

# NINETEENTH CENTURY NOTES

Summer 2009

Society for American Baseball Research

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

## 19th Century Conference Held; Thorn & Ivor-Campbell in Midseason Form by Peter Mancuso

### 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

Copyright © Society for American  
Baseball Research 2009

### Inside this issue:

The Big Picture By John Thorn	3
T.P. Sullivan and Charlie Comiskey- J. Casway reviewed by Frank Vaccaro	6
Baseball Vocabulary— Paul Dickson reviewed by Dean Sullivan	8
Grandstands & Knotholes — B. Robinson reviewed by Tom Shieber	9
More on ISEG— Walt LeConte	10
Chairman's Corner	10
Upcoming Books of Interest	12

When you invite a couple of superstars to take part in something, whether it is a ball game or a conference, you first hope that they will accept. If and when they do, you next hope that they will take it seriously. When the superstars, as in this case, have sterling reputations for doing things right, you still worry a bit that they will

be too busy to prepare, or that something really big comes along and they are sidetracked in another direction and your program gets secondhand treatment. In the case of the Inaugural 19th Century Base Ball Conference in Cooperstown this past

April 18th, I learned that I should not have worried a bit.

John Thorn and Frederick Ivor-Campbell took on



John Thorn delivering 2009 Conference Keynote Address

### Editor's Note:

The first portion of this quarter's Newsletter are reports from the First Annual 19th Century Baseball Conference held in April at the Baseball Hall of Fame. Chairman Peter Mancuso reports on the Keynote Address delivered by John Thorn, one of the Committee Founders. Frank Vaccaro, Dean Sullivan and Tom Shieber provide details of the Research Presentations.

The sold-out affair attracted

over 50 Committee members, presenters, and others involved in research topics related to 19th Century baseball.

There will plenty of discussion about the Conference at the Washington Convention along with ideas for a 2010 Conference.

Read on.

two key roles at this conference, luncheon keynote speaker and panel discussion moderator respectively. Neither would disappoint. They were the fourth and fifth inning of our nine inning day-long conference with John

(Continued on page 2)

## Conference Report by Peter Mancuso (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

coming to the podium to put the finishing touches on a delicious lunch with a well thought out talk about the origins and early challenges and activities of our quarter-century old committee.

As one of the Nineteenth Century Committee's founding members, and along with Mark Rucker a first Co-Chair, John not only touched on the establishment of our group, but more importantly communicated in a most effective way the spirit in which our forbearers went about the early organization, research and projects that put us on the SABR and baseball map. As Thorn began to list the many names that have brought baseball history into early morning light, he made no distinction other than referencing formats between Henry Chadwick, Robert Henderson or David Block. He understands that ours is a group of individuals who in a sense are part of a much deeper community with a passion for telling baseball's story and, in turn, our story.

His reading of a section of a letter dated September 30, 1982 sent to approximately thirty individuals inviting them to take part in a SABR committee devoted to 19th century baseball revealed the true nobility behind our founding. I quote in part,

“The way to exploit the talents in this committee is through continual exchange of information and advice. We hope

someday to have a large group assembled in one place where a close rapport can develop.”

Given our “large group assembled” I got goose bumps over the prospect that twenty-seven years ago such a gathering as ours was one of the hopes of our founders.

Thorn threw down the gauntlet, but in a gentle way, asking us to reexamine some of those ready answers we may tend to provide about 19th-century baseball, answers that have perhaps become convenient due to lack of deeper inquiry. He cited five, but made us understand that he could have given us twenty if time permitted.

Finally, he drew on a friend's expression to describe someone that “really doesn't know about anything” as “a big-picture guy.” In closing, he sent the message home, “I am pleased to think of myself, like each of my colleagues in the 19th century committee, as a small-picture guy.”

Frederick Ivor-Campbell was coming to the plate immediately on the heels of John Thorn's blast into the upper deck. But like Tony Gwynn or Cal Ripken, success was already certain. As we admire those who prepare to play the game, so too do we admire anyone who brings his work ethic into any arena.

Fred's preparation began when he gave serious consideration to, and then acted deci-

sively to develop a potent topic for his panel to discuss. Then he assembled a potent panel to discuss that topic – “Doing Baseball History: From Research to Writing to Publication.”

Fred's panel consisted of three of the most admired and respected published authors of baseball history, Peter Morris, William Ryczek and John Thorn. To thicken the soup he added in McFarland Publishers editor Gary Mitchem. This quartet would eventually have most of the audience frantically taking notes as if their publishing lives depended on it.

Ivor-Campbell started slowly, introducing his line-up (in baseball publishing terms, something like the first four guys on the '27 Yankees) and then digressing into what at first seemed a delightful, but somewhat disconnected recounting of Odysseus long return home from Troy and Dolius' refrain that all that had been done was for the sake of a song (Homer's great epic poems). And so, Fred set the stage, reminding audience and panel alike that our member's bear a certain responsibility to uphold the deeply rooted ancient tradition of retelling history.

Then, giving each panelist an opportunity to answer an introductory question, Fred gave the assembled members what they really wanted, access to this extremely knowledgeable and experienced panel of writers and editor. The questions began to

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Conference Report by Peter Mancuso (Cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

fly with answers flying right back. It was honest and forthright the whole way. How do you write? When do you write? How do you work with a publisher? What do you give them? How much do you give them? What about ad-

vances? What about payment? What about editorial control? I finally, had to step in, allowing one more question. OK, so I allowed a few more than one, but who could stop it? The flood gates had opened, the questions kept coming, followed by the answers

that meant so much to our group. Then, finally, with no time left, Ivor-Campbell rounded third and trotted home. As they say in baseball, "You had to be there."

## The Big Picture

by John Thorn

These remarks were delivered at the first annual conference of SABR's 19th Century Baseball Research Committee, at Cooperstown on April 18, 2009:

Thanks to Peter Mancuso and to the previous 19th Century Baseball Research Committee chairmen, some of them gathered here (I see Fred Ivor-Campbell and Bob Tie-mann ... but not Mark Rucker, John R. Husman, or Paul Wendt). But for truly making this occasion necessary, my thanks must go to you in the room and all our colleagues in this robust research committee, which has grown from an initial 20-something to now some 550. Such success would have been unimaginable to Mark and I back in 1983.

Within the well-deserved context of self-congratulation that marks this first annual gathering, what I'd like to talk about today is the state of research into early baseball, that former dark side of the side of the moon: how far it has come in the 25

years that coincide with the tenure of this committee, and where it may yet go, for we have only scraped the surface and returned with a few moon rocks.

It may seem incongruous for a gang of myth busters to be gathering here in the town that, to a significant extent, Abner Doubleday made. And yet the location is apt, for however it may have found its way here in Cooperstown, the Baseball Hall of Fame is a great institution with a legacy all its own and a keen sense of the interplay between myth and what we think of as history—that is, *what happened*. Legend, which runs alongside fact in such a way as sometimes to undermine it and sometimes to enrich it, offers clues to a history not found in news clips.

For example, while there is no need to recite for this audience the story of how Abner Doubleday came to be anointed Father of Baseball by the Mills Commission, it may come as news to some that Mills never bought the tale of two Abners and pursued the real story even beyond the end of his

mandate at the end of December 1907. In the report he issued at that time he wrote:

"I am also much interested in the statement made by Mr. Curry, [first president] of the pioneer Knickerbocker club, and confirmed by Mr. Tassie, of the famous old Atlantic club of Brooklyn, that a diagram, showing the ball field laid out substantially as it is to-day, was brought to the field one afternoon by a Mr. Wadsworth. Mr. Curry says 'the plan caused a great deal of talk, but, finally, we agreed to try it.'"

It is possible, he continued, "that a connection more or less direct can be traced between the diagram drawn by Doubleday in 1839 and that presented to the Knickerbocker club by Wadsworth in 1845, or thereabouts, and I wrote several days ago for certain data bearing on this point, but as it has not yet come to hand I have decided to delay no longer sending in the kind of paper your letter calls for, promising to furnish you

(Continued on page 4)

## The Big Picture (Cont.) by John Thorn

*(Continued from page 3)*

the indicated data when I obtain it, whatever it may be."

Mills was wondering whether an upstate Wadsworth, perhaps one of the Geneseo clan, might somehow have brought the Doubleday diagram to New York. The requested data about the mysterious Mr. Wadsworth never emerged, and the Wadsworth connection was not again the subject of published curiosity, though Louis F. Wadsworth has been a more or less constant preoccupation of mine since the time we launched the 19th Century Baseball Research Committee. Only in very recent years has his story, with all its implications for baseball history, unfolded. (No, he did not carry a diagram from Cooperstown to New York City, but I will not say more at this time.)

Today we dismiss the Cooperstown myth—that baseball was played here before the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club played it in New York City. After the Doubleday myth was thoroughly exploded, serially, by Will Irwin and then Robert Henderson and then Harold Peterson, journalists and even serious students of the game could be relied upon to say, "Baseball grew up in the city, not in the country." That is in my view untrue-- even if baseball as a game for grownups evolved in the city as a nostalgic reenactment of the joys of youth, those joys were rightly understood to be agrarian. My best guess—and

I assure you it is not *mere* guesswork—is that the American game of baseball grew up, if not exactly here in Cooperstown, then in multiple variants and locales in the Housatonic Valley triangle of Western Massachusetts, Eastern New York State, and New York City. Future General Abner Doubleday had nothing to do with it, but then again Alexander Cartwright had little to do with "inventing" the New York Game.

\*\*\*

Questions about baseball's evolutionary tree (or as better conceived, bramble bush) have tended to dominate the listserv activity of this committee, as some of our most active researchers have taken up mental residence in the antebellum period. But when Mark Rucker and I first believed that such a group would be valuable, our concerns were quite different.

On September 30, 1982, we sent out a letter to some 30 individuals—mostly collectors, which will explain some of the language below—known to have an interest in early baseball, especially its visual record. That letter read, in part:

"To whom it may concern: Knowledge of baseball from the 1860s to the 1890s, the era of earliest organization, has till now been restricted to a very few. With more information continually appearing, the opportunity for research is expanding, as is interest in the earliest known teams and players. To accommodate this growing fascination, and to widen the possibilities for gathering in-

formation, we propose a new S.A.B.R. committee dedicated to the Nineteenth Century game."

The committee will compile photographic and factual records of individuals and clubs from the New York Knickerbockers to the end of the century. Considerable attention will be focused on the late 1850s, the 1860s, and 1870s, where it is most needed. A particular goal will be to assemble a photo file (copied from original sources) of all major teams and players, a virtually unattainable task, but one which should give the committee long life. The committee's job must be pure research, and will not be a vehicle for the selling and trading of documents."

Among the concerns of the new committee, approved by SABR in 1983, was the relative absence of this century's players from the Hall of Fame. This continues as something of a preoccupation. In a letter from Rucker and myself to research committee members in October of that year we wrote:

"We hope the [accompanying table, with interests of members accompanying their names] will help communication among us. The way to exploit the talents in this committee is through continual exchange of information and advice. We hope someday to have a large group of us assembled in one place where a close rapport can develop. Until

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The Big Picture (Cont.) by John Thorn

(Continued from page 4)

then, however, consistent contact through the mail is our best way to learn from one another."

Our 19cbb list has served this



function far better than anyone might have imagined in 1983.

Email and the internet had in fact already been invented but would not come into widespread use for another decade. This gathering today is the first meeting as Mark and I envisioned it (the SABR annual get-together is dedicated almost exclusively to structural review of committee activity).

\*\*\*

Long before 1983 there were historians and researchers and aficionados of early baseball whose accomplishments are singular because they were, in one respect or another, first. We don't have time to discuss each of them in detail, but let's at least call the roll of pre-committee notables. Some were shoebox and scrapbook fillers like Frank Marcellus, John Tattersall, Tom Shea, and Mike Stagno, not storytellers but vital to the statistical annals. Others had a highly

personal stake in how the game's history would be told—Henry Chadwick, Albert Spalding, Al Spink, Will Rankin, Will Irwin. There were the revisionists—Robert Henderson, John Rickard Betts, Harold Peterson. There were the academically trained historians—Harold Seymour, Foster Rhea Dulles, David Voigt, Melvin Adelman, Steve Riess. And there were the campfire writers, who stoked the flame of memory—the great Lee Allen and the unfairly neglected Robert Smith. There were the one-book wonders like Seymour Church, Irving Leitner, or Preston Orem. And you will tell me later, I hope, to which giant I have forgotten to give props.

Since 1983 we have seen many dramatic finds and studies, many of which attach to this group, individually or collectively. Some of us have used up our lifetime allotment of 15 minutes of media fame, including George Thompson, Ted Widmer, and yours truly. Some have produced groundbreaking larger works that continue to inspire researchers—David Block, Peter Morris, Paul Dickson, Dean Sullivan, Larry McCray, Bob Tiemann, just to name a few. Others have published articles that have transformed prior understandings of well-worn topics—Richard Hersberger, David Ball, Fred Ivor-Campbell, Randall Brown. Everyone in this room today has heard of Doc Adams and Jim Creighton.

Oh, I could go on. But it's time to wrap up with the matter

that even for antiquarians is of the highest interest: what to do next.

Not all of the baseball myths are hundreds of years in the making. Some are rather modern, and are worthy of reexamination. I offer these falsehoods as but five of twenty that might be rattled off without much head-scratching:

1. William Hulbert founded the National League because the National Association was drowning in drink, corruption, and scheduling nightmares related to weak co-op nines.
2. When the pitching distance moved back 10 feet in 1893—truly 5 feet, but that's another story—many pitching careers were ruined (like those of actors from the silent era after *The Jazz Singer*).
3. Albert Spalding was a ruthless capitalist rather than a sentimental idealist and mama's boy.
4. Professional baseball play began with the Cincinnati Reds of 1869.



5. The reserve clause was an evil mechanism designed to assert owner rights over those of the players.

(Continued on page 6)

## The Big Picture (Cont.) by John Thorn

*(Continued from page 5)*

Just as holding this meeting in Cooperstown may be seen as paradoxical, so may the success of our committee members in discovering new details, especially amid the newly digitized historical newspapers. For decades, writers on early baseball were given to grand pronouncements supported by highly selective if any evidence. Today we have reams of evidence which appear to contradict many bits of received wisdom and general understanding ... but we seem a little short on synthesis. We need

to knit together the diverse findings and make sense of the larger vista now afforded to us.

I have a friend, Dan Diamond, who knows more about hockey than any of us knows about baseball. His favorite term of derision for a marketing type or corporate suit was, "He's a big-picture guy"—by which he could have said, "he doesn't really know much about anything."

As I wrote in the current number of *Base Ball*, just off press, we would do well to contextualize the game in a way that

expands our understanding not only of baseball but also of the nation whose pastime it is. But because both the devil and the angels are in the detail, we still need to find that first name for the "Sullivan" who played two games for New Haven in 1875. I am pleased to think of myself, like each of my colleagues in the 19th century baseball research committee, as a small-picture guy.

*Editor's Note: A copy of this address can also be found at <http://thornpricks.blogspot.com/>. Scroll down to "The Big Picture"*

## T.P. Sullivan and Charlie Comiskey: Baseball's Hibernian Collaboration By Jerrold Casway Review by Frank Vaccaro

Not including his silver mine and oyster fishing business; work on his North Carolina plantation and for the Grand Pacific Hotel in San Francisco; not including two plays, three books, and a twelve year baseball lecture series; not including stints writing for the Milwaukee Journal, The Sporting News, and the Washington Post; and not including three Midwest football promotions, and trips to Europe and Cuba as a baseball ambassador; Timothy Paul Sullivan held, conservatively, 71 baseball jobs in 56 years. You can call him Ted.

This is a staggering baseball life. Sullivan, a tiny, manicured, yarn-spinner with the catcher's

hands and the derby, promoted the sport as "The Big Show", assembling and educating eager investors in leagues from Northern Wisconsin to the Texas Gulf Coast like a baseball Johnny Appleseed. He lamented "bible-holding" wannabe magnates who rewarded his pioneering spirit with backstabbing and skullduggery, yet turned his back on major league manager posts three times. Could baseball history produce a more independent soul?

Hold on to your Sporting Life. April 18th, author Jerrold Casway led off SABR's Nineteenth Century Conference at Cooperstown with a recounting of Sullivan's storyline connecting him indelibly with Char-

lie Comiskey. Casway, a senior member of SABR's Bob David's Chapter and a history professor and division chair at Howard Community College, brought his easy, conversational delivery to the Hall-of-Fame's Bullpen Theater in his presentation "TP Sullivan and Charlie Comiskey: Baseball's Hibernian Collaboration."

Casway touched all the bases, starting with the fact that Comiskey, like Sullivan, was Irish - not Polish - and that the two married sisters, making them brothers-in-law. Many Nineteenth Century Committee members knew that Sullivan discovered Comiskey, managing him at Dubuque in the late 1870's and then at St. Louis. But Casway pointed out that Sulli-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Vaccaro on Casway (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 6)*

van had managed Comiskey at St. Mary's Academy as early as 1874. Sullivan, the 23-year-old baseball impresario, developed an almost paternal relationship with the 15 year old Comiskey, then a star pitcher. (Sullivan later claimed to be only 17.) According to Casway, Comiskey's real father was against his son's baseball hobby and actually transferred him to Christian Brothers College in hometown Chicago just to get him away from baseball and Sullivan's influence.

The move did not work. Comiskey pitched for factory teams and Sullivan's semi-pro Milwaukee "Alerts" the next year before spending five years with Sullivan on the Dubuque "Rabbits". Sullivan masterminded the four team North West League to give the Dubuque regular opponents and moved the team to St. Louis, mid-1881, leading to the November creation of what is now the St. Louis Cardinals franchise. As Casway pointed out: "Sullivan told Commie to sign, and Commie told Sullivan to meet his Dad."

After the veteran Ned Cuthbert led St. Louis that inaugural year, Casway noted that Sullivan finally met principal St. Louis investor Chris Von der Ahe in Chicago. Sullivan, whose distaste for the major leagues led him to refer to them as the "guilted cavern", nevertheless sold himself to the naive German by saying "I am your long looked for Moses." St. Louis immediately contended.

Sullivan gave Comiskey the captaincy and Von der Ahe gave Sullivan a gold watch. In first place, August 29, Von der Ahe stunned Sullivan by ordering a pitching change, to which Sullivan stood up and quit the team, throwing his gold watch at the St. Louis owner.

St. Louis lost the 1883 pennant, but Casway pointed out that Sullivan seeded their dynasty. Casway also mentioned that the Sullivan-Von der Ahe season may have given rise to the word "fan"; a Sullivan take on the broken prose of the German immigrant. Casway skimmed over a dozen Sullivan managerial appointments bringing us to 1894 where, he points out, Sullivan became fascinated with the Baltimore style of winning championships. He developed good relationships with Ned Hanlon and John McGraw and first "extolled the Irish athlete" as having qualities perfect for baseball. Sullivan demeaning view of blacks may have been rooted in the fact that the two minorities were competing for low end jobs in America, and may explain Comiskey's 1901 opposition to Charlie Grant, a Negro league second baseman that John McGraw tried to pass off as an Indian.

Sullivan and Comiskey remained friends through the years, but when Comiskey began his career as a minor league magnate, Sullivan once again brought all his resources for his disposal. Casway credits Sullivan with a string of hard-hitting contributions: helping Comiskey purchase Sioux City of the Western League late in 1894;

moving the franchise to St. Paul; and setting up the American League in 1900 where Comiskey created the first year champion Chicago White Sox. When the AL became major in 1901, Sullivan helped again by bringing his Washington connections to the table. Sullivan said: "The National League is like the English conniving with the Kaiser."

Ironically, despite helping the AL, Sullivan spent the next six seasons as chief scout for the Cincinnati Reds. Fired for recommending the Reds dump "asphalt for brains" Cy Seymour in 1906 - the Reds slumped without him - Comiskey made Sullivan chief White Sox scout until death in 1929. Sullivan arranged and advised Spring training trips for Chicago from 1907 to 1912. In 1907 he brazenly took Chicago through Mexico to California, tacking posters of upcoming games himself in Mexican cities. At the age of 62, he organized the 138-day world tour of the White Sox and Giants which included an audience with Pope Pious X.

Casway, who coined the phrase "The Emerald Age of Baseball", displayed passion for Sullivan, summing up by calling him baseball's own Irish shanachie, a chronicler, story teller, and raconteur. "We see Sullivan in Comiskey's shadow," he said, "but he deserves better." Thanks to Casway, Sullivan's time will come.

## The Vocabulary Of 19<sup>TH</sup> Century Baseball

by Paul Dickson

Review by Dean Sullivan

Paul Dickson gave a most entertaining and enlightening account of the origins and evolution of his seminal book *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (the third edition of which was released earlier this year) at the initial 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference. He explained that the book's origin was a series of questions posed by his nine-year-old son at a 1984 baseball



Paul Dickson

game—"where did the work 'bunt' come from?" and "why do players wear socks like that", for instance. Dickson, always in research mode, expected to find the answers easily but instead found none. He resolved to develop a baseball dictionary with some 3000 terms, and in 1989 the first edition of the *Dictionary* (Facts on File) featured approximately 5000 entries.

Dickson received enthusiastic responses from fans and the base-

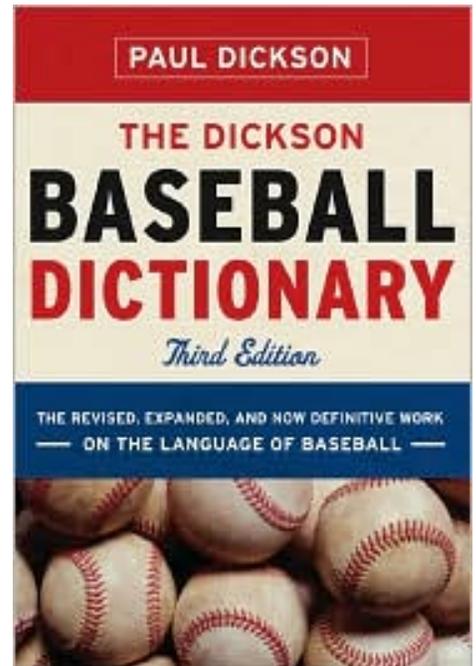
ball research community, and in 1999 he issued a new edition with over 7000 terms.

Around that time Skip McAfee offered to help organize future editions, and together the two men assembled the latest edition, right on schedule in 2009, with exactly 10,687 terms (approximately the vocabulary of the average person) with over 12,000 definitions.

Dickson found the research into 19<sup>th</sup> century terms to be especially interesting. He noted that the popularity of baseball coincided with the dramatic increase in newspaper circulation, and that this was not entirely coincidental. Often editors assigned their better writers to cover baseball, and a happy result was the creation of a wealth of unique baseball terms. Some of the terms familiar to fans include doubleheader, mascot, rubber game, scorcher, slugger, bunt, command, and Dickson's favorite, fan. He discussed the three dominant theories regarding the origin of "fan"—fanatic, fancy (a boxing term), and fan (the blowing motion and generated breeze reminded some of the actions and yelling of spectators). Another term, "fungo," has inspired five origin theories (so far).

Dickson emphasized that over 350 researchers contributed to the latest edition of the *Dictionary* (many of whom, no doubt, are reading this review). Any subscriber to either the 19<sup>th</sup>

Century or Deadball listservs can see that this research is active. To my mind, the most interesting online conversations involve the baseball origins of the word "jazz," coming from the San Francisco area in the early 1910s, before it was adopted by musicians. No doubt the tremendous interest in pre-1860 baseball will yield many more unique 19<sup>th</sup> century baseball terms which baseball



fans, cultural historians and educated people everywhere will discover in the current volume and in future editions.

*Editors Note:*

*The Dickson Baseball Dictionary (Third Edition) is available from W.W. Norton & Co.*

*See: [www.wwnorton.com](http://www.wwnorton.com)*

## Grandstands and Knotholes: A Portrait of the Spectator in New York City, 1883-1887.

by Ben Robinson.

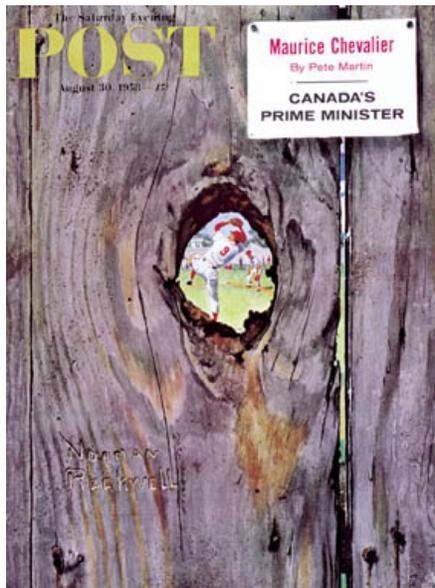
Reviewed by Tom Shieber

Ben Robinson gave the final presentation at SABR's 19th Century Baseball Conference in Cooperstown, a talk entitled "Grandstands and Knotholes: A Portrait of the Spectator in New York City, 1883-1887." Robinson explored various aspects of the city's baseball enthusiasts, focusing on those who supported the two major league clubs of the metropolis at the time: the Giants of the established National League and the Metropolitans of the junior American Association.

Robinson's talk can be roughly broken down into the examination of two main questions: Why did people attend baseball games and who were these ardent fans?

As a prelude to delving into the former question, Robinson quoted Allen Guttman from his *Sports Spectators* (1986), stating that "simple answers are impossibly reductionist." Unfortunately, Robinson mistakenly attributed the quote to James Hardy, author of *The New York Giants Base Ball Club* (2006). After reviewing the now familiar differences between NL and AA ballpark experiences, specifically the upstart league's 25 cent admission (half that of NL clubs), the embracing of Sunday ball play, and the sale of liquor at the park, Robinson quickly moved on to commonalities that enticed paying customers to the park. In-park restaurants and hired musical bands enhanced the fans' experience, while the excitement of gambling at the park gave the

spectator reason to stay and, in a very real sense, made him a part of the action. The titillation of violence, whether it be semi-controlled "kicking" or all-out brawls, also proved to be a powerful lure to the park.



Baseball Through the Knothole  
The Saturday Evening Post  
August 30, 1958

As to who exactly attended the games, Robinson brought up the oft-discussed ideal that baseball stands were a unique blend of classes. But he is careful not to fall into this trap, also "impossibly reductionist," noting that historians Steven Riess and Guttman both question, if not refute, this commonly held belief.

Robinson discussed the "crank" and how he was characterized in the press. And he also

touched on the role of women in the stands, again avoiding the one-dimensional thesis that their presence at the park quelled men's "evil passions," noting that women were not averse to raucous behavior, both cheering and booing.

Robinson ended his presentation with a short look at two subjects worthy of much greater attention: the non-paying fan (both adult and child) and the fan outside the park, whose baseball appetite was fed by reading newspaper accounts and vicariously "watching games" on giant scoreboards located throughout the city.

All-in-all, Robinson gave a fine overview of the New York baseball fan of the mid-1880s, condensing a under-appreciated and nuanced subject into a short, but manageable talk. Just as club owners of the late 19th century enhanced the ballpark experience with additional attractions, Robinson might have enhanced his audience's experience with relevant images, but overall his presentation was admirable.



## More on In-season Exhibition Games (ISEG)

A few issues back Committee Member Walter LeConte reported on his research concerning In-season Exhibition Games. The following is an update of that research with some interesting results of several games.

On Thursday, 9/21 1876, the Chicago White Stockings played at the Toledo Athletics and blasted them 43-2! No further details could be determined.

On Monday, 10/2 1876, the Chicago White Stockings beat the Actives in Clinton, Iowa 37-2. The following day the Whites

won a game at Marshalltown, Iowa by a score of 35-7. In two days work the Chicagos would tally 72 runs! No further details could be determined.

On Sunday, 4/29 1877, the Saint Louis Brown Stockings beat the West Belleville Browns 32-2 at Belleville, Illinois. No further details could be determined.

On Tuesday, 5/1 1877, the Saint Louis Brown Stockings played a 15-inning scoreless game versus the Syracuse Stars of the League Alliance. The game was played in Saint Louis, Missouri.

On Sunday, 6/24 1877, the Chicago White Stockings scored 20 runs versus the Saint Louis Reds; however, the problem was that the Reds scored 24! No further details could be determined, including the site of the game.

On Saturday, 6/30 1877, righty Terry Larkin of the Hartford Dark Blues tossed a 9-inning complete game no-hitter versus the Philadelphia Athletics of the League Alliance. The game was played at the Union Grounds in Brooklyn, New York.

Walter can be contacted at:  
waltlec3310@kc.rr.com

## Chairman's Corner

by Peter Mancuso

Just in case you have been glued to the TV watching your favorite club this season and haven't heard, our Nineteenth Century Committee's annual business meeting will take place at SABR 39 in Washington, DC on Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> from 12:00-1:00 PM.

Counting the time it takes to get everyone seated and the time it takes to get the room clear for the next group, we have all of about forty-five minutes to conduct our business. Therefore, I wish to set as much of the agenda as possible now, while still allowing our membership at least one-third of the forty-five minutes for topics they propose. So, I'll start with the first thirty minutes of the agenda here.

Five Minutes – Welcome and Special Presentation

Ten Minutes – Overlooked 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Legends Project. Representatives of our Legends Project will announce the full results of the 2009 selection of our Overlooked 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Legend. They will also give the results of the nomination of 2010 candidates. Press Releases will be on hand for those interested in distributing the news to their own local media outlets, baseball related organizations (including SABR Regional Chapters) and other interested parties. Remember, selecting an overlooked 19<sup>th</sup> century base ball legend does little to raise the profile of the individual selected or the

19<sup>th</sup> century game in general unless we each take the opportunity to get the word out far and wide. Start thinking now where you will distribute a few copies of the press release. Spread the joy of knowing about the development of our National Pastime. Make it infectious.

Five Minutes – 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conference. By SABR 39, a survey of the fifty – two attendees of this past conference will have been completed. This initial and limited survey will focus on three essential questions: Do we hold future conferences, and, if so, how often? Where should we hold the next conference? Should we lengthen the conference or keep it

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Chairman's Corner (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 10)*

the same in terms of duration? Naturally, five-minutes may not allow us the luxury to fully explore each question, but we can at least come away with a sense of the survey results and then continue to work through these essential questions using our newsletter and on-line committee communications. If further 19<sup>th</sup> Century Base Ball Conferences are in our committee's future (and I hope they are) additional surveys and questionnaires will be utilized to shape and enhance the conference's design.



Belt gusset ball

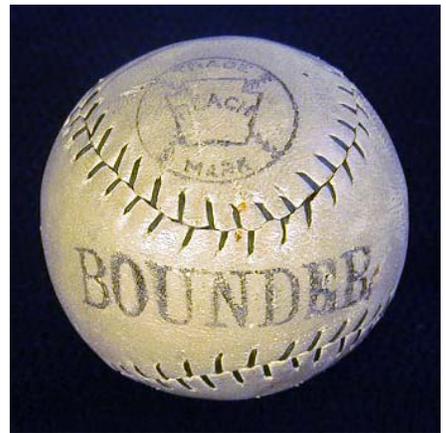
Ten Minutes – Greatest Base Ball Games of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Project/Book. A few months ago Committee Member John Thorn posted a brief description of what he thought was a very exciting 19<sup>th</sup> century game. Within a few days another five committee members added their choices of “Greatest Games of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.” I would venture a bet that most of you have one, two or

more favorite games of that period. Some choices, perhaps, may be due to the excitement of the play itself, others due to the importance to a specific season, or to the development of baseball in general. For whatever reason, we may have stumbled on a unique opportunity to really grab the essence of 19<sup>th</sup> century base ball and give it a very high profile to a very wide audience. In the weeks that followed, the idea of publishing a Nineteenth Century Committee project in book or journal form was discussed among myself, Bob Bailey, John Thorn, another half dozen or so other members who initially contributed to John's initial posting and, finally, SABR's Director of Publications, Nick Frankovich. Nick liked the idea and carried it to the SABR Board Meeting in mid-May. Frankovich reported that the Board, in turn liked the idea, particularly coming from a committee whose membership it holds in such high regard. Although, there are several SABR books and journals currently in the pipe line, a “Greatest Base Ball Games of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” book is a real possibility in the not too distant future, but it will be largely up to us to make it happen. So, put on your thinking caps, line up a couple of your favorite games, then, put on your game face for this project. We will need to identify some key people and a lot of foot soldiers. It will all start with a formal prospectus to SABR, a book outline, introduction, proposed table of contents and sample chapter. It is

a very focused and doable project and I think it should be great fun.

Fifteen Minutes – This chunk is our time is dedicated to explore those topics and issues dear to your hearts and minds. So please, feel free to contact me directly for items that I can add to this portion of the meeting agenda.

Finally, we are saddened to announce the passing of Nineteenth Century Committee member Joseph A. “Joe” Wayman. Joe's comprehensive re-



Bounder Ball

search on pitching W-L records from 1876-1902 were published in “Grandstand and Baseball Annual #2, which he edited. Joe had relocated to New Port Richey, FL last year to be near family. His occasional notes and postcards always reflected a positive attitude despite his increasing age and declining health.

Best Regards, Peter Mancuso

# Upcoming Books of Interest

Compiled by Peter Mancuso

**William J. “Bill” Ryczek’s** latest book “Baseball’s First Inning: A History of the National Pastime Through the civil War”

McFarland & Company, Inc. has just been published. The reports are starting to come in, and like his two other works, it is getting great reviews. The book is a prequel, to “Black Guards and Red Stockings” and “When Johnny Came Sliding Home.” John Shifert has posted a wonderful review on his Blog “19 to 21...”

**Monica Nucciarone’s** work, “Alexander Cartwright: The Life

Behind the Baseball Legend,” 2009, Univ. of Nebraska Press, has by all accounts accomplished the difficult task of separating the subject from his legend. Reviewers seem to agree that she has barely left a stone unturned and has gotten it right regarding another baseball “inventor.”

**David Flietz’s** “The Irish in Baseball: An Early History, 2009, McFarland, is just now being released by McFarland. It will no doubt be in demand by us Nineteeners..

**R. A. “Roy” Kerr, Ph.D.** has just been informed us that McFarland will be releasing his comprehensive biography of Billy Hamilton under the title “Sliding Billy Hamilton: The Life and Times of Baseball’s First great Leadoff Hitter.” This is an obviously long overdue book on this Hall of Fame outfielder.

**Dean Sullivan’s** third volume of his baseball history series, “Final Innings” should be released in the latter half of 2010.