

Originals.

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THE MONTH IN 19cBB.

Members of the Origins Committee used the 19cBB yahoogroup during the month of April to pursue a number of interesting topics.

A BUZZ IN HOBOKEN.

the charm of Hoboken

In two posts, George Thompson forwarded a description of a recipe of 1827 for "Hoboken Milk Punch", and suggested that at about 40 proof it added to the desirable nature for early visitors of the site of the Elysian Fields. John Thorn posted a promise to perform further research at the first opportunity. Jack Little vouched from personal experience for another contemporary favorite, the Rasburry Freeze, but failed to provide a recipe. Priscilla Astifan was happy to get the exact description of a drink for which she had previously found only a general reference, in an article mentioning a novelty game, played in "Birds and Worms" costumes; she mentioned the existence of a photo, which would be interesting if found. The Origins Committee will have to re-create that game

sometime, perhaps at a SABR convention.

DISCUSSION.

Monica Nucciarone's new biography of Cartwright

Richard Hershberger sent the first (and presumably not the last) comments and discussion points to be sparked by Monica's new book. Peter Mancuso sent a response recommending Monica and Richard's pieces in the new Spring issue of *Base Ball*.

Earliest Double Plays and First Use of the Term

Craig Waff posted a discussion of the origin of the term "double play", in reference specifically to the entry in the 3rd edition of the *Dickson Baseball Dictionary*. His inquiry about the date when the play, if not so actually called, appeared as a tactic was the subject of a lengthy response by Glenn Drinkwater.

DISCOVERIES.

the Elysian Fields, 1847

George Thompson posted a lengthy 1847 description of activities at the Fields; unfortunately it mentions only in passing that there was a ball game going on.

early sighting of the Olympic Club of Philadelphia

Richard Hershberger sent an 1838 item, the earliest known by far, on the Olympics. In his reply, Peter Mancuso called attention to the note that the Olympics played some other games besides town ball, and asked if any more is known about the club's other activities.

Richard in his response concluded that the other games were "incidentals", and also noted that the new item confirms the information about the club provided in the 1866 club history found previously.

"Town-Ball and Baseball"

Richard Hershberger sent a 1904 Alabama item which described town ball as played in that locale before baseball.

old fashioned base ball at Frewsburg

Richard Hershberger sent an 1873 note of a vintage game of ball which used an unknown slang term, for a feature of the game, "nigging", which Richard guesses referred to the practice in town ball of soaking. Kyle DeCiccocarey in response pointed out that the Oxford English Dictionary gives its contemporary meaning as cheating.

INQUIRIES.

New York Knickerbockers

Frank Cerisi, beginning a research project on the Knicks, asked for existing sources, and particularly for biographical sources on the players. John Thorn pointed Frank to *Total Baseball* (1995), and also mentioned the Knicks will be the subject of an article in the Pioneer Project.

Reconstruction and the spread of the NY game

Richard Hershberger sent another item in his current motif: the true role of the Civil War in spreading the game. This one notes a 1904 item from Charlotte which concludes that the game played in a role in the reconciliation of the town's citizens to reunion in the period immediately following the war; Richard asked for any similar findings.

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PHILADELPHIA BASE BALL SITES.

Researching Philadelphia base ball sites? The New York *Sunday Mercury* ran the following on June 24, 1860:

“PHILADELPHIA BASE BALL CLUBS— A list of the base ball clubs in Philadelphia, and their days of playing, and the grounds where they exercise:

Agility, Monday, Fifth street below Canal;

Continental, Saturday and Wednesday, Columbia and Ridge avenues;

Keystone, Thursday, Fifth Street, below Canal; Equity, Tuesday and Saturday, Columbia and Ridge avenues;

Pennsylvania, Saturday and Tuesday, Columbia and Ridge avenues;

Mercantile, Saturday, Nineteenth street and Columbia avenue;

Athletic, Wednesday and Saturday, Camac's Woods;

Olympic, Tuesday and Friday, Camac's Woods;

Winona, Monday, Ridge and Columbia avenues;

Excelsior, Thursday and Saturday, Fifteenth street and Columbia avenue.”

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MARY RUSSELL MITFORD AND BASEBALL

From Tom Altherr:

Several baseball historians have noted British writer Mary Russell Mitford's use in the set of sketches, “*Our Village*”, published serially between 1824 and 1832, of the term “base-ball”. On page 312 of an edition of 1893, Mitford wrote of a young girl who preferred to listen to her father repeat a certain story than play “base-ball” or engage in childhood recreations. But, according to Google, Mitford on at least two other occasions also referenced baseball. In the sketch entitled “Jack Hatch” in the 1827 edition, the second series of *Our Village*, on page 85, Mitford mentioned a ten-year old girl who despised “dirt and baseball, and all

their joys.” Then in her 1835 novel, *Belford Regis: Or Sketches of a Country Town*, she included this passage on page 59:

“What can be prettier than this [boys playing cricket], unless it be the fellow-group of girls-- sisters I presume, to the boys-- who are laughing and screaming around the oak; then darting to and fro, in a game compounded of hide-and-peek and base-ball. Now tossing the ball high, high amidst the branches; now flinging it low among the common, bowling as it were, almost within reach of the cricketers; now pursuing, now retreating, shouting, jumping, running, bawling --almost shrieking with ecstasy; whilst one sunburnt black-eyed gypsy throws forth her laughing face from behind the trunk of the old oak, and then flings a newer and a gayer ball --fortunate purchase of some hoarded sixpence-amongst her favorite playmates. Happy, happy children! That one hour of innocent enjoyment is worth an age!”

A Philadelphia publisher, Carey, Lea & Blanchard, also published the 1835 American edition of *Belford Regis*, and, six years later, another Philadelphia publisher, James Crissy, scooped all of Mitford's works into an anthology, including the *Our Village Sketches*. Thus some American readers besides those in range of her New York editions, had exposure to her use of the term baseball, or “base-ball”.