The SABR UK Examiner

Number 14
Anthology

16 June 2007

The Newsletter of the Bobby Thomson Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research, Incorporating the Research Journal of the Baseball Origins Committee of SABR

The Chicken or the Egg?

by Patrick Carroll

Some off-the-cuff ramblings from the Chairman of the Historical Committee:

Undoubtedly the most tedious experience for the baseball enthusiast in Britain is the almost-unfailing repetition of the phrase, "Oh, you mean rounders" mouthed by the average Brit whenever the subject of baseball comes up. Apart from the universal human instinct to patronise that about which one is ignorant, it is difficult to understand the monotonous predictability with which this phrase is trotted out. It's boring. It isn't original. It isn't witty. And, more to my immediate point, there is considerable doubt as to whether it's even true.

Having been continuously peppered with this cliché for the nearly thirty years I've spent in close proximity with Perfidious Albion, I decided recently to try to begin justifying my august office within this organisation by undertaking an innocent, disinterested enquiry into the whole "Oh, you mean rounders" business.

I took as a starting point John Montgomery Ward's "BASE-BALL: How to Become a Player - with the Origin, History and Explanation of the Game". This excellent booklet was originally published in 1888 and has been lovingly reproduced in a SABR edition, with a forward by Mark Alvarez, and given free for our delectation to us lucky members. In his introduction: An Enquiry into the Origin of Baseball, with a brief Sketch of its History, Ward argues eloquently against the theory that baseball is a development or deviation from the game of rounders.

The crux of Ward's argument is that despite being invariably referred to as "the old English game of rounders" those propounding the rounders-as-chicken-baseball-as-egg theory have never been able to adduce any historical evidence whatsoever of rounders' antiquity as a game in its own right. Unfortunately for his complete credibility, Ward's argument was, as Alvarez points out in his forward, "flawed by [his] chauvinistic insistence that our game was a purely American sport, not descended from or related to English ball and bat games". And, as I have said elsewhere, it is not really convincing to suppose that baseball "just growed" from the native ingenuity of the American Boy. I am aware that there have been studies made of this subject but I have not as yet had an opportunity to read any of them. In order to fill in until such a chance arises I betook myself to the local library and pulled down a hefty tome entitled "The Oxford Companion To Sport & Games", edited by the late and much lamented John Arlott, the Red Barber of cricket.

Turning the entry for baseball I find, after an exegesis of the rules and so forth of the game, this statement: "Baseball, long regarded as the American national game, evolved *directly* (my italics) from the *old* (again, my emphasis) English game of rounders". Pretty authoritative and positive, what? The entry goes on to say, "The myth that baseball was spontaneously invented by Abner Doubleday in 1839 at Cooperstown has no basis in fact." Well, no, it never did. Even in Ward's day that piece of American counter-propaganda katzenjammer had been thoroughly debunked. But check out the end of the paragraph which, referring to rounders, says, "The game was played in a simple form under the name 'base ball' in England and America as early as the eighteenth century."

Hmm, do you, as I do, get the feeling that there is a screw loose in the logic of this historical analysis?

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Anthology

Why an anthology? When bands put out a "Greatest Hits" collection, you get the feeling the end is near… But not here. Putting out an anthology at this time should serve 3 functions: 1. To remind everyone (and us) what a rich selection of writing and research, some of it ground-breaking, that we've published over the years; 2. To let people know that we're still around despite a recent quiescent period; and 3. To encourage our readers to do research and submit articles for Examiner 15.

The SABR UK Examiner had humble origins, starting out as the SABR Rattler in March 1993. This issue was just a mockup of a typed newsletter that had been distributed to the Chapter, but it soon moved on and up. Hopefully this issue will give an inkling of the treasures to be discovered from the last 14 years.

In an anthology, choices must be made, and sometimes difficult choices. We have enough material - and unpublished photos - for another anthology, but how about let's try to kick out some new stuff first!

Enjoy this offering – *editor*

The Next Destin'd Post

by Larry McCray

Notes on Research on Ballplaying Prior to the Pro Leagues

Note: A mere ten years ago, research into baseball's earliest roots was a little like farming arid lands. The redoubtable David Block was, then, mainly a book collector; Tom Altherr was still poking around assorted dusty places looking for references to early ballplaying; the amazing Peter Morris was still mainly a world-class Scrabble whiz; the plucky members of SABR-UK were only beginning to infiltrate British libraries, museums, and playing fields; Paul Wendt's inspired 19CBB list-serve wasn't to provide our daily nourishment for 4 more long years; and those young wizards at Google hadn't yet handed us the ability to go find big handfuls of choice needles in mammoth haystacks. Jeez — did John Thorn have anyone to *talk to* in those dark old days?

It's all different now. Lots more of us share in common toil — trying to figure out where baseball came from, and how. This minimalist newsletter is intended to throw a little more light on the whole bunch of us, and on our current quests. Below, you'll see initial highlights. Please send us material on work or happenings you know of for posting here in Issue 2 – which is, . . . uh . . . the next destin'd post of *The Next Destin'd Post.*

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Conceived and edited by **John Thorn** [Kingston NY], the new McFarland offering *Base Ball: A Journal of the Early Game* will be appearing soon. The inaugural issue will have several substantial articles on pre-1870 ballplaying, including Joanne Hulbert's work on Fast Day in Massachusetts, Angus McFarland's work on San Francisco's first ballclub, Fred Ivor-Campbell's take on the 1857 Convention, and John's own reflections on that surprising find of *bafeball* in 1791 Pittsfield MA.

Tom Altherr [Conifer CO] is preparing a paper for the June Cooperstown colloquium on the reasons that baseball-type games caught on in the first part of the 19th century. And he's still out there digging up more accounts of ball playing for us, having recently spent a week at Dartmouth and the American Antiquarian Society.

Priscilla Astifan [Rochester NY] is expanding her earlier work on early base ball in Rochester into a monograph, and has recently examined the circumstances surrounding Samuel Hopkins Adams' famous story about base ball in the Flower City in 1827. She and **Larry McCray** [Lexington MA] have drafted a 10-page research note on what was called "old-fashioned base ball" – it was portrayed as the predecessor to the New York game — in Western New York State.

The latest book by **Peter Morris** [Haslett MI] is ***Level Playing Fields: How the Groundskeeping Murphy Brothers Shaped Baseball.*** It includes coverage of the development of early ballfields before 1872. Peter's next project is a textbook on the history of baseball from 1840-1870, and will include the scoop from new sources that Peter has recently turned up.

McFarland now lists *Base Ball in Philadelphia* as "available for immediate shipment." The book traces the history of baseball in Philadelphia before 1900. It was written by **John Shiffert** [Newnan, GA], and sports favorable reviews by Tom Altherr and John Thorn.

A book-length evaluative history of baseball from 1845 to 1857 — Knickerbocker Base Ball — is occupying **Fred Ivor-Campbell** [Bristol RI]. A first segment, treating the 1857 base ball convention, is slated for the inaugural issue of *Base Ball.*

The March 2007 update of the **Protoball Chronology** is imminent, and incorporates about 120 new entries submitted by 15 researchers in recent months. The new version will comprise about 625 items. The Protoball website occupies a small corner of the *Retrosheet* site, and is found at http://retrosheet.org/Protoball/.

Kyle DeCicco-Carey [New Bedford MA] is researching early base ball on the southern coast of Massachusetts, from Fall River to New Bedford. He reports finding a 33-inning Massachusetts-rules game from 1858, and has discovered that New Bedford clubs in those transitional days were willing to play by either NY or MA rules.

The earliest days of California base ball are being investigated by **Angus McFarlane** [San Francisco CA]. He identifies the local Knickerbockers as the first CA team, and is working with Mexican historian Cesar Gonzalez to ascertain the role of the New York Volunteer Regiment, which sailed to CA in 1846, in implanting baseball in Mexico.[

David Arcidiacono [East Hampton, CT] has been looking to confirm the report that baseball gloves were first used in an 1858 Massachusetts-rules game. Old-timers later recalled that a ball with a bullet core was put in play, and that players then donned gloves to protect their hands. Contemporary accounts haven't, as yet, confirmed this story

David Nevard [Waltham MA] has researched and written *Wikipedia* pieces on Town Ball and the Massachusetts Game, and has also written a brief overview of the whole class of safe haven games for the site. Next: he's trying to understand, and to explain, what those "old-cat" games were all about.

The UK Chapter of SABR is preparing to resume publication of *The Examiner*, which has given us several accounts of members' research on English ballplaying [see http://www.sabruk.org/examiner/index.html.] **Martin Hoerchner** [Kent, England], who has uncovered contemporary stoolball and trap ball in the olde country, is leading the renewed effort.

Brock Helander [Sacramento CA] is collecting information on baseball history in towns — like Syracuse and Troy NY — that once had, but then lost, major league teams. Brock is at helander@neteze.com if you want to know more, or to help out.

"The Cartwright Conundrum: Fact and Fiction of Cartwright's Baseball Legacy" was the subject of a poster session by **Monica Nucciarone** at the SABR 36 convention. She is in the rewrite phase of her treatise on

Alexander Cartwright, and may present some results at the St. Louis SABR convention. She spent part of last April doing research in Hawaii.

George Thompson [New York NY] recently re-discovered the elusive 1859 *NY Tribune* article that challenges the superiority of the New York Game to the Massachusetts Game. George continues to examine all aspects of life in New York City from the 1790s to 1860, including all varieties of sports.

A chronology of the evolution of ballmaking has been assembled by **Rob Loeffler** [Rancho Santa Margarita CA]. It will appear on the Protoball site. Rob has a collection of photos of well over 200 nineteenth century baseballs and is analyzing them to estimate their sizes and weights.

Dan Selz [New York] and associates are collecting information for a prospective documentary on the meaning of baseball for local towns. They have interviewed Priscilla Astifan about events in early Rochester

Newly added to the list of "Local Diggers" on the Protoball website: **David Arcidiacono** [Gloves], **Kyle Decicco-Carey** [New Bedford Area], **Richard Hershberger** [Philadelphia], **Rob Loeffler** [Ballmaking], **Phil Lowry** [Length of Games], **Angus MacFarlane** [San Francisco], **David Nevard** [Town Ball], and **Bill Wagner** [Digger-at-Large].

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The ball once struck off,
Away flies the boy
To the next destin'd post
And then Home with joy."

Send news and comment to: Larry McCray, 125 Vine Street, Lexington MA, or lmccray@mit.edu.

Without the legs, this stool is a stoolball bat, which is very similar to an oversize ping pong paddle. The interesting thing is that the milking stools were supposed to be rudimentary wickets, but here it appears the milking stools were also rudimentary bats.

Research Requests

Phil Lowry, renowned author of Green Cathedrals, has submitted a list of queries to the membership of SABR UK:

What was the name of the field or stadium, city where played, final score, time of game, attendance, and finish time for the following baseball games involving Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey, and England. If you know any of this information, please send to Phil Lowry at plowry1176@aol.com so that he can update the records.

(1) First-ever baseball game ever played in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, etc.

(2) Longest-ever baseball game ever played in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, etc. in terms of number of innings.

(3) Longest-ever baseball game ever played in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, etc. in terms of time of game.

(4) Longest-ever baseball game ever played by the National Team of Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, etc. in terms of number of innings.

(5) Longest-ever baseball game ever played by the National Team of Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Wight, etc. in terms of time of game.

Thank you very much.

Philip J. Lowry
4323 Woodhill Road
Minnetonka, Minnesota 55345 USA

1847 Sporting Life Articles Shed Light

by Mike Ross

Clues and Conjectures regarding the Origin and Suppression of Ball Games:

Baseball did not appear as a result of spontaneous generation somewhere near Cooperstown, New York, as a purebred American thing. Such a myth surrounds the ubiquitous Abner Doubleday who was miles away from Cooperstown when he was supposed to have been there inventing the modern game. The yarn has been spun by A.G. Spalding and been supported by various commissions and societies hyping the American dream.

Being liberated from such notions, SABR(UK) has every reason to get down to the business of verifying the bone fide roots of baseball, with a variation on the theme of its derivation from *rounders*.

For a kickoff we can search for customs relating to old British children's games, and they lead to the fields, dales and wayward greens of rural England and the parks of London.

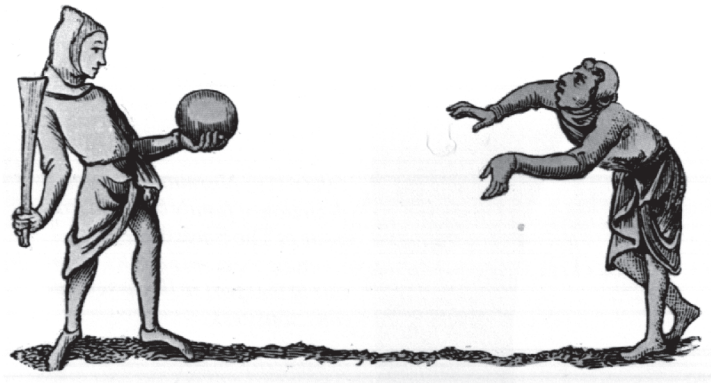
Really, with the talk of researching baseball's origins, and while forced to assume it sprang from British soil, SABR(UK) has a tough turkey to carve. After all, scant information has been set down. With the Doubleday myth, up until the publication of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* [Henderson] in 1947, no one really knew the story. While the Americans were shifting the goalposts from England to the USA, the British bothered not about staking a claim to a game they invented, and were indeed asleep at the wheel. In a way, the Britons' failure to lift a pen to prove what was theirs, is almost an insult to our beloved game. The Russians would have had their own Cooperstown by now.

At the British Library Newspaper Library in Colindale, London, while searching for clues to baseball's murky origins, an article emerged from among the first issues of a British publication, *The Sporting Life (TSL)*, dated 1847. The writer (no by-line) laments the demise of the old children's games, pretty much forbidden (already) on many greens. One such game was "*base*", mentioned in a couple of Shakespeare plays and quoted by the *TSL* writer from Shakespeare's *Cymbaline*:

> *'"He, with two striplings, lads more like to run the country base, then to commit such slaughter, made good the passage'"*

The country base? How be it? One supposes that the quote refers to boys playing games rather than running to war. The writer adds:

> *"Drayton and Spenser, contemporary with Shakespeare, also allude to 'Prison Base'. It was a running game, and therefore we may presume chiefly a youth's amusement; yet it is also known to have been played by men in Cheshire and the counties adjoining, within the memory of the present generation."*



Not much to go on, but if conjecture indeed be acceptable, let us then suggest that, when a batter gets on base, that we regard him as being a prisoner? Let's face it, when one is 'on base', if he (or she) possesses any degree of competitiveness, an inkling of team spirit would result in an innate longing to break out, to go home.

The baserunner, while safe, is unable to move forward toward his ultimate destination without help. So, while the base is a prison, it is also a refuge. And if he gets caught off base, he is *out*. Out of luck, out of the game, out of life. A player's position on base is a formality if he fails to make it home

Just an idea.

My favourite contention has been that baseball was unable to develop in England because of the power of the aristocracy and the remnants of feudal Britain. The game was forced to America, and there permitted to grow up. And akin to the Pilgrims, baseball can be regarded as an underlying cause of the American Revolution.

We are reminded of the original quote from John Tener, former president of the National League: "Britain is a democratic country, but lacks the finishing touch of baseball". Well, not so surprising when we consider the ponderous process required by baseball to win out.

Our TSL writer alludes to what might relate to baseball's origins, showing where the squeeze was on:

> *"The rural games are nearly abolished, that many persons perhaps scarcely know any of them excepting by name. Some are entirely or all but entirely extinct and others are only kept up in out-of-the-way nooks of the country, where modern manners have been less successful in intruding..."*

Modern manners? Or was it restrictions imposed by the upper classes perhaps as far back as the middle ages? What say to the notion that the origins of baseball go back that far?

> *"It is mentioned so long ago as the reign of Edward III* [1327-1377] *when an order of Parliament forbade 'boys and others' to play at it* ["base"] *in the avenues of the Palace at Westminster, on account of the interruption which it gave the members passing to and fro as their business required'".*

Well, we wouldn't want those poor M.P.'s to be disturbed by silly children's games, would we?

Alexander Cartwright of the New York Knickerbockers organized a game of baseball at Hoboken, New Jersey, and is now officially recognized as the inventor of the modern game. Not Doubleday. Credit was given to Cartwright for his pacing out the 90 (30 yards) between bases. Such a perfect distance! Practically mystical. Not to deprive Cartwright and company of glory - we need our benchmarks - but that 90-foot space has been around a long time. The 1847 *TSL* quotes a Mr Strutt writing in his "*Sports and Pastimes*", about the games of *Base* or *Prison Base*:

> *"The performance of this pastime requires two parties of equal numbers, each of them*

having a base or home, as it is usually called, to themselves at the distance of about twenty or thirty yards..."

Well, we know about the 30 yards, so the 20 yards was to accommodate the little leaguers from the Middle Ages. Softball also relates to Strutt's numbers. Remember, we speak of these as simply running games. Do we detect the beginnings of what in baseball is termed 'the running game'? Were some lads pre-empting Ty Cobb or Rickey Henderson and setting the pace? And one might suspect that, at some point, *Base* joined with the game of *ball*; hence "base ball".

The writer speaks of the concept of "going home", and of a player being tagged "out". First team to get a score of 20 would end a contest. Twenty-one was needed in Knickerbocker baseball. Another childlike variation was known as *bars*, "with stakes placed in the ground at 90 feet intervals", an innovation used in rounders.

"...Bars - it is necessary to have on each side a row of stakes driven into the ground about thirty yards in advance of the home boundaries; this row of stakes is called the prison. Such was the arrangement adopted in Essex where the game was played by men since the beginning of the reign of George III [1760-1820]*."*

England is far behind several other European countries in adopting the game on a national scale. Yet English uncles, brothers and cousins played baseball in America and attempted to introduce it 'back home'. Despite the various baseball missions and the efforts of Spalding, the eager and wealthy John Moores, and Frances Ley of Derby who built "The Baseball Ground" there in 1890, which exists to this day, baseball utterly failed to succeed here.

We may acknowledge a lingering feudalism that has often caused the suppression of initiative in the British commoners. And suppose, their children's natural impulses were thwarted for the pleasure of the lords, most noticeable in London's parks and "commons". Not so strange that baseball failed to flourish.

Just an idea.

Since the events surrounding Edward III in the 1300's, the notion of a free range would not materialize for the children. Described as a game of "unrestrained exercise", even in the mid-1800's they were "fast disappearing". So the culprit was not baseball in the eyes of the lords; it was the natural freewheeling and imaginative activity of "unrestricted" children's games.

From an issue of *The Sporting Life* of the same year, 1847, a further indictment:

"A FEW MORE WORDS UPON HYDE PARK

[Hyde Park] is of a goodly extent... This park is a royal property, and is used now and then for (royal) reviews; but for nothing else; for as we stated in our last paper with reference to Regent's Park, "It is all for the eye" - children not even being allowed to play trap-ball [i.e. an early form of baseball] *within its precincts. This monopoly of space on the part of the government is a great moral injustice if ever there was trusteeship on the part of the nation, it but ill becomes it to employ that prerogative to the very letter of the law that allows it. We have walked over Hyde Park dozens of times and could not help feeling surprised each time we did so, that so large a space of ground should be suffered to lay idle..."*

As in Italy and Sweden particularly, baseball is a spectator sport. In Britain only about 1200 players from assorted leagues keep the flame alive. The governing federation is ill-equipped to deal with the opposition from above which also affected softball during its rise in Britain, from 1963. Then a few Hollywood moguls, filming in London, started a club in Hyde Park which evolved into HyPISCO (Hyde Park International Softball & Canoeing Organisation).

Now, that Palace of Westminster, mentioned above, where Edward III and the fellas made the rules (and Elizabeth wrote the Tide Letter!), would have been in close proximity to what is now Hyde Park. There HyPISCO threw down the gauntlet and, against negative tradition, has succeeded in playing ball at their regular pitch for 31 years. But, more than once, modern-day edicts have banned them. Déja vu. In the last decade, a bowler-hatted stroller, attending a "royal review", stubbornly refused to recognise the game's boundaries. He inadvertently received a conk on his bowler, and wrote a letter to the authorities. As a result, police maintained restrictions for awhile. Some of the national press found the incident compelling.

And get this: At the same Regent's Park mentioned above, while cricket and soccer were permitted, softball and baseball (gaining increasing popularity) officially were banned in 1992 (the charge was for "digging up the grass"). That edict was overturned, for the numbers now playing organized softball in London are vast. That is not to say that in the future the Duke of Westminster or Lady Porter might again induce the House of Lords to end softball in 'their' royal parks.

The Sporting Life of 1847 concludes:

"(an act) which one might suspect emanated from the brain of some Old Bailey clause-picking lawyer, rather than from that quarter where the soul of honour is supposed, most essentially, to be a freehold resident. To take the fraternity of Brother Bobs [commoners, one supposes], *as a class there does not exist a more inoffensive one to the rights of property in the whole of Her Majesty's dominions; and to make them suffer...is a despotic act not at all in keeping with the commonest notions of common justice.*

Representing as we do...the interests of this class, we are thus emboldened to speak out, and hoping that our first words may not pass unregarded, for the present we lay down our pen."

And with that, so will we, leaving the issue open-ended.

But stop press! I have just acquired a copy of "Ball, Bat, and Bishop", which traces the history of ball games back to the year dot. I have just began to make a dent into the information contained therein. More on this book later on.

The Last Game

by Patrick Morley

Fifty years ago we were in the middle of a World War. Britain was packed with thousands of American troops all waiting to go over to join the fighting in newly invaded France, once the breakout had been achieved from the invasion bridgeheads. Yet amazingly, some of those troops found time to stage an exhibition baseball game for several thousand bemused English spectators in a Midlands town.

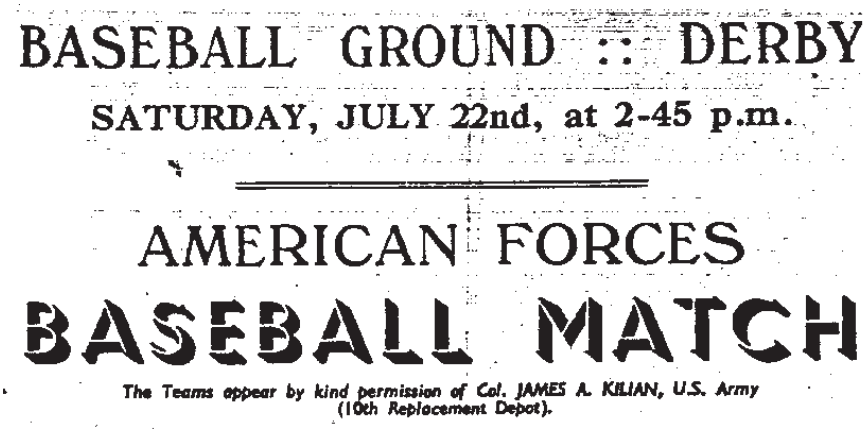
It was probably the last baseball game ever played at the Baseball Ground in Derby, home of Derby County Football Club. The Americans, stationed at a huge army camp several miles out of the town, had been intrigued as to how a football stadium, as they called it, came to be named after their national sport.

The answer lay in a factory whose chimneys poured out smoke right next to the Baseball Ground. Ley's Malleable Castings had been founded by a Victorian industrialist, Sir Francis Ley. In 1888 he went to America on a business trip and became so enamoured of baseball he decided to support those who were trying to introduce the game over here. His money and enthusiasm was a big factor in setting up an English league.

The Baseball Ground emerged from what had originally been a sports ground for the workers at the factory. Part of it was used by Derby County F.C. whose players were to make up the nucleus of the baseball team. There were four teams in the league formed in 1890, all based on football clubs. Apart from Derby the others were Preston North End, Aston Villa and Stoke City. That first league lapsed after a couple of seasons but in 1894 a National Association was formed.

Most notable player in the Derby side was Steve Bloomer, the England international inside right, capped 23 times and a prolific goal scorer with over 350 goals during his soccer career. For the Derby baseball team he played second base but sadly the statistics of his performance on the diamond have not come down to us. The side also boasted another England soccer international, goalkeeper Jack Robinson, the third baseman.

The Derby team did amazingly well. Not only did they win the English Baseball Cup three years out of four, they also trounced a top American team, the 1897 National League Champions, the Boston Beaneaters, when they were unwise enough to pay a visit in what was intended as a triumphal tour of England.


BASEBALL GROUND :: DERBY

SATURDAY, JULY 22nd, at 2-45 p.m.

AMERICAN FORCES

BASEBALL MATCH

The Teams appear by kind permission of Col. JAMES A. KILIAN, U.S. Army (10th Replacement Depot).

By 1898 it was clear the public's enthusiasm for baseball didn't match that of Sir Francis Ley. The game rapidly declined over here but by then Derby County were playing football regularly at the Baseball Ground and the name stuck.

Now, after a lapse of over 40 years, baseball was back again at the Baseball Ground. The Americans had promised to show the people of Derby what baseball was about, and even though D-Day had arrived only six weeks before, they kept their word. The date was Saturday, July 22, 1944, and among the crowd of several thousand was an excited schoolboy who probably knew more about the game than any other Englishman there.

My passion for baseball began with the film *Pride of the Yankees*. I watched mystified but entranced as Gary Cooper, in the role of Lou Gehrig, tried to fulfill his promise to a crippled child to hit three home runs in the same game. The crouching man in the mask snarling exultantly every time Coop swung and missed was clearly the villain of the piece. But what was it all about? Why didn't Gary Cooper belabour the squatting growling figure by his side with his bat? I must know more about this fascinating ritual.

I began listening regularly to AFN, the American Forces Network set up in England for the growing army of Yanks flooding into the country for the invasion of Europe. AFN transmitted live or recorded commentaries on major league games most days and I listened to them avidly. I got the general drift of what was going on but most of the details escaped me. Equally baffling were the baseball reports in the American newspapers we occasionally got to see, with their incomprehensible box scores.

I wrote to the Office of War Information at the American Embassy in London for enlightenment. Considering there was a world war on, they were remarkably helpful. They could have given me a polite brush off but not a bit of it. They sent a long detailed letter, telling me precisely what every item on the box score signified, explaining a variety of baseball terms and also listing all the major league grounds.

Then an aunt who lived in America put me in touch with a boy of my own age who was an avid fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Ships running the gauntlet of the U-boats to bring vital supplies across the Atlantic also carried his letters containing baseball magazines, newspaper cuttings, and even photographs he had taken himself at Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds. Before long I was the best informed 14-year-old on baseball in Britain. I was familiar with all the heroes of the day and their nicknames before they vanished to join the forces: Jolting Joe DiMaggio, the Yankee Clipper, Hammering Hank Greenberg; Stan the Man Musial; Ted Williams, the Splendid Splinter. I absorbed the jargon of the game with a speed and

ease that surprised me. If only I could have mastered physics and algebra with the same thoroughness.

But nothing spurred my enthusiasm more than watching a real live baseball game. The Americans certainly did it in style. There was a full military band, an informed, radio-style commentary over the loudspeakers and even popcorn and chewing gum dished out free. I was enthralled. Every now and then, as I sat there I'd close my eyes and imagine I was in Yankee Stadium. Maybe when I opened them again I'd see not the usual grimy factory chimneys but the skyscrapers of New York.

Almost all of the crowd at the game was totally bemused by what they saw. But there was at least one spectator who understood and appreciated it all. I listened with amused condescension to the uncomprehending remarks of those around me and read with even more disdain the report in the local paper. Looked at now nearly 50 years later I see it was actually quite an amusing piece.

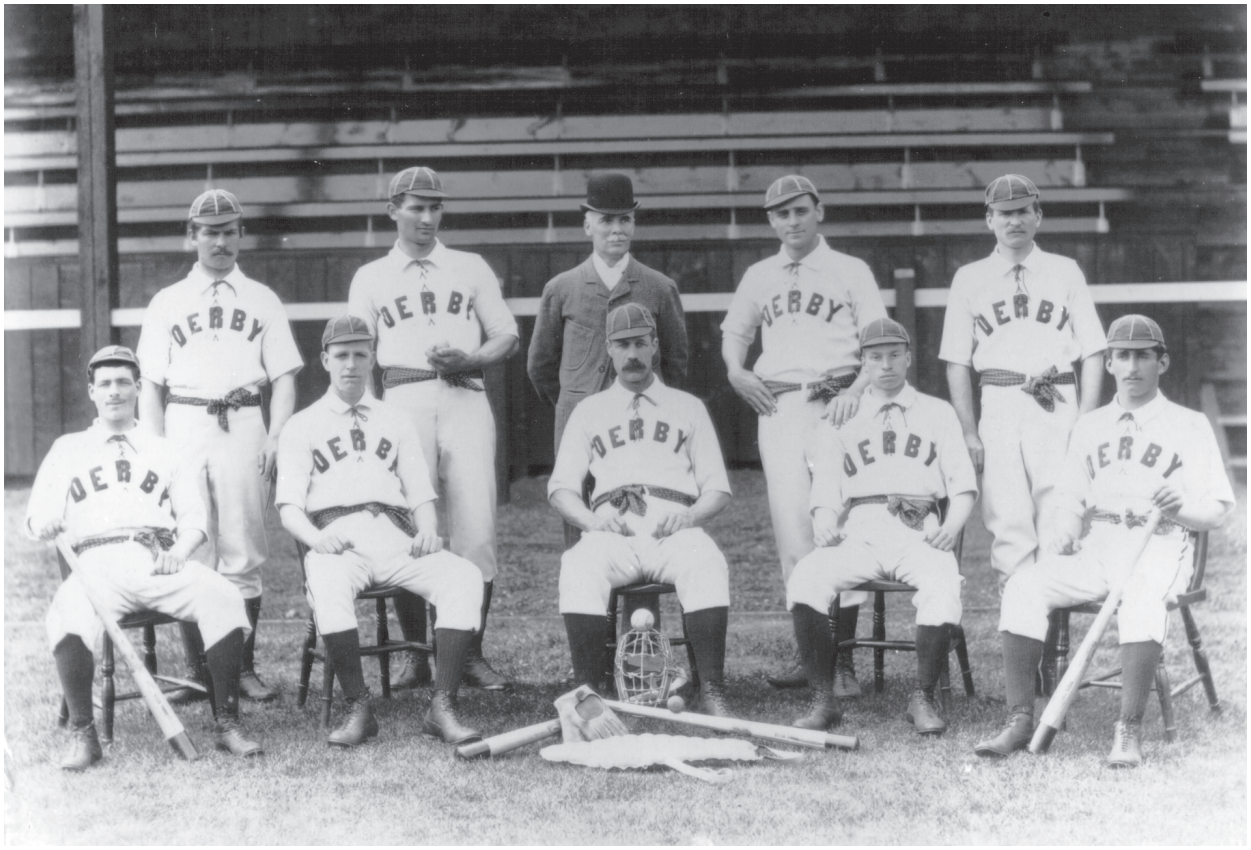
"No girls, I'm sorry (the paper's reporter wrote). You've got it wrong. When an American talks of squeeze play he's not thinking on the same lines as you but of an intricate situation on the baseball field.

"That was only one of the things I learned at the Baseball Ground on Saturday. Another was that all the players on the fielding side keep up a nonstop babel of shouting. It may be encouragement, it may be imprecation, it may be directed at the guy who happens to be listening. I don't know. What I do know is that it isn't cricket!

"I gathered from my Yankee guide, counsellor and friend that the Derby crowd, in its deplorable ignorance, applauded spectacular aerobatic catches when it should have taken these for granted but failed lamentably to show due appreciation of the squeeze play and another mystifying move known as making a double play."

Some things clearly have changed little over the years. The reporter (a woman by the way) notes that "the baseball umpire, that is the referee, is just as defective in vision and general mental capacity as in football." And after reporting that the game ended in a 3-3 tie, called after seven innings (why I never discovered), she writes: "Very sportingly, the commentator offered to have the players demonstrate any particular point in the game when the match was over. That, girls, should have given you the opening coyly to inquire about 'squeeze play'".

Whatever the girls got up to after the game, I made my way home filled with starry eyed satisfaction. Carefully folded in my pocket was the special souvenir programme. I have it still, creased and faded now but a reminder of that distant happy day. It hadn't been the Yankees or the Giants, just two scratch teams of American servicemen. It didn't happen in Yankee Stadium or the Polo Grounds, which all my dreams said it should. But it had been my first live baseball game and that was satisfaction enough.



Sir Francis Ley and his 1890 Derby Baseball Team

Starting from Home (or Back to Basics)

by Barry Winetrobe

I chose the title deliberately to indicate that this is my first attempt, however minor, at baseball research, and that this is a look at an aspect of the possible origins of baseball in this country. It arose from Mike Ross' article in the January 1995 Examiner, "1847 Sporting Life articles shed light", and seeks to firm up some of the references cited in that article. As such, this piece can hardly be regarded as a piece of original work, but it might assist fellow SABRites in their work.

What intrigued me about Mike's article initially was the reference to an order of Parliament during the reign of Edward III banning the playing of 'base' around the Palace of Westminster. I had just been working with the volumes of Parliamentary material of that period and was sure that they would contain the full, official version of the relevant order. The index to the Parliamentary Rolls records not one but 14 (!) different orders of this type during Edward III's reign. In these early days, Parliament did not meet on a regular 5-yearly cycle as we have nowadays. The King would summon a Parliament, which may have lasted only a number of days or weeks, as and when he needed money or other assistance from his subjects, so new Parliaments may have been summoned a number of times a year, and orders, such as the one in which we are interested, will have be issued anew each time.

As SABR is a research body, I will disturb the flow of my narrative to provide you with the full citation for those who may wish to look up these orders: Rotuli Parliamentorum pp64a (1331-2), 66a-b (1332), 68b (1332), 103a (1339), 107a (1339*), 112a (1340), 117b (1340), 126a (1341), 135a (1343), 146b (1344), 157a (1346), 164a (1347*), 235a (1350-1) and 236b (1351-2). All the orders are in Old French, which, with Latin, was the official language. The English translation of the order, taken from the first recorded instance in 1331-2, is as follows:

"Our Lord the King forbids on pain of imprisonment that any child or others should play in the area of the palace of Westminster, during the Parliament which is summoned there, at barrs or other games, nor at knocking people's hats off nor laying hands on them nor any other hindrance which would prevent each person from peacefully going about their business." All the orders cited use this phraseology, some with minor variations, except the two marked * above which do not have the "*a bares*" phrase in which we are interested. It is the "bares" which Mike's article cites as 'base'. The crucial question is "Does the Old French word 'bare' either mean 'base' in a baseball sense, or refer to some game which itself can be regarded as an ancestor of baseball?"

The entry for 'bares' in Robert Kelham's "A dictionary of the Norman or Old French language" (1779; Tabard Press, 1978) is "at barrs, a game so called." Not very helpful beyond confirmation that it is a game. So, if in doubt, go to the obvious source, the Oxford English Dictionary. Under 'bar' it has an entry for the plural 'bars': "*the game of 'prisoner's base' or 'chevy.' The players, after choosing sides, occupy two camps or enclosures, and any player leaving his enclosure is chased by one of the opposite side, and, if caught, made a prisoner. Still used in northern dialect*". It cites several examples back to c1400.

Dr Samuel Johnson's "Dictionary of the English Language", has an entry for 'base' in similar terms: "*An old rustick play, written by Skinner, bays; and in some counties called prison bars; in which some are pursuers, and others are prisoners, one party being opposed to another in the trial of swiftness. It is yet in use.*" [Todd's ed., 1827]. Johnson also cites several uses of the word, including the quotation from Shakespeare's Cymbeline cited by Mike in his article:

Posthumus: *"He, with two striplings, - lads more like to run The country base than to commit such slaughter, With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer Than those with preservation cas'd, or shame, Made good the passage; ...."* [Act V scene ii lines 19-23; editions vary]

For our purposes, the most interesting citation is the OED's reference to Strutt's Sports and pastimes, also cited in Mike's article. Joseph Strutt's "The sports and pastimes of the people of England" (1801) is a beautiful book with stunning illustrations, and it contains a lengthy description of 'base' or 'bars' or 'prisoner's bars' or, citing Johnson's Dictionary, 'bays'. Unfortunately there were no illustrations of the game that I could see. As this book may not be easily accessible to all SABRites, I will quote at length from Strutt [pp61-3]:

Base "*is a rustic game ... and as the success of this pastime depends upon the agility of the candidates and their skill in running, I think it may properly enough be introduced here. It was much practised in former times, and some vestiges of the game are still remaining in many parts of the kingdom.*" Strutt then says that the first mention he had found was the Parliamentary order in Edward III's time, and, as his text is virtually word for word that of the 1947 TSL article quoted by Mike, it is safe to assume that the TSL piece was based, at least in part on Strutt's book. Strutt also quotes the lines from Cymbeline, again in the form cited in the TSL rather than the version quoted above. Base was "*most assuredly played by the men, and especially in Cheshire and other adjoining counties, where formerly it seems to have been in high repute.*"

Strutt then explained how the game was played. "*The performance of this pastime requires two parties of equal number, each of them having a "base" or home, as it is usually called, to themselves at the distance of about twenty or thirty yards. The players then on either side taking hold of hands, extend themselves in length, and opposite to each other, as far as they conveniently can, always remembering that one of them must touch the base; when any of them quits the hand of his fellow and runs into the field, which is called giving the chase, he is immediately followed by one of his opponents; he again is followed by a second from the former side, and he by a second opponent; and so on alternately, until as many are out as choose to run, every one pursuing the man he first followed, and no other; and if he overtake him near enough to touch him, his party claims one towards their game*" [Strutt here has a footnote: *"It is to be observed, that every person on either side who touches another during the chase, claims one for his party, and when many are out, it frequently happens that many are*

touched."] *"and both return home. They then run forth again and again in like manner, until the number is completed that decides the victory; this number is optional, and I am told rarely exceeds twenty."*

He then recalled a game of base he saw "about thirty years back", i.e. c1770, "in the fields behind Montague House, ie the British Museum". This game was played by *"twelve gentlemen of Cheshire against twelve of Derbyshire, for a considerable sum of money, which afforded much entertainment to the spectators".* Strutt described the Essex variation of base *"with the addition of two prisons, which are stakes driven into the ground, parallel with the home boundary, and about thirty yards from them; and every person who is touched on either side in the chase, is sent to one or other of these prisons, where he must remain till the conclusion of the game, if not delivered previously by one of his associates, and this can only be accomplished by touching him, which is a difficult task, requiring the performance of the most skilful players, because the prison belonging to either party is always much nearer to the base of their opponents than to their own; and if the person sent to relieve his confederate be touched by an antagonist before he reaches him, he also becomes a prisoner, and stands in equal need of deliverance."* He concluded his short piece by noting that *"the addition of the prisons occasions a considerable degree of variety in the pastime, and is frequently productive of much pleasantry."*

Now, it is all too tempting when doing any form of historical research, especially that which seeks the origin of something, to 'make the history fit'. We can see in the 'prisons' a form of dugout; the London game Strutt saw between representatives of two Northern English counties for "a considerable sum of money" may resemble a mixture of barnstorming and the early days of professional baseball in the USA, and so on. Whatever the truth of these theories, it does seem that Mike's suggestion that 'barrs', 'base' or 'prisoner's bar' may be part of the origin of the running game in baseball is very possible. Of course running and 'tag' games must be as old as humanity itself, and there are no doubt many variants in every country, and we cannot pounce too eagerly on anything which happens to contain the word 'base' or something similar to it. Look at any good dictionary and you will see the many derivations of the word, most of which have nothing to do with the origins of baseball. I had a brief moment of excitement on a recent visit to Hampton Court Palace, which has a courtyard area called 'Base Court'. Unfortunately it simply means that it is the lower, secondary courtyard.

The idea that baseball is an amalgam of several games, i.e. running games and ball-and-stick games, seems very plausible. If 'barrs'/'base' is part of that origin, then at some point not only did the two aspects of running and ball-and-stick games combine, but so did the methods of scoring of each game. How these amalgamations took place, presumably a long slow process over centuries, may well be the answer to the question of the origins of baseball.

THE ANCIENT NATIONAL GAME OF STOOLBALL—A MATCH AT HORSHAM PARK.
From *The Graphic*, October 12th, 1878.

Footprints In The Snow

by Martin Hoerchner

There is nothing so elusive as time. There is nothing so irrevocably lost as that which is lost in time.

One day last winter we had a light snowfall. By the time I got home it was dark, so I switched on the outside light in the back of the house. The snow was fresh and untouched, except for a set of tracks across it. I could follow the route with my eye. It seems that one of the neighbourhood cats had jumped over the fence at a low point, had walked over to ponder one of the cement flower pots in the garden, then walked over to the clothes line, then walked back toward the fence, and jumped back over from whence it came.

I'm sure many neighbourhood cats have jumped into our garden, snooped around, and jumped out. Probably thousands of times a year. These are moments lost in time. But because of a fresh snowfall, one action was recorded. It was an incomplete record; only footprints. We don't know the colour of the animal. Or even if it was a cat; that was only an assumption. We don't know which way it was looking, or what moved it along that path. We only have the footprints.

Our search for the origins of baseball is like looking these footprints. We have evidence that this game, or a game with the same name, was played extensively in different parts of Britain in the 1700's - yet in that time period exactly four references to baseball have been found. Footprints in the snow. A group of Wessex children, as likely to be girls than boys, meet for a match on a breezy spring day in 1738; one team triumphs, and the moment is lost. The game is called baseball, but there is no record. A moment lost in time.

In 1700 Reverend Samuel Wilson of Maidstone, Kent, wrote a letter decrying the playing of sports on Sunday, and wrote down the earliest reference to "base ball" we have. In 1744 was first published "The Little Pretty Pocket Book" with the first illustration of the game. In 1798 Jane Austen wrote "Northanger Abbey", and mentioned base ball in the first few pages.

Another footprint dates from 1748. That year Lady Hervey wrote "The Prince's family is an example of innocent and cheerful amusements. All this summer they played abroad; and now, in the winter, in a large room, they divert themselves at base-ball, a play all who are, or have been, schoolboys, are well acquainted with. The ladies, as well as the gentlemen, join in this amusement." This Prince was none other than Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was one of the few heirs to the throne to predecease the monarch; he was the son of George II and father of George III. It says that "all who are, or have been, schoolboys, are well-acquainted" with baseball. But baseball in a large room? This was 217 years before the Astrodome. What kind of a sport was this? There are much more questions than answers.

I've always been intrigued about the origins and parentage of the game we know as baseball. I call it the "Mists of Time" period of baseball history. Pitifully little currently exists on the subject. This makes it a bit hard to know where to start. We came to the conclusion that it would at least be interesting to look at some seminal texts, including the 18th century references, and see what they might offer to the researcher trying to trace the origins and parentage of the game of baseball.

Living within shouting distance of London, I always assumed that the British Library would be ideal place to start in this search. Henderson may have had access to many texts, but he wasn't over here. But for some reason I had always assumed that the British Library was only open on weekdays. A turning point for my enthusiasm for breaking this mystery, was when I actually made a phone call and found out it was open on Saturday! I also found out that the Newspaper Library at Colindale was also open on Saturday! Boy did I feel stupid! That proves what they say about assuming things, that "ass out of you and me" joke.

One evening Mike Ross and I, fuelled by fine single malt whiskey and Havana cigars, came up with the idea of finally visiting the British Library, and, as a start, trying to find certain seminal texts oft quoted in baseball cosmogony. I didn't take us long to come up with a search list - The Little Pretty Pocket Book of 1744, the first illustration of the game of baseball. Joseph Strutt's 1801 "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England". William Clarke's "The Boy's Own Book "of 1829, the first listing of the rules of rounders - the rules that were transported intact to the American 1836 volume "Book of Sports", except that the name of the game was changed to baseball.

We made the visit on Pearl Harbor Day - I don't know if this was significant. I met Mike in the middle of Russell Square, not far from where a "grand match of base" was played in 1770 behind Montague House, between gentlemen of Cheshire and Derbyshire. I knew the area, having worked there years ago, and pointed out where the match would have been played. The game was recorded, and so we have more footprints in the snow. Both Strutt and Chadwick mention it. Mike had phoned in advanced to request our books, so it was all arranged in advance. We completed the applications and they issued a card good until 2001 - by that time Hal would supposedly be available to help us with our searches.

Then we passed through security and entered into the Main Reading Room. This was an awe-inspiring moment. This place is august, and no other word suffices. The huge circular room is surrounded by stacks going up towards the ceiling, rising to a dome. Hushed lighting, with reading stations fanning out from a central area, like petals on a daisy.

The solemnity of the wisdom of the ages. This was where Karl Marx researched Das Kapital. It was published three years after the first codified rules of baseball, and it started revolutions, just like baseball. I'm not usually a traditionalist, but the new place won't be the same.

Then we found a place to sit, read, and take notes. I immediately spotted my favourite research tool - computers! At that point I knew I would be home free. While Mike went off to get the books he had ordered, I jumped on one of the computers, entered "baseball" into the search criteria, and off I went. I bombed around, going off on tangents and following threads, like a real net surfer. Unlike the net, though, you could only search titles, authors, and subjects, and not the texts. I dreamt of a time in the future when all the books in the

library would be digitized, and searches could be done throughout all texts. You'd really need Hal for that. I uncovered all sorts of gems, with some tempting misses. An 1878 volume entitled "Base-ball and Rounders" by Captain Rawdon Crawley (pseud.) was "permanently mislayed". A book with the same title by Robert Henderson, published in 1939, was destroyed during the war. Most importantly, an 1838 version of Joseph Strutt's "Sports of Pastimes of the People of England" could not be found. I just kept filling out slip after slip - I was on a roll. Mike came back with the books, including a huge volume of the 1801 Strutt, and an old book in Russian. This wasn't evidence of the Russian claim to inventing *beizbol*, but merely an error by the librarian.

We had a few dead ends. We got an 1823 edition of Suffolk Words, which was supposed to mention regional usages of the word "baseball" in Britain. However, the book had more than 300 pages, no index, and just a passing reference to the word. We couldn't find it, and it would have taken all day to look. Another book, The Club: A dialogue between father and son by Puckle, written 1834, was supposed to be about baseball. We couldn't find any reference to baseball in it. We coined a word, "to be puckled", meaning "to get a bum steer". In fairness, the edition was a different one than the reference we were given, so maybe it changed.

We were faced with a multiplicity of volumes, more than we could ever digest in an afternoon. Then, to my joy, I found that you could *photocopy* these books! If the book wasn't too old or rare, you could do it yourself, and it wasn't exhorbitant. So I tucked Strutt et al under my arm and went off to copy relevant pages. So I could digest these texts in unhurried peace, or on the tube during rush hour.

I have always been intrigued with the past. At the age of 16 I was going through charity shops looking for old 78 rpm records that people threw out. I'm not too sentimental, and I don't believe the past was necessarily better than the present. It's just *unobtainable*. It's the fourth dimension. You can go to Egypt, you can go to Spain, but you can never go to yesterday or tomorrow. By the time you get to tomorrow, it's today. I've never liked being told what I can and can't do. That which you can never have intrigues me. So I make it a goal to break open this mystery, dispersing the mists of time, and discovering how and where, and most importantly why, baseball suceeded or failed to flourish and grow, and the social, geographic, ethnic, and political factors that influenced it. It's a deep and intense story, and we've only just begun.

I write extensively about what we discovered and what we didn't elsewhere in this issue. I only want to end this article with a call to hit the stacks yourself. It was surprisingly easy, and these books are full of interesting reading. Even if you don't find references to baseball, this stuff is fascinating, like a time capsule dug from the earth after two centuries. The last time I was in California, I searched the 1931 Sacramento newspapers for my my great-great-grandfather's obiturary. I found it. On the same day there was an advertisement for the first public display of television in the city, though the ad admits it is "still in its infant stage". Amazing stuff. And it's waiting for you.

"Ready for Stoolball", 1861. Note the tall target, obscured by movement during the long exposure.

A Brief History of Baseball Prehistory

by Martin Hoerchner

Baseball grew to maturity unself-consciously in New York City in the 1840's. The city gentlemen who came together to play on weekends were not overly concerned with the origins of the game that they so enthusiastically embraced. It was only a variation of a family of games that all had known since childhood. A bit of baseball history ends, not begins, with the Knickerbockers. Before baseball became a codified game, it existed in numerous variations under a myriad of names, with only passing mentions by writers of the age. Indeed, in this prehistoric era, the references to baseball and rounders and town ball and one old cat and many other related games are extremely rare. So we peer into the past "through a glass darkly".

Baseball grew from the Knickerbockers at an amazing rate. True, in the beginning it was largely regional, being popular in the Northeast. But the Northeast was also the most populous, important, and advanced region of the country, and everything that originated there was bound to spread. Just as baseball spread from New York City to the rest of the Northeast, it spread from the Northeast to the rest of the country. Events such as the Civil War and the California Gold Rush hastened the inevitable.

This was an aggressive, optimistic, and forward-looking young country, and retrospection was not the rule of the day. Bright minds were more concerned with "what can we do with this game?" rather than "where did this game come from?".

Along with the rapid growth in baseball came the beginnings of baseball writing. It seemed that people couldn't get enough of baseball; when the game was over, they wanted to read about it later. Henry Chadwick soon emerged as the premier sports writer. Arriving in this country in 1850 at the age of 13, he started out as a cricket fanatic. But in 1856 he witnessed a game of baseball at Elysian Fields, and was so moved that he adopted the new country's new sport and became its prime champion in the press. He was influential for a half century. He invented the box score and most of baseball's statistics, and was known during his lifetime as "The Father of the Game". More accurately, I would call him the "Father of Baseball Writing and Statistics".

Henry Chadwick was born in Britain. He didn't have to research the origins of baseball; he knew them. He immediately recognised the similarities between baseball and rounders, a game that he played as a child. He mentioned it in his writings, often commenting on the "ancient game" of baseball, and discussing its English roots. Here was the most respected baseball writer of all time, telling them they were playing game of British origin! This did not set well with many people.

Including one John Montgomery Ward. Most of us remember Monte Ward as the founder of the first baseball players' union and the first player to fight against the reserve clause. In 1888 he wrote a book called "Baseball - How to Become a Player". In his "Introduction: Origin and History", he writes about the history of ball games, leading up to the codification of baseball in 1845. He sketches the history of games from ancient Greece to Old England, quoting scholars such as Joseph Strutt. He then shows his pique with those that claimed baseball is descended from rounders. He wrote "There were ... persons who believed that everything good and beautiful in the world must be of English origin". His ire evident, he then specifies Chadwick in all but name as "the main proponent of the rounders theory", and says other writers were parroting his words without making an investigation.

Ward supports his theory that baseball is not descended from rounders by mentioning 18th-century English references to baseball, including Jane Austen, and said there were no references to rounders anywhere near as old. [Patrick Carroll made this same point in Examiner 5]. But then he paints himself into a corner. So as not to give credit to the English for baseball itself, he also said that this game must have been quite different from baseball as we know it. He then mentions old American ball games that could have developed into baseball, especially one old cat. But his credibility suffers when he declares the origin of baseball is "the fruit of the inventive genius of the American boy". Well-researched as it is, Ward's account fails to bridge all the gaps, and it reads as if written by someone who had made his mind up before thoroughly examining the facts.

I have no doubt that most of the American jingoistic attitudes about the origins of baseball were a reaction to Chadwick's frequent mention of baseball as a derivation of rounders.

In 1888 Monte Ward went with Albert Spalding and a group of ballplayers representing two Major League teams, and took a round-the-world tour to bring baseball (and presumably Spalding's sporting goods) to the unconverted nations of the world. When they played a game by the Pyramids, one of the players wrote about the locals "They took more interest in the game than the average Englishman, and did not once refer to it as 'the old game of Rounders, you know' ". And they hadn't even been to England yet! Evidently the attitude that so annoyed this player was fostered by the English people he had met in America.

When the tour finally returned to New York there was a grand formal banquet served at Delmonico's, attended by dignitaries such as Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the former National League president, Abraham Mills. Mills addressed the group, and said that "patriotism and research" [in that order, presumably - ed.] had shown that baseball was a purely American invention. Guests and players alike pounded the table and chanted "No rounders! No rounders!". If Henry Chadwick had been present, he must have run for cover.

In 1905 Al Spalding decided to put the last nail in the rounders coffin by commissioning a group to finally discover the origins of baseball. How much research they actually did is questionable, but their partiality was unquestionable: they were there to prove baseball American. They could not, however, unearth solid facts, and were near their deadline with just the insistence that baseball was an American invention. Then, like a gift from God, came a letter from Abner Graves, an elderly resident of Cooperstown, New York. He wrote of playing baseball with Abner

Doubleday in 1839, and how Doubleday made improvements to town ball and turned it into baseball. Doubleday was a general in the Civil War and a real American hero. This was what they'd been waiting for. The Spalding Commission took this as gospel without investigation, even though the account was full of holes. As if this wasn't enough, they added embellishments such as Doubleday's eliminating soaking, and his sketching the diagram of the field on a piece of paper. Henry Chadwick, ever more venerable by now, was allowed to add his dissenting opinion to the end of the report, restating his claim that baseball was a descendant of rounders. But it didn't do any good. The patriots had the certification they had always wanted.

And thus was sunk the ship of baseball prehistory. The last bit of it disappeared under the waters, and the waves closed over it. Within minutes it was never apparent that there was ever anything there.

The sea remained sealed over it for thirty years. Doubleday was Baseball's Founder, and that was that. 1939 was seen as the centennial of baseball, and as the year approached, Baseball made preparations to erect a shrine to itself in Cooperstown.

The man who finally debunked the Doubleday myth was Robert W. Henderson. He was head librarian at the New York Racket Club, but his main area of interest was baseball. He proved baseball was once the same game as rounders by showing two texts side by side, one in 1829 in England describing rounders (The Boy's Own Book), and another a few years later in America describing baseball (The Book of Sports). The rules are exactly the same. He also showed the utter implausibility of the Cooperstown myth by showing the contradictions of the Graves story. His argument was so compelling that even the traditionalists begin to see the truth of it. By this time, a half-century after Ward, it is possible that America was starting to feel a bit more secure about itself, and could accept foreign influence in its national pastime.

His book, "Baseball and Rounders" was published in 1939, the year the Hall of Fame opened in Cooperstown. It must have rained heavily on their parade. Henderson kept up his research and in 1947 published "Bat, Ball and Bishop - A History of Ball Games". It is a sweeping genealogy of ball games, starting with ancient Egypt, where they were connected with religious ceremonies. They were picked up by the Muslims after they conquered that land, and then entered Europe through Moorish Spain. From there the games moved into France, and were particularly connected with church rites during the Easter season (hence the "Bishop" part of the book's title). From there they moved into Britain. He describes the medieval French game of *la soule*, and the British game of stoolball, first mentioned in 1330, which sprang from la soule and which he says is the parent of both cricket and baseball. Like Ward, he quotes Joseph Strutt, but comes up with a different conclusion.

This book is the seminal work in the prehistory and origins of baseball; it is also currently out of print. Today the name Henderson is fairly obscure. But he is the father of baseball prehistory. We really haven't uncovered much beyond Henderson. Later scholarly works such as Seymour's "The Early Years" only paraphrased him.

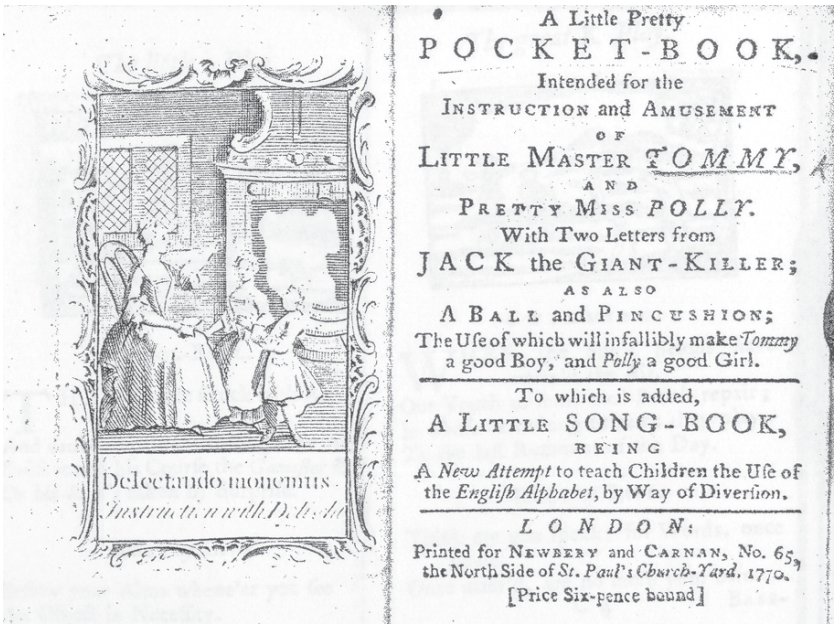
We of SABR(UK) are in a unique position. We're close to the source of baseball parentage, unlike our American cohorts. And we care to know, because we're baseball fanatics, unlike our British neighbours. We are sitting in the catbird seat, with the opportunities to make some real discoveries. And that's an exciting prospect.

Kaz Sayama plays stoolball in Plimoth Plantation, Massachusetts

Dispersing the Mists of Time

by Martin Hoerchner

We didn't have a detailed plan of action when we went to the British Museum. It's hard to, when researching the origins and parentage of baseball - the "prehistory" of baseball in Britain. You just don't know where to start. I did however, have the name of a few early references to either baseball or related games. The first illustration of a game named "base ball" occurred in the "Little Pretty Pocket Book", first published in 1744. The volume we found was from 1770. A key volume was the encyclopedic listing of games of the era, "The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England" by Joseph Strutt, published in 1801. There was "The Boy's Own Book", first published in 1828. The first reference to rounders was the 1829 edition; we had the 1849 edition. It was this book that, when transported across the Atlantic, printed the same rules for "baseball" as it did for "rounders". We had some other references, but they all came to nought.


A Little Pretty
POCKET-BOOK,
Intended for the
INSTRUCTION and AMUSEMENT
OF
LITTLE MASTER TOMMY,
AND
PRETTY MISS POLLY.
With Two Letters from
JACK the GIANT-KILLER;
AS ALSO
A BALL and PINCUSHION;
The Uſe of which will infallibly make *Tommy* a good Boy, and *Polly* a good Girl.
To which is added,
A LITTLE SONG-BOOK,
BEING
A *New Attempt* to teach Children the Uſe of the *Engliſh Alphabet*, by Way of Diverſion.
LONDON:
Printed for NEWBERY and CARNAN, No. 65, the North Side of *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1770.
[Price Six-pence bound]
Delectando monemus

Title page of the Little Pretty Pocket Book, 1770 edition.

This search was not as straightforward as you might think. For instance, while the Little Pretty Pocket Book (1744), a small children's book, had a text and illustration of baseball, Strutt's book (1801), a scholarly compendium of the games and other pastimes engaged in by the people of England, mentions neither baseball or rounders. And it was Strutt's book that most interested me. It was the one of the three that was written for adults, and it listed more games than the others. I decided, not only to look for references to rounders or baseball, but also to look for elements of baseball in the other games that were listed. In this I was not disappointed.

Having lived in Britain for more than a decade, I have become aware of an angle that can (and must) be read into works such as Strutt's, an angle that might get past even a solid researcher as Robert Henderson, because he had never lived here. And that is the pervasive effects of the British class system on every aspect of life. Even writing from 1997, I find it stifling. I can't imagine what it was like two centuries ago. It has been said that the Americans are taught to do the best they can, while the British are taught to follow the rules. Whether this is true or not in that exact wording, the principle becomes a key factor in the success or failure among particular sports, and more importantly, the success or failure among which classes.

There is another effect the class system would have on the development of a sport. That is how the rules develop under an authoritarian system, where playing by the rules is all-important, in comparison to how they develop under a system where each team member is encouraged to do their best to win the game. The examples are multitude of 19th-century baseball players trying to break or bend the rules to get an advantage; in fact that is *the* story of the development of baseball. Players and later managers such as John McGraw would stay up late reading the rulebook, finding loopholes. Some of these loopholes were soon closed up, such as King Kelly's jumping into a game to catch a fly ball. But some of them permanently changed the game, such as the stolen base. In the 1850's a runner caused amusement when he ran from first to second base between pitches. When challenged by the umpire, he correctly pointed out that there was no rule against it. And there still isn't. This type of behaviour would be seriously frowned upon over here. Christy Mathewson, in a gently mocking tone, writes in his book "Pitching in a Pinch" (which has a whole chapter on cheating) "'You have such jolly funny morals in this country', declared an Englishman I once met. 'You steal and rob in baseball and yet you call it fair. Now in cricket we give our opponents every advantage, don't you know, and after the game we are all jolly good fellows at tea together'".

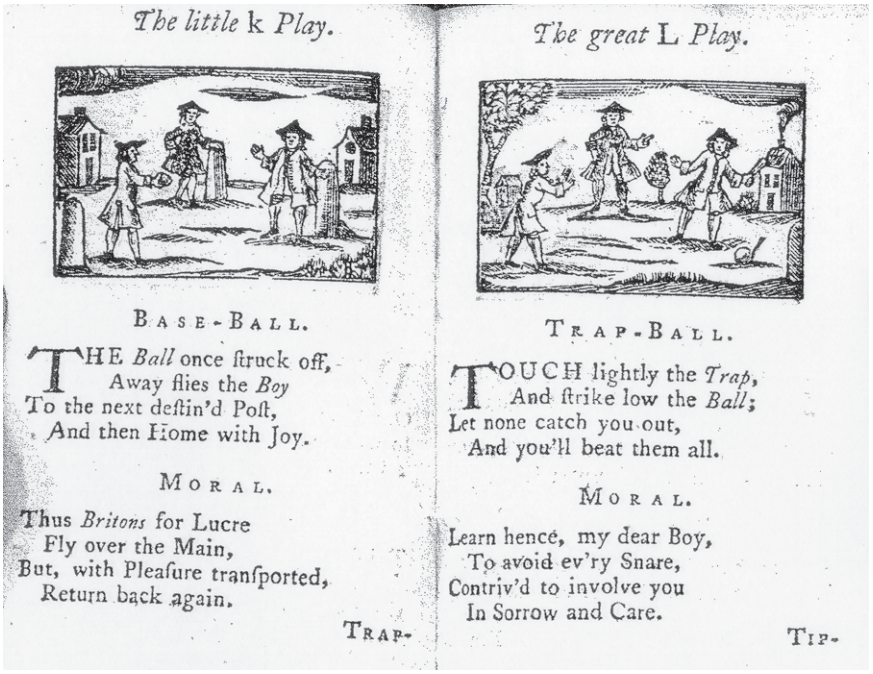
Overt references to class in Strutt are constant. Under "running", he writes "In the middle ages, foot-racing was considered as an essential part of a young man's education, especially if he was the son of a man of rank". Later he writes "Two centuries back running was thought to be an exercise by no means derogatory to the rank of nobility". Under wrestling, he writes "The art of wrestling, which in the present day is chiefly confined to the lower classes of people, was however highly esteemed by the ancients". Yet under tennis he writes "We have undoubted authority to prove that Henry the Seventh was a tennis-player", surely the highest stamp of approval you can give to a sport, and mentions his son, the future Henry VIII, who was "much at-

tracted to this diversion". Under "hurling" he writes "The matches are usually made by gentlemen". The game of "foot-ball" receives short shrift "It was formerly much in vogue among the common people of England, though of late years it seems to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practiced." Obviously that trend did not last. Later on he writes of the possible origins of football violence, saying "The abilities of the performers are best displayed in attacking and defending the goals: when the exercise becomes exceeding violent, the players kick each other's shins without the least ceremony, and some of them are overthrown at the hazard of their limbs." Strutt names golf as the oldest of all bat and ball games. About it he says "It should seem that golf was a fashionable game among the nobility at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and it was one of the exercises which prince Henry, eldest son to James the Fifth, occasionally amused himself". Of pall-mall he writes "The game of mall was a fashionable amusement in the reign of King Charles the Second, and the walk in Saint James's Park, now called the Mall, received its name from having been appropriated to the purpose of playing at mall, where Charles himself and his courtiers frequently exercised themselves in the practice of this pastime." But throughout this period, the quintessential British game was cricket, another bat and ball game which is obviously but distantly related to baseball. Strutt writes "Cricket of late years is become exceedingly fashionable, being much countenanced by the nobility and gentlemen of fortune."

Even my understanding of Strutt changed from reading to reading. For instance, he uses the term "rustic" often. Viewed from American eyes, the word denotes a countrified, pastoral environment. Yet I wonder whether the word has more of a "peasant" connotation in Strutt's time. Backward, in a word. I would be very surprised if it didn't. Among the games listed as "rustic" are foot-ball. Strutt writes "The rustic boys made use of a blown bladder without the covering of leather by way of foot-ball." About trap ball, which shares many elements of baseball, is written "Trap-ball, when compared with cricket, is but a childish pastime; but I have seen it played by the rustics in Essex". And essentially, the game of "base" is a "rustic" game. "There is a rustic game called *base* or *bars*, and in some places *prisoner's bars*".

Strutt fascinated me, yet there are more questions. I would like to know why he didn't mention baseball or rounders. Maybe the 1838 edition does, but we haven't been able to locate. He mentions so many obscure games of the time, why not baseball or rounders? But he does mention the game of *base,* which is often quoted as a precursor to baseball, or even the same game. It is listed, not under ball games, but under running games. He states that it was "much practiced in former times", and notes the references to base in Shakespeare and in the Edward III edict. He explains the rules this way: "The performance of this pastime requires two parties of equal number, each of them having a base or home, as it is usually called, to themselves, at the distance of about twenty or thirty yards. The players then on either side taking hold of hands, extend themselves in length, and opposite to each other, as far as they conveniently can, always remembering that one of them must touch the base". If you can picture the opening position, there are two bases, one for each team. The team members join hands and stretch out in parallel lines to full length, with each team member facing his opposite, and the one at the end touching the base. Strutt continues: "When any one of them quits the hand of his fellow and runs into the field, which is called giving the chase, he is immediately followed by one of his opponents; he again is followed by a second from the former side, and he by a second opponent; and so on alternately, until as many are out as choose to run, every one pursuing the man he first followed, and no other; and if her overtake him near enough to touch him, his party claims one toward their game, and both return home."

Now this doesn't sound like baseball; it sounds more like an extended game of tag. I'm not sure if its connection to baseball is at most an unlucky coincidence of name. Yet many writers talk of base as if it is baseball. Harold Seymour, in his epochal volume "Baseball: The Early Years" writes "Possibly the first record of an American baseball game is that recorded in the journal of George Ewing, a Revolutionary soldier, who tells of playing a game of 'base,' April 7, 1778, at Valley Forge." He might have been following Robert Henderson, who in his even more epochal "Bat, Ball and Bishop: A History of Ball Games"



Illustrations of base-ball *and* trap-ball, *from "The Little Pretty Pocket Book", 1770 edition.*

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The Nineteenth Century Debate - Spalding vs. Chadwick

by Martin Hoerchner

In the last Examiner I wrote an article called "A History of Baseball Prehistory". I feel now that the issue is a bit more polarised than had originally occurred to me. In the 19th century, if you were interested in the origins of the game of baseball, you either had to believe Henry Chadwick, or you had to believe Albert Spalding.

Soon after baseball began in the U.S. as an organised sport, the first baseball writer commented on the origins of baseball. He was Henry Chadwick, and he was born in England. He emigrated when he was 13 years old, so he remembered his childhood games. In 1856, when he was 19 years old, he wholeheartedly embraced the new American game of baseball.

Chadwick also recognised similarities between baseball and a sport he played as a schoolboy, namely *rounders*. In Britain, rounders is a game played mainly by children, boy and girls, with a bat like a policeman's night stick and a ball more the size of a tennis ball than a baseball. But it also has bases (actually posts, like in the Pretty Little Pocket Book), and batters hit the ball and then run the bases. Because baseball resembles rounders, Chadwick immediately drew the conclusion that baseball was descended from rounders. Chadwick was soon the most popular and respected baseball writer of the nineteenth century. So in his writings he often mentioned "the ancient history of baseball", and he promulgated extensively the baseball-from-rounders theory.

I'm not sure what research Chadwick really did, aside from noting the similarities between rounders and baseball. He quoted from Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, from 1801. This book mentions *base*, but neither *baseball* or *rounders*.

I can't help thinking about another analogy. There is a British sport called netball. It is played by schoolgirls, i.e. from 12-16 years old. It is very similar to the U.S. sport of basketball, with these exceptions: the ball is smaller, there is no dribbling, only passing, there is no backboard, the net is lower and smaller. It is obviously a more basic game than basketball.

Well, Britain has more history than America, and netball is a more primitive game than basketball, and netball is a girls' game and US basketball is an adult professional sport, so US basketball is descended from UK netball, right? Well, not really. Netball is derived from basketball. Basketball was an invented sport whose origins can be traced specifically to Dr. James Naismith, a Canadian working at the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts. He invented basketball in 1891 in response to the need for a game involving more skill than strength, and one that could be played indoors in a small space. The first game was played with a soccer ball and two peach baskets. If only the beginnings of baseball could be traced so exactly! But baseball wasn't invented; it developed. Slowly and over decades, if not centuries.

Chadwick immediately saw the similarities between rounders and baseball, just like he would have seen the similarities between netball and basketball. He assumed that the American game was descended from the British game because of those similarities. But he was never able to prove it.

This of course did not sit well with the American press and public; evidently Chadwick never let the matter lie dormant. The American backlash was strong, led by Albert Spalding (the first baseball magnate) at first, and later supported by other lights such as John Montgomery Ward. Ward sounds a bit silly when he writes that baseball "just growed". But is it really that far off the mark?

The 19th century debate about the origins of baseball boiled down to Chadwick vs. Spalding. A.G. Spalding had the final say for thirty years. He got A.G. Mills, the President of the National League, to chair a commission to support his viewpoint, and the "Mills Commission Report" was accepted as gospel until Robert W. Henderson.

While Henderson's scholarship is nearly immaculate, his conclusions sometime require a leap of faith. He is extremely successful in debunking the Mills Report, the Doubleday story. It was fairly easy to do, because the evidence is so flimsy, but no one had ever thought of it before. It seems to me that, once he knocked down Spalding, all Henderson had left was Chadwick. He was caught in the 19th century debate instead of starting his own. He must have figured that because Spalding was so far wrong, Chadwick must be right. When Henderson discredited Spalding, he basically adopted the Chadwick's "baseball as rounders" story. He also felt the need to put Alexander Cartwright in Abner Doubleday's place as baseball's founder, even though he admits it is arbitary.

Henderson will always be remembered for debunking Spalding, but he muddied the waters by swallowing Chadwick hook, line, and sinker. Chadwick had a lot of insight and information, but I've never seen how he supported his "baseball from rounders" theory. He may have noted similarities, but does that mean one is descended from the other? Henderson found the Pretty Little Pocket Book picture, and also the almost exact match between the English *Boy's Own Book* (1829) description of rounders and the American *Book of Sports* (1837) description of base-ball. The leap of faith consists of accepting this as evidence that baseball descended from rounders.

And while Alexander Cartwright is probably baseball's first organiser, his part in the formulation of baseball's rules is questionable at best. Is there something about the psyche, or maybe the American psyche, that needs an Abner Doubleday, an Alexander Cartwright, instead of accepting that baseball "just growed"?

I have said before that Henderson is the father of baseball prehistory. But we need to move on. If we see anything more clearly in the intervening years, is that it's not as simple as Spalding vs. Chadwick, or Doubleday vs. Cartwright. Just as we needed to break the shackles of Spalding, we need to break the shackles of Henderson. We need to look at the origins and ancestry of baseball from an unprejudiced viewpoint, search for hard facts and not draw conclusions without them.

19th Century Baseball Tours Visit England

by Patrick Morley

The first serious attempt to interest the English in baseball came in 1874. By that time the game in the United States had become organised on a serious business footing and it was obviously felt that expanding baseball abroad would open up new markets. Britain was the obvious target: the game had originated there in some form; the two countries were closely linked by a common language and by a shared heritage; and the British Empire was a potentially vast market waiting to be exploited.

Here is how the illustrated magazine *The Graphic* reported on that first tour in its issue of August 15, 1874 under the heading "The American Baseball Players":

"The game of base-ball which during the last ten years has grown so rapidly in favour on the other side of the Atlantic, that it is now regarded by our American cousins as their national pastime, appears to an English spectator very much like the simple game of rounders with which he was familiar in his youth. The gentlemen who have come over to teach us the game belong to two of the crack clubs of the United States, the Philadelphia Athletic and the Boston Red Stockings, the latter being the champion club of America and the former, ex-champions."

The *Graphic* then goes on to give a resumé of how the game was then played, noting that "the pitcher...must pitch or bowl high or low according to the desire of his opponent and always underhand."

The report goes on: "The innings are got over with great rapidity, three or four players being put out in perhaps as many minutes. There is scope for much agility, and as no gloves are worn the 'catcher' requires to be tolerably hard handed as well as extremely alert. The usual game is nine innings a side but in the first contest at Liverpool the playing was so close that at the end of the eighteen innings the scores stood alike and a final bout had to be played to decide the game, which was won by the Philadelphians by three runs, the finish being very exciting."

The paper goes on to report that the game took place at the Liverpool Cricket Ground at Edge Hill "and there was a good attendance of spectators." It adds that the Americans also played at Manchester and in London "and they intend staying with us for some time, playing matches in various parts of the United Kingdom."

That visit to Liverpool was part of a series of exhibition games played on the cricket grounds throughout the country by arrangement with the Marleybone Cricket Club. But whatever hopes the organisers of the tour may have had of getting the English to take up the game were clearly not fulfilled.

Fourteen years later, another baseball tour was organised, and A.G. Spalding, a baseball star in his own right and later head of the major sporting goods firm which bears his name, was the promoter and tour manager. This time it was a world tour and games were played in the Sandwich Islands (as Hawaii was then called), Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Italy and France. The players reached England in March 1889, and this is how the *Illustrated London News* reported the games played in London:

"The visit to England of two fine teams of good performers in this favourite American pastime has attracted much notice...The opening match between Chicago and the All American teams was played on Tuesday March 12 at Kennington Oval...Soon after the play began, the Prince of Wales arrived and the game being stopped by the players, congregating together, cheered his Royal Highness very heartily. They display wonderful agility in running from one base to the other, whilst they are brilliant catchers and return the ball with extraordinary smartness."

The paper noted that the slippery state of the ground hindered the players but Chicago eventually proved successful winning 7-4. The next match was at Lord's where this time the All Americans won 7-6. They were also victorious in the third London game, played at the Crystal Palace, the score being 5-3.

The Prince of Wales was asked by a newspaper reporter what he thought of the game he attended. He asked for the reporter's notebook (where is that treasure now, one wonders) and in it he wrote the following "The Prince of Wales has witnessed the game of Base Ball with great interest and though he considers it an excellent game he considers cricket as superior."

So too it seems did most of the other English spectators. One of them was no less a cricketing legend than Dr.W.G. Grace himself, who met the teams and no doublt compared the two summer sports with them. Sadly, there is no record of his views on baseball.

For the record, the *Illustrated London News* recorded the names of the touring sides, some of them familiar to anyone with a nodding acquaintance of 19th century baseball:

From Chicago, Messrs A.C. Anson, T.P. Daly, M. Baldwin, J. Ryan, F.N. Pfeffer, T. Burns, M. Sullivan, J.K. Tener and R. Pettitt. The All Americans, drawn from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Washington, Detroit, and Indianapolis: Messrs J.M. Ward, W. Earle, T. Healey, F.H. Carroll, J. Manning, G.A. Wood, J.G. Fogarty, E. Hanlon, and T.L. Brown.

A bare eighteen players, it will be noted. One wonders what happened in the event of injury, especially as they had been touring for several months. Maybe they were a tougher lot than the baseball players of today.

The Spalding world tour produced more positive results than the earlier one. In the following year, capitalising on the public interest which had been aroused, a professional English baseball league was set up.

Baseball and Cricket - Cross Currents

by Allen Synge

Failure of a mission

In the year 1859, rather like General Howe's redcoats nearly a century earlier, a party of 'all-star' English professionals set out to retain America - in this instance for Cricket.

The mission can be adjudged a failure, largely on account of a certain misplaced commercialism. The players wanted the best of both worlds. They were anxious not to lose their English summertime salaries. At the same time they were keen to avail themselves of the handsome £50 per man offered by the American sponsors. As a result, the tour was undertaken in the late Fall when the side would be bound to face adverse weather conditions. Indeed, the tour concluded with the notorious 'Frosty Match' played at Rochester, NY, on October 21st, 24th, and 25th between Eleven of England and Twenty-two of the United States and Canada. The home side was wrecked by the round-arm bowling of John Wisden (of the Cricket Almanack). But dismissal appeared to come as relief to the half frozen batsmen. 'Shiver my timbers, I'm out!' was the relieved cry as they made a dash for the warmth of the pavilion. The home side was beaten, early on the third day, by an innings and 70 runs, but in fact, it was Cricket that was defeated on the fields of Rochester. Lillywhite tells us:

'The remainder of the day was spent in a match at base-ball, which was got up to lessen the severe loss of the promoters of the cricket match.

'According to good judges, the English cricketers played remarkably well, and (wicket keeper) Lockyer's playing behind the bat could not have been surpassed.'

The Cricket Field, U.S. edition

In fact, Cricket was reasonably well established in the US at the time of Lillywhite's tour. As it happens, I have a copy of the American edition of the classic manual, The Cricket Field by James Pycroft published in Boston in the same year. You wouldn't find Simon Schuster, for example, bringing out Mike Atherton's hints on batting these days! The book's original owner, a Mr Charles Jackson of the Chelsea (Mass) Cricket Club, records in his own hand a busy cricket season with challenges from Bunker Hill and most of the other Boston suburbs. Despite all this heartening activity, you get the impression that the book's publishers may just have sensed that they were backing the wrong horse; they are certainly in the process of changing horses in mid-stream, or perhaps, like Lillywhite's promoters, are looking to Baseball to recoup their expenses. The back of volume is an extensive, and lavishly illustrated advertisement for the Base Ball Player's Pocket Companion with vital 'directions for playing the Massachusetts Game and the New York Game' which, of course, had nothing to do with the St John's Wood Game.

In other words, we may be looking at a turning point when Cricket would begin to give ground (and even grounds) to Baseball in America, a process which we are told the Civil War would hasten and nearly complete. With 'nearly' all America won for Baseball - I will deal with the exception in due course - the time would have seemed right for the conquest of England. Why didn't England yield?

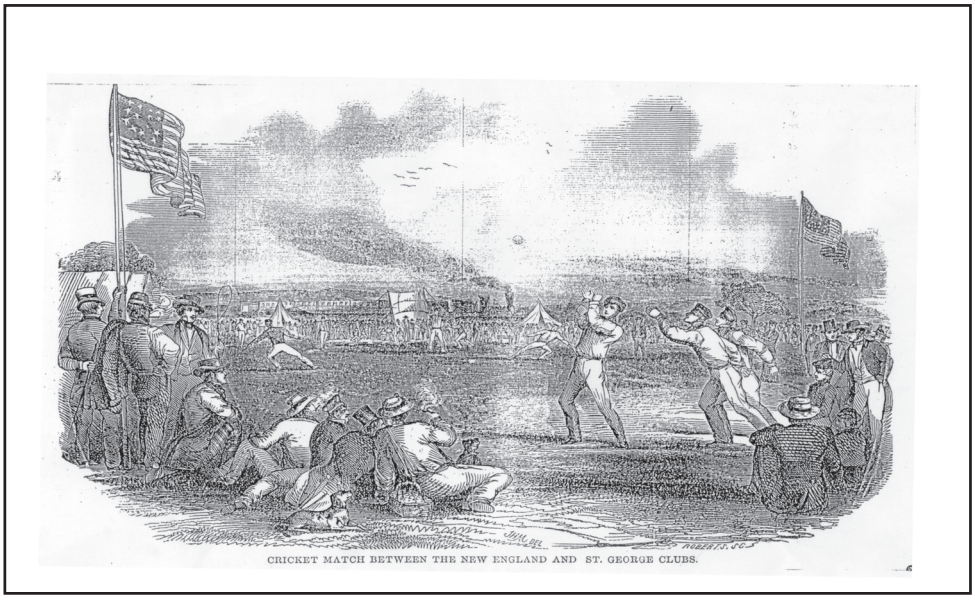
A rough crossing - Lillywhite's Tour takes the Atlantic route.

The cult of the 'Straight Bat'

Just when Baseball was in a position to begin to make inroads on Cricket on its home ground, England's summer game underwent a fundamental administrative change. The management was removed from the hands of mercenary professionals like William Clarke and Fred Lillywhite and came under the control of the upper-class idealists of the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's. These gentlemen made it their business to stamp their approval or disapproval on the various strokes available to the batsman. They came down heavily on the 'hook' and the 'pull', indeed any stroke that savoured of the Baseball batter's cross-the-body swing. The 'straight bat', aimed towards the off, was enshrined as the epitome of style and even as the hallmark of moral rectitude.

Again, cricket had suddenly acquired a giant championin the person of W.G. Grace, who between the mid-1860s to the end of the century would bring crowds flocking to the broader bat and ball game.

Grace's formidable bat was as straight as any Lord's purist could wish and he himself was a vigorous upholder of orthodoxy.
'Young batsmen should not be allowed to practice the stroke; indeed they should be severely reprimanded if they show any tendency towards pulling!' he wrote in his book of Reminiscences.
In fact, such was the great man's fear of straying from the straight and narrow path that, according to C.B. Fry, he would even contrive, by an extraordinary rotation of the body, a straight batted drive to a ball wide of the leg stump. In this context, it will be seen how the principles of Baseball would be regarded with any amount of raised eyebrows.
We are looking back at a culture which saw the young B.J.T. Bosanquet, the inventor of the 'googly', threatened with expulsion from Eton if he attempted any more 'uneducated shots'.


CRICKET MATCH BETWEEN THE NEW ENGLAND AND ST. GEORGE CLUBS.

It's perhaps significant, too, that the beginning of this century saw a concerted attempt to eliminate 'throwing' from cricket. A number of famous careers were ruined and the fast bowler and batsman C.B. Fry was compelled to concentrate exclusively on batting, which he did to memorable effect. From time to time, notably in the late '50s, the spectre of throwing has reappeared, causing the authorities to react with the utmost severity for fear that the whole cricket castle could come tumbling down.
Thus it can be said that the twin precepts of the 'straight bat' and the 'straight arm' have formed a barrier through which Baseball has not found it easy to pass.

Further attempts to bowl out Baseball

Meanwhile, England didn't abandon her efforts to turn back the tide of Baseball in the US. In late August 1872, for instance, the Secretary of the M.C.C. himself, a Mr R.A. Fitzgerald, led a touring party to Canada and the US with W.G. Grace as the star attraction. While Fred Lillywhite's overriding aim had been to market his patented scoring machine, Fitzgerald's purpose was purely missionary. The tour saw some exciting cricket but could not be described as a diplomatic triumph. W. G. Grace was ridiculed for making the same speech at every port of call:
'Gentlemen, I thank you for the honour you have done me. I have never tasted better oysters than I have tasted here today, and I hope I shall get as good wherever I go.'
Then the team got into double trouble - first from the Philadelphians for rushing off to catch the train to Boston and from the Bostonians for missing the train and arriving a day late, too late to play a crucial match with influential Harvard. The remaining Boston match was played, significantly, on a Baseball ground which heavy rain, or the god of Baseball, soon turned into a quagmire. A delicate hint was dropped by a local sports hero when he presented each member of the England team with a baseball, a gift dismissed by Grace in his memoirs as 'an interesting relic'. The hardships involved in travelling back to Canada may have helped to decide W.G. not to tour the New World again. 'As we passed through Maine we came under the veto of the famous Prohibition Laws and had the curious experience of being absolutely unable to get, for love or money, anything stronger by way of refreshment than thick soup washed down by tea!'

Wartime opportunities for Baseball in Britain

The two World Wars saw Baseball and Softball played in England on an unprecedented scale in and around the camps of the Doughboys and GIs. There is a nice Baseball scene in the British wartime movie The Way to the Stars which has an RAF officer, played by Basil Radford, scampering with bat in hand straight for the pitcher to the merriment of his US Army Air Corp allies. As I remember, the local lads around the base were always generously encouraged to join in. Indeed, Robin Marlar, the former Sussex spinner, writing in The Cricketer in August 1957, recalled post-War attempts at outright bribery on the game's behalf:
'The lure of unlimited popcorns, ice cream and candy floss has enticed children and their parents away from the cricket grounds of West London to the American base at Ruislip where these nourishing foods are handed out with typical largesse. This generosity reminds me of a summer's day when an exhibition match was played at Harrow in 1945. After the game, bats, balls and gloves were given away ad lib.'

Marlar reckoned, perhaps a little patronisingly, that the reason Baseball has failed to take root here was that it is 'too much akin to the kindergarten or girlish pastime of rounders'. Marlar, as a Sussex man, may also have had in mind the quaint local game of Stoolball, which is chiefly worth watching because it is played by lithe young country girls and is, interestingly, said to have derived from a ball game played by milkmaids using their milking stools for bases. We

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Stoolball Is Alive And Well In Sussex

by Martin Hoerchner

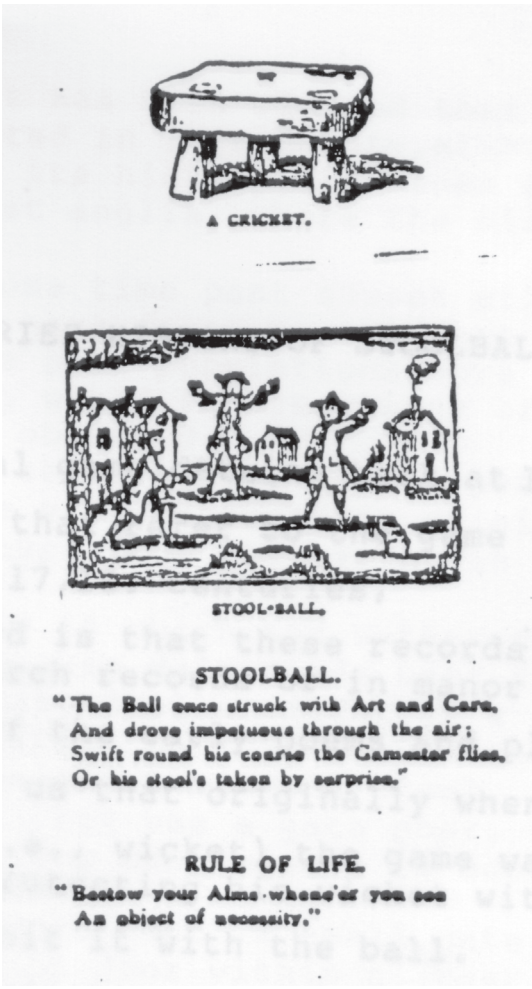
It amazes me sometimes how life dishes up treats and surprises, how things unexpectedly fall in place, how coincidences solve riddles, and how, as Ray Kinsella quotes Terence Mann "There comes a time when all the cosmic tumblers have clicked into place, and the universe opens itself up…"

So it happened last June when I received a letter from Japan. It was from a SABR member named Kazuo Sayama, saying he was researching the origins of baseball. He asked if the games of rounders and stoolball were still played in Britain. It struck a special chord with me, because I've always considered the genealogy of baseball to be my speciality. So I composed a letter on my computer and stated that rounders was very common all over this island, but that stoolball, first mentioned in the middle ages, has been long extinct.

Both sports have a long history in Britain. Rounders is the sport that Robert W. Henderson, the prime genealogist of baseball, points to as the direct precedent of baseball, in his 1947 book "Bat, Ball, and Bishop: A History of Ball Games". Henderson compares the "The Boy's Own Book" by William Clarke, published in London in 1829, with "The Book of Sports" by Robin Carver, published in Boston in 1834, where the rules of an English game called "rounders" and an American game called "base ball" are almost exactly the same. I've always questioned Henderson's conclusion that it means baseball was descended from rounders; to me it only proves that rounders and baseball were once different names for the same sport. That's a very big distinction.

Rounders is still a very popular game in Britain. In fact, if anything has dampened British enthusiasm towards baseball, it's that a similar but lightweight game exists over here. Mention baseball to a native and they say "it's just a girl's game", or a "it's just a school game". I presume none of them has ever faced Randy Johnson in the batter's box.

As for stoolball, it's the game that Henderson defines as the common ancestor to baseball and cricket. The common lore is that milk maids used their milking stools as both wicket (i.e. a target to throw at) and bat (with the legs removed). The first reference to the game by name is in 1450, but Henderson thinks it could date from at least 1330. There's a page for "stool-ball" in the "Little Pretty Pocket Book" from 1744, a few pages over from



A CRICKET.

STOOL-BALL.

STOOLBALL.

"The Ball once struck with Art and Care,
And drove impetuous through the air;
Swift round his course the Gamester flies,
Or his stool's taken by surprise."

RULE OF LIFE.

"Bestow your Alms whene'er you see
An object of necessity."

the first illustration of a game named base-ball. In its earliest incarnation, the game was played by two people; one would throw a ball at a stool and the other would stand in front of it and try to hit the ball away from it with their open palm. The winner would be the one that hit the stool the most times. Modifications like using a piece of wood to hit the ball, running between two or more stools, and having fielders to retrieve the batted ball, came later. It was the first game recorded as being played in the English colonies in America, in Massachusetts in 1621. And finally, in 1801, Joseph Strutt in his "Games and Pastimes of the People of England", writes of a variation where runners, after they have hit the ball, race around a course of stools set out in a circle. It is not difficult to see that the two-stool variety could be the progenitor of cricket while the multi-stool variety could be the ancestor of baseball.

Yet as far as I knew, stoolball was dead as the proverbial dodo. So I had my mouse pointer hovering over the "print" button on my letter to Mr. Sayama…

But I had other chores to deal with. I'm the editor the SABR UK Examiner, the research journal of the Bobby Thomson Chapter, the UK branch of SABR. I was working on the AGM report for the Examiner, and I had videotaped the meeting, and was going over the tape for my meeting report for the Examiner. This was an excellent meeting, including Allen Synge, a cricket writer and member of the Marylebone Cricket Club (the governing body of cricket), who presented an excellent piece entitled "Cricket and Baseball - Cross Currents". We all know about the proselytising missions that Albert Spalding sent to England in 1874 and via the world in 1888/1889, but Allen spoke about cricket tours aimed at the American market in 1859 and 1872. As an aside he said "And then there's stoolball. You should watch it, if only for the comely maidens who play it".

My mouth dropped open. Allen was talking about stoolball in the present tense. I was on the phone to him immediately, first to ask if I could publish his piece in the Examiner, to which he agreed, but then to ask him about this stoolball remark. "Oh yes", he said, "it's still being played. I know of a few matches coming up in Wisborough Green, in Sussex." He said he would check and come back to me with some dates.

I was dumfounded. I asked my wife, who is from Yorkshire, if she ever heard of a game called stoolball. She said she hadn't. I was very perplexed.

Allen got back to me with a few game dates, and July 1 seemed ideal. So we organised a road trip with Allen, me, and Mike Ross, the Chairman of SABR UK and the one who'd originally commissioned Allen to do the piece. Allen gave me the

number of the head of the Wisborough Green Stoolball Club, Mrs. Denman. I phoned her and told her of our mission, and she was very helpful and gracious. She said the match started at 7.00 and we were more than welcome to attend.

In the meantime I thought I'd hit the internet and see if I could find any stoolball. I did - there's lots of it! All of it seemed to be in Sussex, except a reference in Alresford, Hampshire, from Mrs. Stanbrook. It turns out she was originally from Sussex and imported the game. The web site also offered a booklet, published by the National Stoolball Association, containing the rules and history of stoolball. I contacted her, and eagerly awaited my booklet.

We set out from my home in Kent about an hour before the match started at 7.00. The weather was fine, and it was a lovely summer's evening as we drove through the Sussex countryside. This year had a generally rainy summer, and we'd lucked out today.

When we got to Wisborough Green the match had started. It was a lovely setting, a huge open town green surrounded by brick houses of varying age and design, most with gardens bursting with summer flowers. The obligatory pub was set off on one corner of the green, and the town church rose up on a hill just behind the green. A cricket sight screen was pushed off to the side of the green, and right behind it was a flag pole where the Union Jack fluttered proudly. Towards the edge of the green was a club house; obviously it was the headquarters for the local cricket club. It had a bar on the ground floor, and above it was a balcony where the score (runs, overs, and wickets) was displayed.

We parked and made our way towards the clubhouse. As we walked, our attention focused on the game. The two teams were indeed, as Allen mentioned, all female, although Mrs. Denman told us that mixed teams also exist. The home team was dressed in yellow and green, like the Oakland A's of the 70's, with a yellow top and green skirt. The away team from Steadham was dressed in maroon, like that other Philadelphia team of the late 70's and early 80's. The basic uniform consisted of a pullover shirt with a few buttons at the top, and a pleated skirt, which was fairly short, over shorts, like ladies tennis players. Some team members, more sensitive to the cold, wore a sweatshirt and/or sweat pants in the same colour scheme, over or instead of the basic uniform.

The main action of the game was in the middle of a large circle drawn near the perimeter of a green, which I later learned was 90 yards feet in diameter. Stoolball has no foul territory. In the middle of the circle were set up two wickets, though not wickets in the cricket sense. They were wooden targets, about a foot square, set on a wooden pole about the height of the players' heads, supported on the ground by four short legs. It was a bit like a stop sign, only square and wooden. There were two of them, 16 yards apart. There were two batters, though they are called batsmen in stoolball, even though most of them are female. The stoolball bat bore no resemblance to a baseball bat, or even a cricket bat. It was more like an outsized ping pong paddle, though reinforced and with a lot more whack, as we later found out.

The pitcher, as we would call her, or the bowler (as called in stoolball and cricket) would pitch the ball underarm in the air from a distance of 10 yards, towards the wicket about head-high to the batsman. The batsman would try to hit the ball, and if she made contact, would run towards the other wicket. In the meantime the batsman at the other wicket would run towards her wicket. They would run back and forth as many times as possible before the ball was fielded and returned to the running crease, which is a line drawn from either side of the wicket. I immediately recognised it as a very similar game to cricket. The primary difference was that instead of bouncing the ball off the ground try to hit a wicket about 2 feet tall, as in cricket, the bowler threw the ball towards a wicket placed on a pole at about the same height as the batsman's head. Indeed, articles I later read called stoolball "cricket in the air".

We located Mrs. Denman, and she made us feel welcome while she explained the game to us. First she showed us the game equipment. The bat was a lot more substantial than a ping pong paddle; it was made of willow (the same wood as cricket bats are made) and very hefty. It was completely flat on one side (the hitting side) and rounded on the other (like a cricket bat). And it was heavy; you could really pack a wallop with this thing! The handle was wedged in the middle with a soft wood, for extra spring. But it was the ball that really delighted us. It was like a tiny baseball, white leather with red cross-stitching, but only about 2¼ inches in diameter. By contrast, a cricket ball is red with two hemispheres joined by stitching around the equator. This simple connection to baseball, the similarity of the game balls, really intrigued us.

Mrs. Denman then explain to us the rules of the game, which are very similar to cricket. There are eleven players on a team. It is organised into overs, which are six legitimate bowled balls in cricket and eight in stoolball. The number of overs is flexible and agreed before the match, usually from 15 to 20. There were many ways to score. If the batsman hits a ball that isn't

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Illustrious Turnout for Baseball In Britain: 1918

by Stephen Green, Curator, Marylebone Cricket Club

This is the first of hopefully many stories to come out of the Wilson Cross scrapbook, which was graciously loaned to SABR UK by Jim Montgomery, a baseball collector living in Miami. The scrapbook covers baseball in Britain during the First World War and the following decade, and contains a wealth of information. We are greatly indebted to Stephen Green, who is the Curator for the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's, for his analysis of articles and photographs relating to a match held on U.S. Independence Day in 1918. - ed.

The Weekly Dispatch for 7 July 1918 made the confident assertion that a recent event 'was the most momentous day in Anglo-American history'. In similar vein the paper said that by going on 4 July to the playing fields of Chelsea in South West London 'George V wiped out the blunder of George III.'

This may be pitching it a bit high but it is clear that tremendous efforts were made that day to promote the wartime alliance. This culminated in a baseball match at Stamford Bridge in which the US Navy defeated the US Army in front of 38,000 people.

King George V was there as with his wife (Queen Mary), his mother (Queen Alexandra), his daughter (Princess Mary, later the Princess Royal) and his aunt (Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll).

The Prime Minister attended - he was the 'Welsh Wizard', David Lloyd George. In addition to his wife, two of his predecessors were there. They were AJ Balfour and HH Asquith. The latter was also accompanied by his wife.

Equally important was the presence of two future Prime Ministers, Arthur Bonar Law and Winston Churchill. The latter was to lead his country in an even more significant wartime alliance with the United States, his mother's native land.

Many of the Cabinet attended including Sir Eric Geddes (the First Lord of the Admiralty), ES Montagu (the Secretary of State for India), Walter Long (the Colonial Secretary) and the prominent politician, Austen Chamberlain. GN Barnes, a leading Labour Member of Parliament, was also in the Royal Box.

Two former Viceroys of India (Lord Curzon and Lord Hardinge) were present as well as that country's leading statesman, the Hon Sir SP Sinha. They were accompanied by the cricketer, the Maharaja of Patiala.

Leading figures from the Dominions included Sir Robert Borden and WF Lloyd from Canada, WM Hughes of Australia and WF Massey, the New Zealand leader. South Africa was represented by their great statesman, General Smuts, in addition to Lord Milner, the former British High Commissioner in that country.

One of the most famous present was Lord Grey of Falloden. He was the Foreign Secretary in 1914 who said 'the lights are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.'

Possibly the most knowledgeable British spectator would have been Lord Desborough, the great sportsman and public figure.

Three high ranking military figures were present. Sir William Robertson was the only Field Marshal in the British Army to have started his career as a private. Sir Henry Wilson was later to be murdered by Irish extremists. Major General Sir Francis and Lady Lloyd also were in the Royal Box.

Cricket was represented by Lord Hawke, the famous former Yorkshire captain. He is said to have prayed that no professional would ever captain England. One wonders what he thought of the match.

The present writer is not competent to judge whether it was a great baseball game. In one respect, however, it was possibly the most distinguished sporting event ever held in England. The Royal Box was full of the most eminent representatives of the allied nations - the great and the good in fact.

One hopes that the VIPs were enlightened and entertained. For a few moments the leaders of the allied nations could forget the conflict. Thanks to the new Anglo-American alliance, the war mercifully had only four months more to run.

Henderson's Historical Method

by Jim Combs

Mr. Robert W. Henderson's work entitled *Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games* is rightly regarded as an important work for historians of baseball, tennis and indeed many other ball games. In his introduction to *Ball, Bat and Bishop*, Mr. Will Irwin writes:

"the early critics of the Doubleday tradition base their scepticism mostly on observation and common sense. What they lacked was a thorough investigation undertaken in the scientific spirit. Mr. Henderson has supplied that."

Whether or not Mr. Irwin's accolade is deserved is not the subject of this short piece. I have quoted Mr. Irwin, however, to note that Mr. Henderson's place in the history of ball games – not just baseball- is generally regarded as important. Indeed, my colleagues and I in the Bobby Thomson Chapter of SABR UK here in the UK generally regard *Ball, Bat and Bishop* as the authoritative source as to the origins of ball and bat games. I suspect that our view is shaped mainly by the expansiveness of the work, which ranges from Egyptian times to the present replete with references and pictures. For example, when Mr. Henderson quotes Jusserand's description of the game La Soule on p.39 of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* we assume that the quote is accurate and that Jusserand's description is based on convincing evidence. None of us has to my knowledge began a painstaking analysis of Mr. Henderson's work which would, I submit, be quite a daunting task since he does not footnote his quotations.

JEU DE BOULES TAPESTRY AND THE STORY OF GOMBAUT AND MACEE

An opportunity to verify one of the facts in *Ball, Bat and Bishop* presented itself to me fortuitously when the Chairman of our Chapter, Mr. Mike Ross, gave me a picture of a tapestry on display in New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mike had noted that the tapestry showed a group of young persons playing some sort of ballgame. He asked me to translate the inscriptions. (Not unlike a modern day comic strip, each of the persons had their remarks set forth in a cloud shaped circle in close proximity to their heads.) The medieval french proved too difficult for myself and my French friends, so I wrote to the Metropolitan Museum and received in return a very helpful letter complete with an extract from a work by Edith Appleton Standen entitled *European Post-Medieval Tapestries and Related Hangings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (hereinafter referred to as "Met Tapestries Work.") Prompted by this article, I began a search of the British Library's works on tapestries to see if I could find any similar tapestries. Eventually, I discovered that the tapestry seen by Mike Ross was indeed the same subject as the tapestry, which appeared in *Ball, Bat and Bishop*. Here at last was a chance to analyze the accuracy of one small part of Mr. Henderson's seminal work.

GROUND BILLIARDS (BILLIARDS DE TERRE)

Opposite p.133 of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* is an illustration which Mr. Henderson calls Ground Billiards, France, 1460 (From St. Lô tapestry, in J.M.J. Guiffrey, *Les Amours de Gombaut et de Macee*, Paris, 1882) This tapestry is quite similar to the one that Mike Ross saw in the Metropolitan Museum. A comparison of Ms. Standen's discussion of these tapestries with that of Mr. Henderson should afford us a chance of determining whether Henderson's conclusions drawn from the tapestry are consistent with those of a noted scholar on tapestries.

Henderson states on p.121 of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* that billiards, like hockey, football, and tennis " . . . *is a direct descendant of the old Egyptian fertility rites, a close relative of the other games.*" According to Henderson, the source of both croquet and billiards (through the game of jeu de boules) is a game of jeu de mail. On p.114 Henderson describes jeu de mail as a game which developed in southern France during the 14th century. It was, he continues, on p.114 a game in which "*...two sides strove to drive a ball to a given mark in the least number of strokes. ... The boxwood ball, about the size of a lawn tennis ball, was driven with a mallet, a stick with a wooden head.*" (p.114) On p. 115 Henderson writes that in England *"Just as la soule had been reduced to ground billiards, so pall mall (the name of jeu de mail in England) was played on a definite 'ground' and the ball had to be driven through an iron ring suspended in the air. The earliest rules of jeu de mail were published in Paris by Joseph Lauthier in 1717, some forty years before the earliest rules of golf."*

Returning to Henderson's discussion of billiards, I note that on p. 121 of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* Henderson mentions a famous French tapestry known as "Les Amours de Gombaut et de Macee" which was made in about 1460 and was first inventoried at St. Lô in 1532. On pp.21-2 of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* Henderson writes

"This tapestry portrayed

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Baseball's Earliest Reference?

by Martin Hoerchner

I've always thought that SABR members in the U.K. were uniquely placed to investigate the origins of the game we call baseball, because we live in the land that most probably nurtured the early games that gave birth to baseball. For instance, I've always been interested in Robert W. Henderson's account of the earliest known baseball reference.

Robert W. Henderson is the Father of Baseball Genealogy. In his seminal 1947 book, *Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games*, he writes:

"*The earliest mention of a game called baseball so far located was made by the Reverend Thomas Wilson, a Puritan divine at Maidstone, England. He wrote reminiscently in the year 1700, describing events that had taken place before that time, perhaps during his former years as a minister. 'I have seen', he records with disapproval, 'Morris-dancing, cudgel-playing, baseball and cricketts, and many other sports on the Lord's Day.'*"

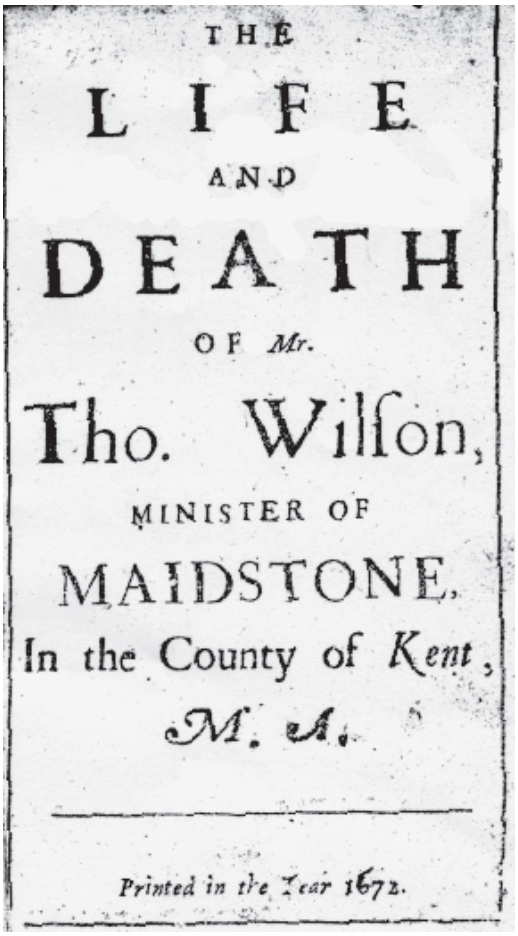
This reference has been accepted and repeated many times over. But to me, something never seemed quite right about it, for a few reasons:

1. I have never seen the word 'divine' used as a noun.
2. I know there is a 1 in 100 chance that an event will take place in a year ending in 00, but it just seemed to me to be an estimate, a 'circa' date.
3. I wouldn't expect such an early reference to use the term "baseball". I would expect either "base ball" or "base-ball".
4. There is no hint regarding the source of the quote, whether a book, personal letter, etc. Unfortunately this is a general failing of Henderson's usually impeccable research.
5. According to my knowledge of British history, the Puritans were a spent force after the Restoration (1661), after twelve years of the theocracy of Cromwell and the Roundheads. I can't imagine someone claiming to be a Puritan in 1700, at least openly.

A further clue was discovered when I was researching stoolball, and was going through the papers of Major Grantham, stoolball's twentieth-century re-inventor, in Lewes in Sussex. I came across a copy of the Sussex County Magazine for July 1928, which contained the article "Stoolball in Sussex" by M.S. Russell-Goggs. It contains a series of early references to stoolball, including this one:

"*About 1630 a Puritan records that 'Maidstone was formerly a very profane town, where stool-ball and other games were practised on the Lord's Day*'."

This really got my interest, because it seemed very similar to the Thomas Wilson comment,


THE
LIFE
AND
DEATH
OF Mr.
Tho. Wilson,
MINISTER OF
MAIDSTONE,
In the County of Kent,
M. A.
Printed in the Year 1672.

quoted by Henderson. But it gives a much earlier date than Henderson, and baseball is not one of the games mentioned. Still, 1630 is a much more reasonable date for a Puritan minister; in fact, that was the year the Puritans founded the American city of Boston.

So I was more puzzled than ever, but I didn't know exactly where to start to track down the exact quote. So I let it simmer for years, but then, last week, in a sudden burst of inspiration, I vowed to try to solve the mystery. After all, Maidstone isn't far from me, about 20 minutes by car. I pictured myself discovering the quote on a yellowed letter in a dark cobwebbed corner of the Kent County Historical Society Headquarters.

Maidstone, in fact, is the County Town of Kent (where I live), so it's equivalent to a U.S. state capital. It's a busy town of 140,000 people, about 20 miles southwest of London. At least I think it's a town. In Britain cities and towns are official designations; for instance, a city has to have a cathedral to be a city. Cityships are of high status and are handed out like prizes on the Queen's Jubilee years. Maidstone sits on the River Medway, which snakes right through the centre of town. Despite its proximity, I haven't spent much time there, probably due the lack of parking spaces. It's got a jumble of bridges and roundabouts in the middle of town, with a hundred signs whizzing around; the kind of traffic maze where you have to know what lane you want to be in about six turns in advance. My fondest memory of Maidstone is driving through it once during a summer festival, which I later found out was an annual event called the River Festival. The streets were full of people, the river was full of brightly-decorated party boats, makeshift barbecues served food all over, and the sound of music was everywhere. And yes, it was on a Sunday.

I was at a loss as to where to start to find the quote, because Henderson didn't give a clue to the source of the quote. So to start, I entered "Thomas Wilson" and Maidstone in Google, and to my surprise got quite a few hits! I felt guilty doing research by Internet, but salved my consciousness by telling myself it was only a pointer to finding the original document, and seeing for myself the wording.

The first reference that caught my attention was from the Canterbury Christ Church University College Bookshop. To my great joy I found a write-up of a book that they carried, written by Jacqueline Eales, a Reader in early modern history at the University. The book was entitled "Community and Disunity – Kent and the English Civil Wars, 1640-1649". It was a collection of four different lectures, number three of which was entitled "Thomas Wilson and the 'Prophane Town' of Maidstone". So there was a

whole chapter based on the quote! And my suspicion was reinforced of an earlier date. I phoned the book-shop immediately to see if they had the book in stock so I could drive to Canterbury to pick it up that day (I love visiting Canterbury, if you can overcome – yes – the lack of parking spaces). But it was a Bank Holiday, and the shop was closed. So I contacted them the next day and ordered the book, which was not in stock, and I eagerly await its arrival.

Back to the Internet, the second reference that grabbed me was on a website about "the 1911 Encyclopaedia", which was a really excellent reference site and taken verbatim from the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica. The listing was for 'Cricket' and it ran into screenfuls, very exhaustive and complete. The section of interest was at the beginning, where, like the stoolball article, they ran a catalogue of early references to the sport. One of the earlier references was this:

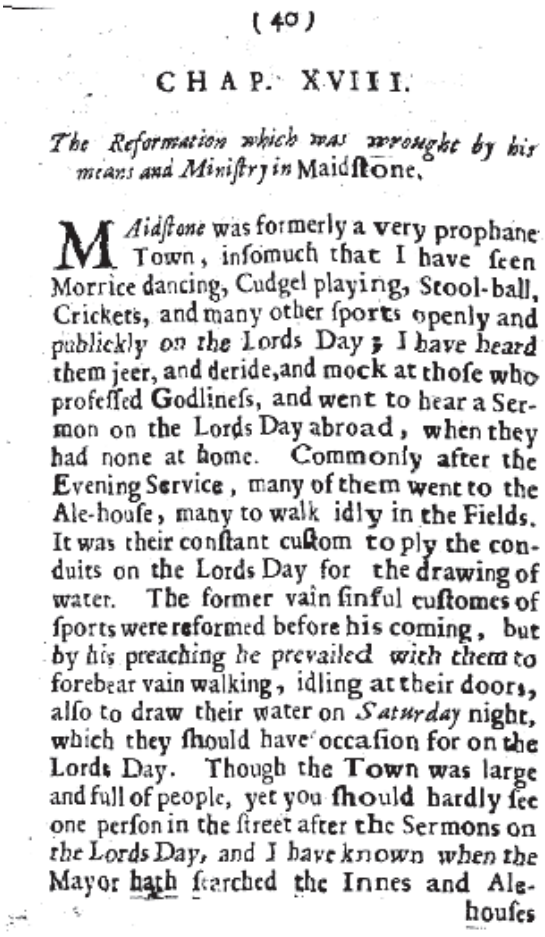
In The Life of Thomas Wilson, Minister of Maidstone, published anonymously in I672, Wilson. having been born in 1601 and dying in or about 1653, occurs the following passage (p. 40): "Maidstone was formerly a very profane town, in as much as I have seen morrice-dancing, cudgel-playing, stool-ball, crickets, and many other sports openly and publicly indulged in on the Lord's Day."

That was really a Eureka moment! This reference gave the source I'd always wanted. If it was Henderson's baseball quote, it would set the date of the earliest baseball reference back at least 28 years, and maybe even 47 years, and maybe even more. The quote was taken from a book about Thomas Wilson, published in 1672. I was thrilled to discover it was in a book, because I could possibly see it in the British Library. Now I even knew on which page the quote was.

So I immediately went to the British Library website – sorry, doing research on the web again. You can search their catalogue, and I hoped against hope, and bingo! It was there. The title of the book was given as "The life and death of Mr. Tho. Wilson, Minister of Maidstone, etc." It was indeed dated 1672, and ran 99 pages. The book had no author but there was a comment that the preface is signed G.S., i.e. George Swinnock. I immediately ordered the book for my perusal in two days' time.

From the moment I first got the idea to check the Internet for the quote till I found the British Library catalogue listing for the book, took about a half-hour.

So I had two days to mull things over. One of the first things that came to me was that the 1911 cricket quote didn't mention baseball either. It was stool-ball where Henderson had baseball. This tallied with the stoolball article, which mentioned stoolball "and other sports". I was at odds as to how to reconcile these discrepancies. Unless… there are SABR UK members, sometimes including me, who believe, in one form or another, that there has been a certain level of suppression of baseball in this country, including suppression of baseball's importance in the history of sport, because they wanted to diminish its importance to give precedence to British sports. It smacks a bit of paranoia, conspiracy theories, etc, but I honestly thought that it was the most likely explanation for the difference in the quotes. Seeing the source will reveal all.



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CHAP. XVIII.

The Reformation which was wrought by his means and Miniſtry in Maidſtone.

Maidſtone was formerly a very prophane Town, inſomuch that I have ſeen Morrice dancing, Cudgel playing, Stool-ball, Crickets, and many other ſports openly and *publickly on the* Lords Day; I have heard them jeer, and deride, and mock at thoſe who profeſſed Godlineſs, and went to hear a Sermon on the Lords Day abroad, when they had none at home. Commonly after the Evening Service, many of them went to the Ale-houſe, many to walk idly in the Fields. It was their conſtant cuſtom to ply the conduits on the Lords Day for the drawing of water. The former vain ſinful cuſtomes of ſports were reformed before his coming, but by his preaching he prevailed with them to forebear vain walking, idling at their doors, alſo to draw their water on *Saturday* night, which they ſhould have occaſion for on the Lords Day. Though the Town was large and full of people, yet you ſhould hardly ſee one perſon in the ſtreet after the Sermons on the Lords Day, and I have known when the Mayor hath ſearched the Innes and Ale-houſes

I had this fantasy of coming across the baseball reference on page 40, and running my fingers over the word, and proving all the conspiracy theories. I would feel like Howard Carter opening Tutanhamen's tomb – I would be the first person in history ever to specifically search for an original baseball reference and find it in a source that can be definitely dated to a year in the 1600's.

When I got to the library, they handed me the book, which was very small – it was 3" x 5 ½ " - and fit in the palm of my hand. I hurried to my desk and hurried to page 40, and this is how it read (preserving the original spelling):

"***Chap. XVIII***

The Reformation which was wrought by his means and Ministry in Maidstone.

"Maidstone was formerly a very prophane Town, insomuch that I have seen Morrice dancing, Cudgel playing, Stool-ball, Crickets, and many other sports openly and publickly on the Lords Day; I have heard them jeer, and deride and mock at those who professed Godliness and went to hear a Sermon on the Lords Day abroad, when they had none at home."

It mentioned stoolball, not baseball. King Tut's tomb collapsed around me, and my chance at baseball history immortality vanished in a puff of dust. *Sic transit gloria mundi*, as I always say (actually, I've never said it). After the realisation that life doesn't always meet your expectations sank in, I started to look deeper into the book.

It is a short book, more like a hardcover booklet. It tells Rev. Wilson's life story, and the unnamed writer of the book is full of praise of the late Reverend. He must have been a remarkable character, because the book was published about 19 years after his death! Thomas Wilson was born in Cumberland, and after he started his ministry was transferred a few times, finally coming to Maidstone. The book isn't strong on exact dates.

There is a handwritten note on the inside cover, "by George Swinnock". I don't know whether this applied to the whole book or only to the preface (as the British Library public catalogue listing stated). George Swinnock certainly

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The Dinosaur Hunters II :

by Martin Hoerchner

I've written previously about how a coincidence helped me discover an ancient bat and ball game previously thought extinct. This story can be seen as an adjunct to the stoolball story, but it has enough interest to stand on its own.

The stoolball story started when I received a letter from a SABR member in Japan, asking if stoolball was still being played in England. I was ready to send back a negative answer. By coincidence I was working on a meeting report for the latest AGM, and came to Allen Synge's report, where he stated that stoolball definitely was being played, particularly in Sussex. This led to a trail of exploration through the south of England, in search of information on stoolball as it is currently played. Eventually my story was printed in "The National Pastime".

If the first story started with a coincidence, then the second story must too. Four years ago my wife and me were blessed with our first child, a son. After that life became too busy, and SABR seemed a bit irrelevant. But time passes and Jack has become very independent and life doesn't 100% revolve around him like it used to. It's more like only 85%, but that's a big difference. So lately I've been thinking about how to expand my horizons, and a few weeks ago my wife is at work on Sunday, so I'm driving around with my son, and only a few miles from my home I see a sign "Bat and Trap fun day - Halstead".

"Bat and trap" is the modern name for trapball, a very old game played in England since the Middle Ages. It is definitely older than cricket, and probably older than stoolball. The Canterbury & District League traced trapball back to a monastery in Canterbury in the 1300's; currently occupying the grounds is "Ye Olde Beverlie" pub, which became one of the founding members of the league. It is in the "Little Pretty Pocket Book" of 1767 (and probably earlier editions), right next to the first illustration of a game called "base ball". By the time "The Boy's Own Book" was published in 1828, it was considered to rank next to cricket in popularity.

I've seen bat and trap being played before, along with Mike Ross and Allen Synge, at the Black Lion pub in Gillingham before my life got so complicated. Allen provided the lead that the game was still being played, just like he'd put us onto the stoolball matches.

We learned that bat and trap was a Kent game, and uniquely a pub game, played in the beer garden just behind the pub. The month was May and the match started at 8 p.m., so we watched them play in declining sunlight, until the two 100-watt lamps mounted in the conifers kicked in. We mused about how trap ball and stoolball might be linked to cricket and baseball in the grand scheme of things, but more about that later.

For the longest time none of this was important, but this sign I saw a few miles from my home drew me in. I knew Bat and Trap was a Kent game, but what was it doing on my doorstep? Of course I had to rush home and get my camera and rush back to Halstead.

Being a small village, there was no parking, and I had to park miles away. The event was held on a school playing field, across from a pub where no doubt bat and trap is played. I was with Jack, and he was fascinated by the crowds and mix of sights, sounds, and smells.

The first thing I saw was a huge bouncy castle, for the kids. There was an information desk on bat and trap. There were a line of stands where you could purchase snacks, hot sandwiches, or the occasional beer. But on the far field, in a line stretching 100-200 yards, was a series of bat and trap pitches set up, one next to the other, and all frantic with activity and the whizzing of balls right and left. Behind the pitches was a row of seating for the players, and behind that was a large open area to mill about and watch the action.

I was fascinated, like a kid who had only read about baseball coming across all seven games of the World Series happening at once, foul-line to foul-line. I frantically took pictures while trying to keep my third eye on Jack. I bought him an ice cream. At one point I couldn't find him and panicked, until I found him chatting up a girl 6 months younger than him.

I left after I found that they had run out of hot dogs, but my appetite had been whetted. I felt I had to complete my trapball story before the end of season, and it was approaching fast. So I hit the internet, and found a number of trapball websites – just enter "bat and trap" in any search engine. I contacted the Canterbury & District Bat & Trap league, and I was put in touch with Peter Guise, the Press Officer for the League. He informed me that the season was pretty much over, but that there was a makeup game due to take place in Whitstable in a few days. Great, I said, we'll be there.

I arranged a journalistic expedition with Chapter Chairman Mike Ross. We set off from my home at 4.00 to avoid the rush, and it took about an hour to get there, down the M2 through numerous roadworks that have been going on since 1066.

Whitstable is a charming seaside town which I've managed to miss in my seventeen years in Britain. Driving into the town you come down from a hill and hit a spectacular panorama with the

Trapball Found Alive!

town in the foreground and the sea consuming the background. We found a car park right next to the shingle beach. A long line of land hung on the horizon – I took my wife there the next weekend and she said "Is that France?" to which I replied "No, it's Essex". (Is this heaven? No, it's Iowa.) I'm not sure if it's the Thames Estuary or the North Sea, but it was pleasant and calming watching the boats on a sunny day.

We were early, so we were hungry, and Mike was out for the famous Whitstable oysters. We sauntered down numerous alleys in search of the perfect meal. Many of the white wooden houses seemed distinctly New England to me. Our only problem was that it was 5 minutes past high season, and it was 5.30 which is on the cusp between lunch and dinner. You may use different terms for the noon and the evening meals, but all the restaurants we came across were closed for the next hour. The only place we could find that actually served food was a pub not far from the harbour. Mike sampled the fish and chips, and me being an unrepentant Californian I had probably the only tacos available in Whitstable. Not completely accurate, but tasty nonetheless.

Thus refreshed, we set out for the pub, which was named the Four Horseshoes. It was easily found, and I squeezed the car into a tight parking space next to the pub. As we parked Mike said "Let's be low-key about this; I don't want to attract too much attention", but the minute we got inside the pub, he started telling everyone that we had just flown in from the States to watch this game! I was confused. Then I tried to pass myself off as a "Kentish Man", but I'd only lived in Kent for 8 years, and part of the "London Borough of Bromley" at that. But I tried.

But after that shaky start, we quickly engaged the locals in conversation, and it turned out most of them were there to play bat and trap. The first thing we found out about Whitstable was that Peter Cushing lived there before he met his fate in the Death Star.

But the Force was with us, and we soon had a player volunteer to explain the game to us. His name was Kevin, and he took us to an adjoining room overlooking the game pitch. Bat and trap is played on a rectangular pitch, long and narrow, measuring 63 feet by 13 1/2 feet. What makes Bat and Trap unique is of course the trap, which is a wood and metal device. The batsman hits the trap with his bat and the ball pops up, fungo-style, and the batsman hits the ball towards the narrow end of the pitch. If the ball goes right or left before then, the batsman is out. On the far end of the pitch, the eight members of the opposing team stand, ready to field the ball. If the ball is caught on the fly the batsman is out. Besides that, how they field the ball really doesn't matter. What matters is how the bowler returns the ball. The person that catches the ball isn't neccesarily the one that returns the ball. Each team member becomes the bowler, who rolls the ball towards the trap and tries to hit it. If he hits the trap, the front part of the trap (a 5 inch square) falls down so everyone can see the out is registered.

The term bowler is used differently from cricket. In cricket the bowler is the one who delivers the ball to the batsman, the equivalent of the baseball pitcher. But in bat and trap, the bowler is the one who rolls the ball towards the batsman, and tries to get an out by hitting a tiny target.

Kevin explained the format of the match. Each team was on offence and defence 3 times each. I expected them to be called "innings" (like in cricket and stoolball), but instead they were called "legs". In fact, they were different games. The team that won 2 out of 3 legs was the winner, independent of the scores of the individual legs. If leg one was 32-0, and leg two is 4-5, the overall score is still 1-1. "A bit like the 1960 World Series" I said, but no-one paid attention.

We mused over the implications of the game. The key skill of the game seemed to be rolling the ball along a long pitch, trying to hit a the trap, a very small target. A bit like lawn bowling. Except that the pitch was not as finely groomed, meaning that the bowler should know the hills and dales as well as a PGA golfer. Mike deduced that home field advantage would be very great, because the local team would know their own pitch much more than the visitors.

The game was played by both men and women, but never women-only, unlike stoolball. It was organised into leagues within districts, and uniquely in the county of Kent.

We asked Peter if there was any connections with teams in other countries, and he said they sometime played international matches. We started to get interested, and then he explained it was between English vs. the Welsh or the Scots living in the Whitstable area. In other words, in the opening ceremonies of the international matches, there was no dispute on which anthem to play.

The game was played by a wide range of people, from their 20's to their 70's, sharing only two things – love of bat and trap and love of beer. This being a pub sport, everyone had a pint in their hand, including the players. But it wasn't drunk too much to excess, because the players still had to roll a ball to hit a tiny target 21 yards away.

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Buena Vista Baseball Club

by Mike Ross

CUBA MISSION

In case there is some doubt, baseball and antique American autos are doing just fine in Cuba. The Cubans generally appear to love Americans and it is quite certain that baseball has been our charm, despite the fact that Cuban politics has been prickly toward us, and vice versa.

My first adventure was in the main square situated between the old city and central Havana, within view of the National Capitol. There I came across a heated baseball discussion by a large ruckus of Cuban men, a majority of whom acted as Lou Piniella taking up a rules complaint with an umpire. To a stranger, with the apparent rage and gesticulations, there was cause for alarm – but not really. I learned that this was talking baseball Cuban Style and an alarming style of debate for a most simpatico of people. A few baseball cards did not go amiss with these good folk either.

Going to Cuba as a baseball envoy and handing out baseball cards as seeds of friendship helped make the trip purposeful and honourable; the kids were overjoyed with their Palmeiro's and Canseco's. Although I went to the island blind, not knowing what and where to find the baseball genie, four events tied up my short visit nicely: 1. Walking the city and seeing the kids invent ways of playing baseball was a treat. Action on every block. 2. Got to a big league ballgame at the Havana ballpark. 3. Discovered the exact room in Havana which housed Babe Ruth on his 1921 tour of the island, and later, in an antiquarian bookshop, found an English/Spanish booklet commemorating the tour. 4. Lastly, visiting the main cemetery I found a pantheon for baseball players, dated 1942. Whether this counts as serious conclusive SABR research I wonder; however my hope is that the findings open up other avenues and assist another researcher in perhaps turning a double play.

STREET BALL

Ill equipped with sticks and paper cups, the children somehow managed, reinventing foul and fair territory depending on the lay of the land, just like it was in America with stick ball when few inner city playing fields were available. Walking through the main parts of Havana, you will come across all sizes of children playing with sticks and a paper cup ball, and in some locales one or two will have a glove and a real wooden bat or a rubber baseball. Each had his particular stance, that of Julio Franco being most obvious but clearly those kids knew what they were doing and who they wanted to be. It was interesting to observe that nowhere in Havana Central did they play lengthwise in the street, rather across ways. Or in alley spaces between streets, mostly with scrub rules with a first base only; make it to first and back and you stay at bat. Countless times passers-by will be obliged to retrieve the ball and toss it back. Of course trying to look cool. My wearing a White Sox cap for protection from the sun was a sure-fire way of winning friends and unsolicited exchanges of conversation, the first question always being "Are you American?" The Cuban people love Americans.

On the ride back to the airport I asked my driver to go via the Buena Vista district. With its newly acquired fame it was worth a look, maybe to find The Buena Vista Social Club, though it turned out to be terribly poor and run down. A game was going on, softball, flat pitch, tricky pitching, played longways because the streets were wider and there was less street activity in this suburb. Four kids, all with gloves, were at it; the batter looked good choking up on a big wooden bat. He had his glove down for home plate. A vital detail was that there was an adult man umpiring and calling pitches. The driver stopped to let me take a quick snapshot. I was unable to communicate my desire to find out how the game worked with the added complexity of balls and strikes… And so another research chore lingers.

BALLPARK

Politicos and propaganda go hand in glove with sporting events in Cuba: *"Our freedom is non negotiable"* is the motto boldly written on the front of Havana's modern stadium, built for the most recent Pan-American Games. Unfortunately, the big league games are staged in a ballpark of a much more modest calibre. I had wanted to witness Cuban baseball since reading a Roger Angell article many years earlier; he reported his pleasure when the baseball stadium was shipshape. On this occasion things were not as good: and the state of the structure was dilapidated, peeling paint, poor lighting, and the facilities were rough and dirty. There were no programs. As for the ballpark food: if Cubans can afford it, you do not want it. They are on an average wage of about $20 a month, and for them tickets are virtually free. For us $3.

I was partly distracted but amused as my newly acquired companion, a Canadian who made arrangements, spent the middle innings of a thrilling contest negotiating with an usher for a signed jersey by the home team, as well as

a ball and whatever else 20 dollars could buy, which was a great deal for him and for the players who would have joyfully received probably a buck and a half each. The game was the most exciting one could devise if inclined to invent it. Angell had mentioned the fervour of the fans. So, it was bad luck when the visiting team scored four runs in the first and took the fans out of the game, aided by the Havana first baseman dropping a routine pop-up. The fielding looked sloppy until suddenly the quality transformed and Havana started playing big league ball. The crowd came alive as gradually the home team clawed back to tie in the seventh, take a one run lead in the eighth, and win in the top of the ninth on a play from deep left for the final out on a close call at the plate. You root for the home team and when they win you share in the joy of the crowd.

THE PLAZA

I was in the market for a room change in case my current reservation could not be extended. I walked across the square to the Plaza, now in decay since its days of glory. The one available room was enormous. I saw there were two foldout cot beds which nixed the place for me. I turned to leave and found the reason the baseball gods had placed me in that particular room; upon examination I was faced with what I would describe as a shrine to Babe Ruth. It was set up on one wall just inside the main entrance, explaining why I did not see it on entering. Four large framed photos of the Babe in action hung on the wall in front of a raised glassed enclosed display case holding a bat, various articles and a ball with indications that Babe Ruth had indeed slept there. I was not at once aware of the significance until a few days later. I have reason to believe that Cuban baseball fans are not aware of this shrine to the Babe. In fact my first reaction was "These Cubans really are baseball crazy". I did not realize the significance until a few days later. While preparing to leave for the airport I strolled into Chinatown for lunch (where else?). Afterwards just down the street I spied a street stall selling antiquarian books. This is where research does the work for you: As I was searching through a pile of old baseball cards (hoping to find the Honus Wagner big ticket), the vendor handed me a yellow booklet which was of course was nothing less than English/Spanish account of Babe Ruth's 1921 tour of the Island conducted and promoted by none other than John McGraw. Muggsy's picture along with a shot of the Plaza Hotel was a main spread.

The text was confusing and shabbily edited. Nonetheless I telephoned the author Yuyo Ruiz in Puerto Rico when I got back to London. I told him about the Plaza shrine. He said, surprised if not shocked, "I didn't know about that". He had credited Cuban

baseball sources in his book and they too were obviously unaware of the shrine. Yuyo was not forthcoming or of a generous nature, and I suppose the shrine is still our secret.

NECROPOLIS CRISTOBAL COLON

Again by chance, on the outskirts of Havana, I found yet another baseball shrine described in Spanish as a "pantheon" situated outside the up-market central placements of this grandest of graveyards. It is laid out as a little 'city of the dead' with a grid of streets. In fact to get to the placement indicated in the guide map, which I spotted simply by the word *baseball*, I was obliged to take a taxi from the entrance. It was an astonishing edifice, perhaps 14 feet at its highest point, with an effigy of a ballplayer in uniform towering over. The bigger-than-life figure is truncated a foot below the crotch, with his left hand resting on the knob of a bat. Before him, just where the three-quarter length statue ends, is a ball in a catcher's glove laying flat, above eye level. It is fronted on its pedestal by an unidentifiable round moustached head carved as part of the overall piece. Below on a granite supporting pedestal, about 8 feet high, are two bronze crossed bats with a catcher's mitt and ball in the middle, surrounded by a laurel with a large round bronze portrait beneath, engraved *"Emilio Sabourin – annos 1878-1895"*. It is not clear as to whether this inscription relates to the main figure, however it is clear that a representation of a catcher is intended as a featured detail.

On the main supporting base of the edifice, probably 200 square feet, upon which all the sections stand, are several raised stone graves, and beneath centred at the bottom is the main inscription: *"ASSOCIATION CRISTIANA DE PLAYERS UMPIRES y MANAGERS DE BASE-BALL PROFESSIONAL, 1942"* Without an acute grasp of Spanish it is still clear the grave honours an Association of Christians, and the various names listed are of those who sponsored and financed the site. Above, on the front of one of the raised stone graves off to one side is a prominently displayed white stone plaque carved in black letters the heading: *"SECUNDARON EFICAZMENTE LA CONSTRUCCION DE ESTE PANTEON"*, followed by 14 names. Loose translation: *Pantheon built by for these gentlemen: "Los Senores: Horacio Alonso, Jose Sosa, Antonio Mosa, Antonio Ma de Cardenas, Alfredo Suarez, Paul J. Miller, Pedro M. Bauza, Rafael Inclan, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, Euslaquio Gutierrez, Alfredo Menendoz, Manuel Alonso, Tomas Miguillon, Jose Ma Fernandez."* On the end of the main platform is another white and black plaque with a list of men inscribed: *"ESTE PANTEON SE CONSTRUYO POR INICIATIVA DE"* (and below in

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The Chicken Or The Egg, continued

from page 1

The feeling is not assuaged by turning to the entry for rounders and finding there the statement "The earliest known literary reference to rounders was in 1744 when "A Little Pretty Pocket Book" included a woodcut of the game and a verse under it under the name of (wait for it) 'Base Ball'." The Oxford Companion goes on to cite R.W. Henderson's book "Ball, Bat & Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games" in which the author maintains that baseball stems from the English game. Not having been able to get hold of Henderson's book, I am unable to comment on the basis of his argument, but whatever it is it doesn't seem to have lessened the confusion of those responsible for the relevant companion entries. The problem is becoming one of semantics and may be stated thus: baseball evolved from rounders, only rounders, at the time when baseball was evolving from it, wasn't called rounders, it was called baseball. Got it? Good.

In justice (or injustice) to the compilers of the Oxford Companion I must observe that they manage to get their boxer-shorts in a similar tangle over cricket. In the book's lengthy cricket entry there is a section dealing with the origins of the game which gives a wonderfully English Heritage account of how it arose out of the Saxon mists, played (this is all quite specific) by shepherds - particularly in Kent and Sussex where the terrain favoured its development - using hurdle gates as wickets, their crooks as bats and bundles of wool as balls. Very picturesque indeed.

Unfortunately for the coherence of this fairy story, in other entries it is suggested that cricket came about through the marriage of two other games, club ball and stool ball, both of which, in historical reference, post-date those cunning shepherds batting the wool around the gate with their crooks. I give you this from the entry on stool ball: "It was one of the two older pastimes from which the modern game of cricket probably sprang, ...the idea of bowling at a wicket, an essential feature in the development of cricket, was borrowed from stool ball where, as the name suggests, the wicket was a stool." Compare this with the following: "Club ball was an ancient pastime played with a stick and ball and ... [a] 'rude and unadulterated simplicity'. (Sounds like Lenny Dykstra's kind of game.) It is important because it introduced the straight (as opposed to curved) bat and, it seems, the placing of fielders to catch the ball." This, combined with the use of the stool as wicket in stool ball, apparently equals the recognizable ancestor of modern cricket. Poor old John Arlott, chewing over all this in the great Long Room in the sky, might well be tempted to call for another bottle of claret.

So, our earliest references to baseball (so called) are early-to-mid eighteenth century. Rounders - which as it is now played, has always seemed to me to be a rather stilted and artificial game; one that gives the feeling of having been codified by P.E. teachers rather than naturally evolved by players - gets no historical reference that I know about prior to 1827. Before that every (English) commentator assumes it is an old English game but all his historical sources refer to it as 'base ball'. Cartwright drew up his rules in 1845. The first governing body for rounders did not come into being until 1889.

My researches in the Oxford Companion also led me to the entry for Welsh baseball (of which we have read previously in this newsletter). It says in part, "Supporters of this form of the sport claim that the American game grew from Welsh baseball. The ancient [that word again] game of rounders flourished in the West of England and almost certainly led to this refinement building up in South Wales. It spread to isolated pockets of England, notably around Liverpool." Internal migration of the Welsh to Liverpool, of which there was a great deal, would, of course, easily explain this, but why should the mere process of crossing the Bristol Channel change the name of the game from rounders to baseball?

Then there is Irish rounders. I've seen this game played. It is also called base rounders, as it uses bases rather than posts, and it is described in the Oxford Companion as being "...very similar to the softball version of baseball." This is accurate enough not to warrant any quibbling from me. And, it may be Irish chauvinism on my part but I find it a much more attractive game than the English version.

Then we have Pesapallo: Finnish baseball. Also known as 'nest ball' and 'burn ball'. (Surely Nolan Ryan didn't come from Helsinki.) It is said to be based on modern baseball and certain traditional Finnish games such as kuningaspallo, pitkapallo and (wouldn't you know it) rounders, called in Finnish the 'four goals' and in Swedish brannboll.

The last entry in the Oxford Companion to which I will refer is for the certifiably ancient game of trap ball. This game is recorded as being played at least as long ago as the fourteenth century, being especially associated with Shrove Tuesday festivities. The game is essentially the same as baseball or rounders but for the fact that the ball instead of being thrown was projected toward the hitter by means of a miniature version of the type of catapult used at that period to hurl cauldrons of molten lead at one's military adversaries. This medieval pitching machine consisted of a spoon suspended by a thole between two uprights; the thin, or handle, end of the spoon being struck downwards thus slinging the ball at the batter. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun. There are no entries in the Oxford Companion for town ball, or for one- or two-old-cat, that 'favorite of boyhood' which Ward maintained was the one true lineal ancestor of baseball. Perhaps the omissions occur because these games are thought to be too strictly American and 'unorganized'. However, there are references in the trap ball entry to games with such suggestive names as tribet, tip cat, kit-kat and others using various combinations of stick, ball, and hole culminating in Knurr and Spell, a game widely played in Yorkshire and appearing to be one of a number of games developed from a variety of primitive Scandanavian golf.

Having had some fun with inconsistencies of the Oxford Companion compilers, I feel that it is only fair to leave the last word with them. In the cricket entry, after all that flap-doodle about Kentish shepherds, there is this wisely modest observation: "The basic pattern of one person casting a ball at a target - hurdle, gate, stool or stone - defended by another who tries to hit the ball away with a stick is so simple that it may well have separate origins in different communities..." In my present state of benign and ignorant agnosticism, I'll go with that for now.

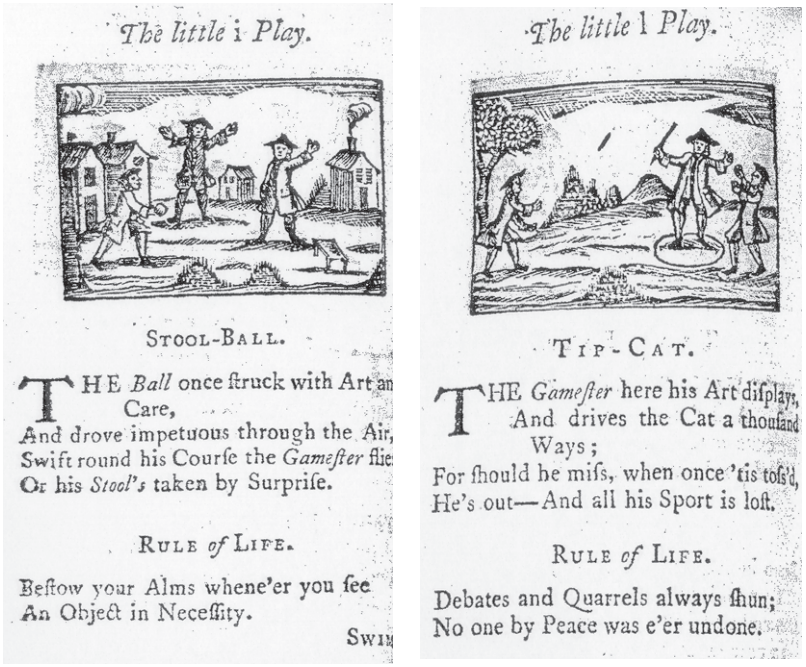
Dispersing the Mists of Time, continued

from page 15

writes "What may be the first game of an actual game of baseball played in America, and so called, is related in the *Journal* of a Revolutionary War soldier, George Ewing who at Valley Forge on April 7, 1778 'Exercisd in the afternoon in the intervals playd at base'". In both cases *base* is taken as *baseball*. More ironically, Henderson adds "and so called" after calling the Valley Forge account the first record of a baseball game. Yet the name wasn't at all the same. It's like confusing *York* with *New York*.

In Strutt's account, just before he lists the rules, he writes of the "grand match of base played in the fields behind Montague House", just behind the present British Museum. The game was generally played by adult men, rather than children. In 1801 Strutt says the Montague game was "about thirty years back", bringing it perilously close to the date of the Valley Forge game. Whether the same game could have been played in London and in America by Britons a generation or two removed must be considered. Whether the Valley Forge game was more *base* than *baseball* should not be pre-judged. And the question whether base could be an ancestor or other relation to baseball needs more research. Strutt writes than in Essex there was a variation of the game which added two prisons "in parallel to the home boundaries, and about thirty yards from them" thus making a rudimentary diamond. Yet the players didn't "run the bases", i.e. run in circuit from the first to the second and thereon, and any link is still tenuous. This needs more research.

In the same vein I am trying to understand the game in the Little Pretty Pocket Book, a London publication dating from 1744. This illustration is on page 10. At least this game was named "base-ball". Yet the differences with the modern game of baseball are numerous. First of all, there are posts instead of bases. That is not a problem; rounders uses posts instead of bases. And there is no bat. The "pitcher" stands by what we would know as second base, ready to throw the ball to someone ready to hit it with an open palm. But many of the rules of the early games mention using a "bat or hand" to hit the ball after it had been thrown. And only three bases are visible, but that could be because of the perspective. And early bat, ball and base games showed a varying number of bases, so that is not a problem. In fact, this lovely engraving with its teams of men in three-cornered hats, is about 80% of the game we know today. I find the differences fascinating rather than troubling. The fact that a game named *base-ball* could have had posts instead of bases, an open palm instead of a bat, and maybe more or less than four bases, is intriguing. Monte Ward points out in his "Ward's Baseball Book: How to become a player" that during his tour of Britain in 1888-89 that the British constantly remarked that Ward's game was "rounders with the rounder taken out". He logically asks that, if baseball was an old British game, didn't they make *that* comparison. Perhaps by that late time, the game known as baseball in Britain had long ago transformed itself into rounders. Or even disappeared completely. What actually did happen to baseball in Britain after the Little Pretty Pocket Book, 144 years before the World Tour? And a more tantalising question: which really is older, baseball or rounders? I'm sure there are references out there to be found which would clear up the questions.



Illustrations of stool ball *and* tip-cat, *from "The Little Pretty Pocket Book", 1770 edition.*

The Little Pretty Pocket Book also shows games such as trap-ball, stool-ball, and tip-cat, in addition to base-ball. These illustrations are shown in full on page 11. It is in these three games that I find the most resemblance to the baseball we know. But before I go into detail about these similarities, there are a few odds and ends that struck me from this research.

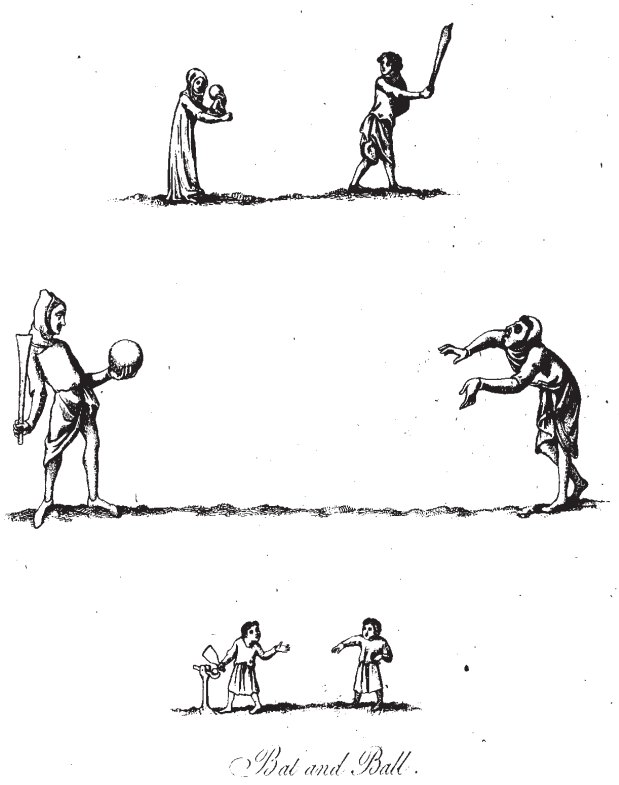
First, despite the fact that is it obvious that Henderson relied heavily on Strutt's work, there is one disagreement I found immediately. It concerns a game called "club ball". In chapter 19, the chapter about cricket, Henderson writes as club ball as the immediate ancestor of cricket, " First, if we understand by 'club ball' not the name of a specific game, but a generic term for ball games played with some form of club." Yet Strutt writes that "Club-ball is a pastime clearly distinguished from cambuc or golf, in the edict above mentioned [i.e. Edward III's]". He also presents two drawings taken from earlier illustrations from games he claimed were club-ball. [These are on page 12]. He then names club-ball as the origin of cricket. So Henderson

Dispersing the Mists of Time, continued

counters with "Strutt invented this term in 1808 [ed: the book was published in 1801], and his use of it has misguided historians into the belief that at one time there was an English ball game called 'club ball'. So far there is no evidence that there was such a nomenclature in English for a ball game." But Monte Ward writes "The first straight bats were used in the old English game called club ball". So who is right? Without more research it's anybody's guess.

But there was one aspect of Henderson that was well supported by Strutt, and that is Henderson's connection of medieval ball games with Easter ceremonies, and their connection with the Church, as everything was in that time. Strutt writes that "hand-ball was formerly a favourite pastime among the young persons of both sexes, and in many parts of the kingdom it was customary for them to play at this game during the Easter holidays for *tansy cakes*". Later he quotes a Chester antiquary who said it had been the custom from "time out of mind" for the shoemakers to yearly deliver a ball of leather, called a foot-ball, on Shrove Tuesday, the day that begins the period of Lent that ends on Easter Sunday.

There is one last point that also struck me. That is that the "Boy's Own Book" copies Strutt word for word in many places. About stool ball, the Boy's Own Book writes "In some parts of the country, a certain number of stools are set up in a circular form, at a distance from each other, and every one of them is occupied by a single player; when the ball is struck, which is done as before, with the hand, they are every one of them obliged to alter his situation, running in succession from stool to stool". Strutt writes about the same sport: "Again, in other parts of the country a certain number of stools are set up in a circular form, and at a distance from each other, and every one of them is occupied by a single player; when the ball is struck, which is done as before with the hand, they are every one of the obliged to alter his situation, running in succession from stool to stool.". As for foot-ball, the Boy's Own Book writes that "Foot-ball was formerly much in vogue in England, though, of late years, it seems to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practised." Strutt writes: "It was formerly much in vogue among the common people of England, though of late years it sees to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practised". The fact that a child's manual of the rules of commonly-known games could have borrowed wholesale from a scholarly work is an interesting twist in this search.



The top two drawings illustrate different versions of club ball, according to Strutt, while the bottom drawing is of trap ball. All are in the 1801 edition of "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England".

But while the "Boy's Own Book" mentions rounders, Strutt's book mentions neither rounders or baseball. So in a search for the origins of baseball, I looked for elements of baseball in the games that were listed. As I wrote before, these are many.

One of the games that Henderson names as a direct ancestor of baseball is **stool ball**. Of this game Strutt writes "I have been informed that a pastime called stool-ball is practised to this day in the northern parts of England, which consists in simply setting a stool upon the ground, and one of the players takes his place before it, while his antagonist, standing at a distance, tosses a ball with the intention of striking the stool; and this it is the business of the former to prevent by beating it away with the hand... If, on the contrary, it should be missed by the hand and touch the stool, the players change places: the conqueror at this game is he who strikes the ball most times before it touches the stool." This resembles cricket if you substitute the *stump* for the *stool*. If the ball passes the batsmen and hits the stump, the batsman is out. Also note that the "batter" actually beats the ball away with his hand, like the Little Pretty Pocket Book illustration of baseball. Note also, that there is no mention of bases or the "batter" running a circuit.

However, Strutt goes on: "In other parts of the country a certain number of stools are set up in a circular form, and at a distance from each other, and every one of them is occupied by a single player; when the ball is struck, which is done as before with the hand, they are every one of the them obliged to alter his situation, running in succession from stool to stool, and if he who threw the ball can regain it in time to strike any one of the players, before he reaches the stool to which he is running, he takes his place, and the person touched must throw the ball, until he can in like manner return to the circle." Now we're getting closer! Here we have a circuit of bases, each one occupied by a runner (who evidently doesn't have to hit safely to reach base). We also see the beginnings of baseball's "force play", where each runner has to move up a base when a runner is behind him. And interestingly, the runners are put out by being struck with the ball - "soaking", in other words. This was a feature of early versions of base-

Dispersing the Mists of Time, continued

ball (like town ball) that was finally abolished with the Knickerbocker rules of 1845. It is interesting to note that the "bases" version of stool ball was just a *variation* of the game. Like regional accents, it is obvious that different regions played different versions of games. And this is what makes research both more difficult and more interesting.

Henderson says stool ball is the parent of cricket, while Strutt disagrees, saying that cricket descended from **club ball.** This is the game that Henderson says is a generic and not specific tag. Strutt's description is largely based on two illustrations, reproduced on page 12. He does not date the drawings, but he does connect club ball with Edward III's 14th-century ban. And the dress in the drawings is clearly medieval. Strutt writes: "The first exhibits a female figure in the action of throwing a ball to a man who elevates his bat to strike it; behind the woman at a little distance appear in the original delineation several other figures of both sexes, waiting attentively to catch or stop the ball when returned by the batsman." Unlike stool ball, club ball uses a bat; in fact, that is how it gets its name. But there is no mention of the batter running after hitting the ball. An interesting point is the mixed-sex nature of the game; which has not been uncommon from then till now.

Strutt continues: "The second specimen of club-ball, which indeed is taken from a drawing more ancient than the former, present to us two players only, and he who is possessed of the bat holds the ball also, which he either threw into the air and struck with his bat as it descended, or cast forcibly upon the ground, and beat it away when it rebounded; the attention of his antagonist to catch the ball need not to be remarked." This description is reminiscent of hitting fungos. In school we did a similar exercise as a warmup before a baseball game. But the batter could either toss the ball in the air and hit it, or bounce it hard on the ground and hit it after the bounce. Surely an early version of the Baltimore chop! This hints that the ball was softer and more rubbery than a baseball.

The description of these two illustrations is all that Strutt writes about club ball. The pictures, obviously copies from the originals, are neither identified or dated. Henderson's scepticism regarding club ball might well be justified. Again, this is a story waiting to be written.

We now come to the grand English game of this time, if not all time: **cricket**. Cricket was so dominating that the Boy's Own Book, in its chapter on ball games, has one section on cricket and one section on "other games". Strutt writes: "From the club-ball origi-

Illustration of trap ball, from "The Boy's Own Book", 1849 edition.

nated, I doubt not, that pleasant and many exercise, distinguished in modern times by the name of cricket. The differences and similarities between cricket and baseball are too familiar to list here. But less familiar is his description of variations of cricket: "This game, which is played with the bat and the ball, consists of single and double wicket". Double wicket is similar to the current game, and the single wicket version is described this way: "At the single wicket the striker with his bat is the protector of the wicket, the opponent party stand in the field to catch or stop the ball, and the bowler, who is one of them, takes his place by the side of a small batton or stump set up for that purpose two and twenty yards from the wicket, and thence delivers the ball with the intention of beating it down. If ... the ball is struck by the bat and driven into the field beyond the reach of those who stand out to stop it, the striker runs to the stump at the bowler's station, which he touches with his bat and then returns to his wicket. If this be performed before the ball is thrown back, it is called a *run*."

Like many sports of the period, cricket had a varying number of "bases", a bit like the versions of the old U.S. game of cat, like "one old cat", "two old cat", etc. Has cricket ever been played with four bases?

"The Boy's Own Book" says about **trap-ball** "This game is, by many, considered to rank next to cricket." Strutt only says is "anterior [i.e. older] to cricket". That this was a popular game of the time is evident when "The Boy's Own Book" says "With the form of the trap our young readers are of course acquainted". The trap was actually a small catapult, spring-driven, that would hold the ball. The striker would spring the trap with his foot and strike with the ball with a small bat that resembled a large wooden spoon. Strutt writes "It is usual, in the present modification of the game, to place two boundaries at a given distance from the trap, between which it is neccesary for the ball to pass when it is struck by the batsman, for if it falls without side of either, he gives up his bat and is out." This is the first reference to the foul rule. This is important because the existence of foul territory is one of the main things that distinguishes baseball from cricket. Strutt continues: "He is also out if he strikes the ball into the air and it is caught by one of the his adversaries before it grounds." This is the fly rule, a feature of both baseball and cricket. "And again, if the ball when returned by the opponent party touches the trap, or rests within one bat's length of it." This is similar to the put out. And the "Boy's Own Book" says "It is not necessary to make the game in one inning". The *inning* is a hallmark both of baseball and cricket, but note the usage in the singular, like the American game!

Strutt lists a variation of the game played in Essex: "for instead of a broad bat with a flatted face, they used a round cudgel about an inch and a half in diameter and three feet in length, and those who had acquired the habit of striking the ball this instrument rarely miss their blow, but frequently drive it to an astonishing distance." The first reference to power hitting! But still, unlike stool ball and cricket, trap ball is purely a hitting and catching game, with no running element.

Dispersing the Mists of Time, continued

"**Tip-cat**, or perhaps more properly, the game of *cat,* is a rustic pastime well known in many parts of the kingdom. Its denomination is derived from a piece of wood called a *cat*, about six inches in length and an inch and a half or two inches in diameter. The player with its cudgel strikes it smartly, in the same manner as he would a ball". Strutt then says, unsurprisingly, that there are many variations, and lists two of them. One of them has the batter standing in the middle of a large circle drawn on the ground, and trying to hit the cat outside of the circle.

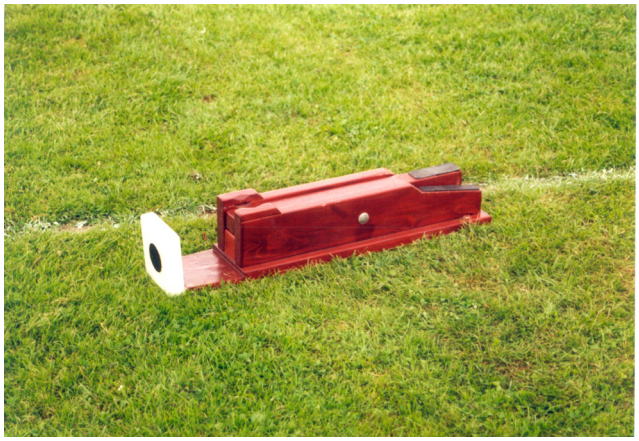
More importantly "The second method is to make four, six, or eight holes in the ground in a circular direction, and as nearly as possible at equal distances from each other, and at every hole is placed a player with his bludgeon; one of the opposite part who stand in the field, tosses the cat to the batsman who is nearest him, and every time the cat is struck the players are obliged to change their situations, and run once from one hole to another in succession; if the cat be driven to any great distance they continue to run in the same order, and claim a score towards their game every time they quit one hole and run to another; but if the cat be stopped by their opponents and thrown across between any two of the holes before the player who has quitted one of them can reach the other, he is out." This version get closer to baseball. It has a bat (cudgel or bludgeon), unlike stoolball. It has bases, like cricket and stoolball. It has runners who run the bases in succession, like cricket and stoolball. Like cricket and unlike baseball, it has a striker at each base. A unique aspect of the game is its use of an irregular piece of wood instead of a ball, which would give it an irregular path, and thus be harder to catch, especially on the bounce. A bit like a rugby ball or American football. I have heard of a U.S. game, in living memory, that used as a ball a bit of wood with a nail driven it in, to give it untrue bounces. Has anyone ever heard of this game? Another question is about the connection between the English game of tip-cat and the U.S. pre-baseball game of "one old cat" and "two old cat". Irving Leitner, in "Baseball: Diamond in the Rough" says "it has been suggested that the familiar game one o' cat ... originally was known as 'one hole cat'. Such a description would be in perfect harmony with Strutt's description of tip-cat, in which 'every time the cat is struck' players 'quit one hole and run to another.'"

Lastly we come to **rounders.** Of rounders , "The Boy's Own Book" says it is "a favourite game with bat and ball, especially in the west of England", which is Jane Austen country. The entry on rounders is printed in its entirety on page 13. This game is, of course, the closest to baseball yet seen. It would be easier to list the differences. Most importantly, the runner is put out by being struck by the ball, and not tagged or forced out. The feeder (or pitcher) is allowed to fake a throw, violating baseball's balk rule. There are no strikes, balls, or fouls. And rounder has the "rounder", in which one of the last two players may opt to be given two tries to circle the bases before the ball is returned. If he makes it, the whole side gets the bat again; if not, the inning is over.

The subject of the relationship between baseball and rounders has filled volumes. It is a game that is commonly known as the English parent of baseball, though that has never been proven. It may be more correctly a cousin, a maybe even a younger cousin, to baseball. Suffice it to say at this time that references to the word baseball go farther back than rounders. What exactly is the relation between these two similar sports? We need to dig deeper.

All this is of course only skimming the surface. There are so many questions to be answered: I hope we've asked some of them here. The study of the ancestors and origins of baseball is a wide-open field, because so little has already been written. It can be a difficult and frustrating path; the references that interest us are frustratingly rare. I know there must be more than four references to baseball in the 1700's. It was described as well-known and commonly played. The first reference dates from exactly 1700. Imagine if someone could find a 17th century reference! And of the four, only the Little Pretty Pocket Book gives a hint of the rules. Can more information on this be discovered? And of course, the relationship to rounders always bedevils us. Is the child father to the man? Can we find more early references to rounders, and especially those that use it in the same breath as baseball. Do you think any newspaper articles about the 1874 tour, or even the 1888 tour, describe baseball in comparison with any British games?

This is virgin territory, and one could make important discoveries with very little effort. So give it a go - great things await!



A modern trap, Knockholt, Kent

Baseball and Cricket - Cross Currents, continued

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can appease the fairer sex here by claiming that this generally feminine pastime is, in fact, a father of both the games under discussion.

Baseball influences on Cricket's development

Baseball may have failed to conquer Cricket but it has exercised significant influences on the English game's development. Let me turn first, or rather at last, to the 'Gentleman of Philadelphia' who continued to play Cricket long after the rest of America had turned to the other game and who in their tours of England in 1897, 1903 and 1908 showed they could give most English first-class counties as good as they got.

The 'gentlemen' of the various elite Philadelphia clubs were, it has to be faced, a bunch of moneyed snobs. Indeed, I sometimes think that it was the snobbishness of Philadelphia which was largely responsible for branding Cricket as a 'stuck-up' game in popular American perception. In any event, as they prepared to set out for England in the summer of 1897, the Gentlemen of Philadelphia found they were short of a really penetrative bowler. A non-'gentleman', in that his trip had to be subsidised, was recruited by the name of John Barton King (1873 - 1965). King had a lethal delivery which he called 'the angler', a product of his experience as a Baseball pitcher, which, time and again, would prove the ruin of English batsmen. On his last tour in 1908 'Bart' King topped the England bowling averages with the extraordinary figure of 11.01 which was not to be bettered until 1958 by Les Jackson of Derbyshire with a figure 10.99.

You may be the judge of 'Bart' King's impact on the English game when I tell you it was confidently rumoured that he was offered the hand of a rich widow in order to enable him to play regularly as an amateur in County Cricket. Technically, the impact was altogether more far-reaching. England's faster bowlers, who had hitherto depended on sheer pace with perhaps a last second application of spin, suddenly became 'complete anglers' in the Barton King mould. A former trundler like Yorkshire's George Hirst started to shatter stumps with balls that ducked in, some said, with the force of a hard throw in from mid-off. The 'swingers' multiplied through the decades to the near- extinction of the Lord's purists' beloved off side play.

By and large England continued not to play Baseball, but Australians did. And this fact alone began to reflect adversely on England's performance in Test matches. Good fielding was not traditionally a great feature of English cricket. Even in 'The Golden Age' (the first decade of this century) we find a statistician calculating that a total of 1,439 surplus runs had been scored in one week in July by batsmen who should have been safely caught by the fielding side. Since the beginning of the 'Ashes' Test matches, Australians have tended to produce safer pairs of hands. In his book The Art of Cricket the great Sir Donald Bradman suggests an explanation - Australian cricketers play Baseball, at least their finest fieldsmen tended to have. To quote:

"Those who have watched crack baseball teams know how they get under a catch and never seem likely to miss. The glove is a tremendous help of course, but many baseball-cricketers still use the same technique with bare hands. Neil Harvey was an arch exponent of this and that wonderfully safe catcher Victor Richardson always took the ball as high as possible."

With the advent of One Day Cricket English fielding has improved immeasurably, even though we still seem to drop the vital catches. But it can reasonably be claimed that the improvement began with Englishmen imitating Australians who played American Baseball.

Summary

It's nearly the year 2000 and the two nations still seem set on keeping their national games to themselves. In the US, Cricket has crept in through the back door with the Caribbean leagues. But I am not aware that many new converts have been won, although an Indian New York taxi driver told my son the other weekend that he was proud to have seen Ted Dexter bat at Hove. Certainly Philadelphian cricket is today a series of disused temples. I visited the Philadephian Cricket Club itself in 1989. Now an elite country club, it keeps the name and the snobbery and an actual cricket bat still hangs over the bar. However, the barman was unable to offer any explanation as to what the curious instrument might be. Here your distinguished body continues the fight to win English hearts and minds for your cherished game.

Allen Synge passed away on February 24 of this year. This article is presented as a memorial to him. Allen was the one who first revealed to us that stoolball and trapball were still being played in these Isles, and we were honoured to know him.

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fielded immediately, they have the option of running back and forth from wicket to wicket, scoring a run for each time they make the traverse. A hit ball that rolls over the boundary on the ground scores four runs, and one hit in the air that clears it scores six runs. There are four ways for the batsman to be out: 1) "caught", i.e. flied out; 2) "run out", having the ball get to the wicket the runner is heading towards before she reaches it, a bit like the force play; 3) "bowled out", in which the bowlers strikes the wicket with the ball, throwing it past the batsman untouched, and 4) "body before wicket (BBW)", similar to cricket's "leg before wicket", and which the umpire decides that the batsman would have been bowled out if she had not been standing directly in front of the wicket and deflected the ball. There are no free bases for HBP's in stoolball.

In studying the genealogy of ball games, one quickly learns that it is easy to find similarities, e.g. stoolball with cricket, or baseball with rounders, but proving ancestry is completely different. Stoolball has a lot of rules in common with cricket, for instance the 4-run and 6-run rules. But whether cricket got them from stoolball or stoolball got them from cricket is open to debate. It was my gut feeling on first viewing the game, and I can't prove this, that there was a lot of back-influence from cricket to the game of stoolball. In other words, cricket may have, and probably did, spring from stoolball, but cricket was codified much earlier, while stoolball remained a pastoral pastime with rules that varied from county to county, indeed village to village. When it was time to set down the official rules of stoolball, which I later learned was 1881, I have no doubt that gaps or inconsistencies in the stoolball rules were filled in by cricket rules. A subject for further research.

We watched the game from a long while, taking photographs and video, and then the clouds moved in, and the late evening sun moved towards evening twilight. Soon night would fall, and we felt it was the time to move on. But we had one more errand to run. Allen asked if we could stop by the church on the hill that overlooked the town green. It turned out his parents were buried there; evidently Allen's roots in this area were deeper than I thought.

I gave him his privacy at his parent's resting places; my attention had been captured by a duck pond just below the church. There was a mother duck with a long string of baby ducks, paddling around the pond. As I watched them I reflected upon the great

circle of life and death, with a group of baby ducks below and a churchyard above, and an ancient game with ancestors very much alive, still being played in the Sussex countryside.

Of course I excitedly reported all this back to Japan, to Mr. Sayama. We immediately wrote back and said he would be visiting England to watch this ancient game! He also sent me his c.v. He had written numerous books and articles on both Japanese and American baseball, as well as Japanese translations of books such as "The Boys of Summer" and Satchel Paige's "Maybe I'll Pitch Forever". It also seems he has been interested in stoolball for many years, because he also sent me a copy of a photograph of him playing stoolball at Plimoth Plantation. Plimoth Plantation is a recreation of the original English colonial settlement of Plymouth, Massachusetts, complete with actors in period costume. The photo shows Kazuo bowling toward a batsman stationed in front of a stool, with everyone but him dressed as the original Pilgrim settlers. Stoolball was the first game reported to have been played in the Americas, by the Massachusetts colonists in 1621.

About that time the National Stoolball Association booklet arrived. The rules were pretty much what I had learned so far, in addition to such facts as the names of the fielding positions, e.g. the bowler, wicket keeper, mid wicket on, slip on, slip off, mid wicket off, deep mid wicket off, deep over off, deep mid on/off, deep mid cover on/square leg area, and deep mid wicket on. The booklet advised "The bowler should try several different deliveries to unsettle the batsman". I read about a certain delivery called the "donkey drop", which is a high and slow ball that drops just on or behind the wicket. The book says "This delivery fools many batsmen and they have difficulty making a stroke".

The booklet also contained a copy of a fascinating article from "The Sussex County Magazine" from July, 1928. It gave an account of the history of the game. The seminal character in twentieth-century stoolball history was Major W. W. Grantham of Balneath Manor, Sussex, who was responsible for the stoolball revival in 1917. The article waggishly asks the question "Did Major Grantham revive the Sussex round frock, or smock, as a suitable garment in which to disport himself at stoolball, or did he revive stoolball in order to show off his fine smock?" The article then gives a few references to stoolball going back to 1450, in which the game was forbidden to be played in churchyards.

One reference that particularly interested me was "About 1630 a

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Puritan records that 'Maidstone was formerly a very profane town, where stoolball and other games were practised on the Lord's Day'". The first reference to baseball yet uncovered has been dated 1700 in every book I've read. It was written by the Reverend Thomas Wilson of Maidstone, Kent, who wrote in dismay "I have seen Morris-dancing, cudgel-playing, baseball and cricketts, and many other sports on the Lord's Day." If this is the same reference, maybe a much earlier date is possible. A subject for further research. The article goes on to say that Major Grantham was convinced that "stoolball in some form or other was the progenitor of cricket, rounders, and baseball". This was long before Henderson wrote his words in agreement.

Stoolball never completely died out. Indeed, Major Grantham played the game as a youth. There exists a beautiful illustration of a stoolball match in Horsham Park in Sussex, between Horsham Park and the Foresters, two female teams, in 1878. This match was played by cricket rules, except that the batsman had to tap the wicket after every ball, and was out if the wicket keeper touched the face of the wicket with the ball first. It was noted that "the match was spoiled by one incident. Miss Florrie Lucas, of Horsham Park, managed to edge the ball so that it curled round and lodged in her hair, of which she had quite a lot. She asked the wicket keeper to take it out, which was done, but the Rev. C. Hodgson, one of the umpires, gave her out 'caught', without having been appealed to. This broke their hearts and led to 'remarks', which nearly ended in play being stopped for good."

Major Grantham revived the sport in July 1917. At the time the First World War was raging, and Major Grantham was serving on the Military Tribunal. His eldest son had been badly wounded in France, and the Major was moved to provide some sport for the "battered heroes of the war in our military hospitals". Cricket and tennis were deemed to strenuous for those who had lost limbs or otherwise handicapped; stoolball seemed to be the ideal game. A seminal match was played that year on the Sussex County Cricket Ground, between soldiers from the Pavilion Hospital "damaged by wounds" and a team of ancient lawyers, including Major Grantham, "damaged by age". The soldiers won.

Major Grantham, besides being a tireless champion of stoolball, was also an excellent chronicler of the sport. He wrote two books on the sport and his copious scrapbooks, notes, and artefacts still reside in the Sussex County Archives in Lewes. The game grew and thrived, and started being played in Japan, France, Canada, Africa, Australia, and other countries. The 1917 revival led to the institution, in 1923, of the Stoolball Association for Great Britain.

The Stoolball Association ceased to exist in 1946, after the Second World War and the death of Major Grantham dampened enthusiasm. But the game still continued to be played, and in 1979 the present National Stoolball Association was formed, and has been going strong ever since.

The N.S.A. booklet had a note "For further information contact: Mrs. K.R. Price, Secretary". I was interested in finding out how widely played the game was, so I gave her a call. She was a gold mine of information. Stoolball is very popular not only in Sussex, but also in nearby counties. For instance, Surrey has 25 teams in a league and Kent has 12-15 teams. Sussex, however, has 60 teams that are part of a league. In the Eastbourne area alone are 10 leagues. Plus there are lots of non-league teams. In Sussex every village has a team. I talked for quite a while to Kay and her husband John, the Vice-President of the N.S.A. They were both very aware of stoolball's long history, and very keen to make sure that the history would continue. John mentioned to me some upcoming tournaments, including the Sussex County Championship in Seaford on August 9, which pitted the top five teams from each league against each other. The "Rest of League Tournament" was the weekend after in Plumpton Green, in which the next five teams from each league would square off against each other. In addition, there would be the "Day of Stoolball", at Wivelsfield Green on September 9, an informal event where stoollballers from all over would meet, be arranged in pickup teams, and play their sport all day long.

August 9 dawned semi-overcast, but as we got nearer to the English Channel, the clouds broke and it turned into a gloriously sunny Sunday. The quaint antique-print scene in Wisborough Green did nothing to prepare me for the spectacle at Seaford. The playing field was monstrous, and it seemed like multitudes of stoolballers stretched to the horizon. At Wisborough Green I saw two teams; here were 25 teams, and this was only the cream of the crop. I finally started to get an inkling of the game's popularity. I stood, open-mouthed, at the perimeter for a few moments, and then we made our way toward the action. There was a total of four stoolball pitches (playing circles) laid out in close proximity, staggered like the Olympic rings, with four concurrent matches taking place. In addition there were throngs of relatives, friends and interested parties watching the play from the edges. We approached the small clubhouse and my wife said "Martin, I'm going to the bathroom". Almost immediately a genial-looking man in his 60's walked up and said to me "Are you Martin Hoerchner?", even pronouncing my surname correctly, which you normally wouldn't do from the spelling. I was flummoxed; had my fame preceded me? It turned out to be John Price of the N.S.A. He welcomed us heartily and introduced us to his wife Kay, who I had talked to on the phone.

John was acting as officiator of the tournament - I don't know his exact title, but he basically ran it. He had a desk set up where the scores were kept and results tabulated, and the area around him was a beehive of activity. Players would come up to him at regular intervals reported scores - Burwash beat Graffham 119-79; Ringmer beat Maresfield 100-64. He would mark them on a chart and the winner would proceed to the next round. He would get on the P.A. and summon Geebro and Adastra to pitch three in five minutes. Kay seemed to be disappearing and reappearing with lightning speed, going here and there on varying errands. They worked together like a well-oiled machine.

Despite his duties John was very gracious and helpful in supplying stoolball knowledge. He explained the layout of the tournament, and pointed out some of the teams. They seemed to be generally

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not from larger towns, but from small villages with exotic names like Sidley, Ditching, Mountfield, Newick, and Angmering. He also explained how the rules varied from regular stoolball, in that there were only eight players on a team instead of eleven and the number of overs is reduced. He said tournament stoolball is a lot faster than town stoolball, and many runs are scored. In fact, he offered so much information I couldn't keep up with him, being without notebook or tape recorder.

Duty called him back to the desk, so we took off and walked around the pitches, taking photos and shooting video. Here a tall blonde in blue and yellow bowls a wicked underarm ball to a cowering girl in green and white. There a confident batsman holds her place as the ball comes in, waiting a final moment, and giving the ball an affirmative whack! On a far pitch fielders scramble after a ball hit far, retrieving it just before it reaches the perimeter and returning it as runners chase each other back and forth from wicket to wicket. It was like a three-ring circus, only there were four rings. It was an incredible spectacle, under a very uncharacteristic English bright sunny summer's day. And in the background, if you walked to the far end of the playing field, rose huge chalk cliffs, which the south coast of England is famous for. Picture postcard stuff - it's on the cover of the Examiner.

The spectators clustered around the edges of the four circular pitches. Some had lawn chairs, some had deck chairs, some were spread out on blankets, and many brought ice chests full of food and drinks for picnicking. Some were engaged in mortal combat with beach umbrellas in the wind. I saw a small boy swinging a cricket bat on the sidelines as his father bowled him a ball. He hit it with authority and it went rolling down the well-manicured lawn. The father shouted "That's a real daisy cutter!". I was amazed to hear that term, which describes a fast ground ball, because the only time I had ever came across it was in an explanation of baseball terms from the 1880's. What goes around comes around, as they say. The great circle once again.

We walked the whole circuit of the playing field and came back to John and Kay. Noting the incredibly fine weather, I asked him if the tournament had ever been cancelled due to poor weather. He said no; in 27 years, it had always been completed. He said once in a while it had started in a drizzle, and with the enthusiasm of the players been completed in a driving rain, but had never been cancelled.

John then gave me the chance to hit a stoolball ball with a stoolball bat. He went into a duffle bag and dug out a few stoolball bats, of varying weights. I chose one of the heavier ones, and my wife pitched the ball, and I whacked it with the bat, which now felt a lot more substantial than a ping pong paddle, and the ball soared into the air. I not only felt the thrill of Barry Bonds hitting one over the fences, I also felt the thrill of a 15th century milk maid hitting one into the next cow pasture! He gave me a stoolball ball, which I'd come to admire as a miniature baseball. John also gave me a ball used in indoor stoolball, a derivation of the game invented for those long rainy English winters. It's also white with red stitches. This ball was actually an official rounders ball; it's about halfway the size between a stoolball ball and a baseball. From stoolball to rounders to baseball, the ball grows larger as the game progresses. Though I would say that the rounders ball seemed to be the softest, with the stoolball next and the baseball the hardest.

In talking to John and Kay, it turned out that they had a keen knowledge and appreciation of the long history of stoolball, which I found gratifying. I asked if they had ever held a match in old style costumes, and John said they had, in 1997, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first Sussex vs. Kent match, on Rusthall Common. [Photo on page 10.] In fact, the National Stoolball Association is planning to recreate the 1878 Horsham Park match previously described for the Millenium celebrations, in the original location and in full costume. John and Kay are actually from Horsham, and they said the setting exists pretty much as it did in the illustration.

John and Kay were once more called to duty, and we thanked them and moved on, as we had a long drive home to make. Before we left we took a short stroll along the shingle beach, and I walked along the pebbles still in awe of the scale of the support for stoolball in Sussex.

Of course I reported all this back to Mr. Sayama. He wrote back that he was coming over to England with his wife, but couldn't make it until September. He was concerned about coming too late for the stoolball season, but he was in luck. September 9 would be the "Day of Stoolball", an informal tournament which originally celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Queen's accession, which would be held at Wivelsfield Green in Sussex. So we made plans to meet there.

In the flurry of letters exchanged between Japan and England, Mr. Sayama once enclosed a photocopy from a book entitled "The Man Who Invented Baseball" by Harold Petersen. It mentioned the ancient game of trap ball, stating "Trap ball is still played, usually by men and particularly in Kent". I live

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in Kent and Mr. Sayama wondered if I knew anything about trap ball being played currently. To make a long story short, it was John Price who discovered the game had been played as a pub game in the south of England fairly recently, and discovered at least one pub (in Gillingham, Kent) where the game is still being played. The season starts on May 18 this year and they play on Wednesday nights, on the grass behind the pub. Someday soon I expect to report on a live brontosaurus lumbering around the southern English countryside.

September 9, the Day of Stoolball, dawned wet and blustery. The Seaford weather couldn't be duplicated. I took off in a driving rain, and once it became so intense I couldn't drive and had to pull over while it abated. It stopped raining by the time I got to Wivelsfield Green, but the sky was still angry and the wind was still strong.

The signs lead me to town, but before I got there this playing field appeared. This must be the place! It was just on the outskirts. I pulled into the parking lot on the edge of the field; just to the left were some brick buildings, including a meeting hall and a small club house. The scene before me was very different from either Wisborough Green or Seaford. There were three pitches. And the atmosphere was very subdued, most likely due to the perilous nature of the weather. The stoolballers were not dressed in uniform, like I'd seen before.

I'd come on my own, so I parked the car and set out to find Mr. Sayama, John and Kay Price, Mike Ross, Allen Synge, or any combination of the above. When I made it to the club house I came across both Prices and Mr. Sayama. It turned out that he had made contract with the Prices on his arrival in Britain; they were already on a first-name basis. Mr. Sayama, I learned, was referred to as "Kaz", and his wife Sedtz was referred to as "Setts". We exchanged hearty greetings after having had such a lively correspondence. Almost as soon as we made contact, Mike and Allen showed up, and we soon were engaged in lively conversation. Kaz, who is in his 60's, talked about watching Satchel Paige pitch in San Francisco. He told how he would load the bases and then strike out the side, confirming a story that had been only legend to me. I asked Kaz if Satchel would also call in the outfield and then either strike out the side or make them ground out, and he said he saw that too. It was baseball history coming alive to me.

I had my own bombshell that set the baseball people buzzing. I checked the internet that morning, which was September 9, and the previous night in the States, which would have been early morning U.K. time, Mark McGwire hit his 62rd home run of the season, breaking one of baseball's most cherished records. Kaz was dumbfounded, and drew a circle in the air. We all knew what he meant. It was the great circle again. On a day that we viewed a game at least half a millennium old, a milestone was reached in a game that was the child, or grandchild, or great-grandchild of that same game. The past and present came together in one moment. It was an auspicious day indeed to watch stoolball.

The tournament consisted of stoolballers organised into six pickup teams. In previous years they were given the letters "A" through "F", but this year they thought to make things a bit more human by giving the teams names, conveniently starting with the letters from A to F - the Amazons, Braves, Cobras, Dragons, Elks and Falcons. John made me laugh when he said the "E" was at first going to be the Elephants, but then someone mentioned the fact that very few woman would want to be known as an "elephant". Good point, but I can't image many women wanting to be a dragon, either. They would play a knockout tournament and the final two teams would play for the championship.

Soon after we arrived there was a break for lunch. The players and friends retired to the meeting hall, where a light meal was presented. John Price made a brief speech, where he described the meaning of the "Day of Stoolball". Besides the official reason, he said that this day was one where stoolballers from all over could play and meet each other, and come in contact with stoolball legends as Barbie Jenner or Barbie Weir. The stoolball community seems to be very tightknit, and successful players over the years attain legendary status without recourse to mass media, but only through their reputations spread by word of mouth.

John then introduced us, Kaz and Allen and Mike and myself, as the "International Sporting Press". Kaz spoke and told us that after the war had ended in 1945 - he was 9 - that three things came together: peace, democracy, and baseball, and he would always associate those them together. Baseball had been popular in Japan since 1874, but had been suppressed during World War II as a foreign influence. But after the war baseball was allowed to blossom again, and Japan soon became only the second country to support professional baseball.

Chapter Chairman Mike Ross

Stoolball Is Alive And Well In Sussex, continued

then spoke a few words of greeting, and posed two research questions to the crowd: has anyone heard of the game of trap ball being played in recent memory, and has anyone heard of "tansy cakes"? Tansy cakes were mentioned by Joseph Strutt and later Robert Henderson as being the prize offering to victorious ball teams in Easter festivities, and traced back to Biblical times. This question later brought forth a response - a recipe in an old English book "The Compleat Housewife (or Accomplished Gentlewomen's Companion)" by Eliza Smith, first published in 1758. After Mike's speech Setts Sayama was presented with a lovely basket of flowers, and Kaz was presented with, as if bringing "coals to Newcastle", John Price said, a bottle of sake. Both gifts were heartily appreciated.

Afterwards the food was served and the cooks were thanked with a round of applause. Play resumed after the meal; unfortunately the weather hadn't improved in the least. At one point players and spectators were scattered by a particularly fierce shower, but it was short and the stoolballers were back to their game in no time. As we watched the game, John had time to explain to me some of the finer points of the game. Earlier he showed me coloured practice cones that were used to help batsmen place their hits between fielders. He pointed out that bowling is always underarm, with no allowed wrist snap, but it still can get very fast. The game has the fly rule, and balls have to be caught on the fly for the batsman/runner to be out. In fact batsmen are encouraged to hit the ball down, so it won't be caught and they at least have a chance of making it to the other wicket. As in all bat and ball games, the fielders get to know the batters and where they hit and position themselves accordingly. Also, the bowlers know how the batsman hits and they try to cross them up. We watched one woman who had a very unorthodox stroke - she hit the ball directly behind her! John said such a tactic would be very effective, usually making a definite four runs, until the fielders got wind of it, and positioned themselves correspondingly. He used two terms that had always confused me in cricket, hitting toward the "on" or the "off". I asked and the answer was simple - the "on" was what in baseball would be called "pull hitting", and the "off" would be called "hitting to the opposite side". Actually, the cricket/stoolball terms seemed to make more sense! That explains terms like "mid-off", but I'll never understand why cricket has a fielding position called "silly mid-off". Later on I saw an example of a runner being "run out". The fielders were hurrying a ball towards a wicket to get there in front of a runner; it was a close contest. They threw the ball at the wicket, the square wooden bit, before the runner touched her bat to it, and she was out. I asked why the fielder didn't hold the ball in her hand when she touched and wicket, and John said it was for two reasons: 1), if the fingers got between the bat and the wicket it could get quite painful, and 2), if the fielder was holding the ball you couldn't tell if the ball had actually touched the wicket ahead of the bat. Fair enough, I thought, if it was crucial that the ball and not just the hand holding the ball touches the wicket first.

The final match was played between the Elks and the Falcons. The sun broke through as they took the field, and that lovely late afternoon light broke through the clouds to bathe the players. In the end the Elks triumphed, and almost immediately followed a presentation, in which the victorious stoolballers queued up while John Price presented them with prizes. The queue stretched as the other players joined in, and it seemed that everyone got something. This event was about fellowship, not competition. Towards the end of the presentations I moved further back to take in the scene of lines of stoolballers queuing up to received recognition for their efforts in keeping an ancient ball game alive. I finally realised I was watching the last hurrah of maybe the 549th season that stoolball has been played in England. The National League at 123 years is a mere child in comparison.

I finally found myself at the edge of the parking lot, and thought I'd make a discreet exit. But before I got into my car, I turned around once more to take in the scene. The dark clouds were turning day into dusk as the stoolball crowd started breaking up; the great circle was once again in force. I turned for one last look and saw summer turning into autumn, and another stoolball season going into the record books and into history.

That's okay, because spring comes soon, and within months on village greens all over Sussex and Kent and Surrey we'll hear the thwack of bat against ball and the activity of fielders scurrying to return a ball to the next wicket. So will another season start in the sixth or seventh century that stoolball has been played in this fair isle.

As for me, I can hardly wait for opening day.

Henderson's Historical Method, continued

from page 23

scenes around the country-side at St. Lô, two of which show a game called jeu de boules or de tiquet. A small ground is enclosed in a low wattle fence. Within the enclosure, at some distance from each other, appear an arch, or low hoop, later called a "port", and a small cone-shaped marker, later called a 'king'. Three players and three balls indicate that each played his own ball, and each player carries a mace, or cure, which appears to be a long wooden stick with a spade-shaped, slightly curved end."

".... Jeu de boules is none other than the link between jeu de mail, as played on the ground, and the modern game of billiards, played on a table. The game was also called billard de terre, or ground billiards, a name which indicates a definite relationship. One other feature of this fifteenth century game justifies the claim that it was an ancestor of billiards: the ball could be caromed off the sides of the enclosure, which were commonly made of planks of wood."

Henderson concludes his case on pp.121-2 by stating that the next step was to put this game on a table. He notes that some claim that this was done by Henrique de Vigne in about the year 1571 for Henry III for his summer palace in Blois, but that this claim is not too well substantiated. On p.122 Henderson notes that as late as 1674, in a portrait of Louis XIV playing billiards, there is still a port and a king with no change in the mace. *"By 1700 the port and king had disappeared and by 1734 the modern cue began to displace the spade-shaped mace. The earliest rules of billiards known to us today appeared in Cotton's Compleat Gamester which was published in 1674."*

Edith Standen's work discusses the various versions of the "Jeu de Boules" tapestries and confirms as Henderson claims that the Jeu de Boules tapestry was indeed a familiar one in France and the Low Countries. Ms. Standen also gives us more information about the subject. She mentions that the game is being played by teenage boys and girls of presumably humble origin and that the dialog clearly indicates that the game is part of the courtship rituals, since it is played between boys and girls and the language is quite suggestive. For example, the remarks in the last scroll translate as follows according to the Met Tapestries Work of Ms. Standen:

"Gombaut, thy hand is too free, and then it is not good manners to smack the behind of a girl without promising to marry her."

DATING THE JEU DE BOULES TAPESTRIES

Ms. Standen attributes the version of Jeu de Boules which is hanging in New York's Metropolitan Museum to Bruges and on stylistic grounds assigns it a date of 1600. Henderson assigns the date of about 1460 to the version of Jeu de Boules hanging in St. Lô and states that it was first inventoried in 1532. On the otherhand, Ms Standen in footnote number 13 of her work states that "*none of the existing pieces can be assigned to so early a date* (as 1532)." As authority for this proposition, Ms. Standen cites Guiffrey (*Amours*, p.14.) This is somewhat surprising since Henderson has also most probably relied upon Guiffrey, *Amours* for his date of 1460 although one cannot be sure because Henderson does not footnote. Thus, according to Standen, Henderson's date is probably about 100 years too soon.

GUIFFREY'S STORY OF THE LOVES OF GOMBAUT AND MACEE

Somewhat surprisingly, a reading of Guiffrey, *Amours* appears to support Henderson. In referring to the St. Lô Tapestry Guiffrey writes on page 1 of *Amours*:

"Evidement, l'execution de la tapisserie remonte a une date anterieure a l'inventaire de trente ou quarante annees au moins. Ce document souffirait a lui seul pour faire attribuer a la fin du 15th siecle l'invention du roman qui nous occupe."

"Clearly, the execution of the tapestry goes back to a date which is at least 30 to 40 years prior to the inventory. This document alone is sufficient to attribute the invention of the story (which is the basis for the tapestries) to the end of the 15th century."

In his work (*Amours*) Guiffrey is seeking to date the story of Gombaut and Macee. He notes that this country tale was very popular in the 16th & 17th centuries. Indeed, it is averred to in Moliere's Avare.

"Harpagon veut faire accepter pour mille ecus a son client: ....; plus une tenture de tapisserie des Amours de Gombaut et Macee."

Guiffrey also notes that the name of Gombaut was frequently in the poetry of the 15th and 16th century and that Macee (the feminine form of Mathieu) was common in the 15th and 16th centuries. (p.54 of *Amours*.) Guiffrey in the end conjectures that a poet named Henri Baude had probably popularized the story.

HENDERSON'S USE OF JEU DE BOULES VINDICATED

What do we make of Henderson's use of the tapestry to illustrate the development of table billiards? In balance, he seems to have used the tapestry Jeu de Boules quite legitimately to support his conclusion that, although table billiards was claimed by some to have been played in 1571, this claim has not in fact been "too well substantiated" (p.122 Henderson.) It would perhaps have been better to attribute the tapestry to the second half of the 15th century than to refer to a particular year ("about 1460"), but this is only a quibble. He seems to have dated the tapestry consistently with the information contained in his source, Guiffrey's work *Les Amours de Gombaut et Macee*. Ms. Standen's argument about the dating, if she is indeed including the St. Lô tapestries in what she refers to as "existing tapestries," would appear to put the tapestry of St. Lô at 1600. Even this date would not cast significant doubt on the chronology which Henderson is advancing for the development of table billiards.

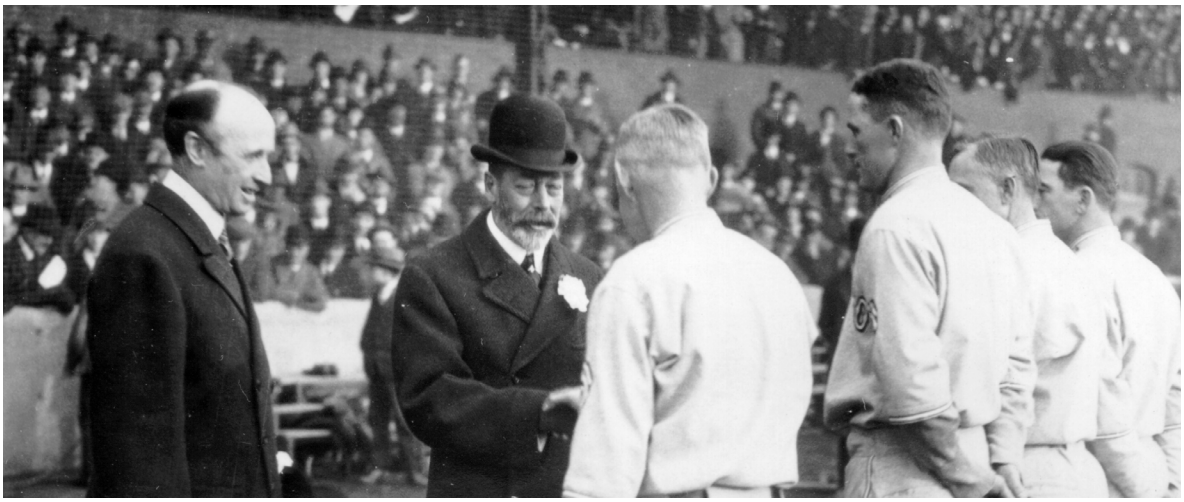
This brief attempt to assess

Henderson's Historical Method, continued

the accuracy of the scholarship employed in the writing of *Ball, Bat and Bishop* would not seem to call into question Mr. Henderson's research methods. Indeed, if the tapestry Jeu de Boule is in fact 100 years older than he asserts, this is a mistake which was made by his source, J.M.J. Guiffrey in his *Les Amours de Gombaut et de Macee*, Paris, 1882. Indeed, even if the 20th century fine arts scholar, Edith Appleton Standen, has discovered a 100 year mistake in Guiffrey's dating of the St. Lô tapestries, this mistake does no serious damage to Mr. Henderson's analysis of the emergence of the game of Table Billiards nor to Henderson's reputation for scholarship. Ms. Stanton appears to be questioning the conclusions of Guiffrey based upon her analysis of various tapestries as being of a style much later than 1532, because of the design and style of the St. Lô version of Jeu de Boules.

CONCLUSION

Our first attempt to assess the scholarship of Henderson's work, *Ball, Bat and Bishop*, suggests that in this work Henderson is faithful to his sources.



In October and November 1924 John McGraw took his New York Giants, along with Johnny Evers managing the Chicago White Sox, on a brief tour of France, Britain and Ireland. These two photographs are from the London match, played at Stamford Bridge. The game was played in the presence of King George V, who greeted the players before play started. In the top photo he meets members of the White Sox; below he greets the Giants, shaking the hand of the Young Perfesser himself, Casey Stengel. From the Wilson Cross scrapbook.

Baseball's Earliest Reference?, continued

from page 25

is a likely candidate to be the author of the book. His name appears in the text of the biography, mentioned as Rev. Wilson's patron. I looked his name up – yes, on the Internet – and came up with many references, including a five-volume set of his writings currently in print! The publisher of the set said that Swinnock was among the most readable of the Puritan writers.

An interesting point is that the "prophane Town" quote is not presented as a quote from Rev. Wilson. The book glided along from the start in the third person talking about Rev. Wilson, and at the beginning of Chapter 18, it switches to the first person in enunciation of the former sins of profane Maidstone. It looks very much like these were the observations of the author, not Rev. Wilson's. Most likely they are George Swinnock's. The thrust of that chapter was that Rev. Wilson made Maidstone a less profane place because of his ministry, so Swinnock sets the scene by telling how worldly Maidstone was before Rev. Wilson's arrival.

As for the sports mentioned, I can't explain what cudgel playing is. It must be some sort of mock fight, because a cudgel is a weapon. For anyone living outside these fair isles, an explanation of Morris dancing would be in order. It still exists and is quite popular in some rural places. It is a form of ancient folk dance, done in a group of dancers with very traditional outfits, to me a bit reminiscent of Bavarians and Tyroleans with their lederhosen, and with a string of small bells around their ankles. It's the kind of hobby that comedians find tremendously humorous (read: geek factor), but others are generally fascinated and appreciative with the link to a much simpler past. When I've ever come across Morris dancers, I always stop and watch for as long as I can.

I needed to address the bottom line, why is the Henderson quote different from the Wilson book? Why does Henderson say baseball when the book says stoolball?

What is really puzzling is that the Henderson section is wrong on almost every level. The original mentions stoolball, not baseball, The date is 1672, not 1700. It is not Rev. Wilson's memoirs, it is his posthumous biography. And the quote about Maidstone was not Rev. Wilson's, but by the author of the biography.

How could this happen? I can come up with three possibilities:

1. Maybe the book exists in another edition, dated 1700, which mentions baseball instead of stoolball.
2. Maybe there is another similar quote either by Thomas Wilson or George Swinnock which mentions baseball instead of stoolball.
3. Henderson got the quote second or even third hand. I have in mind an American academic, coming across the stoolball reference, and saying to him/herself, "Stoolball… that's what they called baseball in 17th century Britain, isn't it?" I'd like to trace Henderson's original source for the quote.

The third option certainly seems the most plausible, but we may never know. I still have a few more paths to tread in my search to clear up this mystery. I'll see what Jacqueline Eales' chapter on "the profane town of Maidstone" will bring. I'll write her to see if she knows anything more. If I have to, I'll buy the five-volume Swinnock set to see if I can find a variation of the Maidstone quote, maybe one mentioning baseball.

I'd like to find an answer. I don't like being puzzled.

Photo Captions and Comments

Page 20 - This photo is problematic. It is obviously from the Little Pretty Pocket Book, but I've never seen an edition with the "cricket" picture on top. It looks as this is from two different sources placed together. Wikipedia, under "History Of Cricket", states "Alternatively, the French *criquet* apparently comes from the Flemish word *krickstoel*, which is a long low stool on which one kneels in church which may appear similar to the long low wicket with two stumps used in early cricket, or the early stool in stoolball. The word *stool* is old [Sussex] dialect for a tree stump in a forest, but in stoolball it may well refer to the milking-stools which are believed to have been used as wickets in early times."

Page 21 - Stoolball at Wisborough Green, West Sussex.

Page 26 and 27 - both pictures from Knockholt, Kent

Page 36 - Seaford, East Sussex

Page 38 - Seaford with the chalk cliffs rising in the background

Page 39 - Dinner at Wivelsfield - left to right, Setts Sayama, Kaz Sayama (seated), Mike Ross (seated), John Price

Page 40 - Wivelsfield, from the "Day of Stoolball"

Page 44 - Painting of a boy playing trapball. From a poster, which has the caption: "*painted by H. Thompson Esq, R.A. From an original picture in the collection of George Watson Esq. London, Published Jan 2nd 1809*"

Trapball Found Alive, continued

from page 27

Peter joined us after batting, and explaine that a batsman can only lose, and a bowler can only gain. We understood. The chore of the batsman (i.e. to hit a ball straight ahead without too much deviation, without defensive intervention) was so easy that it was taken as a given; whereas the chore of the bowler (i.e. to roll a ball to hit a tiny target 12 leagues away) was so unlikely it was considered a fluke when it happened. An interesting split of responsibilites. But because they rotated, each player would get his hand at both roles.

I supposed we could add to that the role of the fielder, which is nothing. All the person that retrieves the ball does is pass it to the bowler whose turn it is. Whether he catches it in an Ozzie Smith-style catch, or dropped it six times before shovelling it up, it really doesn't matter. It doesn't affect the scoring.

A lot of the players actually fielded the ball with their feet. They would kick it to a stop before picking it up. Mike theorised that it was because they were used to football as the dominant sport, and I suggested it was because they didn't want to spill their beer. Both valid viewpoints.

Of course, this mirrors the long association between baseball and beer. A new league was formed in 1882 when the National League banned beer in ballparks. Breweries have a long history of owning ballclubs, and a hot dog and beer is what really tops off the baseball experience. In fact, when San Francisco starting serving wine, it just didn't seem right. What year is the best vintage? 1985? No, they lost 100 games that year.

Being a pub game, it was amicably low-key, with no high-fives and no-one doing the Dirty Bird in the end zone. Comraderie was more important than victory. But Peter assured me that in the first division, games get very serious and very competitive.

It got late and we had a long drive home, so after the first leg Mike and I politely excused ourselves. We bounced ideas back and forth as I drove.

For instance, which was older, stoolball or bat and trap? Stoolball goes farther back in the historical record, but it would be difficult to pinpoint which features of which game were derived from which features of the other game. An interesting point, though, is that bat and trap has the concept of foul territory and foul lines, which is only shared with baseball.

We discussed the skill level needed to play the game. Being a

pub game, comeraderie is obviously more important than winning (except in the higher echelons as Peter explained). Or to paraphrase him, batting is easy and bowling is hard. I suspect bowling is very hard. It combines a steady hand and an eagle eye with the ability to read the hills and dales of a hundred or so yards of possibly unfamiliar turf.

We talked about comparisons with stoolball. Stoolball recruits children, is taught in schools in Sussex and maybe surrounding areas. Bat and trap is a pub game, and thus has a completely different player base. Yet, as we observed the age range, there is little danger of the game dying out because of lack of interest.

Maybe the most important point we discussed was the possibilities that could have sprung from such as game as bat and trap. Admittedly it is a very simple game.

We especially found more room for the development in the role of the fielder. Balls were hardly ever hit on the fly, and besides that, it is the role of the fielder only to retrieve the ball and give it to the bowler.

Maybe they could make scoring dependent on whether he fields the ball cleanly, or something like that. We didn't like the fact that the position had become totally relegated. Also, there was no running element. No one ever had to move faster than a slow saunter. The batsman stood his ground until put out, and that was it.

We wondered why the game didn't evolve. But then again, maybe it did evolve. Maybe it became cricket.

But then what struck us was the fact that a simple game made us ponder who to make the game more interesting. This is the same process used by children throughout the ages to make things more interesting as they grew older. Not just with their games, but with their lives. Children would get bored and start changing the game. Why wouldn't adults? I guess it's because children are moved keyed to growth and having a constantly-changing world. Bat and trap has been played for so long, the rules seem to be set in stone. The fact is, the minute you codify a game, you start to stifle it.

It may sound corny, but the growth in bat and ball games from informal and/or amateur games to finely codified professional sports mirrors the human growth from childhood to adulthood.

Perhaps we were over-analysing. Besides, the night air was clear and the night blossoms were fragrant.

Buena Vista Baseball Club, continued

from page 29

smaller letters): *Los senores: Alberto Azoy, Manuel Alonso, Gonzalo Sanchez, Antonio Chavez, Emilio Hernandez, Jose Castener, Manuel Padron.* This would represent and earlier sponsorship. What is obviously a much later addition is a plaque with a bust carved in relief, beneath which is the name *"Dr. Antonio Mesa, 1959".* This plaque is positioned on a raised pedestal portion of the grave, level with the crossed bats of the centrepiece. On the plaque itself inscribed beside the bust is the inscription: *"Dr. Antonio Mesa Valdes".* With the inscription: *"FUE GRAN CUIDADANO Y DE BUEN DE DEPORTISTA. GRAN ABOGADO Y HONORABLE PRESIDENTE DE LA ASS. C. DE U. Y M. DEL BASE BALL PROFESSIONAL"* translates as: *"A good citizen and sportsman... a lawyer and honorable president of the Association [C.de U. y M] of professional baseball."* On the raised portion on the other side of the crossed bat centrepiece is a round bronze plaque with a portrait inscribed *"ANTONIO MARIA DE CARDENAS".*

This amazing site sadly has been vandalized and it appears that at least two plaques have been removed. Various pieces of salvaged stone have been assembled informally on or beside the graves. With only token searching, I have indication that many of these names are typical of northern Spain, where many emigrated to Cuba in the 19th century. The name of Rafael Inclan, perhaps by coincidence perhaps relates to a well known Spanish writer, Suarez Inclan (could he be a Cuban Roger Angell?). The conclusion is: There is much to be discovered with to baseball in Cuba.

Hotel Plaza, belleza arquitectónica, donde se hospedaran El Bambino, esposa e Igor, agente y secretario en 1920. Está aún situado a varios centenares de metros del Frontón Jai Alai.

Babe Ruth slept here, and his room still holds a shrine to him.

Who Exactly Was On First?

The story behind the creation of the Abbott & Costello routine "Who's On First"

by Mike Ross, as told byWill Chance

Baseball has provided American literature with several classics, none more enduring and popular than Who's on First. This is best known to the public as performed by the comic team of Abbott & Costello. The routine was first heard by a mass audience in the film *The Naughty Nineties* in 1945. Visitors to the baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York may find the routine shown on video in the public gallery.

Now it has emerged that what was thought to be purely a product of a fecund comic imagination is in fact based on reality. Here is a taste of the fabled jest that has come down to us through the years compliments of the zany comic duo:

Costello: Hey Abbott tell me the names of the players on our baseball team so I can say hello to them.

Abbott: Sure. Who's on first; What's on second; I Don't Know's on third.

C: Wait a minute.

A: What's the matter?

C: I want to know the names of the players

A: I'm telling you. Who's on first; What's on Second, I Don't Know's on third.

C: Now wait a minute. What's the name of the first baseman?

A: No. What's the name of the second baseman.

C: I don't know.

A: He's the third baseman.

C: Let's start over.

A: Okay. Who's on first…

C: I'm asking YOU what's the name of the first baseman!

The full roster of the Abbott & Costello squad reads as: Who, What, I Don't Know, Why, Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today, Because, and I Don't Give A Darn. One might contend that these are unlikely names even in late 19th century USA, with its burgeoning immigrant population. That is, unless you spell the names correctly. The legendary fictitious "Who" of the text is, dear readers, none other than one Honus J. Hooehe, born in Rotterdam, Holland, nicknamed "The Dutchman". "Hooehe's on first?" That's right.

An impetuous researcher from the north of England, a Timothy ("call me Timmy") Watt, was researching his family tree and found a baseball player among the close knit Watt clan. Mr Watt journeyed to the United States in search of one Archie Watt, his great grandfather, who emigrated soon after the birth of his first child, unable to take the strain of family life.

As a result, Watt inadvertently discovered the original box score from whence the origins of the Abbott & Costello routine emanated. Yes, the Today's, Who's and What's that sent fans and regular

people alike into fits of mirth were real players with batting averages, wives and children, hobbies, fetishes, drinking problems and comic book addictions. In short: real life fiction turns to real life fact when characters' names exist as something other than icons for an unlikely comic script - a rather elaborate form of professional assassination.

Armed with a Watt family scrapbook, Timmy Watt combed libraries and perused the small town newspaper archives across America, following the smallest clue. Fruitless journeys to Oregon, Texas and Louisiana maybe, but not fruitless when he landed in a town beginning with "P" in a state starting with "I". At last baseball fans can touch base with the likes Honus Hooehe, Tom Morrow and Isaiah Donough and the rest of this real life squad.

Costello: Tell me the names of the players on our team.

Abbott: Sure. Hooehe's on first; Watt's on second; I.Donough's on third.

C: Wait a minute.

A: What's the matter?

C: I want to know the names of the players.

A: I'm telling you. Hooehe's on first; Watt's on second; I. Donough's on

third. [Not to be confused with his brother U. Donough.]

So now picture if you will a cub reporter back in 1919 interviewing the manager of the town team. That reporter's inability to comprehend the manager - who was playing it up for the assembled mass - has allowed for a precise albeit innocent rendering by the precious talent of dear Lou Costello; not to deny Bud Abbott his due as an equally believable manager.

Watt's dig was strictly family research and, at first, utterly unconcerned with the crack of bat and baseball, and moreover, curtly if not rudely dismissive of the famed routine. Yet such naive efforts have led to the most significant baseball research discovery since the unearthing of Honus Wagner's lost plate appearance.

Watt, while relating his tale to Will Chance, tended toward effusive verbosity, often vacuous and strangely reticent, albeit darn-right evasive. Persistence, however, based on unbearable excitement, paid off.

Watt, despite his scant knowledge and little interest in baseball, suddenly became - once he knew he had struck gold - a veritable Mr. Baseball. And most painfully, he held firm to a journalistic credo previously foreign to him. "Sorry Will, but I cannot divulge my sources". He refused to name the town from whence came his sources, only that it began with a 'P' in a midwestern state starting with the letter 'I'. He said he would tell me more once his book was published. A serious researcher could come to hate this man.

Chance spent three long years gathering the information now in his possession. Chance spoke of how this Timmy character chipped

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off bits of his sanity, but satisfied his lifelong urge to understand carving in flint. Watt had spoken guardedly of how the story first spread, starting in 1919 in a tavern where a "beaver-like cub reporter" [Watt's mixed metaphor] was interviewing the manager. Among those watching the proceedings in the tavern in what was described as "the waning afternoon sun", were your archetypal booze hounds: a salesman on a good day, a woman practising the oldest profession, and not least, the actual town drunk himself, a raconteur who, with an obvious theatrical background, which suggests that he spread the story in the colourful telling of it.

As Chance relates, this flotsam and jetsam of local society, creased with suppressed laughter, spread the tale far and wide. It gathered momentum as it crossed state lines, much in the manner that folk tales do. The commercial potential soon became obvious.

What transpires is not fully known. That which is known can be questioned; and that which is questionable somehow makes sense. But, for all of Watt's maddening reticence, he was no mean researcher. Get this: Timmy Watt was apprehended on several occasions for various unlawful incursions into the Mutual Network's basement archives and other secluded locations where he unearthed early radio scripts, learning of such facts as Nat Turley's early inclusion as "Naturally" - subsequently dropped from the version folks have come to know and love.

Here is the lineup in more detail:

Honus Hooehe was indeed a Dutchman. Likewise Frank Archie Watt, the man without whose presence on the roster Timmy Watt would have been rendered purposeless, was also European born and indeed did play second base. Archie Watt made the big leagues as a late season callup with Washington in 1920. Watt is reckoned to be the only second baseman with a career batting average of 1.000 in the majors. His name does not appear in some reference books because he had only one turn at bat in which - legend has it - he doubled, giving him a slugging percentage of 2.000. The highest in major league history for a second baseman.

Isaiah (Ike) Donough, an Irishman and former railroad worker, Donough was the brother of Ulysses Donough. Both were born in county Wicklow, near Dublin, Ireland. The team manager in the original 'folk' version used the initial before the surname, reciting the name as it appeared in the box score. No artistic contrivances here. Simply more confusion for the already besotted Costello. When the name U. Donough came up in early versions of the skit, Costello exclaimed "I know I don't know, Abbott!" To which Abbott would have replied "What?" To which Costello, acquiescing to the inevitable, resignedly prompted "Yeah, I know. He's on second."

Herman (Donkey) Farr-Darne at shortstop was a tragic figure. A heavy drinker, the doomed Donkey was targeted for the major leagues, but died before realising his destiny ("unless," as Watt had boorishly prompted, "death was his destiny"). Donkey, as the story goes, downed a fifth of Kill-Devil on a bet and fell into the Ohio River while attempting to cross a trestle railroad bridge on foot.

The radio writers certainly indulged themselves, creating the famous "I Don't Give A Darn" from Farr-Darne. In the early versions Nat Turley was the shortstop. Watt unearthed records relating to Herman Donald Farr-Darne, whose parents were born in Yorkshire, England. Watt was so mean with his sources, he would only say "A place beginning with a W". There Joseph Farr met and married the winsome Marie Darne. They assumed for the good of their heirs, the double-barrelled Farr-Darne, as was, and is, quite the common practice in the Britain of today, especially among those of higher station, thus preserving collateral wealth.

This wealth was far greater then would ever be achieved by the fleet-footed Donkey. The poor chap was disinherited very early in his career for disgracing the names of Darne and Farr with his admittedly quaint monicker. Moose Skowron, former Yankee slugging first sacker, in later years acknowledged Farr-Darne's contribution. "Donkey was a great influence on me; he had the guts to support the animal kingdom which too few players do nowadays. I did the same because of him. He would have made it to the major leagues, I can tell you that much."

Rabbit Maranville was also highly respectful of Donkey and said before his death: "Donkey had plenty of guts. And he could turn the double play too".

"Why" was the show business center fielder, who was based on the real Wee Willie (Wild Bill) Wye, who changed his name from Wyrostek. He was uncle to Barney Wyrostek who played 11 seasons in the National League.

Blitz "Baby Doll" Kauz became "Because" and was brother of Kiki Kauz who never made the A&C script. The Kauz brothers were from a town in Bavaria beginning with a 'V'.

Right field was the Swede, Jess Turdae, whose name was translated to the phonetically practical "Yesterday". Jess not surprisingly insisted on the original pronunciation, "out of respect for Papa" was his repeated explanation, hence the "J" spoken as "Y". The name Turdae (Sometimes "Turrhdae" or "Turrhdai") can still be found in Minnesota and Aroostok County phone books. Fairly common around Duluth, Minnesota and Caribou, Maine.

Tom Morrow, or "Tomorrow", the ace pitcher on the squad (still kept secret by our Timmy!), was in 1895 christened Custer Udo Thomas Morrow. He was known for a highly sophisticated sense of the absurd. "And he enjoyed a good joke as much as the next man. Often he signed himself C.U. Tom Morrow... He was a funny fella," said Watt who was obviously letting on less than he knew and was highly pretentious as to what he thought he knew: "Morrow threw a wicked curve taught to him by Candy Cummings when he was six years old." Watt spoke parrot-like in his recitation, ignorant of the true exploits of the great Cummings. "Oh how opposing hitters sucked for that sweet looking sugar-coated candied pitch tossed to them by the brilliant Candyman."

"Today" was none other than Leon Touhy ("Two") Day, a superstitious character. He came to the ball park suggesting to all within earshot, "Let's play two," indicating and immortalising his love for the game and his willingness to play double-headers, virtually heroic for a backstop in the days of wool flannel. The legend of Day's love of the game resulted in the nickname "Two". A former teammate had -

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according to Watt - said: "You know how superstitious ballplayers can be. Well, one time ol' 'Two', he come out to the park and darn if he didn't forgot to say it, you know, 'Let's play two'. And would you believe it! He struck out four times, not even a loud foul ball; dropped an easy tag at the plate, then broke his thumb on a passed ball. Two Day never again forgot his P's and two's, I can tell you that."

As with the Kauz family, (Ulysses) U. Donough, brother of Ike Donough, had to be satisfied with a utility role. Nathan (Nat) Turley, scratched totally from immortality, was born in Troy, Illinois, and was great uncle of former big league pitching star Bob Turley, a 20-game winner for the Yankees.

So when Costello asks "Have you got a pitcher on this team? Abbot's reply should read on paper "Tom Morrow" and Costello says "You don't want to tell me now? " "I said I'd tell you: Tom Morrow."

"What's wrong with today?" "Nothing; he ['Two' Day] is a pretty good catcher." "Who's the catcher?" "No. Hooehe's the first baseman." "All right, what's the first baseman's name?" "No, Watt's the second baseman's name." So, a far fetched joke this is not. We fans have forever been in the dark and down a garden path. Costello's contention that "players have such strange names these days" is insupportable. The names are not that strange. Certainly not as examples of first generation American immigrants. Not bad for what is allegedly a semi-pro outfit.

A: Look It's very simple:

C: I know it's simple. You got a pitcher Tomorrow. He throws the ball to Today. Today throws the ball to Who, he throws the ball to What. What throws the ball to I-Don't-Know, he's on third... and what's more, I Don't Give A Darn!

A: What's that?

C: I said I Don't Give A Darn.

A: Oh, he's our shortstop.

So where do we go from here to find out the rest of the facts? Batting averages, on base percentages, earned run averages, and outfield assists; all these matters are of compelling interest. I, for my curiosity, am left with the last clue from Watt before he jumped off the Talahatchee Bridge (made famous in song years earlier by Bobbie Gentry) taking with him the last word; this coming after Chance grabbed him by the scruff of his maroon silk foulard scarfed neck and wrestled him to the ground. He agreed to eliminate Iowa and Indiana, for which he was greatly thanked. Chance spoke how he had been to Iowa, and managed to pass through Indiana unscathed. I personally am heading for Pocatello, Idaho next month, my first stop in my quest for verification. I got a good feeling about Pocatello.

This article originally appeared in the SABR UK Examiner 11, issued in 1999, on April 1, I think - ed.

Source

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