* which contains a nice discussion of Fred Thayer's pioneering catcher's mask. It also notes the first catcher's chest protector, dating it precisely: "Soon even the pluckiest catchers were wearing Thayer's mask, or 'bird-cage,' and were prepared to follow Harvard catcher Herbert T. Allen when he donned the first chest protector for a game with Yale at New Haven on May 17, 1884." Moore's source is John A. Blanchard's authoritative (if chauvinistic) *The H Book of Harvard Athletics* (1922), p. 200. But *Reach's Guide* for 1884 (which would have been published earlier than 17 May) includes a full-page illustrated ad (p. 178) for "Gray's Patent Body Protector." Who is Gray? When did he invent his "body protector" (which looks about the same as those used through the 1950s)?

Finally, JOHN SCHWARTZ has sent a copy of a May 1994 article from *The Rochesterian* and another from *The Friends of Mt. Hope* which claim that a Rochester (N.Y.) pitcher—23-year-old Richard Bradford Willis—introduced "the demon curve ball" to baseball in a September 1860 game between Willis's Lone Stars and another Rochester team, the Live Oaks, causing a great sensation. But demon researcher Schwartz found no mention in either of Rochester's newspapers of a September 1860 game between these clubs. He did find a substantial contemporary account of a September 1859 Lone Star-Live Oak game, and of a 22 September 1860 Lone Star-Niagara game in which Willis is also alleged to have overwhelmed the opposition with his curve, but neither report mentions a curve ball. Schwartz also found an undocumented claim in another recent article that a Rochesterian named Loder (who lost big to Jim Creighton and Brooklyn's Excelsiors in July 1860) pitched the first curve, but nothing in his extensive research into Rochester of that era leads Schwartz to believe any Rochester claim to precedence in curve ball pitching.

FREDERICK IVOR-CAMPBELL

COMPILER'S COMMENTARY

WE'RE ROBUST

THE OPPORTUNITY I had at the Pittsburgh convention to meet and talk with many of you—several for the first time—was but one of many reminders I continually receive of the strength of our committee. JOHN THORN, who is

among the best at finding the right word for things, recently described our committee as "robust." Evidence to support this accolade seems greater this year than ever.

Never before in a single year (not even in the nineteenth century itself) have so many books been published that deal in a significant way with nineteenth century baseball. Most of these, it turns out, were written, co-written or edited by Nineteenth Century Committee members. Further, and to my mind even more impressive, most authors and editors of recent books on the nineteenth century game, both in and out of SABR, have relied upon the expertise and information generously provided by committee members.

Vintage base ball is booming, and our committee is stronger than ever with its flourishing vintage emphasis. An increasing number of our members are active in vintage ball clubs, introducing the broader public to early styles of play, and finding for themselves a deeper understanding of the early game.

In this, our game's sesquicentennial year, let's take a moment to pat ourselves on the back—researchers, vintage ballplayers, writers, and all whose important work is to encourage and support the efforts of others. Largely because of us, nineteenth century baseball has been rediscovered, and is at last receiving the attention it deserves. We're robust. I like that.

CORRECTING THE CORRECTION

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN I'd get in trouble talking about the spelling of whiskey (*NCN*, Winter 1995, p. 10). Fortunately there are experts in just about everything among our readership. JOHN MATTHEW and SABR secretary Bob Ruland have (more or less) straightened me out. Here is Ruland's clarification:

The difference of spelling is less "modern" versus "obsolete" as it is British versus American.

Distilled alcoholic liquor made from fermented mash of grain developed in the former British Empire has, since time immemorial, been spelled WHISKY. To this very day labels on bottles of Scotch, Irish and Canadian blends bear that spelling.

Those blends indiginous to the United States, such as bourbon, rye and blended American use the spelling WHISKEY. I do not know the reason for this phenomenon. Nor have I been able to determine the precise point the two departed on their separate ways. I can only assume it to have been evolutionary.

Matthews concurs, for the most part, though he says the Irish, like the Americans, spell "whiskey" with an e.

NEXT: THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

WHEN BOB MCCONNELL EXPRESSED A WISH to retire from leadership of the American Association History Project he initiated two years ago at the San Diego convention, everyone's first choice to succeed him was BOB BAILEY, who heads the Ballpark Committee's Nineteenth Century Ballparks Project. Fortunately, Bailey loves a challenge, and the AA Project reins (and hoardes of mate-

rial) were handed to him at Pittsburgh.

Under McConnell the project got off to a strong start, and researchers are now at work on most AA cities (some have even completed their share of this first stage of the project). A few cities still remain uncovered, though, and the project still has a long way to run.

We hope to feature the American Association (1882-1891)—the only successful nineteenth century challenger to National League hegemony—in the next issue of *NCN*. David Nemeč's pioneering history, *The Beer and Whisky League*, will be spotlighted, along with a full progress report on the AA History Project.

In the meantime, if you'd like to assist in the AA research, contact Bob Bailey at 121 South Drive, Newtown, PA 18940.

NINETEENTH CENTURY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT, JUNE 1994-MAY 1995

THE GROWTH OF INTEREST IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BASEBALL continues, in large part because of the research, writing, teaching—and vintage ballplaying—of members of the Nineteenth Century Committee. These examples (just a few of many that could be listed) suggest the variety and import of committee members' efforts.

Spring 1995 saw the long-awaited publication of DEAN SULLIVAN's *Early Innings*, a collection of documents tracing the history of baseball from its beginnings through 1908. This pioneering compilation should provide a starting point and essential reference for students of the game for years to come. Another pioneering volume also appeared this spring: DAVID NEMEČ's *The Beer and Whisky League*, the first history of the major league American Association (1882-1891), illustrated by one of the finest arrays of nineteenth century baseball photos and illustrations ever published, assembled under the direction of the book's picture editor MARK RUCKER.

The University of Nebraska Press, whose editor-in-chief is committee member DANIEL ROSS, has in recent years reprinted such important books for nineteenth century researchers as Albert G. Spalding's *America's National Game* and Ted Vincent's *The Rise and Fall of American Sport*; this spring, in addition to publishing *Early Innings*, UNP has reprinted *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball*, a crucial source of information on nineteenth century black baseball clubs and players, edited with an important introduction by JERRY MALLOY, and has published a new biography of Moses "Fleet" Walker, major league baseball's first black player.

David W. Zang, the author of the Walker biography, is not a member of SABR, but one paragraph in his acknowledgements, in honoring a member of our committee, describes SABR at its best:

The largest debt I owe is to Jerry Malloy, a baseball researcher who has done extensive and fine work on Walker. In an unprecedented act of generosity, Jerry shared not only his thoughts on Walker, but his entire file of documents. They arrived at a point long after I thought this manuscript was complete. Their availability added detail and insight that would have been otherwise lacking. I am grateful beyond words to Jerry and the researchers who sent him material over the years. I hope the book does justice to his contribution.

Vintage baseball, which has awakened thousands of spectators to the character and excitement of the nineteenth century game, will have a prominent presence at the SABR convention in Pittsburgh, thanks to committee associate chair JOHN R. HUSMAN, who has arranged for the appearance of the movement's leading club, the Ohio Village Muffins of Columbus, and his own club, the Great Black Swamp Frogs of Sylvania, Ohio. Other committee members who head vintage clubs include ROBERT J. THOLKES (of Minnesota's Quicksteps, the club of SABR's Halsey Hall regional chapter, and BRIAN D. BURLEY (of the Haymakers, Worthington, Ohio), one of several vintage base ballers Husman has recently introduced to the committee.

No fewer than eleven contributors to the new fourth edition of *Total Baseball*—including three of the four editors listed on the title page—are members of the Nineteenth Century Committee, as are several additional persons credited with providing information or correcting errors from previous editions. Also, in at least two places the committee itself is recognized by name for its contribution to research incorporated in the encyclopedia. *Total Baseball* has been a prime mover in restoring the nineteenth century to baseball's historical memory; the fourth edition, among a number of new features, includes TOM SHIEBER's important study of the evolution of the baseball diamond.

The committee's four projects continue: (1) The National Association Box Score Project will provide full team and player

stats for the NA (most recently, the box scores for 1874 have been computerized: Levi Meyerle's league leading BA is corrected downward to .392, Cal McVey is revealed as the RBI champ with 70, and while Dick McBride dethrones Bobby Mathews as ERA leader, at 1.64, Mathews is revealed as strike-out leader, with 96); (2) *More Nineteenth Century Stars* is scheduled for publication in December; (3) The research phase of the American Association History Project is well under way; and (4) the Pre-1871 Rosters Project continues its daunting task of compiling all that can be uncovered about baseball's earliest clubs and games.

When the committee inaugurated an annual membership renewal program in 1994, several inactive members dropped out, reducing the committee roster from a record high 159 in July 1994 to 144 by November. Subsequent enrollment of new members has raised committee membership to its current 157.

Only one issue of the committee newsletter, *Nineteenth Century Notes*—a double issue covering the first half of 1994—was mailed during the period covered by this report, but the gap should be closed in the coming year. Efforts are being made to bring *NCN's* compiler (who doubles as committee chair) up to speed.

Frederick Ivor-Campbell, Chair
19 May 1995

"The Base Ball Fever"

By H. Angelo (1867)

[After completing his documentary collection *Early Innings* (1995), DEAN SULLIVAN discovered that "The Base Ball Fever" contains several more verses than he reprinted there. James Mote, in *Everything Baseball* (1989), also printed excerpts from the song. Sullivan here provides the full text, as originally published by Marsh & Bubna, Philadelphia, 1867, and reproduced in facsimile by Harry Dichter, *Baseball in Music and Song* (1954). The original punctuation and spelling have been preserved. Sullivan points out that the second verse contains the famous line, "Their hands are all out playing."]

All 'round about we've queer complaints,
Which needs some Doctors patching;
But something there is on the brain,
Which seems to me more catching,
'Tis raging too, both far and near,
Or else I'm a deceiver,
I'll tell you what it is, now, plain,
It is the Base Ball fever.

CHORUS

O my, O my, O my, O my,
We want a safe releiver
For ev'ry body old, and young,
Has got the Base Ball fever.

Our Merchants have to close their stores
Their clerks away are staying,
Contractors too, can do no work,
Their hands are all out playing;
There's scarce a day that folks don't run,

As true as I'm a liver;
To see a match 'bout to be played,
'Cause they've the Base Ball fever.
O my, &c:

Our little boys as well as big,
All, to the Bat are taking;
And smarter folks are coining cash,
At Bat and Base Ball making:
You cannot walk along the street,
I'll bet my patent lever;
That two boys aint a playing catch,
'Cause they've the Base Ball fever.
O my, &c:

To be in fashion, ladies too,
In place of Waterfalls sirs;
Way back behind the ears, they wear,
An awful big Base Ball sirs;
I shouldn't wonder but 'ere long,
Each Miss, if you'll perceive her,
Will carry Bats all through her hair
'Cause she too has the fever.
O my, &c:

Our papers teem with base ball News,
Four columns good and over;
Our stores now sell more bats and balls
Than would, three acres cover
We've clubs no end, and players sharp,
But I will bet my Beaver;
That I can catch, as well as they,
For I have kotch the fever.
O my, &c: