

Originals.

Newsletter of the Origins Committee of the Society for American Baseball Research

October 2009

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Vol. 2 No. 10

INTRODUCING ROUND CAT.

Tom Altherr, poking around in a 1917 issue of Scribner's, came upon a reference to a game called "Round Cat", and inquired about it to Larry McCray, who is assembling a glossary of safe - haven games. This inspired more poking around on Larry's part in Google Books, with the following results, as reported by Larry:

[] In a 1917 story by Armistead Gordon in Scribner's magazine, there is a reference to "boys, black and white, playing round cat and chermany" during summers. The time specified is likely the early- or mid-1850s. The passage mentions Dragon Swamp, and there is such a place to the E or NE of Richmond, VA, which fits the story narrative.

[] Dialect Notes, 1896, attributes to Angelo Hall, "we played in Washington DC] round cat = scrub in New England." Scrub is described by Hall as a reduced form of base ball. I don't easily ascertain who Angelo Hall was, or the source of his quotation on round cat.

[] In "A Sketch of the Life and Travels of Isaac Fenton King" contains a passage, "we boys used the

oak trees or bases as we played "base ball," long cat," "round cat," town ball" . . . "Long cat" is new to me; I wonder if it resembles Long Ball [or Long Town], which employs one distant base rather than several closer ones arranged in a ring.

[] "History of Ivor and its Environs" [1965] by E. M. Babb, mentions round ball in two places. One states that it was a Sunday pastime for "young men and boys" in about 1890. Another says it was like baseball. Ivor is about 55 miles SW of Richmond and about 35 miles west of Norfolk.

[] Four novels by Bernice Kelly Harris, written from 1939 to 1951, mention round cat. Only snippet views are available, and I don't know the times for the settings of this fiction, but they were reportedly set in eastern NC. The books are "Purslane" 1939, "Portulaca" 1941, "Sage Quarter" 1945, and "Wild Cherry Tree Road" 1951. Harris, b. 1892, was from eastern NC.

Larry concludes, As none of these accounts mentions the use of cats instead of balls, I'd guess that round cat was a ball game whose name reflected its early history [in England, maybe?] when it was played with wooden cats.

NEW IN PROTOBALL.

It occurred recently to the geniuses at *Originals* (probably over a second or third post-prandial glass of wine) that it might be useful for the membership if a list of the new items in the Protoball Chronology, Committee Chair Larry McCray's ever- growing list of published references to base ball and the many other safe-haven games also played in the Origins period, was posted regularly. The first update, a catch-up edition for all of 2009 to date, follows, for the period from 2500 B. C. to the year 1823 A. D., a mere matter of only four millennia and change; the remainder will appear next issue. *-ed.*

BC2500C.1 - "Tip cats"
Found in Egyptian Ruins.

1310c.2 - A Drawing of "A Game of Ball," with a Player in a Batting Pose.

1700.1 - First Public Notice of a Cricket Match?

1750s.2 - Town Ball & Cat Played in NC Lowlands?

1760.2 - Bat and Ball . . . in Paris?

1793. 4 – Scorer Compiles “Complete List” of Year’s Grand Cricket Matches.

1794.2 -- Historian Cites “Club-ball”

1795.5 –Playing At Ball in the Untamed West.

1796.4 – Early Geographer Sees Several Types of New England Ballplaying.

1797.5 –In NC, Negroes Face 15 Lashes for Ball playing.

1800.10 -- Hudson NY Council Prohibits Boys’ Ballplay, Preserves Turf. Etc.

1800c.11 – MA Man Recalls Games of Ball in Streets, with Wickets.

1803.4 –Middlebury College, VT, Forbids Ball playing.

1805.6 –In SC, Some Slaves Use Sundays for Ballplaying.

1805c.7 – NH Poet Recalls Ballplaying at School.

1806.3 – Gentleman Beldham Loads One Up.

1806.4 –Minister from New England Plays Ball in Western Reserve [OH].

1815c.5 – RI Boy Did A Little Ball-Playing.

1815.6 – Group at Dartmouth Ponders Worth of Ballplaying, Nocturnal Cowhunting.

1818c.5 – English Immigrants from Surrey Take Cricket to IL

1820s.14 – New England Youngster Recalls Fast Day Ballplaying and also other Assorted Games.

1820s.18 -- Alums Make Nostalgic Visit to Syracuse NY Ball Field.

1820s.19 – Ball-Playing in Ontario.

1820s.20 -- Horace Greeley Lacks the Knack, Fears Getting Whacked.

1820s.21 – College Prexy Was a Klutz at Ball and Cricket.

1820s.22 –MA Boy Played One Old Cat, Base Ball in Early Childhood.

1820c.15 – Ballplaying at Bowdoin College

1820.17 – “The Game of Ball” Banned in Area of Belfast, ME.

1821.5 – NY Mansion Converted to Be Suitable for Cricket, Base, Trap – Ball.

1822.5 – Ball-playing Disallowed in Front of Hobart College Residence.

1823c.9 –Kentucky Abolitionist Played Base ball.

ORIGINS

THE MONTH IN 19cBB.

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

SOURCES.

Gale and The British Library Produce Nineteenth-Century Online Newspaper Archive

Rod Nelson contributed the news of the availability of a new archive.

NOTES.

Lawrence Base Ball Club of 1858

Kyle DeCicco-Carey sent his notes on the Lawrence, MA club of 1858.

INQUIRIES.

tie goes to the ball?

Bob Tholkes inquired if anyone had a reference for his recollection of seeing a source which mentioned that in the high-scoring period around 1860 most umpires would call close plays on the bases in favor of the defense, or "ball". Replies from Eric Miklich and Tom Hoffman referred to the first printed rules on the subject in the 1870s. Paul Hunkele provided the reference, from an 1861 publication authored by Henry Chadwick. Bob later located a corroborating note in the in *New York Sunday Mercury*. John Thorn contributed an 1855 note that doubtful plays should be considered "fair for the hand in", and upon request John, David Dyte, and Eric Miklich explained that this referred to the team "in", or at bat. Bob opined that the switches back and forth were in response to rule changes which first increased and then decreased scoring.

Pioneer BBC of New Jersey, 1855

Richard Hershberger sent an 1855 notice of a game played between two New Jersey clubs with eleven players per side. Richard concludes that it what a New York Game match, and asked for further info on the club involved. David Block sent a link to an online reprint of the club's constitution. Craig Waff sent a game account.

home team on the bottom

Andrew Schiff inquired about the old custom of placing the home team on the bottom half of a line score. John Thorn that it apparently was not a result of the home team batting second, since that began later, and found it done inconsistently in the years before line scores began to appear (1854) Jack Little noted that in England visitors are listed first in line scores, win or lose.

What to make of this?

Richard Hershberger sent an 1861 Cincinnati note about "foot and town ball games" and requested and requested further info that anyone had. Jon Daly guessed that a version of football, soccer, or rugby was referred to.

reinterpreting the term "match game"

John Thorn questioned the current interpretation of the term, and of the term "fancy match", based on use in the Knickerbockers' Game Books.

Richard Hershberger sent an analysis of the various appearances of the two terms, and Marty Payne

and David Ball added info and also comments. Scott Feisthumel provided an example of conflicting usage. The uses of the terms "social", "stump", "scrub" and "friendly", matches (Craig Waff and Kyle DeCicco-Carey) with reference to matches was also discussed in other postings. Larry McCray added a request for help in defining all the terms for inclusion in the Protoball Glossary of Games.

On a related note, Debbie Shattuck asked for input on a game called "scrub", referencing an interview with an old Knickerbocker.

CFA Hickman's sporting goods

John Thorn requested more information about this company after seeing an 1851 advertisement.

"old fashioned or Massachusetts Base Ball"

Richard Hershberger sent an inquiry about a quote from an 1859 paper, asking what might have been meant by conflation of the two.

DISCUSSION.

One Old Cat

John Thorn posted a discussion of a possible etymology for "cat" which disposes of the present theory, which doesn't fit the game well. Jack Little asked for clarification. The explanation to be found in Harold Peterson's book was described by Monica Nucciarone. David Block reiterated the etymology he described in *Baseball Before We Knew It*, which he still supports, and also

mentioned his belief that English base ball did not use a bat. This drew a post from Richard Hershberger in which he laid out his disagreement with David on that final point.

DISCOVERIES.

three outs, 1843

John Thorn posted an 1843 game reference in which the rule "three out, all out", was used, noting that it is the earliest such reference known to him. Richard Hershberger sent a note that he was aware of the reference, but that he believed it referred to a strikeout.

Indians playing Base Ball 1858

Richard Hershberger sent an 1858 note about a possible New York Rules match between two tribes in Buffalo, N.Y.

ORIGINS

NUMBER CATCH - UP.

Thanks to alert reader Joe Williams for pointing out to your less-than-alert editor that an issue number was repeated earlier in the year. Thus this issue skips to Number #10 from September's #8.
--ed.

SUBMISSION OF ITEMS.

Please send items for *Originals* to the editor, Bob Tholkes, at email rjtholkes@msn.com.